

MIDDLE BRONZE AGE BURIAL PITS IN ASHQELON

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The site of the excavations in Ashqelon (map ref. 16151–63/61900–40) would have remained unknown for years to come, had it not been for the surge of development that engulfed the country at the beginning of the 1990s. The massive immigration waves from the former Soviet Union forced the authorities to come up with solid housing solutions. The town of Ashqelon allowed the development of new residential neighborhoods to the north and east of Migdal—the old section of the city (Fig. 1:1). District supervisors of the IAA suspended the infrastructure work whenever archaeological remains, chiefly consisting of burial pits, were encountered.¹

The Middle Bronze Age burial pits were cut in the eastern *kurkar* ridge of Ashqelon and will be referred to as the Ramat Eshkol cemetery.² Due to the manner of discovery, it was unknown which layer or layers covered the *kurkar* sandstone. Pit 204, which was lower than the other pits and thus not badly damaged, was an exception. The section of this pit shows a top layer of light brown soil, overlaying red *hamra* soil that covered the *kurkar*

¹ The salvage excavations were funded by the developing company. Although some of the archaeological remains had been conspicuous, they were badly damaged by heavy machinery prior to and following the intervention of the IAA. Important and significant data was lost due to this ordeal.

² The excavations in Ashqelon, on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, were directed by the author (Permit Nos. A-2032, A-2174, A-2317). During the first season, assistance was provided by Moshe Matalon (administration), Israel Vatin and Pavel Gertofsky (surveying), Elisheva Kamaisky (pottery restoration) and Irina Segal (analysis of bronze bead). During the first phase of the second season, assistance was extended by Zvi Wallach (area supervision), Vadim Essman and Razvan Nicolescu (surveying) and Michal Ben-Gal (pottery restoration); the second and longer phase of this season benefited from the assistance of Zvi Wallach and Karina Engelbert (area supervision), Vadim Essman and Viatcheslav Pirskey (surveying), Yossi Nagar (physical anthropology) and Roni Gat (pottery restoration). The team of the third season included Yair Rahamim (administration), Vadim Essman and Viatcheslav Pirskey (surveying) and Ludmila Margolis (pottery restoration). Throughout the three field seasons, the district archaeologist and supervisors were extremely helpful and encouraging, and I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to Yeshayahu Lender, Pirhiya Nahshoni and Nitzan Sarig. All line-drawings were prepared by Carmen Hersch, to whom I am particularly thankful; chemical cleansing and preservation was carried out by Ella Altmark; final plans were drawn by Natalya Zak; Tanya Kornfeld prepared Figs. 16 and 29 and Irina Berin prepared Fig. 2 and Plans 1, 2; photographs were by Tsila Sagiv and Clara Amit. Thanks are also due to Hamoudi Khalaily (flint), Frida Ben-Ami (mollusks), Anat Cohen-Weinberger (petrography) and Daphna Ben-Dor (scarab) for their specialists' reports.

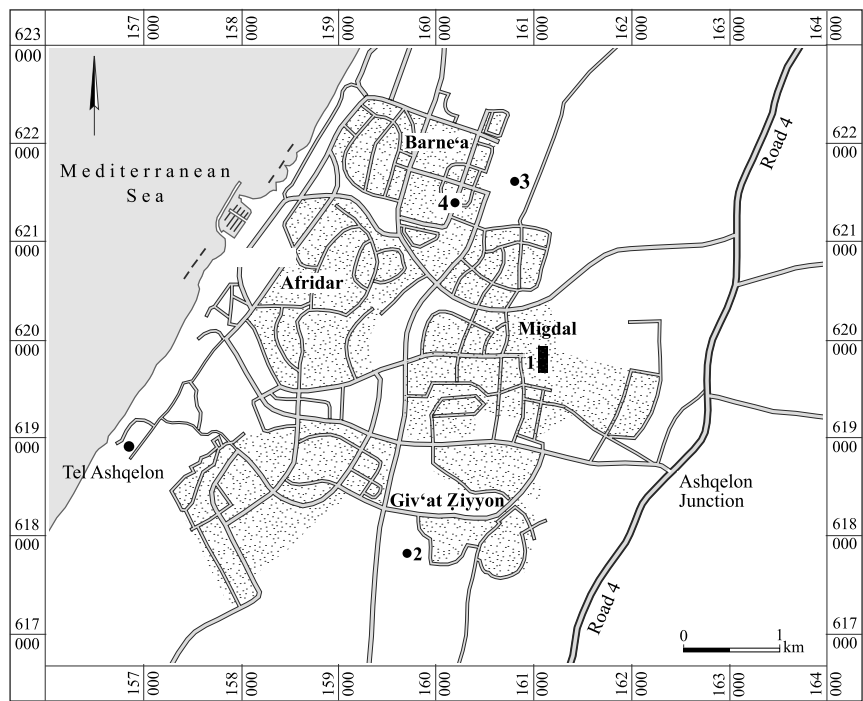
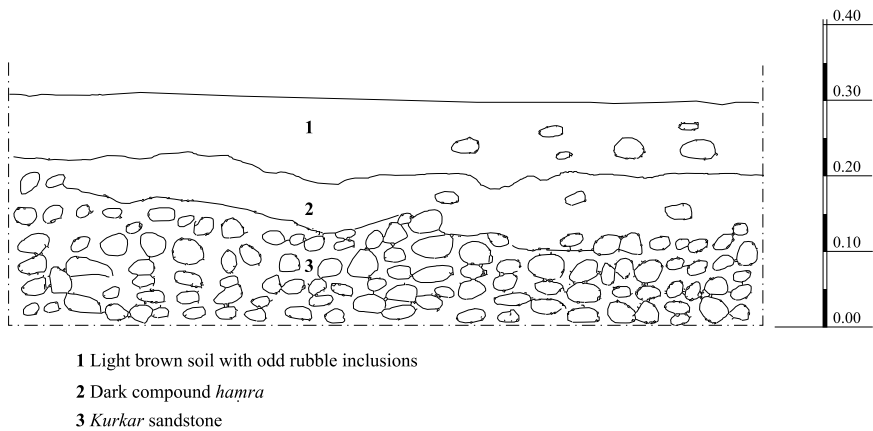


Fig. 1. Location map of MB II burial grounds in Ashqelon.



Plan 1. Section of Pit 204.

sandstone (Plan 1). As *kurkar* is a fairly hard sandstone, the pits were neither lined with stones, nor marked in any other evident manner. Undoubtedly, more burial pits were in the Ramat Eshkol cemetery, but these had been destroyed during infrastructure works, forming the lacunae in the excavation area.

Along the eastern *kurkar* ridge of Ashqelon and to the south of the Ramat Eshkol cemetery, a similar Middle Bronze Age burial pit was uncovered accidentally in the Giv'at Ziyon neighborhood during a survey of the area (Fig. 1:2).³ The pit was cut in half while digging a trench for new pipes. Some of the finds it contained were exposed, and it appeared to be of the same character and contents as the pits in the Ramat Eshkol cemetery; hence, it has been included in this report.

Two other locations in Ashqelon revealed Middle Bronze Age burial pits. The first, within the Barne'a neighborhood, included seven burial pits (Fig. 1:3; Zelin 2002:86*) and the second was at the Third Mile Estate, where 16 pit graves were excavated (Fig. 1:4; Erickson-Gini and Israel 2013:152).

The discussion of the pits is presented as a general summary that focuses on the more complete pits and those with particular characteristics. The section on the finds includes a discussion of the pottery vessels, small finds and miscellanea. A complete register of all excavated pits and their contents appears in Appendix 1 and thereafter are accounts of the anthropological remains (see Nagar and Gershuny, this volume), petrography (see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume) and a scarab (see Ben-Tor, this volume).

THE BURIAL PITS

THE RAMAT ESHKOL CEMETERY

The excavations at the Ramat Eshkol cemetery revealed 76 burial pits (Fig. 2). These were excavated in groups, set by the progress of construction work. Many of the vessels found in the burial pits were fragmentary and broken; only those that were preserved well enough are included in the discussion. A complete list of the finds from each pit appears in Appendix 1. For anthropological data, see Nagar and Gershuny, this volume: Table 1.

Group 1

The first group of pits (100–138 and 191–197) was badly damaged by ground leveling and sand robbers; none of the pits in this group retained their original shape. All the pits (depth 0.5–0.8 m) contained at least one store jar with either a bowl situated nearby or a dipper juglet inside, as well as a few bones which turned into dust upon recovery.

³ The survey near the neighborhood of Giv'at Ziyon was conducted on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority by Harley Stark and Leticia Barda. The pit was excavated by the author (Permit No. A-2253), with the assistance of Harley Stark and the kind help of Pirhiya Nahshoni. The pottery, restored by the author and Ludmila Margolis, was drawn by Carmen Hersch; the metal finds were cleaned by Ella Altmark. Many thanks to them all.

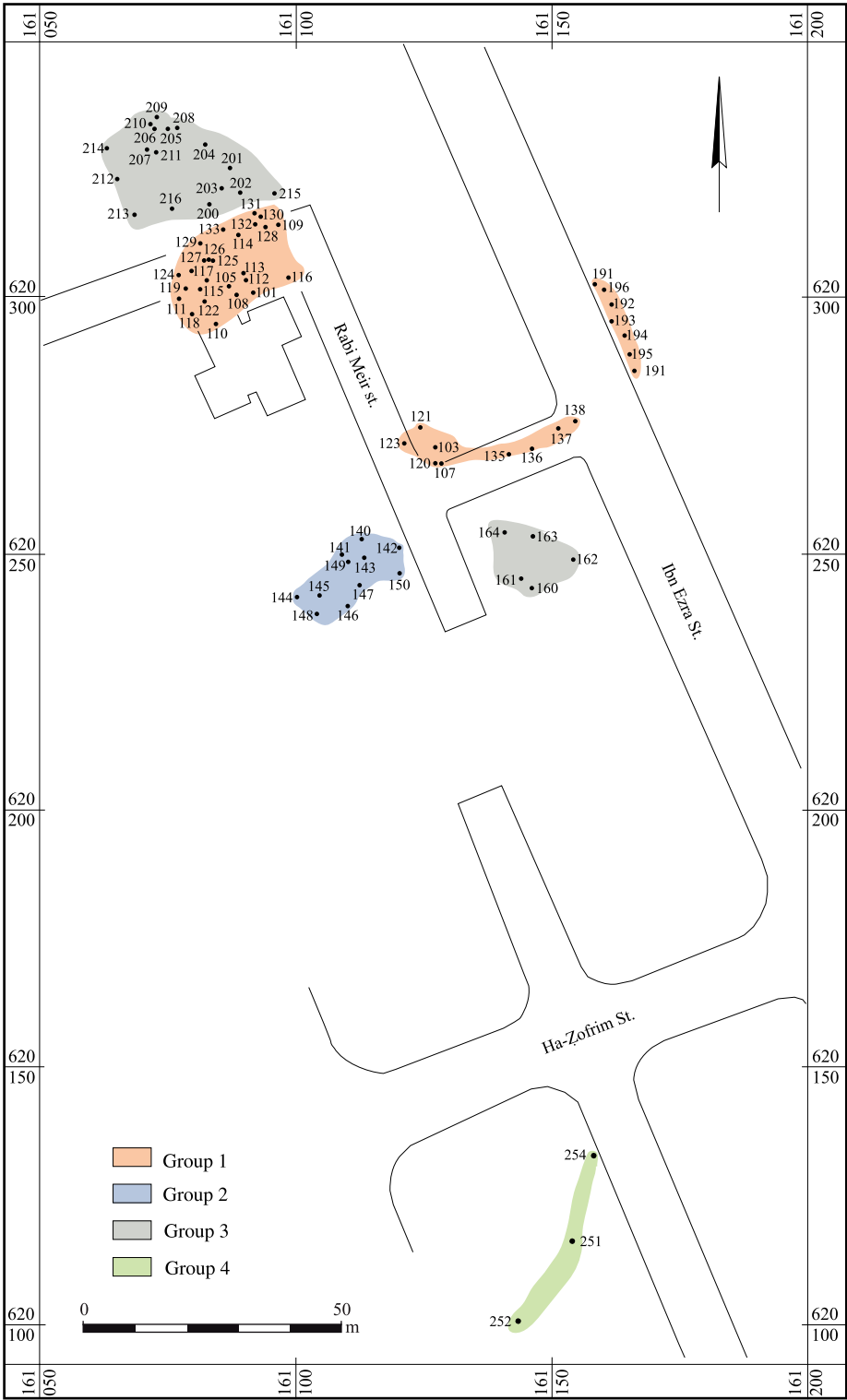
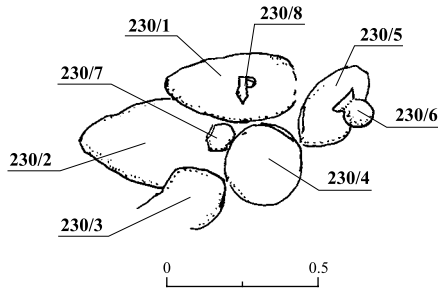


Fig. 2. The Ramat Eshkol cemetery burial pits.



Plan 2. Pit 122, placement of pottery vessels.

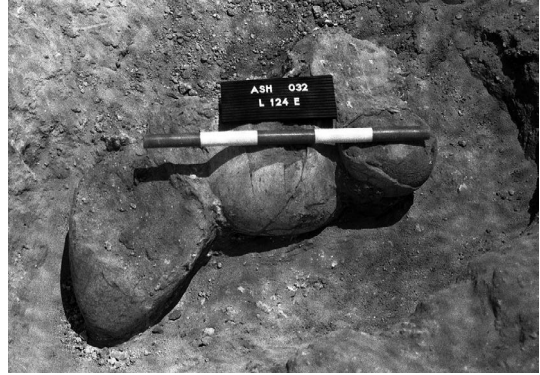


Fig. 3. Pit 124, looking southwest.

Pit 122.— This burial pit contained the most complete burial kit in this group (Plan 2), comprising eight vessels: three store jars, a jug and an open bowl inside which was a carinated bowl; another carinated bowl was placed between the store jars, one of which contained a dipper juglet.

Pit 124.— The pit contained three jugs of different sizes and shapes and a single jar (Fig. 3). The absence of a store jar can be attributed to the fact that part of the pit was removed by the bulldozers.

Pit 130.— The pit was badly damaged. Nevertheless, there was a platter bowl, which had very fragile fragments of a skull underneath. Crumbling fragments of a dipper juglet and a stone pommel rested near the bowl.

Group 2

The second group of pits (140–150) was located in a nearby lot where foundations for a building were already set in place. The state of most pits in this lot was somewhat better than that of Group 1.

Pit 140.— This pit had an elongated shape with offerings at each end; the interspace was used for the interment. Large fragments of a possible store jar were at one end, and at the opposite end were two store jars, one large and the other small, leaning against each other (Fig. 4). A dipper juglet was found inside one of these store jars. A carinated bowl seemed to be attached to the larger jar, and a jug leaned against the smaller jar.

Pit 142.— Offerings were placed at the two ends of the pit, which were not far apart. One end had two store jars, one of which was barely preserved; the other end had a carinated bowl, lying upside down, and a small dipper juglet next to it.



Fig. 4. Pit 140, looking north.



Fig. 5. Pit 143, looking north.

Pit 143.— A bone-bearing layer was the only preserved part of the pit. Close to a dipper juglet, half of which was lying flat (Fig. 5), were long limb bones and among them a complete bronze dagger, positioned on its side. Fragments of a large open bowl, possibly associated with the bones and the dagger, were lying close by.

Pit 144.— The pit contained three store jars arranged in a row, leaning against each other (Fig. 6); a dipper juglet was inside the central jar. Apparently, the pit had not been badly damaged as the store jars were in fairly good condition.

Pit 145.— The offerings in this pit were arranged in an L-shape formation. The western row contained four jars: a large store jar, which contained a dipper juglet, a smaller store jar, an amphoriskos and a jug (Fig. 7). The southern row of jars included small vessels: a jug, two carinated bowls and the base of a dipper juglet.



Fig. 6. Pit 144, looking west.



Fig. 7. Pit 145, looking southwest.

Pit 146.— This was the best-preserved pit in the second group. Its depth from the top of the store jar to the bottom of the pit was over one meter. The pit was rather small in circumference and had visible layers. A store jar in the upper layer stood in the northern side, with a fragmentary juglet and a platter bowl next to it. A jug and a miniature bottle were leaning against the lower body of the store jar (Fig. 8). Below the store jar, to the southeast, was a dipper juglet and below, was a fine small juglet leaning against a skull, with a few scattered bones. The skull had possibly been placed on the edge of the platter bowl found beneath it, which had been placed inside another platter bowl. To the north, below the store jar, a carinated bowl was lying upside down, with a dipper juglet beside it.



Fig. 8. Pit 146, the lowest burial layer, looking south.

Pit 147.— The burial in this pit included two large store jars, inside one of which was a dipper juglet. Small fragments of another dipper juglet were discarded. Between them, facing each of the jars, were two carinated bowls (Fig. 9), one containing teeth and small bones. The association of the bones and teeth with the carinated bowl repeats itself in other burials. It should be noted that the bones and teeth belonged to a young adult.

Group 3

The third group of pits (160–164 and 200–216) was located in empty plots intended for construction. Pits 160–164 were found at a higher elevation than Pits 200–216 and had been badly grazed by heavy machinery. Pits 200–216 were much better preserved.

Pits 160 and 161.— These two pits were adjacent to each other, which made it difficult to determine whether there were one pit or two. Initially, they were regarded as two pits, due to the spatial arrangement of the pottery vessels, as well as the placement of the skeletons. However, later on it appeared to have been originally one pit (160), which was expanded to include Pit 161, possibly because the deceased were related to each other. Despite the poor preservation of the pits, both contained remains of skeletons in anatomic articulation, facing each other (Fig. 10). On the eastern side of Pit 160, near the head, stood a store jar and a large platter bowl, inside of which was a small carinated bowl. By the feet of the skeleton were fragmentary and crumbling small vessels, including juglets, carinated bowls and dipper juglets. Next to the lower limb bones was a bronze dagger (Fig. 11). The pottery vessels in Pit 161 were placed on the northern side of the skeleton and if, indeed, Pit 161 was an extension of Pit 160, then the pottery vessels on the northern side formed the boundary of the expanded pit. Following the retrieval and sorting of the pits' contents, it was determined that the interred in Pit 160 was accompanied by six pottery vessels and a single dagger, whereas Pit 161 had two store jars and two platter bowls along its northern margin.



Fig. 9. Pit 147, looking east.



Fig. 10. Pit 160/161, the articulated bones, looking west.

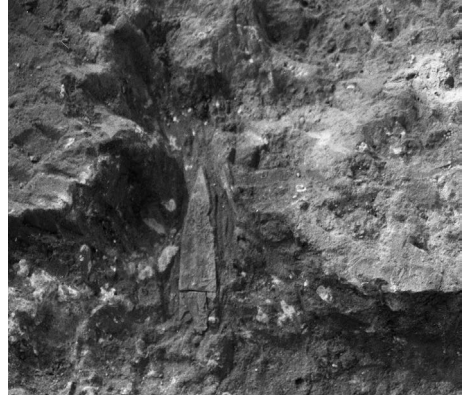


Fig. 11. Pit 160/161, *in situ* dagger, looking west.



Fig. 12. Pit 162, looking south.

Pit 162.— This pit contained a pithos and three store jars, lying at the northeastern side. A fragmentary toggle pin was found close to the store jars. At the southwestern side, which could have been a separate pit, although this could not be substantiated, were three pottery vessels, a globular bowl and platter bowls and a broken store jar (Fig. 12). Under the group of store jars was a layer of broken bones and remains of a skull accompanied by a carinated bowl, a juglet and two dipper juglets, all of which were extremely fragmentary.

Pit 163.— At the northern side of this pit was part of a large platter bowl, under whose edge was a skull. The skeleton must have extended southward, where two store jars stood. At a right angle to the jars, forming a ‘T’, were several small vessels, including a small juglet, missing its rim, neck and base (Fig. 13); one of these is a jug (273/4; Fig. 45:3) that contained 17 specimens of *Calaxis hierosolymarum*, a species of underground mollusk, probably recent.⁴

Pit 164.— The higher level of this pit caused far greater damage to the finds stored inside it. At the eastern side of this pit were fragments of a skull lying under the side of a platter bowl. Lower limb bones extended westward and between them was a bronze knife. A store jar that contained a dipper juglet and a jug closed the pit on the western side, beyond the bones (Fig. 14). The rest of the vessels in this pit were extremely broken and only some fragments of each were kept.



Fig. 13. Pit 163, looking east.



Fig. 14. Pit 164, looking west.

⁴ Thanks are due to Frida Ben-Ami for identifying the mollusks.

Pit 200.— The pottery vessels in this pit were set at the two opposing ends, with the space between left for the interments (Fig. 15). The bones had disintegrated, but fragments of a skull were found close to the northeastern end of the pit, where a store jar stood. A bowl had apparently covered the store jar, which contained a dipper juglet and several bones, indicating that it may have been a jar burial. Three vessels at the southwestern end of the pit included a Cypriote WP V amphora (Fig. 47) in the middle, squeezed between a jug and a store jar. The large jug contained another dipper juglet.

Pit 204.— This was the largest, most complete and best-preserved pit (Figs. 16, 17). It contained 18 vessels in different states of preservation and a scarab. The pottery vessels were arranged in a circle; some were standing upright, while others were lying horizontally or positioned at various angles. The assemblage included seven store jars, a jar, three platter bowls, three carinated bowls, a jug, two juglets and five dipper juglets, two of which were found inside store jars. A skull was positioned under the raised side of a platter bowl (304/7). More bones were found under the jug (304/16;⁵ Fig. 48:8), together with the scarab (see Ben-Tor, this volume) that was located beside a fragmentary skull, possibly of a young female. In this case, the scarab may have been used as an ornamental pendant. In addition, other bones were found that indicate a male individual.

Pit 205.— This was another well-preserved burial pit. Pottery vessels were deposited at opposite ends of the pit, and the skeletons extended between and below the vessels (Fig. 18). On the northern side was a store jar with three very broken and fragmentary bowls beside it—two carinated and one platter. Along the southern end of the pit was a row of



Fig. 15. Pit 200, looking southwest.

⁵ One whole specimen of *Helix engaddensis* was found in this jug; however, it was not associated with the burial except as a habitat. Another specimen was found on the surface near the carnelian bead in Pit 196 (204/1; Fig. 31:7). Thanks are due to Frida Ben-Ami for identifying the mollusks.

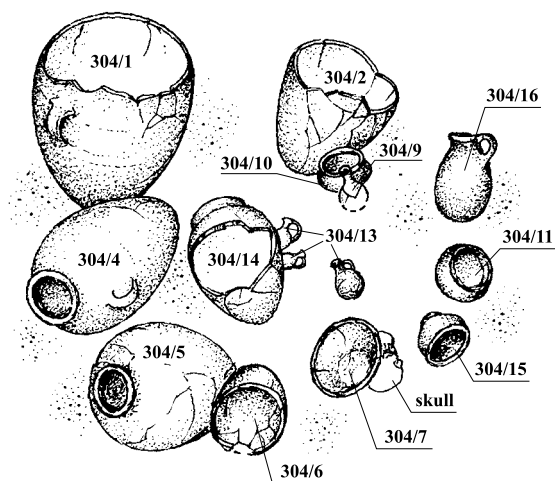


Fig. 16. Pit 204, location of vessels in the tomb.



Fig. 17. Pit 204, looking south.



Fig. 18. Pit 205, looking north.

vessels, including two store jars, two carinated bowls and two dipper juglets (Fig. 19). The dipper juglets were placed one on top of the other, and below the lower one was a tiny black juglet, which disintegrated completely upon exposure. A skull was discovered at the western side of the pit, next to the store jar, and a few bones extended eastward. Once the vessels were removed, more bones and skulls were found below them, together with a few small broken vessels.

Pits 204 and 205 were the best preserved burial pits. Both contained the same pottery vessels, yet in different proportions (Fig. 20). The number of platter bowls is the same in both pits, yet Pit 205 contained more carinated bowls. The number of store jars and juglets



Fig. 19. Pit 205, looking south.

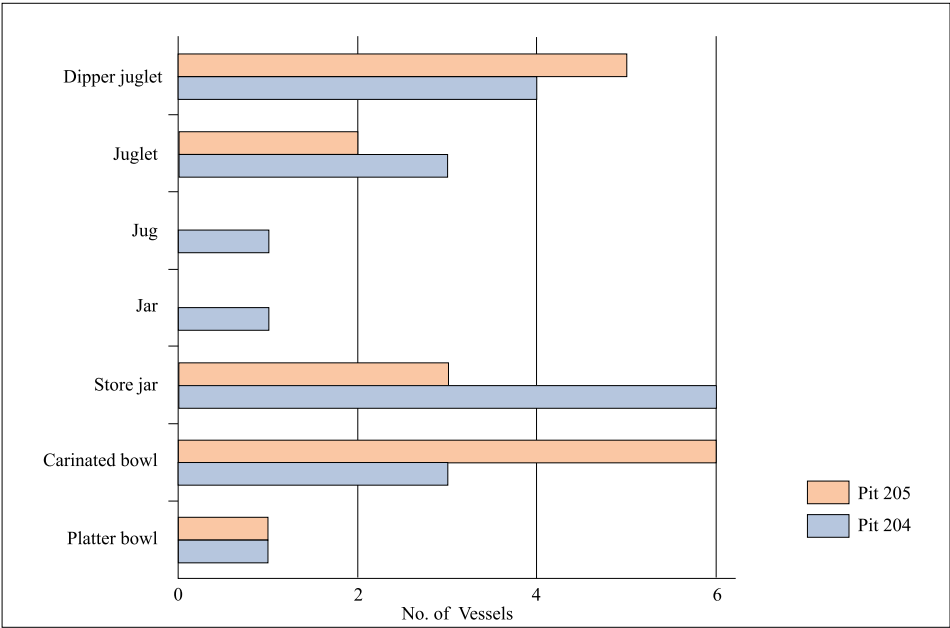


Fig. 20. Diffusion of pottery vessels in Pits 204 and 205.

is higher in Pit 204, while dipper juglets are more numerous in Pit 205. Pit 204 contained a jug and a jar, types which are absent from Pit 205.

Pit 206.— An articulated skeleton was found in this pit (Fig. 21). Between its lower limb bones was found a fragment of a flint blade, made of translucent flint and broken at the distal end (B306/4; 19×10 mm).⁶ A few small vessels were located near and around the skull, which was placed at the eastern end of the pit.

Pit 207.— The core of the pit contained three store jars leaning against each other (Fig. 22), with a fragmented platter bowl squeezed between them. One of the store jars contained the base of a carinated bowl, indicating that originally the mouth of the jar was probably covered



Fig. 21. Pit 206, looking west.

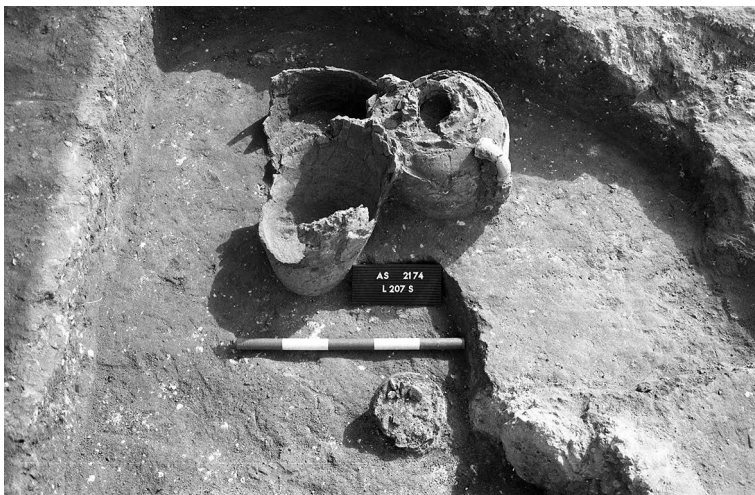


Fig. 22. Pit 207, looking south.

