

Molds and Mold-links

A View on the Female Terracotta Figurines from Iron Age II Transjordan

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Abstract: Within the corpus of the Iron Age female terracotta figurines originating from Transjordan, several mold-links are attested. These doublets and triplets among the figurines' types and subtypes which, in general, show a relatively large variance raise questions about molding techniques and mold use as well as issues as to typology and its development, local preferences, regional diffusion, leading forms, and variants. In the following, the characteristics of some preserved molds and the geographical and typological "setting" of some mold-links will be evaluated. The present article concludes with a short glimpse on a new interpretation of Genesis 2:21-23 in terms of an allusion to the reproduction of mold made figurines.

1. Introduction

The question of the identification and interpretation of the Iron Age terracotta figurines in the Southern Levant, males as well as females, is far from being resolved. This fact must be declared in 2015, a year that has been labelled *The Year of Coroplastic Studies*¹ and this mainly because of the many conferences on the topic that took place in the United States, in Europe, and in the Middle East.²

While in 1982 still, Richard Nicholls deplored that by modern scholars, the small figures of clay are "often neglected",³ since the turn of the millennium a constantly growing international scientific community dedicates itself to the research on terracotta figurines from ancient times.⁴ Even though the Greek and Mesopotamian coroplastic art has been the subject of some topic-specific monographs already in the 19th and during the 20th century,⁵ the scientific exchange on terracotta figurines at the occasion of regular international conferences with a wide focus and a broad multiplication effect can be observed only recently.⁶

¹ Jaimee Uhlenbrock, President of the Association for Coroplastic Studies (ACoSt), at the Haifa Conference in March 23-26, 2015, see below n. 8.

² New York (see below n. 7), Haifa (see below n. 8), Strasbourg (see below n. 8), Tallin (see below n. 8). See also the relevant publications of the last years on the website of the Association for Coroplastic Studies (Bibliography).

³ Nicholls 1982, 89.

⁴ Caubet 2009, 45-46. In the field of research on the Syro-Palestinian minor arts a trend reversal started to emerge already by the studies and publications of Othmar Keel (Fribourg, Switzerland) and his students, see in *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis. Series Archaeologica* (OBO.SA) the volumes 10, 13, 29, 31; Winter 1983; Schroer 1987; Keel/Uehlinger 1992 (6th edition 2010).

⁵ See for example Biardot 1864, Contenau 1914, Van Buren 1930, Barrelet 1968, Böhm 1990; Muller 1996; cf. Pinch 1993.

⁶ *Colloquium: Coroplastic Studies at the Start of the 21st Century: From Collection to Context* (AIA Annual Meeting Philadelphia 2009); *"Figuring Out" the Figurines of the Ancient Near East* (ASOR New Orleans 2009; San Antonio 2010; San Francisco 2011), *Iron Age Terracotta Figurines from the Levant* (Baltimore 2013). Earlier conferences were focused

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In the last ten years, two main trends in method and theory of figurine studies are becoming apparent. One trend is basically determined by the issue of function and identity of the figurines.⁷ Another trend is primarily focused on inventorying and comparing these artifacts.⁸ Both approaches imply, amongst others, the evaluation of archaeological data, such as stratigraphic contexts and assemblages, petrographic analysis, and studies in iconography and typology as well as the relation between images and texts.

In the field of research on Levantine terracotta figurines the publications linked to the first trend are most often realized in monographs written by a single author,⁹ while publications linked to the second trend are realized in teamwork by research groups in edited volumes that witness a wide range of approaches.¹⁰ As this second type of publication is still in the minority, the need for a multidisciplinary dialogue remains more of a desired object. In an era of networked exchanges on humankind's world heritage, scholars are facing the challenge of seeking new ways of making the data available to researchers all over the world and of providing platforms for the discussion of issues concerning the artifacts' historical, cultural, and religious¹¹ setting, function, and meaning. As one contribution in the field, an on-line open archive database, in French, English, and Arabic, containing RTI photographs¹² and records of all accessible Iron Age female terracotta figurines from Transjordan is under construction at the University of Strasbourg, France.¹³

on specific figurine corpora as for example the colloquium in Bruxelles/Liège/Amsterdam in 1989 (Cypriote figurines), the one in Limenaria in 1995 (figurines from Thasos) and the one in Lille in 1995 (Greek and Roman figurines).

⁷ *Figurines en contexte : iconographie et fonction(s)* (Lille 2011); *Silent Participants: Terracottas as Ritual Objects* (Philadelphia January 2012); *Representations of Musicians in the Coroplastic Art of the Ancient World. Iconography, Ritual Contexts, and Function* (New York 2015); see also, more focused on specific corpora: *Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée orientale, grecque et romaine : production et diffusion, iconographie et fonction* (Izmir 2007).

⁸ *Terracottas in the Mediterranean through Time* (Haifa 2015); *Figurines féminines nues. Nubie, Egypte, Méditerranée, Proche-Orient, Asie Centrale (néolithique – IIIe siècle apr. J.-C.). Approche contextuelle et comparative* (Strasbourg 2015); *Ancient Near Eastern Figurines Workshop* (Tallinn 2015). Focused on Aegean figurines: *Emporia. Aegeans in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean* (Athens 2004).

⁹ Moorey 2003; Cornelius 2004 (2nd edition 2008); Paz 2007; Sugimoto 2008; Ben-Shlomo 2010; Press 2012; Darby 2014; cf. Dever 2005; Budin 2011.

¹⁰ Schroer 2006; Bickel 2007; Langin-Hooper 2014.

¹¹ Archaeologists and scholars of subsidiary sciences who work on the Iron Age material culture of the Southern Levant are confronted with the necessity to evaluate also textual sources, and as one of them the Hebrew Bible. The encounter between sources of different genre and the need to differentiate between historical and theological data reflects the continuing challenge of avoiding positivistic identifications of history and theology as it has been (and still is) done in the field of Biblical Archaeology, see Hunziker-Rodewald 2012, 131-132. The relation of archaeological and biblical data has to be critically discussed by experienced scholars and experts in each of these fields.

¹² The imaging technique RTI (Reflectance transformation Imaging) has been developed in the Hewlett Packard Labs in Palo Alto CA in 2001 and essentially improved in 2006, but in practice it has been eclipsed by different applications of 3D data acquisitions. Nevertheless, the modest purchase cost, the simple set up of the mobile equipment, the low space requirements and the high quality results achieved in a short amount of time are only some of the benefits provided by this type of photo-technique that can be used under varying working space and lighting conditions.

¹³ In contrast to paper copies, such a database is accessible from everywhere and can easily be updated and enlarged. The material evidence shall be linked to investigations under the aspects of history, history of religion, typology, iconography, anthropology, women's studies, music archaeology, ethno-archaeology - to name but a few.

In the following a relatively small group of the inventoried figurines from Transjordan will be presented: the molds and mold-links. Their characteristics will be discussed against the background of the experience gained on the occasion of a workshop on molding and firing techniques that has recently been undertaken, in collaboration with local potters and under the supervision of a specialist in ancient ceramic technology, at the University of Strasbourg with the aim of better understanding the operational performance of ancient potters.¹⁴ The work with molds finally serves as a hermeneutical key for a new interpretation of the narrative of the woman's creation in Genesis 2.

2. Molds and mold-links in Iron Age II Transjordan

The database of the Franco-German Figurines Project (FGFP)¹⁵ contains to date about 400 female terracotta figurines from Transjordan dating back to the Iron Age II.¹⁶ The major portion of these figurines originate from excavations; only a few items were collected from the surface, removed during topsoil scrape or purchased, decades ago, on the antiquities' market. Three quarters of the figurines are kept in archaeological museums in Jordan, so in Irbid, Tall Dayr Alla, Salt, Amman, Madaba and Karak.¹⁷ Through division of the early finds, a fourth of all known figurines reached university collections and museums in Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia, sometimes as isolated fragments, sometimes in groups of several items.

Of the currently listed female figurines¹⁸ 95 percent are fragments including all parts of the body: heads, busts, torsos, legs and feet, apart from a few small fragments like parts of headgear, of faces, or of pillar bases. More than half of the fragments that have been recorded are heads and torsos, a fact that reflects the main points of breakage: the neck and the waist. Both, heads and torsos are quite solid parts of the figurines' bodies. This is particularly true in cases where the torso displays specific gestures like holding a frame drum,¹⁹ cupping the breasts²⁰ or carrying/nursing a baby.²¹

¹⁴ The Franco-German project of an Experimental Archaeology Workshop was undertaken at the University of Strasbourg from April 8 to May 13, 2015. It was organized by the present author in collaboration with Marlies Heinz, professor of Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology (University of Freiburg, Germany), Isabelle Weygand, Researcher in Empires of the Middle East (University of Strasbourg) and Maria-Louise Sidoroff, Specialist in ceramic technology (Hobe Sound FL, United States).

¹⁵ The Franco-German Figurines Project FGFP is directed by the present author in collaboration with Astrid Nunn, Wuerzburg, and Thomas Graichen, Mainz. The project term is 2012-2016 (first phase).

¹⁶ Until now, the total amount of the figurines cannot be defined more precisely because several fragments, even though they have been published, could not yet be located and examined by the FGFP team. The chosen time frame 'Iron Age II' comprises the 9th to 6th centuries BCE, cf. Steiner 2014, 677-679.

¹⁷ In Irbid and Amman figurines are kept in several museums. Irbid: Dar as-Saraya Museum; Archaeological Museum of Yarmouk University. Amman: The Jordan Museum; Jordan Archaeological Museum (on the Citadel); Archaeological Museum of the University of Amman; Department of Antiquities, storage Nuweijis. Our sincere thanks go to the directors and curators of all these museums. The FGFP particularly express our thanks to Dr. Monther Jamhaw, the Director General of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan in Amman, as well as to the responsible of museums and the people in charge at the Directorate of Surveys and Excavations.

¹⁸ New figurines are found in excavation campaigns almost every year, so recently in Jneneh (2013), Tall Damiyah (2013), and Tall al-Umayri (2014).

¹⁹ Most of the Ammonite and many of the Moabite female figurines are holding a frame drum. The Ammonites are "playing" (= placing the right hand on the drum while supporting it with the left hand from below) a relatively big

With very few exceptions, the female heads from Iron Age Transjordan are molded on the front; also four-fifths of the preserved body parts are mold-made. Some of the figurines show a minimal frame of clay around their proper shape and constitute therefore a kind of hybrid that can be situated between the Late Bronze plaques²² and the Iron Age pillar figurines.²³ The mold-made female figurines from Transjordan have a vertical stance, but they are not designed to be free-standing.²⁴

One-fifth of the preserved body parts are modelled,²⁵ but, as we know from some complete figurines, they were designed as composite figurines with modelled bodies²⁶ and a mold-made head. It can be concluded that the fabrication of the female terracotta figurines in Iron Age II Transjordan was – apart from the creation of the master figurines/prototypes – only to a small degree linked to the technique of modelling. The dominant manufacturing process of the potters east of the River Jordan was the technique of molding by using open molds from which the figurine emerged with a flat or slightly convex back side. During the 8th-7th century BCE, this feature constitutes a major difference between the contemporaneous female figurines east (mostly mold-made) and west (mostly modelled)²⁷ of the River Jordan.²⁸ Both types, the eastern “Dancers For Fertility” (DFF)²⁹ and the western Judean Pillar Figurines (JPF) were mass-produced.

decorated drum on the left side of the chest, while the Moabites are holding/playing an often much smaller drum in the middle of the body flat against/parallel to their chest, see Fig. 5. Amongst the latter, the drum is held with both hands directly in front of the upper chest or at a 45 degree angle to the body. The term ‘frame drum’ is intentionally chosen, because there are no jangles attached around the frame that would justify the designation ‘tambourine’.

