

Tel Aviv University
Faculty of Humanities
School of Jewish Studies
Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures

Ph.D. Dissertation

The Archaeology of Cult in the Northern Kingdom of Israel

Erin Hall

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Archaeology

Advisor: Professor Israel Finkelstein

Submitted to the Senate of Tel Aviv University
December 2020

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For Mom

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

List of Figures

List of Tables

Abstract	1
Chapter 1: Introduction	2
Research Aims	2
Overview of Dissertation	5
Chapter 2: Geographical and Historical Background	7
Geography of the Northern Highlands and Valleys	7
Chronology of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages	9
Canaanite and Israelite Identity	12
Late Bronze Age City-States	14
The Rise of the Northern Kingdom (Israel)	16
Chapter 3: Review of Literature	19
Archaeology of Cult, Ritual and Religion	19
Definitions	19
Approaches	24
Archaeology of Cult in the Southern Levant	33
Archaeology of Centralization	39
Archaeology of Cult Centralization	43

Chapter 4: Theoretical and Material Approaches	47
Research Questions	47
Theoretical Framework	48
Archaeological Methods	52
Limitations of the Study	52
Chapter 5: Cult at Megiddo and Ḥorvat Tevet	58
Megiddo's Area Q South	58
Architecture and Features	59
Ceramics	64
Faunal Remains	67
Discussion	69
Ḥorvat Tevet	71
Cult Finds	73
Four-horned Altar	73
Ceramic Altar	75
Shrine Models	77
Cult Stand	78
Perforated Cups	79
Statue Base	81
Chalices	82
Horned Funnels	85
Figurines	89
Spatial Distribution	91

Level 5	91
Level 4	93
Discussion	95
Summary	96
Chapter 6: Cult in the Late Bronze and Iron I	97
Jezreel Valley	97
Megiddo	97
Palace 2041	98
Stratum VIII	98
Stratum VIIA	100
Temple 2048	102
Palace 2072	107
Tell Qiri	110
Beth Shean Valley	113
Beth Shean	114
Temple 58066	115
Buildings 1230 and 1234	119
Temple 1072	123
Temple 1032	129
Pella	131
Phase 1–2: Green and Brown Mudbrick Temples	133
Phase 3: Stone-Anten Temple	134
Phase 4: The “Fortress/Tower” Temple	136
Phase 5: Temple with Pillared Hall	137

Tell Abu al-Kharaz	139
Samarian Highlands	140
Mount Ebal	140
The “Bull Site”	149
Tel Dothan	152
Shiloh	154
Summary	157
Chapter 7: Cult in the Iron IIA and Iron IIB	157
Jezreel Valley	157
Megiddo	158
Building 12/Q/99	158
Building 2081	161
Building 338	165
Ta’anach	169
Tel Kedesh	173
Beth Shean Valley	174
Beth Shean	174
Tel Rehov	182
Tel ‘Amal	193
Pella	197
Bent-Axis Temple (Phase 6)	197
Ceramic Altars	201
Samarian Highlands	202
Tell el Far‘ah N./Tirzah	202

Tel Dothan	206
Shiloh	212
Samaria	214
Excursus: The Huleh Valley and Tel Dan	216
Summary	218
Chapter 8: Catalog of Cult Finds	219
Four-horned Altars	219
Shrine Models	223
Cult Stands	225
“Petalled” Cult Stands and Chalices	226
Horned Funnels	227
Strainer Jars	228
Perforated Cups	228
Figurines	231
Summary	234
Chapter 9: Discussion	235
A Holistic Approach to Cult	235
Architecture	235
Ceramics	243
Faunal Remains	248
Cult Paraphernalia	251
Continuity and Change in Cult Practices	258
Late Bronze–Iron I	258

Iron I–Iron IIA	259
Iron IIA–IIB	260
Regional and Inter-regional Aspects of Cult	260
Jezreel Valley	260
Beth Shean Valley	261
Samaritan Highlands	264
Synthesis	265
Cult Centralization and the Relationship of Ritual to Power	266
Late Bronze–Iron I	266
Iron IIA	267
Iron IIB	269
Chapter 10: Conclusions	273
References	276

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LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1.1 Sites with cultic contexts analyzed in this dissertation	4
Fig. 5.1 Aerial view of Area Q South	60
Fig. 5.2 Megiddo Level Q-7	60
Fig. 5.3 The <i>Südliches Burgtor</i>	61
Fig. 5.4 Excavation of the northwest corner of the <i>Südliches Burgtor</i>	61
Fig. 5.5 Two of three octagonal pillars (14/Q/167) beside Hearth 16/Q/60	62
Fig. 5.6 The standing stone/ <i>maṣṣebah</i> of Level Q-6b	64
Fig. 5.7 View of the Level 5 pillared hall from Ḥorvat Tevet	71
Fig. 5.8 Aerial view of Ḥorvat Tevet	72
Fig. 5.9 Four-horned altar from Level 5 at Ḥorvat Tevet	74
Fig. 5.10 Ceramic altar or possible shrine model from Ḥorvat Tevet	76
Fig. 5.11 Ceramic altar “metope” from Ḥorvat Tevet	76
Fig. 5.12 Cult stand with complete profile from Ḥorvat Tevet	78
Fig. 5.13 Perforated cup with knob-handle preserved from Ḥorvat Tevet	80
Fig. 5.14 Possible statue base from Ḥorvat Tevet	82
Fig. 5.15 Chalice base from Ḥorvat Tevet	83
Fig. 5.16 Large chalice from Ḥorvat Tevet	84
Fig. 5.17 Horn from a funnel/stand from Ḥorvat Tevet	85
Fig. 5.18 Horse head from a zoomorphic figurine found at Ḥorvat Tevet	90
Fig. 5.19 Figurine of a female holding her breasts from Ḥorvat Tevet	91
Fig. 5.20 Spatial distribution of cultic finds from Level 5 at Ḥorvat Tevet	92
Fig. 5.21 Spatial distribution of cultic finds from Level 5/4 at Ḥorvat Tevet	94
Fig. 5.22 Spatial distribution of cultic finds from Level 4 at Ḥorvat Tevet	94
Fig. 6.1 Palace 2041 at Megiddo with shell-paved Room 3091	99
Fig. 6.2 Shell-paved floor and “sump” of Room 3091	99
Fig. 6.3 Plan of Megiddo’s Stratum VIIA palace	101
Fig. 6.4 Northernmost room of Treasury 3073	102
Fig. 6.5 Plan of Megiddo’s Area BB in Stratum X	102
Fig. 6.6 Plan of Megiddo’s Area BB in Stratum IX	103
Fig. 6.7 Selected items from Megiddo’s Hoard 2048a	105

Fig. 6.8 Middle Kingdom statuettes from Megiddo's Hoard 2048b	106
Fig. 6.9 Bronze statuette from Megiddo's Hoard 2048b	106
Fig. 6.10 Bent knife, broken fire pan and chisel from Megiddo's Hoard 2048c	106
Fig. 6.11 Hoard 2048d and Hoard 2048e from Megiddo	107
Fig. 6.12 Destruction of Megiddo's Palace 2071 (Locus 2070)	108
Fig. 6.13 Spatial distribution of cult finds in Megiddo's Palace 2072	109
Fig. 6.14 Palace 2072 as it was recorded	110
Fig. 6.15 Cultic vessels and forelimbs from Tel Qiri's Area D	112
Fig. 6.16 Plan of Beth Shean's Stratum R-2	116
Fig. 6.17 Plan of Temple 58066 of Beth Shean's Stratum R-2	117
Fig. 6.18 Isometric plan of Temple 58066	117
Fig. 6.19 Plan of Stratum IX at Beth Shean	120
Fig. 6.20 "Mekal" stele from Beth Shean's Temple 1234	121
Fig. 6.21 Gold pendant from Beth Shean's Temple 1230	122
Fig. 6.22 Plan of Stratum VIII–VII at Beth Shean	124
Fig. 6.23 Cylindrical stand from a "street east" of Beth Shean's Temple 1072	125
Fig. 6.24 Zoomorphic vessels from Temple 1072	128
Fig. 6.25 Finds from Temple 1072 and its surroundings	128
Fig. 6.26 Plan of Beth Shean's Level VI	130
Fig. 6.27 Cylindrical stand from Beth Shean's Temple 1032	131
Fig. 6.28 Areas marked out on an aerial plan of Pella	132
Fig. 6.29 Sequence of temples from Pella, by phase	132
Fig. 6.30 Phase 1 and Phase 2 "Green and Brown Mudbrick Temples" at Pella	133
Fig. 6.31 Schematic plan of Pella's Phase 3 "Stone-Anten" temple	134
Fig. 6.32 Phase 4 "Migdal" temple at Pella	137
Fig. 6.33 Plan of Pella's Phase 5 temple with pillared hall	137
Fig. 6.34 Decorated cult stand from Phase 5 temple at Pella	138
Fig. 6.35 Plan of the "cultic site" on Mount Ebal	143
Fig. 6.36 Stratum IB structure at Mount Ebal	144
Fig. 6.37 Plan of Stratum II at Mount Ebal	145
Fig. 6.38 Reconstruction of the podium of Stratum IB at Mount Ebal	148

Fig. 6.39 Drawing of the bronze bull figurine from the “Bull Site”	150
Fig. 6.40 Plan of the “Bull Site”	152
Fig. 6.41 Tel Dothan’s Area A and Area D, Phase 4	153
Fig. 6.42 Iron I cultic vessel from Tel Dothan	154
Fig. 7.1 Plan of Megiddo’s Level Q-5 pillared building 12/Q/99	159
Fig. 7.2 Spatial distribution of cult finds within Megiddo’s Level Q-4	161
Fig. 7.3 Reconstructed plan of Megiddo’s Building 2081	162
Fig. 7.4 Plan of finds from the southwestern courtyard of Building 2081	163
Fig. 7.5 Photograph of the cultic paraphernalia from Building 2081	164
Fig. 7.6 Plan of Megiddo’s “Templeburg”/Building 338	166
Fig. 7.7 Plan of Buildings 338, 10 and 1A	167
Fig. 7.8 Restored plan of Building 338	167
Fig. 7.9 Cross-section of the “Templeburg”/Building 338	168
Fig. 7.10 Reconstruction of the interior of Building 338	168
Fig. 7.11 Top plan of Ta’anach’s “Cultic Structure”	169
Fig. 7.12 “Basin” or possible <i>massebah</i> from Ta’anach’s “Cultic Structure”	170
Fig. 7.13 Photograph of the finds from Ta’anach’s “Culture Structure,” <i>in situ</i>	171
Fig. 7.14 Photograph of the Ta’anach cult stand discovered by Lapp	171
Fig. 7.15 Location of the four-horned altar at Tell Kedesh/Tell Abu Qudeis	173
Fig. 7.16 Tel Kedesh/Tell Abu Qudeis Stratum IV four-horned altar	174
Fig. 7.17 Plan of the Lower Level V Southern Temple at Beth Shean	175
Fig. 7.18 Cylindrical stands from the Southern Temple	176
Fig. 7.19 Cult stands from the Northern and Southern Temples of Beth Shean	177
Fig. 7.20 Plan of Lower Level V Northern Temple at Beth Shean	178
Fig. 7.21 Stele of the goddess Antit by Hesi-Nekht	178
Fig. 7.22 Stelae of Seti I and Ramses II, as well as the Ramses III statuette	180
Fig. 7.23 Plan of Area E, Stratum IV, at Tel Rehov	183
Fig. 7.24 Ceramic altar from Area C apiary at Tel Rehov	184
Fig. 7.25 Drooping petal chalice from Area C apiary at Tel Rehov	184
Fig. 7.26 Storage jar inscribed with “belonging to Nimshi” from Area C at Tel Rehov	185
Fig. 7.27 Plan of Tel Rehov’s Buildings CP and CF	187

Fig. 7.28 Shrine model from Building CF, Stratum IV, at Tel Rehov	187
Fig. 7.29 Façade of possible ceramic altar from Building CF	188
Fig. 7.30 Ceramic altars from Building CP at Tel Rehov	189
Fig. 7.31 <i>Elisha</i> Inscription from Building CP, Tel Rehov	189
Fig. 7.32 Cylindrical stand and other remains from Building CP	190
Fig. 7.33 Platform from Area E at Tel Rehov	191
Fig. 7.34 Altar from Tel Rehov's Area E	192
Fig. 7.35 Figurines from Tel Rehov	193
Fig. 7.36 Distribution of cult finds from Tel 'Amal's Niveau III	195
Fig. 7.37 Cylindrical stand and tripodal stone cult stand from Tel 'Amal	195
Fig. 7.38 Inscribed Hippo jar from Tel 'Amal Niveau III-IV	196
Fig. 7.39 Pella's Phase 6 "bent-axis" temple	198
Fig. 7.40 Basalt tripod and "Ashdoda" figurine from Phase 6 temple at Pella	198
Fig. 7.41 "Bull-box" from Phase 6 temple at Pella	199
Fig. 7.42 Tripod cups and decorated chalice from Phase 6 temple at Pella	200
Fig. 7.43 De Vaux's reconstruction of Building 490 at Tell el Far'ah N./Tirzah	203
Fig. 7.44 Tell el-Far'ah N./Tirzah shrine model	204
Fig. 7.45 Top plan of House 14 at Tel Dothan	207
Fig. 7.46 Reconstructed plan of House 14 with altar and platform	207
Fig. 7.47 Four-horned altar from Tel Dothan	209
Fig. 7.48 Reconstruction of the Tel Dothan altar	209
Fig. 7.49 Iron IIA cultic vessel from Tel Dothan	212
Fig. 7.50 Rock-hewn altar found near Shiloh	213
Fig. 7.51 Single-horned altar found near Shiloh	213
Fig. 9.1 Percentages of pottery classes in selected cultic contexts	244
Fig. 9.2 Percentages of pottery classes in various contexts at Megiddo	246
Fig. 9.3 Comparison of ceramic classes in Palace 2072 and Building 00/K/10 at Megiddo	247

LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1 Counts and percentages of pottery classes in Level Q-7	66
Table 5.2 Counts and percentages of pottery classes in the Level Q-7a	66
Table 5.3 Counts and percentages of classes in the Level Q-7b	67
Table 6.1 Classes of pottery in Megiddo's Palace 2072	110
Table 6.2 Count and percentages of pottery classes in Temple 1072	126
Table 6.3 Counts and percentages of pottery classes in the courtyards of Temple 1072	127
Table 6.4 Classes of pottery from Stratum VII at Tell Abu al-Kharaz	140
Table 6.5 Pottery classes from Stratum II and Stratum IB at Mount Ebal	144
Table 6.6 Pottery classes from Shiloh Area D	155
Table 7.1 Classes of pottery from Megiddo's Building 2081	164
Table 7.2 Counts and percentages of pottery classes from Ta'anach's Cultic Structure	172
Table 8.1 Typology and distribution of horned and non-horned altars	221
Table 8.2 Typology and distribution of perforated cups	230
Table 9.1 Temples at Megiddo, Beth Shean and Pella in Late Bronze and Iron Ages	242
Table 9.2 A comparison of pottery classes from various cultic contexts in the north	243
Table 9.3 Comparison of ceramic classes from various context types at Megiddo	246
Table 9.4 Comparison of ceramic classes in Palace 2072 and Building 00/K/10	247
Table 9.5 Species from Mount Ebal and Shiloh's Debris 407	249
Table 9.6 Right to left limbs in Mount Ebal and Shiloh's Debris 407	249
Table 9.7 Cultic paraphernalia from Late Bronze and Iron I contexts in the north	254
Table 9.8 Cultic paraphernalia from Iron IIA and IIB contexts in the north	255

ABSTRACT

This dissertation deals with several lines of inquiry that are relevant to public cult places in the northern Highlands and valleys of Canaan and Israel from the beginning of the Late Bronze Age IIA to the fall of the Northern Kingdom ca. 721 BCE. This study is the first to concentrate on cult in the north specifically, viewing this region from a *longue durée* perspective and as a complex territorial entity unto itself. Although there is a considerable lack of theoretical discourse on the archaeology of ritual and religion in the southern Levant, this dissertation brings theoretical approaches to the forefront by analyzing various methods and applying those that are most relevant to cult in Canaan and Israel. The primary goal of research is to consider the evolution and transformation of cult in northern Canaan and Israel from an archaeological perspective. Two new cultic assemblages are presented, located at Megiddo and Ḥorvat Tevet, and are analyzed on the background of previously published assemblages from various sites in the highlands and lowlands. Cultic contexts are analyzed from a holistic perspective, with considerations made for stratigraphy, architecture, ceramics, faunal remains and cultic paraphernalia. Definitions and criteria for identifying cultic contexts are also presented, as is a methodology for analyzing sacred spaces and assemblages. Methodological questions regarding centralization are considered, as one of the central aims of this dissertation is to see whether cult was centralized in the Northern Kingdom prior to its fall. The impact this question has on centralization in Judah cannot be over-stated, as some scholars see centralizing activities in the north as pre-dating those in the south. The outcome of this research thus has far-reaching implications for the fields of Southern Levantine archaeology and biblical studies, as well as for anthropological and sociological perspectives on the development of Canaanite and Israelite religion.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Research Aims

This research aims to trace the evolution of public cult in the northern highlands and northern valleys of Canaan and the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the Late Bronze IIA–III and Iron Age I–IIB (14th–8th centuries BCE) by means of studying the archaeology of cultic contexts and remains. Although several studies have been published on cult in the southern Levant, most focused mainly on the Iron Age (Holladay 1987; Zevit 2001; Hess 2007; Albertz and Schmitt 2012) and did not compare it to the manifestations of cult in Canaan during the Late Bronze Age (for Late Bronze Age cult see De Pietro 2012; Greener 2019; for those studies that do focus on both the Late Bronze and Iron Age cults see Mazar 1992; Zwickel 1994). Furthermore, the archaeology of cult in the Northern Kingdom of Israel has never been studied separate from the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The rich assemblage of cult finds uncovered in recent archaeological excavations in the region, as well as changes in stratigraphic sequencing and chronological dating made in the past 30 years, calls for an up-to-date re-evaluation of the previously published material and conventional hypotheses. This will be done through a presentation of two unpublished cultic contexts from Tel Megiddo and Ḥorvat Tevet (dating to the Iron I and Iron IIA, respectively) and through a critical evaluation of material from previously published sites, in order to reassess cult through a modern archaeological lens. Thus, this research will analyze cultic contexts both chronologically and on a regional basis, comparing the Late Bronze and Iron Age cultic contexts from various sites in the northern Highlands and the Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys.

The importance of the Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys should not be under-stressed. Both regions were hubs of cultic activity in the periods under question, and both played a central role in forming the geo-political and cultural spheres of Canaanite and northern Israelite culture. Thus, this dissertation focuses on these two important regions, in addition to the Samarian Highlands, since: 1) most cultic material is from there; 2) the valleys are the perfect place to observe developments temporally; 3) the valleys and the Samarian Highlands cover the core of the Northern Kingdom of Israel; 4) in more marginal regions of the kingdom, such as pre-Iron IIB Hazor, there is a dispute regarding geopolitical affiliation.

By integrating the new archaeological data from Megiddo and Ḥorvat Tevet with information from previously published, well-stratified sites, this dissertation will situate these new contexts within the sphere of cultic activity in the northern valleys. The valleys themselves are unique in providing a large body of data for the entire sequence of the Late Bronze IIA and Iron IIB. In addition to the assemblages from Megiddo and Ḥorvat Tevet, cultic contexts from the north include those from Beth Shean, Pella, Tell Abu al-Kharaz, Mount Ebal, the “Bull Site,” Tell el-Far‘ah N./Tirzah, Shiloh, Samaria, Tel Dothan, Tel Qiri, Tel Kedesh, Ta’anach, Tel Rehov and Tel ‘Amal (see Fig. 1.1). This research will also provide a comprehensive typology and distribution of cult finds in Late Bronze and Iron Age contexts throughout northern Canaan/Israel. This will be done to better understand patterns in the spread, use and popularity of cultic paraphernalia in these periods.

To assess the continuity and change of cultic traditions, as well as Canaanite and foreign influences on the Israelite cult, this research compares north Israelite cultic activity to the worship of cult in Canaan during the Late Bronze Age. Such a comparison also allows for a broader perspective on the nature of centralization or decentralization of cultic activities in

Israel/Canaan and other areas within the ancient Near East. Overall, this research will provide not only an analysis of new material but will also compile and present a database for future study. It is expected to have a long-lasting impact on interdisciplinary studies which seek to synthesize the archaeology of cult in the Northern Kingdom of Israel with biblical studies, anthropology and sociology. Through the study of Canaanite and Israelite cults, it is anticipated that the idiosyncrasies of cult(s) in other time periods and regions will become more apparent.

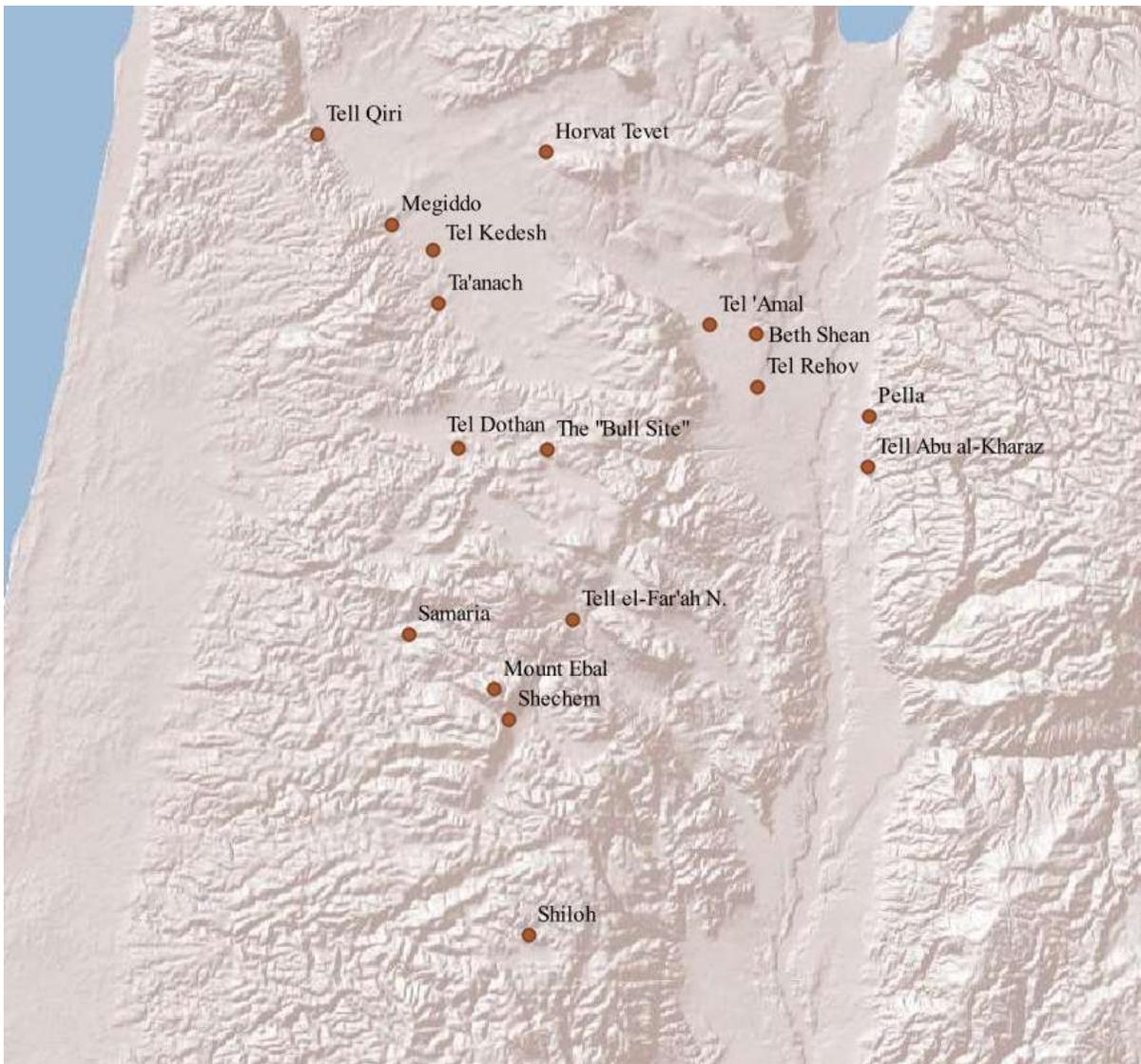


Fig. 1.1. Sites with cultic contexts analyzed in this dissertation.

Overview of Dissertation

This dissertation begins with a historical overview of the geography, chronology and history of the northern highlands and valleys during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. Issues regarding what is meant by the terms “Canaanite” and “Israelite” are also discussed, with an eye toward identity. The next chapter presents a review of definitions, theoretical concepts and archaeological approaches related to cult, ritual, religion and cult centralization. Definitions are presented first to lay a groundwork for the discussion on approaches. The history of research on cult in the southern Levant is reviewed, with an eye to various opinions and debates. The archaeology of centralization is then considered, which is often mentioned in the literature on cult but is hardly ever defined. This leads into a discussion and review of past approaches to cult centralization in the southern Levant and beyond.

As the research questions of this dissertation are informed by the review of literature, they are listed in a follow up chapter on theoretical and material approaches. Theoretical and archaeological methods are reviewed to layout an explanatory framework for how the process of answering these questions will be achieved.

Next, the material is presented. The first contexts to be considered are those of Megiddo’s Level Q-7 and Horvat Tevet. These are presented first since they constitute new, never before published archaeological data. Megiddo’s Level Q-7, which dates to the Iron I, is hypothesized by the site’s excavators to be cultic in nature. The data from this context is analyzed and general conclusions are made within a subsequent discussion. Horvat Tevet, which is replete with cult finds, is subsequently analyzed from a cultic perspective.

The following chapter revises previously published data on cult from the northern highlands and valleys during the Late Bronze IIA–Iron I. This chapter is presented separately

from the next, which deals with cult in the Iron IIA–IIB, given that there is a clear break in material culture and territorial disposition from the late Iron I to the Iron IIA. The former period can be considered “Canaanite” and the latter “Israelite” (see below). The material presented in both of these chapters is presented regionally, beginning with the Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys before turning to the Samarian Highlands.

Next is a catalog of the cult paraphernalia from the Late Bronze IIA–Iron IIB. This is followed by a discussion wherein answers to the research questions are considered. Finally, conclusions detailing the major contributions of this dissertation are presented.

CHAPTER 2: GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Geography of the Northern Highlands and Valleys

This dissertation analyzes all cultic sites present within the Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys, as well as the Samarian highlands, from the Late Bronze through to the Iron Age IIB. To begin with the Jezreel Valley, it is an alluvial plain located between the northern Samarian hills (to the east) and the Carmel Ridge (to the west-northwest). Megiddo and Ta'anach are situated on the Umm el-Fahm anticline (Zertal 2016: 10). Between Megiddo and Ta'anach lies the small, ca. 1 hectare site of Tel Kedesh. Jezreel sits on the eastern edge of the valley, on a spur of Mount Gilboa (Aharoni 1979: 24). Horvat Tevet lies in the northeast, at the foot of the Hill of Moreh, and leads into the Lower Galilee. In ancient times, the "Via Maris" cut through the Jezreel Valley from the Sharon Plain through Nahal 'Iron and the Hill of Moreh on its way up the Lower Galilee to Hazor. It also crossed the Beth Shean Valley via Beth Shean, running up to the Bashan in the east. The Jezreel Valley itself separates the Carmel and Gilboa Mountain ridges. The southeastern edge of the valley lies close to the hills of modern Jenin and the Dothan Valley. The valley was a rich source of agriculture in antiquity, which is reflected in the name Jezreel, "God will sow."

To the east of Jezreel and Ein Harod lies the Beth Shean Valley, a continuation of the alluvial plain which forms part of the Jordanian rift valley. To the south lies Wadi Far'ah, connecting the Beth Shean Valley to the northern Samarian hills. The Jordan River splits the western and eastern sides of the Beth Shean Valley, the latter of which is now part of modern-day Jordan. An eastern branch of the Jordan River is the Jabbok, along which lay the biblical sites of Succoth, Penuel and Mahanaim. To the north, on the opposite side of the river from Tel Rehov, is Pella. On the western side of the Jordan, Tel Rehov lies close to the

Samarian hills, 5 km south of Tel Beth Shean. To the west of Beth Shean, which itself leads to the Galilee, sits the small site of Tel 'Amal. The latter is located in the middle of the valley.

