

high priests, but which was also put on the head of a beloved girl.³ The *nēzer* is commonly interpreted to have been a diadem, a gold band worn around the head, while the ^a*tārāh*, the crown mentioned in the two passages discussed here, was a helmet-type or hat-type crown which could have been made of metal or other material.⁴ A crown (^a*tārāh*) of gold is mentioned in the Bible not only in the passages under discussion but also in different contexts in Ps 21:3 and Zec 6:11, while precious stones are said to have adorned a crown according to Zec 9:16.

The second problem is concerned with the Hebrew *mlkm*, which designates the original owner of the crown in question. The Masoretes vocalized it in such a way (*malkām*) that it received the meaning "their king," but the LXX translators evidently took it to be Milkom, the name of the Ammonite god, rendering it as *Melchol* or *Molchol*, two of the several transliterations used in the LXX for Milkom.⁵ However, it should be pointed out that the LXX contains the additional phrase *τοῦ βασιλέως αὐτῶν*, "their king," after Milkom in both passages, thus giving the impression that the Hebrew *Vorlage* for the LXX translators was *milkōm malkām*, "Milkom, their king." It is, though, quite possible that the doubling of *mlkm* was simply due to dittography or conflation of two variants. The LXX is not the only source for the high antiquity of the tradition that David obtained a gold crown in Rabbath-Ammon from a statue of the Ammonite god Milkom and not from a king. Jerome mentions a Jewish tradition, according to which this crown was snatched from the head of Milkom by Ittai, the (non-Israelite) Gittite, because it was unlawful for a Hebrew to take spoil from an idol.⁶ It is therefore not surprising that many modern commentators and Bible translators (e.g., NEB and Jerusalem

³ For a king, Jer 13:18; for a high priest, Sirach 45:12; for a lover, Eze 16:12.

⁴ Kurt Gallig, *Biblisches Reallexikon* (Tübingen, 1937), cols. 125-128; L. E. Toombs, "Crown," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York, 1962), I, 745, 746.

⁵ The transliterations in the LXX for Milkom are *Melchom*, *Melchol*, *Melcho*, *Molchol*, *Amelchou*, and *Moloch*.

⁶ Quaestr. Hebr. on 1 Chr 20:2, according to A. F. Kirkpatrick, *Cambridge Bible for Schools* (Cambridge, 1930), p. 339.

Bible) prefer the reading Milkom to the Masoretic *malkām*,⁷ although there are still a few defenders of the Masoretic tradition⁸ which is reflected also in such Bible translations as the KJV, RV, and RSV.

The third problem is the weight of the crown—a talent, which amounts to ca. 75 lbs. Most commentators consider this to be an exaggeration and believe that it was merely based on an unreasonably high popular estimate indicating that this crown of solid gold was considered to be of immense value.⁹ On the other hand, some commentators think that the weight is accurately recorded. They consider it proof that the crown had adorned a statue and not a human being, who could not have worn such a heavy headgear.¹⁰ Furthermore there are a few commentators who accept the statement concerning the weight of the crown and believe it to have been worn by the Ammonite king. They point out that peasant women of the Near East are used to carrying heavy water containers on their heads which, in some cases, are heavier than 75 lbs., and that Oriental coolies can carry incredible loads on their heads.¹¹ Finally, some commentators who accept the weight of one talent recorded in the Bible think that the Ammonite king as well as King David would have worn this heavy crown for only a few moments as a symbolic act, or would have needed an extra support to wear it.¹²

⁷ H. P. Smith in the *International Critical Commentary*, on 2 Sa 12:30; Kirkpatrick, *Cambridge Bible for Schools*, on 2 Sa 12:30; R. P. Smith in *Pulpit Commentary*, on 2 Sa 12:30; E. L. Curtis and A. A. Madsen, *Int. Crit. Comm.*, on 1 Chr 20:2, referring as a parallel to our story to the statue of Apollo of Delos who also wore a crown; W. Rudolph, *Handbuch zum Alten Testament*, on 1 Chr 20:2; and A. Noordtjij, *Korte Verklaring*, on 1 Chr 20:2.

⁸ C. F. Keil und F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, on 2 Sa 12:30; H. W. Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel* (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 319; C. J. Goslinga, *Korte Verklaring*, on 2 Sa 12:30; C. F. Keil in Keil und Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles*, on 1 Chr 20:2.

