

A BUILT TOMB FROM MIDDLE BRONZE AGE IIA AND OTHER FINDS AT TEL BURGA IN THE SHARON PLAIN

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Two soundings were carried out at Tel Burga (*Tall* or *Kh. el-Bureij* on the British mandate maps and in the mandatory archives), located 1 km east of modern Binyamina in the Sharon coastal plain (map ref. NIG 19700/71400; OIG 14700/21400; Fig. 1).¹ Extensive surveys of the site and its surroundings (Conder and Kitchener 1882:52; Gophna and Kochavi 1967; 1972; Kallai and Mazar 1971; Olami 1984:200, Site 241; Olami, Sender and Oren 2005: Site 89) have revealed lithic finds from the Lower and Middle Paleolithic periods, as well as ceramic evidence from the Chalcolithic period, the Early Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age II, the Iron Age, and the Persian, Roman, Byzantine

and Early Islamic periods. The site comprises a circular-shaped plateau covering an area of more than 250 dunams (Plan 1). Artificial earthworks defining the perimeter of the tell are clearly visible in aerial photographs and are most pronounced along the site's southern and western perimeters.

The tell has been identified as a fortified MB IIA enclosure. The large plateau rises only a few meters above its immediate surroundings and slopes down moderately from south to north. Two low hillocks are located along the southern edge of the tell within the enclosure, where the slope is most pronounced, rising nearly 10 m above the surrounding plain. The northern

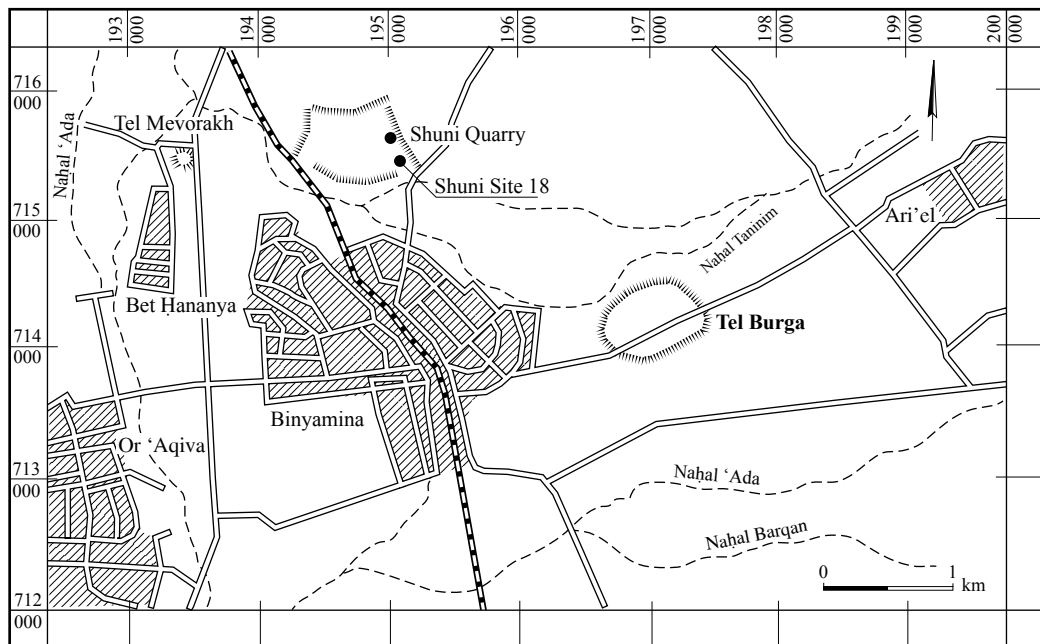


Fig. 1. Location of Tel Burga.

perimeter is bounded by Nahal Tanninim, a now-dry streambed. All the published pottery, collected from both excavations and surveys in the enclosure, has been attributed exclusively to MB IIA (Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979:143); however, large amounts of ceramic material from the Intermediate Bronze Age were discovered following deep plowing in the eastern portion of the site, attesting to a settlement from this period within the confines of the enclosure.² The easternmost hillock bears occupation remains from the Roman and medieval periods, including ashlar masonry, granite columns and sarcophagi.³ The Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age pottery collected in the surveys was very limited and apparently originated from chalk material brought from outside the site for construction of the artificial rampart (Olami, Sender and Oren 2005:40*).

The site of Tel Burga is now traversed from east to west by a dirt road, and much of the area of the tell itself has been planted over with vineyards and orchards. Prior to extensive cultivation and deep plowing on the plateau of the tell in recent decades, the outline of at least two rectangular fortification towers (A and B; see Plan 1) were still visible at the crest of the artificial ramparts on the southern and western perimeters of the tell. The outline of much of the fortification wall could also be discerned, interrupted by a gap on the eastern side. A limited excavation was conducted in 1971 (Plan 1:C), revealing a mudbrick gateway attributed to MB IIA (Gophna and Kochavi 1972; Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979:142–150).

Previous surveys and excavations in the vicinity of Tel Burga have revealed several MB IIA sites (Fig. 1), including Tel Mevorakh, 4 km to the northwest, where remains of a large building or fort surrounded by a rural settlement and later fortified by a rampart have been excavated (Stern 1984). More recently, limited remains of a rural MB IIA settlement were discovered at Shuni Site 18, 2 km to the northwest (Gorzalczany 2005). In addition,

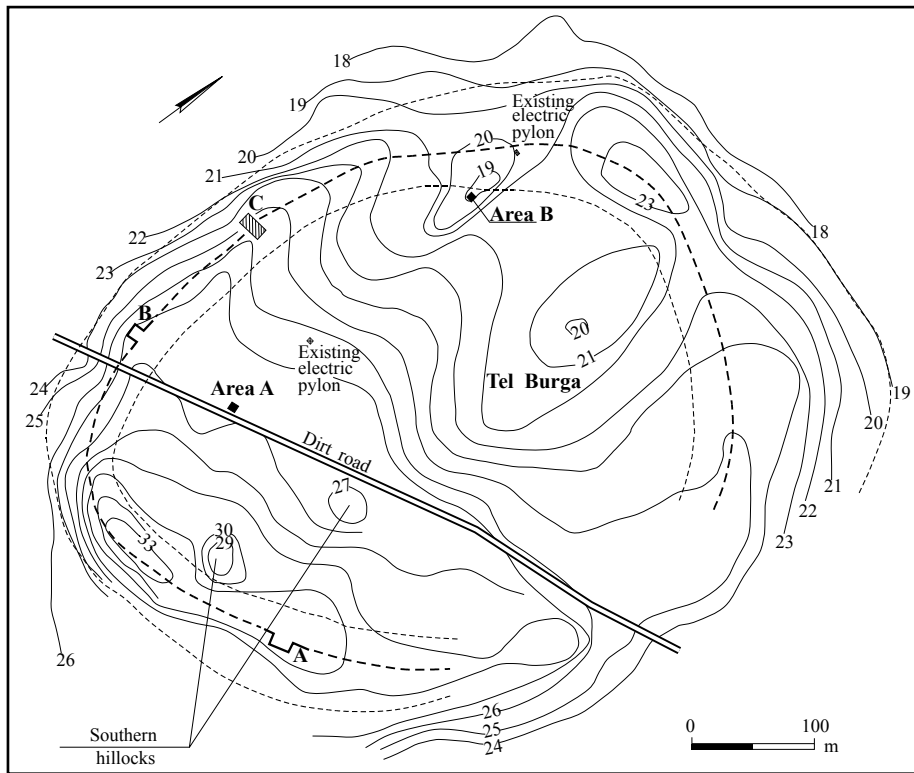
a large cemetery with shaft tombs of the Intermediate Bronze Age, MB IIA and MB IIB was recently excavated at the Shuni Quarry (Peilstöcker and Sklar-Parnes 2005). Major sites in the region where MB II remains have been excavated include Tel Megadim, on the Mediterranean coast 20 km to the north (Wolff 1998), Tel Esur, 5 km to the southeast (Dothan 1970), and Tel Zeror, 12 km to the south (Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979).

The present report describes the results of two limited soundings within the area of the enclosure, located 260 m apart (Areas A and B; Plan 1). Although the total excavated area is very limited in scope, the results obtained in these two soundings are important for our understanding of the history of the site.

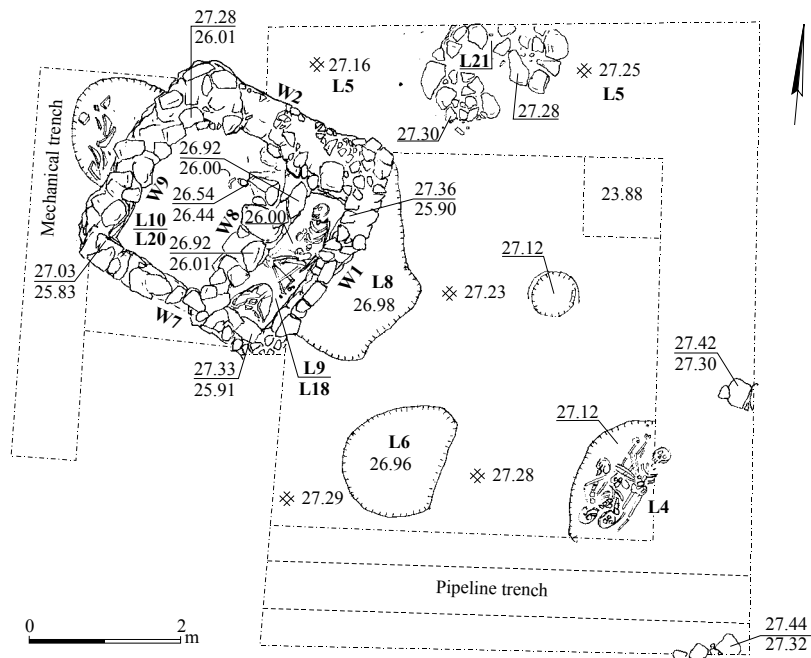
AREA A

This area is positioned in the western portion of the site, 125 m north of the western summit in the south of the tell and adjacent to the modern dirt road (Plan 1). A large, 6 × 8 m square was excavated, which was later expanded 2.5 m to the west (Plan 2). The archaeological remains had been damaged by a modern pipeline trench that cut through the southern portion of the square. Prior to excavation, a mechanical test trench was sunken to the west of the area to be excavated, revealing stone building debris from close to the surface down to a depth of 1.5 m, below which was sterile *hamra* soil.

Excavation within the main square exposed remains of a thin and severely eroded occupation level lying directly upon a very packed and marly layer of sterile *hamra* and small stone chips. The occupation remains consisted of several rounded, shallow pits (L6, L21), filled with stones in a dark gray matrix, that included limited ceramic remains (Fig. 2). Adjacent to Pit 21 were the remains of an occupation surface with fragmentary ceramic remains (L5). Several concentrations of stones upon the sterile layer along the southern and eastern boundaries of the excavated area may represent heavily eroded architectural remains.



