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# THE LATE BRONZE AND EARLY IRON AGES OF SOUTHERN CANAAN

*Edited by Aren M. Maeir, Itzhaq Shai  
and Chris McKinny*



ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE BIBLICAL WORLDS

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## **The Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Southern Canaan**



# **Archaeology of the Biblical Worlds**



Edited by  
Aren M. Maeir and Haim Goldfus

## **Volume 2**

# **The Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Southern Canaan**

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**DE GRUYTER**

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## Foreword

During the years 2014–2015, the Ackerman Family from South Africa, provided a generous donation to the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project (directed by A.M.M.), on the basis of which the project was renamed the “Ackerman Family Bar-Ilan University Expedition to Gath” for that period. In addition to providing funding for the research activities of the project, the Ackerman Family’s support included two other important aspects – funding for stipends to college students from throughout the world (from 6 continents!) to join the excavation team, and a professional meeting dealing with biblical archaeology. And in fact, on Wednesday–Thursday, April 15th–16th, 2015, the “Ackerman Family Workshop in Biblical Archaeology” took place, which included a first day of lectures at Bar-Ilan University (Fig. 1), followed by a field trip to archaeological sites in the Shephelah (Judean Foot-hills) and Philistia. Approximately 50 scholars from Israel and abroad participated in the workshop.



**Fig. 1:** Participants of the Ackerman Family workshop at Bar-Ilan University, April 15th, 2015.

The topic chosen for the workshop was the Late Bronze Age in Canaan and its vicinity. Recent excavations, particularly in southern Israel, but in other regions both in Israel and neighboring countries, have provided a wealth of new and exciting discoveries relating to the Late Bronze Age (ca. late 16th to early 12th centuries BCE). This workshop provided a unique opportunity to bring together a rather large group

of scholars working on this period, including those currently active in relevant excavations and research, as well as those who had dealt with this period in the last decade or two. The 15 lectures presented on the first day, and the lively discussion that developed, both between the lectures and on the following day, demonstrated the vitality and ongoing developments on a broad range of issues relating to the Late Bronze of the Southern Levant.

In the current volume, there are 14 papers. Most of them are by those who presented at the original meeting. In addition to this, there are three invited papers (by Pfoh, Uziel et al., and Wimmer), whose topics nicely add to the general theme of this volume.

The volume opens with two papers on the Late Bronze Age remains at Tell es-Safi/Gath. Starting with a general overview by Maeir (co-editor of the volume) et al., on the LB remains at the site and how this can be understood against the background of LB Canaan, Frumin, Melamid and Weiss present a review of the archaeobotanical evidence from Tell es-Safi/Gath and other sites in the LB Shephelah, and their implications.

Following this is a chapter by Kleiman et al. on the LB remains from the relatively recent excavations at Tel Azekah, with important, and what might even be considered somewhat surprising finds. Of particular interest is the dramatic remains of the destruction of the Canaanite city of Azekah (whose name during the LB is not clear) during the mid/late-12th cent. BCE.

Ortiz and Wolff then present a timely summary of the LB remains from their excavations at Gezer, and in fact summarize the relevant results as their ten-year project winds down. This includes not only some very unique finds, but impressive remains of the destruction of the site towards the end of the LB, most probably at the hands of Pharaoh Merneptah.

Not only recent excavations are covered in this volume. Mazar and Panitz-Cohen present a retrospective of the LB remains found in the excavations at Tel Batash, which were both excavated and published in previous decades. These results, which provide an excellent sequence for the entire LB, are reviewed in light of more recent work on this period.

The recent excavations at Lachish, and the very interesting LB remains that were discovered, including an additional LB temple at the site, are described in the paper by Garfinkel et al. As Lachish is one of the foundational blocks for the discussion of the LB in Canaan, these are important results for any further discussion of the period.

Stephan Wimmer, whose paper was not included in the original meeting, presents another paper on Lachish, in which he reviews and discusses and interesting hieratic inscription and its interpretation.

The exceptional LB finds from Tel Burna are presented by Chris McKinny, Itzhaq Shai (co-editors of the volume), and Aharon Tavger. These remains, most probably representing a hitherto unknown temple from a site that had previously not

been excavated and discussed regarding the LB period. This adds an important “point on the map” for this period.

Yet another invited paper, not included in the original meeting, is by Uziel, Szanton and Baruch. Here, they summarize the LB remains in Jerusalem, based on both earlier finds and those from more recent excavations, including those conducted by the authors. Needless to say, understanding Jerusalem during the LB is of importance, due to its mention in the el-Amarna correspondence.

The results of the American excavations by Hammond at Hebron, carried out in the 1960s, were never fully published, and Jeffrey Chadwick, who is currently in charge of their publication, presents an overview of the LB remains from the site. Giving that very little was previously known about Hebron during this period, this paper is of importance to anyone interested in the LB of Canaan.

Peter Fischer’s paper provides an overview of the Jordan Valley during the LB with a particular focus on Tell Abu el-Kharaz. He discusses the question of whether or not there was a substantial Egyptian presence in the region at the time.

The well-known Aegean and Aegeanizing pottery found at many LB sites in Canaan is discussed by Philipp Stockhammer. As in his previous publications on this topic, he attempts to go beyond the standard check lists of the presence or absence of the various types of this pottery, but rather, attempts to understand the social significance – and appropriation – of these imported items, in the local Canaanite milieu.

The two final papers are more general overviews relating to the LB. Emanuel Pfoh presents his understanding of the power relations in Canaan during the period, both between Egypt and the local polities as well as between these local entities.

The final paper, by Ido Koch, surveys the socio-political developments during the LB and the very early Iron Age, attempting to place them within their broader cultural and historical contexts.

All told, the 14 papers in this volume provide a broad and variegated range of studies, views and new finds relating to the Late Bronze Age. The rich finds, their significance, and the new directions that are suggested in their interpretation, demonstrate how much the study of this period has advanced in recent years – and how much more work there is yet to be conducted in the future.

The editors would like to thank the Ackerman Family for their support of the workshop, for the contributors for submitting their excellent papers, and to Haim Goldfuss, co-editor (with Aren Maeir) of the series “Archaeology of the Biblical Worlds”, an offshoot of the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (published by de Gruyter), for agreeing to accept this volume in this new series.

Aren M. Maeir, Itzhaq Shai and Chris McKinny  
June 2018



# Contents

## Foreword — V

Aren M. Maeir, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Amit Dagan, Louise A. Hitchcock, Jill Katz, Itzhaq Shai and Joe Uziel

**The Late Bronze Age at Tell es-Safi/Gath and the site's role in Southwestern Canaan — 1**

Suembikya I. Frumin, Yoel Melamed and Ehud Weiss

**The Wheat-People of Canaan — 19**

Sabine Kleiman, Ido Koch, Lyndelle Webster, Vanessa Linares, Karl Berendt, Omer Sergi, Manfred Oeming, Yuval Gadot and Oded Lipschits

**Late Bronze Age Azekah – an almost forgotten story — 37**

Steven Ortiz and Samuel Wolff

**A reevaluation of Gezer in the Late Bronze Age in light of renewed excavations and recent scholarship — 62**

Amihai Mazar and Nava Panitz-Cohen

**Tel Batash in the Late Bronze Age – a retrospect — 86**

Yosef Garfinkel, Igor Kreimerman, Michael G. Hasel and Martin G. Klingbeil

**First impression on the urban layout of the last Canaanite city of Lachish: a view from the northeast corner of the site — 122**

Stefan Jakob Wimmer

**Lachish is Lachish on the Lachish bowl: an object lesson for reading Hieratic, with little surprising results — 136**

Chris McKinny, Aharon Tavger and Itzhaq Shai

**Tel Burna in the Late Bronze – assessing the 13th century BCE landscape of the Shephelah — 148**

Joe Uziel, Yuval Baruch and Nahshon Szanton

**Jerusalem in the Late Bronze Age – The Glass Half Full — 171**



Jeffrey R. Chadwick

**Hebron in the Late Bronze Age: Discoveries of the of the American expedition to Hebron (Tell er-Rumeide) — 185**

Peter M. Fischer

**The Transjordanian Jordan Valley in the Late Bronze Age: under Egyptian control? — 217**

Philipp W. Stockhammer

**Shifting meanings and values of Aegean-type pottery in the Late Bronze Age Southern Levant — 233**

Emanuel Pfoh

**Prestige and authority in the Southern Levant during the Amarna Age — 247**

Ido Koch

**Southwestern Canaan and Egypt during the Late Bronze Age I-IIA — 262**

**Index — 283**

Aren M. Maeir, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Amit Dagan,  
Louise A. Hitchcock, Jill Katz, Itzhaq Shai and Joe Uziel

## The Late Bronze Age at Tell es-Safi/Gath and the site's role in Southwestern Canaan

More than twenty years of excavations at Tell es-Safi/Gath (Maeir 2017; in press b) have provided substantial amounts of data and insights on a broad range of periods, cultures and research questions. Among the many periods represented at the site, the Late Bronze Age is a period that has been found in almost all the excavation areas on the site, even if not being the most dominant period on the site.

In this paper, we would like to provide an overview of the Late Bronze Age remains from Tell es-Safi/Gath, and place them within the context of the Late Bronze Age in southern Canaan.

To start with, we believe that the identification of Tell es-Safi/Gath as *Gintu* of the el-Amarna texts (Maeir 2012) is to be accepted. In these letters, two rulers of the site are apparently mentioned – Šuwardata and Abdi-Ashtarti, the latter most probably the king of Gath after Šuwardata, perhaps even his son. Both appear to have been relatively major players in the political events that are referred to in the letters. Although Rainey (2012) expressed reservations whether *Gintu* of the el-Amarna letters is to be located at Tell es-Safi, this is hard to accept, and for several reasons. To start with, the petrographic analysis of the relevant tablets fits in well with this location (Goren, Finkelstein and Na'aman 2003: 280–86). Secondly, Tell es-Safi is the only major LB site in the region which seems to fit in with this identification (Fig. 1.1). The extensive size of the LB city was already seen in the results of the surface survey prior to the onset of the excavations (ca. 27 hectares; Uziel and Maeir 2005: 56). Thirdly, and as will be demonstrated below, there is evidence of finds from the 14th century BCE, the time of

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**Note:** The excavations at Tell es-Safi/Gath are conducted under the auspices of Bar-Ilan University, directed by AMM. The other authors served as supervisors of the various excavation areas in which Late Bronze Age remains were discovered. The excavations of the LB finds are funded by a broad range of sources, including a grant from the Israel Science Foundation (#100/13 to AMM) and an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant 1093713 (LAH AMM). Finally, thanks to all the staff and team members of the Tell es-Safi/Gath Project ([gath.wordpress.com](http://gath.wordpress.com)) over the last 22 years.

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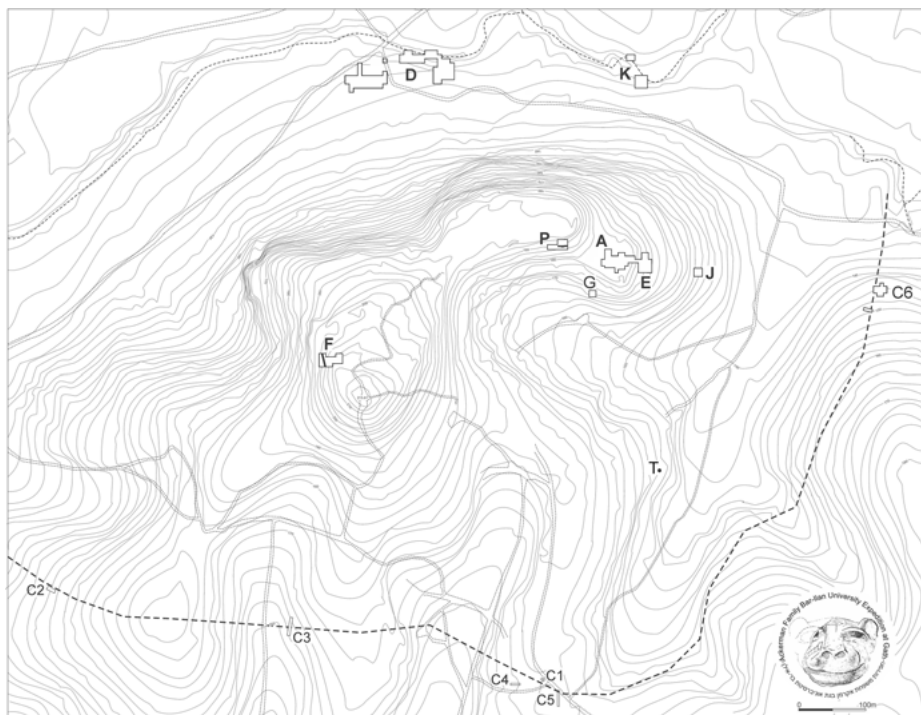
**Joe Uziel**, Israel Antiquities Authority



Fig. 1.1: Map of Tell es-Safi/Gath and Major Sites in SW Canaan.

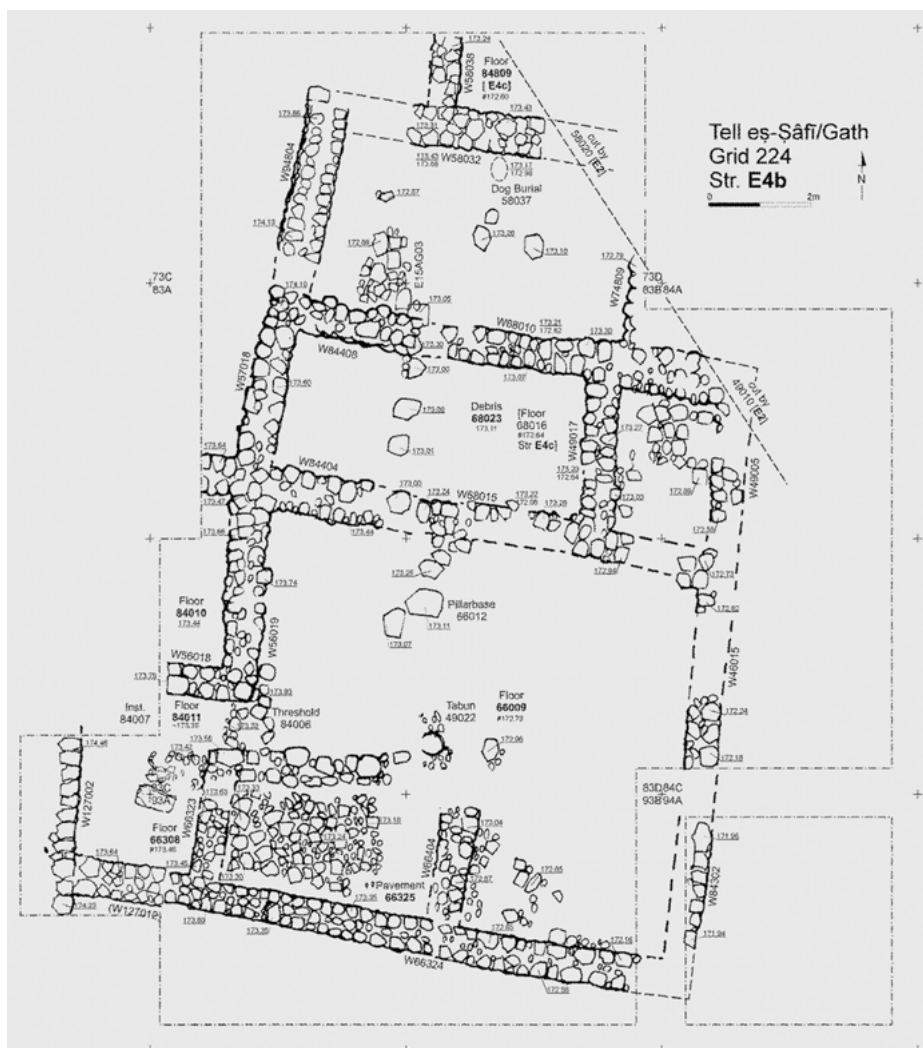
the el-Amarna texts. Furthermore, this identification dovetails well with this site's rather solid identification as Philistine Gath (see as well Na'aman 2011: 282).

It should be stressed that the ongoing excavations in various areas provide substantial data on Gath in the second half of the second millennium BCE and its role in southern Canaan in this period. Interestingly, the remains discussed below are primarily from the latter part of the period, particularly the late 13th/early 12th century BCE, subsequent to the Amarna period. While archaeological evidence of the 14th cent. BCE, the time of the el-Amarna tablets linked to Canaanite Gath, is somewhat limited, there is clear evidence of this, such as seen in Late Helladic IIIA2 pottery (Stockhammer 2017; in press), and glyptics (D. Ben-Tor in press). Stratified contexts, of limited scope, from the LB I and LB IIA have been discovered in Area F (see below). On the other hand, finds from the LB IIB were discovered in almost all of the excavated areas on the tell (both in the upper and lower cities). This may indicate that during the 13th century BCE, Canaanite Gath was a very large city that covered the entire upper tell, and possibly extended to the lower city as well. The following discussion will focus however on the finds from Areas E and F, where the most significant LB remains were discovered, but finds from other areas (such as A, D and P) will be mentioned briefly (Fig. 1.2).



**Fig. 1.2:** Plan of Tell es-Safi/Gath and the various excavation areas.

**Area E** is located on the lower eastern slopes of the tell and the excavations in this area were initiated in 1999. Below modern and Iron Age strata, a large building (Building 66323; Fig. 1.3) was exposed. The building was interpreted as a “Patrician House” or elite dwelling (Shai et al. 2011), based on its size, the large amounts of foundation deposits that were discovered in almost every room and its architectural plan which is similar to other such buildings of the period (see Shai et al. 2011; Shai, Uziel and Maeir 2012 on foundation deposits, see Maeir et al. 2015). The building is dated to the 13th century BCE and the finds include local pottery alongside Aegean



**Fig. 1.3:** Plan of Building 66323, Area E, Tell es-Safi/Gath.

and Cypriot imported vessels (see Gadot, Uziel and Yasur-Landau 2012; Shai, Uziel and Maeir 2017; Stockhammer 2017; in press). Two phases were defined, and the finds indicate that the date of the establishment and abandonment of the building should be placed within the 13th century BCE.

The plan of the building (comparable to Building 475 at Tel Batash – Panitz-Cohen 2011) suggests that the entrance was from the west, with restricted access to an inner court, similar to other patrician houses (and in contrast to the so-called governor houses). The location of this house along the eastern slope of the tell, well beyond the summit, is of interest. The presence of such an impressive and important building on the eastern slopes highlights that the inhabitants of this building felt safe enough to build it on the edge of the settlement. Interestingly, the placement of large public buildings on the outer edges of the settlement may have been a local phenomenon, as it is also found in other sites (e.g., at Tel Mor – Barako 2007).

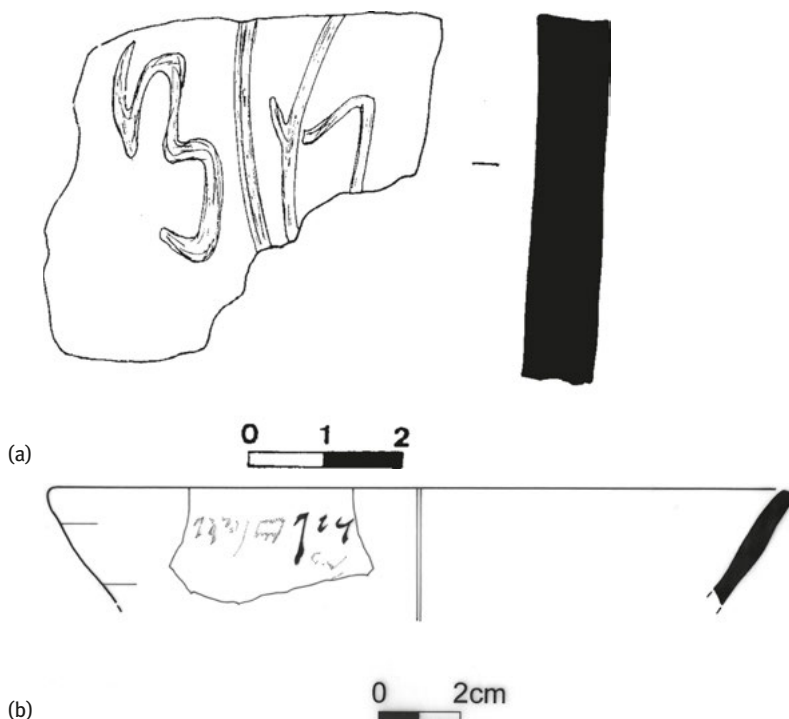
The finds included a large number of sub-floor deposits, often associated with cult-oriented functions, including lamp-and-bowl deposits, a dog skeleton, a bovine skull, and a bronze knife. In addition, among the finds were imported Cypriot and Late Helladic pottery (Gadot, Yasur-Landau and Uziel 2012; Stockhammer 2017; in press),<sup>1</sup> several Egyptian or Egyptianizing glyptic objects (Görg and Wimmer 2012; Keel and Münger 2012; Münger 2018), as well as a sherd with an incised Hieratic inscription (Fig. 1.4a). The Hieratic inscription was incised before firing on a locally made vessel and it is dated to the late 19th or early 20th dynasty, combining an Egyptian (the hieratic) and Canaanite tradition (inscribing before firing – Maeir, Martin and Wimmer 2005:133; Wimmer 2012; 2017). It has been suggested that this inscription should be linked to administrative or cultic activity, which may aid in identifying the status of the inhabitants of this building (Maeir, Martin and Wimmer 2005; Shai et al. 2011: 128–29). All told, the finds from Building 66323 appear to indicate that the building was the abode of a wealthy family and/or served some public function, within which possible cultic activity was undertaken.

**Area F** is located on the upper west side of the tell, just below the Crusader period fortress' outer wall line. The area consists of a 20 x 40 m trench that was excavated to discern the stratigraphic history of the site. Eighteen different strata are represented in the sequence, two of which date to the LB: Stratum F14 represents LB I in a single phase, and Stratum F13 represents LB IIA and IIB in two phases.

Portions of two LB structures were unearthed along the inside face of the EB III/MB II city wall (see Fig. 1.5), which continued in use until the Iron Age IIA.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that due to the character of the Late Helladic pottery, a limited amount of stray sherds from a few kraters in non-primary contexts, requires caution from seeing their presence in Building 66,323 as being an indication of elite use of such pottery types in the 13th cent. BCE (and see Stockhammer in press).



**Fig. 1.4:** Egyptian Inscriptions from Tell es-Safi/Gath. A) Incised inscription from Building 66323, Area E; B) Inked inscription from Area F.

The area running along the wall terraced down from south to north in three deep steps over 20 meters. On the upper (south) terrace the exterior courtyard of a building was found, which appears to have hosted a finishing area for small bronze objects during LB IIA. Weapon points, a chisel (or small axe head), and two perforated buckles with sizing tangs (made from the same mold) were found on a surface surrounding a stone installation that may have served as an anvil station.

An entire room with remains of all four walls (Room 106450; Fig. 1.6) was found on the lower terrace. Originally built in LB I, with foundations of large stones, the walls of the room were rebuilt in LB IIA with smaller stones and mud bricks, a white plastered floor, and a small corner bench of plastered mud brick in the northwest. Along the western wall, near the bench, was a basalt grinding stone in secondary use in an upright position, in the style of a *massebah*, suggesting that the room may have functioned as a small cultic shrine. At the end of the LB IIB, the surface of the room was deliberately buried, covered with fill soil 50 cm deep, which buried the corner bench and the *massebah*, above which Iron I floors with early Philistine pottery were found in the subsequent stratum.



**Fig. 1.5:** The City Wall in Area F, Tell es-Safi/Gath. First built in the EB and reused and rebuilt in the MB, it continues to function in the LB as well.





Fig. 1.6: LB Room 106450, Area F, Tell es-Safi/Gath, which seems to have had a cultic function.

A rim sherd from an LB II bowl was found outside this room, bearing a broken inscription in hieratic, inscribed in ink (Fig. 1.4b). The two words *wr ḏf[t]* were reconstructed as “... prince of Ṣaf[it]” (Wimmer and Maeir 2007; Wimmer 2012; 2017).

It should be stressed that clear stratigraphic and architectural evidence was discerned from the reuse of the EB and MB fortification wall in Area F during the LB (see Fig. 1.5). This, along with possible evidence of the reuse of the EB wall in Area P as a fortification during the LB (see below), is our first explicit evidence of the fortification of the site during the LB. As is well known, at many sites in LB Canaan the evidence for fortifications is not clear (e.g. Kempinski 1992).

**Area A** is situated on the eastern side of the tell, just above Area E. While the LB remains in Area A were not as substantial as in Area E (with the “patrician house” described above), evidence of some architectural features and stratified levels in the eastern, central, and especially the northern part of the area can be noted. In addition, whenever excavations went below the earliest Iron I levels, evidence of LB activity was discerned. Often, this was of minimal character, but included substantial stratified olive pit deposits, nevertheless, there was consistent evidence of the LB IIB in this area.<sup>2</sup> Of special note is a decorated ivory bowl (Maeir et al. 2015). While found in an early Iron Age context, the bowl is made in Canaanite style with close parallels from the

<sup>2</sup> As the LB deposits in Area A are thicker in the northern part of Area A, there is a strong possibility that more substantial LB remains are to be found to the north of the current excavations.

terminal LB ivory cache from Megiddo (Loud 1939; Fischer 2007; Feldman 2009). Significantly, the transition between the final LB and the earliest Philistine phases in Area A (which did not produce evidence of a break between the periods, but rather evidence of continuity reaffirming the connection between migration and prior contact) was dated by repeated Carbon 14 analyses to the late 13th cent. BCE, a few decades earlier than the accepted paradigm for the beginning of this transition (Asscher 2015; Boaretto et al. 2018).<sup>3</sup>

**Area P** is located just to the west of Area A, below the eastern cemetery of the modern village, and in the vicinity of an extensive area excavated by Bliss and Macalister in 1899. In this area, a fortification wall dating to the EB was discovered, portions of which had already been exposed by Bliss and Macalister – although its dating was not clear (Shai et al. 2016; Welch et al. 2019). The EB fortification wall was reused in the LB, as a series of rooms with LB finds were discovered built up against the inner side of the EB wall (Fig. 1.7). Two possible interpretations to this can be suggested: 1) That during the LB the EB fortifications were reused (as seen in Area F) – and if so – this indicates that in the LB most of the upper tell was fortified; 2) That the EB fortification wall was used as an outer wall of these LB structures, and the wall itself did not serve as a fortification in this area at the time. Among the notable finds from this area one can note a “lamp and bowl” deposit under the foundation of one of the LB walls (Fig. 1.8), similar to several such deposits found in Area E.



**Fig. 1.7:** EB fortification wall reused in the LB in Area P, Tell es-Safi/Gath. LB structures are built up against the northern, inner side of the wall.

<sup>3</sup> Although Finkelstein 2016 questioned the validity of this early dating, the dating in its original publication has been retained, as explained in our rebuttal (Boaretto et al. 2018).



**Fig. 1.8:** LB Lamp and Bowl deposit under the foundations of a LB wall in Area P.

**Area D** is situated in the lower city, to the north of the tell itself, on the southern bank of the Elah Valley riverbed (Dagan, Eunikhina and Maeir 2018). Extensive stratified remains from the Iron I and Iron IIA have been found in this area, including fortifications, a possible gate, a temple and an iron smithy. The LB finds from this area are limited, but worthy of note. In fill layers relating to the Iron I phase of the fortifications, significant amounts of LB pottery and other finds were found. While the source of the materials in the fills is not clear, it may very well be that they derive from nearby LB contexts in the lower city and were not brought to this location from LB deposits in the upper city. Thus, this might be our first, even if at present secondary evidence that the LB settlement expanded beyond the tell itself. Perhaps, in future exploration of the lower city, primary LB contexts may be found.

## General Points

Several general points can be raised regarding the LB finds at Tell es-Safi/Gath. Despite the fact that two Egyptian inscriptions were found (Wimmer 2012; 2017) and an assortment of LB Egyptian or Egyptianizing glyptics were reported as well (Keel and Mûnger 2012; Görg and Wimmer 2012; Mûnger 2018), there is no evidence, as of yet, of Egyptian or Egyptianizing ceramics at the site, something that is quite common at many LB II sites in southern Canaan (e.g. Martin 2011). Taking into account the status of the site during the LB, as seen from el-Amarna texts, the size and fortifications of

the site, and continuous occupation of Canaanite Gath throughout the LB, this lack of Egyptian or Egyptianizing ceramics stands out in comparison to many Egyptian sites in SW Canaan (see, e.g., Koch 2017b; this volume). If in fact this dearth of Egyptian ceramics is representative of the situation at the site (taking into account the limited exposure of the LB at Tell es-Safi/Gath, save for Building 66323), perhaps this might be indicative of a slightly different character to the relationship between Gath and Egypt, as opposed to Egypt's relationship with other sites in SW Canaan.

An LB figurine that was discovered during the survey of the site was published in the early years of the present project (Maeir 2003; Fig. 1.9), and its connections with north Syrian traditions were noted. Since then, additional examples of this type of figurine have been reported from several excavations in the region, making this an even more interesting discussion. In addition to the example already noted (Maeir 2003), another example of this figurine was found at Tell es-Safi/Gath by Bliss and Macalister (1902: 132, Fig. 51). To this one we can add the following examples: a figurine from nearby Tel Harasim, 3 km to the north of Tell es-Safi/Gath (Givon 2002); another from Azekah, 8 km to the east (Oeming et al. 2016: 208–10, Fig. 3:1; Lipschits et al., this volume); an unpublished example from Beth Shemesh (Z. Lederman, pers. comm.); one from Tel Burna (Sharp, McKinny and Shai 2015: 65–65, Fig. 4); and one from Tel Lachish (Kletter 2004: 1572, Fig. 23.53:2). As discussed in Maeir (2003), the stylistic parallels to this figurine type are from northern Syria (save for an example from Akko [Conrad 1985]), although the provenience studies that have been conducted on figurines from the Shephelah region indicate that they are locally produced (Ben-Shlomo, Maeir and Momssen 2008; Oeming et al. 2016). Previously, Maeir (2003) pointed to the possibility of some connection between the north-Syrian stylistic origins of this figurine type and the non-Semitic, Hurrian character of



**Fig. 1.9:** LB figurine found during the surface survey of Tell es-Safi/Gath.

Šuwardata's name (king of Gath in the el-Amarna letters; Hess 1993: 151). The fact that this figurine type is found at several sites in the Shephelah, might indicate that whoever was represented by this figurine, perhaps a specific female deity, was of importance in the region. Perhaps even, there may have been a cultic center of regional importance dedicated to such a deity, but this perhaps will be elucidated in further research at Tell es-Safi/Gath and other sites in the region.<sup>4</sup>

Several studies (Toffolo et al. 2012; Asscher et al. 2015; Boaretto et al. 2018) have dealt with the Carbon 14 dating of the end of the LB and the beginning of the Iron Age at Tell es-Safi/Gath, and are of interest. These studies attempted to provide accurate and well-contextualized radiometric dating of the LB/Iron I transition – and in particular, the earliest appearance of Philistine material culture. The first study (Toffolo et al. 2012) related to finds from Area F, and while indicating a possible dating in the 13th century BCE, was based on a sequence that was not sufficiently secure from a stratigraphic basis. The second study (Asscher et al. 2015 and subsequently Boaretto et al. 2018), was based on a secure sequence of stratified levels, with accompanying pottery assemblages. This study once again demonstrated a late 13th century BCE dating for the first appearance of Philistine material culture (and in particular Philistine 1/Myc IIIC pottery) on the site. Although, as noted above, Finkelstein (2016) questions the validity of this early date, the new data strongly supports this dating (Boaretto et al. 2018). That being the case, this can be seen as additional evidence, already noticed at other sites (e.g., Carbon 14 dates at Tell Tweini in Syria; Kaniewski et al. 2011; 2013) and based on the analysis of early Philistine pottery (e.g., Yasur-Landau 2003; 2010), that the very first appearance of the Philistine culture, at some sites, may date earlier than usually assumed – that is already in the late 13th and very early 12th centuries BCE, and not only in the first decades of the 12th century BCE (or even later). This would fit in well with an understanding of the underlying mechanisms and processes of the appearance and development of the Philistine culture on the one hand, and the slow process of transformation of the Late Bronze Age Canaanite culture on the other, which was a drawn out and complex affair – both on a regional and site by site basis. Thus, the recently published Carbon 14 sequence for the LB of nearby Tel Azekah (Webster et al. 2018; Lipschits et al. this volume), in which the final LB levels (defined on the basis of the material culture) are dated to the late 12th century BCE, does not necessarily argue that the early dating of the LB/Philistine transition at Tell es-Safi/Gath that we suggested is untenable. Rather, in our opinion, it shows that this transition was of a complex nature. While at Tell es-Safi/Gath, already in the late 13th century BCE, the Philistine culture begins to appear, and becomes more and more dominant throughout the 12th century BCE, at nearby Azekah, there is no evidence of

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<sup>4</sup> For comparison, see now Koch (2017a; this volume) who suggests to identify Elat/Hathor as the deity of the Fosse Temple at Lachish. See Ziffer, Bunimovitz and Lederman (2009) who identify another figurine type found at Beth Shemesh and other sites in the region, and suggest that this might reflect either a deity of regional importance, or the image of a (female) ruler.

Philistine material culture throughout the 12th century BCE, until the final destruction of the Late Bronze Age Canaanite levels; different cultural vectors were in place at two neighboring sites.

In addition to the question of the dating of the transition between the predominantly Canaanite culture of the Late Bronze Age and the earliest manifestations of the Philistine culture at Tell es-Safi/Gath, an interesting question is whether or not the site was destroyed during this transition. Previously (Maier 2012), it was suggested that there was evidence of a destruction of the last LB phase in Area E, perhaps indicating a general destruction of the site at this point. Since then, continued excavations in other areas (Area A, D, F and P), present a more complex picture. In Areas A and P, there is no evidence of a destruction in the late LB, while in Area F, there might be some evidence in some squares, but not in others. Thus, it would appear that if in fact the end of the LB at Tell es-Safi/Gath was a complex process – some parts of the site (perhaps the elite zones in Area E and F) were partially destroyed, while other parts of the site were not. This would fit in well with our current understanding of the multi-faceted nature of the early Philistine culture and its composition – and in particular that Canaanite elements were incorporated into the Philistine culture (e.g. Maier and Hitchcock 2017).

## Discussion

Based on the summary of the LB remains at Tell es-Safi/Gath, we would like to briefly discuss the broader regional context during this period.

The large number of the excavated LB sites in the region of the southern Coastal Plain and the Shephelah, makes it one of the archaeologically best-known regions in the Southern Levant for this period. In addition to sites that have been well-known for years (e.g., Gezer, Tel Batash, Beth-Shemesh, Ashdod, Lachish, Tell Beit Mirsim; some of them re-excavated in recent years, such as reported in chapters in this volume), substantial new evidence is available from newer excavation in the region (e.g., Ashkelon, Tel Miqne-Ekron, Tel Zayit, Tel Burna and Azekah). So much so, there is even no agreement on the ancient toponyms of some of these sites (e.g., Tappy 2000; McKinny, Tavger and Shai, this volume; Lipschits et al., this volume).

What is clear is that historical data and archaeological remains provide evidence of a flourishing and dynamic settlement pattern in this region during the LB. Regional developmental trajectories can be seen (e.g., Jasmin 2006; Na'aman 2011; Finkelstein 2014; Koch 2015; 2017b; this volume), in particular relating to defining the main centers, and their relationships with Egypt. In this context, we can note several insights that the LB finds from the recent excavations at Tell es-Safi/Gath can provide.

First and foremost, it appears that Canaanite Gath was a fortified city throughout the entire LB, from the end of the MB until the first appearance of the Philistine culture. While extensive stratified remains from all this sequence have not been

exposed, the finds that have been recovered represent this full sequence. As such, this strengthens previous suggestions that stressed the central role of the Kingdom of Gath during this period. The exact borders of this kingdom are hard to determine, but one can assume that sights such as Tel Harasim and Azekah were within its borders.

The extent of Egyptian influence in this region is of interest as well. While Egyptian inscriptions and small finds have been recovered from the LB levels at Tell es-Safi/Gath (and at other neighboring sites), the lack of Egyptian and Egyptian style ceramics at the site might indicate a different pattern of interaction with the Egyptian imperial control, than that which is seen at other LB sites in SW Canaan (Martin 2011; Koch, this volume). This though requires further research.

The unique type of figurine, with apparent north Syrian influences, that is found at several sites in the Shephelah, raises the possibility of the existence of regionally specific cults during this period. Recent discoveries of LB cultic remains at sites in the region (e.g., Lachish – Garfinkel et al., this volume; Tel Burna – Shai, McKinny and Uziel 2015; McKinny, Tavger and Shai., this volume; Azekah – Lipschits et al., this volume), in addition to well-known finds from previous excavations (e.g., Lachish – Ussishkin 2004), indicate the rich cultic traditions of this region, and how much more still remains to be explained.

Finally, the dating of the end of the LB at different sites in the region (e.g., Tell es-Safi/Gath, Azekah, Lachish, Gezer, etc.) hints to the complex nature of the processes and mechanisms that occurred during the LB/Iron Age transition in this region. While a straightforward, and somewhat simplistic understanding is convenient to suggest (such as uniform destructions by specific agents such as the Philistines), it would appear that the processes involved took place over an extended period – from the late 13th until the late 12th centuries BCE – and that various cultural, political and identity groups were involved, creating a complex “matrix of identities” (e.g., Maeir in press) and unfolding historical scenarios. Even at adjacent sites, such as Tell es-Safi/Gath and Azekah, very different pictures of change, continuity and destruction can be seen.

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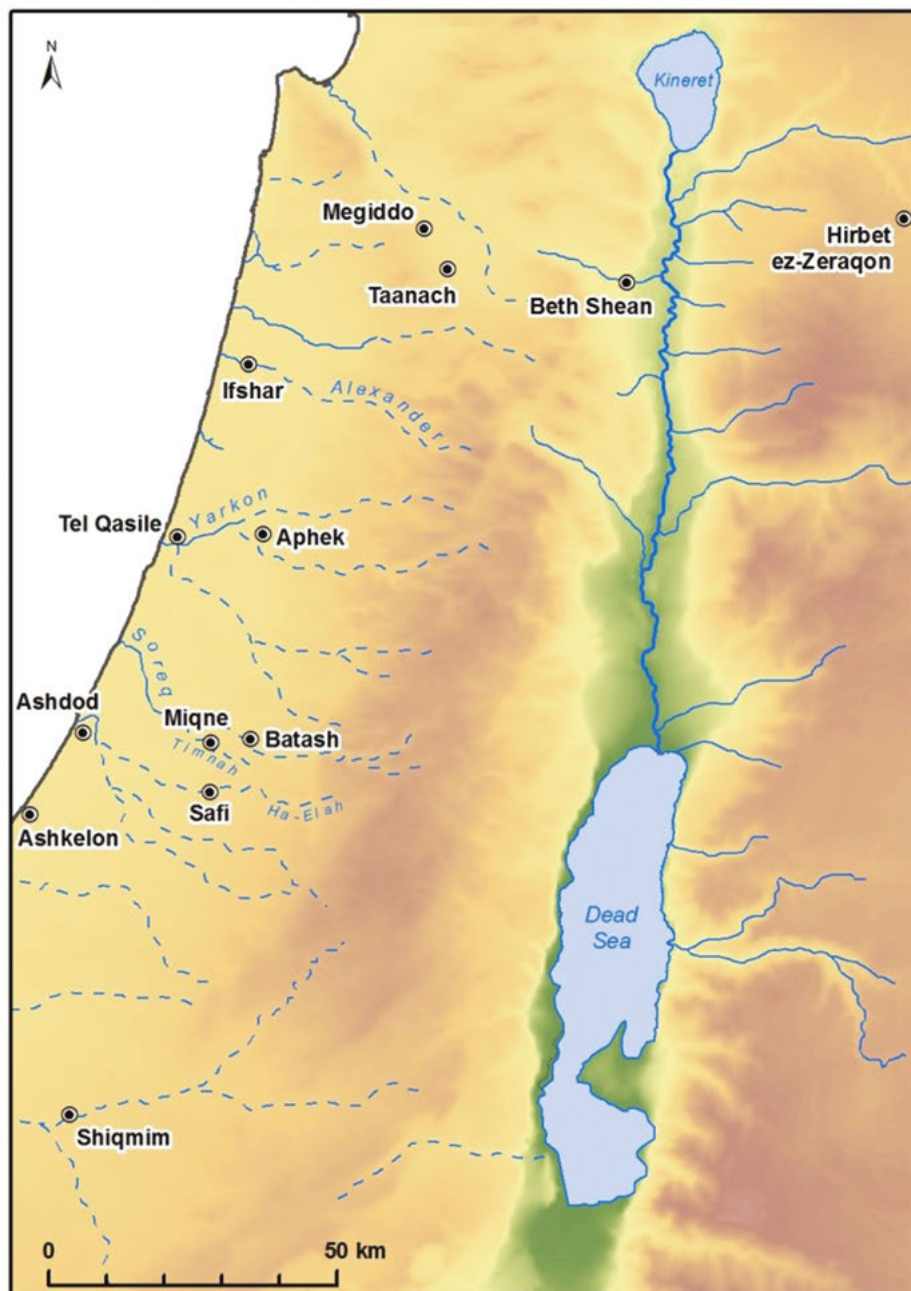
Suembikya I. Frumin, Yoel Melamed and Ehud Weiss  
**The Wheat-People of Canaan**

## **Introduction**

The Late Bronze Age was a period of massive inter-regional trade relationships in the eastern Mediterranean, when various staple crops and luxury food items were intensively transported. Here we present an attempt to reconstruct the food basket and agricultural economy in the region of the Shephelah during the Late Bronze Age, when the Southern Levant was ruled by Egypt through administrative and military outposts, and was active in trade with other parts of the ancient Near East, as was shown by numerous studies (e.g. Haldane 1993; Panitz-Cohen 2013: 535–54). The data of plant remains from Tel Batash/Timnah, Tel Miqne/Ekron and Tell es-Safi/Gath enable reconstruction of the general pattern of local diet and aspects of the local agriculture of this part of Canaan. Quantitative analysis of the plant remains suggest several local economic patterns: (i) the region was a wheat granary, i.e. it specialized in two types of wheat, which represent diversity of agricultural practices and food preferences; (ii) variation in legume species may reflect variation in specialization and foreign cultural ties within the region.

The level of political-territorial organization within Canaan, i.e. connections between city-states, is the focus of vibrant discussion. Indeed, networking of trade routes implies intensification of agriculture whenever it is profitable, and spatial specialization in cultivation of different crops to increase surplus (e.g. Faust and Weiss 2005). However, low population density and small city size suggest self-sustained economy (e.g. Bunimovitz 1995; Panitz-Cohen 2013 and references therein; this volume).

As plant food plays a key role in human subsistence, study of plant remains could provide data reflecting population density, agricultural sophistication, social norms and structure, cultural and trade linkages and interactions of ancient settlements and peoples (e.g. Wasilikowa 1981; Chernoff and Paley 1998; Frumin et al. 2015). In pre-modern Palestine, two thirds of the field area were sown by wheat and less than one-third was sown by barley (e.g. Schwarz 1850: 306; Elazari-Volkani 1930: 30; 55). Ugaritic texts indicate that Late Bronze Age agricultural production in eastern Mediterranean included grain crops, grapevine, and oil (Aqhat 1:1 in Coogan 2012). Biblical descriptions of Canaan expand on this too:



**Map 1:** Southern Levant, showing the archaeological sites mentioned in the text.

... a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey. (Deut 8:7–8)

Analysis of agriculture in the Shephelah may provide a first critical insight into the agriculture of Canaan, as this relatively small region is well represented by archaeobotanical studies of three key settlements (Map 1) – Tel Batash/ Timnah, Tel Miqne/ Ekron and Tell es-Safi/ Gath (Mahler-Slasky 2004; Kislev, Melamed and Langsam 2006; Mahler-Slasky and Kislev 2012; Frumin 2017). Plant assemblages of these Late Bronze Age Canaanite settlements are rich and diverse (57, 41 and 76 taxa, respectively), and include major and minor crops, accompanying weeds, and other wild species. Thus, comparative analysis of these assemblages may shed light on patterns of local agriculture – locally cultivated crops, agricultural practices, as well as imported crops. When unstable ties between settlements exist, we expect that major crops will be cultivated locally, in the immediate vicinity of the settlement.

In this paper we address two research questions regarding Late Bronze plant use in Shephelah: 1. The local food plants. 2. The variation and shared patterns in the local agriculture.

## Methods

### Late Bronze floral list

Data for plant remains from these three settlements was combined (see Table 2.1); in order to reduce nomenclature bias plant names were verified according to the Analytical Flora of Israel (Danin and Fragman-Sapir 2016+). Taxa identified to “cf. species” level were treated as species. Species ecology and level of adaptation to agricultural plots, is based on Keller (1934–5), Zohary (1941, 1950), Zohary and Feinbrun-Dothan (1966–1986), Townsend and Guest (1974, 1985), Meikle (1977–85), Danin and Fragman-Sapir (2016+). We applied species ecology to the archaeological data, grouping them into several categories: (i) cultivated fields (weeds of winter bread crops, weeds of summer crops and irrigated plots, general weeds); (ii) disturbed habitats (plants of fallow fields, plants of disturbed ground); and (iii) plants of undisturbed (“natural”) habitats. Ethnobotanical data is based on various published sources and specific references are given for each case. English vernacular names follow Fragman et al. (1999) when possible.

The archaeological contexts of selected plant assemblages:

1. Tel Batash – a small town with no defensive city wall, showing a sequence of numerous destruction and rebuilding events, and predominance of local pottery, most probably had a subordinate status in the region of Gezer. Plant remains from a storage jar and few other samples from domestic contexts of high-

class residence represent three strata – X (LB IA, 14th century B.C.E.), VII (LB IIB; end of 13th / beginning of 12th century B.C.E.) and VI (LB IIB) (Bruins, Plicht van der, and Mazar 2006).

The settlement is situated in the broad, fertile alluvial valley of the Soreq River (Kelm and Mazar 1995: 42–54). Plant assemblage includes 57 taxa and represents crops and weeds. All attested crop plants and weeds grow in the Shephelah today, and in particular, in the immediate environment of this site (Kislev, Melamed and Langsam 2006).

2. Tel Migne – an unfortified low hill-top settlement under Egyptian influence (19th Dynasty), also involved in international maritime trade with Aegean and Anatolian civilizations (Dothan and Gitin 1993). Rich plant remains (clusters of grains) from a storeroom complex represent the last Canaanite Stratum – VIIIA from Area I (LB IIB, 13th century B.C.E. – first quarter of 12th century B.C.E.).

The settlement is situated in the Nahal Timnah valley. The plant assemblage comes from three loci containing Canaanite storage vessels (ISW.4127, ISW.29088, and INW.4149) and includes 41 taxa, representing mainly crops and weeds (Mahler-Slasky 2004).

3. Tell es-Safi – a large fortified hill-top city with a rich collection of high-status findings and imported wares, showing ties with the Aegean and Greece cultures, as well as with northern Syria and Egypt (Givon 1978: 97–8; Gadot, Yasur-Landau, and Uziel 2012; Maeir 2012: ch. 1; 2a: 95; Wimmer 2012). The Late Bronze city is dated to ca. 1420–1310/1250 B.C.E. (Maeir 2012: fig. 1.1, 1.2; Asscher et al. 2015: table S2).

The settlement is situated on the southern bank of the Elah River valley. Plant remains come from garbage pits and floors of domestic contexts (Mahler-Slasky 2004; Mahler-Slasky and Kislev 2012; Frumin 2017; Frumin, Melamed, and Weiss in prep.). Density of plant remains is low, yet the plant assemblage is diverse, including 76 taxa. The plant assemblage comes from different areas of excavations: Stratum A7 dated to LB IIB, 13th century B.C.E.; Stratum E4 (a-b) dated to LB II-III, and P2. This material represents 49 loci of diverse contexts, such as floor of large public building, streets, hearth, spots of ash and phytoliths, and sounding probes (Mahler-Slasky 2004; Frumin 2017: Tables 5S, 5A-C).

## Results and discussion

### General patterns of Late Bronze Shephelah plant assemblage

The archaeobotanical remains from the Late Bronze Age strata of the Shephelah include 137 plant taxa, of which 65 are identified to the species level. Analysis of the presented contexts in the three studied settlements, such as storeroom complex, storage vessels, and floors of living spaces, indicated that the plant assemblage

represent domesticated food plants and accompanying weeds (Table 2.1, 2.2). Among the plants, there are 15 species of food crops, including two forms of emmer wheat, barley, various pulses, olives and fruits (Table 2.1).

Eight food crop species have the highest ubiquity index, i.e. are found in all three settlements. These include three species of cereals: free-threshing emmer wheat (*Triticum parvicoccum*), hulled emmer wheat (*T. dicoccum*), and free-threshing barley (*Hordeum vulgare*); one legume – lentil (*Lens culinaris*); and four fruits: fig (*Ficus carica*), olive (*Olea europaea*), pomegranate (*Punica granatum*), and grape (*Vitis vinifera*).

Among the food crop species found in two of the three sites are four legumes: grass pea (*Lathyrus sativus*), fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*), bitter-vetch (*Vicia ervilia*) and faba bean (*Vicia faba*); and one tree – Atlantic pistachio (*Pistacia atlantica*).

Two food-crop species have been identified only in one of the settlements: terebinth (*Pistacia palaestina*) – in Tel Miqne; and flax (*Linum usitatissimum*) – in Tell es-Safi.

In addition to food crops, this plant assemblage comprises 38 local species, which occur also as weeds in cultivated fields and irrigated plots; 10 species of fallow fields and waste habitats; and nine species of natural habitats.

## Diet and subsistence

### Shared patterns of dietary preferences

There are 13 species of domesticated plants in the Late Bronze Age plant assemblage from the Shephelah – cereals, legumes, oil plants and tree fruit, covering the spectrum of human diet (Table 2.1). The species with the highest ubiquity index are identified here as the main crops of the region. The results show that the plant diet in the Late Bronze Shephelah was based on the three cereals mentioned above. Among the cereals, wheat grains are most abundant, suggesting that wheat played the dominant role in local diet. Barley is usually present as a small addition among wheat grains, and only in a single locus of Tel Batash it was a primary crop constituent (in the destruction debris and ash layer above beaten earth floor, L763B 7527, Stratum X, LB IB, Kislev, Melamed and Langsam 2006). The data suggest an overall inferior status of barley in the diet in the Late Bronze Shephelah.

Another shared pattern of the Late Bronze diet of the Shephelah is use of three sweet fruits – figs, grapes, and pomegranates. The fact that these fruits could be eaten raw and easily stored can explain their frequent occurrence in various contexts across these sites. Indeed, figs can be stored dry, as have been found in Tel Miqne (Mahler-Slasky 2004); grapes are used to produce raisins and wine; pomegranate fruits can be stored for a couple of months unprocessed, or by sealing the young



fruit's flower remains (calix) with a clay plug in order to prevent aphid pests entering (Batello et al., 2010).

The main oil plant of Shephelah was, apparently, olive, while flax oil was rarer. Yet, as is well known in archaeobotany, the stony olive endocarps may be over-represented in the archaeological layers due to their better preservation. Also, the ubiquity of olive stones was probably related to the use of olive pomace as a fuel source, which would increase the likelihood of preservation by carbonization (Frumin 2017). Thus, a direct evaluation of the relative role of olive in comparison to fragile flax fruits and seeds is far from certain. Notably, flax remains – six capsules and a seed – were found only in Tell es-Safi (Building 66323, L94407; LE15AG03, Stratum E4b; Frumin 2017), the largest settlement among the three sites. Flax cultivation and its use in the region is attested since the Early Bronze Age (McCreery 1981; Frumin 2017). During the Late Bronze Age, remains of the common flax are found in diverse regions of Canaan – at Beth Shean (Simchoni, Kislev, and Melamed 2007), Tel Aphek (Stratum X12, LB IIB, Kislev and Mahler-Slasky 2009), Deir 'Alla (van Zeist and Bakker-Heeres 1973), and Tell Ifshar (*Linum* sp., Chernoff and Paley 1998).

Lentils have been attested in all three Shephelah settlements, yet in small quantities (Table 2.1). In addition, there is not a single locus where lentils are dominant among the crops. Apparently, it was not among the preferred foods in the local diet. Remains of fava beans and bitter vetch are sporadic and few, suggesting they also were not a significant part of the local diet.

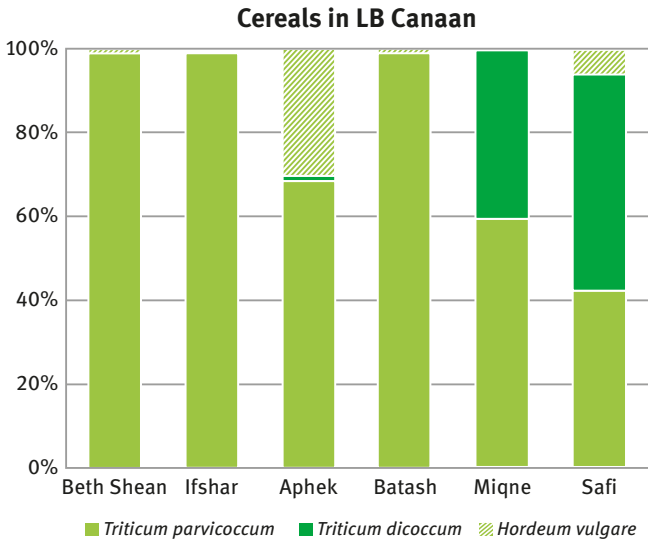
Crop remains are accompanied by their weeds (Table 2.2). Among the 28 weeds attested to in these three settlements, all grow today wild in the region of the Shephelah (Danin 2004). These weeds, and local plants found with them, support the hypothesis of a self-subsistence economy at the region level.

In sum, the Late Bronze Shephelah diet was based on two species of wheat, and included some legumes, olive, fig, grapevine and pomegranate. The data show that each settlement cultivated its major food crops. In addition, the data reveal continuity in wheat preference in three settlements of different size, administrative and political orientations within the region.

### Site-specific diet preferences

There is spatial variation in cereal preferences in the Shephelah: hulled emmer dominates at Tell es-Safi, while free-threshing emmer dominates at Tel Miqne and Tel Batash (Fig. 2.1).

The two forms of emmer, hulled and free-threshing, require different harvesting and processing techniques; they are also consumed differently in traditional economy (e.g. Hillman 1984 and references therein). Hillman (1984) reports that the hulled emmer in human diet has various uses in various forms. Whole, unprocessed grains are consumed in soup and as porridge, flour is used for baking, and



**Fig. 2.1:** Cereal grains in Late Bronze Age Canaan. Sites with less than 10 grains were excluded.

fermented grains – for beer brewing. Free-threshing emmer, when ground, is used to produce porridges, as couscous, bulgur or semolina. Ground to fine flour, the wheat is used for baking flat bread or other baked goods. In addition, the flour is used for meat breeding.

Considering that these two forms of wheat have been found mixed in domestic contexts of Tell es-Safi, including a storage vessel (L 18P60B03 Stratum P2, Frumin 2017), one can assume that they were consumed together. In addition, most of the site's wheat findings are clean grains with almost no chaff. The occurrence of the two types of relatively clean grains together in all studied sites suggests consumption of the two forms of wheat together in local diet, probably as soup or bread.

Notably, Tel Batash is the only site with considerable amount of barley remains (N=1,524 grains). Barley grains, both unprocessed as well as fermented, are consumed in soups and stew, and as malted grains – the main source for beer brewing and certain distilled beverages, while flour is sometimes used for bread baking. Barley is also an important animal fodder (Hanelt and IPK 2001: 2549–55). In Tel Batash, barley grains were found mixed in most samples dominated by wheat, and therefore could be considered weeds of wheat fields. However, barley remains dominant in one locus (L763, Stratum X), where they were found as clean grains, with no chaff. This favors the inclusion of barley also into human food of the site.

Regarding flax, it requires specific growing conditions, such as deep and moist soils, which can be equally found near the three sites. Thus, the total absence of this species in Tel Mique and Tel Batash is apparently unrelated to their environments. Rather, it may be linked with plant deposition differences in these sites (see Methods).

Among the exclusive food plants of the Shephelah are two legumes: fenugreek and grass pea, both attested in Tel Batash and Tel Miqne. Fenugreek was found in two loci in Tel Batash (L466 Stratum VII, LB IIA, and L460 Stratum VIB, LB IIB) and in Tel Miqne (LISW.4127, building 150, Area I, Stratum VIIIA, LB IIB, 1125–1150 BCE). This legume is used as an additive to bread, as a seasoning (*hilbeh*), as a medicinal plant, and as cattle fodder. Thousands of fenugreek seeds found in these two settlements indicate its importance in the local economy.

As for grass pea, numerous (ca. 600) clean seeds have been found on a locally-made plate in one domestic context of Late Bronze Tel Miqne (LINW.4149, Building 150, Area I, Stratum VIIIA, LB IIB, 1125–1150 BCE). Another 54 seeds were found in Tel Batash (Building 475, L494, Stratum VIII, LB IB, 15th century BCE). Also, in the immediate vicinity of the grass pea seeds at Tel Miqne, there was a grinding stone (Mahler-Slasky 2004 and references therein). In both cases, grass pea findings represent a clean final product without admixture of other crops or weeds (Mahler-Slasky 2004; Kislev, Melamed, and Langsam 2006). Grass pea flour, which is particularly rich in protein and starch, is used for soup/ porridge preparation and for bread baking (Hanelt and IPK 2001: 845–47).

### The Shephelah in a regional context

The wheat-based crop-basket of the Shephelah resembles other plant assemblages of other Late Bronze southern Levantine sites that have been studied (Table 2.3, Fig. 2.1). The available data include: Ashdod (Melamed 2013), Tel Ifshar (Chernoff, 1992; Chernoff and Paley 1998), Megiddo (Borojevic 2006), Taanach (Lipshchitz and Waisel 1980), and Tel Aphek (Kislev and Mahler-Slasky 2009). In comparison, ethnographic data regarding local traditional agriculture at the beginning of the 20th century was also wheat-based, while barley and lentils played a secondary role (Elazari-Volcani 1930).

Remarkably, different regions preferred different species of wheat – Canaan was unlike other Near Eastern regions during the Late Bronze.

Hulled emmer wheat (*T. dicoccum*), the common species since the Chalcolithic in the whole region, was also the dominant wheat in various Late Bronze Age sites. These include: Hirbet ez-Zeraqon (Jordan), Marmariani, Tiryns and Kastanas (Greece); Marki-Alonia (Cyprus); Troy, Titris Hoyk (Turkey); Tell Atij (Syria) and Tell Ibrahim Awad (Egypt) (Kroll 1983; Kroll 1984 cited in Riehl and Kümmel 2005). Similarly, hulled emmer wheat dominates the cereals of southern Levantine Late Bronze sites such as Tell es-Safi and Tel Miqne. The dominant status of hulled emmer wheat in these two sites is a continuation of the preceding local tradition of the Chalcolithic, Early and Middle Bronze Ages, as attested to in Tel Miqne, Tell es-Safi and Shiqmim (Kislev 1987; Frumin and Weiss 2014; Mahler-Slasky 2004; Frumin 2017). In contrast, during the Late Bronze, it is free-threshing emmer (*T.*

*parvicoccum*) that dominates most studied Canaanite sites: e.g. Tel Batash, Tel Ifshar, Tel Aphek and Beth Shean (Table 2.3, Fig. 2.1; Kislev and Mahler-Slasky 2009; Kislev, Melamed and Langsam 2006; Kislev et al. 2009).

Both fenugreek and grass pea have been associated with the appearance of Philistine culture in the southern Levant (Mahler-Slasky 2004; Mahler-Slasky and Kislev 2010). Thus, their presence in Tel Miqne and in Tel Batash was interpreted as related with involvement in international trade. Accordingly, these findings represent final products – threshed seeds for food, according to the foreign (Aegean?) preferences of some inhabitants of these settlements. Later, Iron Age findings of fenugreek and grass pea are all limited to the settlements associated with the culture of the Sea Peoples, like Tel Qasile (grass pea and fenugreek, Stratum X, 11th century BCE) and Ashkelon (grass pea, Phase 7, Iron Age II, 604 BCE, Mahler-Slasky 2004). Thus, the presence of these two legumes in Shephelah could envisage the presence of some foreigners with cultural preferences similar to those of Philistines already in Late Bronze Age.

## Late Bronze Canaan Agronomy

### Type of agriculture

The dominance of wheat remains in the Shephelah plant assemblage suggests agriculture on fertile, well-treated soils. The most common and numerous weeds are plants associated with intensive winter bread cultivation under rain-fed agriculture: false thorn-wax (*Bupleurum subovatum*), Syrian cephalaria (*Cephalaria syriaca*), darnel (*Lolium temulentum*), Egyptian gold-of-pleasure (*Ochthodium aegyptiacum*), and bristle-spiked canary grass (*Phalaris paradoxa*) (Table 2.2). The presence of these species in archaeobotanical assemblages in the Shephelah suggests that rain-fed winter wheat cultivation was the main local agricultural practice during the Late Bronze Age.

Fenugreek and grass pea grow in Mediterranean conditions, as cereals, in rainfed fields. The fenugreek of Tel Batash is accompanied by lentils, free-threshing wheat, bedstraw, and darnel. All these plants grow in the Shephelah, so it is logical to deduce that the fenugreek was cultivated locally.

### Practice for soil fertility maintenance

The annual life-form of the weeds indicates intensive cleaning of fields, such as hoeing and digging (Jones 1992; Bogaard 2002; Jones 2002 and references therein). In addition, there are species associated with fallow fields, as gromwell species (*Buglossoides tenuiflora*), hispid viper's bugloss (*Echium angustifolium/judaem*),

small-flowered mallow (*Malva parviflora*), slender timothy (*Phleum subulatum/ex-aratum*), wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*), and plax-leaved stelleria (*Thymelaea passerina*), etc. suggesting the practice of leaving a plowed field unseeded for a season or two, in order to maintain soil fertility (e.g. Hillman 1981; Jones 1992; Karg 1995; Bogaard 2002).

The low amount of lentils and fava bean in the Shephelah during the Late Bronze Age probably indicates that these were mainly used as cover crops. A sustainable management strategy, including agricultural practices like fallowing and cover crops, apparently enabled the maintenance of a high carrying capacity of the rain-fed fields, to produce enough wheat grain for the local population, and allowed crop surplus for trade.

## Conclusions

### Wheat-People of Canaan

The archaeobotanical data and its quantitative analysis presented here suggest several local economic patterns for human diet in the Canaanite Late Bronze Shephelah:

- (i) the region was a wheat granary, i.e. it specialized in two types of wheat, which represent diversity of agricultural practices and food preferences, the combination of hulled and naked wheat would have allowed preparation of groats, porridge, soups, as well as bread baking. Our results suggest that the Late Bronze Age dates the onset of traditional preference of wheat cultivation in Canaan.
- (ii) variation in secondary crops may reflect variation in specialization and foreign cultural ties within the region. Tel Miqne and Tel Batash show the earliest impact of the foreign, probably Aegean cultures, in local Canaanite diet. Here exotic legumes, as fenugreek and grass pea, have been found in large quantities. In turn, Tell es-Safi was the only settlement in the LB Shephelah where flax capsules have been found so far.
- (iii) each settlement's plant assemblage includes wheat, olive, and edible tree-fruit, supporting a locally self-sufficient (autarkic) economy. In addition, local agriculture was based on rain-fed fields of cereals, and orchards of fruit trees such as olive and fig trees, pomegranates, and vineyards. Moreover, typical and local weeds accompany each crop assemblage. The presence and ubiquity of typical weeds suggests intensive land use for crop cultivation, and practices of fields maintenance.

In sum, the rain-fed agriculture under the conditions of the Mediterranean climate would have enabled the local population to grow wheat, and even to produce surplus allowing to take active part in international trade.

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**Table 2.1:** Food plants in Late Bronze Age Shephelah.

Taxa \ Site	Tell es-Safi	Tel Batash	Tel Migne
<b>FOOD PLANTS</b>			
<b>Cereals</b>			
<i>Triticum dicoccum</i> , hulled emmer [grain]	1,264 (+130)	111 –	3,040 (+3,593)
<i>T. parvicoccum</i> , naked small-grained emmer [grain]	1,053 (+101)	190,892 (+204)	4,525 –
<i>Triticum</i> sp., wheat [grain]	133 (+58)	610 (+210)	
<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> , barley [grain]	148 (+16)	1,524 –	3 –
<b>Total cereals</b>	<b>2,598 (+305)</b>	<b>193,137 (+414)</b>	<b>7,568 (+3,593)</b>
<b>Fruits</b>			
<i>Ficus carica</i> , fig [achene]	337	17	7 (+200 dry fruits)
<i>Pistacia atlantica</i> , Atlantic pistachio [nutlet]	128	6	

Table 2.1 (continued)

Taxa \ Site	Tell es-Safi	Tel Batash	Tel Mique
<i>Punica granatum</i> , pomegranate [seed]	28 (+167)	12	4
<i>Vitis vinifera</i> , grape [pip]	147 (+34)	25	3
<b>Total fruits</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>Legumes</b>			
<i>Lathyrus sativus</i> , grass pea [seed]	–	54	600
<i>Lathyrus sativus/ cicera</i> (incl. <i>Lathyrus</i> sp.), grass pea [seed]	3	8	4
<i>Lens culinaris</i> , lentil [seed]	38	14	63
<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i> , fenugreek [seed]	1	2,200	1,541
<i>Vicia ervilia</i> , bitter vetch [seed]	31	7	–
<i>Vicia faba</i> , fava bean [seed]	6	1	100
<b>Total legumes</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>2,284</b>	<b>2,308</b>
<b>Oil Plants</b>			
<i>Linum usitatissimum</i> , flax [fruit]	7	–	–
<i>Olea europaea</i> , olive [pit]	1,755	4	4 (+4)
<b>Total oil plants</b>	<b>1,762</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>

**Note:** Number in brackets represent the quantity of chaff (threshing waste – spike axes/ glume bases and glumes) – for cereals, peduncles – for grape; rind fragments – for pomegranate; fruit pulp – for olive.

Table 2.2: Wild/ weed plants in Late Bronze Age Shephelah.

WEEDS	Site	Anthropogenic habitat: REF
<i>Adonis annua</i> , autumn Adonis	S	FF: Danin 2004
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i> , poor man's weather glass/ red pimpernel	S	Irr: Danin 2004
<i>Anthemis palestina</i> cf., chamomile	B	NH: Danin 2004
<i>Asperula arvensis</i> , blue woodruff	S	GW: Zohary 1950

Table 2.2 (continued)

WEEDS	Site	Anthropogenic habitat: REF
<i>Asperula arvensis</i> / <i>Galium tricornutum</i> , blue woodruff/ rough-fruited bedstraw	B	GW of legumes: Zohary 1941
<i>Avena barbata</i> , slender oat	B	WB: Keller 1934–5; Zohary 1941
<i>Avena sterilis</i> , wild oat	B; M	FF: Keller 1934–5; Zohary 1950
<i>Brachypodium distachyon</i> , purple false-brome	S	FF; DG: Keller 1934–5
<i>Brassica nigra</i> , black mustard	M	WB, incl flax; DG: Zohary 1941
<i>Buglossoides arvensis</i> , corn gromwell	S	GW: Danin 2004
<i>Buglossoides tenuiflora</i> , gromwell	S	FF: Danin 2004
<i>Bupleurum subovatum</i> , narrow thorow-wax	B; M; S	WB; GW: Zohary 1950
<i>Centaurea hyalolepis</i> / <i>pallascens</i> , knapweed	S	GW; DG: Danin 2004
<i>Centaurea iberica</i> / <i>hyalolepis</i> , knapweed	B	GW/ FF; DG: Zohary 1950; Danin 2004
<i>Centaurea verutum</i> , centuary	B	WB: Zohary 1941
<i>Cephalaria joppensis</i> , cephalaria	B	WB: Keller 1934–5; Zohary 1941
<i>Cephalaria joppensis</i> / <i>syriaca</i> , cephalaria	M	WB: Keller 1934–5; Zohary 1941
<i>Cephalaria syriaca</i> , Syrian cephalaria	B; S	WB, incl flax: Keller 1934–5; Zohary 1941
<i>Chenopodium album</i> , white goosefoot	S	S; Irr; DG: Zohary 1941
<i>Chenopodium murale</i> cf., nettle-leaved goosefoot	S	S; Irr; DG: Zohary 1941
<i>Cichorium endivia</i> , dwarf chicory, endive	S	WB: Zohary 1941
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i> , corn bind	B	WB, incl legumes: Zohary 1941
<i>Coronilla</i> cf. <i>repanda</i> , vetch	M	NH: Danin 2004
<i>Daucus broteri</i> , carrot	B	DG: Danin 2004
<i>Echium angustifolium</i> , hispid viper`s bugloss	S	DG: Feinbrun-Dothan 1978
<i>Echium angustifolium</i> / <i>judaicum</i> , hispid viper`s bugloss	S	DG: Feinbrun-Dothan 1978
<i>Erodium gruinum</i> , crane stark`s-bill	B	FF: Danin 2004
<i>Erucaria hispanica</i> , Spanish pink mustard	B	FF; DG: Danin 2004
<i>Euphorbia valerianifolia</i> , spiny-fruited sprunge	B	WB: Zohary 1941
<i>Galium</i> sect. <i>Kolgyda</i> , bedstraw	B; M; S	S; Irr incl. legumes, flax, tuber, etc: Keller 1934–5



Table 2.2 (continued)

WEEDS	Site	Anthropogenic habitat: REF
<i>Geropogon hybridus</i> , goat`s beard	B	WB; FF: Zohary 1941
<i>Heliotropium europaeum</i> , European turnsole	S	S; Irr; FF; DG: Keller 1934–5; Zohary 1941
<i>Hordeum glaucum</i> / <i>Aegilops longissima</i> , wall barley/ slender goat-grass	S	WB; DG: Keller 1934–5; Zohary 1941
<i>Lavatera trimestris</i> , queen mallow	B	WB; S; Irr: Zohary 1941
<i>Lepidium</i> cf. <i>spinenscens</i> / <i>spinosum</i> , prickly pepperwort	S	NH: Danin 2004
<i>Linum nodiflorum</i> , common flax	B	NH: Danin 2004
<i>Linum pubescens</i> , hairy pink flax	B	NH: Danin 2004
<i>Lolium rigidum</i> , rigid rye-grass	S	WB, incl legumes; FF; DG: Keller 1934–5
<i>Lolium temulentum</i> , darnel/ bearded rye-grass	B; M; S	WB: Keller 1934–5; Zohary 1941
<i>Malva parviflora</i> , small-flowered mallow	S	DG: Danin 2004
<i>Medicago</i> cf. <i>doliata</i> , medick	M	NH: Danin 2004
<i>Ochthodium aegyptiacum</i> , Egyptian gold-of-pleasure	M; S	WB: Zohary 1941
<i>Phalaris paradoxa</i> , bristle-spike canary grass	B; M; S	WB, incl legumes: Zohary 1941
<i>Picris altissima</i> , oxtongue	B	FF; DG: Danin 2004
<i>Picris galilaea</i> , oxtongue	B	NH: Danin 2004
<i>Quercus</i> cf. <i>calliprinos</i> , kermes oak	S	NH: Danin 2004
<i>Ranunculus arvensis</i> , corn buttercup	S	WB, incl flax and legumes: Keller 1934–5; Zohary 1941
<i>Ranunculus marginatus</i> var. <i>scandicus</i> , buttercup	M	DG: Danin 2004
<i>Ranunculus marginatus</i> , buttercup	B	DG: Danin 2004
<i>Rhagadiolus stellatus</i> , star hawkbit	B	FF: Zohary 1950
<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i> , green dock	S	Irr; DG: Zohary 1966; Danin 2004
<i>Rumex pulcher</i> , fiddle dock	B; M	DG: Danin 2004
<i>Scorpiurus muricatus</i> , two-flowered caterpillar	B; M; S	S; Irr: Zohary 1941
<i>Thymelaea passerina</i> , plax-leaved stellera	B; M; S	FF: Danin 2004

**Table 2.2** (continued)

WEEDS	Site	Anthropogenic habitat: REF
<i>Trifolium berytheum</i> , clover	B	FF: Danin 2004
<i>Vaccaria hispanica</i>	B	S; Irr: Zohary 1941
<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i> , lilac chaste tree	S	NH: Danin 2004

**Note:** Settlements abbreviated as following: B – Tel Batash; M – Tel Migne; S – Tell es-Safi. Data for settlements follow the references mentioned in text. Species adaptation to anthropogenic habitats marked as following: WB – winter cereal fields; DG – disturbed ground; GW – general (non-specific) weed; S – weed of summer crops; Irr – weed of irrigated plots; FF – fallow field; NH – species attributed only to natural, undisturbed habitats in local flora.

