





Ivory cosmetic box in the shape of a duck

Late Bronze Age, about 1500-1370 BC
From Alalakh, Syria

Toilet or cosmetic boxes of this sort were extremely popular throughout the Levant in the second half of the second millennium BC. Although Egyptian in origin, they were produced by Canaanite and, later, Phoenician craftsmen. This complete box was found in the palace at Alalakh. A similar box in the shape of a fish, discovered at Tell es-Sa'diyeh, is now also in The British Museum.

Alalakh lies at the heart of the fertile Plain of Antioch and was excavated between 1936 and 1949 by Leonard Woolley. A huge palace complex was revealed, which had been occupied from the start of the second millennium BC. At the time that this box was made, the city was subject to the king of Mitanni, a powerful state dominating north Mesopotamia. However, around 1370 BC, Alalakh was captured and destroyed by the Hittites from Anatolia who were expanding south into western Mitanni. The rebuilt city was finally brought to an end in the thirteenth century BC, most probably by the Sea Peoples.





embrace by the lioness. It's also reminiscent of Dredde's misery in Europe too. His hair and facial features tell me that he's indeed a young African man but the museum title doesn't mention this, and I wonder why. It's very common for this kind of omission to occur. There's something about this boy, there's gold leaf on him, and armbands, it suggests to me that he may have been important in some way, was he a noble family's son perhaps?' Anita McKenzie, of African, Caribbean and Indian heritage

This carved ivory panel is one of an almost identical pair with one now in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad. They originally formed part of a piece of furniture, perhaps a throne. The incised letter 'aleph' beside holes on the top and bottom of the panel would have served as a construction guide.

The panel was found at the Assyrian capital city of Nimrud in northern Mesopotamia. It was recovered by the excavator Max Mallowan from the bottom of an ancient well in the palace of the Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II (reigned 883-859 BC). It had probably been thrown there during the destruction of the palace in the late seventh century BC. The carving is Phoenician in style, which suggests that the piece of furniture may have been made in one of the Phoenician centres along the Levantine coast, and come to the Assyrian capital as tribute or booty.

The carving shows an African boy with jeweled armbands and bracelets being attacked by a lioness. Above them is a dense network of lilies and papyrus. Much of the surface of the ivory was once overlaid with gold leaf and inlaid with carnelian and lapis lazuli. Some of this survives and there are traces of the blue mortar into which the lapis lazuli inlays were pressed. The African wears a short kilt covered in gold leaf. The curls of his hair are marked with gold. A spot of lapis lazuli is also inlaid on the forehead of the lioness.





Ivory plaque depicting a winged sphinx

Phoenician, 9th-8th century BC

Found at Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud (ancient Kalhu), northern Iraq

Clear Egyptian connections

Fort Shalmaneser consisted of a palace, storerooms and arsenal for the Assyrian army. This openwork ivory plaque may originally have been part of a piece of furniture which came to Nimrud, the Assyrian capital, as part of tribute or booty. When Nimrud was plundered at the end of the seventh century BC objects such as furniture were broken up for their inlaid precious stones and metals.

The sphinx shows clear Egyptian influence since he wears the Upper and Lower crown of Egypt and hanging from his chest is an apron with a projecting uraeus (rearing cobra) worn by Egyptian pharaohs. The style shows that the ivory was probably carved by a Phoenician craftsman on the coast of the Levant. It is similar to the falcon-headed sphinxes, which wear the double crown and uraeus, on a bronze bowl also from Nimrud.

D. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern art* (London, The British Museum Press, 1995)