Plan 1. Tel Burga and the location of the excavation areas (after Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979).



Plan 2. Area A.

In the southeastern corner of Area A, a pit (L4) contained three primary, articulated adult burials closely arranged in 'sardine' fashion (Fig. 3). The westernmost skeleton was a male, 17–20 years of age, the head oriented southwest, lying on its right side in a flexed position.⁴ The middle skeleton, 15–18 years of age and of undetermined sex, was lying on its side in an outstretched position with the head to the southwest and the hands crossed over the chest. The easternmost skeleton was a male just over 20 years of age, also lying on its back,

although in contrast to the other two, the head was oriented northeast. Aside from a fragment of a sheep/goat scapula lying next to the left femur of the easternmost skeleton, no other burial goods were found in association with these interments.

Subterranean Tomb

In the northwestern corner of the excavated area, the remains of a stone burial structure were exposed (Plans 2, 3). Consequently, the excavation was expanded to the west to fully



Fig. 2. A concentration of stones and ceramic remains found within a shallow pit (L6) sunken into a sterile matrix, looking west.



Fig. 3. Remains of three articulated burials in a shallow pit (L4), looking east.

initial burial phase (L20; see Plan 3: Section 1–1; Figs. 4, 5). At the bottom of the pit, outside the structure to the west, were several smashed vessels (L19; see Fig. 14:3, 4), which may indicate that the tomb had been entered and rifled at least once after the initial burial phase, or perhaps they are the remains of post-mortem rituals. The manner in which the tomb was roofed remains unclear; no stone slabs were found within the tomb. Several large stones, strewn haphazardly in the central area of the structure, suggest the existence of a collapsed stone pillar or a stone pillar-base. The pillar probably carried a wooden column that once supported the roofing, which was apparently composed of wooden beams and mud that had decomposed long ago.

The Early Burial Phase.— In the earliest phase, a deep pit was dug into the sterile *hamra* and lined with four walls (W1, W2, W7, W9) to form a subterranean square structure (Plan 3). The walls were built of one to two rows of medium-sized fieldstones, preserved seven courses high. Access to the burial chamber was through a 1.5 m deep semicircular pit that led into a 1.25 m wide entrance in the western wall of the chamber (W9). The entrance was found blocked with large to medium-sized stones, which were set atop the debris of the

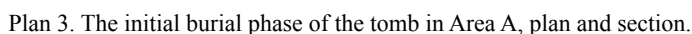




Fig. 4. Subterranean tomb structure, looking west, after the contents of the tomb had been cleared; note the blocked entrance at upper center, the southern door jamb is seen at upper left.



Fig. 5. Subterranean tomb structure, looking west, toward the blocked entrance; note the two crushed storage jars, probably in their original position, in the corners on either side of the entrance.

The burial deposits in the early phase of the tomb (L20) appear to have been disturbed. None of the bones were found in articulation and most of the numerous ceramic vessels were smashed, scattered or piled up in a corner, although some may have remained in their original position (Fig. 5). The central area was mainly devoid of *in situ* finds (Plan 3; Fig. 6).

Within the tomb, in the corners flanking the entrance, stood two storage jars (Fig. 14:1). One jar contained a complete dipper juglet, while another such juglet (Fig. 15:12) was found behind the storage jar in Fig. 14:1. Near this vessel were a smashed jar (Fig. 16:4) and a skull, while near the other storage jar were two more juglets (Fig. 15:1, 7) and a concentration of two skulls, one of them with several beads



Fig. 6. Burial remains in the eastern portion of the subterranean structure, looking east; note the large agglomeration of ceramic vessels piled up in the southeastern corner of the structure, at right.

adjacent to it (Fig. 19:3–5). Along the northern wall of the chamber were two bowls (Figs. 12:1; 13:2) and a skull. Numerous disarticulated bones and smashed vessels (Fig. 12:3) were found in the northeastern corner and along the eastern wall, where a low rectangular bench of compacted earth may have been outlined by several small to medium-sized fieldstones (Plan 3). The southeastern corner of the structure contained an agglomeration of disarticulated bones, ceramic vessels and vessel fragments (Figs. 12:2; 13:1, 3–6; 15:2, 3, 6, 11; 16:2) that appear to have been piled up.

The human osteological remains associated with the earlier phase of the tomb include the remains of at least five individuals aged 6–7, 13–15, 15–20 and 30–40 years, and one of uncertain age. At least one of the individuals was a female; the gender of the other four could not be determined.

The faunal remains, recovered from the early burial phase, include various limb bones from at least two specimens of sheep/goat (*Ovis aries/Capra hircus*), one of cattle (*Bos taurus*) and one of pig (*Sus scrofa*).⁵

The Late Burial Phase.— At a later phase, the tomb was re-used and architectural changes were made. A wall (W8) was constructed



Fig. 7. Cist of the later burial phase, looking south.

parallel to W1 in the eastern half of the structure, delineating a separate rectangular compartment measuring 0.5×2.0 m (Plan 2; Fig. 7). Built of one row of large to medium-

sized stones and preserved to a maximum of three courses, W8 was laid directly upon the burial deposits of the earlier phase. Within this cist (L9), a storage jar (Fig. 18:5) with a dipper juglet inside (Fig. 18:7) stood upright at the southwestern end, while to the northeast of this vessel was the primary burial of a male, 18–25 years of age, lying on the right side in a flexed position with the head to the northeast. A red-washed juglet (Fig. 18:6) was found near the pelvis; a large fragment of a mother-of-pearl shell was next to it.

Removal of these burial deposits (L18) revealed the fragmentary remains of another juglet and two scarabs (Figs. 20, 21) atop the uppermost remains of the earlier burial phase (L20). It is unclear whether this juglet and the scarabs should be attributed to the earlier or later burial phase, although it seems most likely that the scarabs were placed near the body associated with the later phase.

In the larger compartment to the northwest of this cist, very limited and scattered remains were recovered (L10), which also postdate

the earlier burial phase, and it can be assumed that they were contemporary with the final burial phase in the cist (L9). The L10 deposits included several vessel fragments (Fig. 17) and a complete bowl (Figs. 8; 17:7) alongside a few non-articulated bones of a female. The rifling of the earlier phase of the tomb and the stone blockage of its western entrance (see Plan 3: Section 1–1) may possibly be associated with this final burial phase. However, it is uncertain whether the deposits revealed in L10 actually represent part of the tomb that was in use at this time.

The faunal remains recovered from the late burial phase include various limb bones from at least three specimens of sheep/goat (*Ovis aries/Capra hircus*) and two of cattle (*Bos taurus*).

Discussion

The excavations in Area A comprised a very limited exposure within a site that remains to a large degree unexplored. The discovery of burials in this area may reflect the existence of a cemetery within this part of the settlement

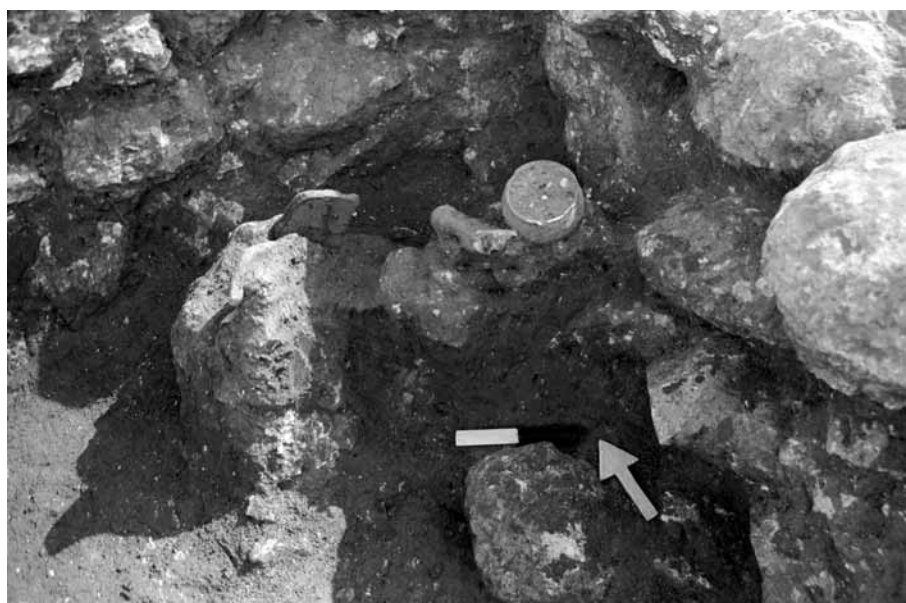


Fig. 8. Scattered remains of the later burial phase in the larger compartment, looking northeast.

or, alternatively, it may have been a localized phenomenon that was incorporated within and beneath building remains, which had eroded away or been dismantled due to their proximity to the modern surface. The existence of a large structural tomb within the confines of the site suggests, however, that it was of some importance. This assumption is supported by the fact that numerous MB IIA tombs were found in the large cemetery at Shuni Quarry, located to the north of Tel Burga (Peilstöcker and Sklar-Parnes 2005). As Tel Burga is the largest, although not the only MB IIA site in the vicinity, it may be that Shuni Quarry functioned as the cemetery of the site itself. The location of this tomb outside the cemetery and within the site indicates that a burial ground may have existed within the confines of the city as well, and that the tomb occupants wished to be buried in proximity to their homes.

Tombs and burial practices of MB II in the southern Levant are numerous and varied (Hallote 1995). Adult burials are most commonly found in cist tombs or hewn burial caves accessed by shafts that are located outside settlements (Gonen 1992:151). Intramural, subterranean structural tombs first appear during MB IIA, such as Tomb 3130 in Megiddo Stratum XIII (Loud 1948: Fig. 397), becoming more common in the subsequent Strata XII–X of MB IIB–C (Loud 1948: Figs. 29, 32, 202–205, 215–223; Gonen 1992:153). At Megiddo, these tombs generally consisted of a hewn rectangular or oval pit lined with stone courses and roofed with stone slabs, at times supported by a stone pillar. The tombs were composed of one, sometimes two chambers, within which were multiple interments accompanied by numerous burial goods. The chambers were somewhat smaller than the Tel Burga structure; none of the Megiddo tombs exceeded 1.5 m in width and only a few reached 2 m in length. These tombs were positioned underneath houses, their ceilings creating a floor for the room above them. Similar subterranean, intramural tombs—of square or rectangular plan, with stone-built chambers accessed by a built

entrance—are also known from Tel Dan during MB II (Ilan 1996). At both these sites, the tombs were roofed with stone slabs or corbelling, in which each successive stone course lining the walls of the tomb jutted slightly inward to create a dome-like roof, capped by stone slabs.

