

Jan Dietrich / Judith E. Filitz (eds)

Cultic Kisses

Fruitful Encounters Between Deities and Humans

Festschrift for Angelika Berlejung on the Occasion of Her 65th Birthday

Cultic Kisses. Fruitful Encounters Between Deities and Humans

Vetus Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus

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VOLUME 3

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Preliminaries



Preface

Jan Dietrich / Judith E. Filitz

Some kisses are given in privacy only, but some are meant to be seen in public, like when two politicians meet, when the pope kisses the earth or when the football-star kisses the championship's goblet. In the first instance, kisses are exchanged on the horizontal axis, in the second, the lips move down steeply to the ground, and in the third, the kiss moves up to the trophy's heaven. In case no strong lipsticks are in use and no lovebite intended, it is a phenomenological fact that the kiss leaves no empirical impression at all. Instead, the ritual act of kissing expresses and reveals something about the person doing the kissing, about the person or object being kissed, and about the relation between them. And although nobody ever has seen the kiss as such, independent as an entity in itself, it nevertheless seems to linger upon the person or object having been kissed, providing it with an esteemed status. With this Festschrift, its authors waft written kisses to the jubilarian to express their happiest congratulations, their sincere compliments, their deepest gratitude, and their cordial sympathy.

It was in 1998 that Angelika Berlejung published her first intense research on the topic of cultic kisses in the ancient Near East (*Kultische Küsse. Zu den Begegnungsformen zwischen Gottern und Menschen*, WdO 29, 80–97). In this article, she highlighted how kings kiss the feet of divine cult statues (sometimes also the ground in front of the statue and sometimes perhaps even the statue's divine lips), while humans kiss the feet of kings in ways that reveal the intermediary position of the king between heaven and earth, between divine cult statues and earthly human beings. The contribution itself was dedicated to Manfred Weippert on the occasion of his 60th birthday. In 2021, she published an updated and revised version of her article under the title *Refreshed Cultic Kisses: Forms of Encounter Between Gods and Humans* (ORA 42, 49–65). It is time now, in celebration of Angelika Berlejung's own 65th birthday, that the profound investigator of the phenomenology of ancient cultic kisses receives illustrious contemporary kisses back by dedicating this book to her. This Festschrift is an expression of our gratitude for many years of exchange and support in all aspects of life – academic and beyond – and a tribute to a highly esteemed scholar whose wide-ranging interests are reflected in numerous interdisciplinary and international collaborations. She has brought together people from several parts of the world and created many “fruitful encounters”. The present volume mirrors the breadth of her own research interests, featuring contributions from Archaeology, Assyriology, Egyptology, Biblical Studies,

and Theology, written by colleagues from Canada, China, Finland, Germany, Israel, South Africa, Switzerland, and the USA. Their contributions bear kisses on every single page, and though you cannot see them, you can read them.

We extend our sincere thanks to all authors who contributed to this Festschrift. At the University of Augsburg, we would like to thank Nikolai Hilz for his assistance with proofreading and Sabine Schröder-Fartash for her invaluable support with formatting and compiling the indexes. At the University of Bonn, we thank Hauke Fischer, Shayley Martin and especially Dr. Søren Lorenzen for their assistance with formatting, proofreading, and copy-editing the articles. Finally, we would like to thank the publisher Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht and especially Dr. Izaak de Hulster for their helpful support with all technical questions.

Bonn and Augsburg, with a view towards February 2, 2026
Jan Dietrich and Judith E. Filitz

Göttliche Perspektiven menschlicher Verehrung

Volker Erbacher

Der folgende Text wurde 2024 auf einer gebrannten Tontafel in einem römischen Streifenhaus in der Nähe des heutigen Heidelberg entdeckt. Erbauer des Gebäudes war offenbar Cato Felidas, Centurio der syrischen Auxiliartuppen in Neuenheim zur Regierungszeit Domitians (81–96 u.Z.). Er ließ sich nach seiner Dienstzeit als Betreiber einer Ziegelmanufaktur im Mündungsgebiet des heutigen Steinbachs nieder. Die Tontafel mit westaramäischem Text wurde, anders als zu erwarten, in einer kryptischen Keilschrift verfasst, deren Zeichen überraschende Ähnlichkeit mit Krallenabdrücken aufweisen.

Der Text wurde 2024 transkribiert und übersetzt von Volker Erbacher und ist bislang unveröffentlicht.

Segen für die Hohepriesterin Katzamatratz, die Engelsgleiche
von den Göttinnen und Göttern ihrer Verehrung.
Gehört und geschrieben von K'qter, dem treuen Begleiter.

