BACK FROM THE HUNT: A PICTORIAL TELL EL-YAHUDIYEH JUGLET IN THE ERETZ ISRAEL MUSEUM, TEL AVIV

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The vase, in the collection of the Eretz Israel Museum, MHP 77.88, is among the few extant Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware juglets that combines geometric with pictorial decoration (Figs. 1, 2; on Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware generally, see AMIRAN 1969, 118–120; KAPLAN 1980; ASTON and BIETAK 2012). The following discussion concentrates on two major aspects: the shape which is indicative of its date and place of manufacture, and its Figural decoration, specifically, its iconographic affinities and meaning.

Shape and Surface Treatment

The juglet has an elongated piriform body, a tiny, flattened base, and a vertical double-coil handle attached to the shoulder and neck, just below the lip. The rim is funnel-shaped, with a groove or gutter on the lip's interior. The juglet is slipped, burnished to a high gloss, and fired to a dark grey. Its decoration was incised and punctured using a single pointed tool; there are not traces of white encrustation.

Typology and Dating

The closest parallels for its profile shape point to a northern Palestinian provenance and date from the late Middle Bronze (MB) IIA to early MB IIB. Petrographic analysis on the juglet postulates a possible provenance in the northern Levantine Coast but other provenance cannot be ruled out. Its tiny flattened base, which precedes the fully developed 'button base' occurs on Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware juglets from Megiddo (LOUD 1948, pl. 17:7), Tell ʿAmr (DRUKS 1982, Fig. 2:19), and Jericho, Tomb D.461 (MARCHETTI 2003, Fig. 9:a5).

Its elongated piriform body has parallels from Ginosar, Tomb 1, dating from late MB IIA to transitional MB IIA-IIB (EPSTEIN 1974, Fig. 5:7), as well as juglets from Tomb 2/3 (EPSTEIN 1974, Figs. 8:11,12). Although Epstein, the excavator, dated tomb 2/3 to MB IIB, an earlier phase of burial is evident from a pair of notched chisel-type axe-heads (EPSTEIN 1974, Fig. 12:1, 2) and early pottery types (EPSTEIN 1974, Fig. 9:15,16). More parallels come from Megiddo (LOUD 1948, pl.19:28)

and Jericho, tomb D.461 (MARCHETTI 2003, Fig. 9:a 5).

Juglets with a rounded shoulder and double-coil handle attached to the shoulder and the base of the neck occur at Megiddo (LOUD 1948, pl. 10:19–20), ʿAfula (ZEVULUN 1991, Figs. 21–25), Ginosar (EPSTEIN 1974, Fig. 5:6,8 [Tomb 1], Fig. 8: 11,12, 22 [Tomb 2/3]), Turʿan (GERSHUNY and EISENBERG 2005, Fig. 9:1–9,14,15; ASTON and BIETAK 2012, 65), Hazor, tomb 1181 (MAEIR 1997, 310, pl. 4:5.11; BEN-TOR 2003, Fig. 6:12), Kefar Szold (EPSTEIN 1974, Fig.1:5), Ruweisse, Tomb 66 (TUFNELL 1975–1976, Fig. 2:18,19), Sidon, burial 14 (DOUMET-SERHAL 2004, Fig. 53:S/1857), Kāmid el-Lōz, tomb 100 (MIRON 1982, pl. 24:2), and Tell el-Dabʿa (ASTON 2004, pl. 118:394. 4751 b/3 [=F]).

Parallels to the juglet's funnel-shaped rim and interior gutter or groove on the lip occur at Barqai (GOPHNA and SUSSMAN 1969, Fig. 4:4), Megiddo (LOUD 1948, pl. 19:28), ʿAfula (ZEVULUN 1991, Figs. 22, 24), Ginosar (EPSTEIN 1974, Fig. 5: 6, Figs. 8: 9,11,12, 20, 22; for a jug with this type of rim and lip, see EPSTEIN 1974, Fig. 6:2), Hazor, tomb 1181 (MAEIR 1997, 310, pl. 4.5.11; BEN-TOR 2004, Fig. 6:12), Kefar Szold (EPSTEIN 1974, Fig. 1:5), Ruweisse, tomb 66 (TUFNELL 1975-1976, Fig. 2:18,19), Sidon, burial 14 (DOUMET-SERHAL 2004, Fig. 53:S/1857), Kāmid el-Lōz, Tomb 100 (MIRON 1982, pl. 24:2), and Tell el-Dabʿa (ASTON 2004, pl. 118:394. 4751 b/3 [=F], pl. 117:390 b/2[=E/2]).

The funnel-shaped rim with inner gutter deserves special attention, since its variants are quite frequent in jugs and juglets dated to late MB IIA and early MB IIB assemblages. This feature appears frequently on 'stepped-rim' juglets, e.g., at Megiddo (LOUD 1948, pls. 17:6, 24:31), ʿAfula (ZEVULUN 1991, Fig. 23), Turʿan (GERSHUNY and EISENBERG 2005, Fig. 9:11–13,15), Ginosar (EPSTEIN 1974, Figs. 5:10, 8:10,19; ASTON and BIETAK 2012: 65), Hazor, tomb 1181 (MAEIR 1997, 310, pl. 4:5.1, 2, 12, 14; BEN-TOR 2004, Figs. 4:14, 15), Kefar Szold (EPSTEIN 1974, Fig. 1:4,6,7), and Ruweisse, tomb 66 (TUFNELL 1975–1976, Fig. 2:9).