81 Nimrud'dao, kanath sferks



17 Hocsühid'ün, stenkli filici



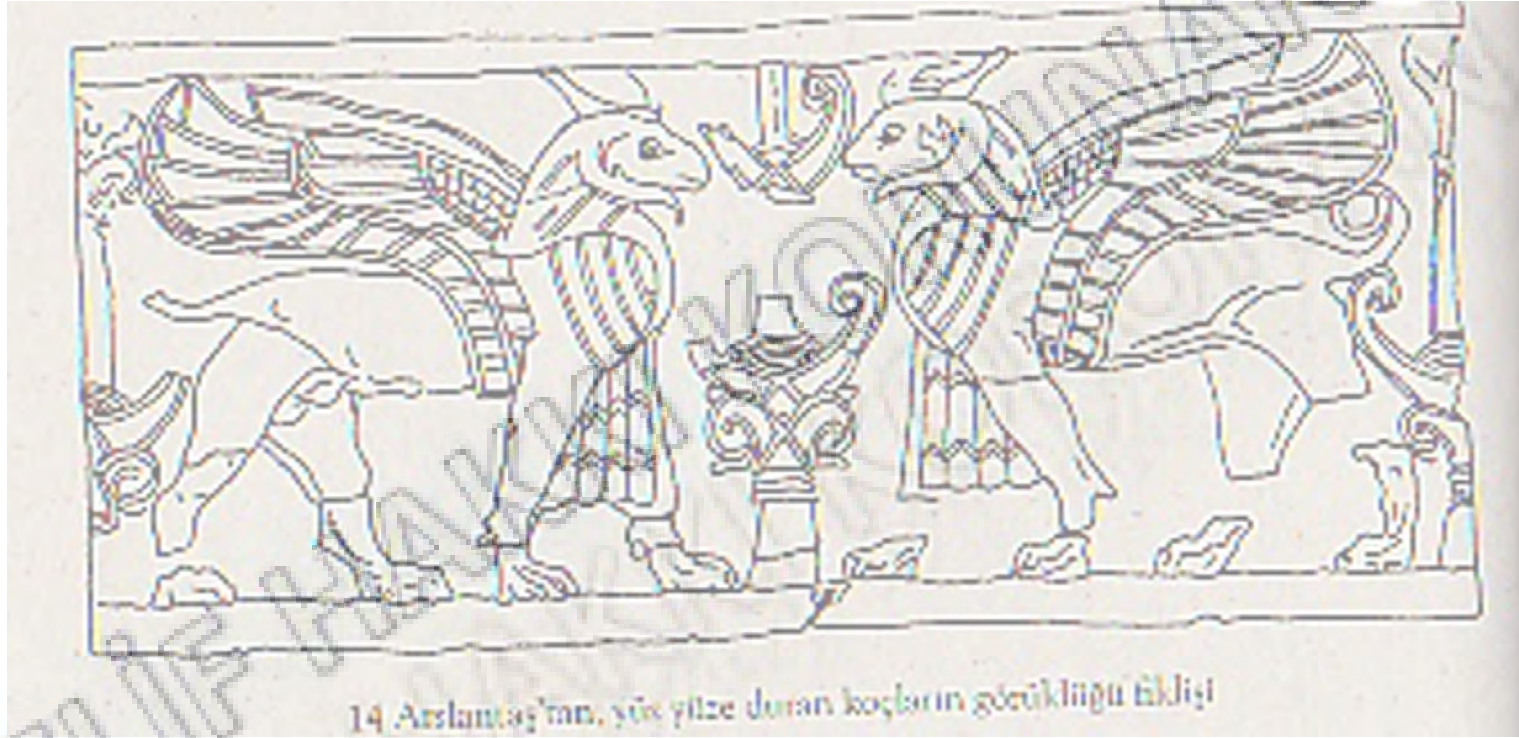
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78 Kanatlı sfenks Sakhmet'dan bir çizim







12 Ardıtaş'tan, kanatları açık figürlerin görüldüğü ünlüleri





80 Nimrud'dan, bir gençle bir latus
sapının tasvir edildiği tildigi



83 Nimrud'dan, Asur tipi
figürlerin g'etildiği illiği

Carved ivory depicting a woman at a window

Phoenician, 9th-8th century BC
From Nimrud, northern Iraq

A sacred prostitute?

This ivory panel was once part of a piece of furniture. (The West Semitic letter *gimel* is incised twice on the back of the panel, to guide the furniture-maker during construction.) The excavator Henry Layard found it with other objects in the North-West Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud, the site of the ancient Assyrian capital of Kalhu.

The panel shows a woman with Egyptian-style hair looking out of what appears to be a window. It is often thought that she is a sacred prostitute, connected with Astarte or Ishtar, goddess of fertility, but the exact significance of the scene is unclear. Versions of these panels can be seen decorating the legs of a couch on which King Ashurbanipal reclines in the 'Garden Party' scene at Nineveh.

Ivory was clearly popular as a form of decoration throughout the Near East. Examples of various styles but of similar date are also known from elsewhere at Nimrud, where they may have been part of captured booty or tribute, as well as from the Assyrian city of Khorsabad, and further afield in Syria and Israel.

A.H. Layard, *Nineveh and its remains*, 2 volumes
(London, J. Murray, 1849)







