'Atiqot 64, 2010

An Early Bronze Age Tomb of the 'Common People'(?) in the 'En Esur ('Ein Asawir) Cemetery

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Introduction

During October–November 2003, a salvage excavation was conducted c. 350 m south of the Byzantine site at Ḥorbat Gilan (South) (map ref. NIG 203230–600/709839–10030; OIG 153230–600/209389–10030),[1] prior to construction of a new bridge and an interchange connecting the Cross-Israel Highway (Road 6) with the Naḥal 'Iron (Wadi 'Ara) Road (Road 65). The site is situated on the southern fringes of the Menashe Hills (Umm el-Faḥm Hills), some 10 km northeast of Ḥadera and 800 m east of the Barqai Junction, on the northern bank of Naḥal 'Iron. Excavations (Gorzalczany and Sharvit 2007) uncovered several quarries and one tomb within the limits of the ancient cemetery related to the nearby protohistoric site of 'En Esur (Yannai 2006), at the foot of the tell, some 1400 m to the west (Figs. 1, 2).[2]

Environment

The tomb, designated T80, is associated with the 'En Esur cemeteries that have been extensively excavated in the past (see below). The tombs in this cemetery were hewn in the soft Senonian-Paleocene chalk of the Mount Scopus group (Menuḥa and Mishash Formations; Fig. 3). The chalk surface is covered by a narrow layer of *nari*, which is partially covered with Quaternary alluvium (Sneh, Bartov and Rosensaft 1998) and brown forest soil (Ravikovitch 1969:17; 1981:75–80).

Dozens of rock-hewn installations, including ancient quarries (Figs. 2, 4), were exposed on the surface close to the tomb (Gorzalczany 2005; 2007). The ancient stonecutters exploited the thin layer of *nari*, which is particularly suitable for construction, as its hardness ensures good-quality masonry stones, and it is sufficiently soft to be quickly and efficiently quarried. The rock-quarrying resources of the area were well known in antiquity, and have been exploited continuously until the present. Many quarries, deserted as well as active, are scattered in the vicinity. The Vered Quarry

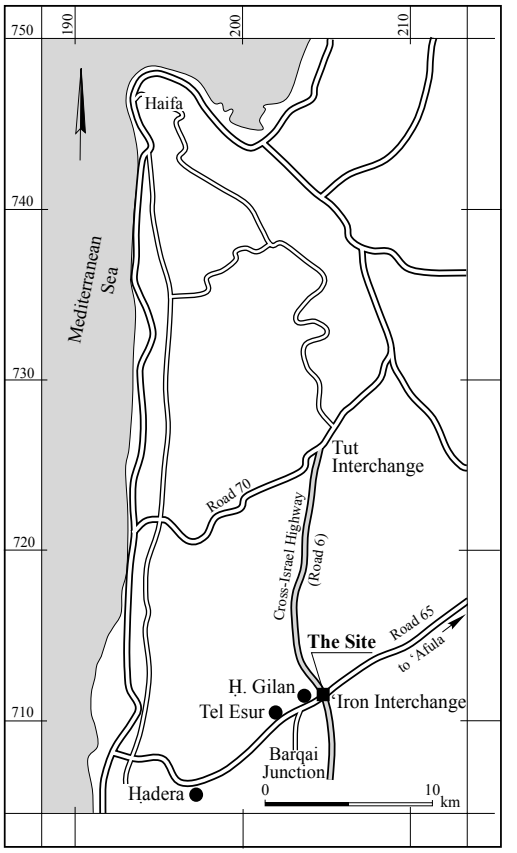


Fig. 1. Location map.

(map ref. NIG 204807–6495/709314–949; OIG 154807–6495/209314–949) is the largest quarry that is still productive. The ancient quarrymen were interested only in the hard *nari* rock, and did not continue hewing into the soft chalk layers where the tombs are located. When the *nari* layers were exhausted in one spot, they moved on to a new, nearby location.

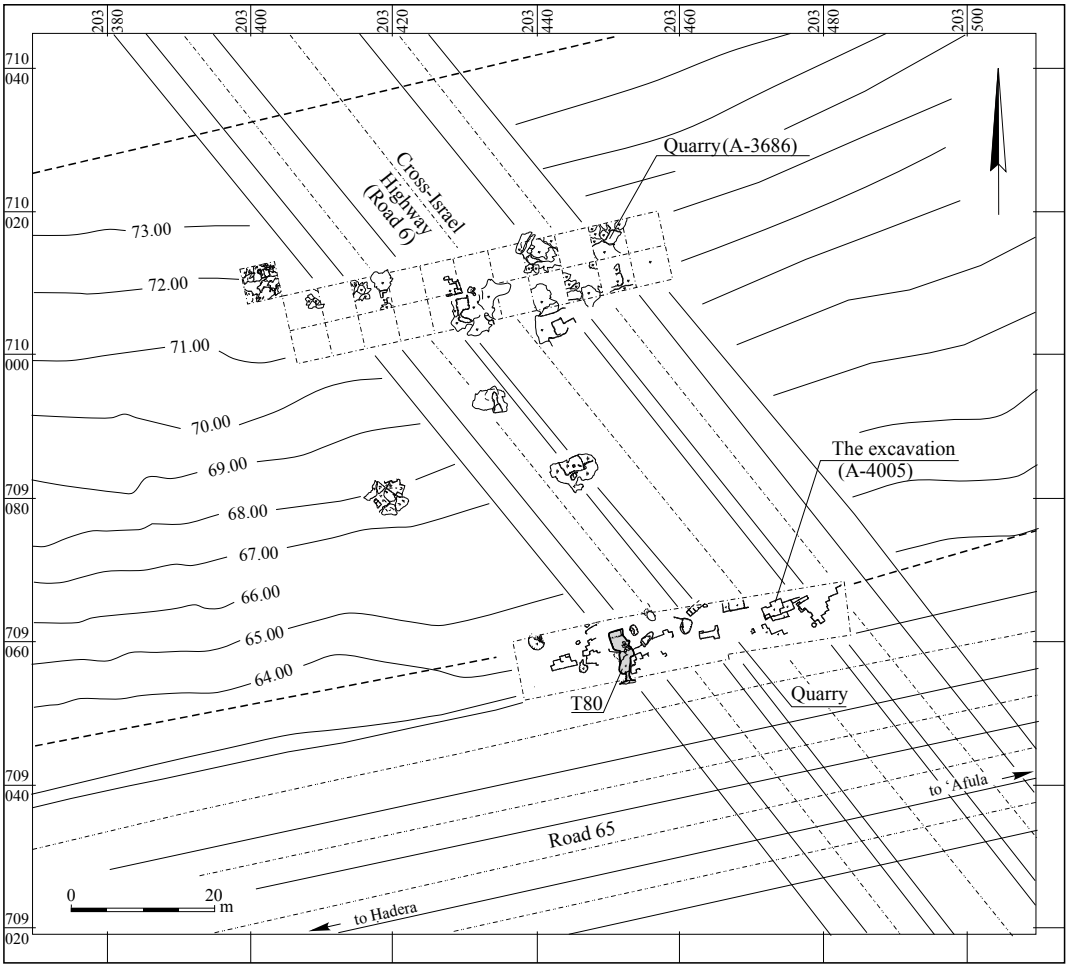


Fig. 2. Location of excavations within the projected interchange.

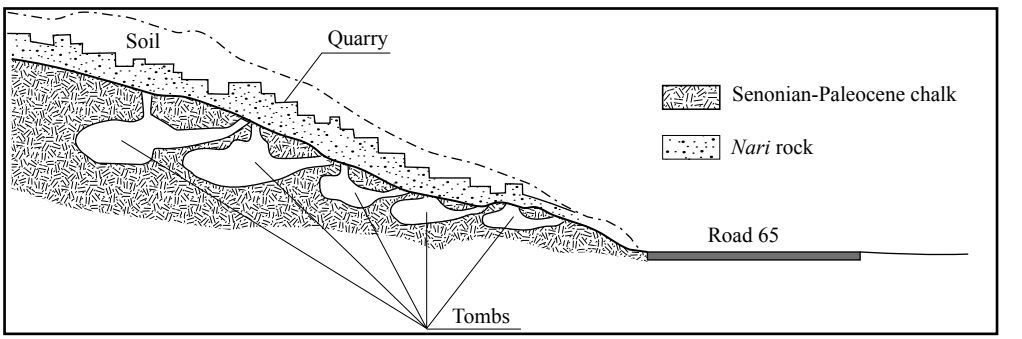


Fig. 3. Schematic section of the quarry and the tombs (drawing: A. Gorzalczany).

Interestingly, a similar pattern of quarrying is followed in modern exploitation (Rot 1977: 1–10).[3] The quarrymen thus moved across a vast area, creating quarries that extended over hundreds of meters. The cemeteries, however, were preserved almost without damage.

History of Research (Fig. 5)

A tomb dated to the Early and Middle Bronze Ages (later designated Tomb 01 by Eli Yannai, see below),[4] was excavated east of the Barqai Junction by Dothan (1970; 1993) as early as 1953. In 1956, another burial cave, dating to the

Fig. 4. The quarry, looking west; to the left, Road 65.

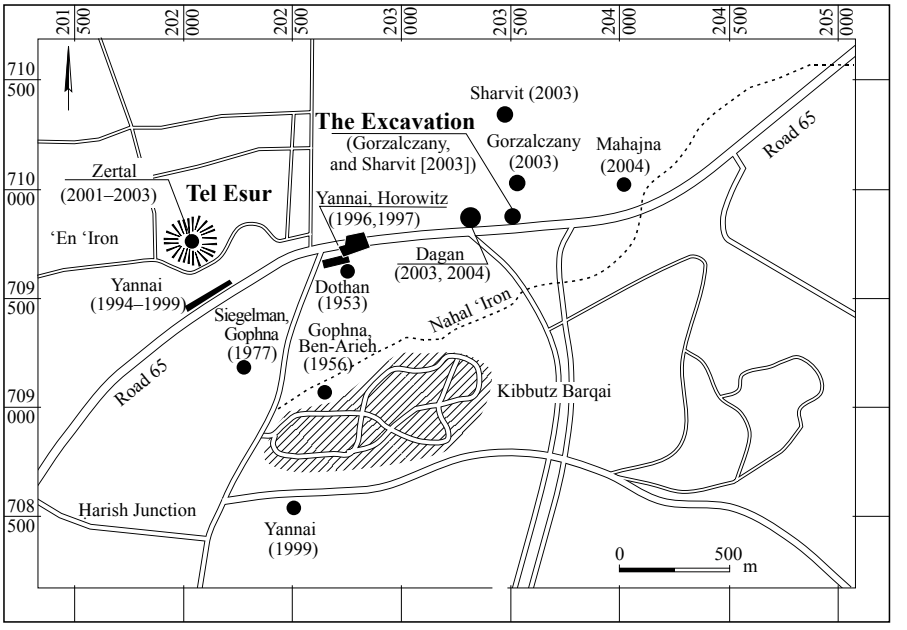


Fig. 5. Location map of the excavations in the vicinity of ‘En Esur, according to excavation date.

