

T. F. Potts

## A Bronze Age Ivory-Decorated Box from Pella (*Paḥel*) and its Foreign Relations

*To the memory of Dr Tony McNicoll (1943–1985),  
Co-director of the Pella Excavations*

The ruins at Tabaqat Fahil in the north Jordan Valley were identified as Pella ‘of the Decapolis’ well over a century ago.<sup>1</sup> It is only in recent years, however, that archaeological investigations at the site have progressed beyond the exploration and recording of its visible monuments. When the first major expedition was launched in 1967 the importance of Pella’s early Christian community naturally focused attention on its churches, still the site’s most conspicuous monuments, and other vestiges of the Byzantine and later occupation.<sup>2</sup> These remain a major concern of the present Joint Sydney-Wooster Expedition. But Pella was also a Bronze Age town of some importance and it was clear when the Joint Expedition began in 1979 that this period also deserved more serious attention. At that time, the 2nd-millennium settlement at Pella was known only from a dozen or so tombs cut into the surrounding hillsides<sup>3</sup> and from sporadic references in Egyptian inscriptions and the Amarna correspondence, where it appears as *phr* and *ph-l* respectively, presumably representing a West Semitic *phl*.<sup>4</sup> Eight seasons on, a considerable area of the contemporary settlement is now beginning to be exposed. On many points already the results of the excavations confirm and complement the historical indications of Paḥel’s importance as a prosperous ‘Canaanite’<sup>5</sup> centre—none more vividly than the object which forms the subject of this paper.

It came to light in February 1984 in the East Cut excavations by the University of Sydney<sup>6</sup> at the south-east corner of the *tell*.<sup>7</sup> These represent the largest exposure of Bronze Age levels at Pella, covering an area of approximately 650 m<sup>2</sup>. In Plots III C and III D of the operation a stretch of large mud-brick wall, doubtless the town defensive circuit, has been uncovered. It fell out of use towards the end of the Middle Bronze Age and was then partly built over by a monumental stone structure with thickly plastered floors, designated East Cut phase v.<sup>8</sup> Very little well-stratified pottery has yet been recovered from phase v.<sup>9</sup> What there is includes Chocolate-on-White Ware and other forms conventionally dated to the early Late Bronze Age, but not yet any Cypriote Base-Ring or White-Slip; these first appear in the succeeding phase IV.<sup>10</sup> A number of unlined pits were cut into the plaster floor of one room of the phase v building. The pit which concerns us (Plot III C Feature 80) was dug to a depth of approximately 0.6 m. It was later sealed by a replastering of the floor, still in phase v, which thus provides a *terminus ante quem* for the exceptionally interesting group of objects which were found in the bottom 30 cm: three small calcite/gypsum vessels, fragments of two cuneiform tablets, a scarab-seal impression, part of a stone scarab and remains of two ivory-inlaid boxes, the more complete and elaborate of which shall be called, after the dominant feature of its decoration, the ‘Lion Box’.

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precise ethnic and linguistic grouping of the Bronze Age inhabitants of Pella (as of much of the Levant) is unknown, though it may be significant that when firm linguistic evidence becomes available (in the 1st millennium BC) the peoples of Transjordan write in dialects different from those of their western neighbours.

<sup>6</sup> These excavations were funded chiefly by the Australian Research Grants Scheme, the Australian National Gallery and the University of Sydney, and co-directed by Prof. J. B. Hennessy, the late Dr A. W. McNicoll and T. F. Potts.

<sup>7</sup> See site plan showing location of Areas III/IV (though not the individual plots) in *ADAJ* xxviii (1984), p. 56 (FIG. 1); and, for the plot positions, Potts in *Pella in Jordan* 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Pella in Jordan* 1, pp. 49ff.; J. B. Hennessy *et al.*, *ADAJ* xxvii (1983), pp. 331ff.; Potts in *Pella in Jordan* 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Pella in Jordan* 1, p. 53, pl. 118:6–9; Hennessy *et al.*, *loc. cit.* and FIGS 5–7 (note that most of this pottery comes from fills above the earliest phase v floors and some may belong to phase IV); Potts in *Pella in Jordan* 2.

<sup>10</sup> A. W. McNicoll *et al.*, *ADAJ* xxvi (1982), p. 352, FIG. 6:6; Potts in *Pella in Jordan* 2.

### Abbreviations used in footnotes

*Pella in Jordan* 1. A. W. McNicoll, R. H. Smith, J. B. Hennessy, *Pella in Jordan 1: An Interim Report on the Joint University of Sydney and The College of Wooster Excavations at Pella 1979–1981* (Canberra, 1982).

*Pella in Jordan* 2. A. W. McNicoll *et al.*, *Pella in Jordan* 2, Second Interim Report, 1982–1984 (Canberra, forthcoming).

*Tutankhamen* 1–3. H. Carter (vol. 1 with A. C. Mace), *The Tomb of Tut-ankh-amen*, 3 vols (London, 1923, 1927, 1933).

<sup>1</sup> For an account of Pella’s rediscovery and identification see R. H. Smith, *Pella of the Decapolis* 1 (College of Wooster, 1973), pp. 2ff.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 13ff., ch. v.

<sup>4</sup> These and other ancient references to Pella are collected in Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 23ff.

<sup>5</sup> This term is not intended to imply identity with the peoples of Canaan proper. The



**The Lion Box**(Reg. No. 70402 + 70415), FIGS. 1–2.<sup>10a</sup>*Shape and materials*

The wooden frame of the Lion Box has completely perished leaving only the ivories employed in the decoration of its surfaces. These were found in two groups about 15 cm apart, one representing the main body of the box (Reg. No. 70402) and the other the lid (Reg. No. 70415). Fortunately, both body and lid seem to have been intact when placed in the pit and, since the ivories were not disturbed after the deterioration of the wooden backing,<sup>11</sup> their original juxtapositions were preserved at the time of excavation. It has been possible, therefore, to reconstruct not only the decorative arrangements of the ivory elements but also the overall form of the box. The fashioning of a new wooden frame and the resetting of the ivories in their original patterns was generously undertaken by the British Museum, London.<sup>12</sup>

The key to the shape of the box is the lid (FIGS. 1–2). It takes the form of an asymmetrical gable ridge, rectangular in plan, 9.5 × 14.7 cms, and triangular in section down the long axis with a maximum height at the ridge of just over 2 cm. The ridge runs parallel to the narrow front and back ends of the box but it is off-set from centre towards the front, thus creating a large, gently inclining slope on the rear side of the ridge and a short, steep rise at the front, with asymmetrical triangular gables down each of the long sides.

Boxes with ridged lids such as this were a popular Egyptian type, well-known from tomb reliefs and the many examples which have been found almost perfectly preserved by the arid conditions of that country.<sup>13</sup> The general form is highly standardized, varying only rarely in more than minor details. Below the lid the top of the rectangular body usually carries a projecting cavetto cornice which in the present case was not inlaid and has left no trace. Below the cornice (often separated by a torus moulding) the vertical sides, here decorated with Egyptian motifs, would rest on four short feet, sometimes shod with metal.<sup>14</sup> Since the ivory decoration on the sides of the Lion Box formed only a frieze, its full height cannot now be measured, but an estimate of between 9 and 11 cm is suggested by the proportions of Egyptian parallels.<sup>15</sup> These

1. Ivory decoration from the lid of the 'Lion Box' before reconstruction. Scale in centimetres. (Pella Reg. No. 70415)



also indicate the mechanism for securing the separable lid to the body. Once slid into place on top of the box it was held down at the rear by two angled, longitudinal projections (or a single, transverse projection) on its underside which fitted into corresponding slots at the top of the inside rear wall.<sup>16</sup> At the front were two knobs, one near the ridge of the lid, the other in the short side below, which could be secured

<sup>10a</sup> Brief reports on the Lion Box have appeared previously in T. F. Potts, 'Bronze and Iron Age Discoveries in Jordan', *The Illustrated London News*, Vol. 272, No. 7037 (December, 1984), pp. 82f. (with colour photograph of lid) and *idem*, 'An ivory-decorated box from Pella (Jordan)', *Antiquity* LX (1986), pp. 217–219 with pl. xxvi (top view of reconstructed lid).

<sup>11</sup> Except for damage to the top of one of the short sides noted below.

<sup>12</sup> Special thanks for facilitating this work are extended to Mr T. C. Mitchell, Keeper, Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, Mr A. Oddy, Keeper, Department of Conservation and Mr Sherif Omar, then Chief of the Organic Section, Dept. of Conservation; and for its execution to Mr Frank Minney. Dr A. J. Spencer, Department of Egyptian Antiquities, kindly advised on aspects of the reconstruction.

<sup>13</sup> Below n. 30.

<sup>14</sup> Copper-alloy or, for luxury consumption, gold: see, e.g., *Tutankhamen 1*, pl. LVib; *Tutankhamen 3*, pl. LXXia; Winlock, *loc. cit.* (below n. 30).