Regarding the geography of the Samarian highlands, the hills are divided into two regions: northern Samaria and southern Samaria (Finkelstein and Gophna 1993: 2). The northern Samarian hills are located in the area north of Shechem, where many valleys and water sources exist (*ibid.*). The southern Samarian hills, where water sources such as springs are also present, are located south of Shechem and run to the Benjaminite plateau. The area of the plateau is beyond the scope of this study, which sets Shiloh as the southernmost site in the Samarian highlands.

The Shechem syncline is part of the northern Samarian highlands (or the Manasseh hill country), which run from the Dothan Valley to Mt. Ebal (Monson 2005: 8). The highlands are divided from west to east into the northwest margin, the interior, the el-Far'ah anticline and the desert fringe (Zertal 2004: 24). The interior of the syncline receives an annual rainfall of 600 mm, making it suitable for terrace farming (*ibid.*: 26). This part of the hill country served as a natural cross-roads between the hills, the Sharon Plain and the Jezreel Valley. The sites included within the interior highlands include Samaria to the west, Tel el-Far'ah N./Tirzah to the east, Tel Dothan to the north and Shechem and Mount Ebal to the south.

Southern Samaria, south of Shechem, is otherwise known as the hills of Ephraim. The southern portion of the Samarian hills continue to the Judean highlands. The hills of southern Samaria are not as conducive to settlement or agriculture as those of north (Finkelstein 1989: 123). The only site from either the Late Bronze or Iron Ages with cultic remains is Shiloh.

Shiloh is located in a valley just east of the major north-south route, known as the “Way of the Patriarchs,” connecting Jerusalem and Bethel to Shechem. This area was more populated in early antiquity than, for example, the slopes of the southern Samarian hills (Finkelstein 1989: Fig. 12–13).

Chronology of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages

Chronology is one of the cornerstones of southern Levantine archaeology. Although a plethora of studies exist on absolute dates for the Iron Age (see summaries in Finkelstein 2011; Mazar 2011), dating events in Late Bronze Age Canaan has, in the past, been very much dependent upon Egyptian historical chronology. Now, an independent skeleton of dates for the Late Bronze Age phases in northern Canaan has been presented (Martin, Finkelstein and Piasezky 2020; see also Fantalkin, Finkelstein and Piasezky 2015). Radiocarbon and ceramic sequencing place the Late Bronze IB–Late Bronze IIA transition at both Megiddo and Beth Shean to the first half of the 14th century BCE (Martin, Finkelstein and Piasezky 2020). The early part of the Late Bronze IIA corresponds with the Amarna period, and the latter half of the period continues into the early 13th century BCE.

The transition from the Late Bronze IIA to IIB (Levels K-9 and H-14) is difficult to discern at Megiddo, as major stratigraphic changes are not apparent in the archaeological record. Comparison of radiocarbon dates with those from Beth Shean help to clarify this issue (especially given the destruction of Beth Shean’s Stratum R-1a), however it must be kept in mind that there is significant continuity at Megiddo during this time. The Late Bronze IIA–IIB transition is currently set in the early 13th century BCE, and the Late Bronze IIB continues into the second quarter of the 12th century BCE (Martin, Finkelstein and Piasezky 2020).

New research also indicates that the transition from the Late Bronze IIB to the Late Bronze III occurred at some point in the early 20th dynasty, “well in[to] the reign of Ramses III” (*ibid.*). The Late Bronze III is marked, in Levels K-6, H-12 and in general Stratum VIIA of the University of Chicago’s excavations at Megiddo, by the absence of imports from Cyprus or the Aegean, and the disappearance of commercial Canaanite storage jars and of Late Bronze-type carinated bowls. Level K-6 ended in “small scale destruction” (Martin, Finkelstein and Piasezky 2020; Arie and Nativ 2013: 171, 174). Unlike Level K-6, Level H-12 continued from the Late Bronze III to the early Iron I, with its “early days” in the former period (Martin, Finkelstein and Piasezky 2020). This indicates that, in the palatial sector of the mound, continuity is well attested in this transitional phase. Although this transition is marked by continuity in Level H-12, it is characterized by destruction not only in Level K-6, but also at Beth Shean (Level S-3a) (Martin, Finkelstein and Piasezky 2020; cf. Martin 2011: 150).

Level H-12 at Megiddo challenges many conceptions held by scholars regarding the Late Bronze III to Iron I transition. Although there is evidence for destruction in many sites, the transition from one period to the next, at least at Megiddo, may be more complex than what is perceived by most archaeologists. There was a “peaceful” transition from Level H-12 (Late Bronze III to early Iron I) to Level H-11 (early Iron I) (Martin, Finkelstein and Piasezky 2020). There is also evidence that in Area Q, the transition from the Late Bronze III to the early Iron I may not have been as dramatic or as destructive as typically thought (Finkelstein and Homsher 2018: 305–306; and see below).

As for the Iron Age, much work in terms of relative and absolute dating has focused on this period. Modified Conventional Chronology offers a compromise between the High and

Low chronologies (cf. Mazar 2011: Table 2). It sets the end of the Iron I at ca. 980 BCE, rather than ca. 930/925 BCE, as Finkelstein and other proponents of Low Chronology previously proposed (Finkelstein 2011: 50). The end of the late Iron IIA is typically set at ca. 830 BCE and is marked by the destructions wrought by Hazael's campaign. However, others see the Iron IIA continuing until the end of the 9th century BCE and possibly into the early 8th century BCE (Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2006: 186; Finkelstein and Piasezky 2011: 51).

New advances in stratigraphic and relative dating now suggest that it is also possible to isolate the "middle Iron IIA," or the early phase of the late Iron IIA (ca. 900–880 BCE), and the "final Iron IIA" (ca. 830–800 BCE) (Finkelstein and Kleiman 2019: 278–279; Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2006). Ceramic forms such as the holemouth jar, Hippo jar and Black-on-Red pottery make their first appearance in the mid-Iron IIA. Stratigraphically speaking, this phase has been detected at Megiddo Level Q–5 (Kleiman *et al.* 2017: 26–27) and potentially at Tel Rehov V (Finkelstein and Kleiman 2019: 283). The final Iron IIA, which is unattested at Megiddo but is apparent in other sites in the north, is a particularly important period given that it marks the transition of ceramic forms from the late Iron IIA to the Iron IIB. It is also thought to mark the period of Damascene hegemony over certain sites in the northeast of Israel (Sergi and Kleiman 2018: 10).

The Iron IIB continue well into the 7th century BCE, at least in Judah, but in fact we do not know enough on this matter in the north (Lehmann 1998: 23, 31; Singer-Avitz 2014: 138–140). More research needs to be conducted on this subject, especially in terms of early and late Iron IIB horizons, however the scope of this thesis is limited to analyzing material from before the takeover of the Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys by Assyria ca. 732 BCE.

Canaanite and Israelite Identity

Identity is an important topic in the field of southern Levantine archaeology. Attempting to answer this question has always been at the heart of the discipline. But identity in the ancient world is often difficult to pinpoint, from both theoretical and archaeological perspectives. Having a notion of the subtle differences between “Canaanites” and “Israelites” is, nevertheless, essential for this study and thus is explored.

First, it is necessary to discuss recent approaches to identity. As O. Sergi has pointed out, “identity” is often used as a neat replacement for the term “ethnicity” (2019b: 146). Past attempts to trace “ethnicity” are problematic in the sense that texts, such as the Bible, may suggest the presence of one or more specific “ethnicities,” under the influence of the ideology/theology of the author(s), while the archaeological evidence speaks to homogeneity (*ibid.*: 146–147). Questions of ethnicity, which are related to the question of “pots equal people,” is in many ways methodologically flawed (Bunimovitz 1990; Finkelstein 1997: 226). However, new approaches to “identity” stress that individuals within a group may have fluid connections to their social, political, economic and religious status rather than, as Sergi puts it, “one specific, fixed ‘ethnicity’” (Sergi 2019b: 147).

Kinship ties are essential to understanding “Canaanite” identity. In the Late Bronze Age, “Canaanites” are biblically conceived as being the autochthonous inhabitants of the land lying between the brook of Egypt and the empires to the north. The differentiation between “Canaanites” and “Israelite” comes from biblical ideology. It is now believed that the Israelites are local inhabitants of the land (Finkelstein 1988; 1995; Sergi 2019: 42), but that their remains are characterized by a specific type of material culture (Finkelstein and Piasezky 2006; Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2006: 182–183). Whereas Late Bronze Age

“Canaanite” material culture is a mixture of local traditions of the Middle Bronze Age and of imported or locally imitated foreign objects and wares, Iron Age “Israelite” material culture consists of new forms of pottery and small finds. The change begins in the Megiddo Stratum VB horizon with the appearance of red-slipped, hand-burnished pottery, but the most characteristic forms, which continue into later periods, only begin in significant numbers the late Iron IIA (e.g. advent of iron, Hippo jars, holemouth jars, Black-on-Red ware) (Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2006: 183–184; Gottlieb 2010: 94–95). The main take-away is that this change in material culture corresponds with the change from city-states to kingdoms.

In a recent analysis of Israelite identity,¹ Sergi argues that kinship was also central to individuals’ self-perception within society (2019a: 208). Patronage and patrimonialism were a means of creating connections, as they served to establish group cohesion and a sense of identity (Pfoh 2008: 111; Sergi 2019b: 215–216; Maeir and Shai 2016: 325). Despite the classic view that states transcend kinship ties (for a review see Master 2001: 124), the relationship between kinship and state need not be dichotomous. Indeed, the 8th century Samaria Ostraca show evidence of a kingdom organized through king-clan relations (Niemann 2008; Nam 2012). Rather than questioning the existence of the state/kingdom, the power and importance of local elites as reflected in the ostraca have led to questions concerning the degree to which the state/kingdom was centralized (cf. Maeir and Shai 2016: 327–328).

¹ Israelite identity, for one, should be considered separate from Judahite identity, given that the two groups formed along different trajectories (Finkelstein 1999b; Sergi 2019a).

Late Bronze Age City-States

The Late Bronze Age is characterized by a demographic decline (Bunimovitz 1994) following a period of prosperity and urbanization in the Middle Bronze Age (Bunimovitz 1992; Dunayevsky 1992; Yasur-Landau 2011). It is nevertheless a period that saw the rise in international trade and commercial markets, the construction of elite palaces at major tells and the continuation of urbanization in the form of city-states ruled by petty kings. Under the rule of the 18th, 19th and 20th Egyptian dynasties, Canaan served as a land-bridge between Egypt and various kingdoms to the north. The 14th century BCE el-Amarna tablets attest to a period of political instability (e.g. EA 68, EA 185, EA 195, EA 244 in Rainey 2015), yet material remains provide evidence of relatively peaceful interaction (perhaps this was not the case in particular regions, such as the Shephelah, cf. Na'aman 2011: 292–295; Paz and Birkenfeld 2017: 232). The Amarna letters also stress the importance of kinship as well as patron-client relations (Pfoh 2008: 105). In what follows, I wish to present a review of the sociopolitical situation in Canaan, with a particular emphasis on the northern valleys, so as to provide a historical framework for analyzing cult in this period.

Canaan, under the rule of the Egyptian Pharaohs, was ruled by petty kings who vied for power and the preservation of control over their respective territories. Unruly members of the population, such as the *'apiru*, could form alliances with these kings or, if alliances broke, could cause havoc within the rural landscape of each kingdom (Pfoh 2019: 251). Although each city-state was essentially autonomous, they lacked the centralization, institutionalization and the coercive power of state-level societies (*ibid.*: 256). As reflected in both the Amarna correspondences and the archaeological record, each king rather maintained his power through the garnering of prestige (*ibid.*: 252). Prestige could be gained through a king's

success in battle, accumulation of wealth or patronage. Indeed, the expression of prestige can explain the construction of monumental gates, palaces and temples in Late Bronze Canaan. Patronage was thus an important yet fragile means for the maintenance of power (*ibid.*: 253). If the king, or “mayor,” as some of the translations of the Amarna letters describe this office, broke the conceptual “contract” of patronage, he could lose the support not only of his people but also of those closest to him (*ibid.*: 254).

One leader did, however, seek to establish coercive power during this time. Labayu, king of Shechem, sought to establish control over central Canaan through the forging of alliances with local kings (Finkelstein and Na’aman 2005; Finkelstein 2013: 16–18). Kings who allied themselves with Labayu include the rulers of Gezer, Ginti-kirmil, Yoqne’am, Tel Rekhes, Pella and Shimron (Finkelstein 2013: 17–18). Rulers who united against Labayu include the kings of Megiddo, Rehov, Akko, Achshaph and Hazor (*ibid.*: 19). Many of these cities, it will be noted, are located in the Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys, and all are concentrated in the north. Finkelstein has reconstructed a situation in which Labayu ruled central Canaan, both “diplomatically and militarily,” for several years (2013: 19). He put his sons in charge of important city-states, who continued to rule the region after Labayu was killed. The Egyptians finally managed to squash the Shechem “polity,” but how they did so is unknown (*ibid.*: 20).

This event is often cited as a precursor to the later territorial expansion efforts of the northern Israelite kings. These kings, who ruled from the northern central highlands, also sought to expand their power by first focusing on integrating the Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys. The importance of these regions to the northern highlands administration is thus

telling. When we discuss the northern highlands and valleys, we are thus talking about “core” Israel (Finkelstein 2019).

The Rise of the Northern Kingdom (Israel)

Finkelstein (2011c) has reconstructed stages in the territorial expansion of the northern Israelite kingdom. First, using a combination of archaeological remains, textual evidence and biblical data, Finkelstein sees two consecutive highlands polities rising in the aftermath of the Late Bronze Age collapse. The first centers upon the area of Shiloh, in the 11th century BCE. Finkelstein reconstructs Shiloh as a major cultic center, which is supported by the fact that a “*favissa*” of the Late Bronze Age was uncovered there (2019: 10; see below). He proposes that Shiloh served as the cultic and administrative outpost of Shechem. This administrative system probably came to an end in the second half of the 11th century BCE, based on the few radiocarbon dates published, and Finkelstein connects its destruction to the following polity (*ibid.*: 10–11). The second polity was located on the Gibeonite–Gibeah plateau, which he sees as having ruled over the northern part of the central highlands. This polity declined in the mid-10th century BCE, perhaps as a result of Pharaoh Sheshonq I’s campaigns (*ibid.*: 9–10).

Similar expansionist efforts were later taken up by what Finkelstein refers to as the “Tirzah” polity (Finkelstein 2019: 12). This polity came to fruition in the mid-10th century BCE, well after the fall of the Shiloh–Shechemite polity. The archaeological evidence from Tell el-Far‘ah N./Tirzah points to settlement at the site in the early Iron IIA (Stratum VIIa, Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2006: 175; Kleiman 2018). Finkelstein attributes the “Tirzah” polity horizon to this settlement phase (2011c: 233–234; 2012; 2013: 63–82). But according to Kleiman (2018: 95), Stratum VIIb, a more substantial settlement, probably better

represents the days of this polity (*ibid.*: 97). This settlement, in Kleiman's view, should be attributed to the Megiddo Q-5 and Tel Rehov V horizon ("mid" Iron IIA) (2018: 89). It was destroyed in the early 9th century and the site was apparently uninhabited during the late Iron IIA (Megiddo VA–IVB and Tel Rehov IV horizon) in light of the reassessment of the meagerness of finds in Stratum VIIc (*ibid.*: 95, 97). This conclusion better fits the archaeological evidence, as it can be proposed that by the "mid" Iron IIA, an administrative kingdom existed in the Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys (see below). It is thus clear that by the "mid" Iron IIA, a territorial entity (probably based at Tirzah) existed and managed to integrate key sites in the lowlands into its territorial holdings (*ibid.*: 96–97; Finkelstein 2012: 343; Finkelstein 2013: 73).

Following the destruction of Tirzah and the rise of the Omride kings, the capital of this polity was transferred to Samaria. The Omrides are attested in extrabiblical sources, such as the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, the Mesha stele and probably the Tel Dan stele. The kingdom is referenced in conjunction with expansionist efforts (Finkelstein and Na'aman 2005: 185–186). It is clear from these texts that the Omrides expanded as far east as the Transjordan and as far north as Hazor. It is also likely that the Omride power-base extended southeast but it is debatable whether it encompassed the Benjaminite region (Finkelstein 2011b; Na'aman 2009a–b) or the seaport of Tel Dor (Gilboa, Sharon and Bloch-Smith 2015; Na'aman 2016). This is the point at which northern Israel became a "secondary state" (Joffe 2002).

Expansionist efforts were, however, cut short after Aramean and Moabite campaigns took control over the Omrides' holdings in various regions. The kingdom seems to have lost its control over the Mishor in Transjordan around ca. 840 BCE, as evidenced by the Mesha

stele (Dearman 1989). As for the Aramean campaign (Na'aman 1997, Dion 1997: 199–201; Lemaire 1991: 97, 102–103), archaeological evidence shows that sites within the Jezreel Valley were destroyed or abandoned and that sites in the Beth Shean Valley were destroyed in violent conflagration (Kleiman 2016). These destructions are typically attributed to the campaigns of Hazael, King of Damascus (*ibid.*). It is also possible that Hazor and areas further north fell under the control of the Armaeans (Finkelstein 1999a; Sergi and Kleiman 2018: 9).

It was not until the Iron IIB that sites began to recover (Megiddo Stratum IVA horizon); it was at this same time that Israel began expanding further north and east than it had previously. Archaeological evidence from Hazor (Stratum VI–V) and Tel Dan (Stratum III–II; Arie 2008) as well as Tiglath-Pileser III's *Annales* (Na'aman 2005: 202) indicate that the Israelites expanded to the northern end of the Huleh Valley and maintained control of the Upper and Lower Galilee during this period. Sites such as Abel-beth-Maacah and Bethsaida, which were previously under Aramaean control, now shifted into Israelite hands (Finkelstein 1999a; Sergi and Kleiman 2018). This is also the first time Hebrew inscriptions appear in these northern contexts (Finkelstein 2011c: 240). The kingdom had reached its zenith during this period, but it fell to the Assyrians ca. 732–722 BCE. The kingdom was destroyed, the capital of Samaria was sacked, and, according to Assyrian documents, some of its citizens were deported and replaced with foreign peoples (Becking 1992: 28–29).

CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section reviews approaches to the archaeology of cult, ritual and religion. Various definitions related to cult are presented, followed by an overview of approaches to ritual. The history of research of the archaeology of cult in the southern Levant is then reviewed. This is followed by a discussion of centralization, which is presented to better understand potential centralizing factors in the northern Israelite kingdom. Although cult centralization is typically conceptualized as being biblically founded, this dissertation discusses the meaning of centralization while viewing it through a strictly archaeological lens.

Archaeology of Cult, Ritual and Religion

Definitions

There is an avoidance to this day regarding the use of the term “cult” in fields of anthropology and archaeology. Two landmark studies that embrace the term are those of Renfrew (1985) and Levy (2016). But the more popular approach within these disciplines, which has itself become a sub-discipline, is the “archaeology of ritual and religion” (Fogelin 2007; Kyriakidis 2007; Swenson 2015). While it is true that the centrality of ritual to cult cannot be overlooked, preference here is for the study of “cult,” which is a more holistic concept in that it encompasses myth, or religious belief, and ritual at one and the same time. The following section explores how “cult,” “ritual” and “religion” are interrelated, yet distinctive concepts. Several definitions of each are analyzed, as are definitions of concepts such as “ceremony,” the “sacred” and “cultic/religious belief.”

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology* defines cult as “a fragmentary religious grouping, to which individuals are loosely affiliated, but which lacks any permanent

structure.” This definition essentially links cult to its function within society; however, other, spiritual dimensions of cult are not included. It is similar to Rüpke’s insights on the same subject, which emphasize that the difference between “religion” and “cult” is that cult is notable for its “organizational deficits” and “openness to pluralism” (2011: 194). These definitions are difficult to accept, however, when discussing the concept of cult centralization. Centralization, it will be shown, implies a step toward cult institutionalization, which is an attempt to strengthen any given cult’s organizational aspects and to limit its pluralism. Whether a centralized cult can be equated to a religion, or to a proto-religion, is a question that cannot be answered by these definitions.

Turning to other definitions of cult, the functional approach presented by É.

Durkheim is that cult...

...is not a mere collection of ritual precautions that man is responsible for taking in certain circumstances. It is a system of rites, feasts, and various ceremonies all having the characteristic that they recur periodically. They meet the need that the faithful feel periodically to tighten and strengthen the bond between them and the sacred beings on which they depend (Durkheim 1995: 60).

Durkheim’s definition is an attempt to encompass all aspects of ritual practice and observance under the heading of “cult.” Durkheim saw rituals as the “rules of conduct” by which people act, but cult as a culturally systematic approach to the divine (*ibid.*). One may take issue with his definition in that it, too, diminishes the spiritual dimension of cultic worship and that it perhaps places too much emphasis on cult’s role within society. It is nevertheless a helpful starting point for understanding cult archaeologically.

Material remains of “rites, feasts and various ceremonies” are all found in the archaeological record. It is not far removed from C.M. Antonaccio’s definition, which has its roots in the archaeological perspective. Antonaccio defines cult as...

...a pattern of ritual behavior in connection with specific objects, within a framework of spatial and temporal coordinates. Ritual behavior would include (but not necessarily be restricted to) prayer, sacrifice, votive offerings, competitions, processions and construction of monuments. Some degree both of recurrence in place and repetition over time of ritual action is necessary for cult to be enacted, to be practiced (1994: 398).

Antonaccio differs from Durkheim in that her definition emphasizes the role of ritual behavior. But reference to the numinous is once again lacking. Perhaps this is because the spiritual dimensions of cult are so difficult to pinpoint in the absence of written records. The Latin term for cult, *cultus*, refers to the “care” of deities and their sacred spaces. At the center of cult is thus a deity or deities, whose cultivation demanded active veneration. This is applicable to cult in the ancient Near East, where evidence exists for pantheons of deities and for deity worship. The cults of Yahweh, Ba’al and Chemosh, for example, are attested in the written record (Emerton 1982: 2; Day 2000: 68; Na’aman 1997: 86). Their archaeological correlates, however, are very much tied to what was left behind by ritual.

Antonaccio’s definition is an attempt to define what is left by cult within the archaeological record. It places an emphasis on ritual behavior, or the means by which archaeologists can effectively study cultic practices. Ritual is very much tied to cult in this definition, and ritual itself is defined by its recurrence in place and repetition over time. The “where” is easier to trace archaeologically than the “when,” and but these concepts are a useful and essential starting point for understanding ritual behavior.

As for ritual, the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology* defines it as...

...a favorite but deplorable term commonly used by archaeologists looking to explain unfamiliar patterns in material culture that seem to have no functional explanation. Ritual strictly refers to practices connected with magical, supernatural or religious experiences and beliefs, ritual deposits being the result of material culture deployed as part of such practices. It is now widely

recognized, however, that in non-capitalist, non-westernized societies there is no formal boundary between what is ritual and secular, between the sacred and the profane.

It is immediately apparent that this definition lacks the place and time-structured components mentioned by Antonaccio. At its outset, there is an assumption that the material remains of cult are non-functional. However, cultic equipment, such as altars, chalices and incense burners are certainly functional within the context of cult itself. There is a cultic or ritual “logic” to these instruments, which—though difficult to pinpoint—certainly existed in the minds of the ancients. Returning once again to the Latin, *ritus* simply denotes a custom, habit or ceremonial act; according to D. Šterbenc Erker, *ritus* “implies a way of performing a sacrifice or a ritual, but does not include the content of a ritual or a rite itself” (2008: 25). Other words, like *caerimoniae* and *sacra*, usually referred to ritual action.

Another definition for ritual has been set forth by C. Renfrew, wherein rituals are “practices that are time-structured and involve performance, with the repetition of words and actions in formalized ways” (2007: 109–110). In this way, ritual can be either secular or religious, as emphasis is not placed upon how ritual performance connects one to the divine. A similar definition which, however, does reference the supernatural or divine is the one set forth by M. Verhoeven: “rituals are performances which are distinguished in both space and time, marked by explicit material and immaterial symbolism, often (but not always) related to the supernatural, in which behavior is guided and restricted by tradition, rules and repetition” (2011: 118). To this definition, Emile Durkheim would add that rituals “meet the need that the faithful feel periodically to tighten and strengthen the bond between them and the sacred beings on which they depend” (Durkheim 1995: 60). The social cohesion that derives from *communal* ritual behavior (as opposed to private or domestic ritual behavior) is

important to what will be later discussed regarding public cult spaces. However, we must not forget that rituals are “marked by explicit material and immaterial symbolism” (Verhoeven 2011: 118), which can be seen in the ancient Near East as, for example, in the sacrifice of burnt offerings to “feed” and care (*cultus*) for the gods.

Turning to the term “ceremony,” one must differentiate between what is meant between ritual and ceremony, given that the two are so often related. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines ceremony as “a formal religious or public occasion, especially one celebrating a particular event, achievement or anniversary,” “an act or a series of acts performed according to a tradition or prescribed form” or as “the ritual observances and procedures required or performed at grand and formal occasions.” Again, like rituals, ceremonies are time structured. However, emphasis, as V. Koutrafouris has pointed out, is on the perennial nature of the ceremony: “when the word ‘ceremony’ is used it refers to an occasion which is part of a ritual or rite” (2009: 20). Ceremonies are thus repeated, time structured *events*, whereas rituals are a repeated, time structured *behavior* or *act* which is can be related to a specific place.

Then, what is the difference between a ceremonial site or place and a sacred space? According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology*, a ceremonial site is “a broad term used to refer to construction or natural feature which were attributed special symbolic or cosmological meanings by the communities that built or used them. Mainly non-functional in the strictly utilitarian sense.” The sacred, according the same dictionary, is “an object or structure that prompts or inspires attitudes of awe or reverence among believers in a given set of religious ideas.” Both ceremonial sites and sacred spaces are related to the supernatural, symbolic or cosmological. Based on the definition presented above, however, a ceremonial

site is a place for a celebrating a perennial occasion, whereas a sacred space is a more lasting place wherein ritual behaviors are repeatedly carried out. There is a diversity of approaches to understanding sacred space (to be reviewed below), which clarify the meaning of the sacred and provide more coherent definitions of this concept.

The last term to be reviewed here is that of “cultic” or “religious belief.” “Religion” itself can be defined as a means of communing with the divine within a set of organized beliefs and prescriptions. Often, religion is a structured institution that can be based on hierarchies or modes of spiritual attainment. It is a systematized worldview or approach to the divine, which differs from cult in that it is less variant and structured. “Religious belief” entails having faith in the divine or numinous, in accordance with a more structured worldview. When discussing religion in the ancient Near East, it should be conceptualized as the effect of a cult being standardized, institutionalized and prescribed. Cult centralization differs from religion in the sense that cultic practice was not necessarily prescribed. There may have been an attempt to do set ordinances, but the systematized, prescribed religion of latter periods (e.g. in the Persian and Hellenistic) does not compare with the nature of cult in the Iron Age (see below).

Approaches

Scholars’ definitions of the terms reviewed above are almost always based on a given methodological approach. Definitions are as varied as the approaches themselves. Key approaches, which are related to the archaeology of ritual and religion, are those of intellectualism, emotionalism, symbolism, structuralism, cognitive perspectives, Marxist perspectives, relational perspectives, performance perspectives and practice theory (Verhoeven 2011: Table 9.1). As Koutrafouris points out, approaches that are most useful for

the study of archaeological remains are functionalism, symbolism, structuralism, Marxism, performative and practice approaches, whereas “intellectualism, emotionalism, cognitive and relational approaches may be valuable for the construction of hypothesis on ritual, but *lack clear material correlates*” (2009: 41). Nevertheless, all will be reviewed prior to constructing a theoretical framework for understanding cult, ritual and sacred space.