It also seems that the double-coil handle springing from the shoulder and curving under the rim is

Fig. 1 Figurative Tell el-Yahudieh juglet MHP 77.88
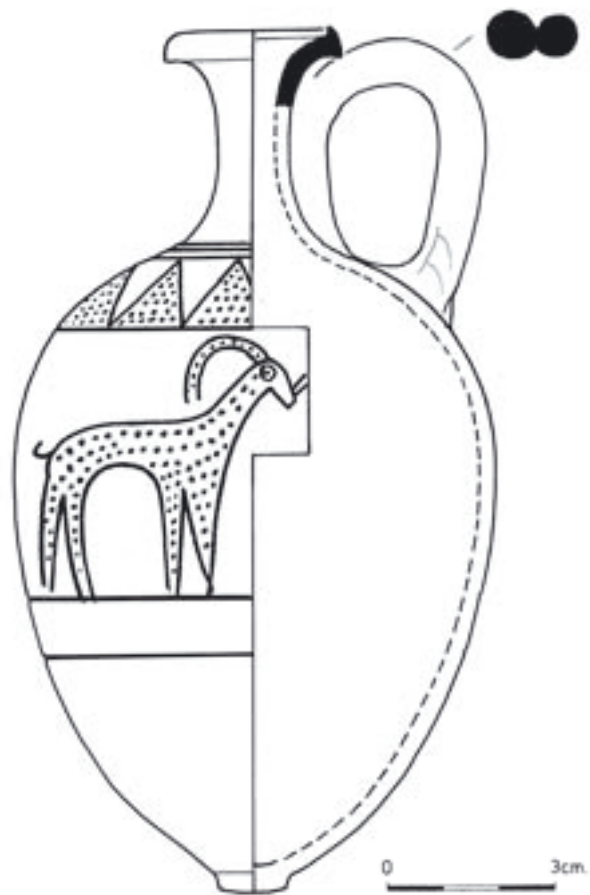(Photo: Gregory Vinitsky)

Fig. 2 MHP 77.88 (Drawing: Yoseph Kapelyan)

a distinctive northern Palestinian feature dated to this transitional phase. This mode of attaching the handle will make its appearance on Tell el-Yahudi-yeh ware juglets in southern Palestine slightly later. On contemporary southern Palestinian juglets, the handle is attached on the rim and to the shoulder, as in the Aphek Palace and Post-Palace phases (BECK 2000, Fig. 10.31: for a piriform with funnel-shaped mouth) and Jericho, Tomb 48 (KENYON 1965, Fig. 98:21).

Another northern Palestinian trait is an incised linear band consisting of two or three lines encir-cling the base of the neck. This trait appears on many of the juglets (either with cut-away necks or without) dating from the late MB IIA through MB IIA-B transitional phase in Tell Kabri, tomb 498 (SCHEFTELOWITZ 2002, Figs. 5:25. 2, 4, 7, 8, 10; 5:26.1, 2, 13) as well as on many piriform Type I Tell el-Yahudieh ware juglets dubbed by Bietak 'Levanto-Egyptian' (KAPLAN 1980, Figs. 23–33; BIETAK 1988, 8,11–15, Figs. 7–11). It should be noted that all of the 36 Tell el-Yahudieh juglets from a potter's refuse pit workshop at 'Afula have

this linear collar (ZEVULUN 1991). Further exam-ples of juglets with this feature are found at Megiddo (AMIRAN 1969, pl. 36:4, 8) and Ginosar (AMIRAN 1969, pl. 36:16), and on sites in Lebanon such as Majdaluna (AMIRAN 1969, pl. 36:21) and Byblos (AMIRAN 1969, pl. 36:25). The early date of this feature is supported by its occurrence on imported Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware juglets at Tell el-Dab'a Strata G-F, where this linear band appears on cut-away necked jugs similar to those from Kabri (ASTON 2002, Figs. 14:1, 2, 4; 17:7, 8).

Decoration (Figs. 1 and 2)

The juglet has two decorative friezes: a geometric one on the top and a pictorial zone below it, both defined and bordered by horizontally incised lines. A terminal triple-linear band encircles the base of the neck above the geometric frieze. Two broadly separated incised lines border the baseline of the pictorial scene. The lower third of the vessel is left undecorated.

Fig. 3 Triangle frieze around the neck
(Photo: Gregory Vinitsky)

Triangle frieze

A geometric frieze of seven punctured triangles encircles the shoulder (Figs. 3, 4). Another three narrower triangles are squeezed in where the handle joins the shoulder. The triangle motif is of northern Levantine origin (CHARAF and OWNBY 2012, 596–597). Seen from above, the reserved areas between the triangles look like a star or rosette.

Figural frieze (Fig. 5)

Below the handle, a Figural frieze surrounds the main zone of the juglet's body, is comprised of a file of four striding horned quadrupeds and a human Figure. Based on their direction of movement, the Figures appear divided into two confronting groups. A hunter, wielding weapons and standing in a smiting posture, walks to the left leading a small ibex towards three large ibexes, which are striding to the right (Fig. 5).

