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An Intermediate Bronze Age Settlement and a Middle Bronze Age II Cemetery at the 'Third Mile Estate', Ashqelon

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In the spring of 1991, a salvage excavation was conducted at the 'Third Mile Estate' site in Ashqelon (map ref. NIG 16080/62160, OIG 11080/12160), located east of the Barne'a neighborhood, on the eastern slopes of a *kurkar* ridge that runs parallel to the Mediterranean shoreline (Fig. 1).[1] The site was named 'Third Mile Estate' after a Roman milestone marking the third mile from Ashqelon (Roll, this volume), which was found near a Byzantine agricultural complex uncovered there. The excavation revealed remains from a number of periods, extending over an area of c. 400 × 400 m (Fig. 2), including Intermediate Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age II, and the Iron Age through the Byzantine period. The present report describes the remains from the Intermediate Bronze Age and MB II; for the later periods, see Israel and Erickson-Gini, this volume.

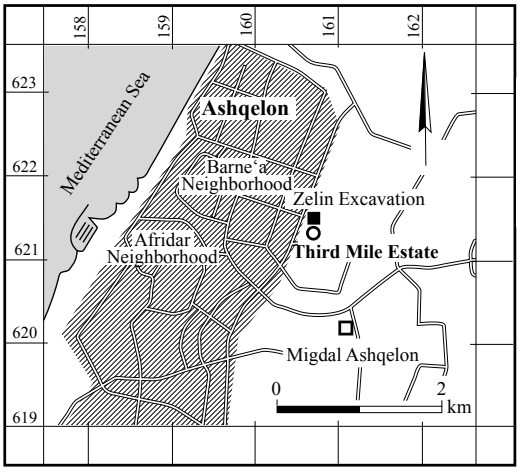


Fig. 1. Location map.

The Intermediate Bronze Age Settlement

The site was first settled in the Intermediate Bronze Age (2200–2000 BCE), in a location shielded from the wind and overlooking the Migdal Valley to the east. This valley is characterized by its fertile soil and a high water table that supplies wells in the valley even today. The settlement remains were sealed beneath a layer of *ḥamra* soil, 3 m thick, partially located below the latest, Roman–Byzantine, occupation phase. Architectural remnants of the Intermediate Bronze Age settlement were uncovered primarily in Area F. In addition, Intermediate Bronze Age pottery was found over an area of nearly 60 dunams, below the Byzantine-period buildings of the estate (Areas C, E) and the kiln (Area B), as well as in exploratory probes excavated c. 50 m south (D136, D137) and c. 100 m southwest (F509a; Figs. 3:14; 4:7; 5:5) of Area F. A number of complete and nearly complete vessels were retrieved beneath the collapse of the southern wall of the Byzantine winepress in Area C (see Fig. 4:1, 3) and in the interior of the structure (see Fig. 5:3).

The Architecture

Architecture dating to the Intermediate Bronze Age was revealed in Area F, comprising a 'cluster' of four round or oval rooms with an average diameter of 1.5–3.0 m (F512, F513, F515, F516; Plan 1). Sherds of vessels dated to the Intermediate Bronze Age were discovered on the floors of the rooms, which were sunk one meter below the living surface outside the structure. The entrance to Room 512 had a high step (F520) leading down to the sunken floor.

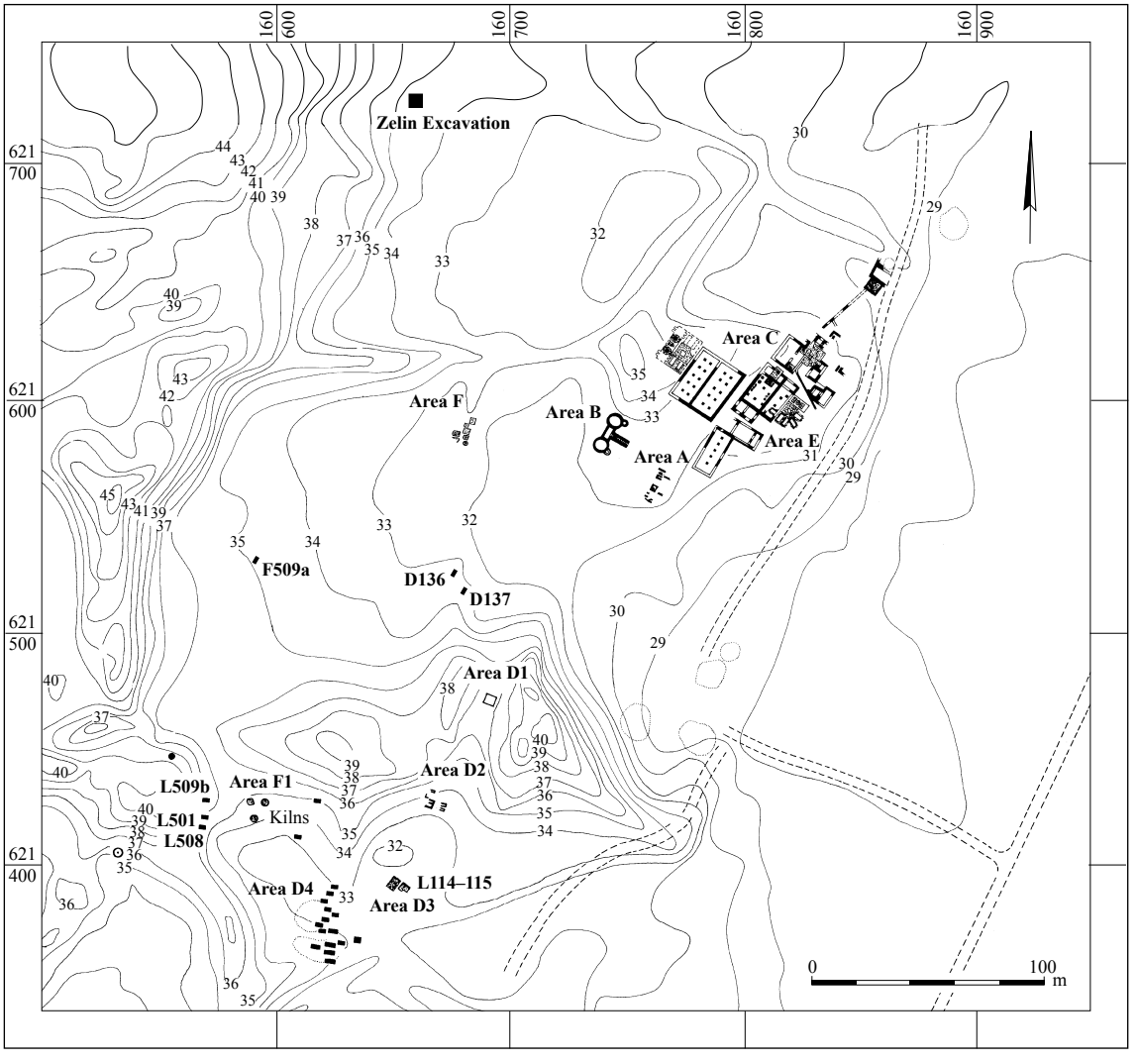
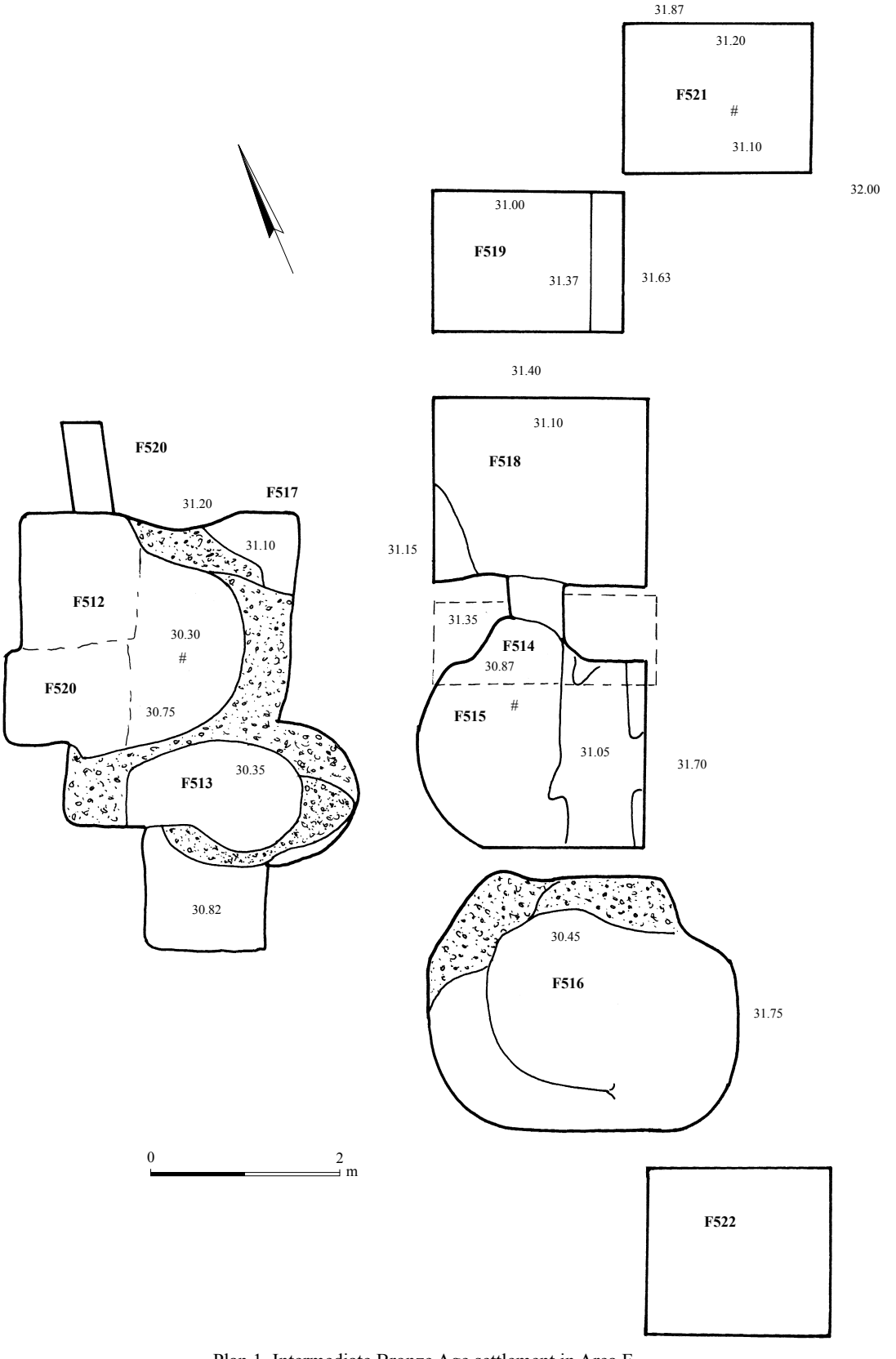


Fig. 2. Location of excavation areas.

