



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# Bone or ivory ? Another look at material transfers in Late Bronze Age Syria and Cyprus

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## Abstract

Modern value put on “luxury materials” used to produce ancient artifacts may not always coincide with that of the ancient craftsmen. Taking the example of decorative arts from Bronze Age Levant, we observe that similar types of artifacts were produced in ivory (elephant or hippopotamus), bone, faience, soft stone and metal. One example is the “tazza”, or ribbed cup, derived from an Egyptian model in alabaster, which inspired many faience vessels and the gold bowl of Ugarit decorated with a hunting scene. Was there a gradation of appreciation and price between those different versions? Would the bone version of ivory boxes be considered an inferior product or imitation? Prof. Amnon Ben Tor demonstrated in 2009 \*that much care and imagination had been employed in the making of a bone jewelry box from Hazor, of a type familiar in elite context. Material matters, and ancient craftsmen would be careful to choose the right material(s) to achieve the desired product. This paper discusses the case of a narrow l pyxis of a type appreciated by the Late Bronze Age elite of Cyprus and Syria, to illustrate the phenomenon of material transfer between bone and ivory.

## Keywords

Ivory, Bone, Cyprus, Syria, Late Bronze Age

## Session

7. Characterizing culture ?

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