

FASSUTA, HORBAT PEZELET: SETTLEMENT REMAINS FROM THE EARLY AND MIDDLE BRONZE AGE AT FASSUTA

HENDRIK (ENNO) BRON AND HOWARD SMITHLINE

The site of Horbat Pezelet (Kh. Fašil Danyal; map ref. 229136/772948; Fig. 1) is a tell located on a hill in the northwest part of the village of Fassuta, in the upper Galilee (Frankel et al. 2001:31, Site 233). It lies on a ridge between Naḥal Keziv, which runs to its south, and the 'Aqrav Valley ('Emeq 'Aqrav) to its north, where two streams—Naḥal Biranit and Naḥal Sarakh—run (for a detailed geographical and geological description, see Gershuny and Aviam 2010:17).

Several excavations took place at the site and in its vicinity. The first, in 1986, was conducted by Yehuda Ben Yosef; it was never published, and no further information is available. In 1989, two Middle Bronze II burial caves were excavated in the center of the village (Aviam 1991; Gershuny

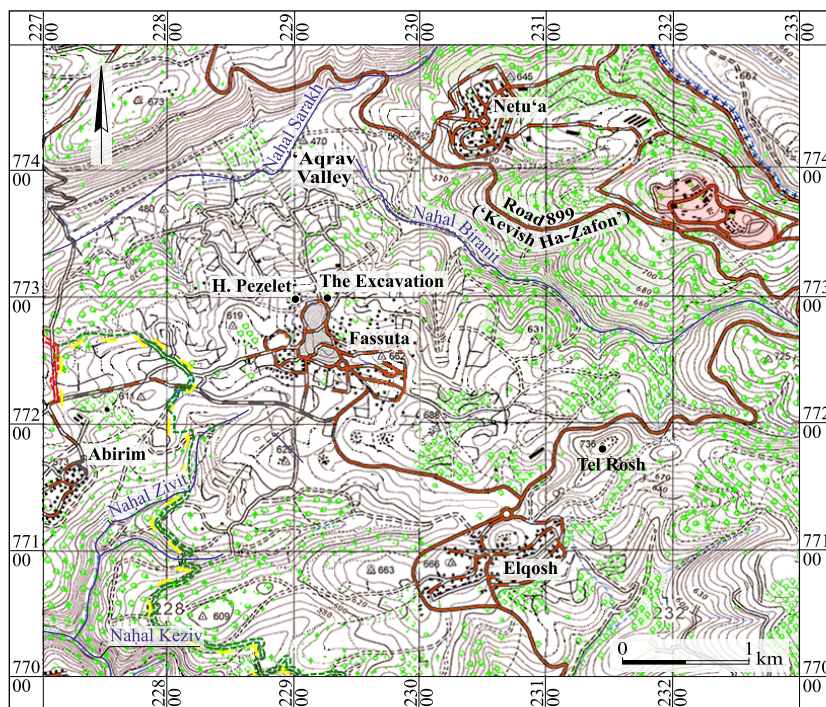


Fig. 1. Location map.

and Aviam 2010).¹ In 2004, a collapsed, bell-shaped cave was excavated; it was probably hewn in the Hellenistic period for storage purposes (Bron 2007). The next year, the covering stones of three graves were uncovered to the east of the current excavation, but the work was halted, and their date remains unknown (Tahan 2009). In 2009, an Iron Age structure was excavated above the present excavation area (Bron 2010). The site and neighboring sites were surveyed in 2006 (Abu-'Uqsa 2013).

THE EXCAVATION

The excavation was conducted in January 2004, after extensive damage was caused by mechanical equipment during the construction of a private house on the northern slope of the hill on which the village is located, close to and above the present-day cemetery and about 20 m from a natural spring.² The earthworks carried out prior to the construction of the house cut two north-facing terraces into the hillside, creating a steep step (4 m high) between them. In creating these terraces, the mechanical equipment completely removed the upper archeological strata. Two excavation areas were opened: Area A (5 × 7 m) on the upper terrace, and area B (3 × 4 m) on the lower terrace.

The excavation was carried out under appalling weather conditions. January of 2004 saw a rainfall of more than 400 mm, which flooded the excavation areas daily and turned the upper layer of soil into mud which was nearly impossible to excavate. Beyond the nuisance of manually emptying the squares, the flooding caused mud slides, and the square sections collapsed, causing pottery from higher strata to slide into lower strata. Further damage was caused when the mechanical equipment called in to remove the layer of mud left deep trenches that cut through the archeological remains below the mud. Under these extremely challenging excavation conditions, only a few loci remained clean from intrusions.

Despite these constraints, the excavation revealed five strata (5–1): Stratum 5, which consists of two building phases from the Early Bronze Age IB, was exposed in area B; Stratum 4 from the Early bronze Age II, was exposed in area A; Stratum 3 comprised a jar burial and a tomb from the Middle Bronze Age I in Area A; Stratum 2 comprised building remains in Area A, which could only be ascribed in general to the Middle Bronze Age; and Stratum 1, found in both areas, was the dark, compact layer of surface soil that became heavily muddy; it contained numerous pottery fragments, many of them shattered, from the EB, MB, Iron Age, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods, along with modern debris. As the upper archaeological strata were in essence ‘shaved off’, this

¹ They were originally published as MB IIB burial caves, according to the now dated chronological terminology for the Middle Bronze Age.

