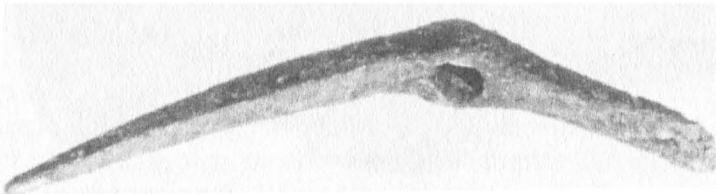


the bronze objects were shaped according to Late Bronze prototypes; even figurines such as the seated deity from Hazor and the bull from the Samarian Hills were made in the Canaanite tradition.⁶² Other bronze utensils reflect Aegean and Cypriot influence, apparently related to the immigration of Sea Peoples. These utensils include weapons found at Megiddo, Tell Qasile, Tel Zeror, Achzib, and Tell es-Sa'idiyeh; among these weapons are double axes, axe-adzes, elongated shafted spearheads and a European-type bronze sword with a contemporary Cypriot parallel. Bronze stands and a cauldron from Beth-Shean and Tell Sa'idiyeh are also typical products of this bronze industry, which flourished mainly during the twelfth century B.C.E. It has been suggested that the transition to iron was to some extent dictated by the difficulty in obtaining copper and tin—difficulty resulting from the termination of Late Bronze Age international trade relations.

Iron, particularly from meteorites, had long been known in the ancient Near East as a precious metal. During the twelfth and eleventh centuries B.C.E., iron objects which were produced from ores appeared in various parts of the ancient world, but the birthplace of this technology eludes us. It was once thought that the Hittites held a monopoly over iron technology in the Late Bronze Age, and that after the collapse of their empire the knowledge spread throughout the ancient world, being transmitted especially by the Sea Peoples. But this theory is no longer regarded as valid. As the earliest iron implements in Palestine were found in Philistine contexts (a sword at Tell el-Far'ah [south], knives at Tell Qasile and Ekron, and jewelry), it was assumed that the Philistines introduced ironworking during the twelfth century B.C.E.⁶³ A passage in 1 Samuel 13:19–22 mentioning Philistine monopoly over metal production was cited as support of this hy-

8.32 An iron pick from the citadel at Har Adir, Upper Galilee (eleventh century B.C.E.). This is one of the earliest known examples of steel tools.



pothesis, but in fact this passage does not specify the metal in question. The finds show that in Iron Age I, iron was still rare and expensive; it was chosen for jewelry (bracelets and earrings) and a limited number of weapons and knives. Iron tools began appearing only in the eleventh century B.C.E., and even then in meager quantity.

A pick found in the eleventh century B.C.E. fortress at Har Adir in the Upper Galilee is the earliest known iron implement made of real steel produced by carbonizing, quenching, and tempering. This technological revolution opened the way for the widespread use of iron.⁶⁴

ART

The twelfth and eleventh centuries B.C.E. have been considered a "dark age" in the history of the ancient world. The decline of Egypt, and the collapse of the Hittite kingdom and the Mycenaean emporium, are also reflected in the deterioration in art and architecture in these areas. In Palestine and Phoenicia, the Canaanite miniature art of the Late Bronze Age apparently continued to thrive during the twelfth and eleventh centuries B.C.E. The last of the Megiddo ivories were made during the time of Ramesses III in the mid-twelfth century B.C.E. A carved ivory box from Stratum VIA at Megiddo, dated to the eleventh century B.C.E., as well as additional ivory works from Tell Qasile, Tel Miqne, and other sites illustrate the continuation of the art of ivory carving in Canaan throughout Iron Age I.

Both in Philistia and in the northern valleys and plains, creative and imaginative artists were producing objects which blended Canaanite traditions with motifs and concepts probably brought by the Sea Peoples. Their products are exemplified by the variety of cult artifacts from Beth-Shean, Megiddo, Ashdod, and Tell Qasile. This art is a link between that of the Late Bronze Age and that which developed in Palestine and Phoenicia during Iron Age II.

WRITING

A meager number of inscriptions represents the development of alphabetic writing during Iron Age I.⁶⁵ An incised ostrakon from 'Izbet Sartah was apparently a pupil's exercise.