

TRADE, IDEOLOGY, AND BOUNDARY MAINTENANCE IN IRON AGE ISRAELITE SOCIETY

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Ideology and boundary maintenance are complex issues, whose sustenance involves various mechanisms that influence the acceptance and use, and even avoidance and rejection, of various traits. It appears that in ancient Israel boundaries were also kept by the use and avoidance of various types of pottery (e.g., Faust in press and references). In the present paper I would like to discuss briefly one of the possible mechanisms through which the Israelites kept themselves separate—the avoidance of imported pottery. In light of the theme of the present volume, it should be noted that one of the major uses of the word ‘holy’ in Biblical Hebrew, is in the sense of separate (e.g., Schwartz 2000, 47), and it is therefore a relevant concept for the study of boundary maintenance.¹

The present paper aims, therefore, to examine the distribution of imported wares in Iron Age Israel, in order to learn about Israelite world-views in general, and boundary maintenance in particular.

Background

Iron Age pottery has received a great deal of scholarly discussion (e.g., Amiran 1969; Bikai 1978; Hunt 1983; 1987; Wood 1990; Zimhoni 1997, and references), and various types of imported wares have been studied in great detail as to their typology, chronology, and

¹ A fuller treatment of Israelite ethnicity will be conducted in Faust in press a; for theoretical aspects of ethnicity and boundary maintenance see Barth 1969; Emberling 1997; McGuire 1982; Faust 2000, with additional bibliography. It should be emphasized that unlike most studies of distribution, the present paper does not discuss why and how certain types of artifacts, styles or ideas were transmitted or diffused, but rather concentrates on objects which were ‘rejected’. Such an enterprise is complicated, as it necessitates an explanation as to why something is not found in the archaeological record, while at the same time demonstrating that it should have been present.

role in the economy (e.g., Katz 1979; Mazar 1985; Anderson 1990; Waldbaum 1994). Their distribution was also given considerable attention in order to learn about trade relations. The actual quantities of the finds, however, were not usually discussed. Even a small amount was sufficient to mark the site on the 'distribution maps', and sites with no such pottery were simply not marked. The social significance of pottery was not usually given much thought (but see Dever 1997a, 229–230; Faust 2002).

Trade and Ceramics during Iron Age II (10th–6th Centuries BCE)

Iron Age II is usually regarded as a period of intensive trade in the Mediterranean and the Levant (e.g., Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 363; Niemeyer 1993; Elat 1979). There seems to be a consensus that the kingdoms of Israel and Judah participated in this flourishing international trade, especially due to their proximity to, and perhaps also close relations with, the Phoenicians.

Archaeological discoveries in many sites in Israel and Judah have indeed discovered various indications for trade, and some of this evidence will be discussed below.

The most obvious archaeological manifestation of this trade is ceramics. Imported pottery, of various 'foreign' origins, is found in many sites throughout the Mediterranean and the Levant (for the importance of ceramics as indicator of trade, see various papers in Zerner, Zerner and Winder 1993), and imported wares of various types, including Bichrome, Black on Red, Akhziv Wares, etc., have been uncovered throughout the Land of Israel (e.g., Barkay 1992, 325, 338; Mazar 1990, 514; Katz 1979; see now also Schreiber 2003). The distribution of various types of ceramics, especially those associated with the Phoenicians, along with other kinds of artifacts, usually serve as an indication of this widespread commercial activity (e.g., Katz 1979; Sherratt and Sherratt 1993).

However, as will be shown below, while imported pottery is abundant in many parts of the Levant, including the Land of Israel, it is extremely rare, or even absent, in most sites in the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah (Dever 1997b, 465).² There is, therefore, a peculiar reality in many sites in which there are various indications for

² It should be noted that in most cases the data that was published is not quantified

trade, but its most obvious and mundane manifestation seems to be missing.