Middle and Late Bronze Ages (later designated Tomb 02), was excavated by Ram Gophna and Sarah Ben-Arieh at Kibbutz Barqai (Gophna and Sussman 1969; 1970). A collection of finds from a third (unpublished) cave (Tomb 03) is displayed in Kibbutz Barqai.[5]

Salvage excavations were carried out on the fringes of Tel Esur, south of Road 65 in 1977 (Siegelmann and Gophna 1978), due to damage caused to a tomb by development work and the construction of a water reservoir.[6]

A cemetery from the Early and Intermediate Bronze Ages was discovered during excavations near Tel Esur in 1994 (Yannai 1996; Yannai and Horowitz, forthcoming), and the pre- and proto-historic site near the tell was largely excavated by Yannai between 1994 and 1999, revealing occupation strata dating to the Pottery Neolithic A, Wadi Rabah culture, Chalcolithic period and EB I (Yannai 2006; 2008). In the years 1996–1997, several tombs were excavated by Yannai and Horowitz in the so-called 'eastern cemetery', including two tombs dated to EB IB and 20 tombs dated to the Intermediate Bronze Age (Horowitz 2000; Yannai and Horowitz 1998; forthcoming). The tombs, including those excavated by Yannai in 1994, were numbered by the excavators from 1 to 29. In 1999, Yannai excavated the so-called 'southern cemetery' near Ḥarish Junction, reporting six tombs from the Early Bronze Age, one tomb from the Late Bronze Age and one LB IB tomb (Yannai 1999; 2002; Yannai and Grosinger 2000; Yannai and Braun 2001). Four additional tombs were excavated in 2003 by Yehuda Dagan (Dagan and Sadeh 2008) in the 'eastern cemetery', dating to EB IB, EB II, the Intermediate Bronze Age and MB IIA. A Late Roman site was uncovered in 2003 by Jacob Sharvit (as yet unpublished; Permit No. A-3924) and in the same year a Roman–Byzantine quarry was excavated by Gorzalczany close to the present excavation (Gorzalczany 2007). Another tomb, dating to the Intermediate Bronze Age, was excavated in 2004 by Mahajna (2006). Excavations were carried out during 2001–2003 at Tel Esur by Adam Zertal (see Zertal and Mirkam 2000: 139–143; Zertal 2003).

The picture that emerges from years of research at this site is of a settlement first established in the vicinity of a perennial water source (the springs of 'En Esur) during the Pottery Neolithic A. Occupation flourished during the Chalcolithic period and the Early Bronze Age. The material culture, as reflected in the burial goods, suggests that the inhabitants of the site enjoyed prosperity and engaged in commercial ties with the Yarqon Basin, Tell el-Far'ah (North), Egypt, Anatolia, the Lebanese littoral and the 'Amuq Valley (Yannai 2002:339; 2006a:1–3). Recent surveys carried out in the area have revealed that the EB I settlement at 'En Esur covered c. 600 dunams (60 ha), making it one of the most extensive Early Bronze Age sites in Israel (Yannai 2006:1). During the Middle Bronze Age, the population appears to have shifted, as reflected by the construction of a rampart along the fringes of the MB II settlement near the springs. In this area, remains dating to MB II, the Late Bronze Age and the Persian period were found (Yannai 2008:1734). Iron Age sherds were unearthed only on a small mound southwest of the tell, and it seems that a habitation gap occurred during this period at the tell. Roman and Byzantine remains were revealed along the southern fringes of the tell's summit, suggesting the existence of an isolated farm during this period. The tell was then abandoned until the late Ottoman period when a khan was erected at the site, which was used sporadically by nomadic Bedouin tribes until the days of the British Mandate (Yannai 2008:1734).

Methodology

The topsoil (L154, L159; 1.0–1.8 m thick) was removed by mechanical equipment under close supervision. A test trench was excavated through the collapsed roof of the tomb (L162, L168; Fig. 6), which was partially removed with care using a backhoe. Subsequently, a local grid was established in the cave and the inner

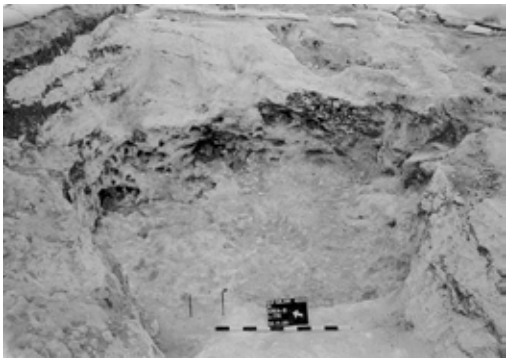


Fig. 6. Tomb 80 at the end of the excavation; note the rodent burrows in the cave walls.

Fig. 7. Locus 170, articulated skeleton with a bronze dagger close to its belly, looking southwest.

elliptical space was divided into four small squares or quadrants, which were excavated separately (see Plan 1). The earth from each square was sieved in a separate location in the excavation camp, using different-sized sieves. In the beginning, the earth was dry-sifted and later, it was wet-sifted with a delicate stream of water. The latter technique proved to be highly efficient, as it considerably increased the number of small finds, especially beads (see Golani, this volume). The locations of the finds, the skeletons and the large bones are recorded on the plans (see Plans 2–12).

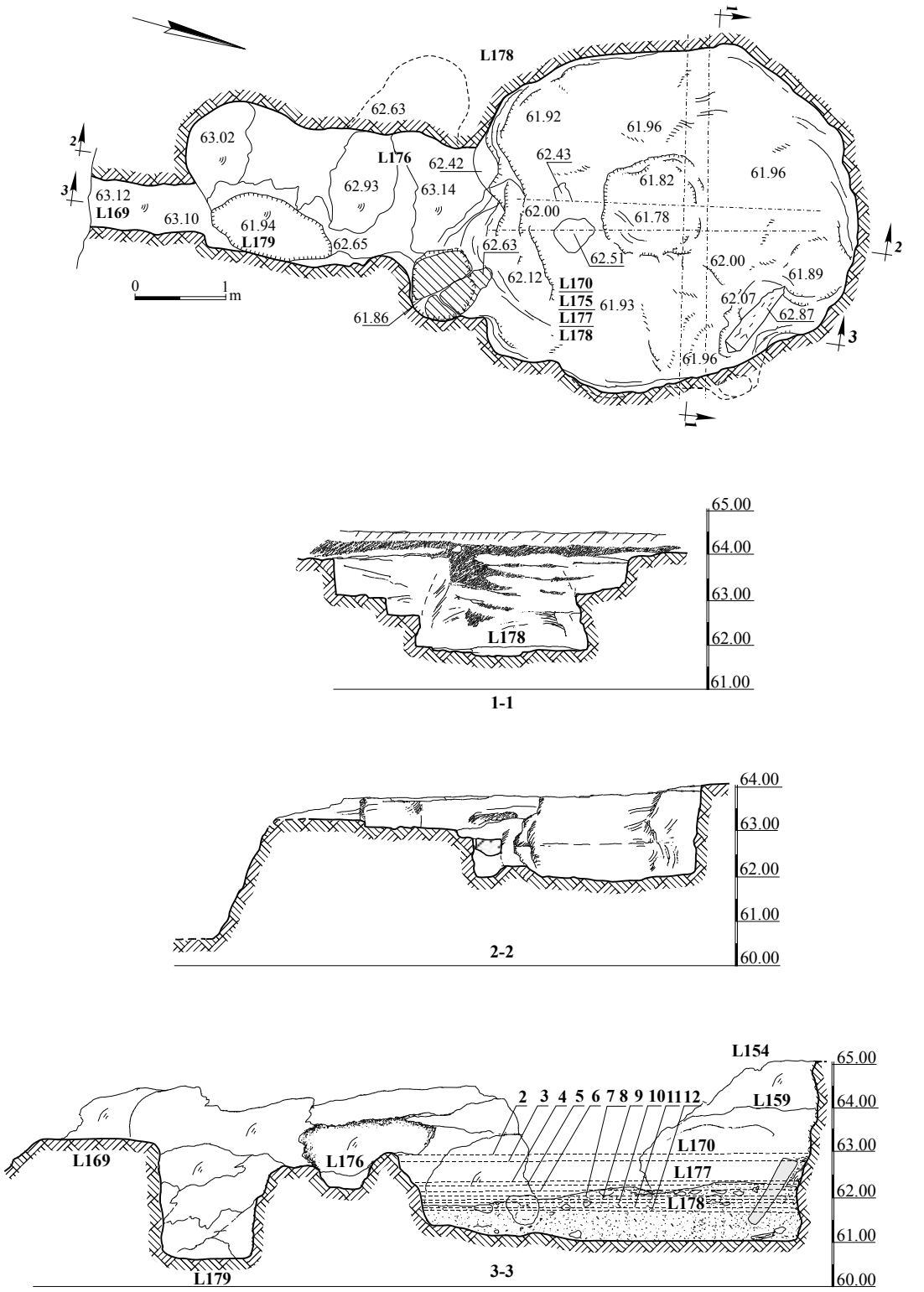
THE EXCAVATION OF TOMB 80

Entrance to the tomb was through a narrow passage from the south (L169; 0.7 m wide, 1.8 m; Plan 1; see Fig. 6). This corridor was most probably related to a shaft, of which no remains were discerned due to modern disturbances; however, possible vestiges can be traced as an intrusive pit above L176 and L179 and between them (1 m deep, diam. 0.7 m). The corridor grants access to a narrow chamber (L176; 3 m long on a north–south axis, 1.5 m wide). This space, heavily damaged by modern construction, did not contain any grave goods. It was hewn some 0.2 m lower than the corridor and led to the main burial chamber (L170, L175, L177, L178), located 0.5 m below the level of L176. It is irregular, almost elliptical in shape and roughly hewn, and it measures 4 m north–south and 3.5 m east–west.

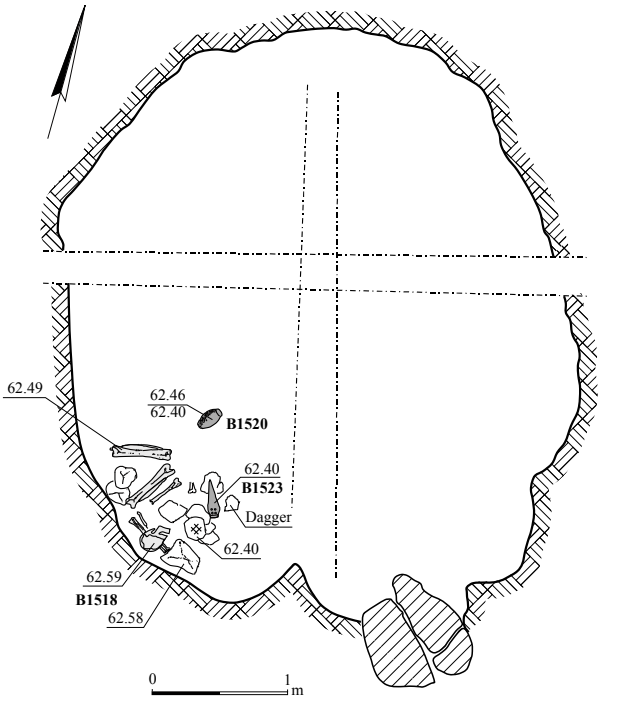
Two different periods of interment were discerned in the tomb, based on pottery typology and stratigraphy. The later period (L170; Plan 2), dating to a transitional phase between EB IB and EB II, was represented by a single burial, while the earlier period (L175, L177, L178; Plans 3–12), attributed to EB IB, could be divided into several phases.