⁹ R. P. Smith, *Pulpit Commentary*, on 2 Sa 12:30; Curtis and Madsen, *Int. Crit. Comm.*, on 1 Chr 20:2.

¹⁰ E.g., H. P. Smith, *Int. Crit. Comm.*, on 2 Sa 12:30.

¹¹ E.g., Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel*, p. 319.

¹² E.g., Kirkpatrick, *Cambridge Bible for Schools*, on 2 Sa 12:30; *SDA Bible Commentary*, on 1 Chr 20:2.

A recently published alphabetic economic text from Ugarit shows that the talent of Ugarit was worth only five-sevenths of the Ashdod talent (Mitchell

In the fourth place there is the question of what David actually put on his head. Did he wear the golden crown containing a precious stone after capturing it in Rabbath-Ammon, or was it merely the precious stone which from that time on he wore attached perhaps to a *nēzer*, a diadem? The antecedent for the pronoun "it" in the phrase "and it was (put) on the head of David" is not clear. The text in 2 Sa 12:30 could be understood in such a way that David captured a golden crown weighing a talent as well as a precious stone, and if the antecedent of the "it" is the last-mentioned object, only the precious stone would have been worn by David.¹³ On the other hand, 1 Chr 20:2 clearly says that the precious stone was in the crown, so that the assumption must be that the antecedent to "it" in the Chronicle passage is the crown containing the stone.

Although the two passages under discussion contain these several problems which with our present knowledge cannot be fully solved, they are clear in one thing and that is the importance of the crown captured by David—the only item of spoil specifically mentioned. The following conclusions can be reached from the foregoing discussion. The Hebrew text uses the word *'tārāh*, indicating that the crown was more than a diadem or head band, but rather a helmet-type headgear made of solid gold so that it gave the impression that it was either as heavy as a talent or worth a talent. It is not certain whether this crown had been worn by the Ammonite king himself or by a statue of the Ammonite god Milkom, but it seems to me that David would hardly have worn a crown which came from the idol of a heathen nation. Hence I am more inclined to believe that it was actually the royal Ammonite crown which henceforth became King David's official crown, although I join those commentators who do not believe that its weight was 75 lbs. The statement about its weight simply cannot be taken literally whatever its correct explanation might be.

After having discussed the two biblical passages in question,

Dahood, *The Claremont Ras Shamra Tablets*, ed. by L. R. Fisher [Rome, 1971], pp. 31, 32). Therefore the possibility—though remote—must not be ruled out that the Ammonite talent was lighter than the Hebrew talent, and that the Ammonite talent was referred to in the biblical story.

¹³ So H. P. Smith, *Int. Crit. Comm.*, on 2 Sa 12:30.

let me come to the purpose of my paper, namely the possibility that we have several Ammonite stone sculptures depicting the Ammonite royal crown. In Amman and in its direct vicinity seven crowned stone heads have come to light in recent years plus a complete stone sculpture of a human being wearing such a crown.¹⁴ The crowns in question are all more or less alike. They consist of conical caps or hats similar to those worn by Ba'al or Resheph statues found in Palestine and Syria, with an additional feature, namely a plume or feather attached to each of its two sides.

This type of crown is known from Egypt as the 'atef-crown of Osiris.¹⁵ Occasionally it is worn also by other gods such as Horus, Harsaphes, Khnum, Thoth,¹⁶ and Satis,¹⁷ and rarely also by the goddess Nekhbet,¹⁸ although it seems to have been a crown worn almost exclusively by male deities in Egypt. On the other hand this crown rarely appears on the head of a male deity which did not belong to the native Egyptian pantheon,^{18a} but it is worn by non-Egyptian goddesses. Some of our evidence in this respect comes from Egypt since Asiatic deities had found entrance to Egypt. The unknown goddess on the Baluah Stele (now in the Amman Museum) wears this crown,¹⁹ as well as

¹⁴ The seven sculptured heads are here published for the first time. I want to express my gratitude to Mansour Bataineh, director-general of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan from 1971 to 1972, for having given me permission to study and publish the five heads now in the Amman Museum; to C. B. F. Walker, Assistant Keeper of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities in the British Museum, for permission to publish the head in the British Museum; and to Dimitri Baramki, Curator of the Archaeological Museum of the American University of Beirut, for permission to publish the head in the Beirut collection.

¹⁵ A. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (3rd ed.; Oxford, 1957), p. 492, S8.