The Tel Burga tomb differs from all these tombs in two major aspects, namely its size and the manner of its construction and roofing, and the fact that no structural elements, such as floors or buildings, were discerned above it. The Tel Burga tomb is significantly larger than most other MB II structural tombs and was not roofed with stone slabs. The stone walls lining the tomb stood vertically, suggesting that the roofing of the tomb was of wooden beams and mud. Several large stones were found strewn within the central area of the structure (Plan 3), suggesting a collapsed stone pillar or pillar base. However, the stone walls may also have supported a vault or gabled roof of mudbrick that has since disintegrated. Mudbrick vaults or gables are known from MB IIA chamber tombs at Tell el-Dab'a in Egypt (van den Brink 1982) and Jericho, where an MB IIA tomb chamber (Tomb HAR, Phase H VII.XXII), built of sun-dried mudbricks and measuring c. 1.5×2.5 m, with an entrance on one of the short sides, was revealed on the tell itself. Kenyon assumed that this tomb had a corbelled vault as one of the walls was found inclining slightly inward (Kenyon 1981:349, Fig. 5, Pls. 188, 189). Although it is not unfeasible that the Tel Burga tomb was roofed in a similar manner, very little mudbrick debris was uncovered above the tomb deposits, so the method of roofing must remain conjectural.

As the Tel Burga tomb differs structurally from other tombs of its time, it may not have originally been built as a tomb at all. Perhaps this structure was initially constructed as a subterranean cellar, the walls designed to support the superstructure of a building that has since disappeared, and was only later reused as a tomb. A few meager architectural remains uncovered on the fringes of Area A (see Plan 2) may suggest the existence of a structure in this

area, although it is by no means certain that it stood above the tomb.

AREA B

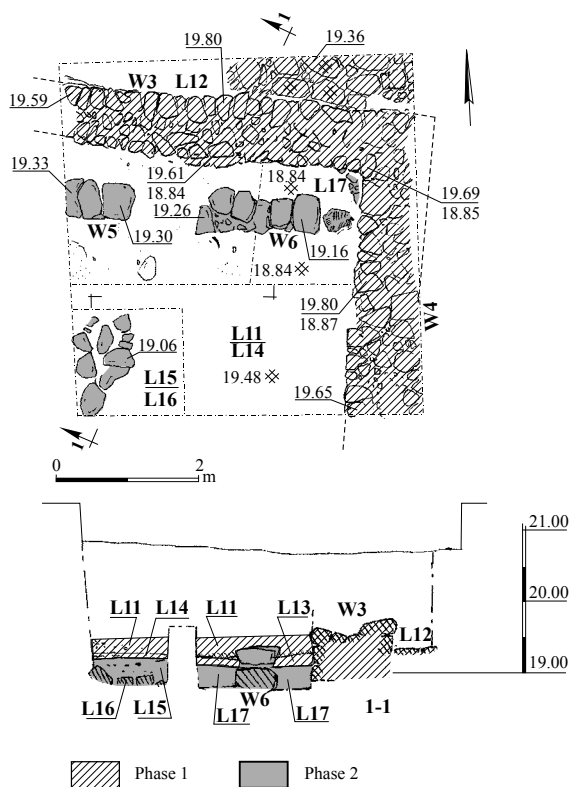
Area B comprised one 5×5 m square, positioned just to the south of the northern rampart (see Plan 1). As this area is situated in one of the lowest parts of the site, the archaeological remains were covered by more than 1.5 m of heavy dark brown, almost sterile alluvium. A trench, excavated mechanically prior to excavation, parallel to the square and 2.5 m from its western side, revealed bedrock at 2.3 m below the modern surface. Directly upon the bedrock was a 0.3 m thick layer of gravel with numerous sherds, and above it were remains of a stone wall within dark brown alluvial soil at a depth of 1.5 m below the surface. Although manual excavation in the adjacent square reached a depth of 2.5 m below the modern surface, neither the bedrock nor the overlying gravel layer were identified. Excavation in this square revealed the presence of two architectural phases, and while bedrock was not attained, the depth of these features suggests that the earlier architectural phase comprised the first occupation in this area.



Fig. 9. The excavated remains in Area B, looking east. Wall 6 of the earlier phase is seen at center, while W3 and W4 of the later phase are at left and top.

Phase 2.— The earliest occupation phase was only partially exposed and consisted of two walls (W5 and W6) built of one row of large fieldstones (Plan 4; Fig. 9). Excavation revealed only the top of W5, yet a small probe near the eastern end of W6 revealed two courses of this wall. Adjacent to its lower course was a beaten-earth surface (L17) that included a patch of gray ash near the eastern end. A one-meter-wide gap between W5 and W6 may have been an entranceway. In the southwestern corner of the square, another probe exposed a mass of stones of unclear function overlaid by debris (L15, L16) that may also be associated with this phase.

Phase 1.— In the subsequent phase, the earlier remains went out of use and a large building was erected. The Phase 2 features were covered by a constructional fill (L13), which was sealed



Plan 4. Area B, plan and section.

by a 5 cm thick layer of grayish-white marly soil that only partially covered the earlier walls (L14; see Plan 4: Section 1–1). Walls 3 and 4 of Phase 1, preserved to a maximum height of three courses, and built of two parallel rows of large- to medium-sized fieldstones with smaller chinking stones in between, joined at a right angle (Plan 4; Fig. 9). A beaten-earth surface (L11) was found between these walls, covering the top of W5 and W6. To the north of W3, a small portion of a flagstone pavement (L12) was revealed. Both these surfaces are associated with the upper course of W3 and W4. The two lower courses of these walls functioned as subsurface foundations for this massive structure that penetrated into the earlier Phase 2 remains (see Plan 4: Section 1–1).

Discussion

The finds from Area B indicate the existence of a massive building with subsurface foundations in the later phase, preceded by an earlier structure. The location of Area B within the northern extremity of the enclosure indicates that this area was inhabited, while the substantial architectural remains suggest a building of importance. The ceramic material associated with both these phases is virtually

identical and is also paralleled by that found in both phases of the tomb and in previous excavations at the site (Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979:142–150), all dated to MB IIA.

THE FINDS

The two excavation areas produced a wealth of finds that consisted primarily of pottery vessels and fragments thereof. The following discussion considers only the ceramic finds from Area A, as the meager repertoire from Area B was identical to that from Area A. Thus, it appears that Area B is of the same chronological timespan as Area A.

In addition to the pottery, a small amount of flint implements was recovered from both excavation areas. These comprise non-diagnostic flakes and debitage; however, one item, recovered from the Phase 2 beaten-earth surface in Area B (L17), is a fragment of a typical, very wide MB II sickle blade.⁶

The Pottery

All the pottery removed from the tomb was later restored in the IAA laboratories.⁷ Although most of the vessels were relatively well preserved (Figs. 10, 11), others were in



Fig. 10. Selection of ceramic vessels from the early burial phase.



Fig. 11. Selection of ceramic vessels from the late burial phase.

a very poor condition and were not restorable. The following discussion presents the full range of vessel types found in the tomb. As no significant difference was noted between the ceramic repertoires of the early and late burial phases, they are discussed as one assemblage; however, they are depicted separately in the figures.

As a whole, the ceramic repertoire is wheel-made, with many of the vessels, primarily bowls, showing fine horizontal wheel-marks that may also have been the result of delicate combing. Regular horizontal striations are evident on many of the juglets, which were probably made of several portions later joined together. A decoration of red wash, sometimes appearing as a thicker, somewhat more uniform, lustrous and burnished slip, is very common. Red-slipped vessels often bear traces of a radial (on bowls) or vertical (on juglets and jugs) burnish. Painted decoration was not observed on any of the vessels.

Bowls (Figs. 12, 13, 17).— Most of the bowls have a flat or disc base, a few (e.g., Fig. 13:6) have a shallow ring base. Some of the flat-based bowls have a string-cut base. The

wide bowls (Figs. 12:1–3, 7; 13; 17:1–5) are generally shallow and thick-walled; their rims are often turned-in or incurving (Fig. 13:2–4), a characteristic feature of this period (Amiran 1969:91, Group b). One example (Fig. 13:6) has ornamental bars or ledge handles on the rim (Amiran 1969:91, Group d). The latter is relatively uncommon, yet examples from sites such as Megiddo, Tel Aphek, Ras el-‘Ein and Tel Megadim,⁸ all appear to indicate an MB IIA date. Another uncommon feature is three loop handles on the underside of a bowl forming a stand (Fig. 13:5). This feature is known on kraters from Tel Aphek Stratum BIV (Beck 2000b: Fig. 8.20:11) and Megiddo Stratum XI (Loud 1948: Pl. 38:11), and is also found on wide, shallow bowls, as at Tel Dan Tomb 1025, also dated to MB IIA (Ilan 1996: Fig. 4.104:6).

Deep carinated bowls (Fig. 12:4–6) are found in the early burial phase, while deep curving (Fig. 17:6) and globular, hemispherical bowls (Fig. 17:7) are more common in the later burial phase. All these forms are common in MB IIA.

Storage Jars (Figs. 14; 18:1, 5).— The storage jars are all egg-shaped vessels with a high neck and two opposing loop handles. Two such vessels were found on either side of the entrance to the tomb, within which were dipper juglets; the rim and part of the neck of one of the jars was not located and may have been purposefully broken off in order to insert the juglet. The storage-jar rims (Fig. 14:2–4; 18:1) are all of the elongated, folded-over type, typical primarily of MB IIA. Two examples bear designs incised on the shoulder prior to firing (Figs. 14:4; 18:5), whose significance is unclear.

Juglets (Figs. 15:1–7, 9–12; 18:6, 7).— Numerous juglets were recovered from the tomb, all well made, and include squat, biconical (Fig. 15:1, 2) and cylindrical (Fig. 15:3) forms that are usually typical of MB IIA. Alongside these are oval-shaped juglets (Fig. 15:4–7), usually with a double-stranded

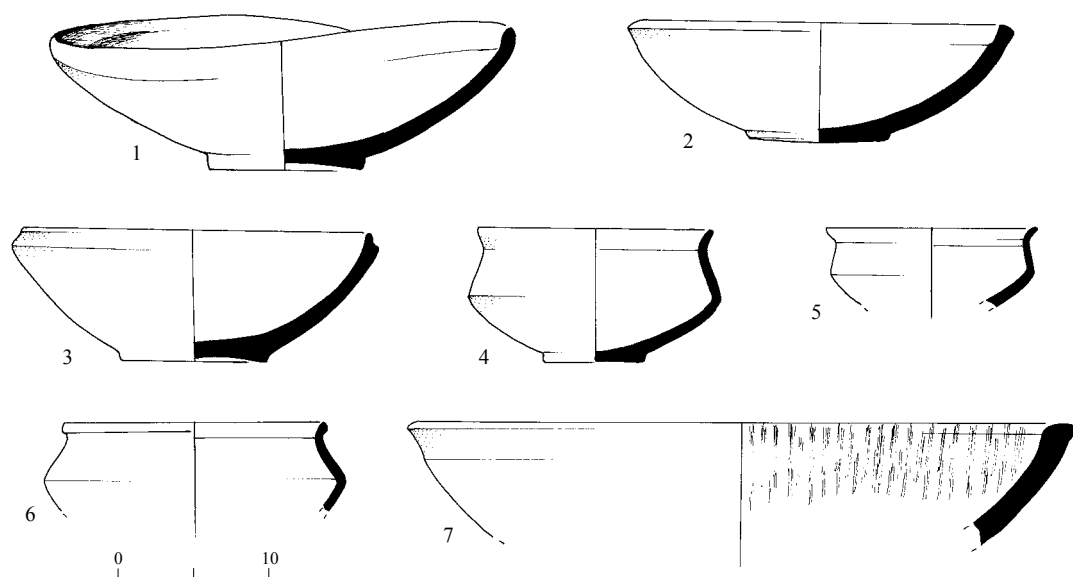


Fig. 12. Bowls, early burial phase.