From the beginning of the excavation it was clear that the ceiling of the cave had collapsed, causing heavy damage and covering the remains of the earlier interments with rubble. However, the cave continued in use after its collapse, evident by the final interment (L170), which was placed above the roof debris. This burial consists of an articulated male skeleton lying in fetal position on its right side, with the head to the south and the face to the east (Plan 2; Fig. 7). Close to the belly were a bronze dagger (see Fig. 13:1) and a jug (see Fig. 12:11) dated to early EB II.

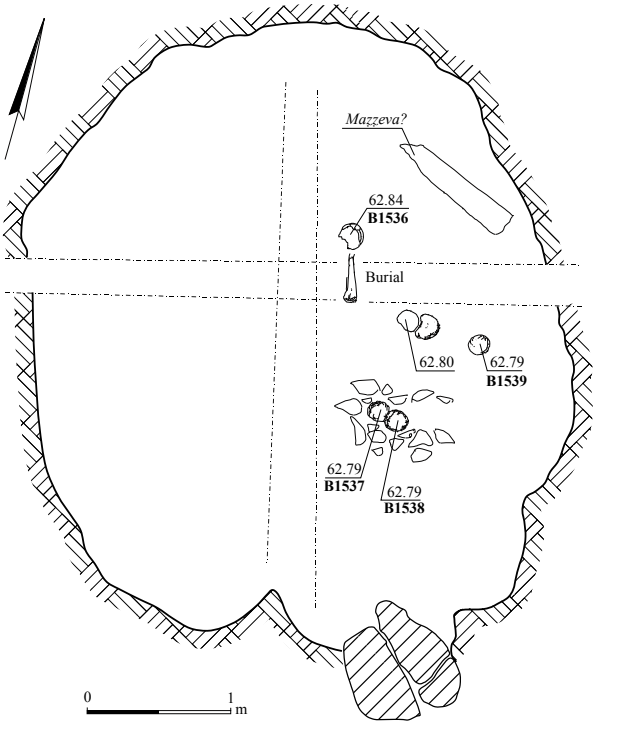
The earlier phases were closely superimposed, distinguished mainly by concentrations of burial goods (Plan 1: Section 3–3). Due to the difficulty in isolating individual phases, the



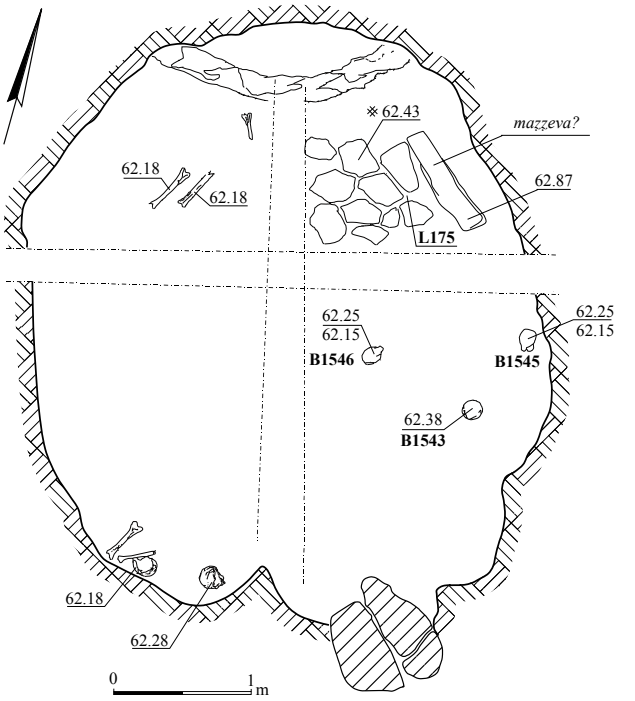
Plan 1. Tomb 80, plan and sections; Section 3–3 shows the schematic level of interments (Nos. refer to Plans 2–12).



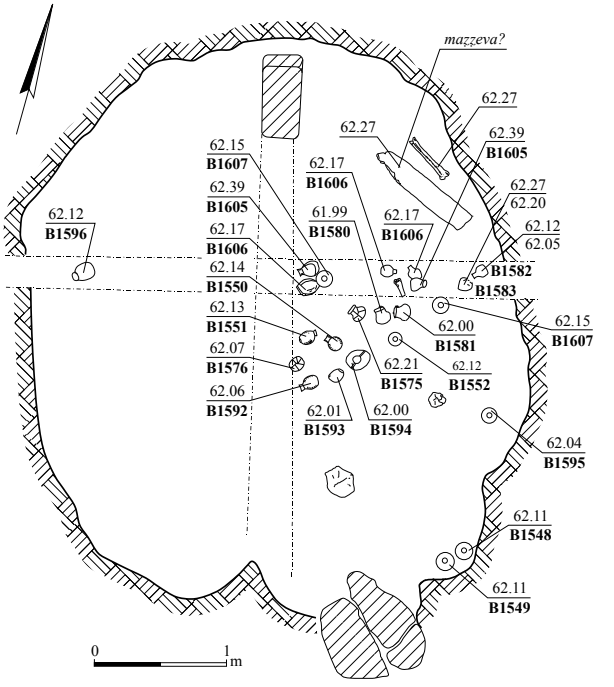
Plan 2. Tomb 80, L170: articulated burial with a bronze dagger.



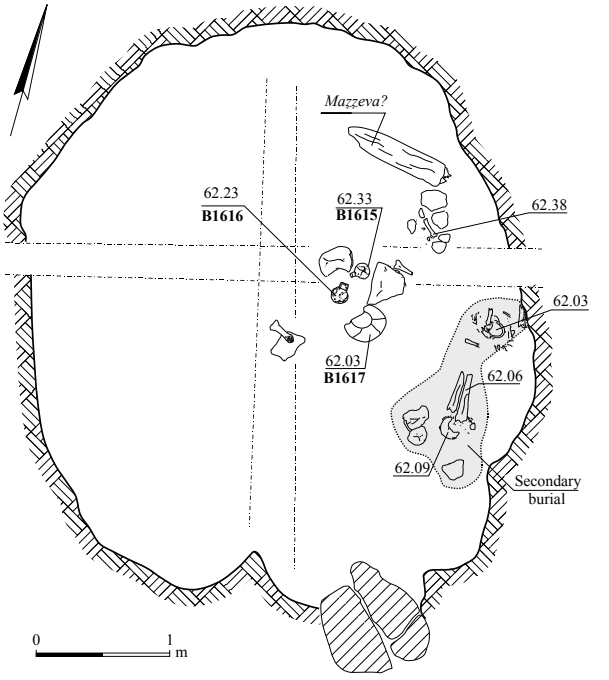
Plan 3. Tomb 80, L177: scattered bones covered with flat stones; in the northeastern quadrant, a rectangular stone slab (*mazzeva*?).



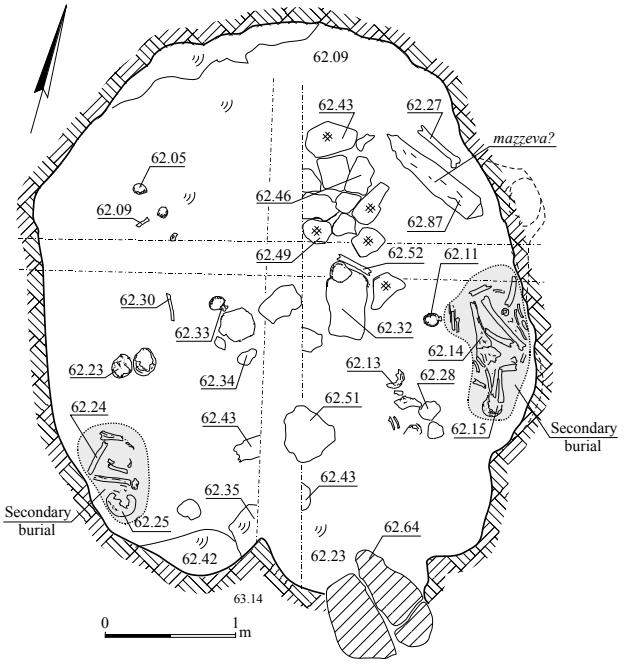
Plan 4. Tomb 80, L175: flat stones covering burials.



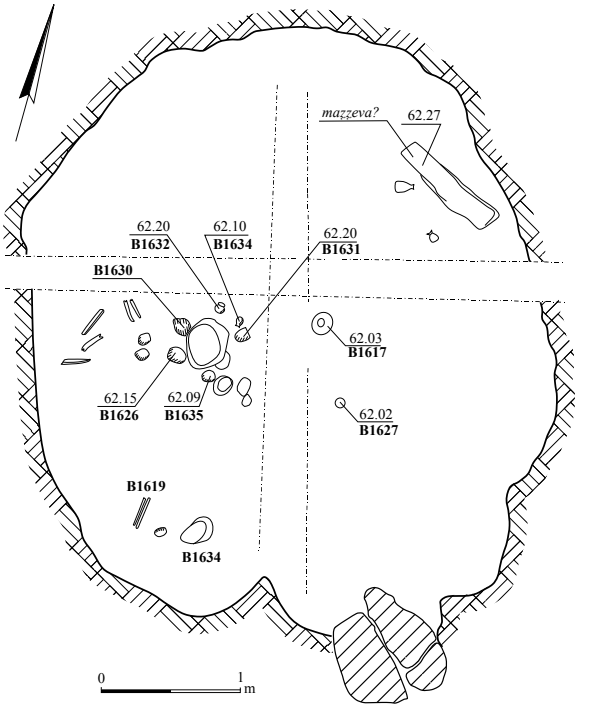
Plan 5. Tomb 80, L178: concentration of burial gifts.



