

FRAGMENTING THE SEA PEOPLES, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON CYPRUS, SYRIA AND EGYPT: A TEL DOR PERSPECTIVE

The Philistine Paradigm

Archaeological research of the Sea Peoples phenomenon in the southern Levant is largely dominated by finds in Philistia and by Egyptian and biblical records. Based on this evidence, with few exceptions (in recent years this has been mainly S. Sherratt, e.g., 1998), most scholars would concur nowadays that many material cultural phenomena in Early Iron Age Philistia can best be explained by the arrival of a significant new population.

Debates concern mainly the following points: (1) the origin of this population, chiefly in the Aegean-Anatolian sphere (Mazar 1988: 256–257; T. Dothan 2003; Yasur-Landau 2003a; Singer 1988; 1992), or in Cyprus (e.g., Brug 1985: 135; Killebrew 2000), (2) the way the newcomers arrived—by land or by sea (e.g., Yasur Landau 2003b), (3) the size of the new population (Stager 1995: 344 vs. Finkelstein 2000: 172), (4) the chronology of the settlement process and, as an integral part of this issue, (5) the balance of power between the Philistines and the Egyptians (Wood 1991; Finkelstein 2000: 163–165 vs. Mazar 1985a; Bietak 1993). Two to four distinct waves in this process have been identified by some scholars, based on the different styles in Philistine pottery, but others perceive these as exemplifying local stylistic developments (Dothan and Dothan 1992: 165–70 vs. Mazar 1985b), though this latter debate has subsided somewhat lately.

Starting in the late 1980s, some scholars started to address the social aspects of Philistia, and as part of this enquiry they attempted to define the material manifestations of social dialectics. Bunimovitz's study (1990) was pioneering in this respect and subsequently followed by others (e.g., Bunimovitz and Yasur-Landau 1996; Bunimovitz and Faust 2001; Yasur-Landau 2002; Sharon 2001; cf. also Gilboa, Cohen-Weinberger and Goren 2006).

Based on the Egyptian records, mainly the Medinet Habu reliefs, the Great Harris papyrus, Amenope and Wenamun, the following familiar picture is usually drawn regarding the southern Levant (rendered graphically in Stager 1995: fig. 2): three 'groups', supposedly of different origin and ethnicity,¹ settled on the Canaanite coast, each in its own territory, a result of some extraordinary coordination of the Sea Peoples contingents (somewhere "in their isles...."). Slight divergences

¹ However, the notion that the Šikila arrived from Sicily and the Shardana from Sardinia seems generally to have been abandoned.

from this picture, for example Pritchard's (1968) identification of Sea Peoples in the Jordan Valley, and Zertal's (2001) of Shardana at the 'Iron pass, not far from Megiddo, have by and large been ignored.

Interpretations of Philistine pottery outside Israel's southern coast and Shephela depend on its locale versus the Egyptian and biblical testimony. If it is found in the Jezreel Valley, at Megiddo for example, it testifies to a late Philistine presence (T. Dothan 1982: 69–82; Raban 1991). Philistine pottery in the highlands or in the Negev, on the other hand, testifies to commercial contacts (T. Dothan 1982: 269).

Breaking Loose from the Philistine Paradigm: The Tel Dor Case

My uneasiness with this model started to develop following the excavations at Dor, the Šikila town according to Wenamun. In the mid-1980s, when Ephraim Stern first reached the Early Iron Age levels there,² bets were laid. What would the Šikila material culture look like? Jokingly someone said that Šikila pottery would be something akin to that of Philistia - but painted in purple and yellow. This was the sort of expectation, to find something analogous to Philistia, but slightly different, as befits another Sea People. It seems that this is still what some scholars expect to be uncovered along the southern Levantine coast north of Philistia, something similar, but with a different ethnic tinge.

The finds at Dor, however, have not lived up to expectations, and the 'western association' of the Šikila has turned out to be elusive. Though a few artifacts do find corollaries in Philistia, like a lion-headed cup (for which see further below), incised scapulae and bimetallic knives (see summaries in Stern 2000b; Sharon and Gilboa in press), the broader picture is different. At Dor, in the earliest Iron Age phases, there are no 'western' architectural traits. The two 'domestic' units excavated are ordinary courtyard buildings of Canaanite type (see summary of Area G in Sharon and Gilboa in press; the second building, in Area D5, is as yet unpublished). There are no western figurines, and the pottery is mostly of Canaanite derivation. The Myc IIIc and Philistine Bichrome phenomena, or anything remotely similar, do not exist there.

Recently, I offered an interpretation of the Šikila material culture as revealed at Dor, which is based mainly on its juxtaposition to the coastal region to its south (i.e., Philistia; Gilboa 2005). In a nutshell, the most revealing difference between these two regions is the role of pottery in general, and especially that of decorated vessels. This difference, however, cannot be explained in ethnic terms, but by the different circumstances in which newcomers settled along the southern Levantine coast. At Dor, there is evidence for the arrival

² Excavations at Dor, directed by Ephraim Stern in 1980–2000, and by the Renewed Tel Dor Expedition, headed from 2002 by Ilan Sharon and myself, have produced the first data base pertinent to the elucidation of the 'other' Sea peoples, or at least to the definition of Early Iron Age material culture north of the Yarkon River (for surveys on Dor in this period, see Stern 1990, 1991, 1993, 1999, 2000a: chap. 3 and pp. 345–64; 2000b; Gilboa and Sharon 2003; Sharon and Gilboa in press).

of some new groups from Cyprus, a region from which at least part of Philistia's population also originated (see below). However, the material manifestations of the settlers at Dor are different, as their social, economic and perhaps also political status was not the same. Among other things, this is expressed in the ceramics that were singled out for decoration. In Philistia, as is well known, significant effort was invested in hand-painted designs on a variety of vessels, including table wares. These are the "Philistine Monochrome", "Philistine Bichrome" and the later "Ashdodian" and red slipped and burnished vessels (for these later traditions, see lately Ben-Shlomo, Shai and Maeir 2004). These had a role in maintaining and expressing group affiliation and status. At Dor, on the other hand, as well as along the Canaanite coastal stretch to the north, such a phenomenon does not exist. The only systematically decorated vessels were commercial containers, first in Canaanite-derived designs, which later developed into the so-called "Phoenician Bichrome style". Significantly, these commercial containers reveal a mixture of Canaanite and Cypriot stylistic traits.

Contrary to Stern (e.g., 2000b), who suggested that the first part of the Early Iron Age at Dor should be identified with the Šikila (i.e., Sea Peoples) settlement, and that later on the place was conquered by the Phoenicians, to my mind, the entire sequence should be understood as one cultural continuum, with the Šikila and Phoenicians essentially synonymous. Cypriot elements were paramount to this culture, and to Early Iron Age commercial activities along the Phoenician/Šikila coast.

Social Negotiations

To reiterate, the difference between the southern and northern parts of the Canaanite coast should not be explained in ethnic terms, but rather by the discourse between the symbolic properties of the material cultural components of the newcomers, and by their local contexts. If we accept that the traumatic events at the end of the Late Bronze Age caused the dislocation of different populations (from different locales), we must also acknowledge the intricacy of this process. For example, it stands to reason that the southern Levant (and other regions) witnessed the arrival of different populations (or smaller groups or individuals) for different reasons and at different times (see similarly, Yasur-Landau 2007). Although material manifestations of newcomers depend on a plethora of factors, including the circumstances in the country of origin (willful or coercive emigration, planned or not, etc.), they mostly depend on two factors: the symbolic or other meanings objects convey to their users (or the lack of such meaning), and the social negotiation the newcomers engage in, or are forced to conduct, with the indigenous and other immigrant populations they come in contact with. There is no *a priori* reason to assume a necessary correlation between the size of the new population and its impact on the local material culture. We must also anticipate the opposite, the material cultural 'reactions' of locals to the newcomers. To my mind,

the Early Iron Age should be treated as a sort of 'dialectic laboratory' of group identities. This attitude is similar to 'recontextualization' and 'localization' approaches prevalent in recent post colonial and creolization studies (e.g., Friedman 1990; Stein 2002; Gosden 2004: esp. pp. 7, 18–19, 30–32; Van Dommelen 2005; Hodos 2006: e.g. 7, 11, 15–17).

An example of the types of questions that should be asked regarding the local matrix, concerns the nature of Egyptian control over LBA Canaan. In recent years, a growing number of scholars (e.g., Bryan 1996; Higginbotham 2000; Gadot 2005) have concluded that the Egyptian administrative hold on the southern Levant was implemented mostly through local elites, whose power, prestige and legitimacy was drawn from Egypt. These elites probably occupied most of the so-called residencies, while their sons were sent, willingly or unwillingly, to be educated in Egypt (and indoctrinated in the royal Kap). Some of these individuals already bore Egyptian names, they controlled a significant portion of the trade, and they held a variety of functions within the Egyptian administration. What was the fate of these elites when the Egyptians lost control of the region? How did this affect the absorption of new populations and their status (this is especially pertinent to the issues of interest here)? And how, of course, was this reflected in their material culture?

This last question will be of utmost importance in any elucidation of different absorption processes in the south (meaning Philistia) versus the north. For example, it would be essential to assess what happened to all the lands controlled by these elites (and those controlled by the Crown) after they lost their support and legitimacy. Is it just a coincidence that the cultural and demographic phenomenon that we have dubbed 'Philistine' is known mainly in the south, in areas where Egyptian control was greatest, and perhaps lasted longer? Why is such a phenomenon not attested elsewhere?

