

## A CHALCOLITHIC BURIAL NEAR HORBAT GOVIT IN LOWER GALILEE

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### INTRODUCTION

A salvage excavation was carried out during February 1998, in a rock shelter opposite Horbat Govit (Arabic: Khirbat Jibyatha) in the Lower Galilee (van den Brink 2000).<sup>1</sup> The site (map ref. NIG 21356/74135; OIG 16356/24135; c. 100 m above sea level) is located 6 km southeast of Qiryat Ata, 5 km northwest of the multiple-period site of Tel Regev (Arabic: Khirbat Harbaj; cf. Ronen and Olamy 1983: xxi, Site 113)<sup>2</sup> and about 12 km east of the Mediterranean shoreline at Haifa (Fig. 1).

It is situated within a landscape unit known as the Allonim Hills (Ziv 1970), a chain of moderately sloping hills reaching heights of 200–300 m, divided by shallow, grassy wadis that drain into Nahal Zippori. The Allonim Hills landscape is composed primarily of soft limestone covered with a crust of *nari* (Gal 1992:2).

The site is on the lower part of the northwestern slope of a hill crowned by the present-day village of Nofit (formerly, Pi-Ner; Fig. 1). The rock shelter is situated just above, and overlooking, a north–south oriented wadi,

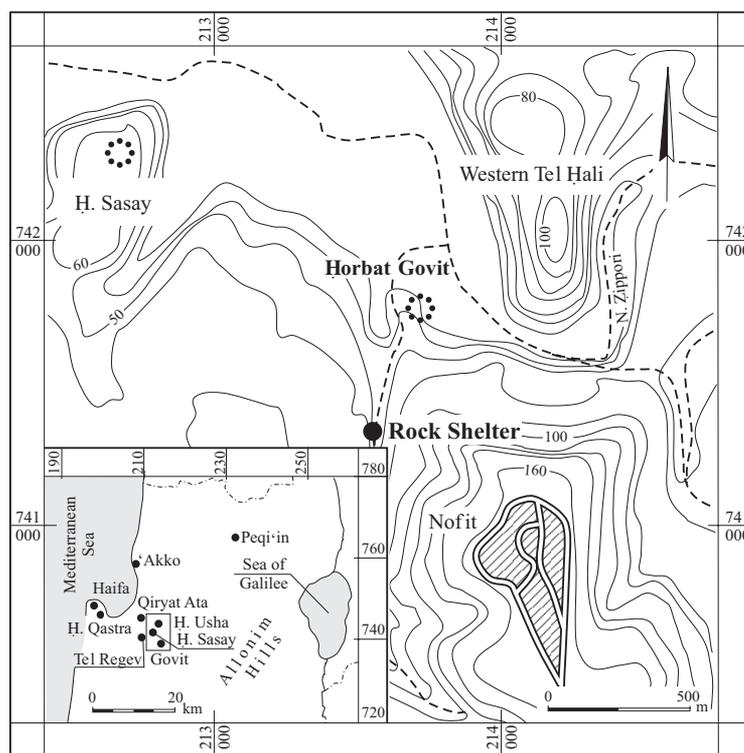


Fig. 1. Location map of the site with other Chalcolithic burial sites in the region.

a minor tributary of Naḥal Zippori. A small Bedouin settlement (Ḥorbat Govit) is located opposite the site, on the west bank of the wadi. Ancient remains in the vicinity of this Bedouin settlement were first identified during an archaeological survey of the Lower Galilee carried out in the years 1970–1972 (Olami and Gal 2003:46\*, Site 113). Ruins founded on rendzina soil cover an area of 4 dunams on a low summit on the southern bank of Naḥal Zippori, where the stream emerges from the Allonim Hills toward the 'Akko Plain. Naḥal Zippori, which provided the site with fresh water, passes close by at a distance of 150 m. Today the area is under cultivation. Many sherds, dating from Iron Age II until the Roman–Byzantine periods, are visible on the surface (Gal 1992:20).

#### THE EXCAVATION

The rock shelter was discerned by Iskander Jabur of the Israel Antiquities Authority during preparatory mechanical trenching to accommodate a water supply infrastructure. A trench, c. 2.5 m wide and 2 m deep, had destroyed the western side of the original space (Fig. 2). In the preserved, eastern part of the shelter (Fig. 3), measuring c. 1.5 × 5.0 × 6.0 m,

two strata (1 and 2) dating to the Chalcolithic period were distinguished.

In Stratum 2, large quantities of ceramic sherds and a few flints were collected from a 0.3–0.4 m thick fill resting on the bedrock floor in the southern part of the cave (L102). The presence of both storage and cooking vessels suggests that the shelter (or, at least this part of it) was initially used for domestic purposes during a phase of the Late Chalcolithic period. This stratum was sealed and separated from the overlying Stratum 1 by a scattered layer of medium-sized limestone rocks, indicating that the roof over the southern end of the cave must have collapsed and that the shelter was subsequently abandoned.

In Stratum 1, the intact northern part of this shelter was reused to accommodate a single, primary, human burial (age between 15 and 20 years, sex unknown),<sup>3</sup> surrounded by an assemblage of partly restorable pottery vessels (Fig. 4), all embedded in a 0.5–0.6 m thick accumulation of soil deposits (L101) above debris from the roof collapse. This assemblage, still within the Late Chalcolithic, includes small and medium-sized so-called V-shaped bowls, basins, holemouth vessels (see Figs. 6–11) and other jars. An apparent second collapse of the



Fig. 2. Mekorot Water Company trench cutting the cave in foreground, looking south.



Fig. 3. The shelter after excavation, looking east; in the foreground is the refilled Mekorot trench.

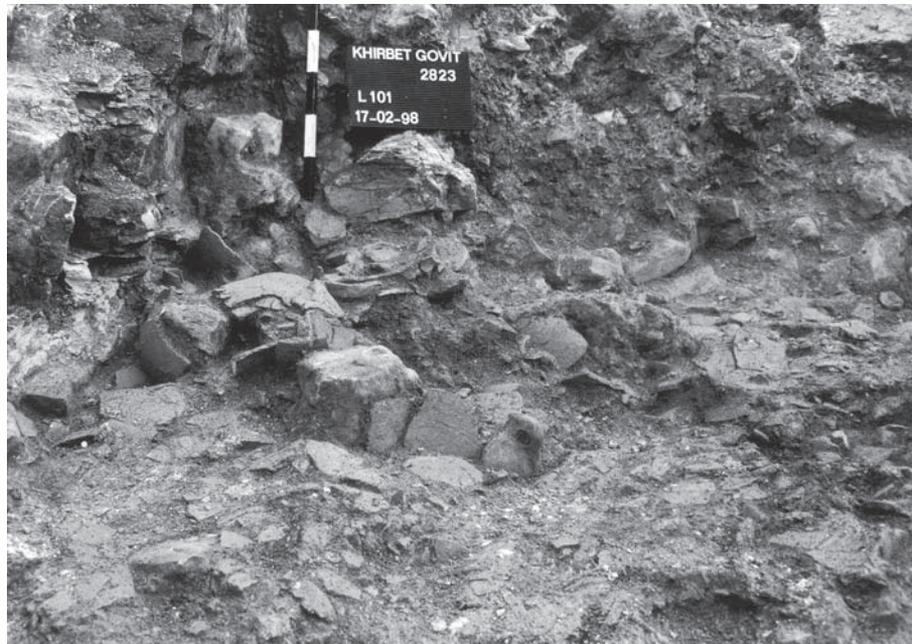


Fig. 4. Pottery remains surrounding the primary burial in Stratum 1.

shelter's roof, this time in the northeastern part of the cave, effectively sealed the burial until it was uncovered by the bulldozer.