²⁰ Amongst the Iron Age female figurines from Edom, the typical representation is a nude pregnant female cupping her breasts. Only of one single figurine the lower part of the body is preserved (Fig. 5): it shows the vulva wide open and directed towards the front side (cf. Gen 29:31 and 30:22 Yhwh/God opens the womb; cf. the figurine of a female displaying her vulva from Revidim, IAA 1982-219, Israel Museum, Jerusalem). In the northern regions of Transjordan the gesture of cupping the breasts is performed in a slightly different way and is rather rare (9 figurines: 6 from Moab, 3 from Ammon).

²¹ Seven busts and torsos from the Jordan Valley and Ammon/northern Moab represent women holding a child. The child is seated on the mother’s lap, on her left hip or it is held in front of her chest while being nursed.

²² Cornelius 2008, 5:30-62.

²³ Moorey 2003, pl. 12; Paz 2007, 44; Keel 2007, 45-47; cf. Daviau 2014, 3-4.

²⁴ While the contemporaneous Judean Pillar Figurines with their conical base are not primarily intended for mobility (?), cf. also the points of breakage in Kletter 1996, 101, the smaller mold-made figurines might have been designed to be carried (Daviau 2014, 3), cf. in Gen 31:34 the *teraphim* put in a camel’s saddlebag.

²⁵ Cf. Daviau 2014, 3 for the figurines from Khirbat al Mudaynat ath-Thamad and the shrine site WT-13.

²⁶ The statues from WT-13 and Busayra area (see Daviau 2014, 5-6) are not included into the FGFP project.

²⁷ The western figurines of the 8th/7th centuries BCE, the so-called Judean Pillar Figurines (JPF), have always a modelled body and, in one-third of all cases, also a modelled head (from where do these statistic derive? Is this based on Kletter? It varies between regions of Judah, but my most recent count is that they are pretty close to equal on a national scale... of course this will change once Weksler-Bedolah figurines are published from the Western Wall. At any rate, it would be helpful to include which bank of data this statement is based upon.

²⁸ The Philistine female figurines (which are primarily modelled) are here not taken into account. Nevertheless, further investigation on exchange and trade is needed, for example, an Iron Age II head from Jalul (Gregor 2010, 497 Fig. 9) has been made in the same mold/mold series than an Iron Age II head from Ashdod presented by Ben-Shlomo 2010, 76.

²⁹ On the “Dancers For Fertility” (DFF) see Hunziker-Rodewald, forthcoming; on nude female dancer figurines in Mesopotamia see Felli 2015, 232. The ‘JPF concept of maternity’ (cf. Ps 144:12b daughters like corner pillars) might have been promoted by King Hezekiah after the northern kingdom had been incorporated into the Neo-Assyrian Empire

Advantages and disadvantages of the molding technique become particularly clear with regard to the very popular representation of females playing a frame drum.³⁰ The drum having been attached on the chest of the modelled prototype became part of the master figurine's shape in the concavity of the mold and subsequently of every figurine that emerged from that mold or from this series of molds. The disadvantage of placing the drum in front or on the left side of the female's chest is a kind of unrealistic demonstration of the mode of playing a frame drum. In fact, the drum is tightly pressed onto the chest and thus could not produce any sound.³¹ But it is particularly for this reason, owing to exigencies involved in the manufacture of the figurines by molding technique, that the drums did not separate from the chest during the last 2600 to 2800 years, even in cases of strong external impact.³²

The observation of the widespread use of the molding technique in Iron Age II Transjordan leads us to the material evidence, i.e. to the figurine molds that have been found in the regions east of the River Jordan.

2.1 *Figurine molds*

The FGFP database contains twelve open molds made of clay.³³

(cf. Byrne 2004). The Judean concept of maternity can be compared to Jer 29:4-6 (v.6b: "multiply ... and do not decrease"). It has been designed in opposition to the concept of 'dancing for fertility' represented by the Israelite modeled figurines (DFF) at the end of Iron I and the beginning of Iron II (Sugimoto 2008, 55.115-121). With the DFF a common Canaanite cultural heritage attested on both sides of the River Jordan is tangible (Keel/Uehlinger 2010, 96); they appeared earlier in the west (since the 11th c. BCE), but were longer in use in the east (until the 7th-6th c. BCE). Polemics against the DFF concept might appear in Hos 4:12-14 (offering sacrifices with the *qedeshot*"); cf. Jdg 21:19-23 (the daughters of Shiloh dance in dances during the yearly festival of Yhwh at Shiloh; Jdg 11:40 a ritual performed by virgins in Israel); 1Sam 1:1-20 (Hanna's prayer for pregnancy at Shiloh) and the Shiloh plaque figurine 7214 (Finkelstein 1993, 230.234); 2Ki 17:9-11 (cultic practice associated to green trees symbolizing natural fertility).

³⁰ The FGFP database contains to date 57 busts, torsos and complete figurines from Transjordan holding a drum, but typologically many more fragments (lower parts of body, legs, heads) can be attributed to the so-called DFF type, see Hunziker-Rodewald, forthcoming. Peri 2013, 1024-1025 counts 65 female IA drummers all over Israel and Transjordan and considers Megiddo as the site with the largest number of figurines of this type (Peri 2013:1047-1049 AB.II.1-11 of which five dressed). On Amman Citadel at least twelve female drummers, two isolated drums and two females with a drum and a baby have been found (eight of these figurines are unpublished). As far as can be discerned, only three of at least 12+2 drummers from Amman Citadel are (half-) dressed, cf. on the tendency towards clothing Keel/Uehlinger 2010, 187. The tendency started probably sooner in the west, in the FGFP database 7 % of the figurines are dressed.

³¹ On the identification of the round object as a loaf of bread see Schroer 1987, 277-281, but cf. Keel/Schroer 2004, 178; Paz 2007, 72-74; Dabrowski 2009, 62-63.

³² Seven broken off drums with attached hands in the FGFP database, two of them decorated with black and white lines around the outside edge of the drum's face, had been fixed "more realistically" at a 45 degree angle to the body. But understandably enough, this posture survived only with two figurines from Khirbat al-Mukhayyat (Saller 1966, 261 Fig. 28.1-2) and one bust from WT-13 (Daviau 2014, 4 Fig. 3.3).

³³ The body molds BN 860173 from Pella (unpublished), DA 408 from Tall Dayr Alla (Franken 1961, pl.19) and the head mold 743 from Tawaylan (Bienkowski 1995, 80.293.337) have not yet been checked by the FGFP team. The Tall Jawa mold TJ 1782 (Daviau 2002, 65) is a very small fragment of the end of two legs, aligned in parallel, wherefore the sex of figurines produced in this mold cannot be determined. Also the head mold 608 from Tall al-Umayri is a poor fragment, if the remaining details are from a male or a female face cannot be decided, see Dabrowski 1997, 348 Fig. 18.19-20.

Provenance	Type	Found in excavation	Preservation	Photos	RTI ³⁴
Pella RN 90033	Body mold	x	complete	x	-
Tall Dayr Alla DA 200	Body mold	x	fragmentary	x	-
DA 408	Body mold	x	fragmentary	x	-
Amman ADTI 5	Head mold	x	complete	x	x
ADTI 29	Head mold	x	complete	x	x
ADTI 32	Head mold	x	fragmentary	x	x
Tall al-Umayri 608	Head mold	x	fragmentary	x	x
3020	Head mold	x	fragmentary	x	x
Tall Jawa TJ 1782	Body mold	x	fragmentary	x	-
Karak, <i>region</i> ³⁵ 78	Body mold	-	complete	x	x
Khirbat an-Nahas L317	Body mold	x	fragmentary	x	-
Tawaylan 743	Head mold	x	complete	x	-

Table 1: Figurine molds attested in Iron Age II Transjordan.

The molds, being the main tools for the mass-production of female figurines, reveal a good deal of details about the fabrication and the use of molds in Iron Age II Transjordan. When examining the molds we are, so to speak, looking over the potter's shoulder.

The amount of figurine molds in the FGFP database is 3 %. They have been found all over Transjordan, from Pella in the eastern foothills of the north Jordan Valley to Tawaylan in the southern part of the Edomite plateau, from Tall Dayr Alla to the Amman area (Amman, Tall al-Umayri, Tall Jawa). South of Amman, the sites Karak and Tawaylan are situated along the major trade route on the central and southern highlands, the so-called King's Highway,³⁶ between the Wadi Araba-Jordan *Graben* and the Central Desert Areas of East Transjordan. Only one site, the copper production center of Khirbat en-Nahas in the Edomite lowlands, lies about 20 km (linear distance) east of this major trade route.³⁷

Most of the molds originate from the central Jordan Valley and the area of Amman. This evidence fits the general accumulation of figurines in these two regions: up to now, more than half of the Iron Age II female terracotta figurines from Transjordan have been found in the central Jordan Valley and in Ammon (Fig. 1).

