Figurines from Tell Balatah/Shechem

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ABSTRACT

FIGURINES FROM TELL BALÂTAH/SHECHEM

by

Jacob A. Moody

Adviser: Paul Ray Jr.
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: FIGURINES FROM TELL BALÂTAH/SHECHEM

Name of researcher: Jacob A. Moody

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Paul Ray Jr., Ph.D.

Date completed: April 2015

Problem

The Drew-McCormick Expedition conducted six seasons of excavation at the site of Tell Balâtah/Shechem between 1957-1968. During those campaigns they uncovered several anthropomorphic and zoomorphic (clay and stone) figurines. This study represents the initial research for those figurines and their eventual publication and will briefly review the pertinent research done on figurines from the Levant and provide a detailed catalogue of the available figurines from Tell Balâtah/Shechem.
Method

The 38 available figurines were studied and detailed drawings were provided for each. The known data associated with every figurine are specified (provenance, registration number, size, condition, physical description, etc.) and, where possible, parallels from other published figurines are given, based on typology and iconography.

Results

A detailed catalogue for the 38 figurines was established and can be used to easily reference and compare the available terracotta and stone figurine corpus from Tell Balâtah/Shechem.

Conclusions

Due to the lack of readily available data on the original context of each figurine, no major conclusions about them, specifically, can be drawn at this time. This paper has laid the foundation for the further study of these figurines when all their contextual data have been made available.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

FIGURINES FROM TELL BALÂTAH/SHECHEM

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Jacob A. Moody

2015
FIGURINES FROM TELL BALÂTAH/SHECHEM

A thesis
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
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Jacob A. Moody

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

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Paul Ray Jr., Ph.D., Adviser

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Constance Gane, Ph.D. Date approved
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I am likewise indebted to Joseph Greene, Adam Aja, and any volunteers and staff of the Harvard Semitic Museum who helped in providing me with the needed information, photographs, and access to the needed materials from their collections. My special thanks to Marina Gibbons for her exquisite drawings, which are not only crucial to this thesis but provide something actually worth viewing.

Most of all, I wish to thank my dear wife, Joanna, and my four sweet children for their sacrifice and for being my support and drive in all of this.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The site of Tell Balâtah/Shechem was first excavated by an Austro-German team from 1913 to 1934, and later by the Drew-McCormick Archaeological Expedition from 1957 to 1968. In recent years the ongoing publication of the Drew-McCormick excavations of Tell Balâtah/Shechem has seen several volumes come forth and there are still several more in the works. Dr. Edward F. (Ted) Campbell of the Drew-McCormick team is currently overseeing the ongoing publications. One of the original publication goals of the expedition was to create a small finds volume. At the invitation of Dr. Campbell, this thesis marks a beginning in the examination and eventual publication of the small finds from the Drew-McCormick expedition to Tell Balâtah/Shechem.

Of the 57 recorded ceramic or stone figurine fragments that were discovered by the Drew-McCormick excavations, 42 of those are currently allocated to the Harvard Semitic Museum (HSM) with the rest presumably in possession of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. Close examination of those 42 objects shows that only 38 of them can be identified with any degree of certainty as being part of a figurine. Table 1 lists the 38 figurines.
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<td>2011.2.10</td>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>XV 1.63</td>
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As the material for this paper was researched and written, a limited amount of data was readily available. Copies of all of the original object registries from the Drew-McCormick excavation were given to me, as was access to each of the figurines in question. The object registries provide a provenance for each object by giving the Field, Area, Basket, and occasionally the Locus. The majority of the contextual information for each object and how they relate to the other findings in their respective, such as Fields, Areas, Loci, is in handwritten field notes and journals, including the needed data to provide proposed dating for each of the figurines. All of these handwritten data are being digitized by the HSM and will be eventually incorporated into this study when available. Therefore, this thesis is comprised of a brief history of the study of figurines from the Levant and, primarily, a catalogue of the above-mentioned 38 figurines from Tell Balâtab/Shechem.
CHAPTER 2

BRIEF HISTORY OF RESEARCH

Several key studies have taken up the topic of figurines from the Levant. While each has added to the discussion and provided frameworks of classification and theories to better facilitate that discussion, no seminal work has been done that provides a consensus point for scholars to currently classify form and function of these figurines.

Recognized as the first to really delve into this topic was Edwin Pilz (1924). His study compiled the published figurines at that time, totaling 123, and he also included figures made of materials other than clay. Using form and iconography, Pilz identified seven possible classification groups.

This was followed by the studies of William F. Albright (1939, 1943) who focused primarily on the figurine corpus from his site, Tell Bit Mirsim, and was able to note that a few of his figures did not seem to fit into Pliz’s typology, but offered no real new typology of his own.

In 1943 James B. Pritchard presented his research on figurines. He had the advantage of more published sources and compiled a catalogue comprising of 294 figurines which he divided into eight main types with two to three subtypes for nearly all of his categories. As with the studies before him, his primary focus was on form and iconography.
Each of these early studies focused only on female figurines and completely ignores male and zoomorphic figures. In addition to iconographic typologies, each brought an increased understanding of chronology to the discussion.

By the 1970s the earlier studies on the subject of figurines from the Levant had become outdated. Thomas Andrew Holland’s doctoral dissertation (1975; and his subsequent 1977 study) proceeded to catalogue and identify typologies for the updated overall corpus. He focused on Iron Age, Palestinian figurines with 2,711 examples making up his study base. Holland’s typology identified 16 heavily subdivided types, which include male, female, and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines and expanded the traditional definition of figurine to include such things as decorated vessels and figures on model shrines. Holland’s work was monumental for its time, providing a comprehensive study of the known material and an extensive framework wherein to classify terracottas from the Levant.