Fig. 4 Narrow triangles at join of handle
(Photo: Gregory Vinitsky)

The hunter is depicted in twisted perspective with the head, arms, lower torso, and legs in profile and the chest rendered frontally. His left arm, raised behind the head, wields an axe with a curved handle. The axe blade crosses the upper border line of the frieze. In his outstretched right hand is grasping a bow, goading the ibex in front of him. The attentive depiction of movement of the hunter's arms
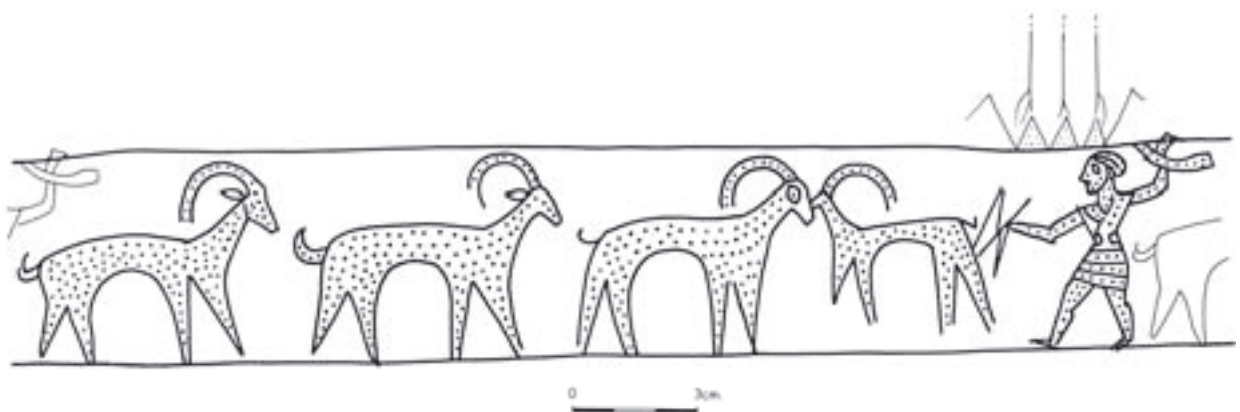

Fig. 5 Figural frieze (Drawing: Yoseph Kapelyan)

Fig. 6 Baal stele from Ugarit (SEEDEN 1980: Pl. 26, 136)

Fig. 7 Storm god wearing tunic. Cylinder seal and impression
(Collection Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, MHM 1.92)

and shoulders – with one shoulder lower than the other – contrasts with the artist's neglect to render the hands. His legs are spread wide in an energetic gait. Both feet rise above the ground line, the front foot touching the ground with the heel only, while the hunter tip-toes on his backward foot. This rendition lends vigor and motion to the whole scene.

The hunter is clad in a sleeveless tunic and a short tight-fitting kilt ribbed horizontally. The kilt is held at the waist by a broad belt fastened at

the front. The coiffure is indicated by incised lines and dots. Facial features include a large slanting eye, a pointed nose and a heavy chin. The mouth is hinted.

The animals are depicted in full profile. On each animal, the four legs and two horns are rendered without overlapping. The horns, swung backward, are depicted as two parallel curved lines filled with a line of punctured dots. Their highly arched bellies are supported by two pairs of wedge-shaped legs.

The tails are rendered naturalistically, short and upturned.

The ibexes differ from each other in small details. The legs of the small ibex (# 1) led by the hunter do not touch the ground line; the tail is rendered by a single line, turning up at a sharp angle and the head is partly hidden by the head of the ibex walking towards it (# 2). Thus, the eye and ear are not indicated. Only on ibex # 2 is the eye indicated with an emphatic iris. The tail of ibex #2 curves upward as a simple incised line. Like ibex # 1, it lacks an ear. Ibex # 3 has an ear and a voluminous tail filled with a row of dots, but lacks an eye. Ibex # 4 also has an ear, lacks an eye, but has a graphically rendered jaw line. Its tail is rendered by two parallel upturned lines, but is smaller than the tail of ibex # 3, and is not filled with a row of dots.

Iconography

The human Figure

The hunter's hair seems to be arranged in a 'mushroom coiffure', which according to D. Arnold is a typical 'Asiatic' coiffure (ARNOLD 2005; see also BIETAK 1991, 63, Fig. 10, pls. 16-17; SCHIESTL 2007, 177–179). The bearded man in the Egyptian hieroglyphic classifier for Asiatic wears this particular hair style (ALLEN 2008, 33, pl. 3).

His broad belt recalls actual examples known from warrior tombs and is also typically seen on Syrian and Anatolian male gods (ZIFFER 1990, 75*–77*; BIETAK 1991, Fig. 6; SCHIESTL 2002, Figs. 2, 3). His horizontally banded kilt is typical of Syrian storm gods (Fig. 6), as is his sleeveless tunic (Fig. 7; SAFADI 1974, no. 61). The short horizontally striped kilt is also worn under a mantle by royal figures, as is seen on an inlay from Ebla and on Syrian cylinder seals (Figs. 8, 9). This kilt is rare on Canaanite scarabs from Palestine however, although a similar skirt is worn by a Canaanite dignitary on an early scarab from Stratum F at Tell el-Dab'a, whose hair also seems to be arranged in a 'mushroom coiffure' (Fig. 10).

Our hunter wields an axe and what seems to be a bow. This combination of arms is found on Syrian glyptic depictions of warrior (or hunting) gods (Figs. 11, 12) as well as on depictions of mortal warriors, such as the Canaanite painted on a tomb from Beni Hasan (Fig. 13). The axe, however, is not the typical weapon of the Levantine storm god, who commonly wields a mace. Kings, on the other hand, often appear with an axe when smiting an enemy (Figs. 14, 15, 16; TEISSIER 1996, 117, nos.

Fig. 8 Eblaite ruler wearing banded kilt under mantle. Ivory inlay (MATTHIAE, PINNOCK and SCANDONE-MATTHIAE 1995: 397, no. 246).