Several examples help explain the complex reality described above: Jerusalem: An analysis of the large selection of Fish bones found in the City of David and in the Ophel indicate an intensive and well organized trade with the Mediterranean and the southern Coastal Plain (Lernau and Lernau 1992: 136). The analysis of shells uncovered in the City of David provided similar conclusions, as they were brought from the Mediterranean sea, the Red Sea and the River Nile, and Mienis (Mienis 1992, 129) concluded that they indicate 'intensive trade between these areas and the inhabitants of the city'. An examination of a small collection of wood remains found in the Ophel reveals that about 8% were imported from a relatively long distance (Lipschitz 1989, 142–143). Several inscriptions might indicate trade with South Arabia (Shiloh 1987), or perhaps even with Greece (Sass 1990). Auld and Steiner conclude (1990, 63–64) that 'Luxury goods were imported into Judah', and that trade played an important role in the city's economy (Notably, some of the evidence to which they refer is quite meager, see also Franken and Steiner 1990, 123–125).

Pottery, however, indicates otherwise. Eshel (1995, 62), in summarizing his analysis of Jerusalem's pottery forms (based on hundreds of vessels found in caves II and III on the eastern slopes of the City of David), concluded that the pottery shows some 'contacts' with Samaria and the Galilee, but 'low rate of contacts' with Phoenicia, south Jordan and Philistia. Franken and Steiner also mention (1990, 125) 'the absence of any other finds, especially of luxury objects and imported pieces . . .' in these caves. The same situation seems to have existed in cave I (*ibid.*, 128), and actually in the entire extramural quarter analyzed by them (*ibid.*, 5). Kathleen Kenyon had a similar

or even quantifiable (Bikai 1978; Hunt 1985; 1987; Singer-Avitz 1999, are the most noted exceptions), therefore making it impossible to establish detailed statistics about the percentages of the various types of pottery. Imported pottery is recorded much more often than local pottery, even if the amount is insignificant. Since detailed statistics are not provided, it is difficult to rely on one's own impression from the publications (see also Waldbaum 1994, 62, note 4, for a similar problem). In most cases, therefore, we had to rely on the impressions of the excavators and the data supplied by them. Fortunately, however, the data concerning the absence of imported pottery, which stands at the base of the present paper is, in most cases, unambiguous, therefore placing this research on firmer ground.

impression regarding the poverty of finds (Kenyon 1974: 132, 135). A similar picture is revealed by the other excavations in Jerusalem, i.e., the City of David and the Jewish quarter excavations. In summarizing the finds in the Jewish Quarter, De Groot et al. (2003, 15) wrote 'Imported vessels are extremely rare', and they add '(T)he phenomenon of a dearth of imports to Jerusalem in Iron Age II is well known from other excavations in the city' (see also De Groot and Ariel 2000, 97). And the very few imported pieces found in other excavations, for example by Barkay in Ketef Hinom (Barkay 1989, 36–37), do not alter this reality.³

Therefore, while ceramic evidence for trade is meager, other kinds of data indicate the contrary. Of special importance in this regard are the fish bones as they indicate daily and mundane trade with the Mediterranean.

The second example is Beer-Sheba: Liphshitz and Biger have analyzed wood remains from this site. They counted 22 fragments of cedars which were found in Iron Age Beer-Sheba (1991, 171). A similar reality existed in nearby sites (mainly in the 7th century BCE). They, therefore, concluded that: 'The high occurrence of cedar in the Negev—10% of the wood assemblage—indicates the wealth and widespread commercial activities of a regime which was able to use such an expensive import in the building of monumental constructions' (1991, 172). It is also important to stress that Singer-Avitz (1999) concluded that Beer-Sheba took an important part in the South Arabian Trade, and maintained that it was 'a gateway community' along this route (note that viewing Beer-Sheba in this role might be a bit exaggerated; cf. the situation in Kuntilat 'Ajrud; Gunneweg, Perlman and Meshel 1985). This, following various finds, and in spite of the petrographical analysis which will be discussed later.

³ I am aware of the fact that in some cases I refer to vessel-form (e.g., in quoting Eshel's study of Jerusalem's pottery), while in other cases I am discussing the origin of the pottery (e.g., Beer-Sheba, below). This is a result of the lack of data. In most cases, I referred only to stylistic differences, as these data are more readily available, and it is perhaps even more significant (as it was easily observable even in antiquity). As Eshel has indicated for Jerusalem, and as Singer-Avitz found regarding Lachish and Beit Mirsim (1999, 12) the pottery was usually composed of forms which were different from vessels found at contemporary coastal sites. However, as the data from Beer-Sheba indicates, *even* when there is more similarity in forms (which is a rare phenomenon), the vessels were manufactured locally and were not imported.