A case in point regarding 'the local material response': it is well known that in Philistia, alongside the decorated pottery of foreign derivation, production of traditional Canaanite shapes continued to flourish, and these comprise the bulk of most ceramic assemblages (e.g., for the Myc IIIc phase, Dothan and Zukerman 2004: Table 1, Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 78; for the Philistine Bichrome phase, e.g., Brug 1985: 68–103). Yet very little attention has been given to tracing changes in this 'local' repertoire, and to determining whether there were differences in this respect between sites or regions. Perhaps the most conspicuous trend is the rapid disappearance of the Late Bronze Age painted tradition. If we consider Late Bronze Age closed kraters, for example, which were elaborately decorated, many featuring composite figurative designs, and found in 'special' contexts (those from the Lachish Fosse Temples are the best known; cf. Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940: pl. XLVIII), and therefore must have been imbued with special meaning—why do they disappear in the Early Iron Age? (And in Philistia they seem to vanish particularly quickly.)

"Sea Peoples" from Nearby Regions: Cyprus

As mentioned above, most scholars identify some part of the Aegean or western Anatolia as the primary 'source' of the Sea Peoples. However, I would like to examine two closer regions. The first is Cyprus.

The 'real' crisis in Cyprus occurred somewhat later than in neighboring regions—during the transition from LC IIIA to LC IIIB. (The latter period is contemporary with the Bichrome-bearing contexts in Philistia.) The island witnessed one of the most severe crises in its history (as demonstrated by Iacovou 1994; 2005: 20–23; contra Negbi 2005: 5, 27). Nearly every site was abandoned, and the social and economic structure of Late Bronze Age Cyprus collapsed. Iacovou (1994) has suggested that the 'vanishing' population either congregated at the few remaining sites, or dispersed into the countryside.

Is it possible that this did not affect the Levantine coast? At Dor, for instance, on present evidence, this seems to have been the period when the Early Iron Age town emerged. Although, the Late Bronze Age settlement has not been located yet, it was certainly very small, and probably located on the southwestern part of the tell. No levels paralleling the Myc IIIC horizon in Philistia have been located yet, either, though it is unclear whether this is accidental or not. What is clear is that somewhat later, paralleling the LC IIIB period in Cyprus and the Bichrome levels in Philistia, the town occupied more or less the entire extent of the tell, or approximately 8 ha, and was fortified (Sharon and Gilboa in press). This brings to mind the experience at Tel Mique/Ekron (and perhaps Beirut). However, the growth of Dor was significantly later than at Ekron (the expansion of Beirut cannot be dated closely enough, see Badre 1997: 50–66). The conspicuous "Cypriot connection" at Dor may point in the direction we should look to explain this phenomenon.

The 'late' Cypriot crisis is also reflected in Philistia, during the Bichrome period, which has produced strong Cypriot connections. Well known examples include the cylindrical and horned-shaped bottles in the Bichrome repertoire (which have no clear local Myc IIIC antecedents for the time being), the incised scapulae and bimetallic knives (see similarly Yasur-Landau 2002: 211, but he sees these objects as attesting to trade relations).

As I have mentioned, the significance of the transition in Philistia from the Monochrome to the Bichrome phase has been ignored for quite a while now. Implicitly or explicitly (for example, Stager 1995: 335), it seems that most scholars prefer A. Mazar's view of a local stylistic development over the 'immigration waves' model first suggested by T. and M. Dothan. However, perhaps it is time to re-visit some aspects of this latter model, and to link at least some of the developments in the Bichrome phase to the Late Cypriot IIIB calamity.

"Sea Peoples" from Nearby Regions: Syria

The Syrian coast (and perhaps not only the coast) also needs to be considered. What happened to the inhabitants of the kingdom of Ugarit,

which totalled about 3,000 in the city and 10,000 in the kingdom, according to Liverani (cited in Yon 1992; for somewhat different estimates see Calvet and Castel 2004: 219), after its destruction? Yon (1992) has suggested that they fled to the mountains, while others (e.g., Courtois 1975: 31; Negbi 1992: 604–605) have traced part of the population to Cyprus. What happened, for instance, to the social/professional class that included such major figures as Rapanu, Yabinu, Urtenu and Rašap Adu who, alongside their services to the crown, maintained independent entrepreneurial commercial activities (see, for example, Monroe 2000: 342–343; Liverani 2003: 124; cf. Sherratt and Sherratt 2001), and had extensive interregional contacts, *inter alia* with the Phoenician cities to the south. (for a recent evaluation of the economic activities of these individuals, see Bell 2005: 130–35.)

The picture for Early Iron Age Syria is still fragmentary, but it is being unveiled increasingly. Early Iron Age settlements are usually small and non-urban in nature, and a significant portion of the LBA population appears to disappear from the archaeological 'radar' (e.g., Capet and Gubel 2000: 427, 428, 437; Klengel 2000: 23; Venturi 2000: 532–533). In most regions, significant commercial activity, including maritime trade, does not resume until Iron Age II.

The Early Iron Age in the southern Levant, especially in its more northern parts, cannot be understood without considering the fate of Syria. Is it possible that some portions of the Syrian population, perhaps specific social/economic groups, chose to seek their fortunes in the thriving centers on the coast to their south (see similarly Liverani 1987: 69–70; Bell 2005: 211)?³

The Foreign Associations of Selected Šikila Pottery Types from Dor: Syrian or Cypriot?

As I have discussed previously (2005), and summarized above, the primary characteristic of the decorated ceramics of Early Iron Age Dor (and regions to its north) is the presence of commercial containers bearing stylistic affinities with Cyprus. Here I wish to complicate the picture by discussing those very few vessels at Dor that were adorned with paint, but which apparently were not used for trade. Some of them have already been illustrated previously (Gilboa 1999: figs. 15:5–8; Sharon and Gilboa in press), and from the outset it has been evident stylistically that they represent a phenomenon distinct from the commercial containers; there is a complete dichotomy between the two groups. Recently, more fragments of such vessels have been uncovered, enabling a better definition, and a possibility of interpreting the group.

Figures 1 through 3 illustrate nearly all of the Early Iron Age ceramic vessels at Dor on which some decoration can be discerned beyond simple linear designs (excluding, as mentioned, commercial containers). Most of these vessels were recovered from Area G, Phases 10–9. These two phases (Ir1a early and late in Dor terminology)

³ Capet and Gubel (2000: 43) suggest that in the Early Iron Age, parts of western Syria, like the Akkar plain, were occupied by Phoenicians.

parallel chronologically the Philistine Bichrome-bearing occupations in Philistia, and the LC IIIB and probably also the LC IIIB/CG I transition in Cyprus (for these associations and the chronological terminology at Dor, see Gilboa and Sharon 2003: table 21). One vessel (Fig. 1:9) originates from deep in a small probe in Area F on the western fringe of the tell. Its stratigraphic context is not entirely clear, but the associated pottery parallels material from Phases 10–9 in Area G. Two vessels (Fig. 1:10, 11) originate from Phases 8–7 in Area G (Ir1a/b and Ir1b), and thus are somewhat later than the rest. In the following discussion, I will examine whether these vessels reveal any recurrent stylistic phenomena.

The Decorated Amphoroid Kraters

Other than the commercial containers, amphoroid kraters (KR 1 at Dor) are the only vessels at Early Iron Age Dor that are almost always painted. They are different from the bulk of the rest of the kraters, which are open, neckless, handleless and never decorated (see Gilboa and Sharon 2003: figs. 2:14–17). It thus seems that they had some other, 'special' function. They are represented in restricted quantities in Ir1a (Phases 10 and especially 9 in Area G), further diminishing later, until Ir1b (in Phases 8–7 in Area G), when they practically disappear. Three items (Figs. 1:4, 6–7) have been submitted to petrographic analysis. They were apparently manufactured on the Carmel coast, perhaps at Dor itself (Anat Cohen-Weinberger and Yuval Goren, personal communication). Macroscopically, the fabric of the rest of the vessels resembles the predominant fabric types at Dor, and thus is probably also 'local'.

Amphoroid kraters clearly had a special significance along the northern Canaanite coast. Towards the end of the Iron I and beginning of Iron II, when the Phoenician Bichrome Style started to be employed on vessels other than commercial containers (see Gilboa 1999), amphoroid kraters were among the few shapes still being decorated (e.g., kraters at Tell Abu-Hawam and Sarepta: Balensi 1980: pl. 10:9; Anderson 1988: pl. 34:10). This would seem to confirm that a special function continued to be assigned to them.

At Dor, the specific contexts in which these kraters were uncovered do not hint at their precise function (the only two primary contexts that produced such kraters were apparently domestic storerooms). However, it is reasonable to assume that they functioned as serving/mixing vessels, perhaps of liquids, for special events.

The krater in Figure. 1:1 has a depressed globular shape, with a disc base, a cylindrical upright neck, two vertical handles and a protruding ledge rim, oblong in section. Most of the other examples at Dor are very fragmentary. Sometimes it is possible to deduce that the vessel shape is similar to Figure 1:1, but often the form of the vessel is unclear; all of the fragments that were large enough revealed upright necks (indicating closed kraters) and oblong ledge rims, either horizontal or diagonal. Only one krater had a conical neck.

