

FIGURINES FROM QURNAT ḤARAMIYA (ROSH HA-‘AYIN)

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Four figurine fragments were found in the excavations at Qurnat Ḥaramiya (Fig. 1; see Torgē and Avner 2018).¹

1. ‘Ashdodite’ head (Fig. 1:1). Reg. No. 5158; Area D, L618. Height 60 mm, width 36 mm, depth 35 mm, neck width 10 mm. Light brown ware with pink to gray shades, well fired; light gray core. A little gray encrustation on the neck. State of preservation: good, except for damaged areas on the nose, ears and the edge of the upper head.

Description: This head is handmade, solid and formed of a long, round cylinder of clay, unto which the ears, eyes and nose are applied. The large eyes are made of round clay pellets. The head is flattened from above, with a low ridge surrounding it on top.

Comparisons: The most famous figurine of this type is the so-called ‘Ashdoda’, a woman whose body is shaped as a bed (Dothan 1971:129, Fig. 91:1, Pl. 82; 1982:234ff). It is dated to the Iron Age I, although the head is reminiscent of the Late Bronze Age Mycenaean figurines. One fragment of this type was published from an Iron Age I context in Jerusalem (Gilbert-Peretz 1996:39, Fig. 18:11, Pl. 9:8–9). There are similar heads from Iron Age II levels at Ashdod, Tel Miqne (‘Eqrn), ‘Azeqa, Maresha and perhaps Tel Gerisa (Tell Jerishe) and Gezer (Kletter 1996: App. 5.IV.2.8, 5.IV.3.5–7, 17?, 19). Other heads are from Tel Ḥamid (unpublished, courtesy of the excavator, Sam Wolff); Tel Sheqef, now in the Dorot collection (Cohen 1993:113, No. 70–5422); and four heads from area M at Ashdod (Dothan and Porath 1993: Fig. 42:5=Pl. 49:9; Fig. 44:11=Pl. 50:12; Fig. 46:9=Pl. 52:1; Pl. 45:1). This type of figurine is clearly a coastal type, and has its origins in Greece (but see also Cyprus: Courtois 1984: Pl. IX:5–6, Figs. 24:14, 26:9; for a recent discussion, see Ben-Shlomo 2010:45–51; Guzowska and Yasur-Landau 2009: Figs. 11:9, 10; Press 2012:160–165, with a distinction between sitting and standing figurines).

2. Solid body of an animal figurine (Fig. 1:2). Reg. No. 5133; Area D, L617. Length 70 mm, height 64 mm. Red-brown to pink ware, with many tiny white grits; gray core.

Description: The body is massive and rounded. Two broken areas indicate the hind legs, which are now missing. A long, heavy tail curves upwards (broken at the middle). The front part is completely missing.