No.	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels	Remarks
1	20	173	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits, red wash on ext.		
2	20	191	Light brown-red fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits	Tel Aphek Phases 2–4 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 14:4–7; 22:22, 24; 27:17) Tel Zeror (Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979: Fig. 17:4)	In ceramic pile in southeastern corner
3	20	172A	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white, gray and black grits, red wash on int. and ext., string-cut base	Tel Aphek Phase 3 (Beck 2000a: Fig. 10.12:13; Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 23:2) Ras el-'Ein (1947 Ory excavations in Beck 2000a: Fig. 10.27:8) Megiddo T.2152 Strata XIV–XIII (Loud 1948: Pl. 14:3)	
4	20	193B	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white, gray and black grits, red wash on int. and ext.	Ras el-'Ein (Ory 1937: Figs. 27, 28, 36, 66) Tel Aphek Phases 2–4 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 13:18; 22:1–12; 27:1–5) Tel Mevorakh Stratum XIV (Stern 1984: Fig. 16:11) Tel Poleg (Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979: Figs. 7:4; 8:3) Megiddo T.2152 Stratum XIV (Loud 1948: Pl. 14:31)	
5	20	193E	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits, red wash on int. and ext.	As No. 4	
6	20	193D	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits, red wash on int. and ext.	As No. 4	
7	18	144	Light brown fabric, gray core, small to medium white and gray grits, red wash on int., red wash and vertical burnish on ext.	Tel Mevorakh Stratum XIV (Stern 1984: Fig. 15:2, 8) Tel Zeror (Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979: Fig. 17:22)	From upper debris of earlier phase

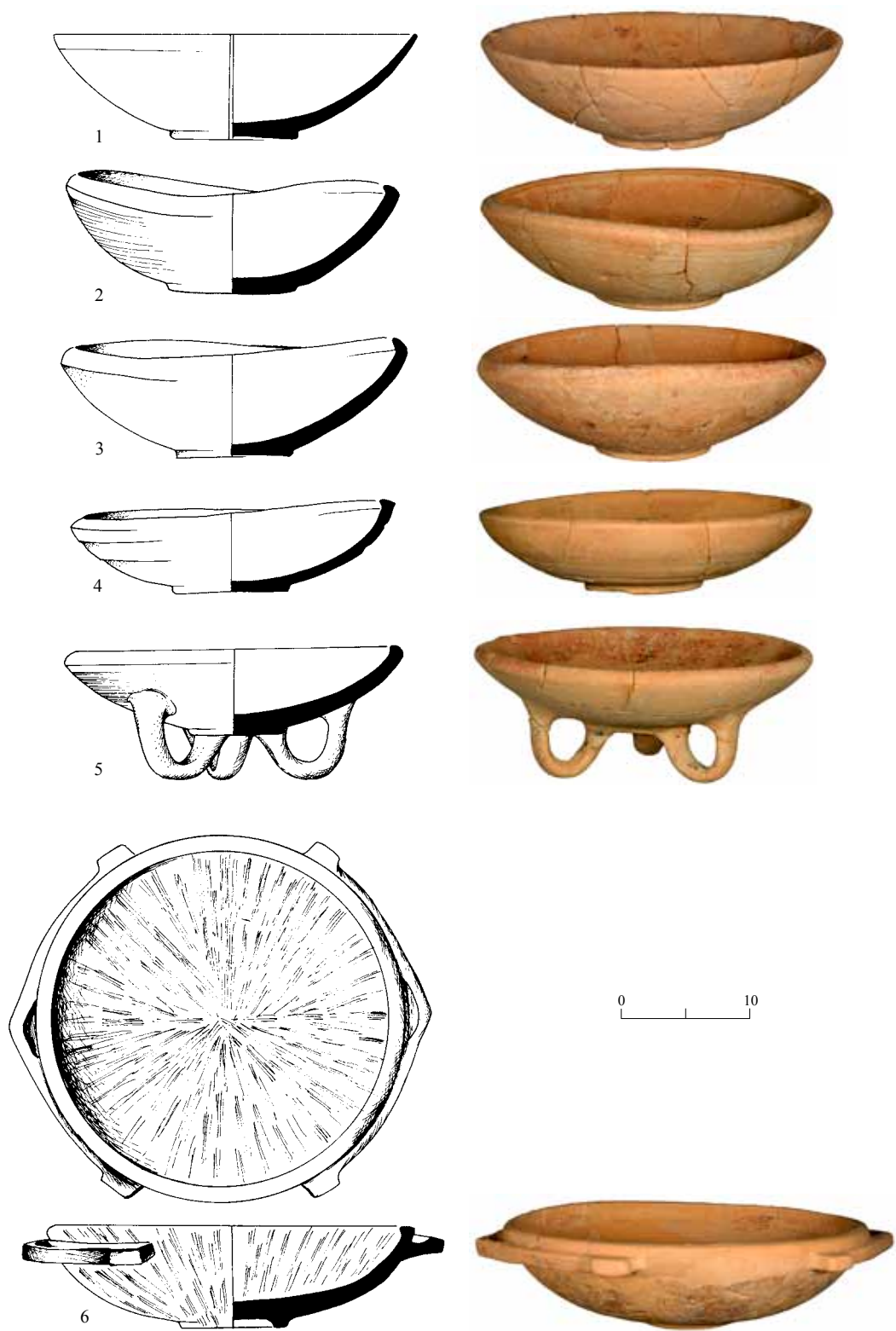


Fig. 13. Bowls, early burial phase, L20.

◀ Fig. 13

No.	Basket	Description	Parallels	Remarks
1	182	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits, red wash on int. and rim ext.	Ras el-‘Ein (1947 Ory excavations in Beck 2000a: Fig. 10.27:3)	In ceramic pile in southeastern corner
2	174	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits, red wash on int. and ext., string-cut base	Tel Aphek Phases 2, 3 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 14:12, 14; 22:21) Ras el-‘Ein (Ory 1937: Fig. 62; 1947 Ory excavations in Beck 2000a: Fig. 10.27:7) Tel Poleg (Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979: Fig. 8:2) Tel Mevorakh Stratum XIV (Stern 1984: Fig. 15:12) Megiddo T.5167 Strata XV–XII (Loud 1948: Pl. 9:6)	Overtured
3	192	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits, red wash on int. and ext.	As No. 2	Upright on side in ceramic pile in southeastern corner
4	180B	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits, red wash on int. and ext.	Tel Aphek Phase 2 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 15:13) Megiddo T.5179, T.3148, Strata XIV–XIII (Loud 1948: Pl. 14:16, 17)	In ceramic pile in southeastern corner
5	180A	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits, red wash on int. and ext.		Upright on side in ceramic pile in southeastern corner
6	183A	Light brown-orange fabric, gray core, small white grits, red wash and pattern burnish on int. and ext.	Tel Aphek Phase 2 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 15:17) Ras el-‘Ein (1947 Ory excavations in Beck 2000a: Fig. 10.27:9) Megiddo T.3162, Stratum XIV (Loud 1948: Pl. 15:15)	In ceramic pile in southeastern corner

Fig. 14 ▶

No.	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels	Remarks
1	20	178	Light brown fabric, gray core, small to medium white and gray grits		Lacking rim
2	20	180C	Light brown fabric, gray core, small to medium white and gray grits	See No. 4	In ceramic pile in southeastern corner
3	19	165B	Light brown fabric, gray core, small to medium white and gray grits	Tel Aphek Phases 2, 3 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 17:11, 12, 23; 24:5) Tell el-Dab‘a (Aston 2002: Figs. 3:1; 4:3)	
4	19	165A	Light brown fabric, gray core, small to medium white and gray grits, incised design on shoulder	Tel Aphek Phases 2, 3 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 17:14–22; 24:2–11) Tel Poleg (Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979: Fig. 7:17) Tell el-Dab‘a (Aston 2002: Figs. 1:1; 2:1, 2; 3:4; 5:5; 6:8, 9; 7:5; 9:5, 6)	In entrance pier outside tomb

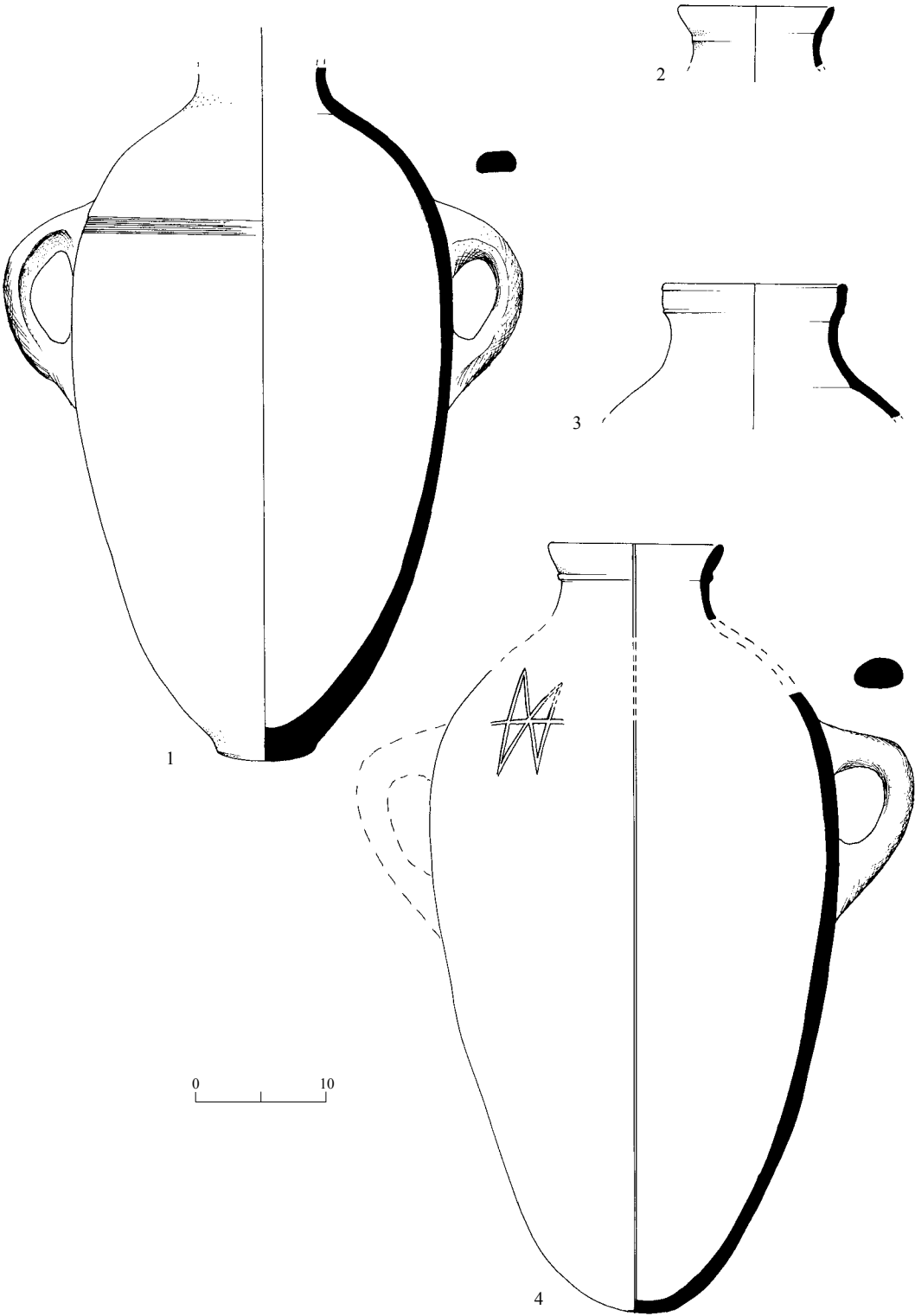


Fig. 14. Storage jars, early burial phase.