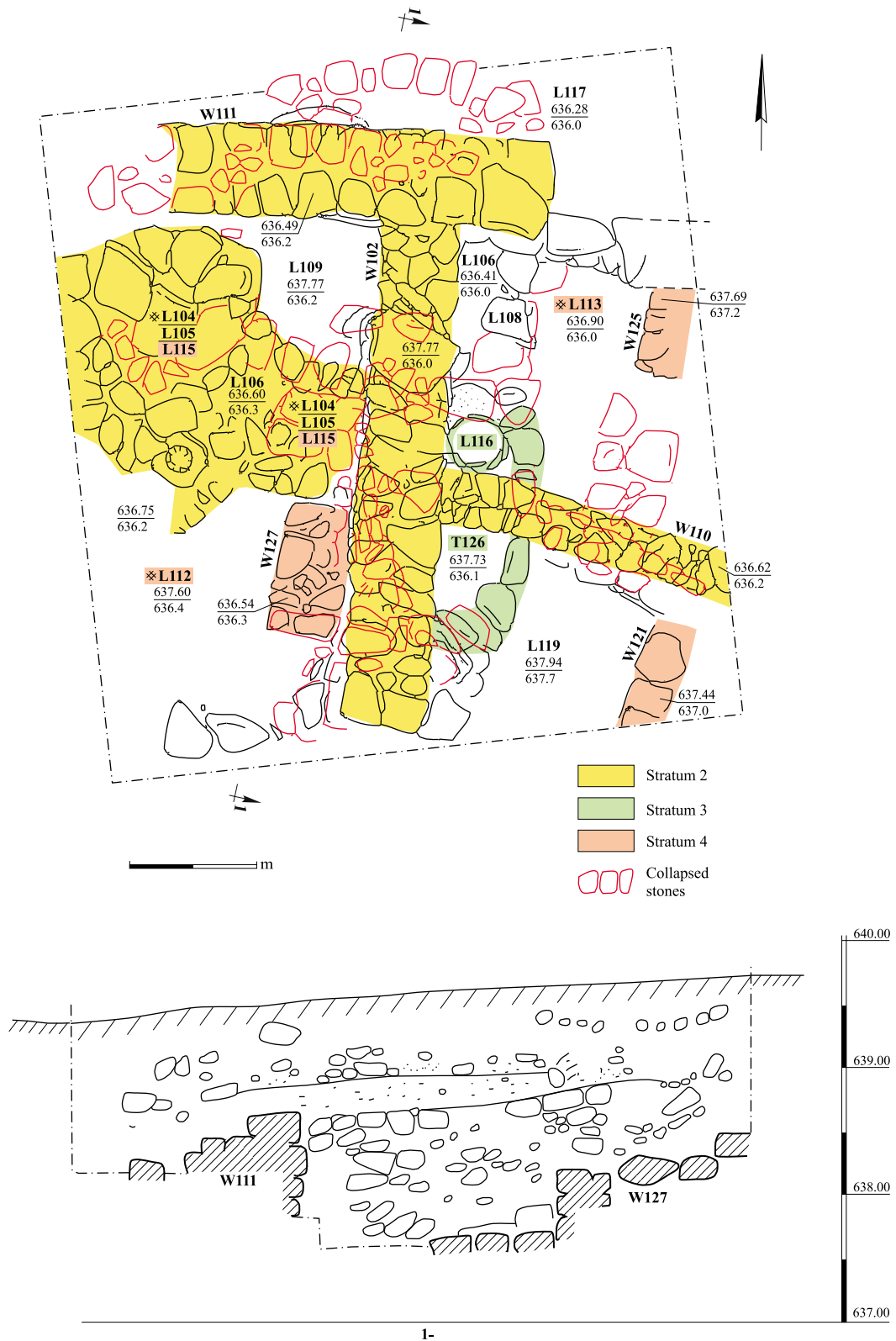
² The excavation (Permit No. A-4065), on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, was directed by the authors, with the assistance of Yossi Yaaqobi (administration), Vadim Essman (drafting and plans), Yossi Nagar (anthropology), Hagit Tahan-Rosen (pottery drawing) and Leea Porat (pottery mending). The article was edited by Dafnah Strauss.

pottery indicates that Iron Age, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine occupation levels existed at the site above Stratum 2 (hence the numbering of the strata with Arabic numerals).

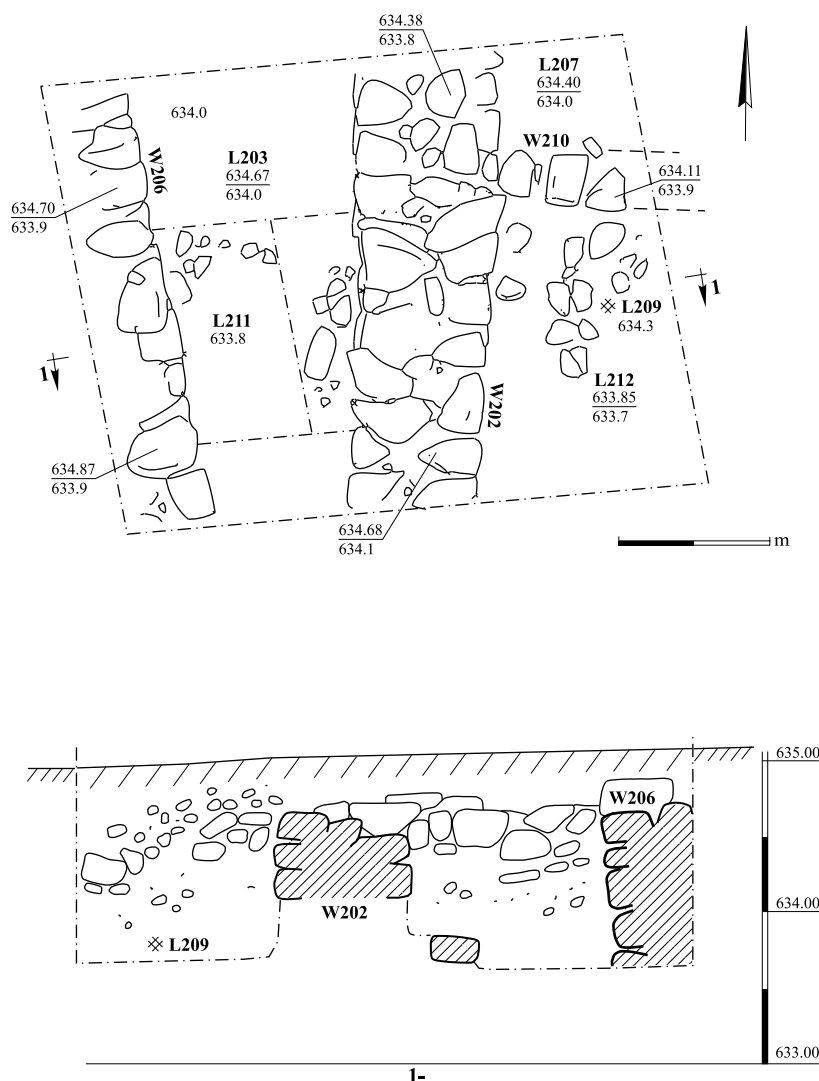
A massive layer of stones was discerned in the section of the step separating the two terraces (Fig. 2). These may have been part of an EB II defense ramp or wall, as suggested by the EB II pottery that fell from the section. In any case, the remains uncovered in Area A lay topographically above this layer of stones, and Area B lay below it. Area A (Plan 1), on the upper terrace, yielded the remains of the four upper strata (4–1), whereas Area B (Plan 2), on the lower terrace, yielded remains belonging only to Strata 5 and 1; numerous collapsed stones were found scattered in Area A.