Historiographically speaking, the “myth and ritual” and phenomenological schools (Bell 1997: 8–12) represent some of the earliest ways of thinking about myth, or cultic/religious belief, and ritual. In the “myth and ritual” school, ritual was seen as inspiring the myth (Robertson Smith 1889: 19; Frazer 1911; Harrison 1903, 1912), whereas phenomenological approaches saw the myth as giving rise to ritual (Eliade 1958: 9). Regardless of perspective, ritual and myth were inextricably tied (Hooke 1935: v–vi; Gaster 1950: 3–5) and thus were studied in tandem. The “myth and ritual” and phenomenological schools shed light on the distinction and interplay between ritual and religious belief. However, in relating the two so inextricably, each school created a causality dilemma wherein it ritual represented the chicken and myth the egg.

Irreconcilability of approaches is a theme that continues into the modern era. Out of the “myth and ritual” vs. phenomenological schools arose the intellectualist approach, which sees cultic/religious belief as a cognitive process allowing individuals and groups to “understand, explain, order and adapt” (Bell 1997: 12). Rather than order society, ritual and belief are seen to order the human mind (Frazer 1990 [1911]; Goody 1961; Horton 1973; Spencer 1885; Tylor 1929). In contrast to this approach stands functionalism (Durkheim 1995; Radcliffe-Brown 1956; Rappaport 1999; Levy 2016), which sees ritual and belief as ordering community or society. A third perspective which, like intellectualism and

functionalism grew out of the work of W. Robertson Smith (1889), is emotionalism, or the psychoanalytical approach to religion (Freud 1985; Tarlow 1999).

Researchers from the intellectualist, functionalist and emotionalist school all give primacy to either to belief, ritual, or a combination of the two, however they emphasize different aspects in their approach. The same is true for performance and symbolist approaches. Koutrafour (2009: 61) puts the main distinctions simply...

Functionalist approaches will find data to support the ideal that ritual had some psychological, social, political or economic function within a specific sociocultural system. Performance approaches will stress the connection of ritual and theatre and will emphasise cultural emotional managements. Symbolic and structural approaches will highlight the meaning that is culturally communicated via the practice of ritual.

Each approach highlights a legitimate aspect of ritual, and all agree that it is a complex behavior. An attempt to synthesize these approaches is referred to as holism, which has primarily been put forward by M. Verhoeven. Holism is an approach wherein long-term, multidimensional and multi-relational phenomena are viewed in conjunction with human agency (Verhoeven 2004: 179). It is an approach that may be applied to several different aspects of human history, but its connection to cult is highlighted here. According to Verhoeven, there are two ways of interpreting ritual and religion in the archaeological record from a holistic perspective. These include “framing” and “contextualization.”

Framing is a means of identifying cultic objects and contexts. It is identified as “the way, or performance, in which people and/or activities and/or objects are set off from others, spatially and/or chronologically, for ritual purposes” (Verhoeven 2011: 126). Framing is the “mechanism” behind ritualization, but in contrast to ritualization, it presents a modified, holistic approach. Methodologically speaking, framing may identify: 1) ritualization and

framing (“contextual oddness”); 2) ritual-syntax (context, object, act, typology, agent); 3) various relevant aspects of symbolism (dominant symbols, punctuation, metaphor, positional meaning, contextual meaning); 4) ritual dimensions (intellectualism, emotionalism, functionalism, symbolism, structuralism, cognitive approaches, Marxist approaches, relational approaches, practice theory); 5) analogy” (Verhoeven 2002: 34). Contextualization “tests” framing and it is how archaeologists reconstruct ritual contexts. It allows for the application of the various approaches to ritual mentioned above.

Objects and places that have been “framed” in the southern Levant include temples or cultic buildings, ceremonies such as feasting and ritual objects such as altars, *bamot*, statues/statuettes, *maššebot*, figurines, wall brackets, cult stands, tripod cups, etc. This “framing” is based on the objects’ “contextual oddness” as well as on textual records and comparative archaeology.

Verhoeven’s “framing” stands in contrast to C. Renfrew’s list of criteria for identifying cult places (1985: 19–20). Renfrew’s list was certainly a milestone for identifying ritual in the archaeological record, however today it is criticized for its narrow conception of the sacred (as, for example, standing in contrast to the profane)² and for its lack of applicability to various cultures outside of Greece. Perhaps a more suitable approach is to list a series of questions for understanding the function of cult places, akin to those presented by T.E. Levy (2006: 17–19). Helpful questions for consideration include: 1) “what was the nature of cult paraphernalia used”? 2) “can local cults be distinguished from pan-regional cult practices”? 3) “is there evidence for a hierarchy of ritual practices ... and how can this

² For an overview and critique of the dichotomy past scholars proposed between the sacred and the profane, especially Durkheim, see most recently Droogan (2013: 117ff.). This dissertation does not apply this or other dichotomies in its analysis of cult given that scholarship has shown such binaries to be monolithic and, for the most part, anachronistic.

be demonstrated”? The list continues, but it will be an important source of questions for considering cult in the northern highlands and valleys (see below).

Other approaches to the archaeology of ritual and religion argue that, though power has manifestations in ritual, ritual does not signify all aspects of society (Swenson 2015: 330). Ritual, in this sense, may be a separate heuristic category, such as economics or politics. Hodder, for one, argued that ritual is non-functional (1982: 164). Although this thesis views ritual and belief through an intellectualist/phenomenological and functionalist lens (see below), it is important to consider such lines of argumentation. This is no doubt why many “archaeologies of ritual” exist (Kyriakidis 2007: 289; D’Agata 2009; Barrowclough and Malone 2007; Whitley and Hays-Gilpin 2008). However, this study prefers to view ritual not as a distinct etic category, but rather as expressions of belief that are intimately tied with worldview as constructed by landscape, society and culture (Insoll 2004; Rowan 2011: 2).

Another important approach to consider is that of ritualization. According to C. Bell, ritualization is a “way of acting that sets itself off from other ways of acting by virtue of the way in which it does what it does” (1992: 140). In other words, ritualization is a specialized means of emphasizing specific objects, spaces and actions. R. Bradley (2003: 12), adding to this definition, states that ritualization is a matter of degree, and thus some rituals may be more formalized than others. This means that rituals may exist in more or less formalized ways in both the public and domestic spheres (*ibid.*). According to Bradley, “everyday acts could take on special qualities until they assume the characters of a theatrical performance” (*ibid.*: 20–21). But if Bradley’s hypothesis is to be accepted, this would make the process of discerning ritual action from domestic or everyday action a difficult task indeed. Ultimately, it depends on culture and on context.

As scholars have put forward, ritualization and its archaeological correlates are connected to ritual action “as manifested in specific localities and/or objects” (Orrelle and Horwitz 2018; cf. Renfrew and Bahn 2001). Rituals can thus be analyzed or reconstructed based on cult objects and contexts, i.e. “sacred spaces.” Although rituals may be formalized to varying degrees, ritual actions tend to be related to both “repetition and standardization” (Orrelle and Horwitz 2018: 260). Repeated object types and spaces are thus to be expected, and they reflect repeated actions. The only way to uncover the action is to analyze *objects and spaces* through macro- and, when possible, micro-archaeological methods.

In terms of the objects and spaces themselves, Fogelin and Schiffer (2015: 815–827) have suggested that such material remains can be ritualized through undergoing rites of passage. The kinds of rites that objects and spaces go through may include consecration, dedication and termination. In the ancient Near East, evidence for the consecration of a building may be seen in the form of foundation deposits, whereas the termination rituals of objects and spaces can be related to their intentional destruction. Hoards, deposits and *favissae* are all examples of ritual deposition that will be encountered over the course of this thesis. Since ritualization is part of the process of procurement, manufacture, use and discard of cultic objects and spaces, thinking about objects and spaces in this way aids in understanding their cultural meanings and symbolism.

As for cultic objects, it is important to remember that objects may have multiple meanings. According to Alice Mandell and Jeremy Smoak, the possible meanings depend on the participants as well as on sociopolitical and material contexts (Mandell and Smoak 2019: 12). It is in this way that cultic objects are entangled with their cultural contexts. The same is true for sacred spaces. When space is made “sacred,” it is related to not only actors, but also

to culture—both in its political and social aspects (Raja and Rüpke 2015: 5). In archaeological terms, religions and their material correlates are informed by the socioeconomic, historical, geographic and political worlds of ritual actors and participants (Knott 2010: 35).

To further explore the concept of sacred space, according to Andrew R. Davis (2013: 10), sacred spaces are essentially loci of cultic activity: “a space is sacralized by the rituals that are performed there, and in this sense we cannot talk about sacred space without talking about the cultic activity that is practiced in that space.” In this definition, and in archaeological terms, the spatial is very much tied to material remains of ritual, for the material—in most cases—indicates the “boundaries” of an ancient sacred space. It is, however, important to keep in mind that boundaries may also be delineated by ritual actions, which generate “a center and circumference, both of which can fluctuate, the center receding and advancing or momentarily disappearing altogether as subgroups disperse and recongeal” (Grimes 2013: 257).

Ritual economy is another emerging approach to understanding how the economic systems of ancient societies affected the interpretations and beliefs of past cultures. It is defined as “the process of provisioning and consuming that materializes and substantiates worldview for managing meaning and shaping interpretation” (McAnany and Wells 2008: 3). In other words, production and consumption are closely related to worldviews developed by ancient peoples; the economic process is intricately tied with one’s ability to derive meaning from the world, and vice versa—one’s worldview is tied with one’s understanding of the economic process. One of the ways in which ritual and economy are related is through public ritual wherein the symbolic and performative aspects of communication are reinforced, as are

inequalities between elite and non-elite participants.

Another important aspect of ritual economy is its focus on socially valued goods, which “are endowed with symbolic or sacred characteristics through the nexus of production, distribution, and consumption” (Wells 2006: 285). The mechanisms of production may be considered sacred, i.e. the act of production may have been endowed with sacred characteristics, even if the product (e.g. ceramics) may not have been considered as such. In hierarchical societies, among ritual craft specialists there is an association between ritual knowledge and the accumulation of power and wealth (Spielmann 1998: 157; cf. Brandt 1994). These approaches, in addition to ritual economy, can be useful for analyzing contexts in which cult and industrial production, such as pottery and textile production at Horvat Tevet and metallurgy at Megiddo, are closely related. By concentrating industry in cultic areas, those who controlled the means of production could acquire ritual knowledge and warp it into secular power.

Ritual economy grows out of two approaches: those of political economy and agency theory. Political economy is concerned with the ways in which the elite aggrandize materials, concentrate their wealth and gain political power through the manipulation of resources. Agency theory focuses on individual actors who take part in the cultural systems at play. It considers the structures embedded in society in order to understand how institutions come to be built, as well as the ways in which “everyday practices produce and are produced by cultural norms” (Wells 2006: 278). It is also concerned with how ritual performances and ideologies are controlled by the elite “by dominating political and economic interests through social coercion or the threat of physical violence” (Wells 2006: 178). Taking this a step further, the establishment of ritual and the generation of ideologies reinforces the political

elites' ability to control. These approaches are useful for both understanding how ritual generates acquiescence among non-elite and how the movement toward centralization is broached by using ritual and ideology as means to an end.

Another model put forward in economic anthropology is that of indebtedness. For example, the wealthy elite, who have accrued goods and prestige items, may redistribute these items in feasting ceremonies, allowing for the expression of their power and ensuring the indebtedness of the gift recipients (Mauss 1990 [1925]; Wells 2006: 272). The debt that is then owed to the gift giver may be transferred into “political power by permitting debtors to default on return obligations in exchange for their acquiescence in political arenas” (Wells 2006: 272). In this sense, feasts are an expression of “commensal politics” wherein the social status of participants is reinforced through the roles played in the feasting ceremony (Dietler 2011: 183). As this approach demonstrates, feasts represent a complex interplay between ritual and power. The relationship between ritual and power, analyzed above, is key to understanding how cult is related to society and politics. This serves as step toward approaching cult centralizing processes in the archaeological record (see below).

Lastly, the concept of ritual ecology takes a broad, holistic look at the interrelations between humans, rituals and their environments. According to J.J McGraw and J. Krátký, ritual ecology is a methodological approach wherein “ritual is [seen as being] more about action and experience than it is about symbolism and conscious reflection” (2017: 249). What this means is that ritual is a lived experience that is informed by all five senses as well as our interactions between places, objects and each other while the conscious, symbolic aspects of ritual are limited. This is a totally holistic approach, wherein all aspects of material culture and environment are seen to inform ritual behaviors and understandings. It is similar

to the theory of ritual emplacement as discussed by C. Moser and C. Feldman (Moser and Feldman 2014: 1). This theory argues that ritual is emplaced within the entirety of its surroundings. But the danger of, or perhaps the limitation of, these approaches is—where does it end? Examining the *whole* ecological and emplaced environment surrounding ritual behaviors is a massive undertaking, and thus this is a difficult methodology to apply to a (fairly) concise study on ritual reconstructions. It is worth keeping in mind a ritual's ecological and emplaced environs, but to apply this approach in a literal sense is outside the scope of this study.

Archaeology of Cult in the Southern Levant

At the heart of approaches to the archaeology of cult in the southern Levant is an emphasis on the material (e.g. Holladay 1987; Mazar 1992; Zevit 2001; DePietro 2012; Greener 2019). This, however, was not always the case. In the beginning the Bible played an important role in scholars' attempts to understand "Israelite religion" (Faust 2020: 1, n. 1). But as time progressed, and more archaeological excavations unearthed evidence of ritual, scholars became increasingly fixated on material remains, especially in regard to how they are situated within society. The following presents approaches to understanding the material remains of cult, and key concepts which have arisen from such methods.

In an analysis on cult in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, one obvious observation is that the Late Bronze Age cult has received considerably less attention than that of the Iron Age. Work on the Late Bronze Age cult generally provides an overview and analysis of the material objects and their contexts (Nakhai 2001; Hess 2007; DePietro 2012; Greener 2019). Most recently, Greener (2019) has provided a survey and typology of Late Bronze temples and some of their associated remains. In his discussion of Late Bronze cult, Greener places

much emphasis on the importance of sacrifice. He sees slaughter and sacrifice as being at “the emotional core” of Late Bronze cultic traditions (Greener 2019: 3). Although some work has been done on the symbolism of animals within Late Bronze Age contexts (Sapir-Hen 2019: 232–233), the interplay of sacrifice and ritual economy in this period should be explored further.

In terms of feasting, Lev-Tov and McGeough argue that elites offered feasts as a means of establishing social order and maintaining social identity (2007: 87). They, like many others, highlight that feasts and other religious festivities were a means of practicing conspicuous consumption, i.e. as a means of establishing elite control. This “bound commoners to elite in a power relationship” and reinforced elite status (*ibid.*). The exclusionary and, in a sense, hierarchical nature of feasts reflects their relation to commensal politics (Dietler 2001: 66–69). Unfortunately for modern archaeologists, early excavators (e.g. the University of Chicago at Megiddo, Lapp at Ta’anach) either did not retain their animal bones or, in any case, did not analyze them. Such lacunae are not always the case (cf. Zuckerman 2007), however, in most cases such data will always be or currently remains unavailable.

Another means of studying the Late Bronze Age has been to present typologies of cult places, i.e. temples (e.g. Mazar 1992). Although this is a helpful and efficient means of organizing the data, typologies often do not analyze the objects or spaces. The cultural-historical meaning of similarities amongst temple-types is also often not addressed. This thesis, though appreciating typologies, seeks to push the extent of this further.

Recently dePietro (2012) has studied Late Bronze IIB cultic and funerary contexts, looking at sites on a regional basis. In terms of temples, she concluded that there are

remarkable functional similarities in the types of cult paraphernalia used across regions, however there is local agency in terms of how rituals were carried out (DePietro 2012: 126). This dissertation takes up this question and applies it more closely to cult in the northern highlands, Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys.

As for Iron Age religion, there has always been, more of an emphasis on “Israelite religion,” which aimed at understanding concepts such as the evolution of monotheism and the development of Judaism. Many of the key concepts related to southern Levantine religions, however, are inspired by approaches to Israelite cult. These include the concept of “official vs. popular” religion (Holladay 1987), the application of comparative techniques (Zevit 2001; Bergen 2007), approaches to domestic cult (Albertz and Schmitt 2012), the typology of cult places (Mazar 1992; Schmitt 2012) and so on.

J.S. Holladay (1987) was among the first to apply a strictly archaeological approach to the study of “Israelite religion.” At this time, Israelite religion still encompassed both Israelite and Judahite cultic remains. After presenting a general survey of the most salient remains in the archaeology record, Holladay applied a theory toward their interpretation. This theory was, however, inspired by hierarchical social theoretical concepts such as “official vs. popular religion” (Holladay 1987: 269–275). Holladay differentiated between “conformist,” or official, sanctuaries and smaller, more local “non-conformist” cultic contexts, and argued that regional and supra-regional cults reflected a more standardized form of cult practice (*ibid.*). R. Albertz (2008: 19) and R. Schmitt (2012: 221) recently criticized this scheme on the grounds that evidence of “non-conformist” cult elements can be found in many different kinds of cultic contexts, including “conformist”/“official” temples. This dichotomy was also criticized by F. Stavrakopoulou and J. Barton, who insist that the diversities present in Iron

Age religion were not divided into “official” and “non-official,” but rather that the scribes of the Hebrew Bible “sought to undermine” such diversities (Stavrakopoulou and Barton 2010: 4). Today, the rituals and ritual remains of Iron Age cult should be viewed as existing along a continuum of practice. It is more helpful to look at the remains as being either less specialized, such as in the private, domestic sphere, and more specialized/formalized in the form of public worship. However, we must remember that this may not always necessarily be the case.

Z. Zevit’s analysis of Israelite religion took a different approach. In his work, Zevit emphasized the importance of synthesizing the biblical and epigraphic evidence with archaeological remains (2001: xiv). Ultimately, however, Zevit concludes that there is a lack of evidence for the continuation of Late Bronze to Iron Age cult based on the belief that the Israelites were a new cultural entity who entered the land in the Iron I. He cites as evidence for this the homogeneity of Late Bronze cult versus the heterogeneity of Iron Age cult. However, as noted above, the Iron Age inhabitants of Israel and Judah grew out of the local stock of Late Bronze Age inhabitants. Long-standing traditions occur from one period to the next, although innovations are certainly apparent in the Iron Age. In light of the former, it is worthwhile to view Late Bronze and Iron Age cult practices from the *longue durée* perspective, as existing along a continuum of cultic tradition.

Albertz and Schmitt (2012) have gone on to analyze and survey domestic religion in ancient Israel. Although each context is presented in full, limitations of this study are more based on approach. It is argued that cult, rather than existing along a continuum of practice, can be broken into three levels: those of family, local and state (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 55). It further differentiates cult places based on typologies (*ibid.*: 220–244). One of the

issues with this approach is that some aspects, such as state level sanctuaries, are poorly defined. Some parts of the typology section also seem collapsible or difficult to identify, such as the distinction between domestic cult in houses vs. shrines, or neighborhood vs. village shrines (Kletter 2014).

A. Faust (2010) questioned the consensus that “Israelite” cultic contexts are often found in the archaeological record. He ultimately concluded that such contexts are rare, especially in the case of temples. In a recent article, Faust (2019) reiterates his argument (cf. Faust 2010) that worship in Israelite temples was the exception rather than the norm. The following dissertation questions this conclusion, first by considering what constitutes a temple and then by analyzing contexts in relation to this question. Temples, as far as this research is considered, are to be interpreted as “houses to the deity,” whereas cultic buildings are places where cult was conducted, perhaps in less formalized ways (see p. 55).

W. Mierse (2012), it should also be pointed out, has recently provided a thorough survey of Late Bronze and Iron Age temples from the southern Levant. His point of departure, similar to my own, is that of continuity and change. Although Mierse provides a thorough-going survey of the temple contexts, his thesis differs from mine in several aspects. The first, and most important, is that my research assesses archaeological contexts from a holistic perspective, wherein I not only analyze the cultic contexts based on the most up-to-date stratigraphic insights and ceramic reports in terms of dating, but I also analyze the contexts in terms of all aspects of material culture present (ceramics, animal bones, cultic paraphernalia, etc.). Furthermore, my dissertation focuses on theoretical methods and applies these to my approach, especially in terms of identifying and comparing cultic contexts. I also focus on the north separate from the south, in terms of both Canaan and Israel, highlighting

the regional characteristics of the relevant localities. Lastly, my overarching question is one of cult centralization, wherein I analyze the ways in which public cult may have been integrated into larger political spheres. Rather than focus on textual material and its correlation to archaeology, I approach the material from an archaeological point of view first, before drawing further interpretations about the cultic material based on theoretical and conceptual models.

C. Uehlinger (2015) has recently presented the dichotomy of distinctive or diverse and has, in a sense, applied it to the religious history of the Iron Age Southern Levant. But he does not apply this dichotomy to the material culture, rather these concepts are included in a series of theoretical and methodological questions aimed at scholars. But I do not see how this dichotomy is particularly helpful, in that the remains, as I see them, can be both distinctive and diverse. One concept does not negate the other. Furthermore, C. Uehlinger (2015: 16-17) questions the need for differentiating between the Northern Israelite Kingdom and the Southern Judahite Kingdom, despite the fact that it has been well-proven that these two entities developed along differing trajectories (Finkelstein 1999). The need in this thesis for a distinction between the two is paramount, given that the two are almost always conflated. It is first necessary to separate down into smaller regional units, and then to compare in broader strokes, as local cults dictated local religious behaviors, particularly in the Iron IIA.

Although these are all important contributions to the field of archaeology, especially in the sense that they catalog and present the material remains of various cultic places, their interpretive models are nevertheless problematic. Almost all of the above works on Israelite religion in some way or another use the Bible as a source (usually first) for interpreting

archaeological remains. Furthermore, theoretical approaches such as those outlined above and below are virtually absent from work on cult in the Iron Age southern Levant. This leads to a lack of clarity pertaining to definitions as well as to confusing or unreliable interpretations.³

Archaeology of Centralization

The most thorough work on centralization has occurred in Mesoamerican archaeology. A debate regarding the concept of centralization characterized Mesoamerican scholarship throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Centralization proponents claimed that centralizing, hierarchical structures over-ruled kin-based structures, and that the former were predominant throughout Mayan prehistory. Decentralists, on the other hand, argued for the dominance of kinship ties, wherein city centers were “enlarged versions of the households of local patrilineages” (Landau 2016: 60) and the difference between kingship and kinship was diminished. Of more relevance nowadays is the dynamic model which holds, in accordance with F. Braudel’s understanding of history, that kinship is part of an entrenched, *longue durée* process, whereas kingship is more related to *événements* or the *Moyenne durée* (Marcus 1983, 1992, 1993; McAnany 1995; Iannone 2002). As Landau postulates “if the longest-term structure of Maya society is kinship with the concomitant tendency of decentralization, then medium-term periods of centralization marked by an overriding kingship structure occasionally made waves” (2016: 65). The two may not be complementary

³ Gilmour (2000) has attempted to apply a theoretical approach to the analysis of Iron Age cults. He sees cult as existing along a continuum of “definitely cultic, probably cultic, possibly cultic and not cultic” (*ibid.*: 287). A problem occurs when Gilmour assigns numerical values to these different aspects (from 0 to 10), which ultimately allows for numerical values to be based on the hunch of the researcher. A “1” or a “2” would indicate that the cultic context includes a small number of cultic objects, for example chalices, but it still does not answer the question as to whether this constitutes a cultic space.

structures, however it is possible that kinship was subsumed at some points under a centralized kingdom.

These approaches may be applied to similar processes in the southern Levant. Recent articles emphasize the role of kinship ties in the northern Israelite Kingdom (Sergi 2019a: 207). O. Sergi views kinship as the primary factor in the construction of Israelite identity, which was “adapted” by the political systems of Israel and Judah. In Sergi’s view, there is no contradiction between kinship and kingship; the king of Mesha, for one, probably still identified himself along kinship lines despite establishing a kingdom within which kinship would ordinarily be subsumed (Routledge 2000; Sergi 2019: 209). Yet another example of the patronage ties established by leaders (or in this case, would-be kings) is that of Labayu of Shechem from the Late Bronze Age. Labayu was able to forge alliances through kinship ties, and thus his hegemony, as Sergi demonstrates, was over the people rather than the territory (2019: 212).

A similar model may be applied to understanding state formation in northern Israel during the Iron IIA. But the extent to which this kingdom was centralized still remains unknown. Too often, centralization is taken for granted in the archaeology of the southern Levant—definitions are not presented nor are theoretical models applied. Turning to Mesoamerican archaeology, it is possible to define and theorize upon this concept.

Centralization, as a starting point, is referred to as the “concentration of power in the hands of a few” (Roscoe 1993: 113, 135) or the “degree of linkage between the various subsystems and the highest-order controls in society” (Flannery 1972: 409). A more detailed definition of political centralization is presented as...

...the concentration of political authority in a set of ruling institutions that typically operate from one or a small number of urban or suburban settlements,

usually referred to as political centers. In addition, centralization involves expansion in the scale and scope of political authority, as ruling institutions gain decision-making capacities over broad regions, large populations, and formerly locally administered social phenomenon. Such expansion generated large-scale social identities through which people in multiple communities acknowledged shared social, economic, and political relationships. Participation in political relations, however, would have differed substantially among polity members (Joyce and Barber 2015: 820).

Within this definition, there is an emphasis on the concentration of authority in the hands of a few, but there is reference to one or a few political centers who hold control over an expanding power base. It is described as a movement away from local-based politics and a development toward incorporating formerly local polities under the umbrella of ruling institutions. Such a scenario has been reconstructed for the Omride and Nimshide kingdoms during the late Iron IIA and Iron IIB, respectively.

Aspects of centralization may include differentiated societal structures (economic, administrative political and ritual), hierarchies of societal structures, endogamous classes that supersede kin groups, bureaucracies, settlement hierarchies, decision-making hierarchies and centralized control over public works, institutions (writing and legal), life and labor (LeCount and Yaeger 2010: Table 2.1). In contrast, decentralized states are seen as having sociopolitical organization “based on kin-relations, with a two- or three-tier settlement hierarchy (the ruler, elites and commoners) and a two-tier decision-making hierarchy (the ruler, elites)” (Landau 2016: 66). Although this distinction might make sense on the theoretical level, how does one identify centralization in the archaeological record?

Examples of archaeological evidence for centralization that may appear in the ancient Near East include the construction of monumental buildings, construction and maintenance of public buildings, state-level agricultural management, standardization of storage jars and

other ceramic forms, construction of water-management facilities and defensive earthworks, military conscription, craft specialization, royal gifting and so on (Finkelstein 1999b: 39ff).

As an example of how centralization works in practice, G.A. Johnson proposes that centralization was an effort undertaken by the elites to control the rural population economically by bringing them under the umbrella of “center”-related economic activities (1987: 116). The center’s subsidization of craft production made the rural periphery more dependent upon this method of obtaining goods because it “undercut” rural modes of supply and demand. By reducing the demand on rural suppliers, the rural population in turn became increasingly dependent on the center. Ultimately, the decision to interact with center services was up to the rural population but increasing reliance upon these services ensured demand for these services from the center.

Feasts, for example, represent one aspect of centralization since they can, in a sense, be interpreted as centralizing ceremonies. In this case, centrality may be concentrated around a person or place. The concentration of cult activities in a place, such as in a temple or cult building, can also serve as an indicator of cult centralization.

Center and periphery relations can also be applied to the analysis of ritual power and its connection with temples. In certain near Eastern cultures, the temple served as a distributive organization wherein goods were offered by individuals to the priests, who then presented these offerings to the gods. Feasting, performed by the temple, solidified the patron’s continued donations and reinvigorated their “divine purpose” (Adams 1974: 11). Adams sees this as a kind of “credit” which is established between giver and recipient (*ibid.*). The movement of peoples from their local habitations to the temple—a central, sacred space—is a centralizing act. The question that remains is to what exist temples functioned on

their own terms, site by site, and to what extent overarching political institutions had control over them.

In terms of “state” cult centralization, an ideal based on the biblical record is an intentional “cancellation” of temples or shrines outside of a singular geographic space, such as Samaria or Jerusalem. To test this archaeologically is one of the aims of this dissertation.

