

THREE IRON AGE CERAMIC ASSEMBLAGES FROM THE TEL 'ETON CEMETERY

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INTRODUCTION

Tel 'Eton is a large tell located in the southeastern Shephelah, near an important crossroad, at the edge of the trough valley that separates the Hebron Hills from the Shephelah (Fig. 1). The tell is surrounded by large ancient cemeteries that were systematically looted since the 1960s (Faust and Katz 2016; Fig. 2). A few tombs were excavated, most in 1968, as part of a salvage operation initiated by the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums. The finds from some of these tombs were published over the years, and the authors undertook to publish the finds from four of the tombs. One of these tombs (Tomb C3) was published in a preliminary report (Katz and Faust 2014), and the three others (Tombs C2, A3 and B) are presented here, providing the available, if only partial, information on the ceramic assemblages, and discussing their significance.¹

The three tomb assemblages are dated to Iron Age IIA–B, including the ninth century BCE, from which only a few tombs are heretofore known in Judah, and hence, their significance.²

The Excavations on the Tell

In 1976, a brief salvage excavation was undertaken at Tel 'Eton by the Tel Aviv University Lakhish Expedition, headed by David Ussishkin and directed in the field by Eitan Ayalon

¹ Many people helped in collecting the data, finding the material and advising. We are grateful to Trude Dothan, Amihai Mazar, Baruch Brandl, Sy Gitin, Eran Arie, Osnat Brandl, Arie Ruchman-Halperin, Alon De Groot, Debi Ben-Ami, Michael Sabbane and Yael Barschak for their help, and to the Israel Antiquities Authority for allowing us to publish the material. We would like to thank Yulia Rudman (pottery drawing), Bracha Zilber (final plan), Michal Marmelshtein, Tamar Olenick and Sivan Landenberg (pottery plates), Carmen Hersch (final pottery plates) and Elena Delerzon (final maps). The preparation of this article was made possible through a research grant from the Open University of Israel (Grant No. 501012).

² In this article we use the following terminology for Judah: Iron IIA (c. 970–830 BCE), Iron IIB (c. 830–700) and Iron IIC (c. 700–600/585 BCE; see Faust 2019:202–203, 210–212, 240, 276–277). While the chronology of all subphases can be questioned, most of the debate focuses on Iron IIA, and therefore, a brief discussion of this phase is presented toward the end of the paper.

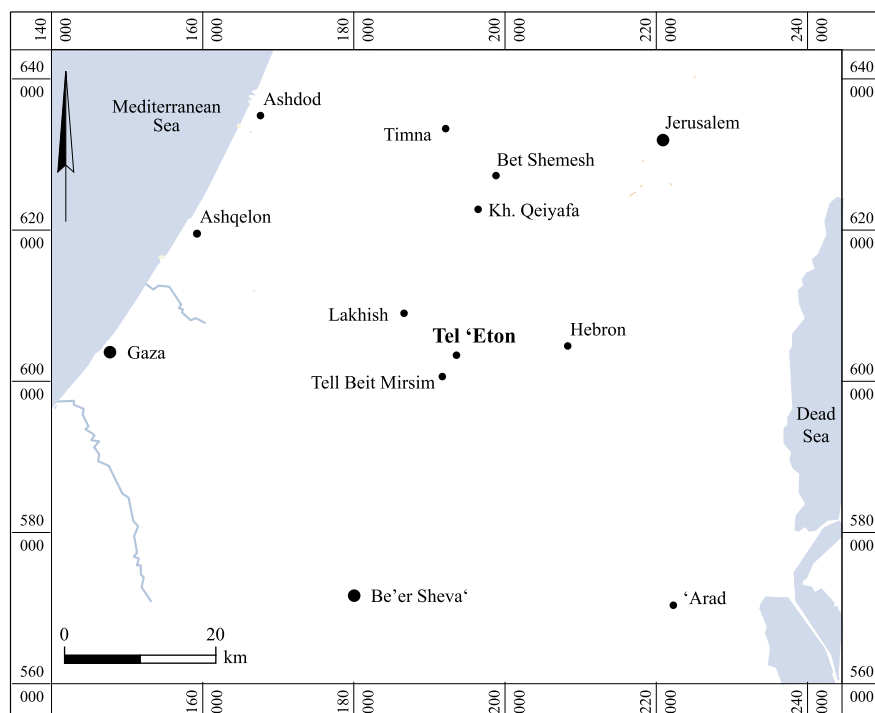


Fig. 1. Location map of Tel 'Eton, showing sites mentioned in the article.

with the assistance of Rachel Bar-Nathan (Ayalon 1985; Zimhoni 1985). In 2006, Bar-Ilan University initiated a large-scale excavation project at Tel 'Eton, including a survey of its surroundings. The excavations, directed by Avraham Faust, revealed that the mound was settled throughout much of the Bronze and Iron Ages, and again in the Persian and Hellenistic periods (Faust 2011; 2014; 2016; Faust and Katz 2012; 2015). The site was first settled in the Early Bronze Age, followed by a settlement hiatus in the Intermediate Bronze Age. Although a few Middle Bronze Age sherds were retrieved in the survey, finds from this period have not yet been encountered in the excavations. The Late Bronze Age settlement was large, apparently covering the entire mound, whilst the Iron I settlement was smaller. Occupation continued in Iron II; the settlement reached a peak in the eighth century BCE before it was destroyed toward the end of the century in an Assyrian military campaign, perhaps at the time of Sargon (for a preliminary report on the pottery assemblage in the destruction layer, see Katz and Faust 2011; 2012). Settlement remains from Iron IIC (seventh century BCE) were not found on the tell, but only in the plain below (Sapir and Faust 2016:66).

After a hiatus of over three centuries, settlement on the tell resumed in the fourth century BCE, when a fortified building surrounded by a village was established on the top of the mound; the Persian-period building and village were probably abandoned in the third century BCE (Faust, Katz and Eyall 2015), after which there was no significant settlement on the mound.