Fig. 2. Stone layer in the section of the step, looking southeast.



Plan 1. Area A, plan and section (section drawn after the removal of W102).



Plan 2. Area B, plan and section.

STRATIGRAPHY AND ARCHITECTURE

STRATUM 5: THE EARLY BRONZE AGE IB

Remains belonging to two architectural phases of Stratum 5 and dated to the EB IB were identified in Area B (Plan 2). Only poorly preserved remains belong to the early phase: a small segment of a wall (W210) constructed of medium-sized fieldstones, of which only a single course was preserved (height 0.15 m); a floor comprising a layer of cobbles covered with a layer of large jar body sherds (L209; see Fig. 12:8); and an accumulation of dark brown compact soil mixed with small stones and pottery sherds (L211, L212; see Fig. 12:1, 2), which was found on both sides of a later wall (W202).

A layer of debris covering Floor 209 contained a badly damaged human skull belonging to a male aged 18–25. No other signs of a grave or any other parts from the skeleton were encountered.

The remains of the later phase comprise two well-built walls (W202, W206). Wall 202 (1 m wide) was constructed of medium-sized fieldstones and preserved to a height of three courses (c. 0.6 m high). Only the eastern part of W206 was unearthed (0.6 m wide), and so its full width is unknown. It was built of medium-sized and large fieldstones and was preserved to a height of 0.5–0.8 m (Fig. 3). The two walls, which run in a general north–south direction but are not parallel, were founded directly on the remains of the earlier phase; it could be clearly discerned that the foundations of W202 run right over W210, with a thin layer of soil (c. 0.1 m) separating the two. Despite this clear stratigraphic relationship, no chronological distinction could be made between the two phases, as the same fill (L207)—a dark gray soil with a large amount of small stones and a small amount of pottery (see Fig. 12:3, 4, 6, 7, 9)—abutted both walls. Furthermore, the ceramic finds from Fill 207,



Fig. 3. Overall view of Area B, looking east.

like those from the fill between Walls 202 and 206 (L203; see Fig. 12:5), is rather homogeneous and seems to date from the Early Bronze Age IB.

STRATUM 4: THE EARLY BRONZE AGE II

Architectural remains of this stratum were unearthed only in Area A (Plan 1). These remains were scant due to building interference during the Middle Bronze Age (Strata 3 and 2), when wall foundations were sunk into the earlier levels, and earlier walls were used as foundations. The badly preserved remains comprise three walls running in a general north–south direction (W121, W125, W127 [partially under W102; Fig. 4]); these walls seem to have been part of one structure, but it is impossible to trace its contours. The remains of a floor of compact red earth mixed with small stones (L112) ran up to W127 on the west. The pottery finds from this floor included a large number of typical EB II platters (see Fig. 13:1–9). Slightly to the northwest of Floor 112 was a layer of compact light gray to yellow-colored soil with light brown to orange-colored spots, probably mud-brick remains, which included a large amount of body shards (L115). Underneath a stone collapse (L108) to the west of W125 was a patch of a beaten-earth floor (L113). Stone Collapse 108 yielded a complete EB II cooking jar (see Fig. 13:10), which was partially embedded in Floor 113, and several additional EB II potsherds (see Fig. 13:11, 12).



Fig. 4. Walls 102 and 127, looking east.

STRATUM 3: MIDDLE BRONZE AGE I

Area A (Plan 1) yielded the remains of two graves—a stone-built tomb (T126 [L122, L123, L126]) and a jar burial (L116)—ascribed to Stratum 3 and dated to the Middle Bronze Age I. Both were damaged by the construction of the Stratum 2 walls.

The stone-built tomb (T126; 0.9×1.6 m; Fig. 5)—shaped as an irregular oval along a general north–south axis—was constructed of one course of large standing stones (c. 0.6 m high) and was paved with flat fieldstones (Fig. 6). As the tomb was not dismantled, it is unclear what earlier remains it sealed. Two Stratum 2 walls (W102, W110, below) were built over its western side and northern end (Fig. 7). The construction of these walls shifted and partially removed several the standing stones delineating the tomb on the west. It seems that six deceased individuals were interred within the tomb: two children aged 3–5 years, three adult males and one adult female.³ The last person to be interred—an adult male—was found in articulation with folded knees, its head in the north, facing east. Several grave goods could be clearly ascribed to this individual, as they were set beside his head, to its west, along the tomb’s western wall (Figs. 8, 9): four bowls of various sizes (see Gershuny 2020: Fig. 1:1, 3, 4, 6), two small juglets (see Gershuny 2020: Fig. 3:14, 15) and a bronze dagger (see Fig. 15), all dated to the MB I. The remains of the other four deceased were disturbed due to the repeated burials, but they too were accompanied by grave goods as well. All in all, the tomb yielded 24 vessels, most of which were juglets (see Gershuny 2020: Figs. 1; 2; 3:1–12, 14–16).