Fig. 15 ▶

No.	Vessel	Basket	Description	Parallels	Remarks
1	Juglet	188	Gray fabric, gray-brown core, small white grits, lustrous, dark brown, vertical burnish	Tell el-Dab'a (Aston 2002: Fig. 15:13), with gray burnished slip, brown polished(?)	On floor next to storage jar
2	Juglet	169	Brown-gray fabric, brown-gray core, small white grits	Tel Aphek Phase 4 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 29:4)	Overtured in ceramic pile in southeastern corner
3	Juglet	170A	Brown-orange fabric, gray core, small white grits, red wash on ext.	Tel Aphek Phases 2, 4 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 20:2; 29:1) Megiddo T.5063, Stratum XIII A (Loud 1948: Pl. 16:8)	Overtured in ceramic pile in southeastern corner
4	Stepped-rim juglet	183B	Gray fabric, gray core, small white grits, vertical burnish on ext.	Tel Aphek Phases 3, 4 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 25:5; 29:6, 7) Tell el-Dab'a (Aston 2002: Fig. 15:8, 9)	In ceramic pile in southeastern corner
5	Stepped-rim juglet	170B	Brown-red fabric, gray core, small white grits, red wash and vertical burnish(?) on ext.	As No. 4	Overtured in ceramic pile in southeastern corner
6	Juglet	181	Gray fabric, gray core, small white grits, red wash and burnish(?) on ext.	Ras el-'Ein (Ory 1937: Fig. 12) Tel Aphek Phase 3 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 25:10) Tell el-Dab'a (Aston 2002: Fig. 15:1, 3)	In ceramic pile in southeastern corner
7	Tell el-Yahudiyeh juglet	175	Gray fabric, gray core, small white grits, incised and pricked decoration on ext.	Megiddo T.3129, Stratum XII (Loud 1948: Fig. 24:32) Tell el-Dab'a (Aston 2002: Fig. 17:7, 8)	On floor next to storage jar
8	Tell el-Yahudiyeh jug	194	Gray fabric, gray core, small white grits, incised and pricked decoration on ext.	Tell el-Dab'a (Aston 2002: Fig. 17:6)	
9	Juglet	193G	Brown fabric, brown core, small white grits	Tel Aphek Phase 3 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 25:10, 11) Megiddo T.5114, T.5292, Strata XIII A–B (Loud 1948: Pls. 16:2; 17:15)	
10	Juglet	193F	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white grits	As No. 6	
11	Dipper juglet	171	Brown-gray fabric, gray core, small white grits	Tel Aphek Phases 3, 4 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 25:12; 29:11) Ras el-'Ein (Ory 1937: Fig. 15)	In ceramic pile in southeastern corner
12	Dipper juglet	179	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white grits, red wash and vertical burnish on ext.	Tel Aphek Phases 2–4 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 19:11, 12; 25:2–4; 29:3) Ras el-'Ein (Ory 1937: Fig. 49) Megiddo T.3151, T.5167, Strata XV–XIII A (Loud 1948: Pl. 7:20, 21)	Behind storage jar

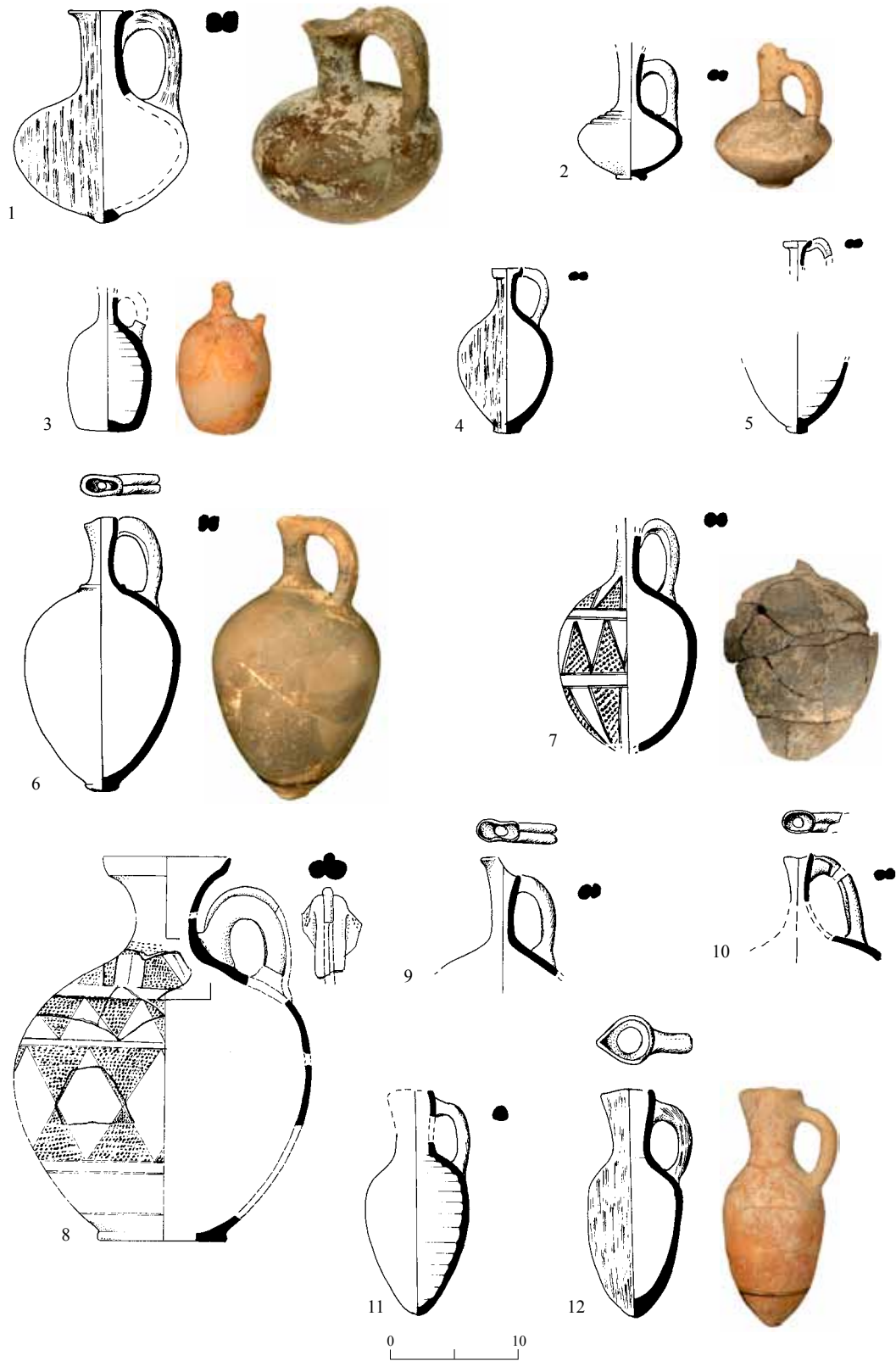


Fig. 15. Juglets and jug, early burial phase, L20.

handle and a small button base. One Tell el-Yahudiyeh juglet was recovered (Fig. 15:7), although poorly preserved. The dipper juglets are plain (Figs. 15:11; 18:7) or with a red wash and vertical burnish (Fig. 15:12). Like many of the other juglets, the latter type features a pinched mouth.

Jugs (Figs. 15:8; 16:1–3).— The jugs in Fig. 16:2 and 3, both with a three-stranded handle and decorated with a lustrous, red-burnished finish, are typical of MB IIA and are among the most impressive examples of the potter's art. However, this form appearing with Tell el-Yahudiyeh decoration (Fig. 15:8) is rare; only one example is known from Tell el-Dab'a in Egypt.

Small Handleless Jar (Fig. 16:4).— Only one example of a plain, undecorated jar, lacking handles, was recovered. It may be generally dated to MB IIA (Gerstenblith 1983:78, Pl. 28).

Kraters and Cooking Pots (Fig. 18:2–4).— Definitive remnants of these vessel types were

recovered only in the later burial phase. They may possibly have been stray sherds, intrusive to the later burial deposits in this area.

Small Finds

Ceramic Strainer (Fig. 19:1).— A fragment of a ceramic strainer was recovered from the deposits of the earliest burial phase. This fragment was undoubtedly the upper part of a strainer jug that could not be restored. Such vessels are uncommon during MB II, although strainer cup/bowls of this period are known from Tombs J3 and 9 at Jericho (Ziffer 1990:120, Figs. 134, 135).

Ceramic Wheel (Fig. 19:2).— One curious ceramic object consists of a wheel with a projecting 'hub' on both sides and decorated with red wash. Such wheels may have been used as spindle whorls or as votive or toy wheels on a ceramic model (Littauer and Crouwel 1974). They are commonly found throughout the Middle Bronze Age, as in Megiddo Strata XIV–XIIA (Loud 1948: Pl. 257:4–8) and at a site near Tell Qasile (Kletter 2006:112, Fig. 34:4, 5).