THE TEL 'ETON CEMETERY

Tel 'Eton is surrounded by burial fields on most sides (Fig. 2), possibly constituting the most extensive Late Bronze–Iron Age cemetery in the country. It is clearly unique in terms of its history, as the salvage excavations that were carried out here over the years revealed continuous use from at least the Late Bronze Age to Iron Age IIB, and even later. In 1968, following reports of large-scale tomb looting, the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums conducted a large salvage operation, directed by Gershon Edelstein, Vasilius Tzaferis, David Ussishkin and Trude Dothan (Permit No. A-155/1968; Edelstein 1968; Edelstein et al. 1971). The excavation areas were designated A–D, and the excavated tombs were allocated numbers within each area.³ Four of the tombs were published in 1974 (Ussishkin 1974), and over the following two decades, several other tombs and their finds were published (Tzaferis 1982a; 1982b; Brewer 1992; Edelstein and Auran 1992; Arensburg and Belfer-Cohen 1992; Tzaferis and Hess 1992).

The two tombs excavated by Trude Dothan in Area C were designated Tombs C2 and C3 (located near Tomb C1 that was published by Edelstein and Auran 1992; see also Faust 2015). Several years ago, Dothan proposed that the tombs that she excavated will be published as part of the Tel 'Eton project. The boxes containing part of the limited ceramic assemblage from Tomb C2, and most of the vessels from Tomb C3, were eventually

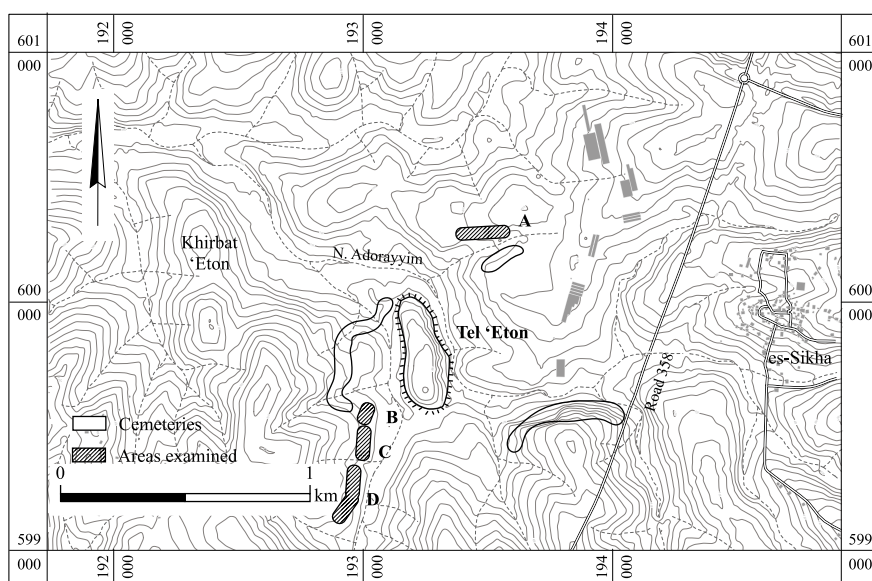


Fig. 2. Schematic map of the Tel 'Eton cemeteries (based on a map prepared in 1968; courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority).

³ Following the final recording system adopted in the course of the 1968 project.

discovered following a thorough search in the IAA storerooms (see Katz and Faust 2014 for Tomb C3).

In the course of the search, two other boxes, registered as part of the 1968 salvage excavations of the cemetery, were found: one, labeled 'Tomb A3', contained some vessels registered as A3 or with the Hebrew letter *alef*, as well as some unmarked vessels; and the other, marked 'Tomb B' (without a specific tomb number), contained some vessels registered with the Hebrew letter *bet*, and some unmarked vessels. Since the registered sherds and the unmarked vessels in each of the two boxes were chronologically homogenous, and since no sherds from other periods were found in the boxes, we assumed that each box formed an integral group.

This report presents the pottery finds from Tomb C2, and from Tombs A3 and B. At the outset, we stress that while the Tomb C2 assemblage is quite secure, the integrity of the assemblages from Tombs A3 and B is less certain. In the light of our understanding of the 1968 excavation project, and the uniform nature of the small assemblages, we consider these as coherent assemblages.

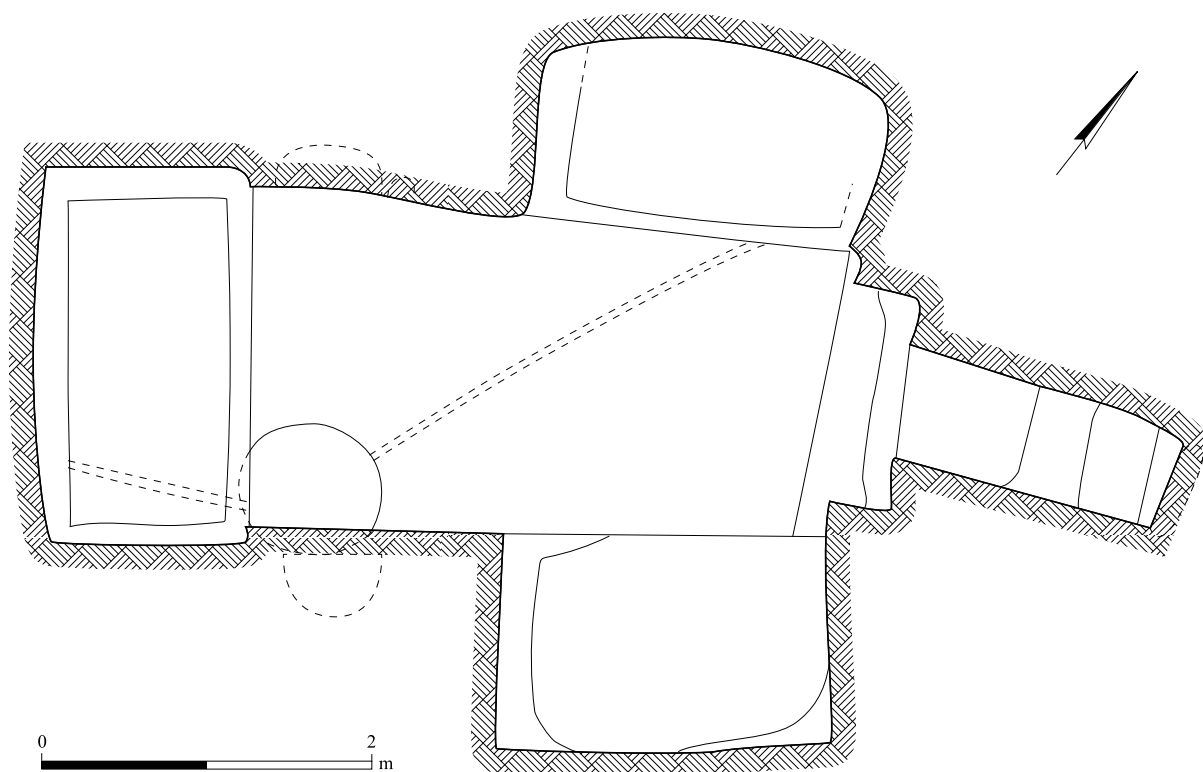
TOMB C2

A brief report published in *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* (Edelstein 1968:6) describes Dothan's excavations of the caves as follows (our translation from Hebrew):