**Table 2.3:** Cereal grains in Late Bronze Canaan. Data for settlements follow the references mentioned in text.

Site	Hulled Wheat, <i>Triticum dicoccum</i>	Free-Threshing Wheat, <i>Triticum parvicoccum</i>	Barley, <i>Hordeum vulgare</i>
Megiddo	–	–	–
Beth Shean	30	35,408	281
Ta'anach	–	–	1
Tel Hefer/ Ifshar	–	374	–
Tel Aphek	16	643	276
Tel Batash	111	190,892	1,524
Tel Migne	3,040	4,525	3
Tel es-Safi	1,264	1,053	148
Ashdod	–	–	1

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# **Late Bronze Age Azekah – an almost forgotten story**

## **Introduction**

The first five excavation seasons of the Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition (2012–2016) have revealed the long occupational history of the site – from the Early Bronze III through the Umayyad period (Lipschits, Gadot, and Oeming 2017). The most prominent period in this sequence, and documented throughout the site thus far, is the Late Bronze Age. A destruction layer dating to this time period was exposed in almost every excavation area of the site, enabling various multi-disciplinary studies of a wide range of material remains. This report focuses on stratigraphic investigations, ceramic analyses, results from a radiocarbon dating project, residue analysis of pottery containers, physical anthropological studies and glyptic and figurative examinations. The results provide testimony to the character of daily life, aspects of interaction with Egyptian overlords, and observable transformations in concepts and consumption practices at Tel Azekah in the Late Bronze Age.

## **Late Bronze stratigraphy**

The Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition commenced in 2009. There have been six excavation seasons, from 2012 to 2018.<sup>1</sup> Seven sections have been excavated along the southern (Area S1), eastern (Areas E1 and E3), western (Areas W1, W2 and W3) and northern (Area N1) slopes (Fig. 3.1). One area (Area S2) was opened on a lower terrace to the south of the mound, and two areas (Areas T1 and T2) were excavated at the top.

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<sup>1</sup> The expedition is directed by Oded Lipschits, Yuval Gadot and Manfred Oeming under the auspices of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Theological Seminary (Wissenschaftlich-Theologisches Seminar) at Heidelberg University.

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**Fig. 3.1:** Topographic plan of the site with the excavated areas.

To date, the Late Bronze Age is the most notable period at Tel Azekah and occupational remains dating to its various phases have been found in eight of the ten excavated areas (Kleiman, Gadot, and Lipschits 2016; Lipschits, Gadot, and Oeming 2017).

Area S2, located on the lower terrace that formed an extramural quarter of the town, features at least four occupation phases dating to the Late Bronze Age (Phases S2–6 to S2–4; see Fig. 3.2 and Table 3.1). The most prominent architectural feature of this area is a deep, rock-cut ditch that may originally have been used as a water reservoir. Regardless of the initial function and date of the rock-cut ditch, it is clear that by the Late Bronze II it went out of its original use when a new building was constructed within it. Few architectural elements can be attributed to the earliest occupation remains in Area S2 and they seem to indicate that the extramural quarter was inhabited by the Late Bronze IIA (S2–6; see  $^{14}\text{C}$  investigations below). The next occupational level is characterized by the erection of Building S2/F613 (termed also the “Boulder Building”) within the rock-cut ditch (S2–5b). This building was enlarged during the next occupational level (S2–5a, Building S2/F614, termed also the “Pillar Building”), with the addition of a row of pillars on the western end of the western room. Though the exact



**Fig. 3.2:** Aerial photo of Area S2 featuring the paved place and Building S2/F614 after the 2013 Season, looking south.

nature and function of this building could not be determined, the use of large boulders, coupled with the degree of building activity required to erect them inside the ditch, suggest that the building was not merely domestic in nature. The entire layout of the extramural quarter changed in the Late Bronze III<sup>2</sup>: the rock-cut ditch was filled with earth and stones, burying the former buildings and creating a leveled space on which an open, paved plaza was built. The plaza incorporated a cistern and a stone silo, alongside a new building. The Late Bronze III constructions were abandoned and covered by thick destruction debris. Habitation in Area S2 resumed only in the Iron IIB.

Area T2 is located at the top of the mound, and features two Late Bronze Age occupation layers (T2-4 and T2-3; see Fig. 3.3 and Table 3.1) to date.<sup>3</sup> The earliest phase (T2-4) includes several architectural elements such as substantial walls and stone pavements, found in probes under the floors of the latter building. For

<sup>2</sup> The term Late Bronze III is used to define the first half of the 12th century, following Toffolo et al. 2014 and earlier references therein.

<sup>3</sup> In Phase T2-3 two sub-phases could be distinguished. T2-3b, the construction of the compound, and T2-3a, the destruction phase that features some alteration of the architecture (see Metzger 2015).





**Fig. 3.3:** Aerial photo of Area T2 after the 2016 Season, looking west. The substantial walls of Phase T2–4 are visible in the north-eastern part of the area.

the moment, we can only conclude that this part of the site was occupied during the Late Bronze II, and it will remain for future excavations to reveal the character of the structures and to provide additional information about Tel Azekah during this period. The final Late Bronze phase (T2–3) includes a large architectural compound (Building T2/F627) in the southeastern sector as well as an open area to the west, which is probably a street (Fig. 3.4). This compound was found below thick destruction debris, including collapsed walls and melted mudbrick, large numbers of intact and smashed ceramic items and precious objects. Human remains, including skeletons of at least four individuals found trapped under debris, display the sudden and unexpected nature of a catastrophe (see further below). An analysis of the destruction process shows that at least parts of the structure were roofed and that the top of the compound was used for storage (Metzer 2015: 127–128). On the ground floor, was an elaborate grinding installation with an adjacent collecting vat. This specialized architecture points to the exceptional character of Building T2/F627. This is further emphasized by the pottery and other finds from this area (see further below). Beneath the floor next to the entrance of the structure a Lamp-and-Bowl foundation deposit was discovered.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Another foundation deposit was uncovered in Area W2 in the corner of a room, below a floor that was covered with destruction debris (Phase W2–4).

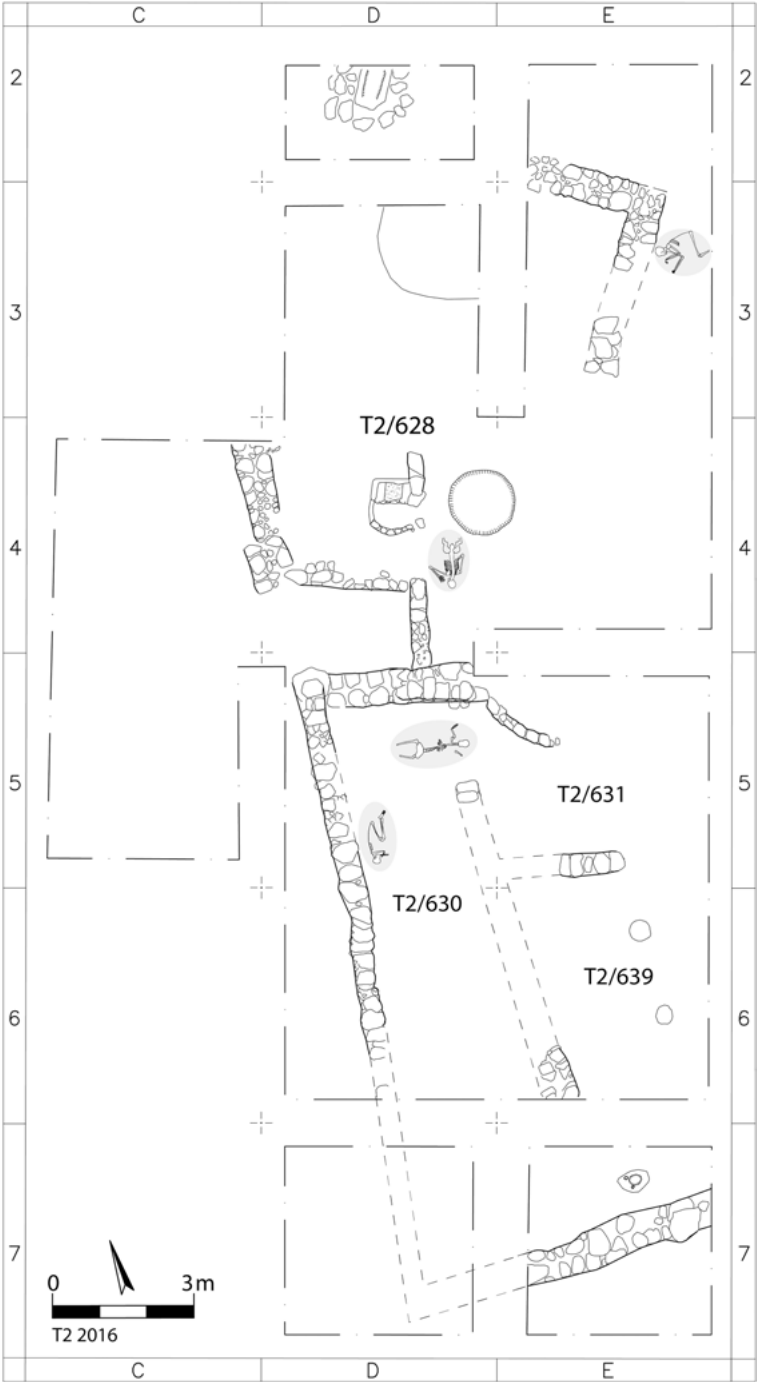


Fig. 3.4: Plan of Building T2/F627 with the location of the four skeletons.

Late Bronze III remains were also found in other areas of the excavation (Table 3.1):

- Area T1, located west of Area T2, features a small segment of a structure (Phase T1–5), whose remains include burnt mudbricks and smashed ceramic vessels.
- Excavations in Area E3 exposed the corner of a large structure (Phase E3–4), located on the slope at the southeastern corner of the mound. In addition to traces of destruction the site also yielded several standing stones, which may hint at a cultic function.
- Area W2, located on the western slope.
- Area N1, located on the northern slope.

In light of this data,<sup>5</sup> it might be suggested that the settlement at Tel Azekah was completely destroyed; it should be kept in mind, however, that portions of the town could have been destroyed while others survived.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 3.1:** Late Bronze stratigraphy of Azekah

Period	Area E3	Area N1	Area S2	Area T1	Area T2	Area W2	Comments
LBIIA			S2-6				Architectural remains
LBII B			S2-5		T2-4		Domestic and public structures
LBIII	E3-4	N1-7	S2-4	T1-5	T2-3	W2-4	Domestic and public structures
Complete destruction							

## The pottery

The ceramic assemblages from five areas (E3, S2, T1, T2, and W2) have now been typologically investigated.<sup>7</sup> At first, our main focus was on the large assemblage from the destruction in Area T2. In general, the vessel types included almost the entire range of pottery found in southern Canaan in Late Bronze II and III. However, a few types – carinated bowls with a hammer rim and bowls with s-shaped profile and a circular decoration (see Kleiman, Gadot, and Lipschits 2016: Fig. 4: 7, 9) – made it possible to narrow down the timeframe to the Late Bronze III. These specific types were not

<sup>5</sup> The ceramic material of Area S1 and W1 is awaiting more thorough investigation that will enable placement of their phases securely in the Tel Azekah Late Bronze Age stratigraphic sequence.

<sup>6</sup> For the discussion on this phenomenon see Toffolo 2014: 240.

<sup>7</sup> For the assemblage from Area T2, see Kleiman, Gadot, and Lipschits 2016.

found in earlier Late Bronze phases in Area S2 and T2. The decorated carinated bowls with hammer rim appeared in vast numbers in the assemblages of Area S2, T2 and W2, and they served as a solid chronological marker for the Late Bronze III. The almost absence of imported ware as well as local pottery types, which are typical of the Late Bronze I and II but missing from later Late Bronze assemblages, was also a reason to position the assemblage in the Late Bronze III horizon.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, several types from the assemblage are distinctive of the Late Bronze Age tradition and occur throughout this period. These are small open bowls, large open bowls with a thickened inner rim and cooking pots with an everted triangular rim profile (*ibid.*: Figs. 4: 1–3; 5: 3–4). These types support not placing the assemblage later than the Late Bronze III. The strong connection of the pottery assemblage from Tel Azekah with Lachish Level VI allows us to place its termination in the same timeframe as the destruction of Lachish

The pottery assemblage from Tel Azekah features a strong Canaanite cultural tradition. This can be seen in the typical Late Bronze pottery types as well as in the decoration styles that feature Canaanite motifs. It is notable that Mycenaean IIIC:1b pottery is missing from the assemblage. One locally produced “Egyptian-style” cooking pot<sup>9</sup> is all that was found from the entire known repertoire of locally produced or imported “Egyptian” pottery. However, the distribution pattern of several juglet types, all imitating vessels of Mycenaean origin, does reveal a shared pattern with sites located along the southern coastal plain of Israel (*ibid.*: Fig. 5: 8–12). Their parallels were found together at Tell el-Yehudiyeh (see Griffith 1890: Pl. XV: 11) and the Egyptian “administrative centers” from the southern coastal plain, at Tell el-Far’ah (see Petrie 1930: Pl. XII: 155) and Deir el-Balah (Dothan 1979: 38, Fig. 84), in tombs dated to the Late Bronze II and III; the tombs also contained an anthropoid coffin. Two of these types were found in Tomb 570 at Lachish, where an anthropoid coffin was discovered as well (Tuffnell, Inge and Harding 1940: Pl. LIB: 284). Another parallel appears in an occupational context in Stratum IX at Tel Sera’ (Oren 1984: Fig. 7: 4).<sup>10</sup> It should be pointed out that parallels to these juglets were not found elsewhere in the Shephelah. This evidence points to a possible direct connection between the inhabitants of Azekah and the Egyptian administrative system located to the southwest.

The preliminary observation of the ceramic material from the earlier phases from Area S2 showed a similar ceramic tradition. The number of painted specimens, often in bichrome, distinguishes this phase from the Late Bronze III assemblages that featured only monochrome paint with simpler decoration patterns. Another difference

<sup>8</sup> Typical Late Bronze I and II types are, for example, bowls with pronounced carinated body (see Panitz-Cohen 2006: 40–42) or shoulder-handled jugs (see Panitz-Cohen 2006: 95–96). These types could not be found in the Tel Azekah assemblage.

<sup>9</sup> For parallels, see Martin (2011: 63–64). Of special interest are the locally produced examples from Tel Sera’.

<sup>10</sup> For more parallels from these sites see Kleiman, Gadot and Lipschits 2016: Table 2.

is the relatively vast amount of imported Cypriot White Slip II and Base Ring II ware in Phases S2–6–S2–5, which are almost absent from the later assemblage.

## Absolute chronology

A radiocarbon dating project has been underway at Tel Azekah since 2015. Attaining a locally-derived absolute chronology for the Late Bronze Age is a high research priority at Tel Azekah. The approach taken is to thoroughly integrate radiocarbon dating considerations in the field, both through the main excavation process and in targeted efforts to retrieve datable material from specific strata. Our aim is to contribute a new, independent chronological reference point for southwest Israel, particularly the Shephelah. While the intent is to examine a wide range of periods represented at Tel Azekah, the peak period of occupation – the Late Bronze Age – is naturally a major focus.

The period divisions and absolute chronology of the Late Bronze Age in the southern Levant remain strongly dependent upon connections with Egypt (Panitz-Cohen 2014: 542). While the New Kingdom [high] chronology has found support in radiocarbon dating (Dee 2013), local radiocarbon sequences are greatly needed to support a more independent reconstruction of the southern Levant during this period. An excellent radiocarbon dataset is available for northern Israel (Tel Megiddo; Toffolo *et al.* 2014), but similarly robust sequences from the Shephelah and coastal plain are currently lacking. A valuable dataset spanning the LB IIA to LB III exists at Lachish, however it includes few short-lived samples (Carmi and Ussishkin 2004). New Late Bronze Age data focused on the LB-IA transition was recently published for Tell eš-Šafi/Gath and Qubur el-Walaydah (Asscher *et al.* 2015a; Asscher *et al.* 2015b)<sup>11</sup>; other sites in southwest Israel provide only isolated dates.<sup>12</sup>

At Tel Azekah, short-lived samples for radiocarbon dating have been obtained from the top of the mound (Area T2) and from the extramural quarter (Area S2). As noted above these are the two excavation areas with the best exposure of Late Bronze Age strata until now. Area T2 provides the best opportunity to date the last Late Bronze phase and its destruction (T2–3), but earlier phases cannot yet be dated here since they have been reached only in limited probes. These earlier phases have only been uncovered in Area S2, which yielded a dense and largely continuous occupation sequence from at least LB IIA through to LB III. With the aid of Bayesian analysis, samples from this sequence should yield a radiocarbon-based chronology spanning a large portion of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>13</sup> Four phases in Area

<sup>11</sup> For a critical evaluation of these publications, see Finkelstein 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Tel Batash (Bruins, van der Plicht, and Mazar 2006), Tel Zayit and Tel Migne (Sharon *et al.* 2007).

<sup>13</sup> For Bayesian analysis as applied to radiocarbon data, refer to Buck *et al.* (1991; 1992) and Bronk Ramsey (2009).

S2 can be dated, all from overlying building phases within the rock-cut ditch: a first building phase (S2–6), two sub-phases of the succeeding monumental structure (S2–5b, S2–5a) and a final building with adjacent public plaza (S2–4).

Preliminary results from Areas T2 and S2 were recently published (Webster *et al.* 2017). They indicate that phase T2–3 (LB III) commenced in the late 13th or early 12th century BCE and was destroyed before the end of the 12th century BCE. This is consistent with the pottery analysis (see above, and further Kleiman, Gadot, and Lipschits 2016), which showed a strong parallel with Lachish Level VI, whose destruction was placed in the 2nd half of the 12th century BCE by Egyptian finds (Ussishkin 2004: 69–71). As shown in Webster *et al.* (2017), the radiocarbon evidence from Lachish supports this dating, and the correlation with Azekah T2–3. Radiocarbon estimates for the close of LB III at Tel Azekah and Lachish are consistent with previously published models across the southern Levant, but do not fit well with the high radiocarbon results published at Tell eṣ-Ṣafi/Gath, just 8 km distant from Azekah (*ibid.*: 18; see also to Finkelstein 2016: 282, Table 2). As noted above, Mycenaean IIIC:1b pottery has not been found in the Late Bronze levels of Tel Azekah, an observation that is difficult to reconcile with the late 13th century dating given for the appearance of this ware at Tell eṣ-Ṣafi/Gath (Asscher 2015a).

Analysis of the initial dataset from Area S2 – covering phases S2–6, S2–5b and S2–5a – placed the earliest clear building phase (S2–6) in the 14th or early 13th century BCE, and suggested a date for the S2–5 monumental building in the second half of the 13th century or the early 12th century BCE (Webster *et al.* 2017; refer also to Webster 2015). Further radiocarbon work will expand the dataset for Area S2, providing more robust dating of the various phases, and adding data for the final phase (S2–4).

Whilst the results published for Late Bronze Age Azekah should be understood as preliminary in nature, they show that the city was thriving from at least c. 1300 BCE until the second half of the 12th c. BCE, at which time Tel Azekah, like Tel Lachish, was destroyed in a fiery conflagration.

## Residue analysis

Tel Azekah is rich in preservation of absorbed organic residues. Ninety percent of all the vessels sampled show indication of preserved lipids (Linares 2015).<sup>14</sup> Based on the total lipid extracts of the 32 vessels from Area T2, and the Lamp-and-Bowl foundation deposit from Areas T2 and W2, four categories can be established according to

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<sup>14</sup> This study was conducted as part of V. Linares's M.A. thesis, supervised by D. Namdar, Y. Gadot and O. Lipschits and conducted at the Fredy and Nadine Herrmann Institute of Earth Sciences, Hebrew University under the directorship of Alon Amrani.

the content of the vessels. These four categories are: plant oils, animal fat, beeswax and clean-unused vessels.

Analysis of the lipids extracted from 28 of the 32 vessels that make up the T2 residue demonstrates that plant oil is the most prominent material identified within this assemblage (Linares 2015: 50). The vessels containing plant oil include: cooking pot (1), pyxis (1), bowls (2), oil lamps (2), juglets (3) and storage jars (19). Based on our archaeological samples in comparison to previous publications and literature, only olive oil and palm oil could be identified in our assemblage (Condamin *et al.* 1976; Copley *et al.* 2005; Garnier *et al.* 2009; Inserra *et al.* 2015). In all other cases, further analysis of plant oils is required in order to distinguish the origin of each oil contained in the vessels as these samples are lacking sufficiently specific biomarkers that enable differentiating them from one another.

Animal fat was identified in two of the storage jars from the T2 assemblage. These vessels differ from all the other vessels in terms of the high amounts of stearic acid ( $C_{18:0}$ ) identified in the lipid assemblage (Linares 2015: 52 and see Dudd and Evershed 1998; Copley *et al.* 2001: Fig. 1B; 2005; Baeten *et al.* 2013). Examination of one storage jar showed the presence of lipids that correspond with the identification of heated beeswax in antiquity (Linares 2015: 53–54 and see Namdar *et al.* 2009). The fact that the natural composition was altered in the way it was may indicate that the beeswax component was heated at some point (Namdar *et al.* 2007; Namdar *et al.* 2009).

All in all, the storage jars at Tel Azekah were used to store different types of material as was indicated above by the detection of bee product, animal fat, and a variety of plant oils, in the same types of vessels. Beeswax and animal fat were not contained in the other vessels that were sampled, such as bowls, juglets, one pyxis and the cooking pot. The fact that plant oil is the only content that is detected in every type of vessel sampled begs the question as to the importance and the common usage of plant oil products that will be researched further. Moreover, the reality that plant oil is also observed in different types of ceramics of varying size and shape is very interesting, as it is not seen that there are differences between the use and function of vessels to their content and vessel type. We therefore suggest that the vessels were everyday household containers containing any oil the local inhabitants had accessible to them. The only difference that is seen between the vessels is that the people active in the building did not mix animal fat with plant oil and that they did not reuse storage jars that contained animal fat to store plant oil or vice versa.

The foundation deposits from Areas T2 and W2 were discovered underneath the plaster floors belonging to buildings that had been destroyed at the end of the Late Bronze Age (see Fig. 3.5). The vessels from this deposits did not contain a lipid assemblage (Linares 2015: 55–57). This can indicate one of two things: (1) the vessels were exposed to direct heat over 250 °C, which would rid the vessels of any residues that they had once contained (Namdar *et al.* 2011), or (2) lipids were not introduced to the vessels that make up the foundation deposit. The first option can be ruled out as storage jars found next to the foundation deposits but above



**Fig. 3.5:** Lamp-and-Bowl foundation deposit in Area W2.

the floor, demonstrate lipid preservation despite the fire. This leads us to suggest that the lack of lipids detected in the foundation deposits indeed reflects that the lamp and bowls were completely empty of lipids. In this case it seems that the vessels themselves were the offering, possibly symbolizing light, sacrifice and or warding away spirits. This is direct evidence and a scientific glance into the cultic practices preformed within the domestic buildings of the Late Bronze population. The extracts from the deposits support the assumption that they were only used for the purpose of offering and ritual practices (and see already Bunimovitz and Zimhoni 1993).

## Human remains

Between the 2012 and 2014 excavation seasons, the remains of four individuals were found in the destruction debris of Building T2/F627 in Area T2 (Figs. 3.4, 3.6). These skeletons were found pinned beneath heavy fallen objects, some of their bodies contorted in apparent positions of self-protection. Additionally, the bones of all four individuals exhibited evidence of moderate to heavy burning. On three of the skeletons, this burning appears to have occurred at a low temperature over a long duration, as though the fire had smoldered for some time. Furthermore, the skeletons exhibit evidence of fragmentation due to three sources: crushing trauma,





**Fig. 3.6:** Unearthing the fourth individual in Area T2 (Photo by Meirav Meiri).

burning and scavenging/erosion. This suggests that the building collapse occurred during the fire and around the time of death, and that other processes, such as erosion or scavenging, disturbed the remains after death.

The first individual was uncovered in the 2012 excavation season in Room T2/F628, next to the grinding installation described above. The skeleton was positioned directly beneath three complete storage jars. Parts of the legs not covered by these vessels were missing, possibly due to post-mortem animal scavenging, erosion or some other process; the missing parts were bilaterally absent distal to the first 5–6 cm of the proximal femur. The rest of the skeleton was in a prone position. The right arm was flexed at the elbow joint and positioned near the right side of the body, with the hand pointing slightly away from the head. The left arm was directly beneath the thoracic region of the body, also flexed. This position was interpreted as either a crawling position, or as a limp position indicating loss of consciousness. Artifacts discovered near this skeleton (see further below) may have been personal items associated with this individual. Osteological evidence indicates that this individual was a young person between 15 and 16 years of age; sex was indeterminate due to youth and fragmentation of the remains. Additionally, this individual exhibited evidence of *cribra orbitalia*, a condition that most commonly develops in childhood as a result of megaloblastic or haemolytic anaemia due to chronic illness or malnutrition (Stuart-Macadam 1992, Steyn et al. 2016). This indicates that this individual suffered one or more of these conditions for a long period during childhood.

A second individual was uncovered in the 2013 excavation season in Room T2/F630, next to the western wall of the compound. This skeleton was largely encased in melted mudbrick. The cranium was extensively fragmented, presumably smashed by the rocks overlying it, and the entire left leg was missing, possibly due to post-mortem scavenging or erosion. The skeleton was found in a flexed position on its right side, with both arms tightly flexed against the thoracic region, the remaining femur flexed at around 90° relative to the vertebral column, the tibia at an acute angle relative to the femora, and the foot plantarflexed. Overall, this posturing could be construed as a self-protective “fetal position,” although it may also be consistent with the pugilistic posture that results from perimortem burning. Osteological evidence indicates that this individual was a male between 19 and 25 years of age. This individual exhibited extensive tibial periostitis, bony evidence of chronic physiological stress, which might reflect a significant episode of illness or malnutrition that ended some time before the individual’s death. Robust muscle markings on the limbs and changes in the spine consistent with load-bearing activity suggest physical activity including heavy lifting and carrying, which would be consistent with manual labour.

Very nearby, a third individual was uncovered. This skeleton was situated among collapsed architectural stones, with both legs missing the distal section from about two thirds of the way down the femora. It was in a supine position, with both legs apparently extended, and both arms abducted. The left humerus was preserved in a flexed position, extending vertically into the air, and carpals and metacarpals of both hands were found in the region of the cranium, suggesting that this individual’s hands were positioned protectively above the face at the time of death. Breakage patterns and positioning of the bones of the right lower arm suggest that it was fractured by a sudden, longitudinal impact while the soft tissues were still in place. This is consistent with the apparent cause of death of crushing due to the collapsed ceiling and walls. Skeletal evidence identifies this individual as a female over the age of 19, possibly relatively young. Bony evidence of childhood anaemia similar to that of the first individual was also identified, suggesting that this individual suffered a significant episode of nutritional stress or illness at some time in her childhood. Strong muscle markings and possible evidence of spinal osteoarthritis suggest that this individual was accustomed to strenuous physical activity, possibly related to manual labour as described above.

In the 2014 excavation season a fourth individual was uncovered in the northern part of the compound (Fig. 3.6). This skeleton was found among destruction debris in a semi-prone, loosely flexed position, with both femora around 90° relative to the trunk, and the tibiae presumably flexed, although the lower legs inferior to the patellae were not recovered in the field. Both arms were acutely flexed at the elbow joint and parallel, and the metacarpals and phalanges were tightly wrapped around an unidentified animal bone artifact. Other artifacts were associated with this skeleton, that may have been personal items (see further below).

This positioning was interpreted as possibly a neutral, limp position due to loss of consciousness. This individual exhibits far less evidence of burning than the other three individuals, although a degree of charring and heat damage is still evident. It also exhibits far less fragmentation in general, and in fact was the only skeleton with a complete, relatively intact cranium at the time of excavation. Skeletal evidence suggests that the victim was a possible female between 15 and 17 years of age, with bony evidence of physical activity including heavy lifting that could be characterized as domestic manual labour, similar to most of the individuals above.

## Pictorial and figurative amulets

A rich assemblage of pictorial and figurative amulets was found during the five seasons of excavations, most within the remains of Building T2/F627. The pictorial amulets include an 18th Dynasty bifacial plaque from Area S2, a scarab of Ramesses II from Area N1, and a large variety of 20th Dynasty scarabs. The figurative amulets were found in Area T2, and consist of Bes, Pataikos and Amun figurines, all of which date to the 19th–20th Dynasties.

Among the pictorial amulets from Tel Azekah, three depict noteworthy scenes:

- 1) A bifacial plaque, Keel (1995) Type II, is decorated on both wide faces in a style characteristic of the mid- to late 18th Dynasty (Fig. 3.7).<sup>15</sup> One face shows a hawk-headed anthropomorphic figure holding a w3s scepter in his front arm; a thick and short vertical line and a dot above it are located between the figure and the scepter. A comparable scene is depicted on a rectangular plaque from Level E4a at Tell eṣ-Ṣafi/Gath (Keel and Münger 2012: no. 4), where a similar figure accompanied by a disk (Re-Horakhty?) and a ḥz-sign, “praise”<sup>16</sup>; an oval plaque from Stratum VIII at Tel Beth Shean (Keel 2010a: 108–109 no. 26) depicts a hawk-headed anthropomorphic figure accompanied by two ‘nḥ-signs and a uraeus. The other face encloses a figure of a royal sphinx wearing a blue crown, accompanied by a winged uraeus and ‘nḥ-sign. The closest comparable scene is depicted on a plaque found at a burial cave near Tell Balaṭa (Clamer 1981; Lalkin 2008: Pl. 21 no. 377). A similar sphinx and a winged uraeus with a wavy tail are depicted on a rectangular plaque from an unknown context at Tel Gezer (Keel 2013: 428–429 no. 609) while the third element is a cartouche with the

<sup>15</sup> This object was found in Area S2 in an unstratified context.

<sup>16</sup> See also a more schematic depiction of the scene on a rectangle plaque from the Dayan Collection, allegedly from Deir el-Balaḥ (Keel 2010a: 438–439 no. 89). A similar scene is depicted on rectangular plaques from Tell el-Ajjul: one (Keel 1997: 392–393 no. 847), from Tomb 1653 dated to the Late Bronze IIA, has the figure of Ptaḥ, while the other (idem: 290–291 no. 554), from unknown context on the mound, has the figure of Amun.



Fig. 3.7: Bifacial plaque from Area S2.

praenomen of Thutmose IV. The same composition but with a cartouche of Thutmose III is depicted on a scarab from Tomb 216 at Tel Lachish (Tufnell *et al.* 1958: Pl. 37: 301), while a scarab from Stratum XVII–XVI (or XV–XIV) at Tel Ashdod (Brandl 1993: 132 no. 4) has a similar scene but the sphinx is wearing the double crown. Lastly, the aforementioned rectangular plaque from Tomb 1653 at Tell el-Ajjul has a sphinx wearing a cap crown, a winged uraeus with a wavy tail, and the cartouche has the prenomen of Amenhotep III.

- 2) A scarab from Building T2/F627 shows a scene depicting a king with a blue crown decorated with a uraeus standing in adoration posture in front of a hawk-headed anthropomorphic figure holding a schematic *w3s* scepter (see Koch *et al.* 2017: no. 1). Below is a double line, perhaps standing for a *nb*-sign. Above the two figures are three signs (from right to left): *wsr*, *m3't*, and a short horizontal line that might be R'; that being the case, the R'-sign might identify the deity as Re-Horakhty, or alternatively all the three signs might stand for a royal name, such as *Wsr-m3't-r' [Stp.n-r']* (Ramesses II) or *Wsr-m3't-r' [mrj-jmn]* (Ramesses III). No exact parallel has been published. A more detailed version, with the name of Ramesses II fully written, was found in Tomb 984 at Tell el-Far'ah (S) (Keel 2010b: 358–359 no. 781). Other variants depict different deities, the most common of which is a king worshipping Ptaḥ (Keel 2010a: 156 no. 134 with parallels). This type of scene belongs to a wider pictorial assemblage crystalized during the days of Ramesses II and was elaborated further during the later New Kingdom.

- 3) Another scarab from Building T2/F627 is decorated with a scene depicting a suckling gazelle accompanied by two branches and an oval with the throne-name of Thutmose III (*Mn-hpr-r'*) (see Koch *et al.* 2017: no. 7). No parallels have been published thus far. A scarab from the surface of Tel Beth Shean (Keel 2010a: 178–179 no. 182) has a similar composition that includes a gazelle (without offspring) accompanied by a branch, and lotus and papyrus buds. A typologically similar scarab found in Tomb 9 in Kition (Leclant 1974: 148 and fig. 1) depicts a similar scene where a lizard stands in the upper register. A more complex scene depicts a suckling gazelle together with various additional elements on a Ramesses III plaque from Tomb 252 at Tel Gezer (Keel 2013: 210–211 no. 100). The suckling gazelle scene is known in Egypt from as early as the Old Kingdom, the result of the closeness of the inhabitants of the Nile Valley and the desert, leading to the integration of desert animals in various pictorial depictions (Arnold 1995: 7–23; Strandberg 2009: 98–99, 123–124). Its combination with the oval of Thutmose III is peculiar though not unique; see scarab found in unknown context at Tell Jemmeh (Keel 2013: 28–29 no. 62) decorated with a scene depicting an antelope with the oval, accompanied by a M3't feather and h'-sign (N28). The oval with the name of Thutmose III was long ago interpreted as a cryptographic writing of the name of Amun-Re (Keel 1995: 242–246 with previous literature).

Seven of the thirteen amulets from Building T2/F627, pictorial and figurative alike, were found in two clusters with dozens of beads, each alongside the remains of two individuals, thus raising some questions regarding the place of these Egyptian amulets in the daily life of their owners (see Koch *et al.* 2017). In search of the meaning of these amulets, it should be noted that the appropriation of Egyptian amulets was common in the region since the Middle Bronze Age (Schroer 1989; Goldwasser 2006; Ben-Tor 2007, 2011a) and in a slow and gradual process during the Late Bronze I and more visibly during the Late Bronze IIA, Egyptian imports largely replaced the locally produced scarabs, reaching their zenith of popularity during the Late Bronze IIB (Lal-kin 2008; Ben-Tor 2011b). The spread of pictorial amulets was accompanied during the Late Bronze IB by another trend – importation of Egyptian figurative amulets in great numbers that were attributed to a workshop located in the Delta (Herrmann 1994: 31; 2012: 6). The most common amulets in the southern Levant were the Udjat eye, Pataikos, Bes and figures with feline heads (Herrmann 2012: 5). The clear majority of pictorial and figurative amulets were found in burials, sometimes consisting of a necklace placed on the body of its owner or beside it. A similar practice in Egypt was common since the First Intermediate Period (Keel 1995). It conveyed a personal connection between the artifacts and the owner. The Egyptian practice can be understood in light of Middle Kingdom texts describing rituals that include incantations and a symbolic entanglement of amulets, beads and seashells into necklaces that function as a charm, a materialization of divine protection (Dubiel 2012: 67–69). The amulets found in tombs are therefore relics of their owners' life. The discovery of two

individuals accompanied by two sets of scarabs and figurative amulets in the destroyed structure in Area T2 is the first time this practice is identified in the context of daily life and seems to confirm this suggestion.

## Clay figurines

Several types of Late Bronze Age figurines were found over the years at Tel Azekah. One of them is a plaque figurine, found by Bliss and Macalister (1902: Pl. 67; 11z), depicting a naked female figure adorned with a Hathor-like wig and holding lotus flowers in both hands. This type of figurine is a regional variant known throughout the Late Bronze II–III that localized an older Syrian concept known since the Middle Bronze Age (Cornelius 2004: 52–57; Budin 2015; Koch forthcoming). It became popular especially in the Shephelah region: Cornelius's corpus (Cornelius 2004) lists 37 items, of which 31 originated from excavations, 26 of them from the Shephelah. Additional fragments were found by the current expedition:

The first fragment is the upper part of a figurine showing the large head of a female anthropomorphic figure with two protruding, widely outlined eyes, a prominent nose and a bold mouth. The hair is stylized as ridges crossing the head, fashioned around the face and adorned by a tiara and two decorated hairclips (that might be earrings). The style of the hair and tiara of the figure depicted on the fragment from Tel Azekah is similar to that depicted on the plaque from Tel Ḥarasim and from Tel Burna, all of them seem like schematic variants of better-made figurines found at Tell eṣ-Ṣafi/Gath, Tel Lachish and Tel Akko (Sharp *et al.* 2015: 65–66; Oeming *et al.* 2016: 208 with references), depicting a slim, naked figure, adorned by a necklace with a rosette pendant, standing barefoot while cupping its breasts, with a simply outlined, triangular-shaped pubic area. The fragment from Tel Azekah and the better-executed example from Tell eṣ-Ṣafi/Gath were both locally produced (for the latter see Ben-Shlomo, Maeir and Mommsen 2008). This type of figurine represents a variant of a motif known from Syria since the Middle Bronze Age, thus supplementing the aforementioned type as another localized Syrian component in the local coroplastic repertoire.

The second type of figurine is represented by a fragment depicting the torso and the pelvis of a naked female figure; the head and legs are missing altogether. The arms frame the torso, and the surviving left hand is adorned with multiple bracelets. The hand is placed on the thigh close to a triangular shaped, accentuated vulva (it is possible that the hand is touching it). The position of the right arm suggests a similar location for the other hand. Petrographic analysis of this figurine localized the origins of the clay in the Naḥal Ha-Elah Riverbed deposits but other valleys in the Shephelah cannot be ruled out. The fragment belongs to the so-called “Revadim type” plaque figurines (Beck 2000; Ornan 2007; Tadmor 2011). This group is known from southwestern Canaan alone, with an almost complete examples found in a quarry near

Kibbutz Revadim, Tel Aphek Stratum X12, Tel Ḥarasim Stratum V, and recently also Tel Burna (Oeming *et al.* 2016: 210–211; Sharp *et al.* 2015: 63–65). They share the circular shape of the arms, framing the depiction presented on the torso and adorned with bracelets on the wrists. All three depict the two small anthropomorphic figures on each side of the torso near the dot-shaped breasts. The comparison between these exemplars shows the existence of two sub-types, which differ in their depiction of the figure's necklace and the proximity of the hands vis-à-vis the vulva, and possibly even shapes of the vulva. The specimens from Tel Azekah and Tel Burna belong to the second sub-type.

The third fragment also depicts a naked female figure. She has long hair fashioned as two hair-locks reaching down to her belly. Her face, relatively small, is badly eroded, thus no distinct facial features can be distinguished. Two round protruding dots may be eyes; their location in the middle of the face would indicate a relatively large forehead or the existence of some sort of feature on the forehead. Below the face and reaching down to the end of the hair-locks is a chain of seven small circular protrusions, probably a schematic depiction of a necklace. The breasts are broken and seem to have been round and small. The arms are not symmetrical; the left arm seems to be longer than the right one. They are round and there are no clear shoulders or elbows. The hands have no palms, are oddly disproportionate and are adorned by four bracelets each. There are four large and very long fingers on each hand, which are placed on the thighs with the fingers almost reaching the round, protruding knees. The legs are joined together with two emphasized, round and protruding kneecaps and two bracelets on each ankle. The woman's feet resemble her hands but are less distinct, depicted in the frontal position, displaying four long, oddly-shaped toes that extend directly from the ankles. The only place the frame and the depiction come in direct contact is under the feet, creating a small ledge upon which the woman's feet rest. According to petrographic analysis, the figurine was made from raw material that was most probably quarried from the alluvial beds of Naḥal Ha-Elah, but notice that the same geological characteristics also parallel valleys to the north and south (Naḥal Soreq and Naḥal Guvrin). The figure shares five distinct motifs with the so-called "Revadim type" figurines: (1) the figure's posture, mainly the rounded arms encasing the torso, ending in hands resting on hips, on or next to the genitalia; (2) the figure has long, thick hair in two locks; (3) the figure is adorned with jewelry; (4) the figure has small, round, dot-like, far apart breasts; (5) the figure has round, protruding kneecaps.<sup>17</sup>

The Late Bronze figurines from Tel Azekah contribute to the study of the regional coroplastic repertoire of the region by the inclusion of types that belong to different spheres of interaction: (1) the "Qudshu" and the "Syrian" types derive from a cross-Levantine interface that brought about the localization of concepts known from the

<sup>17</sup> For an alternative interpretation by Oeming, who suggests that the figure is seated, see Oeming *et al.* 2016: 212–214.

northern Levant, though the former was far more popular, especially in the Shephelah, and its components attest to intense discourse with Egyptian pictorial concepts; (2) the “Revadim” type was, apparently, a local development limited in distribution; and (3) the “Azekah” type that either shares its background with the “Revadim” type or reflects a unique concept developed at Tel Azekah itself.

## Historical reflections and conclusions

The rich material findings that were unearthed during the first seasons of the Lauschnitz Azekah Expedition made it possible to deal with the period of the Late Bronze Age in a multi-disciplinary approach towards a more holistic understanding of the inhabitants of Late Bronze Tel Azekah, their practices and interactions. The initial results of the radiocarbon dating project as well as the stratigraphic observations showed that the site had already been occupied during the Late Bronze II, when the settlement covered not only the tell itself but also the lower plateau. This settlement continued into the Late Bronze III and suffered a widespread destruction. This destruction is evident in almost every excavated area and was so severe that it was followed by an occupational gap of more than 200 years. Azekah was resettled only during the later part of the Iron IIA, the exact date is still unclear.

Building T2/F627 and its inhabitants were witnesses to this disastrous event. The careful unfolding of the destruction debris opened before us a rare opportunity to analyze activities performed at the building in great details. Our excavations unearthed an exceptionally large ceramic assemblage with a wide range of types and painted specimens. Organic residue analysis revealed that most of the vessels contained plant oil. The content was not restricted to storage containers but was detected in bowls, juglets and even cooking pots. This evidence points to the possibility that the vessels and their contents were not part of a usual household assemblage but were rather used in a manufacturing cycle of a specific product. The strenuous part of the production cycle was probably conducted by at least three of the individuals whose remains were found in the building; their skeletons showed signs of heavy physical labor including heavy lifting and carrying. The other individual in the building, however, exhibited only light muscle markings and no signs of load-bearing activity. It is striking that the remains of this individual were accompanied by a rich assemblage of pictorial and figurative amulets and more precious finds. This may indicate that this individual, and possibly one other associated with similar finds (see above), were of higher status and/or performed a part of the production cycle that did not involve heavy manual labor.

The pictorial and figurative amulets reveal more than the status of the local inhabitants and enable us to reach into their ideological and cultural conceptions. We suggest that the consumers of Egyptian amulets in the southern Levant in general



and Tel Azekah specifically, belonged to the indigenous population of the region. From the very outset, Egyptian activity in the region was coupled by collaboration with local groups and across the many generations that followed an intermediate elite emerged. Its members conducted on-going interaction with agents of the court, Egyptians and Egyptian-based Canaanites alike, and were exposed to various practices and ideas that they selectively adopted and appropriated. The material remains of this interaction attest to a gradual yet constant transformation of local pictorial depictions, cuisine, cult practices, architectural concepts, and pottery production (Higginbotham 2000; Koch 2014; 2017a). This is further supported by the ceramic findings that exhibit strong connections to the Egyptian affiliated sites. In the same line of thought, we suggest that the consumption of Egyptian amulets by the indigenous population during the same period reflects a transformation of local charm practices. Moreover, upon their acquisition by locals, the amulets (figurative and pictorial alike) became detached from their Egyptian context and were given new meanings as protective intermediaries between the common people and the divine sphere based on local pictorial conventions (Cooney and Tyrrell 2005, pp. 6–8). This process sometimes results in the appropriation of pictorial concepts and even complete scenes and their localization, such as the Middle Bronze Age localization of Hathor's images (Schroer 1989; Cornelius 2004), or the Late Bronze Age case of an equestrian goddess, an Egyptian concept of Astarte, which spread in the southern Levant and lasted until the Iron IIC (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 141). The suckling gazelle scene depicted on the scarab from Tel Azekah is another Egyptian concept (above) that was appropriated by local agents to include other horned animals and became a popular theme until the Iron IIA (Koch 2017b).

The finds also help us in determining Azekah's regional status and its relations with other neighboring cities. In the 14th century BCE, Tell eš-Šafi/Gath was probably the ruling kingdom in the area.<sup>18</sup> Impressive 13th century BCE architectural remains uncovered in strata assigned to this period show that this circumstance probably continued into the Late Bronze IIB. At some point in the first half of the 12th century BCE the balance of power changed. The published archaeological evidence from this period uncovered at Tell eš-Šafi/Gath, are still unclear. On the other hand, the finds from Tel Azekah, detailed above, are so numerous that it is relatively safe to assume that a prosperous town existed at the site during this period. Moreover, the many Egyptian objects testify to direct contact and political relations with the Egyptian related sites that occupied the coastal plain to the west and to the south of the site. Apparently while Tel Azekah thrived, the site of Tell eš-Šafi/Gath diminished in regional importance. Changing political and social circumstances opened up to the

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<sup>18</sup> This is indicated mainly by the textual evidence from the Amarna Correspondence, in which the site appears as one of the influential powers in the Shephelah, and less through the archaeological finds discovered at the site of Tell eš-Šafi/Gath or Azekah.

residents of Tel Azekah the option to tie their fate with other political entities. An alliance was probably formed with the elite of Lachish. The two sites show many similarities in their material culture and most importantly in their distressing fate. Only further studies of social status, trading networks and manufacturing system will allow us to conclude if one of the two sites was superior to the other or whether these were two independent towns that enjoyed similar connections with the Egyptians. As it stands now, we can only conclude that when the Egyptians retreated from the region in the last third of the 12th century BCE, the two towns lost sponsorship and support. Without their valuable connections they fell victim to devastation, either by an unknown aggressor or from a natural disaster. Tel Azekah never managed to regenerate itself after the great destruction; only the myth of Canaanite Azekah survived.

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Steven Ortiz and Samuel Wolff

## **A reevaluation of Gezer in the Late Bronze Age in light of renewed excavations and recent scholarship**

Tel Gezer is an important site for the history of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>1</sup> The ancient site is at the heart of most archaeological and historical reconstructions of the second millennium BCE due to fact that it is located on major trade routes, mentioned in several historical texts, and it has been extensively excavated. Gezer is mentioned in several Egyptian texts dating to the Late Bronze Age. The city is first mentioned in an inscription from the reign of Thutmose III on the walls of the Temple of Amon at Karnak as one of the cities conquered during his first campaign to Canaan. An inscription of Thutmose IV in his mortuary temple at Thebes refers to Hurrian captives from this city.<sup>2</sup> Gezer is a prominent city mentioned during the Amarna period (see discussion below). The most well-known inscription is the Merneptah Stela that mentions Gezer as a city that was captured. Another inscription of Merneptah from Amada claims that he was the “subduer of Gezer.”

### **History of excavations and debates**

The first intensive exploration of Tel Gezer was conducted by R.A.S. Macalister during the years 1902–1905 and 1907–1909, under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF). The results of these early excavations were published in three volumes (Macalister 1911–1912). Macalister excavated nearly 60% of the tell. Unfortunately, the methods of excavation were very primitive as Macalister dug the site in strips and back-filled each trench, as was the custom of the time. He distinguished eight levels of habitation, assigning his Third Semitic (1400–1000 BC) to a LB occupation. The rudimentary excavation and dating methods make it difficult to reconstruct the history of Gezer during the last half of the second millennium BCE – this difficulty is

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**1** It should be noted that as a result of subsequent discoveries, this version differs significantly from the lecture delivered at the conference. It should also be pointed out that the pottery has yet to be restored and that a detailed analysis of the ceramic assemblages has not yet been undertaken; thus, the possibility exists that the interpretations presented here will need revision in future discussions.

**2** Although the inscription is broken it is likely the city of Gezer that is mentioned.

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particularly pronounced when attempts to accurately date the various structures that were excavated by Macalister. Hence, the Macalister reports are not usable to reconstruct LB Gezer. Nevertheless, many scholars have attempted to discern LB structures based on his publications (see below). In spite of the shortcomings of this earlier excavation, the plan and material culture allows us to postulate that there was a robust LB occupation at Gezer.

Raymond-Charles Weill was the next excavator of Gezer. His excavations took place in 1913–1914 and 1923–1924, and were conducted under the patronage of Baron Rothschild. Weill excavated tombs on the periphery of Tel Gezer (Maeir 2004). In 1934, Alan Rowe conducted a brief excavation on the western end of the tell (Rowe 1935a, 1935b) yielding primarily Early Bronze Age tomb material.<sup>3</sup>

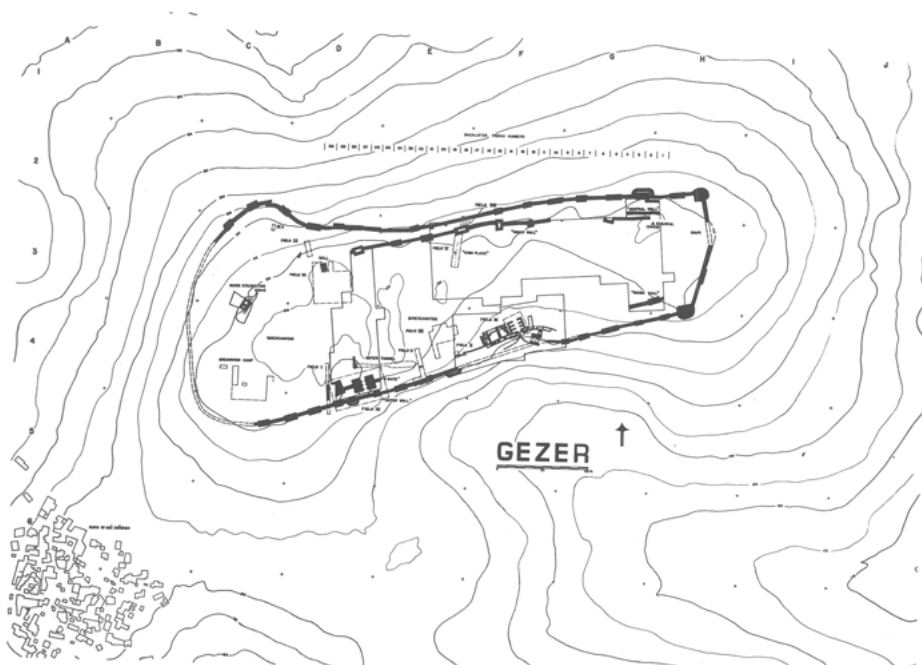


Fig. 4.1: Tel Gezer HUC Excavations (Gezer / Dever et. al. 1970).

The American Gezer Project began in 1964 under the auspices of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC) and the Harvard Semitic Museum, with Nelson Glueck and G. Ernest Wright as advisors (Fig. 4.1). William G. Dever led the

<sup>3</sup> A detailed publication based on material found in the archives of the Israel Antiquities Authority and the Palestine Exploration Fund, is currently being prepared by S. Wolff.



Phase I excavations (1964–1971) of the HUC/Harvard excavations. Phase II was led by Joe D. Seger (1972–1974). These excavations distinguished 21 stratigraphic levels from the Late Chalcolithic to the Roman period. Currently, seven large final report volumes have been produced (Dever, Lance and Wright 1970; Dever, Lance, Bullard, Cole; Seger 1974; Dever, Lance and Bullard 1986; Seger 2013, Lance and Bullard 1988; Gitin 1990; Gilmour 2014).

The main results of Phase I were as follows: 1) to “securely” date the city defenses such as Macalister’s “inner wall, ‘outer wall,’ and the ‘Maccabean Castle’”; 2) to confirm the accepted date of the “High Place”; 3) to clarify the MB and LB domestic levels; and 4) to illuminate the “Philistine” Iron Age I horizon. The objectives of the Phase II excavations were to investigate the city’s Iron Age and later stratigraphy, and to expand investigations of the MB southern gate in Field IV. Two additional brief seasons were conducted by Dever in 1984 (Dever 1984) and 1990 (Yunker 1991).

## Overview of HUC excavations

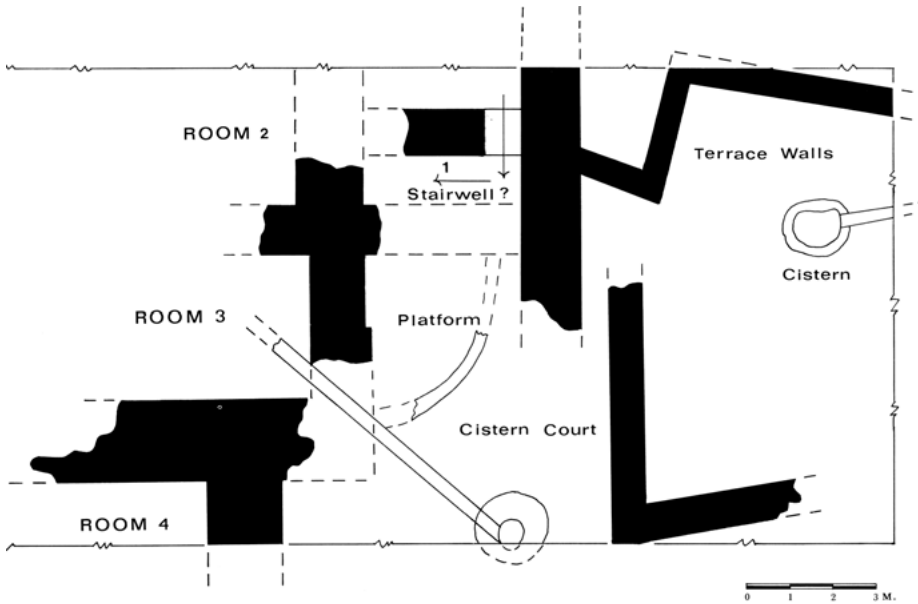
Currently, there is not an up-to-date synthesis of the LB occupation of Gezer (cf. Dever 1998: 110–130; Seger and Hardin 2013: 31). Thus, this current paper will attempt to provide an overview of the LB occupation at Gezer. While the HUC excavations isolated four phases of the LB (Stratum XVII–XIV), there were only limited stratigraphic results (Table 4.1). All of the LB remains were found in the western hill of the tell, where the majority of HUC’s excavation areas were located. It is difficult to determine from Macalister’s excavation if LB occupation reached the eastern tell. The most impressive remains are Palace 14120, located on the acropolis (Field VI) and an LB tomb (Field I) located on the southern end of the western hill. In addition, there were limited exposures of LB stratigraphy in the sondages located on the southern slope of the western hill (e.g. Fields I and II). The last potential LB feature is the “outer wall.” This was extensively excavated by Macalister and then by HUC in Field I/IV. The dating of this wall has been controversial (see discussion below).

### “Palace 14120”

On the acropolis (western hill), the HUC project excavated a series of domestic structures which date from the LB to the Hellenistic Period. During the LB, there are remnants of a multi-room structure of substantial proportions (in comparison to other structures) (Fig. 4.2). This building is only partially preserved (due to later trenching), yet a multi-room building with courtyards can be reconstructed. The HUC excavation defined four rooms with two courtyards. Room 1 is 3.5 x 1.1 m with an entrance from the north and is understood as a sort of vestibule (Dever

**Table 4.1:** HUC LB Stratigraphy.

General Stratum/Date according to Field	I	I (cave)	II	IV	V	VI	VII
XIV 13/12TH	5A?		12			7	12
XV LB IIB (13TH)	5B-C		13	'outer wall'		8A-B	Sub-12
XVI LBIIA (14th c.)	6A-B 'Outer Wall'	Upper	14		1?	9A-B	
XVII LBIB late 15th c.	—	Lower	Post-15	—	—		

**Fig. 4.2:** Palace 14120 (Gezer IV, Dever, et al. 1986, fig. 8, page 43).

1986: 41). Rooms 2 and 3 are fragmentary, with room 3 measuring 3.25 x 6.25 m. These two rooms are a part of the interior of the roofed main structure. The main complex extends farther south and it looks like there is a second offset to the west, with room 4 being probably another service area (Dever 1986: 41–42). This building reused Stratum 10 (MB) features, like upper terrace walls and the two cistern courtyards. According to Dever (1986: 41–42), the construction of the structure is

both of monumental scale and superior workmanship. The walls measure 31.3 m in length x 1.85 m in width. Dever postulates that the building had walls that could have supported at least two stories. Also, even though the evidence is sparse, he argues that the building had a palatial character (Dever 1986: 42).

The end of Stratum 9 and “Palace 14120” is an important question. There is almost no occupational accumulation or debris in most of the main structure, and it seems that the building was deliberately emptied shortly before its destruction. There is also no significant collapse or even destruction debris of the building. On account of this evidence, Dever stated that there must have been looting of the building and also that there is no indication of a sudden destruction by enemy attack. He concluded that “Palace 14120” was probably part of the residence and even the administrative center of the governor of the city in the Amarna Period (Dever 1986: 43). Dever did not understand why the building was abandoned, looted, demolished and replaced by ordinary complex of domestic courtyards, but he surmised that it was not destroyed in the military campaign against the city (1986: 43).

## Late Bronze Age occupation in Fields I and II

Fields I and II are north-south five-meter wide sondages located on the southern slope of the western hill. Field I encompasses part of the MB tower of Field IV while Field II is located midway between the MB gate and the Iron Age gate to the east (see Fig. 4.1). Field I has continuous occupation from the LBII to Iron IB. These layers occur after the destruction of Stratum XVIII, which is the destruction that corresponds with events associated with the Egyptian 18th Dynasty and the expulsion of the Hyksos. Field II has continuous occupation from the LB to the Hellenistic period.<sup>4</sup> The LB strata were only found in one excavation square in each field; as a result, there is only minimal data to characterize the LB occupation in this field. Nevertheless, we can conclude that there was LB occupation that extended from the acropolis south to the edge of the southern end of the western hill.

Past excavators dated Stratum 6 in Field I of HUC excavations to the 14th century BCE. They stated that it probably represented a substantial period of building. However, later pitting and Macalister’s activity disturbed the remains and very little is left to base an estimate (Dever, Lance and Wright 1970: 20). Stratum 6B had no real evidence of burning, although it had sizable rock-fall and accumulation of brown brickly earth in the corner of Walls 2020 and 2016A in Area 2. Surface 2022

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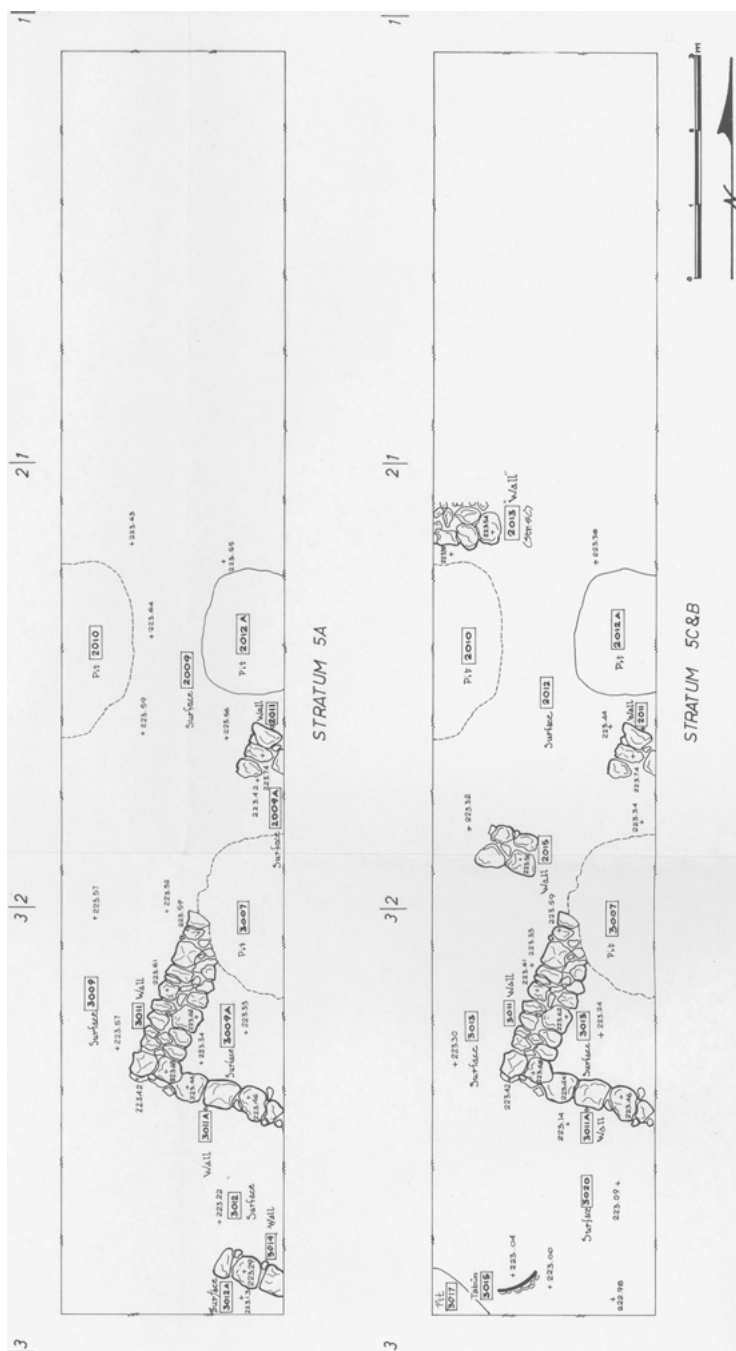
<sup>4</sup> This pattern is due to the fact that Field II is located in an area that Macalister did not excavate, while most of the Iron Age and Hellenistic strata in Field I was probably removed by Macalister.

had around 20 cm of soft reddish-brown brickly debris (L. 2018.1); the absence of smashed pottery or overthrown rocks, however, suggest that this was a fill for Stratum 6A surfaces (Dever, Lance and Wright 1970: 20). Stratum 6A represents the rebuilding of Stratum 6B. Even Surfaces 2018 and 2018A are very similar to Stratum 6B surfaces 2022 and 2022A, running around 20 cm higher. The destruction debris in Area 1 (L 1028.1) was very similar to the Stratum 6B destruction with additions of bones and numerous sherds. There was no evidence of burning with the total accumulation of debris measuring 15–20 cm. The destruction of Stratum 6, according to the excavators, may have been due to the disturbance of the violent Amarna period or possible as late as the southern Levantine campaign of Seti I (Dever, Lance and Wright 1970: 21–22).

Stratum 5 dates to the LB IIB/Iron IA period and consists of 3 sub-phases. It had a limited exposure (3 x 11 m) with later pitting, consisting of domestic-like walls with surfaces. Walls 3011A and 3011/2011 from the earlier phases (5C and B) formed a structure. The surfaces were of beaten earth with a tabun built on Surface 3020. Stratum 5B went out of use with the construction of 5A. The surface went out of use and the tabun was smashed by a “considerable rockfall” (Dever, Lance and Wright 1970: 23). The earlier structure continued in use and a new wall was built on the surface of Stratum 5B. Beneath the Stratum 5A surface in the structure, a lamp and bowl deposit was sealed beneath Surface 3009A within the brickly destruction debris of Phase 5B (Fig. 4.3).

Like in Field I, the LB strata in Field II were limited to one excavation square (ca. 3 x 4 m). The main phases are Stratum 14–12 (corresponding to General Strata XVI–XIV). Stratum 14 was found in a limited sounding along the west balk with the only feature being an earthen surface (L 1147) on which a tabun was constructed (L1207). Due to the limited exposure, it is impossible to date the phase; nevertheless, the excavators stated that it must date to the early 13th century BCE or later 14th century BCE. Stratum 14 of Field II correlates with the “Amarna Age,” represented by Stratum 6 of Field I and Stratum 9 of Field VI (Dever 1974: 47–48).

Stratum 13 was destroyed by a violent destruction involving a fire. Several storage jars and large vessels were smashed on Surface L1193 (Dever 1974: Pl. 65B). The debris averaged 25 cm in depth and was composed of soft ashes, charred roof-beams, and crumbled mud brick (Dever 1974:48). The excavator dated Stratum 13 to the last phase of LB IIB in the thirteenth century BCE, represented by Stratum 5 in Field I and Stratum 8 in Field VI. The overall impression is that this stratum exhibited a decline in comparison to the preceding Amarna period stratum. It is difficult to characterize the architectural remains, however, due to subsequent pitting operations which destroyed most of the architecture (Dever 1974: 50). Although Stratum 13 was violently destroyed, most of the architecture was reused in Stratum 12, which followed after a quick interlude. Dever argued that the best explanation for this destruction is by Pharaoh Merneptah, who claimed to have seized Gezer around 1220 BCE (Dever 1974) (Fig. 4.4).



**Fig. 4.3: Late Bronze IIB/Iron IA Strata of Field I. Gezer HUC General Stratum XIV, Local Stratum 5 (A-C). [Gezer I, Dever, Plan IV, 1968].**



## The “Outer Wall”

One of the major proposals by the HUC excavations was that the “outer wall” found by Macalister should be dated to the LB. The “Outer Wall” was excavated in Fields I and IV, and possibly in Field II. It cut through the MB glaciis and had fills associated with its construction that contained LB pottery. Yet, there were no surfaces or architecture to stratigraphically assign the wall to a particular period. The wall also was rebuilt in the Hellenistic period when ashlar masonry was utilized. In the Amarna period, all of the main city-states that have been excavated (e.g. Megiddo and Lachish) were not fortified (Finkelstein 2002: 264). However, Dever (1984: 208) argued that “it was unthinkable that Gezer had remained unwallled in the Amarna Age.” Based on this presumption, Dever (1984; 1993) dated the “Outer Wall” to the LB. Several Israeli scholars criticized Dever’s reasoning and offered alternative dates for the construction of the “Outer Wall” (Bunimovitz 1983; Finkelstein, 1981, 1994; Zertal 1981). The criticism was substantial enough for Dever to return to the issue in 1984 and 1990 that arose from the initial HUC excavations. Finkelstein (2002: 268) stated that Dever ignored “a set of hard archaeological data which flatly point to an Iron II date for the wall: Iron II pottery was retrieved from the foundation trenches of the wall, from fills leaning on the inner face of the wall and from its supporting glaciis.” The latest publication of the HUC Gezer excavation still proposes that the outer wall dates to the LB (Seger 2013: 31–32; see below for our opinion on this subject).

## Late Bronze Age tombs at Gezer

One of the most important LB discoveries of the HUC excavations was the Field I LB burial (Seger and Lance 1988: 47 ff.). Cave 1.10A is a reused cistern that was turned into a burial cave by carving a side entrance from the inside out. The limestone tunnel waste was used to level the chamber and build a low burial bench around the back and sides of the tomb. There were five distinct phases dating from the LBIB and IIA transition. This tomb contained a ceramic sarcophagus with at least twelve interred individuals. Throughout the lifespan of the tomb at least 88 individuals were interred. This burial provides evidence that there was occupation in the 15th century BCE after the MBII/LBIA destruction.

The many tombs excavated by Macalister can be compared to the LB tomb excavated by the HUC team. Macalister excavated over 250 tombs. In his publications, Macalister details all of the tombs and caves he explored and illustrated the small finds which came from each tomb. Unfortunately, the tombs are discussed individually and are presented roughly geographically and numbered ostensibly in order of their discovery and exploration. Furthermore, few details are actually given about the distribution of finds within the tomb. The figures of the tombs also

demonstrate a mixing of periods (e.g. second millennium BCE and Roman pottery from the same tomb). It is difficult to determine if tombs were reused or if there was mixing of finds in the excavation of tombs of different periods that happened to be in close proximity. Despite these limitations to the modern researcher, there are a number of tombs which can be placed within the LB cultural milieu. The vast majority of the tombs, ascribed by Macalister to his Third Semitic Period, are extramural (Macalister 1911–1912 I: 284).

At Gezer, several tombs contain LB Pottery based on Macalister's pottery plates. For example, Tomb 7,<sup>5</sup> a cave burial, had several pilgrim flasks, Mycenaean IIIB imports, Base Ring Ware II bilbils, and several disc-based rounded bowls (Macalister 1911–1912, Vol. III: Pl. LXVI). Additionally, Tomb 9 has Base Ring Ware II bilbils and jugs, pilgrim flasks, and multiple Mycenaean imports (piriform stirrup jars, bell shaped kraters, pyxis; Macalister 1911–1912: III. Pls. LXX, LXXI). Tomb 58 is a hewn tomb with three benches and two "circular cells" which had a large amount of pottery which was gathered in the second cell and seems to have been gathered over a period of time and not as a single deposit (Macalister 1911–1912: 1. 321). This deposit included two footed chalices, one resting inside the other, and another "footed bowl" or stand with a Cypriot "tubular flask" resting on it. He also found a bowl with a concentric circular decoration inside with two button handles and three looped feet, a Mycenaean pyxis, a local imitation pyxis, disc-based circular bowls, dipper juglets, a shouldered storage jar (with two handles below the shoulder), and a globular jug with a basket handle (Macalister 1911–1912: III. Pls. LXXXI, LXXXII, LXXXIII). Several other tombs have material which may date to the LB (although other dates may be posited given the lack of available data) with comparable material.<sup>6</sup> Tomb 30 is one of the most interesting tombs – a cave tomb which opens into a large chamber. Its ceiling was at one point supported by a no longer extant column, with a pit dug just inside the entrance. A step led down into a second chamber, which had a second pit and a third chamber. No skeletal remains were recovered. Finds included a unique White Slip II Cypriot jug, Base Ring Ware II bilbils and jug, as well as 14 javelin/arrowheads, the "fragments of a Mycenaean sword," and an Egyptian-style *khopesh* or sickle sword.