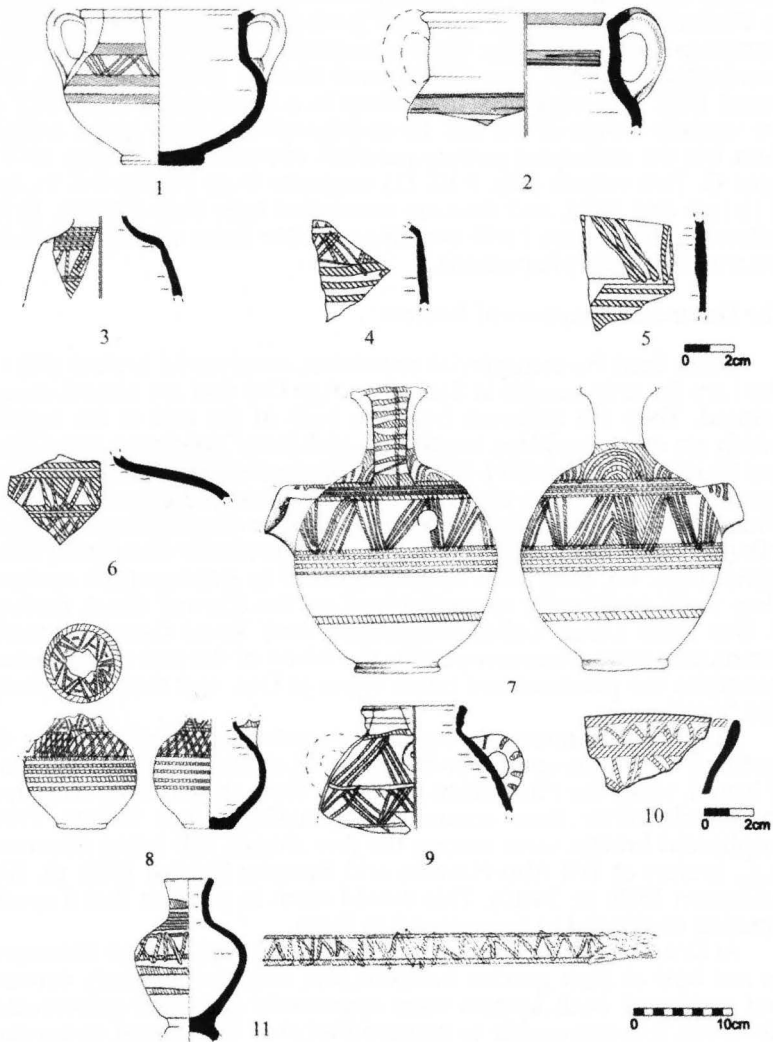


Fig. 1. Decorated Iron I vessels from Dor. (1) Krater --, L18265, Phase G/9; (2) Krater 98368, L9832, Phase G/9; (3) Strainer(?) jug 181993, L18267, Phase G/10; (4) Strainer(?) jug 183955, L18312, Phase G/10; (5) Strainer(?) jug 04G0-0125/2, L04G0-004, Phase G/9; (6) Jug?/jar? 182177/1, L18286, Phase G/10; (7) Strainer jug 181964, L18241, Phase G/9; (8) Jug 181953+181989, L18242, Phase G/9; (9) Amphoriskos 86769, L8890, Area F; (10) Jug 180095/2, L9727, Phase G/8-7; (11) Goblet 99434+99466, L9903, Phase G/8.

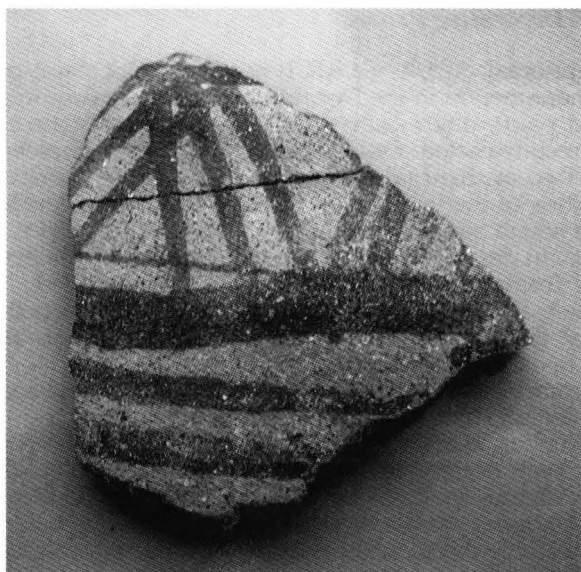


Fig. 2. Photograph of fragment Fig. 1:4.



Fig. 3. Photograph of fragment Fig. 1:9.

The OMDS Decorative Pattern

As mentioned, nearly all KR 1 vessels at Dor were painted, an unusual phenomenon in the Dor repertoire. The decoration is always only in red paint, often quite faint, and in many cases the designs cannot be reconstructed. Only three vessels were complete or nearly complete. Two of them (e.g., Fig. 1:2) bear simple horizontal bands of paint. None of the vessels revealed the use of the "enclosed band design", in which narrow bands flank a wider one, or vice versa; this being the main design employed on commercial containers, a design originating from Cyprus (cf. Gilboa 1999: figs. 4–5, 8–9, 15:1–4). As I have stated, a clear distinction can be drawn between the stylistic affinities of the commercial containers and those on the vessels discussed here. Only one vessel (Fig. 1:1) bears on its shoulder a somewhat more complex design; possible traces of the same design have survived on some other fragments as well.

I would thus like to highlight the more 'complex' pattern (Fig. 1:1). It has been defined in the past (by myself and by others) as a continuous zigzag enclosed by horizontal bands. In fact, the basic decorative patterns consist of groups of parallel diagonal strokes (in our case there are three, in other cases usually two to four) applied in alternating directions. The strokes overlap each other at the points of contact between the groups, and in many cases they also overlap the horizontal bands that enclose the design (this latter trait is more evident in the vessels discussed below). As a result, I have called this design "Overlapping Multiple Diagonal Strokes", or OMDS. This, syntactically, is very different from the multiple zigzag design (i.e. a design formed by parallel zigzags that do not meet, and that enclose 'empty' zigzag spaces that can be filled with various other continuous designs, like wavy lines), a standard design in Late Bronze Age Canaan.

Possible Parallels of Kraters with the OMDS Pattern

1). Bronze Age Canaan/Phoenicia. Although closed/necked kraters were already singled out for special decoration in Late Bronze Age Canaan, they differ from the vessels discussed here in general shape (they are usually carinated or biconical in profile), and none have ledge rims. A few exceptions are amphoroid kraters from Tel Michal (Negbi 1989: figs. 5.8:11–14), and Beth She'an (James and McGovern 1993: fig. 21:4); other kraters, from Megiddo, are mentioned below.⁴ The situation is similar in those regions of Canaan that later became part of Philistia, There too, 'true' amphoroid kraters are extremely rare (but see a krater of unclear stratigraphic association in Dothan and Freedman 1967: fig. 26:8).

Furthermore, in all these regions the OMDS pattern, as defined above, is practically non-existent, other than two examples: an

⁴ However, they are more carinated than the Iron Age examples considered here, they lack handles, and except for the Tel Michal krater that has a ledge rim, they are equipped with thickened rounded rims.

amphoroid krater from Tomb 73 at Megiddo (Guy and Engberg 1938: pls. 64:34; 159:2), which bears the pattern twice, and a similar krater with a conical neck from Tel Zippor (Yannai 2000: fig. 5:1).⁵

Along the north Canaanite/Phoenician coast (admittedly, there are not many Late Bronze Age assemblages from these regions), the situation is as follows. At Sarepta, amphoroid kraters do exist, but are extremely rare before Iron II (their exact shapes are unknown; see Anderson 1988: Table 7, K-6a). However, in Stratum G1 in Trench II/Y (a quite long-lived transitional LB/Iron Age horizon), one such krater, of depressed globular shape, was encountered bearing an OMDS pattern (Anderson 1988: pl. 28:5; here Fig. 5:7).⁶ It is impossible to determine with any confidence to which phase in this long period the krater belongs.

In addition, closed kraters bearing designs similar to the OMDS pattern are attested at Kamid el-Loz in the southeastern part of the Lebanese Biq'ah, where similar patterns occur on other vessels as well (see Metzger 1993: pl. 105:2; here Fig. 5:2, but the rim is not a ledge rim).⁷

2). Iron Age Canaan/Phoenicia and the "Megiddo Style".

Tracing the fate of the decorated kraters in the Early Iron Age reveals the following processes. In Philistia, painted kraters in the Bronze Age tradition practically disappear and amphoroid kraters are non-existent.⁸ Generally, there are no decorated closed kraters in the Monochrome and Bichrome horizons of Philistia. Their (ceremonial?) roles, requiring large and deep open vessels, seem to have been replaced by the bell-shaped kraters which, both in shape and decoration, are rooted in a non-Canaanite tradition, of some 'western' derivation.

Regarding the OMDS pattern in Philistia, the variegated painted repertoire does include various zigzag and zigzag-like patterns (T. Dothan 1982: chp. 3, fig. 71), but most of them are unrelated to the pattern we seek, and the exceptions are commented on below.⁹

⁵ Morphologically, the Tel Zippor krater is very similar to the krater from Dor, mentioned above, with a conical neck.