Further along the ridge in which the previous burial cave [i.e., Tomb C1, the authors] was found, two additional burial caves, apparently hewn at the same time, were excavated by Dr. Trude Dothan of the Hebrew University. One was found robbed, apart from a few items. The early burial phase is represented by a bronze sword decorated with incision patterns identical to the decoration on a bronze bracelet from the Philistine tomb [Tomb C1, the authors]. Among the later finds is a Black Juglet that cannot predate the tenth century BCE. The cave has a regular plan and arcosolia, similar to the tomb described above. Peculiar to this tomb are a few architectural details such as arched niches, in which lamps and vessels were apparently placed (in one niche, a jug and an oil lamp were found *in situ*), and a channeling installation. This channeling installation comprises narrow hewn channels that led off from two arcosolia to the bone repository pit. It appears that this is an installation connected with the burial process, whose function is not yet clear. A double bowl is the only find in the repository pit.

A tomb plan labeled 'Trude', located in the IAA archives, was probably the plan of Tomb C2. The tomb comprises a long, rectangular chamber with three rock-hewn arcosolia, one at the end and one on either side, the latter two extending only for part of the length of the chamber (Plan 1). The circular bone repository pit is located in front of the back bench, on its left side. The two channels described above are clearly visible on the plan, as well as the two niches for placing the vessels, as mentioned in the brief report.

Unfortunately, it seems that the sword and several other finds were lost, and only part of the ceramic assemblage was extant. The pottery description presented here relates to the



Plan 1. Tomb C2.

vessels retrieved from the IAA storerooms, and to a few pottery drawings marked 'C2' found in the IAA archives. When both the pottery vessel and the original drawing were found, the vessel was usually redrawn; when the vessel was not retrieved, the original drawing was used. Parallels for the vessels were chosen from stratified sites in Judah; they are cited in the pottery figure descriptions.

The Ceramic Assemblage

Compared to the finds in many burial caves, the ceramic assemblage includes relatively few vessels, probably due to looting activities prior to the excavation (Edelstein 1968:6). The assemblage comprises 17 vessels (four represented by drawings only, as the vessels were not retrieved).

Bowls (Fig. 3:1–4).— A single red-slipped bowl has rounded walls and a groove below the rim (Fig. 3:1). This bowl type is characteristic of Iron IIA assemblages, such as at Lakhish Levels V–IV (Zimhoni 2004a: Figs. 25.16:5, 6; 25.25:7) and the City of David Strata 15–14 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012: Fig. 5.1:22). Three shallow, almost flat bowls have straight walls from rim to base (Fig. 3:2–4). Two of them have a rounded rim (Fig.