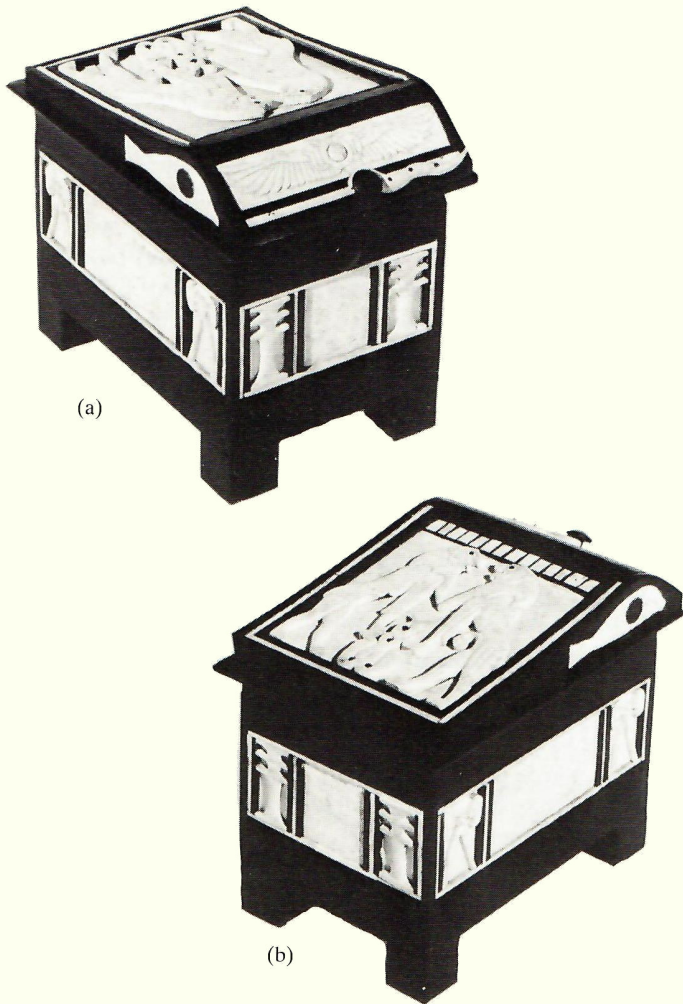
<sup>15</sup> These calculations are based principally on the following boxes from the tomb of Tutankhamun whose measurements are noted on Carter's catalogue cards in the Griffith Institute, Oxford (cf. H. Murray, M. Nuttall, *A Handlist to Howard Carter's Catalogue*

*of Objects in Tutankhamun's Tomb* (Oxford, 1963)): Cat. no. 551 (64 (width) × 45.5 (breadth) × 48.5 (height) cms) and Cat. no. 44 (48.8 × 33.9 × 32.6 cms).

<sup>16</sup> C. Aldred in C. Singer *et al.* eds, *A History of Technology 1* (Oxford, 1954), p. 694.



2a-b. The 'Lion Box' reconstructed; ivory and ebony. (Pella Reg. No. 70402 + 70415)



*Ivory decoration*<sup>19a</sup>

Both the body and the lid of the box carried ivory decoration. Around the sides, probably mid-way up, ran a continuous frieze just under 4 cms high. The arrangement is the same on each side: a large, central rectangular panel flanked by two smaller panels, each separated and framed by narrow bars. Onto the smaller flanking panels were set separately carved Egyptian motifs: *djed* 'pillars' on the shorter sides and paired papyrus stalks on the longer sides. They are basically flat silhouettes about 2 mm thick; the rounding of the front edges and the internal detail picked out in low relief lend only a minimum of three-dimensionality. They were attached to their background panels by glue.<sup>20</sup> Although no *appliqué* decoration survives on the large central panels these are unlikely to have been left blank and probably carried wooden elements which have perished along with the box's frame or, less likely perhaps, decoration in a precious material such as gold which was later removed for reuse. Gaps between the framing bars and the panels indicate where thin vertical wooden strips were inlaid alternately with the ivory members (as now restored, FIG. 2). Though much of the frieze was broken when recovered, the fragments are themselves well preserved and the frieze is virtually complete except for the top of one of the short sides, which had eroded from the pit fill before excavation, and the absence of one of the four pairs of papyrus stalks, presumably lost in antiquity.

The lid lay about 15 cm away and slightly lower in the pit fill. The decoration here (FIG. 1) is more elaborate and original and is perfectly preserved except for some minor ancient damage.<sup>21</sup> It comprises two main designs oriented in opposite directions on the two slopes of the gable ridge. The principal group, occupying the more gentle slope, was viewed from the rear end of the box and consist of rampant antithetical lions resting their front paws on the heads of intertwined *uraei*. Like the *appliqué* elements on the sides, these animals are each separately carved in low relief, and they are again set on an ivory backing. In this case, however, the background is not a single panel but a combination of 10 irregularly-shaped panels economically cut so that they form a rectangular field, 8.9 × 9.3 cm, which fills all the spaces between the animals while not overlapping with them any more than is necessary. This neatly produces the effect of a single large background panel using only two-thirds the amount of ivory. The whole group is framed on the sides and lower edge by bars, and above by a row of small inlaid rectangles.

The lions stand rampant roaring at each other, muzzles fur-

by tying string round them and then sealed with a lump of clay and stamped.<sup>17</sup>

Various woods were used for ridged-lid boxes in Egypt. Those carrying ivory decoration are almost invariably faced with ebony whose dark tone and lustrous finish provided the perfect complement to the hard, white ivory.<sup>18</sup> There can be little doubt therefore that this was the material used for the Lion Box, at least for the areas immediately around and between the ivories and probably for all the visible exterior, as it has been restored. The frame of the box and the parts which could not be seen may have been constructed from a less valuable wood such as cedar or juniper.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> H. G. Fischer, *Lexicon der Ägyptologie iv* (1982), pp. 182f. For various kinds of containers sealed in this manner see *Tutankhamen 3*, pls LIIIa, LXVib, LXVIIb and C. Desroches-Noblecourt, *Tutankhamun, Life and Death of a Pharaoh* (London, 1963), pl. xxiii b.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., *Tutankhamen 3*, pls LXXIa-b; K. S. Gilbert *et al.* (eds), *Treasures of Tutankhamun* (New York, 1976), pl. 32; H. S. Baker, *Furniture in the Ancient World* (London, 1966), FIG. 227; Winlock, *loc. cit.* (below n. 30).

<sup>19</sup> This was common practice in Egypt: Aldred, *op. cit.* (n. 16), p. 686.

<sup>19a</sup> The material has been visually identified by the Organic Materials Section, Dept. of Conservation, British Museum as ivory rather than bone. In view of growing evidence that much of the Levantine ivory hitherto regarded as elephant ivory is in fact from hippopotamus tusks, a species identification cannot yet be given. See O. Krzyszkowska, 'Ivory from hippopotamus tusk in the Aegean Bronze Age', *Antiquity* LVIII (1984), 123-125, and a study of the Ras Shamra ivory by A. Caubet in press. See postscript.

<sup>20</sup> There are no dowel holes in the *appliqués* nor in their backing panels, except for one panel behind a *djed* which has an unexplained perforation near the bottom. There is no corresponding hole in the *djed*.

<sup>21</sup> The tip of the left lion's tail and the corner of the top right backing panel are missing; otherwise there are only small chips.



rowed and ears pricked. The internal detail of the heads and bodies is to varying degrees stylized, but enough naturalism is achieved to convey effectively the aggression of the subject matter, the contrived, formal composition notwithstanding. The paws are carefully defined and the musculature of the legs is skilfully though sometimes schematically articulated, particularly the simple inverted U-shaped grooves defining the thigh muscles. The manes are more severely stylized as large untextured areas with stiff fronts, an important feature discussed further below. The tails are shown in a peculiar position curling down between the legs and up under the abdomen from where the tip falls down phallus-like.<sup>22</sup> Each lion was secured by three dowels. Two were invisible from the front, being set in holes drilled into the back of the body; the third was placed in a drilling running right through the ivory at the centre of the eye. In this prominent position a strong tonal contrast between ivory and dowel wood was obviously desirable and suggests that ebony was used here also.

The lions stand on the heads of addorsed *uraei* whose bodies intertwine upwards between the lions' forelegs. Their eyes are reserved in low relief, the dowels being set instead between the meanders of the serpents' bodies. This is again a place where the dark-light contrast could be used to advantage, in this case emphasizing the distinction between figure and ground.

The steeper face of the ridge, viewed from the front end of the box, is inlaid with a broad rectangular panel carved in low relief with a winged sun-disc, the symbol of Horus of Behdet.<sup>23</sup> The sun-disc itself is carved from a separate piece of ivory set into a hole cut through the centre of the panel. It is surrounded by a corona from which emanate *uraei*, and flanked by outstretched falcon's wings. The winged disc is bordered below by a bar upon which rests a serpent, copied from the hieroglyph representing the horned viper *cerastes cornutus*.<sup>24</sup> The viper is secured by means of four dowels running right through the ivory, one at the eye and three along the body where they effectively evoke the viper's spotted skin. Below its head a wider drilling (3 mm) cuts the lower edge of the underlying bar. This hole probably accommodated the lid's wooden knob, now perished, to which the snake was attached for extra security by a fifth dowel running horizontally into its head. The decoration of the lid is completed by Egyptian-style eyes, probably simplified 'Eyes of Horus' (*wed-jats*), set into the vertical pediments at each end of the ridge.