In addition to Macalister's excavations, the Weill excavation also yielded LB tombs (Maeir 2004). Rowe's excavation yielded primarily EB pottery, but one complete Cypriot vessel was found in the fill of the EB "great Canaanite tomb."<sup>7</sup>

Gonen (1992) has detailed a general typology for LB tombs, which is helpful for understanding the situation at Gezer. Broadly speaking, the coastal plain, which is generally lower than 200 meters above sea level, utilized cist or pit graves. These

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<sup>5</sup> Identified as "early Fourth Semitic" by Macalister but here placed in the LB.

<sup>6</sup> Tombs 59, 84, 85, and 252.

<sup>7</sup> See note 3.



graves grew in popularity beginning in the LB I and were for individual burials, dug into dirt or rock, and filled with a specific repertoire of grave goods (a few storage jars, a few large bowls, and a few juglets, often including foreign imports; Gonen 1992: 15–20, 34). The older tradition of cave burials continued in highland areas. These tombs frequently were in unaltered caves or cisterns, were often used successively (with previous occupants and grave goods pushed aside), with grave goods representing the full repertoire of the domestic assemblage (Gonen 1992: 34–35).

## Gezer in recent research

Since the HUC excavations, Gezer has been prominent in research concerning the nature of the LB in the Shephelah. Several petrographic analyses of Amarna tablets as well as new comprehensive studies have been produced in the last two decades (Rainey 1996; Goren, Finkelstein, Na'aman 2004; Rainey and Cochavi-Rainey 2015). In addition, several studies have focused on the nature of Egyptian rule and on material culture that includes objects from Tel Gezer.

### Gezer and the Amarna tablets (LB IIA)

Studies on the provenience of the tablets (Goren, Finkelstein, Na'aman 2004) and the correspondence and linguistic analysis (Rainey 1996; Rainey and Cochavi-Rainey 2015; Vita 2000) have further highlighted the role that Gezer played during the LB. The Gezer Amarna tablets consist of twelve letters that demonstrate that Gezer was a prominent Canaanite city-state ruled by Milki-ilu, and then later Yapahu and Baludani (once read Balushipti; EA 268–72, 292–3, 297–300, 378). These rulers were sometimes in league with Labayu, Prince of Shechem, and sometimes against him. They also had relations with Abdi Hepa of Jerusalem and Shuwardata (of Gath?).

Na'aman's analysis of the Amarna correspondence in the Shephelah noted that the most important kingdoms in the Shephelah were Gezer, Lachish and Gath (2011:283; see also Finkelstein 2014:265). He based his analysis mostly on the textual data. Vita (2000, 2015: 75–84) examined a group of letters sent from Gezer and other nearby sites and concluded that the same four scribes wrote about 34 letters, which he labeled the 'Gezer-Corpus.' A study conducted on the Gilgamesh fragment from Megiddo led the authors to conclude: "The results of the petrographic and NAA analyses of the Gilgamesh fragment indicate that the tablet was probably produced in Gezer" (Goren et. al. 2009: 771). The authors further proposed that the 'Gezer scribe travelled to neighboring cities whose ruler were Gezer's allies and wrote letters on behalf of their rulers" (Goren et. al. 2009: 771). They concluded that the accumulation of all these studies "indicate the centrality of the Gezer scribes in southern Canaan."

## Gezer and LB site distribution

Other studies, while not focused specifically on Gezer, have addressed the social and political nature of LB Canaan. Finkelstein and Jasmin each used a Thiessen polygon model of site distribution and hierarchy to determine the nature of the kingdom. Finkelstein proposed that Gezer dominated a territory of ca. 1150 sq. km with 35 settlements and a built-up area of ca. 36 hectares and controlled the “entire width of the coastal plain from the hills to the sea (Finkelstein 1996: 234). Jasmin suggested (2006: 173) that this territory is too large, arguing that Gezer did not control the coastal sites.<sup>8</sup> This is also supported by Gadot (2010: 59–63) who proposed that the Yarkon and Aijalon basins were annexed by Egypt during the 18th Dynasty. It became royal or temple land until rebellion broke out following the death of Ramses II when the coastal sites were destroyed (e.g. Jaffa, Gerisa, Aphek). He proposed that perhaps Gezer led this rebellion, which is why Merneptah claimed to have destroyed Gezer (“subduer of Gezer”) in the Merneptah Stela.

## Where is the Egyptian Governor’s residence?

Research in the past decades has also focused on the nature of the Egyptian rule in the southern Levant. During the 1980s, several scholars took up the challenge to propose locations for the ‘supposed’ Egyptian governor’s residencies. Two proposals have been suggested regarding Gezer. Singer (1986–87) postulated that Macalister’s “Canaanite Castle” should be identified as an Egyptian governor’s residence. Bunimovitz (1988–1989) proposed that the Egyptian governor’s residence should be identified with the ‘Brick Building’ found in Trenches 27/28 on the acropolis. These proposals have not been widely accepted (cf. Hasel, 1998: 93, n. 1; Higginbotham 2000: 279–281; Maeir 1988–89; Morris 2005: 564–568; Gilmour and Kitchen 2012: 15).

## Gezer and recent material culture studies

Several studies have focused on particular aspects of LB material culture. For example, Bunimovitz and Zimhoni (1993) analyzed lamp-and-bowl foundation deposits. Many of these deposits found at Gezer were from the Macalister excavations along with five from the HUC excavations (and several from the

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<sup>8</sup> Savage and Falconer (2003:38, Fig. 4.) estimate that it has a site cluster of 19; Jasmin (2006: 165, Fig. 2) places Gezer as a major site with 26 satellite sites (including Tel Miqne, Tel Harassim and Tel Hamid).

Tandy excavations- see below). These date to the end of the LB and beginning of the Iron Age (e.g. 13th and 12th century BCE). These deposits have been found at Gezer in Stratum XII (LB/IA I transition). Uziel and Gadot note that they are distributed throughout Canaan in the LB, but in the Iron Age I they do not appear in the hill country (2010).

Another unique artifact is the stunning bolt, which were used by high-ranking warriors. Several examples were found at Gezer (Genz 2007: 57).

## Summary

Recent studies of site size distribution (Finkelstein 1996, Jasmin 2006, Savage and Falconer 2003) and social organization and urbanization (Bunimovitz 1993, Gonen 1984) are providing a picture of the role played by Gezer. Gezer dominated a territory with several settlements, perhaps including Jaffa (Finkelstein 1996: 234, contra Gadot 2010). This is mostly based on survey data, the Amarna Tablet correspondence and rank-size modeling and theory. The nature of the Egyptian relationship and role in Canaan is still debated, whether it was a colonial or imperial model (Hoffmeier 2004). Nevertheless, all scholars agree that the ancient city of Gezer was an integral focus of Egyptian activity, whether as direct rule or as Canaanites loyal to Egypt (even if it was coerced). Ironically, for such an influential city and one that played a major role during the LB, past excavations revealed only one structure that can be definitively attributed to the LB (e.g. Palace 14120). The renewed excavations by the Tandy Institute for Archaeology are now changing this picture.

## Tandy excavations

### Late Bronze Age

The current excavations by the Tandy Institute for Archaeology have revealed a large building complex (nearly 15 x 20 m) dating to the 13th century (Fig. 4.5). The exposure of the LB stratum occurred over several seasons, mostly as the excavations were studying and excavating the Iron Age fortifications. In the first season (2006), shallow fills with LB pottery were found on the slope beneath the line of the Iron Age casemate wall. In following seasons, a probe (Y8) was conducted to determine the foundation level of the city wall in which a large “pillar base” was found. The debris associated with the pillar base contained LB pottery. We tentatively proposed that the remnants of a square pillared building should be associated with Stratum XIV of the HUC excavations solely because the stratum above

dated to the Iron I. We postulated that this might have been the Merneptah destruction of Gezer (Ortiz and Wolff 2012:12).<sup>9</sup>

In subsequent seasons, as more parts of this stratum and building were exposed beneath our Iron I layer we began to question whether the circular stone served as a pillar base. In the 2013 season, while cleaning the Iron I outer wall, a chance exposure of part of Stratum 12 was exposed. One of the significant finds was a scarab of Amenhotep III as well as cylinder seals. This shifted our dating to the 14th century BCE.<sup>10</sup> In the 2017 and final season, we were able to expose this building. This building sat on the southern slope of the western hill where about two meters of the building eroded down the slope. We are also able to date it back to the original 13th century BCE proposal.

The building complex (Fig. 4.6) consists of two major room units (A-C and D), a courtyard (E), and an auxiliary western room or another building (F). The main unit is a complex of rooms (A-C) consisting of a large rectangular main room and two southern units (B and C). Unit A is about 10 x 5 m with entrances to Units B and C to the south and two entrances to Unit D to the north. This room is only partially excavated as a later Iron I wall, which was not removed, and was built over this LB building. This room had an industrial purpose, as a vat was discovered in the northeast corner of the room near the putative pillar base (Figs. 4.7, 4.8).

This disc-shaped stone was found to be sitting on the surface. It is also smoothed on top, apparently well-worn from activity. About two meters southwest of this installation was a cylindrical stone, usually identified as a roof roller but in this case it may have been used in conjunction with the stone vat, perhaps as an olive crushing stone. Remnants of a cobble surface were found in this room as well as a third installation consisting of a line of stones forming a trough possibly to support storejars and a large pithos. Several small finds from this room include a cylinder seal, a scarab of Amenhotep III and flakes of gold foil. These finds are still being analyzed. The cylinder seal (Fig. 4.9) is unique, consisting of a complex war scene headed by the Levantine god Reshef with a gazelle head drawing a large bow towards twelve enemies shown in varying degrees of collapse along with two kneeling bound captives. Talley Ornan, who is responsible for the publication of this object, interpreted the triumph of Reshef over his human rivals here as a generic depiction that aimed to invoke his assistance in ensuring a victory of Gezer over its enemies. South of this industrial room (Unit A) were two rooms (Unit B and C). These southern rooms were only partially preserved as they were on the edge of the site and eroded down the slope.

<sup>9</sup> In our previous excavation report (Ortiz and Wolff 2012) our stratigraphic chart contained a misprint. The LB stratum should reference HUC Stratum XIV and not Stratum XII.

<sup>10</sup> When this paper was first presented, this was the dating that was suggested. We want to thank the editors for allowing us to update the article to reflect the results of excavations completed during the editing of this volume.

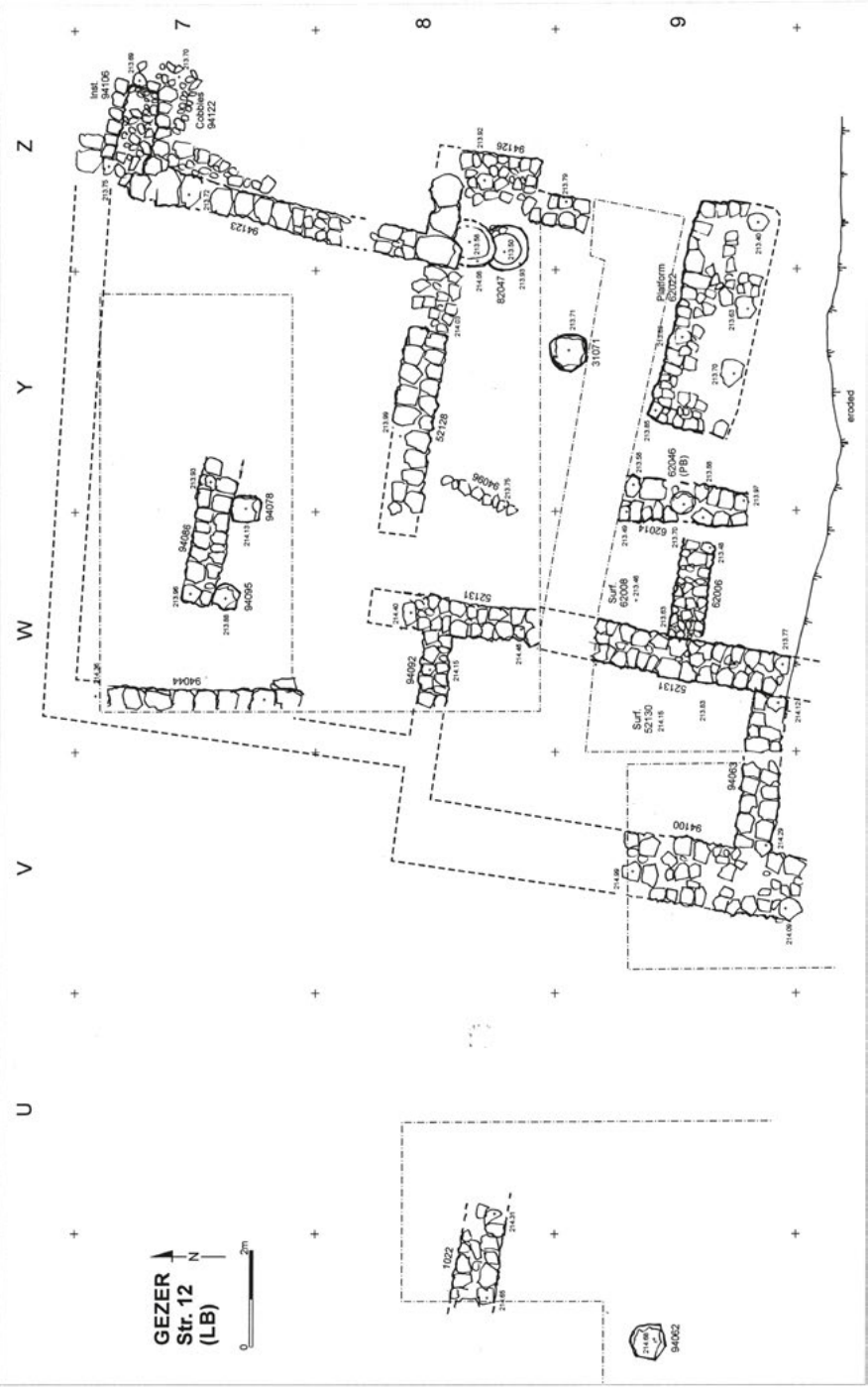


Fig. 4.5: Plan of Late Bronze Age building (Stratum 12).



**Fig. 4.6:** Aerial of Field E and proposed reconstruction of LB building.



**Fig. 4.7:** Room A Installations: Vat with Disc-shaped installation (looking SW).



**Fig. 4.8:** Room A: Cylindrical Roller found just south of disc-shaped installation, probably used in conjunction with the disc-shaped installation.



**Fig. 4.9:** Reshef seal in situ and cleaned in dighouse after excavation.



Unit D was situated to the north of this unit. It measures ca. 10 x 5 m and was at a slightly higher elevation as it sat higher up the slope of the western hill. About half the room was removed by later pitting activity. There are remnants of cobble surfaces as well as a central wall running east-west with engaged pillars serving as a support wall for the ceiling and a room divider wall. This room had two entrances from Units A-C from the south and an exterior entrance in the southeast corner into Unit E. Inside this room a bifacial rectangular faience plaque was found. It had a barrel-shaped top with a cartouche of Thutmose III flanked by a truth feather on each side. This is a typical 19th Dynasty product commemorating the name of the great pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty. Unit D led out to Unit E, which is probably a paved courtyard with bin. While this unit was also disturbed by a later pit and foundation deposit, several complete storage jars were found in its destruction debris. Unit F was situated to the west of Units A-C. This is a room that measures ca. 5 x 7 m. It has been only partially excavated, but based on our proposed wall lines, it probably belongs to a complex just west of this building as there is no connecting entrance. The nature of this building remains to be determined; it may have been a larger (elite?) residency (cf. Shai et al. 2011).

This building was destroyed in a fierce conflagration. In that conflagration were the remains of three individuals – two adults and one child. In Unit A, near the industrial installations, an adult was found lying on its back with its hands over its head. Next to it was a youth. Both of these bodies were badly burnt—most of the bones were decomposed (Fig. 4.10). The well-preserved remains of a third individual was found nearby in the southwest corner of Unit D. It was a female adult in a fetal position, probably shielding herself from the collapse of the building as several stones and mudbrick debris were found lying on top of her (Fig. 4.11). Based on the pottery, the stratigraphic context, and the glyptic material, the destruction of this building dates to the Late Bronze IIB (i.e. the 13th century BCE). Thus, this destruction should likely be associated with the Merneptah campaign.

Evidence was found for an earlier building beneath this building, probably belonging to the 14th century BCE city. In addition, there is a small rebuild of the LB building. This rebuild (Stratum 12A) reuses Unit D, as the southern entrances between Unit D and Unit A were filled in.

## Outer Wall

Previous Tandy publications have noted that the LB stratum is found on the edge of the slope with the southern extent eroded down the slope (Ortiz and Wolff 2012) (Fig. 4.12). The building was built above the MB glacis. Based on this data, we proposed that there was no LB city wall (at least in this area) and that the LB stratum did not reuse the MB fortifications. Sometime in the Iron I, a city wall was built directly on top of the LB destruction and occupation. An Iron II glacis was





**Fig. 4.10:** Room A: Remains of an adult and child (lower left).



**Fig. 4.11:** Room D: adult skeleton in semi-fetal position (west at top of photo).



**Fig. 4.12:** Late Bronze Age built on southern edge of city (looking eastward). Iron Age I Wall built on top of Late Bronze Age building (green). Note the sharp slope in the right of the photo. The LB building extended to the end of the slope with no possibility for an outer wall.

built over the Iron I wall and provides evidence for the extent of the slope during this period (Fig. 4.13). The LB Building is built directly on top of the MB glacis and was built on the edge of the southern slope of the tell. The excavations have now confirmed, or at least strongly supported the notion that the Outer Wall does not exist in Field W of the Tandy excavations and that it would be impossible for a wall to have served as a defense as it would have been lower/downslope than the occupation on the tell.

## Conclusion

While the analysis and excavation of the Late Bronze Stratum of the Tandy Excavations is still in its initial stage, some tentative results can be suggested. We appear to have a robust LB IIA (14th c. BCE) stratum (i.e. Stratum 13). Unfortunately, there are only two massive walls that were exposed in a probe. The plan and history of the 14th century BCE Amarna city can only be superficially reconstructed using Macalister's reports. The HUC excavations did uncover a courtyard structure on the





**Fig. 4.13:** Iron Age I Walls built above Late Bronze Age Building (Blue = Stratum 8 [IA IIA], Red = Strata 9/10 [IA I], Yellow = Stratum 12 [LB]). (looking east).

acropolis. Therefore, we have evidence that the Amarna period city of the 14th century BCE extended across the western hill of the ancient city, and perhaps even extended to the eastern hill.

The LB occupation of the LBIIB probably had the same occupational footprint. With the results of the last season of the Tandy excavations, we now have evidence of the occupation of the city on the southeastern slope of the western hill. The last season of the Tandy excavations focused on the almost complete excavation of a single patrician house with human skeletal remains. This structure has evidence of a violent destruction, probably corresponding to the claims made by pharaoh Merneptah as the subduer of Gezer.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> This was already postulated by the HUC excavations (HUC Stratum XV), but evidence was only found in one square in Field II.

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Amihai Mazar and Nava Panitz-Cohen

## Tel Batash in the Late Bronze Age – a retrospect

In this paper, we survey the Late Bronze Age remains at Tel Batash (Arabic Tell el-Batashi, identified with biblical Timnah) in light of recent developments in the research of the Shephelah and related regions.<sup>1</sup>

*Geographic Location.* Tel Batash is located in the wide alluvial Sorek Valley, close to the river bed, on an almost level plain (Figs. 5.1, 5.2). As such, it differs from all other sites of the Shephelah, which are located on hilltops. The valley is bounded on the north and south by low hills of the northwestern border of the Shephelah. The region west of the site can be defined as the inner coastal plain, while to the east, the wide and fertile Sorek Valley continues until the foot of the Judean Hills near Beth-Shemesh. The valley provided sufficient fertile land, available water sources and a convenient road leading from the coastal plain into the inner Shephelah and the Judean hills; these environmental conditions were ideal for the development of an ancient settlement, although the location in the low alluvial valley lacked strategic advantages.

The location of the site in a border zone between two geographical regions—the lower Shephelah and the coastal plain—recalls sites like Tel Miqne-Ekron and Tel Zayit and, to some extent, Gezer and Tell es-Safi, both located on westernmost ridges of the Shephelah, overlooking the inner coastal plain. The closest sites to Tel Batash with excavated Late Bronze remains are Gezer (8 km to the north), Beqo'a (5 km to the north), Tel Miqne-Ekron (5.7 km to the west), Beth-Shemesh (7 km to the southeast), Azekah (9 km to the south east) and Tell es-Safi (Gath), (11 km to the south).

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<sup>1</sup> The excavations at Tel Batash were directed by George L. Kelm and Amihai Mazar for 12 seasons, between the years 1977–1989, on behalf of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1977–1979) and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (1981–1989), in collaboration with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Final reports were published in three volumes: the architecture and stratigraphy (Mazar 1997); the finds from the first millennium BCE (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001) and the finds from the second millennium BCE (Panitz-Cohen and Mazar 2006). For a popular account, see Kelm and Mazar 1995.

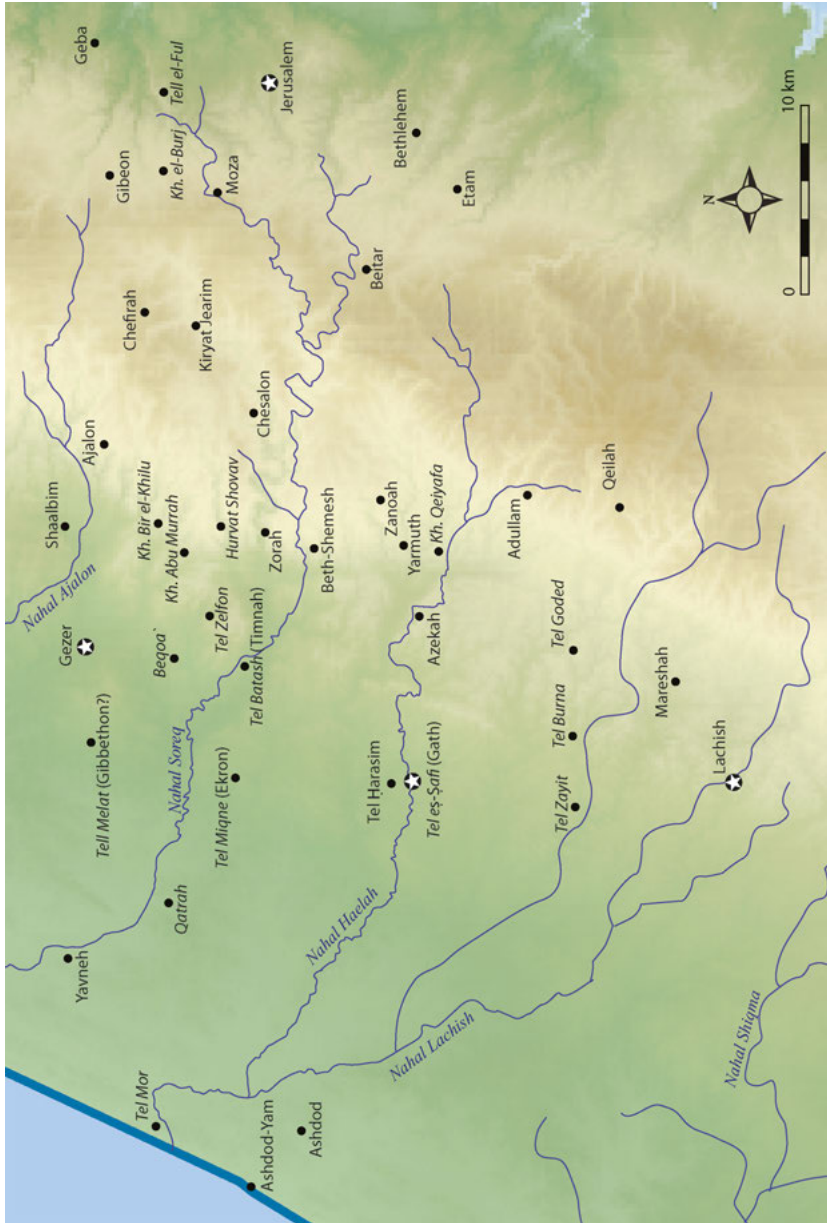


Fig. 5.1: Map of Bronze Age and Iron Age sites in the central and northern Shephelah Stars mark centers of Late Bronze city-states.

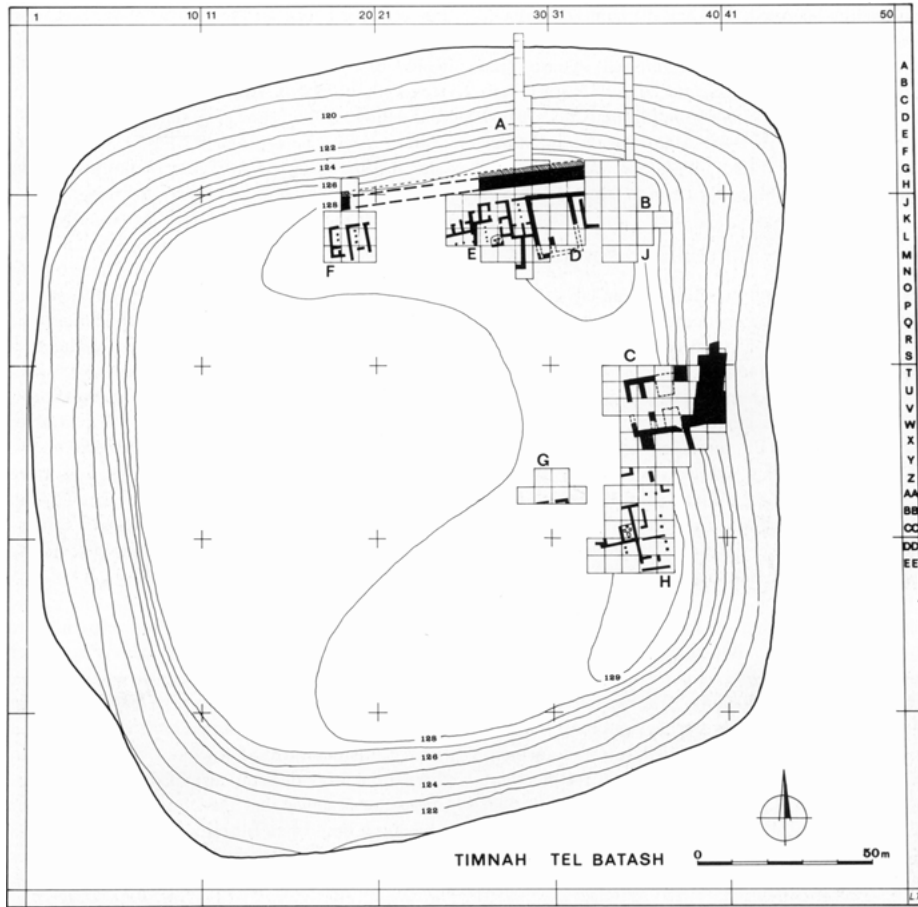




**Fig. 5.2:** Aerial view of Tel Batash and the Sorek Valley, looking east (Photo: Richard Cleve).

## **The foundation of the town: Middle Bronze Age: Strata XII–XI**

The excavation revealed that the site was founded during the Middle Bronze Age II (MBII) as a well-planned city; it is an exact square of  $200 \times 200$  m, 4 hectares in area at its bottom, with its sides, created by massive earth ramparts, oriented to the points of the compass (Fig. 5.3). In Area B, located at the northwestern corner of the site, the rampart leaned against a massive mudbrick tower or citadel. Two Middle Bronze IIB strata (XII–XI) related to this massive structure were observed. The area of the site inside the rampart was  $150 \times 150$  m (2.25 ha or 5.6 acres) and this was also the settled area during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.



**Fig. 5.3:** Topographic map and excavation areas at Tel Batash (walls shown are of the Iron Age II period).

## The Late Bronze Age levels: architecture and finds

In the Late Bronze Age (henceforth LB), Tel Batash maintained the same area as in the Middle Bronze Age; it was about one fourth of the area of Gezer, somewhat more than half the area of Tel Migne-Ekron and almost similar to that of Beth-She-mesh during the Late Bronze Age. The site can thus be defined as a small town. Its urban characteristics are evident in almost all occupation periods.

Five LB strata and an additional three sub-phases were excavated in Area B, in an area covering  $25 \times 25$  m (625 sq.m) at the most. Eight LB phases were also revealed in the narrow step trench in Area A, corresponding to the eight phases detected in Area B. The few LB remains in Area C perhaps can be identified as the entrance to the

Table 5.1: Comparative stratigraphy at Tel Batash and other major sites in the Shephelah in the second millennium BCE<sup>2</sup>.

Stratum	Period	Main Building	Suggested date (centuries BCE)	Gezer*	Tel Mique/Ekron	Beth-Shemesh (Grant)	Beth-Shemesh (Bunimovitz and Lederman)	Lachish
V	Iron IB	313	Late 12th-11th	XII-IX	V-V	III	5-7	
VIA	LBIB/iron IA?	442	Late 13th-early 12th(?)	XIII	VII	?		VI (?)
				XIV				
VIB	LBIB	476	13th	XV	VIIIA	IVa	8	VII
	Hiatus?				VIIIB			Fosse Temple III
VIIA	LBIIA	315	Late 15th-early 14th	XVI	IX		9 "palace"	Fosse Temple II
VIIIB				XVII	X			
VIII	LBIB/IIA	475	Second half of 15th					
IXA	LBIB	715	First half of 15th(?)	[Gap?]		IVb	10?	Fosse Temple I
IXB								
X	LBIA		Second half of 16th					
XI	MBIB-C (MBII)		17th-mid 16th	XVIII	XI	V		
				XIX				
XII	MBIB (MBII)		Mid 18th(?)—early 17th	XX				
				XXI				

\* Based on Dever 1986: 8-9

2 The table follows Panitz-Cohen and Mazar 2006: XIV and differs somewhat from the table published in Mazar 1997: XIV.

city. The dense stratigraphy recovered at Tel Batash is almost unparalleled at other LB sites in southern Canaan.

Significantly, three of the five LB strata in Area B (Strata IXA, VIII and VII) ended in a severe conflagration and some evidence of destruction by fire was also detected in Strata X and VIB. These violent destructions, particularly those of Strata IXA, VIII and VII, left behind exceptional architectural remains of opulent dwellings, containing an abundance of restorable pottery vessels and other artifacts, which provide one of the best anchors for the typological development of material culture of the LB in southern Canaan (Figs. 5.20A–B summarize the typology and duration of each type). In contrast, the finds from Strata X and VI are more limited in scope. Stratum X of the LBIA period was excavated in a rather small area which was mostly an open area, and the two phases of Stratum VI were excavated in limited areas and greatly suffered from erosion.

The following is a brief summary of the main architectural features and finds from each stratum, based on the final report (Mazar 1997; Panitz-Cohen and Mazar 2006).

## Stratum X

Only few architectural remains of this stratum were exposed on top of the ruined MB II mudbrick citadel or tower (Fig. 5.4). They include several segments of stone wall foundations on the eastern and northern sides of the excavated area (only one face of which was exposed), a narrow partition wall flanked on the north and south by cobblestone floors, a circular installation which might have been a pillar base, an oven and several pits. These remains appear to belong to courtyards of a substantial building (720). It is noteworthy that no fortifications were identified in this stratum nor, in fact, in any of the subsequent LB occupation levels. In the southern part of the excavated area, a reddish burnt layer and black ash are evidence for a violent destruction of this phase.

The pottery assemblage from Stratum X contained 23 complete or almost-complete restored vessels and a collection of 232 pottery sherds, all attributed to the very beginning of LB, a phase denoted here LBIA. Shapes that show a distinct continuity from MB (e.g., pithoi, which subsequently disappear in the LB, some with vertical bands painted in white) are accompanied by innovations in many of the ceramic types and fabrics, which launch the well-known LB ceramic sequence (e.g., carinated cooking pots with everted triangular rims) (Panitz-Cohen and Mazar 2006: Pls. 9–15). Noteworthy are two vessels painted in black and red, assigned to the so-called Cypriot Bichrome group; one of these was an import from Cyprus. Stratum X contexts yielded 25 fragments of Cypriot imported pottery, represented by Monochrome (32%), Base Ring (32%) and White Slip (32%); two sherds of a single bowl were defined as White Slip I. A single scarab from this period was defined by Brandl (2006: 214–215) as a local Canaanite MBII design-scarab.

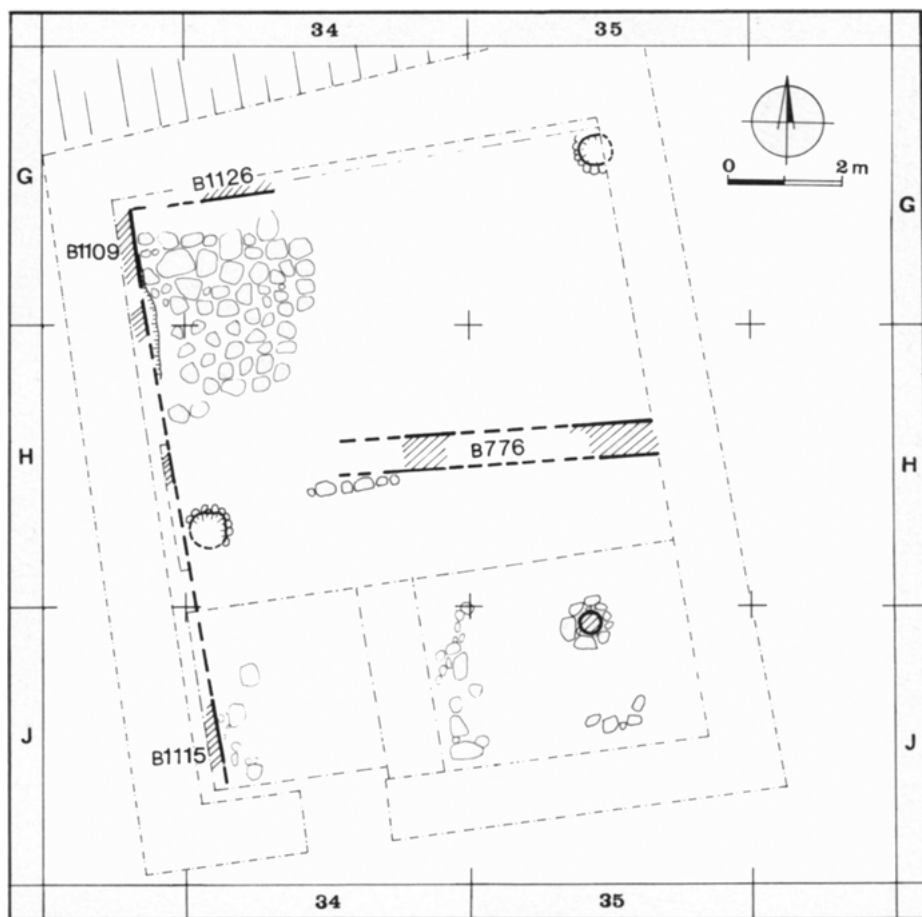


Fig. 5.4: Plan of Area B, Stratum X.

## Stratum IX

Two phases of a substantial building (Building 715) with stone foundations, 1.0–1.5 m wide, were exposed, although the building was only partially excavated. In the earlier phase (IXB), it included a large space (inner dimension  $9 \times 10.9$  m) and two rooms to its south ( $2.1 \times 3.1$  m and  $2.35 \times 4.7$  m, inner dimensions). In the larger space, eight stone bases for wooden posts were recovered, arranged in two perpendicular lines. The southern part of this space had a stone floor. In the later phase IXA (Fig. 5.5), the western wall of the building was modified and in the large space, the wooden posts were replaced by two substantial walls, which created a new room with a rectangular corner installation (a bin?).

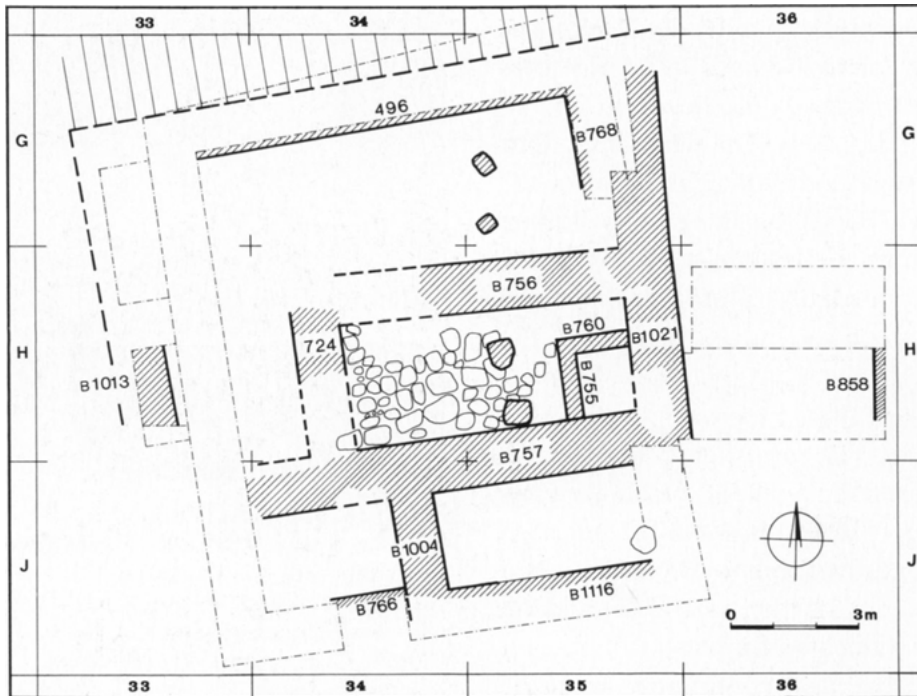


Fig. 5.5: Plan of Area B, Stratum IXA.

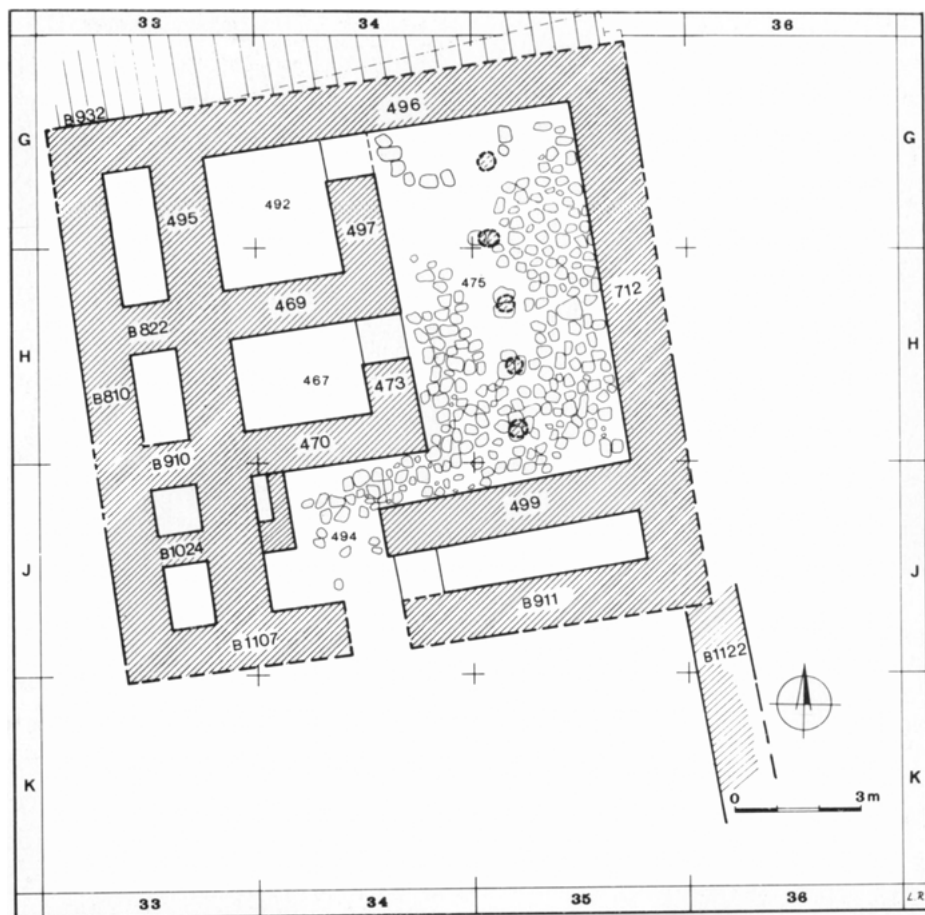
The southern rooms remained unchanged, except for a new floor constructed in one of them. As in the previous stratum, no fortifications were identified, while the northern wall of the building served as the outer defense line of the town as well. The building was destroyed in a heavy fire, creating a 0.4 m-thick destruction layer with burnt red brick debris with much ash and burnt wood; a large number of restorable vessels and other finds were recovered in this debris layer.

The pottery from both phases of Stratum IX includes 17 complete or almost-complete restored vessels and 267 sherds. The types are firmly entrenched in the LB tradition; all vestiges of MB types have disappeared. The component of Cypriot imports increased, with some 45 vessels represented amongst the sherds, including 6.8% Monochrome, 59% Base Ring (I and mostly II) and 34% White Slip II. A 'design-scarab' and a scarab sealing on a clay stopper were defined as late MB local Canaanite production. A scarab sealing on a bulla showing a lion and a lotus flower was defined as an early 18th Dynasty Egyptian product (Brandl 2006: 214–218). Other finds from this building included a bronze arrowhead, a bronze earring and a glass bead.

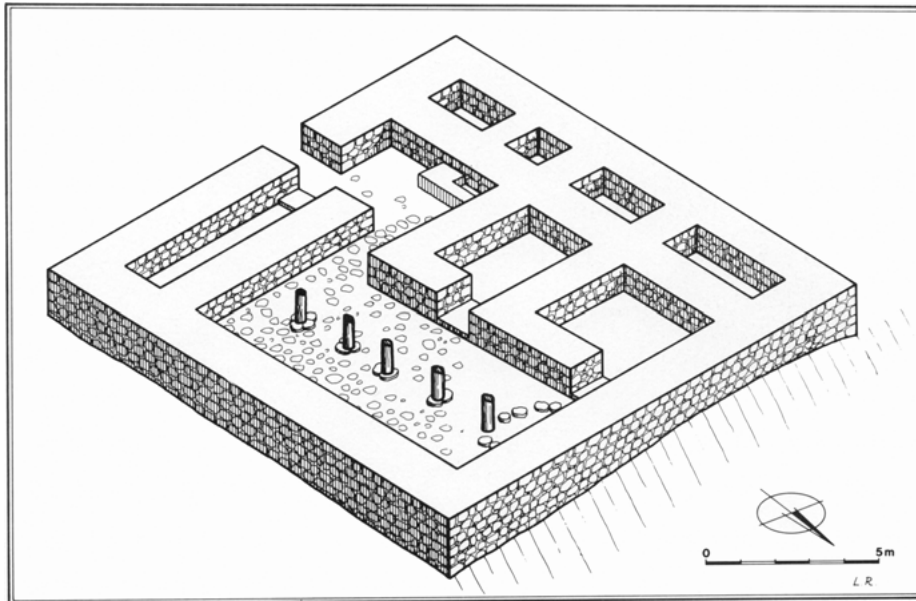
## Stratum VIII

Four pits cut through the debris layer of Stratum IX and sealed by Stratum VIII construction possibly mark a short period of activity between Strata IX and VIII, perhaps related to the preparations for construction of the Stratum VIII building.

An unusual substantial building (475) was founded in Stratum VIII of the 15th century BCE (Figs. 5.6, 5.7). The building was exposed in its entirety: its outer dimensions are  $13.1 \times 13.7$  m and its floor space is 80.8 sq m. Its outer walls on the north and east and an inner wall on the west were constructed directly above walls of Stratum IX, indicating some architectural continuity between these two strata. The inner plan included an entrance chamber, from which a bent-axis entrance led to the main hall and another entrance to a narrow corridor on the east ( $1.2 \times 5.8$  m).



**Fig. 5.6:** Plan of Area B, Stratum VIII.



**Fig. 5.7:** Isometric view of Building 475, Area B (drawing: Leen Ritmeyer).

which might have served a staircase to a second floor. The main hall ( $4.6 \times 8.9$ , 41 sq m) was a large roofed space, with a stone floor and five stone pillar bases along its central axis that had supported wooden posts. To the west of this hall were two square rooms with floor spaces of 8.64 and 6.6 sq m. A massive wall separated these rooms and the entrance chamber from a western wing which included four narrow chambers with a total floor space of 8.3 sq m. This wing was enclosed on the east by another massive wall; no entrances to the narrow chambers were found and thus, they possibly were reached from an upper floor and served for storage. The thickness of the walls hints at the existence of a second floor, thus doubling the floor space to ca. 160 sq m. The building was found burnt, with a heavy mud-brick collapse and broken vessels and other objects on its floor.

Outside the building, there probably was an open courtyard, yet only a small part of it was excavated. This open space was enclosed on the east by a massive wall which abuts the building, thus creating a continuous wall along the edge of the mound. The outer walls of the houses and extension walls like the one mentioned here served as the only defense of the city, as there was no actual city wall.

*The Finds.* An exceptionally rich assemblage of pottery and other artifacts were recovered from Building 475. The published pottery plates include 152 complete or almost-complete local vessels. The local ceramic assemblage included 39 bowls, 28 cooking pots, 40 storage jars, 25 jugs and nine other vessels, such as



kraters, chalices, funnels and lamps. Typologically, the vessels continue the shapes from Stratum IX, while certain types and features typical of LBIB–IIA (e.g., biconical jugs, shoulder handles, painting in red and black) become more common. Most of the pottery was found in the two small rooms west of the main hall, which perhaps served for storage (for distribution maps and tables, see Panitz-Cohen 2006: 176–182). This is one of the largest assemblages of pottery from the LBI/LBIIA transition in the southern Levant. The number of vessels found in this building appears to exceed the needs of an average family and this must be taken into consideration when defining the function of this building (see below). Notable are several storage jars painted in black and red. On one of these, a frieze on the upper part of the body shows a procession of two human beings and various animals in a crude style (Fig. 5.8). Other vessels (bowls, biconical jars) are occasionally painted in red bands and metopes, in typical Canaanite style. The imported Cypriot pottery from the building and the nearby courtyard included four complete or almost-complete vessels and another 47 sherds, representing BR II (58.8%), White Slip II (26%) and White Shaved (11%) (for details of distribution and typology, see Steel 2006: 152, Table 40). A sherd of a rare Mycenaean beaked jug is one of the earliest Mycenaean imports in the country. An Egyptian “cow-roid” seal dated to the 15th century BCE came from this building (Brandl 2006:

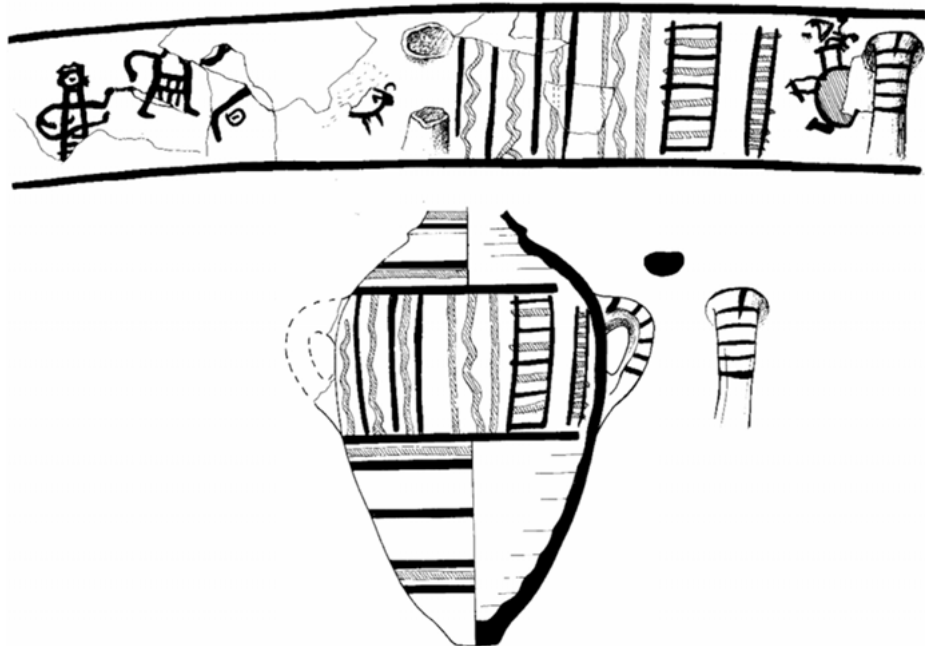


Fig. 5.8: A jar from Stratum VIII with a painted frieze.

218–219). Only few additional finds were revealed in this building, among them two bronze arrowheads.

## Stratum VII

In Stratum VII of the first half of the 14th century BCE, a new building (315) was constructed directly above the ruined Building 475 of the previous stratum (Figs. 5.9, 5.10). The building is rectangular,  $11.1 \times 13.5$  m in size, with a floor space of 92.1 sq m. The eastern, northern and southern walls of the earlier building were rebuilt, but the new building was narrower. Its external western wall was a rebuild of the

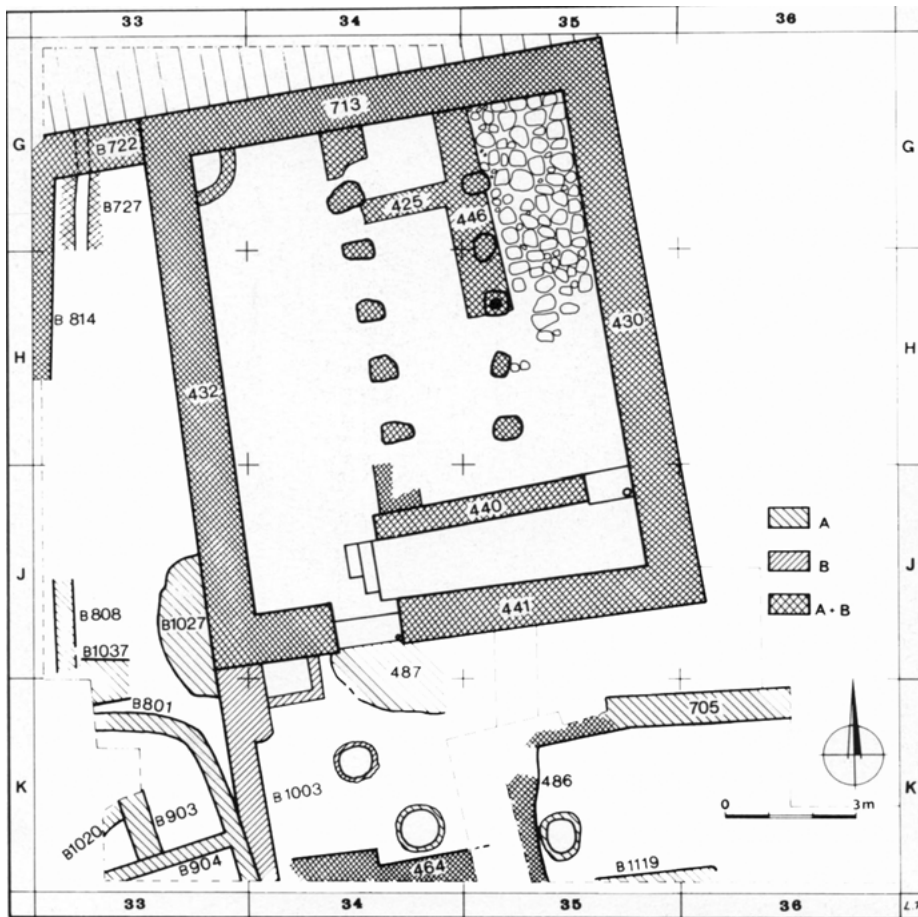
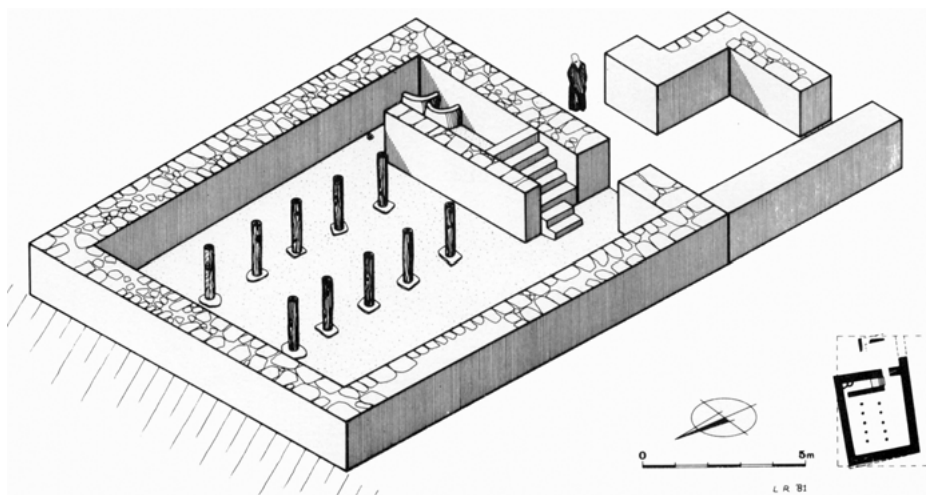


Fig. 5.9: Plan of Area B, Stratum VII.



**Fig. 5.10:** Isometric view of Building 315, Area B, Stratum VII (drawing: Leen Ritmeyer).

northeastern inner wall in Building 475, so that the area of the small western chambers of the latter was excluded from the new building and that area became part of a street. The inner plan of the new building was simpler than its predecessor: the main entrance led to a large rectangular space divided by two rows of five stone pillar bases into a central space and two aisles. The aisles were paved with stones covered by a layer of white lime. The spaces between some of these pillar bases were enclosed by narrow partitions, creating storage niches. A narrow wall created a small chamber at the northern part of the central space; this might be a secondary feature in the building. A staircase leading to a second floor was located in a narrow corridor at the southeastern part of the building, as was the case in the former building. Two stone steps were preserved in this corridor and they probably continued as wooden steps. An opening at the northeastern corner of the corridor enabled entrance from the main hall to the space below the steps, which was used as a storage area with two bins and jars full of grain. As evidenced by the nature of the collapse and destruction debris, it is almost certain that the main living rooms had been located on the second floor.

The building was destroyed by a fierce fire that resulted in a huge collapse; in the southern part, this destruction layer was up to 2 m deep and contained burnt beams, fallen bricks, fragments of plaster floor and many artifacts fallen from the second floor. In the main entrance, a skeleton of a 20–25 year-old male was found in the fallen debris, with two arrowheads close by, evidence for a violent destruction caused by human attack. The well-preserved skull was defined as being of typical Mediterranean stock (Arensburg 2006: 313–314).

To the south of Building 315 was a small courtyard enclosed on the west by a wall and on the south by the outer walls of an unexcavated adjacent building. Two stratigraphic phases were observed in this courtyard and in the partially excavated structures to its south (Building 481). In the earlier phase (VIIB), the courtyard, 4.7 × at least 11.0 m, ca 52 sq m, was enclosed on the west by a wall which continued the western wall of Building 315 and on the south, by a wall of an unexcavated building. The courtyard contained a rectangular bin, two ovens and a raised oval installation with a stone foundation and thick plaster floor which could have been used as a domestic wine press. West of Building 315 was a north–south street, enclosed on the west by an outer wall of yet another adjacent, unexcavated building. At the northern edge of the mound, the street was enclosed by a wall with a drainage canal. Thus, the outer northern wall of Building 315 and the closure wall of the street created a continuous defense line along the edge of the mound, on top of the erstwhile MBII rampart.

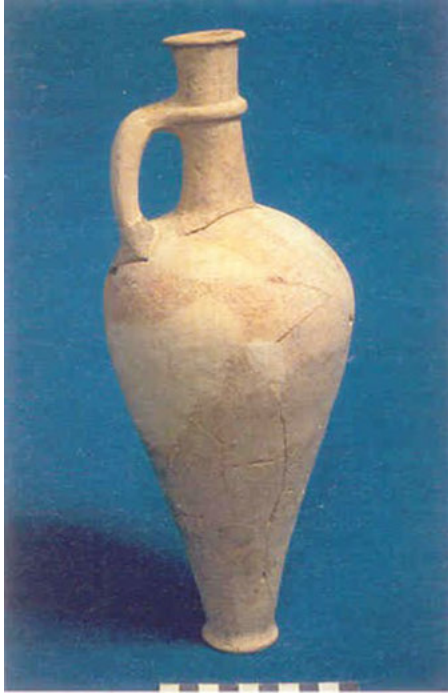
In the second phase (VIIA), the southern part of the courtyard was redesigned. Its western wall went out of use, a new floor was constructed with a new oven and new structures were built in the southeastern and southwestern corner; the former cancelled the plastered installation and the latter blocked the street of the former phase. It seems that Building 315 continued to be in use without change in this phase, since the two structures of Phase VIIA in the southern part of the area were destroyed by the same fierce fire that devoured the building itself.

*The Finds.* Rich finds were recovered in the destruction layer, both on the floor surfaces and in the burnt destruction debris high above the floors; the finds in these higher levels seem to have fallen from the collapsed second floor, which was probably the living quarters. The pottery assemblage is smaller than that of Building 475, but richer and more varied: 85 complete or nearly complete pottery vessels were restored, including 26 bowls, six kraters, two chalices, one goblet, 12 cooking pots, 15 storage jars, 13 jugs, three juglets, three biconical vessels, two funnels, one stand and one lamp (for distribution maps and tables, see Panitz-Cohen 2006: 183–190). The ceramic shapes and fabrics continue those of the previous stratum, with only minor differences, such as a decrease in the amount of carinated bowls and the virtual disappearance of shoulder handles on jugs. This continuity, despite the violent destruction of the previous Stratum VIII building, might be an indication that the same population returned to rebuild, with no hiatus between the occupations. The imported pottery included a complete Mycenaean LHIIIA2 alabastron (FS94) (Fig. 5.11) and a handle of a piriform jar. Aside from the sherd of a beaked jug in Stratum VIII, these are the only Mycenaean pottery items found in the excavation. Six complete Cypriot vessels were recovered: a large BR II jug (“bilbil”), a BR II juglet, a BR II lentoid flask, an intact BR II bull-shaped rhyton, a White Shaved juglet and a rare example of White Shaved “spindle bottle” (Fig. 5.12). Fifty additional Cypriot sherds were recovered in the building and its vicinity, mainly BR II (61%), White Slip II hemispherical bowls (“milk bowls”) (20.4%) and White Shaved juglets (18.5%) (Steel 2006: 156–172).



**Fig. 5.11:** Mycenaean IIIA2 alabastron from Stratum VII.

The glyptic finds from Building 315 included a scarab of Amenhotep III, a cow-roid with the name of his spouse, Tiye, and an amulet scaraboid showing the god Ptah; all three were imported from Egypt (Brandl 2006). An important group of cylinder seals was recovered: five from Building 315 itself and one from an adjacent building to the south. These seals nicely reflect the glyptic styles in LB Canaan: two belong to the Mitannian Common Style (Fig. 5.13), two are in local Canaanite styles, and one in a local Levantine style which perhaps originated in Ugarit (Mazar 2006a). The sixth seal is a rare example of the “Cypriot Derivative Style”, with two or three signs in the Cypro-Minoan script between figures of human beings (“Mistress of Animals”), a caprid and a sacred tree (Smith 2006) (Fig. 5.14). An impressive total of 17 bronze objects were found in this building, including a pair of cymbals, a chisel, a drill point and two bronze sheet-figurines depicting a schematic female shape, two socketed spear heads, one dagger and eight arrowheads. Sixty beads probably belonging to the same necklace were found in a high level of the destruction debris in the main space of the building, close to four of the cylinder seals;



**Fig. 5.12:** Cypriot White Shaved “spindle bottle” from Stratum VII.



**Fig. 5.13:** Mitannian “Common Style” cylinder seal from Stratum VII.

these probably fell from a second floor. 40 of these beads were made of glass (or probably glass), others were made of faience and various stones (Yahalom-Mack 2006b: 263–266). The small exposed part of the building to the south (Building 481) yielded two arrowheads and an additional sheet figurine (Yahalom-Mack 2006a).



**Fig. 5.14:** Cypriot cylinder seal with Cypro-Minoan signs from Stratum VII.

An intact ceramic plaque figurine was found in the street west of Building 315. It shows a naked goddess with a Hathor headdress, decorated with a necklace bracelets and anklets and holding a lotus flower with a long stem in each hand. Her face remained blank (Fig. 5.15). Two fragments of figurines made from an identical mold are in the Reifenberg collection (now in the Israel Museum); in one of them, facial details were added by incisions. The item from Tel Batash is one of the finest examples of such Canaanite clay figurines depicting naked goddesses (Mazar 2006b: 251–252).



**Fig. 5.15:** Plaque figurine from Stratum VII.

## Stratum VIA-B

This stratum was poorly preserved due to erosion in much of the central and eastern parts of Area B. It marks the end of the series of the superimposed buildings of Strata X–VII. In this stratum, the arrangement where the outer walls of the buildings served as a defensive line no longer existed. In the earlier phase (VIB, Fig. 5.16), the corner of an elongated building was located in the northwestern part of Area B, on top of the former street of Stratum VII; a stone floor was found to its east, cut by the erosion line. In the southeastern corner of Area B, a corner of a massive building (476) was found, replacing the poorer building of Stratum VIIA in this area. Floor surfaces of an open area were uncovered west of this building, with a large stone trough attached to it. Building 476 ended in fire, as evidenced by a thin layer of reddish-fired bricks and ash. Finds from Stratum VIB included an Egyptian bifacial glazed steatite plaque showing a procession of three gods and a pharaoh on one side and, on the other side, a royal sphinx, along with a design showing a sistrum of Hathor and two *uraei* (probably an heirloom from the 15th century BCE), a scarab with the prenomen of Thutmose III (probably a 19th Dynasty product; Brandl 2006: 223–224), a bronze dagger and a bronze arrowhead. All these finds came from the open space west of Building 476 (the scarab perhaps originated from Stratum VIA).

In Stratum VIA, the northwestern structure (of which only a corner of two walls was preserved) probably continued in use (Fig. 5.17). In the southeastern part of Area B, a new building (472) replaced Building 476 (Fig. 5.18). Its northern and eastern parts were poorly preserved; the preserved parts are  $9.8 \times$  at least  $8.5$  m, with 1 m-wide stone foundations. It may be reconstructed as a square building,  $9.8 \times 9.8$  m, with an interior plan including at least five rooms, one of them with a stone floor. No traces of destruction were found in this building. In fact, this building was reused in Stratum V of the Iron Age I, when a new floor was laid and architectural changes occurred.

The finds from Stratum VIA comprised only a few pottery vessels and a selection of sherds, including a few Cypriot sherds. This pottery fits a 13th century BCE date. Although separated by a (partial?) destruction, the pottery of both phases of Stratum VI is generally similar and differs from that of the previous occupation of Stratum VII in several ways. For example, carinated bowls disappeared and the typical LB storage jar was almost entirely absent, replaced by a type with a narrower body and four handles; Cypriot imports greatly decline and are mostly fragmentary, found mainly in the earlier phase, VIB; these include some very late types of White Slip painted bowls. It is interesting that for the first time in the LB sequence, pottery from outside the Shephelah region is noted, made of loess with fine quartz that originated in the southern coastal plain.



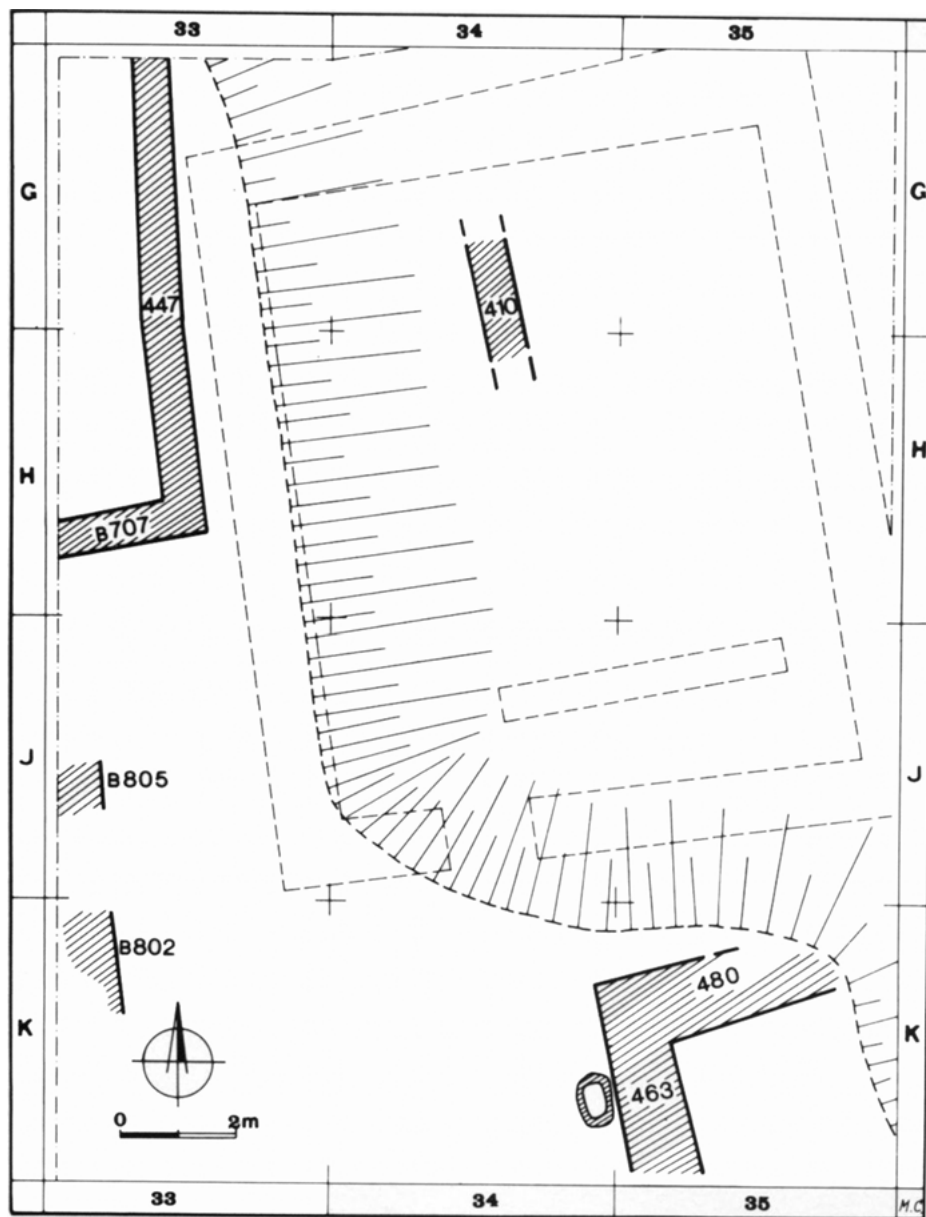


Fig. 5.16: Plan of Area B, Stratum VIB.

Special finds in Stratum VIA included a fragment of a plaque figurine (Mazar 2006b: 252–253) and a stone weight, weighing exactly one Egyptian *dbn* (89.45 gr) (Kletter 2006: 275).

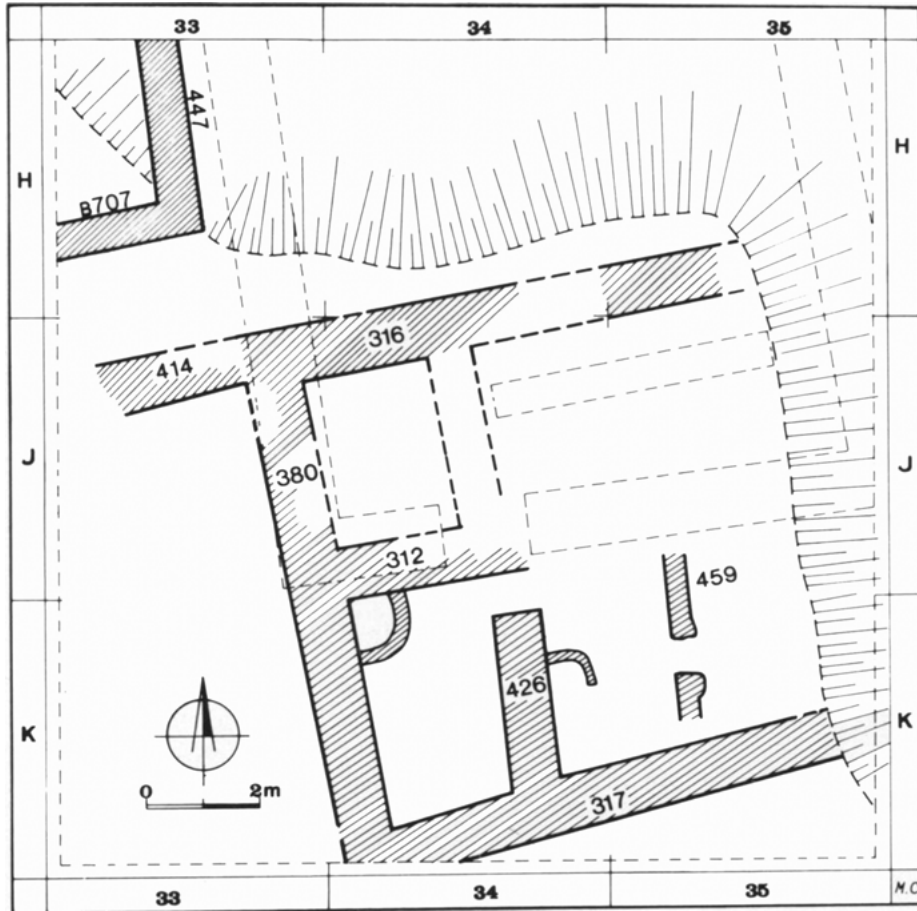


Fig. 5.17: Plan of Area B, Stratum VIA.

## Area A stratigraphic sequence

Area A was a 5 m-wide step-trench along the northern slope of the mound, west of Area B. Eight building phases were attributed to the LB, corresponding with Strata IX–VI in Area B. Each of these phases was excavated on a small scale (Mazar 1997: 21–30). The earliest, corresponding with Stratum IX, included a corner of a massive building and a narrow wall, perhaps intended to block a gap between two adjacent buildings along the perimeter of the mound. A massive wall, 1 m wide, constructed along the perimeter of the mound, served as the outer wall of a substantial building. South of this wall and related to it are five building phases,



**Fig. 5.18:** Building 442, Stratum VIA, looking north (the stone floor on the right belongs to Stratum V when the building was reused).

including various floor surfaces and installations all, corresponding with Strata VIII and VII. The fourth phase from the bottom was destroyed in a conflagration, perhaps corresponding with the violent end of Stratum VII in Area B; the final phase was poorly preserved.

## Area C: possible gate passage

The LB remains in Area C were revealed in a limited exposure, below the Iron Age II city gates and an Iron I massive building (Mazar 1997:97–98). The main feature here was a 4.5 m-wide east–west street with a drainage channel along its side, located at the same location as the gate passage of the Iron II city. The street was bounded on both its southern and northern sides by massive brick walls with stone foundations, one of them exposed along 6 m. They perhaps were the outer walls of massive buildings flanking the street or of a gate structure. In either case, the street must have served as the main entrance to the city. Few additional LB walls were located close the edge of the mound in this area. A 1.5-m wide wall built of large stones on the slope of the mound (below the Iron II ramp leading to the city gate of this period), at an angle to the slope, may have been a retaining wall for an earthen ramp that led to the city from the north along the slope, as was the case in the Iron II. Yet, the date of this wall – either LB or Iron I – remained unclear. These building remains were tentatively attributed to the last LB city (Stratum VI), but perhaps were founded earlier in this period.

