'Atiqot 106, 2022

A Middle Bronze Age II Burial Cave at Beit Ṣafafa, Jerusalem

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Introduction

In the summer of 2013, a burial cave (Cave 1) was excavated following its discovery in the course of development works carried out by mechanical equipment during road construction in Beit Ṣafafa, Jerusalem (Fig. 1; map ref. 218496/628154).[1] The cave was severely damaged by these works and was subsequently partially looted. In the spring of 2014, two damaged caves nearby (Fig. 1) were discovered and documented, but not excavated: Cave 2, about 12 m northwest of Cave 1 (map ref. 218486/628157), and Cave 3, about 30 m northwest of the cave (map ref. 218462/628172). Caves 2 and 3 yielded few finds, which were dated to Middle Bronze Age II and the Intermediate Bronze Age.[2]

The burial caves were hewn on the southern slope of a chalky hill, just above the northern bank of a small wadi, and were part of a larger burial site located at the eastern end of the Refa'im Valley (Fig. 2).

Beit Ṣafafa was surveyed in the past by Kloner (2000:31–34) and Eirikh-Rose and Levy (2012). Quarries, rock-cuttings, terraces and many cave openings were documented. A large Roman-period cemetery (third–fourth centuries CE) was excavated on the northern and southern slopes of the wadi (Zissu and Moyal 1998; Landes-Nagar 2015a; 2015b; 2017; Adawi 2016). Over the years, modern development in the southwestern part of Jerusalem—the spurs and slopes surrounding the Refa'im Valley—has led to extensive archaeological

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[1] The excavation, on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority (Permit No. A-6898) and financed by the Moriah Jerusalem Development Corporation, was directed by Alexander Wiegmann (field photography, GPS), with the assistance of Nissan Nehama (administration), Ya'akov Billig (inspection), Mark Kunin (surveying and drafting), Yossi Nagar (physical anthropology), Argita Gyrman Levanon (pottery drawing), Irina Lidsky-Reznikov (artifact drawing), Tamar Gonen (restoration), Raisa Vinitsky (metal conservation), Clara Amit (artifact photography) and Natalia Zak (plans and location map). Special thanks are due to the IAA Jerusalem District staff and the Antiquities Theft Prevention Unit.

[2] The chronology used in this article: Intermediate Bronze Age (2500–2000/1900 BCE; Regev et al. 2012), MB I (2000/1900–1850/1800 BCE), MB II (1850/1800–1700 BCE), MB III (1700–1600 BCE) (Höflmayer 2017).

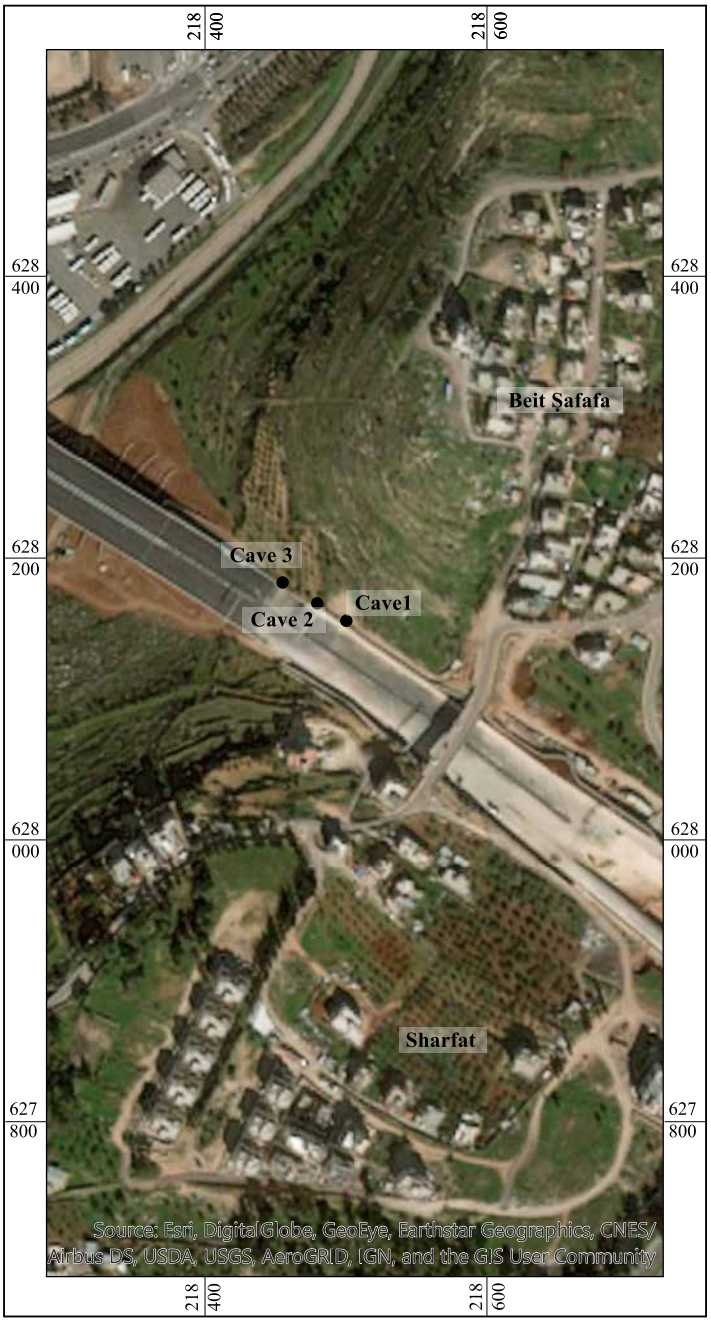


Fig. 1. Location map.

excavations, exposing Intermediate and Middle Bronze Age settlements (Edelstein, Milevski and Aurant 1998; Eisenberg 1993; Eirikh-Rose 2015; Fig. 2:2, 7), a Middle Bronze Age cultic structure (Ein-Mor 2011; Fig. 2:11) and large Intermediate and Middle Bronze Age burial grounds, where numerous burial caves were hewn (Ovadiah 1994; Ben-Arieh 2000;

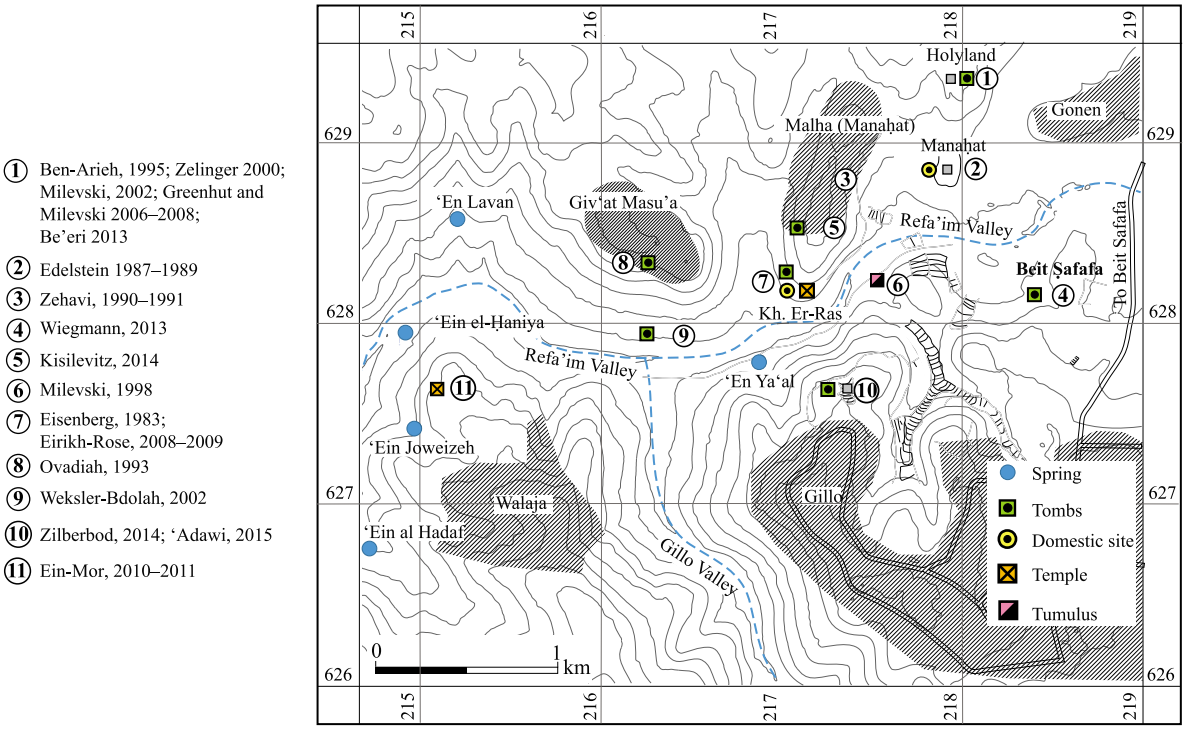


Fig. 2. Location map of Intermediate and Middle Bronze Age sites in the vicinity of the Beit Ṣafafa burial caves (after Kisilevitz and Turgeman-Yaffe, forthcoming).

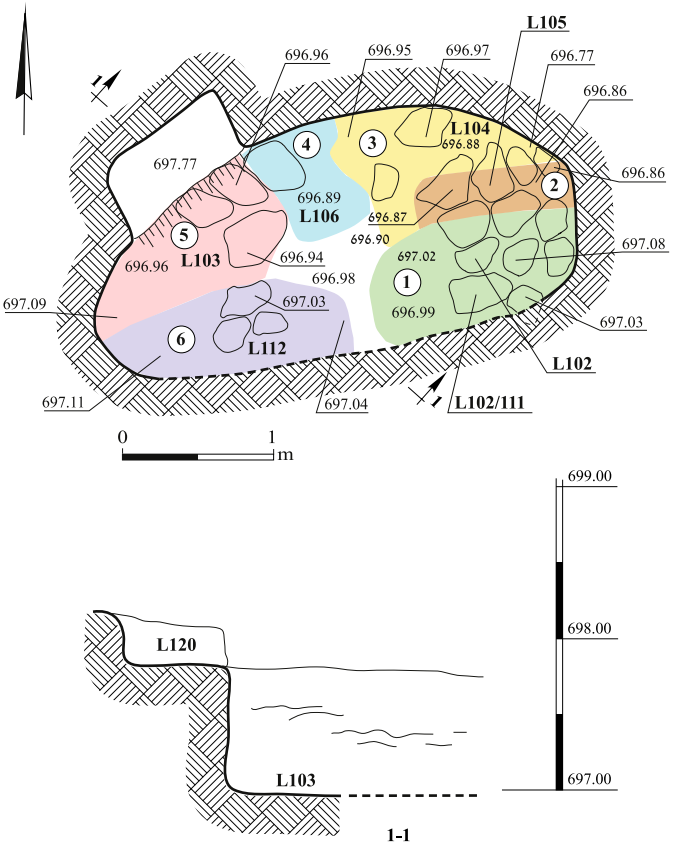
Milevski and Ben-Or 2007; Greenhut, Milevski and Agha 2008; Kisilevitz et al. 2017: Weksler-Bdolah 2017; Zilberbod and Be'eri 2017; Fig. 2:1, 3–6, 8–10).