Since Holland’s time, ongoing studies of terracotta plastic art from the Levant have continued but in more narrowed fields such as site-specific assemblages, time period, or a particular type. These include works such as Henry R. Dornemann’s (1983) study of figurines from Transjordan; Raz Kletter’s work on Judean Pillar figurines (1996) and Tel Lachish terracotta studies (2004a-b); Ephraim Stern’s book on the figurines, cult objects, and amulets from Dor (2010); and Michael D. Press and his study of Iron Age, Philistine figurines (2012); to name a few.
CHAPTER 3

CATALOGUE

The following catalogue will elaborate on the 38 figurines mentioned above. Each will have an annotated description providing the following information: their Balâ­tah registration number/ Harvard Semitic Museum registration number (where applicable); their figure number used in this text; their Field, Area, Basket, and Locus (when known); their material; Munsell Soil Color(s); technology; decoration; measurements and overall condition.¹ An example of an annotation is as follows:

*Object B66.345/2011.2.19; Fig. 1; XIII 4.217. Clay; very pale brown (10 YR 7/3), dark gray core (10 YR 4/1). Mold-made (single). Undecorated. H 9.3, W 6.6, T 2.1 cm.*

*Broken.*

When the Field, Area, Basket, and Locus are shown in the annotation, the Tell Balâ­tah/Shechem provenance notation is used. In the above example, the Roman numeral XIII represents the Field, while 4.217 denotes Area (square) four and Basket 217. When a locus also has been provided, it will be notated after the Basket number. Each annotation will be followed by a physical description of the object, a listing of any relevant parallels, and a drawing of the artifact. Marina Gibbons did all

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¹ This annotation system is a borrowed and slightly modified version of the one created by Michèle Daviau in *Excavations at Tall Jawa, Jordan: Vol. 2, The Iron Age Artifacts* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).
of the drawings in this paper. The parallels that are given are based on typology and iconography.

Using some of Holland’s terminology, I developed my own typology specific for this corpus:

I. Anthropomorphic:
   A. Low relief female plaques
   B. High relief female figurines
   C. Male anthropomorphic figurines
   D. Miscellaneous Anthropomorphic figurines

II. Zoomorphic:
   A. Solid handmade Bovine
   B. Solid handmade birds
   C. Solid handmade miscellaneous animals
   D. Zoomorphic spouted vessels

III. Miscellaneous and undefined fragments

**Anthropomorphic**

Low Relief Female Plaques

**B66.345: Female Plaque With Arms Raised Holding Objects**


*Broken.*
This is one of the more complete figurines from Tell Balâtah/Shechem, and has a fair amount of detail. The figure is that of a naked female on a plaque with both arms bent at the elbow, hands raised. The sides of the plaque gradually slope inward from top to bottom. There are both new and old breakage spots that result in the upper left portion of the head and face being missing, as well as the left forearm and hand being gone. Also, a smaller break along her upper right side has removed a portion of her right hand and part of the object she is holding. It is also broken at the bottom in a straight horizontal line just above the knees.

The hair or wig, which frames her face and ends at her shoulders, is in a Hathor style that is common to these kinds of plaques, but is also depicted in curls or having some other decoration. Right where the hair meets the shoulders and on either side of the neck are two heavy half-moon shapes, possibly hoop lunate earrings. ’V’-shaped markings below the neck likely depict a necklace or possibly her collarbone. The navel is detailed along with the pubic triangle and genitalia.

She is decorated with two faint, yet tight bands around the neck like choke necklaces and two faint bangles around the right wrist, and it can be assumed that matching bracelets adorned the left wrist as well. Something was held in each hand and a faint trace of what is in the right hand is still there, but due to brakeage it is not clear what the objects could be.

Parallels

Several plaques with this motif have been found though many of them have slightly differing hair/wig styles. Similar plaques and a possible mold that parallel Object B68.86 have been discovered at Gezer (Macalister 1912: pl. XIX.16; pl. CCXX.
12, 20, 22; 416, pl. CCXI; Dever, Lance, and Wright 1970: pl. 25A; 37.11); Megiddo
(May 1935: pl. XXX, M2884); Tell Batash/Timnah (Kelm and Mazar 1995: 66-67, 78;
fig. C8), and Ain Shems (Grant 1931: pls. XI.1543, L.17; Grant and Wright 1938: pl.
Ll.16-17).

Fig. 1. B66.345: Female plaque with arms raised holding objects.
B68.86: Female Plaque With Arms at Sides

Object B68.86/2011.2.20 (fig. 2) XIII 4.37. Clay; red (2.5 YR 5/6), black core (10 YR 2/1). Mold-made (single). Undecorated. H 12, W 5.1-6.0, T 2.9 cm. Broken.

This figurine depicts an unadorned naked female. A large break at the upper right side of the figure cuts the body essentially in half, leaving only the lower potion fully intact from the stomach down. The barest hint of the left side of the torso remains as does the left shoulder and left arm and hand. The right forearm and hand also remain on their tablet backing; both arms and hands hang loose and slightly away from the figure’s sides. The fingers of the hands are depicted crudely and the lines that make them seem to have been incised after molding. No navel remains, but that could be due to the breakage. There is a faint pubic triangle, and genitalia are marked. The whole of the woman is depicted forward facing except her feet, which are displayed in profile, facing left.

Parallels

Holland designated a whole category to figurines like this one, C.VI “female plaques with arms hanging straight down.” While there are many figures that fit that basic typology, this one from Shechem is unique. No exact parallels were found that had all of the characteristics here, the rectangular plaque, hands flat against the plaque, emphasized genitals, and feet in profile.
Fig. 2. B68.86: Female plaque with arms at sides.
**B68.822: Female Plaque Figurine**

*Object B68.822/2011.2.21 (Fig. 3) XIII 4.261. Clay; very pale brown (10 YR 7/4), light brownish gray core (2.5 Y 6/2). Mold-made (single). Incised lines. H 9.5, W 3.6, T 2.6 cm. Broken.*

All of the other molded females in this corpus (both low and high relief) have a relatively smoothed back with the exception of this one. The back of this figure was left crude, misshapen, and untrimmed, with clear finger impressions from when the clay was pressed into its mold. Multiple handprints and fingerprints are also left in the clay of the back.

The figure is that of a naked female but the top and top-front portions are broken off as are the front of the feet and toes. The feet presumably stuck out, facing forward, as evidenced from the direction of the lower breakage and remaining clay. Only the lower portion of the figure is clear, from just above the hips down. Both legs are wearing jewelry and have two anklets each, just above the feet. The pubic triangle is defined by deep incisions that were cut after molding; no genitalia were detailed. A fainter horizontal line at the hip level could be depicting some kind of belt or girdle.

