

TWO SEASONS OF RESCUE AND EXPLORATORY EXCAVATIONS AT ḤORBAT 'AVOT, UPPER GALILEE

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INTRODUCTION

In the early 1980s, development plans for Moshav Avivim, in the mountainous region of Upper Galilee (Fig. 1), called for inclusion of a sizable portion of the sloping area south of the village in a series of newly-

fashioned terraces intended to support poultry coops (Fig. 2). The designated area included a registered antiquities site, Khirbet Uba/Horvat 'Avot (Ḥorbat 'Avot; map ref. 24350–400/77635–70; Fig. 2). The Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums received notice of the intentions

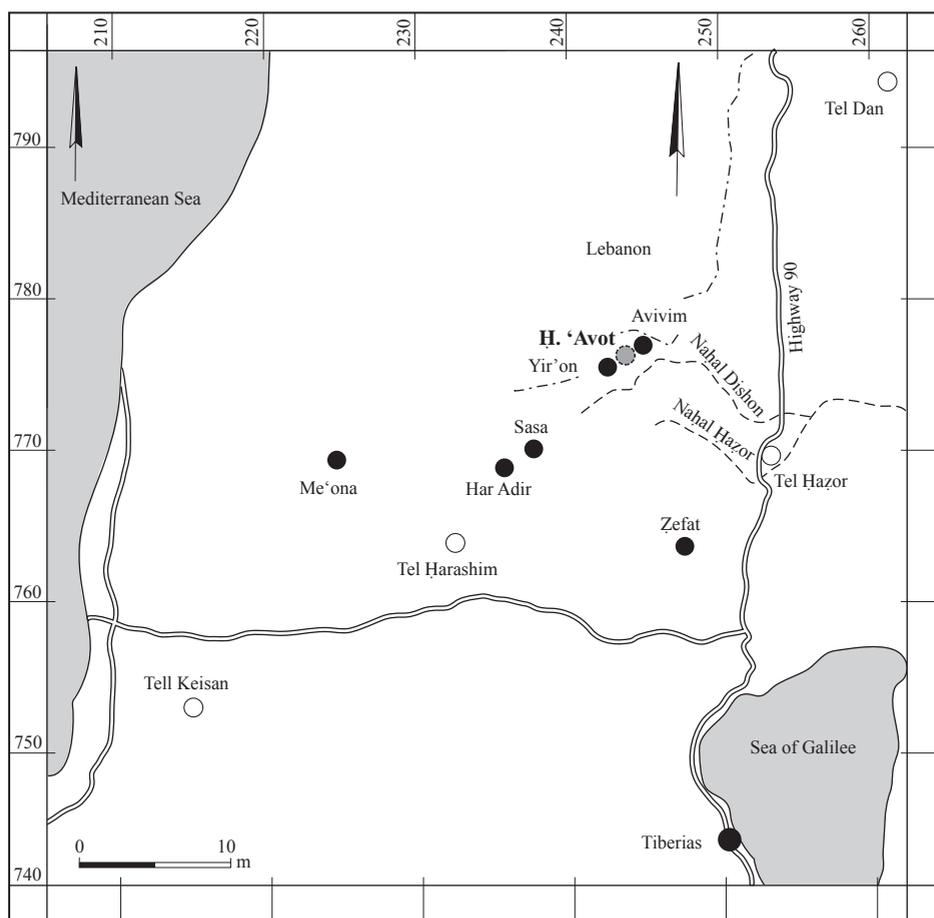


Fig. 1. Location map.



Fig. 2. Aerial view: the topography of the area surrounding Horbat 'Avot.

of government planning agencies only after work on the uppermost of those terraces had commenced in the spring of 1980. Yosef Stepansky, then antiquities inspector for the region, promptly halted work in the immediate environs of the hill and the writer was commissioned to conduct an exploratory excavation to determine the nature of the archaeological deposits. Three weeks and a small work force of five were allotted for the excavation. A short, follow-up season with the help of four volunteers took place in the following year.¹ Results of these two brief seasons of excavation, representing a limited exploration of the site, are described below.

The Site and Environs

Moshav Avivim is situated at the southern edge of a long, narrow valley, part of a large mountainous formation with a high crest to the north (Figs. 2, 3). To the south is a slope that drops off quite abruptly into a series of rounded hills cut by numerous watercourses (Fig. 4). One of these, Nahal Aviv is a narrow ravine beginning west of the modern community and the site. It cuts south into the slope for a few score meters and then curves east and east-southeast in a rapid descent toward Nahal Dishon, a major, circuitous watercourse, one of many that sculpted the rounded contours of this mountainous landscape of Upper Galilee.



Fig. 3. The terrace on the western side of the mound, looking north; overgrown remains of the Iron I buildings in foreground, and the head of Naḥal Aviv in left background; the high, barren mountain in the distance is in Lebanon (photograph by the author, 2012).



Fig. 4. The excavation area on the western side of the hill, looking south; circuitous Naḥal Aviv is discernible in the right background; the wall-like line of stones next to the vehicle on the bulldozed surface to the right of the excavation is modern.



Fig. 5. Basalt bedrock fractured into slabs (photograph by the author, 2013).

Ḥorbat ‘Avot is located on a small, elongated hill, c. 700 m above sea level, within the first bend of Naḥal Aviv, which sharply defines the hill’s western and southern slopes (map ref. 24365–85/77630–70; Figs. 1, 2). To the east, this hill descends gently down to an abrupt juncture with the edge of a small, deep tributary of Naḥal Aviv, a deep gash in the landscape that separates it from the large basalt formation of Ramat Yir’on, the lower counterscarp of this watercourse. To the northeast, a low saddle rises up to the large massif that dominates the region.

The summit is an outcrop of basalt that spewed out onto the limestone base of the hill, one of several volcanic flows that formed smaller and larger outcrops of dark basalt scattered over the cream-colored, weathered limestone and *terra rossa* soil of this deforested region (Orni and Efrat 1980:74, 77). The same, or an analogous flow, also formed a shallow, circular pool in a depression to the south of the hill (Figs. 2, 6, 8; see below). The basalt bedrock is additionally evident in a number of outcrops of thick, layered, partially detached slabs (Fig. 5), of a

type used for much of the stone construction encountered in the excavation.

The site occupies most of this basalt prominence and its slopes, over an area of approximately two dunams (Fig. 6). The summit and some of the slopes are covered by masses of stones in heaps and long lines (perhaps crudely defined enclosures, such as animal pens), and occasional trees and large bushes (Fig. 7). Archaeologically, it remains unexplored. The northern edge of the site is a short, steep incline that eases into a shallow saddle on that side. The hill falls off more abruptly to the east and ends in a rather steep, high terrace, which was cut by a bulldozer prior to the first season of excavation. This terrace appears to be made up of masses of fieldstones mixed with loose earth that may cover a core of a structure that gives the slope a stepped contour.

The southern side of the hill is a large, flat, very gentle slope that merges with a continuation of the eastern contour that defines the site. The western slope is an extension of that to the south, but is considerably narrower and steeper. It has been bulldozed into a series of step-like

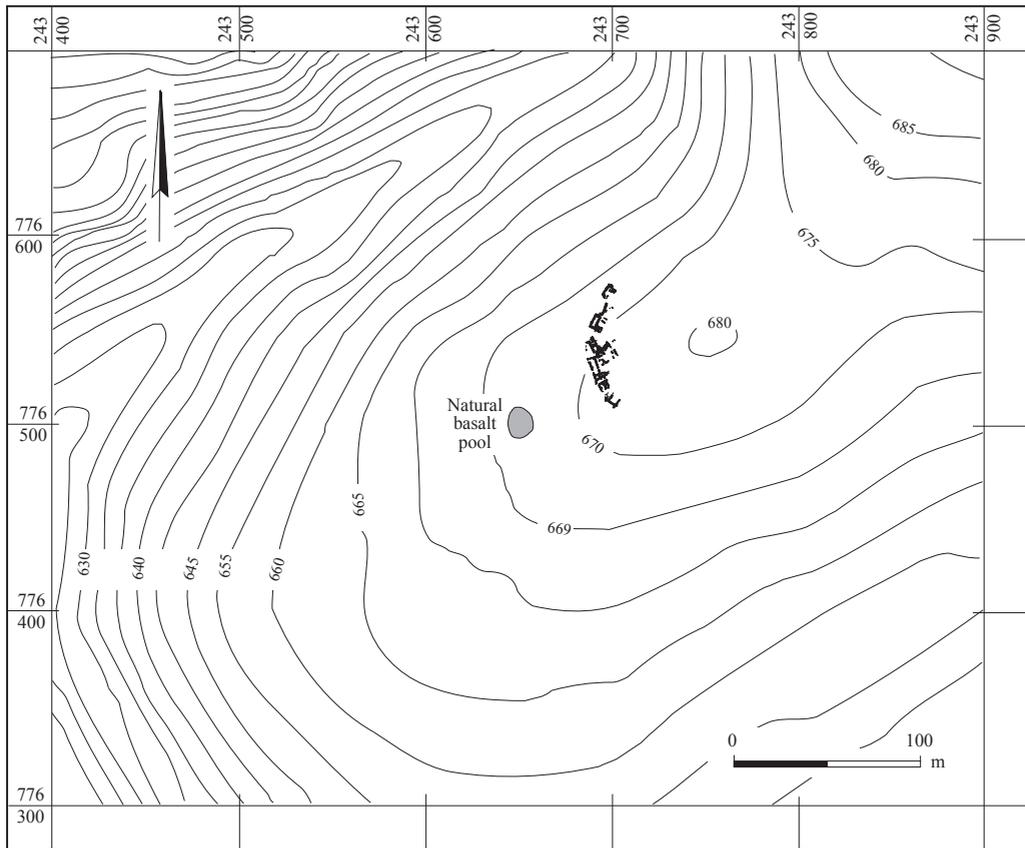


Fig. 6. Map of the site, showing the location of the excavation.



Fig. 7. Massive stone heaps on the upper mound, looking east from the terrace where the excavations took place.

terraces extending as far as the steep bank of a small tributary of Naḥal Aviv. Cuts into the western slope created low, vertical sections in

which material-culture deposits were visible. These slowly eroding sections indicate that in the past, the hill followed a gentler incline.



Fig. 8. View from the site, facing south: the natural basalt pool, partially filled from late rains, which attracted numerous storks; Kibbutz Yir'on in the right middle ground; and the distant massif of Mt. Meron rising to c. 1200 m asl in the background (photograph by the author, 2013).

There are no springs in the immediate vicinity of the site, but the above-mentioned depression to the south of the hill allows the winter rains to pool (Figs. 2, 6, 8), where they are retained until well into late spring and sometimes early summer. During the two seasons of the excavation, water was observed there into the early part of June, after which an abundance of plant growth arose in the muddy precipitates at the bottom. This pool may have served as a seasonal water source for drinking and watering of flocks. A shepherd from the modern village used it for watering his flocks during the period of the excavation and in spring of 2013 numerous storks were observed watering there.

History of Occupation and Utilization

To date, the sole information we have in the archaeological record of H. 'Avot derives from the present limited excavation of the western slope and casual surveying of the site's entire surface.² Although evidence for three superimposed architectural strata was encountered within the excavation, supplementary surface finds and a number of concentrations of artifacts indicate activity in additional cultural horizons (Table 1). All in all, there is material evidence for intermittent

occupation and utilization possibly from as early as the Epipaleolithic period (see Figs. 42, 43).

Across Nahal Aviv to the west is a large, karstic cave in an almost vertical limestone scarp (Fig. 9). It is registered as Nahalit Cave, an antiquities site with Paleolithic remains. It is also noteworthy for having, at the time of excavation, an eagle's eyrie located somewhere within its cavernous interior.

The Excavation

The first season, in the spring of 1980, took place after a winter of particularly heavy rains, when the lower reaches of the site were overgrown with weeds that reached a height of more than 1.5 m. Under the watchful eye of the excavator, a rubber-tired backhoe was used to scrape off the surface of the gently sloping terraces on the western side of the site, removing a very thin (c. 10 cm) overburden of loose stones, rubble and weeds. Two probes separated by only a few meters were then opened, one on the upper terrace and a second on a track bulldozed on the western side of the hill some years prior to the excavation (see Fig. 6). A second season in spring of 1981 continued the work and eventually joined the two areas to form a single excavation area.

Table 1. Human Utilization of Horbat 'Avot

Cultural Horizon	Type of Evidence	Stratigraphic Ascription
Epipaleolithic?	Flint tools and debitage found on the surface	None
Neolithic?	Several stone artifacts, including limestone bowls and flint tools from fills	None
EB I	A small quantity of potsherds in likely association with a wall fragment and a Canaanite blade	Below Stratum 2, on bedrock
EB II	A small quantity of potsherds in fills	In fills below Stratum 2
MB II	An infant jar burial and some scattered sherds of a pithos associated with a badly disturbed burial	In fills below Stratum 2, on or near bedrock
LB	Scattered sherds of cooking pots	None
Iron I	Sedentary occupation with evidence of several structural phases	Stratum 2; possibly Strata 2b and 2a
Iron II–III	Potsherds	None
Persian period	Surfaces associated with a corner of a building and stray sherds in fills	Stratum 1
Hellenistic period	One minute fragment of a bowl	None
Undefinable, post-Persian through Ottoman periods	Stone-lined cist graves, clay pipes, tiny sherds of glazed wares	Intrusive into Stratum 2
Unknown	Stone walls and heaps of stones	Covering highest portions of site and forming terraces around entire site



Fig. 9. View across Nahal Aviv of the large, karstic cave, known to have Paleolithic deposits and, at the time of excavation, home to an eagle's eyrie.

STRATIGRAPHY (Plan 1)

The gently sloping western side of the site appears to have been plowed, and had suffered from erosion below the level at which the excavation began. Varying depths

of occupational debris were found above the basalt bedrock. Two superimposed strata, which relate to each other, were defined and numbered Strata 1 (the upper) and 2 (the lower). Stratum 2 included up to three very localized construction phases, generally

superimposed floors, cited in field notes as “a” for the latest and “c” for the earliest. An underlying structure, which did not directly touch the upper levels, is represented only in a single wall segment (W60, Sq P/10) built into a depression in the bedrock. It was not assigned a stratum number, but merely noted as “below Stratum 2” (i.e., Stratum -2), because at least one intervening cultural horizon is represented within the archaeological record of the excavation. Likewise, several intrusive graves dug into the site from the surface are assigned to Stratum +1 (see below).

STRATUM 1

Stratum 1 was encountered only in a very small area of the slope (Sqs H-I/5-6). The sole architectural remains definitively ascribed to this stratum are W33 and W34 that form a corner of a rectangular building, dated by associated patches of earthen surfaces (L208) on which pottery of the Persian period was found. In addition, in a non-contiguous precinct (L504, Sq K/6), remains of surfaces from this same period appear to have survived the vagaries of weather and human utilization of the site. Associated with one such surface was a large portion of a ceramic jar from the same chrono-cultural horizon.

It should be noted that the corner of the Stratum 1 building (the juncture of W33 and W34) is set directly atop an earlier, Stratum 2 structure (W35), and that it shares the alignment of the earlier building. Additional walls and possibly even complete structures that originated in Stratum 2 may have been utilized in Stratum 1, but since there was no definitive evidence for this in preserved surfaces, only this one fragmentary structure could be assigned to Stratum 1 with any degree of confidence.

STRATUM 2

Most probes below the surface and the Stratum 1 remains went directly into fills associated

with Stratum 2, a well-preserved Iron I occupation that covers the entire excavated portion of the western slope. Remains of Stratum 2 include several rectilinear buildings, most of which appear to have been contemporaneously occupied. No complete structures were encountered, but a number of rooms have complete or nearly complete plans. Accordingly, they are discussed as more-or-less discrete units, labeled “Rooms.” All “Rooms” are associated with Stratum 2 and are numbered arbitrarily, generally in a north-to-south direction.

In a few instances, within one limited precinct of the excavated area, features of several buildings were superimposed in as many as three distinct, highly compressed architectural phases (see Appendix 2). These sequential phases have tentatively been assigned a further alphabetic designation. Although some rooms appear to be associated with the later phases, the alphabetic differentiation is used only in the text, where relevant, and in the List of Walls (Appendix 2); it is not indicated on the plan.

The lowest of these architectural features are designated Substratum 2c and were found to be clearly associated with surfaces that yielded Iron I pottery, mostly *in situ*. Others are assigned to this substratum on the basis of their alignment and the pottery derived from associated fills. In effect, most of the Stratum 2 structures and features can be assigned to this initial building phase. Two additional, localized architectural phases found directly atop walls of Substratum 2c were not definitively associated with surfaces that could date them. They are tentatively assigned to Stratum 2 on the basis of an overwhelming bulk of ceramics dating to Iron I in associated fills. The latest of these superimposed phases is tentatively designated Substratum 2a and the middle phase is tentatively named Substratum 2b. However, as noted above, later periods are represented in the ceramic assemblage of the site, and it is possible that these Substrata 2a and 2b structures may have belonged to post-Iron I occupations.

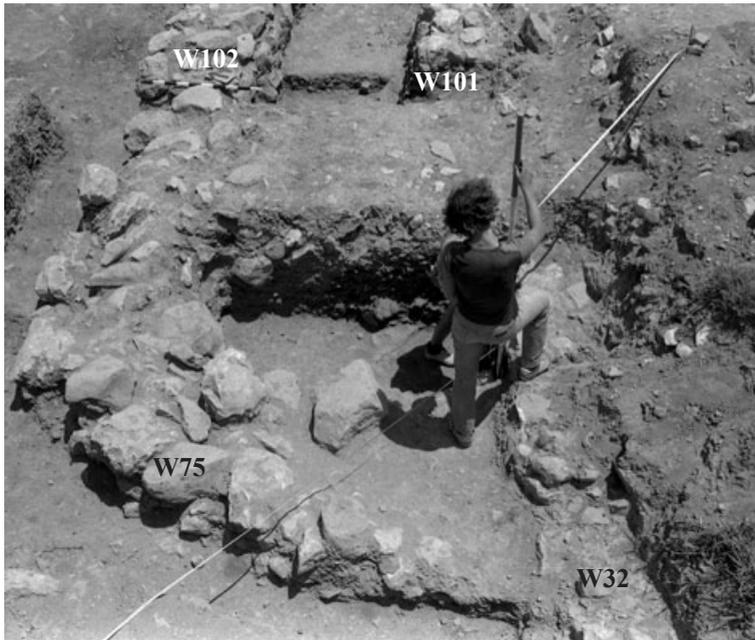


Fig. 10. Room 1, looking north, showing the rounded corner of W75 and W102.

Room 1 (Fig. 10). This room, at the northeastern edge of the excavation (Sqs G–H/5–6), lay along the bulldozed path; the upper courses were obviously sheared off when the track was made. The somewhat irregular shape of its walls suggests it may have suffered misalignment after its abandonment. It was only partially excavated (L103) at the end of the first season, after which work on it was abandoned (Plan 1: Section 2–2). It appears that only its foundations remain; no sign of a floor level was recovered. The alignment of this room is analogous to that of Rooms 2 through 5 and suggests they are all part of a larger, complex building (see below, Room 2).

Room 2 (Fig. 11). This room is part of a larger complex with multiple chambers. Part of its superstructure was sheared off where it lay in the path of the bulldozer track (W37, W38 and W39). Its lines were only barely visible within a mass of fieldstones on the surface at the beginning of the excavation.

Room 2 appears to have been a semi-subterranean chamber, built into the hillside. All

four of its walls are preserved to between 0.6 m and 1.1 m in height, with no sign of an entrance. It is therefore assumed that access to this room was from an upper story, perhaps through a trap door in a floor supported by wooden beams.

Three complete pithoi (Figs. 27–29) were found smashed on the earthen floor of this room. Their bulk and likely weight (especially when full), suggest they were recovered *in situ* rather than in secondary deposition after having collapsed into the room from an upper story. Indeed, so cumbersome are these pithoi, it seems likely the room might actually have been built around them. Notably, in a contemporary or nearly contemporary occupation at nearby Sasa, excavation of a similar subterranean storeroom yielded similar pithoi (Stepansky, Segal and Carmi 1996:65).

Wall 35 (an extension of W40) and W36 seem to belong to another room, situated between Rooms 1 and 2, but nothing more of that space has been preserved.

Rooms 3 to 6 (Figs. 12, 13). Three partially unearthed rectangular rooms, two wide

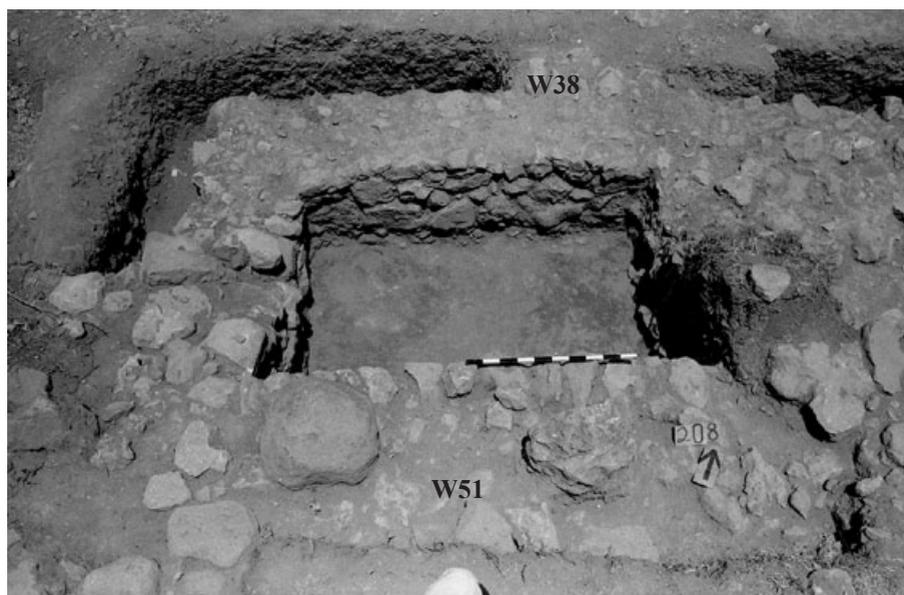


Fig. 11. A detail of Room 2, before the removal of the balk (Plan 1: Section 3–3).



Fig. 12. Room 5 at an early stage in the excavation, looking west; note the large Iron I potsherds in the corner formed by W35 and W34, which is dated to Stratum 1.

chambers (Rooms 3 and 5) flanking a narrower one (Room 4), share W40/35 with Room 2 and the space adjacent to it. The eastern ends of

these three rooms remain unexcavated. Patches of two superimposed levels of plastered floors were found within them. It seems likely that



Fig. 13. A volunteer standing in the large, stone-lined pit (L520) in Room 6.

W34 of Stratum 1 obscures the northern closure wall of Room 5 (Fig. 12). Room 5 contained a very deep fill of debris—soft, crumbly soil replete with small, jagged fieldstones that left a very ragged and unstable balk. An attempt (largely unsuccessful) at “trimming” the eastern balk within this room led to the discovery of a bone-handled knife (Fig. 40:1).

In the southeastern corner of this complex, adjacent to Rooms 2 and 3, was another small chamber (Room 6) filled with debris of large fieldstones. A sizable stone-lined pit (L520), that takes up the southeastern corner, may have been built integrally with this structure (Fig. 13), but it could have been constructed in a later phase or even during the Stratum 1 occupation. Another, smaller, stone-lined pit near the northwestern corner (L521) was quite clearly cut into the building from a superior elevation at a later phase.

Room 7. This partially-exposed room is delineated on the north and east by Walls 57 and 14, which share their orientation with nearby Walls 8–11, 56 and 70, part of a large complex structure in which at least two building phases are preserved (see below). Room 7 could not be excavated for lack of time, but W57,



Fig. 14. Room 10 at the end of the first season, after clearance of its earthen floor, looking north.

obviously truncated by bulldozing, was subsequently cleaned. Wall segments 16 and 17 are roughly aligned with it, and may have belonged to the same structure or one nearby. Three large fieldstones still embedded in the surface of the bulldozer track appear to be part of its western wall (W73).

Room 8. This is a small rectangular room east of Room 7, notable for a circular aperture (pit?) surrounded by flagstones, near its center. The fill below the aperture could not be explored because of lack of time, and its function and association with this room remain obscure.

Room 9. A flagstone pavement was found adjacent to W56 in this room, which is to the north of Room 8. The northern end of this room remains unexplored.

Room 10 (Fig. 14). This is a large, rectangular room with an earthen floor, on which much pottery and mud-brick debris was found. It is



Fig. 15. Detail of Room 18, with earlier and later structures, almost all at the same elevations, looking west; the 0.5 m stick rests on W60, dated to EB I. Note an intrusive grave (T509), still capped and still unexcavated.

part of a large structure that was built over in a later phase. A gap in W15 may indicate the location of the entrance to this room.