Wort der Meedy: Leben sollst du – lange und wohl. Selbstbewusst und stolz.

Wort der Bébé: Deine Augen sollen scharf bleiben – dass du bewundern kannst
jedes Haar unserer Weichheit.

Wort der Isis: Wagg! Sage ich. Und abermals: Wagg! Das Leben sei dir leicht. Dein
Herz springe!

Wort der Fr!tz!: Dein Ohr sei offen, dass es höre, was wir brauchen.

Chor der wandernden Götter (Zorro, Indie, Nichtdieindie): Ja, höre unser Rufen
und lenke deine Schritte zum Schopf der Erwartung!

Wort der Schamschi: Die Liebe in dir möge niemals schwinden. Dein Herz sei
offen und froh.

Wort der Jinx: Voll sei dein Herz. Voll Freude und Wärme in schwerer Zeit. Dass es
überfließe und alle Götter es sehen.

Wort des Whisky: Dein Rücken möge beweglich bleiben, damit du mich tragen
kannst, an die Enden der Welt.

Wort der Lakschmi: Dein linker Arm soll nimmer verdorren. Ein Ort des Friedens
und der Geborgenheit sei er. Ob Tag oder Nacht sei er offen und bereit.

Chor aller: Dein Schlaf sei ein ruhiger, nicht wie der des Menschen neben dir.
Sodass wir ohne Gefahr auf dir ruhen können.

Feiere das Leben – und vergiss nicht, was wir dir Gutes getan haben.

Verehere uns – denn wir sind bei dir.

Katzamatratz sei dein Name.

Wir rufen ihn unentwegt.

In der Nacht und am Tag.

Marau.

Archaeology



Gods, Goddesses, Men and Women in Ammonite Religious Iconography

P.M. Michèle Daviau

Abstract

In the small kingdoms west of the Jordan River, artefacts with anthropomorphic features that were related to religious practices are in the form of small ceramic figurines. To the east in Ammon, the ceramic figures include variant styles that appear alongside stone statuettes, both male and female. In 1980, Ali Abou Assaf published a detailed description of the stone statuettes and heads found in the 'Amman area. In the same year, Abdel-Jalil 'Amr produced the first comprehensive study of ceramic figurines from Jordan at sites on the central plateau and in the east Jordan Valley that yielded Ammonite-style pottery. In the past 40 years, some of the most productive sites for understanding Ammonite culture were extensively excavated, such as the Lower Terrace of the 'Amman Citadel, Tall al-'Umayri, Tall Jawa, and Jalul. This paper is a study of 215 figures in stone and ceramic from previous publications and recent excavations. The purpose is to increase the number of known examples of each type, identify new types, and compare the degree of variability with two recent analyses of Moabite ceramic figurines and stone statuettes.

1.1 Introduction

Attempts to understand the religious beliefs and practices of Iron Age peoples living in societies for which there is little textual evidence is a challenge. We assume on the basis of archaeological excavations at Late Bronze (1550–1150 BCE) and Iron Age (1150–600 BCE) sites in the southern Levant that the representations of deities and individual humans¹ appear predominantly as small figurines in ceramic or metal.² Now, after the recovery of thousands of

¹ Negbi, Deposit; Negbi, Canaanite. In 1885, Georges Perrot differentiated between figures that depict votaries (individual humans) and others that depict deities. This distinction was based on the presence or absence of divine insignia (Perrot/Chipiez, *Histoire*, 264).

² The discussion of the typology and function of baked clay and metal figurines and the identification of the gods, goddesses, or humans whom they depict began with the earliest

male and female figures, there is an intense study of the formation techniques, iconographic features, and symbolic meaning of these figures by researchers in the Association for Coroplastic Studies along with the Franco-German Figurines Project in Jordan. Considerable variety is evident among anthropomorphic figurines and statues from sites in the Negev³ the Arabah,⁴ and the kingdoms of Moab⁵ and Ammon.⁶

The first comprehensive study of ceramic figurines from nine sites in Jordan was by Abdel-Jalil 'Amr in 1980 who presented an analysis of 109 anthropomorphic ceramic figures from sites in the Jordan Valley, the 'Amman Citadel, Saḥāb, Muqabalayn, and Jalul (fig. 1.1). More recent excavations at major Ammonite sites have added to this number. A thesis by Rebecca Trow (2010) categorizes 258 female figurines from sites throughout Transjordan.⁷ The scope of this paper has a narrower focus and follows an earlier study by this same author.⁸ Although incomplete due to the number of unpublished figurines, our current corpus may help us to better categorize the features of Ammonite culture and the extent of its influence in central Transjordan. It is with great pleasure that I present this contribution in honour of Angelika Berlejung, friend and colleague, whose work on the "Encyclopedia of Material Culture in the Biblical World" and her study of figurines greatly expands our understanding of Iron Age peoples, their culture and religion.