Fig. 9 Ruler wearing banded kilt under mantle. Cylinder seal (COLLON 1982, Fig. 2:23).
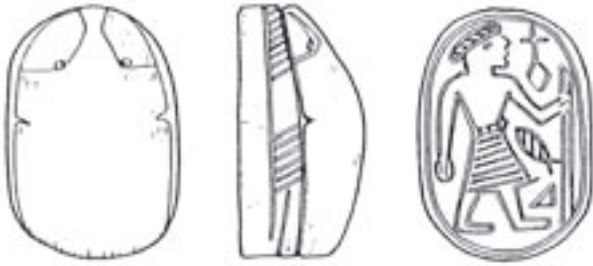
Fig. 10 Canaanite dignitary clad in banded kilt. Scarab from
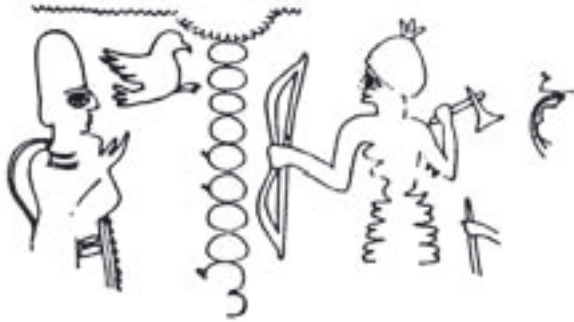Tell el- Dab'a (BIETAK 2002, Fig.6:2)

Fig. 11 God armed with bow and axe. Cylinder seal
impression from Alalakh (COLLON 1975, 25, no. 31)

Fig. 12 God armed with bow and axe. Syrian cylinder seal
(TEISSIER 1996, 67, no. 81)

Fig. 13 Canaanite warrior in the caravan of Semitic people.
Wall painting at Beni Hasan (ZIFFER 1990, Fig. 24*)

Fig. 14 King smiting an enemy with an axe. Detail from the
Ishtar Stele, Ebla (MATTHIAE, PINNOCK and SCANDONE-MATTHIAE
1995, 391)

Fig. 15 King smiting an enemy with an axe. Syrian cylinder
seal (TEISSIER 1996, 117, no. 250)

Fig. 16 King smiting an enemy on a Canaanite scarab
(KEEL 1995, Fig. 487)

Fig. 17 *Hbdd* riding donkey, shouldering an axe. Rock engraving in Sinai (Ziffer 1990, Fig. 35*)

Fig. 18 King Djoser running on the Sed-festival. Sakkara (Kemp 1993ʳ, Fig. 20E)

248–250; Keel 1995, 222, Figs. 486, 487). The finds from Ebla prove that the axe was part of the regalia of Asiatic kings beginning in the third millennium B.C.E. (Matthiae 1980, 60; Beck 2002, 60, Fig. 2). It is significant to note, that the nobles of Retenu also carry an axe. For example, a rock carving from Sinai, dating to the 12ᵗʰ Dynasty, shows *Hbdd,* brother of a ruler of Retenu, riding a donkey, wearing a horizontally striped kilt, and shouldering an axe (Fig. 17). The Beni Hasan Canaanite warrior and *Hbdd* still carry duck-billed axes. The rectangular outline of the hunter's axe blade is the new Canaanite chisel-type axe, which

gradually replaced the duck-billed axe during the 18ᵗʰ century B.C.E. (Ziffer 1990, Fig. 100; Miron 1992, pls. 16–17, nos. 258–288).

The hunter's posture

The hunter appears in a smiting posture familiar from representations of storm gods and male warriors. Deriving from the Egyptian heroic royal icon of the smiting Pharaoh, which crystallized around 3000 B.C.E. (Goldwasser 1995, 4–7), this powerful posture makes its sudden appearance in the Levant and Anatolia in the 19th-18th centuries B.C.E. (Collon 1972, 130).

In Syro-Palestinian art, the smiting Figure usually stands firm with both feet planted on the ground line or on a mount, such as a dais, an animal, or mountains (Figs. 6, 7). As noted above, our hunter's feet rise partly above the ground line, with only the heel of the front foot and the toes of the back foot touching the ground. This foot position, along with the wide vigorous stride, may derive from the Figure of the running pharaoh, which is associated with the Sed festival and other festivals dating from Proto-Dynastic to Roman times (Fig. 18; Vandier 1952, Figs. 587, 588; Decker and Herb 1994, pls. 1–53: A1–A307). The wide stride is also typical of pharaoh's depictions as early as the First Dynasty, from scenes which depict him smiting Asiatics (Fig. 19; Vandier 1952, 504–505). This is how the pharaoh is also depicted on rock reliefs from the South Sinai (Fig. 20; Giveon 1978, 51–52). But, whereas in Egypt the king's front foot is planted flat on the ground, and the back heel in the air, both of our hunter's feet seem to be lifted in the air, with only the heel of the front foot and the toes of the rear foot touching the ground.

This peculiar stance can only be paralleled with the Figure represented on a unique branding stamp from the famous Tell Balāta-Shechem hoard (Fig. 21). This metal stamp bore as an emblem the silhouetted Figure of a Pharaoh in a running posture, wearing the red crown of Egypt. Müller states that the posture of the runner represented on the stamp was unknown in miniature art, i.e. on scarabs of the period (Müller 1987, 72). However, on a scarab from Jericho there is a single 'dancer' in a wide stride and with raised arms (Keel 1996, Fig. 10). Significantly, the Figure on the Shechem stamp deviates from the canonic Egyptian image of the running pharaoh in two regards: the king is empty handed and his front leg is planted, with the heel and not the toe, on the ground. Therefore, the Balāta stamp must be a local version of an Egyptian mod-

Fig. 19 King Den smiting an Asiatic. The inscription reads "the first time of smiting the East". Ivory label from Abydos (Köhler 2002, Fig. 31.8)

Fig. 21 Running king. Metal branding stamp from Shechem (Müller 1987: Fig. 24)

