

# Assyria to Iberia

Art and Culture  
in the Iron Age

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
Symposia



The Metropolitan Museum of Art Symposia

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## Art and Culture in the Iron Age

Edited by  
Joan Aruz and Michael Seymour



THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK  
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The essays in this volume are based on papers and lectures presented in conjunction with the exhibition “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age” on view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, from September 27, 2014, through January 4, 2015.

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motifs. Said to be from Kourion (the Kourion Treasure).  
Cypro-Phoenician, late 8th–early 7th century B.C. The  
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(ME 127412)

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# Contributors to the Publication

**Joan Aruz**, Curator in Charge, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

**María Eugenia Aubet**, Professor and Chair of Prehistory Department, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona

**Zainab Bahrani**, Edith Porada Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Art and Archaeology, Department of Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University

**John Boardman**, Emeritus Lincoln Professor of Classical Art and Archaeology, Classical Art Research Centre and The Beazley Archive, University of Oxford

**Annie Caubet**, Professor, Ecole du Louvre, and Curator Emerita, Département des Antiquités Orientales, Musée du Louvre

**Paul Collins**, Jaleh Hearn Curator for Ancient Near East, Department of Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford

**Marian Feldman**, Professor, Departments of the History of Art and Near Eastern Studies, Johns Hopkins University

**Israel Finkelstein**, Professor of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University

**Amy Rebecca Gansell**, Assistant Professor, Art and Design, St. John's University

**Sarah B. Graff**, Associate Curator, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

**Eric Gubel**, Director, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels

**Ann C. Gunter**, Bertha and Max Dressler Professor in the Humanities, Department of Art History, Northwestern University

**Marsha Hill**, Curator, Department of Egyptian Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

**Ann E. Killebrew**, Associate Professor of Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies, Jewish Studies, and Anthropology, Pennsylvania State University

**Carolina López-Ruiz**, Associate Professor, Department of Classics, The Ohio State University

**Hartmut Matthäus**, Senior Fellow, Institut für Klassische Archäologie, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, Erlangen-Nürnberg

**Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier**, Director Emeritus, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Athen

**Mirko Novák**, Professor, Institut für Archäologische Wissenschaften, Universität Bern,

**Aslı Özyar**, Director of Tarsus-Gözlükule Excavations, and Professor, Department of History, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul

**Nassos Papalexandrou**, Associate Professor, Department of Art and Art History, The University of Texas at Austin

**Ronny Reich**, Professor, Department of Archaeology, University of Haifa

**Maurizio Sannibale**, Curator, Reparto per le Antichità Etrusco-Italiche e il Museo Gregoriano Etrusco dei Musei Vaticani

**Michael Seymour**, Assistant Curator, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

**Nicholas Chr. Stampolidis**, Professor of Archaeology, University of Crete, and Director, Museum of Cycladic and Ancient Greek Art, Athens

**Jonathan N. Tubb**, Keeper, Department of the Middle East, The British Museum

**Marc Van De Mieroop**, Professor, Department of History, Columbia University

**Irene J. Winter**, William Dorr Boardman Professor of Fine Arts Emerita, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University



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We are very pleased that, with these essays, we are able to make another contribution to the Museum’s symposium series, three years after the publication of *Cultures in Contact: From Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.* We would like to thank Mark Polizzotti and Michael Sittenfeld of the Publications and Editorial Department for their assistance in bringing this volume to completion. As with the *Assyria to Iberia* catalogue, Christopher Zichello has done masterful work in production and contributed his expertise with images and layout. Elizabeth Franzen devoted much time, energy, and skill to the careful editing of this volume, with the assistance of Anne Rebecca Blood, Elizabeth Gordon, Frances Malcolm, and Amelia Kutschbach. Anandaroop Roy created the exhibition catalogue maps and has kindly adapted them for the purposes of this volume, Philomena Mariani prepared the bibliography and endnotes, and Jane Tai handled image rights. Special thanks to Anne Rebecca Blood who, as project manager, ensured that the volume moved forward.

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always responding to our queries with expedience and good cheer. Their contributions enriched the presentation of the exhibition and reflect the complexities of an era of ancient civilization that is best understood when its various aspects are considered from a “global” perspective, as we endeavored to do in our journey from Assyria to Iberia.

Joan Aruz and Michael Seymour



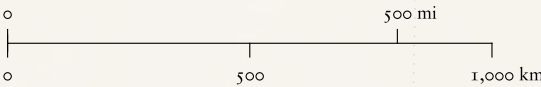


# The Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean in the First Millennium B.C.

With Select Second-Millennium B.C. Sites

Map showing place-names cited in the essays.

- Archaeological site
- Modern city
- ✕ Shipwreck



Robinson projection centered on 20°E



Region	City
ANATOLIA	Troy, Ankara, Hattusa, Gordion, Marash, Carchemish, Arslan Tash, Tell Halaf, Tell al Rimah, Aleppo, Ugarit, Salamis, Kition, Byblos, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Megiddo, Samaria, Amman, Jerusalem, Lachish, Tanis, Naukratis, Memphis, Herakleopolis, Tell el-Amarna, Deir el-Medina, Medinet Habu, Tôd, Thebes, Dakka, Abu Simbel, Kerma, Nuri, el-Kurru, Meroë, Khartoum, Sana'a
ASSYRIA	Karmir Blur, Yerevan, Van, Musasir, Nineveh, Nimrud, Ashur, Mosul, Baghdad, Tell Asmar, Dilbar, Ur, Uruk, Susa
SYRIA	Marash, Carchemish, Arslan Tash, Tell Halaf, Tell al Rimah, Aleppo, Ugarit, Salamis, Kition, Byblos, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Megiddo, Samaria, Amman, Jerusalem, Lachish, Tanis, Naukratis, Memphis, Herakleopolis, Tell el-Amarna, Deir el-Medina, Medinet Habu, Tôd, Thebes, Dakka, Abu Simbel, Kerma, Nuri, el-Kurru, Meroë, Khartoum, Sana'a
MESOPOTAMIA	Karmir Blur, Yerevan, Van, Musasir, Nineveh, Nimrud, Ashur, Mosul, Baghdad, Tell Asmar, Dilbar, Ur, Uruk, Susa
BAByLONIA	Karmir Blur, Yerevan, Van, Musasir, Nineveh, Nimrud, Ashur, Mosul, Baghdad, Tell Asmar, Dilbar, Ur, Uruk, Susa
EGYPT	Tanis, Naukratis, Memphis, Herakleopolis, Tell el-Amarna, Deir el-Medina, Medinet Habu, Tôd, Thebes, Dakka, Abu Simbel, Kerma, Nuri, el-Kurru, Meroë, Khartoum, Sana'a
LEVANT	Ugarit, Salamis, Kition, Byblos, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Megiddo, Samaria, Amman, Jerusalem, Lachish, Tanis, Naukratis, Memphis, Herakleopolis, Tell el-Amarna, Deir el-Medina, Medinet Habu, Tôd, Thebes, Dakka, Abu Simbel, Kerma, Nuri, el-Kurru, Meroë, Khartoum, Sana'a
ARABIA	Riyadh, Sana'a
NUBIA	Kerma, Nuri, el-Kurru, Meroë, Khartoum, Sana'a
KUSH	Kerma, Nuri, el-Kurru, Meroë, Khartoum, Sana'a
Other	Crete, Eleutherna, Knossos, Priniias, Mount Ida, Cyrene, Tobruk, Rhodes, Miletos, Ephesos, Samos, Athens, Mycenae, Olympia, Corinth, Delphi, Lefkandi, Eretria, Sardis, Cyprus, Nicosia, Ugarit, Salamis, Kition, Byblos, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Megiddo, Samaria, Amman, Jerusalem, Lachish, Tanis, Naukratis, Memphis, Herakleopolis, Tell el-Amarna, Deir el-Medina, Medinet Habu, Tôd, Thebes, Dakka, Abu Simbel, Kerma, Nuri, el-Kurru, Meroë, Khartoum, Sana'a



*Iberia*



*Greece and  
Western Anatolia*





*Central Mediterranean*

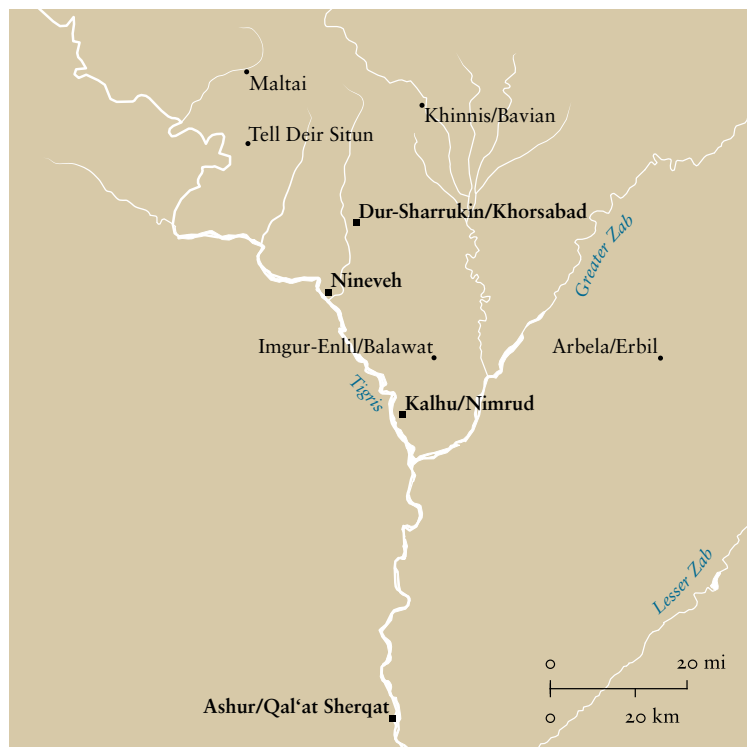


*Urartu and the  
Syro-Hittite States*





*Assyrian World*



*Assyrian Heartland*

## CHRONOLOGY, 1200–400 B.C. (all dates are approximate)

	Mesopotamia	Iran	Syria and the Levant	Anatolia/North Syria
1200	<p><b>BABYLONIA</b> Nebuchadnezzar I (1125–1104)</p> <p><b>ASSYRIA</b> Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076)</p>	Iron Age II, 1250–800	Iron Age I, 1200–900 Sea Peoples incursions	<p>Syro-Hittite and Aramaean kingdoms, 1200–800</p> <p>Traditional date of Trojan War, 1184</p>
1100				
1000	<p>Neo-Babylonian period, 1000–539</p> <p>Neo-Assyrian empire, 911–612 Adad-nirari II (911–891)</p>	Neo-Elamite period, 1000–539	Philistine city-states founded in 10th century	
900	<p><b>ASSYRIA</b> Ashurnasirpal II (883–859) Assyrian capital moved to Nimrud/Kalhu, 878</p> <p>Shalmaneser III (858–824)</p>		<p>Iron Age II, 900–700</p> <p>Battle of Qarqar, 853</p> <p>Hazael of Aram-Damascus (843–806)</p>	<p>Sarduri I (840–830) founds royal dynasty of Urartu</p>
800	<p>Assyrian rule in Babylonia, 729–625</p> <p><b>ASSYRIA</b> Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727)</p> <p>Sargon II (721–705) Assyrian capital moved to Khorsabad/Dur-Sharrukin, 717</p> <p><b>BABYLONIA</b> Marduk-apla-iddina II, 721–711</p> <p><b>ASSYRIA</b> Sennacherib (704–681) Assyrian capital moved to Nineveh/Kuyunjik, 704</p>	Iron Age III, 800–550	<p>Assyria conquers Samaria, 722</p> <p>Assyria conquers Philistine city-states, 714–712</p> <p>Assyrian sieges of Lachish and Jerusalem, 701</p>	<p><b>URARTU</b> Argishti I (785/780–756) Sarduri II (756–730) Rusa I (730–714/713)</p> <p><b>PHRYGIA</b> Midas (contemporary with Sargon II of Assyria)</p> <p>Assyrian sack of Haldi Temple, Musasir, 714</p>
700	<p>Sennacherib destroys Babylon, 689</p> <p><b>ASSYRIA</b> Esarhaddon (680–669) Ashurbanipal (668–627) War between Ashurbanipal and Shamash-shuma-ukin, 652–649</p> <p>Fall of Nineveh, 612</p> <p><b>BABYLONIA</b> Nabopolassar (626–605)</p> <p>Neo-Babylonian kingdom, 626–612</p> <p>Neo-Babylonian empire, 612–539</p> <p>Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562)</p>	<p>Battle of Til Tuba, 653</p> <p>Assyrian sack of Susa, 646</p> <p>Median empire, 625–550</p>	<p>Iron Age III, 700–550</p> <p>Babylonian rule, 605–539</p>	<p><b>URARTU</b> Rusa II (first half of 7th century)</p> <p><b>LYDIA</b> Mermnad dynasty, 680–546</p> <p>Battle of Carchemish, 605</p>
600	<p>Nabonidus (555–539)</p> <p>Persian conquest of Babylon, 539</p> <p>Achaemenid rule, 539–330</p>	<p>Achaemenid dynasty, 559–330</p> <p>Bisutun relief of Darius I, 521</p>	<p>Babylonian sack of Jerusalem and destruction of Temple, 587</p> <p>Achaemenid rule, 550–330</p>	<p><b>LYDIA</b> Croesus (560–546)</p> <p>Achaemenid rule, 546–330</p>
500				Ionian Revolt, 499–498



Egypt	Cyprus	Greece	Western Mediterranean
Ramesses III (1184–1153)	Late Bronze Age, 1600–1050	Late Helladic (LH) IIIC period on mainland / Late Minoan (LM) IIIC period on Crete, 1200–1125	SPAIN Middle and Later Bronze Age, 1500–700
Third Intermediate Period, 1070–712 (or 664)* Dynasty 21, 1070–945	Phoenician colonies on Cyprus, ca. 1100 Cypro-Geometric period, 1050–750	Sub-Mycenaean period on mainland / Sub-Minoan period on Crete	
Libyan period / Dynasty 22, 945–712 Sheshonq I (945–924) Osorkon I (924–889)		Protogeometric period, 1000–900 Lefkandi “heroon,” 950  Tekke bowl, late 10th–early 9th century	ITALY Iron Age, 1000–750
Osorkon II (874–850)	Phoenician colony at Kition founded, mid-9th century	Geometric period, 900–700	ITALY Villanovan culture, 900–500  SARDINIA Earliest possible date for Nora stele (see cat. 98)  NORTH AFRICA Traditional date of foundation of Carthage, 814
Kushite period / Dynasty 25, 712–664 Late period, 712–332	Salamis “royal” tombs, 8th–7th century  Cypro-Archaic I period, 750–600  Cypriot kings pay tribute to Sargon II, 707	<i>Iliad</i> and <i>Odyssey</i> composed, 8th–7th century  Olympic games established, 776  Orientalizing period, 750–600	SPAIN Tartessian rule, 800–540  ITALY Etruscan culture, 750–90 Orientalizing period, 750–575 Nestor’s cup inscription, 750–725
Taharqo (690–664) Assyria invades Egypt, 671–663 Saite period / Dynasty 26, 664–525  Greek settlement at Naukratis, second half of 7th century  Necho II (610–595)			SPAIN Iron Age, 700–200    Mazarrón shipwrecks, second half of 7th century    Bajo de la Campana shipwreck, late 7th–early 6th century
Amasis (Ahmose II) (570–526)  Achaemenid rule, 525–404	Cypro-Archaic II period, 600–480 Egyptian rule, 570–526 Achaemenid rule, 526–333	Archaic period, 600–480 Polykrates of Samos (538–522)	ITALY Archaic period, 575–490
	Cypro-Classical period, 480–310	Classical period, 480–323	ITALY Classical period, 490–300

\*See Hill in Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 198–201.







The exhibition “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age” began with the collapse of the interconnected world of palatial centers that had developed during the Bronze Age—the third and second millennia B.C.—in the Near East and the eastern Mediterranean. It explored the dynamics of this transitional time, the artistic legacy that survived over centuries, and new forms in which cultures intersected with the onset of the Iron Age in the early first millennium B.C. One main area of emphasis was the manifestation in the arts of this new world order where decentralized merchant and colonial endeavors took place against the backdrop of the expanding power of the Assyrian empire. This was also the world alluded to in the maritime adventures of the Homeric hero Odysseus. Land and sea trade proliferated with Phoenician merchants expanding through Europe and North Africa, traveling the inland sea—the Mediterranean—to its westernmost reaches, the Pillars of Hercules, and beyond. Along with trade came traveling craftsmen and other specialists, imported materials, technologies, and goods, which stimulated a flowering in the arts throughout the region. While the term “Orientalizing” is considered controversial in that it may not express the complexity of interaction, it does evoke the age in which the Aegean saw an influx of Near Eastern figural imagery that introduced, in particular, depictions of a supernatural world of fantastic creatures. The profound impact of such cultural encounters is explored in this volume by scholars who address art and archaeology, as well as literature, language, and script. Inspired to take a new look at this transformative period, their contributions enriched the scholarly events that took place during the course of the show: a two-day symposium, individual lectures, and a scholars’ day. In all, their papers create a compelling picture of the origins and development of artistic traditions in the western world and their deep roots in the interaction between the ancient Near East and the lands along the shores of the Mediterranean.

## Introduction

Four papers address the art and archaeology of transition from Bronze to Iron. This author concentrates on two of the three essential themes that were illustrated in the introductory gallery of the exhibition (fig. 1): the extraordinary foreign imports and foreign-inspired works—particularly jewelry and metalwork—discovered in the elite burials at the Euboian site of Lefkandi, and secondly, the role of Cyprus in preserving and transmitting the artistic legacy of the Bronze Age. The role of Cyprus is expressed in the style, imagery, and techniques of ivory carving and metalworking found in both the Near East and Greece during the Iron Age. The third theme is examined by Ann Kilbrew, who focuses on depictions of Philistines in art and the Aegean associations in Philistine material culture, to understand the phenomenon of the Philistine occupation along the southern Levantine coast and to better define the Sea Peoples. Jonathan Tubb, in his keynote lecture for the symposium, also addressed the complex dynamics occurring from the twelfth to tenth century, before Assyrian intervention in the Levant. This period of transition is marked by the movements of the Sea Peoples, whom he identifies as a collective of Anatolian and Aegean skilled urban dwellers; the survival of Canaanite-Phoenician cities; the collapse of Egypt and its loss of status as a driving force in the eastern Mediterranean; the establishment of Philistine settlements; the formation of historical Israel; and the Amorite resurgence into the Aramaean states with the collapse of the Hittite empire, whose legacy



Fig. 1. Introductory gallery addressing the Bronze to Iron Age transition in “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2014–15

remained visible in the material culture of the region.

The paper by Israel Finkelstein describes the scientific initiatives undertaken by the Iron Age Micro-Archaeology Project to address issues such as chronological synchronisms between the Aegean and the Levant, as well as climate change during the Bronze to Iron Age transition. He outlines the evidence for drought and famine in the context of the displacement of populations as the Iron Age shifted from a dry to a very wet phase.

Moving into the heart of the show and the heartland of the Assyrian empire, the visitor was greeted by the statue of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.), exquisite ivory furniture inlays, and monumental reliefs from palaces at Nimrud and Nineveh (fig. 2). Three contributions focus on Assyrian themes, emphasizing the portrayal of the overwhelming power of the empire and the ruler as expressed in the arts. Paul Collins explores the ways in which the heroic royal image changed from the thirteenth to the seventh

century B.C. He cites the role of Late Bronze Age Egyptian narrative imagery as well as Near Eastern literature, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, in forming the Assyrian iconography of kingship and its divine associations.

Amy Gansell approaches the subject of the embodiment of empire in the material culture of Assyria through a detailed study of the spectacular jewelry and metalwork found in the tombs of three foreign royal women at Nimrud. In an attempt to understand the nature of interaction as expressed by queenly fashion, she distinguishes works with imported elements and those inspired by foreign works or fusing aspects of many traditions.

Michael Seymour focuses on another expression of empire in the later Assyrian palaces: the detailed narrative reliefs depicting military campaigns in varied landscapes with rich incidental elements and genre scenes. As he points out, the imperial prowess of the ruler is not expressed on these reliefs by his towering presence, as in Egypt, but rather by his great geographical reach,





Fig. 2. Gallery view with Nimrud ivories and Assyrian relief sculptures in “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age”

and the masses of captives and the immense wealth he collects as booty. Seymour notes that such depictions reinforced the image of Assyrian control over an ordered world.

One other paper focuses on the Mesopotamian heartland and foreign contacts from a very different perspective. Marc Van De Mieroop draws our attention to the rich holdings of the Library of Ashurbanipal, which included texts on divination and lexical lists of words defining the multiple meanings of the cuneiform signs used to compose them. He illustrates the stark contrasts between the Near Eastern approach to language and script and that of the Greek world. While many aspects of Mesopotamian art and culture were adapted, he makes the point that the Babylonian philosophy of language, expressed by the way in which cuneiform script worked, remained unknown in the Greek environment, where the alphabet—a Phoenician import—was by contrast meant to record the spoken word. This fundamental difference reveals contrasting ways of understanding the world in the east and west.

Assyrian expansion to the north and west were the subject of exhibition galleries devoted to the art of the Urartian kingdom

and that of the Syro-Hittite states of northern Syria and southeastern Anatolia (fig. 3). Mirko Novák’s paper examines the relationship between Assyrian and Aramaean culture, the creation of a distinct Aramaean identity, and the eventual adoption of the Phoenician-derived Aramaic script as the lingua franca of the empire. “Aramaization” appears to have been necessitated by “Assyrianization”—the expansion of Assyria with its displacement of populations. Such dynamics created a multicultural society that may have required a simpler way of writing, leading to the adoption of a bilingual administration by the royal court—a phenomenon of great interest in light of the intellectual divide between cuneiform and alphabetic scripts, as illuminated in the paper of Van De Mieroop.

Aslı Özyar expands the exploration of the Syro-Hittite lands to the fortified site of Karatepe-Aslantaş, where Phoenician presence is evidenced both in sculptural imagery and in the survival of the longest extant Phoenician alphabetic text, a bilingual inscription also written in Hieroglyphic Luwian and outlining the achievements of the citadel’s patron. Her paper elucidates the historical background and artistic impact of

encounters with both Phoenicians and Greeks on the Cilician plain.

The exhibition proceeds—as did the Assyrians—from the land toward the sea, to the Levantine coast and confrontations with Israelites, Judahites, and Phoenicians (fig. 4). Tubb offers a cogent explanation of the biblical United Monarchy as a phenomenon of the ninth rather than the tenth century B.C. Despite the textual evidence for a dynastic “House of David” on the Tel Dan inscription, he emphasizes that the “united” monarchy was that of the Israelites, established at the end of the tenth century and ruled by the Omrids. He cites kings such as Ahab of Samaria and Jehu, both of whom are mentioned in the Assyrian records, the latter illustrated on the Black Obelisk in submission to king Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.; see Collins essay, p. 46, fig. 4). Tubb believes that there was no independent kingdom of Judah until the eighth century B.C., gaining

prominence in the annals of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), whose incursions into Judah resulted in a confrontation with Hezekiah in Jerusalem and the destruction of Lachish. He attributes the biblical United Monarchy of David and Solomon not to actual events but rather to the later political situation during the Babylonian exile and when the texts were being written down.

Ronnie Reich’s focus on Iron Age Jerusalem and its foreign contacts stems from the discovery of a Phoenician ivory artifact, clay bullae bearing seal impressions, and the remains of a fish industry in the City of David excavations. This evidence points possibly to the Phoenician heritage of the rulers of the city, perhaps descendants of Jezebel. Finkelstein, as in the exploration of the transition between the Bronze and early Iron Ages, demonstrates the efficacy of micro-archaeology in addressing issues relating to local and long-distance trade. The work he



Fig. 3. Gallery view with sculptures from Guzana (Tell Halaf) in “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age”



Fig. 4. Gallery view with statue torso from Sidon and bronze cauldron and equestrian fittings from Tomb 79 at Salamis in “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age”

presents reveals shifts in the patterns of production and trade in copper from the tenth to ninth century B.C. with profound effects on the political situation in the southern Levant. Other commodities, too, have been the subject of analysis, and perhaps the most startling discovery was the residue of a component of East Asian cinnamon in flasks of Phoenician type distributed in the southern Levant.

Phoenician relations with Egypt during the Third Intermediate Period are explored by Marsha Hill, who alludes to the presence of Phoenicians in the Nile Delta and their possible role in the wide dissemination of Egyptian imagery in the southern Levant. Her work on the specific iconography of this time of disunity in the Nile Valley reveals the new emphasis on subjects emphasizing female divinities, such as Bastet and the Faraway Goddess. One image that characterizes the era is the depiction of a fragile, nude child-god

emerging from a lotus with royal and cosmic associations linked to the sun, the new dawn, and the celebration of the new year heralding the annual inundation of the Nile. He may be shown under the protection of winged goddesses in both Egyptian and Phoenician art. The imagery of renewal is also manifested in depictions of ram heads emerging from a lotus—at a time when ram sphinxes also proliferate on Phoenician furniture plaques.

Eric Gubel delves further into the presence of Egyptian motifs on Phoenician ivories and metalwork and the possible reinterpretation of images showing themes such as the uniting of Upper and Lower Egypt in a Levantine political context, signaling perhaps the coalition of Sidon and Tyre. He also offers an explanation for one of the most vexing images in Phoenician art: the pharaoh slaying Asiatics, which was commonly used in Egypt as propaganda against its enemies.



Fig. 5. Near Eastern bronze statuettes, horse blinker, and frontlet from the Samos Heraion; ivory frontlet from Nimrud; and bronze frontlet from Tell Tayinat in “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age”

Not all motifs on Phoenician ivories can be closely associated with Egypt, but their distinctive stylistic features differentiate them from carvings in Syrian and Assyrian traditions. One enigmatic image has been the subject of much discussion: the “woman at the window.” Furniture plaques bearing this representation have been found in palatial contexts both in northern Syria and in Israel, the latter in Samaria, the famed capital city of Ahab and his Phoenician wife, Jezebel. Irene Winter carefully examines elements that are incorporated into the depiction of the frontal bust of a beautifully adorned female framed by a window and peering over a balustrade, which elsewhere has been questioned, with a decorative element on the couch of Ashurbanipal in the famous banquet scene relief from Nineveh (see Winter essay, p. 182, fig. 4). Her interpretation, which takes into account the open gaze, and both the interior and exterior space implied, leads to speculation

regarding the essential meaning of such a scene and its relationship to biblical descriptions of Jezebel herself.

Ivory was one of the most ubiquitous materials utilized for elite furnishings in royal courts, bringing up questions in the contribution by Sarah Graff regarding not only sources of the material but also the act of hunting elephants and the idea of trophy displays in terms of royal ideology. Depictions of elephants are rare, appearing as tribute on Assyrian monuments but not on palatial reliefs that demonstrate the king’s prowess against powerful beasts—contrasting with the celebration of such confrontations in the royal annals.

In the “Assyria to Iberia” exhibition, the Phoenician mercantile expansion and the “Orientalizing” phenomenon are explored, taking the visitor on a journey from the cities of Tyre and Sidon to Cyprus, Greek mainland and island sanctuaries, and Cretan and Etruscan tombs en route to Sardinia and Carthage



(fig. 5). A lecture by Sir John Boardman wove together the evidence for the Age of Heroes from the Bronze Age past and the world of Odysseus and the Phoenicians from the historical time during which the Homeric epics were written down. He notes the profound cultural influences that took place during this time and explores the nature of narrative art in east and west after the breakthrough that reintroduced a wealth of pictorial imagery to the Greek world. Complementing Boardman's discussion of early Greek poetry is the contribution by Carolina López-Ruiz, whose reflections on the written legacy of the Iron Age deepen our understanding of the extent to which the Orientalizing process penetrated both language and literature. She makes her point with interesting discussions of Kadmos and Europa, Hesiod's *Theogony* and the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, exploring the multilayered transmission of aspects of cuneiform literature, including the Epic of Creation (*Enūma Eliš*) and the Epic of Gilgamesh. The latter, as she points out, was the most popular epic circulating in the Near East, with versions in many languages.

Ann Gunter's contributions to both the catalogue and this volume are very much in line with the perspective of the exhibition: viewing the spectrum of developments during the ninth to seventh century B.C. and especially the Orientalizing era within an Assyrian imperial framework. She elucidates the artistic impact of Assyrian political dominance that extended beyond the Levantine coast to indirectly encompass the Mediterranean world largely through the movements of traders and specialists, some of whom were tied to the royal court and its economy. Marian Feldman explores the complexities of interaction through a study of foreign metalware in Mediterranean funerary contexts, questioning whether their presence may also indicate the transfer or transformation of eastern social practices, feasting in particular. Two other authors, Annie Caubet and Nassos Papalexandrou, also offer perspectives on the "consumption" of the ancient Near East. Caubet examines aspects of Cypriot material

culture that reveals its place in the cross-fertilization of cultures to east and west. She notes that the extraordinary finds from Tomb 79 at Salamis (fig. 4)—a major focal point of the exhibition—not only produce a picture of royal funerary banqueting reminiscent of that described in Homeric epic but may indicate a transition between eastern and western feasting styles and meanings. Papalexandrou's study of the cauldron delves into the meaning of fantastic creatures, such as griffins found around cauldron rims and the introduction of cauldron imagery into Greek art, where in one case a vessel with snakes at the rim serves as a Gorgon head. He contrasts the reception of these impressive bronze vats in Greece, where they were displayed in major sanctuaries, and in Etruria, where monumental bronze and clay versions were buried as part of assemblages of funerary cooking and tableware.

Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier also addresses the role of foreign dedications in Greek sanctuaries. His discussion largely centers on Olympia and the Samian Heraion. He explores the ways in which objects reached these sanctuaries—through trade, piracy, and mercenary activities by Greek donors and through the exchange of gifts for positive oracles by foreign royals—and the meaning they may have acquired in their new contexts. Niemeier also points to the vast geographic range of sources for foreign dedications in the Heraion of Samos, which largely coincides with the extent of Assyrian control during the mid to late eighth century B.C. In answer to his initial question regarding the role of Orientalia, he emphasizes the impact that the prominent display of such impressive objects would have had both on the visitor and on the course of Greek artistic development.

Further west, the excavations of Nicholas Chr. Stampolidis have revealed impressive Near Eastern and "Orientalizing" bronzes and other precious material within the necropolis of Eleutherna on Crete, in the foothills of Mount Ida, where dedications of a similar nature were discovered in the cave



Fig. 6. Gallery view with objects from Etruscan tombs, including bronze cauldron with lion-headed protomes from the Regolini-Galassi Tomb, Caere, in “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age”

sanctuary traditionally associated with Zeus. Stampolidis elucidates the significance of Eleutherna, at a crossroads on Crete, with its combination of foreign and local burial customs that complement its outstanding array of grave goods.

Proceeding across the Mediterranean, the “Assyria to Iberia” exhibition reached Etruria, which—despite its distance from the Levant and Cyprus—was replete with Phoenician and Near Eastern-inspired elite grave goods (fig. 6). Maurizio Sannibale’s work on the finds from the extraordinary Regolini-Galassi Tomb highlights the mature phase of the Orientalizing period with masterpieces of goldworking that incorporate Near Eastern imagery and a mastery of techniques perhaps first introduced from the east but achieving an extraordinary level of refinement in the hands of Etruscan goldsmiths. Some of the finest Phoenician bowls with

narrative themes, perhaps princely gifts, were also found in the tomb along with extraordinary cauldrons derived from eastern prototypes and ivory objects adorned with griffins and sphinxes. Further evidence of connections between the Etruscans and the Phoenicians comes in the form of two gold plaques found in a ritual setting at Caere. María Eugenia Aubet compares their texts and interpretations of their meaning both in a religious and historical framework.

As Zainab Bahrani notes in her lucid concluding remarks, both the “Assyria to Iberia” exhibition and the papers in this volume emphasize the fact that geographic and ethnic boundaries are not barriers that divide peoples and cultures. Rather the Mediterranean Sea provided a connecting link for exchange that stretched far beyond its shores and far beyond the trade in goods (fig. 7). The complexities of interaction—whether



Fig. 7. Gallery view with inscribed elephant tusks from the Phoenician shipwreck at Bajo de la Campana and a video documenting their excavation in “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age”

due to war and deportations, commerce and the circulation of specialists and technologies, or shared and emulated social practices and the desire to display elite exotica—are addressed in the studies of the scholars who contributed to this volume. Their work serves to further illuminate the need to view the entirety of the “fantastic cauldron of expanding cultures and commerces”—an apt description of the Iron Age, as cited by Cyprian Broodbank<sup>1</sup>—and to break down both chronological and geographic barriers between the Bronze and Iron Ages and the proverbial east and west. The lasting artistic impact of cultural encounters across the Near East and the Mediterranean formed the premise behind “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age” (2014) and its immediate predecessor “Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.” (2008), which explored the first great age of

interculturalism in a very different world: that of royal courts connected through diplomacy and trade before the unprecedented collapse marking the end of the Bronze Age. While the dynamics of such interchange varied in different circumstances, the transformative nature of interaction, emphasized here, remains key to an understanding of the roots of our own society.

1. Aruz 2014b, p. 4 n. 20.







# From Bronze to Iron

# Bronze to Iron: Art in Transition

Among the greatest conceptual challenges in curating the “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age” exhibition was the introduction. One felt compelled (in a very limited space) to demonstrate the dramatic events that signaled the demise of the Bronze Age: the collapse of the centralized palace systems and the compromised trading networks, interrupted by seafaring warriors, with a dramatically different world of smaller polities emerging in the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age (see Finkelstein essay for a new interpretation of these events).<sup>1</sup> One also had to highlight the remarkable strength and persistence of cultural traditions against such a background. Furthermore, it was important to introduce the sources we rely on—historical and archaeological, biblical and Homeric—which allow us a glimpse of this new order in what has been traditionally called a Dark Age.

The decision was made to concentrate on three specific areas, one being the cities of the Philistines—their pottery evoking the last phases of Mycenaean production in the eastern Mediterranean and looking forward to the Protogeometric period<sup>2</sup>—allowing us to address the subject of the Sea Peoples and also biblical sources. The second focus was the extraordinary site of Lefkandi, with elite burials possibly evoking Homeric associations,<sup>3</sup> and astounding foreign imports in tenth- to ninth-century B.C. contexts. Its location along a northern trade route alludes to the renewal of trade for securing metals that extended to Crete and Cyprus.<sup>4</sup> The latter, and especially the survival of metalworking

and ivory-working traditions on the island, was the third area highlighted in the introductory gallery. The initial focus of this paper will be on Lefkandi, its eastern connections leading to an examination of the legacy of Bronze Age Crete and Cyprus in the Iron Age, with specific reference to the extraordinary figural metal bowls found on both Euboia and Crete.

Many explanations have been offered to account for the profusion of eastern and eastern-inspired objects in the Lefkandi tombs.<sup>5</sup> A number of scholars agree that such exotica were highly prized and marks of elevated status in Lefkandi society, placing the initiative to acquire them with the Euboians themselves.<sup>6</sup> One case in point is the burial in Tomb 79, dated to the beginning of the ninth century B.C. and identified by its excavators as the tomb of a Euboian warrior-trader.<sup>7</sup> The cremated remains had been placed in a bronze vessel, along with iron weapons. However, there was also a collection of stone balance weights—the only ones surviving from the Iron Age Aegean—that have led to the identification of the man as a trader. The weights, which do not represent a coherent tool kit for practical use, are similar to those used during the Late Bronze Age. They demonstrate the involvement of Euboia in the age-old eastern Mediterranean system and represent three Near Eastern mass standards used both in the Levant and on Cyprus, and found as well on the Uluburun ship. These standards were also used by the Phoenicians.<sup>8</sup>

Of the other finds in the tomb, one is of particular interest: a North Syrian-style cylinder seal reported to be made of hematite (fig. 1), which will be fully published by Andres Reyes. It can be placed in the same period and general region as a well-known gold pendant discussed below (fig. 2).<sup>9</sup> The cylinder seal is engraved with the depiction of two robed figures, arms raised toward a schematic voluted plant below a rosette-filled sun disk and crescent, these elements paralleled on Syrian seals datable to the nineteenth to seventeenth century B.C.<sup>10</sup> Other



Fig. 1. Hematite cylinder seal and modern impression. Lefkandi, Toumba cemetery, Tomb 79. Early 9th-century B.C. context, Old Syrian manufacture, early second millennium B.C. Archaeological Museum, Eretria, Greece. © British School at Athens

features are more unusual, in particular, the front-facing pair of robed figures who hold a stalk between them.<sup>11</sup> The cylinder seal is one of a number of North Syrian seals made in the early second millennium B.C. that were found in Greece. Two more elaborate examples come from Bronze Age contexts at Mochlos and Tylissos on Crete.<sup>12</sup> The Lefkandi cylinder seal was found along with more recent glyptic heirlooms: Mycenaean IIIA seals made of vitreous material. Similarly, combinations of seals from different cultures and periods have been found in other ancient contexts, among them the burial of an Old Assyrian period trader at Ashur in northern Mesopotamia and the Tôd Treasure in Egypt, also possibly connected with mercantile activity.<sup>13</sup>

Interpreting the Tomb 79 remains, Irene Lemos emphasizes the role of Euboians in distributing their distinctive pottery throughout the Levant, with a large quantity found at Tyre.<sup>14</sup> Other scholars have looked at the phenomenon from a different perspective. Nicolas Coldstream suggested that elite personal connections between Lefkandi and Tyre accounted for Euboian prosperity during the reign of Hiram in the tenth century B.C.<sup>15</sup> John Papadopoulos goes further.

He concludes that “the quantity and quality of *Orientalia* at Lefkandi—much more than just pottery—could suggest that the site may have been a place where enterprising Easterners—whether Phoenicians, North Syrians or Cypriots—settled in the Aegean . . . Lefkandi may have been a place where Greeks and other eastern Mediterraneans co-existed. . . .”<sup>16</sup> Such a description evokes a picture of emporia, probably on a far less grand scale than at Ugarit where, during the Late Bronze Age, not only merchants but ideas and art styles coalesced. Therefore, in order to begin to trace the survival of the arts through the transitional period, it seems worthwhile to examine a select group of finds from Lefkandi, particularly the jewelry, and then turn to the survival of both bronze and ivory-working traditions.

One item of jewelry from Lefkandi stands out in particular: an Old Babylonian period pendant found in what appears to have been the most elite burial at the site, a shaft grave containing a richly adorned female inhumation; she was placed next to a male whose cremated remains had been put in an elaborate Cypriot-type bronze amphora.<sup>17</sup> Along with a second shaft containing the skeletons of four horses, the grave was enclosed within



Fig. 2. Necklace with a gold pendant and gold, faience, and rock-crystal beads. Lefkandi, Toumba cemetery, female burial. Protogeometric context, pendant: Old Babylonian/Old Syrian manufacture, early second millennium B.C. Archaeological Museum, Eretria, Greece (20161)

a 45-meter-long apsidal building, originally referred to as a “Heroön,” but those interred have been interpreted as a ruling couple buried within their residence, which was eventually destroyed and covered by a tumulus.<sup>18</sup>

One can hardly imagine the biography of this gold jewel, found as part of a necklace composed of forty-one fluted gold spherical beads and with disparate terminal elements, including one rock-crystal lentoid bead and two faience beads, one date-shaped and the other amygdaloid (fig. 2).<sup>19</sup> In the excavation photograph we can see the beads spread in the vicinity of the neck of the skeleton.<sup>20</sup> We can only speculate about when and under what circumstances the already 700- to 800-year-old pendant arrived at Lefkandi—whether traded, gifted, or possibly brought as the possession of a foreign bride from Tyre, to name only some of the many possible scenarios.<sup>21</sup> When it was made into a necklace also remains a mystery, as does the ancient break in the center of the pendant. What we do know is where the pendant probably originated, based on parallels both on the pendants of the so-called “Dilbat necklace” (fig. 3), which feature a similar means of suspension, and particularly on gold disks from Ebla in Syria, exhibiting a nearly identical pattern of granulation (fig. 4).<sup>22</sup>

In his attempt to understand the reintroduction of elaborate jewelry working techniques into the Greek world after the Mycenaean collapse, Jack Ogden has raised the possibility that a piece of jewelry such as this one could have sparked local attempts at granulation.<sup>23</sup> However, some form of direct Near Eastern involvement seems more likely, particularly to explain the production of accomplished jewels like those in the Khani-ale Tekke tholos on Crete and the “tomb of the rich Athenian lady” buried on the slopes of the Areopagus in Athens.<sup>24</sup> The rest of the elite Lefkandi lady’s jewelry appears to have been locally made for her funeral and consists of a fragile crescent-shaped gold sheet pectoral and disks to cover her breasts.<sup>25</sup> The crescent form—used here as well as in the Tekke





Fig. 3. Gold pendants and beads ("Dilbat necklace"). Mesopotamia. Old Babylonian, ca. 18th–17th century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.1a–h)



Fig. 4. Gold jewelry band and discs. Syria, Ebla, Tomb of the Lord of the Goats. Old Syrian, early second millennium B.C. National Museum, Aleppo, Syria (M10783)



Fig. 5. Gold necklace. Lefkandi, Toumba cemetery, Tomb 63. Late Protogeometric context, 10th–9th century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Eretria, Greece (ME 20004)



Fig. 6. Gold necklace. Kephallenia, Lakkithra cemetery, chamber tomb. Late Helladic IIIC, 12th century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Argostoli, Greece (1184)

jewelry—and the guilloché patterning may, however, suggest eastern inspiration.

Other possible Bronze Age descendants at Lefkandi are the quadruple-spiral beads that form a necklace with a central disk, found in Tomb 63 of the Toumba cemetery adjacent to the main burial (fig. 5). The bead shape originated in the Near East and proliferated throughout the third and second millennia B.C. over a wide area, exhibiting variations in technique that may suggest sources of manufacture.<sup>26</sup> The quadruple-spiral beads from Lefkandi have convincing parallels from the Mycenaean era for their technique of attaching s-spirals or individual coils at their outer edges to a long thin gold tube, rather than having the spirals extend from or emerge from the ends of the tube in Near Eastern manner (figs. 6, 7).<sup>27</sup> The tubular suspension with loop/spectacle spirals was replicated on other jewelry from Lefkandi: a crescent-shaped ornament with carefully done triangular granulation from the tenth-century (Late Protogeometric II–III A) Tomb 38, possibly also an heirloom that may have inspired an inept version by a local jeweler, found in the slightly later Tomb 59 at the site.<sup>28</sup> The central pendant was integral to the necklace by the time it was placed on the skeleton, again evidenced from the excavation photos.<sup>29</sup> A type derived from ubiquitous Late Bronze Age star disks, some of

more elaborate design, this may have been a local addition, executed in a technique and with decoration that relates it to gold sheet jewelry produced for Lefkandi burials.<sup>30</sup>

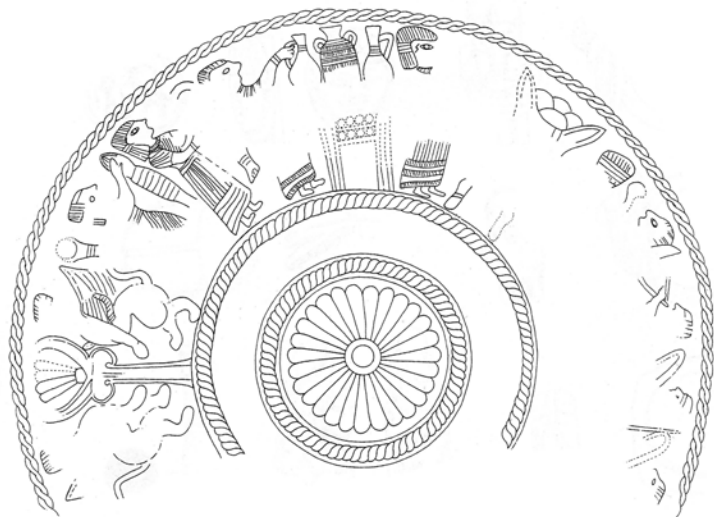
Foreign connections remain ambiguous, based on the jewelry evidence but are reinforced by the presence of the earliest dated engraved bronze bowls. The bowls, to be fully published by Hartmut Matthäus, are generally attributed stylistically to Syria; however, it is neither clear where exactly they originated in fact, nor how they were conveyed to Euboia, whether by locals, Syrians, Cypriots, or Phoenicians.<sup>31</sup> The bowls were found in separate tombs of the Toumba cemetery at Lefkandi, both in late tenth-century B.C. contexts. One (Tomb 70, with Late Protogeometric pottery) contained the burial of a wealthy lady. Her hands were placed over the foreign bowl that depicts a procession of women carrying offerings to a table facing a seated figure, with a file of musicians playing double flutes and lyres, approaching behind her (figs. 8a, b).<sup>32</sup>

Richard Barnett called attention to similar scenes on ivories from Nimrud, which he interpreted as a spring ritual in a lotus and palm grove.<sup>33</sup> Scholars have recognized the closest parallel for the representation on a bowl discovered, according to Luigi Palma di Cesnola, in a tomb in Idalion, found in an eighth- to seventh-century B.C. context with



Fig. 7. Part of a gold necklace. Reported to come from a grave on Skyros. Protogeometric context, probably Late Helladic manufacture, 10th century B.C. Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens (609 and 610)





Figs. 8a, b. Bronze Levantine bowl with procession of women and drawing. Lefkandi, Toumba cemetery, Tomb 70. Late Protogeometric, ca. 900 B.C. Archaeological Museum, Eretria, Greece. © British School at Athens



Cypro-Archaic pottery (figs. 9a, b).<sup>34</sup>

Remarkably, both the amphora and jug on the four-legged stand, as depicted on the Lefkandi bowl, look very much like those on the Cypriot bowl. Other similar bowls were also found in Greece, one from Sparta again in eighth- to seventh-century B.C. context.<sup>35</sup>

The stylistic features of the figures on the Lefkandi bronze bowl are not easily discerned. When looking at surviving details on the bowl itself—admittedly a challenge—the face of the female with a striated garment that follows the curves of the body and straight hair held back, looks quite distinctive, with a bulbous nose, small mouth, and raised eye (figs. 8a, b). The bodies of the rampant winged creatures flanking the palmette tree are defined by strong curves and liveliness in a manner reminiscent of the end of the Bronze Age. Another concession to the freer styles of the eastern Mediterranean may be the way the figures' feet are lifted off the ground—imparting a sense of movement.

The second imported bowl from Lefkandi—also dated around 900 B.C. on the

basis of the Greek pottery—comes from Tomb 55, a double burial with an inhumation and a cremation. Depicted around the outer concentric ring of decoration, framed by two guilloché bands, are pairs of sphinxes flanking an ornamental palmette tree with elongated extensions—a type that becomes popular on Cypro-Phoenician bowls.<sup>36</sup> The Lefkandi sphinxes appear to wear helmets with a top knob—headgear also worn by sphinxes in Syrian art (figs. 10a, b). The limbs of the sphinxes are lifted above the groundline, as are the prowling leopards hunting horned animals around an inner band that encircles a central rosette. The format, as often noted, apparently derives from the concentric designs exemplified on a gold bowl from Ugarit, echoed on a gold roundel from Qatna.<sup>37</sup> The sphinxes have elongated solid bodies with raised wings in three layers in Near Eastern manner, lacking the typically Aegean bent-wing profile as seen at Ugarit. Other parallels include a pyxis found in the Burnt Palace at Nimrud, which features a frieze with confronted sphinxes and goats

Figs. 9a, b. Bronze Levantine bowl with enthroned goddess, dancers, and musicians and drawing. Cyprus, Idalion. 8th–7th century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.5700)





Figs. 10a, b. Fragment of bronze Levantine bowl with sphinxes and drawing. Lefkandi, Toumba cemetery, Tomb 55. Late Protogeometric, ca. 900 B.C. Archaeological Museum, Eretria, Greece. © British School at Athens







Figs. 11a, b. Ivory Syrian-style pyxis with confronted sphinxes and goats flanking sacred trees and drawing. Nimrud, Burnt Palace (Southeast Palace). Neo-Assyrian period. The British Museum, London (ME 118175)

flanking sacred trees, the figures, however, solidly grounded in typically Near Eastern manner (figs. 11a, b).

A chariot hunt on another Syrian-style pyxis from Nimrud was singled out by Irene Winter because of its close resemblance to the scene on the Enkomi game box (fig. 12); the latter was placed in the first gallery of the

exhibition, both because of its feather-helmeted fighters and because it is a demonstrable forerunner of later Syrian ivories.<sup>38</sup>

Helene Kantor perceptively noted long ago that the ivories from Cyprus were executed in a style that mixed Aegean and Canaanite features. She believed that such works continued to be produced in the twelfth century

Fig. 12. Ivory game box with chariot hunt. Enkomi, Chamber Tomb 58. Late Bronze Age, 1250–1100 B.C. The British Museum, London (GR 1897,0401.996)





Figs. 13a, b. Ivory pyxis with lions attacking bulls and drawing. Lachish, Fosse Temple. Late Bronze Age, ca. 13th century B.C. Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem



Fig. 14. Ivory plaque with animal combat scene from shaft of Tomb of Ahiaram. Byblos, Royal Necropolis. Late Bronze Age, 13th century B.C. Directorate General of Antiquities, Beirut (2461)

B.C. and that this mixed style “had a vitality enabling it to survive the collapse of the Mycenaean koine and the succeeding dark centuries . . . reappearing in the first millennium as the North Syrian school of decorative art. . . .”<sup>39</sup> Two ivories best illustrate the presence of such hybrid works in the Canaanite cities of the Levant. One, a pyxis, was found in the Fosse Temple at Lachish, which was destroyed in the thirteenth century B.C. (figs. 13a, b). The other, a plaque from Byblos, was discovered in a shaft leading to the royal tomb that contained the sarcophagus of Ahiaram—a work that itself spans the transition, with its Phoenician inscription dated to the late eleventh century B.C. (fig. 14). These plaques—with imagery closely paralleled on North Syrian ivories from Nimrud—are remarkable witnesses to the strength of cultural traditions (fig. 15).<sup>40</sup> In addition to demonstrating shared stylistic features, they signal the survival of the theme so vividly expressed in the Late Bronze Age on objects manifesting artistic interculturalism: animal attack and animal domination, often allusions to heroic male





Fig. 15. Ivory Syrian-style furniture leg with animal combat scenes. Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, Room SW 11/12. Neo-Assyrian period. Iraq Museum, Baghdad

strength and royal supremacy. One ivory with a very Aegean version of a contest between two powerful predators—a lion and a griffin—may have been in circulation in the eastern Mediterranean until it was deposited in a ritual context on Delos during the seventh century B.C.<sup>41</sup> It is one of more than 2,500 fragments discovered in a small rectangular structure within the Hellenistic temple dedicated to Artemis and Apollo. Among them were long strips depicting combat scenes with lions attacking bulls—probably framing strips for furniture like those from Nimrud.<sup>42</sup>

The mixture of Aegean and Canaanite artistic traditions, manifested in animal combat and hunting scenes of the end of the Late Bronze Age, was certainly a significant factor for the development of ivory carving styles, as well as Levantine metalwork, with many bronze bowls bearing images of bulls

resembling those on the Enkomi box. One was found in the Ida Cave on Crete, along with Phoenician ivories and Phoenician bowls.<sup>43</sup> Also deserving attention is another bronze bowl from Crete, featured in the “Assyria to Iberia” exhibition, which covered a cinerary urn dated to the late eighth century B.C. (figs. 16a–f). It comes from an exceptionally rich tomb in the Orithi Petra necropolis at the site of Eleutherna and is one of a number of outstanding bronzes from the site (see Stampolidis essay).<sup>44</sup> The bowl stands out because of its mixture of motifs and styles that relate to Aegean, Cypriot, and Levantine art in the Bronze and Iron Ages. Surrounding a rosette radiating from a small central omphalos are two friezes of figural decoration. Half of the outer frieze is taken up by pairs of archers shooting lions, and there are two scenes of animal attacks showing feline predators and horned animals;



Fig. 16a. Bronze bowl with hunting and animal attack scenes. Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis, Tomb A1/K1. Orientalizing, 720–700 B.C.

these scenes are divided by rosettes with Syrian-type tendrils (figs. 16a–d). The felines are in versions of the so-called “flying gallop,” one probably a leopard, its sleek and elongated body punctuated by rows of dots, with short curved lines marking the ribs (fig. 16d). One rear leg extends the long line of the body, while the other dangles in a manner that, in fact, finds parallels in the art of the fourteenth century B.C.<sup>45</sup> Other animals on the bowl—such as the horned prey—find their best parallels on Late Bronze Age Cypriot metalwork and faience, displaying the vitality and energetic movement that can be associated with the Aegean animal style.

Three of the kneeling archers on the outer frieze are in very dynamic postures (figs. 16b, c), enacting a nonmounted version of the “Parthian shot” as they attack the lion between them (mounted versions can be seen on Phoenician bowls).<sup>46</sup> The archers wear long and pointed caps or helmets (paralleled in both Syrian and Assyrian art), and their quivers, strapped across their bodies, are stuffed with arrows. One kneeling archer faces forward (fig. 16c)—like the hunter on a unique bronze bowl from Cyprus.<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps the clearest connections to the east, however, are found on the inner frieze. Depicted are six striding bulls, their heads





Fig. 16b. Detail of bowl's outer register with hunting scene



Fig. 16c. Detail of bowl's outer register with hunting scene



Fig. 16d. Detail of bowl's outer register with animal attack scene





Fig. 16e. Detail of bowl's inner register and central rosette



Fig. 16f. Detail of bowl's inner register with animal attack scene



Fig. 17. Detail of bronze lion-head shield.

lowered, with one facing the other way, caught between two lions (figs. 16e–f). The posture of the bulls finds precedent in the art of the eastern Mediterranean Bronze Age, as we have already seen. The theme of feline predators interrupting a circle of bulls, which we see both on the Eleutherna bowl and the lion-head shield from the site (fig. 17; see also Stampolidis essay, p. 290, fig. 14), can be paralleled on Phoenician bowls.<sup>48</sup>

Whereas the adaptation of contemporary elements from the art of the Near East is not surprising, their seamless fusion on the Eleutherna bowl with imagery that would otherwise characterize the Bronze Age Aegean animal style is remarkable. Hartmut Matthäus commented long before this bowl was discovered that Cypriot technology, iconography, and style are significant components of early Cretan minor arts, creating a cosmopolitan style that incorporated its Minoan heritage along with elements derived from North Syria and Phoenicia.<sup>49</sup> Cyprus may well have played a similarly pivotal role in the Near East—a place where the infusion of Aegean elements into Canaanite art, combined with the persistence of both ivory carving and metalworking during the transition to the first millennium B.C., may have provided the conditions for the survival of the traditions associated with an age of great powers—heralded in the works of Homer as an Age of Heroes.

1. For an overview of the “perfect storm of calamities,” creating widespread collapse, see Cline 2014, ch. 5.
2. See Aruz et al. 2014, p. 45, cat. no. 11a–b (entry by E. Arie); Coldstream 2000, p. 17, fig. 2; Coldstream 1998, p. 358, pl. 1, figs. 1, 2.
3. Kosma 2014, pp. 34–35; Lemos 2007. For a discussion of Lefkandi and the earliest definition of “heroic status,” see I. Morris 2000, pp. 218–38. See also Antonaccio 1995, p. 236.
4. As Antonaccio (2002, p. 15) points out, “In the early Iron Age, seagoing trade was plying a north Aegean route, either continuing to use the old Bronze Age path or reviving it by the 10th century. Attika’s silver [in reference to the Lavrion mines] and Euboia’s iron were perhaps already exploited at this time.” She also notes that “As early as the



- 11th c. iron weapons and gold jewelry appear in some of the graves at Lefkandi, as well as Syro-Palestinian, Cypriot, and Cretan imports. The gold ceases to be offered around 1050, as do most of the imports, to reappear again in the 10th c.”
5. For instance, I. Morris (2000, pp. 228–39, 251) attributes Near Eastern objects found in the Toumba graves to Phoenician penetration of the Aegean, evidence for the heroic aspirations of the local elite.
  6. Lemos 2001, 2005. I thank Irene S. Lemos, whose publications of the Lefkandi material and generous permissions have been crucial for my discussion here.
  7. Popham and Lemos 1995; Popham and Lemos 1996, pls. 74–79, pl. 78B1 (killed sword); Lemos 2003, pp. 189–90; Antonaccio 2002, pp. 28–29, 40 n. 70.
  8. Kroll 2008.
  9. For the cylinder seal, see Tomlinson 1995, p. 31; Popham and Lemos 1995, pp. 154–55, fig. 9; Popham and Lemos 1996, pl. 135 (T. 79, A. 19); pl. 142(i); Antonaccio 2002, p. 28.
  10. Teissier 1984, p. 227, no. 439, and see Popham and Lemos 1995, p. 157 n. 9; Hammade 1994, p. 65, no. 361. For the rosette sun disk, see El-Safadi 1974, pl. XV, no. 107.
  11. Frontal figures are rare in the art of the Old Syrian period: see, for instance, Collon 1981, fig. 3j. I thank Andres Reyes for generously sharing his images and preliminary text with me and for allowing me to further discuss this important work.
  12. See Aruz 2008, p. 271, nos. 108, 109, figs. 195, 196.
  13. Aruz 2013, p. 216; Harper et al. 1995, pp. 60–62, cat. nos. 41–43 (entries by J. Aruz); Aruz et al. 2008, cat. no. 35a–b (entry by G. Pierrat-Bonnefois); Porada 1982; among other foreign seals found at Lefkandi are an Egyptian faience ring with the head of Amun, a Dynasty 20 heirloom found along with six faience Egyptianizing vessels from T. 39; Popham et al. 1982, pp. 219–20, pls. 31, 32. For other imported seals (in Tomb 59), see Popham et al. 1988–89, p. 119.
  14. Lemos 2005.
  15. Coldstream 2000, p. 20; Coldstream 1998.
  16. Papadopoulos 1997, p. 206.
  17. Popham et al. 1993; for the bronze amphora, see Catling 1993.
  18. Kosma 2014, pp. 35–36; Coldstream 2000, p. 20.
  19. Kaltsas et al. 2010, p. 56, fig. 4.
  20. Popham et al. 1993, pl. 15.
  21. See Lemos 2001 on gift exchange, to display wealth (specifically p. 219 on Toumba); Coldstream 1998, p. 355, personal relations; see also Antonaccio 2002, p. 29.
  22. Dilbat necklace: supposedly seven pendants found in a pot in Tell Deylem, a site south of Babylon; see Lilyquist 1994 and Aruz et al. 2008, pp. 24–25, cat. no. 4 (entry by K. Benzel); for the Ebla necklace, see *ibid.*, p. 40, cat. no. 14 (entry by P. Matthiae).
  23. Ogden 1998, p. 16.
  24. See Boardman 1967c for Khaniale Tekke; Smithsonian 1968; see also Coldstream 1993, pp. 99–100.
  25. Kosma 2014, pp. 35–36, cat. no. 6; Popham et al. 1993, pl. 15.
  26. For a distribution map, see Aruz 2003, p. 241, fig. 73.
  27. For Aegean parallels, see Demakopoulou 1988, p. 138, cat. no. 87 (entry by L. Papazoglou–Manioudaki) (Lakkithra dated to the end of the Mycenaean period); Marangou 1996, p. 145, nos. 224, 225; Antonaccio 2002, p. 25.
  28. See Lemos 2003, p. 189, fig. 2; Popham et al. 1988–89, pp. 120, 128, fig. 25.
  29. Popham and Lemos 1996, pl. 19 (top right).
  30. *Ibid.*, pl. 137d–g. Kaltsas et al. 2010, p. 98, nos. 21, 22; Kosma 2014, pp. 35–36, cat. no. 6.
  31. Coldstream (2000, p. 16) raises this issue.
  32. Popham 1995; Popham and Lemos 1996, pls. 133–34, 144–45.
  33. Barnett 1957, pp. 78–81, pls. XVI: S3, XVII.
  34. Markoe 1985, pp. 56–59, 246–47, 171–72: Cy3.
  35. Paris, Musée du Louvre AO 4702; Langdon 2008, pp. 189–91, fig. 3.29.
  36. Popham et al. 1988–89, pp. 118, 121, fig. 5; for griffins flanking a similar palmette tree, see Markoe 1985, p. 259, bottom detail of Cy8.
  37. For the Ugarit bowl, see Aruz et al. 2008, pp. 239–41, cat. no. 146 (entry by J. Aruz) and, for the Qatna roundel, pp. 139–40, cat. no. 79 (entry by P. Pfälzner).
  38. Aruz et al. 2014, p. 43, cat. no. 9 (entry by T. Kiely); I. Winter 2010, pp. 199, 216, fig. 2.
  39. Kantor 1956, p. 174.
  40. Aruz 2014b, pp. 8–10.
  41. *Ibid.*, p. 9; Aruz et al. 2008, p. 414, cat. no. 267 (entry by P. Chatzidakis).
  42. Gallet de Santerre and Tréheux 1947; Poursat 1977, p. 158, pl. 13; Aruz and de Lapérouse 2014b, p. 144, fig. 3.28; Mallowan and Herrmann 1974, pls. CV–CVII.
  43. Sakellarakis 1983, pp. 439–40, fig. 1, pl. 261.
  44. I thank Nicholas Chr. Stampolidis for offering me the opportunity to collaborate with him on the publication of this bowl. See Stampolidis and Aruz 2013; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 290–91, cat. no. 158 (entry by N. Stampolidis and J. Aruz).
  45. See Aruz et al. 2008, p. 417, fig. 131; see also Stampolidis and Aruz 2013, pp. 380, 385, figs. 7–9.
  46. See Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 322–23, cat. nos. 192, 193 (entries by L. Mercuri and M. Sannibale).
  47. V. Karageorghis 1981.
  48. For the lion-head shield, see Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 288–89, cat. no. 157 (entry by N. Stampolidis).
  49. Matthäus 1998, p. 127.

# The World of the Philistines and Other “Sea Peoples”

The final centuries of the second millennium B.C. represent a transformative period in the eastern Mediterranean and Near East. Memorialized in fragmentary recollections of a golden age of great kings and heroes in Homer’s *Iliad*, the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550–1200 B.C.) witnessed the rise of the Hittite and New Kingdom Egyptian empires and the development of the world’s first age of internationalism and global economy. The closing decades of the Bronze Age mark a major turning point in history that was characterized by the decline of Egyptian power, the demise of the Mycenaean palace system on mainland Greece, and the collapse of the Hittite empire. This catastrophe is expressed in the destruction of numerous Late Bronze Age centers and the breakdown of centralized administrative and economic structures, including the cessation of large-scale international trade as revealed in the archaeological evidence.<sup>1</sup> In the wake of this widespread crisis, a mosaic of local cultures and peoples emerges from the ruins of the Bronze Age. Of these groups, the so-called Sea Peoples have been portrayed variously as a catalyst or a casualty of the Late Bronze Age collapse. Instead, they should be understood as one of the “winning” groups that emerge most successfully from this transformative period.

Who were these Sea Peoples, best known from New Kingdom Egyptian texts, and what was their role in the demise of empires and the reordering of this new post-Bronze

Age world? Popularized by nineteenth-century Egyptologist Gaston Maspero, the modern—and misleading—term “Sea Peoples” encompasses the ethnonyms Lukka, Sherden, Shekelesh, Teresh, Ekweh, Danuna/Denen, Sikil/Tjeker, Weshesh, and Peleset, the latter identified with the biblical Philistines.<sup>2</sup> These groups appear in Ugaritic, Hittite, and Egyptian New Kingdom texts over a period of two hundred years.<sup>3</sup> Based on these texts and the material culture evidence, a variety of origins have been suggested for these peoples, including mainland Greece and the Aegean islands, the western and southern coasts of Anatolia, as well as Syria and Cyprus, and also the Balkans.<sup>4</sup>

Sea People groups are mentioned more than fifty times in New Kingdom texts, often as enemies or, alternatively, as foreign mercenaries fighting in the Egyptian army.<sup>5</sup> The lengthiest and most insightful of these texts appear on reliefs on the walls of the Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III (ca. 1184–1153 B.C.) at Medinet Habu (fig. 1). Two major battle scenes, on land and sea, depict in great detail the defeat of these Sea Peoples by Ramesses III (see Tubb essay, pp. 92–93, figs. 3, 4). Portrayals of the vanquished Sea Peoples have been of special interest to scholars, in particular in their attempt to identify the Peleset, or biblical Philistines, one of the groups who participated in the attack against Ramesses III.<sup>6</sup> The best-known image is of clean-shaven warriors wearing what appear to be feathered headdresses and sharing similarities with depictions from Cyprus and the Aegean of warriors with similar headgear. At Medinet Habu, these warriors are usually identified in both the scholarly and popular literature as Peleset (Philistines) (fig. 2).<sup>7</sup> When this image is accompanied by a hieroglyphic text, however, the names of several Sea People groups appear, including the Denen, Tjeker, and Peleset, suggesting that this may be a more generic image not necessarily representing any particular group. Alternatively, a relief portraying a bearded captive wearing a cap instead of the trademark “feathered” headdress, located in the first court on one of the bases



Fig. 1. Aerial view of Medinet Habu, Thebes, Egypt

of the Osirid pillars at Medinet Habu, is clearly identified as a Peleset captive chief (figs. 3a, b).<sup>8</sup> A glazed tile, also from Medinet Habu, shows a similar bearded figure, who is identified as a Philistine (fig. 4). Although it is tempting to read these texts and depictions literally, as historical reports and as an indicator of absolute chronology regarding the Sea Peoples' invasions and the appearance of the Philistines in Canaan's southern coastal plain, many Egyptologists are more cautious in their assessment, observing that these sources should be interpreted largely as propagandistic in nature.<sup>9</sup>

Based on interpretations of contemporary texts mentioning the Sea Peoples, most notably of Merneptah's (ca. 1213–1203 B.C.) account of his battle against the Libyans at the temple of Amun at Karnak and Ramesses III's Medinet Habu reliefs, early scholarship has placed the Sea Peoples at the top of the list of possible culprits responsible for the end of the Late Bronze Age. According to this

scenario, massive migrations of these groups were the cause for the many late thirteenth- and early twelfth-century B.C. destructions experienced at sites throughout the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>10</sup> However, the accumulated archaeological evidence suggests a far more complex set of interactions and causal factors for the demise of the Bronze Age, characterized by a protracted process that continued well into the twelfth century B.C.<sup>11</sup> Several recent studies suggest the Sea Peoples should be understood as "nomads of the sea," pirates, or entrepreneurial and enterprising groups who took advantage of and benefited from the power vacuum that emerged following the collapse of imperial power at the end of the Bronze Age.<sup>12</sup>

Identifying Sea Peoples in the material culture record has proved challenging, and these groups remain elusive. The appearance of Aegean-style pottery, especially Mycenaean IIIC (alternatively referred to as Late

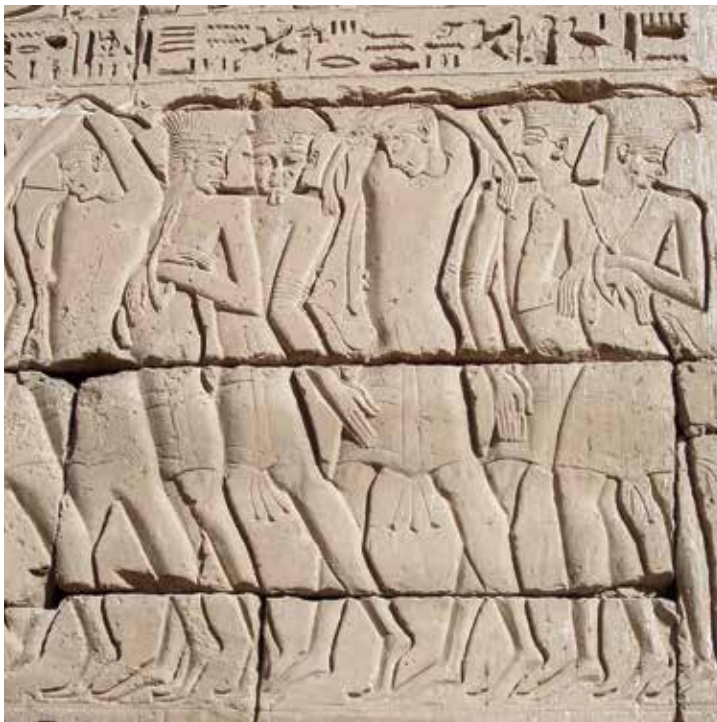


Fig. 2. Detail of relief showing captive Sea Peoples. Medinet Habu, Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III. Dynasty 20, reign of Ramesses III, ca. 1184–1153 B.C.

*Top right, fig. 3a.* Osirid column with base relief showing captive Philistine chief. Medinet Habu, Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III. Dynasty 20, reign of Ramesses III, ca. 1184–1153 B.C. *Bottom right, fig. 3b.* Detail of captive Philistine chief



Helladic IIIC, White Painted Wheel-made III, or Philistine I pottery), at early twelfth-century B.C. sites on the eastern Mediterranean littoral and in adjacent areas has often been interpreted as heralding the arrival of various Sea Peoples (fig. 5).<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, using Late Helladic or Mycenaean IIIC ware as an ethnic indicator of the Sea Peoples is complex and often problematic.<sup>14</sup> A case in point is the view that twelfth-century B.C. Aegean-style material culture and locally produced Mycenaean IIIC pottery on Cyprus, which differ markedly from earlier thirteenth-century B.C. traditions on the island, represent the



colonization of Cyprus by Mycenaean Greeks and Sea Peoples from the west Aegean.<sup>15</sup> Later studies suggest a more gradual “Aegeanization” process on Cyprus, which included the adaptation of Late Helladic culture by local inhabitants combined with more modest migrations from mainland Greece.<sup>16</sup> The discovery of locally produced Late Helladic IIIC pottery and related material culture assemblages in twelfth-century B.C. strata at numerous sites in the eastern Mediterranean, such as Tarsus in Cilicia and Tell Tayinat in the Amuq Valley (fig. 6), as well as along the Levantine coast, testifies to the widespread diffusion of Aegean-style material culture during the crisis years.<sup>17</sup>

More challenging has been the search for individual Sea People groups mentioned in Egyptian, Hittite, and Ugaritic texts in the archaeological record. Attempts to locate the Shardana/Sherden and Sikil/Tjekker at Tel Akko and Tel Dor, respectively, have produced limited results with conflicting interpretations.<sup>18</sup> Of the Sea People groups, the Philistines are the exception. Aided by the extensive biblical account, a century of excavations has produced abundant evidence for the Philistines and the post-Late Bronze Age cultures of the early Iron Age Levant. The twelfth and eleventh centuries B.C. in the southern Levant can be characterized as follows:<sup>19</sup>

- Retreat of Egyptian military and administrative personnel marked by the disappearance of Egyptian-style material culture in Canaan by ca. 1130 B.C.
- Appearance of a new “Aegean-style” material culture in significant quantities at sites in the southern coastal plain specifically mentioned in the textual sources as Philistine settlements
- Continuation of Canaanite settlements in northern coastal regions and their fertile valleys associated with the Iron Age Phoenicians
- Appearance of large numbers of small villages in the central highland regions, often interpreted to represent the ethnogenesis of early Israel



Fig. 4. Philistine leader depicted on polychrome faience-glazed tile. Medinet Habu, Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III. Dynasty 20, reign of Ramesses III, ca. 1184–1153 B.C. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (03.1572)



Fig. 5. Map of the eastern Mediterranean with key sites associated with the Philistines and other Sea Peoples

Both Egyptian and biblical texts mention cities of the Philistines. Joshua 13:3 and 1 Samuel 6:1 specify five cities—Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, Ashkelon, and Gaza—popularly referred to as the Philistine pentapolis, all located in the Levant’s southernmost coastal plain. The physical hallmark of the Philistines is the sudden appearance in the archaeological record of locally produced

Mycenaean IIIC pottery and associated Aegean-style assemblages. First discovered in large quantities at the site of Ashdod (see Tubb essay, p. 94, fig. 5), this distinctive pottery has subsequently been recovered from early Iron Age levels at the other pentapolis cities of Ekron, Ashkelon, and Gath. The fifth city, Gaza, remains, archaeologically, largely unexplored. Of these early Philistine cities, Ekron continues to be the most extensively excavated.<sup>20</sup> Large-scale excavations at Tel Mique-Ekron from 1981 to 1996 were directed by Trude Dothan and Seymour Gitin under the sponsorship of the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Three major excavation areas on the fifty-acre mound exposed a distinctive Aegean-style culture dating to the first half of the twelfth century B.C. that differed dramatically from the preceding Late Bronze Age remains. These newcomers, identified as the Philistines based on both textual and archaeological evidence, established an impressive urban center, complete with fortifications, public architecture, cultic structures, and industrial zones that completely superseded the earlier and very modest Late Bronze Age village. Of the three major areas of excavation at Tel Mique-Ekron, Field INE in the northeastern area of the tell reveals the most complete stratigraphic sequence spanning the entire 600-year Philistine occupation at the site (fig. 7).<sup>21</sup> Mycenaean IIIC decorated and undecorated Aegean-style wares dominate the assemblage (fig. 8).<sup>22</sup> It is noteworthy that the closest parallels to the Tel Mique-Ekron assemblages are found on Cyprus (especially Enkomi) and in Cilicia (especially Tarsus), and not with Mycenaean IIIC assemblages in mainland Greece and the islands in the west Aegean.<sup>23</sup>

Aegean-style Philistine wares differ dramatically from preceding Late Bronze Age Canaanite pottery assemblages in decoration as well as in terms of their shape, clay preparation, formation techniques, and firing technology. The excavation of a potter’s workshop dating to the initial settlement of



Fig. 6. Locally produced Aegean-style pottery. Tell Tayinat. Late Helladic IIIC, 12th century B.C.

the Philistines at Tel Mique-Ekron illustrates the abrupt break with the preceding Late Bronze Age potters' tradition.<sup>24</sup> A comparison of Late Bronze Canaanite and Iron I Philistine cooking pots (fig. 9) illustrates the profound change that coincided with the arrival of the Philistines. The very distinct cooking-pot shapes also reflect a newly introduced Philistine cuisine, which is indicated by a marked increase in the appearance of pig bones, signifying the importance of pork in the Philistine diet.<sup>25</sup>

Other aspects of Iron I Philistine material culture are equally distinctive. These include the appearance of hearths, unknown in Late Bronze Age Canaan (fig. 10).<sup>26</sup> Although they have been compared with monumental ceremonial hearths on the Mycenaean Greek mainland, better parallels to more modest hearths can be found on Cyprus. Weaving traditions also changed, as revealed by the excavation of distinctive Iron I cylindrical loom weights that differ from Late Bronze Age loom weights. The closest comparative material can be found on Cyprus and in the northern Levant and the Amuq, especially at Tell Tayinat.<sup>27</sup>

New types of artifacts, generally considered cultic in nature, make their debut in early Philistine occupation levels. These objects include incised cow scapulae (fig. 11), perhaps used either as parts of musical instruments or for divination, which are similar to scapulae found on Cyprus. Female figurines that demonstrate strong Aegean influence are abundant at Philistine sites. Nicknamed "Ashdoda," due to their initial discovery at Ashdod, they share similarities with other Aegean-style figurines from Cyprus and markedly differ from Late Bronze Age Canaanite female deity images, which are usually realistic in style and are nude (figs. 12–14).<sup>28</sup> Additional intriguing glimpses into Philistine ritual practices include the discovery of an altar in a domestic setting at Ashkelon, interpreted as a "house altar."<sup>29</sup> At Tel Mique-Ekron, a puppy buried with distinctive cut marks on its vertebrae and its decapitated skull placed between its two back



Fig. 7. View of Field INE Sondage, Tel Mique-Ekron



Fig. 8. Painted ceramic skyphoi. Tel Miqne-Ekron. Mycenaean III C



Fig. 9. Ceramic cooking pots. Tel Miqne-Ekron. (Upper left and lower left) Canaanite. Late Bronze Age. (Right) Philistine. Iron Age I

legs suggests sacrifice. Similar sacrifices of puppies are also a feature of Hittite ritual.<sup>30</sup>

This very distinctive, locally produced Aegean-inspired material culture of the twelfth century B.C. appears in significant quantities and at times supersedes indigenous Canaanite culture, providing a case study par

excellence of the material manifestation of immigration in the archaeological record.

Each of the Iron I cities in the southern Levantine coastal plain identified as Philistine displays varying quantities and styles of Aegean-type material culture, indicating different scenarios and origins of groups that



settled at sites in the region.<sup>31</sup> Evidence from the earliest Philistine settlement at Tel Miqne-Ekron, in particular, illustrates the complexity of cultural and technological relocation that transpired during this transformative period in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>32</sup> What emerges from the examination of the textual and archaeological data is that the Philistines should not be considered refugees fleeing the collapse of the west Aegean Mycenaean world. They arrived in Philistia in the wake of the Egyptian retreat from Canaan, together with their families and craftsmen, as prosperous colonizers who constructed walled urban centers and were well acquainted with the region. The strong similarities between early Philistine material culture and that of Cyprus, Cilicia, and the east Aegean demonstrate the continued ties between these regions following the breakdown of the Late Bronze Age trading network between the Levant and the west Aegean at the end of the thirteenth century B.C. The two images of bearded men from Medinet Habu (figs. 3b, 4), who are specifically identified as Peleset, provide additional evidence for their non-west Aegean origin since Aegean males are usually depicted as clean-shaven.

Despite the abundance of archaeological evidence for the Philistines, attempts to archaeologically trace other Sea Peoples known from Egyptian, Hittite, and Ugaritic texts have been less successful. This is likely a result of the ambiguity both of the modern definition and the ancient composition of these groups, which included mercenaries and probably other mobile groups, such as pirates or “nomads of the sea.” Although difficult to discern archaeologically, these other groups should also be understood as enterprising communities who emerged from the ruins of the Late Bronze Age as some of the “winners.”

The processes that led to the demise of the Bronze Age and the creation of new cultural, social, and political structures were complex and continued over a period of about a century. However, the world of the Late Bronze



Fig. 10. Philistine hearth. Tel Miqne-Ekron. Iron Age I



Fig. 11. Incised cow scapula, ventral and dorsal views and detail of incisions. Tel Miqne-Ekron, Field INE, Cultic structure. Iron Age I



Fig. 12. Terracotta Philistine female figurine. Ashdod. Iron Age I, 12th century B.C. Israel Museum, Jerusalem (IAA 1968–1139)



Fig. 13. Terracotta Aegean-style figurine. Late Helladic IIIB, 13th century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.1711)

Age did not completely perish. On its ruined foundations emerged a new configuration of diverse cultural identities and Mediterranean connectivity during the early Iron Age, characterized by locally controlled and multidirectional, entrepreneurially driven networks and decentralized political and cultural structures. With the arrival of the Assyrians in the eastern Mediterranean some three hundred years later, the descendants of these Sea Peoples and their world once again underwent a transformative change, when they were incorporated into the greater Assyrian empire.

1. For detailed discussions, see Liverani 1987; Ward and Joukowsky 1992; Drews 1993; Dickinson 2006; Bachhuber and Roberts 2009; Venturi 2010; Cline 2014; Killebrew 2014.
2. See, for example, Maspero 1896. It should be noted that only a few of these groups, the Sherden, Shekelesh, and Ekwesh, are accompanied in texts by the designation “of the sea,” highlighting the problematic nature of the modern term “Sea Peoples.”
3. For a detailed list and discussion of the appearance of Sea People groups in ancient contemporary sources (for example, Egyptian, Hittite, and Ugaritic), see Adams and Cohen 2013.
4. See, for example, Sandars 1985, pp. 198–202. For a discussion of Sea People ethnicity based mainly on the textual evidence, see Woudhuizen 2006.
5. For a convenient table that summarizes the Egyptian primary sources mentioning the Sea Peoples according to specific groups, see Killebrew and Lehmann 2013b, pp. 2–5. See also Adams and Cohen 2013 for additional information.
6. For a detailed discussion of the relevant reliefs relating to the Philistines, see T. Dothan 1982, pp. 5–13; see also Wachsmann 2000.



Fig. 14. Terracotta Canaanite female figurine. Tel Batash. Late Bronze Age, 14th–13th century B.C. Israel Museum, Jerusalem (IAA 2001–2232)

7. See Epigraphic Survey 1930, esp. pls. 32, 37, 43, 44.
8. See Epigraphic Survey 1932, pl. 118c.
9. See, for example, Cifola 1988, 1991; O'Connor 2000.
10. See Drews 1993, pp. 48–72, for a detailed discussion of this theory.
11. For recent discussions, see Killebrew and Lehmann 2013a; Killebrew 2014; Cline 2014, with extensive bibliography.
12. See Artzy 1997 and 2013 for a discussion of the “nomads of the sea” and Sherratt 1998 and 2003 regarding the entrepreneurial role of the Sea Peoples at the end of the Late Bronze Age and in its aftermath. For a recent discussion of Sea Peoples as pirates, see Hitchcock and Maeir 2014.
13. Regarding terminology, see, for example, Kling 1991.
14. For a recent discussion, see Sherratt 2013.
15. See, for example, V. Karageorghis 2000b.
16. For a recent discussion of the complexities involved, see Iacovou 2013, 2014.
17. For a detailed discussion of twelfth-century Aegean-style pottery in the East, see Benzi 2013 and Mountjoy 2013 (southeast Aegean); Mountjoy 2005 (Tarsus); Harrison 2010 and Janeway 2011 (Tayinat); and Lehmann 2013 (northern Levant).
18. Regarding the possible presence of Sherden/ Shardana at Akko, see, for example, M. Dothan 1986. Regarding attempts to identify the Sikil/Tjekker at Dor, as referred to in the eleventh-century B.C. Egyptian papyrus account of Wenamun, see most recently Stern 2013, who outlines evidence of Sikil/Tjekker at the site, *contra* Gilboa 2005 and 2006–7, who disputes this interpretation.
19. See Killebrew 2005, with extensive bibliography. See also Faust 2006 regarding the ethnogenesis of Israel and Yasur-Landau 2010 for an in-depth discussion of the Philistines.
20. For an accessible account of the discovery of the Philistines and overview of the evidence from Tel Mique-Ekron, see T. Dothan and M. Dothan 1992.
21. The stratigraphic sequence in Field I at Tel Mique-Ekron can be summarized as follows: Strata IX and VIII B: the fourteenth- and thirteenth-century B.C. Canaanite village, including the typical Late Bronze Age assemblage of local and imported pottery wares. This village was destroyed by fire in the late thirteenth-century B.C. Stratum VIII A: a transitional phase spanning the late thirteenth century B.C. through the first decades of the twelfth century B.C. This village was characterized by the continuation of local Canaanite ceramic traditions but lacking the imported Mycenaean/west Aegean wares of the Late Bronze Age. Also note that there is no evidence for a destruction of this settlement. Stratum VII: the initial appearance of large quantities of locally produced Aegean-style Mycenaean IIIC pottery and other distinctive material culture features associated with the arrival of the Philistines and the transformation of Ekron into a significant urban center. Stratum VI: the continuation of Mycenaean IIIC pottery and the development of Bichrome (Philistine 2) pottery at the end of the twelfth century B.C. Stratum V: the eleventh-century B.C. city dominated by locally produced Bichrome pottery, which still retains aspects of its Aegean style. See, for example, Killebrew 1998, 2013. For an alternative view, see T. Dothan 2000.
22. For a detailed discussion of Mycenaean IIIC pottery at Philistine sites, see T. Dothan and Zukerman 2004.
23. See, for example, Killebrew 2005, pp. 219–30.
24. See Killebrew 2013 regarding a reconstruction of the Philistine pottery technology.
25. Regarding Mique-Ekron, see Killebrew and Lev-Tov 2008.
26. See, for example, Maeir and Hitchcock 2011.
27. For recent discussions, see Ben-Shlomo 2011, pp. 198–201, and Janeway 2011.
28. See Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009, with bibliography.
29. See Master and Aja 2011.
30. Killebrew and Lev-Tov 2008, pp. 344–45.
31. Regarding Ashkelon, see Master et al. 2011.
32. For a concise discussion of diffusion, including relocation diffusion, see Dickson 1996.





# Assyria and Babylonia



# The Face of the Assyrian Empire: Mythology and the Heroic King

The image of an ever-victorious and courageous king lies at the heart of Assyrian court art. Assyrian rulers presented themselves as the heroic kings they aspired to be and, in so doing, deliberately tied themselves to a mytho-historical past. The depictions of their superhuman achievements take the most impressive forms as narratives carved across stone panels lining the lower walls of significant rooms and courtyards in royal palaces, but they also occur as wall paintings, repoussé metal bands decorating palace and temple gates, and carved ivory panels on furniture. These depictions were intended to glorify the gods as well as the divinely directed achievements of the king.<sup>1</sup> This essay explores the ways in which the heroic royal image was transformed during the period from the thirteenth to the seventh century B.C. as the Assyrian kingdom expanded to establish an empire across the Near East. The heroic aspect of the ideal king was part of the unifying body of values, traditions, and knowledge shared within the Assyrian courtly community, but over time it became increasingly situated within a mythological framework that overlapped with social networks beyond the empire's borders, where it was readily received.

The heroism of an Assyrian king was believed to be dependent on his intimate relationship with the gods. This notion was rooted in a millennia-old understanding

within Mesopotamia of a mutual obligation in which humans served the gods in return for abundance, security, and justice.<sup>2</sup> As early as the later fourth millennium B.C., such relationships were established through ritual acts and imagery. Jan Assmann has explored how these human obligations to the gods had a legal character, established as agreements whereby transgressions would be subject to divine retribution.<sup>3</sup> In Mesopotamia, "everything in the universe, material or immaterial, human or divine, was laid down by decree. Man's duty was to conform to these regulations."<sup>4</sup> Those who broke the rules faced divine justice, which was carried out on behalf of the gods by their appointed human king. The king restored the world to the order established by the gods at the beginning of time through heroic exploits that were essentially ritual acts.<sup>5</sup> Royal inscriptions narrating how the guilty were punished demonstrated the imposition of divine justice. While written narrative texts served to establish the actions and logical basis for the resolution of the event, related visual images depicted the divinely inspired action and thereby transformed linear history into cyclical ritual, ensuring that the present led to the divinely ordered world of the past.<sup>6</sup> Such images were the medium through which the symbiotic relationship between the king and the gods was established and maintained.

Just as there was a contractual relationship between humans and the gods, the relations between Mesopotamian city-states and kingdoms were also regulated by oaths and contracts held in place by divine authority. During the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C., much of the Near East came to be linked by such contractual relationships established through diplomacy. In Egypt during this period historical narratives began to be recorded by both ordinary people and by kings as evidence of this divine intervention in their lives.<sup>7</sup> Royal inscriptions transformed these events into reports, while the most striking visual records are the royal battle reliefs of Dynasties 18 and 19 (ca. 1550–1180 B.C.), especially the narrative monu-



ments of Seti I and Ramesses II.<sup>8</sup> It is within this Late Bronze Age setting that we should consider the origin of Assyrian narrative art.

An emphasis on the mythological and ritual nature of the Assyrian king's heroic activities is apparent in a fragment of a small, round, black stone lid, perhaps of a pyxis, from the New Palace at Ashur (fig. 1). The lid is carved in relief with one of the earliest known versions of an Assyrian royal hero, and it combines scenes of battle and ritual that derive from both contemporary Assyrian and third-millennium B.C. Babylonian imagery.<sup>9</sup> Divided into two registers, much of the scene in the top half is missing but can be reconstructed as a triumphant king pressing his foot on the body of a defeated enemy who is about to be killed. In the lower half of the relief, a royal figure raises a bowl, while to his rear two horses may be pulling a chariot (which does not survive) and rider. The direction of the characters in both registers is significant: action moves from left to right in the top scene and, in the lower register, victory celebrations move from right to left in a formula well known from later Assyrian palace reliefs.<sup>10</sup> The arrangement of the imagery as a simple narrative within a circular frame emphasizes the connection between punishment and celebration (conflict and victory), as well as the circularity of the past and future.

The relationship between the action of the divinely inspired king and the rituals associated with his restoration of order are also apparent on the so-called White Obelisk from Nineveh that probably dates to the reign of Ashurnasirpal I (1049–1031 B.C.).<sup>11</sup> Here again, the arrangement of the carved scenes, organized into registers, is meaningful. There is an expansion in the length of individual narrative scenes within each register, moving from a single image on each of the four sides at the top and bottom of the monument toward the two middle registers, where single scenes wrap around the entire pillar. Significantly, the longest registers, whose position at the center of the obelisk underlines their importance, depict victory



Fig. 1. Black stone lid. Ashur, New Palace. Middle Assyrian, reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207 B.C.). Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (VA 7989)

processions and a wine libation and sacrifice; a cuneiform caption describes the latter scene. These scenes are flanked by vignettes of the king engaged in battle and, at the very top and bottom, the hunting of wild animals. A cuneiform inscription on two sides of the monument, above the carved scenes, narrates a series of military campaigns “at the command of [the god] Ashur.”

An emphasis on the mythological and ritual nature of the king's activities is represented unambiguously by the throne-room reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) from the Northwest Palace at Nimrud. Here not only is the king accompanied by a god in a winged disk but the deity and ruler adopt an identical pose so that Ashurnasirpal is a mirror of the divine (fig. 2).<sup>12</sup> Narrative elements are distributed over parallel registers running the length of the throne room: Assyrian chariots advance to battle; a city is besieged; and the victorious king returns to his encampment, where the omens are taken and the defeated enemy is paraded and humiliated. However, these events do not occur in a linear sequence. The order



Fig. 2. Gypsum alabaster relief showing Ashurnasirpal II returning from a victorious campaign accompanied by a god in a winged disk. Nimrud, Northwest Palace. Neo-Assyrian, ca. 865–860 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 124551)

established by the king on behalf of the gods, represented by the ritual celebrations and punishment of the guilty, is placed, like the processions and scene of sacrifice on the White Obelisk, at the center of the scheme rather than at the end.<sup>13</sup>

Ashurnasirpal states how he depicted on the palace walls his “heroic praises, in that I had gone right across highlands, lands, (and) seas, (and) the conquest of all lands.”<sup>14</sup> It was his duty to reestablish divine order beyond the borders of Assyria, and these military campaigns were the perfect vehicle to illustrate age-old heroic qualities that could be demonstrated visually in a number of ways. The approach to battle took the army over long distances through varied landscapes that were used by the Assyrian artists to express territorial expansion and, with it, the incorporation of a potentially bountiful world.<sup>15</sup> This was a world where heroes of the past had reached the Mediterranean Sea and washed their weapons or had ventured into mountains to discover resources and sacred places.<sup>16</sup> The overcoming of physical obstacles on these military campaigns was especially important for the heroic image. Mountains presented no challenge to the king, who is shown leading his army over the

traditional scale patterns; similarly, a major river, probably the Euphrates, is traversed effortlessly (fig. 3).

The parallel registers running the length of the throne room that depict narrative episodes are separated by a central band carved with the so-called “Standard Inscription,” recording the king’s military achievements and the founding of his new capital and palace at Kalhu (Nimrud). Guy Bunnens has proposed that Assyrian court scholars established a deliberate analogy between the content of these inscriptions and *Enūma Eliš*, the so-called “Epic of Creation.”<sup>17</sup> Thus Ashurnasirpal had the ruins of the already ancient city of Kalhu rebuilt just as in myth the god Marduk created Babylon as his cult center following his defeat of the forces of chaos. Cosmic order was reflected in the building and layout of the Northwest Palace. This was where the rituals of state could take place and the intimate relationship between the king and the gods was maintained: for example, a route from the throne room, with its carved scenes of successful battles and animal hunts, led through a series of chambers, with images of supernatural spirits and stylized trees, to a space for ritual libations in the east wing of the palace.<sup>18</sup>

The Assyrian king's imposition of divine justice on those who had opposed both him and the gods is depicted in extraordinary detail in the reliefs. While this was necessary so as to preserve the memory of the royal achievements, it came with the danger of introducing into the palace, albeit in pictorial form, wicked outsiders who would disturb the perfect order of the Assyrian world.<sup>19</sup> Marian Feldman has argued that the sculptors and painters countered this threat by depicting the foreign people, animals, and lands in an Assyrian style as “an effective means of co-opting and neutralizing that which is threatening about alterity.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, as she makes clear, disorder was turned into order by the incorporation of non-Assyrian elements into Assyria. At the same time, a consistently coherent Assyrian style contributed to a sense of community within the royal court. It meant the chaotic world beyond the edges of the kingdom as well as its exotic resources, such as the unusual animals depicted on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.), were Assyrianized and presented not as frightening but with the potential to submit to the authority of the Assyrian king (fig. 4).

Beyond the Assyrian heartland, kings had images of themselves carved in Assyrian style

on cliff faces in remote places.<sup>21</sup> These depictions were intended to establish the ruler's actual presence in these foreign lands and thereby transform them into Assyrian territory. They focused not on battles or the hunt but showed the king as the unwavering center of the world as established by the gods. He is depicted in profile, standing and performing the so-called *ubāna tarāšū*—“stretching the finger”—gesture of devotion with the raising of the right hand. From the ninth century B.C., freestanding stelae were erected on which the king gestures to his gods, who appear as symbols above him. The commemorative inscriptions that accompany the images narrate the historical context for the making of the monument, providing details of the royal heroism. As the texts would have been understandable only to the literate elite, these carvings, especially when set up in foreign lands, were intended presumably to be read by the gods and future Assyrian kings; local populations were limited to viewing only the portrait of the perfect ruler.

From the mid-eighth century B.C. onward, conquered territories were increasingly incorporated into a formal provincial system. The reliefs lining the walls of the palace at

Fig. 3. Gypsum alabaster relief showing Ashurnasirpal II crossing a river, probably the Euphrates, while on campaign. Nimrud, Northwest Palace. Neo-Assyrian, ca. 865–860 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 124545)







Fig. 4. Two faces of inscribed limestone obelisk (Black Obelisk) showing submission of foreign rulers and tribute, including exotic animals presented to Shalmaneser III. Nimrud, Northwest Palace. Neo-Assyrian, ca. 825 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 118885)

Khorsabad, established by Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), now focus on an ordered world with processions of tribute bearers approaching the king, as well as celebratory banquets and scenes of historically specific battles and sieges.<sup>22</sup> Under Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), entire rooms in the Southwest Palace at Nineveh are devoted to individual military campaigns, with an emphasis on particular moments or a number of episodes that are juxtaposed to express movement in space and time. These detailed pictorial narratives replace the written narratives previously carved across the panels. Action and resolution, ritual and myth, are all carried through the visual image (longer annalistic texts are restricted to gateway figures or foundation documents). Indeed, these scenes can be understood in mythological terms. For example, some of Sennacherib's building projects are highlighted in a series of carved panels that decorated the walls of a courtyard at the heart of his palace at Nineveh.<sup>23</sup> Enormous numbers of prisoners of war and deportees from defeated regions are depicted quarrying and shaping a huge stone block and then using ropes to haul the colossal sculpture across a changing landscape. This represents a creative act at the center of the state, using resources acquired through the king's defeat of his enemies. As with the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal noted above, there are clear parallels with *Enūma Eliš*, in which the forces of disorder are defeated by the god Ashur (in the Assyrian version of the epic), who then creates humans from the body of his enemy to become the workers who will construct his temple and work the land.<sup>24</sup> In this case, however, the carved images carry the message. Indeed, Sennacherib is shown directing the work, and, as noted by scholars such as Irene Winter and Tallay Ornan, he increasingly assumes properties associated with divinity in monumental art.<sup>25</sup> In fact, the king is no longer depicted in the reliefs engaged in battle, but he is situated at the end of narratives and presented as the ultimate source of power and justice,

overseeing life and death and bringing the narrative to a conclusion.

With a permanent Assyrian presence established from Iran to southeast Anatolia and the southern Levant through a system of provinces, the concept of a heroic divine-like king was disseminated through the empire's administrative structures to local elites. The palaces of provincial governors were decorated with carved reliefs or wall paintings and, judging from surviving examples, focus on many of the same themes as in the Assyrian capitals: triumphal processions, royal hunts, and occasionally scenes of battle, often presented in an Assyrian style.<sup>26</sup> This "Assyrian" identity and associated material culture was shared by an increasingly multiethnic ruling class that emerged from the mixed populations that resulted from the empire's policy of mass deportations. In addition, an "Assyrianization" of outsiders was encouraged through the presentation of portable gifts to mercenaries, messengers, hostages, and envoys.<sup>27</sup> Among the most portable of objects were cylinder seals, and increasingly stamp seals, carved with representations of worshipers standing before gods, as well as supernatural contests.<sup>28</sup> The Assyrian world was thus authorized and protected (as expressed in the act of sealing) by the divine world. But there were other, more intangible, methods of Assyrianization. It is usually presumed that certain texts, such as the so-called Letter to the God Ashur, which records the heroic achievements of Sargon II, and treaties establishing the successors to Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.), were read aloud as elements of public ceremonies.<sup>29</sup> Barbara N. Porter has suggested the same for the texts inscribed on Esarhaddon's stelae from Til Barsip and Sam'al (fig. 5).<sup>30</sup> The message of the texts would thus have reached almost everyone in the two cities. Indeed, the carved images on the stelae are no longer simply depictions of a generic Assyrian king gesturing in supplication to his gods; instead, each monument is crafted with distinct political agendas—reward for a faithful city and a warning to one of doubtful loyalties. The



Fig. 5. Basalt stela of Esarhaddon. Sam'al (Zincirli). Neo-Assyrian, ca. 670 B.C. Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (VA 2708)

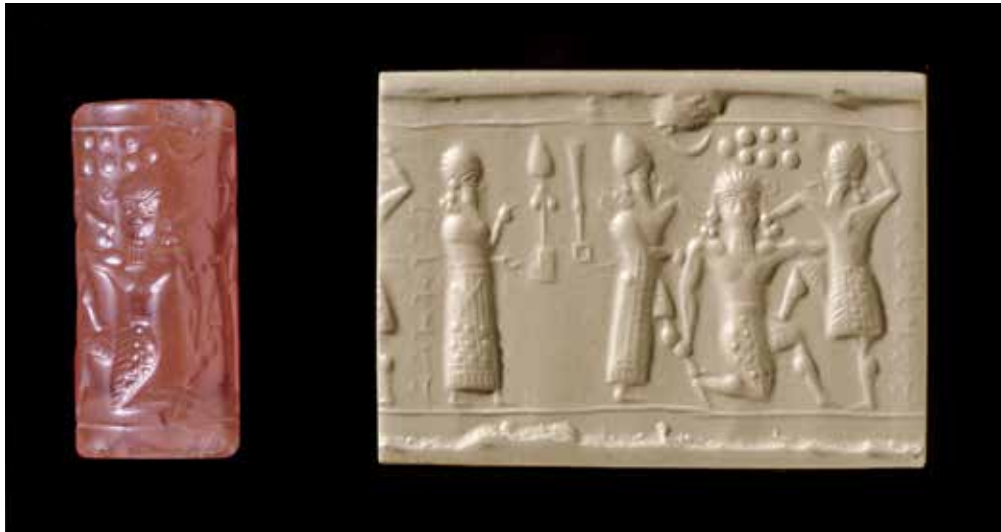


Fig. 6. Carnelian cylinder seal and modern impression with Gilgamesh and Enkidu flanking Humbaba, 8th century B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 89763)

inscription on the Sam'al stele makes a clear association between the heroic god and the triumphant king:

I had a stele made (with) my written name and I had inscribed upon it the renown (and) heroism of the god Aššur, my lord, the mighty deeds which I had done with the help of the god Aššur, my lord, and the victory (and) booty. I set it up for all time to astonish all the enemies.<sup>31</sup>

Among the greatest of heroes from Mesopotamia's mythological past to which a divine-like Assyrian king could aspire was Gilgamesh. From the Late Bronze Age, the Epic of Gilgamesh became one of the best-known literary works throughout the Near East, and its popularity at the Assyrian court is suggested by the thirty-five manuscripts of the standard version that have survived from the libraries at Nineveh.<sup>32</sup> Although only rarely can Mesopotamian myths be equated with artistic representations, it is significant that the subjects of Tablets V and VI of the standard version, the combat with Humbaba, and Ishtar and the Bull of Heaven, are

known from a number of cylinder seals and clay plaques (fig. 6).<sup>33</sup> By the reign of Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.), the epic had come to play a central role in the definition of Assyrian kingship. No longer was it only in literary texts that historical battles were portrayed as if between a supernatural hero and monstrous rivals, but the parallels between myth and reality were made explicit in reliefs from the Southwest and North Palaces at Nineveh depicting a major battle between the Assyrian and Elamite armies at Til Tuba (in about 653 B.C.).<sup>34</sup> The death and treatment of the Elamite king Teumman in the reliefs closely matches those of Humbaba in the epic: both individuals are killed and decapitated in a woodland setting using a mace and an ax (fig. 7), and their severed heads are carried over long distances from a mountainous foreign land to Mesopotamia, where they are displayed at gateways and consecrated to the gods.<sup>35</sup> The two Assyrian soldiers responsible for dispatching Teumman and his son in the reliefs presumably stand in for Gilgamesh and his companion Enkidu. While it might have been expected that Ashurbanipal should play the role of the hero, by the seventh century B.C., as noted above, the Assyrian king is no



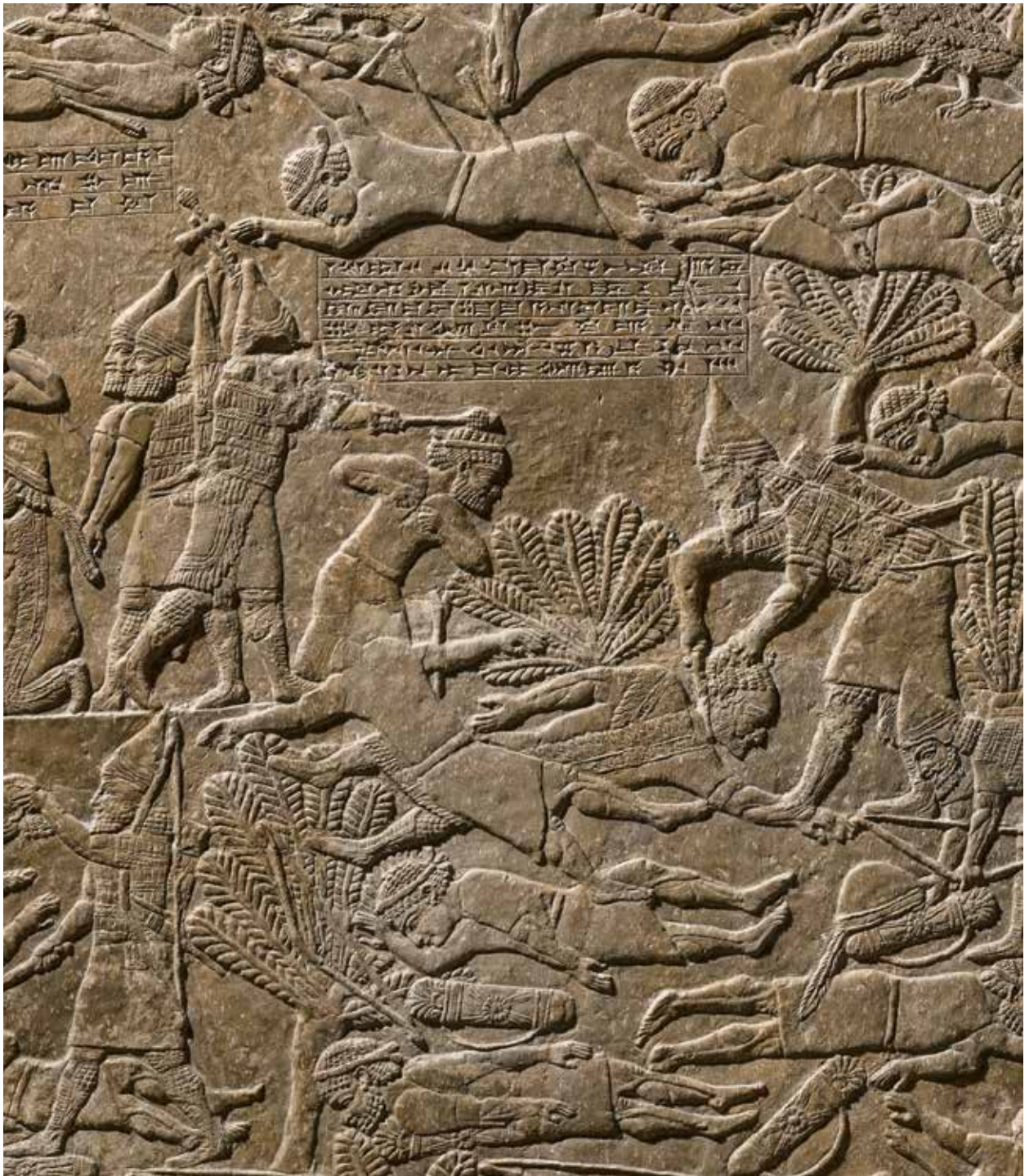


Fig. 7. Detail of limestone relief showing an Assyrian soldier cutting off the head of the Elamite king Teumman, while another kills the king's son with a mace during the battle of Til Tuba. Nineveh, Southwest Palace, Room XXXIII. Neo-Assyrian, ca. 650 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 124801c)



Fig. 8. Gypsum alabaster relief showing a victory celebration with a figure wearing a lion skin. Nimrud, Central Palace. Neo-Assyrian, ca. 730–727 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 136773)

longer portrayed in battle with humans. Nevertheless, Ashurbanipal makes the claim in the epigraph accompanying the scene of decapitation that it was he who cut off the head of the Elamite king, thus tying himself to a mythological past and its greatest hero.<sup>36</sup>

Ashurbanipal's reliefs and inscriptions also make a relationship clear between the ritual killing and display of Teumman and the ritual killing and presentation of lions.<sup>37</sup> The Assyrian king's association with the powerful lion was already established in the ninth century B.C., when the animals may have been hunted as ritual acts relating to military triumphs; figures wearing the skins of lions appear as part of the victory celebrations of both Ashurnasirpal II and Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) (fig. 8).<sup>38</sup> Lions were closely connected with notions of kingship,

sometimes on a mythological level.<sup>39</sup> Under Sargon II a striding lion was used as a pictogram, standing for LUGAL = *šarru*, king, engraved in front of the king's name on vessels of stone and glass.<sup>40</sup> Although the image of the king killing a lion was circulated among state administrators through the official government seal from the ninth century B.C. onward (see Seymour essay, p. 70, fig. 5), it is only with Ashurbanipal that the royal lion hunts figure significantly in both carved reliefs and wall paintings.<sup>41</sup> Elnathan Weissert has interpreted the famous lion-hunt reliefs from the North Palace at Nineveh as the depiction of a ritual act, a magical way of protecting the city.<sup>42</sup> The reliefs show a wooded hill adjacent to the hunting arena that is populated with Assyrians apparently fleeing from the scenes of slaughter. The





Fig. 9. Detail of gypsum alabaster relief showing Ashurbanipal pouring a libation, which the inscription states is wine, over the bodies of four lions he has killed. Nineveh, North Palace. Neo-Assyrian, ca. 645–640 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 124886)

inclusion of these people, who may be overwhelmed by the king's terrifying *melammu* (radiance), suggests that an element of public performance and diplomatic encounter was intended by the event. In another series of reliefs, the royal hunt culminates with Ashurbanipal dedicating the dead animals to the warrior goddess Ishtar by pouring a libation of wine over their bodies just as he poured wine over the head of Teumman (fig. 9).<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., such notions of Assyrian kingship overlapped and interacted with other social

networks across political and cultural boundaries in all geographic directions.<sup>44</sup> This is most evident in the contact between the Gilgamesh epic and analogous “epic traditions” of Greek-speaking poetic craftsmen. Martin West has shown how certain Gilgamesh themes made their way into the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.<sup>45</sup> Recently he has proposed a hypothetical Herakles poem separate from that of Gilgamesh but drawing on Gilgamesh motifs and phrases.<sup>46</sup> We therefore have two cultures with a body of shared identities in which the hero moved—an Assyrian



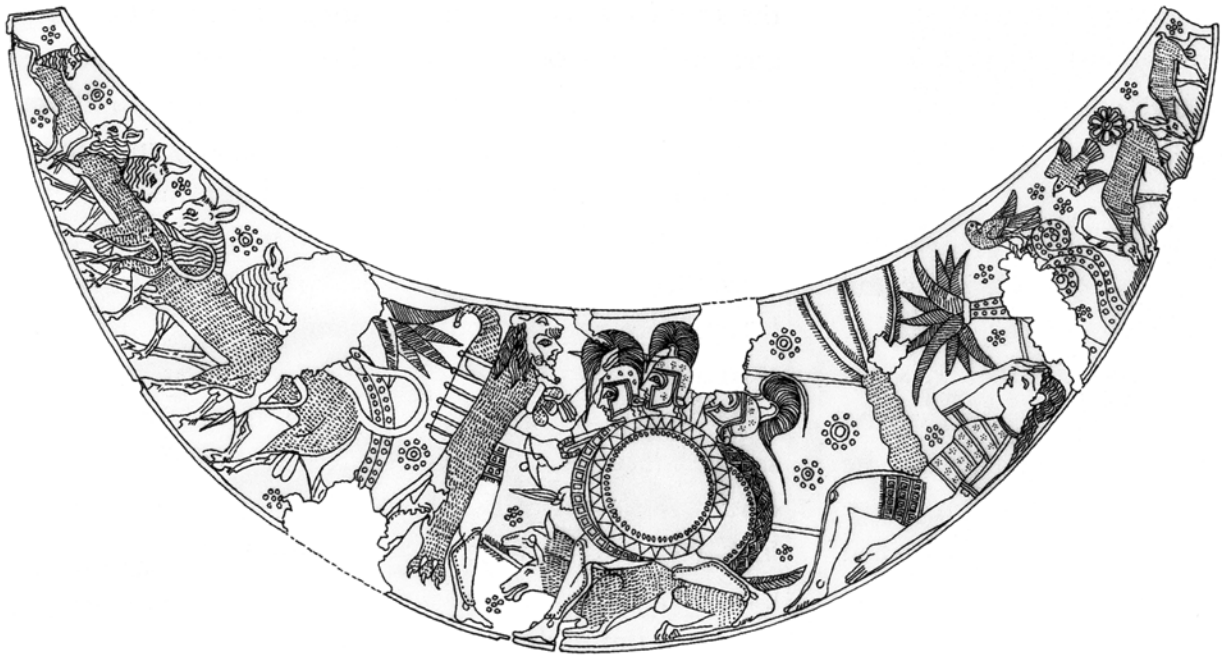


Fig. 10. Bronze votive breastplate. Samos, Heraion, ca. 625 B.C. Archaeological Museum, Vathy, Greece (B2518)

imperial identity centered on the heroic image of the divine-like king and an identity based on the traveling heroes of the Mediterranean—and indications that these two heroic identities interacted and fused. While the Assyrian court style was aimed at controlling foreign influences, the politically fragmented Greek world was able to embrace Assyrian imagery and symbols of royal authority and power to depict local mythological figures. One extraordinary example is a bronze tympanum, found in the Ida Cave on Crete, showing an Assyrianizing lion wrestler flanked by supernatural spirits; the other is a bronze relief, dating to within a few years of the death of Ashurbanipal (627 B.C.). Dedicated at the sanctuary of Hera at Samos, this relief features the earliest representation of Herakles wearing a lion's head over his own (fig. 10).<sup>47</sup>

1. For general surveys of Assyrian art with extensive bibliographies, see J. Curtis and Reade 1995 and J. Curtis 2014.
2. Cohen 2005, p. 119.
3. Assmann 2011.
4. Lambert 1972, p. 67.
5. For battle as ritual, see Reade 2005b. For the concept of bringing order to the chaos of the non-Assyrian world, see Machinist 1993.
6. For Mesopotamian images as embedded in mythology, see Ataç 2010a, Selz 2014, and Collins forthcoming.
7. Assmann 2011, p. 222.
8. Heinz 2001.
9. Moortgat 1969, pp. 117–18; Collins 2008, pp. 21–22. For comparative imagery on contemporary cylinder seals, see Matthews 1990.
10. I. Winter (1981, p. 14) notes the same use of direction in the ninth-century B.C. throne-room reliefs from the Northwest Palace at Nimrud. On the Til Tuba reliefs from Nineveh, the Elamite king flees to the right, but his severed head is carried in triumph across the field to the left; see Watanabe 2004 and Collins 2008, p. 97.