⁶ Hamoudi Khalaily identified the flint tool and concluded that such blades were common in the Chalcolithic period; however, the blade might have been intrusive.

by the bowl. Another store jar contained a unique dipper juglet, which has a hollowed tunnel passing across its lower body (Fig. 49:6). North of the store jars was a carinated bowl and south of the jars were skeletal remains. These were accompanied by a platter bowl and a carinated bowl, whose top part, above the carination angle, was broken off and covered a very fragmentary skull of a young adult. The platter bowl could have been associated with the remains of an adult skull and bones found right next to it.

Pit 209.— No bones were found in this pit, although the space between the pottery vessels likely indicates the location of skeletal remains (Fig. 23). On the northern side, a store jar (309/1) that was lying flat down contained a dipper juglet (309/9; Fig. 50:3). The juglet contained 30 specimens of the mollusk *Calaxis hierosolymarum*, probably recent. Another store jar (309/7a) contained one specimen of the mollusk *Acanthocardia tuberculata*, which probably reached the burial pit by natural circumstances, although it could have been used by man as it is an edible mussel (Mienis 2004:404).⁷ On the southern side was a row of vessels, including two very broken and disintegrating store jars, platter bowls that seemed to have been stacked, and carinated bowls, as well as an olive pit and a bronze ring (Fig. 50:4).

Pit 210.— Two store jars formed the core of this pit. A dipper juglet was placed in one of them. On the side of the upper jar was a fragmented carinated bowl and to its west was a jug (Fig. 24). To the north of the lower store jar were fragments of a carinated bowl, overlaying limb bones (Fig. 25). Juxtaposed onto the middle of the store jar was a flat-lying platter bowl, partially covered with a jug, and inside it was a carinated bowl, into which a small skull was inserted.

Pit 212.— This pit contained three store jars placed together (Fig. 26); a dipper juglet was found in one of them. Two more store jars lying flat were found to the south; they were badly preserved. A bronze fragment with rivets was found between the two adjacent southern store jars, and near them were a bronze dagger (Fig. 52:1) and a small bronze tool, which



Fig. 23. Pit 209, looking southeast.



Fig. 24. Pit 210, looking south.

⁷ Thanks are due to Frida Ben-Ami for identifying the mollusks and for the bibliographic reference.

could be an awl (Fig. 52:2). It is possible that the bronze piece with rivets was the butt of a dagger (Fig. 52:3). The upper limb bones of an individual were found near the dagger.

Pit 216.— On one side of the pit, a very fragmentary and crumbling jug, a carinated bowl and a dipper juglet were placed; they clustered together over time. To the northeast was a row of several vessels (Fig. 27), including three store jars, two jugs and a dipper juglet that had been placed in one of the store jars. The upper parts of all these vessels were cut off and removed by the heavy machinery that operated in the area. Fragments of a mandible and a skull, probably of an adult, were found in the northern side of the pit.



Fig. 25. Pit 210, looking east.

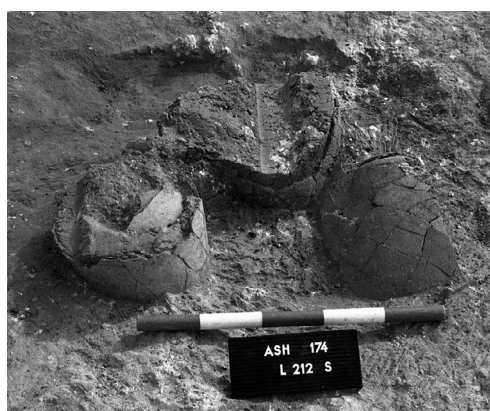


Fig. 26. Pit 212, looking south.



Fig. 27. Pit 216, looking west.

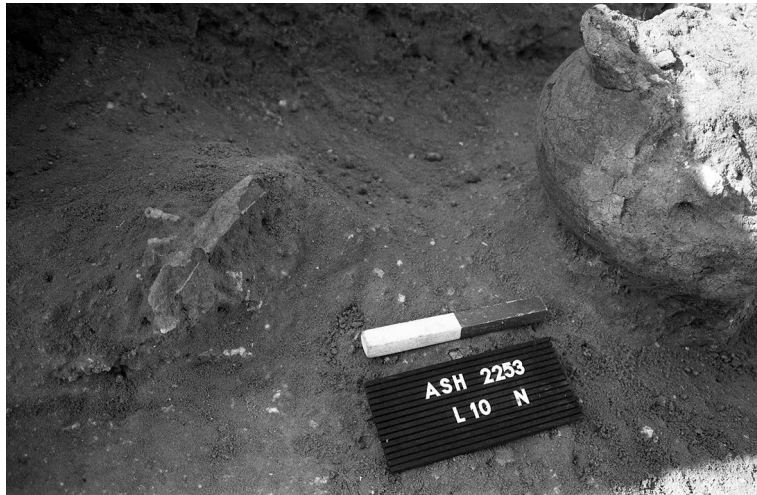


Fig. 28. Giv'at Ziyon Pit 10, looking north.

Group 4

The fourth and last group of pits (251, 252, 254) was badly disturbed and destroyed. The contents of Pit 252, including a jug and two bowl cups one of which has red-painted decoration, indicates an MB I date for the pit;⁸ it joins three other pits (122, 136, 196) whose contents point to a similar date. Pit 251 yielded a store jar and a metal ring, and Pit 254 contained a platter bowl and a store jar.

GIV'AT ZIYYON

Pit 10.— The pit was destroyed by a bulldozer that removed half of it when digging a trench (Figs. 28, 53). The surviving remains were found in the western section of the trench and included a store jar in a perpendicular position, facing west. To the west of the jar were fragmentary bones, teeth and a bronze toggle pin. To the north of the jar was a bronze dagger, lying flat in the section, with its blade tip pointing north. A very fragmentary and flaky jug was standing to the north of the jar and next to it was a concentration of human bones and teeth. Fragments of another jug and a dipper juglet were discovered.

SUMMARY

Summing up the data of the burial pits, the following points should be considered:

(1) The four pits (122, 136, 196, 252) dating to MB I on account of their contents are a poor remainder of possibly many more burial pits of this date, which did not survive the massive destruction.

⁸ The period terminology used in this article is MB I (= MB IIA), MB II (= MB IIB) and MB III (= MB IIC).

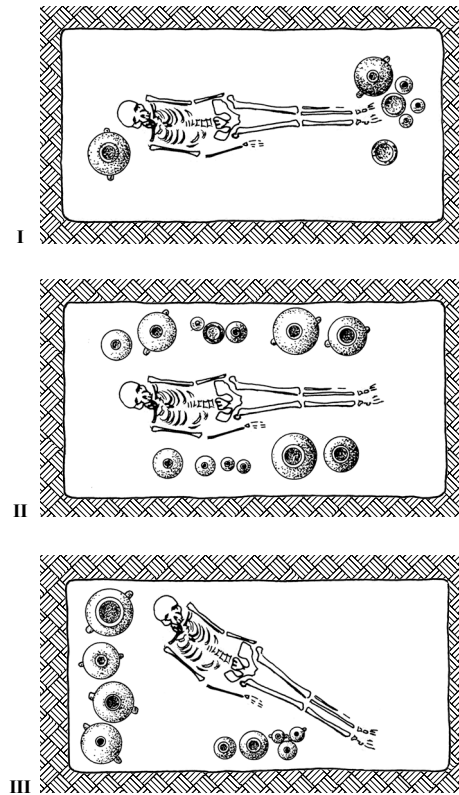


Fig. 29. Positions of skeletal remains and offerings within the pits.

(2) There is no pattern to the spatial diffusion of the pits. Yet, the fact that no pit cuts into or coincides with another suggests that the existing pits were marked in some way that was acknowledged by those who were digging new burial pits.

(3) There is no regularity to the shape and size of the pits. As these were cut into the *kurkar* sandstone, both size and shape were determined by the number of the interred people and the number of offerings that accompanied them.

(4) There is no systematic order in how the skeletal remains were positioned: skulls were placed at all directions within the pits. However, it seems that the skeletal remains were always bordered by the burial offerings, either on their side, at the two ends or a combination of both options (Fig. 29).

(5) The skeletal remains in some of the pits were laid in the lower layer, which was covered with a layer of pottery vessels. Sometimes, a single skeleton or just a skull was placed together with the pottery vessels.

(6) A single jar burial occurred in Pit 200. Other possible jar burials include Pit 105, which had a few bones inside a store jar; Pit 119, which contained human teeth inside a store jar; and Pit 121, where a few bones were placed within one of the store jars.

The Ramat Eshkol cemetery seems to have occupied a fairly large section of the second *kurkar* ridge from the shoreline. However, it heavily suffered from illegal earth moving and sand theft, which caused a tremendous damage to most burial pits. Similar characteristics and contents are exhibited by the MB II burial pits excavated in the Third Mile Estate (Erickson-Gini and Israel 2013). Somehow, and in spite of the heavy machinery work in the area, the preservation of human bones in these pits was much better than in the Ramat Eshkol cemetery. The burial kit in the Third Mile Estate pits was composed of store jars and dipper juglets, although the latter were absent from some pits. A rather popular vessel type is the piriform juglet, which appears in 8 of the 12 pits. It could be that the piriform juglet replaced the dipper juglet as a component of the burial kit in several pits.⁹

The seven burial pits excavated at the edge of the Barne'a neighborhood (Zelin 2002) were also badly damaged and contained similar pottery vessels and small finds of MB II date.

To the north of Ashqelon, at Dhahrat el-Ḥumraya, a similar mortuary ground was excavated in the 1940s (Ory 1948:76). The graves are described as “holes dug to varying depth in the ground.” Unlike the pits in Ashqelon, those at Dhahrat el-Ḥumraya hardly reached the *kurkar* bedrock, which is apparently far deeper and covered with sand that is topped with alluvial soil. The graves were marked on the surface by a strip of dark gray muddy soil, which differed from the ground around it.

To the south of Ashqelon, another disturbed mortuary ground of pit burials was excavated at Khirbat Ma'raba (Gershuny 2007). The pits were cut into the *kurkar* bedrock and contained store jars and dipper juglets, usually within them, as well as platter and carinated bowls and a few metal artifacts.

It appears that pit graves were not confined to the coastal plain. Seventeen pit graves of Cemetery 9000 at Lakhish were dug in the ground and had either rectangular or oval shapes (Singer-Avitz 2004a:971). Four of the pits were lined with mud bricks, rendering them as cist graves, and all the pits were marked by boulders.

THE FINDS

The offerings in the burial pits comprised pottery vessels, metal artifacts, and stone and bone small finds. The ceramic assemblage forms the undisputed majority of finds in the pits and is presented first, with the other finds following.

POTTERY

Many of the pottery vessels were shattered in the burial pits, damaged by modern construction. Yet the worst agent that caused the gradual deterioration of the clay vessels was the sea salt

⁹ Unfortunately, the description of the MB II cemetery in the report lacks an in-depth analysis of the finds from this period.

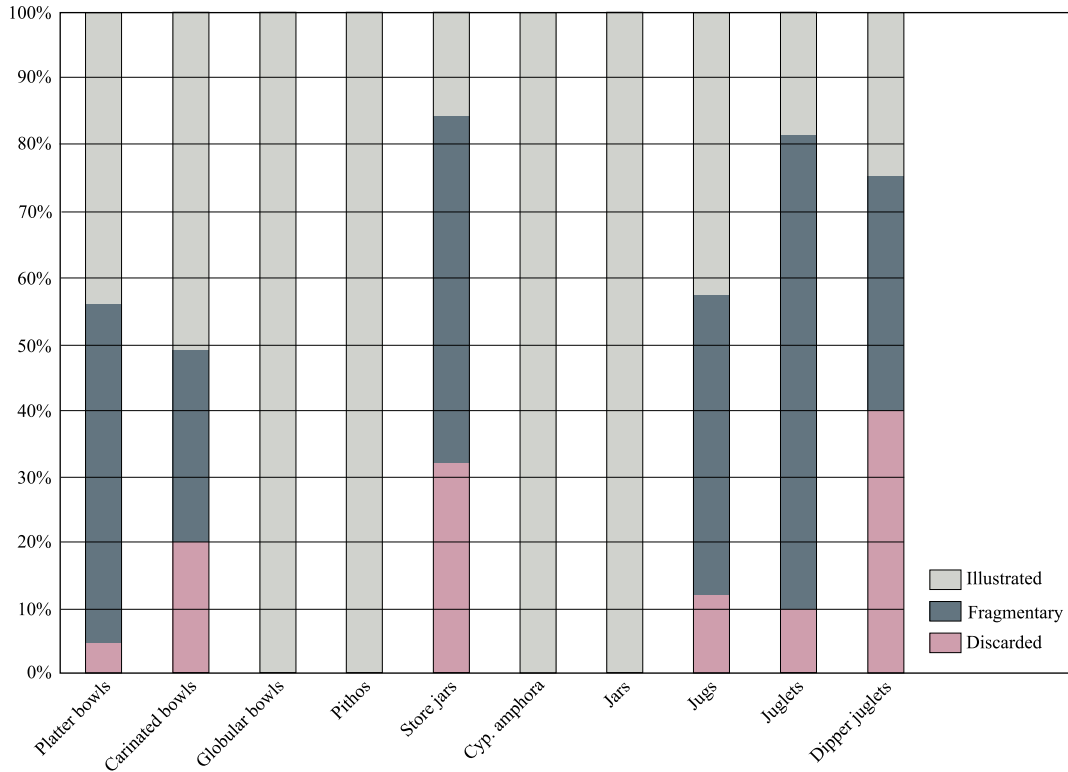


Fig. 30. Proportions of illustrated, fragmented and discarded pottery vessels.

absorbed into the *kurkar* sandstone. Consequently, many vessels were discarded in the field after registration, and others were kept as representative fragments (Fig. 30). The contents of the MB I pits is discussed by tomb and in each one, by typological order, whereas the MB II pottery discussion follows a typological sequence.

The Middle Bronze Age I

Pit 122 (Fig. 31:1–3).— The platter bowl (Fig. 31:1) has a concave disc base and a beveled rim with an inverted lip. Similar bowls appear in Group 5 from the courtyard cemetery at Tell el-‘Ajjul (Tufnell 1962: Fig. 13) and in the palace phase of Afeq (Beck 2000: Fig. 10.13:14), and continue throughout the Middle Bronze Age with hardly any changes.

The closed carinated bowls from this pit (Fig. 31:2, 3) and from Pit 196 (Fig. 31:5; see below) display a burnished red slip on the exterior body and inside the rim. The two bowls from Pit 122 have a flat disc base and are similar in size (rim diam 9.5 and 10.5 cm, max. diam. 12 and 12.75 cm, height 8 and 7.12 cm). Their plain everted rim indicates an

advanced stage within MB I, when the everted guttered rim, like the bowl from Pit 196, had largely disappeared. These carinated bowls can be compared to the bowls of Group 3 in the courtyard cemetery (Tufnell 1962: Fig. 11). Although the everted guttered rim appears in early MB I, for example the bowls from the palace phase of Afeq (Beck 2000: Fig. 10.10:1), it has sporadic appearances in the following post-palace phase, Stratum A XII (Beck 2000: Fig. 10.20:3).

Pit 136 (Fig. 31:4).— The platter bowl is missing its base, which was a flattened disc. The plain rim is externally beveled and somewhat depressed on the exterior. Both rim and upper exterior part bear a red-burnished slip. A similar rim appears on a platter bowl from Khirbat Umm Kalkha (Dagot 2005: Fig. 2:3).

Pit 196 (Fig. 31:5–8).— For the carinated bowl (Fig. 31:5), see discussion in Pit 122 above. The small intact juglet (Fig. 31:6; rim diam. 4.5 cm, max. diam. 10.5 cm, base diam. 3.5 cm, height 10.5 cm) has a biconical body, with a flat disc base, a narrow cylindrical neck and an everted rim with an upright lip. The two-strand handle extends from the rim to the shoulder. This juglet has a burnished red-brown slip on the body and inside the rim. A similar biconical juglet, albeit with a shallow ring base, a two-strand shoulder handle and an everted rim, was recovered from Kabri Tomb 498 (Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002: Fig. 5.30:7). Another biconical juglet, with a thick and narrow flat base, a two-strand handle that springs from the base of the neck and an everted rim, was found in the post-palace phase of Stratum A XII at Afeq (Beck 2000: Fig. 10.21:4). Another small biconical juglet with a high cylindrical neck, missing the rim, and a two-strand handle was discovered in the MB I structural tomb at Tel Burga (Golani 2011: Fig. 15:2). All these small biconical juglets are confined to MB I.

In addition to the pottery vessels, Pit 196 included two beads, both globular and truncated, one of carnelian (Fig. 31:7) and the other of amethyst (Fig. 31:8).

Pit 252 (Fig. 31:9, 10).— The bowl cup (Fig. 31:9) has a flat disc base and a plain rim with a rounded lip. It is found in Groups 1 and 2 of the courtyard cemetery at Tell el-‘Ajjul (Tufnell 1962: Figs. 9, 10) and disappears in Group 3 (Tufnell 1962: Fig. 11). Unlike the flat base of the bowl in Group 1, the bowl in Group 2 has a flat disc base, similar to our sample. Groups 1 and 2 of the courtyard cemetery are confined to the early and middle phases of MB I; Tufnell (1962:10) suggested that the shape derived from the beakers of the Intermediate Bronze Age.

The jug (Fig. 31:10) has an ovoid shape, a flattened base, a single loop handle extending from rim to shoulder and an upright rim with a pointed lip. A similar jug, although with a different rim, comes from Grave 14 at Gesher (Garfinkel and Cohen 2007: Fig. 5.15:1). A similar body shape and base, although with a different rim and no handle, occurs in Stratum A XVII at Afeq, which is the earliest pre-palace stratum at the site (Beck 2000: Fig. 10.4:4, 6).

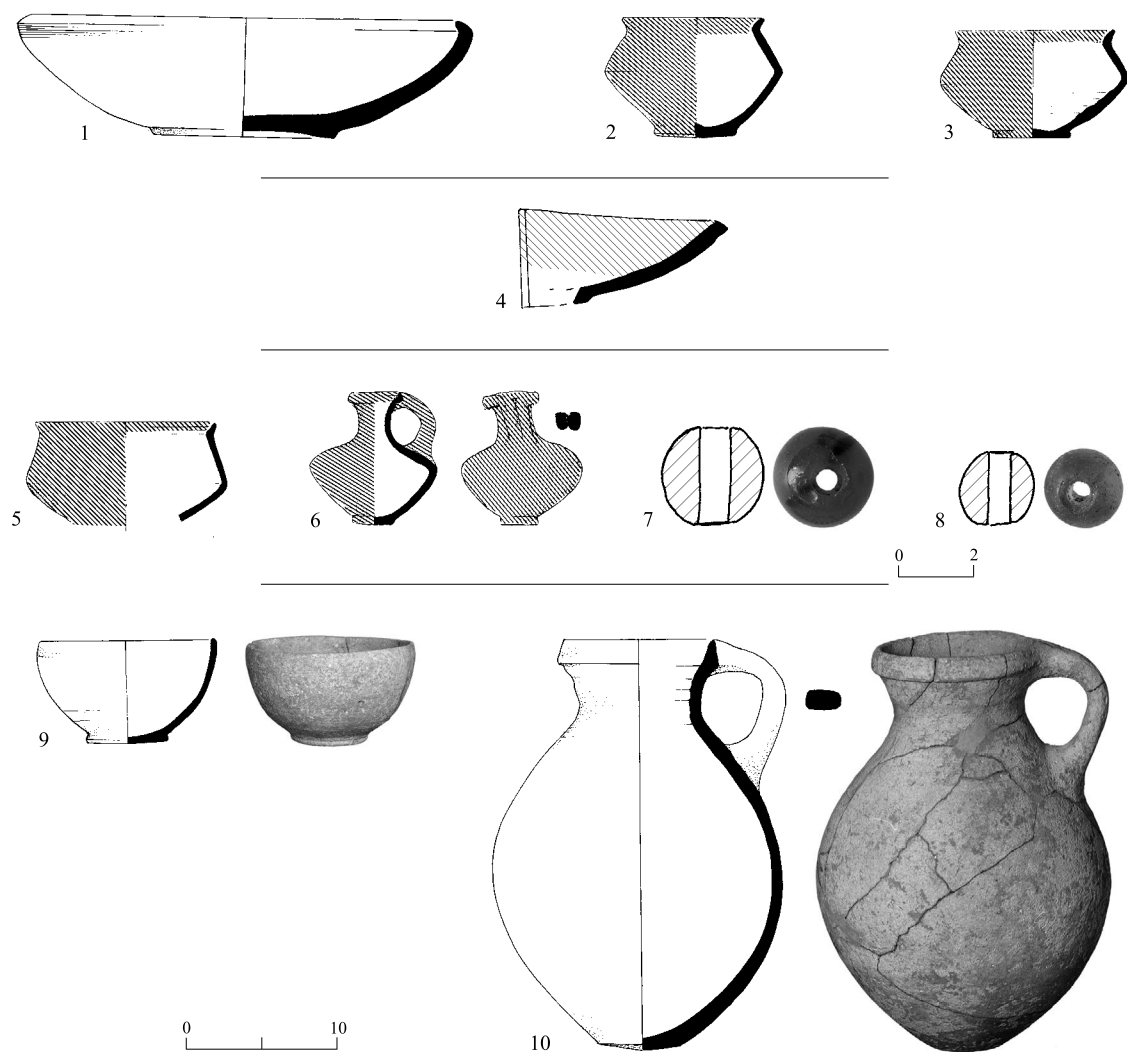


Fig. 31. MB I pottery and small finds: Pits 122 (1–3), 136 (4), 196 (5–8) and 252 (9, 10).

No.	Pit No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.	Comments
1	122	Bowl	230/5		
2	122	Bowl	230/6		
3	122	Bowl	230/7	2001-2496	
4	136	Bowl	250/3		
5	196	Bowl	203/1		
6	196	Juglet	203/2	2001-2482	
7	196	Bead	204/1	2001-2525	Carnelian
8	196	Bead	204/2	2001-2524	Amethyst
9	252	Bowl	352/1	2001-2489	
10	252	Jug	352/2	2001-2490	

The Middle Bronze Age II

The ceramic finds in these pits are homogeneous enough to be discussed typologically, although the illustrations are arranged by pits. It is worth mentioning that of the 76 burial pits, 72 represent the MB II period; the vessels that came from the work of the mechanical equipment in the area (Pits 235, 134) are not considered in the count of the pits, although the vessels are described within their categories.

Bowls

Platter Bowls.— A total of 40 bowls was uncovered, two of which were discarded in the field and 13 are illustrated (Table 1).

The concave disc base is predominant among the platter bowls (51%; Figs. 32:2; 35:3; 40:1; 50:1, 2; 51:1).¹⁰ The flat disc and the ring bases take up 22% each of the total, and the flattened disc base is slack (5%, not illustrated). The dominant rim type is externally beveled (57%; Figs. 33:5; 40:1; 46:1; 48:1; 50:2; 51:1; 52:7); its variations are created by the changing angle of the slant, the turning of the lip and the protrusion of the lower edge. The mushroom-like rim (13%; Figs. 32:2; 33:4) and the rolled-in type (10%, not illustrated) are sporadic, whereas other rim types are negligible. On the whole, the platter bowls are plain; only two bowls are red-slipped and burnished (Fig. 33:5), one bowl has traces of a red-painted cross on its interior (Fig. 51:1) and a single rim fragment (not illustrated) has a red-painted band on top of the rim.

Platter bowls with an externally beveled rim and a concave disc base were found in the MB II cemetery at the Tel Aviv harbor, Tombs 5 and 18 (Kaplan 1955: Figs. 3:9; 4:9), in the various MB II cemeteries of Lakhish, including Cemetery 1500, Tomb 1539 (Tufnell 1958: Pl. 71:612), Cemetery 9000 of the renewed excavations, the early MB II Grave 9008 (Singer-Avitz 2004b: Fig. 17.8:1, 2) and Grave 9054 (Singer-Avitz 2004b: Fig. 17.13:1–3), and in Tomb 2/3 at Ginosar (Epstein 1974: Fig. 9:10, 11), also dating to MB II. Bowls with these two features were mainly assigned to Group III in Jericho (Kenyon and Holland 1982:384, Fig. 153:5), e.g., Tomb A34 (Kenyon 1960: Fig. 140:5).

The bowl with the inner red-painted cross (Fig. 51:1) belongs to a rather small group, which first appears in the middle of MB I and continues into MB II (Gerstenblith 1983:68–70). During MB II, platter bowls with an interior painted cross usually had an everted rim, like the bowl from Tomb 2 at the Tel Aviv harbor (Kaplan 1955: Fig. 4:10) or a decidedly flanged rim, as in the bowl from Tomb 3 at Jatt (Porath, Yannai and Kasher 1999: Fig. 23). However, a handful of bowls still retain the externally beveled rim, like the bowl from the third burial phase at Barqai (Gophna and Sussman 1969: Fig. 6:10), and our bowl from Pit 210, which appears to be the southernmost specimen in the country.

¹⁰ The percentage of pottery vessels includes those illustrated and kept, as well as the discarded vessels that were documented in the field.

Table 1. Platter Bowls

No.	Pit No.	Reg. No.	Fig. No.	Rim	Base	Other
1	193	235	32:2	Mushroom like	Concave disc	
2	117	225	33:4	Mushroom like		
3	118	226/3	33:5	Externally beveled		Burnished; red-slipped on ext. and int. rim
4	130	240/1	35:3	Everted, rounded edge	Concave disc	
5	137	251/2	35:5	Upright, folded-out flat	Flat disc	
6	146	259/9	40:1	Externally beveled	Concave disc	
7	163	273/1	45:1	Upright, folded-out flat	Ring, shallow	Distorted shape
8	200	300/2	46:1	Externally beveled		
9	204	304/7	48:1	Externally beveled	Flat disc	
10	208	308/2	50:1	Upright, slightly oblique end	Concave disc	
11	209	309/2	50:2	Externally beveled	Concave disc	
12	210	310/7	51:1	Externally beveled	Concave disc	Red-painted cross on int. and red-painted on int. rim
13	254	354/2	52:7	Externally beveled	Shallow convex disc	

Carinated Bowls (Table 2).— Forty-five carinated bowls were found, eight of them were discarded in the field. Of the 37 kept, 23 were illustrated; three of those are missing their base (Figs. 33:3; 34:1; 51:5) and one is missing its rim (Fig. 49:4).

The concave disc base is dominant among the carinated bowls (65%; Figs. 33:2; 37:1, 4, 6; 41:2; 45:2; 46:8; 48:2–4; 49:3); ring (24%; Figs. 39:2, 3; 49:4; 51:2) and flat-disc (11%; Figs. 41:1) bases follow suit. The single flat base is a rarity, perhaps relating to the distinct character of the bowl (Fig. 40:2). The undisputable majority of rim shapes is everted (95%) and a single everted and guttered rim was recorded (Fig. 40:3). The latter is predominant in narrow carinated bowls of MB I date, e.g., at Afeq Stratum A XVII (Beck 2000: Fig. 10.1:1), Stratum A XIV (Beck 2000: Figs. 10.10:1; 10.12:1, 2; 10.13:1, 2) and Stratum A XII (Beck 2000: Fig. 10.20:3), although the acute and sharp carination of this bowl with its somewhat concave shoulder is rather distinct.