The finds within Cave 1 were clustered in six distinct groups, comprising similar pottery types and metal finds. Each group is presented separately, followed by a typological discussion of the pottery.

Excavation and Documentation

Cave 1

In Cave 1, a single burial phase was identified and dated to MB II, presumably sealed prior to the damage caused by the mechanical equipment, which destroyed its southern half (Plan 1; Fig. 3). The cave was oval in shape (original dimensions c. 1.8 × 3.2 m). A carved rectangular surface, some 0.8 m above the cave's floor on its northwestern side, may have been the remains of the bottom of a shaft that led into the cave (L120; Figs. 4, 5). The cave interior was completely covered with stone collapse from the ceiling and a very dense light brown, concrete-like sediment, which was also found inside the complete ceramic vessels. This sediment and the humidity inside the cave led to the disintegration of the human and animal bones, making it nearly impossible to identify bone articulation.



Plan 1. Cave 1, plan and section.

Fig. 3. Cave 1 prior to excavation, looking north.

Fig. 4. The lower portion of the shaft that led into Cave 1; note the stone pavement in the foreground, looking west.

Fig. 5. Cave 1, stone pavement, looking west.

A few vessels were found outside the cave in the stone rubble of what was the southern part of the cave, destroyed by the mechanical equipment (L99; Fig. 6). The removal of the light brown sediment in the northern part of the cave revealed a stone pavement (Fig. 5) and at least 65 complete vessels, which were clustered in six groups (Plan 1); additional groups were probably clustered in the destroyed southern part of the cave. Many of the vessels were found on the floor pavement, while others were found between the pavement slabs on the bedrock.

Burial Group 1 (L102/111; Figs. 7–10).— This group comprised nine complete pottery vessels, two toggle pins, a scarab and many crushed pottery vessels. The bones of at least one adult individual were found scattered in these loci (see Nagar, this volume).

Burial Group 2 (L105; Figs. 11–15).— Some of the vessels were found piled one atop the other, against the cave's eastern wall. Seven complete pottery vessels were found, including a rare twin vessel that had been placed between two *in situ* platter bowls (Figs. 14; 15:5). Many crushed pottery vessels were found, as well as a single bronze earring (Fig. 15:8).

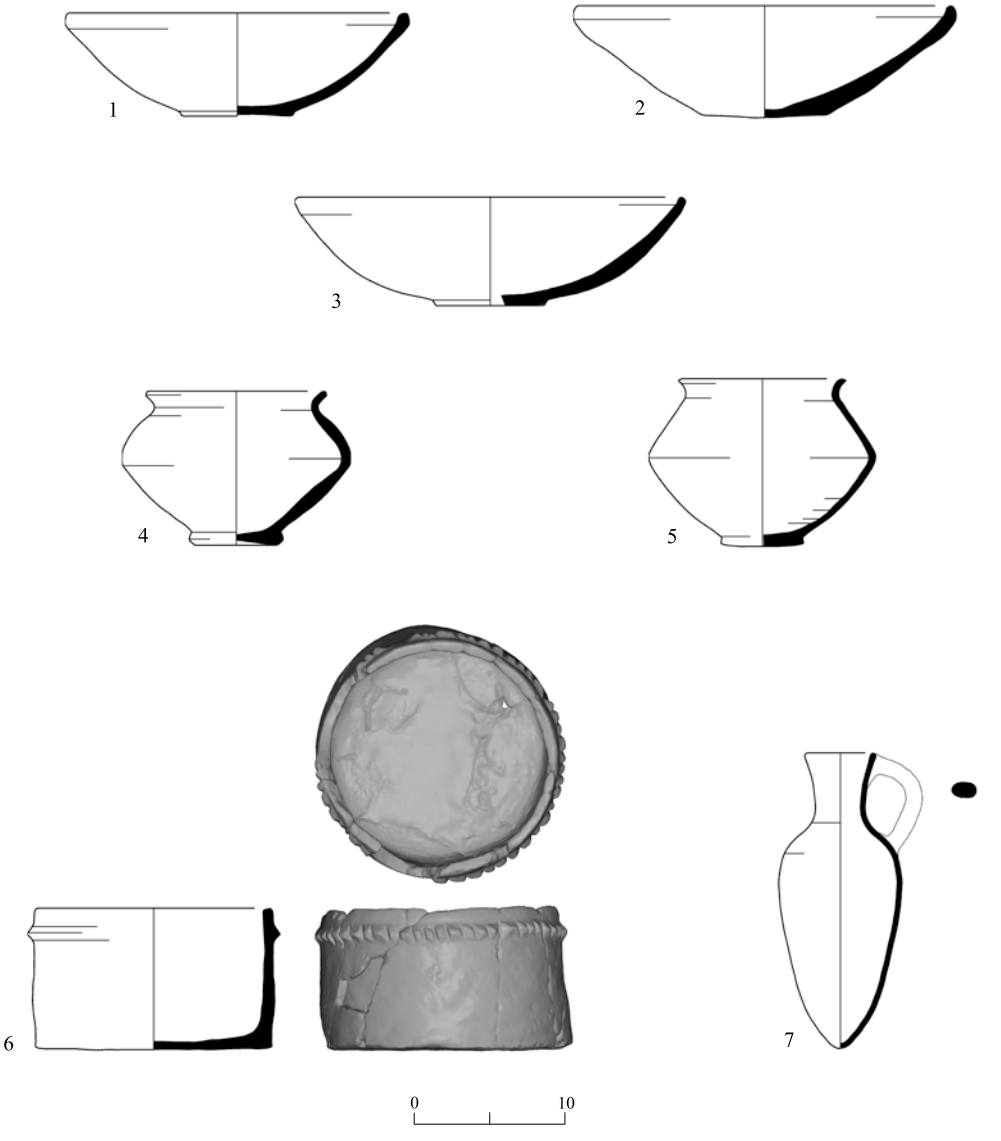


Fig. 6. Pottery vessels from Cave 1, L99.

No.	Vessel Type	Basket	Description
1	Platter bowl	1061/1	Brown clay, many white grits
2	Platter bowl	1079/1	Red brown clay, many white and red grits
3	Platter bowl	1063/14	Brown clay, white and gray grits
4	Deep carinated bowl	1075/1	Brown clay, white grits
5	Deep carinated bowl	1062/2	Brown clay, white and gray grits
6	Cooking pot	1077/6	Brown clay, tiny shiny grits, applied rope decoration
7	Dipper juglet	1061	Light brown clay, many white and red grits, coarse ware

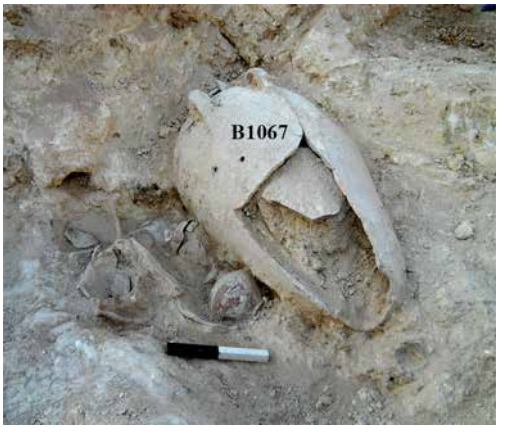


Fig. 7. Cave 1, Group 1: pithos (B1067) and smashed pottery, looking north.

Fig. 8. Cave 1, Group 1: jug (B1010), looking north.

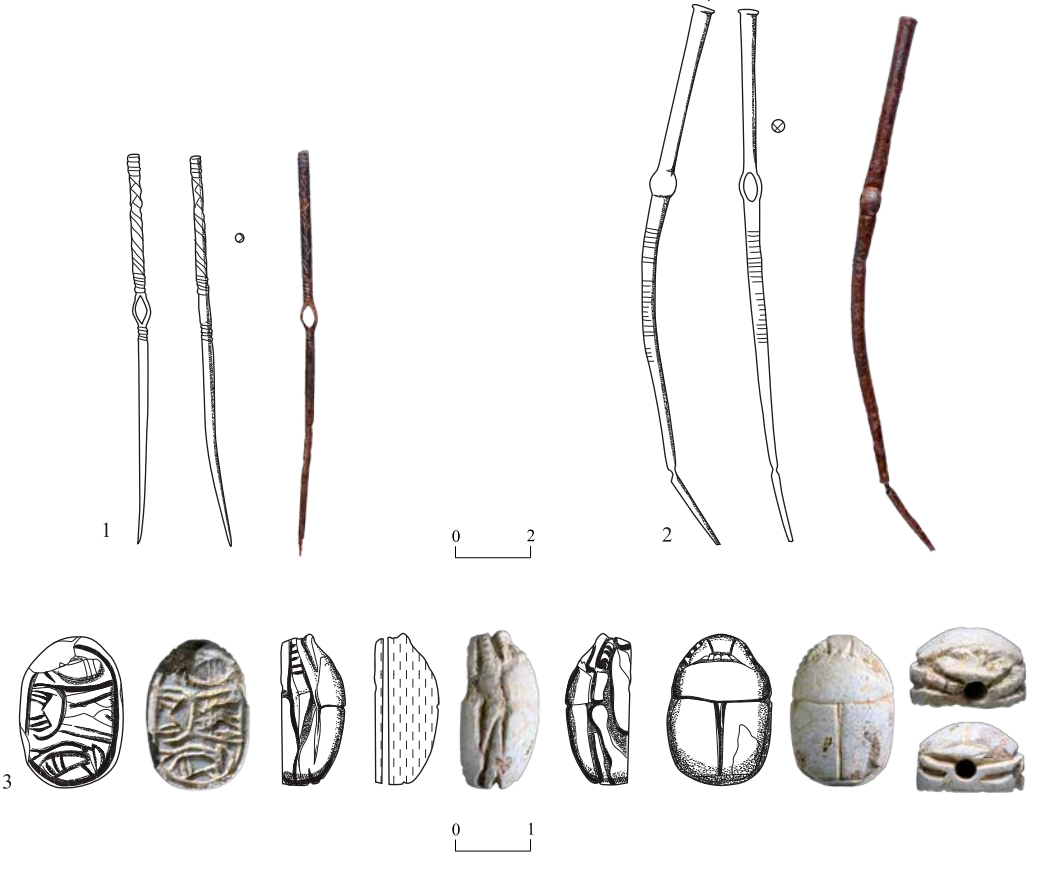


Fig. 9. Small finds from Cave 1, Group 1, L102/111.