⁶ As can be gleaned from Figure 5:7, two fragments of this vessel were found, but they do not join. In the Sarepta report they were placed in such a way as to render the decorative design incomprehensible. In Figure 5:7 the fragments are placed differently. This, no doubt, is an OMDS pattern, though the placement suggested here is not necessarily the correct one (the fragments could belong, for instance, to different sides of the vessel).

⁷ There is at least one other amphoroid krater, but it is unadorned, taller than the vessels pursued here, and has a ring base (Metzger 1993: pl. 105:1).

⁸ Possible exceptions are two closed kraters (but not amphoroid) with 'Canaanite designs' from Strata XIII B and XI in Area A at Ashdod (M. Dothan 1971: figs. 1:4; 3:1), but their stratigraphic attribution, mainly that of the earlier example, is not entirely clear (M. Dothan 1971: 25).

⁹ In general, continuous horizontal geometric configurations are rare in Philistia. This is evident on the Monochrome vessels (see Dothan and Zukerman 2004). There, decorative friezes are usually subdivided into metopes with independent designs, usually differing from each other (for example, Dothan and Zukerman

However, there is one design in the Philistine Bichrome repertoire that does resemble the OMDS pattern (see T. Dothan 1982: chp. 3, 214: figs. 17:1; 27:1; 72:6–9); Dothan considered it a western, Myc IIIc-derived pattern. In some instances, the triangular spaces formed by the groups of strokes are painted solid red, a phenomenon that is also attested on some of the Dor vessels discussed here (Figs. 1:6–7, and see below). But the Philistine designs are different from those at Dor in some respects, most notably in the quality of their execution. They are meticulously rendered, the groups of strokes are usually considerable in number, but do not overlap with each other, nor with the horizontal bands that frame the designs (which is the practice at Dor, and at other sites as well; see below). The high quality of the painting in Philistia differs from the sloppy work and faint colors on the examples from Dor.

The only vessel in Philistia that bears a design that closely resembles our OMDS is the cylindrical bottle from the Gezer cache (T. Dothan 1982: fig. 1:4, pl. 1 on right); this vessel is discussed further below. Similarly, a horn-shaped bottle of unknown provenance (T. Dothan 1982: chp. 3, fig. 41, pl. 81:2; here Fig. 4:1) is adorned with three friezes containing a continuous pattern of faint red diagonal strokes, partly overlapping each other, and the horizontal bands that enclose the pattern. It does not seem accidental that Dothan underscored the unusually low quality execution of the decoration on this bottle (in comparison with regular Philistine ware), and compared both fabric and decoration to those of a cylindrical bottle found in Stratum VI at Megiddo (T. Dothan 1982: 168–171; chp. 3, fig. 40:2, pl. 80). Dothan attributed both vessels to her late, degenerated phase of Philistine Bichrome. However, the difference between these two vessels and the ‘standard’ Philistine products is regional, rather than temporal (see below).

Similarly, in Israel’s northern valleys, the Carmel coast, Galilee, and the Lebanese littoral, kraters decorated in the Canaanite manner practically vanish, and amphoroid kraters, adorned or unadorned, are extremely rare. One such krater was uncovered in Megiddo VIB (Loud 1948: pl. 85:5). Morphologically it is similar to the Dor krater in Figure 1:1 and it is painted with a composite design in red.¹⁰ Dothan also attributed this vessel to the late, debased stage of Philistine Bichrome (T. Dothan 1982: chp. 2, 79–80, fig. 14:3), though in fact the shape, style and fabric are totally different. Here too, the difference is regional

2004: fig. 18:8), or with single geometric designs, repeated, or antithetic, but not continuous. The few rare exceptions in this regard are continuous wavy lines or horizontal bands of lozenges or triangles. Likewise, on the Philistine Bichrome group, decorative friezes are usually divided into metopes (T. Dothan 1982: chp. 3, fig. 7), sometimes with further subdivisions. In other instances the friezes are not divided, but the geometric designs in them are separate, usually repetitive, or alternate with other designs, or are antithetic (T. Dothan 1982: figs. 10:1–4). Here too, continuous geometric designs are rare, though they are definitely attested (for instance, chains of cross-hatched lozenges, T. Dothan 1982: chp. 3: figs. 70:12–13). This notwithstanding, the prevailing decorative syntax is different.

¹⁰ Another tall plain amphoroid krater from Megiddo is probably a Cypriot import (Finkelstein, Zimhoni and Kafri 2000, fig. 11.2:8).

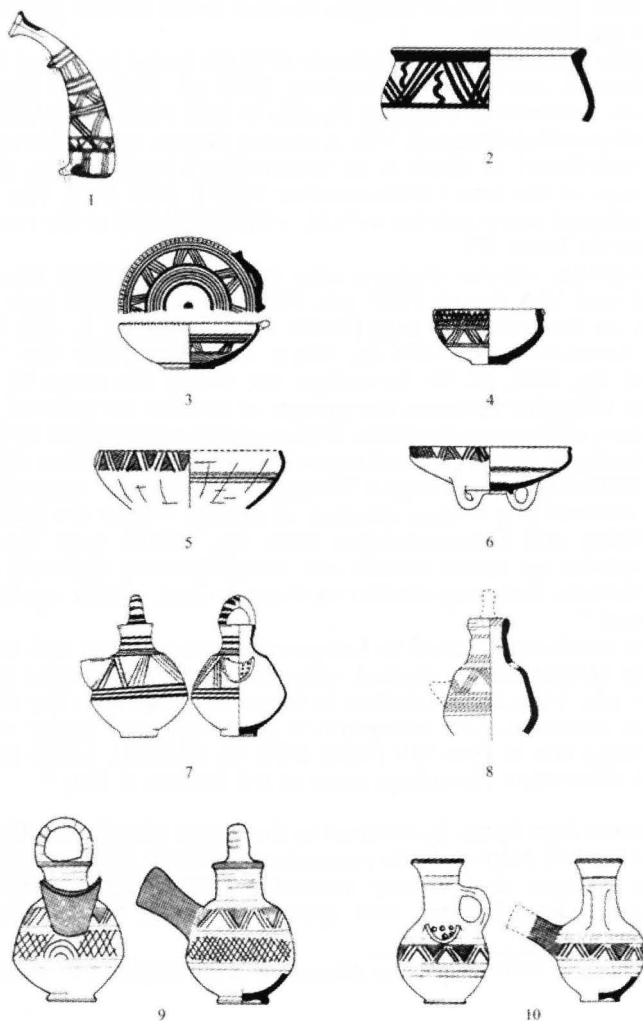


Fig. 4. Vessels of the 'Megiddo Style': (1) unknown provenance, T. Dothan 1982: chp. 3, pl. 81:2); (2) Megiddo, Tomb 877, Guy and Engberg 1938: pl. 13:9; (3) Megiddo VIb (Loud 1948: pl. 74:11); (4) Megiddo VI (Loud 1948: pl. 85:2); (5) Megiddo VI (Loud 1948: pl. 79:4); (6) Megiddo VI(b?) (Loud 1948: pl. 74:10); (7) Megiddo VIa (Zarzecki-Peleg 2005: fig. 40:14); (8) Yoqne'am XVII (Ben-Tor, Zarzecki-Peleg and Cohen-Amidjar 2005: fig. 1.23:19); (9) Megiddo (Dothan 1982: chp. 3, fig. 59:1); (10) Megiddo (Dothan 1982: chp. 3, fig. 27:7).

and not chronological. Megiddo, as detailed below, is the main site in the Canaanite sphere where designs similar to the OMDS pattern are attested in the Iron Age.

Megiddo also produced (in Tomb 877) an Iron I rounded krater (not amphoroid, see Guy and Engberg 1938: pl. 13:9; here Fig. 4:2), which bears a pattern of diagonal strokes in red; most of the contents of this tomb parallels Stratum VIB. A similar design appears on a bell-shaped krater/bowl in Grab A of Schumacher's excavations, dating to some stage of the Iron I (Schumacher 1908 I: Abb. 247). The latter served as a burial receptacle for a child, which may hint at the function of the krater in Tomb 877.

At Megiddo, similar designs also appear on various bowls in Strata VIB and VIA (Loud 1948: pls. 74:10, 11; 79:4; 85:2; here Figs. 4:3–6) and on three strainer jugs (Yadin 1975: figure on p. 223, lower right and Zarzecki-Peleg 2005: fig. 40:14; T. Dothan 1982: chp. 3, fig. 27:7, pl. 60; fig. 59:1, pl. 95; here Figs. 4:7, 9–10). On some of these vessels, the triangles between the groups of strokes are painted solid red, like some of the vessels at Dor. It thus seems appropriate to define a 'Megiddo Style' in the painted repertoire of the Early Iron Age (cf. Harrison 2004: 40),¹¹ or perhaps a 'Western Jezreel Style', since at least one such strainer jug is also attested at nearby Yoqne'am (Ben-Tor, Zarzecki-Peleg and Cohen-Anidjar 2005: fig. I.23:19; here Fig. 4.8). The decorations on these vessels are conspicuously different from those in Philistia, but very similar to those at Dor, which can hardly be accidental.¹²

On the northern (Carmel to Lebanon) coastal stretch and inland, amphoroid kraters are unattested, other than a few examples at Dan (Ilan 1999: pls. 14:6; 28:3). Neither is there evidence that the OMDS design was common. One exception is an amphoroid krater with a diagonal ledge rim in Tyre XIV (Bikai 1978: pl. XLII:22), which both in shape and decoration resembles some of the kraters at Dor.¹³

3). Bronze Age Syria. In contrast to the vague situation in Canaan (discussed further below), Syria presents an entirely different picture. Geometric designs that closely resemble our OMDS, as defined above, have a long history, and appear on other vessels besides

¹¹ See also Arie 2006 for a recent discussion of the Megiddo VI ceramic repertoire.