Room 11. This room is adjacent to Room 10 on the east and may have been of analogous proportions. The short segment of W5 is probably the remains of the room's eastern closure.

Room 18 (Fig. 15). Only the northern portion of this rectangular room is preserved. There is no evidence of a closure wall to the south, perhaps because it was destroyed through erosion or later building. The remains seem to be below the floor level, and it is likely that the foundations to the south were located higher than elsewhere because of the elevated basalt bedrock. Fill in this room was disturbed by an intrusive cist burial (T509).

Room 19. Although this room does not share the orientation of the other structures assigned to this stratum, it does share their more-or-less rectangular plan. Its orientation may be a function of the high bedrock outcrop adjacent to its western wall (W45). There is no indication of any phasing here and it is not known how much more of the structure remains unexcavated. Its ascription to Stratum 2 was based on the similarity of its overall aspect and plan to other buildings of that stratum. The room appears to have been part of a multi-chambered structure as indicated by the stub of W54 that juts out beyond the line of the southern wall (W49) of the house.

Architectural Phasing within Stratum 2

More-or-less in the center of the excavation is a small precinct with the very compressed stratigraphy noted above. Wall foundations sit

directly atop others, with an obvious sequence of three structural phases. Some walls (e.g., W4, W7 and W15, delineating Room 10) appear to have remained in use throughout the entire sequence of this stratum; others fell into disuse or segments of them were removed. In virtually no instance was it possible to assign fills to a specific architectural phase. Thus, phase designations in the List of Walls (Appendix 2) refer solely to clearly stratified, superimposed architectural features or surfaces, of which only a very few were encountered.

Several rectilinear walls form chambers that appear to represent a final phase of occupation associated with Iron I. They are dated by the prevalence of quantities of pottery of this period in what appear to be associated fills. However, since their floors were not preserved, it is not inconceivable they actually were in use in Stratum 1 and the pottery is residual from the earlier occupation. Nonetheless, since no particular features attest to the Persian period, whereas indirect evidence suggests that all these architectural features in this precinct should be dated to Iron I, they are presented here as part of Stratum 2.

Rooms 12–14 (Fig. 16). A number of disconnected walls in Sqs M–N/8–9 can be assigned to Substratum 2b. Walls 1, 2, 3, 16 and 17, all sharing the same orientation (either parallel or perpendicular), are the only remains of what appears to have been a multi-chambered building. Much of it was probably removed for construction of later structures that overlie it.

Room 12 was only partially preserved in W2 and W3, which are oriented quite differently from the walls of Rooms 10 and 11. The relative elevation of the short segment of W5 seems to indicate it was in use sometime during the history of the room, but it cannot be determined precisely in which stratum or phase that might have been. It was possibly part of a structure superimposed upon those better-preserved chambers, as its foundations are somewhat higher. Alternately, Room 12 may have utilized



Fig. 16. Room 14, detail of W12; note the white plaster floor on which it was built (marked by the arrow); the fallen stone is resting on what may be an earlier, earthen floor strewn with potsherds visible to its right.

existing W4 of Room 10, which would have given it a rather irregular plan.

Room 13 is a partially preserved chamber of uncertain proportions. It may well have utilized the existing northern closure wall of Room 11 (the easternmost segment of W8). The juncture of W6 and W9, a corner of what is almost certainly a later structure, seems to have impinged upon it.

Only the western portion (W1, W2, W16 and W17) of Room 14 is extant (Plan 1: Section 1–1; Fig. 16). It seems likely that the southern part of this large, rectangular room remained in use in a later phase, with W6 and W12 delimiting it. A short wall segment (W46) possibly preserves the eastern end of this room, but its relative distance from W1 and W2 make this hypothesis extremely tentative. No room number was assigned to the area north of the entrance formed by W6 and W12 (L13) because of the intrusive, later cist grave (T17).

Rooms 10, 11, 15–18 (Fig. 17). Rooms 10, 11 and 18 were apparently constructed in Substratum 2c, as may be judged from their



Fig. 17. A detail of Room 16 with broken pottery, *in situ* on its earthen floor.

orientation and their integration into structures of this main building phase. The partially open space between Rooms 10 and 11 and Room 17 was enclosed and divided by Walls 7, 13, 18, 19, 23 and 26 into several small irregularly trapezoidal chambers (Rooms 15 and 16). Preservation was poor, especially at the northern end of Room 15, probably because of the high outcrop of bedrock. It is uncertain how entrance to these chambers was achieved. However, considering their narrow aspects and the likelihood they were used for storage, they may have been accessed through apertures in their roofs or even high up in their walls by means of ladders.

Room 20 (Fig. 18). This is a long, narrow room in Sqs L–M/8, formed by additions of Walls 6, 9, 11, 12 and 70 to existing structures, probably in the last phase (2a) of Stratum 2. It is part of a larger, multiple-roomed building, and is notable for its well-defined entrance formed by W9 and W70.

Rooms 21–23 (Fig. 19). Rooms 22 (Fig. 19) and 23 seem to be late additions to the same pre-existing building to which Room 20 was added (Substratum 2a). Room 23 was less explored

and is delineated only by short segments of W52 and W71, represented by only a few stones found *in situ*. Room 21, east of W47, was probably separated from Room 23 by W71. The remainder of this room lies in an unexcavated area of the site.

Additional Walls of Stratum 2

Several short wall segments (W27, W28 and W46) possibly belong to Stratum 2, based on adjacent, associated fills that yielded Iron I pottery fragments. However, those walls cannot be connected to any particular construction phase. Walls 27 and 46 appear to be aligned with the Stratum 2 buildings, but are unattached segments. Wall 28 may also be associated with this phase, although it is slightly misaligned with W46, with which it could have formed a continuum. The juxtaposition of these walls could, however, suggest two construction phases. Alternately, they may represent very poorly preserved constructions of a later period.

BELOW STRATUM 2

Several deposits, representing different chronological horizons were noted in probes below Stratum 2.

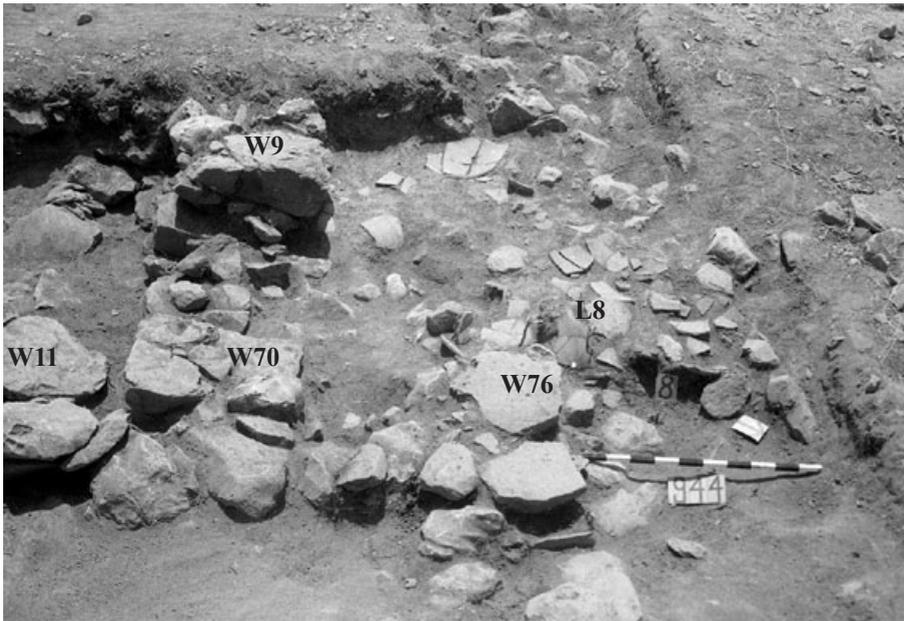


Fig. 18. The western end of Room 20, showing walls attributed to Substratum 2a, looking south; note the entranceway in W9/70 and the pottery-rich fill (L8).



Fig. 19. Room 22 after clearance of the cist graves, looking south; note the fallen monolith in the left mid-ground.

Middle Bronze Age. A Middle Bronze Age II infant jar-burial (T26, Sqs O/9–10; Fig. 21:4) was found in L24. In addition, possible remains of an adult burial came to light in a probe beneath the Stratum 2 floor in Room 10 (L501), where badly disturbed remains of a skeleton were found in association with Middle Bronze Age pithos sherds. Elsewhere on the site, various fills also yielded small amounts of MB II pottery (Fig. 21).

Early Bronze Age. A curvilinear segment of a wall (W60, Sq P/10) and a nearby door socket are tentatively dated to the Early Bronze Age on the basis of pottery recovered from associated fills (L514), including several fragments of Gray Burnished Ware (not illustrated). In addition, a number of limestone bowls (Fig. 42:1, 2), reminiscent of some from a Neolithic assemblage at Yiftah'el III and IV (Braun 1997), suggest the presence of even earlier deposits on the terrace. None of these deposits was extensive enough nor appeared within a sequence that would justify it receiving a specific stratigraphic designation.

Non-Stratified Wall. An especially broad wall segment (W50, Sq Q/11), outside the western corner of Room 19, is not aligned with the architecture in its immediate vicinity. Its elevation, just above the nearby outcrop of bedrock, suggests it should be placed early in the sequence of occupation at the site. However, no artifacts could be associated with it and so its chrono-cultural ascription remains obscure.

STRATUM +1: GRAVES

Except for the limited area below the poorly preserved remains of Stratum 1, almost every spot where the terrace was probed produced evidence of Stratum 2 directly below the surface.³ Alongside the rectangular buildings of this level, we also discovered several anomalous structures that did not seem to fit into the overall plan of the buildings. Closer inspection revealed them to be cist graves:

Tombs 17–19, 511, 523 and 524 (Sqs L–M/7–8). Large, heavy slabs of basalt capped these long, narrow rectangular box-like structures, lined on their sides and bottoms with thin, flat slabs of the same material (Fig. 15). They were obviously intrusive and, in one instance (T523), utilized a Stratum 2 wall (W11) to delimit the cist. Other graves were built within the fill of Stratum 2 structures. Several of those graves shared the same orientation.

Each grave was found to have contained the remains of a single individual in a supine, extended attitude. With a single exception—a large iron ring that cannot be located for study, no grave goods accompanied these interments. There is no indication as to the precise age of these graves, but a date within the late second millennium CE would seem to be consistent with the skeletal morphology.

Baruch Arensburg studied the poorly preserved remains of the two individuals interred in T511 and T523 (internal report in the IAA archives). Remains in T511 consisted of only a complete skull and fragments of long bones of a male approximately 40 years old. Those in T523 included only a small fragment of a jaw and some long bones. Arensburg concluded that the human remains from H. 'Avot "...may fit well within those of a Bedouin sample in Israel..."

PORTABLE FINDS

EARLY BRONZE AGE POTTERY (Fig. 20)

The Early Bronze Age pottery from the site consists of a small quantity of fragmentary sherds that may be assigned to the EB I and EB II–III horizons on the basis of fabrics and morphology. The bulk of diagnostic specimens belongs to the earlier period, while only a few examples can be attributed to the later Early Bronze Age.

The earliest EB I pottery is represented by several diminutive sherds of small bowls, identifiable as late types of Gray Burnished Ware (Type 3; Braun 2012:11, Fig. 3:1, 3),

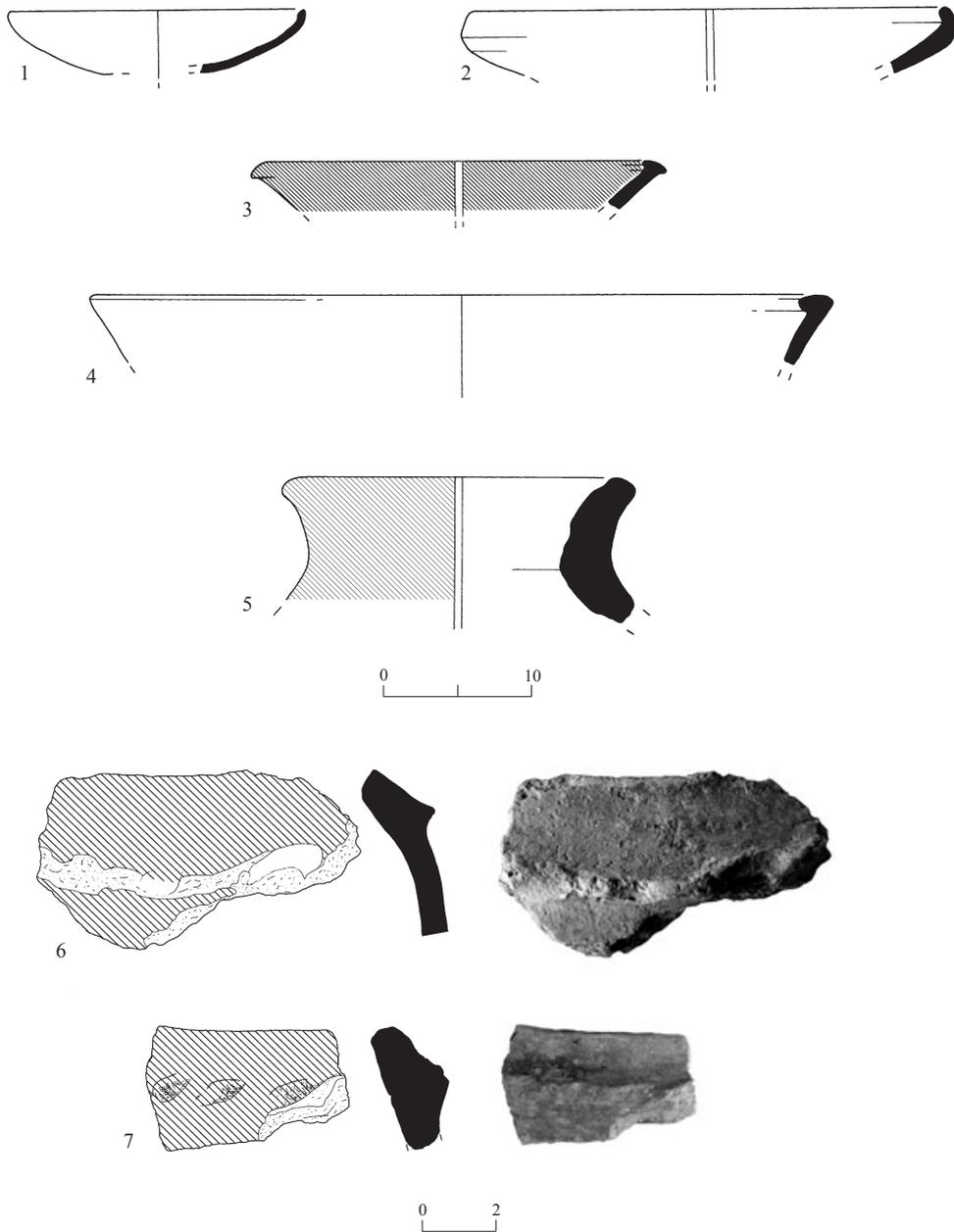


Fig. 20. Early Bronze Age pottery.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	Bowl	23	78/1	Orange-yellow external surface; light brown core; small white, gray and red grits
2	Bowl	208	225/1	Red-brown external surface; red-brown core; white, red and gray grits
3	Bowl	4	9/1	Red paint coat; light brown external surface; gray core; white grits
4	Bowl	102	104/1	Brown-red, dark brown, brown-red core; white and gray grits
5	Jar	1	3/2	Red-brown paint coat, light orange external surface; dark gray and white grits
6	Holemouth	213	268/9	Red paint coat; light brown surface; gray core; white, brown and gray grits
7	Holemouth	522	397/1	Red paint coat; buff external surface; gray core; white, brown and gray grits

encountered in fills at the time of excavation; unfortunately, they could not be located for inclusion in this publication. Fabrics of other EB I ceramic types from this site are reminiscent of EB I pottery from Me'ona (Braun 1996:18–22), a site located a relatively short distance to the west, albeit at a much lower altitude. These fabrics tend to be coarse, relatively low-fired and often light in color outside with darker cores, evidence of less than complete firing. Some examples were red painted (e.g., Fig. 20:3, 5–7), but none was burnished. Some sherds show carination, but it is unlikely they represent examples of the earliest type associated with EB I (e.g., Type 11 in Braun 1997: Figs. 9.2, 3; 2012:6–11), as no evidence of the distinctive protuberances or knobs that identify that type was encountered.

One shallow, rounded bowl (Fig. 20:1) is typical of the entire Early Bronze Age and cannot be assigned to any particular phase within it. Two holemouth vessel fragments, represented by rims (Fig. 20:6, 7) have distinctive, rope-like or pie-crust decorations, hallmarks of early EB I types (cf. Braun 1997:55, 62, Fig. 9:11; 2001). A carinated bowl (Fig. 20:2) is of a type common in late EB I or EB II (e.g., Beck 1985: Fig. 4:8).⁴ One splayed rim of a jar (Fig. 20:5) seems to be similar to EB I types (e.g., Braun 1996: Fig. 9.21), although it is somewhat thicker and coarser than most examples known to the author.

Several bowls with wide rims (e.g., Fig. 20:3, 4) are of “metallic ware” (Greenberg and Porat 1996) and of a morphological type associated with the EB II–III horizon (e.g., Eisenberg, Gopher and Greenberg 2001: Fig. 8.1:16–19). The later Early Bronze pottery does not include types that allow a more specific chrono-cultural designation and, in the absence of Khirbet Kerak Ware, it is impossible to state whether this material should be dated to either EB II or EB III or both periods.

Thus, this small, eclectic assemblage of Early Bronze ceramic types suggests intermittent occupation and/or utilization of the site during

several phases of the Early Bronze Age, the extent of which may be known only through further excavation.

MIDDLE BRONZE AGE POTTERY (Fig. 21)

A small assemblage of ceramics indicates utilization of the site during MB II. Among the pithoi are fragments of two dated by parallels from MB II contexts at Shekhem: one (Fig. 21:1), of a type with a long, wide neck and a folded, profiled rim (Cole 1984: Fig. 41:a); a second (Fig. 21:2), with a flaring, folded, profiled rim and rounded shoulders (Cole 1984: Fig. 33:m). A tiny fragment of another pithos of this period has incised, herringbone decoration (Fig. 21:3), a feature common on MB II pithoi and kraters (e.g., Bonfil 1992: Fig. 1; Golani and Yoyev 1996: Figs. 2:7, 3:6; Ben-Tor, Bonfil and Zuckerman 2003: Figs. 79:2; 80:4; 82:8; 87:3; 88:5; 95:3).

An infant burial (T26) in a smaller storage jar (Fig. 21:4), found just above bedrock, was also apparently of this horizon (cf. Yadin et al. 1960: Pl. CXIII:1–6; Ben-Tor, Bonfil and Zuckerman 2003: Photograph 82:b). Notably, the handles and neck were missing from this vessel and may well have been deliberately removed because of its mortuary-related function.⁵

LATE BRONZE AGE(?) POTTERY (Fig. 22)

A certain style of cooking pot appeared in Middle Bronze Age II and gradually developed and underwent changes throughout the Late Bronze (Ben-Tor, Bonfil and Zuckerman 2003:302–303) and Iron Ages, making it difficult to definitively ascribe some types to one or another of these periods. Two examples appear to be of pottery types best paralleled in the Late Bronze Age, although there is no appreciable quantity of additional types that are likely to be contemporary. Thus, it is not unlikely these examples represent an early phase of Iron I.

One cooking pot (Fig. 22:1) is notable for its coarse, light brown fabric that is very different from that of other cooking-pot types.

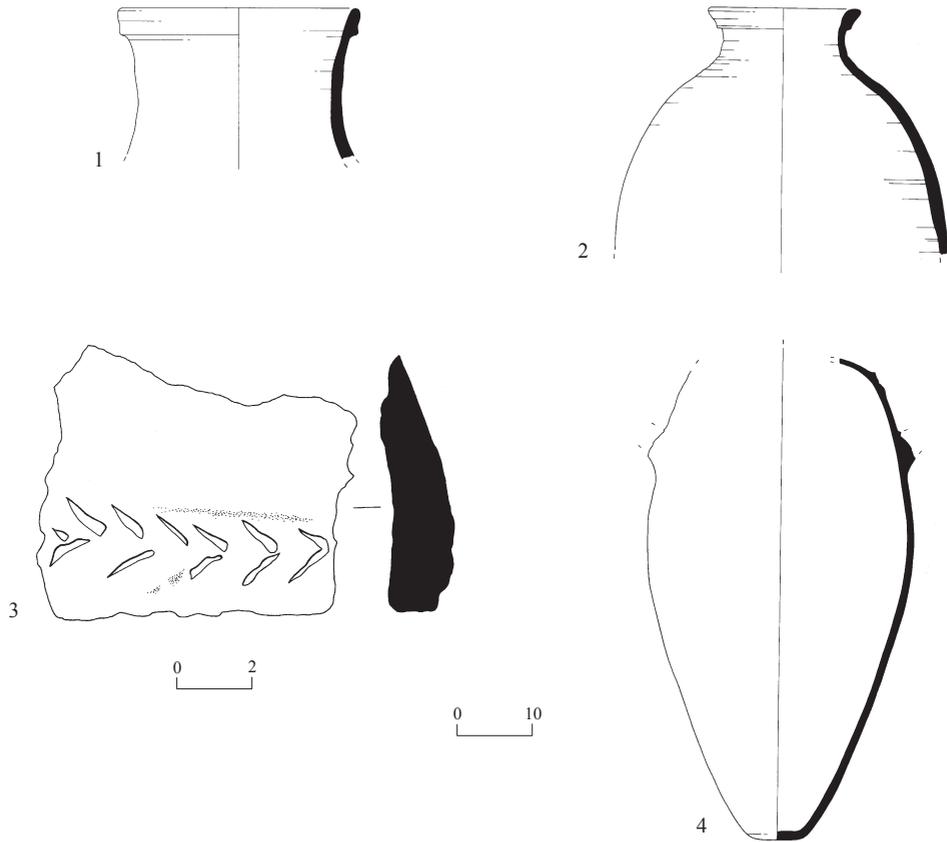


Fig. 21. Middle Bronze Age pottery.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	Pithos	519	386/1	Red-brown external surface; gray core; white and gray grits
2	Pithos fragment	8	25/9	Buff, incised "herringbone" decoration
3	Pithos	102	105	Light red-brown and yellow-gray surface; yellow-gray core; white and gray grits
4	Jar	26	1015/1	Light red-brown and brown-gray surface; light brown core; white and gray grits

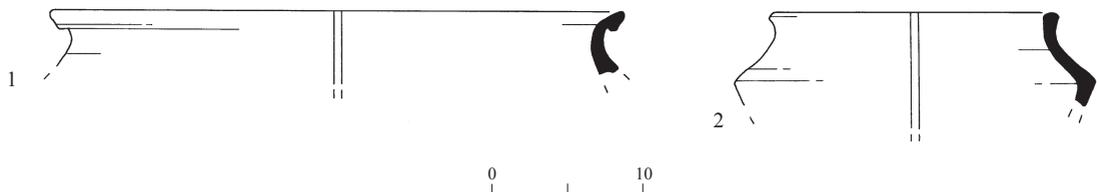


Fig. 22. Late Bronze Age(?) cooking pots.

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	597	381/1	Brown and gray-brown surface; light gray core; white grits
2	516	360/9	Brownish red

Its similarity to Late Bronze and transitional to Iron I types with triangular rims (e.g., Yadin et al. 1960: Pl. CXIX:9–17; 1961: Pl. CCXCII:4; Ilan, Hallote and Cline 2000: Figs. 9.11:9, 11, 13, 15 and especially Fig. 10.3:5; Ben-Tor, Bonfil and Zuckerman 2003: Fig. 127:14–16) and general affinities to earlier, Middle Bronze types (e.g., Loud 1948: Pl. 55:4; Yadin et al. 1960: Pl. CX:15; Kenyon and Holland 1982: Fig. 150) suggest that it may derive from a pre-Iron Age or very early Iron I occupation of the site. Another vessel (Fig. 22:2), having an unusually simple rim profile, also may have originated in a pre-Iron Age occupation. It is paralleled in Late Bronze contexts of Stratum 1a in the lower city at Hazor (Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCXCII:4), in Stratum F9 at Megiddo (Ilan, Hallote and Cline 2000: Fig. 9.11:1, 4) and Stratum XVII at Tyre (Bikai 1978: Fig. XLIIA:21).