There is another incision in clay, post-molding, that runs from the top right corner of the pubic triangle that cuts down across the right thigh and ends on the outer leg at about where the knee would be. This incision has the same depth and style as those that make up the pubic triangle and was presumably made at the same time and with the same instrument but its purpose or significance is unclear. No close parallels were found for this figurine.
Fig. 3. B68.822: Female plaque figurine.

B66.97: Female Plaque Fragment
With Hands at Sides

Object B66.97/2011.2.18 (fig. 4) XIII 2.97. Clay; pink (7.5 YR 8/4), ext+int.

The plaque of this nude female figurine leaves only a slight but clearly defined background, with the border of the plaque tapering towards the feet. The back of the plaque also was smoothed perfectly flat. Only a fragment of the overall
figurine remains. It is broken off just below the chest and just above the knees, leaving only the lower torso, hips and thighs. While her arms are missing due to the brakeage, her hands are preserved. They are at her sides just below the waist and on the outside of her thighs, palms against the legs. A faint depression constitutes the navel, and the pubic triangle is clearly emphasized.

Parallels

There are many parallels for this type of figurine. A near identical figure comes from Hazor (Yadin 1958: 83, pls. LXXXIX.15, CLX.1). Another good parallel for this figurine was found at Beth-shean (Mazar 2009: 530-33, fig. 9.1, photo 9.1a).

Ashdod also has similarly formed figures, though their backs are not flattened (Dothan 1971: 128, 138-39, fig. 64.2; Dothan and Porath 1982: 122-23; fig. 11:6). Other parallels come from Gezer (Macalister 1912: 414-15, pl. CCXX.13, CCXXI.11); Pella in Jordan (McNicoll, Smith, and Hennessy 1982: 75, pl. 15a); and a figure from a dolmen in the Golan (Epstein 1985: 34, 52-53, fig. 5.9, pl. IX.14).
Fig. 4. B66.97: Female plaque fragment with hands at sides.

**B64.659: Female Plaque Fragment**


Broken off at the waist and at the knees, all that remains of this naked female plaque fragment are the pubic area and the thighs. There is slightly more of the plaque background on the right side of the figure, but both sides have clearly shaped
edges. The excess clay of the back of the plaque has been nicely rounded at the sides and smoothed nearly flat in the back.

The base of the pubic triangle is clearly molded and the legs are slightly separated with the gap between them growing towards the feet, indicating that the feet were likely slightly apart rather than close together. No other features or decorations are visible, including a lack of the hands or fingertips at the sides, likely meaning that the arms were bent at the elbow, remaining above the waist.

Parallels

Not much remains of this fragment to draw parallels from, but possible finds include figures from Megiddo (May 1935: pl. XXX.M 878; Sass 2000: 396, 398, fig. 12.35.1); and Ain Shems (Grant 1938: pl. LI.15).
Fig. 5. B64.659: Female plaque fragment.

**B64.370: Hips and Legs of a Female Plaque**

Object B64.370/2011.2.12 (fig. 6) VII 2.204. Clay; yellow (7.5 YR 7/6), ext+int.


This broken plaque is the lower half of a naked female and is broken off at the hips leaving the lower portion of the figurine. It was made from a rather shallow
mold resulting in an only slightly raised figure, almost two dimensional on its plaque. There is far more clay making up the plaque's tablet and backing than what makes up the figure, and the back of the plaque has been smoothed and rounded into an almost perfect half oval.

None of the torso remains on this fragment. The hips are shown along with a molded pubic triangle with no marked genitalia. The full extent of the legs remains, though the feet seem not to have been fully formed, which could be due to a lack of the clay being sufficiently pressed into the mold, though it could be that the mold itself was lacking fully formed feet. The top portion of the right foot is preserved and is in profile, pointing towards the figure's left. No other features or decorations remain or are intact.

Parallels

A piece such as this with just the lower portion of the body showing could belong to several different types of plaque figure design where the arms are raised or with elbows bent above the waist. Similar fragments of legs in low relief also with rounded or roughly rounded backs have been found. Parallels include figures from Lachish (Kletter 2004a: 1573; 1577, figs. 23.54.1-2; 1580, figs. 23.56.8-9) and Ashkelon (Press 2012: 75. No. 67, 173-78).
B64.585: Lower Legs of a Female Plaque


This piece is presumably another nude female; only the lower portions of the legs remain of the figure in this fragment, from just below the knees to the ankles. It is rather worn with portions chipped and flaked away in addition to the breakage. The tablet border is small and the back of the excess clay is smoothed flat. The legs
do not touch and there is an anklet or bangle around the right leg. Due to the brake there is not a clear matching anklet on the left leg, though what appears to be the faint remains of one can be seen on either side of the left leg, at the break. While there are no other physical marks or decorations on this fragment, the anklets point to it likely being a female figure.

Parallels

Several examples exist of plaque female figurines with anklets or bangles. Although none may be considered exact parallels to this one, they come close and show the common trend: Gezer (Macalister 1912: pl. CCXX.21); two from Lachish (Kletter 2004a: 1575; 1577, figs. 23.53.7-8); Megiddo (May 1935: pls. 27.M810 and 28.M5418); a mold from Tell En-Nasbeh (246-7, pl. 87.3), and a figure from Tall Jawa (Daviau 2002: 60-61, 218, fig. 2.30.3).
Fig. 7. B64.585: Lower legs of a female plaque.

High Relief Mold-Made Female Figurines

**B62.512: Head Fragment of Female**


This figurine is broken just below its neck, leaving an intact head but none of the upper torso or chest. While similar to Object B62.281 in representation and
make, Object B62.512 differs significantly in the quality. The face here is misshaped with the left side being marred before firing, possibly when it was removed from the mold. This marring has caused the nose to be nonsymmetrical, making the left eye slightly smaller than the right, and has the top half of the left ear missing. A row of curls lines the forehead with a possible veil or head covering depicted.