Again, pottery indicates otherwise. In summarizing her analysis of several unique kraters which were found in Beer-Sheba stratum II G. Bachi showed that while a few Cypro-Phoenicians vessels were found at Beer-Sheba, other types of imported pottery, typical of Coastal sites, were absent (1973, 42). Bachi's impression is substantiated by a scientific analysis of the pottery. Singer-Avitz has recently published the results of her thorough examination of about half of Beer-Sheba's pottery—some 900 vessels (Singer-Avitz 1999). Though a relatively large percentage of the pottery studied by her was composed of Coastal and Edomite forms, a petrographical analysis (by Y. Goren) revealed that the vessels, with the exception of three Egyptian wares, were manufactured in Judah, and were not imported (*ibid.*).

Again, the most mundane indication for trade is almost completely missing from the repertoire, while other elements, including imported cedars, are found.

A similar reality is seen in most sites in ancient Israel and Judah (due to space considerations, I did not provide references for most of the sites mentioned below. For a fuller discussion with references see Faust in press a). The mound of Beth Shemesh was excavated almost entirely in the course of three expeditions. Still, very few imported vessels were reported by Mackenzie and by Grant, and though the recent excavations have not yet been published, the excavators informed me that only a handful of Iron II imported sherds were found, in spite of the fact that thousands of sherds from this period were uncovered. The same reality is revealed in most other sites, e.g., Gibeon, Moza, Hebron, Kh. Marjameh, Kh. Jemlein, Beit Aryeh, Kh. Jarish and more (including Kh. Malta, Kh. Rosh-Zayit and Tel Mador to be discussed below). In many of these sites not a single imported shard was discovered. In several cases the excavators have even expressed their surprise of this situation (e.g., Mazar 1995, 114).

In summary, while obviously not as a result of the lack of trade, only extremely small quantities of imported pottery, and sometimes none at all, have been found in most sites in the kingdom of Judah, as well as in most highland sites of the kingdom of Israel.⁴

⁴ Though detailed statistics are not available, it is possible that imported pottery

Notably, this reality stands in sharp contrast to sites in the Coastal Plain and the northern valleys, where imported pottery is much more abundant. Almost every excavated coastal site apparently yielded such pottery, from Rukeish in the south, through Ashkelon, Mesad Hashavyahu, Azor, Tel Mikhmoret, Tel Mevorakh, Dor, Shiqmona, Tell Abu Hawwam, Tell Keison, Acco, and Akhziv to Tyre in the north. Though most publications do not provide any quantitative data or statistics, it seems as if such pottery is not rare in the sites mentioned above (Notably, a few sites in the southern Sharon Coastal Plain also exhibit a different pattern, and they deserve a more detailed study, both spatially and diachronically). In addition, imported pottery is not infrequent in some more inland sites, such as Tell es-Safi. Imported pottery seems to be frequent also in most sites, urban and rural alike, in the Northern Valleys, whose population was composed to a large extent by non-Israelites (e.g., Finkelstein 1999, 44, 48; Faust 2000; Faust in press b: 256–283), i.e., Tell ‘Amar, Yokneam, Tel Qiri, Tel Qasis, Megiddo, Hazor, Nir David Beth-Shean, Tel Rehov, and Tel el-Hama.⁵ Imported pottery was found also in some sites across the Jordan, such as Tell es-Say’idia, Tell Abu-Kharaz and Pelah, though probably in much smaller quantities (therefore, questioning the relevancy of this data). Imported pottery, though in small quantities, was also found in the Negev ‘fortresses’ and the ‘Aravah.

was found in larger quantities (relatively to the highlands) in the city Samaria, and perhaps also in some large urban centers of the northern highlands. At the moment, the evidence seems to be ambiguous. The existence of some imports should not come as a surprise, as a different behavior, especially among the elite, is to be expected (see, in this regard, the various texts relating to the relationship between the kingdoms of Israel and Tyre). In light of the excavations of the many highland sites in the Kingdom of Israel (both in the region of Samaria and in the Galilee), the city of Samaria, if indeed it presents imports, seems to represent an exception, and not the rule, in this kingdom.