¹⁶ J. B. Pritchard, ed., *ANEP*, (Princeton, 1954), No. 573:7, 9, 12, 30.

¹⁷ Jaroslav Černý, *Bull., Inst. Franç. d'arch. orientale*, 27 (1927), 159-203, Pl. 2.

¹⁸ Pritchard, *ANEP*, No. 573:18.

^{18a} A figurine of a standing male deity with an 'atef-crown was found in the 10th-century B.C. Stratum VB at Megiddo (Gordon Loud, *Megiddo II* [Chicago, 1948], Pl. 239), and a figurine of a seated male deity with the 'atef-crown, interpreted by Schaeffer to represent El, came to light at Ugarit (C. F. A. Schaeffer, "Nouveaux témoignages du culte de El et de Baal à Ras Shamra-Ugarit et ailleurs en Syrie-Palestine," *Syria*, 43 [1966], 7, 8, Fig. 3, Pl. II).

¹⁹ W. A. Ward and M. F. Martin, *ADAJ*, 8-9 (1964), 16, Pls. I, III, and IV.

the Semitic goddess Anath (known also as Antit or Anta in Egyptian inscriptions) on the British Museum Stele 646,²⁰ on a stele found at Beth-shan,²¹ and on a sculpture which Montet discovered during the excavations of Tanis.²² Furthermore, the Semitic goddess Astarte appears frequently with this crown. She is depicted as a huntress on horseback crowned with the 'atef-crown on a stele in Turin,²³ on a cylinder seal,²⁴ on a Ramesseum stele,²⁵ on a sculpture in the *Wadi Abbad*,²⁶ on an Egyptian bas relief now in the University College in London,²⁷ and on a stele found at Beth-shan.²⁸

From this evidence, it is safe to conclude that the 'atef-crown with rare exceptions was worn only by Egyptian gods and non-Egyptian goddesses.

But now we encounter this same crown on the heads of eight bearded male images, all found in or around Amman. Unfortunately all these sculptures came to light accidentally and not one was discovered in the course of controlled excavations, with the result that it is extremely difficult to ascertain a date of origin for them. Only one has so far been dated with reasonable certainty as coming from the Iron II age, namely the male statue which was exhibited at the World's Fair in New York a few years ago. This statue (Amman Museum J1657, in this paper referred to as No. 1), 81 cm. high, of hard gray stone, represents a barefooted well-dressed man. It was found outside the Roman city wall at the northern end of the Amman Citadel in 1949, together with three other sculptures.²⁹

²⁰ Pritchard, *ANEP*, No. 473, lower relief.

²¹ Alan Rowe, *The Topography and History of Beth-shan* (Philadelphia, 1930), p. 33, Pl. 50:a.

²² Pierre Montet, *Les nouvelles fouilles de Tanis (1929-1932)* (Paris, 1933), Pl. 54.

²³ Jean Leclant, *Syria*, 37 (1960), Pl. I:A.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Pl. I:B.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31, Fig. 10.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33, Fig. 11, Pl. 2:A, B.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14, Fig. 2.

²⁸ Rowe, *Top. and Hist. of Beth-shan*, p. 21, Pl. 48:2.

²⁹ R. D. Barnett, *ADAJ*, 1 (1951), 34-36. After this paper had been completed I learned that in October 1971 another limestone statuette had been found wearing an 'atef-crown. At an Iron Age II site, Khirbet el-Hajjar, 7 km. southwest of Amman, fragments of two statuettes came to light in local

One of these three bears an inscription, which has been dated by R. D. Barnett³⁰ and R. T. O'Callaghan to the 9th-8th cent. B.C.,³¹ but by Y. Aharoni and Y. Yellin-Kallai to the 8th-7th cent. B.C.³²