## Additional finds: non-organic and organic

In addition to the finds mentioned above, all the LB strata yielded some 90 flint tools, mainly geometric sickle blades (Rosen 2006). Various grinding stones were found, as well as spindle whorls, but no loom weights. The lack of loom weights should be noted, as they are missing at other LB sites as well, perhaps due to the use of a horizontal loom during this period (Yasur-Landau 2007). Several stones were suspected to be weights, yet almost no examples of formal stone weights were found, except the single *dbn* weight mentioned above (Kletter 2006).

Studies of wood remains from the LB levels revealed four types of trees: oak, pistachio and olive were found in almost equal amounts, along with one example of *Tamarix aphylla* (Athel tree) (Liphshitz 2006). Large quantities of grain were found; the most common in Strata VIII and VII was the subspecies *Triticum parvicoccum*; almost 168,000 seeds of this type were counted from the jars in the storage area below the staircase in Building 315 of Stratum VII. This is a small-size grain with a deep crease, which could have had served as a self-defense mechanism against the granary weevil, the pest beetle that has been most destructive for stored cereals from the Early Neolithic period onwards. The main pulse found in the Stratum VII was *trigonella foenum-graecum* (fenugreek or *Hilba*) and in Stratum VIII, *Lathyrus sect. Cicercula*. Fifteen species of weeds were identified, all of them of types known today in the Shephelah (Kislev, Melamed and Langsmam 2006: 295). Among the shells, few specimens of *Conus* and Mother of Pearl from Stratum VII may have arrived from the Red Sea, and two examples of molluscs from Stratum VI came from the Red Sea and the Nile respectively. Other molluscs are of Mediterranean or local fresh-water sources (Bar Yosef Mayer 2006). A large amount of faunal remains was collected during the excavation, yet no final report was submitted. Preliminary reports by the late Brian Hesse mention 5% pig bones in the LB levels. Yet, this material requires further research in the future.<sup>3</sup>

## Radiometric dates and some chronological queries

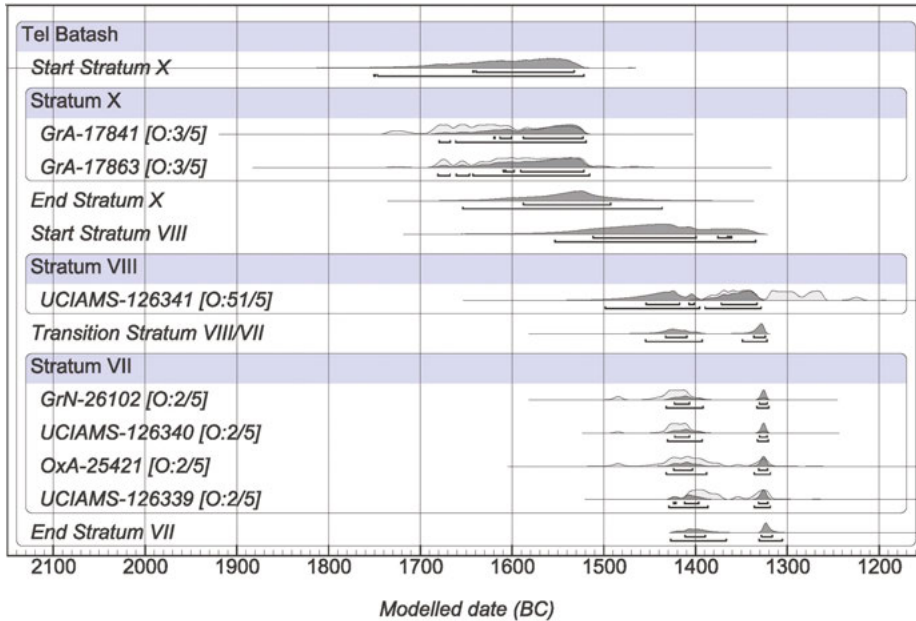
Seven radiocarbon dates from the second millennium BCE strata at Tel Batash were measured: two from Stratum X, one from Stratum VIII and four from Stratum VII. Table 5.2 presents the data and results and Fig. 5.19 show a mutiplot of these

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<sup>3</sup> The bones, after being sorted previously by Brian Hesse, arrived at the department of archaeology, University of Haifa, where they await further research.

Table 5.2: Radiocarbon dates from Strata X, VIII and VII.

Stratum	Locus	sample	Lab No.	<sup>14</sup> C date Year BP	δ13C	1σ	2 σ
X	763	Very fine charred organic matter	GrA-17,863	3305±40	-25.45	1626-1529 (68.2%)	1684-1501 (95.4%)
			GrA-19,841	3340±40	-21.36	1687-1607 (56.1%) 1582-1560 (12.1%)	1739-1714 (5.5%) 1696-1521 (89.9%)
			Average Stratum X	3323±29		1641-1600 (33.0%) 1586-1534 (35.2%)	1686-1527 (95.4%)
VIII	492	Charred grain	UCIAMS- 126,341	3050±20	-22.6	1380-1343 (32.0%) 1306-1266 (36.2%)	1396-1257 (91.2%) 1251-1231 (4.2%)
			GrN-26,102	3150±20	-22.92	1443-1410 (68.2%)	1496-1474 (7.7%) 1461-1392 (86.2%) 1334-1326 (1.5%)
VII	437	Charred grain inside jar	UCIAMS- 126,339	3105±20	-21.9	1415-1385 (36.4%) 1340-1311 (31.8%)	1429-1371 (50.4%) 1359-1301 (45.0%)
			UCIAMS- 126,340	3145±15	-22.3	1435-1411 (68.2%)	1452-1394 (95.4%)
			OxA-25,421	3131±31	-20.8	1441-1388 (54.2%) 1339-1319 (13.0%)	1495-1476 (4.0%) 1460-1371 (66.0%) 1359-1300 (25.3%)
		Average Stratum VII		3135±10		1429-1410 (68.2%)	1437-1394 (95.4%)



**Fig. 5.19:** Multiplot of radiocarbon dates from Tel Batash, Strata X, VIII, VII (prepared by Felix Höflmayer).

dates.<sup>4</sup> The average of the two dates from Stratum X is in the range 1641–1600 (1σ) or 1686–1527 (2σ). The 1σ date is in the range of late MBII (MBIII), prior to the beginning of the 18th Dynasty, while the 2σ date brings us close to the beginning of the 18th Dynasty and the transition to the LB. This early date for the assemblage which included Cypriot White Slip I ware is notable. The single date from Stratum VIII is an outlier, since it is later than the dates from Stratum VII. The average calibrated dates of the four dates from Stratum VII are 1429–1410 in 1σ and 1437–1394 in 2σ. However, it should be recalled that two of the four individual determinations cover most of the 14th century BCE, while the two others are before the end of the 15th century BCE. This must raise the question to what extent can the rich assemblage from Stratum VII be correlated with the Amarna period, or did the destruction of this level occur during the reign of Amenhotep III? The finds of a

<sup>4</sup> The two dates from Stratum X and one from Stratum VII were measured at Groningen University and published in Bruins, Van der Plicht and Mazar 2006: 320–321. The single date from Stratum VIII and three additional dates from Stratum VII Building 315 were measured in 2014 at the initiative of Felix Höflmayer from the Austrian Academy of Science in Oxford and the University of California, Irvine laboratories. Our thanks to Felix Höflmayer for providing the data and interpretation.

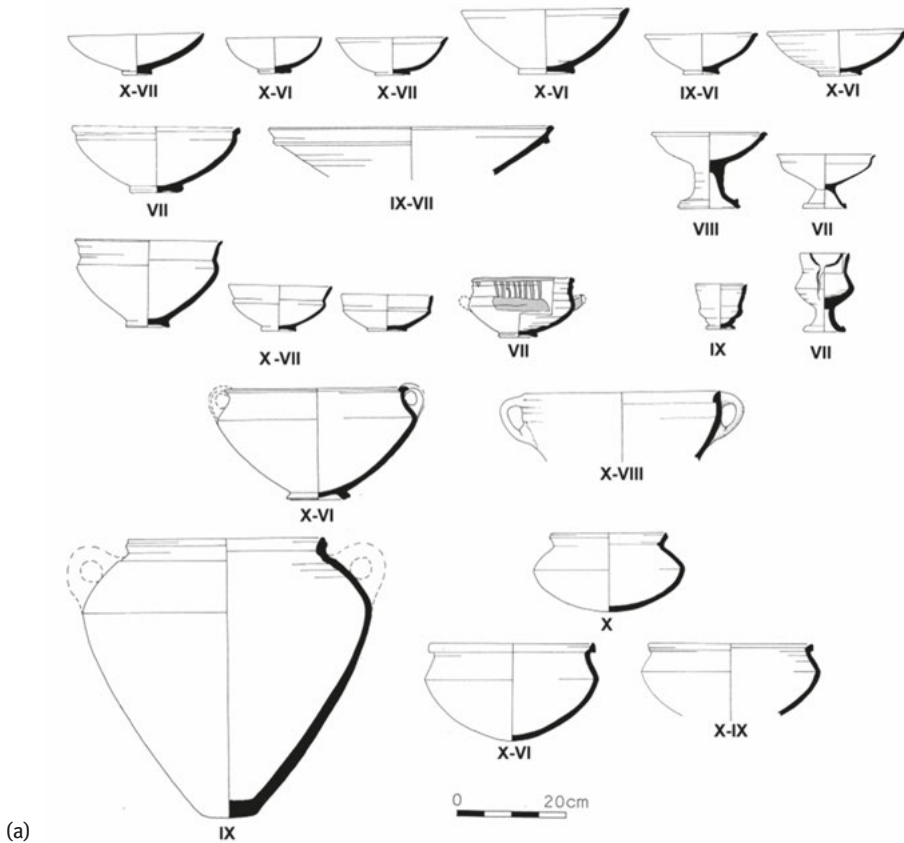
scarab of Amenhotep III and a scaraboid with the name of Tiye in the same building, as well as the single LH IIIA2 vessel, may point to the latter possibility. Amenhotep III is dated to 1391–1353 by Kitchen (2000: 49, accepted also by Kraus 2007: 187); these dates would be somewhat later than the average of the Bayesian model of the dates from Tel Batash. To what extent can LH IIIA2 be dated earlier than Amenhotep III or to his earliest years? This question is beyond the scope of the present paper; we should only refer to a recent discussion of the subject in light of the discovery of a commemorative scarab of Amenhotep III at Beth-Shemesh, together with two Late Minoan IIIA1 cups (Brandl, Bunimovitz and Lederman 2014, in particular pp. 24–25). In the authors view, the commemorative scarab from Beth-Shemesh belongs to the last decade of Amenhotep III, and this date provides correlation with LM IIIA1 which corresponds to LH IIIA1 and thus, earlier than our Mycenaean alabaster, defined as LH IIIA2. Providing that the Minoan vessels are not heirlooms (even of a few decades), this conclusion may contradict the average date and the Bayesian results from Tel Batash, which appear to show that Stratum VII (with the LH IIIA2 vessel) was destroyed ca. 1400. In any case, these dates precede Amenhotep III according to both chronologies cited above.<sup>5</sup> As said, we are not confident about the results of the Bayesian model, and Stratum VII could have been destroyed, in our view, sometime during the first half of the 14th century BCE.

## Historical and chronological synthesis

It should be recalled that a maximum area of ca. 300 m<sup>2</sup> (in Stratum VII) out of ca. 25,000 sq m of the entire built-up LB town was excavated, and even less of the previous strata; this is a very small sample of only 1.2% of the entire site and thus, we should be careful with deductions concerning the entire town. Yet, this sample provides an important window into the stratigraphic sequence, with a succession of three main destruction layers and two minor ones, yielding rich architectural and material culture assemblages from this medium-sized LB town. The following are our main conclusions.

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<sup>5</sup> The following is a citation from an e-mail from Felix Höflmayer, dated February 2017: “These finds are of crucial importance not only for the Aegean but also for Egyptian chronology, because it seems to suggest a slightly higher New Kingdom chronology (since the first year of Amenhotep III is usually dated to 1391 BCE) and because we know that LH IIIA2 probably started a little bit earlier than 1400 BCE. From a tomb at Sellopoulo (near Knossos) we know that LH IIIA1 lasted at least to the beginning of Amenhotep III, so the transition to LH IIIA2 must come after his first year, but still prior to 1400 BCE (according to Tel Batash). This would give us a very nice synchronism all over the eastern Mediterranean.”

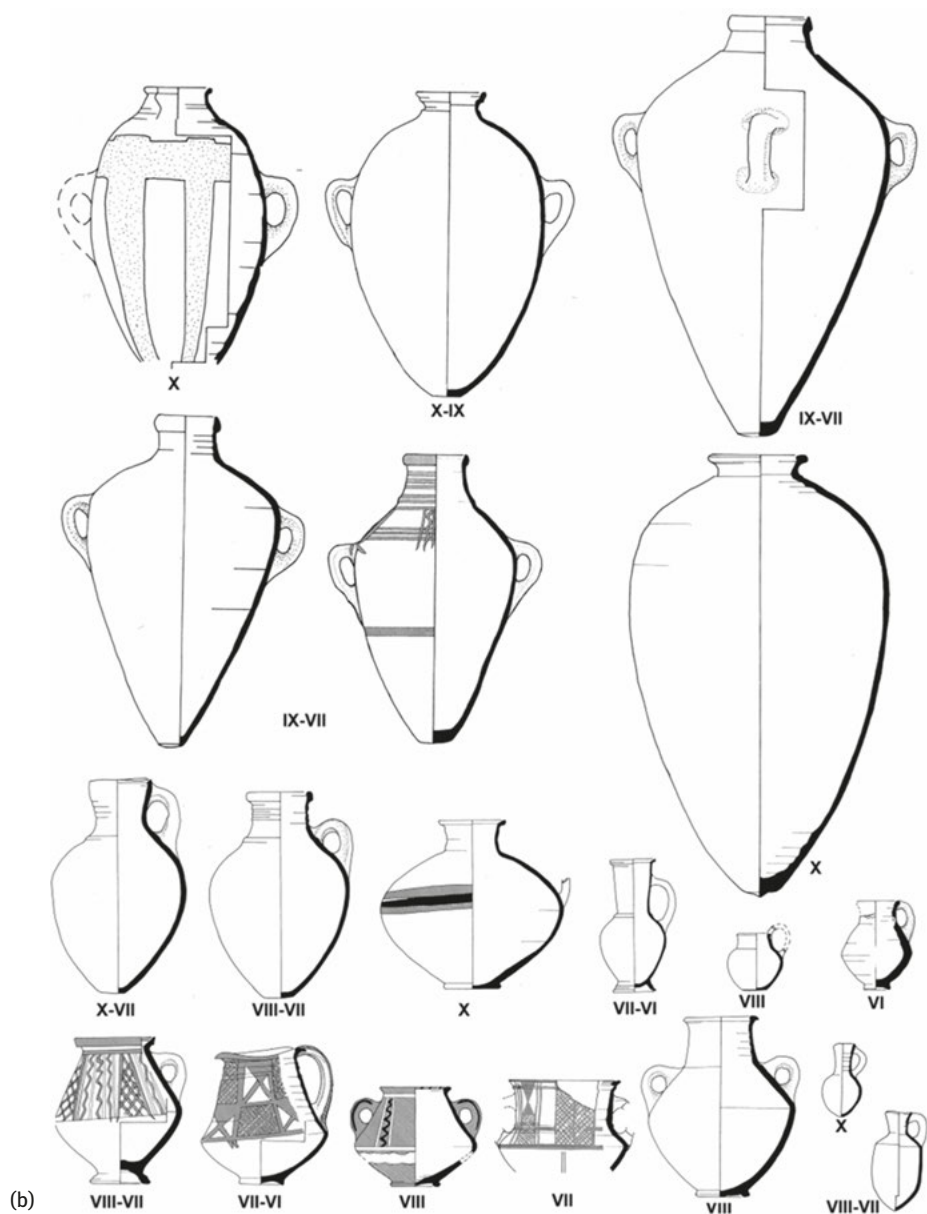


**Fig. 5.20a:** Major pottery types from Strata X–VI (strata numbers indicate the duration of each type).

## Continuity from Middle Bronze to Late Bronze

In many cases, major MB cities in the southern Levant declined in size in the LB (for a general survey, see Bunimovitz 1995). Examples in the central/southern coastal plain and lower Shephelah are Tel Mique-Ekron, Tel Aphek, Yavneh Yam, Ashkelon and Tell el-Ajjul. In contrast, Tel Batash, Beth-Shemesh, 7 km to its east, Gezer, Tell es-Safi and Lachish, continued to maintain their size throughout the LB (LBII Tell es-Safi even became larger than the MB city). The reason for this diversity is still unclear; perhaps major southern coastal cities were more affected by traumatic events related to the expulsion of the Hyksos and the inception of Egyptian domination of Canaan. In any event, the LB town at Tel Batash maintained its size, although lacking the mighty fortifications of the previous period.





**Fig. 5.20b:** Major pottery types from Strata X-VI, continued (strata numbers indicate the duration of each type).

## Geopolitical status

The geopolitical situation in the central and northern Shephelah as known from Egyptian topographic lists and the Amarna documents, indicates two major political forces in this region: Gezer (8 km north of Tel Batash) and the city of Shuwardatu, commonly identified at Gath (Tell es-Safi) (for the geopolitical situation in this region in the Amarna period, see Ross 1971; Na'aman 1979; Goren, Finkelstein and Na'aman 2004: 270–279; Rainey and Notley 2006: 83–86, 89). Further to the south was the city-state of Lachish. The Sorek Valley seems to have been divided between Beth-Shemesh, which exploited the eastern part of the valley while Tel Batash enjoyed its western part. Both were of similar size and may have been dominated by the city-state of Gezer; substantial LB buildings, probably belonging to high-ranking elite families, were found at both sites. Smaller villages are hardly known in this region: an example of such a village was excavated in a salvage excavation at Moshav Beqo'a, 5 km north of Tel Batash. It is a single-phase village, about 3 ha in area; one of the two houses excavated there is a typical courtyard house, considerably different from the Tel Batash houses. The village is dated to LBII with no closer dating; it was abandoned without evidence for violent destruction (Kogan-Zehavi 2008).

From the Amarna documents, we know that smaller towns like Aijalon, Zor'ah, Keilah, Rubutu, and the town ruled by a queen called Bēlit-nešeti ("mistress of lions", EA 273–274) were also subordinate to Gezer or claimed by her (for a suggestion to locate Bēlit-nešeti at Beth-Shemesh, see Ziffer, Bunimovitz and Lederman 2009: 339). Tel Batash was probably one of such minor towns in the city-state, although we cannot know its name.

## Regional occupational history

The pottery assemblage, Egyptian scarabs, seals and radiocarbon dates provide a safe basis for relative and absolute chronology of the LB strata at Tel Batash and enable comparisons to other sites in the region. Table 5.1 suggests correlations with Gezer, Beth-Shemesh, Tel Migne-Ekron and Lachish.

Stratum X is attributed to the LB IA, following the termination of the MB fortification system. Its pottery assemblage may be dated to the second half of the 16th and early 15th centuries BCE. This date may be confirmed by the two radiometric dates from these stratum, as mentioned above. The two phases of Stratum IX, as well as Stratum VIII, are dated to the 15th century BCE, namely to LBIB and early LBIIA. Stratum VII was attributed in the final excavation report to the 14th century (LBIIA). As we have seen above, the four radiocarbon dates from its destruction layer point to a date ca. 1400 BCE. Yet, this is an average of four dates, while two of them indicate a lowest possible date of 1410 in 1 $\sigma$  and 1394 in 2 $\sigma$ , the two others

are substantially lower and cover most of the 14th century BCE. It might be questioned to what extent the average dates and the Bayesian model comprise sufficient evidence to date the end of this stratum to ca. 1400 BCE. The scarab and seal of Amenhotep III and Tiye found in this stratum may point to a time during their reign, yet they could also provide a *terminus post quem*, and the destruction could have occurred somewhat later. The same may be said of the imported LH IIIA2 alabastron; its production date could either be contemporary with the use of this building, or it could provide a *terminus post quem*. It is thus difficult to decide whether Stratum VII was destroyed around 1400 BCE or somewhat later, during the Amarna period.

An occupational hiatus may have taken place at Tel Batash between Strata VII and VI, perhaps during the second half of the 14th century BCE. This is based on the radiocarbon dates from Stratum VII, on the typological attribution of pottery from Stratum VIB to the 13th century, and on the architectural discontinuity between Strata VII and VI. In Stratum VIB, the city was revived, as seen in the few remains from this stratum. The corner of a massive building from this phase in the southern part of Area B was destroyed by fire, probably sometime during the 13th century. In the following Stratum VIA, a new building was founded in the southern part of Area B, but the northern part appears to continue to survive. No evidence for destruction was found in Stratum VIA; the buildings appear to have been abandoned. The southern building was renovated in Stratum V and contained Philistine Bichrome pottery, showing both continuity and change. It should be recalled that although Tel Batash is only 7 km away from Tel Miqne-Ekron, no pottery of the local MycIIIC, typical of Miqne Stratum VII, was found; it thus seems that either there was an occupation gap between Strata VIA and V, or that the Canaanite city continued to survive during the early 12th century without the presence of this Aegean-like local pottery, until the construction of Stratum V, when Philistine Bichrome ware was in use. In any event, no collapse and violent destruction, commonly attributed to the end of the LB, could be defined at Tel Batash (for the settlement history of the region in the 12th century, see Mazar 2006c: 327–328).

The sequence of five successive destruction layers in Strata X–VIB, dated to the timespan of the late 16th–13th centuries BCE, particularly the extremely violent destruction of Strata VIII and VII, is unprecedented in other LB sites in the Shephelah, and in fact in much wider parts of southern Canaan.

A survey of the LB stratigraphy and urban development in four nearby sites follows.

*Gezer*: Four strata (XVII–XIV) correspond to Strata X–VIA at Batash. An occupation gap was suggested for the LBIA, a time period which may correspond with our Stratum X, yet this gap may be questioned in light of finds from burial caves excavated by Macalister (Mazar 2006c: 326; also Dever 1986: 36; 1998: 116). Strata XVII–XVI correspond to our Strata VIII–VII, 15th–14th centuries BCE. In Field VI, the acropolis, Stratum XVII was not identified, while Stratum XVI (local Stratum 9B-9A) includes the

monumental, partly excavated Palace 14120, which probably was the major palace of Gezer. It is dated to the 14th century BCE. Perhaps it can be suggested that this palace was founded in Stratum XVII, to which Dever assigns a gap in Field VI. This palace probably had a long life, served at least three successive rulers of Gezer during the Amarna period and was finally abandoned (Dever 1986: 36–46, Fig. 5.8). Cave I.10A yielded rich assemblages from two burial phases, corresponding with Strata XVII–XVI (parallel to Strata IX–VII at Tel Batash) (Seger 1988: 47–119). The 13th century (Stratum XV) marks a decline at Gezer; a violent destruction revealed in the new excavations was related to Merneptah's conquest of the city as reflected in the "Israel Stele (Ortiz and Wolff 2012: 12) . In Field VI, the previous palace went out of use and the area became an open space (Dever 1986: 46–51). This recalls the changes in Stratum VIB at Tel Batash compared to VII, although at Tel Batash, more 13th century architecture was revealed than in Gezer. This probably is the city that is mentioned by Merneptah. Yet, no evidence for a violent destruction during the LB was recovered at Gezer that would parallel the destructions at Tel Batash, except a local destruction in Field II, which occurred sometime during LBII.

*Beth-Shemesh:* Grant's excavations revealed one major LB stratum with two subphases (Strata IVB–IVA), including a substantial house which may be defined as a patrician house (see above). Among the finds were a tablet written in Ugaritic and a Proto-Canaanite inscription on a pottery sherd. Bunimovitz and Lederman's excavations revealed three LB occupation layers (Ziffer, Bunimovitz and Lederman 2009: 333–334). Level 8 is dated to the 13th century; level 9 of the 14th century (?) includes the "palace", an elaborate building which was destroyed in a heavy fire and contained a rich assemblage of finds. Level 10 is only briefly mentioned.

*Tel Migne-Ekron:* four strata are attributed to the same time range: Stratum X of the late 16th–15th centuries should be contemporary with Strata X–VIII at Tel Batash; Stratum IX of the 14th century, perhaps contemporary with Tel Batash VII; the later one (VIIIa) included a major building which suffered a massive destruction (Dothan and Gitin 2008: 1953). This last level should be contemporary with Batash VIB or VIA, although at Tel Batash no such destruction was found.

*Azekah.* A stratigraphic sequence in Area S starts with poor activity in LBI (S2–8), two strata with few remains from LBI/LBIIA and LBIIA (S2–7–6), a monumental building with two phases dated to LBIIb (S2–5a–b) and an LBIII stratum (a term referring to the 12th century, BCE, corresponding to our Iron Age IA). The latter period is well represented in Area T2 by a heavy destruction of a substantial building (Webster et al. 2017; see also paper in this volume)

The frequent destructions revealed at Tel Batash and the one at Beth-Shemesh, as opposed to the lack of such destructions at Gezer, indicate the relatively insecure situation in the smaller towns of the period, as opposed to the center of the city-state, which enjoyed a higher degree of stability. The destructions could occur due to local reasons, such as fire, or may be taken as evidence for an unstable political situation, with competition and threats between local forces during this period,

such as the rivalries between city-states and attacks by Habiru gangs. Both are evidenced in the Amarna archive, where attacks on minor towns, like Keilah and Aijalon, are mentioned. In spite of these frequent destructions, the town at Tel Batash was immediately rebuilt, as evident in the dense stratigraphy in Areas B and A, where continuity throughout the entire LB, from the 16th century onwards, could be observed, except for the possible hiatus mentioned above between Strata VII and VIB.

## Urban planning

The edges of the ca. 2.5 hectares LB town at Tel Batash were situated on top of the MB earth rampart and fortification wall which created a square-shaped site, with its sides oriented to the points of the compass. During the LB, there was no city wall, yet the MB earthen rampart could have provided some defensive qualities. Some sort of defense was achieved by the continuous line of outer walls of massive buildings along the edge of the slope, with the gaps between these buildings closed with walls. This is seen, for example, in Area B Stratum VII, where such a wall, equipped with a drainage canal, was built at the end of a street where the latter reached the edge of the site. The entrance to the city was perhaps partly exposed in Area C as a 4.5 m-wide road between two massive walls, perpendicular to the slope; yet, the exposure was too limited to say whether there was a gate structure in this location. The lack of fortifications in LB towns and cities, with only a few exceptions, was discussed by several scholars. Gonen (1992: 217–218) suggested that this was a result of preplanned Egyptian policy to curtail the power of local Canaanite cities. However, it should be noted that the MB fortifications at Tel Batash went out of use already in Stratum X, which probably preceded the Egyptian 18th Dynasty's conquest of Canaan (Mazar 1997: 252; 2006c: 326 and above for the radiocarbon evidence).

The urban plan is known only from the small area excavated in Stratum VII, Area B, showing a wide north–south street running alongside a massive building; a courtyard separated this building from one to its south. The few building remains in Areas A and C indicate the existence of massive walls in the LB strata exposed there. It thus appears that in the LB, the town was well built, with an organized entrance and street system. The finely constructed buildings excavated in Area B were probably houses of high-ranking families. Yet, of course, the exposure is too limited, both spatially and diachronically, to enable unequivocal generalizations.

## Architecture and its social reflections

The buildings excavated in Area B are of great interest due their unique planning and social significance. They are extremely different from the typical “courtyard

houses”, known in Canaanite domestic architecture throughout the Levant, for example at Hazor, Megiddo and Ugarit (for a summary, see Herzog 1997: 164–189; for Hazor: Yadin 1972: 34, Fig. 5.6; for Ugarit: Schloen 2001: 314–315, with previous literature). In contrast to the latter, the houses at Tel Batash are closed units, with the courtyard used for household tasks located outside the building proper. In the complete examples excavated in Strata VIII and VII, each house had a central hall with one or two rows of stone bases for wooden posts to support the roof. In Stratum VIII, the western wing was designed with small storage chambers and two larger rooms, while in Stratum VII, the side rooms were cancelled, and the building became smaller. Notably, the area of the small chambers now became devoted to a public function, namely a street. In both houses, there was a corridor in the southern part which served for a staircase leading to the second floor. As can be learned from the destruction pattern in Stratum VII, we assume that the dwelling rooms were on the second floor, while the ground floor served mainly for storage and household tasks. Based on the large size and sturdy construction of the houses, their coherent plan and the rich finds uncovered in them, we defined them as “patrician houses”, probably the homes of elite Canaanite families.

LB buildings that may be defined in a similar way are the “Western Building” at Ta’anach, probably of the 15th century BCE, the “Herrenhause” at Beth-Shemesh and the newly excavated building at the same site, the latter dated the 14th century and defined as a “palace” (for detailed discussion and references, see Mazar 1997: 253; for the new building excavated at Beth-Shemesh, see above).

The use of rows of wooden columns to support the roof of the ground floor finds parallels in a number of LB structures in southern Canaan, e.g., at Lachish, Tel Harasim and, perhaps, Tel Halif (references in Mazar 1997: 252). At Tel Harasim, two rows of pillar bases in the ground floor of one of the houses (Givon 1999: 175–176, Figs. 2–3) recall Tel Batash Building 315 of Stratum VII. This southern Canaanite planning principle may be regarded as a prototype for the development of the pillared houses, including the well-known four-room and three-room types of the Iron Age (Mazar 1997: 253).

The square building uncovered in Stratum VIA belongs to a different tradition. Similar houses are known at the end of the LB and in the early Iron Age at Hazor Stratum XIII–XIV, Tell Abu Hawam Stratum IVa and Tel Aphek Stratum X-11, as well as at Alalakh and in Egypt (references in Mazar 1997: 253–254; Gadot and Yadin 2009: 90–93).

The residents of these houses enjoyed the favorable location of the site in the midst of the arable land of the Sorek valley, with ample water sources and a major east–west road. They lived rather opulently, owning a rich collection of what may be considered luxury items, including a variety of imported Cypriot vessels, some of them quite rare (e.g., the White-Shaved spindle bottle), valued for their contents, as well as for their shape, as well as a small amount of Mycenaean pottery.

Egyptian seals, scarabs, and seal impressions on stoppers or bullae are evidence for inland and/or international trade, and possibly, the relations of the houses' residents with the local administration under Egyptian auspices. The presence of a variety of bronze objects, such as cymbals, schematic bronze female sheet figurines and weapons of various sorts (daggers, spear heads and arrowheads) attest to household wealth and influence. The six cylinder seals found in Stratum VII reflect the major styles of the period in the Levant: local Canaanite, perhaps Ugaritic, common Mitannian and Cypriot, and the necklace found in Stratum VII, including many glass beads, is another manifestation of wealth. Jars full of grain found in the storage space below the staircase in Stratum VII and the large amount and variety of pottery vessels found in all these buildings are evidence for the ability of the houses' occupants to maintain a high standard of living. The amount of local pottery vessels seems to exceed the needs of an average family and might allude to their having conducted periodic feasts or other celebrations, in and of itself perhaps an indicator of wealth and status (Panitz-Cohen 2011). Notable in this regard are several extremely large cooking pots among the household repertoire. The numerous storage facilities point to the possibility of some form of intra- or inter-household redistribution having taken place. Local cult practices are only slightly manifested in the form of a complete plaque figurine showing a naked goddess from Stratum VII and another fragment from Stratum VI, as well as the three schematic bronze female figurines from Stratum VII. All were produced in the local Canaanite tradition.

The substantial, well-built and well-planned houses at Tel Batash, with their uncommon plans and the rich assemblages of finds (in particular in Strata VIII and VII), have social significance, indicating that they were houses of high-ranking families, perhaps land owners or merchants. Free citizens and farmers in Canaanite society are termed *Ḫupšu* in the Amarna letters and *awilu* at Ugarit (Rainey 1967: 104). Can we suggest that our houses served families of this status? The patrimonial nature of Canaanite society is well established (Schloen 2001: 50–53 and *passim*). It may be surmised that the rebuilding of houses in the same location and along the same outline, in spite of the destruction episodes in Strata IX–VII, may signify continuous use of the same plot by the same patrimonial family during several generations.

The remains at Tel Batash Strata X–VI shed light on our understanding of social organization in the Late Bronze Age Shephelah towns, within the context of the city-state system and Egyptian domination of Canaan.

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# First impression on the urban layout of the last Canaanite city of Lachish: a view from the northeast corner of the site

## Introduction

The site of Lachish was extensively excavated in the past by three different expeditions. They uncovered major Late Bronze and Middle Bronze Age remains relating to the Canaanite city under the Iron Age layers. It is not our aim here to give a detailed review of these Canaanite levels. This had been done recently in a popular book summarizing the results of the first three expeditions (Ussishkin 2014). This introduction presents only in brief the basic activities and final publications of each expedition:

1. **Starkey's Expedition.** In the years 1932–1938 the British undertook a large scale expedition headed by James Lesley Starkey. After his tragic murder the results of the excavations were faithfully published by members of the expedition. Two volumes are dedicated to the Canaanite city: Lachish II: the Fosse Temple (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940) and Lachish IV: The Bronze Age (Tufnell 1958).
2. **Aharoni's Expedition.** In the years 1966 and 1968 a small scale project was directed by Yohanan Aharoni, on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University. He excavated inside and around the Persian Period Solar Shrine. From the Canaanite city only the last phase, Level VI, was uncovered. Since he excavated a rather limited area from this phase only a few fragmentary walls of domestic architecture were found (Aharoni 1975: Pl. 61).
3. **Ussishkin's Expedition.** In the years 1974 to 1994 a large scale project was directed by David Ussishkin, on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University. Canaanite remains from the Middle Bronze Age and the Late Bronze Age were uncovered (Ussishkin 2004), including a new temple from Level VI, designated as the “Acropolis Temple.”

The Fourth Expedition to Lachish took place between 2013–2017. The expedition was co-sponsored by the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the Institute of Archaeology, Southern Adventist University, under the co-direction of Yosef Garfinkel, Michael G. Hasel, and Martin G. Klingbeil. Consortium

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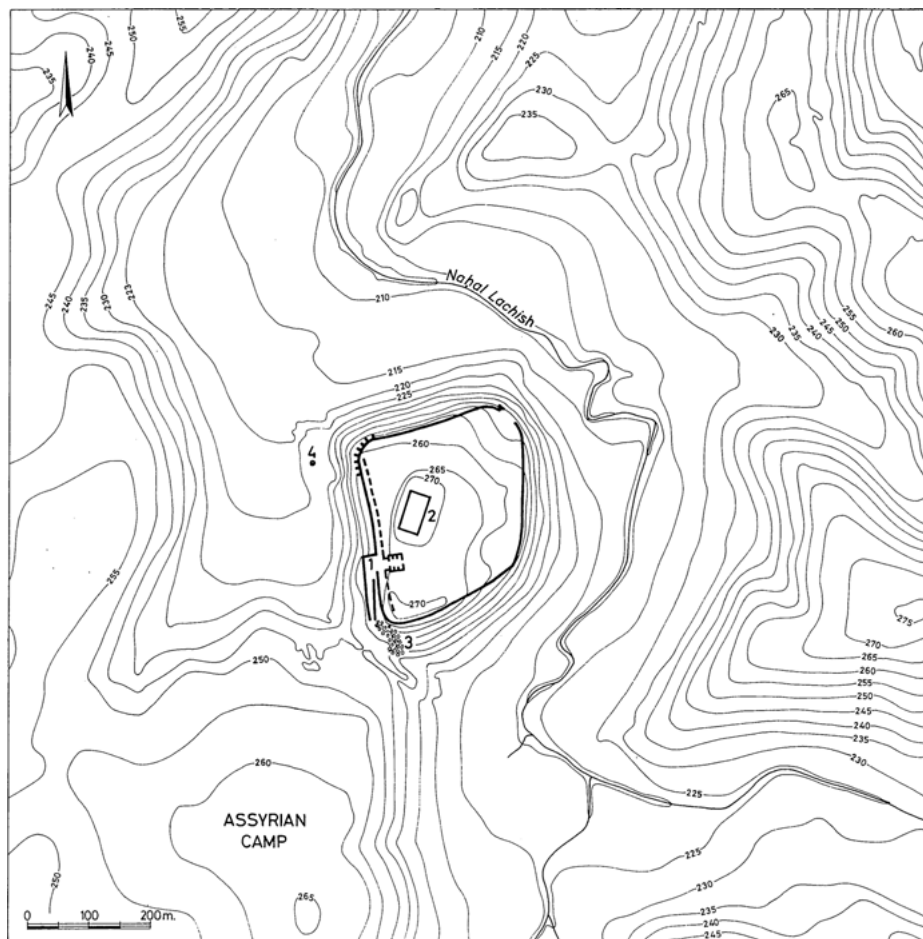
institutions include the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (Philippines), Oakland University, Virginia Commonwealth University (United States), and Seoul Jangsin University (Korea). The excavation work is undertaken in cooperation with the Israel Antiquities Authority, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, and the Israel Exploration Society, and is affiliated with the American Schools of Oriental Research.

Four seasons of excavations took place during the summers of 2013–2016. The expedition excavated in three areas (Areas AA, BB, and CC) located in the northeast part of the site. Remains of Level VI, the last Canaanite city, were found in every area, but the most extensive remains were found in Area BB, which will be the topic of this essay. Since we are in an initial stage of research, our study will not present detailed analysis of stratigraphic observations, architectural plans, or pottery assemblages. Instead, we wish to present general impressions and conclusions that will provide a new understanding of the layout and planning of the Canaanite cities of Lachish and especially of Level VI.

## The vicinity of the city and the location of the city gates

Tel Lachish is situated on the bank of the Lachish river, at a point where the river makes a turn, and thus encircles the site from the east and north (Fig. 6.1). The river and the valley provide the city with a number of important advantages:

1. **Water.** Easy access to water is crucial for a city. A 40 meter-deep well was dug at the northeast corner of the site, most likely in the same way a deep water installation was cut down to the water table. Massive water installations are known from Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, and other sites. The water from these installations, however, were probably used for emergency situations, when the city came under siege. Furthermore, the dating of the well is unclear, Tufnell suggested cautiously a Bronze Age date (Tufnell 1953: 93), while Ussishkin advocated a dated not later than Level IV (Ussishkin 2004: 25). Thus, for regular daily life, as well as for herds of animals, the river was probably used as the main water resource.
2. **Agricultural fields.** The population most probably consisted of farmers who cultivated agricultural land around the city. The area around Lachish is quite hilly and the limestone bedrock is exposed on large parts of the area. Even today, with modern technologies like irrigation and extensive use of chemical fertilizers, the hills around the site are not cultivated. Modern agricultural activity in the vicinity is concentrated in the valleys making use of their alluvial soil. In the same way, the Canaanite agricultural activities had to be concentrated in the valley on both sides of the river.



**Fig. 6.1:** Map of Lachish and its close vicinity (after Ussishkin 2004, Fig. 13.1).

3. **Clay.** Most of the buildings in the city were built of mudbrick. The production of mudbricks requires clay and water, and the river is a constant supplier of both. A study of the mudbricks from the site showed that in many cases the materials originated from the alluvial soils down the slope (Rosen 2004). Taking into account the heavy burden of carrying tons of brick into the city, the river bank closest to the site must have been the preferred location of the people of Lachish for the manufacture of bricks.
4. **Road.** The Lachish River is naturally flowing from the hills of Hebron in the east to the costal plain and to Ashkelon in the west. Lachish is situated about one day's walk from Ashkelon (ca. 30 km) and one day's walk to Hebron (ca. 25 km). This was a most strategic location for one of the most important roads in

this part of the country. Even today there is a modern road leading from the coastal plain into the hills that passes by the mound.

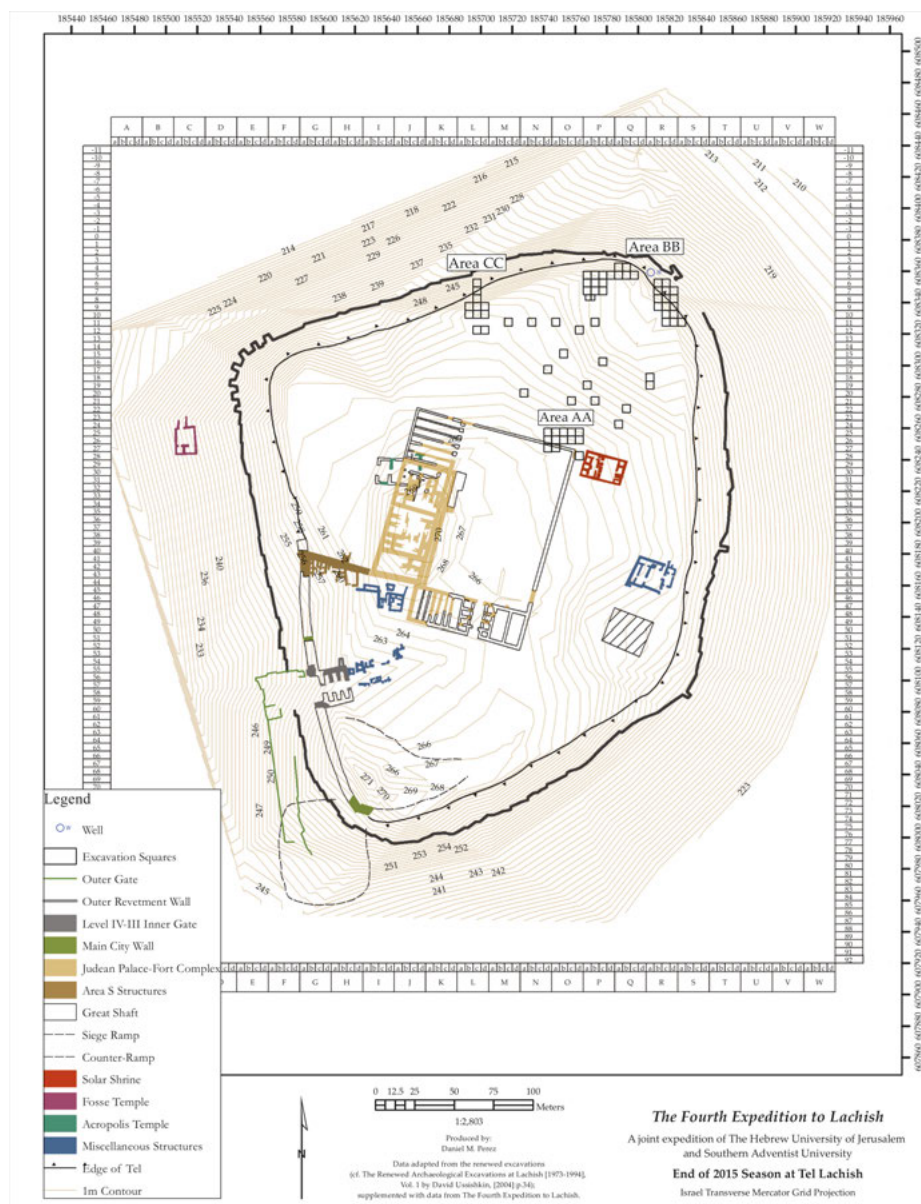
With all these advantages, and without any clear resources on the opposite side of the site, the city was likely approached from the valley and the river in the northeast as this became the most important part of the tel. It would follow that the ideal location of the city gate should face the valley at this point where the city is closest to the river, that is the northeast corner of Tel Lachish (Fig. 6.1). Indeed, in this location there is a relatively moderate slope from the top of the tel to the valley. Even today, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority built in this location a path and steps leading to the site. In fact, the first map of Lachish, completed in 1932 by the Department of Antiquities of Palestine for the excavation permit of Starkey's expedition, marked at this point the only path leading up the tel.

As of 2016, the entrance to Second Millennium BCE Lachish (Levels VIII–VI) has not been found. This is in contrast to First Millennium BC Lachish (Levels IV–I), which used a massive gate construction near the southwest corner of the site. Ussishkin suggested that the Canaanite gates were also located near this spot, but had not been located yet (2014:227).

In the Iron Age, Lachish was a Judean city facing Philistia to the west and north. Thus, for strategic purposes the gate had been constructed as far away as possible from the road in the nearby valley, the point where the potential enemy was expected. In the Bronze Age, however, there was a different political landscape, and the valley connected the different Canaanite city states in the region. During this period, the ideal location for the Late Bronze Age gate (if there was a gate) would have been in the northeast corner of the site.

This was a key consideration in the research design of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* when we chose to excavate the northeast corner of the site (Fig. 6.2). Indeed no Bronze Age gate has been found, but a simple Iron Age gate was uncovered here connected with the city walls of Levels II and I. This new gate had no chambers or any other type of gate structure, only a 3-meter opening in the city's massive stone wall. This is clearly an official opening, as the city wall ends square on both sides, with massive stones well preserved on the north side of the opening (Fig. 6.3). Remains of a road, paved with flat stone slabs, was found abutting the city wall from outside, and adjacent to the southern opening. Thus, in addition to the western gate of Level II, where the famous Lachish Letters were found, the city had another gate leading down to the valley. We believe that when the Level I city wall was built in the Persian Period, the inhabitants kept this tradition and left an opening in the same location.

It is interesting that the British expedition mentioned a "blocking of a gate" in this area as well (Tufnell 1953, Pl. 11:3). Our expedition located this same blocked area during the initial survey season (Fig. 6.4). Our expedition, however, did not have the time for further investigations of this feature.



**Fig. 6.2:** Tel Lachish and the three new excavation areas (AA, BB and CC) as of the end of 2015 season.

To summarize this section, we suggest that based on the site's environs, the newly uncovered Iron Age gate, and the lack of known Late Bronze Age gates elsewhere at the site, that the entrance to the Canaanite city was located in the northeast corner of Lachish.



**Fig. 6.3:** A simple gate in the northeast corner of Tel Lachish, dated to Level II (Iron Age IIc) and Level I (Persian Period).

## The topography of area BB

Area BB is located in a large depression at the northeastern corner of the tel (Fig. 6.2). The gap in elevation between the highest point and the lowest point is ca. 15 meters. To the west in Area CC, at the top of the depression, remains of Level I were uncovered below topsoil, while in Area BB, at one point Level V was below topsoil. Slightly to the east no remains of Level V were preserved and Level VI was found directly below topsoil. This suggests that at some point in time a severe erosion event caused the collapse of this area of the mound and the depression was created. This depression enabled us to excavate Late Bronze Age remains just below the surface without the need to go first through the Iron Age remains and thus a large exposure of the Late Bronze Age levels was possible.

## “Lower City” and “Upper City”

In the confined area of Tel Lachish there are relatively lower areas on the north and east sides, while the southwest part of the site is higher (Fig. 6.2). In this elevated acropolis area the massive Iron Age Palace was built (Fig. 6.2). In the same





**Fig. 6.4:** The point designated by the British expedition as a “blocking of a gate” (Tufnell 1953, Pl. 11:3). The massive wall on the right side of the picture ends in a straight vertical line, indicating its edge. To the left there are poor stone walls, that blocked the area further to the south.

location the partly uncovered remains of the Middle Bronze Age palace were also found (Ussishkin 2004:140–168). It is interesting that the Level VI temple, designated by Ussishkin as the “Acropolis Temple,” is situated on the edge of the higher area, overlooking the lower part of the site toward the north (Ussishkin 2004:215–267). The floor of the main hall of the Acropolis Temple is at an absolute elevation of 266.88 m above sea level (Ussishkin 2004: Fig. 6.2), the floor of the pillared structure in Area S was at 258.68 m (Barkay and Ussishkin 2004: Fig. 8.35). The cache of bronze objects that was found below the Iron Age city gate in Area GE was found at elevation of 255.15–255.40 m (Ussishkin 2004: 626). Similarly, the threshold of the newly uncovered Late Bronze Age temple (see below) was in an elevation of 248.74 m and in a nearby building the floor was at an elevation of 246.22. This shows that the current topography of the tel is to some extent similar to the topography of the site in the Late Bronze Age. The northeastern corner of the city was the lowest point on the site in the Late Bronze Age, while the Acropolis Temple was constructed at the highest point.

It is well known that public structures were not only built to serve functional purposes but also to symbolize and communicate the power and the values of their builders and to transmit them to the population in the city, the neighboring villages and the passersby. One of the main factors that influenced this perception of the

structures is their location in the urban landscape (Rapoport 1976; Lawrence and Low 1990; Maran *et al.* 2006). The Acropolis Temple was a prominent building when approached from the lower parts of the site, located more than twenty meters higher than the other buildings, as might be expected from an Acropolis Temple. It communicated the power of the gods of the city and probably also of the ruling class that built it. If the entrance to the unfortified city was from the southwest corner, at the location of the Iron Age gates, the population would have entered the city in more or less the same height as the temple, and it would not have had an impressive visual impact on the people entering the city.

In the northeast corner of Tel Lachish, in the lower city, our expedition uncovered two public, monumental buildings: a citadel and a temple. The citadel is located on the eastern side of the corner, overlooking the valley. The temple is located on the northern side of the corner. The two buildings are located about 30 meters from each other.

## The citadel

As early as 1933 the British expedition uncovered a small segment of a massive stone wall in the northeast corner of Tel Lachish. It had been understood as part of the Iron Age fortifications built on top of a Late Bronze mudbrick wall (Tufnell 1953, Pl. 11:2). This wall was never excavated from the inside, so its length, date and function remained unclear. Our expedition cleaned and excavated areas around this wall from both, the outside and the inside (Figs. 6.5, 6.6). Now it is evident that it is a massive wall of 11 meters in length, built from large stones, standing for nearly 2 meters in height, and 1.5 meters in width.

The excavations from outside the wall clarified that the foundations of the wall were sunken inside foundation trenches, in the north and south. These foundation trenches were cut into an earlier, very massive Middle Bronze mudbrick building. After the construction of the wall, the foundation trenches were filled with small stones.

The excavations from inside the wall were carried out in a rather small test pit, adjacent to this massive wall from its west. To excavate a larger area here there is a need to dismantle the Iron Age city wall and the gate, mentioned above. At this stage of our work we have only excavated a relatively small test pit, inside the gate opening. The location and size of the test pit are dictated by the location and size of the gate opening (Fig. 6.7). At first, we uncovered under the Level II gate floor a layer characterized by Iron Age pottery, decorated by red slip and irregular hand burnish. These are remains of Level IV or V. Under this level, from the top of the massive stone wall, and for about half a meter down, destruction debris with only Late Bronze pottery was uncovered. The assemblage collected so far does not include imported Cypriote pottery, so it is probably dated to Level VI. Our excavations clarify that, *contra* to the earlier publication, this wall is not an Iron Age city wall



**Fig. 6.5:** The outer face of a massive stone wall in Area BB, on the eastern slope of the northeast corner of Tel Lachish, dated to the Late Bronze Age.



**Fig. 6.6:** Aerial photo of the massive stone wall in Area BB, on the eastern slope of the northeast corner of Tel Lachish, dated to the Late Bronze Age.





**Fig. 6.7:** Test pit dug under the Iron Age gate opening, exposing debris levels abutting the massive stone wall from inside the city.

built on top of Late Bronze remains, but a massive Late Bronze Age building, built on top of massive Middle Bronze building.

As most of the Late Bronze architecture at Lachish was built with mudbricks, this stone wall is outstanding in its monumental construction. Thus we suggest that Canaanite Lachish built a prominent citadel on the northeast corner of the site, at the closest point to the river. This massive stone building probably stood for a few floors as a symbol of power and to emphasize who is the landowner in this place. The monumental citadel was built in this location to see and to be seen. Every person and every caravan moving in the valley, below the city, could not ignore this landmark, and would have had to pay tributes to the king of Lachish.

## The temple

The second significant building located on the northern side of the northeast corner of Tel Lachish is a temple. It is dated to Level VI based on the pottery, stratigraphy and radiometric dates. Only the western side of the building survived since large parts of its eastern side was eroded downslope (Fig. 6.8). Nevertheless, the preserved parts of the building indicate the typical symmetrical plan of Canaanite temples, with two towers and two pillars on its façade. Such temples are known from



**Fig. 6.8:** Aerial photo of the temple in Area BB, on the northern edge of the northeast corner of Tel Lachish, dated to the Late Bronze Age (Level VI).

Hazor, Megiddo and elsewhere (Mazar 1992). Very rich assemblages of pottery and metal objects had been unearthed in the destruction debris of this building. Other impressive objects are three large bronze bowls, gold jewelry, and two bronze smiting god figurines. The recently published Canaanite inscription was also uncovered in this building (Sass et al. 2015).

## The transition between Level VII and VI

The destruction of Level VII was not uniform. This is clearly seen both from the excavations of the previous expeditions and from our new results. While some areas produced evidence for a fierce conflagration, accompanied by a large amount of restorable pottery, in other areas no evidence for fire or a burnt destruction was observed (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940; Barkay and Ussishkin 2004: 347–51; Ussishkin 2004: 60–62, 191–98).

After the destruction of Level VII, some significant changes in the layout of the city occurred. In most areas there is no direct architectural continuity between Levels VII and VI. Although the structures of both levels were built in the same orientation, hardly any walls or buildings were reused. The most significant change is that the Fosse Temple went out of use with the destruction of Level VII (Ussishkin 2004: 59–61). The Acropolis Temple, on the other hand was dated to Level VI, although is possible that an earlier temple, although of a different plan, was present in Level

VII as well (Ussishkin 2004: 191–200). The newly discovered temple in the north-eastern corner of the site was built only in Level VI, and no remains of an earlier temple or any other cultic activity were found below the floors. In Area S, a domestic structure of Level VII was replaced by a new public pillared building in Level VI (Barkay and Ussishkin 2004: 344–361). The situation with the newly uncovered citadel is less clear as the floor levels were not yet reached.

These observations demonstrate a significant change in the city during the transition between the two levels. Cultic activity was apparently no longer conducted outside the city (i.e. the “Fosse Temple”), but was concentrated inside at the Acropolis Temple and the newly excavated Late Bronze temple in the northeast. Furthermore, the significant change in the plan of most of the buildings and sometimes of areas that were previously designated as private into public suggests a change in the social organization of the city.

## Summary

Remains of Level VI were found in all our excavation areas: AA, BB and CC. The most prominent are the citadel and temple in Area BB. These monumental buildings suggest that the northeast corner of Tel Lachish, neglected thus far in previous expeditions, was an important location in the Canaanite city (Fig. 6.9).

As the northeast corner is the closest one to the road, fields and water-sources, it is most probable that this was the location of the city gate, or entrance, of Bronze Age Lachish. The location of a temple near the gate may continue a tradition already documented at Shechem in the Middle Bronze Age (Dever 1974) and is followed by the Iron Age tradition of cult rooms near city gates (see, for example, Blomquist 1999; May 2014; Garfinkel, Ganor and Mumcuoglu 2015; Garfinkel and Mumcuoglu 2016; Ganor and Kreimerman 2017; In Press).

If the entrance to the city was in the southwest corner of the site how would the citadel function during an emergency situation in the valley below? Would the soldiers cross the entire city, and encircle the tel to be in the area they were guarding? There is no tactical logic in this situation and the citadel would lose its imposing function. But if there was a gate nearby, the soldiers could reach the valley in a few moments.

Our suggestion that the Canaanite city of Lachish had a gate, and a main entrance, in the northeast corner, takes into account all the above mentioned observations and new discoveries.

In the Level VI reconstruction of the city after the violent destruction of Level VII, the inhabitants chose to build a new temple at the northeastern corner of the site. The gate was probably located between the temple and the citadel. Thus, when a person entered the city there was probably an open piazza in front of him. Further



**Fig. 6.9:** Aerial photograph of the northeast corner of Tel Lachish. (1) The Level VI temple (2) the Levels II–I gate (3) the estimated location of the Bronze Age gate or entrance (4) the Late Bronze Age citadel (5) the well (6) the location of the blocked gate identified by Starkey (7) the modern road that leads from the valley to the tel.

to his left (to the east) the citadel was located, representing the power of the king. Further to his right (to the west) the temple was found, representing the power of the gods. When he raised his eyes to the upper city, he observed a mirror image: the palace of the king and the Acropolis Temple of the god. In this way, the entire world order was present at the entrance to the Canaanite city of Lachish.

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Stefan Jakob Wimmer

## Lachish is Lachish on the Lachish bowl: an object lesson for reading Hieratic, with little surprising results

The Lachish Bowl in the context of Hieratic inscriptions from  
southern Canaan

Most of the Hieratic inscriptions that we have from Egyptian administered Canaan come from sites in the southern coastal area, the southern Shephelah and the adjacent northern Negev.<sup>1</sup> Currently a total of 38 Hieratic inscriptions from Israel can be determined (see updated list below). Two main corpora come from Tel Sera' with sixteen, and Lachish with ten inscriptions, while nine more inscriptions scatter over diverse sites in the same region (see Map 7.1).<sup>2</sup>

The majority of these texts deal with the registration of grain deliveries. They were written in ink<sup>3</sup> on the inner or outer (or both) sides of locally produced LB bowls. As a new study will attempt to demonstrate, these notations follow a more or less consistent parameter.<sup>4</sup> With all data assembled, a complete, standard notation sequence can be reconstructed, listing an opening formula ("The *b-r-t* which is in it", see below), date, commodity, quantity, origin, destination, and the registering scribe. Ten (or perhaps twelve) of the Tel Sera' inscriptions, all ten inscriptions from Lachish, and six (out of nine) other inscriptions from the region can conclusively be fitted in this pattern. As all preserved inscriptions are fragmentary, in no case is the full sequence preserved, and the number and sequence of given details may have varied from bowl to bowl. The longest sequence that we have is preserved on Lachish Bowl no. 3 (Černý

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<sup>1</sup> The only exceptions are a few small fragments from Beth Shean, see list below.

<sup>2</sup> The number presented here for Tel Sera' results from a revised edition that I was entrusted with by Eliezer Oren to be published in the final excavation reports (Wimmer forthcoming). Orly Goldwasser in her profound *editio princeps* (Goldwasser 1984) had presented 7 inscriptions (4 bowls and 3 sherds) and classified 4 fragments as "undecipherable sherds". The re-edition will comprise all 16 inscriptions: 12 bowls or fragments thereof, 2 ostraca and 2 labels, now named "Tel Sera' Hieratic Inscription" TSHI 1–16. (One more Hieratic fragment with a numeral and a sign for the measure epha must date to the IA II and belongs to the context of Hieratic notations in Hebrew alphabetic inscriptions, see Wimmer 2008a). The re-study of the Tel Sera' inscriptions may open the way for a better understanding of this text genre in general. Some of the new observations and insights, as are of relevance for texts from other sites as well, are referred to in this paper and will be presented in a more comprehensive manner in Wimmer forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> Black ink as a rule, but some numerals in red are attested in TSHI 4 (Wimmer forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> Wimmer forthcoming, see n. 2.

1958), now Lachish Hieratic Inscription I (Sweeney 2004: 1601–1607), where more than two thirds of the bowl could be reassembled.

The same expression that appears at the beginning of TSHI<sup>5</sup> 1, 2, 3(?) and perhaps on Tell el-Fara' fragment B,<sup>6</sup> is also recorded on this Lachish Bowl. A portion of the bowl to the right of (i.e. preceding) this expression is missing. If any preceding signs were spaced as closely as in the rest of the line, at least the lower parts of one or two signs should, however, be visible in the remaining 1.5 cm to the right, if there were any. Both Černý 1958 and Sweeney 2004 start reading the line with the regnal year date, a logical introduction for an administrative record. On the other hand there is no pronounced spatium before the date, two more dates follow later in the same inscription, not in an initial position, and, as other inscriptions demonstrate (TSHI 1 and 6), the year date can indeed hold another position than the beginning in these notations.<sup>7</sup> It can thus be assumed that the Lachish Bowl, too, starts with what should be understood as an “opening formula”. Due to the fragmentary or otherwise bad preservation in all attested cases where this expression is preserved, it is exceedingly difficult to conclusively interpret the remaining signs. There is a consensus that its initial group is <sup>8</sup>. As I elaborate in Wimmer forthcoming, a possible and plausible reading would suggest to reconstruct *b-r-t*, the Semitic lexeme known from the Hebrew Bible as “covenant” or “treaty”, and attested in Egyptian Ramesside texts as a loan word referring to tributes imposed on foreigners who capitulated to submission.<sup>9</sup> Here, the formula seems to read: *b-r-t ntj [jm=s]*, “(The) *b-r-t*, which is in it:”, and imply: “the tribute, (for) which (atoken amount) is in it (i.e. the bowl)” or “... is (registered) in/on it (i.e. the bowl)”.

What follows, specifies the date of the delivery: *m rnp.t 4 3bd 4 3h.t sw 26*, “in year 4, 4th month of inundation, day 26”. The rest of the first line is missing. We would expect here a specification of the delivered commodity (probably *sw.t*, “wheat”, as twice on the outside) and the amount. In line 2, after the long break, a fragmentary sign and a place name, which shall be discussed below, can be read. Further in the line, after a faded portion, where only an isolated *s* can be made out, follow the remains of a second place name. After the classifier (determinative) for a foreign toponym, the line continues with *dmd 1000[...]* *n šmw t3 1000[...]*, “total: 1000[...] for harvest tax, the 1000[...],” followed again by the long break.

The two lines on the outside, which are in an even worse state of preservation with parts of the inscription faded, start, after a break, with the expression *jnj(?) m*

<sup>5</sup> For the abbreviation “TSHI” cf. n. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Goldwasser and Wimmer 1999; cf. also Wimmer forthcoming.














<sup>7</sup> Cf. also Goldwasser 1984: 78, “The *b3* ligature ... on the Lachish hieratic bowl, were it also apparently opens the inscription.”



<sup>8</sup> Černý 1958, Sweeney 2004: 1602, Goldwasser 1984: 78, Wimmer forthcoming

<sup>9</sup> In Wimmer 2010a: 176 I followed Černý and Sweeney reading “die beiden Bas”. The reading *b-r-t* in the Tel Sera' inscriptions and the Lachish bowl as well, is clearly to be preferred.



*rn.p.t 4 3bd 2 šmw sw* [...], “delivered in year 4, 2nd month of summer” in line 1, and in line 2: *[rn]p.t 4 3bd 4 šmw sw* [...], “[...] year 4, 4th month of summer”. In both lines, the word *sw.t*, “wheat”, and several numbers for quantities follow (line 1: 420 *d3.t* [...], “420, remainder: [...]”; line 2: 360[...]900), but no other details are discernible.<sup>10</sup>

### Toponym I: Lachish!

The first toponym (inside, line 2) has been a matter of much discussion. All agree, 1) that it is preceded in the break by the lower parts of the sign , best understood as: “(The) prince/ruler of...”, 2) the last phonetic group is to be read as , -š3, 3) the classifiers are  (Černý) or  (Sweeney) and standard for a place name considered foreign from the Egyptian perspective. Next is the group , y-, probably the initial consonant of the personal name of this ruler (“The prince of TN, Y-“). The first and second phonetic groups of the toponym are difficult and controversial. The discussion is reviewed in Sweeney 2004: 1603. Černý 1958: 133 rendered      . This was read “Latish”, and equated with Lachish in Ahituv 1984.<sup>11</sup> The two parallel lines and a possible tick at the left would have to be joined for a somewhat awkward .  for the second group is self-suggesting at first glance.

In Sweeney’s facsimile (Fig. 7.1b, Sweeney 2004: 1604), the upper line in the first group has a little, downbent tick at the left, while she verified at the original that the small loop at the lower line is “in fact, a small grain of lighter pottery fabric” (Sweeney 2004: 1603). Sweeney opts for two parallel *n*-signs and renders “Nentisha?”, as had been suggested as one possibility by Albright (1939: 20–21). His alternative option is “Kentisha”. For this last reading, the upper sign would be identified as , which might be tempting at first glance (cf. Sweeney’s facsimile). However, the *k* is a difficult option, since in Hieratic the long sloping stroke always joins the right end of the little loop, never its left end, as would here be the case. The downbent tick makes it, on the other hand, impossible, to read *n* for the upper line. This leaves Černý’s  as the only remaining possibility, but, intuitive as his reading may be, it clearly does not fit well with his own facsimile (Fig. 7.1a). The

<sup>10</sup> In Goldwasser 1982 and Sweeney 2004: 1607 it is argued that the outside should be read before the inside. In this case, the sequence of the three dated entries in correlation with the throne accession date would indicate Ramesses III as the regnal year’s pharaoh (as against Merenptah, if the inside is read first, cf. Redford 1979). Palaeographic indicators would indeed support a 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty date (cf. Wimmer 1003: N.11/Cc.2,3 d, N.11/Cc.4 c, N.37 b [outside], S.29 b, U.10/B.7 b). If this is so, the opening formula b-r-t ntj jm=s must have preceded the text on the outside, too, and has to be reconstructed in the missing part at the beginning of line 1.

<sup>11</sup> Ahituv 1984: 129f.: “a reading of the name as Lachish is not improbable”, with n. 324: “The first signs being  ” (without explanation).

granular spot referred to by Sweeney, which can also be seen on the photograph Sweeney 2004: Fig. 24.2, may in fact open a way out of the dilemma: it disturbs the sign here and blurs the closeness of the downbent tick to the lower line. It seems now possible to reconstruct a shape that comes much closer to a Hieratic  $\complement$ , than the facsimiles by both Černý and Sweeney suggest (Fig. 7.1c). On the basis of the photograph, it should also be permitted to reconstruct the right ends of the two lines in a way fitting well for  $\complement$ : a break line between two fragments runs exactly here vertically through the lines. This (and all other joining breaks) was not indicated in the existing facsimiles, and may explain, why the precise details at this end of the sign were not examined and considered. The reconstruction now fits well with a spacious  $\complement$  that is in compliance with the overall spacious ductus of the inscription (Fig. 7.1c). Its handwriting can be characterised as favouring large, generous sign drawings, with pronounced straight vertical and horizontal lines.<sup>12</sup> In group writing, the  $r$  should be complemented by a stroke:  $\text{I} \complement$ . The absence of the stroke is rare, but not excluded. On the other hand, there is a small gap after the  $\complement$  (which can be seen in Černý's facsimile, Fig. 7.1a). It may be considered to restore a tiny stroke, which would then have faded completely.

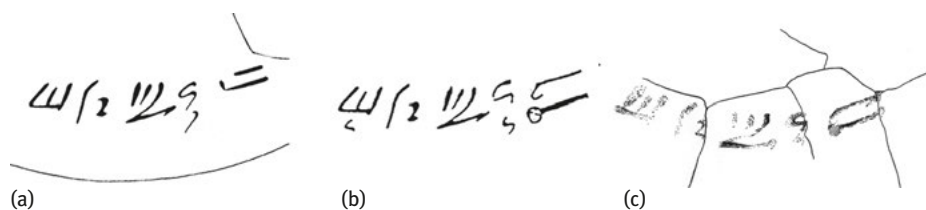










Fig. 7.1: Facsimiles by a) Černý 1958 (detail of Pl. 44), b) Sweeney 2004 (detail of p. 1604), c) Wimmer.

For the second group, it has been accepted to read no other than  $\complement$   $\iota(j)$ .<sup>13</sup> According to the principle of *lectio difficilior*, Černý opted for an unidentified “Lachish”, rather than the expected “Lachish”. The  $\complement$   $k$  in Hieratic is usually characterized by a very pronounced stroke sloping down to the right. But, if this sign takes the upper position in a group of two signs, one under the other, this stroke can dwindle dramatically, so that the sign can resemble an ‘S’ turned horizontally by 90° (cf. Möller 1927: no. 511, P10621,11; von Bomhard 1998: 71). The sign on the Lachish bowl can in fact be explained as a characteristic trait by the scribe’s hand,

<sup>12</sup> see esp. line 1, but also the word *šmw* in line 2, inside. On the outside the signs turn out smaller.




<sup>13</sup> Even if Černý’s facsimile looks more like  $\complement$  – a rather unlikely positioning of these signs in Hieratic, where they would normally be grouped  $\complement$ . Sweeney suggests  $\complement$  for the upper and  $\complement$  for the lower sign as possible alternatives (Sweeney 2004: 1606).




who would have bent the down stroke in the direction of the sign following below, yet stopped short of a true ligature. The wide spectrum that individual styles allow Hieratic scribes to navigate in, does make this a possible and plausible option! This instance may not be an exemplary performance for  but it would not be the only example of careless or rather individual traits in this handwriting.<sup>14</sup>

In sum, little if any odds remain with a very likely interpretation of this toponym, which would suggest itself à priori, namely       , *L-k-š*, “Lachish”. It is no longer necessary nor reasonable to introduce otherwise unattested, new place names here.



This result is by no means surprising, but it comes after a long history of meandering attempts at reading three small Hieratic signs. This may serve as an object lesson for the often problematic interpretation and reproduction of badly preserved passages in Hieratic texts. Jaroslav Černý was an outstanding expert for Hieratic texts (mostly those from Deir el-Medine), and so is Debora Sweeney. And yet their two facsimile drawings differ markedly at this (and other) detail(s). As can be demonstrated in many cases, facsimiles tend to reflect the researcher’s interpretation of what he or she perceives on the original or on a photograph.<sup>15</sup> Hieratic displays a range of flexibility in writing styles, in the shaping and grouping of signs, which differ from Hieroglyphic writing. It must be said that a substantial measure of familiarity is essential for assessing the possibilities of interpretation that Hieratic provides. For assessing different, given interpretations, 1) their consistency with the properties of Hieratic styles must be given, and, when this is positive, 2) a logical solution in a given context should take precedence. Both, seems to me, is applicable here.

### Toponym II: Jaffa?





The second place name, which follows in the same line, after a lacuna of several centimetres, has  as classifier (determinative). The preceding signs are read *JJ*□ (Černý) or   □ (Sweeney). It is purely a matter of convention in transliterating Hieratic, whether the two little strokes are rendered as *//*, *JJ*, or even *ጋ*<sup>16</sup>. The last spelling is highly unlikely and would best be explained here as an erroneous



<sup>14</sup> cf. e.g. the very bumptious  in *ntj* (line 1 inside), the line drawing of  in line 1 outside, as compared with the other occurrences of this sign, or the varying styles of the different occurrences of .








<sup>15</sup> Cf. my observations in Wimmer 2008a: 21 and passim, Wimmer 2001. This is naturally not only true for Hieratic, cf. also e.g. Wimmer 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Sweeney 2004: 1606 remarks that a photo exists in the Lachish British Expedition archive, where the two strokes appear as if joined at the top, “like the house-sign ”. This can be seen in Černý’s facsimile (Fig. 7.3a), but Černý ignores the upper line in his transliteration. If an upper line was there, it would be difficult to explain such a sign preceding the classifier .

diplography for  $\vartheta \square pw$ .  $\mathbb{P}\mathbb{P}$  is in this case less likely, too, since the two strokes are even smaller than the preceding  $\square$ . The transcription for  $//\square$  (and for  $\mathbb{P}\mathbb{P}\square$ ) would be *pj*. Černý's *JJ* is ambiguous and may render *pj* or *pw<w>*. The preceding signs have completely faded, unfortunately.