⁵ Schreiber had recently analyzed the Cypro-Phoenician pottery found in the Levant. She claimed that Black on Red juglets, for example, were found in ‘relatively small quantities throughout the region west of the Jordan’ (2003:28). Still, when she discusses the finds, one can clearly see that hardly any pottery was found in the highlands (see the discussion on pp. 85–169, 186–212).

*Trade and the Distribution of Imported Pottery in the
Kingdoms of Israel and Judah*

The most reasonable explanation for the difference between the finds in the highlands and the coastal area and the valleys is of course economic, that is, trade related. Imported pottery is more likely to be found near trade routes, and the important routes crossed the Coastal Plains and the valleys. While there is no doubt that economy would explain part of the pattern ('fall off analysis', see e.g., Renfrew and Bahn 1996, 354; see also Hodder 1979b), it cannot be the sole explanation. After all, as shown above, Beer-Sheba and Jerusalem exhibit many finds which indicate that these sites did participate in large scale trade. The contradictory evidence in Beer-Sheba and Jerusalem, where there is evidence for trade, perhaps even on a large scale, but not manifested in ceramics, precludes the lack of commerce as an explanation for the lack (or rarity) of imported pottery in Judah and Israel. This is especially true for Beer-Sheba, as it was located on a route which many scholars consider to be one of the most important trade routes—that of the Arabian trade (e.g., Singer Avitz 1999; Finkelstein 1996, 103 ff.; Holladay 1995, 383 ff.).

Moreover, there is no geographic logic in attributing the distribution only to trade:

- A fine example of the phenomenon can be seen at Kh. Malta in the lower Galilee. The site is an Iron II village. In spite of its proximity to the area where abundant quantities of imported pottery were found, only a single Iron II imported sherd was found in the site itself (Covello-Paran, personal communication), therefore making the distribution map a bit awkward, if examined only from an economic perspective. This is true especially in light of large quantities of imported sherds found in the eastern site of Tell el-Hama for example.
- The Iron II village in Kh. Rosh Zayit, located immediately above the Coastal Plain, also exhibits only a minor amount of Cypro-Phoenician pottery, Akhziv wares, etc., in sharp contrast to the finds at an earlier fort excavated at the site, and to most other sites in the Coastal Plain's (Gal 1992b, 13; 1998, 10; see also Gal and Alexandre 2000).⁶

⁶ Note that the statistics published from this site are problematic, as they refer

- No imported sherds were reported also from the soundings at Tel Mador in the lower Galilee (Gal 1992a, 36–43).

It is important to emphasize that the rural nature of at least two of the three sites mentioned cannot explain this reality, as rural sites in the northern valleys which are located much farther away from the Phoenician coast yielded larger quantities of imported pottery (e.g., Tel Qasis, Tel Qiri and Nir David mentioned above).

The Inadequacies of the Economic Explanation

In light of the data presented above, there seem to be several factors that prove that the economic explanation is insufficient, and indicate that the distribution is ‘non-random’ (Hodder 1979b, 7, 14):

1) The contradictory evidence in Beer-Sheba and Jerusalem, where various non-ceramic evidence indicates intensive trade, hints that it is not a lack of trade which prevented imported pottery from reaching these sites.

2) The lack of imported pottery in settlements which are adjacent to sites or areas where such pottery is abundant, a pattern seen especially in the Galilee (Beth Shemesh might also serve as an example). Such sharp falloffs cannot be explained simply as being a result of ‘distance-decay falloff’ or similar explanations (Hodder 1979a, 452; see more below). It is important to re-emphasize that even if imported pottery is expected to be represented in higher percentages in the valleys due to the trade routes which crossed this region, its absence in some sites and almost complete absence in other sites in the Lower Galilee, so close to the Phoenician coast, must be of significance.