1.2 Current Research

The district of 'Amman continues to yield statues and figurines, many of which are currently housed in museum collections and remain unpublished. Presently, 470 female figurines from various museums and university collections have been photographed by the Franco-German Figurines Project

excavations in Palestine (Macalister, *Excavation*, 411–417). By 1939, Tell Beit Mirsim, Megiddo, and Beth Shean had produced such a large corpus that scholars undertook to formulate typologies and establish specific identities for anthropomorphic figures (Albright, *Astarte*; Pritchard, *Palestinian*). A large corpus of ceramic figurines from Jerusalem was later organized by Holland, *Study*.

3 Beck, *Catalogue*.

4 Cohen/Yisrael, *Fortresses*, 223–235; Ben-Arieh, *Temple*.

5 Daviau, *Light*; Daviau, *Wayside*; Daviau, *Multiplicity*.

6 Daviau, *Coroplastics*; Daviau, *Diversity*.

7 Trow, *Female*.

8 See n. 6 above.

adding to a rich repertoire.⁹ Among stone sculptures in Ammon, male statues and heads constitute the largest assemblage, in which a male wearing the Osiris-style *atef* crown continues to dominate. These sculptures were described and classified by Abou Assaf (1980), who dated them to the floruit of the Kingdom of Ammon in the 8th and 7th centuries.¹⁰ Uncrowned male and female statues in various styles were also present in the 'Amman area, including a new style of male statue featuring an uncrowned male recovered recently in the 'Amman Theatre excavations.¹¹

Iron Age ceramic figurines of both males and females were published in the preliminary reports of the Madaba Plains Project and in final reports of excavations at Tall al Mazar, Tall Jawa and Hisban (1400–600 BCE).¹² Additional final reports of the wayside shrine at WT-13 and the town of Mudayna Thamad in Moab,¹³ as well as of towns in Edom, add much needed comparative material.¹⁴ This study begins with male statues and figurines followed by female figures. Refined typologies of individual types were published previously.¹⁵

1.3 Male Statues and Figurines

1.3.1 *Male Figures with atef Crown*

In the southern Levant, Iron Age stone sculpture appears to be limited to sites in central Jordan, notably Ammon and Moab. Ammonite craftsmen produced and set up at least thirty male and female stone sculptures, primarily in the 'Amman area. This artistic production is intimately related to the repertoire of ceramic figurines and benefits from being studied together.¹⁶ Egyptian influence on the artistic repertoire appears to be a continuation of the early Iron Age political domination of the area by Egypt as seen in the presence in the Hauran of a stela of Ramesses II standing in front of a divinity wearing the

9 Douglas/Hunziker-Rodewald, Performance.

10 Assaf, Untersuchungen, 76; see also Dornemann, Archaeology.

11 Burnett, Amman; Burnett/Gharib, Basalt.

12 Yassine/Steen, Tell el-Mazar; Daviau, Excavations II; Dabrowski, Terracotta.

13 Barako/Lapp, Tell er-Rumeith; Daviau, Wayside, 81–108; Chadwick et al., Town.

14 Bienkowski, Busayra; Bienkowski, al-Biyara.

15 Assaf, Untersuchungen; Dornemann, Archaeology; Dabrowski, Preliminary; Daviau, Excavations II; Daviau, Coroplastics; Daviau/Dion, El.

16 Assaf, Untersuchungen, 68; Daviau, Diversity, fig. 1. In tab. 1 (online, <https://borealisdata.ca/file.xhtml?fileId=996345>), each figure is assigned a number, and it is this number that appears in the text. With the addition in this study of 100 newly published figurines and statues, the catalogue numbers have changed in some categories when compared to Daviau, Diversity, tab. 2.

atef crown and of a stela of Sethos II.¹⁷ The principal style of sculpture among male statuettes and stone heads in Ammon (Type A; figs. 1.1; 1.3; tab. 1)¹⁸ is that of a male wearing the Egyptian-style *atef* crown, which changed its shape over time under Syro-Phoenician influence as seen on ivory inlays.¹⁹ The apex of the tall crown typically ended in a knob that was flattened over time resulting in the presence of a disc flanked by two short volutes (figs. 1.3:1; 1.3:2). These differences in the style of the crown on statues and heads from Ammon can be recognized by comparison with the tall white crown on Late Bronze Age images of Ba'al, the Osiris crown on the figurine of 'El from Ugarit, and the later style crown of Melqart on the Amrit stela.²⁰