No.	Type	Basket	Description
1	Toggle pin	1003	Bronze
2	Toggle pin	1060	Bronze
3	Scarab	1001	Steatite

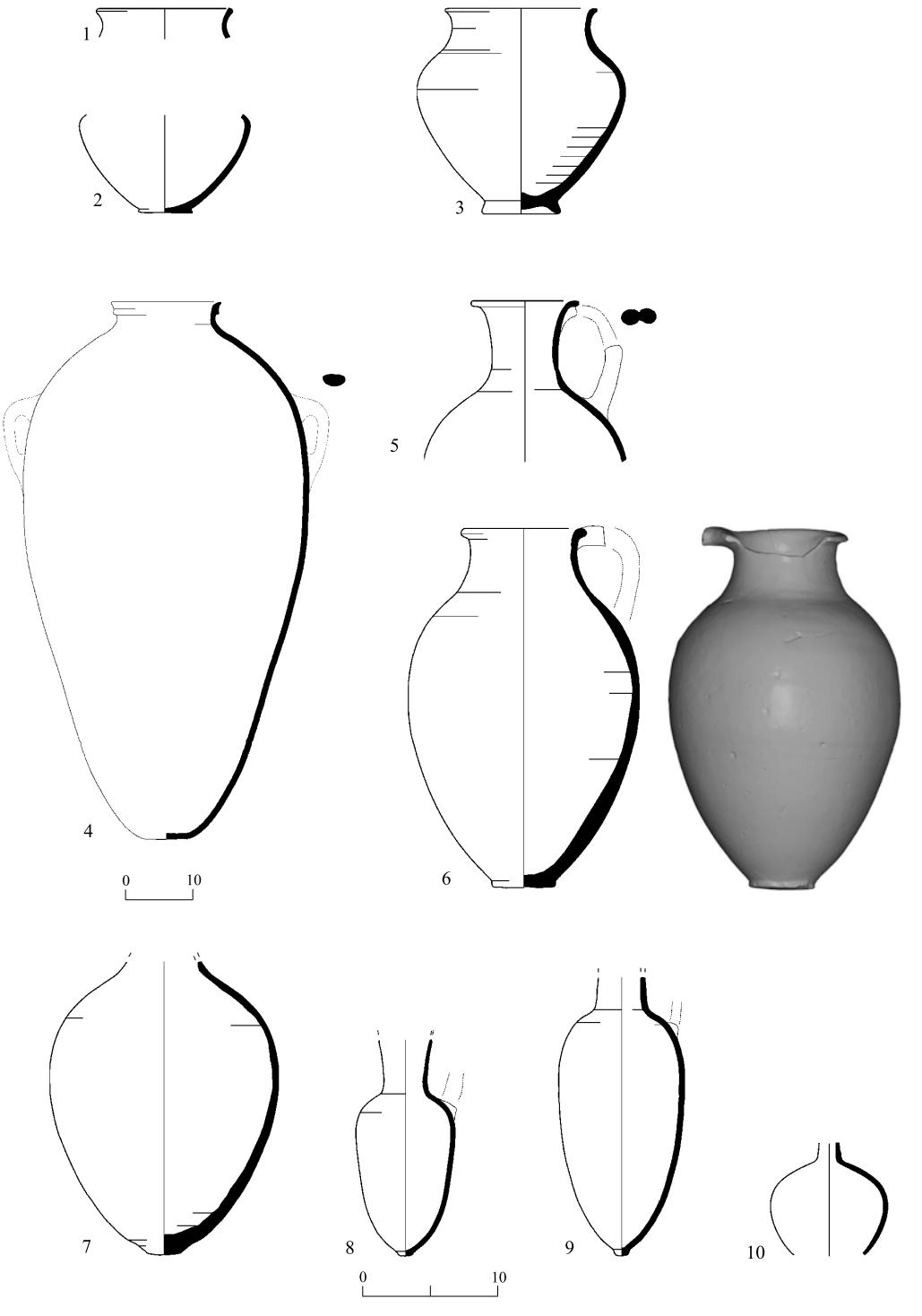


Fig. 10. Pottery vessels from Cave 1, Group 1, L102/L111.

◂ **Fig. 10**

No.	Type	Basket	Locus	Description
1	Deep carinated bowl	1012/1	102	Brown clay, white grits
2	Bowl/Lamp	1091/6	102	Brown clay, soot marks; secondary use of body of a deep carinated bowl
3	Deep carinated bowl	1000/5	102	Brown clay, many white grits
4	Pithos	1067	111	Brown clay, white and gray grits, four handles
5	Jug	1002/1	102	Brown clay, white grits, double handle
6	Jug	1010	102	Brown clay, many white, red and gray grits
7	Jug	1002/2	102	Brown clay, many white grits
8	Dipper juglet	1096	102	Brown clay, many white grits
9	Dipper juglet	1004	102	Brown clay, many white grits, gray core
10	Juglet	1080	102	Dark gray clay

Fig. 11. Cave 1, Group 2: pile of vessels, looking east.

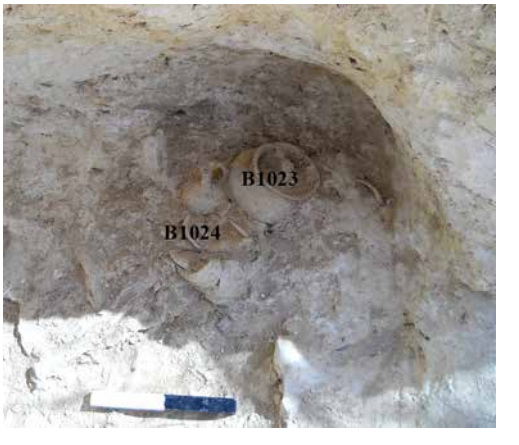


Fig. 12. Cave 1, Group 2: the middle part of the pile of vessels, looking east.

Fig. 13. Cave 1, Group 2: the lower part of the pile of vessels, looking east.

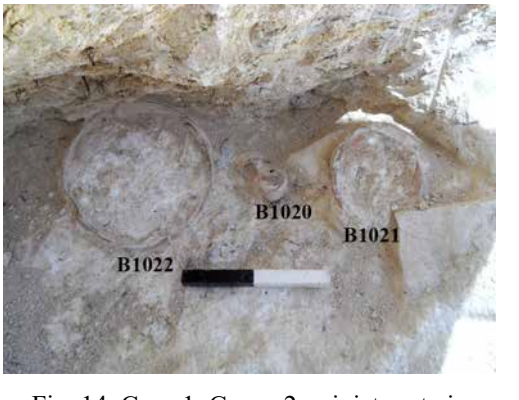


Fig. 14. Cave 1, Group 2: miniature twin vessel lying between two platter bowls, looking east.

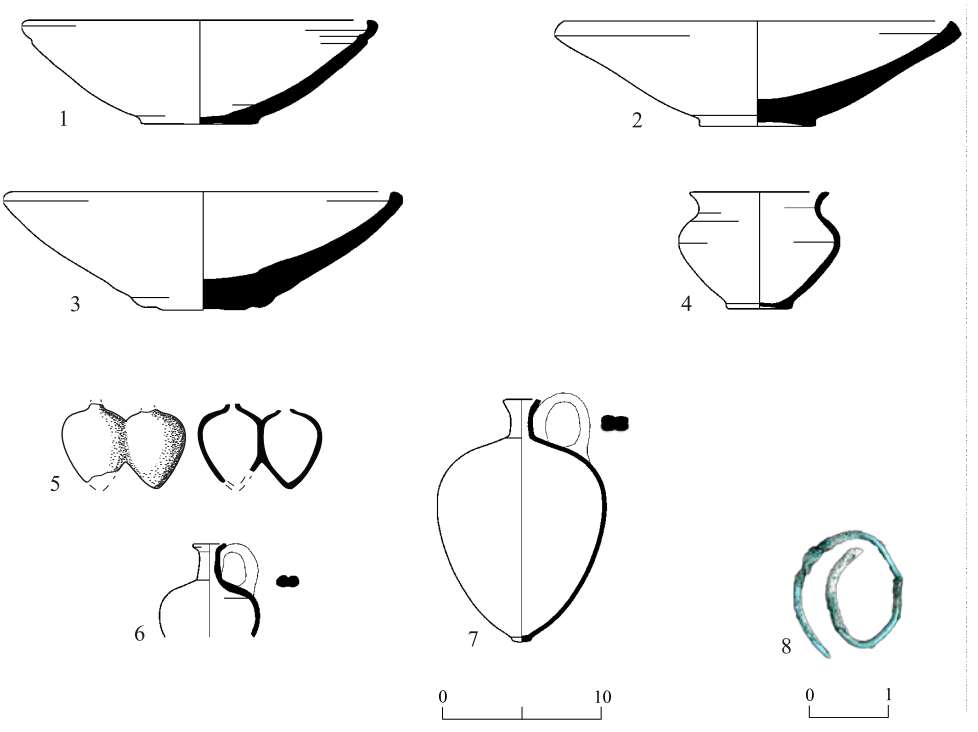


Fig 15. Pottery vessels and an earring from Cave 1, Group 2, L105.

No.	Type	Basket	Description
1	Platter bowl	1022/1	Brown clay, many white and gray grits
2	Platter bowl	1098/1	Brown clay, many white grits
3	Platter bowl	1098/2	Brown clay, white grits, gray core, crude base
4	Deep carinated bowl	1023	Brown clay, many white grits
5	Twin juglets	1020	Brown clay, grits barely visible
6	Piriform juglet	1024	Brown clay, red grits, double handle
7	Piriform juglet	1027	Brown clay, white and gray grits
8	Bronze earring	1033	Curved spiraling wire

Burial Group 3 (L104; Fig. 16).— Three complete pottery vessels and one or two crushed vessels were retrieved, as well as few scattered non-diagnostic human bones (see Nagar, this volume).