#### THE POTTERY

##### *Stratum 2* (L102; Fig. 5)

Due to the fragmented and incomplete nature of the pottery assemblage retrieved from L102, none of the vessels could be restored. The assemblage as a whole is very similar to that of Stratum 1 (described in detail below), and therefore the finds are only briefly enumerated

here. Diagnostic sherds of open vessels include the base of a single small V-shaped bowl, 31 rim fragments of medium-sized V-shaped bowls (of which 15 are red-painted), and 2 rims of basins. Closed vessels include rim fragments of 8 medium-sized holemouth jars and 20 rims of large jars—either holemouths or with short, everted rims (Fig. 5:1). In addition, 47 fragments of flat bases (Fig. 5:2) provide an estimated minimum number (henceforth, MNI) of 8–10 holemouth and/or necked jars (based on differentiation in fabric, size, etc.). Some of the jars have lug handles (Fig. 5:1, 2).

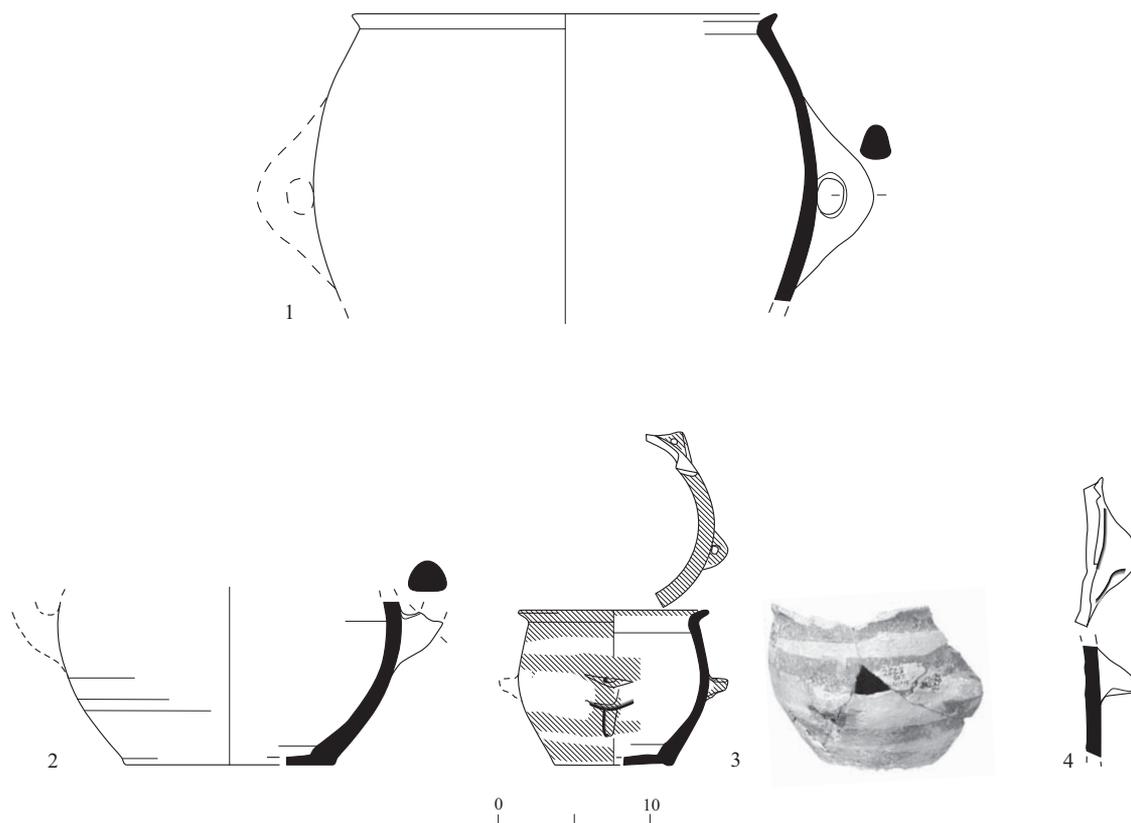


Fig. 5. Stratum 2, L102: pottery.

No.	Type	Basket	Remarks
1	Short-necked jar	1040	Incomplete; only one lug handle preserved
2	Medium-sized krater	1045	Lower half of vessel with part of a lug handle
3	Small, short-necked pot	1034	Incomplete; small, red-painted lug handles (originally 4); horizontal, red-painted bands
4	Knob handle	1040	

A single specimen of a small, painted pot with multiple, vertically pierced lug handles (Fig. 5:3) is morphologically similar, for example, to a specimen from Pella (McNicoll, Smith and Hennessy 1982: Pl. 105:8; and see Frankel and Gophna 1980), although the latter has a decoration of horizontally incised lines, instead of red-painted bands. In addition, two knob handles (Fig. 5:4), three small lug handles, one large lug handle, and three fragments of a vertical triangular handle were retrieved (cf. Fig. 6:7, 8).

*Stratum 1* (L101; Figs. 6–11)

*Small and Medium-Sized Bowls* (Fig. 6).— An MNI of 17 small and medium-sized V-shaped bowls was calculated by counting diagnostic base fragments from L101. These bowls have flat bases and flaring walls (Fig. 6:1–7). Rims are either plain (Fig. 6:1, 7) or red-painted (Fig. 6:2); the lower part of one small bowl (Fig. 6:4) resembles a bowl with parallel concave-convex walls, known, for instance, from Abu Maṭar (“bol à paroi concave-convexe,” Commenge-Pellerin 1987: Fig. 17:17; 1990: Fig. 18:12). One medium-sized bowl with flaring walls has a vertical triangular handle, elliptical in section, attached to the rim (Fig. 6:7).<sup>4</sup> A fragment of yet another similar handle derives from the same burial locus (Fig. 6:8), thus providing a MNI of two specimens of this special type of bowl within the burial assemblage.

*Large Bowls* (Fig. 7).— These bowls (Fig. 7:1–6) are also V-shaped and their rims are invariably painted red. A flat base is presented in Fig. 7:1. An unusually large, deep bowl with traces of a fenestrated pedestal (Fig. 7:3) has a parallel at Giv’atayim (Sussman and Ben-Arieh 1966: Fig. 3). The two parallel red-painted bands around the upper part of its body occur elsewhere, e.g., at Şafadi (Commuge-Pellerin 1990: Fig. 20:2).

*Basins* (Fig. 8:1).— Basins are rare in L101, only 16 rim fragments (MNI 2) having been retrieved.