Archaeology of Cult Centralization

Cult centralization in the southern Levant, more specifically in Judah, has traditionally been tied to Hezekiah and Josiah’s supposed reforms (2 Kgs 18:4; 22–23). For biblical scholars, centralization is often linked to these texts and to Deuteronomy 12 (Römer 2018). Over the years, archaeologists and biblical scholars have debated the historicity of these biblical reforms (Na’aman 1995; Finkelstein and Silberman 2006; Edelman 2008; Herzog 2010; Pakkala 2010) and the significance and/or dates to which Deuteronomy 12 and 2 Kings 18:4, 22–23 should be assigned (Greenspahn 2014: 227; Gallagher 2014; Römer 2018). Others have turned to ancient Near Eastern parallels, arguing in favor or disfavor of centralization on the grounds of Assyrian or Babylonian analogy (Weinfeld 1964; Kratz 2010: 136).

In most of these studies, definitions for “cult,” “reform” or “centralization” are hardly ever addressed. The conception of cult centralization is often one based on the Bible, which involved the removal of “sacrilegious” cult places and the establishment of a central cult place in Jerusalem. Recent studies, however, seek to analyze and explore the concepts of centralization. A new study by K. Psychny (2019) seeks to not only analyze cult centralization from a biblical scholarship perspective, but also from a theoretical lens. A key point to her definition of centrality is that it need not be related to locality, but rather to

“density of interaction” (2019: 291). A second definition is also offered in that centrality refers to the “degree to which an actor is connected to others within a social network” (*ibid.*). In this way, centrality need not be connected to a place, but rather can be related to a group or person.

As for centralization, Psychny defines it as “a complex process by which activities, procedures, resources, competences, planning and decision-making power or authority become concentrated on a (construed or defined) space, a particular (geographical place), or a specific (group of) person(s)” (2019: 292). This is a useful definition, which may be linked to various aspects of state formation within a society and culture. In terms of its identification, centralization is often associated with “(hierarchical) stratification, reorganization, standardization, formalization, routinization, unification, etc.” (*ibid.*: 292–293) and oscillations between centralization and decentralization may also occur. Although some of these associations may have archaeological correlates, it is more difficult to pinpoint such processes as formalization, routinization and unification based on material remains alone. One can hopefully identify stratification and reorganization based on settlement patterns and hierarches, and standardization based on building projects and objects, but this does not work for identifying all aspects of centralization.

From another perspective, J. Rhyder defines centralization as simply the “process of bringing activities together” (Rhyder 2018: 8). However, centralization is often seen more as an effort to structure power relations and social process, “so that authority, decision making and resources are concentrated rather than dispersed” (*ibid.*). Here again, Psychny’s definition is applicable, wherein centrality may be around a construed or defined space, geographical place or person(s). This allows for some variability when seeking to define the

mechanisms of centrality within a given culture. Centrality need not be focused on a place—such as the Jerusalem temple—but could rather be related to a king and his elites. Once again, in terms of identifying centralization, standardization is very much integral to this process. In terms of thinking about standardization's role within society, established socio-cultural systems (or standards) reinforce the “privileged position” of elites, while affectively “marginalizing those who operate according to different norms or customs” (*ibid*: 9).

What Rhyder touches on here is the relation of ritual to power. This relation exists along a continuum, wherein individuals may use ritual power to establish local social hierarchies or institutions may wield this power to maintain prevailing social structures (Flad 2001: 23). According to Aldenderfer (1993: 8), individuals “agree to ‘cooperate’ with ritual process through belief in either the power of ritual as a sanctioning or persuasive force.” This explains why individual cultic participants agree to cooperate with prescribed rituals. On the other hand, it also explains the power held by elites in control of ritual, who may wield this power for social solidarity or for retaining control. Wielders may use ritual power to extend their control by establishing other social hierarchies (*ibid*.: 33).

Focusing on the role symbols play in establishing power, N. Sugiyama (2014: 19) argues that “the construction of highly effective state symbols, the manipulation and control over these symbols, and the materialization of such symbols that are embodied and experienced through state ritual spectacle were central to reifying and legitimizing the state.” Although Sugiyama suggests that animals acted as such symbols (*ibid*.), this dissertation considers whether monuments, ritual objects and ritual spaces could also be considered as functioning similarly. This relates to cult centralization in that cultic symbols, ranging from feasts to four-horned altars, may have been used to reinforce social solidarity and statehood.

S. Ackerman (2012: 19) has recently pointed out that centralization's effect on women must not be overlooked. She addresses centralization in an interesting way, in terms of the relationship between centralization, the dissolution of kin-based communities and women's religion. Building on M. Weber's theory, which was adapted by B. Halpern (1991; 1996) and J. Blenkinsopp (1995; 1997), Ackerman asks focuses on the woman's role in ancient Israel's kin-based religious communities. Halpern and Blenkinsopp saw centralization as a political movement away from the rural countryside, which was abandoned to the Assyrians. The kin-based, religious elements existing within the countryside were thus desacralized, and focus was put on the temple in Jerusalem (Ackerman 2012: 22–30). Ackerman argues that this movement away from local, kin-based religious practices in favor of a centralized, hierarchical cult was ultimately detrimental to women's involvement in the cultic setting (*ibid.*: 39–40). The tendency for women to be marginalized within centralized, hierarchical and, it must be emphasized, patriarchal settings, is nicely highlighted throughout this essay.

Although recognizing the woman's role is cult post-centralization is an important study for future research, this dissertation focuses on the material remains to assess whether centralization *actually occurred* in the Iron II. But how to go about this? Recognizing symbols of ritual and power is a step toward identifying cult centralization in the archaeological record. Another step is to consider objects and places that look standardized, to consider each cultic context in comparison to its homogeneity or heterogeneity with others and to see whether cult was concentrated in specific places, such as temples. Identifying a) centralization and b) cult centralization is a difficult task, but the application of archaeological approaches from various geographical regions is a help.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL AND MATERIAL APPROACHES

The current chapter follows up on the previous. To further elucidate the aims of this dissertation, research questions are presented. Approaches on how to answer these questions then follow in the form of a theoretical framework and an explanation of the archaeological methods used.

Research Questions

The central aim of this dissertation is to discern similarities and differences in cult on a regional level as well as through the *longue durée* perspective. This leads to the main research question, which is as follows: in what ways do the complexities of the period influence cult centralization? To answer this question, I have applied a holistic approach to cult, one in which the architecture, ceramics, faunal remains and cultic paraphernalia of each cultic context are reviewed. When possible, I have included a discussion on the botanical or ground-stone remains, however my analysis remains limited due to the nature of or lack of publication. This is, admittedly, one of the limitations of my study. My holistic analysis, is, however, also done through the application of theoretical concepts for tracing cult and centralization in the archaeological record. In general, when considering cult centralization, important questions include:

- Is cult homogenous, or do cult(s) differ regionally?
- Is there a standard building plan of temples and other cult-related spaces?
- What are the types of cultic paraphernalia used in ritual contexts? Are they standardized?
- What types of ceramics and animal bones are typically found in cultic contexts? Do patterns emerge?
- Are there similarities in the way cultic space was used?

Theoretical Framework

To answer the aforementioned question(s), we must consider various aspects of cult and ritual. This dissertation focuses on approaches to understanding the “what,” “where” and “how” of ritual practice in order to discern patterns that may be related to cult centralization. The following provides approaches to understanding these aspects, particularly in relation to ritual, power and ideology.

In terms of ritual, A.M. Chadwick highlights that this term is a modern concept for activities as wide-encompassing as dancing, feasting and sacrifice. The ancients did not conceive of ritual activity in this broad sense, but rather in specific terms. To quote Chadwick (2012: 296):

In many societies all activities, ritual and secular, are intended to have practical outcomes. Stating that artefacts or structured deposits were once part of ‘rituals’ therefore does not distinguish between the activities that led to such deposits, and it is therefore more pertinent to examine the processes and acts through which certain materials, practices or places became ritualized.

In light of this, Chadwick calls for a holistic, self-critical examination of ritual remains, which is what this dissertation aims to present. The contexts, cultic paraphernalia, ceramics and faunal remains of each cultic deposit are examined throughout the course of this dissertation. Regarding the archaeology of ritual deposition, Chadwick argues that placed deposits are not the same as refuse and that we must view deposition along a continuum. Chadwick gives multiple ethnographic and archaeological examples for viewing placed, or intentional, deposits in ritual terms (2012: 296–298). This relates back to my own work on hoarding (Hall 2021), and although I argue that ritual deposits can be differentiated from non-ritual, secular hoards, it is paramount that we view do not view the deposition of ritual

items in strictly dichotomous terms.

Socially speaking, ritual is very much tied to economic and political systems, as well as to social solidarity and order. Some ways of approaching how ritual is tied to economics and politics is through the application of the relation of ritual to power. In terms of ritual action and performance in the ancient Near Eastern, L. Ristvet argues that “Mesopotamian polities – including villages, city-states, kingdoms, and empires – created a sense of political belonging through ritual and daily practice” and that ritual performance, which is essentially politics, “provided a space and means for sovereignty to be both created and debated” (Ristvet 2015: 2). In her view, elites and non-elites of society used rituals to “negotiate, establish and contest” political power (*ibid.*). It is hypothesized here that the relationship of cult and ritual to political power was similar in the southern Levant during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.

T. Inomata and L.S. Coben highlight the interplay of performance, community and politics in the ancient past (2006: 21). Public, or communal, ritual practices may have naturally involved many facets of society. It is through the public performance of ritual that asymmetrical power relations may have been established and reinforced (*ibid.*; DeMarrais *et al.* 1996: 31). Limiting access to sacred space is another option, however regardless of whether the lower classes were involved in temple activities, they were impacted either socially, economically or politically through the process of limited inclusion or exclusion of worship (see below).

Ideology also played an integral role in the way ritual and belief were consolidated. Ideology is defined as “the organizational embodiment of a set of values and explanations that attempt to prop up and defend the legitimacy of power on which the ruling minority

bases its claim to rule in any political environment” (Stefanovich 1992: 27). The acceptance of ideology by the majority means that ideology must reflect the values inherent in each society. For example, in the ancient Near East, the sacrifice of offerings, whether of animals or plants, ties into the subsistence strategies off which the society thrives. Goats, sheep and plant-based secondary products were central to the agricultural life of any village, town or city. The idea of sacrifice is ideological—it reflects both the relationship of the gods to humans as well as of the elite minority with the lower classes. In essence, it is a social contract—one in which meat or plant-based products are offered in exchange for some promised return, whether that return be a deity’s blessing or the receiving back of a portion of the animal in communal feasts.

In many cases, control over ideology assists in processes of centralization (DeMarrais *et al.* 1996: 16). According to DeMarrais *et al.*, ideology has symbolic as well as material correlates; it is “as much the material means to communicate and manipulate ideas as it is the ideas themselves” (*ibid.*). Symbols may consist of icons, rituals, monuments and textual records (*ibid.*), which in themselves are powerful images that may have been communicated through top-down channels in society. They have they ability to solidify or divide certain segments of a society, though we should also remember that the changing face and interpretation of symbols is just as dynamic as the populations themselves (Aldenderfer 1993: 8).

A. Knapp has formulated a theory that emergent elites take control of religious symbols and ideology to maintain the power of their particular group (1988: 136). According to Knapp...

...the relationship between religion and ideology—be it economic, social or political power—is expressed not only in the way elites or other special

interesting groups use religion to establish, challenge or change of specific social order, but also in the sense in which power establishes religious personalities, authorizes specific religion practices and their insignia, defines what is to be believed, and in fact constructs religious ideology (*ibid.*; cf. Asad 1983: 18).

The elites' control and use of religious symbols to maintain social order is key to this approach. The reach of elite influence over religion extends to the appointment of cultic personnel as well as the establishment of rules for belief, ritual worship and the creation of symbols. In archaeological terms, we can expect to see rituals in various cult sites perhaps reflecting one another, at least in the Iron Age. Ideology itself plays a significant role in centralizing political authority, and allows elites to better legitimate their power (Knapp 1988: 156). The establishment of ritual ideology was, in sum, an effective means of maintaining elite control over many facets of society.

As Aldenderfer states, ritual is an effective means of maintaining social order “as long as most participants in the ritual process continue to get what they consider to be their appropriate benefits and have a reasonable expectation of continuing to do so” (*ibid.*). This means that agency is an important aspect of the performance of ritual and the maintenance of social norms. Going back to the relationship of ritual to power, individuals “cooperate with ritual because their beliefs are strongly molded and manipulated by a wielder of ritual power” (*ibid.*). These wielders of ritual power, whether they be kings, courtiers or other elites, have the ability to establish ritual norms through the construction of large-scale monuments, the appointment of ritual leaders and through the commissioning of cultic paraphernalia. It is, however, up to the lower classes to support the elite in their ritualistic endeavors, either through providing monetary support, labor or animals and crops through sacrifice.

The relationship of ritual to power and ideology thus plays an important part in

interpreting public cult in the northern highlands and valleys of the southern Levant. The Late Bronze Age, as reviewed above, was a time of petty kings who ruled city-states and incorporated cult into the urban settlements over which they were in charge. The Iron Age witnessed a rise in kingdoms wherein cult, we assume, was incorporated into the fabric of the administrative apparatus. Furthermore, cult centralization would have been a top-down procedure, wherein the elites begin to manage cult through standardization, institutionalization and ritual prescription. Thus, it is an important aspect of this dissertation that cult is viewed through the lens of power relations, wherein ritual and power interact and inform one another.

Cult and religion not only explained the numinous or unknown, but also served a social function. The close interrelation of belief, ritual and culture are clear both in the archaeological record and in textual sources, however relevant. The interplay between ritual and society means that the two affected one another in various ways. Socially speaking, ritual is very much tied to economic and political systems, as well as to social solidarity and order.⁴ Some ways of approaching how ritual is tied to economics and politics is through the application of theories of ritual economy and the relation of ritual to power.

Archaeological Methods

The archaeological analysis of cult finds will begin at the “locus” level.⁵ When analyzing a “known” cultic context (i.e. a context that has been identified as “cultic”), all relevant loci from and surrounding the cultic context will be described and their finds analyzed. Ceramics associated with the context are considered part of the cultic assemblage

⁴ What I have essentially presented above is an intellectualist/phenomenological approach with an emphasis on how beliefs and rituals function within society.

⁵ Most of the data will be gathered from preliminary and excavation reports, as well as from locus lists, registers of finds, section drawings, top plans and drawings or photographs of the finds *in situ*.

and will serve as useful tools for properly dating each context according to modern chronological revisions. Ceramics also provide important insights into the nature of the activities carried out over the time in which the context was in use. An in-depth analysis of the finds from cultic assemblages will be conducted in order to shed light on the cultic equipment and paraphernalia used within each cultic context. Spatial analysis of assemblages will be provided when possible, although this can only be done if the appropriate information is provided within the published reports. Given that some cultic contexts may have been intentionally “cancelled,” it will also be necessary to search for a clustering of cultic items from non-“clean” contexts. This will be a difficult task, and so it is crucial that I examine all relevant reports for clues—e.g. concentrations of broken potsherds, offering stands, and figurines—which may have been removed from their original loci of cult activity.

All contexts will be analyzed on the background of the site in which they were found, with particular attention paid to the periods during which cultic contexts existed at the site and whether multiple cultic contexts co-existed. Special attention will be paid to the movement of cultic contexts from one area of a site to another as well as to changes in cultic architecture or lack thereof. How each cultic context fits into the urban development and city planning of the site will also be considered, given that the location and accessibility of a cultic context can provide information on the socio-economic and political status of cult participants and officiants. The types of ceramic wares—e.g. whether the assemblages are comprised of a high percentage of imports, tablewares or storage jars—may also be indicative of “elite” or non-elite cultic contexts or of feasting activities and storage facilities. Arie’s breakdown of elite ceramics will be applied in this case (2013: 549, Table 12.31). I will also look for refuse pits, check descriptions of objects for evidence of burning, and look

at zooarchaeological analyses related to specific cultic loci in order to reconstruct the types of practices associated with each cultic area.

The types of items found within cult assemblages will vary from context to context. The types of objects found within Megiddo's Building 2081 (Loud 1948: 161–162) are, for instance, different from the types of objects discovered in other cultic contexts, such as at the contemporaneous Ta'anach.⁶ Although the same types of objects can appear in both assemblages, their arrangement, frequency of appearance and use-wear is distinctive. It is important to first consider assemblages within their own immediate context before creating a broader typology of objects found within the Israelite cult. Priority will be given to assemblages deriving from the "cleanest" contexts, i.e. destruction layers, before moving on to floor assemblages that may have been abandoned and later disturbed. Assemblages from destruction layers will serve as an anchor, or baseline, for analyzing assemblages from "less clean" contexts. The well-documented assemblages will also be given top priority, as it is extremely difficult to reconstruct assemblages from publications missing crucial information (cf. Loud 1948: 45-46 on Building 2081).

In order to discern whether cult places are present in the archaeological record, it is also necessary to establish a list of criteria for identifying them as such. Such criteria are particularly useful in discerning the existence of cult places and can be used to determine whether the buildings at Tell el-Far'ah N./Tirzah, Megiddo and Beth Shean served a cultic function. The first thing to look for in identifying a cultic space are podia/bamot/platforms and altars, which are well agreed upon as being indicators of sacred space. They are both attention focusing and functional, as sacrifices could have been offered on such installations.

⁶ Lapp 1964: 26-32; Lapp 1967: 17-21; Lapp 1969: 42-47, Figs. 29-30; Frick 2000.

Furthermore, both biblical and extra-biblical texts points to the cultic function and use of altars and podia in antiquity (Pardee 2002: 64, 69, 267). A second thing to look for is cultic paraphernalia, including stands, shrine models, portable altars, chalices and other specialized objects such as fire pans. The use of these objects is attested both in ancient literature and iconography (cf. Spalinger 1978: Pl. VI–VII), and they are thus an agreeable criterion off which to base the identification of a cultic space. The high frequency of such cult-related items, as well as the presence of votive offerings in a cultic space, such as figurines, plaques or ritual deposits, strengthens the idea that buildings were used for a cultic purpose.

Furthermore, sacred spaces which are set apart from domestic contexts, or cultic buildings which are constructed on top of earlier cultic remains, are a good indication for cult. That space was ritualization or sacralized, i.e. set apart from the quotidian, is an important criterion for interpreting ritual actions (Bell 1992: 140). These are thus the criteria off which to base the conclusions drawn in this paper, and each criterion is in some way related to criteria previously suggested in the scholarly literature (cf. Renfrew 1985; Coogan 1987; Steiner 2019).

A note should also be provided on the difference between “temples” and “cultic buildings” (cf. Faust 2019). In this dissertation, a temple is considered a consecrated, dedicated “house of the deity” (cf. Nakhai 2015: 90), whereas a cultic building is a public building that was devoted to ritual performance, but which may not have necessarily been dedicated or reserved for a specific deity or deities. Cultic buildings may have had a ritual component, but may have also been used for other activities, such as storage, industry or communal feasting. Temples, on the other hand, are more formalized and less open to public access, and it is assumed that they were a place for small groups of elites to conduct private

rituals therein (cf. Boda and Novotny 2010). However, the identification of the deity/deities to whom temples were dedicated is outside the purview of this dissertation (for a recent study, see Lewis 2020).

The examination of individual cultic contexts (especially temples and cultic buildings) will shed light on how loci of cult activity compare within varying levels of society. A regional and inter-regional analysis will also shed light on how cultic contexts differ within various localities. Once the data is collected, I will seek to understand: 1) how cult was practiced in the different regions of the Northern Israelite Kingdom; 2) if there are patterns in cultic contexts and assemblages at the local, regional, inter-regional and supra-regional levels; 3) if northern Israelite cult practices can be differentiated from those of neighboring regions; and 4) if there is evidence for the standardization and repetition of cult throughout the northern valleys and highlands. Any patterns that emerge will be considered on the background of geo-political, socio-political and socio-cultural theories on state formation and centralization with the Northern Israelite Kingdom. It is only after such comparisons are made that the question of the existence and/or nature of northern Israelite “religion” or “religions” can be discussed. Potential evidence for the northern Israelite cult’s impact on cult in the southern Kingdom of Judah will also be considered considering recent theories on the origins of “Biblical Israel” (cf. Na’aman 2009a–b; Finkelstein 2009).

Limitations of the Study

It is also necessary to outline what this thesis strives to achieve. It aims to: 1) list, catalog and analyze the types of objects found in ritual/sacred contexts; 2) analyze the types of places/sacred spaces within which cultic finds are found; 3) determine what constitutes a sacred space/place based on the presence of cultic objects; 4) reconstruct, when possible,

ritual behavior/action; 5) analyze sacrifice—in terms of the types of offerings made—when possible. It will not, however, attempt to discern religious belief insofar as identifying to which deities or spiritual beings offerings were made, or attempt to reconstruct rituals in their entirety. Although the finds from each context will be considered and catalogued, a revised typology of all the different types of items found is also beyond the scope of this study.

Regarding ancient belief systems, it is the argument of this dissertation that cult and religion entail a system of belief which is intimately tied to ritual action. These systems of belief and action are the product of cognitive patterns in human thought which have led groups/individuals to explain the unknown. These explanations were often based on what was seen and unseen in the surrounding world. Nature and landscape—as well as tradition—played an important role in determining such explanations, which later transformed into long-held belief.

Although this theory serves more as a basis for understanding belief, rituals are essentially the behavioral expressions of the latter. They are, moreover, all that is left in the prehistoric or ahistoric archaeological record. Textual records from the Late Bronze and Iron Ages that directly pertain to ritual belief are lacking in Canaan and Israel. However, as archaeologists, tools for understanding belief and thus ritual are found in the form of ritualized objects and spaces. Although it is not the aim of this thesis to discern ancient belief systems, one of its goals is to reconstruct, to the best of its abilities, ritual action. The intricate relationship between ritual and belief means that discoveries about one affect the other.

CHAPTER 5: CULT AT MEGIDDO AND HORVAT TEVET

Turning now to material evidence for cult, the following section presents for the first time the stratigraphy, architecture and assemblages of Megiddo's Level Q-7 and summarizes the stratigraphic and architectural data provided by the excavators on the newly excavated site of Horvat Tevet; a study of the site's cult finds is also offered.⁷

Megiddo's Area Q South

Area Q is located in the southeastern sector of Tel Megiddo, situated between University of Chicago's Area CC and Tel Aviv University's Area K. Excavations in the southern end of Area Q occurred from 2012–2016. In 2012, the aim of the excavations was to reassess: 1) the dating of G. Schumacher's *Südliches Burgtor*; 2) to analyze the late Iron I destruction of Megiddo using microarchaeological methods. One of the most interesting finds was the discovery of a late Iron I hoard of bronze bowls, iron blades and other precious items beside the eastern wall of the *Südliches Burgtor* (Hall 2016; Hall in press). This, coupled with evidence of large-scale destruction, led to the opening of eight squares with the purpose of better understanding the architecture and remains associated with the area.

Floors dating to the Late Bronze III (Level Q-9), early Iron I (Level Q-8), late Iron I (Level Q-7) and early Iron IIA (Levels Q-6) were uncovered in 2012. In 2014, remains from the Iron IIB (Levels Q-1 to Q-4) were discovered.⁸ The focus of this section will be on detailing and interpreting the finds from Level Q-7 (Fig. 5.1), Level Q-6 will also be discussed. Level Q-6 seems to represent a "squatter's" phase of sorts, especially Level Q-6b, which appears to have been inhabited not long after the late Iron I destruction. Evidence for

⁷ The author participated in salvage excavations at Horvat Tevet for several weeks as the supervisor of Area C.

⁸ The architectural remains from these later levels are probably related to the northern end of the area, where Levels Q-1 to Q-5 were uncovered (for local stratigraphy, see Kleiman *et al.* 2017: Table 1; see Kleiman *et al.* 2017 for discussion of the finds from the northern end of the area).

this will be presented below.

It also must be noted that Area Q south's proximity to the edge of the mound meant that the finds southernmost squares (I/1-I/5) were subject to erosion. The University of Chicago's construction of a tracked "dumping" system around the tell caused portions of these squares to be further disturbed. A long and deep military trench in some of the H-squares, which was filled with bullets from the 1948 war, is a further stratigraphic obstacle to consider. Despite these natural and man-made disturbances, the I-squares and H-squares yielded a rich display of finds beneath large-scale evidence for destruction.

Architecture and Features

Level Q-7c comprises Walls 12/Q/18, 12/Q/22, 14/Q/19 and 16/Q/6, floor surfaces 12/Q/154, 16/Q/036 and one tabun (12/Q/135). Floors range in height from ca. 166.65 to 166.80. The re-use of the eastern wall (Wall 12/Q/17) of the *Südliches Burgtor* occurred during this phase. The hoard of bronze and iron objects mentioned above was discovered in this level, which was dug into a floor (12/Q/76) abutting Walls 12/Q/17 and 12/Q/18. This hoard probably represents a foundation deposit dug beside the wall of the *Südliches Burgtor*. Homsher and Finkelstein, who date the *Südliches Burgtor* (Fig. 5.1–4) to the Late Bronze III and its re-use in Area Q to the late Iron I, suspect that this building was cultic in nature. Based on the robust architecture and finds, which include the foundation deposit and bronze items such as spearheads and daggers, this building probably also served a public elite/function. The standing stones, or *maşşeböth*, erected above the *Südliches Burgtor* (Fig. 5.4), also point to a ritual function. Thus, the *Südliches Burgtor* and its re-use in Level Q-7c point to the first phase of cultic activity in this part of the area.



Fig. 5.1. Aerial view of Area Q South, with prominent features of Level Q-7 exposed and reconstructed; note the *Südliches Burgtor* to the west (photo courtesy of R.S. Homsher).

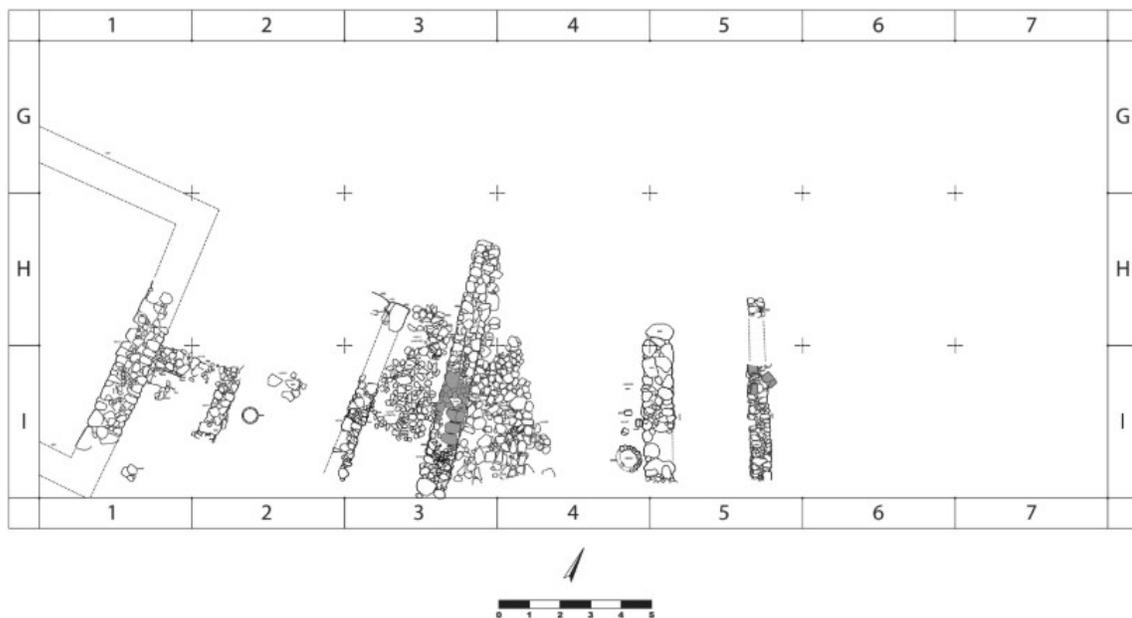


Fig. 5.2. Preliminary plan of Megiddo Level Q-7, with the *Südliches Burgtor* and its adjacent rooms (Level Q-7c) to the west in Squares H/I-2. Note the Level Q-7a platform in Square H/I-3 and the Level Q-7b walls to the east in Square I-5. The figure in its final form, with levels, floor and wall numbers, will appear in *Megiddo VII*.