11. For the dating of the obelisk, see Reade 1975. Pittman (1996) suggests that the scenes derive from wall decoration in an Assyrian throne room.
12. The deity in the winged disk may be identified as the Assyrian national god Ashur, although Shamash, the sun god of justice, is another possibility; see Collon 2001a, pp. 79–81.
13. Lumsden 2004.
14. Grayson 1991, pp. 289–90.
15. Marcus 1987, 1995; Thomason 2001.
16. Harmanşah 2007; Shafer 2007.
17. Bunnens 2006.
18. Russell 1998b; Collins 2010, pp. 187–88.
19. In Mesopotamia, images could be thought of as a form of essential presence of the thing represented. Thus the *šalmu* (“image”) of the king acted as his double; see Bahrani 2003, p. 123.
20. Feldman 2014a, pp. 92–93.
21. Harmanşah 2007.
22. Albenda 1986.
23. Barnett et al. 1998, pls. 91, 96–126, 414–23.
24. Noegel 2007. For literary allusions to *Enūma Eliš* in Sennacherib’s account of the battle of Halule, see Weissert 1997a.
25. Ornan 2007; I. Winter 2008.
26. Stone reliefs are known from Arslan Tash (see Albenda 1988) and wall paintings from Tell Ahmar (see Parrot 1961, pls. 109–20, pp. 332–47).
27. Gunter 2009, pp. 124–54.
28. Collon 2001a.
29. A. Oppenheim (1960, p. 143) first suggested that the letter was read aloud as an element of a public victory ceremony. Such a scenario seems likely but remains hypothetical. For the Letter to Ashur, see *ibid.*, Fales 1991, and Kravitz 2003. For the succession treaties, see Wiseman 1958 and Fales 2012.
30. Porter 2000.
31. Leichty 2011, p. 186.
32. George 1999.
33. Lambert 1987.
34. For the Southwest Palace reliefs, see Barnett et al. 1998, pls. 286–319; for the North Palace, see Barnett 1976, pp. 42–43, pls. XXIII–XV.
35. Bonatz 2004a.
36. Barnett et al. 1998, p. 95.
37. For the inscriptions, see Russell 1999, p. 161; text A, section 14, and note b. The treatment of Teumman has been recognized as analogous in Assyrian art to the royal hunt; see Pongratz–Leisten 2007.
38. Reade 2005b, p. 20, figs. 18, 19. The lion-garbed figures may be related to the god La-tarāk; see Black and Green 1992, pp. 33, 116.
39. Watanabe 1998; Ataç 2010a, p. 93.
40. Finkel and Reade 1996, p. 249. For examples of inscribed objects, see J. Curtis and Reade 1995, pp. 146, 148.
41. For the government seal, see Millard 1965 and 1978, Nadali 2011, and Radner 2008. For the Nineveh lion-hunt reliefs, see Barnett 1976, pls. VI–XIII, XLIX, LI, LVI, LVII. There is debate over the dating of the lion-hunt paintings from the Assyrian palace at Til Barsip; see Albenda 2005, pp. 71–73; Reade 2005b, p. 24; and I. Winter 2007, p. 379.
42. Weissert 1997b.
43. Reade 2005b, p. 21, fig. 20; note 37 above.
44. For an example of the emulation of Assyrian court models at Hasanlu, Iran, see Gunter 2009, pp. 40–49.
45. West 1997.
46. Martin L. West, “Gilgamesh and Homer: The Missing Link,” paper delivered at “Wandering Myths: Transcultural Uses of Myth in the Ancient World,” Somerville College, University of Oxford, April 14–16, 2014.
47. For the bronze tympanum, see J. Curtis 1994b, pp. 1–2, and Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 118–19, fig. 3.5; for the Samos bronze, see Knapp and van Dommen 2014, p. 292, fig. 16.7.

# Imperial Fashion Networks: Royal Assyrian, Near Eastern, Intercultural, and Composite Style Adornment from the Neo-Assyrian Royal Women's Tombs at Nimrud

Situated in northern Iraq, near the modern city of Mosul, the ancient Neo-Assyrian capital of Nimrud is known in today's media as a site of terrorist destruction. In early spring 2015, iconoclastic militants razed the excavated ruins of Nimrud's first-millennium B.C. Northwest Palace. We can only hope that any unexcavated materials will remain intact until they can be safely accessed and preserved as scholarly research and cultural heritage resources. In the meantime, however, research based on safeguarded artifacts and documentation from previous excavations at Nimrud can continue to enrich our knowledge of Neo-Assyrian history and culture.<sup>1</sup> This study of items of adornment excavated between 1988 and 1990 from the Nimrud

tombs illuminates the multicultural aspects and imperial implications of Neo-Assyrian royal dress.<sup>2</sup> These spectacular finds also attest to the significance of royal women as embodiments of imperial fashion and, in turn, of the empire itself.<sup>3</sup>

Comprising a crypt beneath the domestic quarters of Nimrud's Northwest Palace, the tombs date to the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.<sup>4</sup> Simple interments, as well as five sealed structures, (Tombs I, II, III, IV, and the Vaulted Complex) contained the remains of women, men, and children. Inscriptions identified some of the women as "queens"; hence the popular designation of this site as the "queens' tombs," although the status of the deceased women as primary queens has not been confirmed.<sup>5</sup> Also, it cannot be assumed that the women were buried in the same adornments that they would have worn in life, but affinities with the visual record suggest that their burial garb was closely related to courtly attire. For example, the famous banquet scene relief from Ashurbanipal's (668–627 B.C.) North Palace at Nineveh presents a detailed rendering of a queen, whose dress generally corresponds to Nimrud's excavated ensembles (fig. 1).<sup>6</sup>

Preserving artifacts in the positions in which they would have been worn, Tombs I and II and Coffin 2 of Tomb III provide the most comprehensive archaeological evidence for royal female dress. The assemblages covered the entire body and typically included a headdress, earrings, necklaces, beads, fibulae, bracelets, finger rings, and anklets. Mounted seals could be chained to fibulae, and metal appliqués decorated some garments.<sup>7</sup> The women's adornments were made predominantly from imported luxury resources, such as gold, agate, and carnelian. Although items varied in their material, scale, and design, the ensembles' configurations were comparable and may thus be considered representative of Neo-Assyrian royal female fashion.

Nimrud's mortuary ensembles incorporated elements of different styles, which I categorize as "Royal Assyrian," "Near Eastern," "Intercultural," and "Composite."<sup>8</sup> I





Fig. 1. Detail of gypsum alabaster relief portraying Ashurbanipal dining in a garden with a royal woman, probably Libbali-Sharrat. Nineveh, North Palace. Neo-Assyrian, ca. 645 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 124920)

define Royal Assyrian Style as a consistent visual language that distinguishes Assyrian courtly culture.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, I describe objects that are visually and/or archaeologically attested in both Assyrian and non-Assyrian Near Eastern contexts as Near Eastern in style.<sup>10</sup> Intercultural Style refers to works incorporating foreign visual characteristics, while Composite Style refers to objects that include imported physical components.<sup>11</sup> It should be stressed that these distinctions in style need not reflect distinctions in the place of manufacture: in fact, overall consistency in the materials and production techniques of Nimrud's Royal Assyrian, Near Eastern, and Intercultural artifacts supports the likely Assyrian production of all three.<sup>12</sup> In the case of the Composite objects, it is probable that Assyrian craftsmen incorporated the foreign items into their own creations.

Worn in combination, Royal Assyrian, Near Eastern, Intercultural, and Composite

Style adornments attest to the rich fashion networks that are manifest in Neo-Assyrian royal female dress.<sup>13</sup> The ensembles' incorporation of diverse styles and foreign-sourced materials fundamentally communicated imperial wealth, power, and identity by displaying the empire's native Assyrian culture, as well as its geographic and ethnic breadth.<sup>14</sup> In addition, dress elements could reflect idiosyncrasies of taste and aspects of the women's personal identities.<sup>15</sup> Some Neo-Assyrian royal women, including those buried in Tombs II and III, had Levantine names, suggesting that they were of foreign origin.<sup>16</sup> For them, Royal Assyrian Style jewelry would have affirmed their new status, while Near Eastern, Intercultural, and Composite Style adornments could have communicated their heritage and any personal and political relationships that it sustained. Neo-Assyrian fashion thereby reflected entangled personal and imperial networks.<sup>17</sup>



Fig. 2. Gold bracelets inlaid with semiprecious stones. Nimrud, Tomb II. Neo-Assyrian period, 8th century B.C. Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 105702, 105703)

#### ROYAL ASSYRIAN STYLE

Some Royal Assyrian Style objects match items depicted in Assyrian art or excavated from elite Assyrian contexts. These artifacts may also bear imagery and ornament corresponding to the visual record of Neo-Assyrian palaces, temples, and royal monuments.<sup>18</sup> Dress elements could certainly denote royal Assyrian status, but it is unknown whether all Royal Assyrian Style adornments occurred exclusively in courtly contexts. On the basis of its affiliation with the ruling class, however, I specify this stylistic category as “Royal Assyrian,” rather than merely “Assyrian.”

From Nimrud’s Tomb II, three pairs of gold cuff bracelets featuring large inlaid roundels demonstrate Royal Assyrian Style (fig. 2).<sup>19</sup> Bracelets of similar form and design are portrayed on royal and divine figures in Neo-Assyrian art.<sup>20</sup> The Nimrud bracelets also bear Neo-Assyrian iconography. The roundels’ border friezes depict winged genies

flanking rosettes or stylized trees with cones and buckets. On two of the pairs, agate eye-stones mark the roundels’ centers, while scenes of the king and crown prince flanking divine emblems fill the interiors of the roundels on the third set.<sup>21</sup> Because this scene’s composition is corrupted, and its inlay technique evokes Egyptian craftsmanship, the bracelets have been potentially attributed to foreign jewelers employed by the Assyrian palace.<sup>22</sup> I nonetheless suggest that these bracelets would have identified their wearers as members of the Assyrian court and implied their close relationships to the divine, to the ruler, and, in the case of the third pair, to the heir apparent.<sup>23</sup>

Stamp and cylinder seals from Tombs I and III can also be classified as Royal Assyrian in style, but a gold fibula from Tomb I presents a complicated case (fig. 3).<sup>24</sup> Its triangular bow portrays the Assyrian demon Pazuzu, along with a bird of prey and a female figure.<sup>25</sup> Related gold fibulae were recovered



Fig. 3. Gold figural fibula. Nimrud, Tomb 1. Neo-Assyrian period, 8th century B.C. Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 108980)



Fig. 4. Gold earring. Nimrud, Tomb I. Neo-Assyrian period, 8th century B.C. Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 108979)

from Tomb II, and simpler bronze examples were found at the Neo-Assyrian provincial site of Tell Deir Situn and excavated from a context at Megiddo in Israel where Neo-Assyrian influence was in evidence.<sup>26</sup> Six more fibulae of this type were purportedly found in Iran.<sup>27</sup> The iconography and potential east-west distribution of these fibulae support their Assyrian cultural affiliation. These fibulae may, then, be Royal Assyrian Style pieces that circulated beyond Assyrian palace contexts. Alternatively, if this fibula type originated in Assyria, but the design was subsequently reproduced by non-Assyrian cultures, the fibulae would be better classified as Near Eastern in style.

#### NEAR EASTERN STYLE

Near Eastern Style refers to object types that were geographically widespread and perhaps culturally neutral in the early first

millennium B.C. They are represented in both Assyrian and non-Assyrian art and material culture. A typology of gold crescent earrings embellished with pendants demonstrates Near Eastern Style (fig. 4). Tombs I, II, and III collectively yielded scores of these earrings, including many variants.<sup>28</sup> The earrings' bodies may be plain or patterned with granulation, and pendants constituting floral, bud, and pomegranate motifs sometimes incorporate polished stone beads and/or dangle in dense bunches. Crescent earrings and their jewelry molds have been found at the Neo-Assyrian capital of Ashur, and earrings of this type are commonly portrayed on the king, queen, and courtiers in Neo-Assyrian art (see fig. 1).<sup>29</sup> Analogous earrings have been excavated from a number of early first-millennium B.C. Levantine and Anatolian sites,<sup>30</sup> and they are depicted on Levantine ivory sculptures of women as well





Fig. 5. Ivory head in the round of a woman wearing a forehead ornament diadem. Nimrud. Neo-Assyrian period, 9th–8th century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1954 (54.117.8)

(fig. 5).<sup>31</sup> Other examples of Near Eastern Style jewelry from the Nimrud tombs that correspond to adornments portrayed on women in Levantine and Anatolian art include multitiered beaded necklaces and hinged horizontally ribbed anklets that resemble stacks of bangles.<sup>32</sup> Exemplifying Near Eastern Style, versions of these earrings, necklaces, and anklets were fashionable in and beyond Assyria during the era in which they adorned the deceased at Nimrud.

#### INTERCULTURAL STYLE

Intercultural Style works combine culturally diverse visual attributes, as demonstrated by a woven gold diadem with a dorsal streamer from Tomb II (fig. 6).<sup>33</sup> Agate eyestones enhance the head and dorsal bands, and a fringed forehead plaque ornaments the front of the headdress (see fig. 5).<sup>34</sup> The diadem's materials, production techniques, and pomegranate iconography fit with Assyrian culture. Also corresponding to Assyrian

traditions, an analogous dorsal streamer is worn by the Neo-Assyrian king (see fig. 1).<sup>35</sup> His headgear, however, never includes a forehead plaque, which is probably a Levantine feature. Commonly depicted on first-millennium B.C. Levantine ivory figures of women, forehead ornaments were an established type of elite female adornment in the Levant.<sup>36</sup> Supporting my interpretation of the Nimrud diadem as an Intercultural Style headdress produced in Assyria is a set of three interlocking square plaques from Tomb II (fig. 7). One of the plaques has lost its inlay, but Royal Assyrian Style images embellish the other two plaques, which are probably remnants of an Assyrian-made Levantine-type forehead ornament.<sup>37</sup> One of these plaques is inlaid with an image of a stylized palm tree, and a naturalistically rendered palm decorates the other intact plaque.

A unique three-tiered gold headdress from Tomb III's Coffin 2 provides another iteration of the Intercultural Style (fig. 8).<sup>38</sup> Instead of explicitly referencing a foreign tradition in the manner of the diadem with a Levantine-type forehead ornament, this crown more subtly blends references to multiple cultures.<sup>39</sup> Grape leaves constitute the top of the headdress, and miniature bunches of lapis lazuli grapes dangle from its upper and bottom tiers. Grapevines are depicted in the Neo-Assyrian banquet scene, and they were also associated with Elamite iconography and Syrian culture.<sup>40</sup> The crown's central tier is composed of a row of winged, robed female figures. Their appearance is not precisely compatible with either Assyrian or Levantine visual traditions, but Levantine art offers the closest parallels.<sup>41</sup> Finally, the rosette and probably pomegranate motifs comprising the crown's lower tier were more commonly, but not exclusively, represented in Neo-Assyrian art.<sup>42</sup> This crown's amalgamation of native Assyrian, foreign, and Near Eastern references celebrates the heterogeneity that enriched the Neo-Assyrian court and empire, as well as the commonalities that unified them. Wearing this headdress, a royal woman could have conveyed the strengths of the empire's unique cultural matrix.



Fig. 6. Gold forehead ornament diadem inlaid with variegated stone and banded-agate eyestones. Nimrud, Tomb II. Neo-Assyrian period, 8th century B.C. Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 105696)



Fig. 7. Two of the three interlocking gold forehead ornament plaques inlaid with lapis lazuli and semiprecious stones. Nimrud, Tomb II. Neo-Assyrian period, 8th century B.C. Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 105813, 105814)



Fig. 8. Gold crown with female figures and fruit and floral motifs. Nimrud, Tomb III, Coffin 2. Neo-Assyrian period, 8th century B.C. Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 115619)

#### COMPOSITE STYLE

Composite Style describes the incorporation of foreign, or seemingly foreign, physical components into a work that includes Royal Assyrian, Near Eastern, and/or Intercultural parts.<sup>43</sup> A seal-fibula apparatus from Tomb I exemplifies this style (figs. 9a, b).<sup>44</sup> Bearing what is probably pseudo-Egyptian hieroglyphic script, the carnelian stamp seal was likely imported from the Levant.<sup>45</sup> A gold chain could have linked the mounted seal to the Royal Assyrian or Near Eastern Style fibula discussed above (see fig. 3). Found in Tomb II, similar gold fibulae, from which clusters of Egyptian or Egyptianizing scarabs dangle, provide another example of Composite Intercultural Style.<sup>46</sup> Due to the miniature scale of the scarabs and stamp seal, their foreignness would only have been recognized through close inspection. Perhaps

glyphic materials were preferred as foreign components on account of their colorful and exotic aesthetic prosperities. Scarabs and seals were also highly durable and portable, accounting for their presence in numbers in Assyria. Overall, both the Composite and Intercultural Styles reflect Assyrian access to and appreciation for non-Assyrian goods and designs. In particular, items from foreign dowries could have been incorporated into Composite dress elements and/or inspired Intercultural adornments.<sup>47</sup>

#### IMPERIAL FASHION NETWORKS

These stylistic categories of “Royal Assyrian,” “Near Eastern,” “Intercultural,” and “Composite” are modern classifications. They are not presumed to have been articulated as such in antiquity; however, they do describe real variation in the objects. The categories





Fig. 9a. Gold pendant with carnelian stamp seal. Nimrud, Tomb 1. Neo-Assyrian period, 8th century B.C. Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 108982)



Fig. 9b. Line drawing of intaglio on carnelian stamp seal

are offered here to help us comprehend the cultural diversity represented in Nimrud's dress ensembles and to clarify the various modes through which royal Neo-Assyrian fashion referenced and engaged with foreign cultures. Although many of the adornments from the tombs were not Royal Assyrian in style, they were probably of Assyrian manufacture. Furthermore, they were all *socially* royal Assyrian objects in the sense that they contributed to the dress of Neo-Assyrian royal women and thereby helped to communicate their status as such. So that these women of rank would have been indisputably recognizable, a codified tradition may have motivated their attire, but flexibility in the selection of dress elements could have personalized appearances.

Although the empire extended in all cardinal directions, royal female fashion predominantly referenced the Levant and Egypt. Certainly, the personal heritage of at least some royal women could explain the Levantine aspects of their adornment.<sup>48</sup> Assyria's particular political and mercantile relationships with the Levant and Egypt also could have inspired these western dress attributes.<sup>49</sup> Finally, it is possible that all Neo-Assyrian royal women, whose fertility was key to the empire's future, were conceptually associated

with the Levant and Nile Valley, which the Assyrians appreciated for their fecundity.<sup>50</sup>

Viewed in historical context, Levantine and Egyptian aspects of Neo-Assyrian royal female fashion might also have been rooted in a second-millennium B.C. "international artistic koine."<sup>51</sup> As a common visual tradition manifested on diplomatic gifts, this artistic koine had helped to negotiate a balance of power among a network of distant kingdoms in the eastern Mediterranean, Anatolia, the Levant, Egypt, and Assyria. Attesting to the emergence of Assyrian state identity, Ashur's thirteenth-century B.C. elite Middle Assyrian Tomb 45 contained goods belonging to this koine as well as items demonstrating a developing Royal Assyrian style.<sup>52</sup> By the first millennium B.C., as the Neo-Assyrian empire coalesced, the Royal Assyrian Style dominated imperial environments and courtly fashion.<sup>53</sup> But, concurrently, Nimrud's Near Eastern, Inter-cultural, and Composite Style dress elements might also have evoked the second-millennium B.C. artistic koine and the ancient cultural, social, and political networks that underlay first-millennium B.C. imperial power.<sup>54</sup>

The breadth, wealth, and diversity of the Neo-Assyrian empire were expressed through collecting and displaying nonnative materials, designs, and products.<sup>55</sup> Royal structures were

built with imported lumber, and their architecture sometimes incorporated a foreign portico feature, known as the *bit hilani*.<sup>56</sup> In addition, palace gardens and menageries collected specimens from around the empire.<sup>57</sup> Just as the Neo-Assyrian palace asserted imperialism through quotations of and allusions to foreign culture, fashion would have contributed to the rhetoric of imperialism as it, too, materialized imperial networks of power and diplomacy. In addition, not only did royal women convey imperialism through their dress, but those of foreign origin may have solidified and sustained specific political relationships that were essential to the empire's stability.<sup>58</sup> In this manner, imperial fashion networks connected people, cultures, sovereignties, histories, and memories through visual and material relationships. In the case of the women buried at Nimrud, their dressed bodies memorialized their personal roles and identities within the framework of imperial networks. Moreover, through their gleaming gold fashion incorporating Royal Assyrian, Near Eastern, Intercultural, and Composite Style adornments, these royal women vividly embodied the networked diversity of the Neo-Assyrian empire.

#### CONCLUSION

The dress elements from the “Queens’ Tombs” at Nimrud promise to tell us more about the women and the empire that they adorned. However, the “Nimrud treasures,” to which this material belongs, are currently stored in an undisclosed location in Iraq.<sup>59</sup> Scholars have never had an opportunity to carefully inspect the objects, which are not fully published. Yet, patience is warranted, as the artifacts’ inaccessibility protects them during this period of violence against Iraqi cultural heritage. Indeed, in the wake of Nimrud’s devastation, the preservation of these precious burial assemblages inspires hope for future research, education, and exhibitions about ancient Assyria and its royal women.

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1. For overviews of the excavated site of Nimrud, see Mallowan 1966; Oates 2001. For recent research on Nimrud, see J. Curtis et al. 2008.
2. Entailing “body modifications and/or supplements,” “dress” refers to *how* people wear *what* in specific cultural contexts (Eicher and Roach-Higgins 1992, p. 15). Nimrud’s archaeological evidence, for instance, could reflect social, political, and/or ritual, as well as mortuary dress traditions that were carried out by those in charge of preparing the dead for burial.
3. “Fashion” can be defined as a social and ideological phenomenon that is discernible through patterns in a community’s dress (Baadsgaard 2014, pp. 424–26). On the debated appropriateness of applying the term “fashion” to ancient dress practices, see Batten et al. 2014, pp. 16–17; Lee 2015, pp. 21, 238, n. 73.
4. Hussein 2016. See also Damerji 1999; Hussein and Suleiman 2000.
5. Inscriptions from Tombs II and III refer to *sēgallu* (written logographically as MÍ.É.GAL) (Al-Rawi 2008, pp. 119–25, 136–38; Kamil 1999, p. 13). Literally translated as “woman of the palace,” this term probably means “queen,” but there is some debate as to how many women could hold this title simultaneously (Parpola 1988; Macgregor 2012, pp. 71–73; Melville 2004, pp. 43–52; Svärd 2015, pp. 39–47; Kertai 2013).
6. Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 73–74, cat. no. 22 (entry by N. Tallis). Schmidt-Colinet (1997) has suggested that the queenly figure is actually a eunuch, but Albenda (1998) logically refutes this argument. Note that the Nineveh relief and other images portray the queen wearing a crown of city walls (Börker-Klähn 1997; Ornan 2002, pp. 474–76), but no mural crowns were preserved in the Nimrud tombs. Because the archaeological evidence is earlier than the visual evidence, it is possible that the mural crown was not yet established as queenly attire during the era of the Nimrud burials. Among the other possible explanations for this discrepancy is that a single mural crown was passed down between generations and therefore never taken to the grave (Gansell 2012, pp. 20–21); or the deceased may not have worn mural crowns, because they were not queens of the highest rank.
7. Hussein 2016, pp. 5, 7, 21–22, 29–30, pls. 8a, 13a–c, 15a–b, 77–79, 105a–c. Regarding how seals were

- worn, see Collon 2001b, pp. 20–21; for discussions of garment appliqué, see Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, pp. 254–60; Guralnick 2004b, p. 226; Gaspa 2014.
8. “Style” is defined here as the characteristic manner in which materials, production techniques, forms, imagery, ornament, and designs contribute to the appearance of similar objects. The stylistic categories presented are not necessarily exclusive to dress. For archaeological and art-historical concepts of style and their application in grouping and interpreting objects and manners of dress, see Conkey 1990; Conkey and Hastorf 1990; I. Winter 1998; Feldman 2006b, p. 30; Feldman 2014a, pp. 43–78; Lee 2015, pp. 24–27.
  9. For a detailed description and discussion of “Assyrian Court Style,” on which my category of “Royal Assyrian Style” is based, see Feldman 2014a, pp. 81–86.
  10. Gansell 2013, p. 408.
  11. The Intercultural and Composite categories could be applied to items from any culture, but, with regard to the Nimrud assemblages, I describe what would have been Intercultural and Composite Style adornment from the Assyrian perspective (i.e., Assyrian works referencing non-Assyrian cultures). Feldman’s (2002, pp. 6–8; 2006b, pp. 1–4, 30) discussion of “international style” informs my “Intercultural” categorization. I opt for the term “Intercultural” over “International” in this analysis, because at various points different foreign cultures fell under the control of the Neo-Assyrian empire, and the term “international” implies a landscape of politically independent entities.
  12. Collon 2008, p. 105; Youkhanna 2008.
  13. “Networks” constitute dynamic interactions among people and things in time and in social and physical space (Knappett 2011, pp. 8–10). Knappett (2011, p. 12) acknowledges that neat network interactions and tightly bound object categorizations cannot adequately represent all of the “variability and mess” that archaeologists encounter. Likewise, the stylistic categories of dress presented here do not necessarily account for every adornment artifact from the Nimrud tombs.
  14. On the archaeological investigation of ethnicity as a factor in defining group identity, see Sweeney 2009.
  15. Ownership inscriptions on seals and grave goods, as well as a curse from Tomb II threatening anyone who “lays his hand upon my jewelry with evil intent,” indicate that the deceased were probably buried in their personal belongings (Al-Rawi 2008, pp. 119–24, 136–38).
  16. Dalley 1998; Dalley 2004, pp. 394–96; Dalley 2008.
  17. Hodder 2012, pp. 88–112.
  18. For a summary of the characteristics of Neo-Assyrian art, see Feldman 2014a, pp. 81–86. On Neo-Assyrian ornament, see I. Winter 2003; Albenda 2005, pp. 76–117.
  19. Hussein 2016, p. 20, pl. 72.
  20. Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, pp. 246–49; Musche 1992, p. 219, pl. LXXXI, nos. 10–15; Collon 2010, pp. 152–59. Neo-Assyrian texts might also refer to bracelets of this type (Postgate 1994, pp. 240–42).
  21. For a detail photo and a line drawing of the roundels’ imagery, see Collon 2010, p. 160, figs. 14a–b.
  22. Collon (2010, pp. 160–61) discusses the potential circumstances and visual details of the scene’s corruption. For example, rather than hovering above the royal figures, as is typical, a rayed disk encircling the bust of either the state god Ashur or the sun god Shamash is irreverently positioned at the bottom of the scene, facing the king’s legs. On the bracelets’ possible Egyptian production technique and workmanship, see Hussein and Benzel 2014, p. 128.
  23. On the status of the mother of the Neo-Assyrian crown prince, see Melville 2004, pp. 45–48; Svärd 2015, pp. 42–43.
  24. For examples of Royal Assyrian Style seals, see al-Gailani Werr 2008, figs. 19a–r, v–w. For the fibula, see Hussein and Benzel 2014, p. 125; Hussein 2016, p. 5, pl. 15b.
  25. J. Curtis 1994a; J. Curtis and Reade 1995, p. 174; J. Curtis 2008, pp. 252–53.
  26. Amiran 1966, pl. XVII; J. Curtis 1994a, pp. 53–54, 62, pl. 6; Hussein 2016, p. 23, pl. 80g.
  27. Calmeyer 1974, figs. 11a–c, 12a–b, 13a–c.
  28. Some earrings, described as “triple-armed,” have three static projections instead of a row of pendants (Madhloom 1970, pp. 91–92, pl. LXIX, nos. 1–24; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, pp. 241–42, fig. 127, nos. 6–27; Musche 1992, pp. 209–10, pl. LXXXVIII). For a range of examples of crescent earrings excavated from the Nimrud tombs, see Hussein 2016, pp. 7–8, 17, 31, 35, pls. 16a–c, 44–45, 116–21, 142.
  29. Jakob-Rost 1962; Madhloom 1970, pp. 90–92, pl. LXIX; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, pp. 235–46, figs. 126, 127; Musche 1992, pp. 207–11, pls. LXXVIII, LXXIX.
  30. Musche 1992, pp. 224–25, 227, 234–35; Golani 2013, pp. 109–14, 240–41.
  31. G. Herrmann 1986, pls. 90–92, nos. 400, 401, 409–14, 417; G. Herrmann 1992a, pl. 19, no. 109; Gansell 2008, p. 63.
  32. On Levantine and Assyrian necklaces, see Barnett 1975, pls. LXX–LXXII, LXXV, LXXVI, nos. S172, U7, S176, S180, S193, S215, S221, S224; Musche 1992, p. 213, fig. 2; Gansell 2008, p. 64; and Hussein 2016, p. 18, pl. 50. On Levantine, Anatolian, and Assyrian anklets, see Orchard 1967, pls. XXVIII–XXXI, nos. 135–37, 139, 144, 147; Barnett 1975, pls. LXXV, LXXXIX, nos. S217, S294; Bonatz 2000, pls. 12, 13, 18, 20, 21, nos. C21, C29, C51, C59, C60; Gansell 2008, p. 65; Hussein 2016, pp. 21, 31–32, 37, pls. 76, 125, 149b.
  33. Hussein 2016, pp. 14–15, pl. 37b; Collon 2008, p. 107; Gansell 2008, p. 144; Gansell 2012, pp. 20–21; Hussein and Benzel 2014, pp. 126–27.



34. Orchard 1967, pls. XXVIII–XXXI, nos. 135–38, 146; G. Herrmann 1986, pls. 91, 92, nos. 409–17; G. Herrmann 1992a, pl. 19, no. 109.
35. Madhlloom 1970, p. 76. The Babylonian crown also had a dorsal ribbon (Reade 2009, pp. 246–47, fig. 10), but the diadem from Tomb II is more closely related to the Assyrian king’s headgear.
36. Orchard 1967, pls. XXIX–XXXI, nos. 136, 137, 145, 146; G. Herrmann 1986, pls. 91, 92, nos. 409–17; G. Herrmann 1992a, pls. 19–21, 50, 89, nos. 109–13, 251, 252, 255, 256, 441; Gansell 2008, p. 63. Dating to the second millennium B.C., a jewelry mold for a formally related adornment element was found at the royal city of Ugarit on the Syrian coast (Musche 1992, pp. 187–88, pl. LXV).
37. Hussein and Benzel 2014, p. 127; Hussein 2016, p. 15, pls. 38a–c. Negating the possibility that the plaques are Levantine and were fitted with Neo-Assyrian inlays in the manner of a Composite Style object, these plaques are crafted in a manner comparable to the entire diadem from Tomb II, which has the Assyrian feature of the dorsal band.
38. Collon 2008, pp. 105–6, 116, 145; Gansell 2013, p. 410; Hussein and Benzel 2014, pp. 130–31; Hussein 2016, pp. 32–33, pls. 129–32.
39. This crown’s culture of production has perplexed scholars who have considered its potential foreign and archaic origins (Boehmer 2006; Collon 2008, p. 106).
40. Albenda (1977) discusses the banquet scene’s depiction of war trophies from across the empire. On the representation of grapevines, in particular, see Albenda 1974. Building on earlier scholarship, Álvarez-Mon (2009, p. 144) has suggested that the Assyrian grapevine iconography referenced Elamite culture. Thomason (2001, p. 84) associates grapevines with Neo-Assyrian conceptions of the Levant and points out the royal Neo-Assyrian appreciation of Syrian wine, which may be referenced through grape imagery (2010, pp. 210–11).
41. For discussions of the crown’s female figures, see Collon 2008, p. 106; Hussein and Benzel 2014, p. 131.
42. For instances of Neo-Assyrian pomegranate iconography, see Albenda 2005, pp. 47, 51–52, 113–14; for a sample of Neo-Assyrian rosette motifs, see *ibid.*, pp. 2, 6, 13–15, 22–24, 28, 30, 31, 36, 38, 43, 51, 52, 77, 84, 91, 130, 132. Pomegranates and rosettes are also portrayed, for example, as details of headdresses on Levantine ivory sculptures of women (Barnett 1975, pls. LXX, LXXI, nos. S172–77, S180, U6, U7; G. Herrmann 1992a, pls. 18–20, nos. 102–10). Note that on the ivories, minuscule pomegranates are sometimes only roughly rendered as the tips of forehead ornament fringes. Hussein 2016, p. 33, points out that these “pomegranates” may actually be poppy capsules.
43. No foreign items from the Nimrud tombs appear to have been worn independently (Collon 2008, p. 105).
44. Hussein and Suleiman 2000, pp. 212–13, fig. 12; Hussein 2016, p. 6, pls. 13a, 15a–b.
45. Hussein and Benzel 2014, p. 125 n. 2; Hussein 2016, p. 6. Note that the caption for al-Gailani Werr’s line drawing of this seal’s intaglio misattributes the seal to Tomb III (al-Gailani Werr 2008, p. 160, fig. 198).
46. Hussein 2016, p. 19, pl. 69a. The incorporation of scarabs into Neo-Assyrian jewelry was not unprecedented. For an example of a scarab on a necklace, see Pickworth 2005, pp. 301–2. Scarabs were also used as seals in Neo-Assyrian contexts (Herbordt 1992, pp. 120–22).
47. Jewelry, seals, or adornment components from foreign dowries may have been included in the tombs (Dalley 2008, p. 172; Collon 2010, p. 161; Aruz 2014a, pp. 115–16).
48. Probably reflecting their ethnic origin, about half of the known Neo-Assyrian queens have West Semitic names (Melville 2004, p. 47).
49. Dalley 2004; Thomason 2013.
50. Thomason 2001; Ciafaloni 2009.
51. Feldman 2006a and 2006b, p. 30.
52. Harper et al. 1995, pp. 81–97; Feldman 2006a.
53. Feldman 2014a, pp. 81–86.
54. On potential roles of portable luxury goods as vehicles of cultural memory in the ancient Near East, see *ibid.*, pp. 43–78.
55. On Neo-Assyrian royal collecting, see Thomason 2005, pp. 119–205. The extent to which foreign goods, such as ivory-clad furniture and metal dishes, were used or kept in storage in the palace is debated (G. Herrmann and Millard 2003, pp. 390–92, 398–99; Thomason 2010, pp. 203–10; Thomason 2013; Feldman 2014a, pp. 94–95; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 73–74, cat. no. 22 [entry by N. Tallis]).
56. Thomason 2001, p. 82; Thomason 2010, p. 208; Thomason 2013, pp. 8–9; J. Osborne 2012.
57. Thomason 2001; Thomason 2005, pp. 169–99; Thomason 2010, pp. 210–11; Novák 2002.
58. Dalley 2004.
59. McDonald 2005, p. 213.

The Southwest Palace at Nineveh, Sennacherib's (704–681 B.C.) "Palace Without Rival," contained a hugely ambitious and extensive program of reliefs, dominated by depictions of foreign military campaigns. Further campaign imagery was added over several generations by Sennacherib's successors: the very last reliefs may only just predate the collapse of the empire at the end of the seventh century B.C.<sup>1</sup> From the point of view of modern scholarship these campaign scenes, with their varied landscapes, enormous numbers of human figures, and sometimes textual labels, are among the richest and most informative visual sources available, not only for the Iron Age but for any ancient period. In antiquity, they expressed the size and complexity of the imperial project and thus the power of Assyria. More than this, however, the scenes set up a unique visual dynamic between the occupants of the palace and the world they governed. This essay considers how the depiction of foreign military campaigns in the palace might have functioned for an ancient audience, and argues that the Southwest Palace relief program in particular was designed to fulfill a specific and conceptually sophisticated purpose: to present a living microcosm of the empire at, and principally for, the imperial center. The reliefs not only allowed the viewer in the palace to look out across the empire; they also visually and magically manifested the empire within the palace.

#### THE FORMAT OF THE RELIEFS

Neo-Assyrian campaign reliefs constitute a highly unusual body of material from the wider perspective of ancient Near Eastern art. If they hold a unique interest for modern historians, this is precisely because, in ancient terms, they are anomalies. Their narrative format, illusionistic qualities, ubiquitous inclusion of landscape elements, and depiction of large numbers of human figures are all rare in ancient Near Eastern art generally. Although the gradual development of these aspects of campaign scenes through the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods is visible to

## The Empire in the Palace: Campaign Reliefs in the Southwest Palace at Nineveh and an Assyrian Microcosm

some degree in the stelae, obelisks, bronze gate bands, and palace relief programs of successive kings, it is reasonable to ask why they became central components of the later Assyrian palaces' decorative schemes.<sup>2</sup> The Southwest Palace at Nineveh is the extreme case: here, campaign reliefs make up the bulk of the decorative program and are found throughout the known portion of the palace (fig. 1). On the relief program, Sennacherib's annals state simply: "I engraved on large limestone slabs (images of) the enemy settlements that I had conquered. I surrounded their (the palace rooms') lower courses (with them and) made (them) an object of wonder."<sup>3</sup> No hunt imagery is known from the palace, and overtly magical protective imagery seems to be concentrated in courtyards and facades and, as one would expect, around entrances.<sup>4</sup> There is little, if anything, to indicate that the reliefs added to the palace by later kings — Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) and, very probably, Sin-sharra-ishkun (622–612 B.C.)<sup>5</sup> — broke significantly with the program's original intention and vision, since these kings, too, focused on depicting campaigns, and in styles sufficiently similar to that of Sennacherib's sculptors that their

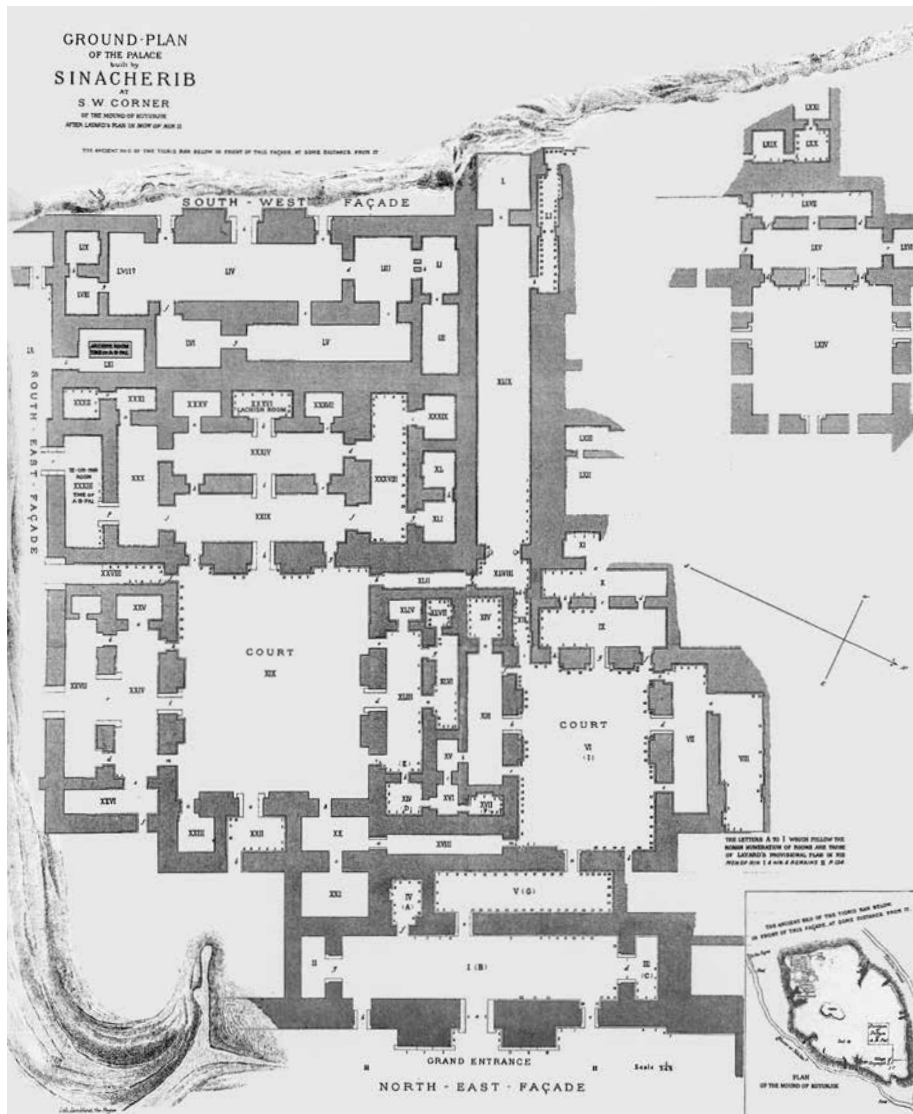


Fig. 1. Plan of the excavated portion of the Southwest Palace, Nineveh

identification is not always certain. There are certainly differences between the reliefs of Sennacherib and those of his successors in the palace, spectacularly so in the innovative composition of Ashurbanipal's Til Tuba cycle;<sup>6</sup> however, most of the broad aspects of the campaign reliefs' format and content discussed here are common to all. The later reliefs were conscious additions to an existing program, retaining the most important components of that program's format and, I

would suggest, functioning in tandem with the earlier sculptures. The palace program is multiperiod, but we cannot assume that it was always disjointed as a result. At a minimum, since the palace continued in use and since the positioning of the later reliefs implies the continuing visibility of many if not all of their earlier neighbors, we must imagine a stage at which Ashurbanipal's campaign reliefs could be seen alongside those of his grandfather, a temporal dimension that



surely also played into the ancient experience of walking in the palace.<sup>7</sup>

Features already visible in the ninth-century B.C. reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) at Nimrud, but far more so in those of the Sargonid kings of the later eighth and seventh centuries, are the extensive depictions of human and landscape detail. A cast of thousands populates the walls of the Southwest Palace, and the scenes are almost always situated in distinct environmental settings. It should be stressed at the outset that this extensive representation of landscape is highly unusual in ancient Near Eastern art. Far more typical, in Mesopotamian and other ancient Near Eastern art of this and earlier periods, is the limited use of commonly understood but relatively abstracted visual cues—for example, the scale pattern used to signify hilly or mountainous country—to convey landscape types in a minimal, emblematic fashion, and then only where necessary: for almost any given period or category of ancient Near Eastern art, the most common treatment of landscape elements was not to include them at all. (Indeed, excluding campaign reliefs, Sargon's water transport reliefs at Khorsabad [see p. 2], and the Southwest Palace bull transport reliefs, which I would argue are part of the same phenomenon,<sup>8</sup> and the exceptional Ashurbanipal reliefs from the North Palace involving the landscape around Nineveh, the same might even be said of Neo-Assyrian art.) The rise of extensive landscape depiction in the Assyrian case specifically can be seen in stages, culminating in the Nineveh reliefs.<sup>9</sup> In the Southwest Palace, landscape and environmental details are ubiquitous and prominent: one might think of the extension of the scale pattern—an extremely ancient device—into a pseudo-naturalistic terrain, for example, as the backdrop to the siege of Lachish (fig. 2) or to narrow mountain passes (figs. 3a, b), the endless ranks of date palms denoting the Babylonian river plain, or the distant, reed-thicketed water world of the marshes (fig. 4). This unusual treatment of landscape raises the strong possibility that it was important for its

own sake.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, it is not at all evident that foreign landscapes are automatically shown as environmentally hostile: it has been argued that the North Syrian landscape is portrayed as very rich,<sup>11</sup> and the same might be suggested for the Babylonian plain, where the date palms, highly valuable in themselves and always shown fruiting,<sup>12</sup> may be taken to stand for an entire richly irrigated agricultural environment. The format allows for the expression of profusion and, in a case such as the date palms, abundance—a key concept in Neo-Assyrian art and in the royal image more generally.<sup>13</sup> As for the huge number of people pictured, many not combatants but prisoners awaiting deportation, a comparable logic may apply: rather than an “inefficient” use of space that might better be given over to the image of the king triumphant or to divine protective imagery, the captives may represent both the scale of the imperial project and the human resources that foreign campaigns put at Assyria's disposal (see below). If the campaign reliefs lie at one end of a spectrum of elaboration in this respect, the other extreme is exemplified by the royal seal (fig. 5). This simple design, probably familiar to officials across the empire in antiquity, shows the king triumphing in combat over a worthy foe—a rampant lion.<sup>14</sup> The “scene” is schematic and conceived in what we might call an iconic mode, as opposed to the narrative format of the campaign reliefs. For a more direct comparison in the historical depiction of war and campaigns, one could look to the Assyrian obelisks that depict specific triumphs in a comparable but more economical fashion, the most direct parallel being the campaign scenes of the eleventh-century B.C. White Obelisk.<sup>15</sup> A more distantly removed example would be the famous victory stele of Naram-Sin: far from simple, this monument's design is nonetheless a model of iconographic efficiency. A historical triumph is depicted, and with it the king's greatness and relationship with the gods; the imagery even includes landscape. Yet the image can still be read as a single, greatly compressed scene,



Fig. 2. Detail of gypsum alabaster relief showing Assyrian soldiers and captives in a hilly landscape from the siege of Lachish. Nineveh, Southwest Palace, Room XXXVI, S9. Neo-Assyrian, reign of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.). The British Museum, London (ME 124908)



Fig. 3a. Gypsum alabaster relief of Assyrian soldiers leading horses beside a stream in the mountains. Nineveh, Southwest Palace, Room XXXVIII, S15. Neo-Assyrian, reign of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1932 (32.143.16)

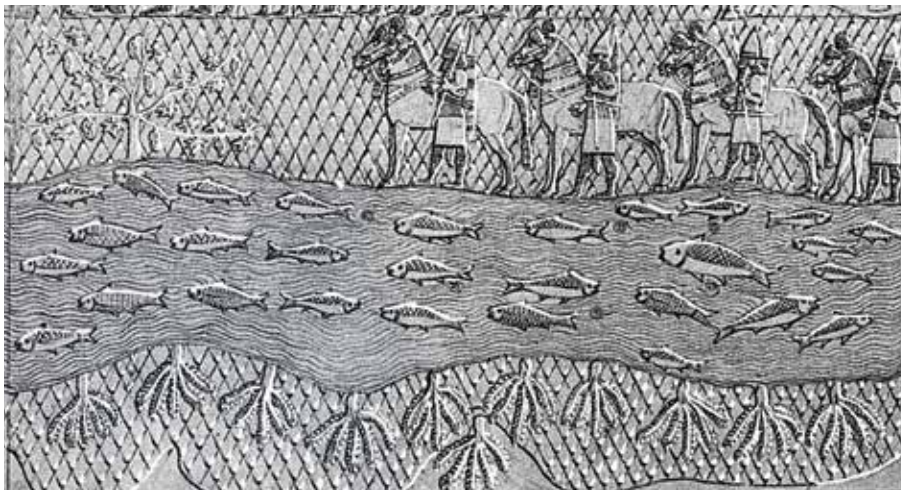


Fig. 3b. Detail of unsigned drawing of the relief in its setting. Probably by F. C. Cooper. The British Museum, London (Or. Dr. I, 44)

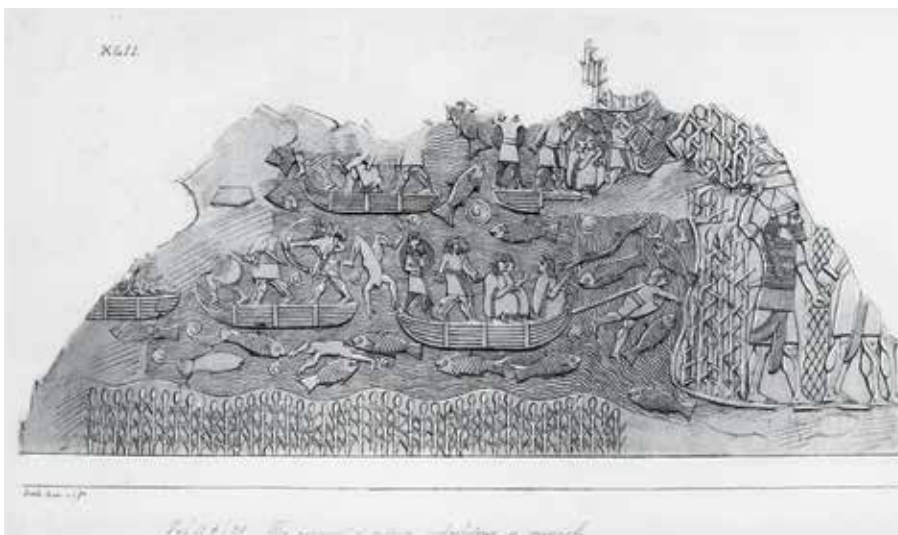


Fig. 4. Drawing of relief showing a campaign in the marshes. Nineveh, Southwest Palace, Room LXX, S1. Neo-Assyrian, reign of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.). The British Museum, London (Or. Dr. IV, 42)





Fig. 5. Ancient impression on clay bulla of an Assyrian royal seal. Nineveh. Neo-Assyrian, reign of Sargon II, ca. 715 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME SM.2276)

utterly dominated by the figure of the king himself.<sup>16</sup> Such images can contain a high level of practical detail<sup>17</sup> and even narrative,<sup>18</sup> but this is always subordinate to a clear, iconic primary reading of royal triumph; it is not equivalent to devoting meters of throne-room sculpture to the practicalities of crossing rivers, undermining the walls of cities, or establishing military camps, as Ashurnasirpal did, or to filling an entire palace with such detail, as in the case of Sennacherib. The extended narrative mode and its wealth of “incidental” detail, so welcome to us in the present, is if anything quite counterintuitive in ancient terms.

By the same token, the image of the king himself is by no means ubiquitous, in contrast to the triumph scenes—even when narrative—of earlier Mesopotamian rulers<sup>19</sup> and, indeed, to Assyrian stelae and monuments outside palaces.<sup>20</sup> For Assyrian artists, demonstrably concerned with the magical efficacy of images and of repetition, this might be seen as a cost of the narrative mode. As Julian Reade notes, “The king is invincible, but not superhuman. In each composition, or in each unit of a strip-cartoon composition, he normally appears once and once only, like anyone else.”<sup>21</sup> In addition, the geographically

situated format dictates that the king is not depicted unless he was physically present on the campaign. The image of the king as warrior is important, but in this respect the reliefs are remarkably candid: Ashurnasirpal II is shown riding into battle and probably did so; Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal are not, and presumably did not; instead, they are seen presiding over victories and receiving booty and prisoners (fig. 6).<sup>22</sup>

Other anomalies relate less to the content shown than to its mode of representation. Modern viewers are frequently struck by the wealth of incidental detail in the reliefs and the apparent window that their format presents into the lived world of the Assyrians. The latter is the deliberate product of an illusionistic impression of field depth and specificity of place, whereby the inclusion of landscape features, the overlapping of foreground and background imagery, the use of a groundline, and (in general) the consistent use of scale combine to create a convincing impression of physical space.<sup>23</sup> The illusion is so effective that it takes caution to refrain from treating many of the reliefs as naturalistic depictions of events as they were seen on the ground—and this to modern viewers accustomed to different pictorial conventions, and without the polychromy and palace setting that surely heightened the reliefs’ effect in antiquity.<sup>24</sup> The proliferation of human figures and extensive use of landscape contribute to the illusion, for although in reality the reliefs greatly compress and manipulate action, time, and space, the result of such profusion is that the viewer is presented with superficially plausible unified scenes from a campaign in progress. Again, none of this is common in ancient Near Eastern art more generally; indeed, there can be few other contexts in which an ancient viewer might have seen anything approaching an immersive, illusionistic depiction of events in a distant landscape. The images may have struck viewers more forcefully as a result.





Fig. 6. Detail of gypsum alabaster relief showing Sennacherib at the siege of Lachish. Nineveh, Southwest Palace, Room XXXVI, S12. Neo-Assyrian, reign of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.). The British Museum, London (ME 124911)

#### ANIMATION AND THE LIVING IMAGE OF EMPIRE

It is very likely that the campaign reliefs were considered magically animate in much the same way as those portraying protective beings or royal hunts. (In the latter case, the famous example of an Ashurbanipal lion-hunt scene in which the king's grip on a lion's tail has been carefully and deliberately

severed offers a vivid negative illustration of belief in the potency of images performing actions.)<sup>25</sup> To assume some level of embodiment and magical agency in the campaign reliefs would be consistent with our current understanding of general ancient Mesopotamian conceptions of image-making and might seem more intuitive were it not for the (to us) “documentary” historical



Fig. 7. Detail of gypsum alabaster relief showing livestock, including lowing cattle and prisoners from a Babylonian campaign. Nineveh, Southwest Palace, Room XXVIII, S7. Neo-Assyrian, reign of Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) or Sin-sharra-ishkun (622–612 B.C.). The British Museum, London (ME 124953)

narrative character of the campaign scenes. If we accept that in ancient Mesopotamian thought image-making was not merely a matter of mimetic representation but a process understood to partake of the object represented—as we are accustomed to do for divine and royal images<sup>26</sup>—we should extend the same consideration to the content of the campaign reliefs. Moreover, this content, and the scope for animation and embodiment, are not limited to the action of the scenes but also include the depiction of the natural world and of physical space. Where the continuous narrative format allows for the expression of profusion, this perspectival quality allows for the expression of spatial depth and, crucially, the illusion of creating physical space in a world where (in contrast to our own photography-saturated experience) this practice was virtually unknown. “Illusion,” of course, is probably quite the wrong word: if image-making is more than mimesis, it follows that a visual effect is more than a trick.

Thus the campaign reliefs create a world that is embodiment as well as representation, a true microcosm, in which the acts pictured—the making and maintenance of an empire—are continuously performed. The mass of small, “incidental” details—human movement and gesture, cattle lowing—and the depiction throughout of actions in progress contribute to this sense of animation and active performance (fig. 7). The animation of small details and the capture of a given moment are qualities routinely understood as highly meaningful in Western art; in the Assyrian context—and especially in the rarefied context of palace reliefs—I would suggest that they are similarly meaningful choices and more than a show of technical virtuosity or the whim of the sculptor. It is interesting to note that particularly striking examples, such as women giving water to children (fig. 8) or, in a different context, the agony of dying lions, appear specifically with Ashurbanipal and later, that is to say,



coincident with the appearance of the fully developed continuous narrative format.<sup>27</sup> These innovations together serve the goal of seeming embodiment and movement, narrowing the space between image and living object. They complement the illusionistic qualities of the campaign reliefs, deliberately and skillfully invoking a sense we might call the uncanny and producing what is very much the living image of the empire.<sup>28</sup>

Animation does not always mean a focus on the most dramatic action, however, and indeed the campaign reliefs are far from an uninterrupted succession of battles. Substantial space was given over to prisoners and the counting of booty and of the dead in the form of heads. Orderly lines of prisoners, often women and children, include details of dress and hair and incidental scenes and gestures suggestive of movement, such as one member of a group turning and raising a hand. The prisoners are accompanied by animals, most frequently cattle but also equids, sheep, and goats, and, occasionally, more exotic creatures such as dromedary camels.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes we see ox-drawn carts, carrying either women and children or piles of booty.<sup>30</sup>

The inclusion of so many captive foreign women in the reliefs is particularly notable because visual representations of Assyrian women are so very rare; it has been suggested that foreign women are therefore demeaned through this kind of exposure.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, the few known images of Assyrian women do include royal women, and under the Sargonid kings in particular, there is enough evidence to say categorically that their depiction was not taboo.<sup>32</sup> It should also be noted that the depiction of women and children as prisoners contrasts to some degree with that of male captives, who are often shown bound or being beaten, and there are no other indications of women's humiliation beyond the general context of military defeat. Even without fully excluding the possibility of some negative connotation to women's exposure, whether as prisoners or through the very fact of their visual representation on the reliefs, it seems probable that

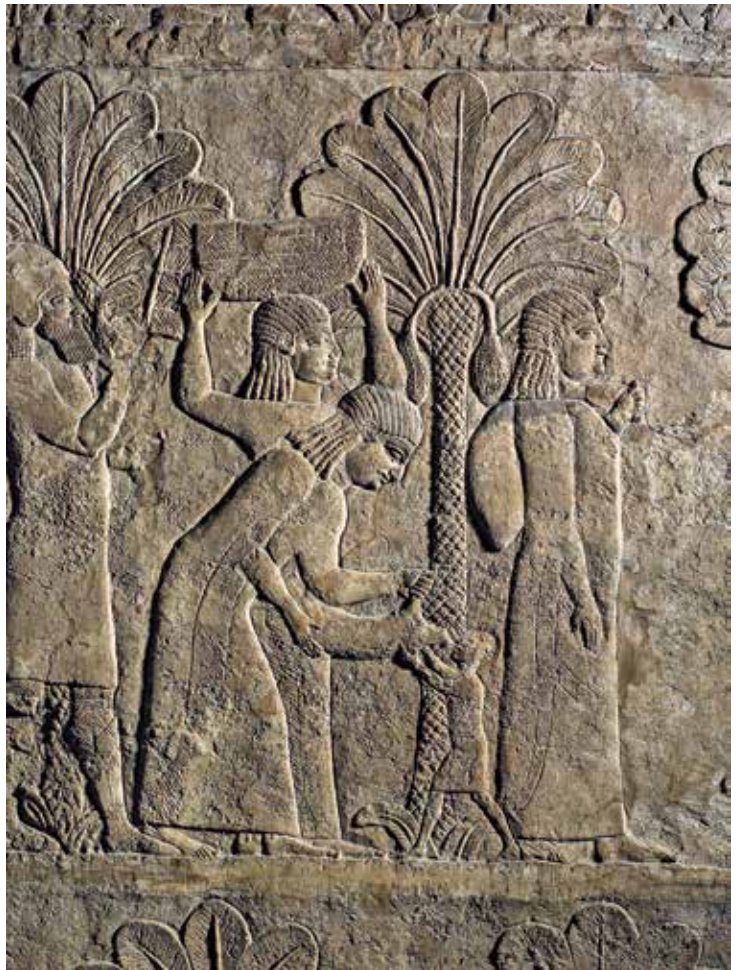


Fig. 8. Detail of gypsum alabaster relief showing female prisoner giving water to a child, from a Babylonian campaign. Nineveh, Southwest Palace, Room XXVIII, S8. Neo-Assyrian, reign of Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) or Sin-sharra-ishkun (622–612 B.C.). The British Museum, London (ME 124954)

the primary message here is one of possession and of resources human and natural under the control of Assyria.

Scenes showing the piling up of enemy soldiers' heads and/or newly acquired booty, sometimes with the king in attendance to review the spoils, seem to form focal points, punctuating the long lines of soldiers and prisoners (fig. 9). The piles of booty are one area in which the illusion of a single perspective is typically suspended in favor of a view showing complete objects in profile, one above





Fig. 9. Detail of gypsum alabaster relief showing scribes recording booty from a Babylonian campaign. Nineveh, Southwest Palace, Room XXVIII, S10. Neo-Assyrian, reign of Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) or Sin-sharra-ishkun (622–612 B.C.). The British Museum, London (ME 124955, 124956)

another and apparently floating in space.<sup>33</sup> Objects shown include furniture—beds (or possibly reclining couches of the kind seen in the famous Ashurbanipal banquet scene<sup>34</sup>), stools and tables, cauldrons, bowls, and other vessels, incense burners and stands, and weapons: swords, spears, bows, and quivers.<sup>35</sup> The repertoire varies only a little between piles of booty, and there is no indication of number, nor are the contents overtly based on the lists of booty given in the annals, which

themselves are not accounting documents and only rarely give quantities. We might note that prisoners and material goods are described together in both annals and reliefs, and the repeated phrase “I counted them as booty” should be kept in mind when viewing the long lines of people depicted.<sup>36</sup> Their numbers are one of many examples of profusion in the reliefs, expressing the scale of the military operations and of Assyria’s dominion and wealth.

## AUDIENCE, EFFECT, AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE STATE

What exactly does the format of the campaign reliefs serve to show? Victory, of course, but this can be achieved as well or better in a more iconic mode, as it normally had been in both Mesopotamian and Syro-Hittite art, the two principal traditions upon which the Neo-Assyrian reliefs draw.<sup>37</sup> It has been noted that later reliefs, and especially the great Ashurbanipal lion-hunt scenes of the North Palace, playfully incorporate this more standardized iconography into their scenes, uniting the impact of iconic and narrative approaches in the representation of the king.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, for all their richness, there is also an iconographic economy to the reliefs: wholly novel scenes with unique elements do occur, particularly under Ashurbanipal, but most campaign reliefs employ what is actually a relatively small repertoire of icons to signify the various landscapes of the empire (for example, the date palm for Babylonia) and a series of human “types” (categories of Assyrian soldier, enemies, prisoners), whose gender, ethnicity, and other affiliations are identified by costume and hair, but which are not usually individualized as portraits any more than a given date palm should be taken to represent one specific tree.<sup>39</sup> Even the dramatic use of terrain texture and inversion to evoke a river or stream running through mountains around an entire room of the palace (figs. 3a, b) is an adaptation and extension of a basic principle for representing river valleys that can be seen in its iconic form well over a millennium earlier.<sup>40</sup> There is a high degree of standardization in landscape despite its prominence, and in this respect the extended narrative mode is not as distant from its iconic precursors as it first appears; the difference lies in the quantity and deployment of these icons to form coherent, complex scenes, often vast in scope and involving very large numbers of people—that is, to represent profusion. The more elaborated narrative mode allows the expression both of campaigning and imperial control as an epic, logistically staggering

achievement and of the empire’s size and the richness of its human and natural resources. The king’s achievements, as recorded in the annals, are given an epic sweep as their overwhelming geographical and human scale find tangible expression. The triumph depicted is one not only of the king, however, but of the state he leads. Others invested in that state—those living and working in the palace itself, for example—could partake of that triumph, knowing that they, in whatever capacity, were involved in the running of the vast empire. It is in this sense that the reliefs of Court VI, depicting not war but the quarrying and transport of a colossal winged bull, are not distant in their meaning and purpose from those showing military campaigns: both stress control over immense resources and unprecedented logistical achievement.

It is relevant that the court appears to have become more physically centralized in one palace under Sennacherib, with more royal and senior personnel living in the same palace as the king himself than had been the case in the Khorsabad of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.).<sup>41</sup> The occupants of the palace constituted a large part of the central imperial administration, and they lived and worked surrounded by the reliefs, with the relationship between political center and far-flung empire ever-present. It is not far-fetched to imagine that this ancient audience was sensitive to the reflective, meditative potential of the reliefs or that the images’ content was—for the informed ancient courtly viewer—philosophically complex.<sup>42</sup> Clearly, there is a focus in the reliefs on imperial accounting, and that focus is very particular: the reliefs do not record the quantities of booty or prisoners from a campaign but rather depict that recording being performed (fig. 9). Reliefs in the narrative mode are still subject to all the concerns governing ancient images, including agency and magic, and in this connection they perform the empire constantly: the soldiers and administrators in the reliefs are eternally at work. The same supernatural considerations, more than mere triumphalism,

are surely why we never see an Assyrian soldier harmed in the reliefs: any desire to commemorate fallen heroes would be wholly overwhelmed by the magical imperative not to represent harm befalling Assyrians. The effortless successes shown in the reliefs mask a far more dangerous physical reality, and here magical protection meets spiritual comfort.

Much speculation has attended the difficult question of who saw the reliefs, although the early idea that they were created principally for the discomfort of visiting foreign dignitaries has remained a popular one.<sup>43</sup> Without entirely excluding some role for intimidation of this kind, it is extremely unlikely to account for the full range of meaning and use of what is manifestly a complex and ideologically charged body of imperial art.<sup>44</sup> It seems implausibly simplistic to reduce all of Assyrian palace sculpture to a giant intimidation tactic. The idea of art produced primarily for purposes of political intimidation works somewhat better for the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, where throne-room reliefs depicting campaigns and hunts quickly give way to supernatural protective imagery in more restricted areas, though even here it fails to allow for the magical potency of such imagery, or the religious meaning of depictions of the king performing his roles as warrior and hunter for an elite Assyrian audience.<sup>45</sup>

The arrangement of the Southwest Palace reliefs in terms of campaign geography has been investigated particularly by John Malcolm Russell, who explored the possibility that some reflection of physical geography might be found in the systematic grouping of, for example, western campaigns in one area of the palace.<sup>46</sup> Based on the incompletely known floor plan, the results were ambiguous but spoke against the idea that the program was arranged to reflect the cardinal points overall. Possible juxtapositions of eastern and western campaigns could be discerned within individual suites, and the throne-room suite shows greater geographical variety in its subject matter than any other.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps the most important point,

however, is simply that campaign reliefs are found throughout the palace. Rather than being concentrated as a showpiece in a relatively accessible location, or in the throne room, they were the constant backdrop to court life. To give some context to this idea in terms of the day-to-day use of space, Julian Reade has suggested that the unusual layout of the so-called Lachish suite (Rooms XXIX–XLI, including the room with the Lachish reliefs themselves, XXXVI) might be explained by the need to create a new format for receiving rooms used by high officials, again associated with the increasing concentration of administration in one palace following the relocation of the capital from Khorsabad to Nineveh.<sup>48</sup> If this is correct, we might be inclined to see especially Court XIX as possibly a space to which some outsiders had some access.<sup>49</sup> More importantly, we should see the whole suite as an area in which the business of empire was actually conducted in the shadow of campaign reliefs. Campaign scenes also continue into spaces whose access can reasonably be assumed to have been highly restricted. A good example of the latter might be Rooms LXV–LXVII, which a gateway lion inscription suggests may have been apartments of Sennacherib's queen Tashmetum-sharrat.<sup>50</sup> Without suggesting that any space in the palace is not on some level associated with the identity of the king, both of these examples are interesting in that they seem to be spaces occupied by, and to that extent associated with, other individuals and functions, royal and administrative.

If we approach the question of audience from another angle, foreign emissaries are an important but small category, whose relative prominence in the textual sources relating to the audience for palace inaugurations may mislead us. The majority of people who saw the reliefs were subjects of the empire, living and working at its very center.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps more significantly, many (and the most prominent) of those at work in the palace would have been officials of high rank who were intimately involved with the imperial



administration, as well as members of the royal family itself. It is difficult to imagine that those high officials living and working in the palace did *not* feel that they stood very near the state's apex and that they, too, were a part of Assyria's greatness. The palace, from their perspective, controlled the empire, and the intoxicating ability to view and even cross the vast expanses of that empire, surrounded by Assyria's great military achievements as one moved through the palace, reinforced this view. The most unusual characteristics of the reliefs' format—the qualities of immersive naturalism, the huge numbers of people, the wealth of practical and logistical detail, and the emphasis on the scale and complexity of the empire—all make sense from this standpoint.

The relief program, for the king and many other powerful individuals within the palace, presented a microcosm of the empire, a visual expression of the world Assyria ruled, as well as a more specific historical monument to Sennacherib's (and, later, Ashurbanipal's and probably Sin-sharra-ishkun's) achievements. That awe and even intimidation are part of this mixture seems clear, but there is also room for fascination, curiosity, pride, and a sense of investment in a great work. Awe itself is not only the consequence of intimidation: Sennacherib's annals describe the palace as "beautiful" and "an object of wonder."<sup>52</sup> Work on the palace is typically described together with Sennacherib's landscape engineering around Nineveh, including the famous garden that, like the reliefs, brought the products of empire physically and visually to its center.<sup>53</sup> One might say the same of a later imperial project, the Library of Ashurbanipal, which brought the learning of the empire—above all, of Babylonia—back to Nineveh.<sup>54</sup> Walking in the palace, one could observe a vista from the mountains and the marshes in complete safety, a unique experience in a world without easy rapid travel or photography, and in which even the particular illusionistic conventions of the campaign reliefs were uncommon.

The most important audience, however, may have been divine. There are only a few textual allusions to audience, but among them should be included that Sennacherib's inscriptions speak particularly of inviting Ashur and Ishtar into the completed palace.<sup>55</sup> At a more general level, where the later palace reliefs express controlling and harnessing distant and hostile regions, they may also have been conceived as helping to create and maintain that order in a way that was more literal than symbolic. On the magical level that suffused ancient Near Eastern art, it is likely that the images were understood by their very existence to contribute to the empire and its well-being, reinforcing the ordered world of Assyrian supremacy they depicted. Neither landscape nor the prosecution of war can be regarded as "secular" subjects—both were deeply bound up with omens and divine significance. The campaign reliefs were important enough to occupy space that might otherwise have been devoted to supernatural protective imagery, and this is probably in part because they played a religious role of their own, creating and projecting a vision of an ordered cosmos and a triumphant Assyria. These vistas, with all their potential for magic and meditation, formed the setting for the very heart of Ninevite court life. Their imagery constituted an important part of the consciousness of the empire with which that court was imbued, indeed its primary visualization. Far from being confined to the palace walls, this microcosm should be pictured, above all, as active and alive, both magically and in the minds of the Assyrian elite who lived and worked in its presence.

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1. Russell (1991, pp. 117–51) assesses the reliefs in terms of stylistic criteria, assigning them to the reigns of Sennacherib or Ashurbanipal accordingly. Reade (1972, pp. 89–90; 1979b, pp. 109–10) has argued that many of the reliefs may be even later than Ashurbanipal, on the basis of the king's presence on campaign and differences in the depiction of his entourage from that of known Ashurbanipal comparators. Reade assigns these reliefs to a son of Ashurbanipal, most probably Sin-sharra-ishkun, since this king is known to have performed his own building work on a palace of Sennacherib and to have campaigned in Babylonia, the focus of these reliefs. If this is so, the extensive southern campaign reliefs of Room XXVIII and Court XIX record some of the very last foreign campaigns by an Assyrian king.
2. I. Winter (1983b, p. 19) notes the difficulty of following the emergence of the basic format, since already on the campaign reliefs of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud “not only do details reflect specificity of dress and landscape; but also the consistency of a profile view, the engagement of all figures, and the lack of emphasis on the king except for his identification by headdress and garment all permit attention to be entirely focused on the action unfolding within each sequence.”
3. Grayson and Novotny 2012, p. 39, no. 1, 86.
4. On the overall layout, see Russell 1991; Barnett et al. 1998. On the spatial arrangement of Neo-Assyrian palaces in general, see Kertai 2015.
5. See note 1, above.
6. Chief among the innovations of Til Tuba is its incorporation of an Assyrian continuous narrative format into a composition that swirls across a single large field rather than progressing through linear registers. It has been very plausibly suggested that the design is in part a response to Assyrian exposure, under Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.) and Ashurbanipal, to monumental art in Egypt and particularly New Kingdom triumph scenes, such as the Battle of Qadesh (Kaelin 1999; see also Warburton and Matthews 2003).
7. More ambiguously, examples of recut reliefs suggest varying degrees of apparent attention to the preexisting scenes they adjoin. See Reade 1967, pp. 42–45, for British Museum ME 124773, a striking case in which later recutting appears to have made deliberate dramatic use of an older relief.
8. Discussed by Russell 1987.
9. On changes over time in the Neo-Assyrian palace relief programs, see especially Reade 1979b.
10. For a broader discussion of the religious and ritual significance of landscape in Assyrian culture and from a royal perspective, see Radner 2000, Shafer 2007, and especially Shafer 2014. My argument here is very much in line with Shafer's point that it is possible and productive to consider the reliefs “not in usual fashion as ‘military’ narratives or as ‘hunting’ narratives — although they do include these themes — but as *landscape* narratives, stories that take place first and foremost in and for the sake of the landscape” (Shafer 2014, p. 713).
11. Thomason 2001, 2013.
12. Collins 2004, pp. 2–3. Evidently this was part of the depiction of the object's essential qualities, although it is also interesting, as Collins notes, that (contra Ashurbanipal's banquet scene) date palms do not fruit in Assyria.
13. I. Winter 2003.
14. On this imagery and its interpretation, see especially Watanabe 2002, pp. 42–56, who also discusses another kind of royal seal featuring only a lion.
15. The comparison may be a very direct one. Pittman (1996) argues that the design of the White Obelisk was based on that of a throne room.
16. On the image of the king and the depiction of landscape and space in the stele of Naram-Sin, see especially I. Winter 1996, 1999, and 2004, respectively.
17. For an example of such detail in the Stele of the Vultures, see Nadali 2014.
18. I. Winter 1985, again with reference to the Stele of the Vultures.
19. I. Winter 1983b, p. 19.
20. Campaign scenes do not appear in the rock-cut reliefs of Maltai or Khaniss/Bavian, for example, nor farther afield in the empire in cases such as the Nahr el-Kalb reliefs, which take the form of stelae depicting the king. On the depiction (and nondepiction) of violence on Assyrian public monuments, see Porter 2003, pp. 81–97.
21. Reade 1979a, p. 331.
22. Reade 1972, pp. 92–93.
23. On the visualization of physical space in the reliefs, see Russell 1991, pp. 191–215.
24. McMahon (2013) considers the importance of sensory experience, space, and light in seeking a more phenomenological perspective on the palace of Sargon II at Khorsabad. On the attempt to reach toward an understanding on their own terms of ancient Mesopotamian aesthetic values, see especially Bahrani 2014; I. Winter 1995, 2002. In describing the reliefs as “illusionistic” here, I am attempting to do just this: to identify specific conventions that seem deliberately employed to create the illusion of events situated in a landscape and spatial depth, and could reasonably be argued to have done so for an ancient viewer.
25. British Museum, ME 124886+124887. J. Curtis and Reade 1995, pp. 86–87, cat. nos. 28, 29; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 69–71, cat. no. 20.
26. For a key analysis of ancient Mesopotamian conceptualization of image-making, see Bahrani 2003, pp. 121–48, and further discussion in Nadali 2012.
27. On the overall historical development of the narrative format, see especially Reade 1979b; Nadali

2006. On the “continuous narrative” mode in the later sculptures, see especially Watanabe 2004, 2014.
28. Bahrani (2003, pp. 171–73) uses the idea of the uncanny in a related sense in considering issues of doubling and substitution around the image of the king. Nadali (2012, pp. 588–90) notes that the observation of movement, even when depicted in an image, produces a detectable neurological effect and that this speaks in favor of an ancient experience of the reliefs as simulating movement—again blurring the boundary between static image and depicted action.
  29. Mitchell 2000.
  30. Ataç (2010a, pp. 46–48) considers the question of whether compositionally we should read prisoners as likened to livestock, and thus demeaned, concluding that such humiliation is not intended and that in seeking to find humiliation and dehumanization throughout the reliefs our readings may be unduly restrictive. Reed (2007) also seeks to open up a broader range of possibilities in the interpretation of representations of prisoners. My own opinion is that livestock and prisoners are both shown primarily as campaign booty and as such are treated in a parallel fashion, but the focus is on the power and wealth of the Assyrian king and state rather than humiliation, particularly since, when the latter is intended, it can be shown in unambiguous and sometimes quite brutal fashion.
  31. Cifarelli 1998, pp. 220–23.
  32. Pertinent examples are the originally gilded bronze relief depicting Naqia alongside her son Esarhaddon (Musée du Louvre AO 20.185) and the stele of Ashur-sharrat (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum, VA 08847). The famous banquet scene of Ashurbanipal (ME 124920; see Gansell essay, p. 55, fig. 1, or Winter essay, p. 182, fig. 4, both in this volume) may be another strong example but is a more complicated case: the scene’s many interpretations have included suggestions that the reliefs in this part of the North Palace were intended for the extremely restricted audience of the royal “harem” and that, alongside her possible Assyrian identifications, the queen depicted might even represent a captive Elamite queen or princess (Álvarez-Mon 2009). One might also consider the seal of Sennacherib’s queen, Tashmetum-sharrat, which depicts the king and queen standing before Ishtar (Radner 2012). This last may be especially relevant, since the very existence of some of its ancient impressions increases the likelihood that the context for viewing this image was not specially restricted, as indeed could be the case with a palace relief.
  33. These abstracted piles of booty are themselves a development that attempts to incorporate objects that need to be shown complete into a naturalistic scene: compare their precursors in the Northwest Palace (for example, British Museum ME 124539), where items of booty are simply shown floating above the action of the scene. Some reliefs in the Southwest Palace may be attempts to further integrate this apparently difficult subject matter, for example, slab 11, Court XIX, and slab 7, Room XXVIII, which both show booty stacked on carts and tied down, striking a balance between completeness and physically situating the objects.
  34. If reclining couches are intended, it should be noted that they are not confined to western campaign reliefs and can be seen among booty from, for example, Babylonia.
  35. For example, slabs 10, 19, Court XIX; slabs 9, 10, Room XXVIII. These are both from southern campaigns; similar items of furniture are shown on western campaign reliefs, though usually carried by Assyrian soldiers rather than presented as piles of booty, for example Or. Dr. VI, 4, Room XXXVIII. Possibly this is a meaningful difference, though it could also be simply an accident of survival.
  36. Grayson and Novotny 2012, 2014, *passim*.
  37. On Hittite/Syro-Hittite influence in the Neo-Assyrian palace relief format, see especially I. Winter 1982.
  38. The most striking example is the incorporation of the royal seal motif of the king defeating a lion into the otherwise narrative composition of the North Palace lion-hunt reliefs (J. Curtis and Reade 1995, p. 87).
  39. On the late and very limited appearance of specific portraiture, particularly in the case of the Elamite king Teumman, see Collins 2006; Collins 2014, pp. 632–33. I. Winter (2009) discusses the use of the term “portrait” in ancient Near Eastern context more generally.
  40. See the bottom register of the famous serpentine cylinder seal of Ibni-sharrum, a scribe of Shar-kali-sharri, ca. 2183–2159 B.C. Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Orientales, AO 22303.
  41. Reade 2011, pp. 120–21.
  42. Ataç 2012, p. 415.
  43. Arguments and key proponents of this view are summarized in Porter 2003, pp. 81–83. The idea itself is the product of what most nineteenth- and early twentieth-century viewers saw as a harmony between the cruelty of Sennacherib as described in the Bible and as depicted in the violence of the reliefs. The main textual sources cited in support of this view are those that make clear foreign rulers and dignitaries were present at palace inaugurations. Sargon II specifies foreign subject kings; however, it should be noted that these appear in lists together with high officials of Assyria (Luckenbill 1927, pp. 38–39, no. 74, pp. 50–51, no. 98), not as a separate group singled out to be terrified.
  44. For a summary of the ancient sources on audience, see Russell 1991, pp. 223–40. The lasting popular perception of Assyrian palace art as intimidation is arguably a consequence of our own cultural



preconceptions, the role of biblical portrayals of, especially, Sennacherib and the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 B.C.), and the particular history of research on Assyria. On the pervasive historical problem of an underlying cultural stereotype of “despotic” ancient Mesopotamian kings, see especially Bahrani 1998. From the specific standpoint of the “Assyria to Iberia” exhibition, amid an otherwise greatly encouraging public response to and engagement with the ancient material, one truly sad note was how much of Bahrani’s critique was borne out in some of the public responses to the violence of the Battle of Til Tuba reliefs. During the run of the show, we repeatedly heard—and tried to answer—assertions that the violence of the reliefs meant that the Assyrians were particularly violent people (as opposed to particularly assiduous and vivid recorders of their violence) and that—conversely, since this form of art is so particular to a period—this violent tendency was somehow timeless, ahistorical, and endemic to the Middle East.

45. On the overall arrangement of reliefs in the Northwest Palace, see Paley and Sobolewski 1987. Another way to look at the concentration in the throne room is to argue that, by dint of restricted access relative to the courtyards that precede it, campaign reliefs here are *less* suitable for the propagandistic purpose of intimidating visitors than would be those in the “reception wing” of the palace of Sargon at Khorsabad (Reade 1979a, p. 338)—or, by the same token, spaces such as the facades and Courtyard H of the Southwest Palace.
46. Russell 1991, pp. 171–74, fig. 92.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 173. On the throne room, see Russell 1998a.
48. Reade 2011, pp. 120–21; see also Barnett et al. 1998, pp. 27–30. Note that here, too, in Rooms XL and XLI, was discovered part of the Library of Ashurbanipal.
49. On access to the palace, see note 50 below.
50. On the winged lion inscription indicating the possible apartments of Tashmetum-sharrat, see Galter et al. 1986, pp. 31–32; Borger 1988; Grayson and Novotny 2014, pp. 38–43, no. 40. On the status of queens under the Sargonid kings, see Reade 1987; Ornan 2002; Melville 2004. On

Tashmetum-sharrat, and what was very probably her seal (BM ME 2002,0515.1), see Radner 2012. Although very little information has survived on Rooms LXV and LXVI, Layard (1853, p. 586) recorded that they contained campaign scenes, giving a brief description; more is known of Room LXVII and of the adjoining Court LXIV, one of the very few spaces outside the throne-room suite to apparently show campaign scenes from more than one geographical region (Barnett et al. 1998, pp. 127–30, nos. 605–32).

51. As Russell (1987, pp. 535–36) observes: “The only portion of the palace that may reasonably be termed ‘public’ is the outer throne-room court (H). . . . The throne room (I) as the site of royal audiences would presumably have been accessible to a select, but still wide-ranging group of people, including courtiers, provincial officials, and foreign diplomats. Access to the inner portions of the palace beyond the throne room must have been very restricted, and we may wonder who, if anyone, outside the court circle would have seen the reliefs there. The safest assumption, then, would seem to be that the primary audience for the majority of the preserved reliefs was the king and his court, and at a more abstract level, future kings and perhaps the gods. In practice, though, a combination of royal vanity and hospitality probably insured that favored visitors to the palace did not leave without being shown at least a sampling of its inner splendors.” Even this may be a generous interpretation of access: on the textual sources for gatekeepers suggesting severe restriction of access to the palace and king, see Radner 2010a.
52. Grayson and Novotny 2012, 2014, *passim*.
53. On this landscape engineering and the royal gardens, see especially Dalley 2013. (On the question of whether these gardens form a basis for the Greek descriptions of the hanging gardens of Babylon, see also Reade 2000; Spek 2008; Seymour 2014, pp. 55–56, 72–75.) On their manifestations in the reliefs, see Albenda 1974, 1976, 1977; Collins 2004; Thomason 2001.
54. On Neo-Assyrian royal collecting practices, see Thomason 2005, 2013.
55. Grayson and Novotny 2012, 2014, *passim*.

“As of March 2016, Twitter has more than 310 million active users.” So states the Internet encyclopedia Wikipedia,<sup>1</sup> and even though these users are limited to 140 characters per post, they produce a vast amount of writing every day. Despite repeated warnings that reading and writing are vanishing skills, it is clear that the written word plays an extremely important role in most people’s daily lives. This fact stands in contrast with a strong tradition in Western intellectual history that considers literacy to be harmful to the masses and writing a tool of oppression,<sup>2</sup> and still today some suggest that illiteracy is a blessing.<sup>3</sup> Part of this negative attitude toward the written word derives from Socrates’s dismissal of it at the time when writing first emerged in the European world. The Greek philosopher stated that writing does not lead to knowledge but only reminds the reader of something he or she already knew.<sup>4</sup> Writing is imitation, not creation. Socrates had good reason for his verdict (and had he known of Twitter, he probably would have been even more critical). Plato, in his *Theaetetus*, observed that when you break down the Greek written word into its component parts, you end up with elements that have no meaning in themselves: the letters of the alphabet.<sup>5</sup> Few in number—we use twenty-six of them, the Greeks twenty-four—they are mere building blocks for the representation of words in the spoken language. Alphabetic writing aims to record speech; therefore, it is secondary to speech.

What if Socrates had written using not an alphabet but rather the cuneiform script? When he uttered his criticism in fifth-century B.C. Athens, he was an active participant in a newly emerging and vibrant culture that developed at the fringes of a much older culture in the Near East, whose traditions by that time had existed for more than two thousand years. Its center was in Babylonia, and although that region in Socrates’s day was under the political control of foreign rulers, the Persians, its literate cultural traditions were not in decline. The Babylonian path to knowledge was entirely different from what

Marc Van De Mieroop

## Scholars and Scholarship in Assyria and Babylonia, or: What If Socrates Had Studied Cuneiform?

Socrates teaches us. He tells us that we have to peel away the confusion introduced by several layers of representation—writing being the outer one—to reveal ideal forms. In contrast, the Babylonians believed that truth was to be found in a proper understanding of the written form of reality.

The key to understanding Babylonia’s principles of higher learning is found in its libraries, several of which have survived.<sup>6</sup> In the 1980s, Iraqi archaeologists excavated a well-preserved example in the temple of the sun god Shamash at Sippar, just south of Baghdad. A small room in that temple functioned as a library close to Socrates’s time (fig. 1). Its pigeonholes contained some eight hundred tablets, only a handful of which have been published because of the disastrous events in Iraq after their excavation.<sup>7</sup> However, preliminary descriptions of the library’s contents indicate that it held the usual mixture of cuneiform literature, best known to us from the earlier library (or libraries) that Ashurbanipal of Assyria compiled in his capital Nineveh in the seventh century B.C. Although Assyria was distinct from Babylonia, it adopted the high culture of its southern neighbor, and kings such as Ashurbanipal avidly collected writings from the region. Some thirty-one thousand tablets and fragments that are now in the British Museum, London,



Fig. 1. Shelves from a tablet library at Sippar. Neo-Babylonian, 6th century B.C.

belonged to Ashurbanipal's collections, and they show us how Babylonian scholarship worked in practice.<sup>8</sup> We do not find treatises of the type Aristotle and other Greeks produced but instead large compositions that were created on the basis of coherent principles, and whose principles we can recover.

In order to demonstrate this point, I discuss two fields of scholarship that the Mesopotamians probably considered to be their most important scholarly disciplines: divination and lexicography. The largest corpus of texts in Ashurbanipal's library dealt with divination: some three hundred works are preserved, all of them consisting of multiple tablets. For example, the primary work of celestial divination, called *Enūma Anu Enlil*, was seventy tablets long and dealt with all visible and anticipated phenomena in the sky: the moon, the sun, the weather as personified by the storm god Adad, and the planets and stars (fig. 2). The predominance of divinatory texts in the library shows the magnitude of this scientific activity in Assyria and in Mesopotamia in general. Diviners were expected to predict the future based on the observation of everything in the surrounding world. Their observations and the outcomes they foresaw were all phrased using the same pattern: If X is observed, then Y will happen. Every occurrence in the natural world was ominous, such as the flight of birds

or the physical appearance of animals. Naturally, unusual events were even more significant. There were omens that interpreted malformed births, including lambs with more than one head or eight legs. In addition to observing spontaneous events, specialist diviners cut open sheep to examine their livers and other organs, and all discolorations and anomalies were considered important. Even the behavior of the sacrificial animal before its slaughter was taken into account, as in this omen: "If a sheep bites his right foot—raids of the enemy will be constant against my land."<sup>9</sup> Diviners would interpret the patterns rising smoke made, the configurations of oil poured on water, and so on. They also looked at human creations, such as the layout of a house or the color of a city's garbage dump.<sup>10</sup>

The scholarship involved was much more intricate than just observation and interpretation. Scribes created massive lists of potential omens by elaborating on a given theme. For example, they spun out the appearance of a cat into a list of good and bad omens depending on its color:

If a white cat is seen in a man's house—hardship will seize the land.  
 If a black cat is seen in a man's house—that land will experience good fortune.  
 If a red cat is seen in a man's house—that land will be rich.  
 If a speckled cat is seen in a man's house—that land will not prosper.  
 If a yellow cat is seen in a man's house—that land will have a year of good fortune.<sup>11</sup>

The pattern is easy to recognize: the ancient scholars extrapolated from the basic idea that a black cat meant good luck to conclude that a white cat meant bad luck, and they expanded this into three more options: red and yellow cats were good; speckled ones were bad. These same five color options appeared many times with all sorts of animals, stones, planets, and other living and inanimate things.



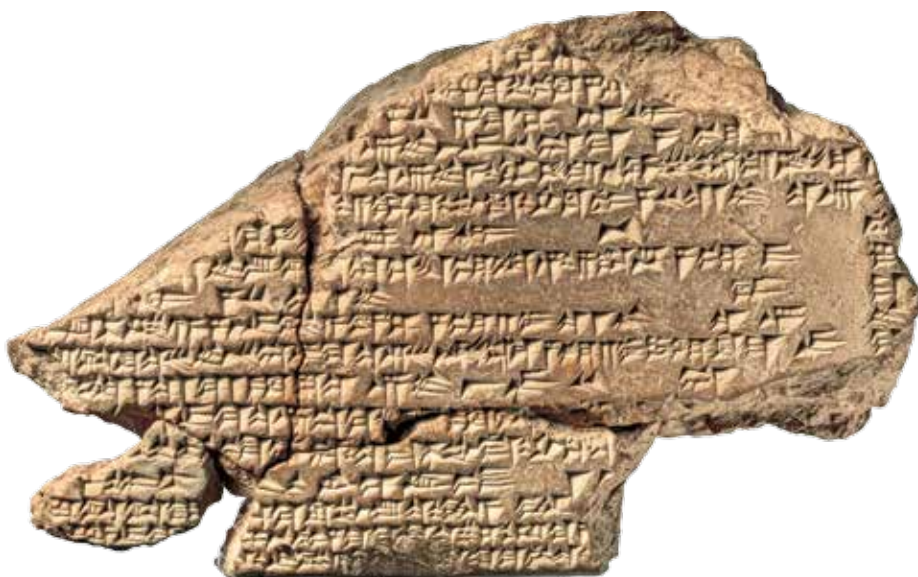


Fig. 2. Commentary on Tablet V of the astronomical collection *Enūma Anu Enlil*. Clay tablet with Babylonian cuneiform inscription. Mesopotamia, late first millennium B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, 1886 (86.11.503)

In the first millennium, astronomical omens became increasingly widespread, and the series describing and interpreting planetary alignments, eclipses, and the appearance of stars and many other celestial events became extremely lengthy. For example: “If the moon makes an eclipse in Month VII on the twenty-first day and sets eclipsed—they will take the crowned prince from his palace in fetters.”<sup>12</sup> Here, too, the scholars elaborated on a theme and created lists of days when the moon would eclipse, interpreting what would happen on each one. These were not observed eclipses, however, but options produced through extrapolation, most of which were actually impossible. No lunar eclipse can take place on the twenty-first (one can only occur the night of a full moon, that is, days fourteen to sixteen of the Babylonian lunar month, as Babylonian astronomers well knew). The omen was imagined, not observed.<sup>13</sup>

Second in importance to the divination texts in Ashurbanipal’s library are what we call lexical lists—a genre of writing that was

central to Mesopotamian scholarship throughout the region’s ancient history. It appears from the first evidence of writing in Sumer in the late fourth millennium B.C. to the moment when Greek culture had spread throughout Mesopotamia.<sup>14</sup> Lexical texts are often compared to dictionaries, but they are much more. Indeed, they contained within them a full record of the Sumerian lexicon with Akkadian translations—and, in other parts of the ancient Near East, other languages (Hittite, Hurrian, etc.). As in the case of omen lists, however, the vocabulary was not limited to what one could read in other texts, as new words were constantly created through elaboration. To take a simple example, color variations were attached to all sorts of words, and we find the sequence white, black, red, speckled, and yellow repeated numerous times. While this may have made sense for some animals, it is unlikely that this was true for all those included: sheep, goats, cows, dogs, pigs, ants, and scorpions. The pattern recurred elsewhere with stones, trees, and dates. The scribes thus created an

imaginary vocabulary with words that made perfect sense within the lists but that did not have any referent in reality.

At the same time that the lexical scholars created a new vocabulary, they analyzed words by taking them apart and looking at the different signs used to write them. A characteristic of the cuneiform script was that every sign had multiple readings and thus multiple meanings, and the ancient scholars listed each one. Again, they did not stick to what was common in practical writing but instead elaborated and made up multiple options, each of which was given a meaning. In this passage, for example, the following information is provided: the Sumerian sign studied in the second column, its pronunciation in the first column, and its Akkadian translation in the third column:

Pronunciation	Sumerian	Akkadian	(English)
be	BAD	<i>bêš<sub>u</sub></i>	(to depart)
be	BAD	<i>petû</i>	(to open)
ziz	BAD	<i>sāš<sub>u</sub></i>	(a moth)
til	BAD	<i>gamānu</i>	(to finish) <sup>15</sup>

Reading through the lexical lists may seem tedious, but to the Assyro-Babylonian eye they are the key to all knowledge. We know this because Assyrian and Babylonian scholars left behind many manuscripts that show how they investigated the true meanings of words and sentences by looking at the multiple readings of the cuneiform signs used to write them out.<sup>16</sup> This type of analysis is well exemplified in a literary text that was very important to the Babylonians, as they recited it at the New Year's festival. It is *Enūma Eliš* (the so-called Babylonian Epic of Creation), which describes the organization of the universe by the god Marduk. The first nine hundred lines of the poem tell the story of creation, but the author did not end once this was accomplished. He (or she) devoted another two hundred lines to a recitation of the fifty names of Marduk, explaining what each one means. For example:

Asari, giver of agriculture, founder of the grid (of fields), creator of cereals and flax, producer of (all) greenery.<sup>17</sup>

The author of the Creation Epic did not explain how such meanings could be derived from the name Asari, but later commentators did. In unfortunately poorly preserved manuscripts they showed how all three signs that made up the name Asari, a + sar + ri, could be assigned a number of readings and meanings, based on the information the lexical lists provided. For instance, the initial sign “a” was connected to water, its principle meaning in Sumerian, and to the grid of an agricultural field; “sar,” was connected to cereals, flax, greenery, and production. The last meaning was only clear if one knew that the sign could also be read ma<sub>4</sub>. And “ri,” because it sounded like “ru,” was taken to mean “to give.” The similarly sounding ra<sub>2</sub> could be read du<sub>3</sub> and in that form had a meaning “to create.” All these readings justified the conclusion that the name Asari held the meaning “giver of agriculture, founder of the grid (of fields), creator of cereals and flax, producer of (all) greenery.”<sup>18</sup>

The author of the Creation Epic analyzed all of Marduk's fifty names with the same technique and in this way connected the god to every aspect of the world he had created: agriculture, wisdom, warfare, and all other areas of life. Civilization came into being at the time of creation through this naming process. The final two hundred lines of the poem were not a nonessential afterthought or a mere liturgical recitation of a god's attributes through obscure names, as many scholars claim.<sup>19</sup> Rather, they present the culmination of creation: everything in the universe was made according to a divine plan. That plan may not have been immediately clear, but the poem provided the system of analysis, the key to understanding the universe.

All ancient Babylonian scholars were aware of these principles and displayed remarkable skill and inventiveness in their application. These were not word games, but analyses to reveal truth. Nothing had just one simple

meaning, rather everything had many different ones. But these were not just made up randomly; they were based on how the words were written out. This polyvalence was perhaps especially important for omens, which made up the largest part of Ashurbanipal's library. We still say that we "read" omens, and the Mesopotamians took this very literally. They believed that the gods wrote texts in all aspects of the world to communicate messages, and the diviner had to be able to interpret them in all their possibilities.<sup>20</sup>

Let us return to the Greek philosophers, to Socrates, his predecessors, and his successors. When confronted with the question of how to determine truth, they had to find new ways to do so. While the Babylonians saw fascinating details in their rich assembly of signs, all of which had multiple meanings, the Greeks saw combinations of meaningless symbols when they looked at the written expressions of reality. Some Greeks analyzed the written form of words through the technique of etymology, which they hoped would reveal their true meanings. Socrates is known to have made fun of the approach. In Plato's dialogue titled *Cratylus*, he analyzed the name of Apollo, breaking it up into smaller parts and connecting the god to music, divination, medicine, and archery. Socrates showed himself very apt at this exercise but then argued how meaningless it was.<sup>21</sup> To him, the written word was a poor imitation of the spoken one. If, however, he had studied cuneiform, he would have known that in the Babylonian system this was not true. And while the ancient Greeks were indeed inspired to adopt many elements from the east when they developed their culture, as several papers in this volume argue, they could not adopt Babylonia's way of understanding the world because they did not study its script.

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter> (retrieved June 12, 2016).
2. For a brief survey, see Harris 1989, pp. 37–42.
3. See, for example, Robson 2006, who speaks of the "blissful ignorance" of writing among Sumerian villagers and nomads.
4. *Phaedrus* 275c–d.
5. *Theaetetus* 202c–206b.
6. See Pedersén 1998 for an accessible survey.
7. See Al-Jadir 1987 for the archaeological context. Al-Rawi and George (1990, p. 149 n. 1) survey the texts found in it (some of them have been published since then). According to Al-Rawi and George (2006, p. 25), the library was abandoned in the early fifth century B.C., but they do not provide evidence for that claim. If correct, it no longer existed by the time Socrates was born, but other Babylonian libraries show that the intellectual traditions of the region survived into the first century B.C. (see Clancier 2009).
8. Fincke 2003–4. There is a brief description of the library in the catalogue of the exhibition that gave rise to the papers published in this volume (Arúz et al. 2014, pp. 68–69).
9. Guinan 1997, p. 423.
10. Maul 2013 contains a detailed examination (in German) of Mesopotamian divinatory practices. Maul 2007 is a less comprehensive English survey.
11. Guinan 1997, p. 424.
12. Hunger 1992, no. 103, line 12.
13. For other examples, see D. Brown 2000, pp. 132–36.
14. For a detailed survey, see Veldhuis 2014.
15. This passage derives from a lexical text called *Ea* (Tablet II, lines 73–76), which was edited by Civil 1979.
16. For a detailed survey of this type of analysis, see Frahm 2011.
17. *Enūma Eliš* Tablet VII, lines 1–2.
18. Bottéro 1977 was the first to look at these analyses in detail. Bottéro 1992, pp. 87–102, provides a synopsis that requires no Assyriological knowledge, from which the example I used derives. Frahm 2011, pp. 114–16, gives a summary of the argument.
19. For example, Dalley 1989, p. 230.
20. A full discussion of these practices can be found in Van De Mieroop 2016.
21. Sluiter 2014.







# Syria, the Levant, and the Phoenician Expansion

# A New Millennium— A New Order: Philistines, Phoenicians, Aramaeans, and the Kingdom of Israel

I decided to call this paper, “A New Millennium—A New Order,” because it reflects precisely what happened in the western part of Western Asia—the Levant if you like, toward the end of the second millennium B.C. and in the transition to the first. Almost overnight, so it seems, out go the old players on this well fought-over stage—the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and Hurrians, and, to a large extent even the Egyptians—and, in their stead, seemingly new peoples enter the theater. I say “seemingly” because, although in some cases the newcomers are precisely that, in others we are almost certainly looking at the same peoples under new guises and with new names.

In any event, if we are going to understand the arrival of the Philistines, the appearance of the Aramaeans, the development of Phoenician maritime trade, and the emergence of historical Israel in the first millennium B.C., and the roles these peoples played on the international stage before the intervention of the Assyrians, we need to step back into the latter part of the second millennium and look at the political situation and the balance of power in this western part of the Near East.

Key to our understanding is geography. When we look at a relief map we can see how the coastal strip is continuous from north to south, and the area to the north, which was to become Phoenicia in the first millennium, formed a cultural as well as geographical continuum with the rest of the southern Levant. This whole “L” shaped area can be defined as the Land of Canaan—what we may describe as the “Canaanite Continuum,” by which I mean that the material culture within it is broadly similar whether it comes from Ras Shamra, ancient Ugarit, on the northern coast, or from Pella in Transjordan (figs. 1a, b). The “hole” within the “L,” incidentally, was occupied by a related people, the Amorites, whose material culture, as exemplified by sites such as Ebla or Hamath, was distinctively different from that of the Canaanites. During the second millennium this region of central inland and northern Syria saw the arrival of non-Semitic people, the Hurrians, who came to dominate and control the Amorite city-states and welded them into a loose confederation known as Mitanni.

During the second half of the second millennium B.C., following the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt, the Land of Canaan with its numerous city-states was taken into direct Egyptian control and, together with Nubia, formed part of Egypt’s New Kingdom empire. Although undoubtedly oppressive and unpalatable to many Canaanites, for those who embraced the empire it was an intellectually stimulating and productive period. Far from stifling Canaan’s well-established and acknowledged inventiveness, artistry, and craft expertise, the Egyptians actively encouraged, facilitated, and exploited these attributes, and the city-states, although technically vassals of the pharaoh, continued to prosper. The cities of the coastal plain, in particular, responded to the new situation with great enthusiasm, establishing new trade connections off the mainland, and the material culture of the Canaanite Late Bronze Age, as the period is known, was enriched through the importation of luxury goods from the Aegean and Cyprus. This activity



Fig. 1a. Relief map of the Levant

earned the coastal cities international respect, prosperity, and, most importantly, a measure of autonomy. The traffic was not one way, and, already by the fourteenth century B.C., the Canaanites were seeking markets away from their own shores, as George Bass's and Cemal Pulak's excavations of a Canaanite merchant ship, wrecked off the southern coast of Turkey, have brilliantly demonstrated.<sup>1</sup> The increased trade and cultural contacts only served to enrich and further inspire the Canaanite craftsmen to develop and refine their artistic and technological skills still further, particularly in the fields of glass production and ivory carving.

What then happened to this apparently idyllic situation to transform the Canaanites of the second millennium into the seafaring Phoenicians of the Lebanese coast on the one hand and the hill-country Israelites on the other in the first millennium? The answer is a very complicated combination of factors, for although in terms of the material culture



of Canaan, everything looks fine, politically it was a powder keg. Egypt was no longer the only Great Power. In Anatolia, under its greatest king, Suppiluliuma (1344–1322 B.C.), the aggressive Hittite empire had reached the peak of its power, and its expansionist aims

Fig. 1b. Map of the Levant showing Late Bronze Age regions

had led it into northern Syria, where little by little it was taking over the Hurrian-led Amorite city-states of Mitanni. And although Mitanni had, for many years, been a traditional enemy of Egypt, this was not a development welcomed by the pharaohs. From the Amarna Letters, the diplomatic correspondence between Amenhotep III (ca. 1390–1353 B.C.), Akhenaten (ca. 1353–1336 B.C.), and Tutankhamun (ca. 1336–1327 B.C.), and the vassal princes of their empire, we learn of an extremely turbulent period of shifting alliances, petty rebellions, and most significantly the threat of the expanding Hittite empire. Over seventy of the letters are from Rib-Addi, the king of Byblos, and others are from the rulers of Tyre and Sidon.<sup>2</sup> It is quite clear from the tone of the letters that the vassals of these northern coastal cities had to play a precarious balancing act, maintaining a degree of loyalty to the Egyptians on the one hand, while making the right noises to the Hittites on the other. The situation was to get worse before it got better, and the years following Tutankhamun's reign were to see the territory to the north of Byblos (Amurru) fall into Hittite hands, including the great mercantile city of Ugarit. The Hittite expansion into inland Syria, as far south as Qadesh, put them on a path of imminent conflict with Egypt.

The first steps toward the creation of historical Israel can also be seen in the Amarna correspondence, where we can detect a real polarization of Late Bronze Age Canaanite society. The letters make frequent reference to the *Habiru*, seen by the Egyptians as bands of lawless troublemakers, living on the fringes of society and posing a threat to it. In reality, these *Habiru*, or Hebrews, as we better know them, can be characterized as freedom fighters—dissident, disaffected, and dispossessed Canaanites, whose military actions against the increasingly decadent Egypto-Canaanite establishment posed a threat to the stability of the empire. From the texts, it is clear that the principal arena of their activities was in the central hill country, and many of the letters refer to the role of a

certain Labayu and his sons as *Habiru* leaders, with a focus of their interests on the city of Shechem. There is an obvious resonance here, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that the adventures of the *Habiru*, as reported in the Amarna correspondence, formed such an important element of regional folk tradition that they were preserved and transmitted orally before being captured by the Bible writers in the sixth century B.C. to form the basis of the equally epic tales of Joshua and his conquest of Canaan.

In terms of both the Hittite threat and the widespread civil unrest, the Amarna Letters present a picture of an empire in disarray, and it was left to Seti I (ca. 1294–1279 B.C.) and his son, Ramesses II (ca. 1279–1213 B.C.), to bring matters under control. Under Seti I a peace treaty was signed with the Hittites, but it was short-lived, and Ramesses II was obliged to confront the armies of Muwatalli, the Hittite king, at Qadesh in 1289 B.C., a battle that, although indecisive, was to lead to a treaty bringing peace to Canaan and Syria, and a recognition of spheres of influence of the two great powers.