Sweeney discusses the possibility of reconstructing the toponym Jaffa, but rules this option out, because in the known attestations “Jaffa is always written with a final ” (Sweeney 2004: 1605), or rather  $\vartheta$  in Hieratic. In Ramesside Hieratic orthography, the semi-vowels *j* and *w*, when joining a consonant, and especially in the final position of a word, are often interchangeable. Moreover, according to the rules of Egyptian spelling of foreign names in the New Kingdom, groups with the semi-vowels *ʒ*, *j* or *w* complementing a consonant, such as e.g.  ,  ,  (see both above in *L-k-š*, “Lachish”), do not indicate any specific vowels as a rule.<sup>17</sup>


Thus,  $\mathbb{P}\mathbb{P}\square$ ,  $//\square$  and  $\vartheta\square$  (and also   for *pʒ*) stand for *-p-* solely.  $[J-]p$  for Jaffa/Yafo is therefore in fact a plausible reading. With Sweeney, “it seems logical for it to be mentioned in this context”, because an Egyptian grain depot is attested there (Sweeney 2004: 1606),<sup>18</sup> and in our given context the tax delivery from Lachish may have been destined for Jaffa.

Support for this option comes from another fragment from Lachish, Hieratic Inscription X (Sweeney 2004: 1613). Only a few signs are preserved there. The first can, with some caution, be identified as the definite article *pʒ* ,<sup>19</sup> followed by the symbol for prince/ruler (as above, preceding *L-k-š*). The rest is rendered    by Sweeney. The sign read as  can in Hieratic be identical with  $\square$ , and here this looks in fact a better transliteration. The following  $\vartheta$  fits well with  $\square$  in group writing (but does not fit with ).<sup>20</sup> The two irregular preceding signs are not an elegant way to write  $\mathbb{P}\mathbb{P}$ , but in a ductus such as in this brief fragment, this is a permissible transliteration. A classifier () must then have faded

<sup>17</sup> cf. Late Egyptian orthography rules in Černý and Groll 1984: 1–3; Junge 2008: 42. An axiom expressed by M. Görg for the principles of group-writing is still valid: “Fälle, die einer postulierten Vokalisation zu widersprechen scheinen, dürfen nicht von vornherein als Ausnahmen charakterisiert werden.” (Görg 1979: 176 n. 45).

<sup>18</sup> with reference to Na’aman 1981: 179–180 and Redford 1990: 35.

<sup>19</sup> In Hieratic, we should expect a complementing , which is omitted here.

<sup>20</sup> The unusually long downward stroke of this  $\vartheta$  comes along the equally long stick of , and the upward extension of the right stroke of  $\square$ . All are obviously a characteristic trait for a somewhat excentric hand.

without a trace, or is to be expected beyond the break. *p<sup>3</sup>-wr J-p*, “the prince of Jaffa”, can (and should) be read in Lachish HI X (Fig. 7.2).



Fig. 7.2: Facsimile of Lachish HI X (Wimmer).

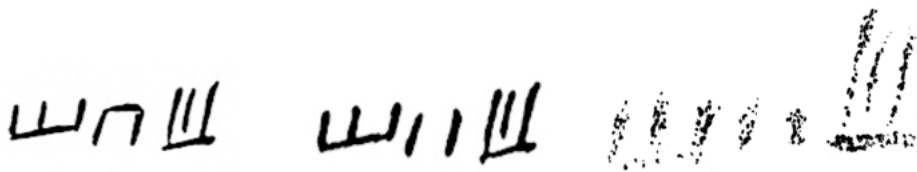






Fig. 7.3: Facsimiles by a) Černý 1958 (detail of Pl. 44), b) Sweeney 2004 (detail of p. 1604), c) Wimmer.

An alternative option for our second toponym in the Lachish Bowl would identify the first preserved sign as  (instead of ). This could explain, why the sign is clearly higher than the following signs. Such a reduced shape in Hieratic (cf. the same sign in *L-k-š*) is graphically possible.<sup>21</sup> The abridged ductus in this passage allows us to read the first of the two small strokes as a much reduced, cursive , 3. The second stroke can then be explained as , an additional classifier for a foreign name. Even the possibility of an upper line, joining, in this case, with the left stroke only, would then find a comfortable explanation.<sup>22</sup> The shapes differ markedly

<sup>21</sup> cf. Wimmer 1993: M.8/G.1: Wien 18; M.8/X.1(/N.5): Ramesseum 127; Sowada and Wimmer 2017: 75, 80 Fig. 2b.

<sup>22</sup> cf. above n. 16.

from the spelling of the first toponym, but variable ductus, sign shapes and spellings for the same signs and expressions by one scribe, even in one and the same text, are a familiar phenomenon in Hieratic texts.<sup>23</sup> It is a possibility that, instead of Jaffa, the toponym *L-k-š* is repeated here. But, it would then have to be explained, why the same place name would appear twice after a short interval in the same line.

As on other bowls and fragments, the toponym Lachish in the Lachish Bowl can best be understood as indicating the origin of the harvest tax deliveries, in such a sense as: “amount and type of grain, delivered by the prince of TN, PN”. The second toponym, if the reading “Jaffa” is preferred over “Lachish”, documents the destination.

It is most regrettable that no other toponyms are preserved completely, and none can be read clearly in any of the Hieratic bowl inscriptions. Their bad and mostly very fragmentary preservation allows us only in a few cases to suggest readings or reconstructions. We can tentatively detect seven instances of toponyms. Lachish on Lachish HI I is the only example that is preserved completely. “Jaffa” (or: “Lachish” again) on the same bowl is fragmentary, and such are all other instances:

Lachish HI X has [...] *p3-wr J-p* [...], “the prince of Jaffa” (see above). Lachish HI II has a fragmentary *wr Qn*[...] or *Pn* [...] “[from the] prince of TN”. Only the initial group is preserved. Perhaps one of the subsidiary towns of Lachish is meant, but I cannot offer an identification.<sup>24</sup> Lachish HI IV has *sšrw n(?) wr* [...], “grain of/for(?) the prince [of TN]”.<sup>25</sup> The Tel Sera’ inscriptions have only in one case (TSHI 3) the passage *dmd m-dj wr R/T* [...], “total (amount) from the prince of TN” (Wimmer forthcoming). Only the initial group is preserved, which can be read either  $\text{I} \triangleleft$  or  $\text{9} \triangleleft$ . A small fragment from Tell es-Safi has arguably [...] *j-r wr D-p-[t]*, “[...]el, the prince of Saf[it]”, preserving an original name form of Tell es-Safi/Gath (Wimmer and Maeir 2007). Another small fragment from Tel Haror has only the final [...] *tj* preserved, preceding foreign place name classifiers (Goldwasser 1991b). A purely speculative, but logical reconstruction would be [*Q-d*]-*t*, “Gaza”.<sup>26</sup> It

<sup>23</sup> see also above n. 14.

<sup>24</sup> This group is read  $\square$ , pn, by Sweeney: 2004: 1607 „this foreign ruler“. The preserved traces fit better for  $\triangleleft$  than  $\square$ , and there is no other example in these inscriptions, where the term *wr* is accompanied by the demonstrative pronoun.

<sup>25</sup> The signs in this line of the fragment are difficult, cf. Gilula 1976 and Sweeney 2004: 1609f. I believe the term *sšrw* is graphically maintainable and the most logical solution. [*d*]mj  $\epsilon$  *wr*, “the town of the district of the ruler” (Sweeney) would be an unexpected wording in the context of the Hieratic bowl inscriptions.

<sup>26</sup> Suggested first by Görg, cf. Wimmer 2010a: 177 n.216.



could then indicate the destination of the grain taxes from Tel Haror, in the same way as “Jaffa” in Lachish HI I. Incoming tax deliveries at local sub-centres such as Lachish and Tell es-Safi would have been forwarded from there to a central Egyptian grain depot at Jaffa. For the more southern sites like Tel Sera’, Tel Haror and others, the collecting centre can be assumed to be located in Gaza.

#### Updated list of Hieratic inscriptions from Canaan:

**Tel Sera’ 16 inscriptions:** three incomplete bowls plus nine fragments of probably or possibly the same context (TSHI 1–12); one ostrakon (TSHI 14), one unclear (literary, administrative, letter?, TSHI 13), one possible label (TSHI 15), one jar label (TSHI 16)  
Lit.: Goldwasser 1984; Wimmer forthcoming.

**Lachish 10 inscriptions:** one bowl plus nine fragments of probably or possibly the same context (Lachish HI I–X). Lachish HI XI is a label in cursive hieroglyphs.  
Lit.: Černý 1958; Gilula 1976; Goldwasser 1991a; Sweeney 2004; Magrill et al. 2004.

**Tell el-Fara’ 2 sherds:** perhaps from one bowl.  
Lit.: Goldwasser and Wimmer 1999.

**Qubur el-Walayda 2 sherds:** one probably a fragment from a bowl, one administrative ostrakon.  
Lit.: Wimmer and Lehmann 2014.

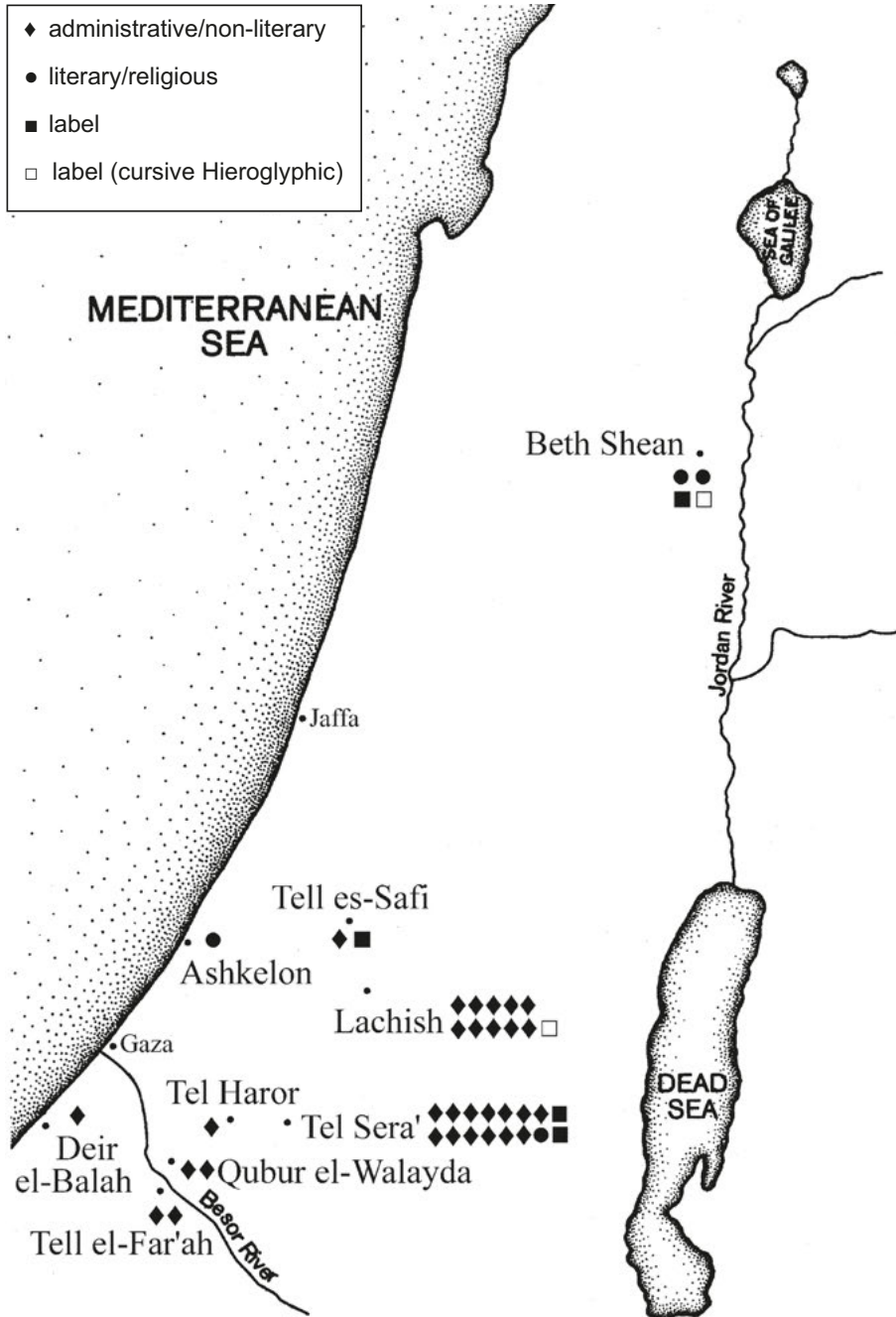
**Deir el-Balah 1 sherd:** probably a fragment of a bowl.  
Lit.: Wimmer 2010b.

**Tel Haror 1 sherd:** probably a fragment of a bowl.  
Lit.: Goldwasser 1991b.

**Tell es-Sâfi 2 sherds:** one possible fragment of a bowl, one label.  
Lit.: Wimmer and Maeir 2007; Maeir et al. 2004; Wimmer 2012.

**1 ostrakon fragment:** literary/religious.  
Lit.: Wimmer 2008b.

**Beth Shean:** 3 sherds two literary/religious fragments, one label. Another label in cursive hieroglyphs.  
Lit.: Wimmer 1993; 1994; 2007; James and McGovern 1993; fig. 11/4.



Map 7.1: Hieratic inscriptions found in Israel.

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Chris McKinny, Aharon Tavger and Itzhaq Shai

# Tel Burna in the Late Bronze – assessing the 13th century BCE landscape of the Shephelah

## Introduction

Over the last decade, new excavations (see below) and the publication of survey materials (cf. Dagan 2000, 2010, 2011b) have shown that the Late Bronze Age (LB) was a period of great significance in the Shephelah.<sup>1</sup> Unlike most of the southern Levant, settlement in the Shephelah during the LB (56 sites)<sup>2</sup> actually increased following the Middle Bronze (MB) II (47 sites).<sup>3</sup> This evidence seems to indicate that the Shephelah was more immune to the destabilizing forces that characterized the southern Levant during the transition between the MB and LB (e.g., Gonen 1984, 1992b, 1992a; Mazar 1990: 239–241; Weinstein 1991; Fischer 2006; Maeir 2010: 165–178). The historical rationale for this relative immunity goes beyond the scope of our paper, however, in what follows we would like to layout the current archaeological landscape of the Shephelah during the LB with a specific emphasis on the 13th century BCE, which to date is the only phase from the LB that we have excavated at Tel Burna. In order to accomplish this, we will compare the excavated results of the main archaeological sites of the Shephelah that were inhabited during the LB to the contemporaneous remains from Tel Burna.

## Tel Burna

Tel Burna is located in the Shephelah above the Nahal Guvrin between Lachish and Tell es-Safi/Gath (Map 8.1). Since 2009, our team, under the auspices of the Institute of Archaeology at Ariel University,<sup>4</sup> has investigated the tell by opening five

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<sup>1</sup> This study was made possible through support from the Israel Science Foundation Grant No. 522/16 (I.S.).

<sup>2</sup> Classified by Dagan as 15 cities/town on tells, 11 villages, 1 farmstead, 4 isolated or scattered structures, 11 burial sites, 14 findspots (2011b: 252–254).

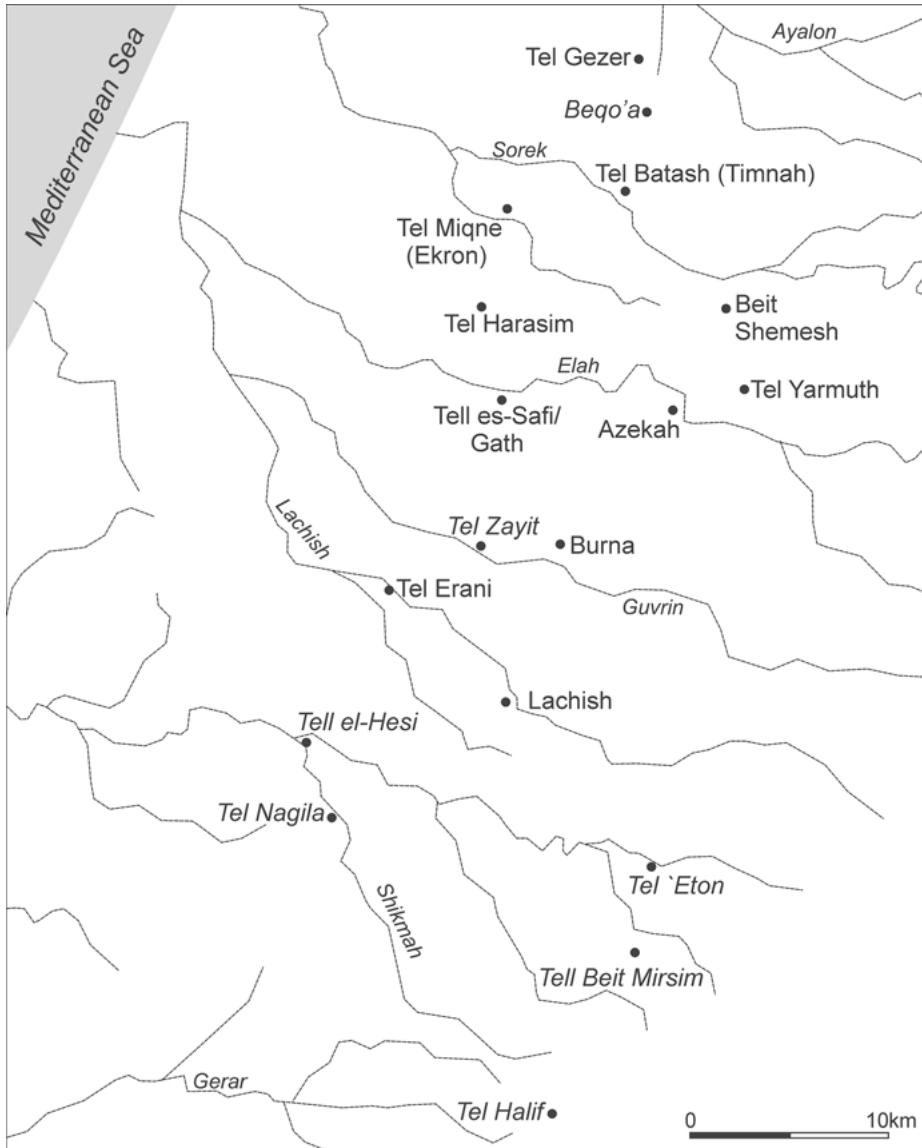
<sup>3</sup> Classified by Dagan as 8 fortified cities/towns, 15 villages, 1 isolated structure, 8 burial sites, and 15 findspots (2011b: 250–251). Compare also the decrease of sites in the Iron I from 56 (LB) to 17 (Iron I) (Dagan 2011b: 255–256).

<sup>4</sup> The 2010–2014 Seasons were under the auspices of the Institute of Archaeology at Bar-Ilan University.

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**Map 8.1:** Map of Tel Burna and sites mentioned in the text (prepared by J. Rosenberg).

excavations areas that include the following: Area A1 (eastern stepped trench with Iron II fortifications), Area A2 (central summit with Iron II buildings with some Persian activity), Area B1 (western lower platform with a Late Bronze cultic enclosure), Area B2 (western stepped trench with Iron II/Persian structure, Iron II fortifications, and LB fill[?]), and Area C (agricultural installations located to the northeast of the

tell). The previous surveys and excavations in these areas indicate that the site was inhabited from the Early Bronze Age through the Persian period with the LB and Iron II representing the two main periods of occupation on the mound (Uziel and Shai 2010; Shai et al. 2012, 2015; Shai and Uziel 2014; Shai, McKinny, and Uziel 2015). To date, LB remains have been uncovered in all of the excavated areas including the agricultural installations, but occupational remains have only been exposed in Area B1 (in situ stratum) and B2 (large fill layer).

## The LB at Tel Burna

### Area B2

Significantly, the summit of the tell is marked by a 70 x 70 m casemate fortification that presumably was constructed during the Iron II (Areas A1, A2, and B2). The exact dating of this fortification within the Iron II has not yet been established as we have yet to reach the foundation of the city walls, but our current knowledge indicates that the wall was in use from at least as early as the 9th century BCE/late Iron IIA (cf. Shai et al. 2012, Shai et al. 2015a). Related to this and the nature of the LB occupation at Tel Burna, over the course of the last several seasons in Area B2 we have exposed a large amount of what appears to be Late Bronze fill that was deposited next to the western edge of the Iron II casemate fortifications. This fill was presumably deposited at some point during the Iron II in order to strengthen the city's fortifications on its western side, or due to other unknown reasons.

The discovery of large quantities of LB fill on the western side of the tell should be compared to the stratigraphic picture on the eastern side of the tell (Area A1) where we did not find LB fill, but, instead, found the remains of a late Iron IIA extra-mural occupational layer. With regards to the Iron II, this is interesting given the fact that the western side of the city would have been naturally more desirable to the ancient inhabitants as it faces the prevailing Mediterranean breeze, whereas occupation on the eastern slopes would have received far less wind on account of the fact that it would have been blocked by the rise of the tell. During this period, the northern side also faced Philistine Gath while the eastern side faced Judah. Accordingly, this contemporary political reality might have played a dominant role in the Iron II inhabitants' choice to only settle outside of the walls towards the relative safety of their Judahite kin. In addition to the implications of this stratigraphic sequence in the Iron II, the Late Bronze fill in Area B2 might also indicate a significant LB layer originating from the near vicinity. This conclusion is due not only to the high quantity of LB fill in the four squares (A7, C6, C7, and B7) that were excavated west to the fortification, but also due to the mostly homogenous character of the ceramic material coming from the northwestern side of C7 (see Fig. 8.1). In this



**Fig. 8.1:** Aerial photo showing Area B2 after the 2017 season.

area, which (Semjda et al. 2018: 122) also is clearly defined by metallurgical activity presumably in a secondary context, it appears that the context will allow for the restoration of a LB ceramic assemblage despite the fact that the LB material was clearly deposited there at some point during the Iron II, as noted by the presence of indicative Iron II sherds among the majority LB sherds that were deposited at almost two meters in depth (and it remains unclear that we have reached the end of this fill layer). Future excavation will hopefully help to determine a more specific dating for the secondary date of this fill, which seems to be related to the strengthening of the Iron II fortifications, however, as it now stands, it appears that the high quantity of secondary LB material found along the Iron II fortification wall was brought to its current location from a short distance away, as indicated by the restorable nature of the pottery. Regarding the primary date of the LB fill in Area B2, it is impossible to state with certainty due to the fact that we have not thoroughly examined the pottery. However, our initial examination of the pottery indicates that it is similar to the in situ material from Area B1.

## Area B1

Currently, the most important LB remains that have been found at Tel Burna are from Area B1. This area was excavated from 2011–2017, as a result of the survey that



indicated that this region of the site was only inhabited during the LB (Uziel and Shai 2010: 233–234; Shai and Uziel 2014: 186). This dating has been confirmed in the 20 excavation squares (5 x 5 m) that have been excavated in Area B1 in which a single layer<sup>5</sup> of LB occupation was excavated. It is worth noting that throughout Area B1 the archaeological deposit has been exceptionally shallow with the deposit ranging in depth between 20 cm to 1.20 m. This depth is governed by the high bedrock in this area of the tell, which was often used as a surface. Area B1 can be characterized as the northern half of a wide plateau that is located to the west and below the summit of Tel Burna. This plateau is roughly 40 meters wide by 90 meters long, and seems to have been artificially formed during the LB. The northern edge of the plateau is rectangular in shape starting along the same line as the casemate fortifications of the tell (Fig. 8.2). The western edge of the plateau seems to run beside and beneath the modern road before turning diagonally to the southeast and joining (or going beneath) the southwest corner of the upper summit/Iron II fortifications. During the 2017 season, and owing to a particular dry winter and early grazing by the local cattle herd, we were able to trace the lines of very large architecture along the southwestern diagonal stretch of the plateau. The extent of the eastern side of the plateau is unknown, as it appears that during the Iron II (perhaps the Iron IIB) a large stone fill or glacis was built on top of the LB layer presumably along the entire length of the western side of the tell.<sup>6</sup> Further excavations in the lower sections of our western stepped stratigraphic trench (Area B2) will hopefully allow us to determine the relationship between the LB layer going beneath the tell and the large-scale earthen and stone works that were constructed there presumably during the Iron II (Fig. 8.1).

The main architectural feature in Area B1 is a large enclosure (Building 29305) that now appears to measure c. 26 m (east-west) x by at least 25 m (north to south), which results in a sq. area of c. 500 m. To date, the western, northern, and eastern sections of the enclosure have been located, but we have been unable to trace the southern wall of the enclosure (Fig. 8.2). Building 29305 was primarily built directly on bedrock, which served as a surface in various locations throughout the enclosure. In other places, the enclosure had either a stone pavement or a crushed limestone surface over loose rocky fill, in these cases depressions in the bedrock were filled in with stones to create a level living surface. The western section of the enclosure remains the most significant part of the building, as the finds there were the best preserved in the entire excavation area, and demonstrated a clear cultic affiliations as made evident by the uncovering of ceramic masks, local and imported figurines and cultic vessels, a large assemblage of animal bones, and a standing stone (Shai, McKinny, and Uziel 2015; Sharp, McKinny, and Shai 2015), Fig. 8.3.

<sup>5</sup> Stray Byzantine sherds and tesserae were found in every square all over Area B1, but only a very small architectural feature can be related to this period (a wall in square MM9).

<sup>6</sup> A probe into this feature reached bedrock (WW7) at the same level as bedrock in the adjoining square (VV7).



Fig. 8.2: Aerial photo showing Area B1 after the 2017 season.



Fig. 8.3: Standing stone(?) with cylindrical hole.

Directly to the east of this assemblage, we uncovered high quantities of restorable vessels beside what appears to be three standing stones (Hebrew *masseboth* – cf. e.g., Gen 28:18–22; Exod 34:13), which are often associated with ritual activity. The large rectangular central standing stone is made of soft chalk that was purposefully situated on its end as it was supported by a wall on the east, north and south, and the exposed bedrock on the west. In the center of the stone, a symmetrical hole was drilled through its width (Fig. 8.3). Standing stones are common in the southern Levant (e.g., Avner 1984, 2001; LaRocca-Pitts 2001: 205–28) and considered to be an identification marker for ritual places. Therefore, it is important to be certain that the standing stone was not part of the structure. In our case, this seems very clear, as it was made of a very soft stone, it is located near a concentration of cultic vessels and it does not seem to be part of any architectural elements. It is well-known from earlier periods (e.g., Early Bronze I Hartuv – Mazar and Miroshedji 1996) but also LB (e.g., Hazor – Ben-Tor 2013).

### 13th century BCE date for Area B1?

While it is too early to be certain regarding the exact date of the stratum uncovered in Area B1, the ceramic evidence seems to indicate a 13th century BCE date at the latest with the possibility of occupation already starting in the 14th century BCE.<sup>7</sup> Currently, we are carrying out a thorough study of the ceramic materials in preparation for the final publication, as well as analyzing C 14 samples. Hopefully, this will allow us to make a confident statement regarding the date of the LB remains from Area B1.

Despite the current lack of radiometric dating, the ceramic remains appear to be similar to Lachish VII and Tell es-Safi/Gath Stratum E4 (Shai et al. 2017; Maeir et al. this volume). This includes local vessels as rounded bowls with various rim shapes some are decorated with red band on the rim or inside the bowl (Singer-Avitz 2004: 1012; Panitz-Cohen and Mazar 2006: 31–33; Gadot, Yasur-Landau, and Uziel 2012: 243–45), cooking pots with triangular rims (Yannai 2004: 1042–44; Panitz-Cohen and Mazar 2006: 68–70; Gadot, Yasur-Landau, and Uziel 2012: 247–48). A few typical LB kraters with carinated bodies and everted rims were found, one of the kraters is unique. It is a decorated with the typical LB hand-painted decoration including two horned animals, yet the tree is not the usual palm tree but seems to be a different type (perhaps a pomegranate? – see a similar although not identical motif of a tree on a goblet from

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<sup>7</sup> Additional evidence for a 14th century BCE occupation at Tel Burna was found in a survey test pit on the south side of the tell in the form of a Egyptian plaque seal dating to the reign of Amenhotep III (Cassuto, Koch, and Shai 2015).

the Fosse Temple at Lachish – Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940: Pl. XLVIII B: 251). The krater also has a depiction of a bird which is not a very common decoration on these types of vessels, however, one can also be found in the Fosse temple at Lachish (e.g. Lachish II: Pl. XLVIII B: 251). Several chalices were found and most of them have an open rounded bowl and a straight hollow (~10 cm) short leg (for parallels, see Panitz-Cohen and Mazar 2006: 52–54). Goblets were discovered in the same location some of which were decorated. The last two types are of importance, since in a domestic context as at Tel Batash (Panitz-Cohen and Mazar 2006: 52–55) and Tell es-Safi/Gath (Gadot et al. 2012: 246) their occurrence was quite rare. The imported ceramic repertoire includes the common types of Base Ring, White Slip and White Shaved wares. However, several rare vessels were also discovered, including a three-cupped votive vessel, two large Cypriot pithoi (Shai et al. in press) and several zoomorphic (bull-shaped) vessels.

We also uncovered several locally-made LB plaque figurines (Sharp, McKinny, and Shai 2015). While plaque figurines are typical to the LB in general, the *Revadim*-type figurine has as of yet only been found in the Shephelah/Coastal Plain (Aphek, Tel Harasim, Azekah, and Revadim) contexts associated with the 13th century BCE (Sharp, McKinny, and Shai 2015: Fig. 3, 63–65; Oeming et al. 2016: Fig. 5, 210–211 see also Kleiman et al. this volume), although one possible variation of this type appears at Ashkelon in what seems to be the early 12th century (Press 2012: 76). Further evidence for a Shephelah figurine tradition is reflected in the presence of a figurine with a Hathor head-dress (Sharp, McKinny, and Shai 2015: 4) with examples from Tell es-Safi/Gath (Maeir et al. 2003), Tel Harasim (Givon 2002: 2.2), and Azekah (see Oeming et al. 2016).

Taking this evidence together, it appears that Tel Burna was settled extensively during the 13th century BCE including both the western lower platform and likely the summit of the tell itself, as made evident by the fill layers from Area B2. It is not yet clear if the site was inhabited during the earlier phases of the LB, or if it was re-settled only during the 13th century BCE. Based on the survey as well as numerous sherds found in Area B1 and B2, it seems likely that the site was inhabited during the Early Bronze and MB Ages. In light of this evidence, and in view of this current volume which brings together a wide array of different LB archaeological material, we would like to briefly compare the chronological sequence at Tel Burna to the main excavated archaeological sites in the Shephelah.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This overview will include excavated ruins from Nahal Aijalon in the north to Nahal Shiqmah in the south (with the exception of Tel Halif). The chalk trough and the rise of the Judean hill country is the eastern limit, and the transition zone between the Shephelah and the coastal plain in the west (i.e., including the ruins of Gezer, Ekron, and Gath).

## Comparison of excavated sites in the Shephelah

### Gezer

Gezer was continuously occupied from the MB-Iron II (cf. Dever 1986b, 1986a; Seger and Hardin 2013 see Ortiz and Wolff this volume). The destruction of the MB city (Stratum XVIII) has been related to the invasion of Thutmose III c. 1482 BCE (Dever 1993: 500–01). The LB IB (Stratum XVII) occupation at Gezer is poor, however, the Amarna Age/LB IIA (Stratum XVI) is well-established and the period to which Dever controversially dated the “Outer Wall” (Dever 1986b, 1993: 503). This latter stratum may have suffered a destruction towards the end of the 14th century BCE (Dever 1993: 503). 13th century BCE Gezer (Stratum XV)<sup>9</sup> remained inhabited and seems to have suffered a destruction towards the end of the 13th century that might be related to Merneptah’s attack on the site as mentioned in the Merneptah/Israel Stele (as reported following the 2017 excavation season – cf. also Dever 1993: 504).<sup>10</sup>

### Beqo’a

Moshav Beqo’a is located a short distance to the south of Gezer (3.5 km). Salvage excavations revealed single phase a LB II rural settlement scattered over an area of c. 30 dunams consisting of several houses (Kogan-Zehavi 2008; Golani and Storchan 2010; Golani 2011; see discussion in Mazar and Panitz-Cohen this volume).

### Tel Mique-Ekron

Ekron was founded during the MB II (Stratum XI) and was continuously inhabited until the Iron II (Dothan and Gitin 2008). Following the collapse of the MB (which had also included the lower city), LB occupation (Strata X-VIII A) was limited to the northeastern acropolis (Dothan and Gitin 2008: 1952–53). Recently, Killebrew presented her analysis of the excavations of the summit (field I) and sondage at Tel Mique-Ekron (Killebrew 2014). Killebrew outlined the stratigraphic sequence of Ekron from the LB IIB-late Iron I as follows: LB IIB Canaanite city that was destroyed around 1200 BCE (Stratum VIIIB); LB/Iron I transition that re-inhabited by the same population until about 1170/1160 BCE (Stratum VIIA), equivalent to Lachish VI; and

<sup>9</sup> It is worth noting that Dever mentions that Stratum XV is marked by the scarcity of Cypriot imports (Dever 1993: 503). The scarcity of Cypriot imports is currently understood to be a cultural feature associated with the first-half of the 12th century BCE (similar to Lachish VI).

<sup>10</sup> For the Iron Age layers at Gezer see Ortiz and Wolff the referenf to Ortiz and Wolff is 2012 - it needs to be at the beginning of the reference before - “cf. also”.

Early Iron I (IA) city with the arrival of Philistine 1 pottery around 1170/1160 BCE (Stratum VII). This last stratum also witnessed an increase of pig bones from c. 0% to 17% of the faunal collection (Killebrew 2014).

## Timnah (Tel Batash)

Timnah was inhabited continuously from the MB-Iron IIA including five strata (and eight phases) from the LB (X–VIA) (see especially Mazar and Panitz-Cohen this volume; cf. Mazar 1997; Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001; Panitz-Cohen and Mazar 2006). During the MB II, which appears to have been the period when Timnah was founded, a massive rampart was built around the site to create an artificial fortified position with an accompanying mudbrick city wall. These fortifications (200 x 200 m) went out of use at the end of the MB IIC (stratum XI), but during the LB the same square area was used as during the MB (c. 40 dunams). LB Timnah has one of the most densely stratigraphic sequences in all of southern Canaan. For reference, we have added the stratigraphic sequence to Table 1 (below), but readers should refer also to the following outline and Mazar and Panitz-Cohen (this volume) for the exact stratigraphic sequencing.

- Stratum X – LB IA – second half of the 16th century; destruction
- Stratum IXA–B – LB IB – first half of 15th century; destruction
- Stratum VIII – LB IB/IIA – second half of 15th century; destruction
- Stratum VIIA-B – LB IIA – Late 15th-early 14th century; destruction (possible Hiatus)
- Stratum VIB – LB IIB – 13th century; destruction
- Stratum VIA – LB IIB/Iron IA – Late 13th-early 12th century(?); abandonment
- Stratum V – Iron IB – Late 12th-11th century; Philistine Bichrome sherds (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, table 1 this volume)

## Beth Shemesh

Beth Shemesh's massive city wall was founded during the MB II (Mackenzie – Stratum V) and the site was continuously inhabited throughout the LB (Mackenzie – Stratum IV; Bunimovitz and Lederman Levels 10–8 – Bunimovitz and Lederman 2013). Stratum IV was divided into two phases – IVa/Level 10 which relates to the 15th century BCE/LB I and IVb/Level 9 which relates to the 14th-13th centuries BCE/LB II with each phase suffering a destruction (Bunimovitz and Lederman 1993: 2510, 2013: 17–18). In the case of the latter, it is unclear if Bunimovitz and Lederman continue to attribute a destruction to the late 13th century BCE layer (Bunimovitz and Lederman 1993: 2050), because, in more recent years, they have exposed more of stratum IVb, which they have subdivided and now refer to as Levels 9 and 8. Level 9 is related to

the LB IIB/14th century BCE and included a large palace on the northern side of the tell, which the excavators have connected with the female ruler <sup>f</sup>NIN.UR.MAH.MEŠ of the Amarna correspondence (EA 273–274 -Moran 1992: 318–319; Bunimovitz, Lederman, and Hatzaki 2013: 53–54, 61). This palace was destroyed with fire in the 14th century BCE (Brandl, Bunimovitz, and Lederman 2013: 68; Bunimovitz, Lederman, and Hatzaki 2013: 53). Above this palace, a 13th century BCE/LB IIB layer (Level 8) was excavated (Bunimovitz, Lederman, and Hatzaki 2013: 53). In the first-half of the 12th century BCE, Beth Shemesh was inhabited and lacked Cypriot and Mycenaean imports, as well as Philistine 1 (i.e., monochrome/Mycenaean IIIC) pottery (Bunimovitz, Lederman, and Manor 2009: 116; cf. also Ziffer, Bunimovitz, and Lederman 2009: 333).

## Tel Harasim

The excavations and the reports of Tel Harasim (see Givon 2008 for a list of the preliminary reports published from 1991–2002) are problematic.<sup>11</sup> However, the site undoubtedly has remains from the LB, as made evident by imported wares encompassing the LB I-IIB (Givon 2008: 1766–67). According to the excavator, Tel Harasim was established during the MB IIB (Stratum VII), and continued to be inhabited throughout the LB (Stratum VI-V – including a destruction dated to the mid-13th century BCE), but was abandoned in the Iron I (Givon 2008: 1766–67).

## Tell es-Safi/Gath

LB Gath is primarily known from three excavation areas – Areas E, F, and P. A large patrician house dating to the 13th century BCE was excavated in Area E (Shai, et al. 2011; see also Asscher et al. 2015; Shai et al. 2017; Maeir et al. this volume). In Area F, two LB buildings were discovered along the inner face of the Early Bronze fortification wall. Both structures were used throughout the entire LB (Shai et al. 2017). The latter is of much importance as it probably reflects the city of Shuwardata the ruler of Gath in the Amarna period. It is also noteworthy to point out the size of the city in this period as LB finds were discovered in Areas F, P, A and E, therefore the settlement was quite impressive (ca. 20 ha). Recently, excavations from Area A (Stratum A7) and accompanying <sup>14</sup>C analyses have shown the appearance of Philistine pottery at Tell es-Safi/Gath already in the 13th century BCE (Asscher et al. 2015; Maeir et al. this volume).

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<sup>11</sup> Givon's excavations were never fully published. The preliminary reports are only in Hebrew, and there are numerous problems with the dating of the ceramics.

## Azekah

As shown by Kleiman et al. (this volume), the LB is the most dominant period at Azekah as remains from this period have been found in 8 of the 10 areas excavated. According to the survey, Azekah was settled during the MB II (Dagan 2011a; Emmanuilov 2012; Lipschits, Gadot, and Oeming 2012: 200), but occupational layers from either the MB II or the LB I have been yet found in the excavation. During the LB II (i.e., 14th through the mid-12th centuries BCE/encompassing LB IIA-B and the early Iron I or Ussishkin's LB II-III), Azekah was settled both on the acropolis and lower city (see also Kleiman, Gadot, and Lipschits 2016). Thus far, excavations have revealed layers from the LB IIA/14th century BCE (S1-10-S1-8<sup>12</sup>; S2-7-S2-6), IIB/13th century BCE (S1-10-S1-8?; S2-5b-S2-5a; T2-4), and III/Iron I/early-mid 12th century BCE (E3-4; N1-7; S1-7; S2-4; T1-5; T2-3) (Kleiman et al. this volume, table 1). There is evidence for a possible destruction in the 13th century BCE city (Kleiman et al. this volume, see note 4), but abundant evidence of a violent end to the 12th century BCE city (Kleiman, Gadot, and Lipschits 2016). While the analysis of the LB stratigraphy at Azekah is preliminary with further excavation seasons scheduled to continue, the current evidence clearly points to Azekah being a major political entity during the 14th-mid-12th centuries BCE before suffering a massive destruction in the 12th century BCE (Kleiman, Gadot, and Lipschits 2016; Kleiman et al. this volume). Surveys at Azekah indicated that the site was inhabited during the Iron I (Dagan 2011a: 77; cf. Emmanuilov 2012).

## Tel Yarmuth

Tel Yarmuth is primarily known for the extensive Early Bronze II-III urban remains that were uncovered there (see e.g., de Miroschedji 2003; cf. also Jasmin 2006b, 2006a; de Miroschedji 2008). However, de Miroschedji's limited "soundings" (1 and 2) on the acropolis of Tel Yarmuth indicated that it also was settled during the LB (de Miroschedji 2008: 1797). The acropolis was apparently occupied in the MB II as noted by sherds (the earliest phase on the acropolis dated to the Early Bronze II-III-Acr-7), and was resettled during the 13th century BCE/LB IIB (Acr-6) as indicated by Mycenaean and Cypriot imports (Base Ring II and White Slip II) but with no architectural remains (de Miroschedji 2008: 1797). Three substantial layers from the Iron I (Acr-5-3) were also found on the acropolis (de Miroschedji 2008: 1797).

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<sup>12</sup> See discussion in Kleiman et al. (this volume: table 1) where strata S1-10-S1-8 are related to the entire Late Bronze II sequence at Azekah.



## Tel Erani

According to the most current assessment,<sup>13</sup> after Tel Erani was abandoned during the Early Bronze II it was only resettled during the LB IIB (i.e., 13th century BCE) (Brandl 1997: 257). According to Brandl, LB remains (stratum A?)<sup>14</sup> were found all over the upper mound (in areas A, B, F, G) and also in two tombs in Area DII (southern lower terrace) (Kempinski and Gilead 1991: 170; Brandl 1997: 257). The basis for the dating of the tombs to the 13th century BCE was the discovery of Cypriot pottery of the Base Ring II and White Slip II types and an Egyptian scarab dated to the reign of Ramses II (Yeivin and Kempinski 1993: 421). Following the 13th century BCE, Tel Erani was resettled during the Iron I, as made evident by remains from the acropolis, the eastern slopes (Area C), and a recently excavated (Philistine?) cemetery on the lower terrace (Lifshits 2014; Yegorov and Milevski 2017). Interestingly, to date, no MB remains have been found at Tel Erani in either the regional survey (Dagan 2000: site 187) or the various excavations. While the lack of a final publication for the acropolis excavations of Yeivin makes any assessment of Tel Erani difficult, the establishment of a 13th century BCE settlement there after a long occupational gap (and excluding a MB occupation) may shed further light on the settlement processes at Tel Burna (which was much larger in the 13th century BCE than in the MB) and the wider region.

## Tel Zayit

Tel Zayit is very close to Tel Burna (4 km to the west), and seems to have had a very similar stratigraphic sequence with the LB and Iron II<sup>15</sup> representing the primary occupational periods at both sites. Surveys indicated that Tel Zayit was inhabited from the MB (Dagan 2000: site 181; see note of caution regarding any Middle Bronze occupation – Tappy 2000: 31), but the LB appears to be the most significant period of occupation at Tel Zayit (Tappy 2008: 2082). Like at Lachish, no Iron I remains were uncovered in either the various surveys or Tappy's excavation of Tel Zayit (Tappy 2011). Regarding

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<sup>13</sup> The upper mound was only excavated by S. Yeivin, as Kempinski and Gilead focused on the primarily Early Bronze remains on the lower terrace (Yeivin and Kempinski 1993). A small salvage excavation also took place on the lower terrace in the late 1990s under the direction of Braun and van den Brink (Braun and van den Brink 1997). See (Ciałowicz, Yekutieli, and Czarnowicz 2016) for a discussion of the renewed excavations.

<sup>14</sup> With regards to the LB and Iron I, the stratigraphic sequencing is either unclear or absent in the various preliminary reports. For example, no reference to a LB layer (besides the two tombs) is made in the *NEAHAL* entry (see table by Kempinski – 1993:421).

<sup>15</sup> Although one key difference is the lack of Iron II fortifications and an Iron IIC layer at Tel Zayit.

the LB, Tappy notes four distinct phases that presumably span the 16th-early 12th centuries BCE. The first phase is related to the LB I, and the three subsequent phases are related to the LB II. According to Tappy, the 14th century BCE/LB IIA phase (Amarna Age) is the most significant and includes a very large public building that was destroyed by fire (Tappy 2008: 2082). Tappy notes two more phases in the LB II that he equates with Lachish VII-VI, and specifically notes that the final phase is marked by a lack of imports (Tappy 2008: 2082)<sup>16</sup>.

## Lachish

The stratigraphic sequence of LB Lachish is well-known (e.g., Ussishkin 2004: 55–75, especially Table 3.3), and for our purposes only requires a brief sketch of the stratigraphic sequencing. Following the destruction of the city in the MB II (stratum VIII) and a brief squatter settlement in the palace (Level P-3), a sparse settlement resumed in the LB I (Fosse I; P-interim phase) (Ussishkin 2004: 55–58). During the Amarna Age (i.e., the 14th century BCE), Lachish was settled on a much larger scale (Fosse II/S-3–S-1/P-2)<sup>17</sup> as the entire mound appears to have been occupied. Lachish VII and IV (13th-12th centuries BCE – Ussishkin’s LB IIIA-B) were the two most prosperous LB periods at Lachish. Lachish VII (Fosse III/P-1) encompassed the entire mound including the rebuilding of the Fosse Temple on a much larger scale (Ussishkin 2004: 59–61). This settlement, which is marked by high quantities of imports (particularly Cypriot), was destroyed with fire towards the end of the 13th century BCE (Ussishkin 2004: 61–62). Stratum VII at Lachish seems to be a close chronological parallel to the 13th century BCE layer found at Tel Burna. In the 12th century BCE layer of Lachish VI (Ussishkin’s LB IIIB), the city was re-built on the same scale as the previous city (although the Fosse Temple was abandoned) and was ultimately destroyed c. 1130 BCE

<sup>16</sup> It is unclear from the *NEAHAL* entry (which remains, to our knowledge, the only publication dealing with the LB remains of Tel Zayit) if the site suffered more than one fiery destruction over the course of the LB.

<sup>17</sup> Ussishkin’s excavations in area S stopped at S-3, which were contemporary with Fosse II (Ussishkin 2004: 59), however, the renewed excavations under the direction of F. Höflmayer have already re-opened (2017) this area in order to better understand the earlier archaeological phases of Lachish <https://tracingtransformations.com/category/tel-lachish-2017/>. It is also worth noting that the recently concluded excavations led by Garfinkel, Hasel, and Klingbeil, which focused on the northern end of the tell) also exposed remains from the MB and LB (Sass et al. 2015; Weissbein et al. 2016).

according to the excavator (Ussishkin 2004: 62–64). Significantly, Lachish was not occupied during the Iron I.<sup>18</sup>

## Tel ‘Eton

Surveys at Tel ‘Eton indicate that the site was inhabited during the MB, but no occupational remains have been found in the excavation (Faust 2011; Faust et al. 2014; Faust and Katz 2015: 90–91). During the LB at Tel ‘Eton, the entire summit was settled, as made evident by the finding of LB remains in Areas B and C (Faust et al. 2014: 51). Currently, the excavators assign two temporary strata (B7 and B8) to the LB (Faust et al. 2014: 47–49, 51–55, Table 1). They also noted in situ 13th century BCE remains comparable to Lachish VII (Faust et al. 2014: 51), but it is unclear if these remains should be associated with temporary stratum B7 or B8. Tel ‘Eton continued to be occupied in the Iron I following its destruction, which occurred sometime during the 12th century BCE (Faust et al. 2014: 55–56).<sup>19</sup>

## Tell Beit Mirsim

Assessing the archaeology of Tell Beit Mirsim is difficult due to the rudimentary character of Albright’s excavations of the site from 1926–1932 (Albright and Greenberg 1993). Albright divided the LB strata from Tell Beit Mirsim into strata C1–2, which included two destruction layers (Albright and Greenberg 1993: 178–79). LB remains were also found in the cemetery of Tell Beit Mirsim (Ben-Arieh 2004). Greenberg’s re-assessment (1987) of the stratigraphy of the site has been followed in Table 8.1.<sup>20</sup>

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**18** Recent excavations at the nearby ruin of Khirbet el-Arai seem to have revealed 12th century BCE remains, which may be consistent with Lachish VI (Garfinkel and Ganor 2017).

**19** From the preliminary reports, it is unclear if this destruction should be related to the end of the 13th century BCE or the mid-12th century BCE destruction found at other sites in the region (e.g., Lachish VI) (note statement in Faust and Katz 2015: 91 which equates the destruction of the final Late Bronze phase to the first half of the 12th century BCE).

**20** Tel Halif is not technically in the Shephelah as it is located in the northern Negev, however, it seems to be the southernmost site that was occupied during the LB Age that can be connected with the settlement in the Shephelah. Unlike many other sites, Tel Halif’s LB occupation (XI–VIII) was not preceded by a MB layer, as there appears to have been a settlement gap at the site from the Early Bronze Age (Seger et al. 1990; Seger and Borowski 1993: 554–57). A destruction towards the end of the 15th century BCE brought an end to the LB I occupation (strata XI–X), but there was apparently no destruction at the end of LB II period (strata IX–VIII) (Seger and Borowski 1993: 554). The site was also occupied during the Iron I (stratum VII) (Seger and Borowski 1993: 557).

**Table 8.1:** Archaeological summary of LB excavated strata in the Shephelah.<sup>21</sup>

Site	Estimated Size in 13th cent. BCE (dunams) <sup>22</sup>	MB II	LB I/15th cent.	LB IIA/14th cent.	LB IIB/13th cent.	LB III/Iron IA first half of 12th cent.	Iron IB
Gezer	c. 130	XVIII – <i>destruction</i>	XVII	XVI – <i>destruction?</i>	XV – <i>destruction</i>	XIV–XIII?	XII–IX
Beqo'a	c. 40	–	–	X (no sub-phasing given)	–	–	–
Tel Migne-Ekron	c. 40	XI	X	IX	VIII B – <i>destruction</i>	VIIIA–VII B–A Philistine	VIB–A–VC–A
Tel Batash	c. 40	XI	X – <i>destruction</i>	IX – <i>destruction</i> VIII – <i>destruction</i> VII – <i>destruction</i>	VIB – <i>destruction</i>	VIA – <i>abandonment</i>	V – Philistine pottery
Beth Shemesh	c. 28	V <sup>23</sup>	IV/Level 10 – <i>destruction</i>	IV/Level 9 – <i>destruction</i>	IV/Level 8 – <i>destruction?</i>	III/Level 7	III/Level 6
Tell es-Safi/Gath Azekah	c. 200 c. 58 <sup>24</sup>	F15 X	F14 ?	F13 S1–10–S1–8; S2–7–S2–6	F13; E4; A7 S1–10–S1–8? S2–5b–S2–5a; T2–4 – <i>destruction?</i>	F12; A6 E3–4; N1–7; S1–7; S2–4; T1–5; T2–3 – <i>destruction</i>	F11; A6 X

(continued)

<sup>21</sup> For excavations that do not yet have stratigraphic sequencing we have used an “X.”<sup>22</sup> For sites where measurements were not provided (or appear to be inaccurate), we have measured the area of the presumed LB occupation (as described and portrayed in various publications) using the Google Earth measurement tool. In most cases, this size corresponds to the size of the respective site during any period of LB occupation.<sup>23</sup> Roman numerals are after Mackenzie and (later) Grant and Wright’s terminology.<sup>24</sup> Including both the lower terrace and the upper tell (Lipschits, Gadot, and Oeming 2012: 196).

Table 8.1 (continued)

Site	Estimated Size in 13th cent. BCE (dunams) <sup>22</sup>	MB II	LB I/15th cent.	LB IIA/14th cent.	LB IIB/13th cent.	LB III/Iron IA first half of 12th cent.	Iron IB
Tel Yarmuth	c. 15	X	–	–	Acr-6	?	Acr-5-3
Tel Burna	c. 20	X (sherds)	?	X (sherds and plaque seal)	B1 – <i>abandonment?</i>	?	X (sherds)
Tel Zayit	c. 28	?	X	X – <i>destruction</i>	X	X?	–
Tel Erani	c. 22	–	–	–	A?	?	P3, Q3 (salvage excavation)
Lachish	c. 72	VIII/P-5	P-interim phase (LBIA) Fosse I (LBIB)	Fosse II/S-3- S-1/P-2	VII/Fosse III/P-1 – <i>destruction</i>	VI – <i>destruction</i>	–
Tel 'Eton	c. 66	X (sherds)	?	?	Temporary Stratum B8-B7 – <i>destruction</i>	?	Temporary Stratum B6
Tell Beit Mirsim	c. 45	E-D	C1 – <i>destruction</i> (dating unclear)	C2 – <i>destruction</i> (dating unclear)	B1-2 (Greenberg)	B2a	
Tel Halif	c. 24	–	XI-X – <i>destruction</i>	IX	VIII – <i>abandonment</i>	?	VII
Tel Nagila	c. 40	XI-VII – <i>destruction</i>	VI	V – <i>abandonment</i>	–	–	–
Tell el-Hesi	c. 16	X (sherds)	City II	City III – <i>destruction</i>	?	–	–
				City IV – <i>abandonment</i>			

## Tel Nagila

During the MB II (Strata XI-VII), Tel Nagila was fortified with a large earthen glacis that was destroyed with fire around 1550 BCE (Amiran and Eithan 1993: 1079–81; cf. also Uziel and Avissar-Lewis 2013). In the following LB I period (Stratum VI), occupational remains were found over this destruction debris and pottery from the LB II was found at various locations in the excavations (Amiran and Eithan 1993: 1079–80; cf. Shai, Ilan, et al. 2011; Uziel and Avissar Lewis 2013).

## Tell el-Hesi

The LB layers at Tell el-Hesi were first excavated by Petrie (1891) and then Bliss (1898), and, thus are difficult to determine with certainty (Fargo 1993: 631–32). According to the later assessment of the Joint Expedition Tell el-Hesi's LB occupation can be broken down into the following: City II was dated to the LB I; City III was associated with the LB IIA, which also yielded the only known Amarna tablet to be found in Canaan (cf. Horowitz, Oshima, and Sanders 2006: 91–94) and was burned with a massive conflagration; and City IV was also related to the 14th century BCE, after which the site was abandoned until the Iron Age (cf. Doermann and Fargo 1985; see also studies in Dahlberg and O'Connell 1989; Fargo 1993: 631).<sup>25</sup> The Joint Expedition found abundant ceramic evidence of the LB in their excavations of the acropolis and lower city (Fargo 1993: 631–32).

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented the current archaeological data at Tel Burna relating to the LB and sought to compare it to the excavation results of the major sites in the region that possessed LB remains. Thus far, our excavations at Tel Burna have revealed extensive remains from the LB IIB/13th century BCE with very limited evidence of an earlier occupation in the LB IIA/14th century BCE (finds with no clear context) and MB II. When compared with other LB sites in the Shephelah (and more broadly throughout the southern Levant), the occupational sequencing in Area B1 is somewhat unique as the 13th century BCE layer at Tel Burna was not built directly over an earlier Middle or LB (I-IIA) layer. While MB remains were found in both the

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<sup>25</sup> In this stratum, a proto-Canaanite inscription was also found (Fargo 1993: 631). Given the rudimentary methodology of Petrie and Bliss' excavations, the question of whether or not Tell el-Hesi was inhabited during the 13th and 12th centuries BCE should remain open (an 11th century BCE layer was uncovered by – Doermann and Fargo 1985: 8–9).

survey and excavation, and we do not yet know the nature of occupation during this period, it seems clear that it was limited to the upper summit. As we have shown in Table 8.1, it is striking that only a few Shephelah sites seem to have been founded or re-founded (following an occupational gap) during the 13th century BCE (i.e., Tel Erani, Tel Yarmuth, and Tel Burna). Almost all of the excavated sites in the Shephelah were either destroyed or abandoned at the end of the 13th century BCE (Tel Burna included<sup>26</sup>) with about half of the sites possessing an early-mid 12th century BCE Stratum. While our survey at Tel Burna showed evidence of Iron I the exact stratigraphic relationship between the 13th century BCE and the subsequent periods of occupation remains unclear. As of yet, the LB finds at Tel Burna were discovered *in situ* only in Area B1 and its context is clearly not of a domestic nature. There is a clear Cypriot influence on this assemblage (daily life vessels, zoomorphic vessels, votive vessels and large imported pithoi) alongside the typical local repertoire. While Cypriot imports in LB context in the southern Levant are very common, some of the finds in this specific context call for attention. We hope that future excavations in other areas of the site will provide us with more knowledge and better understanding of LB society in Tel Burna in particular and the Shephelah region and the southern Levant in general.

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<sup>26</sup> The nature of the end of the 13th century BCE occupation at Tel Burna remains unclear, however, there is one sign of a possible destruction – the presence of human remains (a few bones) in the excavation area.

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Joe Uziel, Yuval Baruch and Nahshon Szanton

## Jerusalem in the Late Bronze Age – The Glass Half Full

Over twenty years ago, N. Na'aman (1996) presented a seminal study in which he paralleled 10th Century BCE Jerusalem to that of Jerusalem of the el-Amarna period. In both periods, the archaeological remains discovered in over 150 years of excavations have been quite meager, yet the historical and/or biblical accounts indicate Jerusalem's stature as the center of some sort of political entity. In the Late Bronze Age (=LB), the el-Amarna archives present us with evidence of 'Abdi-Heba's Jerusalem, the center of a hill country polity, which interacted with other such entities (e.g., Gezer, Gath).<sup>1</sup> The biblical account describes Jerusalem of the 10th Century BCE as the capital of the United Monarchy – that of David and Solomon. The latter period has been discussed extensively, as scholars have grappled about the authenticity of these accounts, particularly in light of the meager archaeological evidence (e.g., Finkelstein et al. 2007). On the other hand, 14th Century BCE Jerusalem (and as a result – LB Jerusalem as a whole) has been accepted as a fact in most reconstructions of the southern Levant in the LB (e.g., Pfoh 2016: 95–96). This of course is a reflection of the objective nature of Jerusalem's mention in the Amarna correspondence, as opposed to the difficulties of interpreting biblical historiography.

Yet many scholars – including Na'aman (1996) – have noted the discrepancy between the textual evidence of the el Amarna period and the archaeological remains uncovered at the site. The basis of understanding LB Jerusalem is not whether the site existed or not – but rather the nature of the evidence, or more precisely the lack of evidence. Na'aman's stance (and therefore then implied to Jerusalem of the 10th Century BCE) stems from the principle of negative evidence and its limitations. Others – including Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits (2011) and Reich (2011) – use the negative evidence as factual, indicating a need to search for a new locale for LB Jerusalem. In the following paper, the LB finds from Jerusalem – including some old materials and some new ones as well – will be presented and

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<sup>1</sup> For further discussions on Jerusalem in the Amarna letters, see e.g., Na'aman 2011, and references therein. Important to note is that Na'aman (ibid. 34) stresses that the name – despite the Hurrian theophoric element – does not indicate an ethnic relationship to the Hurrians, but rather the common practice of the spread of such names throughout the southern Levant (see Hess 1993), which seems to indicate the eclectic religious nature of the region in this period, which resulted in the introduction of foreign deities into the Canaanite realm (for further discussion on the religious diversity of the LB, see Uziel 2011).

discussed. In this light – another concept related to 10th Century BCE Jerusalem will be applied, that being: Jerusalem in the LB – The Glass Half Full (Mazar 2006).

## The evidence at hand

Although the LB is clearly not one of the more dominant periods in the archaeology of Jerusalem, finds from the period have been noted in various excavation areas (Fig. 9.1). The lower eastern slopes (Area E), excavated by Y. Shiloh, constitute the most complete published Bronze Age sequence of the City of David (de Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012). Here, despite secure archaeological contexts preceding the LB, including EB dwellings and MB structures and fortifications (contra Ussishkin 2016), only a single secure LB context was discovered. Nevertheless, pottery from the LB was found in secondary deposition in later contexts. This pottery, including Mycenaean and Cypriot imports, is attributed in general to the LB, without a specific sub-period (de Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012: 149). Further uphill, fills excavated beneath the Stepped Stone Structure included LB pottery, in what has often been debated as the sub-structure of the massive stone mantle. This sub-structure consists of “boxes”, as described by Shiloh (1984: 16). Shiloh attributed the construction of these compartments to the LB, his Stratum 16, based on the ceramic evidence from within the fills. However, subsequent analysis of the finds suggest that the compartments are part of a single constructional feature, which included the stepped stone structure, and a network of terraces which served as its substructure (Cahill 2003). Whether one accepts that the two elements are of the same date, as suggested by Cahill, or whether they are viewed as individual elements, the dating of both the terraces, as well as most certainly the dating of the stepped stone structure, post-date the LB, and should be attributed at the earliest to the LB-Iron I transition (see e.g., Steiner 2003; Cahill 2003). Despite this, ceramic evidence from both Kenyon’s excavations, as well as Shiloh’s excavations, in the upper part of the eastern slope of the City of David indicate some sort of activity at the site in the latter part of the LB, when imported Cypriot and Mycenaean pottery become common. Furthermore, portions of a structure dating to the LB II were discovered in Kenyon’s Trench A in this area (Steiner 2001).

Further west, on the summit of the City of David, the recent publication of glyptic material is of importance, as it includes LB finds. Here, a scarab attributed to Amenhotep III – one of the Pharaohs directly related to the Amarna Letters – was discovered in a mixed fill. Despite its unclear context, and considering the possibility that the object may have been in use at a later time, it once again seems to contribute to the finds dating to the period of the LB (Keel 2015a: 422, 436).

The recurring theme in several excavation areas is that there is a consistent appearance of stray finds – whether ceramic or glyptic which indicate human activity

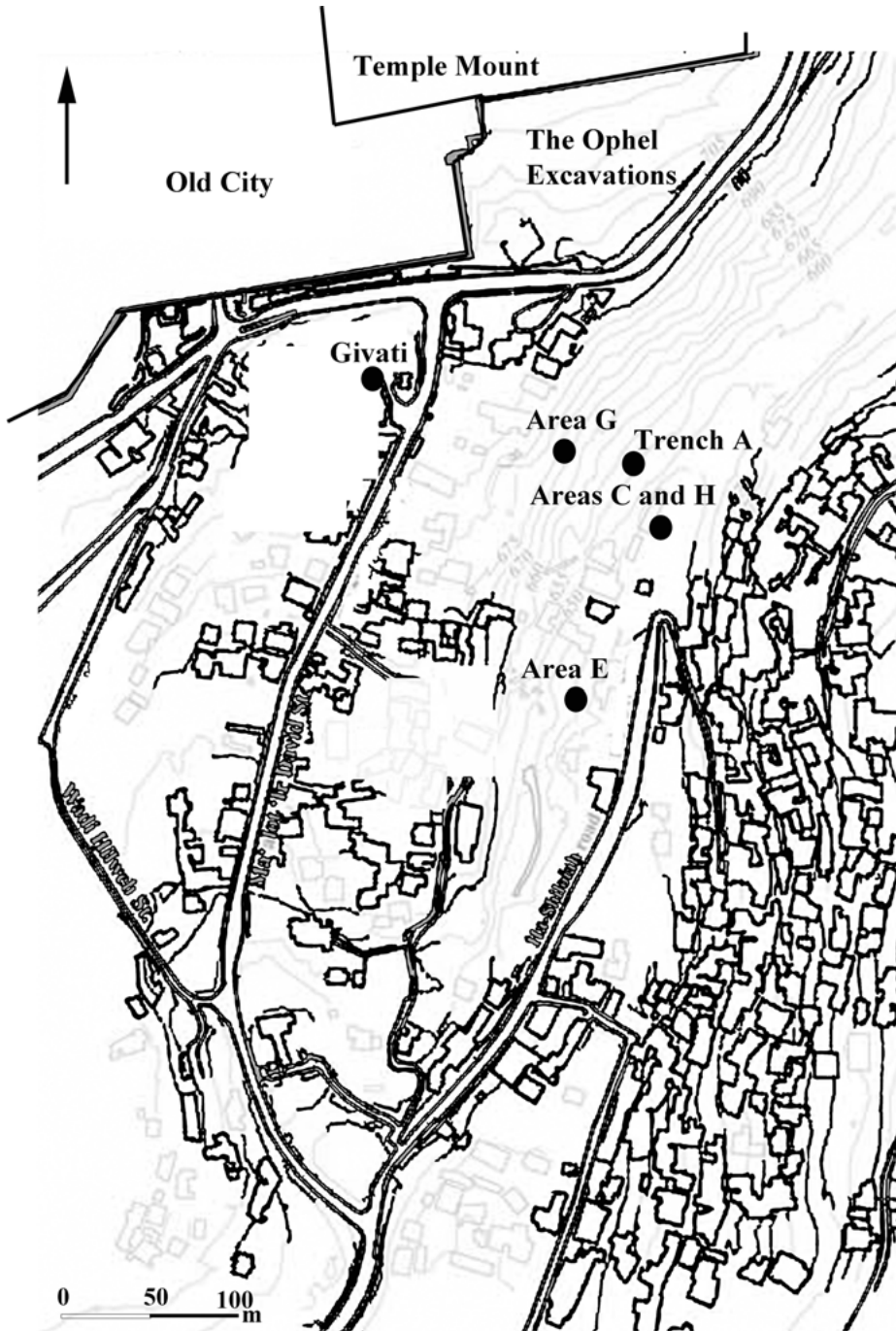


Fig. 9.1: Ancient Jerusalem with Areas of Excavation marked.

in Jerusalem's historical core. To this one can add the extremely important recent finds from the Ophel (and see further discussion below). These not only include scarabs dating to the 18th Dynasty (Keel 2015b: 491), but two Cuneiform tablets (Mazar et al. 2010; 2014) which are of particular interest. Although not found in primary deposition, the finds are unique in that not only do they present us with more artifacts that can be securely attributed to the LB, they present us with evidence of scribal activity at the site. Interestingly, the source of the clay tablets differs from one another, as well as from the Jerusalem Amarna Tablets. The latter corpus is almost all made from Motza clays (Goren, Finkelstein and Na'aman 2004), whereas those found in Jerusalem are each made from a different clay source. The first tablet found was made from terra rosa clay (Mazar et al. 2010), whereas the second was made from clay possibly originating from the Nile (Mazar et al. 2014). The tablet termed Jerusalem 2 must have arrived in Jerusalem from Egypt, signifying Jerusalem's international connections in the period. The authors of the *editio princeps* suggested that as the Jerusalem 1 tablet must be an archived copy of a letter sent elsewhere. Conversely, Rollston (2010) has argued that this is not necessarily so, and the fragment may be part of a number of documents, including a literary or legal text. Continuing this line of thought, perhaps it should be considered that this still may be a letter of correspondence, although not a copy of a letter sent elsewhere. Although there may not have been consistency in the choice of clay used for forming tablets at a particular site, the fact that Jerusalem 1 was found to be made of terra rosa, as opposed to the Motza clays used to produce the letters sent to Egypt and archived at el Amarna, may be of importance. Terra rosa is not exclusive to the Jerusalem region, and it is feasible that letters written in Jerusalem and sent elsewhere would have been produced with Motza, while the terra rosa Jerusalem 2 tablet may have been written elsewhere and linked with local correspondence between southern Levantine entities. If this is the case, both fragments found in Jerusalem can be considered in the same light – as indicating correspondence sent to Jerusalem from as far as Egypt and as near as a competing local “city-state.” Regardless, the most significant aspect of these finds is that they indicate, as Rollston (2010: 20) has stated, “further demonstration of the fact that LB Jerusalem had a contingent of scribes with formal, standardized education in cuneiform.”

Of critical importance in understanding LB Jerusalem are the remains surrounding the Gihon Spring. The importance of the spring in Jerusalem's 1 settlement prior to the construction of aqueducts has long been established (and see Reich and Shukron 2004 for a history of the Gihon Spring). For the Bronze and Iron Ages, it is difficult to argue that the spring did not only constitute Jerusalem's primary water source, but also dictated the location of the settlement on the hill south of the Temple Mount (Geva and de Groot 2017; contra Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits 2011). The fortification of the spring – which according to most opinions was established in the MB – supports the designation of the importance of this water source. The various systems and fortifications developed around the spring were aimed at both

protecting and controlling this resource. The excavations around the spring exposed a massive – cyclopean – system of a tower and passage meant to protect the spring and those who would have descended to retrieve water. This system was attributed to the MB, the time when Jerusalem is thought to have reached urban status. The dating was based on architectural style, stratigraphic relationships with other supposed MB features (e.g., Wall NB – Reich and Shukron 2010) and fills and patches of floors which yielded MB pottery (Reich and Shukron 2010; Reich 2011). Subsequently, several claims were brought to support the continued use of the fortifications well into the Iron Age II (Uziel and Szanton 2015), including more specifically, the LB (Mazar 2006: 267). This would suggest the reuse of the earlier fortification in the LB – as noted at many other sites in the southern Levant (e.g., Kempinski 1992).

## Recent finds from the excavations in the Area of the Gihon Spring

The excavations in Area C and H, in the area around the Gihon Spring,<sup>2</sup> have yielded 11 strata, with particularly significant finds dating to the Iron Age II and spanning the 9th-early 6th centuries BCE (Uziel and Szanton 2015). Although no architectural remains were discovered belonging to the LB, several finds indicate human activity during this period. Residual or redeposited pottery dating to the LB – particularly the LB II – were found in various loci of the Iron Age. This is in contrast to the prior excavations in the area, where no such finds were found (Reich 2011: 304–305). Most notably are imported Cypriot ware – namely White Slip II and Base Ring II sherds, dating to the LB II. In addition, local LB II pottery, such as cooking pots and decorated bowls with typical red-painted motifs of the period have been found (see Fig. 9.2). Of particular interest are numerous scarabs dating to the LB. One can note an XVIII Dynasty scarab, found in a late Iron Age (Str. VII) fill (Fig. 9.3).<sup>3</sup> While not found in a secure context, its date may be another

<sup>2</sup> The excavations were carried out by the Israel Antiquities Authority within the confines of the national park and were funded by the Elad Foundation. In 2012, the excavation was directed by J. Uziel and E. Shukron, while in 2013 it was directed by the authors. Assisting in the excavation were N. Sanduka (area supervisor); V. Essman and Y. Shmidov (surveying and drafting); V. Neichin, A. Peretz and C. Amit (photography); N. Mizrachi and G. Berkowitz (foremen); M. and D. Shukron (excavation struts and excavation); A. Sanduka (registrar); and S. Adallah (metal detection). Finds were drawn by A. Karasik (digital drawing) and C. Hersch. Wet sifting was carried out at the Emek Tsurim National Park. We are grateful to all those who assisted in bringing these finds to publication.

<sup>3</sup> The scarabs have been studied by O. Keel and will be published by him in the final report of the excavations, which is currently in preparation.