*Holemouth Jars* (Figs. 8:2–5; 9; 10:1, 2).— Most of the holemouth jars, which constitute the largest group in the assemblage, have relatively wide mouths. They can be subdivided into plain (Figs. 8:2–5; 10:1, 2) and spouted (Fig. 9) vessels. Both subtypes may be provided with pairs of lug handles (Figs. 9:1; 10:1, 2). Based on the 133 plain rim fragments and the 162 flat base fragments of holemouth jars that were retrieved from L101, an MNI of 14 vessels can be calculated. Spouted vessels of this type have parallel, red-painted, horizontal bands with oblique red-painted stripes around or over the spout (Fig. 9:1, 2), or are undecorated (Fig. 9:3, 4). Figure 9:1 is a large, spouted holemouth jar with a plain, slightly beveled rim and two lug handles which are also painted red. But for its beveled rim, Fig. 9:1 is very similar in shape and size to the fragmented (spoutless?) vessel illustrated in Fig. 10:1. Two other spouted holemouths (Fig. 9:3, 4) also have plain rims; the latter, with its broad mouth and parallel convex walls, might be defined as a basin. Figure 9:2 has a slightly everted rim, while the holemouth jar illustrated in Fig. 10:2 is a medium-sized vessel with a slightly constricted red-painted rim. The smaller vessels with straightish walls in Fig. 8:4, 5 are of a type termed elsewhere, ‘small pithoi.’<sup>5</sup>

Of interest are the multiple, post-firing drilled perforations in the upper part of the body of Fig. 9:1. Similar drill holes are also noted in the rim of the holemouth jar illustrated in Fig. 8:5. These probably served for mending breaks, thus indicating that these vessels were valued. Soot stains on the exterior of some of the holemouth jars (e.g., Fig. 10:1) show that they were possibly used for boiling liquids,<sup>6</sup> while others (e.g., Fig. 10:2) apparently served for storage.

*Jars*.— Five rim and shoulder fragments of large, short-rimmed jars (MNI 2) were retrieved from L101 (Figs. 10:3, 4). An additional jar with two lug handles (Fig. 11:1) could be restored, except for the rim, which had been removed intentionally before its inclusion in

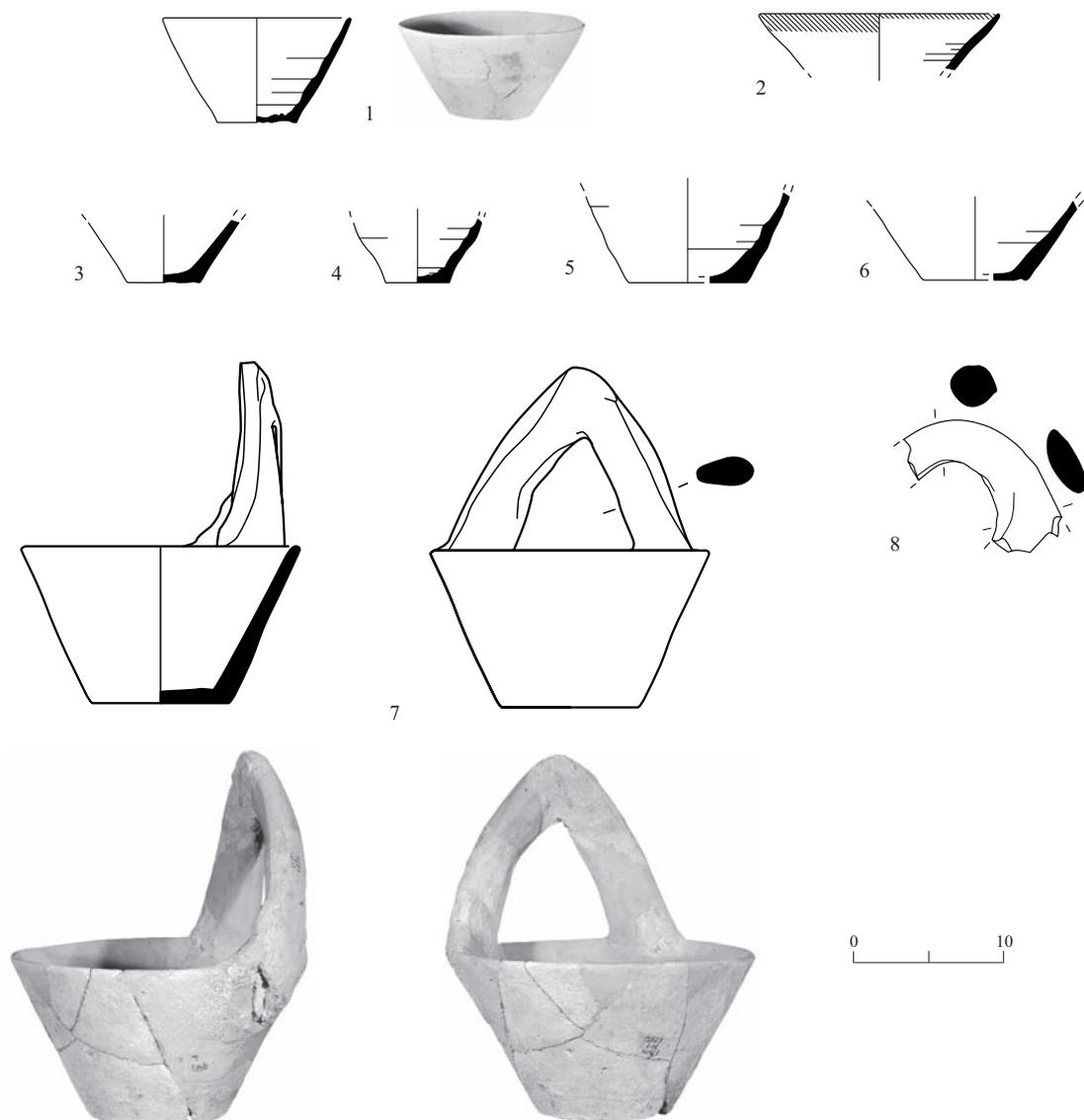


Fig. 6. Stratium 1, L101: small and medium-sized V-shaped bowls.

No.	Type	Basket	Remarks
1	Small V-shaped bowl	-	Restored, complete
2	Small bowl	-	Rim fragment
3	Small bowl	1009	Base fragment
4	Small bowl	1022	Base fragment
5	Medium-sized bowl	1045	Base fragment
6	Medium-sized bowl	1017	Base fragment
7	Medium-sized bowl with vertical triangular handle	1041	Restored, complete
8	Triangular handle	1038	Fragment