Two fragmentary bowls (Fig. 23:1, 2), although included in the Iron Age I material (see below), may also date to this period, as suggested by similar types from the Late Bronze Age levels at Tel Qashish (Ben-Tor, Bonfil and Zuckerman 2003: Fig. 113:19–22).

There are three feasible explanations for the presence of this group of vessels that seemingly predate the Iron Age: (a) They indicate a Late Bronze utilization that is otherwise unrepresented in the archaeological record of the exposed portion of the site, but which may well lie beneath the masses of stones covering the top of the hill; (b) They have been incorrectly identified and their appearance is actually related to the Middle Bronze utilization of the site; (c) They derive from the Iron I deposits (see below) and are archaic types continuing in use into the beginning of the Iron Age.

IRON AGE I POTTERY (Figs. 23–36)

Based on parallels, the bulk of pottery recovered from the excavation dates from Iron Age I. It is noteworthy that, with the exception of numerous pithoi and several jars and goblets, most of the material is fragmentary, suggesting that when the inhabitants of this period left the

site they took most of the portable vessels with them. In addition, these fragments, found in fills, could not be definitively associated with one or another architectural phase.

Bowls and Lamp (Fig. 23:1–4)

Only two types of bowls were encountered. One, with rounded walls and a somewhat bulbous rim, is represented by two variants (Fig. 23:1, 2). This type has a long chronological span, beginning in the Late Bronze Age (see above; e.g., Ilan, Hallote and Cline 2000: Fig. 9.10:20; Finkelstein and Zimhoni 2000: Fig. 10.2:4, 15) and continuing well into the Iron Age (e.g., Loud 1948: Pl. 30:114; Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CLXIV:1; Finkelstein, Zimhoni and Kafri 2000: Figs. 11.1:1; 11.6:2, 4).

A second type of bowl has a flat rim with a thickened profile that tapers at its juncture with a carinated wall (Fig. 23:3). This type also has affinities with a Late Bronze specimen from Megiddo (Finkelstein and Zimhoni 2000: Fig. 10.2:12) and therefore, a long chronological span beginning in the Late Bronze Age. Similar bowls are found in Iron I contexts at Tell Keisan Level 9b (e.g., Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 66:11), while later variants are known in the later Iron Age in Stratum Va at Hazor (Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCXXXI:3) and Stratum IV at Bet She'an (James 1966: Fig. 68:6, 8).

A single lamp fragment (Fig. 23:4), the base and a partially preserved rim, is the only evidence for this type of vessel encountered in the excavation. It is assumed to date to Iron I, although it could also be Iron II in date.

Chalices/Goblets (Fig. 23:5–9)

These vessels derive from Late Bronze Age types (e.g., Yadin et al. 1961: Pls. CCLXXIII:9, 10, 16, 18; CCLXXX:3–5), many of which are painted. However, the H. 'Avot examples are notably undecorated, somewhat coarsely modeled and roughly finished. Similar types are common in Iron I contexts (e.g., Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCIV:4; James 1966: Figs. 2:1; 51:8; Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 73:4; Bonfil and Greenberg 1997: Figs. 11.31:7; 11.35:4–7;

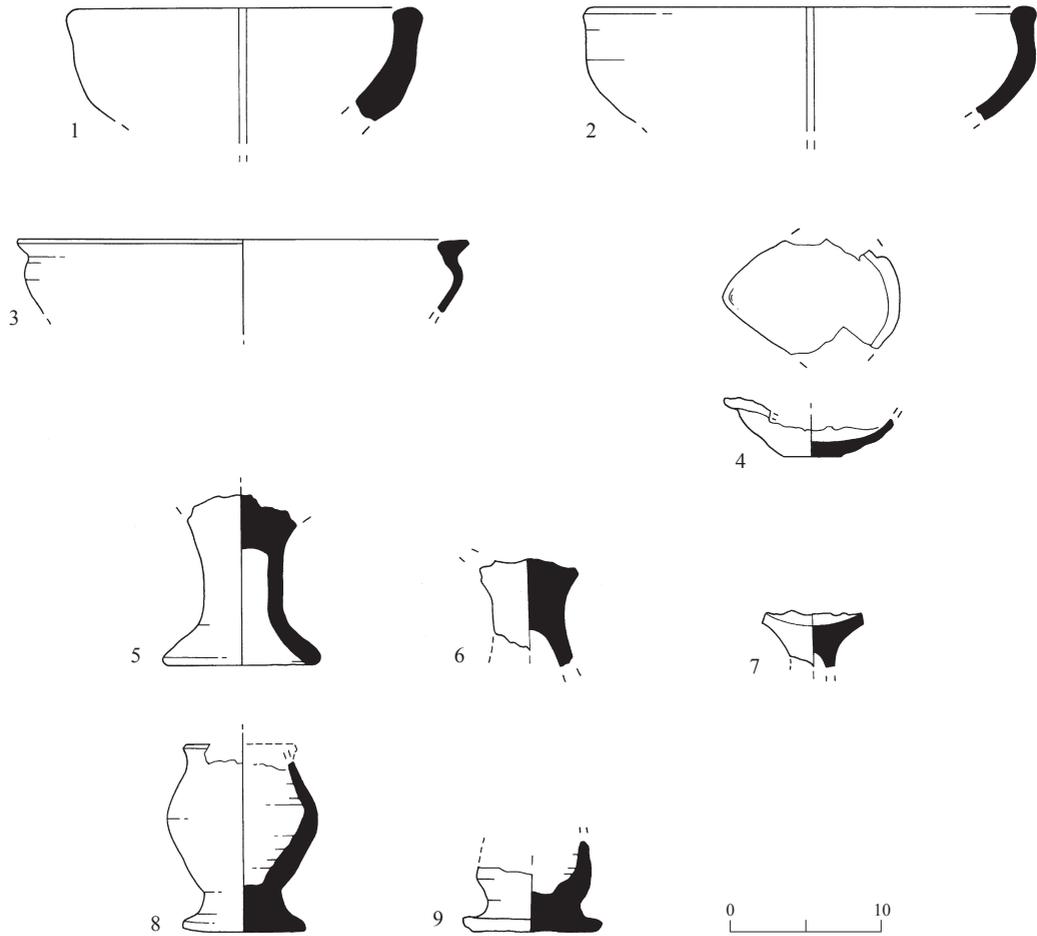


Fig. 23. Iron Age I pottery.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	Bowl	7	22/9	Buff to pink
2	Bowl	13	74/1	Light yellow-orange-gray and yellow-gray surface; gray core; white and gray grits
3	Bowl	522	393/9	Light orange and light-gray surface; gray core; white and gray grits
4	Lamp	25	1001/1	Light gray
5	Goblet base	243	275/1	Light brown and yellow-gray surface; gray core; white and gray grits
6	Goblet base	13	77/1	Light yellow and light orange surface; gray core; white and gray grits
7	Goblet base	23	79	Orange and light brown surface; light brown and buff-gray core; white, red, brown, gray and shiny grits
8	Goblet	213	268/4	Light yellow, light orange, light brown, and gray surface; gray core; white and gray grits
9	Goblet	104	108/1	Light orange and light brown surface; brown-gray core; white and gray grits

Pakkala, Münger and Zangenberg 2004: Fig. 9; Panitz-Cohen and Mazar 2009: Pl. 52:13), while generic parallels from Megiddo for these vessel types date much later in the Iron Age (e.g., Lamon and Shipton 1939: Pl. 33:8, 9).

Cooking Pots (Fig. 24)

Numerous cooking-pot fragments of fabrics typical of this type of vessel were encountered. Most of them bear evidence of fire clouding, confirming their function. Virtually all the variations of rim forms we encountered are represented in the illustrations. Their profiles attest to an Iron I date for the bulk of the examples (for possible LB types, see above).

The most specific parallels I was able to perceive for the different types are appended to the descriptive table for Fig. 24. Mostly, the criterion for these parallels is the profile of the rim, but it should be noted that the reader might not always agree with my choice, especially since I have been somewhat less than strict in comparing the actual angles of rims in relation to bodies of vessels. I have allowed for some considerable idiosyncratic degree of variation in this aspect.

Flasks and Jugs (Fig. 25)

Pilgrim Flask.— Several variations of this type of vessel were recovered, all in a very poor state of preservation. Only one, somewhat diminutive example is worthy of illustration (Fig. 25:1). It is tentatively assigned to the Iron I horizon, although it may have originated in the Late Bronze Age. The suggested reconstruction of this vessel, fashioned from two bowls, is based on analogous objects. The potter apparently joined all its several parts rather poorly; they have all separated leaving only marks of attachment on the fragment recovered. The outside surface of this vessel was badly pitted by the elements and it is impossible to ascertain whether it had been decorated.

Jug.— A fragment of a neck with the stub of a handle is of a jug (Fig. 25:2). It too was badly worn by the elements and nothing more of its

original aspect may be ascertained. Portions of this or other vessels of this general type may be represented in a number of body sherds with concentric circles painted in monochrome and bichrome styles (e.g., Fig.25:3).

Decorated Sherds.— One such fragment (Fig. 25:3) is notable for its fine, burnished, cream-colored slip and light-and-dark circles painted in two different shades of red, highly reminiscent of a jug said to be made in a Cypro-Phoenician style from an Iron I context at Tel Kinrot (Pakkala, Münger and Zangenberg 2004:20–22, Fig. 11:2). This type of decorated ware is also known as “Phoenician Bichrome” (Mazar 1994:52–53).

A handful of diminutive bichrome body sherds (not illustrated) includes several decorated with concentric circles painted in red and black. Of those, some fragments were turned on a wheel and apparently were parts of jugs or flasks.

Storage Jars (Fig. 26)

Four large fragments of storage jars were found in the assemblage. Three are sizable enough to suggest they were found *in situ* (Fig. 26:1–3). Two are variations on a type with a flaring neck, a rounded or slightly tapered rim and sloping shoulders (Fig. 26:1, 2) ending in carination. Figure 26:1, with two handles just below the somewhat rounded juncture of shoulders and body, is paralleled in Stratum XII at Hazor (Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCII:10), Stratum VI at Bet She’an (James 1966: Fig. 19:17) and Levels 9a–b, 9c at Tell Keisan (Briend and Humbert 1980: Pls. 60:1–3; 69:3). Figure 26:2 is rather more sharply carinated at the juncture of shoulder and body. Parallels for it are from Bet She’an V (James 1966: Fig. 19:17) and in handled versions, from Tell Keisan Levels 9a–c (Briend and Humbert 1980: Pls. 59:2, 3, 5; 67:2, 3); Yadin’s excavations of Stratum VIA at Megiddo (Zarzecki-Peleg 1997: Fig. 3:8); Stratum XVII at Yoqne’am (Zarzecki-Peleg 1997: Fig. 2:8); and Stratum XIV at Tyre (Bikai 1978: Pl. XLI:5–9). Only one base of what is

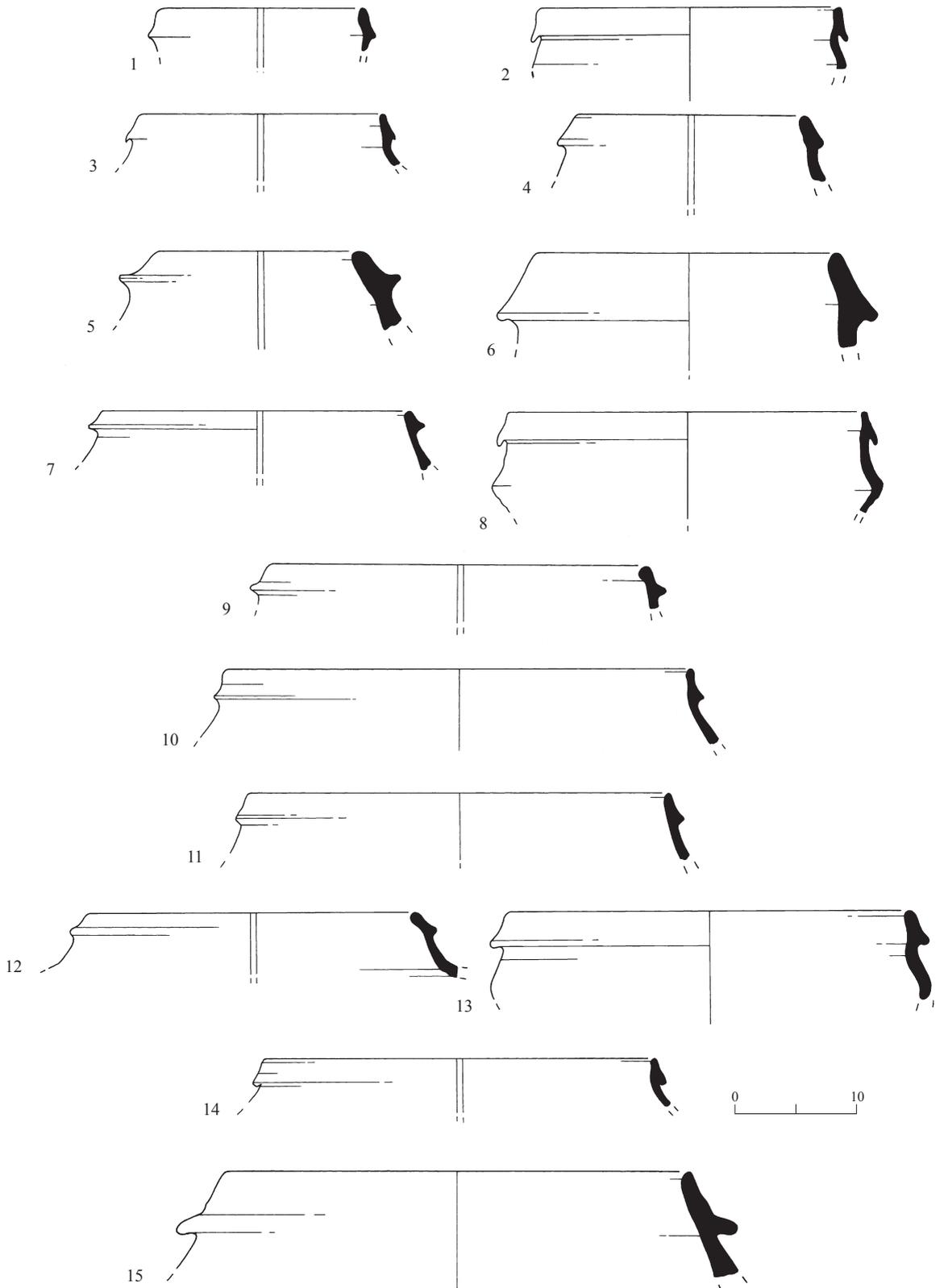


Fig. 24. Iron Age I cooking pots.

◀ Fig. 24

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Description	Parallels
1	3	12/4	Brown-gray and red-brown surface; brown core; white and shiny grits	No close parallels
2	205	221/1	Not available	Ḥazor VIII, intrusive from Iron Age: Bonfil and Greenberg 1997: Fig. II.26:13
3	4	29/1	Light brown surface; light gray core; white, gray and shiny grits	Tell Keisan 9a-b: Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 63:4c Tell Qiri IX–VIII: Ben-Tor and Portugali 1987: Figs. 16:5; 20:4
4	3	17/1	Orange surface; gray core; white and shiny grits	Ḥazor XI: Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCIII:11 Megiddo V–IV and “earlier”: Lamon and Shipton 1939: Fig. 40:16 Dan: Biran 1989: Fig. 419:10
5	3	19/1	Dark red-brown and red-brown surface; brown-gray core; white and shiny grits	Ḥazor X: Garfinkel and Greenberg 1997: Figs. III.20:3; III.23:9, 10
6	2	8/34	Orange-brown surface; gray core; white, brown and shiny grits	Ḥazor X: Garfinkel and Greenberg 1997: Fig. III.21:14 Tell Keisan 10: Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 81:8b
7	204	213	Red-brown surface; gray core; white, gray and shiny grits	Ḥazor XII, X–IX: Yadin et al. 1961: Pls. CLXV:3; CCX:15
8	517	382/2	Yellow-brown and red-brown surface; gray core, gray and shiny grits	Dan V: Biran 1989: Fig. 4.6:2 Yoqne’am XVII: Zarzeki-Peleg 1997: Fig. 2:6 Sasa Pit: Golani and Yogev 1996: Fig 4:1, but with lesser overhang
9	209	234/1	Red-brown surface; gray core; white grits	Megiddo K-2 (Va–IVb): Finkelstein, Zimhoni and Kafri 2000: Fig. 11.22:2 Ḥazor VIII: Bonfil and Greenberg 1997: Fig. II.44:18
10	8	50/1	Brown and red-brown surface; light gray core; white and shiny grits	Ḥazor XII: Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CLXVI:4, 6
11	10	31/9	Black and dark brown-black surface; dark gray core; white, gray and shiny grits	Ḥazor XII: Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CLXV:7
12	13	58/1	Black and red-brown surface; black core; white and shiny grits	Ḥazor XII: Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CLXV:21 Dan V: Biran 1989: Fig. 4.6:7, 8 Megiddo V–IV: Loud 1948: Pl. 40:13
13	22	74/1	Brown and red-brown surface; dark gray core; white and shiny grits	Ḥazor XII: Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CLXVI:8 Tell Keisan 9c: Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 77:3b Bet She’an VI: James 1966: Fig. 6
14	3	12/1	Red-brown surface; red-brown core; white, gray and shiny grits	Ḥazor XII: Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CLXVI:22 Tell Keisan 9a–b: Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 63:4a
15	516	360/2	Brown surface; gray core; white, brown and shiny grits	Ḥazor XII–X (= 6): Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CLXIV:7; Bonfil and Greenberg 1997: Figs. II.33:8 Dan VI: Biran 1989: Fig. 4.16:6 Tell Keisan 9a–b: Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 63:7

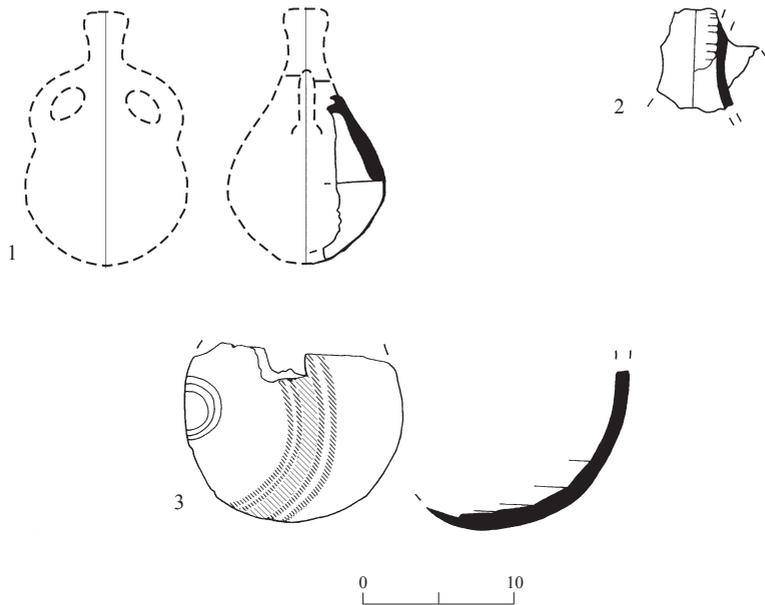


Fig. 25. Iron Age I pottery.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	Pilgrim's flask	516	359/1	Light brown and light brown-gray surface; light brown core; white and gray grits
2	Jug	25	1001/6	Buff surface; buff and gray core; white, gray and brown grits
3	Jug/flask	23	79/1	Light brown and buff surface, red-brown painted concentric circles on ext.; light brown and buff core; white, brown, gray and red grits

likely to be a jar of this type was sufficiently preserved to be drawn (Fig. 26:7).

A third vessel (Fig. 26:3) has a somewhat unusually long neck, rounded shoulders and a slightly thickened rim for which I have been unable to find good parallels. Two painted jars from Stratum VI at Bet She'an (James 1966: Fig. 51:13, 15) have necks of similar morphology, but their rims are different and their shoulders are less sloping.

The fourth jar (Fig. 26:4), of which only the rim and shoulder remain, seems to be more akin to pithoi found at the site (see below) and may be a scaled-down variant of the massive jars.

Of note are two large rims with guttered profiles (Fig. 26:5, 6), belonging to large vessels about which nothing more of their morphologies is known. On the basis of one parallel (a small

rim and neck fragment; Aharoni 1956: Fig. 5:3), they appear to date to Iron I.

Two bases of storage jars (Fig. 26:7, 8), possibly associated with the types depicted in Fig. 26, are also tentatively assigned to this period. In addition, two small illustrated handles (Fig. 36:1, 2) indicate the existence of additional medium-size and small vessels in the Iron I assemblage, otherwise not well-represented.

Pithoi (Figs. 27–35)

These out-sized vessels are the type best represented in the assemblage. Obviously they were not easily transported and they were abandoned along with the buildings. Accordingly, several complete specimens were recovered, as well as fragments of

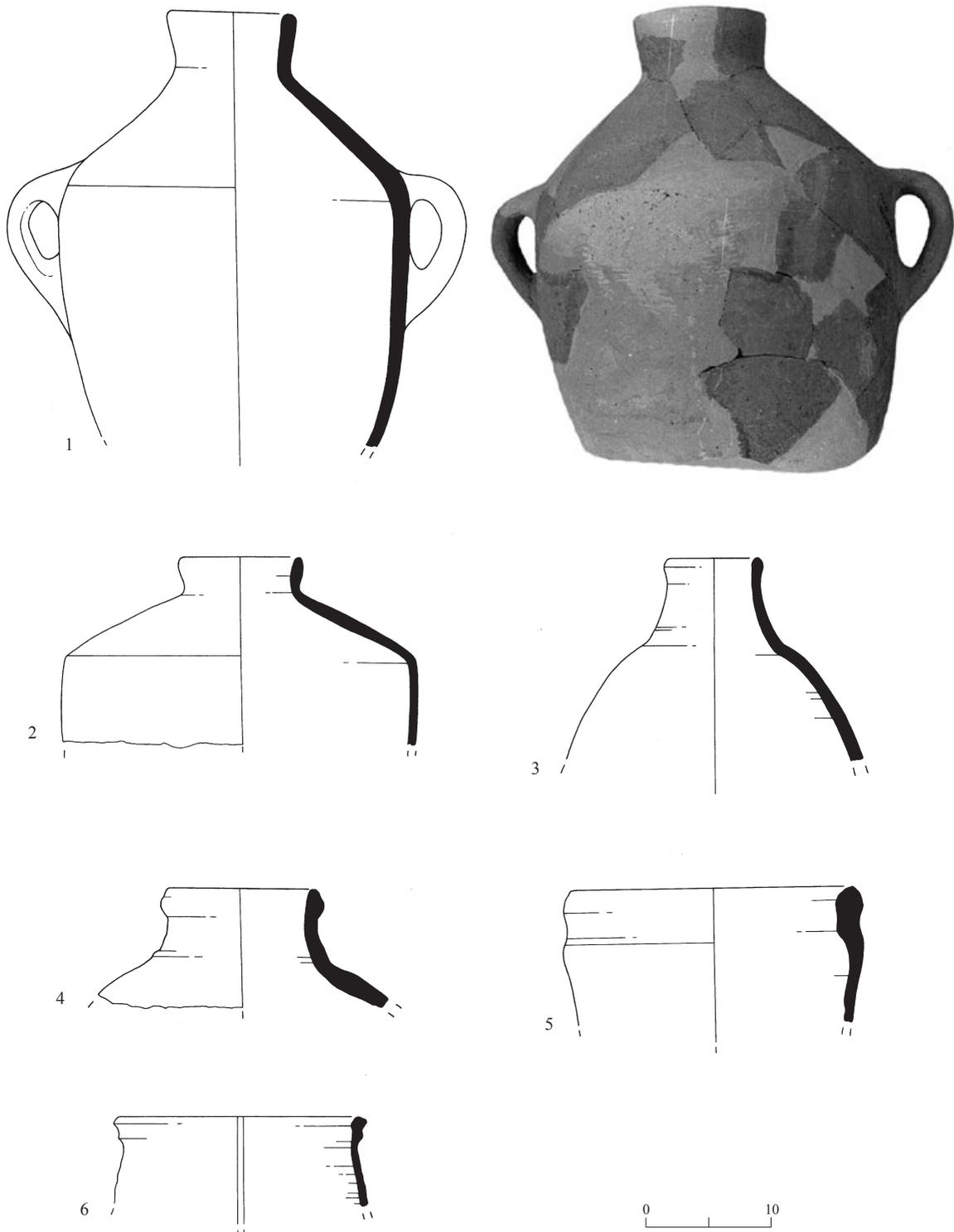


Fig. 26. Iron Age I storage jars.