Each room was excavated to a depth of one meter below the floor into sterile soil composed of sand and clay.

The walls were constructed of mud bricks, the remains of which were still visible in each sunken room. The mud bricks had been produced by hand, without the aid of a mold, as evidenced by their irregular shapes. The interior-facing sides of the bricks had been smoothed, and the bricks laid in place while still wet.

Overall, the plan of the four rooms uncovered in the excavations is similar to that of stone-built structures comprising round or oval-shaped rooms dating to the Intermediate Bronze Age in the Central Negev Highlands. One site in that region, ‘En Ziq, contained partially-sunken structures similar to those in our excavation (Cohen 1999:137–164). The walls of the structures may have originally stood to such a height as to allow the inhabitants to stand upright. The roof may have been thatched with branches supported by a central wooden pillar, similar to the stone-built dwellings with stone pillars from the same period in the Central Negev Highlands (Cohen and Dever



Plan 1. Intermediate Bronze Age settlement in Area F.

1981:58). Small round stones, charred and blackened, averaging 7 cm in diameter, were found scattered in a layer between the floor and the collapsed debris in most of the rooms. These small stones may have been used in the cooking fires.

The architectural remains and probes revealed occupational refuse of blackened organic material containing bones and animal droppings (coprolites). In the area outside the rooms in Area F, a 0.5 m thick layer of this blackened organic material was revealed.

The Pottery

The Intermediate Bronze Age pottery presented in this report is very similar to contemporaneous assemblages from other sites in the southern coastal region and the southern Judean Shephelah; see parallels listed in the pottery tables.

Cups (Fig. 3:1–4).— Four plain or decorated cups have varying forms of slightly globular bodies with high necks, often bearing bands of combed decoration, in some cases a combed wave on the lower neck.

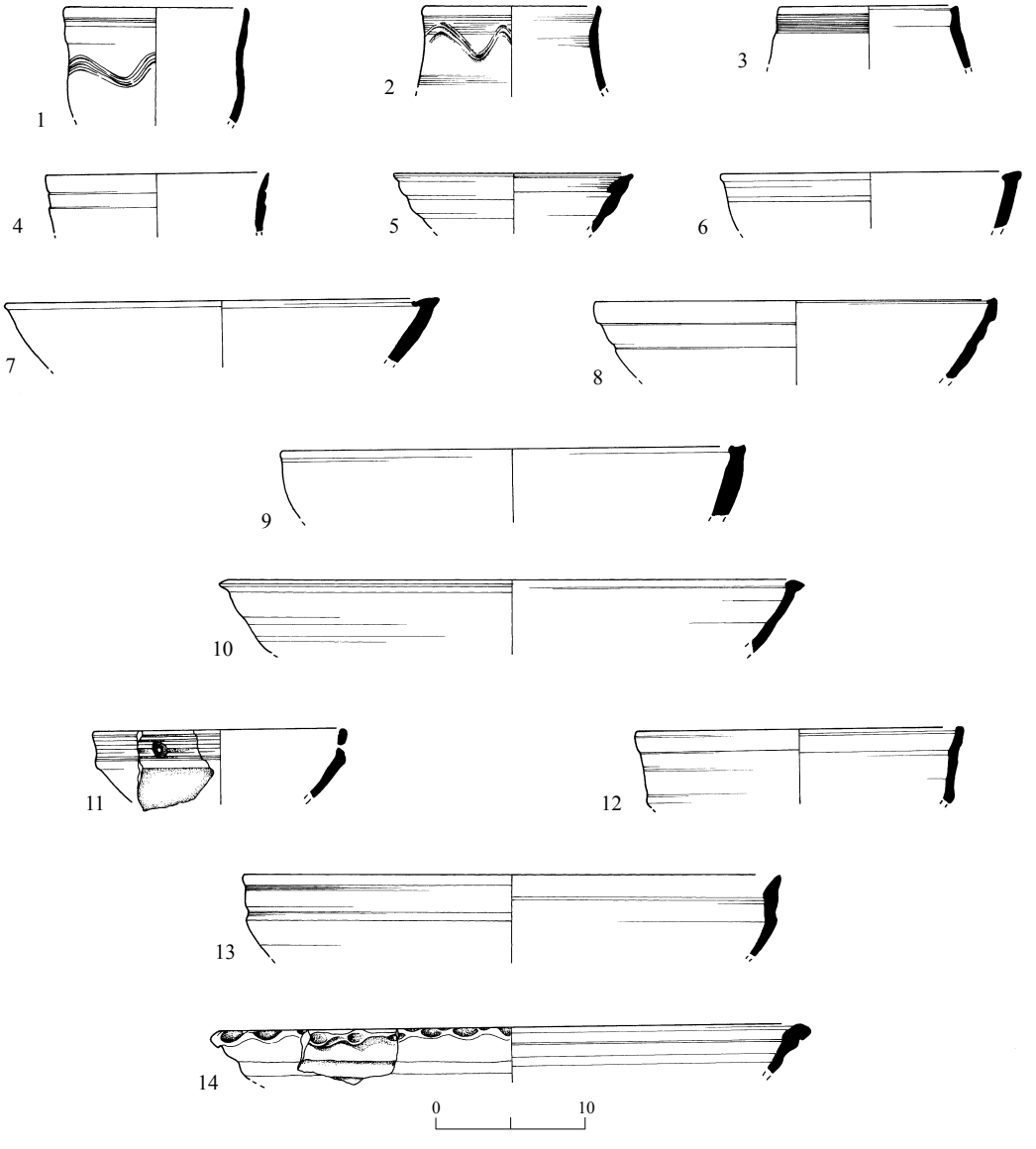


Fig. 3. Intermediate Bronze Age pottery: cups and bowls.

◂ **Fig. 3**

No.	Type	Area and Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Cup	Surface	-	Ext.: 10YR7/3 very pale brown; int.: 5YR5/8 yellowish red; minute white, gray, large white inclusions; incised wave and combed decoration	Har Yeruḥam: Cohen 1999: Fig. 69:2 Har Ẓayyad: Cohen 1999: Fig. 56:2
2	Cup	F516	284	10YR7/3 very pale brown; minute gray and large white inclusions; well levigated; incised wave and combed decoration	Har Dimon: Cohen 1999: Fig. 53A:2 Khirbat el-Kirmil: Dever 1975: Fig. 5:24
3	Cup	F516	284	10YR7/4 very pale brown; minute white, gray and large gray inclusions; thick walls; combed decoration	'En Ziq: Cohen 1999: Fig. 101:5, 6 Har Ẓayyad: Cohen 1999: Fig. 56:2
4	Cup	F510	150	7.5YR7/4 pink; minute white, gray and large white inclusions	'En Ziq: Cohen 1999: Pl. 101:3 Har Ẓayyad: Cohen 1999: Fig. 56:5 Har Dimon: Cohen 1999: Fig. 53A:2 Jebel Qa'aqir: Dever 1981: Fig. 3:2 Khirbat el-Kirmil: Dever 1975: Fig. 5:17 Lakhish: Tufnell 1958: Pl. 66:395, 403
5	Bowl	F513	231	10YR7/4 very pale brown; minute and large white inclusions	Jebel Qa'aqir: Gitin 1975: Fig. 3:2 'En Ziq: Cohen 1999: Fig. 102:5–8 Lakhish: Tufnell 1958: Pl. 66:401
6	Bowl	B510	199	7.5YR7/4 pink; grayish core; minute white, gray and numerous large white inclusions	Abu Irshareibeh: MacDonald, Clark and Neeley 1988: Fig. 5:7
7	Bowl	F516	284	5YR7/6 reddish yellow; grayish core; minute reddish brown and numerous large white inclusions	Southern Ghors and Northern 'Arava, Survey Site 109: McDonald 1992: Pl. 15:3
8	Bowl	B510	199	Ext.: 10YR7/3 very pale brown; int.: 7.5YR7/4 pink; grayish core; minute white, gray and large red, brown and white inclusions	Tell el-'Ajjul: Petrie 1932: Pl. XXVII:15P8
9	Bowl	C205	47	10YR7/4 very pale brown; light grayish core; minute white, gray and numerous large white inclusions	Jebel Qa'aqir: Gitin 1975: Fig. 2:11 Tel Na'ama: Greenberg et al. 1998: Fig. 20:6
10	Bowl	F515	241	7.5YR6/4 light brown; minute white, gray and large white inclusions	Jebel Qa'aqir: Dever 1981: Fig. 3:2 'En Ziq: Cohen 1999: Pl. 102:9
11	Bowl	F516	284	7.5YR7/6 reddish yellow; gray core; minute white and gray inclusions; perforated and combed rim; traces of grayish slip or burnish	Southern Ghors and Northern 'Arava Survey, Site 174E: McDonald 1992: Pl. 16:2 Bab edh-Dhra: Schaub 1973: Fig. 6:12 Har Dimon: Cohen 1999: Fig. 53A:4 'En Ziq: Cohen 1999: Pl. 102:3 Lakhish: Tufnell 1958: Pl. 66:430, 431
12	Bowl	B510	199	7.5YR7/6 reddish yellow; minute white, gray and large white inclusions	Har Ẓayyad: Cohen 1999: Fig. 56:10, 11 Lakhish: Tufnell 1958: Pl. 66:434
13	Bowl	F510	101	7.5YR7/4 pink; minute white, gray and numerous large white, gray inclusions	Khirbat el-Kirmil: Dever 1975: Fig. 4:13 Jebel Qa'aqir: Gitin 1975: Fig. 3:4
14	Bowl	F509a	136	7.5YR6/4 light brown; grayish core; very coarse ware and cracked ext.; minute white, gray inclusions; finger indentations on rim	Ḥorbat Avnun: Cohen 1999: Pl. 65:8 Jebel Qa'aqir: Gitin 1975: Fig. 2:16 Lakhish: Tufnell 1958: Pl. 66:449