Tomb 126 is strikingly similar to Graves 39 and 37 at Sasa (Ben-Arieh 2004:17*–19*). These graves, like Tomb 126, were stone built; the capping stones in Grave 37 were found *in situ*, whereas those of Grave 39 were missing, and the grave seems to have been intentionally left uncovered. It



Fig. 5. Tomb 126, looking southwest.

³ The anthropological remains were examined in the field by Yossi Nagar, and the bones were handed over to the Ministry of Religion for reburial.



Fig. 6. Tomb 126 after it was fully excavated, looking south.



Fig. 7. Tomb 126, W102 and the location of Jar Burial 116 after it was removed, looking west.



Fig. 8. Tomb 126, in situ cranium and long bones of an articulated burial of an adult male with accompanying juglets, looking south.



Fig. 9. Tomb 126, *in situ* bowls and dagger, looking east.

is also remarkable that at both Sasa and Ḥorbat Pezelet there seems to have been no effort to build durable graves, which could explain how the construction of the Stratum 2 building damaged the tomb.

The jar burial (L116)—a jar with human remains—was poorly preserved. It was set into the upper part of the accumulation in Tomb 126, at its northern end (Fig. 7). The western edge of the jar lay directly under the stones of a Stratum 2 wall (W102, below; Fig. 10), and it protruded to the east of the wall; its location may suggest that it was purposely set under the wall. The rim and base of the jar were intentionally removed. Within it were the skeletal remains of an adult, about 30 years old



Fig. 10. The northern end of end of Tomb 126 and the location of Jar Burial 116 after it was removed, looking west.

(sex unknown), as well as dental remains and a thigh bone of a child, 2–4 years old.⁴ An MB I juglet was found within the jar, on top of the burial remains, where it was probably left as a grave good (see Gershuny 2020: Fig. 3:13).

The assemblage of grave goods found in Burial 116 and Tomb 126 date the burials to the later part of the MB I (see Gershuny 2020).

STRATUM 2: MIDDLE BRONZE AGE

The architectural remains were ascribed to this stratum based on their clear stratigraphy: above the MB I burials (Stratum 3) and an earlier wall (W127; Stratum 4) and below the surface layer (Stratum 1) in Area A (Plan 1). Nevertheless, they could only be dated in general to the Middle Bronze Age due

⁴ See Note 3.

to the large amount of obviously intrusive pottery from the Early Bronze Age (see Fig. 14:1–4), with a clear presence of EB II material (see Fig 14:1, 3, 4), and only scant Middle Bronze Age potsherds (see Fig. 14:5, 6).

These remains comprise three walls (W102, W110, W111; Fig. 11), which seem to have belonged to a structure. Walls 102 and 111 (exposed length 3.3 m and 5 m, respectively) were broad and well-built of two rows of medium and large fieldstones; W102 was preserved four courses high, and W111—only two courses high. They ran perpendicular to each other, but did not meet, as an opening (c. 1 m wide) with a large flat stone that served as a threshold, was set along the course of W102, adjacent to W111. Wall 110 (exposed length 2.2 m), which was narrower, was probably a partition wall situated within the building; it was built of small and medium-sized fieldstones, which were preserved to a height of two courses. Part of a floor made of unworked, medium-sized flagstones (L104) was uncovered to the west of W102. The flagstones were laid on a bedding of reddish brown soil containing a large amount of pebble-sized stones (L105), which, in turn, was laid on layer of compact light-colored soil and possible mud-brick debris with a large amount of body shards (L115), which was ascribed to Stratum 4. A small installation (L106) was discovered in the center of the



Fig. 11. Overall view of Area A after the removal of W102, looking north.

floor, suggesting that this area served as a courtyard. Installation 106 consisted of flat stones lining a bowl-shaped depression, with a larger stone with a carved basin to its west. The building underwent some minor changes during its life span: the doorway between Walls 102 and 111 was blocked with large fieldstones, separating the courtyard from the rest of the building in this area.

Floor 104 and its bedding (L105) yielded a mixed assemblage, comprising a large amount of EB pottery sherds mixed with only two diagnostic sherds from the Middle Bronze Age (see Fig. 14). This assemblage made it impossible to date the architectural remains of Stratum 2 with any accuracy.

STRATUM 1: SURFACE LAYER

This was a layer of dark, sticky soil which turned into a massive layer of mud due to the large amount of downpour. It contained numerous pottery sherds from a wide range of periods: the Early and Middle Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman periods. This mixed assemblage (not drawn) resulted from the massive damage suffered by the site and originated in strata no longer present in this part of the site. Nevertheless, it indicates that the site has a rich history of settlement.

THE FINDS

This chapter presents the pottery from Strata 5, 4 and 2; the pottery from Tomb 126 and Jar Burial 116 in Stratum 3 are presented separately (see Gershuny 2020), and the mixed pottery from Stratum 1 was not drawn and does not require any discussion. This chapter also presents the bronze dagger found in Tomb 126. Parallels for the Early Bronze Age material are provided from the nearest EB I and II sites with published pottery corpora: Me'ona (Braun 1996), Bet Ha-'Emeq (Givon 2002) and Qiryat Ata (Golani 2003) and Abu edh-Dhahab (Getzov 2004). Parallels for the Middle Bronze Age finds are from Hazor (Yadin et al. 1960) and Sasa (Stepanski, Segal and Carmi 1996).

POTTERY (Figs. 12–14)

Stratum 5 (Fig. 12)

The ceramic assemblage from Stratum 5 is rather homogeneous: it has parallels dating from the EB I and early EB II, and should probably be dated to the EB IB.