It was during the reign of Ramesses II that a major reorganization of the empire was effected. This was intended not only to bring the troublesome Canaanite princes to heel but also to strengthen the borders and streamline the taxation system. The process of restructuring, which involved the substantial redevelopment of certain key strategic cities at the expense of others that were allowed to decline, had the effect of increasing still further the movement of disaffected and dispossessed people—*Habiru* in other words—to the hill-country regions, and the increase in population there has been monitored and documented archaeologically by the results of numerous archaeological surveys.<sup>3</sup>

So it was that the dimorphic society, already apparent in the fourteenth century B.C.—lowland Egypto-Canaan on the one hand, and hill-country “alternative” Canaan on the other—became even more pronounced in the thirteenth century B.C. Egypt's recognition of the significance and status of the hill



country population became apparent in the reign of Merneptah (ca. 1213–1203 B.C.), when a victory stele, recording a campaign in southern Canaan, makes reference to “Israel,” the first recorded appearance of the name used to represent a loose-knit confederation of hill-country towns.

The peace, following the treaty between the Hittites and the Egyptians, proved to be short-lived, for around 1200 B.C. the Levant, and Egypt itself, experienced a ferocious series of attacks, by both land and sea, from an enigmatic collection of people of ultimately Aegean and Anatolian origin. They included people with names such as the Sherden, Shekelesh, Lukka, Teresh, Ekwesh, Denen, Tjeker, and the Peleset, better known as the Philistines. Although known as the “Sea Peoples,” many of them arrived by land, sweeping through Anatolia and

hastening the downfall of the already ailing Hittite empire. They arrived in ox carts with their families and possessions, ready to settle. Some Sea Peoples, most prominently the Sherden, were already known to the Egyptians, having previously served in their army as mercenaries. One group used a type of burial in anthropoid coffins (fig. 2), while another brought the practice of interment in pairs of large jars joined shoulder to shoulder—so called “double-pithos” burials. It was at least one of the groups that introduced cremation burial to the region.<sup>4</sup>

Ramesses III (ca. 1184–1153 B.C.) fought a great battle in northern Canaan and was able to hold the Sea Peoples at bay (fig. 3), but only temporarily, because they also invaded by sea, all along the Levantine coast.<sup>5</sup> In Syria, the great Canaanite commercial center of Ugarit was destroyed, as were sites farther



Fig. 2. Ceramic anthropoid coffin lid. Beth Shean, Northern Cemetery. Iron Age I, 12th–11th century B.C. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia (29-103-794)

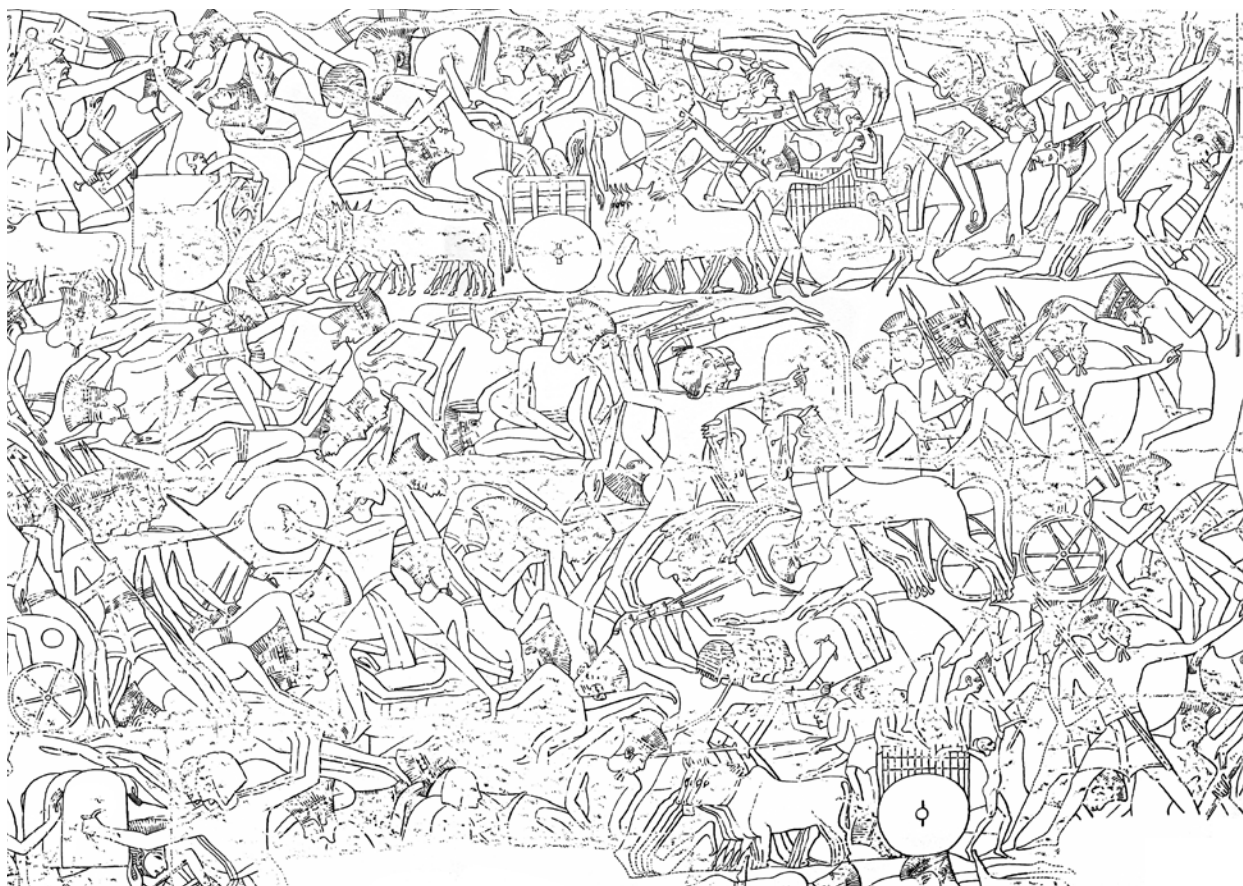


Fig. 3. Detail of drawing of relief with land battle between Egyptians and Sea Peoples. Medinet Habu, Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III. Dynasty 20 (ca. 1186–1070 B.C.)

inland, such as Alalakh and Emar, the trading entrepôt on the most westerly bend of the Euphrates. To the south, many important Canaanite coastal cities in Palestine were destroyed—Ashkelon, for example. There is evidence also in Cyprus for newcomers of Aegean origin, and it may be safely proposed that eastern Cyprus was used as a staging post for raids against the coast.

Few cities along the Levantine coast seem to have escaped destruction at this time, but many in northern Israel, such as Dor, Abu Hawam, and Akko, show immediate re-occupation, with pottery indicative of the Sea Peoples. In particular, the Tjeker and the Shekelesh seem to have settled here.<sup>6</sup> On the Syrian coast, Tell Sukas was destroyed and

immediately reoccupied; although Ras Shamra, ancient Ugarit, was completely destroyed, occupation continued at the nearby site of Ras Ibn Hani, which had been the residence of the queens of Ugarit. In both cases again, the pottery indicates occupation by a group of the Sea Peoples.<sup>7</sup>

The Nile Delta was itself attacked, and although the pharaoh Ramesses III was able to repulse the invasion (fig. 4), he was forced to allow groups of the Sea Peoples to settle on the southern Levantine coast. The most significant of these groups was, of course, the Philistines. Once settled on the southern coastal plain, the Philistines developed a new, highly attractive style of painted pottery, which is so characteristic that it can be

used as a tool to monitor their settlement and expansion (fig. 5).

In all of the confusion that engulfs the end of the second millennium, however, it is very interesting to note that there is no evidence to suggest that the Lebanese coastal cities were destroyed. This seems to be the case at Tyre and Byblos, and most recently at Sidon.<sup>8</sup> It is best seen at the site of Sarepta, an extensively and well-excavated site, where the occupation sequence shows no major interruptions or destructions from the sixteenth to the eighth century B.C.<sup>9</sup> One cannot help but wonder, therefore, whether there was not some

element of collaboration between the Sea Peoples and the inhabitants of these cities. What the nature or basis of this collaboration might have been is difficult to determine. Perhaps it resulted from preexisting and long-standing trade agreements, or it might simply have arisen out of necessity—protection in return for safe harbor. In any event, the legacy of the relationship between the Sea Peoples and the Phoenicians is clear, as manifested, for example, by the later ceramic anthropoid coffins found at Arwad and Tartus.

Returning to the twelfth century, however, the main effect of the Sea Peoples' wars in

Fig. 4. Detail of stone relief with sea battle between Egyptians and Sea Peoples. Medinet Habu, Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III. Dynasty 20 (ca. 1186–1070 B.C.)







Fig. 5. Philistine pottery. Ashdod. Late Bronze Age

respect of Egypt was not the damage they caused physically, but the extent to which they drained that country's economy; to the point that the empire was simply no longer sustainable. Some time around the middle of the twelfth century, during the reign of Ramesses VI or VII, the empire was dissolved, and its resources, military, economic and administrative, were withdrawn. The effect was dramatic and far-reaching. The political map of the whole region had changed forever. In the north, in the region of Syria formerly controlled by the Hittites, there was a resurgence of indigenous Amorite culture manifested in the rise of the Aramaean city-states, overlaid in places by the remnants of the old Hittite order. This is perhaps the most realistic way to view the Aramaeans, a people who make their first certain appearance in historical texts only in the early eleventh century B.C. With regard to their origins, it used to be assumed that they moved into central and northern Syria as seminomadic pastoralists following the demise of the Hittite empire during the twelfth century. As with the Amorites before them, older scholarship dreamed up a "traditional homeland" somewhere in the Syrian Desert. In reality, there is nothing to support this view, and it is more reasonable to see the Aramaean

"culture" of the first millennium, which is fundamentally urban in character, as a revival of the indigenous Amorite population of the second, reasserting its identity after the departure of the Hittites. And just as Canaan to the south had been dominated by the Egyptians in the second millennium B.C., leaving a lasting legacy in the material cultural traditions of the Phoenicians, so too did the formerly Hittite-controlled Aramaean regions retain enough of that empire's cultural attributes to warrant the descriptive appellation "Neo-Hittite." At Carchemish, Hamath, and Aleppo, for example, all of which retained in their ruling classes members of the old Hittite aristocracy, the Hittite element was particularly strong. The material culture recovered during the course of their excavation, along with the so-called "Hittite Temple" at 'Ain Dara in the Afrin Valley (fig. 6), seem well deserving of the term "Neo-Hittite."<sup>10</sup>

At Damascus, on the other hand, which never succumbed to the Hittites, the material culture remained resolutely Egypto-Canaanite. In other places, not affected by association with the Hittites, such as Guzana (Tell Halaf), a somewhat naive style is apparent with rather charming and childlike sculptural representations of humans, mythical creatures, and deities, and decidedly un-ferocious-looking lions. The origins of this style can be traced back to the third-millennium B.C. Amorite heartland, as manifested, for example, at Ebla.

Returning to our redrawn map, in the region between Tell Sukas and Akko, the Canaanites, having almost certainly been in league with the Sea Peoples, were relatively unscathed, and it was this enclave, including the cities of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, and Arwad, which would, from this point on, become known as Phoenicia. We will return to this point later. Farther south on the coast, there were pockets of Sea Peoples, most prominently in the south where the Philistines were consolidating their position, developing the polity of Philistia. The absence of the Egyptians meant that they could begin to expand eastward, leading inevitably to



conflict with the population of the heartland of Canaan.

In this heartland, there was an immense vacuum left by the departure of the Egyptians. With the removal of their resources, including most probably the Canaanite elite, the Egyptians left behind a society so deeply divided and impoverished that it would take some 250 years to reintegrate the two elements of its population (lowland Canaanites and hill-country Hebrews or Israelites) and regain a degree of prosperity. This period of recession is clear both from the archaeological record and from the absence of references to the region in the contemporary

texts from Egypt, Assyria, and the Aramaean states. The situation can in fact be monitored archaeologically through the excavations I have been undertaking since 1985 at the site of Tell es-Sa'idiyeh in the Jordan Valley.<sup>11</sup> Between the impressive architectural phase, Stratum XII, representing the period of Egyptian control of the site by the pharaohs of Dynasty 20, and the equally extensive Iron Age city of Stratum VIIA, we uncovered no less than seven distinct phases of occupation, covering the entire period from the departure of the Egyptians in the mid-twelfth century to around the middle of the ninth century B.C.

Fig. 6. View of temple at 'Ain Dara





Fig. 7. Double-pithos burial. Tell es-Sa'idiyeh cemetery

During the twelfth century B.C., the site, which consists of a large double tell, was an important outpost of the Egyptian empire. On the Upper Tell, excavations have revealed the extraordinary architecture of this phase—Stratum XII, corresponding to Egyptian Dynasty 20. We have excavated the remains of the city wall and several administrative buildings, including a so-called governor's residence. We have also revealed and preserved the site's unique water system.

On the Lower Tell, we have uncovered the extensive cemetery contemporary with this phase. To date, some 460 graves have been excavated, many of them showing strongly Egyptian features, both in terms of grave goods and burial practices. A large number of double-pithos burials in the cemetery indicate the presence in the population of a group of the Sea Peoples, testifying to the claim of Ramesses III that he settled such people in strongholds bound in his name (fig. 7).<sup>12</sup>

Stratum XII was destroyed by fire toward the end of the twelfth century B.C., having survived under local control for fifty or so years after the departure of the Egyptians. Following a brief and somewhat ephemeral phase of squatter occupation in the burned-out ruins, the site seems to have been abandoned for a period of time. When occupation

resumed toward the end of the eleventh century, it was on a greatly reduced scale, and Stratum XIA shows a small un-walled settlement confined to the inner zone of the tell's surface. The main feature of this phase was a small, mud-brick built shrine or temple, bipartite in plan, with an inset niche in the rear wall containing a basalt incense burner. Elsewhere, the buildings were sparse and poorly constructed. The temple did not persist beyond Stratum XI, but the impoverished settlement pattern continued through three further architectural phases, covering the tenth and early ninth centuries B.C. Although the architecture is of little note, the pottery collections from these phases are of immense importance, since it is by reference to these assemblages that the depth and extent of the recession can be monitored.

The end of the recession is dramatically demonstrated at Sa'idiyeh, with an explosion of settlement in the middle of the ninth century B.C., Stratum VII shows a well-planned city with substantially constructed architecture laid out on a grid system with streets and alleyways (fig. 8). Every part of the tell's surface was utilized, and the settlement was surrounded by a city wall. Evidence for industrial specialization was found suggesting that weaving and textile preparation were major undertakings. The buildings show considerable sophistication with great attention to detail: most units are provided with bathrooms that have elaborate systems of drainage.

The pattern at Sa'idiyeh then is clear and may provide a model for sites elsewhere—a period of decline and recession after the departure of the Egyptians, followed by a revival of fortunes in the ninth century B.C. Although poor and ill documented, this period of recession did, in reality, see the formation of historical Israel—the development in the ninth century B.C. of the first nation-state whose capital was at Samaria. That this did not happen before the end of the tenth century is clear from one important piece of external evidence. Around 924 B.C., the Egyptian pharaoh Sheshonq I (ca. 945–924 B.C.) conducted a military campaign in

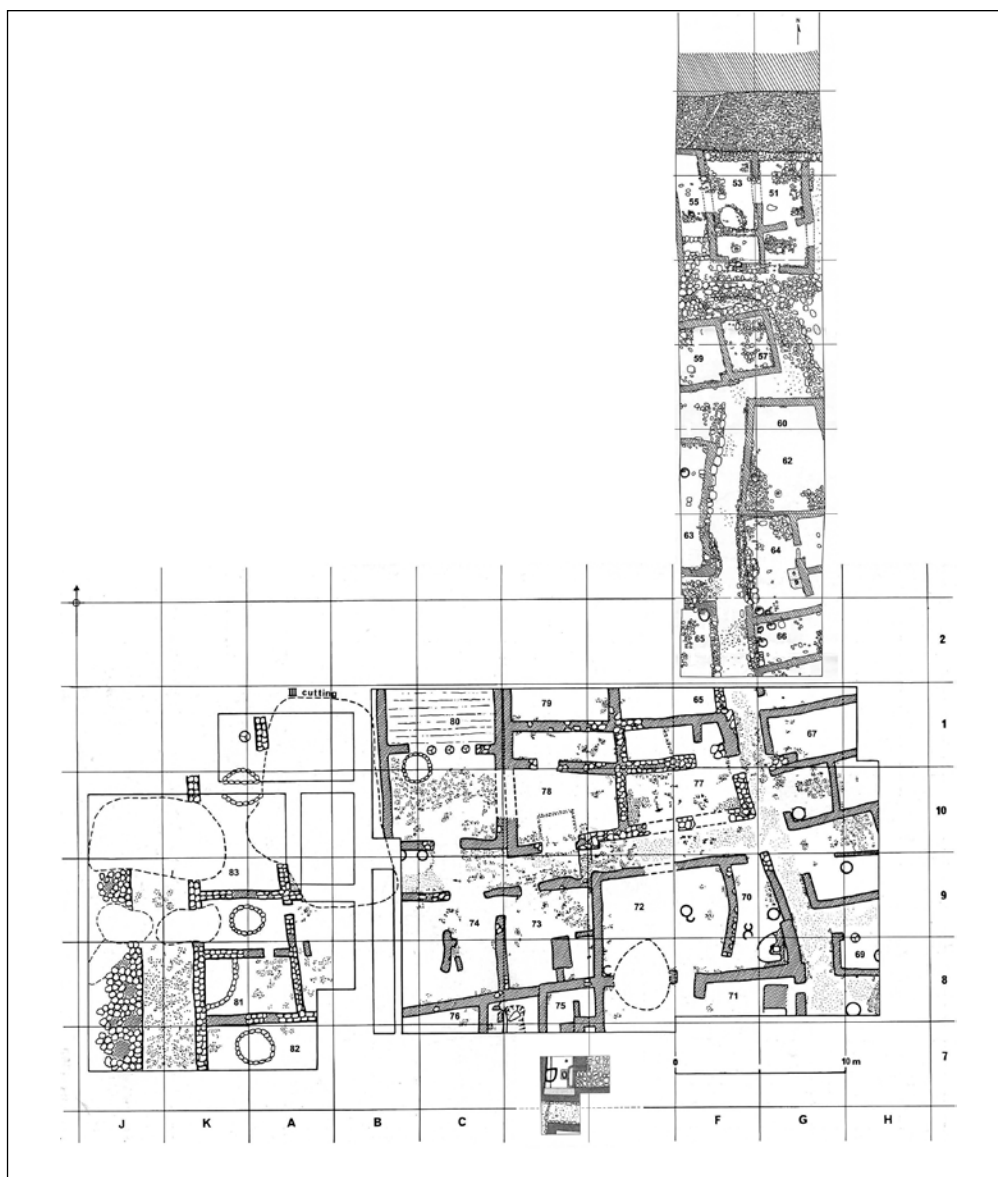


Fig. 8. Composite plan of Tell es-Sa'idiyeh Stratum VIIA

Canaan. The biblical account of this campaign suggests that it was primarily directed toward Judah. It is stated in 1 Kings 14 that Sheshonq (or Shishak as he is referred to) came up against Jerusalem and took plunder from the treasures of the House of the Lord and from the king's house. However, an examination of Sheshonq's own record,

preserved on the walls of the Amun temple at Karnak, reveals that Jerusalem is not mentioned at all and that the two main thrusts of the campaign were directed against Philistia on the one hand—to prevent Philistine expansion into the Negev—and against the cities of the north on the other. These two objectives are clear from the itinerary, which

shows two main offensives, one striking north by way of Gaza and Gezer to conquer such cities as Megiddo, Ta'anach, and Beth Shean, and the other driving deep into the Negev where sites such as Arad and Beer-sheba are mentioned.<sup>13</sup>

What is especially significant is that the Sheshonq inscription fails to recognize polities in the region that go beyond the city-state: no united or divided monarchy, no Judah, and no Israel. It would be about another fifty years before Omri established his kingdom of Israel at Samaria, and it may well be that it was Sheshonq's campaign that provided the catalyst for this development, galvanizing the disparate hill-country communities toward nation-statehood.

In reality, once formed, this *was* the kingdom of Israel—*Israel was Israel*, and in a very real sense represents a “United Monarchy.” We have to put out of our minds the so-called “United Monarchy” of David and Solomon, which must be consigned to the realms of legend rather than history, and instead follow the archaeology that has, over the past twenty years or so consistently reassigned supposedly Solomonic remains (both architectural and artifactual) from the tenth century to the ninth.<sup>14</sup> If we do this, we can answer questions that have remained problematic for quite some time:

Why, in the reign of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.), and as recorded on the Kurkh Stele, did Judah not support the coalition headed by the kings of Hamath and Damascus, which confronted the Assyrians at the battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C.?<sup>15</sup> Ahab of Israel certainly did.

Why, on the Moabite Stele, does Mesha claim that his land has been oppressed by Omri of Israel, when geographically Moab is adjacent to Judah and is quite a distance from Israel?<sup>16</sup>

Why, in the reign of Adad-nirari III (810–783 B.C.), did the Assyrians record a campaign against Israel and Palasatu (Philistia), with no mention of Judah? Why, indeed, is there no mention at all of Judah in the Assyrian records until the time of

Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) in the eighth century B.C.?

And finally, in the revised scheme of things, which reassigns the so-called Solomonic buildings of the royal cities to the time of Omri, why was that king able to impose a uniform architectural plan on the defenses and gateways of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer (fig. 9), when Gezer lies within the territory of Judah?

The answer to all of these questions is the same and is quite obvious: there *was* no independent kingdom of Judah until after the decline, or even demise, of the Omride dynasty in the eighth century B.C. Until this time, there *was* only one kingdom, based in Samaria, which controlled the territory later known as Judah. Archaeology has only served to confirm this view. The results of excavation and survey have revealed that until the eighth century B.C. Judah was sparsely populated, with a few towns of very modest size. Even Jerusalem has failed to produce evidence for a sizable settlement, either in the Early Iron Age, or in the preceding Late Bronze Age.<sup>17</sup> Even the so-called Tel Dan inscription, dated to the ninth century B.C., does not support the existence of a United Monarchy of David and Solomon: it refers to *Bit-Dawid*, the House of David, in very much the same way as reference is made to the Aramaean city-states such as Bit-Adini or Bit-Agusi.<sup>18</sup> The formula preserves the name of the dynasty's founder, who might have been little more than a local folk hero and not necessarily a major player in the political arena.

Before dismissing David and Solomon and their United Monarchy as a complete fiction, however, it is important to remember that the relevant biblical texts themselves were compiled, edited, and largely composed during the period of the Babylonian captivity in order to fulfill the aspirations of an exiled people, that is, to reestablish a specifically Judahite polity in the Levant. In reconstructing their history, the exiles needed to create a golden age—something to look back to as a source of inspiration. In reality, the only credible monarchy of international status was



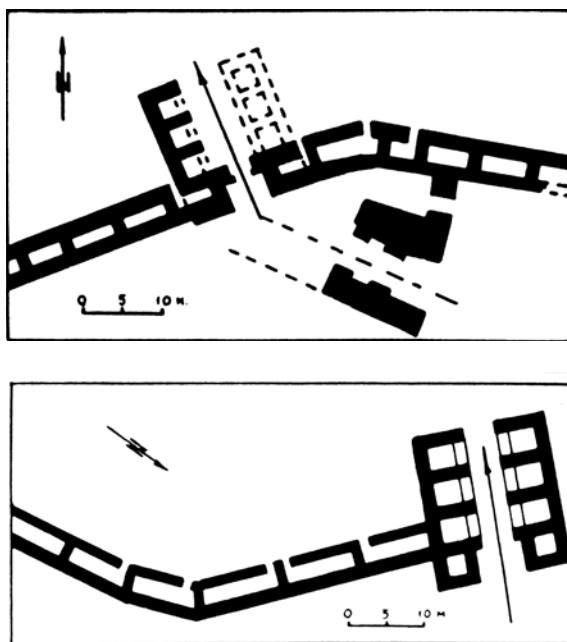
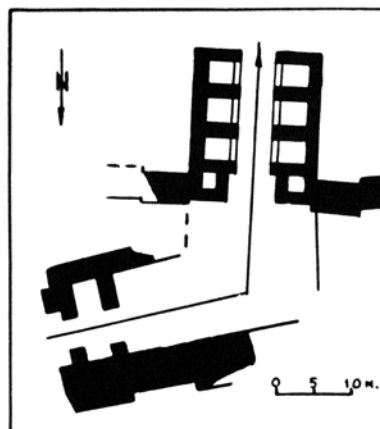


Fig. 9. (Clockwise from top left): Gates at Gezer, Megiddo, and Hazor



that of Omri and Ahab, based at Samaria. This, however, would have been totally unacceptable to a Judahite audience, for whom, in the days of the true divided monarchy in the eighth century, the northern kingdom of Israel was anathema. It was therefore necessary to invent an even more impressive united kingdom—verging on an empire—that was both earlier than Omri and centered on Jerusalem. In other words the *real* United Monarchy of the Omrides might well have served as the model for the *invented* monarchy of David and Solomon. Perhaps it was to the court of king Ahab that the queen of Sheba made her fabled visit!

I am certainly not saying that David and Solomon did not exist. They probably did, perhaps as local Judahite heroes, responsible perhaps for the movement that led to the separation of Judah from Israel in the eighth century. In fact, the Tel Dan inscription argues for such a case: the House of David representing the dynasty that led to the accession of Ahaziah and Hezekiah as independent monarchs. We should also remember that just as Judah represents a subset of Israelite or Hebrew culture, which itself

emerged from a Canaanite background, the Bible, as a Judahite creation, preserves the common collective literary heritage not only of Judah but also of formative Israel, and before it—Canaan.

The collapse of the Solomonic “house of cards” takes a lot of baggage with it and provides, in fact, a very cleansing and liberating experience. It enables us to look at the early Israelite monarchy in a totally new light, one in which Omri and his son Ahab hold center stage as powerful rulers who, for the very first time, created a kingdom of international significance. It was an extensive kingdom. Under Omri at least, according to the so-called Mesha Stele, it included Moab in Transjordan.<sup>19</sup> As mentioned above, we can also assume that it included the territory of later Judah. The passage in 1 Kings 9 relating to the “store cities” of Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo preserves the reality of the situation. These cities were developed by Omri, not Solomon. With the revised dating of the Iron Age levels at these sites, this view is fully substantiated archaeologically. And I think we can go further, suggesting that the fortified cities and fortresses in the

Negev, which, architecturally, are closely similar to the “store cities,” were developed not by Solomon, nor even his biblical successor, Rehoboam, but by Omri, king of Israel, in order to defend the southern borders of what was in reality his united kingdom, and perhaps even to safeguard the route to the Red Sea.

So when Ahab came to the throne on the death of Omri, he inherited a significant and relatively prosperous kingdom. The capital city, Samaria, was finely constructed, and was clearly quite opulent. The House of Ivories referred to in the Book of Kings was a reality—a reception room with furniture lavishly adorned with ivory inlaid plaques of Phoenician manufacture, many of which were found during the two major campaigns of excavations there (fig. 10).<sup>20</sup> Otherwise, what do we know about Ahab? The biblical texts, with their anti-Israel agenda, of course paint a very negative picture of a rather weak and gullible ruler, easily led into sin by his atrociously evil Phoenician wife, Jezebel. But again, if we strip away the colorful but inaccurate stories of encounters with

the Prophet Elijah, Naboth’s vineyard, and even the manner of Ahab’s death, we are left with a rather different picture of a competent and strong ruler of international renown.

In 853 B.C., the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III embarked upon a major campaign to the west, the events of which are described in detail on the so-called Kurkh Stele.<sup>21</sup> Having marched down through northern Syria, capturing Aleppo on the way, he confronted a coalition of twelve kings at Qarqar in the Orontes Valley. The coalition, led by Irhuleni of Hamath, included, in addition to the camel fighters of Gindibu the Arab, the kings of Damascus, Arwad, and Moab, but third on the list, supplying a formidable 2,000 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers, was Ahab, king of Israel. Clearly Ahab had considerable resources at his disposal. Given this status, his marriage to a Phoenician princess would have been an entirely appropriate way of cementing a political relationship already apparent in the importation of ivories and the extensive use of Protoaeolic capitals in Israel’s architecture (fig. 11).<sup>22</sup> The Bible names her as Jezebel,



Fig. 10. Phoenician-style ivory plaque depicting Heh figures. Samaria. Iron Age II, ca. 9th–8th century B.C. Israel Museum, Jerusalem (IAA 1933–2550)

daughter of Ithobaal, king of Tyre. The Bible actually describes her as daughter of the king of the Sidonians (1 Kings 16:31). This misattribution results from another biblical anachronism: at the time of compiling the Book of Kings, Sidon was the most prominent Phoenician city, and so became a generic term for all Phoenicia.

Although Jezebel is not attested in any contemporary textual source, her existence need not be doubted. The Jewish historian Josephus, writing in the first century A.D. and quoting from two otherwise unknown sources, Diodorus's *History of the Phoenicians* and a work by Menander of Ephesos, provides in his *Against Apion* a list of kings of Tyre, most of whom are unknown from other sources, but the list, although mentioning Ithobaal, does not refer to Jezebel.<sup>23</sup> He does refer to her in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, but here he is paraphrasing the biblical account.<sup>24</sup> The only rather tenuous fragment of archaeological evidence for Jezebel is a gray stone seal in the collections of the Israel Museum, inscribed with the Phoenician form of the name, "Jezebel."<sup>25</sup> What do we know about her?

Leaving aside the somewhat lurid accounts in the Bible, virtually nothing, but at least it is possible to give her some sort of context.

The same circumstances that created the conditions for the emergence of the Israelite monarchy, namely, the withdrawal of the Egyptian empire and the collapse of the Hittite empire in the twelfth century B.C., were also responsible for the definition of the Phoenician city-states. For once the new players had taken up their positions on the redrawn political stage of the twelfth century B.C. as described above, the only part of the Levant relatively unaffected by these upheavals was that part of the Levantine coast between Akko and Tell Sukas (fig. 12). The Canaanites of this region, partly through geographical isolation and partly through active collaboration with the incoming Sea Peoples, secured for themselves autonomy and power. And it was they, more than anyone else in the region, who preserved, nurtured, and developed the purest ideals of Canaanite culture, and ultimately transmitted them to the west through trade and colonization.



Fig. 11. Stone column capital. Megiddo. Iron Age II, 10th–8th century B.C. Oriental Institute, Chicago (OIM A13394)



Fig. 12. Map of the Levant showing Iron Age regions prior to Assyrian conquests

It is regrettable that despite their prominence abroad, so little is known, archaeologically, of the Phoenicians in their homeland.<sup>26</sup> As far as one can tell, and despite the lack of architectural remains, Byblos seems to have been the most prominent of the cities in the earliest

phase of Phoenician history, providing from its discovered inscriptions several names of rulers from the thirteenth through tenth century B.C. It is Byblos, too, that is singled out in the colorful *Story of Wenamun*, which dates to the eleventh century B.C. and wonderfully reflects the changed situation on the Levantine coast following the withdrawal of the Egyptian administration about a century before.<sup>27</sup>

As a senior official of Ramesses XI, Wenamun was sent to Phoenicia in order to obtain cedarwood. He left from Tanis on a merchant ship with a Levantine captain. First he went to Dor, which was controlled by the Tjekker. He was robbed of all the gold and silver he needed for payment for the cedar but continued his journey to Tyre and then to Byblos. Arriving penniless and without proper credentials, Wenamun was treated very indifferently by the Byblian prince, Zakarbaal, who demanded payment from Egypt before releasing any timber. An envoy eventually arrived with the required payment, and Wenamun was able to leave. Unfortunately, Wenamun's ship was intercepted by the Tjekker, who had been sent to arrest him. Zakarbaal interceded on Wenamun's behalf, and the latter was able to escape. In the end, however, his ship was driven off course to Cyprus where he was received by a Cypriot queen. At this point the account breaks off, and sadly we do not know the conclusion.

One of the main points about the Wenamun story is that it highlights the vastly increased status of the Phoenician cities. Only a century earlier it would have been utterly unimaginable to have treated an Egyptian official with the contempt meted out by Zakarbaal. It is within the context of this affluence and high status that we must set Jezebel's family. By the ninth century B.C., Tyre seems to have become the preeminent Phoenician city, and Ahab's marriage to a princess of this city would have been seen as a highly prestigious union. Together they would have made a formidable team, and one that could well have developed long-distance joint trading ventures.



Finally, what do we know about the deaths of Ahab and Jezebel? According to the Bible, Ahab was killed at Ramoth Gilead in the third of a series of battles with the king of Damascus, named Ben-Hadad. This seems, however, unlikely, since, firstly, according to the Assyrian records, Ahab's contemporary was Hadadezar (Assyrian Adad-Idri) and not Ben-Hadad, and, secondly, whatever the name of the king of Damascus, according to the Kurkh Stele, the two monarchs were fighting side by side at Qarqar in the same year as Ahab is supposed to have died. In reality we have no evidence to suggest that he didn't die perfectly naturally. The same applies to Jezebel. Again, according to the Bible, after Ahab's death, and in the military coup which brought Jehu to the throne, Jezebel was thrown from a window at Jezreel and her body fed to the dogs—colorful, but improbable.

For the military coup itself, we have no external evidence, and it seems most likely that it is another literary invention—a contrivance designed to promote a Yahwistic ideal. In reality, we have no reason to doubt the Assyrian evidence provided by the Black Obelisk, the monument that records the submission of Israel to Shalmaneser III, some twelve years after the battle of Qarqar (see Collins essay, p. 46, fig. 4).<sup>28</sup> The Israelite king is named as Jehu *son* of Omri—not “Jehu of the house of Omri.” The Assyrians did not make mistakes of this sort, and it would not be out of line to suggest that Jehu was, in fact, Ahab's younger brother, and in these terms, the Omride dynasty ruled for a much longer period than hitherto thought.

In any event, the kingdom of Israel was short-lived. It came to an end in 701 B.C., when Samaria fell to the Assyrian king, Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), and it was only after this defeat that Judah came to the fore as the final Hebrew kingdom—one that preserved and encapsulated both the heritage of Israel and the deeply embedded traditions of Canaan.

1. Pulak 2008.
2. Moran 1992; Liverani 2004, pp. 97–124.
3. Finkelstein 1988, 1995.
4. On the Sea Peoples in general, see T. Dothan 1982; Tubb 2014b. On double-pithos burials, see Tubb 2000.
5. Tubb 2014b, pp. 38–39.
6. Stern 2000.
7. Tell Sukas: Riis 1996. Ras Ibn Hani: Lagarce et al. 1987; Bounni et al. 1998.
8. Bikai 1978; Doumet-Serhal 2013, esp. pp. 108–12; Tubb 2014a.
9. Pritchard 1978, esp. pp. 76–77, 111–48; Tubb 2014a.
10. I. Winter 1983a; Abou-Assaf 1993; Stone and Zimansky 1999.
11. Tubb 1988, 1990, 2006; Tubb and Dorrell 1991, 1993, 1994; Tubb et al. 1996, 1997. See also [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/research\\_projects/tell\\_es-sa%E2%80%998idiyeh\\_excavations.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/research_projects/tell_es-sa%E2%80%998idiyeh_excavations.aspx).
12. Double-pithos burials: see note 4, above. Egyptian features in cemetery: Tubb 2006, pp. 86–90; Green 2010, 2011.
13. Epigraphic Survey 1954.
14. Tubb 2008.
15. Kurkh Stele: Grayson 1996, pp. 11–24, A.o.102.2.
16. Mesha Stele: B. Schmidt 2006b.
17. Mazar 2006; Reich 2011.
18. Biran and Naveh 1993, 1995; B. Schmidt 2006a; Aruz et al. 2014, p. 175, cat. no. 64.
19. Mesha Stele: see note 16, above.
20. Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 176–77, cat. no. 65a–e.
21. Kurkh Stele: see note 15, above.
22. For example, at Megiddo: Novacek 2011, pp. 86–87, no. 43a–b.
23. Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.154–56.
24. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 8.328, 9.47. Cf. 1 Kings 18:4, 18:13.
25. Korpel 2006a, 2006b.
26. Tubb 2014a, pp. 132–33.
27. Lichtheim 2006 (1976), pp. 224–30.
28. Black Obelisk: Reade 2014. For the obelisk's text: Grayson 1996, pp. 62–71, A.o.102.14, pp. 148–51, A.o.102.87–91.

# The City of David in Jerusalem and Its Phoenician Connection

If a tourist had traveled through time to reach the Old City of Jerusalem in the nineteenth century and asked a local dragoman where one could visit the site of Jerusalem mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, he or she would have been taken to the Citadel at Jaffa

Gate at the western edge of the city. However, 150 years of excavations and study have shown us that the most ancient part of Jerusalem is in fact located on the elongated hill to the south and outside of the city walls (fig. 1). This is an obvious location, since from the valley next to this hill emanates Jerusalem's only perennial spring.

The ancient mound, identified with the City of David of the Bible (2 Samuel 5:7), has been excavated, intermittently, since 1867. Working on the site between 1995 and 2010, the author headed what can be considered the twelfth expedition here, and four additional expeditions have followed since.<sup>1</sup> And yet, the full archaeological sequence of the site is not known. The following lines will concentrate on one discovery that colors a specific period in the history of the site, unknown till now, and will try to connect it to the subject under discussion in this volume.

Fig. 1. Aerial view of the City of David area





Fig. 2. Stone volute capital. Jerusalem, City of David. Iron Age II, 9th–8th century B.C. Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA 1968–455)

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL MARKERS FOR STATEHOOD

An important Iron Age II relic of a public edifice discovered at the site, which might indicate statehood, is the large stone volute capital discovered by Kathleen M. Kenyon in the City of David in the 1960s (fig. 2). Unfortunately, it was found as part of a heap of fallen stones, so its exact date, as well as the exact place where it was originally erected, is unknown.<sup>2</sup> Similar capitals were found at the Judahite site of Ramat Rahel, about 5 kilometers south of Jerusalem, but all other existing parallels are from cities located in the northern state of Israel (Samaria, Megiddo [see Tubb essay, p. 101, fig. 11], Hazor, and Dan).

A recent study of the volute capitals expresses the view that they are the creation of the Omride dynasty,<sup>3</sup> who ruled the kingdom of Israel from Shomron (Samaria) in the

ninth century B.C., and from here their use was spread to various cities in the country, including Jerusalem. However, the visual components of these capitals (volute, central triangle, lower and upper tassels on the volutes) are already at home in the Late Bronze period, as can be seen at Ugarit.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1980s, Yigal Shiloh found additional evidence on the site of Kenyon's discovery. Among the outstanding finds should be mentioned fragments of carved wooden furniture, some of imported (from Syria?) boxwood,<sup>5</sup> as well as a hoard of around fifty bullae (small lumps of clay bearing stamp seal impressions that would have been affixed to documents or containers) bearing Hebrew names.<sup>6</sup> The former are objects of prestige, while the latter indicate the existence of an elaborate system of administration. Both date to the seventh century B.C.



Fig. 3. Rock-cut “pool” near Gihon spring, Jerusalem, City of David

#### THE ROCK-CUT “POOL”

The author’s excavations near the spring have added to our knowledge of the elaborate water supply system and its massive fortification, dating to the Middle Bronze II period (eighteenth to seventeenth century B.C.). One of the main finds was a large (10 by 15 meters, with a maximum depth of around 12 meters) rectangular cutting in the rock, close to the spring (fig. 3).<sup>7</sup> This has been dubbed the “pool,” although it never held water (hence the quotation marks). It was part of the water system of the city, but in the period discussed here this system went out of use and was replaced by another water system. The abandoned “pool” was reused in the eighth century B.C. when a common house was constructed in it.

#### A SIFTING PROJECT

The discovery of the rock-cut “pool” and the Iron Age II house constructed in it was an important addition to the archaeology of Jerusalem during the Iron Age, although one could not even guess what was still ahead. The inhabitants of the house made use of the four vertical rock walls but preferred not to live on the bottom of the “pool.” Instead, they raised the floor by about three meters. This modification required throwing in boulders and a huge amount of debris (about 250 cubic meters), which they must have scraped from the immediate vicinity. This debris was flattened and a floor that sealed it was created by treading the debris into a hard beaten surface.<sup>8</sup>

#### THE FINDS

The debris from beneath the floor was meticulously sifted by a wet process and careful hand picking. Fortunately, the garbage heap with which the “pool” was filled contained a large quantity of pottery sherds. These sherds, while not spectacular finds, provided extremely important evidence for dating, ranging from the late ninth to the early eighth century B.C. By extension, these dates can also be assigned to all other materials found in conjunction with the pottery sherds. It should be mentioned that excavations in the City of David in recent decades have produced only a handful of pottery sherds from this time span, hence the importance of this discovery: it fills in a gap in the archaeology and history of the city.

#### BULLAE

The meticulous sifting project unearthed a large quantity of clay lumps. These bore imprints of the various materials they were originally attached to (papyrus sheets, fabrics of sacks, leaves, and wicker of baskets, etc.) on one side, and about 180 of them bore the impressions of stamp seals on the other. Hence, they must be defined as bullae for the sealing of letters or of parcels containing various commodities. All these bullae were found broken, indicating that they



were part of incoming mail, as opposed to the bullae found by Shiloh (mentioned above), which were mostly intact, indicating sealed local archival documents. From where these sealed items arrived must be investigated. A petrographic analysis carried out by Yuval Goren on a sample shows the local affinities of the clays from which the bullae were made.

The bullae did not carry any Semitic letters (Hebrew, Aramaic, Phoenician, Ammonite, Moabite, or Edomite). This means that they probably date to the early part of the eighth century B.C., before the introduction of names on stamp seals. A similar discovery, of a few bullae with iconic impressions but without any names in any of the languages mentioned above, was previously made at Samaria in the edifice in which carved ivories were also found.<sup>9</sup>

The bullae bear mainly iconic representations. In addition, some bullae feature Egyptian hieroglyphs, or rather mock-hieroglyphs, which serve as decorative elements. Among the many bullae, I point out the following, which are relevant to our subject:<sup>10</sup>

(a) A bulla with a representation of a stylized volute capital (fig. 4). On this bulla, the central triangle and simple stylized volutes are clearly visible. The capital motif is doubled, with one capital above and inverted in relation to the other, rather than appearing in its usual context as an architectural capital. We have found several broken bullae with additional elements in combination with this motif.

(b) A bulla with a representation of a large fish (fig. 5). The fish is depicted skeletally, as though its flesh had been consumed. Next to the fish are seen some blurred lines. I see in these blurred lines a simple representation of a dinghy floating above the fish and a person in it (one can call it “the old man and the sea”). Another reading of this representation sets the fish vertically on its tail with undefined objects on either side. Unfortunately, we have no indication as to whether this bulla might have sealed a parcel containing a shipment of fish (see below).



Fig. 4. Clay bulla with depiction of a stylized volute capital. Jerusalem, City of David. Iron Age II, early 8th century B.C. Israel Antiquities Authority



Fig. 5. Clay bulla with depiction of a fish. Jerusalem, City of David. Iron Age II, early 8th century B.C. Israel Antiquities Authority



Fig. 6. Clay bulla with depiction of a Phoenician ship. Jerusalem, City of David. Iron Age II, early 8th century B.C. Israel Antiquities Authority

(c) A bulla that fortunately survived almost in its entirety (fig. 6). It depicts a Phoenician vessel. The ship is facing left, and its horizontal body with vertically upright prow and stern are clearly visible. The top of the prow seems to be pointed like a bird's beak but

might also represent a different animal's head. The vessel is provided with two oars and one large oar serving as steering rudder. At this rudder is depicted a simple figure of a helmsman. At its center the vessel is equipped with a heavy mast. This mast is very thick and massive at its base, narrowing with height. Its outer face is bulgy, and it seems to be a tree trunk.

This representation brings to mind two famous and important sources for Phoenician seamanship in the Iron Age. One is the depiction of Phoenician ships on Assyrian reliefs from Sargon's palace at Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad), where, however, the vessels' prows have horses' heads and most vessels have no masts (see p. 2). The bulla, with the document or parcel it sealed, must have arrived in Jerusalem from one of the Phoenician cities.

The other source is the famous biblical lament on Tyre (Ezekiel 27: 3–6, 29), of which it will suffice to quote the following:

Say to Tyre:  
 O you who dwell at the gateway of the sea,  
 Who trade with the peoples on many coastlands:  
 Thus said the Lord God:  
 O Tyre, you boasted,  
 I am perfect in beauty . . .  
 Your builders perfected your beauty.  
 From cypress trees of Senir  
 They fashioned your planks;  
 They took a cedar from Lebanon  
 To make a mast for you.  
 From oak trees of Bashan  
 They made your oars;  
 Of boxwood from the isles of Kittim,  
 Inlaid with ivory,  
 They made your decks.  
 . . .  
 And all the oarsmen and mariners,  
 All the pilots of the sea,  
 Shall come down from their ships  
 And stand on the ground.

#### AN IVORY POMEGRANATE

Sifting debris from ancient sites resembles panning for gold: tedious work that on rare occasion brings to light something extraordinary. In our case, this was the tiny carved ivory object, some 18 millimeters in height, that shows a bird, most probably a dove, sitting upon a pomegranate (fig. 7). This object was probably attached to a piece of furniture as part of its decoration. A somewhat later parallel, from the early fifth century B.C. and in terracotta, is kept at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, originating from Howard Crosby Butler's excavations at Sardis.<sup>11</sup>

Two features of the Jerusalem ivory might connect it to the Phoenician world from where it might have been imported. First, the fact that it is made of ivory, the prestigious material that the Phoenician craftsmen and artisans carved extensively and traded.



Fig. 7. Ivory pomegranate with dove sitting above. Jerusalem, City of David. Iron Age II, 9th–8th century B.C. Israel Antiquities Authority

Second, the pomegranate and the dove were attributes of the Greek goddess Aphrodite, who moved to Greece from the east, that is, from the Syrian and Phoenician realm. The name for pomegranate in Latin—*malum puni-cum*—indicates its connections to Phoenician culture as well, since “Poeni” was the name given by the Romans to the Carthaginians, the western Phoenicians.

#### FISH BONES

The sifting project retrieved fish bones in large numbers, altogether about 10,600 (fig. 8). Fish bones are a trivial find at sites located along the Mediterranean coast but require an explanation at inland sites like Jerusalem. As the crow flies, Jerusalem is located at a distance of about 55 kilometers from the nearest Mediterranean port of Ashdod. More importantly, it is located in the mountains, about 750 meters above sea level. It would have taken a merchant with his pack animal a few days to reach Jerusalem with the merchandise, which implies that fresh saltwater fish could never be brought to Jerusalem. Only fish that were dried, salted, smoked, or marinated could make this journey successfully. This discovery points to a fish industry at the Mediterranean ports and to organized trade.

The fish bones were studied by Omri Lernau from Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup> From the 10,600 bones, 5,414 (51.1 percent) could be identified to *taxa* (the various species of the fish), and the overall identification of the definable bones resulted in the following table:

Common name	Scientific name	No.	%
(* = freshwater)			
Porgy	<i>Sparidae</i>	3,628	67.0
Mullet	<i>Mugilidae</i>	1,044	19.3
Catfish*	<i>Clariidae</i>	216	4.0
Croak, Drum	<i>Sciaenidae</i>	191	3.5
Shark, Ray	<i>Elasmobranchii</i>	39	0.7
Nile perch*	<i>Lates niloticus</i>	136	2.5
Grouper	<i>Serranidae</i>	44	0.8
St. Peter's fish*	<i>Tilapia</i>	102	1.9
other		14	0.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,414</b>	<b>100.0</b>



Fig. 8. Fish bones. Jerusalem, City of David. Iron Age II, 9th–8th century B.C. Israel Antiquities Authority

This table shows that about 91.3 percent of the fish brought to Jerusalem were saltwater fish, namely from the Mediterranean ports. More than this, a small number (2.5 percent) of Nile perch, which are freshwater fish, were imported from as far as the Nile in Egypt.

Lernau's study is now in its second stage in which he aims to calculate the quantity of fish meat that these bones represent, since, for example, a Nile perch is on average a much larger fish than a porgy.

#### A PERFORATED PLAQUE

An intriguing discovery unearthed in the sifting was a thin rectangular bone plaque. The plaque was provided with a short perforated tang, indicating that it was probably worn with a string around the neck (fig. 9). The plaque has three rows of five perforated holes, fifteen holes altogether. By itself it seems strange, but similar objects of this type have been encountered in Iron Age II strata at various sites around the country: Gezer, Lachish, Tell el-Far'ah (south), and Aro'er. The objects from the last two sites are decorated at their edge with a volute capital design.<sup>13</sup> This motif points to a possible northern origin from the kingdom of Israel, or even from Phoenicia.

Fig. 9. Bone plaque with three rows of perforations. Jerusalem, City of David. Iron Age II, 9th–8th century B.C. Israel Antiquities Authority



The object from Aroer provides the conclusive explanation for the function of these objects. It has four rows of perforations: three rows of ten (thirty perforations altogether), and a fourth row of twelve perforations. This, most probably, was a device to reckon time by moving a peg each day from hole to hole, or, in short, a calendar. All the other examples have thirty perforations, and the object from Jerusalem contains half the number of holes. It should be noted that the development of an elaborate administrative system, which made use of dates upon its documents, could do well with these objects as timekeeping devices. In this respect it should be mentioned that in the Hebrew Bible (1 Kings 6:1, 37, 38; 8:2) the names of three Phoenician months (Ziv, Ethanim, and Bul) are recorded,<sup>14</sup> which are mentioned in conjunction with the construction and consecration of the Temple to the God of Israel, an edifice constructed by Phoenician craftsmen (1 Kings 5:15–32).

#### THE PHOENICIAN EPISODE IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

Turning now to the Hebrew Bible we find for the period dated to the late ninth century B.C. that a Phoenician “episode” occurred in Jerusalem. We read in 2 Kings 8:16–18, 25–27; 11:1–20 (with its later repetition in 2 Chronicles 22:2, 10–12) that Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab of the Omride dynasty, and Jezebel. Ahab ruled from Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of Israel.<sup>15</sup> Jezebel herself was the daughter of Ithobaal, the king of Sidon, one of the Phoenician city-states. Thus three rulers with a Phoenician affiliation—Jehoram, Athaliah (who after Jehoram’s death reigned as sole monarch for some time), and later their son Ahaziah—ruled over the kingdom of Judah from Jerusalem.

Several, somewhat later, entries in the historical sources relate Tyre and Tyrians with Jerusalem. Two of these entries occur in the Book of Nehemiah, who was the *Peha* (Persian governor) of the city in the fifth century B.C.

In the description of the wall of Jerusalem, which was rebuilt and repaired under his governorship, the Fish Gate is mentioned as one of several city gates (Nehemiah 3:3; 12:39). As the description of the Jerusalem city wall is given in a true geographical sequence (starting from the north, and progressing counterclockwise back to north) then the Fish Gate mentioned must be located on the northwestern side. I believe that this gate received its name because next to it, probably extramural, was located the local fish market. According to the biblical text (2 Chronicles 33:14) the Fish Gate was already present in the eighth century B.C., during the reign of Manasseh, and it is mentioned again in the seventh century B.C. during the reign of Josiah (Zephaniah 1:10). This supposition, that a fish market was located on the northwestern outskirts of Jerusalem, may one day be verified by a corresponding chance discovery of fish bones.

Another biblical reference in Nehemiah



(13:16) refers to the merchants from Tyre who resided in Jerusalem and brought fish to the city and sold it on the Sabbath, a deed that annoyed the governor Nehemiah. These references indicate clearly that Tyrians were present in the city, and suggest that the main commodity they traded was fish.

The last mention of Tyrians in Jerusalem, according to a recent suggestion of mine,<sup>16</sup> takes us to the first century A.D. In his famous description of Jerusalem, the Jerusalemite historian Flavius Josephus mentions the topography of the city is bisected by the Valley of the Tyropoeon.<sup>17</sup> This Greek toponym is referred to by Josephus only once. It is translated as the Cheesemakers' Valley, a translation accepted by all. Yet it is difficult to accept at this particular time in Jerusalem, in the large Temple City, that anyone made a living from agriculture let alone the dairy industry of cheesemaking. The many archaeological excavations in the specific stratum carried out in that valley, which have exposed remains of well-appointed and decorated city houses, do not support this. I repeat here my suggestion to move the accent on the word from the Greek word Τυρός to Τύρος. This adjustment changes the meaning of the word from "cheese" to "Tyre" (the Phoenician island city). Although we have no other contemporary references to the presence of Tyrians in Jerusalem in the first century A.D., we know, mainly through inscriptions, of a Phoenician community living in Maresha (some 30 kilometers southwest of Jerusalem).

#### SUMMARY

The Phoenician presence in Jerusalem during the second half of the ninth century B.C. is well established through the biblical text. Now archaeological discoveries are able to furnish a few corroborative finds. Some of these seem to be unequivocal, such as the fish bones from the Mediterranean and the representation of a Phoenician vessel on a bulla. Other finds, though less certain, might also be the outcome of these connections, such as the volute capitals in stone as

architectural elements or as depictions on clay bullae. In this latter category should also be placed the ivory pomegranate and the time-reckoning device. Some of these elements point to state prestige and administration, while others point to international trade.

1. For the history of excavation on the site, see Reich 2011, pp. 5–276.
2. Kenyon 1963, p. 16, pl. VIII:B; Kenyon 1967, p. 59, pl. 20. Strangely, Kenyon completely omitted this important discovery from the book that sums up her excavations in Jerusalem (Kenyon 1974). Furthermore, in her book *Royal Cities of the Old Testament* (1971), for some unknown reason she disregards the similar capitals that were discovered at Hazor, Samaria, Megiddo, Ramat Rahel, and Jerusalem.
3. Lipschits 2011.
4. Aruz 2014b, p. 10, fig. lower left.
5. Shiloh 1984, p. 19, pl. 34.
6. Shoham 2000.
7. Reich 2011, pp. 206–19.
8. This sifting project was carried out for eighteen months by a group of six to eight paid students. In retrospect, the important finds retrieved justified the high expense of sifting.
9. Crowfoot 1957.
10. The study of the iconography of the bullae was undertaken by Othmar Keel from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.
11. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of The American Society for the Excavation of Sardis, 1926 (26.164.20). Butler 1922, p. 118, fig. p. 124 (right); Richter 1953, p. 70 n. 32, pl. 51k; Greenewalt et al. 1988, pp. 37, 49 n. 36. Thanks go to my colleague Yuval Baruch for drawing my attention to this object and to Michael Seymour from the Metropolitan Museum for these references.
12. Lerna et al. 2008.
13. For all the available parallels, see Fox 2011.
14. The Hebrew names for the months were simply their consecutive numbers: the First month, the Second month, etc.
15. According to 2 Kings 8:26, Athaliah was the daughter of Omri, hence Ahab's sister. The possibility that she was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel should be preferred. Note that her name is already Judaized. It has a Phoenician component, Atil (also found in the name of the Phoenician town of Atlith on the Mediterranean coast south of Haifa), augmented with the Judahite theophoric component *-yahu*.
16. Reich 2011, pp. 327–28.
17. Josephus, *The Jewish War* 5.140.

# The Levant and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Early Phases of the Iron Age: The View from Micro-Archaeology

A broad, unprecedented in scale, micro-archaeology and palaeoenvironmental research project, which focused on the Iron Age in the Levant, was carried out in Israel between 2009 and 2014, with some of the studies still in the process of publication. The project (hereafter IAMA = Iron Age Micro-Archaeology) was funded by the European Research Council and was directed by Steve Weiner of the Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel, and the author. About forty researchers—faculty members at different institutions, postdoctoral researchers, and doctoral students—took part in the project, which dealt with ten research tracks. Team members were active in the field at eleven sites in Israel and analyzed samples from eighteen additional sites in Israel, plus one in Cyprus and three in Greece. Though the project focused on the Levant, some of its results shed light on the central topic of this volume—that is, on the relationship between the ancient Near East, in particular the Levant, and the west, in particular the eastern Mediterranean. The studies discussed here have recently been published or submitted for publication in various professional journals; what has not been done is to

integrate their specific contributions to the study of east-west relationships in the Iron Age.

In this article I present results that allude to the early phases of the Iron Age. In terms of the archaeology of the Levant, they relate to the Iron I and the Iron IIA periods, thus approximately to the four centuries between the mid-twelfth and the early eighth centuries B.C.<sup>1</sup> This time span corresponds to an era with no imperial domination, when the Levant was ruled by territorial kingdoms such as Aram-Damascus, Israel, and Judah.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT DATING:

### SYNCHRONIZING EAST AND WEST

The relative ceramic phases for the Levant and the Aegean Basin are well established, but the absolute chronologies of both regions have been disputed,<sup>2</sup> which has hindered studies of connections between them. Massive radiocarbon dating programs in the last few years in Israel seem to resolve this matter for the Levant;<sup>3</sup> however, the absolute dating of Greek ceramic phases remains contested,<sup>4</sup> especially since there are very few (if any) radiocarbon dates from *secure* contexts in Greece. This situation has resulted in two contrasting dating systems for the Protogeometric and Geometric phases in the Greek world: the Conventional Aegean Chronology, which followed the Samaria-based Low Chronology, and the Aegean High Chronology based on the traditional biblical-based South Levantine Chronology.<sup>5</sup>

One of the goals of the radiocarbon track of the IAMA project was to harmonize the chronologies of the two regions. We therefore scrutinized possible sites and contexts in Greece and decided to work on samples from Lefkandi, Kalapodi, and Corinth. Our team dated sixteen samples from these sites, which span the period from the Late Helladic IIIC to the Middle to Late Geometric. These samples allowed us to calculate the date of the highly important transition from the Sub-Mycenaean to the Protogeometric periods. Good results can serve as a peg for Aegean Iron Age chronology. Adherents of

the Conventional Aegean Chronology put this transition in the mid- to late eleventh century B.C., while those who support the High Chronology place it close to the end of the twelfth century B.C. According to our results the (ceramic) transition from the Sub-Mycenaean to the Protogeometric took place in the second half of the eleventh century, approximately centered on 1025 B.C.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, our results support the Conventional (Low) Aegean Chronology.<sup>7</sup>

The IAMA project did not succeed in shedding light on other transitions in the Aegean ceramic sequence. Hence, in a sequel paper we turned to a different method, which can be described as “chronology by proxy.”<sup>8</sup> The idea is simple: while much of the Aegean sequence does not have radiocarbon anchors, pottery items representing the majority of the Aegean phases (or their Cypriot contemporaries) were found in good contexts in well-radiocarbon-dated strata in the Levant. We therefore built a model for the entire Aegean sequence from the Late Helladic IIIB2 to the Middle Geometric II (with implications for Late Cypriot IIC to Cypriot Geometric III) according to the (mainly) Levantine dates. These results, too, (Table 1)<sup>9</sup> support the Conventional (Low) Aegean Chronology; because of the broad geographical distribution of Greek pottery, they have far-reaching implications for the archaeology of the entire Mediterranean Basin, from Iberia to the Levant.

#### THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE: THE CRISIS YEARS AND AFTER

For a century now, scholars have debated the impact of climate on the ancient civilizations of the Levant and the Aegean Basin, with much attention given to the “crisis years” at the end of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>10</sup> A major goal of the IAMA project was to better understand climate fluctuations in the Bronze and Iron Ages. In order to do so we turned to palynology, acknowledging that the study of fossil pollen grains is a powerful tool in the reconstruction of past vegetation and climate history. We extracted two cores of sediments,

from the shores of the Dead Sea and from the center of the Sea of Galilee; they were subjected to high-resolution pollen sampling (sample per about forty years compared to the usual resolution of sample per about 200 years), as well as to intense radiocarbon dating.<sup>11</sup> The results of our investigation have implications for the entire eastern Mediterranean arena.

The most striking feature in the Sea of Galilee pollen record appears at the end of the Late Bronze Age, between ca. 1250–1100 B.C. This time interval is characterized by the lowest arboreal vegetation percentages in the entire sequence; it is also the most prolonged event in the time-interval investigated (fig. 1).<sup>12</sup> The dramatic decrease in tree percentages was not accompanied by an increase of secondary anthropogenic palynological indicators, showing that the shrinkage of the Mediterranean forest could not be interpreted as a result of human pressure. The dry event at the end of the Bronze Age was also detected in high-resolution pollen records from the Syrian coast and the Nile Delta.<sup>13</sup> Northern pollen records from Lake Abant in the western Pontus and from the Eski Acıgöl crater-lake on the central Anatolian plateau<sup>14</sup> also point to a decrease in arboreal frequencies at the end of the Late Bronze Age. These palynological records suggest that the dry event at the end of the Late Bronze Age took place across a vast geographical area—at least from northern Turkey to the Nile Delta. Brandon Drake proposed that the Levant arid phase may have been milder than in other regions, such as Anatolia or mainland Greece.<sup>15</sup> The Lake Van isotopic record corroborates this assumption.<sup>16</sup>

Two other pieces of information should be noted for the same time interval. The first comes from archaeology: the wave of destructions in the Levant at the end of the Late Bronze Age commenced in the middle or second half of the thirteenth century<sup>17</sup> and continued until about 1100 B.C.<sup>18</sup> The second is historical: textual evidence from the entire ancient Near East—from Hatti, Ugarit, and

Aegean and Cypriot ceramic phases	Sites in Levant	Results 68%
1. Late Helladic IIIB2, correlated with advanced to late phase of the Late Cypriot IIC	Megiddo K-8, K-7; Beth Shean N-4	– 1187
		1205 – 1176
2. Late Helladic IIIC Early 1 (represented by local monochrome in the northern Levant), correlated with Late Cypriot IIC/IIIA transition	Tweini 7a	1193 – 1168
		1188 – 1132
3. Late Helladic IIIC Early 2/Middle 1 (represented by Cypriot imports), correlated with early phase of Late Cypriot IIIA	Beth Shean S-3a	1170 – 1114
		1145 – 1083
4. Late Helladic IIIC Middle 2 (correlated with Philistine I [monochrome] in the southern Levant), correlated with advanced phase of Late Cypriot IIIA	Miqne VIIIB	1126 – 1053
		1098 – 1035
5. Late Helladic IIIC Late (correlated with Philistine II [bichrome] in the southern Levant) and Sub-Mycenaean, correlated with Late Cypriot IIIB	Beth Shemesh 6, 5; Miqne VIB, VB	1069 – 1026
		1049 – 1018
6. Early Protogeometric, correlated with Cypriot Geometric IA	Megiddo K-4, H-9, pre-destruction	1040 – 1005
		1031 – 984
7. Euboian Middle Protogeometric/Late Protogeometric, correlated with Cypriot Geometric IB/II	Hadar	1017 – 940
		1001 – 917
8. Euboian Late Protogeometric, correlated with Cypriot Geometric II	Dor D2/8c; Megiddo H-7, Q-5	973 – 905
9. Euboian Sub-Protogeometric I, corresponding to Attic Early Geometric I and correlated with Cyprian Geometric II/III Early	—	Estimated, 25 years
		966 – 890
10. Euboian Sub-Protogeometric II, corresponding to Attic Early Geometric II and correlated with Cypriot Geometric III Early	Rehov V	930 – 877
		917 – 851
11. Euboian Sub-Protogeometric IIIA, corresponding to Early Attic Middle Geometric I and correlated with Cypriot Geometric III Middle	Rehov IV	891 – 815
		869 – 752
12. Middle Geometric II	Beth Shean P-7	793 –

Table 1: Dates of Aegean phases (white rows) and transitions between phases (gray rows) according to radiocarbon results in the Levant, 68 percent probability; all dates B.C.



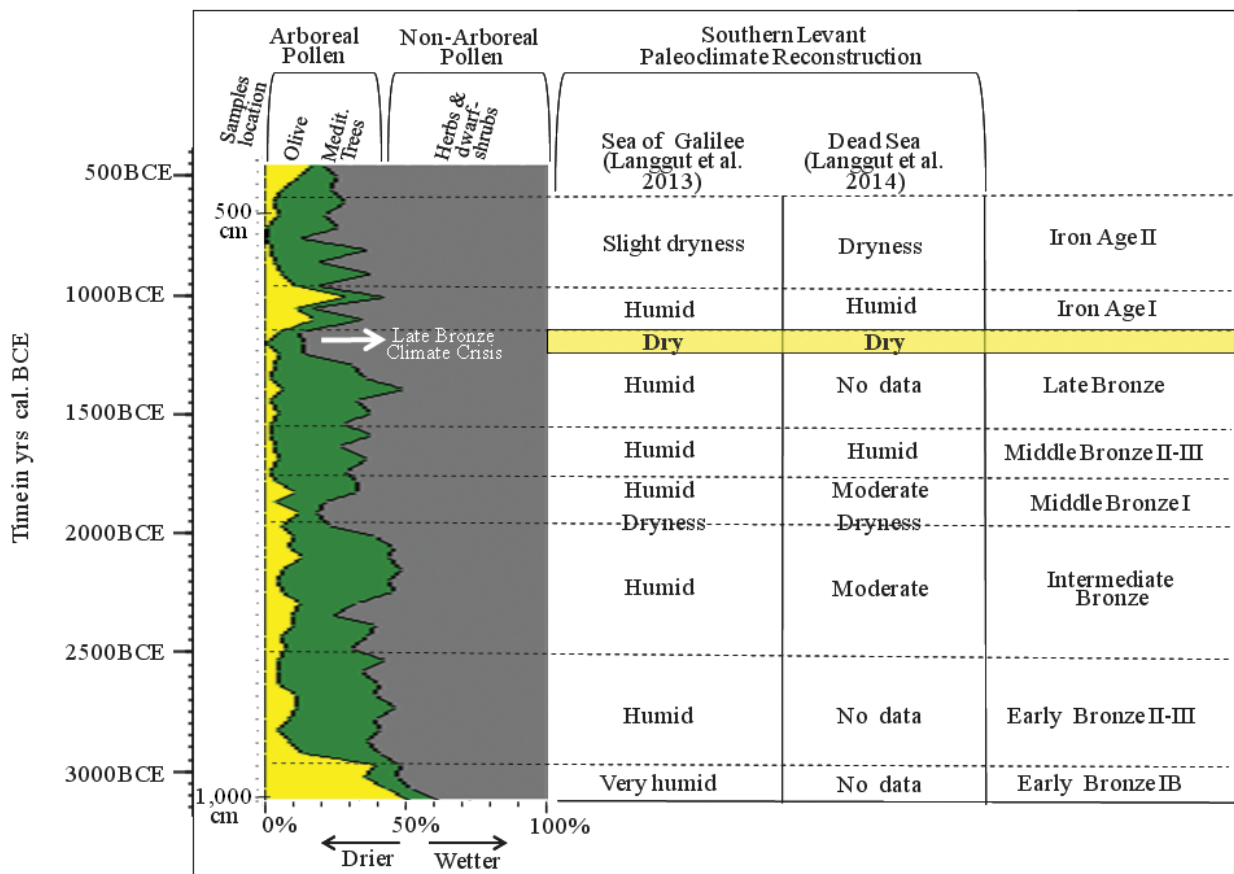


Fig. 1. Pollen diagram of the Sea of Galilee Bronze and Iron Ages and southern Levant paleoclimate reconstruction. Slight differences between the Sea of Galilee and Dead Sea pollen records derive from the fact that the latter's area is a meeting point for three different environments—Mediterranean, semiarid, and desert—which makes it more vulnerable to climate change.

Emar in the north via Aphek in Canaan to Egypt in the south—hints at droughts and famine at the end of the Bronze Age, between the middle of the thirteenth and the end of the twelfth centuries B.C.<sup>19</sup> This means that the three records—the palynological evidence for a dry period at the end of the Late Bronze Age, the destruction of cities in the Levant, and textual testimonies of droughts and famine—cover the same period, ca. 1250–1100 B.C.

Based on detailed written sources, Ronnie Ellenblum has recently discussed a period of severe droughts and famine that shook

different parts of the Near East in the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D.<sup>20</sup> These texts demonstrate that a major component in the calamity—no less important than reduction in rainfall—was the phenomenon of extremely cold winters, which destroyed agricultural output, especially in the northern steppe regions. These cold spells and the ensuing failure of crops motivated masses of people to move to warmer areas in search of food, and they, in turn, spread havoc on their way. The impact was felt from Khorasan and the Danube areas in the north, to the Near East and to Egypt in the south.

Based on these data—palynological, archaeological, and textual for the end of the late second millennium B.C. and historical for the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D.—we suggested the following scenario for the events at the end of the Late Bronze Age:<sup>21</sup> A period of dryness and, no less important, cold spells on the northern fringes of the Mycenaean world and the Hittite empire brought about severe crop failure and famine, driving displaced groups southward in search of food. These hordes devastated large regions and forced other, more southerly groups to move by land and sea. The unrest disturbed trade in the eastern Mediterranean and wrecked the delicate network of the Late Bronze Age koine. The eastern Mediterranean trade system of the Late Bronze Age crumbled as a result of pirate activity.<sup>22</sup> Groups of displaced people, labeled “Sea Peoples” in Egyptian Dynasty 20 texts, moved by land and sea and assaulted cities for provisions. In the Levant, the steppe areas were the first ones to be influenced. In the “green” areas the climate crisis could have been less threatening, but economic and political instability, which resulted from the situation in more northerly and easterly regions, were no less menacing.

What happened after the crisis is also significant. The Sea of Galilee pollen data for the Iron I time interval displays a significant increase in arboreal and olive-pollen percentages. What we see, in fact, is a shift from an extremely dry phase to an above-average wet event. Thanks to higher available moisture, both the Mediterranean forest/maquis and olive orchards expanded. A maximum value of Mediterranean trees was documented around 1000 B.C. Increase in moisture during the Iron I is also evident from the Dead Sea pollen diagrams.<sup>23</sup> The pollen record from the Mediterranean coast of Syria was interpreted as indicating a continuing drought that covers the Iron Age I.<sup>24</sup> Yet, the pollen spectra document a peak in the distribution of evergreen oak and cultivated olives at the beginning of Iron Age I,<sup>25</sup> which—similar to the records from the Levant—indicates a

regional resumption of the Mediterranean vegetation.<sup>26</sup>

In the Levant, the improved conditions during the Iron I period enabled the recovery of settlement activity. This is evident in the revival of the urban system in the northern valleys and in the settlement wave in the highlands of Cis- and Transjordan. A change to wet conditions during Iron I facilitated a quick recovery of the agricultural systems in the northern regions of the Near East, too, which resulted in the cessation of movement of people and stabilization of the settlement system.

#### THE COPPER PENDULUM: CYPRUS AND THE ARABAH

Over two decades ago, Axel Knauf suggested a pendulum relationship between the Cyprus and Arabah (south of the Dead Sea) copper sources, whereby the latter prospered as a result of the Bronze Age collapse and decline of eastern Mediterranean trade in the twelfth century B.C. and deteriorated following the revitalization of the Cypriot copper industry in the ninth century B.C.<sup>27</sup> Intensive explorations in the copper production sites in Wadi Feinan in Jordan and Timna in Israel support this theory:<sup>28</sup> A large number of radiocarbon determinations from these sites, especially Khirbet en-Nahas in Wadi Feinan, the largest single copper production site in the Levant, indicate that production intensified in Iron I in the eleventh and early tenth centuries B.C., peaked in Iron IIA in the late tenth and ninth centuries B.C. and came to an abrupt end in the later part of the ninth century. Can these changes in the sources of copper be seen in finds from settlement sites?

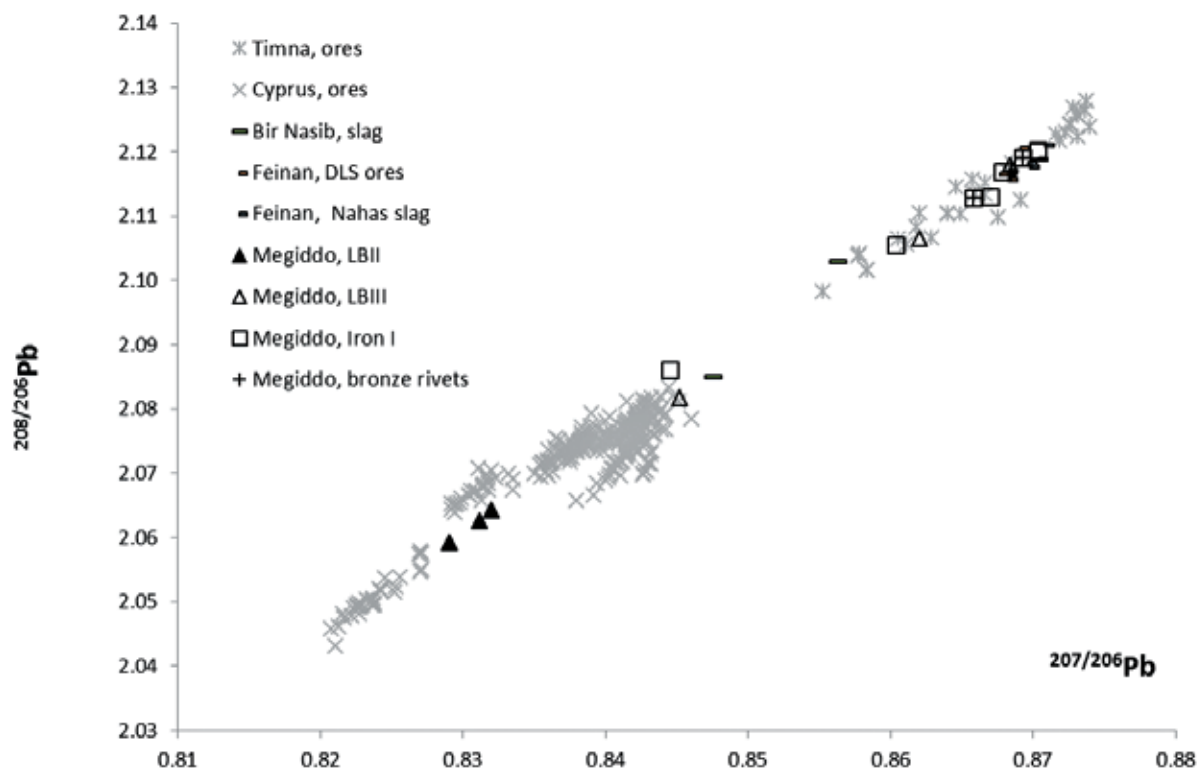
Results of studies carried out by the metallurgy team of the IAMA project are related to this issue. The first investigation focused on ingots, which are good indicators for copper provenance. A group of ingots from Hazor and two clusters retrieved during underwater exploration off the Carmel coast were subjected to microstructure, chemical, and lead-isotope analysis. Previously studied ingots from several other sites were also

investigated. The results enabled us to follow changes in the supply of copper between the two main production centers in the region:<sup>29</sup> Cyprus in the Late Bronze Age and the Arabah in the Iron Age. In the second study, lead-isotope analysis was performed on bronze artifacts from Megiddo.<sup>30</sup> The results showed a clear dichotomy between the objects dated to the Iron I and those dated to the previous Late Bronze II. Four objects and a waste product from the late Iron I Stratum VIA (destroyed in the first half of the tenth century) were consistent with Arabah ore deposits, as were a crucible slag fragment and a dagger from the Late Bronze III Stratum VIIA (destroyed ca. 1100 B.C.). Four artifacts dated to Late Bronze II–III were not compatible with the Arabah ore deposit; one of them (from Late Bronze III) had lead

isotopes consistent with Cyprus, while three (dated to Late Bronze II) had lead isotope ratios similar to, but not fully consistent with, Cypriot ores. Therefore, this pattern also supports a shift from the use of Cypriot copper during the Late Bronze Age to Arabah copper during the Iron I (fig. 2).<sup>31</sup> Lead-isotope analysis of objects from other sites reveals the same pattern.<sup>32</sup>

All this raises historical questions regarding the forces that operated the Arabah mines. Egyptian New Kingdom rulers, while aware of the copper deposits in the Arabah (based on finds from Timna and a few radiocarbon dates from Khirbet en-Nahas), seem to have preferred to suppress them and benefit from the Cypriot copper trade, possibly from taxes imposed in the ports of Canaan. As long as the eastern Mediterranean remained

Fig. 2. Lead-isotope ratios in bronze artifacts from Megiddo plotted against ores from Cyprus, Timna, and Wadi Feinan, and slag from Khirbet en-Nahas in the Wadi Feinan area



peaceful, importation of Cypriot copper was an easier and probably cheaper enterprise. Transportation of large quantities of copper over arid land routes was a more challenging task compared to dispatching a ship from Cyprus to the coast of the northern Levant. Also, dry climate conditions in the final phase of the Late Bronze Age must have had a significant impact on the pastoral nomads in the arid zones, which must have made production in the Arabah difficult from the perspective of manpower.

This situation changed dramatically with the collapse of trade relations in the eastern Mediterranean in the twelfth century B.C., the withdrawal of Egypt from Canaan in the late twelfth century, and improvement of climate conditions a short while later in the eleventh century. Mining in Cyprus and transportation of Cypriot copper declined, and Egypt found itself short of the material. On the other hand, better environmental conditions stimulated the rise of a local entity that advanced production in the Arabah. I refer to the southern Moabite polity of the late Iron I period (late eleventh to early tenth century B.C.), which transported copper along the King's Highway in Transjordan to Damascus and the Phoenician ports.<sup>33</sup>

The Egyptian presence in southern Canaan in the second half of the tenth century (Dynasty 22) brought about changes in the copper economy. The Negev incursion by Sheshonq I during his campaign to Canaan should probably be seen as an attempt to monopolize the copper economy and direct the metals trade through Egypt-dominated territories. Copper production sites seem to provide evidence for Egyptian involvement at this time.<sup>34</sup> As a result, the southern Moabite polity deteriorated and was replaced by a Negev polity that had its center in the Beersheba Valley; the latter prospered from the late tenth century to the middle of the ninth century B.C.<sup>35</sup> Copper was now transported via land routes and ports of the southern coastal plain, which could have promoted the prosperity of

Iron IIA Tell es-Safi/Gath, the largest city in Canaan at that time.

Cypriot trade with the Levant strengthened again in the first half of the ninth century B.C. Black-on-red Cypriot vessels appear in significant quantities in Levantine Late Iron IIA strata.<sup>36</sup> These layers are radiocarbon dated to the early to mid-ninth century. This opened the way for another change in the copper trade a few decades later. Damascus rose to dominance in the Levant in the second half of the ninth century B.C., and its most powerful monarch, Hazael, cooperated with the Phoenician cities—among other reasons, in an attempt to benefit from trade with Cyprus and possibly other Aegean localities.<sup>37</sup> In order to evade competition, Damascus endeavored to stop copper production in the Arabah. Hazael campaigned in the southern coastal plain, destroyed Gath<sup>38</sup> and strangled copper production in the Arabah by controlling its outlets to the coast. This is the background for the first expansion of Judah—as a vassal of Damascus—into the Beersheba Valley, the decline of the Negev desert polity, and the cessation of copper production in Wadi Feinan in the late ninth century B.C.

#### EAST ASIAN TRADE TO PHOENICIA (AND BEYOND?)

At this point, we do not know if Arabah copper was traded far beyond the Levant. Taking into consideration that other Levantine products, especially olive oil and wine, had no advantage in the west, one could ask whether other commodities were shipped to Mediterranean ports. One possible answer is Arabian goods; yet unequivocal evidence for the operation of Arabian trade routes exists only from the period of Assyrian domination, starting in the second half of the eighth century B.C. The possibility of earlier contacts with southern Arabia rests on circumstantial evidence, such as traces of activity in the oases of the Hejaz.<sup>39</sup> Another possibility is trade in East Asian goods, but evidence for pre-sixth/fifth century B.C. connections with the east is fragmentary or ambiguous.<sup>40</sup>



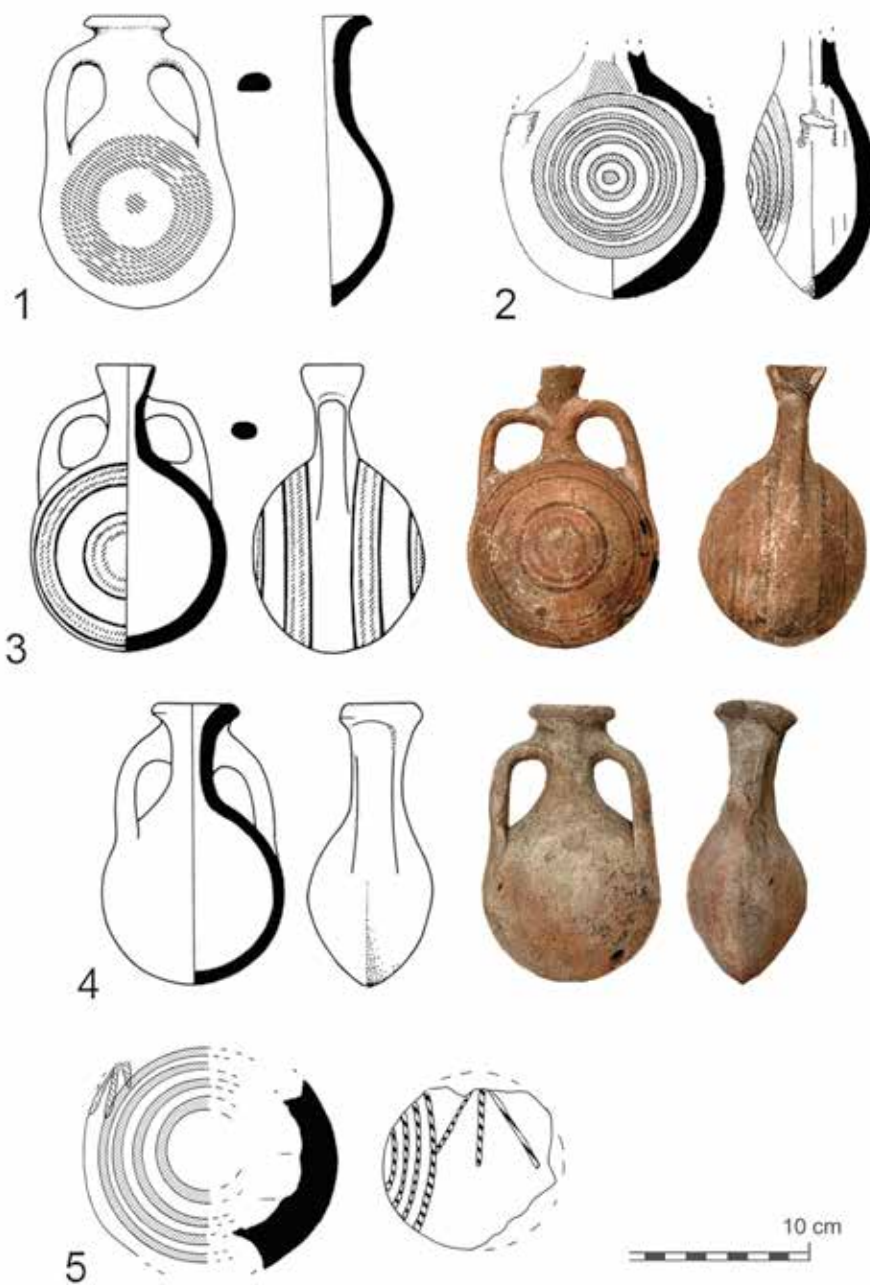


Fig. 3. Phoenician flasks containing cinnamon. Examples 1, 3, and 4 are from Tell Qasile; 2 and 5 are from Tel Dor

The IAMA project has made a major contribution in this area of research, stemming from analysis of residues in Phoenician flasks (their origin in Phoenicia has been confirmed by study of their fabric<sup>41</sup>). These are small, robust containers (fig. 3) found in large

quantities in the southern Levant and Cyprus, which date (in Levantine terminology) to the Iron I and Iron IIA phases, mainly in the early phase of the latter. Many were found in cult contexts, but others were uncovered in domestic settings.

The IAMA team examined twenty-seven Phoenician flasks from several sites in Israel. In ten of these vessels significant quantities of cinnamaldehyde—one of the three major compounds of cinnamon—was found.<sup>42</sup> In addition, small amounts of tartaric acid were detected in some of the flasks. The idea that tartaric acid is a marker for wine has recently been debated, and hence there is no way to determine the type of liquid in which the cinnamon was immersed.<sup>43</sup> Cinnamomum is the only plant group that accumulates large quantities of cinnamaldehyde. The Cinnamomum family is native to South and Southeast Asia, and therefore the cinnamon in the flasks must have been imported from these regions, providing evidence for trade contacts between East Asia and the Levant as early as the eleventh century B.C. Cinnamon was usually transported in dry form; it could have traveled west by sea and land via Arabia and the Negev, or along more northern land routes directly to Phoenicia. Arriving there, it was immersed in as-yet unidentified liquids and then distributed in the locally made flasks in the Levant and Cyprus.<sup>44</sup> Phoenician and/or Cypriot vessels with cinnamon could have continued to travel farther west in the Mediterranean. For now, there is no way to check this possibility.

**AEGEAN – LEVANT IRON I MOBILITY**  
Mobility between the Aegean Basin and the Levant in the Late Bronze Age is evident in Aegean ceramic vessels that were traded in large quantities to the east and in “Canaanite” jars that were transported on board ships that sailed in the eastern Mediterranean (as demonstrated in the Uluburun shipwreck<sup>45</sup>). Only a trickle of Aegean vessels continued to reach the Levant in the early phases of the Iron Age. But connections between regions can be detected in media other than ceramics. Indeed, the most obvious mobility from eastern Mediterranean coasts to the Levant in Iron I is that of the Sea Peoples. Egyptian and Ugaritic texts describe seafaring groups that attacked the coasts of Syria and Egypt and—according to conventional

wisdom—settled along the south Levantine littoral. The most well known among these groups were the Philistines. A package of features in the material culture of Iron I urban centers in Philistia demonstrates Aegean characteristics.<sup>46</sup> Scholars have debated the volume of this movement and its nature, at times somewhat diminishing the importance of actual movement of people to the Levant.<sup>47</sup> The IAMA project has shed interesting new light on this subject.

A significant characteristic of the Iron I urban centers in Philistia is the exceptionally large number of pig bones in their faunal assemblages—up to almost 20 percent (compared to the “normal” share of pigs—up to 3 percent).<sup>48</sup> We decided to investigate this phenomenon from a different perspective—that of ancient DNA.<sup>49</sup> As pig husbandry and pork consumption are major characteristics of the main urban Philistine sites, the question of whether they brought their pigs (and their kitchen traditions) with them or relied on local fauna is crucial for understanding the nature of their migration. We started by extracting DNA from 25 modern pigs in Israel. To our surprise, and differing from what is known for other parts of the Near East where pigs are of local haplotype, all modern Israeli pigs that were checked belonged to the Aegean haplotype, meaning that at a certain point in history Aegean pigs were imported to the region. We then continued to ancient pigs and successfully extracted and sequenced DNA from 34 out of 177 bones of domestic pig from secure archaeological contexts at sites in Israel representing different periods—from the Middle Bronze Age to medieval times.

Our study demonstrated that pigs from Late Bronze Age sites in Israel depict haplotypes of modern and ancient Near Eastern pigs, meaning that they were of local origin (fig. 4).<sup>50</sup> European haplotypes became dominant at the beginning of Iron IIA (ca. 900 B.C.). As the archaeological evidence points to increasing pig consumption in the Philistine urban centers during the early Iron Age, it is reasonable to attribute at least a

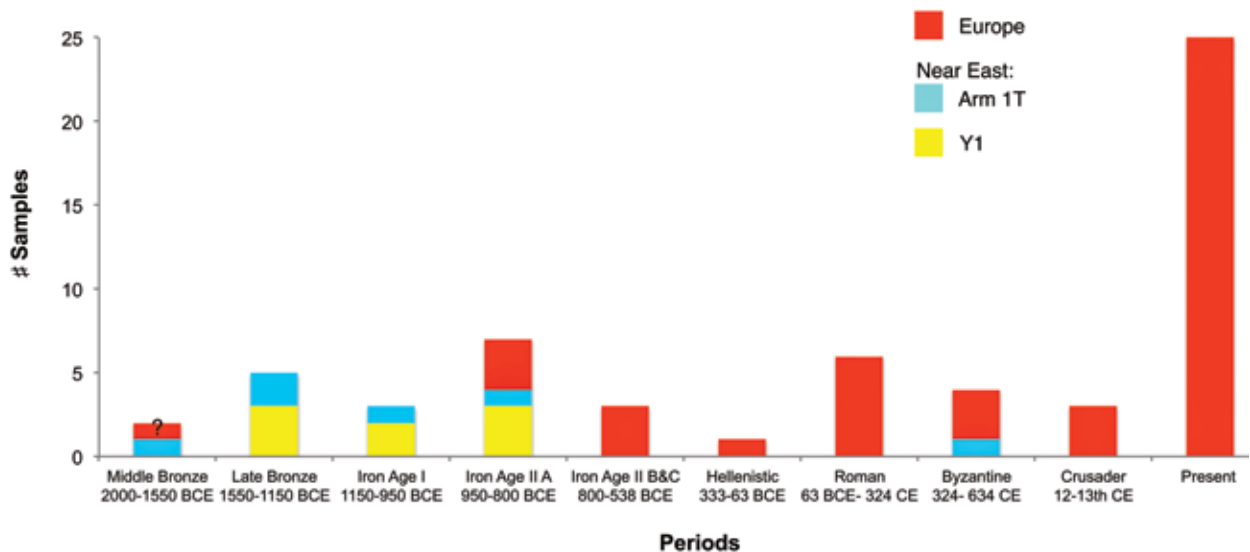


Fig. 4. Pig samples from Israel with particular mitochondrial DNA genetic signature

significant step in the introduction of domestic European pigs to the Sea Peoples in general and the Philistines in particular.

Admittedly, ancient DNA information from Iron Age I Philistine sites is still missing; the first European pigs identified thus far come from Megiddo, located about 150 kilometers north of the main Philistine centers; and the early European pigs that have been identified are over two centuries younger than the first appearance of the Philistines. Yet, these issues can be explained as representing problems of preservation, insufficient data for the early phases of the Iron Age, and/or the time needed for the European pigs to expand from Philistia to the north. A similar pattern in genetic signatures is observed in Anatolia, where the major transition to a European haplotype also took place during the Late Bronze–early Iron Age transition.<sup>51</sup>

Whatever the reasons that motivated the Sea Peoples to bring Aegean pigs to the Levant,<sup>52</sup> the phenomenon is clear evidence of humans boarding ships in the Aegean Basin or southern Anatolia on the way to the Levant. It seems, then, that the contacts between the regions in the early phases of

the Iron Age were stronger than perceived from the small number of pottery items that were retrieved in excavations.

#### SUMMARY

The IAMA project has contributed significantly to the understanding of the relationship between the Levant and the eastern Mediterranean in the Iron I–IIA period (late twelfth to early eighth centuries B.C.). The project:

- Helped establish absolute chronology for the Aegean ceramic phases and synchronize between the chronologies of the Aegean and the Levant;
- Illuminated the climatic background behind the collapse of the Late Bronze civilizations in the eastern Mediterranean;
- Demonstrated certain continuities in trade relations between east and west after the collapse, in the early phases of the Iron Age;
- Shed light on the historical circumstances of the resumption of strong trade relations between Cyprus and the Levant in the ninth century B.C.;

- Helped bring about a better understanding of the nature of the Sea Peoples migration to the Levant.

Our work underlines the importance of micro-archaeology—in this case mainly the study of ancient DNA and analysis of residues in ceramic vessels—in the study of mobility between different regions of the ancient world.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1. For a radiocarbon-based chronology of the relative phases in the Levant, see Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2010.
2. For the Aegean, see reviews in Coldstream 1968, pp. 302–10; Coldstream 2003; Fantalkin 2001.
3. Sharon et al. 2007; Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2010.
4. For instance, Van der Plicht et al. 2009; Fantalkin et al. 2011.
5. Discussion in Fantalkin 2001.
6. Toffolo et al. 2013.
7. Coldstream 1968.
8. Fantalkin et al. 2015.
9. Table according to *ibid.*; for the overlaps between the periods, see the discussion there.
10. Ward and Sharp Joukowski 1992; the first to link the Bronze Age collapse to a climate event was Carpenter 1966.
11. Langgut et al. 2013, 2014.
12. Langgut et al. 2013.
13. Kaniewski et al. 2010 and Bernhardt et al. 2012, respectively.
14. Bottema et al. 1993–94 and Woldring and Bottema 2003, respectively.
15. Drake 2012.
16. Litt et al. 2009.
17. Hazor: Ben-Tor and Zuckerman 2008.
18. Megiddo, evidence from the 2012 season, as yet unpublished.
19. For instance, Singer 1999, pp. 715–16; summary in Langgut et al. 2013.
20. Ellenblum 2012.
21. Langgut et al. 2013.
22. Attested in several Ugarit tablets; see, for example, Yon 1992 and Singer 1999, pp. 719–23.
23. See, for example, Litt et al. 2012.
24. Kaniewski et al. 2010.
25. *Ibid.*, fig. S2.
26. Langgut et al. 2014.
27. See, for example, Knauf 1995, pp. 112–13.
28. For Wadi Feinan, see Levy et al. 2004, 2008; for Timna, Ben-Yosef et al. 2012.
29. Yahalom-Mack et al. 2014.
30. Yahalom-Mack et al. forthcoming.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Yahalom-Mack, Segal, and Finkelstein forthcoming.
33. Finkelstein and Lipschits 2011.
34. Ben-Yosef et al. 2012, p. 64; Levy et al. 2014.
35. Boaretto et al. 2010.
36. Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2006.
37. I would see the Hazael finds in Eretria and Samos in this context, rather than as gifts sent after the Assyrian conquest of Damascus; on Hazael, see, for example, Lemaire 1991.
38. Maeir 2012, pp. 26–49.
39. Hausleiter 2010.
40. Gilboa and Namdar 2015.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Namdar et al. 2013.
43. Gilboa and Namdar 2015.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Pulak 2008.
46. Stager 1995; Yasur-Landau 2010.
47. Sherratt 1998.
48. Sapir-Hen et al. 2013.
49. Meiri et al. 2013.
50. *Ibid.*; Sapir-Hen et al. 2015.
51. Ottoni et al. 2013.
52. Sapir-Hen et al. 2015.



The first half of the first millennium B.C. in the Near East was characterized by two developments: first, the rise and unrivalled dominance of the Assyrian empire, the largest political entity yet seen in the region, until its dramatic collapse at the end of the seventh century B.C.; and second, the appearance of the Aramaeans and the diffusion of their language and script throughout Mesopotamia, the Levant, parts of Iran, and Egypt. Despite the political supremacy of Akkadian-speaking Assyria, Aramaic imposed itself as a *lingua franca* in the Near East, a role it held for more than a millennium.

How do these two phenomena fit together? Should we not have expected the cuneiform script and the Assyrian dialect of the Akkadian language to predominate across the Assyrian empire? How could the Aramaic language have become so dominant given that there was never an Aramaean empire?

To answer this question in a short article we must limit the discussion to one single example. For this purpose, no other site provides better information than Tell Halaf, the ancient city of Guzana. It was founded as the capital of a small Aramaean principality, later became the seat of the governor of one of the most prosperous Assyrian provinces, and ultimately was one of the few Upper Mesopotamian towns that survived the collapse of the Assyrian empire and flourished until the Parthian period.<sup>1</sup>

**THE EMERGENCE OF THE ARAMAEANS**  
Dramatic events caused and accompanied the collapse of the political and economic systems of the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean and Near East. Migrations of several peoples had already begun during the late thirteenth century B.C. as symptom and result rather than as reason for the crises that affected and finally terminated great powers such as the Hittite empire and the Egyptian New Kingdom. Assyria was the only major kingdom to survive, but it suffered considerably, losing control over almost all of its

# Assyrians and Aramaeans: Modes of Cohabitation and Acculturation at Guzana (Tell Halaf)

territories outside its heartland proper and a few provinces on the lower Khabur River. Among its major opponents from the twelfth century B.C. onward were Aramaean tribes who first attacked Assyria at its Euphrates River border and later penetrated its western provinces up to the springs of the Khabur and even beyond the Kashiari Mountains to the Tigris River. The Aramaean tribes formed a number of principalities in the Levant and Upper Mesopotamia, from Damascus to Amida, and Sam'al to Nasibina (Nisibis) (fig. 1).<sup>2</sup>

The ethnogenesis of the Aramaeans remains a mystery. Their origin in the steppes of the Arabian plateau has long been posited, although no solution has ever provided an explanation as to how an Aramaean population could have grown in such a dry and economically disadvantaged region. In more recent studies the possibility of locating an ethnogenesis in the northern Levant has become more popular, implying a population continuum from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age with changing social structures and subsistence strategies.<sup>3</sup> One argument is the affiliation of the Aramaic language with Northwest Semitic languages of the second

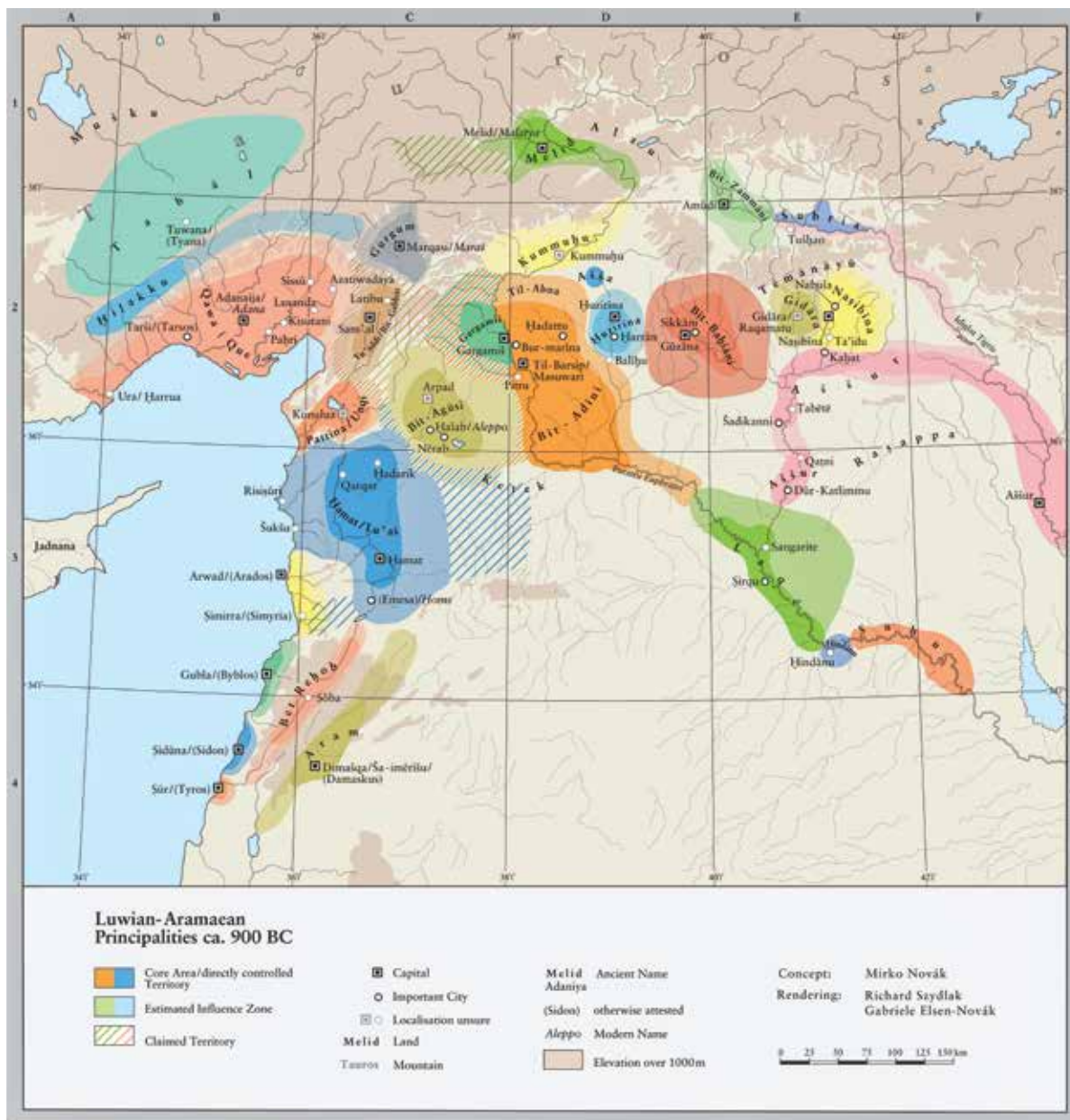


Fig. 1. Map of Luwian-Aramaeian principalities, ca. 900 B.C.

millennium, such as Ugaritic, making the connection with Canaanite probable.<sup>4</sup> A possible scenario for the creation of a distinct “Aramaean” identity might begin with the destruction of numerous Levantine towns during the migrations of Aegean and Anatolian people (the “Sea Peoples”) and

the displacement of the autochthonous Semitic-speaking population from the coastal plains. At least some of these people may have joined already migrating nomadic and raiding groups with heterogeneous origins. After a certain period of time, these people developed a new ethnic consciousness and a

common language, and finally a new identity with particular cultural norms. As “Aramaeans” they became associated with raiding nomadic tribes at the margins of Assyria and Babylonia.

#### GUZANA AS CAPITAL OF AN ARAMAEAN PRINCIPALITY

Among the newly established Aramaean principalities was Pale, also known as Bit Bahiani. Its capital at modern Tell Halaf was named *gwzn* (Gōzāna) or “transition place”<sup>5</sup> (Gūzāna in the cuneiform texts) and located in Upper Mesopotamia on the springs of the Khabur, the major tributary of the Euphrates. One of the main trade routes connecting Assyria with the northern Levant and the Mediterranean passed through the region and was known in Neo-Assyrian times as the *ḫarrān šarri* (King’s Road). Today, the site lies immediately south of the Syrian-Turkish border, near the modern twin towns of Ras al-‘Ayn (Syria) and Ceylanpınar (Turkey).

Tell Halaf was first occupied in the Neolithic period, and today it has become the eponymous site of a widely distributed archaeological culture characterized by its painted pottery.<sup>6</sup> During the Bronze Age, the site was left abandoned in favor of the neighboring Tell Fekheriye, the ancient city of Washshukanni.<sup>7</sup> The Middle Assyrian provincial administration, which resided in Washshukanni (Assyrian Ashshukanni), may have stimulated the first re-settling of Tell Halaf after two thousand years, and when it was presumably founded as a town for Anatolian prisoners of war and deportees.<sup>8</sup>

In the tenth century B.C., the area of the springs of the Khabur (in Akkadian *ša rēš īnā ša Ḫābūr*, meaning the same as Arabic *ra’s al-‘ayn* “Head of the Springs of the Khabur”) was invaded and occupied by an Aramaean tribe, later known as Bit Bahiani to the Assyrians, who established a small entity named *palē* (Pale) in its own inscriptions. The Aramaeans decided not to reside in Ashshukanni (by now called Sikani) but instead to realign the town in Tell Halaf, thereby creating a new residential city.

The ancient town of Guzana consisted of a citadel, situated immediately at the river, and an extended lower town, enclosing the citadel to the west, south, and east. Together, the Iron Age settlement covers an area of approximately 75 hectares *intra muros*. Although the settlement existed before the foundation of the Aramaean principality, a radical realignment took place. The rectangular citadel was subdivided into a lower part toward its entrance, and a more elevated inner part to its north. This feature is reminiscent of the citadels in Carchemish located on the Euphrates, Sam’al on the Islahiye Plain, and Kinalua in the Amuq.<sup>9</sup> The former necropolis of the earliest settlers was overbuilt by the residential area, which included the palace and a monumental gateway. A new necropolis was established at the southern edge of the citadel. Instead of inhumation burials—attested in the pre-Aramaean Iron Age town—cremations became popular, following a practice known from northern Levantine and southern Anatolian sites, such as Carchemish, Deve Höyük, and Hamath. Of particular interest are the ancestor cult statues discovered on top of two cremation burials depicting seated women, each holding a cup in one hand (fig. 2). The style and iconography, as well as the function of these statues, reflect a northern Levantine tradition that goes back to the early second millennium B.C. and is represented in several objects discovered at Ebla and Qatna (see Sannibale essay, p. 310, fig. 17).<sup>10</sup> This continuity is an argument for an indigenous Levantine ethnogenesis of the Aramaeans.

The most impressive remains dating to this period can be attributed to king Kapara (ca. 925 B.C.), from whose palace a number of orthostat reliefs survive, as well as several inscriptions. The palace, situated in the western part of the citadel, was constructed in the style of the *hilani* buildings (figs. 3, 4). This type of building is characterized by a tripartite structure with an entrance hall opening through a broad, columned gateway and flanked by two tower-like rooms. The central reception hall was accessible directly from the entrance room. This architectural pattern was



Fig. 2. Basalt statue of seated woman. Guzana (Tell Halaf), discovered on top of a cremation. Syro-Hittite, early 9th century B.C. Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung, Cologne (TH B 1); on long-term loan to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum

developed in the northern Levant (presumably in the Islahiye and Amuq Plains) during the Bronze Age and became popular in the Luwo-Aramaean (“Neo-Hittite”<sup>11</sup>) world during the Iron Age.

Kapara’s known inscriptions are relatively short and were written exclusively in the Akkadian language using cuneiform by a scribe with the Assyrian name Abdi-iliya; hence the local tradition of using cuneiform, dating back to the time of the Middle Assyrian administration, appears to have survived. The inscriptions reveal some Neo-Assyrian characteristics comparable to those discovered in the foundation inscription of governor Assur-kette-līšir from Tell Bdēri in the lower Khabur and to those in the texts from Giricano on the Upper Tigris, both dating to the eleventh or tenth century B.C.<sup>12</sup> No Aramaic inscriptions are known from Kapara’s reign; presumably this script was not yet developed, or at least not known in Upper Mesopotamia. The earliest example from Tell Halaf was written on a small altar or statue base and dates to the early ninth century B.C.,<sup>13</sup> followed by the famous Tell Fekheriye bilingual statue inscription (see below).