Two complete statuettes were crowned, Statuette III stands 75 cm tall one and is quite well preserved (cat. 12).²¹ Less well preserved is Statuette I (cat. 11), but it should be noted that this figure stands less than 45 cm in height. In both cases, these crowned figures are shown wearing local or Syrian-style clothing consisting of a long garment and a shawl that crosses the body from lower right to upper left with the tassel end hanging down from the right shoulder.²² The ends of a belt extend below the shawl to just above the feet, which are visible in the front. In the group of ten stone male heads, seven wear an *atef* style crown and several appear to be finished on the base of the neck or shoulders, suggesting that they were complete and not part of a larger statue. These heads had a different function from those that end in a peg and could have been part of a larger figure. The male features include a moustache, a beard line on the cheeks and a beard that covers the neck (cat. 5; 10; fig. 1.2:2), with one clear example of an Osiris beard (cat. 7). An ornate head, currently in the Israel Museum, is Assyrian in style with a rosette band across his forehead and large earrings resting on his elaborately curled hair (cat. 4; fig. 1.2:3). The only anomaly is a crowned head that 'Amr suggests is that of a female (cat. 6) in view of the long hair that extends onto the shoulders, the large size of the ears

17 Wimmer, Stela.

18 Types refer to those established previously (Daviau, Diversity, tab. 2) although subtypes from that study are not specified here.

19 See tab. 1 for references to the published source for each statue or figurine.

20 Bonnet, Melqart.

21 See online, Table 1. Dornemann, Archaeology, 156, considered the possibility that Statuette III (Assaf, Untersuchungen, pl. III) was unfinished. However, lack of detail on basalt figures is not unusual.

22 Syrian influence is seen in the comparable appearance of an Assyrian genius statue from Hadatu in the Aleppo Museum (Parrot, Arts, fig. 61). Carved in relief, a stela from Qaboun (Damascus area) currently in the Museum of Tartus shows Ba'al wearing the *atef* crown and standing on a lion (Assaf, Stele).

and the apparent lack of male facial hair. However, this does not detract from divine status as can be seen by comparison with the female carrying an *ankh* symbol on the Balu'a stela from Moab; she also wears an *atef* crown.²³

1.3.2 *Ceramic Male Figurines Wearing the atef Crown*

Ceramic male figurine heads wearing the *atef* crown were found at 'Amman, Tall Jawa and Jalul (cat. 13–16), while a crowned head with an ornate headband comes from Bethsaida.²⁴ A seated bronze figurine covered in gold in an Iron II stratum at Tall Zira'a, southwest of Gadara (Umm Qays), shows a continuation of the Syrian tradition depicting 'El wearing the Osiris crown.²⁵ Facial features among males include a beard and moustache, best represented on the ceramic figurine from Tall Jawa (TJ 100; cat. 13; fig. 1.2:4). Given the origin of the crown in the religious iconography of Egypt, it seems reasonable to assume that these figures represent a deity, possibly the local version of 'El or Milqom. Only the figurine from Jalul of a male with a short broad crown and a double flute (cat. 16; fig. 1.2:5) suggests a votive figure and may indicate a change in the symbolism of the *atef*-crowned male in the late Iron II period.

1.3.3 *Uncrowned Males in Various Styles*

Foreign influences are seen in the hairstyle and/or clothing of another group of statuettes, heads and figurines (cat. 17–22). Most notable are those with curled hair resembling an Egyptianized style hairdo or wig such as the clean-shaven Nubian-style Statuette XII (see below) and bearded head XVII (cat. 19f), along with ceramic heads with tight curls from Jalul (cat. 23f). Another stone statuette wears a long tight-fitting garment and holds a floral or lotus flower bouquet (Statuette XI, cat. 17), while others are too badly damaged to classify (cat. 72–77).

Local features are represented on two stone figures, that of Yrḥ 'zr, son of Zakir, son of Sanipu (Statuette IX; 48 cm; cat. 26; fig. 1.4:1) and an unnamed monumental statue found more recently in the 'Amman theatre area (cat. 27).²⁶ Carved in the round in limestone, the statuette of Yrḥ 'zr reveals the details of local hair and clothing styles including the presences of side curls, a headband, long pleated tunic, belt with tassels and a shawl.²⁷ In contrast, the 'Amman

23 Routledge/Routledge, Balu'a, fig. 1. In view of the presence of the *atef* crown and the lack of this feature on any other female figure, this head is catalogued among the male crowned heads.

24 Arav, Bethsaida.

25 Häsel/Vieweger, Project, 389, fig. 17.

26 Burnett/Gharib, Basalt.

27 Assaf, Untersuchungen, pl. VI.