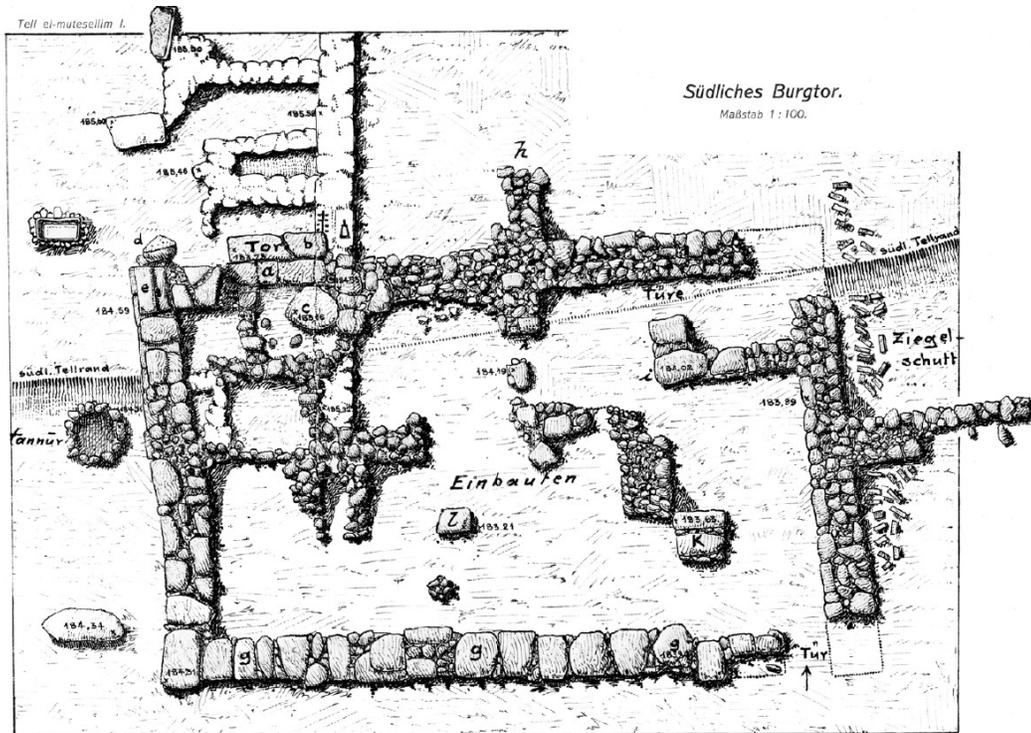


Fig. 5.3. The *Südliches Burgtor* (after Schumacher 1908: Tafel XXI).



Fig. 5.4. Excavation of the northwest corner of the *Südliches Burgtor*, with a view from the northwest; note the standing stone, or *maşşebah*, erected over what appear to be destroyed remains (after Schumacher 1908: Fig. 110).

Level Q-7b is composed of north-south Walls 16/Q/1 and 16/Q/4. Surfaces range in height from ca. 166.85–167.05. Three small standing stones were uncovered at the western face of Wall 16/Q/4, next to a hearth (16/Q/060) (Fig. 5.5). These stones are octagonal in shape, with their edges bevelled, and were arranged in an equilateral triangle. The tops of the stones were apparently cut off in antiquity. This may point to a ritual termination of cult-related activities in this area during the transition from Level Q-7b–a. Parallels for the pillars derive from the Level VI temple in Area P at Lachish (Ussishkin 2004: Pl. 6.29). It is significant that octagonal pillars were found in a clear cultic context at Lachish, pointing to a ritual use of these pillars in Area Q. But, unlike the Lachish pillars, which probably served as columns, the erection of pillars beside a hearth suggests that they may have instead had both a functional and symbolic significance in relation to fire-based activities.



Fig. 5.5. Two of three octagonal pillars (14/Q/167) beside Hearth 16/Q/60. Note that the tops of the pillars appear to have been cut off in antiquity.

Level Q-7a is comprised of Wall 12/Q/30 and two pavements—one abutting the wall’s western face (12/Q/137, a.k.a. 16/Q/013)—and one abutting its eastern face (14/Q/153). These pavements were measured at an elevation of 167.25–35. Pavement 14/Q/153 consists of broken basalt stela, similar in appearance to the octagonal-shaped pillars, that were probably reused from the previous phase (Level Q-7b). This platform is constructed upon fill from Level Q7c–b; the excavators believe that this fill originated from a pit in Square H/4. They suspect that this construction effort was cut short by the destruction event which characterizes the end of Level Q-7a. The excavators interpret this construction as a “*bamah*,” thus reconstructing three phases of cultic activity in this area. It should be noted that human skeletal remains were found in this area, indicating that this individual probably died in a sudden and unexpected destruction event.

A large standing stone (Fig. 5.6) was erected over the Level Q-7a destruction debris in Level Q-6b, a phase assigned to the earliest stage of the early Iron IIA. It is postulated that the site’s inhabitants returned to the site soon after the *bamah*’s destruction and erected a standing stone over the debris to commemorate the remains. This may have been due to mark the cultic nature of the late Iron I cult place and/or to memorialize the human remains that were found under the destruction layer. The standing stone, which was found *in situ* and was left untouched throughout the Iron IIA, may serve as evidence for a “ruin cult” at Megiddo, similar in many ways to the one discovered at Hazor in the aftermath of the Late Bronze Age destruction (Zuckerman 2007). A further indication that this area was sacred in nature is that the area was left open until the Iron IIB. Even then, the Iron IIB remains are scant in this area, and it is suspected that the memory of late Iron I sacred area lasted until the final days of northern Israelite Megiddo.



Fig. 5.6. The standing stone/*massebah* of Level Q-6b, erected over the Level Q-7a destruction.

Ceramics

A total of 1,046 rims, decorated body sherds and complete or partially complete vessels were uncovered from the floors of Level Q-7. All that derive from secure loci were counted according to class and type. The method for categorization used follows Arie's type-series of Late Bronze III and Iron I ceramics from Megiddo (Arie 2013b), which included types from clean loci from Areas K, F, M, H, G and L of the TAU expedition, as well as from Areas AA, DD and one locus (2048) from Area BB of the OIC excavations (cf. Finkelstein *et al.* 2000 and Mazar 1985b: 97, n. 6). The complete type-series, with analysis and parallels, will be published in a forthcoming excavation report (Hall, forthcoming). The present sub-section focuses on percentages of classes represented in Level Q-7, to better understand the types of pottery found within the assemblage.

A total of 895 rims and complete or partially complete vessels were divided into

classes and types (Table 5.1). This number excludes a number (n=151) of decorated body sherds, which could not be identified as belonging to a particular class. Painted pottery constitutes 17% (n=203) of the assemblage, which is in the norm for Stratum VIA (Arie 2006: 222). Storage jars, which comprise 28.6% of the assemblage, and bowls, which make up 33%, together form most of the assemblage at 61.6%. Cooking pots and kraters each constitute 11%. Cookware in general represents 14% whereas drinking vessels, including jugs, juglets, flasks, strainers and amphorae, make up a mere 7%.

Based on this evidence, it seems that drinking was not a primary activity in this context. Evidence for cooking and consumption is, however, apparent. Storage seems to have been the main activity in this level and it is hypothesized (see below) that this is where many of the goods from the *Südliches Burgtor* were kept. The lack of imports in an Iron I context is not surprising, however at least five fragments of Phoenician Monochrome and Bichrome jugs were uncovered.

When the classes are broken down according to Level Q-7a (Table 5.2) and Q-7b (Table 5.3), similar percentages are apparent. Cooking ware represents 15% of the assemblage in both cases, with drinking vessels making up 9.6% in Level Q-7a and 7.1% in Level Q-7b. Storage vessels account for 26.5% of the assemblage in Level Q-7a and 29% in Level Q-7b. The percentage of drinking vessels is slightly higher than the average for Level Q-7 in Level Q-7a, which indicates that drinking and food consumption were more common in this phase. This is not surprising given the amount of bowls represented, 33%. A similar percentage (32.2%) of bowls is apparent in Level Q-7b. Storage and eating were apparently the main activities carried out in all phases. Kraters make up 11% of Level Q-7a and 9.3% of Level Q-7b. Overall, they make up 10.6% of the Level Q-7 assemblage. It is worth noting

that the same sorts of activities took place from one phase to the next, indicating that this area was dedicated to the same activities from Level Q-7b to Level Q-7a.

Class	Count	Percentage
Amphorae	12	1.3%
Baking tray	3	0.3%
Bowl	295	33.0%
Chalice	19	2.1%
Cooking jug	29	3.2%
Cooking pot	96	10.7%
Flask	4	0.4%
Goblet	1	0.1%
Jug	34	3.8%
Juglet	14	1.6%
Krater	95	10.6%
Lamp	22	2.5%
Pithos	7	0.8%
Pyxide	5	0.6%
Stand	1	0.1%
Storage jar	256	28.6%
Strainer	2	0.2%
Total	895	100%

Table 5.1. Counts and percentages of pottery classes represented in Level Q-7.

Class	Count	Percentage
Amphorae	1	0.6%
Baking tray	0	0%
Bowl	52	33.5%
Chalice	2	1.3%
Cooking jug	6	3.9%
Cooking pot	19	12.3%
Flask	1	0.6%
Goblet	0	0%
Jug	10	6.5%
Juglet	3	1.9%
Krater	17	11%
Lamp	2	1.3%
Pithos	2	1.3%
Pyxide	1	0.6%
Stand	0	0%
Storage jar	39	25.2%
Strainer	0	0%
Total	155	100%

Table 5.2. Counts and percentages of classes represented in the Level Q-7a assemblage.

Class	Count	Percentage
Amphorae	1	0.5%
Baking tray	1	0.5%
Bowl	69	32.2%
Chalice	3	1.4%
Cooking jug	7	3.3%
Cooking pot	26	12.1%
Flask	1	0.5%
Goblet	1	0.5%
Jug	6	2.8%
Juglet	6	2.8%
Krater	20	9.3%
Lamp	9	4.2%
Pithos	1	0.5%
Pyxide	2	0.9%
Stand	0	0%
Storage jar	61	28.5%
Strainer	0	0%
Total	214	100%

Table 5.3. Counts and percentages of classes represented in the Level Q-7b assemblage.

Faunal Remains

A total of 283 animal bones were retrieved from floors in all phases of Level Q-7. Based on preliminary results, cattle make up ca. 19% of the animal bone percentage and sheep/goat comprise the vast majority at 78% (L. Sapir-Hen, personal communication). The high percentage of cattle, sheep and goat (96%) indicates that the animals consumed were almost exclusively domesticates. Ritual texts indicate that cattle, sheep and, to some extent, goats were common in feasts and offerings (Scurlock 2002; Lev-Tov and McGeough 2007: 96). Horwitz and Milevski (2001: 298), comparing Late Bronze Age cultic and non-cultic contexts, concluded that Late Bronze Age people “appear to have exploited for ritual purposes the species most commonly represented in their herds.” But it is important to keep in mind that the animals represented most probably reflect typical animal husbandry practices (Lev-Tov and McGeough 2007: 97). Comparable non-cultic sites, such as Tel Kinrot, show similar representational patterns among sheep, goat and cattle (Hellwing 1988–1989; Lev-

Tov and McGeough 2007: 97–96). However, the high percentage of cattle present within the assemblage may mean that these valuable animals were acquired by and for elite personnel (Lev-Tov and McGeough 2007: 99).

Although there is a preference throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages of the southern Levant for the sacrifice of sheep (Fleming 1997; Lev-Tov and McGeough 2006: 99), the Level Q-7 assemblage has a 3:1 ration of goat to sheep. Since the animals culled probably represent animal husbandry practices of the time (L. Sapir-Hen, personal communication), it can be argued that goat was more commonly herded by, or at least more easily accessible to, this sector of the tell's inhabitants. As Sapir-Hen *et al.* (2016: 63) concluded regarding their analysis of faunal remains from Iron I Area K, which lies close to Area Q, the people in this sector of the tell were “engaged in agriculture and raised their own animals.”

Goats can be useful for their secondary products such as dairy. Wool, the secondary product of sheep, may not have been in such high demand. Unfortunately, it was not possible to identify the age of the cattle bones from Level Q-7. Unfused cattle bones are typically representative of “choice meat,” as cattle are typically more expensive than sheep/goat (Sasson 2006; Sapir-Hen *et al.* 2016: 65). The ratio of right to left limbs unfortunately cannot be discussed at this time.

A high amount of butchery marks can be seen on the bones from Level Q-7 (L. Sapir-Hen, personal communication). In most assemblages, the standard for burnt and butchered bones is 7% each (A. Spiciarich, personal communication). Butchery marks appears on all parts of the animal in the Level Q-7 assemblage. As far as body parts of mammals are concerned, most sections of the animals are represented (L. Sapir-Hen,

personal communication). This may mean that butchery, in some cases, occurred within Level Q-7.

Discussion

It is worth noting that the ceramic assemblage from this level lacks clearly cult-related items, however the architecture and animal bones point, to some extent, to ritualistic activities. Furthermore, given the existence of Building 12/Q/99, it appears that this area was an important location for cultic practice from a long-term perspective. The small finds, of which there are not many, and ceramics do not necessarily suggest the presence of elite personnel in Area Q during the late Iron I. The lack of imports, for instance, compared to other cultic contexts (see below) is not indicative of the higher classes. However, imports are not typical of the Iron I in general and this should be kept in mind when analyzing the assemblage. There is also a significant number of painted and otherwise decorated pottery within the assemblage, totalling 17%. In contrast to the ceramic assemblage, the high percentage of cattle—an expensive animal—present in this layer suggests that the consumption of choicer pieces of livestock occurred here. The representation of all body parts of livestock may mean that this area served as a place for butchery and consumption; however, this conclusion is highly preliminary given that the final report has not been published. This area, located outside and just east of the *Südliches Burgtor*, was perhaps adjacent to where the main cultic activities took place. The standing stones and hearth of Level Q-7b and the *bamah* of Level Q-7a, which reflect open-air activities next to the *Südliches Burgtor*, are perhaps where sacrifices were cooked and offered. Butchery, which itself can be viewed as a sacred act (Pongratz-Leisten 2012), may be an important activity in this area. The high amount of storage vessels, bowls and cooking ware suggests that this

was also a place for storage, in addition to one of food preparation and food consumption. This is perhaps where goods were stored and food was prepared for the cultic personnel of the *Südliches Burgtor*.

When active, the *Südliches Burgtor* must have been concurrent with Temple 2048, which was previously uncovered by the University of Chicago expedition. However, the lack of finds within Temple 2048 during the late Iron I may point to the decline of this building as a place of ritual activity.

As mentioned above, the *Südliches Burgtor* was constructed in the Late Bronze III and reused until the destruction of the late Iron I Stratum VIA. Reasons for identifying the *Südliches Burgtor* as having a cultic function are as follows: 1) the *Südliches Burgtor*, itself a public building, contained a number of valuable small finds and imports, which can be indicative of the presence of elite personnel (Schumacher 1908: Tafel XXII–XXIII); 2) several *maššeboth* were found erected over its destroyed late Iron I remains; 3) a hoard of bronze and iron objects was discovered beside the eastern foundation wall of the building and this can be interpreted as a foundation deposit; 4) two other potential caches—one of five bronze cult stands and the other of iron sickles with ivory handles—were found near the *Südliches Burgtor* by Shumacher (1908: 85–87, Fig. 118). At least one of the bronze stands preserved fatty material, charcoal and ash inside its bowl (Schumacher 1908: 85). The proximity of these stands to the *Südliches Burgtor* may mean that they were either hoarded prior to the destruction of Stratum VIA, or that they represent a *favissa*.

From an archaeological perspective, while it is a shame that the *Südliches Burgtor* was excavated using pre-modern techniques, it is nevertheless fortunate that the area east of this building was dug with modern archaeological methods.

Horvat Tevet

Horvat Tevet is located in the northeastern Jezreel Valley, at the foot of the Hill of Moreh. A monumental pillared building was uncovered at the site, which was excavated in 2011 under the direction of Karen Covello-Paran and in 2019 under the direction of Omer Sergi and Rachel Lindemann. Preliminary results from the excavation indicate two main phases of the building: Levels 5 and 4 (O. Sergi and R. Lindemann, personal communication). Level 7 pre-dates these phases and it is believed that this stratum contains a monumental pillared building that is cultic in nature (O. Sergi, personal communication). Little is known of this phase, however, in light of its limited exposure.



Fig. 5.7. View of the Level 5 pillared hall at Horvat Tevet (photographed by R. Lindemann, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Horvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

The Level 5 pillared building features walls constructed of large stone monoliths (Figs. 5.7–8). Monoliths were also used as pillars in the main hall of the building. The pillars,

which number 12 in total, divide the main hall into three aisles. The building is oriented east-west and is supported on its southern end by casemates. The building proper is made up of a main hall, back and front halls (to the east and west) and auxiliary rooms to the south. The pillared building is located close to an industrial area where pottery and textile production workshops were found. These installations are tentatively dated to Level 5.



Fig. 5.8. Aerial view of Horvat Tevet, with prominent features from Levels 5 and 4 (photographed by M. Cavanaugh, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Horvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

Level 4 is constructed on top of the walls of the Level 5 building (Fig. 5.8). It contains a 2 m wide rubble wall to the west, and 2 m wide casemate walls to the north and east. My interpretation differs from the excavators in that I believe that this monumental structure, or “fort,” was originally closed by a 2 m wide wall to the south that was not

detected due to erosion. In my opinion, there is an absence of floors given that their presumed height probably means they were destroyed by modern ploughing activities. To the north of the building lies a courtyard, partially enclosed by a 2 m wide casement closing wall that may be part of a structure lying to the east.

Pottery from the Level 5 and Level 4 buildings dates to the late Iron IIA. A large number of holemouth and hippo jars indicate that the collection, packaging and transfer of goods sustained the site (O. Sergi, personal communication). There are, however, a number of indications that the Level 5 building was also cultic in nature: 1) a four-horned limestone altar dating to this phase was found in the western entry room of the building; and 2) a number of cult objects, including horns from horned funnels, shrine models and stands, were found to surround east the building.

Cult Finds

This section provides an overview of all the cult finds from the site, which were uncovered in Phases 7, 5 and 4 as well as in post-Phase 4 occupational layers. Many objects were found in Area A and are described here, primarily from Phases 5 and 4. Types of objects include a four-horned altar, a cult stand, shrine models, many “horns,” a strainer jar, tripod cups, chalices and figurines. Nearly all the cultic objects from Area A are catalogued and discussed in the present section, as are most pieces from Covello-Paran’s excavations. A spatial distribution of the cult finds in each level is also provided.

Four-horned altar

1. Feature A/F1116; Area A; pillared-building courtyard; Phase 5.

A complete four-horned altar (Fig. 5.9) was discovered in Square E/6, just north of the pillared building’s western courtyard. The altar was found standing *in situ* beside a

smaller, square-shaped piece of limestone, which may have served as a secondary altar or a preparation “table.” Only one horn is preserved on the altar, although it can be assumed that it originally featured four horns. The altar is free-standing, i.e. finished all sides, and is rectangular in form, with a prominent, protruding band around the upper half of the shaft. It is most similar in appearance to Megiddo altar M 5331 from Stratum V (Square R/6, found beneath the stables; cf. May 1935: Pl. XII), although the Megiddo specimen is more roughly cut. There was much effort done in smoothing the sides of the Horvat Tevet altar, and thus the level of craftsmanship is more impressive. The top of the altar is slightly convex, which may have served to better contain the offerings placed upon it (for a detailed discussion of the appearance and typology of four-horned altars, see Chapter 8).



Fig. 5.9. Four-horned altar from Level 5 at Horvat Tevet (photographed by E. Hall, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Horvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

Ceramic Altar

1. Sub-basket A/SB12139; Locus A/L1289; Area A; north of large silo; Phase 4.

Six fragments of a possible ceramic altar were uncovered in Square D/7 of Level 4. One side wall fragment is decorated with alternating black, red and white lines. A single horizontal red line intersects these lines below what it apparently an intentional hole or window made in the altar. This “window” may have served as the opening to the interior of the altar. The remaining five fragments are characterized by a prominent, protruding band that probably wrapped around the top four sides of the altar. The band is also decorated with circular impressions that are set at equidistant intervals (ca. 1 cm apart). These impressions may have been made with the thumb or finger of the crafter or with a rounded, elongated tool.

There is a question as to whether these fragments represent an altar or shrine model. Two of the fragments are smoothed, indicating that these may represent the top, or tray, of an altar. This altar may have featured two bands, or “metopes,” along the top and upper half of the shaft. On the other hand, parallels to this example are classified as shrine models. Mazar, however, reclassifies some of these parallels as ceramic incense altars based on their form and their presumed function (e.g. May 1935: Pl. XV). The closest parallel comes from Schumacher’s excavations of the “Templeburg,” i.e. Building 338, at Megiddo (1908: Fig. 185). Other parallels include an altar/model from the Templeburg (1908: Fig. 186) and a cuboid ceramic altar (see below) from the University of Chicago’s excavations (May 1935: Pl. XV).



Fig. 5.10. Ceramic altar or possible shrine model from Ḥorvat Tevet. Note the “window” and red, black and white painted stripes on the side-wall fragment at the lower right (photo by M. Cavanaugh, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Ḥorvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

2. A/SB12175; Basket A/B11817; Locus 1137; Area A.

A “metope” fragment of a probable ceramic altar. The metope is, like the altar mentioned above, decorated with circular impressions that were likely made with the finger or a round instrument when the altar was leather-hard.



Fig. 5.11. Ceramic altar “metope” from Ḥorvat Tevet (photo by M. Cavanaugh, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Ḥorvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

Shrine Models

1. Basket 2106; Locus 227; Area C; stone layer above kiln (i.e. kiln collapse); Phase 5.

A fragment of a cuboid shrine model was found in Square IV of Covello-Paran's excavations. It represents a side corner of the model, and it is clear from what is preserved that the model was decorated with red and black lines. Alternating red and black vertical lines are decorated on what remains of the side-walls, and these are crossed by two sets of horizontal red and black lines set apart at a distance of ca. 3.5 cm. The walls of the fragment are ca. 1.5 cm thick and the fabric is made of coarse, reddish-gray clay. It appears that a hole ca. 2.5 cm in diameter was intentionally included within the design of the model.

Parallels for this cuboid shrine model are known from Megiddo (May 1935: Pl. XIII – XV). They include a ceramic shrine model with female figures applied onto its façade (May 1935: Pl. XIII–XIV) and the cuboid ceramic altar mentioned above, which features windows and two rows of “rope” decoration around its upper half, resembling “metopes” (May 1935: Pl. XV).

2. Basket 2085; Locus 224; stone collapse; unknown phase.

A second fragment of a shrine model was also uncovered in Covello-Paran's excavations. Found in Square I within a layer of stone collapse, it preserves a corner of the model. Similar to the fragment described above, it features red and black decoration. This particular fragment, however, is decorated more simply, with only one line of each color. It is too difficult to determine which part of the shrine model the fragment represents—whether it be where one of the side walls meets the top of the model, the bottom or if it represents the

intersection of two side walls. The walls are ca. 1.5 cm thick and are made of reddish-gray clay. It is once again seems that a hole, ca. 2.5 cm in diameter, was intentionally included within its design. For parallels see No. 1 above.

Cult Stand

1. Sub-basket A/SB10099; Locus A/L1036; Area A; “fort;” Phase 4–1.

Two fragments of ca. 13 cm tall cylindrical cult stand were found in Sq. I/3 of Level 4. One of the fragments preserves a complete profile. The rim is flattened, everted and slightly flaring. The stand is undecorated and was made using a coil-technique. The clay is pinkish-orange in color and the fabric contains white grits. A bowl for burning incense presumably sat atop the stand, though no remains of such a bowl were found with the object.



Fig. 5.12. Cult stand with complete profile from Ḥorvat Tevet; the top faces the left in this photo (photo by M. Cavanaugh, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Ḥorvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

Parallels of simple cult stands include an example from Tel ‘Amal Stratum IV (Levy and Edelstein 1978: Fig. 16: 7) and what is labelled as “CH?” from Level H-5 at Megiddo which, although classified as a chalice, probably served a similar function to the cult stand described

here (Arie 2013: Fig. 13.10; 13.41: 5). As Arie points out, the relationship between cult stands with bowls and chalices is clear from the many examples found at Megiddo (2013: 690).

Perforated Cups

1. Sub-basket A/SB12481; Locus A/L1301; Area A; pillared-building; Phase 4.

A fragment of a perforated tripod cup was uncovered in Square D/8 on the remains of the Level 4 floor F1184. The shoulder, body and a knob-handle are preserved on the sherd, which features vertical rows of perforations on the body as well as perforations on the shoulder. A distance of ca. 2 cm separates the perforations on either side of the handle. The vertical rows are separated by ca. 1 cm and each perforation within the row is separated by ca. 0.5 cm. Three perforations appear on the shoulder of the vessel, on either side of the knob-handle, and a smudge mark made with a finger or crude tool was made beneath the handle. The perforations were made before firing. The entire fragment is ca. 8 cm wide and ca. 7 cm long. The clay is orangish-pink. This particular vessel is being sent to residue analysis, as they are suspected to have served a cultic function as incense burners (Gal and Alexandre 2000: 185; Arie 2013a: 719).

Other examples of perforated tripod cups are known from Iron IIA Megiddo (Arie 2013: 719, Type TC31), Beth Shean (Mazar 2006: 373, Type PC), Tel Rehov (Mazar in press), Hazor X –IX (Ben-Ami 2003: 122, Type Bowl VIb), Ta'anach (Rast 1978: Fig. 51: 3), Tell el-Far'ah N./Tirzah (Chambon 1984: Pl. 54: 2 –3) and Horvat Rosh Zayit (Gal and Alexandre 2000: Fig. VII.6: 18).



Fig. 5.13. Perforated cup with knob-handle preserved from Ḥorvat Tevet; note the smudge-mark under the handle (photographed by M. Cavanaugh, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Ḥorvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

2. Sub-basket A/SB 12170; Locus A/L1235; Area A; pillared-building; Phase 5.

Three fragments of a perforated cup were found in the Level 5 destruction debris on a floor containing black ash and burnt mudbrick debris. The largest fragment is ca. 5.5 cm wide and ca. 4.3 cm tall. Fortunately, the rim of this fragment is preserved, as is a trace of a low carination. Two extant perforations, set at a diagonal to one another, are located between the rim and the carination. The perforations were presumably made when the vessel was leather-hard. The clay of the vessel is reddish-pink and the fabric is medium-gray.

The second fragment is a body sherd that contains four perforations that are vertically aligned. The clay is orangish-pink. Traces of burning inside and outside the vessel are apparent. The fragment is ca. 3.3 cm wide and ca. 5 cm long. This piece does not seem to go with the large fragment described above.

The final fragment is small and contains only one perforation. Traces of burning also appear on the exterior of this piece. The clay is reddish pink and the fabric is a medium gray.

3. Sub-basket A/SB 12269; Locus A/L1235; Area A; pillared-building; Phase 5.

Two perforated cup fragments were found in the same locus as mentioned above. The larger fragment preserves a rim like the rim fragment described above. The rim itself is slightly hammer-like yet flattened. A vertical row of four extant perforations, set ca. 1 cm apart, lines the body. Another row of perforations, only one perforation of which remains, seems to have been set at a distance of ca. 5 cm from the first row. The perforations were apparently made when the vessel was leather-hard. The clay is reddish orange and the fabric is slightly gray.

The second tripod cup fragment preserves four perforations set in vertical rows on either side of a broken handle, at a distance of ca. 3.5 cm. There is evidence of burning on the interior and exterior of the vessel, which may have occurred during the destruction event from which the cups derive. The clay is slightly gray due to exposure to fire and the fabric is medium-gray.

4. Sub-basket A/SB11860; Locus A/L1083; Area A; “fort;” Phase 4–1.

A fragment of another tripod cup is ca. 7.5 wide and ca. 2.5 cm tall. It contains perforations set at ca. 2.0–2.5 cm apart in a vertical row around the body. The clay is reddish-pink and the fabric is dark gray. The perforations are much cleaner than example No. 1 and must have been made when the vessel was leather-hard.

