

JOURNAL OF NORTHWEST SEMITIC LANGUAGES

VOLUME 34/2

2008

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The *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
(ISSN 0259-0131) is published half-yearly

JNSL is an accredited South African journal listed in the *International Bibliography of Social Sciences*. It publishes peer reviewed research articles on the Ancient Near East. As part of the *peer review policy* all contributions are refereed before publication by scholars who are recognised as experts in the particular field of study.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Paz, S 2007. *Drums, Women, and Goddesses: Drumming and Gender in Iron Age II Israel* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 232). Fribourg/Göttingen: Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. pp. xii+143. ISBN: 978-3-7278-1610-9/ 978-3-525-53031-3. Price: SF 45.

Sugimoto, D T 2008. *Female Figurines with a Disk from the Southern Levant and the Formation of Monotheism*. Tokyo: Keio University Press. pp. 209. ISBN: 978-4-7664-1477-6.

Both of these books study Palestinian terracotta figurines with disks (or as Paz has it “rounded objects”), which have previously been dealt with by Beck (2002) and Hillers (1970), and included in the figurine catalogues of Holland (1975), Kletter (1996) and Pritchard (1943).

In her catalogue of the material, Paz identified three types: 65 plaque figurines with a round object (which she identifies as a drum – 4.1.1; it is definitely not a cake as in Dever 2005:178-179), 14 drummer figurines with hollow, conical bodies, and 18 drummer figurines of the hybrid types (e.g. the “lamp” from Jennin). She also includes the musician’s stand from Ashdod. The material is then analysed and comments added on the identification of the figures. In contrast to popular opinion, Paz does not opt for merely identifying the women with a goddess such as Astarte or, what has become fashionable currently, the goddess Asherah. She describes the women as mortals and identifies them as drummers in some religious rite, perhaps priestesses. In three chapters she describes drumming in the Old Testament, in the Iron Age and in the social context.

What makes this study valuable is the detailed catalogue of the material and the illustrations (unfortunately not all of them are photographs) included. It can be regarded as the current *standard work* on this type of figurine, but it also includes reflections on drumming, gender and ideology, and the role of the drum as a *female* instrument in Iron Age II Israel.

Sugimoto (who kindly sent me a copy of his book) also has typological catalogues in his Appendices and includes 55 plaques (Israel, “Philistine,” “Edomite” and Transjordan) and 44 pillar figurines (Israel, Judah, “Philistine,” “Edomite,” Transjordan, Phoenicia) with illustrations (but only line-drawings). Because he sees a relationship with the disk types, he also included four figurines with a bird as well as figurines with musical instruments (eight with a double pipe and two with a lyre).

There are not long descriptions, as in Paz, although attributes such as clothes, accessories, hair style, etc. are included in table format. The catalogues do not include

the present location of the material. In this regard Paz is preferred as it provides longer descriptions and gives the present location in her catalogue.

In his identification Sugimoto relates the figurines to the cult of the goddess Astarte (and rejects the Asherah link), but not to the goddess herself. He finally describes the relation between the figurines and monotheism – the second part of the title of the book – and argues that the victory cult of Astarte (as expressed visually by the figurines under discussion) was appropriated for YHWH by the Israelites. But during the 9th century BCE these figurines became less popular in Israel when YHWH became the “unique” god of the Israelites.

With respect to both publications, it could be noted that when figurines are included in a catalogue, the information should be carefully checked. One example might be used to explain this point, Tel _Amal. Sugimoto (p. 117: N14) makes it Amar and the source is wrongly indicated as from Kletter 1996:5.V.1.12 instead of 1996:5.V.1.31. Paz (p. 27: A36) again has wrongly cited Kletter 5.E.31.1.

Nevertheless, both studies are important in so far as they have collected the material (many items still unpublished) and do not only describe the material and its archaeological find context. Both *move away* from the tendency to only identify the figurines with some pagan goddess and *move on* to ascertain the *function* of the figurines. However, regardless of how much their interpretations can be appreciated, they have both perhaps over-emphasised one aspect: Paz gender and Sugimoto the rise of monotheism.

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