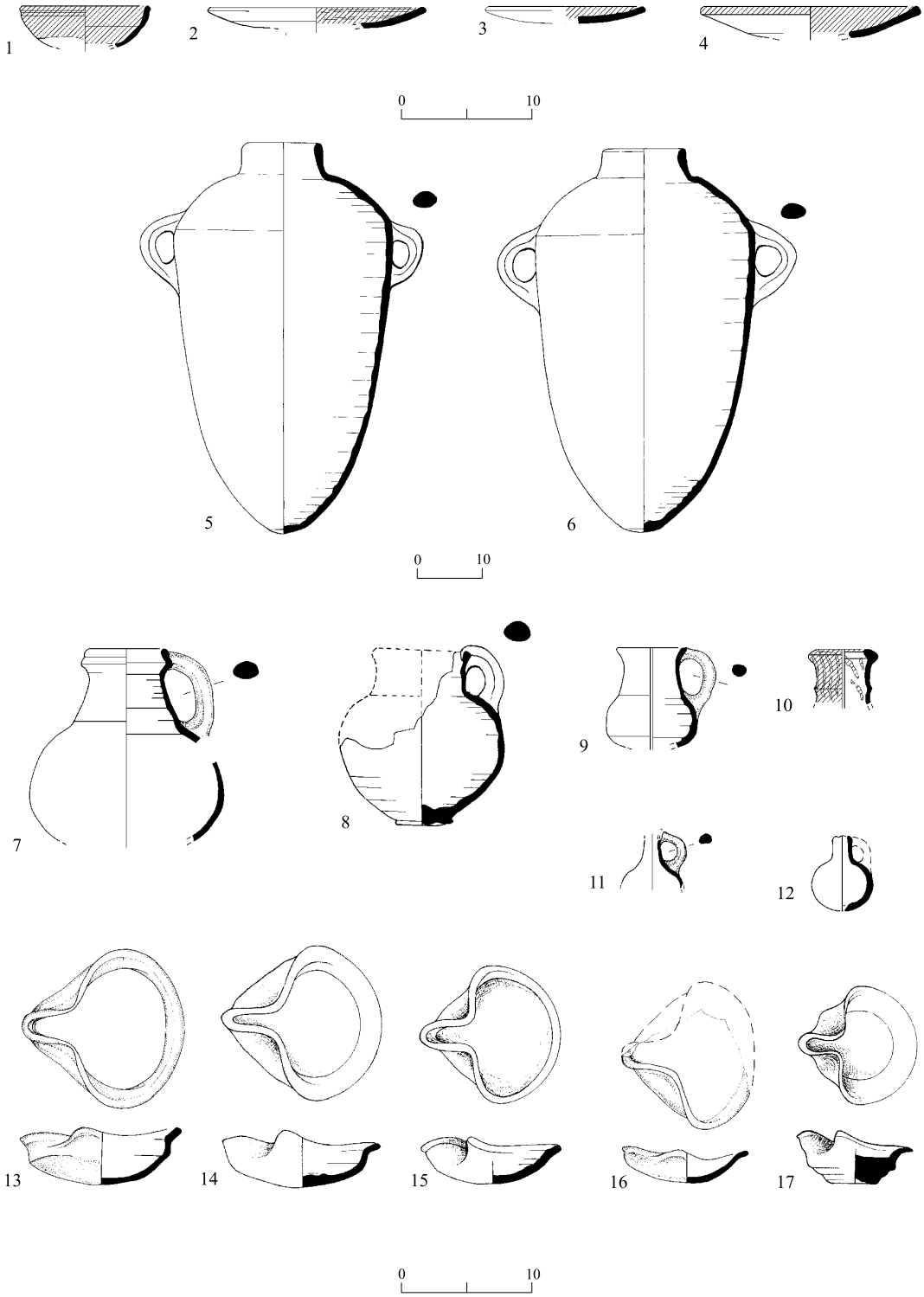


Fig. 3. Tomb C2, pottery.

◀ Fig. 3

No.	Vessel	Reg. No. (IAA No.)	Description	Parallels
1	Bowl	4/2	Red-slipped on int. and upper half of ext.	Lakhish V–IV (Zimhoni 2004a: Figs. 25.16:5, 6; 25.25:7) Timna IV (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001: Pl. 6:6) Jerusalem, City of David 15–14 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012b: Fig. 5.1:22).
2	Bowl	4/16	Red-slipped on int.; horizontal hand burnish on int. and ext.	Lakhish IV–III (Zimhoni 2004a: Fig. 25.27:5; 2004b: Fig. 26.3:13) Timna III (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001: Pl. 14:3) Tell Beit Mirsim A2 (Albright 1932: Pl. 65:30) Jerusalem, City of David 12 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: Fig. 4.48:6–8) Be'er Sheva' III–II (Singer-Avitz 2016b: Pls. 12.10:1; 12.72:4) 'Arad IX–VIII (Singer-Avitz 2002: Figs. 34:1; 37:1)
3	Bowl	4	Red-slipped on int.; traces of horizontal hand burnish on int.	As No. 2
4	Bowl	4/15	Red-slipped on int. and ext. rim	As No. 2
5	Storage jar	101/1	Drawing only	'Izbet Zarta II (Finkelstein 1986: Fig. 19:14) Lakhish V–IV (Zimhoni 2004a: Figs. 25.25:17; 25.21:4) Timna V and IV (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001: Pl. 5:2; Panitz-Cohen 2006: Pl. 76:2–4) 'Arad XI (Singer-Avitz 2002: Fig. 7:9)
6	Storage jar	11/1	Drawing only	As No. 5
7	Jug	4/9		
8	Jug	5/1	Drawing only	
9	Jug	4/6		Tel 'Eton Tomb C3 (Katz and Faust 2014: Fig. 8:3) Tell Beit Mirsim A2 (Albright 1932: Pl. 57:17) Lakhish III (Zimhoni 2004b: Fig. 26.16:2)
10	Jug neck	4/4	Red-slipped on ext.; vertical hand burnish	
11	Juglet	4/10	Traces of vertical hand burnish	Lakhish IV–III (Zimhoni 2004a: Fig. 25.39:15; 2004b: Figs. 26.24:4; 26.39:10) Kh. Qeiyafa IV (Cohen-Weinberger and Panitz-Cohen 2014:405–406) Jerusalem, City of David 12 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: Figs. 4.16:19; 4.36:26; 4.44:20) Be'er Sheva' VI and III–II (Singer-Avitz 2016a: Fig. 11.7:3, 4; 2016b: Figs. 12.18:12–14; 12.51:1–2) 'Arad X–VIII (Singer-Avitz 2002: Figs. 27:5, 6; 31:8, 9; 35:16–18)
12	Juglet	4/19		As No. 11

Fig. 3 (cont.)

No.	Vessel	Reg. No. (IAA No.)	Description	Parallels
13	Lamp	3/1		Kh. Qeiyafa IV (Kang and Garfinkel 2009: Fig. 6.8:12)
14	Lamp	29/1	Drawing only	As No. 11
15	Lamp	1/1		Tel 'Eton Cave C3 (Katz and Faust 2014, Fig. 8:12–14) Lakhish IV–III (Zimhoni 2004a: Figs. 25.31:26; 25.38:6; 2004b: Figs. 26.21:12; 26.39:4, 5) Tell Beit Mirsim A2 (Albright 1932: Pl. 70:10) Jerusalem, City of David 12 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: Fig. 4.40:19) Tel 'Ira Tomb 15 (Beit-Arieh, Freud and Baron 1999: Fig. 4.33:20–22) Be'er Sheva' VI–V, III–II (Singer-Avitz 2016a: Figs. 11.5:9; 11.11:2; 2016b: Figs. 12.2:17; 12.137:2) 'Arad XI (Singer-Avitz 2002: Fig. 9:3)
16	Lamp	4/1		As No. 15
17	Lamp	4/7 (69-1784)		Lakhish II (Zimhoni 2004b: Fig. 26.42:7) Timna II (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001: Pl. 50:13–15) 'Arad VII–VI (Singer-Avitz 2002: Figs. 45:11; 46:6)

3:2, 3) and one has a knife-cut rim (Fig. 3:4). The bowls are red-slipped, one exhibiting horizontal hand-burnishing. The shallow bowl type appears as early as the ninth century BCE (Zimhoni 2004a:1657–1678), but it is more common in the eighth century BCE.

Storage Jars (Fig. 3:5, 6).— The two storage jars from this tomb are oval, with a straight neck and a rounded rim, and two handles extending from the shoulder to the body. This storage jar-type first appears in Iron I, and it continues into Iron IIA.