Just below the neck and chin and where the upper chest begins, right where the figurine is broken, remnants of red paint may be seen going across the figure horizontally. The head itself was not painted and it can be assumed that this decoration was reserved for the lower portion(s) of the figurine.

Parallels

Parallels for this figurine fragment are few and uncertain with only the head to match but there are some possibilities. An interesting complete figure from Tel ‘Ira is almost identical (Kletter 1999: 377, fig. 7.1.1, 382-83). Two figurine heads from Samaria have the same style of facial features and a similar headdress or curls (Crowfoot and Sukenik 1957: 80, pl. XI.3-4).
B62.512: Head fragment of female.

B62.281: Head Fragment of Female

Object B62.281 (fig. 9) VII 22.123. Clay; light red (2.5 YR 6/6); Mold made (single). Slip, reddish brown (2.5 YR 4/4). H 3.7, W 2.3, T 2.3 cm. Broken.

Only the head remains of this figurine, as it is broken off just below the chin. While the lower portion of its right ear and the tip of the nose have also been broken off, this is the most detailed face in this catalogue. It is beautifully rendered and care was given to the overall facial structure so that such features as the brow, eyelids, cheekbones, nostrils and chin are clearly defined. The hair is styled in a single row
of curls along the forehead and in two locks that come from behind the ears and fall along the neckline, but are truncated due to the break of the figure. The red slip is flaking and eroded in places, but it originally covered the entire head and presumably the whole figurine.

Parallels

A possible parallel from Busayra is close in facial features and hair decorations, but it is not an exact match (Sedman 2002: 370; pl. 10.39). Tall Jawa likewise has a similarly styled figure (Daviau 2002: 58-59, 218, fig. 2.29.1).

Fig. 9. B62.281: Head fragment of female.
B62.389: Head Fragment of Female


This is the most poorly preserved of the female figurine heads from Tell Balâtah/Shechem. It is broken at or just below the neck so that only the head of the figurine remains. The front portion, starting just below the eyes and including the nose, also has been broken off or eroded away. Only the top of the head, most of the hair, the forehead, eyes and ears remain. There is also a gash-like cut or imperfection that runs from the top of the head, just left of center, and which runs down the middle of the forehead, going between the eyes and ending just were the bridge of the nose would start. The hair has a clear part right in the center and top of the head, and is depicted unbound and not styled, flowing from either side of the part and down the sides of the head. The ears are depicted just poking through the hair, that is, flowing over them so only the top portions of the ears are shown. There is a faint ridge where the hairline stops on the forehead. This could be depicting curls or perhaps a headband of some kind.

Parallels

Due to the damage of this fragment, determining close parallels is difficult. A possible parallel comes from Ashkelon (Cohen 2011: 462).
B62.70: Face Fragment of Female


This fragment consists of only the face of a mold-made female figurine. The complete face is preserved from forehead to chin save for the mouth, which is missing due to a chip. A portion of the hair just above the forehead is also preserved. The hairline is depicted with a single row of curls along the forehead. The brow
ridge of this figurine is well defined, arching over each eye and coming down in a ‘V’ shape between the eyes, both of which are rendered in detail with clear eyelids and eyeballs.

Parallels

Though only a fragment, there are examples of figurines found with similar facial details to those that can be determined on this one. A possible parallel comes from Ashkelon (Cohen 2011: 465). Several figurine heads from Lachish have the same detailed eyelids, eyes, and brow (Tufnell 1953: 374-378, pl. 31). A mold from Megiddo produces a similar facial image (May 1935: pl. XXIII, M4117).

Fig. 11. B62.70: Face fragment of female.
B64.658: Female Torso


Here is the torso of a naked female figure which is broken at the top of the neck, so none of the head or face remains, and is also broken off at just above the navel so that nothing below was preserved. This figurine has a rounded back with two clear finger impressions on the right side, just behind the shoulder and arm. The excess clay was trimmed from around the edges of the figure, except for a bit of a background, which was kept to either side of the head. The portion of the hair that remains is not styled and is shown coming over both shoulders and stopping on both sides at the base of the neck. The figure’s arms are bent at the elbow and the hands are each cupping a breast from underneath with the fingers and thumb of each hand holding the sides of their respective breast, leaving the undetailed fronts exposed.

Parallels

By far, this figure has the most parallels of any in all of the figurines from Tell Balâtah/Shechem with the motif of a nude female cupping her breasts being very prolific throughout the Levant and beyond. Holland's category for this very type, “both hands clutching the breasts,” category C II (Holland 1995: 159), is appropriate.

Some very nice parallels include several pieces found at Busayra (Sedman 2002: 370-71, pl. 10.42a-e; 371-74, pls. 10.48:a-c, 10.51, 10.52, 10.53) and one from Samaria (Crowfoot and Sukenik 1957: 79, pl. XI.6). Tell Batash/Timnah produced a nice mold that makes a figure that matches fragment B64.658 (Kelm and Mazar...
1995: 88, fig. C32; 136-37). A close parallel was also found at Gezer (Macalister 1912: pl. CLXXXVII. 22), and Hazor has produced some as well (Yadin 1960: pl. CXCV.8; Yadin 1961: pls. CCVII.36, CCCXIV.2). Two pieces from Lachish parallel closely, though the hair does not come down as far (Kletter 2004a: 1573; 1577, figs. 23.53.5-6; 1580, figs. 23.56.5-6). A fragment from Tawilan has almost the same breaks as this fragment and is a fine match (Bienkowski 1995: 80, 292; fig. 9.3.1), and Tel Dor provides several examples (Stern 2010: 11-12, 56-59, pl. 6).
Fig. 12. B64.658: Female torso.

B64.510: Female Fragment


Figurine B64.510 is a fragment depicting a naked female preserved from just above the waist to just above the knees. Other than the pubic triangle and the thighs,
this broken piece has no other detail, lacking a defined navel or genitalia. The forearms and hands also are not depicted so it can be assumed that its arms were bent at the elbow above the waist. On the upper right hip and on the inner left thigh there are modern shallow chips in the clay, revealing the darker interior.

