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TERRACOTTA HEAD IN ‘ATEF-CROWN FROM TELL JAWA (SOUTH), TRANSJORDAN*  

Three seasons of excavation at Tell Jawa (South)\(^1\) yielded some six anthropomorphic and zoomorphic terracotta fragments. The most interesting of them, was the head of a male found during the 1989 season in Field A (Square 4, Locus 2) allocated to the Department of Antiquities of Jordan (Fig. 1)\(^2\).

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\(^1\) The Tell Jawa (South) excavations were conducted for two seasons (1989 and 1991) in consortium with the Madaba Plains Project. Since 1992 it has been an independent project sponsored by Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada. Randall Younker of Andrews University was the excavation’s first season Director. Since 1992 it has been directed by P. M. M. Daviau of Wilfrid Laurier University.


\(^2\) The Dig Registration Number, 89.1972, was that of the Madaba Plains Project, of which the Jawa dig was then a part. The object has been illustrated and mentioned (in:) Younker et al., AUSS 28, 1990, 16–17, Pl. 10 on p. 37; Herr et al., ADAJ 35, 1991, p. 171, Pl. II:2 on p. 176; Younker and Daviau, *Is Meša'at to be Found at Tell Jawa (South)?*, Israel Exploration Journal 43, 1993, p. 28 (no illustration); Daviau, ADAJ 36, 1992, pp. 151–152 (no illustration).
DESCRIPTION AND PARALLELS

The figurine fragment depicts a bearded man wearing headgear consisting of a spherically surmounted central conical cap with a plume attached to either side. This form is a variant of the so called ‘atef-crown, which is well known as a headdress of the Egyptian god Osiris\(^3\). Only the solid head and neck are preserved. The head features are molded with a collar of clay, manually narrowed on both sides of neck, surrounding the head. No details are modeled on the back of the head and neck giving the representation the appearance of a high relief. These features indicate that the representation of a male was pressed from a single mold onto a plaque.

Explorations in Amman and its vicinity have yielded over a dozen stone head sculptures and complete statues of the same iconography as our figurine\(^4\). It is worth mentioning that recently another limestone statue of analogous subject appeared on a public auction in Zurich as one of three Ammonite sculptures presented then for sale (Fig. 2)\(^5\).

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\(^4\) Horn, AUSS 9, 1973; Abou Assaf, UF 12, 1980; Dornemann, Archaeology, 1983: 153–159, Fig. 91.

Many bronze statuettes of the Bronze and Iron Ages wearing the ‘atef-like’ crown have been found in the Levant. The closest parallel to the Amman District limestone statues and to the Jawa fragment appears to be a statuette from Aya Irini, Cyprus (Fig. 3). It came from a sanctuary and was attributed to Cypro-Archaic I-II period (700–475 B.C.)

The only two other clay figurines of this iconography, to the author’s knowledge, seem to have come from the 1988 excavation at Amman Citadel and the 1990 excavation at Bethsaida (et-Tell) in ancient Geshur (Fig. 4). Neither a picture nor a drawing has been provided in the Amman Citadel report. Yet, a text on page 362 reads, “on the plaster floor of a room [...] an Ammonite clay figurine, bearing the pointed ‘atef

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7 Seeden, Standing Armed Figurines..., p. 125, Pl. 113: 1803.
crown and with a painted beard and moustache was discovered”. Traces of paint have not been detected on the Jawa figurine but this cannot be excluded. A drawing of the Bethsaida fragment reveals it was solid and the molded onto a plaque as was the Jawa figurine.

Terracotta figurines dated to the Persian Period and representing seated bearded men wearing similar ‘atef-crowns were found at Makhmash, Tell Sippor and Tell Sukas in western Palestine and Kharayeb on the Phoenician coast (Fig. 5). They were manufacured in the hollow molded technique.

A kind of ‘atef-crown is the most intriguing iconographical feature common to all these examples. The crowns on the Ammonite stone sculptures show a great variety of shapes. None of them, however, is like that on the figurine from Jawa.