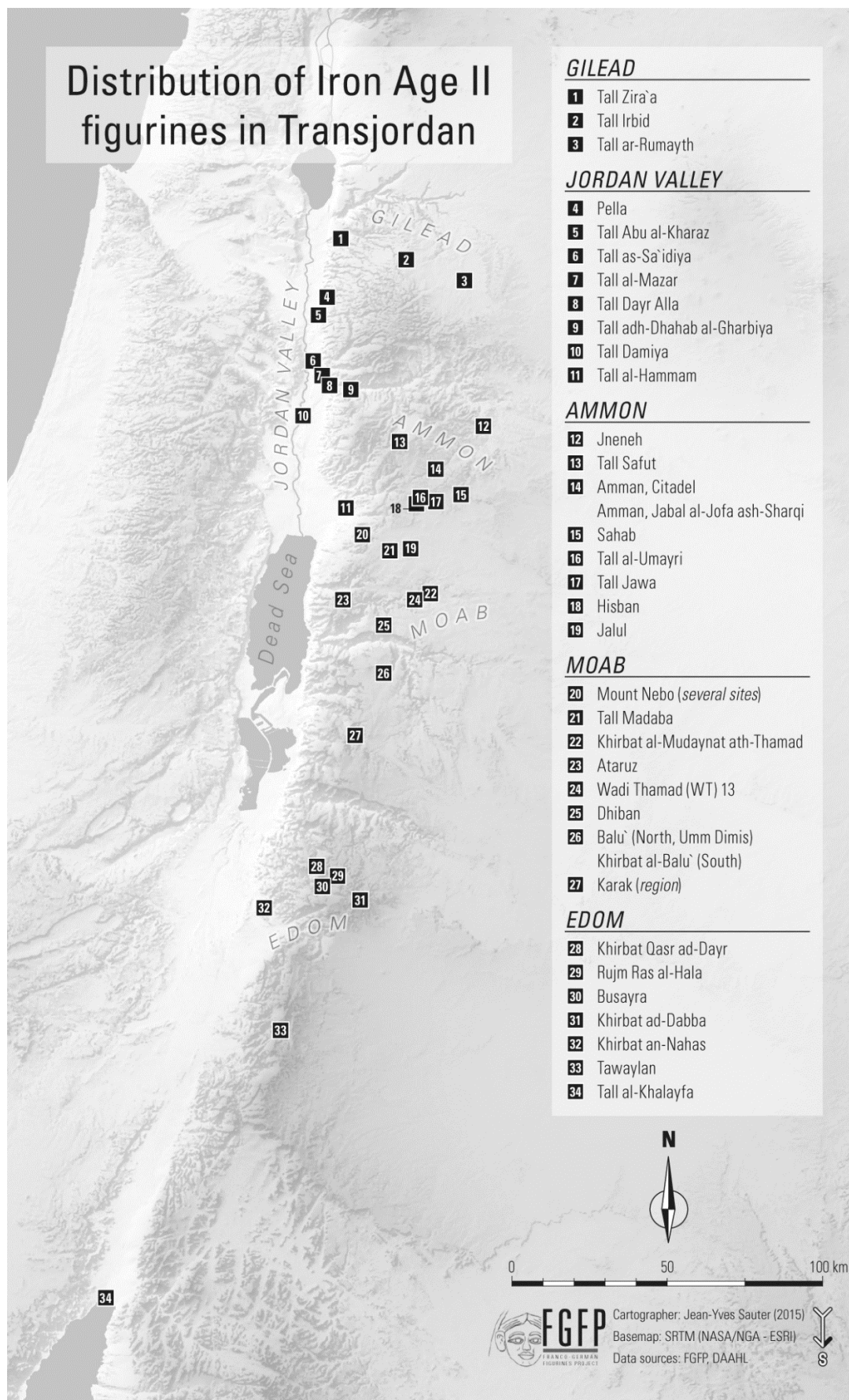
³⁴ Photos from publications, from the excavators or taken by the FGFP team, RTIs taken and processed by Thomas Graichen for FGFP.

³⁵ The unpublished complete mold 78 (see below) for a relatively small female figurine (H. of the mold 106 mm) that is holding a roundish object has been purchased from locals and is on display in Karak Museum, Jordan.

³⁶ Num 20:17; 21:22 הַמֶּלֶךְ הַדָּרִי. Cf. Donnan 1996.

³⁷ Because of its location in a mining district, the fragment of a clay mold from Khirbat an-Nahas has been interpreted by Levy 2008, 50 as having been used for casting molten images, but the mold-made terracotta head found in 2011 in the same larger district, on Khirbat Faynan (Levy et al. 2012, 234), attests the presence if not the production, also, of mold-made terracotta figurines.

Fig.



Iron Age II sites in Transjordan where female terracotta figurines (incl. molds) have been found.

Five of the molds in the FGFP database are complete, of which two are body molds. The size of the preserved items varies between 27 x 23 mm (fragmentary head mold) and 160 x 63 mm (complete body mold).³⁸ The particular shape of body molds, hollowed out and being much longer than wide, makes them quite fragile.³⁹ But also the head molds can easily break as their thickness sometimes does not exceed 11 to 13 mm.⁴⁰ Two complete head molds⁴¹ and a fragmentary one have been found in Amman, in a tomb that was badly disturbed by the Roman Theater's foundation trench.⁴² The fact that molds have been found in a tomb raises the question if they have been placed there simply as grave goods,⁴³ if the dead had been a (royal?) potter and figurine producer and his relatives endowed him with a 'Best Of' selection of his precious creations or if the molds as working tools may imply a continuation of his earthly activities in the afterlife.

Two molds, the fragmentary head mold from Amman and the body mold from Karak region (table 1; Fig. 2), have each one on its back side a letter incised before firing. The 'alep on the head mould shows by its open triangular (sideways-V) shape and its quite long vertical shaft near the join of the V strokes a typical late eighth to mid-seventh century BCE Ammonite shape.⁴⁴ The letter on the body mold from Karak region is probably a *reš* with a closed triangular head and a quite long vertical stroke that leans slightly to the right and cuts through the lower stroke of the head.⁴⁵ The scratches on the left corner of the letter's head might attest that the artisan tried to erase the acute angle at the point where the two oblique strokes connect in order to obtain the usually not too much pointed head of a *reš*.⁴⁶

³⁸ The indicated data correspond to the mold's external dimensions. Depending on the clay quality, the clay body shape and the firing temperature, the clay shrinks during the drying and the firing procedure. A random test at the Strasbourg workshop (see below n. 14) showed a shrink rate of 8 % between the master figurine and the mold's internal shape and of another 3 % between the mold and the mold-made figurine, what means that the final product had lost 11 % in comparison to the master figurine.

³⁹ Particularly body molds need a shallow wide open shape for an easier removal of the modeled figurine from the mold, cf. the mold 78 from Karak region. This fragile shape explains the fact that in the most often multi-layered Levantine settlement structures only few such pieces survived.

⁴⁰ It is not only their specific shape that causes molds to break, but also their repeated use; some of them were perhaps not even fired.

⁴¹ The complete head mold ADTI 5 has been roughly mended with lots of glue; on the right side of the represented face (from the right ear to the temple and the hairline) a piece is chipped off. The Fig. 88.3 in Dornemann 1983, 281 shows that in 1983, the mold still was intact.

⁴² The finds of tomb F on Jabal al-Jofa ash-Sharqi have been published by Dornemann 1983, 47 n. 3, 63, 132-142, 281, figs. 87-88; Tyson 2014, 41-42.

⁴³ The tomb F contained also pottery, several painted male (rider type) and female figurine heads, two fragments of animal figurines, two broken off decorated frame drums with attached hands (see above n. 32) and another two fragmentary terracotta molds, see Tyson 2014, 41-42; Dornemann 1983, 280-281.

⁴⁴ Herr 2014, 179-184; the tomb F on Jabal al-Jofa ash-Sharqi in Amman has been dated by Dornemann 1983, 63 from the mid-seventh to late sixth centuries.

⁴⁵ The letter *reš* is almost non-indicative and its precise dating is difficult. The closed head and the tendency to lean to the right may indicate the Moabite style of the late eighth and seventh centuries BCE (Herr 2014, 189, 193, 196). Nevertheless, the provenance and dating are confirmed by the impressed shape of a female figurine in that mold.

⁴⁶ More scratches appear at the bottom of the vertical stroke that might allow, under certain light conditions, to read the letter as a *bet* with a short foot that extends to the left of the downstroke.



Fig. 2: Letters on the back side of the molds from Amman (left) and Kerak (detail, center and right).

The meaning of these marks is not clear. They could indicate the origin or the destination of the molds, so perhaps the initials of the names of the moldmaker⁴⁷ or of affiliated potters who had specialized in the proper molding procedure.⁴⁸ Regarding the head mold, the artisan could have established a marking system in order to make sure that the head will find its correct position,⁴⁹ for example on a jug⁵⁰ or another object. The fact that these potters were literate is remarkable,⁵¹ and this even though the *reš* on the body mold from Karak region testifies to a quite low level of writing competence.⁵² That the labelling or marking of molds can also be done – in another context – by a simple grid incised before firing on the mold's back side is attested by a mold from Taanach (Fig. 3).

⁴⁷ But in this case we would expect marks on all the recorded molds. On potters marks see also Wood 1990, 48.

⁴⁸ The pattern of local, regional and trans-regional distribution of mold-links can be explained by activities/movements of the clients or by job specialization amongst the potters' guild, cf. the royal potters in 1 Chr 4:23; on potters' guilds in ancient Palestine see Wood 1990, 48-49). Molds from outstanding or trendy master figurines manufactured by artistically skilled potters could have been transmitted to potter colleagues who did the proper molding procedure, cared about the finish (eye dots, hair, nipples, jewellery, toes), the slip (15 %), as the case may be, the attachment to bowls, jugs, architectural models or cult stands (> 5 %) and, if needed, the paint (5 %). As the paint has been applied after firing, it has on most of the Transjordanian figurines completely disappeared, but see above 2.2 n. 113.

⁴⁹ See also the marks on the back side of some ivories from Fort Shalmaneser (Herrmann 2004) and the masons' marks on limestone ashlars in Megiddo and Samaria (Franklin 2001). No mold-made figurine in the FGFP database shows signs or letters on its back side or elsewhere.

⁵⁰ See for example the head attached on the neck of a strainer jug from Tall al-Mazar (Hunziker-Rodewald 2012).

⁵¹ The perfectly executed *'alep* on the fragmentary head mold from tomb F that was cut into the Jabal al-Jofa ash-Sharqi opposite to the Citadel where the royal palace was situated (cf. the royal potters that are living and working close to the palace in 1 Chr. 4:23.. the proper reading of this verse is still debated, given the textual problems and placement at the end of the genealogies) attests professional training and good writing skills. That royal scribes in Ammon were trained in writing and reading already in the 9th century BCE attests the Amman Citadel inscription, cf. also the Tall Dayr Alla inscription from the 8th c. BCE (Ahituv 2008, 357-362.433-465).

⁵² Or is the clumsy shape of the letter simply caused by hastiness?



Fig. 3: Mold J. 7285 from Tel Taanach, Palestine; outside (left), inside (center), modern cast (right).

The relatively large⁵³, heavy, and compact mold made of a dark, grit-tempered clay had been found during the 1963 campaign conducted by Paul Lapp at Tel Taanach, 8 km southeast of Megiddo. It emerged from a heavy ash layer on the floor of a cultic structure which was filled with pottery and artifacts. The destruction debris have been dated to the end of the 10th century BCE.⁵⁴ The mold has been kept, since 1963, in the storage facilities of the Jordan Archaeological Museum, on the Amman Citadel. It was long thought to have been lost⁵⁵ until the present author rediscovered it in March 2014 in the museum's safe.

