

APPENDIX 1 FIGURINES

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INTRODUCTION

Eleven human and animal clay figurines or fragments were discovered in the Iron Age strata from Tell Abu al-Kharaz. Two are from Area 2 NW, two from Area 3, four from Area 7 and three from Area 9. The material includes two anthropomorphic and nine zoomorphic figurines or rhyta.

This study mainly makes use of Iron Age material from the Southern Levant as *comparanda*, although in some cases it was also opportune to consider material from Phoenicia, Greece and the Aegean, Egypt and Mesopotamia. Previous comprehensive studies on clay figurines from Palestine, which amongst other aspects deal with classification and chronology, were done by PILZ (1924), PRITCHARD (1943), HOLLAND (1975, 1977, 1995)¹²⁹ and °AMR (1980; Transjordan). The fact that there is no complete up-to-date study on clay figurative art in the Southern Levant is only one reason for the difficulty of drawing conclusions on the meaning and function of the figurines. Other reasons are that a part of the material comes either from old excavations or the antiquities trade and the original context is uncertain. Only in a very few cases were figurines recovered in a primary context. The objects are often not complete or even reconstructable. Due to the relatively low number of attested figurines an exact typology is impossible.¹³⁰ For all these reasons, most known Iron Age figurines from the Southern Levant are at best roughly dated. Therefore, in this study the dating of cited parallels is only specified if the object is discussed at length.

Although all the figurines are illustrated and described in Chapter 2, a description, drawings and photographs will also be presented in this chapter in order to provide an overview of the complete evidence.

1. ANTHROPOMORPHIC FIGURINES AND VESSELS

Figurine of a woman holding a hand-drum (N874)

Description

The figurine depicts the upper part of the body of a slender woman standing upright (Figs. 248:6, 458:5 and 462:1). It is hand-made, hard-fired, and of light red fabric with a thick grey core. The clay is coarse and has multicoloured inclusions. The figurine is finished with a light red slip; traces of glaze are visible on the back of her left shoulder. Head and legs are not preserved. The breasts were separately made and attached to the chest and are well accentuated. The fingers are indicated. The woman is holding a disc-shaped object in both hands against the left side of her chest, just under her breast.

Context

The object was found in Area 9, Trench XXIV, L1 (Fig. 247; published in FISCHER 1996a: 103, fig. 2:1; *idem* 2001: 314, fig. 11). From the stratigraphy and associations with other finds it can be dated to Phase XIII, viz. to the beginning of the 8th century BCE (see Table 83).

Parallels

On the strength of several other figurines of women holding round or disc-shaped objects, which are richer in detail and therefore easier to interpret, the round object held by the figurine can be identified as a drum (see though interpretations as a *tambourine*).¹³¹ The woman's left hand supports the bottom of the instrument,¹³² while her right hand rests upon it. The drum

¹²⁹ HOLLAND's study from 1975 is his unpublished PhD-thesis, which unfortunately is not available. His 1977 study is a part of it featuring finds from Jerusalem, his 1995 study being almost identical to the 1977 one.

¹³⁰ This is also valid for clay figurines from the Bronze Age; cf. AL-AJLOUNY *et al.* 2011: 99 regarding the Early Bronze Age.

¹³¹ The term *tambourine* is most frequently used when these figurines are described (see e.g. HILLERS 1970; CHAMBON 1984: 73; VAN DER KOOLJ and IBRAHIM 1989: 104; BECK 1995: 162–168; BECK 1999). However, a *tambourine* denotes a drum with cymbals around the rim, while none of the pre-

served figurines show any renderings of such cymbals (MEYERS 1991: 18). This feature, viz. the *tambourine* itself, can only be traced from the 13th century CE on (SENDREY 1969: 373). Furthermore, a *tambourine* is usually played by shaking the instrument or hitting it with the knuckles – neither gesture appeared in any of the known examples. In order to avoid anachronisms the term (frame) drum or hand (frame) drum will be used below for this instrument, as already suggested by MEYERS (1987: 120; 1991: 18, 21), BURGH (2004: 128) and PAZ (2007: 11).

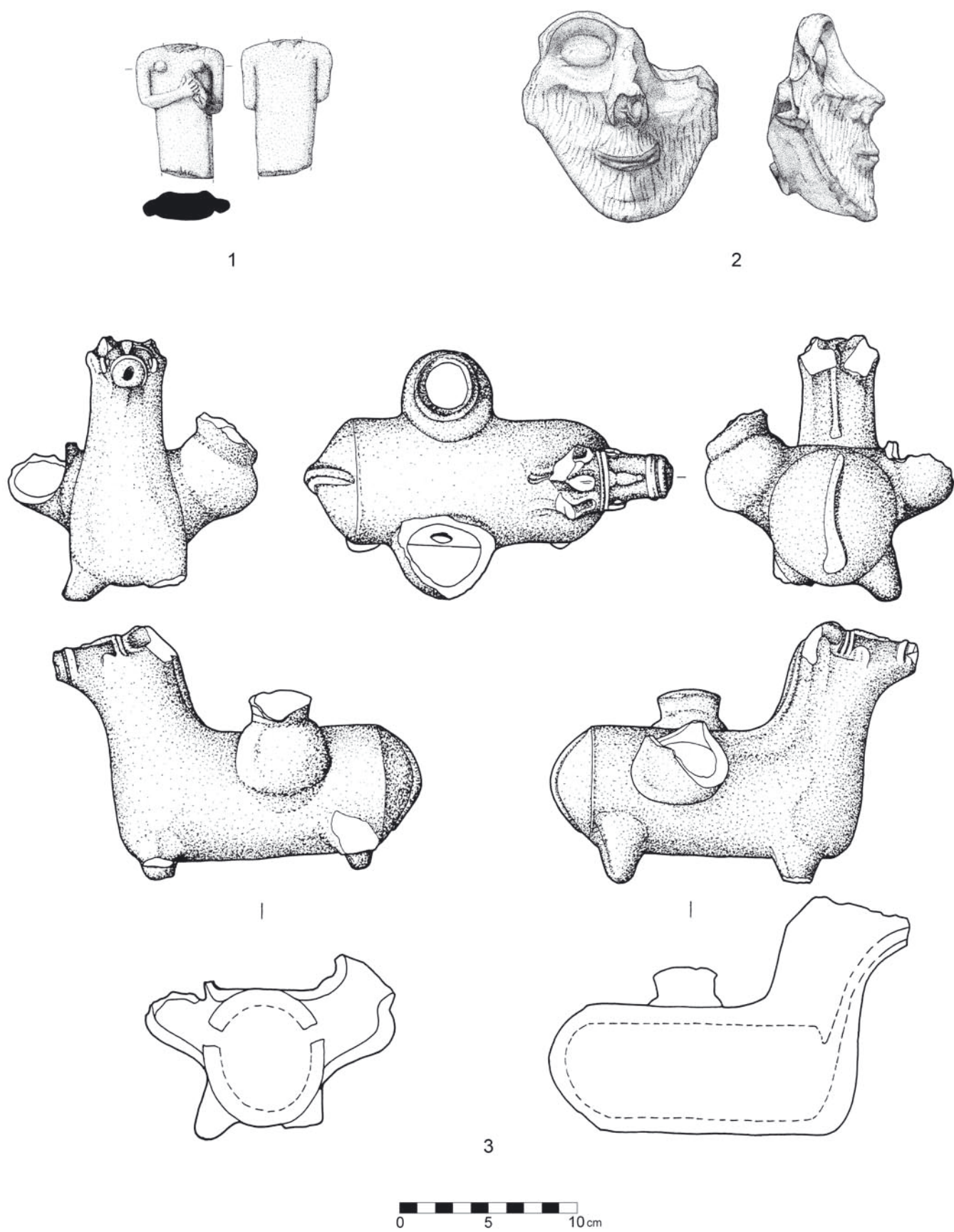


Fig. 462 1. Figurine of female with drum (N874); 2. Head of male (N504); 3. Rhyton (N1085)

is held perpendicular to the body and shown from the side.