The appearance of burnished red slip on carinated bowls (22%) is not as frequent as on the platter bowls; only two bowls are completely red-slipped and burnished (Figs. 39:3; 40:2), two bowls have a burnished red slip on the shoulder and rim (Figs. 39:2; 49:3), and four bowl fragments have a red-painted rim, inside out (not illustrated). Most of the bowls (73%) are either plain or have a self slip. Four bowls (11%; Figs. 33:2; 34:1; 49:3; 51:5) are open, namely their rim diameter is wider than or the same as their maximum diameter. Eight bowls (22%) are wide, i.e., their maximum diameter is 90% or more of the maximum diameter. In other words, a third of the carinated bowls (33%) are wide and open.

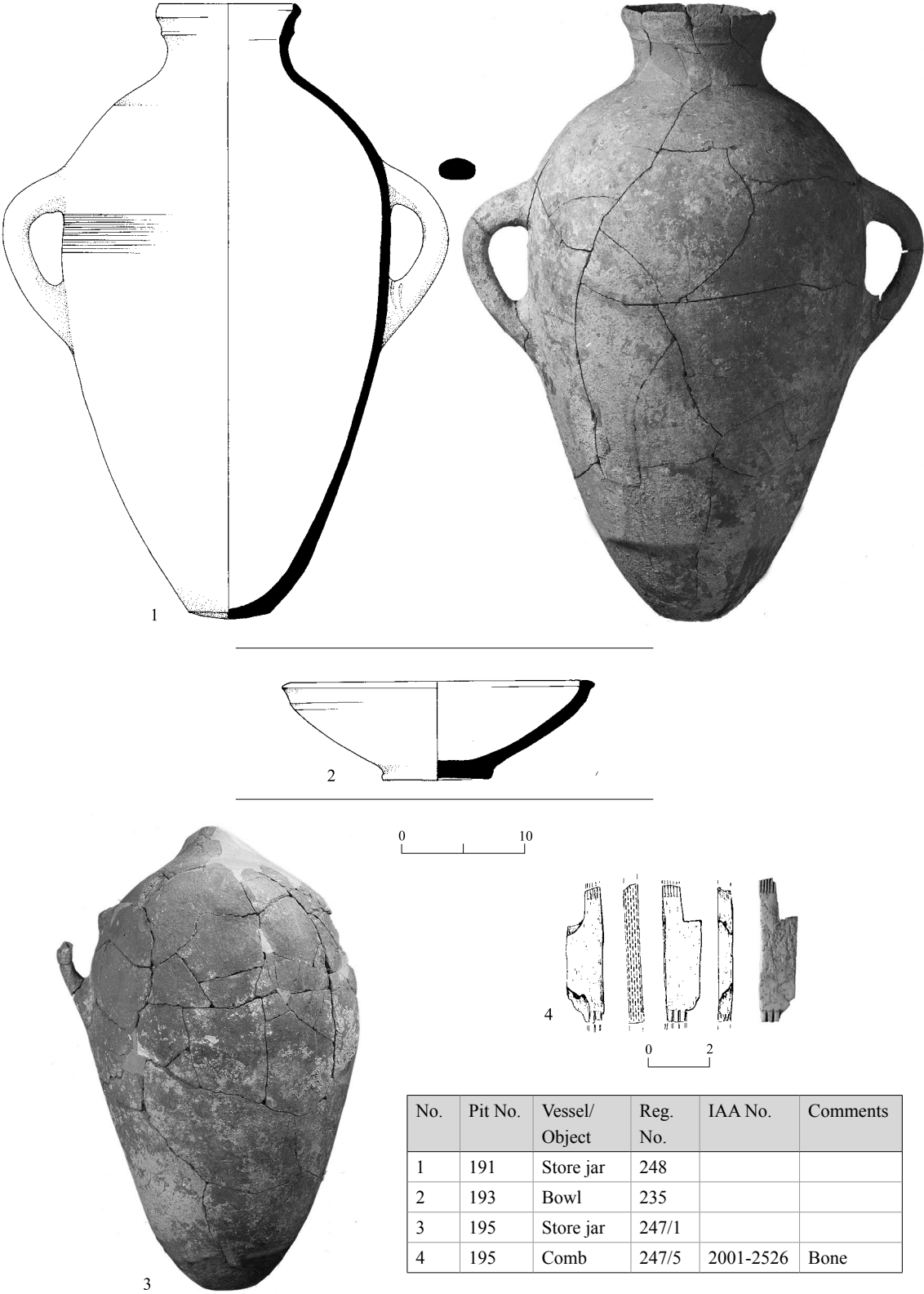


Fig. 32. Pottery and small finds from Pits 191 (1), 193 (2) and 195 (3, 4).

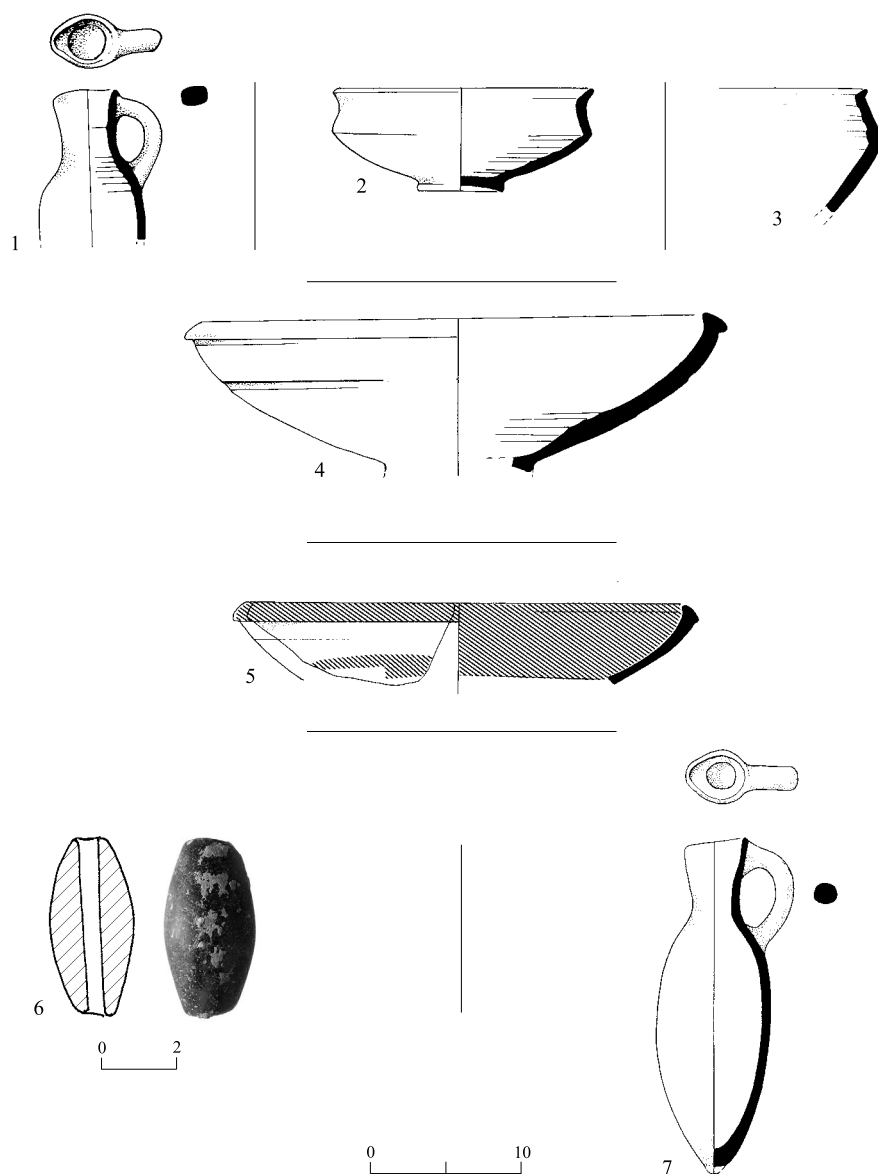


Fig. 33. Pottery and small finds from Pits 101 (1), 109 (2), 113 (3), 117 (4), 118 (5), 119 (6) and 120 (7).

No.	Pit No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.	Comments
1	101	Juglet, dipper	206/2		
2	109	Bowl	215/2	2001-2483	
3	113	Bowl	220/2		
4	117	Bowl	225		
5	118	Bowl	226/3		
6	119	Bead	222	2001-2527	Stone
7	120	Juglet, dipper	228/2	2001-2484	

Closed and open carinated bowls were recorded in Layers 3 and 4 of Tomb A34 at Jericho, which is assigned to Group III (Kenyon 1960:352–368). Wide and open carinated bowls are prevalent in MB II contexts, e.g., at Khirbat Ma‘raba (Gershuny 2007: Figs. 4:5; 5:1), Lakhish Cemetery 9000 (Singer-Avitz 2004b: Figs. 17.10:2, 3; 17.12:4; 17.13:5) and in many of the tombs in Cemetery 500 at Tell Far‘a South (Price Williams 1977).

Globular Bowl (Fig. 44:1).— The bowl from Pit 162 has a flat disc base, a high and rounded carination and a very short, upright rim with a rounded lip. The early form of such bowls appears in MB I tombs, e.g., Tomb 2 at Ras el-‘Ein (Ory 1938: No. 67), which has a flat base, a small everted rim and its maximum diameter is slightly above mid-bowl. During

Table 2. Carinated Bowls (measurements in cm)ⁱ

No.	Pit No.	Reg. No.	Fig. No.	Rim	Base	Other
1	109	215/2	33:2	Everted (Rd 17.5)	Concave disc (Bd 5.5)	Md 17 H 6.5
2	113	220/2	33:3	Everted		Rills visible
3	121	229/4	34:1	Everted (Rd 22)		Rounded carination, Md 19
4	140	253:3	37:1	Everted (Rd 14.5)	Concave disc (Bd 5)	Md 15, H 5.5
5	141	254/2	37:4	Everted (Rd 14)	Concave disc (Bd 5.5)	Md 15.5, H 9
6	142	255/3	37:6	Everted (Rd 15.5)	Concave disc (Bd 5)	Md 16.5, H 8.5
7	145	258/6	39:2	Everted (Rd 15)	Ring (Bd 3)	Burnished, red slip above carination and on int. rim, Md 16, H 8
8	145	258/7	39:3	Everted, guttered lip (Rd 10)	Ring (Bd 4.5)	Burnished, dark brown-red slip on int. rim and ext., sharp carination at mid-height
9	146	259/10	40:2	Everted	Flat (Bd 2.5)	Burnished, red slip; holes below carination
10	147	260/5	41:1	Everted (Rd 10)	Flat disc (Bd 4.5)	carination at mid height, Md 13, H 9.5
11	147	260/3	41:2	Everted (Rd 13.5)	Concave disc (Bd 5)	Md 14.5, H 7.5
12	163	273/5	45:2	Everted (Rd 13.5)	Concave disc (Bd 6.5)	Md 16, H 3.6
13	203	303/2	46:8	Everted (Rd 17)	Concave disc (Bd 6)	Md 18, H 8
14	204	304/11	48:2	Everted (Rd 14)	Concave disc (Bd 6)	Md 15.5, H 9
15	204	304/15	48:3	Everted (Rd 14.5)	Concave disc (Bd 7.5)	Md 16.5, H 8
16	204	304/10a	48:4	Everted (Rd 15.5)	Concave disc (Bd 5)	Lopsided, Md 16, H 7.5
17	207	307/5	49:3	Everted (Rd 15.5)	Concave disc (Bd 4.5)	Burnished, red slip on upper part and rim, inside out, Md 15.5, H 6.5
18	207	307/8	49:4		Ring (Bd 5.5)	Broken at carination
19	210	310/8	51:2	Everted (Rd 10)	Ring (Bd 4.5)	Md 11.5, H 8
20	211	311/2	51:5	Everted (Rd 18.5)		Md 18

ⁱ Rd = rim diameter; Bd = base diameter; Md = maximum diameter; H = total height.



Fig. 34. Pottery and small finds from Pits 121(1-3), 123 (4) and 124 (5-7).

◀ Fig. 34

No.	Pit No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.	Comments
1	121	Bowl	229/4		
2 ⁱ	121	Store jar	229/1		
3	121	Juglet, dipper	229/2		
4	123	Bead	212	2001-2523	Copper
5	124	Jar	232/4		
6	124	Jug	232/1		
7 ⁱ	124	Jug	232/2		

ⁱFor petrographic results, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

MB II, these bowls have a disc base, like our bowl, or a ring base, like a similar bowl from Tell Beit Mirsim Tomb 33 (Ben-Arieh 2004a: Fig. 2.21:27). The bowl from Tell Beit Mirsim has a mushroom-like rim, which is decorated with an incised herringbone pattern. Its maximum diameter is 66% of the total height, higher than in the former period and slightly lower than our bowl, whose maximum diameter is 69% of the total height. The rim of our bowl is unusual and has no known comparisons.

Jars

The major group consists of store jars (Table 3)—including a jar with a shoulder handle, a jar with a handle from rim to shoulder and jars without handles—a pithos and an amphoriskos.

Store Jars (Table 3).— This is undoubtedly the predominant vessel type in the burial pits. A total of 110 store jars were uncovered, but a third of them (33%) were discarded in the field. It is regrettable that many of the store jars miss their top parts because of the graders' activity in the area, and many others were badly preserved due to the physical conditions of the *kurkar* ridge.

Store jars are the most frequent commodity in the burial pits. Each pit contained at least one store jar and in many cases, up to four. The shape of the store jars is ovoid and the flattened base dominates ($n = 41$, 38%; Figs. 32:1, 3; 34:2; 35:1; 36:2; 37:2, 7; 44:2; 48:5, 6; 52:6; 53:1), whereas the flat base occurs in fewer specimens ($n = 18$, 17%; Figs. 36:1; 40:3; 41:4; 42; 44:3; 46:3; 49:5). The variability of the store-jar rims calls for a more detailed division. Two rims (Figs. 32:1; 35:1) have a stepped base, and four rims (Figs. 42; 44:2; 48:5; 53:1) have a ridge at the base. Most of the rims are various everted forms (Figs. 36:1; 37:7; 44:3; 46:2, 3; 48:5; 49:5; 52:4; 53:1), including folded-out flat (Figs. 37:7; 49:5; 52:4); others are concave (Figs. 32:1; 35:1; 42).

Table 3. Store Jars (measurements in cm)ⁱ

No.	Pit No.	Reg. No.	Fig. No.	Rim	Base	Other
1	191	248	32:1	Concave, pointed lip, externally beveled, stepped (Rd 12)	Flattened (Bd 7)	H 50.5
2	195	247/1	32:3		Flattened	
3	121	229/1	34:2		Flattened	
4	126	237/1	35:1	Concave, tapered lip, externally beveled, stepped (Rd 12)	Flattened (Bd 6.5)	H 52.5
5	134	246/1	36:1	Everted, tapered lip, externally beveled, thicker than side (Rd 13)	Flat (Bd 6)	H 54
6	134	246/3	36:2		Flattened	
7	140	253/2	37:2		Flattened	
8	142	255/1	37:7	Everted, pointed lip, folded-out flat (Rd 11.5)	Flattened (Bd 6)	H 56.5
9	146	259/1	40:3		Flat	
10	147	260/2	41:4		Flat	Red-painted horseshoe band above one handle
11	150	263/1	42	Concave, upright, pointed lip, ridge at base (Rd 12.5)	Flat (Bd 6)	H 51.5
12	162	272/1	44:2	Upright rim, pointed top (Rd 11.5)	Flattened	Pithos; small ridge below rim
13	162	272/2	44:3	Everted, ridge at base, pointed top (Rd 18.5)	Flat (Bd 10)	No handles; one curved side, one rounded side
14	200	300/1	46:2	Everted, pointed lip, ridge at base (Rd 13)		
15	200	300/6	46:3	Everted, flattened end	Flat (Bd 4.5)	Handle starts at bottom shoulder, two parts not joining
16	204	304/1	48:5	Everted, triangular section, tapered lip, ridge at base (Rd 14)	Flattened	
17	204	304/4	48:6		Flattened	
18	207	307/1	49:5	Everted, pointed lip, folded-out flat (Rd 12.75)	Flat	
19	213	313/1	52:4	Everted, elongated, pointed lip, externally beveled, folded-out flat (Rd 13)		
20	251	351/1	52:6		Flattened	
21	GZ10	50/1	53:1	Everted, thickened, pointed lip, ridge at base (Rd 11.5)	Flattened (Bd 5)	H 60.5

ⁱ Rd = rim diameter; Bd = base diameter; Md = maximum diameter; H = total height.

Concave rims with inverted lips are not very common, yet they occur in MB II contexts, i.e., at Khirbat Ma'raba (Gershuny 2007: Fig. 3:1), Kabri Tomb 498 (Kempinski, Gershuny and Scheftelowitz 2002: Fig. 5.28:10), 'Akko Phase 3, L1000 (Beeri 2008: Fig. 6.67:4) and the third burial phase at Barqai (Gophna and Sussman 1969: Fig. 8). Variations of everted rims, as well as those folded-out flat, occur at Lakhish Grave 9021 (Singer-Avitz 2004b: Fig. 17.10:8), Jericho Tomb H11 (Group V; Kenyon 1960: Fig. 206:1), Tell Beit Mirsim Tomb 7 (Ben-Arieh 2004a: Fig. 2.3:18), Shillo Stratum VII, Area F rooms (Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993: Fig. 6.20:7), and Tel Qashish Stratum IXB (Bonfil 2003: Fig. 122:2, 8).

One store jar (Fig. 46:3) was broken and the two parts do not join. It has marks of a handle beginning at the bottom of the shoulder toward the lower body, inside which a dipper juglet (Fig. 46:5) was found.

Two of the store jars (Figs. 36:2; 41:4), both missing their neck and rim, were probably of Egyptian clay and were possibly imported from Egypt (see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume; McGovern and Harbottle 1997:151–152). The two store jars are entirely Canaanite in shape and size and must have been produced by Egyptian potters who adopted the familiar Canaanite store-jar shape, which was imported in massive quantities into Egypt as “commercial containers” (Arnold, Arnold and Allen 1995:27). Alternatively, the store jars may have been produced by Asiatic potters in Egypt and sent to Ashqelon, as gifts which could have been empty or contained a local Egyptian product for trade. As the store jars were not the only vessels made in Egypt and then imported to Ashqelon, it can perhaps be posited that some family ties existed between the people buried in the Ramat Eshkol cemetery and the people in Tell ed-Dab'a-Avaris, the large Asiatic center in northern Egypt. This, in turn, may be related to the fact that nearly three-quarters of the Canaanite jars imported to Tell ed-Dab'a proved to have originated from the southern Canaanite coast, or, in McGovern's words, the “Gaza group of Middle Bronze Age sites” (1997:151).

One of these store jars (Fig. 41:4) has an unusual decoration. Although missing its upper part, a red-painted horseshoe pattern is delineated above the existing handle. Red-painted geometric designs occur on MB II store jars, e.g., in Lakhish Stratum P-5 (Singer-Avitz 2004a: Fig. 16.12:1, 4); however, no analogies for the pattern on our store jar were found.

Jar with a Shoulder Handle (Fig. 46:3).— This jar, from Pit 200, was reconstructed from two parts that do not join. It is estimated to have been originally c. 50 cm high, with a rather wide neck, ending in an everted rim with a rounded edge and a pointed lip (rim diam. 13 cm). Fine wheel-combing appears on the shoulder and at the base of the neck. The base is small and flat (diam. 4.5 cm). The single loop handle on the shoulder is partly broken. One of the dipper juglets from this pit was discovered inside the lower part of this store jar.

Store jars with a shoulder handle appear in the transition MB I–II period in the north of the country, e.g., in Hāzor Tomb 1181 (Maeir 1997: Fig. IV.9:2) and Fassuṭa (Gershuny and Aviam 2010: Figs. 7:5, 10:5). In both cases, the height of the jars exceeds 40 cm and

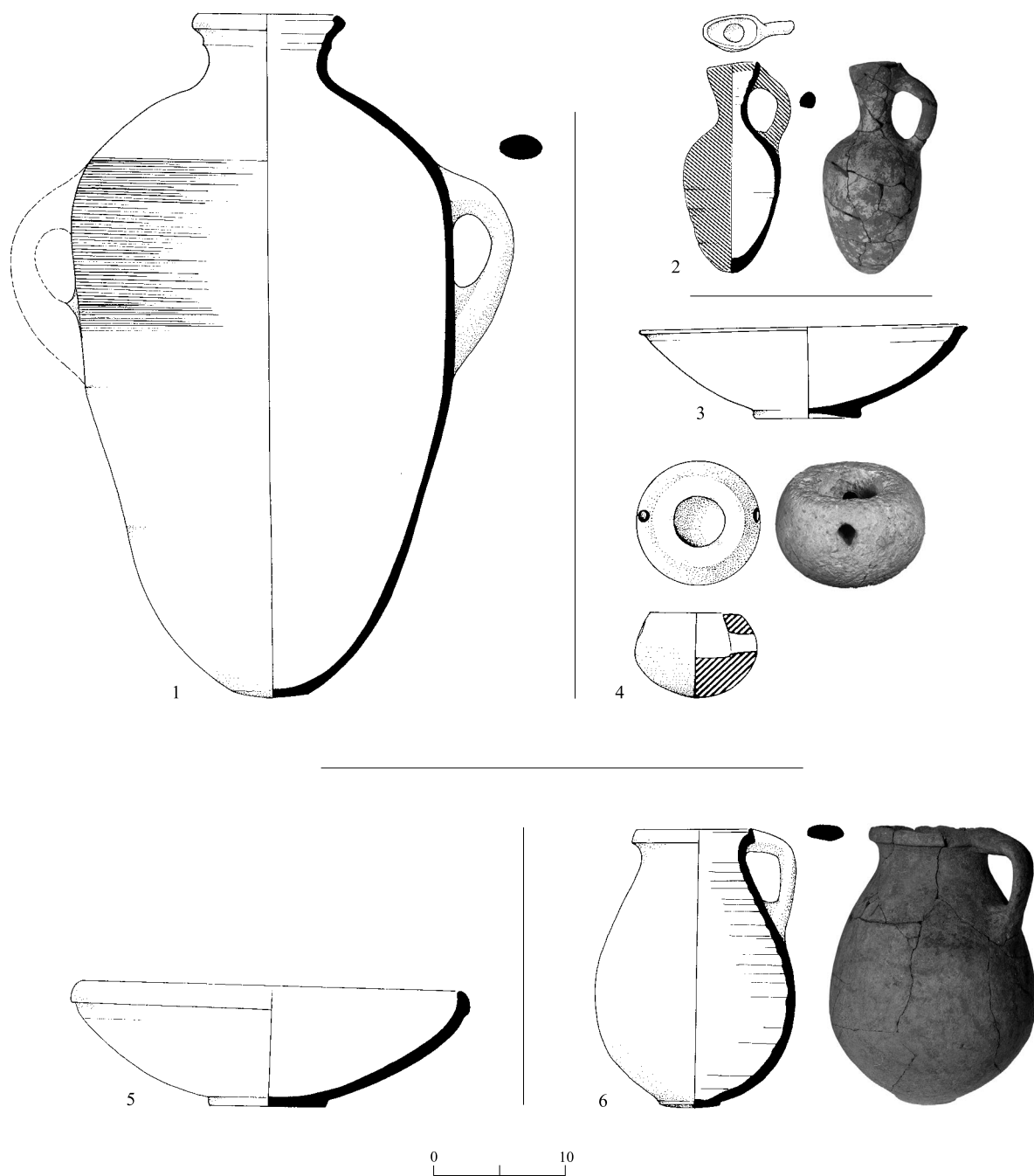


Fig. 35. Pottery and small finds from Pits 126 (1), 127 (2), 130 (3, 4), 137 (5) and 138 (6).

No.	Pit No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.	Comments
1	126	Store jar	237/1		
2	127	Juglet, dipper	238/2	2001-2491	
3	130	Bowl	240/1	2001-2492	
4	130	Pommel	241	2001-2521	Limestone
5	137	Bowl	251/2		
6	138	Jug	252/1	2001-2493	

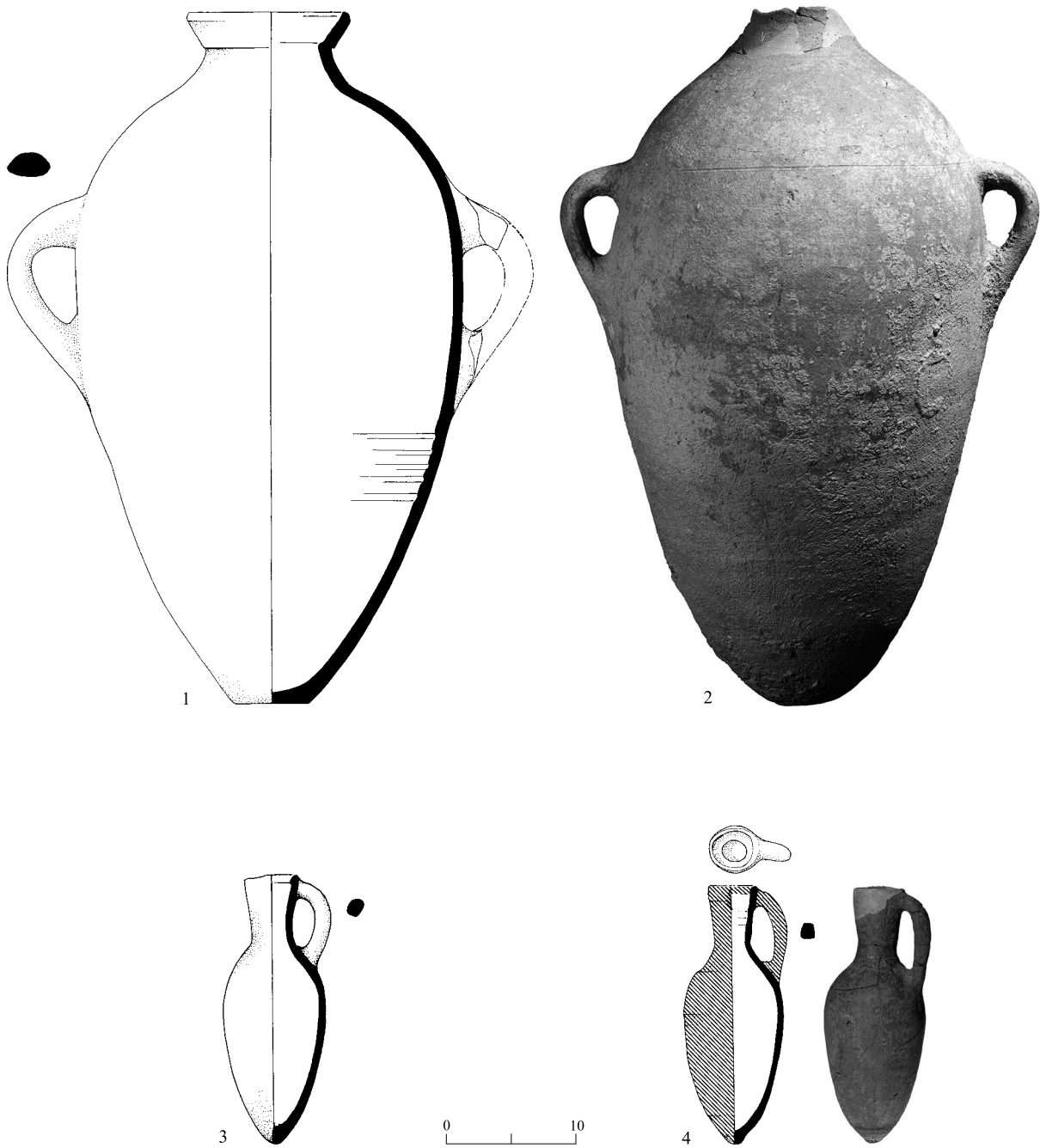


Fig. 36. Pottery from Probe Trench 134.