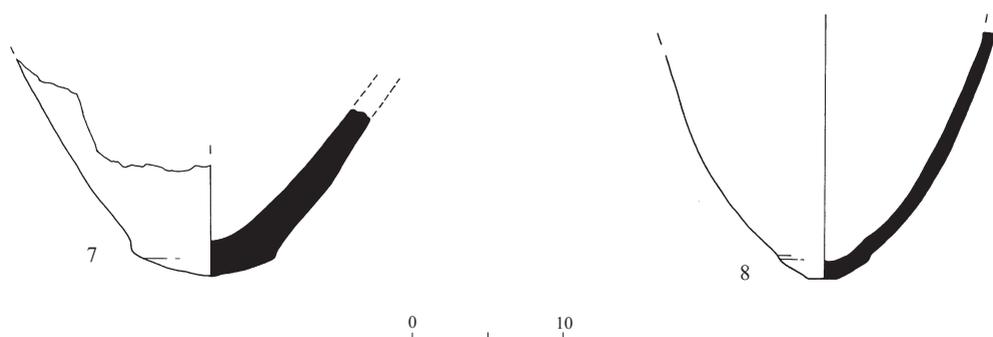


Fig. 26. (cont.)

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	213	274/1	Light yellow-gray and buff surface; yellow-gray core; white and gray grits
2	213	266/1	Orange-brown and yellow-gray surface; gray core; white and dark red grits
3	212	244/1	Red-brown surface; ochre-gray core; white, gray and red grits
4	28	1017/9	Not available
5	213	268	Light yellow surface; yellow-gray core; white and gray grits
6	3	18	Light brown and orange to light-red surface; light-brown and buff core; white, gray, dark brown and shiny grits
7	213	266/15	Orange and gray surface; gray core; gray, white and red grits
8	2	5/1	Buff surface; light brown core; white grits

numerous others of varying morphologies. They are notably well-made, of hard-fired fabrics with walls of even thicknesses. Several bear incised or punctuate decorations; the last probably made by impressing hollow reeds prior to firing. Their colors vary from shades of buff and pale green to earthen reds. Many have bands of shallow, oblique impressions, obviously made by braided rope tied around their exteriors, probably during leather-hard stages of drying.

The Ḥ. 'Avot assemblage of pithoi shows the same bifurcation in major morphological styles that has come to be recognized at Iron I sites of Upper Galilee (Finkelstein 1988): "Galilean" (Figs. 27–32) and "Wavy-Band" (Figs. 33–35). Many of the Ḥ. 'Avot pithoi seem to belong to the "Galilean" Type A category (Figs. 27–30). Two of them (Figs. 28, 29) are notable for the incised decorations on their shoulders (discussed below, under *Decorative Elements*).

"Galilean" Type B may also be represented (Fig. 31, and particularly Fig. 31:1). The majority of the pithos-rim fragments are too small to be diagnostic, but they seem to be of the "Galilean" group (Fig. 32).

Of the pithoi belonging to the "Wavy-Band" group, several are with certainty Type A (Fig. 33). If the Type B "Wavy-Band" pithos was at Ḥ. 'Avot, its presence cannot be detected, as no definitive remains of that type were found there. Nonetheless, it might be preserved in one partial vessel illustrated in Fig. 34, which lacks the lower part of its body and a base, and possibly in some "Wavy-Band" pithos rim sherds (Fig. 35). However, since none of those fragments is definitively diagnostic, they cannot be used to identify the type.

The terminology and the typology of the northern Iron I pithoi, with examples from Ḥ. 'Avot and elsewhere, are presented in

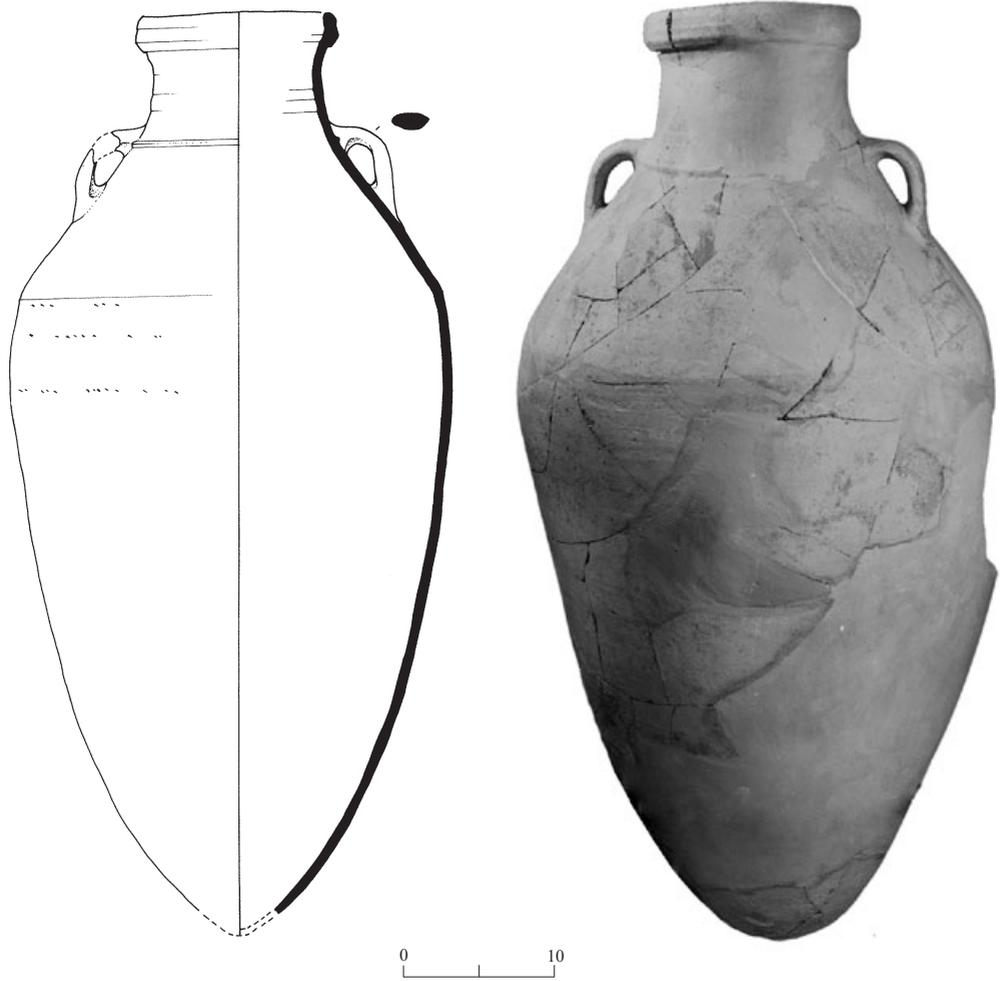


Fig. 27. "Galilean" pithos, Type A (L213, Reg. No. 268/2); buff, greenish ware.

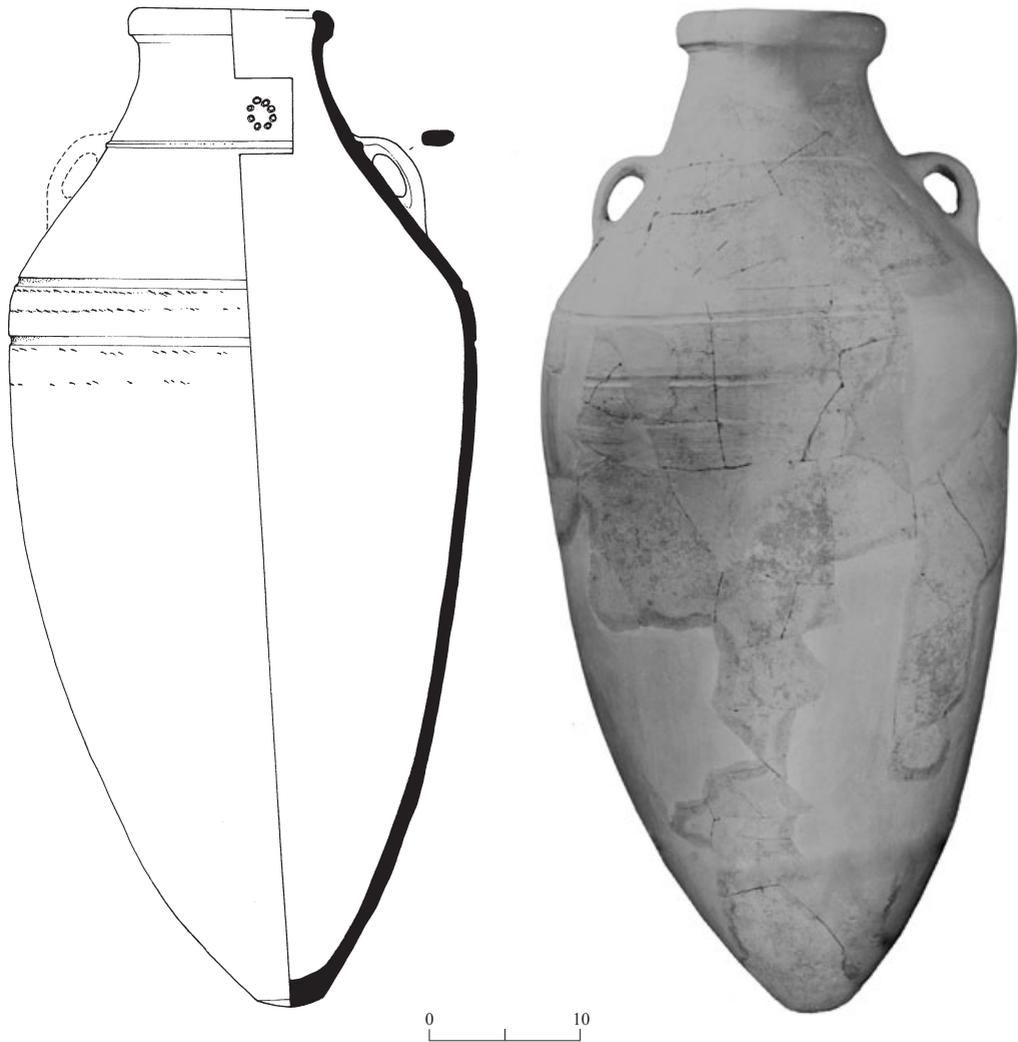


Fig. 28. "Galilean" pithos, Type A (L213, Reg. No. 259/2); buff ware, potter's mark on shoulder.

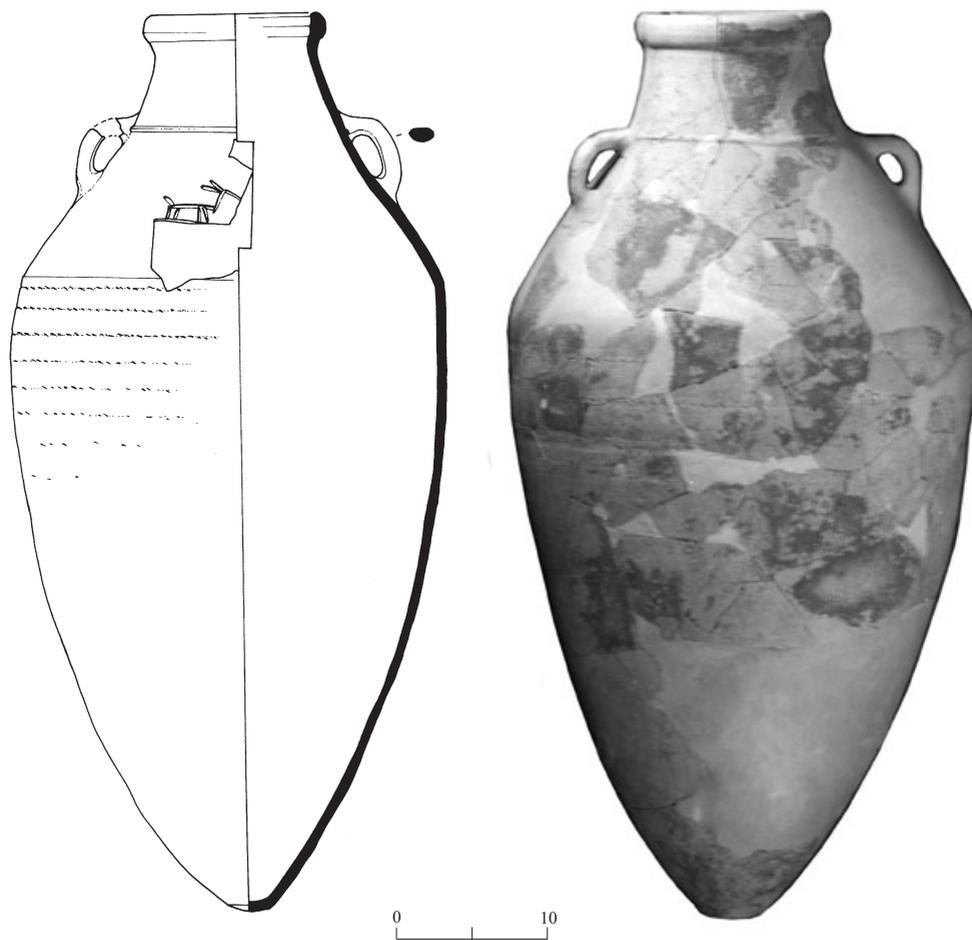


Fig. 29. "Galilean" pithos, Type A; buff ware, incised quadruped on shoulder.

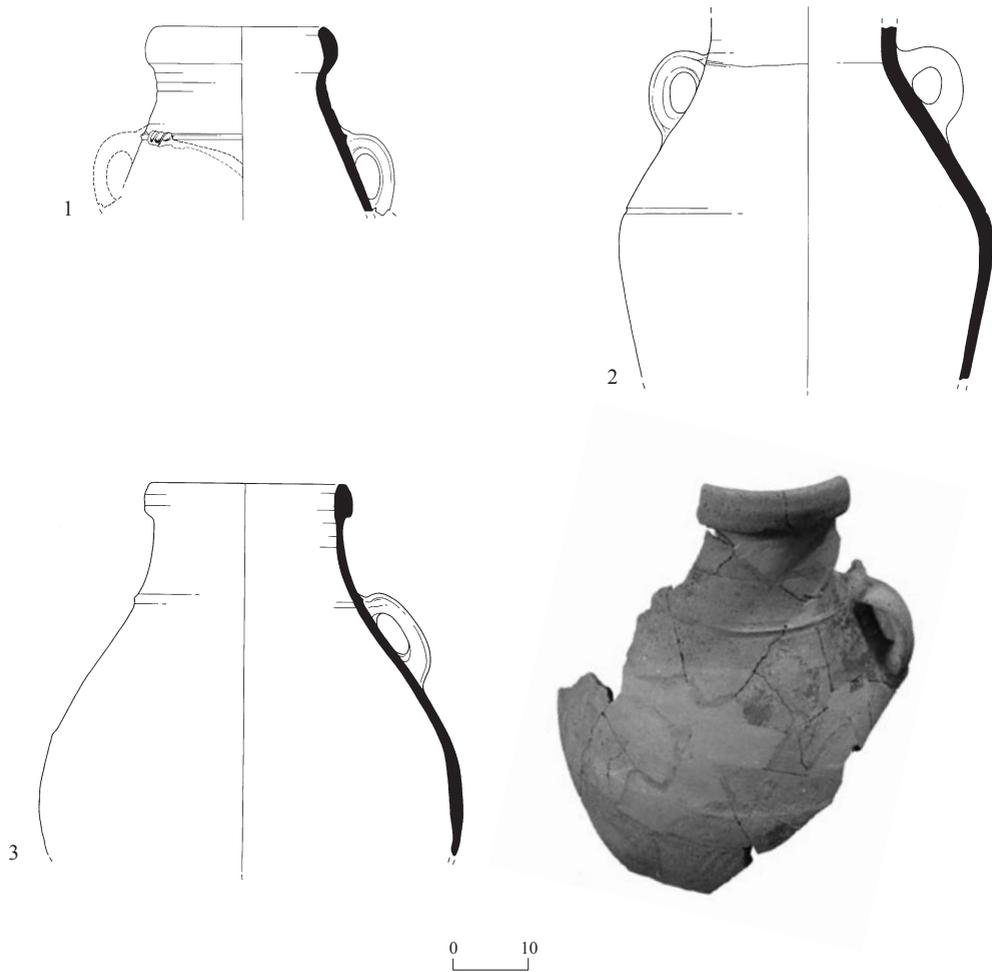


Fig. 30. "Galilean" pithoi, Type A.

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	213	278/1	Light yellow, yellow and gray-yellow surface; buff core; white, gray and brown grits
2	508	I378/1	Light yellow-buff
3	13	56/1	Light yellow and yellow-gray surface; gray-yellow core; white and gray grits

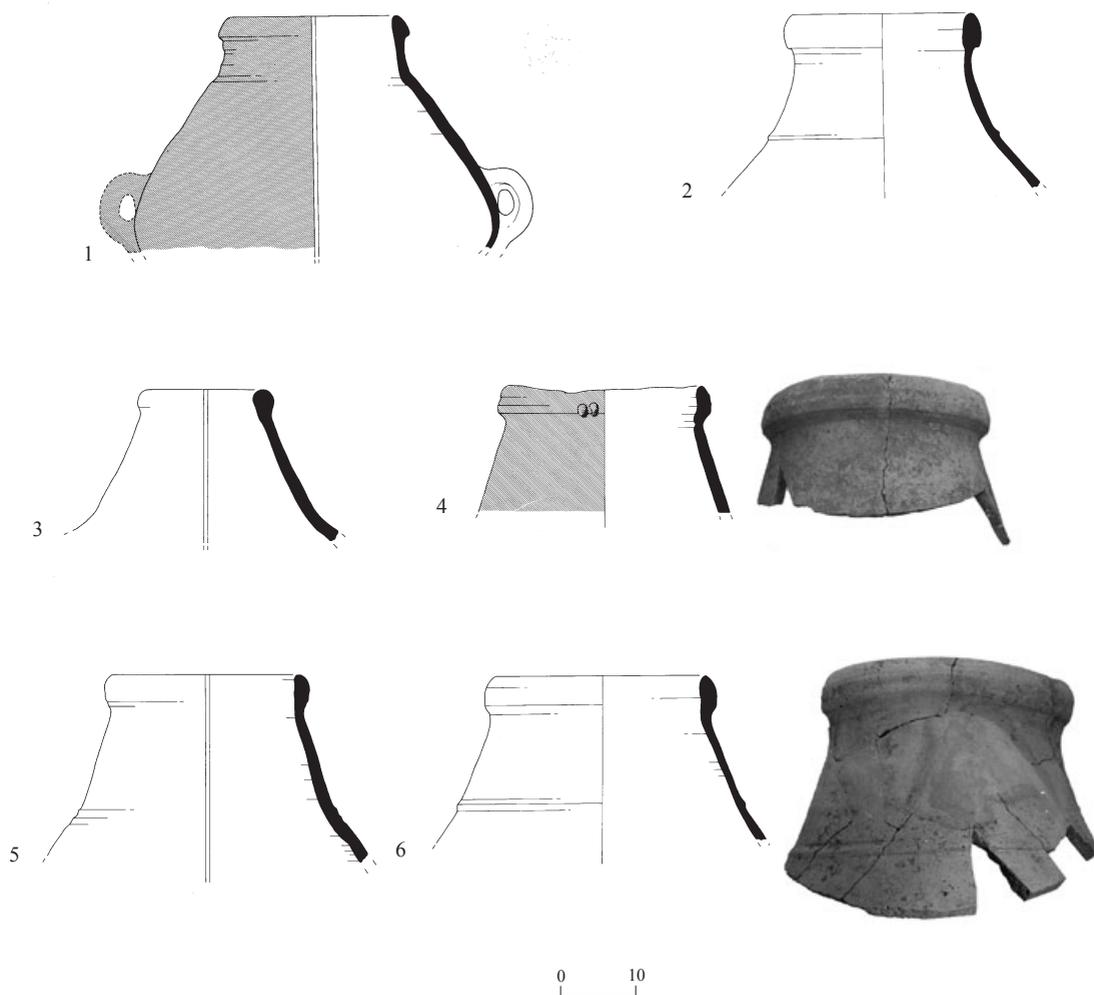


Fig. 31. "Galilean" pithoi, Type B(?).

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	22	83/1	Not available
2	13	57/1	Yellow and yellow-gray surface; yellow-gray core; white, gray and brown grits
3	212	251/1	Not available
4	213	269	Red slip, yellow and yellow-gray surface; gray-yellow core; white and gray grits
5	25	1001/2	Yellow-orange surface; light yellow-light gray core; white and gray grits
6	213	273/1	Light yellow, light yellow-gray, and dark buff surface; yellow-gray core; white and gray grits



Fig. 32. "Galilean" pithoi, rim fragments.

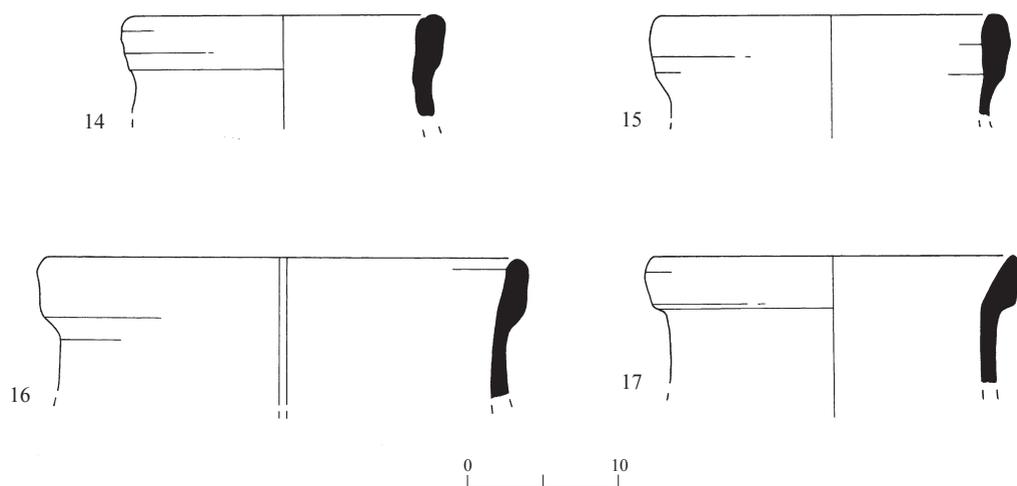


Fig. 32. (cont.)