A wide variety of drums are known from Mesopotamian and Egyptian art and literature from the fourth millennium BCE onwards (RASHID 1984: 68–77; TEETER 1993: 69). The earliest examples for female figurines with drums are attested in Mesopotamia from the late third or early second millennium onwards (OPIFICIUS 1961: 207–208; BARRELET 1968: 75), whereas in Palestine such figurines became most popular during the Iron Age (“Women holding Disc” in PRITCHARD 1943: 19–21, 54–55). Clay figurines of predominantly female hand-drum players are known from many sites in the Southern Levant, especially from northern Palestine and the coastal region but also from Transjordan (see catalogues in ‘AMR 1980: 51, 59–64; PAZ 2007: 13–49; SUGIMOTO 2008: 115–132). The best known example of a drummer figurine performing amongst other musicians is represented in the ‘Musician’s Stand’ from Ashdod (DOTHAN 1970; MAZAR and BEN-SHLOMO 2005: 31–42; BEN-SHLOMO 2005: 180–184, figs. 3.76–78). As regards Transjordan, a shrine found near Kerak ornamented by two female drummers should be mentioned (Amman Museum: J. 5751; ‘AMR 1980: 95, 131–136, fig. 104a, b, pl. 18).

Apart from these two extraordinary examples of drummer figurines, there are two types of fairly uniform representations, which together form the majority of drummer figurines. One group are mould-made, the women often wearing headdresses or hats and jewellery (see examples in PAZ 2007: 36–38).¹³² Such plaque figurines are known from Beth-Shean (JAMES and MCGOVERN 1966: 339, fig. 112:5), Tel Rehov (discussed and illustrated in PAZ 2007: 21–25, 37, figs. 2.2.1, 2, 4–6), Tell Deir ‘Alla (VAN DER KOOLJ and IBRAHIM 1989: 105, fig. 128), Tell el-Far‘ah North (CHAMBON 1984: pl. 63:1, 2), Hazor (YADIN *et al.* 1960: pl. LXXVI:12, 13; TADMOR 2012: fig. 7.1:1), Megiddo (HARRISON 2004: pl. 25:6 = LOUD 1948: pl. 243:20), Tell Jatt (HOROWITZ 2001), Tell Ta‘annek (the mould for a figurine!; LAPP 1964: 39–41; HILLERS 1970), Khirbet

al-Mudayna (DAVIAU 2006: 27, fig. 5:C) and Tel ‘Ira (BECK 1999, 2002b with further parallels,¹³⁴ which might also be a man as suggested by BURGH 2004).

The other group consists of wheel-made and hand-finished figurines with a hollow conical body (‘pillar figurines’; see SUGIMOTO 2008: *passim*). They wear a simple dress, viz. a kind of trumpet-shaped skirt, and no jewellery (see examples in PAZ 2007: 44; further description and interpretation of this type in MEYERS 1991: 19). Figurines of this type were found in Akhziv (DAYAGI-MENDELS 2002: 145–147), Shiqmona (ELGAVISH 1993), Hazor (the fragments of a drum; TADMOR 2012: fig. 7.2:2), Tell Gemme (PETRIE 1928: pl. XXXV:14), Wadi ath-Thamad (DAVIAU 2001b: 321, fig. 4), Sarepta (PRITCHARD 1988: fig. 11:28a,b (sitting on a chair), 29, 30) and Tyre (BIKAI 1978: pl. LXXXI:2).¹³⁵ There are additional examples from Cyprus, e.g. from Amathus (KARAGEORGHIS 1987: pls. II–VII), Kition-Kathari (SMITH 2009: 145, fig. IV.20.) and Kamelarga (KARAGEORGHIS 1999: 146–150). A figurine of unknown provenance now in the Semitic Museum at Harvard University (discussed by MEYERS 1987) also belongs to this group.

The drummer from Tell Abu al-Kharaz is hand-made and more stylized than the two types described above. It is naked (?) and has no ornament and therefore belongs to neither of the types mentioned. PAZ (2007: 45–49 with examples) established a third group, the “hybrid figurines (type C)”, which also covers our type.¹³⁶ Such ‘hybrid’ figurines were e.g. found in Amman (‘AMR 1980: 86–87, fig. 82, pl. 15:2; also PAZ 2007: 47–48; C.14), Irbid (SUGIMOTO 2008: 146, T1), Tell er-Rumeith (‘AMR 1980: 52, 59–60, figs. 12, 28, 29, pls. 3:4; 4:4), Tell el-Mazar (‘AMR 1980: 60, fig. 30, pl. 5:1), el-Meshhed, next to Mount Nebo (GLUECK 1934: 24, 26–27, fig. 8; also discussed in ‘AMR 1980: 60–61, figs. 31a, b, pls. 5:2a, 6), Khirbet al-Mudayna (DAVIAU 2006: 27, fig. 5:B) and Samaria (BRAUN 1999: 252, fig. IV/1–7; also PAZ 2007: 46). All these objects differ considerably from each other as regards their size, style, execution and finish. The figurine from Tell Abu

¹³² The drums depicted in the figurines discussed are small round hand drums made by stretching one or two parallel membranes of hide or skin over a wooden frame (SENDREY 1969: 262). They are played by striking with the palm or fingers.

¹³³ These figurines often appear to press the discs horizontally to their body. Therefore, the identification of the disc as a drum was challenged by MEYERS (1987: 119; 1991: 19) and DEVER (2005: 179) who argued that this is an unrealistic position for playing a drum. LAPP therefore identified this object as a loaf (1964: 40; rejected in *idem* 1967: 36), AMIRAN (1967) as a sun disk, PETRIE (1928: 17) and DEVER (2005:

179) as a cake. However, depicting the drum perpendicular to the body is difficult for the manufacturing of mould-made figurines (KLETTER 1996: 36; KEEL and UEHLINGER 2010: 188). See also discussion in BRAUN 1999: 108–109 and TADMOR 2006.

¹³⁴ BURGH (2004) suggested that this figurine represents a cross-dressing man or eunuch rather than a woman.

¹³⁵ Fragments of drums were found in Horvat Qitmit (BECK 1995: 162–168) and Yoqne‘am (TADMOR 2005: 354–356).

¹³⁶ SUGIMOTO (2008: *passim*) refers also to this type as ‘pillar figurines’.

al-Kharaz is stylistically related to female torsos in various stances (holding a baby, clutching the breasts) which were found in Beth-Shean (e.g. JAMES and MCGOVERN 1966: 329, fig. 107:7, 337, fig. 111:2; MAZAR 2009b: 532, fig. 9.1) or Tell er-Rumeith (‘AMR 1980: 53, fig. 15, pl. 4:2) and are hand-made, naked with accentuated breasts and without any ornament. One figurine represented in this class, also originating from Beth-Shean (JAMES and MCGOVERN 1966: 337, fig. 111:1, from Lower Stratum V, dated to the 10th century), holds a drum and appears to be almost identical with our object. It was found in a similar state of preservation to that of the figurine from Tell Abu al-Kharaz: Head and lower part of the body are missing. Due to the fragmentary state of preservation of the discussed parallels, it is impossible to get a picture of how this type of figurines originally appeared.

