AN INTERMEDIATE BRONZE AGE PRESENCE AT TEL YIZRA''EL

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INTRODUCTION

Tel Yizra''el (Fig. 1) is a large well-known site situated on the western foothills of Mount Gilboa on the south central border of the Jezreel Valley. It sits upon a plateau overlooking the fertile valley that spreads below to its north and east. Its area is estimated to be 60 dunams (Ussishkin and Woodhead 1992:3). Tel Yizra''el is best known for its Iron Age II occupation level, which is interpreted as being the Yizra''el of the Old Testament (for biblical references, see Williamson 1991). The tell was surveyed by Nehemia Zori¹ (Zori 1977:19–23, Site 34), who enumerated finds from the following periods: Early Bronze Age I–III, Middle Bronze Age II, Iron Age I and II, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine. Initially, two salvage excavations were carried out at the site (Porat, Feder and Agasi 1990; Yogev 1990).² During the 1990s, a multi–season excavation under the direction of David Ussishkin and John Woodhead was conducted on its summit. A large, Iron Age II enclosure was the major element uncovered by them. Although fills contained pre-Iron



Fig. 1. Location map.

Age II sherds—from EB I–III, MB II, LB and Iron I—no material dating from these periods was found *in situ* on the tell (Zimhoni 1997:83– 84; Ussishkin and Woodhead 1997:67–68). The excavators, thus, could only conjecture the existence of earlier occupations, but were unable to pinpoint their locations.

Less than one kilometer to the east of the excavation, near the base of the plateau upon which the tell is situated and about 50 m lower than the tell, is the spring of 'En Yizra''el. Surveys (Zori 1977; Gophna and Shlomi 1997³) at 'En Yizra''el revealed a rich Early Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age site of approximately 1.5 dunams. In their first preliminary report, Ussishkin and Woodhead (1992:49) suggested that the early material retrieved from the tell possibly originated in 'En Yizra''el, having been transported to the mound to serve as fill material. Later, they suggested the possible existence of an Early Bronze Age habitation level on the tell itself (Ussishkin and Woodhead 1997:67).

The sole indication of the existence of an Intermediate Bronze Age presence on the site was reported by Zori in an obscure reference to material from that period at Tel Yizra''el and other sites. It appears as a footnote in a locally issued Hebrew publication with no specific indication of the quantity, quality or precise location of the Intermediate Bronze Age sherds at the site (Zori 1971:30, n. 29). No further mention is made by him of this material in his later published survey (Zori 1977), nor have any of the other Tel Yizra''el surveys or excavations recorded the retrieval of Intermediate Bronze Age material.

THE EXCAVATION

In 2007, a single 5×5 m trial excavation was conducted on the eastern slope of Tel Yizra''el, approximately midway from the top of the tell to 'En Yizra''el below. It is located on a relatively flat area between the steep upper portion of the tell and the gradual descent to the spring (map ref. 231670–720/717980– 8030). Two periods dominated the ceramic finds: Intermediate Bronze Age and, to a lesser extent, EB III. No definite architectural elements were uncovered.

The lowest level of the excavation comprised nearly sterile alluvial soil, approximately 1.0-1.5 m below the surface. Above this alluvium was a less homogeneous alluvial deposit with large dovetailing pockets of a light brown matrix that incorporated within it the majority of the finds (Figs. 2, 3). The light brown matrix appears to be the accumulation of settlement debris that consists of brick material, the existence of which points to non-preserved construction at the site. On the southern edge of the excavation, a number of stones that continued into the unexcavated balk began to appear. These may be an additional indication of building activity. Above the light brown debris was an upper level of hard packed alluvial earth. Further details of the loci can be found in Appendix 1.

It appears that the Intermediate Bronze Age finds are *in situ* and were not transported to the site. Although it is located on a gradual slope, which is convenient for construction, no major building activity was uncovered that would necessitate the importing of fill. Suggesting that the Intermediate Bronze Age sherds were washed down the slope from the summit also appears untenable. The distance is too long for such a concentration of material to have accrued without some of it being strewn along the upper slope and, as has been stated previously, only Zori's surveys yielded an unknown amount of Intermediate Bronze Age pottery somewhere on the site. Furthermore, it is illogical that exclusively Intermediate Bronze Age and EB III sherds should have been washed down in light of the major Iron Age occupation on the tell itself. It is important to note that the pottery fragments did not exhibit typical characteristics of worn surfaces and rounded edges common to water-borne sherds or sherds that had traveled over a distance.