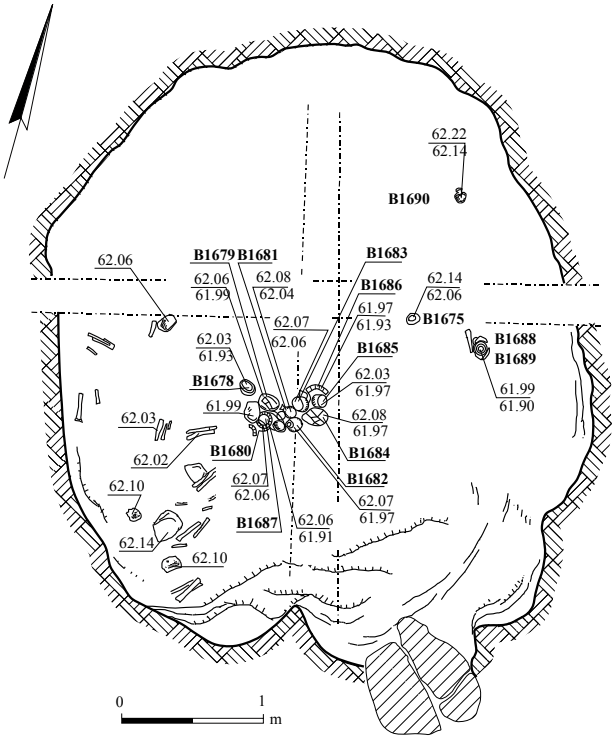
Plan 6. Tomb 80, L178: earlier burials carefully pushed aside.



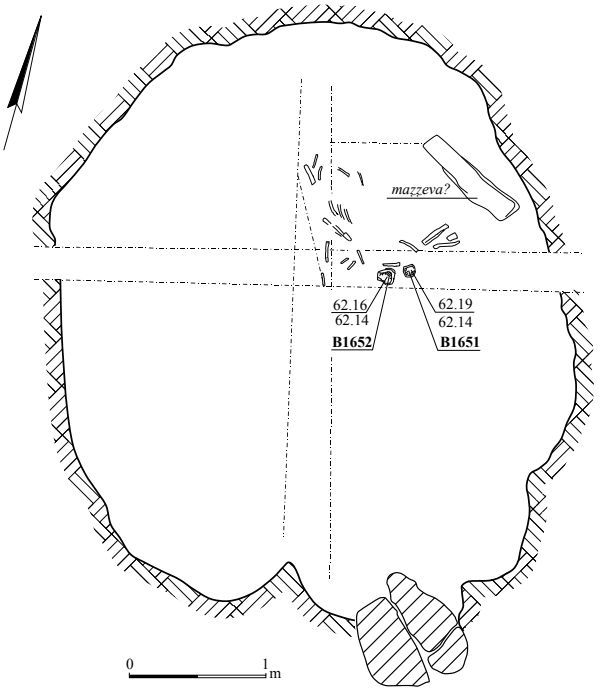
Plan 7. Tomb 80, L178: secondary burials and scattered bones.



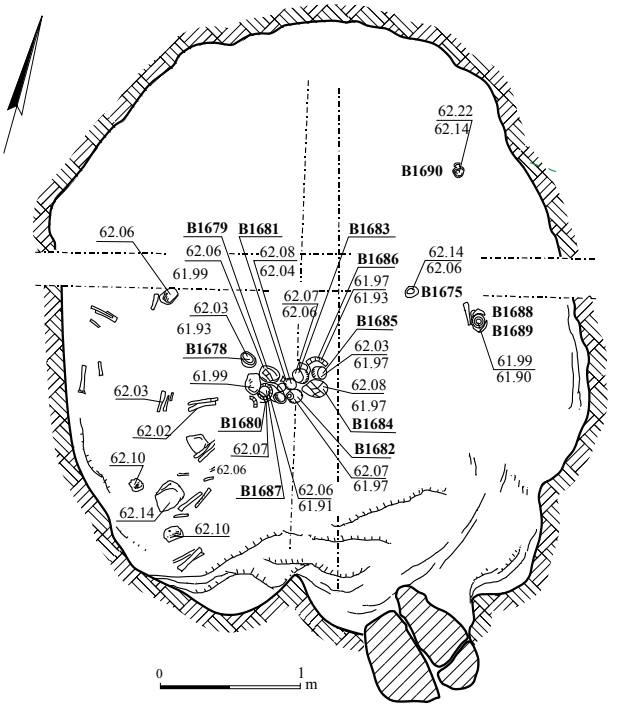
Plan 8. Tomb 80, L178: scattered bones.



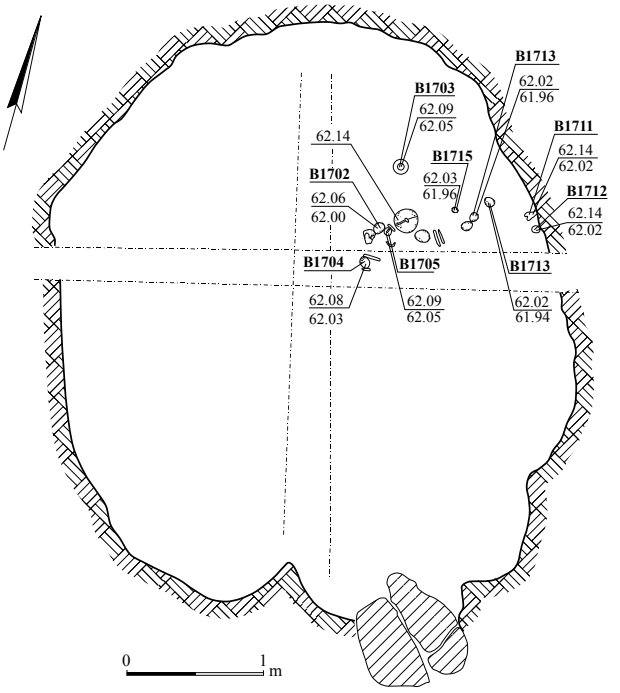
Plan 9. Tomb 80, L178: concentration of burial gifts.



Plan 10. Tomb 80, L178: lower level of interment.



Plan 11. Tomb 80, L178: lower level of interment: scattered bones and concentration of burial gifts, mostly cups and teapots.



Plan 12. Tomb 80, L178: lower level of interment: concentration of closed vessels.

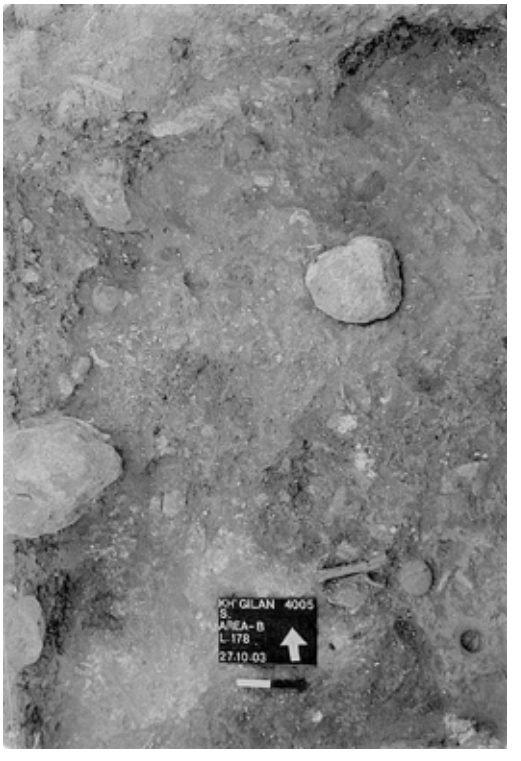


Fig. 8. Locus 178, stones covering burials; at lower right, an uncovered burial, looking north.

tomb was excavated and documented in thin layers at arbitrary intervals of approximately 10 cm. It is evident that the earlier burials were carefully pushed against the walls of the cave to clear space in the center of the chamber for a burial in a later stage. The skeletal remains near the walls had clearly been treated with respect, as the bones of each deceased were mostly kept together in a manner that suggests secondary burial (see Plans 6, 7). It is important to note that the burial place of most of the individuals in this later stage was marked with a few small- or medium-sized flat stones (Fig. 8; Plans 3, 4, 6), and in a few cases, burials were covered with a thin layer of flat stone slabs, reminiscent of a pavement (e.g., Plans 5, 7).

In the northeastern quadrant of the cave, a stone slab of a suggestive rectangular shape (0.8 × 0.7 m, 0.2 m thick) was found standing almost upright (Plans 3–8, 10). It is not clear whether the slab was intentially vertically positioned, or fell in this position when the roof collapsed. The slab seems to delimit a certain segment of the inner cave space, with at least

one burial interred behind it (Plan 5). If the slab was fixed in place, it can perhaps be interpreted as a *maẓẓeva* or stela, as known from several Chalcolithic burial caves, e.g., in Bene Beraq and Giv‘atayim (Avner 1984:119). It is noteworthy that in nearby tombs, several stones were identified by the excavator as out-of-context *maẓẓevot* (Yehuda Dagan, pers. comm.). Another possibility is that this quadrangular slab was used to seal the entrance to the cave. A similar phenomenon was observed in several caves excavated by Dagan (Dagan and Sadeh 2008); it is noteworthy that also in these caves, previous burials were moved aside to make room for the new ones.

THE FINDS

The finds include human skeletons, pottery vessels, jewelry, a few animal bones, flint artifacts and a bronze dagger. The human bones were poorly preserved, some disintegrating upon retrieval, and most were found out of context. The anthropological study has revealed that a minimum number of 94 individuals were buried in the cave during the Early Bronze Age (see Nagar, this volume).

The tomb contained several concentrations of grave goods, mostly pottery vessels (e.g., Plans 5, 9, 11). It is noteworthy that in the later phases of burial (Plans 3–6), the ceramic assemblage was characterized mainly by bowls of various sizes and types, while in the earlier phases, closed vessels, such as cups and teapots, were predominant (Fig. 9). Most of the beads, probably belonging to a single necklace (many of carnelian, some of stone, shell and faience), were found in L178 and retrieved by sieving (see Golani, this volume). Therefore, they could not be assigned a precise provenance; however, it seems that they originated in the earlier burial phases in the northeastern quadrant of the tomb.

Pottery

The pottery assemblage recovered from T80 comprises a total of 108 vessels, made up of 61 complete or restorable vessels (39 of which are illustrated in the present report), and another 47 vessels based on analysis of diagnostic sherds, mostly handles and rims (Table 1).

Whenever possible, comparisons were made with finds from previous excavations at the nearby ‘En Esur cemeteries (Dothan 1970;

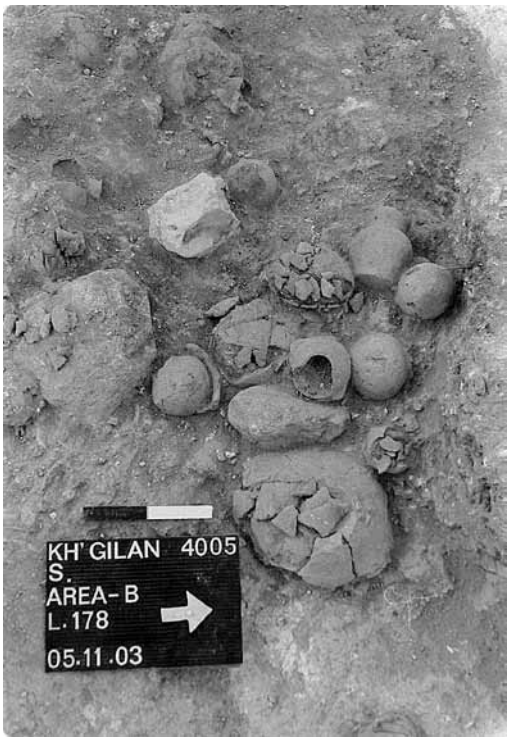


Fig. 9. Locus 178, lower level of burial, characterized by concentration of closed vessels, looking west.