No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.
1	Store jar	246/1	2001-2478
2 ¹	Store jar	246/3	
3	Juglet, dipper	246/2	2001-2479
4	Juglet, dipper	246/4	2001-2480

¹ For petrographic results, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

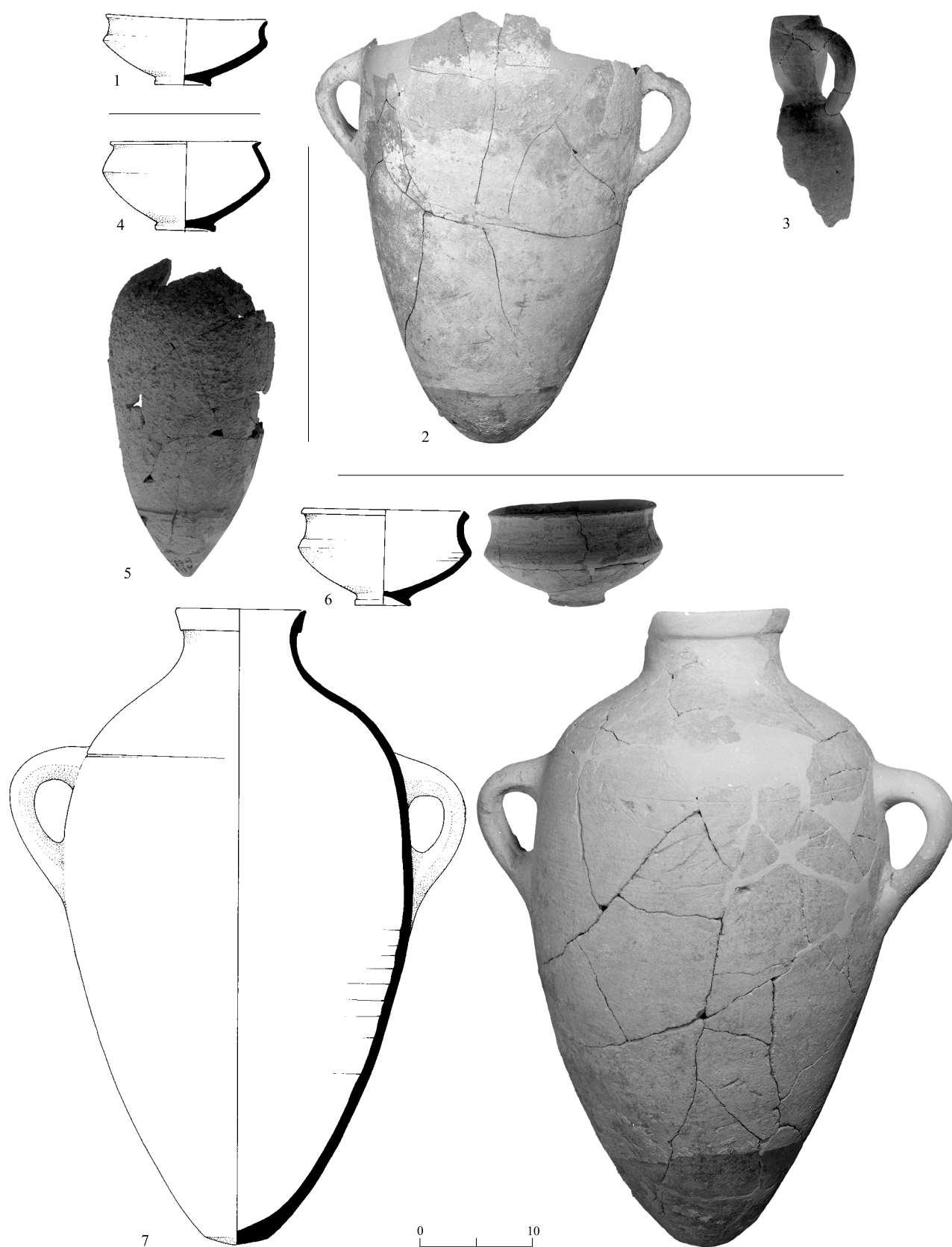
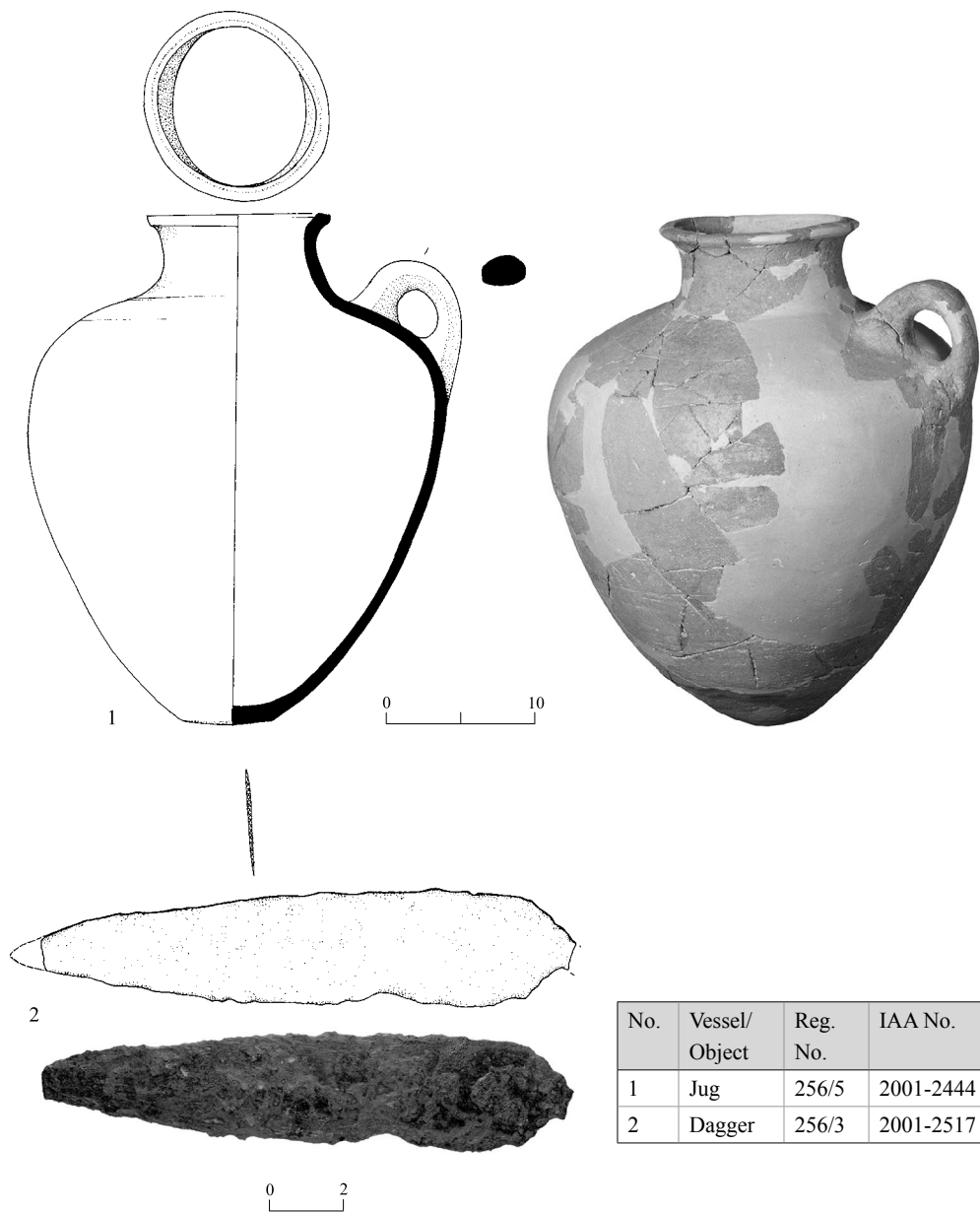


Fig. 37. Pottery from Pits 140 (1–3), 141 (4, 5) and 142 (6, 7).

◀ Fig. 37

No.	Pit No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.
1	140	Bowl	253/3	
2	140	Store jar	253/2	
3	140	Juglet, dipper	253/5	
4	141	Bowl	254/2	2001-2475
5	141	Juglet, dipper	254/4	
6	142	Bowl	255/3	2001-2477
7	142	Store jar	255/1	2001-2476



No.	Vessel/ Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.	Comments
1	Jug	256/5	2001-2444	
2	Dagger	256/3	2001-2517	Bronze

Fig. 38. Pottery and small finds from Pit 143.

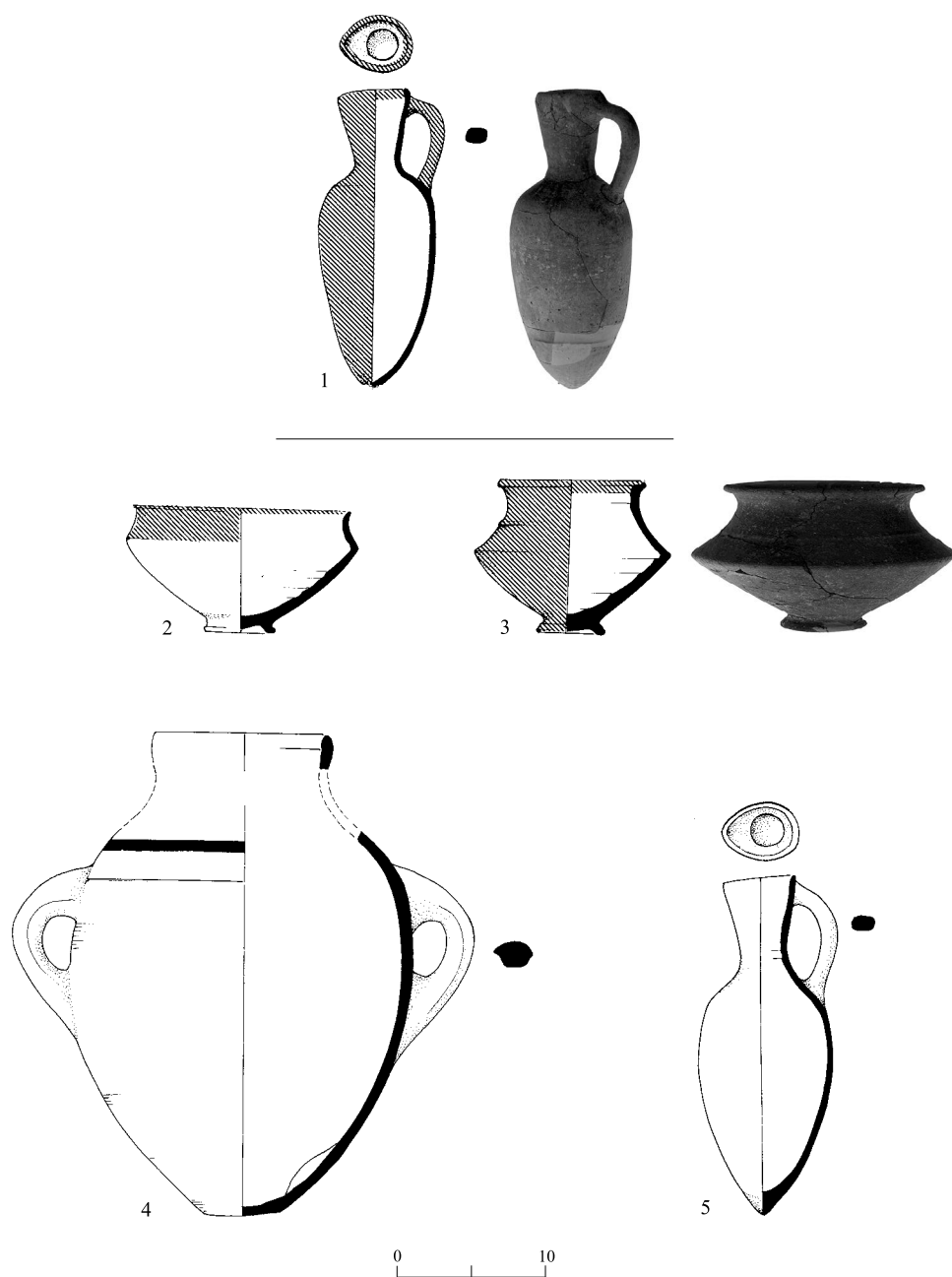


Fig. 39. Pottery from Pits 144 (1) and 145 (2–5).

No.	Pit No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.
1	144	Juglet, dipper	257/4	2001-2445
2	145	Bowl	258/6	
3	145	Bowl	258/7	2001-2446
4 ⁱ	145	Amphoriskos	258/3	
5	145	Juglet, dipper	258/9	2001-2447

ⁱFor petrographic results, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

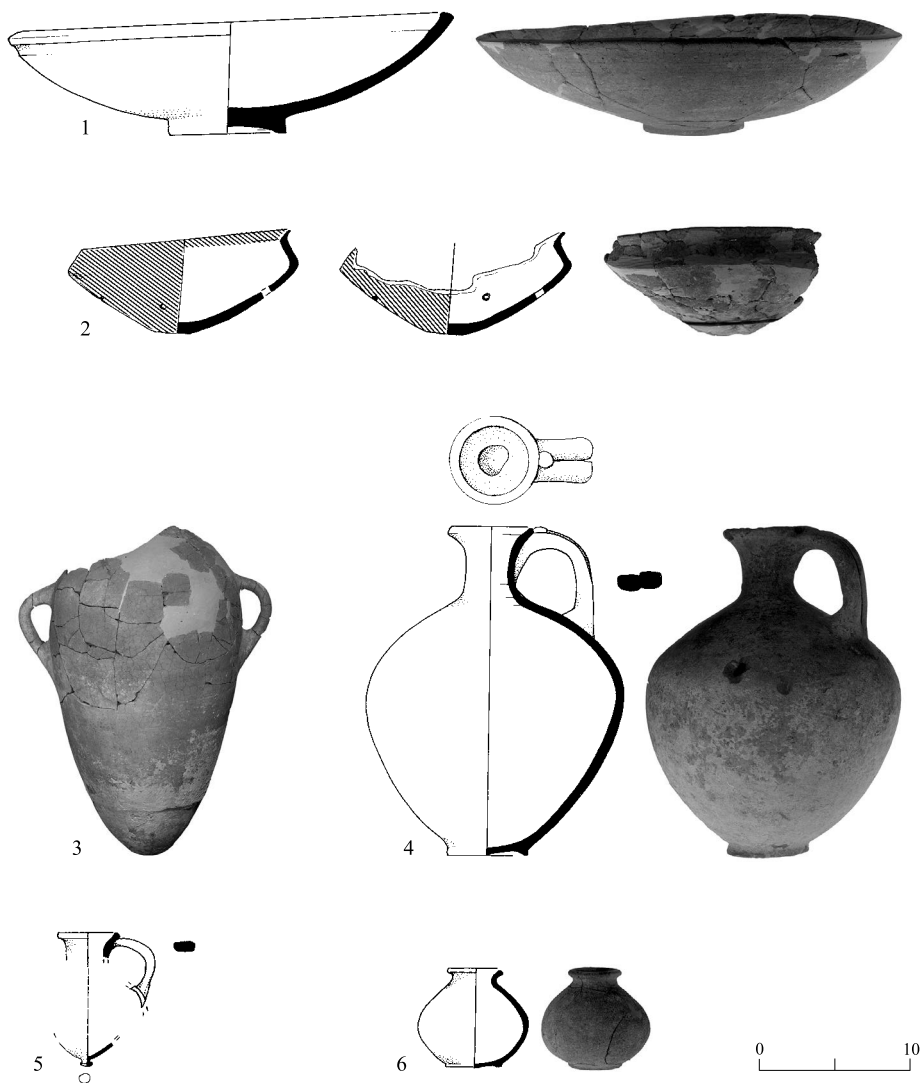


Fig. 40. Pottery from Pit 146.

No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.
1	Bowl	259/9	2001-2449
2	Bowl/colander	259/10	
3	Store jar	259/1	
4	Jug	259/4	2001-2448
5	Juglet	259/7	
6 ⁱ	Bottle, miniature	259/5	2001-1410

ⁱ For petrographic results, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

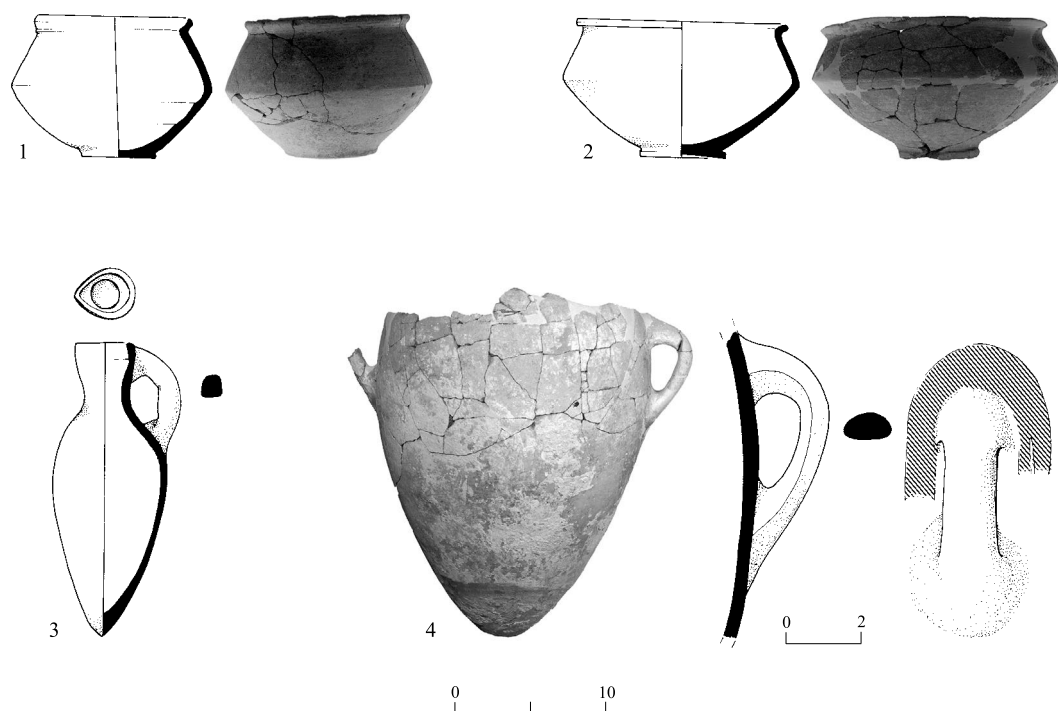


Fig. 41. Pottery from Pit 147.

No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.
1	Bowl	260/5	2001-2496
2	Bowl	260/3	
3	Juglet, dipper	260/6	2001-1411
4 ⁱ	Store jar	260/2	

ⁱ For petrographic results, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

the neck of the jars is also high (5.5–6.5 cm).¹¹ During MB II, jars with a shoulder handle are more prevalent throughout the country, e.g., at Dan Tomb 4663 (Ilan 1996: Fig. 4.91:3), Dhahrat el-Ḥumraya Tomb 62 (Ory 1948: Fig. 35) and Khirbat Ma‘raba (Gershuny 2007: Fig. 5:3). At Tel Te‘enim (Oren and Scheftelowitz 1998: Fig. 19:2), a jar with a shoulder handle is defined as a jug, although it is nearly 50(!) cm high.

Jar with a Handle from Rim to Shoulder (Fig. 45:5).— One jar from Pit 164 has a single handle extending from rim to shoulder. This feature has its beginnings in the intermediate

¹¹ Jugs with a shoulder handle and jars with the same handle are sometimes very similar, a fact that causes quite a few misunderstandings. In the case of Ashqelon, it was decided to make a clear distinction between jars and jugs based on total height. The height of jars was set between 40 and 50 cm, whereas that of jugs is up to 40 cm. It seems a better criterion for division between the two vessel types, rather than using the rim morphology, which can be the same for both kinds of vessels.

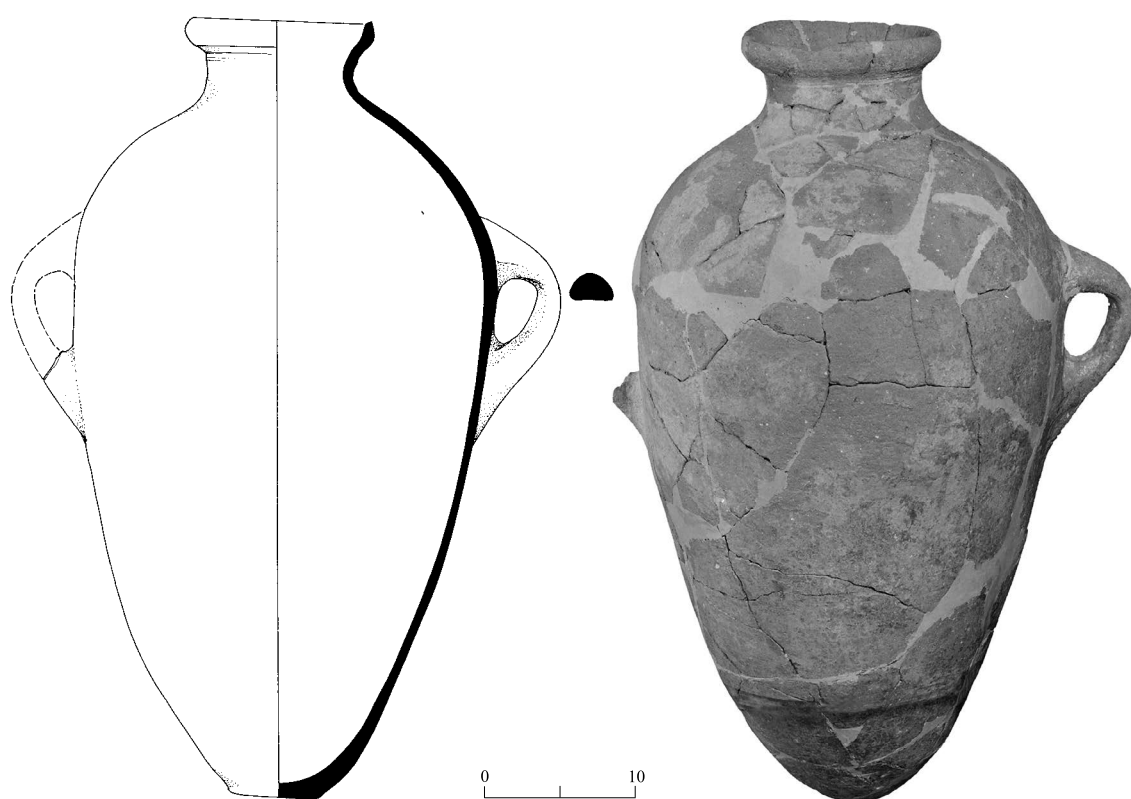


Fig. 42. Pottery from Pit 150.

No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.
1	Store jar	263/1	2001-2495

MB I–II period. Although it extends into MB II, it is not as prevalent as the jars with a shoulder handle (see above). All the following examples are over 30 cm high, but they do not exceed the height of 40 cm. One example comes from Jericho Tomb 12 (height 34.5 cm; Garstang 1932: Pl. XL:2). Another jar was found in Tell Beit-Mirsim Tomb 24 (height 33.5 cm; Ben-Arieh 2004a: Pl. 2.13:7). A third example was recovered from Megiddo Tomb 233 (height 35.75; Guy 1938: Pl. 26:1). Although there is a tendency to address any jar with a shoulder handle as a jug, regardless of its height, it must be stressed that the shoulder handle predominates in the single-handed jars.

Jars Without Handles (Figs. 34:5; 48:7).— Two specimens are illustrated. One from Pit 124 (Fig. 34:5) has an ovoid body, a small flattened base (diam. 6 cm), a short neck and an everted rim with an oblique end and a tapered lip. The jar from Pit 204 (Fig. 48:8) has an ovoid body, a flattened base and a nearly upright rim with a tapered lip. Both jars resemble store jars, but their height and lack of handles render them as jars.

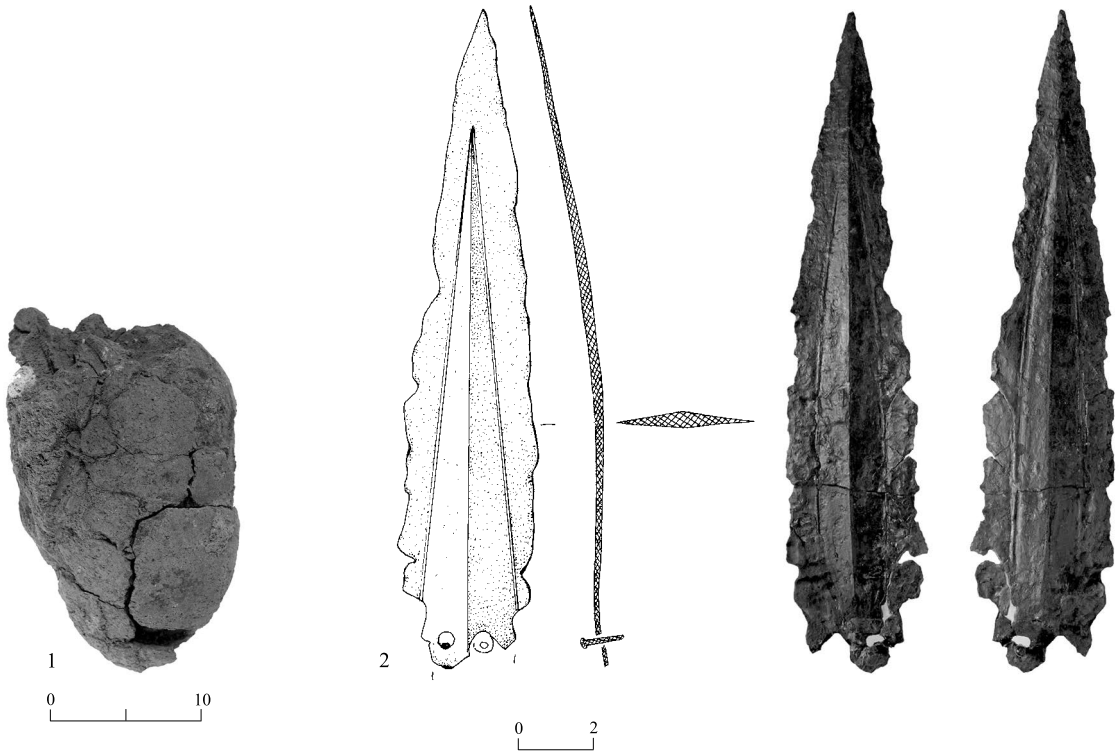


Fig. 43. Pottery and small finds from Pit 160.

No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.	Comments
1	Juglet, dipper	270/6		
2	Dagger	270/3	2001-2520	Bronze

Jars such as these are rare in MB II. A reexamination of the vessels confirmed their lack of handles and it is therefore assumed that this shape is typical of Ashqelon and has no known comparisons elsewhere in the country. It may be that the jars were produced for burials and thus were a local phenomenon.

Pithos (Fig. 44:2).— The single pithos comes from Pit 162 (Fig. 44:2). Its height is close to 70 cm, which is taken to be the minimum height of pithoi (Bonfil 1992:26), and its lack of handles prompted its definition as a pithos. It has a wide ovoid shape, with one side rather flat and the other more globular, a flat base, a short neck and a plain everted rim with a tapered lip and a ridge at the base. The rim has analogies in store jars of the MB II period, e.g., at ‘Akko Phase 3, L1000 (Beeri 2008: Fig. 6.62:17) and Lakhish Grave 9054 (Singer-Avitz 2004b: Fig. 17.13:12); pithoi with plain rims were recorded at Tel Qashish Stratum IXB (Bonfil 2003: Fig. 123:1). It would seem that the pithos from Ashqelon is a cross between a store jar and a pithos, and it may have been produced for burial purposes.