One cup (Fig. 3:1) with an upright, slightly everted neck and a somewhat pointed rim, has bands of combing below the rim and a combed wave decoration on the neck. Another example (Fig. 3:2) has a globular lower body, a high, slightly flaring neck, and a pointed rim. Combed bands appear below the rim and on the upper body and a combed wave decoration on the neck. A third cup (Fig. 3:3) has an inverted neck bearing a wide band of combed decoration below the rim. The interior of the neck is slightly grooved and the rim is pointed. The fourth example (Fig. 3:4) is plain, with a ridged, upright neck and an everted, pointed rim.[2]

Bowls (Fig. 3:5–14).— The bowls in this assemblage have flaring, rounded or carinated walls. Several bowls have angular, flattened and sharply inverted rims (Figs. 3:5–7). One bowl (Fig. 3:8), with rounded sides, has a wide, 'collared' band on the exterior below an angular, slightly inverted rim. Two other bowls with rounded sides have different rims: that in Fig. 3:9 has thick walls and a crudely grooved rim, while the bowl in Fig. 3:10 is wider and more open with a slightly rounded, inverted rim.

Carinated bowls include a small bowl with a heavy band of combing on the upper body and a perforation (Fig. 3:11). The combed upper body appears to bear traces of a gray burnish or slip. A second bowl has a carinated profile with high, upright, slightly ridged walls (Fig. 3:12) and an upright, rounded rim. Another carinated bowl is wider and rather shallow, with an angular, inverted rim (Fig. 3:13).

The bowl in Fig. 3:14 has an unusual, slightly carinated profile and finger-indented decoration along the thickened, everted rim, and the ware is relatively coarse and cracked. Although no exact parallels were found for this vessel, finger-indented decoration is seen on other types of bowls and basins of this period at Jebel Qa'aqir (Gitin 1975: Fig. 2:16) and Lakhish (Tufnell 1958: Pl. 66:449), as well as in the Central Negev (Cohen 1999: Fig. 65:8).

Amphoriskoi (Fig. 4:1–3).— Three amphoriskoi were found at the site. One complete example has a globular body, a flat base, a high everted neck and round handles extending from the center of the neck to the shoulders (Fig. 4:1). The ware is coarse and finely cracked. A larger vessel has a similar profile, although the neck is shorter and the rim is pointed (Fig. 4:2).

Figure 4:3 appears to be a twin amphoriskos (or teapot). It was found intact on what was apparently a living surface of the Intermediate Bronze Age, located below the Byzantine winepress in Area C. This vessel is rare in the Intermediate Bronze Age repertoire. It is joined at the widest part of the body by a hollow joint. A handle extended from the interior rim of each vessel, and one side has traces of a spout. To date, similar vessels have been found as far distant as Ḥanita in the north (Singer and Dar 1986: Pl. IV:5) and Jericho in the east (Kenyon 1965: Fig. 47:13), as well as in Intermediate Bronze Age deposits at the Ophel in Jerusalem (Amiran 1969: Pl. 11:12).

Twin amphoriskoi in Intermediate Bronze Age contexts appear to be the continuation of an earlier Early Bronze Age tradition. Twin cups have been found in EB II deposits at Megiddo (Loud 1948: Pl. 5:5) and in Jordan, at Tell el-Sa'idiyeh (Tubb 1989: Fig. 4:7) and Bab edh-Dhra (Schaub and Rast 1989: Fig. 30:13).

Jars (Fig. 4:4–9).— The jar assemblage comprises storage jars with flaring necks. The jar in Fig. 4:4 has a flaring neck, an everted rim, combed bands at the point where the neck is joined to the body, and small decorative handles from the lower neck to the upper body.

The sherd in Fig. 4:5, which probably belonged to a similar type of jar, has a decorated handle and lines of pierced decoration on either side. Another sherd that appears to belong to the same type of jar (Fig. 4:6), has a pinched knob protruding from the body surrounded by incised dots and a line of dots extending away from the knob. At other sites, this type of jar

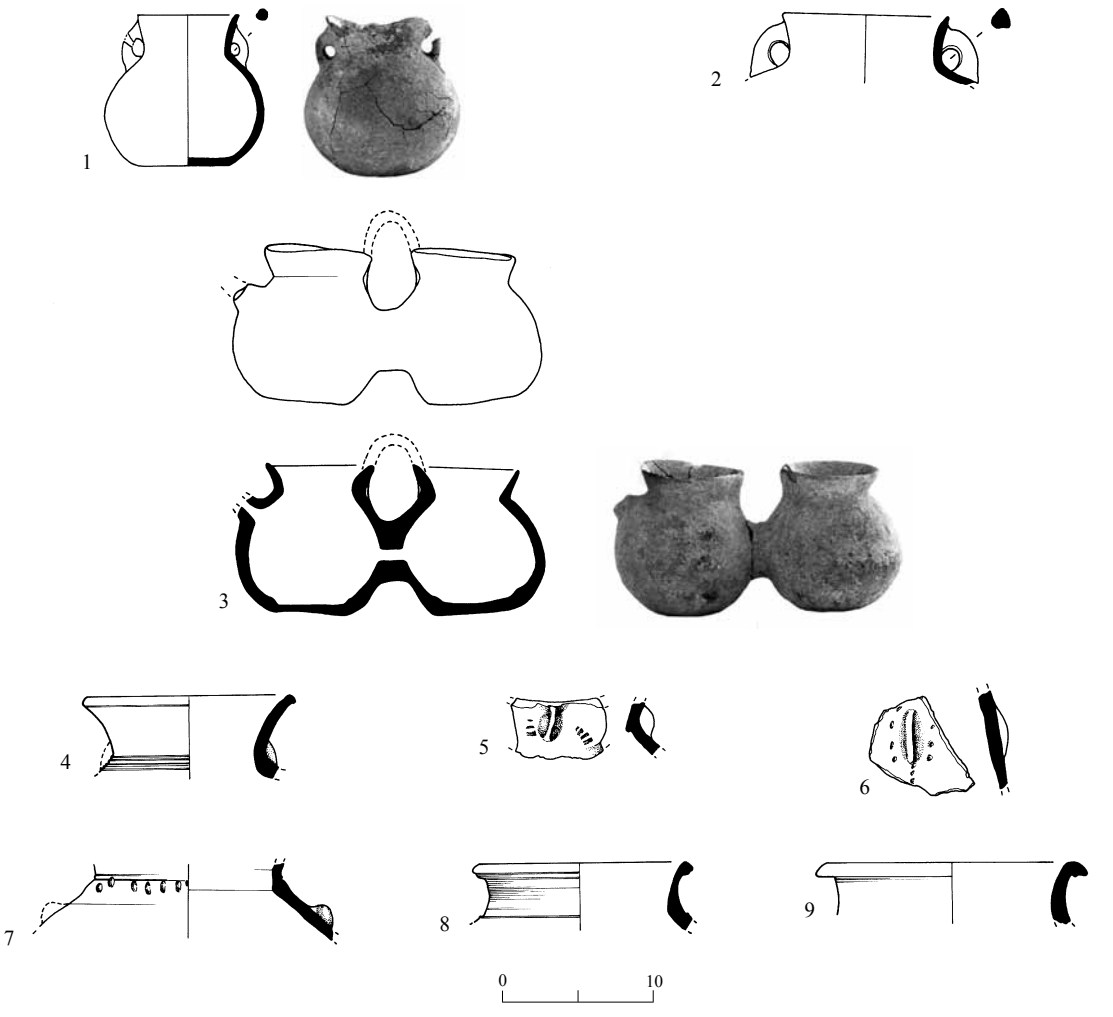


Fig. 4. Intermediate Bronze Age: amphoriskoi and jars.

appears with an elongated body of varying heights and a flat base, and occasionally bears decorative handles or non-functional knob handles protruding from the upper shoulder, similar to our examples. It appears to be a particularly common jar type at Intermediate Bronze Age sites in the south of the country, for example, in the Central Negev Highlands at Har Ẓayyad, Mash'abe Sade, 'En Ziq and Be'er Resisim (Cohen 1999: Figs. 57:5, 9–12; 78:10–18; 106–108; 136:16–23; 137:1–9), in the southern coastal plain at Tell el-'Ajjul (e.g., Kenyon 1956: Fig. 8:7), in northern Sinai (Oren and Yekutieli 1990: Fig. 4:15, 16) and in the Shephelah at Tell Beit Mirsim (Albright 1933: Pl. 2:1, 7), Lakhish (Tufnell 1958: Pl. 67:469, 471, 482) and Jebel Qa'aqir (Dever 1981: Figs. 3:4–6; 4:4, 5, 7).