Despite the above-stated differences between the three groups, all the figurines mentioned have their body postures in common – especially the position of their arms with the left hand supporting the drum from below and the right hand striking it is uniform.

Discussion and interpretation

Although, as mentioned above, in some cases the identification of the round object and the sex of the drummer is controversial (see also discussion with further references in ‘AMR 1980: 110–113), female-drummer figurines from Palestine clearly outnumber depictions of male drummers. This observation is supported by references to female musicians playing the hand frame-drum in the Old Testament,¹³⁷ where they were mentioned in connection with the victory celebrations of the Israelite warriors (Exodus 15:20; I Sam 18:6) or in other cultic ceremonies (Judges 11:34; Psalms 68:26).¹³⁸ According to both the archaeological and the written record a tradition of women playing the drum existed at least from the Iron Age II onwards, the period to which most of the known figurines could be assigned (PRITCHARD 1943: 54; MEYERS 1987: 120; DAYAGI-MENDELS 2002: 146; ZIFFER 2010: 81). A strong association of frame-drums and women still persists today in many regions of the Middle East (DOUBLEDAY 1999: 101). This evidence resulted in several studies on such drummer-figurines from such aspects as musical performance (BRAUN 1999), gender

(DOUBLEDAY 1999; BURGH 2004; PAZ 2007) or the identification of the figurine (HILLERS 1970; ‘AMR 1980: 118–128; MEYERS 1991, 1993; BECK 1999, 2002 a, b; SUGIMOTO 2008; KLETTER and SAARELAINEN 2011). It is proved by the record in the Old Testament and by archaeological finds – for example the ‘Musician’s Stand’ from Ashdod and other depictions – that the drum was an essential component of musical ensembles.

Nevertheless, the identification of the depicted musicians and the function of the figurines in general have to be examined in their archaeological context, which ranges from private or public buildings and structures (e.g. Tel ‘Ira or Tell el-Far‘ah North), tombs (e.g. Akhziv or Amathus) to shrines (e.g. Ta‘annek or Horvat Qitmit) or temples (e.g. Beth-Shean; see references above).¹³⁹ The context of the drummer figurine from Tell Abu al-Kharaz is difficult to interpret (see description above). As already insisted by FOWLER (1985: 343) a figurine itself does not prove that its findspot belongs to a cultic structure if there are no other indications to suggest such a function, nor can it give any hint concerning its context.

Regardless of their context, the elaborate plaque figurines, especially, and also other types of drummer figurines were often connected with some kind of cult (HOROWITZ 2001: 319), more specifically the cult of Astarte (SUGIMOTO 2008: 67–87), or a fertility rite (‘AMR 1980: 119; PAZ 2007: 118). Others suggested an identification of the figurine with a cultic participant (KEEL and UEHLINGER 2010: 188) or with goddesses (HILLERS 1970: 612–616 with Ashera or Anath; ‘AMR 1980: 118–128 with Ishtar; recently KLETTER and SAARELAINEN 2011: 25). Figurines from burials may have had the function of entertaining the gods and/or the deceased with music (KARAGEORGHIS 1987: 1; DAYAGI-MENDELS 2002: 145). An alternative interpretation is the function as a toy (FOWLER 1985: 342 with discussion and further references). This may be valid for other types of figurines but it is not convincing in the case of the drummer figurines and cannot be proved. In short, conclusions on the identity and function of our figurine based on parallels is not possible.

The same uncertainty concerns an exact dating of the figurines: As no detailed typology is available, the figurines can only be dated if their stratigraphical

¹³⁷ Identified with the Hebrew *top* (MEYERS 1991: 21; BRAUN 1999: 50–51 with etymology and discussion; PAZ 2007: 11).

¹³⁸ Although the exact dating of the composition of these passages is controversial, many of them can be ascribed to the Iron Age II. See discussion in PAZ 2007: 83–85.

¹³⁹ The majority, however, do not originate from clear archaeological contexts. As stated above a number of figurines were acquired through the antiquities trade, making it impossible to trace their archaeological context, let alone their place of origin and date.

context is unambiguous. Even in this case, it is plausible that an object like a figurine could be kept as an heirloom for more than one generation and could therefore clearly predate its context. The figurine from Tell Abu al-Kharaz can – from its context and stratigraphy – be dated around 800 (see above). Although there are some examples dating from as early as the 11th century (e.g. Tell ‘Ira and Tell Gemeh; see references above), most of the drummer figurines are – as stated above – predominantly attributed to the Iron Age II. Their appearance lasted at least until the sixth century, which is attested by a figurine from Carthage (CULICAN 1975: 84, 78, fig. 31). The drummer from Tell Abu al-Kharaz thus fits well into the evidence of the majority of the Levantine drummer figurines.

The distribution of the sites where mould-made drummer figurines and, in particular, figurines with trumpet-shaped skirts were found suggests that either this depiction originates from a Phoenician tradition or that there is at least a strong Phoenician influence (TADMOR 1982: 172; KLETTER 1996: 35–36). This fact is supported by the finds from Cyprus and from Punic sites. Most of the figurines of PAZ’s “Hybrid type” come – like our figurine – from sites in Jordan (Tell Deir ‘Alla, Tell er-Rumeith, el-Meshhed or Tell el-Mazar) or close to the Jordan River (Beth-Shean). This suggests that a special tradition of manufacturing was prevalent in Transjordan, which may have been inspired either by Phoenician/coastal (TADMOR 1982: 172) or by Mesopotamian conceptions (as pointed out by ‘AMR 1980: 124–126) or by both (see discussion in WINTER 1983: 121–127).

Head of a young male with beard (N504)

Description

The object depicts the head of a young bearded male (Figs. 117, 453:4, 462:2). It is hand-made, hard-fired, of light brown medium-coarse fabric with multicoloured inclusions. It is finished with a self slip; red paint on the upper part of the face is visible. The lower part of the face is covered with long incisions (made before firing), which indicate a beard. The left eye is not preserved. The right eye is modelled as an oval knob. The tip of the nose is broken, the slender lips are bent to a smile. Although the face is considerably smaller than life-sized it is naturalistically rendered: The traits are accurately modelled and the object itself is of high quality.

The fracture at the back of the head suggests that it was a part of an anthropomorphic vessel or attached to a vessel. Since no other parts of the presumptive vessel were found no conclusions about the original vessel type can be drawn.

Context

The object comes from Area 3 (FISCHER 1994a: 130, 133, 136, fig. 6:1; *idem* 2000b: 461, 470, fig. 3:6; *idem* 2001: 314, fig. 8; *idem* 2008b: 209, 212), Trench XIX (Fig. 111). It was recovered in an open space between two buildings which may have served as a courtyard (see description in Chapter 2). The whole structure and its finds – the mask included – were attributed to Phase XII, which is dated to the second half of the 9th century (see Table 83).