¹² Two similarly adorned bowls (skyphoi in these cases) are known at other sites: a single bowl at Beth She'an, in Stratum VI which, like the Megiddo specimens, was considered by Dothan to be a Philistine vessel (T. Dothan 1982: chp. 2: figs. 13:2, 14:2), and one lately uncovered at Tel Kinrot, on the sea of Galilee. It is a complete vessel found out of context, but should probably be attributed to either Stratum VI or V. I thank Stefan Münzer for permitting me to mention this find. The significance of these two isolated examples is unclear.

¹³ Another possible site is Tell el-Ghassil in the Lebanese Biq'ah, where one closed krater in Stratum 4, correctly attributed by Baramki to the Early Iron Age, bears a design that may possibly be identified as OMDS (Baramki 1961: fig. 5:3). Generally speaking, the painted decorations there are mainly evident on strainer jugs and kraters, as at Dor.

the amphoroid krater, and frequently in ceremonial contexts. The monochrome (usually red) design is prominent on the painted pottery of the Syro-Cilician sphere from the Middle Bronze Age (for example Garstang 1940: pls. LIX:1; LXVI:1, 4, 7; LXVIII; LXXI:1; Matthiae 1989: figs. 5–7; Nigro 2002: fig. 26). On some of these vessels, as at Dor, it is clear that the groups of strokes deliberately overlap each other and/or the horizontal bands enclosing the designs. Closed, necked kraters adorned with this pattern appear towards the end of the Middle Bronze Age (for example at Ebla, see the lower frieze in Nigro 2002: fig. 35; here Fig. 5:1).

In the Late Bronze Age, the OMDS design is known mainly from Ugarit, especially on goblets, jugs, amphoriskoi and zoomorphic vessels, and chiefly in one color (Schaeffer 1949: 205, fig. 84:7; Courtois and Courtois 1978: 229, figs. 9b:2, 4; 11:6, 10; 12:12; 14:2, 6–7, 10; 15:13; 16:3, 6; 17:2–3), on amphoroid kraters (Yon, Lombard and Renisio 1987: fig. 37: no. 79/979; Monchambert 2004: 219, esp. fig. 95:1281), and on other krater shapes (Yon, Lombard and Renisio 1987: fig. 84: no. 81/947). In some cases, the strokes overlap each other and the horizontal enclosing bands (in some cases the illustrations are not clear enough to determine). Occasionally, the spaces between the groups of strokes are filled with dots or very short strokes, similar to a jug from Dor (fig. 1:8). In addition to the decorated kraters, the Ugarit assemblage also includes an abundant collection of undecorated amphoroid kraters with ledge rims which, according to Monchambert, were modelled on Cypriot Plain White Wheel made [PWWM] amphoroid kraters (see 1983: 28, fig. 3:14; 2004: especially kraters of Classe 1, see the examples in fig. 51).

It thus seems that OMDS was significant in Ugarit, as were the amphoroid kraters, whether decorated or not. Ugarit has provided the most numerous examples, but the design was not confined to that site (cf. a krater from Tell Rif'at, Seton Williams 1961: pl. XL:6, with overlapping groups of strokes).

4). Early Iron Age Syria. The two phenomena continue to be attested in Syria during the Early Iron Age, and appear to become even more common. Kraters that resemble Figure 1:1 in both shape and decoration are known from Tell Afis in level E/7, dated by the excavators to the second half of the 11th century BCE (Mazzoni 1998: fig. 16:8; here Fig. 5:4), and apparently also in level E/9a, attributed to the late 12th/first half of the 11th century BCE (Venturi 1998: fig. 4:2). At Afis, similarly to Dor, these kraters are among the few vessels that are decorated. Decorative motifs closely resembling the Dor OMDS are most prominent among the Early Iron Age red-painted designs (Venturi 2000: 513; dubbed by him "des linges en zigzag par groupes de trois").¹⁴

Likewise, in the territories of the former kingdom of Ugarit, there is evidence both for the continuous importance of the OMDS pattern, and of the association with amphoroid kraters. At Tell Tweini (ancient

¹⁴ At Afis, this design (but in black) is also attested on an Iron II deep bowl (Degli Esposti 1998: fig. 7:4).

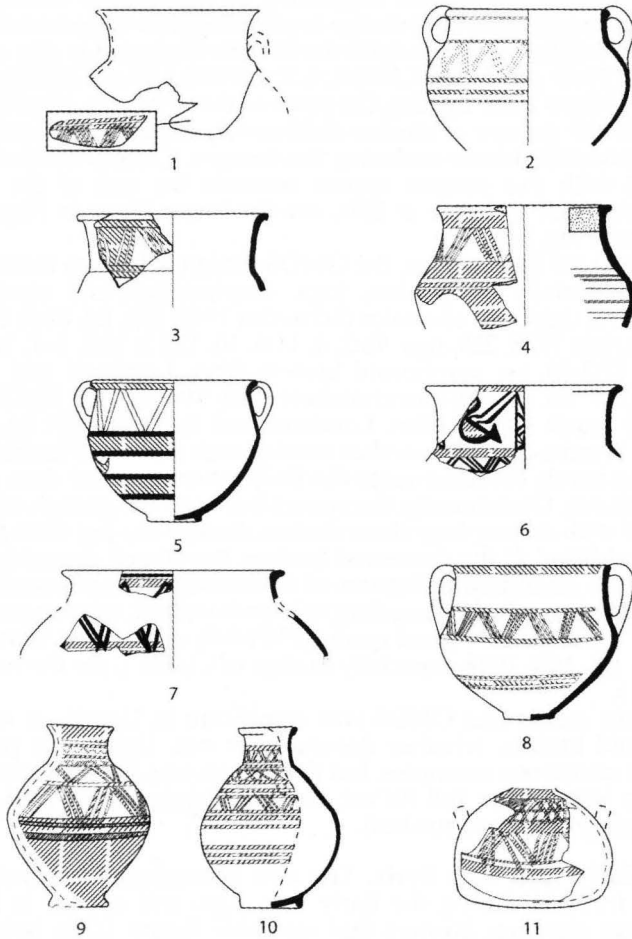


Fig. 5. Decorated vessels from Lebanon, Syria and Anatolia: MB II krater from Ebla (after Nigro 2002: fig. 35); (2) LB krater from Kamid el-Loz (after Metzger 1993: pl. 105:2); (3) LB krater from Ugarit (after Courtois and Courtois 1978: fig. 15:16); (4) Iron I krater from Tell Afis E/7 (after Mazzoni 1998: fig. 16:8); (5) Iron I krater from the 'Amuq, Phase O (after Swift 1958: fig. 38); Iron I(?) krater from Tell Tweini (after Vansteenhuyse, Al-Maqdissi and Van Lerberghe 2002: fig. 6 and unpublished photograph); (7) LB/Iron I krater from Sarepta Y/G (after Anderson 1988: pl. 28:5, re-arranged); (8) Iron I krater from Tarsus (after Goldman 1956: 228, fig. 391, no. 1352); (9) Iron I urn from the Hama cemetery, Period I (after Riis 1948: fig. 123); (10) Iron I urn from the Hama cemetery, Period II (after Riis 1948: fig. 29); (11) Iron I amphora from Troy VI_d (after Blegen, Caskey and Rawson 1953: Figs. 382, lower).

G'abla), south of Lataqiah, at least four such kraters were recovered from insecure stratigraphic contexts, dating somewhere between the end of the Late Bronze Age and Iron II (for example, see Vansteenhuyse, Al-Maqqissi and Van Lerberghe 2002: 41, fig. 6; here Fig. 5:6).¹⁵

In general, amphoroid kraters are among the most frequently decorated vessels at Twieni, a phenomenon also attested at the Ugaritic port site of Ras Ibn Hani. The excavators of this site explicitly mention the existence of kraters decorated with diagonal groups of strokes, which according to them were similar to configurations at Hama. However, there are no published illustrations of these vessels (see Lagarce 1983: 225, n. 8; for Hama see below). They also mention that these kraters were the only decorated vessels shared by Ras Ibn-Hani and Hama. Generally speaking, decorated amphoroid kraters are prominent among the painted assemblage of Ras Ibn-Hani, but the specific morphology and decoration of the published examples are different from those at Dor (e.g., Badre 1983: figs. 1:f; 2:c–d).

At Tell Kazel, south of Ras Ibn Hani, closed kraters, including amphoroid ones, where among the vessels where investment in decoration was most apparent, as noted by the excavators (Capet and Gubel 2000: 439, figs. 12–13).¹⁶

Other regions and sites in the Syro-Cilician sphere where the OMDS design is attested include the Amuq (Swift 1958: fig. 38; here Fig. 5:5), 'Ain Dara (probably a krater, Stone and Zimansky 1999: fig. 25:3), Tarsus (Goldman 1956: 228, fig. 391, no. 1352; here Fig. 5:8), but most clearly at Hama.