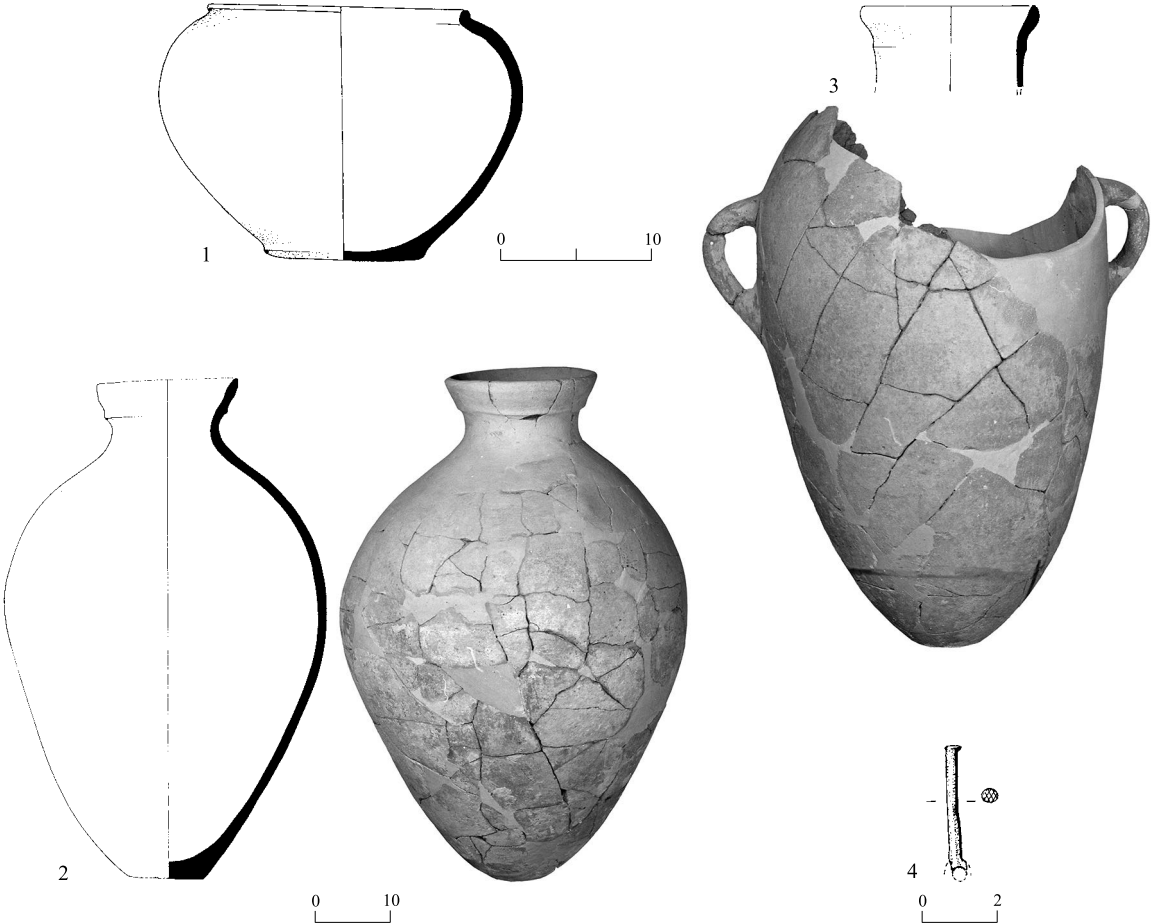


Fig. 44. Pottery and small finds from Pit 162.

No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.	Comments
1	Bowl	272/6		
2 ⁱ	Pithos	272/1	2001-2466	
3	Jar	272/2		
4	Toggle pin	272/3		Bronze

ⁱ For petrographic results, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

Amphoriskos (Fig. 39:4).— The single amphoriskos was discovered in Pit 145. Its ovoid shape is rather even, whereby its maximum diameter (c. 23 cm) is located almost at the middle of the vessel (total height 32.5 cm). It has a small flattened base (diam. 5.5 cm), two loop handles that begin at the base of the shoulder and extend below the maximum diameter, and an almost upright rim, slightly concave and internally beveled. The whole body is white-slipped and some fine wheel-combing is visible. A black-painted band circulates the shoulder above the handles.

Burial 18114 in Bet She'an Area M yielded an amphoriskos (SJ22; Maeir 2007:265, Pl. 36:17), which is similar to the one from the Ramat Eshkol cemetery in its total height, the flat base and the position of the handles. However, its shape is narrower and it has a higher neck and a different type of rim.

Although a single dark gray-to-black band is visible on the shoulder of the amphoriskos, it is highly possible that more decorative bands had been initially drawn, possibly in alternating gray/black and red colors. This vessel might be related to the group of painted MB II pottery vessels, known as RWB (Red, White, Blue; Maeir 2002:229). This ware occurs primarily along the southern coastal plain and more rarely inland (Maeir 2007:286). The linear patterns, both plain and wavy lines, appear over white slip on the shoulder and neck parts, which was applied to the painted sections of the vessel, as on the amphoriskos from Lakhish Grave 9025 (Singer-Avitz 2004b:996, Fig. 17.11:9), or the jar from Megiddo Stratum XI, Locus 4028 (Loud 1948: Pl. 34:17). Completely white-slipped vessels with similar painted decorations are uncommon. The association of the Ashqelon amphoriskos with this ware is doubtful, but at the same time cannot be entirely ruled out.

Cypriote Amphora (Fig. 47)

The single Cypriot import in the burial pits is an amphora of the White Painted V ware (Åström 1957:75–76). The amphora is made of levigated, well-fired light greenish clay; it was checked petrographically and assigned a Cypriot origin (see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume). The body is spheriform, with a flattened base, a rather wide and short neck and an everted, beveled rim (total height 39.75 cm). It has two handles positioned below the shoulder (one is missing); the lower attachment of the handle is at the body's maximum diameter. The amphora has a white-cream slip and black-painted decoration. A wide band encircles the base of the neck, two bands encircle the center of the neck and an additional upper band was applied to the beveled edge of the rim. The handle has a single strip along its sides and a potter's mark on its top, bordered by two short horizontal strokes above it and a round cavity, 0.75 cm deep. The body is decorated with six groups of vertical bands of two kinds: one is composed of five-to-six plain bands, and the second comprises five-to-six narrow bands with a bound zigzag line in the center. Three of the six groups are of the first kind, and the other three are of the second kind; each surrounds a handle on both of the vessel's sides and has another group in the center of one side. The idea of vertical lines separated by undulating or zigzag bands seems to prevail in Cypriot pottery, perhaps because it complements the circular or spherical shapes of Cypriot pots.

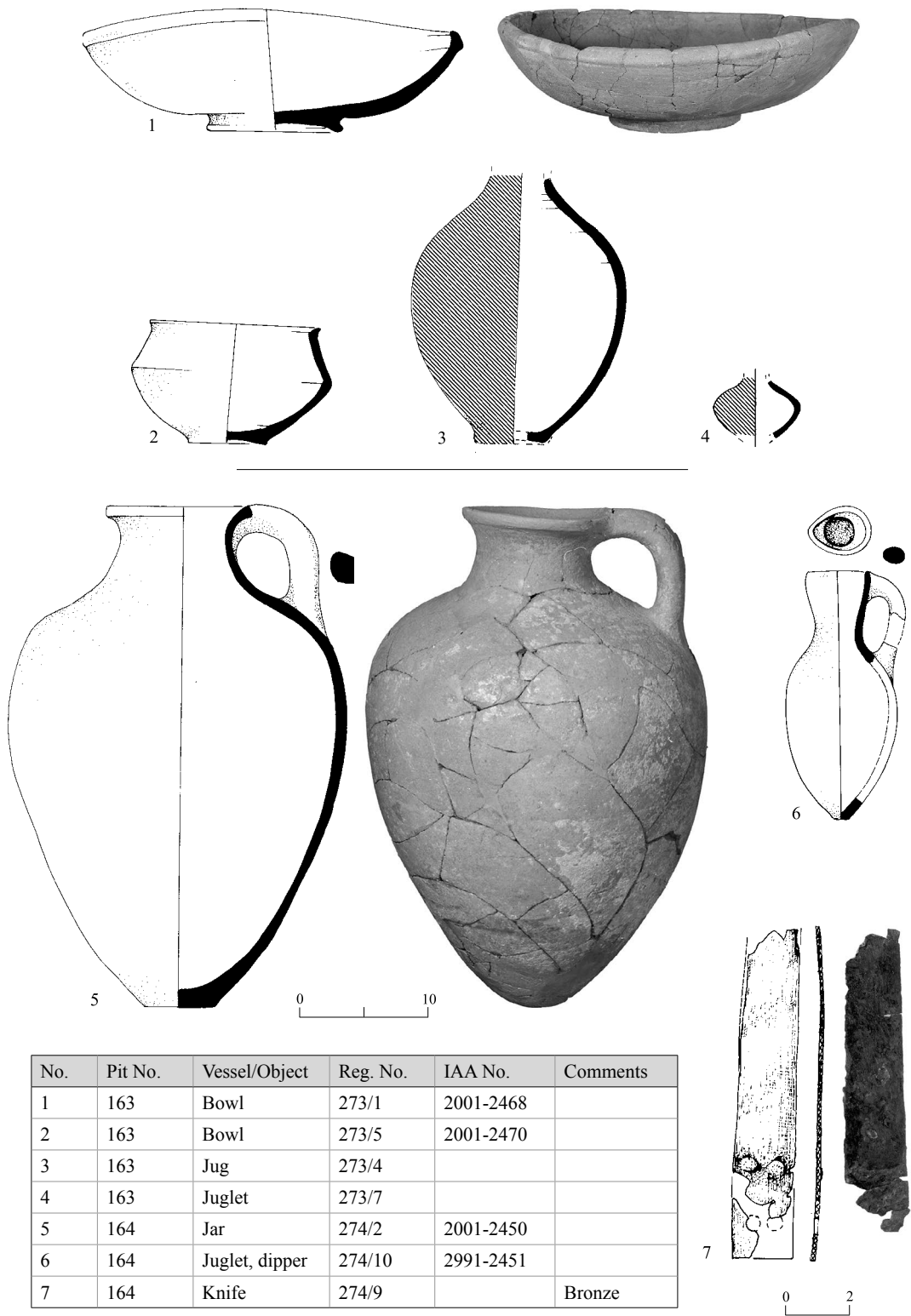


Fig. 45. Pottery and small finds from Pits 163 (1–4) and 164 (5–7).

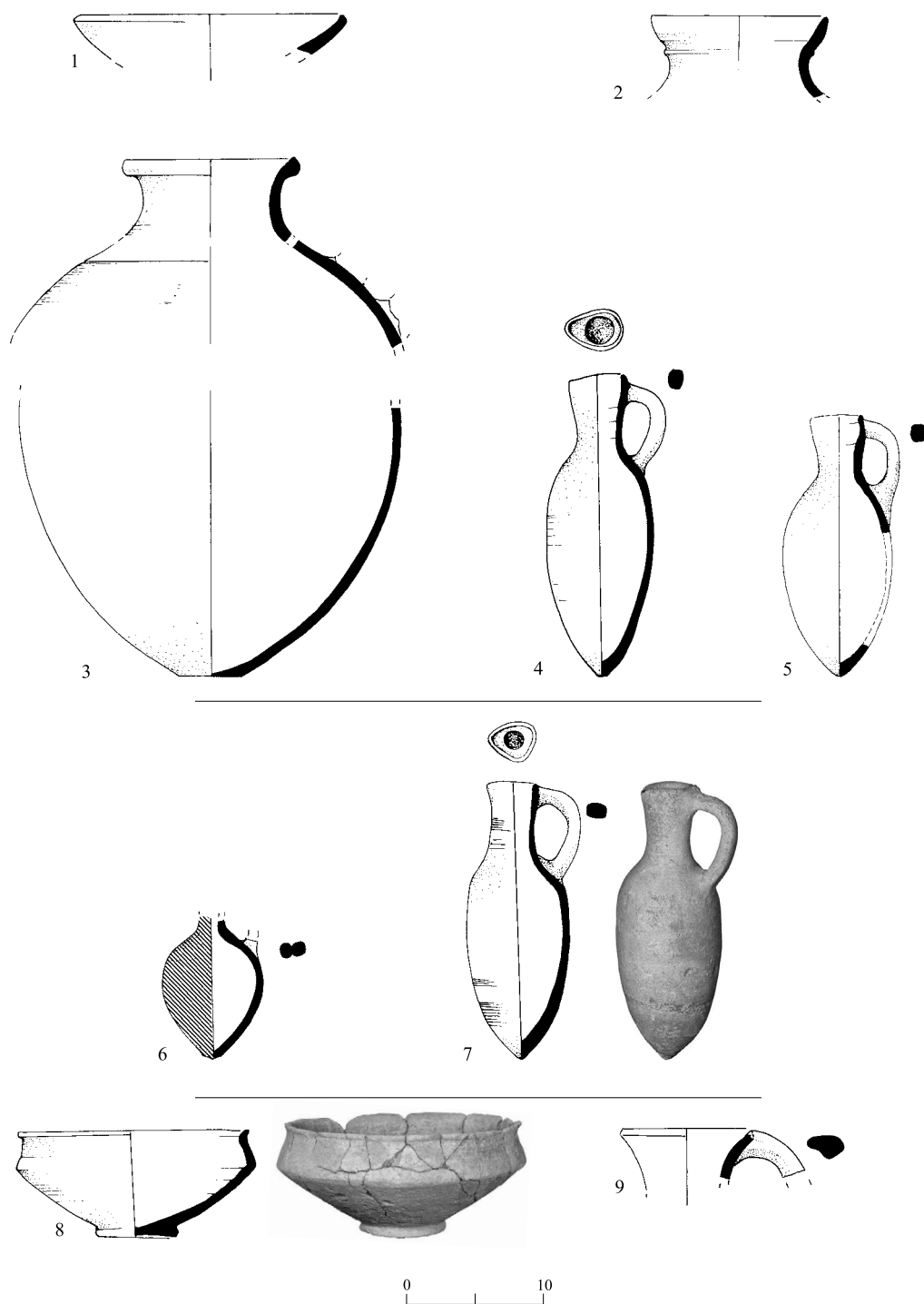


Fig. 46. Pottery from Pits 200 (1–5), 201 (6, 7) and 203 (8, 9).

◀ Fig. 46

No.	Pit No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.
1	200	Bowl	300/2	
2	200	Store jar	300/1	
3	200	Jar	300/6	2001-2474
4 ⁱ	200	Juglet, dipper	300/9	
5	200	Juglet, dipper	300/7	2001-2473
6	201	Juglet	301/3	
7	201	Juglet, dipper	301/5	2001-2509
8	203	Bowl	303/2	2001-2437
9	203	Jug	303/1	

ⁱ For petrographic results, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

One other complete WP V amphora from Israel was found in an MB II pit of Stratum XIII at Tel Mevorakh (Saltz 1984:58, Fig. 17:4, Pl. 44:1). Its shape, as well as its height, is similar to the Ashqelon amphora, but it has a plain everted rim. Its decoration scheme differs from that of the Ashqelon amphora by having bands circulating the shoulder and not the neck, a second wide band just above its maximum diameter that is bordered by two narrow bands circulating the body, and plain handles. It also has an arrow with a chevron tail painted on a lower framed section, which is rare. Another fairly complete WP V krater from Megiddo Stratum XI, Locus 5037 (Loud 1948: Pl. 36:3) has bands circulating the very short neck and upper shoulder; vertical bands on both sides of the handles; and on the upper body, horizontal wide and narrow bands with a zigzag band in-between. Body fragments and handles of WP V amphorae were recovered from LB I fills at Tel Mikhel (Negbi 1989:50, Fig. 5.4:5–16). Three fragments of WP V jars were discovered at Tel ‘Akko (Beeri 2008: Pl. 19:23–25): two fragments were found within a context dated to LB I, while the third was dated to MB III (Beeri 2008:287–288).

A body fragment possibly from an amphora or a large jug from a secondary deposition at Tell ed-Dab’a has a vertical decoration of two bands and a partially bound zigzag band (Maguire 2009: Fig. 31, DAB 109), similar to the Ashqelon amphora. A similar amphora that is part of the Censola collection is known from Alambra in Cyprus (Åström 1957: Fig. XVIII:10).

The WP V ware is traditionally affiliated with contexts of MB II–III in Syro-Palestine (Johnson 1982:66), and the Ashqelon amphora is consistent with this association. The WP V in Cyprus is dominant in MC III, continuing into LC IA, and its broad band style, which was exported to the east Mediterranean littoral, comes from the south and east of the island (Maguire 2009:73). The chronological span of WP V ware in Cyprus is not well-documented and its occurrence in Egypt and the Southern Levant cannot be used to delineate its presence in Cyprus, except for the fact that it must have been produced on the island before it was exported eastward (Maguire 2009:86). Furthermore, Maguire (2009:84) uses the term “date of occurrence” to define the dates of the Cypriot imports in their Levantine contexts, since

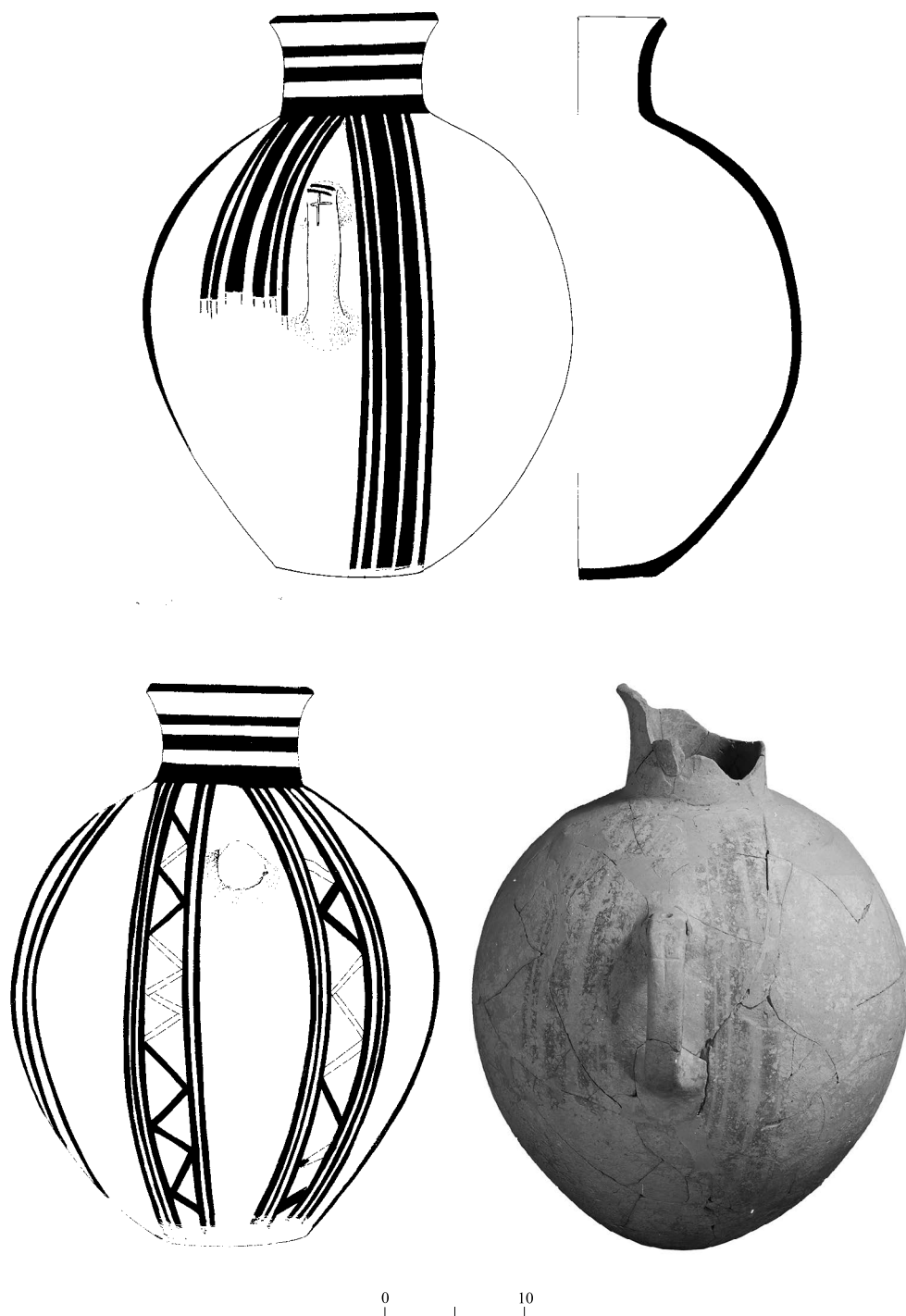


Fig. 47. Cyriot White Painted V amphora from Pit 200 (300/5).

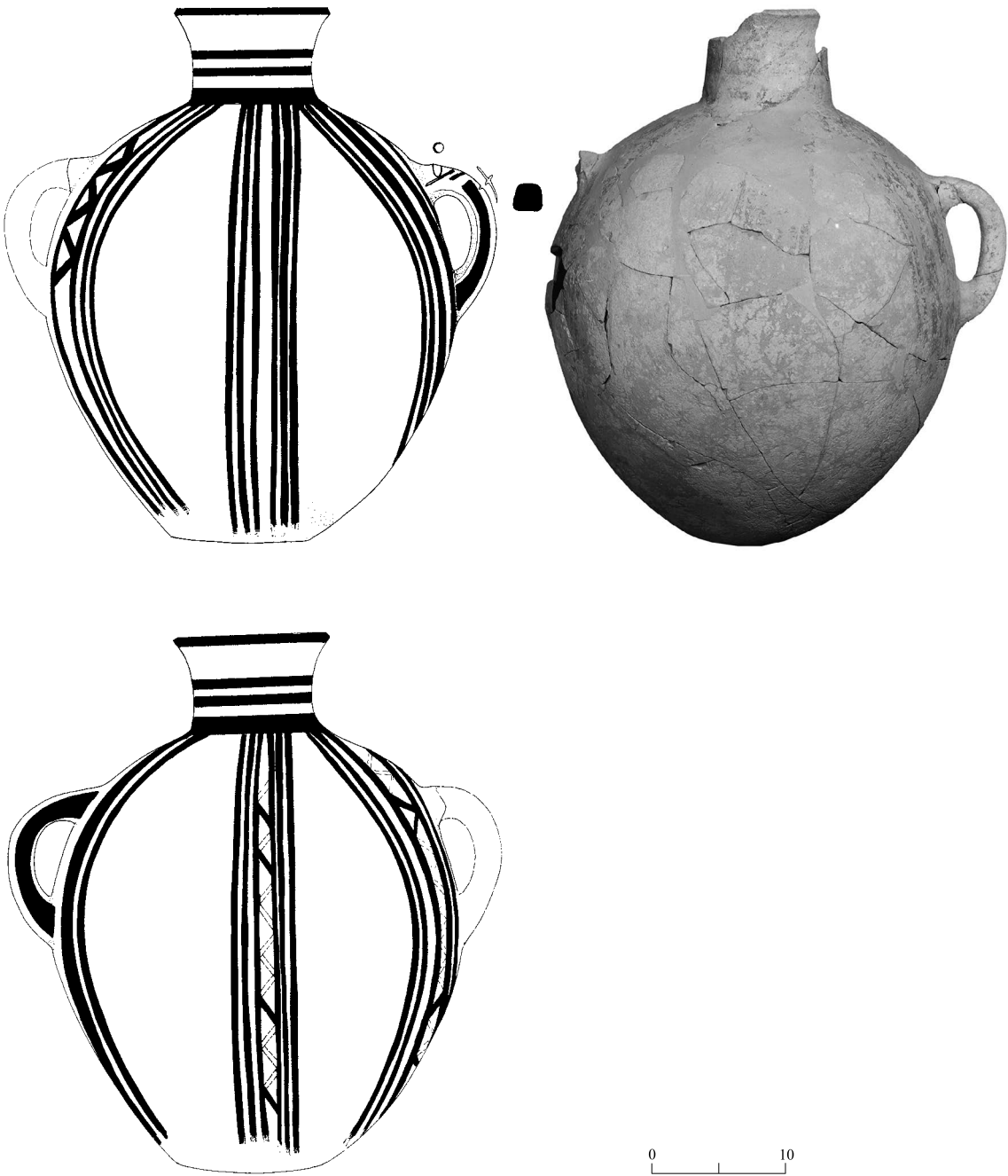


Fig. 47. (cont.).

these dates can only be used as a *terminus ante quem* for the production of the vases in Cyprus and the range of their export to the East.

The tomb evidence from Tell ed-Dab'a and the Southern Levant shows that WP V sometimes overlaps, but also occurs later than the PLS (Pendent-Line Style) and CLS (Cross-Line Style) wares, which are the common Cypriot wares exported to the Southern Levant during the Middle Bronze Age (Maguire 2009:86). The date of Pit 200, where the WP V amphora was placed, is MB II, i.e., the amphora's production and export must predate this occurrence date.

The chronology of the Cypriot Bronze Age, as worked out by Merrillees (1977:44) and revised thereafter (Merrillees 1992:51), gives a date of 1750–1650 for the MC III period, which generally correlates with the MB II period in the Southern Levant. The same date is used by Manning (2001:80) for the beginning of the LC IA period. He further states (Manning 2007:118) that WP V had its beginning in the MC II–III transition and it continued through LC IA along the eastern part of Cyprus. In this case, the Ashqelon amphora had ample time to be manufactured in Cyprus and eventually was exported to the Southern Levantine coast.

Jugs

Several categories of jugs occur in the Ramat Eshkol burial pits. These include jugs with a shoulder handle, jugs with a handle extending from rim to shoulder and bag-shaped jugs.

Jugs with a Shoulder Handle (Figs. 34:6; 38:1).— Two jugs, very similar to each other, were discovered. The first, from Pit 124 (Fig. 34:6), has a wide ovoid shape and a somewhat flattened base, a wide neck and an upright rim with a slightly concave interior, rolled out flat with a projecting end. The handle's position is tight and its bend projects upward. The second jug, from Pit 143 (Fig. 38:1), has a more slender ovoid shape with a flattened base, a wide neck with an uneven aperture and a plain everted rim, whose top and end are flat. The lower attachment of the loop handle is at the base of the shoulder.

The rim shape of the first jug and the odd position of its handle are not common; the second jug is more prevalent, although it usually has a small flat or ring base, e.g., at Tell el-Far'a (South) Tomb F557 (Price Williams 1977: Fig. 29:4), a site west of Tell Qasile, Tomb 207 (Kletter 2006: Fig. 15:4) and Tomb 800 (Kletter 2006: Fig. 20:6), Tel Aviv harbor Tomb 7B (Kaplan 1955: Fig. 2:10) and Jericho Tomb J14 (Kenyon and Holland 1982: Fig. 173:7).

Jugs with Handle from Rim to Shoulder (Figs. 40:4; 45:3, 5; 46:9).— Three jugs belong to this category; an additional jug is included (Fig. 45:3), despite its missing neck, rim and handle, but it is presumed to have had such a handle.

One jug from Pit 146 (Fig. 40:4) has a short and wide ovoid body, a shallow ring base and a two-strand handle topped with a pellet, beginning at the base of the neck up to the rim and down to the shoulder. The rim is plain and everted. Analogies to this jug come from Lakhish Tomb 1552 (Tufnell 1958: Pl. 74:670), Jericho Tomb J3 (Kenyon 1960: Fig. 116:8,

Group I) and Tomb A34 (Kenyon 1960: Fig. 141:2, Group III), Bet Shemesh Tomb 2 (Grant 1929:151, No. 372) and an almost identical jug was found in Tell Beit Mirsim Tomb 24 (Ben-Arieh 2004a: Fig. 2.12:63).