Table1. Typological Breakdown of the Ceramic Assemblage from T80

Vessel Type	N	%
Bowls	10	9.2
Small goblets	2	1.8
Bowls on stand	1	0.9
Amphoriskoi	17	15.7
Loop-handled cups	45	41.6
Small bottles	6	5.5
Ledge-handled bottles	2	1.8
Teapots	10	9.2
Jugs	6	5.5
Unidentified vessels	9	8.3
Total	*108*	*100*

Yannai 1996: Fig. 5) and settlement (Yannai 2006). Otherwise, comparisons were sought among contemporary pottery assemblages of nearby Tel Qashish (Zuckerman 2003a), Megiddo (Engberg and Shipton 1934; Guy 1938), Kefar Glickson (Siegelmann 1978), Ha-Zore'a (Meyerhoff 1989), Qiryat Ata (Golani 2003), 'Afula (Gal and Covello-Paran 1996) and Bet Yeraḥ (Kinneret; Mazar, Amiran and Haas 1973). It should be stressed that the 'En Esur cemeteries have been further excavated in recent years, yielding a rich and prolific pottery assemblage; regrettably, at the time this report was completed, the new excavations were still unpublished. Nevertheless, the excavators kindly shared with us the relevant data.[7]

In the following typology, the most representative vessels of each type are illustrated (Figs. 10–12).

Hemispherical Bowls (N = 1; Fig. 10:1).— This type of vessel is characterized by slightly curved walls, a flat base and a simple rim, and it is either red-slipped or red-washed. Similar bowls were retrieved in previous excavations in tombs at 'En Esur (Yannai 1996: Fig. 2:1–6). Such bowls are also common at Tel Qashish Strata XV and XIV (Zuckerman 2003a:35, Fig. 17:1, 2). These small bowls, with a diameter of less than 15 cm (following Zuckerman's classification [2003a:36]), are also present at Qiryat Ata (Golani 2003: Fig. 4.24:3–8), Ha-Zore'a (Meyerhof 1989: Pl. 25:33.152), Yiftaḥ'el (Braun 1997:60, Fig. 9.1:1–3) and Megiddo (Guy 1938: Pl. 3.1, 2).

Gutter-Rim Bowls (N = 4; Fig. 10:2–4).— This type has a flat base, a rounded profile and an everted rim with an inner gutter. The bowl is red-slipped on the interior and exterior. These bowls are common in the cemeteries of 'En Esur (Yannai 1996: Fig. 3:1, 9) and are also known at Tel Qashish Strata XV and XIV (Zuckerman 2003a: Fig. 17:5, 6), Megiddo Stages VII–IV (Engberg and Shipton 1934:19, Fig. 6:17a) and 'En Shadud (Braun 1996:202, Fig. VI.D.6).

Fig. 10 ▸

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Bowl	178	1689	Orange clay, white grits; red wash on int. and ext.
2*	Bowl	177	1538	Orange clay, white grits, gray core; red slip, burnished
3*	Bowl	177	1539	Orange clay, white grits; red slip, burnished
4	Bowl	175	1527	Orange clay, white grits; red slip, burnished
5	Bowl on stand	178	1688	Orange clay, white grits, black core
6*	Bowl with conical projections	178	1644	Brown clay, white grits; red wash
7	Bowl with ledge handles	178	1640	Orange clay, white grits, black core; red slip on ext. and int. rim
8*	Bowl with ledge handles	178	1617	Orange clay, white grits; red slip on ext. and int. rim
9*	Small goblet	178	1624	Orange clay, white grits, black core
10	*Amphoriskos*	178	1582	Orange clay, white grits; red slip on ext. and int. rim
11*	*Amphoriskos*	178	1659	Orange clay, white grits; red slip on ext. and int. rim
12	*Amphoriskos*	178	1549	Orange clay, large white grits; red slip on ext. and int. rim
13	*Amphoriskos*	178	1579	Orange clay, large white and gray grits; red wash
14	*Amphoriskos*	178	1653	Orange clay, white grits; red slip on ext. and int. rim

* Petrographically analyzed, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

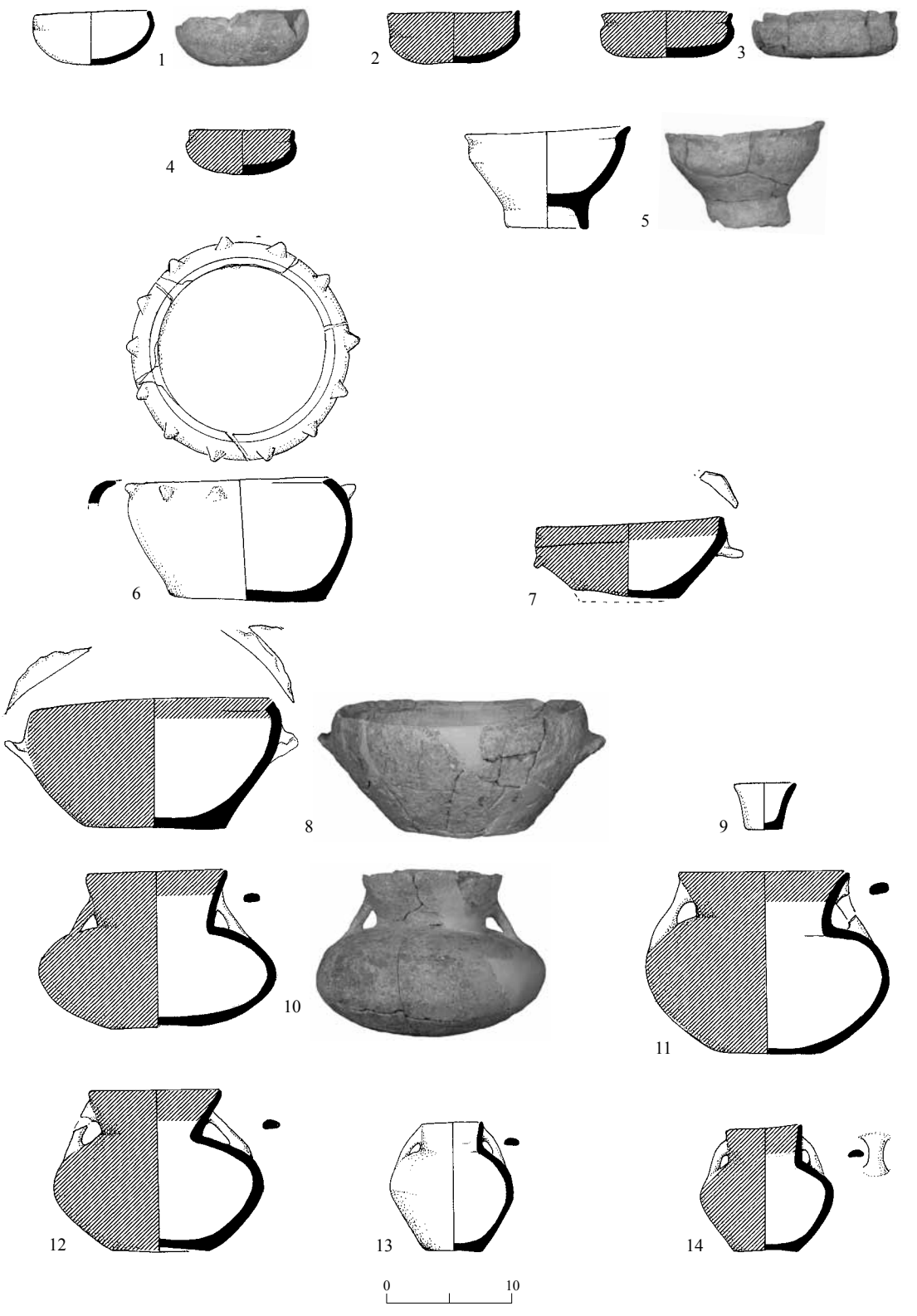


Fig. 10. EB IB pottery.

It is noteworthy that this type of bowl ('Esdraelon style', as defined by Wright 1937:42–44; see also Louhivuori 1988: Pl. 130; Goren and Zuckerman 2000) has only been found in the Jezreel Valley and its surroundings; its limited chronological span, together with its restricted geographical distribution, make it one of the clearly diagnostic vessels of EB IB sites in the valley (Louhivuori 1988:159, Pl. 130; Zuckerman 2003a:35).

Bowl on Stand (N = 1; Fig. 10:5).— This vessel is a small carinated bowl attached to what seems to be the vestiges of a cylindrical (fenestrated?) stand. Such vessels are relatively rare. A few examples were retrieved in the renewed excavations at 'En Esur (Yannai 2006:175, Fig. 4.74:17). Parallels are also found at Qiryat Ata, including an almost-complete example in Strata II–III, confidently associated with EB IB (Golani 2003:108, Fig. 4.14:1–4, esp. 1). Bowls with conical plastic projections on fenestrated stands were found in Stratum II at Yiftaḥ'el, associated with the EB IA occupation (Braun 1997:60, Fig. 9.4:1, 2). A specimen also dated to EB IA was found at Ha-Zore'a (Meyerhof 1989:106, Pl. 24:33.107).

Contemporaneous stands, without the attached vessel, are known from sites such as Tel Qashish (Ben-Tor and Bonfil 2003a: Fig. 7:19, Photograph 7 right) and there is a small specimen from 'En Esur (Dothan 1970: Fig. 7:27).

Bowl with Conical Projections (N = 1; Fig. 10:6).— This bowl, common in EB I assemblages throughout the country, presents an almost spherical profile with a flat base. The inner and outer surfaces of these vessels are red-slipped or red-washed, and the rim, sometimes sharpened, turns inward. Plastic conical projections are attached around the outer rim at regular intervals.

These examples are paralleled by similar vessels retrieved from the nearby settlement at 'En Esur (Yannai 1996:3*, Fig. 3:12) Stratum II, dating to EB IB (Yannai 2006:87, Fig. 4.52:13–18). Such bowls are known in the vicinity from Megiddo Tomb 903 (Guy 1938: Pl. 3.31, 32) and in Stages VII–IV on the eastern slope (Engberg and Shipton 1934:19, Fig. 6:18a), 'Afula (Sukenik 1948: Pl. 12:1–9; Gal and Covello-Paran 1996: Fig. 4:18) and Qiryat Ata (Golani 2003: Fig. 4.20.3).

Occurrences of such bowls reach the Jordan Valley, where they appear in close association with bowls of the Gray Burnished Ware (GBW) family (Leonard 1992: Pl. 23:21–24). It has been argued that this type of bowl, possibly an imitation of GBW bowls, especially the type termed 'Crackled Ware', should be located chronologically in the later part of EB I (Esse 1989:81, Fig. 15). At Tel Qashish, this bowl (Type BIIc) appears only in Stratum XV (Zuckerman 2003a:35 and further discussion therein). In T80, small sherds belonging to two carinated bowls (not illustrated), probably GBW bowls, or imitations thereof, were also retrieved.