Parallels and discussion

Iron Age anthropomorphic vessels which may be compared to the object from Tell Abu al-Kharaz are known from Beth-Shean (ROWE 1940: pl. XLVIA:3–4; JAMES and MCGOVERN 1993: figs. 78:2, 79:1; MAZAR 2009b: 539 fig. 9.5.), Tell Qasile (MAZAR 1980: 78–82), Jerusalem (GILBERT-PERETZ 1996: 83, 120, fig. 18:6–7, pl. 10:9), Ashdod (BEN-SHLOMO 2005: 199, fig. 3.87.), Gezer (MACALISTER 1912: 414, fig. 499), Beth Shemesh (GRANT 1931: pl. XXVII – second row, third from the left), Tell Beit Mirsim (ALBRIGHT 1943: 26–27, pl. 32:17), Tel Batash-Timnah (MAZAR and PANITZ-COHEN 2001: 209, Photo 139) and Horvat Qitmit (BECK 1995: 43–54). In total about 20 to 30 such vessels from the Late Bronze¹⁴⁰ and Iron Ages are known from the Southern Levant (MAZAR 2009b: 539; see also discussion in MAZAR 1980: 80) but only a fraction of them are well enough preserved to allow a reconstruction of the whole vessel. Their bad state of preservation makes comparisons extremely difficult. Another aspect is that these vessels differ considerably from each other, thus making any classification intricate. On many of the vessels the faces are depicted in a very stylized way which does not at all resemble the object from Tell Abu al-Kharaz.

Regarding stylistic criteria, another type of human representation in clay can be compared to our object, viz. human masks. Such masks do not belong to a vessel, are often smaller than life-sized and are painted red and/or black (MAZAR 1980: 84; BROWN 1992: 18).

Masks are known from the Phoenician sphere of culture (CULICAN 1975; STERN 1976) but were also found in neighbouring areas. Iron Age finds from the

¹⁴⁰ See examples in BEN-SHLOMO 2005: 199.

southern Levant include masks from Beth-Shean (JAMES and MCGOVERN 1993: fig. 79:2), Tel Qasile (MAZAR 1980: 84–85, fig. 21), Tel Dor (STERN 2011), Ashdod (BEN-SHLOMO 2005: 199–200, fig. 3.87.), Akhziv (CULICAN 1975: 56, figs. 10, 12; DAYAGI-MENDELS 2002: 156–159), Sarepta (ANDERSON 1988: 564–565, pls. 29:7–8, 30:22, 38:10; PRITCHARD 1988: fig. 16), Hazor (YADIN *et al.* 1960: 115, pl. CLXXXIII) and Tyre (BIKAI 1978: pl. 24:7; first half of the 9th century). Further evidence of Iron Age clay masks is attested in Cypriote sites, e.g. in Kition (KARAGEORGHIS 1976: pl. XVI), Kition-Kathari (SMITH 2009: 122, fig. IV.1., 123, fig. IV.2, 124, fig. IV.3.), Enkomi (LAGARCE and LAGARCE 1973; COURTOIS 1982) and Amathus (CULICAN 1975: 66, fig. 19) in addition to two more masks of unknown provenance (CAUBET and COURTOIS 1975). Finds from Punic sites are represented by several masks from Carthage (PICARD 1967; see further examples in CINTAS 1946: 32–64). A tradition of creating masks is also apparent in Greece and the Aegean from the 7th century on (PICARD 1967: 49–55).

The most striking parallel was found in Kition-Kathari, Cyprus (Floor I, Bothros 20; see SMITH 2009: 123, fig. IV.2.). Only the chin, a part of the mouth and the left cheek of the bearded man are preserved. The mask appears to be manufactured in the same way: The beard is indicated by long incisions and painted (black). The smiling lips and the eminent chin are almost identical with our object. Since the context of the mask from Kition-Kathari is dated to 1000–850 (SMITH 2009: xviii, Table 4) it is possible that the two objects were produced during the same period. Another close parallel to the item from Tell Abu al-Kharaz is the mask of a bearded man from Akhziv (CULICAN 1975: 56, fig. 10; DAYAGI-MENDELS 2002: 158, fig. 7.22.): in comparison with the object from Tell Abu al-Kharaz the high cheekbones are equally eminent. In contrast the beard is painted and does not cover as much of the face. It also shows a faint smile but the lips are not curved as much. A third parallel comes from Sarepta (PRITCHARD 1988: figs. 16:8a, b; see also MARKOE 1990: 15, fig. 4) and an almost identical object dating to the 12th century is from Enkomi (COURTOIS *et al.* 1986: pl. 29:9): On these two masks the beard is characterized by circular incisions. Unfortunately on both items only the lower part of the face is preserved.

A connection with a third class of human depictions, namely with Cypro Archaic and Archaic Greek coroplastic art, was already made by FISCHER in the preliminary report (1994a: 130) due to the faint “Archaic” smile of the man. The affinity to Archaic

kouroi (and also to *korai*) concerning traits and physiognomy – especially compared to sculptures dating from the second half of the 6th century (e.g. KARAGEORGHIS 1993: pl. XIV:2, 4; BOARDMAN 1978: figs. 121, 166) – is striking. A direct link is not possible, however, as the bearded man from Tell Abu al-Kharaz belongs to a clearly older phase. Although from the 7th century onwards Levantine masks began to copy Greek attributes (BROWN 1992: 18), which becomes even more evident from the 6th and 5th century on (CULICAN 1975: 51), it is not clear how the idea and the type of masks were transmitted (see general discussion in VANDENABEELE 1986). Since Greece and the Levant were already connected by trade in earlier centuries, a mutual influence is already conceivable in the 9th century. It is however not excluded that the object was imported from Cyprus (cf. the parallel from Kition-Kathari, see above) or the Phoenician sphere of culture.

Possible function and interpretation of the mask

Both anthropomorphic vessels and masks had a connection with cultic performance. Life-sized masks could be worn by worshippers or priests during a ritual (MAZAR 1980: 84; DAYAGI-MENDELS 2002: 159–160), smaller masks hung on statues (BROWN 1992: 20) or used as votive objects in connection with burial customs (YADIN 1970: 221, 223). An apotropaic character of the masks was suggested by MAZAR (1980: 85), PRITCHARD (1988: 70–71), BROWN (1992: 20) and STERN (2011: 328). However, the exact function of anthropomorphic vessels remains unclear. Studies are further complicated by the fact that the known anthropomorphic vessels occur very sporadically within one region and one period (MAZAR 1980: 81).

As regards the object from Tell Abu al-Kharaz, the evidence is too scanty to draw any conclusion about its function – even more since our find is part of a larger object.

2. ZOOMORPHIC VESSELS AND ANIMAL FIGURINES

A rhyton of a pack horse or donkey (N1085)

Description

The rhyton depicts a horse or donkey with a bridle and two attached vessels or sacks (?), which are connected through the hollow trunk with the animal's muzzle (Figs. 223:1, 224, 453:2A, B, 462:3). It is medium-hard-fired, of medium-coarsely levigated clay with mainly black inclusions, and has a brown fabric with a brownish-grey core. It is covered by a light brown slip. Traces of red paint are visible. The body of the animal is wheel-made and has a volume of