The jug from Pit 163 (Fig. 45:3) has an ellipsoid shape with a concave disc base, partly broken, and a burnished reddish slip. The shape, as well as the red slip are reminiscent of MB I jugs, e.g., from the burial cave in Zefat (Damati and Stepanski 1996: Fig. 2:1–3), as well as from the MB I–II transition period in the north of the country, e.g., Hazor Tomb 1181 (Maeir 1997: Fig. IV.7:5, 8). This jug is rather rare in the southern region of the country and may have reached Ashqelon from somewhere in the north.

The jug from Pit 203 (Fig. 46:9) is survived by the rim and beginning of a narrow neck and handle. The tip of the rim is broken, but it appears to have been plain with a flat, slightly oblique end. It resembles the top part of the jug from Pit 163. Similar jug tops usually have an ovoid body with a concave disc or ring base, e.g., in Jericho Tomb 19 (Garstang 1933: Pl. III:18).

Bag-Shaped Jugs (Figs. 34:7; 35:6; 48:8; 51:3, 4; 52:5).— This group includes five complete jugs of various bag shapes (Table 4), whose prime distinction is the height of the maximum diameter that lies at an average of 40% of the jug's total height. A jug's rim (Fig. 51:3) is included in this group, as it is nearly identical to the rim of another bag-shaped jug from the same Pit 210.

Table 4. Bag-Shaped Jugs (measurements in cm)ⁱ

No.	Pit No.	Reg. No.	Fig. No.	Rim	Base	Handle	Other
1	124	232/2	34:7	Upright, triangular section (Rd 11.5)	Flat disc (Bd 6)	Missing	Md 17, H 24, Md of H = 44%
2	138	252/1	35:6	Everted, upright pointed lip (Rd 9.5)	Flattened disc (Bd 4.5)	Rim to shoulder	Md 15.5, H 21, Md of H = 43%
3	204	304/16	48:8	Trefoil aperture; everted, upright end (Rd 10.5)	Flattened (Bd 4)	Rim to shoulder	Md 16.5, H 26, Md of H = 34%
4	210	310/3	51:3	Everted, upright, flat end, pointed edge			
5	210	310/5	51:4	Everted, upright lip (Rd 9.5)	Flat (Bd 2.5)	Rim(?) to shoulder	Md 14.4, H 21.25, Md of H = 40%
6	216	316/3	52:5	Everted, upright end, pointed lip (Rd 9)	Flat disc (Bd 3.5)	Two-strands, rim to shoulder	Md 16.5, H 21.5, Md of H = 40%

ⁱ Rd = rim diameter; Bd = base diameter; Md = maximum diameter; H = total height.

The bag-shaped jug sporadically appears in MB I, for example in a tomb at Nabi Rubin (Mayer 1926: Pl. 1), in Lakhish Cemetery 9000, Grave 9059 (Singer-Avitz 2004b: Fig. 17:14) and in the courtyard cemetery of Tell el-‘Ajjul (Tufnell 1962: Fig. 11:32, Group 3; Fig. 14:61, Group 5), as well as in Pit 252 of the Ramat Eshkol cemetery (Fig. 31:10). It reaches its peak production in MB II and is most prevalent in the southern region of the country, occurring mainly in burial contexts. The dominant base of comparative jugs is flat, and the rim of most jugs resembles that of the Ashqelon jugs. Jugs with a completely rounded bottom appear in Gezer Tomb 1 (Macalister 1912, III: Pl. LXI:22) and Cave 15 I (Macalister 1912, III: Pl. XX:14), and a single jug with a plain everted rim and a tapered lip occurs in Giv‘at Sharet Tomb 2 (Bahat 1976: Fig. 22). Trefoil apertures are not very common to bag-shaped jugs; two examples come from Tel Aviv harbor Tomb 14 (Kaplan 1955: Fig. 2:11) and an MB II burial cave at Mazor.¹²

The prevalence of bag-shaped jugs in the southern region of Canaan is not surprising as the inspiration for this form has come from Egypt. Egyptian pottery has a general tendency toward rounded bottoms and bases, the absence of handles and wide apertures (Redmount 1995:78), as can be seen in the graves from Tell el-Yahudiyeh (Tufnell 1978: Fig. 6) and in the rooms of the pyramid in Dahschur (Arnold 1982:36, Fig. 12), as well as in the Egyptian vessel forms of the second intermediate period at Tell ed-Dab‘a (Bietak 1991: Fig. 10). However, the adapted form had indigenous features, namely the defined bases and a single handle with an ellipsoid or rounded cross-section, which extends from the rim to the shoulder.

Juglets

Many of the juglets, due to their small size and consequently thin walls, have been completely shattered and only a few diagnostic sherds could be saved. Three juglets of various shapes and appeal are illustrated. The first juglet from Pit 146 (Fig. 40:5) is delicate and thin. The upper neck and handle cannot be joined to the base because of missing fragments. The body has a rather shallow piriform shape with a projecting small button base. The single handle has an ellipsoid cross-section, and the everted neck ends in a plain rim with a rounded end. A burnished, light creamy slip is applied to the juglet. This juglet is somewhat unusual, as its wide aperture and neck, with the handle beginning slightly below the rim, is reminiscent of jugs from this period, yet the base is certainly that of a juglet, and most likely of a piriform shape.

Another juglet, from Pit 163 (Fig. 45:4), is red-slipped and burnished. It is smaller in size and has a somewhat biconical body shape. Its base, neck and rim are missing, as well as the handle. This juglet can be compared to juglets from Tell Beit Mirsim Tomb 24 (Ben-Arieh 2004a: Fig. 2.10:48, 49).

The third juglet, from Pit 201 (Fig. 46:6), is red-slipped and burnished. It has an ovoid body, a convex small disc base and the bottom part of a two-strand handle on the shoulder;

¹² The MB II burial cave from Mazor has been studied by the author and submitted for publication.

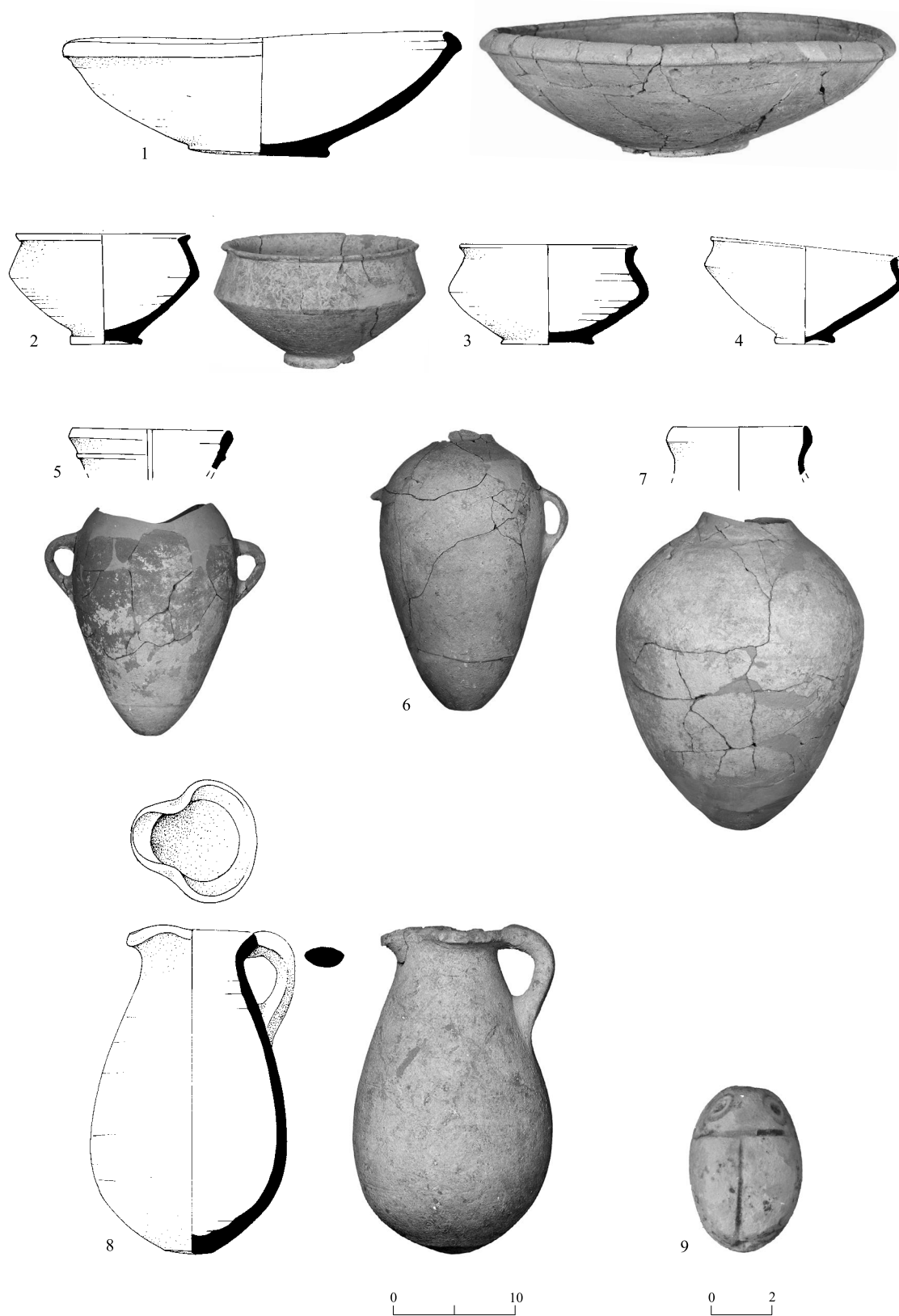


Fig. 48. Pottery and small finds from Pit 204.

◀ Fig. 48

No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.
1	Bowl	304/7	2001-2439
2	Bowl	304/11	2001-2441
3	Bowl	304/15	2001-2442
4	Bowl	304/10a	2001-2440
5	Store jar	304/1	
6	Store jar	304/4	2001-2438
7	Jar	304/5	
8 ⁱ	Jug	304/16	2001-2443
9 ⁱⁱ	Scarab	304/17	2001-2522

ⁱ For petrographic results, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

ⁱⁱ See Ben-Tor, this volume

its neck and rim are missing. The same body shape, and likewise missing its neck and rim, is apparent in a juglet from Tell Beit Mirsim Tomb 7 (Ben-Arieh 2004a: Fig. 2.1:11).

Dipper Juglets

The second most popular vessel in the Ramat Eshkol burial pits, frequently associated with store jars, but also found on its own, is the dipper juglet (Table 5). A total of 70 dipper juglets were discovered; 3 dipper juglets from Pit 134 are not included in the count, and 28 (40%) of them were discarded due to their crumbling state.

Most of the dipper juglets are ellipsoid in shape (Figs. 33:7; 34:3; 36:3, 4; 39:5; 45:6; 46:4, 5; 49:1, 2, 6); the pointed base is prevalent (Figs. 33:7; 36:3, 4; 37:5; 39:1, 5; 41:3; 46:5, 7; 49:6), as well as the rounded or rectilinear-section handle, which extends from the rim to the shoulder (Figs. 33:1, 7; 34:3; 35:2; 36:3, 4; 41:3; 45:6; 46:7; 49:1, 6). Only five of the illustrated juglets have a burnished red slip (Figs. 35:2; 36:4; 39:1; 49:1; 50:3). On the whole, the dipper juglets seem to have been made according to a general standard, whereby it is composed of two-thirds body and one-third neck. The different volume quantities stem from the fluctuations in height, but mainly in the maximum diameter of the juglets. Most of the juglets have a pinched orifice, although in several it is more rounded than funneled.

An exceptional dipper juglet (Fig. 49:6) was found inside a store jar whose lower body was preserved. The juglet has a clay pipe inserted through its lower body. The pipe was made separately and then placed through the juglet when it was drying, before it turned leather-hard. The course of the pipe is somewhat diagonal; it enters through a hole in the wall close to the front side of the juglet (the pinched mouth side) and exits through a hole bored from inside closer to the back (the handle side). It is feasible that such a course was chosen as it may have aided in keeping the dipper juglet in an upright position while hanging over a store jar aperture. The actual hanging was done with a wooden dowel or a branch, inserted through the pipe in the juglet, long enough to extend beyond the store jar orifice.

The only comparison for the pipe that runs across the lower body of this dipper juglet is found in an ovoid juglet of the local Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware, which was discovered in a burial cave of the MB I–II transition period at Tur'an, in the lower Galilee (Gershuny and Eisenberg 2005:13, Figs. 11, 12). The position of the pipe in the Tur'an juglet is above its maximum diameter. This, combined with its very thick base, implies it was probably more balanced than the dipper juglet, whose base is of regular thickness and whose pipe is positioned in the lower half of the body.

As dipper juglets are so popular in mortuary contexts of the Middle Bronze Age, it seems superfluous to cite comparisons; however, it should be interesting to examine the dipper-juglet data from the Ramat Eshkol cemetery against the study of dipper juglets from Tell ed-Dab'a (Kopetzky 2002). At that site, dipper juglets appear to become taller at the beginning of MB II, albeit tall and ellipsoid dipper juglets with pointed bases are confined to Stratum E/1, which marks the end of MB II (Kopetzky 2002:235, Fig. 5), unlike their earlier appearance in the Southern Levant.

Table 5. Dipper Juglets

No.	Pit No.	Reg. No.	Fig. No.	Height (cm)	Max. Diam. (cm)	Vol. (ml)	Ovoid Shape	Ellipsoid Shape	Pointed Base	Flat/ flattened Base	Handle from Rim	Handle below Rim	Burnished Red Slip
1	101	206/2	33:1								+		
2	120	228/2	33:7	22.75	7.75	350		+	+		+		
3	121	229/2	34:3	20.00	7.50	300		+		+	+		
4	127	238/2	35:2	16.00	7.75	220	+			+	+		+
5	134	246/2	36:3	21.00	8.00	360		+	+		+		
6	134	246/4	36:4	20.00	7.75	310		+	+		+		+
7	140	253/5	37:3									+	
8	141	254/4	37:5				+		+				
9	144	257/4	39:1	20.50	8.00	380	+		+			+	+
10	145	258/9	39:5	22.75	9.25	490		+	+			+	
11	147	260/6	41:3	19.50	7.50	330	+		+		+		
12	164	274/10	45:6	19.75	8.75	400		+		+	+		
13	200	300/9	46:4	22.00	8.00	410		+		+		+	
14	200	300/7	46:5	19.00	8.25	330		+	+			+	
15	201	301/5	46:7	20.25	7.75	330	+		+		+		
16	205	305/12	49:1	20.25	8.75	380		+		+	+		+
17	206	306/3	49:2					+		+		+	
18	207	307/7	49:6	20.00	8.00	330		+	+		+		
19	209	309/9	50:3	18.25	7.50	260	+			+		+	+

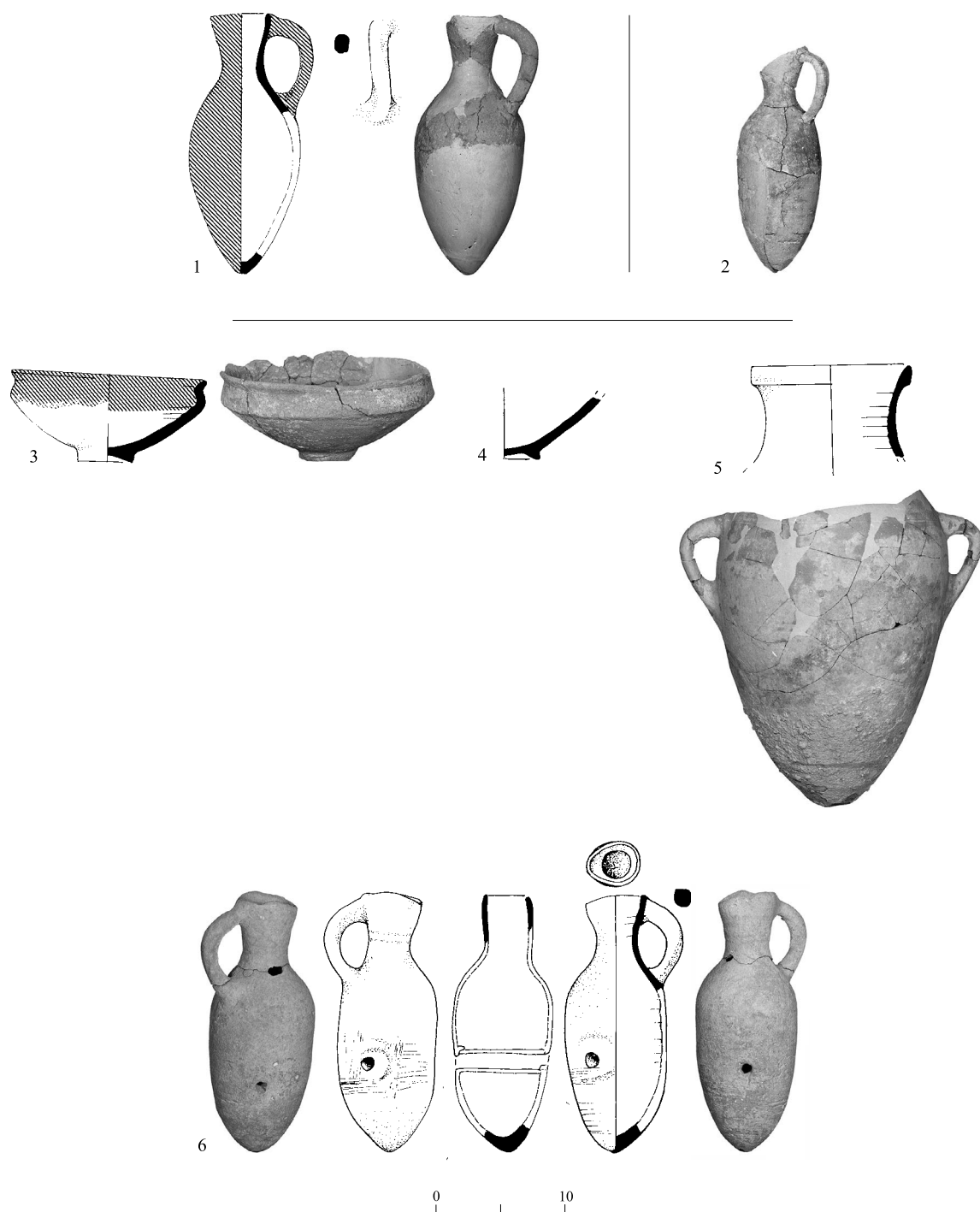


Fig. 49. Pottery from Pit 205 (1), 206 (2) and 207 (3–6).

◀ Fig. 49

No.	Pit No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.
1	205	Juglet, dipper	305/12	2001-2485
2	206	Juglet, dipper	306/3	2001-2486
3	207	Bowl	307/5	2001-2487
4	207	Bowl	307/8	
5	207	Store jar	307/1	
6	207	Juglet, dipper	307/7	2001-2488

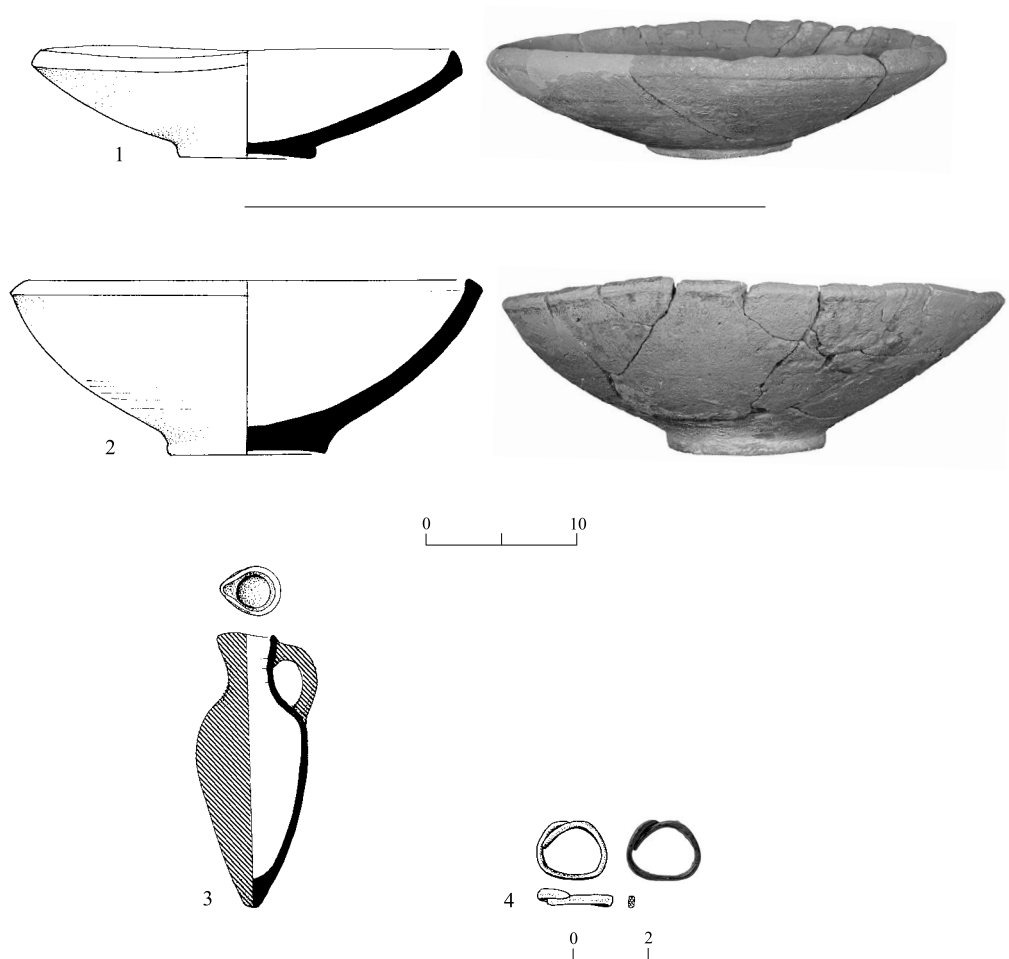


Fig. 50. Pottery from Pits 208 (1) and 209 (2–4).

No.	Pit No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.	Comments
1	208	Bowl	308/2	2001-2452	
2	209	Bowl	309/2		
3 ⁱ	209	Juglet, dipper	309/9	2001-2454	
4	209	Ring	309/3	2001-2518	Copper

ⁱ For petrographic results, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

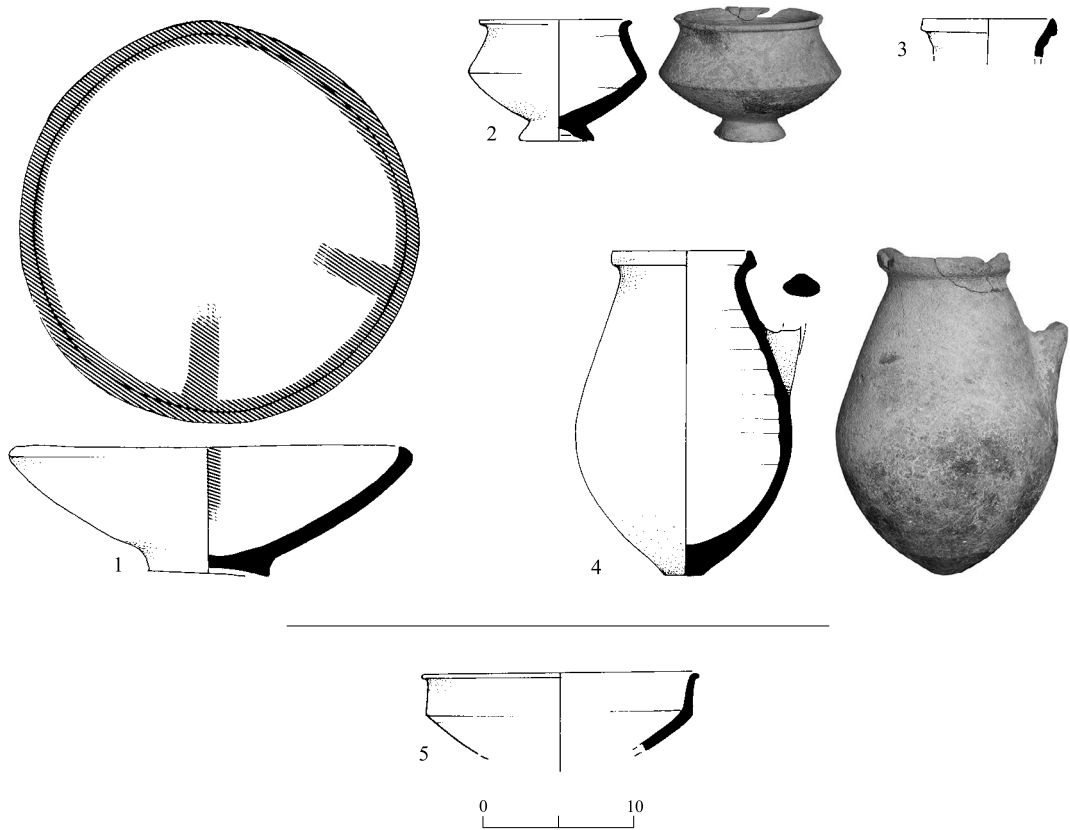


Fig. 51. Pottery from Pits 210 (1–4) and 211 (5).

No.	Pit No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.
1	210	Bowl	310/7	
2 ⁱ	210	Bowl	310/8	2001-2457
3	210	Jug	310/3	
4	210	Jug	310/5	2001-2456
5	211	Bowl	311/2	

ⁱ For petrographic results, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

Bottle (Fig. 40:6)

This miniature bottle from Pit 146 has a small spherical body (rim and base diam. 3.5 cm, max. diam. 7.25 cm, height 6.5 cm), a shallow ring base, an everted rim with a flattened end and a burnished dark gray-black slip.

The shape and size of this bottle make it a rare specimen. Although locally produced (see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume), similar vessels have been found in Egypt. The

various pottery types that appear in the pyramid of Amenemhat III in Dhaschur include two small jar types (Arnold 1982: Fig. 14:38, 39). A small bottle, although having a rather high neck, comes from Tomb A/II-p/14 Grave 18 at Tell ed-Dab'a (Forstner-Müller 2001: Fig. 17a:12). This shape continues into the Late Kingdom and appears in a tomb assemblage from Saqqara (Bourriau 1991: Fig. 6:9–11), which is dated to the reign of Amenophis I (Bourriau 1991:140).

It is rather evident that the Egyptian form was adjusted to conform with local forms, as clearly seen in the shallow ring base and the slight bulge of the body. It may have been produced by a potter who was familiar with Egyptian pottery shapes, and the assimilation of the foreign shape into the local repertoire is one way of enriching the indigenous ceramic assemblage.