Jugs (Fig. 3:7–10).— Four jugs were found in the tomb. A medium-sized jug has a globular body, a wide inward sloping neck with a concave rim, and a single handle extending from the rim to the wall (Fig. 3:7). Another medium-sized globular jug with a low base ring, preserved only by a drawing, has a wide straight neck, and a single handle extending from the rim to the shoulder (Fig. 3:8). A small globular jug has a low carination ending in a rounded base, a single handle from rim to shoulder, and a wide everted neck with a plain, rounded rim (Fig. 3:9). The neck sherd of a jug with a mid-neck ridge and a thickened rim is red-slipped and vertically hand-burnished (Fig. 3:10). The jugs from the tomb assist only partially in dating the tomb, since two of the jugs (Fig 3:7, 8) have no parallels. One jug type (Fig. 3:9) appears in both Iron IIA and IIB assemblages, for example at Tel 'Eton Tomb C3 (Katz and Faust 2014: Fig. 8:3), Tell Beit Mirsim Stratum A2 (Albright 1932: Pl. 57:17) and Lakhish Level III (Zimhoni 2004b: Fig. 26.16:2).

Juglets (Fig. 3:11, 12).— The juglets are of the black juglet type, characterized by a black slip, a narrow neck and a single handle. The black juglet first appears in assemblages dated to the transitional Iron I–IIA (Cohen-Weinberger and Panitz-Cohen 2014), and it continues to appear throughout Iron IIA–B.

Lamps (Fig. 3:13–17).— Three types of lamps were found in the tomb. Two deep lamps, similar to bowls, have a rounded base and a pronounced rim (Fig. 3:13, 14). A similar deep lamp retrieved at Khirbat Qeiyafa was dated to the transitional Iron I–IIA phase (Kang and Garfinkel 2009: Fig. 6.8:12). Two smaller and shallower lamps have a rounded base, and a pinched spout (Fig. 3:15, 16). This lamp type appears in Iron IIA, and continues to appear, although less frequently, throughout Iron IIB–C. The third type is a lamp with a thick, high disc base and a pronounced rim (Fig. 3:17). This lamp type is common in Iron IIC assemblages, when it is regarded as a characteristic form, although it may begin to appear earlier (see *Discussion*, below).

Date of the Tomb C2 Assemblage

In the brief preliminary report published after the excavation, the tomb was dated to Iron I–IIA (Edelstein 1968:6). The attribution to Iron I was based on the similarity of the incised decoration on the bronze sword found in Tomb C2 to that on a bronze bracelet retrieved in the adjacent Tomb C1 (the Philistine tomb; Edelstein and Auran 1992). The later dating to Iron IIA was based on the black juglets. In a subsequent article, the tomb was attributed to the second half of the eleventh century BCE (Edelstein et al. 1971:87). The present analysis of the pottery from Tomb C2 leads to a revision of this preliminary dating: the entire assemblage dates to Iron II, and cannot be attributed to Iron I, not even to its latest phase.⁴ Although straight-necked storage jars first appeared in late Iron I (eleventh century BCE), they continued to appear throughout Iron IIA. The other vessel types did not appear before the transitional Iron I–IIA phase (see Katz and Faust 2014). The flat bowls, as well as the jug with the wide everted neck, continue to Iron IIB. Since all the discussed types appeared throughout Iron IIA, and since no characteristic Iron IIB vessels were found, it is evident that the tomb was in use during Iron IIA, although we cannot rule out that it continued into the transitional Iron IIA–B phase.

The only vessel that does not align with the Iron IIA dating is the high-based lamp that is usually attributed to Iron IIC, the seventh century BCE. The presence of this lamp in the tomb may be due to some later activity, but whatever the explanation, it should be treated as an ‘outlier’ that does not affect the dating of the assemblage.

⁴ We note that basing the date of the tomb on the decoration incised on the sword (that was not located) is problematic. Not only is it doubtful whether this stylistic similarity can provide a basis for dating, especially in the case of metal artifacts about which we know very little, but it is also probable that such special artifacts were retained for long periods of time. Even if the sword was manufactured in Iron I, it could still have been an heirloom deposited in an Iron IIA tomb.

TOMB A3

In contrast to the tombs from Area C, little information is available regarding this tomb, and its exact location and plan could not be reconstructed. It may be assumed that it was located in Area A, northeast of the tell (Fig. 2).

The Ceramic Assemblage

The small assemblage attributed to this tomb comprised ten vessels, seven of which were rim sherds.

Bowl (Fig. 4:1).— A bowl with rounded-carinated walls and a simple rim was found. The lower part of the walls of this bowl type are rounded, and the carination is located at the middle, or the upper third. This bowl type is characteristic of Iron IIA assemblages, and it is mainly common during the ninth century BCE, continuing into Iron IIB, and becoming rarer in Iron IIC (Katz and Faust 2014:120).

Krater (Fig. 4:2).— This open krater, with rounded walls and an inward-thickened rim, has a red-slipped interior and rim, and horizontal hand-burnishing. This vessel type is mostly characteristic of Iron IIB assemblages.

Cooking Pot (Fig. 4:3).— An open cooking pot has a rounded mid-body carination, a pair of handles extending from the rim to above the carination, and a grooved stepped rim. This cooking-pot type is characteristic of Iron IIB assemblages.