The back side of the intact mold is covered with a grid of six vertical and nine horizontal lines (Fig. 3 left). The artisan started in the middle on the top from where emanate three lines, then he added one more line to the right and two lines to the left before he continued with nine horizontal lines. He left at the top an irregular triangular shape. For what reason the maker of this mold from the end of the 10th century BCE chose this special marking system (or is it a decoration?) is unknown.⁵⁶ Perhaps he had not yet alphabetic letters at his disposal, as in this early period the Palestinian art of writing was still in its infancy. Since the 14th century BCE there is some minimal evidence of alphabetic writing and since the end of the 11th century BCE there is a growing number

⁵³ The dimensions of the mold are 177 x 70 x 44 mm and of the negative shape of the figurine 164 x 45 mm.

⁵⁴ NEAEHL vol. 4 1993:1432-1433; Lapp 1964:39-40.

⁵⁵ Keel/Schroer 2004:178, but see the correct museum Reg. nr. in Braun 1999, 333 IV/1-12a. The existing drawings and photos have all been taken from the modern cast VRep 2004.8 kept in the Bible+Orient Museum, Fribourg Switzerland, see for example Paz 2007, 37; Keel/Uehlinger 2010, 185.

⁵⁶ In the Iron Age I, grid patterns on seals were quite popular, see Eggler/Keel 2006, 331-345 et passim.

of very short inscriptions on pottery and stone,⁵⁷ but the majority of the population of that time was certainly illiterate.

Also the shape of the nude female figurine in the interior of the mold – it is obviously related to the concept of the “Dancers For Fertility” (DFF) figurines - attests a quite early stage of iconographic perfection (**Fig. 3 center and right**). Nevertheless, several typical characteristics that are constitutive for the DFF concept, on both sides of the River Jordan, are present, albeit in a comparatively not well-developed form of artistic design:⁵⁸ the big almond-shaped eyes, a decorated⁵⁹ drum held on the left side of the chest and covering the left breast, the small size of the breast, the bracelets, the girdle or waistband, the open vulva, the multiple anklets.⁶⁰ In comparison with DFF figurines from the 10th to 8th centuries BCE (Israel) and the 8th to 6th centuries (Transjordan) respectively⁶¹, the female figurine in the Taanach mold is rather large.⁶²

The features represented in the interior of the Taanach mold lead us to the issue of typology of the molds listed above (**Table 1**). In view of the fact that two mold fragments are too small to be analyzed and interpreted,⁶³ only ten molds from the FGFP database can be evaluated typologically. Common features can be observed clearly in the molds from Amman and Tall al-Umayri while the figurine shapes in the molds from Pella, Tall Dayr Alla, Karak region, Khirbat an-Nahas and Tawaylan are typologically all quite different from each other.

The females represented on the head molds from Amman⁶⁴ and Tall al-Umayri⁶⁵ have very fine facial features, large eyes, large ears and straight hair parted in the middle. One of the molds (**Fig. 4 left**)⁶⁶ displays a hairstyle with four stylized curls nicely arranged above the forehead. At the end of the side-locks, which reach the shoulders, the hair is elaborately rounded up in several large and regular plaits. The represented young woman wears a narrow headband, lunate shaped earrings with three round attachments,⁶⁷ and some sort of necklace marked on the upper chest by three parallel lines.

⁵⁷ Hamilton 2014; and recently Garfinkel 2015.

⁵⁸ Certain features could also be attributed to local taste or to the clumsiness of the creator of the master figurine. The relatively long upper part of the body in relation to the rather short legs is a typical feature of the DFF on the west bank of the River Jordan (Megiddo, Tel Rehov, Tel Ira), cf. Paz 2007, 36-37.

⁵⁹ On the central x-shape made of three strokes and framed by a circumferential row of dots, see Keel/Schroer 2004, 178-179 Fig. 155.156.156a and cf. Peri 2013, Fig. 20.1, 4 [586]. Dots combined with (zigzag-) lines is a recurrent pattern on drums held by the DFF figurines. The x-shape is probably not a Hebrew *taw*, see below n. 69.

⁶⁰ Differences in comparison to later DFF figurines, on both banks of the River Jordan, are: the unique headdress, the x-shape on the frame drum, the ring shaped navel, the pubic hair.

⁶¹ Between 120 and 150 mm, cf. Sugimoto 2008, 115-124.

⁶² 165 x 41 x 27 mm, see Keel/Schroer 2004, 178. The modern cast has been taken from the Taanach mold in 1963, during the Paul Lapp excavation.

⁶³ The fragment of the face mold Tall al-Umayri 608 and the tiny fragment of a body mold TJ 1782 (see Table 1).

⁶⁴ Dornemann 1983, Fig. 88.1-3.

⁶⁵ Dabrowski 2000, 219-220 Fig. 9.5-6.

⁶⁶ Dornemann 1983, Fig. 88.3; H. 41, W. 34, D. 13 mm.

⁶⁷ The female limestone statue J. 12954 (8th c. BCE) from Khirbat al-Hajjar, about 10 km southwest of Amman, shows the same earrings, see Tyson 2014, App. B II; Bienkowski 1996, 42 Fig. 42; cf. also the earrings of the male statue J. 11260 from Araján/Irjan, east of Amman, Tyson 2014, App. B XII; Bienkowski 1996, 44 Fig. 44. On female terracotta figurines,



Fig. 4: Mold Amman ADTI 5 from Jabal al-Jofa ash-Sharqi (left, mended); "Woman at the window" motif (furniture fitting, detail), Ivory, 9th–8th c. BCE, Arslan Tash, Syria (right).

In the mold, the eyebrows and the outlines of the eyes are marked by impressed lines meeting at the outer corner and extending towards the large ears. The contour of the eyeballs is impressed in negative shape and the round of the pupils is slightly raised.

The Phoenician Egyptianizing style of the representation is obvious. The closest parallels can be found amongst the female faces in the corpus of the Neo-Assyrian ivories, from Arslan Tash on the Euphrates River (Fig. 4 right) as well as from Nimrud in the Assyrian heartland.⁶⁸ The female in the head mold Amman ADTI 5 wears on its forehead a local adaptation of the typical square or rectangular ornament in the hair of the Neo-Assyrian 'woman at the window' motif.⁶⁹ Because of

this type of earrings is attested only one more time: together with a similar hairdo and a headband, on a quite worn terracotta bust from Tall Jawa, about 10 km south of Amman, cf. Daviau 2002, 218 Fig. 2.29:1. In iconographic depictions from the southern Levant during the Iron Age II earrings are rare, they usually refer to Neo-Assyrian influence, cf. Golani 2013, 127–128. Nevertheless, the double-faced female heads from Amman Citadel show earrings of a, to date, unique local style, cf. Abou Assaf 1980, 41–42 tabl. XII–XVI; Zayadine 1987, 134–135; Bienkowski 1996, 45 Fig. 45.

⁶⁸ See also So868 and So869 from the Fort Shalmaneser ivories (Herrmann 2004).

⁶⁹ An ornament of the same style appears in the center of a diadem placed on a female head made of ivory (42 x 36 mm) from Nimrud. The artefact dates back to the 8th c. BCE (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Online collection, Acc. Nr. 54.117.8), cf. Rakic 2010, 20. The ornament contains a continuous row of x-shapes framed by raised dots, cf. the jewelry displaying a single x surrounded by raised dots on the forehead of the 'woman at the window' motif in Keel/Schroer 2004, 181. If ever the x-shape on the Assyrian 'woman at the window' motif could be brought into connection with the x-shape on the drum of the Taanach mold, it has certainly nothing to do with a Hebrew *taw*, pace Keel/Schroer 2004, 179.

its fine facial features this mold and also the two other head molds from tomb F on Jabal al-Jofa ash-Sharqi may not have been taken from a terracotta prototype but from an ivory figurine.⁷⁰

The typological features of the molds in the central Jordan Valley, Pella, and Tall Dayr Alla, as well as south of Amman in the Karak region, Khirbat an-Nahas and Tawaylan, have few points in common (long hair and, if visible, nudity), but above all many differences. The figurines from the Jordan Valley, from Pella and Tall Dayr Alla, wear an elaborate headdress, but the specific shapes differ. The Pella female seems to be nude.⁷¹ The female represented in the mold from Karak region is also nude, shows stout legs and a rounded belly, and is holding an object flat against her chest. Her hairdo corresponds to the typical Moabite hairstyle consisting of a flat top with short fringes and two side-locks falling down on both sides of the face and reaching the shoulders or the breasts.⁷² The facial features of the female are rather sturdy displaying large round eyes, protruding ears, and a strong nose. Large eyes and a large nose appear also further south in the fragmentary mold from the Edomite site Khirbat an-Nahas. The left side-lock is braided and ends on the left shoulder in a spiral turned inwards. Finally, the crudely shaped female of the head mold from Tawaylan, south-east of Khirbat an-Nahas, has very large round eyes with a raised center point, a large nose, and rather thick lips. The hairdo with fringes on the forehead and thick side-locks falling down to the shoulders is coarsely marked by strokes. The ears are invisible, a feature that is very rare in Ammon, rather rare in Moab, and quite common in Edom. A neckband with raised round elements constitutes the only adornment in the Tawaylan mold.

⁷⁰ In this case, the mold Amman ADTI 5 could be considered as the result of a local adaptation of Neo-Assyrian ivory style to Ammonite pottery style. The shape of the prototype's face in the mold reproduces amongst other features also the inlaid eyes of the original, see the head 54.117.8 (above n. 69) and Fig. 4 right.

⁷¹ On the scanned negative that is currently at our disposal the details can unfortunately not be determined.

⁷² Cf. Daviau 2001, 320 Fig. 2.6; 2012, 444 Fig. 3:1-2; 2014, 2 Fig.2:2-3.6-11. The side-locks show often incised lines and are cut straight, but in some cases, as for example in the present mold, the side-locks are plain, rounded at the bottom and reach the breasts, cf. Daviau 2001, 321 Fig. 3.