The first of the crowned stone heads is of gray basalt and was found in 1921 in a river bed near Amman. It was presented to the British Museum a year later (referred to henceforth as No. 2).³³ The next one (our No. 3), a limestone head, came to the Amman Museum several years later and was registered as J2801 with the simple notation that it had been found in Amman.³⁴ No. 4 (J4767) was discovered in Amman in 1953,³⁵ No. 5 (J6806) in 1958,³⁶ while No. 6 (J8882) was entered in

building operations. One, representing a male figure, is 51 cm. high. Its face and body are badly mutilated. The statue is very similar to our statue No. 1, though somewhat smaller. The individual depicted stands barefoot on a socket. His right arm is extended along the body, but the left arm is bent 90°. Of the face no details are discernible, but the crown, similar in appearance to that of No. 1, is rather well preserved. The ears are large and reach from the lower edge of the crown to the shoulders. The second statue found at Khirbet el-Hajjar represents a female and is 46 cm. high and less mutilated than the male figure, so that some features of the garment, hair style, and ears wearing rings can still be recognized. A brief trial excavation at the site of discovery under the direction of Moawiyah M. Ibrahim of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan produced a quantity of pottery, basalt bowls and slingstones, all pointing to the Iron II period, according to the excavator. This information was obtained from Moawiyah M. Ibrahim's article in the official tourism magazine *Jordan*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (1972), pp. 10-16, Plates 1-7.

³⁰ Barnett, *ADAJ*, 1 (1951), 35.

³¹ R. T. O'Callaghan, *Or*, 21 (1952), 184-193.

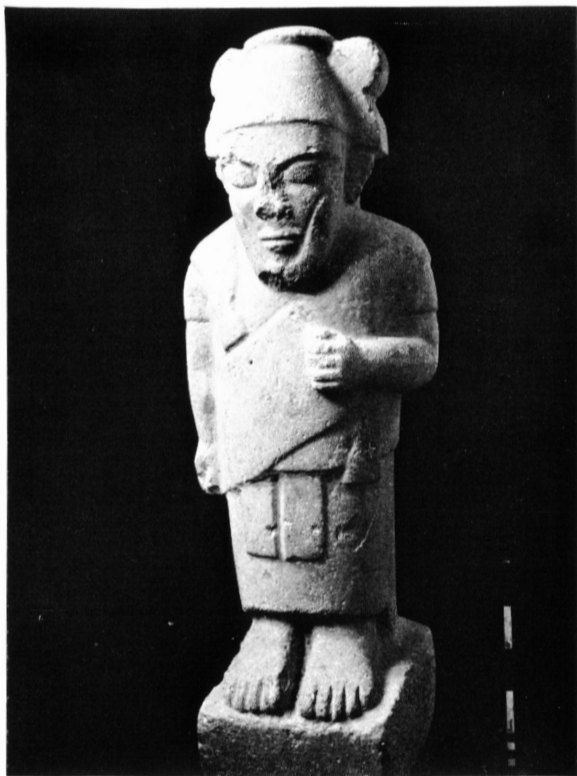
³² Y. Aharoni, *IEJ*, 1 (1950-1951), 219-222; Y. Yellin-Kallai, *IEJ*, 3 (1953), 122-126.

³³ Thanks to information provided by Walker of the British Museum by letter of April 5, 1972, the sculpture bears the registration number 1922-12-22,1 with the entry: "Found in river bed near Amman, Transjordan, 1921. Philby Collection. Presented by Miralai F. G. Peake, Inspector General of Gendarmerie, Transjordan." The size of the sculpture is 43.5 cm. long, 23 cm. wide, and 24 cm. deep.

³⁴ It is probably the head mentioned by G. Lankester Harding in the *ADAJ*, 1 (1951), 34, note, as being "28 cm. high, with a mustache and beard and a long neck."

³⁵ This limestone head is 25 cm. high and 17 cm. wide at the base of the crown.

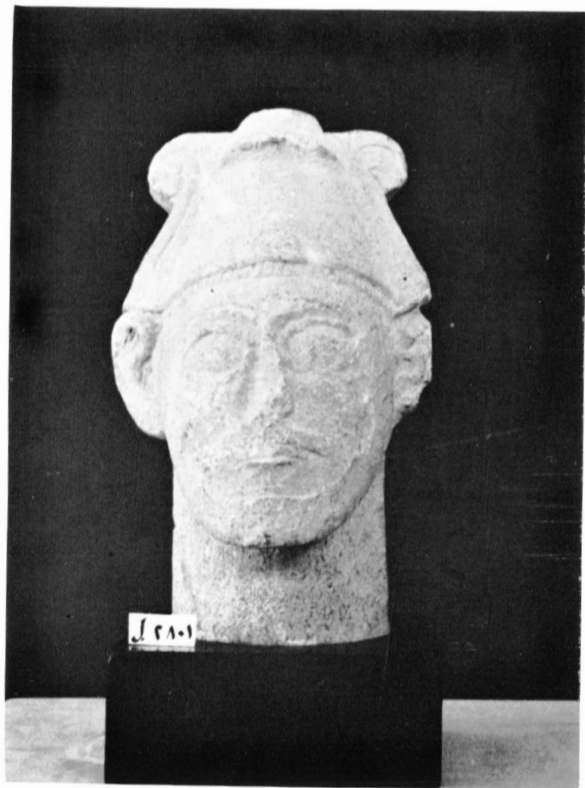
³⁶ This head of limestone was, according to the Amman Museum Registry book, found in Amman and bought in 1958. It is 37 cm. high and 17 cm. wide at the base of the crown.