Burial Group 4 (L106; Fig. 17).— Three complete pottery vessels and numerous potsherds seem to indicate that there had been other vessels that did not survive the collapse of the ceiling. A toggle pin (Fig. 17:5), a unique cylinder seal (Fig. 17:8) and an amulet (Fig. 17:7) were found, as well as the scattered bones of at least two individuals (see Nagar, this volume).

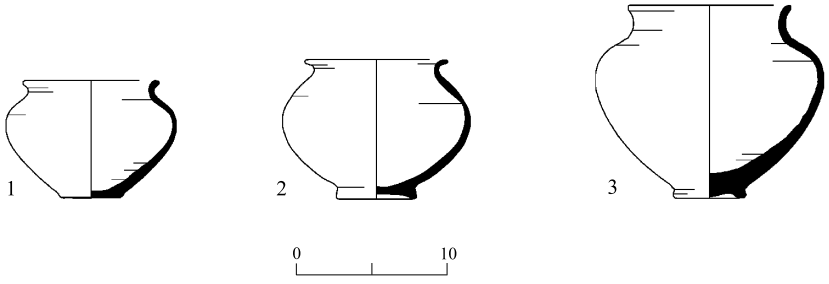


Fig. 16. Deep carinated bowls from Cave 1, Group 3, L104.

No.	Basket	Description
1	1019	Brown clay, white grits
2	1017	Brown clay, gray grits
3	1018	Brown clay, white, gray and red-brown grits

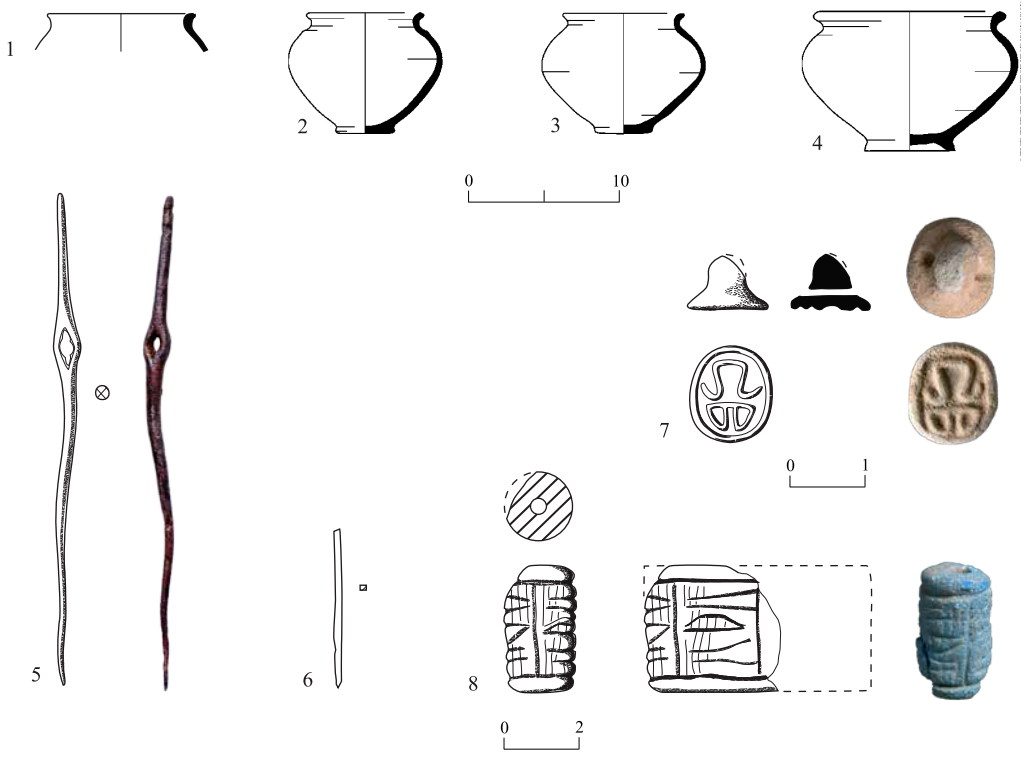


Fig. 17. Pottery vessels and small finds from Cave 1, Group 4, L106.

No.	Type	Basket	Description
1	Deep carinated bowl	1044	Brown clay, white grits
2	Deep carinated bowl	1042	Brown clay, many white grits
3	Deep carinated bowl	1030	
4	Deep carinated bowl	1036	
5	Toggle pin	1046	Bronze
6	Toggle pin	1032	Bronze
7	Amulet	1047	Steatite
8	Cylinder seal	1045	Frit

Burial Group 5 (L103; Figs. 18, 19).— Three complete vessels and the remains of three others—a bowl, a juglet and a jar—were found.

Burial Group 6 (L112; Figs. 20–23).— Thirteen complete vessels were found alongside many crushed ones.

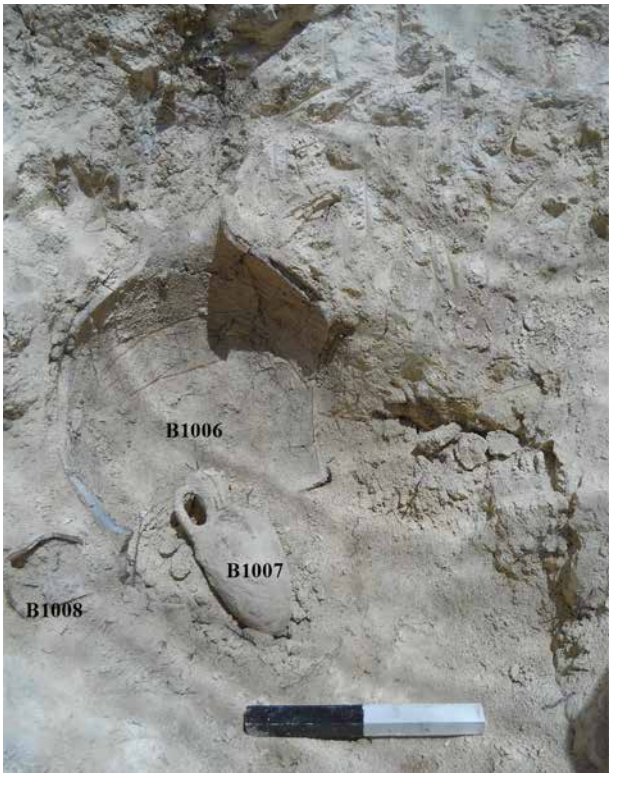


Fig. 18. Cave 1, Group 5: dipper juglet inside storage jar, looking north.

Fig. 19 ▸

No.	Type	Basket	Description
1	Jar	1006	Brown clay, many white grits
2	Dipper juglet	1007	Red-brown clay, many white grits
3	Piriform juglet	1008	Dark gray clay

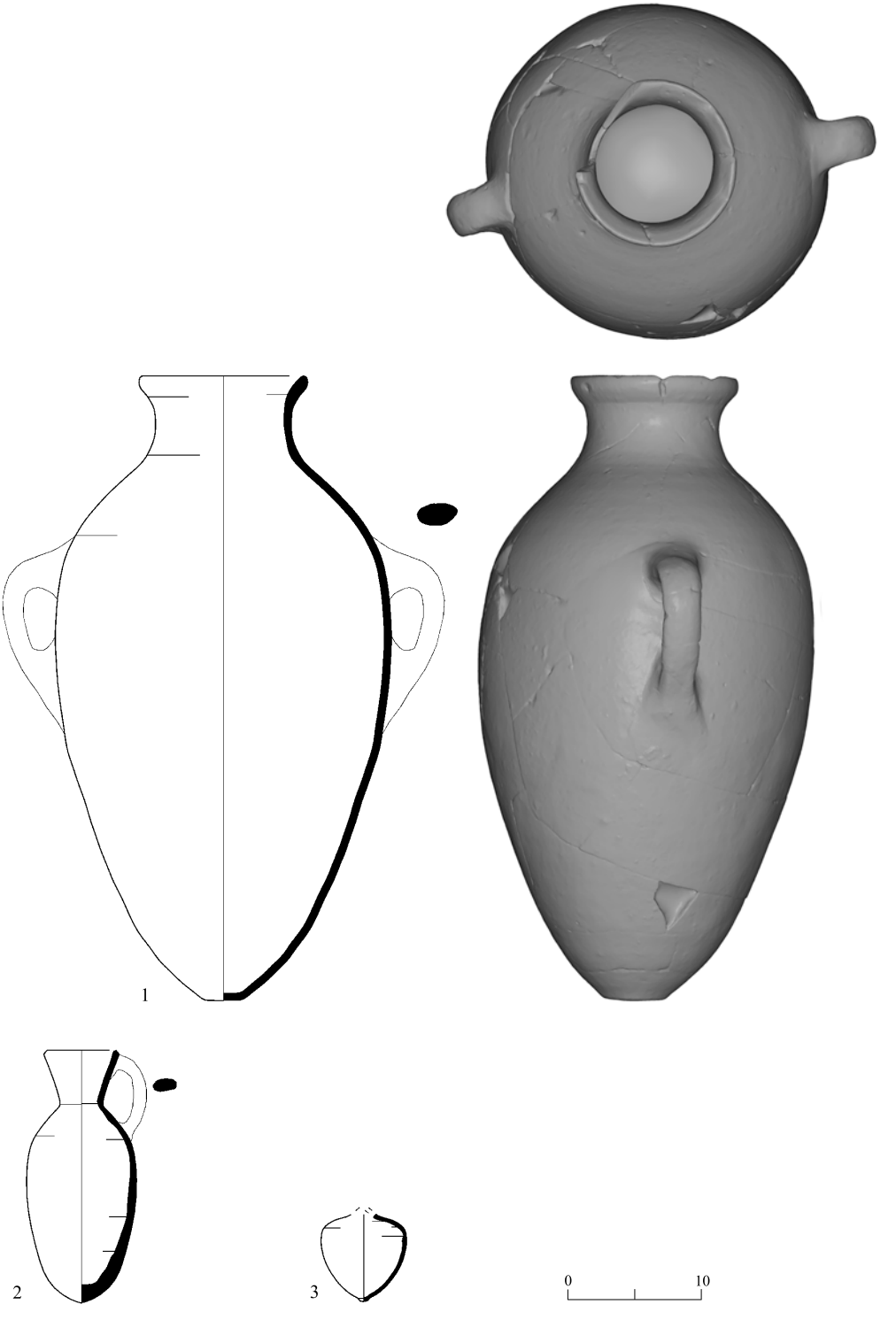


Fig. 19. Pottery from Cave 1, Group 5, L103.