Fig. 2. Northwestern section showing light brown settlement debris above alluvial deposit.



Fig. 3. Southwestern section showing light brown settlement debris above alluvial deposit.

THE FINDS

The Pottery

Intermediate Bronze Age

The Intermediate Bronze Age at Tel Yizra''el is recognized solely by its pottery remains. A few bone and stone objects (Fig. 8) may

also date from that period, but as there are no clear identifying features, they will be presented separately. The ceramic assemblage of Tel Yizra''el is characteristic of the northern Intermediate Bronze Age ceramic repertoire. It includes bowls, cooking pots, storage jars, holemouth jars and an amphoriskos. The sole



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No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Bowl	101	1007/1	Pinkish white fabric; numerous small white inclusions	Smithline 2002: Fig. 10:1
2	Bowl	107	1020/2	Buff surface; small gray and brown inclusions	Smithline 2002: Fig. 10:8
3	Bowl	107	1020/4	Pink surface; very numerous small to medium gray inclusions	
4	Bowl	105	1015/1	Pinkish white surface; small to medium gray and brown inclusions	
5	Bowl	107	1020/3	Pinkish white surface; small to medium gray and brown inclusions; small white inclusions	Smithline 2002: Fig. 11:4
6	Cooking jar	104	1014/2	Brown burnt surface; gray and quartz inclusions	Gal and Covello-Paran 1996: Fig. 10:10, 11 Smithline 2002: Fig. 12:3
7	Cooking jar	102	1010/2	Brown surface; red and gray inclusions	As No. 6
8	Cooking jar	101	1004/1	Yellowish red surface; gray, brown and quartz inclusions	
9	Cooking jar	107	1022	Burnt surface; gray and quartz inclusions	

Fig.	4.	Intermediate	Bronze	Age	bowls	(1-5)) and	cooking	jars	(6 -	9)
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complete vessel (a storage jar) evident prior to the excavation was inadvertently destroyed during earth-moving operations before it was properly excavated and recorded.

Bowls (Fig. 4:1-5).— Three bowl types can be distinguished. One type includes small plain bowls (Fig. 4:1), which are made of a whitish pink ware with numerous small white and black inclusions. One characteristic Intermediate Bronze Age bowl has a squared angled rim with a shallow channel (Fig. 4:2). Figure 4:3 may be a goblet of the same whitish pink ware. Among the bowl fragments were those belonging to small cups (not illustrated) reminiscent of vessels found in Horbat Qishron (Smithline 2002: Fig. 12:1). A second type (Fig. 4:4) consists of a single example of an unusual, plain, deep unadorned vessel with straight angling walls. Its ware is identical to that of the small bowls; the external surface appears to have been shaved much like the walls of some Intermediate Bronze storage jars. The third bowl type (Fig. 4:5), with a thick wall and a finger-indented ledge handle below the rim, is a form exclusive to the Intermediate Bronze Age.

Cooking Jars (Fig. 4:6-9).— The everted rim cooking jar, commonly found in the north of the country during the Intermediate Bronze Age, was the sole cooking vessel type unearthed in our excavation. It is on the whole a homogenous group at Tel Yizra''el. All of the examples found possess an everted plain rim with a certain amount of variation in angle, they exhibit no decorative elements. Most of the cooking jars are large and thick-walled (Fig. 4:6-8), but one is uncommonly thin-walled (Fig. 4:9). Our examples are similar to Early Bronze Age cooking jars whose provenience is in the north of Israel (Greenberg 2002:53). These vessels demonstrate a cultural continuity relating the Intermediate Bronze Age to the preceding Early Bronze Age.

In contrast to the plain Tel Yizra''el cooking vessels, at Horbat Qishron, not distant from the northern rim of the Jezreel Valley, many possess a ridged, thickened shoulder occasionally with incised or impressed decoration (Smithline 2002: Fig. 12). Similarly decorated cooking jars are also a facet of the 'Afula Intermediate Bronze Age assemblage (Gal and Covello-Paran 1996: Fig. 10:15–17). Greenberg (2002:53) considers the decoration to be an identifying aspect of the Intermediate Bronze Age cooking jars.