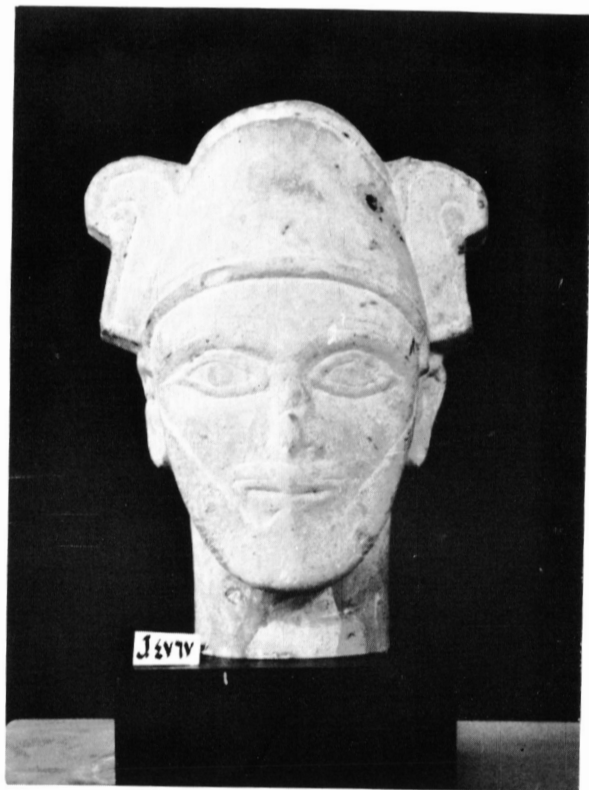
1. Statue of a crowned Ammonite king or god in the Amman Museum. Photo: Abu Hannah