3) The fact that the absence of imported pottery correlates with the distribution of other traits (which seems to be relevant to the discussion of ethnicity; see Faust 2000; in press a, for a discussion of some of these characteristics) seems to indicate that this trait, too, is important. This seems to represent a reality where, if to use Hodder’s words, ‘regional plateaus of similar frequencies of some traits in assemblages may be found with sharp falloffs at the edges . . .

to the rims that had been found from most vessels, but include any body sherd of imported pottery. In any event, the finds indicate a huge decline in the percentages of imported pottery when one compares the fort and village.

that cannot be explained by normal distance-decay falloff or by environmental, functional adaptation' (Hodder 1979a, 452; see also Hodder 1979b, 12).

In any event, as distance and location cannot account for this distribution, it seems as if the solution to the discrepancy between the various types of evidence belongs, at least partially, to the socio-cultural realm (see also Hodder 1979b).

Value and Attitudes toward Imported Pottery

According to Orser (1996) there are three kinds of value: exchange value—the market value of a commodity; esteem value—an additional, sometimes emotional, value which could be added to artifacts; and use value—what one values the utilitarian usage of the artifact. Any artifact, or commodity, can therefore be seen in a number of ways. It can be seen as having high value, whether exchange value or esteem value, and therefore desired; or it can be seen as a mundane object, and therefore used whenever necessary. However, as Wood (1990, 88) claimed, all vessels should be 'culturally accepted', and there is, therefore, another possible attitude toward objects: artifacts might not be accepted culturally, and therefore avoided.

While it is quite obvious that the pottery vessels discussed here were manufactured either as containers or as commodities in their own right (e.g., Anderson 1990, 50; Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 370; see also Sherratt and Sherratt 1991, 362–363), I would like to suggest that the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Beer-Sheba, as well as many other sites in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, viewed these pottery vessels in a different way than their contemporaries in Tyre, Tell Abu Hawwam, Megiddo and even Tell el-Hama. Both Jerusalem and Beer-Sheba participated in inter-regional and even international trade, but this fact is not manifested in the pottery, since imported pottery was viewed negatively in these regions, and was not 'culturally accepted'. Such a reality should not come as a surprise since the fact that stylistic similarities and differences are not merely a result of interaction is well established, following studies such as Plog (e.g., 1980) and Hodder (e.g., 1979a; 1982; see also Bunimovitz and Faust 2001). After all, 'style may be actively used to mark out boundaries of different social groups when there is intense interaction between them' (Shanks and Tilley 1987, 87).

Imported Pottery in Salem—An example from the 'New World'

Before returning to the Israelite society, I would like to bring one example (out of several) from the 'New World', in order to exemplify that the negative attitudes toward foreign pottery is not a unique phenomenon to Israel's Iron Age, and that it can have a great impact on distribution.

Brian Thomas examined the reality in two late 18th century sites in North Carolina: Salem, which was a Moravian site (a German-speaking religious group, who settled in the several American colonies in the mid 18th century, see Thomas 1994, 16–17, and references), and Richmond, which was the central city in the region. According to Thomas (1994, 25), the results of the ceramic analysis exhibit clear differences between Richmond and Salem. Fifty-eight percent of the pottery found in Richmond was made of 'British style', while only 21% of the pottery recovered at Salem was of British style. This might have been expected, or at least not be considered surprising, when one remembers that Richmond was the local center. The disturbing fact is that Salem was the center of pottery importation. Moreover, when there were difficulties with imports, Salem produced local imitations for the entire region (Thomas 1994, 26). Thomas (*ibid.*) explained this awkward distribution by the different messages the population of Salem attempted to send to the 'inside' and the 'outside' world (*ibid.*). On the one hand, they wanted the outsiders to view them as part of the region. Their importation, and even production, of 'foreign' artifacts, and even symbols, accomplished this. In reality, however, they did not want to be part of this 'outer world', and wanted their members to be as excluded as possible. They, therefore did not use this ceramic, although they imported/produced it, as it symbolized a world they didn't want to be part of. Thomas (*ibid.*, 26), after discussing the fact that the Moravians wanted to appear as if they were part of the larger region, summarized the contrasting messages: 'However, despite the projection of this message outside of its borders, the small percentage of imported ceramics recovered . . . suggested that the Moravian community did not participate in the British world'.