Statue Base

1. Sub-basket A/SB12106; Locus A/L1285; Area A; pillared-building; Phase 5.

A heavy, rectangular-shaped black steatite/granite stone was uncovered in Sq. G3/H3, within a medium brown fill below the Level 5 floor F1174. This fragment may preserve the corner of an Egyptian(?) statue base(?), although there are no signs of inscription on the fragment. The fragment contains signs of ancient use-wear in the form of scratches. It is a question as to whether this fragment was intentionally broken in antiquity, given the hardness of the stone.



Fig. 5.14. Possible statue base made from a unique black stone from Ḥorvat Tevet (photographed by M. Cavanaugh, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Ḥorvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

Chalices

1. Sub-basket A/SB11143; Locus A/L1081; Area A; pillared-building; Phase 5.

The stem of a chalice was discovered in Level 5 mudbrick destruction debris above a Level 5 floor (F1092/F1103). The base of the bowl is preserved and seems to contain evidence for burning. The clay is pinkish-orange and the fabric is dark gray. This vessel is to be sent to residue analysis.

Typical vessels of this period feature carinated flaring rims (Arie 2013: 689, CH31). For parallels see Yoqne'am XVI–XIV (Zarzecki-Peleg *et al.* 2005: 259, Types CIIA–B), Beth Shean S-1 (Mazar 2006: 333–334, BL59 and Pl. 6: 12) and Rosh Zayit (Gal and Alexandre 2000: Fig. III.79: 16).

2. Sub-basket. A/SB11213; Locus A/L1179; Area A; pillared-building; Phase 5; level 157.50.

Two fragments of the base of a chalice ca. 10.5 cm in diameter were uncovered in Square H5/I5, within Level 5 mudbrick destruction debris north of Level 5 wall F10003 and west of wall F1010. The clay is orangish pink and the fabric is dark gray. The rim of the base is folded.



Fig. 5.15. Chalice base from Ḥorvat Tevet; the two fragments pictured here do not connect (photographed by M. Cavanaugh, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Ḥorvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

3. Sub-basket A/SB10402; Locus A/L1069; Area A.

A fragment of the base of a chalice was uncovered in Locus 1069. Part of the stem is preserved. The clay is whitish-gray and the fabric is light gray.

4. Sub-basket A/SB12140; Locus A/L1289; Area A; “fort;” Phase 4.

The stem of a chalice was discovered in Sq. D/7 and it was found, in conjunction with the altar described above, in relation to a possible U-shaped installation at an elevation of 157.40. The stem is ca. 4.5 cm in diameter and the clay of the chalice is yellowish orange with a similar fabric.

5. Sub-basket A/SB11024; Locus A/L1151; Area A; Phase 1.

A fragment of a large chalice was uncovered in modern dump accumulation and topsoil on the lower side-slope east of the pillared building complex. The base of the chalice’s bowl, part of the bowl’s side-wall and the stem are preserved. The size of the chalice is the most unique feature of this piece. The stem measures 7 cm in diameter. Its clay is reddish pink and its fabric is dark gray in color.



Fig. 5.16. Large chalice from Horvat Tevet (photographed by M. Cavanaugh, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Horvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

Horned Funnels

1. Sub-basket A/SB11598; Locus A/L1008; Area A; surface; unphased.

This is an intact horn, or “petal,” preserved with part of the rim of the funnel to which it was attached. The horn is erect, standing straight up from the rim. The rim is curved, indicating that the funnel was circular. The horn is 5.3 cm wide at its base and 7 cm long; the horn tapers, like all other examples, at the top, which in this case is 4 cm wide.



Fig. 5.17. Horn from a funnel/stand from Ḥorvat Tevet; this one of many similar horns found at the site (photographed by M. Cavanaugh, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Ḥorvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

2. Sub-basket A/SB11150; Locus A/L1113; Area A; above Phase 5 walls; Phase 2–1.

A broken horn, 6.5 cm wide at its base. The horn is preserved with the rim of the vessel to which it was originally attached. It is clear from the rim that the vessel (i.e. funnel) was curved/circular. Unlike other examples, in which the horn is erect, this horn would have protruded from top of the funnel at an angle.

3. Basket 1192/15; Locus 132.

A smaller, intact horn, found in Covello-Paran's excavations, has parallels at Tell Afis (Soldi 2009: Fig. 10). It is attached to a partial rim, which indicates that this funnel, like of all funnels so far mentioned, was circular. The horn's length is 2.5 cm and its base measures 3.5 cm wide, with its top, which tapers, measuring 2.5 cm wide. It is clear that this horn stood erect at the top of the funnel.

4. Basket 1198/19; Locus 111.

A second horn from Covello-Paran's excavations is a bit smaller than the larger horns typically found at Ḥorvat Tevet. On this example, the horn was smoothed down when attached to the rim by the potter. It stood erect, like many other examples found at the site. It measures 4.5 cm at its base, and its top is broken. Its length probably would have been no more than 5.5–6 cm.

5. Basket 1178/1; Locus 111.

A third horn from Covello-Paran's excavations is much larger than the aforementioned example. It is intact and measures 7.5 cm in length, 6 cm at its base and 4.5 cm at its top. The clay is reddish. The horn stood erect on the rim of the funnel. Given its size, it may be part of a larger funnel.

6. Sub-basket A/SB12699; Area A; unphased.

A particularly wide horn, 6 cm at its base, was discovered in the 2019 excavations. Noteworthy is that the join between the rim of the funnel and the horn is clearly visible. This

means that the horns were probably made separately and later attached to the rim of each funnel. The clay is orangish-pink. Lengthwise, it measures 6.5 cm.

7. Sub-basket A/SB10871; Locus A/L1036; Area A; Phase 4–1.

Another small horn, like No. 3, was discovered in the 2019 excavations. The rim of the funnel to which is what once attached is not preserved. It measures 2.3 cm in length, 3 cm wide at its base, and 2.2 cm wide at its top.

8. Sub-basket A/SB10404; Locus A/L1020; Area A; unstratified.

A portion of the rim is preserved on this rather large horn. It appears that the horn was attached to the rim of the funnel at an angle. At its base it measures 6 cm wide, at its top 4.5 cm wide and in length 8 cm.

9. Sub-basket A/SB10862; Locus A/L1117; Area A; Phase 4–1.

This horn is wider than most examples, measuring 7 cm at its base and 5.8 cm at its top (length ca. 7 cm). Its rim is unfortunately not preserved.

10. Basket A/B10042; Locus A/L1004; Area A; unphased.

This horn was apparently attached to the funnel at an angle. It is complete, with part of the rim preserved. It measures 6.3 cm at its base, 5.3 cm at its top and is 7 cm long.

11. Basket A/B10861; Locus A/L1051; Area A; unstratified.

This horn may have been attached to the top of the funnel at an angle. It does not taper much, measuring 4.5 cm at its base and 4.3 cm at its top; lengthwise it is ca. 7 cm.

12. Basket A/B10235; Locus A/L1043; Area A; Level 5.

This example probably stood erect on the rim of the funnel, as part of the rim is preserved. It is unique in that its exterior appears to have been painted white. Usually most horns are undecorated. It is 6.3 cm wide at its base, 4.5 cm wide at its top and 8 cm in length.

13. Basket A/B10866; Locus A/L1111; Area A; Level 4/1.

This horn stood erect on the top of the funnel, with part of its rim being preserved. This particular horn must have been exposed to high firing temperatures, as the fabric is black. At its base it measures 5.5 cm and at its top, which tapers slightly, 4 cm. It is 7.3 cm in length.

14. Basket A/B11151; Locus A/L1113; Area A; Level 2/1.

This horn is broken at its top and base, so that only its mid-section is preserved. This horn, too, was subjected to high firing temperatures given that its fabric is dark grey-black.

15. Basket A/B11860; Locus A/L1111; Area A; Level 4/1.

The top of this horn is broken off, but the base and rim are preserved. This horn was apparently attached to the rim at an angle. Again, it is apparent that the horn was made separately and only later attached to the rim. Its base measures 5.5 cm.

16. Basket A/B12338; Locus A/L1311; Area A; Level 4/1.

Only the top of this horn is preserved, which measures ca. 4.8 cm. It appears that this specimen was not exposed to particularly high heating temperatures, unlike other examples.

17. Basket A/B11464; Locus A/L1033; Area A; Level 4/1.

As with the aforementioned example, only the top of this horn (4.3 cm wide) is preserved. This example was, however, exposed to high heating temperatures given the color of its fabric.

18. Basket A/B11860; Locus A/L1111; Area A; Level 4/1.

Only the top of this horn is preserved (ca. 5 cm wide). It does not appear to have been exposed to high heating temperatures.

Figurines

1. Basket 1222; Locus 165.

A possible pillar figurine from Covello-Paran's excavations. The object is a hollow, broken cylinder with a prominent ridge on the side that is preserved. The ridge is painted with a red stripe; a protrusion at the top of the object may possibly represent a broken arm of the figurine.

2. Sub-basket A/SB12818; Locus 1395; Area A; Phase 7.

A head of a horse figurine; the head is covered with a bridle that goes from the top of the horse's head down over the bridge of its nose. The figurine is decorated with circular, protruding eyes, and the mouth of the horse is spouted. This head probably represents what remains of a hollow, zoomorphic vessel.



Fig. 5.18. Horse head from a zoomorphic figurine found at Ḥorvat Tevet (photographed by M. Cavanaugh, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Ḥorvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

3. Sub-basket A/SB10891; Locus A/L1117; Area A.

A red-slipped female plaque figurine. The figurine depicts a woman holding her breasts. Her hair is curly and drops to her shoulders. Her hands are spread out and each individual finger is depicted. She may be wearing a skirt or dress, given that a protrusion is apparent just below her waist. Parallel figurines of naked women holding their breasts are known from Tel Rehov Stratum IV (Mazar 2020: Fig. 34.2: 15) and Megiddo Stratum IV (May 1935: Pl. 28, M 5376). Other parallels are attested at other sites around the Land of Israel, including Ashdod, Tel Jemmeh, Beth Shemesh, Buseirah, Gezer, Beth Shean, Ta'anach and Tel Zeror (see Holland 1975: 23–24, Type C.II.b for references). As pointed out by A. Mazar, the motif of a woman holding her breasts follows the Late Bronze Age tradition (Mazar in press; for Late Bronze examples see Loud 1948: Pl. 243: 16, 18).



Fig. 5.19. Figurine of a female holding her breasts from Ḥorvat Tevet (photographed by M. Cavanaugh, courtesy of O. Sergi and the Ḥorvat Tevet Archaeological Project).

Spatial Distribution

Level 5

Given that very few finds, and no pieces of cult paraphernalia, were found in the central hall indicates that this space was probably cleared out before the destruction. Many items were found inside Squares F–G/2, within the southwestern-most casemate (Fig. 5.10). These finds include a figurine leg, a horn from a funnel and two tripod cups. Perhaps these artifacts, which were probably used in the building, were thrown into this space prior to the clearing out of the central hall. Some of the southern side rooms did, however, contain cultic paraphernalia, including a cult stand within a room of Square F–G/3–4, a chalice inside a room of Square G/3 and another chalice inside a room of Square H/3. Additionally, two horns of a funnel and a statue base were discovered in the eastern long-room of the building.



Fig. 5.20. Spatial distribution of cultic finds from the Level 5 pillared hall at Horvat Tevet (top plan courtesy of O. Sergi and the Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University).

Horned funnels, in general, were found outside, along the edges of the building, and this may connect with their function. The horned funnels from Tel Afis were probably set in niches along the exterior of the temple (Soldi 2009: Fig. 9–10). In this case, one can surmise that horned funnels were similarly set up along the exterior of the Level 5 pillared hall.

The most significant find from the catalog, the four horned altar, was erected outside and west of the pillared building in a courtyard. Its location is puzzling as, if the pillared hall functioned as a cultic building or temple, one would expect to find the altar in a attention-focusing space, such as the long-room in the back. However, the presence of an altar in the

open-air⁹ may mean that this was a place for sacrificial activities. Since no animal bones or hearths were found beside the altar, it is safe to say that it was probably used for incense or grain offerings. Evidence of altars being used to offer grain is attested at Megiddo's Building 2081, wherein a small pile of grain was found beside one of the four-horned altars stowed away in the corner of Courtyard 2081 (Loud 1948: 162). The excavators' interpretation of Ḥorvat Tevet as a center for grain storage and production makes it logical that grain would have been offered on this altar.

Aside from the altar, two additional chalices were found outside the building in Squares H-I/5 and D/5. In Level 5/4 contexts—that is, in those contexts that could not be definitively assigned—it is clear that three horns from funnels were found in the southeastern-most casemate of the pillared hall and that a perforated storage jar was found just east of the long-room. Again, the facts that horns were found outside of the building points to their placement along the exterior of the building.

Level 4

Of the finds belonging to Level 4 (Figs. 5.11–12) are a chalice, a shrine model, a tripod cup and a female figurine. The three former objects were found concentrated in Squares D/7–8, just north of the large silo in Square D/6. They may be associated with a secondary architectural unit northwest of the “fort” of Level 4.

⁹ Although the altar may have been set in the open air, two small walls on either side of it may mean that it was actually enclosed within a building adjacent to the pillared hall.



Fig. 5.21. Spatial distribution of cultic finds from Level 5/4 at Horvat Tevet (top plan courtesy of O. Sergi and the Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University).

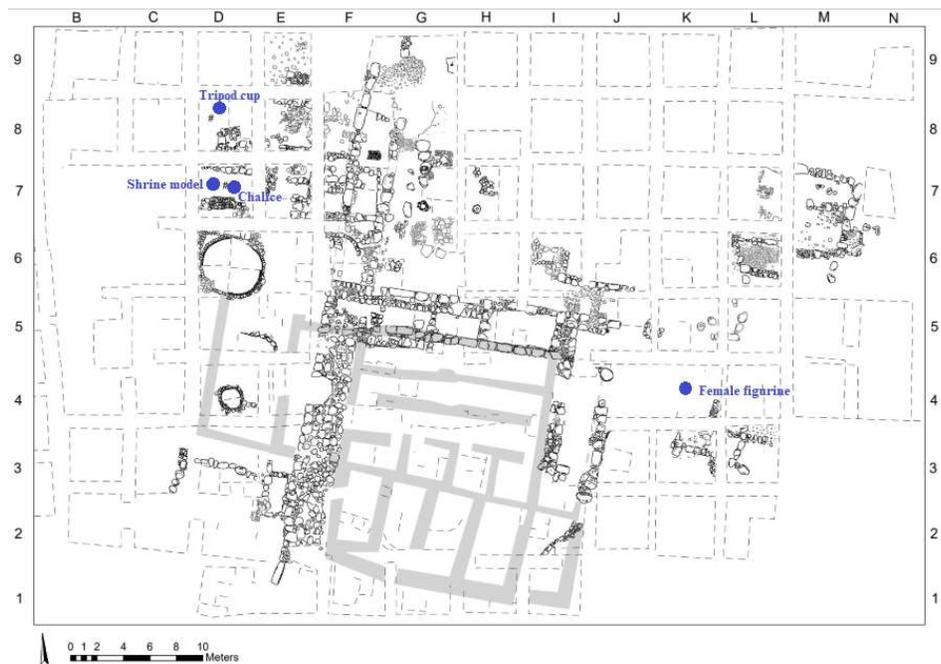


Fig. 5.22. Spatial distribution of cultic finds from Level 4 at Horvat Tevet (top plan courtesy of O. Sergi and the Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University).

Discussion

The ceramics and animal bones from the pillared building of Level 5 and the “fort” of Level 4 have not yet been published. The following discussion of the nature of cult at Ḥorvat Tevet is therefore incomplete, yet there are certain conclusions that can be drawn from the cultic catalog presented above.

As will be demonstrated below, the pillared building of Level 5 at Ḥorvat Tevet shares a similar plan and layout to Iron IIA cultic buildings/temples at Megiddo (Level Q-5 pillared building) and Beth Shean (the “Southern Temple” of Lower Level V). This, coupled with the many cult finds associated with the building, leads to the conclusion that this building served a cultic function. Administrative aspects were no doubt part of the building’s role as an outpost in the Jezreel Valley, however it seems that cult was central to this activity. The same can be said for other cultic buildings of the Iron IIA (see below), where administration and cult were closely tied.

There is certainly cultic milieu, or *koiné*, present in the cultic artifacts from the Jezreel Valley (see below). Many of the parallels for cultic materials come from Megiddo and nearby sites. There is also an interesting two-way influence on cultic artifacts from Syria and Ḥorvat Tevet, in light of the parallels for horned funnels found at Tell Afis (Soldi 2009: Fig. 9–10). It is hard to say whether the red, black and white decorations on the ceramic altars and shrine models are also reflective of such an influence, given that these decoration techniques are found on several cult stands from Tell Afis (Soldi 2009: Fig. 12a–b, 13a–b). The take-away from this is that the northern Israelite Kingdom may have influenced the northern Levant (or vice versa), at least cultically, more than has typically been supposed.

This perhaps should be unsurprising given the level of interaction between the northern Israelite Kingdom and Aram-Damascus (Sergi and Kleiman 2018).

Summary

The assemblages at Megiddo and Horvat Tevet are interesting given their differences—the Megiddo context is characterized by a lack of cultic objects, yet it is identified as cultic based on the presence of cultic architecture. Horvat Tevet, on the other hand, is replete with cultic paraphernalia, and yet the excavators do not consider the building in which the finds were discovered to be cultic. These contexts present new challenges to understanding cult, both from a theoretical and material perspective. It is proposed that the Megiddo assemblage can be interpreted as an open-air place for cultic activity adjacent to and associated with the *Südliches Burgtor*, which itself probably served as an elite cultic building. The animal remains point to butchery and consumption of livestock in Level Q-7, and it is hypothesized that the *bamah* constructed in Level Q-7a is where offerings would have been made. The pillared building at Horvat Tevet, on the other hand, and contrary to the opinion of the excavators, is interpreted as a cultic building. Evidence in support of this is the numerous cult finds found around the building, including a four-horned altar, as well as its similarity to other cultic buildings of the period. Horvat Tevet's pillared building can more specifically be interpreted as a cultic building wherein administrative activities were carried out. Whether this building should be classified as a temple is difficult to say, as the definition and identification of temples during the period is complicated (see below).

CHAPTER 6: CULT IN THE LATE BRONZE AND IRON AGE I

Now that the contexts of Megiddo Level Q-7 and Ḥorvat Tevet have been reviewed, it is possible to turn to cult in the northern highlands and valleys. This chapter reviews cult in these regions from the Late Bronze IIA to the late Iron I, beginning with the Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys before turning to contexts in the Samarian Highlands. An emphasis is placed on regionality, rather than presenting the contexts in chronological order. This is so that the regional similarities will be more apparent to the reader. There is, however, a chronological presentation of contexts within the discussion of each region. The stratigraphy, architecture and cult paraphernalia of each context are reviewed. When possible, the ceramics, small finds and faunal remains are also considered. In the next chapter, Iron IIA and Iron IIB contexts will be presented. Although this means that there is discontinuity in presentation whereas cult in some contexts is continuous, the significant break in material culture and historical processes from the late Iron I to the Iron IIA warrants such a division.

Jezreel Valley

The contexts presently under review include Megiddo's Palace 2041 (Stratum VIII and VIIA), Temple 2048 and Palace 2072, as well as possible cultic structures at Tell Qiri.

Megiddo

Megiddo (Tell el-Mutesellim, "governor's hill," in Arabic) is a ca. 6 hectare site situated along the southwestern edge of the Jezreel Valley. The site was dug by four different expeditions, the first by G. Schumacher from 1903–1905 and the second by the University of Chicago from 1925–1939. This was followed by excavations by Y. Yadin in the 1960s and 1970s, and most recently the Tel Aviv University Megiddo Expedition has been conducting excavations since 1992. In what follows, the Late Bronze and Iron I cult remains are

considered. Megiddo itself is a remarkable case-study for cult given that continuity in cultic tradition is apparent from the Early Bronze down to the Iron Age (Kleiman *et al.* 2017). The following presents the cultic contexts according to stratum.

Palace 2041

STRATUM VIII

Palace 2041 is located in the northern sector of the mound, just west of the Late Bronze city gate, in Area AA (Fig. 6.1). The palace was constructed in Stratum VIII and was reused, with alterations made to its plan, in Strata VIIB–VIIA. The Stratum VIII palace contained an open courtyard (Locus 2041) surrounded by smaller rooms to its north, west and east. An entrance chamber paved with seashells (Locus 3091) was constructed just south of the courtyard. This room contained a basalt basin and sump for draining liquids, which led Loud to identify it as an “ablution chamber” (1948: 25). The room otherwise featured few finds.

S. Zuckerman argued that this room functioned as a “royal portal,” where the ruler of Megiddo and emissaries would perform ritual activities upon leaving or entering the palace (2010: 168, 170, 172). R. L. Grimes (1986: 452–453; cf. Zuckerman 2010: 168) defines royal portals as...

...a gateway or doorway, insofar as it elicits ritual actions or becomes a locus of concentrated architectural symbolism. It is a space framed to call attention to spatial transition; thus it has characteristics of both a path and a place... it is both a termination and a beginning. As a structure that is both inside and outside the same zone... it is a site of considerable ambivalence.

According to Zuckerman, such portals not only separated the ruling elite from the common people, but may have also marked a separation between the “secular and the divine” (*ibid.*: 169).

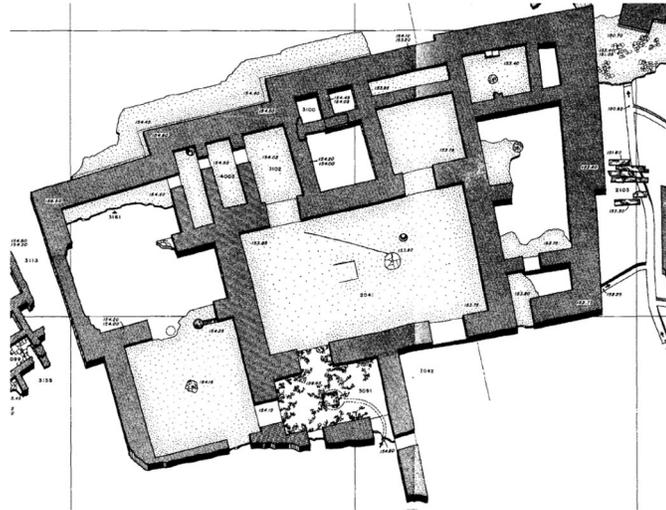


Fig. 6.1. Palace 2041 at Megiddo with shell-paved Room 3091; note the other possible points of access to the palace (after Loud 1948: Fig. 382).



Fig. 6.2. Shell-paved floor and “sump” of Room 3091 (after Loud 1948: Fig. 51).

Room 3091, like the orthostat-paved podium of Hazor's Area M (*ibid.*: 168–169), is unique in its shell-paved construction (Fig. 6.2). The effort that was put into constructing this room indicates that it was probably used for a special purpose. In this case, and in light of the few finds associated with it, its identification as a place for performing libation or ablution ceremonies makes sense. The discovery of installations related to the pouring of liquids within the room and scoops in its proximity lends credence to this possible function (*ibid.*: 170). The libation activities carried out within this room may be tied to ritual cleansing. But it is questionable whether this room is to be understood as a royal portal, since one could access the palace through other entrances—and therefore access was not restricted. A different way to understand this as a “royal portal” is one in which the cleansing act was carried out within the confines of this room, and that as one entered the palace, he or she would go through ritual ceremonies before entering. The room is, in any case, important for understanding ceremonial cult/ritual practices that took place in the Late Bronze Age palatial environs of Megiddo.

It should also be mentioned that a hoard of precious objects was hidden beneath the floor of Palace 2041's Room 3100. This hoard probably represents a foundation deposit, wherein the objects within it were consecrated to a deity or deities as a blessing for the palace (Hall 2016: 49–57, 101–102).

STRATUM VIIA

In the Stratum VIIA phase of the palace, a hoard of ivories was discovered within a subterranean treasury (Locus 3073) just west of Courtyard 2041 (Loud 1939; see Fig. 6.3 here). Approximately 382 pieces of carved ivory and other small finds were spread over an area of 9 sq m directly above the treasury's floor. The largest concentration of ivories lay

directly beneath a fully articulated bovid skeleton (Feldman 2009: 177; see Fig. 6.4 here).

According to M. Feldman's publication of Loud's field notes from 6 March 1937, two human skulls and several human ribs were also scattered about these remains (2009: 177). Other items found beneath the bovid include unidentified animal bones, gold jewelry and alabaster (Loud 1939: 7).

Feldman believes that the finds represent a ritual hoard, and that the ivories, most of which were fragmentary, were intentionally broken and scattered about the annex as an act of ritual destruction (Feldman 2009: 188–190). I. Samet (2009: 83–84), on the other hand, has recently raised the possibility that this deposit represents a tomb that was constructed in Stratum VIIB and closed off prior to the palace's Stratum VIIA destruction. This is a strong possibility, especially considering the human remains that were discovered amongst the ivories. Based on the remains, it would seem that both Feldman and Samet are correct in their interpretations: the ivories were probably ritually broken before a large bovid and other animals were sacrificed and deposited alongside the human remains.

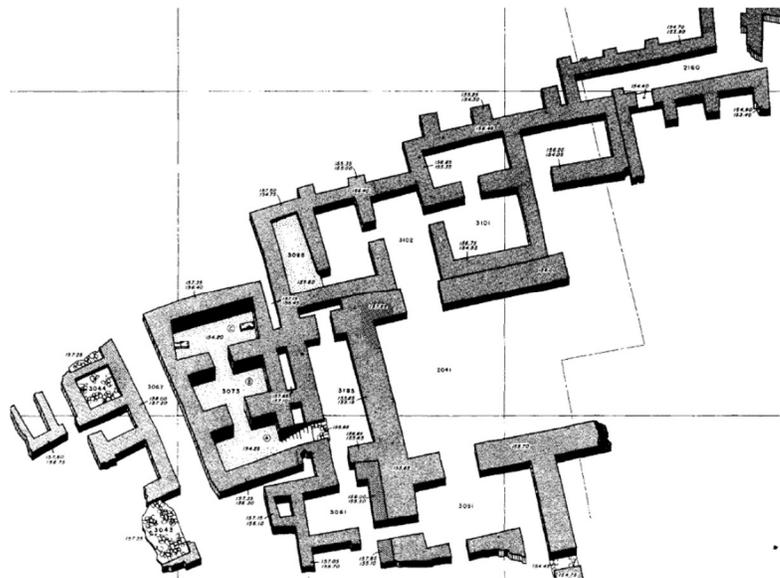


Fig. 6.3. Plan of Megiddo's Stratum VIIA palace; note the location of Treasury 3073 (after Loud 1948: Fig. 384).



Fig. 6.4. Northernmost room of Treasury 3073 (after Feldman 2009: Fig. 3).

Temple 2048

Temple 2048 is located in Area BB, traditionally the cultic sector of the mound. The building was initially constructed in Stratum X, or earlier, when a palace was situated just to its west (Dunayevsky and Kempinski 1980: 180–184; cf. Wright 1957: 20; 1958: 34–35). In Stratum X, the northern end of the temple faced a large courtyard around which a temenos wall was constructed (see Fig. 6.5).

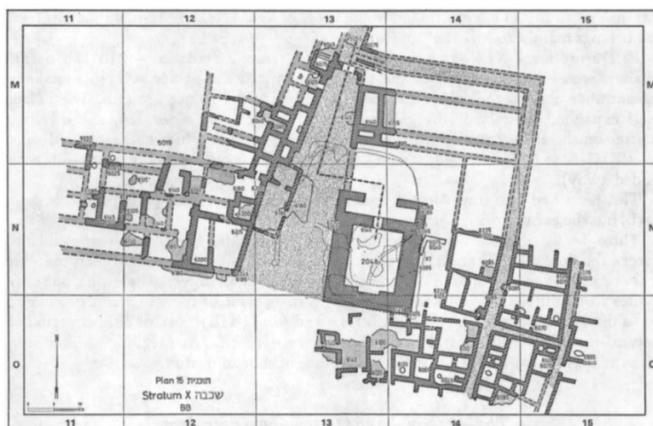


Fig. 6.5. Plan of Megiddo's Area BB in Stratum X; note the courtyard and temenos wall of Temple 2048, as well as the palace to the west (after Dunayevsky and Kempinski 1980: Fig. 15).