Despite the use of Akkadian cuneiform instead of alphabetic Aramaic, both textual and archaeological evidence clearly suggest a western origin or at least a strong western affiliation for Kapara’s dynasty. One indicator is the usage of the word *ekallum* to designate “temple” in some of Kapara’s inscriptions, which mention *é.gal.lim u*—“(to) the Temple of the Storm-God.” The usage of this term is typical for West Semitic languages (compare Ugaritic *hkl* and Hebrew *hekal*), whereas the correct Akkadian term was *é = būtu*. In Assyria and Babylonia *ekallu* meant exclusively “palace.” Another indicator is the palace’s architecture, which follows the *hilani* style, and the new use of orthostat reliefs, both characteristics of the so-called “Neo-Hittite” culture of the northern Levant and southern Anatolia, and previously unattested in Upper Mesopotamia. The same is true of the new funerary customs, which replaced inhumation with cremation and involved



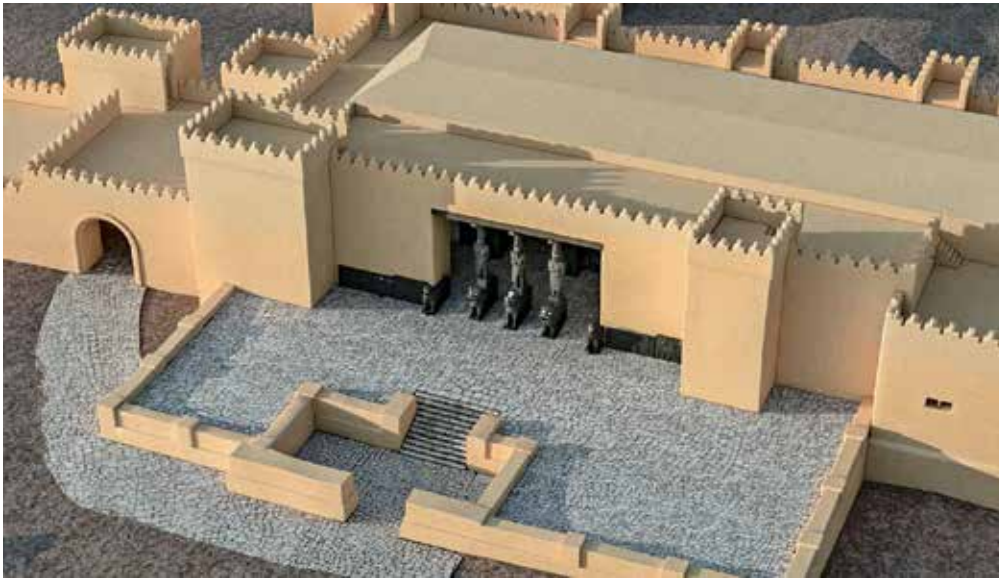


Fig. 3. Digital reconstruction of the *hilani* of king Kapara at Guzana (Tell Halaf)



Fig. 4. Reconstruction of the caryatid entrance of the *hilani* at Guzana (Tell Halaf), National Museum of Aleppo, Syria

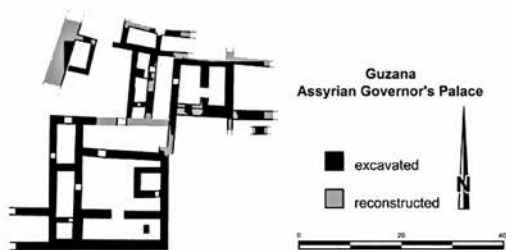
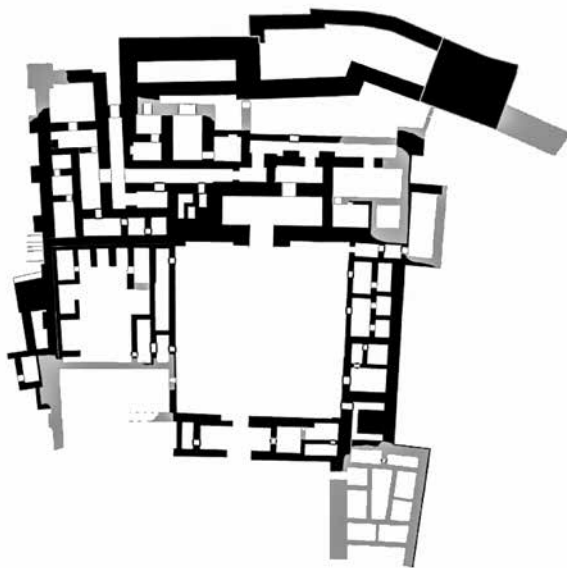


Fig. 5. Plan of Assyrian Governor's Palace, Guzana (Tell Halaf)

the practice of an elaborate ancestor cult, focused on a specific type of statue. Moreover, the radical urban rearrangement that pays no attention to the existing structures not only reveals a clear break in urban development but also suggests it was consciously decided to relaunch and re-create the city as a genuine new political center. In all of these aspects the culture of Aramaean Guzana differed remarkably from the contemporary remains of nearby settlements, such as Kaḫat, Šadikanni, and Tābete, sites with an unbroken tradition from the Late Bronze Age and a predominant Assyrian character.<sup>14</sup>

Nonetheless, some aspects of local tradition are visible at Guzana: the iconography

of the god statues and orthostats shows some Mitannian and Middle Assyrian elements, deeply anchored in the culture of the region.<sup>15</sup> The same is true of the worship of local deities like the storm god in his aspect as Bēl ḫābūr (“Lord of the Khabur”) and his spouse Šala,<sup>16</sup> and, most significantly, the use of the cuneiform script and the Assyrian language. This was presumably inherited from an extant local scribal tradition, as the Assyrian name of Kapara’s scribe suggests. The emergence of the Aramaic script, developed from Phoenician in the Levant, apparently began later than the foundation of Aramaean Guzana. However, in the ninth-century B.C. altar inscription mentioned above, Tell Halaf provides us with one of the earliest pieces of evidence for Aramaic script known to this day.

#### COHABITATION AND ASSYRIANIZATION: THE ASSYRIAN PROVINCIAL TOWN

In the early ninth century B.C. Guzana was incorporated into the Assyrian empire.<sup>17</sup> A new Assyrian-style palace was built in the eastern part of the citadel and renewed in the eighth century (fig. 5).<sup>18</sup> An Assyrian-style temple founded in the lower town and the residential quarters both on the citadel and in the lower town display features that are typical of Assyrian architecture.<sup>19</sup> Almost all of the artifacts—ceramics, sealings, and other objects—were produced exclusively in an Assyrian style.<sup>20</sup> Was the town now completely Assyrianized, obliterating all traces of its former Aramaean character? Not really, as can be demonstrated by examination of some of the statues and inscriptions.

The first is a statue with the bilingual Aramaic/Assyrian inscription of Hadda-yiṭ’i/Adda-it’ī, discovered in Tell Fekheriye, dating to the mid-ninth century B.C. (fig. 6).<sup>21</sup> The cuneiform inscription was written in a good ductus and language and therefore is surely later than Kapara’s inscriptions. Also, the Aramaic version shows a more developed form of Aramaic than the script on the altar.<sup>22</sup> The title of Hadda-yiṭ’i/Adda-it’ī and his father Šamaš-nūrī is “governor” in the



Fig. 6. Stone statue of Hadda-yit'i/Adda-it'i. Sikani (Tell Fekheriye). Mid-9th century B.C. National Museum, Damascus, Syria

Assyrian and “king” of Guzana in the Aramaic version. Šamaš-nūrī was most likely identical with the homonymous eponym of the year 866; Hadda-yit'i/Adda-it'i might possibly be identified with Adad-rēmāni, eponym of the year 841.<sup>23</sup> The use of both scripts and languages, the different titles in both versions, and the alternation of Akkadian and Aramaean names from father to son show the still strong Aramaean character of the Assyrian province. On the other hand it suggests that Hadda-yit'i/Adda-it'i was either a descendant of the old Aramaean elite of Guzana who was adopted by the Assyrian aristocracy and incorporated into its mag-nate system, or a member of the Assyrian elite, who, as local governor, presented himself as an heir of the local Aramaean nobility.

The second example is the statue of Kammaki, discovered during building activities in the late 1990s in the southeastern lower town of ancient Guzana (fig. 7).<sup>24</sup> Stylistically it can be attributed to the local tradition of ancestor cult statues known from Kapara's period. The inscription is only written in



Fig. 7. Stone statue of Kammaki. Guzana (Tell Halaf). Early 8th century B.C. Deir ez-Zor Museum, Syria (DeZ 7970)





Fig. 8. Reconstruction of wall painting showing Assyrian cuneiform and alphabetic scribes. Til Barsip (Tell Ahmar). 8th–7th century B.C.

Assyrian cuneiform and dates to the early eighth century B.C., Kammaki bears an Aramaean name but the Assyrian title of *rubû* (“prince”) without further indication as to his precise role or position. Presumably he was a member of the local Aramaean elite and the form of his statue manifests the perpetuation of traditional local rites.

Both statues demonstrate that in some respects Aramaean culture was still alive in Guzana. Moreover, the population of this town took part in the ongoing and irreversible

process of linguistic Aramaization of Assyria, which was affecting the whole empire, including its heartland. But what were the reasons for this process, and how could it proceed so undisturbed?

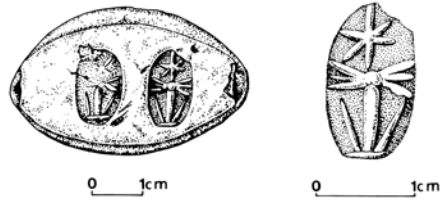
#### REASONS FOR THE ARAMAIZATION OF ASSYRIA

Rapid Aramaization was favored by the Assyrian imperial policy of large-scale deportations, whereby large parts of subjugated peoples (or at least their elites) were removed from their original territories and settled in other provinces. The purpose of this strategy was to break any resistance by erasing existing cultural and political identities and replacing them with Assyrian identity.<sup>25</sup> Guzana was affected in this way in the late eighth century B.C., as mentioned in the Bible. The city is listed among the places to which Israelites were deported after the capture of Samaria:<sup>26</sup> “In the ninth year of Hoshea (= 722 B.C.) the king of Assyria (Shalmaneser V) took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah (Kalhu) and in Habor (Khabur) by the river of Gōzān, and in the cities of the Medes” (2 Kings 17:6).<sup>27</sup>

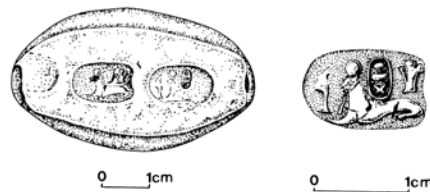
Some cuneiform tablets discovered in Tell Halaf and some letters written in Guzana but discovered at Kalhu and Nineveh, both post-dating the deportation, bear a number of Hebrew personal names, confirming the presence of Israelites.<sup>28</sup> It is also possible that a similar fate had previously befallen parts of Guzana’s own elites, according to some hints in the Bible where the city is listed among punished insurgents.<sup>29</sup>

This deportation policy is well attested to in the Assyrian inscriptions. One result of the movement of large populations within the vast territories of the empire was the rapid emergence of the Aramaic script and language as the unofficial *lingua franca* since the majority of migrating people at least understood this language.<sup>30</sup> The script was much easier to learn than cuneiform, and it thereby became more and more popular, even in parts of the Assyrian administration.





Figs. 9a–d. Dockets with Aramaic inscriptions and drawings. Lower town, Guzana (Tell Halaf). 7th century B.C.



The growing influence of Aramaic is evidenced in a letter from Sargon II to Sin-iddin, governor of Ur:

As to what you wrote: “If it is acceptable [to the k]ing, let me write down and send (my messages) to the king in Aramaic on letter-scrolls,” why would you not write and send (your messages) in Akkadian on clay-despatches? Really, the despatch(es) which you write must be drawn up like this very (royal) order!<sup>31</sup>

Depictions from the time of Tiglath-Pileser III onward show Assyrian cuneiform and Aramaean alphabetic scribes side by side, testifying to the bilingualism of the administration (fig. 8). This is also clear from the

appearance of clay dockets with Aramaic inscriptions and stamp seal impressions in almost all Neo-Assyrian find spots from the seventh century B.C. Two examples from Tell Halaf illustrate this phenomenon.<sup>32</sup> The short inscriptions bear personal names in Aramaean and Akkadian using the Assyrian *limmu* (eponym) dating formula (figs. 9a–d): this is in itself a hybrid form of record. Connected with these dockets, stamp seals in general became more popular, even in Mesopotamia, and began to replace cylinder seals.

The Aramaization of Assyria affected not only the “common” people and the administration: since noble women of Aramaean descent were married to some of the Assyrian kings,<sup>33</sup> and presumably to other members of the aristocracy, these women and

their servants introduced western ideas, lifestyles, craft products, and other elements to the Assyrian court.<sup>34</sup>

#### EFFECTS: ASSYRIA'S ARAMAEAN CHARACTER AND THE QUESTION OF ETHNIC IDENTITIES

The introduction of numerous foreign peoples into the population of Assyria subliminally changed the culture of the Assyrians themselves. This process was empowered by Assyria's open definition of who an "Assyrian" was: neither ethnic origin nor any legal citizenship (as in the Roman empire) were decisive; instead, only an affiliation to the empire, loyalty to the king, and one's fulfillment of all obligations, such as military service, mattered. A remarkable testament to this flexibility is to be found in the inscriptions of king Sargon II as he describes the foundation of his new capital Dur-Sharrukin:

Subjects of (all) four (parts of the world), of foreign tongues, with different languages without similarity, people from mountainous regions and plains, so many (different people) as the light of the gods [= Šamaš], lord above all, supervises, I let dwell inside [my new city] on the command of Ashur my lord [. . .]. Born Assyrians, experienced in all professions, I set above them as supervisors and guides to teach them how to work properly and respect the gods and the king.<sup>35</sup>

Although a differentiation between long-established Assyrians and new settlers is made here, the aim of the policy was obviously to transform the latter into proper Assyrians.

Does this mean that the Assyrians were progressively replaced by the Aramaeans until they were restricted to a small minority, albeit the elite? Of course not! Ethnicity is a category that cannot be reduced to a purely biological or even socially constructed ancestry.<sup>36</sup> It is defined by the consciousness of a group of people and how they define and designate themselves. The formation and

existence of an ethnicity are continuous processes that reflect changes in self-definition. New cultural or even linguistic elements might have been adopted and caused a re-definition of cultural codes and definitions. We do not have any indication that the descendants of the deportees after one or two generations defined themselves as anything other than Assyrians. Not only did the people change but, equally, so, too, did the definition of an "Assyrian."

Thus Assyria achieved a permanent and considerable increase in its population on the one hand, but on the other it progressively lost aspects of its original character. This is not obvious at first sight, when looking at the official records of the empire that were produced by the elite: the Akkadian language and cuneiform script continued to be the official media for communication and administration, and personal names remained in Akkadian. But when the Assyrian empire collapsed in 612 B.C., and its elites were either killed or deported by the triumphant Babylonians and Medes, both the Akkadian language and cuneiform script disappeared completely within a short time span. It was mainly in the heartland on the Tigris that the use of the Akkadian language and cuneiform script was permanently terminated. It survived for a short while and only under Babylonian domination in a few provincial towns in Upper Mesopotamia, one of which was Guzana.<sup>37</sup> Does this mean that the heartland of Assyria was completely abandoned by its inhabitants after the sack of the big cities in 612 B.C. and that any kind of Assyrian identity vanished forever? Were the later inhabitants of the same region new immigrants, wherever they might have come from and whenever this happened? Obviously not, since we do have some indications of a continuing occupation of Nineveh, Kalhu and Ashur, even if the palaces, temples, and elite residences were deserted. Moreover, it is clear that some aspects of Assyrian culture survived. For example, the worship of the national god Ashur enjoyed a surprising revival during the Parthian period centuries

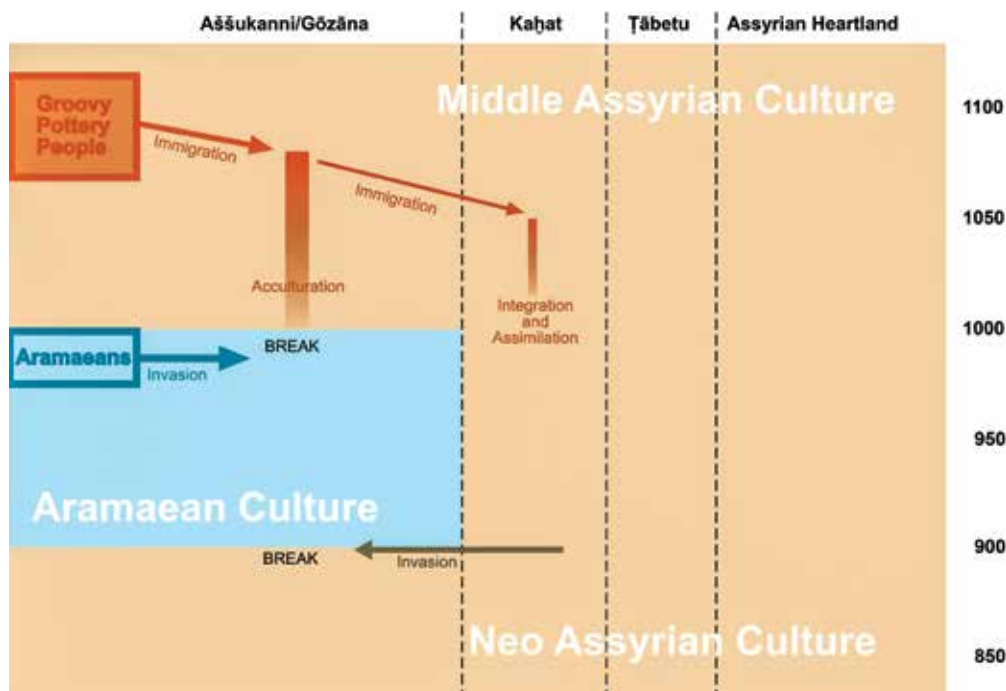


Fig. 10. Model of immigration, cohabitation, and acculturation of Aramaeans and Assyrians at Guzana (Tell Halaf)

later and must therefore never have been abandoned completely.

The likely scenario was that most of the “common” people survived the catastrophe of 612 B.C. and lived on as subjects of the Neo-Babylonian empire. Those aspects of Assyrian culture that were not exclusively connected with the elites—unlike, for example, the Akkadian language and cuneiform script—carried on as living and distinctive parts of what had then become Assyria’s identity. And this identity was now strongly connected with an (eastern) Aramaic dialect. Much later, the population adopted Christianity, thus forming the still-existing community of Christian “Assyrians,” who in their legends keep the remembrance of certain Assyrian kings and heroes alive.<sup>38</sup>

This progressive change shows that modern ethnic as well as ancient lineage-based definitions are all to some extent artificial, and we should consider them as cultural, often dynamic constructs rather than stable entities.

## CONCLUSIONS

Two reciprocal and progressive processes took place during the first half of the first millennium B.C. (fig. 10). First, we must point to the expansion of the Assyrian empire. Vast areas of the Near East became part of it, accompanied by the diffusion of Assyrian culture and the emulation of Assyrian-style products in all provinces and vassal states. Second, we note the emergence and diffusion of the Aramaic language and script. In an exaggerated way we could speak of the parallel processes of an Assyrianization of the Aramaeans and an Aramaization of Assyria.

The Assyrianization of the Aramaeans was initially brought about by the political and military dominance of Assyria. The rulers of subjugated entities were required to attend festivities in the capitals of Assyria (for example, the inauguration of new palaces or cities), including public performances of tribute deliveries. Many grew up in the Assyrian palaces as hostages, given to the Assyrian

king by their fathers as part of the subjugation ritual. Their experience of the court style in Kalhu, Dur-Sharrukin, and Nineveh deeply affected them and led them to later adopt the Assyrian style in their self-representation, as expressed in their own court rituals, the architecture of their palaces, and artistic depictions of their royalty.<sup>39</sup> The inclusion of local Aramaean elites from the incorporated territories into Assyria's administrative system enforced this process, and Assyrian standards in architecture, art, and ceramics, as well as administration, became predominant. This process stimulated the revitalization of the cuneiform script and the official use of the Akkadian language in the Levant and Upper Mesopotamia, both regions where they had previously been abandoned as early as the twelfth century B.C. With this apparent victory of Assyria over the entire "Neo-Hittite" and Aramaean world, however, the empire provided the infrastructure for a gradual Aramaization: some religious concepts like the ancestor cult or the worship of Levantine gods like the storm god of Aleppo and the moon god of Harran not only survived in the occupied territories but became more prominent across the whole empire, including the heartland of Assyria. The Aramaic language and script successively became the language of the common people and some of the elites, a process that was facilitated and enforced by Assyria's deportation policy.

In the same way as the Aramaeans were politically Assyrianized by becoming subjects of the Assyrian empire—and "Assyrians" by definition—Assyria's character was subtly transformed and Aramaized. An impressive example of the reciprocity of transculturation!

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Joan Aruz and her team for inviting me to the very stimulating conference and the publication of the proceedings. I am indebted to Johanna Tudeau and Ekin Kozal for improving the English of the manuscript and to Eva von Dassow for her very valuable remarks and comments.

1. For a short summary of Guzana's history, see Novák 2013b. On Til-Barsip as another example, see Bunnens 2009.
2. On the history and culture of the Aramaeans, see Lipiński 2000 and Niehr 2014. For the relationship between Aramaeans and Assyrians in Upper Mesopotamia, see the various articles in *Syria* 86 (2009).
3. See Sader 2014, pp. 20–21.
4. Gzella 2014, p. 71.
5. Lipiński 2000, p. 119.
6. The archaeological site of Tell Halaf was discovered by the German banker's son, diplomat, and self-taught archaeologist Max Freiherr von Oppenheim in 1899 and excavated in two long seasons from 1911 to 1913 and in 1929. Excavations were resumed in 2006 by a Syro-German team formed by the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums in Damascus, the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, and the universities of Tübingen, Halle, and Bern. The dramatic events taking place in Syria made it impossible to continue fieldwork after 2010. On the results, see Baghdo et al. 2009 and 2012, with further references.
7. Bartl and Bonatz 2013.
8. Novák 2013a, 2013b.
9. Novák 2014, p. 264.
10. Elsen-Novák et al. 2003.
11. The term "Neo-Hittite" is culturally designated and should not indicate an ethnic determination. It is defined by the conscious usage of imperial Hittite traditions in art and ideology, irrespective of the ethnic affiliation of the political elites of the entities.
12. Dornauer 2010; Fuchs 2011.
13. Dankwarth and Müller 1988.
14. Kühne 2009, 2013.
15. Orthmann 2002.
16. Müller-Kessler and Kessler 1995.
17. On the dynamics of Assyrian expansion in Upper Mesopotamia, see Kühne 2013.
18. Novák 2013c.
19. Orthmann 2002, pp. 42–44; see the various contributions in Baghdo et al. 2012 by Winfried Orthmann, Lutz Martin, and Muhammad Fakhru, and Alexander Sollee and Ralf Wartke, respectively.
20. See the various articles by Gabriele Elsen-Novák, Winfried Orthmann, Uwe Sievertsen, Alexander Sollee, and Ralf Wartke in Baghdo et al. 2009 and 2012.
21. Abou-Assaf et al. 1982.
22. Gzella 2014, p. 72 and *passim*.
23. On this discussion, see Dornauer 2010, with further literature. For translations of Aramaic names into Akkadian, see also Naqī'a/Zaqūtu, "the pure."
24. Röllig 2003.
25. Oded 1979.
26. 2 Kings 17:6, 18:11, 19:12; Isaiah 37:12; 1 Chronicles 5:26.



27. See also 2 Kings 18:11, 19:12; Isaiah 37:12; 1 Chronicles 5:26.
28. Becking and Novák 2015, p. 750.
29. 2 Kings 18:19–35, 19:12; Isaiah 37:12.
30. Nissinen 2014, p. 282.
31. CT 54 10, cited after Dietrich 2003 (= SAA 1), p. xvi (Introduction), treated again in SAA 17, p. 5 (text no. 2, lines 13–21).
32. See the contributions of Wolfgang Röllig and Gabriele Elsen-Novák in Baghdo et al. 2012.
33. Nissinen 2014, pp. 294–95.
34. Bonatz 2004b. On Aramaean craftsmen in Assyria, see also Nissinen 2014, pp. 287–88. On non-Assyrian features of the Nimrud gold, see Gansell's essay in this volume, pp. 54–64.
35. Cited after Fuchs 1994, p. 296.
36. On ethnicity in the ancient Near East, see the various papers published in Soldt 2005.
37. Novák 2013b, pp. 276–77.
38. Novák and Younansardaroud 2002.
39. Clear evidence is given by the monumental art representing the style “Neo-Hittite III” according to the definition of Orthmann (1971), which is characterized by the strong impact of Assyrian iconography and style. This process had already started in the ninth century B.C., as the famous stele of Kilmuwa of Sam'al shows. Even in the cases of principalities engaged in open political opposition to or military conflict with Assyria, conscious copies of Assyrian style can be observed. Assyrian culture became synonymous with power and success, just like the French court style during the reign of Louis XIV. Copying Assyrian iconography became a tool of legitimation all over southern Anatolia, the whole of the Levant, and into western Iran.

# Phoenicians and Greeks in Cilicia? Coining Elite Identity in Iron Age Anatolia

The time is around 700 B.C., the place a provincial eastern Mediterranean locale, namely, the Cilician hinterland. The players are regional landlords who came to power after the breakdown of the Bronze Age world order. Among the cultural signifiers in circulation are sculpted images and inscribed narratives. A tale is told in different languages. Up on a sylvan hill, the entrance of a stronghold with its two gates adorned with both imagery and writing invites contemplation. This setting provides us with an exceptional opportunity to study how emerging elites used commemorative monuments to stake their claim in the making of a new world order. In the world of contested and fluid boundaries of the early first millennium B.C., Anatolian and North Syrian city-states competed for territory by erecting memorials before, one by one, they eventually succumbed to the expanding Assyrian empire. Monumental sculpture accompanied by inscriptions became the hallmark of these multilingual principalities. This contribution explores selected aspects of one of the longest public inscriptions of its time, displayed in a stronghold located in the periphery of a principality.

The site is known as Karatepe-Aslantaş and was built in the foothills of the Taurus Mountains on the west bank of the Ceyhan

(ancient Pyramos) River before it flows out into the vast alluvial plain (fig. 1). In the 1960s the Aslantaş Dam was constructed on the river about 3 kilometers to the southwest. The site itself is situated in a lush forest, but the surroundings are now mostly submerged by the dam lake. The citadel was erected on a natural hill, clearly to command traffic both on the river to its east and on the caravan road, the Akyol, to its west, just before they diverge from one another. The crusader castle to the north, known as Kumkale,<sup>1</sup> today also inundated by the dam lake, highlights the enduring strategic importance of this location.

Merchandise, raw materials, and surplus goods must have been floated down the river with little effort. For example, according to the inscription in the citadel, the author filled the granaries of the town of Pahar,<sup>2</sup> thought to be located at the mound of Misis on the west bank of the river down in the plain. The text also states that this fortress is one of several, defining the northern border of the city-state Adanawa, the center of which must be the mound of Tepebağ in modern-day Adana on the Seyhan (ancient Saros) River. Further upstream in the Taurus Mountains lies the principality of Gurgum, its center at modern Maraş. Beyond the Amanus range, which separates the Cilician plain from North Syria, stretches the city-state of Sam'al, with its center at the mound of Zincirli.

The topographical proximity of culturally similar yet politically independent city-states, as in other regions and periods, led to incessant conflict but also resulted in a dynamic political energy fueled by alliances and diplomatic measures taken in order to prevent actual aggression. These ever-shifting circumstances were commemorated in public monuments in each principality, as well as noted laconically in the administrative records kept in the archives of the powerful and ever-expanding Assyrian empire. Karatepe-Aslantaş is the site of one such memorial, in fact one of the most elaborate preserved to date.

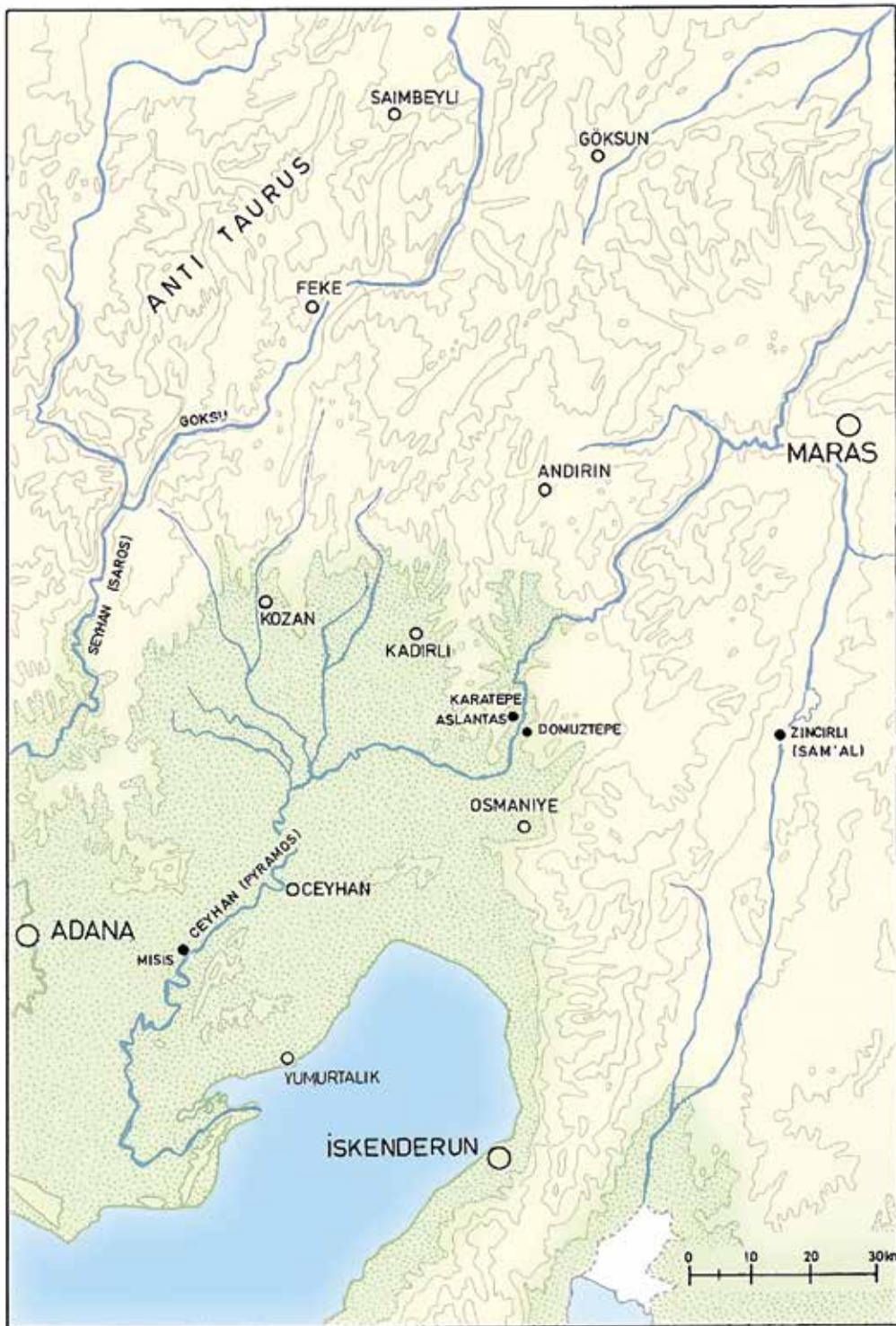


Fig. 1. Map of eastern Cilicia

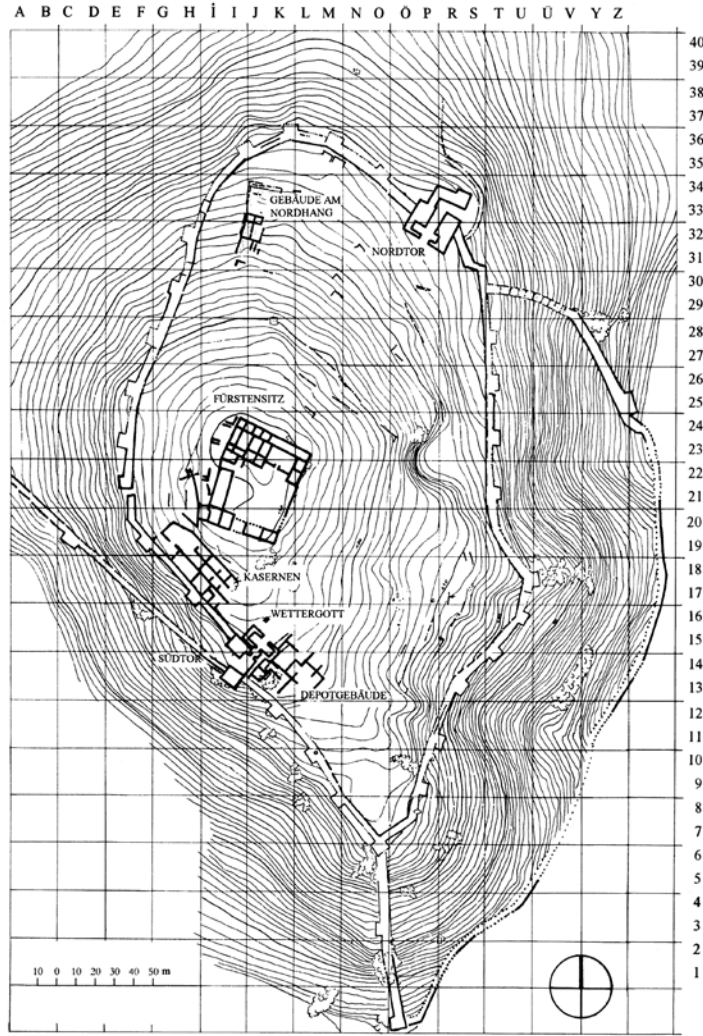


Fig. 2. Plan of the citadel at Karatepe-Aslantaş showing gates and *bit hilani*

During an expedition under the auspices of Istanbul University and the Turkish Historical Society in 1946, Helmuth Theodor Bossert and Halet Çambel discovered the remains of the fortress at Karatepe with its partly in situ portal relief and a bilingual text in Phoenician and Hieroglyphic Luwian.<sup>3</sup> The bilingual narrative, in particular, but also the sculpture prompted an avalanche of publications by philologists, archaeologists, and art historians.<sup>4</sup> The Hieroglyphic Luwian version of the text confirmed and fine-tuned the final decipherment of this syllabic script,

and the Phoenician text remains to date the longest extant. Halet Çambel (1916–2014), one of the pioneering and outstanding female archaeologists of the twentieth century, conducted sustained excavation and restoration at the site and rescued the citadel from being completely submerged in the dam lake by persuading authorities to lower the water level. In doing so, she managed to develop the site into an open-air museum protected by a national park,<sup>5</sup> thereby rescuing the sculpture from being dismantled and taken to a museum. The final publication of the texts



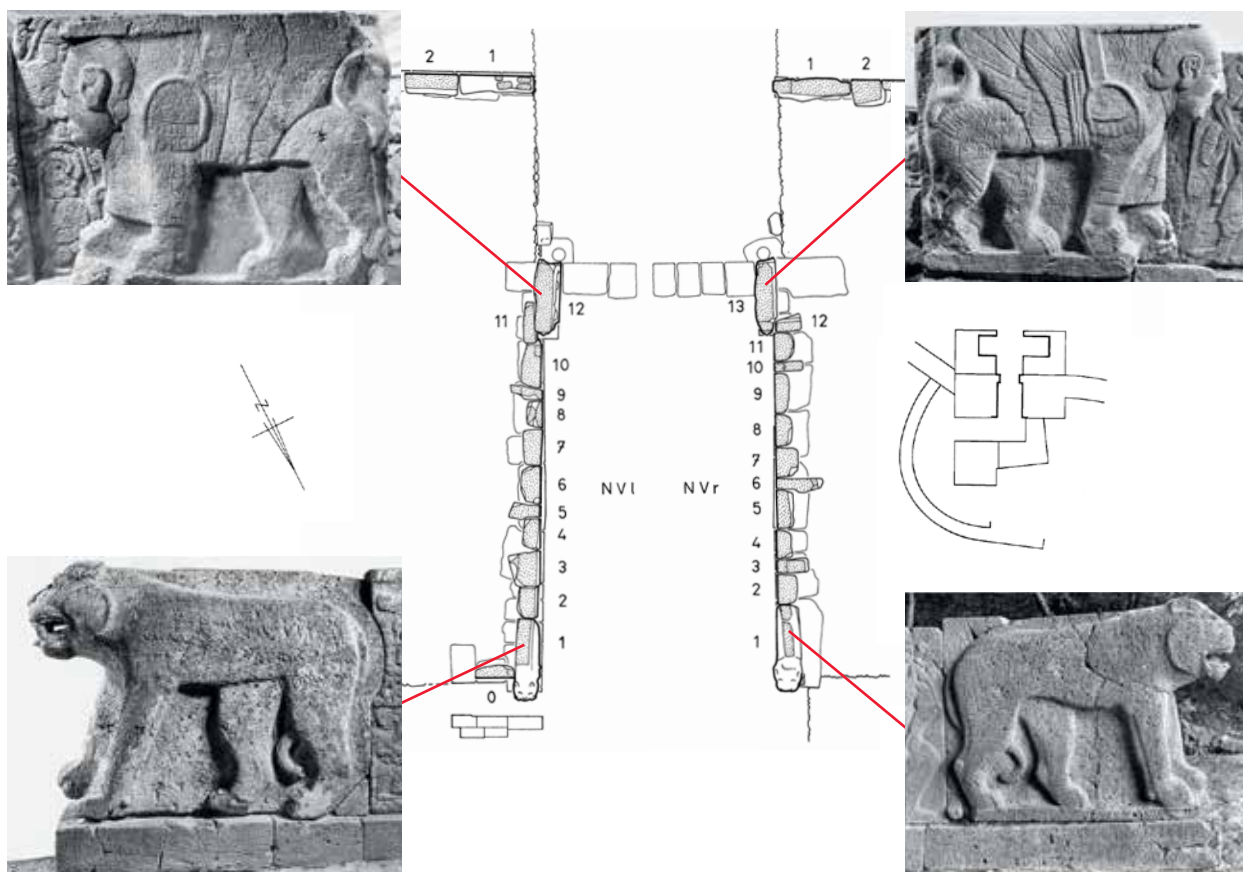


Fig. 3. Plan of North Gate antechamber showing lion and sphinx relief locations. Karatepe-Aslantaş. Syro-Hittite, ca. 700 B.C.

appeared as part of the *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luvian Inscriptions*.<sup>6</sup> The first volume of the final publication presented the sculpture; the second volume, published posthumously, includes essays on the architecture, ceramics, and numismatic and small finds.<sup>7</sup>

The fortress, covering about 5 hectares, was built around the seat of the local potentate, a building of the so-called *hilani* type anchored on the crest of the hill (fig. 2). The contour of the citadel closely follows the terrain, continuing the architectural tradition of the Hittite capital. A second outer wall secured the area sloping toward the river. Only scanty remains of further structures survive. The main course of the fortification wall exhibits protruding bastions in regular

intervals all around, and is pierced by two gates, one in the northeast, another in the southwest. Towers and additional walls protected each gate, comparable to examples in the Hittite capital. The towers and the exterior approach to the south gate in particular resemble one of the city gates at Hattusa.<sup>8</sup> Passage through the gate was via a corridor with gate chambers built into towers behind the fortification wall (differing in this respect from Hittite gates, in which these chambers are set into the line of the fortification wall itself). The forecourt and both gate chambers were each lined with nearly fifty sculpted basalt blocks. Portal lions and sphinxes were positioned to protect every corner, as had been the custom since Hittite times (fig. 3).

The sculptures consist of individual figures and composite scenes carved in relief. Rarely does a scene continue over several blocks. The images are predominantly of a cultic or mythological nature, including funerary themes in line with the Neo-Hittite tradition of representation. Large individual figures carved on a single block depict either deities or other supernatural creatures. Composite arrangements, often in two registers, seem to display scenes with mortal participants, including deceased ancestors, or to illustrate legendary heroes.<sup>9</sup>

The sculpture was juxtaposed with a bilingual inscription on both gates. The Phoenician version of the text, in alphabetic letters, was inscribed on several adjacent slabs, visually emphasizing that the text is one continuous narrative. The Phoenician text was also incised on to the long robe of the colossal basalt figure of a weather god set up in the open space upon entering the citadel through the south gate. The Hieroglyphic Luwian version of the narrative, by contrast, was divided into segments and distributed intentionally (that is, not as a result of secondary use) around the gate with no apparent order or organization in terms of the content, so that in order to read the text the athletic reader must run left and right and back and forth.<sup>10</sup> The text is a type of *res gestae*, a first-person narrative about the deeds and accomplishments of the patron of the citadel, who identifies himself as Azatiwatas, refers to the fortress he built as Azatiwataya, declares that he had already been installed by Awarikus, the by-then deceased ruler of Adanawa, and states that he now promotes the descendants of his former overlord.<sup>11</sup> As will be seen below, the names Awarikus and Warikas occur on multiple monuments and present the historian with a puzzle.

In the context of the “Assyria to Iberia” exhibition, I address the particular Cilician encounter with things Phoenician and Greek, as reflected in the monumental gates just described. Phoenician commercial presence on the Anatolian coast is expected but

lacks visibility.<sup>12</sup> So far no Phoenician trading post or settlement has been identified along the coastal Cilician plain, but their commercial interest in cedar, silver, and iron must have brought the Phoenicians into contact with the inhabitants of the plain in order to access its forested and metalliferous hinterland, known to Mesopotamian merchants as the Silver Mountains. Discoveries of Phoenician pottery in coastal or inland Cilicia have been few and far between: existing examples are small jugs, traded for their valuable liquid content, as found among the imported ceramics in Tarsus-Gözlükule.<sup>13</sup>

Phoenician cultural presence in coastal Cilicia and its connected hinterland, on the other hand, is quite visible, primarily in the output of the possibly itinerant Phoenician scribes who must have been employed by Cilician patrons to inscribe their commemorative monuments with texts composed in the Phoenician language and alphabetic script.<sup>14</sup> What is particular to Cilicia and its Luwian-speaking environment, including northern neighbors beyond the Taurus range, is the production of bilingual, in one instance even trilingual, texts for public consumption, as noted by Machteld Mellink.<sup>15</sup> In other words, competing landlords and potentates decided to announce their deeds and claims not only in Hieroglyphic Luwian, their vernacular and the traditional and imperial Hittite practice preferred for monumental writing but also in Phoenician, a foreign language and script on the rise. Given Assyrian interest in and pressure on the region, it is perplexing that Cilicians did not employ Neo-Assyrian and cuneiform, so far attested only in the single instance of a trilingual inscription. One may perhaps infer a subtle form of resistance to Assyrian power in the preference for Phoenician. The Karatepe-Aslantaş inscription described above remains the longest and most prominent bilingual monumental inscription known to date, illustrating ingenuity and innovation in a provincial setting.

Over the years, discoveries of further Luwian-Phoenician bilinguals began to

accumulate beyond the Cilician nucleus. In the 1980s, the lower half of a stele bearing a relief image of a weather god and a bilingual inscription was found in the northern foothills of the Taurus, 100 meters from the famous İvriz rock relief.<sup>16</sup> The author and patron of the stele, as well as of the rock relief, is Warpalawas, the ruler of Tuwana (Classical Tyana), a rival Luwian city-state. Warpalawas, attested in the Assyrian archives during the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) and Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), states his deeds on this stele and dedicates it to his father. Hieroglyphic Luwian is the script foregrounded on the stele, covering the upper part of the front and back of the monument, as well as the right side. Phoenician is relegated to the lower half of the back and the left side of the monument.

In 1993, a stele with a trilingual inscription in Phoenician, Hieroglyphic Luwian, and Neo-Assyrian was discovered at İncirli, east of Karatepe.<sup>20</sup> The stele is very worn, and so far only the Phoenician inscription has proven legible.<sup>17</sup> The author is the ruler of Adanawa, a Warikas, who announces a change of the border between the city-states of Gurgum and Adanawa to the benefit of the latter and refers to the territorial gain as a gift of Tiglath-Pileser III. It is thus not surprising that the author is depicted in an Assyrianizing manner. The obverse of this border monument presents the three scripts in a visual hierarchy: On top, to the right, facing the image of the patron, are carved the lines in Hieroglyphic Luwian, his vernacular; immediately below, in a central position, are the lines in Neo-Assyrian, continuing around the right side. The Phoenician text is written around the lower half of the stele, on the front, the back, and both sides.<sup>18</sup>

A few years later, in 1997, a colossal limestone statue of a weather god depicted in an Assyrian manner on a basalt bull-drawn chariot was brought to light at Çineköy, about 30 kilometers south of Adana.<sup>19</sup> The patron and author is again the ruler of Adanawa, Warikas, who in the Hieroglyphic Luwian and Phoenician bilingual text states that he is the

descendant of the House of Mopsos and announces close and friendly ties with Assyria. The inscriptions are laid out side by side, with the Phoenician version always shorter due to the nature of alphabetic writing, fitted between both bulls in the front, and the longer Hieroglyphic Luwian version between the legs of each bull, front, side, and back, spilling over on to the plinth of the monument. When deciphered the content stirred discussion, because what was called the plain of Adanawa in Phoenician was referred to in the Hieroglyphic Luwian version as the land of Hiyawa. We shall return to this point.

A ruler of Adanawa, Awarikus appears in the Phoenician inscription on the Hasanbeyli stele, discovered about 30 kilometers south of Karatepe.<sup>20</sup> Edward Lipiński restores the name of the Assyrian king, who entered the territory belonging to Awarku but then made peace with him, as Ashur-dan III (772–755 B.C.).<sup>21</sup> Finally, the westernmost monument inscribed in Phoenician to mention the name of a ruler of Adanawa, again named Warikas, was found 15 kilometers east of Alanya in Cebel-i Reis Dağı.<sup>22</sup> The text records the favorable settlement of a legal dispute by Warikas concerning the allotment of land to the author of the stele.

Recent studies of these texts have led to new proposals concerning the genealogy of the Adanawa dynasty. Lipiński differentiated in his 2004 publication between the personal names Awarikus and Warikas, interpreted by others to be versions of the same name.<sup>23</sup> Most recently Zsolt Simon took this proposal a step further, suggesting that this dynasty must span over four generations, with grandsons named after grandfathers, a common feature in Anatolian dynastic succession.<sup>24</sup> Thus the Awarikus of Hasanbeyli would be the father of Warikas the author of the Çineköy and İncirli inscriptions, who in turn could be the father of Awarikus of Karatepe and perhaps the grandfather of his namesake Warikas of Cebel-i Reis Dağı. This dynasty would thus be attested from about the mid-eighth century to about the mid-seventh



Fig. 4. Syrian-style ivory plaque with winged sphinx. Arslan Tash, Bâtiment aux Ivoires, Room 14. Late 9th–early 8th century B.C. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Antiquités Orientales (AO 11475)

century B.C. We will return to this dynasty when examining the presence of Greeks.

Although no Phoenician luxury goods have been recovered from Cilician sites, familiarity with Phoenician ivories and metal vessels and their influence on the gate reliefs at Karatepe have long been recognized, initially by Mellink,<sup>25</sup> then masterfully elaborated upon by Irene Winter in her seminal article on Karatepe.<sup>26</sup> Let us here examine one such instance in more detail.<sup>27</sup> I refer to exquisite Phoenician ivory sphinx furniture plaques, such as those from Arslan Tash in

North Syria, which clearly inspired sculptors at Karatepe (fig. 4).<sup>28</sup> Translating these small, two-dimensional renderings of human-headed felines into three-dimensional portal figures and chiseling them in porous basalt seems occasionally to have led sculptors astray (fig. 5a).<sup>29</sup> What appear to be decorative elements in this carefully designed gateway image only fall into place in terms of function and meaning when compared with their source of inspiration: the ornamented, rounded shoulder pad of the portal sphinx is derived from the partial view of the large *wesekh* collar as framed by the royal headdress on the ivory sphinx. Moreover, the coverts of the wing on the ivory appear on the portal sphinx in the form of a vertical, compartmentalized strap, as if used to attach the wings to the belly of the feline. The head of the portal sphinx, on the other hand, is not modeled after the Egyptianizing Phoenician type: it does not wear the royal head cloth, but instead seems inspired by North Syrian specimens with Hathor-style straight hair, parted and combed back behind both ears, with the ends rolled into a curl.<sup>30</sup> The textile draped around the chest and front legs of the portal sphinx (fig. 5b) is a variation on the apron of the two-dimensional ivory examples (fig. 4; see also Hill essay, p. 164, fig. 10). Such adaptations result in a perhaps less elegant, but still alluring creature, and one equally valid, given that all hybrids are imaginary.

Among the reliefs from the North Gate is the aftermath of a naval battle, depicting a ship with rolled-up sails, dead enemies floating in the sea, and the captain seated in the stern raising a cup (fig. 6). This ship may allude to relations with the Greek world. Greeks must have arrived in Cilicia on such ships, because in contrast to the round-hulled merchant ships of the Phoenicians, this type of long, shallow galley fitted with a ram is unmistakably of Aegean origin.<sup>31</sup> But why is this scene included in the gate to a citadel in the foothills of the Taurus? It is singular among Neo-Hittite monumental art and has no predecessors in the Hittite world. The patron of the citadel must surely have identified with





Fig. 5a. Side of basalt portal sphinx. Karatepe-Aslantaş. Syro-Hittite, ca. 700 B.C.

the victors on this ship, perhaps as his ancestors. In fact, there are further Aegean-inspired, Greek themes among the sculptures, recalling hoplites, perhaps mythical heroes, confronting each other in single combat, or figures evoking Marsyas challenging Apollo to a musical competition while women hold up a victory wreath, to name two examples;<sup>32</sup> these are images unparalleled in the Syro-Anatolian world of competing polities.

Aegean connections were long suspected, as Azatiwatas, the patron of the citadel declared his overlord, the ruler of Adana, to be a descendant of the house of Mopsos, bringing to mind the name of a Homeric diviner, whom ancient Greek historians credited with historicity.<sup>33</sup> Such contacts were further cemented by the above-mentioned bilingual

inscription from Çineköy, where the name of the plain is rendered as 'dn (Adana) in Phoenician, but as Hiyawa in Hieroglyphic Luwian, recalling Ahhiyawa, as Hittites referred to the land of their western, Aegean, perhaps Achaean, rivals.<sup>34</sup> Recai Tekoğlu and André Lemaire further explain that if the ruler of Adana called the plain in his vernacular *Hiyawa* this would account for the Assyrian name for the Cilician plain, recorded as *Que/Khuwe*. Hiyawa in conjunction with Adana is also attested in the two recently discovered inscribed storm-god stelae from Arsuz (near İskenderun).<sup>35</sup> If this is to be understood as a name introduced by Greeks who at some point came to settle in Cilicia, it reminds one of early Europeans arriving in America and naming settlements in their new territory



Fig. 3b. Front of basalt portal sphinx

after places in their homeland, such as Plymouth, New Amsterdam, or New York. This idea is gaining further support, as over the last decade several philologists, most recently Zsolt Simon,<sup>36</sup> have proposed Greek etymologies for the names Awarikus (Εὐαρχος; well-governing) and Warikos (Wroykos/Rhoikos, as the name of the king of Amathus on Cyprus).

Most recently, Ilya Yakubovich contributed to this discussion by addressing the

presence of people of Greek descent in Que/Hiyawa.<sup>37</sup> He elaborates the argument that the Phoenician version of the Cilician bilingual inscriptions was the primary text, translated into Hieroglyphic Luwian, and that the Phoenician language and script were employed on purpose by a ruling elite of Aegean origin to emphasize their distinction from Luwian-speaking dynasties. He goes on to propose that this could have resulted in a cultural milieu fostering the development of the Greek alphabet from the Phoenician.

The plot further thickens with the recent new reading of the designation of Baal on the statue of the divinity at Karatepe-Aslantaş.<sup>38</sup> Philip Schmitz has argued that the name of the storm god recorded as Baal KRNTRYŠ in the Phoenician version of the bilingual inscription on the colossal personification of this deity at Karatepe, puzzled over by many for decades, could be explained as the Phoenician rendering of an archaic Greek word, \**korunētērios*, the mace-bearing (from \**korunē*: mace, *korunētēs*: mace-bearer). Schmitz also draws attention to several representations of a mace-bearing storm god occurring at Carchemish and Tell Halaf, but most importantly to a relief in the Temple of the Storm God at Aleppo,<sup>39</sup> where the deity is not only carrying a mace but appears next to an epigraph that consists of the Hieroglyphic Luwian determinative for deity placed above another sign in form of a mace, that is “God Mace.”<sup>40</sup> The term is translated as “Divine Mace,” but the phonetic value of the mace-shaped sign has not yet been identified.<sup>41</sup>

To conclude, the elaborately constructed monument at Karatepe is a testimony to the intense cultural encounters that characterize this period. Energetic and bold rulers of newly emerging petty kingdoms marked their territory with monuments signaling modernity as well as tradition.<sup>42</sup> Signs of innovation include new imagery and the adoption of Phoenician script and language, thereby engaging with the rising commercial power of the period. However, echoes remain of the Aegean group of settlers who



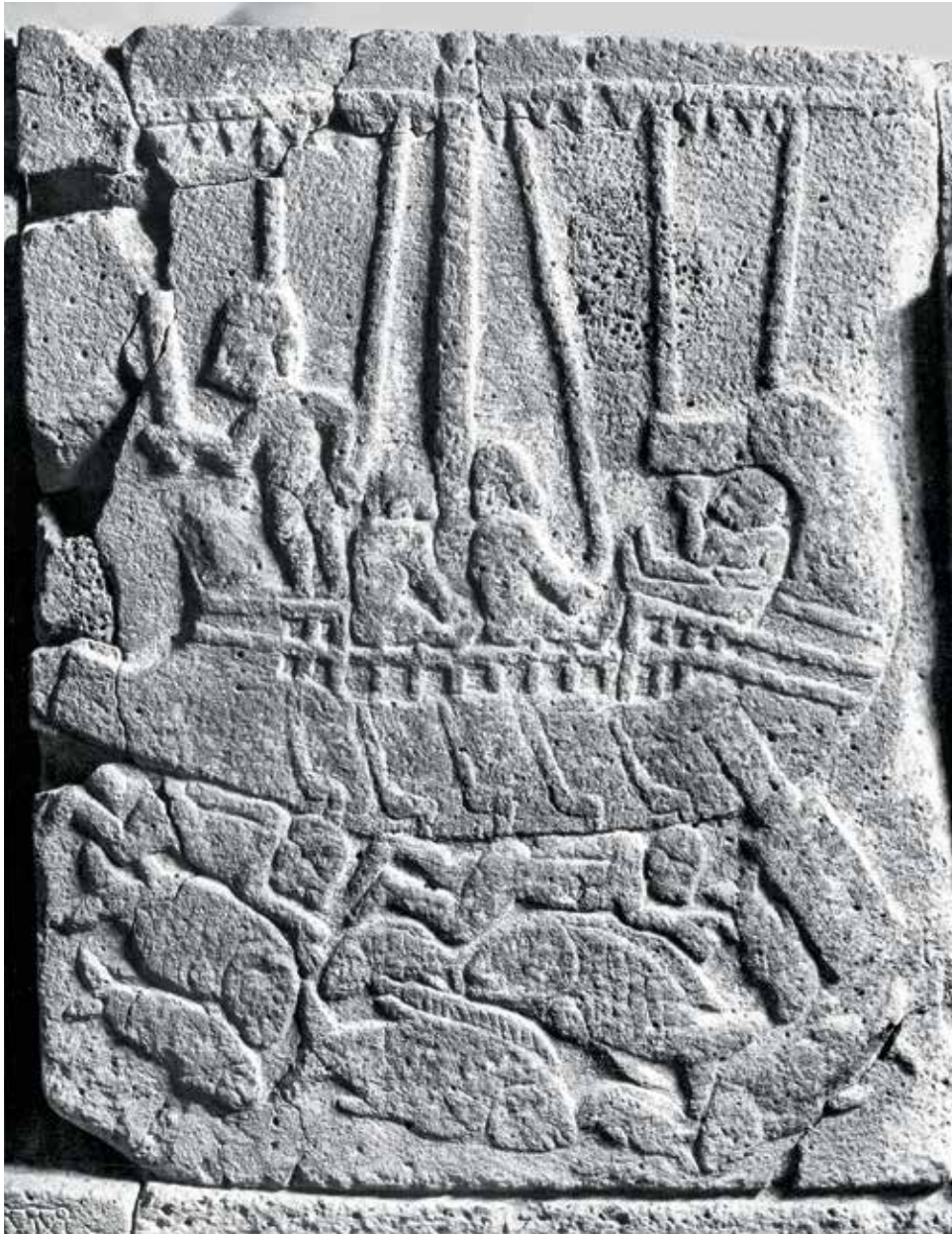


Fig. 6. Basalt orthostat depicting a war galley after a sea battle. Karatepe-Aslantaş, North Gate, right chamber. Syro-Hittite, ca. 700 B.C.

found a new home in Cilicia in the post-Bronze Age new world order. It appears that within a few generations they gave up their former vernacular, probably along with many other cultural practices.

They adopted the traditional language and habits of the land, including the age-old convention of sponsoring monuments with inscriptions and images, thus continuing an imperial Hittite tradition. Their success can

be measured by the fact that they rose to the ranks of the ruling elite. But as is the case with all displaced people, memories of their homeland continued to resonate, in their personal and divine names as well as in imagery, even if local practices and manners of representation shrouded these beyond recognition to the uninitiated.

1. Hellenkemper 1976, pp. 131–34; Edwards 1987, pp. 171–72, fig. 50; Çambel et al. 2007.
2. Hawkins 2000, p. 49.
3. For Çambel's narration of the discovery, see Çambel and Özyar 2003, pp. 1–4.
4. See Çambel 1999, pp. XVIII–XXIII; Hawkins 2000, pp. 28–71; and for the final publication with all previous footnotes, see Çambel and Özyar 2003, pp. 57–144.
5. Çambel 1993.
6. Çambel 1999; Hawkins 2000.
7. Çambel and Özyar 2003; Çambel 2014.
8. Özyar 2013, p. 119 n. 21.
9. For a discussion of this, see Çambel and Özyar 2003, pp. 131–38.
10. For the location of the inscribed blocks, see Çambel 1999, pls. 52, 89, where Hieroglyphic Luwian slabs are marked with Arabic numerals; Özyar 2013, p. 132.
11. Hawkins 2000.
12. For a recent overview of Phoenician relations with Cilicia, see Lehmann 2008.
13. Ibid., p. 156 n. 130; Hanfmann 1963, Early Iron, nos. 171, 172, 173(?), 174(?), 175, 252; Middle Iron, nos. 445, 670, 817, 818, 842(?).
14. For a comprehensive presentation of all inscriptions, see Lipiński 2004, part IV, “Phoenicians in Anatolia,” pp. 109–44.
15. Mellink 1998.
16. Dinçol 1994; Lipiński 2004, pp. 133–35.
17. For a discussion of the Phoenician text, see Kaufman 2007.
18. Ibid., p. 8, pls. III–VIII.
19. Tekoğlu et al. 2000; Lipiński 2004, pp. 127–28.
20. Lemaire 1983.
21. Lipiński 2004, p. 117.
22. Mosca and Russel 1987; Lipiński 2004, pp. 128–30.
23. Lipiński 2004, pp. 119–22.
24. Simon 2014.
25. Mellink 1950.
26. I. Winter 1979.
27. See also Çambel and Özyar 2003, pp. 68–69.
28. Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 152–56, cat. no. 51d. See also Çambel and Özyar 2003, pp. 68–69.
29. This portal sphinx (NVI 12 in Çambel and Özyar 2003) was built into the North Gate, on the left side of the corridor connecting the antechamber to the traverse chambers, its counterpart on the right side of the passageway.
30. See also, especially for the ivory head from Nimrud, G. Herrmann 1992a, p. 101, pl. 56, fig. 304, ND 9400. This coiffure is already depicted among the thirteenth-century B.C. ivories from Megiddo; see Loud 1939, p. 18, pl. 44, fig. 192.
31. For a discussion of the ship, see Çambel and Özyar 2003, pp. 84–89.
32. Özyar 2013, p. 128 and n. 45.
33. Hawkins 2000, p. 51, § XXI, p. 54, § XLII, p. 56, § LVIII. For a discussion of Muksas/Mopsos, see Hawkins 1995.
34. Tekoğlu et al. 2000, pp. 981–84; Hawkins 2009.
35. Dinçol et al. 2015.
36. Simon 2014, pp. 94–95, with references to previous work.
37. Yakubovich 2015, published with an addendum by Hawkins (2015).
38. Schmitz 2009b.
39. Kohlmeier 2000, p. 200; Hawkins 2009, p. 169.
40. Schmitz 2009b, pp. 129–30.
41. Hawkins 2011, p. 40.
42. A. Payne 2006, p. 127.



On July 8, 1964, at the Etruscan sanctuary of Pyrgi, three gold plaques were discovered, bearing inscriptions in both Phoenician and the Etruscan language. The archaeological context was clear and consistent: Pyrgi, considered the main harbor associated with the Etruscan city of Caere, housed the most important sanctuary of southern Etruria, and it was the site of worship of a female goddess identified as Leukothea in the Classical sources.<sup>1</sup>

The sanctuary, located 13 kilometers from Caere on a coastal plain near the natural port of the modern city of Santa Severa, has been excavated continuously since 1957 by the University of Rome under the direction of Giovanni Colonna. The sacred area contained two large sixth-century B.C. buildings, the so-called Temple A, with a tripartite plan and Temple B (fig. 1). Between these two monumental structures we find Area C, a rectangular pit or bothros (fig. 2), possibly an altar, where architectural remains, including terracottas, and the famous gold plaques were found.

The plaques with engraved inscriptions on them appeared to have been carefully rolled up and still had tiny holes, suggesting that they were once affixed to a wall, probably belonging to Temple B. Of the three plaques, one had a very brief Etruscan inscription, clearly of a later date and with no apparent relation to the other two, which bore longer texts of greater significance (figs. 3a, b; 4a, b). One of these two was written in Phoenician and the other in Etruscan, but their contents seemed to be equivalent, leading to their description as “quasi-bilingual” by Massimo Pallottino.<sup>2</sup>

More than fifty years later, numerous articles have been published about these two texts with endless and heated debate among epigraphists who have thus far reached no agreement on the interpretation of the texts or their religious and/or political meaning.<sup>3</sup> While both Etruscan and Phoenician are well-known languages, neither Etruscologists nor Semitists have been able to determine

## Phoenician Politics in Colonial Context: Pyrgi Again

which was the original text. Do we have an Etruscan original text with a Phoenician translation, or vice versa, or are they simply two independently composed versions?<sup>4</sup>

Obviously the historical and political interpretation of both texts depends on the answer to these significant questions. Here, however, I do not intend to deal with the philological aspects of the texts, but instead would like to discuss some of the historical interpretations that have been offered regarding the texts on the gold plaques from the point of view of Phoenician archaeology.

In the Phoenician text (figs. 3a, b), we can easily identify the name of the offering bearer, Thefarie Velianas (*tbyr' wlnš*), and the Phoenician name of the city (*Kishriyye* [= Caere/Cerveteri]), called “the city” in the Etruscan text (figs. 4a, b). It seems that Thefarie Velianas, written in Phoenician script as *mlk 'l*, that is, “reigning over” Caere, had built and dedicated a holy place to the goddess to thank her for his three years of rule. Nor does the transcription of the name of the goddess to whom the inscription is dedicated present the slightest doubt: Phoenician Astarte (*'strt*), who in the Etruscan text appears as Uni, the main female deity of the Etruscan pantheon, goddess of heaven, and the future Roman goddess Juno.

The difficulties posed by the plaques' reading and by the transcription of some of the

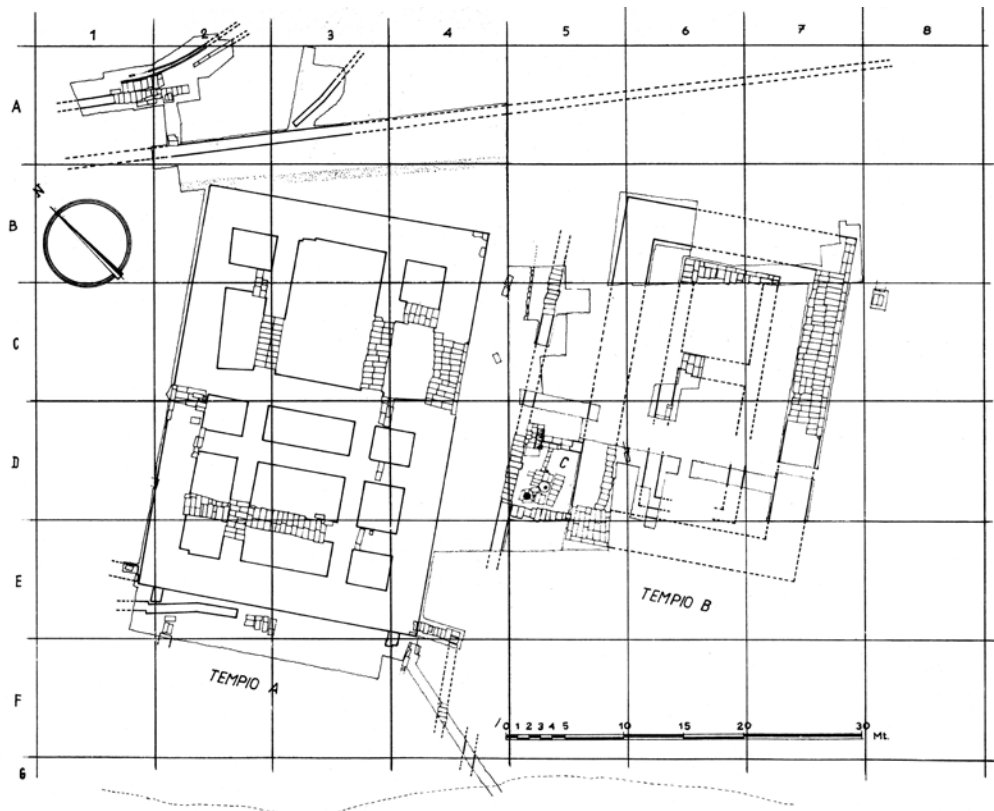


Fig. 1. Plan of Temples A (ca. 540–530 B.C.) and B (ca. 510 B.C.), Pyrgi

paragraphs have created an endless and rather disappointing debate about the particular motives that led the sovereign of Caere to build the monument, and about the religious meaning of the offering. Some of the best accepted hypotheses are: (a) that the Pyrgi inscriptions mention, in the form of ex-votos, Velianas's gratitude to the goddess for his three years on the throne or for some other favor;<sup>5</sup> (b) they refer to a *hieros gamos*, a sacred marriage between goddess and king;<sup>6</sup> or (c) they commemorate in the form of a shrine or a chapel the day or month of the burial of a god—perhaps Melqart or Adonis.<sup>7</sup>

**HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION: THE ROME-CARTHAGE TREATY OF 509 B.C.** The date range attributed to the gold plaques based on paleographic criteria matches that of the archaeological context. Colonna dates the construction of Temple A to ca. 540–530 B.C., and that of Temple B, associated with the “chapel” or Area C where the plaques were discovered, to ca. 510 B.C.<sup>8</sup> The texts can be dated between late sixth and early fifth centuries B.C., thus relating them directly with Temple B of Pyrgi.<sup>9</sup>

This dating of the gold plaques to around 500 B.C. has proven to be very useful for those seeking to link the event mentioned in the texts with a contemporary historical reality: the treaty between Rome and Carthage signed in 509 B.C., described by Polybius.<sup>10</sup> However, interpretation of the different



Fig. 2. Area C (altar or deposit where gold plaques were found), Pyrgi. Late 6th century B.C.

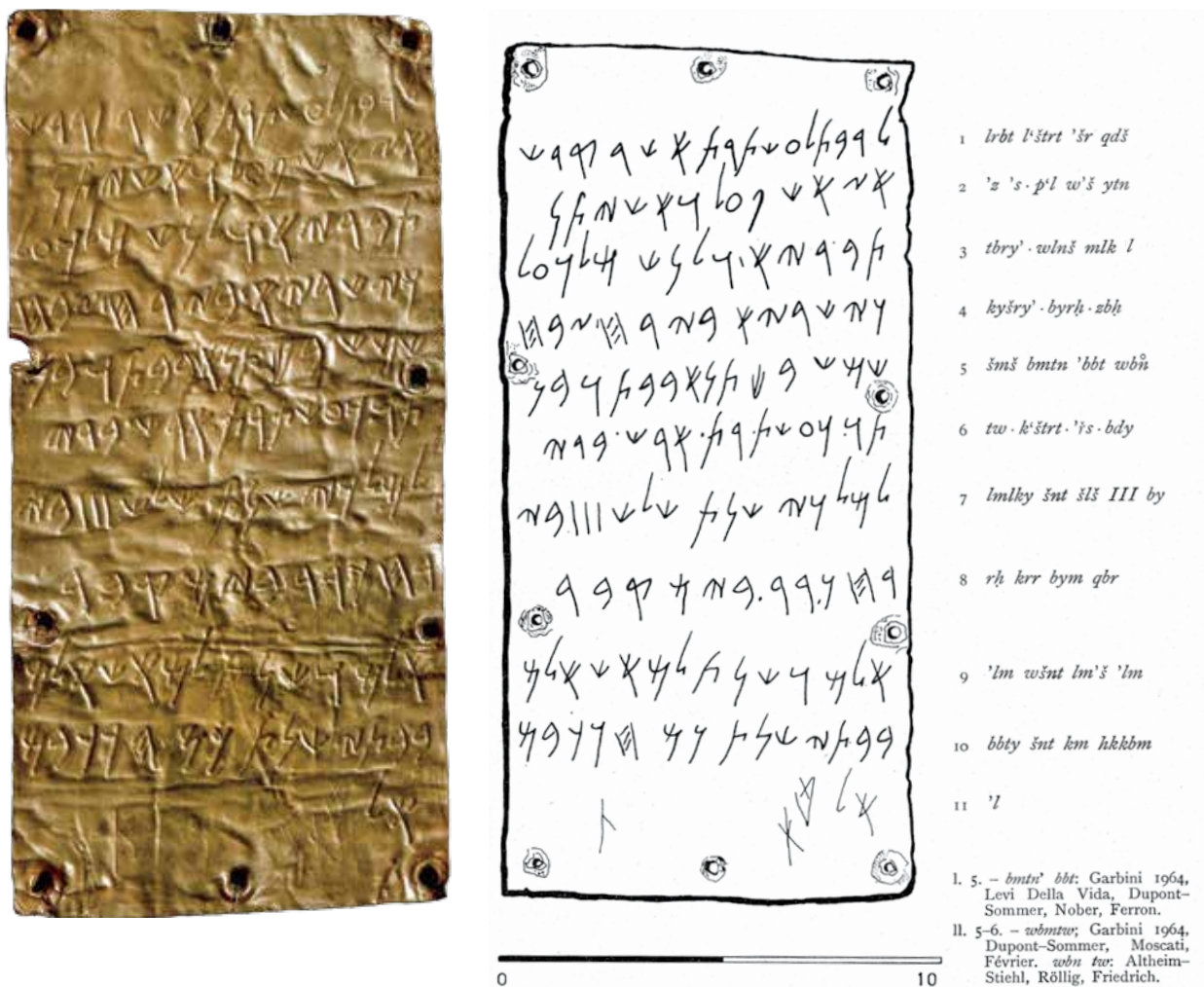
pieces of information needs to be somewhat forced if one seeks to correlate the chronology of the two, so as to transform the Rome-Carthage alliance into a Caere-Carthage treaty. The main arguments in favor of doing so, accepted by a number of authors, would be the following:

Classical sources tell us about the friendly relations between Carthage and Etruria at around this date.<sup>11</sup> The texts would thus represent the expression, in the guise of a religious act, of an agreement of friendship and/or alliance—not a treaty—with Carthage, the main power during that period. This religious act, under the protection of Uni, the Etruscan goddess, and of Astarte, the Phoenician divinity, would have served specifically to commemorate the defeat inflicted by the Etruscan-Carthaginian fleet on Phokaeans Greeks during the famous naval battle of Alalia in 535 B.C.<sup>12</sup> Once the prevailing power of Carthage over the western Mediterranean was consolidated, supported by

Etruscan friendship, the first Roman-Carthaginian treaty would have been signed in 509 B.C.<sup>13</sup>

Some authors have tried to make the evidence fit even more directly with the 509 B.C. treaty. In this case, Uni (Juno), here a goddess more Roman than Etruscan, would have joined with Carthaginian Astarte to promote Thefarie Velianas (that is, Tiberius, Caere's Latin king) to the throne—and this at precisely the moment when Tarquinian's Etruscan Rome had its main naval base in Caere.<sup>14</sup> Thus the connection Carthage-Rome-Caere could finally be established.

Historians of religion have suggested the existence of religious syncretism at Pyrgi, with Phoenician cultic activity within Etruscan lands reflecting Carthage's political supremacy after the Battle of Alalia.<sup>15</sup> This argument is again based on the plaques' apparent identification of the Caeretan goddess Uni with Astarte. Some authors go as far as to identify the name of Unialastres as an



Figs. 3a, b. Gold plaque inscribed with Phoenician script and drawing. Caere, Pyrgi. Ca. 500 B.C. Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome

official recognition of a single composite divinity at Pyrgi.<sup>16</sup> This view is certainly speculative and based on a supposed Caere-Carthage treaty.

Archaeological evidence has also been used to support the treaty hypothesis. For instance, the presence of Etruscan bucchero ware from Vulci workshops in early Carthaginian graves at Junon, Douimès, and Byrsa, an Etruscan inscription on ivory from the sixth century B.C. found by Delattre in 1898, and several

Etruscan imports from the fifth century discovered in Carthage, have been considered signs if not proof of intense trade and economic exchanges between Carthage and Caere-Pyrgi.

Several objections can be made to these historical interpretations:

1. Nowhere do Herodotos, Diodorus Siculus, or Polybius assert that the





- 1 *īṭa · tmia · icac · he*
- 2 *ramšvā [...] vatieṣe*
- 3 *unialastreṣ · 0emia*
- 4 *sa · mex · 0uta · 0efa*
- 5 *riei · velianas · sal ·*
- 6 *cluwenias · turu*
- 7 *ce · munistas · 0uvas*
- 8 *tameresca · ilacve ·*
- 9 *tulerase · nac · ci · avi*
- 10 *l · xurvar · teṣiameit*
- 11 *ale · ilacve · alṣase*
- 12 *nac · atranes · zilac*
- 13 *al · seleitala · acnaṣv*
- 14 *ers · itanim · heram*
- 15 *ve · avil · eniaca · pul*
- 16 *umṣva*

Figs. 4a, b. Gold plaque inscribed with Etruscan script and drawing. Caere, Pyrgi. Ca. 500 B.C.  
Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome

Etruscan fleet in Alalia was of Caeretan origin, nor do they suggest that the friendly relations between Carthage and Etruria pertained only to the city of Caere.

2. All speculative attempts aiming to link the Pyrgi texts with the Battle of Alalia and/or with the Rome–Carthage treaty assume that the language engraved in the Phoenician inscription is Carthaginian, that is, “Punic,” since

at that time, around 500 B.C., it was the only reasonable possibility: Carthage was then reaching its height and was therefore the only possible partner of the Etruscan world.<sup>17</sup> This hypothesis, however, has not taken into account the views of scholars who have questioned the Carthaginian or Punic origin of the Phoenician text. These authors observe, among other things, that many expressions and phrases are

more Near Eastern than Carthaginian, closer to the Phoenician dialect or a variant spoken in Cyprus or Byblos.<sup>18</sup> Further, the name of a goddess Astarte is actually rather unusual in Carthaginian contexts, whereas it is very common in Phoenician ones.

3. There is no archaeological evidence for the frequent presence of Phoenicians or Carthaginians at the Etruscan port of Pyrgi, or at its sanctuary, nor are there any signs of the existence of Phoenician cults in Etruscan territory.

4. The Etruscan elements found at Carthage represent very poor material evidence for special relations between Carthage and Caere-Pyrgi.<sup>19</sup> It should be recalled that the presence of Etruscan bucchero ware in Carthage is anything but special or exclusive to this city, but rather is part of a much more generalized phenomenon of Etruscan goods circulating within Phoenician areas. In this connection, the discovery of Etruscan and East Greek pottery in unequivocally Phoenician contexts in the central and western Mediterranean, dated to the sixth to fifth centuries B.C., has enriched our picture of international trading networks in the west at the end of the Phoenician colonial era. For example, in Iberia at Huelva, the bay of Gadir (Cádiz), Toscanos, Malaka (Málaga), and Cerro del Villar, new finds of homogeneous assemblages of Etruscan bucchero ware, in association with East Greek pottery and Carthaginian amphorae, suggest a complex phenomenon of interregional interaction.<sup>20</sup> The same can be seen in other Punic cities, including Carthage, Ebusus (Ibiza), Tharros, Bithia, Nora, Palermo, and Solunto. In the bay of Málaga, the majority of Etruscan pottery comes from workshops in southern Etruria (Caere). An international trade network of huge scope ultimately involved all of the Phoenician cities, from Tyre to Gadir and Carthage. The

presence of Etruscan goods in the western Mediterranean does not appear to be a response to a specific historical event—whether a battle or a treaty—but seems instead to reflect a clear integration of Etruscan commercial interests in the international exchange networks of the period.

#### PYRGI AND UNI-ASTARTE: AN EXAMPLE OF RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM?

Having addressed the political context, we are better placed to understand the religious meaning of the plaques. Religious syncretism implies something other than a simple semantic game. It suggests a close and deep cultural involvement and the search for means of coexistence through a symbiotic resolution or a new cultural identity in times of crisis or stress. Religious syncretism, in other words, does not occur through a single political pact but through the long coexistence of two different traditions, ultimately leading to assimilation or amalgamation. At Pyrgi we do not observe such a process culminating with two religious traditions—Carthaginian and Etruscan—merging into one. Instead, I suggest, we see a phenomenon whereby Phoenician Astarte came to be recognized in or equated with many local divinities across the Mediterranean world. Since Astarte's main function as patron goddess was to mediate and grant success to Phoenician maritime commercial and cultural enterprises and to protect Phoenician merchants and sailors, her presence at other Mediterranean sanctuaries was essential. At Rhodes, for instance, Phoenician sailors recognized their goddess overseas through a local goddess, Athena Lindia, sharing in her worship, oracles, and common offerings.<sup>21</sup>

Important though this phenomenon was, a sanctuary was more than a place of worship and religious syncretism. From the eighth century B.C., or even before, the main Mediterranean sanctuaries—of Hera on Samos, Melqart at Gadir, and Astarte at Kition—were, above all, cosmopolitan places for

encounter, exchange, and intercultural contact. The sanctuary of Pyrgi would certainly have played a similar cultural and interregional role, at a time when Caere was gaining international prestige among political, commercial, and economic elites. The attempt to place its local divinity, Uni, on the same level as the Phoenician Astarte, known across the entire Mediterranean, suggests that the officials running the port of Caere had a clear ambition to participate in international relations, and to be part of the strategic game that the Phoenician institutions had played during their long experience of long-distance trade, coordinating different commercial circuits. This involved mutual recognition through shared ideology and religious exchange, as could be witnessed by Baalat-Hathor in Byblos, in the relationship between Astarte and Athena Lindia on Rhodes, or in that between Astarte and Uni at Pyrgi.

1. Colonna 1965, 1996, 2002.
2. Moscati and Pallottino 1966, p. 15.
3. The debate would have started virtually on the day of their discovery (Moscati and Pallottino 1966; Moscati et al. 1970) between Orientalists (Garbini

- 1964; Dupont-Sommer 1964; Amadasi Guzzo 1967, pp. 158–69; Friedrich 1969) and Etruscologists (Pfiffig 1965; Heurgon 1966; Torelli 1967). See recently Bellelli and Xella 2016.
4. Kropp 1994, p. 189.
5. Dupont-Sommer 1964; Garbini 1989, p. 183; Kropp 1994, p. 193; Schmitz 2012, p. 90.
6. Février 1965; Delcor 1968, pp. 247–50; Ferron 1972, pp. 199–200.
7. Ferron 1970, p. 429; Schmitz 2009a, pp. 65–66.
8. Colonna 1996.
9. Moscati and Pallottino 1966, p. 15; Moscati et al. 1970, p. 11; Ferron 1970, p. 429; Ferron 1972, p. 191; Schmitz 2009a, p. 65.
10. Polybius, *Histories* 3.22.
11. Aristotle, *Politics* 3.9; Diodorus, *Library of History* 5.20.4.
12. Herodotos, *Histories* 1.166.1–2.
13. Moscati and Pallottino 1966, pp. 11–12; Ferron 1970, p. 434; Ferron 1972, p. 212; Bernardini et al. 1999.
14. Garbini 2011, pp. 226–30.
15. Moscati and Pallottino 1966, p. 16.
16. Delcor 1968, p. 245; Moscati et al. 1970, pp. 29–30; Ferron 1972, p. 193; Garbini 2011, p. 224.
17. Moscati and Pallottino 1966, p. 16; Ferron 1970, p. 429.
18. Garbini 1964; Moscati et al. 1970, pp. 12, 27; Schmitz 1995, pp. 570–71; Schmitz 2012, p. 90.
19. Moscati and Pallottino 1966, p. 12; Ferron 1972, pp. 190–91.
20. Aubet 2007.
21. Bonnet 1996, p. 96; Alvar 2014, p. 62.

# Tribal Dynamics, Child Gods, Festivals, and the Faraway Goddess: Mingling in the Egyptian Delta in the Third Intermediate Period

In an essay for the “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age” exhibition catalogue, I wrote about the situation and particular artistic atmosphere in Third Intermediate Period Egypt at the time of the encounter with the Phoenicians.<sup>1</sup> In this paper that results from my Wilkinson Lecture at the time of the exhibition, I want to focus on the situation in the Egyptian Delta more specifically to evoke recent, and recall some older, insights into the nature of that environment for the bearing they might have on understanding interactions with the Phoenicians. In this context I pursue two particular sets of artistic themes that speak to the quality of engagements. While scholars have assiduously mapped many Phoenician iconographic themes and their sources or possible sources, along with traces of Phoenician physical presence, it is hopefully constructive to bring recent understandings of the moment and the particular area in Egypt to the consideration of the complexity of interactions.

## THE DELTA AS A PARTICULAR ENVIRONMENT

A better provisional picture of the Egyptian Delta during this period and in its earlier history can be drawn from the extensive work of survey, excavation, and analysis in the last thirty to forty years since scholars undertook to deal more systematically with the complex issues of archaeology and preservation in that region.

The Egyptian Delta was somewhat difficult to tame and integrate throughout Egyptian history. Large tracts were swampy and marsh-like, and although there were certain very ancient cities, like Bubastis and Mendes, many other towns, despite the elaborate topographical mythologies created around them, do not really seem to have existed until the later periods of Egyptian history; settlement such as it was concentrated on the eastern branch of the Nile, the route to the Mediterranean and to the east.<sup>2</sup>

Following on Dorothea Arnold’s work on Hyksos identity<sup>3</sup> and Joan Aruz’s “Beyond Babylon” exhibition,<sup>4</sup> we are all familiar with the complexities of the visibility and integration of peoples of foreign origin in Egypt in the period from the later part of the Middle Kingdom into the early part of the New Kingdom. For those periods, attention has to focus on the northeastern Delta and the area of Avaris.

After some New Kingdom activity, the Ramessides undertook more concerted development in the Delta, establishing their capital at Piramesse, and there seems to have been an effort to gradually settle more of the land.<sup>5</sup> Christine Lilyquist’s recently published study of the silver known as the “Bubastis treasure,” two deposits found at Bubastis in the very early twentieth century that date to the period of Ramesses II (1279–1213 B.C.) and perhaps into the subsequent reigns, provides a glimpse into artistic interaction in the area in the Ramesside period.<sup>6</sup> These pieces and related pieces that she studied derive from wine-drinking sets she associated with festivals. Their owners appear to have held offices that may have required foreign



service, or perhaps they were foreign—although both held significant Ramesside official positions and one is known from a Saqqara burial. Their makers appear to have had good familiarity with Egyptian motifs but interspersed them with motifs that had a foreign origin, although it is not possible to demonstrate how far back in time they entered the Egyptian repertoire. Elements of their styles suggest varying degrees of attunement to the traditional Egyptian contexts of motifs, and they show interest in non-Egyptian gods. One can say then that there was a significant leavening of Near Eastern elements of iconography and style in the artistic environment at Bubastis, and one can wonder whether this had always been so.

During the second half of the New Kingdom, settlement in the Delta appears to have remained rather thin, but with the late New Kingdom (from about 1150 B.C.), successive waves of Libyan tribes were settled or settled themselves in the Delta and the northern Nile Valley. These were tribes from the Western Desert whose incursions into the Nile Valley, coinciding as they did with the troubles presented by the Sea Peoples, had become difficult to deal with. Although the Egyptian pharaohs claimed to have defeated these enemies, the tribes were actually settled over large tracts in the Delta and the northern Nile Valley.<sup>7</sup>

The Meshwesh (abbreviated as Ma) tribes seem to have constituted the first wave of settlement and eventually reached the eastern Delta; the Libu tribes formed a second wave and settled in the western part of the Delta.<sup>8</sup> The central section remained largely unsettled until somewhat later. Land records have been important in understanding the outcome of Libyan settlement in the Delta. In particular, donation stelae, a phenomenon by far the most heavily attested in the Delta and in the Third Intermediate Period, are seemingly the actual field markers associated with land donations to the temples: they give a view of new economic activity attributable to land reclamation in the Delta and, at the

same time, of the character of the largely Libyan settlement that had brought this about.<sup>9</sup> Their chronology and distribution correlate closely with what is known of the settlement of the Libyan tribes, while the stelae themselves include names and representations of many Libyan personages involved in this process. Overall, they constitute a remarkable glimpse of the stir of activity in the Delta and of the economic foundations in that region up to the accepted ascendancy of the settlers by Dynasty 22.

Recent work helps to give an overview of the urban entities in the Delta in the Third Intermediate Period.<sup>10</sup> A number of towns along the route to the east through Sinai to the Levant and Asia, along the Tanite and Mendesian branches of the Nile, and Kom Firin to the far west have Third Intermediate Period levels in their settlements. Once north of Memphis and Heliopolis, by far the best-known sites are Tanis and Bubastis, both significant for the branch of the dominant Libyan ruling family known as Dynasty 22. Tanis was a new city begun in Dynasty 21 as the successor of Piramesse and a mirror city for Thebes, and it was constructed inland on the river route beyond the coastal marshes. Bubastis, which has already been mentioned, was an ancient city located upriver from Tanis, at the crossroads with routes to the east across Sinai to the Levant and Asia.

These Delta towns were “open” cities, that is, without walls. Temples lay at their centers, and temple processional axes created the main routes through them. The temple structures in general were largely founded during the New Kingdom, although there was some new construction; at Tanis, of course, and at Bubastis there was considerable building work, albeit reused material from other Delta sites and earlier periods constituted a very considerable part of the construction material.<sup>11</sup> Certain kinds of religious imagery lived and evolved within temples and in the workshops and palaces that surrounded them. Funerals and burials might also offer religious imagery, of course, but burials of royalty at this time appear to have

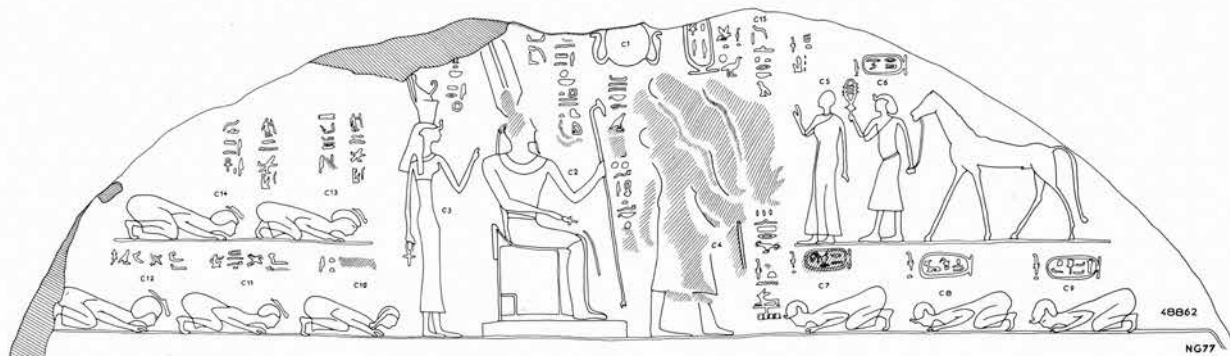


Fig. 1. Drawing showing lunette of the Victory Stele of Piye. Dynasty 25, reign of Piye (ca. 743–712 B.C.)

been largely within the temple, and burials of nonroyalty in the north are not well preserved or understood.<sup>12</sup> But processions of deities outside their temples at religious festivals, in processional barque-shrines or on their large river barques, are also marked contributors to the flux of imagery. The attendant festival celebrations themselves accommodated depictions that appear distinct from formal religious imagery and perhaps might differ more conspicuously among locales.

#### TRIBAL DYNAMICS?

A general understanding of politics and religion in the Third Intermediate Period has advanced, even if chronology and the relationships and reach of different actors remain fraught questions. Following the end of the Egyptian New Kingdom and the dawning of the first millennium B.C., it emerges that considerable social, political, and religious changes had taken place in Egypt, some of them manifesting particularly strongly or in distinctive ways in the Egyptian Delta. For purposes here four aspects are salient: tribal dynamics, child gods, festival culture, and the Faraway Goddess.

While the importance of the Libyans within the political constellation of the country starting with the rule in Dynasty 22 of a dynasty of Libyan descendants has long been known, one important view holds they had already risen to prominence or even control of the northern parts of the land when the country split between a high priest at Thebes and a king in Tanis at the

beginning of Dynasty 21.<sup>13</sup> And a number of scholars believe tribal aspects were powerfully operative in what now happened in Egypt: a concentration of multiple offices in the hands of single individuals as opposed to a structured bureaucracy and the assignment of territories and high offices to sons, all leading to the gradual splintering of power and territories among multiple rulers.

An ancient snapshot of the resultant situation is provided by the well-known stele of Piye of Kush that celebrates his victory over the divisive situation in Egypt in about 733 B.C.<sup>14</sup> The representation in the lunette of the stele (fig. 1) shows Piye (and Amun) receiving the submission of multiple kings and other titled rulers from throughout middle and northern Egypt, among them chiefs of the Ma and other Libyans denoted by feathers. A complex mosaic of territorial entities in the northern Nile Valley and the Delta is reflected in the account given on the stele. Much the same picture is reflected in Assyrian accounts of the years from about 670 to 664 B.C., when they encountered the numerous rulers of the Delta and the northern Nile Valley, so it was in its own way a reasonably stable organization. Analysis of Egyptian sources clearly indicates the situation had been approaching this state since the late ninth century B.C., and that strong tendencies in this direction had been apparent before that time.

So at the end of the New Kingdom into an area unevenly settled and with a long history of a notable admixture of elements from the east, came a surge of relatively new

elements from the west. Material effects of these new elements cannot be captured, but politically it is likely that the new settlement by Libyan tribes influenced the dispersion of power in the Delta. As a result, Egyptian ideas about the singularity of royalty and rulership were modified and stretched, a factor in the wide distribution of the iconography and imagery of rulership as it evolved, spread, and took on new emphases in the particular climate of this period. At the same time, openness to eastern elements and the entry of eastern populations were likely, at a minimum, to survive.

#### CHILD GODS

Turning to aspects of the particular quality of Egyptian imagery at this time, child gods—always male—are salient.<sup>15</sup>

The menat roundel of Harsiese exemplifies one role of these child gods: on this example an individual who is a child—indicated by his hairlock and nudity—makes an offering to the goddess Sakhmet.<sup>16</sup> The child is identified with the king by his uraeus. It is by no means new for the king to be identified as the child of the gods or, indeed, for certain ruler-type gods to be identified with the king. Yet there is increasing emphasis at this time not simply on the filiation god-king, but on the childlike aspect of the king and on the identification with the divine child of a great goddess, whether Horus, son of Isis; or Nefertum, son of Bastet or Sakhmet; or Ihy, son of Hathor; Khonsu, son of Mut; and so on.

There is also a very long tradition of representation of the sun god—often ram-headed because of the connection to Amun or Herishef—as emerging from a lotus, the symbol most essentially of the dawn. This emblem had long appeared in religious imagery, including interestingly on the processional barque shrines of gods who had solar associations.<sup>17</sup>

During the Third Intermediate Period, the appearance of the solar god from an opening lotus was expressed by the emergence of a child god from a lotus, and that child god



Fig. 2. Faience talisman of Osorkon, Great Chief of the Ma. Western Delta. Third Intermediate Period, ca. 800–740 B.C. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes (E 10943)

was moreover identified with the king.<sup>18</sup> So these long-lasting and intertwined traditions acquired a new emphasis characteristic of the Third Intermediate Period. A child god of a great goddess was identified with the sun god, and that child god was identified also with the king.

This imagery appears everywhere, for example, on elite objects including the bracelets of Nimlot; the owner may have been one prince Nimlot, the son of Sheshonq I (ca. 945–924 B.C.), who was appointed governor of Herakleopolis, and so not himself precisely royal.<sup>19</sup> It occurs on elite monuments, such as the stele naming Shedsunefertum high priest of Ptah at Memphis in the time of Sheshonq I, where the child is not named, but the stele is gilded, and the child's eye inlaid; the stele was probably dedicated in a Memphite temple, as it invokes Shedsunefertum's (posthumous?) agency for the living benefit of two other men.<sup>20</sup> The image also occurs frequently on high-status objects belonging to kinglets and chiefs, like the famous faience tile from a naos dated to the time of Iuput II from about 733 B.C., as he is mentioned on the Piye stele,<sup>21</sup> and the faience pendant of a Great Chief of the Ma Osorkon, from a realm in the western Delta and dating to about the first half of the eighth century B.C. (fig. 2).<sup>22</sup>



*Above and below, figs. 3a, b. Faience double-sided, openwork bead spacer. Third Intermediate Period, ca. 925 B.C. Eton College Collections, Windsor, United Kingdom (ECM.1659)*



#### FESTIVAL CULTURE

The festival theme was expressed, again and again, on chalices and other small faience items that have generally been associated with Hermopolis.<sup>23</sup> The scene is represented as part of a compendium of depictions or emblems that have been striking in relation to the subject matter of Phoenician ivories. However, while some of the imagery may be a general fit for the range of subject matter of Egyptianizing ivories, the imagery overall is not a specific fit, and the chronology of neither corpus is very secure. As Richard Fazzini

noted in 1972, based on the few extant inscriptions, the chalice style is considered to have developed from naturalistic to emblematic, leaving little space for arguments about influence from the emblematic group traveling from Egypt to the Levant.<sup>24</sup>

Still, the faience items do bring attention to the importance of festivals in first millennium B.C. Egypt, increasingly acknowledged in contemporary discourse as major cultural events for much of Egyptian history despite the relative absence of accounts in Egyptian texts.<sup>25</sup> Particularly in the first millennium





Fig. 4. Phoenician-style ivory roundel plaque showing a child on a lotus. Samaria. Ca. 9th–8th century B.C. Israel Museum, Jerusalem (IAA 1933–2574)

B.C., it appears these events were major generators of a second level of imagery responding to changes in participation or practices. Indeed, one small openwork jewelry spacer/plaque among the material associated with Hermopolis depicts the ram-headed beetle being born from the lotus on one side and specifically refers to the Egyptian New Year on the other (figs. 3a, b).<sup>26</sup> In fact, the decoration of these faience items consists largely in “myths and rituals relating to creation or its ‘repetitions’ (New Year rituals; coronations; rituals of royal renewal, themselves often linked to the New Year).”<sup>27</sup> It is generally believed that they were exchanged, donated, or employed in some manner in connection with large community festivities, some of them certainly celebrated in conjunction with the Egyptian midsummer New Year, which took place when the waters of the flood began to rise, promising new life and new growth. One can appreciate that there was a tremendous richness up and down the Nile and throughout the Delta in the coordination of stories of the birth of a divine child who was king with the actual renewal of the land.



Fig. 5. Syrian-style ivory and gold plaque with figure on a lotus. Arslan Tash, Bâtiment aux Ivoires, Room 14. Late 9th–early 8th century B.C. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Antiquités Orientales (AO 11465)

The birth of the child from a lotus, then, is a pervasive and distinctive visual element in the Third Intermediate Period. There were certainly multiple claimants to the imagery and to the associated symbolism of royalty and divinity in Lower Egypt, owing to the dispersion of royalty and leadership, and this and related imagery could also be publicly dispersed through processions and festivals. Two Levantine ivories can be cited that show the influence of these concepts. The first, from Samaria, resembles overall the amulet of the Great Chief of the Ma Osorkon, although the circle is not a *shen* ring, the *atef* crown uraei are overgrown, and the heavy child is not the lithe round-bellied Egyptian infant (fig. 4).<sup>28</sup> The second ivory, from Arslan Tash, departs considerably further from the Egyptian imagery, but suggests a sort of naturalization of the Egyptian concepts (fig. 5).<sup>29</sup> The two may well express concepts of the power of a solar god, or perhaps of the power of a sunlike ruler.

#### FARAWAY GODDESS

Another major theme of Third Intermediate Period religious life was a focus on female goddesses. These were called Eye of Re goddesses, because they were the powerful agents of that god and served like his eye, so that any wandering from their attention to that duty meant a serious diminution of his power. All of them had aggressive aspects, signified by their being represented as lionesses, and when pacified they brought great blessings.

One of the essential stories relating to these goddesses is that of the Return of the Faraway Goddess. The story is often associated with Tefnut, but it is also clear that there were versions attached to many goddesses, including Hathor, Mut, Sakhmet, and especially Bastet. The story, as known in text versions from the Roman period and alluded to in a scene in the Roman temple at Dakka in Nubia, concerns the aftermath of the withdrawal of the angry Eye of Re goddess as a lion to Nubia, and her luring back to Egypt by Thoth in the form of a monkey through a conversation studded with animal fables.<sup>30</sup> It has long been thought that these fables were only definitively brought together with the tale of the goddess quite late in Egyptian history, near the time of the known recording of the story in Ptolemaic temples. Although it was sometimes suspected that certain drawings on New Kingdom ostraca were earlier illustrations of the fables, they were thought to be on the order of folktales that were not officially acknowledged.

Reanalysis of the New Kingdom ostraca by Diane Flores, and especially new studies of important blocks from a temple chapel at Medamud in southern Egypt by Philippe Colombert and Alexandra von Lieven, have revealed the myth studded with fables was recorded already in formal temple context in the Third Intermediate Period.<sup>31</sup> Medamud was a temple in the Theban district to the god Montu but, like many temples in the area, also had a significant cult for the goddess Hathor. The Kushite period Divine Wife of Amun Shepenwepet II, like all the

Divine Wives closely associated with the goddess Tefnut, built a small chapel there that is dismantled and mostly gone except for a few blocks, leaving huge lacunae and limiting our knowledge of the chapel. But the two most significant of these blocks for current purposes have long been known, and their scenes are often illustrated as rather mysterious examples of the crossover of imagery of animals acting as humans into temple contexts, but left at that.

What has not usually been illustrated or treated are the lines of text beneath the scenes, and, indeed, these have only recently been studied and clarified. The whole depiction is very fragmentary, but it is clear that there were several registers of scenes of animal fables whose actors were labeled with names and taglines before the block breaks off, as though referring to well-known and more extensive stories, located in a chapel and immediately adjacent to a large figure of either the Divine Wife or a goddess.

The Medamud blocks parallel ostraca images of cats serving mice and bizarre animal orchestras, while other ostraca show a scene of conversation between a feline and a monkey with a bird over eggs in a nest above their heads that probably correlates to the late demotic versions of the myth where the goddess as “the Nubian cat” and Thoth as “the little ape” are in conversation, and the nest with eggs illustrates a fable recounted by Thoth about a vulture with its eggs/chicks and a cat with its kittens (fig. 6a).<sup>32</sup> The cat and the vulture make an agreement but the vulture eats the baby kittens; the cat then secures the help of the sun god Re, who sends retaliation through a fire that consumes the baby birds. A very frequent image on the ostraca that are considered potential prototypes for the late fables is of a cat or sometimes a jackal herding a flock of goose-like birds (fig. 6b).<sup>33</sup>

The new understanding of the Medamud blocks is significant here in revealing how very important and pervasive the story of the return of the dangerous or Faraway Goddess with its richly rendered fabulous landscape is



Fig. 6a. Drawing of painted limestone ostrakon depicting the myth of Tefnut. Deir el-Medina. Dynasty 20 (ca. 1186–1070 B.C.). Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Berlin (21443)



Fig. 6b. Drawing of detail of painted papyrus depicting a cat herding “geese.” Deir el-Medina. Dynasty 19–20 (ca. 1295–1070 B.C.). British Museum, London (EA 10016,1)

at this time. Lieven believes the reliefs at Medamud might have been the site of public enactments of the tales. In any event, the myth and its interwoven fables are among the strains orienting the fascination with these Eye of Re goddesses.

One of the most important of the Eye of Re goddesses is Bastet of Bubastis. Deborah Schorsch’s recent identification and study of a faience model tambourine in the The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s collection has illuminated a whole complex of Third Intermediate Period images that depict the goddess sailing on her *isheru*—her temple lake—probably marking her successful return from the south.<sup>34</sup> Sometimes she is shown with images of lion-, falcon-, or human-headed figures thought to be her sons (figs. 7a, b).

The model tambourines relate strongly to a formal stylistic tradition. At the same time distinctive faience figurines, often black-spotted, were produced in quite a different stylistic register during the period of Dynasty 22 and Dynasty 23. Both are understandable

in terms of the stories around the Faraway Goddess, although certainly aspects of the goddess’s persona that are less well known to us are also interwoven. Bubastis and Tanis are the centers of the phenomenon (figs. 8a–g). The definitive study of the figure complex was produced by Jeanne Bulté, and most recently a number of examples excavated in eastern Delta sites have been published in the context of the Museums in the Nile Delta project (MiN), along with updated archaeological understandings of a number of Delta sites.<sup>35</sup> The repertoire includes, for instance, a human-headed seated cat alluding to Bastet, most often characterized by the “Nubian”<sup>36</sup> hairstyle that probably alludes to the Faraway Goddess’s sojourn, and monkeys, often many monkeys studding other figures, alluding to Thoth and to the faraway south. An entourage of barely three-dimensional nude female figures is represented whose status is not entirely clear but who wear a variety of distinctive wigs and headdresses that have been read as signifiers of Egyptian, Levantine, and Nubian realms and of the role



*Above and below, figs. 7a, b. Faience double-sided model tambourine. Egypt. Third Intermediate Period (ca. 1070–712 B.C.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.194.2399)*







Figs. 8a–g. Group of seven faience talisman figures. Egypt. Third Intermediate Period, ca. 1070–712 B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: (left to right) a. woman with jar on head, Funds from various donors, 1886 (86.1.55); b. human-headed cat, Gift of Lily S. Place, 1921 (21.6.61); c. female holding monkeys, Purchase, Fletcher Fund and The Guide Foundation Inc. Gift, 1966 (66.99.71); d. female with a lyre, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.194.2459); e. Bes rattle, Purchase, 2007 Benefit Fund and Lila Acheson Wallace and Diane Carol Brandt Gifts, 2015 (2015.11); f. human-headed cat, Gift of Darius Ogden Mills, 1904 (04.2.119); g. monkey and man playing instruments, Rogers Fund, 1944 (44.4.17)

of nursemaids. These figures may carry boxes, or jars or musical instruments, but the “Nubian” and “nursemaid” coiffures are associated with Bastet and nursing, as Bastet was the nurse of the king. And central to the group are large flat figures of Bes. Bes became associated with the tale of the Faraway Goddess through his association with Hathor, and he is also connected with the solar god and solar child, to whom Bastet was a nurse.<sup>37</sup> In these figures, he generally holds an infant or a Bes-infant in his arms to whom he offers a dom nut, and he is himself draped in monkeys and/or cats. The dom nut itself has strong associations with

monkeys and both—again—with the south and the tale of the Faraway Goddess. In two known instances Bes has behind his feathers the representation of a cat herding goose-like birds that corresponds quite exactly to the New Kingdom ostraca discussed above that are of the ilk of the known fables (figs. 9a, b).

The themes and iconography are certainly perfectly Egyptian, the flatness of the figures has some if not very satisfactory contemporary parallels, but precursors of the style are not obvious.<sup>38</sup> Some, like the large Bes figures, seem to have fit on wands, and have numerous holes that held rattling rings, so perhaps they were used in performances.

*Left and right,*  
figs. 9a, b. Front and  
back of faience Bes  
rattle. Egypt. Third  
Intermediate Period  
(ca. 1070–712 B.C.).  
University of  
Pennsylvania  
Museum of  
Archaeology and  
Anthropology,  
Philadelphia (E14358)



Findspots are not often known or revelatory, but some were found in habitations. Offering mythic precursors for societal goals, the figurines might have functioned at social/religious performances and are thought to have functioned on personal levels as amuletic guarantors of fortunate childbirth and mother and child safety.

This long discussion of the Faraway Goddess, Bastet, and Bubastis contextualizes

evocations of the Eye of Re goddesses, and in particular the tale of the Faraway Goddess, in Phoenician ivories: the lion-head aegis from Nimrud representing a goddess, although her crown would be an unaccustomed derivative of the Egyptian red crown not typical of any Egyptian lion-headed goddess; rows of sphinxes from Salamis with the distinctive “Nubian” hair (fig. 10); and the Nimrud ivory depicting a male lion god holding the



Fig. 10. Detail of reconstructed Phoenician-style wood and ivory headboard with human-headed cats. Salamis, Tomb 79. Cypro-Archaic period, ca. 8th–7th century B.C. Cyprus Museum, Nicosia



Fig. 11. Ivory Phoenician-style plaque with Egyptian lion-headed god. Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, SW 37. Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 8th–7th century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1961 (61.197.12)



Fig. 12. Faience female figure holding a vase (or a chest?) on her head. Rhodes. Archaic period, late 7th–6th century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.194.2395a, b)

scepter identified with female goddesses, in particular Bastet, and with the headdress of Nefertum, also considered her son, have been noted before (fig. 11).<sup>39</sup> But even more interesting in the last ivory mentioned is the monkey sitting on a lotus holding a small rounded object. This figure very much evokes the monkey/Thoth sitting and eating a dom nut who appears on New Kingdom ostraca and on Third Intermediate Period faience figures like those discussed above. The monkey eating a dom nut is not a typical temple scene; it is not possible to be categorical, as the Medamud reliefs are roughly contemporary and the limestone reliefs from the main Bubastis sanctuaries extant in the

Third Intermediate Period, whatever their date, are lost to lime burners, but if such a scene existed in a temple, it was likely an instance of the evolution and expansion of the embrace of temple cult at this time and itself an example of the incorporation of the nonformal realm of imagery in the eastern Delta. For that matter, so might be the sphinx with the Nubian hairstyle, only known in formal temple relief from a very old drawing of a missing block at Armant of unclear date, and so difficult to track.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, figures related to the Bubastite/Tanite faience figurines, and in a rather close style, although rounder and of a somewhat different material, were created in

overlapping or slightly later times and found mainly in areas of Cyprus but also the Levant,<sup>41</sup> much as though the ideas for the figures were traveling with Phoenicians who had a fairly integrated relationship to the eastern Delta (fig. 12).

Bubastite, or eastern Delta, themes then appear in Phoenician ivories, and figurines derived from the eastern Delta type appear in Phoenician settlements. Moreover, the ivories perhaps to a degree and the figurines certainly indicate that their various makers were embedded in broader strata of representation and creation, and not just with formal representational styles.

In sum, the atmosphere of the Delta at this time, so far as we can evoke it from our very partial knowledge, is well transmitted by artistic creations found outside Egypt and associated with the Phoenicians. These participate in different stylistic registers, one more or less following formal Egyptian conventions, the second following an extra-formal style that first appeared in the eastern Delta in the Third Intermediate Period. The subject matter in general and the employ of the extra-formal style in particular convey the sense that Phoenicians were immersed in the considerably mixed culture of the eastern Delta.

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Professor Jennifer Houser Wegner located the photograph of the backside of the beautiful Bes in the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

1. Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 198–201.
2. Meeks 1979, pp. 619–21.
3. Arnold 2010.
4. Aruz et al. 2008.
5. Meeks 1979, pp. 619–21.
6. Lilyquist 2012.
7. Vittmann 2003, pp. 1–14, summarizing the work of Leahy and Jansen-Winkel. The questions remain under discussion.
8. Yoyotte 2012 (1961), pp. 43–44, para. 41–42.
9. Meeks 1979, pp. 617–22.
10. Leclère 2008, pp. 577–662, for his concluding observations; individual cities are discussed in extensive dossiers.
11. Bakr and Brandl 2010, p. 28; Leclère 2008, pp. 172–76 (Third Intermediate Period Bubastis), 402–29 (Third Intermediate Period Tanis).
12. Outside the royal burials at Tanis, which follow a Theban tradition, there are almost no coffins well assigned to the Third Intermediate Period in the Delta. Burial imagery on wood coffins and cartonnages in “Libyan” areas of the northern Nile Valley were considerably distinct from the Theban tradition; see J. H. Taylor 2009.
13. Vittmann 2003, p. 11, and generally relative to the Libyan settlement as a guide to the original work up to that year.
14. Grimal 1981.
15. Fazzini 1988 is basic for the imagery of the period; see pp. 8–9 for a discussion of the child on the lotus.
16. M. Hill and Schorsch 2007, p. 105.
17. Karlshausen 2009, pp. 204–9, pl. 12, for a schematic.
18. Fazzini 1988, pp. 8–9.
19. Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 177–78.
20. Berman 1999, pp. 258–60.
21. Fazzini 1988, p. 9, and for a photograph of the Edinburgh plaque, see [http://www.nms.ac.uk/explore/search-our-collections/collection-item/?item\\_id=300451&search=description=%27i-uput%20II%27&startfrom=1](http://www.nms.ac.uk/explore/search-our-collections/collection-item/?item_id=300451&search=description=%27i-uput%20II%27&startfrom=1).
22. Étienne 2009, p. 66.
23. Tait 1963 is the definitive study; the traditional location of chalice- and faience-working at Hermopolis is not an obvious fit for a major influence on the Phoenicians but needs reexamination in any case.
24. Fazzini 1972, pp. 66–67; Lilyquist 2012, p. 40 and n. 189, for a brief discussion of dating and development.