Parallels

This fragment offers little to draw parallels from, though its lack of any excess clay is notable. Parallels come from Ashdod (Dothan 1971: 128, 138-39, fig. 64.7) and Tel Dor (Stern 2010: 12,14, fig. 14.9).

Fig. 13. B64.510: Female fragment.
Male Anthropomorphic Figurines

**B62.377: Hollow Male Figurine Head**

*Object B62.377/2011.2.24 (fig. 14) 1 1.35. Clay; yellowish (10 YR 7/6), ext+int.*


This hand-made head is all of one piece and, although there is a little bit of ware around the base of the neck, it is unbroken. It is hollow and was presumably attached to something at its neck such as a separately formed body or vessel.

The clay that makes up the face was applied to the outside of the shaped head, and then incised, before firing, to make eyes, a nose, and a mouth. The hand-made brows shaped for each eye are rather symmetrical while the incised eyes are not. The incised mouth also is not symmetrical and slants slightly down to the right while the chin slopes down to the left. The lack of jewelry, hair, or any head decoration probably indicates a male figure.

**Parallels**

There are few published parallels for this head. Perhaps the most similar in form comes from Jerusalem (Tushingham 1985: 301; fig. 12.11), though the publication does not say that their figurine head is hollow.
Fig. 14. B62.377: Hollow Male Figurine Head.

B60.145: Crude Pinched Figurine Head

Object B60.145/2011.2.22 (fig. 15) V 2.7. Clay; very pale brown (10 YR 8/3) ext+int. Handmade. Incised and pierced. H 8.4, W 2.5, T 3.3 cm. Broken.

This was the only figure of its kind found at Tell Balâtah/Shechem and seems to be part of an anthropomorphic vessel. The pillared "body" is crudely shaped with finger prints and impressions left in the clay. A face is depicted by a pinch in the clay creating the nose and impressions for the eye locations. A thick, but small horizontal
line was incised, before firing, just below the nose to create a mouth. Eyes were made by deep punctures made into the soft clay.

The front of the nose is broken off from bridge to tip. The top of the head is broken off and the base of the pillared “body” is also broken but not before it flares out around its base where it likely merged with the body of the vessel to which it was attached. There is another break at back of the figure where a handle may have been attached.

Parallels

This figure is unique and no published parallels have been found to date. There is a crude figure from Megiddo that has a similarly pinched face with pierced eyes and an incised mouth, but the overall shape is very different (May 1935: pl. XXIX, M2060).
Fig. 15. B60.145: Crude pinched figurine head.

Miscellaneous Anthropomorphic Figurines

B62.328: Detailed Feet on Pedestal Fragment

*Object B62.328 (fig. 16) VII 1.87. Clay; very pale brown (10 YR 8/3), ext+int.*

*Mold-made (single?). Incised and impressed. H 4.0, W 3.5, T 3.2 cm. Broken.*

All that remains of this figurine are its feet, resting on a pedestal base, and a portion just above the feet. What remains is very detailed, with unique
characteristics. The back of this fragment is also completely broken off, revealing a hollow portion in the base behind the feet.

There is nothing to denote the figure’s gender, but it was at least partially clothed. The base of a robe or dress is clear and comes to rest right on top of the feet, and a horizontal line at the base of the represented cloth likely indicates a hem. The feet are together and the toes were made by deep incisions cut into the clay before firing. Some tips of the toes on the right foot have been broken off. The remaining toe of the right foot and the four main toes of the left all have slight impressions that create clear toenails.

The base, which the feet are resting on, is only slightly wider than the feet themselves. There are two uneven, parallel, faint lines that run horizontally across the front section of the base. The lines do not continue onto the sides of the base.

Parallels

No exact parallels for these pedestaled feet were found among published sources. Some of the closest parallels come from Tell Keisan (Paraire 1980: 339-40, pl. 104.40-41); Lachish (Kletter 2004b: 2066, 2073, fig. 28.40.8); Tel Dor (Stern 2010: 18-19, figs. 20.3, 22.1-3, pl. 13); and Makmish (Avigad 1960: 90-96, pl. 11A-B). There are also some robed, male, stone statues from the Amman Citadel, which have similarly detailed and pedestaled feet (Dornemann 1983: 154-58, 283-285, figs. 90.1, 91.1, 92.3).
Fig. 16. B62.328: Detailed feet on pedestal fragment.

**B64.660: Lower Legs and Feet of a Plaque Figurine**


Only the lower legs and feet remain on this worn figurine fragment, with the legs being broken off just below the knees. A flattened plaque backs the legs; its surface is not smooth, and is pitted and rough. The feet of the figurine rest on a pedestal or shelf which makes a 90° angle with the plaque backing. No garment or jewelry is depicted and no distinguishing features exist to indicate whether the figure was male or female, or fully naked.
Parallels

Figurines with similarly pedestaled feet have been found, both male and female, seated and standing. A close parallel comes from Tel Sippor (Negbi 1966: 11, pl. III.11). Other possible parallels include finds from Megiddo (May 1935: pl. XXX, M878, 772, 599). Object B64.660 is also similar to several model shrine figures, which have their feet on a platform or ledge (Mazar 1985: 5-18, figs. 1-2, 15).

Fig. 17. B64.660: Lower legs and feet of a plaque figurine.
B64.312: Undefined Plaque Fragment

Object B64.312 (fig. 18) IX 2.41. Clay. Mold-made (single). Undecorated. H 4.6, W 4.0, T 2 cm. Broken.

Original notes from the 1964 object registry call this a possible “head of a plaque” figurine. However, close examination shows no indication of a head or facial features and instead points to it possibly being the feet and base of a plaque figurine instead. Two clear raised, molded, parallel shapes run down the middle of the plaque, which could be legs, with the breakage obscuring where the feet would have been. Either way, it is still unclear what is being represented here.
Fig. 18. B64.312: Undefined plaque fragment.