Fig. 20 Sekhemkhet smiting an Asian. Rock carving, Maghara, Sinai (Vandier 1952, Fig. 572)

Fig. 22 Smiting god. Cylinder seal from Tell el-Dab'a (Porada 1984, ill. 1)

el, not necessarily an official Egyptian-made branding stamp. Perhaps it was a piece of miniature art, or jewelry, like a gold pectoral element, dated stylistically c.1890 B.C.E., which shows a running king wearing the red crown of Egypt and holding a flail (Wildung and Schoske 1980, 16; Decker and Herb 1994, 41: A40 pl. 9). Such pectorals, also known from Byblos, were among the gifts given by Middle Kingdom pharaohs to Canaanite princes. Müller assumes that the Shechem stamp was used to brand "cattle of Retenu" for delivery to Egypt (Müller 1987, 76–77). We prefer to consider that the Balāta stamp shows how Egyptian royal emblems were transmitted to Canaan and integrated into the local imagery. It is hard to assess, however, where the Canaanites encountered this image and

how the transference was made, or how the Canaanites understood the image (cf. Goldwasser's recent conclusions regarding the Canaanites' understanding pictures from Egyptian hieroglyphs and choosing them as models for the invention of Proto-Canaanite script; Goldwasser 2007, 131; Goldwasser 2011, 275–276).

As noted above, the smiting posture made its appearance in Syrian and Anatolian art in the 19th-18th centuries B.C.E. to portray storm gods. These gods stand frozen, their feet planted on the ground, wielding weapons (Figs. 6, 7a, b). They may be shown treading mountains, as on the cylinder seal found on the plastered floor of a 13th Dynasty palace at Tell el-Dab'a (Stratum d/1=G/4) (Fig. 22; Porada 1984; Dijkstra 1991). The seal from Tell

Fig. 23 Smiting Figure dominating a horned animal. Scarab
from Tell el-Dab'a (KEEL 1995, Fig. 491)

el-Dab'a shows the god Baal-zaphon, literally 'lord of [mount] Zaphon,' in a wide powerful stride, unusual in Syrian seals, but recalling the Egyptian convention. Yet, the god's feet are flat on the mountains, unlike the Egyptian convention. Porada concluded that the Dab'a cylinder seal was carved in the 18th century B.C.E. by a local seal-cutter influenced by Syrian glyptic, who selected meaningful emblems for his clientele.

Keel has demonstrated that the smiting Figure was adopted in Canaanite scarabs as a visual image to show dominance over human beings, animals, and plants. The dominating Figure almost always appears in a wide stride, running according to the Egyptian canon (KEEL 1995, 221–223, Figs. 486–493). The earliest scarab known to us which shows the smiting Figure dominating a horned animal comes from Tell el-Dab'a Stratum G-F (Fig. 23). This early, pre-Hyksos scarab may well be contemporaneous with our juglet.

The Hunt in Context

Hunting is a noble activity and enfolds many symbolic connotations. Heroic hunters feature in royal, cultic, and mythic contexts as well as in popular 'folk art'. In addition to our juglet, two other Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware juglets depict hunt scenes. Unfortunately, none come from controlled excavations although their intact condition suggests that they were placed in tombs. On an anthropomorphic rhyton-juglet of piriform shape from Jericho (Amman, Jordan Archaeological Museum J. 5173), the hunter is poorly preserved and the fabric is completely worn where his weapon would have originally been represented (BALENSI 1986, 75). On a juglet in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (71.67.225) the hunter,

who wears a striped kilt, wields a bow and arrow toward three different horned animals - an ibex, a deer, and a gazelle (TADMOR 1997). Unlike our Pictorial zone, which is bordered by a line at the top and bottom, the hunting scene on the Israel Museum juglet is incised in a 'free field.'

Hunting scenes are depicted on ceramics in the Near East as early as the 4th millennium, as seen on a Susa I painted bowl (c. 3800–3500 B.C.E.) featuring a hunter aiming his bow at an ibex located on the other side of a set of sweeping broken lines (SCHMANDT-BESSERAT 2007, 15–16). This 'narrative' bowl is an exception, since the painting on most preliterate pottery consisted of repetitions of a single Figure, stylized, in circular patterns, without a linear layout to organize the Figures on a ground line.

Narration in pottery painting began in the early third millennium B.C.E. to communicate information according to the same principles governing the signs of a script: images were read like a text. Whereas preliterate pottery painting evoked an idea, pottery painting in the literate period emulated writing, and thus conveyed stories involving multiple Figures (Schmandt-Besserat 2007, 25, 101–102). A hunt scene composed by a popular potter, a master in wheel throwing, but hardly versed in artistic techniques, appears on the shoulder of a well-formed basin from the Ishtar Temple F at Nuzi (late 3rd millennium B.C.E.; STARR 1937, pl. 58). The hunter, followed by his dog, swings an axe at a feline who is biting the head of a horned animal. The attacking feline is rendered in plastic relief, whereas all the other Figures are crudely incised, almost inattentively. Here, the hunter serves as a protective Figure and is the pivotal image among a file of herbivores that encircle the shoulder of the vessel.