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	25	100	Not available
2	3	12/3	Red-brown and yellow-gray surface; gray core; white and gray grits
3	25	1001/3	Not available
4	3	18/1	Red-brown and orange-yellow surface; gray core; white and gray grits
5	5	5	Buff, white grits
6	3	12/5	Light brown surface; gray core; white, gray and red grits
7	22	78	Light-yellow surface; light brown and gray core; white, gray and brown-red grits
8	5	17/5	Orange and light orange surface; light brown core; white, gray and brown grits
9	212	242/2	Not available
10	204	213/1	Light orange surface; gray core; white, gray and dark red grits
11	25	1001/3	Light yellow and light pink surface; yellow gray core; white, gray and red grits
12	213	272/1	Light yellow and yellow-gray surface; yellow core; white and gray grits
13	22	76/1	Light yellow surface; light brown core; white, gray and red grits
14	22	72/1	Light ochre and light orange surface; light gray core; white, gray and red-brown grits
15	23	78/3	Light pink and light yellow surface; light yellow core; white and gray grits
16	16	1003/2	Light yellow and light yellow-gray surface; light yellow-gray core; white and gray grits
17	505	315/9	Not available

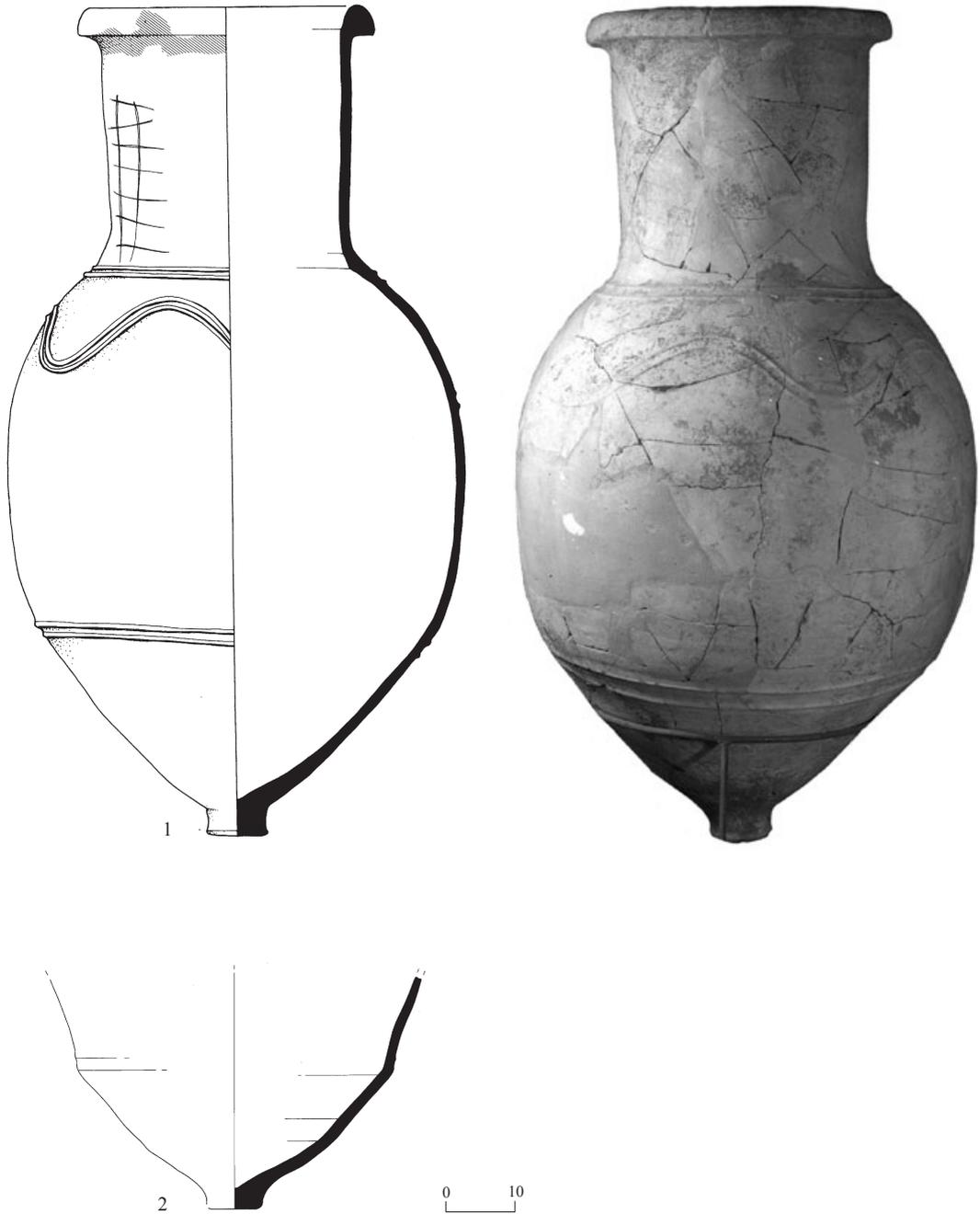


Fig. 33. "Wavy-Band" pithoi, Type A.

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	213	270/2	Buff, traces of red wash near rim
2	13	56/2	Buff, white grits

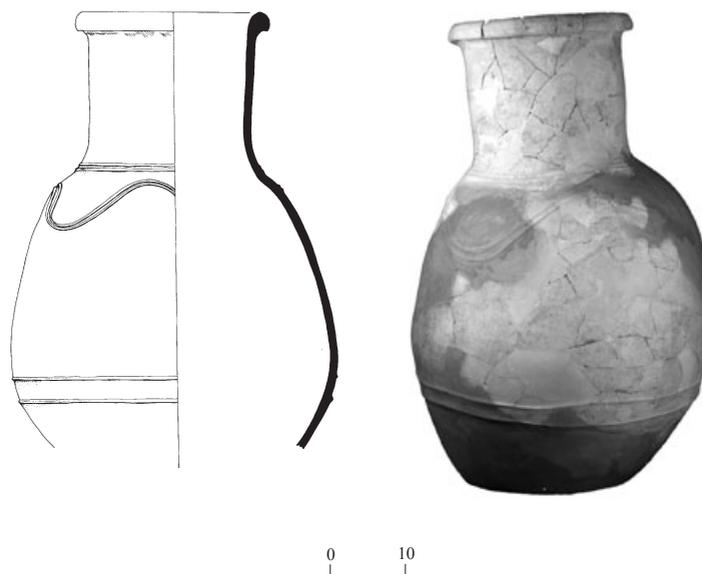


Fig. 34. “Wavy-Band” pithos, probably Type A (L213, Reg. No. 274/1); buff, traces of red wash near rim.

detail below, under the discussion of Iron Age (Table 3 and Fig. 44).

Potter’s Marks,⁶ Potmarks, and Special Decorative Elements (Fig. 36)

There is relatively little evidence of special decoration in the Iron I ceramic assemblage of this site. When present, it was almost invariably accomplished by impressing or incising clay prior to firing.

There are several instances of small, oval (finger-made?) impressions. One example is on an applied band of clay below the rim of a long-necked pithos (Fig. 30:1), creating a unique rope-like effect on the shoulder of the vessel; another is on the rim of a pithos (Fig. 31:4), while yet another is on a jar handle (Fig. 36:1). Similar marks are found on “collared-rim” pithoi rims, one from Tel Dan, Stratum V (Biran 1989: Fig. 4.1:3) and another from Har Adir (unpublished drawing of sherd No. 626/1049/2⁷). Analogous treatment of handles is known from other Iron I sites (e.g., Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCIII:22; Wolff, forthcoming: Fig. 3.13:3).

Other potters’ marks are small and circular and were probably made by impressing a hollow reed into leather-hard fabrics prior to firing. Two examples are of three horizontally arranged, evenly-spaced impressions on rims of pithoi (Fig. 32:12, 13), while another is of eight such impressions in a nearly circular array on the upper body of a pithos (Figs. 28; 36:3). A single such mark is found on a long-necked pithos from Stratum II at Sasa (Golani and Yogev 1996: Fig. 5:4) and in other configurations at additional sites (e.g., Aharoni 1956: Fig. 5:13; Finkelstein 1986: Fig. 15:28; 1988:278–280, Fig. 11: top left; Zertal 1994: Fig. 1:L; Golani and Yogev 1996: Fig. 5:4; Wolff, forthcoming: Fig. 3.9:9).

Several ceramic vessels bear more stylized, possibly unique potter’s marks. One pithos body fragment bears a partially preserved, elaborate graffito (Fig. 36:4) incised prior to firing. Although, unfortunately, too-little preserved to indicate what it might have been meant to convey to the beholder, it is a notably large mark executed with a rather broad stylus in a bold manner. Another representation is a

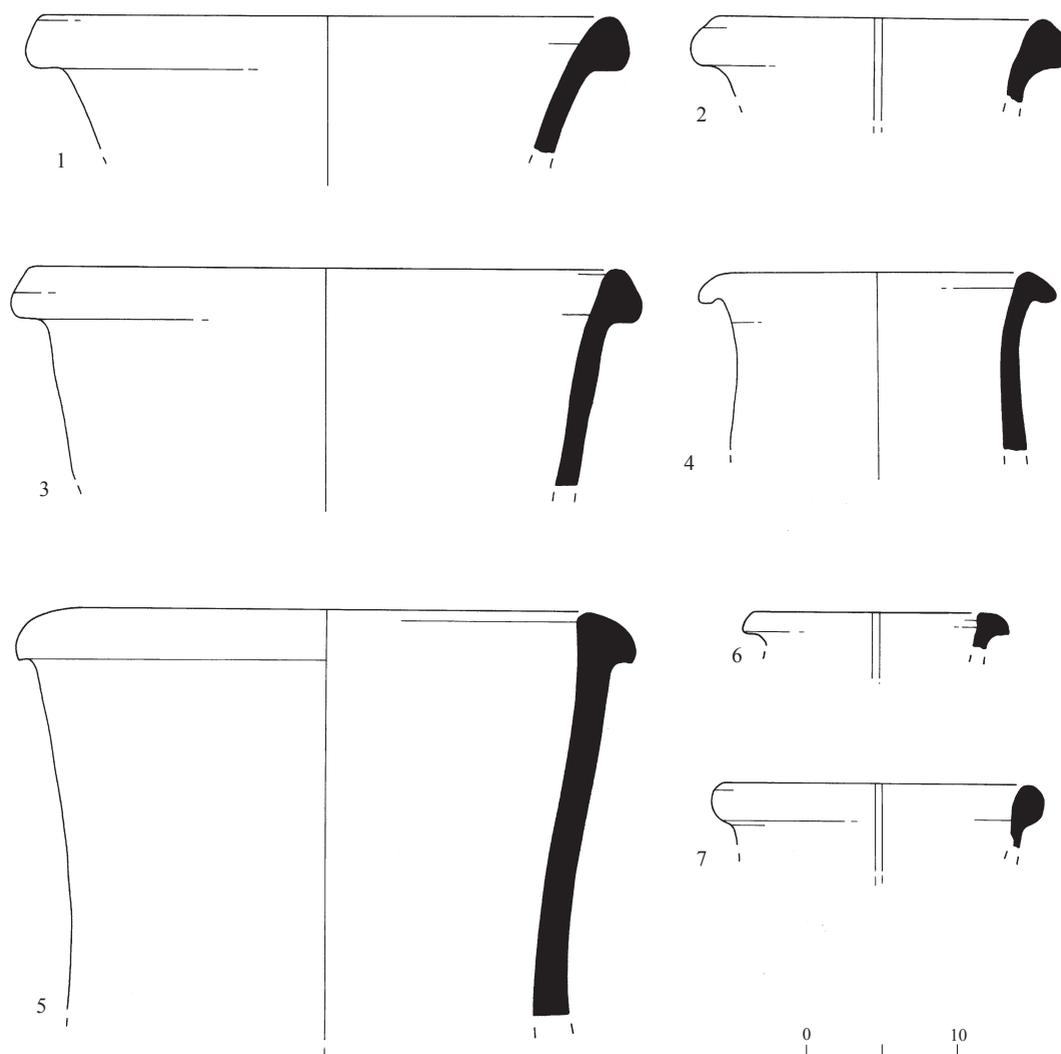


Fig. 35. "Wavy-Band" pithoi, rim and neck fragments.

No.	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	574	399/1	Yellow-gray surface; gray core; white, gray and orange grits
2	23	78/2	Light yellow, red and brown surface; gray core; white, gray and brown grits
3	23	78/4	Gray-brown surface; gray core; white and gray grits
4	8	25/1	Light yellow surface; gray core; white grits
5	214	242/2	Light yellow, red-brown and red-orange surface; light brown-gray core; white, gray and dark red grits
6	3	17/2	Light gray-brown and light brown surface; gray core; white, gray and black grits
7	4	29/2	Light orange-brown and orange-brown surface; gray core; gray, red and shiny grits

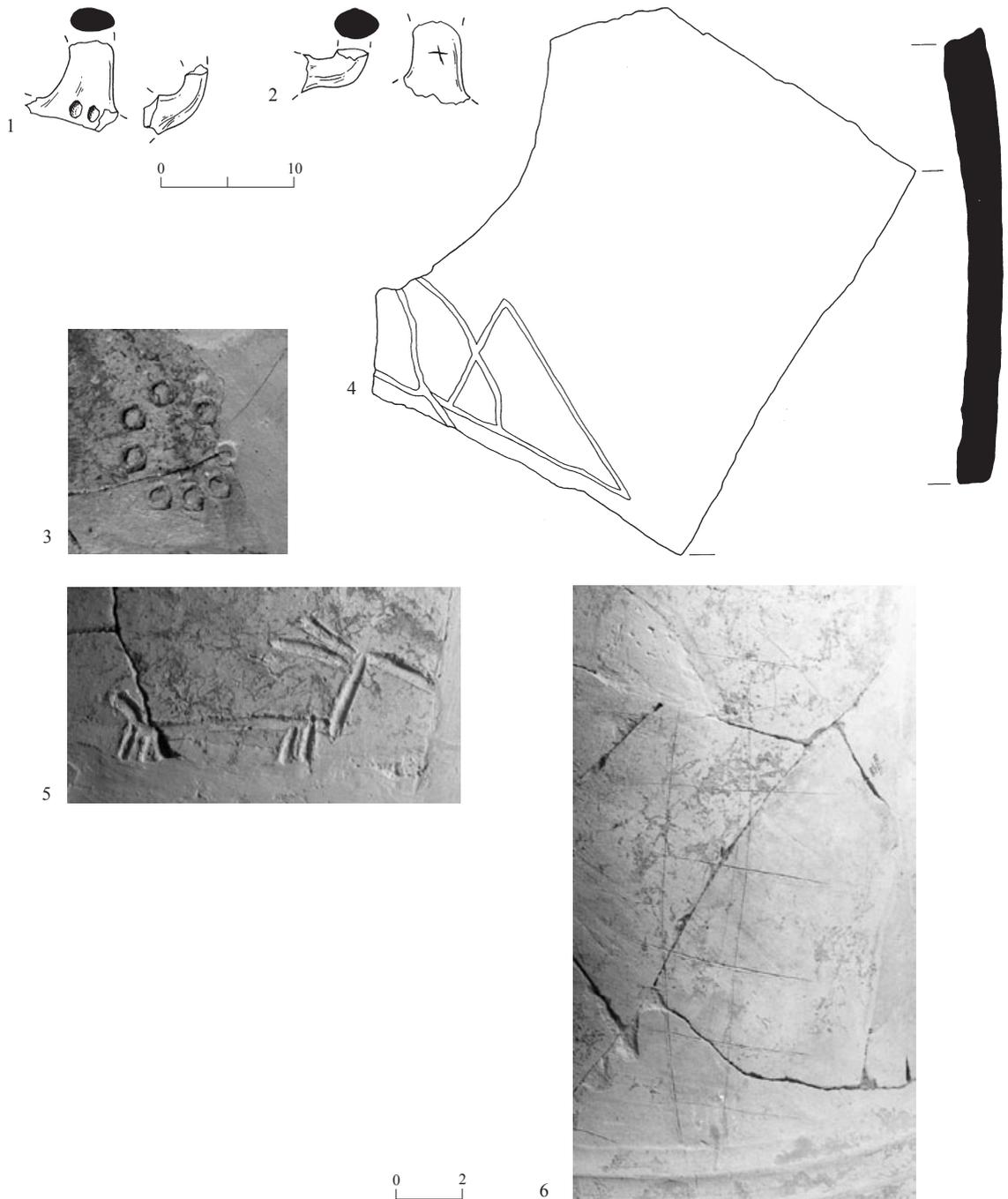


Fig. 36. Iron Age I potter's marks, pot marks and decorative elements.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	Jar handle	209	238/1	Light yellow surface; light yellow-gray core; white and gray grits; finger impressions at base of handle
2	Jar handle	507	329/1	Light yellow surface; orange-brown core; white grits; small incised cross
3	Pithos	213	259/2	Circlet of cane impressions on neck (Fig. 28)
4	Pithos body sherd	204	212	Buff surface; buff core; white and gray grits; incised marks
5	Pithos	213	259/1	Incised quadruped on shoulder (Fig. 29)
6	Pithos	213	276/2	Ladder-like design incised on neck after firing (Fig. 33:1)

stick figure of a horned quadruped, perhaps an ibex, incised into the shoulder of a pithos (Figs. 29; 36:5). This is the sole zoomorphic depiction found at the site. Horned animals are a well-known motif in the art of the ancient Near East, but one not often encountered in Iron I contexts on what appears to be utilitarian pottery. A ceramic object, possibly a pot stand from Tel Kinrot (Pakkala, Münger and Zangenberg 2004: Fig. 12) bears a comparable representation, similarly incised. The mark on the Tel Kinrot object suggests cultic associations, but the context of the pithos from Ḥ. ‘Avot, a semi-subterranean storage room containing several other pithoi, has neither obvious nor even likely cultic associations.

Two potmarks were encountered in the assemblage. One, a ladder-like arrangement with the rung-like lines greatly overlapping the uprights, particularly on one side, was incised by a thin stylus onto the neck of a Wavy-Band pithos (Figs. 33:1; 36:6). The other is a cross incised into the external surface of a small handle (Fig. 36:2). It is a familiar type of mark in Iron I and later contexts (e.g., Yadin et al. 1961: Pls. CLXXX:24; CCXXXI:21; Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 92; Wolff, forthcoming: Fig. 3:13, 5, 6, 8).

Although the ultimate significance of all these marks on ceramic vessels remains obscure, most or perhaps all had meaning or meanings to contemporary peoples; even those that appear to be decorative elements. Accordingly, we may speculate as to what they were intended to convey. Some likely possibilities, which are not mutually exclusive, are identification, ownership, origin and function.

IRON AGE II POTTERY (Fig. 37)

Several cooking pots appear to date to Iron II. Two vessel fragments (Fig. 37:1, 2) represent a major break with the tradition of Iron I cooking pots represented at the site. Notably, they were rather coarsely made and have large handles, and one of them (Fig. 37:1) has a bulbous rim. Somewhat similar cooking pots are found in

Strata VI and Va at Ḥazor (Yadin et al. 1961: Pls. CCXIX:15, 16; CCXXVII:1).

Other cooking pots, though clearly late Iron Age exponents, maintain something more of the earlier traditions. A narrow-necked pot with a profiled rim (Fig. 37:3) is reminiscent of many vessels of this class in late Iron Age contexts such as Ḥazor Vb and Va (e.g., Yadin et al. 1961: Pls. CCXXIV:2–5; CCXXVII:15, 17, 20). A profiled rim (Fig. 37:4) is paralleled in Level K-2 at Megiddo (Finklestein, Zimhoni and Kafri 2000: Fig. 11.20:9), as is another with a thickened and tapered, slightly splayed rim (Fig. 37:5), which is equated with Strata VA–IVB of the Oriental Institute’s excavations (Finklestein, Zimhoni and Kafri 2000:244). However, the rim of Fig. 37:5 is also paralleled in Level 9a-b at Tell Keisan (Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 64:29) and could, according to that context, date just as well to Iron I. The final evidence for Late Iron Age pottery is found in several rilled rim fragments, one of which is illustrated (Fig. 37:6), possibly of kraters, reminiscent of late Iron Age types from Ḥazor V and IV (Yadin et al. 1961: Pls. CCII:7; CCLV:4).

PERSIAN-PERIOD POTTERY (Figs. 38, 39)

A small assemblage of significantly sized fragments of pottery dating to the Persian period allows me to suggest a date for the last use of the Stratum 1 building. It includes several pieces of mortaria (Fig. 38:1), heavy bowls typical of the Persian period easily identified by their profiles and distinctive ring bases. Parallels are from Tell Keisan (Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 31:5a-b) and Ḥazor II (Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCLVII:7). Stern (1995:53) dates similar vessels to the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.

A rim fragment of a Greek *lekythos* (Fig. 38:2) is the sole definitive evidence of imported ware from this period at the site. Several fragments of non-restorable small jars or jugs of well-levigated fabric with broad bands of red paint seem to fall into the class of “East Greek”

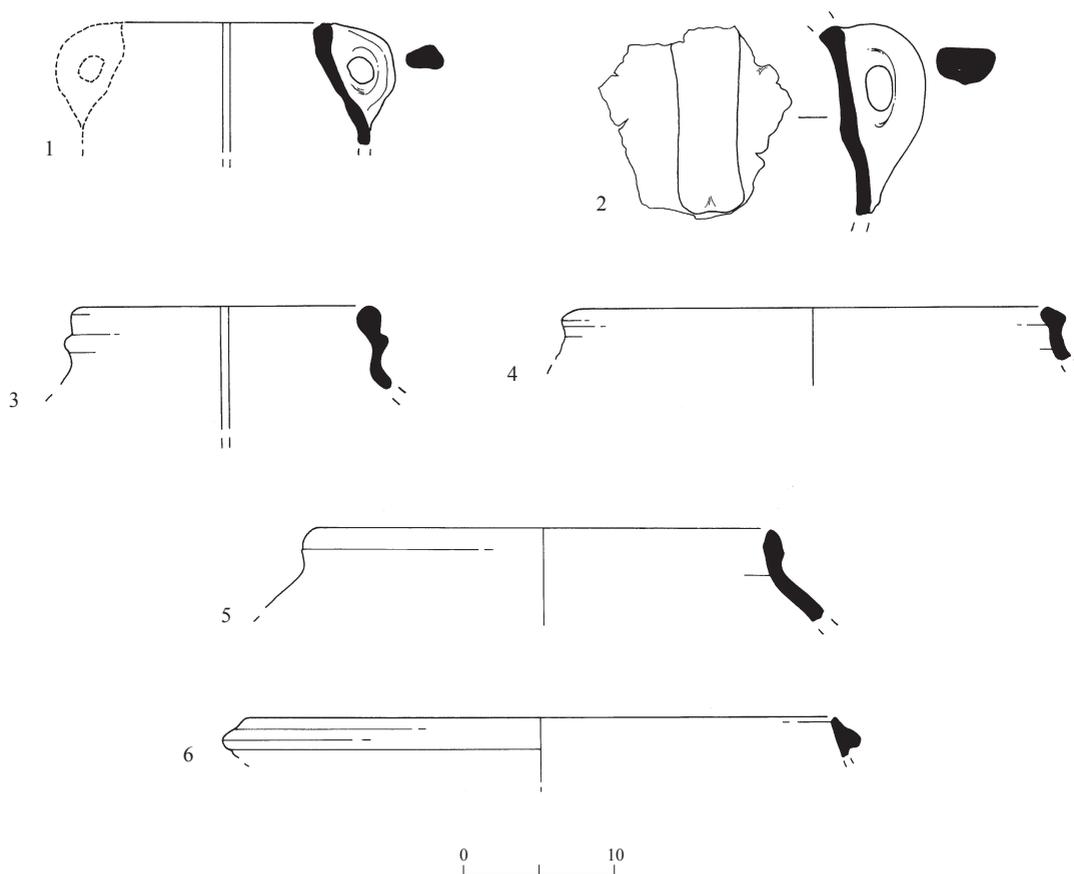


Fig. 37. Iron Age II pottery.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	Cooking pot	504	I318	Red-brown surface; gray core; white and shiny grits
2	Cooking pot	508	354/1	Light brown surface; gray core; white and gray grits
3	Cooking pot	12	60/9	Brown and gray surface; gray core; white, gray and shiny grits
4	Cooking pot	506	723/2	Red-brown surface; gray core; white, gray and shiny grits
5	Cooking pot	25	1001/5	Light orange surface; gray core; white and gray grits
6	Krater or holemouth	508	353/1	Light brown and light red-brown surface; light gray core; white, gray and shiny grits

pottery (Fig. 38:3). One possible parallel is found at Dor in a Persian-period context (e.g., Mook and Coulson 1995: Fig. 3.10).

Several rims of a type of jar known colloquially as “torpedo jars” were recovered. One, of well-levigated but carelessly fashioned ware, was too poorly preserved to be illustrated. Another torpedo jar (Fig. 38:4) lacks a rim,

but has the typical shape associated with such vessels. It is notable for its lightly polished, dark red-slipped exterior and handles, which are both ornamental and functional. The quality of the finish places it far above the mass-produced, carelessly finished morphologically and generically similar jars common in this period (e.g., Stern 1995:62, Fig. 2.9). No exact

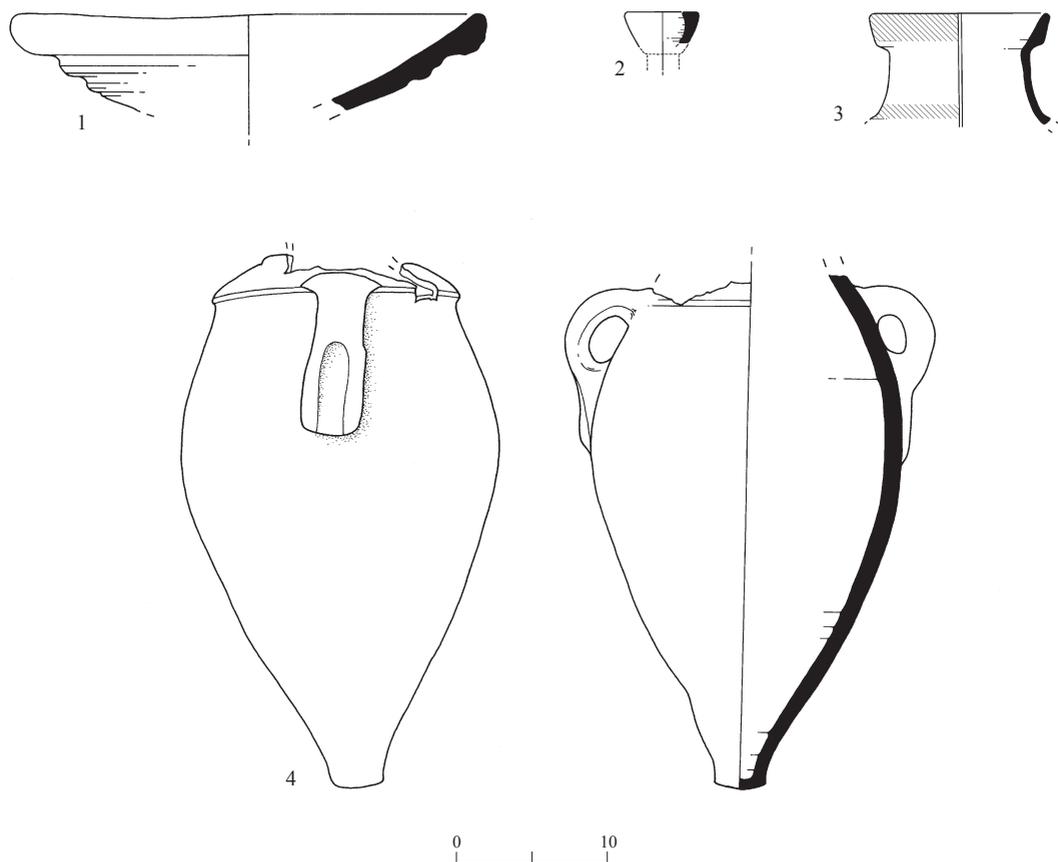


Fig. 38. Persian-period pottery.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	Mortaria	205	224/1	Yellow-gray surface; light brown core; white and gray grits
2	Lekythos	213	267/4	Orange surface; orange core
3	Jug/Jar	208	236/12	Orange-red and orange-yellow surface; orange core; white, red and shiny grits
4	"Torpedo" jar	204	209/1	Red-brown surface smoothed and slightly polished; gray core; white and dark red grits

parallels were found, and I suggest that it is likely of foreign origin.