The decorated sherd in Fig. 4:7 bears incised decoration at the point where the neck is joined to the jar and traces of handles attached to the shoulders. This sherd appears to belong to another type of jar that is also found at the Central Negev sites, which has

◂ **Fig. 4**

No.	Type	Area and Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Amphoriskos	C209	55	5YR 6/8 reddish yellow; grayish core; minute gray, white and large white, reddish brown inclusions; rough texture with fine cracks	Tell el-ʻAjjul: Petrie 1931: Pl. XLIV:276M7; 278 ʻEn Ziq: Cohen 1999: Pl. 103:11, 12 Be'er Resisim: Cohen and Dever 1981: Fig. 10:19 North Sinai Survey, Site C-102: Oren and Yekutieli 1990: Fig. 5:2 Tell Beit Mirsim: Albright 1933: Pl. 3:10 Khirbat el-Kirmil: Dever 1975: Fig. 4:13 Lakhish: Tufnell 1958: Pl. 66:497
2	Amphoriskos	F512	221	Ext.: 10YR7/3 very pale brown; int.: 10YR5/4 yellowish brown; minute white, gray and large white inclusions	Har Ẓayyad: Cohen 1999: Pl. 56:17
3	Twin amphoriskoi	C209	54	10YR5/3 brown; numerous minute white, gray inclusions; grayish core; vessels connected by hollow attachment; spout	Ḥanita: Singer and Dar 1986: Pl. IV:5 Jericho: Kenyon 1965: Fig. 47:13 Jerusalem: Amiran 1969: Pl. 11:12
4	Jar	F512	221	10YR7/2 light gray; minute gray and large white, gray inclusions	Tell el-ʻAjjul: Petrie 1931: Pl. XLI:183, 280 North Sinai Survey: Oren and Yekutieli 1990: Fig. 6:15 Lakhish: Tufnell 1958: Pl. 67:471
5	Jar	F516	284	10YR7/3 very pale brown; minute white, gray and numerous large white inclusions; incised decoration	Pisgat Ze'ev: Seligman 1995: Fig. 4:4
6	Jar handle	F516	284	2.5Y7/3 pale yellow; minute white, gray and large white inclusions; pinched handle; incised decoration	Azor: Amiran 1969: Pl. 22:19
7	Jar	F509	190	10YR6/6 brownish yellow; minute white, gray and numerous large white inclusions; pinched handle; incised decoration	North Sinai, Survey Site A-268: Oren and Yekutieli 1990: Fig. 5:1,7 Har Ẓayyad: Cohen 1999: Pl. 56:19, 25 ʻEn Ziq: Cohen 1999: Pl. 105:13, 14
8	Jar	F512	221	10YR7/4 very pale brown to 5YR5/6 reddish yellow; dark core; minute white, gray and numerous large white inclusions	North Sinai, Survey Site A222: Oren and Yekutieli 1990: Fig. 4:9
9	Jar	F516	234	2.5Y6/4 light yellow; minute white and gray inclusions	North Sinai Survey, Site A222: Oren and Yekutieli 1990: Fig. 4:9 Tell el-ʻAjjul: Petrie 1932: Pl. XXXI:43A2

an oval body, a flat base and a flaring neck with handles extending from the shoulder to the neck. Decoration is commonly found in the form of bands or incisions at the junction between the neck and the body or directly below this point. A third type of jar (Fig. 4:8, 9) may be a variation of the previous type, with a wide, low neck and a drooping, everted rim.[3] This type has been found in Intermediate Bronze Age contexts in northern Sinai (Oren and Yekutieli 1990: Fig. 4:9), but appears to be missing in the Central Negev Highland sites, as well as at sites located in the interior of the country; therefore, it may be a jar type confined to the coastal area.

Holemouth Jars (Fig. 5).— The five holemouth jars in the assemblage exhibit variations commonly found at other Intermediate Bronze Age sites. They are modified versions that developed out of the Early Bronze Age holemouth-jar tradition. In the examples in Fig. 5:1–3, the rim has a flattened, slightly grooved profile. A second type has a flattened, angular, inverted rim (Fig. 5:4, 5). The jar in Fig. 5:5 has ridges on the shoulder.

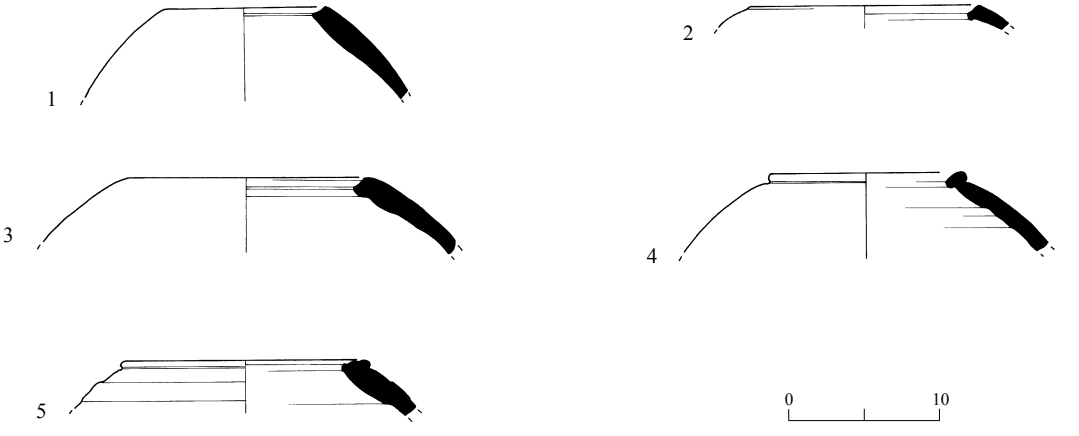


Fig. 5. Intermediate Bronze Age: holemouth jars.

No.	Area and Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	F516	314	7.5YR6/4 light brown; light grayish core; relatively well levigated; minute white, gray and numerous large white inclusions	North Sinai, Survey Site R-184: Oren and Yekutieli 1990: Fig. 5:19 Naḥal Nizzana: Cohen 1999: Pl. 25:3 Har Yeruḥam: Cohen 1999: Pl. 69:24 Be'er Resisim: Cohen 1999: Pl. 137:17
2	F516	284	5YR6/4 light reddish brown; smooth exterior; minute white, gray and numerous large white inclusions	North Sinai Survey, Site R-260: Oren and Yekutieli 1990: Fig. 5:22
3	C209	112	5YR5/6 yellowish red; dark gray core; very coarse ware; minute gray and numerous large white inclusions	North Sinai, Survey Site R-184: Oren and Yekutieli 1990: Fig. 5:19 Ḥorbat Avnun: Cohen 1999: Fig. 5:21
4	F516	284	10YR6/4 light yellowish brown; burn marks on ext.; minute white, gray and numerous large white inclusions	Be'er Resisim: Cohen 1999: Pl. 37:15 Ḥorbat Avnun: Cohen 1999: Pl. 65:20 Naḥal Boqer: Cohen 1999: Pl. 84:8 Ḥorbat Be'er Ratav: Cohen 1986: Fig. 22:6
5	F509	197	Ext.: 10YR7.4 very pale brown; Int.: 7.5YR6.6 reddish yellow; grayish core; minute white and gray inclusions	North Sinai, Survey Site R-179: Oren and Yekutieli 1990: Fig. 5:23

Summary

The Intermediate Bronze Age pottery uncovered at the site belongs to a homogenous ceramic assemblage characteristic of the Intermediate Bronze Age culture of southern Canaan. The ceramic forms and fabrics demonstrate a relatively high degree of similarity to the Intermediate Bronze Age wares at sites in the Central Negev and the southern Judean Shephelah. Moreover, the architectural remains revealed are remarkably similar to the domestic dwellings in the Central Negev Highlands dated to the Intermediate Bronze Age.

Surveys carried out along the Mediterranean coast in northern Sinai, mainly in the area between El-'Arish and Rafah, have revealed the presence of three types of Intermediate Bronze Age sites: large 'base site' settlements, satellite villages and temporary or seasonal sites. Their economy was based on pastoralism (Oren and Yekutieli 1990:18–19). Researchers who have studied these sites suggest an absolute dating of c. 2250–2150 BCE for these sites, based on the presence of late variants of Egyptian 'Meidum Ware' (Oren and Yekutieli 1990:101*). Thus, our site appears to represent a continuation of the Intermediate Bronze Age coastal settlement farther to the north.