The example from Salem is of importance not only because it might help in understanding the reasons for the discussed phenomenon, but also because it puts the examples from Iron Age Israel in some perspective. The dichotomy between the sites with imports

(usually the lowlands) and these with no imports, though not quantifiable, is far greater than the differences presented in Salem. From this perspective the Iron Age pattern is indeed very significant.

Other Lines of Supportive Evidence

There are, moreover, contextual data that makes our suggestion appropriate for Iron Age Israel. Below we will attempt to explain the reasons for this cultural attitude. Before we deal with that, however, we should like to mention two additional lines of supportive evidence:

1) First of all, lack, or rarity, of imported pottery is not the only unique characteristic of local ceramic repertoire. More important, perhaps, is the lack of decoration on the pottery of this period (Faust in press a). This phenomenon was observed by many scholars, including Aharoni (1978, 158), Franken and Steiner (1990, 90), Barkay (1992, 354) and others, but the full significance of it was, I believe, overlooked. The lack of decoration in Israel and Judah is a unique phenomenon in the Iron Age Levant. Much of the local ceramics of Cyprus, Phoenicia, Philistia, Ammon, Edom, etc., was decorated (see, e.g., summary in Barkay 1992; Mazar 1985, and many others), and Israel and Judah stand as a clear exception. This cannot be explained by functional or economic reasons, and must be a result of cultural attitudes toward decoration. Interestingly, a similar phenomenon was observed elsewhere, for example by Deetz in Anglo-America, and was indeed explained as a cultural phenomenon (1996, 81–82). This accords well with a negative view toward other kinds of pottery, imported one in this case.

2) The second line of support lies in the perceptions of trade in Israelite society: though the Bible is a problematic source, its language is most revealing. The most common term in biblical Hebrew for one who engages in trade is ‘a Canaanite’ (for example in Hosea 12:8: ‘A Canaanite, in whose hands are false balances, he loves to oppress’; see also Isaiah 23:8; Job 40:30; Proverbs 31:24; Zephania 1:11; some of which are traditionally dated to the Iron Age II; see also Elat 1977, 203; 1979, 529; Liver 1962, 204). Canaanites were obviously not viewed positively in the Iron Age society which produced much of the Bible. Whether most traders were Canaanites or not, the term indicates that the trading profession, too, was viewed negatively (see more below). And in King and Stager’s (2001, 190)

words: '(A)t least in their propaganda the Israelites were condescending toward traders and commerce'.

To sum up, imported pottery is found in extremely small quantities in most parts of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. While this might be a result of a lack of trade, other lines of evidence indicate the existence of intensive trade. It seems that at least part of the explanation of this phenomenon lies within the socio-cultural realm. This is supported by the lack of decoration on local pottery which can be explained only as a result of a cultural 'avoidance', and by the negative views toward traders in the Bible in general and in the society's spoken language in particular.

Possible Explanations for Negative Attitudes Toward Imported Pottery

But why did such an attitude develop? Though a full analysis of ancient Israel's worldviews is beyond the scope of the present paper, I would like to mention several options:⁷

1) A manipulation of the local elite:⁸ Following Appadurai, this could be a result of 'the antagonism between "foreign" goods and local sumptuary . . . structure' which 'is probably the fundamental reason for the often remarked tendency of primitive societies to restrict trade . . .' (Appadurai 1986, 33). Though Appadurai discusses a different reality, a manipulation of the elite could be the cause of an ideology which left trade under the elite's monopoly. Smith-Kipp and Schortman (1989, 379), after stressing the importance of trade in State Formation Processes, also observed that 'Chiefdoms or early states would have been tempted to protect if not monopolize trade whenever possible . . .' (see also Sherratt and Sherratt 1991, 359). Indeed, the above mentioned pattern in which pottery was not imported while cedars were, seems to indicate that during the period discussed here, trade in Israel and Judah was a state controlled endeavor (see below).⁹ It is likely, however, that even if the elite's

⁷ Theoretically, avoidance could also be seen as a form of resistance (e.g., Joyce, Bustamante and Levine 2001). Since, however, the avoidance of imported pottery seems to have encompassed all segments of the Israelite society, (internal) resistance cannot be the explanation for the phenomenon.