25. Bryan 2014 discusses evidence for festivals of drunkenness through Egyptian history in order to document the Porch of Drunkenness built by Hatshepsut at the Karnak Temple of Mut. And Naukratis, settled just after the Third Intermediate Period, is the source of many small limestone and terracotta Egyptian figures considered potentially associated with a series of festivals; see Thomas 2015.
26. Spurr et al. 1999, pp. 47–48, ECM 1659.
27. Fazzini 1988, p. 9.
28. Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 176–77, cat. no. 65d, and also fig. 361 from Nimrud.
29. Ibid., pp. 152–53, cat. no. 51a.
30. Hoffmann and Quack 2007, pp. 195–229; Flores 2004, pl. 23a, is a sketch of the Dakka scene.
31. Flores 2004 regarding figured ostraca; Lieven 2009 and Collombert 2008 regarding Medamud blocks.
32. Flores 2004, pp. 250–51, pl. 23b; Hoffmann and Quack 2007, pp. 202–4.
33. Flores 2004, pp. 239–41, pls. 7, 8.
34. Schorsch 2016.
35. Bulté 1991; Bakr and Brandl 2014, pp. 158–59, 224–31.
36. Nubia is a central notion in the context of the Faraway Goddess tale, so I do retain the designation here. But reference to that notion in these figures does not depend upon the allusions of this hairstyle. Gubel (1998) notes the variability of the hairstyle, and the point is taken (see also Aufrère 1998 regarding variant interpretations of the tale). Bulté (1991) did discuss the hairstyle at length and refers to Egyptological reasons for categorizing it as Nubian (pp. 95 n. 92, 104–5), and she refers to the occupational “nursing” hairstyle as also referenced; there is in addition a similar late Dynasty 18 and Dynasty 19 childhood style. These are certainly old caricatures dating back to the New Kingdom, so it is hard to know how actively they conveyed a specific meaning, like the rounded Levantine cap. For more recent comments on the upswept hairstyle seen on earlier female sphinxes that Gubel references, see Gabolde 2015, pp. 160–65, who also references the goddess on the Tell Basta vessels.
37. For Bes in the return story, see, for example, Malaise 1990, pp. 693–97, where it is discussed in the context of inquiry into Bes’s own origins. On p. 697 n. 50, probable Third Intermediate Period scarabs in the Petrie and Golenischeff collections are cited that refer to Bes at Nubian sites associated with the Dangerous Goddess.
38. Caubet and Pierrat-Bonnefois 2005, pp. 125–26.
39. Aruz et al. 2014, p. 122, fig. 310, p. 192, fig. 366, and p. 122, fig. 309, respectively. See Gubel 2000, pp. 84–90.
40. Prisse d’Avennes 1997, sculpture pl. II/35, comments p. 17.
41. Caubet and Pierrat-Bonnefois 2005, pp. 125–26.

# Crossing Continents: Phoenician Art and How to Read It

## INTRODUCTION

### *Phoenician Iconography and the Lack of Accompanying Inscriptions*

One of the major drawbacks in reconstructing the intrinsic meaning of Phoenician iconography is that most of the images reproduced by artists in different media lack explanatory legends of the kind possessed by many compositions in Classical Greek art. Ironically, the alleged inventors of the alphabetic writing system have left us with disappointingly few historical inscriptions, largely due to the fact that papyrus (a material not preserved in the humid soil of the Levantine coast) had largely replaced the use of clay tablets that had been prevalent in the Bronze Age.

This shortage of inscriptions certainly affects our interpretation of images. As a case in point, the god represented on a Phoenician stele from about 800 B.C., from Bureij near Aleppo (fig. 1), for instance, would never have been identified by the scholarly community as a depiction of Melqart, tutelary deity of Tyre, without the accompanying contemporary inscription.<sup>1</sup> He is equipped with a fenestrated axe of the type worn by the divinized heroes in the second-millennium B.C. Temple of the Obelisks in Byblos, as well as by a large array of divinities in the Phoenician Mediterranean realm and the Punic west until well into the Hellenistic period—not all of them necessarily representing Melqart.<sup>2</sup> The image of the Baalat Gebal (“Lady of Byblos”), a goddess of the



Fig. 1. Basalt stele depicting Melqart. Bureij. Phoenician, ca. 800 B.C. National Museum, Aleppo (5052)

Astarte type of paramount importance in the pantheon of Byblos and abroad, is identified as such in the well-known Persian-period Yehawmilk stele's inscription, but that is, regrettably, as far as it goes.<sup>3</sup> In other instances, we rely entirely upon the mercy of



Fig. 2. Bronze statuette of Astarte. Seville, Camas, El Carambolo(?). Phoenician, 8th–7th century B.C. Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla (II.136)

epigraphists in order to establish whether, for example, the Phoenician inscription on a Persian-period Egyptian(-izing) cube statue now in the Brussels museums designates the lady represented as the Baalat Gebal, or merely refers to a votive offering to her cult by some anonymous female worshiper.<sup>4</sup> Also testifying to the importance of inscriptions, a more specific link has been postulated between the Phoenician inscription on the bronze figurine now in the Archaeological Museum of Seville (fig. 2), an image heavily

dependent on the art of Third Intermediate Period Egypt, and the religious profile of the Sidonian Astarte Hor (“Astarte of the Grotto”) if not of the “woman at the window.”<sup>5</sup> Such a hypothesis is further corroborated by the seventh-century B.C. bilingual inscription on a sepulchral relief in the form of a triple-recessed window from Kourion, Cyprus, identifying the deceased as of Sidonian descent.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Adoptions versus Adaptations of Egyptian Models in Phoenician Art*

Several artifacts, including many, if not most, of the classical Phoenician bowls referred to below, are marked by the distinct impact of Egyptian art, which once led Georges Perrot and Charles Chipiez in their memorable art-historical volumes to write the oft-repeated one-liner that “the only originality of this [Phoenician] art is that of not being original at all.”<sup>7</sup> As has since been demonstrated in several contributions, this is not invariably true at all. It goes without saying that if the Phoenicians, the alleged inventors of our alphabetic writing system, could write, they could read as well and, moreover, adapt their art to incorporate whatever benefit they derived from their readings, including Mesopotamian and Egyptian written records (for example creation myths, solar cycle, *The Return of the Eye of Re*). Following Perrot and Chipiez, the excavator of Nimrud, Austen Henry Layard, could not appreciate the abundant use of Egyptian motifs by Phoenician artists, no doubt to be explained in his opinion by the fact that they were all too busy wheeling and dealing with Greeks and other Mediterranean populations to create an art of their own.<sup>8</sup> In presenting his views on Phoenician ivories, Henri Frankfort described the crowns of the genii represented on ivories from Arslan Tash as “a parody of the (Egyptian) Double Crown,” and was followed by many in considering such works as meaningless copies of Egyptian concepts, the sense of which the Phoenicians could not even understand.<sup>9</sup> Frankfort illustrated his point by referring to plaques featuring the



Fig. 3. Phoenician-style ivory statuette of Nubian tribute bearer with an oryx, a monkey, and a leopard skin. Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, NE 2. Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 8th century. B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1960 (60.145.11)

short-lived adoption of the *zematawy* motif, which had represented the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt ever since Early Dynastic times. Here again, however, we should not forget that most of these ivories were produced in the early first millennium B.C. by the craftsmen (whether itinerant or not) of a temporarily united kingdom—if not an intimate political coalition between Sidon and Tyre to its south. Thus it was excellent timing indeed for the short-lived popularity of this visual metaphor in the Levant, which was no longer used after the bicephalic Tyro-Sidonian coalition's disintegration.<sup>10</sup>



Fig. 4. Bronze Egyptian furniture inlay. Egypt, Memphis(?). Third Intermediate Period (ca. 1070–712 B.C.). Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (E.6904)

The juxtaposition of a Phoenician ivory statuette from Nimrud and a contemporary Libyan-age Egyptian ajouré plaque in bronze (figs. 3, 4) is but one of many examples underscoring how closely the Phoenician workshops followed new trends and vogues in Third Intermediate Period Egypt. The ivory friezes of the Salamis bedstead (fig. 4), probably part of the dowry offered by a





Fig. 5. Phoenician-style wood and ivory headboard. Salmis, Tomb 79. Cypro-Archaic period, ca. 8th–7th century B.C. Cyprus Museum, Nicosia

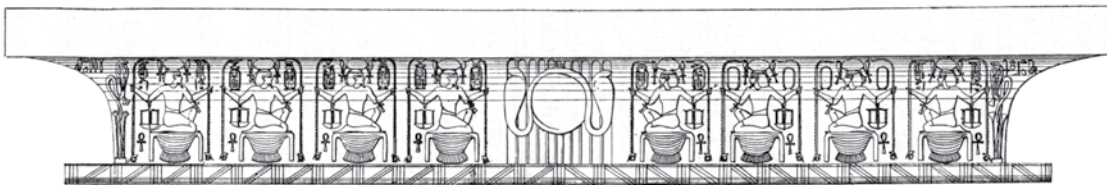


Fig. 6. Drawing of relief cornice. Egypt, Karnak, Temple of Khonsu. Dynasty 21, ca. 1070–945 B.C.

Phoenician king to a Cypriot ruler, are among several examples that warn us not to assume that Phoenician artists' variants on a given theme are their own inventions.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the combination of Heh figures into a frieze (fig. 5, top register) was shown by excavators at Samaria to have been inspired by a similar composition in the Theban temple of Khonsu (fig. 6).<sup>12</sup> A similar ivory strip combining

identical figurations of the Sun child may also hark back to Egyptian prototypes (see Hill essay),<sup>13</sup> although such predecessors are still lacking for the Salmis bedstead's frieze of Bastet sphinxes.<sup>14</sup> Bearing in mind that the absence of evidence is no evidence of absence, these few examples urge greater caution in determining the originality of artistic concepts in a cross-cultural context.

PHOENICIAN ART OF THE IRON AGE I  
PERIOD AND THE TRANSITION INTO  
IRON AGE II AGAINST THE  
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

During a military intervention in Syria around 1020 B.C. best described as a “waving of the flag” campaign, the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.) was received by the aldermen of the insular town of Arwad and invited on a sea “safari” three double military *berû*-miles to the south, where a hippopotamus was killed in the vicinity of the city called Sumur, according to the royal annals. At this time Sumur, present-day Tell Kazel, presumably already used the nearby harbor of Tabbat al-Hammam.<sup>15</sup> Inscribed arrowheads tell us that Sumur was part of the petty kingdom of Amurru, ruled by Phoenician kings named Zakarbaal I and II and Ben-Anat in the eleventh century B.C.<sup>16</sup> It is perhaps not a matter of coincidence that, upon arrival in Byblos, the Egyptian envoy Wenamun had to await the return of its king, also named Zakarbaal, who at the time was still inspecting his territories in the north—where Amurru was situated relative to the location of Byblos, a designation that existed since the days of the fourteenth-century B.C. Amarna correspondence. Consequently, Zakarbaal of Byblos in the *Story of Wenamun* was thus not only a namesake and contemporary of one or the other of the homonymous kings of Amurru, but maybe even the actual ruler (if not Byblite governor) of this buffer state. This would safely identify him as one of the direct forerunners of king Ahiiram of Byblos, who, in usurping an older royal coffin, provided us with an early first-millennium B.C. inscription containing all of the characters of the Phoenician alphabetic script.<sup>17</sup>

As part of the American University of Beirut Archaeological Museum’s excavations at Tell Kazel, I was fortunate in uncovering the earliest sanctuary to date on the Phoenician coast, the foundation of which dates back to the late tenth century B.C. The layer preceding the Assyrian conquest of 738 B.C. by Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) yielded a vast harvest



Fig. 7. Limestone stele with secondary inscription. Sumur (Tell Kazel). Ca. 950–900 B.C.; inscription 5th century B.C. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Antiquités Orientales (AO 22247)



Fig. 8. *Maabed* and surrounding halls. Amrit

of terracotta figurines, representing standing nude goddesses, seated pregnant goddesses, and bearded gods, as well as the heads of young males and females adorned with the ancestral *Lebbade* and polos crowns, respectively. The latter are identical with the poloi of contemporary ivory heads, which could therefore point to an Amurrite contribution to this production. Other examples come from a shrine at Sumur's harbor at Tabbat al-Hammam, and from a temple at Tell 'Arqa in northern Lebanon. This coroplastic production is obviously a regional one and does not continue after the Assyrian raids.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, the so-called Amrit Stele (fig. 7) was in reality found on the banks of the Al-Abrash River meandering at the foot of Tell Kazel and probably once adorned its Iron Age temple. Although already very Phoenician from a stylistic point of view, several Late Bronze Age reminiscences suggest that we should place this monument toward the end of the later Iron Age I, around 950–900 B.C., rather than in the second phase.<sup>19</sup> For many of the same reasons, the same applies to the

stele from Qadboun on the northern outskirts fringes of Amurru, representing a Baal with a spear pointed to the ground as in the iconography of Ugaritic art, a long tassel hanging from the back of his crown comparable to one worn by another Baal on a rhyton from Kition, Cyprus, and, finally, a double axe of the kind often combined with the Homeric figure-of-eight shields.<sup>20</sup>

On the coast of Amurru facing the island city of Arwad, the *Maabed* (temple) of the Amrit sanctuary was constructed atop one of several natural wells cut out of the rock in the manner of an Egyptian *naiskos* shrine long before Achaemenid period buildings surrounded the sacred basin (fig. 8). Egyptian influence is also betrayed by the monumental sandstone altars in the form of *djed* pillars, some of the few remnants of this imposing temple's original building phase, and still represented as objects of veneration on later Phoenician artifacts, such as ivories and stamp seals.<sup>21</sup>

The popularity of this particular type of shrine on the Phoenician coast is



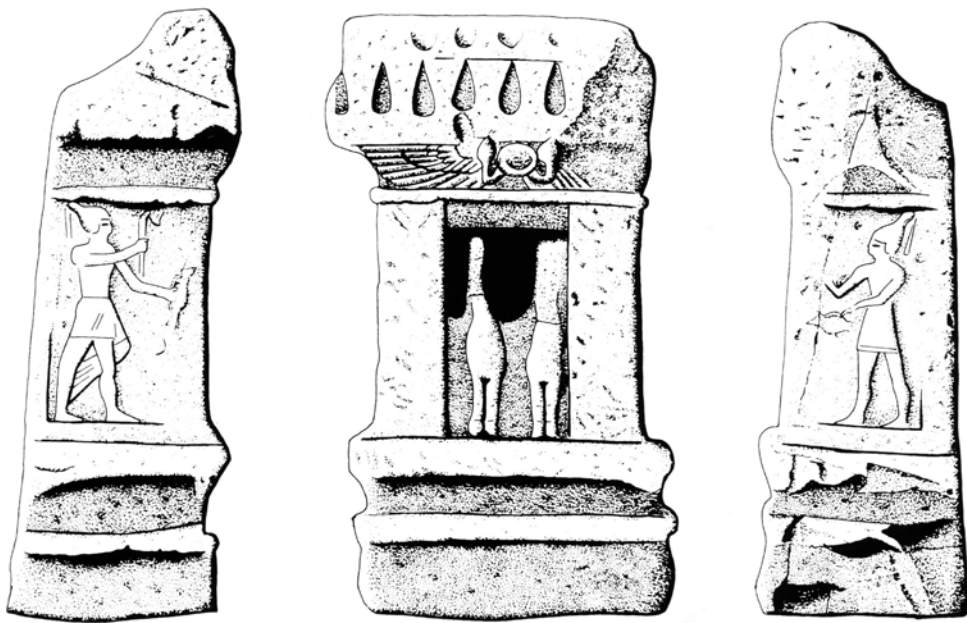


Fig. 9. Drawings of limestone decorated *naiskos*. Sidon. Ca. 850–675 B.C. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Antiquités Orientales (AO 2060)



corroborated by the representation of a similar one within the walls of Byblos, represented on a now-lost relief of Sargon's palace at Khorsabad.<sup>22</sup> The architectural remnants of this tower-like naos, which survived well into Ottoman times under the name Burj al-Assad, and are now kept in the Louvre, and several terracotta shrine models, complete the corpus for this Iron Age I–II type of shrine.<sup>23</sup> To judge by a few stone *naiskos* models, also in the Louvre (fig. 9), and a series of ivory plaques (fig. 10), Sidon, too, may very well have boasted a sanctuary of this type during the transition phase from Iron I to Iron II.<sup>24</sup> Only new excavations will establish whether Sidon's Late Bronze Age sanctuary survived the disaster commonly

Fig. 10. Phoenician-style ivory plaque with figures flanking a sacred tree in a *naiskos*. Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, SW 12. Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 9th–8th century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.269.3)



associated with the Sea Peoples that marks the beginning of the Iron Age I period. For now, the comparison between the aforementioned ivory plaques and the Sidonian *naiskoi* strongly suggests Sidonian workshops to have been behind the propagation of the motif of the acolytes with ram-headed scepters and oinochoai set in shrines. The follower of the royal chariot with identical attributes seen on Sidonian coinage and a relief from Chhim near Sidon all but confirm such a view.<sup>25</sup>

## IRON AGE II: PHOENICIAN ART IN THE HOMELAND AND THE EXPORT OF LUXURY GOODS TO THE WEST: SOME NEW READINGS

### *The “Slaying Pharaoh”*

The more recent group of Phoenician bowls, following our late colleague Glenn Markoe’s classification, covers the better part of the eighth century B.C., to disappear entirely before the middle of the seventh century (for reasons to be explained below).<sup>26</sup> About a dozen of these gilded vessels portray the ritual act of a person, dressed in pharaonic attire in their central medallion, crushing the skull of his Asiatic enemy with a mace, and often holding a bow with arrows above the unfortunate victim’s scalp. All these elements are in line with the ancestral Egyptian propagandistic icon reproduced on several Late Bronze Age stelae set up at Tyre and Byblos, as well as on several of the reliefs carved in the rocks along the southern bank of the Nahr el-Kalb River north of modern Beirut. The message to the local population is clear: “Obey the Egyptian crown or perish!”<sup>27</sup> But why would the Iron Age Phoenician artists represent their own kinglets as the humiliated enemies of the Egyptian rulers with whom their towns once again enjoyed privileged relations in the Iron Age II? Surely, they instead used this motif to express native ideas dealing with moral issues or civil attitudes, as I have recently explained at length.<sup>28</sup> On the Phoenician bowls, the ritual act of slaying the enemy is often performed by the pharaoh-like figure in front of a heavily armed

goddess reminiscent of the “Ishtar of Battle” known from much older Mesopotamian sources. In her Phoenician incarnation as Astarte, she is shown overseeing the ritual crushing of the skull by means of a mace head, specifically referred to by the inscription on an eleventh- to tenth-century B.C. weight from Byblos in the form of such a mace head, which reads: “May the hand of Ozbaal crush the skull of the enemy.”<sup>29</sup> Such divine admonitions urging royals to respect binding contracts recur in many loyalty oaths imposed by the victorious Assyrians on their dwarfed Aramaean and Phoenician adversaries, or partners in the latter case. The treaty concluded around 676 B.C. between Baal of Tyre and Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.) following the latter’s destruction of Sidon is a perfect example.<sup>30</sup> After the enumeration of Assyrian and Tyrian deities as witnesses to the legal obligations, their divine help in punishing infringers of the covenant follows, ending in a series of curses. In perfect agreement with the text of the Byblos mace head, the pattern of action and reaction is clearcut: “If you break this or that rule, then the gates of hell will open up.” I would argue that these textual curses find pictorial counterparts in Phoenician iconography. Three examples, all found on one of the Praeneste silver bowls (fig. 11), must suffice here to explain what I believe are the different elements of the compositions decorating a dozen classical Phoenician bowls illustrating individual curses of the loyalty oath:

- A. “May Astarte break your bow in the thick of battle and have you crouch at the feet of your enemy”
- B. “May Melqart and Eshmoun deliver your land to destruction and your people for deportation”
- C. “May you bathe in blood and pus as if in water”<sup>31</sup>

This new iconological interpretation resolves questions about this imagery that have defied interpretation since the late nineteenth century. In brief, the famous scene of



Fig. 11. Line drawing of silver Phoenician bowl of Esmunya'ad ben "Asto." Praeneste, Bernardini Tomb. 7th century B.C. Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome (61574)

the so-called pharaoh smiting his enemies on a dozen of the bowls appears to be a most ingenious artistic translation of moral values proper to the highest level of Phoenician society, of which members of that elite were reminded whenever sipping wine from such bowls during religious ceremonies and elite banquets. After the fall of Sidon and the

subsequent curtailing of Tyre's prominent role in overseas trade, no more precious metal vessels were sent to the west, no more ivories, no more jewels, nor richly embroidered textiles of all sorts propagating the hallmarks of Iron Age II Phoenician art.



Fig. 12. Drawing showing selection of Levantine seals representing pharaoh-like figures. Late 9th– early 7th century B.C.

### *The Striding Pharaonic Figure Holding a Scepter Aloft*

Several Levantine stamp seals roughly dating from the end of the ninth to the early seventh century B.C. all show variations on a common theme, featuring a larger-than-life male figure clad in pharaonic attire, invariably holding a scepter aloft (fig. 12). The main figure, as well as secondary symbols including baboons<sup>32</sup> and a full-moon disc within a lunar crescent, recur as straightforward Phoenician elements pointing, respectively, to the constellation Orion (represented by the pharaonic figure), the phenomenon of solar (the Thoth baboon) and lunar eclipses (disc and crescent), in the otherwise Aramaean composition of an astral bronze bowl (fig. 13).<sup>33</sup> In the light of these astronomical connotations, the significance of what I had earlier proposed to identify as

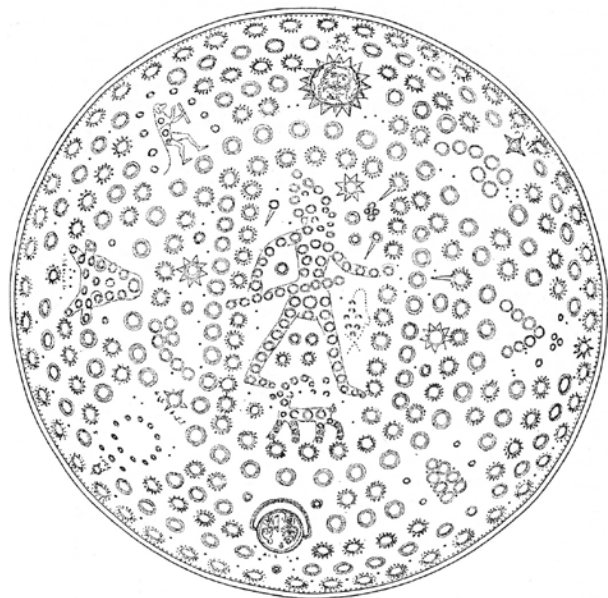


Fig. 13. Drawing showing bronze bowl with astral imagery. Moussaieff Collection, London



Fig. 14. Limestone male statue, Sidon. Late 7th–6th century B.C. Direction Générale des Antiquités, Beirut (2005)

the official seals of magnates officiating in the name of rulers mentioned in successive Neo-Assyrian lists of “The Twelve Kings of the Coast” needs adjustment.<sup>34</sup> New examples have indeed been published recently, such as the spectacular seal of ‘Abday, minister of Hosea, the last king of Israel (732–722 B.C.), set in a golden mount and hanging from a fibula of a type previously attested by the Nimrud excavations (with a secondary seal), and by another example without the original seal from a (Phoenician governor’s?) tomb in Larnaca, all connected with a jewelry production in Tanis in the Nile Delta.<sup>35</sup>

If the former and other addenda to the corpus of seals under discussion underscore their use by prominent members of high society and in some cases even by royalty, they also evoke another question. Could the “pharaonic” protagonist of the aforesaid bowls (including the ones referred to above) and the seals not represent a common super-regional concept, not so much the embodiment of an idealized king, but the giant Orion himself, the symbol of the clearest constellation visible to all members of a temporary league uniting against the Assyrian threat coming down “like a wolf on the fold,” in the words of Lord Byron.

#### *Kings Officiating as Priests in Pharaonic Attire*

Several sites on Cyprus have yielded often oversized statues in an Egyptianizing style, prefigured by the eighth- to seventh-century B.C. sculptures known from Tyre, Sarepta, and Sidon (fig. 14), where Claude Doumet-Serhal brought to light a further, as-yet unpublished example in situ during the 2014 campaign.<sup>36</sup> Generally considered to represent local rulers, possibly portrayed as high priests, such sculptures suggest the existence of prototypes and parallels in wood, as do similar but slightly older oversized ivories. The paramount social rank of the persons depicted is confirmed by pharaonic paraphernalia, such as *wesekh* collars, the aproned *shendyt* kilts and, in some cases, the papyrus rolls held in their hand sometimes referred to as the “testament of the gods.” They stand



out as proof of the existence of a royal iconography common to the southern Phoenician cities and shared by the Phoenician koine of the nearby island of Cyprus. Here again, the question arises as to whether these cross-cultural sculptures would not mark a sacred alliance between local kinglets and Orion, a daily reinforcement of their righteous rule under the shining of the most visible stars after sunset?

The examples above underscore the fact that from the dawn of the first millennium B.C. the workshops and individual artists responsible for the creation of Phoenician court-style artifacts were aware of the intrinsic meanings of motifs they adapted to local taste patterns and ancestral beliefs. Several rules of their visual grammar still challenge our understanding, however, and the situation can only be improved if twenty-first century scholarship is able finally to abandon the biased views on their alleged lack of originality it has inherited from the nineteenth.

1. Bonnet 1988, *passim*.

2. Gubel 1980; Bonnet 1988; Jourdain-Annequin 1992.

3. Caubet et al. 2002, pp. 64–66, no. 50 (entry by P. Bordreuil and E. Gubel).

4. Gubel and Overlaet 2008, pp. 248–49, cat. no. 513 (entry by E. Gubel).

5. Bonnet 1996, pp. 127–31, pl. X; Lipiński 1995, pp. 132–34, 137–38. See also Winter's essay in this volume, pp. 180–93.

6. Pilides and Papadimitriou 2012, pp. 234–35, cat. no. 229 (entry by E. Gubel).

7. “La seule originalité de cet art, c’est de ne pas être original.” Perrot and Chipiez 1885, p. 884.

8. Layard 1850.

9. Frankfort 1954, p. 193, pl. 168a.

10. Briquel-Chatonnet 1992, pp. 63–66; Gubel 2001, p. 36 n. 4 for additional references.

11. Gubel 2009a.

12. Crowfoot 1938, pp. 14–16.

13. Fragments of an ivory strip (unpublished, Barnett Archive). See also Hill's essay in this volume, pp. 154–67. For a more recent Egyptian slab with several figures of the Sun-Child, see Fazzini and van Dijk 2007.

14. On the latter, see Gubel 1998.

15. This was one of the first harbors equipped with ashlar breakwaters, fostering the success of its commercial fleet from the ninth century B.C. onward (Gubel 2009b, pp. 47–48).

16. Puech 2000, p. 253, no. 13, p. 257.

17. Sass 2005, pp. 75–82, although with reservations as to the low dating.

18. Gubel 2007, figs. 2a–c.

19. Caubet et al. 2002, pp. 51–53, no. 38 (entry by E. Gubel and P. Bordreuil).

20. *Ibid.*, p. 53; Bounni 1991.

21. Gubel 2012b, pp. 178–79.

22. Caubet et al. 2002, pp. 63–64, no. 48, fig. 11 (entry by E. Gubel).

23. *Ibid.*; Gubel 1986, pp. 275–76 n. 40, fig. 10.

24. Caubet et al. 2002, pp. 82–84, nos. 71–74 (entries by E. Gubel).

25. Gubel 2001.

26. Markoe 1985, p. 149.

27. Gubel 2012a, pp. 21–23.

28. *Ibid.*, *passim*.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 30–31, fig. 20.

30. Parpola and Watanabe 1988, pp. 24–27.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 31–34, for detailed textual references.

32. Gubel and Boschloos forthcoming.

33. Lemaire 1999; Younger 2012.

34. Gubel 1990, 1991.

35. Gubel 2008; Flourentzos and Vitobello 2009; Hadjisavvas 2014, pp. 22–26.

36. Faegersten 2003.

# The “Woman at the Window”: Iconography and Inferences of a Motif in First-Millennium B.C. Levantine Ivory Carving

Representations in first-millennium B.C. ivory carving of a motif commonly known as the “woman at the window” depict a frontal female figure peering at the viewer from behind an architecturally framed balustrade (fig. 1). A number of recent studies have contributed to our understanding of this figure,<sup>1</sup> yet she remains something of an enigma. It is the argument of the present paper that examination of this motif across the boundaries existing between ancient Near Eastern and biblical studies not only shows how the two perspectives inflect one another but also may contribute to a deeper understanding of the meaning of the imagery and its referential capacity in both directions.

Some eighty of these plaques have been found at sites such as Nimrud and Khorsabad in Assyria, and at Arslan Tash and Samaria farther west, their distribution governed by a broad interaction sphere related to politics and luxury production.<sup>2</sup> They are generally dated from the ninth to the eighth century B.C., based upon archaeological context and parallels with other known works. Although the motif is easily recognizable, the stylistic properties of individual ivories vary and have led scholars to assign examples to all three of

the known production groups of the period: Phoenician, South/Central Syrian, and North Syrian (figs. 1, 2, and 3). These properties were studied in 1992 by Claudia Suter, who further subdivided the groups into ten “series” according to variations in proportion, hairstyle, and added ornament.<sup>3</sup> More recently, Amy Gansell has demonstrated that *measuring* the properties and stylistic variations of female figures can permit one to extrapolate from the resultant statistical analysis notions of “ideal feminine beauty” in the early first millennium B.C.<sup>4</sup>

The plaques maintain a relatively consistent format, with their frames surrounding the frontal female. Often characterized by tenons evident at top and bottom, they were clearly intended to have been inserted into (wood) furniture of some sort. Early scholarship associated them immediately with the appearance of related plaques occurring on the legs of the couch of Ashurbanipal in his banquet scene from Nineveh, despite the fact that in the latter there are two figures present at the “window” (fig. 4).<sup>5</sup>

In the absence of any contemporary texts that would aid in identifying the underlying meaning of the motif, perplexed scholars have speculated but to date have not been able to identify the exact referential associations of our fenestrated females. To reopen the question of meaning, I would make five preliminary observations:

1. Both Gansell and Georgina Herrmann, in her most recent volume of the *Ivories from Nimrud*,<sup>6</sup> have noted that the motif appears in all of the three principal Levantine stylistic groups, with quite standardized format and characteristics. Although I am less persuaded by examples attributed to North Syria, this is not the place to discuss style or attribution. What the commonality in iconography suggests to me is that the motif was indeed recognizable throughout the Levant—that is, Israel, Phoenicia, and at least some of the states of



Fig. 1. Ivory and gold plaque with “woman at the window.” Arslan Tash, Bâtiment aux Ivoires, Room 14. Late 9th–early 8th century B.C. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Antiquités Orientales (AO 11459)



Fig. 2. Ivory plaque with “woman at the window.” Nimrud, Northwest Palace, doorway between Rooms V and W. Neo-Assyrian, 9th–8th century B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 118159)

Syria—and *did* have cross-regional meaning for contemporary viewers.

2. The fact that all exemplars feature a virtually identical architectural frame suggests strongly that the “window” itself aided in identifying the referential context; otherwise it would not have been so consistently and uniformly represented. Suter has called it a “formula of sorts,” despite the stylistic differences. What is more, it probably points to an elite context for the building in which the window was situated, since the triple-inset window frames and the ornate balustrade are likely to have been associated with high-end, monumental architecture.<sup>7</sup>

3. The lower portion of the frame is consistently marked by a three- to four-columned balustrade with elaborate floral capitals and a horizontal sill over which the female figure peers; or at least, is visible. These balustrades,



Fig. 3. Ivory plaque with “woman at the window.” Nimrud, Fort Salmaneser, Room S 10. Ca. 8th century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1959 (59.107.18)



Fig. 4. Detail of gypsum alabaster relief showing banquet scene of Ashurbanipal, with ivory plaques on furniture showing figures at a “window” visible at upper left and upper right. Nineveh, North Palace, Room S (fallen into). Neo-Assyrian, ca. 645–635 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 124920)

evident from India and Italy to rural France and Cambridge, Massachusetts, are a common feature in elite architecture of many times and places. Despite variations in type and placement, the use of this element across such a wide range of historical cultures suggests that its function to close openings while simultaneously providing air and light in the interstices should be understood to have not just practical but experiential significance. In addition, the balustrades provide a boundary between spaces. What is between the viewer and the viewed, both in real life and in image, conveys a degree of protection and distance from any external viewer, a characteristic that requires analysis.

4. The earrings and forehead jewels, worn by a large proportion of the women (and associated by Gansell with actual ornaments found in tombs of royal females at Nimrud; see Gansell essay, pp. 58–59, figs. 5, 6), further suggest that their status would be elite: women who have the means and have made an effort to be appealing through ornamental embellishment. This may be seen together with their elaborate hairdos, which Gansell calls

“luxuriant,” stressing the role of hair in Levantine conceptions of female attractiveness.<sup>8</sup>

5. The very fact of the women shown as frontal, while unexceptional for *our* time, should not be taken for granted when considering the significance of this in antiquity. Indeed, both bodily frontality and frontal faces in two-dimensional works are relatively rare: one genre being “nude females,” sometimes holding their breasts or mastering animals—as seen on ivory statuettes and equestrian frontlets of the first millennium (fig. 5).<sup>9</sup> All of these women, particularly those on the “window” plaques, are unveiled, their faces, hair, and ornaments fully revealed. I argue that precisely because the frontal female face is rare in imagery, and veiling apparently more prevalent than has been thought in practice,<sup>10</sup> these women should be seen in a broader context of the possible *meaning* of frontality and female visibility when deliberately deployed.<sup>11</sup>

One may now proceed to what these observations may lead to in terms of meaning. Suter noted in her 1992 article that the





Fig. 5. Ivory equestrian frontlet with nude female figure. Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, Room SW 37. Ca. 9th–8th century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1961 (61.197.5)

standard features of the motif were easy to identify, but not the theme and context the ancient viewer would have recognized in the image. She attributes the association of the motif with cultic prostitution in early scholarship to a misplaced projection upon the ancient Near East, deriving largely from secondary literature. She then ends her article with references to historical roles played by balconies and open windows, from *Romeo and Juliet* to prostitutes revealed for purposes of seduction in certain quarters of

modern-day Amsterdam. That is, from love out-of-reach to love overtly advertised and available. Both, according to Suter, have clear underlying associations with anticipated sexuality. For the ancient Near East, she closes with mentions of, but does not in the end argue for, either a “window goddess” related to the Sacred Marriage or “cultic prostitution.”<sup>12</sup>

It may be possible to strengthen a preferred reading if one moves out of the domain of the ancient Near East per se and examines references that include women in windows in the Hebrew Bible, itself a product of the ancient Near East after all. This approach has been taken by Gansell in her comparison of Iron Age Levantine representations of women in ivory with ideal feminine beauty as described in biblical sources.<sup>13</sup> Her exegesis focuses upon those qualities of inner character and physical appearance that may be characteristic of “the beautiful.” In the present case, I am less concerned with these representational attributes. Instead, I have different goals in mind: first, to see whether any biblical references may help to enliven our understanding of the referential properties of these ivories; and second, to explore whether we might suggest continuity in motif and meaning across media and the associated historical traditions. To do so, I wish to focus not on the beauty of the women, but on their balustraded windows and the resultant frontality the format required.

As in many Western paintings and even cinema, the frontal gaze demands discourse, intercourse even, with the viewer—a confrontation capturing attention, from which, by the very act of viewing, the viewer cannot escape. This frontality precludes narrative distance. When used on equestrian ornaments of the era—as depicted on a horse sculpture from Zincirli of the ninth to eighth century B.C., and on actual ornaments known as frontlets, discovered in both bronze and ivory (fig. 5)<sup>14</sup>—the frontality has clear affective properties that *must be* a significant part of the referential apparatus.

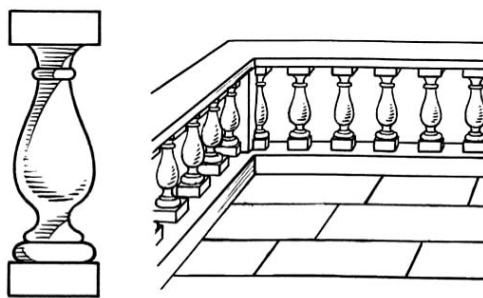


Fig. 6. *Left*, line drawing of baluster; *right*, line drawing of balustrade

When our ivory women appear in a window with a balustrade, the view of the women is partial. The face offers an intriguing challenge to imagining the persona and the rest of the body, which is either obscured by the balustrade or left unrepresented.

Now, balustrades consist of rows of separately formed vertical pieces called “balusters” that can be assembled to construct a barrier of sorts (fig. 6).<sup>15</sup> They are associated with walkways, parapets, staircases, and terraces, as well as with balconies and windows; and they can be made of stone, wood, or metal. To the extent that a balcony may be differentiated from a balustraded window, a balcony permits an individual or individuals to physically emerge from an interior space on an upper story. The balcony balustrade then must be composed of three sides as protection, and afford a view of both those standing on the balcony looking *out* and those looking *at*—as in appearances of the pope overlooking Saint Peter’s Square in the Vatican or the British royal family at Buckingham Palace, or even in Dynasty 18 Egyptian representations of the ruler Akhenaten bestowing rewards to courtiers at what is known as the “Window of Appearances.”<sup>16</sup>

That there were such features in the Levant in the first millennium B.C. is clear from finds at the site of Ramat Rahel in Israel in the 1960s.<sup>17</sup> Two such balustrades thought to have been associated with windows in an elite palatial building have been reconstructed (fig. 7) with additional fragments

uncovered in subsequent excavations. All are made of limestone, 37 centimeters in height without the upper-horizontal element that would have constituted a lintel or ledge. The date of the building is somewhat later than our ivories, but from their initial discovery, the balustrades have been said to be comparable in proportion to the windows depicted on the ivories. For the latter, it is clear that the vertical balusters are set within the frame of, hence belonging to, a window, while the Ramat Rahel balustrades could also reflect sections of an external balcony or terrace divided by structural vertical elements.<sup>18</sup>

There is a difference, however. On a balcony or a terrace, one sees the fully emerged figure(s). What the window implies is an interior space behind the window, occupied by the whole of the figure and its setting, not privy to the viewer. What goes on inside the window may be imagined but is not revealed.<sup>19</sup> The ivory balustrades, therefore, are both protective and obscuring. Given the height of the balustrade and the rendering of the interstices between individual balusters as solid, filled spaces, the only thing visible is the female head. What are promised, but not made visible, are the mystery of the interior and the rest of the obscured body.

Once the woman’s head is represented (note that I am carefully not including in this discussion the rare examples known of ivory plaques, in which only a window with its balustrade is depicted, no female head included<sup>20</sup>), the balustrade poses an intriguing challenge with respect to the rest of the body. Actual balustrades will have spaces between balusters. On the ivory plaques, however, the rest of the body is obscured, even when, in rare examples, the plaque is rendered *à jour* with the background and balustrade cut out.<sup>21</sup> We are further limited by the fact that we do not know just how the existing plaques were set in works of furniture, despite the example of the plaques depicted on the couch of Ashurbanipal.<sup>22</sup> I have, therefore, been prompted by Keith Moxey to question any assumed mimetic presence of the whole person behind the



Fig. 7. Limestone window balustrade (restored). Ramat Rahel. ca. mid-7th–4th century B.C.  
Israel Museum, Jerusalem (IAA 1964–1286)

balustrade. Could it be, he asked, that we see a face rather than a torso, because it indicates the apparition of a supernatural being? To which I added: as with Humbaba heads in earlier Mesopotamian art, or Gorgon heads on shields in later Greece? As an alternative, I have wondered whether the not-see-through balustrade could be a purposeful ploy to mask the body, making its absence more of a tease to the imagination.<sup>23</sup> If, however, the head alone functioned in a protective or apotropaic way, then why the consistent window? It may be that the discussion, below, with respect to the Canaanite/Ugaritic “Goddess of the Tower” (see note 34) will begin to address this issue, suggesting that more of the body would simply have been a distraction, the abbreviated reference adequate.

While many of these ivory plaques have been discovered in Assyria, their place of manufacture remains located in the Levant. It is therefore not an inordinate stretch to look to Levantine evidence for both windows and women appearing in them. Three textual references in the Hebrew Bible include mention of windows as essential parts of the narrative. The first is the account of Jezebel, daughter of Ithobaal, “king of the Sidonians” (that is, Phoenicians) and wife of Ahab of Israel, preserved in 1 and 2 Kings. Notwithstanding the fact that the Book of Kings is thought to have been compiled in Judah a

few centuries after the events recounted, the historical Jezebel and our ivories would have been more or less contemporaries. In 1 Kings 16, she is reviled for having introduced her own gods, Baal and Asherah, thereby turning the Israelite king and kingdom away from Yahweh and toward Phoenician deities. In 2 Kings 9:30–33, we are told that upon the accession of Jehu (ca. 841 B.C., during the reign of Shalmaneser III of Assyria [858–824 B.C.]), after the death of her husband and two sons, she shows herself to the former general, now king, at a palace window in Jezreel (Hebrew: *va’tashkef b’ad hachalon*), having painted her eyes and adorned her head. Such display is likely to have been a sign of availability, seduction even. Of course, it may be that Jezebel was doing what a good Phoenician princess should do: adorning herself before being viewed by the king (rather like Queen Esther before Ahashuerus in the Hebrew Bible [Esther 2]). Nevertheless, the implication is that her appearance is inappropriate. Upon the command of Jehu, Jezebel is thrown to her death from that very window by palace eunuchs and trampled to death by Jehu’s horse. For our purposes, the story strongly suggests that the window was set in an upper story, high enough for the fall to have been part of her death story.<sup>24</sup>

The Jezebel narrative has been cited by both Suter and Gansell when dealing with

the ivories. Four details are compelling. First, Jezebel is Phoenician, as are the majority of our ivories; second, Jezebel was married to Ahab, Israelite ruler of Samaria; third, a number of the ivory representations under discussion were discovered in a first-millennium palace at Samaria, the very capital of Israel;<sup>25</sup> and fourth, both the ivory women and Jezebel appear at a window, adorned and prepared for being viewed. If we then add to the above details an understanding that the Hebrew Bible's portrayal of Jezebel is as a woman antithetical to the religion and mores of Israel, then I wonder whether the trope of her appearance in a window, made up and ready to be seen, is not simply a parallel to the ivories. Rather, it may be seen as a purposeful *verbal* image deployed by the Deuteronomic compilers, who were not unaware of the traditional *visual* motif corresponding to our Phoenician (and Syrian) women in their windows. That is, the very fact of Jezebel being a Phoenician woman/princess/queen may have governed the construction of a *negative* biblical trope referencing what would have been understood as a *positive* Phoenician trope in its original context. And finally, if the original reference is not just to elite women but could be applied equally to a goddess with attributes of fertility, as suggested by Suter (Jezebel's own Asherah perhaps?), one is brought to wonder whether this could account for the iconographic presence of such women at windows on actual furniture, such as the couch of Ashurbanipal, thought to have been taken as booty from further west?<sup>26</sup> For, if so, then the Jezebel story represents an *inversion* of what was originally an auspicious meaning into a possibly erotic and transgressive parody. But, for our purposes, it also reveals the underlying and auspicious original that would have been appropriate for elite furniture decoration in a palatial setting in the Levant.

The second Hebrew Bible reference is found in Judges 5:28, where the mother of the Canaanite general Sisera awaits her son's return, little knowing that he is dead. The

actual text reads: "The mother of Sisera looked out of a window (Hebr. *b'ad ha'chalon*, the same phrase as for Jezebel) and cried through the lattice (Hebr. *b'ad ha'eshnav*): 'Why is his chariot so long in coming?'" Here we have a hint of what would have been considered appropriate decorum for an elite woman, as she peers through a small, *latticed*(?) opening or window (*eshnav*), not visible herself from the exterior. If this represents the norm of appropriate female behavior, then it makes all the more transgressive the biblical account of Jezebel's appearance *in* the window!

The third Hebrew Bible reference to windows occurs in the Book of Joshua, also a late compilation, recounting events surrounding the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan. In Joshua 2, two spies cross the Jordan and enter Jericho, hiding in the house of a woman called Rahab, identified as a "harlot" (Hebr. *zonah*, a term itself contestable, meaning in broadest terms an individual, largely female—harlot, cult prostitute—sexually active on the margins of society<sup>27</sup>), until it was safe to depart. The harlot's house was said to be located on the town wall (Hebr. *kir ha'chomah*). The Israelite spies' eventual escape was effected by the harlot—not by letting them out a door when the way was clear but rather down a scarlet rope through a window. This window, too, was clearly once again in an upper story and most probably with an outside access, otherwise, the spies would merely have been back in the city and vulnerable to the soldiers who were pursuing them. The importance of a harlot's house "on the city wall," literally marginal between the interior walled city and the beyond, will become apparent as we move shortly to the New Testament.<sup>28</sup> For now, I again call to mind those instances of windows in Greek vase painting, the windows always higher up on a wall than a door would be. These windows often include women in the windows and are sometimes even suggestive of what is happening in the interior, as when an amorous male is also present (fig. 8).<sup>29</sup> When associated with city





Fig. 8. Skyphos with woman and man in window. Italy, Apulia. Late Classical–Early Hellenistic, ca. 330–320 B.C. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (69.28)

walls, houses with windows such as that of Rahab would not have been in the lower courses of the wall but rather set high on the wall, or in the towers that were regular features of fortifications—that is, high enough not to make the walls vulnerable to breaching. These windows may be seen in the outer wall gateway towers from a number of traditions; most relevant, perhaps, in the Assyrian relief of Phoenician Sidon, dated to the reign of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) (fig. 9, and see note 7 above), and in modern models of ancient Jerusalem. For where better to advertise one’s wares as an available female than at the city gate, that liminal space where strangers without permanent residence enter, or locals are led to the margins of their own society?

What do we have from the Hebrew Bible accounts, then? Moral judgments about a purportedly disreputable and immodest Phoenician woman/queen who painted and adorned herself before appearing in a window; a modest mother, albeit Canaanite, careful not to be visible through a latticed window as she awaits the return of her son;

and a harlot, also Canaanite, whose house is on the city wall, perhaps in a tower, that contained a window in an upper story.

Up to this point, we have remained within my own realm of relative expertise. I would now take this opportunity to range beyond my competence and beg the indulgence of those with far greater knowledge than mine. For, in attempting to shed some light on the Levantine ivory “woman at the window” motif, I now turn to the New Testament, and to the person of Mary Magdalen. This figure has been the subject of much study, particularly in the last two decades by feminist scholars.<sup>30</sup> The Magdalen, or references thought to pertain to her, appears in all four Gospels, described in terms that have led to debate about whether or not she is implied to have been a “fallen woman” before her association with Jesus of Nazareth (John 19–20; Mark 15–16:9; Luke 7:36–8:2; Matthew 27). As part of the debate, Mary Magdalen has been linked to the unnamed woman recorded in Luke, said to have been a “sinner,” who brought an alabaster container

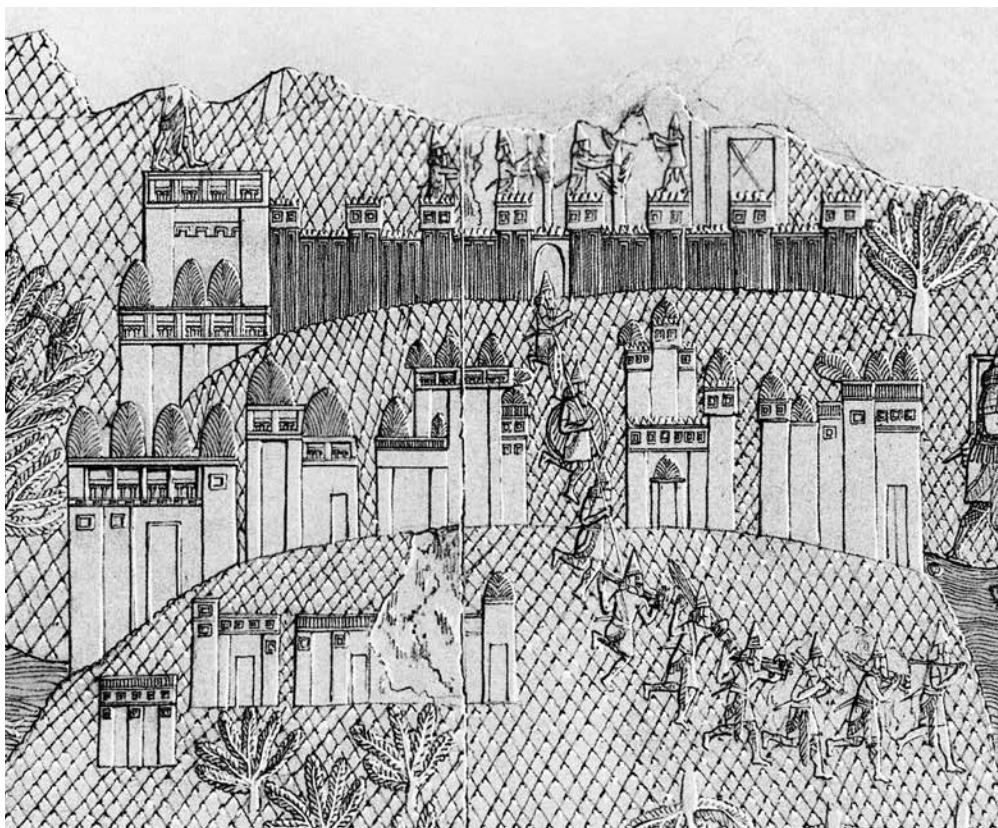


Fig. 9. Drawing of “siege of Sidon” relief. Nineveh, Southwest Palace, Room 48. Neo-Assyrian, reign of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.). The British Museum, London (Or. Dr. IV, 60)

of costly ointment (interpreted as having served previously to perfume her own flesh) in order to anoint Christ’s feet, having first washed them with her tears (implying repentance) and drying them with her hair (implying her hair was loose, as a metaphor for a loose woman—once again, a decorum issue). This unnamed woman has been associated with the Magdalen due to mention in John 11:2 of “that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair. . . .” Later artists (as, for example, Guido Reni in the early seventeenth century<sup>31</sup>) regularly portray the Magdalen with the unguent jar and with flowing hair, suggesting both the drying of the feet and wantonness, but this should not prejudice a reading of the Gospels themselves. Critics

of this interpretation have denied the equation of “sinner” with prostitution, elevating the Magdalen to a level on a par with the disciples, even suggesting her as the beloved or wife of Christ, or else concluding that there is “no substantial evidence” for either assertion: Mary Magdalen as a prostitute or as disciple/companion/even wife of Jesus.<sup>32</sup>

No window plays a role in accounts of the Magdalen, yet her name intrigues me. (Those readers who know Hebrew, Ugaritic, or Aramaic may guess where this is going.) The New Testament, as everyone knows, has at least *two* Marys: Mary the Virgin Mother of Christ and Mary Magdalen, differentiated by her second name.<sup>33</sup> The derivation of the word *Magdalen* is most often understood as a toponym: that this Mary comes from a town

called Magdala, identified as being on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. However, a possible alternative is whether, instead, her name might not refer directly to her prior residence: that is, associated with the West Semitic word for tower: *mgdāl*, hence “Mary of the Tower.”<sup>34</sup> The tower in the ancient Near East and Egypt has been the subject of a recent study, focusing on the archaeological and textual evidence for such features in the Levant, with special reference to Ugaritic literature and to actual architectural elements associated with palaces and temples.<sup>35</sup> In these sources, too, divergences of opinion in scholarship occur between mention of an *‘ilatu magdali* in the Legend of Kirta as meaning “goddess of the tower” or “goddess of the (city of) Magdalu,” with the toponym documented in a number of instances.<sup>36</sup>

In light of this debate on the Ugaritic text and the reference to Rahab’s house and window on the city wall of Jericho in Joshua 2, I have wondered whether the trope could in fact have been quite long-lasting, from the Bronze Age through the Iron Age in the Levant, and, therefore, whether reference to this type of dwelling could not also have encoded the Magdalen’s prior profession: one who could advertise her wares from a window in a tower, as also suggested for the woman who harbors Joshua’s spies? In short, would this imply her prior identity as another *zonah*, or marginal woman—that is, “in/of the tower?” Clearly, then, I am implying a homology between a woman “in/of the tower,” and a woman “in/of the window,” each signifying the same thing.<sup>37</sup>

I am not sure this reading helps in tilting the balance of argument in favor of this identity for Mary Magdalen of the New Testament. But if so, she seems to join a long tradition much more salient than mere place of origin. And I remain intrigued, posing the question of whether, if so, it helps us to understand the earlier ivory women in their windows, with the window and the tower sharing symbolic architectural referentiality? I argue that this could only be the case if we

see the Levantine ivory women not through the lens of later negative judgments, biblical or otherwise, but rather through an original positive lens of Levantine culture, a “goddess of the tower” even, embodying feminine ornamentation, allure, and fertility, which only later took on negative moralistic overtones.

To complete this picture, I refer to images of that primary Mary, the Virgin Mother, shown often in Western art with the Christ Child (as, for example, portrayed by Duccio, ca. 1300, a devotional image now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, fig. 10).<sup>38</sup> There, the Virgin is seated, the Child in her arms. At the bottom of the painting is a discreet balustrade, behind which the Virgin and Child are situated. Here, and in many other cases, the balustrade separates. The pious viewer had access to a sighting of the Virgin and Child; but her gaze is internal (seeing into the future and the Crucifixion?), and the balustrade makes clear she is in another space, out of reach, however visible.

The apposition of the Magdalen and the Virgin leaves me with the sense that Christian theology required the separation into two of a prior union of opposites in a single body—a conception so characteristic of Near Eastern deities, particularly Mesopotamian Ishtar and Levantine Astarte, who embodied both love and war. Thus, the opposites were physically split into two distinct personae: the pure Mary, Virgin Mother, and the impure-but-redeemed Mary “of the tower.”<sup>39</sup>

But let us return, via the Duccio, to what I think is the governing attribute of these ivory plaques: the windows and the balustrades. As noted above, the balustrade in the Duccio tells us clearly that the Virgin and Child exist in a world removed from our own; they are revealed to devotees through representation, revelation, and devotion. Our ivory women, too, are visible but removed, existing in an architectural space separate from that of the viewer. They are out of reach, up high in a window if my argument is correct, and



Fig. 10. Duccio di Buoninsegna (Italian, active by 1278–died 1318 Siena). *Madonna and Child*. Tempera and gold on wood, ca. 1290–1300. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Rogers Fund, Walter and Leonore Annenberg and The Annenberg Foundation Gift, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, Annette de la Renta Gift, Harris Brisbane Dick, Fletcher, Louis V. Bell, and Dodge Funds, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, several members of The Chairman's Council Gifts, Elaine L. Rosenberg and Stephenson Family Foundation Gifts, 2003 Benefit Fund, and other gifts and funds from various donors, 2004 (2004.442)

behind a barrier. While the Virgin's eyes are cast inward, the ivory women at the window look directly at the viewer. And yet, I argue that the latter were clearly not to be reviled as harlots, women outside of social decorum. They are adorned as elite women and goddesses would be, so they must possess positive attributes appropriate to display on royal furniture. They offer allure and enticement, and yes, beauty, in Levantine and Assyrian terms, and thereby represent the positive side of Jezebel, the *zonah* Rahab on the walls of Jericho, and possibly also the early Magdalen. This does not put a name to a textual narrative, myth, or story for the early Iron Age Levant. But it does bring us a bit closer to seeing the "women at the window" in perspective, as we stitch back and forth between

the ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible, and perhaps the Christian Gospels!

To conclude, then, in the absence of explanatory texts with respect to imagery, with few exceptions, our field has tended to work more with problems of style, distribution, and value than with questions of iconography, meaning, and affect.<sup>40</sup> As Erwin Panofsky asserted, correct recognition of iconography in Western painting is grounded in text; without the master text, like claims for old baseball game scorecards, one cannot identify the players!<sup>41</sup> But a governing text comparable to the Bible is precisely what we do not have for the "woman at the window." By proposing what I would call a shared iconographical tradition over time, *some of which constitutes a purposeful inversion of original signification*, I know I am on rather shaky ground. But if I am correct, then recognition of the biblical ways of preserving prior tropes and values by inversion can perhaps lead us closer to original meaning.

For now, I would suggest that we can do more with iconography than has been hitherto attempted, by looking at neighboring traditions of text and image when seeking meaning for first-millennium B.C. ivory carving.<sup>42</sup> Here, I have in mind a recent talk by Michael Ann Holly at the Institute of Fine Arts in New York.<sup>43</sup> There, she posed the question: "How to turn a work experienced into an art-historical text?" If one were to



reverse that question with respect to the “woman at the window” ivories, one might ask: “How to turn an art-historical artifact into a work *experienced*?” At our historical distance of time and space, we are certainly more at ease dealing with these objects’ physical properties, that is, their materiality as ivory carvings, which continues to attract us today. But in part, these ivories touch me precisely because of the ambiguity of their meaning and the challenge of attempting to recapture their effect in the early first millennium B.C. This, after all, is the challenge of the art *historian*: to bring the work alive *within its own historical context*.

Are we any closer now? I would stress three points. First, the power of the ornamented woman in frontal, open gaze. Second, the importance of the balustraded window, hinting at an imagined interior and distinguishing that interior from the external viewer. And third, a resistance to seeing similarity in meaning based upon morphological similarity, when it can be demonstrated that later exempla can exist as purposeful inversions of original meaning to those who understand the referential capacity of the subsequent iterations.

In this view, the “woman at the window” ivories live well on the couch used by Ashurbanipal and at least one Levantine predecessor, suggesting positive and protective aspects of allure and potency (perhaps as goddesses or auspicious feminine principles). Well-born women, by contrast, follow instead the cloistered practice of the latticed window, out of public view, as with the mother of Sisera. And in the inversion category, Jezebel at the window lives well with Rahab in the windowed city wall/tower (especially if the latter is indeed a late Davidic insertion into the Bronze Age legend of the siege of Jericho, as suggested by Feinman—see note 28 above). Mary Magdalen, “Mary of the Tower,” if a former harlot, would initially be allied with them; but there is a twist, for the Magdalen brings us back almost full circle through her redemption. For that, however, she has to be taken out of the tower!

Finally, in closing I would stress the importance of comparison in the absence of governing texts, allowing thereby both cross-temporal and cross-cultural analogues, toward a goal of understanding ancient experience.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of colleagues have been instrumental in the production of this study, generously engaging the subject and giving of their expertise. I list them in alphabetical order: Joan Aruz, Annie Caubet, Peter Feinman, Barry Flood, Christopher Frechette, Amy Gansell, Deirdre Good, Baruch Grosz, Michael Ann Holly, Yan Jia, Christine Kondoleon, Carol Krinsky, Peter Machinist, Philippe de Montebello, Keith Moxey, Diane O’Donoghue, Ann Macy Roth, Michael Seymour, Mark Smith, and Claudia Suter. I am grateful to all.

1. Suter 1992; Roaf 1996. Aschkenasy 1998; Rehm 2003.
2. Thomason 2013.
3. Suter 1992, pp. 10–15.
4. Gansell 2009, 2013, and 2014.
5. For the whole of the Ashurbanipal garden scene (British Museum, London, BM ME 124920), from the North Palace, Nineveh, see Barnett 1976. For discussion, see Albenda 1974 and Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 73–74, cat. no. 22.
6. G. Herrmann and Laidlaw 2009.
7. Suter (1992, p. 20, fig. 17) points to balustraded upper windows in towers and walls of a palace and citadel at Sidon, on a relief of Sennacherib from the Southwest Palace at Nineveh (of which, see the detail here, fig. 9, discussed below). Roaf (1996, p. 26) reminds us that in a Mesopotamian context, insets surrounding architectural features would be associated with a temple.
8. Gansell 2014, pp. 59, 61.
9. See on this, U. Winter 1983.
10. Toorn 1995.
11. The frontal faces of Assyrian gateway colossi and Levantine ivory sphinxes, for example, were intended by their stare to be confrontational and thereby intimidating to outsiders, protective of those within. This is not to say that our women are threatening, or apotropaic; rather, that they confront the viewer directly in a way that seems to have been carefully chosen, and may well have signaled something counter to prevailing decorum (on which see below). I would insist, therefore, that

their pose was likely to have had specific and meaningful connotations.

12. Suter 1992, esp. pp. 26–28.
13. See note 4, above.
14. Zincirli horse: Luschan 1911, figs. 248, 249. Ivory frontlets: for example, one found at Nimrud, in Phoenician style, Aruz et al. 2014, p. 298, fig. 4.20; another from Gordion, in North Syrian style, R. Young 1962, pl. 46 (Gordion inventory 7652-BI-432); Aruz et al. 2014, p. 107, fig. 2.32. For a bronze example, from Samos: Aruz et al. 2014, p. 298, fig. 4.20 (Archaeological Museum, Vathy, Samos B 2579/A 1306). See also I. Winter 1988, figs. 1a–b, and discussion. For further studies of the equestrian ornaments, see Wicke 1999 and Gubel 2005.
15. See the Wikipedia article “Baluster,” accessed July 23, 2015.
16. See, for example, the scenes depicted in the tombs of Meryre and Ay at Amarna: [http://osirisnet.net/tombes/amarna/meryra/e\\_meryra\\_01.htm#](http://osirisnet.net/tombes/amarna/meryra/e_meryra_01.htm#); also [http://osirisnet.net/tombes/amarna/ay/e\\_ay\\_01.htm#](http://osirisnet.net/tombes/amarna/ay/e_ay_01.htm#).
17. Aruz et al. 2014, p. 179, fig. 68: height 37 cm, length 125 cm, in the collection of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. See there the discussion and additional bibliography.
18. Prag 1987.
19. A rare counter case is found in a contemporary painting by David Hockney, entitled *Mr. and Mrs. Clark and Percy*, 1970–71. There, the interior is revealed, a white balustrade prominently visible in the center background as it blocks off open “French” windows. Indeed, given the anomie and the apparent isolation of the couple depicted, one is tempted to read the balustrade as part of the narrative: a possible portal of escape from the relative emptiness of both the apartment and the relationship. This, in turn, calls to mind the third-floor balustrade giving on to a central courtyard from which one of Freud’s early patients plunged to her death in 1891 (discussed in an unpublished paper by Diane O’Donoghue, “Pauline’s Balustrade: Freud in the House of Atonement,” access gratefully acknowledged). That is, however much the balustrade may offer separation and/or protection under certain circumstances, it is also low enough to permit crossing.
20. A visual examination of the reverse of one such plaque, found in association with the Athena Sanctuary at Ialysos, Rhodes, and included in the exhibition “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age,” at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Aruz et al. 2014, p. 302, cat. no. 173, with discussion and bibliography for other examples), has shown that no attachment points or dowel holes are visible that would suggest insertion of such a head in another medium (I am grateful to Joan Aruz and Michael Seymour for this information). These unpeopled windows have been associated by Suter (1992, p. 21) with windows carved over tomb entrances, for example, on Cyprus, and are likely to have had very different associations. (See also G. Herrmann et al. 2004, p. 27, nos. So266, So268, from Fort Shalmaneser Room SE 10, where the balusters are in the form of papyrus stalks, therefore looking more Egyptianizing.)
21. See, for example, Suter 1992, figs. 11, 14, the latter in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 59.107.18, and included in the *Assyria to Iberia* catalogue, Aruz et al. 2014, fig. 3.31—here fig. 3.
22. The one archaeological context from which the furniture might be reconstructed is at Arslan Tash, where a group of plaques found there could have been used serially on the same piece. See the initial publication, Thureau-Dangin 1931, as well as Fontan 2014 and recent work by Giorgio Affanni, as part of the Arslan Tash project of the Louvre; also Aruz et al. 2014, p. 154, fig. 51b, and p. 152, fig. 3.46.
23. Unlike examples in Western painting, such as Goya’s *Two Women on a Balcony*, ca. 1808–12, in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 29.100.10.
24. See here Franklin 2013, discussed also in Franklin 2008. The author reports on excavations in the 1990s that have revealed two towers belonging to a large rectangular Iron Age II enclosure, and argues for the strategic importance of Jezreel for the House of Omri during the Divided Kingdom.
25. On which see Suter 2011, Uehlinger 2005, and the original publication: Crowfoot and Crowfoot 1938. However, as noted by Tappy (2006, p. 656), to make a direct connection between the findspots of the ivories and the biblical reference of 1 Kings 22:39 to Ahab’s “house of ivory” remains “tenuous at best.”
26. With respect to the couch of Ashurbanipal: from the ninth century B.C. onward, couches with curved headboards were associated with the west. See, for example, as depicted on a bronze band of the Shalmaneser III palace door from Balawat, where Irhuleni, king of Hamath, is shown reclining on such a couch above the parapets of his royal city, identified as Ashtammaku (King 1915, pl. LXX-VII.6; see also Schachner 2007, right door leaf, Band 8). This is contra Rehm (2005), who has argued that the Ashurbanipal couch must be of Assyrian manufacture, despite the fact that one also sees couches of this shape being taken as booty well into the seventh century in the reliefs of Sennacherib, grandfather of Ashurbanipal.
27. See the website of the Blue Letter Bible, Lexicon: Strong’s H2181, *zanah/zonah*, for the Hebrew Bible references, a total of ninety-three attestations, from Genesis, through the Joshua references to Rahab (Joshua 2:1, 6:17, 6:22, and 6:25), to Ezekiel. Accessed December 2, 2013. Also Koehler et al. 2001, p. 275, #2524: זָנָה.
28. I thank Peter Feinman, who made his paper “Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho,” presented at

- the Society of Biblical Literature, November 2013, available to me following my initial presentation of this paper at the same meeting. In his talk, Feinman notes the debate concerning this episode, between the account as literal history or pious fraud. He comes to the conclusion that it was likely to have been a performative Davidic insert, with the avowal by Rahab of loyalty to Yahweh rather than her native Canaanite deities serving as a metaphoric reference cast back in history to the needs of the Israelite kingdom to engage non-Israelites (compare Joshua 2:9–13). This does not negate, however, the association of the “harlot” with residence on the city wall, and a window, from which not only the two spies were helped to escape but also from which she was likely to have shown herself when looking out. Indeed, it actually brings the description into the Iron Age, closer to the time of the ivories.
29. See on this Schauenburg 1972, a study of women in windows on Greek and Etruscan ceramics, especially pls. 15–17, 21.2; one of these vases is also illustrated in Suter 1992, p. 25, fig. 21.
  30. For selected recent studies, see D’Angelo 2005; Boer 1997; Good 2005a; Haskins 1993; Schaberg 2002, 2006; J. E. Taylor 2014; Welborn 2006.
  31. Guido Reni, *Mary Magdalene*, 1616, Liechtenstein Princely Collections, Vienna.
  32. Discussed by several authors, for example D’Angelo 2005, esp. pp. 97, 115–16. See also the entry under “St. Mary Magdalen” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, accessed online, December 2, 2013, which further distinguishes between the Mary Magdalen of the Greek tradition and of the Latin tradition.
  33. A third Mary is also discussed, for example, in Good 2005b.
  34. On this, see especially J. E. Taylor 2014 (others have raised the question of this reading as well, but not with the same degree of focus or analysis). I am pleased to note that I have independently harbored this interpretation for years, well before the recent publication of Taylor, but am delighted that she has brought to it her full scholarly apparatus. Crucial in this respect is the fact that, while there may have been a number of places called Magdala, a shortening of Migdal-GN in the area around Tiberias, there is simply no solid argument for selecting any one of them as the place of origin of the Magdalen, apart from the later (Byzantine) desire for a pilgrimage site associated with her. By contrast, Taylor argues for Magadalen as indicating the construct state in which “the Magdalene” serves as an epithet: Mary “the Tower-ess” (ibid., p. 207). She further documents this as wordplay, noting Jesus’s propensity for giving nicknames to his closest disciples—an argument I could never have come up with. “Mary of the Tower,” then, M.-Migdal, while not confirmed, becomes an ever more compelling reading, associating the Magdalen thereby with Rahab and the tower windows discussed above.
  35. Seguin 2007, esp. pp. 17, 25, 34, and *passim*, with respect to the Late Bronze Age Kirta legend. Note that Seguin deals mainly with temples and palaces, not city gates.
  36. Ibid., pp. 24–25. For the Legend of Kirta references, see Dietrich et al. 1995, 1.39 and 1.112.
  37. This suggested conflation of the window and the tower should be stressed. Perhaps the tower was part of the imagined scene, not named because it would have been commonly assumed. Curiously enough, in France, where the cult of the Magdalen is prominent, a portion of the Château at Rennes is known as the Magdala Tower (which does in fact contain windows). And I cannot resist referencing at this point an early sixteenth-century painting by Hans Holbein depicting a famous courtesan of antiquity, *Lais of Corinth* (1526, Kunstmuseum Basel, inv. 322), complete with frontal gaze and parapet. Moreover, the model for Lais was his mistress, whose name just happened to be Magdalene! A more recent aquatint by Georges Rouault, called *The Old Courtesan*, 1937, similarly depicts a woman framed by a window, her arms resting upon a parapet or the top of a balustrade (accessed online, [https://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/23269261\\_georges-rouault](https://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/23269261_georges-rouault), prior to auction in 2014).
  38. On which see Christiansen 2008. My thanks to Amy Gansell and Philippe de Montebello for stimulating conversations on this work.
  39. This division is likely to have a Hebrew Bible precedent, for also in Proverbs 1, 2, and *passim*, qualities of wisdom and waywardness are separated and each cast into the female. Note that in addition to the courtesan Lais behind her balustrade (mentioned above, note 36), Holbein used an identical composition and model for a second painting, this time of the Virgin! (*Venus and Amor*, 1524, Kunstmuseum Basel, inv. 323.) Perhaps he knew something we don’t!
  40. For example, the work of Keel 1978, Hulster 2009, and others, largely in the realm of biblical studies.
  41. Erwin Panofsky, “Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art,” in Panofsky 1955, pp. 26–54, esp. 31.
  42. In anticipation, I point to other motifs that could well yield further analysis: the ivory motif of the “Griffin Slayer,” as compared to other Ugaritic literary texts of the second millennium, such as the Baal Cycle; and equestrian ornaments that, based upon cuneiform sources, need to be read as “sets” rather than as single constituent pieces in order to be understood. Both of these cases were part of my presentation at the Metropolitan Museum symposium in December 2014; it is my hope to pursue these topics in print in the near future.
  43. Michael Ann Holly, “Painting as Silence,” lecture given at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, November 18, 2013.

# The Art of the Elephant and Its Consequences

The vast stockpiles of ivories in the Assyrian palace complexes, especially at Nimrud, inevitably bring to mind the extinction of Syrian elephants during the early first millennium B.C. Although many scholars have done important work on classifying the ivories collected by the Neo-Assyrian kings, relatively little attention has been given to the elephants and to the space they occupied, both literally and figuratively, in the imperial world of Assyria. Mario Liverani's seminal work on Assyrian ideology envisioned an opposition between the dark, chaotic, but resource-laden periphery and the ordered harmonious center in which the world was given its proper form.<sup>1</sup> In this model, the imperial center penetrated into the periphery and worked to extract its rich resources and incorporate them into the cosmos of the center. In this paper I intend to investigate the place of elephants in this Assyrian worldview. Were these awe-inspiring animals, which inhabited the periphery and carried in the form of their tusks one of its most treasured resources, simply the bearers of another precious raw material to be exploited under Assyrian control? Or did the elephants have a role to play in Assyrian ideology, separate from their valuable tusks? A reexamination of the evidence raises these questions, and others, about the elephants of the ancient Near East.

Modern taxonomies distinguish between two geographically separate species of elephant, African (*Loxodonta africana*) and Asian (*Elephas maximus*), with each having in addition several subspecies (fig. 1). The two species are easily differentiated, as the ears of

African elephants are much larger and the head is dome-shaped, while the head of the Asian elephant has two domes. The African elephant's back is somewhat concave or swaybacked, while the Asian elephant has a rounded back profile. Both male and female African elephants grow tusks, while the tusks of the Asian elephant are smaller and some males and most females do not grow them at all—a distinction that will become important in this discussion.

It has long been debated whether elephants in Syria were periodically imported into the region from India, and if they were kept in captivity in royal hunting parks. In several recent articles on the elephant bones from the royal palace at Qatna, Peter Pfälzner has argued persuasively for a free-roaming, naturally occurring population of elephants in Syria, a now extinct subspecies of Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus asurus*), which inhabited the valleys and nearby wetlands of the Orontes, Euphrates, Balikh, and Khabur Valleys until their extinction in the ninth century B.C.<sup>2</sup> While scholars such as Annie Caubet, Dominique Collon, and Irene Winter have favored the hypothesis of imported elephants kept in hunting preserves or parks,<sup>3</sup> I find Pfälzner's arguments for the presence of native elephant herds in the river valleys of northern Syria ultimately convincing. Even today, it is extremely difficult to meet the great territorial needs of elephants in captivity, to keep them healthy and well nourished, and to provide them with conditions in which they will choose to reproduce.<sup>4</sup> It seems unlikely that a significant population could have been maintained through the intensive human intervention elephant husbandry requires for a prolonged period of time in ancient Syria. Additionally, Pfälzner notes that transporting elephants to Syria from regions to the east would have been logistically quite difficult during the Bronze Age, owing to the political fragmentation of the Near East, and similarly, political instability over the long term in the region of the Orontes Valley would have created serious difficulties in maintaining an elephant reserve in the region.



The earliest evidence for elephant hunting is the presence of a burnt elephant bone at Tell Munbaqa in levels dating to the Early Bronze Age IV (ca. 2400–2000 B.C.), suggesting elephants were hunted in Syria over a long period of time. They were also hunted over a wide area within Syria and Mesopotamia. Cornelia Becker has identified fifteen Near Eastern sites where elephant remains have been found, to which four can be added: the seven bones from a single animal found at Qatna, previously mentioned; four bones and bone fragments from Emar; a large rib from a second-millennium B.C. temple at Terqa; and a phalanx, or foot bone, found at Ashur in a Neo-Assyrian context (fig. 2).<sup>5</sup>

Images of elephants are much more rare in the ancient Near East than are bone finds.<sup>6</sup> The earliest is a cylinder seal from Akkadian levels at Tell Asmar, carved in the style characteristic of the Indus Valley, showing an elephant together with a rhinoceros and a crocodilian reptile, perhaps a gharial (fig. 3). The elephant is shown with the two-domed head and rounded back, which identify it as an Asian elephant. The seal's unusual style and unique iconography, as well the finds associated with it, indicate that it was imported into the Diyala River valley rather than made locally.<sup>7</sup> A terracotta plaque of an elephant and rider comes from Diqdiqqah at Ur, and probably dates to the Old Babylonian period (fig. 4).<sup>8</sup> The rider is not mounted, but rather seems to hang from a strap against the elephant's side. In style it resembles other plaques of the same period from Babylonia, making the piece the earliest preserved image of an elephant made in Mesopotamia.

Perhaps the best-known image of an elephant in an ancient Near Eastern context is the Egyptian wall painting showing foreign tributaries in the tomb of Rekhmire at Thebes, dating to about 1450 B.C. Here, Syrian tributaries are depicted offering both ivory tusks and a small elephant (fig. 5). As Winter has noted, the latter is probably not a dwarf elephant but instead a small, young elephant, which would have been much easier and less dangerous to transport. It is



Fig. 1. (*Top*) African and (*bottom*) Asian elephants

therefore shown with tusks as a conceptual rather than actual feature.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the tusks are shown not because this particular elephant actually had them, but because they were, and still are, considered one of the animal's essential and distinctive component parts.

The remaining few ancient Near Eastern representations of elephants round out a disjointed group among which no continuity can be discerned. A seal impression on a fourteenth-century B.C. tablet from Ashur



Fig. 2. Sites in the Near East with finds of ancient elephant remains

was interpreted by Thomas Beran as a possible depiction of one or even two elephants, but the image is unclear.<sup>10</sup> Similarly unclear is the depiction on an orthostat from the palace of Kapara (890–870 B.C.?) at Tell Halaf.<sup>11</sup> A fragmentary terracotta figurine from Hilani I at Zincirli, from a destruction level dated to the reign of Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.), survives in two pieces: one leg, and the head and neck of a tusked elephant with a rider whose bent left leg is just visible behind the animal's ear (fig. 6).<sup>12</sup> Finally, a figurine from Nippur probably dating to Seleucid or Parthian levels shows an elephant and traces of a rider (fig. 7);<sup>13</sup> it recalls Parthian horse and rider figurines, which have also been found at Nippur.<sup>14</sup>

In spite of their sparse and rather late representations in art, elephants seem to have been known very early on in written sources and are attested in Sumerian texts starting in the Early Dynastic IIIb period.<sup>15</sup> They appear

in varying contexts: for example, elephants are listed among the bridal gifts of Enlil to Sud,<sup>16</sup> and they are also used as a metaphor for her adversary, the mountain Ebih, by Inanna, who states, “As with an elephant I have seized your tusks.”<sup>17</sup> However, evidence for elephant hunting in the third and early second millennium B.C. is rather limited, both in terms of the actual remains of elephant bones, and in texts, where possible references to hunting are unclear. For instance, a line in Shulgi hymn B translated by G. R. Castellino as a possible reference to elephant hunting uses a word for the animal that is found in only one other text, instead of the much more common Sumerian *AM.SI*.<sup>18</sup>

In fact, the earliest definitive accounts of elephant hunts in Syria are those of Egyptian kings, starting with Thutmose I (1504–1492 B.C.). Four different texts of Thutmose III (1479–1425 B.C.) record a massive elephant hunt at the lake of Niya, probably



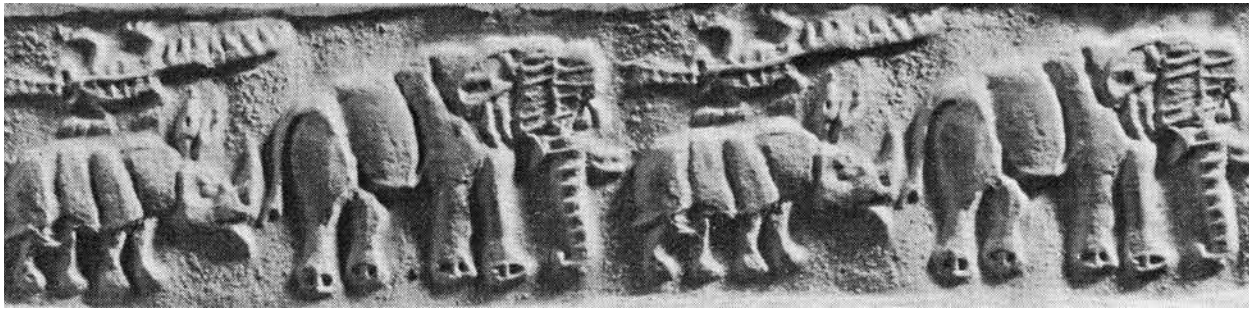


Fig. 3. Impression of cylinder seal. Tell Asmar, Late Akkadian houses. Late Akkadian period, ca. 2300–2200 B.C. Iraq Museum, Baghdad



Fig. 4. Terracotta plaque showing an elephant and rider. Ur, Diqqiqah. Old Babylonian period, early second millennium B.C. Iraq Museum, Baghdad

near Apameia.<sup>19</sup> Following these Egyptian elephant hunts, Assyrian royal inscriptions begin to mention elephant hunts in the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.) and continue until the reign of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.), a period of close to three hundred years. The Assyrian texts consistently mention the gods Ninurta and Nergal in connection with descriptions of royal hunts that kill large numbers of bulls, lions, and elephants.<sup>20</sup> The annals of Adad-nirari II (911–891 B.C.) include not only an elephant hunt but also a passage describing the formation of captive herds of “lions, wild bulls, elephants, *aialu*-deer, ibex, wild asses, deer, (and) ostriches” in Ashur.<sup>21</sup> Captive wild animals, including elephants, were also kept by Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) in his capital at Nimrud, as described in an inscription on



Fig. 5. Facsimile of wall painting showing Syrians tribute-bearers with an elephant and a bear. Upper Egypt, Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, tomb of Rekhmire, TT 100. New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, reign of Thutmose III (ca. 1479–1425 B.C.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1931 (31.6.43)

a slab and several *lamassus* from the Northwest Palace. The inscription speaks directly to the king’s descendants, saying: “O later prince among the kings my sons whom Aššur calls, or later people, or vice-chancellor, or noble, or eunuch—you must not despise (these animals). Before Aššur may these creature(s) live!”<sup>22</sup> Further evidence for elephants

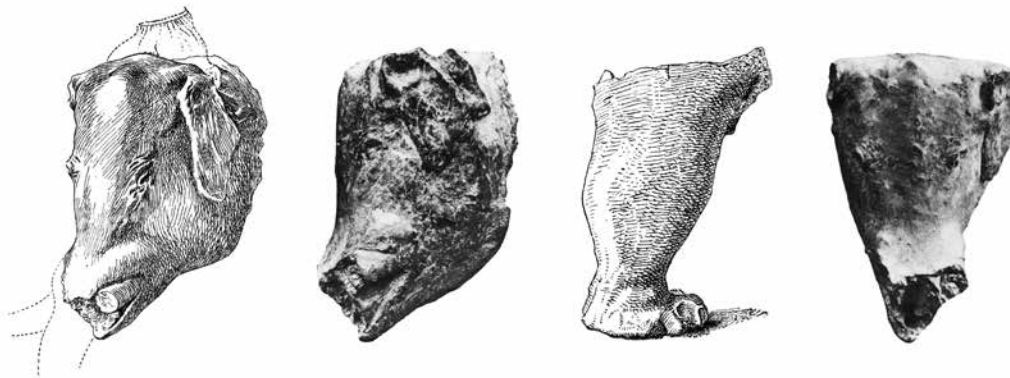


Fig. 6. Fragments of terracotta figurine and drawings. (*Left pair*) head and (*right pair*) leg. Zincirli, Hilani I. Neo-Assyrian period, reign of Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.). Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum (S 347)

kept in captivity comes from the Rassam Obelisk, also from the reign of Ashurnasirpal, which shows fragmentary scenes of tributaries bringing animals and goods. The inscription lists “a herd of domesticated (lit. ‘town-bred’) elephants,” although the animals are not shown on the surviving fragments of the obelisk.<sup>23</sup>

Shalmaneser III mentions elephants less frequently than his father,<sup>24</sup> but his reign is distinguished by the appearance of an elephant among the tribute depicted on the Black Obelisk, the only time the animal is represented in Assyrian art (fig. 8). The panel with the elephant bears the following epigraph: “I received tribute from Muṣri: two-humped camels, a water buffalo (lit. ‘a river ox’), a *rhinoceros*, an antelope, female elephants, female monkeys, (and) apes.”<sup>25</sup> Both the inscription and the image raise serious questions. “Muṣri” in this inscription is usually translated as “Egypt,” although this is a curious assortment of animals to be coming from the region, especially the Bactrian camels, which are native to Central Asia. In his commentary on the inscription, A. Kirk Grayson notes that tribute from Egypt is not listed in Shalmaneser’s annals, which mention Egypt only once, as one of Assyria’s enemies in the battle of Qarqar (853 B.C.).<sup>26</sup> Can the identification of Muṣri as Egypt be challenged? Khaled Nashef has suggested that the reference is instead to a region to the north



Fig. 7. Cast of figurine. Nippur. Seleucid period or later. Original in Istanbul; cast at University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia

of Assyria,<sup>27</sup> which would offer a better explanation for the source of the camels. Nonetheless, the origins of this diverse group of animals remain without a satisfactory explanation. While Muṣri is most plausibly identified as Egypt, the source of the two-humped camels and the particular species of elephant remain as open questions.

The fact that the elephants are specified as female, but the depiction shows what appears to be a male Asian elephant is also interesting. Julian Reade suggests that it could have been a small North African elephant belonging to a subspecies that is now extinct.<sup>28</sup> However,



text and image need not be a rigid match—several of the other animals represented on the obelisk are also depicted with certain peculiarities that make them hard to link to the text. The image could reflect the carver's unfamiliarity with African elephants, or it could be another conceptual depiction as in the wall painting from the tomb of Rekhmire.

After Shalmaneser, elephants are no longer mentioned, only their by-products: tusks, hides, and carved ivory furniture. This suggests that Syrian elephants became extinct or extremely rare in the wild in the later ninth century B.C. Isolated small populations could have endured in remote areas, especially as elephants can live up to seventy years if they avoid encounters with humans. It is doubtful whether the elephants in the royal zoological parks mentioned at Ashur and Nimrud survived for very long, considering the great difficulty of keeping elephants healthy and nourished in captivity even today.

The long bones of an elephant were found during Max Mallowan's excavations in Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud, in room T10, a storage room.<sup>29</sup> These bones were found together with many ivories, carved in both Syro-Phoenician and Assyrian styles, the latter dated to the reign of Shalmaneser and including pieces decorated with narrative scenes. As Georgina Herrmann notes in her catalogue of the room T10 ivories, Assyrian-style narrative ivories such as these are usually found only in areas at Nimrud directly connected to the royal court, especially throne rooms and royal reception rooms.<sup>30</sup>

Room T10 was located in an important area of the building near the throne room and suffered severe fire damage during the sack of Fort Shalmaneser in 614 or 612 B.C. Under the direction of Joan and David Oates, excavations in 1962–63 uncovered a significant concentration of objects in this room in addition to the ivories, including horse trappings, bronze and iron armor scales, and shell fragments inscribed in Luwian hieroglyphs with the name Urhilina (or Irhuleni in Akkadian), king of Hamath, who was one of the kings defeated by



Fig. 8. Detail of the Black Obelisk, showing elephants and apes, among other animals. Nimrud, Northwest Palace. Neo-Assyrian, reign of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.), ca. 825 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 118885)

Shalmaneser in the battle of Qarqar. A number of ivories from this room with alphabetic inscriptions, such as a fragment with the name of Hazael, king of Aram-Damascus, suggest it belonged to the rich booty taken from that king by Shalmaneser.<sup>33</sup>

The fact that the elephant bones—not tusks—were kept in this storage room, which also held Assyrian-style furniture of the type that was probably used by the king and his officials, suggests that they may have had a function to play at court. However, that function is not clear. The elephant bones found at Qatna had been carefully deposited in two rooms near a large chamber tomb, leading Pfälzner to propose that they were hunting trophies associated with a particular ruler and that they had perhaps been publicly displayed during his lifetime and then ritually buried close to him after his death.<sup>32</sup> The Fort Shalmaneser bones have no such association with an Assyrian royal tomb. Still, the simple fact that these elephant bones were kept, rather than discarded as refuse, is significant. It is unlikely that they were retained as raw material to be carved, given the high volume of ivories collected at Nimrud and the general preference for carving ivory over bone. Instead, I suggest they were kept as

trophies, standing in for the elephant. Perhaps, like the Qatna elephant trophies, they were associated only with the ruler who had hunted that specific animal—most likely Shalmaneser III, the last Assyrian king known to hunt elephants—and were moved to storage after his death. It may be significant that they were kept with booty specifically naming the defeated kings Urhilina and Hazael, which memorialized Shalmaneser's military victories in Syria, the elephant-hunting grounds of the Assyrian kings.

This brings us to the question of how elephant hunting functioned within Assyrian royal religion and ideology. The royal bull and lion hunts have been interpreted as religious rituals, as the symbolic slaughter of Assyria's enemies, and most intriguingly, by Elena Cassin, as a type of ordeal through which the king could extend his power beyond the civilized world and into the wilderness, by defeating in combat the ruler of that realm, the lion or "king of beasts."<sup>33</sup> In her study of animal symbolism in Mesopotamia, Chikako E. Watanabe singled out bulls and lions as the prime targets of royal hunting, which she sees as serving a chiefly religious or ritual function.<sup>34</sup> She argued that by hunting bulls the king was modeling himself on Gilgamesh and echoing the defeat of the Bull of Heaven.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the lion hunt allowed the king to align himself with Ninurta by emphasizing certain features, such as the chariot and the swift pursuit on foot, which find parallels in the Ninurta myths of *Angim* and *Lugale*. Thus, the lions stand in for the monsters, or "slain heroes," killed by Ninurta.<sup>36</sup> Can we extend a similar conceptual framework to the royal elephant hunt? Elephants are an infrequent quarry compared to lions and bulls and lack the rich literary context, but the fact that they are grouped together with these two fierce animals in royal inscriptions suggests all three occupied a similar level of importance. Beyond the hunt, how do we make sense of the elephants kept in royal zoological parks at Ashur and Nimrud? If Ashurnasirpal's plea to his descendants can be believed, they were

not kept in captivity to be exterminated later but to live "before Ashur."

A welcome perspective on the relationship between the royal quarry and the king is provided by Mehmet-Ali Ataç's article on the visual impact of the Gilgamesh epic on Neo-Assyrian glyptic. Ataç builds on the little-known unpublished work of Ananda Coomaraswamy on the motif of the monster-slaying hero in ancient Near Eastern art, in which the great historian of Indian art saw parallels with ancient Indian representations of the quest for soma, the source of eternal life. Coomaraswamy argues that the hero represents the seeker of immortality, which takes the form of a plant, guarded by the monster that he must overcome. The paired antagonists—hero and monster, or king and beast—represent the good and evil aspects of what is in fact a single unity, focused on access to a powerful resource. In successfully defeating the wild animal or monster, the king purifies himself of his own evil and attains the status of true high priest and king, becoming worthy of the great treasure that he seeks.<sup>37</sup> If we apply this interpretation to the Assyrian royal hunt, the elephant and other fierce beasts would then represent an evil, internal part of the king, one that he must continually work to defeat and thereby perfect himself through ongoing conflict. This interpretation need not exclude other meanings the elephant hunt may have held for the Assyrian kings, such as a religious ritual connected to Ninurta and Nergal, or a symbolic attack on enemies—perhaps those localized in the regions of Syria inhabited by elephants. It also resonates with Liverani's formulation of Assyrian ideology, mentioned above, in which order is constantly imposed on chaos through the exercise of Assyrian control.<sup>38</sup> In this light, the existence of royal zoological parks at Ashur and Nimrud, with their herds of elephants, became important signs of the Assyrian king's control over the periphery of the empire and over the wild aspects of his own power.

However, the specifics of the relationship between king and elephant remain to be analyzed; for instance, whether there is

significance to the method of attack. Royal annals specifically describe Assyrian kings hunting elephants with the bow, by ambush, or capturing the animals with snares, and such details may convey specific meanings. It is also important to note that unlike lion and bull hunts, elephant hunts appear only in texts, and are not depicted on the walls of the Assyrian palaces. Among the Assyrian kings, the only one who could conceivably have depicted himself hunting elephants in monumental relief sculpture is Ashurnasirpal II, as his palace is the earliest known to have been decorated with reliefs, while the kings after his son Shalmaneser III no longer mention elephant hunting in their royal annals. However, Ashurnasirpal's palace has produced only reliefs showing lion and bull hunts. In fact, I am not aware of any depictions of elephant hunting in ancient Near Eastern art of any period or region. It is worth asking why this formidable animal was never represented as a hunter's prey. An answer may lie in the extremely dangerous and brutal nature of elephant hunts. Elephants are very hard to kill, and it is difficult to imagine that such a gruesome hunt, and one presenting such risk to the hunter, could be presented in an aesthetically pleasing way.

The Neo-Assyrian evidence suggests that elephants and ivory were in fact placed in separate conceptual categories. Ivory was a favored material for luxury arts, collected both in its finished form and as tusks. It poured in to the imperial center from all over Assyria's sphere of influence: the Aramaean and Syro-Hittite city-states of Syria; Phoenicia and Judah in the Levant; southern Babylonia; Egypt and the Arab tribes of the steppe; perhaps even from Urartu or other powers to the north, if "Mušri" on the Black Obelisk does in fact refer to a region north of Assyria. Clearly, ivory in raw and worked forms circulated over a vast area outside the natural habitat of elephant populations in Africa and Asia. However, live elephants and ivory are not always easily equated, since, as we have seen, far fewer Asian than African elephants bear tusks.

I suggest that the Asian elephant was hunted by the Assyrian kings not primarily for ivory—the acquisition of a natural resource, however valuable, need not involve the direct participation of the king—but for ideological reasons. Along with lions and bulls, elephants were one of the most powerful animals associated with the might of the Assyrian king, and thus it was his duty to hunt them. The process was more complex than symbolically annihilating the enemies of Assyria. Rather, it did not end with their defeat; once vanquished, enemies could be taken as trophies by the king in the form of body parts or as living animals, and their powers appropriated for his own use. This is a consistent theme in ancient Near Eastern mythological and literary texts, as in *Angim* in which the battle trophies of the "slain heroes" are hung on Ninurta's chariot, or in the Gilgamesh epic, where Humbaba is vanquished and his powers taken back to the city by Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the form of his so-called auras, his trees felled for timber, and in some instances his severed head.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps this concept explains the strikingly elephant-like appearance of the Assyrian battering rams or tanks in reliefs from the Central Palace of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) at Nimrud (fig. 9).<sup>40</sup> Especially evocative in this slab are the twin projections of the battering beams, recalling paired tusks, and the hanging loop of rope used to raise and lower them, which resembles a trunk.<sup>41</sup> By the time of Tiglath-Pileser's reign in the third quarter of the eighth century, it was several generations since elephants had been the target of the royal hunt, but a memory of their ferocity under attack survives in these representations—now wielded by the Assyrians who had slaughtered them, taking their power for themselves.

Like the lions and bulls, the elephants were not being hunted and killed and held in captivity as natural resources; no king hunted lions because he needed the pelts. Power over these most magnificent of animals was important in itself, not as a means to an end. Together with habitat loss and human



Fig. 9. Gypsum alabaster relief showing assault on the city U[pa?]. Nimrud, Central Palace, slab 15a. Neo-Assyrian, reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.), 730–727 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 118903)

encroachment, elephant hunting certainly did lead to the extinction of Syrian elephants. However, I would argue that the Syrian elephant hunt was driven not primarily by desire for ivory, but for the sake of the hunt itself.

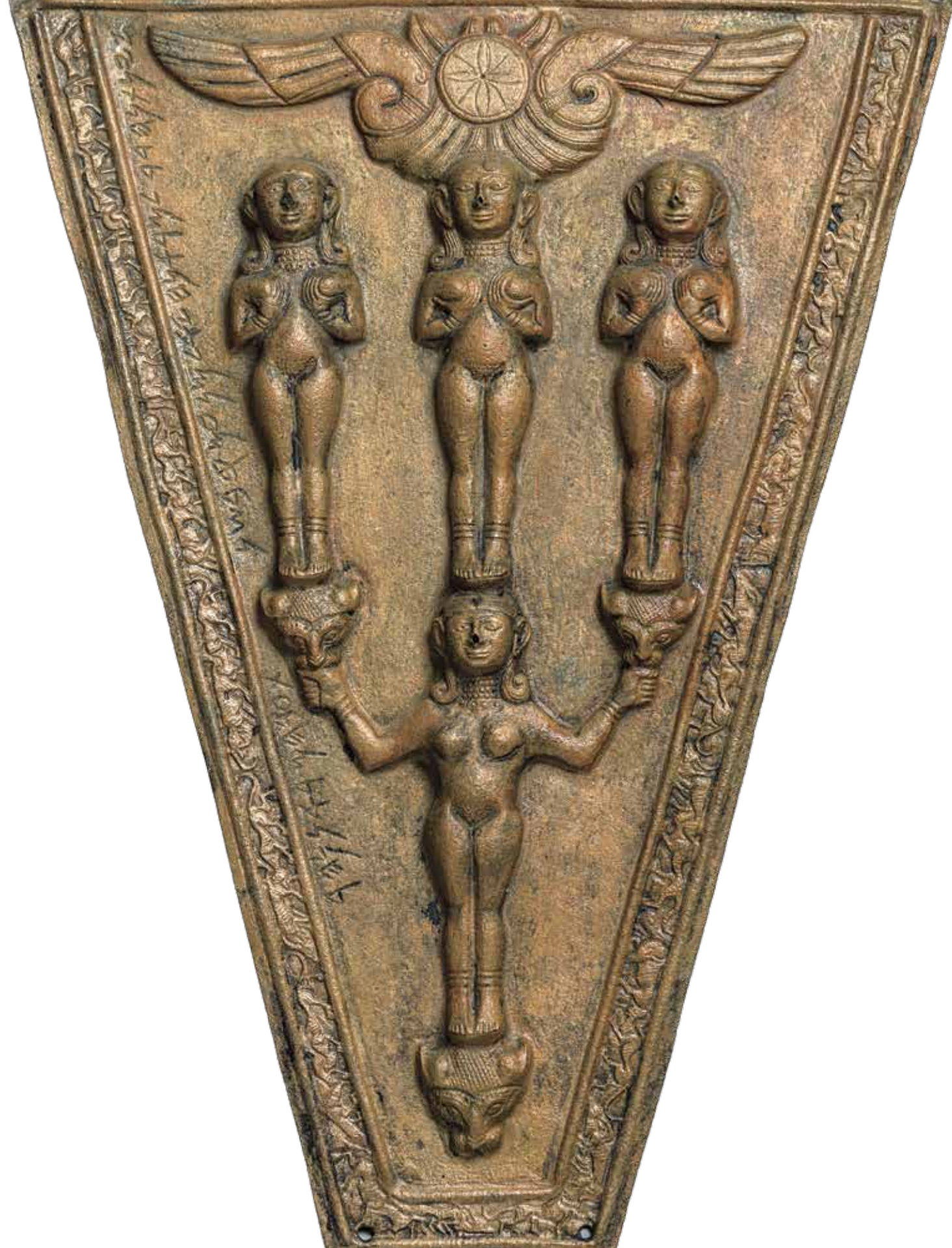
#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1. Liverani 1979.
2. Pfälzner 2013; Pfälzner forthcoming.
3. I. Winter 1973, pp. 265–68; Collon 1977; Caubet and Poplin 2010.
4. Pfälzner 2013, pp. 122–23; see also Moorey 1994, p. 117.
5. Becker 2005, fig. 5; for the bone from Terqa, see Liggett 1982, p. 20; for Emar and Ashur, see Fischer 2007, pp. 75–77. Fischer also cites an unspecified bone from unknown context at Tell Sheikh Hassan in Syria; see Lamprichs 1995, p. 366 n. 15.
6. Moorey 1994, pp. 118–19, lists all known representations of elephants in Syro-Palestine and Mesopotamia, including two objects from Beth Shean not discussed in the present paper.
7. Frankfort 1955, pp. 45–46, no. 642.
8. Woolley and Mallowan 1976, p. 182, no. 250. The plaque's location is not specified in the publication but appears to be in the Iraq Museum; I thank Katy



- Blanchard at the Penn Museum and Birger Helgestad at the British Museum for confirming that it is not in their collections.
9. I. Winter 1973, pp. 264–65.
  10. Beran 1957, p. 163, fig. 34.
  11. M. Oppenheim et al. 1955, p. 69, no. A3, p. 86, pl. 56; neither trunk nor tusks are visible in the published image.
  12. Luschan 1943, pp. 68–72, figs. 80, 81, pl. 35a–b.
  13. Many thanks to Katy Blanchard at the Penn Museum for providing a photograph of the cast of the elephant figurine, the original of which is in Istanbul.
  14. Compare the horse and rider figurine from Nippur now in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 59.41.23.
  15. The Sumerian word AM.SI is translated as “elephant,” as is the Akkadian word *pīru*; *Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2005), vol. 12, pp. 418–20, *pīru* A. However, in some cases AM.SI can also be read as “aurochs,” although scholars differ on certain translations; *The Sumerian Dictionary of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Babylonian Section of the University Museum, 1984–), vol. 1, pt. 3, pp. 185–87, AM.SI.
  16. *Enlil and Sud*, Version A, Segment A, line 107, <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section1/tr122.htm>.
  17. *Inana and Ebih*, line 160, <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section1/tr132.htm>.
  18. Castellino 1972, p. 37, lines 57–62: “. . . in my roaming about, /Treading along (through) alfa grass of marshes and reeds, /Hunting elephants (?) and wild animals of the plain, /Whenever a lion or a panther (?), dragon of the plain, /Would come out whither I was marching, /I would go fearless (in pursuit) in the intricate vegetation of the plain.” See also <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr24202.htm>. On this unusual word and its proposed connection with Indian elephants, see Steinkeller 1980, p. 9; I thank Gina Konstantopoulos for this reference.
  19. Pfälzner 2013, p. 121, with bibliography.
  20. Compare Ashur-bel-kala’s Broken Obelisk: Grayson 1991, pp. 103–4, col. iv, lines 1–34a; the annals of Ashur-dan II: *ibid.*, p. 135, lines 68–72.
  21. *Ibid.*, p. 154, lines 122–27.
  22. *Ibid.*, p. 226, lines 38b–39.
  23. Reade 1980, pp. 18–19; Grayson 1991, p. 344, no. 77.
  24. There is a brief passage in Shalmaneser’s annals dated to 842 B.C. citing Ninurta and Nergal and listing wild bulls, lions, and elephants killed by the king; Grayson 1996, p. 41, col. iv, lines 40–44.
  25. *Ibid.*, pp. 149–50, no. 89; Grayson translates “Mušri” as “Egypt.”
  26. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
  27. Nashef 1982, pp. 198–99; Tadmor 1961 provides an overview of three different geographical identifications for “Mušri” and ultimately concludes that the Black Obelisk refers to Egypt, while acknowledging that the Bactrian camel is hard to explain as Egyptian tribute.
  28. Reade 2014, p. 64.
  29. Mallowan 1966, p. 451.
  30. G. Herrmann and Laidlaw 2013, p. 269.
  31. Oates 2001, p. 181.
  32. Pfälzner 2013, pp. 114–15.
  33. Cassin 1981.
  34. Watanabe 2002, pp. 83–88.
  35. *Ibid.*, pp. 72–75.
  36. *Ibid.*, pp. 76–82.
  37. Ataç 2010b, pp. 266–68.
  38. Liverani 1979.
  39. Wiggermann 1992, pp. 145–47, 157. The case of Humbaba’s head is complex: note that the texts do not unequivocally describe the placement of the severed head in the temple doorway (Graf 2012, pp. 120–21), although the auras and felled cedars were certainly appropriated and used by Gilgamesh after Humbaba’s death. I suspect that the frequent appearance of Humbaba heads at temple gateposts, as depicted on Ur III/Old Babylonian terracotta plaques and in monumental sculpture at the site of Tell al Rimah, has influenced readings of the epic text. In any case, the visual record supports the use of Humbaba’s head as an apotropaion, even though the text does not; see Graf 2012, pp. 121–29.
  40. Barnett and Falkner 1962; see esp. pls. XXXIII, XXXIV (BM ME 118902), XXXIX, XL (BM ME 115634+118903), LXII (original lost).
  41. Yadin 1963, pp. 314–16, describes the Assyrian battering ram and its evolution.



Art of the  
“Orientalizing” Period:  
Greece, Cyprus, and  
Italy

# The Age of Heroes: Greeks and Phoenicians on the Wine-Dark Sea

The Age of Heroes is none too easy to define. For our purposes it encompasses the Late Bronze Age of the Greek Aegean world when there was a war at Troy, and Greek hero kings like Agamemnon and Achilles fought in Asia Minor. Here history seems to meet myth, and the myth was preserved in epic stories recited and eventually written down and, many of them, portrayed in art. Although the Greek hero kings were ultimately killed in the story, they were thought to have survived in an imaginary paradise—the Happy Isles, or the “islands of the blessed.” It was a story of lasting appeal and inspiration, to modern times. So the poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s account of Odysseus (Ulysses), of an old man returned home from long-finished wars, who encourages his men to one last voyage to the west:

for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the  
baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us  
down:  
It may be we shall touch the Happy  
Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we  
knew.<sup>1</sup>

This was the Homeric world. But physically, for us, this was a real world, of Mycenaean fortress towns in Greece, of Mycenaean

and its royal tombs, of Heinrich Schliemann standing on the walls at Troy, of arts displaying a noble life and heroic fighting against men and beasts. Lions are a good heroic quarry, often shown being hunted; there may have been lions as far south as central Greece in early times, and there were certainly lions in the east. But the arena for the stories was also an extension of the world of the Near East, of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine. Here so much of the art and so many of the figures were composed, providing a background to the more familiar Greek scene—more familiar because it was to be encapsulated in sublime literature that survived and was influential over a long time.

Physically the Mycenaean Greek Bronze Age world passes away during the twelfth century B.C., and we enter some three centuries of the so-called Dark Ages, illiterate, at least in Greece, but when bards could sing of the deeds of their heroic predecessors and construct a heroic narrative of the apparently historical events of the Late Bronze Age: its voyages, its wars overseas, its heroic kings and princes.

But then, in the eighth to sixth century B.C., we have literacy. The Greeks learned their letters again from the east, and in a real alphabet devised from the script of the North Syrians, themselves inspired by Phoenician syllabary script.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the Greeks came to have texts recording their heroic past, as did the east. All this took place at the same time as their own truly historical deeds were being enacted, when voyages were being made throughout the Mediterranean, and new towns, “colonies,” and trading posts were created. The Mediterranean became a social as well as a geographical unity, and an eastern people, the Phoenicians, also started the process of exploration, and at the same time brought to the story much of the accumulated lore of civilizations in the east—older than the Mycenaean Greek: a happy juxtaposition of two peoples, more alike than we might expect.

It has been fashionable in the past to regard the Greeks as colonizers, the Phoenicians as



traders, and to think of them as rivals, but a moment's reflection will show that they were each both colonizers and traders. Both the Greeks and the Phoenicians were under considerable pressure. The Greeks had arrived in the earlier part of the Middle Bronze Age, from the north. They were Indo-Europeans, part of one of the great migrations from the east. Once in Europe they turned south and entered the most easterly of the peninsulas running into the Mediterranean, and they continued on to what we know as Greece, followed by folk we know as Macedonians, who spoke a related but mutually incomprehensible language. The Greeks' real northern boundary was roughly at Mount Olympus where they sited their gods. They found themselves in a rugged land of hills and valleys, with very little by way of major fertile plains—even Boiotia in central Greece was then probably mainly a lake. They were an ambitious people. They were bound together by race and language, but not much else; otherwise they would not have split into many smaller kingdoms, each centered on massively fortified towns. In fact, the Greek propensity for fighting each other was already apparent, and it seriously affected any hope of creating a single nation. This, indeed, only happened when the Macedonians and then the Romans enforced it. But they were ambitious. Their end of the Mediterranean was full of islands. They spread onto them in the Aegean, onto the Ionian coast opposite where they founded cities, as at Miletos, and came into conflict with Troy to the north, it seems. Fortunately the inhabitants of this part of the east, unlike the Phoenicians, were not too interested in the sea and left the Greeks to their own devices. Much farther east there was Cyprus, where the Greeks seem to have been welcomed, and to the south was the island of Crete, and the great, colorful, and what we perceive as an essentially peaceful Minoan civilization, which they had no difficulty in destroying and annexing, while also learning from them literacy and some greater freedom in the figurative arts. They soon acquired and adapted for themselves the

sublime styles of Minoan art but generally for a more warlike, heroic if you like, environment. So their palaces acquired a sophistication of architecture and painted decoration, and their arts were more devoted to heroic battle than ever were the Minoan.

The Greeks' restricted territory fostered ambition and a desire for new wealth. So they were always on the lookout for expanding their territory, sometimes encouraged, I expect, by the need to get out of the way of their kin, that is, their aggressive Greek neighbors.