Bowls (Fig. 12:1, 2).— The bowl in Fig. 12:1 is small and hemispheric with a plain rim, and it bears a light brown slip and burnish on the exterior. This type of bowl was very common in the EB I (Givon 2002:99, Fig. 14:15; Golani 2003:87, Fig. 4.2:20, 21; Getzov 2004:42, Fig. 5:2). Such bowls were sometimes used as lamps; the fragment found at the site bears no soot stains, so it is not possible to point to a use for this particular bowl.

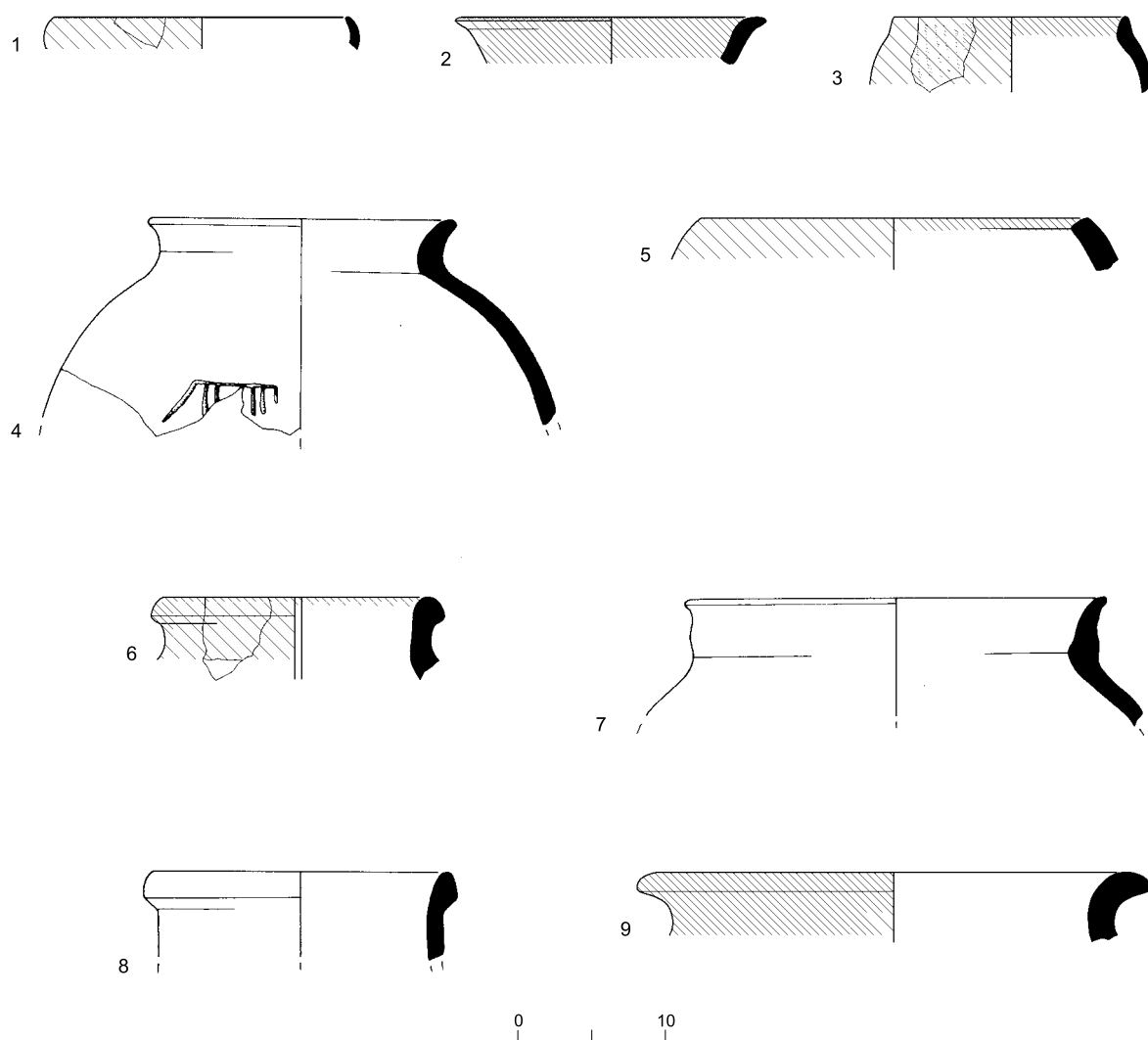


Fig. 12. Pottery from Stratum 5.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Bowl	211	1074	Cream-colored clay; dark brown core; light brown slip and burnish on ext.
2	Bowl	211	1078	Grayish brown slip
3	Bowl or cup	207	1045	Cream-colored clay with grits; brown slip with burnish on ext. and 1 cm on int. rim
4	Cooking jar	207	1053/1	Gray clay, with numerous white grits; orange-buff slip; incision on shoulder prior to firing
5	Holemouth jar	203	1056	Light cream-colored clay; gray core; dark red slip
6	Pithos	207	1045/2	Light red clay; wet finish
7	Jar	207	1053	Light brown clay with mica particles; orange slip
8	Jar	209	1063	Cream-colored clay; gray core; gray wash on ext.
9	Jar	207	1053	Orange-brown clay; grainwash decoration

The bowl in Fig. 12:2 is carinated with an everted rim. This type is the most common of the EB I carinated bowls. Such bowls are mostly red- or brown-burnished, like the example here (for parallels, see Givon 2002:99, Fig. 14:1–3; Golani 2003:87, Fig. 4.2:2–7).

Bowl or Cup (Fig. 12:3).— The rim belongs to either a small bowl or a cup. It bears a dark brown slip and burnish on the exterior and inside the rim. It resembles a high loop-handled cup from Qiryat Ata, Stratum III (early EB IB; Golani 2003:113, Fig. 4.17:7).