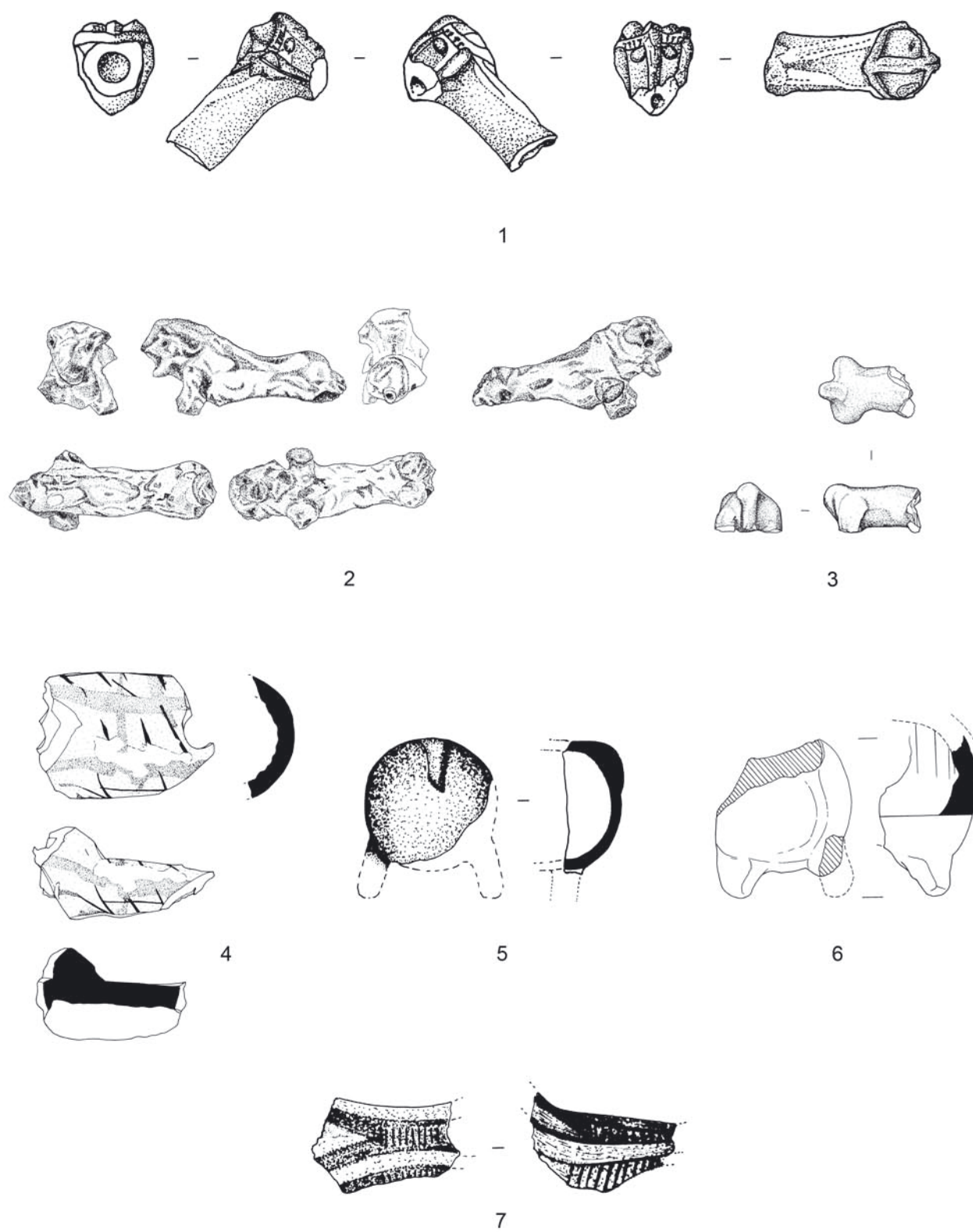


Fig. 463 1. Zoomorphic rhyton (N1093); 2. Figurine of felid (N1424); 3. Zoomorphic figurine L454-2; 4. Zoomorphic rhyton (N1052); 5. Zoomorphic rhyton (L472-2); 6. Zoomorphic rhyton (L7-2); 7. Zoomorphic rhyton (L471-1)

approximately 0.3 l. Legs, tail, vessels, mane, ears, eyes and bridle are applied. The bridle is only visible on the animal's forehead and muzzle and consists of a decorated browband, a noseband, a frontlet/noseguard and blinkers. Other parts of a harness are not depicted.

Context

The object was discovered in Area 7, Trench XXXIX B (FISCHER 1998a: 221, fig. 10; *idem* 1998b: 587, fig. 15; *idem* 2000b: 461, 470, fig. 3:7; *idem* 2001: 314, fig. 9; *idem* 2008b: 209–210, 212). According to the stratigraphy it is associated with Phase XIV, which was destroyed in 732 BCE (see Table 83). It was found outside the large compound of Area 7 (see Fig. 182), just south of House 2. This house consists of four rooms with a courtyard in the middle (see description in Chapter 2). An annex is built against the southern wall of the house. The finds inside the house include two *tawabeen*, jugs, juglets, cooking pots and storage jars. In the annex a bronze dagger with a bone or ivory handle (N1084) and outside the house a lamp (N1081) were found close to the rhyton.

Background and parallels

A tradition of manufacturing pack animals in Palestine – most often bovines, donkeys, mules and later also horses and camels – can be traced from the Chalcolithic period onwards (EPSTEIN 1985). This tradition persisted through the Early Bronze Age (STAUBLI 2001: 102, note 28 with a list; AL-AJLOUNY *et al.* 2011; AL-AJLOUNY *et al.* 2012), was apparently absent in the Late Bronze Age and became stronger again during the Iron Age. Such vessels dating from the Iron Age were found in Jericho (HOLLAND 1982: 556, fig. 225:7, unstratified), Tel Mique-Ekron (BEN-SHLOMO 2008: 37, fig. 9:2), Tell Beit Mirsim (BEN-ARIEH 2004: 88, fig. 2.56, bovine or equine), Beth Shemesh (GRANT 1929: 167), Megiddo (LOUD 1948: pls. 247:8, 248: 9 = HARRISON 2004: pl. 22:12; both referred to as bovines by the excavator) and Lachish (TUFNELL 1953: pls. 30:23, 29, 30; animal not defined). A bridled camel from the Collection Mildenberg is also carrying two vessels (ZAHLEHAAS 1996: 150, no 121; also KEEL and STAUBLI 2001: 4; Kat. 21). Pack animals also appear in Cyprus and the Aegean, especially in the Geometric Period (GUGGISBERG 1996: pls. 34:1, 2, 42:3), furthermore, three donkeys with panniers were found in Medinet Habu (dating to the 21–25 Dynasties; TEETER 2010: 122–123).

The stylized barrel-shaped body and the short legs of the rhyton from Tell Abu al-Kharaz are very similar to the bovine or equine vessels from Megiddo, Tell

Beit Mirsim, Lachish and Tel Mique-Ekron; (BEN-SHLOMO 2008: 31, fig. 5:1, 32, fig. 6) or from other Iron Age sites in the southern Levant (see references in BEN-SHLOMO 2008: 32), from Tyre (BIKAI 1978: pls. VI:1, LXXXIII:6) and from Cyprus (from the sixth century BCE on; KARAGEORGHIS 1996: pl. XVIII: 4–7). This shows that the bodies of equine and bovine rhyta were not differentiated. Therefore an identification of the animals is often problematic, especially if the head is formed in a standardized way or if it is not preserved. However, the vessel from Tell Abu al-Kharaz can without any doubt be identified with an equine in specific due to its mane. Its closest parallel – also a horse (marked by its mane) with two containers – comes from Tel Mique-Ekron (BEN-SHLOMO 2008: 37, fig. 9:2) and is dated to the Iron Age I (Stratum VA; see BEN-SHLOMO 2008: 36). It is somewhat smaller, having a capacity of 0.17 litres, and it is not bridled. Another vessel comes from Tell Beit Mirsim and was identified by the excavator as bull or donkey (BEN-ARIEH 2004: 23, 88, fig. 2.56); it has no bridles.