Bowls with In-Turned Rim and Ledge Handles (N = 2; Fig. 10:7, 8).— This well-known bowl type, which appears in several variants, is characteristic of the western part of the Jezreel Valley and the northern Sharon plain (Yannai 1996:3*). These bowls are rounded with a flat base and a plain or sharpened rim turned slightly inward. The body of the vessel is red-slipped and ledge handles are attached just below the rim. At 'En Esur, two variants of ledge handles appear: indented and pushed up; plain and pushed down. Ledge handles are considered one of the hallmarks of the Early Bronze Age and their internal chronology, distribution patterns and technical development have been discussed at length (Louhivuori 1988:183–186 and references therein; Zuckerman 2003a:39).

This type of bowl was found in previously excavated tombs at 'En Esur (Dothan 1970: Fig. 7:1, 2; Photograph 25.10; Yannai 1996: Fig. 3:1–10), as well as in Megiddo Tomb 903 (Guy 1938: Pl. 3:3), 'En Shadud (Braun 1985: Fig. 16), Bet Yeraḥ (Mazar, Amiran and

Haas 1973: Fig. 6.32, Pl. 34:5) and Ha-Zore‘a (Meyerhof 1989: Pl. 25:33.124). At Kefar Glickson, red-slipped bowls with straight walls and ledge handles were retrieved (Siegelmann 1978: Pl. 4:5).

Small Goblet (N = 2; Fig. 10:9).— This vessel has a flat base and a sharp, slightly flaring rim. One example is red-slipped. The lower part of the profile is cylindrical, becoming conical toward the rim. Parallels were found in the early phases of previously excavated tombs at ‘En Esur (Dothan 1970: Fig. 7:21–23; Yannai 1996: Fig. 2:16), and perhaps in the excavations at the settlement site, where similar small profiles were labeled as typologically undefined (Yannai 2006a:80; Fig. 4.33:34–35). Petrographic analysis of these goblets suggests that the provenance of their raw material is in the Tell el-Far‘ah (N) area (see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume; see also Yannai 1996:3*). Similar vessels, burnished without slip, were found in a later phase of the tomb excavated by Yannai at ‘En Esur (Yannai 1996: Fig. 7:12), in a tomb attributed to EB II at Bet Yeraḥ (Mazar, Amiran and Haas 1973: Fig. 6:32) and in Megiddo Tomb 1128 (Engberg and Shipton 1934: Fig. 7.d; Guy 1938: Pl. 5.11). An additional example was unearthed in a tomb excavated nearby in 2004, and dated by the excavator to the Intermediate Bronze Age (Mahajna 2006: Fig. 1:3; see Fig. 5). Interestingly, a cup with a similar profile (albeit slightly more convex in section) and red-slipped was found in the Phase I assemblage of Tell Abu al-Kharaz in the Jordan Valley. This phase was dated by the excavator to late EB I, equivalent to Dynasty 0 and Naqada IIIB in Egypt (Fischer 2000:225, Pl. 12.2:1).

Amphoriskoi (N = 17; Fig. 10:10–14).— This type of vessel has also been termed a ‘gourd jar’ (Engberg and Shipton 1934:21; Louhivuori 1988: Pl. 22; Zuckerman 1996:20; 2003a:38). It has a flat base and globular or squat body with a flaring neck and a simple rim. These vessels vary in size and shape, ranging from small, almost globular vessels to larger, squatter examples. A noteworthy characteristic of the *amphoriskoi* from T80 is their asymmetry, with one shoulder higher than the other. Two opposed handles are attached from the shoulder to just below the rim. The vessels are red-slipped on the exterior and sometimes in the interior of the neck. They are fairly common in EB I burial assemblages, but less frequent at settlement sites (Zuckerman 2003a:38).

Close parallels were retrieved in Dothan’s excavations at the site (Dothan 1970: Pl. 3, Photograph 26.1). Further examples at ‘En Esur were found bearing handles only on the neck (Yannai 1996: Fig. 4:2), or only on the shoulder (Yannai 1996: Fig. 4:3), in close association with the type retrieved in the present excavations (Yannai 1996: Fig. 4:4, 5). Therefore, these vessels are all apparently variants of one main type. Additional parallels were found in Megiddo Stages VII–IV (Engberg and Shipton 1934: Fig. 6:26, Type 26) and Megiddo Tombs 903 and 1128 (Guy 1938: Pls. 3.7; 5.1), as well as at Tel Qashish (Zuckerman 2003a: Fig. 20:6, 7), ‘Afula (Gal and Covello-Paran 1996: Fig. 5:9), Ha-Zore‘a (Meyerhof 1989: Pls. 26:33.215; 33.233), Qiryat Ata (Golani 2003: Fig. 4.8:5–7), Kefar Glickson (Siegelmann 1978: Pl. 2:9) and ‘En Shadud (Braun 1985: Fig. 20:2, 4).

Loop-Handled Cups (N = 45; Fig. 11).— These vessels are ubiquitous in the early levels of the tomb, and very common in the assemblages of the previously excavated tombs at the site. They are small red-slipped or red-washed vessels. Their base has a flat, rounded or oval profile and a single high loop handle that extends from shoulder to rim, rising above the level of the rim. These cups can be divided into two subtypes: the first (N = 42) has an elongated flaring neck and a simple rim (e.g., Fig. 11:1), and the second (N = 3; Fig. 11:2) exhibits sloping shoulders and a short to vestigial neck. In several examples of this vessel type, the widest circumference of the body is located

close to the vessel's base, lending it a somewhat squat shape.

Loop-handled cups have close parallels in the vicinity, mainly in previous excavations at the site, where they are almost omnipresent (Dothan 1970: Pl. 1:1–38; Yannai 1996: Figs. 5:1–15; 6:9–15), as well as at Qiryat Ata (Golani 2003: Fig. 4.8:1–3), Ha-Zore'a (Meyerhof 1989: Pls. 27:33.220; 33.130; 33.177; 33.173), Tel Qashish (Zuckerman 2003a:52, Figs. 7:18,

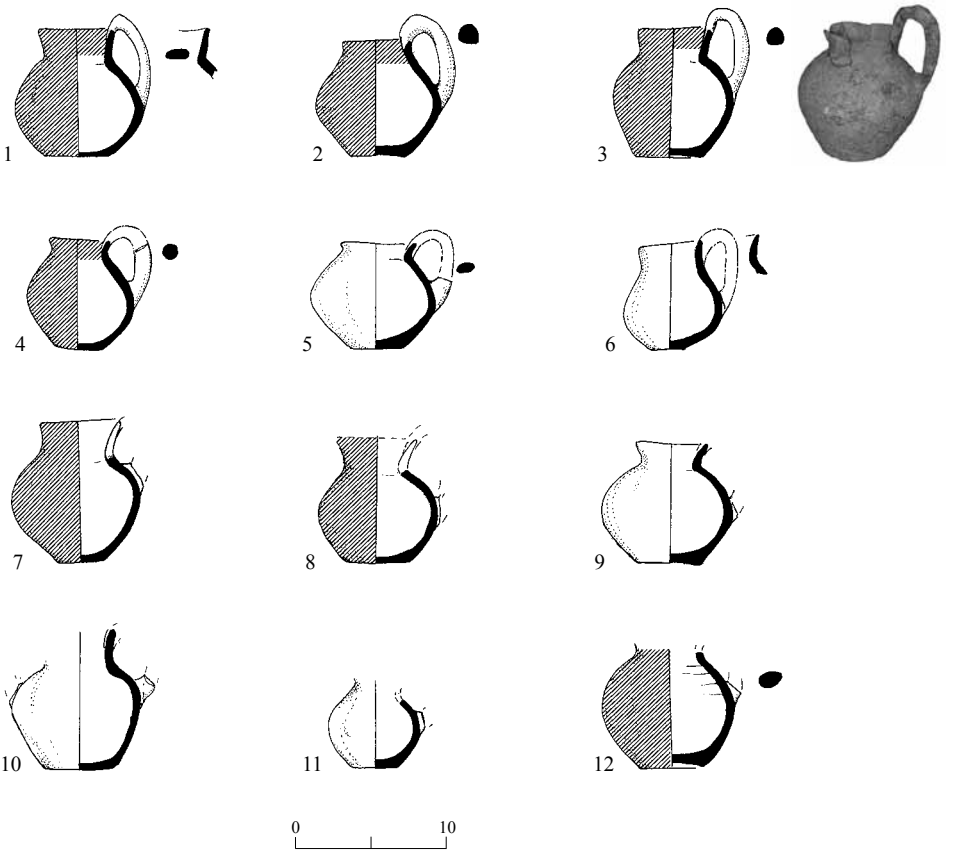


Fig. 11. Loop-handled cups from T80.

No.	Locus	Basket	Description
1	178	1578	Orange clay, white grits; red slip on ext. and int. rim
2	178	1595	Orange clay, white grits; red slip on ext. and int. rim
3	178	1583	Orange clay, white grits; red slip on ext. and int. rim
4	178	1651	Orange clay, white grits, gray core; red slip on ext. and int. rim
5	178	1548	Orange clay, white grits; red wash
6	178	1705	Orange clay, white grits; red wash
7	178	1636	Orange clay, white grits; red slip
8	178	1642	Orange clay, white grits; red slip
9	178	1580	Orange clay, white grits; red wash
10			Orange clay, white grits; red wash
11	175	1715	Orange-grayish clay, white grits; red wash; burnished
12	178	1660	Orange clay, white grits; red slip

19; 20:1), Megiddo (Engberg and Shipton 1934: Fig. 6:24) and Kefar Glickson, where these vessels constitute more than half of the assemblage (Siegelmann 1978: Pl. 2:13–23).

Small Bottles (N = 6; Fig. 12:1–5).— These vessels are bottle-shaped, with a flat base, a rounded body, a simple flaring neck and always red-slipped or red-washed. Similar vessels were uncovered at Ha-Zore‘a (Meyerhof 1989:110; Pl. 26:33.162).

Ledge-Handled Bottles (N = 2; Fig. 12:6).— This vessel is flat based, globular and red-slipped with two ledge handles attached to the widest part of the body. Similar vessels, without handles, with and without slip, were retrieved in the excavations at the settlement site of ‘En Esur (Yannai 2006: Fig. 4.41). A red-slipped and burnished parallel is found at Ha-Zore‘a (Meyerhof 1989:112, Pl. 27:33.201), and another, without slip, albeit attributed to EB II, was recovered at Tel Qashish (Ben-Tor and Bonfil 2003b: Fig. 60:12, Photograph 65).