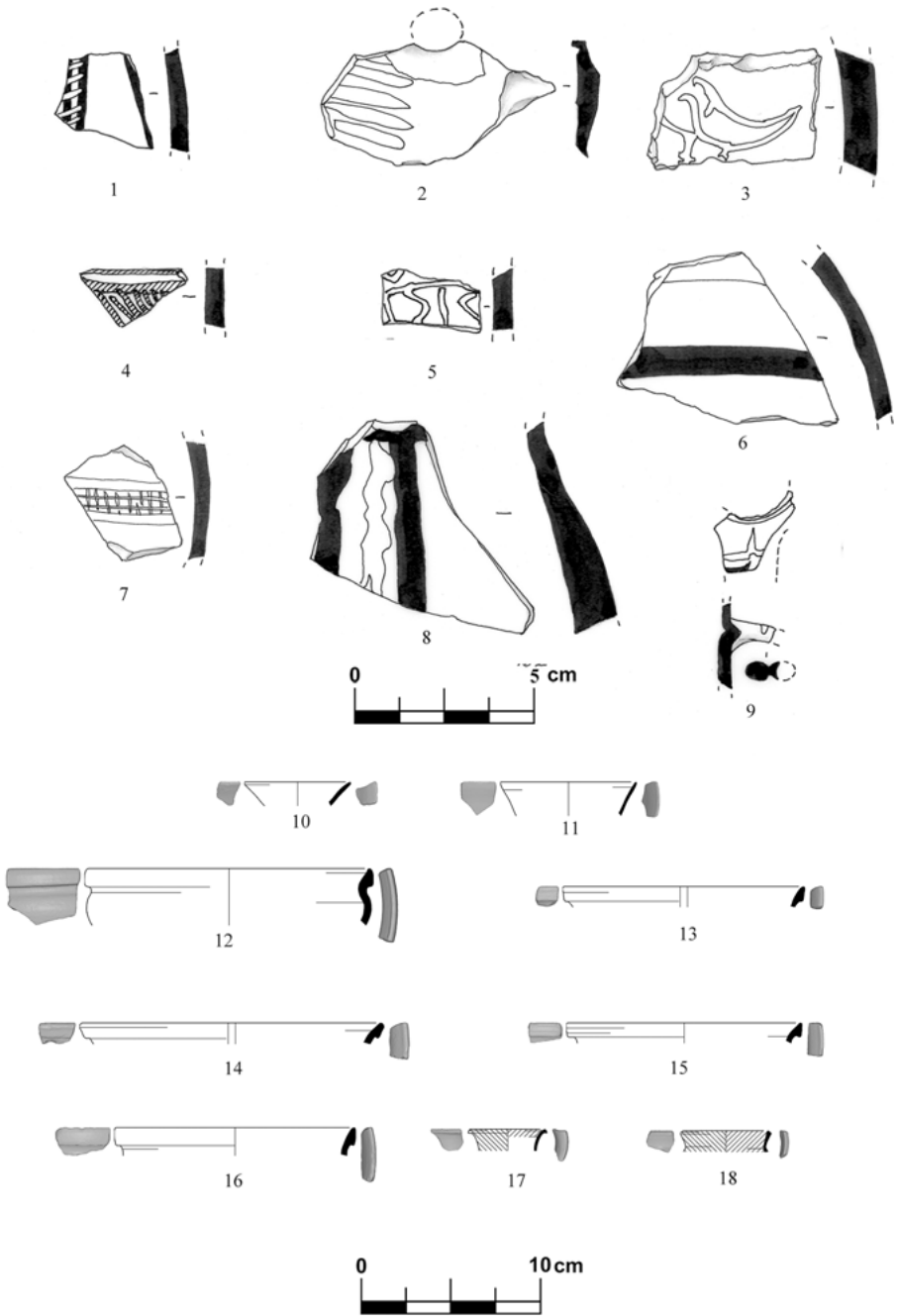
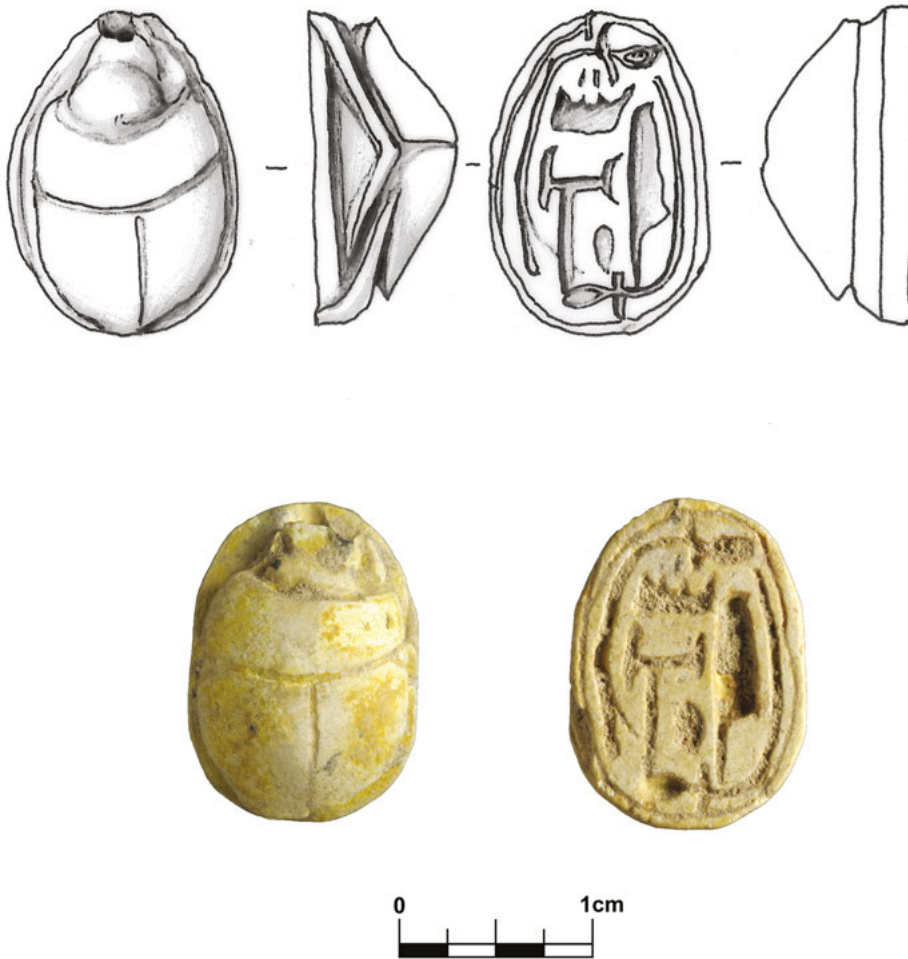


Fig. 9.2: Late Bronze Age Pottery from the Recent Excavations in Area C.



**Fig. 9.3:** XVIII Dynasty Scarab found in Secondary Deposition in the Recent Excavations in Area C.

indication of el Amarna period presence in Jerusalem. Although it must be taken into consideration that the scarabs arrived at a much later date, the number of scarabs dating to the LB seems to indicate a presence at the site in this period, as it is hard to imagine all of these constituting heirlooms.

## Discussion

In light of the difficulties presented in written documents, particularly the biblical text, M. Steiner has claimed that “As so many authors point out, views on the position, status, and role of Jerusalem in the biblical period can only be based on the archaeological evidence: the humble walls and pots found in excavations” (Steiner 2003: 347). This premise, where only archaeological evidence, but more so – that archaeological evidence alone – can be used to determine the presence, extent and nature of settlements is inferred on Jerusalem of the el Amarna period. This led her to conclude that:

“Realizing that Urusalim from the Amarna letters must be associated with Jerusalem, I began to read the Urusalim letters carefully and discovered another possibility that might account for the lack of archaeological evidence from the fourteenth century. There is no reference in any of these letters to the city itself, nor to its walls or its strong gates. Maybe Urusalim of the Amarna period was not a city or large town at all. Maybe we should interpret the “lands of Urusalim” as a royal dominion of the pharaoh, with Abdi-heba as his steward, who lived in a fortified house somewhere near the spring, on top of the hill, or on the Mount of Olives. This does not (as far as I am able to judge) contradict the content of Abdiheba’s letters.”

(Steiner 2003: 351)

While it may be the case that this does not contradict the descriptions of el Amarna Jerusalem in the letters, it does seem to contradict the archaeological evidence – not only from Jerusalem itself, but of the region surrounding Jerusalem. As opposed to the flourishing rural hinterland surrounding Jerusalem in the MB (see, most recently Maeir 2017) and in the later Iron Age II (Gadot 2015), there are practically no LB – let alone el Amarna period – rural settlements known to date, save for one. The only LB evidence for human activity outside of the Ophel/City of David ridge is that of scattered burials in the surrounding regions (see Maeir 2000: 56), and some scanty remains at Manahat (Edelstein et al. 1998). At times, LB remains have been found in secondary deposition. Although the finds clearly date to the LB, it is unclear whether they originate from settlements or burials in the region surrounding the City of David. One can note the stray finds found in excavations at Ras el-Amud, to the east of the City of David ridge (Be’eri 2012; Zilberbod 2012). Regardless of whether these finds originated from burials or settlements, they are still evidence for human activity in the area of Jerusalem. Therefore, despite being minimal, the archaeological data for the existence of an Amarna Jerusalem is in actuality stronger than that suggested by Steiner above.

There is no doubt that if not for the mention of Jerusalem in the el Amarna archive, we would certainly conclude that based on the archaeological remains, Jerusalem was at best a small dispersed settlement in the LB. However, this leads to the core of the problem in relying solely on archaeological evidence, as advocated by Steiner. The textual mention of el Amarna Jerusalem should lead us to conclude that even minimal evidence – such as small remains of structures (Steiner 2001:

24), scattered ceramic remains in the various areas of excavation (Cahill 2003: 27–28; and see above), and most importantly – what should be viewed as the smoking gun – the remains of written documents recently found in the Ophel (Mazar et al. 2010; 2014) are in essence a test case for indicating that archaeology has its limits, and at times, even meager evidence should be used as evidence of presence as opposed to evidence of absence. This should be reflected on other periods of Jerusalem's settlement, as done by Mazar (2006) and Na'aman (1996).

Returning to the LB, we are still left with trying to understand the nature of LB Jerusalem. The recent dating of the Spring Tower (Regev et al. 2017), complicates the situation even more. Killebrew (2003: 339) argued against the idea that MB fortifications could have been in use centuries later than their construction. Although more and more evidence for the reuse of earlier fortifications is coming to light (e.g., at Tell es-Safi/Gath – Shai et al. 2016; Hebron – Ben Shlomo and Eisenberg 2016), Jerusalem's fortifications may or may not have functioned in the same manner. Currently, there is clear evidence that some of the fortification originally attributed to the Middle Bronze Age (Reich and Shukron 2004; Reich 2011) were in use throughout the Iron Age (Uziel and Szanton 2015; see Fig. 9.4), although their date of construction is no longer clear. The radiocarbon dates retrieved from beneath the tower suggest that the fortifications surrounding the spring were constructed in the Iron Age, or at least significantly repaired at that time (Regev et al. 2017). If the latter opinion is accepted, one can still reconstruct a scenario in which these fortifications would have been in use during the LB, as also suggested for Wall 285, discovered in Area E, which had been built in the MB and may have been in use continually until the Iron Age IIB, when Wall 219 is built above it (de Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012). Had there been solid evidence for the MB date of these



**Fig. 9.4:** Artistic Reconstruction of the eastern Slopes of the City of David, with fortifications surrounding the Gihon Spring.

fortifications, we may be on firmer ground for claiming that they continued to be in use in the LB, as their use in the Iron Age II is all but certain (Uziel and Szanton 2015). However, we are currently left with the possibility that they were only built much later. This would have left the spring unfortified during the LB.

Yet, even if we can no longer show the continued use of earlier fortifications in the LB, the presence of finds in many areas of excavation along the eastern slopes seems to indicate the human activity around the spring throughout the period. This should not be surprising, as the spring would have been important to any settlement in the City of David, providing a consistent water source for sustenance. All the more important are the presence of written Akkadian documents, indicating the presence of scribes in Jerusalem in the LB (Mazar et al. 2010; 2014). As noted by Rollston (2017: \*10–\*11), the cuneiform tablets are written at a high level, indicating the skill of a well-trained scribe. Such fragments, as small as they may be, are clearly indicative of the presence of scribal traditions in Jerusalem, as part of the wider scribal traditions of the region in the LB (Rollston 2017; Horowitz; Oshima and Sanders 2006). This, alongside the el Amarna letters, describing Jerusalem and its ruler as one of the entities involved in regional power plays, indicate that one should not view the scattered finds – ceramic, glyptic or epigraphic – as insignificant, but rather be taken as evidence for the presence of human activity at the site.

How should Jerusalem of the LB be viewed in this light, and what was the extent of its settlement and territory? These are questions which are no doubt difficult to answer, but some suggestions will be offered here. When considering the presence of bureaucracy and inter-regional connections, as indicated by the numerous finds, it appears that Jerusalem would not have fallen from its local counterparts, such as Gath (and see e.g., Maeir et al. this volume) in strength and development. Jerusalem, despite being an inland site, would have been involved in international trade, as indicated by the presence of Cypriot and Mycenaean imported pottery. Although it is possible (and even likely) that these items reached Jerusalem in a secondary manner, it still brings Jerusalem into the realm of international interconnections. Interestingly, the amount of LB imported pottery stands out when considering that in the Iron Age II, when Jerusalem is most clearly a large, important city, and there is very little imported pottery reaching the capital of Judah (Ben Shlomo 2017). Furthermore, Jerusalem would have been influenced by Egyptian presence in the same manner. The discovery of scarabs spanning the entire LB indicates once again that Egyptian culture reached Jerusalem in one way or another.

As far as its size, the extent of LB Jerusalem is difficult to determine, in light of the lack of architecture, particularly fortifications which can clearly be used in calculating site size. Where did the physical remains of Jerusalem's buildings disappear to? Steiner (2003), as well as Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits (2011) use the lack of remains to contest the presence of a significant entity in the City of David. However, the pitfalls of using negative evidence are quite clear, and there is no reason, in light of the artifacts found both in the City of David and in the Ophel, to

argue against the existence of a settlement in this area. Although there is no doubt that there is a possibility that these finds were moved in post-depositional processes, the lack of LB finds in other areas seems to suggest that it may be possible to roughly reconstruct the area of LB Jerusalem according to artifact dispersal, in a similar manner as that undertaken in certain surveys (see e.g., Uziel and Maeir 2005; 2012; Uziel and Shai 2010; Shai and Uziel 2014). In this case, the settlement would extend from Areas D/E in the south to the Ophel in the north. It is most likely that the Temple mount – contra Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits (2011) – would have been outside of the settlement, as indicated by the lack of pre-Iron Age findings found in the sifting of finds from the Temple Mount (Geva and de Groot 2017) and in inspection work carried out there (Baruch, Reich and Sandhaus 2016). To the east, the settlement would have been close to the spring, probably extending westward to the summit of the City of David. All in all, this settlement would have extended over an area of some 5 hectare (and see Geva 2014, although he does not include the Ophel in the MB-LB city). Geva (2014: 137) summarizes the opinions regarding the MB population, concluding the population of MB Jerusalem would have been 500–700, and LB Jerusalem would be smaller. If one applies a coefficient density of 25 persons pre dunam (although see Zorn 1994 for problems with such calculations), it appears that the population would have roughly been 1250 people. This would still be far smaller in both size and population from the Iron Age II city (and see Reich 2000), but would be consistent with the demographics of many LB entities (see e.g., Finkelstein 1996; Nakhai 2001).

More difficult to understand is Jerusalem's regional role, as much of the area directly surrounding it seems to have been unsettled, unlike the MB (e.g. Maeir 2017) or the Iron Age II (Gadot 2015). However, this lack of settlement may very well be the reason behind Jerusalem's conflicts with western polities, such as Gath and Gezer. These conflicts, portrayed in the el Amarna letters, may indicate that Jerusalem – albeit a small polity – at least attempted to extend its territory at the expense of its Shephelah counterparts, in order to gain political control of smaller settlements and in this manner gain both monetary and political capital. In this context, one can note for example, the interactions between Jerusalem and what is seemingly Gath (Tell es-Safi) in attempts to control smaller sites, such as Keilah (e.g., Rainey and Notley 2006). It is important to remember in this context the LB Egyptian intervention in the southern Levant certainly demanded local polities to pay taxes in the form of agricultural commodities, such as wine or olive oil. As such, Jerusalem would have much to gain in the form of land and settlement control beyond its direct hinterland. As the population in the southern Levant dwindled in the MB-LB transition, the direct Jerusalem hinterland was abandoned, creating a need for the small polity located in the City of David and Jerusalem, to venture westward. Of further economic and political interest would have been the road networks (Rainey and Ahituv 2000), which would have been a crucial factor in establishing Jerusalem's status in the local *koine* of the LB.

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## Hebron in the Late Bronze Age: Discoveries of the of the American expedition to Hebron (Tell er-Rumeide)

This study is a preliminary report of finds from the Late Bronze Age made by the American Expedition to Hebron (1964–66). It was delivered as an illustrated presentation at the First Annual Ackerman Family Workshop in Biblical Archaeology at Bar-Ilan University on April 15, 2015, bearing the longer title “Hebron in the Late Bronze Age: A Reevaluation on the 50th Anniversary of the American Expedition to Hebron (Tell er-Rumeide).” It is presented here as the written version of that presentation, and as part of the preliminary report series of the American Expedition to Hebron Publication Project.

The American Expedition to Hebron (abbreviated hereafter as AEH) began excavations in 1964 at Tell er-Rumeide, the site of ancient, biblical Hebron. At the time, the site was located within the southern “West Bank” territory controlled by the Kingdom of Jordan prior to June 1967. The expedition was planned and directed by Philip C. Hammond, assistant professor of Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, later a professor of anthropology and archaeology at the University of Utah. Evidence from the Late Bronze Age (hereafter LB) city at Hebron was discovered in six explored areas – three inside the proposed city wall lines, two along the southern wall line exterior, and one tomb. This “Part I” chapter will discuss the stratigraphic LB phases in two domestic structure areas inside the wall line (Area I.1 and Area I.6), and summarize the transition to the Iron I period in both areas. LB ceramic finds in non-stratigraphic contexts from two other areas will be summarized as well.<sup>1</sup>

### The site

Hebron is located 32 km (19 miles) southwest of Jerusalem, in the fertile region known as *Har Yehuda* – the biblical “hill country of Judah” (see Fig. 10.2). The region is also known in current political terms as the southern “West Bank”

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<sup>1</sup> A subsequent “Part II” treatment, planned for future publication, will more fully discuss LB finds in Areas I.3 and I.7, which are only summarized in the present treatment see Chadwick 2018.

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area. The ancient city sat at 930 m. (3050 ft.) above sea level, perched at the highest point of the fertile Judean hills, and was the natural geographic capital of the entire area. It was reported in the Bible to have been a political center of the surrounding region at times during the Canaanite and Israelite periods – a Canaanite-Amorite named Hoham was listed as the king of Hebron prior to its capture by Israelites (Joshua 10:3), and David is said to have reigned in Hebron as king of Judah for seven and one half years (2 Samuel 5:5).

The ancient city of Hebron was located at *Jebel er-Rumeide*, a high, stratified mound centrally located within the modern city (see Fig. 10.1). At the time of the AEH excavations, a few Arab homes were located on *Jebel er-Rumeide*, but most of the mound consisted of olive and vegetable gardens. Hammond utilized the term *tell* for the stratified mound, and the name Tell er-Rumeide was consistently employed by the AEH throughout the excavation and afterward. (In current Israeli conversation, the site is often now referred to as *Tel Hebron*.) While portions of the ancient city walls have been identified, the line of those walls around the entire tell is uncertain. The settled area of the ancient city atop the tell in the Bronze Age periods, within the projected wall lines, is therefore unclear, but estimates range from 2.8 to 3.3 hectares (Eisenberg 2011:28), somewhat smaller than 4 hectare Jerusalem in the same periods (Chadwick 2016:1002). The water source for the ancient community was the perennial spring known as *Ein Jedida*, located at the base of the tell's eastern slope. At the summit of



**Fig. 10.1:** Tell er-Rumeide, site of ancient Hebron, looking east (Photo: P. Partouche, Skyview, 2014).

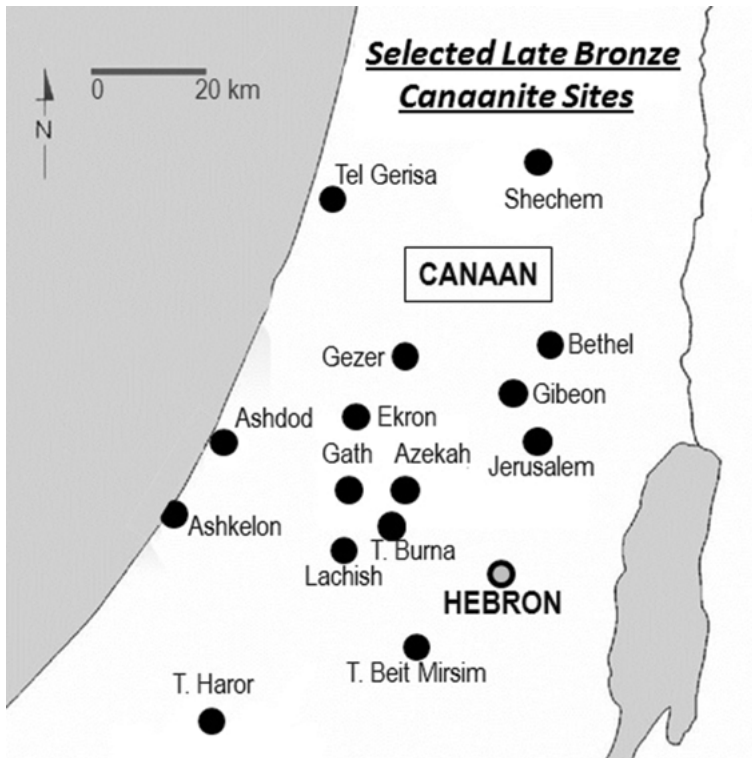
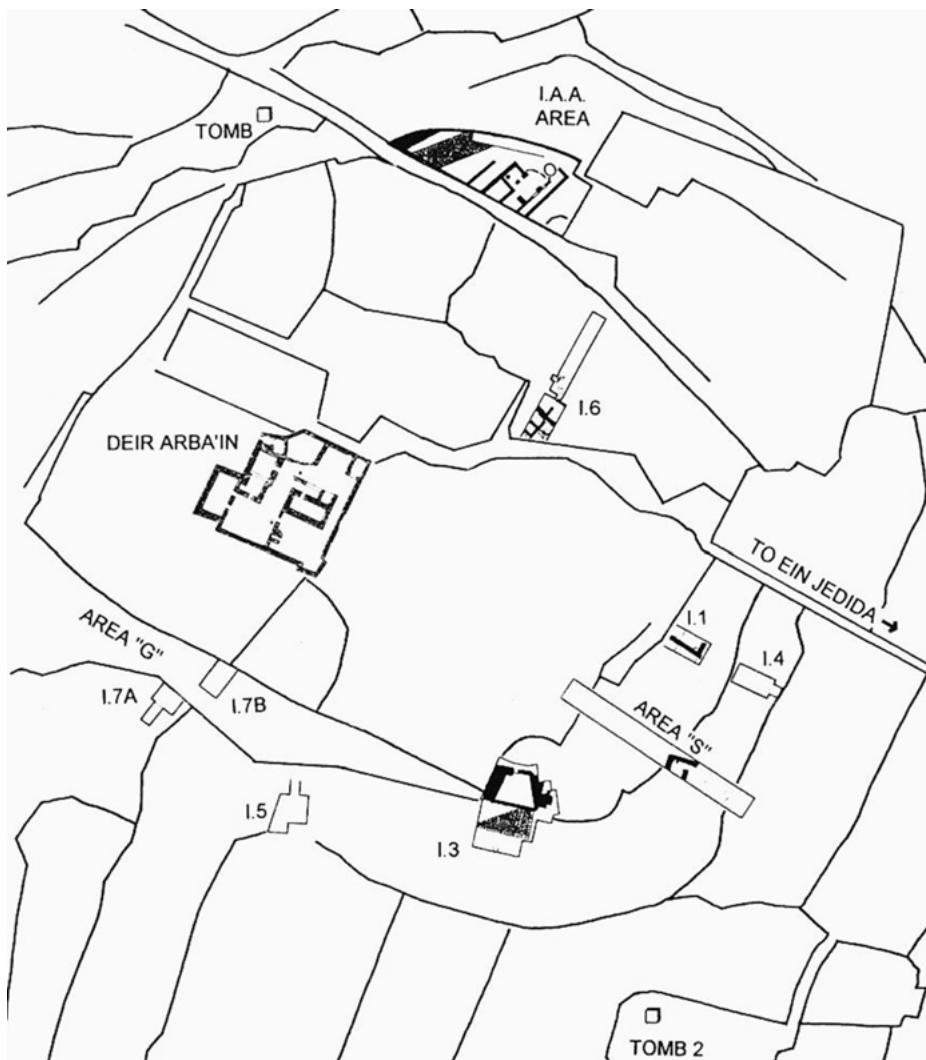


Fig. 10.2: Locator map of Hebron among selected LB sites.

the tell itself are the ruins of a structure from late antiquity known as *Deir Arba'in* (see Fig. 10.3), which features both Byzantine and Crusader architectural elements. As the Arabic name suggests, it was likely a monastery. Medieval tradition asserts that the structure marks the graves of biblical Ruth and Jesse (fornbears of David), although the location, well inside the ancient city boundaries, is surely incorrect. A thousand meters east of the tell is the Herodian period shrine known as the Tomb of the Patriarchs, sitting over the reputed "cave of Machpelah," the burial cave of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah (Genesis 23:19, 49:29–31).

## The AEH expedition

Philip Hammond, director of the AEH, earned a Ph.D. in Middle East Archaeology from Yale in 1957. He had excavated at Jericho in 1955 with Kathleen Kenyon, gaining experience in the Wheeler-Kenyon method of excavation and the ceramics of the Bronze Age periods. He also excavated at other sites, including Petra in Jordan,



**Fig. 10.3: Plan excavation areas at Tell er-Rumeide / Hebron (featuring terrace lines, north at top).**

The AEH areas (1964–66) areas are numbered 1.1 to 1.7 and Tomb 2. Areas G and S are from the later Tel Aviv/Ofer excavations (1984–86). The northern tomb was excavated in 1998 by Peleg. The IAA/Eisenberg excavation area is from 1999. The 2014 IAA/Ariel University excavations of Eisenberg and Ben Shlomo (area depiction not yet available when this visual was created) were conducted on in an extensive area along the fortification line from Area G to Area 1.3.

prior to applying for a permit to excavate at Hebron (for a more complete professional biography and description of the expedition see Chadwick 1992:22). A 1963 planning visit to Hebron was followed by three AEH excavation seasons in the

summers of 1964, 1965, and 1966. Seven areas were opened on Tell er-Rumeide, within and south of the wall lines of the ancient city, and an additional area was opened on the lower eastern slopes of the tell, perhaps outside the city lines. The tell itself was designated as Site I, and the excavation areas were numbered as I.1 through I.6 (see Fig. 10.3). Five tombs near the tell were also excavated, and soundings were dug at *Ein Jedida*. Evidence of the ancient city from the EB, MBII, LB, Iron I, Iron II, Hellenistic and Herodian periods was found during the three AEH excavation seasons. Due to the war of June 1967, which saw the Hebron area come under Israeli control, and due to his close affiliation with the Kingdom of Jordan, Hammond did not return to Hebron. No final report of AEH excavations was prepared by Hammond prior to his death in 2008. Only a few preliminary season summaries and journal articles were published, none of which dealt with AEH finds from the LB periods (Hammond 1965a, 1966a, 1968). However, LB occupational evidence was found in five of the six areas on the tell. In 1986, Hammond assigned and enabled the author of this study to prepare a Ph.D. dissertation on AEH discoveries from the Bronze and Iron Ages (Chadwick 1992), and this material included LB finds which will be described below. In two subsequent projects, in 2003–04 and 2013–14, the author and selected students reexamined hundreds of kilos of AEH ceramics which Hammond had retained from the excavation, with the specific goal of refining the understanding of the LB periods at Hebron. These findings, too, will be included in descriptions below, and will be referred by year and the phrase “AEH Review.”

## Later excavations at Hebron

Other archaeological work at Tell er-Rumeide resulted in finds which impact interpretation of AEH discoveries (see Fig. 10.3). An expedition led by Avi Ofer, sponsored by Tel Aviv University and the Israel Exploration Society, excavated for three seasons at Hebron from 1984 to 1986 (Ofer 1989; 1993). In 1998, Yuval Peleg excavated a LB tomb on the northwest side of the tell, outside the ancient wall line, on behalf of the Staff Officer for Archaeology of the Civil Administration for Judea and Samaria (Peleg and Eisenstadt 2004). In 1999, Emanuel Eisenberg, of the Israeli Antiquities Authority (IAA), directed salvage excavations on the lower north slope of the tell, just inside the ancient wall line (Eisenberg and Nagorski 2002). And in 2014, Eisenberg and David Ben Shlomo, of Ariel University, excavated an extensive area along the outside of the southern city wall line, west of Hammond’s Area I.3 (Ben Shlomo and Eisenberg 2016, Eisenberg and Ben Shlomo 2016, 2017).

In the following descriptions of finds excavated by the AEH, certain quotations are taken from unpublished excavation notes prepared by Hammond from 1967 to 1973. They are referred to in the bibliography thus (Hammond 1973: notes).

These notes were made available to the author at the time his dissertation (Chadwick 1992) was prepared, and appear in that source.

## Area I.1 – A domestic living structure

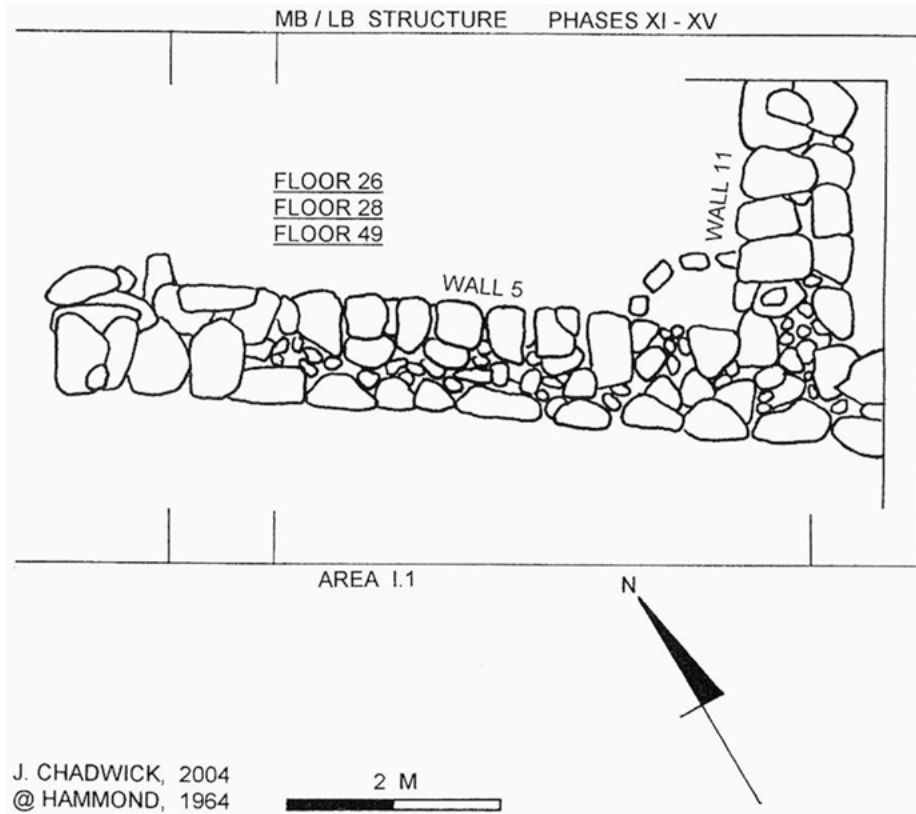
Area I.1 consisted of two adjoining 5 m wide squares, I.1 and I.1A on the southeast side of the tell, one terrace level below the summit. Square I.1 abutted the terrace on its west side, and square I.1A extended eastward from square I.1 for a full 5 m (see Fig. 10.3). This small area was the first to be excavated in the 1964 season. Plans to expand the site beyond the two squares explored were in preparation in 1967, but were cancelled as a result of the war which occurred that year, and the site was never worked again. It was subsequently backfilled by the land owner.

In his unpublished notes, Hammond identified a structure built during the Middle Bronze Age (MBII), in what he called Phase XV of the area. The two surviving walls of the structure that were unearthed in the two squares were designated as Wall 5 and Wall 11 (see Fig. 10.4). Both walls measured 108 cm in width, Wall 5 was recovered to a length of 7.5m, and Wall 11 to a length of 2.5 m. The structure was apparently part of a domestic abode, presumably a private house, and apparently transitioned from MBII into LB without trauma or disturbance, other than the deposition of successive surfaces. Three LB phases were detected.

Phase XIII was a surface that represented the transition from MBII into LBI. The surface, designated Floor 49, ran to the two excavated walls of the room (Walls 5 and 11). The sub-surface fill beneath Floor 49 consisted of EB and MBII sherds. The soil accumulation atop the surface yielded only a few sherds, among which was a rim fragment of a LBI cooking pot. Hammond dated the floor to “very late in Middle Bronze II, or conversely, very early in Late Bronze IA” (Hammond 1973, notes).

Phase XII was a thicker surface, designated as Floor 28, laid atop the earlier surface, and running to Walls 5 and 11. Diagnostic ceramics found in the material above this surface included the knob base of a LB storage jar and the bottom half of a thin-walled juglet with a convex base typical of early LBII. This juglet fragment was made of tan clay, and featured a burnished tan slip and a painted design of interlocking triangles and vertical wavy lines in reddish brown paint (see Plate I:9, Fig. 10.13).

Phase XI was represented by another surface, designated Floor 26, laid above the previous Floor 28. It likewise ran to Walls 5 and 11. This surface phase featured a corner installation (Locus 23), perhaps a hearth, and yielded ceramic fragments from late LBII, including the profiled rim of a cooking pot (Plate I:2), a folded jar rim (Plate I:3), the flared, flat rim of a tan clay bowl (Plate I:4), pieces of a jug or jar painted with thick vertical brown stripes (Plate I:5), the knob base of a LB storage

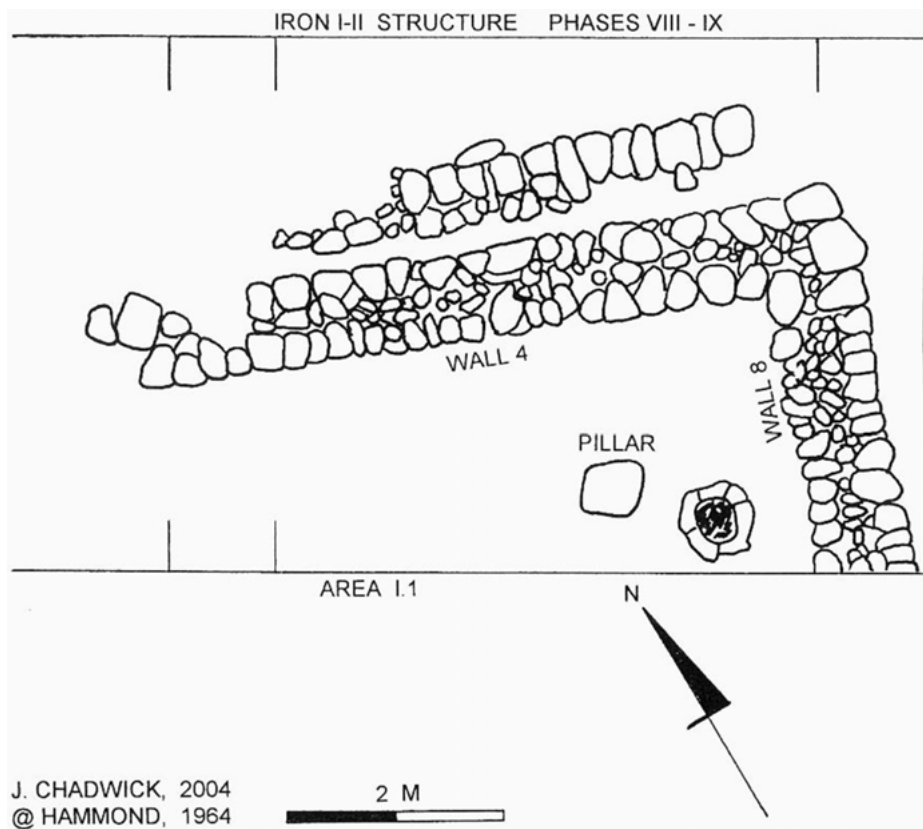


**Fig. 10.4:** Plan of MB / LB structure remains in Area I.1.

jar (Plate I:8), the handle of a pilgrim flask (Plate I:10), a jug shoulder sherd painted with horizontal, alternating brown and red bands (Plate I:16), and a local imitation of a shaved juglet decorated with red paint (Plate I:18).

In his system of phase numbering, Hammond employed a “gap phase” to designate a break in occupation or a change in the architectural nature of the area. Phase X was such a “gap phase,” indicating the termination of use of the MB-LB structure. The stumps of Walls 5 and 11 were covered over, and a new structure was erected in Phase IX, an Iron Age I occupational phase. The new structure, featuring Walls 4 and 8 (see Fig. 10.5), was probably a pillared court house, which was used throughout Iron I and Iron II. Most of the ceramics recovered in Phase IX were Iron I types, but several LBII sherds were recovered from the surface, including the profiled rim of a cooking pot (Plate I:1), the slightly concave disc base of a LB bowl (Plate I:6), a typical LB storage jar handle (Plate I:7), a sherd from a jug shoulder painted with red and black bands (Plate I:14), and a painted sherd from a small hand molded vessel (Plate I:15, Fig. 10.13).





**Fig. 10.5:** Plan of Iron I-II structural remains in Area I.1.

From later period phases in Area I.1, other LB sherds were recovered. Phase VI, a Roman/Herodian period stratum, the broken leg and hoof of a zoomorphic figurine decorated with a thin red stripe painted down the leg may be attributed to the LB (Plate I:12, Fig. 10.13), as well as a cream slipped body sherd with a red painted motif (Plate I:13). Un-phased fragments of a red and brown painted vessel (Plate I:17) and part of the base of a shaved juglet (Plate I:11) may also have originated in the Area I.1's LB phases.

In the author's dissertation, the LB phases of Area I.1 were designated according to Hammond's identification: Phase XIII as a MBII-LBI transition, Phase XII as LBI, Phase XI as LBII, and (following the "gap phase" X), Phase IX as Iron I (Chadwick 1992:83–84, 145). However, as a result of the 2003 review of AEH finds, and the 2014 reexamination of available sherds, it is suggested here that the phasing be adjusted to recognize Phase XII as LBIIA and Phase XI as LBIIB, and this will be the preferred interpretation (see Fig. 10.12). According to either scheme, it appears that the MBII

structure in Area I.1, of which Walls 5 and 11 were part, continued to be resurfaced and refitted for use by inhabitants of Hebron throughout the Late Bronze Age.

## Area I.6 – Another domestic living structure

Area I.6 was excavated in 1966, the third AEH summer season, on the northeast side of the tell, one terrace level below the summit. It consisted of two adjoining 5 m wide squares, numbered I.6A (which abutted the terrace wall on the south at an angle) and I.6B (see Fig. 10. 6). An additional three meter wide trench, designated as I.6C, extended down the slope for 15 additional meters north of the two full squares (this extension is not shown on Fig. 10.6 below). Plans to expand the excavation area in 1967 were curtailed by the war in June of that year, and the site was never worked thereafter. The trench was eventually backfilled by the local land owner.

The excavated area of I.6A and I.6B consisted of several connected walls with accompanying surfaces, which appear to have been a series of small domestic rooms that were part of a large structure which extended beyond the excavated area. The finds of Area I.6 paralleled those of Area I.1 in terms of LB domestic occupation.

In square I.6B, three walls were unearthed (Walls 6, 9, and 10) which seem to have formed a room designated as Room 1096 (by the author, not Hammond). Wall 6 stretched across the square from east to west for 5 recovered meters, and measured about 1 m in width on the east side of Wall 10, but about 75 cm in width west of Wall 10. Wall 10 measured 2.15 m in length, bonded to Wall 6, and was 75 cm wide. The width and length of Wall 9 were uncertain due to its protrusion from the section.

Wall 6 also served as the south boundary of a larger room, probably an outer court, designated as Court 106, to the west of Room 1096. A gap between the northern Wall 9 and the shorter Wall 10 was probably the doorway between the two areas. Hammond determined that the structure utilizing Walls 6, 9, and 10 had been built late in MBII, during Phase XXXVI of Area I.6. Based on ceramic finds, this was identified as a transitional phase from MBII into LBI (Hammond 1973, notes, Chadwick 1992:69).

Phase XXXV, the subsequent stratum, saw three additional walls (Walls 2, 3, and 4) constructed in square I.6A, just south of the MBII structure. Wall 2 was 75 cm wide and 4.3 m long, and ran north-northwest abut Wall 6. Wall 3, which abutted Wall 2 on the west, was 75 cm wide and recovered to a length of 2 m before it disappeared into the west section. Wall 4 was about 1.1 m wide, and appeared corner-bonded to Wall 2 on the west, running west for 1.5 m into the section. Two small rooms were formed west of Wall 2 – the combination of Walls 6, 2, and 3 formed a room directly adjacent to Wall 6 and the earlier Phase XXXVI structure, Walls 2, 3, and 4 formed another room to the south. East of Wall 2 a wide layer of large stones was designated by Hammond as Pavement 50 – it was later discerned to be the

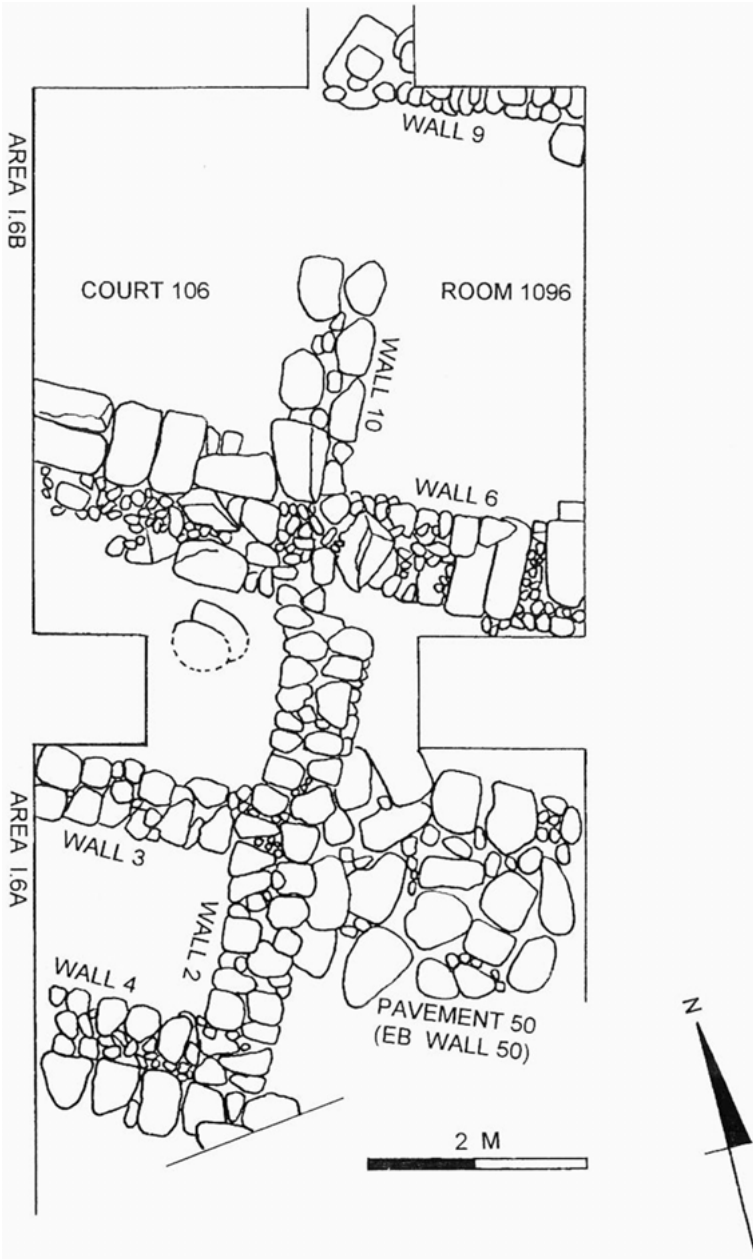


Fig. 10.6: Plan of MB/LB structures in Area I.6 (Hammond 1966d, Chadwick 2005).

foundation of a broad EB wall (EB Wall 50) some 2.7 m wide, which extended beneath LB Walls 2 and 3 to the northwest. Based on ceramics which included EB, MBII, and LB samples, Hammond dated Phase XXXV (and the construction of the rooms of Walls 2, 3, and 4) to LBI (Chadwick 1992:89). The 2003 AEH Review determined that Phase XXXV and its three walls should be dated somewhat later, to LBII.

This phase featured a new surface of yellow clay, Floor 84, in Room 1096 of square I.6B (the Floor 84 number consolidates three separate clay floor patches which Hammond numbered as 84, 97, and 107). Among the mixture of earlier ceramics found in the matrix of Floor 84, two sherds must be dated no earlier than LBII. One was a knob base, with a distinctly vertical profile, from a LBII storage jar (Plate II:10); the other was a base fragment from a Base Ring II Cypriot vessel of dark grey finish painted with white vertical lines (Plate II:7, Fig. 10.13).

Phase XXXIV was discerned in the accumulation of ceramics and objects atop Floor 84 in Room 1096. LBII sherds included profiled rims of two cooking pots (Plate II:1, II:2), rims of two bowls with red painted bands on their rim interiors (Plate II:15, II:17), unpainted bowl rims (Plate II:3, II:4, II:5, II:6, II:18, II:19, II:20), the concave base of a bowl with a red painted stripe on the interior (Plate II:13), body sherds with red painted horizontal bands (Plates II:8, II:9), the knob base of a storage jar (Plate II:12), and rim and neck fragments from closed vessel (jar or chalice) painted with thin horizontal band in alternating black and red (Plate II:14, Fig. 10.13).

Phase XXXIV also yielded two objects found in Room 1096. One was a 6.6 cm long bronze arrowhead (registry number AEH 66 698) of the style typical to LBII (see Fig. 10.7).<sup>2</sup>



**Fig. 10.7:** Registry photo of LB bronze arrowhead from Area I.6 Phase XXXIV.

<sup>2</sup> Arrowheads of similar shape have excavated at several sites, most recently from secure LBII contexts at Tell es-Safi/Gath (object 18F26D020 from locus 18F26D10).

The other object was a small scarab, 1.8 cm long, carved from soft limestone (registry number AEH 66 859) which bore the hieroglyphic prenomen of Rameses II (*user ma'at Ra setep n Ra*). The motif carved into the scarab with the inscription featured a standing figure of Rameses II at left, bearing the “was” staff and headpiece of Seth (see Figs. 10.8 and 10.9). The scarab parallels Dynasty XIX examples from the catalogues of Alan Rowe, Percy Newberry, and William Flinders-Petrie (Rowe 1936:139 and Plate XXVII, Newberry 1906: Plate 35 #2, Flinders-Petrie 1889). Hammond did not identify or classify the scarab at the time of excavation, nor in following years, so it did not impact his LBII assessment of Phase XXXIV ceramics. The scarab was first identified by the author in 1988 during research for his dissertation (Chadwick 1992:91). The likelihood that it was a 13th century BCE product supports the LBII identification of Phase XXXIV in Area I.6.<sup>3</sup>



Fig. 10.8: Registry photo of scarab of Rameses II from Area I.6 Phase XXXIV.

Phase XXXIII in Area I.6 consisted of destruction loci which Hammond designated as separate from Phase XXXIV, and which showed evidence of burning in three

<sup>3</sup> An explanatory note must be added here regarding the report in the author's dissertation (Chadwick 1992:91). During the author's 2003 AEH Review, a typewritten note was discovered in Hammond's materials which bore the heading "Corrections to be worked into I.6." In this note, which had previously gone unnoticed, Hammond assigned to Phase XXXIV certain materials which had been labeled as found in Phase XXXVI. No explanation was given, but this was probably due to a simple transposition of Roman numerals in 1966, and Hammond was later correcting the error. The Rameses II scarab was specifically mentioned as belonging to Phase XXXIV rather than Phase XXXVI. This clarification solved a stratigraphic problem noted in the 1992 dissertation. There, the scarab was said to have been found in Phase XXXVI, but since the MBII/LBI date of that phase was too early for a Dynasty XIX scarab, the suggestion was posited that the scarab should be assigned to Phase XXXIII (the LB destruction phase, see below), and that it had been introduced into Phase XXXVI as an intrusion (Chadwick 1992:91). That theoretical solution was rendered unnecessary by Hammond's note assigning the scarab to Phase XXXIV, a stratum comfortably assigned to LBII.



**Fig. 10.9:** Drawing of scarab of Rameses II from Area I.6 (J. Chadwick).

different locations. Ash deposits 83, 94, and 106 covered the combined patches of yellow clay Floor 84. Ceramic wares were body sherds of plain LB domestic ware, but no decorated or indicative sherds were found in the ash deposits. Probably, this material should be considered as part of the same general stratum as Phase XXXIV, and the yellow clay Floor 84 stratum should be recognized as the terminal LB phase of the domestic structures in Area I.6

The destruction appears to have been localized. The structures themselves were apparently burned, but not destroyed or razed. All of the walls in I.6A and I.6B continued in use during Iron Age I, with new floors laid over the terminal LB deposits. With repairs, the several walls of the Area I.6 structures were used throughout Iron I and Iron II. There are indications that refurbishing of Wall 6 took place, laying worked stones in header and stretcher style atop the earlier MB/LB masonry. As contrasted to the MB/LB structure in Area I.1, which was razed and replaced in Iron I, the MB/LB structure of Area I.6 was repaired and reused. Seven surface phases of Iron I were followed by four Iron II surface phases in the rooms around Wall 6.

## Area I.3 and Area I.7 – Outside the city fortifications

Since the focus of this chapter is on LB finds in the domestic structures of Hebron, areas outside the city limits will only be briefly summarized here. Area I.3, located on the south side of Tell er-Rumeide, was excavated in 1964, and the excavation area was expanded in 1966. The irregular shape of Area I.3 was due to the presence of a very

old olive tree atop the terrace which the land owner did not wish to be harmed, necessitating digging trenches at angles outside the tree's drip line (see Fig 3). Here the first identification of remnants of Canaanite city wall was made in a south-facing terrace – a massive rectangular tower constructed of huge, unworked “Cyclopean” boulders, averaging 2 m and larger in size, founded upon bedrock during MBII (see Fig. 10.10).

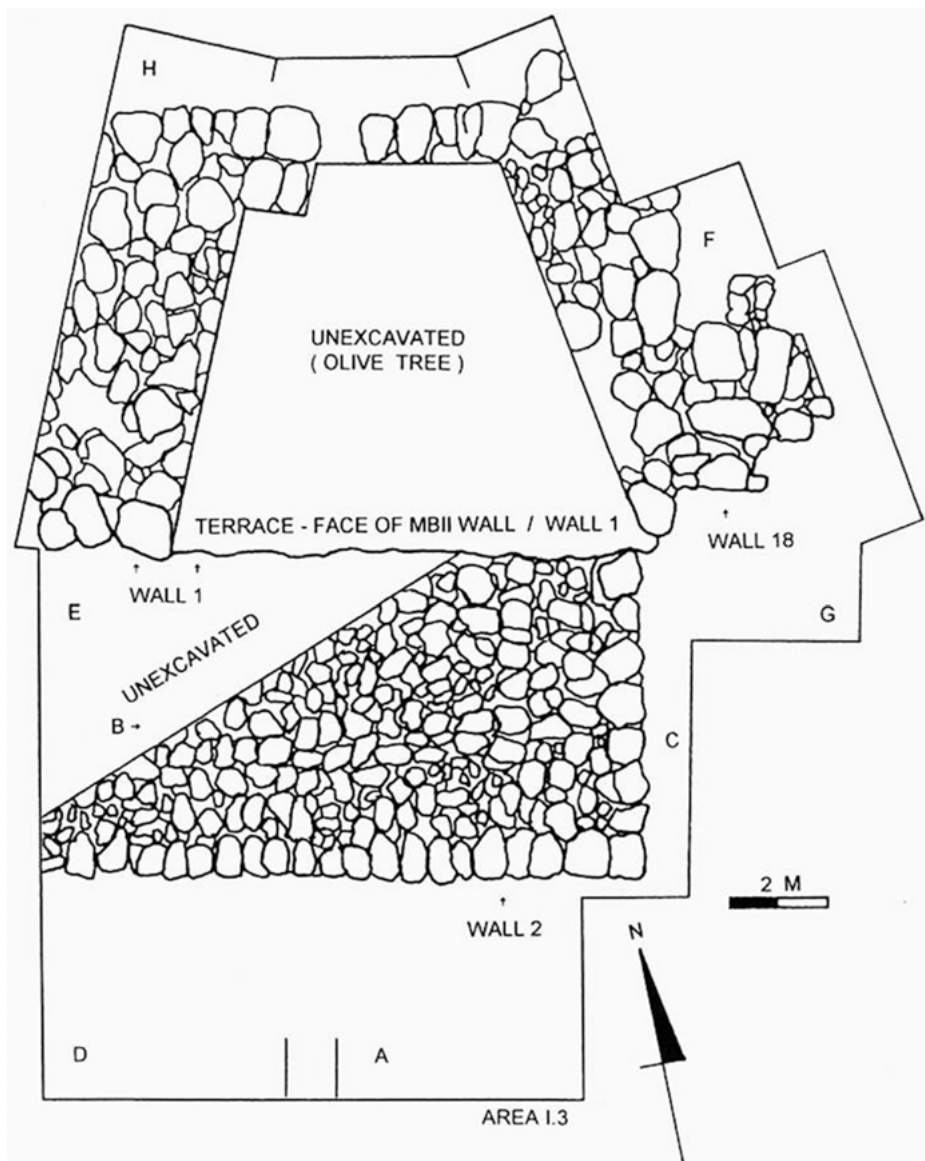
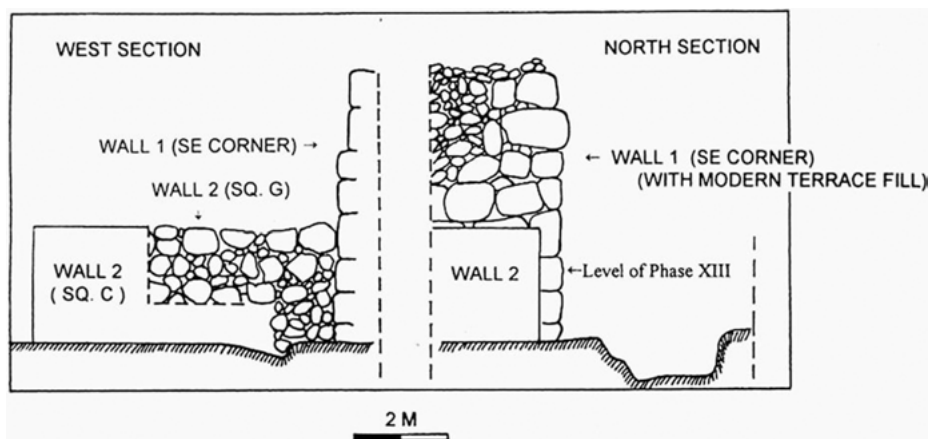


Fig. 10.10: Plan of excavations of Wall 1 (tower) and Wall 2 in Area I.3.

Hammond referred to this structure initially as Wall 1, and portions of its masonry were visible in the terrace prior to excavation. Abutting its south face was a 6.5 m wide fortification wall foundation which Hammond designated as Wall 2, founded on bedrock during EBIII. The stones of Wall 2 were smaller than those of Wall 1, averaging 1 m or less.

Both Wall 1 and Wall 2 were founded on level bedrock, and abutted each other (see Fig. 10.11). Wall 2 stood 2.4 m tall above bedrock, and its top was completely buried, and only revealed by excavation. Wall 1 extended over 3 m higher than the top of wall two, for a surviving height of 5.6 m above bedrock – its original finished height was undoubtedly taller. Discussion of the nature and function of these two fortifications as a gate area (Chadwick 2005:28) will be reserved for another chapter. In the present discussion, it is important only to note that Hammond, digging methodically and stratigraphically, discerned six successive phases (XII through XVII), representing probably four actual surface laminations, which ran to the sides of both Wall 1 and Wall 2 in squares A, C, D, and G. In these phases a variety of LB sherds of local and imported vessels were the latest ceramics recovered. For reference, the position level of Phase XIII relative to both Wall 1 and 2 is displayed in the north section drawing of squares C and G (see Fig.11).



**Fig. 10.11:** Sections west and north of Area I.3 squares C and G, showing LB Phase XIII level.

The top of Wall 2 still stood 1 m above the Phase XIII LB surface. By the end of Iron I, however, the top of the wall had become covered over. It was apparently re-exposed during Iron II.

During the 2003 AEH Review, no bags of retained sherds from Area I.3 were found among the materials Hammond left behind, so a general review of the ceramics from



the LB phases of the area was not possible. However, a single sample from the area was found in a display box which he maintained. The sample was a LB painted sherd from the neck-shoulder area of jug or similar vessel (see Plate III, Fig. 10.13), marked as coming from Level XIII (for further details on Area I.3 see Chadwick 2018).

Area I.7B was a 5 × 7 m trench located some 60 m west of Area I.3, outside the presumed MBII wall line, excavated in 1996. From Hammond's notes it does not appear that any portion of the actual face of the MBII wall was revealed there (the masonry of that wall had been covered over by a more recent terrace wall of small stones). The top of a broad stone structure was found in I.7B, which Hammond designated as Wall 3, and presumed it to be the westward continuation of Wall 2 from Area I.3, with stones of 1 m in size. The nature and dating of Wall 33 will be deferred here, and will occur in another chapter. Atop Wall 33 were the remains of a Hellenistic period structure, in several phases. In a fill layer (Phase X) above Wall 33 but beneath the Hellenistic structure, a mixture of Iron I and LB ceramic sherds was found. Seven of the samples were typical LB painted wares, and others were common domestic LB types. (see Plate IV, Fig. 10.13). It seems likely that the fill soil for this layer was taken from higher up on the tell, to the north, inside the old MBII city wall line, rather than from lower down the tell to the south. While the LB sherds in I.7 were not found in their original domestic context, it is likely that they had come from such a context inside the city.

## Area I.4 – Additional late bronze evidence

Area I.4 consisted of two 4 by 4 m squares (I.4 and I.4A) excavated in 1964 on the eastern slope of Tell er-Rumeide, one terrace level lower than Area I1 (see Fig. 10.3). In Phase XI of the area, which Hammond characterized as a “major construction phase” for an Iron Age II building, more evidence of LB presence at Hebron was discerned. Hammond reported that “probably Late Bronze sherds” were found in the makeup of the “hard packed soil” surfaces of Iron Age II. This stratum covered Wall 8, a MBII structure discerned in Phases XIV and XIII (Hammond 1973: notes). None of the mentioned sherds were found in the 2003 AEH review – it is possible, in view of prevailing practices of the 1960s, that they were discarded, since they were not from an LB context.

Hammond surmised that “the destruction caused by the Iron II construction activities may have obliterated the evidence of occupation subsequent to Middle Bronze II, or the lack of evidence may point to a disuse gap.” He also suggested that “Late Bronze materials recovered in the construction buildup of Phase XI may, in turn, be seen as evidence for the former situation [i.e. an obliterated Late Bronze stratum in Area I.4], or simple represent imported fill from another area occupied

during that period” (Hammond 1973: notes, Chadwick 1992:88). But because the Iron II construction in Area I.1, on the terrace above, had covered MBII, LB, and Iron I strata, Hammond posited that the same pattern of occupation had probably existed in Area I.4: “The construction activities of Phase XI completely masked an evidence of Middle Bronze II (to) Late Bronze II occupation, if any, as well as any between Late Bronze II and Iron II as noted earlier” (Hammond 1973: notes, Chadwick 1992:88).

The presence of LB pottery in Area I.4, but the absence of associated surfaces or other architecture identifiable to the LB, is a phenomenon parallel to that reported by Avi Ofer in the so-called “Tablet House” excavated in his Area S, just 20 m south of Area I.4 on the same terrace level (see Fig. 10.3). Ofer’s 1980’s excavation found an installation and ceramics in that location which included “bowls and decorative designs of a style typical of the end of the Late Bronze Age,” along with “large quantities of ashes” in a “stratum of the early 12th (or perhaps even the late 13th century) BCE” (Ofer 1988:92). This installation and pottery penetrated the MBII stratum to which the construction of the “Tablet House” was attributed. But Ofer found “no clear-cut floors” in connection with the LB material of Area S (Ofer 1988:92). This curiously led him to an entirely differed conclusion than that of Hammond. Ofer maintained that “during the Late Bronze Age, the city of Hebron was abandoned” and that “during the Late Bronze Age there was no large permanent settlement on the site” (Ofer 1993:608). This view was also a factor in dating the cuneiform inscribed “Sheep Tablet” from that context to the MB rather than the LB, even though some indicators pointed to the LB for the tablet (Anbar and Na’aman 1987:10).

The combined presence of LB sherds in Ofer’s Area S, paralleling the LB sherds in Hammond’s Area I.4, and also the LB surfaces and pottery in Area I.1, all in the same east slope area of the tell, combine to demonstrate that the east slope was home to more extensive LB presence than Ofer suggested. Probably, the dating of the “Sheep Tablet” is a subject that ought to be reviewed.

## **Tomb #2**

Tomb #2, referred to as “Tomb Test #2” or “TT#2” in the labeling of the AEH, was located 30 m south of southern wall line of the city, somewhat southeast of Area I.3 (see Fig. 10.3). The tomb chamber of the burial cave measured 4.1 x 8.1 m and featured a central pillar of living rock. The cave was located under the modern house of a local Arab resident, who discovered the tomb eight months prior to Hammond’s arrival in 1964, while digging a cellar for the house. In the only published reference Hammond made to the LB at Tell er-Rumeide, he

reported rumors that some five thousand items had been taken from the tomb and sold on the local market. These items were rumored to include complete ceramic vessels, scarabs, and bronze artifacts (Hammond 1965b:28). Hammond was able to obtain some nearly complete pottery vessels from the house owner, which he entered into the excavation register, including what he called “a variation of the *bilbil* class” (AEH 64 #141), “true *bilbil* and related types” (AEH 64 #147 and #152), and “jugs of the sharply-angled pyxis type” (AEH 64 #160) – (Hammond 1973: notes, Chadwick 1992:92). No register photos of those pieces were found in the 2003 review.

A modest number of broken pottery pieces were recovered by the AEH from areas around the tomb where they had been dumped. These included sherds of LB painted wares, of which photos were retained (see Plate V:10–14). A single bag of sherds from Tomb #2 was found in the 2003 review, which included two of the painted sherds. Also included were three fragments of a bowl of greenish clay (Plate V:2), a rim and handle combination from a large krater (Plate V:8–8a), and the rim and base of a large bowl typical of Iron I (Plate V:9). Other samples recovered (but not found in the 2003 review) included an Iron II black burnished juglet, pinched lambs of both round-bottom and footed types. Hammond suggested that the tomb had been utilized during MBII, LB, Iron I and Iron II periods (Hammond 1973: notes, Chadwick 1992:38, 92, 123). Partial skeletal remains of 23 different burials were also found, although Hammond felt there may have been many more.

The Tomb #2 finds parallel to some degree the LB tomb excavated on the lower northwest slope of Tell er-Rumeide by Yuval Peleg in 1998 (Peleg and Eisenstadt 2004). That cave contained some 53 burials and yielded numerous bronze artifacts and LB ceramic types, along with scarabs of Tutmoses III (ca. 1479–1426 BCE) and Amenophis III (ca. 1390–1353 BCE). Without reference to the LB finds of AEH, Peleg and Eisenstadt concluded: “this tomb and the finds in it prove that Hebron was also settled during the Late Bronze Age, contra Ofer (1993:57–58) who believes, as mentioned above, that the city was abandoned during that period” (Peleg and Eisenstadt 2004:242).

## Adjustments to AEH phase correlation

The 2003 AEH Review, which Hammond personally endorsed, suggested that adjustments were in order for the phasing which had been presented in the 1992 presentation of AEH stratigraphy (Chadwick 1992:144). Fig. 10.12 presents parallel tables of the two phasing schemes, with the 2003 AEH Review scheme now considered more accurate. Those referencing the 1992 dissertation should consult the following adjustments when evaluating AEH LB finds.

## ADJUSTMENTS IN AEH PHASING CORRELATION

## Area I.1 – Phasing of LB Strata

1992 Dissertation (Chadwick 1992:144)	2003 AEH Review
<u>AREA I.1</u>	<u>AREA I.1</u>
Phase IX     Iron IIA	Phase IX     Iron I
Phase X     occupation gap	Phase X     [ canceled ]
Phase XI     LBII (A/B)	Phase XI     LBIIIB
Phase XII     LBI	Phase XII     LBIIA
Phase XIII   MBII / LBI	Phase XIII   MBII / LBI

## Area I.3 – Phasing of LB Strata

1992 Dissertation (Chadwick 1992:144)	2003 AEH Review
<u>AREA I.3</u>	<u>AREA I.3</u>
Phase XI     Iron I	Phase XI     Iron I
Phase X     Iron I	Phase X     LBIIIB (damage)
Phase XI     Iron I	Phase XI     LBIIIB
Phase XII     LBII / Iron I	Phase XII     LBIIIB
Phase XIII   LBII (A/B)	Phase XIII   LBII (A/B)
Phase XIV     LBIIA	Phase XIV-XV*   LBII A
Phase XV     LBI	Phase XVI-XVII*   LBI
Phase XVI     LBI	
Phase XVII   MB / LBI	
	* two phases constitute a single stratum

## Area I.6 – Phasing of LB Strata

1992 Dissertation (Chadwick 1992:144)	2003 AEH Review
<u>AREA I.6</u>	<u>AREA I.6</u>
Phase XXXII   Iron I	Phase XXXII   Iron I
Phase XXXIII   LBIIIB (ash / destruction)	Phase XXXIII   LBIIIB (ash / destruction)
Phase XXXIV   LBIIA	Phase XXXIV   LBIIIB
Phase XXXV     LBI	Phase XXXV     LBIIA
Phase XXXVI   MBII / LBI	Phase XXXVI   MBII / LBI

**Fig. 10.12:** Adjustments in AEH phasing correlation.

## MBII, LB, and Iron I sherd frequency

In preparation for the preliminary report series of the AEH Publication Project, a second review of available sherds from Area I.1 and I.6 was conducted in 2013–14 by the author and Brigham Young University archaeology students Christina Nelson and Jillian Mather. Sherds from the two areas were re-examined, and the 2003–04 AEH Review reads were reconfirmed. A count of sherds from the two areas, by period, was made prior to repackaging the ceramics for permanent storage. Count results from the MBII, LB, and Iron I periods appear in Fig. 10.14.



**Fig. 10.13:** Selected LB painted sherds from AEH Areas I.1, I.3, I.6, and I.7 (Photo: J. Chadwick, 2003).

Sherds by period	Area I.1	Area I.6
Iron Age I	10	33
Late Bronze Age	68	86
Middle Bronze Age II	40	83

**Fig. 10.14:** Table of sherds, by period, recovered in Area I.1 and Area I.6.

Total sherds recovered in the two areas from the LB numbered 154, as contrasted with the total from MBII numbered, which was 123. The Iron I total was a much more modest 43. While this is only one indicator in the complex set of factors by which site occupation and population size may be approximated, it stands in contrast to the notion expressed in the author's original study that Hebron suffered a population decrease in the LB as compared to MBII (Chadwick 1992: 93). The sherd count could be an indicator that the LB population at Hebron was somewhat more robust than in MBII. Only further, and much more wide-spread excavation will answer this issue.

## Conclusions

The combined finds of the American Expedition to Hebron suggest that Tell er-Rumeide was the site of an active populated city during the Late Bronze Age, surrounded by a city wall that had been built in MBII.<sup>4</sup> Finds in Area I.6, including ceramics, architecture, and a datable scarab of Rameses II indicate domestic LB settlement in the center north area of the tell, near the summit. Finds in Area I.1, ceramic and architectural, indicate domestic LB settlement on the eastern slope of the tell, within the presumed wall line. This is supported by LB ceramics recovered in Area I.4, as well as reported ceramics from Area S of the Ofer expedition. LB ceramics recovered in Area I.7 are presumed to have come from the upper south area of the tell, near Deir Arba'in, which would likely have been the elite zone of the ancient city. And LB ceramics from Tomb #2 on the lower south slope of the tell, paralleled by finds made by Peleg in a tomb on the lower north slope, also point to an LB population at Hebron. Contra the proposal of Ofer, who maintained the Hebron was abandoned during the LB (Ofer 1993:57–58), and older sources which relied on that report (such as Dever 1990, Finkelstein 1988, Mazar 1990), the conclusion of Hammond, and also the present author (who directs the AEH Publication Project) is that Tell er-Rumeide/Hebron was a thriving city during the entirety of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>5</sup>

With regard to the pursuit of biblical archaeology, and the issue of the use of archaeological data by those who research biblical tradition, we may say the following: While the finds of AEH and the subsequent AEH Review projects cannot and should not *a priori* be claimed as support for the biblical narrative in Joshua and Judges concerning Israelite conquest and occupation of Hebron, it must certainly be recognized that those traditions also cannot be dismissed on account of the archaeological record. It cannot be claimed that biblical tradition is unreliable because there was no LB Hebron, because there was indeed a thriving city there.

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4 The MBII fortification wall around Tell er-Rumeide/Hebron was first discovered by Hammond in AEH Area I.3 on the south side of the tell in 1964–66 (Hammond 1965a, 1966a, 1968, 1971; Chadwick 1992). It was later found by Eisenberg on the north side of the tell in 1999 (Eisenberg 2011; Eisenberg and Nagorski 2002; Eisenberg and Ben Shlomo 2016, 2017). Both excavations securely dated the fortifications to MBII, contra the proposal of Ussishkin who suggested they might be dated to Iron II (Ussishkin 2016). With repairs the wall continued in use throughout the LB and Iron I and II periods (Chadwick 2005). A preliminary report of the MBII fortification finds in AEH Area I.3 has now appeared (Chadwick 2017).

5 In this regard it is significant that Charles Krahmalkov has suggested the toponym Hebron appears on a New Kingdom topographical list prepared by Rameses II which was copied by Rameses III on the wall of his mortuary temple at Medinat Habu. The reported topographical sequence – Hebron, Janum, Drbn, Apheqah – is remarkably similar to the list in Joshua 15:52–54 (Krahmalkov 1994). I thank Chris McKinny for alerting me to this source.

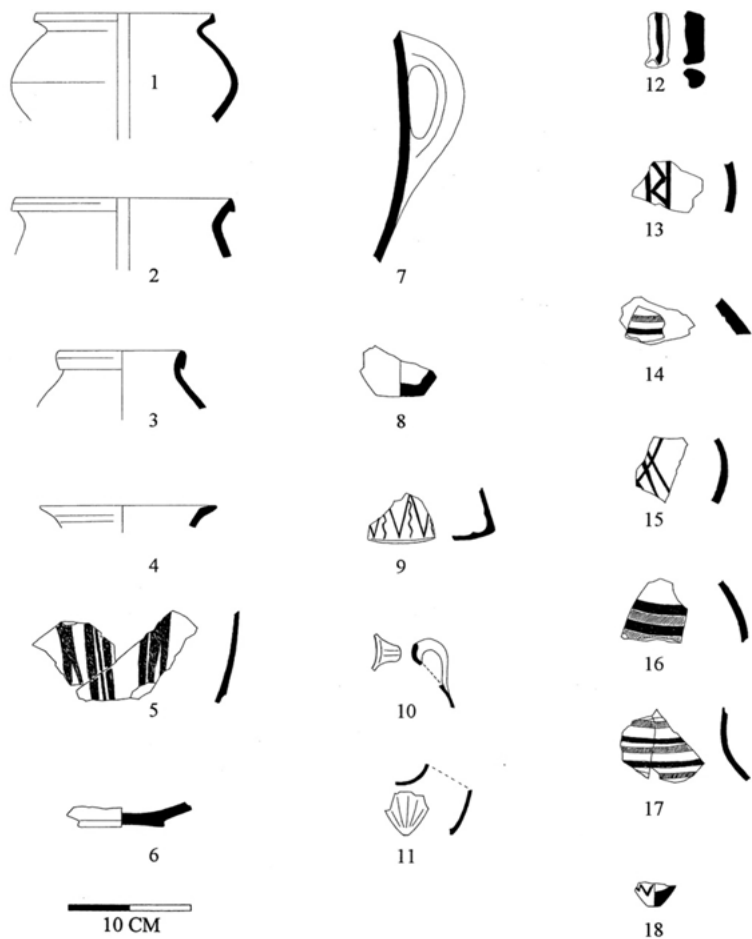


PLATE I: A.E.H AREA 1.1 – 2003 REVIEW.