It is important to note that no holemouth cooking vessels were among the finds; likewise, cooking bowls, which were a common feature of the Intermediate Bronze Age repertoire at Horbat Qishron (Smithline 2002: Fig. 13:3–10), are totally absent from the Tel Yizra''el assemblage.

Storage Jars (Fig. 5:1-9).— Similar to the cooking jars, the storage jars at Tel Yizra''el are a homogeneous group of vessels. Nearly all are styled with a plain everted rim of varying heights. The neck and rim are usually wheel-made, and the wheel striations are often clearly visible on the internal and external surface of the rim. The join between the wheel-made neck and the handmade body is occasionally quite pronounced (Fig. 5:2). Several jars have incised decoration or a modeled rim, elements that are common in the Intermediate Bronze Age repertoire (Fig. 5:3, 4, 7–9). The fragmentary finds do not enable definite determination of the shape of the jars; base fragments (not illustrated) indicate that some stood on a flat base and were not globular. Parallels for these jars may be found at most excavated sites possessing an Intermediate Bronze Age occupation (Murhan: Zori 1977: Fig. 34:12, 13; 'Afula: Gal and Covello-Paran 1996: Fig. 11:3-16; Horbat Qishron: Smithline 2002: Figs. 15:8-11, 16).

Holemouth Jar (Fig. 5:10).— The illustrated holemouth jar possesses an internally overhanging rim with diagonal incisions running along its external edge. It should be mentioned that holemouth jar rims and Intermediate Bronze Age teapot rims are often mistaken for each other abecause of their great similarity. No spout or spout fragment was retrieved from the excavation.

Amphoriskos (Fig. 5:11).— The small amphoriskos made of a red fabric is a characteristic Intermediate Bronze Age type.

Decoration (Fig. 5:12).— Several common Intermediate Bronze Age methods of decoration were present on vessel fragments. These include incisions, finger impressions, and rope-like plastic applications (Figs. 5:3, 4, 10, 12). A number of small fragments (not illustrated) decorated with a red slip, or with red smearing or streaking, similar to vessels from Tel 'Amal (Feig 1991: Figs. 5:17; 6:4–8)



Fig. 5. Intermediate Bronze Age storage jars (1–9), holemouth jar (10), amphoriskos (11) and storage jar decoration (12).

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Storage jar	107	1020/1	Very gritty yellowish red surface; tiny to small white and medium brown inclusions	Gal and Covello- Paran 1996: Fig. 11:4
2	Storage jar	104	1014/3	Light red surface; tiny white inclusions; wheel striations on both sides of rim	
3	Storage jar	107	1022	Pink surface; small white and brown inclusions; wheel striations on both sides of rim	
4	Storage jar	104	1014	Pinkish white surface; very numerous small white inclusions	Yogev 1985: Fig. 1:14
5	Storage jar	103	1008/1	Pinkish white surface; white and brown inclusions	
6	Storage jar	102	1009	Light red surface; small to medium white inclusions; medium to large brown and gray inclusions	
7	Storage jar	102	1006	Pinkish white surface; white and brown small- medium inclusions	
8	Storage jar	101	1007/2	Pinkish white surface; small white inclusions	
9	Storage jar	103	1008/2	Light red surface; small white and medium gray inclusions	Eisenberg 1985: Fig. 4:18
10	Holemouth jar	105	1015/2	Gray surface; small white and medium gray inclusions; quartz; wheel striations on rim top	Yogev 1985: Fig. 2:2
11	Amphoriskos	106	1019/1	Red surface; white and brown inclusions	Zori 1977: Fig. 34:17
12	Storage jar decoration	105	1015/3	Pinkish white surface; tiny to medium gray inclusions	



No.	Vessel	Loc	Bask	Description	Parallels
1	Ledge handle	107	1021	White surface; very numerous small white and medium brown inclusions	Yogev 1985: Fig. 1:12
2	Ledge handle	107	1023/1	Pinkish red surface; numerous small white and gray inclusions	As No. 1
3	Ledge handle	100	1002/1	Pinkish white surface; very numerous small white inclusions	Yogev 1985: Fig. 2:16, 18
4	Ledge handle	100	1002		
5	Strap handle	104	1012	Pinkish white surface; gray core; numerous small white and gray inclusions	Bahat 1976: Fig. 1–13 Feig 1991: Fig. 5:2–4

and Menahemiya (Bahat 1976: Figs. 2:14; 3:2, 8), were unearthed.