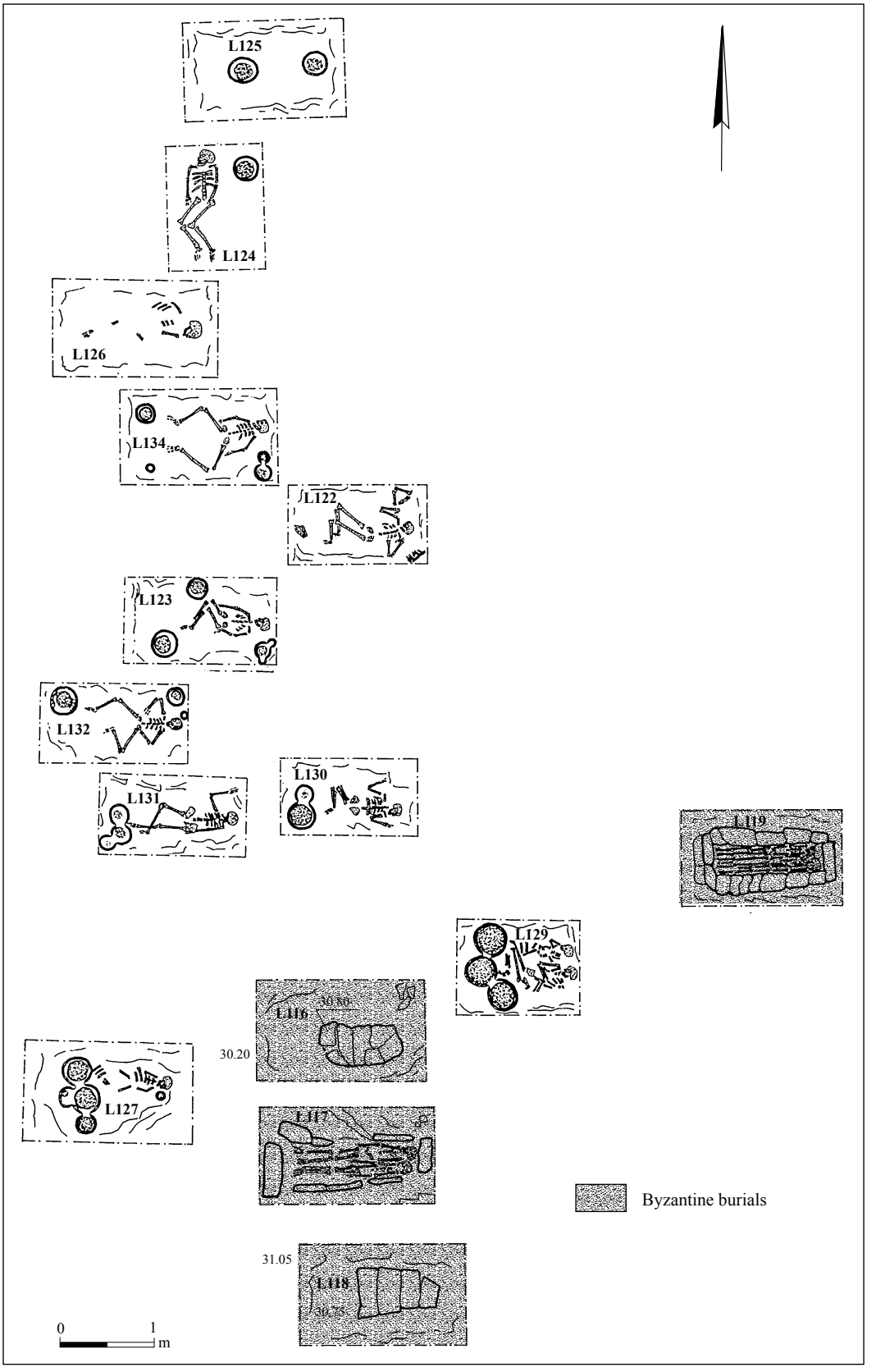
THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE II CEMETERY

Sixteen pit graves belonging to an MB II cemetery were discovered in three clusters in the southwestern quadrant of the site (Areas D3, D4, F1; see Fig. 2). The shallow pit graves were dug into the *kurkar* and covered with reddish sand. In Area D4, twelve graves (L122–L127, L129–L134; Plan 2)[4] were set close to one another, sometimes less than one meter apart. With only one exception, the bodies were oriented east–west, with the head to the east (Figs. 6–10); in Grave 124 the interred lay with the head to the north (Fig. 11). Three additional burials were revealed in Area F1 (L501, L508, L509b). Another grave was found in Area D3 (L114–115; Plan 3).

Fig. 6. MB IIB Grave 132.

Fig. 7. MB IIB Grave 129.

Prior to the excavations, extensive construction work had been carried out throughout the burial area, which may have destroyed additional graves. Furthermore, other graves from this period may have been damaged in ancient times by the construction of the Roman-period pottery kilns in Area F1 and graves dating to the Byzantine period (Areas D1–D4).



Plan 2. Plan of MB IIB cemetery in Area D.

Fig. 8. MB IIB Grave 122.

Fig. 9. MB IIB Grave 130.

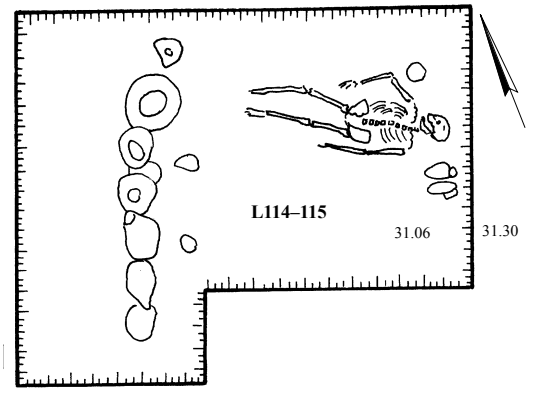
Several graves were excavated without anthropological assistance and the skeletal remains were not examined. In the excavation of the remaining graves, anthropological analyses were carried out (see Appendix 2).[5] Some skeletons in these graves were in fair condition, although it appears that some postmortem deformation had taken place in a

Fig. 10. MB IIB Grave 134.

Fig. 11. MB IIB Grave 124.

number of skulls, apparently due to the pressure of the sand dunes that had accumulated over the graves.

In several burials, the bodies were placed in a fetal position with one hand folded over the stomach, the other lying parallel to the body. In Grave 114–115, the body was extended with both arms parallel to the body (Plan 3). In Grave 132, the body was found in a 'dancing' position, with the hands placed on the waist (see Fig. 6). In Grave 131, the body had one leg extended, the other flexed. Three graves (L124, L127 and L129) contained evidence of double burials (see Fig. 7).



Plan 3. Plan of Grave L114–115

Each burial contained grave offerings, including pottery (Fig. 12), weapons, scarabs and jewelry (see Appendix 2). Analysis of the complete vessels recovered in the graves reveals that storage jars comprised the largest component of the assemblage, followed by dipper juglets, bowls, jugs and a pirifom juglet (Fig. 13). The offerings were generally placed at the feet or the head of the deceased, sometimes to the side. Each burial contained a storage jar (presumably filled with water or some other liquid) and a dipper juglet. Piriform juglets placed at the head of the deceased may have contained oil or perfumes. The mouths of several jars were covered with carinated bowls that may have contained offerings of food. A jug in Grave 126 contained partially burnt shells (similar to the jug in Fig. 17:2). In

Fig. 12. Vessels from the MB IIB cemetery.

addition, bones in several graves indicate that pieces of meat were laid around the deceased (see, for example, Grave 122; Fig. 8).

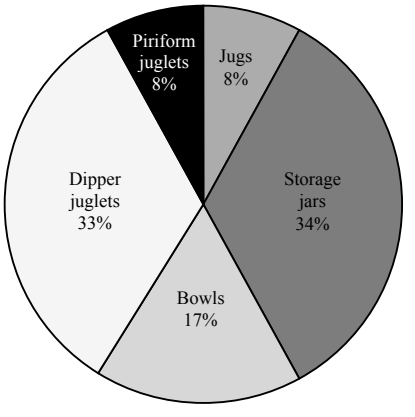


Fig. 13. Percentages of pottery types in the MB IIB cemetery.

In Grave 114–115, a spearhead (see Fig. 19:1) and a large quantity of pottery were found (see Figs. 14:1, 3, 4; 15:1; 16:2). Scarabs were found in two graves (L123, L124; see Fig. 19:3, 4), one placed on the second finger of the deceased in Grave 124.

The Pottery

Bowls (Figs. 14, 15).— Two types of bowls were found in the MB II cemetery, carinated bowls (Fig. 14) and platter bowls (Fig. 15). The example in Fig. 14:1 is a shallow carinated bowl with a rounded base and an everted rim. That in Fig. 14:2 is a more common type with a low ring base, a deep, carinated body and an everted rim. Traces of a gray burnish are visible on the exterior. A bowl from Grave 114–115 has a carinated, S-shaped profile (Fig. 14:3). A high ring base with a thickened, everted foot from the same grave (Fig. 14:4) probably belonged to the same bowl. Carinated bowls with everted

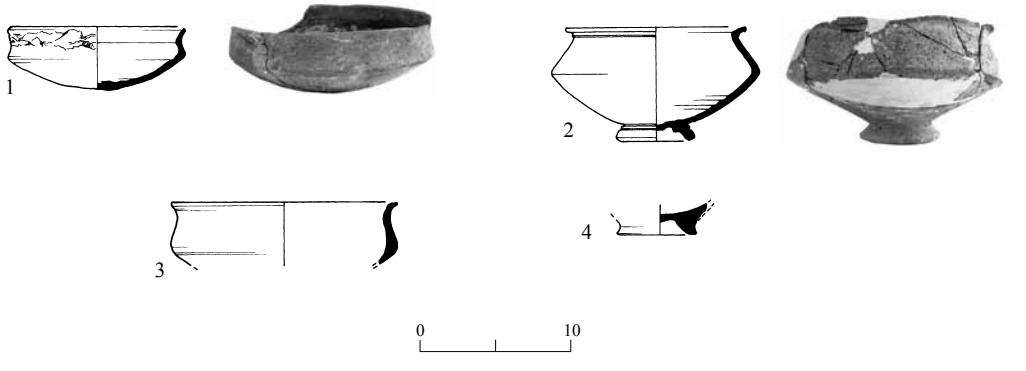


Fig. 14. MB IIB pottery: carinated bowls.