Cooking Jar (Fig. 12:4).— This cooking jar, with a short flaring rim, has many parallels in both EB I and EB II assemblages, but it best resembles the Me'ona type dubbed Splayed Rim Cooking Pot (Braun 1996:16, Fig. 10:5). The jar found at the site has an incised potter mark or symbol on its shoulder.

Holemouth Jar (Fig. 12:5).— Holemouth jars were a rarity in the excavation. This vessel type is part of the EB I repertoire; although it does occur in EB II assemblages, it is found in far lower quantities. The vessel found at the site bears a red slip and has a cut-away rim—two features that point to an EB IB date and can be compared to the EB I holemouth jars from Me'ona (Braun 1996:21, Fig. 12:5).

Storage Jars and Pithoi (Fig. 12:6–9).— The jar in Fig. 12:6 has a flaring rim and a thickened ridge on the inside of the shoulder, probably the result of attaching the rim to the vessel. While no exact parallels were found, it is very similar to storage jars from Qiryat Ata, Strata III–II (EB IB; Golani 2003:104, Fig. 4.12:14, SJ IV) and Abu edh-Dhahab (Getzov 2004:43, Fig. 8:3).

The rim in Fig. 12:7 belongs to either a short jar or a pithos; in both cases, numerous parallels can be found at all excavated Early Bronze sites.

The vessel in Fig. 12:8 has an elevated neck and a rim that folded outward. This type of pithoi is found at all the EB I sites throughout the Western Galilee (Frankel et al. 2001:51; for parallels, see Golani 2003:107, Fig. 4.13:15; Getzov 2004:43, Fig. 8:10).

The rim and neck in Fig. 12:9 belong to pithos with a straight neck, a type that is part of the EB I repertoire of storage vessels. Parallels can be found at Qiryat Ata, Stratum I (EB II; Golani 2003:143–144, Fig. 4.34:2, SJ IIIa) and at Abu edh-Dhahab (Getzov 2004:43, Fig. 8:13).

Stratum 4 (Fig. 13)

The Stratum 4 pottery assemblage is typical of the EB II in the northern part of Israel, and it exhibits a wide range of domestic vessels. Most of the vessels are metallic-ware platters, and no ledge handles were encountered. Hence, the assemblage can be safely dated to the Early Bronze Age II.

Platters (Fig. 13:1–9).— Platters, or large bowls, comprise the baulk of the ceramic finds from Stratum 4. The large number of platter sherds can be explained by the large size of these vessel and their tendency to break (Braun 1996:14). The majority of the platters are very well fired, bear a red

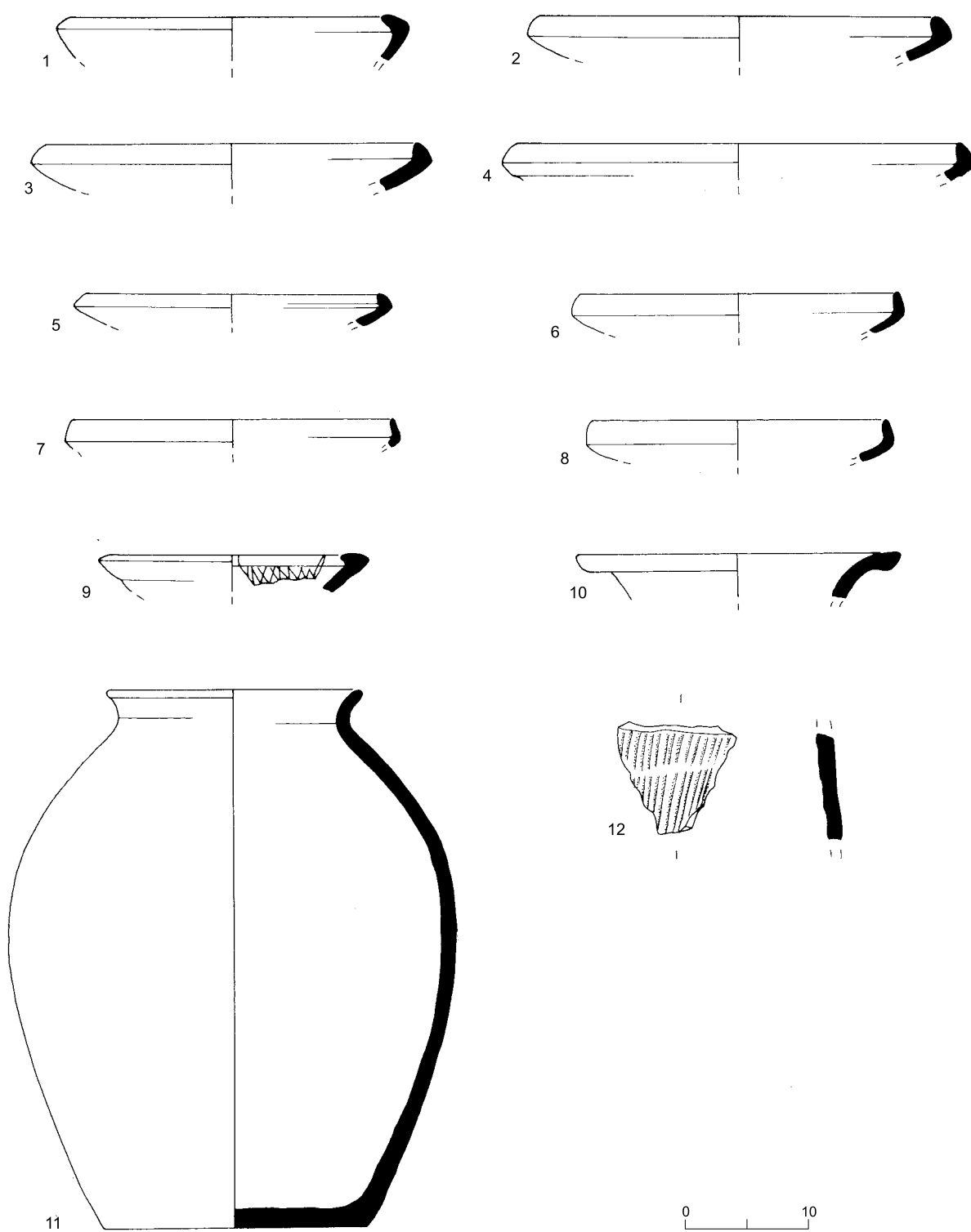


Fig. 13. Pottery from Stratum 4.