Handles (Fig. 6).— The jars were equipped with variations of the Intermediate Bronze Age folded ledge handles (Fig. 6:1–4). The most common type of folded ledge variant has a thumb-impressed edge reminiscent of a spread-out piecrust profile (Fig. 6:1–3). This type was numerically the largest class, consisting of 20 of the 34 handles retrieved. A second group is represented by five larger ledge handles formed by a combination of thumb impressing and a

flattening of the excess pushed clay (Fig. 6:4). Their appearance is similar to traditional folded ledge handles, but they are more carelessly formed and tend to look scalloped with round indentations. The round folds are not flush one to the other and leave a space between them. These two handle groups seem to be more at home in the Jordan Valley and Jordan (Palumbo 1991: Figs. 36:3, 4; 44:3), having been found frequently south of Tel Rehov (Yogev 1985: Figs. 1:12; 2:16–19), at Khirbat Iskander (Richard 2000:407–409, Fig. 3:9–11) and in Amman (Palumbo and Peterman 1993: Figs.



Fig. 7. Early Bronze Age III Khirbet Kerak Ware.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Bowl	105	1017	Red slip with burnish on both faces; very light brown core	Getzov 2006: Fig. 3.50:3
2	Bowl	106	1019/3	Red slip with burnish on both faces; very light brown core	Getzov 2006: Fig. 3.50:4
3	Stand	105	1015/4	Red slip with burnish on both faces	Getzov 2006: Fig. 3.53:4, 5
4	Stand	107	1023/3	Red slip with burnish on both faces	Greenberg and Eisenberg 2006: Fig. 5.86:5
5	Lid	101	1004/2	Gray burnished surface	Getzov 2006: Fig. 3.53:10–15

4:3, 4; 6:1). Palumbo and Peterman (1993:27) refer to them as "an intermediate type between thumb-indented/pushed-up, and fully formed envelope handles."

Only two poorly preserved fragments of strap handles were among the finds (Fig. 6:5). Strap handles are found on jars of the Intermediate Bronze Age, more commonly at sites north of the Jezreel Valley, such as 'Enan (Eisenberg 1985: Figs. 4:17, 18; 5:19, 20) and Qedesh (Tadmor 1978: Fig. 3:70–493, 494, 495, 498). Usually, however, they are an element of Intermediate Bronze Age jugs frequently found in the Jezreel Valley and in sites not distant from the valley: Tel 'Amal (Feig 1991: Fig. 5:2–4), Megiddo (Guy 1938: Pl. 11:21–25) and Menahemiya (Bahat 1976: Fig. 2:1–11, 13). The size and form of the drawn strap handle make it more adaptable to a jug than to a jar.

The remainder of the handles consists of either narrow vestigial ledge handles (not

illustrated; cf. Epstein 1985: Fig. 2:5) or they are too poorly preserved for classification.

Early Bronze Age III (Fig. 7)

The only other period represented among the ceramic finds in the excavation, besides a small number of very worn Roman period sherds, was EB III.

Zori (1977:21) mentioned in general terms the presence of Early Bronze Age material on the tell, but he did not specify from which Early Bronze Age horizon. The Ussishkin-Woodhead excavation in the 1990s does, however, bring an EB III presence on the site to the fore, and the 'En Yizra''el survey also uncovered pottery fragments dated to that period (Gophna and Shlomi 1997: Fig. 6).

All of the identifiable EB III sherds from the present excavation are fragments of Khirbet Kerak Ware vessels. They are easily recognized by their distinctive shapes and their



Fig. 8. Intermediate Bronze Age bone and stone objects.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Parallels
1	Bone point	106	1019/2	
2	Bone spatula	107	1023/2	
3	Slingstone	105	1018	Gopher and Eisenberg 2001: Fig. 9.2:7
4	Grinding stone	104	1013	

characteristic fabric, color and burnish. The Khirbet Kerak Ware finds showed no evidence of being especially worn or water-borne.

Two bowls (Fig. 7:1, 2) are paralleled by the thin-walled shallow Type 29 bowls as classified by Getzov (2006:86, Fig. 3.50:1–4). Two stand fragments originate from separate vessels: Figure 7:3 is a thick-walled, ridged body fragment, and Fig. 7:4 is probably the upper rim of a more finely ridged stand. The lid handle (Fig. 7:5), with a transparent selfslip and burnish is unique to Khirbet Kerak assemblages. Handles of this type are frequently found with a lengthwise piercing.