The Phoenicians' problems were related but the background was different. In our period they lived only in coastal cities—Tyre, Sidon, Byblos—with a relatively restricted hinterland. To simplify matters: in the Iron Age the Phoenicians were caught in the middle of a power struggle involving Babylonia and Assyria to the north and east, and Egypt to the south. Their imagery owed most to Egypt, and they derived their script from that on the borders of Egypt in Sinai. That they survived at all is remarkable, but they did, and inevitably they, like the Greeks, were bound to direct their ambitions away from their belligerent neighbors to the open seas of the Mediterranean. Greeks were already sniffing at their shores to the north, and eventually into the Black Sea, with their trade links with the east established as early as the ninth century B.C., with the Syrians north of the Phoenician cities, along the Orontes Valley. This led, for the Greeks, to profoundly significant cultural influences from the great Mesopotamian civilizations. The Greeks at that end of the Mediterranean could be rather piratic as well as mercantile, but not, it seems, in serious conflict with Phoenicians. They were busy traders and, when need be, mercenaries.

These Greek contacts with the Near East had long-lasting consequences, not least in the exploration of the Mediterranean. They also opened Greek eyes to new ways of recording the world and inspired, for their arts, that so-called “Orientalizing revolution,” which, in Greek hands, led inexorably to

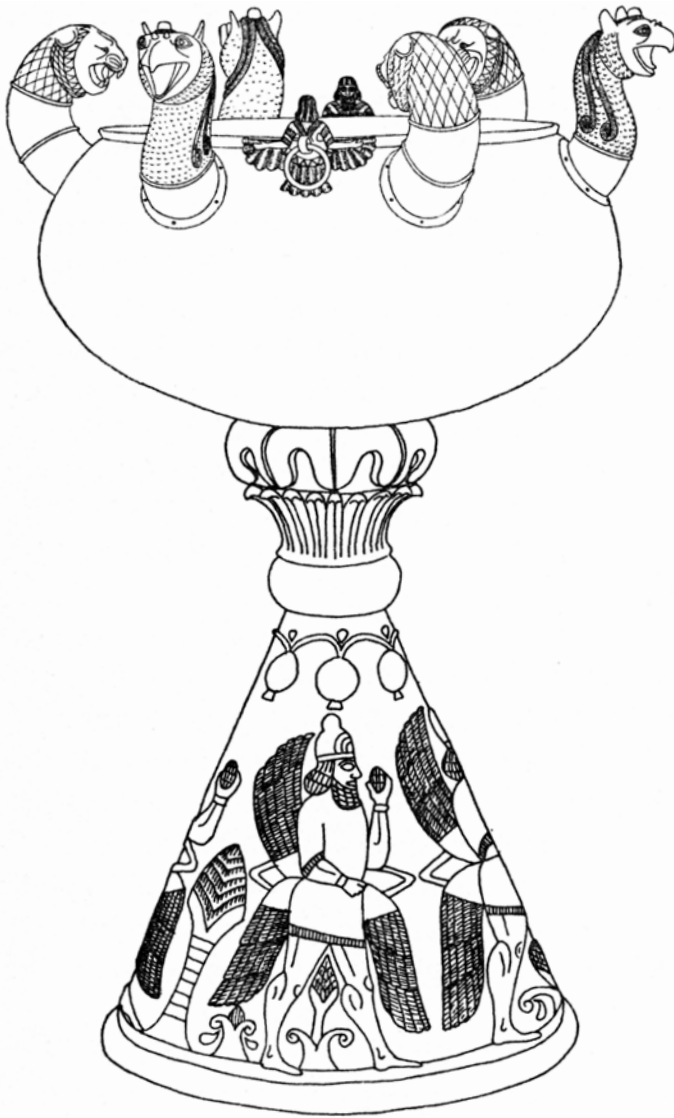


Fig. 1. Drawing of bronze cauldron found at Olympia. Orientalizing, 7th century B.C. Olympia Museum (B 4224)

what have come to be known as “Classical” forms of realistic art virtually unknown elsewhere in the world. This revolution was in part due to observation of the arts of the Near East, with their semirealistic figures and conventions. It led to an ability to tell a story as explicitly in a picture as with words; “a picture is worth a thousand words” runs the proverb—but it was a breakthrough in the

use of the arts presaged already in their Geometric arts, fulfilled then in the seventh century B.C. when it could be served also by the new view of the world offered them by the arts of the Near East. Greek arts turned from the Geometric to the Orientalizing and Archaic, as a result of these eastern contacts and exchanges.

When we find a bronze cauldron (fig. 1) at Olympia around 700 B.C., we can see little that is not of eastern inspiration; particularly notable are the winged Assyrian-type figures at the base. For the attachments to the bowl, the griffins, thought to be Greek additions, would prove to suit the Greeks better than the lions and the little spread-wing sirens on the shoulder. On a bronze quiver in Crete we see some action but no more than the traditional eastern groups of a hero-king confronting lions.<sup>3</sup> The bodies, however, are semirealistic, and a great contrast to the native Greek styles of Geometric figures. Yet, oddly enough, it is in this style that the very first Greek narrative scenes of myth appear, soon to be translated into the more realistic Orientalizing. Thus, on other bronzes (corselets and shield-bands) from Olympia, the eastern style is adopted for Greek dress, and in the rows of human figures, gods and heroes can be identified by their attributes. It is a very small step from here to scenes where individual heroic scenes of myth can easily be identified. With these developments we are well on the way to the noble series of narrative scenes found in Greek art from the seventh century B.C. on but can also easily see how they were developed from observation of the easterners’ arts. We should, however, enter one caveat—Greek narrative of heroic action was a Greek invention. The east offered images of gods, of monsters, and of humans confronting monsters to demonstrate their power, but not the narrative scenes of myth, which are a Greek contribution to the history of art, running parallel to and echoing their heroic poetry. The east set the scenes and helped inspire realistic representation: the Greeks provided the true narrative.

It was less the Phoenician arts that effected



Fig. 2. Greeks and Phoenicians in the Mediterranean

this revolution than those of regions to the north and east. But the Greek relationship with the Phoenicians was at least as fruitful in terms of Greek history and expansion as the less tangible qualities of the arts, and we return to geography and the problems shared by Greeks and Phoenicians alike. Both peoples found themselves obliged to seek expansion and prosperity on the open seas, and the great age of colonization begins, a historical period yet in many ways meshed in the records and voyages of a heroic past (fig. 2). If the first Heroic Age, of Troy and Homer, was no little imaginary, the second Heroic Age, as we might call it, of colonization, was decidedly historical but set against a truly heroic backdrop, and enacted by Greeks at the side of easterners.

The Phoenicians are the first in the field by a long way. A Greek author tells us that the Phoenician king Ithobaal,<sup>4</sup> who reigned in the second quarter of the ninth century B.C., founded a settlement at Aüza in Libya: Libya in those days meant the whole North African coastline. There is good reason to suspect that this Aüza was a site in modern Libya, at the mouth of a wadi between Benghazi and Tobruk, where later, in the seventh century B.C., the Greeks had a

settlement they called Aziris, surely following the Phoenician name.<sup>5</sup> The wadi has dried up but was sherded by an American team, and later by myself and colleagues, on an outing from our site at Tocra/Taucheira farther west. We found nothing earlier than the seventh century B.C., but the site is large and a very good candidate for representing the earliest Phoenician colonization, perhaps better described as the planting of a trading post, along the coast, on the way to their later, major colony at Carthage, and with easy access to the fertile highlands of Cyrene.

Greek movements west did not start until the eighth century B.C., and it is significant that the earliest finds in the Carthage area itself are not just Phoenician but also Greek and Cypriot, with the Phoenician dominating from the seventh century on. The Phoenicians went farther west, to Sardinia, the Balearic islands, and Spain, and even touched the west coast of Sicily at Motya. The early Greek interest, beside the Phoenician, in the Carthage area on the African coast, is reinforced by place-names on and off the coast north of Carthage.<sup>6</sup> They carry Greek names that could only have been given before the whole area became dominated by Phoenicians. One name was "Pithekoussai,"

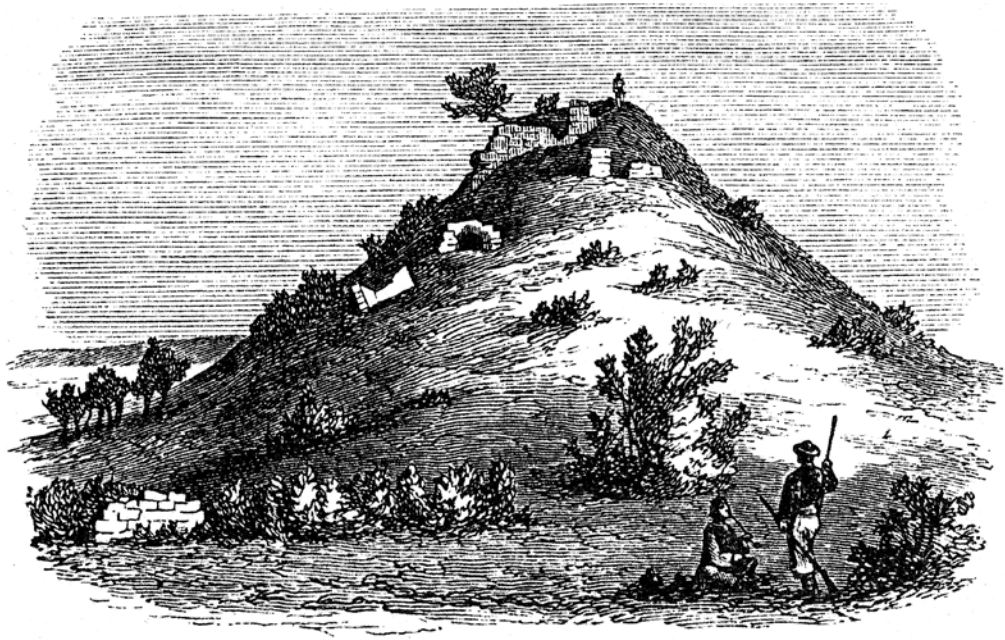


Fig. 3. View of the Tomb of Ajax at Troy produced for Heinrich Schliemann

meaning “monkey land,” and indeed where there are many monkeys. What is odd about this is that the Greeks then used the same name for their first eighth-century B.C. settlement in the west, on Ischia in the Bay of Naples—but there were no monkeys in Europe, so the name must have been borrowed from their earlier encounter with them in Africa. Besides Pithekoussai in Africa there was an island the Greeks called Euboia, after their homeland and the source of their earliest explorers, east and west. Closer to Carthage they named Naxian islands—the Naxians being cousins of the Euboians and also colonizers in Sicily.

So far we see no serious competition between Greeks and Phoenicians and no conflict. Such other evidence as there is suggests that they were friendly or at least indifferent to each other, and that there was a spontaneous division of western interests determined mainly by geography—the Phoenicians to the south and farther west, the Greeks closer to their homeland coast, along the Adriatic and in south Italy and

Sicily, on up the western coast of Italy as far as territories firmly held by Etruscans; but soon even beyond them, to the south coast of France, and Marseilles.

Where the Greeks went their religion went, along with recollections of their heroic Bronze Age past, and of their famous wanderer, Odysseus. On Ithaca in the Adriatic the cave was shown where Odysseus landed and dedicated tripods.<sup>7</sup> And not only were the heroes at Troy recruited to celebrate the Greeks’ command of the seas, but Herakles himself could set off to sea in a bowl and threaten the sun.<sup>8</sup> The Greeks were never slow to help their process of absorbing foreign places and traditions by linking them to their heroic past.

At home in the Aegean their links with the Heroic Age were easily established. At Troy, native Lydian tumulus tombs were readily identified as the tombs of Achilles, Ajax, and others (fig. 3). Alexander the Great carried off what he took to be Achilles’s shield. When Julius Caesar visited Troy he was warned to step cautiously in the long



grass lest he step on Hector's ghost. In Greece the tholos tombs at Mycenae were identified as the treasuries of legendary kings, and rites still obscure to us seem to have been practiced in them—perhaps necromancy<sup>9</sup> (fig. 4). The gold masks found at Mycenae could easily be attributed to hero kings, but more trivial finds were also easily assimilated to their heroic past by the Greeks; as Virgil observes:

Surely the time will come when a  
farmer on those frontiers  
Forcing through earth his curved plough  
Shall find old spears eaten away with  
flaky rust,  
Or hit upon helmets as he wields the  
weight of his mattock  
And marvel at the heroic bones he has  
disinterred.<sup>10</sup>

True enough. There are Mycenaean bronze chisels found by later Greeks and inscribed as “sacred”—*hieros*.<sup>11</sup> And it becomes easy to see why the hero Theseus should have to find his magic sword and sandals under a stone. Such rediscovery of heroic antiquity must have been very common and thought-provoking. A model (fig. 5) from eighth-century B.C. Crete seems to show a tholos tomb of the normal type, but occupied by a goddess, and on its roof we see two men and a dog, as though, out walking, they had come across this underground relic of a heroic past. It was remarkable how, early in their Iron Age, the Greeks could still think big. At Lefkandi a great hall was built incorporating tombs of, we suppose, a king and queen, but furnished with objects from the Near East and Cyprus (see Aruz essay, pp. 14–29), an early indication of the probable sources of wealth sought out by Greeks in the east.<sup>12</sup> But there are almost as many different theories about this complex as there are scholars to study them.

Fossils and fossil bones were easy sources for speculation. Put the picture of a mammoth skeleton pulled upright beside a human skeleton, and you can judge how easy it was



Fig. 4. Attic white ground cup with seer in a tholos tomb. Athens. Ca. 460–450 B.C. The British Museum, London (D5; 1892,0718.2)

for Greeks to imagine that there had been an age of giants, before even Herakles.<sup>13</sup> Stories of gods fighting giants in the Mediterranean world are all located in areas where mammoth bones have been found. One such site was near Troy, so there was a story of Herakles killing a monster there, captured by a Corinthian vase-painter.<sup>14</sup>



Fig. 5. Clay model of tholos tomb with visitors and a goddess. Crete, Archanes. 9th–8th century B.C. Heraklion Archaeological Museum, Greece (SG 376)



Fig. 6. Marble statuette of Jonah being swallowed by a *ketos* (whale). A.D. 3rd century. Cleveland Museum of Art (1965.238)

It is a giant whom we see on a vase helping Athena to build the walls of Athens, where the truly Cyclopean masonry was still easily identified around the Acropolis in historic times, indeed to the present-day.<sup>15</sup> And big fossil footprints of dinosaurs in Italy and France were readily seen to be where Herakles had walked. They may have seemed too big to be mortal but that was all right—heroes were bigger than mortals, a connotation we keep in our contemporary use of the word *heroic*. And of course the mammoth bones were decidedly supernatural for a mortal.<sup>16</sup>

Herakles occupies a very special place in Greek heroic storytelling and their lore of traveling. We have already noticed him at sea. Historically, if one can use such a term,

he antedates the Trojan War heroes. It might be that there was a Greek king in the early days of occupying their new land, whose exploits—very heavily modeled on much Near Eastern storytelling—provided a model for the hero who seemed closest to the gods, yet at the same time managed to display, sometimes to extremes, very human weaknesses. He owes much to eastern traditions, and to illustrations of Near Eastern gods defeating or controlling wild creatures and monsters. And he was a traveler leaving footprints, as we have seen. At the Strait of Gibraltar stood the Pillars of Hercules (Herakles).

It is in keeping with their origins and associations that heroes were commonly connected with lands far beyond the Aegean. Greek poets may not have been very aware

of such origins, but the legendary tales themselves reveal it. Memnon is a good example. He fought on the Trojan side against the Greeks at Troy. He was said to be the son of the Dawn (oriental, therefore) and of Tithonos, brother of the Trojan king Priam. He was the handsomest of warriors. He is regularly shown in Greek art in the company of African soldiers at Troy. A fine mix-up of Egyptian throne names soon won him a reputation for being Egyptian himself, and when the Greeks saw the great seated statues at Egyptian Thebes they readily identified one of them as Memnon, especially since he faced his mother, the Dawn. One of the statues even used to sing when the sun arose—most probably the result of expanding air issuing through breaks in the stone. The statue was eventually repaired by a Roman emperor and sang no more.<sup>17</sup>

It is interesting to see how much of the east lingered in the geography of the Greek Heroic Age. Prometheus had his liver eaten daily by Zeus's eagle because he had stolen fire from heaven to give to mankind. The Greeks located the event either in the Caucasus or even farther east in the Hindu Kush in Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> Colchis, modern Georgia, was the home of Medea and the story of Jason, whose voyage there echoes earliest Greek exploration of the Black Sea. The Golden Fleece reflects the way in which the locals got gold dust from the Caucasus rivers, caught in woolly fleeces.

But we can find comparable locating of heroic myth by ancient authors far closer to the routes through which so much of oriental lore reached Greek lands, that is to say on the Levantine coast, in Phoenicia itself, and in nearby regions. In the valley of the river Orontes in Syria, a coffin eleven cubits long was found with a giant skeleton in it. This skeleton, an oracle said, was of Orontes himself, an Indian.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Joppa on the Palestine coast was identified as the place where the Greek princess Andromeda had been chained up on the seashore as prey for a giant sea monster. The Greek hero Perseus came along and rescued her in an episode upon



Fig. 7. Attic black figure cup with Herakles attacking a sea monster that had threatened Hesione. 6th century B.C. Museo Nazionale, Taranto (52155)

which ancient and later artists often dwelt, giving as it did a fine opportunity to portray a beautiful damsel in distress. In Classical times the fetters with which she was chained were still shown on the seashore of Palestine. There were also the monster's jawbones on show, obviously a whale's, while a whole skeleton, forty feet long, was taken to Rome,<sup>20</sup> again perhaps really the skeleton of a whale. Indeed, this coast was the base even for Phoenician whalers in the Atlantic, also of course the story of Jonah. The image of Jonah's whale (fig. 6) was borrowed by Classical artists from that long before devised by them for the monster threatening Hesione and killed by Herakles, the so-called *ketos*. But the Andromeda episode has a far-longer heroic heritage than Classical antiquity, and it served as model for the story of the Roman soldier, who became Saint George, and had slain the dragon to rescue a king's daughter. These stories linking Greek heroic myth with sites in the Near East, and even with eastern heroic stories, pose interesting and unanswerable questions about the derivation and transmission of heroic traditions. But there are perhaps traditions about which we still know very little, so that we can be tantalized by the view (fig. 7) of a Herakles



Fig. 8. Ceramic figure in the form of a centaur. Lefkandi, Toumba cemetery, Tombs 1 and 3. Late Protogeometric, ca. 10th century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Eretria, Euboea, Greece (8620)

cutting off the tongue of a whale-like monster, and we have no idea of the story involved or whether it was just the product of a Greek artist's fertile imagination. One notable feature of the divine or heroic iconography of the Near East and Mesopotamia had been the invention of such monsters, either with human bodies but animal heads, or with human heads on animal bodies,<sup>21</sup> or with combinations of animal forms. They

seem generally to represent supernatural forces and had an important effect on the invention of monsters and monster stories involving heroes in the Greek world. The only Greek version that also has a really early pedigree is the human-torsoed horse, the centaur. One from Dark Age Greece, at Lefkandi (fig. 8), is a prime example since a case can be made, whether correctly or not, that this is a figure identifiable from later recorded myth. So he might be the famous heroic physician Cheiron, who, like many such intellectual heroes, was also lame from a wound in the leg—a feature that appears on the clay figure though not very conspicuously. Such a physical form could equally be applied to mythical creatures usually shown in more human form. So even Medusa with her stare that could turn men to stone might adopt a horse's body, like a centaur.<sup>22</sup> The form of the Medusa head derives directly from the east.

The bull-headed monster—the Minotaur—is more interesting, since it is associated with a myth that clearly belongs with the heroic tradition in Greece, involving as it does the hero Theseus. The monster was thought to have lived in a labyrinth at Knossos, and we can easily judge how the complex ruins of the ancient palace might have seemed labyrinthine to later visitors. Theseus belongs to a mythical world that is not that of the Trojan wars, although it was easy for poets to make some sort of connection for the sake of prestige. He can perhaps rather be associated with an earlier phase of consolidation in the Greek world, in which Mycenaean Greeks began their expansion south into the island of Crete, home of the Minotaur, who demanded annual tribute of young men and women from Athens. The power of Minos, lord of Crete, is embodied in the monster, a version of which had appeared already on Bronze Age seal-stones, with a bull head and a body mixing human and bovine elements. It seems typical of the Classical treatment in later periods of such horrific stories that its artists could imagine that even the Minotaur had a mother (fig. 9).<sup>23</sup>



Other animal-headed creatures in heroic Greek myth have mixed functions, not always intelligible, and Odysseus's companions are captured by Circe, the naked witch, who gives them her potion, which turns their heads into those of animals.<sup>24</sup>

In its way the Age of Heroes never came to an end, because it set an example and pattern for the imaginative portrayal of events and persons whose skills seem to surpass the merely mortal. In historical terms it encompassed the age of exploration east and west, which signaled the beginnings of what we continue to call Western civilization. The nineteenth-century writer Charles Kingsley wrote books of hero stories for school children and tried to evoke a heroic spirit for a modern world:

And young men, too, whom you know, children and some of them your own kin, did they say to themselves, "How much money shall I earn?" when then they went out to the war, leaving wealth, and comfort, and a pleasant home, and all that money can give, to face hunger and thirst, and wounds and death, that they might fight for their country and their Queen? No, children, there is a better thing on earth than wealth, a better thing than life itself; and that is, to have done something before you die, for which good men may honour you.... God help us all, and give us wisdom, and courage to do noble deeds! but God keep pride from us when we have done them, lest we fall, and come to shame!<sup>25</sup>

1. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Ulysses" (1842), in Gardner 1972, p. 646.
2. Boardman 1999, pp. 274–75.
3. Ibid., fig. 24. In Heraklion Museum, Crete.
4. Josephus, *Against Apion* I.18.
5. Boardman 2010. See also Jacoby 1958, no. 783, F3.
6. Boardman 2006a.
7. Boardman 2002, pp. 67–69, figs. 38, 39.



Fig. 9. Etruscan red figure cup with Pasiphaë nursing the baby Minotaur. Vulci. 4th century B.C. Cabinet des Médailles, Paris (1066)

8. Ibid., p. 174, fig. 158.
9. Ibid., pp. 45–78.
10. Virgil, *Georgics* 1.493–97.
11. Boardman 2002, p. 81.
12. Ibid., pp. 70–74, figs. 42–45.
13. Ibid., p. 35, fig. 6.
14. Ibid., p. 145, fig. 118.
15. Ibid., pp. 44–47, figs. 13, 16.
16. Ibid., pp. 33–39.
17. Ibid., pp. 118–23.
18. Ibid., p. 124.
19. Ibid., p. 224, no. 402.
20. Ibid., p. 228, no. 509.
21. See *ibid.*, ch. 5 for origins of monsters.
22. For example, the relief vase and seal, *ibid.*, figs. 111, 112.
23. Ibid., pp. 150–51.
24. Ibid., p. 151, fig. 127.
25. Kingsley 1856, pp. 108–9, 320.

# Contemplating an Empire: Artistic Responses to the Neo-Assyrian World

A half century ago, only a handful of scholars would have linked the presence of Phoenician or North Syrian luxury objects in the Aegean world with the Neo-Assyrian empire. Yet an association between the empire and core categories of so-called “Orientalizing” artifacts emerged at the very beginning of Assyriology in the mid-nineteenth century. Explorations in the palaces at Nimrud produced stylistically diverse decorated metalwork and carved ivories, which could be linked with related finds from sites in the Aegean and central Italy. Frederik Poulsen’s pioneering study of Orientalizing art focused attention on the ivories and metalwork recovered from sites ranging from Assyria to Spain, and elaborated major stylistic divisions. Like other scholars of his generation, and Austen Henry Layard before them, Poulsen drew on references to Phoenicians and their elaborate metal vessels in Homeric epic poems to connect these objects with particular agents of manufacture and dissemination.<sup>1</sup> Displaced alternately by Greeks or Phoenicians, the Neo-Assyrian empire subsequently figured little in reconstructing relationships between the Near East and regions farther west during the Orientalizing period.

In this paper I suggest that the circulation of elite material culture both in the Near

East and the Mediterranean world can profitably be approached within the framework of Neo-Assyrian imperial strategies, which profoundly affected its availability, meaning, and reception. New research on the history and archaeology of the Neo-Assyrian empire encourages us to reconsider broad issues of cultural encounter and response between the empire and regions both within and beyond its political control.

## GREEK ART AND ASSYRIA: MODELS OF EMPIRE AND THE PROBLEM OF INTERMEDIARIES

By the 1950s, scholarship on Orientalizing Greek art overwhelmingly favored Greeks as the primary agents in pre-Classical contacts with Egypt and the Levant. Yet a few scholars recognized parallels or similarities between Assyrian art and major developments in Greek art from the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. (figs. 1, 2). T. J. Dunbabin noted that certain features of early Greek Orientalizing art, such as scenes of warfare and depictions of lions, exhibited elements specifically associated with Neo-Assyrian art. But he concluded that Greek knowledge of Assyrian subjects, iconography, ornament, and style must have been acquired through “intermediaries,” either material—for example, decorated textiles—or geographical, including architecture or funerary monuments in North Syria. The Greek pottery excavated at coastal sites such as Al Mina then indicated to most scholars that Greek traders, or perhaps mercenaries, were a regular presence in the region.<sup>2</sup> Some fifteen years later, Gudrun Ahlberg elaborated numerous parallels in combat scenes between Greek Geometric art and North Syrian and Neo-Assyrian carved orthostat reliefs.<sup>3</sup> Her argument for substantial Near Eastern influence met with a generally skeptical response, however. While most critics acknowledged the parallels as convincing, they rejected her interpretation for two main reasons. First, they found it highly unlikely that Greek artists could have had access to monumental palace art. The second problem



Fig. 1. Detail of gypsum alabaster relief showing Ashurbanipal hunting lions. Nineveh, North Palace, Room S, Panel 12. Neo-Assyrian, 645–635 B.C. The British Museum, London (ME 124875)

Fig. 2. Detail of the Chigi vase showing a lion hunt. Monte Aguzzo, chamber tomb. Middle Protocorinthian II–Late Protocorinthian, ca. 650–640 B.C. Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome (22679)



concerned chronology. During a period of presumed Assyrian retrenchment in the first half of the eighth century, it was argued, Assyrian influence in North Syria would have been minimal.<sup>4</sup>

George M. A. Hanfmann offered a novel perspective on the relationship between Greek and Assyrian art, specifically within the context of pictorial narrative. In a symposium on narration in ancient art held in 1955, he suggested that contact with the monumental art of Egypt and Assyria had profoundly influenced the development of Greek narrative art. Without attempting a detailed investigation, he proposed that the principal narrative devices used in Late Geometric and Early Archaic mythological scenes, along with new psychological dimensions in actions represented, were introduced from Near Eastern art.<sup>5</sup> Here is what Greek storytelling looked like before its encounter with Near Eastern and Egyptian art, Hanfmann wrote: disposed to a generalized, typical situation, a predilection for vigorous action and gestures, and a lack of interest in specifying moment and place (fig. 3). It was seventh-century B.C. Orientalizing art that largely created recognizable mythological narrative, he maintained. In addition, the creation of a monumental figural style in the first half of the seventh century B.C. significantly expanded the possibilities of storytelling (fig. 4).<sup>6</sup> In such a dramatic picture, figures could be physically elaborated and clearly differentiated from one another, and artists could begin to explore their subjects' emotional and psychological interactions.

In Hanfmann's view, Near Eastern influence introduced a new dimension into this kind of concentrated narrative scene, portraying calm, dignified behavior: "The choice of the moment and the psychological effect of the weighty encounter are modeled on such Near Eastern groups as the encounter of king and courtier often seen in Assyrian paintings and reliefs"<sup>7</sup>(fig. 5) As specific sources, he proposed paintings and textiles from the time of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) or his successors, and thus seemed to allow for



Fig. 3. Detail of ceramic oinochoe showing shipwreck scene. Late Geometric, ca. 740–720 B.C. Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek, Munich (8696)

possible access to monumental art. His observations imply a profound understanding of Assyrian art on the part of Greek artists and the deliberate and knowledgeable selection of specific narrative techniques, including the labeling of figures.

Yet the majority view that the Neo-Assyrian empire was remote and distant from the Greek world, accessible only through intermediaries, was not unique to specialists in Greek art. The picture of the empire traditionally presented by scholars of the ancient Near East themselves likewise seemed to preclude Greek knowledge of Mesopotamian developments in pre-Classical times. Art historians, most notably Henri Frankfort, reconstructed a Mesopotamian "core" centered in the Assyrian heartland of northern Iraq, surrounded by a "periphery" composed of what he considered the inferior arts common to peoples such as the Phoenicians.<sup>8</sup> Given the core-periphery model, it was necessary to postulate Greek or Phoenician intermediaries to account for the small





Fig. 4. Detail of “Melian” amphora showing Dionysos and a female figure, perhaps Ariadne. Melos, ca. 650–600 B.C. British School at Athens (MUS. A0001)

number of works in Assyrian (or more generally Mesopotamian) style that appeared beyond the empire’s western frontiers, chiefly in Greek sanctuaries.<sup>9</sup> In the scholarship of more recent decades, Phoenicians have returned as the prime agents and intermediaries in artistic exchange between the Aegean (and regions farther west in the Mediterranean) and the Near East. “Neo-Assyrian art,” or “the art of the Neo-Assyrian empire,” has for the most part been defined as a late chapter in the history of *Mesopotamian* art.<sup>10</sup>

#### ASSYRIA AND ITS WESTERN NEIGHBORS

Assyria as “a hegemonial empire lined by a periphery of client states” describes the empire in the ninth century B.C.<sup>11</sup> But profound changes took place beginning with Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.), who led military campaigns to east and west and incorporated former client states into the “land of Ashur.” Among other modifications, conversion to Assyrian provincial status entailed the royal appointment of a governor from the empire’s heartland who resided in a local palace. By the late eighth century B.C., when Assyrian provinces extended to the



Fig. 5. Gypsum alabaster relief showing Sargon II and the crown prince Sennacherib. Khorsabad, Palace of Sargon II. Neo-Assyrian, 710–705 B.C. Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Orientales (AO 19873, 19874)

coastal cities and states of southern Turkey and the Levant, Greek encounters with the Near East took place under radically altered political and economic circumstances. The kingdoms and political elites of North Syria, Cilicia (Turkey's southeastern coast), and their neighbors were fully aware of the expanding Assyrian empire, which forced them either to submit to Assyrian rule—as some did—or to form alliances to resist it. The overwhelming fact of Assyrian imperial expansion dominated political life in the region especially from the mid-eighth century B.C. onward. As a result of all these developments, the Greek elites who sponsored trading (and raiding) expeditions along the seacoast would have learned of the dramatic changes taking place throughout the region.<sup>12</sup>

Conversely, the Assyrians apparently knew more about some of their western neighbors than was previously understood. Assyrian royal inscriptions and letters mention a place name, Yaman (pronounced Yawan), translated as “Ionia,” and also the name of a people, Yamanaya (Yawa-naha) or Yamnaya (Yawnaja), “Ionians”—that is, Greek-speaking peoples—who are described as raiding the eastern Mediterranean coast in the area of present-day northern Syria. Assyriologists have only recently reexamined these references in the light of current scholarship. Sargon II declared that in 715 B.C. he “fished out” the Ionians “who live in the sea,” who had been carrying out attacks on Cilicia and the Phoenician town of Tyre.<sup>13</sup> At this time, Assyria was competing with the kingdom of Phrygia, in central Turkey, for control of western Cilicia. The historian Giovanni Lanfranchi suggested some years ago that these “Ionians” were not ordinary pirates, but Phrygian allies carrying out maritime attacks against the Assyrians. He proposed further that we should understand king Midas's gifts to the Apollo sanctuary at Delphi, as reported by Herodotos, in precisely this context of Phrygian efforts to convince the Greeks to join as allies against the Assyrians.<sup>14</sup> The inscribed stele of Sargon II found on Cyprus, which records a delegation of

Cypriot rulers sent to Babylon to meet the king, also acknowledged Assyrian awareness of the world beyond the traditional western limit of the Mediterranean coast.<sup>15</sup>

Esarhaddon's (680–669 B.C.) conquest of Egypt in 671, Lanfranchi reminds us, represented a dramatic expansion of Assyrian rule, which would undoubtedly have become widely known in the greater Mediterranean world.<sup>16</sup> Through commercial contacts and guest-friendships with political and social elites in Cilicia and North Syria, Greeks were surely aware of and affected by this powerful new threat to the local autonomy of kingdoms throughout the region. Esarhaddon's son Ashurbanipal reconquered Egypt, annexed Elam to the east and northern Arabia to the south, and extended Assyrian influence as far as Lydia in western Anatolia. For a period of some forty years during his reign (668–627 B.C.), Assyrian rule reached its greatest extent, and its control extended far beyond the boundaries of the Taurus Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea. Gyges, king of Lydia, sought an alliance with Assyria, as later did his son. Like the Lydian kings, the Greek elites of the Anatolian cities and the Aegean region had to acknowledge the new political situation created by Assyrian influence in western Anatolia.

#### THE ARTISTIC IMPACT OF NEO-ASSYRIAN IMPERIALISM

Scholars debate how intensively Assyria forced a homogeneous culture, especially in the empire's western regions.<sup>17</sup> But Assyrian imperial mechanisms would have markedly changed the “artistic landscape” nearly everywhere, especially in the late eighth and seventh centuries B.C. Assyrian rule affected the availability of raw materials, the training and employment of artisans, and the distribution and consumption of luxury goods. Policies of mass (and sometimes “two-way”) resettlement, introduced in the late eighth century B.C., must also have transformed the artistic landscape. Entire communities were relocated to the Assyrian heartland and



Fig. 6. Gypsum alabaster relief of Assyrian courtier carrying lion-headed situlae. Khorsabad, Palace of Sargon II. Neo-Assyrian, 721–705 B.C. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Antiquités Orientales (AO 19881)

occasionally to more distant regions, thereby dispersing workshops and production centers that previously were regionally based. The palaces and other imperial building projects in northern Mesopotamia employed artisans from many regions of the empire, recruited both as skilled and unskilled labor.<sup>18</sup> Specialists in esoteric knowledge from Egypt and the North Syrian/Neo-Hittite region

took their place at the Neo-Assyrian court, where they played an influential role.<sup>19</sup>

In client states converted to provinces, the construction of military forts, governors' residences, and other official buildings introduced Assyrian architecture, administrative infrastructure, and associated material culture to regions far removed from the royal centers in northern Mesopotamia. Renewed excavations at Tell Tayinat (ancient Kinalua), in the north Orontes Valley, are furnishing new and detailed information on the transformation of a former Syro-Hittite royal city into an Assyrian provincial capital, exhibiting strong material ties to the heartland: palatial buildings, temples and cultic installations, cuneiform tablets, distinctive pottery, and associated small finds.<sup>20</sup>

As texts and archaeological evidence establish, large quantities of luxury goods were also relocated to the imperial center in the form of booty seized from conquered settlements and as tribute and audience gifts presented to the court. Among the best-known examples of such large-scale imports are the Syrian and Phoenician ivories recovered from multiple locations at Nimrud. Some items of booty and tribute were given as gifts to members of the royal family and to high-level courtiers.<sup>21</sup> These luxury items and their restricted, often ceremonial forms of transfer assisted in creating an empire-wide, multicultural ruling class. Elites of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds adopted Assyrian dress, hairstyles, and insignia, and they sometimes possessed a common repertoire of portable possessions made of costly materials, including ivory-decorated furniture in North Syrian, Phoenician, and Assyrian styles.<sup>22</sup> The empire fostered other networks by transferring objects (and artisans) both within the empire and beyond its frontiers, promoting "intercultural" styles in banqueting equipment, personal ornament, and ceremonial weapons.<sup>23</sup> Furniture in Assyrian styles was seized as booty from conquered settlements, indicating its production at multiple, geographically dispersed worksites.<sup>24</sup>



The lion-headed situlae depicted in palace reliefs of Sargon II at Dur-Sharrukin (modern Khorsabad) and mentioned in several texts provide another example of luxury arts in “intercultural” styles (fig. 6).<sup>25</sup> Representations show them in the hands of Assyrian courtiers and also presented as gifts by foreign tributaries. We do not depend exclusively on the Khorsabad representations, or on nineteenth-century drawings of reliefs now lost, to document this development. Examples made of bronze have been recovered from elite contexts over a wide geographical range: Tumulus MM at Gordion dated around 740 B.C. (fig. 7), the Heraion at Samos, and a tomb in Etruscan Veii. Susanne Ebbinghaus has suggested that their broad distribution resulted at least in part from their status as appropriate gifts to the Assyrian court and consequently their circulation in elite exchange networks.<sup>26</sup>

Assyrian kings particularly admired North Syrian art and other cultural traditions, including gardens, which they mentioned in royal inscriptions and sought to imitate in the palaces they built in royal centers in northern Mesopotamia.<sup>27</sup> Including these works in our

definition of art produced under imperial patronage has important implications for understanding connections between the Assyrian heartland and outlying regions. Assyrian royal patronage and emulation may well have contributed to the prestige and appeal of works in North Syrian styles within the empire and beyond its frontiers both east and west. In the monumental architecture of Period IVB (Iron II) at Hasanlu in northwestern Iran, for example, porticos were introduced in front of the anterooms of columned halls. The porticos have plausibly been connected with the North Syrian architectural tradition of the *bit hilani*, one of whose prominent features was an entrance portico. Observing the profound Neo-Assyrian impact on Hasanlu during this period, along with evidence for direct cultural ties also with North Syria, T. Cuyler Young introduced the possibility of Assyrian emulation as the driving force. “The latter cultural association [with North Syria] could provide the connections through which a portico might be borrowed from the Syrians,” he wrote: “[T]he former [Assyrian practice] might provide the cultural model

Fig. 7. Bronze lion-head situla from Gordion, Tumulus MM (Gordion 4816-B-810. MM-45), ca. 740 B.C. Watercolor illustration by Piet de Jong, 1957



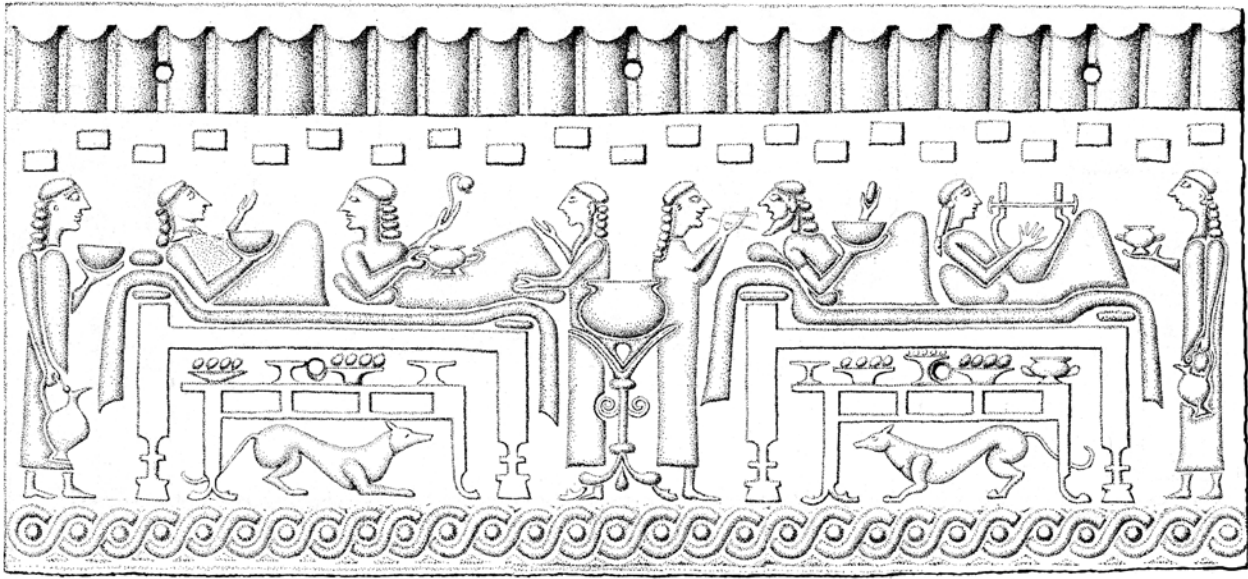


Fig. 8a. Drawing of terracotta frieze showing a banquet. Murlo (Poggio Civitate), courtyard building. Etruscan Orientalizing, ca. 580–575 B.C.

for the borrowing—perhaps even the impetus.”<sup>28</sup> By extension, the special status of this material may help to explain the presence of prestigious works in North Syrian/Neo-Hittite styles among Near Eastern imports in the Mediterranean world, especially in Greek sanctuaries. If we acknowledge that imperial processes helped shape political and social distinctions among objects or styles and their availability, then the reception of Near Eastern works beyond the empire’s frontiers becomes a research area of considerable potential for understanding relationships between the Neo-Assyrian empire and its Mediterranean neighbors.

#### ASSYRIA AND THE “FAR WEST”

In recent years, the central Mediterranean has emerged as a new research frontier for historians and archaeologists to investigate contacts between central Italy and the Neo-Assyrian world. Robert Rollinger has recently discussed Assyrian royal inscriptions demonstrating Assyrian awareness of the central and even the western Mediterranean world.<sup>29</sup> Specialists in Etruscan archaeology have

proposed that beginning in the eighth century B.C. elites adopted and accommodated foreign styles, imagery, and cultural practices in order to communicate emerging social and political roles.<sup>30</sup> Studies of imports and their associated imagery reveal that Etruscan patronage was informed and programmatic in its acquisition and use of foreign objects and the subjects of their decoration. New, monumental features introduced to Etruscan tomb architecture and sculpture in the early seventh century B.C. reflect acquaintance with models in North Syria, western Anatolia (Ionia and Lydia), and perhaps also Phrygia.<sup>31</sup> Annette Rathje has remarked that the subjects of the terracotta friezes on the early sixth-century B.C. courtyard building (“Upper Building”) at Murlo (Poggio Civitate)—including banqueting, an assembly, and a procession—evoke a “courtly setting of dignified behavior and ritual,” echoing the iconographic programs of Assyrian palace decoration (figs. 8a, b).<sup>32</sup> Maurizio Sannibale has convincingly argued that crucial transfers of technology—goldworking techniques, for example—must have accompanied ideas

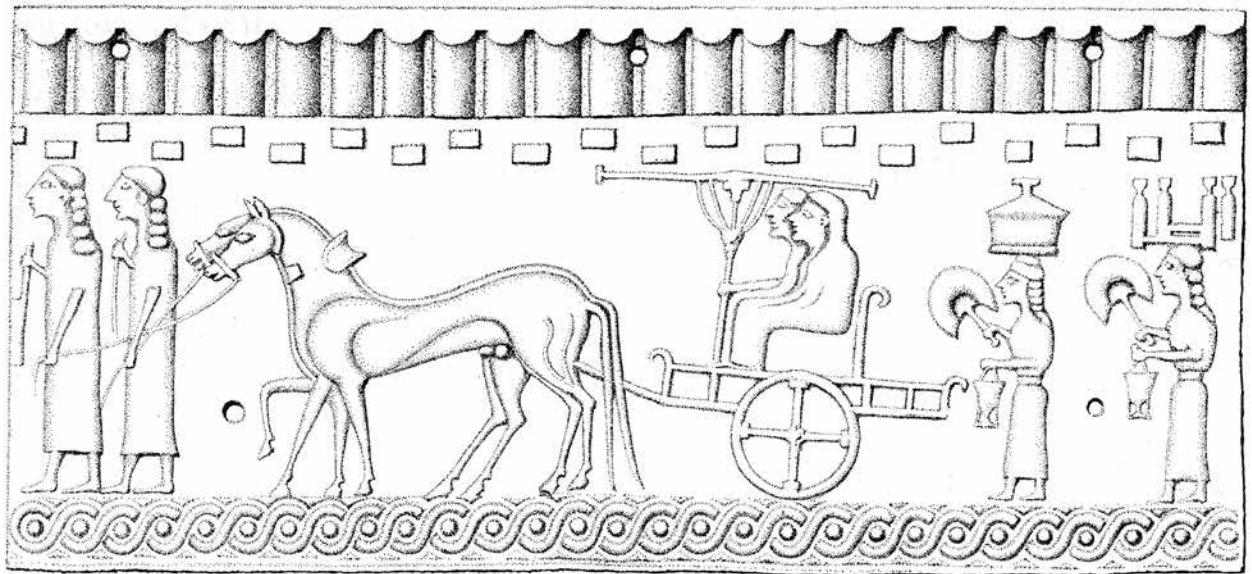


Fig. 8b. Drawing of terracotta frieze showing a procession. Murlo (Poggio Civitate), courtyard building. Etruscan Orientalizing, ca. 580–575 B.C.

about ceremony, ritual, and the visual and material expression of Etruscan elite identity.<sup>33</sup> Still other evidence for cultural contacts between the Neo-Assyrian world and Italy, especially Etruria and Latium, suggests the informed reception not only of an elite “lifestyle” that included banqueting with particular kinds of equipment but also of learning and cultural practices specifically associated with the Assyrian court, such as forms of divination.<sup>34</sup>

We observe here the knowledgeable and programmatic adoption of iconographies, cultural practices involving specialized equipment, and artistic technologies associated with palace and temple. We currently lack textual sources documenting direct contacts between elites in the Mediterranean world and centers within the empire’s reach. I pose as a methodological problem how to approach the reception of a constellation of such images and cultural practices as a possible historical source for these kinds of contacts or, indeed, what one might even consider as evidence for another perspective on the image of Assyria.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Spectacular archaeological discoveries in recent decades have drawn our attention to the richness, extent, and significance of long-distance contacts in the tenth and ninth centuries B.C., and rightly so. Yet given our new understanding of the Neo-Assyrian empire and its pan-regional impact both direct and indirect, the traditional “Orientalizing” period—the late eighth and seventh centuries B.C.—arguably needs renewed attention. Over the course of this period, Assyria’s western neighbors experienced the consequences of imperial processes that transformed former client states into Assyrian provinces. In reality, works in a wide range of styles were strategically relocated, and even created, under Assyrian imperial auspices. From multiple perspectives, and not least in the realm of artistic production, the Mediterranean world was profoundly affected by the very fact of this new empire, which so dramatically altered life throughout the eastern Mediterranean in the late eighth and seventh centuries B.C.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe profound thanks to the organizers of this remarkable exhibition and symposium. I am also grateful to faculty and students at the University of Iowa, where I presented some of the ideas in this paper in a lecture in April 2014.

1. Poulsen 1912, pp. 168–74.
2. Dunbabin 1957, pp. 41–42, 48–49. Hodos (2012) surveys evidence for Greek material culture on Cyprus and the Levantine coast, with bibliography.
3. Ahlberg 1971a, pp. 71–106. She noted that North Syria seemed to be the source for the earlier (Middle Geometric) fighting scenes; “Assyrian art does not dominate the battle scenes until the Late Geometric period” (p. 105).
4. Buck 1972; Boardman 1973; Coldstream 1974.
5. Hanfmann 1957, pp. 72–73.
6. Ibid., pl. 28, fig. 5. Hanfmann illustrated his argument with a “Melian” amphora (Pfuhl 1923, vol. 3, fig. 109) different from the example I have chosen.
7. Hanfmann 1957, p. 73.
8. Frankfort 1954. See also Fales 2009, p. 243.
9. J. Curtis 1994b, pp. 22–23; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 183.
10. Gunter forthcoming.
11. Radner 2014, p. 103.
12. Lanfranchi 2011, pp. 225–33.
13. Lanfranchi 2000, pp. 13–17, and Rollinger 2011, both with bibliography.
14. Herodotos, *Histories* 1.14. Lanfranchi 2000, p. 19.
15. Radner 2010b, pp. 440–41; on Cyprus in the Neo-Assyrian period, see also Mehl 2009, pp. 195–203.
16. Lanfranchi 2011, p. 225.
17. Parpola 2003, pp. 100–105. Bagg (2011, pp. 281–95) argues against a process of “Assyrianization” analogous to “Romanization.”
18. Gunter 2009, pp. 160–64, with further references.
19. Radner 2009, 2011.
20. Harrison and Osborne 2012; Harrison 2014, pp. 86–92.
21. Gunter 2009, p. 168, with further references.
22. See G. Herrmann and Millard 2003, pp. 387–88, for the ivories from the *rab ekalli's* suite in Fort Shalmaneser.
23. Gunter 2009, pp. 120–22, 171–75.
24. J. Curtis 1996, pp. 167–73.
25. J. Curtis 2000, pp. 194–95, with bibliography.
26. Ebbinghaus 2008, pp. 184–86.
27. Bonatz 2004b, pp. 393–99; Novák 2004; Novák 2014, p. 267, with additional references.
28. T. Young 2002, p. 396. For imports of North Syrian ivories, stone bowls, and metal artifacts in Period IVB at Hasanlu, see Muscarella 1980, pp. 118–57, 192–99.
29. Rollinger 2008, 2013.
30. Riva 2010; Tuck 2012, pp. 45–46.
31. Prayon 2004.
32. Rathje 2007, p. 178.
33. Sannibale 2013, pp. 108–9. See also Sannibale's essay in this volume, pp. 296–315.
34. Turfa 2012, pp. 241–77.



Since the nineteenth century B.C., when Near Eastern items began to be recognized in Greek and Etruscan locales, the question of the impact these foreign goods made on the development of Greek and Italian arts has held a special place in scholarship. That these foreign goods *did* make a major impact was generally accepted and was written into the developing narratives of ancient Greece and Italy under the rubric of the Orientalizing period, corresponding roughly to the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.<sup>1</sup> These centuries are critical in understanding the emergence of complex figural arts in both Greece and Italy, and the Near Eastern materials were taken as prime catalysts of a new flowering that, according to the standard narrative, marked a decisive shift in intellectual and artistic achievement from the Orient to the West. The model of *Ex Oriente Lux* leading to the birth of Classical art remained firmly in place throughout the twentieth century B.C. and, indeed, continues to underlie many of the grand stories of Western art and civilization as a whole. However, with a growing awareness of the connectivity generated by the Mediterranean Sea, the opposition of Orient and West is breaking down and the lines of influence are being more closely scrutinized.<sup>2</sup> A much more complicated picture of cross-cultural relations is emerging with many diverse items circulating through different networks of interactions, each producing varied long-term cultural effects.

One way in which these different networks can be approached is to consider the social practices in which objects participated. Such a perspective shifts the emphasis away from the question of origins (whether those of the object in question or those of Greek and Italian art in general) to concentrate instead on specific acts of consumption.<sup>3</sup> In particular, focus shifts to how these foreign works were taken up, used, and disposed of in their new environments, as well as how they may have conditioned new practices or reshaped existing ones through their presence.

## Consuming the East: Near Eastern Luxury Goods in Orientalizing Contexts

In this short essay, I concentrate on one particular type of Near Eastern object that appears with some regularity in Orientalizing contexts: small metal bowls, the most notable of which are decorated with intricate figural scenes. Such bowls featuring repoussé and chased figuration on hammered bronze, silver, or gold sheet are typically held up as exemplifying Orientalizing trends in the Greek and Italian regions.<sup>4</sup> Early on in the scholarship of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries these bowls were associated with the Phoenicians—the agents of Orientalization par excellence—although there has been a long-standing acknowledgment that the places and peoples of their production must have been multiple and not necessarily Phoenician.<sup>5</sup> Some bowls are even considered to be local imitations of Near Eastern prototypes.<sup>6</sup> Without becoming bogged down in the seemingly fruitless pursuit of production locale(s), we can understand these bowls, especially the decorated examples, as deriving from a general Near Eastern source either in actuality or in inspiration. It is, therefore, their presence in early Iron Age Greek and Italian locales that has drawn scholarly attention to them. In particular is the scholarly interest in motifs and styles found on these bowls and the search for



Fig. 1. Etruscan tomb in the Banditaccia necropolis, Caere. 8th–7th century B.C.

possible traces of them in newly emerging Greek and Etruscan arts, and even the very concept of figuration itself in these arts.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, by turning our attention away from the imagery on the object, we can concentrate instead on the object itself within its new non-eastern depositional locales. Such metal bowls occur in two primary types of contexts in Greece and Italy. In Greece, they appear in burials and sanctuaries; in Italy, to date they have been found only in burials. Because of the limited space available for this essay, I focus on those items found in tombs, since this contextual evidence is generally both better preserved and more easily interpreted than that from the sanctuaries. While it has long been recognized that these bowls appeared in burials, the specific manner in which they were deposited and their relationship to their associated assemblages have received less attention. In fact, varied depositional patterns provide intriguing insights into both differences and commonalities among the local responses to these foreign items, which in turn both resonated with and differed from those in the Near

East. In almost all instances, however, the acquisition and/or use of these items appears to have been deliberate and selective at some level.<sup>8</sup>

In Etruscan burials, for example, the metal vessels appear as part of a social strategy pursued by emerging competing urban elites. In this view, the foreign objects served a dual purpose: as an indication of contact with distant worlds—a kind of exotica; yet also, critically, as implements in important, preexisting Etruscan social practices, most notably funerary repasts. In other words, not just any pretty Near Eastern bauble, such as Homer derides the Phoenicians for transporting,<sup>9</sup> would be acceptable or appropriate. In Etruscan tombs, such as the Regolini-Galassi at Caere,<sup>10</sup> the bowls are found in the company of larger sets of drinking and feasting wares associated with elaborate funerary banquets, the very practice of which has been linked to eastern and in particular Levantine banqueting—an influence that has also been ascribed to the bowls in Greek contexts as a stimulus for the development of the symposium.<sup>11</sup>

Corinna Riva, however, argues against understanding the new elite lifestyles marked by these foreign goods as simply “princely” in nature, an emulation of Oriental (and Orientalist) models of aristocratic luxury.<sup>12</sup> Instead, she has made the case for a long-term process of social negotiation through the incorporation of such objects. The earliest examples are fairly simple bronze bowls that appear in burials in the early eighth century B.C., not as part of a larger banquet set, but as isolated items, perhaps to be understood as a display of social status through the ability to acquire items from far away. From the end of the eighth century through the seventh century B.C., the foreign vessels become grouped with much larger assemblages of banqueting paraphernalia, including cauldrons, stands, basins, firedogs, and spits. At the same time, the burial structures and their landscapes also expand to monumental proportions and encompass both interior, private, ritual spaces, and external public spaces (fig. 1). The Regolini-Galassi Tomb,

which included four decorated silver bowls, is an excellent example of this later situation (see Sannibale essay).<sup>13</sup> The recurring performance of funerary and commemorative rituals at the site of the tomb created powerful social practices in which communities came together and identified with one another through commensal activities.

Riva interprets this diachronic change in the depositional manner of the Near Eastern vessels as a social shift from solitary funerary meals to large-scale communal feasts in which elite groups institutionalized their status in markedly public and material ways. The well-preserved bowl from the Regolini-Galassi Tomb retained parts of a nail through a center hole, suggesting it was hung on the tomb wall along with one of the other decorated silver bowls and a series of bronze shields (fig. 2).<sup>14</sup> Such a mounting implies display and its correlate, spectatorship, in which the bowl in all its glorious material properties—gilded silver, repoussé and chasing, and elaborate imagery—could be visually consumed. Yet another way in which such vessels might have been visually, as well as tactilely, consumed would have occurred as part of feasting activities in which they might have served as drinking cups for wine. (Presumably this would have had to precede or preclude any perforation of the center for display!) In either instance—as displayed or viewed through the experience of drinking wine—the bowls would engage with local visualities, that is, local ways of looking and seeing the world. And in turn, they would have shaped new forms of these local visualities as they became part of the lived experiences of the participants in the funerary rituals.<sup>15</sup>

As already mentioned, the appearance of decorated Near Eastern bowls has been associated with more widespread cultural influences of the east upon the west during the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., the most notable of which has been the development in Greece of the symposium—an all-male drinking party that has come to define the rise of the polis and Classical Greek culture as a

whole.<sup>16</sup> Scenes such as those found on a fragmentary silver bowl from Cyprus show a man and a woman reclining on couches, on which the woman appears to hold a similarly shaped vessel, have suggested this transfer of social practice (fig. 3).<sup>17</sup> Yet the Greek symposium constitutes a very different situation, restricted to men who engage in philosophical and sensual encounters, quite distinct from ritual practices associated with death and burial.

The archaeological evidence from Greek burials also indicates a gender inclusivity that one would not expect if the bowls were so strongly linked to the symposium—namely, that the bowls are found deposited in graves of wealthy, high-status women.<sup>18</sup> At Lefkandi, in Euboia, two of the almost one hundred burials in the cemetery that grew on the east side of the buried Protogeometric apsidal building contained decorated bronze bowls, one of which, Tomb 70, had relatively well-preserved skeletal remains.<sup>19</sup> The tomb, on whose floor the bowl was found, contained the flexed body of a woman wearing nine gold rings on her fingers. The burial has been dated to around 900 B.C. on the basis of a Late Protogeometric Attic imported pyxis, making it one of the earliest depositional contexts for such metal bowls (see Aruz essay, p. 20, figs. 8a, b).<sup>20</sup> At Tragana in eastern Lokris, not far from Lefkandi, another decorated bronze bowl was found in a mid-eighth-century B.C. pithos burial of a young woman whose flexed body was adorned with rich jewelry.<sup>21</sup> The bowl was nested inside a plain bronze bowl near her feet. This bowl is particularly interesting for its Luwian inscription engraved on the outside rim, naming a man, Muwizis.<sup>22</sup> David Hawkins dates the inscription paleographically to the mid-eighth century B.C., making it roughly contemporary with the burial and raising interesting questions about how and why a bronze bowl inscribed with the Luwian name of a man ended up at the feet of a deceased woman in central Greece. In the Tekke cemetery near Knossos, in Tomb J, another inscribed bronze bowl was found, this time with a Phoenician inscription



Fig. 2. Gilded silver bowl with battle and hunting scenes. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb. 7th century B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20368)

reading, “cup of Shema, son of L. . . .”<sup>23</sup> The tomb contained two burials within the same pithos, one an inhumation and one a cremation, both of which were identified by the excavators as women.<sup>24</sup> The inscribed bowl lay on the tomb floor with many other vessels that date the latest burial to the early

ninth century B.C., although the bowl itself may be a century or more older.

It is of note that several other inscribed metal bowls appear in burials of women in Near Eastern locales.<sup>25</sup> A gold bowl inscribed for the eighth-century B.C. Assyrian queen Yaba’ and a silver omphalos bowl with the Luwian





Fig. 3. Fragmentary silver bowl with banquet scene from the so-called Kourion Treasure. Cyprus. Ca. 710–675 B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.4557)

male name of Santasarmas(?) were excavated from the queens' tombs at Nimrud (see Bah-rani essay, p. 325, fig. 2).<sup>26</sup> A bronze ribbed bowl bearing an inscription similar to that from Tekke Tomb J was excavated in a tenth-century B.C. cave burial at Kefar Veradim in the Upper Galilee, placed upside down under the skull of an adult whom the excavators assess as probably female.<sup>27</sup> Several of these bowls found with women bear possessive inscriptions belonging to men, which complicates the question of gender associations.

Returning to the question of the role these bowls may have played in the adoption of the symposium, in these early Greek burials at least, there does not seem to be an exclusive tie between luxurious foreign drinking bowls

and men (understood to be symposiasts). Not only do the bowls appear with female burials, in many of the burial contexts an association with drinking or feasting is not explicitly signaled.

While the function of metal bowls as containers for liquids seems to be suggestive of feasting, this was not the sole manner in which these pieces were used in burial environments. In a much more prosaic manner, the bowls also served as closures for larger containers, generally ones in which the cremated remains of the deceased were placed. This usage occurs in a few cases in Italy from the mid-eighth century B.C., as well as with a fair bit of consistency in Greece, including Crete, in burials as early as the ninth century



Fig. 4. Detail of Phoenician bronze bowl with confronted sphinxes. Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis, Tomb A1/K1. 720/710–680 B.C. Archaeological Museum, Rethymnon, Greece (M 1695)

B.C.<sup>28</sup> For example, in a mid-ninth century B.C. burial in the Kerameikos at Athens (grave no. 42), a decorated bowl was set into the mouth of an amphora containing the cremated remains.<sup>29</sup> At Fortetsa on Crete in the wealthy Tomb P, one of the seventy-two pithoi containing cremated remains was closed with a decorated bronze bowl, while at Arkades, in Tomb M, a bronze bowl covered the mouth of a bronze basin.<sup>30</sup> Several bronze bowls from a rich burial (A1/K1) in use from about 880–650 B.C. at the Orthi Petra necropolis at Eleutherna on western Crete were also used to cover the mouth of funerary vessels.<sup>31</sup> Two of these bronze bowls are elaborately decorated with repoussé, chasing, and punchwork that relate them to a so-called shield from the same tomb, which was also used as the lid of a cremation urn (fig. 4; see also Stampolidis essay, p. 291, fig. 14).<sup>32</sup>

Although these bowls may have also been used to serve food or drink during an actual banquet, they appear also to have supplied an excellent cover for cremated remains. The decorated bowl from Fortetsa Tomb P has been dated according to stylistic considerations to around 850 or 800 B.C., about 200 years earlier than the date of the Late Orientalizing pithos that it sealed of around

650 B.C. It has been suggested that the bowl may have been deposited in the tomb much earlier and only later used to close the pithos mouth, and hence that it was possibly a remnant of an earlier funerary meal or offering.<sup>33</sup> One of the bowls from Eleutherna shows evidence of an ancient repair in the form of an added rosette that covers up a crack in the bowl's fabric, thus suggesting both that it was old when finally fitted as a funerary cover and that it had been well used in its earlier life (see Aruz essay, pp. 26–28, figs. 16a–f).<sup>34</sup> However, undecorated bronze examples as well as local ceramic wares are also used in this way, along with ceramic lids that were produced specifically with this purpose in mind.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the role of these bowls in prior feasting activities linked to funerary practices remains hard to identify, as does the motivation behind their selection as lids.

This brief examination of some of the specific ways in which Near Eastern decorated bowls were deposited in Iron Age Greek and Italian burials reveals complex local engagements with the foreign materials that defy universal explanations. We cannot always make sense of the importance and impact of the practices reconstructed from the archaeological remains, for example, that of covering a

funerary vessel with an elaborate foreign bowl as opposed to a local one or a purpose-made lid. A next step in the investigation might be to trace associations and connections with other materials as an assemblage within a single burial or group of burials, which could allow patterns to emerge on a local level. In this way, we might begin to piece together the many possibilities latent in the ancient consumption of the Near East, and thereby provide a reassessment of its impact in early Greece and Italy.

1. Riva and Vella 2006.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 11; Broodbank 2013; Rüdén 2014; Gunter 2014b.
3. Riva and Vella 2006, p. 13.
4. The standard publication is Markoe 1985; see also Markoe 2007.
5. Riva and Vella 2006; Feldman 2014b.
6. See briefly in Hoffman 1997, pp. 32 n. 21, 125 n. 47.
7. For a brief overview of this history, see Riva and Vella 2006, pp. 4–10.
8. See, for example, Sannibale 2014.
9. Homer, *Odyssey* 15.415–16.
10. Pareti 1947.
11. Burkert 1991; Matthäus 1999–2000; Murray 1994; Rathje 1990; Schmitt Pantel 1992.
12. Riva 2010, pp. 39–40, 58–59, 106–7, 125–54. See also Sannibale's essay in this volume, pp. 296–315.
13. Pareti 1947; and with references, Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 322–23, cat. no. 193.
14. Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 322–23, cat. no. 193.
15. Papalexandrou 2010.
16. The classic studies are Fehr 1971 and Dentzer 1982.
17. V. Karageorghis 2000a, pp. 188–89, no. 307.
18. In both Greece and Etruria during the early Iron Age, inhumation and cremation were practiced side by side. Though not a hard rule, it appears that men more often were cremated, while women more typically were interred through inhumation.
19. The second bronze bowl from Tomb 55 was found on the floor along with another plain bronze bowl, but no associated skeletal remains were detected, and a large lidded jar containing a cremation, so perhaps a male, stood with other vases (Popham et al. 1988–89, p. 118).
20. Popham 1995. See also Aruz's essay in this volume, pp. 14–29.
21. Fontan and Le Meaux 2007, p. 346, cat. no. 177, with references.
22. This may be the ruler of the same name of the kingdom of Gurgum in southeastern Turkey, although the absence of any titles lessens this possibility (Hawkins 2000, p. 569, no. XII.14).
23. Hoffman 1997, pp. 120–23, with references.
24. Coldstream and Catling 1996, pp. 25–36.
25. In Italy, at Castel di Decima, a bronze ribbed bowl was deposited with an adult female, along with a knife, a spit, and cooking vessels that Riva (2010, pp. 151–52) associated with a central Italian orientaling elite ideology of women as holders of meat sacrificial utensils. And it is possible that the association of bowls with females in Italy extended to the decorated examples if the group from the Regolini-Galassi Tomb can be associated with the female burial of the innermost cella.
26. For the queens' tombs in general, see Damerji 1999; Hussein 2016. For the gold bowl, with references, see Wicke 2010. For the Luwian inscription on the silver bowl, see Hawkins 2000, p. 570, no. XII.15; Hawkins 2008. For inscribed bowls, see Feldman 2015.
27. Alexandre 2006.
28. Riva 2010, pp. 52, 151. See Markoe 1985, Cr1 (Fortetsa chamber Tomb P, Crete), Cr12 (Arkades Tomb M, Crete; covering a bronze basin), G1 (Athens, Kerameikos cremation grave no. 42). Also Hoffman 1997, p. 32, no. 14 (Fortetsa Tomb P); she considers the Arkades Tomb M bowl to be a Cretan imitation and thus does not include it in her catalogue of "imports" (*ibid.*, pp. 32 n. 21, 131–32).
29. Kübler 1954, pp. 9, 201–3, fig. 5, pl. 162.
30. For Fortetsa Tomb P, see Brock 1957, p. 133; for Arkades Tomb M, see Levi 1931, p. 304.
31. Stampolidis 2014, 1998; Stampolidis and Aruz 2013.
32. Aruz et al. 2014, cat. nos. 155, 157, 158. See also Aruz's essay, pp. 14–29, and Stampolidis's essay, pp. 283–95, both in this volume.
33. Hoffman 1997, p. 130.
34. Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 290–91, cat. no. 158.
35. For example, at Eleutherna, tomb A1/K1, numerous large vessels (pithoi, amphorae, cauldrons) were closed with bronze and clay vessels (Stampolidis 1998; Stampolidis 2004, pp. 122–24; Stampolidis 2014); also in the Kerameikos (Kübler 1954, p. 9) and Fortetsa (Brock 1957, pls. 30–33, 39–42, 47–57, 63–67, 79–92, 108).

# Greek Sanctuaries and the Orient

What role did the Greek sanctuaries play in the process—called the “Orientalizing Revolution” by Walter Burkert—that took place during the second half of the eighth and into the seventh centuries B.C.?<sup>1</sup> At this time numerous works of art and other objects from Anatolia, Cyprus, the Near East, and Egypt—which I group here under the traditional term “Oriental”—of various types and in various quantities reached several sanctuaries in the Greek world. In this contribution, “Orientalia” from recent excavations under the directorship of the author in the oracle sanctuary of Apollo at Abai (Kalapodi) in ancient Phokis, and in the sanctuary of Hera on Samos are illustrated.

The time when the first Oriental objects were deposited in Greek sanctuaries cannot be determined with certainty. The earliest of these objects are to be dated to the ninth century B.C., as a bronze horse frontlet found in the sanctuary of Hera on Samos (see p. 204)<sup>2</sup> and a bronze horse blinker found in the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros at Eretria on Euboea (see Matthäus essay, p. 277, fig. 7).<sup>3</sup> Both are of North Syrian workmanship, and they bear identical Aramaic inscriptions stating that they had been owned by Hazael, king of Aram-Damascus, who ruled from about 845 to 805 B.C. Hazael is mentioned in the annals of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) as well as in the Hebrew Bible. These and other early Near Eastern objects were, however, found in contexts much later than the time of their production. They probably arrived in the sanctuaries with the bulk of Oriental objects

beginning in the second half of the eighth century B.C.<sup>4</sup> when the leading Greek social elites directed an increasing proportion of the available wealth to the developing sanctuaries as dedications.<sup>5</sup> These sanctuaries became theaters for an increasingly ostentatious rivalry in the expression of power and authority, in which metal votives, above all tripods<sup>6</sup> and weapons,<sup>7</sup> played a central role. As will be discussed below, however, Oriental objects also played a significant part.

The earliest secure find contexts for eastern objects in Greek sanctuaries are those of a second bronze horse blinker from the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros at Eretria, very similar to that from Samos mentioned above but without an inscription,<sup>8</sup> and a North Syrian bronze bowl from the oracle sanctuary of Apollo at Abai (Kalapodi), probably also from the ninth century B.C. (figs. 1a, b).<sup>9</sup> The horse blinker from Eretria had apparently been attached to a wood column at the entrance to the Geometric temple constructed around 750 B.C. and destroyed before the end of the same century.<sup>10</sup> The bronze bowl from Abai (Kalapodi) had been deposited together with numerous other votives, jewelry, and weapons, and with a burnt, plank-like, wood cult image when this temple was ritually buried in the second half of the eighth century B.C.<sup>11</sup> Most of the other foreign objects discovered in the Greek world have come from secondary depositions, such as wells and dumps of cleaning activities in the sanctuaries from the seventh to early fifth century B.C.

Let us now look more closely at two sanctuaries: those of Zeus at Olympia and Hera on Samos. I have chosen these examples because foreign dedications found in them appear in great quantities and represent all types known from Greek sanctuaries. Furthermore, their good state of preservation enables us to take into account the complete inventory of objects imported to these sites from outside of Greece.<sup>12</sup>

The pan-Hellenic sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia was the home of the Olympic





Top, fig. 1a. Bronze North Syrian relief bowl. Abai (Kalapodi). 9th–8th century B.C., Museum Atalanti (KA108.103.01) and, bottom, fig. 1b, drawing

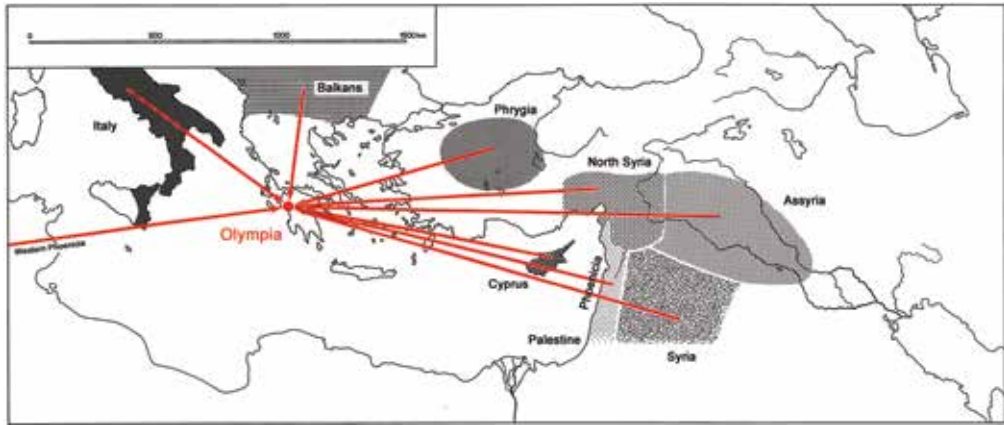


Fig. 2. Provenance of foreign imports at Olympia

games from 776 B.C. according to ancient tradition but in reality probably only played this role from the end of the eighth century B.C.<sup>13</sup> At the site, objects from Phrygia, Cyprus, Phoenicia, North Syria, Palestine/Transjordan, and Assyria have been found (fig. 2). From Phrygia come eleven fibulae that occur in quantity in the eighth-century tumuli at the Phrygian capital Gordion,<sup>14</sup> as well as a complete bronze bowl and fragments of at least five other bowls.<sup>15</sup> Three winged bull's-head attachments for bronze cauldrons arrived either from Phrygia or North Syria,<sup>16</sup> most probably together with the bronze cauldrons to which they were once affixed.<sup>17</sup> The same holds for three griffin attachments.<sup>18</sup> From Cyprus there are several bronze thymiateria,<sup>19</sup> and a bronze side-pendant ornament for a horse.<sup>20</sup> Four bronze bowls with relief decoration are of Phoenician manufacture.<sup>21</sup> The largest number of eastern objects at Olympia, however, come from North Syria. I have already mentioned that the bronze winged bull's-head and griffin attachments may be from North Syria. Eighteen siren attachments also almost certainly come from that region.<sup>22</sup> Two were found still fixed to a probably imported cauldron, which also has attached hammered griffin and lion protomes, the griffins facing outward, the lions inward.<sup>23</sup> There has been a long and controversial discussion about the

provenance of the griffin and lion protomes found in Greek sanctuaries. For one group of scholars the protomes are of Greek workmanship produced under North Syrian stylistic influence and were added after the cauldrons had arrived in Greece,<sup>24</sup> while others believe the protomes are Near Eastern and came to Greece with their cauldrons.<sup>25</sup> On the one hand, J. L. Benson and Hans-Volkmar Herrmann claim that no cauldrons with siren attachments together with griffin and lion protomes have been recovered in the Near East, but more than 400 have been recovered in Greece and in the west.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, there are griffin protomes from the Near East<sup>27</sup> and a lion cauldron protome with an inscription referring to the Urartian ruler Sarduri II (756–ca. 730 B.C.) found at Karmir Blur and shown in the “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age” exhibition that resembles the lion heads on the cauldron from Olympia mentioned above.<sup>28</sup> Therefore the first griffin and lion protomes probably came attached to cauldrons from the Near East to Greece, but soon examples began to be locally produced (perhaps first by immigrant Near Eastern bronzeworkers<sup>29</sup>) and imitated by Greek bronzeworkers, as happened also with the siren attachments.<sup>30</sup> The siren attachments were a short-lived phenomenon in Greece, but the griffins were produced for more than

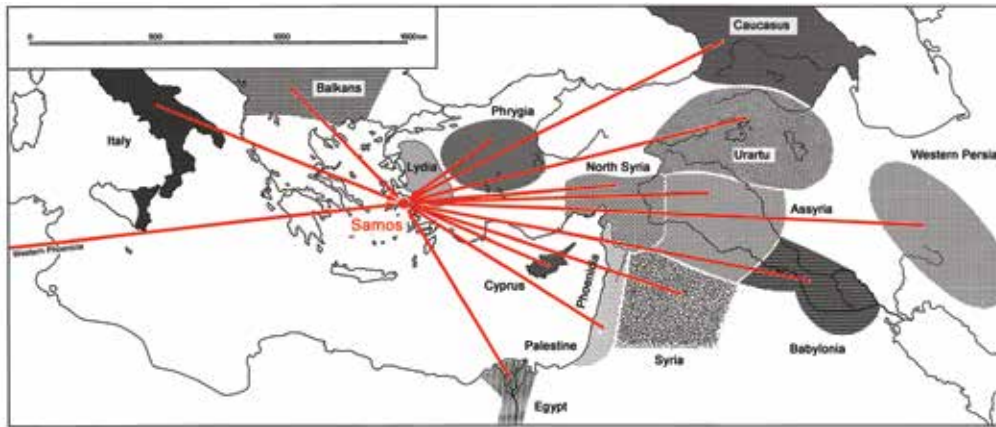


Fig. 3. Provenance of foreign imports at the Heraion, Samos

a century. At Olympia the cauldrons rested on conical stands with hammered decoration, of which seven were found.<sup>31</sup> A drawing of a bronze cauldron found at Olympia (see Boardman essay, p. 208, fig. 1) shows Herrmann's reconstruction of a cauldron with conical stand, siren attachments, and griffin and lion protomes. Other bronze objects from North Syria with hammered relief decoration include a four-sided stand,<sup>32</sup> a bowl,<sup>33</sup> possibly two large lion protomes,<sup>34</sup> a shield,<sup>35</sup> and several sheets of more or less unknown original function with relief decoration,<sup>36</sup> twelve reused sheets along with Greek additions to cover three sphyrrelata, that is statues with a wood core, on which the sheets were hammered (see Matthäus essay, p. 278, fig. 8).<sup>37</sup> I shall return later to this interesting group. The fragment of an engraved tridacna shell came most probably from Palestine/Transjordan;<sup>38</sup> finally, there was a cylinder seal from Assyria.<sup>39</sup>

The eastern objects from the sanctuary of Hera on Samos show a much wider range of geographical origins than those from Olympia (fig. 3). In addition to the areas mentioned above for Olympia, objects found at Samos also came from Lydia, Syria, Babylonia, Urartu, western Iran, the Caucasus, and Egypt. Moreover, no other Greek sanctuary has produced more Oriental objects than the Samian Heraion. Oriental imports constitute

only around 13 percent of the nonlocal votives at Olympia but around 80 percent in the Heraion of Samos.<sup>40</sup> As Peter Calmeyer has pointed out, in the Near East the collection of more than one hundred Oriental bronzes from the Samian Heraion finds only one comparison: the "booty of Sargon II" found at Nimrud.<sup>41</sup>

Bronze objects originating in Phrygia include eight fibulae,<sup>42</sup> parts of belts (three buckles<sup>43</sup> and a fragment of a strap<sup>44</sup>), two bowls, of which only the rims are preserved,<sup>45</sup> a bull attachment,<sup>46</sup> a bell,<sup>47</sup> and a shield buckle.<sup>48</sup> Wood objects from Phrygia include two spool-shaped attachments for bowls<sup>49</sup> and the central slider of a parasol.<sup>50</sup> From Lydia came two lion's-paw electrum coins (fig. 4),<sup>51</sup> and several small clay containers for the Lydian ointments and perfumes that were highly esteemed by the Greeks.<sup>52</sup>

Of Cypriot provenance are twenty-nine bronze thymiateria,<sup>53</sup> a bronze statuette,<sup>54</sup> and most notably hundreds of limestone and terracotta statuettes.<sup>55</sup> From Phoenicia come three bronze statuettes, one of the West Semitic god Reshef,<sup>56</sup> one of a man with a tiara,<sup>57</sup> and one of a woman,<sup>58</sup> four ivory statuettes of which one formed part of a piece of furniture and another formed a handle,<sup>59</sup> an ivory relief that originally decorated a piece of furniture,<sup>60</sup> three ivory receptacles for perfume,<sup>61</sup> as well as one of wood,<sup>62</sup> and a



Fig. 4. Electrum coins. Samos, Heraion. Lydian, late 7th century B.C. Samos Archaeological Museum, Vathy, Greece (V 2065–2066)

silver cartouche ring on the bezel of which three seated Egyptian gods between flanking falcons are represented (fig. 5).<sup>63</sup>

Bronzes of North Syrian origin include the statuette of a god, probably Reshef,<sup>64</sup> the statuette of a winged goat with a human face, which had functioned as the handle of a vessel,<sup>65</sup> the hammered sheet figure of a man holding a lotus flower, a decorative furniture assessor,<sup>66</sup> a bronze relief of a sphinx,<sup>67</sup> two bull's-head attachments,<sup>68</sup> a fragment of a belt,<sup>69</sup> a knob from a wood chest,<sup>70</sup> and several pieces of horse gear: the frontlet with the Hazael inscription has been already mentioned.<sup>71</sup> There is a second rather similar frontlet<sup>72</sup> and four blinkers,<sup>73</sup> two of them very similar to the two blinkers from Eretria mentioned above.<sup>74</sup>

Ivories from North Syria consist of a naked female statuette that had been part of the handle of a fly whisk,<sup>75</sup> a lion's head and two crouching lions, the latter produced as counterparts, all once attached to pieces of furniture,<sup>76</sup> a large bowl with a broad rim,<sup>77</sup> a libation bowl, the underside of which is carved as a human hand, and which was probably fitted as a mouthpiece to a horn containing olive oil,<sup>78</sup> and a zoomorphic seal.<sup>79</sup> A bowl similar in type to the ivory one just mentioned is made of steatite and more splendid.<sup>80</sup> Four seals of red and green serpentine, of the so-called Lyre Player group, are also from North Syria.<sup>81</sup> A bronze statuette of a seated man<sup>82</sup> and a weight in



Fig. 5. Silver ring. Samos, Heraion. Phoenician, 7th century B.C. Samos Archaeological Museum, Vathy, Greece (V 2064)

the shape of a human head came from Syria,<sup>83</sup> while from Palestine/Transjordan came fifteen fragments of tridacna shell.<sup>84</sup>

Imports of bronzes from Assyria consist of five male statuettes, two of standing gods with horned headdresses,<sup>85</sup> the other three of human beings, two standing<sup>86</sup> and one kneeling and holding an egg-shaped object,<sup>87</sup> three situlae ending in animal heads,<sup>88</sup> eight mace heads,<sup>89</sup> one of which bears four faces of the demon Pazuzu,<sup>90</sup> the socket ring of a





Fig. 6. Bronze statuette. Samos, Heraion. Babylonian, 7th century B.C. Samos Archaeological Museum, Vathy, Greece (B 3729)

spearhead featuring two heads of birds of prey,<sup>91</sup> and four horse snaffles in the shape of galloping horses.<sup>92</sup> Also from Assyria came two cylinder seals, one of chalcedony, the other of steatite.<sup>93</sup>

The bronzes from Babylonia found in the Samian Heraion are four statuettes of a bearded man accompanied by a sitting dog (fig. 6; shows one of these),<sup>94</sup> and one of the monster *mushhushshu*, who was associated with Marduk, the city god of Babylon (fig. 7).<sup>95</sup> From Urartu come two bronze statuettes of gods with

Fig. 7. Bronze *mushhushshu* figurine. Samos, Heraion. Babylonian, late 8th–early 7th century B.C. Samos Archaeological Museum, Vathy, Greece (B 1124/A 31)

horned headdresses (one shown in fig. 8),<sup>96</sup> one of a bull,<sup>97</sup> and four bronze bells.<sup>98</sup>

From the Caucasus area came the following bronzes: a statuette of a woman and child on a horse,<sup>99</sup> a bronze attachment with figural decoration for the wood shaft by which horses were harnessed to a cart,<sup>100</sup> three horse snaffles,<sup>101</sup> a pendant in shape of a bird,<sup>102</sup> and two bells.<sup>103</sup>

Bronzes from western Iran consist of a statuette of a ram, originally connected by an iron rod to some implement,<sup>104</sup> a stag figurine with a ring for hanging,<sup>105</sup> a standard,<sup>106</sup> a beaked jug with a head protome,<sup>107</sup> a star-rosette mace head,<sup>108</sup> a pendant,<sup>109</sup> parts of a horse harness,<sup>110</sup> and a shield device.<sup>111</sup>

Finally 130 Egyptian bronze statuettes, complete and fragmentary, ranging from small-scale to half lifesize and dating to Dynasties 25 (ca. 712–664 B.C.) and 26 (ca. 688–525 B.C.)<sup>112</sup> were found in the Samian Heraion. The statuettes take the forms of deities, demons, priests, cats, falcons, and others.<sup>113</sup> One surprising votive is the bronze statuette of a naked woman of undoubtedly erotic character (fig. 9).





Fig. 8. Bronze statuette. Samos, Heraion. Urartian, late 8th–7th century B.C. Samos Archaeological Museum, Vathy, Greece (B 1217/A 943)

Statuettes of this type are interpreted as those of servants or even concubines.<sup>114</sup> To the Egyptian bronzes also belong a mirror with a dedication inscription by a priestess of the Egyptian sky goddess Mut,<sup>115</sup> and a situla with

a relief frieze representing different Egyptian deities.<sup>116</sup> From Egypt also came a limestone statuette of a pharaoh,<sup>117</sup> an alabaster figurine of a hippopotamus,<sup>118</sup> an ivory head of the goddess Hathor, originally part of the handle

of a mirror,<sup>119</sup> an ivory lion, originally part of a tool or a piece of furniture of Dynasty 18 or 19 (13th–12th century B.C.),<sup>120</sup> two ivory scarabs,<sup>121</sup> and a number of faience figurines.<sup>122</sup>

I have only mentioned those objects whose area of origin can be identified with some certainty. Unfortunately, Near Eastern objects found in the Greek sanctuaries can only rarely be ascribed with certainty to specific areas of origin, because of looting and reuse of the Near Eastern bronzework of the first millennium B.C.<sup>123</sup>

How did all these foreign objects reach the Greek sanctuaries? Most of those from distant areas of origin were certainly not imported directly but had already circulated within the Assyrian empire, which, after the conquests of Tiglath Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) and Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), comprised most of the areas mentioned above. Others, like Urartu and western Iran, were situated at the fringes of the Assyrian empire.<sup>124</sup>

Who dedicated all these eastern objects in Greek sanctuaries? I believe that they were mostly dedicated by three groups of Greeks: merchants, pirates, and mercenaries, although there was no clear dividing line among these roles. Traders were often also active as pirates,<sup>125</sup> and the Greek traders active on the coast of North Syria and the Greek pirates attacking cities in Cilicia and Phoenicia, discussed below, were probably the same people.<sup>126</sup> Herodotos reports the presence in the Nile Delta of Ionian and Carian pirates whom the pharaoh Psamtik I (664–610 B.C.) succeeded in engaging as mercenaries.<sup>127</sup> All three groups belonged to the upper class. With regard to the merchants, this is clear from the story of the Samian trader Kolaïos, told by Herodotos, to which I refer below.<sup>128</sup> Piracy is often mentioned in Homer's *Odyssey*,<sup>129</sup> and Odysseus speaks proudly about his raids by ship.<sup>130</sup> Even in Thucydides's days, in some areas of Greece piracy did not produce disgrace but rather glory.<sup>131</sup> The Greek mercenaries active in the Near East were members of the elite who had been driven out of their native country by war, exile following *staseis* (conflicts between aristocratic families),

or economic problems, phenomena typical of the crises of the early Greek polis, or had pursued a search for an alternative way of aristocratic life centered on Homeric values like courage, honor, and glory.<sup>132</sup>

Greek merchants from Euboeia were active at Al Mina and other Levantine harbors from at least around 800 B.C., if not earlier.<sup>133</sup> Later they were joined by eastern Ionian Greeks. Possibly as early as the middle of the eighth century B.C., the Samians set up the two trade colonies at Kelenderis and Nagidos in Rough Cilicia, which brought them straight to the border of the Assyrian empire and facilitated their access to sea routes to Cyprus and North Syria.<sup>134</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, Ezekiel (27:13,19) mentions Ionians as trading partners of Tyre, bringing slaves, bronze vessels, and other items to the city. Increasing trade relations with Egypt in the late seventh century led to the foundation by Miletos and Samos, together with other Greek cities of the trading settlement of Naukratis in the Nile Delta.<sup>135</sup> In Naukratis the Samians established a branch of the Heraion, and the Milesians established a branch of the sanctuary of Apollo.<sup>136</sup>

Herodotos relates the story of the Samian captain Kolaïos, whose ship was blown off course on its way to Egypt, ending up beyond the Strait of Gibraltar at the legendarily rich Tartessos, in what is now southern Spain.<sup>137</sup> Kolaïos returned to Samos with an enormous profit and dedicated very precious votives in the Heraion, among them possibly even his ship: two foundations of parallel stone walls, their lengths decreasing toward the two ends of the installations situated to the south of the Hera temple, the Hekatompedos, certainly formed bases for real ships.<sup>138</sup> Some west Phoenician ivory combs found in the Samian Heraion are possibly to be connected with the display of Tartessian objects dedicated by Kolaïos.<sup>139</sup>

The Samian colonies in Rough Cilicia may also have been lairs for pirates, its coastline offering splendid hideouts over the centuries.<sup>140</sup> Evidence for the activities of Ionian pirates on the Levantine coast is provided by the fragmentary report on a cuneiform tablet

from the archives at Nimrud of an Assyrian provincial officer to Tiglath-Pileser III, written about 738–732 B.C., reporting that Ionians had attacked several Phoenician cities from their ships.<sup>141</sup> In the so-called annals of Sargon II, inscribed on the walls of his palace at his newly founded capital Dur-Sharrukin (modern Khorsabad), in the entry for the seventh year of his reign (715 B.C.), as well as in other texts from the same palace, it is reported that the king destroyed the Ionian pirates in the sea and “caught” them “like fish.”<sup>142</sup> Sargon’s successor Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) defeated a Greek fleet off the coast of Cilicia in 696 B.C. and forcibly enlisted Ionian sailors in the Assyrian army.<sup>143</sup>

Probably beginning in the late eighth century, Greek mercenaries were active in the Near East. They possibly served in the Assyrian army but also fought for Assyria’s enemies in Cilicia.<sup>144</sup> This dual role appears to be reflected in the relief representation on a Cypro-Phoenician silver bowl of the late eighth to early seventh century B.C. from Amathus, showing Assyrian horsemen and archers together with Greek hoplites attacking a Phoenician city, among the defenders of which are also Greek hoplites.<sup>145</sup> Later, Greek mercenaries also served in other Near Eastern armies. Around the turn of the seventh to the sixth century B.C. Antemidas, the brother of the poet Alkaios of Lesbos, fought for the Babylonians, as we learn from a welcome poem by Alkaios composed to celebrate Antemidas’s return.<sup>146</sup> Possibly he was involved in the Babylonian conquest of Ashkelon in 604 B.C.<sup>147</sup> At about the same time, East Greek mercenaries were also employed by the kingdom of Judah and by Phoenician Tyre, as textual evidence and archaeological finds demonstrate.<sup>148</sup>

The best-known Greek mercenaries of the Archaic period in the eastern Mediterranean are those who were active in Egypt.<sup>149</sup> As Herodotos reports, Psamtik I (664–610 B.C.), who first came to power as an Assyrian vassal king, employed Ionian and Carian warriors who had arrived as pirates in the Nile Delta as mercenaries to help him against his rivals.<sup>150</sup>

Later Psamtik settled the mercenaries in *stratopeda* (camps) in the eastern Nile Delta.<sup>151</sup> East Greek mercenaries continued to serve in the Egyptian army throughout the entire Dynasty 26 and reached high ranks.<sup>152</sup> At Carchemish in northern Syria two Greek weapons, a shield and a greave, were found in a destruction level suggestive of war.<sup>153</sup> Most probably they had been owned by Greek mercenaries in the pay of the pharaoh Necho II (610–595 B.C.), who was defeated in the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon (604–562 B.C.).<sup>154</sup> During a campaign of Psamtik II (595–589 B.C.) against Nubia in 591 B.C., Greek and Carian mercenaries holding important commissions in his army carved inscriptions on the legs of the colossal rock-cut statues of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel.<sup>155</sup> Greek merchants certainly dedicated Oriental objects they had acquired during their commercial travels at the Greek sanctuaries, while pirates and mercenaries also dedicated objects they had gained as booty. Epigraphic evidence proves in two cases that homecomers from Egypt made dedications of Egyptian style sculptures at Greek sanctuaries. The first is that of a certain Pedon, who had enjoyed a brilliant career under Psamtik I, and who returned from Egypt around 630–610 B.C. At Priene or nearby, Pedon dedicated an Egyptian block statue of basalt representing him as a pharaonic official and bearing a Greek votive inscription of biographical character.<sup>156</sup> The second case is that of an Egyptian basalt statue representing a seated official and bearing a Greek votive inscription of the mid-sixth century B.C., which was found in the sanctuary of Athena at Kameiros on Rhodes.<sup>157</sup>

As Mary W. Helms has demonstrated, in nonindustrial societies objects that come from faraway lands, especially if they are produced by skilled artists and have an esoteric character, generally confer honor and power on their possessors.<sup>158</sup> The dedication of such objects in sanctuaries certainly gave high prestige to the donors.

Herodotos reports that several Near Eastern rulers also dedicated objects in Greek





Fig. 9. Bronze statuette. Samos, Heraion. Egyptian, late 8th to 7th century B.C. Samos Archaeological Museum, Vathy, Greece (B 3828)

sanctuaries. The first was king Midas of Phrygia, attested in the Assyrian sources for 718–709 B.C. as *Mi-ta-a*, king of the country of Muski,<sup>159</sup> who dedicated to the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi a royal throne “well worth seeing” from which he had administered justice.<sup>160</sup> It has been suggested that a magnificent ivory figurine found at Delphi was possibly a decorative part of this throne (see Bahrani essay, p. 327, fig. 6), but a recent argument holds that the style of the ivory is not Phrygian.<sup>161</sup> Such a dedication would mean that king Midas had more than casual knowledge of the Delphic oracle and was aware of its power. Thus the throne may not have been solely a freewill gift, but rather should be viewed as a type of gift exchange, the throne for an oracle.<sup>162</sup> Later the kings of Lydia Gyges (ca. 685–650 B.C.) and Croesus (ca. 560–546 B.C.) also made dedications, among them precious objects of silver and

gold.<sup>163</sup> In the case of Croesus it is clear from Herodotos’s report that he gave his dedications in return for an oracle.

Two Egyptian pharaohs of the Saite dynasty made dedications to Greek sanctuaries: Herodotos reports that Necho II offered a garment, which he had worn in a victorious battle against the Babylonians, to the oracle sanctuary of Apollo at Didyma.<sup>164</sup> In the sanctuary of Athena Polias at Ialysos on Rhodes a series of faience fragments bearing the name of Necho II was found; these had originally been inlaid in a wood object (a throne, chest, or statue), probably dedicated by the pharaoh to Athena Polias.<sup>165</sup> Again according to Herodotos Ahmose II (570–526 B.C.), whom the Greeks called Amasis, dedicated his portrait, two stone statues, and a linen cuirass to the sanctuary of Athena at Lindos on Rhodes, as well as two wood statues portraying himself to the Samian Heraion, where

they were still standing in Herodotos's day in the great temple behind the entrance door.<sup>166</sup>

The first nonroyal Near Easterners who made dedications in Greek sanctuaries were probably Phoenicians, who in the early ninth century B.C. established, albeit sporadic, contacts with Aegean centers such as Knossos and Lefkandi. From the last quarter of the ninth century B.C. on—contemporary with their well-organized colonial movement to the central and western Mediterranean—Phoenicians were present in the Aegean as traders and probably also resident craftsmen.<sup>167</sup> At the sanctuary at Kommos on the south coast of Crete, a tripillar shrine of Phoenician type in Temple B of around 800 B.C.<sup>168</sup> and finds of Phoenician pottery<sup>169</sup> provide evidence for Phoenician presence and suggest that Kommos formed a staging post for Phoenicians on the route to their colonies in the central and western Mediterranean.<sup>170</sup> One can well imagine that Phoenician merchants and craftsmen made dedications in Greek sanctuaries in order to favorably impress the native deities.

Other foreign votives may have been dedicated by occasional visitors, especially in the Samian Heraion, where numerous Near Eastern and Egyptian bronze statuettes have been found; in other Greek sanctuaries the foreign dedications were mainly vessels. Helmut Kyrieleis suggested that three Babylonian bronze statuettes (now four,<sup>171</sup> fig. 6) found in the Samian Heraion representing bearded men raising their right arms in a gesture of adoration and accompanied by sitting dogs connected to the Babylonian healing and mother goddess Gula were dedicated by Near Eastern donors who identified Hera with the Mesopotamian goddess. This may also be the case with other Near Eastern bronze statuettes for which a Greek interpretation is hard to find.<sup>172</sup> According to Anthony Leahy's and Helga Bumke's interpretation, at least some of the numerous Egyptian bronze statuettes from the Samian Heraion, especially those of priests which in Egypt would have been dedicated in sanctuaries, were offered by Egyptian visitors,<sup>173</sup>

who followed their pharaohs' practice of making dedications in Greek sanctuaries.<sup>174</sup>

Most interesting in this connection is the mirror with the dedication inscription of a priestess of Mut.<sup>175</sup> A close parallel with a similar inscription was found in another sanctuary of Hera, that of Hera Limenia at Perachora.<sup>176</sup> Were the dedicants Egyptians who saw a relationship between Mut and Hera, who later was definitely identified with Mut?<sup>177</sup> The dedication in the Samian Heraion of three Egyptian bronze statuettes of cats<sup>178</sup> has been interpreted by the Egyptologist Siegfried Morenz as a case of *interpretatio Graeca* of the cat Bastet, closely connected to Mut.<sup>179</sup> Were these cat statuettes also dedicated by Egyptians because of the relationship between Mut and Hera? It is of interest that they arrived long before living cats came to Greece from Egypt at the end of the sixth century B.C., and in any case cats did not play any role in Greek religion.<sup>180</sup>

According to Ingrid Strøm, probably not all eastern objects found in Greek sanctuaries arrived as dedications made by visitors. She has observed that the distribution of bronze bowls and bronze cauldrons is restricted to the sanctuaries of a small group of deities—Apollo, Hera, Artemis, and Athena. She argues that these objects did not arrive as votives but were the result of directed importation by a group of Late Geometric sanctuaries with the vessels intended for use at ritual banquets;<sup>181</sup> however, I have difficulty imagining this kind of collective organization existing between the sanctuaries in the eighth century B.C. Following Strøm, Ann Gunter has added a group of North Syrian horse blinkers and horse frontlets to the group.<sup>182</sup> These objects were found in the sanctuaries of Athena at Miletos,<sup>183</sup> Hera on Samos,<sup>184</sup> and of Apollo at Eretria.<sup>185</sup> As already mentioned, a horse frontlet from Samos and a horse blinker from Eretria bear twin Aramaic inscriptions of Hazael of Aram-Damascus, who acquired the pieces as booty from the Syrian kingdom Unqi.<sup>186</sup> A horse frontlet from Miletos stylistically closely related to the other pieces bears an only partly readable Luwian Hieroglyphic

inscription of a craftsman, his king's name not legible.<sup>187</sup> Although the name of Unqi does not appear in the readable part of the inscription,<sup>188</sup> this piece probably belongs to the group of Hazael's booty from Unqi. How did these pieces come into the three Greek sanctuaries? Hardly as direct acquisitions by the sanctuaries themselves, since the objects appear not to have played a role in ritual and cult. The suggestion by Susanne Ebbinghaus and Nino Luraghi, according to which they were acquired as booty by Greek mercenaries in the service of Assyria at the conquest of Damascus by Tiglath-Pileser III and later dedicated to sanctuaries in their homeland, appears more plausible.<sup>189</sup>

Finally, I return to the question asked at the very beginning of this contribution: what role did the Greek sanctuaries play in the process of the so-called "Orientalizing Revolution" in Greece? Oriental items had reached Greece before the eighth century B.C. However, they had circulated only among the members of the elites and had been buried with them in their graves.<sup>190</sup> As we have seen, beginning in the second half of the eighth century B.C., abundant *Orientalia* were dedicated at Greek sanctuaries, where they were visible for every visitor. In regard to the Samian Heraion, Günter Kopcke has written that the abundance of all these foreign goods must have given to the sanctuary a very peculiar, bazaar-like character.<sup>191</sup> As Helmut Kyrieleis has stated, the Greek sanctuaries of this time period were "entire museums."<sup>192</sup> The imports were exhibited together with the works of local Greek artists, still working in the so-called Geometric tradition. In the Greek sanctuaries, a whole world of eastern images now opened the eyes of the Greek artists, and one can imagine how impressed they were and how many new stimuli they obtained from them.

The Greek sanctuaries of the late eighth and the seventh centuries B.C. were meeting points for different cultures of that period, in which not only artistic concepts but also ideas were adapted, like that of erecting cult images in temples. The earliest examples,

such as the sphyrrelata triad of the middle of the seventh century B.C. from the sanctuary of Apollo at Dreros in Crete follow Near Eastern, Phoenician, or North Syrian prototypes.<sup>193</sup> In this connection the three sphyrrelata from Olympia mentioned earlier are of interest. As Ursula Seidl has argued, the corrugated sheet forming the skirt of the largest of the three figures probably belonged to the statue of a Near Eastern goddess that had been brought to Olympia and was—after this statue had decayed—reused in the middle of the seventh century B.C. to make a new statue. This, in turn, was combined into a triad with the two smaller statues featuring Greek heads and Greek sphyrrelata panels on their fronts but Near Eastern sphyrrelata panels on their backs.<sup>194</sup>

The earliest Greek stone temples from the first half of the seventh century B.C. onward were undoubtedly inspired by the monumental stone buildings and masonry practices of the Levant and Egypt.<sup>195</sup> The revival of Greek wall painting after the interruption at the end of the Mycenaean civilization in temples of the seventh century B.C. at Isthmia and Abai (Kalapodi) was certainly influenced by Egyptian and Near Eastern wall painting.<sup>196</sup> The introduction of Greek monumental stone sculptures that were erected in the sanctuaries starting in the middle of the seventh century was also inspired by the Orient, mainly Egypt.<sup>197</sup> The statue type of the Archaic kouros, erected in sanctuaries and on graves, follows an Egyptian prototype.<sup>198</sup>

There has been a long and controversial discussion about how much of a role the Orient played in creating the unique Greek mind and spirit. As Oscar White Muscarella has aptly stated: "Some scholars still seem to think that the Greeks need to be defended against the charge that they borrowed heavily and eagerly from the Orient. Indeed they did borrow—in art, literature, science and philosophy—but, of course, they turned everything into Greek!"<sup>199</sup>

1. Burkert 1992.
2. Aruz et al. 2014, p. 296, cat. no. 165.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 297, cat. no. 166.
4. Ström 1992a, pp. 47–49.
5. Coldstream 1977, pp. 317–39; Snodgrass 1980, pp. 52–54; R. Osborne 2009, pp. 82–96.
6. De Polignac 1994, p. 12.
7. Baitinger 2011, pp. 123–29.
8. Charbonnet 1986; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 30, no. 5; Pruvot et al. 2010, fig. p. 67.
9. For a discussion of this piece, see Niemeier forthcoming.
10. Charbonnet 1986, pp. 119–22.
11. Niemeier 2010a, pp. 107–8, figs. 7, 8; Niemeier 2011a, pp. 98–99, figs. 7, 8; Niemeier 2013, pp. 37–38, figs. 4, 5; Morgan et al. 2010, pp. 94–95, figs. 101, 102.
12. In an important article, Kilian-Dirlmeier (1985) has discussed and listed the nonlocal Greek and non-Greek objects dedicated into the sanctuaries of Pherai, Perachora, Olympia, and Samos. Some of the assignments and statistics, however, must be revised owing to new finds and results of research—see also Ebbinghaus 2006, p. 188 n. 5.
13. R. Osborne 2009, pp. 92–93. Arguing for a date toward the end of the eighth century B.C.: Mallwitz 1988, p. 101; Mallwitz 1999, pp. 196–99, 219–20; cf. also Morgan 1990, pp. 41–42, 47–49, 89–92.
14. Philipp 1981b, pp. 15, 104–5, 310–14, nos. 1115–25, pls. 21, 22, 69. On the fibulae from Gordion, see Muscarella 1967; Muscarella 1989, pp. 338–39.
15. Complete: Schilbach 1999, p. 37, fig. 29. Fragments: Furtwängler 1890, p. 134, nos. 841–44, pl. L; H. Herrmann 1975a, p. 310; Muscarella 1989, pp. 339–40.
16. H. Herrmann 1966, p. 114, no. A24, pls. 42–51; H. Herrmann 1984, p. 22, no. A24a, pl. 6.1–2; Kyrieleis 1977, pp. 74–75, pl. 30; on the provenance, see also Muscarella 1970, pp. 111–12; Muscarella 1992, pp. 25–35. H. Herrmann (1966, pp. 114–30; 1984, pp. 22–26) identified almost all bull attachments from Olympia as eastern imports; see, however, the discussions by Kyrieleis 1977; Muscarella 1992, pp. 34–35. Kilian-Dirlmeier (1985, p. 247) sees all winged bull heads from Olympia as imports from Cyprus. This is, however, a misunderstanding of Kyrieleis 1977.
17. Compare the cauldron with winged bull's-head attachments in the National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, said to be from Cumae: Aruz et al. 2014, p. 281, cat. no. 154.
18. H. Herrmann 1966, pp. 131–34, nos. A35–37, pls. 55, 56; for the provenance, see Muscarella 1970, p. 114.
19. H. Herrmann 1975a, p. 311; Raubitschek 1978, pp. 699–700, pl. 215.3.
20. Philipp 1981a; Schilbach 1999, p. 37.
21. Furtwängler 1890, p. 141, pl. LII left and below center (= Aruz et al. 2014, p. 311, cat. no. 183); Furtwängler 1890, p. 142, no. 884, pl. LII (= Falsone 1985, p. 141, fig. 2); Poulsen 1912, pp. 22–24, figs. 12, 13; Kunze 1964, p. 168, pl. 172a; Imai 1977, pp. 68–70, nos. 69–72, figs. 58–60; Markoe 1985, pp. 204–5, no. G3, pp. 206–7, nos. G5–7; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 107, nos. 6, 7.
22. H. Herrmann 1966, pp. 27–89, nos. A1–13, pls. 7–19; as to the provenance, see also Muscarella 1962; Muscarella 1970, pp. 110–11; Muscarella 1992, pp. 21–24, who *ibid.*, pp. 18–19, strikes out three pieces, A14, A15, and A15a from Herrmann's list, thinking that they are of Greek workmanship. Examples of North Syrian siren attachments from other Greek sanctuaries are illustrated in Aruz et al. 2014, p. 276, cat. no. 147 (Ptoon), pp. 277–78, cat. nos. 149a–b (Delphi). Compare the cauldrons with siren attachments from Tumulus MM at Gordion: *ibid.*, p. 272, fig. 4.14.
23. H. Herrmann 1966, pp. 10–17, pls. 1–4.
24. Furtwängler 1911, p. 385; Karo 1920, pp. 140–41; Kunze 1931, pp. 273–74; Jantzen 1955, pp. 49–52; Benson 1957, pp. 401–2; Benson 1960, pp. 60–65; Schefold 1958; H. Herrmann 1957, p. 379; H. Herrmann 1966, p. 144; H. Herrmann 1972, pp. 82–83; Muscarella 1970, pp. 109–20; Muscarella 1992, pp. 35–36; Boardman 1980, pp. 66–67; Hampe and Simon 1980, pp. 110–11.
25. Beazley 1926, p. 584; Amandry 1955–56, p. 11; Amandry 1956, pp. 250–51; Amandry 1958, pp. 82–96; Amandry 1969, pp. 796–97; H. Payne 1940, pp. 129–30; Barnett 1948, pp. 10–11; Barnett 1956, pp. 231–32; Maxwell-Hyslop 1956, pp. 152–61; Akurgal 1959, pp. 102, 106–14; Akurgal 1961, pp. 55–56; Akurgal 1966, pp. 184–85; R. Young 1967, pp. 151–53; Ström 1971, p. 133; Rolley 1973, p. 508.
26. Benson 1960, p. 65; H. Herrmann 1979, pp. 137–38; Muscarella 1992, p. 36.
27. Muscarella 1992, p. 36.
28. Aruz et al. 2014, p. 325, cat. no. 196; see also Merhav 1991a, pp. 226–43.
29. Akurgal 1992, pp. 39–40. I cannot follow Gehrig 2004, pp. 154–58, who thinks that the griffin and lion protomes were invented in Crete.
30. Jantzen 1967; Gehrig 2004, pp. 151–52; and note 21 above.
31. H. Herrmann 1966, pp. 161–77, nos. U1–6, pls. 65–73; Daux 1966, pp. 824, 826, figs. 12, 13. Gehrig (2004) argues that they came from a Cretan workshop and were made by an immigrant Oriental bronzeworker or a by a trained Cretan one, but I agree with H. Herrmann (1966, pp. 176–77) that they are of North Syrian/Neo-Hittite provenance.
32. Daux 1960, p. 717, fig. 6.
33. H. Herrmann 1966, p. 178, pl. 76.
34. H. Herrmann 1981. For the North Syrian provenance, see Muscarella 1981, p. 52. Muscarella (1992, p. 35 n. 86) is, however, “less sure about its North Syrian origin.” Braun-Holzinger and Rehm (2005, pp. 91–93) reject an Oriental origin for these pieces.