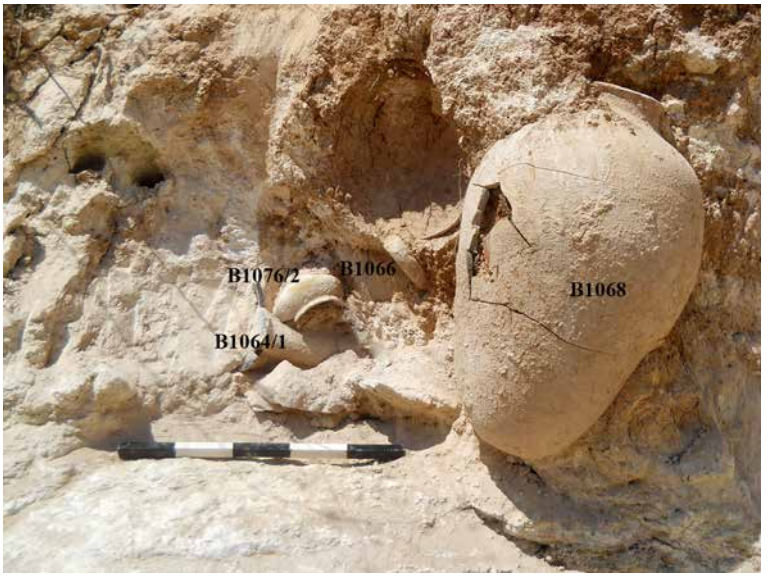


Fig. 20. Cave 1, Group 6: pottery vessels, looking west.

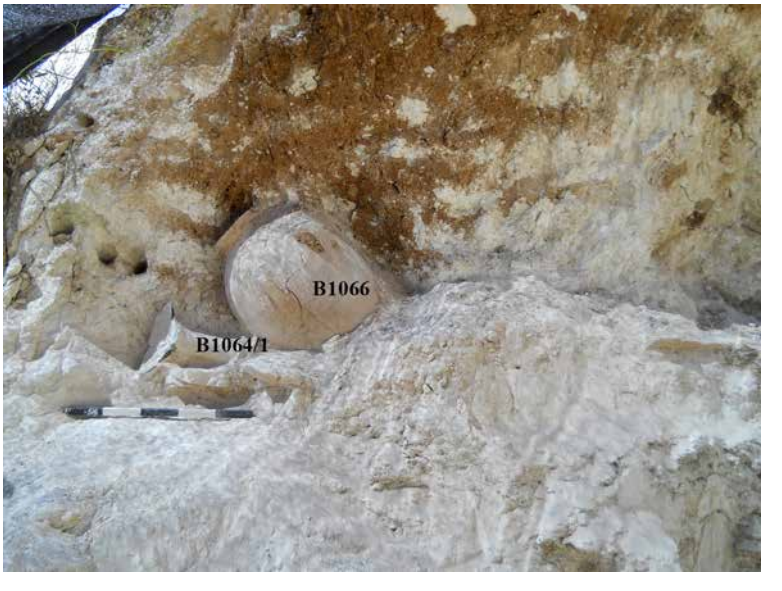


Fig. 21. Cave 1, Group 6: pottery vessels, looking west.

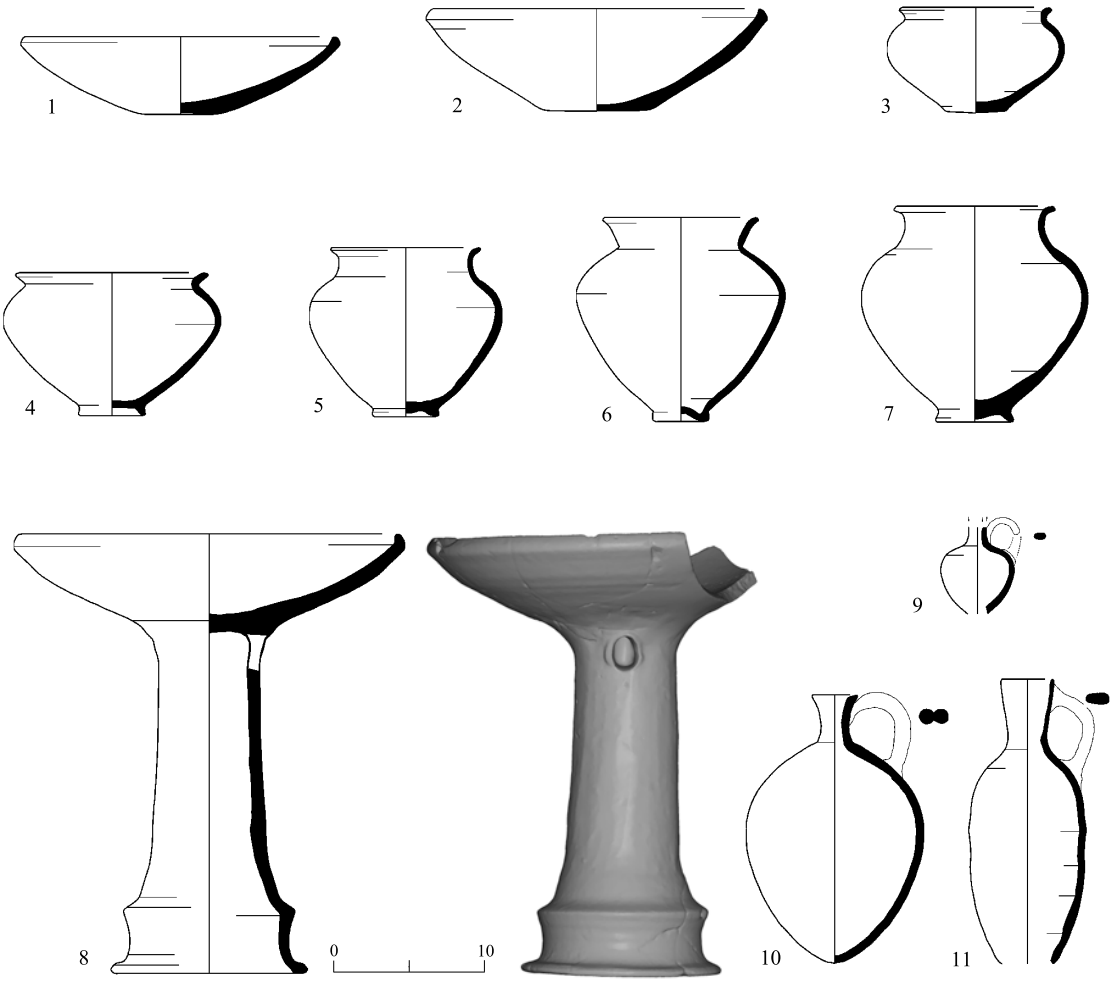


Fig. 22. Pottery from Cave 1, Group 6, L112.

No.	Type	Basket	Description
1	Platter bowl	1086/1	Brown clay, many white, red and gray grits
2	Platter bowl	1072/1	Brown clay, many white grits
3	Deep carinated bowl	1076/2	Brown clay, white and gray grits
4	Deep carinated bowl	1082/2	Brown clay, many white and red grits
5	Deep carinated bowl	1065	Red brown clay, many white grits
6	Deep carinated bowl	1073/1	Brown clay, many white, red and gray grits
7	Deep carinated bowl	1094	
8	Chalice/bowl on stand	1064/1	Brown clay, white grits
9	Piriform juglet	1090	Red brown clay, white grits
10	Piriform juglet	1088/1	Brown clay, white and gray grits
11	Dipper juglet	1083	Red brown clay, many white, red and gray grits

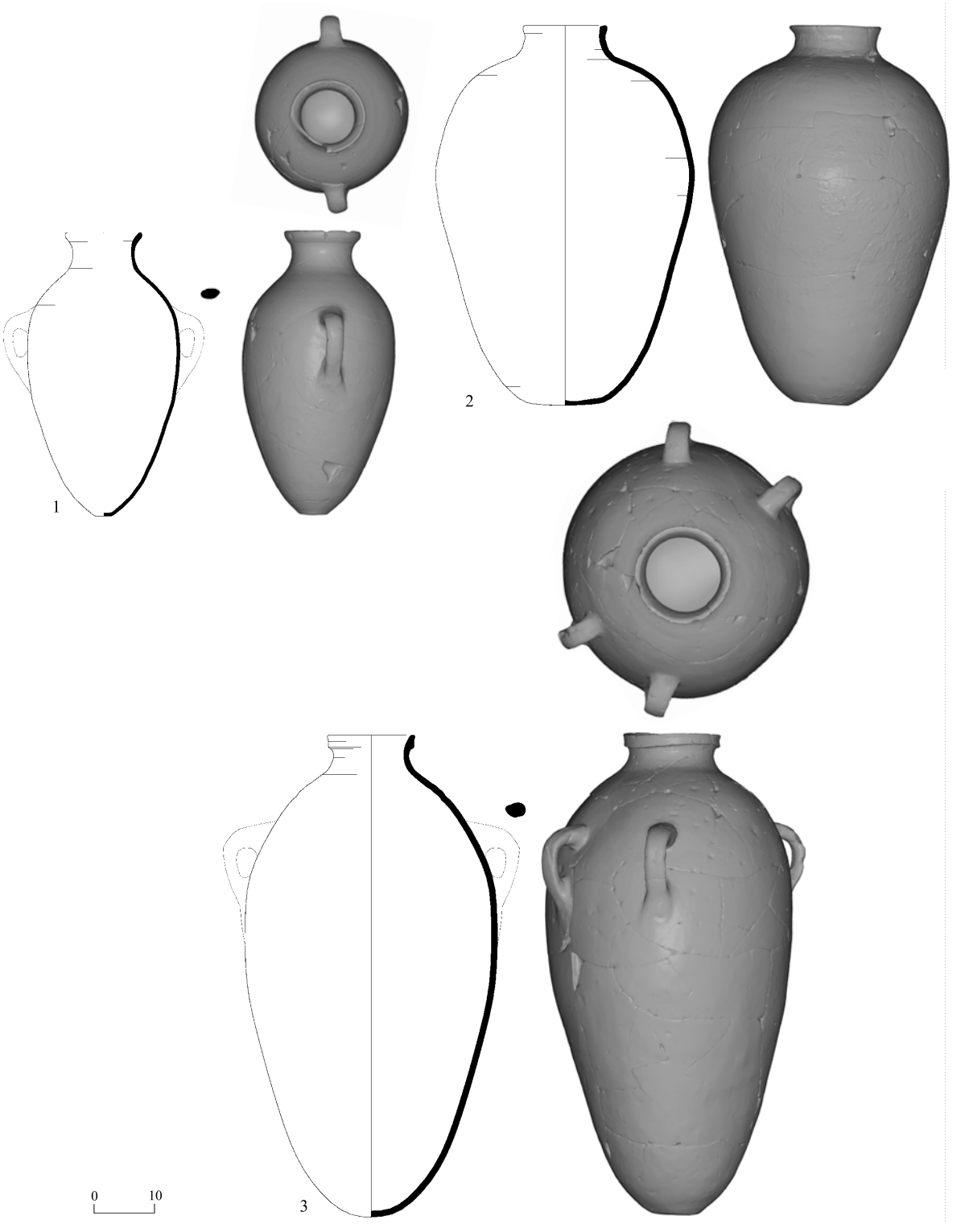


Fig. 23. Pottery vessels from Cave 1, Group 6, L112.