Teapots (N = 10; Fig. 12:7–10).— This vessel type is characterized by a flat base, a globular to oval body and an out-flaring neck that ends in a simple rim. A loop handle is attached to the vessel’s shoulder. A thin ridge is applied around the narrower part of the neck, where it connects to the body, probably to strengthen the joint. A bent spout rises upward from the shoulder. The vessels are red-slipped. Variants of this vessel are known in other assemblages, some lacking the flaring neck (e.g., Yannai 1996: Fig. 4:14), others with spouts that are straight or rise to a lesser degree. Close parallels have been published from previous excavations in the ‘En Esur cemetery (Dothan 1970: Fig. 2; Yannai 1996: Fig. 4:8–12) and from Stratum II at the settlement site (Yannai 2006: Fig. 4.60:18–24), while numerous specimens have also been retrieved in the still-unpublished excavations of the cemetery (Yannai, forthcoming; Yehuda Dagan, pers. comm.). Similar vessels are known from Megiddo (Engberg and Shipton 1934: Fig. 6; Guy 1938: Fig. 3:34), Tel Qashish, with a more accentuated bend in the spout (Zuckerman 2003a: Fig. 20:4, 5), Ha-Zore‘a (Meyerhof 1989: Pl. 26:33.236) and Qiryat Ata (Golani 2003:97, Fig. 4.8:9–14).

Jugs (N = 6; Fig. 12:11–13).— Figure 12:11 is the lower part of a red-slipped jug with a narrow, elongated body. Similar profiles were found in a tomb dated to EB II at Bet Yeraḥ (Mazar, Amiran and Haas 1973: Fig. 5:3). It is generally agreed that these jugs date to late EB I and early EB II (e.g., Louhivuori 1998: Pl. 11, and see further discussion therein). In previous excavations at ‘En Esur (Tomb 3), similar vessels were attributed to a transitional EB I–EB II phase (Yannai and Grosinger 2000: Fig. 9.1:7, 8; Yannai and Braun 2001:42, Fig. 1).

Unidentified Vessels (N = 9).— Body sherds of eleven closed vessels and one open vessel, which could not be positively identified, were found in the tomb. These vessels are not illustrated, but are included in the statistical calculations (see Table 1).

The pottery assemblage is noteworthy in several aspects. While it is quite typical of Early Bronze Age tombs (the difference between the ceramic repertoires of burial and dwelling sites has already been emphasized by researchers, see Amiran 1969:55; Louhivuori 1988:89–220; cf. Golani 2003:147–156), it comprises mainly cups, jugs and bowls, but lacks platters and jars that were recovered in previously excavated tombs at ‘En Esur (e.g., Yannai 1996:4*; Yehuda Dagan, pers. comm.).

The pottery from T80 is relatively homogeneous, handmade and fashioned of friable material, usually covered with some surface treatment. It must be emphasized that no imported vessels or luxury items were found. Petrographic analysis of twelve pottery samples (11.1% of the assemblage) indicated that the raw materials utilized by the potters were available in the immediate vicinity of the site (see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume). An

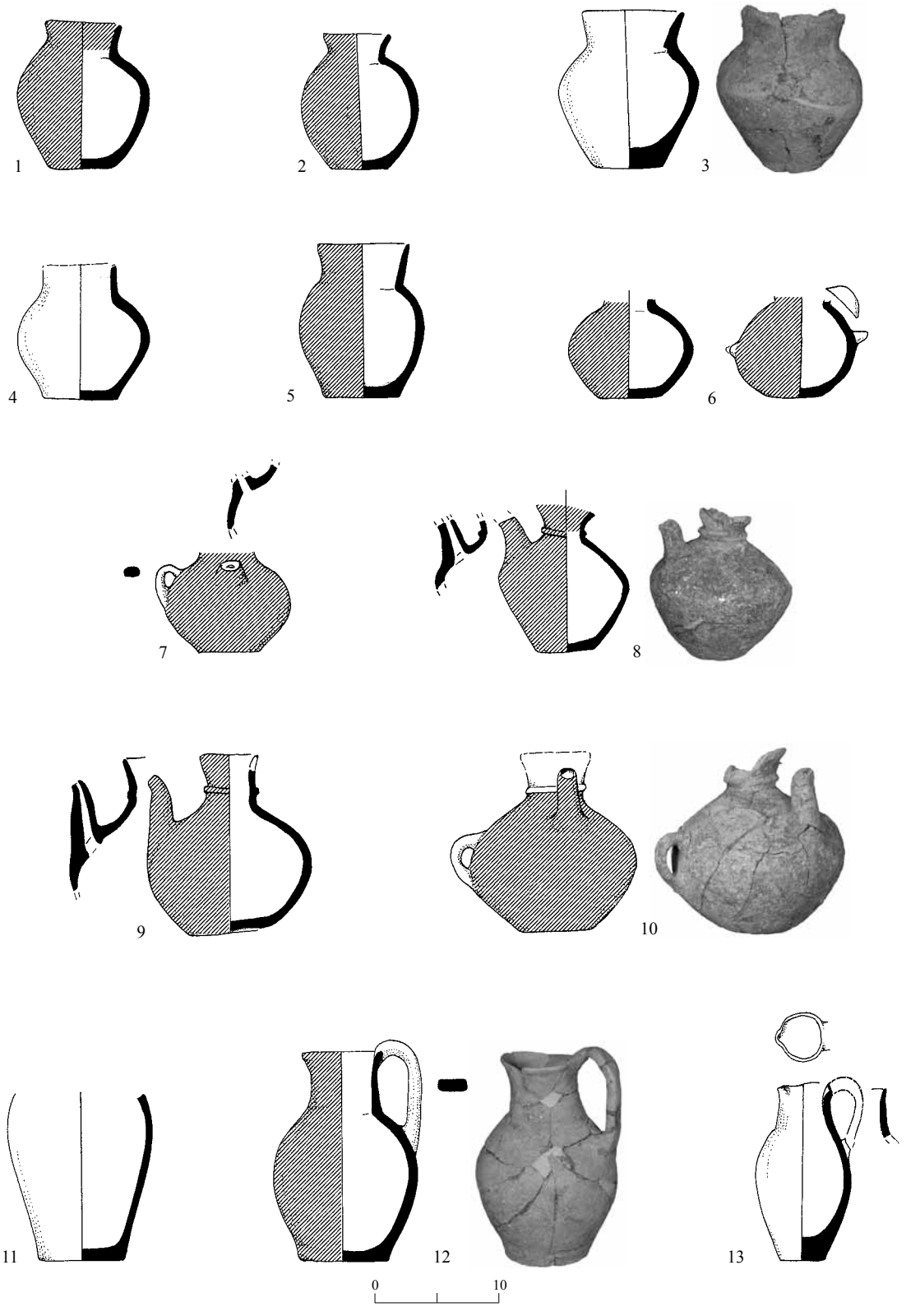


Fig. 12. Pottery from T80.

overwhelming majority of the vessels (83.3%; N = 90) were red-slipped, twelve vessels (11.1%) were red-washed and a few were slipped and burnished. Six vessels (5.5%) bear no surface treatment. Only 9.2% of the vessels are open forms, the rest (90.8%) are closed.

Typologically, the assemblage from T80 finds its closest parallels in vessels originating in the western part of the Jezreel Valley and in the northern Sharon plain, especially in Stratum II of the settlement at ‘En Esur (Yannai, Lazar-Shorer and Grosinger 2006; Yannai 2006:271–273). It compares well also with ‘En Shadud Strata I–II, Qiryat Ata Stratum II and Megiddo Stages VII–IV (for regional discussions, see Yannai 1999:214–215; Philip and Baird 2000:13–17; Zuckerman 2003b, c). Farther afield, contemporary assemblages show important typological differences. For example, while the bowls from ‘En Esur present only flat bases, the bowls from the Yarqon River Basin and Tell el-Far‘ah (North) exhibit omphalus bases (Louhivuori 1988:152). Other notable variations include bowls with in-folded rims and juglets with handles attached to the neck, which are found at ‘En Esur (Dothan 1970: Pl. 7:1–3) and are common at Megiddo (Guy 1938: Pl. 3:13–21), ‘Afula (Sukenik 1948: Pl. 6:20–34) and ‘En Shadud (Braun 1985: Fig. 16), but are absent or rare in the assemblage from Tell el-Far’ah (North) (de Vaux and Stève 1949: Fig. 5:7). Hemispherical bowls with spouts were found at Azor, Tel Shalem and Tell el-Far‘ah (North), but rarely appear in assemblages from ‘En Esur.

It seems clear that the distribution of the Jezreel Valley ceramic assemblage does not reach the Yarqon Basin area or the Jordan Valley. This regional division, and the local characteristics of the western Jezreel–northern Sharon repertoire during EB I, have already been discussed (see, e.g., Yannai 1996:4*–10*).

It is important to note that in the pottery assemblage from T80, no GBW bowls were recovered. This is in contrast to most of the tombs previously excavated at ‘En Esur (e.g., Yannai and Grosinger 2000:156–157, Tombs 1, 3 and 20), where GBW bowls comprised 55% of the total number of bowls in the tombs. The situation in T80 corresponds with that observed in the tomb labeled T40, the first use of which was dated by the excavators to a phase

◂ Fig. 12

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Small bottle	178	1656	Orange clay, white and gray grits, black core; red slip on ext. and int. rim
2	Small bottle	178	1616	Orange clay, white and gray grits, black core; red slip
3	Small bottle	178	1552	Orange-pinkish clay, white grits, black core; red wash
4	Small bottle	178	1581	Orange clay, white grits; red wash
5	Small bottle	178	1573	Orange clay, few white grits; red slip
6	Ledge-handled bottle	178	1657	Orange clay, white grits; red slip
7	Teapot	178	1685	Orange clay ,white grits, black core; red slip
8	Teapot	178	1690	Orange clay, white and black small grits; red slip on ext. and int. rim, burnished
9	Teapot	178	1675	Orange clay, white grits; red slip
10	Teapot	178	1592	Orange clay, white grits; red slip
11*	Jug	170	1520	Orange-grayish clay, white grits; red wash
12*	Jug	178	1625	Orange clay, with grits; red slip
13	Jug	178	1605	Orange clay, white grits; red wash

* Petrographically analyzed, see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume.

Fig. 13. Metal finds: (1) bronze dagger from L170 (B1523); (2) pair of bronze earrings; (3) bronze earring.

following the disappearance of GBW from the local ceramic repertoire.

Metal

The metal finds from T80 are few, comprising one bronze dagger and three bronze earrings.

Bronze Dagger (Fig. 13:1).— The dagger was found close to the belly of the articulated skeleton in the transitional EB IB–EB II burial (L170; see Fig. 7). The blade, with a rhomboidal section, is 25 cm long, 3 cm wide at its widest point, and 4.9 mm thick. The tang has four rivet holes arranged in a trapezoidal pattern (three of the rivets are still preserved) and a shallow midrib along its long axis. Parallels were found in previous excavations at ʻEn Esur (Yannai 1996:13*, Fig. 8:1), albeit with three rivet holes, and in an Early Bronze Age tomb at Maʻabarot (Porath, Dar and Applebaum 1985:193–194; Fig. 81:4).

Bronze Earrings (Fig. 13:2, 3).— Four bronze earrings were retrieved from T80. They include a small delicate pair found inside a juglet (B1673; diam. 1 cm; Fig. 13:2); a single earring (B1655; not illustrated; see Plan 9); and another, single, larger earring (B1556; diam. 2 cm; Fig. 13:3) recovered during sieving; Thus, its exact provenance remains unclear.