5:

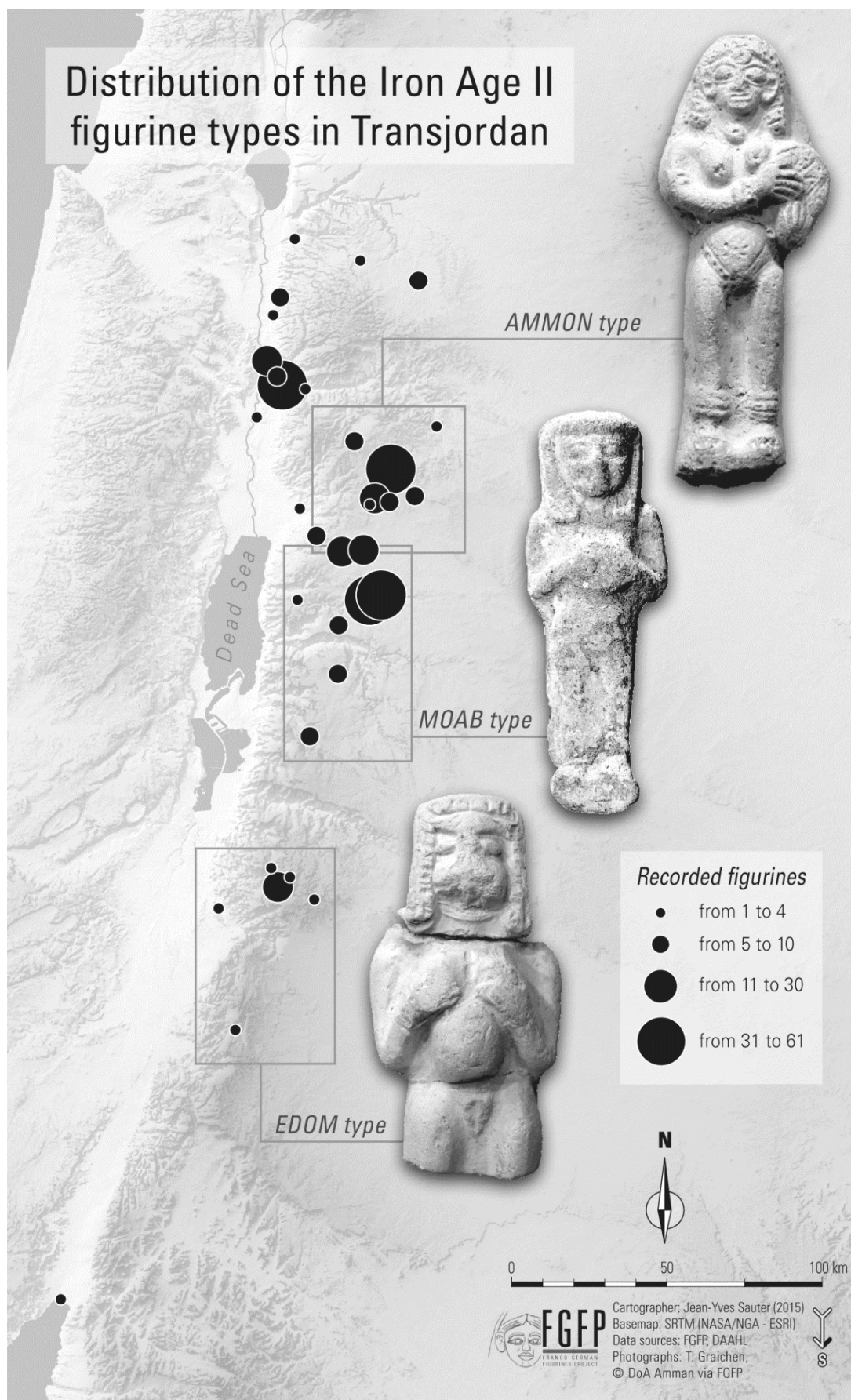


Fig.
The

distribution of the major types of the Iron Age II female terracotta figurines in Transjordan.

The typology of the females represented in the discussed molds conforms to the general typological pattern of the female terracotta figurines from the Iron Age II in Transjordan (Fig. 5). Headdresses of simple or elaborate form and large size, sometimes shaped like a cone, flat-topped, made of layers of cloth, ribbons and cords, and completed with a veil,⁷³ appear first of all in the Jordan Valley,⁷⁴ but, less often, also in Ammon.⁷⁵ In both regions, in the Jordan Valley and in Ammon, the figurines show a vast variety of details, forms, and styles. They have in the majority of cases fine facial features and different ornate hairstyles. They are nude or half-nude but wear fancy girdles or waistbands and jewelry, hold decorated drums, or carry a baby. The pubic area and the genitals are accentuated, whether by adornment (Fig. 5 top) or by the presentation of the open vulva or the button-like clitoral glands; neither are ever covered by pubic hair.⁷⁶ The open vulva is directed towards the observer.⁷⁷ The bodies of these females are designed shapely, but these females are never pregnant. The most diverse and varied corpus in Transjordan is the one from the Jordan Valley. Nevertheless, in central Jordan – in the Jordan Valley and in Ammon, with some modifications also in Moab – the dominant figurine type in the Iron Age II is the “Dancer For Fertility” (DFF) type playing a frame drum and wearing multiple anklets.⁷⁸

Towards the south, the forms and shapes of the female figurines tend to become more uniform.⁷⁹ Among the Moabite figurines there is still variation, but the amount of subtypes is limited.⁸⁰ The Edomite figurines finally show little variation and very clear and simple forms. The represented

⁷³ Whether the Hebrew פָּאֵר (a loan word from late Egyptian *pjr*) worn by luxurious women in Jerusalem (Is 3:20) corresponds to one of these local headdresses is unknown. Traditional Palestinian and Jordanian headdresses of women (*shatweh*) are recorded in the catalogue of the collection Widad Kavar “Pracht und Geheimnis” 1987, 190.282.296.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Franken/Franken-Battershill 1963, pl. XV.

⁷⁵ A characteristic high headdress, flat-topped and draped with a medallion fixed above the forehead, with a veil falling from its top down to the figurine’s back is known from Tall as-Sa’idiya, Tall Dayr Alla, Amman Citadel, Tall al-Umayri (all heads), Sahab (small head fragment), from Tel Rehov, and from a private collection in France (both busts). All these figurines have been taken from the same mold. Five of them are holding a shallow drum above which, in three cases, a hand-modelled baby, sitting on his mother’s left hip, has been attached, cf. the torso with drum and baby from Bet Shean (Rowe 1940, pl. LXIV A 2; James 1966, Fig. 111.6; the drawing in Winter 1983, Abb. 57 is inexact) that represents the same type. The publication of these figurines (which constitute the missing link between the connotations ‘music’ and ‘fertility’) by the present author is forthcoming.

⁷⁶ Some of these figurines have been published, see Mansour 2005, 552–553, Amman Citadel; Franken 1960, 392 pl. 13a, Tall Dayr Alla; Holland 1975, II Fig. 19.7, Tall Dayr Alla.

⁷⁷ In contrast to representations of the vulva as a slit marked by a simple line (Paz 2007, 36 Fig. 2.1.1.3, Aphek, Bet Shean; James 1966, Fig. 111.6, Bet Shean) is the vulva of nine figurines (of which 6 unpublished) from Amman Citadel clearly opened towards the addressee, see Hunziker, forthcoming.

⁷⁸ The multiple anklets worn by the drummers in Ammon as well as in the Jordan Valley and in Israel might have been used as idiophones in order to accentuate the rhythm of the dancing gesture, see Hunziker-Rodewald, forthcoming.

⁷⁹ Nevertheless, compared with the contemporary pillar figurines in Judah there still is a certain diversity in form and style.

⁸⁰ In contrast to the Ammonite figurines and those found in the Jordan Valley, the Moabite figurines represent some types owed to different modelling and molding techniques. The mold-made figurines with a flattened back are completed by pillar figurines with a conical base and mold-made heads as well as by wheel-made statues, see Daviau 2001, 320–322 Figs 2–3.5; 2012, 444–445; 2014, 2 Fig. 2, 4 Fig. 3. The 30 recorded figurines from Jalul situated at the border between Ammon and Moab, cf. Steiner 2014, 770–772, reflect a double influence by features that on the one hand are related to Ammonite and on the other hand to Moabite style (hairdo, posture, adornment).

females are pregnant and cupping their breasts, show a big open vulva (Fig. 5 bottom), almost never wear jewelry, and have square faces framed by chin- or shoulder-length hair, sometimes covered by a scarf.⁸¹

The amount of the recorded figurines differs considerably from one region to the other (Fig. 5). From Ammon and Moab originate one-third each of all the known female figurines, from the Jordan Valley about 25 %, and from Edom only 8 %.⁸² Future excavation may enhance the general and the relative amount of figurines per region, but the pattern of distribution, which until now includes about 400 items, is sufficiently concrete to serve as a starting point for preliminary interpretations concerning typology and its development, local preferences, as well as leading forms and variants (Fig. 5).

More detailed information with regard to the typological distribution and a refined rating of local, regional and trans-regional preferences provide a closer look at the attested mold-links within the corpus of the female terracotta figurines from Iron Age II Transjordan.

2.2 *Figurine mold-links*

In the FGFP database at least 12 mold-links with 38 figurines are recorded.⁸³ The term mold-link implies the occurrence of several figurines made from the same mold or from a series of molds taken from the same master figurine.⁸⁴ The term mold-link also implies the multiple use of a mold or mold series over a certain period and at a certain site, area or larger region. In case two or more figurines from the same mold appear at the same or at a neighboring archaeological site, we are simply faced with the phenomenon of a workshop and its customers. As most of the mold-links consist of only two items, the fact of the existing duplicates does not allow far-reaching conclusions. But if three or more identical figurines taken from the same mold appear at the same site, a certain local preference of the figurine type might become evident. Half of all the mold-links in the FGFP database belong to the corpus of one and the same region, Ammon, Moab or the Jordan Valley.⁸⁵ The other half of the attested mold-links cross the regional borders and even the River Jordan.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Sedman 2002, 369-374.

⁸² The FGFP database contains nine figurines from Gilead (Tall Zira'a, Tall Irbid, Tall ar-Rumayth); for the Tall Zira'a Figurines see Gropp 2013, 593; for Tall ar-Rumayth see Barako/Lapp 2015. The figurines from Gilead are not taken into account in the present article.

⁸³ These numbers correspond to a preliminary results of research.

⁸⁴ Theoretically, the existence also of mold generations has to be considered, but the relevant data have not been processed yet. This seems to be a pretty significant point that might need to be moved to the body of the paper. Since the definition of "mold-link" rests on their contemporaneity, it wouldn't hurt to add a few sentences about why the mold-links you've focused on in the chapter are not really different generations of the same design. Plus, I don't know that we have discussed that issue much elsewhere in the book, so it might make a nice contribution on the issue of molds and generations.

⁸⁵ To date, in the corpus from Edom no mold links are attested.

⁸⁶ This fact raises the question if the object itself (gift), the owner (see Rahel's appropriation of his father's *teraphim* Gen 31:19) or the maker of a figurine (commercial operations) changed place. The mold-links between Cis- and

Mold-links are not easy to postulate with 100 percent certainty. More or less well preserved heads, busts, and torsos can be identified and compared, but the smaller a fragment is the less sure is the possibility of the determination of a mold-link. Legs, feet and damaged or worn items can only hypothetically be typologically assigned, identified, and compared; in many cases they are even excluded from the search for mold-links. For technical reasons small differences in the shape of figurines taken from the same mold have to be taken into consideration. Molds are made by pressing a master figurine into a shallow plaque of clay that accurately duplicates in its concavity the shape of the prototype in reverse. After having been fired (or simply been dried), the potter presses clay into the concavity of that mold and causes to emerge a figurine that is an exact reproduction, in concrete, of the shape of the prototype. But in practice, the execution of the last step,⁸⁷ the molding procedure, particularly the taking off from the mold, was not always done carefully or, sometimes, it attests the creative freedom of the figurine maker. Heads can be slightly compressed, here and there an ear is flattened, a top becomes oblate, finger impressions and traces of smoothing attest to secondary manipulations, eyes have been pierced in order to indicate the pupils, curls have been accentuated by dots, the opening of the lips has been accentuated by using a tool, frames of clay around the figurine have been more or less removed, for lack of pressure details of the jewelry are rendered incorrectly, etc.