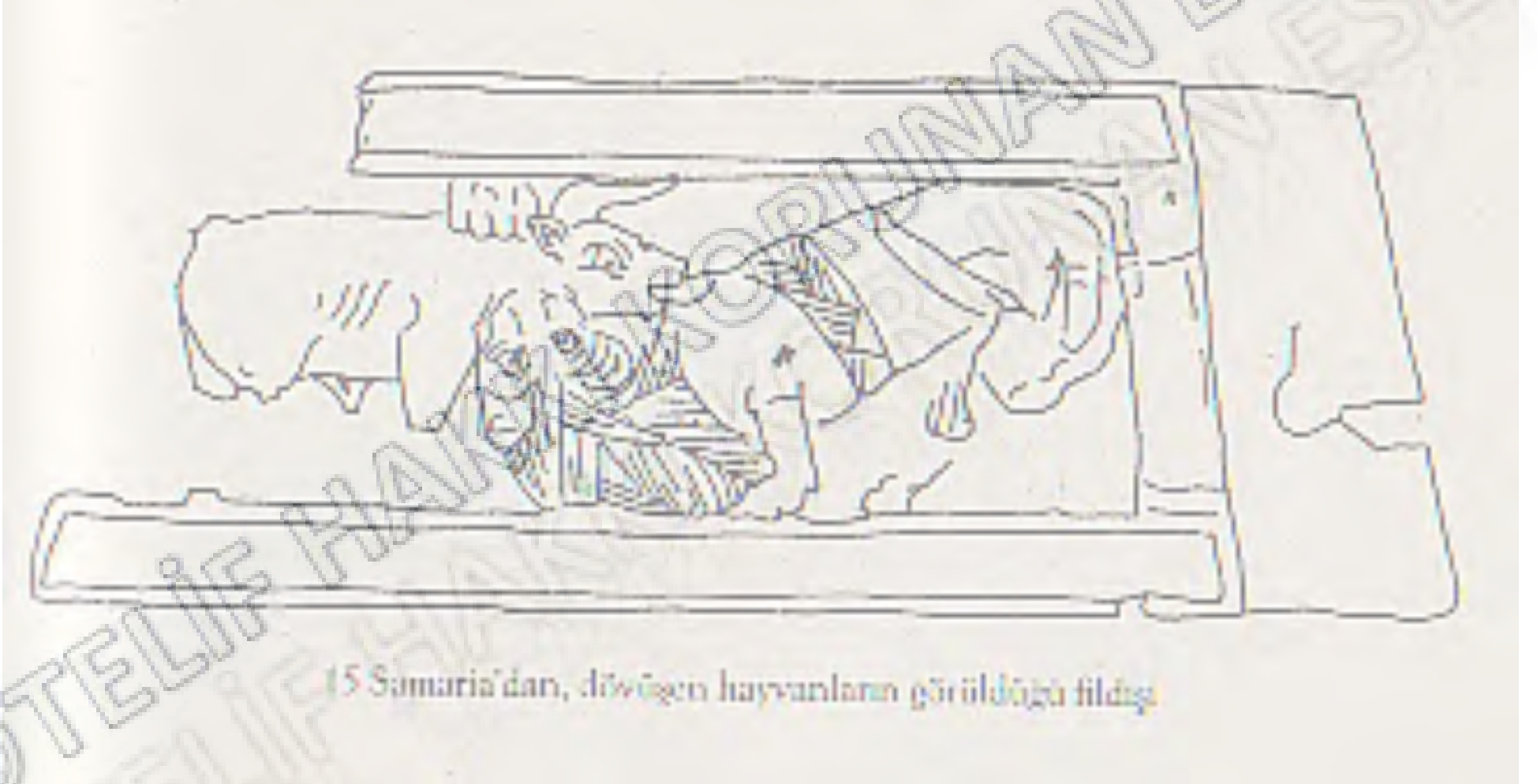
86 Arslançay'dan, bir geyiğin tasvir edildiği fildişi



65 Aryanlar'ın, iranlar bir insanın tasvir edildiği figürü

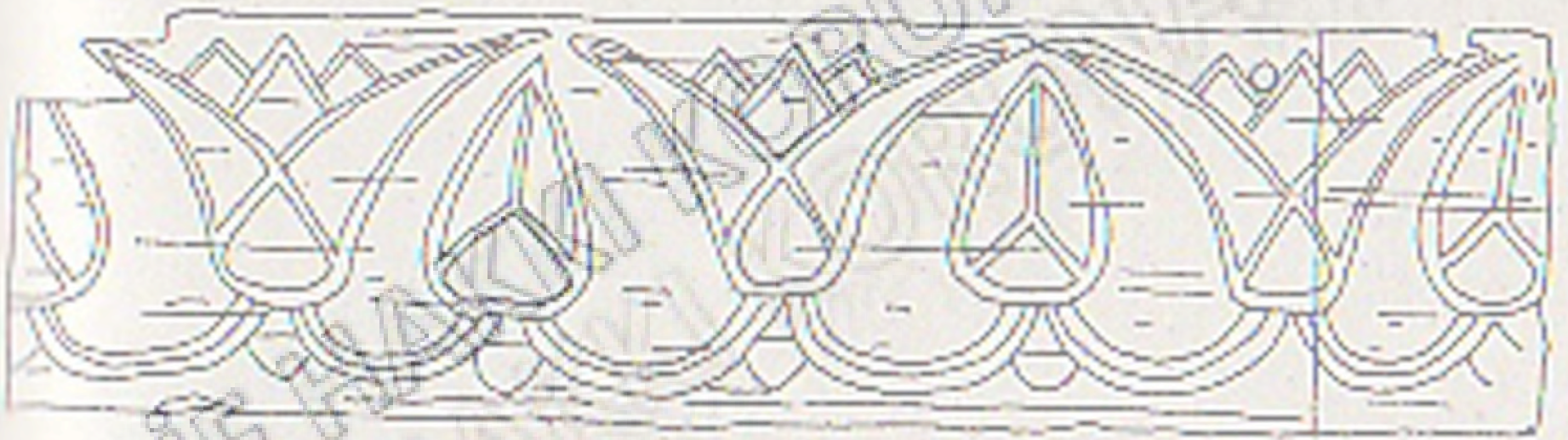
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15 Samaria'dan, dövüğü hayvanların görüldüğü fildiz





16 Samari'dan, tomurcuklu ve lotus çiçekli frizleri görüldüğü fildegi