The hunt scene depicted on the lower left face of the limestone basin from Great Temple D at Ebla (MATTHIAE 1979, ills. 13–14; AMIET 1977, pls. 449–451; KOHLMEYER 1985) provides contextual evidence for the hunt and animal file articulated on the Nuzi vessel. The front of the Ebla basin shows a royal banquet supported by a file of herbivores – a stag, ibex, gazelle, and ram – which are attacked by a threatening lion. On the two narrow sides, mythical themes are articulated on the upper register, combined with animal subjects on the lower register. The actual hunt is carved on the lower left face of the basin. It shows a kneeling archer shouldering a quiver and shooting an arrow at a roaring lion who confronts a goring bull. Thus, the mythical

Fig. 24 Carrying game on a pole. Cylinder seal
(Collon 1982, Figs. 3:f)

Fig. 25 Carrying game on a pole. Cylinder seal
(Collon 1982, Figs. 3:g)

Figures correspond to the Figure of the royal hero at the banquet, whereas the hunt complements the file of animals on the lower register of the basin's front. The various scenes on the basin from Ebla are key symbols of idealized kingship. The animals carrying the banquet scene were no doubt intended to represent the power of the king as tamer of ferocious beasts and protector of nature.

Three of the herbivores from the Eblaite basin – the stag, ibex and gazelle – also appear on two Middle Bronze Age cylinder seals attributed to the Aleppo workshop (Figs. 24, 25). These seals show the aftermath of the hunt with attendants carrying the game tied to a pole on their shoulders. On one of the seals (Fig. 24), the game appears as a live offering made by the king to an enthroned god (Porada 1975–1976, 30; von der Osten-Sacken 1994, 235–237). Moreover, behind the god's throne a recumbent ibex, presumably the god's attribute, appears on the god's dais. One is reminded of the Ugaritic account of Anat's funerary offerings to the dead Baal, which include 70 of each species of hunted beasts: buffalos, oxen, sheep, deer, mountain goats (*y'lm*), and asses or perhaps roe-bucks ([*y*]*hmrm*) (Parker 1997, 152, 174 n. 179) – all wild animals. Significantly, no undomesticated spe-

cies are distinguishable in the ritual texts from Ugarit recording offerings for divine meals (Pardee 2002, 224–226, 233).

The ivory bed from the palace of Ugarit, dating to the 14th century B.C.E., provides more contextual evidence for the hunt. The bed combines the royal aspects of the hunt with the religious dimension of offering game, which form the subject of the two first plaques on the left of the so-called peaceful side of the panel (Fig. 26; Gachet-Bizollon 2001, 49–52; Feldman 2002, 15–16). The outermost left plaque shows an offering bearer presenting a live ibex, which he holds in his arms in a stance whose roots may be traced to Akkadian art (Boehmer 1965, pl. 32:387). Next to him, on the next plaque, we see the king as the Good Shepherd, returning from the hunt, shouldering a bow and a live hunted roe, while leading a hunted stag by a leash. The hunt itself is depicted in two narrow horizontal bands that border both panels: hunters with hunting dog spear and shoot at a bestiary of wild animals including lions, stags and ibexes (Gachet-Bizollon 2001, 73–74). Although later than our juglet, and a product of a palatial workshop, the ivory bed from Ugarit provides clues to understanding the symbolism of our 'folk art' hunting scene, which, we would argue, shows a local ruler leading a file of live ibexes as offerings after a successful hunt.

Interpretation of the juglet

Whereas the hunter on the crater from Nuzi is armed with only an axe, while the hunter on the juglet in the Israel Museum and the hunters on the basin from Ebla are armed with a bow and arrow, our hunter is equipped with both an axe and a bow, as on depictions of hunting gods (Figs. 11, 12). Presumably, a fully successful hunt required both weapons: one for shooting the game and the other for inflicting the final blow to the victim. A 'free-field' style scene on a Cypriot krater depicts a vivid hunting scene employing both weapons. On one side a hunter shoots a horned animal. On the opposite side another hunter strikes the falling animal with his swung axe (Karageorghis 2006, 131–133, no. 107).