In general, apart from obvious matches, mold-links can best be identified by comparing identical irregularities like the uneven eye level, the unequal size of the eyes, the difference in height of the elbows, fingers that are oversized or stretched away, peculiar jewelry or girdles, an irregularity along the hairline, marks on the forehead etc. As the figurines of the present investigation are distributed across many museums and even countries, it is practically impossible to compare mold-links by comparing them side by side.⁸⁸ But, because of RTI's ability to enlarge the picture and manipulate the light angle, photographs that have been post-processed resulting in RTI image files allow a highly advanced virtual analysis of the surface characteristics of each figurine

Transjordan bring a further, triple challenge: 1) to explain the persistence of an artistic tradition, 2) to interpret the trans-cultural move of these artifacts and 3) to analyze traces of a possible typological development.

⁸⁷ The molding procedure is a labor-intensive practice comprising 1) the sculpting of the master figurine and the refining of its features, 2) after drying its firing, 3) the making of the mold(s), 4) after drying their firing (some of them could have simply been dried), 5) the molding and the additional detailing of its features; the application of a clay slip 6) after drying the firing of the mold-made figurines, 7) the application of paint.

⁸⁸ To date only one single 'set' of a mold and a head taken from this mold (or from a mold of the same series) is attested in the FGFP database. The mold DA 200 and a modern cast taken from this mold (Franken 1960, 392 pl. 14b) and the head DA 1027 (Holland 1975, II.28, Fig. 20.5) are kept in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, Netherlands. The body mold has been damaged on the top, a flake at the right side of the impressed female face has been chipped off, and it is broken on the level of her shoulders. But the figurine DA 1027, of which only the head is preserved and which had been made from this mold when it was still intact, displays the complete headdress, the right ear, and a part of the right side lock. The set is unique also because of the female's headdress (a pleated domed bonnet fixed on the head by four parallel ribbons which meet in the middle of the forehead in a kind of inverted v-shape) and her facial features: the "coffee-bean" or grain-shaped eyes and the eyebrows, each made of several slightly curved vertical strokes.

Among the figurines from the Jordan Valley four intra-regional and three trans-regional mold-links with altogether 15 associated figurines are recorded. Ten figurines, including six⁸⁹ from Tall Dayr Alla, are involved in the intra-regional mold-links, and five figurines, including two⁹⁰ from Tall Dayr Alla, are involved in the trans-regional mold-links. The percentage of figurines involved in mold-links relative to all the recorded figurines from the Jordan Valley is 16 %; of these, the amount of figurines involved in trans-regional networks is about 1/3. Also in the trans-regional networks are, apart from the five figurines already mentioned from the Jordan Valley, nine figurines from Ammon⁹¹ and three figurines from Israel and Geshur respectively (Tel Rehov,⁹² Bethsaida,⁹³ Tall Balâtah/Shechem)⁹⁴. Because half of the figurines from the Jordan Valley associated with mold-links, including five different types, are from Tall Dayr Alla,⁹⁵ and because two trans-regional mold-links between the eastern highlands (Amman, Tall al-Umayri) and the western vicinity across the River Jordan (Tel Rehov) as well as a more distant area in the west (Tall Balâtah/Shechem) are connected to Tall Dayr Alla as their center point,⁹⁶ it can be concluded that Tall Dayr Alla was a kind of crossroads within the networks of cultural influence and exchange between east and west. If Tall Dayr Alla might even be understood as a regional production center,⁹⁷ petrographic tests need to be done in order to define the origin of the workshop of the figurines associated with the two trans-regional mold links, Ammon–Jordan Valley–Tel Rehov and Ammon–Jordan Valley–Tall Balâtah/Shechem respectively.

Among the Ammonite figurines two intra-regional and three trans-regional mold-links with 15 associated figurines are recorded. Two figurines each from Jabal al-Jofa ash-Sharqi⁹⁸ and Jalul⁹⁹ are involved in intra-regional mold-links and eleven figurines from Ammon¹⁰⁰ are involved in trans-regional mold links. The percentage of figurines involved in mold-links relative to all the recorded Ammonite figurines is 11% of which about 3/4 are associated with trans-regional networks. Apart from the trans-regional networks Ammon–Jordan Valley–Tall Balâtah/Shechem¹⁰¹ and Ammon–

⁸⁹ Van der Kooij/Ibrahim 1989, 104-5 nos. 124-125, 128; Holland 1975, II 28 Fig. 19.7, 20.4; one figurine has not been published yet.

⁹⁰ Franken 1960, 392 pl. 13 b; Franken/Franken-Battershill 1963, 143-145, pl XV A right.

⁹¹ Seven from Amman Citadel (unpublished) and two from Tall al-Umayri (Franken 1989, 410, 418 Fig. C.5; the other one is unpublished). A tenth, very small fragment of probably the same mold-link is attested from Sahab, cf. Amr 1980, 92 Fig. 97, cf. also above n. 75.

⁹² Unpublished.

⁹³ See Skupinska-Lovset 2014, 73-75 with a contribution of the present author; the third figurine of that trans-regional mold-link originating from Pella is unpublished.

⁹⁴ Dever 1974, 36.

⁹⁵ The eight figurines from Tall Dayr Alla involved in mold-links constitute? 20% of all figurines attested in Tall Dayr Alla.

⁹⁶ On the mold-link Tall al-Umayri–Tall Dayr Alla–Tall Balâtah/Shechem see below. On the mold-link Ammon–Jordan Valley–Tel Rehov see above n. 75.

⁹⁷ Cf. also the recorded molds in Table 1 and the 'set' of a mold and a figurine from Tall Dayr Alla (see n. 87), but no potter's kiln has been found in Iron Age Tall Dayr Alla (Franken 1969, 94).

⁹⁸ Dorneman 1983, 280 Fig. 87.4-5.

⁹⁹ Younker et al. 1995, 72, 88 pl. 13; the other figurine is not published yet.

¹⁰⁰ See n. 90 and Mansour 2005, 555 No. 43; one figurine is not published yet.

¹⁰¹ Three figurines, see below.

Jordan Valley–Tel Rehov¹⁰² a third trans-regional network Ammon–Tel el-Far’ah North–Tel Rehov is attested by a mold-link that is associated with four figurines.¹⁰³ The existence of three networks based on mold-links connecting figurines that have been made contemporaneously within a relatively short time span from the same mold, constitutes a strong argument in favor of a reassessment and readjustment of the dating of the archaeological contexts of these figurines east and west of the River Jordan.¹⁰⁴

Among the figurines from Moab only two intra-regional mold-links with eight related figurines are recorded, of which one link connects six figurines and the other link two figurines. Three figurines each from Khirbat al-Mudaynat ath-Thamad¹⁰⁵ and WT-13¹⁰⁶ and one figurine each from Balu¹⁰⁷ and Dhiban¹⁰⁸ are involved in these two mold-links. The percentage of figurines involved in mold-links relative to all the recorded Moabite figurines¹⁰⁹ is 6 %; no trans-regional mold-link is recorded. But this result relates to the molded figurines only. With a view to the wheel-made statues from WT-13,¹¹⁰ the evidence shows that there was a trans-regional network. It seems that the region situated south of Wadi Wala and Wadi ath-Thamad, between the eastern shore of the Dead Sea and the Central Desert Areas, constituted typologically a cohesive cultural zone¹¹¹ that was rather oriented towards the south (Edom) and the south-west (Hōrbat Qitmit, ‘En Ḥaṣeva) than to the north. The 49 female terracotta figurines that have been found, together with a large assemblage of pottery and artefacts, at the Shrine Site WT-13 located on top of a natural hill (“High Place”) 3 km south-west of Khirbat al-Mudayna, reveal a distinctive¹¹² and intense cultic activity at this border site. Especially noteworthy is a mold-link connecting two figurines from Khirbat al-Mudayna and WT-13¹¹³, one torso, and a bust, cupping her breasts. The girl/young woman represented is adorned with a hairband and ribbons in her side-locks to hold her hair in place, she wears a necklace, armlets, bracelets, and a waistband. and has traces of strong red paint all over.

¹⁰² Eleven figurines, see notes 75 and 90.

¹⁰³ See n. 99 and Paz 2007, 58 Fig. 3.2.3-4.

¹⁰⁴ The dating of the archaeological context of the figurines from Tel Rehov and from Tel el-Far’ah North (Iron Age II A, see Paz 2007, 23.30-31; Sugimoto 2008, 117-119) seemingly differs from the dating of the archaeological context of the figurines from Ammon (Iron Age II B-C), cf. Younker 2014, 758-766. Couldn’t this suggest generations rather than mold-links? Also, have you compared their clay types to see if they are all made from the same matrix?

¹⁰⁵ Glueck 1934, 24, 25 Fig. 7 left; Daviau/Steiner 2000, 15 Fig. 11.7; one figurine has not been published yet.

¹⁰⁶ Daviau 2014, 2 Fig. 2.9; 2006, 27 Fig. 5 B; the third figurine has not been published yet.

¹⁰⁷ Glueck 1934, 24, 25 Fig. 7 right.

¹⁰⁸ Porter et al. 2012, 123-124 Fig. 10. The interpretation of the elongated chin as a beard by Porter, suggested already by Glueck (see notes 105,107), is incorrect. Several (clearly) female Moabite figurines show an elongated and pointed chin, see for example Morton 1989, 246, 321 Fig. 15; Harding 1937, 254, 255 pl. X.8; Daviau 1997, 226 Fig. 2.

¹⁰⁹ They constitute 1/3 of all the female terracotta figurines from the Iron Age in Transjordan, see above 2.1.

¹¹⁰ Daviau 2012, 443-450; 2014, 5-6.

¹¹¹ A mold-link involving five heads and one bust from Khirbat al-Mudayna, WT-13, Balua and Dhiban reveals, by the (mended) bust, an interesting local female drummer type with a mold-made head and a hand-made body which was holding the drum at a 45 degree angle to the chest/waist, cf. the two complete drummers with the same posture from tomb 84 on Khirbat al-Mukhayyat (Saller 1966, 261 Fig. 28.2).

¹¹² Remarkable is the relative lack of faunal material (Daviau 2012, 443).

¹¹³ Daviau/Steiner 2000, 15 Fig. 11.7; Daviau 2014, 2 Fig. 2.9.

Finally, one of the mold-links of the FGFP database shall briefly be presented here. It concerns three fragments of female figurines made in the same mold that have been found in quite distant areas in the Southern Levant, on the highlands of Ammon (Tall al-Umayri), in the central Jordan Valley (Tall Dayr Alla), and in the hill country of Ephraim in Israel (Tall Balâtah/Shechem) . Unfortunately, the current location of the fragment from Tall Balâtah/Shechem has, despite extensive investigations, not been identified to date, the other two



Fig. 6: Mold link of figurine fragments from Tall al-Umayri (left), Tall Dayr Alla (center), Shechem (right).