Fig. 16 ▶

No.	Vessel	Basket	Description	Parallels	Remarks
1	Jug	193C	Brown fabric, gray core, small white grits, red slip on ext.	Ras el-'Ein (1947 Ory excavations in Beck 2000a: Fig. 10.29:11)	
2	Jug	194	Brown fabric, gray core, small white grits, red slip and vertical burnish on ext.	Tel Aphek Phase 3 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 26:1) Ras el-'Ein (Ory 1937: Fig. 78; 1947 Ory excavations in Beck 2000a: Fig. 10.29:2–4) Megiddo T.3147, T.5186, T.5178, Stratum XIV (Loud 1948: Pl. 10:1, 8, 11)	In ceramic pile in southeastern corner
3	Jug	193A	Brown fabric, gray core, small white grits, red slip and vertical burnish on ext.	Megiddo T.5202, T.3155, T.4016, T.3138, T.5114, Strata XV–XIIIB (Loud 1948: Pls. 7:15; 10:2, 5–7, 9, 10; 16:1)	
4	Jar	177	Brown-orange fabric, gray core, small to medium white grits	Tel Aphek Phase 2 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 18:11, 12) Ras el-'Ein (Ory 1937: Figs. 43, 73–76)	Smashed on floor next to storage jar

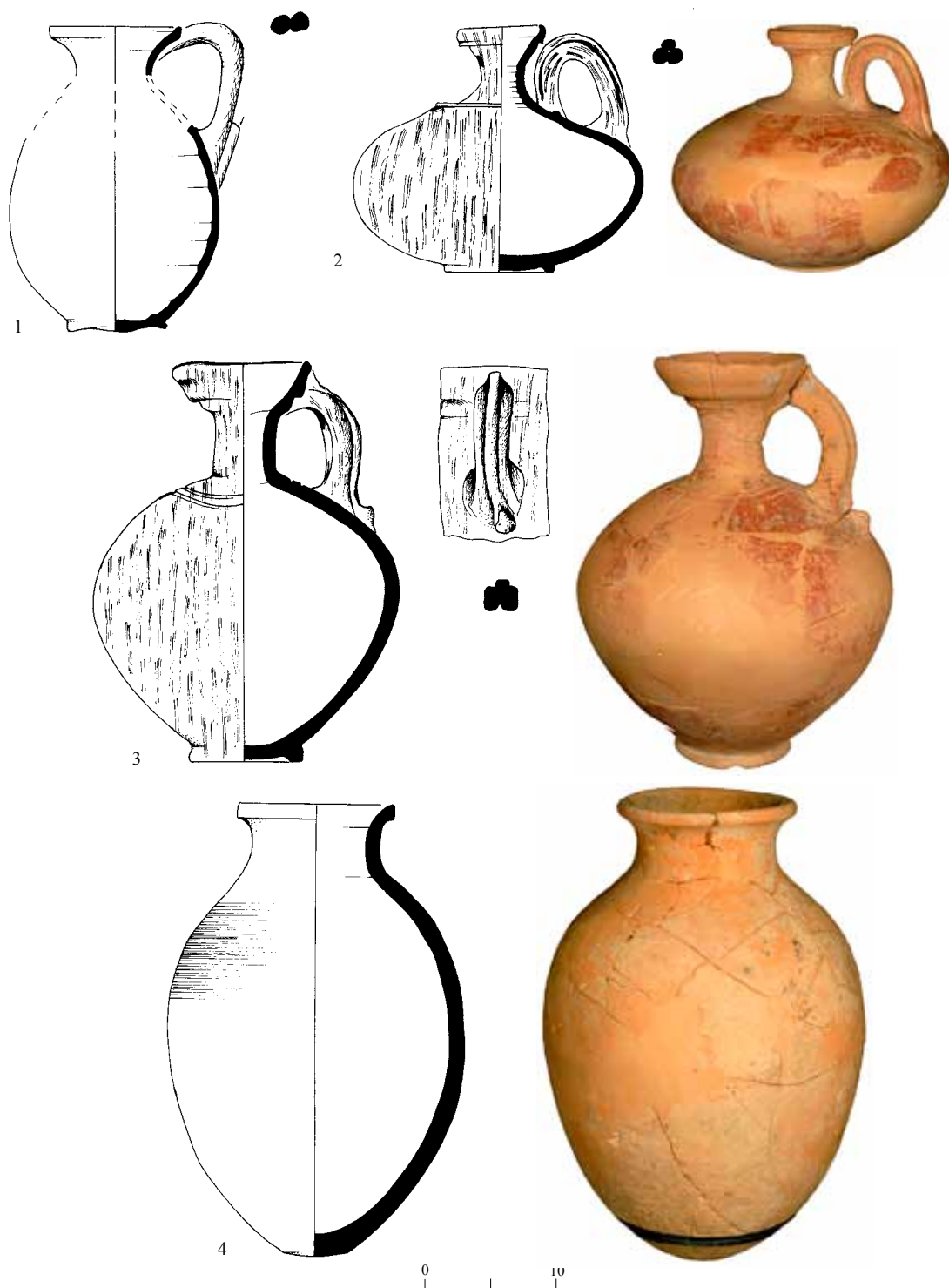


Fig. 16. Jugs and small jars, early burial phase, L20.

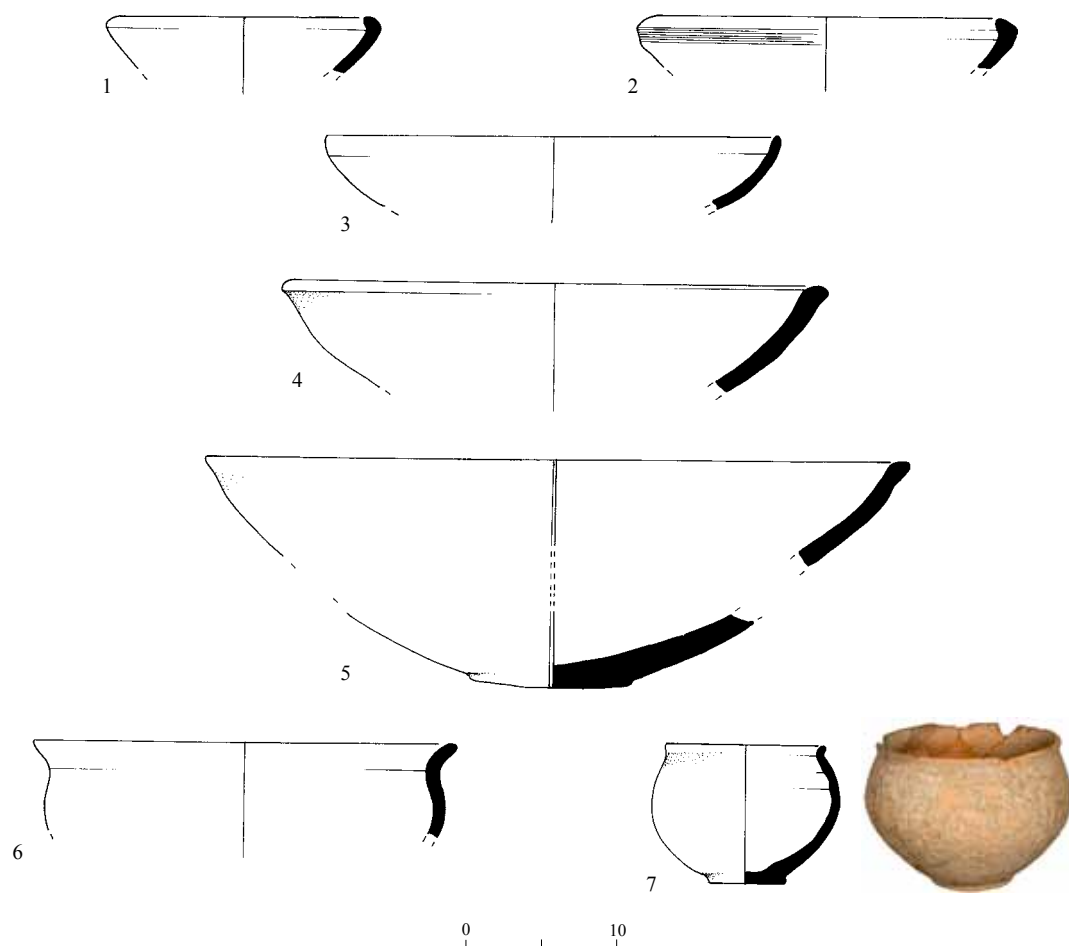


Fig. 17. Bowls, late burial phase, L10.

No.	Basket	Description	Parallels	Remarks
1	162B	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white grits	Tel Aphek Phases 2, 3 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 14:12–14; 22:21)	
2	158B	Brown-orange fabric, gray core, small white grits, red wash on int.	As No. 1	
3	162C	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white grits	Tel Aphek Phase 2 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 15:1)	
4	162D	Brown-orange fabric, gray core, small white grits	Tel Aphek Phase 1 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 13:2) Tel Zeror (Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979: Fig. 17:22)	
5	162A	Light brown fabric, gray core, small to medium white grits	As No. 4	
6	160B	Light brown fabric, gray core, small to medium white and gray grits	Tel Aphek Phases 1, 4 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 12:5; 27:6–12)	Fragment
7	163	Brown-orange fabric, gray core, small white grits	Ras el-'Ein (Ory 1937: Fig. 67) Tel Aphek Phases 1, 2 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 13:3, 4; 13:7) Megiddo T.5202, T.5178, Strata XIV–XV (Loud 1948: Pls. 9:9; 14:34)	In upright position