The victims of our hunting scene are ibexes, whose natural habitat is the high cliffs and rocky mountains of the desert fringe. As such, it should come as no surprise that ibexes abound in the local art from early on in hunting, herding, and religious narrative contexts as well as comprising a decorative motif (Amiran 1989, with references to previous literature). Caprids were preferred game and
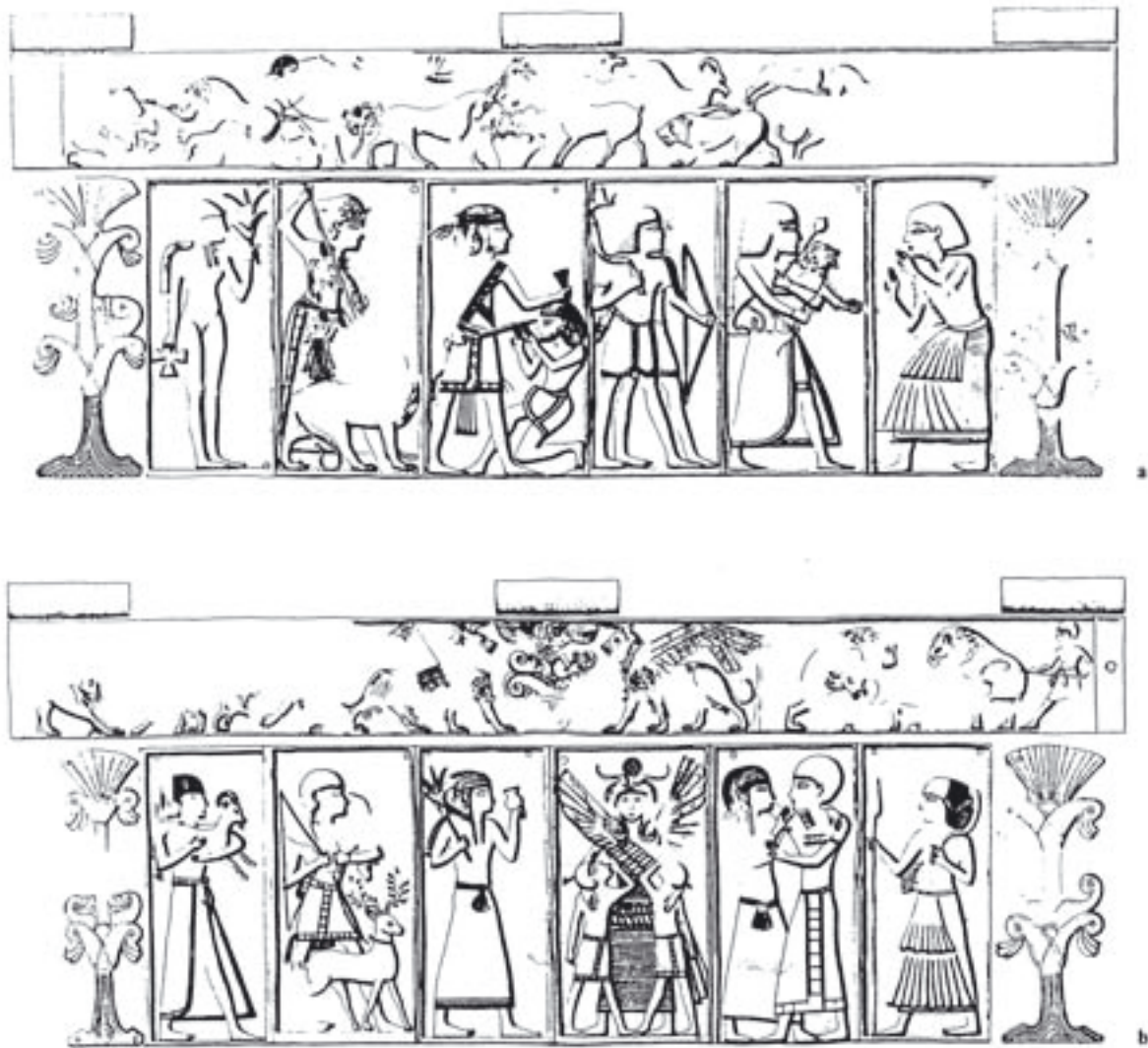
Fig. 26 Hunting and offering game. Ivory bed panels from Ugarit (Caubet and Poplin 1987, Fig. 17)

are depicted hunted with bow and arrow and sometimes with hunting dogs as early as the 5th millennium B.C.E. in Middle Eastern rock art (Anati 1997, pp. 98, 100, 107). Ibexes and sheep are prevalent in the religious imagery of Chalcolithic Palestine, as exemplified by the Nahal Mishmar copper hoard (Tadmor 1986, pp. 75–76, 78, 82) as well as in funerary imagery, as witnessed by the clay ossuaries with applied ibex heads (Milevski 2002, Figs. 10:a–d) and as tomb decorations in the MB I period at Jericho, where striding ibexes and the 'tree-and-caprids' motifs were incised on the wall of a shaft tomb (Kenyon 1965, 138–141, Fig. 76).

On the well-known wall painting in the tomb of Khnumhotep at Beni Hassan, a caravan of Canaanites (*'3m.w*) descending to Egypt present an ibex and a gazelle (Fig. 27).

Because of its mighty horns and leaping ability in rocky terrains, the ibex is a difficult animal to capture alive. It therefore is a noble and prized game, a fit challenge for gods and kings alike (Fig. 28). For comparison, one may note 'the hunt of the god Adad' (*sa-du ša* ᵈ*Iškur*) in Emar text 466:90 (cited in Smith 2007, 14). On the golden quiver found in the main chamber 1 of the Royal Hypogaeum at Qatna, dated to the 15th–14th centuries B.C.E., the ibex is depicted twice: once menaced by a lion and once vanquished by a male hunter, both scenes bearing witness to the mighty caprid (Al Maqdissi et al. 2003, 196, 214–215).

A pair of ibexes subdued by the Master of Animals are depicted on a local scarab from Akko dating c. 1600 BCE (Fig. 29; Keel 1997, 536–537, Akko 18). This heraldic icon eventually became a metaphor fit for the great Persian King of Kings

Fig. 27 Canaanites leading ibex and gazelle. Wall painting at
Beni Hasan (ZIFFER 1990: Fig. 24*)

Fig. 29 Master of ibexes. Scarab from Akko
(KEEL 1978, Fig. 19b)

Fig. 28 Hunters leading ibex and lion. Cylinder seal
(CORNELIUS 1994, Fig. 23)

Fig. 30 Persian 'King of Kings' dominating ibexes.
Achaemenid cylinder seal (KEEL 1978, Fig. 18)

(Fig. 30). The idea of taming caprids underlies the decorative program of the gold dagger from the Temple of the Obelisks at Byblos dated to the 18th century B.C.E. On the dagger's handle, a pair of addorsed caprids rises on their hind legs next to the unarmed striding ruler. The handle depicts the aftermath of the hunt, which is represented on the dagger's sheath (DUNAND 1954, pls. 96–106; LIBAN 1998, 84).

The caprid also appears on royal furniture as a royal insignia. A bronze tanged caprid protome and a recumbent caprid originally decorated a piece of ceremonial furniture, either a throne or a royal bed, discovered in the Tomb of the Lord of the Goats at Ebla, dated to the early 18th century B.C.E. (MATTHIAE 1995, 424, nos. 294–295). Again from Byblos are two prestigious objects in the shape of caprids which presumably came from a royal context. One is a golden cut-out with tiny rivet holes of a striding ibex. The tiny holes indicated that originally this cut-out ibex was once riveted to a wooden piece of furniture, presumably part of an animal file (DUNAND 1939, 222, no. 3287, pl. 136; cf. the bone inlays from a wooden box found in Megiddo, Tomb 4055, stratum XI, which shows a caprid among the more common bird inlays, along with a predator or dog, and thus alluding to a hunt; LOUD 1948, pl.193:9). The other is a silver long-necked hollow buck's head, which was originally part of a precious vessel (DUNAND 1939, 229, no. 3360, pl. 55:1 and frontispiece).

