

An unexpected find from the 1987 excavations at Tel Dan under the direction of Avraham Biran, this scepter top came from beneath an altar in the "altar room" of the Israelite High Place. It is dated to the ninth century B.C.E. The scepter head is about 3 3/4 inches high and 1 1/2 inches in diameter. At the top are four badly corroded bronze heads, possibly lion heads. The bronze petals in the center partially obscure a silver-covered central section. Near this find were three incense shovels of iron and a jar full of the ashes of animal bones and the remains of incense. The excavator thinks this may be the top of a priest's, or possibly a king's, scepter.