The principal difference lies in the horizontal and oblique grooves present on the central cap and plumes of the Jawa figurine’s head crown while the crowns on the stone sculptures are plain as is the Bethsaida terracotta head. The Jawa head crown differs also from the Egyptian prototype. Although the grooves on the plumes of the Jawa head crown closely resemble the Egyptian type, the oblique groves on the central cap are not of Egyptian inspiration since the caps of original ‘atef-crown had vertical grooves indicating a bundle of reeds tied together, or were plain. The excavations at the neighboring Tell el-'Umeiri yielded two terracotta head fragments from Field A wearing conical caps or helmets, which, although not of the ‘atef type, had grooves arranged similarly to the Jawa head (Fig. 6).

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9 E. Stern, Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period. Warminster 1982, pp. 165, 271, Fig. 283, n. 43; Dornemann, Archaeology of Transjordan, p. 156, note 9. These representations are identified with Horon (W. Culican, Dea Tyrtaia Gravida, Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology 1/2, 1969, p. 44) and Baal (Stern, Material Culture, p. 165).

10 The differences in the caps of the terracotta and stone sculptures might challenge the idea that the figurine from Jawa was made directly after these stone sculptures (c.f. Aharoni 1950–51: 222). Other supposedly northern cultural influences in the terracotta ought to be accepted also (see below).

**RECONSTRUCTION**

Abou Assaf, writing about the Ammonite stone heads with 'atef-crowns, stressed that it was difficult to decide whether these heads were meant to go with a torso or not. The Jawa head apparently was attached to a torso, yet no trace of a tenon could be seen. If a complete figure was meant its lower part could be analogous to one of two treatments of the complete Ammonite stone statues. First, the lower part could have been modelled plastically, i.e. torso and legs worked individually, as in the case of the very well known limestone statue from Khirbet el-Hajjar (Amman Museum J 12953), the basalt statue from the Amman Citadel (Amman Museum J 1657), and the Yerah-'Azar limestone statue from the Amman Citadel (Amman Museum J 1656). Interestingly enough, an analogous lower part of a terracotta figurine was found at the adjacent Tell el-'Umeiri. Field A, in 1992 (Fig. 7). Second, the torso with the legs might have not been individually modelled, as in the case of the above mentioned statue displayed at the auction in Zurich (Fig. 2). Similar treatment of a lower part is seen on a human terracotta figurine fragment found in 1992 at Tell Jawa, Field E, Square 55, of which just a lower part is preserved.

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12 Abou Assaf, UF 12, 1980, p. 50, note 128.
13 Zayadine, *Sculpture in Ancient Jordan*, (in:) Treasures from the Land. Art of Jordan, edited by P. Bienkowski, Phoenix Mill, Fig. 41.
14 Zayadine, *Sculpture*, Fig. 39.
15 Zayadine, *Sculpture*, Fig. 38.
17 Daviau, personal communication; used by permission. A third possible, but less probable as it seems, reconstruction could also be proposed. The Jawa head fragment resembles in some details rider heads of terracotta horse-and-rider figurines from Central Transjordan, and thus might have belong to a rider (cf. T. A. Holland, *A Typological and Archaeological Study of Human and Animal*.

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Fig. 6. Head fragments from 'Umeiri: Reg.No.1848; Drawing by Nancy Rynes
DATING

Ammonite stone sculptures representing men wearing a kind of ‘atef-crown have not come from regular excavations. Thus, their dating is not based on stratigraphy but mainly on iconography, style analysis and parallels. Abou Assaf gives a review of the sculpture dating\textsuperscript{18}. The earliest date, ca. 850 B.C., is given by Ibrahim for the statue from Khirbet el-Hajjar\textsuperscript{19}. Abou Assaf and Zayadine, however, give it a somewhat later date in the 8th century B.C.\textsuperscript{20} The latest date for the group, as proposed by Abou Assaf and Ornan, is the first quarter of the 6th century B.C.\textsuperscript{21}Most scholars prefer the 8th and 7th centuries, as given by Dornemann, for the Ammonite stone heads wearing a kind of ‘atef-crown\textsuperscript{22}.