Functions and discussion

The domestication of the donkey in the Chalcolithic and the introduction of the domesticated horse in the third millennium BCE in the Ancient Near East (OWEN 1991; OATES 2003; HYLAND 2003: 8–12; DREWS 2004: 6–9) had a strong impact on trade, transport and economy during the Bronze and the Iron Ages before but also after the appearance of the camel (see CORNELIUS 2007 and discussion below). In fact, rhyta and figurines from equines outnumber – together with bovines (see also the objects from Tell Abu al-Kharaz below) – figurines of other animals, such as caprids, felids or birds. During the Iron Age II depictions of camels become more and more frequent (STAUBLI 2001: 102; see also discussion below). Equines were important means of transport and also used as mounts. The impact of these animals on the economy during the Iron Age is reflected in the frequent depiction of equines and especially of pack horses or donkeys (KEEL and STAUBLI 2001: 37; BEN-SHLOMO 2008: 36). Therefore, according to BEN-SHLOMO (2008: 36), laden animals should not necessarily be considered as related to a divinity or to a cult. Since they were also found in burial contexts, KEEL and STAUBLI (2001: 37) point out that they may have symbolized wealth, prosperity and blessing beyond death.

The exact function of rhyta is enigmatic: Rhyta are frequently referred to as libation vessels and connected to cultic activities (BEN-SHLOMO 2010: 40–41; NOVACEK 2011: 78), as their capacity is usually limited

to not more than half a litre. The two attached vessels on the horse's back may also have served to pour two liquids and blend them inside the animal's body.

Horse figurines (?) are also mentioned in the Old Testament (2 Kings 23:11), in connection with King Josiah's cleansing of Jerusalem's temple of these zoomorphic figurines.¹⁴¹ Suggested secular functions include feeding bottles (NOVACEK 2011: 78), children's toys (KENYON 1956: 186) and teaching tools (MCADAM 1997: 139). All these functions are problematic, as they are contradictory to the enormous technical craftsmanship of the vessels (see conclusions below).

The context of the pack horse from Tell Abu al-Kharaz hints at a connection between the figurine and either a private cult or some other private use. As described above, the finds next to the figurine include a bronze dagger with a bone or ivory handle (N1084) and a lamp (N1081). This suggests that cultic ceremonies may have been performed either in the annex or outside the house. The dating of N1085 to the 8th century corresponds to the Greek Geometric Period and fits in general well with the dating of most of the pack animals from the Southern Levant.

A camel rhyton (N1093)

Description

Only the head and the neck of the animal are preserved (Figs. 179:11, 453:1, 463:1). The neck is hollow and wheel-made, the head hand-made. The figurine is hard-fired and has a medium-fine, light brown fabric with a grey core. It is finished with a red slip and decorated with white paint: two stripes down the neck and one broad band around it. Ears, eyes and an accurately decorated bridle are applied. The depicted and preserved parts of the bridle include headpiece, cheek straps, browband and frontlet/noseguard and most likely bridle reins. The browband is decorated with vertical incisions. Although the front part of the muzzle is broken it is evident that the head of the spout served as a spout of a zoomorphic vessel.

Context

The object comes from Area 7 (FISCHER 2001: 314, fig. 10; *idem* 2008b: 210, 212) and belongs to the context of Phase XIII, which is dated to the beginning of the

8th century (see Table 83). It was found next to a cistern in Trench XLD (see Fig. 158) in an open space, some metres south of a large compound (see description in Chapter 2).

Identification, parallels and discussion

The figurine depicts an equine or – since its neck is long and narrow in comparison to most equine vessels (cf. also N1085 above) and no mane is depicted – more likely a camel.¹⁴²

The camel, or more precisely the one-humped dromedary, was domesticated in the Arabian Peninsula. Sometime during the end of the Bronze Age it was introduced in the Levant (ARTZY 1994: 133; GRIGSON 1995: 259; *idem* 2012) and became gradually more important – especially during the Iron Age II – with the emerging frankincense trade (KEEL and STAUBLI 2001: 44). Amongst the earliest evidence of the camel in close proximity to Tell Abu al-Kharaz is the depiction of a camel caravan on a sherd from Tell Deir 'Alla dated to the Late Bronze Age (IBRAHIM and VAN DER KOOIJ 1983: 581, pl. CXXVII, 2; KNAUF 1987a, b).

The identification of the camel amongst figurines or rhyta appears to be problematic, especially if only the head is preserved: The camel is mentioned extremely rarely amongst the published animal figurines (e.g. in Busayra: SEDMAN 2002: 384–385, pl. 10.78; or Jerusalem: GILBERT-PERETZ 1996: 116, fig. 14:12), whereas equines occur frequently. The head of the aforementioned bridled camel from the Collection Mildenberg (ZÄHLHAAS 1996: 150, no 121; also KEEL and STAUBLI 2001: 4; Kat. 21) has the same iconography and the same way of bridling as several “horses” heads, which challenges the “traditional” classification of many of the “horses” heads. It is self-evident that an object from the antiquities trade with uncertain provenance cannot be used as the basis for a definite identification. The discrepancy between the growing impact of the camel and the absence of camel figurines needs again to be challenged. It must be assumed that at least some of the “horses” heads have in fact to be identified as camels.¹⁴³ Such objects include figurines from Beth-Shean (JAMES and MCGOVERN 1966: 329, figs. 107:3, 6), Tell Deir 'Alla (VAN DER KOOIJ and IBRAHIM 1989: 103, figs. 131, 154), Tell es-Sa'idiyeh (PRITCHARD 1985: fig. 169:4?), Tell el-Far'ah

¹⁴¹ These figurines are not further described, and it remains doubtful whether they imply also pack horses.

¹⁴² As will be explained below, figurines of camels and equines are difficult to distinguish if only the head is preserved. Therefore, the vast majority of them are usually identified

as horses, which does not mean that camels are rarely depicted.

¹⁴³ This problem was also referred to by SEDMAN (2002: 381). Some heads are, however, clearly identifiable as equines due to the typical shape or the depiction of a mane or long ears.

(CHAMBON 1984: pl. 65:2, 4), Hazor (YADIN *et al.* 1960: pl. LXXVI:17; YADIN *et al.* 1961: pl. CCXVI: 16), Megiddo (LOUD 1948: pl. 246: 27, 29), Jerusalem (GILBERT-PERETZ 1996: 118, figs. 16:1, 2, 7, 8), Tel Batash-Timnah (MAZAR and PANITZ-COHEN 2001: 210, Photo 141), Lachish (TUFNELL 1953: pl. 32:7), and Busayra (SEDMAN 2002: 382, pl. 10.69, 384, pls. 10.74, 76, 385 pl. 10.79; these objects were referred to as camels in ^cAMR 1980: 214–216, figs. 173–177). A solid torso of a saddled camel (with hump!) from the 8th or 7th century is known from Amman (^cAMR 1980: 216, fig. 178, pl. 50:1).

The most similar parallel to our N1093 is from Tell el-Far^cah (DE VAUX 1952: pl. XV:11; also CHAMBON 1984: pl. 65:1; from Stratum VIIb, dated roughly to the 10th century) and is, however, a solid figurine of a horse, which is clearly identifiable as such due to the characteristic shape of the head and its mane. The bridle includes the same elements, viz. browband and frontlet (the headpiece is either not preserved or not visible on the photograph). The browband is also decorated with incisions and bridle and eyes are applied – and not incised as on many other examples. It differs from the figurine from Tell Abu al-Kharaz in that the cheek straps are not depicted and the horse's head and neck appear to be rendered in a very “naturalistic” way. This figurine is according to the stratigraphy of earlier date than the other rhyton from Tell Abu al-Kharaz (N1085), viz. around 800 (see above).

It seems evident that the camel rhyton had a similar function to the pack horse (N1085) described above. Camels had a similarly great impact on the economy from the Iron Age II onwards for trade and transport. Another aspect, pointed out by TEETER (2010: 130), is that camels were valued as exotic and rare animals, at least in earlier periods of the Iron Age.