NO.	FIND	PHASE	DESCRIPTION	PARALLELS
1	rim (3 pieces)	IX	everted rim cooking pot, red clay, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , pl. 16:7 <i>Lachish II</i> , pl.55:357, 56:370
2	rim	XI	folded rim cooking pot red clay, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 10:3 <i>Lachish II</i> , pl. 55:356
3	rim	XI	jar rim, tan clay, grey core	<i>Lachish II</i> , pl. 56:374
4	rim	XI	bowl rim, tan clay	<i>Gezer V</i> , pl. 13:13 <i>Lachish II</i> , pl. 41:123
5	body sherds (2)	XI	tan clay, brown paint, grey core	
6	base	IX	concave disc base, pink clay, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , pl. 16:3, 18:2 <i>Lachish IV</i> , pl. 68:555
7	handle	IX	storage jar, tan clay, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , pl. 7:16, 25:1 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 58 :387, 388
8	base	XI	storage jar, red clay, grey core	<i>Gazer V</i> , Pl. 9:23, 11:27
9	juglet base	XII	tan clay, tan slip, burnished, reddish brown paint	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 52:288
10	handle	XI	pilgrim flask handle, tan clay	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 54:349
11	juglet sherd	n. a.	form a LB shaved juglet base, brown clay, tan slip, smoothed finish	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 52:294
12	figurine leg	VI	animal figurine leg, shaped hoof, pink clay, red paint, grey core	
13	body sherd	VI	tan clay, cream slip, red paint	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 50:266
14	body sherd	IX	Jug shoulder sherd, brown clay, tan slip, red and black painted bands	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 11:15
15	body sherd	IX	hand molded, tan clay, pink slip, red paint	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl.57:4(decor)
16	body sherd	XI	krater or jug shoulder sherd, tan clay and slip, alternating brown and red painted bands	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 49:256
17	body sherd (2)	n.a.	from shoulder/neck of chalice or jug, red and brown painted bands	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 47:222(decor)
18	juglet base	XI	from a LB juglet base, tan clay, red painted zig zag design	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 52:319(form)

PLATE I: DESCRIPTIONS A.E.H. AREA I.1–2003 REVIEW SELECTED LATE BRONZE TYPES



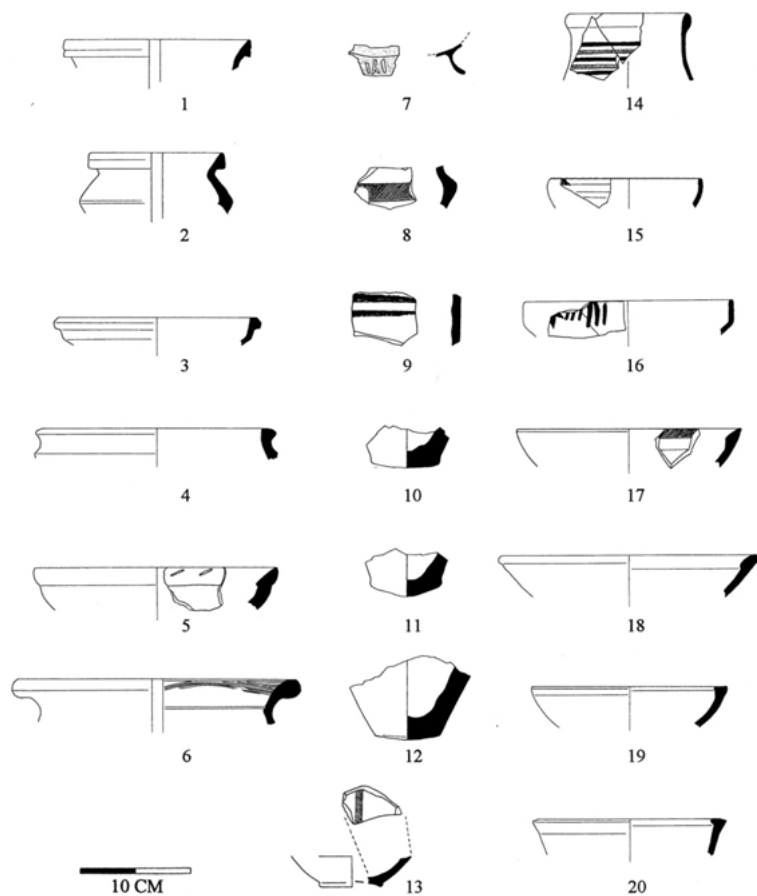
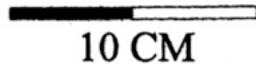


PLATE II: A.E.H AREA 1.6-2003 REVIEW.

NO	FIND	PHASE	DESCRIPTION	PARALLELS
1	rim	XXXIV	folded rim of cooking pot	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 10:3 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 56:364
2	rim/body	XXXIV	folded rim and body of small cooking pot	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 10:3 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 56:371
3	rim	XXXIV	rim of bowl or platter, red-yellow clay, grey core, no decor	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 44:177
4	rim	XXXIV	rim of bowl or krater, buff clay	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 11:8 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 50:271
5	rim	XXXIV	rim fragment of bowl, pink clay, diagonal incised decoration (prior to firing)	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 8:16, 13:8 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 44:177, 50:73
6	rim	XXXIV	rim of bowl or krater, tan clay, buff slip, comb decoration along top interior	
7	base	XXXV	Base Ring II “bilbil” base sherd brown clay, black slip, white paint	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 26:2, 30:1 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 51:279, 280
8	body sherd	XXXIV	carinated bowl with thick red painted band white clay, white slip	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 7:27(form)
9	body sherd	XXXIV	body sherd jug or krater, tan clay, white slip, red painted horizontal stripes	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 9:19 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 49:264
10	base	XXXV	storage jar, thick knob base, tan clay	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 11:21, 16:22 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 57:389
11	base	XVIII	storage jar, thick knob base, tan clay	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 8:12, 11:21 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 57:389
12	base	XXXIV	storage jar, thick knob base, tan clay	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 8:25, 9:22 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 57:385
13	base	XXXIV	bowl fragment, concave disc base, red clay, painted red stripe on interior	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 8:21, 9:12(form) <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 38:49, 47:137
14	rim (2 sherds)	XXXIV	rim and neck of tall neck jar, tan clay, black and red painted horizontal lines	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 47:222(décor) <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 47:239(form)
15	rim	XXXIV	rim fragment of white clay bowl, brownish-red paint, Cypriot White Slipped “milkbowl” form	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 8:7(form) <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 43:164
16	rim (2 sherds)	XVIII	rim fragment of bowl, red clay, red paint	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 41:101(form)
17	rim	XXXIV	rim fragment of bowl, tan clay, red painted band on interior rim	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 13:8 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 49:264
18	rim	XXXIV	rim of bowl, yellow-red clay, grey core	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 38:43
19	rim	XXXIV	rim of bowl, tan clay, buff slip exterior	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 38:41, 42
20	rim	XXXIV	rim of bowl, tan clay, light grey core	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 42:142

PLATE II: DESCRIPTIONS A.E.H AREA I.6—2003 REVIEW SELECTED LATE BRONZE TYPES



**PLATE III:** A.E.H AREA I.3–2003 REVIEW Late Bronze Age II painted sherd from phase XIII.

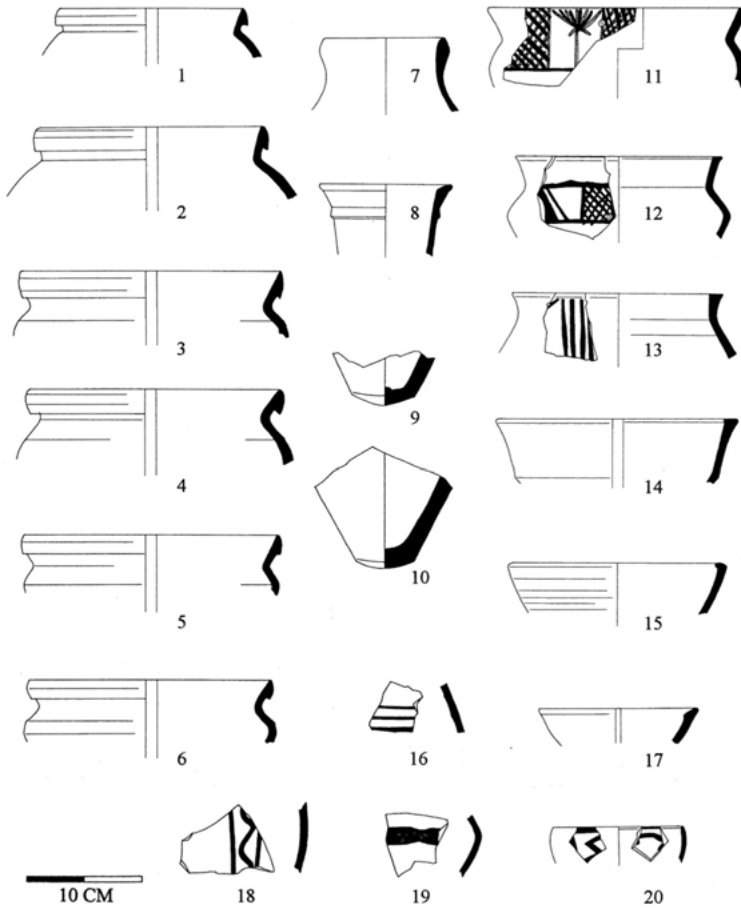


PLATE IV: A.E.H AREA I.7B – 2003 REVIEW.

NO	FIND	PHASE	DESCRIPTION	PARALLELS
1	rim	III	folded rim of cooking pot, red clay, tan slip, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 11:1 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 56:368
2	rim	X	folded rim of cooking pot, red clay, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 8:15 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 56:366
3	rim	X	folded rim of cooking pot, red clay, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 7:6 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 56:371
4	rim	X	folded rim of cooking pot, red clay, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 8:14 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 56:371
5	rim	X	folded rim of cooking pot, red clay, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 7:5 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 56:388
6	rim	X	folded rim of cooking pot, red clay, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 8:35 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 56:367
7	rim	X	standard rim of storage jar, pink clay	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 15:8, 25:1 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 57:389, 391
8	rim	X	flared rim of storage jar, buff clay, lt. Grey core	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 57:393 <i>Lachish IV</i> , Pl. 87:1022
9	base	X	thick base of storage jar, buff clay	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 25:1 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 57:385
10	base	X	thick base of storage jar, tan clay, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 8:12 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 57:385
11	rim	X	rim from krater, buff clay, red and black painted tree with diagonal hatched line metope	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 41:117(form) <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 48:250(décor)
12	rim	X	rim from krater, pink clay, pink slip, grey core, red painted triangle metope and diagonal hatched line metopes	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 49:253(decor)
13	rim	X	rim from bowl (or jar or large chalice), tan clay, grey core, red painted vertical lines meet rim	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 8:10(decor) <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 47:238, 239
14	rim	X	rim form bowl, red-yellow clay	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 23:2 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 40:84
15	rim	X	rim from bowl, tan clay, light grey core	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 38:41, 53
16	body sherd	X	shoulder of jug or bowl. red clay, grey core, three red painted horizontal lines	
17	rim	X	rim from small bowl, buff clay	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 8:16 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 38:43
18	body sherd	X	from jar or jug, tan clay, two black painted vertical lines separated by a single red painted vertical wavy line	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 10:4 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 50:267
19	body sherd	X	from bowl, tan clay, white slip, burnished, red painted horizontal band	
20	rim	III	rim from small bowl, tan clay, grey core, red painted decor inside and outside	<i>Gezer V</i> , Pl. 11:17(decor) <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 38:50(form)

PLATE IV: DESCRIPTIONS A.E.H. AREA 1. 7B – 2003 REVIEW SELECTED LATE BRONZE TYPES

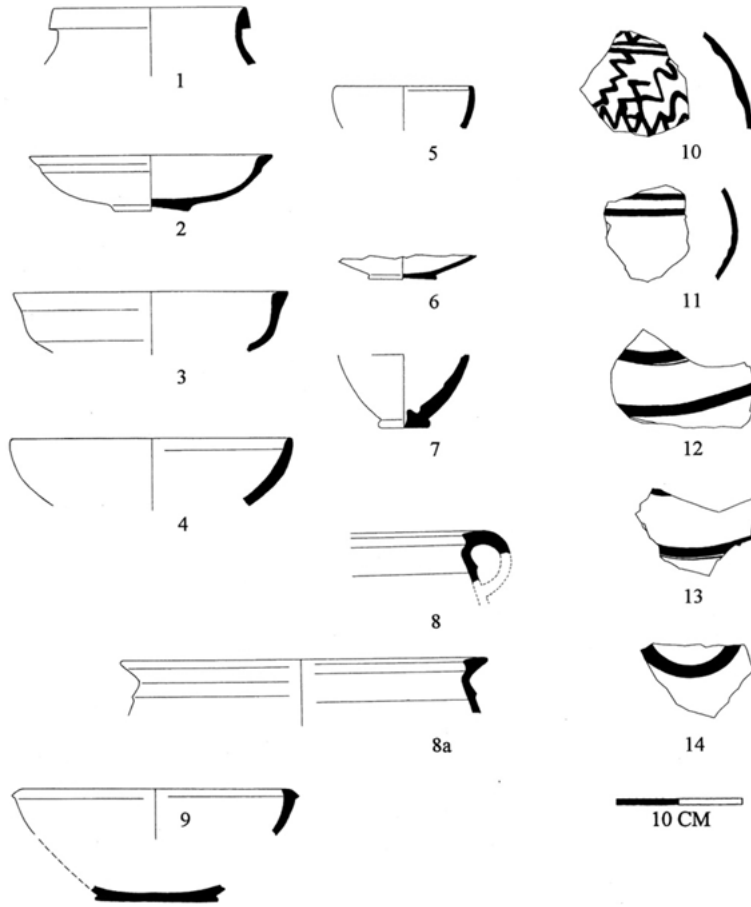


PLATE V: A.E.H. TOMB 2-2003 REVIEW.

NO	FIND	PHASE	DESCRIPTION	PARALLELS
1	rim	D	folded rim fragment, tan-pink clay, (cooking pot or jar)	<i>Gezer V</i> , pl. 9:16 <i>Lachish II</i> , pl. 55:356
2	bowl fragments(3)	D	bowl, green-white clay, concave disc base, full form of bowl recovered	<i>Gezer V</i> , pl. 13:13(rim form) <i>Lachish II</i> , pl. 40:84
3	rim	D	bowl rim fragment, tan clay, interior tan slip	<i>Gezer V</i> , pl. 8:8 <i>Lachish II</i> , pl. 40:84
4	rim	D	bowl rim, pink-buff clay, white grits, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , pl. 7:19 <i>Lachish II</i> , 37:12
5	rim	D	bowl rim, red-yellow clay, exterior buff slip	<i>Gezer V</i> , 20:2 <i>Lachish II</i> , 38:47, 50
6	base	D	concave base of a bowl, red clay	<i>Gezer V</i> , pl. 16:3 <i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 38:35,41,53
7	base	D	base of small jug, flat bottom disc, (Iron I type), buff clay	<i>Lachish III</i> ,89:364
8–8a	rim	D	rim of krater with handle (two views), buff clay, grey core	<i>Gezer V</i> , pl. 7:1,9:13 <i>Lachish II</i> , pl. 39:70,41:9
9	bowl fragments(2)	D	flat disc base and rim sherd of bowl, (Iron I type), pink-buff clay, water pocked	<i>Lachish III</i> , pl. 80:28,86
10	body sherd	D	body sherd from jug, tan clay, red painted decor, two parallel horizontal lines with irregular zig zag lines (motif unclear)	<i>Lachish II</i> , Pl. 51:287 (decor parallel)
11	body sherd	D	body sherd from large juglet, red clay, grey core, two black painted horizontal lines	
12–14	body sherds(3)	D	body sherds from a single vessel, buff clay, black painted concentric circle bands (drawn from photo)	

PLATE V: DESCRIPTIONS A.E.H AREA I.6–2003 REVIEW SELECTED LATE BRONZE TYPES

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Peter M. Fischer

# The Transjordanian Jordan Valley in the Late Bronze Age: under Egyptian control?

## Introduction

This paper presents an overview scrutinizing the material evidence mainly from five sites in Transjordan in order to investigate the extent of Egyptian control over the Transjordanian Jordan Valley during the Late Bronze Age. The study is based on the results of long-term excavation projects at the major sites of Pella, Tell Abu al-Kharaz, and Tell Deir 'Alla, all of which were occupied during most of the Late Bronze Age. Further evidence from the later part of the Late Bronze Age comes from Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, and additional information was extracted from limited excavation and surveys at Kataret es-Samra. All five sites are within a distance of less than 50 km in the central portion of the Transjordanian Jordan Valley between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Although the material remains of these sites in general are comparable it will be demonstrated that there are clear differences as regards occupational sequences and destruction layers, and evidence of foreign, mainly Egyptian, influences.

There are numerous studies which deal with Egyptian control over the Southern Levant in general but investigations specifically dealing with the extent of Egypt's sphere of power in Transjordan are scarce. In this study, the selection of references is restricted to a few syntheses and some more specialized studies. The vast majority of all these studies are based on historical records and the material evidence in Cisjordan. The main objective of the present study is to investigate if there is evidence in the *actual archaeological record* of Transjordan which could clarify the extent of Egyptian control or influence over Transjordan in the Late Bronze Age.

## Chronology

The periodization of the Late Bronze Age is a matter of recurrent debate which has been discussed at length by the author in various publications (inter alia Fischer 2006b; Fischer 2006c and elsewhere). A widely used conventional chronological framework for the Late Bronze Age is the division into LB IA and B, and LB IIA and B covering roughly the second part of the 16th until the beginning/mid-12th century BCE. However, in this paper the chronological periodization which has been suggested by the author and which is reproduced in Table 11.1, will be referred to (Fischer 2006b: 364, table 69; 374, table 70; 2006c: 180, table 21).

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<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110628371-011>

**Table 11.1:** The periodization of the Late Bronze Age in the Southern Levant and contemporaneous pharaohs.

Southern Levant		Egypt (Dyn./nos. of Pharaohs)	Pharaohs	Absolute dates
Revised	Conventional			(approx. BCE)
IA <sup>1</sup>	IA	18/6	Ahmosé-Thutmosis III	1550–1450
IB	IB	18/3	Thutmosis III-IV	1450–1400
IC	IIA	18/6	Amenophis III- Haremhab	1400–1300
II	IIB	19/8	Ramesses I-Tewosret	1300–1190
II	IIB	20/2	Setnakht-Ramesses III	1190–1150

## Selected earlier studies

In her *magnum opus* H. Weippert (1988) dealt with Palestine before Hellenistic times. This important volume, which is based on the state of knowledge of the 1980s, presents a useful overview of the archaeology of mainly Israel and to some extent Transjordan in the Late Bronze Age. Palestine is “part of the Egyptian province of Canaan” (Weippert 1988: 324–25). It does, however, not inform the reader about the extent of Egyptian “presence” in Transjordan. This is mainly due to the fact that Weippert had access to many more publications which dealt with Cisjordan than Transjordan which, not unexpectedly, can lead to a biased view. Since then, new Transjordanian excavations and publications have improved and modified the general picture (see, for instance, Pella: Bourke, Sparks, and Schroder 2006; Tell Abu al-Kharaz: Fischer 2006b, 2006c, 2013; Tell Deir ‘Alla: Franken 1992; Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh: Green 2006, 2011; Tell Zera‘a: Vieweger and Häser 2007; Tell el-Umeyri: Herr, Clark, and Bramlett 2009; Tell al-Hammam: Collins and Aljarrah 2011; Kataret es-Samra: Bürge, Leonard and Fischer 2017, Leonard, Bürge and Fischer 2017). Although designated as an “Egyptian province” Weippert highlights the fact that there is little Egyptian material on the Canaanite market and explains it with the preference of the local people, for instance where ceramics are concerned, for Mycenaean and Cypriot products, and that the genuine Egyptian wares were used by Egyptians stationed in Palestine (Weippert 1988: 323). Another important publication is the overview of the archaeology of the “Land of the Bible” by A. Mazar (1992). The chapter on the Late Bronze Age is headed by “In the Shadow of Egyptian Domination” (Mazar 1992: 232–94). Informative as it is, it follows Weippert’s volume insofar as

<sup>1</sup> The period also contains the transitional MB/LB.

that very little is mentioned about the situation in Transjordan, mainly because of the state of knowledge at that time.<sup>2</sup>

M. G. Hasel (1998) presented the Egyptian military activities between roughly 1300 BCE and the beginning of the 12th century BCE but regarding Transjordan he mentions only Pella. In a recent note, S. Bourke (2013) claims that initially Jordan stood outside the Egyptian orbit, but the Thutmosid conquerors probably (!) brought the Jordan Valley settlements (Nimrin, Deir 'Alla and Pella) into the New Kingdom empire around 1450 BCE. Tell Abu al-Kharaz is not mentioned in this context, certainly because of the almost complete absence of evidence of Egyptian presence as deduced from the archaeological record (Fischer 2006b). Whether early New Kingdom control beyond the Jordan Valley stretched into the eastern highlands remains controversial according to Bourke.

A. A. Burke (2010) treated the Egyptian military activities in "Canaan" during the early 18th Dynasty. He concentrated on the evidence from Cisjordan. There are though some references to Transjordan in his paper which mention destructions during Middle Bronze Age III / Late Bronze Age IA at Pella, Tell Abu al-Kharaz and Tell Deir 'Alla mainly referring to Thutmosis III's warfare (*idem*: 56). He suggests that "... by the end of the LB IA, it is not possible to assert that Egypt had meaningful control of Transjordan or much of the region to the north and northeast of the Jezreel Valley..." (*idem*: 59).

Written sources in the archaeological record from Transjordan are scarce. K. A. Kitchen (1992) discussed the evidence from Egyptian historical sources on Transjordan in a useful overview. Archaeological material which is related to Egypt's activities in the area comes mainly from northern Jordan and southern Syria. This includes a stela with the depiction of Ramesses II vis-à-vis a Canaanite deity which was found at Sheik Sa'ad in the south-westernmost part of Syria at the border with Jordan (Schumacher 1891). Just to the south of the former and north of the Yarmouk River in the village of Tell esh-Shihab another stela showing Seti I with Amun-Ra and Mut was discovered (Smith 1901). The most recent discovery by the Department of Antiquities of Jordan is from 1999: a stela most likely depicting Ramesses II during the campaign in Year 8 of his reign was rediscovered built into the stone structure of the mosque Maqam as-Sayh Halil in the town of at-Turra in northern Jordan (Wimmer forthcoming).

In order to present an up-to-date view on the archaeological evidence as regards the degree of Egyptian influence on the Transjordanian Jordan Valley in the Late Bronze Age, five sites will be presented from north to south: Pella, Tell Abu al-Kharaz, Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, Tell Deir 'Alla and Kataret es-Samra. These sites are

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<sup>2</sup> However, the war annals of Thutmosis III specifically mention raids into Transjordan after the battle at Megiddo.

known from two final publications (Tell Abu al-Kharaz and Kataret es-Samra) or syntheses / preliminary reports (Pella, Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, and Tell Deir 'Alla.<sup>3</sup>

There are other sites which may become of importance to the present discussion. To the north is Tell Zera'a which is at some distance from the Jordan Valley in north-western Jordan. Although there are some Egyptian/Egyptianizing finds, the preliminary reports cannot be used to clarify the extent of Egyptian influence in this region (see e.g. Vieweger and Häser 2007). Another site is Tell el-Hammam in the southern Jordan Valley, about 14 km north-east of the Dead Sea. The excavators state that Late Bronze Age material is absent from the tell proper (Collins and Aljarah 2011) but recent field work (in Field UA) produced a few isolated finds from the second half of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>4</sup> Recently, at Tell Damiyah south of Tell Deir 'Alla, a substantial number of Late Bronze Age sherds were discovered during the 2004 survey (sic). The authors suggest that the permanent occupation started during this period but this claim needs confirmation through excavation (Petit and Kafafi 2016: 19; cf. the Early Bronze Age sherds from the site which the authors believe to have been brought to the site with building material from somewhere else).

## The case of Pella

Much of the information on Pella has been extracted from a discussion in spring 2015 between the author and S. Bourke, the latter being the long-time excavator of Pella.<sup>5</sup> Additional information was retrieved from selected publications by Bourke (in specific Bourke, Sparks, and Schroder 2006: 54, table 2; Bourke 2012). Pella was settled during most of the Late Bronze Age (Phases VB–II; Fischer 2006a: 241, table 1) and there seem to have been three periods of heightened Egyptian influence at Pella.

The first occurred around the LB IA/IB interface, which is the period when the “Governor’s Residency”<sup>6</sup> building was constructed in the local Phase VB (Bourke in Bourke et al. 1994; Fischer 2006a: 241, table 1; 2014: 567). The dating of the construction of this compound is somewhat inexact. Bourke suggests the construction is connected either to the campaigns of Thutmosis III or those early in the reign of Amenophis II. He also suggests that this structure can be compared to the early type found at Tel Halif, and that tentatively detected below Building 1500 at Beth Shan. The percentage of scarabs to cylinder seals begins to climb from about this

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<sup>3</sup> See references below.

<sup>4</sup> There is a small isolated structure and 27 diagnostic vessel sherds which are dated by the excavators to Late Bronze Age IIA.

<sup>5</sup> I am much obliged to S. Bourke’s input.

<sup>6</sup> I leave aside a thorough discussion on the nature and function on the much debated “Governor’s Residency” at Pella.

period (Bourke, Sparks, and Schroder 2006: 54, table 2). According to Bourke, the “Governor’s Residency” goes out of use around the middle of the 14th century BCE. This date is based on Late Helladic IIIA2 pottery in the destruction debris, and may well correspond to the Amarna Letters complaints about the local ruler of Pella, Mut-Balu, handing the city to the nomadic Habiru (EA 255, 256; Fischer 2014: 572).

The second period is tentatively connected with the Egyptian military campaigns in the early reign of Seti I (Kitchen 1993: 17ff.). In the topographical list of Seti I, the sole Transjordanian site known by its name is Pahil/Pella (Kitchen 1992: 26). The people of Pella were reported to collaborate with a rebel chief of nearby Hammath in seizing the Egyptian garrison at Beth Shan. It is not unlikely that the destruction levels across the site around 1300 BCE are related to Seti I’s reign as a reaction to this threatening alliance. After the destruction, which also affected the huge Migdol/ Fortress temple at Pella (Bourke 2012), specific Egyptianizing elements appear for the first time (columned halls, foundation deposits, Egyptian-styled statuary and stone/ paste vessels).

In the third period, around 1200 BCE, Pella sees the construction of several large stone-paved rectilinear buildings, each with ‘lamp and bowl’ deposits under the main walls which may be taken as evidence of Egyptianization (see discussion below)<sup>7</sup>.

## The case of Tell Abu al-Kharaz

Tell Abu al-Kharaz was settled in the entire Late Bronze Age except for its latest part, i.e. after roughly 1300 BCE (Phases V–VIII; Fischer 2006b).<sup>8</sup> From the exposed summit of the tell large parts of the “Egyptian-controlled” Cisjordanian Jordan Valley can be overlooked whereas the nearby Pella is more distant from the Jordan Valley. Egyptian finds from Late Bronze Age strata are virtually missing, which is surprising considering the topographical position of Tell Abu al-Kharaz. Imported goods, mainly pottery, are restricted to vessels from Cyprus and Lebanon (Fischer 2006b: 281–85). Not even locally made Egyptianizing pottery is present in Late Bronze Age strata, which is remarkable considering finds of much such pottery at the neighbouring site of Beth Shean on the other side of the River Jordan (at a distance of only 14 km as the crow flies). From a post-Late Bronze Age stratum comes a scarab (N1389) with the rather mediocre version of *men-kheper-re*, the throne name of Thutmosis III. The context is Iron Age IB (around 1100 BCE; Fischer 2013: 539–43; see also Fischer and Bürge 2013: 152–53) and similar scarabs were mass-produced

<sup>7</sup> These deposits have been found at two widely separated locations across the site.

<sup>8</sup> There seems to be an occupational lacuna between Phase VIII, the most recent Late Bronze Age II phase, and Phase IX, the earliest Iron Age (IB) phase.

in this period (cf. Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger 1990: 205; Münger 2005: 395). There are, however, three destruction layers which may connect Tell Abu al-Kharaz to Egypt and its military campaigns. This will briefly be discussed: the first ended Phase V (Late Bronze Age IB), the second Phase VII (Late Bronze Age IC) and the third Phase VIII (Late Bronze Age II).

The early Late Bronze Age Phase V, which represents the most extensive and intensive Late Bronze Age occupation at Tell Abu al-Kharaz, produced numerous Chocolate-on-White I vessels (Fischer 1999) but nothing Egyptian. This phase was destroyed in a fierce conflagration around or shortly after 1450 BCE (Fischer 2006a: 231–233, 241 and Fischer 2006b: 321–323, 364–374). Let us have a glance at the military and political situation at that time. The historical records mention Thutmosis III's first campaign with its many battles, which affected a number of sites from south-western Canaan (Gaza area) and further east and north. Thutmosis III is said to have taken booty and large quantities of grain not only from Cisjordanian sites and Lebanon but also from three Transjordanian districts and/or towns (cf. Pritchard 1969: 237–38). One of these raids led by him or his vassals might be reflected in the destruction layer of Phase V.

There are a number of names of places in the great topographical list of Thutmosis III whose identification remains obscure (cf. Kitchen 1992: 23–25). Some of these are very likely located in Transjordan and may include Tell Abu al-Kharaz. It is not impossible that Tell Abu al-Kharaz is intended, for instance, by one of nos. 91 (*Utra'a*) or 92 (*Ybr*) in the topographical list, although Redford (1982a; 1982b) prefers to locate these places further east but in any case south of the Yarmuk River (see also Kitchen 1992: 25, van der Steen 2004: 11–12). Regardless of the exact location of these places, nos. 89–101 suggest a route through Transjordan according to Redford's hypothesis.

The campaigns of Amenophis II (Der Manuelian 1987) might be another possible explanation for the destruction of Phase V (see above the roughly contemporary establishment of the "Governor's Residency" in Pella).

A small temple belongs to Phase VII (LB IB/C–IC; Fischer 2006b: 140–58). In addition to numerous complete, locally made, monochrome and bichrome-decorated vessels, and Cypriot imports there is neither Egyptian nor Egyptianizing material. The temple was built after c. 1400 BCE and seems on the basis of the ceramic evidence to have been destroyed around or shortly after 1350 BCE (there is e.g. early Cypriot White Slip II and Base-ring I present). This date corresponds to the reign of Amenophis IV (Akhenaten) who halted military campaigns. Therefore, the destruction of Phase VII might possibly not be connected to an Egyptian raid into Transjordan, but to a raid of the Habiru (see Pella above) or have other, natural causes.

The destruction of Phase VIII after 1300 BCE falls into the period of the reign of Seti I, who campaigned in the Southern Levant (Hasel 1998). The destruction may be connected to Seti's military activities in the area.

## The case of Tell Deir ‘Alla

Tell Deir ‘Alla was settled throughout the Late Bronze Age (general Phases 4–13; van der Kooij 2006: 224, table 10). Egyptian sources from the Late Bronze Age dealing with the area of Tell Deir ‘Alla are missing. After the battle of Megiddo, when Thutmose III turned many towns into Egyptian vassals, followed a *pax Aegyptiaca*. Trade routes through Palestine were secured. The Amarna archives indicate that the middle part of the Jordan Valley was controlled by the King of Shechem, whose power, however, was diminished by the activities of the Habiru. Egyptian campaigns against the Shasu around 1300 B.C. included Transjordan and the Jordan Valley in order to maintain control of the trade routes. The short campaign(s) of Seti I should also be mentioned, dealing with e.g. Beth Shan and Pella (see above; Kitchen 1993: 17ff.) but it has not yet been possible to connect the excavated Bronze Age strata at Tell Deir ‘Alla with historical events in the region (van der Kooij 2006: 201–2).

Amongst the artefacts with historical implications are Egyptian seals with pharaoh names which have been discovered outside the Late Bronze Age sedimentary contexts (van der Kooij 2006: 217). The first (DA2020) is a faience block seal which was found in an Iron Age II (!) context – apparently moved upwards by pit-digging or being picked up in antiquity. As well as the name and title of the owner, the dynastic title and first name of Pharaoh Ramesses II of the 19th Dynasty are given. The second (DA2810) is a scarab seal from the surface of the tell which was apparently also moved up by post-Late Bronze Age activities. The *men-kheper-re* cartouche of Pharaoh Thutmosis III of the 18th Dynasty definitely does not provide proof of a 15th century date because the motif was used for a considerable time after the reign of Thutmosis III (van der Kooij 2006: 217; cf. the scarab of Thutmosis III in an Iron Age IB context at Tell Abu al-Kharaz; Fischer 2013: 539–43).

Another object with historical implications is the faience vase with the cartouche of Pharaoh Tewosret (DA450; Yoyotte 1962; Franken 1992: 31, 187), the last 19th Dynasty ruler. The object was part of the inventory of the temple during the last collapse (Phase E = Phase 12). Thus, the beginning of the reign of this Pharaoh provides the date after which the destruction took place – possibly decades later. An additional object is a bulla with rope impressions on the back and with several impressions of one seal with the *men-kheper-re* name of Thutmosis III (DA3456). Its context is burnt debris on the floor of a room from local Phase 6 on the south-western slope. Whenever the seal was made, it was used during “Phase E/F,” which corresponds to the end of the Late Bronze Age (Phase 13). A large jar stopper (DA3288) with the impression of a big seal with apparently Egyptian signs, but not yet successfully read and chronologically fixed, comes from the burnt debris in the industrial and storage rooms at the south-south-western foot of the tell. This context was to the “final LB” (van der Kooij 2006: 220–22). The stopper was probably used on a



collared rim pithos – presumably too heavy to be used for transport of contents, thus indicating a local use of the seal.

## The case of Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh

The problem with the settlement of Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh is that the soundings for the Late Bronze Age (i.e. sub-Stratum XII) are very limited in scope because of their considerable depth. In addition, they did not yield very much in the way of ceramics. It is, however, most likely that the earliest Late Bronze Age material from the upper part of Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh is from Late Bronze Age IC (former Late Bronze Age IIA), followed by Late Bronze Age II, and the Late Bronze Age II – Iron Age transition, which all seem to predate the Str. XII building.<sup>9</sup> The Stratum XII structures seem to date to Iron Age IB and IIA.

For the cemetery, the earliest material from tombs is that from T.117 (Pritchard’s burials), which include Aegean imports and Cypriot Base-ring II (Pritchard 1980). Some of these ceramics could be heirlooms, but they could also point to a late 13th century date for the start of the cemetery (Green 2011: 164, note 213). In contrast to the above discussed sites, there are quite a few number of Egyptianizing ceramics, especially bowls from the cemetery (e.g. Pritchard 1980: Types 1–7).

## The case of Kataret es-Samra

Limited excavations and surveys in the 1970s and 80s did not produce any Egyptian or Egyptianizing finds with the exception of a scarab from Tomb 2 (MC 78; PB 44; Bürge, Leonard, and Fischer 2017; Leonard, Bürge and Fischer 2017). The scarab which is dated to the 18th Dynasty, maybe its second half, provides a *terminus post quem* (Eggler and Keel 2006: 250). The only other imports are Cypriot: a Base-ring I juglet and a Base-ring I-II juglet.

## Discussion and conclusions

According to the majority of interpretations of historical sources, following the decline of the Canaanite city states of the Middle Bronze Age, Canaan/Southern Levant/Palestine came under Egyptian control in the Late Bronze Age. However, these – almost

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<sup>9</sup> Much of the information has been provided by J. Green in the course of a correspondence in spring 2015.

exclusively – Egyptian sources, do not specify the extent of Egyptian supremacy east of the river Jordan. Today, it is generally accepted that at least the southern parts of Cisjordan were under Egyptian domination starting with the raids of Ahmose, the first pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty, into its southern parts and culminating with the conquest of large areas of the Levant under Thutmosis III around a century later.

However, how much do we know about Egypt's degree of supremacy or at least influence over the territory east of the river Jordan? Historical sources dealing with this area are scarce and those which mention warfare and other events east of the river Jordan are often difficult to interpret. Examples are some dubious toponyms in Thutmosis III's topographical list, some of which are suggested to be placed in Transjordan (see above). A few of those, for instance, nos. 91 (Utra'a) and/or 92 (Ybr), may possibly be connected with Tell Abu al-Kharaz. Nevertheless, this remains speculative, and the only Transjordanian site which is mentioned in Egyptian written sources (Pahil) can fairly safely be identified with Pella. It is hard to point to anything significant (beyond royal-name scarabs) in Jordan before Thutmosis III, but the Egyptian campaign documents from this time onwards strongly imply that the Egyptians insisted on free passage across north Jordan at least from this time onwards. (see Fig. 11.1 showing the principal trade routes).

As regards the archaeological evidence, certain find groups, for instance, Egyptian and Egyptianizing scarabs and containers, which are fairly common all over the Eastern Mediterranean and the ancient Near East including Transjordan, cannot be taken as proof of Egyptian domination or even the presence of Egyptians there. They merely reflect fashion trends, trade connections and a certain admiration and emulation of the "exotic" Egyptian culture.

Other finds, however, point to Egyptian activities in Transjordan (here northern Jordan / southern Syria). These include a stela<sup>10</sup> with the image of Ramesses II from Sheik Sa'ad, a stela showing Seti I from the village of Tell esh-Shihab, and quite recently a stela built in the stone structure of the mosque Maqam as-Sayh Halil in the Jordanian town of at-Turra depicting Ramesses II during the campaign in Year 8 of his reign (Wimmer forthcoming). Another reused stela depicting Ramesses II was found covering a Roman tomb at al-Kiswa, 15 km south of Damascus (Kitchen 1999; Tarqji 1999; Yoyotte 1999). In the author's opinion, all these stelae point to Egypt's determination to secure the trade route east of the river Jordan through the Hauran towards Damascus. This was most likely achieved by means of fortresses commanded by local, and intermittently loyal, rulers but they do not present proof of Egypt's supremacy over the area. This claim is supported by the Amarna Letters' complaints about Mut-Balu, a local ruler – obviously no longer loyal to Egypt – handing Pella to the nomad people of the Habiru (see above). Although this happened some decades before the Ramesside period, the situation during Seti I's and

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10 All stela from the area under discussion are of local basalt.

Ramesses II's reign was certainly only marginally different. However, finds with Egyptian connections from the 13th century may point to an increased use of the trade route from the south starting at the Red Sea and continuing via the Dead Sea and the Jordan Valley through the Hauran towards Damascus (see Map 11.1 which shows how well these find spots line up towards the north).

Let us return to the evidence from the investigated Transjordanian Jordan Valley sites of which Kataret es-Samra is excluded in the following discussion because of the scanty evidence from only short field seasons. None of the remaining four sites proves that the land east of the river Jordan was under direct Egyptian supremacy.

As regards Pella, there is nothing to point to that would make manifest a direct Egyptian military control of the city in the Late Bronze Age. In the first period, around the mid-14th century BCE, of increased Egyptian "interest" in Pella (see the Amarna letter referring to Mut Balu above) there is nothing overt about the Egyptian presence but a local ruler who once was loyal to Egypt. Also in the second period, roughly 1350–1300 BCE there is nothing overly Egyptian, i.e. no inscriptions nor direct imperial imports, but the change in the Migdol-temple layout is remarkable: this situation reflects post-destruction Egyptianizing, as those who survived adopted the trappings of Egyptian rule. Admittedly, the third period maybe points to potential Egyptianization. This occurs from around 1200 BCE which culturally can be considered 'sub-Canaanite'. If one accepts the "lamp and bowl" deposits (cf. Bunimowitz and Zimhoni 1993; Shai, Maeir, Gadot and Uziel 2011) as strong evidence for Egyptianization, an increase in Egyptianization in this final phase of Egyptian imperialism under Ramesses III (?) can be assumed.

As regards Tell Abu al-Kharaz, the absence of any contemporaneous Egyptian or Egyptianizing material in Late Bronze Age contexts is surprising. The Thutmosis III scarab from an Iron Age IB context could have been produced and used in Iron Age IB long after the reign of Thutmosis III and must not necessarily have been dug up from earlier layers by the early Iron Age people and deposited where it was found (cf. Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger 1990: 205; Münger 2005: 395). Egyptian military attacks on Tell Abu al-Kharaz might have been responsible for the three layers of destruction (see Table 11.2) but this remains speculative although two of them seem to be related (the third is tentatively ascribed to the Habiru). It might have been the case that Tell Abu al-Kharaz was dependent on the benevolence of the Egyptians as long the inhabitants obeyed the demands of their powerful neighbour by the provision of supplies of, for instance, grain, meat, hides, wine, oil and incense. If the inhabitants of Tell Abu al-Kharaz had traded these products we certainly would have discovered many more imports at the site. The author suggests the following setting: As long as the people of Tell Abu al-Kharaz paid tribute to their mighty western neighbour they were left alone by the Egyptians but as soon as produce ceased to arrive they were punished, which may be reflected in the destruction layers.





**Fig. 11.1:** Principal trade routes in the Southern Levant including sites mentioned in the text.

Although Tell Deir ‘Alla produced a few Egyptian/Egyptianizing finds most of them were found outside original contexts. The faience vase with Tewosret’s name is the only object of specific chronological indication. This find may be related to the status of the nearby site of Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh.

Concerning Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh, there is not enough exposure or material available from the settlement to decide if there has been an Egyptian colony or trade station as early as Late Bronze Age IC. In Late Bronze Age II, there are some Egyptian-type bowls from what appear to be domestic levels. The presence of some Egyptian-type vessels on the upper tell, and more frequently in the cemetery, may point to the site as a sort of satellite of Beth Shan in the Late Bronze Age II and into Iron IA (cf. Green 2011: 173–74). The status of Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh as an Egyptian outpost or trade post, which in this period was ruled by either an Egyptian administrator or a local “Egyptianized” chief, could be a plausible explanation.

With the exception of Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh, there is no evidence that any of the other sites was ruled by Egyptians. Admittedly, Pella which was ruled by a local chief was certainly tied to the Egyptians’ sphere of influence during certain periods. The remaining three sites, Tell Abu al-Kharaz, Tell Deir ‘Alla and Kataret es-Samra, do not show any evidence of coming under direct Egyptian rule.

A possible scenario could be that a limited Egyptian influence on Transjordan from Thutmosis III on existed, and that there were two periods of heightened Egyptian involvement in certain areas of Transjordan: one during Seti I/early Ramses II, and another from late Merneptah/Tewosret through Ramses III. In between, as long as the trade routes were free, the tribute was supplied and Egyptian commissioners were able to move freely, the Egyptians refrained from military interventions.

Rich find contexts from the northern Jordanian plateau – for instance, the wealthy tomb from Sahem close to the river Yarmouk which amongst numerous other finds included several Egyptian objects (Fischer 1997), or the rich “Ivory Tomb” at Tell Irbid with its unique objects of elephant and hippo ivory, most likely imported from the area around Ugarit (Fischer and Bürge 2015) – underline the importance of the Transjordanian trade route.

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Philipp W. Stockhammer

# Shifting meanings and values of Aegean-type pottery in the Late Bronze Age Southern Levant

## Introduction

For a long time, the meaning and value of pottery of Aegean-type at the Southern Levant has been perceived as relatively stable through all the Late Bronze Age. In contrast to that, a radical re-evaluation of this pottery was seen due to its production at the beginning of the supposed Philistine settlements at the onset of the Early Iron Age. In my contribution, I would like to replace this simplifying notion with a more complex model of the historical development. I will identify several shifts in the meaning and value attached to the Aegean imports from the 15th to the early 12th century BC on the basis of settlement contexts. Whereas first Aegean imports – almost all of them of Cretan origin – can clearly be associated with a particular value, the mass import of Mycenaean pottery led to a severe devaluation of the Aegean pottery at the Southern Levant in the 14th century BC and at the same time triggered the local production of Aegean-type vessels. Societal changes in the Aegean resulted in a subsequent shift of meanings and values of Aegean-type pottery in the second half of the 13th century. In this line of thought, the appearance of the so-called Philistine pottery does not represent a radical brake, but just another step in a history of continuous re-interpretation of Aegean-type pottery at the Southern Levant.

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## Preamble: terms and concepts

In the framework of my research, I am always using the term “pottery of Aegean-type” instead of “Mycenaean pottery”, as my analyses include vessels of diverse origins from the Eastern Mediterranean – be it the Aegean, Cyprus or the Levant. Therefore, Aegean-type pottery comprises all vessels produced in a Mycenaean or Minoan tradition of forming – irrespective where such vessels were actually produced (cf. also Sherratt 1991; French and Tomlinson 2004: 18 n. 1).

In order to show the shifting meanings and values of the pottery, I want to analyse selected processes of appropriation of Aegean-type pottery. This process of appropriation of the foreign is triggered by the moment of encounter with otherness (Stockhammer 2012a; 2012b). Most often, “foreignness” is not an attribute with which objects or social practices are permanently connected. The perception of foreignness is usually just a very short moment before the formerly other is integrated into the mental spectrum of the own. Foreignness is, therefore, no state, but only a moment of individual, emotional perception. By labelling objects or practices as “foreign” by archaeologists, they transform this momentary perception into a timeless attribute. This notion of quasi eternal foreignness goes hand in hand with the idea of a likewise eternal and singular meaning and function of an object or practice. They tend to forget the myriad changes of functions and meanings of the objects which are the part of their itinerancies (Hahn and Weiss 2013; Hahn 2015; Stockhammer 2016). However, functions, meanings and values are permanently created by individual actor’s practices with the object (Stockhammer 2015) which happens within the framework of the live world, the so-called *Lebenswelt* (Schütz and Luckmann 1979; Habermas 1981) of the individual actor. Aegean-type pottery at the Southern Levant is a perfect example to go beyond the notion of a stable function, meaning and value of a certain type of object.

## State of research

For a long time, there had been a rather simple understanding of the interaction with Aegean-type pottery in the 15th to 11th century BC Southern Levant. It was generally assumed that until the end of the 13th century B. C. a great amount of mostly Argolid imports was acquired by almost all communities at the Southern Levant. Due to the appearance of the Philistines, the 12th century seemed to be characterised by open vessels of Aegean type inside the Philistia in contrast to the surrounding Canaanite communities – now with hardly any Aegean-type pottery. For almost a decade, however, more differentiated views have been presented.

In 1998, Ann Killebrew (Killebrew 1998) differentiated between three different phases of “Aegean-style assemblages” in the Southern Levant. Her phase 1 is

characterized by the rich LH IIIA2/B imports from the Aegean, especially the Argolid (Killebrew 1998: 159–61). These imports comprised mostly small transport vessels like stirrup jars, flasks and alabastra as well as amphoroid kraters. Killebrew's phase 2 is defined by the decline of quantity and quality of Aegean-type pottery in the late 13th century (Killebrew 1998: 159–62; 2008: 56–57). This phase is dominated by small "Simple Style" stirrup-jars and flasks. Following Sue Sherratt (Sherratt 1998; 2000), she argues that the breakdown of the palatial trade enabled peripheral groups to take over the local production and distribution of Aegean-type pottery. According to her, also the richly decorated stirrup jars of Cypriot origin as known from Tel Keisan and other sites are part of this phase.

The last phase, phase 3, is marked by the locally produced, so-called "Mycenaean IIIC:1b", the appearance of which she connects with the arrival of the Philistines at the Southern Levant (Killebrew 1998: 159–66; 2003: 121; 2005; 2006/07; 2008: 57–59).

Gunnar Lehmann (2007) intensively discussed Killebrew's ideas and defines five groups – in order not to confuse his terminology with the one of Killebrew. Lehmann's group 1 equals Killebrew's phase 1, i.e. the rich and mostly Argolid imports until the late 13th century BC. However, he further subdivides her phase 2 into two different groups, i.e. group 2 and 3. His group 2 comprises the Simple Style stirrup jars. His group 3 concerns the richly decorated stirrup jars of Cypriot White Painted Wheel-made III origin known from Tel Keisan and other sites. Following Lehmann, this pottery must not be confused with his group 4, i.e. the locally produced "Philistine Monochrome" pottery. The coexistent groups 3 and 4 were then replaced by group 5, i.e. Aegean-type pottery of Proto White Painted style.

In the following, I would like to present the results of my research on Aegean-type pottery in Israel which I have conducted since 2008 (Stockhammer Forthcoming a). I have defined four different horizons of interaction with Aegean-type pottery. These horizons go hand in hand with shifting patterns of interaction with this pottery.

## Horizons of interaction with Aegean-type pottery

### Cretan horizon

The first horizon which I want to define is the so-called Cretan Horizon which started already during the MBA and continued until around 1350 BC. This horizon is characterized by the dominance of imports from Minoan Crete to the Levant.

Already during the MBA, a small number of Cretan imports – most of them part of the so-called Kamares ware – reached the Eastern Mediterranean. So far, only two Kamares finds are known from Israel, namely from Hazor and Ashkelon (Dothan et al. 2000; Stager 2002: 357; Merrillies 2003: 135–36). Both fragments are from secondary

contexts and cannot provide further insights into the functions and values of this pottery in Southern Canaan. Cretan vessels continue to dominate the Aegean imports also during LB I and well into LB IIA. During the 15th century BC, first imports from Mainland Greece appear, albeit still in small numbers.

During the Cretan Horizon, most of the Aegean imports occur in exceptional contexts, e.g. in the Schatzhaus in Kamid el-Loz (Penner 2006: 180–81 with fig. 107) or the so-called temple building at Amman airport (Hankey 1967: 130; 1974). The particular valuation of the Aegean style is also mirrored by the frescoes of Aegean-type e.g. from Kabri and Qatna. In this time, local elites at the Levant show a particular interest in Aegean styles and motives – probably due to their exotic appearance. As the mass import of Aegean pottery has not started in this period of time, the rarity and peculiarity of the vessels seem to have been crucial for their selection for elite treasuries and practices as well as ritual depositions.

Most important insights for the better understanding of the functions and values of these early Aegean imports has recently been provided by two exceptional finds from Tel Beth-Shemesh.

They were found in Level 9 of the 14th century-BC palace (Level 9; LB IIA) that can be attributed to the queen Bēlit-labiat as argued by the excavators (Bunimovitz et al 2013). In one of the rooms, two Cretan conical cups were found close to each other. The cups – definitely used as a pair together – can be identified as LM IIIA1 conical cups. These vessels were very probably produced in the area of the palace at Knossos on Crete, thus enabling us to determine the exact place of origin as well. The excavators interpreted them as royal gifts of the ruler of Knossos to the queen of Tel Beth-Shemesh (Bunimovitz et al 2013) or maybe her predecessor, depending on the duration of her rule, which is unfortunately unknown<sup>1</sup>. Due to the extraordinary context and its documentation, these two cups allow a unique insight into local processes of appropriation of the formerly foreign vessels. In the Aegean, we have clear indications that drinkers sat in pairs opposite each other consuming beverages from pairs of nearly identical drinking vessels (Stockhammer 2008: 297–307). Thus, for the Aegean gift-giver, it was natural to send such a pair of vessels as a gift. The queen of Tel Beth-Shemesh obviously kept the cups together as a pair as well. Drinking from cups, however, was not a common practice during feasting in the Levant.

By examining the two cups closely, I was able to identify that on both cups the handle had been most probably chipped away. In other words, the users of the cups had transformed them into bowls. This fits very well with the common drinking practices in the Late Bronze Age Southern Levant, where drinking bowls were

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<sup>1</sup> As the vessel were most probably produced ca. 1430–1380/60 BC and the Amarna correspondence should not have started before 1350 BC, one can speculate if the rule of queen Bēlit-labiat bridged the possible gap between the two ranges of date or if the recipient of the cups was her predecessor.

held in the palm of the hand, as it is depicted on the Megiddo ivories (Yasur-Landau 2005: 172, 174; 2008: 356). Thus, the use of foreign drinking vessels and the idea to use a pair of almost identical vessels was appropriated by the users. The users manipulated vessels by transforming them from cups into bowls in order to fit more closely into what they perceived as the correct social act of drinking.

It is most interesting to note that the destruction of the palace of Tel Beth-She-mesh took place several decades after the production and probably also the appropriation of the cups by the queen. The itinerancy of the cups continued in the palace after their arrival. The Aegean-type sherds from the mudbrick walls of the palace date are younger (i.e. ca. 1380/60–1320/10 BC; the ceramic phase LH IIIA2 in the Aegean) than the Minoan cups (ca. 1430–1380/60 BC; the ceramic phase LM IIIA1 in the Aegean). Before they were embedded in the walls of the palace, these LH IIIA2 vessels also had to be transported to Tel Beth-She-mesh, had to be used and broken in order to then get mixed with the clay used to repair the walls of the palace, which had deteriorated over time and requested some repair. Therefore, the Minoan cups were probably used for several decades. Moreover, they were still in use after 1380/60 BC, when the mass importation of Aegean-type pottery to the Levant started which led to a severe devaluation of these vessels and a loss of interest of Southern Levantine elites in these later imports (Stockhammer 2012c; Forthcoming a). In contrast to the overall mass of Aegean-type pottery, the two cups had not lost their particular value – probably due to their specific itinerancy and their already established use for drinking practices within the palace.

This difference of function and value of the LM IIIA1 imports in contrast to the LH IIIA2 imports in Tel Beth-She-mesh best exemplifies the shifts that took place from the Cretan Horizon to the second horizon of imports, i.e. the Horizon Tell Abu Hawam.

## Horizon Tell Abu Hawam

Around 1350 BC, the quantity and kind of imports of Aegean type shifted dramatically. Whereas the Cretan Horizon is marked by a broad range of vessel shapes of mostly Cretan origin, the Horizon Tell Abu Hawam is characterized by a completely different pattern: i.e. the mass importation of very standardized, high quality products of the palatial workshops of the Argolid, i.e. of Mainland Greek origin. In the decades, when this shift of power took place in the Aegean, the ceramic styles shifted from LH/LM IIIA1 to LH/LM IIIA2. Therefore, the hallmarks of the Horizon Tell Abu Hawam are the small transport vessels like stirrup jars, piriform jars, alabastra and flasks of Argolid origin as well as the amphoroid kraters. Other shapes also reached the southern Levantine settlements, albeit in small numbers. Due to its prominence and richness of finds, I chose Tell Abu Hawam as the eponymous site (Balensi 1980).

This sudden and complete shift of imports needs explanation. I see the reason for this change in political upheavals in the Aegean: in the early 14th century, the leaders of the political centers on the Greek Mainland managed to conquer Crete (Niemeier 1985: 139–41. 195–217). This shift of power is marked by the replacement of Minoan pottery by Mycenaean pottery all over the Aegean. After 1350 BC, the only Cretan vessels which were exported in larger numbers, are Minoan transport stirrup jars, a shape which was developed after the conquer of Crete as a standardized container for olive oil which Crete had to deliver as tribute to the Mainland palaces (Maran 2005: 427; Stockhammer 2008: 277). These transport vessels also reached the Southern Levant – probably in secondary use and were found at a considerable number of sites, e.g. at Ashdod, Ashkelon, Aphek, Beth-Shean and especially at Tell Abu Hawam (Rutter, personal communication; Stockhammer 2014: 217 no. 59; Forthcoming a).

During this horizon, Aegean imports appeared at almost every site at the southern Levant – even in small sites like Qubur al-Walayida. For a long time, these imports were interpreted as the wish of local Levantine elites to integrate Aegean dishes into their feasting practices (e.g. Leonard and Cline 1998; Steel 2002; van Wijngaarden 2002: 95–96). My re-evaluation of the Aegean-type pottery at the sites of Hazor and Megiddo which were used by Leonard, Cline and van Wijngaarden for their argument, clearly shows that there is absolutely no connection between the elites of the late 14th and 13th century BC and Aegean-type pottery (Stockhammer 2012c). The best evidence for the respective disinterest of the Southern Levantine elites is provided by the “Royal Precinct/Ceremonial Palace” in Hazor. There, 781 completely preserved vessels were found together with a considerable number of exceptional small finds (Zuckerman 2007a, 623. 626; 2007b). There is no doubt that this complex provides a unique insight into the role of material culture within elite rituals. Despite this exceptionally well-preserved context, not one Aegean type vessel has been found complete or at least as multiple sherds. Around 90 single Aegean type sherds – often very fragmented and badly worn – were discovered which were clearly found in a secondary position, often in Iron Age layers (Josephson Hesse 2008: 131–32. 144; Zuckerman, personal communication). At both sides, the sherds found within the area of the palace reached this space incorporated within the mudbrick – and the excavator of the Megiddo palace even mentions that he pulled an Aegean-type sherd out of one of the mudbricks (Loud 1948: pl. 137:5). These sherds are, therefore, all in a secondary position and must not be taken as an indicator of the use of Aegean-type vessels in 13th century BC palaces<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> However, we have to be aware that this Southern Levantine evidence should not be taken for granted for the Levant as a whole. Carol Bell (2006) has already pointed out to the necessity to distinguish different regions and Reinhard Jung (2015) has further underlined this evidence by pointing to the continuous use of Aegean-type pottery by Northern Levantine elites until the end of the Bronze Age.

Moreover, we must be aware of the fact that although Aegean-type pottery was acquired in large numbers, this does not mean that practices which are connected with these vessels in the Aegean were also appropriated. I have intensively dealt with the change of functions and meanings of imported amphoroid kraters and kylikes in several publications and do not want to repeat all of my argument here (Stockhammer 2011; 2012a; Forthcoming a). There is very clear evidence that amphoroid kraters were not used for mixing water and wine at the southern Levant, but to drink beer from them with straws. A similar change of function can be shown for the kylikes, which were most probably used as incense burners like the similar stemmed bowls of Canaanite type.

It is most interesting to see that already during the Horizon Tell Abu Hawam the production of Aegean-type pottery started at the Southern Levant, i.e. long before the supposed Philistine settlements. One of the regions of the early production of seems to have been in the central hill lands around Jerusalem. The small locally produced piriform jar from the cave tomb of Nahalat Ahim could be one of the earliest examples, as the other vessels from the tomb are from the 14th and early 13th century BC at the latest (Amiran 1960, pl. 3:53). This small vessel can be termed a hybrid or material entanglement, as it combines the upper part of an Aegean-type piriform jar with the lower part of a miniature Canaanite amphora (Stockhammer 2012b: 55). A very similarly entangled vessel is known from a tomb in nearby Gibeon (Pritchard 1963; Hankey 1967, 142; Gonen 1992: 61–62).

The earliest evidence appearing to copy Aegean models can be found in Hazor. In Area C, House 6063, Room 6063, Stratum 1B a highly interesting in situ inventory was excavated (Yadin et al. 1958: 77). The finding of two potter's wheels helped to identify the context as the workshop of a local potter. Stone benches are interpreted as places for drying and depositing the vessels which were found in large number in this room. The corpus of pottery also comprised one straight-sided alabastron of Aegean origin (Yadin et al. 1958: pl. 86, 3). This vessel was obviously not produced by the local potter, but the potter had nevertheless acquired this foreign pot. As the straight-sided alabastron – better known as pyxis in the Levantine terminology – is the most frequently produced Aegean shape in the Southern Levant, we might have found one of the earliest evidences for a local potter's interest in this shape in this floor context in Hazor.

Around 1250 BC, we can see a sudden decline of Argolid imports to the southern Levant. There is only a very small number of Argolid imports which can be clearly attributed to the second half of the 13th century. Again, this sudden transformation of the network needs an explanation. The reason may be found in the major earthquake which heavily affected the Argolid, especially Mycenae and its surrounding potters' villages but also Tiryns around 1250 BC (Kilian 1988: 121 fig. 2; 134; French and Stockhammer 2009: 183 tab. 4; Stockhammer Forthcoming a). The destructions of the potters' villages around Mycenae sharply reduced the output of fine tableware and there was probably not enough capacity anymore to produce large numbers of vessels for export, or the palaces did no longer have the ability or interest to export pottery in larger amounts.



## Horizon Nami

In spite of the end of the mass import from the Argolid, there are vessels of Aegean-type that were obviously distributed during LH IIIB2 and LH IIIC Early and which can help us to understand the network of exchange in the second half of the 13th and the early 12th century BC. The relevant shapes are shallow bowls FS 296 with interior decoration and/or white paint on the interior bands and the Simple Style stirrup jars. Both shapes start around 1250/1230 BC and continue well into the first half of the 12th century. It is almost impossible to differentiate the latest LH IIIB and the earliest LH IIIC on the basis of Aegean-type pottery – in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as in the Aegean (French and Stockhammer 2009).

Shallow bowls FS 296 with interior decoration have so far been documented at Tel Dan within the so-called “Mycenaean Tomb” and in the settlement strata (Ben-Dov 2002: 117 fig. 2.85: 105–106), from Aphek, Stratum X11 (Guzowska and Yasur-Landau 2009: 343 tab. 9.1: 15) and the third phase of the Fosse temple in Lachish. Moreover, I identified them also at Tel Nami, Area G/3 and Dor, Area G/11 (Stockhammer Forthcoming a).

Small Simple Style stirrup jars have so far been published in large numbers from sites at the Carmel coast, the Jezreel valley and the Jordan valley. They are most numerous in the cemeteries of Tel Nami (Artzy 2006: 53 fig. 6.14:17), Megiddo (Stockhammer 2011) and Tel Beth-Shean (Stockhammer 2014). Studying the new findings from the Megiddo settlement, I could identify 18 further vessels which can clearly or most probably be classified as Simple Style stirrup jars (Stockhammer Forthcoming b). In Locus 2 in Area K, four complete or largely preserved ones were found together in situ. The Simple Style stirrup jars continue in Megiddo well into the 12th century: one complete stirrup jar and fragments of several others were found in the old excavations in Megiddo in Stratum VIIA and I identified several fragments from K-7 of the recent excavations (Stockhammer 2011: 285–87). Therefore, there is very clear evidence for the use of this Aegean-type vessel until at least the mid of the 12th century BC.

We have a very clear zone of interaction which links the Carmel region on the one hand to Cyprus and the Northern Levant and on the other hand via the Jezreel valley with the Jordan valley, as it has already been proposed by Michal Artzy (Artzy 1990a; 1990b; 1994; 1998). In her view, this route was most important in the aftermath of the breakdown of Eastern Mediterranean palatial trade and was crucial for the transport of incense and scrap metal. The Simple Style stirrup jars, therefore, mirror a group of highly mobile individuals with close connections to Cyprus. However, it would be completely oversimplifying to attach any ethnic or location-dependent name. The evidence from the Nami settlement and other related harbor sites like Dor or Ashdod South shows that this group can best be understood as a trans-cultural amalgamate of highly mobile agents of very different origin – Artzy’s

“Nomads” and Sherratt’s “Mafiosi” (Artzy 1997; 1998; Sherratt 2000: 88).<sup>3</sup> They defined themselves by their international material culture and related social practices.

However, already in the second quarter of the 12th century, my fourth horizon of interaction started, i.e. the so-called Phoenician Horizon.

## Phoenician Horizon

It is most interesting to see that the most considerable evidence for the Simple Style stirrup jars is found at those sites, where shortly afterwards the “Northern Skyphoi” (Gilboa 2005; 2006/07, Gilboa and Sharon 2008: 160; Gilboa 2009) appear, i.e. at Dor, Megiddo and Tel Beth-Shean. The same is true for the richly decorated stirrup jars of the Tell Keisan type, e.g. from Tell Keisan and Tel Beth-Shean (Mountjoy 2005; 2011) as well as further elaborately painted stirrup jars of the same time, e.g. from Megiddo K-5 (Yasur-Landau 2006). The appearance of the Northern Skyphoi has been connected with feasting practices of small groups of foreigners at Dor by Ayelet Gilboa (Gilboa 2005; 2006/07; Gilboa and Sharon 2008: 160; Gilboa 2009). Also in Tel Beth-Shean there are indications for the small-scale presence of foreigners with Aegean and/or Cypriot connections (Sherratt 2009; Stockhammer 2011). In contrast to the entangled Nami phenomenon, we can now trace a different group of foreigners which were brought up in Aegean-style drinking practices and kept these practices. However, they obviously did not live in those settlements which we attribute to what we call the Philistines.

## The Philistia

It is most interesting to compare the evidence of my Horizon Nami and the Phoenician Horizon from the Carmel coast and the Jezreel and Jordan valleys with what we call the Philistia. When we date the beginning of the production of Philistine I pottery in the early 12th century BC, we have to ask, why the “Philistines” did not use Simple Style stirrup jars (Dothan and Zukerman 2004) in spite of their connection to Cyprus and the availability of these stirrup jars all around the Southern Levant. The lack of Simple Style stirrup jars and stirrup jars of Tell Keisan type in Philistia comes as an even larger surprise, as several authors argue for a Cypriot or at least partly Cypriot origin of the Philistines (Killebrew 1998, 159–60; 162–66;

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<sup>3</sup> One must not confuse Artzy’s “nomads” and Sherratt’s “mafiosi” with the “pirates” proposed by Hitchcock and Maeir 2014, who associate the phenomenon of the “Sea Peoples” with piracy. With their pirates, Hitchcock and Maeir 2014 subsume two very different phenomena – my Horizon Nami and the so-called Philistines – into one group of people. However, both phenomena have to be kept separate.

2003: 121; 2005; 2006/07; 2008: 57–59). How can we then explain the evidence? One may either argue 1) that Cypriots only produced Simple Style pottery for export and never used it themselves (so why should they start using it abroad?); 2) that it was a conscious choice of the Philistines not to use these Cypro-Aegean vessels; 3) that the Philistine settlements started later than LH IIIC Early 2 in the Argolid, i.e. after the mid of the 12th century BC; 4) or that the Philistine ceramic repertoire should not be interpreted as a typically Aegean-style repertoire, where stirrup jars definitely played an important role.

I would like to further elaborate on the last point. In my view, we have to differentiate more clearly between the Aegean style of the pottery in its appearance, i.e. its materiality and the style of the practices connected therewith. So far, it has been taken for granted that Aegean-type pottery was also used for Aegean-type eating and drinking practices. I have already pointed out that the Philistine feasting dishes of Aegean-type must not be understood as a copy of the contemporaneous ceramic inventory in the Aegean, but as the product of transcultural entanglement (Stockhammer 2012a; 2013: 18–23). It is most obvious that key vessel shapes of the Aegean are almost completely missing in the Philistine settlements, especially the Aegean drinking vessels like the kylix and the cup and the stirrup jar (Dothan and Zukerman 2004). On the other hand, decorated bowl shapes – like the linear shallow carinated bowl FS 295C – are far more common in the Philistia than in the Aegean. I interpret this evidence as the translation of Canaanite practices into the stylistic vocabulary of Aegean-type pottery (Stockhammer 2013). Canaanite feasting dishes are dominated by countless shallow and deep bowls of small and medium sizes and do not differentiate between a particular shape for eating and a particular shape for drinking. This is exactly mirrored by the Philistine feasting dishes.

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Emanuel Pfoh

# Prestige and authority in the Southern Levant during the Amarna Age

## Introduction: perceptions of Amarna politics

Since the discovery of the Amarna Letters in 1887 and its later decipherment, scholars have constructed a socio-political landscape of Egypt's occupied Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550–1200 BCE) based mainly on what the letters themselves would inform about such conditions, at least for the second half of the fourteenth century BCE, namely the Amarna Age. The multiple claims and petitions for help and assistance, in the form of military troops and provisions, by the southern Levantine kings in these letters and the accusations of treason, revolt and foreign threat to the Pharaonic order in various points of the whole territory of Syria-Palestine led also scholars to imagine this period as one of unrest and socio-political anarchy, due mainly to the character of local politics but also to the apparent lack of attention that Egypt paid to the Levant region during the reign of king Amenhotep IV/Akhenaton, the Pharaoh who initiated a 'monotheistic' religious reform in Egypt.

Thus, the noted British Egyptologist W.M. Flinders Petrie, in his work *Syria and Egypt from the Tell el Amarna Letters* from 1898, would describe the Amarna situation in the following manner:

[...] the more usual case seems to have been that the Egyptians had lost interest in Syria, lost the power of sparing troops to manage the country and to keep order, and lost heart in foreign matters since they were absorbed in the home politics of religious revolutions. (1898: 9).

Furthermore, he observes:

[...] all the petty chiefs and sheks [sic] whose ancestors had been cutting each other's throats for generations, and who, doubtless, had venerable blood-feuds unavenged, soon began to attack one another when not vigorously kept in hand by Egypt. Also any strong and capable man like Abdashirta and his son Aziru, soon found that he could safely bully his neighbours, and gradually acquire power over them. (1898: 9).

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And finally:

Hence the weakening of Egypt threw Syria into a state of internal discord unrepressed. The immediate effect of this was that various parties, without caring particularly about being for or against the Egyptians, began to fight with one another. Each tried to draw the power of Egypt to his own side by representing that he was loyally acting in the interest of his suzerain; and the weaker party was sure to place his trust most fully upon Egypt. It was only when a man had played his own hand for a long time, had strengthened himself by absorbing much of his neighbour's goods and lands, and had safely neglected the orders of the Egyptians on several occasions – it was only then that he cared to throw off the mask and act openly in his own interest, and allow himself to be classed as an enemy. Hence we often find very different views of people, and might put them as being on the Egyptian side according to their own account long after they were on the enemies' side according to other accounts. (1898: 9–10).

Several decades later, in the third edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* from 1975, we find that the socio-political picture has not changed that much in spite of the time passed and the progress in other areas of ancient Levantine studies. Cyril Aldred, from the perspective of the same old paradigm that conceived of the Amarna Age as a crisis period for the Egyptian domination of the Levant, would write:

Within its Asiatic sphere of influence, Egypt hardly exercised any Roman *imperium*, despite some ambiguous indications of its exploitation of the region. The pharaoh as the traditional vanquisher of the Nine Nations was the divine overlord whom vassals in Palestine and Syria addressed as 'my sun', 'my god', 'my lord' and in similar terms of subservience. Apart from this spiritual leadership, however, it is doubtful whether anything like an empire existed and the scenes of foreigners bearing tribute to lay before the mercy-seat of the pharaoh are capable of other interpretations than the mercantile development of the region. (1975: 82)

And regarding the native socio-political configuration:

The many vassal states kept up interminable internecine squabbles, their main objective being to preserve their own autonomy, to extend their frontiers and power at the expense of their weaker neighbours and to enlist the military might and resources of their overlord, ostensibly to protect his interests, but actually to advance their own ambitions. They therefore set up a constant clamour for help to preserve the town or state they were so loyally defending, coupled with assurances of their own honesty and fidelity and the treachery and ruthlessness of their rivals. (1975: 82).