Bone and Stone Objects (Fig. 8)

Among the few non-pottery finds were two bone points (Fig. 8:1), two bone spatulas (Fig. 8:2), a basalt slingstone (Fig. 8:3) and one basalt grinding stone fragment (Fig. 8:4). None of these finds can be unconditionally assigned to the Intermediate Bronze Age. The slingstone can be dated to the Early Chalcolithic period that is present in the area of 'En Yizra''el.

The Flint Assemblage Ofer Marder and Howard Smithline

The small (n = 233) Tel Yizra''el flint assemblage (Table 1) represents three different periods: the Early Chalcolithic period, to which a number of items can be attributed, the Early Bronze Age III and the Intermediate Bronze Age. These artifacts, which were found in a matrix consisting of alluvial accumulations and brick material, were clearly not in primary deposition. The material was only selectively sifted, which resulted in a limited artifact sample. This is most apparent in the small number of retrieved chips (n = 3). We, therefore, present the flint artifacts as a single collection with special attention paid to diagnostic tools.

Most of the artifacts are made of good quality, fine-grained flint, which was used for the production of ad hoc tools. Of special note are six Canaanean blades, five of which were made on fine-grained brown to buff high quality flint, possibly of Eocene origin.

The debitage consists mostly of flakes and primary elements, with blades and bladelets

Туре	No.	%
Debitage	·	
Primary elements	36	24.5
Flakes	90	61.2
Blades\bladelets	8	5.4
CTEs	13	8.8
Subtotal debitage	147	99.9
Debris	·	
Chunks	36	92.3
Chips	3	7.7
Subtotal debris	39	100.0
General		
Debitage	147	63.1
Debris	39	16.7
Cores	12	5.2
Tools	35	15.0
Total	233	100.0

Table 1. The Flint Assemblage

Table 2. Core Frequencies

Туре	No.	%
Single platform (flakes)	2	16.7
Single platform (blades/bladelets)	2	16.7
Two striking platforms (flakes)	1	8.3
Two striking platforms (blades/ bladelets)	1	8.3
Amorphous	4	33.3
Core on flake	1	8.3
Fragment	1	8.3
Total	12	99.9

being less common (Table 1). Only twelve cores were among the finds with amorphous, singleplatform cores being more common (Fig. 9:1, 2). Two cores with striking platforms and a core on a flake were also found (Table 2). The majority of the cores were intended for flake production, although blade and bladelets were also knapped from some of the cores (Table 2; Fig. 9:2). One single platform core (Fig. 9:2) made of semi-translucent flint possibly belongs to the Early Chalcolithic period. Among the

Table 3. Tool Frequencies

Туре	No.	%
Canaanean sickle blades	5	13.9
Canaanean retouched blade	1	2.8
Sidescraper	1	2.8
Endscrapers	2	5.6
Broken tabular scraper	1	2.8
Denticulates	4	11.1
Awls	6	16.7
Borers	4	11.1
Retouched flakes	8	22.2
Retouched blades	2	5.6
Neolithic sickle blade	1	2.8
Blade with pressure retouch	1	2.8
Total	36	100.2

tools, most common are retouched flakes, perforators (awls and borers), Canaanean sickle blades (Fig. 10:1–3) and denticulates (Table 3). In addition, endscrapers, retouched blades, a retouched Canaanean blade (Fig. 10:4), a sidescraper and one fragmented non-cortical tabular scraper (Fig. 10:5) were retrieved.

Of special note are three Early Chalcolithicperiod tools. One is a small, broken, bifacially flaked borer with a triangular cross-section and remains of polish that suggest that this item was initially used as a bifacial before being modified into a borer (Fig. 9:3). The second tool is a typical Wadi Rabah-type sickle blade (Fig. 9:4). It is wide, backed by bipolar retouch and truncated, and its working edge is modified by regular denticulation. The third is a broken blade fashioned by pressure retouching mainly on the dorsal surface while minute pressure flaking was found also on its ventral surface (Fig. 9:5).

Of the six Canaanean blades, four are broken on both ends (Fig. 10:3, 4). The remaining two blades are broken on one end with truncation on the proximal end (Fig. 10:1). One unusually wide blade (29 mm; Fig. 10:2) is distally broken and resembles in its morphology the wide reaping knife commonly attributed to















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Fig. 9. Flint cores (1, 2) and tools (3–5).