The evidence from Hama originates mainly from the Early Iron Age burial receptacles of Periods I and II, conventionally assigned to the 11th century BCE, and concurrent with Citadel F (Mazzoni 2000: 34). Generally, the majority of the decorative designs on the Hama urns are horizontal and continuous (division into metopes is rare), and clear OMDS like patterns were prominent (see Riis 1948: 98–99, motifs 10–12). In some cases, it is obvious that the groups of strokes were deliberately rendered so as to overlap each other and/or the horizontal bands flanking the design. Examples include a jug/jar from Grave GVIII of Period II (Riis 1948: fig. 26, pl. 10:A). At least one triangular space is filled with dots, like the Dor vessel in Figure 1:8, and the manner in which the decoration has been executed is very reminiscent of the Dor goblet in Figure 1:11. Another similar vessel was recovered from the same context (Riis 1948: fig. 29; here Fig. 5:10), and a jug/amphora from Grave GXII of Period I, with two friezes with such patterns (Riis 1948: fig. 123; here Fig. 5:9).

Similar designs are also attested in Early Iron Age burials at Carchemish (Woolley 1939: pl. XII:b; 1952: pl. 68:c), and at Tille Höyük

¹⁵ The line drawing produced here is based on the published illustration and on an unpublished photograph of the sherd that reveals more details of the decoration, for which I thank Klaas Vansteenhuyse.

¹⁶ Also, there is an unadorned amphoroid krater in the Iron I 'temple'. Tell Kazel is the only site in Syria from which an amphoroid krater clearly decorated with a Myc IIIc-like design has been published (Badre and Gubel 1999–2000: fig. 44:b).

on the Euphrates, about 130 km from Carchemish (Blaylock 1999: fig. 1:2, 3; Blaylock highlights the similarity of these designs to those at Hama and Afis).

5). Cyprus. Can the decorated amphoroid kraters phenomenon and the OMDS be traced to Cyprus, which, as I have noted (see Gilboa 2005; Sharon and Gilboa in press), had a close association with Dor throughout the Early Iron Age?

In the Late Cypriot period, amphoroid kraters are very common. In addition to those imported from the Aegean, such shapes were produced locally, especially in the Plain Wheel made Wares I and II, but their morphology is quite different from the Dor (and the Syrian) examples. With very few exceptions, they are taller and more elegant (not squat) and are provided with a high foot. Nearly all are equipped with oblong ledge rims, similar to those of the KR 1 category at Dor.¹⁷ Other than the vessels adorned in Mycenaean style (e.g., Karageorghis and Demas 1984: pl. XIX:105), these kraters are rarely decorated, but designs reminiscent of the OMDS do occur. The best examples are zigzags (not OMDS patterns), that cross the horizontal bands flanking them (Karageorghis 1976: pl. LXIX: 87, 2; Courtois 1981: figs. 122–124; Schuster-Keswani 1991: 112, fig. 11.1:U).

During LC IIIB (the period that is chronologically equivalent to Phases G/10–G/9, which produced most of the vessels discussed here), large amphoroid kraters and smaller krateriskoi occur, especially in Proto-White Painted (PWP) and PWWM wares (Iacovou 1991: 202), but they are uncommon. As in earlier periods, most are taller and more elegantly shaped than the Dor specimens.¹⁸ Kraters in this period are rarely adorned with paint (on these issues see also Iacovou 1988: 34). When they are decorated, the designs are very simple, usually comprising only horizontal bands or wavy lines. Not only do these vessels fail to exemplify some special attention regarding input in decoration, but at Alaas, for example, they are among the least decorated vessels (Karageorghis 1975: pls. XX: no. 7; XL: nos. A9–A10; LXVIII: no. 11).

Still, two kraters from this period are very similar, both in shape and decoration, to the vessel in Figure 1:1, an unprovenanced PWP krateriskos (Karageorghis 1985: 826, fig. 5, here Fig. 6:1), and a krater from an Early CG I context in Tomb MA 1723 at Larnaka (Georgiou 2003: pl. II: 14). However, these vessels have a high foot, and on the Larnaka krater the groups of strokes do not overlap. Also, though both could parallel Dor Phases G/10–G/9, the context at Larnaka is certainly later than G/10 (and possibly also later than G/9, which apparently equals the LC IIIB/CG I transition).

On Cyprus, amphoroid kraters become prominent again only in Cypro-Geometric IB (i.e., later than most of the Dor examples), and

¹⁷ Occasionally there are also some squat examples, but unadorned (for instance, Åström 1972b: figs. LXII:8, 10; LXIII:3).

¹⁸ Occasionally, as at Alaas, there are some depressed globular shapes, but they are still not as squat as the Dor kraters, and they are equipped with ring or torus bases.

thus this phenomenon cannot be associated with the origin of these vessels at Dor (see Iacovou 1991: 202 and notes regarding Hermary and Iacovou 1999: no. 5).¹⁹

The OMDS design occurs in Cyprus as it does in Syria, quite frequently on ceramic vessels throughout the second millennium BCE (for some examples antedating LC II, see Åström 1972a: figs. V:8, 11; VIII:4; XV:12; Vermeule and Wolsky 1990: 196, nos. T.I.404, T.I.401, T.I.1633; 208, T.I.415; 301, T.V.108). In the Toumba Tou Skourou tombs, for example, this is one of the most popular motifs on bowls, jugs and tankards (but not on kraters). In most cases the strokes do not overlap each other (but see Nicolaou 1989: figs. 4:323, 329, 378). After the onset of LC II, the OMDS design still appears frequently on Bichrome vessels (Epstein 1966: pls. II:6, VI:6; VII:9; Åström 1972b: fig. XLIV:1–2; with or without overlaps); on White Painted Wheelmade wares (Webb 2001: nos. 119–120; Åström 1972b: fig. LXXIII:2, 4; with no overlaps), and occasionally also on Base Ring Ware (for instance on the strainer jug in Karageorghis 2002: 41, no. 45). Nevertheless, during the course of LC II–LC IIIA the popularity of this design diminishes.²⁰

A revival in the use of OMDS-like designs can be traced during LC IIIB and the transition to CG I, in other words during the periods paralleling Phases 10–9 in Area G. They are still not particularly common even then, but considering the relative paucity of known LC IIIB ceramics on the island, they appear to assume more importance than attested in other periods. In addition to amphoroid kraters, they adorn mainly PWP 'special' vessels, such as the cylindrical bottle and other shapes at Alaas (Karageorghis 1975: pls. X: no. 9; XXVIII: no. E2), bottles in Tomb 74 at Lapithos (Pieridou 1965: pl. X:3, no. 59; T. Dothan 1982: chp. 3, pl. 78), an askos, probably from the vicinity of Lapithos (Karageorghis 1963: pl. 35:3, here Fig. 6:2; part of the groups of strokes there overlap), a PWP or WP I amphora from Tomb 6 at Kouklia (Myres and Ohnefalsch-Richter 1899: pl. III:439), an unprovenanced stirrup jar (Karageorghis 1965: pl. 24:1), and PWP and WP I bowls from Tomb 132 at Kouklia-Xylino (Flourentzos 1997: pls. XXIX:12, XXX:20).²¹

6). The Aegean. Amphoroid kraters are, of course, common in the Aegean, but there are no squat-shaped examples such as the ones discussed here. Likewise, OMDS designs (termed by Mountjoy

¹⁹ In CG I, in contrast to LC III, there are some hints that amphoroid kraters with OMDS-like designs may have had some significance. This is indicated, for example, by miniature vessels attached to kernoi (e.g., Gjerstad 1948: fig. VII:1). Tomb 521 at Amathus (CG Ib) produced a vessel in the shape of a woman, holding on her head a krater identical to the Dor one in Figure 1:1, adorned by a continuous zigzag (Karageorghis and Iacovou 1990: pl. VII:83). This similarity does not seem to be accidental.

²⁰ A LC IIIA vessel (of unclear stratigraphic association), which possibly bears an OMDS design, was uncovered in Maa-Palaeokastro (Karageorghis and Demas 1988: pl. CCIV). Incidentally, it has a conical neck.

²¹ Such designs continue to feature on later pottery, especially in CG IA-B (e.g., Flourentzos 1997: pl. XXX:20), but the geometric configurations are much more meticulously rendered.

“stacked zigzags”) are extremely rare, even during LH IIIC and the Sub-Mycenaean period, when they are somewhat better attested (for some examples, see Mountjoy 1999 I: figs. 60:461, 61:472; 98:221; II: fig. 421:129). There is no association between the OMDS design and amphoroid kraters, other than a few instances (e.g., on a Sub-Mycenaean krater from Phocis, Mountjoy 1999 II: fig. 309:259; but the strokes there do not overlap). In general, the decorative patterns on the Aegean vessels are much more ‘orderly’, and rendered with precision and the diagonal strokes hardly ever overlap each other.