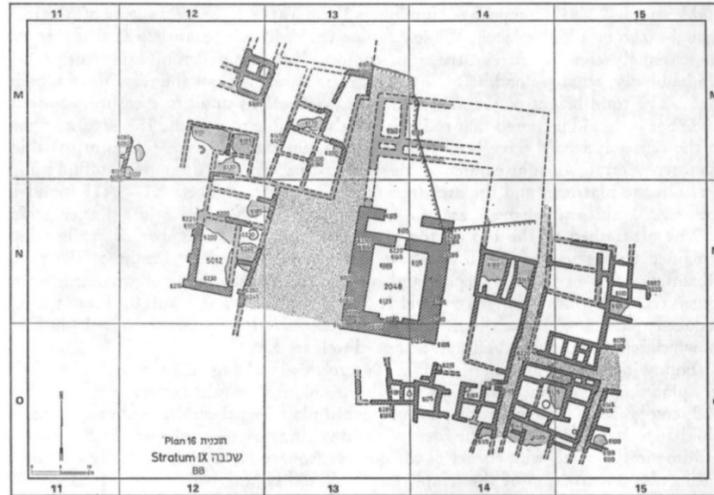


Fig. 6.6. Plan of Megiddo's Area BB in Stratum IX; note the disappearance of the western palace (after Dunayevsky and Kempinski 1980: Fig. 16).

In Stratum IX, the palace disappears and the temple is surrounded by smaller units to the east and southeast (Fig. 6.6). The construction of an entrance-way and open courtyard is apparent in Stratum X and IX (Dunayevsky and Kempinski 1980: Fig. 15–16). The building's Stratum X forecourt is replaced in Stratum IX or VIII with towers;¹⁰ the eastern ashlar tower was probably built/rebuilt in Stratum VIII (*ibid.*: 182, n. 48). The tower was sub-divided into two rooms, which may be related to the addition of a staircase leading up to the temple's roof (DePietro 2012: 45). The only floor found within the temple belonged to Stratum VIIIB and was apparently reused in Strata VIIA and VI (Ussishkin 1995; Mazar 1985a: 97, n. 6). Embedded within the floor were “a collection of stone objects including a ‘bath,’ a smooth flat slab or ‘table’ with cuplike depressions, one circular and six squared basalt blocks, another circular piece and a drain, both of limestone” (Loud 1948: 105). Otherwise, few finds were discovered on the floor (see below).

The building is rectangular in shape with outer walls measuring 21.50 x 16.50 m

¹⁰ Similar “Migdal” or “Monumental Symmetrical” temples (for description and classification see Mazar 1992: 166ff) were found at Shechem (Wright 1965: 80–102; Fig. 49), Hazor's Areas A and H (Yadin *et al.* 1960; Hesse 2008: 63–64; Fig. 3.11) and Pella's Area XXXII Phase 4 (Bourke 2004; 2012).

(*ibid.*: 102). Its large central room (11.50 x 9.60 m) originally contained a niche (*ibid.*: Fig. 249) that was replaced with successive “platforms” (ca. 1.10 m high) in Strata VIIB–VIIA; a second niche was constructed above the platform of Stratum VIIA. The platforms, which run along the temple’s back (southern) wall, are located opposite the building’s northern entrance. In Stratum VIIB, a casemate-like temenos wall, attached to the western tower, was constructed west of the temple. In Stratum VIIA, the temple was altered, with its walls at nearly half the size of those in the preceding phase. The towers, too, were replaced with a “narrow room with two cells in the entrance-hall” and the temenos wall of Stratum VIIB was removed (Dunayevsky and Kempinski 1980: 184; Fig. 19).

Five ritual hoards, or building/miscellaneous deposits, were discovered within the temple (Hall 2016: 60–68; 103–104). They consist of jewelry (Hoard 2048a; Fig. 6.7), Egyptian and Canaanite statuettes (Hoard 2048b; Fig. 6.8–6.9), bronze items (including a ritually broken knife, fire pan and chisel – Hoard 2048c; Fig. 6.10), a bronze cymbal and a basalt chalice (Hoards 2048d-e; Fig. 6.11). Three deposits were discovered in the temple’s platform wall, two beneath the temple’s floor and one within a wall of the temple. It is clear from their contents and depositions that all five can be classified as either “building” or “miscellaneous” deposits (Bjorkman 1994: 7–8; cf. Hall 2016: 10–104). Both deposit types are linked to a specific stage of building activity. Building deposits are deposited during a building’s construction or repair, are built into its architecture and may or may not be visible (Bjorkman 1994: 7–8; 28–30). Such deposits comprise (usually undamaged) single or multiple items made from a variety of materials; they could either be contemporary with the building’s construction or represent heirlooms of symbolic value (*ibid.*: 28). Unlike building deposits, miscellaneous deposits are interred post-construction, are often cut into floors and

are composed of worn, fragmentary or outdated artifacts (Bjorkman 1994: 8; 32). They are, however, similar to building deposits in that they are typically found in temples and often contain items of intrinsic value.

This author classifies two of the aforementioned hoards as building deposits (the jewelry hoard, Hoard 2048a, and bronze cymbal, Hoard 2048d), since they were presumably undamaged at the time of their deposition and were integrated into the temple during a time of construction or repair (Hall 2016: 103). The remaining three hoard deposits (the Egyptian and Canaanite statuettes, the broken knife, bowl, chisel and the basalt chalice – Hoards 2048b, c and e) are classified as miscellaneous deposits, since they consist of worn, broken and/or out-dated items (Hall 2016: 104).

The Egyptian statuettes, which date to the time of the Egypt's 12th dynasty, were sacred heirlooms and were probably hidden during the platform's repair in Stratum VIIA (*ibid.*). The continuous use/worship of out-dated statuettes is also attested in the Northern and Southern Temples of Iron Age Beth Shean, outside of which a stela of Seti I and Ramses II (James 1966: 34; Fig. 81: 1) and a statuette of Ramses III were found (*ibid.*: 35; Fig. 81: 3).

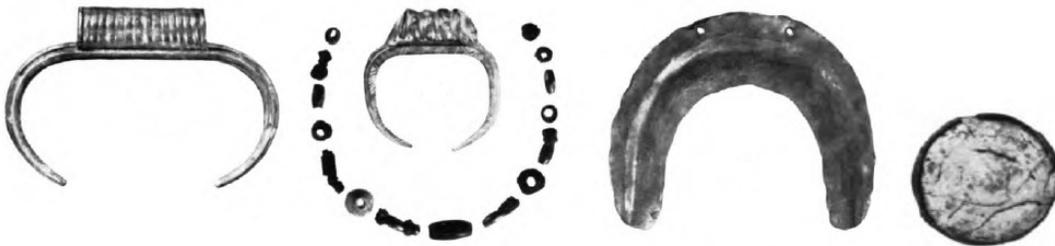


Fig. 6.7. Selected items from Megiddo's Hoard 2048a (after Loud 1948: Pl. 214: 81–84, Pl. 224: 26).



Fig. 6.8. Middle Kingdom statuettes from Megiddo's Hoard 2048b (after Loud 1948: Pl. 265–266: 1–3).



Fig. 6.9. Bronze statuette from Megiddo's Hoard 2048b (from Loud 1948: Pl. 236: 28).



Fig. 6.10. Bent knife, broken fire pan and chisel from Megiddo's Hoard 2048c (after Loud 1948: Pl. 180: 38; Pl. 283: 3; Pl. 184: 12).



Fig. 6.11. Bronze cymbal (Hoard 2048d) and basalt chalice/mortar (Hoard 2048e) found in the Stratum VII temple's wall and platform from Megiddo (after Loud 1948: Pl. 185: 5; Pl. 262: 15).

The temple's floor contained a very limited amount of small finds and ceramics (15 vessels; see Arie 2006: Table 13.18 for an analysis). Small finds are limited to those mentioned above, the bronze hoard dug beneath the floor, a bronze spearhead, beads, a steatite scarab and a bronze toggle pin (Loud 1948: 159). Ceramics, which were found on the floor, consist of Iron I types, including jugs, jars, bowls, flasks, a lamp and a chalice (*ibid.*). The ceramics indicate that the latest use of the building dates to the late Iron I (Kenyon 1969; Mazar 1985a: 97, n. 6). It is possible that the building was cleared out before its possible destruction. The clearing out raises questions as to whether the temple continued to function as a cult place in Stratum VIA.

Palace 2072

Palace 2072 was constructed above and to the east of Palace 2041 in Area AA. The building, which measured 30 x 32 m, dates to the late Iron I (Stratum VIA) and was destroyed at the end of this phase (see Loud 1948: Fig. 85 for a photograph of the smashed, restorable vessels *in situ*; reproduced here as Fig. 6.12).¹¹ It lay just west of the Iron I city

¹¹ Although Loud does not mention its destruction, such an end is likely given the high quantity of restorable vessels and small finds found within the building.

gate and was abutted by the residential Building 3021. The palace's western rooms contained a number of cult-related finds that may be indicative of palatial cult practices. These include "two clay offerings stands (one with 'many handles and windows'), a clay figurine head, two zoomorphic vessels, a clay wall bracket, a limestone statuette, a rattle and a number of decorated vessels, including flasks and kraters with many handles" (Kleiman *et al.* 2017: 42, see n. 104–108 for references). The northern end of the palace opened into a large courtyard, where ceremonial rituals may have been performed. Unfortunately, only partial walls of the courtyard were preserved, and the floor and any possible installations associated with it were lost.



Fig. 6.12. Destruction of Megiddo's Palace 2071 (Locus 2070) (after Loud 1948: Fig. 85).

Fig. 6.13 shows the spatial distribution of cult-related finds within the palace. Most of the finds are concentrated in the western wing of the building. A significant amount of

pottery was concentrated in Room 2070, indicating that this was probably used as a storeroom (Arie 2006: 237). On the other hand, not much pottery was found in Rooms 2072 (the central hallway), 2077, 2101 (the eastern hallway) or 2075 (the courtyard). This is surely due to the fact that these rooms were poorly preserved, as were their floors, as can be seen in Fig. 6.14.

A good deal of ceramics were, however, uncovered in the western wing of the palace. E. Arie conducted an analysis of the ceramics and found that jugs and juglets comprise a large majority of the assemblage, 18.8% and 10.9%, respectively (Arie 2006: 236, Table 13.16; see Table 6.1). Cooking pots are less represented, at only 6.9%. All total, the number of serving vessels comprises 45.6% of the assemblage, with serving vessels including bowls, kraters and jugs. It is safe to say that eating and drinking activities were an important activity carried out in this building, with storage and cooking/food preparation being of secondary interest. This contrasts with the Iron I domestic building 00/K/10, wherein storage vessels make up 41.4% of the assemblage and serving vessels 21.2% (Arie 2006: 236, Table 13.15).

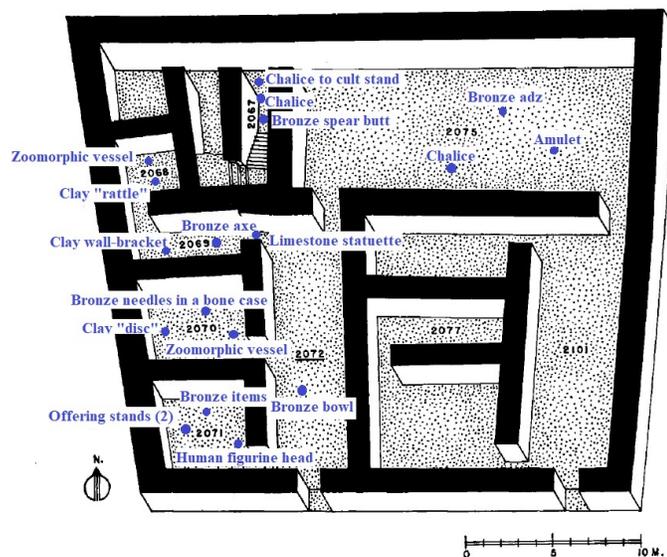


Fig. 6.13. Spatial distribution of cult finds in Megiddo's Palace 2072 (top plan after Loud 1948: Fig. 83).

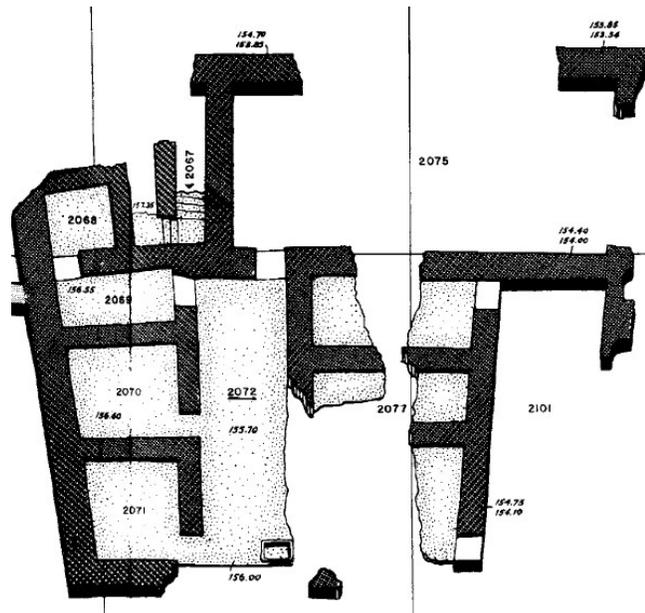


Fig. 6.14. Palace 2072 as it was recorded; note the poor preservation of Courtyard 2075 C(after Loud 148: Fig. 386).

Class	No.	Percentage
Bowls	15	14.9
Chalices and goblets	2	2
Cooking vessels	7	6.9
Flasks	11	10.9
Jugs	19	18.8
Juglets	11	10.9
Kraters	12	11.9
Pyxides	1	1
Storage jars and amphoriskoi	15	14.9
Pithoi	1	1
Lamps	4	4
Varia	3	3
Total	101	100

Table 6.1. Classes of pottery represented in Megiddo's Palace 2072 (after Arie 2006: Table 13.16).

Tell Qiri

Tell Qiri is a small settlement situated along the southwestern edge of the Jezreel Valley, ca. 5 km south of Tel Yoqne'am. Salvage excavations were carried out at the site

from 1975–1977. Excavations yielded architecture from the Neolithic, Middle Bronze II and Iron I through Late Roman/Byzantine periods, with Iron Age remains dominate throughout the site. Potential cultic contexts were unearthed in Area D, located on the southern slope the mound, and Area A2, located further northwest.

The cultic context in Area D is attributed to the Iron I Strata VIII B and VIII C. In Stratum VIII C, a building consisting of three rooms was uncovered (Squares E–F/16–17). The first space comprised an open “courtyard” (L. 1163, 1152, L. 674) with an entrance leading from the street into a central room (L. 685a, 675) and two backrooms (L. 1074, L. 1065). The central room contained a bench along its western wall and partially along its southern. In the smaller of the two backrooms (Locus 1065 [+692]), a chalice and incense burner were found (Ben-Tor and Portugali 1987: Photos 33: 2; 34: 1; Figs. 15: 4, 8). This building was surrounded on all sides by possible domestic units (see Ben-Tor and Portugali 1987: Plan 31).

This structure continued into Stratum VIII B with some alterations. In this phase, the wall sub-dividing the two backrooms was removed and the space between this new room (L. 1044) and the central room (L. 681, L. 675b) was blocked. This created a two-room unit that could be entered from the open courtyard (L. 1117) to the north. A new room (L. 690) was also added south of L. 1044, creating a unit that could be entered from the south. This new room (L. 690) contained an upright stone/*maṣṣebah*, a basin “enclosed by a thin partition wall” (*ibid.*: 82, 89; Photo 31) and two chalices, along with a significant quantity of other ceramic remains (*ibid.*: 82; for chalices see Figs. 15:3 and 15: 6). A “double vessel” was also found in L. 1044 (*ibid.*: Photos 33: 1; 34: 2; Fig. 17: 8; see Fig. 6.15 here).



Fig. 6.15. Cultic vessels and forelimbs from Tel Qiri's Area D (after Ben-Tor 1980: 112).

A large quantity of animal bones, particularly those of the right forelimbs of sheep/goat, was discovered in Strata IXA–VIII B, in the same room as the cultic objects from Strata VIII B–C (L. 1044, L. 1064, L. 1065, L. 1074, L. 1146) (*ibid.*: 89, 250; Photo 35; Table 24). The excavators identified the building as cultic based on these discoveries (*ibid.*: 89–90). The continuity of cultic activity in this building during Stratum VIII A is unclear.

A second potential Iron I cultic context was uncovered in Area A2, Stratum VIII/IX (*ibid.*: 123). It was identified as a “three-space house” with rooms divided length-wise into thirds by a wall and a row of pillars (*ibid.*: 119; for the plan and a reconstruction see *ibid.*: Plans 52–53). This structure was considered cultic based on the discovery of a cup-and-saucer (*ibid.*: Fig. 29: 4, Photo 33: 4), three chalices (*ibid.*: Figs. 28: 8, 29: 2-3, Photos 57-58) and fragments of two miniature bowls (*ibid.*: 90, Photo 33: 3). The cup-and-saucer was found in Locus 880 (+857) and the chalices in Loci 861 and 867 of Stratum VIII/IX (*ibid.*: Plan 52). Faunal remains from this structure were unfortunately lost (*ibid.*: 90).

There is a question concerning whether cult at Tel Qiri is public or domestic in

nature. The building of Area D may be considered a “bent-axis” temple,¹² much like the temple of Phase 6 at Pella, but there is also a possibility that this structure was part of a domestic cult. The bench inside the interior of the central room may indicate that this cult was more public in nature, and the animal remains, which were found in large amounts throughout the structure, may mean that this was a place of sacrifice. The fact that there was a prevalence of the right forelimbs of young sheep/goat means that special attention was given to culling activities in this area of Tell Qiri (Davis 1987: 249–251, Table 24).

As for the structure in Area A2, it seems to represent cultic activities within a three-room house. It should be noted, however, that this building stands out in relation to other structures found at Tell Qiri. It is for this reason that the excavators considered this to be a non-domestic context. This line of reasoning has interesting repercussions for our discussion on temples in the Iron Age, which seem to mimic the structure of standard four-room houses (see below).

Overall, the excavators attributed cultic significance to the site of Tell Qiri, partly based on the significant amount of chalices found within the site. It was proposed that the importance of Tell Qiri may be related to its proximity to Mount Carmel, which was considered sacred in ancient times (Ben-Tor and Portugali 1987: 90; cf. B. Mazar 1982: 3–6).

Beth Shean Valley

The following section describes the cultic contexts at Beth Shean, including Temple 58066, Building 1230 and 1234, Temple 1072 and Temple 1032, as well as the Phase 1–5 temples at Pella.

¹² I would like to thank Dr. Meir Edrey for pointing this out this connection.

Beth Shean

Tel Beth Shean (Tell el-Ḥuṣn in Arabic) is a 4-hectare mound located 5 km north of Tel Rehov and 14.5 km east of Mt. Gilboa. During the Late Bronze and Iron Age, the settled area of the site was ca. 1.5–2 hectares in size. The tell is situated at the crossroads between the Jezreel and Jordan Valleys, and was therefore geographically strategic throughout antiquity. The mound was first excavated by the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania (UME) from 1921–1933, during which time directorship passed through the hands of C.S. Fischer (1921–1923), Alan Rowe (1925–1928) and G.M. Fitzgerald (1930, 1933). Y. Yadin and S. Geva conducted a survey in 1983 to check the Iron I layers at the site. Excavations at the site were renewed by Amihai Mazar on behalf of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem from 1989–1996.

A series of temples dating from the Late Bronze I to the Iron Age were discovered atop the summit of Beth Shean. The first in the series, Temple 58066, was excavated by the renewed excavations and dates to the Late Bronze IA (Stratum R–2). The building was abandoned and filled before the foundations of the Late Bronze IB–IIA Level IX city were laid. Rowe assigned the next temples in the series to Level IX—Building 1226 and Building 1234 (the “Mekal” temple). But reanalysis of the Building 1226 has shown that this structure should not be considered cultic; instead Building 1230 should be attributed this affiliation, since it fits the plan of “Migdal”-style temples known throughout the Levant (Mullins 2012: 131–132). Building 1234, if unroofed, would have served as an enclosure or open courtyard “subsidiary” to Temple 1230; if roofed, it could have functioned as a second temple complex (*ibid.*: 132). According to the renewed excavations, the structures of Level IX were destroyed at the end of the 18th dynasty. The temples/temple and enclosure of Level IX were replaced

by Temple 1072 of the Late Bronze IIB/19th dynasty Level VII–Late Level VII. This temple bears a strong resemblance to Egyptian-style temples, such as the Summit Temple at Lachish. Upon it was built Temple 1032 of Level VI, which is very similar in plan to the former. Temple 1032 is the last of the Ramesside period temples and its stratum marks the end of the Egyptian garrison at Beth Shean.

Temple 58066

Temple 58066 (Squares L–N/5–8) was assigned by the renewed excavations to Stratum R-2 (Fig. 6.24), a phase between Levels X and IX that was not detected by the UME excavations. The temple was found sat in isolation amongst the scattered remains of Stratum R-2. The structure measures 14 x 11.75 m and runs along a north–south axis; its six architectural units consist of an entrance hall to the south (L. 68150), a main (central) hall (L. 58066) with a side room (L. 58093), side chambers to the west (L. 68152 and 68127), an inner room to the north (L. 58120) and two rooms southwest of the entrance (L. 68166 and 78502) (Mazar and Mullins 2007: 112). Evidence for destruction, which the excavators attribute to an earthquake, is attested in the entrance hall and Room 68166 (*ibid.*: 116). The main hall and inner room are lined with benches made of mudbrick covered with plaster.

The main hall also contained two “mudbrick platforms coated with plaster;” one stood 20 cm above the floor and the other 56 cm (*ibid.*: 120; see Fig. 6.16–6.18). The excavators note that a cylindrical basalt stone was placed near the platforms and they suspect that it may have functioned as a cultic feature of the temple (see *ibid.*: Photo 3.64). They also suggest a cultic function for a 20 cm wide post-hole filled with ash found at the northern end of the main platform (*ibid.*: 121). It is possible that this is where cultic activities within the temple primarily took place, given the presence of the platforms, the post-hole and

cylindrical stone (*ibid.*). The platforms were attached to a narrow wall (W. 58090) that separated the main hall from Side Room 58093. This 2 m wide space may have served as a storage area for the temple's sacred objects (*ibid.*: 122).

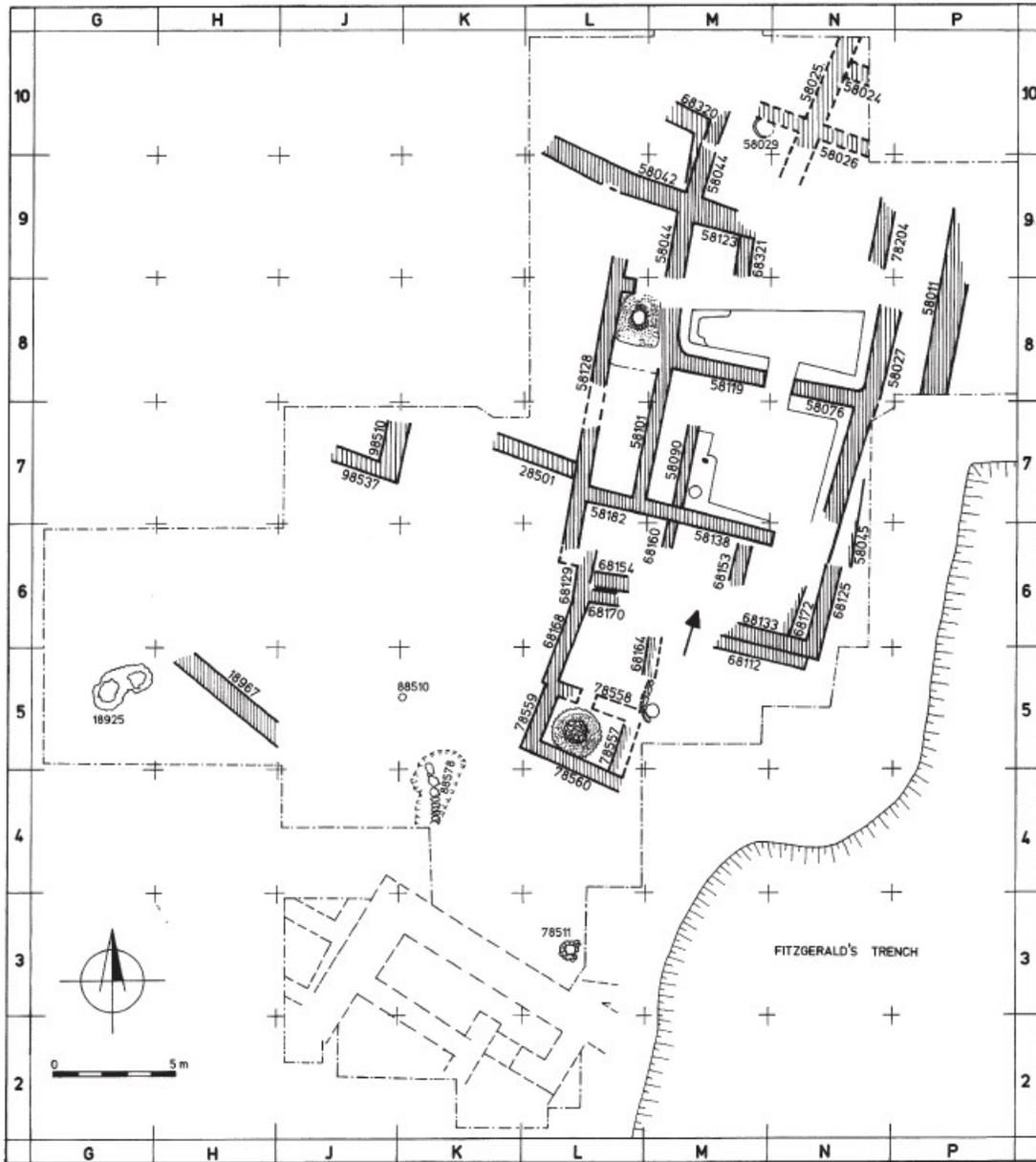


Fig. 6.16. Plan of Beth Shean's Stratum R-2 (after Mullins and Mazar 2007: Fig. 3.17).