Summary of the Pottery

Summing up the ceramic data from the MB II burial pits, it appears that the homogeneity of the finds points to a rather short and limited period of use. Except for a handful of distinct vessels, the majority are domestic and of daily use. The following points should be noted:

- (1) The concave disc base is dominant among the platter bowls (51%);
- (2) The ring base dominates the carinated bowls (55%);
- (3) Burnished red slip on the shoulder or rim of carinated bowls is rather scarce;
- (4) Most of the carinated bowls (22%) are wide, i.e., the rim diameter is at least 90% of the maximum diameter, whereas 11% are open, whereby rim diameter exceeds the maximum diameter;
- (5) There are no carinated bowls of fine thin ware with high ring or trumpet bases;
- (6) Shape and other features of store jars conform to the general appearance of MB II store jars in the Southern Levant—the flattened base dominates (70%) and the everted rims have various lip terminations;
- (7) The bag-shaped jugs are dominant—only two have a burnished red slip and the flattened and flat disc bases are most common;
- (8) Piriiform juglets occur in negligible numbers—of the sixteen juglet fragments discovered, two were discarded, one fragment has a button base and a two-strand handle and four others have button bases, four have a two-strand handle, which could belong to cylindrical juglets as well, only two bear a burnished red slip, while two other fragments have a burnished dark gray slip;
- (9) Cylindrical juglets are non-existent, although a single fragment of a two-strand handle and a flaring rim may have belonged to such a juglet;
- (10) Dipper juglets are mostly plain, only 26% (n = 18) have a burnished red slip;
- (11) A handful of pottery vessels in the burial pits can be regarded as distinct, including a complete Cypriote WP V amphora (Fig. 47), a miniature bottle (Fig. 40:6), inspired by contemporary Egyptian shapes, and a dipper juglet with a clay pipe running across its lower body (Fig. 49:6).

METAL ARTIFACTS

The bronze articles include four daggers, a knife, two toggle pins, one of which is broken at the eyelet, an awl, a bronze fragment with rivets and a ring.

Daggers (Figs. 38:2; 43:2; 52:1; 53:2)

One dagger was found in Pit 143 (Fig. 38:2). The tip of the blade and its tang are broken off, the edges of the blade are uneven and slightly chipped, and the shoulders are unevenly slanted (preserved length 128 mm, max. breadth 325 mm).

This dagger seems to be a variant of the long-tanged daggers, which Philip classified as Type 11 (1989:115). The broken tang is somewhat bent and the break may have occurred where a possible rivet hole was borne. A dagger from Lakhish Tomb 119 (Tufnell 1958: Pl. 22:17), although much better preserved, has a single rivet hole right at the beginning of the tang. These daggers are absent in the north of the country and concentrate in the south and the central mountain region, with the Jezreel Valley being the northern limit.

Another dagger comes from Pit 160 (Fig. 43:2). Its blade displays a central prominent rib whose margins are marked by a double line. The butt is an extension of the mid-rib; it was probably square and is partly broken off. Two rivets are preserved *in situ* and the other two were found nearby. The blade has a pointed tip and the edges are chipped and uneven (preserved length 177 mm, max. preserved breadth 35 mm).

This dagger belongs to Type 17 of Philip's classification (1989:120–121, Fig. 39). It is essentially a southern type, with sporadic occurrences in the central and north regions, e.g., Tell Far'a (North) Tomb A (de Vaux and Stève 1947:135, Pl. XX:3) and the MB I–II burial cave in Wadi Hamra at Zefat (Damati and Stepanski 1996: Fig. 15). It appears in burial contexts dating to MB II, as clearly observed in Jericho T9 (Garstang 1932: Pl. 37:6). It is also rather prominent at Tell ed-Dab'a, where it appears in tombs of Strata E/2 to D/3, spanning the MB II–III periods (Philip 2006:142).

A third dagger was found in Pit 212 (Fig. 52:1). The blade has concave sides, a partly rounded tip and sloping shoulders. The tang is narrow, with a flattened end. Near the tip of the blade and lower on its side the metal is broken and partly missing (preserved length 205 mm, max. preserved breadth 55 mm, length of tang 47 mm).

The fourth dagger was excavated in Giv'at Ziyyon Pit 10 (Fig. 53:2). It is a rather short dagger, having a blade with concave sides and a rounded tip. The tang is narrow with a tapered end. Close to the right edge of the blade, on both sides, there are short and diagonal grooved strokes (total length 160 mm, max. preserved breadth 47 mm, length of tang 40 mm).

These two last daggers are both long-tanged Type 10 (Philip 1989:113–114). The concavity of the blades' sides suggests frequent resharpening, which indicates a cutting function for these daggers, rather than a stabbing one. Although this dagger type is prominent in the central and southern regions, several daggers have been found in northern sites, ruling out the notion that this dagger is solely a southern type. This dagger type was found throughout the Southern

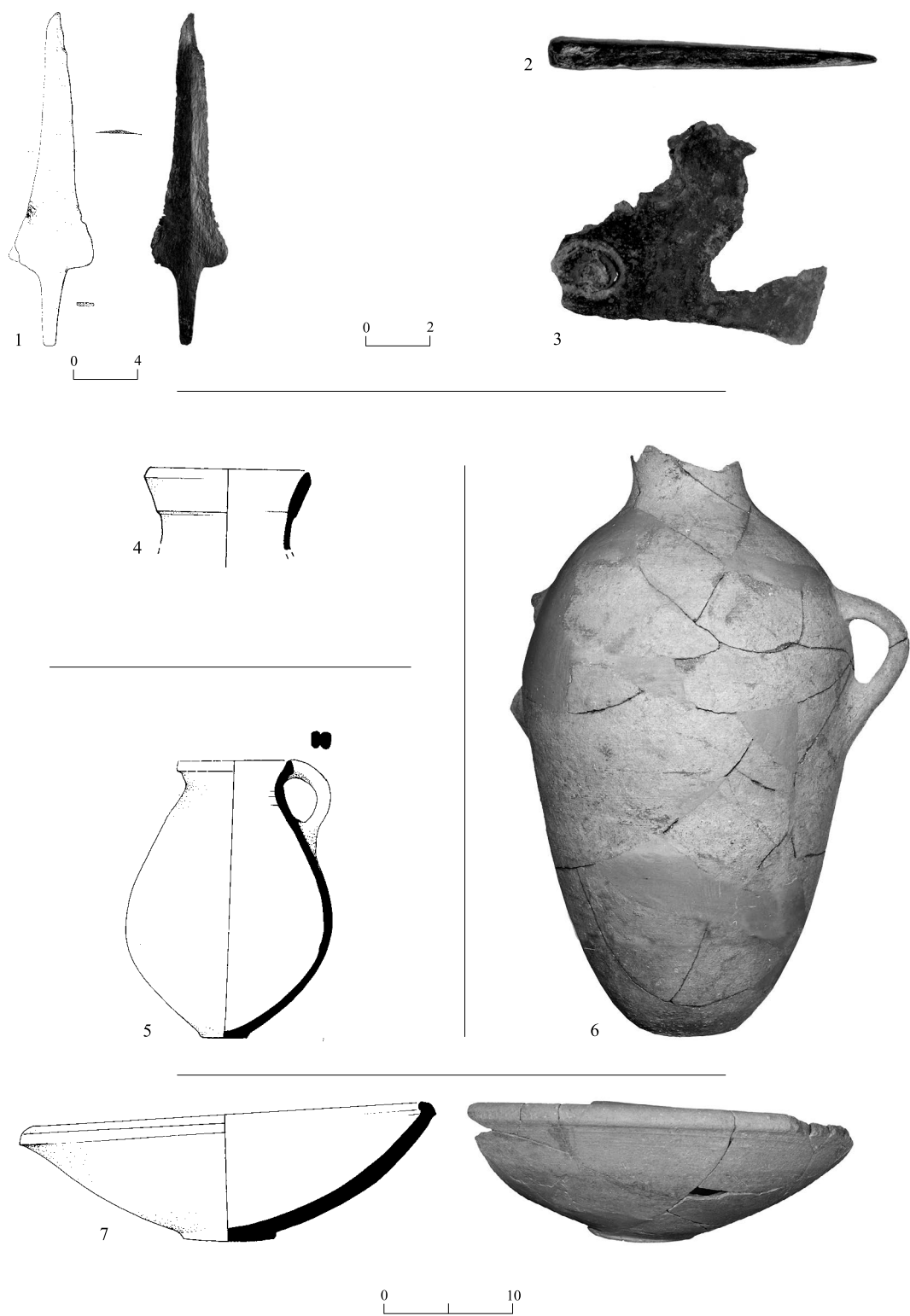


Fig. 52. Pottery and bronze artifacts Pits 212 (1–3), 213 (4), 216 (5), 251 (6) and 254 (7).

◀ Fig. 52

No.	Pit No.	Vessel/Object	Reg. No.	IAA No.	Comments
1	212	Dagger	312/9	2001-2519	Bronze
2	212	Awl	312/10		Bronze
3	212	Fragment	312/5		Bronze
4	213	Store jar	313/3		
5 ⁱ	216	Jug	316/3		
6	251	Store jar	351/1		
7	254	Bowl	354/2		

ⁱ For petrographic results, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

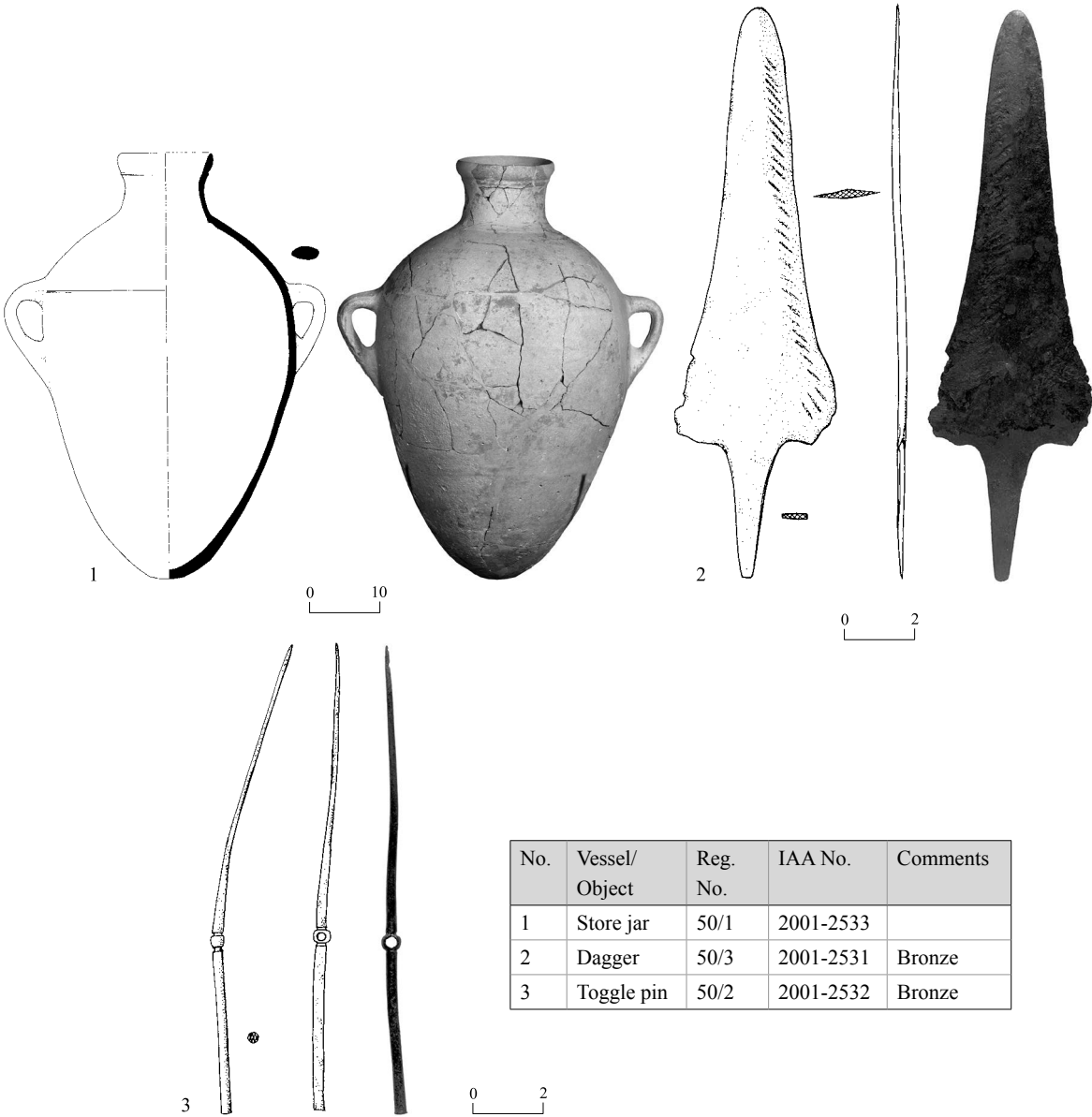


Fig. 53. Pottery and small finds from Giv'at Ziyon Pit 10.

Levant, including Fassuṭa Tomb 1 (Gershuny and Aviam 2010:33, Fig. 13:2; Shalev 2010:46), Kabri Tomb 902 (Shalev 2002: Fig. 8.2) and a burial cave with multiple burials of the MB I and II periods in Zefat (Damati and Stepanski 1996: Fig. 17:1) in the northern region; a room in Shillo Stratum VII (Brandl 1993: Figs. 9.10; 9.11:6) and Tombs 510, 606, 704 and 800 at an MB II site west of Tell Qasile (Kletter 2006: Figs. 17:8; 18:9; 19:11; 20:8, 9) in the central region; and Giv'at Shareṭ Tomb 1 (Bahat 1976: Fig. 50:1, 5, 6) and Tell Beit Mirsim Tombs 7 and 510 (Ben-Arieh 2004a: Figs. 2.4:22; 2.64:47) in the southern region. All these contexts date to MB II and III, except for Fassuṭa, which is dated to the MB I–II transition period that roughly corresponds to the early MB II in the south of the country. Tomb 1 at Fassuṭa also shows that simple long-tanged daggers can be part of a very respectable assemblage that includes a shaft-hole axe, socketed spearheads and fragments of a bronze belt (Gershuny and Aviam 2010: Figs. 13, 14). Another instance of a long-tanged dagger in the company of other daggers, shaft-hole axes, socketed spearheads and toggle pins occurs at Tell Beit Mirsim Tomb 510 (Ben-Arieh 2004a: Figs. 2.64; 2.65). Although of simple manufacture and perhaps of recycled metal, these daggers still occupy an important place in their assemblages. The long-tanged daggers have extended into the Late Bronze Age (Tubb 1985:192), as clearly seen at Tel Batash (Yahalom-Mack 2006:199, Photo 87a).

Knife (Fig. 45:7)

The tip of the knife from Pit 164 (Fig. 45:7) is broken and its butt is incomplete. The back edge is straight and blunt, whereas the apparently curved edge is slightly serrated. The rather rectangular shape of the knife tapers toward the missing tip, which was most likely bent upward. The haft was fastened by three rivets; two were found near the knife and one had survived in the broken butt (preserved length 91 mm, max. breadth 19 mm).

Philip (1989:141–142) differentiates between two types of knives, depending on their butt; he sees both types of knives as cutting tools, very popular in tombs, and suggests they might have been involved in some sort of mortuary ceremonies. He dated the knives to the late MB I, while the bulk of finds appear throughout MB II. Other published knives come from sites in the north of the country, i.e., Tomb 1 in the upper level at Sasa, dating to MB II (Ben-Arieh 2004b: Fig. 10:7), an MB I–II burial cave in Wadi Ḥamra, Zefat (Damati and Stepanski 1996: Fig. 17:3) and at Kabri Stratum 3, from the stairwell in the palace of Area D (Shalev 2002:317, Fig. 8.5:5).

Toggle Pins (Figs. 44:4; 53:3)

An intact toggle pin was found in Giv'at Zīyyon Pit 10 (Fig. 53:3). The pin is long, thin, plain and slightly bent. The ratio between the shank and lower sections is 1:2. The eyelet is emphasized by a narrow band above and below, which ties it tight (total length 13.1 cm; length of shank 4.2 cm; length of lower part 8 cm, max. width 0.3 cm).

It fits Type 3 of Henschel-Simon's classification (1938:173, Pl. LXVIII) and belongs to the long, thin toggle pins that usually have high contents of arsenic and very little tin (Tufnell and Ward 1966:219; Shalev 2002:313). A similar, although shorter, plain toggle pin

(length 11.4 cm) was discovered together with a long-tanged dagger, like the one in Giv'at Ziyon Pit 10, in Tomb 606 at the site west of Tell Qasile (Kletter 2006: Fig. 18:10).

The second toggle pin is from Pit 162 (Fig. 44:4). It is broken at the beginning of the eyelet. The shank is undecorated and its top is fashioned as a flat nail head (length of shank 3.3 cm, max. width 0.3 cm).

This broken pin seems to have been shorter, as can possibly be deduced from the length of its shank. Its head fits Henschel-Simon's Type 8c (1938:174, Pl. LXIX), though its plain shank is at odds with the usually decorated shanks of the shorter pins (Shalev 2002:314–315).

The study of toggle pins at Tell ed-Dab'a revealed that both plain and decorated toggle pins were used contemporaneously and served the same purposes (Philip 2006:102). It was also ascertained that the number of pins increased during MB II, corresponding to their use in the Southern Levant (Philip 2006:157).

Awl (Fig. 52:2)

The lower tip of the awl from Pit 212 (Fig. 52:2) is broken off, its top is somewhat bent and has a square cross-section (preserved length 5.1 cm, max. breadth 0.4 cm).

Awls appeared in the Southern Levant since the Early Bronze Age (Bunimovitz 2000:265) and throughout the Middle Bronze Age. As a small tool for piercing holes, its purpose in a mortuary context is not clear, unless it was part of the deceased's personal items. Awls were usually hafted. An interesting example of an awl inserted into a bone handle comes from the MB II settlement in Manaḥat, Jerusalem (Edelstein, Milevski and Auran 1998: Fig. 7.3:1). As the awls at that site were recovered from occupation levels, it was suggested that they may have been used in wood-working, basketry or a tool for engraving (Edelstein, Milevski and Auran 1998:89).

A Butt Fragment (Fig. 52:3)

The partially broken butt from Pit 212 (Fig. 52:3) has one rivet preserved *in situ* and perhaps two to three other rivets were originally part of it. It appears to have been the butt of a curved knife rather than that of a dagger.

Ring (Fig. 50:4)

The base of the ring from Pit 209 (Fig. 50:4) is rather flattened so that it does not maintain a complete circle. It is made of a plain bronze circular band (diam. 2 mm), whose ends overlap. One end is square and the top one is tapered. A copper-based ring with similar overlapping ends was retrieved from a rubbish pit in Stratum G/1–3 at Tell ed-Dab'a (Philip 2006:116, No. 260, Fig. 52:1). At that site, copper-based rings were found almost always in settlement levels and not in mortuary contexts (Philip 2006:163). Similar copper-based rings with a rounded section and overlapping tapering ends were found in MB II burials at Tell Beit Mirsim (Golani 2004: Fig. 4.1:3). The large diameters of these rings suggest that they may have been used as hair or nose rings, or perhaps as bracelets of young children (Golani 2004:189).

BEADS

Four beads were found in the burial pits; two came from Pit 196, dating to MB I. Their shape, size and material appear ordinary (Tables 6 and 7; Beck 1928; Golani 2004). The two beads from Pit 196 (Fig. 31:7, 8) belong to Golani's Type II.2, short oblate circular (2004:193). A third bead (Fig. 33:6) is similar to Golani's Type III.4 (2004:194). The fourth copper bead (Fig. 34:4) is similar in shape to Golani's Type III.6 (2004:194), although it is shorter. This bead was analyzed to determine its composition (Table 7).¹³ The bead is made of a copper alloy, containing zinc and lead. The very small amount of the latter could indicate a contamination rather than a purposeful addition to the alloy.

Although Golani (2004:194) states that his Types III.4 and III.6 apply to siliceous beads, it is apparent that the same or very similar-shaped beads from other sites are made of different materials.

None of the pits where the beads were found had any bones preserved in them; it was thus impossible to determine whether the pits contained female or male burials. One exception may be Pit 196, where the two beads were found in close proximity to a small juglet and a carinated bowl, both red-burnished. It is presumed to have been the grave of a young woman.

ALABASTER POMMEL

The pommel from Pit 130 (Fig. 35:4) has a rounded shape and was entirely covered with incrustation. The cavity for inserting the wooden handle (diam. 0.15 cm, depth 0.12 cm) is slightly wider at the base. The side holes for tying the handle in place are 0.6 cm in diameter. Although no dagger was found with the pommel, there must have been one when the original interment took place. It is rather common to find the pommel, which is made of

Table 6. Beads (measurements in cm)

No.	Pit No.	Reg. No.	Fig. No.	Length	Diam.	Material	Color
1	196	204/1	31:7	7.0	7.25	Carnelian	Orange-brown
2	196	204/2	31:8	5.5	5.50	Amethyst	Violet
3	119	222	33:6	25.0	12.00	Jasper?	Black
4	123	212	34:4	14.0	17.00	Copper	Green

Table 7. Metal Analysis of Copper Bead (Fig. 34:4)

Sn	Zn	Pb	Cu	As	Sb	Co	Ni	Mn	Fe	Ag	V
0.79	3.91	1.02	90.92	0.09	0.13	0.005	0.15	0.0005	0.086	0.062	0.001

¹³ Many thanks to Dr. Irina Segal for performing the optical emission spectrometry analysis.

a durable material like stone, without the dagger or knife, which has either disintegrated or had been robbed. Philip (2006:56) defines these pommels as subglobular and classifies them as Type 1, made of white limestone. He contends that these pommels were associated with daggers of his Type 13, which are ribbed daggers (Philip 1989:117; 2006:145).

An alabaster pommel was found together with a dagger in Grave 11 at Dhahrat el-Humraya (Ory 1948:81), whose ceramic assemblage points to an MB II date. The dagger is of Philip's Type 17 (1989:120), for which spherical pommels were also used.

BONE COMB

The comb has been attributed to Pit 195 (Fig. 32:4), which was cut by heavy machinery. Two store jars and two dipper juglets, probably inserted within the store jars, were found in the disturbed burial, and the comb was discovered above them.

The comb is broken on both sides and on both edges (preserved length 4.6 cm, preserved width 1.2 cm, thickness 0.5 cm). One edge has widely spaced teeth, of which three are preserved; the opposite edge has narrow, tightly spaced teeth, six of which are preserved. At the inner break of the comb, two very tiny cavities are visible, most likely intended for small wooden or bone rivets which would hold the comb pieces together. Contrary to the usual shape of a comb, whose teeth are located on both long sides of the central bar (Bénédict 1911: Pls. IV–VI), our comb has its teeth on the short edges of the bar, as a continuation of the bar itself. Such a construction exists in small numbers (Bénédict 1911: Pl. III), possibly because of its inconvenience. Bone combs are fairly rare in Canaan and a few odd samples are known, such as the bone combs from the upper layer at Khirbat Kufin Tomb 3 (Smith 1962: Pl. XVII:45, 46), which are different from our specimen, but faithfully adhere to the shape of the wooden combs from Jericho. This assortment from Jericho Tombs H11, H18 and H22 (Kenyon 1960: Fig. 221) displays variations of the same comb type, which has a horizontal bar and is topped by two to three rectangular and slightly curved windows. The teeth are fairly tightly spaced and in the more complete combs, 48 and 53 teeth were counted. The teeth are enclosed with a vertical thin bar on each side. Smith (1962:26) thought that the bone combs originated in Egypt, despite their sporadic occurrence there and far less in the Southern Levant.

DISCUSSION: BURIAL KITS AND BURIAL CUSTOMS

THE BURIAL KIT

It had been observed rather early while processing the finds from the Ramat Eshkol cemetery that each MB II burial pit contains a basic group of vessels, which has been defined as a burial kit (Maier 1997). A complete burial kit is composed of a store jar, a dipper juglet and a bowl, either platter or carinated, or both. Out of the 72 MB II burial pits, store jars are the most significant component of the burial kit in 63 pits (87%). Next come the dipper

juglets, which are found in 45 pits (62%), and the bowls, platter and carinated, occur in 42 pits (58%). It should be noted that for the burial kit statistics, only pits with store jars are considered.

Five pits contained a complete burial kit; however, most pits comprised broad burial kits of the same components as complete burial kits but in larger quantities. The complete and broad burial kits are present in 25 pits (40%). Partial burial kits occur in several compositions: store jars and dipper juglets appear in 18 pits (28%), store jars and bowls occur in 12 pits (19%) and only store jars are present in 9 pits (13%; Fig. 54). It should be emphasized that partial burial kits are the result of the severe damage caused to the burial pits rather than of the absence of burial kit components placed in the pits.

In addition to the basic burial kit, jugs and juglets were found in 15 pits with complete and broad burial kits; eight pits contained partial burial kits. Metal artifacts were mostly found in pits with complete and/or broad burial kits, and only two pits with partial burial kits included metal finds.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that pits with broad burial kits did not necessarily contain interments corresponding to the number of store jars in the burial kit. Out of 20 pits, individuals were identified only in 10 pits; six of these contained a single interment and four contained between two and four interments. This shows that there was no correlation between the number of interments in a pit and the number and kind of offerings accompanying the deceased; rather, the number of interments depended mainly on the physical size of the pit.

Maeir (1997:325) maintains that a burial kit is a group of items placed in burials of individuals of the same social rank. The kit may change according to the standing of the deceased, as well as to the living people performing the funeral. Contrary to this opinion, the Ramat Eshkol cemetery clearly shows that the burial kit was applied to every burial pit and did not change from one pit to another. Additions to the burial kit were reflected in the

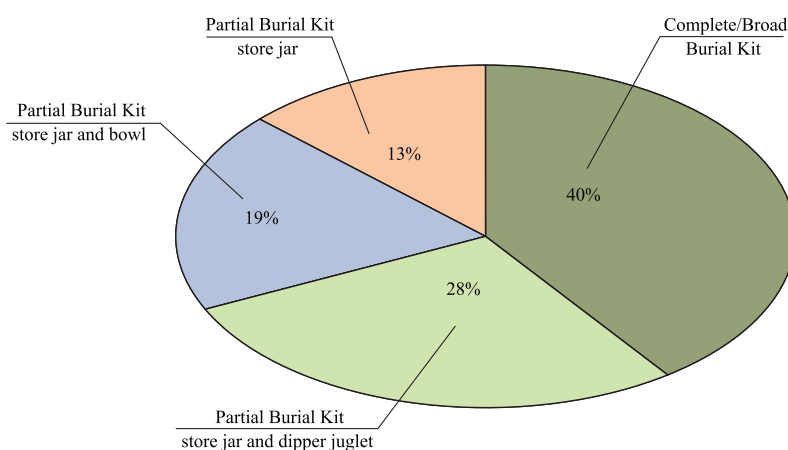


Fig. 54. Burial kit variations.

augmentation of the burial kit components, as well as in placing other pottery vessels and various artifacts in the graves.

A similar importance of the burial kit has been observed in Cemetery 500 of Tell el-Far'a (South), although the tombs in this cemetery are all structured chambers with a stepped shaft. Price Williams (1977:149) regards it as a basic unit of goods that occurred in both small and large tombs. This unit included bowls, a jar or a jug with a dipper juglet, a scarab and a toggle pin; in the large tombs, this unit is multiplied according to the number of burials. A closer examination of the tombs discussed by Price Williams reveals that the basic unit should include a carinated bowl, a store jar, a dipper juglet and a cylindrical juglet. These four vessel types occur in three quarters of the tombs, and slightly more in the case of the dipper juglets. The toggle pin and the scarab are always found together and only in 63% of the tombs. It therefore appears that the scarab and the toggle pin should be regarded as part of the basic unit of wealthy persons; they represent personal items of the deceased and obviously not all people living at the site had owned these articles.

Ory (1948:76) noted that a jar without handles, sometimes with another jar without handles or an amphora, appears in every grave of the cemetery at Dhahrat el-Ḥumraya. The jar without handles is a pithos in our terminology, and the amphora refers to an ordinary store jar. A detailed examination of the graves and their contents reveals that the store jar is, by far, the most dominant vessel, appearing in 87% of the graves. Pithoi always occur together with store jars, except for one case where a broken pithos and a piriform juglet are the only offerings. Piriform juglets and platter bowls are the next most popular vessels, occurring in 54% of the graves. Dipper juglets were usually found within the store jars or pithoi, but their numbers are not as high, occurring in 47% of the graves. It therefore seems that the burial kit at this site consisted of a store jar, a platter bowl, a piriform juglet and occasionally, a dipper juglet.