No.	Area	Basket	Grave	Description	Parallels
1	D3	70	L114–115	5YR6/6 reddish yellow; minute gray and large white inclusions	Tel ʿAmar: Drucks 1982: Fig. 2:11
2	D4	100	L125	5YR6/6 reddish yellow; minute gray and large white, gray inclusions; traces of gray burnish	Tell el-ʿAjjul: Tufnell 1962: Fig. 10:33 Gezer: Dever, Lance and Wright 1970: Pl. 30:23 Bet Shemesh: Grant 1929: No. 676
3	D3	77	L114–115	2.5YR6/8 light red; occasional large gray and tiny gray inclusions; traces of red burnish 2.5YR4.8; white accretions; height: 19.75 cm	Tel Aviv Harbor: Kaplan 1955: Fig. 2:5 Tel ʿAmar: Drucks 1982: Fig. 2:13 Gezer: Dever, Lance and Wright 1970: Pl. 31:3
4	D3	77	L114–115	Base; as No. 3	Lakhish: Tufnell 1958: Pl. 68:518 Tel Ashqelon: Baker 2006: Figs. 9, 10

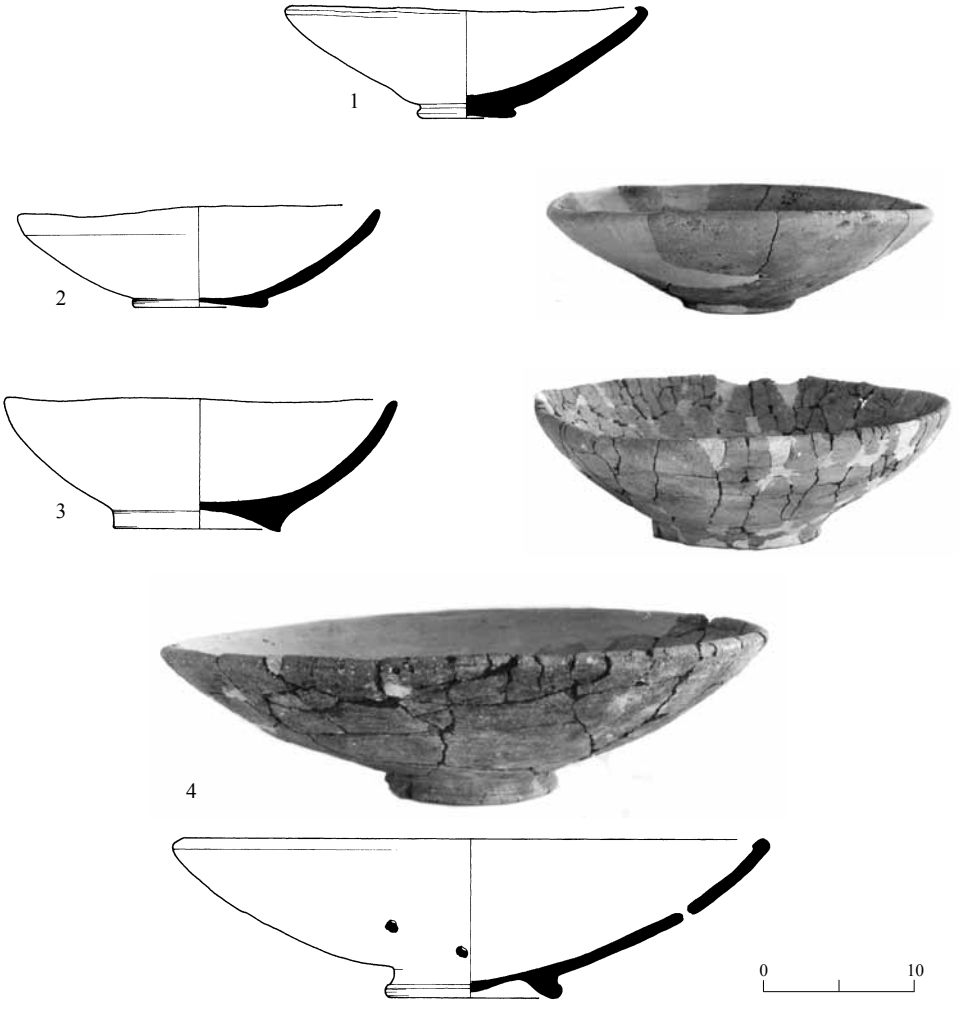


Fig. 15. MB IIB pottery: platter bowls.

No.	Area	Basket	Grave	Description	Parallels
1	D3	77	L114–115	5YR6/6 reddish yellow; minute white, gray and occasional large white, gray inclusions; diam.: 24.5 cm	Tel Aviv Harbor: Kaplan 1955: Fig. 4:8 Bet Shemesh: Grant 1929: No. 313
2	D3	80	L114–115	5YR6/8 reddish yellow; minute white, gray and large white inclusions	Gezer: Dever, Lance and Wright 1970: Pl. 31:21 Afeq-Antipatris : Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1981: Fig. 4:28 Bet Shemesh: Grant 1929: No. 162
3	D4	157	L130	5YR6.4 light reddish brown; minute white, gray and occasional large white, gray inclusions; diam.: 26 cm	Tell el-'Ajjul: Tufnell 1962: Fig. 14:51 Bet Shemesh: Grant 1929: No. 679
4	D3	78	L114–115	5YR5/4 reddish brown; minute white, gray and large white, gray inclusions; 2 perforations close together; diameter: 40 cm	Barqai: Gophna and Sussman 1969: Fig. 5:7, 9

Fig. 16 ▸

No.	Type	Area	Basket	Grave	Description	Parallels
1	Dipper juglet	D4	148	L127	2.5YR6/8 light red; tiny gray and occasional large gray inclusions; traces of 2.5YR4.8 red burnish; white accretions; height 19.75 cm	Tel Aviv Harbor: Kaplan 1955: Fig. 4:15 Gezer: Dever, Lance and Wright 1970: Fig. 30:16 Tel Ashqelon: Baker 2006: Figs. 9–11
2	Dipper juglet	D3	68	L114–115	2.5YR6/8 light red; tiny gray and occasional large gray inclusions; white accretions; height 22.5 cm	Tell el-ʻAjjul: Tufnell 1980: Fig. 3:4 Tel Aviv Harbor: Kaplan 1955: Fig. 4:14 Lakhish: Tufnell 1958: Pl. 78:780, 781 Tel Ashqelon: Baker 2006: Figs. 9–11
3	Dipper juglet	D4	140	L127	5YR5/6 yellowish red; minute white, gray inclusions; white accretions	Tel Aviv Harbor: Kaplan 1955: Fig. 3:14 Tel Zeror: Kochavi, Beck and Gopha 1981: Fig. 17:17 Tell el-ʻAjjul: Petrie 1931: Pl. XLVII:Form 51C3 Tel Ashqelon: Baker 2006: Figs. 9–11
4	Piriform juglet	D4	86	L123	2.5YR7/8 light red; tiny gray and occasional large white inclusions; traces of 2.5YR5.8 red burnish; white accretions; height 14 cm	Tell el-ʻAjjul: Tufnell 1962: Fig. 12:14 Bet Shemesh: Grant 1929: No. 158R Tel Ashqelon: Baker 2006: Fig. 9

rims and ring bases are present in the earliest MB IIB phases of the Tel Ashqelon tombs, and continue into MB IIC with slight variations (Baker 2006:8, 11; Figs. 7–11, Chart 1).

The second type of bowl found in the graves is a wide, everted platter bowl with a variety of ring bases. Some of these are quite large, ranging between 24.5 and 40 cm in diameter (Fig. 15). The bowl in Fig. 15:1 has an inverted rim and a concave disc base. The bowl in Fig. 15:2, made of similar ware, has a straight rim and slightly rounded walls with a ridge around the exterior below the rim. The bowl in Fig. 15:3 is somewhat larger and deeper, with a concave disc base. The largest platter bowl in the cemetery (Fig. 15:4) has a diameter of 40 cm, a ring base with a thickened, everted foot and a slightly hooked, inverted rim. At Tel Ashqelon, platter bowls first appear in tombs during MB IIC (Baker 2006:11, Figs. 10, 11).

Juglets (Fig. 16).— Juglets include dipper juglets (Fig. 16:1–3, usually found inside storage jars) and a piriform juglet (Fig. 16:4). The three dipper juglets presented here have white encrustation on the exterior. The example in Fig. 16:1 has a rather narrow body, a flaring neck and a slightly inverted rim. The pinched lip is ridged on the interior. The juglet in Fig. 16:2 is larger and wider, and the neck has a slightly inverted bell shape with an inverted rim. Another dipper juglet (Fig. 16:3) has a more rounded body profile and a flaring neck ending in a straight rim. Elongated dipper juglets such as these appear in the early phases of the Tel Ashqelon tombs, dated to MB IIB–C (Baker 2006:8, 11, Figs. 7–11, Chart 1: Nos. 24–27).

A piriform juglet (Fig. 16:4) has a pointed base, a narrow neck ending in a flaring, rounded rim, and a double handle that arches from the upper neck to the shoulder. This juglet type has been found in both MB IIA and MB IIB contexts at a number of sites (Baker 2006:8). At Tel Ashqelon, a similar piriform juglet was uncovered in a tomb dated to MB IIB (Baker 2006: Chart 2: No. 43).