In contrast to the above-mentioned "torpedo" jar, the exteriors of several neck-less, sausage-shaped jars with handles on their shoulders (Fig. 39) were poorly finished. These jars are paralleled in Stratum II at Ḥazor (Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCLVII:28–30).

BONE-HANDLED KNIFE (Fig. 40:1)

This copper or bronze knife cannot be precisely dated, but its findspot in the rubble that filled Room 3 (Sq K/6) suggests that it derived from the Iron I occupation of the site. It was found during "balk-trimming," at which time the handle, swollen with moisture, broke into

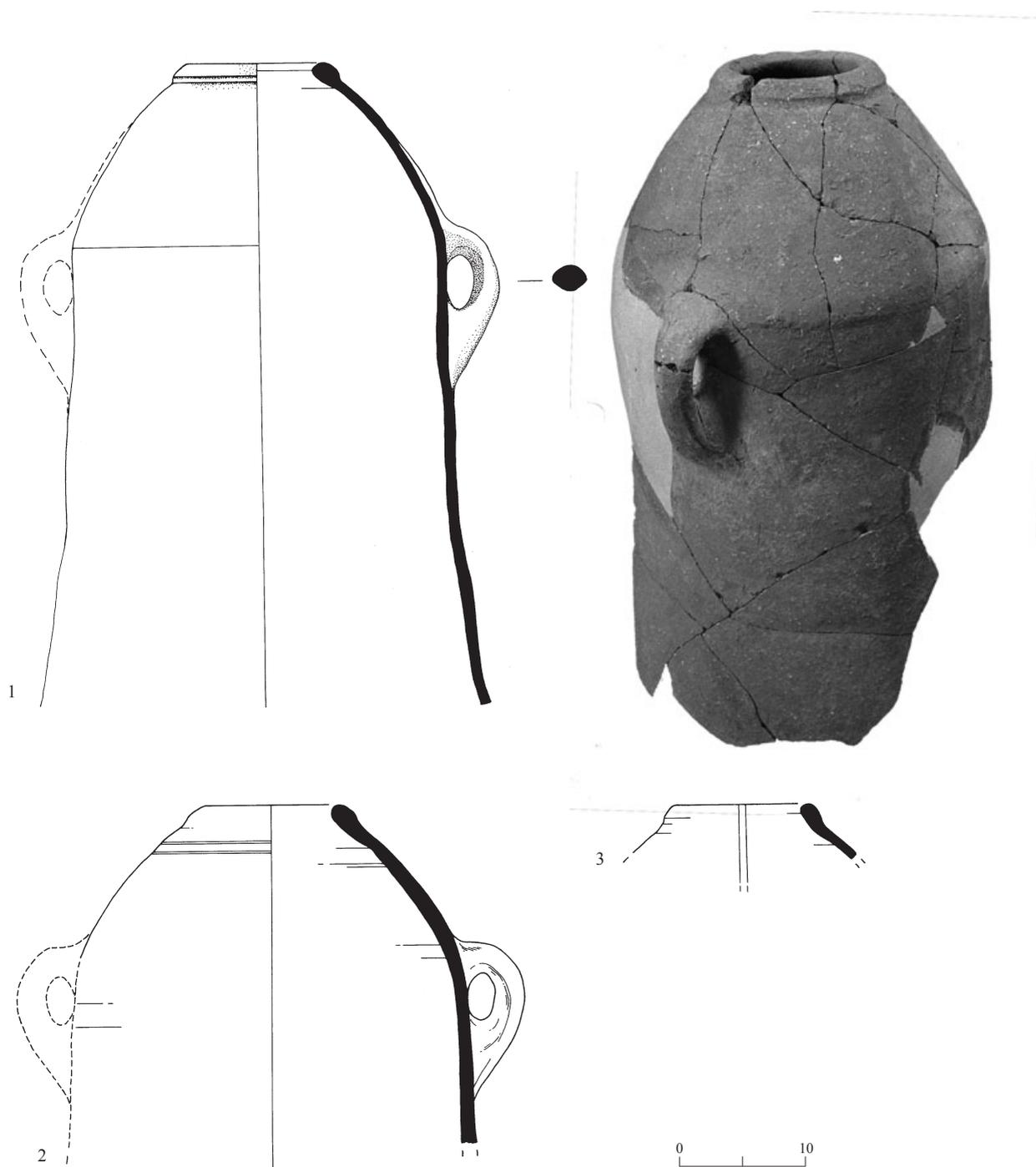


Fig. 39. Persian period jars.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	Jar	504	340/1	Not available
2	Jar	205	221/1	Red-brown surface; dark brown-gray core; white and gray grits
3	Jar	504	355/1	Orange-brown and red-brown surface; brown-gray core; white, gray and dark red grits

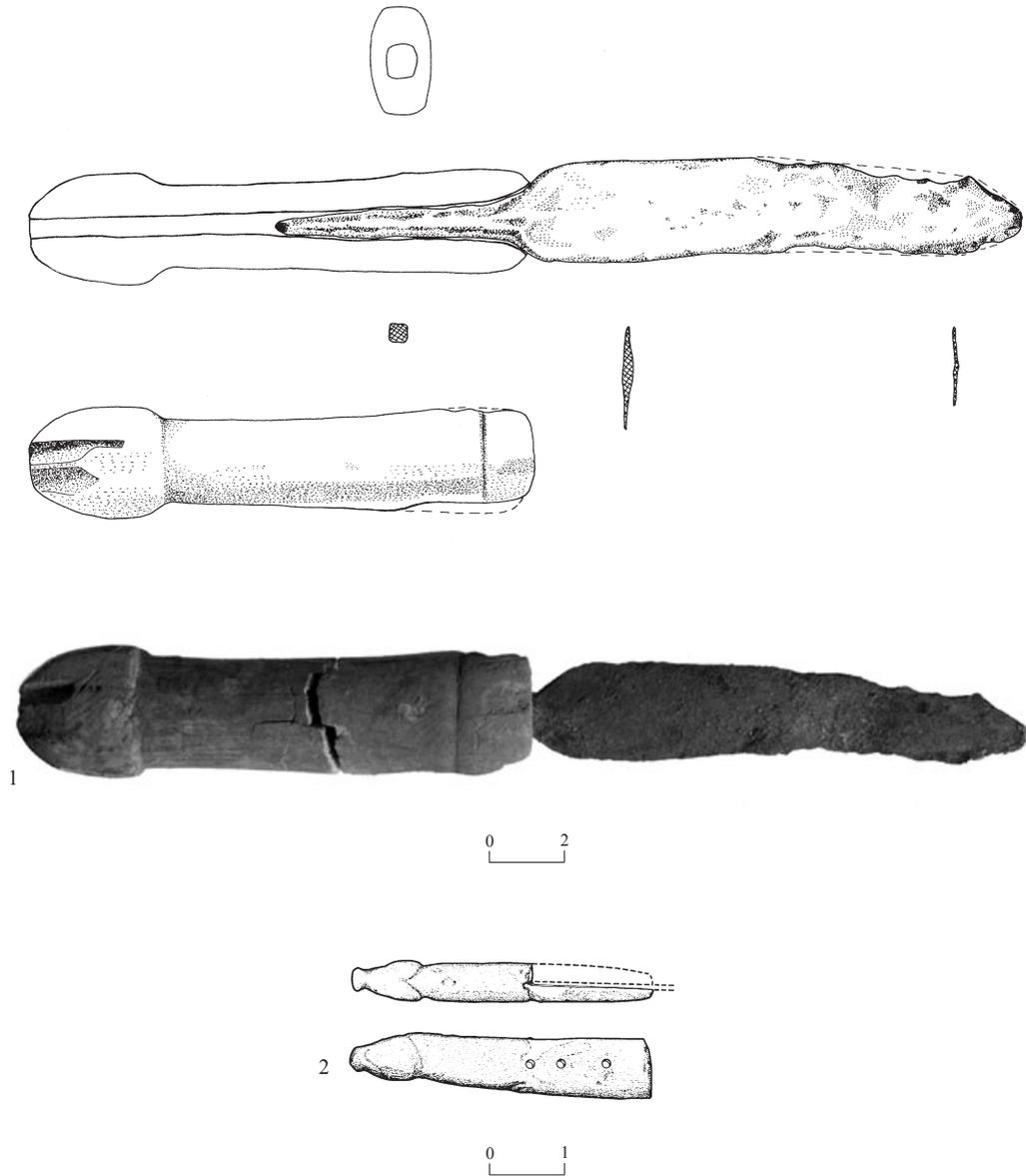


Fig. 40. Iron I bone-handled knives: (1) from H. 'Avot; (2) from Tell Keisan.

No.	Provenience	Locus	Reg. No.	Description
1	H. 'Avot	211	372/1	Bone handle, bronze or copper blade(?) in the shape of circumcised phallus
2	Tell Keisan			Ivory handled knife in the shape of an uncircumcised phallus (after Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 101:13)

several fragments. After thorough drying it was reassembled by Ella Altmark, conservator of the IDAM.

The bone handle was carved to resemble a circumcised phallus. An excellent parallel for this object was recovered from a fill near the surface at Byblos (Dunand 1950:67:711, 107:711). Unfortunately, both objects lack good contexts and thus, they cannot be securely dated. Presumably, these knives had some ritual significance, although the context from which the example from H. 'Avot is derived seems to have been a simple domicile.

Another analogous object, albeit fashioned of ivory and carved into the shape of an uncircumcised phallus (Fig. 40:2), was recovered from a later Iron Age context at Tell Keisan (Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 101:13). One may only speculate as to whether the anatomical differences in these representations of the male member reflect the ethnicity of their owners and/or the inhabitants of the sites from which they derive.

TWO SPINDLE WHORLS AND A LOOMWEIGHT Orit Shamir

Two spindle whorls and one loomweight were discovered in scattered fills during the excavation of H. 'Avot (Fig. 41). They probably represent evidence for household textile production at the site, rather than a textile industry (for discussion, see Shamir 2007), possibly in more than one period.

Spindle Whorls

Whorls are used as weights for spinning fibers into threads. A whorl may be hung on a spindle rod to weigh it down (Israeli 1968), thus allowing the spindle to turn and twist fibers together. Successful attempts by the author to spin fibers using the two objects from H. 'Avot, employing the suspended spindle method, confirmed that they may indeed have served as whorls.

One dome-shaped whorl (Fig. 41:1) is made of fired clay and weighs 9 g. It was discovered

in fills of uncertain date (L518) and likely derived from either an Iron- or Persian-period occupation. A second dome-shaped whorl (Fig. 41:2) is made of bone, perhaps from the head of a femur, and uncleaned, weighs 17.1 g. It was discovered in fills that probably derived from the Iron I occupation (L207).

The whorls are made of light-weight materials that lack density, indicating they were used for spinning short, woolen fibers. Heavier whorls are used for long linen fibers (Forbes 1956:152; Ryder 1983:747).

Loomweight

A somewhat flat, doughnut-shaped loomweight (Fig. 41:3), made of fired clay, weighs 110 g. Its diameter is greater than its height. It was recovered from a fill of uncertain date (L504) along with objects derived from the Iron I and Persian-period occupations.

The doughnut type of loomweight is characteristic of the Iron Age and is found at many sites dating to this period (Sheffer 1981; Shamir 1996; Browning 2001). However, most of these earlier weights are quite heavy (200–500 g), while doughnut-shaped loomweights of the Persian period tend to weigh less. It is therefore likely that our object dates to the Persian period. Similar loomweights are known from sites such as Tel Shiqmona (Elgavish 1968: Pl. LXIII:159–164), Tel Mikhal (Singer-Avitz 1989:359), Kh. Abu et-Twein (Mazar 1981:23), Qadum (Stern and Magen 1982:193–194, Fig. 6:7) and other Persian sites (Shamir 1997:6* with map; 2004:26*).

STONE OBJECTS (Figs. 42, 43)

Limestone Bowls (Fig. 42:1, 2)

A sizable fragment of a crude, shallow vessel with a thin, slightly protruding rim (Fig. 42:1) is made of soft, powdery white limestone. It is one of two examples of bowls of that approximate size. Another is a very crude, minuscule version of that type of object (Fig. 42:2). In addition, several very small fragments of bowls, also of soft, powdery limestone were encountered in the



Fig. 41. Spindle whorls (1, 2) and a loomweight (3).

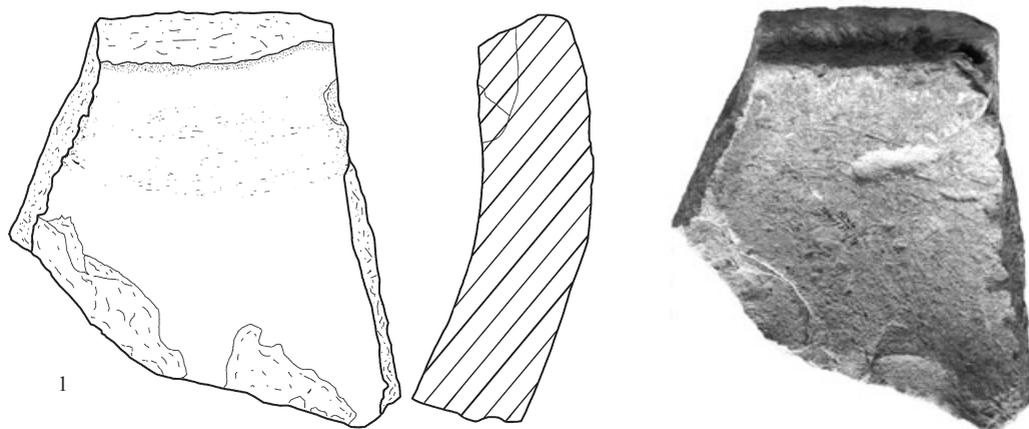
No.	Object	Locus	Basket	Material	Type	W (g)	D (cm)	H (cm)	Hole D (mm)	Hole D (mm)	Hole Type	IAA Reg. No.
1	Spindle whorl	518	383	Fired clay	Domed	9.0	2.9	1.5	0.8	1.0	Conical (not centered)	2012-1902
2	Spindle whorl	207	375	Bone	Domed	17.1	4.0	2.2	0.8	0.8	Cylindrical	2012-1904
3	Loom-weight	504	316	Fired clay	Doughnut	110.0	5.6	3.8	0.8	0.7	Chambered	2012-1903

excavation, but none was well-enough preserved to justify illustration. Some appear to be pieces of the same object. Two rim fragments of a crudely shaped vessel of a sub-rectangular shape, at least 20 cm long, complete the inventory of the limestone vessels. Similar bowls of a Neolithic horizon at Yiftah'el (Commége 1997) could suggest a date for these fragments.

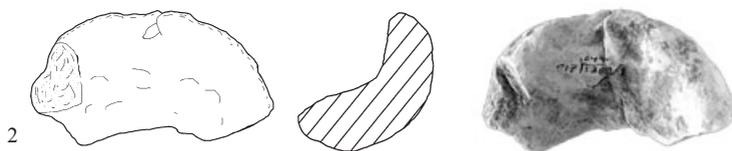
Ground Stone Objects (Fig. 42:3–6)

Three basalt ground stone objects were found in fills, contexts that do not allow them to be dated with any confidence. One, from the surface of the excavation site, is of hard, vesicular basalt

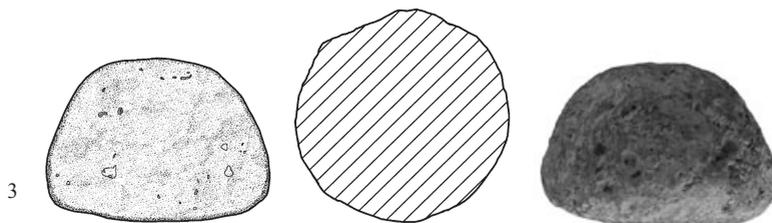
fashioned into a roughly hemispherical form with a flat bottom smoothed from use (Fig. 42:3). It was obviously used as a rubber or grinder. Another is an approximately cubic shaped object of hard black pumice (Fig. 42:4). There are no indications of use wear on its very rough surfaces, unless its beveled corners are indications it was used for grinding. It seems to have been too light for use as a pounder, but it might have served as a weight for a balance, which might explain the beveling as an attempt to obtain a specific measure. Another is a pestle-like object of vesicular basalt in the shape of a truncated cone (Fig. 42:5).



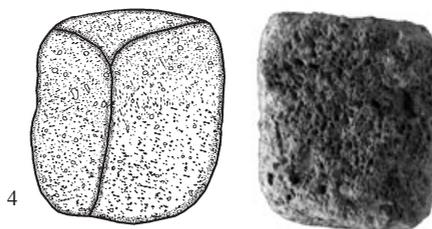
1



2



3



4



Fig. 42. Stone objects.

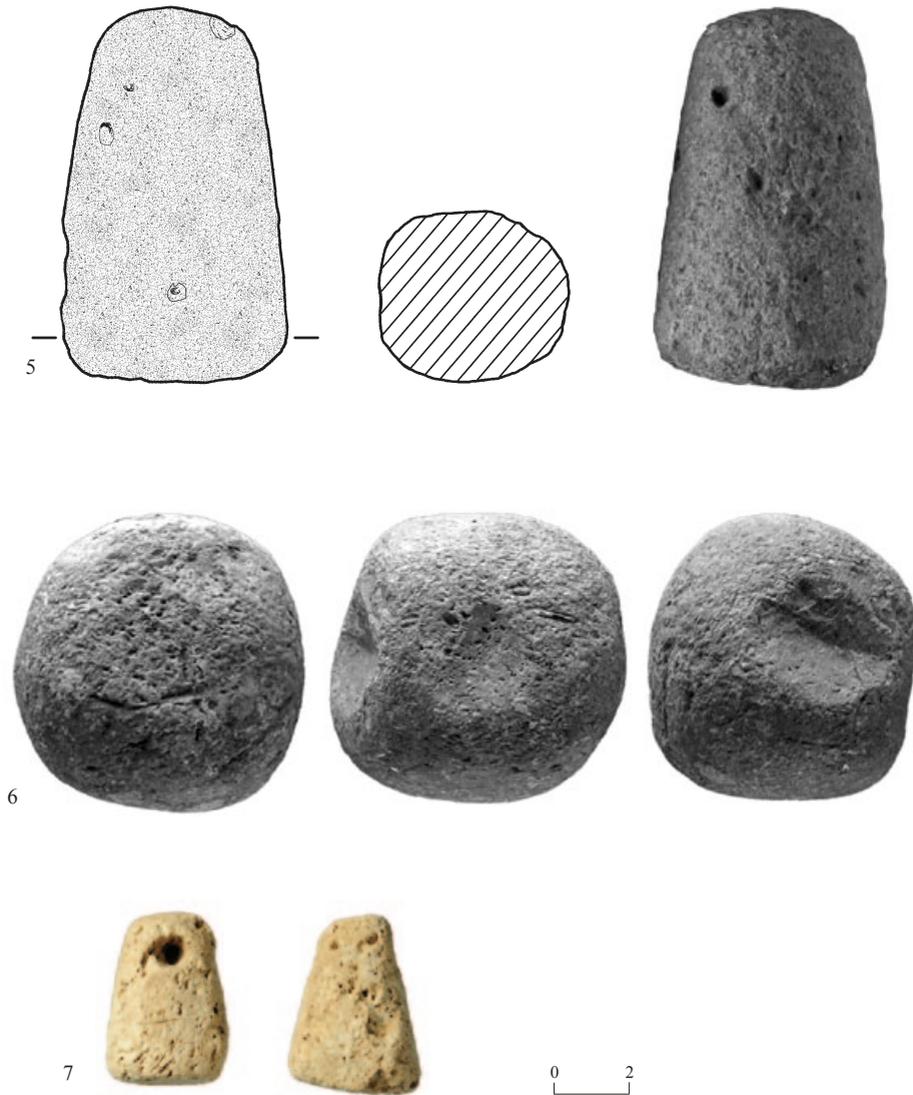


Fig. 42. (cont.)

No.	Type	Locus	Reg. No.	Period	Description
1	Bowl	504	316/9	Neolithic(?)	White, chalky limestone, smoothed interior, crudely finished exterior
2	Bowl	518	389/1	Neolithic(?)	White limestone, crudely fashioned, broken rim
3	Rubber or grinder	Surface	-	?	Dark gray vesicular basalt, bottom, flat surface polished
4	Cube	204	207/1	?	Dark gray-brown pumice, corners partially beveled
5	Pestle?	8	77/1	?	Gray vesicular basalt
6	Hammer	504	345	?	Gray limestone "rounded cube", shallow, worked concavity one side, large scar another side
7	Unknown		2012-1901	?	Extremely light-weight stone with hole for suspension

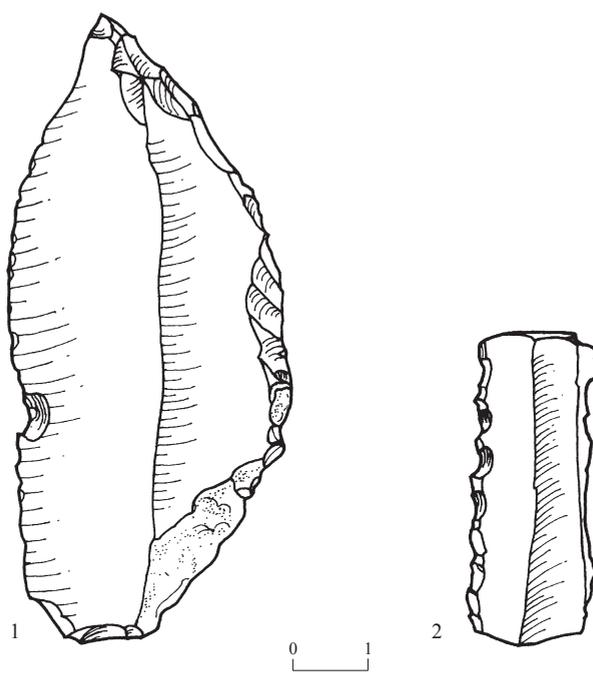


Fig. 43. Flint tools.

A chunk of dense, light gray stone in the shape of a sphere with flattened sides may have functioned as a hammer stone (Fig. 42:6); this would explain a large flake removed from one of the flattened sides of this object. Another side has a slight depression with evidence of smoothing, suggesting it may also have functioned as a surface for grinding small objects.

Perforated Stone Object (Fig. 42:7)

This small object of enigmatic purpose has a perforation at one end, perhaps intended for suspension. It is carved of very light-weight material, and clearly is not heavy enough to have served as a loom- or any other kind of weight; its density is such that it will float on water and its function remains obscure.

Flint Tools (Fig. 43)

A small quantity of flint debitage and a few tools, found on the surface and in fills, provide evidence of earlier occupation of the site. Of

note are an ad hoc sidescraper (Fig. 43:1), to which no date can be assigned, and a Canaanite blade typical of the Early Bronze Age (Fig. 43:2).