**B57.133: Figure of a Toe**

*Object B57.133/2011.2.1 (fig. 19) III 5.4. Clay; pink (7.5 YR 7/4), ext+int.*

*Handmade. Painted, reddish brown (5 Y 4/4); incised. L 5.0, W 1.4, H 1.5 cm. Broken.*

This figurine piece is likely that of a human toe and was part of a larger figure. It is well made and clearly shaped with attention to detail. The only break is at the very base where the toe would have attached presumably to a foot. The toe itself is complete and unbroken. Incised lines at the top and tip of the toe create a
1.0 cm long toenail, with two parallel incised lines marking the cuticle and another curved incision following the rounded toe tip, to show the nail's end. At the base of the toe there is a band of applied clay that may represent a toe ring or a partial footwear strap. The ring of clay does not go completely around the toe, as the bottom of the toe is flattened smooth and is featureless; also the furthest right end of the ring is broken just as it slopes down the side of the toe.

There is some reddish-brown paint on the toe as well, though its significance or representation is unclear. The paint is only on the band at the toe’s base, but from where the band ends on the toe’s left side, the paint continues along the side of the toe to almost to the tip. No parallels were found for this piece.

Fig. 19. B57.133: Figure of a toe.
B64.540: Decorated Anthropomorphic Sherd (?)

Object B64.540/2011.2.6 (fig. 20) IX3.151, loc. 9620. Clay; reddish yellow (5 YR 6/6), dark gray core (10 YR 4/1). Wheel made with hand made relief. Incised. L 8.0, W 4.0, T 1.6 cm. Sherd.

The relief on this sherd appears to be that of a forearm and hand, with the fingers spread. Four incisions were cut into the soft clay to create the spaces between the five fingers. If a hand is being depicted, it is crude. No parallels were found for this figurine.

Fig. 20. B64.540: Decorated anthropomorphic sherd (?).
B62.348: Unidentified Ceramic Fragment With Hand


This unidentified fragment is the only one of its kind found at Tell Balâtah/Shechem. It is a mostly flat, thin piece that seems to be the corner of some larger, rectangular or square shape. What appears to be a small hand is depicted on the unbroken side, with its fingers together, and the palm against the piece. Two small round flattened disks appear on the remaining edge, which runs perpendicular to the hand. A hole was pressed into the center of each of these disks before firing.

An incised line, about 2 cm from the edges of the piece, forms a right angle that runs parallel to the remaining edge, creating what appears to be a wide border that would have run around the outside of the piece. There are traces of yellowish-red paint that presumably once covered the whole piece. No parallels were found for this piece.
Fig. 21. B62.348: Unidentified ceramic fragment with hand.

**Zoomorphic**

Solid Handmade Bovine

**B62.27: Male Bovine Head**

*Object B62.27 (fig. 22) VII 23.29. Clay; very pale brown (10 YR 8/3) ext+int.*

The figurine is broken off at the base of its neck, with no trace of the body or vessel to which that it may have been attached. Other than the tip of the left horn and the very ends of the ears, the head is fully intact. It is a finely crafted and detailed piece. There are two clear horns and two defined ears that are attached at the sides of the head, just below the base of the horns. The eyes are incised, and there are sets of incised, arched lines above each eye, which create a brow line or wrinkles. A pronounced snout extends out from the face, and at its end there are two deep piercings, indicating nostrils, and a wide incised line for the mouth. There are incised lines that follow the top curve of the front of the snout which likely also represent wrinkles in the skin. There is also a nice dewlap (a pendulous fold of skin under the throat) that runs from under the chin and down the neck.

Parallels

While bovine figures are prolific in all varieties, few tend to be as detailed as this head. Possible parallels come from Ashkelon (Press 2012: 125, no. 170; 187-88); Lachish (Kletter 2004a: 1576, 1579-80, figs. 23.55.9, 23.56.13); an as yet unpublished bull’s head from Tell es-Safi/Gath, Area A2, excavated in 2012 (https://gath.wordpress.com/2012/07/09/the-bull-from-area-a2/); and Megiddo (May 1935: pl. XXXVI, M806).
Fig. 22. B62.27: Male bovine head.

Solid Handmade Birds

**B62.262: Duck Head and Neck**

*Object B62.262 (fig. 23) VII 1.62. Stone?, granite?; dark gray (10 YR 4/1),

This is one of the few stone figurine pieces from Tell Balâtah/Shechem, showing a duck head broken off at the base of the neck. The neck is upright and straight, with the head tucked down so the bill of the duck is resting on the front of its neck. Incised concentric circles were used for each eye, and two small pierced or drilled holes on the bill make up the nostrils.

Parallels

No close parallels were found depicting a duck head in this fashion. Beth-shean does have a very interesting number of duck/goose heads that were either figures or attached to bowls, and Mazar provides a good overview of the tradition of duck/goose head figures with their origins and predominant findings (Mazar 2009: 546-50).

Fig. 23. B62.262: Duck head and neck.
Solid Handmade Miscellaneous Animals

**B60.414: Textured Animal Torso**  
(Lion?)

*Object B60.414/2011.2.28 (fig. 24) VII 5.69b. Clay; reddish yellow (5 YR 7/6),


This figure is the forepart and partial torso of a quadruped. The head and lower parts of the forelegs are broken off and the torso is broken about midway, leaving only the front half of the animal. What makes this figure unique are the small circular impressions that cover the neck, front shoulders, and chest of the animal. The original comment on this figurine in the object registry notes states that “the circles representing hair are around the head but not the body, hence a lion?” The portion of the circle pattern that remains very well could be representative of a lion’s mane. The parallels found also support the idea of this being a lion or some sort of *Carnivora.*

Parallels

No parallels were found from the Levant, with the closest parallel coming from the Royal Palace at Urkesh/Mozan, in Mesopotamia (Hauser 2007: 292). Hauser also cited a figure from Susa with similar body shape and circular markings (2007: 249, fig. 43/29), which was also identified as being a large cat or *Carnivora.*
Fig. 24. B60.414: Textured animal torso (lion?).

B64.52A: Zoomorphic Torso Fragment

Object B64.52A/2011.2.31 (fig. 25) IX 3.10, loc. 9508?. Clay; very pale brown (10 YR 7/3), ext+int. Handmade. Painted. H 2.8, W 2.5, L 4.4 cm. Broken.