No.	Locus	Basket	Description
1	101	1004	Amorphous core
2	106	1019	Single platform core
3	101		Bifacially fashioned borer
4	107	1025	Wadi Rabah-type sickle blade
5	101	1007	Blade modified by pressure retouch







No.	Locus	Basket	Description
1	103	1008	Canaanean sickle blade
2	104	1011	Canaanean sickle blade
3	107	1021	Canaanean sickle blade
4	104	1013	Canaanean retouched blade
5	106	1019	Possible tabular scraper

the Intermediate Bronze Age (Bankirer 2002; Rosen 1997).

The working edges of the Canaanean sickle blades are either plain or finely retouched (Fig. 10:1–3). Gloss appears on both edges of three blades. On the remainder, gloss is restricted to one edge while the opposite edge is cortical (Fig. 10:1). Two of the blades are fragmented and severely burnt. They exhibit possible evidence of asphalt application. One has a dark line on its working edge and the other has a spot on its ventral side. As a result of intense burning, the asphalt identification is not definite.

Discussion. The Canaanean blades and the broken tabular scraper are attributable to the EB III/Intermediate Bronze Age tool kit (Rosen 1997). The few Early Chalcolithic items are representative of the Wadi Rabah culture present at 'En Yizra''el (Gophna and Shlomi 1997).

Worthy of special mention are the two Canaanean sickle blades with suspected asphalt residue. Until recently, evidence of asphalt on Early Bronze Age artifacts has been restricted to areas south of Bet She'an, mainly in EB IB (cf. Marder, Braun and Milevski 1995; Milevski, Marder and Goring-Morris 2002; Milevski 2005). This is one of the few reportings of asphalt on flint artifacts dating to EB III/Intermediate Bronze Age.

CONCLUSIONS

Zori recorded 22 Intermediate Bronze Age sites in his survey of the central and eastern Jezreel Valley. In the specific vicinity of Tel Yizra''el, the closest Intermediate Bronze Age sites are Gid'ona (Zori's Site 38) and Site 106 (Fig. 1:3, 4), 3–4 km to the east, as well as the recently excavated major Murhan site (Fig. 1:5; Zori's Site 112; Covello-Paran, forthcoming),⁵ spread along the southern and eastern slopes of Giv'at Qumi, an additional 3 km further east. All four sites are situated slightly above the valley floor and within the boundaries of the Jezreel Valley. Two sites, also with a Jezreel

Valley orientation (Fig. 1:6, 7; Zori's Sites 71, 74),⁶ were enumerated approximately 11 km to the west. There is a large Intermediate Bronze Age presence in 'Afula (Zori's Site 76), approximately 7 km distant. It is the closest site to the north (Gal and Covello-Paran 1996:38-44). Finally, Muqeibla (Fig. 1:8; Zori's Site 61), c. 6 km away, was the sole site specified as possessing an Intermediate Bronze Age presence. In 2002, Karen Covello-Paran (pers. comm.) directed excavations in a number of burial caves in Jalame (Fig. 1:9; Zori's Site 62), in close proximity to Muqeibla, among which were burials dating to the Intermediate Bronze Age, thus adding Jalame to the Intermediate Bronze Age site distribution pattern.⁷

Zori's remark (1977:44), that the rather meager Intermediate Bronze Age finds from Muqeibla are significant due to their presence in a landscape lacking material earlier than the Byzantine period, is relevant for Jalame as well. Muqeibla and Jalame, however, are situated on the southern side of the plateau on which Tel Yizra''el is located, and not within the valley or its periphery. Their location places them in direct contact with the Jezreel Valley, more oriented toward the center and south of the country.

The discovery of an Intermediate Bronze Age habitation at Tel Yizra''el, thus, fills a lacuna in the Intermediate Bronze Age settlement pattern in the picture of the western foothills of Mt. Gilboa and the south-central approach to the Jezreel Valley. The scant remains uncovered in our excavation may be explained by its situation at the periphery of the site. The report from another sounding⁸ mentions the uncovering of Intermediate Bronze Age potsherds and possible remains of structures, over a distance of more than 100 m in two sections. As a result of the trench findings, the planned pipe channel was moved some distance away to archaeologically sterile soil, in order to limit the necessity of further excavation and to avoid unnecessary damage to the site.