Fig. 7: Figurine fragments from Tall al-Umayri (side B; left), Tall Dayr Alla (side A; center), Shechem (side A; right).

fragments are kept in a museum in Jordan¹¹⁴ and in an archaeology collection in the United States respectively.¹¹⁵ All the fragments come from excavations: the figurine from Tall Dayr Alla has been excavated in spring 1960 on the northern slope of the tell by the team of Henk Franken from Leiden University (Fig. 6-7 center). The, to use his exact words, “very curious find” of a seated female figure “with a monkey sitting on her lap whose raised hands grasp the breasts of the female”¹¹⁶ had been found together with several fragments of terracotta animal heads and mold-made nude females. A little later, in 1963, Franken had changed mind and calls the fragment a “figurine of monkey with child”.¹¹⁷ Thomas A. Holland, in 1975, cannot adopt Franken’s assessment; he speaks of a “woman holding a sitting child in her lap”¹¹⁸ and, by the way, regrets the minimal dating information available. Holland further recognizes that the object has a “projecting clay stand or support in the rear”.¹¹⁹ Seventeen years later, in 1980, Abdel-Jalil Amr describes the figurine as a “baby-monkey sitting on his mother’s knee” and suggests that it had possibly “been attached to a vessel (?)”. Amr lists the artifact under “Animal Figurines” in the sub-section “Monkey Figurines”, dates it on the pottery evidence to the Early Iron Age II period, but erroneously indicates that it originates from Tall as-Sa’idiya.¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ Tall Dayr Alla Station, Jordan; Reg. Nr. DA/Ga3, 320, J. 12689; H. 97, W. 55, D. 45 mm; *editio princeps*: Franken 1960, 392 pl. 13 b.

¹¹⁵ La Sierra University, Riverside CA ; Obj. Nr. B840449; H. 78, W. 54, D. 45 mm ; unpublished.

¹¹⁶ Franken 1960, 392 and pl. 13 b.

¹¹⁷ Franken/Franken-Battershill 1963, pl. XVII B.

¹¹⁸ See also Dornemann 1983, 131 n. 1 with reference to the inconsistent captions in Franken’s publications. After Dornemann it is “simply a clumsily depicted naked woman holding a naked child”.

¹¹⁹ Holland 1975, I 94.227-228; II Fig. 20.14.

¹²⁰ Amr 1980, 244-246.248.425 Fig. 190 a-b.

In 1972, even before Holland had completed his Ph.D. thesis¹²¹, an identical figurine had been discovered by William G. Dever on Tall Balâtah/Shechem in Palestine when he removed the dumps of earlier excavations from the MB IIC stratification in the Northwest Gate area. An exact dating is again impossible, but because of the “Hathor-style ringlets” Dever suggests a Late Bronze or Iron Age I date for the artifact. Fortunately, he included a drawing of the front and side A in his excavation report from 1974 (Fig. 6-7 right). Dever obviously was not aware of the figurine that Franken had found, he only knew a ‘parallel’ from Megiddo, a standing female figurine holding on her hip a baby who is clutching one breast (M 2653).¹²² The support in the figurine’s back is interpreted by Dever as the attachment to an incense stand.¹²³

Rudolph H. Dornemann, in 1983, when commenting on the figurine from Tall Dayr Alla, thinks that the represented nude female “seems to be kneeling on one knee and holding a baby”.¹²⁴ According to him, she is part of the group of the “tambourine players”, holding instead of a tambourine a child. Dornemann refers to the figurine from Bet Shean who shows “both the tambourine and an infant held over the left breast”¹²⁵ and suggests for this group of figurines “a date between the late eleventh and early ninth centuries BCE”.¹²⁶ A link between the group of figurines playing tambourines and the females holding a baby was postulated in 1990 also by Pirhiyah Beck who is the first to recognize the similarity “in most details” of the Tall Dayr Alla and Tall Balâtah/Shechem figurines.¹²⁷

In July 1984, six years before Beck published the two figurines from Tall Dayr Alla and Tall Balâtah/Shechem, the fragment of a third identical figurine had been excavated in Tall al-Umayri located about 13 km south of Jebel Amman (Fig. 6-7 left). The identification tag reads: “plaque of chest & belly of a mother & child; mother’s hands clasp the child (on buttocks); mother’s knees with child’s feet between; child’s right arm reaching to mother’s left breast”.¹²⁸ As the head and right side of the child had been broken off and the excavators were not aware of the figurines from Tall Dayr Alla and Tall Balâtah/Shechem, they interpreted the baby as being seen from the back side. The archaeological context is unfortunately, again, not very helpful. The locus was heavily

¹²¹ *A Typological and Archaeological Study of Human and Animal Representations in the Plastic Art of Palestine during the Iron Age*, submitted to the Faculty of Anthropology and Geography of the University of Oxford for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy 1975.

¹²² Dever 1974, 36.49, for M 2653 see May 1935, pl. 24; Peri 2013, 1052 AB.III.15. The posture of the figurines from Megiddo (M 2653) and Shechem as well as their design are not directly related.

¹²³ Beck 1999, 390; the article has in 1990 first been published in Hebrew) speaks of a “fragment of a cult stand” and compares it to a house model from Meskene-Emar (Late Bronze Age) and the temple at Ḥorvat Qitmit (Late Iron Age).

¹²⁴ Dornemann 1983, 130-131.

¹²⁵ Rowe 1940, 82, pl. XXXV.20 and pl. LXIV A.2; James 1966, Fig. 111.6.

¹²⁶ Dornemann 1983, 131. Dornemann was not aware of the figurine from Tall Balâtah/Shechem that had been published in 1974.

¹²⁷ Beck 1999, 390-391 Fig. 7.8; cf. above no. 123. Beck’s study of the figurines from Tall Dayr Alla and Shechem is based on Franken’s black-and-white photo from 1960.

¹²⁸ Tall al-Umayri Dig Database (online).

disturbed and the pottery sherds have been dated from Iron Age I through Late Iron II/Persian. The Tall al-Umayri figurine is unpublished.¹²⁹

The three fragments discussed (Fig. 6 and 7) are not identical, but without any doubt made from the same mold. The probably dressed or at least half-dressed female that is represented on these fragments is the only one in the FGFP database that is shown seated. Until now, the way this relatively large and heavy figurine has been attached to a larger element remains unique in the FGFP database, as for example a cult stand or an incense burner.¹³⁰ The observed relation of this female and her baby with other groups of terracotta figurines that are nursing their babies or playing the drum has further implications. Of the utmost importance is the relation between drumming and carrying a baby.¹³¹ As two figurines from Amman Citadel show, the drum of a molded figurine, before firing, could be partly cut out and a hand-made baby including the left arm and hand of the mother attached on the left side of the figurine and above the remaining part of the drum. Future excavations and publications of figurines from both sides of the River Jordan¹³² will hopefully shed more light on this modification of a popular figurine type that shows that the drum and the child were interchangeable.

The presented observations on molds and mold-links in the corpus of the Iron Age female terracotta figurines from Transjordan shall be concluded by a short glimpse on a new interpretation of the Creation of Woman in the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 2:21-23) with respect to the production of mold made figurines.

3. Genesis 2:21-23 – an interpretation in terms of a molding procedure

It is heresuggested that during the first half of the first millennium BCE, east and west of the River Jordan, the fabrication of terracotta figurines (animals, males and females) was part of the professional knowledge and experience of any potter. Additionally, it is likely that also the elite, the scribes, priests or prophets¹³³ were, both from observations and descriptions, somewhat familiar with the procedure of modelling and molding figurines.¹³⁴ We therefore can assume that reflexes of these activities appear also in the traditions of the largest text source of that time in the Southern Levant, the Hebrew Bible. In the following, three examples shall be briefly discussed.

¹²⁹ Keel/Uehlinger 2010, 96 n.47 mention the fragments from Tall Dayr Alla and Tall Balâtah/Shechem only briefly and recognize in the raised arms of the child a gesture that accords to the child at least as much importance as to the mother. However, if interpreted within the framework of the contemporaneous DFF concept (see above n. 29) the gesture of the child rather fulfils a communicative function through bringing the benefit of the mother's breast to the light of attention, cf. the *בְּרִכַּת שְׂדִים וְרֵחַם* "blessings of the breasts and of the womb" evoked in Gen. 49:25.

¹³⁰ As soon as the Shechem fragment has been located, a petrographic analysis of the three fragments is envisaged in order to identify the mineral composition of their temper and clay and therefore also define the origin of the workshop.

¹³¹ See n. 75.

¹³² The publication of the Iron Age clay figurines discovered during the Tel Rehov Excavations (director: Amihai Mazar) is currently in preparation.

¹³³ Cf. for example YHWH's order addressed to Jeremiah to go and see a potter at work in Jer 18:1-6.

¹³⁴ See the references to gods as potters in Sumerian and Akkadian texts collected by Barrelet 1968, 7-11 and the table entitled "Le travail de l'argile par les dieux dans les textes hitoriques [sic!] et religieux"; cf. Steinert 2012, 61-70; Steinert 2012a, 48-57.

3.1 Jeremiah 18:1-6

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from YHWH: ² "Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." ³ So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴ The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. ⁵ Then the word of YHWH came to me: ⁶ Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done?, says YHWH. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.¹³⁵

In Jeremiah 18:1-6 the manufacture of wheel-made vessels is theologically evaluated in order to illustrate that the house of Israel is in YHWH's hand like clay¹³⁶ in the hand of the potter.¹³⁷ The main focus is on the idea of YHWH's absolute sovereignty and the message of doom that the 'spoiled' will be 'reworked'. YHWH is not described as a potter, but his freedom to act toward his people is compared to a potter's way of working with clay.¹³⁸

3.2 Genesis 2:6-7

⁶ ... and a flush would well up from the earth to water all the surface of the ground, ⁷ then YHWH God fashioned the human, dust from the ground, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living creature.¹³⁹

The idea behind Genesis 2:6-7 is the creation of a hand-made figurine. After the subterranean stream had watered the surface of the ground,¹⁴⁰ clay has deposited.¹⁴¹ From this clay¹⁴² YHWH God

¹³⁵ BibleWorks 9, 2013; New Revised Standard Version Bible 1989 ("the LORD" replaced by "YHWH").

¹³⁶ Hebrew חֵמֶר "potter's clay". Is this cited from a standard lexicon or theological wordbook? It might not hurt to add a short citation, since some of our ideal readership will know those sources.

¹³⁷ The Hebrew profession term יוֹצֵר "fashioner" > "potter" is an active fientive participle Sing. masc. in substantival use from the verbal root יצר "to fashion". Also covered in Darby 2014.

¹³⁸ The relation between the potter and the clay objects he produces is reflected in Isa 29:16; 45:9 and 64:7, cf. also the (fired or simply dried) clay as a symbol for fragility and transience in Dan 2:34. The idea of dashing a potter's vessel in pieces serves to indicate absolute power (Ps 2:9) or judgment (Jer 19). Also covered in Darby 2014.