From the original record, B64.52A also had a part B. Only 52A was in the corpus at the HSM. This fragment is primarily the forequarters and front torso, with a portion of a neck. The body is stylized and is perfectly cylindrical. Faint uneven stripes of dark reddish-brown paint arch across the back and down the sides of the body, but do not continue underneath. The painted stripes continue onto the forequarters and chest of the figure.
Parallels

The unrealistic body shape and unique paint make this piece distinctive.

Other similarly shaped and painted figures have been found and Megiddo provides two good examples (Loud 1948: pl. 246, 25-26).

**Fig. 25.** B64.52A: Zoomorphic torso fragment.

**B62.272: Hindquarters and Partial Tail of a Quadruped (Horse?)**


The figurine here is broken in half, cross-cutting the torso in the middle, and leaving only the back half of the figure. The hindquarter legs are mostly missing as well. This fragment, and presumably the whole figure, was not shaped to the point of showing the muscular definition or detail, and appears roughly made with an
uneven surface. The rear legs were not made side-by-side but the right rear leg is positioned slightly more forward, thus placing the figure in a walking stance rather than a standing one.

The back of the animal has a distinct concave curve placing the animal's rump higher than its back. The broken stump of a wide tail also remains. These points along with the hip-to-body ratio likely suggest the figure to be that of a horse.

Parallels

Without any major defining features, exact parallels are difficult to locate. But the curve of the proposed back, protruding possible tail stump, and the overall handmade roughness of the figure can be matched. Possible parallels include figures found at Ashkelon (Press 2012: 105-7, no. 128-9, and 131); Tel Dan (Greenberg 1996: 139-42, fig. 3.38.6-7); a figure from Hazor (Yadin 1961: pls. CLV.33, CCC.22); and two from Megiddo (May 1935: pl. XXXVII, M2638; Sass 2000: 399, 401, fig. 12.37.1).
Fig. 26. B62.272: Hindquarters and partial tail of a quadruped (horse?).

**B57.335: Animal Torso Fragment**  
(Horse and Rider?)

*Object B57.335/2011.2.25 (fig. 27) II 1.139, loc. 11. Clay; light red (2.5 YR 6/6), ext+ int. Handmade. Undecorated. L 6.0, W 2.5, H 2.7 cm. Broken.*

The fragmentary nature of this piece makes it difficult to clearly identify. It is likely that it represents the underside of a quadruped torso with the base of the neck and beginnings of front legs showing. The top of the animal's back is gone, due to breakage, as are the hindquarters and legs.

While this could represent any quadruped, it is possible that it may be a fragment of a horse and rider figurine, with the breakage along the proposed animal back being where the rider was located.
Parallels

A parallel to show the possible horse and rider connection comes from Ramat Rahel (Kletter and Saarelainen 2014: 201-2, fig. 5).

Fig. 27. B57.335: Animal torso fragment (horse and rider?).

B62.235: Horse and Rider Fragment (?)

*Object B62.235/2011.2.29 (fig. 28) VII 4.80. Clay; yellowish red (5 YR 4/6); black core (5 YR 2.5/1). Handmade. Painted; white (10 YR 8/2). H 5.5, W 5.0, T 4.2 cm.*

*Broken.*

This is another fragment that makes identification a problem but one possibility is that it comes from a horse and rider figurine. The fragment may represent the chest, beginnings of the front legs, and the base of the neck of the
horse, with what appear to be legs straddling the figure just behind the proposed neck.

Parallels

The exact identification of this piece is uncertain, but possible horse and rider parallels give credence to that conclusion. Lachish offers one example of a similarly shaped and questioned figurine fragment (Kletter 2004b: 2060, 2069, fig. 28.36.8). Another comes from Dor (Stern 2010: 8-9, fig. 3.4, pl. 3).

Fig. 28. B62.235: Horse and rider fragment (?).
Zoomorphic Spouted Vessels

**B60.313A: Horned Animal Head Spout**

Object B60.313A/2011.2.27 (fig. 29) VI 8.9, loc. 4. Clay; reddish yellow (5 YR 7/6), ext+int. Handmade with appliqués. H 4.5, W 2.8, T 3.5 cm. Broken.

This spout represents a horned animal of some kind and is likely depicting a bovine. Both horns are broken off at or near their base. The eyes are small, flattened, conical appliqués, and the left eye is partially broken. The actual spout makes up the muzzle of the head, which is partially chipped or broken around its edge.

Parallels

A close parallel for this spout comes from a vessel at Megiddo (May 1935: 34, pl. XXXVIII, 3016); and another from Tell Qasile (Mazar 1980: 112, pl. 38.6).
Fig. 29. B60.313A: Horned animal head spout.

**B64.491: Decorated Spout (Animal Head?)**

_object B64.491/2011.2.33 (fig. 30) VI 215. Clay; pink (5 YR 7/3), ext+int. Hand made with appliqués. L 4.5, W 2.7, H 4.8 cm. Broken._

At first glance this seems to be a non-descript animal head spout with flat clay disk appliqués for its eyes, but the fact that there is a third disk appliqué on the top of the supposed head, in line with and between the two possible eyes, may cause that to be questioned. There are no other decorations or features to say for certain
whether this is just a decorated spout or an animal head. There is some chipping or breakage at the back and on top of the spout where possible horns or ears would be on an animal head, but what remains is too inconclusive to say if they were there or not.

Parallels

Many kernoi have been found that have similar heads to this one. One similar in form but painted was found at Beer-Sheba (Herzog 1984: 17-18, 52 fig. 25:2, pl. 14:2). Ashdod also produced several closely resembling Object B64.491 (Dothan 1971: 132, 142-3, figs. 66.9-13).

Fig. 30. B64.491: Decorated spout (animal head?).
B66.260: Animal Head Spout


Here is a well-made spout head, unbroken or marred except the break at the neck where the head originally was attached to its vessel or body. Two incised eyes are the only decorations or features. The head is smooth with an elongated muzzle comprising the spout. The lack of features makes it unclear what animal is being represented. No parallels were found for this piece.

Fig. 31. B66.260: Animal head spout.