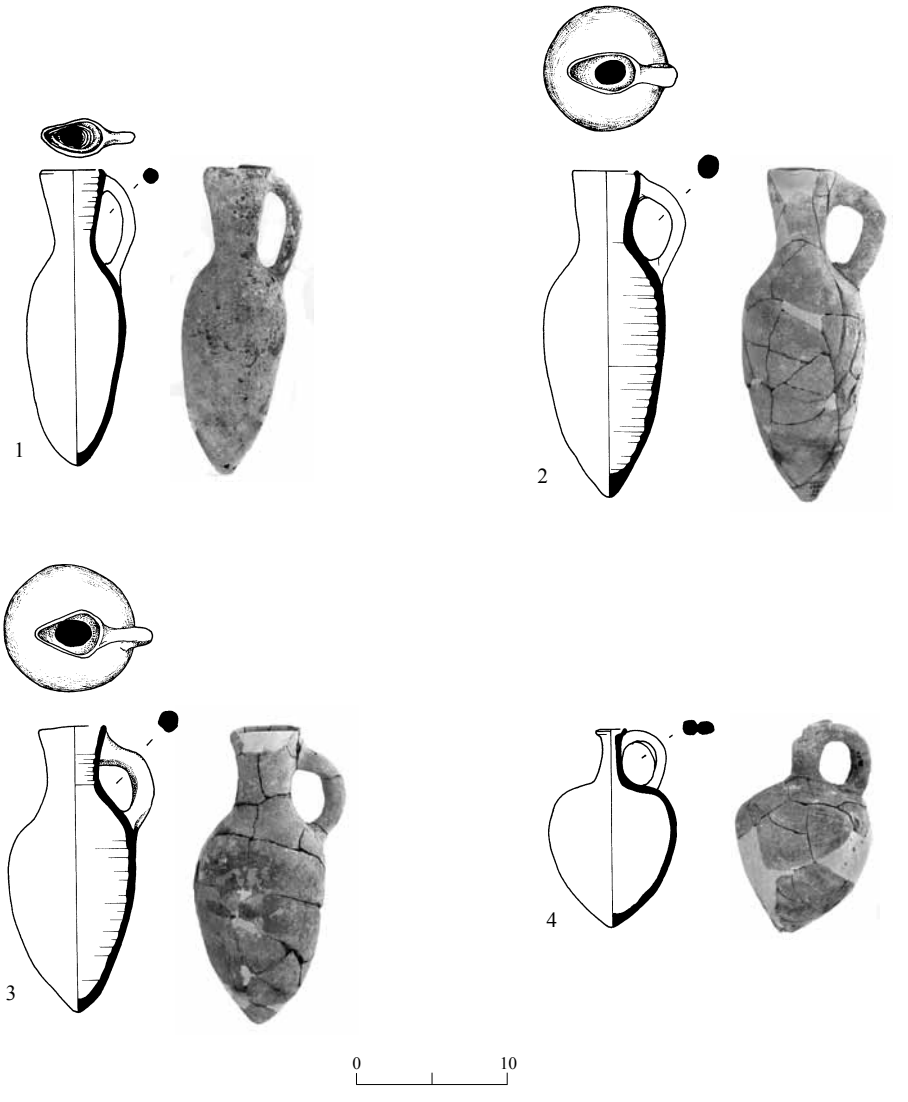


Fig. 16. MB IIB pottery: juglets.

Jugs (Fig. 17).— Three jugs were found in the cemetery. One type has a short, collared neck and an inverted rim stepped on the exterior (Fig. 17:1). No parallels were found for this vessel. A second vessel has a wide mouth, a short, thickened neck and a handle protruding from the upper shoulder (Fig. 17:2). No parallels were found for this vessel as well. A complete example of a third type has a convex base, a globular body, a rather high, narrow neck that ends in a wide mouth, a thickened, incurved rim and a loop handle attached to the shoulder. Fine combing decorates the upper half of the body, but does not extend to the neck (Fig. 17:3). Vessels with a similar globular body and a single handle (described as storage jars) were discovered in the Tel Ashqelon tombs in contexts dated to MB IIC (Baker 2006: Fig. 10, Chart 4).

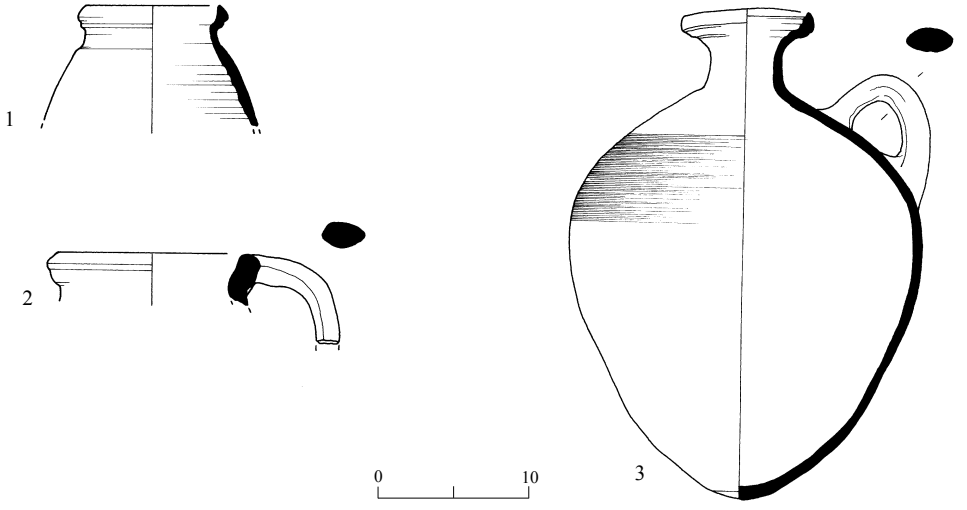


Fig. 17. MB IIB pottery: jugs.

No.	Area	Basket	Grave	Description	Parallels
1	D4	227	L129	2.5YR5/8 red; light grayish core; minute gray, white and large white inclusions	
2	D4	116	L127	5YR5/6 yellowish red; large gray, white inclusions; grayish brown core	
3	F1	115	L501	5YR6/6 reddish yellow; minute white, gray and occasional large white, gray inclusions; height 31 cm	Afeq-Antipatris: Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1981: Fig. 4:40 Tel Ashqelon: Baker 2006: Fig. 10, Chart 4

Storage Jars (Fig. 18).— Although storage jars were found in every grave, many of the upper portions of these jars were damaged by mechanical equipment prior to excavation. A rim and neck fragment and a lower body of two separate storage jars are presented here. The neck is wide and flaring and ends in a triangular, everted rim (Fig. 18:1). This type of rim, described as an elongated, folded type on storage jars from Afeq, is dated there to MB IIA (Beck 1985:186, Fig. 2:12–15). A full ovoid body of another jar has a small, flattened base and loop handles attached to either side, below the shoulder (Fig. 18:2). Ovoid-shaped storage jars were uncovered in tombs dated to MB IIC at Tel Ashqelon (Baker 2006: Figs. 10, 11, Chart 4).

Small Finds (Fig. 19)

Metal Objects.— Two copper-alloy objects were recovered from the graves: a spearhead (Fig. 19:1) and a ring (Fig. 19:2). The spearhead is similar to one found in an MB II grave in the Ẓefat (Safed) area (Damati and Stepansky 1996: Fig. 13:2) and to examples from Tel Na‘ama, dated to mid- and late MB IIA (Greenberg et al. 1998:17).

Scarabs.— Two scarabs were found in the graves.[6] The example from Grave 123 (Fig. 19:3) appears to be a locally produced scarab belonging to the early group of Middle Bronze Age Canaanite scarabs. The Hathor head in the middle of the scarab is a Canaanite variation of the Egyptian Hathor symbol. The second

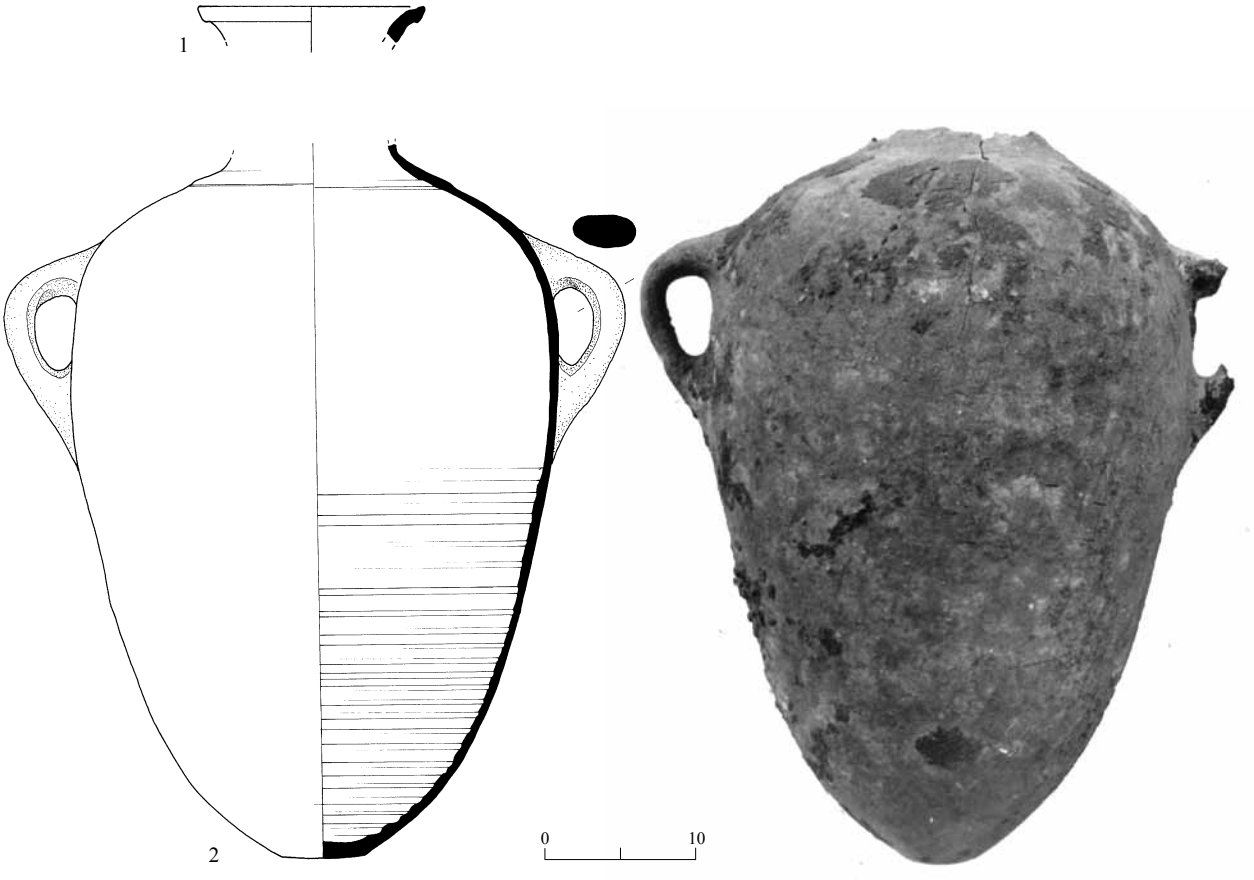


Fig. 18. MB IIB pottery: storage jars.