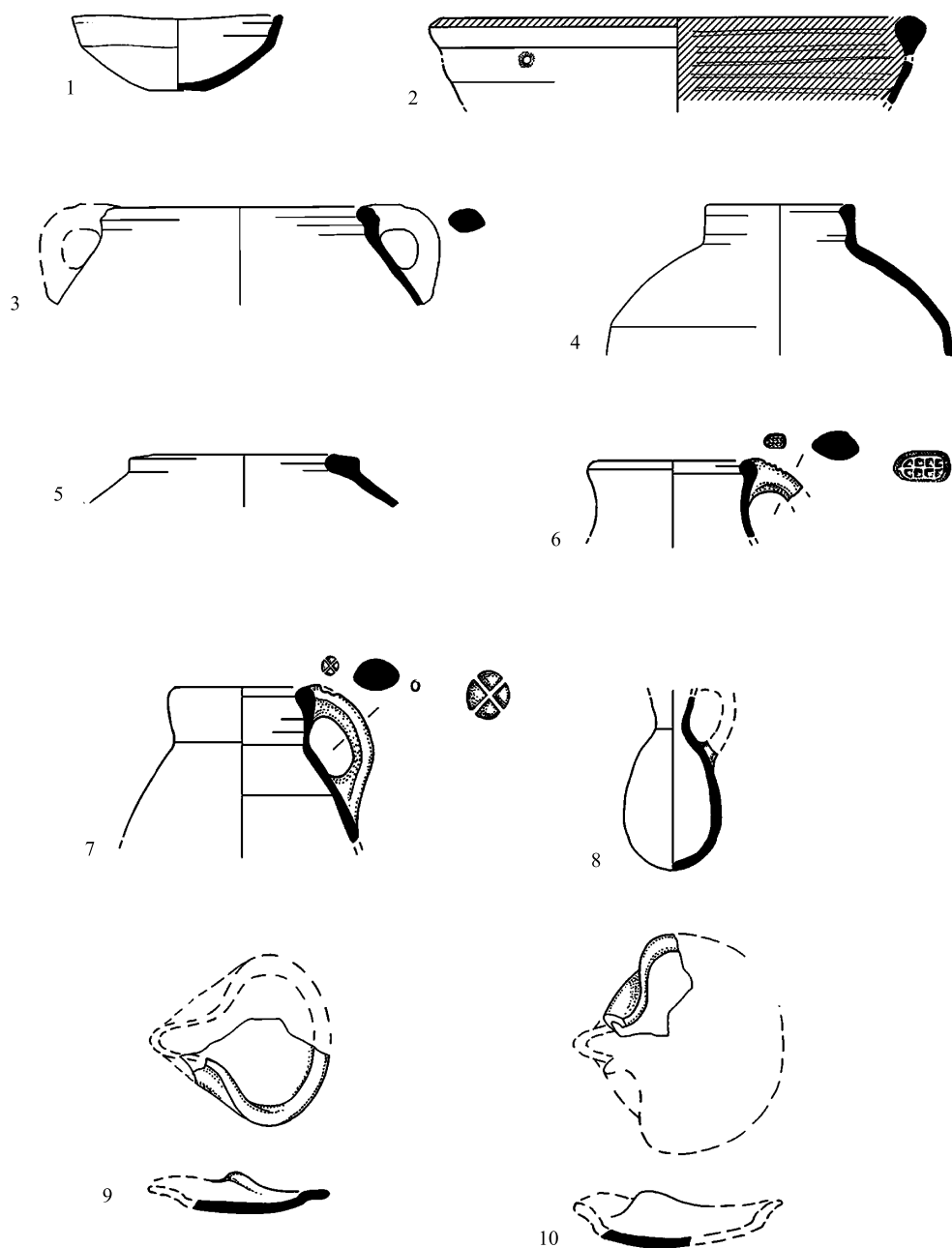
Storage Jar (Fig. 4:4).— A storage jar with a straight neck has a rim that is slightly thickened on the interior.

Holemouth Jar (Fig. 4:5).— This holemouth storage jar, with a narrow flat rim, is a characteristic type of Iron IIB assemblages. The Tomb A3 vessel may be an earlier form that first appeared in Iron IIA, for example at Lakhish Level IV (Zimhoni 2004a: Fig. 25.39:6).

Jugs (Fig. 4:6, 7).— Two jugs with wide necks both have impressions of geometric designs, stamped on the handle before firing.

Juglet (Fig. 4:8).— A juglet with an elongated cylindrical body and a rounded base has a wide neck and a handle extending from rim to shoulder. This juglet type first appears in Iron IIA, and it continues throughout Iron II.

Lamps (Fig. 4:9, 10).— These lamps exhibit a pinched spout and a rounded base. One lamp has a ledge rim (4:9).



0 10

Fig. 4. Tomb A3, pottery.

◀ Fig. 4

No.	Vessel	Reg. No. (IAA No.)	Description	Parallels
1	Bowl	16/1 (69-1787)		Lakhish IV–III (Zimhoni 2004a: Fig. 25.29:3; 2004b: Fig. 26.18:3) Tell Beit Mirsim A2 (Albright 1943: Pl. 24:1–5) Be'er Sheva' VI–IV and II (Singer-Avitz 2016a: Figs. 11.9:1; 11.12:1; 11.48:2; 2016b: Fig. 12.47:17) 'Arad XII–IX and VII (Singer-Avitz 2002: Figs. 2:7; 8:1, 3; 28:4; 34:2; 43:11)
2	Krater	A-1 2014	Red-slipped on int. and ext. rim; horizontal hand burnish on int.	Lakhish III (Zimhoni 2004b: Fig. 26.20:9) Tell Beit Mirsim A2 (Albright 1943: Pl. 20:16) Jerusalem, City of David 12–11 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: Figs. 4.33:18; 4.19:7) Be'er Sheva' II (Singer-Avitz 2016b: Fig. 12.58:12) 'Arad X–VIII (Singer-Avitz 2002: Figs. 24:5; 31:3, 32:11)
3	Cooking pot	1-κ		Lakhish III (Zimhoni 2004b: Fig. 26.4:8–9) Tell Beit Mirsim A2 (Albright 1932: Pl. 56:1–3) Timna III (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001: Pl. 15:19–21) Jerusalem, City of David 12 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: Fig. 4.30:5, 6) Be'er Sheva' III–II (Singer-Avitz 2016b: Figs. 12.14:2,3; 12.48:8, 9) 'Arad X–VIII (Singer-Avitz 2002: Fig. 24:6)
4	Storage Jar	A-2 2014		As Fig. 3:5
5	Holemouth	A-5 2014		Lakhish IV (Zimhoni 2004a: Fig. 25.39:6).
6	Jug	A-3 2014	Stamped impression on handle	
7	Jug	3-κ	Stamped impression on handle	
8	Juglet	129 (69-1786)		Tel 'Eton Cave C3 (Katz and Faust 2014: Fig. 8:7) Lakhish IV–III (Zimhoni 2004a: Fig. 25.36:9; 2004b: Fig. 26.4:14, 15) Tell Beit Mirsim A2 (Albright 1932: Pl. 68:42–47; 1943: Pl. 17:1–5) Be'er Sheva' III–II (Singer-Avitz 2016b: Figs. 12.20:16; 12.66:1) 'Arad IX–VII (Singer-Avitz 2002: Figs. 6:12; 29:2; 33:15; 35:12, 13; 45:9).
9	Lamp	A-4 2014		As Fig. 3:13
10	Lamp	2-κ		As Fig. 3:13

Date of the Tomb A3 Assemblage

The bowl with the rounded-carinated walls, the straight-necked storage jar and the lamps are characteristic of Iron IIA assemblages. The open cooking pot unearthed in the tomb is characteristic of Iron IIB, whereas the holemouth jar and the jugs appear both in Iron IIA and in Iron IIB. The Tomb A3 holemouth jar may be the earlier form that appears in Iron IIA. Consequently, it seems that the Tomb A3 assemblage can be dated to late Iron IIA, and it might have continued into early Iron IIB.