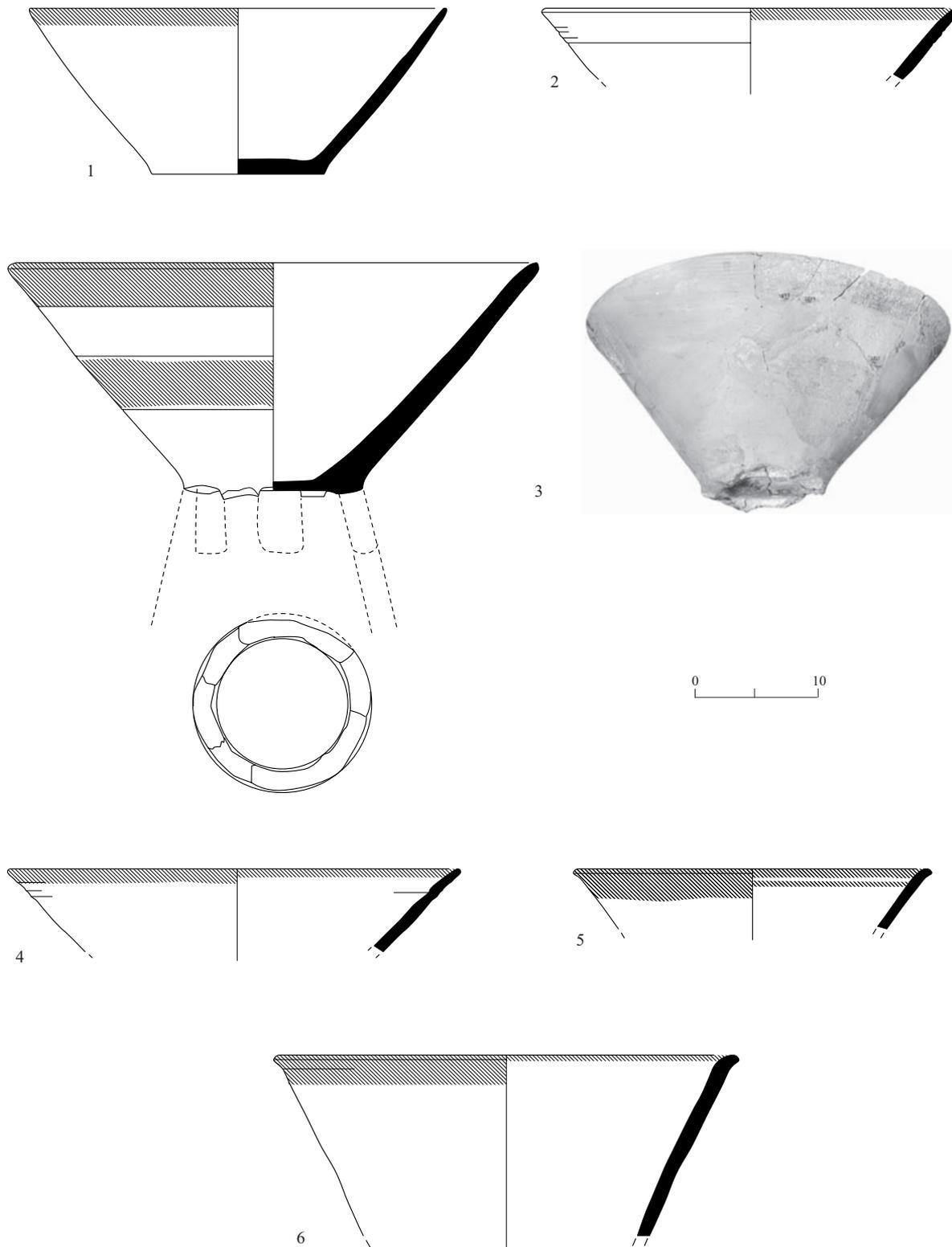


Fig. 7. Stratum 1, L101: large bowls, one with a fenestrated pedestal.

◄ Fig. 7

No.	Type	Basket	Remarks
1	Large bowl	1009	Red paint on exterior of rim
2	Large bowl	1038	Fragment; red paint on exterior and interior of rim
3	Large, pedestalled bowl	1044.1	Pedestal missing; two parallel, red-painted bands on exterior
4	Large bowl	1030	Fragment; red paint on exterior and interior of rim
5	Large bowl	1017	Fragment; red paint on exterior and interior of rim
6	Large, deep bowl	1044.2	Fragment; red paint on exterior and interior of rim

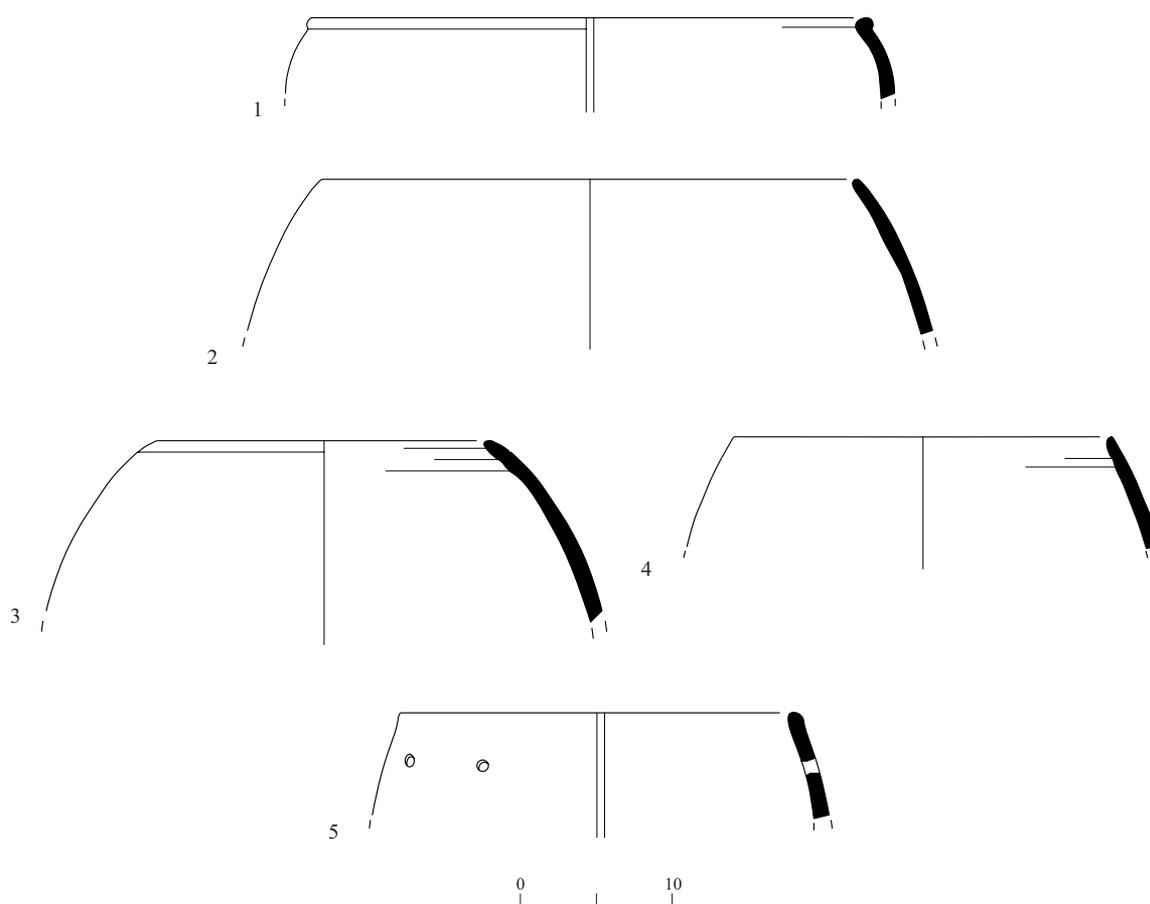


Fig. 8. Stratum 1, L101: basin and plain holemouth jars.

No.	Type	Basket	Remarks
1	Large basin	1005	Rim fragment
2	Holemouth jar	1009	Rim/wall fragment
3	Holemouth jar	1043	Rim/wall fragment
4	Holemouth jar	1041	Rim/wall fragment
5	Holemouth jar	-	Rim/wall fragment; two repair holes drilled through upper part of vessel

the burial. It has two parallel red-painted bands on the upper part of the body with diagonally-crossed, red-painted bands between them. A similar instance of intentionally removing the neck/rim was observed in a Chalcolithic burial context in Cave 1 at Shoham (North) (van den Brink 2005: Fig. 4.4:12). Finally, a single high-necked fragment with an everted rim (Fig. 11:2) was found; it belongs to a jar or possibly a churn.

*Handles.*— Also retrieved from L101 were a number of handles: three red-painted, knob handles, perhaps of kraters (Fig. 11:3); four small, perforated lug handles, two pierced vertically and two, horizontally (each handle different in fabric, shape or size); ten large lug handles (MNI 5 vessels), two of which are red painted; twelve undefined handle fragments (MNI 6 vessels); three small ‘ledge’ handles, one of them red-painted (Fig. 11:4).

#### *Discussion*

There are no perceivable typological differences between the pottery assemblages of Strata 1 and 2; therefore, they are discussed together, albeit with a focus on the Stratum 1 funerary assemblage.