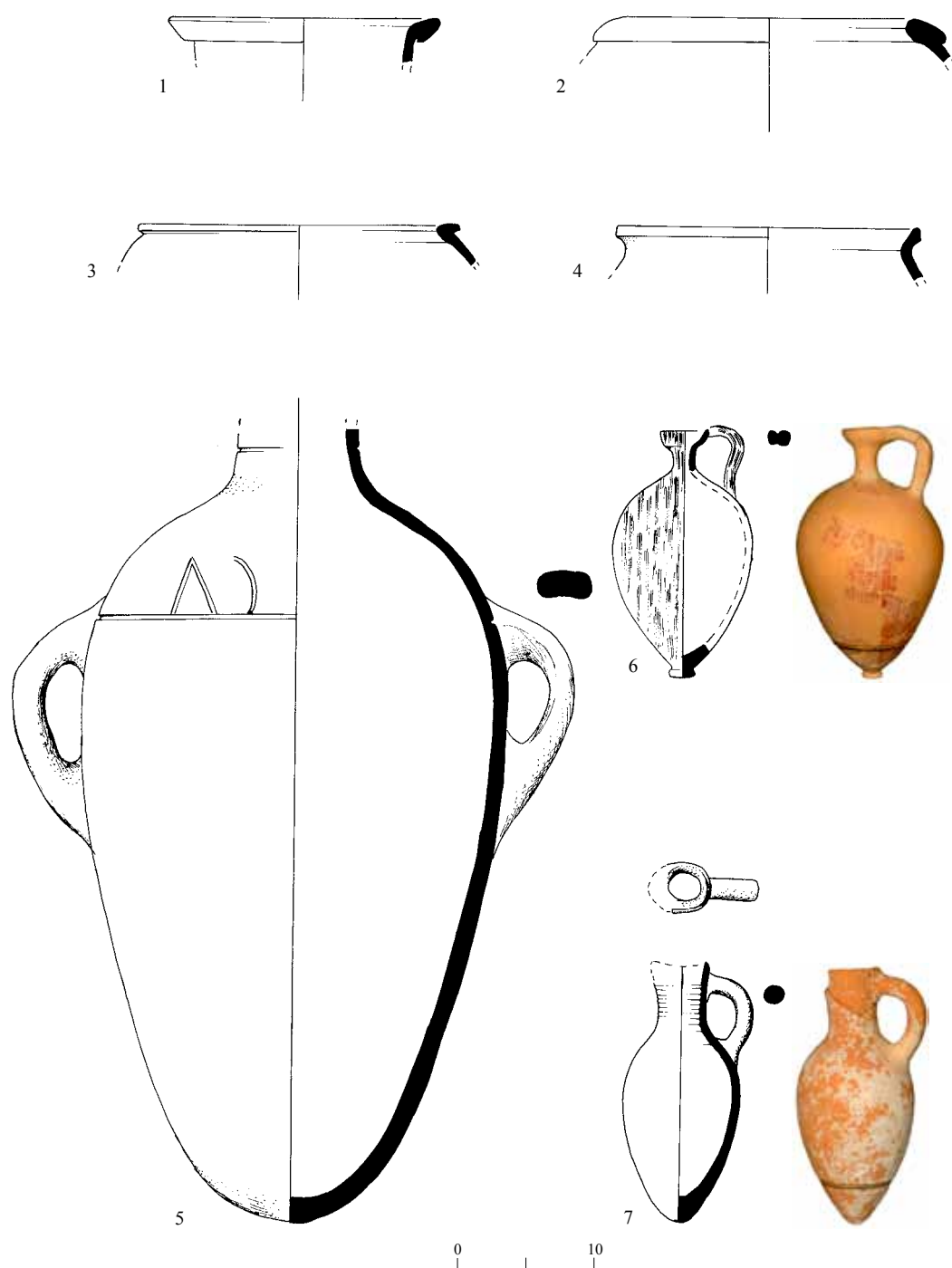


Fig. 18. Storage jars, kraters and juglets, late burial phase.

◀ Fig. 18

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Storage jar	10	160C	Brown-orange fabric, gray core, small white grits	
2	Krater	10	160A	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits	Tel Aphek Phases 1–3 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 12:7; 15:11; 23:6) Tel Zeror (Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979: Fig. 17:7) Tell el-Dab'a (Aston 2002: Fig. 13:4)
3	Krater	10	158A	Light brown fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits	Tel Aphek Phases 1–3 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 12:8; 15:11; 23:8)
4	Cooking pot	10	158C	Brown-red fabric, gray core, medium to small white and gray grits	Tel Aphek Phases 2, 3 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 15:2; 16:2; 23:9, 11, 12) Tell el-Dab'a (Aston 2002: Fig. 13:2)
5	Storage jar	9	136	Brown-red fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits, incised decoration on shoulder	
6	Stepped-rim juglet	9	135	Brown-orange fabric, gray core, small white grits, red wash and vertical burnish on ext.	Tel Aphek Phases 3, 4 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Figs. 25:6–9; 29:5) Megiddo T.5062, Strata XIIIa–XII (Loud 1948: Pl. 17:4) Tell el-Dab'a (Aston 2002: Fig. 15:4)
7	Dipper juglet	9	137	Brown-orange fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits	Tel Aphek Phase 3 (Kochavi and Yadin 2002: Fig. 25:12) Tel Zeror (Kochavi, Beck and Gophna 1979: Fig. 18:24)

Stone Beads (Fig. 19:3–5).— Despite the sifting of all the burial deposits, only three stone beads were recovered adjacent to one of the skulls upon the floor of the earliest burial phase. The small number of beads suggests that even individual beads were esteemed as items of high personal value. The largest bead (Fig. 19:3) is a truncated, convex biconical form (Golani 2009:429, Type II.6) with an elongated, double-cone or chamfered perforation, made of light purple amethyst. Amethyst is commonly found in southern Egypt (Lucas and Harris 1962:388–389; Andrews 1990:40), where it was used as early as the Predynastic period. The other two beads (Fig. 19:4, 5) are short, squat and globular with a plain perforation (Golani 2009:428, Type II.2), and are made of transparent, highly polished rock crystal. Sources for this stone are widely distributed, including western Egypt and Sinai (Andrews 1990:50).

Discussion

The pottery assemblage from both burial phases of the Tel Burga tomb may be dated with confidence to MB IIA, as evidenced by the numerous parallels for many of the ceramic forms, nearly all of which originate in stratified contexts or in tombs dated to the early part of MB II in the southern Levant (twentieth–eighteenth centuries BCE). Parallels from Tell el-Dab'a in Egypt are a reflection of the extensive cultural contacts between the southern Levant and Lower Egypt and are important for the chronological synchronization they provide (Bietak 2002). The parallels from Tel Aphek provide a link to a stratified ceramic sequence from an MB IIA type-site.

Elongated, folded rims of storage jars with a slight ridge below the rim (Fig. 14:2, 4), or without a ridge (Fig. 18:1) have been cited as distinctive of MB IIA (Cohen 2002:117). Furthermore, according to Cohen (2002:114),

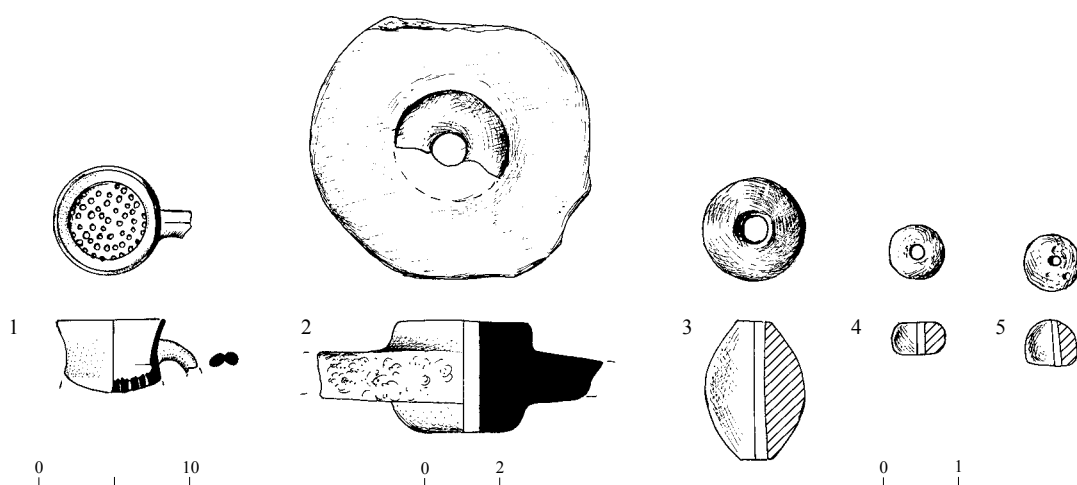


Fig. 19. Various small finds, early burial phase, L20.

No.	Vessel	Basket	Description	Remarks
1	Strainer spout	190	Brown-red fabric, gray core, small white grits	
2	Ceramic wheel	164	Brown-red fabric, gray core, small white and gray grits	
3	Bead	189	Amethyst	Near skull
4	Bead	189	Rock crystal	Near skull
5	Bead	189	Rock crystal	Near skull

'S'-profiled bowls (Fig. 17:6) and large open bowls with thick walls and disk or flat bases (Fig. 12:1–3; 13:1–5) are characteristic of the very early phase of MB IIA, as are small jars lacking handles with a flared neck and a thickened, folded-over rim (Fig. 16:4). Levantine Painted Ware is completely absent in the present assemblage. This painted ware is held to be one of the hallmarks of MB IIA (Bagh 2002), although it is usually found only in the very initial phases of the period. According to Cohen (2002:117), red-slipped and burnished finish and sharply carinated forms, are often regarded as diagnostic of MB IIA (Beck 1985:184); these are absent in the very earliest phase of her four-stage MB IIA temporal ceramic sequence. These features, which appear in the present assemblage from Tel Burga, are analogous to her Phase 2 (Cohen 2002:117), which is characterized by the common use of red slip and burnish and radial burnish on bowls (Figs. 12:7; 13:6), disc or flat

bases, but no ring bases, and double-stranded handles (e.g., Figs. 15:4–7, 9–10; 18:6). These same features continue into Cohen's Phase 3 (Cohen 2002:117), when lustrous red burnishing, such as that on the jugs in Fig. 16:2 and 3, became predominant along with knobbed or ledge-handled bowls (Fig. 13:6), piriform juglets with a button base (Figs. 15:1, 4–6; 18:6) and dipper juglets with or without red slip and burnish (Fig. 15:11, 12; 18:7).

'Stepped-rim' or 'candlestick-rim' juglets (Figs. 15:4; 18:6), as first defined by Epstein (1974:2), are indicative of Cohen's Phase 4 (Cohen 2002:117–118) and the transition into the initial phases of MB IIB (Ilan 1991). Therefore, Cohen's four-stage ceramic sequence appears to be of limited value in restricting the chronological range of the present assemblage, which includes forms typical of nearly the entire period. Nevertheless, this division may still indicate that the Tel Burga tomb is to be placed within the later half of the MB IIA sequence,

if not at the very end (Cohen 2002: Phases 3 and 4), as suggested by the stepped-rim juglets found in both the early and late burial phases of the tomb.

Comparison of the Tel Burga assemblage with the Tel Aphek ceramic sequence may be more promising (Kochavi and Yadin 2002). Of the numerous parallels with Tel Aphek, none are exclusively associated with Phase 1 of the Tel Aphek sequence, further indication that the Tel Burga tomb is not to be attributed to the very initial phase of MB IIA. The majority of the parallels fall within Tel Aphek Phases 2 and 3, while virtually none, except for the small biconical juglet in Fig. 15:2, are paralleled exclusively with Phase 4 at Tel Aphek. This suggests that the Tel Burga assemblage should not be attributed to the very end of MB IIA or the transition to MB IIB. In this light, the two scarabs from the later burial phase of the tomb, which are associated with the very end of MB IIA (see Ben-Tor, below), may indicate that the later burial phase, which includes only a few ceramic vessels, falls at the very end of MB IIA (nineteenth to early eighteenth centuries BCE).

The Scarabs

Daphna Ben-Tor

Two scarabs were recovered in the burial cist within the square-shaped stone tomb in Area A (Figs. 20, 21). The scarabs were located directly below the burial of a young male in the later phase of the tomb (see above). The position of the scarabs between the two burial phases of the tomb makes their association with a particular phase tentative. However, assuming that they were once positioned adjacent to the body, I suggest a more likely association with the burial of the later phase, which is assigned to the end of MB IIA.