No.	Type	Basket	Description
1	Jar	1069	Brown clay, white grits
2	Pithos	1068	Light orange clay, white grits
3	Pithos	1066	Brown clay, white, red and gray grits

Cave 2

The remains of the northern part of a small cave whose dimensions could not be ascertained were found; the cave had been previously damaged and looted. It was filled with silt, from which a single bronze dagger dated to MB II was retrieved (Figs. 24, 25).

The well-preserved dagger blade (length 20.7 cm, max. width 4.8 cm) has slightly convex sides and a rounded midrib flanked by two parallel ribs that meet at the front of the blade. Two rounded rivets were observed in the tang of the blade. Similar dagger blades were found in MB II contexts at ʻEin es-Samiyeh (Dever 1975:28–29, Figs. 1:1, 3:1) and at Megiddo (Loud 1948: Pl. 178:3; Philip 1989:117–118, Type 13).

Cave 3

A nearly destroyed cave was documented. Only a small niche survived, which was not excavated. A few Intermediate Bronze Age sherds were found in the rubble outside the cave, including the profile of a typical carinated bowl (Fig. 26:1) and a jar with an everted rounded rim and a characteristic carination at the join of the neck and sholder (Fig. 26:2). These sherds indicate that the burial ground was already in use during this period.

Fig. 24. Cave 2, looking north.

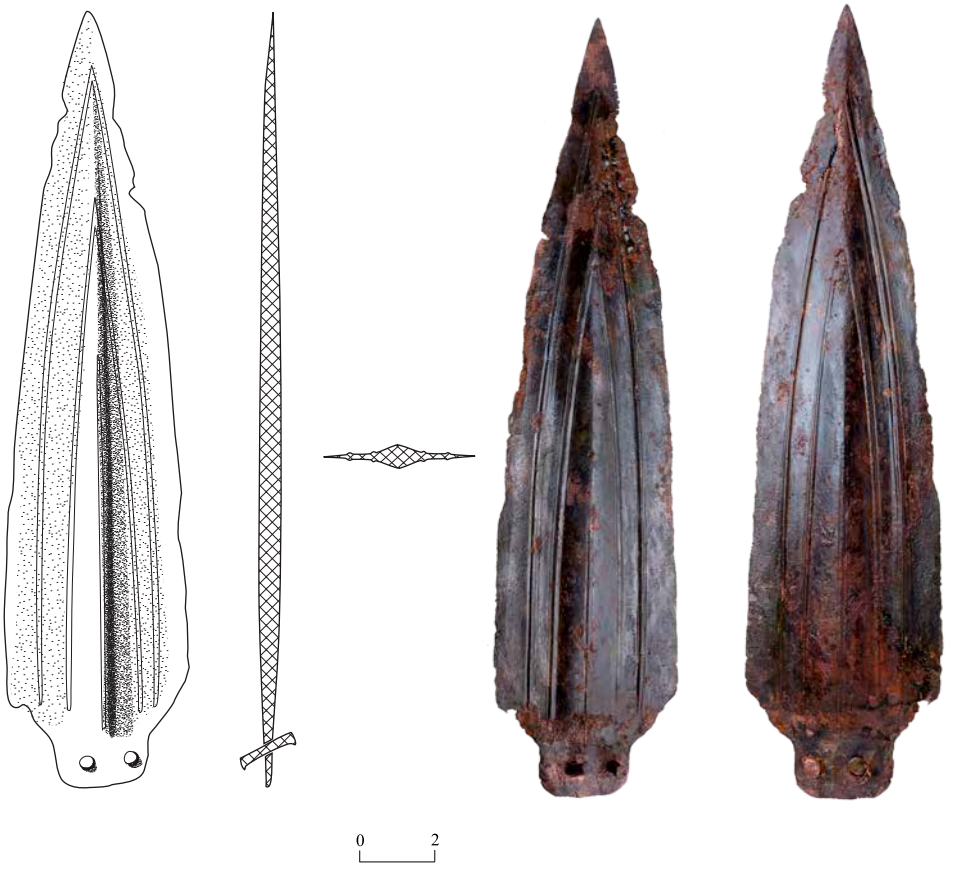


Fig. 25. Bronze dagger from Cave 2, L200 (B2000).

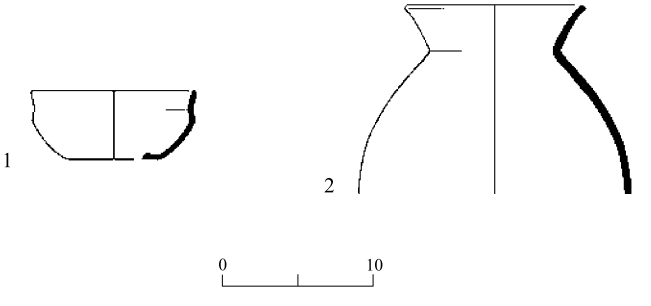


Fig. 26. Intermediate Bronze Age pottery vessels from Cave 3, L300.

No.	Type	Basket	Description
1	Carinated bowl	3000/1	Brown clay, white grits
2	Jar	3000/2	Brown clay, gray core, white grits; combed decoration on lower part of neck and shoulder

The Finds

Cave 1: Middle Bronze Age Assemblage

The Pottery

The ceramic assemblage found in the cave is typical of MB II. It is part of the standard MB II burial kit typical of the central hill country.

Bowls
Bowls are by far the most frequent pottery vessel in the assemblage (c. 54%; Tables 1, 2). They can be subdivided into two types: platter bowls and closed carinated bowls.

Platter Bowls (MNV = 8; Figs. 6:1–3; 15:1–3; 22:1, 2).— The platter bowl assemblage contains little out of the ordinary. Eight complete bowls were found. The bowls average 23 cm in diameter with none greater than 26 cm. All the rims are inturned, tapered rims being the most frequent (n = 6); one bowl has a rounded rim (Fig. 6:2) and another has a thickened rim (Fig. 15:2). Inturned rims are characteristic of MB II. Five of the bowls have a disc base (two concave and three flat) and the other three bowls have a flat base, one of which is coarse, and was apparently removed carelessly from the potter's wheel (Fig. 15:3). The Beit Ṣafafa platter bowls are plain, without surface treatment. Similar bowls were found at Tell Beit Mirsim (Ben-Arieh 2004: Figs. 2.7; 2.19:1–5); Giv'on (Prichard 1963: Figs. 20:2, 3, 5–11, 13, 14; 30:1–3; 32:1–6); Efrata (Gonen 2001: Figs. 27:7; 35:6); Moẓa (Sussman 1966: Fig. 2:1, 2); Bethany (Loffreda 1984: Fig. 6:2, 6–8, 10, 12, 13–16); and Jericho (Kenyon and Holland 1982: Figs. 153; 154:1–11).

Closed Carinated Bowls (MNV = 27; Figs. 6:4, 5; 10:1–3; 15:4; 16:1–3; 17:1–4; 22:3–7).— This is the most common bowl, as well as the most common vessel type in the assemblage. Fifteen complete bowls were found, appearing in almost all the groups. They form the base for the typological analysis as the other twelve were fragmentary in nature.

Table 1. Pottery Frequency by Type

Type	MNV	% of Assemblage
Bowls	35	53.85
Chalice/bowl on stand	1	1.54
Cooking pot	1	1.54
Storage vessels	6	9.23
Jugs	4	6.15
Juglets	17	26.15
Votive vessel	1	1.54
Total	*65*	*100.00*

Table 2. Pottery Frequency by Subtype

Type	MNV	% of Assemblage
Platter bowls	8	12.31
Carinated bowls	27	41.55
Chalice	1	1.54
Cooking pot	1	1.54
Jars	3	4.61
Pithoi	3	4.61
Jugs	4	6.15
Dipper juglets	5	7.69
Piriform juglets	12	18.46
Votive vessel	1	1.54
Total	*65*	*100.00*

Two bowls are sharply carinated (Fig. 6:4, 5), 10 and 12 cm in diameter, with a wide mouth and an everted, tapered or rounded rim. They are squat, ending with a concave or convex disc base. These bowls are most common in MB I, continuing into early MB II, becoming less frequent in its later stages and disappearing entirely in MB III. The disc base indicates a date in late MB I or MB II (Bonfil 2019:80; Ilan and Marcus 2019:12).