None of the ivories shows evidence of gilding or colouring except perhaps the face of the sun-disc which is slightly darker and may have been stained.

#### *Techniques of manufacture and assembly*

The ivories were cut with a saw whose abrasion marks are clearly visible on the backs and sides of the inlays. The sawing marks on the backs of the *appliqués* have been largely erased to provide a flat surface for maximum contact with the underlying panels, but some roughness was left to facilitate adhesion of the glue. After shaping, the internal detail of the decorated pieces was executed with a sharp carving implement, and the front edges of the *appliqué* motifs were rounded off. The faces of all pieces, and the sides of the *appliqué* motifs, were then smoothed of all sawing and carving marks and polished to a high lustre, which they retain to this day. This process was completed before the ivories were attached to the wooden frame of the box by a combination of inlay and *appliqué* work. Inlaid elements were presumably secured with glue for all but one have no dowel holes.<sup>25</sup> The *appliqué* elements on the lid were secured, as described above, by dowels skilfully placed where the tonal contrast between ebony and ivory could best be put to aesthetic advantage. A gold-capped copper-alloy dowel found in the pit was probably one of many used to attach a veneer or strengthen the corner joints. Exactly similar dowels are used for these purposes on Egyptian boxes.<sup>26</sup>

#### Foreign stylistic connexions, origin and date

##### *Style*

The Lion Box clearly owes much to traditions which are foreign to its Jordanian provenance; and since such connexions constitute one of the chief means by which archaeological evidence may contribute to a better understanding of foreign relations, it is appropriate in a conference devoted to these issues to explore them in some detail. By defining the connexions of the Lion Box with works from surrounding regions we may hope to illustrate some of the cultural influences affecting the southern Levant in the mid-2nd millennium BC.

As throughout antiquity, these influences were determined largely by geography. The only land corridor between Egypt and the Near East, the southern Levant was inevitably the arena of exchange, communication and contact of all kinds between Egypt and the other kingdoms of ancient southwestern Asia. Never was this more true than during the heightened internationalism of the final Middle Bronze and Late Bronze Ages. Regularly traversed by traders, caravans, armies and diplomats from all over the Near East, the peoples of Palestine-Transjordan were exposed more than ever before to foreigners, foreign goods and foreign ideas and it is hardly surprising that their own material culture did not remain un-

<sup>22</sup> There are no close parallels on Near Eastern ivories known to the author. The not dissimilar position of the tail of the stalking or covering lioness on the Mycenaean seal, Sakellariou *op. cit.* (below n. 91), no. 246 is suggestive, but no connexion is likely.

<sup>23</sup> I. E. S. Edwards in K. S. Gillbert *et al.* (eds), *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 117; D. Wildung, 'Flügelsonne', *Lexikon der Ägyptologie II* (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 277ff.; A. H. Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 30 (1944), pp. 46ff.

<sup>24</sup> A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1957), p. 476, sign 19.

<sup>25</sup> Above no. 20. The adhesive was probably a colloid or fish glue both of which were used in antiquity for securing ivories and to attach gilt: R. D. Barnett, *Ancient Ivories in the Middle East*, Qedem 14 (Jerusalem, 1982), p. 14 with n. 39. The inlaid pieces have brown stains over most of their backs which might be mistaken for remains of a bituminous glue (cf. *ibid.*). That this is not the case, however, is evident from the fact that it does not occur on the backs of the *appliqué djeds* and papyrus stems which must have been held in place by glue alone. It occurs only on those surfaces of the ivories which would have been in direct contact with the wooden frame and is more likely, therefore, to be residual resin from the wood.

<sup>26</sup> Aldred, *op. cit.* (n. 16), p. 693; cf. *Tutankhamen* 3, pl. xva and pl. LXIXa (footstool).



affected.<sup>27</sup> Pella lay very near one of the main arteries of international communication—the eastern branch-route of the *Via Maris* linking Egypt with inland Syro-Mesopotamia<sup>28</sup>—and must have felt the effects of these contacts almost as much as the cities of the coastal plain.

In the case of the Lion Box the predominant influence derived from the southern terminus of this route, namely Egypt. The ridged-lid box is a characteristically Egyptian form whose peculiar shape imitates the shrine originally associated with Nekhbet, vulture goddess of el-Kâb in Upper Egypt (FIG. 3).<sup>29</sup> According to tradition, when the rulers of el-Kâb succeeded in conquering all of Upper Egypt and then, through Menes, Lower Egypt as well, Nekhbet became joint tutelary deity of the king of the Two Lands along with Wadjet the cobra deity of Lower Egypt. Their sanctuaries thus became representative of all the local deities in their respective regions. Tomb reliefs show that boxes and caskets imitating the shape of the Great House (*per wer*), as Nekhbet's shrine was called, were being made in Egypt by at least the end of the Old Kingdom, and a number of Middle and New Kingdom examples have been found.<sup>30</sup> The Lion Box emphasizes the architectural origin of the shape in the placement of the winged sun-disc on the steep front-facing slope of the lid, precisely where this emblem of Horus the Behdetite was traditionally placed on ridged-roof shrines (FIG. 3).<sup>31</sup>

The Lion Box seems to be only the second of this type which has been found outside Egypt, the other being the obsidian and gold box of Amenemhet IV from Byblos.<sup>32</sup> However, they may have been more common in Asia than these two surviving examples suggest; most of the Egyptian examples (and, presumably, any local copies) were made almost entirely from wood, which will have perished in the wetter climate of the Levant.

As has been suggested at many points already, the decoration of the box is also predominantly Egyptian in inspiration. The practice of framing panels with alternating strips of ivory and wood, almost always ebony, is a thoroughly Egyptian tradition amply illustrated by surviving examples of high quality carpentry.<sup>33</sup> The motifs employed in the decoration are

3. Gold-covered shrine from the Tomb of Tutankhamun. (Photograph: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)



likewise unequivocally Egyptian although some have been adapted in non-Egyptian ways. The *djeds* (which often appear on Egyptian boxes),<sup>34</sup> paired papyrus stalks and winged sun-disc are faithful copies of common Egyptian prototypes.<sup>35</sup> The viper below the winged disc is accurate in what is shown but lacks the horns which characterize the hieroglyph. This can be attributed probably to practical considerations: tiny horns in such brittle material, situated immediately above the knob around which string was wound, would have been extremely vulnerable. But its use as a purely decorative motif is less easy to explain in terms of canonical Egyptian practice where it functions only as a hieroglyph. The eyes set into the gables of the lid clearly derive from the Egyptian *wedjat* motif but these too have been simplified (in this case to fit the available space) by omitting the eyebrow and falcon's markings which

<sup>27</sup> It is, on the contrary, the remarkable degree of independence and innovation characteristic of Canaanite art at its best that presents the challenge to explanation.

<sup>28</sup> Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible, A Historical Geography*, 2nd edn, trans. A. F. Rainey (London, 1979), pp. 52f.

<sup>29</sup> Late 4th millennium representations on cylinder seals explain the origin of its strange ridged roof: a wooden frame covered by the skin of an animal whose head and shoulders form a hump at one end; Edwards *loc. cit.* (n. 23).

<sup>30</sup> Old Kingdom tomb reliefs: G. Jéquier, *Fouilles à Saqqarah, Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains de Pepi II* (Cairo, 1929), FIGS 50, 140, pl. xiv. Middle and New Kingdom tomb-relief illustrations: J. Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne IV, bas-reliefs et peintures, scènes de la vie quotidienne* (Paris, 1964), pp. 157, 160ff. For extant boxes see the many examples in *Tutankhamen 1–3, passim*; and the reconstructed boxes of Sit-Hathor-Yunet, daughter of Sesostris II in H. E. Winlock, *The Treasure of Labun* (New York, 1934), pp. 12–19, pl. 1.

<sup>31</sup> The inscription on Tutankhamun's shrine, as on many such representations, identifies the emblem as 'Horus the Behdetite': Edwards *loc. cit.* (n. 23); see also Gardiner, *op. cit.* (n. 23), p. 46.

<sup>32</sup> Found in the tomb of the Byblite king Ibshemuabi: P. Montet, *Byblos et l'Égypte* (Paris, 1928), pp. 157ff., pls LXXXVIII, XC; colour illustrations in C. Vandersleyen, *Das Alte Ägypten, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 15* (Berlin, 1975), Taf. XLIXb.

<sup>33</sup> Above n. 18; see also *Tutankhamen 1*, pls XLIXb, LV, LIX, LXXIIIa; *Tutankhamen*

3, pls xva–b, xxxiii, LXIXa. The technique of laying cut-out ivory figures over a plain ivory background seems to be otherwise unattested. It is presumably designed to achieve the effect of a large, low-relief panel, a technique not common in Egypt until the New Kingdom, when it may be due to Syrian influence (Aldred, *op. cit.* (n. 16), p. 669), and widely employed by the Mycenaeans. The carving of the Pella animals as silhouettes may also relate to the cut-out style of bone inlay work popular in Hyksos Palestine (cf. Barnett, *op. cit.* (n. 25), p. 25 and below n. 78).