TOMB B

As with Tomb A3, there is no information on the specific findspot of the tomb within the Area B cemetery, located west of the tell (see Fig. 2), possibly near the published Late Bronze Age tomb (Tzaferis and Hess 1992). The finds' box labelled 'B' contained twelve vessels, seven of which were rim sherds.

The Ceramic Assemblage

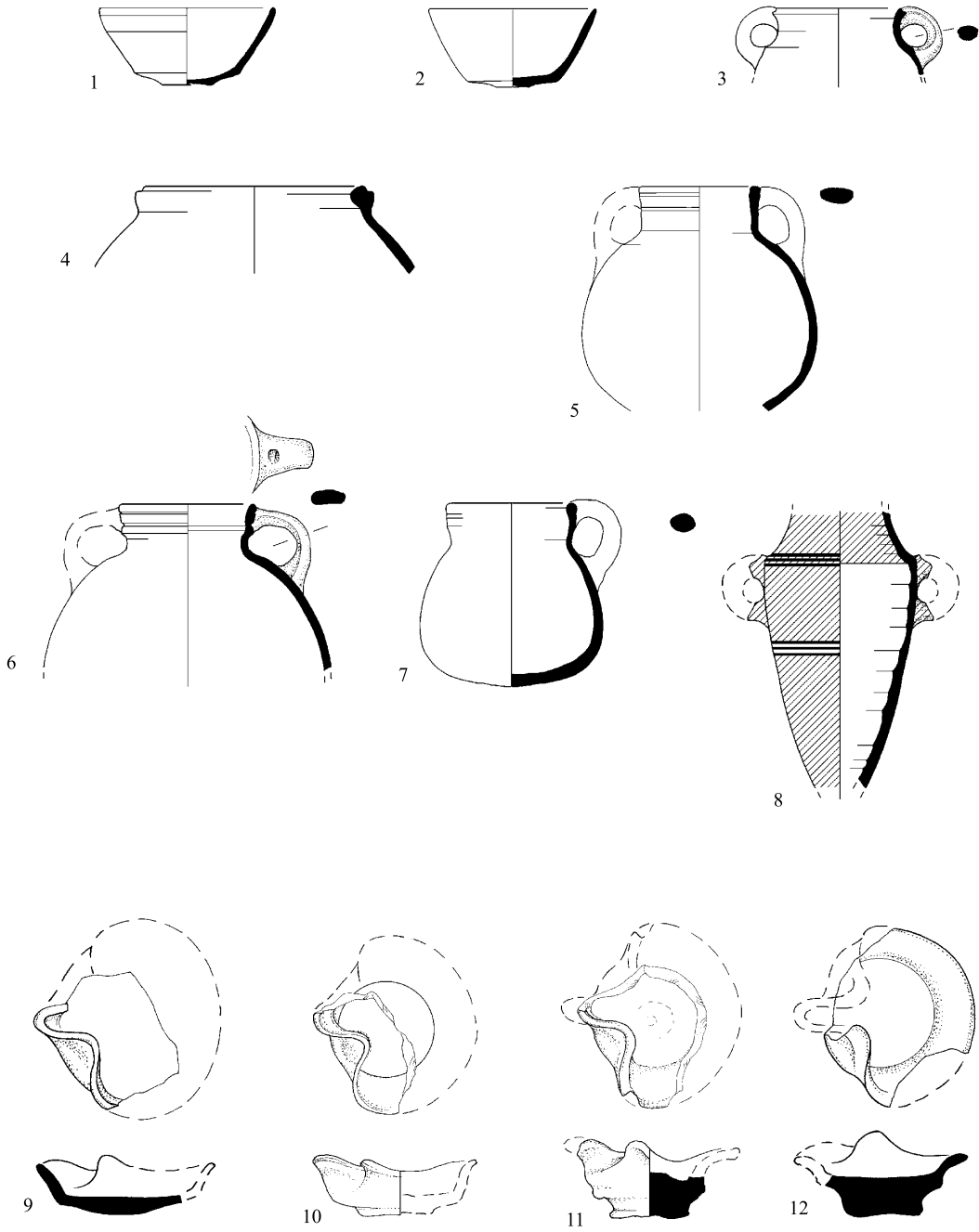
Bowls (Fig. 5:1, 2).— Two straight-walled bowls have a pronounced carination on the lower part, a disc base and a simple rim. These bowls are very common in Lakhish L4421, where they are dated to the transitional Iron IIA–B phase continuing throughout Iron IIB (Zimhoni 2004a: Fig. 25.50; 2004b: Fig. 26.3:2–5).

Cooking Pots (Fig. 5:3–6).— Two types of cooking pots were found in this tomb, both common in Iron IIB. Two vessels are open cooking pots with stepped rims (Fig. 5:3, 4), one exhibiting a pair of loop handles extending from the rim to the walls. Two closed cooking pots have a globular body, a narrow grooved neck and a pair of loop handles extending from the rim to the shoulder (Fig. 5:5, 6). This latter type is a characteristic Iron IIB vessel.

Jug (Fig. 5:7).— This globular jug, with a rounded base, a short everted wide neck, and a single handle extending from rim to shoulder, is a common jug type in Iron IIB strata.

Amphoriskos (Fig. 5:8).— The amphoriskos, with an elongated body, has a pair of handles extending from the carinated shoulder to the walls. The vessel is red-slipped and decorated with two groups of black and white painted stripes. The vessel belongs to the Ashdod Ware family, although there is no exact parallel in coastal assemblages. A petrographic analysis of the vessel, conducted by David Ben-Shlomo, reveals that it was locally produced, probably in the vicinity of Tel 'Eton (not yet published).

Lamps (Fig. 5:9–12).— Two lamps with low disc bases and pronounced rims (Fig. 5:9, 10) are a characteristic lamp type in Iron IIB assemblages. The base of Fig. 3:9 is slightly warped, but it looks more like a low base rather than a rounded base. Two other lamps have thick, high disc bases and pronounced rims (Fig. 5:11, 12).