It thus seems that caprids became a standard symbol of royalty in the Levant. Indeed, it may be argued that caprids came to signify the Land of Canaan. The fragment of an alabaster vessel from the palace of Ugarit dating from the 14th century B.C.E. (Fig. 31) shows king Niqmaddu II of Ugarit and his consort banqueting in a kiosk-like edifice (DESROCHES-NOBLECOURT 1956; SINGER 1999, 625–626). The frieze of caprid protomes that tops the cornice

Fig. 31 Conjugal scene in a kiosk-like palace with caprid frieze. Alabaster vase from Ugarit (Desroches-Noblecourt 1956, Fig. 118)

of the Egyptian-style kiosk replaces the frieze of uraei which was standard on Egyptian architecture, and thus identifies the specifically Levantine environment of Niqmaddu's princely palace (Desroches-Noblecourt 1956, 190, 206–208).

The Bible, which is replete with references to the ibex (the Hebrew, *yâ'ēl*) in place names, as well as in private names, also bears witness to the fact that the ibex was perceived as a signifier of the Levant. For example, the Biblical toponyms *Sûrêy haYĕ'ēlîm* and 'Ein Gedi (I Sam. 24:1-3; II Chron. 20:2; SoS 1:14) may refer to the ibex and its kid (*gĕdî*). Personal names include *Yā'ēl* (Judg. 4:18) and *Ya'lâh* (Ezra 2:56; Neh. 7:58; cf. the Sumerian royal name EN.DARÀ.AN.NA "Lord, ibex of heaven" from the first dynasty of Kiš; OAss OB, as well as the private names *Lalûm* "goat kid" and *Lalûtum* "female goat kid" [Stamm 1939, 254]).

Ibex imagery also appears commonly in Levantine folk art. Middle Bronze Age Palestinian scarabs (Keel 1995, 190–191, Figs. 490–493, 516) as well as early Iron Age scaraboids (Keel 1992, Figs. 196–199) display a great variety of scenes incorporating caprids. A Hebrew 8th–7th century B.C.E. seal inscribed with the personal name *y'l* ("ibex") depicts an ibex wearing a collar (Avigad and Sass 1997, 110, no. 196). This image recalls the Egyptian hieroglyph *s/ś'h*, showing a goat with collar

carrying a cylinder seal, which denoted "rank, dignity" and related words (Gardiner 1957, 461, sign E31).

How does our clay juglet fit within this artistic and literary framework? We believe that the incised scene depicts the return from the hunt. The hunter does not use his weapons to any functional effect, but only wields his bow and axe for public display. Like the images of the smiting god, our hunter's smiting posture was enough to evoke the impression of power (Collon 1972, 130). His appearance simultaneously as a hunter and a tamer of ibexes which were intended as game offering to a divinity (cf. Fig. 24) served as a perpetual reminder of the hunter's devout piety.

While its iconography may derive from the royal sphere, nonetheless, the medium – clay, and the drawing skills surely place this juglet in the realm of 'folk' rather than 'royal' or high prestige art. As we have seen, narrative art in Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware can be counted on one hand. Moreover, the topic of these narrative pots is the noble hunt. This would imply that it was intended for an elite client. When taking into consideration the dearth of monumental art in ancient Israel/Palestine and in view of the fact that its (high-class) artistic tradition is revealed to us through miniature art created in inexpensive, materials (Schroer and Keel 2005, 12, 17), it is understandable why we insist that this pot, embellished with a high-class theme of personal achievement, was produced by a potter who mass-produced utilitarian vessels for everyday use. The juglet was created at the workshop, its decorations (puncture and incised) added before firing. This potter could have worked in a local Canaanite workshop such as the one active at 'Afula that specialized in a variety of everyday vessels as well as Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware (Zevulun 1991). An enterprising potter, he was commissioned by an elite consumer to perfect an otherwise utilitarian juglet (of well-controlled shape, meticulously burnished and fired black, perhaps to evoke precious metal) with an ambitious theme; and he delivered, with gusto. The outcome was an artful container, the best of craftsmanship, a fanciful example of folk art.

Our interpretation is inspired by Pirhiya Beck (2002, 85–86, 89), who suggested that the single burial of Tomb J3 at Jericho, rich in grave goods (Kenyon 1965, 306–315), was that of a high ranking individual. The kilted deceased boasted a metal belt, three sets of personal weapons, a cylinder seal, a scarab, and alabaster vessels. In the shaft of the tomb were found the remains of three equids. But

his ceremonial drinking set, which included a ram headed-cup, a situla for pouring, and a strainer (ZEVULUN and ZIFFER 2007, Fig. 7) were made of unembellished humble clay, far from astonishing. Beck proposed that the warrior was one of the rulers of Jericho in the 18th century. Our pot must be regarded in the same vein. The juglet's fine state of preservation indicates that it was a funerary gift, perhaps the personal possession of a Canaanite noble or even a local ruler of the 18th century B.C.E. In sum, we propose that the hunter's juglet, ordinary and unassuming, reflects the lower end of the scale of the high-class visuals. Carrying a message, skillfully formed and styled in cheap material on the grass-roots level, the narrative Tell el-Yahudiyeh juglet was fit for an aristocrat or lesser king.

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