<sup>34</sup> Fischer, *op. cit.* (n. 17), p. 184 with n. 61.

<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the insertion of a separate piece of ivory for the sun-disc may imitate the Egyptian practice of distinguishing this element by material and/or colour. In jewelry it is often fashioned from carnelian. (Information courtesy Dr Helen Whitehouse.)



4. Skull-cap from the mummy of Tutankhamun; faience and gold beads. (Photograph: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)



constitute an essential reflection of Horus's double aspect as anthropomorphic son of Osiris and Isis, and falcon skygod. The *uraei*, though quintessentially Egyptian, are also rendered in an unusual way: addorsed with upright meandering tails. This is rare in Egypt but does occur on the embroidered skull-cap of Tutankhamun (FIG. 4).<sup>36</sup> The arrangement there is not exactly the same as at Pella—the tails only touch at the meanders without intertwining—but the general dependence, as in all the motifs cited so far, is quite apparent.<sup>37</sup>

We come lastly to the lions which dominate the decoration of the lid. These are not obvious copies of an Egyptian type; indeed their rampant stance—standing on all fours but with the front legs higher than the hind legs causing the back to rise almost vertically—is quite alien to Egyptian iconography. Antithetical quadrupeds occur in Egyptian art but they stand on a uniform groundline<sup>38</sup> (see below and FIG. 5); and unless hunting or being hunted,<sup>39</sup> Egyptian lions usually do not dis-

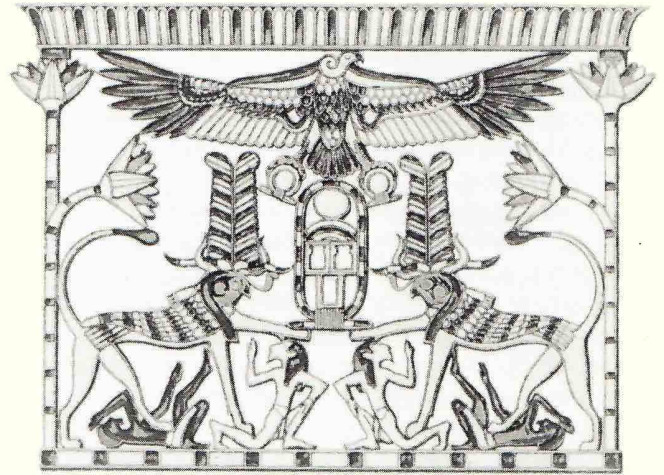
<sup>36</sup> Dr Jaromír Málek (pers. comm.) suggests that the Egyptian examples may represent the cobra goddess Wadjet and the vulture goddess Nekhbet, who could also sometimes be portrayed as a cobra; on Tutankhamun's skullcap they are both, following Amarna-period practice, identified by inscriptions as aspects of the Aten.

<sup>37</sup> Less similar are the addorsed *uraei* with upright tails (not meandering) which frequently occur flanking a sun-disc or cartouche, especially in jewellery. See conveniently C. Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs* (London, 1971), pls 94, 107.

<sup>38</sup> Exceptions are rare and often reflect Asiatic influence; e.g. the goats flanking a thicker on a copper-alloy stand and ivory inlays from Kerma. W. Stephenson Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1965), pls 99a and 82b (lower right) respectively.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., *Tutankhamen* 3, pl. XLVHC; W. Wreszinski, *Löwenjagd im Alten Aegypten* (Leip-

5. Pectoral of Queen Mereret from Dahshûr; reign of Sesostris III; gold inlaid with lapis lazuli, turquoise and carnelian.



play such a ferocious attitude. These features belong rather to the traditions of the Near East, particularly Syria and Mesopotamia, where rampant lions (and other real and fantastic animals) in open-mouthed, aggressive attitudes, often antithetically flanking a hero or tree, were a distinctive and popular motif throughout pre-Classical antiquity.

The antithetical arrangements in which these Asiatic lions are usually found raises the question of whether the composition of the Pella design also derives from this quarter. Antithetical animals are indeed rare in Egyptian art and their more frequent occurrence in particular periods—notably late Predynastic and New Kingdom times—can plausibly be ascribed to the influence of Asiatic traditions.<sup>40</sup>

In the case of the Lion Box, however, there is reason to regard an indigenous origin as more likely. The composition of the Pella lions is suggestively close to that of a class of Egyptian jewellery which owes no obvious debt to foreign prototypes. From early in the Middle Kingdom a popular form of pectoral, well-represented in grave goods of Twelfth-Dynasty royal ladies, had as its central motif a pair of antithetical deities in human, animal or hybrid form, or rarely human figures representing the pharaoh.<sup>41</sup> As in the pectoral of Mereret (FIG. 5), the beasts (here a pair of hieracosphinxes) usually flank a cartouche placed in the centre of the design between the animals' heads; lower down, in the place occupied by the

zig, 1932), Taf. 14 (Abb. 39), 16 (Abb. 42–44). A wooden lion's head with an expression very similar to that of the Pella lions, but much later in date (Achaemenid ?), is H. W. Müller, 'Löwenkulpturen in der Ägyptischen Sammlung des Bayerischen Staates', *Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* XVI (1965), Abb. 22–23.

<sup>40</sup> For the Elamite (Susian) origin of late 4th-millennium representations see P. Amiet, *Glyptique susienne des origines à l'époque des Perses achéménides* (Paris, 1972), pp. 72f., 76. The antithetical pairs that occur in XVIIIth-Dynasty Egypt are usually on representations of Asiatic (Syrian) tribute (P. Montet, *Les reliques de l'art syrien dans l'Égypte du Nouvel Empire* (Strasbourg, 1937), pp. 100ff., FIGS 47, 122, 146) as are the more common vessels etc. with addorsed animal heads (*ibid.*, pp. 94ff.).

<sup>41</sup> See generally A. Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery* (London, 1971), pp. 83ff. (Middle Kingdom), 159ff. (New Kingdom) with references.



6. Middle Kingdom pectoral probably from Dahshûr; gold, originally inlaid.



Lion Box's *uraei*, there may be a subsidiary motif (in this case supplicating foreigners). The hieracosphinxes place their front paws on the knees and heads of the foreigners who turn away from each other, not unlike the Pella lions and addorsed *uraei*. Another pectoral (FIG. 6) carries composite animals, a lion-bodied hieracosphinx representing Horus-Harmakhis and a Seth-animal, flanking a frontal face of Bat. They sit with their rumps on the ground but otherwise the stance is very similar to that of the Pella lions: front legs upright and stiff, the back rising steeply to the head which faces forward. The most suggestive link between the Lion Box and the pectorals, however, is the similarity of the ivory elements which frame the Pella lions to the representation of the primeval shrine which forms the border of the pectorals (FIG. 5). The base and sides of the shrine are usually indicated by narrow strips (here with floral terminals),<sup>42</sup> the roof by a cavetto cornice (less often *wedjat*-eyes flanking a sun-disc (FIG. 6)), all inlaid with variously coloured stones or artificial substitutes. The narrow sides and bottom of the shrine correspond to the bars

<sup>42</sup> The unembellished shrine without floral terminals provides the most likely prototype for the Pella framework; e.g. Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, pls xv, xviii, xxiiB. The sides usually lean slightly inwards.

7. Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut, Deir el Bahari.



beside and below the Pella lions; and the alternating blocks of light and dark colour along the cornice of the pectorals provide a plausible source of inspiration for the otherwise enigmatic row of rectangles above. Since ridged-lid boxes are known to have been used as jewellery caskets,<sup>43</sup> the use of a motif formally very close to a jewellery design would be quite appropriate.

Egyptian influence may also be detected in certain aspects of the stylization of the lions. This applies in particular to their highly distinctive manes. The mane of an Egyptian lion is typically divided into a collar-like band running from ear to ear around the face behind which lies the larger area of the mane proper (FIG. 7).<sup>44</sup> This is clearly marked on the Pella lions. Also peculiarly Egyptian is the line of the mane's edge falling in a crescent-shaped tip behind the shoulder joint of the forelegs and continuing across to the chest in a scalloped double curve (FIG. 8).<sup>45</sup> The unnaturally straight ventral mane narrowing to a point before the chest may also derive from Egypt where the front of the mane is usually flattened (often to provide a surface for decoration or inscription) particularly on sphinxes. In profile views, such as the relief from Hatshep-

<sup>43</sup> E.g. the boxes of Sit-Hathor-Yunet; Winlock, *loc. cit.* (n. 30).

<sup>44</sup> H. G. Evers, *Staat aus dem Stein: Denkmäler, Geschichte und Bedeutung der Ägyptischen Plastik während des Mittleren Reichs* (Munich, 1929), vol. II, p. 90; see e.g. *ibid.*, vol. I, Taf. 122, 125; U. Schweitzer *Löwen und Sphinx im Alten Ägypten*, Ägyptologische Forschungen 15 (Glückstadt, 1948), Taf. XI:1-2, 5, 7; Müller, *op. cit.* (n. 39), Abb. 12-13, 14, 20, 21, 22-23, 25.

<sup>45</sup> Evers *op. cit.* II, pp. 89f., Abb. 60; *ibid.* I, Taf. 49, 79, 137; Schweitzer *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 46, Taf. VIII:2, x:1, 6; Müller *op. cit.* (n. 39), Abb. 4, 24, 40 (crescent tip), Abb. 16-17, 30 (double curve); Vandersleyen, *op. cit.* (n. 32), Taf. 167.



## 8. Sphinx; Second Intermediate Period (with later inscriptions).



sut's mortuary temple (FIG. 7),<sup>46</sup> the horizontal bottom edge is sometimes represented by a projecting point. The artist of the Lion Box has exaggerated this feature far beyond the limits condoned by Egyptian canons.

It is noteworthy that manes with the double-curved border and ventral projection, perhaps a more remote reflection of the Egyptian type, occur very early in Anatolia among the 19th/18th-century ivories from Acmehüyük.<sup>47</sup>

*Date of context*

The East Cut phase v context of the pit from which the Lion Box came places it in the period characterized at Pella by Chocolate-on-White Ware, conventionally assigned to Late Bronze I. This is somewhat earlier than would be expected for ivory-work of this style and quality. The main concentration of Late Bronze Age ivories, notably those from Megiddo VIIA, Lachish Fosse Temple III, and Tel Farah (south),<sup>48</sup> falls towards the end of this period in the late 13th/12th century BC. On the provisional stratigraphical dating suggested above, the context in which the Lion Box was found is somewhere in the region of two centuries earlier, and the box itself may have been quite old at the time of burial (see below).

To pursue this issue further it is necessary to consider three other objects found in the pit with the Lion Box which give promise of being independently datable, perhaps with greater

<sup>46</sup> Cf. also *courant* sphinxes such as A. Dessenne, *Le sphinx, étude iconographique 1, des origines à la fin du second millénaire* (Paris, 1957), pl. xx:261 and *Tutankhamen 2*, pls xix, xx. Further naturalistic features which the Pella lions share with representations such as the Hapshepsut relief may also reflect Egyptian influence: e.g. the musculature of the front legs and the slight projection of the mane over the forehead (for this see also Müller *op. cit.* (n. 39), Abb. 23).

<sup>47</sup> P. O. Harper, 'Dating a Group of Ivories from Anatolia', *The Connoisseur* 172 (1969), pp. 156ff. (with previous literature) notes other Egyptian features on these ivories; see also M. Mellink, 'The Pratt Ivories in the Metropolitan Museum of Art—Kerma—Chronology and the Transition from the Early Bronze to Middle Bronze', *American Journal of Archaeology* 73 (1969), pp. 285ff.

<sup>48</sup> G. Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories*, OIP LII (Chicago, 1939); O. Tufnell, C. H. Inge, G. L. Harding, *Lachish II: The Fosse Temple* (London, 1940); W. M. F. Petrie, *Beth-Pelet I* (London, 1930), p. 19, pl. lv.

9. (a) Scarab impression from Pella; clay; 2.0 × 1.4 × 1.4 cms. (Reg. No. 71999). (b) 'Hyksos' scarab from Jericho Tomb B 35; glazed steatite (?); actual size. (c) Men-kheper-re scarab from Gurob; glazed steatite (?); actual size.



(a)



(b)



(c)

precision than the ivories.<sup>49</sup> First, there were two fragments of cuneiform tablets.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately neither is complete enough for any connected sense to be made but their presence is itself significant. Very few cuneiform texts have been found in Palestine-Transjordan<sup>51</sup> but if any concentration can be said to exist it is in the Amarna period.<sup>52</sup> Rarer finds extend back into the Middle Bronze Age and a group at Taanach, not far from Pella, is dated to the 15th century BC.<sup>53</sup>

More important for present purposes is a scarab impression on a fragmentary clay sealing (FIG. 9a).<sup>54</sup> It is about three-quarters preserved and shows a man striding to right in conquering pose holding aloft a mace with which he is about to smite a kneeling victim. The smiting figure closely resembles the classic representation of the conquering pharaoh, a recurrent theme in Egyptian iconography from the time of Narmer. This motif is not common on royal-name scarabs until the Ramesside period<sup>55</sup> but it occurs in the Eighteenth Dynasty, probably as early as Tuthmosis III.<sup>56</sup> These Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Dynasty representations, however, show the pharaoh crowned whereas the Pella figure has no recognizable headgear; he would seem to be wearing only the short Egyptian wig, if anything.<sup>57</sup> Similarly round-headed smiting figures occur rarely on 'Hyksos' scarabs such as that shown in FIG. 9b

<sup>49</sup> These objects are discussed in greater detail in Potts *et al.*, *ADAJ*, in press (6th Season Report) and *Pella in Jordan 2*.

<sup>50</sup> The following remarks are based on a study of the tablets by Dr J. A. Black forthcoming in *Pella in Jordan 2* and discussions with Dr Stephanie Dalley who kindly examined the texts in Oxford before they were baked.

<sup>51</sup> The only other cuneiform text from Transjordan is an Achaemenid economic document recently discovered at Tawilan: S. Dalley, 'The Cuneiform Tablet from Tell Tawilan', *Levant* xvi (1984), pp. 19ff.

<sup>52</sup> See most recently D. O. Edzard, 'Amarna und die Archive seiner Korrespondenten zwischen Ugarit und Gaza', *Biblical Archaeology Today*, ed. J. Amitai (Jerusalem, 1985), pp. 248ff. and A. E. Glock, 'Texts and Archaeology at Tell Ta'annek', *Berytus* xxxi (1983), p. 58 with nn. 2–5.

<sup>53</sup> A. E. Glock in M. Avi-Yonah & E. Stern (eds) *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* iv (Oxford, 1978), p. 1146, with previous literature.

<sup>54</sup> This may have been used to seal the box as was customarily done in Egypt (above n. 17). Unfortunately, the back of the sealing, which would in this case have carried the impression of the string, is lost.

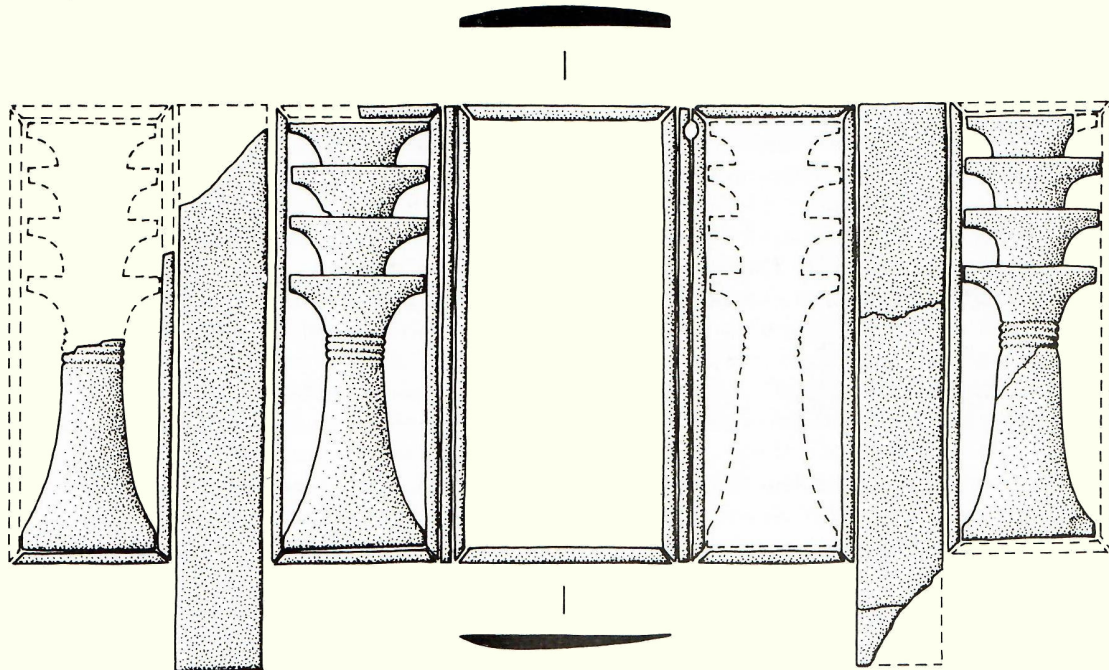
<sup>55</sup> Many of these are Men-kheper-re scarabs produced, like most with this name, long after his reign had ended; B. Jaeger, *Essai de classification et datation des scarabées Menkhéperre* (Göttingen, 1982), pp. 197ff. with nn. 808, 821.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 198f.

<sup>57</sup> Unless he is wearing a poorly represented Blue Crown, as does the smiting king on some Men-kheper-re scarabs, W. C. Hayes, *The Sceptre of Egypt II* (Cambridge Mass., 1959), p. 127, e.g. *ibid.*, fig. 66: 3rd row, 6th along. Less probable is the *khat* wig-cover which continues down the back; cf. Aldred, *op. cit.* (n. 37), pl. 42 (Amenemhet III).



10. Ivory decoration from the sides of a box (?); max. ht. 7.9 cms.  
(Pella Reg. No. 70416)



from Jericho.<sup>58</sup> There are differences<sup>59</sup> but the general similarity is enough to show that the type goes back to the late Middle Bronze Age.

At present, therefore, while neither the tablets nor the scarab impression can be shown to preclude the provisional ceramic dating of the pit from which the Lion Box came to Late Bronze I, both would perhaps be expected more in Late Bronze II.<sup>60</sup>

The other objects from the pit, though none is yet closely datable, may have something to contribute on this issue also. Besides the Lion Box, tablets and scarab impression described above, the pit contained fragments of a second ivory-decorated container (FIG. 10), unfortunately too poorly preserved for the shape to be reconstructed in detail.<sup>61</sup> What is left of the decoration, carved in the same technique and to the same high quality as the Lion Box, shows *djeds* framed by bars. The *djeds* are again faithful copies of an Egyptian type, taller than those of the Lion Box and with central ribbing.<sup>62</sup> Also present were three small calcite/gypsum vessels, all very corroded.

<sup>58</sup> D. Kirkbride in K. M. Kenyon, *Excavations at Jericho II: The Tombs Excavated in 1955–8* (London, 1965), p. 623 no. 20, FIG. 292:20 from Tomb B 35. O. Tufnell's classification of this scarab in *Studies on Scarab Seals II* (Warminster, 1984), pl. XLIII: 2730 as belonging to her Class 10A1f ('empty handed' figures; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 134ff.) seems to be incorrect.

<sup>59</sup> The Jericho scarab has hieroglyphs in the field and no kneeling victim.

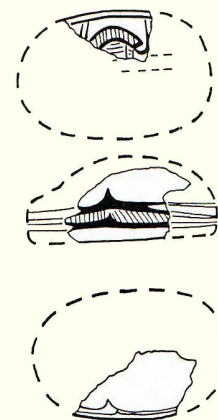
<sup>60</sup> C. Klammer kindly informs me that the shape of one of the plain calcite/gypsum vessels from the pit (see below) may also fit better with a later dating, but this cannot be confirmed at the time of writing.

<sup>61</sup> It is certainly cylindrical with a diameter of c. 13 to 17 cms and a height of at least 8 cms.

<sup>62</sup> Above n. 34; see, e.g., Vandersleyen, *loc. cit.* (n. 32).

Two are plain<sup>63</sup> while the third takes the traditional Egyptian form of a squatting monkey/baboon. This probably, and the others possibly, are Egyptian imports.<sup>64</sup> Finally, we may note the fragment of a stone scarab (FIG. 11). Only a small part of the design survives showing part of the hieroglyph for gold (*nbw*), a motif common on Hyksos and later design scarabs.

11. Scarab fragment; heat-treated (glazed?) stone; 1.2 × 0.7 × 0.7 cms. (Pella Reg. No. 70425)



<sup>63</sup> See above n. 60.

<sup>64</sup> Neither of the usual criteria for Egyptian imports (calcite rather than gypsum, drilled rather than gouged; I. Ben-Dor, *QDAP XI* (1945), pp. 93ff.) has yet been confirmed. The monkey vase seems to be drilled but (like the other two) it is very badly corroded. The stone has not yet been analysed.



It is remarkable that, with the exception of the tablets, these closely associated objects—the Lion and Djed boxes, the calcite vessels, scarab fragment and scarab impression—all have strong Egyptian connexions.<sup>65</sup> And herein, perhaps, lies an indirect clue to their date.

What is the most plausible historical context for such a collection of objects? The main concentrations of Egyptian and Egyptianizing objects in Palestine-Transjordan occur in the Hyksos period and under the Nineteenth Dynasty.<sup>66</sup> The Eighteenth Dynasty is not as well represented and Egyptian objects are particularly scarce in the 15th century BC.<sup>67</sup> Yet historical records, particularly the inscriptions of Tuthmosis III (1479–1425 BC),<sup>68</sup> indicate that the Egyptians were active in Palestine-Transjordan at that time. Garrisons were established in or before Tuthmosis' reign at Sharuhén and possibly also Gaza.<sup>69</sup> More important for the north where Paḥel lay was Tuthmosis' Megiddo campaign of 1456 BC. Paḥel (i.e. *phr*) is listed among the places which submitted as a result of that siege,<sup>70</sup> a victory which represented a major landmark in the establishment of Egyptian hegemony over Canaan. Measures taken to ensure the continuing loyalty of the region<sup>71</sup> may have included the establishment of a permanent Egyptian presence somewhere in north Canaan, perhaps at Beth-shan a few kilometres from Pella across the Jordan River.<sup>72</sup> In such circumstances a general increase in the availability and incidence of Egyptian or Egyptian-inspired objects would present no anomaly.

The historical evidence, therefore, is consistent with a dating of the Lion Box and associated finds (including the scarab impression with possible Tuthmoside parallels) to the period

<sup>65</sup> The tablets too may owe their existence to direct or indirect Egyptian influence (cf. the Amarna letters) but while their contents remain uncertain this can be no more than speculation.

<sup>66</sup> For a critical survey see J. M. Weinstein, 'The Egyptian Empire in Palestine: A Reassessment', *BASOR* 241 (1981), pp. 1ff.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>68</sup> Egyptian dates follow the low chronology of K. A. Kitchen, 'Review of *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes, January 12, 1977*', *Serapis* 4 (1977–78), pp. 65ff. (conveniently summarized in *idem, Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II* (Warminster, 1982), pp. 238f.).

<sup>69</sup> Weinstein, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> Smith *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 24f.

<sup>71</sup> Tuthmosis consolidated his hold on the conquered regions by appointing some new governors and taking the sons of other Canaanite princes to Egypt: K. Sethe, *Urkunden des Ägyptischen Altertums, Abt. IV, Bd III: Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* (Leipzig, 1907), pp. 662–667, 780 (1st campaign), 689f. (6th campaign); translated by J. A. Wilson in J. B. Pritchard ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd edn (Princeton, 1969), pp. 237, 239, 242(a). See also S. Ahituv, 'Economic Factors in the Egyptian Conquest of Canaan', *Israel Exploration Journal* 28 (1978), pp. 93ff. on the subsequent appropriation of land and exaction of tribute from the towns of Nuges, Yanoam and Herenkeru.

<sup>72</sup> This would correspond to Level IX at that site in which a scarab of Tuthmosis (and none later) was found (A. Rowe, *The Topography and History of Beth-Shan* (Philadelphia, 1930), p. 10, pl. 34:2). Dr P. McGovern, who is preparing the Late Bronze Age levels from Beth-shan for publication, kindly informs me that the Level IX pottery is consistent with the excavator's dating to the period of Tuthmosis and after (A. Rowe, *op. cit.*, *idem, The Four Canaanite Temples of Beth-Shan* (Philadelphia, 1940)); though Levels VIII–VI must all be dated to the time of the Rameside garrison as argued by Albright in *AASOR* xvii (1938), pp. 76f., and generally followed since (see e.g. F. James, *The Iron Age at Beth Shan* (Philadelphia, 1966)). (See, however, the recent defence of Rowe's dating, A. Kempinski in M. Avi-Yonah ed., *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land I* (London, 1975), pp. 213ff.).

following Tuthmosis' invasion, i.e. to the latter half of the 15th century BC. There are notorious dangers, however, in trying to read history directly into the archaeological record, and these historical considerations will have to be carefully weighed against further stratigraphical and ceramic data from East Cut phase v. The general problem with all such reasoning is that the orientation of material culture may vary independently of changes in political alignment, a fact which the Hyksos period well illustrates. Egyptianizing objects, particularly scarabs, are common in Palestine-Transjordan during the Hyksos Middle Bronze Age, yet the direction of foreign pressure—i.e. from Palestine on Lower Egypt—was the reverse of that during the Nineteenth Dynasty. Valuable luxury objects such as the Lion Box are likely to be especially misleading in this regard precisely because of their desirability. High quality Egyptian and Egyptianizing objects would have been appreciated and sought after by those who could afford them in all periods; supply permitting, they would always have found a market, in times of independence no less than in periods of oppression. It would be dangerous to treat any such object as an index of Egyptian cultural or political penetration.

More secure evidence for the dating of phase v and the burial of the Lion Box should be available soon when Plot IIIN, representing a further 100 m<sup>2</sup>, reaches the level of this occupation.

#### *Origin and date of manufacture*

A secure date for the Lion Box's context, however, will provide only a *terminus ante quem* for its date of manufacture. A work of such quality and value may have been quite old when finally discarded or lost. Assessing the box's true age immediately raises the question of its place of origin and the two issues may most easily be considered together.

Where then is the Lion Box likely to have been made? Its findspot certainly cannot be regarded as decisive. Many ancient documents, notably the Amarna correspondence, testify to the fact that high-quality luxury items often travelled considerable distances.<sup>73</sup> The issue has therefore to be decided on style, inadequate a basis though this may be.

The overwhelmingly Egyptian character of the box's shape and decoration proves beyond any question that it comes from a region strongly influenced by Egyptian art, if not necessarily from that country itself. Indeed, the uncanonical treatment of certain traditional motifs makes it highly unlikely that the Lion Box is a purely Egyptian product. A native-trained artist might introduce Asiatic or other foreign motifs,<sup>74</sup> but he would hardly divest *wedjat*-eyes of their falcon's markings or employ

<sup>73</sup> Barnett, *op. cit.* (above n. 25), p. 19 with references.

<sup>74</sup> For the adoption of Asiatic and Aegean motifs in 2nd-millennium Egypt: H. J. Kantor, *American Journal of Archaeology* LI (1947), pp. 56–76, 83f.; C. F. A. Shaeffer, *Ugaritica II* (Paris, 1949), pp. 30–35; Stephenson Smith, *op. cit.* (n. 38), pp. 113–120 (Middle Kingdom); *idem, Interconnections in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, 1965). A major source of inspiration during the New Kingdom was no doubt the Asiatic tribute which is represented on private tomb reliefs (Montet, *op. cit.* (n. 40)); these show also that Asiatic craftsmen worked in Egypt beside local artists (Edwards in Gilbert ed., *op. cit.* (n. 18), p. 130).



the viper hieroglyph as a purely decorative motif. Such uninhibited adaptation of Egyptian symbols, oblivious to the strict canons and iconographical grammar that regulate their proper use, suggests rather the work of a foreign (Asiatic) craftsman who has been brought into direct contact with Egyptian art which he selectively copies or modifies at will.

Such circumstances are perhaps best accommodated by the Nile Delta during the period of Hyksos occupation in the 16th and early 15th centuries BC. From as early as the MB IIA period, 'Canaanites' had established settlements in the eastern Nile delta,<sup>75</sup> and with the subsequent Hyksos invasion many more Asiatics overran the delta regions taking control of Lower Egypt itself. Confronted with Egyptian civilization at first hand, the arts and crafts of the 'Hyksos' settlers—and, no doubt, many other archaeologically intangible aspects of their culture—were inevitably affected by those of the conquered nation. This is particularly noticeable in the minor arts (jewellery, ornaments, the common use of scarabs etc.). The process of Hyksos 'Egyptianization' is best documented through excavation in Palestine,<sup>76</sup> but the key area where the borrowing of motifs and blending of styles was most active must have been the Nile delta itself.<sup>77</sup> The close acquaintance with Egyptian art made possible by immigrants living in that region (rather than Palestine-Transjordan) best accounts for the fidelity with which the maker of the Lion Box has reproduced the Egyptian motifs, even when simplified. This is particularly suggestive in the case of the addorsed *uraei*; these are not a common Egyptian motif which foreign craftsmen based outside Egypt are likely to have known. In favour of an Egyptian provenance it should also be noted that there are no other ridged-lid boxes known to have been made outside Egypt.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> M. Bietak, 'Avaris and Piramesse: Archaeological Exploration in the Eastern Nile Delta', *Proceedings of the British Academy* LXV (1979), pp. 225–90.

<sup>76</sup> As throughout pharaonic times, the delta is relatively poorly known in the Hyksos period, though the excavations at Tell el-Dib'ah are beginning to fill this gap. Meanwhile, assessments of the nature of Hyksos art must consist largely of inferences from the Levantine evidence.

<sup>77</sup> The interaction was not a matter of slavish imitation, nor was the influence one-sided. Hyksos artists also introduced Asiatic themes and motifs to Egypt whose impact was felt even after the invaders were expelled, laying the basis for the eclecticism of 'Amarna art'.

Of the relatively few luxury objects from Egypt which may plausibly be regarded as pure Hyksos works note, e.g., the electrum gazelle and stag diadem from the delta, Aldred, *op. cit.* (n. 37), pl. 59, pp. 204f. Hyksos period objects illustrating the blending of Asiatic (and Aegean) themes with Egyptian forms include the dagger naming the Hyksos king Neb-khepesh-re Apepi from Saqqara with a hunt scene (perhaps more Aegean than Asiatic), H. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (London, 1970), FIG. 282; note also the Asiatic deities which now appear on scarabs, R. D. Barnett, *A Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories* (London, 1957), p. 54 with references. In the early XVIIIth Dynasty foreign motifs (a griffin and a chase scene) and technique (niello) are used on the axe and dagger of Ahmose from the burial of Ah-hotep, Stephenson Smith, *op. cit.* (n. 38), p. 126, pls 84b, 86; Kantor, *op. cit.* (n. 74), pp. 63ff.; Frankfort, *op. cit.*, p. 244; Barnett, *loc. cit.* Here again the Aegean and Asiatic elements are inextricably combined and the immediate source of the motif is problematical.

<sup>78</sup> An origin in Palestine-Transjordan during the Hyksos period should not be excluded entirely. Support for such a view might be sought in the strongly Egyptianizing Hyksos-period ivory inlays from el-Jisr (R. Amiran 'The Ivory Inlays from the Tomb at El-Jisr Reconsidered', *The Israel Museum News* 12 (1977), pp. 65–69). Though often accepted as genuine Egyptian products (Barnett *op. cit.* (n. 25), pp. 19, 25 [immigrant craftsmen?]), these may be local work in the Hyksos tradition of cut-out bone inlays for wooden boxes (cf. Frankfort, *op. cit.* (n. 77), p. 395 n. 27). Whatever their origin, the el-Jisr ivories provide close analogies for some features of the Lion Box. Note particularly the mid-section of a rampant animal (Amiran, p. 66, FIG. 1:84)—an almost exact parallel, as far as it is preserved, to our lions. It too is almost certainly a lion rather than a

If the Lion Box is a Hyksos work from the Nile delta it probably predates Ahmose's campaigns of the late 16th century BC in which the foreign rulers were expelled and, as the Tell el-Dab'a excavations have shown, the 'Canaanite' settlements destroyed or abandoned.<sup>79</sup>

So much for the Egyptian option. The alternative is that the box was made somewhere in the Levant where Egyptian objects were known and appreciated by the local population and imitations or adaptations commissioned from their own craftsmen, some of them perhaps Egyptian immigrants.

The taste for *Aegyptiaca* is evident to some extent throughout the Levant in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages but nowhere is it more prevalent than at the *entrepôts* of coastal Syria and Lebanon. The most extensive archaeological evidence of this phenomenon—consisting of both genuine Egyptian objects, some of them gifts from Middle Kingdom pharaohs, and local imitations—comes from Byblos with which the Egyptians had long-standing trade relations.<sup>80</sup> Among the many riches from this site are the only known shrine-shaped pectorals from outside Egypt.<sup>81</sup>

In this region, moreover, ivory was available from Syrian elephant herds which were not hunted out until Neo-Assyrian times.<sup>82</sup> In the final Late Bronze Age and in the Iron Age, Syria and Phoenicia became major centres of ivory working, developing the distinctive styles and techniques of manufacture which have justly received much attention.<sup>83</sup> Rarer finds suggest that workshops had been established already in these regions during the Middle Bronze Age.<sup>84</sup> Thus the essential

rhinoceros, as Amiran p. 69. Note also the very similar lions' lower hind legs (FIG. 1:93, 94), also apparently from rampant animals. Their proportions match some other lions' heads (FIG. 1:78–80) better than the pregnant hippopotami to which Amiran (p. 65) is inclined to attach them. Since the bodies are missing, one cannot be sure how closely their stance might have corresponded to ours. Other points of contact with the Lion Box are the projection of the mane over the forehead of another lion (FIG. 1:82, Amiran, p. 69 regards this as a donkey), a papyrus stalk (FIG. 1:104) and—a more general point—the fondness for standing lions (those cited above plus FIG. 7) and other antithetical animals (hippopotami: p. 67, FIG. 1).

<sup>79</sup> Bietak, *op. cit.* (n. 75), p. 268.

<sup>80</sup> Montet, *op. cit.* (n. 32).

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. xciv:617; also probably from Byblos is Wilkinson, *op. cit.* (n. 41), pl. xxixb, perhaps a local imitation (*ibid.*, p. 88).

<sup>82</sup> Barnett, *op. cit.* (n. 25), p. 6; *idem*, *op. cit.* (n. 77), pp. 164ff.; D. Collon, *Iraq* 39 (1977), p. 220 with nn. 11–13. See also above n. 19a.

<sup>83</sup> Principally by Barnett, *op. cit.* (nn. 25, 77); note also I. J. Winter, *North Syria in the Early First Millennium BC with Special Reference to Ivory Carving*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Ann Arbor, 1975); *idem*, 'Phoenician and North Syrian Ivory Carving in Historical Context: Questions of Style and Distribution', *Iraq* 38 (1976), pp. 1ff.

<sup>84</sup> 'Montet jar' ivory figurines: O. Tufnell and W. A. Ward, *Syria* XLIII (1966), pp. 193ff. Two of the motifs used on the Lion Box (*djed* and paired papyrus stalks) also appear at Byblos in ivory during the XIIth Dynasty: Montet, *op. cit.* (n. 32), pls LIV (*djeds* from the *dépôts de fondation* below the M.B. 'Syrian Temple'), CVI (papyrus stalks from Royal Tomb II [Ibshemuabi]); these may be Egyptian imports. For possible Syro-Phoenician ivories found in other regions: E. Akurgal, *The Art of the Hittites* (London, 1962), p. 59 (17th/16th century statuette from Alacahüyük); Barnett, *op. cit.* (n. 25) pp. 24f., 28 (Megiddo xiv box(?) [below n. 86]). The more numerous ivories from early 2nd millennium Anatolia (Kultepe, Acemhöyük, Alacahüyük; Barnett, *op. cit.* (n. 25), pp. 32ff.) may also, perhaps, count as indirect evidence for Syrian production at this time since this is the closest possible source of the raw material. The Syrians are unlikely not to have exploited a resource desired by others. The relative scarcity of ivories in M.B. Syria-Lebanon probably reflects more the extent of reuse and the ill fortune of discovery than a genuine dearth. Egyptian inscriptions record ivory-decorated furniture brought from the Levant in the reigns of Tuthmosis and his successors (Barnett, *op. cit.* (n. 77), p. 115 with references).



conditions in which a work such as the Lion Box might be produced were present.

Palestinian schools, producing some quite fine work, existed at least by the late 13th or 12th century BC, as was proved by the famous finds at Lachish and Megiddo in the 1930s,<sup>85</sup> but the style and technique of the sporadic earlier pieces<sup>86</sup> do not compare with those of the Lion Box. Once again, the possibility of local production (at Pella or elsewhere in Palestine-Transjordan) under the influence of Middle or New Kingdom Egyptian imports cannot be excluded;<sup>87</sup> but this must be regarded as less probable on the basis of present evidence.<sup>88</sup>

As things stand, then, the most likely source of the Lion Box is the Nile delta during the period of 'Canaanite' settlement (18th to early 16th century BC) or a port of the northern Levant at a time when Egypt maintained strong diplomatic and economic connexions with this region (much of the Middle and New Kingdoms). Failing the discovery of a very similar work in one or other of these regions, the choice between them is likely to remain problematical.

#### *The Aegean*

We have concentrated thus far on what might be called the stylistic 'inheritance' of the Lion Box, the traditions which inspired and conditioned its creation in the form that we have it. In conclusion we may turn in the opposite direction to consider briefly its 'legacy', the traditions it and other similar objects bequeathed—a reorientation not only from the past to the future but also from Asia to Europe.

As the outlet of Western Asia on the Mediterranean, the Levant played a vital rôle in the transmission of oriental motifs to the Minoan and Mycenaean centres of the Aegean. Among this eastern legacy appears the motif of the antithetical beasts.<sup>89</sup> Such pairs occur first in the early Middle Minoan period<sup>90</sup> but are rare until the period of the Later Palaces (Middle Minoan III—Late Minoan IB/II) and do not become popular until the succeeding period (Late Helladic IIIA—IIIB) when the focus of power had shifted from Crete to Mycenae and the mainland.

Antithetical beasts are best attested in the surviving archaeological record of the Aegean among the thousands of stone,

<sup>85</sup> Above n. 48.

<sup>86</sup> Among the very few substantial pieces, other than the el-Jist inlays (n. 78), is a container (?) from Megiddo XIV: G. Loud, *Megiddo II: Seasons of 1935–39*, OIP LXII (Chicago, 1948), pl. 204:1.

<sup>87</sup> Above n. 78.

<sup>88</sup> In view of the technical similarity between ivory-carving and wood-work (cf. Barnett, *op. cit.* (n. 25), p. 82 n. 83a) it may be relevant to point out that Pahl made wooden chariot parts for the Egyptians in the time of Seti II: Smith, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 32.

<sup>89</sup> On antithetical beasts in Minoan and Mycenaean art see M. P. Nilsson, *Minoan–Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion*, 2nd edn (Lund, 1950), pp. 250–255, 357–363, 383–388; A. Evans, *The Palace of Minos III* (London, 1930), p. 515; *idem*, *The Palace of Minos IV* (London, 1935), pp. 584–87, 613f., FIG. 597.

<sup>90</sup> P. Demargne, 'Le maître des animaux sur une gemme crétoise du M.M. I', *Mélanges syriens offerts à monsieur René Dussaud I* (Paris, 1939), pp. 121ff.; P. Yule, *Early Cretan Seals; A Study of Chronology* (Mainz, 1980), pl. 6:21 (Middle Minoan IIB), pl. 3: 23 (Middle Minoan II) (note that this last is from Kedri not from the Knossos Hieroglyphic Deposit as stated on p. 122).

12. The Lion Gate, Mycenae.



and rarely metal, stamp-seals.<sup>91</sup> The most famous antithetical representation, however, and the one most similar to the Lion Box, is to be found on one of the few surviving pieces of monumental Mycenaean sculpture—the Lion Gate at Mycenae (FIG. 12), now generally dated to the late 13th century BC. Like the Pella lions, those at Mycenae stand with their hind legs apart, the far leg forward of the near one, and rest their front paws on a low object, in this case a pair of concave-sided altars supporting a pillar. There are of course stylistic differences appropriate to the individuality of great court art, as the Lion Gate may justly be regarded.<sup>92</sup> The Mycenae lions are more naturalistic than those from Pella; and since their separately-carved heads are lost one cannot be sure whether they faced each other, like the Pella lions, or turned towards the viewer as do some other Mycenaean lions.<sup>93</sup> In any case, the striking similarity in composition and stance brings the lions of the gate at Mycenae closer than ever to a Near Eastern prototype, reinforcing the debt of early Greek art to the Levant.

Cylinder seals, on which antithetical beasts are commonly represented, are generally regarded as the principal medium

<sup>91</sup> Above n. 89. See further the many examples in F. Matz and H. Biezantz eds, *Corpus der Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel*, 13 vols (Berlin, 1964–85), e.g. vol. 3 (Heraklion Museum, New Palace Period) by N. Platon and I. Pini, nos 63, 167, 193, 276, 306, and vol. 1 (National Museum, Athens) by A. Sakellariou, nos 46, 144, 145. Besides ivories, antithetical beasts (sphinxes, griffons) also occur in frescoes at Knossos (A. Evans, *The Palace of Minos III* (London, 1930), p. 40, FIG. 25) and Pylos (M. L. Lang, *The Palace of Nestor II* (Cincinnati, 1969), pl. R. (1A2)).

<sup>92</sup> Though not necessarily a 'coat-of-arms' as argued, e.g. by G. E. Mylonas, *Ancient Mycenae, The Capital City of Agamemnon* (London, 1957), pp. 25ff.

<sup>93</sup> P. Åström and B. Blomé, *Opuscula Atheniensia* v (1964), p. 179.



through which this and other Oriental motifs reached the Aegean.<sup>94</sup> There has been little firm evidence that ivories played any significant role. Although the raw material came from the east, few definitely Oriental carvings have been found in the Aegean,<sup>95</sup> and none with antithetical beasts. In the Near East also the motif is very rare among extant Bronze Age ivories.<sup>96</sup>

In this and other respects, however, the present corpus may be unrepresentative.<sup>97</sup> Far less Syro-Palestinian ivory-work of Late Bronze Age date has been discovered than of the Iron Age, when antithetical beasts are well attested.<sup>98</sup> The Lion Box can hardly have been unique; and once the likelihood of similar works is admitted, the possibility that they played

a part in the transmission of antithetical motifs to the Aegean—perhaps influencing, directly or through intermediaries,<sup>99</sup> the design of the Lion Gate itself—must be considered.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Nilsson, *op. cit.* (n. 89), p. 385 n. 60; E. Porada, *Archiv für Orientforschung* 28 (1981/82), pp. 1–70 (the Theban hoard); J.-C. Poursat, *Les ivoires mycéniens: Essai sur la formation d'un art mycénien* (Paris, 1977), pp. 244f. Poursat (p. 244) derives the antithetical beast motif from Mitannian glyptic.

<sup>95</sup> Poursat, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–233, 240–245 critically reviews the evidence and gives a 'minimalist' list of eastern imports totalling only five.

<sup>96</sup> Aside from the Pella lions these include the Minet el Beida pyxis lid, Poursat, *op. cit.*, pl. XIX (sometimes considered a Mycenaean work); the Byblos pyxis lid, Barnett, *op. cit.* (n. 25), pl. 19c; and the gaming boards from Megiddo, Loud, *op. cit.* (n. 48), pl. 47.

<sup>97</sup> Another indication of this is that the winged disc also is virtually unattested in other Bronze Age Near Eastern ivories, as noted by H. J. Kantor in C. W. McEwan *et al.*, *Soundings at Tell Fakhariyah*, OIP 79 (Chicago, 1958), p. 60 (but note the example on the Megiddo plaque, Loud, *op. cit.* (n. 48), pl. 4).

<sup>98</sup> Significantly, these again occur in Egyptianizing (Phoenician) works in which the *cloisonné* technique as well as the motifs may indicate the continuing influence of Egyptian jewellery designs; e.g. M. E. L. Mallowan, *Nimrud and its Remains II* (London, 1966), pls 468, 477–479.

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<sup>99</sup> 'Sketch-books' may have facilitated the exchange of motifs between media; cf. the comments of Poursat, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

<sup>100</sup> A surprising corollary of this would be the distant Egyptian contribution to the Mycenaean type, should the similarities between the shrine-shaped pectorals and the Lion Box noted above prove significant.