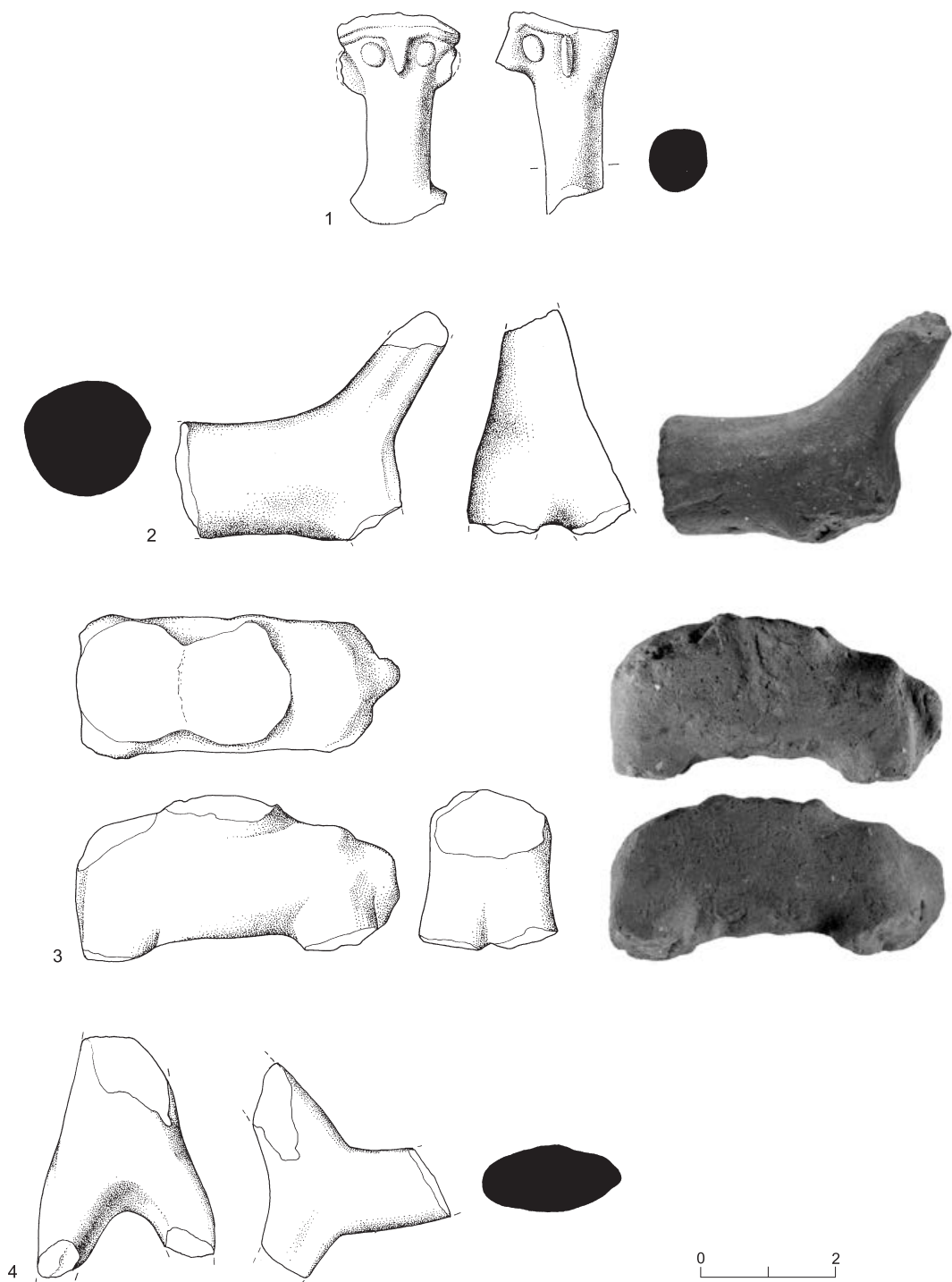


Fig. 1. Figurines.

Comparisons: the ware—color, grits and core—seems typical of the Judean Iron Age figurines, but only a petrographic analysis can indicate an origin more exactly. Hundreds of similar fragments are known from Judah, mainly from the late eighth and seventh centuries BCE. Since the head is missing, the species of the animal is not clear, but it may have been a horse (cf. Holland 1975: Type D; Kletter 1995: Chapter IV; Gilbert-Peretz 1996:37–38, Types B2–B3).

3. Solid body of an Animal figurine, possibly with rider (Fig. 1:3). Reg. No. 522; Area D, L46. Length 92 mm, height 45 mm. Red, soft ware, many small black grits; orange core. The fragment is not well preserved, and its surface is worn.

Description: This very massive, rounded body probably belongs to a figurine of a horse. It has a short and thick tail. The four legs are broken, as well as the neck. There is a large oval break mark on the back of the animal, attached to the broken neck; this probably indicates a missing rider. Although there is no evidence for the rider’s legs on the sides of the horse, it could have been a rider without long legs.

Comparisons: The massive body of the horse resembles the ‘Persian’ riders (see Stern 1995:440–442; Erlich 2014:40–50), but there is no clear proof for this. The clay is not typical of the Judean Iron Age assemblage (see Kletter 1995; for Judean horses and riders, see Kletter and Saarelainen 2014), although some comparisons to the shape can be found (e.g., Gilbert-Peretz 1996: Fig. 17:1, Pl. 8:1, 6). Unfortunately, both the head of the horse and the whole rider are missing, so it is hard to identify this fragment with precision.

4. Solid body of an Animal figurine (Fig. 1:4). Reg. No. 150; Area A, L10. Height 67 mm. Orange ware, well fired; brown-gray core.

Description: Solid front part of an animal (horse?) without a rider. The legs and neck are broken; the break is of a neck, since it is too large and thick to be a tail. The body has an ellipsoid section.

Comparisons: Due to the bad state of preservations, an exact identification is impossible; for general references see fragment No. 2, above.

Conclusions

The four figurine fragments include at least one clear ‘coastal’ type (No. 1). The rest (Nos. 2–4) do not clearly indicate an origin, although No. 2 is probably Judean. Such a humble assemblage cannot indicate the ethnicity of the dwellers of the site. The finds in nearby sites, such as Tell Qasile (Mazar 1951; Mazar 1980) and Azor (Dothan 1989), indicate that the area was part of the Philistine cultural sphere. For recent studies on Philistine figurines, which were published after this report was written, see Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009; Ben-Shlomo 2010; Cohen 2011; Press 2012; Ben-Shlomo and Van Beek 2014; and Yasur-Landau 2016.

NOTE

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