



portrayed back to back, their heads turned backward toward it. The Hathor *sistrum* is frequently found on Eighteenth Dynasty scarabs, cowroids – amulets in the form of cowrie shells – and finger rings, where it is occasionally depicted in association with cats. The connection of the cat with the Hathor *sistrum* seems to relate to the role of Hathor as goddess of women, female sexuality, and motherhood. This aspect of Hathor identified her with the Egyptian goddess Nebet-hetepet, the female counterpart of the creator god, whose most distinctive characteristic was sexual energy, and whose association with the cat was probably due to the animal’s exceptional procreative powers.

The ring, which is clearly an Egyptian product, was found in a Late Bronze Age Canaanite tomb at Tell el-

Ajjul, indicating that Egyptian amulets besides scarabs were used by the Canaanite population during this period, in emulation of Egyptian customs. DBT

References:
Keel 1997, 186–87, no. 247; Petrie 1932, pl. 7:44.

[65] Gold pendants

The gold pendants described below were part of a domestic hoard containing an impressive collection of Canaanite gold jewelry, which was found at Tell el-Ajjul. Such hoards often include valuable items preserved for long periods of time, including heirlooms handed down over the generations. This makes it difficult to establish the objects’ dates. Nevertheless, the archaeological evidence from the site

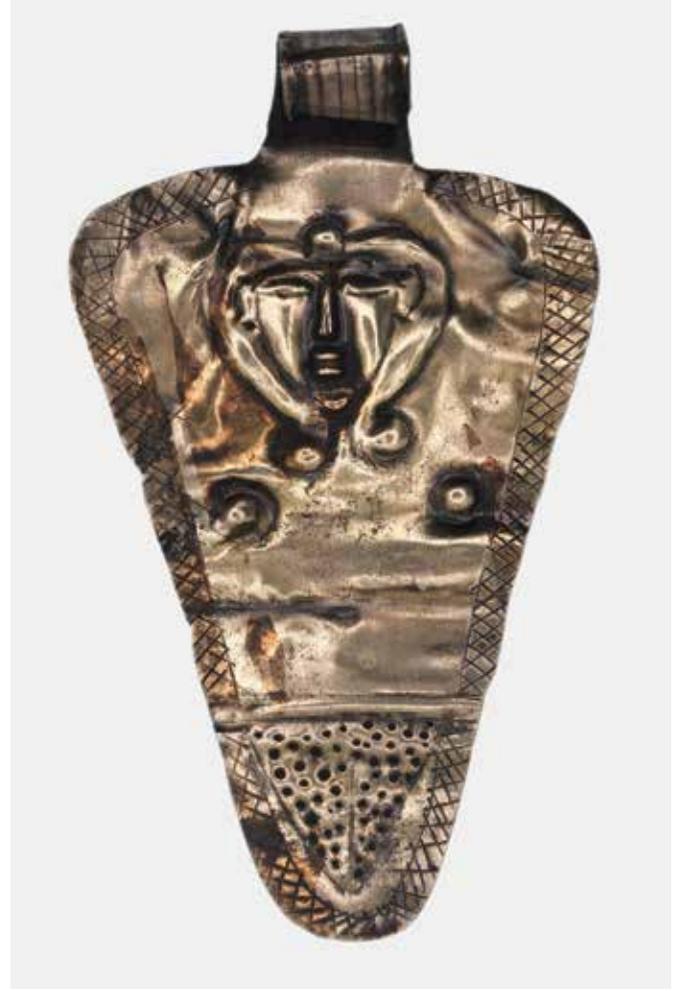
and parallels from other sites suggest that the two pendants date from the late sixteenth through the early fifteenth century BCE, contemporary with the early Eighteenth Dynasty in Egypt. DBT

[65a] Pendant

Tell el-Ajjul | Late Middle Bronze – early Late Bronze Age (mid-16th – early 15th century BCE) | Gold | H: 9.7 cm W: 6 cm | IAA | 1935-3842

This pendant was produced from a triangular gold sheet, the top of which was rolled to form a suspension loop. It belongs to a recognized type of Canaanite gold pendant depicting a highly schematic nude female in frontal view portrayed only by a face, breasts, navel, and pubic triangle. The face, which is sculpted in relief, displays large ears and is reminiscent of the Hathoric face on Middle Bronze Age Canaanite scarabs (see nos. 13–14). A drop-shaped ornament is depicted on the forehead and another beard-like ornament appears under the chin.

The Hathoric face on the pendant suggests Egyptian inspiration, yet the schematic presentation of the body is not known in Egypt, and this type pendant is clearly of Canaanite origin. The female figure represented on such pendants is sometimes identified as the Canaanite goddess Astarte, who was associated with sexuality and fertility. The figure may also be associated with the Egyptian goddess Hathor, the beautiful and sensual goddess of love, joy, and music. There is, however, no conclusive



evidence to identify such figures with either goddess, though it is safe to assume that they symbolized eroticism and sexuality, and, probably, fertility. Considering the conspicuous portrayal of the pubic triangle on pendants of this type, it has been suggested they may have been suspended from pelvic girdles, as opposed to necklaces. It has also been suggested they served as cultic or votive objects in addition to being items of personal adornment.

References:
Negbi 1970, 42, no. 129, fig. 4; Petrie 1934, 6, no. 8, pls. XIII, XIV: 8.

[65b] Pendant

Tell el-Ajjul | Late Middle Bronze – early Late Bronze Age (mid-16th – early 15th century BCE) | Gold | H: 9.42 cm W: 7.2 cm | IAA | 1935-3843

This pendant is similar in shape to the previous one and also depicts a schematic female figure by means of a frontal face, breasts, navel, and pubic triangle. However, the face of the figure on this pendant has a Hathor hairstyle with out-curved locks surmounted by a sun disk – another attribute of the goddess Hathor. Although displaying clear attributes of Hathor, identification of the figure with this Egyptian goddess is challenged by the standard depictions of the Canaanite goddess Qdeshet with distinctive Hathoric attributes on Egyptian Ramesside stelae (see no. 37).

The portrayals of the nude goddess on the Canaanite gold pendants, on the one hand, and on the Egyptian Ramesside stelae, on the other, show interesting reciprocal cultural influences between Egypt and Canaan. During the Middle and early Late Bronze Ages in southern Canaan, the image of the Canaanite nude goddess, whether depicted in full figure on scarabs or in a schematic form on pendants, was inspired by attributes of the Egyptian goddess Hathor. This association is also attested on the Egyptian private stelae of the Ramesside Period and may have been inspired by the earlier fused images of the Canaanite nude goddess in the Levant.

References:
Negbi 1970, 42, no. 131, fig. 3; Petrie 1934, 6, no. 9, pls. XIII, XIV: 9.