¹³⁹ Translation by the present author.

¹⁴⁰ The term עֵלֶּה מִן־ (עֵלֶּה מִן־), therefore the idea of a subterranean stream, cf. in Akkadian the Sumerian loan word *id* "river, river god".

¹⁴¹ Following the internal logic of the text, עֶפֶר indicates the sediments that had deposited after the stream from underneath the earth had flooded the ground (Gen 2:6). Cf. the parallel terms חֵמֶר and עֶפֶר in Job 4:19, 10:9, 27:16, 30:19. Alter 2004, 21 tries to imitate the Hebrew etymological pun אֶדָמָה - אָדָם by "human - humus" and translates עֶפֶר מִן־ הָאֶדָמָה by "humus from the soil", but humus is consisting of decayed organic matter and does not match the imagined situation prepared in Gen 2:5 ("there was no plant of the field on the earth ..."). See other sources on the meaning of aphar here. This is a somewhat unique use of the word that isn't really comparable to other occasions of the term, with the exception of (perhaps) Job. The relationship between the word's use in Job and Genesis might be fairly complex, depending on when each text is dated, so trying to use the word sense in Job to define Genesis is somewhat problematic. Why isn't the choice of aphar here (which is unique) more motivated by its semantic range related to death and afterlife more so than its connection to clay?

¹⁴² In Gen 2:6-7 three 'ground levels' can be discerned: אֶרֶץ (the earth where the subterranean water had been stored), אֶדָמָה (the ground where the welled up water has expanded) and עֶפֶר (the fine and loose components that result from the contact of the welled up stream and אֶדָמָה). On the clay used in antiquity by the potters in Transjordan see Wood 1990, 9-11. I'm still entirely convinced by the meaning assigned these terms, based only on their occurrence in these two verses. We might need some explanation for why the more obvious term, homer, isn't used here, since it is far more predominant than either aphar or adamah throughout the rest of the Bible where pottery items are mentioned. What are the unique theological or narrative characteristics of Genesis or elements from its redactional history that might account for this?

fashioned the human. His shape has been choicely modelled, with nostrils into which YHWH God blew the breath of life.¹⁴³ YHWH God acts definitely as a potter when he forms the prototype of Man from clay.¹⁴⁴

3.3 Genesis 2:21-23

²¹ And YHWH God cast a deep slumber on the human, and he slept. And he took one of his sides and closed up with flesh instead of it. And YHWH God built the side he had taken from the human into a woman and he brought her to the human. And the human said: “This one, this time, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called Woman for from Man this one was taken.”¹⁴⁵

The traditional interpretation of Genesis 2:21-23, the creation of Woman ‘out of Man’ that seems to fit well with Man’s comment “This one, this time, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” can be regarded as insufficient for at least three reasons: 1) the unique ‘mutation’ of YHWH from a potter (2:7) to a ‘surgeon’; 2) the understanding of עֲצָצ “side” as “rib” which is unique in the Hebrew Bible; 3) the unique use of the verb בָּנָה “to build” for the creation of humans.¹⁴⁶

The idea that the woman is built from a bone taken from the man’s body dates back to the translation in the Septuagint of the Hebrew term עֲצָצ by πλευρά “rib”. Consequently, again in the translation of the Septuagint of 2:23, the idea of ‘having been taken out of Man’ is established.¹⁴⁷ But in the Hebrew Bible עֲצָצ refers always to the side of an object implying a surface of a certain, defined extension;¹⁴⁸ it can therefore be regarded as a technical term of the language of craftsmen and master builders. In Hebrew, עֲצָצ is best translated by “side”.

¹⁴³ The verb נָפַח used to indicate the divine initiation of human breathing is etymologically related to the Akkadian *nappāhu* “blacksmith”, i.e. the one who works with bellows. Is there a citation for this? Is the reflection from KB or elsewhere? The coming to life of the human is here associated with the beginning of the continuous lifting and lowering of the chest - and not with the reception of a divine spirit or the like, the term נְשָׁמָה means simply “breath” as evidence of life.

¹⁴⁴ Clay is also the raw material for the creation of the human prototype for example in the Atrahasis myth, but the clay is ‘blended’ with the flesh and the blood of a god, see Foster 1996, 168; Steinert 2012, 67-70; Steinert 2012 a, 50-57. See Egyptian cosmology as well.

¹⁴⁵ Translation by the present author.

¹⁴⁶ Out of the countless commentaries on these verses, only two symbolic corner marks shall be briefly mentioned: 1) Westermann, 1974 (1st ed.), 313-314 argues that the operation may not be understood as a realistic event and that the tradition is very ancient. He refers to comparisons with the plaster sculptures from Jericho (Amiran 1962, 23-25) and on the Sumerian sign TI that denotes both “life” and “rib” (Pritchard 1948/49, 15; cf. Gaster 1969, 21-22); 2) Staubli/Schroer 2014, 63-64 state that the only missing bone of human males is the *os penis* and that the surgical operation mentioned in Gen 2:21 may seek to explain the raphe penis (Gilbert/Zevit 2001). All these explanations and references continue to insist on the fundamental difference between the process of creation of Man and Woman.

¹⁴⁷ Gen 2:21 καὶ ἔλαβεν μίαν τῶν πλευρῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεπλήρωσεν σάρκα ἀντ’ αὐτῆς “and he took one of his ribs, and filled up the flesh instead thereof”; 2:23 τοῦτο νῦν ὅσπου ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων μου καὶ σὰρξ ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς μου αὕτη κληθήσεται γυνή ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς ἐλήμφθη αὕτη “This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of her husband” (BibleWorks 9, 2013).

¹⁴⁸ The Hebrew עֲצָצ denotes the sides of the ark (Exod 25:12), the tabernacle (Exod 26:20) and the altar (Exod 27:7), the side chambers or wings of the temple (Ezek 41:6), planks (1 Kgs 6:15), beams (1 Kgs 7:3) and door leaves (1 Kgs 6:34), the slope of a mountain (2 Sam 16:13) and once a compass direction (Exod 26:35). Amongst the etymological-semantic equivalents and with regard to humans and animals, Akkadian *ṣēlu* for example designates the side of the chest as a

The verb בָּנָה “to build” is used only one more time in the context of creation in the Hebrew Bible¹⁴⁹ but not for the creation of humans. Even if the semantic field of “construction,” or בָּנָה “to build,” corresponds to the presented observations concerning צֶלַע “side,” the difficulty remains that YHWH the potter of Genesis 2:7 and the ‘surgeon’ of 2:21 becomes in 2:22, to top it off, a ‘master builder’. In order to reassess these different functions, a new coherent view of Genesis 2:21-23 is needed.



Fig. 8-9: Screenshots, Experimental Archaeology Workshop Strasbourg; left (Fig. 8): closing up the impression of the master figurine in the mold with clay; right (Fig. 9): removing the figurine from the mold.

part of the body and, specifically, also the rib(s) (CAD § 1962, 124-126). Is the Akkadian term also used to describe the sides of buildings, equipment, etc.? If not, then it could be argued that the Bible is making some type of direct commentary related to the Akkadian lexical field, which would be interesting. This would also make the regular Hebrew lexical field less useful for understanding the word's particular connotation in Genesis.

¹⁴⁹ Amos 9:6 “Who builds his upper chambers in the heavens, and founds his vault upon the earth; who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the surface of the earth - YHWH is his name!”



Fig. 10-11: Screenshots, Experimental Archaeology Workshop Strasbourg; left (Fig. 10): removing the figurine from the mold; right (Fig. 11): a molded figurine ready to be finished by hand.

YHWH God's commitment to create a counterpart to the human¹⁵⁰ and the subsequent simulation of a molding procedure¹⁵¹ are crucial for the understanding of Genesis 2:21-23. After having cast a deep slumber¹⁵² on the human, YHWH God took the impression of one of his sides, like a potter applies a bed of clay on the prototype in order to create a mold. After the mold was removed from the prototype, YHWH God closed up the impression in the mold with flesh, like a potter applies a layer of raw clay inside the concavity of a mold (Fig. 8). Then, in a last step, YHWH God built the shape that had emerged from the mold into a woman, like a potter finishes the figurine taken from the mold (Fig. 9-11) finally still by hand.

According to Genesis 2:21-23 the woman is a molded counterpart of the man. In their basic structure man and woman are closely related: "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh".¹⁵³ The woman corresponds to the prototype in her human shape,¹⁵⁴ but not in her female form that had been 'built' after the molding procedure by YHWH God. That in the long run, this explanatory model of the origin, the similarity, and the difference of man and women could not satisfy

¹⁵⁰ In Hebrew עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ (Gen 2:18), „a sustainer beside him" (Alter 1004, 22). as well as many other options. I'm not sure here whether it is necessary to at least nod to the fact that there is not final scholarly consensus on the translation of this phrase.

¹⁵¹ In only one Sumerian text, the "Creation of the Hoe", the first human seems to have been taken from a mold, see Steinert 2012, 49 with n. 102.

¹⁵² The תִּרְדָּמָה "deep slumber" guarantees the immobility of the human. Human life is tamed by sleep and YHWH God alone is at work, cf. Gen 15:12, 1 Sam 26:12, Isa 29:10, Job 33:15.

¹⁵³ The so called "Verwandtschaftsformel" (Westermann 1983, 315) indicates kinship (cf. Gen 29:14, Judg 9:2, 2 Sam 5:1, 19:13-14), but is not meant to be taken literally (also in the traditional interpretation of Gen. 2:21-23 it 'works' only for the bone but not for the flesh).

¹⁵⁴ Gen 2:23: "for from Man this one was taken".

theological convictions, is demonstrated in the alternate origin of humanity in Genesis 1:26-27. The only prototype is now God and in the same breath “male and female he created them”.

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Fig. 8-9: Screenshots taken from the video documentation of the Experimental Archaeology Workshop undertaken at the University of Strasbourg in spring 2015, © Jean-Charles Mougel, Strasbourg.

Fig. 10-11: Screenshots taken from the video documentation of the Experimental Archaeology Workshop undertaken at the University of Strasbourg in spring 2015, © Jean-Charles Mougel, Strasbourg.

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Abbreviations:

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ADAJ	Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan
AJMG	American Journal of Medical Genetics
AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BAMA	British Academy Monographs in Archaeology
BARIS	British Archaeological Reports. International Series
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
CAD	Chicago Assyrian Dictionary
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CHANE	Culture and history of the ancient Near East
CM	Cuneiform Monographs
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
JSOT.SS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series
LA	Liber Annuus
MMAB	The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin
NEA	Near Eastern Archaeology
NEAEHL	The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBO.SA	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis. Series Archaeologica

PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
RR	The Review of Religion
SHAJ	Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan
UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
VT	Vetus Testamentum
YOSR	Yale Oriental Series: Researches
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins