

BOOK REVIEW

'LATE BRONZE PALESTINIAN PENDANTS, Innovation in a Cosmopolitan Age', by Patrick E. McGovern. 183pp., 25pls. 79 figs. 4 maps, 62 charts. JSOT Press, Sheffield, England (1986), hard cover, published price £25.00/\$35.00.

A distinctive feature of Late Bronze Age civilization is the remarkable profusion and popularity of amuletic and jewelry pendants, as witnessed by the wealth of material excavated at various sites in the country. Previously all discussion of Late Bronze Age pendants was rendered only in excavation reports or museum catalogues in a brief and restricted fashion. Apart from the critical study by O. Negbi: *'The Hoards of Goldwork from Tell el-Ajjul'*, Patrick McGovern's book is indeed the first comprehensive, adequately argued and up-to-date study of its kind. It represents the revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation, written for the Department of Oriental Studies of the University of Pennsylvania. The primary focus is a corpus of these pendants with half of the examples coming from Beth Shan, of which a great number are unpublished. The introductory chapter starts with a discussion of the present state of pendant scholarship, methodology and goals, and clarification of Beth Shan's dating criteria used in the study. Although the author tends to support the belief which says that because pendants were, like pottery, mass-produced, they may be used as dating evidence, he strongly cautions against their use as chronological indicators: as a treasured heirloom or focus of religious sentiments, a pendant's lifespan can be enormously lengthened and its distribution may be widespread.

The introduction also contains an excellent and very useful discussion of typology in relation to the archaeological context of individual specimens. This chapter is concluded with a special section on Beth Shan and its stratigraphical problems. The author's first hand knowledge of the unpublished pottery and artifacts from this site, which are in store at the University Museum, enabled him to conclude that level VII and VIII should be dated to LB IIB. The corpus excludes any unstratified surface finds and specimens bought on the

antiquities' market, which are now in museums or private collections, together with unpublished examples.

Six classes of pendants are proposed by the author. They form the subject matter of his chapters 2-7. His classification follows a short-cut course which does not dwell on "amuletic" types but rather concentrates on "natural" classes, with the exception of classes I and V in which the objects are called by their obvious name because of their Egyptian-related figures and symbols. The excellent discussion of the types is enhanced by detailed drawings and various statistical and distribution charts, which are so well done that the reader is able to obtain a great deal of information by just looking at them.

This book by Dr. McGovern gives us a clear insight into the types of Late Bronze Palestinian pendants and their chronological framework. It includes an excellent catalogue of ornamental and amuletic pendants, occupying 26 of the 183 pages of the text, divided into six types: Egyptian Deities, Human Forms, Fauna, Flora, Egyptian Hieroglyphs and Geometric Forms. The types are illustrated by excellent photographs and a rich series of drawings of designs which illustrate his analysis of the pattern work of pendant production in Late Bronze Age Palestine. This reliable catalogue is very useful for comparative studies and provides immediate aid to scholars who wish to become familiar with the Late Bronze Age period and its chronological intricacies. It is a work of synthesis, stressing cultural process as well as pendant distribution, which is of particular interest for the student working on Egypto-Palestinian contacts who needs a sound guide to Palestinian cultures with whom they interacted. At the end of this valuable book the reader finds a most useful selected bibliography followed by plates and three indexes: the first is of authors and

individuals, the second of sites, and the last is a general index.

Dr. McGovern is to be congratulated on his remarkable achievement and his book is

certainly received with a very warm welcome.

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