Open forms consist of small, medium and large V-shaped bowls, some with red-painted rims, others left plain. At least two medium-sized bowls have a single, vertical triangular handle on their rims. In the case of Fig. 6:7, the handle is attached to the rim in a way that suggests the need for a firm grip when using the bowl as a scoop. This handle is rather

similar to those found on the ‘pedestalled goblets with basket handle’ from the Kissufim mortuary assemblage (Goren and Fabian 2002: Fig. 4.2:2, 4, 5). Although the type of vessels to which these handles were applied and the actual place of their attachment differ (see also Amiran 1986), both are part of funerary paraphernalia. Note also the cultic context of another pedestalled goblet with a basket handle that was part of a foundation offering at Shiqmim (Levy 1987: Figs. 6.11, 12.14). The exceptionally large fenestrated bowl, painted with horizontal red bands, may also have served a ceremonial purpose.

The general proportions of both small and large V-shaped bowls—the rim/mouth diameter being larger than the bowls’ height—relates them to bowls used at sites from the semi-desert areas, both in the Jordan Valley (Newe Ur) and at the Be’er Sheva’ sites in the Negev. These have been set in a later phase of the Chalcolithic period, on the basis of the study of Gilat’s assemblage (Commence 2006). Furthermore, despite the relatively small amount of pottery retrieved from the burial locus, it appears that red-painted rims are in keeping with large bowls of the later phases of the Chalcolithic (e.g., Commence 1990: Figs. 24:2, 5, 7, 8; 25:1–6). In comparison, large bowls in the early Chalcolithic pottery assemblage from Gilat are generally covered with red paint from rim to base on the inside and the outside surface of the vessels, or they are not decorated at all (Commence 2005:414).

With the possible exception of Fig. 9:4, open vessels with a spout are absent in this burial

Fig. 9 ▶

No.	Type	Basket	Remarks
1	Holemouth jar	1043.1	Restored, complete; six repair holes drilled in upper part of the vessel around spout; 2 red-painted lug handles; red paint around rim ext. and in a band below the handles
2	Holemouth jar	1008	Rim/ wall fragment; red-painted band around rim ext., spilling over to spout
3	Holemouth jar	1024	Rim/wall fragment
4	Large basin	1015	Rim/wall fragment; broad opening

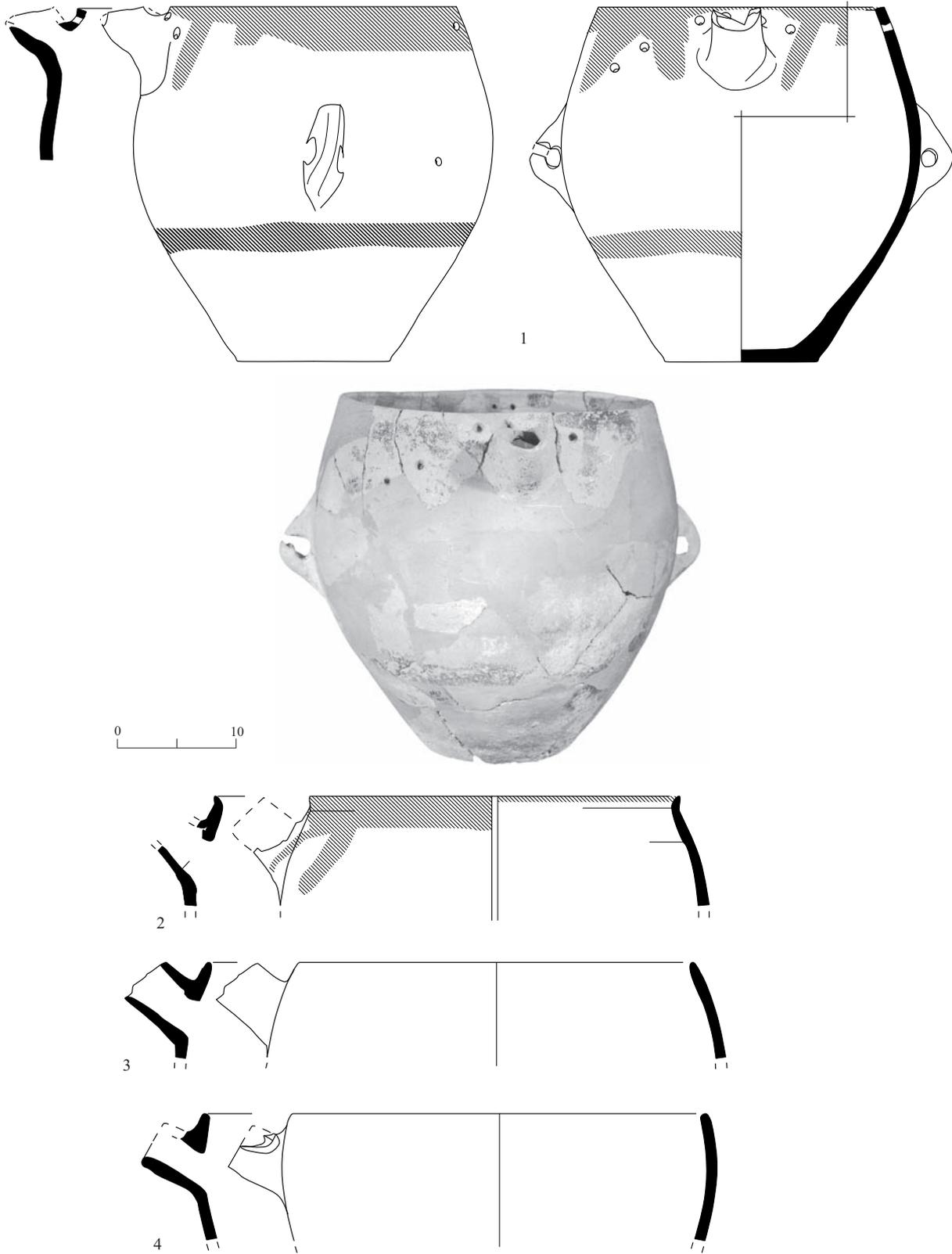


Fig. 9. Stratum 1, L101: spouted vessels.