2. Sculpture of an Ammonite crowned head in the British Museum. Courtesy: British Museum

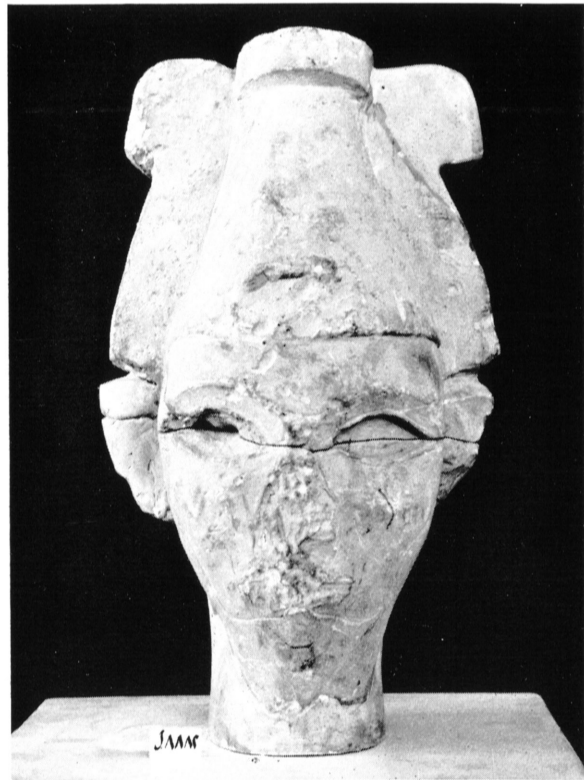


No. 3

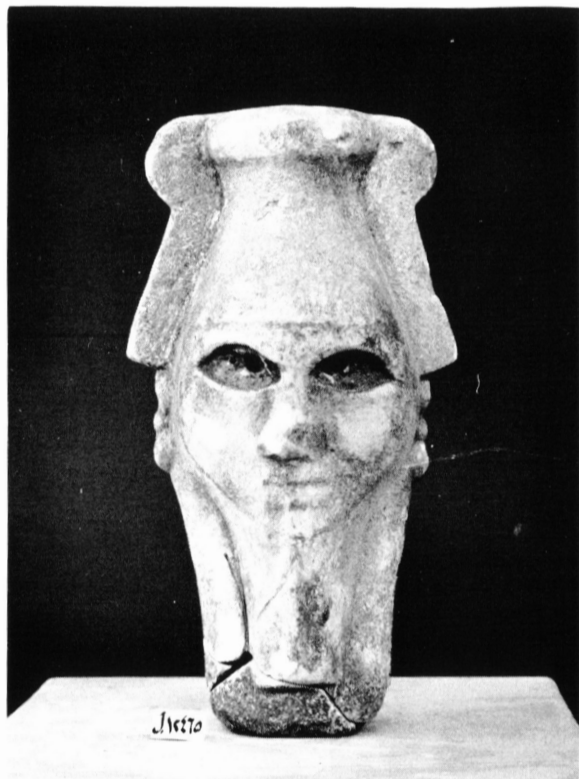


No. 4

Sculptures of Ammonite crowned heads in the Amman Museum. Photos: Abu Hannah



No. 5
No. 6
Sculptures of Ammonite crowned heads in the Amman Museum. Photos: Abu Hannah



No. 7

Sculpture of an Ammonite crowned head in the Amman Museum. Photo: Abu Hannah



No. 8

Sculpture of an Ammonite crowned head in the Museum of the American University of Beirut. Courtesy: D. Baramki

1960 in the Amman Museum registry with the remark that its provenance was unknown.³⁷ No. 7 (J12465) came to light at *Abu Alanda*, seven km. south of Amman, together with ten other badly weathered heads during the time I served as director of the American Center for Oriental Research in 1971.³⁸ Not a piece of pottery that might indicate its date was found with this hoard of sculptures, which had seemingly been dumped into a hole dug for it in antiquity. Finally, there is a mutilated crowned stone head in the Archaeological Museum of the American University of Beirut which was bought by Henry Seyrig in Amman³⁹ (henceforth referred to as No. 8). Its label, saying that it comes from Moab, is misleading and probably based on the information supplied by the dealer when the sculpture was purchased.

Not being trained to date ancient works of art on the basis of stylistic or other significant indications, I am not qualified to venture a dating of any of these sculptures. That they do not all come from the same period or from the same workshop is quite obvious if one compares various features which they have in common, for which reason a brief discussion is in order.

All sculptures depict a bearded man, but the shape of the beard varies greatly. Three beards (Nos. 1, 4 and 5) are well-groomed, rounded at the bottom, and run with a point toward the mouth. One round beard, of No. 3, simply frames the face; while another one, of No. 7, is long and pointed, leaving a clean-shaven chin. The beards on sculptures Nos. 2 and 6 are not preserved well enough to allow details to be distinguished, while that of No. 8 is missing along with the lower part of the face.

Mustaches are indicated on several sculptures. On No. 4 it is a long rectangle, and on No. 5 it is a long rectangle with a tongue pointing toward the nostrils. No. 3 has a mustache of an

³⁷ This badly battered limestone head is 38.5 cm. high and 21 cm. wide at the base of the crown.

³⁸ The head is again of limestone, 32.5 cm. high and 17.5 cm. wide at the base of the crown.

³⁹ It bears the Accession No. 60.30 and is on display in Case 20, as Exhibit No. 46. The fragment is of soft limestone, 11.3 cm. high, 10.8 cm. wide, and 9.8 cm. thick.

inverted flat V. On the other sculptures this part of the face is either damaged (Nos. 2, 6 and 8) or shows no mustache (Nos. 1 and 7).

The mouth is a thin line on two of the sculptured heads (Nos. 3 and 7), but shows full and thick lips on three sculptures (Nos. 1, 4 and 5). On three heads the mouth is destroyed (Nos. 2, 6 and 8).

As is the usual situation with ancient sculptures of humans, the noses have suffered most. The only well-preserved nose appears on head No. 5, and even there it is slightly damaged. It is well-shaped, rather wide at the base, and has a little downward protrusion at the lower end. The damaged nose of No. 4 seems to have been flat, and that of No. 7 gives the appearance of having been short and wide.