Two types of bowls with a rounded carination (also known as globular bowls; MNV = 13) were found. The first type has an extremely short, wide neck and the second type has a pronounced wide neck. Seven complete examples were found of the first type (Figs. 16:1, 2; 17:1–3; 22:3, 4). They have a wide mouth and a wide, squat body with the rim averaging 10 cm in diameter and no larger than 15 cm. The simple everted rounded rim is the rule, although there are exceptions, for example the bowl in Fig. 22:4 with an everted gutter rim and the bowl in Fig. 16:2, with a flattened, everted tapered rim. The bases are diverse in type: two have a convex disc base, two have a flat base, two have a low ring base and one has a pronounced base—either a concave disc base or a very low ring base. This bowl type first appears in MB I and continues in use in MB II; it no longer appears in MB III (Bonfill 2019:80; Ilan and Marcus 2019:12). Of the second type, six complete bowls with a wide pronounced neck were found (also known as necked bowls; Figs. 9:1, 3; 15:4; 16:3; 17:4; 22:5–7). These bowls have a wide mouth and a squat body that is either narrow and relatively tall or wide and low. Their average rim diameter is 10 cm and not larger than 13 cm. Most of these bowls have a simple, everted rounded rim except for the bowl in Fig. 22:7, with an everted flattened rim. They usually have a low ring base or a concave disc base. This type first appears in late MB I and becomes very common in MB II, less frequent in MB III (Bonfill 2019:80, 81; Ilan and Marcus 2019:12). Similar bowls with a rounded carination were found in Tell Beit Mirsim (Ben Arieh 2004: Figs. 2.1:3; 2.6:3, 4); Giv‘on (Prichard 1963: Figs. 20:31, 32; 50:23, 24); Efrata (Gonen 2001: Figs. 23:1, 3, 4; 31:1, 2; 46:2); Bethany (Loffreda 1984: Figs. 3:8; 4:12, 15, 19, 23); and Jericho (Kenyon and Holland 1982: Figs. 157, 164:1, 2; 165:4; 166:1–4, 8–13, 18, 20; 167:2; 168)

Both types of carinated bowls are plain, without surface treatment. As with the platter bowls, the group contains little out of the ordinary. One half of the body of a carinated bowl was reused as a lamp, as shown by soot marks (Fig. 10:2).

Bowl on a Stand/Chalice (MNV = 1; Fig. 22:8).— This vessel is composed of a shallow platter bowl and a tall, hollow cylindrical stand with a wide foot. The bowl is identical to the platter bowls described above. It too has an inverted tapered rim, characteristic of MB II. On the stand, immediately below the bowl, is a single fenestration. Some excess clay is visible inside the stand, at the joint between the two units. A sharp profiled carination in the lower part of the stand marks the upper part of the funnel-shaped foot that ends with a profiled everted flattened rim to provide stability to the vessel. Both the bowl and the stand are plain, without surface treatment. Bowls on cylindrical stands are rare in the Middle Bronze Age; they are known from temple sites such as Tel Haror (Katz 2009).

Cooking Pot

Handmade Straight-Sided Cooking Pot (MNV = 1; Fig. 6:6).— One small complete example was found outside the cave. It has an oblique squared rim and straight walls, and is decorated with an applied rope pattern below the rim. It lacks the pierced holes that are typical of MB I (e.g., Beck 2000:176–177, Fig. 10.31) and MB II wares in the hill country. According to Cole (1984:61–63), this cooking-pot type—without pierced holes—should be dated to the later part of MB II. Soot marks upon the pot's external surface suggest that it was used for cooking and not solely for burial purposes. Cooking pots are uncommon in burial assemblages during the Middle Bronze Age (Baker 2012:109–126); their absence was also noted in Early Bronze Age burial assemblages (Ben-Ari 2010:74). Similar cooking pots were found in burial caves at Efrata (Gonen 2001: Fig. 23:9).

Storage Vessels

Jars (MNV = 3; Figs. 19:1; 23:1).— Two complete jars and the fragments of a third (not illustrated) were retrieved. Figure 19:1 has a thickened everted rim, a long neck, an ovoid body, a narrow flat base and two handles mid-body. Figure 23:1 has a thickened, rounded and everted rim, a long neck, an ovoid body, a very narrow flat base and two handles mid-body. Similar jars were found at Giv'on (Prichard 1963: Fig. 24:88, 89), Efrata (Gonen 2001: Fig. 49:1, 3) and Jericho (Kenyon and Holland 1982: Figs. 190:2, 3, 7; 191:3).

Pithoi (MNV = 3; Figs. 10:4; 23:2, 3).— Three complete pithoi were found. Two (Fig. 10:4; 23:3) have an elongated almond-shaped body, a narrow, flat or slightly rounded base, an extremely short neck, a profiled everted squared rim and four handles on their shoulder. These pithoi accord with Bonfil's Type IVa (Bonfil 1992:28), common in the hill country and at Jericho. It seems to have first appeared in Jericho in the MB I–II transitional phase (Bonfil 1992:28). Similar pithoi were found at Giv'on (Prichard 1963: Fig. 24:90, 91), Efrata (Gonen 2001: Fig. 31:7), Bethany (Loffreda 1984: Figs. 5:1, 5; 10; 11) and Jericho (Kenyon 1965: Fig. 149:2).

The third pithos (Fig. 23:2; 0.63 m high) has a slightly everted thickened, squared rim with a wide ovoid body that ends with a wide flat base. Unlike the other two, it is handle-less.

Jugs (MNV = 4)

Jugs are common in Middle Bronze Age burial assemblages, but in the Beit Ṣafafa burial cave only four jugs were identified; only one was complete and three were illustrated (Fig. 10:5–7). All are plain, without surface treatment.

The jug in Fig. 10:5 has an everted, squared and flattened rim, and a long, narrow neck. A double handle is attached at the rim and the shoulder.

The complete jug in Fig. 10:6 has an everted rounded rim with a wide short neck, an ovoid squat body, ending in a convex disc base. The remains of a single handle are visible, attached at the rim. Parallels for this jug come from Tomb 33 at Tell Beit Mirsim (Ben-Arieh 2004: Fig. 43) and Tomb B35 at Jericho (Kenyon 1960: Fig. 150:3).

Nearly complete Fig. 10:7 is missing the rim. It has an elongated ovoid shape and a narrow convex base.

Juglets

Juglets are the second largest group in the assemblage (c. 26%; Tables 1, 2), comprising two types: dipper and piriform.

Dipper Juglets (MNS = 5; Figs. 6:7; 10:8, 9; 19:2; 22:11).— Five almost complete dipper juglets were found in Cave 1. This type abounds in Middle Bronze Age pottery assemblages, both in settlement and burial sites. The dipper juglets interred in the cave have a large lentoid body with a single handle. Two juglets have a converging base (Figs. 6:7; 19:2) and two, a button base (Fig. 10:8, 9). The dipper juglets are plain, without surface treatment, similar to other vessels in the assemblage. Except for the button bases, these features usually characterize MB II, for example at Tell ed-Daba‘ Strata E3–E1 (Kopetzky 2002:231–234, Figs. 3–5, 8), although there none of the dipper juglets have button bases.

Piriform Juglets (Figs. 10:10; 15:6, 7; 19:3; 22:9, 10).— Two complete juglets and several small fragments were found. Many other non-restorable small fragments indicate that that there were more vessels of this type but it was not possible to provide an MNV. The simple everted rim seems to be the most common; the bases are slightly pointed or button shaped. Many of the juglets have double handles, but single handles were also found. Four broken juglets are very small and seem to have had a votive significance (Figs. 10:10; 15:6; 19:3; 22:9). The juglets were plain without surface treatment, except for the neck of a burnished black juglet (not illustrated). Similar juglets were found at Tell Beit Mirsim (Ben-Arieh 2004: Figs. 2.1:8–10; 2.6:8; 2.10:40, 41, 44, 45; 2.22:28, 29, 31, 32), Giv‘on (Prichard 1963: Figs. 55, 56), Efrata (Gonen 2001: Fig. 24:1–3), Bethany (Loffreda 1984: Fig. 2:3–7, 10, 11) and Jericho (Kenyon and Holland 1982: Fig. 177:15, 21, 26–30, 33, 36).

It is noteworthy that most of the piriform juglets were made of gray or black clay and were poorly fired. Apparently, the color was attained by reducing oxidization during firing. Almost all the gray or black juglets were found in a fragmentary state of preservation (presumably due to their poor firing). Only a few complete body fragments without the rim and the handle survived; they were plain and not treated with slip or burnish, except for the one burnished neck noted above. Gray or black juglets were found in the hill country: in Efrata, where they comprised c. 37% of the juglets, and in Bethany (Gonen 2001:83; Loffreda 1984:360). Contrary to the Beit Ṣafafa black juglets, the juglets at these sites were slipped and burnished. Slipped and burnished black juglets are also known from sites in the coastal plain, for example at Tel Yehud (Ron Be’eri, pers. comm.).

Miniature Twin Vessel

One unique miniature vessel was made by attaching two identical piriform juglets prior to firing (Fig. 15:5); the joint between the vessels was smoothed and the walls of each vessel

were complete, showing no interior connection between them. Currently, there are no exact parallels for this vessel dating from Middle Bronze Age contexts. An alabaster twin juglet was found in an MB II burial context at Jericho (Kenyon 1960:171:1) and a twin juglet was found in an MB II burial cave at Khalet al-Jam'a (Nigro and Montanari 2015: Fig. 7:1).

The recurring presence of specific pottery vessel types clearly indicates the importance of these objects in the eyes of the community for the wellbeing of the deceased. While the number of cooking pots is small, they are known to appear in burial assemblages. The miniature twin vessel and the chalice are unique and seem to have had a votive function and should be classified as status items. These items, together with the small finds, hint that some of the deceased were of a high social status.

Metal Objects

Bronze Toggle Pins (Figs. 9:1, 2; 17:5).— Four bronze toggle pins were unearthed. From Group 1, Fig. 9:1 shows a headless upper part, the ribbing descending to immediately below the eye (Henschel-Simon 1938: Type 6b, Pl. LXVIII:22). A similar toggle pin was found in an MB I–II context at Tel Kabri (Shalev 2002: Fig. 8.3:4). Figure 9:2, also from Group 1, has a flat head and ribbed decoration below the eye (Henschel-Simon 1938: Type 8c, Pl. LXIX:86). A similar undecorated toggle pin was found in an MB II context in a burial cave in Naḥal Refa'im (Gershuny 2017: Fig. 14:7). The headless pin from Group 4 (Fig. 17:5) has a plain shank; the eye is one-third below the top (ratio of 1:3) (Henschel-Simon 1938: Type 3). Similar toggle pins were found at Efrata (Gonen 2001: Fig. 37:2), Jericho (Kenyon 1960: Fig. 128:1–7) and Lakhish (Tufnell 1958: Pl. 24:1, 2). Figure 17:6, likewise from Group 4, is a straight fragment of a toggle pin with a rectangular section.

Bronze Earring (Fig. 15:8).— A spiral wire (diam. 2.9 cm) from Group 2 seems to have been an earring. Similar objects were found in MB II burial contexts at Naḥal Refa'im (Gershuny 2017: Fig. 14:9) and on the Mount of Olives (Saller 1964: Fig. 62:22, 23).