DISCUSSION: THE IRON AGE I AT H. 'AVOT

A TYPOLOGY OF IRON I PITHOI (Fig. 44; Table 3)

Two major classes of Iron I pithoi are recognized in the literature. One is often defined as "Galilean" and is generally recognized as a northern variant of the so-called collar(ed) rim pithos, although the name is somewhat ambiguous and may be misleading. The other is alternately known as "Wavy-Band", "Phoenician" or "Tyrian."⁸ The distinction between the two classes is relevant, but indicates a somewhat simplistic framework for the morphology of Iron I pithoi that does not accurately reflect all the variations within the entire group.

These two pithos types appear to have regional associations, and probably also reflect functional differences. They may, as well, have chronological implications (Finkelstein 1988:270–272) that relate to centers of manufacture and patterns of trade and dispersion. Appropriate methods for determination of these categories, such as a significant number of petrographic samples or neutron activation analyses were, unfortunately, impossible to pursue due to a lack of financial resources for this excavation. Therefore, the present remarks are limited to chronological and regional observations based, with a single exception, on traditional, macroscopic analysis and morphological observations. They confirm the basic division into the two major classes of pithoi, but suggest further subdivisions and a localized typology that may have relevance for sites beyond the region of Upper Galilee (Fig. 44).

“Galilean” Pithoi

Biran (1989:84, 87; 1994:30) employed the term “Galilean” to describe a type, or more precisely, variations on a generic (nowhere specified, but rather implied) type of pithos that has affinities to “collared-rim” pithoi from sites farther south and also to the east in Transjordan (e.g., Herr 2001: Fig. 14.4). Biran found such vessels in deposits he related to Strata VI and V at Tel Dan (cf. Biran 1989: Figs. 4.7:8; 4.12:6; 4.16:9). Most examples are of massive proportions, with thickened rims, oval bodies, pointed bases and often a feature consisting of several horizontal bands of short, oblique incisions, usually around the upper body (e.g., cf. Biran 1989: Fig. 4.23:1, 3, 4). This feature—perhaps considered decorative as it was not removed—seems, nonetheless, to have been made by ropes tied around vessels in some pre-firing stage, possibly for moving them into kilns or firing pits when they were at a leather-hard stage.

In my opinion, the Dan examples from the Iron I levels (VI and V), despite general similarities, differ considerably in overall

morphology from each other and from other types assigned to the same category. Certainly, they are distinct from types associated with sites in the mountainous region of Upper Galilee (e.g., H. ‘Avot, Sasa and Har Adir; see below). Accordingly, I suggest that there are a number of types, identified in this essay by letter designations, within the so-called “Galilean” class. At least three subtypes are present in the mountainous region of Upper Galilee and were found at H. ‘Avot in absolutely contemporary contexts, as well as at other sites in that geographical zone (see below). Additional types are known from Tel Dan. The several types and their slight variations may represent the production of different ateliers or possibly different potters within a single workshop.

“Galilean” Pithos Type A (see Figs. 27–30, and possibly 32).— This type is present in large numbers in the Iron I assemblage from H. ‘Avot. It is noted for its heavy, folded rim, somewhat narrow neck of medium length (cf. Type B) with a raised horizontal band, long sloping shoulders with two opposing handles, oval or egg-shaped body and tapering base. In addition to the pithoi depicted in Figs. 27–30, some or all the rim fragments in Fig. 32 may belong to vessels of this type. There are numerous minor variations in shape of rim, degree of straightness of shoulder and overall body proportion, but in their general aspect these vessels are a clearly recognizable morphological type that, so far as I have been able to determine, is found exclusively at sites in the mountainous region of Upper Galilee, as at Sasa (Golani and Yosef 1996: Fig. 6:1, 2).

“Galilean” Pithos Type B (see Fig. 31, and possibly 32).— The location of the handle, as well as the somewhat squatter shape, differentiate this vessel from Type A. Type B has a broadened rim similar to Type A, but differs in its much broader body and shoulder that slopes directly below the rim. Most examples appear to have handles placed at the juncture of the shoulder with the body (e.g., Yadin et al.

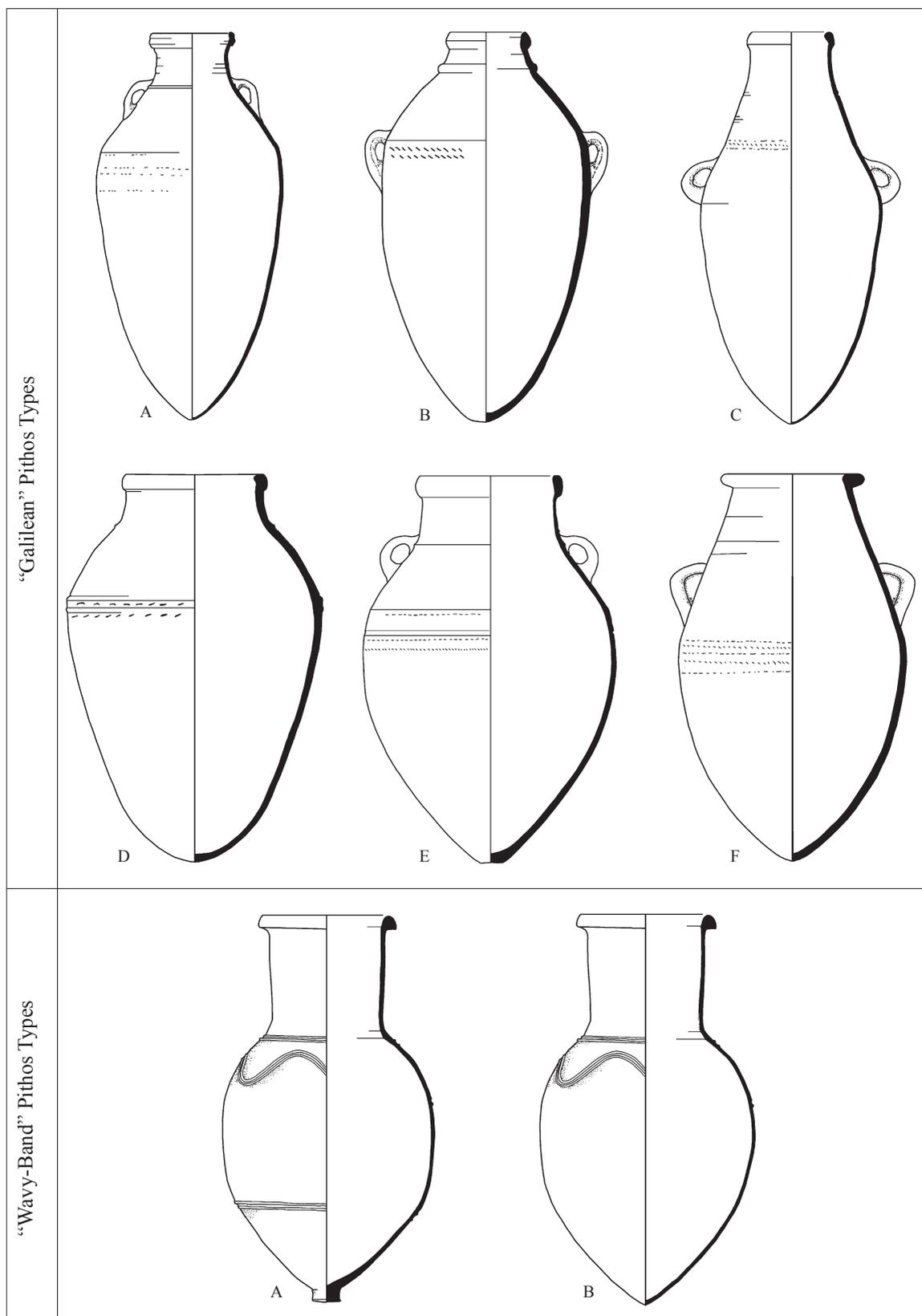


Fig. 44. Typology of Iron Age I pithoi from Galilean sites.

1961: Pl. CLXVII:8, 10; Biran 1994: Fig. 92; Golani and Yogev 1996: Fig. 6).

The “Galilean” *bona fides* of Type B seems particularly questionable to me, as it appears to have a much wider and generally more southerly distribution. Indeed, it is closest in morphology to a neck-less variation of “collared-rim” pithoi known from sites further south (see below).

Type B is equivalent to some examples of Biran’s “collared-rim” pithoi from Dan Strata VI and V (Biran 1989; 1994:134, Fig. 92), an identification Finkelstein (1988:275–276) suggested was erroneous. In my estimation, however, Biran was essentially correct in his characterization; *grosso modo* there apparently are two major variants of “collared-rim” pithoi (Finkelstein, Bunimovitz and Lederman 1993: Fig. 6.56:3–5). One, found in abundance in the north (i.e. “Galilean Type B”), is distinguished by its short neck (e.g., Ben-Tor and Portugali 1987: Photographs 38–41). The other, showing considerable variations in rim form, is distinguished by a virtual lack of a neck, with the rim placed directly atop a sloping shoulder; it is known only at southern sites (e.g., Frankel 1994: Fig 3:1) and therefore is not considered in the present discussion.¹⁰

No exemplars of Type B could be identified with certainty in the Ḥ. 'Avot assemblage, but Fig. 31:1, albeit poorly preserved, could possibly be included in this group. The handle, placed at the juncture of the sloping shoulder, seems to be appended to an almost biconical body. It is quite similar to a large fragment from Sasa (Golani and Yogev 1996: Fig. 6:4), albeit with a rounded rim, and another fragment from Tel Dan (Biran 1989: Fig. 4.16:8). I suspect there were likely additional examples of the type from Ḥ. 'Avot (Fig. 31:2–6), but this cannot be positively determined, as they are represented only by fragments. Most examples from Sasa (e.g., Bahat 1986:100:1; Golani and Yogev 1996: Fig. 6:4) have considerably rounder contours and wider, elongated, bodies, which may suggest that our Fig. 31:1 and its close parallels are relatively rare variants.

“Galilean” *Pithos Type C*.— This type shares the same elongated form of Type A, but with the handles at the juncture of the shoulder and the body, as in Type B (e.g., Sasa—Golani and Yogev 1996: Fig. 6:1–3). However, in Type C, the placement of the handles is lower, because of its extremely long, tapering neck. No definitive examples of this type were recovered from Ḥ. 'Avot, but the possibility that some were present and are represented by fragmentary evidence should not be excluded.

“Galilean” *Pithos Type D*.— This type is represented by only one very large fragment of the upper body of a handle-less vessel from Sasa (Stepansky, Segal and Carmi 1996: Fig. 7:1). Notably, it has a rim and a somewhat long neck, similar to Types A and C, but has a distinctive incised decoration around the upper part of its body. Its proportions are most similar to a Type E pithos with handles from Tel Ḥarashim (Aharoni 1956: Fig. 4:4). It is not known whether there is any chronological inference to be derived from this lack of handles, but it is perhaps noteworthy that this example bears some morphological resemblance in its body and also in its raised horizontal band near its widest point, to a handle-less Late Bronze Age pithos¹¹ from Ḥazor 1b (Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCXCIII:11). On the other hand, the neck and rim of the Sasa type are quite different from those on pithoi of the Late Bronze Age and are well-paralleled in Iron I. A pithos from the same context at Sasa is of “Galilean” Type B, a type noted for its handles (Stepansky, Segal and Carmi 1996: Fig. 7:2).

“Galilean” *Pithos Type E*.— This type (Biran 1989: Figs. 4.7:8; 4.15; 4.16:9) seems to be a hybrid that shares characteristics of the two main classes of pithoi, but which appears overall to be more similar to the “Galilean” group because it lacks two hallmarks of the “Wavy-Band” group: plastic decoration and a stump base. These pithoi have extremely wide apertures, thickened rims and stove-pipe necks

of “Wavy-Band” types, but they also have the sloping shoulders, oval bodies, pointed bases and handles of “Galilean” types. The Tel Harashim example (Aharoni 1956: Fig. 4:4) is marked, as are most examples of “Galilean” types, with horizontal bands of oblique incisions, a feature unknown in “Wavy-Band” pithoi.

“Galilean” Pithos Type F.— This virtually neck-less type is, as far as I know, represented by a single example from Dan VI (Biran 1989: Fig. 4.12:6). It has the pointed base and almost oval body of this class, but is notable for its long sloping shoulders that splay out to form a thickened rim of an unusually wide aperture. Its apparent rarity suggests it might be a functional variant of another type, but its overall morphology demands, for purposes of this discussion, it be assigned its own type designation. This type also shares some features of the “Wavy-Band” type and could be a result of hybridization.

“Wavy-Band” Pithoi (Fig. 44)

This type of vessel is sometimes referred to in the literature as “Tyrian” or “Phoenician,” which could possibly reflect its immediate origins (but not its distribution).¹² More recently, the type has also come to be known as “Wavy-Band” (Gilboa 2001), a more apt name for examples generally found in the southern Levant. However, what appear to be earlier prototypes of very similar morphology have raised, straight, horizontal bands. They have been found at Neyrab (Neirab) near Aleppo in Syria (e.g., Carrière and Barrois 1927) and at Tyre, where Bikai (1978: Pl. XLVI) dates one example from Stratum XIV to the penultimate Late Bronze Age occupation. “Wavy-Band” pithoi were apparently made at different locations; some in Lebanon and others in the southern Levant (Gilboa 2001). I have adopted Gilboa’s term in this work as it is eminently descriptive for virtually all from the southern Levant and because I have no information

concerning the origins of the examples of this type from H. ‘Avot.

This class of pithos is noted for its thickened rim, long, wide and usually straight (but sometimes flaring) neck, and bulbous body ending in a stump or pointed base (see Figs. 33–35). Common to all examples are the raised, broad bands of parallel, wavy and horizontal lines decorating their bodies (see Figs. 33:1; 34). A recently published pithos from a clear, LB (III) context at Megiddo Stratum VIIA (Arie 2013:522–523, Figs. 12.36:P2; 12.45; 12.71) shows virtually identical morphology, but raised line decorations that are horizontal and straight rather than wavy. Possibly, this was imported from the northern Levant, where it may have derived from a production center that produced similar types from Tyre and Neyrab.

“Wavy-Band” Pithos Type A (see Fig. 33).—

The distinguishing characteristic of this type is its heavy and sharply defined stump base. The size range of these vessels is considerable; several examples are extraordinarily large, even for pithoi. Those illustrated in Figs. 34; 35:1, 3, 5 and others from Sasa (Golani and Yogev 1996: Fig. 7:4) are probably of this type, although the bases on some were not preserved.

“Wavy-Band” Type B Pithoi.—

This type appears to be quite similar to Type A in its upper portions, but it differs in its much-less-accented, tapering pointed base, which resembles the tapering pointed bases of some “Galilean Type” pithoi (e.g., Biran 1989: Fig. 4.5:8, 9). The example in Fig. 44 is from Dan V (Biran 1994: Fig. 96) and, notably, has only one raised wavy band.

To judge from its relatively late context, this type appears to have undergone some morphological changes that suggest a degree of “hybridization” or “cross-pollination” between Galilean and “Wavy-Band” types. The almost egg-shaped body is not very different from that of the “Galilean” Type E vessel from the

same context (Biran 1994:95), while the base is so reduced, it seems to have lost the ability to function in the manner of its stump-based counterparts in “Wavy-Band” Type A pithoi. If this observation is correct, then it has major implications for the manufacturing tradition of Iron I pithoi. Unfortunately, however, we have no knowledge of the workshops where they were made and of the potters who produced them.

Pithoi—A Summary Statement

I believe I can discern six basic types of “Galilean” pithoi, although there are examples which may not fall strictly into one or another category. Five of those types (A–E) are definitively associated with hill-country sites of Upper Galilee (for a general idea of their distribution in Upper Galilee, see Frankel et al. 2001: Pl. 26). Type F, the unique example from Tel Dan, is for the present unknown in that region, but the mountains of Galilee remain largely archaeologically unexplored and it may eventually appear there.¹³ It may even be present, but not properly identified in fragments of rims in the Ḥ. 'Avot assemblage (Fig. 32). Some of these vessels were incised prior to firing, perhaps as decoration or as indication of producer or ownership (see below).

“Wavy-Band” pithoi are found in the Galilean hill country and at sites much farther afield (Frankel et al. 2001: Pl. 27; Gilboa 2001). Type A is definitively associated with Ḥ. 'Avot, Sasa and Ḥazor, but not, apparently, with Tel Dan. The possibility that Type B of this class is found in hill-country sites should be considered because some bases of this type are indistinguishable from those of “Galilean” pithoi.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IRON I POTTERY

The relatively large assemblage of Iron I pottery yielded from two brief excavation seasons at Ḥ. 'Avot indicates the rich potential of this site for future research. Following is my

interpretation of the most salient points that may be derived from the archaeological record as revealed in our excavations.

Types of Evidence

While there is overwhelming testimony for the Iron I dating of Stratum 2, it is much more difficult to place that occupation within a full sequence for that period (i.e., following the end of Late Bronze Age through the end of Iron I). Evidence for determining the chronology of the Iron Age occupation of Ḥ. 'Avot may be categorized, in terms of reliability, into three grades: A, B and C, in descending order.

Grade A evidence, the most reliable, derives from complete or nearly complete large (even massive) vessels found *in situ*, on floors of buildings that represent the final utilization of these structures before their abandonment.

Grade B evidence is somewhat less reliable and includes the bulk of fragmentary vessels recovered from fills above floors and sometimes lying on them. Although much of this material is likely to have been contemporary with Grade A artifacts, an admixture of residual and intrusive objects (some of which are rather small and could well be vertically mobile) may have been included in deposits assigned to this category, especially as there is much evidence for intrusion resulting from late burials, agricultural activity, and the burrowing of animals in deposits not far below the modern surface.¹⁴

Grade C evidence is limited to a small collection of ceramic finds with parallels that suggest ascription to specific chronological horizons apparently un-represented in the stratigraphic profile of the excavation. Some of these may truly represent activity in such periods at Ḥ. 'Avot, while others may be incorrectly attributed. The reader is invited to judge the validity of my observations.

Evaluating the Evidence (Table 3)

The three complete and two nearly complete pithoi from L213 were recovered from a basal deposit and are assumed, on the basis

Table 3. Distribution of Iron I Pithos Types from Excavated Sites in the Galilee

Site	Reference	Stratum	“Galilean”					“Wavy-Band”	
			A	B	C	D	Variants	A	B
H. ‘Avot	Braun, this article	2	+	+	?			+	
Sasa	Bahat 1986	I	+	+					
Sasa	Golani and Yogevev 1996	II	+	+	+		+	?	?
Sasa	Stepansky, Segal and Carmi 1996	Destruction		+		+			
Sasa	Stepansky, Segal and Carmi 1996	Post-destruction	+	+			+	+	
Tel Dan	Biran 1994	VI	?	+			+		
Tel Dan	Biran 1994	V		+			+		+
Tel Ḥazor	Yadin et al. 1961	XII/Area A		+	+				
Tel Ḥazor	Yadin et al. 1961	XII/Area B	?	?	?				+
Tell Keisan	Briend and Humbert 1980	9c		+					
Tel Ḥarashim	Aharoni 1956			+					
Har Adir	Unpublished	?	? ⁱ	?				+	

ⁱ Only rim fragments, apparently of this type, are known to me.

of the relative elevations of the floor, as well as the stratigraphic ascription of Room 2, to be definitively associated with the earliest Iron I phase at the site. The presence of both the “Wavy-Band” Type A with curving stump base and “Galilean” Type A examples indicates them to be absolutely contemporary. Since “Galilean” Type A pithoi are also present in the pit at Sasa (Stratum II of the Yogevev excavation), along with “Galilean” Types B and C, as well as “Wavy-Band” pithoi (Golani and Yogevev 1996:48–54), all these types are assumed to be contemporary at some point in time, i.e., their utilization overlapped, although they do not necessarily have identical chronological ranges.

This is an important point to remember when evaluating additional evidence. Because “Wavy-Band” Type A vessels may have made their appearance later in Iron I than “Galilean” types, the presence of such vessels may indicate to what precise point in the Iron I sequence Stratum 2 at H. ‘Avot should be assigned. Following is a limited, simple thread of evidence that suggests some likely correlations for the Iron I occupation of H. ‘Avot.

Stepansky, Segal and Carmi (1996:71) suggest their “post-destruction phase” at Sasa is more-or-less contemporary with Bahat’s Stratum I and Yogevev’s Stratum II at the same site (Bahat 1986; Golani and Yogevev 1996). I would tentatively add H. ‘Avot Stratum 2 to this list as the closest and most numerous parallels to its ceramic assemblage are found in the Stratum II pit of Yogevev’s Sasa excavation, and by extrapolation, to contemporary deposits elsewhere. For instance, the H. ‘Avot assemblage has only one pithos type in common with the earlier, Iron I destruction level at Sasa (Table 3), compared with three from the post-destruction phase and its contemporary deposits.

However, additional evidence is equivocal. On the one hand, the presence of the “Wavy-Band” pithos, which appears to have its origins in the Late Bronze Age (Gilboa 2001:163–165), could suggest a somewhat early date in Iron I. That could further indicate that its absence at Sasa is the chance result of a relatively small sampling of the occupation or merely a quirk in distribution patterns and not a function of chronology. On the other hand, the absence of

“Wavy-Band” pithoi in the Sasa destruction level may point to a date before the type made its appearance in the region.

A similar absence of this type in Stratum VI at Tel Dan, however, would appear to verify its tardier appearance in Iron I relative to “Galilean” Type B. This correlation may find confirmation at Tell Keisan, although once again, the sample from stratified deposits is quite limited. Notably, the “Galilean” type pithoi from Tell Keisan Level 9c (Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 68:1–3) include one (Pl. 68:1) almost identical to the complete specimen from the destruction level at Sasa (Stepansky, Segal and Carmi 1996: Fig. 7:2). In this instance, I believe the absence (at least according to our current state of knowledge) of “Wavy-Band” pithoi in this level at Tell Keisan could be significant and possibly explained by the presence of a massive (“Straight Band”) pithos (Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 69:1) similar to that found in Stratum XV at Tyre (see above), dated by Bikai (1978:8) to the penultimate Late Bronze Age stratum there. That would place Level 9c quite early in Iron I, if the Tyrian sequence is correct, and if the ceramic typology is indicative of an affinity to Late Bronze types.¹⁵ Once again, however, we must rely on a limited sample of pottery from a very small sounding at Tyre, while the parallel from Neyrab (Carrière and Barrois 1927) is of obscure date.

If the correlation holds, then H. 'Avot, with its “Wavy-Band” pithoi, also dates to a later phase of Iron I, perhaps one contemporary with the horizon(s) of Level 9a–b at Tell Keisan. Notably, there are numerous ceramic parallels (Grade B evidence) with those levels that could corroborate this conclusion, although there is no indication for the presence of any “Wavy-Band” pithoi at Tell Keisan, even in those later occupations.

Extrapolating from these correlations, Stratum XII in Area B at Ḥazor has several elements that are directly paralleled at H. 'Avot in Stratum 2, including rims and other fragments of what appear to be “Galilean”

pithoi, as well as a few distinctive stump bases of the “Wavy-Band” Type A examples (Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCII:10–14, 18, 19). But once again, the evidence is equivocal as the stratum is represented by refuse found in pits, which could represent more than a single occupation level. Stratum XII in Area A could possibly be dated to an earlier phase of Iron I by the presence of pithoi fragments (Yadin et al. 1961: Pls. CLXVII; CLXVIII:5–7) that more closely resemble the “Galilean” Type B of the Sasa destruction phase, while there is no evidence for the presence of “Wavy-Band” pithoi there. However, one example from this stratum appears to have the long neck of “Galilean” Type C pithoi (Yadin et al. 1961: Pls. CLXVII–CLXVIII:10), which would argue for a date more-or-less contemporary with the later Iron I of Sasa.

In any event, this evaluation is based on selected morphology of vessels, a rather unsatisfactory ruler for determining chronology, especially when the vessels under consideration are such massive pithoi. Such vessels may be expected to have had a relatively lengthy use-life and, once they arrived safely at their destinations, they would likely have been positioned and rarely, if ever, moved. Their fabrics are hard-fired and durable and their thick walls insure they are not overly fragile. The considerable effort that went into making and transporting them suggests they must have had a significant exchange value. One may imagine that the Iron I denizens of H. 'Avot would have taken care not to destroy them.

A further note of caution should be injected into this discussion and indeed into any similar attempt to recreate horizontal stratigraphy by comparing sites where there is no definitive, superimposed sequence (Table 3). With the single exception of Stepansky's Sasa excavation, there is no good, published evidence for a vertical sequence in any of the sites that have yielded parallel material. In addition, samples of ceramics from these sites are not necessarily wholly representative of the occupations from which they derive. Thus,

the chronological observations noted above are deemed hypothetical and hopefully will be tested empirically sometime in the future.