There is a great variety of ears. Those of Nos. 1 and 6 are simply plain ear-shaped protrusions from the sides of the heads, but the ears of Nos. 3 and 4 are well-formed. The ears of No. 5 are stylized, fanciful decorations which have hardly any resemblance to human ears, while those of No. 7 are little round pierced discs. The shape of the ears in Nos. 2 and 8 is unrecognizable.

The eyes also show different workmanship. No. 1 has flat and large eyes with no indication of pupils or eyebrows. No. 3 has only slightly incised eyes with no pupils, but double lines indicating eyebrows. No. 4 has lightly incised eyes with circular pupils and eyebrows represented by double lines. In No. 5 the eyes are flat with no pupils, but the eyebrows are shown as flat rectangular protrusions. No. 6 has deeply cut-out eyes without pupils, and barely noticeable lines as eyebrows. In No. 7 the eyes are deeply cut into the stone and contain two drill holes in each eye, with one always deeper than the other. It seems that this head must have been provided with inlaid eyes, now lost. There is no indication of eyebrows.

The crowns (or helmets) also show great variety in shape and workmanship. Three crowns are wide (Nos. 1, 3 and 4), four are long (Nos. 2, 5, 6 and 8), while the remaining one is in between as far as its length is concerned (No. 7). Three of the crowns are plain (Nos. 1, 6 and 7), while three are decorated

with lines at the lower and upper ends (Nos. 4, 5 and 8), and one with a border of little rectangles (No. 3). The caps of four sculptures (Nos. 2, 5, 7 and 8) end in spheres with a thinner waist underneath imitating the Upper-Egyptian royal crowns, while the others are either flat or round at the top.

The plumes or feathers attached to either side of the crowns resemble clearly the Egyptian *ma'at*-hieroglyph, which, attached to the Upper-Egyptian crown, made it the *'atef*-crown, as has already been mentioned. On the crowns of sculptures Nos. 1, 6 and 7 the plumes are plain and show no decoration of any kind. Nos. 5 and 8 show border decorations, while Nos. 3 and 4 contain a decorative line following in the center the shape of the feathers. The feathers of No. 2 are not well enough preserved to allow recognition of their shape.

This brief discussion of the various features shows how much the heads differ in details of workmanship and forms. No two of the heads are alike in all the criteria discussed, for which reason I am unable to see a development of style and thus refrain from attempting to arrange them in a chronological order.

The main question still remains to be answered, Whom do these sculptures represent? Are they representations of a god (or gods), of kings, or of commoners? The last possibility can practically be ruled out, since outside of Egypt commoners hardly ever had images made of themselves. It is conceivable that the god Milkom is represented, although I am inclined to agree with Barnett and O'Callaghan⁴⁰ that No. 1 depicts a human, since it is a barefooted figure, probably a king standing on holy ground. Taking this sculpture to represent a human, probably a king, it is tempting to see the seven crowned stone heads from Amman as also representing crowned heads of Ammonite kings. I wonder whether it is a mere coincidence that no other place in Palestine or Transjordan has produced such an unusually large number of sculptures in the round, among them eight wearing the same type of crown, as has the capital of the ancient Ammonites, and that in all biblical records

⁴⁰ Barnett, *ADAJ*, 1 (1951), 34; O'Callaghan, *Or*, 21 (1952), 193. On the other hand Aharoni believes that J1657 represents a god (*IEJ*, 1 [1950-1951], 219-222).

significant mention is made of only one crown, i.e., the crown of the Ammonite king (or god). It seems to me that there is a connection between the crowned sculptures and the Ammonite crown captured by David. Although the possibility must be left open that the crowned heads are representations of Milkom made in different periods of the history of the Ammonites, I am inclined to believe that they represent Ammonite kings of the first half of the first millennium B.C., and that the crown captured by David at Rabbath-Ammon may have resembled those crowns of which we have sculptured examples from Amman.

Postscript. When this article was already in the hands of the printer a bronze statuette of a female deity wearing the 'atef-crown from *Tell Kāmid el-Lōz* (probably ancient Kumidi) in the Lebanon was published by Arnulf Kuschke and Martin Metzger in the *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, 22 ("Congress Volume, Uppsala 1971"; Leiden, 1972), 161, 172, 173, Pl. IV. This figurine, found in 1968 in a temple of the 13th cent. B.C., is identified by Metzger as representing the goddess Anath, an identification with which I am in full agreement. This find supports the observation, already made on the basis of earlier discoveries, that the 'atef-crown is found in Syria-Palestine almost exclusively on female deities.