◀ Fig. 13.

No.	Type	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Platter	112	1058	Red clay; highly burnished
2	Platter	112	1066/2	Red clay; gray core; light black and red slip
3	Platter	112	1062/2	Light red clay; burnished net pattern on interior
4	Platter	112	1062/1	Light red clay; cream and black slip; lightly burnished
5	Platter	112	1066/1	Cream colored clay; burnished
6	Platter	112	1062/3	Red clay; well fired
7	Platter	112	1062/3	Orange clay
8	Platter	112	1066	Red clay; very well fired
9	Platter	112	1072	Well fired; light cream slip; highly burnished
10	Cooking jar	108	1038	Light gray clay with numerous black grits; light orange slip
11	Jar	108	1038/2	
12	Body fragment	108	1039/5	

slip and are highly burnished. The platter in Fig. 13:3 has a strongly inverted rim. All the platter types have parallels at Qiryat Ata (Golani 2003: Figs. 4.25, 4.26, 4.27:1–7), as well as at Me‘ona (Braun 1996:13, Fig. 9:3–21) and Bet Ha-‘Emeq (Givon 2002:94, Fig. 9:1–11).

Cooking Jar (Fig. 13:10).— The complete cooking jar from Floor 113 has a flat base and a slightly flaring rim, which was very common throughout the Early Bronze Age. As these vessels were utility vessels, no special care was taken to assure their esthetics: most were made from materials which were not fired to a metallic level, and slips are rare; nevertheless, this example has a light, dull orange slip (for parallels, see Braun 1996:16, Fig. 10:5; Givon 2002:91, Fig. 6:11; Golani 2003:138, Fig. 4.30:11, 12).

Jar (Fig. 13:11).— The rim belongs to a combed metallic-ware jar. This type is an elongated storage jar with a short neck and an everted, folded-over and thickened rim. Parallels are abundant (e.g., Braun 1996:16, Fig. 10:6; Givon 2002:92, Fig. 7:2; Golani 2003:141, Fig. 4.32:13, Type SJ II).

Metallic Body Sherd (Fig. 13:12).— This fragment belongs to a combed metallic-ware vessel.

Stratum 2 (Fig. 14)

The ceramic material retrieved from this stratum is very mixed, comprising both Early and Middle Bronze Age finds. This is probably due to the complicated circumstances of the excavation. However, Floor 104 and Bedding 105, from which the potsherd were retrieved, were laid directly on a layer of what seemed to be mud-brick material with numerous pottery sherds (not drawn) ascribed to Stratum 4 (L115), which probably contributed to the mixed state of the assemblage. Most of the Middle

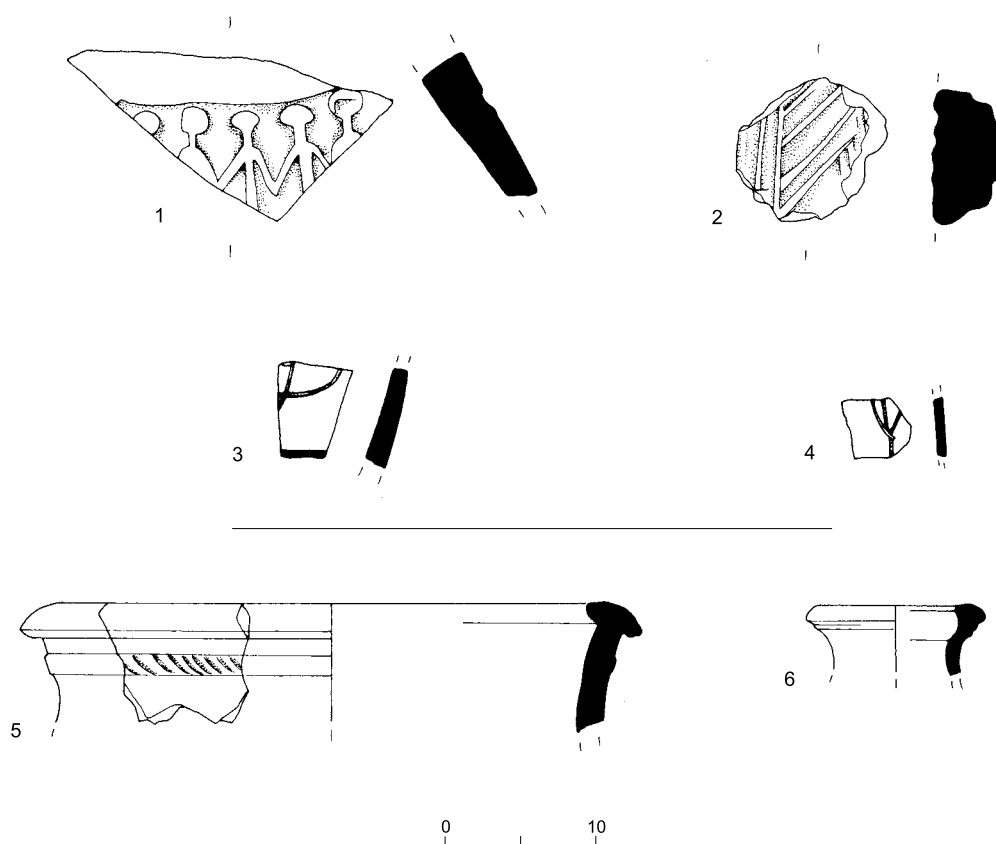


Fig. 14. Pottery from Stratum 2: Intrusive Early Bronze Age pottery (1–4), Middle Bronze Age pottery (5, 6).