0 10

Fig. 5. Tomb B, pottery.

◀ Fig. 5

No.	Vessel	Reg. No.	Description	Parallels
1	Bowl	B-2 2014		Lakhish III and L4421 (Zimhoni 2004a: Fig. 51:1–4; 2004b: Fig. 26.3:4) Tell Beit Mirsim A2 (Albright 1932: Pl. 67:1–15) Jerusalem, City of David 12–10 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: Figs. 4.15:18; 4.19:3; 4.23:16; 4.39:11) Be'er Sheva' III–II (Singer-Avitz 2016b: Fig. 12.6:2–10) 'Arad X–VIII (Singer-Avitz 2002: Figs. 29:15; 32:4; 37:4, 5)
2	Bowl	5-ג		As No. 1
3	Cooking pot	2-ג		As Fig. 4:3
4	Cooking pot	B-4 2014		As Fig. 4:3
5	Cooking pot	B-1 2014		Timna III (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001: Pl. 25:15) Lakhish III (Zimhoni 2004b: Figs. 26.4:1–7) Be'er Sheva' III–II (Singer-Avitz 2016b: Figs. 12.6:17, 18; 12.40: 3) 'Arad X–VIII (Singer-Avitz 2002: Figs. 25:8; 31:4–6; 37:11–13)
6	Cooking pot	1-ג		As No. 5
7	Jug	B-5 2014		Tell Beit Mirsim A2 (Albright 1943: Pl. 17:10) Jerusalem, City of David 12 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: Fig. 4.58:22) Be'er Sheva' VI and II (Singer-Avitz 2016a: Fig. 11.7: 2; 2016b:12.50:7) 'Arad X–VIII (Singer-Avitz 2002: Fig. 35:7)
8	Amphoriskos	(69-1070)	Red-slipped, black and white painted stripes	Be'er Sheva' II (Singer-Avitz 2016b: Fig. 12.31:14)
9	Lamp	B-3 2014		Lakhish III (Zimhoni 2004b: Figs. 26.5:7; 26.13:3) Tell Beit Mirsim A2 (Albright 1932: Pl. 70:4, 9; 1943: Pl. 15:10) Jerusalem, City of David 12–11 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: Figs. 4.28:20; 4.35:33) Be'er Sheva' III–II (Singer-Avitz 2016b: Figs. 12.3:16–18; 12.61:23, 24) 'Arad X–VIII (Singer-Avitz 2002: Figs. 27:10; 34:11; 39:3)
10	Lamp	4-ג		As No. 9
11	Lamp	B-6 2014		As Fig. 3:17
12	Lamp	3-ג		As Fig. 3:17

Date of the Tomb B Assemblage

Most of the vessels in Tomb B are characteristic of Iron IIB ceramic assemblages. These vessels include the closed cooking pots, the amphoriskos and the lamps with the low base. The presence of the two bowls dated to the transitional Iron IIA–B phase suggests that the use of the tomb may have begun early in the eighth century BCE, and lasted for a few generations, probably toward the end of the century.

The only exceptions to Iron IIB dating are the lamps with the thick high bases, which are characteristic of Iron IIC (seventh century BCE) assemblages. Although such lamps were sporadically unearthed in Iron IIB contexts, e.g., in Jerusalem (De Groot, Geva and Yezerski 2003:13, Type B, cf., Pls. 1.5:14; 1.9:12; 1.10:16), Lakhish Level III (Zimhoni 2004b: Pls. 26.5:8; 26.37:6; 26.42:7) and Be'er Sheva' Stratum II (Singer-Avitz 2016b: Fig. 12.38:8), their complete absence from eighth-century BCE settlement contexts on the Tel 'Eton mound (e.g., Katz and Faust 2012) suggests that they should be considered 'outliers', possibly reflecting some later visits to the tomb.⁵

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the pottery indicates that the three tombs were in use in Iron II, but despite partial overlap, they were not in use contemporaneously. Tomb C2, the earliest tomb, served in Iron IIA, perhaps continuing in use in the transitional Iron IIA–B phase. This dating is similar to, or slightly later than, the dating of the recently published assemblage of the adjacent Tomb C3 (Katz and Faust 2014). The ceramic assemblage of Tomb A3 indicates that this tomb was used during the later stage of Iron IIA and possibly continuing slightly into Iron IIB. Tomb B is the latest of the three tombs, and its assemblage, which is similar to Lakhish Level III, Timna Stratum III, 'Arad Strata X–VIII and Be'er Sheva' Stratum II, suggests that the tomb was in use in Iron IIB, the eighth century BCE.

In order to firmly establish the absolute dating of the tomb assemblages within the hotly debated Iron IIA, we propose correlating the relative dating within Iron II with our recently published chronological scheme that elaborates on Mazar's Modified Conventional Chronology (Mazar 2005; 2011; Katz and Faust 2014).⁶ Tomb C2 should therefore be dated to the ninth century BCE, and Tomb A3 to some time in the ninth, possibly continuing into the early eighth century BCE. Tomb B is characteristic of the eighth century BCE.

The information from the three tombs published here, together with that from the previously published Tomb C3 (Katz and Faust 2014), complements the available information on the Tel 'Eton cemetery, and provides additional information that enables us

⁵ Additional similar lamps were also identified in other tombs at Tel 'Eton and in its vicinity (Ussishkin 1974: Pl. 95:12; Tzaferis 1982a; Ganor, Ganor and Kehati 2013: Fig. 6:1).

⁶ The adoption of alternative chronological schemes (e.g., Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004; Finkelstein 2005; Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006; Finkelstein and Piasezky 2011; and see Katz and Faust 2014 for additional references) would naturally generate some adjustments in the absolute dating.

to understand the development of this unique cemetery (see also Faust and Katz 2016). In contrast to other Iron Age cemeteries in the south, the Tel 'Eton tombs provide significant data for the continuous use of this cemetery from the Late Bronze Age to Iron IIB. The Tel 'Eton cemetery also contributes information concerning the unique burial traditions maintained in the Canaanite enclave that survived in the region in Iron I (Faust and Katz 2011; Faust 2015) and continued into Iron IIA, a period from which burials in Judah are practically unknown (Kletter 2002; Faust 2004).

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