Figurine of a felid (N1424)

Description

The figurine is hand-made, medium-hard-fired and of a coarse, greyish-brown fabric with mainly black and white inclusions (Figs. 354, 458:6 and 463:2). It is covered by a light reddish-brown slip, and traces of red colour are visible on the head. The body is complete, the legs broken. Rudiments of the ears are visible as well as incised eyes. Its jaw is wide open. A hole on the

hindquarters might have served to attach a tail made of clay or hair (?). The shape of the body and the short muzzle indicate that the depicted animal is a felid, most likely a lion, to judge from the relatively large head. Although its legs are broken, the fractures hint at a reconstruction of the lion standing with all feet on the ground rather than being recumbent.

Context

The felid was found in Area 9, Trench LVIIB, just north of W668 (see Fig. 250), the outer wall of an early Iron Age compound from Phase IX (see Chapter 2). The context is not clear-cut: a Late Bronze Age “insula” was discovered north of W668, not far from the find spot of the figurine (see BÜRGE in press). However, the level where the object was recovered corresponds to the floor level of the compound from Phase IX. In particular, the hard-fired fabric of the figurine is reminiscent of Iron Age counterparts. Therefore, the object belongs with some certainty to Phase IX, which was destroyed in the first half of the 11th century BCE (see Table 83).

Parallels and discussion

The lion was an animal frequently encountered in Bronze and Iron Age Palestine, which is proved by finds of bones (e.g. in Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, see MARTIN 1988: 83) and its ubiquity in the figurative art of the ancient Near East, e.g. on seals and other artefacts. Representation of lions can also be found on head cups from Tel Qasile (MAZAR 1980: 101–103, fig. 34), Tel Miqne-Ekron (BEN-SHLOMO 2008: 35, fig. 8; *idem* 2010: 128, fig. 3.69), Khirbet ed-Dawwara (NA'AMAN 2012: 4, fig. 2), or Tell es-Safi-Gath (DOTHAN 1982: 230, pl. 15, 232, fig. 7; MAEIR 2006: figs. 3, 4), which are strongly associated with the Philistines (generally DOTHAN 1982: 229–234). Seven stands from Yavneh are supported by lion figurines (KLETTER *et al.* 2010: pls. 7:2, 9:2, 13:1, 20:1, 51–52, 69–70, 101–103:1, 114:2–115:2; BEN-SHLOMO 2010: 130–131) and a stand from Tell Ta'annek has applied lions (BECK 2002a: 403, fig. 8). Furthermore, a faience head of a lion was found in Megiddo (Stratum V; LOUD 1948: pl. 246:30).

However, solid clay figurines of lions appear rarely.¹⁴⁴ A large lion or lioness head of clay was found in Ashdod, Stratum VIII (8th century; DOTHAN and

¹⁴⁴ Felids are not even mentioned in HOLLAND's (1977, 1996) classification of animal figurines.

PORATH 1982: 32–33, fig. 18:2, pl. XVIII:1), and belongs to a large statue originating in an Iron Age IIA stratum. It is decorated with red paint on white slip emphasizing ears, mane and whiskers. It is more elaborate and detailed than the figurine from Tell Abu al-Kharaz. A torso of a lion with an incised mane was found in Tell es-Sa'idiyeh (°AMR 1980: 231, fig. 185, pl. 51:1). Two lions' heads with applied details, one from Tell el-Mazar (°AMR 1980: 231–232, fig. 186, pl. 51:2), the other one of uncertain provenance (Jordan University Museum, without number; discussed in °AMR 1980: 232–233, figs. 187a, b, pl. 51:3a, b, c) should be mentioned. Lions (or lionesses) are attached on the rim of two bowls from Tell Deir °Alla (°AMR 1980: 263–264, figs. 199, 200a, b, c, pls. 56:1, 2, 3). However, their recumbent position and their closed jaw form a contrast to the figurine from Tell Abu al-Kharaz. Another example from Cisjordan is a solid hand-modelled figurine of a roaring lion, which was found at Beit Aula near Hebron and is dated to the 8th or 7th century (KEEL and UEHLINGER 2010: 215, 217, fig. 206a). Similar to the lion from Tell Abu al-Kharaz is the lion's wide opened jaw. It is standing with all four feet on the ground and raises its tail. The closest parallel to our object comes from Sarepta (ANDERSON 1988: pl. 38:7, from Substratum C1, dating from the transition between 8th and 7th century). On this hand-made figurine, too, the legs are broken, but they hint at the same body posture as that of the object from Tell Abu al-Kharaz. The head is formed in a similar way; the muzzle is well accentuated and due to its better state of preservation more detailed. Furthermore, two figurines from Medinet Habu, dated roughly between Dynasties 21–26 (1070–525) (TEETER 2010: 137–138) should be mentioned. Although being rather distant parallels, their relatively simple way of manufacturing resembles the figurine from Tell Abu al-Kharaz.

Lions generally have a wide variety of connotations, power and threat being amongst the most important aspects (see discussion in STRAWN 2005: 46–67). These aspects are further symbolized by the open jaw of the lion from Tell Abu al-Kharaz. The ferocity of the animal may lead to the conclusion that the lion also had a function as guardian (also °AMR 1980: 240–241). The suggestion that these figurines are connected with a deity (STRAWN 2005: 89–107; °AMR 1980: 237–243 compares them with Mesopotamian depictions of lions) – which may apply in other regions or on depictions of lions in other contexts – cannot be proved in the case of southern Levantine figurines from the Iron Age, as there is too little evidence. With reference to KEEL and UEHLINGER (2010: 215) they rather express the respect of humans for this animal.

A bull or horse figurine (L454-2)

Description

The solid clay figurine is hand-made, hard-fired, and has a fine, light pinkish-brown fabric with a thick grey core (Figs. 87:5, 463:3). It is finished with a self slip. Only the hind part of the torso with the two (broken) hind legs is preserved; the head is missing. A thick tail is visible on the hindquarters; it ends between the hind legs. The smooth and even finish of this figurine is striking.

Context

The object was recovered in Area 2 North-west, Trench XXXIVA (see Fig. 86). According to the stratigraphy, context and associated pottery it belongs to Phase XIV, which was destroyed in 732 BCE (see Table 83).

Identification and parallels

The strong build of the figurine suggests that this animal is a bull. In fact, a figurine very similar in shape from Khirbet ad-Dabba (WHITING *et al.* 2008: 274–275, fig. 11:11; head not preserved) was identified as a bull, but the animal's tail is more slender. Our figurine may also depict a horse due to its long and thick tail. It also corresponds to a similar object from Jerusalem which unambiguously shows a horse (HOLLAND 1977: 138, fig. 7:21). Another figurine, also depicting a horse, from Tell el-Mazar (°AMR 1980: 147–148, fig. 123, pl. 31:1) has a similar body shape. Its tail applied between the hind legs greatly resembles the object from Tell Abu al-Kharaz. A definite identification of the animal is problematic.

3. VARIOUS ZOOMORPHIC FRAGMENTS

Fragment of an equine rhyton (N1052)

Description

The object is hand-made, medium-hard-fired, of a fine, light brown fabric with a light grey core. The surface has a light brown slip and is decorated with red and black paint. It shows a part of the back and the base of the neck with a mane of an equine (Figs. 79:11, 463:4).

Context

N1052 was discovered in Area 2 North-west, Trench XXXIVB. According to the stratigraphy it belongs to Phase XI/3 (see Fig. 78) dating to around 900 BCE (see Table 83).