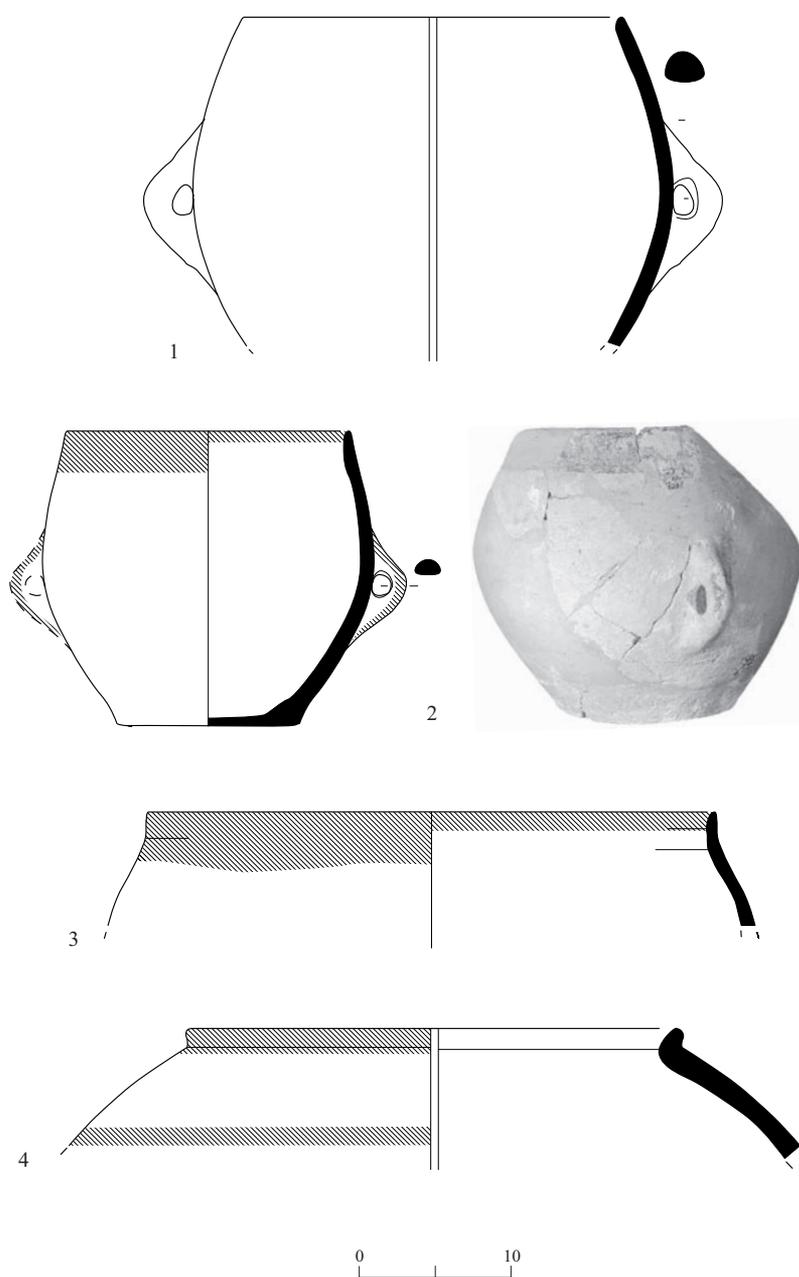


Fig. 10. Stratum 1, L101: holemouth and short-rimmed jars.

No.	Type	Basket	Remarks
1	Holemouth jar	-	Rim/wall fragment; two lug handles; traces of soot on lower part of vessel's ext.
2	Medium-sized holemouth jar	1008	Restored, incomplete; red-painted band around rim's ext.; only one red-painted lug handle preserved
3	Short-rimmed jar	1030	Rim/neck/wall fragment; red-painted on ext. and int. of rim
4	Short-rimmed jar	-	Rim/neck/wall fragment; red-painted on ext. of rim and band on shoulder

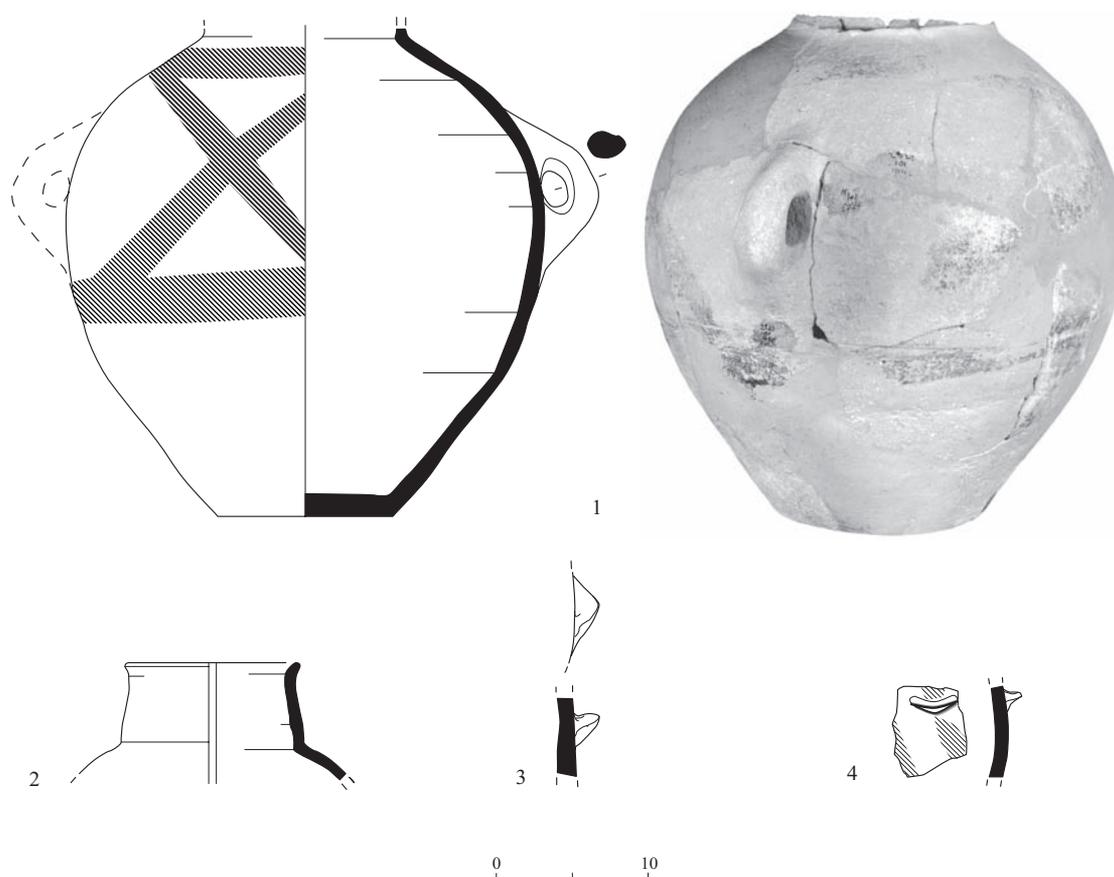


Fig. 11. Stratum 1, L101: necked jars and handles.

No.	Type	Basket	Remarks
1	Necked jar	1024	Restored, incomplete; one lug handle preserved; horizontal and diagonally-crossed red-painted bands around neck and upper part of vessel
2	High-necked jar	-	Rim/neck/shoulder fragment
3	Knob handle	1024	Body sherd; red painted
4	Small, plain ledge handle	-	Body sherd; red painted

assemblage. They are more characteristic of Early Bronze Age assemblages, although they are already present at Late Chalcolithic Zumeili (Commence-Pellerin 1987: Fig 48:3, Pl. IX:3). The large collection of such vessels from the Late Chalcolithic sites in the Golan Heights attests to the great variation of profiles in these vessels (Epstein 1998: Plates XII–XIV).

Closed forms comprise primarily holemouth jars, some of which have spouts and/or

vertically attached lug handles of triangular profile. The holemouth vessels from the Ḥorbat Govit rock shelter have a rather large opening, a characteristic they share with part of the assemblage from Gilat (Commence 2006: Pl. 10.15). The spouted vessels are rather deep and have an inverted rim, thus conforming with the Late Chalcolithic tendency of this type to be closer to jars than to basins (cf. Commence-Pellerin 1990: Fig. 29:3). Holemouth jars with

a spout are part of the Be'er Sheva' facies of the Late Chalcolithic pottery assemblages attested to in both settlement (cf. Commenge-Pellerin 1987: Fig. 26:1–6; 1990: Fig. 38:4, 5) and funerary contexts (cf. Perrot and Ladiray 1980: Fig. 71:10; with a rim higher above the spout). Some jars have horizontal red-painted bands around the rim and waist of the vessels.