No.	Area	Basket	Grave	Description	Parallels
1	D4	192	L134	5YR6/8 reddish yellow; grayish brown core; numerous tiny white inclusions	Afeq: Beck 1985: Fig: 2:12–15 Tel Aviv Harbor: Kaplan 1955: Fig. 1:3
2	F	-	Surface Area F	2.5YR5/8 red; grayish core; minute gray, white and large white inclusions; white accretions on ext.	Tel Aviv Harbor: Kaplan 1955: Fig. 1:6 Gezer: Dever, Lance and Wright 1970: Pl. 31:25 Tell el-'Ajjul: Petrie 1932: Pl. XXXII:43E; 1933: Pl. XXXVII:43D9 Tel Ashqelon: Baker 2006: Figs. 10, 11

scarab, from Grave 124 (Fig. 19:4), is a Late Middle Kingdom Egyptian import of Dynasty XIII. Late Middle Kingdom Egyptian scarabs are occasionally found in Middle Bronze Age contexts in Palestine; however, they constitute a small minority among the locally produced Canaanite scarabs. Evidence from Tel Ashqelon indicates that scarabs were included in tombs dating to both MB IIB and MB IIC and even later (Baker 2006:21).

Summary

The MB II pit graves excavated at the site are unrelated to the Intermediate Bronze Age settlement located to the north. Apparently, only a portion of the cemetery was excavated, which

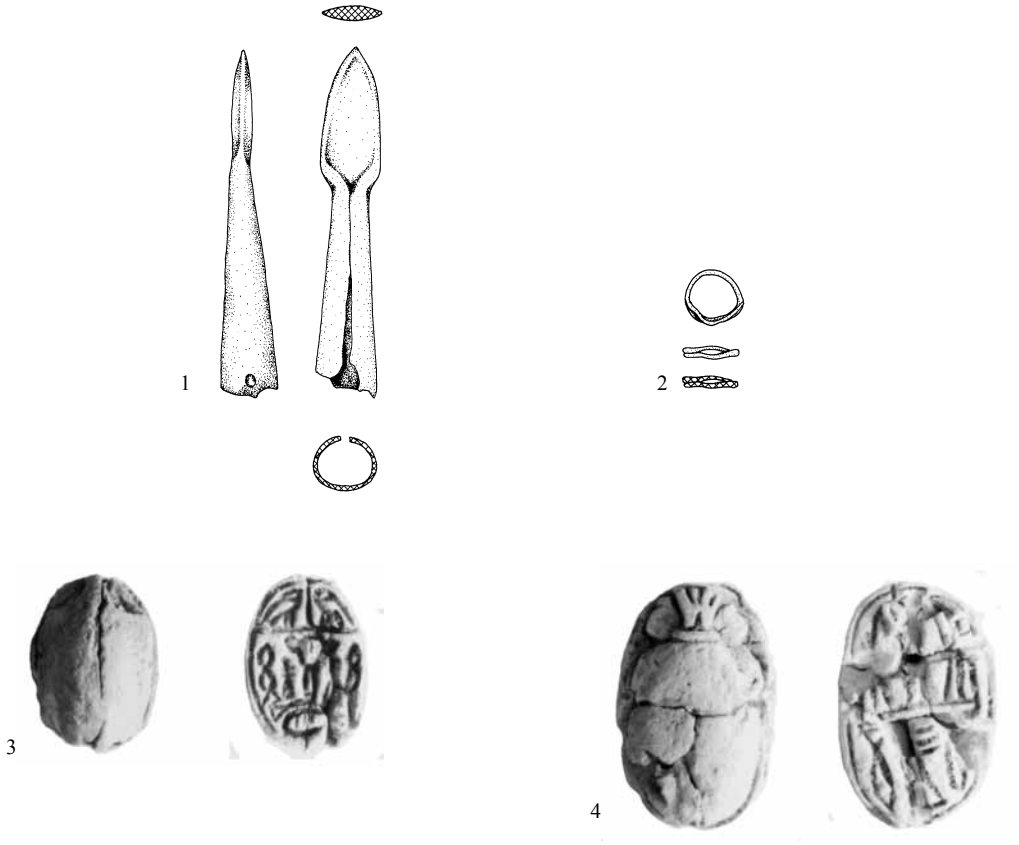


Fig. 19. MB IIB small finds.

No.	Type	Area	Basket	Grave	Description	Parallels
1	Spear	D3	74	L114–115	Copper alloy	Tel Na‘ama: Greenberg et al. 1998: Fig. 20:2 Ẓefat: Damati and Stepansky 1996: Fig. 13:2
2	Ring	D4	177	L134	Copper alloy	
3	Scarab	D4	134	L123	Steatite (worn glaze)	Schroer 1989: Nos. 58–84.
4	Scarab	D4	103	L124	Steatite (worn glaze)	Tufnell 1975: Fig. 6, Class 3, B5, No. 284

probably extends further beyond the limits of the excavation. The inhabitants buried here may have lived in a satellite settlement of the MB II fortified city at Tel Ashqelon, enjoying the features that had attracted settlers earlier in the Intermediate Bronze Age: the fertile soil and the wells of the Migdal Valley. Seven MB II graves discovered at the northwestern edge of the site (Zelin 2002; see Figs. 1, 2) may have belonged to the same settlement. The cemetery uncovered in our excavation was located along the route leading to Tel Poran, a site with a rampart dating to MB IIB (Gophna 1992), located some 5 km northeast of the ‘Third Mile Estate’. It should be noted that another MB IIB graveyard was found c. 1.3 km southeast of our site, near the Migdal Valley (Migdal Ashqelon; see Fig. 1; Gershuny 1996).

The graves and grave goods from the site are similar to those found at other MB IIB–C sites,

such as Tel Ashqelon, Afeq-Antipatris, Bet Shemesh and Tell el-'Ajjul, and in particular the MB IIB cemetery excavated south of the Tel Aviv Harbor (Kaplan 1955). Both the Tel Aviv cemetery and the cemetery discussed here consist of pit burials with bodies interred in an east–west direction (heads to the east), with a similar composition of funerary equipment placed in similar arrangements (Kaplan 1955:2–3).

The 'Third Mile Estate' cemetery contained individuals interred with grave goods, including domestic wares dating to MB IIB–C, in particular storage jars along with dipper juglets and bowls. Such a 'funeral kit' corresponds to the early phases of the tombs at Tel Ashqelon (Phases 1 and 2), comprising mainly domestic wares. Baker posits that these assemblages were not only intended to provide the dead with provisions for their journey to the next life, but may have also been used in funerary banquets that took place at the time of the burial (Baker 2006:23).

NOTES

[1] The excavation, on behalf of the IAA (Permit No. A-1780), was directed by Yigal Israel, with the assistance of David Asael. The site was discovered and reported by Shlomo Gudovitch, then Ashqelon District Archaeologist. The excavation team was based in Kibbutz Gevar'am and assisted by the late Ori Neder, then Ashqelon District Inspector. Further assistance was provided by Joe Zias of the IAA and N. Haimson of Barzilai Hospital (physical anthropology), N. Asael (excavation recording), Y. Haymovich (administration), Nahshon Sneh (field photography), Israel Vatkin, Pavel Gertopsky, Vadim Essman and Natalia Zak (surveying and drafting), Shula Lavi (pottery restoration) and Tali Krinkin-Fabian and the late Yocheved Kasabi (pottery drawing).

We would like to thank Yuval Yekutieli for reading the manuscript, and Lilly Gershuny for her comments on the MB IIB pit graves, as well as Daphna Ben-Tor for her assistance with the scarabs. Further thanks are due to Dan Gazit, Benjamin Saidel and Sam Wolff for their helpful suggestions.

[2] Petrographic analysis of this type of cup from the Central Negev indicated it may have been produced in the Judean Hills (Goren 1996: Fig. 11:14).

[3] A jar with a profile similar to Fig. 4:8, made of different ware, was found in an EB III deposit at a site near Niẓẓanim (Yekutieli and Gophna 1994: Fig. 6:6).

[4] Grave 133 was badly damaged prior to the excavation, and does not appear on the plan.

[5] The anthropological analyses were conducted by Joe Zias. We wish to thank him for his contribution.

[6] The scarabs were examined by Daphna Ben-Tor. We wish to thank her for her contribution.

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