B64.165: Hollow Horse Head


It is clear that this fragment depicts a horse head, in spite of its broken and worn state. Incised into the clay are lines and markings that portray blinders and
the noseband of a bridle. The front of the muzzle is broken and worn away, as are the tops of the ears. The head is hollow and a narrow hole in the muzzle where the mouth would be suggests a possible spout but it is unclear if the intact muzzle sealed this off or not.

Parallels

Similar parallels, some with a hole in the mouth leading to a hollow neck, were found at the Great Temple of Amman (Koutsoukou: 130); at Beth-shean (Mazar 2009: 542-43, fig. 9.10, photo 9.10); at Busayra (Sedman 2002: 382-83, pl. 10.71); Tell el-Far ‘ah (Chambon 1984: 238-39, pl. 65); Hazor (Yadin 1960: 33, pls. LXXVI.17, CIII.8, CLXIII.9, 13; Yadin 1961: pls. CCXVI.16, CLXXVI.24, CCCLVI.1, 3); Megiddo (May 1935: pl. XXXVI, M4823, M44580); and Tell es-Sa’idiyeh (Pritchard 1985: fig. 169.2).

Fig. 32. B64.165: Hollow horse head.
Miscellaneous and Unidentified Fragments

B68.630: Painted Fragment

Object B68.630/2011.2.9 (fig. 33) XIII 2.109. Clay; reddish yellow (7.5 YR 7/6), ext+int. Painted. L 3.4, W 2.5, T 0.9-2.0 cm. Broken.

This is a roughly rectangular piece, which has dark reddish brown painted lines running down its length. One side is perfectly flat and undecorated and is presumably the piece’s underside. Its unbroken edge is rounded and the piece thickens at its break. It is possible that this represents an anthropomorphic foot with painted toes, but another more likely suggestion is that of a bird’s wing or tail.

Parallels

While not exact parallels, the following examples show bird figures with either tails or wings similar to this piece: Gezer (Gilmour 2014: 51, 54, 334-337; pl. 16.5, 17.3); Lachish (Kletter 2004b: 2062, 2070, fig. 28.37.5-6); and Megiddo (Sass 2000: 399, 401, fig. 12.37.4).
Fig. 33. B68.630: Painted fragment.

B68.924: Broken Hollow Fragment

Object 68.924/2011.2.10 (fig. 34) XV 1.63. Clay; light gray (10 YR 7/1). Incised.

L 3.5, W 2.1, H 2.8 cm. Broken.

This hollow piece has two groups of incised lines on one side, which may represent wrinkles in an animal’s hide, suggesting a possible zoomorphic neck, though that conclusion is still uncertain. No parallels were found for this piece.
Fig. 34. 68.924: Broken hollow fragment.

B66.271: Cylindrical Piece

_Object B66.271/2011.1.8 (fig. 35) XIII 3.147. Clay; yellow (10 YR 7/6)._

_Undecorated. H 2.9, D 3.3 cm. Fragment._

Possibilities for what this piece may be include a pillar-base for a anthropomorphic figurine or perhaps a zoomorphic foot. The cited parallels point to both possible conclusions with fragments being found that represent both possibilities.
Parallels

Although it is not clear what this piece may be, a possible parallel comes from Beth-shean (Mazar 2009: 544-45, fig. 9:14.1). Mazar came to similar conclusions with the figure from Beth-shean, claiming a possible animal figure leg, but also recognizes the rarity of figures with similar leg styles and points to an amulet or votive leg as possible alternatives for their figure. Ashkelon provided two other similar pieces that Press identified as possible zoomorphic legs (2012: 124, no. 168; 128, no. 177; 187-87).

Fig. 35. B66.271: Cylindrical piece.
B62.441: Unidentified Piece

Object B62.441/2011.2.11 (fig. 36) VI 25.74, loc. 551. Clay; yellow 7.5 YR 7/6), ext+int. Handmade. Painted or slip. L 3.5, W 3.0, T 1.5 cm. Fragment.

Originally registered as a figurine, and possibly considered a fragment of anthropomorphic legs, this piece was marked later also as possibly being a piece of Chalcolithic ware. Either way, it is still unclear what this piece may be from. No parallels were found to support either proposed theory.
B64.532: Unidentified Fragment

Object B64.532/2011.2.5 (fig. 37) III5.167, loc. 513. Clay; dark gray 5 YR 4/1; interior reddish yellow 5YR 6/6. Handmade. Undecorated. H 3.0, W 2.4, T 1.7 cm.

Fragment.

The original object registry identifies this piece as a “figurine head,” presumably zoomorphic. At some point between excavation and transport to the HSM it was broken into two pieces. Those two pieces have since been adhered back together. The whole fragment is small and crude, with two defined “appendages,” which may represent horns or ears, and hence the possible zoomorphic head description. Oriented the opposite way the same appendages could be taken as the legs of a figure. Both of these options are brought into question as the two appendages are not the same length and they appear to have been made that way since there is no breakage at the end of either. No parallels were found for this piece.
Fig. 37. B64.532: Unidentified fragment.

B60.201: Hollow Figurine Fragment


This piece is likely part of a zoomorphic vessel or hollow zoomorphic figurine, but due to its fragmentary nature, identification remains uncertain. There is what appears to be a shaped zoomorphic eye on the outer portion of the piece, but there are no other clear markings to help identify what is being portrayed.
Parallels

While it is not completely clear what type of figure is represented, a possible parallel is a zoomorphic rhyton from Tell el-Far ‘ah (Chambon 1984: 236-237, pl. 64).

Fig. 38. B60.201: Hollow figurine fragment.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

Bringing this collection of 38 figurines from Tell Balâtah/Shechem to light in this paper is only the first step in their full research and eventual publication. Much has been said about the function and symbolism of Levantine figurines, with the ongoing discussion often pointing to cultic or religious domestic usage but also exploring more utilitarian approaches, including simple art or children’s toys. Without the full contextual information on each of the above figurines, as well as those figurines still unstudied in the possession of the Department of Antiquities, it is unclear what the assemblage from Tell Balâtah/Shechem has to add to the discussion.

As the data are made available they will be added to this study which, when completed, will comprise a single chapter in the Tell Balâtah/Shechem Small Finds volume.
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