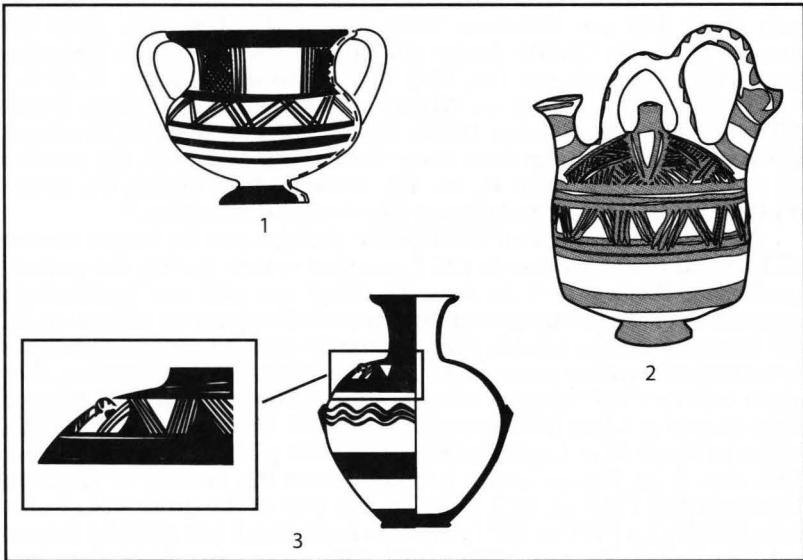


Fig. 6. Decorated LC IIIB vessels from Cyprus. (1) Unprovenanced PWP krateriskos (after Karageorghis 1985: 826, fig. 5); (2) PWP askos from the Lapithos region (after Karageorghis 1963: pl. 35:3); (3) PWP amphora from Floor II of the Ingot God Sanctuary at Enkomi (after Courtois 1971: fig. 140, no. 122).

Strainer Jugs, other Containers, and their Decorations

In addition to kraters, Phases G/10–9 also attest to special and systematic decorative input in strainer jugs (Fig. 1:7 and Figs. 1:3–5 that belong to carinated vessels). The fragment in Figure 1:6 may belong to a rounded strainer vessel like those in Figures 1:7–8 (but larger) or possibly to a jar. The amphoriskos in Figure 1:9 had a (now missing) tubular spout, and the shape of Figure 1:10 is unclear. It seems reasonable to assume that the spouted vessels were used for drinking and/or pouring at exclusive occasions.

Meaningful parallels can be traced only for the carinated strainer jugs, the morphologies of which are rooted in the Canaanite potting

tradition.²² Identical jugs, with the same decoration, are the "Megiddo style" vessels from Yoqne'am and Megiddo mentioned earlier (Figs. 4:7–8).

The origin of the rounded strainer jug has been the subject of some debate, but as suggested by T. Dothan (1982: 154–155), it can be traced to Cyprus. The amphoriskos in Figure 1:9 is definitely a Canaanite shape. Similar vessels are known elsewhere in Iron I, including some that bear Philistine Bichrome decoration, and they continue in Iron II (see Mazar 1985b: 59). However, no known amphoriskoi carry a decoration similar to the Dor example.

On all the vessels at Dor, the prevailing decorative configuration, with some variation, is the horizontal frieze with (red) continuous OMDS design, as seen on the kraters. The Dor vessels portray well the distinctive characteristics of this design, especially the overlapping strokes, which occurs with few exceptions, implying that it was done deliberately. Another trait is evident on two of the examples (Figs. 1:6–7): the red painted triangles formed between the groups of strokes, although this was only partially carried through on the complete strainer in Figure 1:7.

The OMDS design also adorns the neck of the jug in Figure 1:8 (note that the triangular spaces are dotted with very short strokes, as seen on the Hama vessels mentioned above), and apparently also on the rim of the vessel in Figure 1:10.

Other than the OMDS design (and the simple horizontal bands), the only patterns attested on these vessels are horizontal friezes of irregular net patterns (Figs. 1:6, 8) and the single conspicuous example of the concentric semi-circles pattern in Figure 1:7.

The OMDS design has already been discussed above. Here I wish only to highlight those vessels in which solid red triangles are incorporated into the pattern, as in Figures 1:6–7.

In Syria, this combined pattern is first attested in the Late Bronze Age on a variety of vessels at Ugarit, including kraters (Courtois and Courtois 1978: figs. 11:2; 14:1, 3, 17; 15:16; 16: 2, 10; Yon, Lombard and Renisio 1987: fig. 84, nos. 81/687, 81/946). Only one of the kraters is clearly amphoroid (Fig. 5:3), and at least in one case the design clearly adorns a strainer jug (Courtois and Courtois 1978: fig. 6:22; see also Buchholz 2001: fig. 1j and accompanying discussion). On another amphoroid krater (Yon and Arnaud 2001: fig. 20:90.5312; rendered more clearly in fig. 19) this composition is combined with a net pattern (on the neck) – a combination which also typifies some of the vessels from Dor and Megiddo discussed here.

Parallels on Cyprus, as expected, date nearly exclusively to LC IIIB, and frequently occur on 'special' vessels of PWP ware, such as on an amphora and kalathos from Enkomi (Courtois 1971: fig. 107, no. 826; 140: no. 122; here Fig. 6:3; it is unclear whether the strokes overlap) on a pyxis in the Cyprus museum (Iacovou 1988: fig. 34, Cat. no. 15); on the "Boston kernos" (T. Dothan 1982: chp. 4, pl. 7); and

²² In Iron I, this shape is also attested in the Philistine assemblages, but decorated differently than at Dor, frequently in the Philistine Bichrome style (see discussion in Mazar 1985b: 64–65).

on a cylindrical vessel, possibly an askos, of unknown provenance (Karageorghis 1965: pl. 40:5).

A Painted Goblet

The goblet in Figure 1:11 is later than the vessels discussed above (Phase 8 in Area G, the Ir11b transitional horizon at Dor). It belongs to the occupation immediately following the Ir1a destruction at Dor, and is the only decorated vessel to have been found in an assemblage of clear ritual nature (see Stern 2000a: fig. 47;²³ Sharon and Gilboa in press).

The shape is of Canaanite derivation. Similar goblets are widespread in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age southern Levant (including the painted Philistine repertoire), especially in cultic contexts (see Mazar 1985b: 49–51).²⁴

The decoration on this goblet is different from those on the Dor vessels discussed above, as it lacks the OMDS pattern. Again, however, both the decorative syntax and the design may be related. The decoration is in red, featuring a continuous geometric design, but without a division into metopes. Likewise, the design is not a continuous zigzag. Rather, the basic components comprise diagonal strokes that, in places, deliberately overlap each other and the horizontal bands enclosing them. No other goblets with such designs are known.²⁵

Summary of the Ceramic Evidence

The Dor vessels presented here comprise most of the non-commercial pottery vessels that were adorned with anything more than a stroke of paint. Since the vessels consist almost exclusively of kraters and spouted vessels, they were probably used in ceremonies involving drinking. As such, they are the foremost pottery vessels in the earliest Iron Age horizons at Dor that preserve stylistic traditions that may carry symbolic meaning. Chronologically, they mainly belong to the Ir1a (early and late) horizons at the site, and parallel

²³ There it was attributed to a pre-destruction context, Phase G/9.

²⁴ Late Bronze Age examples occur at Tell Kazel, Area IV, Level 5, unadorned (Badre and Gubel 1999–2000: fig. 36:f); Deir 'Alla (Franken 1992: fig. 4-24:7), and Beth She'an VIII (James and McGovern 1993: fig. 18:1). In the Iron I, they occur at Ta'anach IA (Rast 1978: fig. 8:14) and Yoqne'am XVIII A (Ben-Tor, Zarzecki-Peleg and Cohen-Anidjar 2005: Photo I.31 on right; this goblet is roughly contemporary with the Dor one). It may be of some significance that at Tell Qasile, where such goblets are numerous, only one, perhaps two, were embellished with Philistine Bichrome decoration.

²⁵ Some of the Hama urns may bear similar designs (e.g., Riis 1948: fig. 26). The decoration on the Dor goblet is also reminiscent of a miniature red-painted goblet from Megiddo, probably part of a kernos. Though the latter does not bear a zigzag, its overall decorative scheme resembles that of Dor vessels. It is painted with a sloppy net design (one of the designs typifying the Iron I "Megiddo Style" and some of the Dor vessels), and with at least one design of concentric semi-circles (see T. Dothan 1982: chp. 4, pl. 5).

the Bichrome-bearing strata in Philistia, with the exception of the goblet, which is slightly later. The foregoing discussion allows some conclusions, but many questions remain.

(1) Though few, these vessels definitely constitute a stylistic group. The characteristics of the Dor drinking vessels are red/orange painted designs comprising undivided horizontal friezes with continuous geometric decorations. The repeated design on most of them is the OMDS design, as defined above. This hardly seems accidental. Occasionally, part of the triangles are painted solid red or filled with dots/short strokes. Other attested designs include sloppy net patterns, and in one case concentric semi-circles. The metope design, a hallmark of the Canaanite Late Bronze Age syntax, is not attested. Another important characteristic is the frequency of the amphoroid kraters among the painted repertoire (at least two of which bore OMDS designs).

(2) The restricted distribution, and the generally low quality of the decoration on most of the vessels, may hint at the context of their production. They do not appear to have been the product of a specialized production of painted vessels like that attested, for example, in Philistia in this period. The organization of production seems to have been of a lower order, possibly domestic (cf. Costin 1991), and definitely different from that of the much more abundant painted commercial containers.²⁶

(3) To date, no other Levantine site has produced vessels that are identical to the Dor vessels. Thus, when trying to define the spatial and temporal associations of this group, the entire phenomenon should be considered, specifically the dearth of painted vessels, the shapes elected for decoration, and the overall syntax, design and color.