⁸ The term 'manipulation' usually carries a negative connotation. It should therefore be stressed that ideology should not be always viewed in these terms.

⁹ There are various lines of evidence that makes this interpretation plausible (e.g.,

manipulation is involved in the development of the discussed ethos, it couldn't have been its initiator. In order for such a 'manipulation' to be accepted it had to align itself with existing ideas or approaches.

2) Ethnocentrism (e.g., Jary and Jary 1995, 207). A negative view of foreigners and, therefore, foreign goods, could also, theoretically, explain the phenomenon.

3) It is also possible that the absence of imported pottery, as well as decoration, resulted from an ideology of egalitarianism and simplicity. Such an ideology was proposed in the past for ancient Israel on various grounds (e.g., Gordis 1971; Gottwald 1979; Speiser 1971; Cross 1988; Dever 2003; see also Faust 2004; in press a, and there additional references), and though it has been greatly criticized (e.g., Lemche 1985), it seems to correspond with other elements in this society's material culture (e.g., the lack of decoration). A discussion of the possible roots of such ideology are beyond the scope of the present paper (see Faust 1999b, 195–197, 204–205; 2000; 2004; in press a), but it seems to be part of Israel's ethnogenesis (as part of a self definition when facing other groups).

4) Another possible explanation also relates to a world view, though from a different perspective:

The anthropologist Mary Douglas, who studied some aspects of the Israelite society on the basis of texts, presented in 'deciphering a meal' (Douglas 1972) the following diagram:

Under the covenant

human	Israelites	others
non human	their livestock	others

(following Douglas 1972, 75, fig. 6: Analogy between humans and non-humans)

This table relates to human and non-human, but the latter refers only to animals. If Douglas's classification is correct, then it is inevitable that such a system was operating in all realms of life. For example, if we divide the 'Non Human' category into animals and artifacts, we would have the following table:¹⁰

Sherratt and Sherratt 1991, 359), especially in light of pottery's low price in the ancient world (e.g., Vickers and Gill 1994; Sherratt and Sherratt 1991, 363; Faust 1999a, 181; in press b), which makes it a suitable vehicle for such messages.

¹⁰ It should be stressed that I am referring only to the ideas Douglas developed

Under the covenant

human	Israelites	others
(livestock)	their livestock	others
artifacts	their wares	others

(modified from Douglas 1972, 75, fig. 6)

Douglas's classification could, therefore, account for the phenomenon discussed here, as it necessitated a dichotomy between local artifacts and 'other' artifacts. Moreover, there is some indication in the Bible that artifacts were indeed classified in a similar manner, e.g., in Numbers 31:20–24, where booty taken from non-Israelites was supposed to be purified (see also Licht 1995, 115; and also Ben-Shamai 1958, 392).¹¹ Pottery, however, cannot be purified, and perhaps this is the cause for its avoidance (Leviticus 6:21; 11:33; 15:12).¹² The

during the 1960's and 1970's. Though she still uses some of these concepts (e.g., the concept of the covenant; see e.g., Douglas 2000), she changed her ideas significantly over the years (see the discussion in Fardon 1999, 185–205). This is not the place to discuss her new ideas and interpretations, but I should like to stress that in my opinion the ideas expressed in her earlier works, like the one discussed here, seem to fit the archaeological record (and hence, I believe, the reality of the period).