The association of these scarabs with the later phase of the tomb is supported by the fact that scarabs first appear in the southern Levant in archaeological deposits assigned to the final phase of MB IIA. Compared to the

large numbers of scarabs from later periods, MB IIA has so far produced only a handful of examples. These include two scarabs from Tel Aphek (Giveon 1988:44–47, Nos. 37, 38; Keel 1997:82–83, Nos. 14, 15), two scarabs from Tomb 303 in the courtyard cemetery at Tell el-‘Ajjul (Tufnell 1980: Fig. 3:5, 6; Keel 1997:266–267, Nos. 483, 484), a scarab from Tomb AN at Tell el-Far‘ah (N) (Ward and Dever 1994: Fig. 5:1c, 68; Amiet et al. 1996: Pl. 7:40), a loomweight sealing from Tel Nami (Marcus and Artzy 1995:136–137) and possibly a scarab from Tomb 5106 at Megiddo (Loud 1948: Pl. 149:48; Ward and Dever 1994: Fig. 5:1b, 34). The few additional examples presented by Ward and Dever (1994:95–101) and Keel (1995:25–28, §45) as MB IIA or MB IIA–B, more likely date to early MB IIB (Beck and Zevulun 1996:64–67, 69–72; Ben-Tor 2007:117). The two scarabs from Tel Burga thus add a noteworthy contribution to this small, but growing corpus (see Keel 2010:334–335).

As demonstrated elsewhere (Ben-Tor 1997; 2003:244–246; 2007:117–121), scarabs are first attested in significant numbers in the southern Levant in early MB IIB deposits, where the bulk of the material is of local production. In contrast, the few examples found in late MB IIA contexts are exclusively Egyptian Middle Kingdom imports. One of the Aphek scarabs (Keel 1997:82–83, No. 15) is an early Middle Kingdom heirloom, while the other examples display distinctive late Middle Kingdom characteristics (Ben-Tor 2007:117–119). These finds indicate that local production of scarabs in the southern Levant does not predate the early MB IIB.

Based on archaeological evidence from Tell el-Dab‘a, it has recently been shown that the end of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt coincides with the end of MB IIA in the southern Levant, and the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period in Egypt is contemporary with the early MB IIB (Bietak 1997:108–109, 126; Ben-Tor 2003:244–246; 2007:119).

The almost complete absence of scarabs in MB IIA archaeological deposits of the southern

Levant reflects the lack of commercial contacts with Egypt during the Middle Kingdom (Ben-Tor 1997; 2003:245–246). In contrast, the large number of Egyptian Middle Kingdom scarabs found at Byblos reflects strong commercial and cultural contacts between Egypt and Byblos during this period (Ben-Tor 2003:242–243). The large-scale production of scarabs in the southern Levant during MB IIB is an expression of the commercial and cultural interaction with Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period (Ben-Tor 2004; 2007:187–192), while the complete absence of Second Intermediate Period scarabs in the northern Levant argues for a lack of commercial contacts between Egypt and this latter region during this period (Ben-Tor 2007:187–189). The early importation of scarabs into the southern Levant in the final phase of MB IIA reflects the preliminary stage of interaction with Egypt, which was most probably initiated by the Canaanite population at Tell el-Dab'a (Ben-Tor 2003:245–246; 2007:119).

Like other examples from late MB IIA contexts in the southern Levant, the two Tel Burga scarabs date from the late Middle Kingdom and were undoubtedly imported from Egypt. However, they are of special interest as they do not display the typical features of late Middle Kingdom Egyptian scarabs, but rather features of the early scarab workshop at Tell el-Dab'a—Mlinar's Type IIIa (Mlinar 2004:116–120, Figs. 15, 16). Scarabs displaying Mlinar's Type III features occur at Tell el-Dab'a in occupation levels assigned to Strata G, F and E/3,⁹ within the range of the late Egyptian Middle Kingdom and the early Second Intermediate Period (Mlinar 2004:116–120, Fig. 15). Most examples of Mlinar's Type IIIa date from the late Middle Kingdom (Mlinar 2004: Fig. 15).

The most distinctive feature of Mlinar's Type III scarabs is the long, narrow, open head (Tufnell's Type B; Tufnell 1984: Fig. 12) with eyes indicated at its base, and their dominant side is scored with notched fore and hind legs (Tufnell's Type e9; Tufnell 1984: Fig. 14; Mlinar 2004: Figs. 6–8). Mlinar's Type III scarabs

display both plain and lined backs, which were categorized respectively as Types IIIa and IIIb (Mlinar 2004: Figs. 6–8). Both Tel Burga scarabs display the most distinctive features of Type IIIa (Fig. 20:b, c, e, f). Like the great majority of scarabs, especially those dating from the first half of the second millennium BCE, the Tel Burga scarabs are made of glazed steatite, the glaze almost completely worn off, as is usually the case with scarabs found in the Levant.¹⁰

The designs decorating scarabs of Mlinar's Type III are in most cases close variations of designs occurring on late Middle Kingdom scarabs (Mlinar 2004: Figs. 6–8), although some examples display peculiarities reflecting their 'provincial' production.¹¹ The two Tel Burga scarabs (Figs. 20, 21) bear designs that commonly occur on late Middle Kingdom Egyptian scarabs as categorized by Tufnell (1984).

1. L18, B150. Fig. 20.

L 1.4 cm, W 1.0 cm, H 0.6 cm

Design Class 2B—Scrolls and spirals, interlocking

This design class is one of the most commonly attested on Egyptian scarabs of the late Middle Kingdom (Tufnell 1975:



Fig. 20. Scarab No. 1.

Figs. 3, 4; Ben-Tor 2007:13–14, Pls. 3–5). It is also found on scarabs from Tell el-Dab'a, displaying Mlinar's Type IIIa features (e.g., Mlinar 2004: Fig. 6a:3, 4). The scarabs were individually carved, displaying a wide range of typological variations for each design, and each is stylistically unique. Nevertheless, contemporary items bearing close similarity are often found. For late Middle Kingdom parallels to the pattern attested on this Tel Burga scarab, see Tufnell 1975: Fig. 4:205, 206, 220.

2. L18, B151. Fig. 21.

L 1.5 cm, W 1.1 cm, H 0.7 cm

Design Class 5—Cross pattern

Although not as popular as Design Class 2, this is also a distinctive late Middle Kingdom scarab design (Tufnell 1975: Fig. 7; Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 12), occurring occasionally on Mlinar's Type IIIa scarabs from Tell el-Dab'a (e.g., Mlinar 2004: Fig. 6a:2–3, 10). Late Middle Kingdom cross patterns usually display a combination of floral motifs and spirals, which also occur on Mlinar's Type III scarabs from Tell el-Dab'a (Mlinar 2004: Fig. 6a:3, 10) and on the Tel Burga scarab.

The particular pattern on this scarab depicts two column-like bars and two lotus flowers, with spirals depicted diagonally between them.



Fig. 21. Scarab No. 2.

For similar late Middle Kingdom variations of this particular design, see Tufnell 1975: Fig. 7:333, 336; Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 12:41, 49.

Discussion

The occurrence of products of the early Tell el-Dab'a scarab workshop (Mlinar's Types II and III) outside of Tell el-Dab'a is extremely rare, and only isolated items have been found elsewhere in Egypt or in the southern Levant (Ben-Tor 2007:61, 69, nn. 283, 340). The occurrence of two examples in a more-or-less contemporary context in the southern Levant is so far unique. These scarabs support the suggestion that it was the Canaanite inhabitants of Tell el-Dab'a who initiated commercial contacts with the southern Levant during the Middle Bronze Age (Ben-Tor 2007:117–120).

CONCLUSIONS

The two soundings presented in this report, although of limited scope, are an important addition to the growing corpus of data concerning the beginning of MB II in the southern Levant. The tomb structure in Area A, which is somewhat unique in its constructional aspects, yielded a rich and varied ceramic assemblage, typical of the region during the second half of MB IIA. The tomb may originally have been erected as a subterranean cellar, and only later transformed into an intramural burial structure displaying two phases of use. The proximity of the tomb to the large MB IIA cemetery discovered at Shuni Quarry posits intriguing questions as to why such a large structural tomb was located within the fortified MB IIA enclosure at the time that a nearby cemetery was also in use. Burials of three additional individuals, revealed in a shallow pit (L4) adjacent to the structural tomb, further suggest that an intra-site graveyard may have existed contemporaneously with the extramural cemetery. Alternately, the interments in the pit might have been directly connected to the occupants of the built tomb, possibly their servants. Other major sites in the southern

Levant, such as Megiddo, Hazor, Jericho and Tell el-'Ajjul, also have intra- as well as extra-mural cemeteries.

The excavations in Area B, along with the previous excavations of the mudbrick gateway conducted by Kochavi, Beck and Gophna (1979), demonstrate that the entire area of

the fortified plateau was inhabited, and parts may also have been used as a cemetery. The massive architectural remains revealed in Area B indicate that Tel Burga, like several other MB IIA settlements in the Sharon plain, was probably an urban center at this time.

NOTES

¹ The excavation (Permit No. A-4163), directed by the author on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, was carried out during May–June 2004 at the request and with the funding of the Israel Electric Company, prior to the construction of two new electric pylons for an electricity line. The project was assisted by Ya'akov Shlomo-Jam (administration), Eliran Oren (antiquities inspector), Tzachi Horowitz (district archaeologist), Vadim Essman and Viacheslav Pirsky (surveying), Elisabeth Belashov (drafting), Yosef Buckgenholtz (pottery restoration), Alina Pikovsky and Carmen Hersch (artifact drawing), Moshe Sade (faunal analysis) and Yossi Nagar (anthropology).

² This information was kindly supplied by Eli Yannai.

³ While ashlar masonry is still evident, especially where a local dirt road has cut through the site, the columns and sarcophagi are known only from reports in the mandatory archives of the IAA.

⁴ Yossi Nagar of the IAA identified all the osteological remains recovered from the excavation.

⁵ Moshe Sade examined and identified all the faunal remains from the excavation.

⁶ This information was kindly supplied by Hamoudi Khalaily of the IAA prehistory department.

⁷ The relatively large number of restored ceramic vessels presented in this report is in no small part due to the tenacity and ingenuity of Yosef Bukengolts, who worked on the restoration and conservation of this assemblage.

⁸ The example from a tomb at Tel Megadim is as yet unpublished, and is mentioned here courtesy of Sam Wolff, excavator of the site, to whom I am grateful.

⁹ The isolated examples from Strata E/2 and E/1 are almost certainly heirlooms (Mlinar 2004: Fig. 15).

¹⁰ The glaze is preserved on most scarabs found in the dry climatic conditions of the Nile Valley, but is usually lost on examples found in the humid conditions of the Delta and the Levant.

¹¹ For example, the design depicting a man holding a staff standing next to hieroglyphs that do not form an inscription (Mlinar 2004: Fig. 6a:7), or the unusual form of the Hathor symbol (Mlinar 2004: Fig. 7:14). Both examples, which imitate late Middle Kingdom prototypes, are attested later on Canaanite scarabs produced in the Middle Bronze Age in the southern Levant (Schroer 1989:140–160; Keel 1994:20–23).

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