Only a few jars have a short everted rim, and the one case of a jar with a high neck may be, in fact, a churn. Equally rare at the site is a single example of a small, multiple lug-handled pot painted with horizontal red bands. The absence of cornets (and possibly churns) at Horbat Govit is a phenomenon not unusual in Late Chalcolithic funerary contexts, where miniature churns seem the rule and cornets are rare. See, for example, the assemblages of Azor and Ben Shemen (Perrot and Ladiray 1980:68–76, 122–133), Kissufim (Goren and Fabian 2002:21–30) and Shoham (North) (Commenge 2005:58).

The vertical attachment of lug handles at the widest diameter of jars and kraters, instead of above the widest diameter—as seems to be the norm for the later phases of Chalcolithic pottery assemblages—perhaps points to an earlier, rather than later phase within the Late Chalcolithic. However, it is not certain that the placement of the lug handles is a reliable chronological indicator. While vessels in the Gilat Early Chalcolithic pottery assemblage have their handles attached above the maximum diameter, contemporary jars with similar distinctive profiles from Qatîf have them placed below the maximum diameter. On the other hand, the absence of incipient ledge handles, which appear elsewhere for the first time in Late Chalcolithic burial caves, e.g., Azor, Shoham (North), Qula and Ben Shemen, does seem to point to a slightly earlier phase within the Late Chalcolithic for the Horbat Govit pottery assemblages (see Commenge 2005:55, Fig. 6.32; 2006).

#### THE FLINT

Hamoudi Khalaily

The flint collection from the burial cave of Horbat Govit comprises 15 artifacts (Table 1). Among them are three tools, a chisel (Fig. 12:2) collected from the surface (L100), and a blade and an axe retrieved from L102 (Fig. 12:1, 3). The assemblage is very small and in the absence of most debitage categories, this short description focuses on two topics: (1) the presence of long blades; (2) and the relation of the tool types found to the other cultural material. The raw material used for the production of these artifacts is Eocene light brown flint that can be found in the vicinity of the site.

Interestingly, three of the four blades are long blanks, averaging 16 cm. Moreover, the scar pattern observed shows a bi-directional pattern. Such blades were produced from large cores. This blade production is not common to the Chalcolithic industry, but rather to Pre-Pottery Neolithic industries.

The retouched blade (Fig. 12:1) is an elongate artifact measuring 14.8 × 3.2 cm. It was struck off from a bipolar core. Semi-steep retouch alternating with fine retouch is visible on its lateral side. Bilateral notches shaping the proximal end resemble “Nahal Hemar knives” (Bar-Yosef and Alon 1988:9–13, Fig. 9).

The other two tools are bifacials. The chisel is relatively short and heavily utilized (Fig.

**Table 1. Flint Frequencies from Strata 1 and 2**

Type	Surface	L101	L102	Total
Flakes		5	2	7
Blades		3	1	4
Cores		-	-	-
Tools	1	-	2	3
Varia		1		1
<i>Total</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>15</i>

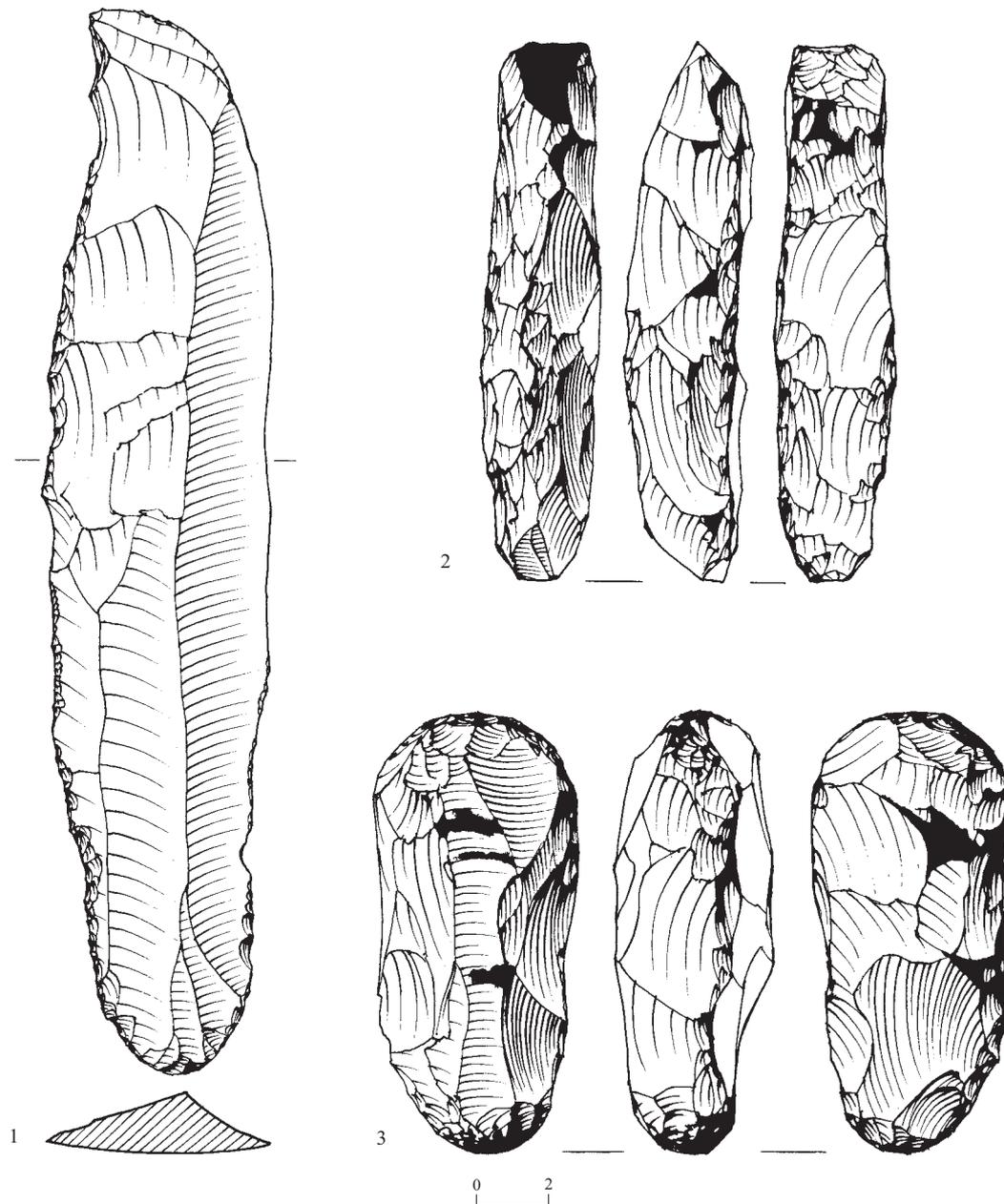


Fig. 12. Selection of flint tools from the surface and from L102.

12:2). It has a rectangular cross-section and tapers toward the ends. The working edge is straight and shaped by longitudinal removal, subsequently polished. The axe, on the other hand, is made from a small pebble with a bi-convex cross-section (Fig. 12:3). The ventral and part of the dorsal sides are shaped by flat

flaking while the edges remained unshaped and still bear cortex. Signs of battering can be seen on both edges, indicating significant usage either prior to shaping or after being discarded.