Absolute Chronology of Iron Age I in Relation to the Stratum 2 Occupation at H. 'Avot

There is no evidence from the excavation of H. 'Avot for indicating the absolute date of the Iron I occupation of Stratum 2. However, associated information that may have bearing on the subject derives from the destruction level at Sasa, with which the Stratum 2 occupation is tentatively correlated.

Three radiometric determinations taken from wood charcoal for the Sasa destruction phase (Stepansky, Segal and Carmi 1996:71) offer a *terminus post quem* in the twelfth century BCE (1209–1114 BCE) with a 93% degree of probability. If we assume the wood charcoal derived from mature portions of trees, then a destruction date within the eleventh century BCE seems reasonable. This date appears to be in general agreement with the ceramic evidence for a date not too late in Iron I. Thus, the suggested dating to the eleventh century for a post-destruction Iron I phase at Sasa seems eminently plausible, especially in light of what appear to be very slight differences in the ceramic forms between the Iron I occupation phases at that site. If the correlation of Stratum 2 at H. 'Avot with the later Iron I level at Sasa is correct, then it too should be dated to the eleventh century. Gilboa's (2001) dating of a "Wavy-Band" pithos from an eleventh century context at Tel Dor may be additional corroboration for this dating, although the lack of a base for that vessel does not allow us to specifically type it.

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF H. 'AVOT STRATUM 2

The Ceramic Assemblage

The relative paucity of forms in the ceramic assemblage is a well-documented phenomenon for Iron I sites in the hill country (Finkelstein 1988:108), and Stratum 2 at H. 'Avot provides

no exception to this picture. The number of pithoi found within this relatively small exposure is, however, notable. Those massive jars, all of strong, hard-fired fabrics, are obviously the product of a highly skilled, labor-intensive manufacturing process (London 1989; Cohen-Weinberger and Goren 1996). As there is no evidence of the potters' art at H. 'Avot, nor indeed at any of the sites cited above, it seems clear that the pithoi of all types were acquired from elsewhere.

No less impressive is the associated distribution network that would have transported these vessels to H. 'Avot, Sasa, Har Adir and other locations in the mountains of Upper Galilee (no mean feat),¹⁶ as well as to valley sites, such as Tel Hāzor and Tel Dan. That such a network was relatively far-flung and touched quite a number of communities is evident from survey work in the region (Finkelstein 1988:94–108 and references therein; Frankel et al. 2001: Pls. 26, 27). It is also notable that this production was not confined to a single short term, but appears to have lasted for several generations, as indicated by the Tel Dan stratigraphy.

Their presence in such large quantities at these sites suggests that whatever the social organization of the inhabitants, they possessed sufficient surpluses to allow them to acquire so many pithoi. If we presume the means of acquisition to be the result of some sort of exchange, then it is understood we are dealing with a rather sophisticated trade network and likely economic interdependence of producers and consumers. Stratum 2 at H. 'Avot is obviously part of that network and the ceramic finds suggest it was a small but prosperous community of agriculturalists, requiring extensive storage capacity, for which the jars were acquired.

The presence of so many massive jars of the several types must also be understood as indicative of the period in which they were made and distributed. On the one hand it points to a well-developed and thriving center or centers of high-quality pottery production

in one or more locales, and on the other, the ability to market and transport them. It further indicates a not inconsiderable degree of communication between mountainous rural sites and possibly also between them and the larger, lowland settlements. When the entire pattern of distribution of these vessels is viewed, it offers evidence of a truly extensive network of production and distribution that bespeaks a period of relative stability and prosperity, possibly for several generations, during Iron I. This suggests a considerable degree of coordination that is in keeping with the development of a more complex social organization in the following period.

The Architecture

The buildings of Stratum 2 were constructed along rectilinear principles. For the most part they exhibit walls of even thickness, corners of 90° angles and somewhat capacious rooms. At least one, and perhaps, more of these structures, had semisubterranean basements that indicate the existence of upper stories.

Alignments of several rooms suggest they were portions of considerably larger complexes and it seems that at least two such structures were unearthed within the excavated area. Their outward similarity may be understood to reflect a degree of social equality between the inhabitants. The likely size of these two complexes could indicate a social structure that needed to accommodate relatively large aggregates of inhabitants in numbers likely to have exceeded the size of the typical nuclear family. The considerable storage potential of the pithoi, such as that associated with Room 10, seems to be in keeping with this interpretation and may indicate the residents were organized into a social unit more complex than the nuclear family—perhaps one of extended families. Unfortunately, aside from the evidence for structures devoted to storage, there is no clear indication of other areas of definitive function within these houses. No ovens or hearths were found, which suggests that the excavated area may not be entirely typical of the site.

The juxtaposition of the structures, more-or-less in concert with the topography of the curving hillside, led Finkelstein (1986:106–107; 1988:105) to conjecture that the settlement was an oval “enclosure” arranged according to a template of buildings surrounding an open courtyard. While such a possibility should be seriously considered, it must be noted that there is no guarantee that the excavated houses were situated at the perimeter of the settlement.¹⁷ In addition, the interior of the site was considerably elevated, a situation that might suggest utilization analogous to the interior of such sites as 'Izbet Şarṭa (Finkelstein 1988: Fig. 26) and its ilk.

The architectural evidence therefore clearly indicates that the inhabitants of Stratum 2 were consummate builders who constructed their homes along lines dictated by a well-established architectural tradition. This picture is particularly at variance with the lack of architecture usually associated with Ḥazor XII that yielded parallel and contemporary ceramics. The ostensible disparity in lifestyles between the purported “tent” and “hut” dwellers and diggers of “pits” (Yadin 1972:129–30) or “resedentarizing pastoralists” (Finkelstein 1988:344–354) of Ḥazor XII, and the sedentary inhabitants of Ḥ. 'Avot Stratum 2 and Dan VI (Biran 1994:135–138), may be explained in several ways. One possibility is that these disparities reflect true difference in lifestyles, although it is extremely difficult to posit the use of pithoi by non-sedentary populations at those valley sites.

I suggest it is also possible that our understanding of the archaeological record of Ḥazor XII and perhaps also of Dan VI is incomplete. Similarities with the hill country sites of Upper Galilee suggest the likelihood that at both major tell sites, primary evidence for sedentary occupation in these early Iron I strata remains to be discovered. Notably, both of these occupations (i.e., Ḥazor XII and Dan VI) exhibit what appear to be elaborate, subterranean storage facilities in which pithoi were placed—perhaps in order to provide specialized conditions for storing the

commodities in these vessels. Such behavior indicates organized and purposeful activity, which demanded expenditure of considerable resources. It is, I believe, significant that this same practice has been noted at H. 'Avot and Sasa.¹⁸ In addition, the presence of stone-lined pits at H. 'Avot, Sasa, Hazor XII and Dan VI, seems hardly coincidental. It is apparent that these excavations have revealed evidence of a series of sedentary communities in Upper Galilee in Iron I. It is hoped that future excavation will help us to better understand the nature of their settlements.

WHO WERE THE IRON AGE I INHABITANTS OF H. 'AVOT

Iron I archaeological deposits in Upper Galilee are generally associated with the biblical period of Judges and the settlement of the tribes of Israel. H. 'Avot is located in the region commonly believed to have been apportioned to the Tribe of Naphtali (Finkelstein 1988:106; Frankel 1994). May we then assume that the twelfth and/or eleventh century BCE inhabitants of this village were Israelites of this tribe? There is, of course, no simple answer to this question and it is not my intent to enter into a discussion of this much-debated subject. So far as I can tell, there is nothing in the material culture of the Iron I occupation that allows us to even suggest a specific ethnic identity for the inhabitants of H. 'Avot in this timespan.

Material remains include the architecture, a ceramic assemblage and a single bone and metal knife (with the representation of an uncircumcised phallus) that might throw some light on this question. Of these elements, only architectural remains can be definitively associated with the inhabitants since they created them and thus, they are a direct expression of the cultural burden these people carried (Watkins 2004:15).

We may say of the Iron I inhabitants at H. 'Avot that they possessed a well-developed tradition of architecture, indicated in the way

they carefully laid out the earliest buildings, taking account of bedrock outcrops and utilizing the slope. They took care, at least in the earliest stages of occupation, to make their houses true rectangles, and were capable of building multi-storied structures, as may be judged by the underground storage facility. Evidence of white plaster floors indicates a degree of sophistication in localized pyrotechnology applied to reduction of limestone. Such skills and traditions do not appear to have any idiosyncratic associations with specific ethnic groups; indeed they appear to be almost universal to sedentary peoples of the southern Levant in this and many other periods.

Whether one wishes to interpret this information as proof that the Iron I people who lived at H. 'Avot were not the biblical tribesmen of Naphtali is, of course, dependent on whether one wishes to recognize the very existence of such a group and how one would prefer to characterize its members. Such a discussion lies beyond the scope of this archaeological report.

If we look to the portable objects of their material culture for clues to their identity, we are on even shakier ground. The overwhelming majority is ceramic, much of it in the form of sherds. Even were we able to accept the equation that pots equal people (and I do not), it is quite clear from available evidence that the Iron I people of H. 'Avot did not make the bulk of their own pottery, if indeed they made any. There is not one shred of evidence for such industry, while the standardization of virtually all the pottery vessels encountered argues for off-site production from large centers that supplied this and many other sites in the hill country and beyond. This includes not only the pithoi, but the standardized types of cooking pots and storage jars.

Thus, the ethnic identity or identities of the Iron I denizens of H. 'Avot remains obscure (as does that of other contemporary inhabitants of Upper Galilee) for the present. Hopefully, further discoveries in the archaeological record will provide illumination on the subject.

SUMMARY

The limited soundings that I conducted at Ḥ. 'Avot more than three decades ago have shown this rather unassuming Upper Galilee hillside to be the site of a small but important tell in which lies buried a wealth of material evidence for many centuries of human activity (see Table 1). The artifactual evidence suggests that Neolithic people may well have lived at the site or in its environs, perhaps frequenting it for its water, and possibly to carry on some activity associated with the stone bowls we encountered. Whether this was a brief episode or a longer encounter between Neolithic people and the site remains to be discovered.

There is no evidence of a Chalcolithic utilization of the site, and the next chronological period represented is EB I. There appears to have been at least one house in the early phases of EB I and perhaps some additional activity in the EB II–III horizon, although the evidence for that is very slight. Middle Bronze burials suggest a nearby occupation, perhaps even one centered in some other precinct of the site, where they remain to be discovered. Whether Ḥ. 'Avot was utilized in the Late Bronze Age cannot be determined, given the very slight and equivocal evidence available to indicate such activity.

The next major period of activity is in an advanced phase of Iron I. Based on exposure of the western slope of the site, it appears to have been the floruit of settlement at Ḥ. 'Avot. It is represented by large, well-constructed houses with considerable capacities for storage suggesting an agriculturally based community with a sound economic basis. Some architectural phasing suggests the site was home to its inhabitants for at least several generations.

There is very little evidence for utilization of this hill in Iron II, but settlement appears to have been renewed early in the Persian period. Little remains of that period in the excavated area, besides a well-built corner of what appears to have been part of a sizable structure, and some patches of related floors with pottery associated with a partially re-used house of Iron I. The site may subsequently have been abandoned, although occasional sherds suggest sporadic activity in various periods. Probably many centuries later, local Bedouins utilized the western terrace for their stone-lined cist tombs. They, or perhaps other, more sedentary peoples left walls, animal pens and massive heaps of stones that presently cover the higher portions of the site.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PRINCIPAL LOCI

Locus	Stratum	Square/s	Description
1	+1	N9	Surface and fill in 2.5 × 5.0 m arbitrary probe in light, loose fill replete with roots; many sherds of Iron I types
2	2	J5, K5	Hard-packed earthen surface on which were found scatters of sherds; a base of a large jar was dug into this floor, with upper portions of the same vessel lying beside it
3	+1	N8, N9	Surface and fill in arbitrary probe 2.5 × 5.0 m in light, loose fill replete with roots; many sherds of Iron I type; continuation of L1 to west
4	-2	N8, N9	Probe below L2; dark brown, very loose fill with many small stones
5	+1	M8, N8	Earthen fill within a vaguely curved arrangement of stones within the confines of L3
6	+1	N8	Probe west of L1 with fill of dark soil and a few fieldstones
7	2	N8, O8, O9	Stony, loose, earthen fill between buildings, Walls, 1, 2 and W5, below L6
8	1 or +1	M8, N8	Surface fill relating directly to fill in Loci 13 and 15, above Walls 4, 6, 9 and 12
9	2	N8, O8, O9	Fill of partially preserved large, rectangular room of Stratum 2, between W4 and W23
10	+1	O8	Fill partially covering a large, rectangular room of Stratum 2 (L16)
11	?	N9, O9	Fill of large stones in a pit or trench that appears to have cut into the fabric of L9
13	+1	M8, N8	Removal of a balk above Walls, 6, 8 and 12
14	+2	M9	Hard-packed surface fill above Walls 27 and 28
15		N7	Cancelled; not excavated
16	2	N7, N8, O7, O8, O9	Fill of a large rectangular room with hard-packed earthen floor; one vessel was dug into the floor, others were scattered on it amidst mud-brick detritus
17	+1	M8	Cist grave
18	+1	M8	Cist grave
19	+1	M7	Cist grave
20	2	O9	Narrow, trapezoidal space between two buildings
21	+1	M8	Continuation of L1 to north
22	2	P9	Narrow space between two buildings
23	+ 1, 2	P9	Surface fill covering Walls 21 and 22, mixed with material on floors below, same as L25
24	-2	O9, O10	Fill above bedrock and above an MB infant jar burial (L26)
25	2	P9	Fill of a small room between larger, rectangular rooms, same as L23
26	-2	O9, O10	Infant jar burial of the MB period
27	2	P10	Fill below tops of walls 20 and 43; some intrusive material resulting from construction of late cist grave, T509
27A	2	M8	A patch of white plaster floor with evidence of burning and the base of a ceramic vessel beneath W12
28	2	O4	Same as L16
101	2	G5	Probe into previously bulldozed surface replete with fieldstones in order to define the walls of the structure
102	2	G5	Fill outside of room
103	1 and 2	G5, H5	Fill within partially preserved room in area eroded and disturbed by later intrusions
104	2	G5, H5	Fill within Room 1
105	+1	G5, H5	Surface probe adjacent to L103

APPENDIX 1 (cont.)

Locus	Stratum	Square/s	Description
201	+1	J5, K5	Surface probe above L202
202	2	J5	Fill associated with the west side of W38
203	2	J5	Fill associated with the east side of W38, Room 2
204	2	J5, K5	Fill associated with buildings
205	2	I6, J6	Fill associated with buildings
206	2	K5	Fill associated with buildings
207	2	K5	Fill associated with buildings
208	1	I6	Fill associated with the structure defined by W33 and W34
209	1 and 2	J6	Fill associated with buildings, probably part of an earthen surface of Stratum 1, together with fill of Stratum 2
210	2	I5	Fill associated with buildings
211	2	K6	Fill associated with buildings
212	2	J6	Fill associated with buildings
213	2	J5, K5	Fill of semisubterranean Room 2
500	+1, 2	O8, O9	Fill above and related to W15
501	- 2	O8	Deep probe below floor of Stratum 2; human bones and pottery of the MB II period suggest the presence of a simple inhumation, but no outline of a grave was encountered
502	+1, 2	P10	Narrow trench for defining W25
503	+1, 2	P10	Probe from surface into dark soil replete with sherds, above wall
504	2	J6, K6	Fill associated with buildings
505	2	P10	Fill associated with buildings
506	+1, 2?	M8	Surface fill, very hard-packed, replete with roots
507	2	J6, K6	Fill associated with buildings
508	2	M8	Fill associated with buildings
509	+1, 2	P10	Fill associated with buildings disturbed by late cist grave (unexcavated)
510	+1, 2	Q11	Surface fill and fill associated with buildings
511	+1	M8	Cist grave
512	2	J6, K6	Fill associated with buildings
513	2, -2	Q11	Fill above basalt bedrock
514	2, -2	P10, Q10	Fill associated with curved W60; contains EB and later sherds
515	2	L8, M8	Floor of building
516	2	L9, M9	Floor of building
517	+1, 2	M7	Surface fill and fill associated with Room 8
518	+1	Q11, Q12	Surface fill above walls
519	+1, 2	K6	Surface fill and fill associated with buildings
520	2	K6	Fill of large, stone-lined pit (granary?)
521	2	K6	Stone lined pit
522	2	M7	Fill on floor of Room 8
523	+1	L8, M8	Cist grave
524	+1	L7, M7	Cist grave
525	+1	O9, P9	Cist grave

APPENDIX 2: WALL LIST

Wall	Stratum	Room(s) and features	Squares
1	2b	14	N9
2	2b	12, 14	N8, N9
3	2b	12, 13	N8
4	2	10, 11	N8, O8, O9
5	2	11	N9
6	2a	13, 14, 20?	M8, N8
7	2	10, 15, 16	O9, P9
8	2	7?, 10, 11	N7, N8, O7
9	2a	20?	N8
10	2	8	M7, M8
11	2a	20, 22	L8, M7, M8
13	2a, 2b?	15, 16	P9
12	2a	20	M8
14	2	7, 8	M6, M7, N7
15	2	10, 16	O7, O8, P8, P9
16	2b	14	M8, N8
17	2b	14	N8
18	2a, 2b?	15, 16, 17	O9, O10, P9
19	2a, 2b?	15	O9
20	2	18	O10, P9, P10
21	+1	T509	P10
22	2a, 2b?	17	O9, O10, P9
23	2	11, 15	O9
25	2	18	P9, P10, Q9, Q10
26	2a, 2b?	15, 16	P9
27	2?		L9, M9, M10
28	2?		M9
31	2	1	F5, G5, G6
32	2	1	F5, G5, H5
33	1		H5, H6, I5, I6
34	1		I6
35	2	5	I6, J6

Wall	Stratum	Room(s) and features	Squares
36	2		I5, J5, J6
37	2	2	J5
38	2	2	J5, K5
39	2	2	K5, K6
40	2	2, 3, 4	J6, K6
41	2a?	4, 5	J6
42	2	3, 4	J6
43	2	18	P10
44	2	3, 6, Pit 520	K6
45	2	19	P11, Q11
46	2?		M9
47	2a	21, 22	L8
48	2	6, Pit 520	K6
49	2	19	Q11, Q12
50	2	?	Q11, R11
51	2	2, 6	K6
52	2a	20, 23	L8, L9
53	2	6, Pit 520	K6
54	2	19	Q12, R12
56	2	8, 9	M6, M7
57	2	7	M6
59	2a, 2b?	17	P9
59	2b	17	P9
60	-2		P10
70	2a	20?	M7, N7
71	2a	21, 23	K8, L8
73	2	7	M6, N6
74	2?		H6
75	2	1	H5
76	2	7, 8	N7
101	2	1	G5
102	2	1	F5, G5, H5

NOTES

¹ The site was excavated for the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (IDAM), the forerunner of the IAA (Permit Nos. A-944/1980 and A-1044/1981). Fieldwork was directed by Eliot Braun in both seasons, with the participation of volunteers from Australia and the United States. Plans were drawn by Eliot Braun and Israel Vatin, and prepared for publication by Natalia Zak. Moshe Hoffman and Freda Raskin restored the pottery and Ella Altmark restored the knife. Objects were drawn by Anna Procter and in a few instances, by the author; the plates were prepared by Carmen Hersch. Field photography was by the author, and studio photography by Tsila Sagiv, Yael Yolovitch and the author. Orit Shamir studied the weaving-related objects and Baruch Arensburg studied human remains from two graves.

Thanks are due to Ephraim Stern for his identification of the Persian-period painted pottery and to the anonymous reader for comments on an earlier draft of this report. I owe a debt to Miriam Feinberg Vamosh and Aviva Schwarzfeld for their many insightful comments on earlier versions of this manuscript.

² Material from this casual survey was only observed *in situ* and purposely not retained for study so as not to prejudice a systematic survey. Information gleaned suggests that the full archaeological potential of the site is far greater than that encountered in the excavated sample.

³ The single exception was at the southern extreme of the excavated area where basalt bedrock was encountered.

⁴ There is no sharp distinction between certain types assigned to these periods; it is usually an association of “Metallic Ware” (Braun 2012:25–28) or other distinctive, non-EB I objects that allows us date some examples to EB II.

⁵ Unfortunately, looters disturbed the burial and the very fragile *in situ* skeleton was destroyed before it could be properly excavated, so no photographs, plan nor anthropological report is available.

⁶ Following a suggestion by S. Wolff, I use the term potter’s mark to signify a mark or marks deliberately incised into pottery prior to firing, i.e., by a potter or potter’s helper during the manufacturing process. Accordingly, I employ the term potmark to indicate all post-firing incisions, which could have been made by virtually anyone with the requisite tool.

⁷ This citation is courtesy of the late David Davis. See n. 13 for full details.

⁸ There is some confusion in the literature with these names. One type is even referred to as “The

Galilean/Tyrian Pithos (Frankel et al. 2001:56–57). Differences in this group are often in the lengths of necks, which tend to be significantly longer in examples from Upper Galilee.

⁹ Indeed, the appellation “Galilean” has no clear scientific basis, but is derived from observations by scholars who have noted their distribution. Additional discoveries of similar objects or even of a manufacturing site, as well as analyses of fabrics which may identify their sources, may well prove this appellation a misnomer.

¹⁰ For further examples, see ‘En Ḥagit (Wolff, forthcoming: Fig 8), Shiloh (Finkelstein 1988:276), Bet Z̄ur (Sellers et al. 1968: Fig. 7:1–6), et-Tell/‘Ai (Finkelstein 1988: Fig. 11;92; Finkelstein and Piasezky 2006: Figs. 3:10, 11; 4:5, 6), Tell el-Ful (Finkelstein 1988: Fig. 11), ‘Izbet Šarṭa (Finkelstein 1986: Figs. 8:18; 9:1, 2; cf. Biran 1989: Fig. 4.1:1–6) and Tell en-Naṣbeh (Wampler 1947: Pls. 2:12, 13, 18, 24, 25; 3:38). As an exercise, I have taken photocopies of relevant pithoi from these sites and pasted them on a single sheet of paper. To me the morphological similarities are nothing short of striking.

¹¹ Late Bronze Age pithoi from Ḥazor are all without handles (e.g., Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCXCVIII:6–9).

¹² The name obviously derives from the presence of a prototype in Stratum XV at Tyre (Bikai 1978: Pl. XLVI) and one example in Stratum XIV. The ultimate origin of this style appears to be in Cyprus (Gilboa 2001).

¹³ Only three sites have been excavated to any extent in Israel: Sasa, Ḥ. ‘Avot and Har Adir. Virtually nothing is known to this writer of sites further to the north in Lebanon. Har Adir (Permit No. A-626) yielded a large collection of Iron I pottery with very close affinities to that from the other two sites. This material is only cursorily published (*HA* 1976; Davis et al. 1985), and I am grateful to the late David Davis for providing me with a set of drawings for comparison with the Ḥ. ‘Avot pottery. Similar pottery has also been found in a more recent excavation at Rosh Pina (Stepansky, forthcoming).

¹⁴ One photographic session took twice as long as usual because an animal was in the very act of burrowing just below the earthen floor: as we swept the area clean it kept piling up small mounds of earth. In addition, during subsequent visits to the site not long after the excavation, I noted that unexcavated portions of the terrace were dotted with so many small holes from additional burrowing, that they appeared to have been made by some type of machine.

¹⁵Notably, straight bands adorn many of the pithoi of the latest Late Bronze Age pithoi at Ḥazor (thirteenth century BCE), which (as A. Mazar has rightly pointed out) may be related to the “Wavy-Band”-type pithos in Iron I. Thus, the latter’s appearance should be expected earlier than the advanced Iron I phase represented by H. ‘Avot, Stratum 2 and its contemporary occupations.

¹⁶These sites are located in very steep, hilly country between 850 and 1100 m above sea level, where access was never easy until the late twentieth century.

¹⁷Unfortunately, we were unable to open more areas on the slopes of the site. The first season of work was limited to those areas where there was some danger of destruction, and therefore, no soundings were

attempted farther west; in the second brief season our energies were devoted to problem-solving and to the issue of defining the western perimeter of the Stratum 2 settlement. On a subsequent trip to the site I noted masses of fieldstones embedded in one of the bulldozer tracks slightly further down the slope; these could well hide additional structures. The surface there, in some places, is quite similar to that which was above Room 10.

¹⁸*Contra* Golani and Yogev’s (1996:48) interpretation of this large hollow at Sasa as a refuse pit, I suggest that it was originally an underground chamber intended to house those vessels. The large number of restorable vessels and the sizable fragments of others support this interpretation.

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