This situation of unrest and political anarchy, however, would allow in this presentation for the presence of some political hierarchies in the region, which traditional historiography on the subject illustrated with characterizations akin actually to Medieval European feudalism. In effect, the dean of biblical archaeology, William F. Albright, would also state in the same edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* that 'there seems to be no doubt that certain princes exercised acknowledged feudal rights over other weaker chieftains' (1975: 104). This socio-political image was supported, yet from a different angle, by a socio-economic understanding of Late Bronze Age Syria-Palestine according to – although not exclusively – theoretical

notions drawn from Marxism. Scholars, not necessarily Marxist, of course, such as John Gray, G. Boyer, Albrecht Alt and Anson F. Rainey would hold an interpretive model that implied that in ancient Syro-Palestinian societies there was not concrete private property of the land, being this the sole property of the king, and that the land laborers did not own the means of production (which in reality represents a slave society, in the Marxist scheme, rather than a feudal order, in which workers do own the means of production) (cf. on this Schloen 2001: 187–94, 201–19). Thus, the king would grant lands ('fiefs') to his men ('vassals'), who would pay service to him in return ('loyalty/fealty'). Those receiving the land – progressively inherited within the family (Liverani 1984: 39) – were able to divide it in order to be exploited by their servants ('serfs'). This socio-economic landscape resulted in fact in a picture with feudal reminiscences; however, the situation evoked lacks the proper juridical and political character of Medieval feudalism, anchored – in respect to lords and vassals – in a contract between free men with institutionalized rights and duties for both parties, something in reality not evidenced in the ancient Near East/Southwest Asia (Pfoh 2016: 108–12).

I will not continue further with the description of socio-economic organization of Late Bronze Age society in Syria-Palestine, which requires another paper on its own, basically addressing and revising the rather anachronistic idea of 'feudalism' in the ancient Near East (Pfoh in press). In the wider outlook of these matters, I essentially accept J.D. Schloen's (2001) proposal of the preeminence of a patrimonial order in society, covering both the socio-economic and the socio-political aspects of organization in Syria-Palestine. It will also suffice to say in the present discussion that over five decades ago Mario Liverani (1967) provided a convincing explanation for the apparent local political anarchy in the Levant during the Amarna Age, noting that the local skirmishes and competition among the petty polities was the normal political situation, while attempting to get the attention of the Pharaoh for the sake of their own political interests.

In the following pages, I shall focus on the basic organization of the Southern Levant polities under the dominion of Egypt and focus especially on the socio-political practices exercised by the local petty kings, as these can be retrieved from the textual sources (notably, the Amarna correspondence) and assessed especially by an interpretation drawn from insights of political anthropology.

## Socio-political textual clues

The whole region of Syria-Palestine in the Late Bronze Age was under a virtually permanent foreign presence – mostly Egyptian and Hittite – ruling over the local petty kingdoms and principalities. The political scene of the Syro-Palestinian petty kings was conditioned by their personal subordination to the Egyptian and

the Hittite power.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the political manoeuvrability of these minor kings, especially in the Southern Levant, was considerably limited ‘from above’ but also within their own political realm to a context and situations where personal ability in the ‘local game’ between peers was the main political capital<sup>2</sup>; a game of accusations of treason and competition to prevail and be the most ‘loyal servant’ (*ÎR ki-ti*) to the foreign overlord, especially in regard to the situation of the Canaanite kinglets towards the Egyptian Pharaoh. As a matter of fact, one could state from the outset that the small kings of the Southern Levant did not exert an absolute power within society. Their authority seemed instead to be quite fragile and often challenged by other social elements and political players, both external and internal (see Liverani 1974). They did not – in the fashion of Weber’s (1978 [1922]: 54) conception of statehood – possess the legitimate monopoly of coercion in their respective communities, due in part, perhaps, to the modest socio-economic structure of their kingdoms. And even in the textual repertoire of the second millennium BCE, it is actually possible to find instances of inner confrontation to the king, by the council of elders or ‘the people’ themselves, that is, the peasantry (*hupši*) (Reviv 1969; Liverani 1974, 1975, 1993; Bunnens 1982; Solans 2015).

From the Amarna correspondence, we get some glimpses of the monarchical condition in the Southern Levant, which expose the efforts of the petty kings to gain prestige from the outside world and authority over their own political community. For instance, in a letter from Abi-Milku, ruler of Tyre, we read:

The king, my lord, assigned me to *ḡ*uard the city of Tyre, the handmaiden of the king, and I sent an urgent tablet to the king, my lord, but he has not sent word back to me. I am the commissioner of the king, my lord, and it is I who brings good news and likewise bad to the king, my lord. May the king send twenty footsoldiers to *ḡ*uard his city so that I may enter in to the king, my lord, and that I may see his face. (EA 149:9–20; after Rainey 2015: 753).

In this extract, we appreciate Abi-Milku’s effort to gain his lord’s attention and to influence in the Pharaoh’s decisions (that is, sending soldiers to Tyre). So, in this situation, if Abi-Milku’s request is attended, the gain of prestige for this leader within his community is consequently assured, as he can prove that he can deal effectively with higher powers, in the same fashion a tribal chief, rather than an autonomous king, would be expected to do.

Another interesting example is found in a set of letters from different petty kings from the plateau of Ḥauran, in Transjordan, in which the common answer to

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<sup>1</sup> A recent synthesis on the Egyptian rule over Canaan during the Late Bronze Age is found in Grabbe 2016; see also Koch 2018. On the Hittite rule over the Northern Levant, which shall not be dealt with here, see the discussion in Pfoh 2016: 112–6.

<sup>2</sup> For a general discussion from political anthropology on these matters, see Bailey 2001.

a letter from the Pharaoh announcing the arrival of Egyptian troops is more or less the following:

Speak to the king, my lord, the message of Artamanya, ruler of Širi-Bashani, your servant: At the feet of the king, my lord, seven times on the face (and) seven times have I fallen. Now you have written to me to make preparations towards the arrival of the regular troops and who am I, a dog, that I would not go. Now I, with my troops and with my chariotry, am in the vanguard of the troops of the king, my lord, to wherever they may go. (EA 201).<sup>3</sup>

In the same way, Biryawaza, ruler of Damascus, responds to the Pharaoh:

I am indeed, together with my troops and chariots, together with my brothers, my ‘apiru and my Suteans, I will march ahead of the archers, wheresoever the king, my lord, shall order (me to go). (EA 195:24–32; after Moran 1992: 273).<sup>4</sup>

It is interesting to see in these answers the particular notification that the petty kings will march ahead of the Egyptian troops/archers, namely leading their march. It could actually be possible to understand such an equivocal declaration of obedience to the Pharaoh – since the answer refers to something never asked – as the creation of a situation by which a small ruler or chief of a Syro-Palestinian polity attempts to gain, once again, personal prestige within his socio-political realm, showing off his limited though operative leadership before his own people.<sup>5</sup>

In the example provided by Biryawaza, along with the prestige represented by marching ahead of the Egyptian troops, we also note the presence of a network of political assets at the Pharaoh’s disposal: the ruler of Damascus offers his support to the Egyptian king not only with his troops and men, but also with his ‘apiru/*ḥabiru* and Suteans. And we may initially understand this socio-political alliance of these parasocial elements in clear terms of clientship towards Biryawaza, a service in exchange for goods or other kind of utilities.

<sup>3</sup> Similarly in 202:7–18; 203:9–19; 204:9–20; 205:9–18; 206:9–17; cf. Rainey 2015: 912–23.

<sup>4</sup> See also Liverani 1998: 251. Cf. Rainey (2015: 897), who renders a variant translation: ‘Now, I with my troops and my chariotry and with my colleagues (brothers) and with my ‘apiru men and with my Sutu men am anticipating the regular troops to wherever the king, my lord, commands.’

<sup>5</sup> Discussing other letters with similar requests, Lemche (2016: 136) indicates: ‘The number of soldiers requested by Abdi-Ḥeba and Bayadi is the same: fifty men. It may be some kind of a conventional number but it might also be a kind of standard composition of an Egyptian military outpost. If the latter option is correct, the *ḥazannu* were only asking for what they could otherwise expect. Maybe they were only trying to win prestige for themselves, not really requesting any particular military assistance from Egypt but making the request in order to show the little town under their administration that they were really in charge, and that they could persuade the mighty Pharaoh to send troops at their request.’

## Prestige, authority and patronage

In considering these selected situations, one may preliminarily conclude that small Levantine kings were indeed politically active but not precisely as ‘men of power’, that is controlling a centralized and established polity through impersonal means. Instead, they are to be better seen as ‘men of prestige’ with political authority (cf. Earle 1997: 3–4; Campagno 2009: 349): they had to protect the community they represented to the outside world, and they had to assure the well-being of the people living in it by appealing to that – most of the time – silent and distant overlord that was the Pharaoh (Liverani 1979: 12). It is not irrelevant that they were referred to in the Amarna correspondence as *ḥazannu(tu)*, which is often translated as ‘mayor(s)’ (under the supervision of a ‘commissioner’, *rā-biṣu*, the highest ranking Egyptian officer in the land), as it is a term equivalent to the officer in charge of local Egyptian administrations, the *HAtya*.<sup>6</sup> And it would not be incorrect to understand the main functions of these ‘kings’ after the social and political role played much later in the region by the sheikhs and mukhtars in Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine’s villages, being a kind of intermediary, a middleman between the villagers and higher powers<sup>7</sup> – not an unlikely analogy as well if we attend to the ritual functions of the Northwest Semitic monarchies (cf. Wyatt 1999, 2007).

The relative authority granted by the accumulation of prestige seemed to be all the power the kings could obtain in their petty kingdoms, given the conditions of subordination to the Egyptian and Hittite empires and also the internal limitations within their polities (see below). At the same time, it was the ostentation of such

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<sup>6</sup> For the Akkadian term, cf. CAD H, 163: ‘chief magistrate of a town, of a quarter of a larger city, a village or large estate – mayor, burgomaster, headman’. For the Egyptian term, cf. Faulkner 1962: 162: ‘local prince, nomarch, mayor’; Hannig 2006: 1596: ‘Graf, Reichsgraf, Gaufürst’. On the variability of the duties of the *ḥazannu* in the Syro-Mesopotamian world, see Taylor 2010.

<sup>7</sup> See Singer 1994: 32–45, for the role of Ottoman rural administrators around Jerusalem in the mid-sixteenth century. Antoun (1979: 79) also indicates the following for the mayor of a Transjordanian village in the mid-twentieth century: ‘The duties of the mayor are to preserve law and order; to inform the police of violations or threatened violations of law, of suspicious characters, and of deaths from unnatural causes; to aid all government representatives coming to the village, including the tax collector’; see also Baer 1980. In the Levant, the role of the mayor in villages was traditionally taken up by local sheikhs, with authority over the rural areas, until their replacement in the second half of the nineteenth century by the mukhtar, appointed by the central Ottoman government in coalition with urban notables (Migdal 1980: 11–2). An important methodological note: One should always have in mind that similarities found between the political functions of actors in Ottoman and Mandate Palestine and in Amarna Palestine do not aim at exposing any kind of features relating to the ‘unchanging East’ or other Orientalist fantasies. Modern ethnographic and historical situations, instead, serve as heuristic tools to attempt an understanding of ancient political action and its echo in the extant textual sources.

prestige which conferred legitimacy to the person in the monarchical office.<sup>8</sup> This rather fragile and circumstantial authority seemed to be dependent on the king's performance in the administration of his kingdom but also on the responses and actions he could get from a foreign, higher overlord (see Na'aman 1996: 158).

Other relevant testimonies are provided by Rib-Hadda, ruler of Byblos, whose declaration about a situation in which he must answer to his peasantry for his actions, or about a situation in which he fears a rebellion against him by a peasantry that would probably be far from being extremely dangerous as a military force (see EA 81:33 and 77:37; further examples in EA 85, 117, 118, 130, and 271:9–21), may well indicate that in socio-political terms this 'king' has to be seen more like a tribal leader than as a head of a state; or, again, more like a man of prestige, a middleman between the foreign overlords and his community, than a man of real power in society.<sup>9</sup> In fact, and considering the still useful ethnographic discussion presented by P.C. Salzman (1974) on tribal middlemen in the Middle East, one might postulate that when the petty kings of the Late Bronze Southern gained authority in society, they acted like patrons towards their people (their clients); on the contrary, when they lost authority and therefore their people's support and loyalty, tribal relationships gained relevance again, and the 'king' was seen as a mere chief, someone who owed his place to the collective will of his tribal kin.

This understanding can be first argued if we consider the native terminology for the monarchy. The term for 'king' *mlk* in Syro-Palestinian societies does not refer to an absolute ruler, but instead to someone in charge of government. As Lowell K. Handy (1994: 112) observed:

The problem lies not with the word *mlk*, but with the connotation of the term 'king'. The verbal root *mlk* means 'to rule'. It does not mean to be the *sole* ruler. In the ancient near Eastern political world, it was common for a series of rulers (any of whom might be called *mlk* 'king') to form a hierarchy within an empire. The city-states of Syria-Palestine had long been subject to the rulers of Egypt or to Hittite kings, even before the arrival of the Assyrians, Babylonians,

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. the reflections in Geertz 1983, about the political leader's need of manifesting charisma and prestige in order to sustain inner political governability. Further on authority and politics, see Skalník 1999; Campagno 2009; Al-Amoudi 2013.

<sup>9</sup> In this context, the ethno-historical discussion by Dennis and Olien (1984) results of relevance, along with the response by Hjelms (1986), on the title of 'king' and its political function and role. Dennis and Olien (1984: 727) indicate that 'The middleman's legitimacy by definition is not ideological but pragmatic. What can he do for us? is the question both sides are expected to ask of the middleman. From this definition, it follows that a middleman can never be a "real king," since the role of king implies a supreme sort of ideological legitimacy.' In this sense, and adapting this ethnographic observation, one may suggest a basic differentiation between Syrian and Palestinian kings as middlemen in this period according to the extant textual evidence: the former, imbued with ideological and ritual functions (notably in Ugarit, cf. Wyatt 2007; Niehr 2015), and the latter, more politically pragmatic (cf. further the discussion in Renger 1988).

Persians, Greeks, or Romans. The king of a local city-state remained a 'king', even though he served under the authority and at the discretion of the king of the empire. The title used for the king of the empire could quite literally have been 'king of kings'. Therefore, *mlk* was a title used not only on more than one level of the hierarchy of an empire, but even of several people on the same level simultaneously.

In effect, a patron-client model of socio-political interaction, as evidenced in the political anthropology of the Mediterranean and the Middle East (cf., i.e., Gellner and Waterbury 1977), with its asymmetric reciprocity and exchanges of protection and loyalty, proves to be useful for understanding the referred political hierarchy and dynamics of the Levant in this period. These 'kings' can serve accordingly another king of higher status or socio-political rank, each of them performing politically as his client, or they can have other minor kings depending on each of them and act like their patron (see Pfoh 2016: 123–49). A petty king may well be replaced by his patron (i.e., the Pharaoh) if he does not fulfil the expectations his place demands or should he die and a successor is needed, as it can be witnessed in the Amarna correspondence (EA 59 and 100; also Artzi 1964). He may even be dismissed from his rulership by his own family or entourage, as Rib-Hadda of Byblos tells in his letters (cf. EA 136–8). The latter situation allows for considering most of the south Levantine rulers as leaders of a community to which they owe political reciprocity, to which they must protect and defend and lead to the common well-being in exchange for the communal consensus supporting the monarch. Precisely, and writing more than four decades ago about another social and cultural context, we find some corroboration of the previous picture in the words of the French anthropologist Pierre Clastres (2007 [1974]: 207), who observed a key element in traditional leaderships that becomes relevant in our discussion for grasping the socio-political characteristics of the Levantine ruler:

The chief is there to serve society; it is society as such – the real locus of power – that exercises its authority over the chief. That is why it is impossible for the chief to reverse that relationship for his own ends, to put society in his service, to exercise what is termed power over the tribe: primitive society would never tolerate having a chief transform himself into a despot.

In spite of the now inappropriate reference to 'primitive society', meaning traditional or tribal society, this insight can shed more light on what local politics were about in Late Bronze Age Canaan.

The situation of the Amarnian Southern Levant in particular offered then more than a few limits to royal authority, if we also consider the socio-economic potential of the petty kingdoms: food and supplies may have been plenty for the population, in spite of some episodic crisis; however, what lacked in the land during the Late Bronze Age were human resources (Bunimovitz 1994), working and military arms in a decreased urban landscape in order to build or maintain a proper kingdom, a real socio-political regional power. From a wider perspective, we have to take into account as well the geographical constraints and the geopolitical position of the Southern Levant, as a means to explain not only the socio-

political structure and the range of expansion of the polities in the land, but also the potentiality of the political relationships enabled by these factors. As Israel Finkelstein writes in a recent study, considering a long-term view of socio-politics:

From a territorio-political perspective, the history of the northern part of the central hill country in the centuries that cover the Late Bronze, Iron I, and Iron IIA is a classic case of *la longue durée*, the French *Annales* School phrase for long-term history. This phenomenon was influenced by the special character of the geography of the region, its economy, and its population. This territory forms a rugged hill country that is, at the same time, not isolated but rather open to the lowland areas around it, and that is well connected to the highlands area to the east, across the Jordan. It was inhabited by a relatively large number of sedentary people with a meaningful pastoral component in the population, a combination that gave it special strength. It also featured significant output of secondary products of its orchards, especially olive oil, which presented it with an advantage in trade with neighboring arid regions that lacked this basic, important commodity.

These parameters led to the continuous rise of territorial entities in this region that were governed by strongmen who resembled in their policies the conduct of the Apiru of the Late Bronze Age – unruly gangs made up of mercenaries and uprooted elements who lived on the margins of organized society. The first such entity that is hinted at is the “Land of Shechem” mentioned in the Khu Sobek Stela of the Twelfth Egyptian Dynasty in the Middle Bronze Age, and the first fully recorded one is the Shechem highlands entity of Labayu and his sons in the Amarna period in the fourteenth century B.C.E.<sup>10</sup>

Such a description (minus some details – see below) works well with a landscape in which patron-client relationships may arise, where interpersonal conflict – like the ones reflected in the Amarna correspondence among the Levantine kings – is always latent due to the competition for controlling material and human resources, but also for political advantage granted by a higher party ruling over the region – like the Pharaoh.<sup>11</sup>

## A socio-political sketch of the Southern Levant in Amarna times

In terms of political action and performance, the petty kingdoms of the Levant during the Late Bronze Age, instead of being perceived through the model of *city-states*, as it is usually done, they should rather be compared to what political anthropologists call *chiefdoms* (or even *complex chiefdoms*, depending on their size and socio-

<sup>10</sup> Finkelstein 2013: 160; see also in this connection the comparative analysis in Morris 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Here it is useful once again to turn to ethnographic references, now on the combination of scarce resources and political violence/conflict: see, for instance, Boissevain 1966; Schneider 1969; Blok 1974; Black-Michaud 1975.



political manoeuvrability), given the importance of personal relationships and prestige for exerting some sort of authority over the population.<sup>12</sup> These kings, especially in the Southern Levant and after taking into account the evidence from the Amarna letters, did not seem to have overcome the bonds of kinship or tribal relationships in order to rule over society, namely they had not fully broken the tacit social contract that forces them to reciprocate to society in exchange for being its rulers. In this sense, the small polities of the Southern Levant may well be seen as chiefdoms centered in urban sites (see Khoury and Kostiner 1990: 8), not necessarily opposed in socio-political terms to other more unruly or parasocial elements like the *šasu*, the Suteans or the *ḥabiru*, but instead being part of a same spectrum of political action, as evidenced in the letter by Biryawaza to the Pharaoh.<sup>13</sup>

Also, these kings did have political prestige and authority over the population of their kingdoms, but even if we assume authority as ‘a relation of power based on legitimacy’ (Al-Amoudi 2013: 187) as some authors argue, and that the prestige the kings held made them legitimate rulers, they did not exert however institutionalized power in society, only a temporary political authority attached mainly to their behavior as kings. They had to resort to networks of kinship and patronage to rule over society – but always to a limited extent. The king (*mlk*) was the patron of his local society and, as such, he was responsible for its well-being. At the same time, he could be the client of a higher *mlk*, from whom he also expected political reciprocity.

It is therefore logical that we see in numerous places in the Amarna correspondence what seems to be a political behavior towards their Egyptian overlord, the Pharaoh, which simply does not fit within an institutional or impersonal understanding of the workings of rulership. These petty kings could say of themselves that they were loyal servants of his lord, but they were not meaning that in the sense of being officers who obey a direct order from his superior. They were still speaking the language of patronage: they were loyal clients of their distant patron in Egypt, even though the Pharaoh did not recognize or accept the dynamics of

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<sup>12</sup> In spite of the terminology, I do not accept the evolutionist/neo-evolutionist theoretical approach which sees the chiefdom as the organic, necessary previous step to the emergence of an inevitable condition of statehood in society (i.e., Service 1962; Carneiro 1981; Earle 1997). I understand and deploy *chiefdom* as an autonomous category to organize and analyze archaeological and historical data; see more in Campagno 2000.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Sapin 1982: 2–3: ‘Lorsqu’elle est intégrée – plus ou moins solidement – dans le cadre politique et économique que constitue le monde urbain, cette société [tribale] se trouve modifiée par la influence des pouvoirs centralisateurs régionaux que sont les cités-états. On peut alors parler de société agro-urbaine, fondamentalement agricole et subsidiairement pastorale dans sa production économique, socialement structurée par le système clano-tribal mais dépendante, parfois entièrement, des pouvoirs de décision palatins dans les domaines politique, juridique et économique.’ See further Sapin 1982: 128–37, 152–86; and Benz 2016: 111–38.

patronage.<sup>14</sup> It is in this manner that we can better explain the expressions of loyalty and obedience in the petty kings' letters *together* with petitions of assistance or complains about the total lack of it in the same message. The petty kings understood themselves as clients of the Pharaoh; reciprocity was always expected, and if it was not achieved, the client was rightly entitled to reclaim it to his overlord. It is thus that we may interpret Rib-Hadda's words in EA 83. After opening with the expected formula of respect and recognition of the Pharaoh's sovereignty in his letter, Rib-Hadda complains:

Why do you not send back word to me that I may know what I should d[o]? I sent a man of mine to my lord. And both his horses were taken. A second man – a man of his – was taken, [and] a tablet of the king was not put [i]n my man's hand. Listen [to me]! Why are you negligent so that your land is being taken? [...] Moreover, I have written for a garrison and horses, but they are not given. Send back word to me, or like Yapaḥ-Hadda and Zimredda I will make an alliance with 'Abdi-Aširta and stay alive. (EA 83:7–27; after Moran 1992: 153).<sup>15</sup>

This declaration – including the threat of allying with another party – can indeed be seen as completely impertinent, given that it is a minor king addressing a truly powerful one. However, it makes perfect sense if understood from the client point of view in a patron-client relationship, after which a client is demanding an expected reaction from whom he considers to be his patron. This particular attempted relationship was usually aborted or truncated, since, as stated, the Egyptian king did not play along the patronage game with his Canaanite subjects.

## Conclusion

After considering the textual evidence, together with ethnographic insights on political authority, we may conclude this discussion by stating that local socio-politics in the Southern Levant were structured through personal relationships built essentially upon prestige features and authority display. Local polities did not constitute real states during the Late Bronze Age but they may be understood rather as chiefdoms *qua* kingdoms, with kings who should *analytically* be considered tribal rulers

<sup>14</sup> Liverani (1967) characterized this as a clash of socio-political conceptions, the Egyptian and the Asiatic. What Liverani calls the 'Asiatic perspective', I propose, should however be understood better as a patron-client dynamics of politics in society; cf. Pfoh 2016: 123–37.

<sup>15</sup> See also Liverani 1998: 189–90. Rainey (2015: 491) translates: 'Why do you not send back word to me so that I may know the thing that I should do? I sent my man to my [lo]rd but they confiscated both his horses, then a second man had his man (squire) taken. And no letter of the king was delivered to my man. Listen to me: [W]hy do you keep silent so that your territory is being taken? [...] Furthermore, I have been writing for garrison troops and for horses but they are not being given. Just send me the word and I myself will make a treaty with 'Abdi-Ashirta like Yapa'-Haddi and Zimredda, and I will stay alive.'

– even when they operated from urban centers or palaces (see Nigro 1995: 119–91). Also, their political authority was territorially restricted to around 10–20 kilometers (depending the zone, highlands or lowlands),<sup>16</sup> in what may clearly be seen as a fragmented political topography (cf. Bunimovitz 1994: 3; Jasmin 2006: 164; also Falconer and Savage 2003; Pfälzner 2012). Their office was dependent to a considerable degree on the personal assets they could manage, like prestige and patronage, and on their subjects' will and loyalty. Thus, in this view, the dynamics of tribal politics seem fit for characterizing the kings of the Southern Levant. Political communication towards the exterior of the polity was carried out in a similar manner as to the interior. Support to the petty king from the outside meant prestige in society, and prestige granted the local king authority over his subjects. Finally, we can interpret the array of petitions and demands to the Pharaoh from the petty kings in the Amarna letters as political strategies aimed at maintaining and reproducing prestige and authority within their small kingdoms, as seen from the perspective of patron-client politics.

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<sup>16</sup> This, of course, in spite of Labayu's attempted territorial expansion (cf. Finkelstein 2013: 17–21), which should still be understood in clear terms of tribal politics.

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Ido Koch

# Southwestern Canaan and Egypt during the Late Bronze Age I–IIA

## Introduction

The mechanisms that brought about the consolidation of Egyptian hegemony over the southern Levant during the 18th Dynasty are shrouded in the meager information provided by written sources. Beginning with the first Egyptian campaign beyond the Nile Valley, led by Ahmose against the city of Sharḥan<sup>1</sup> (Morris 2005: 28–29), the Egyptian kings documented their expeditions to the northern Levant, from Byblos to Euphrates River (Höflmayer 2015: 195–97 with literature). Sharḥan, however, was the exception since no locale in the southern Levant is mentioned in these sources. Mid-late-18th Dynasty sources refer only sporadically to south Levantine toponyms: sources related to the first campaign of Thutmose III (Redford 2003); Papyrus Hermitage A1116, an administrative document describing the appointment of emissaries (*maryannu*) from Canaanite centers, which received portions of grain and beer in the Egyptian court (Morris 2005: 141–142); and the detailed information embedded in letters from the el-Amarna correspondence that were sent by local rulers (Goren, Finkelstein and Naʾaman 2004; Mynářová 2007; Rainey 2015).

Given such modest written evidence, much ink has been spilled in scholarly debate regarding the historical reconstruction of this period. Some scholars have associated the handful of Egyptian campaigns through to the reign of Thutmose III with the destructive end of the Middle Bronze Age in the southern Levant to a coherent process in which the Egyptian Empire was created (Weinstein 1981: 1–10; 1991; Dever 1990). Other scholars have argued against such association, pointing to the limited information that precludes any reconstruction of Egyptian policy regarding the southern Levant until the first campaign of Thutmose III (Redford 1979; 2003: 185–94; Hoffmeier 1989; 1991; 2004: 121–31; Naʾaman 1994: 181–183; Bunimovitz 1995: 322). Consequently, a more nuanced version of the traditional perspective suggests that the Egyptians expanded their hegemony by sporadic, mostly undocumented campaigns that spanned the Late Bronze Age I (Morris 2005: 35–38; Burke 2010: 47–53).

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<sup>1</sup> For vocalization of the toponym, see Rainey 1993.

A new perspective was brought to the discussion with the study of Egyptian-style pottery from the southern Levant. These analyses showed the gradual growth in local production and consumption of such pottery through the Late Bronze Age I–IIA. It began during the early 18th Dynasty at Tell el-Ajjul (Kopetzky 2011: 201–209), and expanded by the mid-18th Dynasty (corresponding to the Late Bronze Age IB) to Jaffa (Strata VI) (Burke and Lords 2010) and Beth-Shean (Strata XIB and R-1b) (Mullins 2006; 2007; Martin 2011: 123–55). These assemblages are isolated in their geographic distribution and domestic character (which consisted mainly of vessels used in food preparation and eating), and their production did not interact with or influence production of pottery in local style; they were interpreted, therefore, as the remains of Egyptian activity at these sites – most probably soldiers and officials (Burke and Lords 2010: 27–28; Martin 2011: 240, 259–261). Consequently, it has been suggested that a limited Egyptian presence in the Levant began during the early-18th Dynasty and that it intensified during the mid-18th Dynasty, probably following the first campaign of Thutmose III (Höflmayer 2015: 201).

With this historical perspective in mind, I would like to trace several trends in the archaeology of the Late Bronze Age I–IIA that illuminate the integration of the southern Levant into the Egyptian sphere. I begin with a reassessment of settlement history during the Late Bronze Age I–IIA, followed by evidence for interaction between locals and Egyptians, and conclude with the reflection of the Egyptian hegemony during the Late Bronze Age IIA in local religion. These are followed by a discussion of the Egyptian-local discourses during the period. I have chosen to focus on southwest Canaan (Map 14.1), the region between northern Sinai and the Yarkon River, that is between and around the Egyptian-oriented Tell el-Ajjul and Jaffa.

## Settlement history: Late Bronze Age I–IIA

The beginning was the end of the previous system, a dense network of socially segmented cities and towns that was disturbed during the latter part of the Middle Bronze Age III. In a long and complicated process, some settlements, such as Aphek Stratum X15 (Gadot and Yadin 2009: 39), Beth-Shemesh (Bunimovitz and Lederman 1993: 250; 2013) and Tell el-Ajjul (Horizon H5 of the recent excavation) (Fischer and Sadeq 2002: 125–30), were destroyed; others, such as Tel Haror (Oren 1993a: 582) and Tel Jemmeh (Ben-Shlomo and Van Beek 2014: 1054) were abandoned. The fortified settlement at Lachish was destroyed and to a limited extent resettled during the Middle Bronze Age III (Level P-3) (Ussishkin 2004: 160–64); the massive rampart and gate of the large center at Ashkelon were abandoned (Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: 236) and the settlement nucleated to the inner





**Map 14.1:** Southwest Canaan during the Late Bronze Age I–IIA (base map after John K. Hall and Rani Clavo, <http://www.cybaes.org/archive/downloads/Hall2005/PIXI.pdf>).

mound,<sup>2</sup> whereas the small settlement at Tel Sera' may have continued unimpaird (Oren 1993b: 1330).

The resettlement process was a long one. Some sites were resettled shortly after destruction/abandonment; others were reestablished some decades later. Beginning in the south, the settlement at Tel Sera' was joined during the Late Bronze Age IA by reestablished settlements at Tell el-Ajjul (Horizons 4–3) (Fischer and Sadeq 2002: 119–25),<sup>3</sup> Tel Haror (Oren 1993a: 582), Tel Nagila (Stratum VI) (Uziel 2008: 115–201; Uziel and Avissar-Lewis 2013), and possibly also Tel Hesi (City II) (Fargo 1993: 631); farther to the east, a rather modest settlement at Tel Halif (Stratum XI) developed in the Late Bronze Age I (Strata XI–X) (Seger 1983: 4; Seger, et al. 1990: 18–19). Of these, Tell el-Ajjul and Tel Halif were destroyed during the Late Bronze Age IB and were resettled, Tel Haror and Tel Sera' (Stratum XI) and possibly also Tel Hesi (City III) were settled uninterruptedly and Tel Nagila went into decline and was eventually abandoned.

Not much is known about the Late Bronze Age I–IIA settlement at Ashkelon, whose remains were confined to the upper mound alone (Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: 301–3). A settlement at Ashdod developed through the Late Bronze Age I–IIA (Strata XX–XVII) (Dothan and Porath 1993: 27–36) and a small settlement appeared at neighboring Tel Mor (Stratum XI) (Barako 2007: 11–15; cf. Martin 2011: 188–91). Farther north, the Middle Bronze Age II earthen ramparts and a gate at Yavneh-Yam were used in the Late Bronze Age I–IIA (Uziel 2008: 54–114), and additional information of occupation comes from the nearby tombs uncovered north and south of the site (Ory 1948; Yannai, et al. 2013).

Turning eastward, a cluster of Late Bronze Age I settlements include Tel Migne, which also nucleated to the upper mound, where settlement remains (Stratum X) were found covered by a layer of ash (Killebrew 1996; Dothan and Gitin 2008: 1953), Tel Batash, where a sequence of three settlements were established and destroyed through the Late Bronze Age I (Strata X–VIII) (Mazar 1997: 23–26, 41–72; Panitz-Cohen and Mazar 2006: 123–32), and Tel H̄arasim (Stratum VI) (Givon 2008: 1766). Late Bronze Age IA sherds from Lachish (Singer-Avitz 2004: 1021; Ussishkin 2004:

<sup>2</sup> Contrary to the excavators' claim, there appears to be no evidence of the settlement's continuation on the northern tell in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I (Finkelstein 2007: 520; Yasur-Landau 2007: 615): the fortifications from the Iron Age IIB (Phase 8 on the northern mound) were built directly over the glacis from the Middle Bronze Age II (Phase 10) (Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: 236).

<sup>3</sup> The rich assemblages found in Petrie's excavations at Tell el-Ajjul come from enigmatic stratigraphy (Sparks 2005; Kopetzky 2011: 207, 209; Winter 2018). Until a complete reevaluation of the finds is conducted, their interpretation regarding the settlement sequence at the site and its chronology cannot be concluded.

188) and Gezer (Mazar 1989: 61; Finkelstein 2002: 280) indicate limited activity at both sites that intensified during the Late Bronze Age IB, when a temple was built at the foot of the western slope of the former (Fosse Temple I) (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940: 21–24, 36–37; cf. Singer-Avitz 2004: 1024–26) while a burial cave located on the slope of the latter yielded evidence for the prosperity of its residents during the Late Bronze Age IB–IIA (Seger and Lance 1988). More limited information attests to a Late Bronze Age I settlement at Beth-Shemesh (Stratum IVA) (Bunimovitz and Lederman 1993: 250), while sherds recorded at Tell eṣ-Ṣafi/Gath (Maeir 2012: 16–17) attests to some activity through this period.<sup>4</sup>

Farther north, Jaffa (Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan 1993: 657; Herzog 2008: 1791) and Tel Gerisa (Herzog 1993a: 482) were settled during the Late Bronze Age I and were joined by a new settlement at Tel Azor, which was destroyed and rebuilt shortly afterwards (Ad, Golani and Segal 2014). Of these, only Jaffa yielded remains dating to the Late Bronze Age IIA, with the construction of a temple and a silo (Herzog 2008: 1791; Burke and Lords 2010; Martin 2011: 238–40; Burke et al. 2017). The harbor at Tel Michal (Stratum XVI) was reestablished during the Late Bronze Age I, and was destroyed and renewed during the Late Bronze Age IIA (Stratum XV) (Herzog 1993b: 1037). Contrary to that, Aphek remained abandoned for a long period until the renewal of settlement sometime in the Late Bronze Age IB–IIA (Strata X14–X13) (Gadot 2003: 185; Gadot and Yadin 2009: 39, 42–49, 583).

The transition to the Late Bronze Age IIA in the region was accompanied by several destructions (Jaffa, Tel Azor, Tel Miqne, Tel Batash, Tell el-Ajjul, and Tel Ḥalif) but the following years saw a growing number of settlements and more substantial remains. In some cases, accumulation of wealth is evident by the construction of large buildings, such as at Jaffa (above), Beth-Shemesh (Brandl, Bunimovitz and Lederman 2013; Bunimovitz, Lederman and Hatzaki 2013) and Gezer (Dever 1986: 36–46; 1993: 502–3) or the refurbishment of others, like the Fosse Temple at Lachish (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940: 22, 24, 37–38). Remains dating to this period were found also at (from north to south), Tel Azekah (Yasur-Landau, et al. 2014), Tel Zayit (Tappy 2008: 2082), Tel Burna (Cassuto, Koch and Shai 2015), Netiv Ha'Asara (Shavit and Yasur-Landau 2005), Tell Beit-Mirsim (Stratum C<sub>1</sub>) (Albright 1932: 37–52; 1938: 61–79), and Tel Jemmeh (Ben-Shlomo and Van Beek 2014: 1054–55).

To conclude, Southwest Canaan was resettled in a long process in which clusters of settlements developed through the Late Bronze Age IA–B: in the Besor Basin, along the coast, the inner Coastal Plain and the western Shephelah, and in the Yarkon Basin. Overall, the Late Bronze Age IIA was a period of stability when most existing settlements advanced in their development and were joined by

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<sup>4</sup> Note that at both sites the current excavations have not reached the relevant occupational remains.

additional settlements through the region south of the Yarkon Basin. There were some destructions as well. Settlement at Tel Batash, for example, was continuously short-lived, with four destructions hitting local populations during the Late Bronze Age I–IIA; Tell el-Ajjul and Tel Ḥalif were destroyed in the Late Bronze Age IB, while Gezer was abandoned in the Late Bronze Age IIA. But overall, the Late Bronze Age I–IIA is characterized by long recovery from the turmoil of the Middle Bronze Age III.

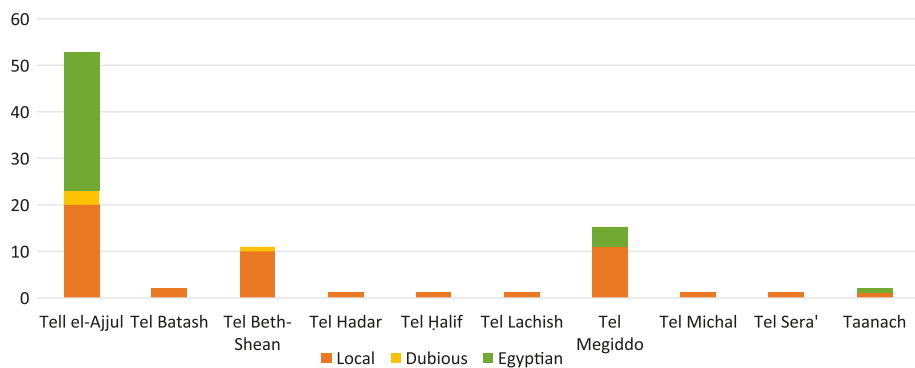
## Changing charms

In what follows I suggest reassessing the Egyptian–local interaction based on the distribution of Egyptian products during the Late Bronze Age I. Egyptian-style pottery was locally produced and consumed at Tell el-Ajjul and at Jaffa during the Late Bronze Age IA and IB respectively (above). Sporadic finding of a single specimen at nearby sites, such as slender ovoid jars from the Fosse Temple I at Lachish and Tel Seraʿ Stratum XI (Martin 2011: 219, 223), probably reflect some sort of interaction between locals and the Egyptian communities along the coast. Another sort of interaction brought about the gradual spread of Egyptian scarabs and related artifacts such as plaques and cowroids during the Late Bronze Age I and their broad consumption by the Late Bronze Age IIA (Lalkin 2008: 205–9; Ben-Tor 2011a: 202–7).

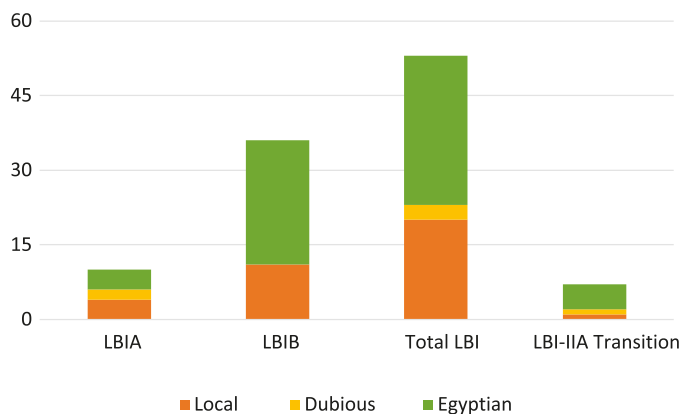
Overall, the number of securely dated Late Bronze Age I artifacts is around 90 (Fig. 14.1).<sup>5</sup> Of these, 35 were imported from Egypt. The greatest number of Egyptian artifacts comes from Tell el-Ajjul, with 30 Egyptian artifacts, compared to five from all the rest of the country – four from Megiddo and a single artifact from Taanach. Moreover, it is only at Tell el-Ajjul, and more specifically, in the burials,<sup>6</sup> that a gradual increase in consumption of Egyptian scarabs from the Late Bronze Age IA to the Late Bronze Age IB is visible (Fig. 14.2): from similar numbers as the locally produced scarabs during the Late Bronze Age IA to ca. 75% of the total items in the Late Bronze Age IB. When one includes artifacts from assemblages generally dated to the Late Bronze Age I, with no distinction of sub-phases, the Egyptian imports constitute about two thirds of the entire assemblage.

<sup>5</sup> These include Tell el-Ajjul Tombs 257, 281, 290, 291, 327, 329, 346, 360, 375, 1007, 1020, 1026, 1030, 1032, 1037, 1039, 1041, 1055, 1071, 1073, 1104, 1117, 1128, 1147, 1510, 1532, 1904, 1918, 2126 (Keel 1997); Tel Batash Strata X–IX (Brandl 2006); Beth-Shean Strata R2–R1 and Tombs 42 and 59 (Keel 2010); Tel Hadar Stratum V (Keel 2013: 508–09 no. 1); Tel Ḥalif Stratum X (Keel 2013: 536–37 no. 10); Lachish Fosse Temple I (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940: pl. 32A no. 1); Megiddo Stratum IX, Level F-10, and Tombs 37K4, 1100C, 2117, 2123, 3018E (Guy 1938; Loud 1948; Lalkin 2006); Tel Michal Stratum XVI (Giveon 1989); Tel Seraʿ Stratum XII and Taanach Stratum I (Lalkin 2008). Note a bulla from Tel Batash Stratum IX that was stamped by an Egyptian scarab but could have been made anywhere (Brandl 2006: 216–17 nos. 3).

<sup>6</sup> The dating of the burials at Tell el-Ajjul follows Gonen 1979, 1981, 1992.



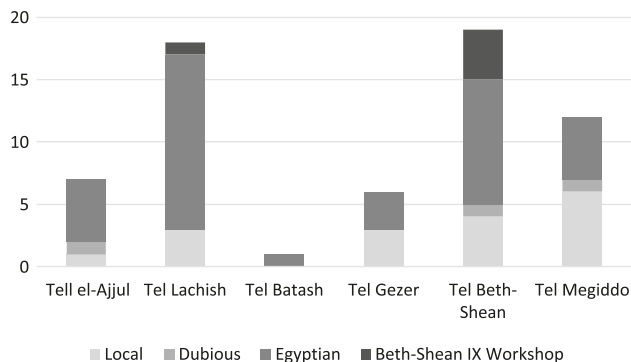
**Fig. 14.1:** Scarabs and related artifacts from south Levantine Late Bronze Age I contexts classified according to origin.



**Fig. 14.2:** Scarabs from Late Bronze Age I Burials at Tell el-Ajjul classified according to provenience.

The broad distribution of Egyptian scarabs and related artifacts beyond Tell el-Ajjul is attested to at a somewhat later horizon, from assemblages dating to the Late Bronze Age I/IIA transition (Fig. 14.3).<sup>7</sup> These assemblages indicate the massive consumption of Egyptian scarabs in Southwest Canaan, at Beth-Shean and to lesser extent also at Megiddo. The case of Beth-Shean is of special interest because of the evidence of a local workshop that produced scarabs in molds that

<sup>7</sup> These include Tell el-Ajjul Tombs 1062X, 1068, 1083 (Keel 1997); Tel Batash Stratum VIII (Brandl 2006); Beth-Shean Stratum IX and Tomb 27 (Keel 2010); Gezer Cave I10A (Keel 2013); Lachish Fosse Temple I/II transition (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940) and Tombs 216 and 501 (Tufnell 1958); and Megiddo Stratum VIII and Tombs 1145B and 877C1 (Guy 1938; Loud 1948).

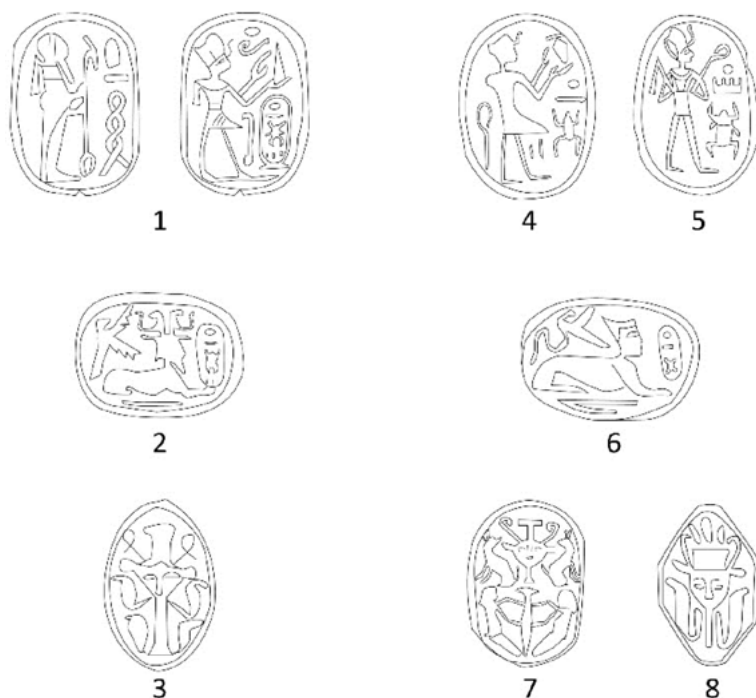


**Fig. 14.3:** Scarabs and related artifacts from south Levantine Late Bronze Age I/IIA transition contexts classified according to origin.

were formed based on Egyptian scarabs (Ben-Tor and Keel 2012). No such workshop is known in Southwest Canaan during this period but the presence of Egyptian scarabs at each burial dated to this phase attests to the integration of these artifacts in the local cultural settings.

The change in the case of the amulets used during the Late Bronze Age I was not, apparently, connected to the function of the scarabs, since they were used in similar practices as in the Middle Bronze Age (Lalkin 2008: 186–204; Ben-Tor 2011b: 32), but rather to their source, being imported from Egypt. The distinct character of the 18th Dynasty iconography includes a predominant component of royal concepts, arguably because the court became the main producer of such media (Ben-Tor 2011a: 205). The distribution of imported scarabs in Canaan and their consumption by locals reflects Egyptian agency, like Egyptian officials en route to Levantine locales, but also the interactions between locals and Egyptians based at Tell el-Ajjul that brought about the growing prestige given to these imported artifacts by the indigenous population.

The change was not only the source of the amulets but also the images they conveyed to the Southwestern Canaanite context. These include good-luck formulas, royal and divine names, and figurative images of the king and deities like Ptaḥ and Hathor. A comparison of the anthropomorphic motifs depicted on Egyptian artifacts from Late Bronze Age IB/IIA transition contexts at Lachish, Gezer and Tel Batash reveals that they very much resemble scenes from contemporaneous contexts at Tell el-Ajjul (Fig. 14.4). Circulated by locals as amulets, the royal images decorating these artifacts might have been perceived by their owners as intermediaries between the common people and the divine sphere (nos. 1, 4, and 5) or as protective figures (nos. 2 and 6) (Cooney and Tyrrell 2005: 6–8). The ‘Hathor head’ (nos. 3, 7, and 8) was adopted and appropriated in the region from the Middle Bronze Age (Schroer 1989: 181–82; Ben-Tor 2007), and hence it is easy to suggest similar process during the Late



**Fig. 14.4:** Comparison of scenes depicted on artifacts – Left: Tell el-Ajjul (nos. 1–3; after Keel 1997: Tell el-‘Ağul nos. 209, 240, and 272); right: Gezer (nos. 4–5; after Keel 2013: 440–441 Geser nos. 634 and 635), Lachish (nos. 6–7; after Tufnell 1958: Pl. 38 nos. 301 and 307), and Tel Batash (no. 8; after Brandl 2006: no. 5).

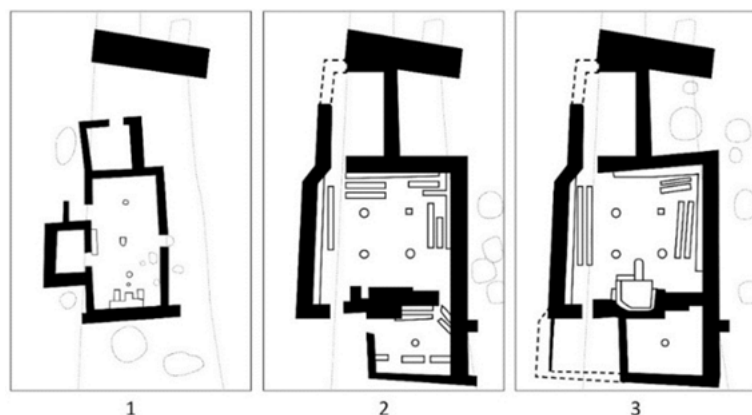
Bronze Age (more below). Thus, royal Egyptian iconography was embraced by inhabitants of Southwest Canaan during the Late Bronze Age I, and its localization may have included the appropriation of new meanings.

To conclude this section, locally produced amulets were replaced in Southwest Canaan by Egyptian imports in a slow and gradual process during the Late Bronze Age I and more visibly during the Late Bronze Age IIA. The main outcome was that this consumption practice was shared by both Egyptian and indigenous groupings for both the living and the dead. Moreover, to those in possession of the amulets, the Egyptian king was considered a guardian and perhaps even a mediator with the gods, not (only) as an aggressor who was to be feared. Further developments in the integration of the Egyptian king in Southwestern Canaanite minds will be elaborated in the next section.

## Goddess in translation

The relative rarity of Egyptian finds in Southwest Canaan in the Late Bronze Age I stands in clear contrast to the wealth of such finds from Late Bronze Age IIA

contexts. A rich assemblage of Egyptian-style artifacts comes from Lachish, and more specifically from the Fosse Temple, located close to the western slope of the mound (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940). The modest structure was built there during the Late Bronze Age IB (Fig. 14.5) and rebuilt there during the Late Bronze Age IIA in Egyptian style; a third phase, dating to the Late Bronze Age IIB, was a renovation of the second one, with no change in the plan (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940: 22, 24, 37–38; Bietak 2002: 60, 63–74).



**Fig. 14.5:** Plan of the three phases of the Fosse Temple (after Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940: pl. 66–68).

While most of the items in the latter two phases reflect indigenous traditions, others are Egyptian imports, mainly associated with the cult and iconography of Hathor. A similar mixture of Canaanite-Egyptian artifacts is also seen in the nearby pits, which show affiliation with both a local goddess, specifically called *Elat* (Fig. 14.6), and with the Egyptian goddess Hathor.

I have recently suggested a possible explanation for this sudden appearance of a unique dual cult in the Fosse Temple (Koch 2017). It is based on the glyptic items bearing the name of Amenhotep III and his consort, Tiye, found in the remains of the second and third phases of the structure, all of which led the publishers to associate the renovation of the building with the days of that king (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940: 69 and pl. 32A/B nos. 2–4, 7). Significant are three medium sized scarabs and a large-sized “lion-hunt” scarab that were found on top of the altar of the third phase, although they are dated some 150 years after Amenhotep III’s death (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940: pl. 32A/B nos. 36–39). The latter belong to a family of large-sized scarabs commemorating a lion-hunt, Tiye as the beloved consort, a lake dedicated to Tiye, and other scenes (Berman in Kozloff and Bryan 1992: 70–72; Kozloff 2012: 108–9). These scarabs are characterized by a uniformity of





**Fig. 14.6:** The Lachish ewer inscription (drawn by the author after Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, pl. 60 no. 3).

style and production, and they might have been produced in a single workshop, possibly in the late third or early fourth decade of Amenhotep III's reign, contemporaneously with and in direct relation to his monumental construction activities (Brandl, Bunimovitz and Lederman 2013).

Amenhotep III is well known for his palaces and temples, either newly erected or built in place of previous buildings. Most of these temples were dedicated to the pharaoh himself or to his personage as one of the Egyptian deities, e.g., the temple “Nb-Ma’at-R’ (Amenhotep III), united with Ptah,” at Memphis. Temples were also built at Nubia, such as the temple at Soleb, north of the third cataract, where Amenhotep III was worshiped as “Nb-Ma’at-R’, Lord of Nubia.” Additional temples were dedicated to Tiye, the best known of which were located at Malkata, Thebes, and Sedinga, near Soleb, where she was worshiped as Hathor (Kozloff and Bryan 1992: 73–124; Kozloff 2012: 120–47, 168–76).

These building projects were mostly erected during the third decade of Amenhotep III's reign, in preparation for and as the outcome of the king's first jubilee festival (*Heb-Sed*) that was celebrated at Malkata; two additional festivals were held during his 34th and 37th regnal years. The rituals enacted at these festivals were a symbolic performance of the centralization of the political power in Egypt by the court, mostly visible by the main event of the festival when Amenhotep III accorded himself and Tiye with divine attributes, making them both living gods (Kozloff and Bryan 1992: 39–41; Johnson 1998: 86–89; Grover 2008: 1–14; Kozloff 2012: 182–96). Following his deification, Amenhotep III was depicted as the Sun God, as Ptah, as Osiris, or as other deities, depending on the location of the temple (Kozloff and Bryan 1992: 76, 132–36, 168–69, 192–98, 204–6; Johnson 1996: 67 nn. 13–15, 68–71;

1998: 87–88). Tiye took on a central role in the festival, during which, and for the rest of her life, she was presented as Hathor, with Hathor's traditional attributes, thus creating an icon of queenship used by later royal consorts in Egypt (Kozloff and Bryan 1992: 171–72, 175–77, 202–3, 212; Johnson 1996: 72–77; Grover 2008: 8–9; Troy 2008: 158–59, 162–63).

In light of the above, it is possible to suggest the following scenario. The cult in the Fosse Temple was dedicated to a local goddess who was associated during the Late Bronze IIA with Egyptian Hathor. Hathor, in turn, was linked to the royal cult of Tiye, who was deified by her husband, Amenhotep III, during his fourth decade of reign. Consequently, one can assume that the introduction of the new cult was an initiative of the Egyptian court, as a means to strengthen the loyalty of the local population, similar to parallel phenomena under political hegemonic systems.<sup>8</sup> Yet, caution must be exerted here. The Fosse Temple functioned up until the late-13th century BCE, Phase III, long after the death of Tiye. The persistence of the royal cult, in an indigenous context outside of its homeland, reflects, in my opinion, the active role of the Canaanite population in this process. The entanglement of the Egyptian royal cult with the local cult reflects both the interweaving of Egyptian and Canaanite cultures but also the rapid integration of Lachish within the Egyptian network. The identification of Elat and Hathor/Tiye meant that the people of Lachish saw themselves connected to the Egyptian court. Hence, I would argue that this identification was a deliberate act, meant to strengthen the connection of the local elite with Egypt.

## Discussion

This partial overview of changes in Southwest Canaan shows several clear trends. First, the Late Bronze Age I–IIA was a period of revitalization of the settlement pattern in most parts of the region with evidence for social segmentation during the Late Bronze Age IIA. Another aspect of the settlement pattern is the nucleation of the previous large centers of Ashkelon and Tel Migne and the apparent growth of prosperity at neighboring sites during the Late Bronze Age IIA that suggest a change in distribution of wealth and the rise of an altered social structure. Contemporaneous to this revitalization process, local individuals and groups began to consume Egyptian amulets in growing numbers and were exposed to Egyptian royal imagery that was integrated into local context. This kind of localization of Egyptian concepts is best exemplified by the translation of Hathor, the personification of Queen Tiye, into the cult of a local goddess at Lachish named Elat. Originally born

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<sup>8</sup> On divine kingship and its political role, see the various papers in Brisch 2008; See also De Maret 2011: 1059–67; Brisch 2013.

in the politics of the Egyptian court, the manifestation of the cult of Hathor by Amenhotep III was embraced by residents of Lachish (and possibly in other locales), who kept this special association with Egypt until the end of the 13th century BCE.

The association of these processes with recorded historical events requires a note on chronology. It has been the consensus that the south Levantine archaeological periodization during the second millennium BCE corresponds to the reign of Egyptian kings. Thus the Late Bronze Age IA begins with the commencement of the New Kingdom, the Late Bronze IB is dated to the days of Thutmose III to Thutmose IV/Amenhotep III, and the Late Bronze Age IIA is designated as “the Amarna Period” and is confined to the days of the late 18th Dynasty. This structure was further elaborated by the Ultra-Low Chronology of the second millennium BCE following the stratigraphy of Tell ed-Daba and its suggested chronology, arguing that the Middle Bronze Age lasted well into the days of the 18th Dynasty (Bietak, et al. 2008). In this light, Middle Bronze Age III destructions throughout the country were sometimes associated with Ahmose and his successors (e.g., Burke 2010: 51–53).

Recently published radiocarbon evidence suggests otherwise. Radiocarbon dates from Tel Kabri, Tel Ifshar and Tel Burak support a High Chronology for the Middle Bronze Age in the southern Levant (Höflmayer, et al. 2016a; Höflmayer, et al. 2016b), dating the transition from Middle Bronze II to III to ca. 1700 BCE. That means a longer length of the Middle Bronze Age III (~1700–1550 BCE) or an earlier beginning of the Late Bronze Age I. The main implication is that the destructions of the Middle Bronze Age III could have occurred during the 17th – early 16th century BCE, much before a single Egyptian soldier stepped foot on Levantine soil. And yet, agreement has not been reached among scholars (Ben-Tor 2018). Until detailed radiocarbon evidence of the Late Bronze Age I is published, there should be much caution in the “find-a-pharaoh” discourse (Sherratt 2011: 8–9).

So strong is the Egyptian impact at Tell el-Ajjul and Jaffa, the possible presence of Egyptians along the coast, and their interaction with the locals that the Egyptian-Southwest Canaanite trajectories can be seen through other processes. The focus of Egyptian colonization at Tell el-Ajjul during the early 18th Dynasty<sup>9</sup> was an enclave on the southwestern corner of the Levant during the Late Bronze Age I.<sup>10</sup> It could have functioned as a stronghold aimed to block unexpected

<sup>9</sup> Common scholarly wisdom identifies Tell el-Ajjul with Sarḥan, captured by Ahmose (Kempinski 1974; Morris 2005: 28–29 n. 7) but not without critique (Rainey 1993; Redford 2003: 11–12).

<sup>10</sup> The closest Egyptian site during the early to mid-18th Dynasty was Tell el-Habua, guarding a corridor leading from northern Sinai to the eastern Delta (Hoffmeier and Moshier 2013: 498–501). Evidence for mid-18th Dynasty presence in northern Sinai is found together with late-18th Dynasty remains at two sites: Bir el-Abd, located ca. 75 km east of Tell Habua, and in and around Ḥaruva (Oren 1993c: 1389–91; 2006), located some 35 km southwest of modern Rafah and 12 km east of al-Arish.

invasions of Egypt, a base serving the Egyptian armies, and a harbor involved in Egyptian maritime activity.<sup>11</sup> The latter two explanations would also fit Jaffa during the Late Bronze Age IB onwards.<sup>12</sup> Tell el-Ajjul might thus have served the Egyptian armies in the campaigns aimed at the northern Levant. These armies might have met with local resistance but the rather limited destructions in Southwest Canaan during the Late Bronze Age I suggest that the more common local reaction was to pay homage.

The handful of Egyptian vessels consumed in sites near Tell el-Ajjul during the Late Bronze Age I and the growing popularity of Egyptian scarabs and related artifacts both reflect two aspects of the Egyptian–local interactions during this period. This allows further speculations about the nature of such interactions that might include exchange of agricultural commodities between coastal and more inland communities. The gradual growth of various sites in the region during the Late Bronze Age I reflects the benefits local groups achieved from such interaction.

The frequent Egyptian campaigns to northern Canaan and farther to the northern Levant during the days of Thutmose III and his successors possibly strengthened the importance of the harbors in Southwest Canaan. At the same time, there is only meager evidence for any clash between the Egyptians and the locals in this region. On the contrary, the relations between both sides were deepened, as was suggested regarding the consumption of Egyptian artifacts decorated with royal iconography that might have been localized in Southwest Canaan. This process reached an unprecedented peak during the reign of Amenhotep III, when the royal Egyptian cult was localized in Southwest Canaan with the identification of Tiye/Hathor with the local goddess *Elat*.

## Conclusions

The archaeological manifestations of the growing Egyptian hegemony in Southwest Canaan during the Late Bronze Age I–IIA indicate processes of revitalization from the turmoil of the Middle Bronze Age III and integration within an Egyptian sphere of influence. The latter include the establishment of two harbors with strong Egyptian influence and possibly actual colonization by Egyptians, the interactions

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<sup>11</sup> Egyptian sources refer to the navy since the Middle Kingdom (Spalinger 2005: 5–6); the navy is referred to in written sources dating to the days of Kamose (“The Kamose Stela”) and Ahmose, and predominantly from the days of Thutmose III onwards, when “the navy appears most prominently as a means of troop transport and supply, whose efficacy greatly contributed to Egyptian imperial expansion” (Manassa 2013: 2).

<sup>12</sup> Egyptian presence in Jaffa during the Late Bronze Age IB was interpreted as commencing before the reign of Thutmose III (Burke and Lords 2010: 26) or as the result of his first campaign (Martin 2011: 240).

between these communities and their local neighbors, and an increasing local favor towards Egyptian royal iconography. Thus, while Egyptian royal sources are embedded within a military perspective towards the southern Levant, the archaeology of Southwest Canaan suggests a more complex situation of negotiation and collaboration that brought about integration of Egypt into local daily life and expansion of Egyptian hegemony.

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# Index

- Abdashirta 247  
 Abdi-Ashtarti 1, 257  
 Abdi-Heba 72, 178, 251  
 Abi-Milku 250  
 Aijalon 113  
 Akko 11, 53  
 Alalakh 113  
 Amada 62  
 Amarna Letters/Correspondence 1, 3, 10, 12, 56, 66–67, 72, 81–82, 109, 113, 118, 158, 161, 165, 171–174, 177–180, 221–225, 236, 247–249, 252–258  
 Amman Airport 236  
 Amun-re 50, 52, 219  
 Anthropoid coffin(s) 43  
 Aphek 24–27, 33, 54, 73, 111, 117, 155, 238, 240, 263, 266  
 Aphekah 205  
 'Apiru/Habiru 116, 221–227, 251, 255–256  
 Artamanya 251  
 Ashdod 13, 26, 33, 51, 238, 240, 265  
 Ashkelon 13, 27, 111, 124, 155, 235, 238, 263, 273  
 Azekah 11–14, 37–57, 86, 115, 155, 159, 163, 266  
 Azekah Type Figurine 54–55  
 Aziru 247  
  
 Balu-dani 1  
 Bayadi 251  
 Belit-neseti 113  
 Beqo'a 113, 156  
 Bes 50, 52  
 Beth Shean 220–221, 229, 238, 240–241  
 Beth Shemesh 11–13, 86, 89–90, 110–111, 113, 115, 117, 157–158, 163, 233, 236–237, 263, 266  
 Biryawaza 251  
 Byblos 253–254, 262  
  
 Carbon 14 Dating 9, 12, 37, 44–45, 55, 107–109, 113–116, 154, 179, 274  
 Chocolate-on-White ware 222  
 Cyclopean 198  
 Cypriot Base Ring Ware 44, 71, 91, 93, 96, 99, 155, 159–160, 175, 195, 209, 222, 224  
 Cypriot Bichrome 91  
 Cypriot Monochrome 91, 93, 222  
 Cypriot White Slip Ware 44, 71, 91, 93, 96, 99, 103, 109, 155, 159–160, 175, 209, 222  
 Cypriot White-Shaved Ware 96, 99, 101, 117, 155, 192, 207  
 Cypro-Minoan 100, 102  
  
 Damascus 225–226, 251  
 David 171  
 Deir Arba'ain 187, 205  
 Deir el-Balah 43, 51, 144  
 Deir el-Medine 140  
  
 Egyptian *dbn* weight 104, 107  
 Egyptianizing 5, 10–11, 220–229  
 Elat (goddess) 12, 271, 273, 275  
  
 fenugreek 23–30, 107  
 Fosse Temples (Lachish) 12, 122, 133, 155, 161, 240, 256–258, 271, 273  
  
 Gaza 143–144, 222  
 Gezer 13–14, 50, 52, 62–82, 86, 111, 114, 123, 156, 163, 181, 266–267, 269  
 Gihon Spring/Spring Tower 174–175, 179  
 Gilgamesh Fragment 72  
 Gintu 1  
 grass pea 23, 26–30  
  
 Hathor 12, 56, 102–103, 155, 269–275  
 Hazor 117, 123, 132, 235, 238–239  
*hazzanu* 251–252  
 hearth 22, 190  
 Hebron (Rumeide) 179, 185–214  
 Hirbet ez-Zeraqon 26  
 Hoham 186  
 Hurrian 11, 62, 171  
  
 ivory/ivories 8, 237  
  
 Jaffa 73–74, 141–144, 263, 267, 274  
 Janum 205  
 Jerusalem/City of David 72, 171–81, 186, 239, 252  
  
 Kamid el-Loz 236  
 Kamose/Kamosa Stela 275

- Kastanas 26  
 Kataret es-Samra 217–229  
 Keilah 113, 116, 181  
 Kentisha 138  
 Khirbet Ra'i 162  
 Kition 52  
 Knossos 110, 236
- Labayu 72, 255, 258  
 Lachish 11–14, 43–45, 51, 53, 57, 70, 72, 90,  
 111, 113, 117 122–134, 136–145, 148,  
 154–155, 161–162, 164, 240, 263, 265–274  
 Lamp-and-bowl deposit 5, 9, 40, 45, 47, 73,  
 221, 226–227  
 Late Mycenaean/Helladic/Minoan Ware(s) 3,  
 43, 71, 96, 99, 110, 114, 117, 180, 221,  
 235–238, 242
- Malkata 272  
 Manahat 178  
 Marki-Alonia 26  
 Marmariani 26  
 Masseboth/standing stones 6, 152–154  
 Medinet Habu 205  
 Megiddo 9, 26, 33, 44, 70, 72, 117, 123, 132,  
 219, 223, 233, 237–238, 240–241, 267–268  
 Memphis 272  
 Milki-ilu 72  
 Motza clay 174  
 Mut-Balu 225
- Nahalat Ahim 239  
 Netiv Ha'Asara 266
- Ophel 179–181  
 Osiris 272
- Papyrus Hermitage A1116 262  
 Pataikos 50, 52  
 Pella/Pehel 217–229  
 Pharaoh Ahmose 218, 225, 262, 274–275  
 Pharaoh Amenhotep II 222, 227  
 Pharaoh Amenhotep III 51, 75, 100, 109–110,  
 114, 154, 172, 202, 218, 220, 222, 227, 271,  
 273–275  
 Pharaoh Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten 222, 227,  
 247  
 Pharaoh Horemheb 218
- Pharaoh Merneptah 62, 67, 73, 75, 79, 82, 115,  
 156, 205, 218, 227, 229  
 Pharaoh Ramses II 51–52, 73, 160, 196–197,  
 205, 218, 222–227, 229  
 Pharaoh Ramses III 51, 218, 225–227  
 Pharaoh Seti I 67, 218–219, 221–223, 227, 229  
 Pharaoh Setnakht 218  
 Pharaoh Tewosret 218, 222–223, 227, 229  
 Pharaoh Thutmose III 51–52, 62, 79, 103, 156,  
 218–229, 262–263, 274–275  
 Pharaoh Thutmose IV 51, 62, 274  
 Philistine 1/Mycenaean IIIC 12, 114, 157–158,  
 233–235, 241  
 Philistine 2/Bichrome 114, 157  
 Proto-Canaanite Script 115, 165  
 Ptah 50–51, 100, 269, 272
- Qatna 236  
 Qubur el-Walaydah 44, 144, 238  
 Qudshu Type Figurine 54
- Ras el-Amud 178  
 Reshef 75, 78  
 Revadim Plaque Figurine 53, 55, 155  
 Rib-Hadda 253–254  
 Rubutu 113
- Sahem 229  
 Sedinga 272  
 Sharuhem 262, 274  
 Shasu 223, 256  
 Shechem 50, 72, 133, 223, 255  
 Sheep Tablet 201  
 Sheik Sa'ad 225  
 Shiqmim 26  
 Shuwardata 1, 12, 72, 113  
 Siri-Bashani 251  
 skeleton(s) 5, 40–41, 47–50, 55, 80, 82, 98  
 Solar Shrine 122  
 Solomon 171  
 Stepped-Stone-Structure 172  
 Suteans 251, 256
- Taanach 26, 33, 117, 267–268  
 Tel Azor 266  
 Tel Batash (Timnah) 13, 19, 21, 24–30, 33,  
 86–118, 155, 157, 163, 265–269  
 Tel Burak 274

- Tel Burna 11, 13–14, 54, 148–166, 266  
 Tel Dan 240  
 Tel Dor 233  
 Tel Erani 159–160, 166  
 Tel Gerisa 73, 266  
 Tel Hadar 267–268  
 Tel Halif 117, 155, 162, 164, 220, 265–267  
 Tel Harasim 11, 13–14, 155, 158  
 Tel Haror 143–144, 263–265  
 Tel Jemmeh 52, 263, 265  
 Tel Kabri 236, 274  
 Tel Michal 266–268  
 Tel Miqne/Ekron 13, 19, 21–30, 33, 37, 86, 111,  
 114–115, 156, 173, 265–266, 273  
 Tel Mor 5, 265  
 Tel Nagila 164–165, 265  
 Tel Nami 233, 240–241  
 Tel Sera<sup>c</sup> 43, 136, 143–144, 265, 267  
 Tel Yarmuth 159, 164, 166  
 Tel Zayit 13, 86, 160, 164, 266  
 Tell Abu al-Kharaz 217–229  
 Tell Abu Hawam 117, 233, 237–238  
 Tell Ajjul 50–51, 111, 263–269, 274–275  
 Tell Atij 26  
 Tell Beit Mirsim 13, 162, 164, 266  
 Tell Damiyah 220  
 Tell Deir ‘Allah 24, 217–229  
 Tell ed-Daba 274  
 Tell el-Far‘ah (S) 43, 51, 137, 144  
 Tell el-Habua 274  
 Tell el-Hammam 218, 220  
 Tell el-Hesi 164–165  
 Tell el-Yehudiyeh 43  
 Tell es-Safi/Gath 1–14, 19, 21–30, 33, 50, 53,  
 56, 86, 111, 113, 143–144, 148, 154–155,  
 158, 163, 179, 181, 195, 233  
 Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh 217–229  
 Tell esh-Shihab 219, 225  
 Tell Ibrahim Awad 26  
 Tell Ifshar 24–27, 33, 274  
 Tell Irbid 229  
 Tell Keisan 235, 241  
 Tell Nimrin 219  
 Tell Tweini 12  
 Tell Zera‘a 218, 220  
 Temple Mount 174, 181  
 Thebes 62, 272  
 Tiryns 26, 239  
 Titris Hoyk 26  
 Tiye 100, 110, 114, 271–275  
 Troy 26  
 Tyre 250  
 Udjat eye 52  
 Ugarit 19, 100, 115, 117–118,  
 229, 253  
 Yapa-Hadda 257  
 Yapahu 72  
 Yavneh Yam 111, 265  
 Zimredda 257  
 Zorah 113