Cemetery 9000 at Lakhish presents a very small sample of burials with burial kits (Singer-Avitz 2004b:971–1011). Of the 16 tombs dating to MB II, only 13 contained offerings. Store jars occur in ten of the tombs, whereas dipper juglets and carinated bowls appear in eight tombs and platter bowls, in seven. It can thus be determined that despite the small sample, the burial kit would have included a store jar, a carinated bowl that sometimes was replaced or accompanied by a platter bowl, and a dipper juglet.

Summing up the burial kit, the components shared by all samples are the store jar, combined with the dipper juglet (Table 8). A piriform juglet forms part of the burial kit at Daharat el-Ḥumraya, which is the earliest of the four samples, while the cylindrical juglet is an intrinsic component of the burial kit in Cemetery 500 at Tell el-Far'a (South), the latest of the four samples.

A different terminology and association of the burial kit is provided by Baker (2003; 2006), who studied the chamber tombs at Tel Ashqelon. Baker refers to the burial kit as a 'funeral kit', which is "an identifiable assemblage of ceramic and non-ceramic artifacts that was deposited with each interment" (2006:1), and is associated with the funeral feast (2003:221). Baker (2003:68) defines the funeral kit as the essential group of items that

Table 8. Comparative Burial Kits

Site	Store Jar	Dipper Juglet	Platter Bowl	Carinated Bowl	Piriform Juglet	Cylindrical Juglet
Ashqelon, Ramat Eshkol cemetery	+	+	+	+		
Dhahrat el-Humraya	+	+	+		+	
Lakhish Cemetery 9000	+	+	+	+		
Tell el Far'a (South) Cemetery 500	+	+		+		+

contained the food ingredients used in the funerary meal. Her funeral kit evolved and changed over time, either by natural development or by trade. Yet, Baker clearly says that the basic components of the funeral kit are consistent and homogeneous throughout its four phases (2006:3). It is therefore questionable whether the additions and changes apply to the funeral kit per se, or rather to the extra items placed in the burial.

The burial kit, as defined in the Ramat Eshkol cemetery at Ashqelon, would correspond to the first of the three burial categories devised by Binford (1972:414), who groups burials as essential, personal and competitive. The essential category, referred to as the “essential assemblage” by Yasur-Landau (1992:240), is part of every mortuary context if the belief entails that provisions should be supplied to the deceased on his way to the netherworld. The other two categories seem to coincide with each other. A scarab would be considered a personal item, but at the same time it has a competitive value, as it is found in just a single tomb in the Ramat Eshkol cemetery. The same is true of the metal artifacts. These are usually regarded as competitive or status symbols (Baker 2006:1). Simultaneously, they may be regarded as personal items, belonging to the deceased in his lifetime, particularly when they appear to have functioned as cutting tools, rather than weapons. As such, they are also competitive, since only a few individuals had apparently owned them. These categories may be applicable to large cemeteries that contain tombs of different sizes and construction, as well as more substantial deposits.

The burial kit in the Ramat Eshkol cemetery represents the rudimentary containers of subsistence, applicable to every member of the community in his lifetime and posthumously. This burial kit could be indicative of an egalitarian concept, whereby every individual, whether well-off or less fortunate, receives the same fundamental assemblage. Those who could afford it, or those who deserved it, whether by their contribution to the community and/or position therein, supplemented their burial kit with larger quantities of the base components, as well as with other pottery vessels, such as jugs and juglets and objects of other materials, i.e., metal, stone and bone artifacts. This state of affairs represents human behavior and standards, whether in ancient times or in the modern era, which is essentially a paradigm of every society: everyone has the same, but some have more!

BURIAL CUSTOMS

The pit burials excavated in the Ramat Eshkol cemetery at Ashqelon are rather simple and ordinary in comparison with other pit burials exposed along the coastal plain. Nevertheless, certain burial customs observed in several pits deserve our attention (see Nagar and Gershuny, this volume).

Human skulls were found to be associated with platter and carinated bowls. In the case of platter bowls, skulls were not placed inside the bowl itself, but rather leaned against the side of the bowl. Over the long course of time and due to the shifting of the ground, the skull usually was found below the raised side of the bowl, as was observed in Pits 130, 163, 164 and 204. The few skull fragments in Pit 130 were found next to a platter bowl and a pommel was lying below it. It is therefore assumed that the skull belonged to a male adult. A platter bowl was found below a skull of an adult in Pit 146, which was either put next to or below a fragmentary skull of a child, 2.5 years old. The bowl was set into another platter bowl below it. The skull in Pit 163 ended up below the raised side of the slanted platter bowl (Fig. 55). A very fragile and broken skull was found below the extremely broken platter bowl in the eastern side of Pit 164. The skeleton had apparently extended westward and between the fragmentary lower limb bones, a bronze knife was found. These bones had perhaps belonged to an adult male. Only in Pit 204, with the skull leaning against the side of the platter bowl, was the interred identified as a possible adult male, over 45 years of age.

The relation between platter bowls and human skulls was observed in the northern region of the country during MB I, e.g., in Kabri Tomb 990, where a human skull was leaning against the inner side of an platter bowl with three bar handles, or rather projections (Gershuny 1989:14; Scheftelowitz and Gershuny 2002:30). At the same site, in Tomb 902



Fig. 55. Pit 163, skull below the raised side of a platter bowl.

of the MB III period, three skulls were found jammed together inside a large shallow platter bowl (Gershuny 1988:42; Scheftelowitz and Gershuny 2002:34). A secondary burial in Grave 9054 from Lakhish Cemetery 9000 consisted of a group of bones and teeth of an individual, 25–30 years of age, which were partially placed within a platter bowl (Singer-Avitz 2004b:986).

The skulls associated with carinated bowls attest to a completely different phenomenon. A carinated bowl in Pit 147 (Fig. 41:1) was used as a cover for the skull of a young adult, 20–25 years of age. The bowl was kept intact and the skull may have been inserted via the jaw as the bowl contained only small bones and several teeth of the mandible (Fig. 56). Conversely, the skull may have been inserted in the usual manner, as recorded with the other bowls, yet it was broken and only the small bones and teeth had remained inside the bowl.

Below the store jars in the upper layer of Pit 162 were scattered bones and a fragmented skull, which were apparently set within a very broken and crumbling carinated bowl. An articulated skeleton was discovered in the lower burial layer of Pit 206. The individual whose gender could not be identified was 20 years of age. Below the skull was a carinated bowl, which apparently housed the skull, but was too fragmentary to survive; next to the skull was another carinated bowl, upside down, which may have also been associated with the skull, perhaps as an upper cover. The skull of an adult individual, placed inside a carinated bowl, was discovered in Pit 207. The shoulder and rim of the bowl above the carination angle were cut off (Fig. 49:4) and the remaining lower part of the bowl was apparently used as a lamp, as the cut edge is blackened and has traces of soot. Only later was a skull put into the bowl, fitting over it like a cap (Fig. 57). The skull belonged to an adult individual whose gender and age could not be identified. It is feasible that the carinated bowl was intentionally cut off so that the skull could easily fit inside it. Another case of a skull within a carinated bowl, which was placed inside a platter bowl, was documented in Pit 210. The carinated bowl



Fig. 56. Pit 147, carinated bowl containing small bones and teeth.

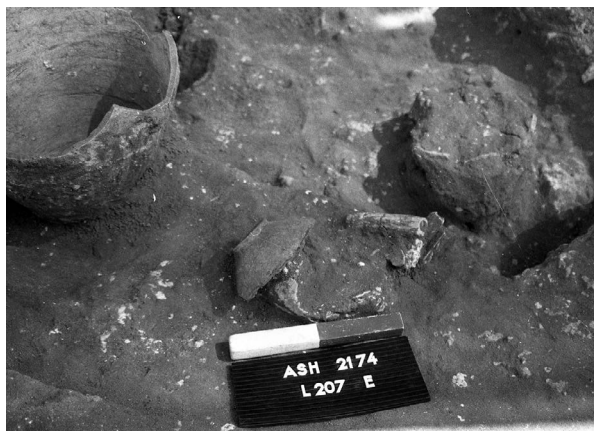


Fig. 57. Pit 207, a cut carinated bowl on an adult's skull, looking east.

(Fig. 51:2) was kept intact and the cranial vault of an infant, 3–4 years of age, was squeezed into the bowl's aperture, leaving a clear mark on the cranium (Fig. 58).

Except for the infant in Pit 210, all other cases of skulls set within carinated bowls belonged to young adults, 20–25 years of age, and older adults, 40–45 years of age. In other words, the association of skulls with carinated bowls was not confined to a certain age. It may be related to another mortuary custom that prevailed in the community buried in the Ramat Eshkol cemetery.

Skulls were associated with carinated bowls twice in Cemetery 9000 at Lakhish: in Grave 9025, dating to late MB I or early MB II, wherein a skull of a child, 6 years old, was set in a carinated bowl that “acted as a helmet” (Singer-Avitz 2004b:983); and in Grave 9028, dating to MB II, where one of the ten fragmented skulls was placed in a carinated bowl (Singer-Avitz 2004b:985).

Head covers denote an association with a particular social group and the wish to become part of and participate with this group (Cirlot 1995:140). Indeed, gods and goddesses in ancient times are associated with a head cover and, to that effect, so are other social groups, i.e., priests in the service of gods, royal figures, attendants or soldiers.

It is feasible that the carinated bowl ‘cap’ was not a whim of the people who performed the burial, but rather a compliance with a social class designation. The occurrence of this custom in just a few pits indicates that it was performed only in certain cases. It could mean that the adults and the infant were associated with distinguished families, perhaps those involved in certain functions within the community. The adults could have served as priests or in some other similar capacity, which called for a head cover as part of their duty. This was then symbolically transmitted to the burial ground in the form of a carinated bowl ‘cap’. Likewise, the vessel could have been the actual bowl used by the deceased when performing their duties, such as pouring libations or anointing. This is certainly an intriguing phenomenon, which should be examined over a larger corpus of information that would provide further insight into this matter.

The association of human skulls with platter bowls seems to denote a completely different concept than the one applicable to carinated bowls. Whereas the latter are regarded as a cap for the skull, the platter bowl may be considered to be a pillow or headrest for the skull. These two methods may possibly imply diverse social classes of the deceased and different rankings in the community.

The lack of details regarding burials and tombs in publications prevents us from drawing conclusions pertaining to the phenomena described above. Addressing this issue in



Fig. 58. Pit 210, the carinated bowl and its associated skull.

publications of ancient cemeteries will undoubtedly enable us a better understanding of the intricacies of ancient societies.

CONCLUSIONS AND CHRONOLOGY

The 76 burial pits excavated in the Ramat Eshkol cemetery at Ashqelon present a coherent mortuary ground that most likely served an MB I–II rural community in its vicinity that has not yet been uncovered or identified.

Pit graves appear during the Middle Bronze Age and are the most basic and simplistic form of burial structures, often concentrating in groups or clusters (Gonen 1992:15). They are mostly located along the *kurkar* ridges of the coastal plain, probably because of the ease in cutting *kurkar*, a type of calcareous sandstone rock, which could maintain structural integrity without further stone or mud-brick lining. As *kurkar* is a lithification of sea sand dunes, it is highly porous and salinization processes, such as sea water and precipitation seeping through, caused severe damage to the contents of the pit graves.

Hallote (1995:98) claimed that with the advancement of the Middle Bronze Age, a shift from pit burials to more structured tombs occurred, pointing to a more urbanized society (Hallote 1995:100). Regarding this claim, it should be said that although society may have become more urbanized, a significant number of rural communities and small towns was maintained as the agricultural hinterland for the growing urban population. Furthermore, burial pits are the outcome of physical conditions and therefore, as long as people were buried in these geographical regions, pits were used for mortuary purposes.

The burial pits in the Ramat Eshkol cemetery are irregular in shape and have various sizes. They are spread out along the *kurkar* ridge in disarray and have no uniform direction. This inconsistency applies to the skeletal remains, which were placed randomly, complying with the space of the pit.

The jar burials in the Ramat Eshkol pits display a unique phenomenon. Jar burials are rather frequent in the Middle Bronze Age, found in occupation levels below or within floors. They are not known to be common in large mortuary grounds in the Southern Levant, although an example can be found in the early phase of the Khabur cemetery at Tell Mozan in northern Syria.¹⁴

The pottery vessels, which are the majority of the offerings in the burial pits of the Ramat Eshkol cemetery, represent the MB II period; various considerations contribute to this assessment, e.g., red-slipped vessels are in a striking minority; carinated bowls are mostly open and no carinated bowl has a high ring or trumpet base or are thin-walled; only a handful of piriform juglets occur in the pits and cylindrical juglets are rare; and lamps are completely absent. Consequently, the Ramat Eshkol cemetery should be attributed to the

¹⁴ Data of the Tell Mozan cemetery was presented in a poster at the 8th ICAANE Congress in Warsaw, April 30th–May 4th, 2012.

first half of the MB II period, with perhaps a short extension into the later half, based on the occurrence of the Cypriot White Painted V amphora.

The single scarab from Pit 204, which belongs to the early Palestinian group (see Ben-Tor, this volume), lends further support to the MB II date of the pit burials.

The two Egyptian store jars recovered from the pits might be the forerunners of bilateral trade relations between Canaan and Egypt in the later MB II. Yet, some prior relationship must have existed between Egypt and southern Canaan. The bag-shaped jugs from the burial pits were produced locally, although the origin of the shape is undoubtedly Egyptian. It could have reached southern Canaan by trade or the jugs could have been created by potters who had lived in Egypt and were exposed to its ceramic repertoire. The miniature bottle is another example of a locally manufactured vessel whose shape is ingrained in Egyptian ceramic traditions.

The dating of the Ramat Eshkol cemetery corresponds to that of other coastal or slightly inland pit graves. Those from the site west of Tell Qasile are attributed to MB IIB (Kletter 2006:99, 115). The cemetery at the Tel Aviv harbor is also dated to MB II, as offered by the excavator (Kaplan 1955:6) and reaffirmed by Beck and Zevulun (1996:67). Of the 63 tombs excavated at Dhahrat el-Humraya, the majority are dated to the Middle Bronze Age (Ory 1948:77). Judging by the context of each grave, whose description is sometimes insufficient, at least a quarter of the burials should be dated to MB II.

The handful of burial pits attributed to MB I imply that the cemetery was in use throughout the late MB I and first half of MB II. In absolute dates, it should range from the first quarter of the eighteenth century to the first quarter of the seventeenth century BCE (1775–1675/70 BCE).

It seems that the people interred in the burial pits at the Ramat Eshkol cemetery were not particularly well-off and not dramatically modest. However, it cannot be stated that the pit graves, being the simplest form of a burial locale, demonstrate inadvertently a low-income community. The simple pits were probably the relevant burial type for the *kurkar* ridge and as such, they do not reflect the socio-economic state of the population buried in them. The burial pits and their contents point to a working-class community, whose social system was based on an egalitarian concept with spiritual undertaking involving customs and beliefs reflected in the interment of several deceased.

The Ramat Eshkol cemetery adds an important echelon to the study of Middle Bronze Age burial customs and sites. It is lamentable that the excavation area was so badly destroyed—it impeded our ability to attain further details that could have rendered the conclusions more verifiable and significant.

APPENDIX 1: The Burial Pits and Their Contents, in Sequential Order

Pit No.	Reg. No.	Type	Kept/ Discarded	Fig. No.	Pit No.	Reg. No.	Type	Kept/ Discarded	Fig. No.
<i>Ramat Eshkol Cemetery</i>					120	228/1	SJ	+	
101	206/1	SJ	+			228/2	JD	+	33:7
	206/2	JD	+	33:1	121	229/1	SJ	+	34:2
	206/3	SJ	–			229/2	JD	+	34:3
103	208	SJ	–			229/3	SJ	+	
104	209/1	BL pl.	+			229/4	BL car.	+	34:1
	209/2	JD	–		122	230/1	SJ	+	
105	210	SJ	–			230/2	SJ	+	
106	211	SJ	–			230/3	JG	+	
107	213/1	SJ	+			230/4	SJ	+	
	213/2	JG	+			230/5	BL pl.	+	31:1
108	214/1	SJ	–			230/6	BL car.	+	31:2
	214/2	BL car.	–			230/7	BL car.	+	31:3
109	215/1	SJ	–			230/8	JD	–	
	215/2	BL car.	+	33:2	123	212	Bead	+	34:4
	215/3	JD	–			231/1	SJ	+	
110	216/1	SJ	+			231/2	BL car.	+	
	216/2	JD	+		124	232/1	JG	+	34:6
111	217/1	SJ	+			232/2	JG	+	34:7
	217/2	BL pl.	+			232/3	JG	+	
	219	BL pl.	+			232/4	Jar	+	34:5
112	218/1	SJ	+		125	234/1	SJ	+	
	218/2	JD	–			234/2	JD	+	
113	220/1	SJ	–			234/3	SJ	+	
	220/2	BL car.	+	33:3		234/4	JD	–	
114	221/1	SJ	+		JCB	235	BL pl.	+	
	221/2	JD	+		126	237/1	SJ	+	35:1
115	223	SJ	–			237/2	JD	–	
116	224	SJ	+		127	238/1	SJ	+	
117	225	BL pl.	+	33:4		238/2	JD	+	35:2
118	226/1	SJ	+			238/3	SJ	–	
	226/2	JG	+			238/4	JD	–	
	226/3	BL pl.	+	33:5	128	236	SJ	–	
	226/4	JD	–		129	239	JG	+	
	233	SJ	+		130	240/1	BL pl.	+	35:3
119	222	Bead	+	33:6		240/2	JD	–	
	227/1	JG	+			241	Pommel	+	35:4
	227/2	JD	+		131	243/1	SJ	+	
	227/3	SJ	–			243/2	JG	+	
	227/4	JD	–		132	244/1	SJ	+	

APPENDIX 1. (cont.)

Pit No.	Reg. No.	Type	Kept/ Discarded	Fig. No.	Pit No.	Reg. No.	Type	Kept/ Discarded	Fig. No.
133	244/2	JG	+		143	255/4	JG	+	
	245/1	SJ	+			255/5	JD	+	
	245/2	SJ	—			256/1	JD	+	
	245/3	BL car.	—			256/2	JD	—	
134 ⁱ	246/1	SJ	+	36:1		256/3	Dagger	+	38:2
	246/2	JD	+	36:3		256/4	BL pl.	+	
	246/3	SJ	+	36:2		256/5	JG	+	38:1
	246/4	JD	+	36:4		256/6	JD	+	
	246/5	JD	+			256/7	SJ	+	
	246/6	SJ	+			256/8	BL pl.	+	
	246/7	SJ	+			256/9	JG	+	
	246/8	JG	—		144	257/1	SJ	+	
	246/9	JG	+			257/2	SJ	+	
	246/10	BL pl.	—			257/3	SJ	+	
	246/11	SJ	+			257/4	JD	+	39:1
	246/12	SJ	—		145	258/1	SJ	+	
	246/13	SJ/Jar	+			258/2	SJ	—	
	246/14	JG	+			258/3	AM	+	39:4
136	250/1	SJ	+			258/4	JG	+	
	250/2	JG	—			258/5	JG	—	
	250/3	BL pl.	+	31:4		258/6	BL car.	+	39:2
137	251/1	SJ	+			258/7	BL car.	+	39:3
	251/2	BL pl.	+	35:5		258/8	JD	—	
	251/3	JD	—			258/9	JD	+	39:5
138	252/1	JG	+	35:6	146	259/1	SJ	+	39:3
	252/2	JD	—			259/2	JT	+	
140	253/1	SJ	—			259/3	BL pl.	+	
	253/2	SJ	+	37:2		259/4	JG	+	40:4
	253/3	BL car.	+	37:1		259/5	BT	+	40:6
	253/4	JG	+			259/6	JT	+	
	253/5	JD	+	37:3		259/7	JT	+	40:5
141	254/1	JD	+			259/8	BL pl.	+	
	254/2	BL car.	+	37:4		259/9	BL pl.	+	40:1
	254/3	SJ	+			259/10	BL car.	+	40:2
	254/4	JD	+	37:5		259/11	JD	—	
	254/5	JD	—			259/12	JD	—	
	254/6	JG	+		147	260/1	SJ	—	
	254/7	BL pl.	+			260/2	SJ	+	41:4
142	255/1	SJ	+	37:7		260/3	BL car.	+	41:2
	255/2	SJ	—			260/4	Skl, Bn		
	255/3	BL car.	+	37:6		260/5	BL car.	+	41:1

APPENDIX 1. (cont.)

Pit No.	Reg. No.	Type	Kept/ Discarded	Fig. No.
	260/6	JD	+	41:3
	260/7	JD	—	
149	262/1	SJ	+	
	262/2	JD	—	
150	263/1	SJ	+	42:1
	263/2	JD	—	
160	270/1	SJ	—	
	270/2	BL pl.	+	
	270/3	Dagger	+	43:2
	270/4	BL car.	+	
	270/5	JT	+	
	270/6	JD	+	43:1
	270/7	BL car.	—	
161	271/1	SJ	+	
	271/2	SJ	—	
	271/3	BL pl.	+	
	271/4	BL pl.	—	
162	272/1	PT	+	44:2
	272/2	SJ	+	44:3
	272/3	Tog. pin	+	44:4
	272/4	SJ	+	
	272/5	SJ	—	
	272/6	BL glob.	+	44:1
	272/7	BL pl.	+	
	272/8	SJ	+	
	272/9	JD	—	
	272/10	JD	+	
	272/11	BL car.	—	
	272/12	JT	+	
163	273/1	BL pl.	+	45:1
	273/2	SJ	+	
	273/3	SJ	+	
	273/4	JG	+	45:3
	273/5	BL car.	+	45:2
	273/6	BL pl.	+	
	273/7	JT	+	45:4
	273/8	JD	—	
164	274/1	SJ	—	
	274/2	Jar	+	45:5
	274/3	SJ	+	
	274/4	JD	+	

Pit No.	Reg. No.	Type	Kept/ Discarded	Fig. No.
	274/5	BL pl.	+	
	274/6	JT	—	
	274/7	JG	+	
	274/8	Potsherds	—	
	274/9	Knife	+	45:7
	274/10	JD	+	45:6
	274/11	JG	—	
	274/12	SJ	—	
191	248	SJ	+	32:1
192	201	SJ	—	
193	202	SJ	—	
	235	BL pl.	+	32:2
195	247/1	SJ	+	32:3
	247/2	SJ	+	
	247/3	JD	—	
	247/4	JD	—	
	247/5	Comb	+	32:4
196	203/1	BL car.	+	31:5
	203/2	JT	+	31:6
	204/1	Bead	+	31:7
	204/2	Bead	+	31:8
197	205	SJ	—	
200	300/1	SJ	+	46:2
	300/2	BL pl.	+	46:1
	300/3	JT	—	
	300/4	JG	+	
	300/5	WP V AM	+	47
	300/6	SJ	+	46:3
	300/7	JD	+	46:5
	300/8	Juglet	+	
	300/9	JD	+	46:4
201	301/1	SJ	+	
	301/2	SJ	+	
	301/3	JT	+	46:6
	301/4	SJ	—	
	301/4a	JT	+	
	301/5	JD	+	46:7
	301/6	Potsherds	—	
202	302/1	BL pl.	+	
	302/2	SJ	—	
	302/3	JD	+	

APPENDIX 1. (cont.)

Pit No.	Reg. No.	Type	Kept/ Discarded	Fig. No.	Pit No.	Reg. No.	Type	Kept/ Discarded	Fig. No.
203	303/1	JG	+	46:9		305/14	JD	+	
	303/2	BL car.	+	46:8		305/15	BL car.	+	
204	304/1	SJ	+	48:5	206	306/1	SJ	–	
	304/2a	SJ	+			306/2	BL pl.	+	
	304/2b	SJ	+			306/3	JD	+	49:2
	304/3	SJ	+			306/4	Flint	+	
	304/4	SJ	+	48:6		306/5	BL car.	+	
	304/5	Jar	+	48:7		306/6	JG	–	
	304/6	SJ	–			306/7	Potsherds	–	
	304/7	BL pl.	+	48:1		306/8	BL car.	–	
	304/8	BL pl.	+		207	307/1	SJ	+	49:5
	304/9	JD	+			307/2	SJ	+	
	304/10a	BL car.	+	48:4		307/3	BL pl.	+	
	304/10b	JT	+			307/4	SJ	–	
	304/11	BL car.	+	48:2		307/5	BL car.	+	49:3
	304/12	BL pl.	+			307/6	BL pl.	+	
	304/13a	JT	+			307/7	JD	+	49:6
	304/13b	JD	+			307/8	BL car.	+	49:4
	304/13c	JD	+		208	308/1	SJ	–	
	304/14	SJ	+			308/2	BL pl.	+	50:1
	304/15	BL car.	+	48:3		308/3	BL car.	–	
	304/16	JG	+	48:8		308/4	SJ	+	
	304/17	Scarab	+	48:9	209	309/1	SJ	+	
	304/18	Potsherds	–			309/2	BL pl.	+	50:2
	304/19	JD	+			309/3	Ring	+	50:4
	304/20	JD	+			309/4	Olive pit	+	
205	305/1	BL car.	+			309/5	BL car.	+	
	305/2	BL car.	+			309/5a	BL pl.	+	
	305/3	JD	–			309/6	BL car.	–	
	305/4	JD	+			309/7a	SJ	+	
	305/5	SJ	+			309/7b	SJ	–	
	305/6	SJ	–			309/8	BL pl.	–	
	305/7	JT	+			309/9	JD	+	50:3
	305/8	SJ	+			309/10	JD	–	
	305/9	BL car.	+		210	310/1	SJ	–	
	305/9a	BL pl.	+			310/2	BL car.	+	
	305/9b	BL car.	+			310/3	JG	+	51:3
	305/10	BL car.	–			310/4	SJ	+	
	305/11	JD	+			310/4a	JD	+	
	305/12	JD	+	49:1		310/5	JG	+	51:4
	305/13	JT	+			310/6	BL car.	+	

APPENDIX 1. (cont.)

Pit No.	Reg. No.	Type	Kept/ Discarded	Fig. No.	Pit No.	Reg. No.	Type	Kept/ Discarded	Fig. No.
	310/7	BL pl.	+	51:1	216	316/1a	JG	+	
	310/8	BL car.	+	51:2		316/1b	JD	+	
	310/9	JD	+			316/2	BL car.	+	
211	311/1	JG	+			316/3	JG	+	52:5
	311/2	BL car.	+	51:5		316/4	JG	+	
	311/3	BL pl.	+			316/5	SJ	+	
212	312/1	SJ	+			316/6	SJ	+	
	312/2	SJ	+			316/7	SJ	+	
	312/3+4	SJ	+			316/8	JD	+	
	312/5	Bronze piece	+	52:3	251	351/1	SJ	+	52:6
	312/6	JD	–			351/2	Ring	+	
	312/7	SJ	–		252	352/1	BL cup	+	31:9
	312/8	SJ	+			352/2	JG	+	31:10
	312/9	Dagger	+	52:1		352/3	BL cup	+	
213	312/10	Awl	+	52:2	254	354/1	SJ	+	
	313/1	JD	+			354/2	BL pl.	+	52:7
	313/2	BL car.	+		<i>Giv'at Ziyon Cemetery</i>				
	313/3	SJ	+	52:4	10	50/1	SJ	+	53:1
	313/3a	BL pl.	+			50/2	Tog. pin	+	53:3
	313/4	BL car.	+			50/3	Dagger	+	53:2
	313/5	SJ	+			50/4	JG	–	
	313/6	Flint	+			50/5	JD	–	
215	315/1	JG	+			50/6	JG	+	

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