¹¹ Many scholars interpret the purification of the booty to be a result of the fact that they were in contact with corpses (e.g., Licht 1995, 115), and not necessarily with non-Israelites (for a short survey of biblical attitudes toward non-Israelite's impurity, see Klawans 1995, 288 ff.). The dating of the paragraph is problematic. It is attributed to 'P', probably even to a later phase (e.g., Gray 1906, 419; Licht 1995, 116). The dating of P, however, is not clear. Traditional view dates it to the Persian Period (Wenham 1979, 9–11; see also Eissfeldt 1965, 207–208). Recently, however, there seems to be a growing consensus to date it to the Exilic Period, while maintaining that some or much of the data is earlier in origin (e.g., Clines 1993, 580). While this seems sufficient to allow us to relate to these data in this context, I would like to mention the fact that it seems that a growing number of scholars tend to date P to the late Iron Age, see e.g., Wenham 1979, 13; Schwartz 1999, 32–33; Friedman 1987; Weinfeld 1979; Hurvitz 1974; Milgrom 1991, 12–13, and many others. Leviticus, quoted in the next sentence, is also attributed to P. In addition, as we are dealing here with some of Douglas's ideas, it is interesting to refer also to Douglas 1975, 315–316, where she claimed that an earlier date for P suits her thesis.

¹² For the dating of the texts, see above. Interestingly, by the end of the Second Temple Period similar ideas/interpretations (among other things) led to the avoidance of imported pottery in general, and for intensive use of stone vessels by people who cared about purity (i.e., priests) (see, e.g., Ariel and Strikovsky 1990). The problem with the idea presented here, which attributes similar ideas to the Iron Age, lies in the fact that the later sources do not indicate historical precedents; if they could, they would have probably preferred to cling to any such sign of continuity.

reasons for the development of such a classification system are beyond the scope of the present paper (see also Douglas 1975, 306 ff.), but I believe, as Douglas claimed, that it was part of the Israelite's extensive boundary maintenance (e.g., 1972, 77), the roots of which should be sought in Israel's ethnogenesis.

While it is possible that one of the above is responsible for the discussed pattern, it is more plausible that in reality a combination of some, or all, was the case: e.g., the ideology against contact with foreigners\foreign goods was a result of a manipulation of the elite which aimed at maintaining a monopoly over trade, and that due to other factors, rooted earlier in the Iron I, this ideology suited the broader Israelites' world-views. It should be stressed, however, that the avoidance of imported pottery served the Israelites in their boundary maintenance (i.e., being separate, holy in the biblical sense), whether directly (e.g., options 2, 3, 4, above) or indirectly (option 1). In the latter case, even if the main message was internal, the outcome, at least as a by-product, would have been meaningful for signifying ethnic boundaries (e.g., David et al. 1988). This is much more so, as it is likely that we are discussing a phenomenon that resulted from several social processes, some of which were *directly* connected with boundary maintenance (and option 1, above, cannot be viewed as the sole responsible for the pattern).

An evaluation of the weight of the various explanations suggested above, or their possible combinations, relies upon a detailed discussion of Israel's social development during the Iron Age, its world views and ideology (see also, in this regard, Pedersen 1926, 307), and especially its ethnogenesis. This, as well as the inter-relations between internal and external messages, are well beyond the limits of the present paper, and is part of a larger study that will be published elsewhere (Faust in press a). While the current discussion is only partial, the importance of imported pottery for Israel's boundary maintenance, however, is clear.

Ideology, Economy and Commerce

It appears that only a socio-cultural explanation can account for the above discussed pattern, and it must supplement any economic related explanation. A negative view toward imported pottery, shared by many members of the society discussed here, correlates well with the

prevalent view of trade in ancient Israel, where ‘domestic commerce per se’ (Mazar 1990, 510) is seen as unimportant (see also Elat 1979, 546). It did not, of course, prevent massive trade probably organized by the state, as was already observed by some scholars (e.g., Elat 1979, 545–546; see also McNutt 1999, 158, in addition to the archaeological evidence discussed above), and in contrast to the reality in most contemporary centers (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 362; see also Sherratt and Sherratt 1991, 376). The avoidance of imported pottery should be viewed as part of Israel’s boundary maintenance during the Iron Age, and it played a role in the maintaining a separate (holy) identity.

Conclusion

Like all groups, the Israelites used and avoided various elements of material culture in maintaining boundaries with their neighbors. While the level of boundary maintenance changed through time and space, it appears that the avoidance of imported pottery was one of the mechanisms through which the Israelites kept themselves separate and distinct from other groups.

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