Egyptian Scarab and South Anatolian Amulet

Daphna Ben-Tor

Egyptian Scarab (Fig. 9:3; B1001; L 1.99 cm; W 1.37 cm; H 0.84 cm).— The scarab was found in Burial Cave 1, Group 1. It is made of glazed steatite (no remains of glaze) and has a lined back, A5 head and d14 side.[3] Its base design comprises a gold sign (*nbw*) in longitudinal

[3] The description of the scarabs' designs and features follow the typology of Tufnell (1984:28–38) and Ward and Dever (1994:162–69).

setting, typical of Tufnell's base design 3B6, displaying the gold sign *nbw* (S12)[4] as a central motif, usually with one or more signs above, and a symmetric arrangement of signs on either side (Tufnell 1984: Pl. XV). The design is well-attested on Egyptian scarabs of the late Middle Kingdom (Ben-Tor 2007: Pls. 10:14–48; 11:1–7) and is imitated on Middle Bronze Age Canaanite scarabs (Ben-Tor 2007: Pls. 80:31–44; 81:1–28).

This scarab's design presents confronting red crowns (S3) above the gold sign, flanked by straight and curved papyrus plants on *nb* (V30), displayed *tête bêche*. The details of the design indicate a late Middle Kingdom Egyptian origin for the scarab (Ben-Tor 2007: Pls. 10:30–34; 11:2, 4–6), which was most likely produced in the eighteenth century BCE (Dynasty XIII). Straight and curved papyrus plants on *nb* signs frequently appear on late Middle Kingdom scarabs displaying the *nbty* design (Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 6:20–30, 43–45). The scarab is earlier than the MB II context in which it was found.

South Anatolian Amulet (Fig. 17:7; B1047; L1.29 cm; W 1.09 cm; H 0.74 cm).— This faience amulet was found in Burial Cave 1, Group 4. Its base design comprises an Ω-shaped motif above a semicircle geometric design. This object belongs to the distinctive "Omega Group" of south Anatolian amulets based on the Ω-shaped motif decorating the base of most examples (Keel 1989:43–48, Figs. 2–15). Such button-shaped amulets are typically made of a composite material (faience), their base decoration is made in raised relief and they are dated to 1770–1740 BCE, thus indicating that the Beit Ṣafafa example is earlier than the MB II context in which it was found. The most common base-design of this group displays the Ω-shaped motif above a semicircle (Keel 1989:45–47, Figs. 4–17). Like most examples, the Beit Ṣafafa amulet is perforated. The Omega Group amulets inspired the production of small faience Omega-type scarabs in the Southern Levant in the early MB II (Ben-Tor 2007:135–136).

Cylinder Seal

Laura A. Peri

A small, longitudinally perforated cylinder (Fig. 17:8) made of a light blue artificial material—frit (glassy faience) based on copper or calcium-copper tetrasilicate (Egyptian Blue)—was retrieved from burial Cave 1, Group 4. It is identified as a cylinder seal due to its incised design of irregular horizontal lines divided into two registers by vertical lines, confined between upper and lower border grooves. No exact parallel is known, but similar, crudely designed cylinder seals were found in Middle–Late Bronze Age contexts at Ta'anakh and other South-Levantine sites (Lapp 1999:152, Fig. 1; Keel and Lapp 2015:166, No. 33); however, these are mostly made of stone and bone, and might be rooted in a local Early Bronze Age glyptic tradition. Although artificial materials are known from the Southern

[4] The hieroglyphic signs are described in reference to Gardiner's sign list (Gardiner 1957:442–548).

Levant (Eliyahu Behar et al. 2016), frit or faience cylinder seals are unusual prior to the Late Bronze Age. Given the fact that this seal was found together with a Middle Bronze Age South-Anatolian(?) faience amulet (see Ben-Tor, above), may attest that it was of the same northern glyptic tradition that specialized in processing mineral-based composite materials since the third millennium BCE (Moorey 1994:173, 176; Matthews 1997:174–175), reaching its peak in late LB I–early LB II (late fifteenth–fourteenth centuries BCE) with the mass-production of Mittannian Common-Style frit and faience cylinder seals.

Discussion

Relative Chronology

Although the full scope of the ceramic assemblage is unknown, the clusters of vessels found *in situ* inside Cave 1, together with the vessels discovered outside the cave, can provide much information concerning the relative chronology of the assemblage. There is nothing in the Cave I assemblage that calls for an MB I or III date. The vessels clearly date to MB II, as shown by (a) the medium-sized platter bowls with in-turned rims; (b) the carinated bowls with rounded carination and disc or low ring bases; (c) the piriform juglets with simple everted rims and pointed or button bases; and (d) the absence of surface treatment.

There are exceptions, nonetheless. Some of the carinated bowls make an appearance already in late MB I contexts (Ilan and Marcus 2019:12) and the first appearance of four-handled pithoi dates to the transitional phase MB I–II (Bonfil 1992:28). These exceptions suggest an early date in MB II for the Cave 1 assemblage, a date which is also supported by the scarab and the amulet. The absence of large platter bowls, flaring-rim bowls, trumpet or pronounced pedestal bases, cylindrical juglets and long-necked pithoi (Bonfil 1992: Type VI), such as occur in the ceramic assemblage retrieved from the burial cave in Dominus Flevit (Saller 1964), indicates that use of the cave did not continue into the later part of MB II or MB III. Thus, it would seem that the cave was in use for a short period, probably the early and middle stages of MB II (1850–1700 BCE).

The Middle Bronze Age II Burial Kit

The concept of a burial kit was defined by Binford (1972:208–243, 412–416), followed by Shay (1983) and Baker (2006; 2012). According to them, the kit was a distinct assemblage of offerings deposited with each interment, common to all burials; it was an integral part of the burial process. Its repetitive nature and its uniformity are indicative of ceremonial behavior, and as such, allows us a glimpse into an unseen set of beliefs and mortuary rituals concerning life and death (Baker 2012:14–15).

Cave 1 was robbed and damaged over the years. Nonetheless, the excavation revealed many *in situ* vessels that remained in the last spot in which they were placed. These six vessel clusters are part of a larger burial kit that included non-ceramic artifacts such as a seal, a scarab, an amulet and other ornaments. The cave's poor state of preservation prevents a reconstruction of the complete ceramic assemblage deposited in the cave, but by

comparison to other contemporary MB II burial assemblages, we can identify some of the key components of the burial kit.

The first key component are the platter and carinated bowls. Some of the platter bowls were found containing animal bones, mainly sheep and goats (see Marom, this volume) and in some of the bowls traces of olive oil were identified using residue analysis (see Namdar, this volume). Platter bowls are found in almost every MB II burial assemblage, retrieved from burial caves at Jericho, Bethany, Efrata and Giv‘on, to mention but a few. The bowls with a rounded carination are also a common feature in MB II burial assemblages; they were found at Giv‘on, Bethany and in many caves at Jericho.

The second component is the juglet; at Beit Ṣafafa, dipper and piriform juglets were found. These are the secondmost frequent vessel type in the assemblage. Piriform juglets are very common in MB II burial assemblages, for example at Tell Beit Mirsim, Efrata, Bethany and Jericho. The residue analysis conducted on some of the juglets revealed traces of olive oil and an undefined plant oil (see Namdar, this volume).

The third key element is the storage jar, including both jars and pithoi. Six jars and pithoi were found within Cave 1. Additional handles and bases found inside the cave indicate that there were more storage jars that were not preserved. Storage jars and pithoi occur in many MB II burial assemblages, albeit usually in small numbers, for example at Efrata, Bethany and Jericho.

These three components underscore that during MB II a standardized burial kit was in use in the central hill country. Baker made a similar observation regarding the Ashqelon MB II–III and Late Bronze Age tombs (2006; 2012). The offerings within the burial kit can be separated into three classes: personal, status and essential (Binford 1972:208–243, 412–416; Shay 1983; Baker 2012). Personal objects represent the deceased’s persona, for example, possessions that served or were used by the departed. Objects of status represent the deceased’s social rank or profession, or both, usually items of wealth and rank. Essential offerings are vessels necessary for the success of the burial process, needed for the well-being of the deceased’s spirit in the afterlife. The repetitive nature of the ceramic key elements—the bowls, juglets and store jars—in the burial kit and their uniformity classifies them in the essential category. The small finds, as well as the bronze dagger, could be classified as personal objects or objects of status.

The faunal finds from Cave 1 comprise the remains of at least nine different animals, mostly sheep, although goats were also present. All were adults at the time of death and some were clearly butchered prior to burial in the cave (see Marom, this volume). Burial of sheep and goats in funerary contexts is commonplace in the Middle Bronze Age (Horwitz 2001; 2017). Apparently, some of the pottery vessels and the animal offerings in the cave were used in funerary ceremonies and meals; it is likely that they were placed in the burial cave to symbolize the deceased’s partaking in the meal, thereby also becoming essential to the funerary process (Baker 2012:42, 47).

During what appears to have been a short time of use, Cave 1 contained multiple, successive burials. At least seven individuals were interred in the cave (see Nagar, this

volume). Little can be said about the social status of the deceased. The standardized burial kit found in the Beit Ṣafafa cave provides no clues as to their status; the kit can be classified as essential. However, the chalice from the Group 6 cluster and the twin vessel in the Group 2 cluster seem to be votive and could be additions to the burial kit. These vessels may hint at the different social status of the individuals interred with them. Ornaments such as the toggle pins, the earring and the scarab, found in some of the burial clusters seem to have been personal objects. The Egyptian amulet and the cylinder seal, both in Group 4, are clearly prestige items. As such, they should be classified as personal objects that attest to the social status of the individuals to whom they belonged—their high rank within the community.

Summary

The Cave 1 burial assemblage is typical of MB II, comrising part of a standardized burial kit essential for the burial process and the wellbeing of the deceased. A few prestige items suggest that at least one high-ranking individual was interred within the cave. The MB II pottery assemblage shows close affinities with other central hill country burial sites such as Bethany and Efrata and to some of the burial caves at Jericho, in the Jordan Valley. The Cave 1 assemblage at Beit Ṣafafa shows no continuation from MB II to MB III, and was apparently in use for a short period, probably in the early to middle stages of MB II. The Intermediate Bronze Age potsherds scattered near Cave 3 seem to indicate that Caves 1 and 2 were quarried into an earlier Intermediate Bronze Age burial ground.

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