Flint

Twenty-one flint artifacts (not illustrated) were collected during the excavation, the majority (N = 18) comprising waste and debris, as well as one flake core and two retouched flakes. All these artifacts were manufactured of light beige flint with white inclusions, most probably chalk, which originated in flint outcrops of the Mashash Formation. It would appear that these artifacts are isolated finds associated with surface fills and are not diagnostic of any lithic industry.[9]

Archaeozoology

A few animal bones (not illustrated) were retrieved from the cave, including an upper left jawbone and a tooth of a mole (*Spalax ehrenbergi*), a molar of a dog (*Canis familiaris*) and a phalanx (No. 2) of a sheep/goat (*Ovis aries/Capra hircus*).[10] As these items were retrieved during sifting, their exact provenance could not be ascertained. Nevertheless, the presence of rodent's teeth among the finds is consistent with the numerous burrows discerned in the cave walls (see Fig. 6).

DISCUSSION

Tomb 80 belongs to the extensive EB IB–EB II necropolis at ʻEn Esur, which has been excavated a number of times in the past. It most probably served the population that dwelt in the settlement of ʻEn Esur. Examination of the finds reveals that the pottery assemblage is characterized by a notable regionalism, closely resembling the material culture of the

late EB I and EB II, as known in the northern Sharon plain and the Jezreel Valley (Louhivuori 1988:152), and differing from the assemblages of the Yarqon Basin and the Jordan Valley. However, it should be stressed that no sites were excavated to the south of ‘En Esur and therefore, no assemblages from that area are known. The same is true for the Lower, Upper and Western Galilee, north of Yiftaḥ’el.

Chronologically, the pottery of T80, mainly the *amphoriskoi*, teapots and jugs, is comparable to vessels from Tomb 1 in the eastern cemetery of ‘En Esur. This tomb has been equated by the excavator to Stratum II at the settlement site of ‘En Esur, dating to late EB I, as have Tombs 3 and 20 (Yannai and Grosinger 2000:153).

Several vessels from Tomb 3, found in the upper levels of the tomb, close to the entrance shaft, were dated by the excavators to EB II, or to a transitional EB I–II phase (Yannai and Grosinger 2000:153, Fig. 9:7, 8). This material is significant, as it can be compared with the jugs we found in the later burial phase of T80 (L170), above the collapsed roof. A similar internal stratigraphy was discerned in Tomb 40, uncovered in the southern cemetery of ‘En Esur in 1996: an earlier phase contained vessels dating to the end of EB I, while an upper level yielded (among other vessels) jugs of the type known as ‘Abydos Ware’ (Yannai and Grosinger 2000:154). Tomb 40 also contained a third and final phase dated to the Intermediate Bronze Age, not represented in T80. Imported vessels, as well as their local imitations, were found in all the Early Bronze Age tombs excavated so far at ‘En Esur, except T80. In light of the petrographic analyses (Yannai and Grosinger 2000:160, n. 9), the provenance suggested for some of the vessels is the adjacent areas of Megiddo, the northern Jordan Valley and the western Jezreel Valley, comprising close- and medium-range imports to ‘En Esur (Vita-Finzi 1978:80–82; Arnold 1985:20–37). However, it is important to point out that even these imports are missing in T80, which has a pottery assemblage of local provenance *sensu stricto* (see Cohen-Weinberger, this volume).

Some of the imported vessels retrieved in previous excavations in the ‘En Esur cemeteries originated from as far away as Egypt and Anatolia, and such vessels can provide a solid base for dating the assemblages in which they were found. A rectangular, graywacke Egyptian palette and a calcite jar found in Tomb 40 have close parallels in Naqada IIIA2–IIIB, although they seem to predate the other finds from this burial cave (Hendrickx and van den Brink 2002:340–341). Tombs 3 and 20 yielded Egyptian and ‘Egyptianized’ bottles, which are dated toward the end of EB I and the very beginning of EB II, namely, between 3150 and 2950 BCE or the beginning of the Egyptian Dynasty I. A goblet included in the assemblage from Tomb 20 was identified as an import from the Upper Euphrates region during the Late Uruk period (3300–3100 BCE) and the Jemdat Nasr period (3100–2800 BCE). The presence of the Egyptian and ‘Egyptianized’ bottles in close association with Anatolian goblets in the ‘En Esur EB I–II tombs strongly suggests a synchronization between the later phase of Dynasty 0 or the very beginning of Dynasty I in Egypt with the transitional phase between the end of the Late Uruk–Jemdat Nasr and the Early Ninevite V cultures (Yannai and Braun 2001:47–51, and see further discussion and references therein).

The burial gifts, including imported goods and prestige items discovered in the Early Bronze Age cemeteries of ‘En Esur, suggest a period of affluence in late EB I. It has been proposed (Yannai and Braun 2001:51) that this prosperity was a by-product of mechanisms of trade conducted through Naḥal ‘Iron (Wadi ‘Ara). However, T80 seems to constitute an exception when compared with other tombs at the site due to its small size, the simplicity and homogeneity of the ceramic assemblage and its local nature, and the almost complete lack of prestige items, such as jewelry or metal items. For instance, despite the careful sieving, the number of beads from the tomb is negligible when compared with the large quantities found in neighboring contemporary tombs (e.g.,

Yannai and Horowitz 1998:49; Yehuda Dagan, pers. comm.). These facts may perhaps suggest a lower socio-economic level for the group (extended family?) buried in T80. However, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the evident diminution of burial gifts is related to changes in burial customs toward the beginning of EB II, although the small number of EB II tombs excavated so far (Bet Yeraḥ-Kinneret, Jericho and ʻEn Esur) renders clarification of this point impossible at this stage. Nevertheless, the tomb at Bet Yeraḥ cannot be attributed to an impoverished population people, as jewelry, gold and other luxury items were retrieved there (Mazar, Amiran and Haas 1973:183, Pls. 8, 9).

The absence of GBW bowls, apart from the chronological aspects, can perhaps be explained as a result of the social role of the vessels. Researchers have pointed out (Goren and Zuckerman 2000:176) that the uniqueness of GBW in EB I, as reflected in the patterns of production and distribution, could be related to "ideo-technic" realms (Binford 1962; Rice 1984), a term coined to explain functional categories of ceramic use and change. In this case, GBW is assumed to be a decorative or socially-related artifact rather than a utilitarian ware. The lack of these less-affordable vessels in the assemblage of T80 corresponds well with the proposed scenario of a less affluent group buried there.

Whatever the case, it seems clear that the absence of GBW bowls in T80 is by no means accidental. Yannai has proposed a correlation between the wealth and status of the deceased and the distance of the burial place from the city, in terms of quantity and quality of burial gifts (Yannai and Horowitz, forthcoming). If this theory is accepted, it may be conceivable that the group buried in T80—the most remote cave from the city found to date—represents a poorer, lower-ranked segment of the city's population.

Further confirmation of this proposal may be found in the results of the analysis of the skeletal remains retrieved in T80. Apparently, the life expectancy of the population buried in T80 was some six years lower than that calculated for other tombs in the necropolis (see Nagar, this volume), a fact that can, perhaps, be attributed to a lower standard of health of the people buried in this tomb due to poor nutrition and a lower socio-economic level.

It would appear that the people buried in T80 did not share the prosperity of the period and their humble status is reflected in the distant location of their tomb, their poor health and the lack of luxury items among their burial gifts.

NOTES

[1] The excavation permit was issued under the name of Ḥorbat Gilan (South), the official name of the site (Site No. 31873/0), as it is located within the declared limits of the Byzantine site. However, the tomb is related to the ʻEn Esur (ʻEin Asawir) cemetery, hence the title of this report.

[2] The salvage excavation (Permit No. A-4005) was carried out under the auspices of the Israel Antiquities Authority, directed by the authors, with the assistance of Shlomo Yaʻaqov-Jam (administration), Avraham Hajian and Tania Kornfeld (surveying and drafting), Yossi Nagar (physical anthropology), Amir Golani (beads), Anat Cohen-Weinberger (petrography), Olga Shorr (pottery restoration), Carmen Hersh (pottery and small finds drawing), Tsila Sagiv (field photography), Clara Amit (studio photography), Raisa Winitsky (metal treatment), Ofer Marder and Hamoudi Khalaily (flint analysis) and Moshe Sade (archaeozoology). A debt of gratitude is owed to Amir Golani, Eli Yannai and Yehuda Dagan for sharing

with us their knowledge of previous excavations in the area, and for allowing us to examine unpublished material from their excavations, and to Zach Horovich and Yiʻad Awda. Sharon Ben Yehuda, as well as the IAA staff of the storerooms at Har Hoẓevim in Jerusalem, offered invaluable assistance. The maintenance staff of the commemoration site for the fallen soldiers of the Border Police at Barqai Junction, especially David Hershkowitz, were very helpful, as was Yaki Mor (Gadish Engineering and Supervision Co.). The excavations were conducted with the help of workers from Netanya, Ḥadera and Umm el-Faḥm, and financed by the Cross-Israel Highway Company.

[3] For stone quarrying in antiquity, see Dworakowska 1963; 1974; 1977; 1987; Ward-Perkins 1971; Canto 1977–1978; Bessac 1988; Kozelj 1988a, b; Dodge and Ward-Perkins 1992; Waelkens, Herz and Moens 1992. For ancient quarries in Israel, see Weksler-Bdolah 1998; Gudovitch 1999:36*; Magen and Dadon 1999:72–74; Galili and Sharvit 2001; Magen 2002; Hartal and Amos 2006. For workshops of soft limestone vessels, see Gibson 1983.

[4] In Yannai's excavations (Yannai and Horowitz, forthcoming), the tombs are numbered in sequence beginning with No. 1. Previously excavated tombs (by Dothan, Gophna and others) were labeled 01, 02 and 03. As definitive numbers for all the excavated caves have not been published, we have chosen to number the present tomb T80, to avoid redundancy and to leave the opportunity for other excavators to place burial caves excavated earlier in proper numerical sequence.

[5] Despite the questioning of elderly members of the kibbutz (Eli Yannai, pers. comm.), no information regarding the identity of the excavator or the date of the excavation could be ascertained.

[6] The exact location of this tomb was never published. Nevertheless, its position, as it appears in Fig. 5, was inferred thanks to the kind description of Ram Gophna, who still recalls the geographic details, combined with the skillful use of GPS/GIS devices and air photography performed with the help of Angelina Dagot. The authors are grateful to them both.

[7] The authors are grateful to Eli Yannai and Yehuda Dagan, who kindly allowed us to examine the ceramic assemblages from their excavations, and offered valuable remarks and observations.

[8] Due to the friable condition of the vessels, in many cases the presence of burnishing on the surface could not be ascertained.

[9] The authors are grateful to Ofer Marder and Hamoudi Khalaily for examining the flint.

[10] The animal bones were most kindly identified by Moshe Sade, to whom the authors are deeply grateful.

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