Discussion

The bichrome ladder-shaped pattern on the back of the animal brings to mind considerably earlier Aegean-style decorated figurines, e. g. from the earliest Iron Age I levels at Tel Mique-Ekron (BEN-SHLOMO and PRESS 2009: 59, figs. 16–18; BEN-SHLOMO 2010: 101, fig. 3.52). As on these examples the decoration appears not to follow any naturalistic features of the animal. In the case of the objects from Tel Mique-Ekron this decoration is linked to Mycenaean decorative traditions (BEN-SHLOMO 2010: 101). However, these traditions can hardly apply to the object from Tell Abu al-Kharaz, which dates to around 900 BCE.

Two fragments of equine or bovine rhyta (L472-2 and L7-2)

Description

Both fragments show the hindquarters with broken hind legs of an equine or bovine.

The body of L472-2 is wheel-made and medium-hard-fired (Figs. 223:2, 463:5). The fabric is light red on the exterior, grey in the interior and coarse with multicoloured inclusions. It is covered with a light orangish-brown slip and red paint. The two hind legs and a short tail are applied.

L7-2 has a wheel-made body and hand-made legs (Figs. 248:5, 463: 6). It is hard-fired, of a light red fabric with a thick grey core. The fabric is coarse with mainly black inclusions. It is finished with a self slip and red paint.

Context

L472-2 was found in the large compound of Area 7, Phase XIV and thus belongs to the structure from which the pack horse (N1085) comes (see Fig. 182). It was recovered inside House 5 (in Trench XLIXA) which was destroyed 732 BCE (see Table 83).

L7-2 was discovered in Area 9, Trench XXIV (Fig. 247). Being associated with Phase XIII (first part of 8th century BCE; see Table 83) it belongs to the same layer as the drummer figurine (N874; see above).

Discussion

Both objects are of the same type as the equine rhyta (N1085) discussed above. They have wheel-made bodies which can be reconstructed as bottle-like shapes. As already explained an identification of such stylized figurines is hardly possible if the head is missing. Although neither bulls nor horses or donkeys have as short tails as L472-2, it resembles the ‘token’ tail of Iron Age IIB–C bull vessels from Tel Mique-Ekron

(BEN-SHLOMO 2010: 111–112, figs. 3.58, 3.59). However, an identification of this figurine as a bull from this scanty evidence would be too far-fetched.

Fragment of a bovine (?) figurine or rhyton (L103-1)

Description

The figurine has a hand-made, hollow body. It is very hard-fired, of a light yellowish-brown fabric and coarse with multicoloured inclusions. It is finished with a pink slip and covered with red paint on the exterior. It depicts the hindquarters, possibly of a bovine. One hind leg is complete, the other one broken. The figurine is not illustrated because of its very fragmentary preservation.

The preserved dimensions are: W 4.5, L 3.5, H 3.5 cm.

Context

The object was found in Area 3, Trench XII, outside a small walled compound (see Chapter 2). It belongs to Phase XI (suggested date around 900 BCE; see Table 83).

Further remarks

Its extremely short, almost stump-like, legs may justify identification of this animal with a bovine rather than a horse.

Fragment of an animal rhyton (L471-1)

Description

The object is wheel-and-hand-made, hard-fired, and has a dark grey, medium-fine fabric. It is covered with a thick brownish-red slip. It shows the back and withers of an animal (Figs. 223:3, 463:7).

Context

The object comes from Area 7, Phase XIV (destroyed 732 BCE; see Table 83). It was found within the same compound as the laden animal (N1085) and not far from the rhyton L472-2, in the westernmost room of House 4 (Trench XLIXB; see Fig. 182). Other finds from this room include a jug with a trefoil mouth (N1282), a juglet (N1278) and a tripod bowl of fired clay (N1280; see Chapter 2)

Further remarks

Possible parts of a mane are visible on the withers, which might justify an identification as an equine.

Also the narrow shape of the body hints at an equine rather than a bovine. The pattern on the back is unusual. It might either depict the coat colours of the animal or indicate a harness, or both.

CONCLUSION

The Iron Age material from Tell Abu al-Kharaz shows a wide variety of different animal and human figurines and rhyta. The areas which yielded most and also the best preserved figurines are Areas 7 and 9. This is not surprising, since the Iron Age strata of these two Areas are those with the largest number of finds. Three animal rhyta (N1085, L472-2 and L471-1) were recovered in or around different houses belonging to the large compound in Area 7, Phase XIV. The earliest phases of the Iron Age, viz. Phases IX and X, are underrepresented,¹⁴⁵ whereas the latest one, viz. Phase XV, did not contain any figurines. Most of the figurines come from Phases XI, XIII and XIV. However, such a low number of examples does not allow any statistical conclusions to be drawn.

Figurines may make it possible to study (religious) beliefs and habits of the people who produced and/or owned them. Hence many theories on the function and meaning of the figurines have been developed. They range from profane and practical functions to various cultic aspects.

Concerning profane uses it was suggested that rhyta might have served as feeding bottles (NOVACEK 2011: 78) and animal figurines in general as children's toys or "bric-à-brac" (KENYON 1956: 186; FOWLER 1985: 342). These assumptions are however problematic, as many of the figurines show high technical craftsmanship – also the rhyta from Tell Abu al-Kharaz. Relating to Neolithic sites it was suggested that figurines were used as toys after having been utilized in cultic activities (VOIGT 2000: 267) or as teaching tools (MCADAM 1997: 139). Leaving aside the question whether it is legitimate to compare the functions of Neolithic and Iron Age figurines (which are moreover of a fairly different type), this seems at least possible for the less elaborate figurines, such as the lion (N1424) or the bull/horse figurine (L454-2). Another

profane purpose is offered by BEN-SHLOMO, who suggests that zoomorphic vessels just represented "fashionable decorative ware" (2008: 42).

Rhyta and figurines are often connected with some cultic activity. Rhyta – frequently used as synonymous with libation vessels (e. g. in MAZAR 2009b: 541–543) – were used in sacrifices. In particular bull-shaped vessels may have contained the blood of the sacrificed animals (MARINATOS 1986: 31; HÄGG 1990: 183–184; BEN-SHLOMO 2008: 41–42), since these animals played an important role in the cult in the Levant (FLEMING 1999), but also in Egypt, Cyprus and the Aegean (RICE 1998: 116–152, 198–219, 237–250). This does not necessarily apply to equine rhyta. As regards the laden animal (N1085) from Area 7 it is conceivable that the two vessels were used as filling spouts in order to mix two different liquids inside the animal's body. It is not impossible that such a function was also connected to religious practices.

Although attempts have been made to link animal and human figurines with various deities (e. g. by HILLERS 1970; °AMR 1980: *passim*), it is more legitimate to assume that each animal and each human figurine represented different aspects: horses, donkeys and bulls reflected their impact on agriculture and trade, the lion shows the respect for this strong animal. A figurine of a musician could symbolize the tradition and appreciation of musical performance, whereas the meaning of the mask remains enigmatic. Possibly all or at least some of these connotations were linked to religious perceptions and the figurines used as votive objects (as suggested by NOVACEK 2011: 14). However, for an outsider it is often difficult to distinguish between domestic or communal ritual and games or amusements (RENFREW 1985: 21), which makes definite statements on the meaning of the figurines difficult.

At least the three objects discussed from the compound in Area 7 allow some conclusions:

They demonstrate that animal rhyta belonged to the inventory of a household. Furthermore, the context of the laden animal (N1085) from House 2 suggests that it was used in a (cultic?) ritual.

¹⁴⁵ The lion figurine (N1424) was attributed to Phase IX. Phase X did not yield any figurines.