The physical location of the Tel Yizra''el Intermediate Bronze Age site, on a previously unsettled alluvial accumulation adjacent to fertile fields, is consistent with the behavior exhibited at other settlement sites during this period, e.g., Horbat Qishron (Smithline 2002:44–45) and Murhan (Tel Yosef; Zori 1971:10; 1977:81). Not distant from the settlement, and crucial for its sustenance, is the major water source of 'En Yizra''el.

The small dimensions of the excavation do not allow for an in-depth discussion of the Intermediate Bronze Age presence and its socio-economic structure. Nonetheless, one can say that the findings at Tel Yizra^(*)el fit well with the settlement pattern of the early third millennium BCE following the decline of the Early Bronze Age cities.

The diffusion of Khirbet Kerak Ware in the Jezreel Valley has not been as yet subject to an intensive study. Milevski (2005:83), basing himself for the most part on Zori's survey, collated most of the known sites in the Jezreel Valley where Khirbet Kerak Ware has been found to date. The sites are few and contain very limited assemblages. As is presently known, Tel Yosef, is one of only a few sites that occupied a niche in the inhospitable muddy valley floor, likewise Horbat Qishron. The remaining sites lie somewhat above the valley floor. At Tel Yizra''el, Khirbet Kerak Ware was discovered both on the top of the mound and at 'En Yizra''el (Gophna and Shlomi 1997: Fig. 6), but its presence on the slope is more problematic and more difficult to explain in the absence of architectural remains. Possibly, an as yet elusive EB III habitation was established in close proximity to the excavated area. In any case, evidence of an EB III (KKW)-Intermediate Bronze Age occupation sequence, such as appears at Tel Yizra''el, is rarely found in the region.

Locus	Description	Upper Height	Lower Height	Date Opened	Date Closed
100	Above top soil				
101	Alluvial/earth surface	32.12	31.42	24.7.2007	29.7.2007
102	West quarter of square in light colored earth and alluvium	31.90	31.38	25.7.2007	29.7.2007
103	Alluvial with sherds	32.45	31.80	26.7.2007	26.7.2007
104	Combining of L101 and 102; fine and light colored earth	31.38	31.23	29.7.2007	30.7.2007
105	Gravelly earth makeup with sherds, stones and dark soil	31.53	30.39	30.7.2007	6.8.2007
106	Eastern half of L104; mix of alluvium, loose earth, ash and gravel	31.26	30.82	1.8.2007	1.8.2007
107	= L102; extending excavation to western balk; alluvium and earth accumulations	32.13	30.59	2.8.2007	6.8.2007

APPENDIX 1. TEL YIZRA''EL LOCUS LIST

NOTES

¹ Nehemia Zori was an indefatigable pioneering researcher and surveyor of ancient sites in and around the Jezreel Valley. For consistency, we have decided to spell his name "Zori" although his name may be written also as "Tsori". Both spellings refer to the same individual.

² For a comprehensive overview of the site and its history, including historical references, research, and visits by travelers, scholars, and pilgrims, see Ussishkin and Woodhead 1992:3–10.

³ The survey was supervised by Paul Croft of the British School of Archaeology at Jerusalem (Gophna and Shlomi 1997:73).

⁴ The excavation (Permit No. A–5121) was conducted during the last week of July and the first week of August, 2007 under the direction of the author, on behalf of the IAA and financed by the 'En Harod Water Cooperative. Assistance was provided by Hagit Tahan-Rosen (pottery drawing), Ofer Marder (flints), Anastasia Shapiro (GPS), Natalya Zak (final plans) and Michael Smilansky (flint drawing).

⁵ For a long time, the important excavations conducted by Zori at Murhan provided the only indepth picture of the Intermediate Bronze Age in this area. I would like to thank Karen Covello-Paran for allowing me to read her article on Murhan prior to publication.

⁶ Zori's Site 74, termed by him, "a site near Zebuba," was excavated as Nahal Rimmonim by Karen Covello-Paran (2002).

⁷ I would like to thank Karen Covello-Paran for fruitful discussions of the Intermediate Bronze Age in the Jezreel Valley.

⁸ A series of mechanically excavated trenches was carried out by Walid Atrash and Zach Horowitz (both of the IAA). One section of the trenches yielded ceramic finds and was later excavated as Tel Yizra''el. The sounding-trench report is catalogued in the IAA archives without a registration number.

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