(4) Most conspicuous and significant are the differences with Philistia, particularly the vessels chosen for decoration, the colors used, the decorative syntax and the prominence of the amphoroid kraters.

(5) Most of the vessel forms (the carinated strainer jugs, the amphoriskos, the goblet) are rooted in the southern Levantine tradition. The rounded strainer jug may have been borrowed from the Cypriot repertoire, but it is also possible that such rounded vessels developed from the carinated strainer jugs of the Late Bronze Age. The only shape for which a Canaanite origin cannot be evoked is the squat/depressed amphoroid krater. This, ultimately, is an Aegean shape, but one was adopted and adapted in the Levant as early as the Middle Bronze Age, becoming more common in the Late Bronze Age.

(6) However, despite the Canaanite roots of most of the vessel shapes, the phenomenon as a whole cannot be interpreted as (only) of Canaanite derivation, since the OMDS design was rare in Canaan, as was the amphoroid krater.

(7) Syria is the only region where significant similarities to the Dor phenomena occur. The OMDS design seems to have carried special

²⁶ It should be borne in mind that the main area at Dor where the earliest levels of the Iron Age have been excavated (Ir1a, early and late) is Area G, which was a domestic area, featuring other cottage industries, and perhaps this is the reason that the decorated vessels are so few.

significance as early as the Middle Bronze Age, and certainly by the Late Bronze Age (though the symbolism eludes us). During the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages, a similar decorative syntax is evident: red-painted horizontal friezes with continuous geometric designs. Syria is also the only region where, starting in the Late Bronze Age, but possibly already by the late Middle Bronze Age, kraters and in particular amphoroid kraters with red-painted decorations become important in assemblages that are otherwise very minimally adorned.

(8) In addition to this Syrian connection, there is also an association with Cyprus, including both the OMDS design and the presence of amphoroid kraters. Although the Cypriot parallels are not many, they seem to be of significance and the resemblance is hardly accidental. Squat amphoroid kraters are not numerous on Cyprus, and are especially scarce in LC IIIB, the period that parallels most of the Dor vessels discussed here, and they are never singled out for special decoration. However, designs reminiscent of the Dor OMDS are well attested from the Middle Cypriot period onward. During LC IIC and LC IIIA they become more scarce, but significantly, a revival in the use of this motif is attested in LC IIIB, including on some 'special' vessels.

(9) In the southern Levant, Megiddo is the only Early Iron Age site that produced several vessels with designs similar to the Dor assemblage. The Megiddo examples occur in Stratum VIB, which is *grosso modo* contemporary with Phases 10 and 9 in Area G (Ir1a), and in Stratum VIA, which is slightly later (Ir1b, parallel to Phase G/7). A significant portion of the so called 'degenerated Philistine' ceramics of Stratum VI are not related to Philistia at all, but constitute a distinctive local stylistic tradition, similar, but not identical to that of Dor. A few similar designs at Yoqne'am may further hint that this "Megiddo Style" had a wider spatial distribution.

Dor, Megiddo, Syria and Cyprus

The Syrian, and especially Ugaritic, associations of the Dor vessels presented here are, of course, not a robust enough platform to suggest that our expectations to trace some influx from this region to the southern Levant have been fulfilled. However, they do suggest that at least at Dor, and possibly at Megiddo, the foreign associations of the material culture extended not only to Cyprus. A major drawback in assessing the significance of this phenomenon is the fact that we cannot pinpoint its beginning. On present evidence, the association is evident only in the Ir1a horizon at Dor, equaling Stratum VIB at Megiddo and the Philistine Bichrome phase in Philistia. Whether at Dor it actually started earlier, in the LB/Iron Age transitional horizon, is a moot question at the moment, as such a horizon has not yet been encountered. At Megiddo, on present evidence, it is not attested earlier than Stratum VI.

In this context, it should be noted that this is not the first time that a Syrian connection has been suggested for the material-cultural

components of the Sea Peoples in the southern Levant. In 1987, Uza Zevulun demonstrated that the famed lion/lioness-shaped cups, prominent in 'Philistine' contexts, are a Syrian (and not an Aegean) phenomenon, a suggestion convincingly demonstrated more recently by Linda Meiberg (2005).

Consequently, perhaps we should also return to some other long-neglected issues. On one of Thutmose III's lists at Karnak, a place named TKR is mentioned in a north Syrian context (cf., Sethe 1961: IV/788, no. 136). Gardiner, in his commentary on the Onomasticon of Amenope (followed by others), dismissed the similarity between this toponym and the name of the inhabitants at Dor as coincidental, a mere homonym (Gardiner 1947: 200*). He denied the Syrian-Šikilian connection, mainly because he deemed it impossible that a toponym that preceded Ramesses III might be connected in any way to the Šikila, and could not envisage any connection between Syria and Dor. But others, such as Anton Jirku (1937: 19, no. 47, n. 19), left the issue unresolved, while still others, like Claude Vandersleyen (1985: 52–53), suggested that the origin of the Šikila and other Sea Peoples should be sought in Syria. This also raises yet another unresolved dilemma, the possible connection between the Šikila and the Šikilayu (who lived on boats) mentioned in Ugarit in RS.34.129 (cf., Lehmann 1979; Rainey 1982; Hoftijzer and Van Soldt 1998).

The association of Dor with Syria admittedly remains vague, but it cannot be ignored anymore. Can we consider the Dor group a first hint that indeed some population of Syrian origin (or at least one family or workshop producing pottery in accordance with Syrian concepts) is attested here? Or should we consider another type of association between Syria and the term Šikila, which to my mind (as noted earlier; cf. Gilboa 2005) is co-terminus with our concept of "Phoenician". As demonstrated above, there are also clear connections between the Dor (and Megiddo) style and some Cypriot pottery, and in the Dor context, with its multiple links to the island, this, *a priori*, may seem more plausible. A connection with Cyprus is further suggested by the association of OMDs designs with shapes of clear Cypriot origin, such as cylindrical and horn-shaped bottles, a phenomenon also attested in LC IIIB Cyprus.

The main obstacle in untangling these links, is that the contexts in which this style develops in Syria remains unclear. Based on the evidence surveyed in this paper, it would appear to be a local development, but scholars working in Syria usually attribute it to a western stimulus (i.e. the "Sea Peoples") (for example Venturi 2000: 513, 532, 534; Blaylock 1999: 266 and more vaguely Lagarde 1983: 225). At Tell Afis, the excavators have debated whether the OMDs design is in fact of Cypriot origin and, if so, whether it 'arrived' in Syria in the Bronze or Iron Age (Venturi 1998: 129, 130 and references; Mazzoni 1998: 166; Degli Esposti 1998).²⁷ It must be pointed out, however, that

²⁷ In Syria, another Cypriot association is exemplified by the tall amphoroid kraters with wavy lines on their necks, like those at Ras Ibn Hani and Tell Tweini (e.g., Badre 1983: fig. 1:f; Vansteenhuisen et al. 2005). They are not known in the southern Levant.

other than the OMDS design the Syrian examples differ substantially from their alleged Cypriot models.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that at least one site in western Anatolia (Troy), has produced painted vessels with a resemblance to the group discussed here that does not seem accidental. In Stratum VI^d a few vessels and potsherds were adorned with clear OMDS designs painted in red, and occasionally combined with net patterns. Blegen dubbed these Trojan Matt-Painted Ware, and he considered them imitations of Mycenaean vessels (e.g., Blegen, Caskey and Rawson 1953: figs. 382, lower; 405 upper middle; here Fig. 5: 11), which is totally unwarranted.

For the time being, I must leave the question unresolved. Future finds, and a better chronological correlation between Syria, Cyprus and the southern Levant, may in time provide some answers. In the meantime, however, it can be demonstrated that LC IIIB Cyprus, Early Iron Age Syria, and at least Dor and Megiddo (but not Philistia), experienced some stylistic interaction, though its specific trajectories cannot be defined at the moment. Regarding Dor, the association with the "Megiddo style" indicates a phenomenon of some significance, beyond one or two potters.

Future Prospects: Fragmenting the "Sea Peoples"

It thus seems that there are some new research avenues to be explored. Above all, the "Sea Peoples" phenomenon must be fragmented into its local components, perhaps even investigated on a site-by-site basis and not only along Amenope's coast. Rather than employing a trait list approach to identify the material correlates of different ethnic "Sea Peoples", social negotiations as reflected in material culture should be defined in each locale.²⁸ It is quite possible that eventually the Sea Peoples 'settlement' will be demonstrated to encompass such divergent processes as to render the term essentially meaningless. There is, of course, a limit to the resolution possible, but the present paradigm, based on the Philistine model and on Amenope, of three discrete ethnic groups invading and settling in three discrete territories leads us down a blind alley.

In *Foucault's Pendulum*, Casaubon proclaims: "you cannot escape the revelation of the identical by taking refuge in the illusion of the multiple" (Eco 1989: 6). Regarding the Sea Peoples, at this point in time, I would argue for the opposite: it is high time that we address the multiplicity, the differences and the nuances. Only after archaeologically defining (and hopefully understanding) the social and demographic *realia*, will we be able to try to decipher the relevant Egyptian records, and not vice versa, and perhaps eventually, as Von Ranke aspired, to understand better how it really was.

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²⁸ And as there is no *a priori* reason to assume that these processes were always exemplified by ceramic changes, this should also be carried out free of the tyranny of pottery.

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