35. Mallwitz 1981, pp. 49–50, fig. 34. For the dating in the first half of the eighth century B.C., see Schilbach 1999, p. 37.
36. Furtwängler 1890, p. 100, no. 659, pl. XXXIX; H. Herrmann 1956, pp. 81–84, figs. 37, 38.
37. Borell and Rittig 1998. On the Oriental sheets, see *ibid.*, pp. 3–62, pls. 1–23; Seidl 1999 and 2007.
38. Stucky 1974, p. 50, no. 75, p. 94, pl. XLIX. For Palestine/Transjordan as the probable center of production, see Stucky 2007; Caubet 2014, p. 163.
39. Furtwängler 1890, pp. 187–88; Unger 1926, pl. 162c after p. 370.
40. See the statistics by Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985, p. 231, fig. 13 (Olympia), p. 237, fig. 18 (Samos).
41. Calmeyer 1973, pp. 123–24.
42. Jantzen 1972, pp. 48–49, pl. 44; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978, p. 13, no. 1615, pl. 50, p. 125, no. 1630, pl. 51, p. 126, nos. 1645, 1646, pl. 52, p. 128, nos. 1680, 1684, pl. 53.
43. Jantzen 1972, pp. 50–53, nos. B593, B606, and B613, pls. 45, 46. Other examples that Jantzen considered to be Phrygian have been identified as non-Phrygian in Boehmer 1979, p. 7 n. 48.
44. Jantzen 1972, pp. 50–53, no. B1289, pl. 47. For a reconstruction of belts of this type, see Boardman 1967b, pp. 214–15, figs. 140, 141.
45. Jantzen 1972, p. 54, no. B494. Of the four bowl fragments Jantzen ascribes to Phrygia (pp. 54–55), H. Herrmann (1975b, p. 395) accepts only nos. B494 and B413 as Phrygian and sees in the others local imitations, whereas Börker-Klähn (1975, p. 536) thinks that all four pieces are local imitations. For a complete example of this type from Ankara, see Akurgal 1955, pl. 57a.
46. Jantzen 1972, p. 77, no. B1266, pl. 77 (“Urartu”). For the Phrygian provenance, see H. Herrmann 1975b, pp. 399–400; Kyrieleis 1977, p. 87.
47. Isler 1978, p. 79, no. 32, pl. 40 (“Oriental”). For the Phrygian provenance, see Furtwängler 1981, pp. 85–86.
48. Jantzen 1972, p. 60, no. B264, pl. 56 (“Neo-Hittite”). For the Phrygian provenance, see Börker-Klähn 1975, p. 539.
49. Kopcke 1967, p. 122, no. 15a–b, pl. 63.2–3.
50. Kyrieleis 1991, pp. 131–32, pl. XXX.2; Kyrieleis 1997. For its probable origin in Phrygia (or possibly North Syria), see Ebbinghaus 2006, pp. 205–6.
51. Excavated in 2013 from a level of ca. 700 B.C., found with water-sieving of the soil in 2014. Since water-sieving was not used in the earlier excavations, other coins may have been lost. For the lion’s-paw electrum coins, see Karwiese 1995, pp. 133–35, 192–93. For Lydian coins as votives, see Kerschner 2006, pp. 269–71. Some 115 electrum coins have been found in the Artemision of Ephesos: see Head 1908, pls. I, II; Bammer 1988, pp. 18–21, figs. 29, 30, 32–35; Bammer and Muss 1996, p. 89, fig. 115; Karwiese 1995 and 2001. Head (1908, p. 91) saw the lion, the lion’s head, and on the smaller denominations the lion’s paw as “signets or seals of the kings of Lydia.” On the other hand, Karwiese (1995, pp. 134–35) argues that the lion’s-paw coins were minted in Ephesos, but this is not convincing—see Wartenberg 1997, pp. 264–65.
52. Kerschner 2006, pp. 274–75. Unpublished Lydian objects from the Heraion are mentioned here, p. 272 n. 105.
53. Jantzen 1972, pp. 43–46, pls. 40–42. Two more examples are mentioned in Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985, p. 249.
54. Jantzen 1972, pp. 47–48, no. B252, pl. 43.
55. G. Schmidt 1968; Kyrieleis 1989; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, figs. pp. 92, 94–99, 356 upper left. More pieces come from the new excavations 2009–13—see Niemeier 2010b, pp. 113–14, fig. 15; Niemeier 2011b, p. 105, fig. 19; Niemeier 2012, p. 101, fig. 22.
56. Jantzen 1972, p. 12, no. B1212 (“Egyptian”); Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 140 left. For the Phoenician provenance, see Calmeyer 1973, p. 131 n. 52.
57. Jantzen 1972, p. 66, no. B1219, pl. 66 (“Syrian”). For the Phoenician provenance, see Calmeyer 1973, p. 131.
58. Jantzen 1972, p. 66, no. 342, pl. 66 (“Syrian”). For the Phoenician provenance, see Calmeyer 1973, p. 131.
59. Freyer-Schauenburg 1966, p. 7, nos. 12, 13, pp. 69, 72, pls. 14, 15a; part of a piece of furniture: *ibid.*, p. 7, no. 14, pp. 74–75, pl. 16a; forming a handle: *ibid.*, p. 7, no. 15, pp. 75–78, pl. 16b.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 6, no. 11, pp. 51–69 (discussing the whole group of ivory reliefs of this kind of which examples have been found at Nimrud and Samaria), pl. 12a.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 10, nos. 22–24, pp. 91–98, pls. 25a–b, 26a, 27a.
62. Kopcke 1967, pp. 123–24, fig. 8, pl. 65. Kopcke considers it possible that the piece is a local imitation.
63. On this group of Phoenician Egyptianizing rings, see Boardman 1967a, p. 5 with n. 9; Golani and Sass 1998, pp. 68–69.
64. Kopcke 1968, pp. 290–91, pl. 122; Jantzen 1972, p. 66, no. B1285, pl. 64 (“Syria”); Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 86, no. 7, pl. 16a; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 130; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 298–99, cat. no. 168d. For the North Syrian origin already recognized by Kopcke, see also Börker-Klähn 1975, pp. 541–42.
65. Jantzen 1972, pp. 63–64, no. 150, pl. 60; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 143.
66. Kyrieleis 1991, p. 130; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 138.
67. Jantzen 1972, p. 71, no. BB778, pl. 73 (“Assyria”). For the North Syrian origin, see Calmeyer 1973, p. 132; Börker-Klähn 1975, p. 544.
68. Jantzen 1972, p. 76, no. B348, pl. 76 (“Urartu”). For the North Syrian origin, see H. Herrmann 1975b, pp. 399–400; Kyrieleis 1977, p. 87. The

- unpublished second protome B2250 is mentioned in Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985, p. 250.
69. Furtwängler 1981, pp. 83–84, 134, no. I/5, pl. 18.5.
  70. *Ibid.*, pp. 82–83, 133, no. I/4, pl. 18.3–4.
  71. See note 2 above.
  72. Jantzen 1972, p. 58, no. B1123, pl. 58; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 33, no. 15, pl. 4; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 137.
  73. Jantzen 1972, p. 59, nos. B1151, B149, B257, B936, pls. 53, 54; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, pp. 5–6, nos. 1–3, 6, pls. 1, 2a.
  74. See notes 3 and 8 above.
  75. Brize 1992, pp. 163–64, pl. 1a–b; Brize 1997, p. 132, fig. 15; Ebbinghaus 2006, p. 205, fig. 5. For parallels from Nimrud, see Barnett 1975, pp. 103–6, 206–15, nos. S187–310, pls. LXXI–XCVI.
  76. Freyer-Schauenburg 1966, pp. 85–91, nos. 19–21, pls. 22–24.
  77. Brize 1992, pp. 164–65, pls. 1c, 2a.
  78. Walter 1959b, pls. 118–19; Freyer-Schauenburg 1966, pp. 98–103, no. 25, pl. 28. For this type going back to the Bronze Age, see Barnett 1935, pp. 191–92, fig. 4; Barnett 1957, pp. 91–92; Amiran 1962, pp. 166–67, fig. 3.2. For the North Syrian provenance, see also I. Winter 1976, pp. 12–13, fig. 1.
  79. Freyer-Schauenburg 1966, p. 6 n. 10, pl. 11a. For the probable North Syrian origin, see Boardman 1968, pp. 9–10.
  80. Walter 1959b, Beil. 115–17; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. on p. 145.
  81. Boardman and Buchner 1966, p. 31, nos. 84–87, figs. 39–41; Brandt et al. 1972, pp. 124–25, nos. 2928–30, pl. 285. The pieces were bought from an Athens art dealer as coming from Samos, most probably the Heraion. For the North Syrian area of origin of the Lyre Player group, see Boardman and Buchner 1966, pp. 59–62.
  82. Jantzen 1972, pp. 66–68, nos. B155, BB741, pls. 63, 65.
  83. *Ibid.*, p. 66, no. B416, pl. 68.
  84. Diehl 1965, pp. 827–35, nos. 91–93, figs. 4–10; Stucky 1974, pp. 42–46, nos. 51–66, pls. XXXII–XL.
  85. No. B165: Jantzen 1972, p. 70, pl. 69; after cleaning: Börker-Klähn 1973, pp. 41–42, pl. 18; Braun-Holzinger 1984, p. 97, no. 336, pl. 65; J. Curtis 1994b, pp. 2–3, 4, figs. 3–5. No. B1218: Jantzen 1972, p. 70, pl. 68; Braun-Holzinger 1984, p. 97, no. 337, pl. 65; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 298–99, cat. no. 168c; for the Assyrian origin, see Calmeyer 1973, p. 133.
  86. No. B1594: Jantzen 1972, p. 70, pl. 70; Börker-Klähn 1973, pp. 43–44, pls. 19, 20.3, 21.1–2; Braun-Holzinger 1984, p. 101, no. 345, pl. 67; J. Curtis 1994b, pp. 4–6, figs. 6–8; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 84, no. 2, pl. 15b; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 298–99, cat. no. 168b. No. BB773: Kyrieleis 1966, pp. 167–68, 170, figs. 7, 8; Jantzen 1972, p. 70, pl. 71; Börker-Klähn 1973, pp. 44–54, pl. 22; Braun-Holzinger 1984, p. 100, no. 343, pl. 67; J. Curtis 1994b, pp. 3–6, figs. 9–11; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 84, no. 1, pl. 15a.
  87. Jantzen 1972, p. 66, no. B931, pl. 65; Braun-Holzinger 1984, p. 86, no. 293, pl. 58. For the Assyrian origin, see also Calmeyer 1973, pp. 127–28.
  88. Jantzen 1972, p. 71, no. B275, pl. 73; Kyrieleis 1986, p. 189, pl. IIc; Kyrieleis 1991, p. 130; J. Curtis 1994b, pp. 16–17, fig. 27; Ebbinghaus 2006, pp. 215, 221, fig. 11. On this vessel type, see J. Curtis 2000.
  89. Seven of the Adad-nirari type (for this see Calmeyer 1969a, pp. 91–98, distribution map p. 92, fig. 94): Kopcke 1968, p. 294, no. 124, pl. 126.4; Calmeyer 1969a, pp. 91–95; Jantzen 1972, pp. 56–57, nos. B664, B1290, B1122, B278, B137, pls. 50, 51; Kyrieleis 1980, pp. 347–48, fig. 16; J. Curtis 1994b, pp. 20–21, figs. 33, 34; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, pp. 63–64, nos. 1–7, pl. 10a–c; and one knob mace head: Jantzen 1972, p. 57, no. B574, pl. 51; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 64, no. 9, pl. 13d; for this rather rare type, see Calmeyer 1969a, p. 108, no. 49.
  90. Jantzen 1972, p. 57, no. B1076, pl. 51; J. Curtis 1994b, pp. 22–23, fig. 38; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 90, no. 17, pl. 21b; Heessel 2002, p. 53, no. 61; Aruz et al. 2014, p. 301, cat. no. 171.
  91. Furtwängler 1981, pp. 74–82, figs. 1–3, pl. 18.1–2.
  92. Jantzen 1972, pp. 64–65, nos. B895, B1215, B756, B508, pl. 61 (“Neo-Hittite”). For the Assyrian origin, see Calmeyer 1969a, pp. 113–14; Calmeyer 1973, p. 128; Moorey 1974, p. 194; Börker-Klähn 1975, p. 540; J. Curtis 1994b, pp. 17–21, fig. 29. For this group of horse snaffles and its distribution, see Calmeyer 1969a, pp. 112–15.
  93. Diehl 1965, pp. 826–27, nos. 89, 90, figs. 1–3.
  94. Jantzen 1972, pp. 70, 73, no. BB779, pl. 72; Kyrieleis 1979; Braun-Holzinger 1984, p. 95, nos. 331–33, pl. 63; J. Curtis 1994b, pp. 8, 10, figs. 15–19; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, pp. 87–89, pl. 19a–b.
  95. Jantzen 1972, p. 71, no. B1124, pl. 72; Braun-Holzinger 1984, p. 106, no. 360, pl. 70; J. Curtis 1994b, pp. 8, 11, fig. 20; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 91, no. 18, pl. 20b. Since Marduk was also revered in Assyria, Braun-Holzinger (1988, p. 129) has suggested that this statuette might also be of Assyrian origin. J. Curtis (1994b, p. 8), however, thinks “this seems less likely.” For the Babylonian origin, see also Calmeyer 1973, pp. 128–29.
  96. Jantzen 1972, p. 76, no. B1217, pl. 78; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 134 right. Braun-Holzinger (1984, p. 97, no. 338, pl. 64) included this statuette in her book on figural bronzes from Mesopotamia, but other scholars have agreed with Jantzen’s identification as Urartian: Kyrieleis 1966, p. 166; Calmeyer 1973, p. 129; Börker-Klähn 1973, p. 48, pls. 24, 25.1; J. Curtis 1994b, p. 2 n. 4. Now apparently Braun-Holzinger and Rehm (2005, p. 85, no. 5, pl. 15c) see Urartian features distinguishing

- the statuette from Assyrian ones.
97. Jantzen 1972, p. 66, no. B111 (“Syrian”). For the Urartian provenance, see Börker-Klähn 1975, p. 542.
  98. Jantzen 1972, pp. 81–82, nos. B474, B1604, pls. 79, 80 (“Caucasian”). For the Urartian provenance, see Calmeyer 1973, p. 130; Furtwängler 1981, pp. 86–87, pl. 19.1–2.
  99. Jantzen 1972, p. 80, no. B452, pl. 81; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 142.
  100. Jantzen 1972, pp. 80–81, no. B136, pl. 83; Tsakos and Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 131.
  101. Jantzen 1972, pp. 64–65, nos. B396, B265, B26, pl. 62 (“Neo-Hittite”). For the origin in the Caucasus area, see Börker-Klähn 1975, p. 540.
  102. Jantzen 1972, p. 81, no. BB762, pl. 84; Caucasian parallels quoted on p. 84 nn. 307–10.
  103. *Ibid.*, p. 81, nos. B271, B146, pl. 80. For the origin in the Caucasus area, see also Calmeyer 1969b, p. 429; Calmeyer 1973, p. 130.
  104. Kopcke 1968, pp. 291–92, no. 115, fig. 33, pl. 123; Jantzen 1972, pp. 70–71, no. B1282, pl. 72 (“Assyrian”). Kopcke’s original attribution to western Iran has been confirmed by Calmeyer 1973, p. 130; Moorey 1974, p. 193; and Börker-Klähn 1975, pp. 540–41.
  105. Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 135.
  106. Jantzen 1972, p. 74, no. B896, pl. 74 (“Luristan”). For the area of origin, see also Calmeyer 1973, p. 130 (“western Zagros-area”); Moorey 1974, p. 191 (“Luristan”).
  107. Buschor 1932; Boehmer 1965, pp. 811, 818, fig. 6a–c; Calmeyer 1969a, pp. 100–101, fig. 103; Jantzen 1972, p. 74, no. B274, pl. 74. For the area of origin, see also Calmeyer 1973, p. 130 (“Median”); Moorey 1974, p. 191 (“western Iran”). For this type and its distribution, see Calmeyer 1969a, pp. 99–105, with distribution map on p. 104, fig. 107.
  108. Jantzen 1972, p. 57, no. B52, pl. 51; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 64, no. 8, pl. 13; for the type, see Calmeyer 1969a, p. 78, no. 39; for the probable origin in western Iran, see Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, p. 62; parallels from there: *ibid.*, pp. 73–75, nos. 57a–c, 61, 65, pl. 14a–b.
  109. Jantzen 1972, p. 75, no. B1161, pl. 74 (“Luristan”). Agreeing, Moorey 1974, p. 192.
  110. Jantzen 1972, p. 65, no. B589, pl. 62 (“Neo-Hittite”). For the origin in western Iran, see Calmeyer 1973, p. 130; Börker-Klähn 1975, pp. 540–41 (both: “Luristan”).
  111. Kopcke 1968, p. 292, no. 116, pl. 124.1 (“Median”); Jantzen 1972, p. 60, no. B1681, pl. 56 (“Neo-Hittite”). Kopcke’s identification of the area of origin is confirmed by Calmeyer 1973, pp. 130–31 (“Iranian”); Börker-Klähn 1975, p. 538 (“Median”). Shields with devices of this type are represented in the Apadana reliefs at Persepolis: Kopcke 1968, pl. 124.2.
  112. Bianchi 1990, pp. 72–76; Hölbl 2007, p. 451.
  113. Parlasca 1953; Jantzen 1972, pp. 5–37, pls. 1–32; Sliwa 1983. A further statuette of a priest mentioned in Kyrieleis 1990, p. 24; Kyrieleis 1991, p. 130; Ebbinghaus 2006, p. 193 with n. 29, is now illustrated in Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 50.
  114. Roeder 1956, p. 320. Other similar statuettes from the Heraion: Jantzen 1972, p. 13, nos. B1216, B1517, pls. 14, 15 (with separate, movable arms).
  115. Jantzen 1972, pp. 33–34, no. B432, pl. 33; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 51.
  116. Catling 1983–84, p. 39, fig. 114; Kyrieleis 1991, p. 129, pl. XXIX.2.
  117. Kyrieleis 1991, p. 131; Kourou et al. 2002, pp. 35, 49, 71, no. SA-15, pl. X.2.
  118. Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 151 upper right.
  119. Freyer-Schauenburg 1966, pp. 112–14, no. 30, pl. 33; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 151.
  120. Furtwängler 1981, pp. 107–27, pls. 27–30, 36.1, 38.1; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. pp. 148–49.
  121. Freyer-Schauenburg 1966, pp. 114–16, nos. 31, 32, pl. 34a–b.
  122. Webb 1978, pp. 81, 97–107.
  123. Calmeyer 1973, p. 124.
  124. Gunter 2009, pp. 17–49, 11, map 1; J. Curtis 2014; Potts 2014; Carter 2014; Cholidis 2014, pp. 93–94; Tubb 2014; Mazar 2014; Pilides 2014, p. 185.
  125. Mele 1979, pp. 43–44; Tandy 1997, p. 74.
  126. Rollinger 2001, pp. 248–49.
  127. Herodotos, *Histories* 2.152.
  128. *Ibid.*, 4.152.
  129. Homer, *Odyssey* 3.71–74, 9.252–55.
  130. *Ibid.*, 14.222–34.
  131. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.5.
  132. Seibert 1979, pp. 7–26; Stein-Hölkeskamp 1989, pp. 81–84; Bettalli 1995, pp. 108–9; Kaplan 2002. Luraghi (2006, p. 22) doubts that mercenary service in Archaic Greece was an elite phenomenon and thinks that it was more widespread. This is probably the case with the great numbers—possibly tens of thousands—of Greek and Carian mercenaries in Egypt of Dynasty 26 (*ibid.*, p. 25), although Luraghi also allows that “upper class Greeks . . . were certainly involved” (p. 26).
  133. Tandy 1997, pp. 62–66, with literature p. 62 n. 3; Lemos 2002, pp. 228–29, map 8; Luke 2003, pp. 31–44, 56–59.
  134. Shipley 1987, pp. 41–42.
  135. For the date of the foundation, see Möller 2000, pp. 187–88; Schlotzhauer 2012, pp. 32–35.
  136. Mentioned by Herodotos, *Histories* 2.187. For the situation of the sanctuaries, see the plan in Schlotzhauer 2012, fig. 1; for the *temenos* of Hera, see Möller 2000, p. 101; for that of Apollo, *ibid.*, pp. 94–99. See also Schlotzhauer 2006.
  137. Herodotos, *Histories* 4.152.
  138. Kyrieleis 1981, pp. 88–90, fig. 65; Walter 1990, p. 83, fig. 92, pp. 88–89, fig. 98.

139. Freyer-Schauenburg 1966, pp. 104–10, nos. 26–28, 125, pls. 29a–b, 30a; Tsakos and Viglaki-Sofianou 2012, fig. p. 149. For the probable connection with Kolaios's Tartessos dedication, see Freyer-Schauenburg 1966, p. 125.
140. Braun 1982, p. 15.
141. Saggs 1963, pp. 76–78; Braun 1982, pp. 14–15; Luraghi 2006, pp. 30–31.
142. Luraghi 2006, pp. 31–32.
143. *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33.
144. Braun 1982, pp. 15–16; Kearsley 1999, pp. 119–22.
145. Myres 1933, pls. I–III; Barnett 1977, pp. 164–68, fig. 3, pl. XLVIII.2; Markoe 1985, pp. 172–74, Cy4, pls. 248, 249; Niemeier 2001, p. 21, fig. 21; Luraghi 2006, pp. 36–38, pls. 1, 2k.
146. Page 1955, pp. 223–24; Seibert 1979, pp. 20–22; Stein-Hölkeskamp 1989, pp. 82–83; Niemeier 2001, p. 18. I cannot discuss here the unconvincing theory of Fantalkin (2011, pp. 103–4), according to which Artemidas's service in the Babylonian army is uncertain.
147. Braun 1982, p. 22.
148. Mitchell 1991, pp. 387, 399; Braun 1982, p. 22; Niemeier 2001, pp. 19–20; Niemeier 2002, pp. 329–30.
149. Haider 2004.
150. Herodotos, *Histories* 2.152–54. Lloyd 1975, pp. 14–23; Niemeier 2001, p. 17.
151. Niemeier 2001, p. 17, with literature.
152. *Ibid.*, p. 18, with literature; see also Haider 2004.
153. Woolley 1921, pp. 79–81, 125–29, pls. 24, 25a; Boardman 1980, p. 51, fig. 20; Niemeier 2001, pp. 19–20, figs. 2, 3.
154. Niemeier 2001, pp. 19–20.
155. Lloyd 1975, pp. 21–23; Boardman 1980, pp. 115–17.
156. Masson and Yoyotte 1988, pl. 25; Haider 2001, pp. 200–201; Haider 2004, p. 453, fig. 3.
157. Trolle 1978, p. 146, fig. 7; Boardman 1980, p. 143, fig. 167.
158. Helms 1988 and 1993.
159. Hawkins 1994.
160. Herodotos, *Histories* 1.14.
161. Aruz et al. 2014, p. 308, cat. no. 180; DeVries and Rose 2012. Contra: Muscarella 2016.
162. Muscarella 1989, pp. 333–34. See also DeVries and Rose 2012.
163. Herodotos, *Histories* 1.14, 1.50–51.
164. *Ibid.*, 2.159.
165. Touchais 1978, p. 750.
166. Herodotos, *Histories* 2.182.
167. Coldstream 1977. For the Phoenician expansion to the west, see Aubet 2001.
168. Shaw 1989, pp. 165–72, figs. 4–10; Shaw 2000, pp. 20–21, pls. 1.31–32, 1.37–39, 1.42–43.
169. Shaw 1989, pp. 181–82; Bikai 2000.
170. Even before the discovery of the Phoenician features at Kommos, Coldstream (1977, p. 161) had argued that “any Phoenician sailing to the western Mediterranean would have been foolish to avoid the Aegean altogether.”
171. See above with note 94.
172. Kyrieleis 1979. Critical: Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, pp. 87–89, who deny a connection to Gula and think that the find of three figures of this type in the Heraion is merely due to accident. See also Gunter 2014a, p. 252. J. Curtis, in Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 300–301 (nos. 169a–c) considers both functions possible, votive offerings to Gula or figurines with a protective or apotropaic function. In any case, I do not believe that the concentration of four figurines of this type in the Heraion could be accidental.
173. Leahy 1988, p. 303; Bumke 2007 and 2012.
174. Leahy 1988, p. 303; Gunter 2014a, p. 252.
175. See above with note 115.
176. H. Payne 1940, pp. 142–43, pl. 46.
177. Munro 1969; Strøm 1992a, p. 57.
178. Jantzen 1972, pp. 20–22, nos. B445, B791, B1608, pl. 23.
179. Morenz 1954, p. 279.
180. Engelmann 1899; Zahn 1934, p. 17; Lullies 1940, p. 2 n. 1.
181. Strøm 1992a.
182. Gunter 2014a, p. 253.
183. Held 2000, pp. 131–34, nos. B37–39, pls. 23–25.
184. See above with notes 2, 72, 73.
185. See above with notes 3, 7.
186. See above with notes 2, 3.
187. Identified by J. David Hawkins. See Ebbinghaus 2006, p. 210 n. 117; Luraghi 2006, p. 40 n. 107; Herda 2009, p. 80 n. 308. The final publication of the inscription by J. David Hawkins and Alexander Herda is in preparation.
188. According to Luraghi (2006, p. 40 n. 107), the name of Unqi is “apparently mentioned” in the inscription. However, Alexander Herda has kindly informed me that this is not the case.
189. Ebbinghaus 2006, pp. 210–11; Luraghi 2006, p. 40.
190. See Coldstream 1977, pp. 263–65; Strøm 1992a, pp. 46–47.
191. Kopcke 1968, p. 283.
192. Kyrieleis 1993, pp. 148–49.
193. Kopcke 1992, p. 112 n. 34.
194. Seidl 2007. See also Gunter 2014a, p. 253.
195. Coulton 1977, pp. 32–50; Hölbl 1984; Ostby 2001, pp. 31–32; Gebhard 2001, pp. 45–50, 61; Bammer 2001 (with incorrect dating of the Peripteros = Naos I at Ephesos in the mid-eighth century B.C.; for the corrected dating in the second quarter of the seventh century B.C., see Weissl 2002, pp. 321–27; Kerschner and Prochaska 2011, p. 77); Kienast 2001; Haider 2004, pp. 461–63.
196. Schaus 1988; Niemeier et al. 2012.
197. Haider 2004, pp. 456–58.
198. Kyrieleis 1996, pp. 81–86, 108–27.
199. Muscarella 1970, p. 124 n. 6.



Cyprus, situated in the “midst of the sea,”<sup>1</sup> was well placed to play its part in the international concert of cultures between east and west. The period that extends from the late second millennium B.C. into the Iron Age, brilliantly illustrated by the “Assyria to Iberia” exhibition organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, was a time of continuity and transformation for Cyprus. Placed under the stewardship of local rulers and the protection of their gods, the island developed a culture both diverse and unique in character, expressing different identities yet still immediately identifiable as “Cypriot.” This paper examines some of the most characteristic traits of Cypriot identity manifested in artifacts and their iconography: images associated with the exercise of power, demonstrated in the royal figure, presented under various guises and engaged in activities connected with the exercise of power; a Cypriot vision of the cosmos, populated with mythological creatures and symbolic plants and animals; and a world placed under the eyes of gods created by the Cypriots for themselves.

Drastic political crises and population upheavals took place at the turn of the second to first millennium B.C. in Cyprus, and changes in languages and settlement patterns ensued. Nevertheless, the island experienced a spectacular revival in art and culture during the first millennium B.C., in part owing to the rejuvenating arrival of new settlers, in part due to various factors of continuity, one of which being that the Cypriots, like the Greeks and the Phoenicians, were experienced sailors and maintained their network overseas. Cypriot seafarers had long asserted themselves as middlemen in the far-reaching network of trade and diplomacy that crossed the Mediterranean, a network that extended as far as the western Mediterranean, to Sicily and Sardinia, during the Late Bronze Age.<sup>2</sup> Anchors of a specific type mark the trail of Cypriot navigation,<sup>3</sup> and throughout the Iron Age numerous terracotta models of boats are indicators of the continuing importance of seafaring to the island.

Annie Caubet

## Between Orient and Occident: The Iconography of Cyprus (ca. 800–600 B.C.)

Literary or epigraphic evidence is scarce and indirect, originating mainly from outside the island. No mythological or epic composition has survived from Cyprus, but Cypriot iconography during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages on painted vases and clay figurines seems to have been inspired by narrative tales that circulated in the Mediterranean.<sup>4</sup> Cypriots shared an appreciation and understanding of heroic epic, a genre that produced the mythological texts from Ugarit, the Gilgamesh epic from Babylonia, and the Homeric poems.<sup>5</sup>

The few Bronze Age inscriptions found on Cyprus give very little information; the rare documents in local scripts on clay tablets and tokens remain as yet undeciphered.<sup>6</sup> In the written sources from outside the island, the identification of Cyprus as Alashiya is now almost unanimously accepted, despite the lack of definitive proof.<sup>7</sup> A powerful kingdom, Alashiya is documented in cuneiform tablets from the Mari archives in Syria as early as the eighteenth century B.C. and in the Amarna Letters addressed to the pharaohs during the reigns of Amenhotep III (ca. 1390–1352 B.C.) and Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten, ca. 1353–1336 B.C.). The *Story of Wenamun* (eleventh century B.C.) mentions a queen Heteb of Alashiya.<sup>8</sup> Officials from



Fig. 1. Letter of Kushmeshusha, king of Alashiya, to the king of Ugarit. Clay tablet with Akkadian cuneiform inscription. Ras Shamra-Ugarit, ca. 1200 B.C. Damascus National Museum, Syria (RS 94-11774)

Alashiya appear frequently in the archives from the Syrian kingdom of Ugarit: tablets discovered in the house of a high-ranking official, give for the first time the name of a ruler, Kushmeshusha, who sends 33 talents of copper (more than 600 kilograms) to the king of Ugarit (fig. 1).<sup>9</sup>

By the end of the second millennium B.C., waves of Greek-speaking people had landed on Cyprus and founded cities, which later would trace their origins to heroes returning from the Trojan War. Beginning in the ninth century B.C., Phoenicians settled along the southern coast, notably at Amathus and Kition (today Larnaca). A multiethnic and multilingual society emerged with inhabitants speaking local, Greek, and Phoenician languages and understanding Egyptian and Syro-Anatolian dialects.<sup>10</sup> More Phoenician inscriptions have been found on Cyprus than anywhere else in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>11</sup> The island may have played a significant role in the transition between the Phoenician and Greek alphabets. By the eighth century B.C. Cyprus, known as (Y)adnana “of the midst of the sea,” was

recorded in Assyrian sources, the earliest being the Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) stele erected in Kition (see Bahrani essay, p. 324, fig. 1).<sup>12</sup> According to these sources, the island was shared between seven and later ten kingdoms. Most of their capitals are easily identified and located with the exception of Karthihadast, meaning “New City,” for which there is a running debate about its identification as either Amathus or Kition.

Many Cypriot cities of the first millennium B.C., including Paphos, Salamis, and Kition, trace their origins back to the second millennium, and the settlement pattern of Cyprus remains fairly similar between the Bronze and Iron Ages despite the arrival of new populations. Salamis, founded according to legend by the Homeric hero Teukros, was established at a short distance from the city of the Late Bronze Age excavated at Enkomi;<sup>13</sup> at Paphos<sup>14</sup> and at Kition,<sup>15</sup> monumental temples erected in ashlar masonry at the end of the Late Bronze Age were rebuilt several times in the first millennium B.C. A Holy of Holies was added by the Phoenicians to the temple of Kition–*Kathari*.<sup>16</sup>

#### CONSTRUCTING THE CYPRIOT ROYAL IMAGE

Archaeological remains dating to the time of the Cypriot historical kingdoms bear the mark of their rulers’ activities. The role of royal power as a factor in the development of the copper industry, timber export, textile production, or ivory working is a matter of speculation; this paper concentrates on the cultural traits that contribute most to the expression of royal ideology. Especially informative in this respect is the pattern of distribution of cult places dedicated to “national” deities; the construction of royal images as king, hero, warrior, and hunter; the funerary rituals; and the institution of the banquet.

The geographical distribution of palaces and sanctuaries over the territory, despite the paucity of remains, reflects a political pattern.<sup>17</sup> The best evidence comes from cultic places. These were distributed within the city and on the outskirts, at liminal locations and

at border sites, so as to cover the whole political territory of each of the several kingdoms that shared the island, thus asserting the identity of each polity and displaying its privileged relationship with the deities.<sup>18</sup> Rarely built on a grand scale, the temples are mostly recognizable by the presence of votive offerings stored in deposit fosses; these *bothroi* contained, among other offerings, stone and terracotta statues representing rulers and the local deities.

Near Eastern rulers had statues made in their images to be placed in the temples of their gods. Likewise, Cypriot kings have left an impressive array of monumental figures carved from the local limestone or modeled in terracotta, their majestic stance reminiscent of Assyrian royal sculpture.<sup>19</sup> Formal dress, beard, and headgear vary with time or place, reflecting different traditions borrowed from Egypt or the Syro-Mesopotamian world. The attitude is peaceful and majestic, the eyes staring at an invisible deity, the hands carrying a small offering: a bird, a wreath, a box of balsam. Their painted decoration, especially well preserved on the terracotta statues, offers a glimpse of the lost art of textile manufacture and dyeing. The dark red background on a number of large-scale figures uncovered from the cult places of Kazaphani and Salamis *tomba* are good evidence for the presence in Cyprus of purple-dyed cloth, a major export product of the Phoenicians.<sup>20</sup> In addition to the votive portrait sculptures, many Cypriot artifacts are decorated with images of kingship in action: a dominating figure is engaged in the activities that were the essential prerogatives of kingship: hunt, warfare, and banquets. In the great empires of the first millennium B.C., the king was glorified on the walls of the temple (in Egypt) or the palace (in Assyria) to impress visitors. Nothing as monumental has survived in Cyprus, but images pertaining to the iconography of triumph are applied to the very instruments and vessels used in the course of those royal functions. Weapons, chariot fittings and horse gear, and vessels used during banquets carry rich imagery.



Fig. 2. Painted ceramic oinochoe showing chariot and heads of decapitated enemies. Cyprus. Cypro-Archaic, ca. 750–600 B.C. Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Berlin (30356)

Cypriot artists adopted and transformed visual devices and compositions derived from the cultures that surrounded the island. Some visual compositions depict a continuous narrative, a Cypriot parallel on a small scale to the monumental Assyrian relief depictions of military campaigns. Scenes of warfare, besieged cities, parading soldiers, and foreign landscapes are engraved on Cypro-Phoenician metal bowls found on Cyprus<sup>21</sup> and painted on clay vessels:<sup>22</sup> a pottery jug shows the return of the victors with the decapitated heads of their enemies hanging from their chariot (fig. 2).<sup>23</sup> Such violence, unknown in earlier Cypro-Mycenaean vase painting and rare in Cypriot iconography of the Iron Age, brings to mind the calculated horrors of Assyrian iconography.<sup>24</sup>

Narratives are frequently fragmented into small vignettes on account of the reduced scale of the artifacts on which they are

depicted. Thus, the royal image appears as an isolated heraldic motif on the central medallion of metal vessels, on painted clay vases, or on embossed horse frontlets and blinkers. It is placed either in the “real” world or in a world of fantasy, on a symbolic and mythological level where anthropomorphic images mix with fantastic creatures. Combat motifs oppose a victor and a prostrate enemy. The victor appears in human shape or in a mythological guise. The triumphant ruler is seen in a striding motion, his arm raised in the attitude given in Egypt to the image of a warring pharaoh and in the Near East to the “smiting” thunder god.<sup>25</sup> The mythological being is generally a hybrid, often winged—a sphinx, or a lion with ram’s head, for example; according to Egyptian iconography it serves as herald of the king. The vanquished enemy is ethnically characterized by his costume and facial traits as either an African or Asiatic,<sup>26</sup> the two hereditary foes of Egypt, and symbols of the extreme edges of the Egyptian world. In Cyprus, those exotic figures may have retained part of their spatial signification, without the precise geographic meaning, perhaps to express the concept of political supremacy. Another avatar of kingship takes its source of inspiration from the Aegean world and is inherited from the late second millennium B.C.: a youthful, elegant figure clad in a kilt, slaying a beast that is seen falling head down. With its dynamic visual composition of inverted bodies framed by the spread wings of the monster, the motif was a favorite in Cyprus and the Levant to decorate luxury artifacts, especially on metal bowls (fig. 3).<sup>27</sup> The personality of this hero is susceptible to multiple understandings and identifications: he is perhaps a deified ancestor, or the herald of the deity, and certainly related to the concepts of kingship and royal ideology.

Cypriot royal burials were sumptuous, as evidenced by tomb architecture and the remains of funerary rituals in the necropoleis of Tamassos, Kition, and especially Salamis.<sup>28</sup> The deposition of horses, chariots, and iron weapons finds a literary echo in the funeral

of Patroklos.<sup>29</sup> Many artifacts deposited in those tombs are related to the banquet. A royal pastime par excellence as described by Homer, banquets would take place at the tomb, in the palace, and in cult places. Consumption of food and drink was turned into an ostentatious, ritualized ceremony, accompanied by the performance of epic recitation, music, dance, and games. Banquets were the occasion to display luxurious implements, fine examples of which have been discovered in the royal necropolis of Salamis: meat was cooked on andirons and skewers made of iron, a novelty at that time;<sup>30</sup> whole services of ceramic or bronze vessels served to store, carry, mix, serve, and drink wine. One such vessel was the cauldron for mixing wine, an essential component of the drinking practices among the international elite during the eighth to sixth century B.C. This was a large, open vessel made of hammered sheet bronze with cast handles in the shape of fantastic creatures. The cauldron would rest on a stand, made of iron, the metal of the new age (see p. 322).<sup>31</sup> Examples have been found over an immense geographical area, from eastern Anatolia to Etruria and Celtic Gaul; a significant number were deposited in the sanctuaries of Samos and Olympia. Salamis Tomb 79 contained two such cauldrons.<sup>32</sup> Other notable banquet implements are the ewer and drinking bowl. Ewers, a type of jug used to dip wine from the cauldron and to pour the drink into the cup, were appreciated among the international elite (see Sannibale essay, p. 303, fig. 7); they were made of clay, metal, or stone, with local variations in the decoration of the handle and spout.<sup>33</sup> In Cyprus, ewers were popular in different materials. Images of ewers were a frequent motif on Cypriot painted ceramics depicting festive events; they appear either isolated or carried by a “cupbearer” who is better designated as a jug bearer (fig. 4).<sup>34</sup> A favorite drinking cup was a type of metal bowl decorated with narrative or heraldic scenes.<sup>35</sup> These cups have no handles, a distinctive trait of Near Eastern drinking vessels,<sup>36</sup> which distinguish them from the Greek





Fig. 3. Gilded silver bowl showing smiting ruler "Bes" and hero with griffin. Idalion, Cyprus. Cypro-Phoenician, 7th century B.C. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Antiquités Orientales (AO 20134)



Fig. 4. Detail of the Hubbard Amphora. Platani, near Salamis. Cypro-Geometric, ca. 800 B.C. Cyprus Museum, Nicosia (1938/XI-2/3)

double-handled cups, or *kantharoi*. These decorated metal bowls, much appreciated in Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean, were produced in a number of workshops in Phoenicia and the Levant. About twenty-two examples have been found on Cyprus;<sup>37</sup> it is possible that some pieces were created by Cypriot workshops, for their iconography is closely related to local vase paintings, notably in the depiction of dance and musical performance.<sup>38</sup> Their rich iconographic repertoire, including war, hunting, banquet scenes, smiting kings, and heraldic genies, constructed an iconography pregnant with meaning. One might expect more mundane subjects for drinking vessels, but this politically and ritually charged imagery may explain why so many of these bowls ended up as offerings in Greek sanctuaries.

Cyprus may have played a role in the evolution from the meal served in honor of a dominating figure, a deity or king, to the “democratic” Greek symposium, shared among equals engaged in courteous conversation.<sup>39</sup> Salamis Tomb 79 provides a unique

link for the transition between the two modes of formal banqueting in antiquity: sitting on a chair, or resting on a couch. A famous example of the former is seen in the banquet scene of Ashurbanipal (ca. 645–635 B.C.) from his North Palace at Nineveh, the earliest image of a ruler resting on a bed (see Gansell essay, p. 55, fig. 1);<sup>40</sup> his consort, in a rare depiction of an Assyrian queen, is seated on a throne in accordance with a hierarchy. Banqueters seated on a throne or resting on a couch are attested on Cyprus by depictions in art<sup>41</sup> and by pieces of furniture. In Tomb 79 at Salamis, three chairs, a stool, and a bed were discovered; made of ivory or precious metal, they are dated to the early seventh century B.C.<sup>42</sup> The presence of abundant clay vessels and two large metal cauldrons make it certain that these pieces of furniture were used for formal banquets, whether during the life of the deceased or at their funerals. One of the ivory chairs (throne Γ) and the bed are decorated with the motifs of the stylized tree, sphinx, and water genies, which relate stylistically to the





Fig. 5. Ceramic vase with barbounia fish. Kellia, near Kiton-Larnaca. Cypro-Geometric, ca. 800 B.C. Musée du Louvre, Paris (AM 661)

western Phoenician tradition of ivories found in the Assyrian capital of Nimrud (see Gubel essay, p. 171, fig. 5).<sup>43</sup> The furniture from Salamis may have been imported from Phoenicia; it is also possible that it was made on Cyprus: there are traces of ivory working within the precinct of Temple I at Kiton-Kathari from the same period.<sup>44</sup>

## II. CONSTRUCTING A CYPRIOT VIEW OF THE COSMOS

By assembling visual motifs common to the eastern Mediterranean since the Late Bronze Age, Cypriot artists created their own coherent view of the cosmos, a space placed under

the protection of the gods, which served as a stage for the action of kings, the representatives of the deities. Apart from the narrative scenes in miniature on metal bowls and painted vases used for banqueting, most images are reduced to isolated motifs decorating objects used for hunting and warfare, including horse fittings. These isolated motifs are not mere decorative designs or included only to fill space, rather they are fragmented parts of larger narratives, indicative of the mysterious presence of the deities. They are especially varied in the kingdom of Salamis where a floral style of vase painting was developed, inspired by motifs derived from



Fig. 6. Wall bracket with a goddess and a bull. Athienou-Golgoi. Cypro-Geometric, ca. 850 B.C. Musée du Louvre, Paris (AM 1704)

Phoenician iconography.<sup>45</sup> Stylized trees, lotus buds, palmettes, and rosettes create a fantastic, outdoor landscape. Birds, real or fantastic, contribute to the impression of space and the spirit of flight. The palm tree, with its symmetrical disposition of hanging bunches of fruits above a triangular design, probably served as a metaphor for a naked goddess.<sup>46</sup> Fish, in association with the lotus,

as in Egypt with the deified Nile River, represent the rejuvenating powers of water (fig. 5).<sup>47</sup> Large beasts and monsters roam the space: bulls, lions, sphinxes, and griffins are shown recumbent or striding, rampant or engaged in combat in a world at peace or needing to be tamed. Their nature as both foe of and substitute for the ruler is ambivalent. Their vanquished enemy with the physical appearance of an African or Asiatic suggests, as in Egypt, the confines of a world in submission and civilized by the action of the king under the protection of the gods. The gods themselves rarely appear on the painted vases and are to be sought instead in figures in the round found in cult places.

### III. CONSTRUCTING CYPRIOT IMAGES OF THE DEITIES

Cyprus, as a small island in the Mediterranean world, shared with other civilizations a number of religious beliefs related to themes such as life and death, the annual cycle of the seasons, and male and female powers. Cypriots rejuvenated these concepts over time and adapted to their own needs and aspirations, giving them specific forms according to their geographical and political territory and cultural identity. The most frequent way in which Cypriots constructed their religious images was in the production of the thousands of terracotta figurines recovered from sanctuaries and in lesser measure of stone and metal statuettes. It is never clear whether these figurines represent the deity, the worshiper, or a priest/priestess, an ambiguity that probably also existed at the time of their creation.

The Cypriot conception of a female power or "Great Goddess," to use a conventional term, takes many forms.<sup>48</sup> In the early years of the first millennium B.C., terracotta female figures with uplifted arms appeared often together with a bull figure or a horse and rider, a traditional association of female and male principles (fig. 6).<sup>49</sup> Inherited from the Bronze Age and renewed by the influx of newcomers from the Aegean at the turn of the second to first millennium B.C., the



image of the goddess with uplifted arms endured well into the Cypro-Archaic period. In the eighth to seventh century B.C., another ancient and widespread divine concept, the “Mistress of Animals,” was adopted in Cyprus and displayed on luxury artifacts, including the metal horse fittings from Salamis where it is certainly associated with kingship.<sup>50</sup>

When the Phoenicians settled in Cyprus in the ninth century B.C., they introduced the molding technique for the production of clay figurines and brought their own iconographic types, notably the so-called *Dea Tyria Gravida* and Astarte plaques.<sup>51</sup> In Kition and Amathus, the enthroned pregnant figure, clad in a long garment and with a distinctive coiffure, was transformed from its original Levantine model by the addition of an infant carried in her arms, making her a superlative mother, both childbearing and child-suckling.<sup>52</sup> At Lapithos, a Cypriot headdress and ear jewelry, and a transparent tunic that reveals the body, were added to the nude Astarte type.<sup>53</sup> The woman at the window, well known in the Levant from ivory carving (see Winter essay),<sup>54</sup> was adapted on a number of clay models of shrines (fig. 7):<sup>55</sup> they may reproduce in miniature the cultic installation observed in the Holy of Holies of the temple at Kition-*Kathari*.<sup>56</sup>

Both the *Dea Tyria Gravida* and the Astarte plaques are often found in association with other types of Phoenician origin, to form a nuclear divine family. A potbellied child mastering snakes, the so-called *Ptah Pataikos*, is the Cypriot rendering of the complex mythological concept of the child god, known elsewhere as the Egyptian demiurge Ptah, the young Horus, the Phoenician Eshmoun, or the infant Herakles (Herakliskos).<sup>57</sup> The “father figures” are surprising. One is the Bes image, originating in Egypt and popular in the Levant. Cypriot clay “Bes” figurines belong, from the point of view of technique, style, and distribution, to the group derived from Phoenician prototypes.<sup>58</sup> The Bes image was adopted and transformed on Cyprus into a master of lions: an improbable hero — hairy, stocky, with bulging muscles, a



Fig. 7. Terracotta model of a shrine with “woman at the window.” Idalion. Cypro-Archaic II, 6th century B.C. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Antiquités Orientales (N 3294)

broad, coarse face, short neck, and beard — he generally wears a garment made from the skin of a lion, the tail of which trails between his bowed legs. He appears on the silver bowl from Idalion no less than six times, and at two different moments of activity (see fig. 3).<sup>59</sup> In the first scene, he is engaged in combat with a lion, in a symmetrical attitude to that of the royal hero, seen next to him on the same bowl; in the second, he carries the slain lion on his shoulders. This disquieting figure is especially related to the kingdom city of Amathus, where he appears on large stone statues and a royal sarcophagus (fig. 8).<sup>60</sup> Adapted from the visual types of the Egyptian Bes and the Mesopotamian Humbaba images, given an imposing and awe-inspiring allure, he lends his features to the king-god of Amathus, the kingdom’s patron god, lord of the lions, endowed with special powers over the underworld and its riches, the copper mines.<sup>61</sup> Another variant image of the master of lions was created in and for the neighboring kingdom of Kition. Several stone statues were discovered in the temple of Kition-*Bamboula*.<sup>62</sup> He is depicted as a youthful and



Fig. 8. Detail of hard limestone Amathus sarcophagus showing Bes. Amathus, north acropolis. Cypro-Archaic II, second quarter of 5th century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.2453)



Fig. 9. Statue of the god Melqart. Kition-Bamboula. Cypro-Classical, ca. 450 B.C. Cyprus Museum, Nicosia (SCE-Kit 141+167+170+175+220+227+317+321)

beardless male; he raises a club in his right arm in a smiting gesture, while mastering a small lion in his left hand. Over his tunic the skin of a lion is draped so as to cover his head (fig. 9). With his menacing appearance, he looks like an avatar of the royal hero (compare fig. 2) and as such is depicted on the coinage issued by the Phoenician dynasty of Kition.<sup>63</sup> Though he shares iconographic features with the Greek Herakles, he is probably the god-king of the city of Kition ruled by a

Phoenician dynasty that had strong ties with the city of Tyre, whose patron deity was Melqart. With his bow and arrow, the Melqart of Kition is endowed with powers over fever and disease, comparable to those of the Greek Apollo,<sup>64</sup> another instance of the complex identities and culture of the ancient Cypriots and their transformative abilities.

There is not one simple Cypriot identity. The originality of the Cypriot character,

open to traditions from outside, renders ambiguous any attribution to Cypriot or Phoenician workshops of the many artifacts found overseas across the Mediterranean. The question remains open, especially in the case of the metal bowls. It is not easy to distinguish Cypriot from Phoenician iconography and production, nor is it simple to ascertain the role of Cyprus in the elaboration and diffusion of the Orientalizing movement. The spiritual world, as expressed in the iconography and material culture of Cyprus at the time of the first millennium kingdoms, demonstrates a thorough acculturation of Egyptian, Greek, Phoenician, and local traits, transformed into a coherent and complex, multifaceted new cultural context, rich with interacting identities.

1. Bull inscription from the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), Nineveh: Luckenbill 1927, pp. 118–19, § 239 (= Yon 2004, p. 50, no. 33). Prism of Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.), Nineveh: Luckenbill 1927, pp. 265–66, § 690 (= Yon 2004, pp. 54–55, no. 39).
2. On the interconnections between Cyprus and Sardinia, see Matthäus 2000b; Bonfante and Karageorghis 2001; Lo Schiavo 2012; Lo Schiavo and Campus 2013.
3. Frost 1991; Sauvage 2012, pp. 253ff.
4. For instance, a terracotta boat depicting the sea voyage of an embracing couple brings to mind the kidnap of Helen by the Trojans: Louvre, AM 972 (Fourrier and Queyrel 1998, pp. 57–60, no. 31).
5. See Yon 2014.
6. Egetmeyer 2008; Olivier 2007; see Yon 2013, p. 207 n. 2.
7. *Contra* Merrillees 1987, evidence in favor of the equivalence Alashiya/Cyprus has surfaced recently on an ostrakon dating to the Hellenistic period from the palace of Idalion (Amadasi Guzzo et al. forthcoming).
8. Pritchard 1955, p. 29; Yon 2013, p. 213 n. 40.
9. Akkadian cuneiform tablet RS. 94.2177: Malbran-Labat 1999; see Yon 2013, p. 213, for a list of officials from Alashiya in the Ugarit archives.
10. On linguistic diversity in the kingdom of Kition, see Yon 2004.
11. Amadasi Guzzo 2004.
12. See Luckenbill 1927, pp. 265–66, § 690. On the Sargon stele, see Yon 1995 and 2004; Aruz et al. 2014, p. 187, cat. no. 74 (entry adapted from Na'aman 2005, pp. 132–33).
13. Yon 1993; Yon 2014, pp. 35c–37; Yon forthcoming.
14. V. Karageorghis and Maier 1984.
15. V. Karageorghis 1976.
16. According to Callot 2005.
17. See Hermary 2013.
18. See Fourrier 2007, pp. 111ff., on coroplasty, cultural identities, and political territories.
19. For Paphos, see Maier 1989. For the Golgoi statues, possibly kings of Kition or Salamis, see Hermary 2005; Hermary and Mertens 2014, nos. 1, 2, 11, 12, 22.
20. Yon 2005.
21. For instance, the metal bowl from Amathus: Culi-can 1982; Matthäus 1985, no. 428, pl. 36; Markoe 1985, Cy4, fig. pp. 248–49; Hermary 1986.
22. V. Karageorghis and Des Gagniers 1974, groups I and II; V. Karageorghis and Des Gagniers 1979, p. 101, no. SII.
23. V. Karageorghis and Des Gagniers 1974, p. 30, no. II.6.
24. For instance, Ashurbanipal's campaign in Elam in the Southwest Palace of Nineveh, Room XXXIII (Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 71–73, cat. no. 21).
25. On the central medallions of metal bowls, see Markoe 1985, Cy2, pp. 170–72, fig. pp. 244–45 (Idalion), Cy5, fig. p. 251 (Salamis), and Cy7, fig. p. 254 (Kourion).
26. Blinkers from Salamis; see V. Karageorghis 1973, blinker 220/1, pls. CVII, CVIII, CCLXXIX. See also Wicke 1999.
27. Outer band of the Idalion bowl; see Markoe 1985, Cy2, n. 25 (= Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 161–62, cat. no. 54 [entry by E. Fontan]).
28. For Tamassos: Matthäus 2007; Kition: Hadjisavvas 2014; Salamis: V. Karageorghis 1973.
29. Homer, *Iliad* 23.108–261.
30. V. Karageorghis 1973, pl. LVIII; see Vonhoff forthcoming.
31. Matthäus 1985, pp. 211ff., pls. 62, 63, shows the continuity with the metal vessels from the Late Bronze Age. See Aruz and de Lapérouse 2014a on their diffusion, techniques of manufacture, and iconography.
32. V. Karageorghis 1973, pp. 97–114, pls. CCXLIII–CCXLVI, figs. 18–24. It is not clear whether they were locally made or imported from the east.
33. See Matthäus 1985, pls. 67, 71, for Cypriot ewers from the Late Bronze Age and the Geometric periods; Fontan and Le Meaux 2007, cat. nos. 181–97, on ewers from the Levant to Spain; Aruz et al. 2014, cat. nos. 116a (Spain, bronze), 117 (Italy, ostrich egg shell), 118 (Israel, red slip clay), 119 (Egypt, alabaster).
34. V. Karageorghis and Des Gagniers 1974, pp. 6–7, 516–17; for ewers in banquet scenes, see Caubet 2008, 2015b.
35. Gjerstad 1946 and Matthäus 1985, pp. 160ff., for the bowls from Cyprus; catalogue in Markoe 1985; recent overview in Feldman 2014b. A large number

- were presented and discussed in Fontan and Le Meaux 2007, cat. nos. 163–77, and in Aruz et al. 2014, cat. nos. 52 (Kourion, Cyprus), 53 (Nimrud), 54 (Idalion, Cyprus), 159 (Eleutherna, Crete), 156 (Nimrud), 183 (Olympia), 192, 193 (Etruria).
36. Observed on many Assyrian reliefs, notably the banquet scene of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (British Museum), recently discussed in Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 73–74, cat. no. 22 (entry by N. Tallis).
  37. Count from Markoe 1985.
  38. Ibid., Cy3 from Idalion, fig. pp. 246–47; Caubet 2015b for banquet iconography in Cyprus.
  39. See Dentzer 1982 for a general discussion of the appearance and development of symposium scenes in the ancient world.
  40. See note 36, above.
  41. Bronze bowl from Salamis: Markoe 1985, Cy5, fig. p. 251; bowl from Kourion: *ibid.*, Cy6, fig. pp. 252–53.
  42. V. Karageorghis 1973, pls. A–F, LIX–LXXI, CCXXXVIII–CCXLII; see Aruz 2014a, pp. 121–22, figs. 3.7, 3.8.
  43. G. Herrmann and Laidlaw 2009, pp. 75ff., esp. 81–82; Gubel 1996.
  44. The fragments of an elephant tusk and debitage pieces are evidence for ivory working within the precinct of Temple I at Kition–*Kathari* during the eighth to seventh century B.C. V. Karageorghis 1999–2005, vol. 3, pp. 71, 90–91, nos. 891, 1443, 3188, 3197, vol. 4, pls. XXXI and CXLIII, from area 2, floor 2A; vol. 3, p. 103, nos. 1750, 1751, vol. 4, pls. XLIII and CLI, from area 2, floor 2–2A. See Caubet et al. 2015, pp. 268–69.
  45. See Yon 2005 on the floral style from Salamis.
  46. Michel-Dansac and Caubet 2013.
  47. Caubet 2005.
  48. See J. Karageorghis 1977, 2005.
  49. In Fourrier and Queyrel 1998, p. 216, no. 328, a wall bracket is a good example of the association of the naked goddess with the bull on the same cultic object.
  50. V. Karageorghis 1973, frontlets nos. 190, 165, 178+179, pls. LXXXII–LXXXIV, CCLXX, CCLXXI; disk pendant no. 155, pls. LXXXIX, CCLXXII; see V. Karageorghis 2014, pp. 188–92 and cat. nos. 75b–d.
  51. Culican 1969.
  52. Yon and Caubet 1989, figs. 9d–e; Fourrier and Queyrel 1998, nos. 523, 524; Caubet et al. 2015, p. 249, fig. 1c.
  53. Yon and Caubet 1989, figs. 3, 5, pls. III, IV; Fourrier 2007, pl. XXII.2.
  54. Aruz et al. 2014, p. 144, fig. 3.31, p. 154, fig. 51b. See also Winter's essay in this volume, pp. 180–93.
  55. Fourrier and Queyrel 1998, pp. 276–77, nos. 408, 409; Fourrier 2007, pl. IV. 4.
  56. Callot 2002, 2005; see above note 16.
  57. Yon 1986; V. Karageorghis 1996, pl. VIII.3–4; Fourrier and Queyrel 1998, pp. 351–52, nos. 565, 566; Caubet et al. 2015, pp. 241–42, fig. 1f, p. 249.
  58. V. Karageorghis 1996, pl. VIII.1–2; Fourrier 2003.
  59. Markoe 1985, Cy2, pp. 170–72, fig. pp. 244–45; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 161–62, cat. no. 54 (entry by E. Fontan).
  60. Tassignon 2013; royal sarcophagus of Amathus in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (74.51.2453, The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76): Hermary and Mertens 2014, no. 490, pp. 353–63.
  61. Tassignon (2013) comments convincingly on mythological dwarfs with special skills in metallurgy, from Hephaistos to the Niebelungen.
  62. Yon in Caubet et al. 2015, pp. 309–11, 330–32, figs. 10–12.
  63. G. Hill 1904, pl. II; Yon 2006, p. 59, fig. 32.
  64. Yon 2006, p. 59, fig. 32.



More than any other period of antiquity, the seventh century B.C. was a time of wonder and radical innovations in the material and visual cultures of the Mediterranean. Historians of the ancient world often resort to the metaphor of the Orientalizing Mediterranean as a “cauldron” in order to communicate aspects of life and human interaction around the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>1</sup> This may be fanciful, but it is apt for translating the unfathomable physical and conceptual scale of the great sea into a graspable and familiar category. Cauldrons have always been good to think with. They possess enclosed spaces, they are precious, and they bring people together. Their rims are tantalizing thresholds to thrilling delights, yet like the Mediterranean shores they may be populated with mystique, promise, and danger. It is certainly not by accident that Odysseus conjures up a boiling cauldron to speak of Charybdis.<sup>2</sup> His description of the ghastly Skylla has correspondences with and seems to have been consciously or unconsciously inspired by the multiheaded griffin cauldrons that are the focus of this essay (see Boardman essay, p. 208, fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> The Early Classical iconography of Herakles traversing the Mediterranean inside the golden bowl (*dinos*) of Helios clearly echoes the pan-Mediterranean dimension of cauldrons.<sup>4</sup>

The exhibition “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age” illustrated very well that the griffin cauldron is the most widely attested specimen of the so-called Orientalizing cauldron—perhaps the most emblematic artifact of the Orientalizing century throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>5</sup> In his delineation of the aesthetics of wonder, Philip Fisher talks about objects and phenomena that offer “the feeling of radical singularity of means and purposes . . . incomparable experiences . . . the self-consciously fresh or first work in a technical direction where preparation for seeing it breaks down and gives few clues . . . the address to delight. . . .”<sup>6</sup> The Orientalizing cauldrons fit this model better than any other category of Near Eastern or Orientalizing

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artifacts. The extremely fragmentary state of preservation of Orientalizing cauldrons has, however, prevented specialists and nonexperts alike from appreciating that these intricate artifacts were meant to be perceived as monsters in and of themselves.<sup>7</sup> Their radically novel and arresting appearance introduced unprecedented experiences and necessitated new forms of physical and mental responses to the visual.<sup>8</sup>

A good number of sophisticated studies have illuminated important aspects of the stylistic classification and technical properties of the Orientalizing cauldrons.<sup>9</sup> As to their practical function, sumptuous burial contexts in Anatolia (Tumulus MM at Gordion), Cyprus (Salamis, Tomb 79), and Italy (Circolo dei Lebeti at Vetulonia and the Bernardini and Barberini Tombs at Praeneste) show that Orientalizing cauldrons were used as luxurious feasting equipment.<sup>10</sup> In this capacity, they showcased their owners’ worldly outlook and exclusive access to and control of an affective figurative language. In Greece, on the other hand, where Orientalizing cauldrons are attested only in a small number of sanctuaries, their practical or symbolic functions remain largely unknown. Scholars have always thought of them as the seventh-century versions of the monumental tripod



*Above and below, Figs. 1a, b. Terracotta conical lekythos-oinochoe fragment with a marsh bird confronting an Orientalizing cauldron and a wolf chasing a stallion with fish above and below. Said to be from Italy, Cumae. Early Protocorinthian, ca. 700 B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1923 (23.160.18)*



cauldrons, the dedicatory objects par excellence of the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.<sup>11</sup> This is, however, erroneous.<sup>12</sup> Kolaïos's dedication of a gigantic griffin cauldron at the Samian Heraion after a lucrative trade voyage to the area of the Guadalquivir, reported by Herodotos,<sup>13</sup> was a unique gesture motivated by exceptional circumstances. The incident dates to the third quarter of the seventh century B.C. Herodotos's account stands out as the only textual testimony about an Orientalizing cauldron surviving from antiquity. The contrast with the tripod cauldrons could not be more striking. A plethora of texts, literary or epigraphical, complements a large number of figurative representations with tripod cauldrons playing various roles in mythical narratives and ritual settings.<sup>14</sup> The Orientalizing cauldrons, by contrast, were a short-lived phenomenon.<sup>15</sup> By the end of the seventh century their production had petered out, although there is evidence that a few of them were treasured as venerable relics in Greek sanctuaries until the Hellenistic period.<sup>16</sup>

#### GRIFFIN CAULDRONS IN GREECE: REPRESENTATIONS

Despite the plethora of archaeological evidence from Olympia, Delphi, and Samos, the public visibility of the Orientalizing cauldrons in antiquity turns out to be minimal. A small number of them may have been deposited in the sanctuaries as dedicatory objects, but it seems that the great majority of Orientalizing cauldrons were physically and cognitively inaccessible for most of the seventh century B.C. Below I discuss figurative representations of Orientalizing cauldrons that encode a range of responses and understandings—but certainly not their wholesale incorporation within the cultic environments of the seventh-century Greek world.<sup>17</sup>

Two Protocorinthian pots, a lekythos-oinochoe in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (figs. 1a, b) and an aryballos in Berlin (fig. 2), playfully record the fascination engendered by the Orientalizing cauldrons. The lekythos-oinochoe invites viewers to think of an impressive griffin cauldron on a

conical stand in terms of the violence inherent in the hunt of two stallions by a wild wolf.<sup>18</sup> One of the two griffin protomes watches the wild scene with rapt attention. On the opposite side, the other protome has locked its gaze in an amorous tête-à-tête with an impressive marsh bird. The same emphasis on vision animates a similar scene on the Berlin aryballos.<sup>19</sup> Here the vase painter has added an interesting comparative foil. An overly schematic tripod cauldron provides a measure of value and technical intricacy for the griffin cauldron. Its inert “thingness” also underscores the visual impression of the Orientalizing cauldron as alive, or at least considerably elevated from the inert and elegant intricacy of its peer.

We are used to thinking of the Orientalizing monsters on cauldrons as apotropaic figural devices, replete with demonic forces that were unleashed in the wake of the Orientalizing wave. Examples such as the vases discussed above seem to suggest the opposite: the monstrous had to do more with attraction and attentive vision than with fear and repulsion. The ebullient lifelikeness of these bronze vessels invited attention and scrutiny. It also challenged those allowed to physically interact with them to develop new perceptual strategies for handling the tremendous affective power of art forms, such as the “siren” attachments and the griffin or lion protomes. These shockingly novel configurations of the visual did not hide their artificial nature. Yet, their formal and technical properties imparted to these devices a “taxidermic” effect that must have caused a mixture of delight and puzzlement. How do you negotiate an encounter with a man-made representational object that has powerfully crossed the culturally tolerable threshold of lifelikeness? The pre-Orientalizing material cultures of Greece and Italy had been largely devoid of these cognitive challenges. Until the second half of the eighth century B.C., wondrously intricate artifacts had existed at the epicenter of well-established performative practices.<sup>20</sup> These objects, however, had never invited viewers or users to negotiate



Fig. 2. Terracotta aryballos showing marsh bird and cauldron. Protocorinthian, ca. 690 B.C. Antikensammlung, Berlin (3409)

the complex sentiments and thoughts evoked by the lifelike depiction of the supernatural.

Three more figurative documents from Greece complement the understanding of griffin cauldrons as active living beings embedded in the fauna of a physical world oscillating between the real and the fantastic. A Protocorinthian krateriskos from the Heraion at Samos, whose workshops played a pioneering role in the invention and dissemination of the griffin cauldron, embeds a

griffin cauldron in a narrative sequence featuring monsters (fig. 3).<sup>21</sup> A sphinx underscores the power of a spear-brandishing Athena. Directed toward the violent action of the main frieze, her alert gaze invites viewers to focus on a duel of epic proportions between a centaur and a griffin cauldron. The centaur seems to be the aggressor against the cauldron-monster, who directs two of its three griffin protomes against its foe. On the other side of the vase, a duel





Fig. 3. Roll-out drawing of krateriskos showing figural frieze. Samos. Protocorinthian, 7th century B.C. Samos Archaeological Museum, Vathy, Greece

between a panther and a hero punctuates the main scene like a Homeric simile.

Even more aggressive are the Orientalizing cauldrons on the famous burial amphora from Eleusis's west cemetery.<sup>22</sup> To render the horrifying ugliness of the pursuing Gorgons, the Polyphemos Painter sought his models in long-limbed girls and Orientalizing cauldrons—a paradoxical combination of delight and horror! His choice of the Orientalizing cauldrons for the ghastly Gorgons' heads may have been an ingenious pictorial gesture, but it also betrays an extremely negative sentiment toward the Orientalizing cauldrons (fig. 4). I believe that since the publication of the amphora in 1957 the critical responses to this grand narrative have altogether missed the creator's allusive message. Confronted with the materiality and visibility of the Orientalizing cauldrons, he must have found them horrendously repulsive. His response, however, is not of a purely aesthetic order. I propose that a profound moral quality intentionally permeates this unprecedented figurative narrative. His strategic placement of Athena as a bulwark against the running Gorgons may be motivated by Athena's function as the champion of Perseus, but the figurative staging clearly orchestrates an oppositional confrontation between Athena and Orientalizing cauldrons. It is possible that the Polyphemos Painter was trying pictorially to suggest that griffin cauldrons were not at all appropriate *agalmata* for Athena. At Eleusis, the presence of Athena on the Eleusis amphora would have evoked nearby Athens and the sanctuary of Athena on the Acropolis in viewers' minds. Remnants of Orientalizing cauldrons ("siren" and griffin

protomes) are documented, albeit in fragmentary form, in this sanctuary, but the minimal scholarly attention they have received is incommensurate with their original significance in the cultic life of the sanctuary.<sup>23</sup> It is possible, therefore, that a number of these cauldrons were representative of the Athenian elites who would have used the sanctuary to show off their power and exclusive access to the Orientalizing aesthetic ethos. From the vantage point of a socially or politically dissenting group at Eleusis, the Orientalizing cauldron would have stood for a dangerous political order that had to be decapitated like Medusa. The actualization of this message in the context of a child's burial would have made it even more urgent and poignant.<sup>24</sup>

My discussion of the miniscule corpus of pictorial representations of griffin cauldrons in Greece concludes with an elaborate hammered bronze plaque with embossed figurative decoration from Olympia (fig. 5).<sup>25</sup> Since its initial publication this piece has received attention because of the practical information it provides for reconstructing the original appearance of Orientalizing cauldrons. However, it also provides valuable testimony about Orientalizing cauldrons at Olympia, a pan-Hellenic sanctuary with remnants of an impressive number of cauldrons. Originally used in an architectural setting, the specific details of which are unknown, this remarkable piece preserves a vertical sequence of square panels. The topmost panel features an elaborate conical stand topped with an Orientalizing cauldron with four griffin protomes. The panel immediately below it has a clearly rendered crab, followed by a



Fig. 4. Detail of terracotta amphora showing a Gorgon. Eleusis. Protoattic, mid-7th century B.C. Archeological Museum, Eleusis, Greece (2630)

panel with a bird (described as a “goose” in the original publication) facing to the left, its wings unfolded as if it is in the process of landing or taking off. It is vividly animated. The panel below is not well preserved, but enough remains to identify a slithering snake to its left. The plaque is an enigma now, but I would argue that even in its original usage it was meant to function as a pictorial riddle. The topmost panel shows a formidable cauldron in splendid isolation. This framing invites attention and scrutiny, whereas the vertical sequence of crab, goose, and snake provide figurative clues for viewers to actively put together an understanding of the griffin cauldron. The vertical juxtaposition of sumptuous artifact and disparate living beings seems to suggest an overarching categorical alignment (all four are living beings). On the other hand, the plaque prompts viewers to understand the formidable cauldrons in terms of qualities inherent in crabs, birds, and snakes. For example, crabs are polypods and amphibian, properties that offer useful



Fig. 5. Bronze hammered sheet with griffin cauldron, crab, bird, and snake. Olympia. Orientalizing, first half of 7th century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Olympia, Greece

referents for thinking about the cauldrons' griffin protomes. To the same end, birds and snakes, too, are helpful, as the cauldrons' griffin protomes are distinctly avian and incorporate serpentine elements. This attempt at a semantic decipherment cannot be pursued in depth here, but we can suggest that the Olympia image could originally have functioned as a figurative prop for communicating the hybrid nature of the Orientalizing cauldron.

The limited prominence of the griffin cauldron in antiquity suggests that at least in Greece this type of bronze vessel was neither fully understood nor uniformly received. However, the *lekythos-oinochoe* at the Metropolitan Museum and the *aryballos* in Berlin attest to the value of the griffin cauldron and the novelty of its affective lifelikeness. The Eleusis amphora suggests strong distaste, whereas the *krateriskos* from Samos places a griffin cauldron in a struggle among monsters. In its present state of preservation, the bronze plaque from Olympia articulates the confusing hybrid nature of the griffin cauldron. These representations are motivated by the fascination griffin cauldrons generated, but they contain no clues as to why or by whom they were brought into the sanctuaries. The plethora of griffin cauldrons deposited in Olympia, Delphi, and Samos was not necessarily accessible to all those who frequented the sanctuaries from the late eighth century onward. Instead of thinking of them as sumptuous dedications generating the fame (*kleos*) of their dedicants, it makes more sense to view them as equipment acquired to enhance the mystique and otherworldliness of the great sanctuaries during a period of rapid change and increasing competition between them. As cultic apparatus, they would have been treasured not only because of their value or practical function, but also because of their extraordinary visual properties and sensory effects. I think of them as the material motivators of a new Orientalizing aesthetic of wondrous and rare experiences.



Fig. 6. Drawing of white-on-red terracotta olla with griffin protomes. Narce, Pizzo Piede, Tomb 19. XLI. Orientalizing, ca. 675–650 B.C. Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome (4374)

#### GRIFFIN CAULDRONS IN ITALY

If we now turn to Orientalizing Italy, we get a somewhat more concrete picture of the cauldrons' social life, effect, and reception. There is plenty of evidence in Etruria and Latium that princely elites controlled these objects in order to construct, assert, and reinforce their otherworldly status and mystique. In their hands, these objects were tools of ideological control. I propose that this was primarily because the cauldrons introduced radically new forms of visual engagement with material culture.<sup>26</sup> Until the beginning of the seventh century, a culture of sparse visibility had been dominant in Italy. As in Greece of the Protogeometric and Geometric periods, the prevalent media were characterized by expressive minimalism, schematic formal effects, and rudimentary figuration.<sup>27</sup> These traditions were severely and irreversibly disrupted by the onset of the

Orientalizing phenomenon. Its impact is manifest in princely burial assemblages such as those of Praeneste (the Bernardini and Barberini Tombs), Vetulonia (Circolo dei Lebeti), and Caere (the Regolini-Galassi Tomb).<sup>28</sup> They all contained extraordinary collections of equipment generally associated with Greek-style symposia, predominant among which were sizable cauldrons

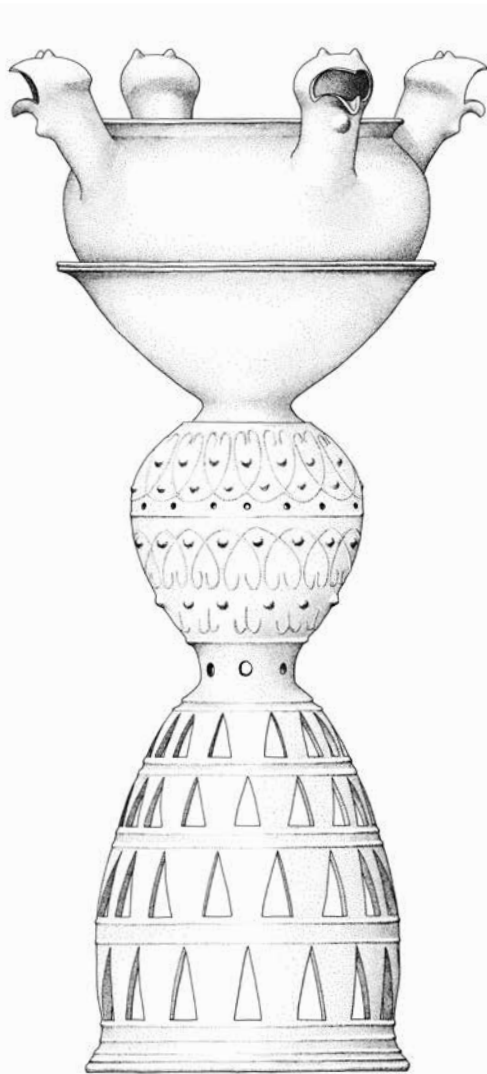


Fig. 7. Drawing of terracotta olla with griffin protomes standing on terracotta olmos (stand). From an Orientalizing-period house in Ficana. Second half 7th century B.C. Ostia (olla) (38252) and Ostia (olmos) (38249)

equipped with finely made griffin and/or lion protomes and siren attachments. These were meant to amaze by denoting an exclusive lifestyle of mythical opulence and prestige emanating from the owners' involvement in elite networks both within and outside the Italic peninsula.<sup>29</sup> The affective force of these bronzes can be traced in a series of ceramic ollae (bowls) with outward-directed, plastically rendered protomes attached below the rim—an arrangement whose syntax leaves no doubt that their makers were trying to emulate the grand bronze griffin and lion cauldrons. These all derive from rich burials whose luxury and wealth, however, pales by comparison with the opulence of the princely tombs of Praeneste or Vetulonia. Most notable are white-on-red wares in a few graves of the Ager Faliscus near Civita Castellana (fig. 6), as well as impasto ollae from Ficana (fig. 7), Castel di Decima, and Laurentina Acqua Acetosa in Latium.<sup>30</sup> In all cases, contextual data suggest that these belonged to drinking sets for banqueting events modeled after the practices of the superrich elites. But how familiar were those second-tier elites of, for example, Ficana or the Ager Faliscus with the bronze originals and their functions? Despite the syntactical homology of their protomes, the Italic ollae and the bronze cauldrons are separated by sharp differences: the Italic protomes are conceived as fierce and threatening monsters, yet they are minimalist in conception, schematic, and categorically indefinable. They lack the most distinct traits of the bronze specimens, such as the protruding eyes, the knob above the forehead, the upright ears, and the hanging volutes down the neck. These formal departures suggest that the makers of the Italic ollae could not have had direct physical contact with the original models or with the nexus of relationships that defined them as status-constructing tools.<sup>31</sup> I posit instead that the local emulators (craftsmen or their patrons) were recipients only of the fame of the bronze originals as well as of the practices in which these were embedded and the prestige of their owners.





Fig. 8. Hammered bronze protome. Olympia. Orientalizing, mid-7th century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Olympia, Greece (Br 8347)

The princely elites, for example, of Praeneste, would have controlled physical and cognitive access to their wealth (the bronze cauldrons) and the practices (symptotic or burial events) in which this wealth was actively used. This model of extremely restricted accessibility is predicated on exclusivity and the ability of the top elites to control social and cultural conventions around the new material and visual culture of the Orientalizing period. Radically novel types of material and visual culture entail radically novel behaviors (such as modes of looking at and interacting with the monstrous Orientalizing griffins and lions). These can be arbitrary, but they are also conditioned by the new forms of materiality and visuality. Moreover, these new interactive behaviors are strictly dictated by those on top

who control modes and degrees of initiation to lifestyles and ideologies. They also control the discursive trickle-down of information about themselves and their material and visual culture outside their exclusive circles.

#### CONCLUSION

The reception of Orientalizing cauldrons in Greece and Italy offers fascinating insights into the Orientalizing phenomenon. A miniscule number of pictorial representations in Greek figurative media and ceramic imitations in central Italy reveal a wide range of responses, all of which seem to be governed by a common denominator: during the heyday of their usage, the griffin cauldrons remained exclusive to spaces, practices, and social milieus that systematically monopolized their unprecedented sensory properties and effects. Precisely because of their aggressively illusionistic components (vividly animated griffins and lions), these objects became the most coveted instruments of power in the hands of institutions (Greece) and elites (Italy). I have tried to show that viewers experienced them as wondrous monsters in and of themselves—not simply as sumptuous ornate vessels with lifelike decoration. The movement, textures, surface treatment and gaze of the griffin and lion protomes beckoned viewers (or at least those viewers allowed access to them) to experience the uncanny: the frisson when confronted with matter vividly animated as never before, the puzzlement in front of the artifact that looks at you exacting a response of sensory submission or cognitive command, the confrontation with artifacts being at once familiar and overtly alien, the disorienting sense of synesthesia, fear entangled with attraction, the compulsion to share these novel experiences and, if possible, re-create them at will (fig. 8). These were rare and unsettling experiences, constitutive of a new “Orientalizing” aesthetic that manifested itself as a sweeping pan-Mediterranean phenomenon. Kolaïos, the legendary Samian tradesman who blazed new commercial trails by sailing as far as the Guadalquivir,

acknowledged this new aesthetic by setting up a monumental griffin cauldron at the Samian Heraion, the most cosmopolitan and most Orientalizing sanctuary of the entire Mediterranean.<sup>32</sup>

1. For example, Demand 2011, pp. xi–xii, and p. 249: “the ‘model’ within which to view the birth of the Greek polis is not that of the isolated farmstead, but rather that of the ‘fantastic cauldron’ of Mediterranean maritime interactions.”
2. Homer, *Odyssey* 12.237–38.
3. *Ibid.*, 12.73–126, 222–59.
4. From Vulci, attributed by Beazley to Douris. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Vatican City, inv. no. 16563. Beazley 1963, no. 449.2.
5. Aruz and de Lapérouse 2014a, pp. 272–81.
6. Fisher 1998, p. 6.
7. Orientalizing cauldrons from Greece have been addressed in previous scholarship only in terms of their constituent parts (siren or bull attachments, griffin and lion or bull protomes).
8. I explore these issues in Papalexandrou forthcoming.
9. The most important publications are Jantzen 1955, H. Herrmann 1966, H. Herrmann 1979, and Gehrig 2004.
10. Gordion: R. Young 1981, pp. 79–176, esp. 102–10, and McGovern et al. 1999 and McGovern 2000 on consumed foodstuff and beverages. Cyprus: V. Karageorghis 1973, pp. 25–27, and V. Karageorghis 2014. Italy: Praeneste, Bernardini Tomb: Canciani and von Hase 1979; Barberini Tomb: C. Curtis 1925. Vetulonia: Falchi and Pernier 1913 and Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 276–77.
11. Philipp 2012, p. 90; Kyrieleis 2011, p. 73. See Papalexandrou 2005 and 2008 on the significance and performative functions of the Geometric tripod cauldron. Brisart (2011) discusses griffin cauldrons and other Orientalizing artifacts as ideologically laden generators of social distinction.
12. See Papalexandrou 2013 and forthcoming on the need for variegated models of symbolic and practical functions of Orientalizing cauldrons. For example, Ström (1992b, p. 51) has proposed that Orientalizing cauldrons are associated with the introduction of Near Eastern–style banquets to Greek sanctuaries.
13. Herodotos, *Histories* 4.152.
14. See the comprehensive treatment of representations of tripod-cauldrons in Sakowski 1997.
15. Gehrig (2004, pp. 175–79), argues that the Samian production had come to an end already before the end of the seventh century B.C.
16. A good example is the griffin protome (dated ca. 670 B.C.) found in a second-century B.C. destruction layer inside the so-called Prytaneion of the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona. See Touchais 1983, p. 770; Vlachopoulou–Oikonomou 1994.
17. Sakowski (1998) brings together and discusses the pictorial representations of griffin cauldrons.
18. Moore 2009; Aruz et al. 2014, p. 262, cat. no. 137.
19. Johansen 1923, pp. 17, 60–61; Amyx 1988, p. 18.
20. Greece: Papalexandrou 2005 on tripod-cauldrons; Italy: Babbi 2008 on anthropomorphic terracottas.
21. Walter 1959a, pp. 57–60.
22. Mylonas 1957 and 1975, pp. 91–92.
23. Scholl 2006, pp. 101–5.
24. For a detailed discussion of this argument, see Papalexandrou forthcoming.
25. Hampe and Jantzen 1937, pp. 71, 85; Hampe 1939, p. 36; Kunze 1948, p. 14; Moore 2009, p. 9.
26. Papalexandrou 2016.
27. Andrea Babbi’s (2008) systematic analysis of Early Iron Age anthropomorphic terracotta figurines is an exemplary illustration of this situation. See also Richardson 1962; Drago 2012; and S. Neri 2012.
28. On the princely tombs at Vetulonia and Praeneste, see the references in note 10 above. On the Regolini–Galassi Tomb, see Pareti 1947.
29. Fulminante (2003, pp. 239–40) discusses conspicuous consumption of Orientalizing luxury as an active mode of social differentiation in Orientalizing Italy. In the same vein, but focusing on Greece and Crete, see Brisart 2011.
30. Ager Faliscus: Micozzi 1994, pp. 49–51, 284, nos. 24, 25; also Aruz et al. 2014, p. 273, fig. 4.15. Ficana: Rathje 1983. Castel di Decima: Pallottino 1977, cat. no. 516 (olla with protomes from female burial in tomb no. 181). Laurentina Acqua Acetosa: Di Mino and Bertinetti 1990, pp. 48–51.
31. This is emphatically the case with an olla from the east side of the Apennine Mountains: Silvestrini and Sabbatini 2008, p. 84, cat. no. 77 (Matelica, Breccia Tomb 53). This idiosyncratic olla unmistakably replicates the vessel-plus-protomes model, but in this case the protomes have become an altogether different species from that of the griffin cauldrons.
32. Herodotos, *Histories* 4.152.

The civilizations of the Near Eastern world, as well as the island of Cyprus, were never isolated from the Aegean, the central and western Mediterranean. Even at the beginning of the first millennium B.C., the period often characterized as a “Dark Age,” ships followed sea routes throughout the Mediterranean, from the Levant to the Iberian Peninsula. We may recall the legendary maritime enterprises of Hiram I of Tyre and Solomon of Jerusalem, who sent ships to Tarshish, Greek Tartessos, in southern Spain. The search for metals and other valuable raw materials was the decisive motif for long-distance trade at this time.

During the eleventh to seventh century B.C. several horizons of cultural interaction between the Near East, the Aegean, and the central and western Mediterranean may be observed:

- (1) Contacts between Cyprus, the Levant, and the Mediterranean from the eleventh century to the eighth century B.C.
- (2) Contacts between Egypt and the Aegean around 900 B.C.
- (3) The artistic influence of the city-states of North Syria, starting during the late tenth century B.C. and continuing well into the eighth
- (4) The impact of Phoenician art, parallel to Phoenician commercial enterprises and colonization during the ninth, eighth, and early seventh centuries B.C.

#### CYPRUS, THE LEVANT, AND THE MEDITERRANEAN DURING THE EARLY FIRST MILLENNIUM B.C.

The maritime enterprises of Hiram I of Tyre and Solomon are mirrored in the archaeological record: In Berzocana, located in the province of Cáceres in central Spain, a bronze bowl has been found in a hoard together with gold rings, which are difficult to date.<sup>1</sup> The bowl, without parallel on the Iberian Peninsula, is 17 centimeters in diameter and has a flat shape with a low foot and

## Metalwork from the Levant to Iberia during the Early First Millennium B.C.

a typical incurving rim (fig. 1). The best parallel is a bowl of identical shape and dimensions in the Cesnola Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (fig. 2). It is a variant of a type known from the Levant and from Cyprus found concentrated in these areas and in Egypt. Bowls of this type have been discovered in Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I contexts in Israel and Jordan. In Cyprus they begin to appear in the Late Bronze Age but have their greatest popularity at the beginning of the Cypro-Geometric phase around 1000 B.C.



Fig. 1. Drawing of bronze bowl from a metal hoard. Spain, Cáceres, Berzocana. Ca. 1000 B.C. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, Spain



Fig. 2. Drawing of bronze bowl. Cypriot. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.5602)



Fig. 3. Fragmentary bronze lotus bowl. Crete, Prinias. Cypriot, ca. 10th century B.C.



Fig. 4. Bronze bowl. Crete, Prinias, Sub-Minoan Tomb BA. Cypriot, 11th century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Heraklion, Greece (X. 3130)

During the same period Cypriot artisans created their most successful invention, hemispherical bowls of different sizes whose handles are decorated with a lotus flower, or in one case with a wild goat protome. The handle attachment has a figure-of-eight shape. From the Cypro-Geometric I onward, this type of bowl appears at Kouklia/Palaepaphos, Amathus, and other sites. The life span of the type in Cyprus seems to have been rather short, Cypro-Geometric I–II.<sup>2</sup>

These bronze bowls, of excellent technical quality and aesthetic brilliance, were exported to the Near East, Asia Minor, and the Aegean, especially Crete (fig. 3), where a vivid local production started during the later Geometric period and when Cypriot originals were no longer available. Local Cretan bowls of this type are rather flat in their proportions in comparison to the hemispherical Cypriot originals. In the central and western Mediterranean we find lotus bowls, probably Cypriot originals of early date, in Sardinia

(Sardara) and even in Portugal. Local imitations developed in central Italy as well, where the lotus flower became a popular ornament during the Etruscan Orientalizing period. In the south, lotus bowls can be traced to Kush, modern Sudan, most of them local imitations of later date. The distribution of the type illustrates its popularity in the ancient world with exports from Cyprus and local production in the Near East, Asia Minor, the Aegean, especially Crete, central Italy, Sardinia, the Iberian Peninsula, and Sudan.

A rarer variant is represented by comparatively large bowls with similar but plain handles without the typical lotus flower on top. They are attested in Cypro-Geometric I tombs at Kouklia/Palaepaphos–Plakes and Kouklia/Palaepaphos–Skales, whereas an export to Prinias on the island of Crete has even been found in a Sub-Minoan tomb context (fig. 4).<sup>3</sup>

Cultural interrelations in the Mediterranean basin were no one-way road from east to west. In Amathus, Tomb 523 (of Cypro-Geometric I–II date, tenth to ninth century B.C.), a bronze spit has come to light, which Fulvia Lo Schiavo was able to identify as an *obelos*, a spit for roasting meat, belonging to the final Atlantic Bronze Age.<sup>4</sup> A ring as a finial, a small U-shaped foot and a fragmentary statuette, probably of a bird, are the characteristics of this artifact type whose origin lies in the area of Spain and Portugal, western France, and Britain. A fragment of a comparable spit has been discovered among the objects from the famous hoard of Monte Sa Idda in Sardinia, and it is highly probable that the Amathus *obelos* found its way to Cyprus via Sardinia. In this context one should note that Sardinian pottery is widespread in the Mediterranean, and a Sardinian *askos* of the ninth to eighth century B.C. has been found in the tholos of Khaniale Tekke, north of Knossos on Crete.<sup>5</sup>

There are more imported bronze vases of early first millennium date in the Mediterranean, which cannot be attributed to a specific region in the Near East, as they have a wide geographical distribution from Egypt,



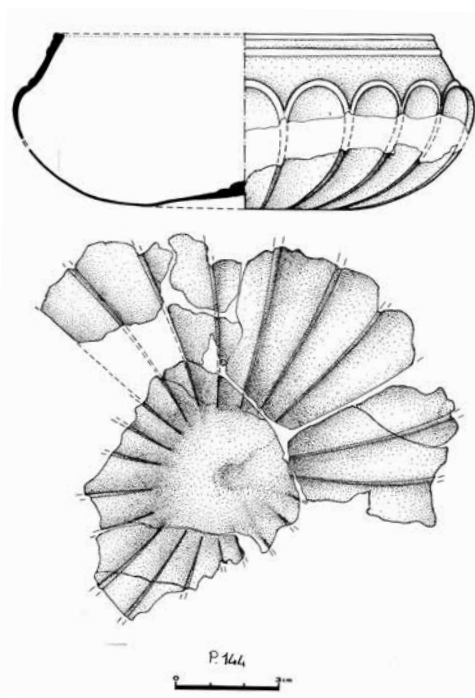
Israel, Syria, and Phoenicia to Mesopotamia. Among these are bowls with rod-shaped attachments and swing handles, a type well known between the ninth and seventh centuries B.C.<sup>6</sup> An early specimen from Lefkandi, Toumba, Tomb 79A, dates to the ninth century B.C. (Sub-Protogeometric II).<sup>7</sup> Others have been found on the island of Crete and as far west as Sardinia. Later, eighth-to-sixth-century B.C. Phoenician variants are characterized by an extremely long attachment, with a geographical distribution extending from Nimrud, Cyprus, and ancient Kush to the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>8</sup>

Equally widespread are bowls with ribbed decoration, known in Luristan, Assyria, North Syria, and Phoenicia. In the west they became popular in the Aegean, from the Cretan Protogeometric to Protogeometric B period from around 900 B.C., for example, in the Siderospilia cemetery at Prinias, into the

eighth century B.C. (fig. 5), as well as in central and south Italy during the eighth and especially seventh centuries B.C. There are imports as well as local adaptations. These bowls can indeed be found from Assyria to Iberia. Ferdinando Sciacca has discussed the numerous variants of this type in his magnum opus *Patere baccellate in bronzo*.<sup>9</sup>

Round-bottomed carinated cauldrons are another creation of early Levantine craftsmen that found their way to the west: Iron Age I specimens from Tell es-Sa'idiyeh in Jordan and from Jatt in Israel, in this latter case with spiral attachments, have parallels in Kouklia/Palaepaphos–Plakes, in Cala Gonone in Sardinia (with spiral attachments again), as well as in a specific variant with triangular attachments on the island of Crete, in the Orthi Petra cemetery at Eleutherna, and in a Protogeometric to Protogeometric B tomb in the Siderospilia cemetery at Prinias.<sup>10</sup>

Fig. 5. Drawing of bronze ribbed bowl. Crete, Prinias, Tomb 39. Cypriot or Levantine, Protogeometric to Protogeometric B context, 10th–9th century B.C.



#### EGYPT AND THE AEGEAN

Around 900 B.C. Egyptian metal artifacts appear in the Aegean on the island of Crete (in the Ida Cave of Zeus, in the North Cemetery of Knossos, and in Protogeometric to Protogeometric B tomb contexts at Prinias) and in Lefkandi on the island of Euboea (in tombs of Late Protogeometric to Sub-Protogeometric date).<sup>11</sup> A distinct horizon of imports is represented by a series of small squat jugs whose handles are decorated with lotus flowers in delicate low relief. There are more than fifteen specimens from the Cave of Zeus on Mount Ida and six of them (as yet unpublished) from Prinias. Egyptian craftsmen had created this attractive type during the New Kingdom; it was one of their most successful inventions. Production continued in Egypt during the first half of the first millennium B.C., as is indicated by a series of well-dated juglets from Kush, modern Sudan, in Meroë, Kerma, and other cemeteries. Lotus juglets appear quite often in the Aegean, mostly in wealthy early Iron Age tombs in the Knossos area, at Lefkandi, and in sanctuaries, such as the sacred Cave of Zeus on Mount Ida.<sup>12</sup>

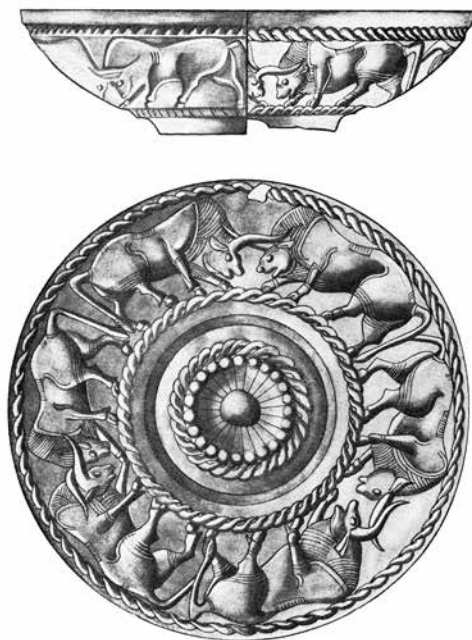


Fig. 6. Drawing of bronze bowl with bulls. Crete, Ida Cave. North Syrian, 9th century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Heraklion, Greece (X. 4848)

Of course, it is impossible to identify the seafarers who brought these Egyptian luxury goods into the Aegean: were they Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians, Phoenicians, or Cypriots? There are more metal vases of Egyptian origin, which warn us against underestimating the influence of Egypt in the years around 900 B.C. These include especially Egyptian *situlae*, vessels used for libations, Egyptian bowls, and an Egyptian spouted jug, in the Ida Cave, at Prinias and at Lefkandi (in Late Protogeometric/Sub-Protogeometric I contexts). As Egyptian artifacts of this type are missing in the Near East and on Cyprus, which would have been the regular waypoint on the route to the west for Phoenician merchant ships, the hypothesis that Phoenicians brought these metal vases into Greece becomes rather improbable. I suppose that direct contacts between early first millennium Egypt and Greece were responsible for the distribution of such “Aigyptiaka” in the

Aegean. In Egypt the years before and around 900 B.C. represent a period of renewal of imperial power and of economic expansion under the pharaohs of Dynasty 22, beginning with Sheshonq I (ca. 945–924 B.C.).

#### NORTH SYRIA, CYPRUS, AND THE AEGEAN

At the same time, the city-states of North Syria were important cultural and artistic centers that came into close contact with Cyprus and the Aegean at an early date.<sup>13</sup> Probably during the ninth century B.C. a bronze bowl of unique character and excellent technical quality, depicting antithetic pairs of bulls with very heavy bodies, came to Crete from central North Syria (fig. 6).<sup>14</sup> It displays a style that combines organic observation and fine decorative linear hatching. Parallels can be detected in the figural art of Tell Halaf, the ancient city kingdom of Guzana, during the ninth century B.C. It is a stylistic group, represented by stone sculptures and ivory carvings, which has been christened the “flame and frond school” by Georgina Herrmann.<sup>15</sup> Artifacts of this style are widespread in the Near East, but localization is made possible by the stone sculpture from Tell Halaf, particularly orthostats made for buildings, which were executed by ateliers working for the local rulers (see Novák essay).

The same type of bowl, but displaying a completely different style of stout figures with heavy parallel hatching, was found in Tomb 42 of the Athenian Kerameikos, datable to the second half of the ninth century,<sup>16</sup> although this is only a *terminus ante quem*. Stylistically comparable bowls depicting processions and royal or—more probably divine—banquets were found at Lefkandi (in Late Protogeometric tomb context, ca. 900 B.C.) and at Idalion on Cyprus. Their style has excellent parallels on gold jewelry from Zincirli, the ancient city kingdom of Sam'al.<sup>17</sup> There must have been other artistic centers as well: a bronze bowl from Lefkandi displaying a distinct, vivid, and elegant style may have been produced in Carchemish (see Aruz essay, p. 20, figs. 8a, b).<sup>18</sup>

Fig. 7. Bronze horse blinker with Master of Animals. Euboia, Eretria, sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros. Syrian, 9th century B.C. National Archaeological Museum, Athens (X 15070)



Finds of North Syrian metal bowls from Cyprus, Crete, Athens, and Lefkandi indicate a sea route via Cyprus. The North Syrian centers, which probably produced stylistically different variants of these bronze vases, are the city-states of Sam'al (Zincirli), Guzana (Tell Halaf), and Carchemish.

Among imports from North Syrian ateliers in Greece are equestrian ornaments, such as the famous frontlet with the inscription of king Hazael of Aram-Damascus, whose reign ended around 830 B.C., with its relief of nude goddesses (see p. 204).<sup>19</sup> Bronze blinkers, also with the inscription of Hazael, have come to light in the sanctuary of Apollo at Eretria on the island of Euboia (fig. 7).<sup>20</sup> Additional North Syrian horse gear is known from Samos and Miletos.<sup>21</sup> North Syrian figural art had a strong impact on local Greek metalwork on the island of Crete, where animal friezes and religious iconography (deities, demons, and mythical creatures) reflect North Syrian prototypes. It also influenced religious ideology directly: shields with depictions of a nude goddess are known from the Ida Cave, Eleutherna (see Stampolidis

essay, p. 291, fig. 14) and from Phaistos.<sup>22</sup> Bronze reliefs of ultimately North Syrian origin (probably originating in different workshop traditions), in secondary use as part of Cretan korai (combined with contemporary Cretan bronze plate of the early seventh century B.C.), have been found in the Archaic stadium of Olympia (fig. 8). They must have been exported to Crete during the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. and reused by Cretan metalworkers who erected these statues as votives in the sanctuary of Zeus in Olympia.<sup>23</sup>

I shall not comment on cauldrons decorated with griffin protomes, animal protomes of different types, or winged demons as attachments, as these have been discussed so often (see Boardman essay, p. 208, fig. 1; Niemeier essay; Papalexandrou essay; and p. 322).<sup>24</sup> They have a distribution from the Near East via the Aegean to central Italy. There must have been various production centers in Syria, Urtu, as well as Phoenicia, and from around 700 B.C. onward local production also evolved in Greece and Italy.



Fig. 8. Bronze repoussé sheets from statue of a goddess. Olympia, Well 17, northern embankment of stadium of sanctuary of Zeus. Olympia Museum, Greece



Fig. 9. Fragmentary silver bowl. Cypriot. Archaic, ca. 710–675 B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.4556)

PHOENICIA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN  
North Syrian metalwork has a geographical distribution from the Near East via Cyprus and the Aegean toward central Italy but not farther to the west, whereas imports of luxury goods from Phoenicia, which arrived somewhat later in the Mediterranean than works of art originating in the city-kingdoms of North Syria, can be traced to Spain, Portugal, and the Atlantic coast of Morocco, not only in the coastal regions where Phoenician merchants founded emporia and colonies during the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. but also in the neighboring indigenous regions, like inland Spain or central Italy. This is an era that Hans-Georg Niemeyer has called a period of early globalization in the ancient world.<sup>25</sup>

Among the most widespread products of Phoenician metal workshops are different types of bowls with figural decoration made of bronze, silver, and gold, prestige objects of high artistic quality and high value. Figural scenes show a remarkable consistency of iconography and style over wide distances.<sup>26</sup>

Amid the different types of Phoenician bowls, those with animal friezes *en miniature* seem to be the earliest variant. In Italy they can be found in contexts of the precolonial period, for example, in Francavilla Marittima in a tomb that may be dated to the late ninth century or the years around 800 B.C. at latest.<sup>27</sup>

At a slightly later period, during the eighth century B.C., bowls with friezes of striding bulls became extremely popular in the Near East and in the Mediterranean world. They are found in Iran, at Nimrud, in Phrygian tomb of late eighth century B.C. date in Ankara, on the island of Crete, in the Cyclades, on the Greek mainland, in Italy (Montevetrano near Pontecagnano, tomb of the second half of the eighth century B.C.), and in later contexts in ancient Kush (modern Sudan).<sup>28</sup> Attic vase painters of the second half of the eighth century B.C. tried to imitate them in their own medium on painted clay bowls.<sup>29</sup>

More or less contemporary are bowls of the variant called by Richard Barnett, the





Fig. 10. Gilded-silver bowl with Egyptianizing motifs. Italy, Etruria, Praeneste, Colombella necropolis, Bernardini Tomb. Phoenician or Orientalizing, early 7th century B.C. Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome (N61565)

“marsh pattern group,” with circles of small palmette ornament framing friezes with repetitive groups of mythical creatures.<sup>30</sup> A related version with complex floral ornament and repetitive figural groups is represented by finds from Nimrud, Athienou, and Praeneste. A gold bowl from the tomb of Yaba’, consort of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C., thus giving a chronological terminus ante quem in the second half of the eighth century B.C.), displays a procession of boats on a river within a papyrus grove (see Bahrani essay, p. 325, fig. 2). A silver bowl from Athienou on Cyprus, now in Berlin, and another from the Bernardini Tomb in

Praeneste (see Gubel essay, p. 176, fig. 11) are closely related.<sup>31</sup>

The latest variants of Phoenician bowls with figural decoration seem to be those with narrative friezes, which can be found in Cyprus and in mainland Italy (Etruria and Lazio). Particularly spectacular is the correspondence between a silver bowl from Cyprus in the Cesnola Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and one from the Bernardini Tomb in Praeneste in central Italy, a tomb context of the early seventh century B.C. (figs. 9, 10). The narrative friezes show a king departing from a city, hunting in a mountain forest, being attacked by a gorilla-like

monster, and being saved by a winged goddess, who carries his chariot up into the heavens.<sup>32</sup>

The geographical distribution of decorated Phoenician bowls can be traced throughout the Mediterranean and also in the Near East as far south as the Arabian Peninsula—there is a bowl from Yemen—and east to Iran, as well as to Sudan in the south, where finds of Phoenician metalwork but also metalwork of Cypriot origin and inspiration can be identified in the large cemeteries of Nuri, el Kurru, and Meroë. Like North Syrian art, Phoenician metalwork with figural decoration had a considerable impact on Greek art of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. Greek metalworkers and vase painters adopted animal friezes and religious and mythical iconography of Phoenician origin.

Parallel to the production of bowls with figural decoration, other types of Phoenician metalwork were distributed all over the Mediterranean, the most important being Phoenician ewers, a type originating in Levantine pottery but later made of bronze, silver, stone, and even glass or ostrich eggs (fig. 11).<sup>33</sup> They are quite common in Cyprus, possibly between the ninth and sixth centuries B.C., and we can trace them to Italy and the Iberian Peninsula, where imports from Phoenicia and local imitations are encountered (fig. 12).

Another class of artifacts of ultimately Phoenician origin found in large numbers in Cypriot tombs, dated to Cypro-Archaic I and II, are incense burners.<sup>34</sup> The most popular types are finials of incense burners, cast in bronze, decorated with leaf ornament, and originally placed on top of wooden stands, examples of which have been preserved at Sidon. A bowl containing the incense was placed on top. Again the distribution is pan-Mediterranean: from the Near East to Spain. Rarer types are thymiateria with a trumpet-shaped foot, in Cyprus only attested at Tamassos, but more often found in the Near East or the Iberian Peninsula. Last but not least, a less-ambitious variant is a cuplike smaller incense burner placed on a flat plate, a type well known in Phoenician pottery, though rather rare in metal. All types

seem to date between the late eighth and early fifth centuries B.C.

Incense burners are objects of cultic function: incense was burned during offerings to the gods, as shown in Phoenician glyptic art and on stelae, and in burial ceremonies, as they occur often in Cypriot tombs. They were very valuable objects, and a relief from Nineveh depicts Assyrian soldiers carrying away thymiateria as booty after the capture of Lachish in 701 B.C.<sup>35</sup>

Incense was a commodity traded by Phoenician merchants, although in the archaeological record only the incense burners are preserved, of course. Incense and Phoenician incense burners changed religious rituals across the Mediterranean world. Their geographical distribution may be compared to that of Phoenician metal ewers in the Mediterranean: few finds from the Near East, a concentration on Cyprus, objects in the Aegean (twenty-five in the sanctuary of Hera on the island of Samos alone), and further finds from central Italy, Sardinia, and the Iberian Peninsula.

An extremely wide distribution of Phoenician metalwork can also be observed if we consider a rarer variant of bronze vessels and ladles characterized by deep bowls with handles that terminate in swan's heads. The type originates in North Syria but was later developed in Phoenicia and Cyprus. It is known on Cyprus, and as an export on Samos and at Lindos on Rhodes, in Spain (Castulo), and in Lixos in the far Phoenician west, as well as in Sudan.<sup>36</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The civilizations of the Near East and the Mediterranean (from Greece to the Iberian Peninsula) were part of a closely connected cosmopolitan world during the early first millennium B.C.

Motifs and mechanisms have to be discussed: tribute and booty are possible major factors in the Near East, as, for example, in the case of the Phoenician finds from the Assyrian capital Kalhu (Nimrud). In general, however, luxury goods may have accompanied



Fig. 11. Ostrich eggshell, ivory, and gold-sheet ewer. San Severino Marche, necropolis of Monte Penna, Tomb 14. Museo Nazionale della Marche, Ancona, Italy (60843-4)

exchange and trade in raw materials that were needed in east and west, such as silver, copper, iron, wood, incense, and purple-dyed textiles, the latter typical Phoenician products. The distribution of Phoenician luxury goods illustrates Phoenician expansion and commerce in the Mediterranean. Literary sources like the Egyptian *Story of Wenamun*, or passages in the Homeric epics, enable us to identify a large number of our objects as diplomatic gifts or as examples of gift exchange between rulers, as well as other levels of social elite in the Mediterranean world.



Fig. 12. Bronze ewer. Spain, Huelva, Cabezo de La Joya, Tomb 17. Phoenician, 8th–7th century B.C. Museo de Huelva, Spain (A/CE 02776)

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2. Matthäus 2001, pp. 154–65, 179–88; Matthäus 2009, pp. 154–55.
3. V. Karageorghis and Raptou 2014, pls. 11, no. 1; 24, no. 76; 38, nos. 43, 65; 81, no. 1; 86, no. 76; V. Karageorghis and Raptou 2016, pls. 65, no. 3B; 66, no. 22. Prinias: unpublished.
4. V. Karageorghis and Lo Schiavo 1989; Matthäus 2000b, pp. 61–62, fig. 9; Matthäus 2009, pp. 160–62; Lo Schiavo 2008, pp. 429–30, fig. 7–1.
5. Vagnetti 1989; Lo Schiavo 2008, p. 436, fig. 13.
6. Matthäus 1985, pp. 128–32; Matthäus 2001, pp. 169–74, 191–99; Vonhoff 2015, p. 279.
7. Popham and Lemos 1996, pls. 78, 129, 146.
8. Vonhoff 2015, p. 279.
9. Sciacca 2005.
10. Botto 2007, 2008a, 2008b; Bernardini and Botto 2010; Matthäus 2008a. Prinias fragments: unpublished.
11. For the following, cf. Matthäus 2014, with all necessary references.
12. Lefkandi: Popham and Lemos 1996, pls. 132, 143. Ida Cave: Matthäus 2000a, pp. 522–24.
13. North Syrian metal bowls with figural decoration: Matthäus 2008b, pp. 441–42; Matthäus 2009, pp. 163–65 (with references).
14. Matthäus 2000a, pp. 531–33, fig. 11.
15. G. Herrmann 1989.
16. Kübler 1954, p. 202; Markoe 1985, p. 203, no. 91.
17. Matthäus 2009, pp. 163–65.
18. Popham and Lemos 1996, pls. 133, 144; Matthäus forthcoming a.
19. Kyrieleis and Röllig 1988. Cf. Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005, pp. 7–39.
20. Verdan 2013, pp. 126–27, pl. 102.
21. Held 2000, pp. 131–34; Le Meaux 2015.
22. Nude goddess: Böhm 1990; Wiggermann and Uehlinger 1998; Cornelius 2008.
23. Borell and Rittig 1998; Guralnick 2004a.
24. Gehrig 2004, with extensive bibliography.
25. Niemeyer 1999.
26. Markoe 1985, 2007; Matthäus 2008b; Matthäus forthcoming b.
27. Zancani Montuoro 1970–71; Pace 2008, pp. 81–83, 86–89, fig. 1; Botto 2008a, p. 163, fig. 8; Bernardini and Botto 2010, pp. 71–73, fig. 31.2.
28. Falsone 1985; Almagro-Gorbea 2004; Rafanelli 2013, p. 132.
29. Borell 1978, pp. 55–58, pls. 28, 29.
30. Barnett 1974.
31. Wicke 2010.
32. Markoe 1985, pp. 254–55 (Cyprus), 278–83 (Praeneste).
33. Taloni 2013, 2015.
34. Morstadt 2008, 2015.
35. Morstadt 2008, pp. 19–118. Lachish: *ibid.*, pl. 25 bottom.
36. Matthäus 1985, pp. 257–60; Boube-Piccot 1994; Vonhoff 2015, pp. 280–81.