As yet, a precise date for the Jawa figurine cannot be established. The dominant pottery obtained from Locus 2 in Field A, where the figurine was found, was Iron II, encompassing the dates given for the stone sculptures\textsuperscript{23}. Additionally a sample taken from the figurine was chosen for the petrographic analysis, which is now in process, together with other figurines from Tell el-'Umeiri and Tell Hesban. The results will be published elsewhere.

INTERPRETATION

Religious function of the Amman District limestone sculptures has been widely accepted. There has been no agreement, however, as to the question of whom – king or

Footnotes:
\textsuperscript{18} Abou Assaf, UF 12, 1980, pp. 71–72.
\textsuperscript{19} Moaiwyah Ibrahim, Two Ammonite Statuettes from Khirbet El-Hajjar, ADAJ 16, 1971, pp. 91–97.
\textsuperscript{20} Abou Assaf, UF 12, 1980, pp. 73–74; Zayadine, Art of Jordan, Fig. 41.
\textsuperscript{21} Abou Assaf, UF 12, 1980, p. 75; Tallay Ornan, A Man and His Land: Highlights from the Moshe Dayan Collection, Jerusalem 1986, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{22} Dornemann, Archaeology, p. 154.
\textsuperscript{23} Cf. however, Daviau's report in ZDPV.
god – the stone heads and complete statues with ‘atef-crown represent. Some leave this question open, some see a god, apparently Milcom, the national god of the Ammonites, while most tend to believe they represent Ammonite kings, either still alive or deified after their death.

The terracottas recently found in regular excavations, parallel to the stone statues, do not solve the problem. The Amman Citadel fragment was found on the plaster floor of a room which may have belonged to an official building “decorated with the double faced Hathoric heads”. The Jawa fragment was unearthed in a probable domestic context. The Bethsaida fragment, on the other hand, was discovered, as it is supposed, in a temple. However, it was the head itself which was used by the excavators as one of the pieces of evidence for a temple function of the building. Thus, provenance cannot give definite answers as to whether a representation of a god or king was intended. It only says that, as with all kinds of terracotta figurines, the heads with ‘atef-crown are found in different contexts.

Of some importance might be the grooves on the head’s cap. Since they are not present on Egyptian originals (see above) we must look elsewhere for their roots. One possible explanation is that they depict stylized horns as on manifold horned conical caps, “the characteristic head-gear of [Mesopotamian] divine beings” of the 3rd-1st millennium B.C. However, although multihorned caps, were mostly worn by deities, they were also used by kings in special situations. What is more, the meaning of the horned cap, if the grooves were really stylized horns, might have been lost in the Ammonite culture, as seems to be the case with the Egyptian ‘atef-crown.

CONCLUSION

With the finding of the heads from Jawa, the Amman Citadel, and Bethsaida, a new group of terracotta figurines has started to emerge. Without doubt they were of religious function but the figurines do not answer definitely as to whether a god–Egyptian or Asiatic – king, deified king or combination of all was represented. Further, the head

28 Darvash, ADAJ 36, 1992, pp. 151–152. For Darvash the terracotta head is an exceptional find among the “commonplace, everyday items” discovered in the structure.
30 E. D. van Buren, Concerning the Horned Cap of the Mesopotamian Gods, Orientalia 12, 1943, p. 320.
31 van Buren, Orientalia 12, 1943, p. 324.
32 Cf. Dornemann, Archaeology, p. 163.
34 If a king was intended, the figurines might have been an element of a royal propaganda.
from Bethsaida attests that during the Iron Age II solid and molded terracotta figurines representing bearded males in šatee-like crown were not exclusive for Central Transjordan. Thus the use of the Jawa head as an evidence for the Ammonite presence at the site should be employed with caution.³⁵