Few conclusions can be drawn from the sparse waste products and tools found at Horbat Govit. However, based on the blade and tool

types, the flint industry is presumably earlier than the Chalcolithic and is probably Pre-Pottery Neolithic in tradition.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Whereas the prevalent Late Chalcolithic burial custom of depositing multiple, secondary burials in caves (cf. van den Brink 1998; 2005) often makes it difficult to relate specific funerary gifts to individual inhumations, at Ḥorbat Govit the unusual circumstance of a single, primary burial accompanied by grave goods provides a rare opportunity to do just that. In the present case, the deceased, a 15–20 year-old individual, was surrounded by the following MNI of pottery vessels which presumably contained food and beverages as provisions for the afterlife: 17 small, V-shaped bowls; 2 ‘scoops’ (i.e., medium-sized, V-shaped bowls with upright triangular handles); 5 large, deep bowls; a single, very large fenestrated, pedestalled bowl (which, given its size, perhaps served a cultic purpose); 2 basins; 14 spouted, closed kraters/holemouth jars (11 of which at least had two lug handles); 2 large, short-rimmed jars; and one high-necked jar or churn.

The composition of the pottery assemblage associated with the burial at Ḥorbat Govit adds new information to the open file on Chalcolithic funerary customs. Certain vessels of the typological repertoire tend to be better represented than others in mortuary assemblages, a phenomenon already noted at Shoham (Commenges 2005:60–61). At Ḥorbat Govit, bowls and basins predominate; they would probably have been used, depending on their size, for individual or communal food consumption. Jars were used for food storage, heating/cooking (spouted jars with soot), and serving. Intriguingly, churns and necked jars are either absent or under-represented. Specific types of vessels often associated with burials are also missing, such as miniature churns and bottle-necked jars like the ones found at Azor (Perrot and Ladiray 1980: Fig. 71:8) or Kissufim (Goren and Fabian 2002:27–30). On

the other hand, an unusual V-shaped bowl with a triangular, vertical handle and a fragment of another such handle, presumably from a similar vessel (Figs. 6:7, 8), certainly may have served a ceremonial purpose. The simplicity of this bowl is noteworthy: it is undecorated and without a pedestal—both features that generally suggest prestige or cultic function when found in a burial context (cf. Goren and Fabian 2002: 24–25). The same applies to the large bowl with a (missing) fenestrated pedestal (Fig. 7:3), which may reflect the relative modesty of a burial that would include a damaged, funerary gift. (Alternatively, the neat breakage of the pedestal may have been intentional, as might also have been the case with the broken-off rims of some of the jars, implying a ritual significance to the act.) The association of this rather modest group of vessels with a primary burial, stands in contrast to the general picture of Chalcolithic burials in the southern Levant. Distinctive burial practices have already been documented at other sites that are remarkable for the treatment of the bodies (e.g., Mezad Aluf, Levy 1987; Levy and Alon 1982), the choice of ossuary types (e.g., Ben Shemen and Shoham North), and/or associated burial gifts. The context of the Ḥorbat Govit burial might reflect specific burial circumstances related to the low status of the deceased and/or a regional or cultural variation in custom.

It must be emphasized that primary burials are rare in the present Chalcolithic record of funerary caves and rock shelters in the southern Levant. In the case of the so-called ‘Warrior’ burial in Wadi el-Makkukh in the Judean Desert (Schick 1998), dated to the transitional phase between the Chalcolithic period and the Early Bronze Age (Schick et al. 1998:126–129), two theories are offered to explain the phenomenon. The authors suggest that (1) this was a temporary interment that was never carried through to its final stage of secondary burial, or (2) this was a permanent primary burial related to special circumstances (Schick et al. 1998:128). Another instance of primary interment, also from the Judean Desert, is the

burial of 21 adults and children in the Naḥal Mishmar Cave (Bar Adon 1980:198; Haas and Nathan 1973). The individuals seem to have been placed in family groups associated with some vessels (including one complete necked jar).

Based on the morphology of the vessels, the restricted modes of (red-painted) decoration on the vessels' exterior, and the types and placement of handles (both large roughly-shaped, and small compact lugs), the Ḥorbat Govit assemblage dates to a phase within the Late Chalcolithic and shows clear affinities with the Be'er Sheva' facies of the Chalcolithic culture. In the absence of a regional northern sequence for this period, however, it is difficult to establish the assemblage's exact chronological position within this time span. It is also difficult to assess the chronological and/or cultural significance of the apparent absence of certain types, such as cornets, churns and, for that matter, ossuaries.

The scarcity of Late Chalcolithic dwelling and burial sites in this region of the Lower Galilee lends additional importance to the Ḥorbat Govit site. Its nearest more-or-less contemporary neighbors to the west are Ḥorbat Qaştra, a natural cave on the lower slopes of

Mount Carmel at the southern entrance to Haifa that was used for both dwelling and burial purposes during the Late Chalcolithic (see van den Brink et al. 2004), and Neve David, Chalcolithic settlement remains on the northern bank of Naḥal Siah in Haifa (Kaufman and Ronen 1985:88). A recently probed Chalcolithic settlement at Ḥorbat Usha, just 3 km north of Ḥorbat Govit, apparently predates the Late Chalcolithic (Peilstöcker 2006). Closer in time to Ḥorbat Govit, but further away, is Peqi'in, a Chalcolithic mortuary cave north of the Sea of Galilee (Gal, Smithline and Shalem 1997; 1999). Ḥorbat Govit's isolated position (thus far) makes it difficult to assign it to a regional, northern subsystem. It is clear, however, that most of the pottery relates to assemblages from both burial and settlement sites associated with the Be'er Sheva' facies of the Chalcolithic.

The flints that were collected in the rock shelter, on the other hand, should be considered intrusive to the present site. They probably originate from higher up the hill slope. A likely PPN date for the tools is corroborated by the results of a cursory surface survey conducted in the recent past by Ofer Marder and Hamoudi Khalaily in the same area, yielding mainly PPNB artifacts (Hamoudi Khalaily pers. comm.).

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The present excavation (Permit No. A-2823) was directed by Edwin C.M. van den Brink on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, assisted by Avraham Hajian and Viatcheslav Pirsky (surveyors), Tsila Sagiv (photography), Marina Shuiskaya-Arnov (pottery drawings), Hamoudi Khalaily (flints), and Yossi Nagar (physical anthropology). Financial support was provided by HPT Development and Infrastructure Ltd. Thanks are due to the anonymous reader and the editor.

<sup>2</sup> For additional salvage excavations at Tel Regev, see Lipkunsky and Horowitz 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Fragments of the skull, a few teeth, and remains of postcranial bones were identified. The state of preservation of the human bones was poor, and even though some of the long bones were found still in articulation (thus indicating primary burial), it was not possible to ascertain the original burial position of the deceased. Age was determined by dental attrition observed on the upper and lower M1 and M2 (Yossi Nagar, pers. comm.).

<sup>4</sup> These handles recall the 'wishbone' handles on the so-called milk bowls, characteristic of the Cypriot Late Bronze I and II. Both are sharply triangular in

profile and project from one side of the bowl (cf. Yon 1981:40, Fig. 58).

<sup>5</sup> On the differentiation between deep basins and pithoi, see the more defined categories in the assemblages from Gilat (Commégen-Pellerin 1990:34) and Safadi (Commégen 1990: Fig. 32).

<sup>6</sup> All spouted holemouth jars from Abu Matar are superficially burnt and covered with soot from the

bottom up to two-thirds of their height (Commégen-Pellerin 1987:50, Fig. 26:1–6; Commégen-Pellerin 1990:34). The soot implies that the vessels were not in direct contact with fire, but rather were set on embers or embedded in ember-ash layers or heated pebbles. In view of the presence of the spouts, the heating method seems related to boiling liquids rather than to cooking solid foodstuffs.

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