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Body fragment	104	1035/2	Reddish brown clay; well-fired metallic ware; seal impression
2	Body fragment (tile?)	104	1035	Cream colored clay; poorly fired; seal impression
3	Base fragment	115	1065	Dark red clay; potter mark's incised prior to firing
4	Body fragment	104	1028/5	Light red clay; well fired; potter's mark incised prior to firing
5	Large bowl/ krater	105	1025/4	
6	Jar	104	1036/1	gray core; orange slip

Bronze fragments from Stratum 2 were body sherds; only two rim fragments which originated from clear loci—Floor 104 and its bedding (L105)—will be presented here.

Early Bronze Age Body Sherds (Fig. 14:1–4).— These four body sherds, like many others found in Stratum 2, date from the Early Bronze Age and are clearly intrusive; three of them (1, 3, 4) belong the EB II metallic-ware family. The four examples presented here bear either seal impressions (Fig. 14:1, 2) or potter's marks (Fig. 14:3, 4). The impression in Fig. 14:1 is of a cylinder seal on a shoulder of a vessels; it depicts a row of figures holding hands. A parallel cylinder impression was found at Tel eṭ-Ṭaba'iḳ near Rosh Ha-Niqra (Prausnitz 1955: Fig. 1), while other known impressions, especially

ones from Tel Qashish (Ben-Tor 1994:23, Fig. 18) and from a chance find of Avner Raban at Giv'at Rabi (Ben-Tor 1992:157, Fig. 3) seem to belong to the same type of seals. The two Tel Qashish examples depict a figure standing in front of an animal and are probably cultic in nature. While the Ḥorbat Pezelet example seems to depict some type of dance or the like, their the shape of the figures and especially their heads, which in all cases are oval, as well as the arms—are all very similar and probably belong to the same Early Bronze cultic horizon. The fragment in Fig. 14:2 bears an impression depicting a geometric design; as it is a poorly fired sherd, it may belong to a brick.

Large Bowl or Krater (Fig. 14:5).— This rim fragment, protruding both inward and outward, belongs to a large bowl or a krater. The vessel bears a rope decoration below the rim, which was created by diagonal incisions on an applied band. The rope decoration, like the herring-bone decoration, serves as a *fossile directeur* for the whole of the Middle Bronze Age. Two parallels, both from Ḥazor (Yadin et al. 1960: Pls. CXII:13; XCIII:20), are dated to the MB IIB.

Jar (Fig. 14:6).— This rim fragment, belonging to a jar, resembles a jar rim from Sasa (Stepanski, Segal and Carmi 1996:65, Fig. 2:2). Although our example has a slightly more inverted neck, both rims obviously belonged to similar jars. The excavators at Sasa dated this type of jar to the later phase of the MB I, but they did not preclude an early MB II date. Indeed, a similar fragment from Ḥazor (Yadin et al. 1960: Pl. XCIV:12) was dated to the MB II period.

DAGGER (Fig. 15)

The dagger found in Tomb 126 is rather simple in form. The blade is long and concave on both sides, with no midrib. It tapers toward a slightly rounded tip with a flat, slightly trapezoid section. A rivet hole is found at each corner of its 'shoulders' near the tang. The tang is shaped as an elongated trapezoid which bulges slightly near its base, with a third rivet hole near its end; a small bronze rivet



Fig. 15. Bronze dagger from Tomb 126 (B1085).

was found still inserted into this third rivet hole (the rivet is shown separately in Fig. 15, following cleaning). This dagger resembles several MB I daggers found in burials, such as one of the daggers from a burial cave near Zefat (Damati and Stepanski 1996: Fig. 17:1), although the Zefat example has no rivet holes and its tang is much longer; and two daggers found in Tomb 2/3 at Ginnosar (Epstein 1974: Fig. 12:3, 4, Pl. IX:11, 12).

CONCLUSIONS

The excavation yielded remains from the Early Bronze I and II, Middle Bronze I and possibly II, as well as indications of occupation at the site during the Iron Age, as well as the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods. The Early Bronze remains in area B, which seem to date from the later part of the period—EB IB—indicate a settlement continuity from the EB I into the EB II period. These remains seem to extend over a somewhat larger area than the MB period settlement, the remains of which were exposed only in area A. The EB II seal impression with a religious aspect suggests that the community at Ḥorbat Pezelet during that period had connections with the Syrian hinterland. After the Early Bronze settlement was abandoned, the site seems to have remained so during the Intermediate Bronze period. As remains of this period are known at nearby Tel Rosh (see Fig. 1), it is possible that the settlement moved to that site. The first indication of the renewed occupation of the site in the Middle Bronze Age is the stone-built grave (T126) from the late MB I. Although Jar Burial 116 seems to have been laid following the burials in Tomb 126, it is of the same period, as it contained a juglet very similar to one from Tomb 126, and both date from the late MB I (see Gershuny 2020: Fig. 3:13, 14). The Stratum 2 structure was built almost directly over Tomb 126 and Burial 116, and although it seems that the builders of the structure knew of these graves—or at least of Jar Burial 116—the relationship between the graves and the structure remains unclear. As only two diagnostic sherds were found in the structure, it could only be dated tentatively to the MB II, suggesting a continuous occupation of the site from the late MB I.

The EB II pottery sherds seen in the section separating the two excavation areas suggest that there is still an undisturbed accumulation, about two meters thick, from this period between the Middle Bronze accumulations on the upper step (Area A) and the EB I level in the lower step (Area B). Furthermore, the remains discerned during the excavation in the section—raising the possibility that they belonged to an EB II defense structure—were left unexplored. Future excavations at the site should aim at examining these remains and clarifying their use. Finally, as the excavation did not reach bedrock in either of the excavation areas, there is reason to believe that there are remains of earlier periods present at the site, underneath the Early Bronze level in area B.

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