Ancient Eleutherna is located in the heart of the island of Crete, approximately 25 kilometers southeast of Rethymnon, on the north-western lower ridges of Mount Ida, at a height of about 400 meters above sea level (fig. 1).

The central hill of the ancient city resembles a petrified ship anchored in a green ocean of olive trees, oaks, cypresses, and carob trees, among others, a wonderful natural landscape that is now protected by law. Streams flow on either side of the Prines hill in an area that today has been transformed into an archaeological park.<sup>1</sup> On the western slopes of the hill, at the site named Orthi Petra (Upright Stones), a necropolis and parts of the ancient city have been revealed over the last thirty years by a team from the University of Crete under my direction (fig. 2).<sup>2</sup>

The necropolis, now protected by a stepped-bronze cover (itself a landmark within the archaeological park), contains burials dating from the beginning of the ninth to well into the sixth century B.C. Earlier finds have also been excavated within the

## Eleutherna on Crete: The Wider Horizon

necropolis, dating from the Sub-Neolithic and Early Bronze Age to the Late Minoan period (third and second millennia B.C.).<sup>3</sup> Thus far, three types of burial practices have been identified: inhumations simply in the soil, mostly of women and children; inhumations in large pithoi (heights normally in the range 0.60 to 2 meters) that contained wealthy women or adolescents, and rarely older people of a high social rank, marked by grave stones and usually pillars; and cremations.<sup>4</sup>



Fig. 1. View of Eleutherna, Crete



Fig. 2. Aerial view of excavation. Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis

Some of the huge pithoi are covered by stones as pseudotholos tombs. Particularly notable among these is the arrangement of three gigantic pithoi in a line representing a chain of matrilineage, where women of the same descent were buried together from around 770 to 650 B.C.<sup>5</sup> Many of the grave goods were of high quality and will be examined later. Smaller amphorae or jars for children and adolescents were also revealed, among them an ephebe with whom a Cretan hunting hound was buried.<sup>6</sup> The stratigraphy shows that the dog was placed next to his master after it died—perhaps out of grief?

A huge incinerator appears to have been reserved for men from the ages of eighteen to forty or fifty years old of high rank and mostly princely warriors of the Eleuthernian Geometric period. This rectangular pit

(approximately 5 by 3.5 by 0.70 meters) was used for cremations from about 880 to 700 B.C.<sup>7</sup> The rest of the cremated individuals were placed in a rock-cut tomb (A1/K1) along with their grave goods (weapons, tools, jewelry, and pottery, for instance; fig. 3).<sup>8</sup> More than 150 urns and hundreds of grave goods have come to light in this “Tomb of the Warriors.” The results of the physical anthropological study of the human remains by Professor Anagnostis Agelarakis give us an incredible catalogue of the palaeodemography of the people of Eleutherna over a span of more than two hundred years during the Early Iron Age.<sup>9</sup>

Around 700 B.C. the use of the incinerator for collective cremations seems to have come slowly to an end, and individual funerary pyres start to pop up in the eastern and northern areas outside its perimeter. It





Figs. 3a–b. Tomb A1/K1. Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis



Fig. 4. Funerary pyre remains LL90/91. Crete, Eleutherna. Fig. 5. Detail of Apulian red-figure volute crater with funerary pyre of Patroklos. Attributed to the Darius Painter. South Italy, Canosa, ca. 340–320 B.C. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, Italy (81954)

appears as though funerary customs are changing in tandem with ancient literature, from an emphasis on the collective to one on individuality with the transition from epic to lyric poetry.<sup>10</sup> Among the new funerary pyres outside the crematorium, the pyre (fig. 4) of a princely warrior was found. In his honor a prisoner of war (?) was slaughtered, exactly as Homer describes the execution of the twelve captive Trojans by Achilles in front of Patroklos's funeral pyre (fig. 5).<sup>11</sup>

We cannot be certain whether this was a simple execution, a ritual act of vengeance, or an expiatory sacrifice, but it is a rare archaeological datum that clearly matches the Homeric description. Such a find bears on the debate regarding the truth of Homer, a subject of discussion since the time of Plato and Aristotle.<sup>12</sup>

One of the most recent and spectacular discoveries at Eleutherna in 2009 was the built tomb of the so-called “priestesses”



Fig. 6. The “Tomb of the Priestesses.” Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis

(fig. 6). Women of the highest rank had been buried inside this peculiar tomb, which brings to mind Minoan “house” tombs, in the first half of the seventh century B.C.<sup>13</sup>

To the east and southeast of the necropolis, two important monuments should be mentioned: the 4-meter-high obelisk,<sup>14</sup> probably marking the tumulus of the individual pyres and the so-called Heroön or cenotaph (now restored, fig. 7) for fallen warriors of the Eleuthernian state, which resembles Late Minoan built tombs, such as the one painted on the frieze of the famous Hagia Triada sarcophagus.<sup>15</sup>

Following this very brief overview of the Orthi Petra necropolis, I now turn to the unexpected variety of grave goods and their wide range of geographical provenance, which I term the “wider horizon” of the city; it is a rare phenomenon, at least in terms of what we know for Crete at present,

for the so-called “Dark Ages” and the Geometric period as a whole.

Searching for a city that could tell the story of Crete at the dawn of the Early Iron Age, following the destruction of the Late Minoan



Fig. 7. Reconstruction of cenotaph monument. Crete, Eleutherna





Fig. 8. Map showing the distribution of Cypriot oinochoai in the eastern Mediterranean



Figs. 9a–e. Cypro-Phoenician and Phoenician juglets. Crete, Eleutherna. 8th–7th century B.C.

palaces and centers, we could never have imagined such a rich concentration of information in a part of a necropolis that—based on our research thus far—does not exceed 1,000 square meters. Among the hundreds of Cretan vases now restored (from the thousands whose fragments have been found at the site), there have been quite a few Attic vases, mostly dating to the ninth century B.C.<sup>16</sup> Others have a Cycladic island provenance,<sup>17</sup> either direct or indirect, while still others are the products of Corinthian or Argive workshops.<sup>18</sup> There are also a number of examples of so-called “spaghetti ware,”<sup>19</sup> imitating Cypriot motifs but probably made elsewhere (perhaps Rhodes or Crete?). Some vases have an eastern Aegean or Milesian provenance;<sup>20</sup> others come

from farther away, such as glazed examples from Syria to which I will refer later.<sup>21</sup>

The most frequently attested imports are Cypriot oinochoai dated to the Cypro-Geometric III and Cypro-Archaic I periods (ninth to seventh century B.C.) (fig. 8),<sup>22</sup> and a quite large series of Cypro-Phoenician and Phoenician juglets (figs. 9a–e),<sup>23</sup> as well as imitations of Cypriot juglets and flasks of the type called “Cretocyprica” by Nicolas Coldstream.<sup>24</sup> The Cypro-Phoenician juglets are sometimes accompanied by others of Phoenician origin, some of which can be identified, after the examination of their clay, as coming from Tel Dor or Tyre.

Sometimes, vases of Eleuthernian or Cretan origin of the eighth/seventh century B.C.



Figs. 10, 11. Amphora and bronze vessel used as funerary urn and lid. Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis, Tomb A1/K1



have adopted older Aegean and Near Eastern motifs, as if a “retro” artistic movement is developing during this period, bringing the past—including that of the Protogeometric period—into the Late Geometric/Early Orientalizing period.<sup>25</sup>

Many of the vases, used as urns, especially within the “Tomb of the Warriors,” were either covered or accompanied by bronze bowls or cauldrons of Cypriot origin or inspiration. Some of the cauldrons were also used as urns. Carinated bronze cauldrons and hemispherical small- or medium-size bronze bowls constitute a firm body of Cypriot imports starting in the ninth century and continuing deep into the seventh century B.C.<sup>26</sup> Some of the bowls find their closest parallels in Palaepaphos. Bronze “lekanides” vessels of a peculiar form were also found covering vases used as urns (figs. 10, 11).

These may have been manufactured on Crete, but undecorated prototypes—one example found in Eleutherna’s necropolis—have Cypriot origins of Late Cypriot II date.<sup>27</sup> The developed thin type of these large vessels, with representations of processions toward a female seated deity, have Cypriot and Phoenician/Near Eastern elements.<sup>28</sup> Bronze phialai, with concentric rings around a central omphalos or decorated with petals of lotus flowers (fig. 12), most probably of Phrygian origin, have also found their way to Eleutherna.<sup>29</sup> One other bowl has a number of figural motifs recalling a Mycenaean past, as well as demonstrating Cypriot, Levantine, and Egyptian affinities (see Aruz essay, pp. 26–28, figs. 16a–f).<sup>30</sup>

Bronze imports, such as a Phoenician bowl found within the “Tomb of the Warriors” evoke descriptions in Herodotos of

Phoenician merchants frequenting the Greek seas and islands, and especially Thera. A Theran stamnos used as an urn was covered by this Phoenician bowl (figs. 13a, b), and the two vessels as a set—in accordance with the description of Herodotos—show the way toward the city of Axos through the Eleuthernian territory and then to the Ida Cave (where other bronze bowls of the same type have been found).<sup>31</sup>

Within the gigantic pithos burials of women, mentioned earlier, metallic utensils of everyday life have been excavated, among them a bronze ladle of Cypriot origin most probably from Palaepaphos, as it corresponds most closely to the one discovered there in an eighth-century B.C. context.<sup>32</sup> I suspect it is an older piece that found its way to Eleutherna among other Cypriot items, probably as part of a dowry.

On the other hand, within the built chamber of the “Tomb of the Priestesses,” among other bronze finds—cups, omphalos phialai, etc.—a rare example of a bronze lamp has come to light, linking Eleutherna (directly or indirectly) again with the Levantine coast or Cyprus, or even Carthage, where such types of lamps (though mostly of clay) have been found.<sup>33</sup>

Last but not least, the bronze shield of the so-called Idaean type found covering a clay urn within the “Tomb of the Warriors” is of considerable importance not only because it was found in a chronologically secure context but also for its workmanship and style, as well as for rituals associated with this type of object (fig. 14).<sup>34</sup>

The distribution of bronze items produced in or originating from the Near East, Cyprus, and Anatolia in the Mediterranean, and particularly on Crete at sites such as Knossos and the Ida Cave is significant; however, the number and the quality of the Eleuthernian finds from a small excavated area (compared, for example, to the vast cemeteries of Knossos<sup>35</sup>) are indeed astonishing.

Many of the iron weapons (daggers, swords, and spearheads) that accompanied the remains of the princely warriors of

Eleutherna find parallels among Argive, Cypriot, and Near Eastern examples. The iron firedogs from the Eleuthernian necropolis, dated to the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., as well as the iron *obeloi* (of different types) find their counterparts again on Cyprus at Patriki and Palaepaphos.<sup>36</sup> They demonstrate relations on other cultural levels with connections, for example, to the symposium or to dietary customs, which were to be adopted by Etruscan elites by the end of the eighth and the beginning of the seventh century B.C.<sup>37</sup> Two rare examples of andirons, one found in the “Tomb of the Warriors,” resemble the only one found in the Knossos North Cemetery, as well as an example found at Tyre. The second, rounder andiron has its parallel in an example from the Cherson/Black Sea region.<sup>38</sup>

The same result is evident for Eleutherna in terms of faience, glass, and glazed products, which were imported mostly from the east, namely, from Cyprus, the Levantine coast, and Egypt. Glazed vases without handles came probably from Syria, as did glazed amphoriskoi, finding their way to Cyprus and Rhodes, as well as to Eleutherna, and reaching even Pontecagnano in the Italian peninsula.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, the faience

Fig. 12. Bronze phiale. Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis, Tomb A1/K1. Phrygian, 8th–7th century B.C.







Figs. 13a, b. (*Right*): Burial with Theran stamnos and Phoenician bronze bowl (pictured at bottom in photograph). Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis, Tomb A1/K1. (*Top*): Bowl, end of the 8th century B.C. (*Above*): Stamnos, ca. 680 B.C.





Fig. 14. Bronze lion-head shield. Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis, Tomb A1/K1. Orientalizing, ca. 830–730 B.C.

alabastron and the lion-headed Sakhmet figurine (figs. 15, 16) are evidence of Egyptian and Phoenician manufacturing and trading.<sup>40</sup> A glass omphalos phiale (fig. 17) with thirty-nine petals is unique in its context and date (first half of the seventh century B.C.). The fragile object was found intact, covering the neck of an amphora within the “Tomb of the Priestesses,” and although plain inside, it brings to mind broken examples of glass phialai from Gordion.<sup>41</sup>

The materials for ivory artifacts (fig. 18),<sup>42</sup> and for beads—semiprecious stones, including carnelian, amethyst, and rock crystal, as well as amber from northern Europe and Italy—originated in the Near East or Egypt.<sup>43</sup> Some were worked by Cretan hands

or by foreigners living in Crete’s Geometric/Archaic cities, among them Eleutherna itself.

The same is true for the gold jewelry. Amalgams of motifs and styles are visible, for instance, on a gold sheet in cutout technique (fig. 19), with a tripartite frieze in which a Phoenician baetyl covered by crescents is shown flanking a Mistress of Animals. The latter is depicted in a completely Cretan style and resembles an ivory goddess from the Ida Cave.<sup>44</sup> There are some items of jewelry that find Cypriot parallels: gold earrings from Eleutherna with those from Palaepaphos, and the necklace of golden and rock-crystal beads of an Eleuthernian princess, which can be compared to that worn by a so-called Greek princess from Salamis, Cyprus (figs. 20, 21).<sup>45</sup>



Fig. 15. Bronze phiale with faience alabastron. Crete, Eleutherna, “Tomb of the Priestesses,” 700–650 B.C. Fig. 16. Lion-headed Sakhmet figurine. Crete, Eleutherna, “Tomb of the Warriors,” found in an 8th-century B.C. urn



Fig. 17. Glass fluted omphalos phiale. Crete, Eleutherna, Sector III West, Tomb M. Late 8th–7th century B.C.



Fig. 18. Ivory faces. Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis, funeral pyre west of the cenotaph. Orientalizing, ca. 600 B.C.

Fig. 19. Gold cutout plaque. Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis. Orientalizing, 7th century B.C.



This list could go on, but the purpose of my paper is not merely to stress the quantity of finds in the Orthi Petra necropolis at Eleutherna. After all, there are other important and rich cities of the Early Iron Age across the whole Mediterranean.

If this wealth of finds occurred at a cosmopolitan sanctuary like that of the Ephesian Artemis or of Hera on Samos, the pan-Hellenic sanctuary at Olympia, the pan-Cretan Ida Cave, or even capital cities on Crete, like Knossos, such a variety of material would not be surprising. But why at Eleutherna?

Does the answer lie in Eleutherna's location, in the heart of the island at the crossroads of Crete from east to west and from south to north? Is it because of the existence of two ports at the northern coast in the middle of Crete (Stavromenos and possibly Panormon)? Is it because of its wood, its leather and wool products, its rare herbs with aromatic and medicinal properties that were exported abroad, or because of the iron mines in its neighborhood (the Talaia mountains, today's Kouloukonas mountains)? Or even more, is it because of other reasons like taxation of its ports, trade, mercenaries, or even piracy carried out by its people?<sup>46</sup>





Fig. 20. Gold and rock-crystal necklace beads. Crete, Eleutherna, Orthi Petra necropolis, crematorium. 9th century B.C.



Fig. 21. Gold and rock-crystal necklace beads. Cyprus, Salamis, Tomb 1. Mid-8th century B.C.

A positive answer could be valid for some or all of the above-mentioned reasons, and it may be proved as the ongoing excavations come to more certain results. For the time being, however, one answer may derive from the Eleuthernian necropolis itself. Among the many grave stones, mostly rectangular pillars, which mark the cremations, the pithos graves, and the burial pits, we have found some peculiar examples: four cippi of the Near Eastern–Phoenician (or even West Phoenician) type.<sup>47</sup> Since I do not think that locals adopted this kind of cippi to mark their graves, the logical explanation should be that some foreigners, making their visits and staying in the city, were buried there among the local elites. This interpretation seems the more plausible if we take into account an Archaic inscription from Eleutherna, where a [*kosmos*] *ton xenon* (κόσμος τῶν ξένων, for example, the “minister” for foreigners) is mentioned.<sup>48</sup> The existence of the cippi, the Archaic inscription, and the wide range of imported artifacts and materials from the Geometric/Archaic period, the amalgams seen in many of the items found here, with the Cypriot factor that prevails among them, and the

demographics of the burials, which suggest that some of the wealthy ladies could have been wives of the Eleuthernian aristocratic warrior elite, could be explained by the fact that among the “closed” and “open” Geometric/Archaic societies of antiquity,<sup>49</sup> Eleutherna belonged in the second category, with its members looking across the Aegean with their eyes open to the wider horizon.

1. For recent bibliography on Eleutherna, see, for example, Stampolidis 2004, 2005, and forthcoming a (on the protection and promotion of the archaeological site); Stampolidis 2008a.
2. For the necropolis of Orthi Petra at ancient Eleutherna, see Stampolidis 1990, 1993, 1994, 1998; Stampolidis and Koutsogiannis 2013; Stampolidis 2012, 2013, and Stampolidis and Aruz 2013.
3. See, for example, Stampolidis 2004, pp. 48, 177, cat. no. 70, p. 82, fig. 2, p. 191, cat. no. 99, p. 234, cat. no. 249, p. 293, cat. nos. 392, 393; Stampolidis 2008a, p. 107, fig. 49, and Stampolidis forthcoming b.
4. See Stampolidis 2008a, pp. 107ff.
5. See, e.g., *ibid.*, pp. 126–29, figs. 80–82.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 129, fig. 83.
7. Stampolidis 2004, pp. 120–22, figs. 4–6; Stampolidis 2008a, pp. 108–10, figs. 50–52.
8. Stampolidis 2004, pp. 122–25, figs. 8–10; Stampolidis 2008a, pp. 111ff., figs. 54–70.
9. Agelarakis 2005.



10. Stampolidis 2004, pp. 125–27, figs. 11–14; Stampolidis 2008a, pp. 119–21, figs. 71, 72.
11. Homer, *Iliad* 23.111–257.
12. Stampolidis 1995, 1996, and 2008b.
13. For the princesses of the Mediterranean, see Stampolidis and Giannopoulou 2012. For the Eleuthernian priestesses, see Stampolidis 2012.
14. Stampolidis 2008a, pp. 141–42, fig. 98; Stampolidis 2013, pp. 2–4, fig. 5.
15. Most recently, Stampolidis 2013, pp. 5–14, figs. 10, 15–20; Stampolidis and Koutsogiannis 2013.
16. See, for example, Stampolidis 2004, p. 245, cat. no. 273; Kotsonas 2008, pp. 263–67.
17. Stampolidis 2004, p. 253, cat. no. 287; Stampolidis 2006; Kotsonas 2008, pp. 267–73.
18. See, for example, Stampolidis 2003a, p. 344, cat. no. 441; Stampolidis 2004, p. 252, cat. no. 285; Kotsonas 2008, pp. 256–63.
19. Stampolidis 2003a, p. 298, cat. no. 279; Kotsonas 2008, pp. 279–82.
20. Stampolidis 2004, p. 258, cat. no. 297; Kotsonas 2008, pp. 274–82.
21. See, for example, Stampolidis 2008a, pp. 117–18, fig. 70.
22. On how these traveled from Cyprus to Crete, see Stampolidis et al. 1998, pp. 86–88 (map); Stampolidis 2003a, pp. 69–70, 255, cat. no. 123; Kotsonas 2008, pp. 284–87.
23. See Stampolidis et al. 1998, pp. 88–90, fig. p. 89, pp. 130–32 with figs.; Stampolidis 2004, p. 255, cat. no. 289; Kotsonas 2008, pp. 284–88; Stampolidis 2008a, pp. 152–53, fig. 106.
24. Most recently, V. Karageorghis et al. 2014.
25. For example, the old Minoan octopus motif returning on vases from the huge pithos tombs, or the plate from the area A–K. On similar lines, see note 29 below.
26. For some of these, cf. Stampolidis et al. 1998, pp. 232–33, cat. no. 277, pp. 235–36, cat. no. 282, p. 238, cat. no. 285. See also pp. 242–43, cat. nos. 295–97; however, some of them may have been manufactured elsewhere. Some of the carinated cauldrons seem to be either “imitations” of Cypriot ones, having a thinner body, or they seem to have been manufactured in this way because they were to be transported abroad and were less expensive for their manufacturers.
27. Cf. Stampolidis et al. 1998, p. 241, cat. no. 294; Stampolidis 2004, p. 274, cat. no. 346.
28. Some of the “lekanides” are presented in Stampolidis et al. 1998, pp. 253–54, cat. nos. 316–18; Stampolidis 2004, pp. 279–80, cat. nos. 354–57.
29. As evidenced by parallels from Elmalı or Sardis. Cf. Stampolidis 1994, pp. 113–18, pls. xv–xviii; Stampolidis et al. 1998, pp. 240–41, cat. no. 292, p. 244, cat. no. 300, pp. 245–46, cat. nos. 301, 302, 304; Stampolidis 2003a, p. 443, cat. nos. 761, 763; most recently in Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 284–85, figs. 4.17, 4.18.
30. Stampolidis and Aruz 2013; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 290–91.
31. See Stampolidis 2006. For analogous bronze phialai from the Ida Cave, cf. Stampolidis et al. 1998, pp. 248–49, cat. nos. 307, 308 (entries by A. Karesou). For the reference to the Thera merchant Themision at Axos, Herodotos, *Histories* 4.154.
32. Cf. recently Stampolidis 2008a, p. 148, no. 51.
33. The material of the “Tomb of the Priestesses” was recently presented in Stampolidis 2012. For the lamp, see p. 222, no. 62. The only bronze parallel I recall is the one in the Hecht Museum, Israel.
34. Most recently in Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 288–89, with bibliography and figs.
35. Cf. Coldstream and Catling 1996.
36. See Stampolidis 2003a, p. 467, cat. nos. 833, 834; Stampolidis 2004, p. 284, cat. nos. 366, 367.
37. Cf. Stampolidis 2003a, p. 468, cat. nos. 855, 856; Stampolidis 2008a, pp. 114, 117, figs. 65, 66, for the Etruscan examples; see also most recently Stampolidis and Giannopoulou 2012, p. 44 and elsewhere.
38. See Stampolidis 2004, p. 284, cat. no. 368. The second example from tomb A1 is under conservation.
39. See Stampolidis et al. 1998, pp. 212–15, cat. nos. 236–42. Also Stampolidis 2008a, pp. 113–14, fig. 57.
40. For the Sakhmet figure, see Stampolidis et al. 1998, p. 219, cat. no. 251; Stampolidis 2003a, p. 510, cat. no. 974; and Stampolidis 2004, p. 294, cat. no. 395. For the alabastron, one can compare alabastra in Stampolidis et al. 1998, pp. 216–17, cat. no. 246 (entry by G. Tassoulas); Stampolidis 2003a, p. 491, cat. nos. 910–12.
41. Most recently, Stampolidis 2015. But I suspect that this special object, because of its workmanship, may be an “imitation” or could have been “inspired” by metallic objects. This is also the case for an analogous clay phiale, for example, from Poggio Buco (Grosseto) in the Florence Museum; cf. Stampolidis 2003a, p. 373, cat. no. 544 (entry by G. Gianferoni).
42. For instance, the four ivory heads; cf. Stampolidis 1992.
43. For example, Stampolidis and Giannopoulou 2012, p. 212, cat. nos. 25–44.
44. Stampolidis et al. 1998, p. 268, cat. no. 336, with bibliography; Stampolidis 2003a, p. 569, cat. no. 1147 (entry by S. Kalogeraki).
45. See Stampolidis 2004, p. 287, cat. no. 377; Stampolidis 2008a, pp. 153–54, fig. 109.
46. Questions that have not lost their validity since first published in Stampolidis 1993, some years after the excavations at Eleutherna started.
47. Cf. Stampolidis and Karageorghis 2003, pp. 217–32; Stampolidis 2008a, pp. 138–40.
48. See Guarducci 1939.
49. Stampolidis 2003b; Stampolidis 2003c, p. 226.

# The Etruscan Orientalizing: The View from the Regolini- Galassi Tomb

In April 1836, an extraordinary, undisturbed tomb was discovered in ancient Cerveteri (Caere), within a still-extant monumental structure.<sup>1</sup> The rich funerary goods discovered there have told the tale of the symbols of power and the ritual dimension of the culture and identity of a princely Etruscan family from Caere, in Latin, *Cisra* to the ancient inhabitants. This family had concealed from sight and future memory, under a tumulus roughly 60 meters in diameter, an earlier tomb—already surmounted by a smaller tumulus—which was filled with gold, figured bronzes, furniture, and pottery. Thus protected, these objects were found intact by the astonished individuals who entered the tomb for the first time in 1836. Since that day, the tomb has universally been known by the combined names of Alessandro Regolini, archpriest of Cerveteri, and Vincenzo Galassi, a retired general.<sup>2</sup>

Excavation techniques at the time were disorganized with more attention paid to the objects discovered, especially precious goods, than to the context in which they were found. The excavation “documentation” detailing the nature and position of the funerary deposits was, therefore, reconstructed

later. The loss of essential information remains an insoluble and irreversible problem, because the descriptions furnished in the first years following the discovery are, unfortunately, both vague and at times contradictory.

Today we know that the tomb represents one of the most significant contexts documenting the mature phase of the Orientalizing period in Etruria, as experienced by a city that enjoyed extensive contacts with the entire Mediterranean world.

The interior of the tomb is long and narrow: from the antechamber one passes into the second, last chamber, the site of the main burial. This was partially sealed off from the antechamber by a low wall, with an opening, or “window,” for ritual purposes. The main burial chamber at the far end was used for the inhumation of a female who we can, without exaggeration, describe as being of royal lineage, given the funerary goods deposited within extremely finely worked jewelry, silver and bronze vases, and cloth decorated with gold plaques. The antechamber contained a bronze funeral bed and lavish furnishings for ritual uses connected with aristocratic banqueting and the power of the nobility. On either side of the antechamber are two smaller rooms of elliptical plan, generally termed “niches” or cells. The niche on the right held a large ceramic olla containing the cremated remains of a male, the traditional burial befitting warriors and heroes. The niche on the left did not hold any burials, but instead contained funerary goods the precise nature and function of which are still the subject of debate.

The best image of the Orientalizing phase among the Etruscans—and that which most clearly shows its novelty compared to the world of their Villanovan “grandparents”—begins outside the tomb with the monumental and unusual tumulus: this shapes the territory in the image of the noble families whose status was based on the possession and inheritance of land. We do not know how the Regolini-Galassi tumulus would have appeared originally, leaving aside

Luigi Canina's somewhat imaginative reconstruction (fig. 1), except through analogy with others in Cerveteri dating to the same period.<sup>3</sup> From the early seventh century B.C., the sculpted bases of these tumuli, which can be as large as 50 to 60 meters in diameter, are characterized by horizontal bands of relief. These and other architectonic elements recall stonework, such as columns and thrones in northern Syria and may have been introduced by an architect hailing originally from the east. The monumental structures emerge quite suddenly and shape the landscape, recalling Anatolian tumuli found only in Phrygia and Lydia. The latter tumuli, however, lack any of the particular Etruscan architectural elements and are so large as to be almost artificial hills, as is the case of Bin Tepe at Sardis (Lydia), with dozens of huge tumuli, including the massive Gyges Mound with its diameter of 220 meters.<sup>4</sup>

From Tumulus MM ("Midas Mound") at Gordion—now dated to 740 B.C. and, therefore, constructed at least one generation before the mythical Phrygian king to whom it was attributed<sup>5</sup>—we have a lion-head situla in bronze, for example, a vase in the Assyrian style depicted on reliefs at Nineveh from the time of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) (see Gunter essay, pp. 222–23, figs. 6, 7), of which one specimen was exported to Veii during the second half of the eighth century B.C.<sup>6</sup>

Let us now enter the tomb. Once past the antechamber, undoubtedly far more full of objects than it appears in nineteenth-century representations (which, among other things, ignored completely the three disassembled chariots and wagons that have only now been reconstructed), our gaze is drawn to the small window at the end of the antechamber (fig. 2). It was through this space that the epiphany of the deified deceased was witnessed, as was fitting for a goddess or queen.<sup>7</sup>

Fig. 2. Giovanni Montiroli's drawing of antechamber reconstruction showing location of some grave goods. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb



Fig. 1. Luigi Canina's reconstruction of tumuli showing the Regolini-Galassi Tomb, Sorbo necropolis, Caere

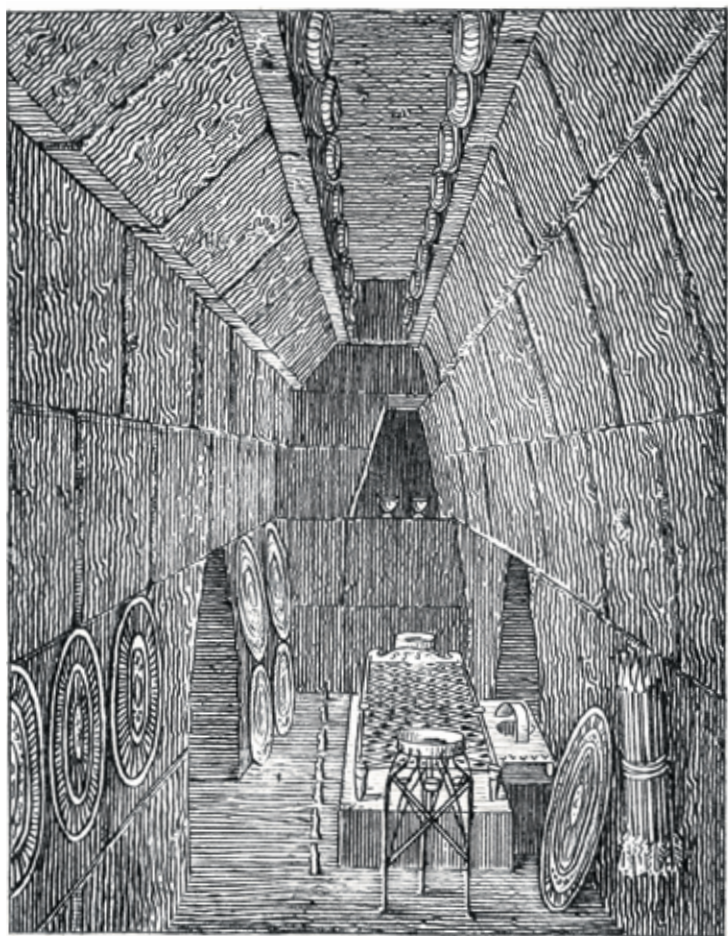


Fig. 3a. Gold pectoral. Caere,  
Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi  
Tomb. Orientalizing, 675–650 B.C.  
Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei  
Vaticani, Vatican City (20553)



This could be a symbolic allusion to the ancient eastern motif of the “woman at the window,” signaling a sacred event (see Winter essay).<sup>8</sup>

One has the impression that the analogy and the symbol, together with certain narrative elements present in the rich assemblage of funerary goods, act almost as a substitute for the more immediate impact usually made by painted decorations. Caere, together with Veii, was one of the centers in which wall paintings were first seen in Italy (see, for example, the Tomb of the Painted Animals, the Tomb of the Painted Lions, and the Tomb of the Ship), but in the Regolini-Galassi Tomb these seem to be absent.<sup>9</sup>

Eastern symbolic elements recur frequently in the decorative repertoire of the jewelry that adorned and accompanied the deceased. We may reasonably presume, along with the necessary technology, that the underlying significance of shapes and images was also transmitted to the west. The very profusion of gold suggests magical and ritual meanings, given that in the ancient Near East and

Egypt it was originally associated with the realm of the gods and of royalty. And it was in this sense that gold was used in Egyptian burial rites to ensure the regeneration of the deceased in the next life.<sup>10</sup>

We can also consider from this standpoint the gold pectoral, one of the most singular examples of the Etruscan Orientalizing repertoire, the *oriental* connotations of which were recognized from the moment the tomb was discovered, only to be repeatedly ignored over the decades!<sup>11</sup> On a technical level, it is a virtuoso exercise in applied geometry, with a tripartite division of space and a series of thirteen decorated bands made with different punches, plus the central emblem. Themes of differing origin converge in the iconography, from the generically “eastern” (the winged woman with or without “Paradise Flower” scepter), to those more specifically relating to the Syro-Phoenician area (like the Master of Animals, the griffin, the Phoenician palmette), while the repertoire of fantastical animals (chimera, Pegasus) recall, instead, Greece (figs. 3a–g).





From top to bottom, left to right, figs. 3b–g. Details of gold pectoral showing: b. Pegasus; c. Chimera; d. a lion with a lotus flower; e. a griffin; f. Master of Animals; g. winged women

Certain aspects suggest an Egyptian origin for the form and symbolism of the Regolini-Galassi pectoral,<sup>12</sup> although, given the historical context and decorative elements, this ornament had presumably been mediated by Levantine influences before reaching Etruria.<sup>13</sup> The *wesekh* collar, which, in fact, resembles our pectoral, is found in Egypt from the Early Dynastic period on.<sup>14</sup> Similar pectorals are also present in the ancient Near East, close to or almost contemporary with the Etruscan Orientalizing period, as seen in examples from Ziwiyeh<sup>15</sup> and Urartu,<sup>16</sup> although these objects are of a different type.

The Regolini-Galassi pectoral, therefore, still represents a unique case in ancient Italy, and similar objects used in funerary rites are comparable only in terms of function and material. We may recall here the general apotropaic and symbolic significance that we find in a somewhat earlier period, the transition from the Iron Age to the Orientalizing period, in the Tomb of the Warrior at Tarquinia (730–720 B.C.). In this instance the gold pectoral takes the form of defensive armor, and, in fact, it is placed upon a bronze one, again inspired by Near Eastern examples, in this case as seen on the Assyrian reliefs of the eighth to seventh century B.C., where they are worn by infantrymen between the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) and Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.), as well as by Ashurbanipal himself, depicted on a fast chariot during a lion hunt.<sup>17</sup>

A similar function was served by the other Orientalizing chest ornaments from female tombs: these were rectangular and were provided with straps, possibly recalling the Egyptian pectorals. I refer specifically to the Castellani pectoral<sup>18</sup> and an example from Tomb 101 at Castel di Decima,<sup>19</sup> which mingled gold with an exotic substance shrouded in magic and myth: amber. This combination of gold and amber is characteristic of the Orientalizing style in southern Etruria, ancient Latium,<sup>20</sup> and at Verucchio near Rimini, in Romagna.<sup>21</sup> In the Regolini-Galassi Tomb it is also used in the necklace

with three pendants, the result of a hypothetical reconstruction made at the beginning of the twentieth century;<sup>22</sup> the gold setting of the three pendants is exquisitely decorated with meanders and herringbone patterns rendered with granulation.

The large parade fibula (fig. 4) is both the icon of the tomb and a timeless masterpiece of the goldsmith's art.<sup>23</sup> Its symbolic function, clearly reflecting its having been commissioned in Etruria, is depicted through what appears to be a clear, thematic program, even more significant if we consider that the fibula was destined to pin the shroud closed or decorate the clothing of the deceased. Life and death alternate in depictions of lions, elements of the "sacred tree" (palmettes with intersecting arches) and aquatic symbols (zigzags) in the transversal zones, the latter possibly contemporary with and alluding to the Homeric motif of diving into Hades's abyss,<sup>24</sup> while the lotus flower is a symbol of regenerative powers.<sup>25</sup>

The zigzag motif, so characteristic of Etruscan jewelry and typically rendered in granulation, is of very ancient origin. We find it as early as the second millennium B.C. on an Egyptian amulet<sup>26</sup> and on the gold objects from Alalakh in Syria, around 1460 B.C.<sup>27</sup> In the pectoral of Sheshonq I (dating to the beginning of Dynasty 22, ca. 945–924 B.C.), the solar barque stretches over the expanse of water, depicted with these same zigzag lines corresponding at the same time to the hieroglyphic sign for water.<sup>28</sup> In the Orientalizing period, the schematic representation of water by the use of zigzags appears on Phoenician bowls imported to Italy,<sup>29</sup> and on various Etruscan works in gold, including the bowl from Praeneste now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the shape of which relates to eastern prototypes.<sup>30</sup> It is seen, in fact, even earlier in the gold bowl found at Nimrud in the tomb of Yaba', the consort of Tiglath-Pileser III (see Bahrani essay, p. 325, fig. 2).<sup>31</sup>

The bow of the parade fibula is decorated with waterfowl that connect the water, the earth, and the sky, while the heavens are



Fig. 4. Detail of gold parade fibula with bow showing waterfowl, griffins, and head of Hathor. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb. Orientalizing, 675–650 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20552)

protected by winged griffins to guarantee its inviolability and, at the same time, allude to the underworld. It is perhaps not by chance in the final decades of the fourth century B.C. that griffins and lions pull the chariot driven by the demon in the wall paintings of the Tomb of the Infernal Chariot at Sarteano.<sup>32</sup> The key to interpreting the iconography appears at the end of the bow with the head of Hathor, Egyptian goddess of the heavens, a female sun deity and the mother of Re, whom she accompanies in the solar barque.<sup>33</sup> In her primary role as life-giver, Hathor is also the goddess of fertility and of the regeneration of the cycles of nature and, in this sense, is also closely connected to the underworld.<sup>34</sup>

Further associated with this symbolism is the silver situla, a ritual vase again recalling the ancient Near East and Egypt<sup>35</sup> that is worked in an openwork technique. In pharaonic Egypt, the situla, which was shaped like a breast and symbolized the idea of rebirth,<sup>36</sup>

was used to hold the sacred waters of the Nile as well as milk. In Assyrian reliefs a cylindrical situla like this Etruscan one was a fixed attribute of the winged genies shown flanking stylized “sacred” trees.<sup>37</sup> On the Regolini-Galassi situla we have not only such a sacred tree with its motifs of intersecting arches and palmettes but also the lion and the griffin, real and fantastical animals who, like the sphinx, retain their Near Eastern symbolic value as guardians of passageways, including that toward the land of the gods.<sup>38</sup>

The Regolini-Galassi bracelets,<sup>39</sup> a nearly exact copy of what was found in the Galeassi Tomb at Praeneste,<sup>40</sup> are also characterized by iconographic motifs derived from the eastern repertoire. In particular, both for the female figures with bell-shaped garments and Hathor-like curls (fig. 5) and for the hero killing the lion (fig. 6), parallels have been drawn with the Syrian-style ivories from the palatial complexes at Nimrud.<sup>41</sup>





Fig. 5. Detail of gold bracelet showing female figures holding scepters. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb. Orientalizing, 675–650 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20563)



Fig. 6. Detail of gold bracelet showing a hero killing a lion. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb, last room (the so-called cella). Orientalizing, 675–650 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20563)

The motif, labeled the “Paradise Flower” by Brian Shefton,<sup>42</sup> is of Phoenician derivation and held like a sacred and royal insignia by the female figures on the bracelets and on the trapezoidal pendants,<sup>43</sup> like the scepter held by the enthroned figure on a Phoenician ivory.<sup>44</sup> This floral motif from the Egyptianizing repertoire, appearing either singly or as blooms on the sacred tree, together

with the palmettes and double volutes facing inward, again with sacred and symbolic significance, was developed by Phoenician ivory and gold craftsmen (probably on Cyprus) working for the court. In Etruria this same motif was to enjoy a marked success, and it was also reproduced on bronzes and in bucchero.

These objects are accompanied by a banqueting service of fifteen silver vases, six of which bear inscriptions giving the same “owner’s” name.<sup>45</sup> The vases were probably made by craftsmen of eastern origin and commissioned by the owners of the tomb, since the Etruscan inscriptions were incised with a chisel during their manufacture. The shapes themselves reflect the multicultural environment of Caere, with not only Phoenician (oinochoe) and more generally Near Eastern (hemispherical cup, fluted bowl) vessel types but also Corinthian (skyphos) and local types (small amphora with double spiral and cup) (fig. 7).

The Phoenician-style oinochoe<sup>46</sup> was found throughout the Mediterranean in a variety of shapes and materials: clay, silver, bronze, as well as ivory and composite examples.<sup>47</sup> The use of gilt and the Paradise Flower motif, seen on the base of the handle,<sup>48</sup> recall Phoenician craftwork. Other silver ewers of the same type were found at Vetulonia, Praeneste, Cumae, and Pontecagnano.

The hemispherical cup, an ancient form and one symbolically linked to eastern royalty, spread throughout the Greek and Aegean world between the tenth and eighth centuries B.C. and has been found in funerary and sacred contexts also in the west and the heart of continental Europe. Glass versions were imported into Etruria<sup>49</sup> and reproduced in precious metals.<sup>50</sup> In the Tomb of the Warrior in Tarquinia we find, alongside an example in bronze, another in painted pottery, which combines a local geometric repertoire with Euboian-Cycladic influences (the figure of a bird).<sup>51</sup> The silver version found at Caere,<sup>52</sup> decorated with rows of scales, had already been developed at the end of the eighth century B.C. in Veii, in the





Fig. 7. Silver banqueting service. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb. Orientalizing period, 675–650 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20438, 20439, 20461, 20462, 20464)



Fig. 8. Silver fluted bowl. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb. Orientalizing, 675–650 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20468)

Faliscan countryside (Narce), in Latium (Rocca di Papa) and in Campania (Capua Tomb 722); it was also used in Vetulonia, Marsiliana d'Albegna, and Palestrina.<sup>53</sup>

The fluted bowl is another example of a ceremonial vase of eastern origin, adopted and reproduced in Etruria. Used only by the king and his officials in the Assyrian court, it became a symbol of rank in aristocratic Etruscan banquets and was employed

symbolically in banquets of the dead and of the ancestors.<sup>54</sup> The few imported examples can be identified by the dense fluting that became less pronounced and more widely spaced in the locally produced versions. In the Regolini-Galassi Tomb, apart from an example in silver (fig. 8), there were also eleven bronze fluted bowls attached with nails to the walls of the main burial chamber and possibly the antechamber.<sup>55</sup>



Fig. 9. Detail of gilded silver patera showing a cow suckling a calf. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb. Phoenician, 675–650 B.C. context. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20364)



Fig. 10. Ivory pyxis showing sphinx surmounted by a Phoenician-style palmette. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb. Phoenician or Orientalizing, 675–650 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20443)

Among the grave goods there are three paterae and a double-walled silver gilt bowl<sup>56</sup> with fine embossed and incised decorations depicting themes associated with royalty—war, hunting, the pharaoh's triumph (see Feldman essay, p. 230, fig. 2)—as well as motifs with funerary symbolism, such as the cow in the papyrus grove and the cow suckling a calf (fig. 9), in line with the iconography of Phoenician and South Syrian (or Intermediate Style) ivories.<sup>57</sup>

These precious works were produced in Phoenician workshops, possibly on Cyprus, where the Egyptianizing context was interwoven with the lively narrative form of Neo-Assyrian reliefs. They would have been prestigious gifts for the Etruscan princes between the end of the eighth and the first half of the seventh century B.C., and have been found not only in Caere but also in Praeneste and Pontecagnano.<sup>58</sup>

Two bowls discovered in Italy, from the Bernardini Tomb in Praeneste and from Pontecagnano, even bear inscriptions giving the Semitic name of the craftsman.<sup>59</sup> After arriving in Etruria they were also reworked, with the addition, for example, of a dedicatory inscription and the partial removal of the gilt in the case of the Regolini-Galassi bowl,<sup>60</sup> or the addition of protomes on the silver gilt cup converted into a small cauldron from the Bernardini Tomb.<sup>61</sup> The importation of such goods, together with others, including the engraved ivories, introduced a figurative and narrative repertoire that also began to appear in paintings.

The Italian examples form a distinct group within the wider Levantine production of precious vases, which spread through Greece, the Aegean islands, the Levant, and Assyria from the ninth to the mid-seventh century B.C.<sup>62</sup> The precise area of production has not been identified, and various hypotheses place the workshops most probably in Cyprus,<sup>63</sup> Syria-Phoenicia,<sup>64</sup> or northern Syria.<sup>65</sup> Particular attention has been directed toward a workshop link between the three silver gilt bowls with military scenes from the Regolini-Galassi Tomb and others from the Barberini<sup>66</sup>

and Bernardini Tombs at Praeneste, the latter example depicts a narrative involving a royal hunt (see Matthäus essay, p. 278, fig. 9).<sup>67</sup> These scenes in turn appear to be so closely linked to Cypriot examples from Idalion<sup>68</sup> and Kourion<sup>69</sup> (see Matthäus essay, p. 279, fig. 10) as to suggest they are products of the same workshop or at least the same repertoire. We can exclude the idea that they were made in Italy by itinerant craftsmen since they differ so clearly from Orientalizing examples manufactured in Etruria.<sup>70</sup> These were, quite literally, goods fit for a king, as in the case of the two inscribed bowls from Cyprus bearing, respectively, the names of Akestor, king of Paphos, and Diweithemis, another person of royal lineage.<sup>71</sup>

The representation par excellence of Levantine craftsmanship is found in the ivories,<sup>72</sup> only a few examples of which were imported directly into Etruria. The Regolini-Galassi Tomb contained a pyxis depicting a male figure between two rampant lions, a man on a chariot, and a sphinx surmounted by a palmette between volutes in the Phoenician style (fig. 10).<sup>73</sup> Held originally to be of Cypriot origin by Yvette Huls, it has since been identified as the work of a craftsman who immigrated to Etruria, as has the Baltimore pyxis, possibly of similar provenance.<sup>74</sup> In particular, the iconographic detail of the sphinx with the uplifted rear wing—found also in similar depictions on bucchero and white-on-red pottery, both of Etruscan manufacture—persuades us that these pieces show evidence of direct contact with local craftwork.<sup>75</sup>

It would appear that misunderstandings and reinterpretations of the traditional iconography also occurred in Etruria. The sacred tree disappears and is replaced by the lotus flower above the head of the sphinx itself (fig. 11);<sup>76</sup> the two heraldic lions—without manes, unlike their Syro-Phoenician prototypes—and facing a lotus flower (replacing the sacred tree)—are joined by a third, as though in a frieze.<sup>77</sup>

Among the most characteristic goods in the entire Orientalizing repertoire are the monumental bronze cauldrons with lion and



Fig. 11. Sheet bronze with repoussé decoration showing a sphinx with its head surmounted by a lotus flower. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb. Orientalizing, 675–650 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (37096)

griffin protomes, the basic form of which originated in Urartu, eastern Anatolia, and North Syria.<sup>78</sup> From Syria we have the originals exported to Greece and the west,<sup>79</sup> including the two cauldrons from the Barberini<sup>80</sup> and the Bernardini Tombs in Praeneste,<sup>81</sup> both of which stood on repoussé





Fig. 12a. Detail of bronze stand showing sphinxes. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb. Orientalizing, 675–650 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20558)



Fig. 12b. Detail of bronze stand showing griffins. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tombs. Orientalizing, 675–650 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20558)

hypokrateria, and from the Circle of the Cauldrons at Vetulonia.<sup>82</sup> By contrast, the twin cauldrons with lion protomes from the Regolini-Galassi Tomb are probably the products of a local workshop,<sup>83</sup> as they are quite distinct from, although inspired by, the cauldrons from the Barberini Tomb at Praeneste and the Circle of the Cauldrons.<sup>84</sup> In

addition, the Regolini-Galassi Tomb contained a third cauldron of a different type:<sup>85</sup> its six inward-facing protomes are similar to one found at Karmir Blur on the outskirts of Yerevan in Armenia, which has the engraved name of the king of Urartu, Sarduri II (756–ca. 730 B.C.), who reigned roughly one century earlier than our tomb.<sup>86</sup> A second lion protome from the antiquities market, now in the collections of the Berlin State Museums, could be from the same workshop.<sup>87</sup> Given their significance and worth, the protomes of the large cauldron—like other objects—probably made their way to Etruria via a complex network of exchange.<sup>88</sup>

The body of the cauldron with “Urtian” protomes may be the work of an immigrant artisan, as might the base (the holmos or hypokraterion), which is decorated with embossed friezes of real and imaginary animals either in a line or facing each other: bulls and lions with and without wings, griffins and sphinxes, and palmettes.<sup>89</sup> The iconographic similarity of the two objects with Near Eastern examples, and the fact that they are quite distinct from the other decorated bronzes found in the tomb, was noted by Ingrid Strøm, who compared them with the ivory cups from the Barberini Tomb.<sup>90</sup> For the holmos, a recent proposal suggests that a Near Eastern craftsman (“more Phoenician than Syrian”)<sup>91</sup> was responsible for the works. In particular, according to Ferdinando Sciacca, the sphinxes depicted face-to-face seem to derive from Phoenician prototypes in terms of the sinuous body, the tail curving up and forward above the back and the “apron” between the forepaws (fig. 12a).<sup>92</sup> The unusual pose of the sphinx, with the rear wing shown uplifted and turned toward the front, finds parallels in the Nimrud ivories in Phoenician<sup>93</sup> and North Syrian style,<sup>94</sup> as well as on Urartian bronzes.<sup>95</sup> Among the notable characteristics of the griffins and sphinxes on the Regolini-Galassi holmos (figs. 12a, b) and jewelry (figs. 3a–g)<sup>96</sup> are the long locks of hair ending in curls, linking them with those depicted on Phoenician-style ivories (fig. 13).<sup>97</sup>





Fig. 13. Phoenician-style ivory openwork panel showing griffin. Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, Room SW 37. Neo-Assyrian period, 9th–7th century B.C. Musée Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (o.3009)

Monumental cauldrons, placed on tripods or supports, have been found in the princely tombs of Etruria and in other peripheral areas of the Greek world, such as Cyprus and Phrygia. The cauldrons were introduced and reproduced in Greece, where they assumed an important role in ceremonies conducted in sanctuaries (see Papalexandrou essay).<sup>98</sup> Containing wine for banquets, as well as boiled meat, these large containers, associated with aristocratic feasting,<sup>99</sup> retained the importance they enjoyed as ceremonial objects in the Near East, where they were given in tribute to the Assyrian kings.<sup>100</sup>

There were no large statues in the Regolini-Galassi Tomb, but thirty-three bucchero figurines, all without feet so that they could be wedged into the ground, were discovered along three sides of the bronze bier in the antechamber (fig. 15).<sup>101</sup> Some may also have been placed in the right-hand cella in two rows alongside the cinerary urn. They depict females in various poses, as though reproducing the series of mourning gestures used during the lying in state. These “performers”—possibly imbued with magical properties themselves—though far smaller in scale, are reminiscent of the ranked statues in the dromos of the Tumulus of Pietrera at Vetulonia, interpreted as ancestors accompanying the deceased.<sup>102</sup> The same meaning is conveyed by the caryatids on the supports for chalices, who are shown grasping their braids with their hands on their breasts in the eastern gesture typical of goddesses of fertility and

rebirth. We can see this same gesture on an ivory from the Barberini Tomb and in the bucchero replicas, again inspired by Near Eastern prototypes.<sup>103</sup> In an example from the Regolini-Galassi excavations, there is also a detailed depiction of the sacred tree (fig. 16).<sup>104</sup>

The birth of Etruscan monumental statuary has been attributed to Levantine craftsmen following Syro-Hittite models, as in the case of the Tomb of the Statues at Cери.<sup>105</sup> These statues, as intuited by Giovanni Colonna, were inspired by a sculptural model that could only have been transmitted by an “eyewitness.” An example is provided by the statue of a royal couple seated on a throne from a cultic context at Tell Halaf (ancient Guzana), dating to the early ninth century B.C.<sup>106</sup> We are dealing, in reality, with models that date back much further, and it is striking to observe the ancestors seated on thrones in the Tomb of the Five Chairs in Caere<sup>107</sup> and recall the figures of the ancestors in the dynastic tomb of Qatna in Syria,<sup>108</sup> all depicted with a cup in the right hand as befits the gods and dignitaries (figs. 17, 18). Similarly, we are also reminded of the statues of the kings of Ebla, from the nineteenth to eighteenth century B.C., consecrated in the temple of Ishtar and in the palace, respectively, with a political-religious function and related to the dynastic cult,<sup>109</sup> and so on, back down to the start of the ninth century B.C. at Tell Halaf, and the Syro-Hittite statue of a seated woman placed above a cremation



Fig. 15. Bucchero figurines of mourners. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb. Orientalizing, 675–650 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20376–20377, 20392–20399)



Fig. 16. Bucchero chalice with caryatids and sacred tree. Caere, Regolini-Galassi excavations. Orientalizing, 630–580 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20016)

burial (see Novák essay, p. 126, fig. 2).<sup>110</sup> The similarities seen in funerary rituals in Etruria centuries later are impressive and must have related not only to the form but also the significance of the statues. In effect, they speak to us of specific aspects of royalty, its relationship with the divine, the sacred, and society received by the Etruscans in the private sphere in the cult of the dead, and of the ancestors with all of their symbolic and magical importance.

Alongside the bronze bed there was the ritual trolley,<sup>111</sup> the wheels of which recall eastern and Aegean forerunners from Cyprus (see p. 12), Crete, Euboea, and Palestine, dating to the late second to early first millennium B.C. (fig. 19).<sup>112</sup> The Book of Kings mentions the bronze basins on wheels made by Hiram of Tyre for the Temple of Solomon.<sup>113</sup> Containers on wheels are also described by Homer as royal and divine attributes: a silver basket on wheels with gold



Fig. 17. Basalt seated ancestor figures. Qatna, Royal Tomb, Antechamber. Manufacture: Middle Bronze Age, 18th century B.C.; context: Late Bronze Age, 15th–14th century B.C. National Museum of Damascus, Syria (MSHo2G-io738, MSHo2G-io744, MSHo2G-io729, MSHo2G-io736)



inlay that was given to Helen<sup>114</sup> and the golden wheeled tripods made by Hephaistos for the banquets of the gods were able to reach the divine assembly and return unaided.<sup>115</sup> The ritual trolley, with its containers for offerings surrounded by lotus flowers, therefore appears to function as a link with the divine realm precisely because it is equipped with wheels. This role is further indicated by its hypothetical function as an incense burner, since incense and perfume were undoubtedly linked to the sacred sphere in the Near Eastern and Egyptian worlds. Its true function remains uncertain, although the caryatid vessels (fig. 16) have been compared with Orientalizing incense burners from the Iberian Peninsula,<sup>116</sup> and the burning of incense is documented for Orientalizing Etruscan tombs.<sup>117</sup>

To conclude, the Regolini-Galassi Tomb is an excellent example of the Orientalizing phenomenon precisely because of the combination of different cultural elements it exhibits. For this reason, every age has been able to see its own particular vision reflected in it with emphasis on one or another aspect. Thus we pass from the immediate recognition of “Egyptian, Babylonian, and Phoenician” elements by Luigi Grifi in 1836,<sup>118</sup> to the more complex pan-Mediterranean view of Giovanni Pinza in 1915,<sup>119</sup> which itself perpetuated the nineteenth-century appraisal of Wolfgang Helbig, down to the blindly ideological interpretation given in 1947 by Luigi Pareti, who ended up denying any eastern or Semitic links whatsoever.<sup>120</sup>

The intangible Cypriot atmosphere, which Vassos Karageorghis confessed he sensed on first visiting the Etruscan Museum in the Vatican in the late 1960s, is today both tempered and reinforced by our knowledge of the influence exercised by the larger Mediterranean islands and by the Greek element.<sup>121</sup> We are speaking here of those Greeks whose culture, influenced in its turn by the Orientalizing phenomenon, we encounter in the Regolini-Galassi Tomb, not only through imported vases but also in the zoomorphic and, perhaps, the geometric



Fig. 18. Terracotta seated female figure. Caere, Tomb of the Five Chairs. Orientalizing, 650–630 B.C. The British Museum, London (1873,0820.637)

repertoires employed on Etruscan objects. Such research has inevitably brought the Oriental aspect to the fore, and this is a positive result, since today we know that foreign master craftsmen and other transmitters of cultural influences settled in Etruria, proving that it was not only goods that circulated and journeyed.



Fig. 19. Bronze cult-trolley. Caere, Sorbo necropolis, Regolini-Galassi Tomb. Orientalizing, 675–650 B.C. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City (20559)

That the Greek element exists there can be no doubt: one need only consider the Etruscan alphabet, adapted from the Euboian version, the allusions to heroic and aristocratic ideals, the funerary ritual suggested by the bier surrounded by mourners, and the funeral carriage, which, taken together, provide a concrete version of the *prothesis* (lying in state) and *ekphora* (funerary procession) painted on Geometric Greek vases.<sup>122</sup> This Greek matrix was to become even more marked in Etruria in later years. Orientalizing is not merely a simple historical period, but a process that continued to influence western culture. One need only think of the analogical and symbolic language employed in literature by Homer,<sup>123</sup> and in art, as, for example, in the case of animal friezes that persist in Classical art, or the diver in the sixth-century B.C. Tomb of Hunting and Fishing in Tarquinia, which epitomizes what the goldsmiths at the court of Caere centuries earlier may have aimed to convey through their images of the water and the heavens.<sup>124</sup>

1. The original Italian text has been translated by Penelope-Jane Watson.
2. On the Regolini-Galassi Tomb, see Pareti 1947; Ström 1971, pp. 160–68, *passim*; Colonna and Di Paolo 1997; Sannibale 2012; Gaultier et al. 2013, pp. 104–11 (entry by M. Sannibale).

3. Canina 1846, pp. 173–91, pl. LII.
4. Naso 1998. For tumuli and their precursors in protohistoric Italy, compared with the situation in central Europe and the Iberian Peninsula, see Naso 2011. For southern Etruria, see Alessandro Naso in Naso 2011, pp. 115–30. The author is cautious about identifying a specific region for the provenance of the models adopted in Etruria (p. 117).
5. Rose and Darbyshire 2011, pp. 3, 16, 24ff., 92ff., 166, fig. 1.2. The chronology of the Iron Age at Gordion has been revised following the latest dendrochronological and radiocarbon dating. The destruction level of the city is now dated to the end of the ninth century B.C., roughly one century earlier than the traditional chronology, and many of the 150 known tumuli, including Tumulus MM, have been shown to be contemporary with the reconstruction of the Middle Phrygian Citadel carried out during the eighth century B.C., reflecting a certain connection with the Levantine milieu.
6. Bartoloni et al. 2000, p. 128, cat. no. 78 (entry by M. Marchesi). For the example from Gordion, see *ibid.*, p. 96, fig. p. 98 (entry by F. Delpino).
7. Colonna and Di Paolo 1997, pp. 167–68; Sannibale 2008b, pp. 110–11.
8. Barnett 1975, pp. 145–51, C12–C15, Nimrud, Northwest Palace, Phoenician-style ivories; G. Herrmann 1986, nos. 401ff., Fort Shalmaneser Room SW 37; G. Herrmann 1992a, nos. 467ff., Fort Shalmaneser, Room NW 15; Fontan 2014, p. 154, cat. no. 51b, Arslan Tash; Di Filippo Balestrazzi 1999, p. 319, fig. 14.
9. For the Etruscan painting, see Naso 1996, pp. 427–31; Naso 2003, p. 21; Colonna 2005, with bibliography. For Veii and the Tomb of the Roaring Lions, see Boitani et al. 2010.

10. On the cultural and magical significance of gold and other minerals in ancient Egypt, see Aufrière 1991, pp. 308–92.
11. Pareti 1947, no. 28; Sannibale 2003, p. 57, fig., pp. 63–65; Bubenheimer-Erhart 2004a, pp. 93ff., fig. 14; Bubenheimer-Erhart 2005, pp. 154ff., fig. 1; Sannibale 2008a, pp. 356–58, figs. 23–25; Sannibale 2008b, pp. 90–93, fig. 6.
12. Emphasized especially, and in relation to other aspects of the funerary rituals, in Bubenheimer-Erhart 2005.
13. For Phoenician influence in the spread of Egyptian motifs and goods in Etruria between the mid-eighth and mid-seventh centuries B.C., as well as for the particular role played by Caere, see Camporeale 2006.
14. For example, see the splendid gold elements incorporated into the funeral masks of Tutankhamun, 1333–1323 B.C. (JE 60672: Tiradritti 1998, p. 235) and of Psusennes I, 1040–992 B.C. (JE 85913: *ibid.*, p. 315), but also the “simpler” pectoral in gold sheet worn by the pharaoh’s Ka in Tutankhamun’s tomb (JE 60707–8: *ibid.*, p. 205).
15. Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, pp. 216–17, pl. 188.
16. Merhav 1991b, pp. 164–70, cat. nos. 2, 3, 5–9, dated to the late eighth to seventh century B.C.; Hase 2000, p. 138, pl. VIa, dating to the eighth century B.C.
17. Babbi and Peltz 2013, pp. 233–39, no. 1, pp. 262–64, no. 10.
18. For the gold pectoral from the “Galeassi Tomb” in Palestrina, restored by the Castellani: Moretti Sgubini 2000, no. 115; Torelli and Moretti Sgubini 2008, cat. no. 76, fig. p. 143.
19. Colonna et al. 1976, pp. 287–88, pl. LXIb (entry by A. Bedini).
20. For example, at Bisenzio, Narce, Palestrina, Satricum, and Castel di Decima; see Cristofani and Martelli 1983, nos. 6, 7; Moretti Sgubini 2000, nos. 117, 119–21.
21. Bartoloni et al. 2000, pp. 293–94, cat. nos. 388, 389 (entries by P. von Eles); Eles 2012.
22. Pareti 1947, pp. 180–82, no. 2, pl. V, with bibliography; Cristofani and Martelli 1983, fig. p. 96, p. 262, no. 31; Sannibale 2003, p. 57, fig. p. 66; Mura Sommella 2008, pp. 110–11, cat. no. 46 (entry by M. Sannibale).
23. Pareti 1947, no. 1; Sannibale 2003, pp. 56–57, fig. pp. 61–62; Sannibale 2008a, pp. 358ff.; Sannibale 2008b, pp. 101–4; Sannibale 2014, fig. p. 316.
24. Homer, *Iliad* 16.742–50; cf. Cerchiai 2003, pp. 34–36.
25. Sannibale 2008a, pp. 352, 360–61.
26. Wolters 1983, no. 29, 1900–1800 B.C.
27. Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, p. 135, pl. 100; Wolters 1983, nos. 34, 35.
28. Tiradritti 1998, p. 330, JE 72171.
29. As in the case of the silver cup from Pontecagnano, formerly in the Tyskiewicz collection, where the zigzag motif surrounds the central tondo; Markoe 1985, E10.
30. Bartoloni et al. 2000, p. 219, cat. no. 250 (entry by L. Minarini), 680–660 B.C.
31. Strøm 2001, pp. 363–64. On the gold bowl from Nimrud, see also Aruz 2014a, pp. 115–16, figs. 3.1, 3.2, and Hussein and Benzel 2014, pp. 125–26, fig. 3.13.
32. Minetti 2006, pp. 25ff., 38ff., figs. 23–29.
33. For Hathor in the solar barque, see Derchain 1972, pp. 36–44.
34. Pinch 1993; for the mask of Hathor in particular, see pp. 135–59. Cf. also Daumas 1970; Fekri 2005. For the cult of Hathor at Byblos, see Scandone Matthiae 1991.
35. Pareti 1947, pp. 217–18, no. 151, pl. XV; Aruz et al. 2014, p. 327, cat. no. 199 (entry by M. Sannibale). For the symbolism in connection with the situla, see Sannibale 2008b, pp. 109–10.
36. Bommas 2005.
37. For example, see the winged genie with a human head, divine tiara, and situla touching the sacred tree with a pinecone, Nimrud, Northwest Palace, Room T, slab 8, 883–859 B.C., New York, Brooklyn Museum 55.152; Matthiae 1996a, p. 66, fig. 3.8.
38. W. Brown 1960, pp. 1–45; Sciacca 2012, pp. 240–41, with bibliography.
39. Pareti 1947, pp. 182–84, nos. 3, 4, pl. VI; Cristofani and Martelli 1983, p. 263, no. 36, fig. p. 100; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 323–24, cat. no. 194 (entry by M. Sannibale).
40. Marshall 1911, no. 1356.
41. Cristofani and Martelli 1983, p. 263, no. 36. For the female with Hathor-like curls and a bell-shaped garment as “Mistress of Animals” and for the hero killing a lion with a sword, see Barnett 1975, pp. 66–67, fig. 20, S20, pl. XXVI. For the hero with the lion, see G. Herrmann 1986, no. 78, Fort Shalmaneser, SW 37.
42. Shefton 1989.
43. Pareti 1947, pp. 187–88, nos. 15, 16, pl. VII; Cristofani and Martelli 1983, p. 263, no. 37, fig. p. 101.
44. Shefton 1989, p. 97, fig. 4 (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1957.224).
45. Found in two versions: *larthia*, or *mi larthia*, “I am of Larth” according to the current interpretation. Pareti 1947, nos. 152–66. For the inscriptions, see Bagnasco Gianni 1996, pp. 81–84, nos. 49–54; Buranelli and Sannibale 1998, pp. 362–63, no. 30; Mura Sommella 2008, pp. 94–97, cat. nos. 32–36 (entries by M. Sannibale).
46. Pareti 1947, p. 224, no. 165, pl. XVII; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 326–27, cat. no. 198 (entry by M. Sannibale).
47. Culican 1976; Grau-Zimmermann 1978, pp. 189, 202, 214 (K11), pls. 38a–b, 43b, type BI; Martelli 1991, p. 1063; Bartoloni et al. 2000, pp. 204–5, cat. no. 216 (entry by G. Ghini) and p. 215, cat. no. 240 (entry by F. Sciacca); Stampolidis 2003a, pp. 447–49, cat. nos. 773–79; Aruz et al. 2014,

- pp. 225–27, cat. nos. 116a–b, 117–19 (entries by A. Caubet, E. Arie, L. M. Berman).
48. Shefton 1989, pp. 97–98, fig. 1.
  49. Palestrina, Bernardini Tomb: Canciani and von Hase 1979, pp. 77–78, no. 148, pl. III.2.
  50. Cerveteri, Regolini-Galassi Tomb, Phoenician–Cypriot double-walled cup: Markoe 1985, pp. 197–98, E9, figs. pp. 298–301; Sannibale 2013, pp. 102–3, fig. 6.8.
  51. Babbi and Peltz 2013, pp. 304–5, no. 52, pl. 43 (in bronze), pp. 349–64, nos. 85–89, pls. 65–68 (painted pottery).
  52. In the Regolini-Galassi Tomb: Pareti 1947, pp. 219–20, nos. 152–56, pl. XVI; Cristofani and Martelli 1983, p. 265, no. 43, fig. p. 105; Mura Sommella 2008, pp. 96–97, cat. no. 33 (entry by M. Sannibale).
  53. Sciacca 2005, p. 402; Martelli 2008, p. 124.
  54. Sciacca 2005, pp. 431ff.
  55. *Ibid.*, Ce1–Ce12, pp. 150–57, 339–41, figs. 221–32.
  56. Pareti 1947, nos. 321–24, pls. XLIII–XLV; Cristofani and Martelli 1983, p. 264, nos. 39–41, figs. pp. 102–3; Markoe 1985, pp. 194–98, E6–E9, figs. pp. 292–94, 296–301; Buranelli and Sannibale 2005; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 322–23, cat. no. 193 (entry by M. Sannibale).
  57. For the cow suckling a calf in Phoenician-style ivories: Barnett 1975, pp. 143–45, C23,31, C22,34, Nimrud, Northwest Palace; G. Herrmann 1992a, nos. 381–89 (Fort Shalmaneser, NW 21, Intermediate Tradition); Fontan 2014, p. 154, cat. no. 51c (Arslan Tash).
  58. Gjerstad 1946; Aubet 1971; Strøm 1971, pp. 123–27; Canciani 1979; Canciani and von Hase 1979, pp. 36–38; Rathje 1980; Cristofani and Martelli 1983, pp. 42–43, 256–57, nos. 17, 18, pp. 264–65, nos. 39–41; Matthäus 1985, pp. 161–78, pls. 33–46, nos. 423–43; Markoe 1985; Moscati 1988, pp. 436–37; Markoe 1992; Markoe 1992–93; D. Neri 2000; Strøm 2001; Buranelli and Sannibale 2005; Martelli 2008, pp. 123, 135 n. 16; Feldman 2014b.
  59. Respectively, Markoe 1985, E1, E10.
  60. Buranelli and Sannibale 2005, pp. 227–28.
  61. Canciani and von Hase 1979, pp. 36–37, no. 16, pls. 12.3–13; D. Neri 2000, pp. 22–29, pls. V–IX.
  62. Feldman 2014b.
  63. Gjerstad 1946; Hermery 1986, p. 194.
  64. Strøm 1971, pp. 126–27; Rathje 1979; Rathje 1980, p. 18.
  65. Barnett 1977; Canciani 1979, pp. 2–3.
  66. Rome, Villa Giulia 13205; Markoe 1985, E5.
  67. Rome, Villa Giulia 61565; Markoe 1985, E2; D. Neri 2000, pp. 18–22, pls. III, IV.
  68. Louvre AO 20135; Markoe 1985, Cy1.
  69. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 74.51.4556; Markoe 1985, p. 152, Cy7.
  70. For general aspects of these products, comparisons between the Italian and Cypriot examples, and location of the workshops, see Buranelli and Sannibale 2005, pp. 220–22, nn. 6, 7, 14; Sciacca 2006–7, pp. 283–90.
  71. Respectively, Cesnola cups 4554 and 4552A: Markoe 1985, pp. 78, 156, Cy8, Cy14; cf. Matthiae 1997, pp. 243–46. For the Aksestos cup (Cesnola 4554), see Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 159–60, cat. no. 52 (entry by M. Feldman and J.-F. de Lapérouse).
  72. On the renewed production of ivories in the first millennium, see Feldman 2008. For the Nimrud ivories, see G. Herrmann 1992b; Aruz and de Lapérouse 2014b. For the ivories from Arslan Tash, see Fontan 2014.
  73. Pareti 1947, no. 168; Huls 1957, pp. 31–32, no. 1, pls. I.1–2, II.1–2, pp. 137–39; Rebuffat 1962; Martelli 1991, p. 1064; Camporeale 2012, p. 34, fig. 13.
  74. Rebuffat 1962; Martelli 1991, p. 1064.
  75. Sciacca 2012, p. 252, with reference to the Calabrese dish (Sciacca 2003, pp. 128–29, no. 33) and the Regolini-Galassi white-on-red pyxis (Micozzi 1994, pp. 26–27, *passim*, p. 244, C6, pls. III.b–IV.a).
  76. Sheet bronze with repoussé decoration, formerly assembled to the reconstruction of the so-called throne: Pareti 1947, pp. 239–40, no. 217 (Fr. 4 and 5–6), pl. XXIV.
  77. *Ibid.*, pp. 295–97, nos. 251–54, pl. XXXVI; Sannibale 2003, p. 56, fig. p. 55; Stampolidis 2003a, p. 445, cat. no. 769 (entry by M. Sannibale).
  78. Marunti 1959; Canciani and von Hase 1979, pp. 46–47; Gehrig 2004; Martelli 2008, pp. 123–24; in general, see Aruz and de Lapérouse 2014a.
  79. For a selection of protomes, also as appliqués (with bull, siren), and protomes alone (especially griffin heads) from sanctuaries in Macedonia and Greece as well as from southern Italy and Etruria (Gravisa), see Stampolidis 2003a, pp. 421–30.
  80. C. Curtis 1925, pp. 44–46, no. 80, pls. 27.2–28 (hypokraterion), no. 81, pls. 29–31 (cauldron with alternating lion and griffin protomes; Curtis suggests that one of the griffins was a locally manufactured copy); Marunti 1959, p. 66, no. 1, pl. XIa. See recently Sciacca 2012, pp. 244–45, fig. 26, also on North Syrian production of the embossed Barberini and Bernardini hypokrateria cauldrons.
  81. Canciani and von Hase 1979, pp. 46–47, no. 42, pls. 27–31.
  82. Marunti 1959, p. 67, no. 2; Camporeale 1969, pp. 102–4, pls. XXXVI.1, XXXVII.1.
  83. Pareti 1947, nos. 307–10; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 325–26, cat. no. 197 (entry by M. Sannibale).
  84. Marunti 1959, pp. 71–75. See above, notes 80 and 82.
  85. Mura Sommella 2008, p. 88, cat. no. 27 (entry by M. Sannibale); Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 324–25, cat. no. 195 (entry by M. Sannibale); see below note 86.
  86. For the comment, cf. the preceding note. For the protome, see Piotrovskii 1962, p. 65, figs. 36, 37; Piotrovskii 1965, p. 416, pl. 98.3–4; Merhav 1991b, pp. 234–35, fig. 11; Aruz et al. 2014, p. 325, cat. no. 196 (entry by I. Mkrtchyan). The two can be



- seen together in Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 324–25, cat. nos. 195–96.
87. Bartoloni et al. 2000, pp. 130–31, cat. no. 82 (entry by C. Berns).
  88. On the presence of imported Urartian and Assyrian bronzes in Etruria between the last third of the eighth and the beginning of the seventh century B.C., with particular emphasis on the fluted bowls, see Sciacca 2006–7. On the question of Urartian types in Etruria, see Pallottino 1957.
  89. Pareti 1947, pp. 103–5, 304–5, no. 303, pl. XXXIX; Mura Sommella 2008, p. 89, cat. no. 28 (entry by M. Sannibale). The two pieces were found in two different parts of the tomb, but seem to be related, as already maintained by Furtwängler (1890, p. 125) in his commentary on the cauldrons from Olympia.
  90. Strom 1971, p. 167: “. . . their repeated animal friezes in relief seem to a lesser degree directly inspired by Near Eastern art” (ibid., p. 159).
  91. Sciacca 2012, pp. 247–48, fig. 35.
  92. For example, see Barnett 1975, suppl. 23, 27, 33.
  93. Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, SW 37: G. Herrmann 1986, nos. 98, 118. Nimrud, Northwest Palace: G. Herrmann and Laidlaw 2009, nos. 255–57, 359.
  94. Barnett 1975, suppl. 13, 70; Orchard 1967, nos. 109–14.
  95. Piece of a horse harness in bronze: Matthiae 1996b, fig. p. 127.
  96. Griffins of the same type, with long locks of hair ending in curls, are depicted on both the gold pectoral and the parade fibula of the Regolini-Galassi Tomb, for which see above, notes 11 and 23.
  97. Griffins: Barnett 1975, suppl. 42, Fort Shalmaneser; G. Herrmann 1986, nos. 143–51, 499–500, 1137–42, 1148–51. Sphinxes: ibid., nos. 1148–1551.
  98. D’Agostino 2000, pp. 46–48.
  99. Delpino 2000, pp. 194–95.
  100. Liverani 2000, pp. 8–9.
  101. Pareti 1947, pp. 272–81, no. 233, pl. XXVIII; Colonna and Di Paolo 1997, pp. 159–60; Stampolidis and Giannopoulou 2012, p. 319, cat. no. 5 (entry by M. Sannibale).
  102. Celuzza and Cianferoni 2010, pp. 157–58, cat. nos. 3.106–7 (entries by A. Maggiani and M. Cygielman).
  103. Camporeale 1963, p. 292; Brocato and Regoli 2009, pp. 216–27; De Puma 2013, pp. 978–80.
  104. Pareti 1947, p. 423, no. 528, 630–580 B.C.
  105. Colonna and von Hase 1984, pp. 48–53.
  106. Aruz et al. 2014, p. 100, cat. no. 39 (entry by N. Cholidis).
  107. Gaultier et al. 2013, pp. 101–2 (entry by R. Cosentino).
  108. Pfälzner 2008. The two basalt statues, placed either side of the entrance to the antechamber of the royal tomb below the palace, can be dated stylistically to the Middle Bronze II (1850/1800–1750/1700 B.C.), but the context dates to the Late Bronze Age (15th–14th century B.C.).
  109. Matthiae 2010, pp. 279–91, figs. 142, 144–47, 150; see also ibid., pp. 526–27, with bibliography.
  110. Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 99–100, cat. no. 38 (entry by N. Cholidis). On the site of Tell Halaf (ancient Guzana), see ibid., pp. 93–97.
  111. Pareti 1947, p. 290, no. 240, pl. XXXIII; Bubenheimer-Erhart 2004b, p. 52, pl. 19a; Sannibale 2008b, p. 98, fig. 18; Mura Sommella 2008, p. 91, cat. no. 30 (entry by M. Sannibale).
  112. For the origins of the wheeled base in Etruria and its precedents in Cyprus, the Hellenic world, and the Levant: Torelli 1997, pp. 589–98; Stampolidis 2003a, cat. no. 725; Tubb 2014b, fig. 1.16; Aruz et al. 2014, pp. 28–29, cat. no. 2 (entry by T. Kiely).
  113. 1 Kings 7:27–30.
  114. Homer, *Odyssey* 4.131.
  115. Homer, *Iliad* 18.373–77.
  116. Bubenheimer-Erhart 2004b, pp. 53–54, pls. 21, 23a.
  117. As in the case of Casale Marittimo, Tomb A (ca. 700–675 B.C.) and Tomb H2 (ca. 700–650 B.C.): Esposito 1999, pp. 90–92.
  118. Pareti 1947, pp. 145–50, doc. 19; Sannibale 2008a, pp. 338–40.
  119. Pinza 1915, pp. 77–492.
  120. Sannibale 2013, pp. 104–5.
  121. V. Karageorghis 2001.
  122. See, for example, Ahlberg 1971b; cf. Sannibale 2008a, p. 365. Alternatively, for a Near Eastern influence even on these aspects of the Greek funerary ritual, see Burkert 1992, p. 19.
  123. For similes in the Homeric poems, see Moulton 1977; for Near Eastern influences on early Greek literature, see Burkert 1992, pp. 6, 25, 88; S. Morris 1997.
  124. Cf. Sannibale 2008b, pp. 111–16.

# Greek Literature and the Lost Legacy of Canaan

The exhibition “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age” brilliantly captured the networks that stemmed from the ancient Near East, forever transforming the Mediterranean cultures. As this volume also demonstrates, we study this “international” horizon mostly through the visual arts and the ongoing process of archaeological excavations. Much less can be said from the literary point of view about the ways in which the so-called “Orientalizing” movement would have also transformed less tangible aspects of the many cultures that entered this international network—Tartessians in southern Iberia, Etruscans, local cultures in Sicily, Sardinia, and North Africa—none of whom left a written legacy of the sort through which we can trace this phenomenon at the intellectual or literary level. Our great exception is, of course, Greece.

There is no question anymore: we can all agree that Greek literature is part of an eastern Mediterranean continuum of narrative and poetic traditions.<sup>1</sup> Hand in hand with the circulation of artifacts and symbols, this literary koine must have its roots in the Late Bronze Age (whose oral traditions in Greece we can trace only through the trail of evidence in Archaic period written epic). But it is with the complex re-organization and re-definition of peoples across the Levant and the Aegean in the Iron Age that we find a surge of new literary forms and voices. The emergence of the Homeric poems in their (extremely long) written form cannot be explained without the model of the Epic of Gilgamesh (fig. 1); Greek cosmogony with

its succession myths, its glorification of the Storm-god and his battles with monsters, even the castration of the Sky, cannot be fully understood but as a variant of the epic genre *alongside* the Mesopotamian, Hittite, and Canaanite variants, all of them species within a genus, as it were. The archaeology of texts that we conduct through comparative analysis brings up the “cultural DNA” of these children of the romance between the Near Eastern and Hellenic traditions. Comparison, of course, also helps us to underscore the peculiarities of each tradition and to broaden the spectrum of interpretive options for a given motif. In literature, as in art history, we have now moved beyond simply detecting “parallels” and are now asking *what it means* for Greek literature to be in dialogue with these other traditions, following or departing from conventions of the authoritative genres, adapting or ignoring motifs, and creating new narratives, and framing new ideologies.<sup>2</sup>

Comparison may also lead toward an understanding of the possible dynamics among the cultures in contact, and what types of interaction would have produced the artifacts (literary and material) that we have found. This essay focuses on the Phoenicians, and how Greek literature help us to ascertain their crucial role in shaping this Orientalizing continuum. At the outset, it is important to acknowledge a sort of paradox when it comes to the Phoenicians: for all their overwhelming archaeological (even epigraphical) presence, they fall on the side of the other Iron Age peoples whose own internal (“emic”) narratives are lost, since their literatures (of whatever sort they were) did not make it into the short list of the Classical canon. And yet, it was the expansion of Phoenician settlements and entrepreneurship that enabled communities throughout the broader Mediterranean to join this new “global” network, bringing them into the cultural and economic gravitational pull of Assyria and the Levant. Thus the field of comparative literature and mythology has traditionally favored the legacy of the great (not

to mention preserved) written sources from Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, associating the Phoenicians instead with material culture alone: trading activity and artistic and technological developments. The problem, of course, is that we have almost completely lost the Phoenician texts that would allow us to conduct comparison on the literary side. As a result, a double line of study has emerged: some study the *material* Orientalizing phenomenon (which admits and even highlights Phoenician agency), while others address the *literary* intersections between Greek and Near Eastern texts, where the Canaanite tradition is almost a footnote.<sup>3</sup>

Given the importance of the Phoenicians in the cultural exchange during this period, it is worth making an effort to compensate for this loss (clinging to that “almost” in “we have *almost* lost”), by focusing on clues left by traces of this Northwest Semitic legacy as reflected in other traditions.<sup>4</sup> The exercise requires no small amount of reconstruction and imagination. And yet, on close inspection, Northwest Semitic elements are present in major areas of Greek literary culture. What more important element, in practical and symbolic terms, than the connection in the realm of writing itself and scribal tradition? Let us remember that the Phoenician alphabet was adapted to Greek sometime before 750 B.C., and was unequivocally associated with the Phoenicians by the Greeks themselves. Some even called their new writing Kadmeian letters (from the legendary Tyrian figure, Kadmos) and others *phoinikeia grammata* (Phoenician letters), while Archaic scribes in Crete were called *poinikastas*.<sup>5</sup> Some might avoid drawing further cultural implications by treating this innovation as a mere technological tool adopted in one “aseptic” transaction after which each speaker (one Greek, one Northwest Semitic) parted ways. But the alphabet is, in fact, the clearest evidence of the existence of areas of linguistic contact, which, in turn, is an index of cultural exchange *beyond* the technological and visual realm. A good example of this comes from the Greek and Northwest Semitic

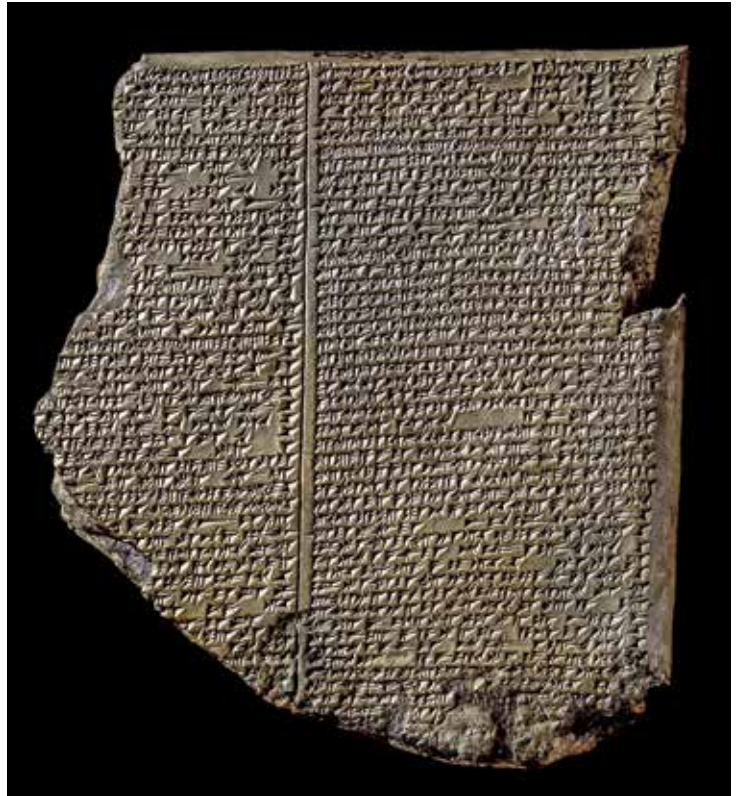


Fig. 1. Clay tablet with Babylonian cuneiform inscription: The Epic of Gilgamesh, Tablet 11 (the “Flood Tablet”). Library of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh, Iraq. Neo-Assyrian, 7th century B.C. The British Museum, London (K.3375)

ostraca found on the island of Pithekoussai (Ischia), across the Bay of Naples, one of the earliest trading posts established by Greeks in the west around 770 B.C. These inscribed objects come mostly from graves and present an unprecedented expression of cultural exchange: Aramaic or Phoenician epigraphs appear incised on Greek pots, while Near Eastern amulets and small objects are found in graves tentatively identified as Greek through the pottery used in the burials. Since the inscriptions on the pots correspond with the earliest stage of the adaptation of the Phoenician alphabet (fig. 2), the letters are so similar that in some cases the best specialists cannot determine which are meant to spell Greek and which the Semitic language. Here, the archaeological and the linguistic



Fig. 2. Ceramic kotyle with Greek inscription, known as the Cup of Nestor. Ischia, Pithekoussai, necropolis of San Montano, cremation grave 168. Late Geometric. Archaeological Museum Pithekoussai, Ischia, Italy (166788)

record reinforce each other to reveal the multicultural, bilingual makeup of a small community, the likes of which must have existed in many other places across the Mediterranean.<sup>6</sup>

The early mythological traditions are also rich with “encrypted” evidence of bilingualism and biculturalism between these groups. These are instances where a word shows that the transfer of the mythical motif was paired with knowledge of the “other” language. One such cluster is that involving Kadmos and Europa as part of the Theban saga. The westward trajectory of the Phoenician family symbolizes the coming of easterners to Greece in early times, along with the alphabet, which Herodotos called “Kadmeian letters.”<sup>7</sup> Their names themselves are fossilized sign posts of this relationship, since many think that Kadmos is a Greek adaptation of a Semitic word *kadm/kedem* (“east, levant, eastern”) and Europa of *’erev* (“evening” or “western”).<sup>8</sup> The Thebans’ descent from Phoenicians, as “sons of Kadmos,” was highlighted in Greek literature (for example, in tragedies), side by side with a parallel myth of autochthony, showing the complexity of communal identities.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the famous sphinx that Oedipus defeated (also at Thebes)

happens to be the most emblematic symbol of Orientalizing art. Moreover, whatever the other connotations of this hybrid creature were, some think that her name, “Sphinx” (in Greek “strangler”) is the literal translation or semantic calque of a Phoenician demon called “the strangler” (*honeket*), attested on the Arslan Tash amulets.<sup>10</sup> Even the grandson of Kadmos, Dionysos himself (son of Kadmos’s daughter Semele), was called Bacchus, a name that some scholars think came to the “exotic” god from the Semitic verb *bacha*, “to cry,” forever attached to his maddened followers, the Maenads, also called *Bacchai*. And the list of characters with a possible Semitic inflection could go on (the clusters of Danaos and Io, Melikertes and Palaimon, and Kinyras, Myrrha, and Adonis, to name only a few).<sup>11</sup>

Then there is Hesiod’s *Theogony*, also stemming from central Greece, and without question the most “Oriental” of all Greek poems. Best known is his adaptation of a widespread succession myth, or “kingship in heaven” (to which I will return), most fully represented in Mesopotamian and Hurro-Hittite myths. But many other important characters and stories in the *Theogony* reflect a Northwest Semitic substrate. Among them, I wish to



highlight the story of Aphrodite's birth from the Sky (Ouranos). Besides connecting her with the castrated genitals of her father (as she is the goddess of sexuality), the story serves to explain her epithet "Ourania." As a "celestial" goddess, she aligns with Semitic Ashtart, called "Queen of Heaven." But the Semitic and Greek goddesses are of course explicitly identified in Classical literature. Aphrodite is also called Kypris in Greek epic, and the overlapping of the two goddesses in the cultic landscape of Cyprus points to Phoenician-Greek contact on that island in the early first millennium B.C. Moreover, her other epithet, Kythereia, is probably not, as Hesiod explains, related to the Greek island of Kythera, but possibly to her association in Cyprus with the prehistoric metal-smith god. In the Phoenician realm he would have been identified with the Canaanite Kothar (compare Ugaritic *Kothar-wa-Hasis*), and is attested as *Koushor*. In other words, she may have had a title such as "Ms. Kothar," (for example, *Kothareia* or the like) in the Graeco-Phoenician realm of Cyprus.<sup>12</sup> In turn, the monster Typhon that Zeus fights in *Theogony* is also very likely an adaptation of the Semitic Saphon, the abode of the Canaanite Storm-god north of Ugarit; and the sickle that Kronos used to castrate Ouranos in the same poem also has a Semitic name, *harpe*, from Semitic *hereb*. So a number of crucial names in these Archaic stories are of possible Semitic derivation; more importantly, they provide internal clues that locate the stories in the Levant. Typhon is placed by both Hesiod and Homer in the land of the *Arimoi* (most likely a reference to the Aramaeans in North Syria), and Aphrodite is associated with Greco-Phoenician Cyprus as discussed above.<sup>13</sup>

At the same time, the remarkable similarities between the story of Gilgamesh and central motifs in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, to mention the earliest known epic Greek works, leave no question as to the overwhelming influence of cuneiform literature in the eastern Mediterranean in the early first millennium, and its lasting impact in the Greek world. It is, however, difficult to

imagine a direct line of transmission between Mesopotamian and Greek literatures, given the lack of evidence of cuneiform literary texts circulating in the Greek world and the more distant relations between the Aegean and Mesopotamia, as compared with the Levant.<sup>14</sup> A more complicated and multi-layered transmission is more likely. Gilgamesh was, after all, the most popular epic by far in the Near East with copies and adaptations in other languages circulating in Anatolia and Canaan; even though we do not possess proof of a Northwest Semitic version, we know the epic was read at Ugarit in Akkadian; in the first millennium B.C., when the Assyrians produced their own copies of *Enūma Eliš*, Gilgamesh, and other Mesopotamian "classics," it is not at all impossible that written and oral versions of these stories continued to circulate among Aramaeans, Phoenicians, and others.<sup>15</sup> Such a mechanism for transmission would constitute a striking parallel: Phoenician art itself (as well as its "Orientalizing" local adaptations) represents precisely a creative synthesis of Canaanite, Anatolian, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian elements, selectively used in adaptations not unlike those we see in the literary artifacts of the Archaic Greek world.

My research on creation myths particularly supports this pattern. Our sources for this are Hesiod and fragments of Orphic texts, and the scattered representatives of a Northwest Semitic tradition: Ugaritic and biblical texts, and fragments of Phoenician cosmogonies transmitted by Greek authors, including the lengthier account by Philon of Byblos. On the one hand, Greek and Northwest Semitic elements converge in ways that are peculiar to those two traditions. Some of these elements are the central place of Heaven and Earth as a primordial couple; of Eros and Pothos (Love and Desire); a Time deity (Greek Chronos and Aion, Semitic Oulomos/Olam); the sustained role of the patriarchal figure of Kronos (outside Hesiod) and Ilu/El; and the motif of a "cosmic egg" that generates time (attested in Phoenician and Orphic fragments).<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, and this is key, important motifs that bring Greek cosmogony close to Mesopotamian and Hittite mythologies are *also* present in Northwest Semitic strands, suggesting the Levant as a fertile “middle ground” for the recasting of the old motifs. Most salient among these are: the emphasis on the primordial waters (characterized in the Hebrew Bible and in Phoenician fragments in a form more reminiscent of Hesiod’s Chaos than of Tiamat and Apsu), and the fight between the Storm-god and a watery dragon enemy personified in Ugaritic and Phoenician cosmogony as the Sea (Yam). The alternative three-tier partition of power among the siblings Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades in Homer also departs from the generational succession of gods and recalls most closely the Ugaritic hierarchy, in which Yam, Baal, and Mot (Death) are in competition for the throne (also in Philon of Byblos). It is not impossible that even the most blatant Anatolian “borrowing” in Greek epic, the castration of the Sky, was part of first-millennium storytelling in the Levant, as the motif is present in Philon’s version (though by this time he might also have been borrowing it from Hesiod).<sup>17</sup>

In other words, we need to think of the Phoenician-Greek adaptations as “adaptations of adaptations,” molded from the already “hybrid” packages that resulted from centuries of contact among cultures in the Levant. The result is a fabric of interwoven Greek and Near Eastern motifs that resist the traditional analysis of isolated “parallels” following a linear trajectory from point A to point B and identifiable with an “original,” isolated source. They are part of a larger cultural (even intellectual) movement stimulated across the Mediterranean, foremost, if not only, by Levantines. To accept this, however, requires believing in the Phoenicians as cultural agents, not mere “empty vessels” of luxury goods, but heirs to a Canaanite cultural heritage marked by its own adaptations of traditions well rooted in the Near Eastern continuum. And indeed, if we listen to our sources, we find indexes of their reputation

as “peoples of the book” in Greek and Roman sources, even if these are much later. Most explicit is Josephus’s placement of Phoenician antiquarians (Mochos and Hieronymos “the Egyptian”) together with Manetho and Berossos, among “All those who among the Greeks and the barbarians have compiled Antiquities,” and Tertulian’s statement, in connection with his inquiries about the early date of Moses, that “we would have to open up the archives of the oldest peoples also—of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Phoenicians.” The library of Carthage was famous enough to be given by the Romans to the Numidians in 146 B.C., and the archives of Tyre were consulted by some of Josephus’s sources. The Phoenician “brand” is also explicitly associated with *literary* culture in the genre of the novel, through titles such as the fragmentary *Phoenikika* or “Phoenician story” and the presence of Phoenician motifs in Heliodoros’s novel, the *Ethiopika*. The author adds a colophon to his work where he identifies himself as “a Phoenician from Emessa,” playing with an authorial Phoenician identity even in Roman times.

Leaving other examples aside, my point is that the Phoenicians, despite our scarce literary evidence, were part of the intellectual and literary circles of the Greek and Roman world. They were also the carriers of the “Canaanite” torch in ways different from those of the Hebrews (and in the long run, less successfully). This literary culture stimulated literacy and a wider worldview in many local Iron Age societies from east to west.

Returning to the so-called “Orientalizing” phenomenon, how might we harmonize the material and the literary sides of it? I would argue that only if we consider the existence of a Phoenician artistic and ideological mediation in the “Orientalizing Mediterranean” can we understand what these materials—objects and texts—conceal. In this difficult rescue operation, we are mostly forced to look at the literary evidence through the lenses of Greek literature and comparative studies that include the broader Northwest

Semitic legacy. But we also need to combine forces with the study of cultural contact that comes from archaeological and art-historical research in order to produce more nuanced and complete readings of our respective textual and physical artifacts.

In addition to its possible “Orientalist” connotations (in Edward Said’s terms),<sup>18</sup> one of the problems of the “Orientalizing” label is its vagueness. It obscures the complex and non-monolithic nature of the cultural components of what we call the ancient Near East. The Metropolitan Museum exhibition “Assyria to Iberia” is a good example of our search for the more precise motors and models involved in this process. However, the weakness of the term is also its strength: it reflects nicely an ambivalent vagueness present in the actual phenomenon. In other words, we should consider the Phoenicians as the first “Orientalists” themselves, as they projected, shaped, and exploited stereotypes (if positive ones), responding to the desire of emerging proto-urban societies to join in the aura of the old urban, literate, prestigious cultures of the Near East.<sup>19</sup>

Put differently, it is very likely that without these elusive first-millennium Canaanites we would not be looking at an interconnected Mediterranean, “from Assyria to Iberia,” through the lenses that the exhibition offered us. It is of crucial importance to recover (to the degree possible) the “lost voices” of these Phoenicians, who, after all, introduced the technology of writing to Greeks, Etruscans, and Iberians, among others, allowing them to encode *their own voices*, even if we cannot always understand them. In effect, they triggered the exit of those they encountered, not least the Greeks, from “prehistory” and into the thriving Archaic world that precedes the “Classical” era.

1. Major works involving comparative literature, mythology, and religion include Burkert 1979, 1987, 1992, 2004; West’s commentaries on Hesiod’s *Theogony* and *Works and Days* (in Hesiod 1966, 1978) and his compendium of literary and mythological parallels (West 1997); J. Brown 1995–2001

on Greek and biblical texts; Penglas 1994 on Greek and Mesopotamian heroic patterns (mainly in the *Homeric Hymns*); and Bremmer 2008, with essays on Greek religion and myth in light of Near Eastern and biblical parallels.

2. On methodological issues, see discussions in López-Ruiz 2014; Ulf 2009; Haubold 2002.

3. I use “Canaanite” in this essay as a broader category that cuts across periods, applied to the Northwest Semitic groups of coastal Syria and Lebanon from the Late Bronze Age (for example, Ugarit) into the Iron Age, where we identify the group we know as “Phoenicians.”

4. For example, J. Brown 1995–2001; Burkert 2004; López-Ruiz 2010; Loudon 2006, 2011; Bremmer 2008.

5. See discussion and references in López-Ruiz 2010, pp. 31–35.

6. Ridgway 1992, 1994; Coldstream 1994; Hall 2002, p. 94; López-Ruiz 2010, pp. 33–34.

7. Herodotos, *Histories* 5.59–61.

8. Phoenician inscriptions are not vocalized, hence vocalization of attested or hypothetical Phoenician words is tentative. I use it here to facilitate the reading and comparison with the Greek.

9. For the traditions surrounding Thebes’s foundation and its Phoenician background, see, for example, Bunnens 1979; S. Morris 1992, ch. 5. Cf. López-Ruiz 2010, pp. 35, 46, and notes for ancient sources and more references.

10. Aaron Demsky, “The Phoenician Connection of the Greek Sphinx,” paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.

11. On these and other parallels, see the works of West and Burkert cited in note 1, above.

12. See López-Ruiz forthcoming.

13. See the recent overview of these and other motifs in López-Ruiz 2014 and references there.

14. See discussion in George 2003, pp. 55–57; López-Ruiz 2010, pp. 125–29.

15. George 2003, esp. p. 56; George 2007, esp. p. 458; see a recent study of the parallels in Currie 2012.

16. For Phoenician and Orphic cosmogonies, see López-Ruiz 2010, pp. 130–70, with references; see especially West 1994 for the cosmic egg motif and West 1983 for Orphic poems in general.

17. For Philon of Byblos, see the most recent edition and references in Kaldellis and López-Ruiz 2009 and López-Ruiz 2010, ch. 3.

18. Said 1978.

19. A monograph on the Orientalizing phenomenon across the Mediterranean and the role of the Phoenicians in this phenomenon is forthcoming by the author.





# Epilogue

## Assyria to Iberia: Closing Remarks

“Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age,” the exhibition, and the catalogue with the same title, have been accompanied by two days of excellent and informative scholarly papers presented in a conference, covering a varied range of topics yet all contributing, in important ways, to the main theme of contact and connections from Assyria to Iberia, from the transition and inheritance of the Late Bronze Age, to the spread of iconographies across the Mediterranean world to east and west. Joan Aruz and the curatorial staff of The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art have made a great and unparalleled contribution to the scholarship of antiquity in this exhibition, as in the two major exhibitions that preceded it, “Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus” (2003) and “Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.” (2008–9). The three accompanying catalogues are strong multigenerational and multinational works of fine scholarship that have remained in use long after the exhibitions have come down and been dismantled. They have been a turning point in the scholarship of ancient Near Eastern art and in setting new standards of excellence in the curating of the material culture and arts of the ancient Near East.

While the title of the symposium, “Assyria to Iberia,” points us toward a geographical expanse that has emerged clearly in the papers of the last two days, the subtitle to the exhibition and to the symposium refers to an



Fig. 1. Gabbro/basalt stele of Sargon II. Larnaca, Kition. Neo-Assyrian, after 707 B.C. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum (VA 968)

era in time. It is “At the Dawn of the Classical Age.” It is a beginning to a new millennium that leads to the history of the west, in terms of both its biblical and Classical origins. When I was asked to cover the closing remarks for this two-day symposium, I asked myself in turn, how does one offer closing remarks on a new beginning at this dawn of a Classical age? How can such an epilogue frame the papers presented in this volume in a way that does justice to the richness of the contributions?

The exhibition and the papers of this symposium volume do tell us something also about the modern framing of knowledge, as they have so clearly revealed that the idea of a closed and self-sufficient culture is no more than a myth. Thus, the dawn of Classical civilization is a far more complex and interrelated era than we have generally taken it to be. What we might observe then as a result of these excellent papers presented here is that in the first millennium B.C., the world’s borders and boundaries became more and more permeable. Frontiers were then not limits and borders that stopped cultures and peoples, keeping them within their own confines, but were there to be crossed. In a spatial sense, the world had a wider expanse from Asia to the Atlantic, but it also became smaller and increasingly interdependent in the circulation and exchange of works and ideas. Horizons of cultural interaction were stretched, both to the east and west.

Empires and wars were one reason for geographical expansion, as we can see in the case of works such as the stele of Sargon II from Kition on Cyprus (fig. 1). Assyria was certainly an expansionist imperial power that demanded tribute and collected booty. But there were also merchants and artists, diplomatic marriages and gifts, works of art and other material objects that traveled along more peaceful routes across this ancient world.

We know from the seventh-century B.C. inscriptions of the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.) and Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) that some Cypriots were then living in



Fig. 2. Gold bowl showing a Nilotic scene. Nimrud, Northwest Palace, Tomb of Yaba'. Neo-Assyrian period. Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 105 697)

Nineveh. In Babylon, there were Phoenicians and Jews, Egyptians and Persians. Phoenicians settled on Crete and much farther west also, reaching Spain and Sardinia. We have learned that at Eleutherna, foreigners lived, died, and practiced their own funerary traditions, all while integrating into the local life. At Caere in Etruria, Phoenicians and other foreigners seem to have lived and integrated. Such evidence might prompt us to consider how much cosmopolitanism existed in major centers, and to what extent people in antiquity relocated (whether by choice or by force) and lived in cities populated by diverse peoples in imperial centers that were certainly multilingual and that hybridized cultural forms and images through the years. One new direction we can explore further might be cosmopolitanism. As Cypriot and Phoenician trade routes and commercial expansion opened more distant

contacts to the west, these routes began taking them as far away as Spain's coasts and to Morocco when the Phoenicians pushed the ancient frontier all the way to the Atlantic Ocean.

At the center of the archaeological and historical evidence are works of art: exquisitely crafted objects that made their way across this world to such places as the tombs of Assyrian royal women, where a Nilotic gold bowl (fig. 2) was among one queen or consort's treasured possessions, and all the way to the western Mediterranean, to Italy, where a similar example appeared in the form of a silver gilt patera from the Regolini-Galassi Tomb (see Sannibale essay, p. 304, fig. 9).

Beyond the artifacts, iconographies were borrowed, adopted, or adapted for local use. Griffins and sphinxes, the powerful Mistress of Animals, frontal and frightening heads of the Gorgon used to ward off evil: these were familiar images, though their meanings varied from place to place (figs. 3, 4, and 5). Like words and coins they become polished

smooth by use, original figures becoming hidden in new meanings as they traveled. Yet there was certainly a recognition, use and reuse of symbols and forms, and a circulation of motifs and iconographies.

There was the acceptance, too, of the act of giving gifts of votives into the sanctuaries of the gods of others. A Babylonian *mushhushshu* dragon and a Pazuzu-headed votive in the temple of Hera at Samos (see Niemeier essay, p. 239, fig. 7); a hero with lion in the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi (fig. 6) and many more examples, as this exhibition demonstrated. Types of gifts mentioned in the *Histories* of Herodotos were the subjects of focus here, represented by material examples from Mediterranean sites. Such contexts indicate that these were not completely exotic objects in worlds of absolute alterity, as in the later historical models of empires and colonialism. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarly practices may be somewhat responsible for the strict division into an Eastern and a Western antiquity that we have inherited. The papers presented in the two-day symposium and related lectures published in this volume, and the exhibition itself contribute a great deal toward destabilizing such comfortable, neat, and ordered subdivisions. They try to dispel the myth of the darkness that preceded the Classical era. They help us to see that the first millennium world of the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean was an interdependent one, and that Greece was part of that world and cultural milieu, not alien to it. Their cultural forms and iconographies arose out of the same cauldrons (both metaphorically and literally, since as we have seen, some magnificent cauldrons traveled, often taking with them fantastic creatures, hanging on to their rims and handles [see p. 322]).

These were not the strange curios and exotic objects collected by empires of more recent times for their *Wunderkammern* and museums. The movement of objects and iconographies, artists and works of art does not fit well into the models of later empires and their collecting practices, even though the



Fig. 3. Painted ceramic cauldron with griffin protomes. Crete, Afrati, Tomb L. Orientalizing, 7th century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Heraklion, Greece (II7944)





Fig. 4. Ceramic plate with the Gorgon Medusa. Rhodes, Kameiros. Orientalizing, ca. 610–580 B.C. The British Museum, London (GR 1860.0404.2)

Fig. 5. Gold plaque with Mistress of Animals. Rhodes. Orientalizing. The British Museum, London (GR 1861.0425.3)



Fig. 6. Ivory male figure with lion. Delphi, Apollo sanctuary, deposition pit on Sacred Way. Phrygian(?), 7th century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Delphi, Greece (9912)





Fig. 7. Phoenician-style ivory plaque with adorsed griffins against a ground of lotuses. Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, SW 37. Neo-Assyrian period. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1961 (61.197.1)

imperial centers of the ancient Near East acquired luxury goods, tribute, and booty from various lands (fig. 7). *Assyria to Iberia* presents us with lands that were closely connected cultures, with a shared world of images and languages that were familiar and recognizable, even when not shared completely in all the nuances of their meanings. And even Greece, its so-called “Greek Dark Age” and its “Greek Miracle” were part of a larger, interdependent world. While in the early days of the identification of “Orientalizing period” Greece, the dominant idea was that the seafaring Greeks of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. encountered foreign

styles in their new maritime and mercantile outposts, this theory, heavily influenced perhaps by a reading of Homeric epics, is no longer convincing. We now know, due to more recent excavations, for example at Crete and Lefkandi, the connections with Cyprus and the Near East started much earlier, taking us back to the tenth century B.C.

Technologies also traveled at this time, alongside objects. Plaques, such as the nude female from Sardinia (fig. 8), represent not only a borrowed iconographic type, or even religious image or system of belief but also an example of the open-mold technique of manufacturing clay plaques that had been

known from as early as the third millennium B.C. in southern Mesopotamia. Craftsmanship, being able to make magnificent things, was no small contribution. Even Socrates claimed that he was a descendant of Daedalos, the mythical craftsman and architect, without whom civilization as we know it could not exist.

Early twentieth-century scholarship argued for the exceptionalism of Europe. And even within the later twentieth-century scholarship of *ex oriente lux* some of those myths of uniqueness flourished and remain alive in our own time. Thus, we still sometimes read that there was no such thing as narrative representation before the Greek miracle (a position argued some time ago now by Ernst Gombrich in his famous book, *Art and Illusion* [1960]) or that there was neither mythology nor history before the Greeks, as even recently some scholars have stated with ease. And many still see a strong if invisible dividing line between the eastern and the western Mediterranean, a line that might have to do more with the modern mapping of the world than with antiquity.

Myths of origins are of course often transformed into empirical claims. The scholarship of this “Dawn of the Classical Age” has been completely reconsidered now. *Assyria to Iberia* offers a different story of origins, one that ties east and west as part of the same interconnected ancient world, and it is a world that formed our common and shared history. The Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art is to be commended for this work.



Fig. 8. Ceramic plaque with nude female figure. Sardinia, Tharros, Grave 11. Cypro-Phoenician, 6th century B.C. The British Museum, London (133132)





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