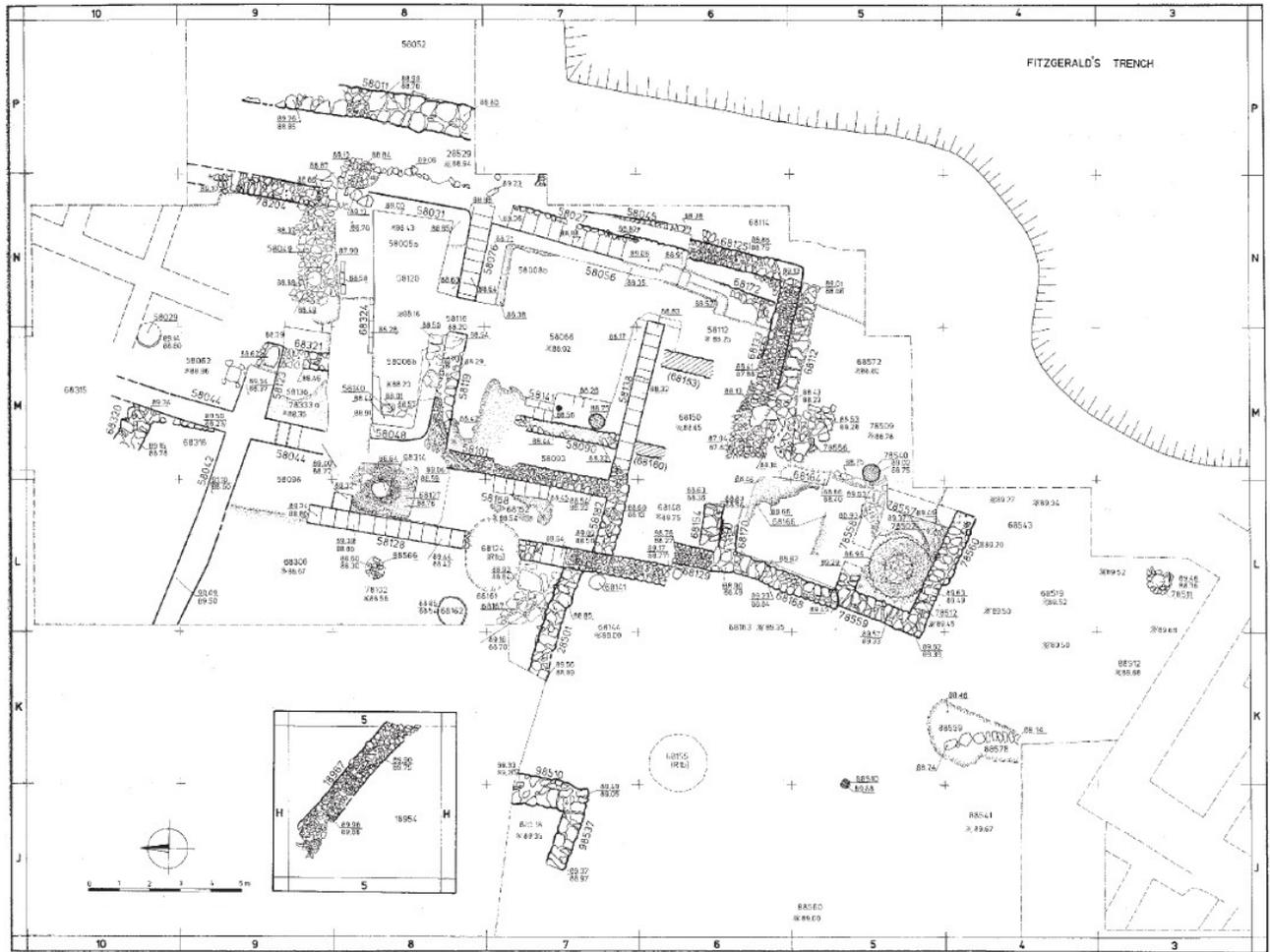


Fig. 6.17. Plan of Temple 58066 of Beth Shean's Stratum R-2 (after Mullins and Mazar 2007: Fig. 3.18).

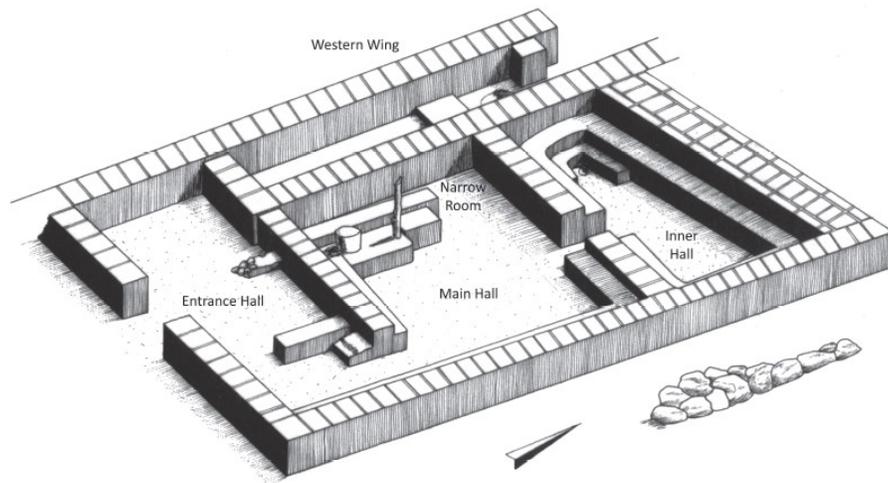


Fig. 6.18. Isometric plan of Temple 58066 (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 1; cf. Mullins and Mazar 2007: 114, Fig. 3.19).

Inner Room 58120 was accessed via a narrow passage leading out from the main hall. The excavators suspect that this room may have functioned either as a *debir* or as a room auxiliary to the main hall (*ibid.*: 123). Ceramic ring stands and a significant amount of animal bones were found within Side Room 68152, which lay west of the main hall and Side Room 58093 (*ibid.*). To the north, within Side Room 68127, a plastered basin was found surrounded by benches. According to excavators, “small holes in the bottom of the basin suggest that liquids were filtered through to a collection pit (98314) below” (*ibid.*: 124). A drain-pipe leading to the pit from the direction of a plastered, 35 x 20 cm receptacle inside Inner Room 58120 was also uncovered. The presence of drainage and filtration systems implies that liquids used in cultic activities were ceremonially disposed of in this way.

The two rooms south of the entrance hall, Rooms 68166 and 78502, may either belong to Stratum R-2 or R-1b (*ibid.*: 125). Its attribution to Stratum R-2 is more likely given that Room 68166 contained a cylindrical basalt stone similar to the one found near the mudbrick platform of the main hall. A 2.1 m wide, 2.4 m deep stone-lined pit (L. 78512) was discovered in Room 78502 and contained a small amount of restorable vessels (*ibid.*). As noted by the excavators, this pit could have stored food or other items related to the cultic activities carried out in the temple (*ibid.*).

A total of 2,175 potsherds from Stratum R-2 were analyzed. Bowls making up more than half of the assemblage at 58.9%. Closed vessels and cooking pots comprise 8.8% and 7.9%, respectively. Kraters and storage vessels are less represented, at 6.2% and 3.26% (Mullins 2007: 391, Table 5.1). The high percentage of table wares indicates that this context was probably used for eating and drinking activities. Furthermore, a significant percentage of pottery was decorated or imported, indicating the elite nature of the building (see Mullins

2007: 394, Table 5.2 for percentages of decorated classes). Unfortunately, the animal bones from the renewed Beth Shean excavations have not yet been published. This, coupled with the lack of small finds, makes it difficult to discern further activities within the temple.

The temple seems to have been abandoned, perhaps as the result of earthquakes that harmed its structural integrity (*ibid.*: 128). It seems the inhabitants cleared out the temple, given that the building was largely devoid of finds. The discovery of various cult-related installations within the building, however, means that the structure should be attributed a cultic significance.

Buildings 1230 and 1234

Stratum R-1, or Rowe's Level IX, contains two monumental temples: Buildings 1230 and 1234 (Fig. 6.19). Level IX has now been sub-divided into two distinct phases: Level IXB (Stratum R-1b) of the Late Bronze IB and Level IXA (Stratum R-1a) of the Late Bronze IIA. According to the excavators, Level IXB was established as an Egyptian out-post given the evidence for Egyptian pottery found in the stratum. As Mullin's points out, the Canaanite character of the town is still nevertheless represented. The percentage of Egyptian-style pottery is low compared to the "garrison" phase of Levels VIII–VI. Furthermore, changes to the town plan were minimal in this phase—showing the continuity of Middle Bronze to Late Bronze traditions. The Canaanite characteristics of the cult in Level IX should, therefore, not be overlooked.

Rowe originally identified two temples: Building 1226 and 1234. Mullins has, however, amended this view and has instead identified Buildings 1230 and 1234 as temples (Mullins 2012: 131). Temple 1230 is a "Migdal" style temple parallel to the "Migdal" temples at Megiddo, Shechem and Pella. However, unlike these temples, Building 1230 did

not have an entrance along a central axis, but rather a kind of “side” entrance to the southwest. This kind of “bent-axis” plan is known from other temples in the ancient Near East, particularly in Phoenicia (cf. Edrey 2018: 113, 145) and at late Iron IIA Pella (for the Phase 6 temple, see below). Unfortunately, the central room of the temple contained pottery mixed from 16th to the 12th centuries BCE.

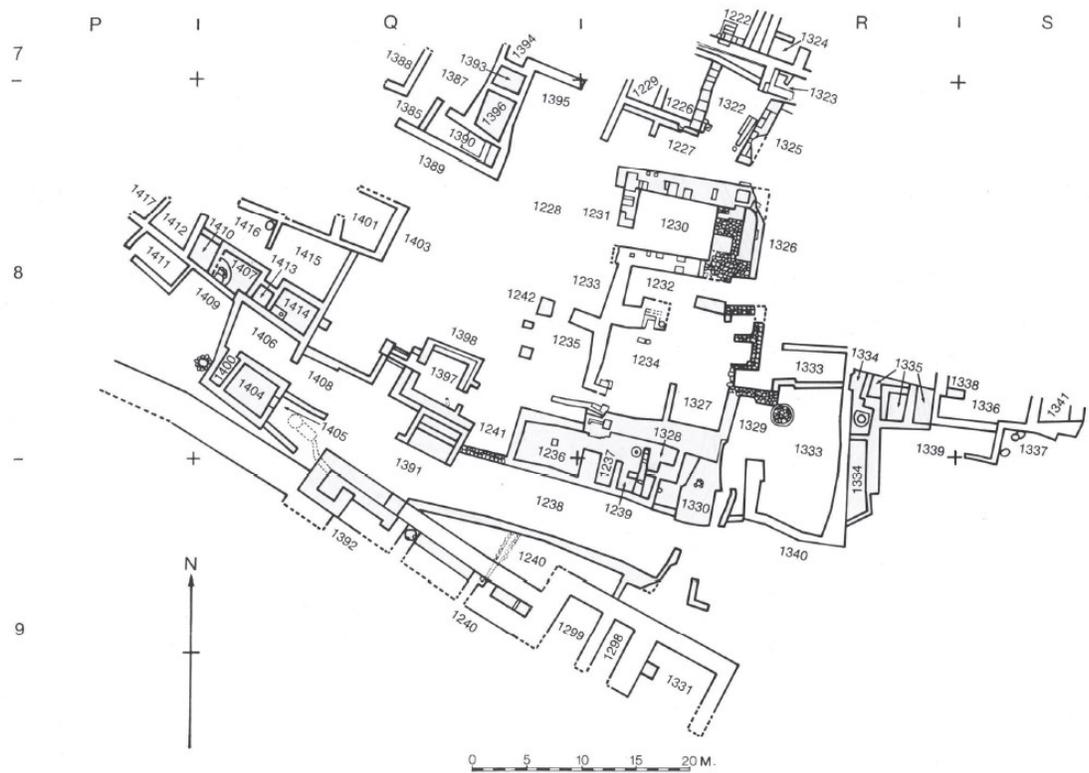


Fig. 6.19. Plan of Stratum IX at Beth Shean; note the central location of Building 1230 and 1234 (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 2).

As for Temple 1234 (the “Mekal temple”), it is unclear whether this served as a kind of enclosed courtyard or as a cultic building. The discovery of a basalt altar and a nude female figurine point to its cultic nature. A stepped lime-plastered brick podium was also stationed in the north of this complex, in front of which lay a stone slab abutting a column base. A “legged” chalice was discovered inside of an “auxiliary” room to the southwest, near

the entrance (Mullins 2012: 132). I agree with Mullins that the “most obvious” conclusion is that this area served as an “open cult area subsidiary to the main cult in Temple 1230” (*ibid.*). Still, Mullins goes on to suggest that this was a roofed structure (*ibid.*).

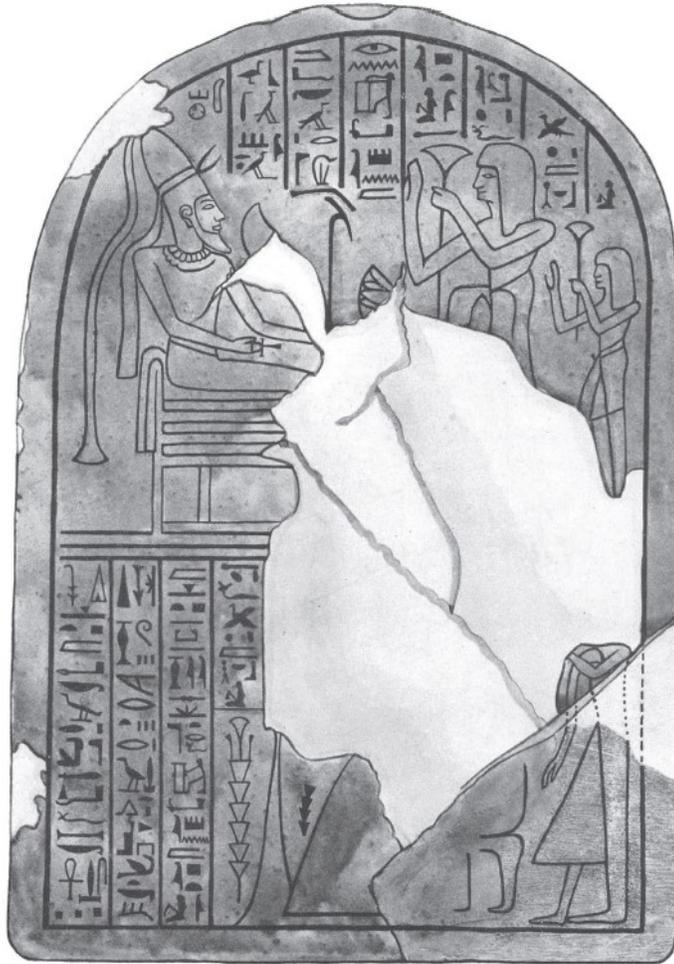


Fig. 6.20. “Mekal” stele from Beth Shean’s Temple 1234 (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 3; cf. Rowe 1940, frontispiece).

This structure was dubbed the “Mekal temple” after Rowe discovered a stele to the southeast of the enclosure (Fig. 6.20). However, McGovern re-dated this stele to Level VIII, not Level IX as Rowe initially believed (*ibid.*: 134; cf. James and McGovern 1993: 240, App.

No. 8). Mullins also notes that a stone-lined feasting pit was discovered in Courtyard 1333 to the east of the structure. A similar pit was found in Building 1397 by Mazar's excavations. According to Mullins, this is evidence for sacrificial worship at the temple, given the proximity of the pits to Temple 1230 and the enclosure. Unfortunately, the bones from Mazar's excavations have not yet been published (cf. Mullins and Mazar 2007: 165–168), and those from Rowe's investigation may be lost.

In the western part of the open courtyard directly west of Temple 1230 a gold pendant decorated with a nude woman holding a *w's* septer was also discovered (Fig. 6.21). A figurine of a woman nursing a baby was uncovered in Locus 1407. An orthostat with a lion/dog in fighting pose, the "Lion and Dog Stele," also comes from Locus 1331. These finds are indicative of the cultic nature of both the temple area and the surrounding units to its south and west. Evidence for the destruction of this stratum was indeed found in Mazar's excavations (Mullins 2012: 135).



Fig. 6.21. Gold pendant from Beth Shean's Temple 1230 decorated with a woman holding a *w's* septer (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 4).

Although the ceramic remains of the temples were not studied separately, it is worthwhile to present the percentages of classes found in Strata R-1 “general.” Bowls make up 65.6% of the assemblage, an even higher percentage than represented in Stratum R-2. Closed vessels and cooking pots each comprise 7% of the collection, with jugs and juglets representing less than 1%. Kraters and lamps are attested at 4.5% each, and storage jars only make up 2.6% of the assemblage (Mullins 2007: 391, Table 5.1). Again, as with Temple 58066, the pottery of Stratum R-1 is largely indicative of eating and drinking activities given the high amount of tableware present. Overall, the percentage of decorated ware and imports is higher in Stratum R-1 (Mullins 2007: 394, Table 5.2), indicating an increase in the elites’ access to expensive wares in this stratum.

Temple 1072

The Level VIII–VII temple (Temple 1072) is the first in a series of two Egyptian-style temples dated to the Late Bronze Age (see James and McGovern 1993; see Fig. 6.22). Level VIII–VII is assigned to the Late Bronze IIB, the period of Seti I and Ramses II. The stelae of Seti I and Ramses II which were found in re-use in the courtyard of the Level V temples are thought to have originated in this stratum. The layout of the town was organized along a different plan, which seems to indicate Egyptian influence and involvement in the garrison. For that reason, we should consider Egyptian influences over the cult and temple at Beth Shean during this period. Scholars note the comparisons between Temple 1072 at Beth Shean and the Summit temple at Lachish (Mullins 2012: 135). Both sites were subject to Egyptian influence, particularly in light of the finds.

Finds from the temple include a decorated basalt throne, an ivory Hathor wand, three ceramic goose/duck heads, a clay cobra and the stele of Astarte/Hathor (“Stele of Ashtoreth

of the Two-Horns”) (Mullins 2012; see Fig. 6.23–6.25 here). A concentration of ash and burnt animal bones was found near an altar in Locus 1104. Another large concentration was found in Locus 1108 (James and McGovern 1993: 199). Animal bones, however, were not subject to analysis and thus much information is currently unavailable.

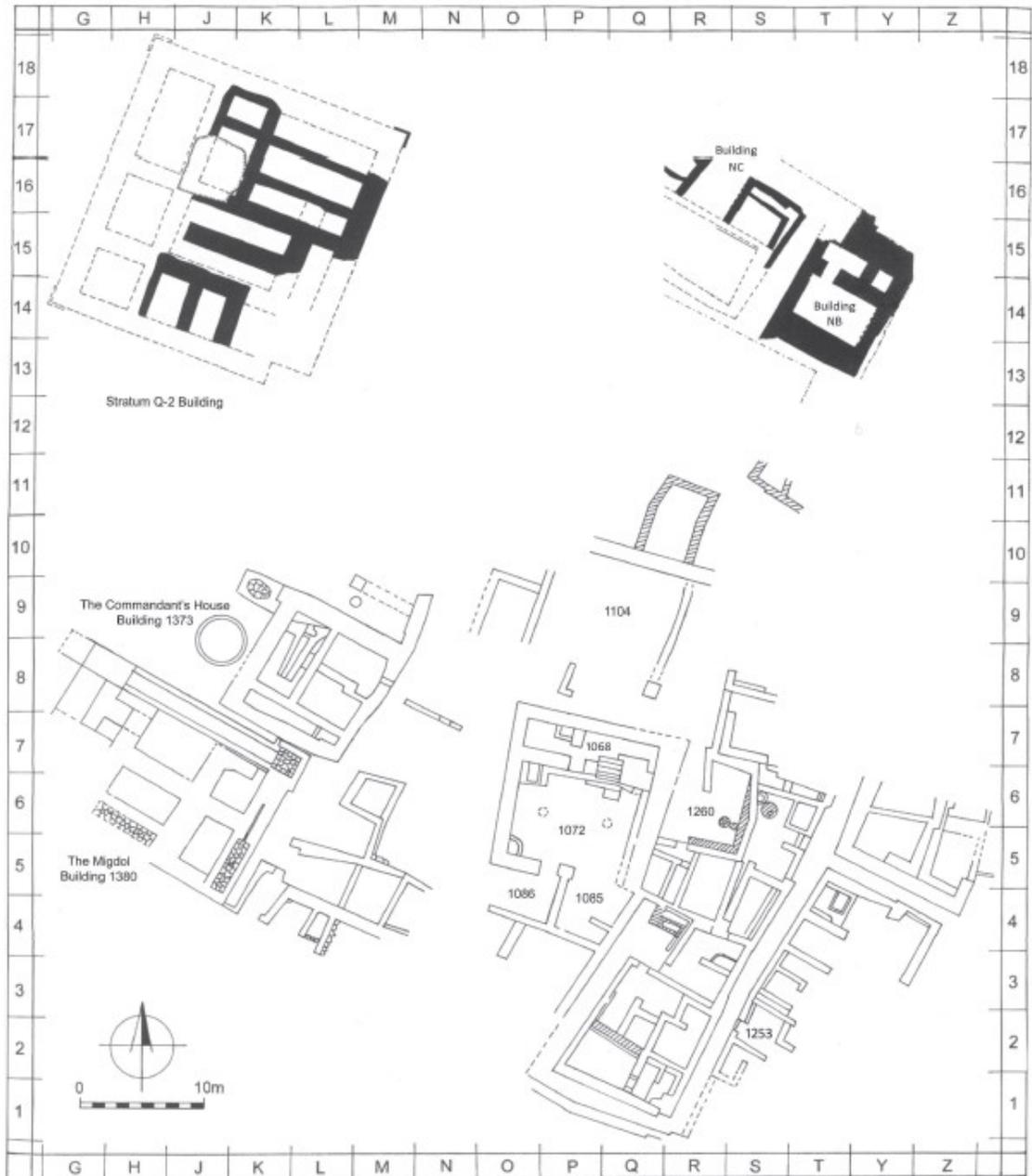


Fig. 6.22. Plan of Stratum VIII–VII at Beth Shean; note the central location of Temple 1072 (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 5).

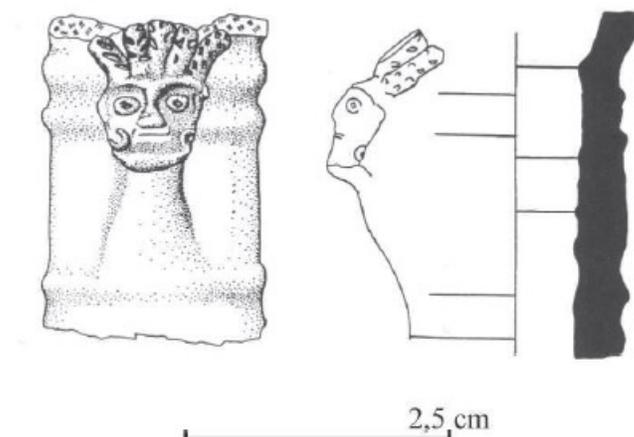


Fig. 6.23. Cylindrical stand from a “street east” of Beth Shean’s Temple 1072 (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 16).

In terms of ceramics, a total of 78 rims, complete or partially complete vessels from Temple 1072 were presented (James and McGovern 1993: 6–18; see Table 6.2 here). Bowls are the most common in the assemblage, at 33.3%. Storage vessels make up 14.1% of the assemblage. Serving vessels (bowls, kraters and jugs) comprise 48.7% of the collection. Aegean imports represent only 5.5%, as one would perhaps expect to see more in such an elite context. Egyptian-style pottery is also attested, though in a smaller percentage.

The temple was also replete with small finds of many different types and materials. Faience is one of the most common materials represented, followed by alabaster, gold, copper and a few silver items. Many beads and pendants were discovered throughout the building as well as within the entry-room and front, eastern chamber. A Hathor “wand,” similar to one found in Megiddo’s Hoard 3100 (Hall 2016: 52–53, Fig. 4.7), was uncovered in the main hall (Locus 1072). Other important finds include alabaster vessels, jewelry made from precious materials, a number of bronze items, weights and cylinder seals. The various

objects and precious materials represented indicate that this was an elite temple, to which the inhabitants of the site could dedicate their valuable offerings.

Class	Count	Percentage
Amphoriskos	3	3.8%
Aegean imports	5	5.5%
Beer bottle	1	1.3%
Bowl	26	33.3%
Cooking pot	5	6.4%
Cup-and-saucer	1	1.3%
Egyptian storage jar	1	1.3%
Flower-pot	1	1.3%
Goblet	2	2.6%
Jug	6	7.7%
Juglet	3	3.8%
Krater	5	6.4%
Lamp	2	2.6%
Painted sherds	1	1.3%
Pedestal base	3	3.8%
Pithos	1	1.3%
Stirrup jar	1	1.3%
Storage jar	9	11.5%
Strainer jug	1	1.3%
Total	77	100%

Table 6.2. Count and percentages of pottery classes represented in Temple 1072.

Ceramics and small finds from the courtyards are also important for consideration, though they are not pooled together with the finds from the temple proper (Table 6.3).

Ceramics from the courtyards total 61 rims, partially complete and complete vessels. Bowls are the majority class represented, at 40.3%. Storage jars and pithoi make up 13.1% of the assemblage. Serving vessels comprise 45.9%. It is also worth noting that cooking pots are absent from the collection. Aegean wares make up a significant part of the assemblage at 8.2%.

In terms of small finds, beads once again are the most represented, particularly those

made of faience. Of note are the five cylindrical stands (James and McGovern 1993; see Fig. 6.31 here), the stele fragment and several figurines. The stands are surprisingly simple given the amount of precious goods associated with the temple and its courtyard. Miniature bowls are also attested as are several bronze items. Once again, a range of materials is represented, those less gold, no silver and more stone objects are present. The distribution of finds in the courtyards indicate that elite and temple-based activities also took place in these spaces.

Class	Count	Percentage
Amphoriskos	1	1.6%
Aegean imports	5	8.2%
Bowl	24	40.3%
Cooking pot	0	0%
Cup	1	1.6%
Cup-and-saucer	2	3.3%
Egyptian storage jar	1	1.6%
Goblet	1	1.6%
Jug	0	0%
Juglet	5	8.2%
Kernos	1	1.6%
Krater	4	6.6%
Lamp	3	4.9%
Painted sherds	1	1.6%
Pedestal base	2	3.3%
Pithos	3	4.9%
Storage jar	5	8.2%
Strainer jug	1	1.6%
Total	61	100%

Table 6.3. Counts and percentages of pottery classes represented in the courtyards around Temple 1072.

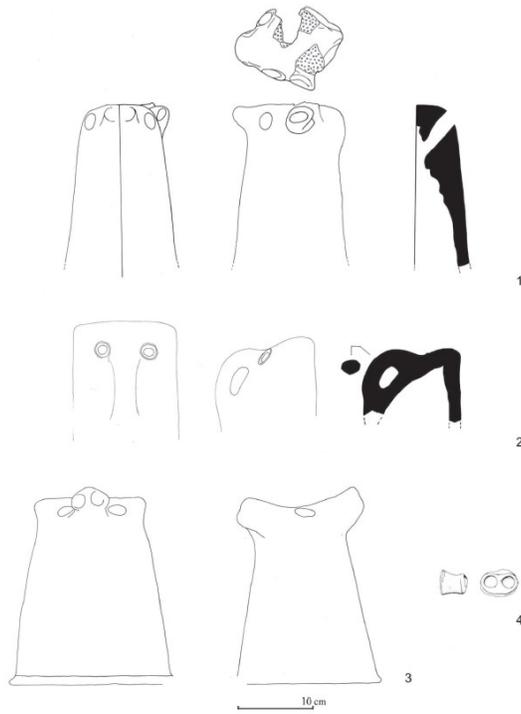


Fig. 6.24. Zoomorphic vessels from Temple 1072 (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 9).



Fig. 6.25. Finds from Temple 1072 and its surroundings (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 6).

Temple 1032

The last of the Late Bronze temples from Beth Shean is attributed to Level VI (Fig. 6.26). It was constructed directly above Temple 1072, showing a sense of continuity from one phase to the next. Unfortunately, little was found inside this temple apart from a kernos near the base of the stairway leading to the “holy of holies” and four bronze vessels at the head of the steps (Mullins 2012: 143; James 1966: 15; cf. Rowe 1940: Pl. XII: 3). According to James, an altar consisting of “two large stone slabs laid at right angles to one another on a platform of brick” was found in Locus 1021B, the altar room (1966: 15). A statuette of the god Horus was also found in Room 1021B, attesting to the Egypitanized character of this building. It is possible that this Horus statuette was an object of veneration, given that Room 1021B served as the *debir*.

To the left of the *debir*, in a small eastern room, a clay box with “studs” and a cylindrical cult stand were found (James 1966: 15; cf. Rowe 1940: Pl. XIV: 2; see Fig. 6.27 here). Unfortunately, the finds from Inner Courtyard 1032 (Loci 1031–1033) were either mixed or not recorded (James 1966: 15–16). As for the outer courtyard to the west, a number of fragments of cultic objects were found here, though “not much” pottery was discovered except for a “quantity of painted pottery” and a ceramic box with a painted lid (James 1966: 16). Cultic objects were also found in buildings west and south of the temple, with Locus 1342 serving as a room for grain storage (burnt grain was found in one of the jars) (James 1966: 16–17). To the north of the temple were found two lotus capitals (James 1966: Fig. 95: 4) which may have sat atop the columns in the temple, as the excavators once suggested. East of the temple there is evidence for domestic activities, with grain, storage jars and hearths

appearing in abundance. Noteworthy is the fact that few cult finds were found in this area (James 1966: 17), perhaps marking a division of space.

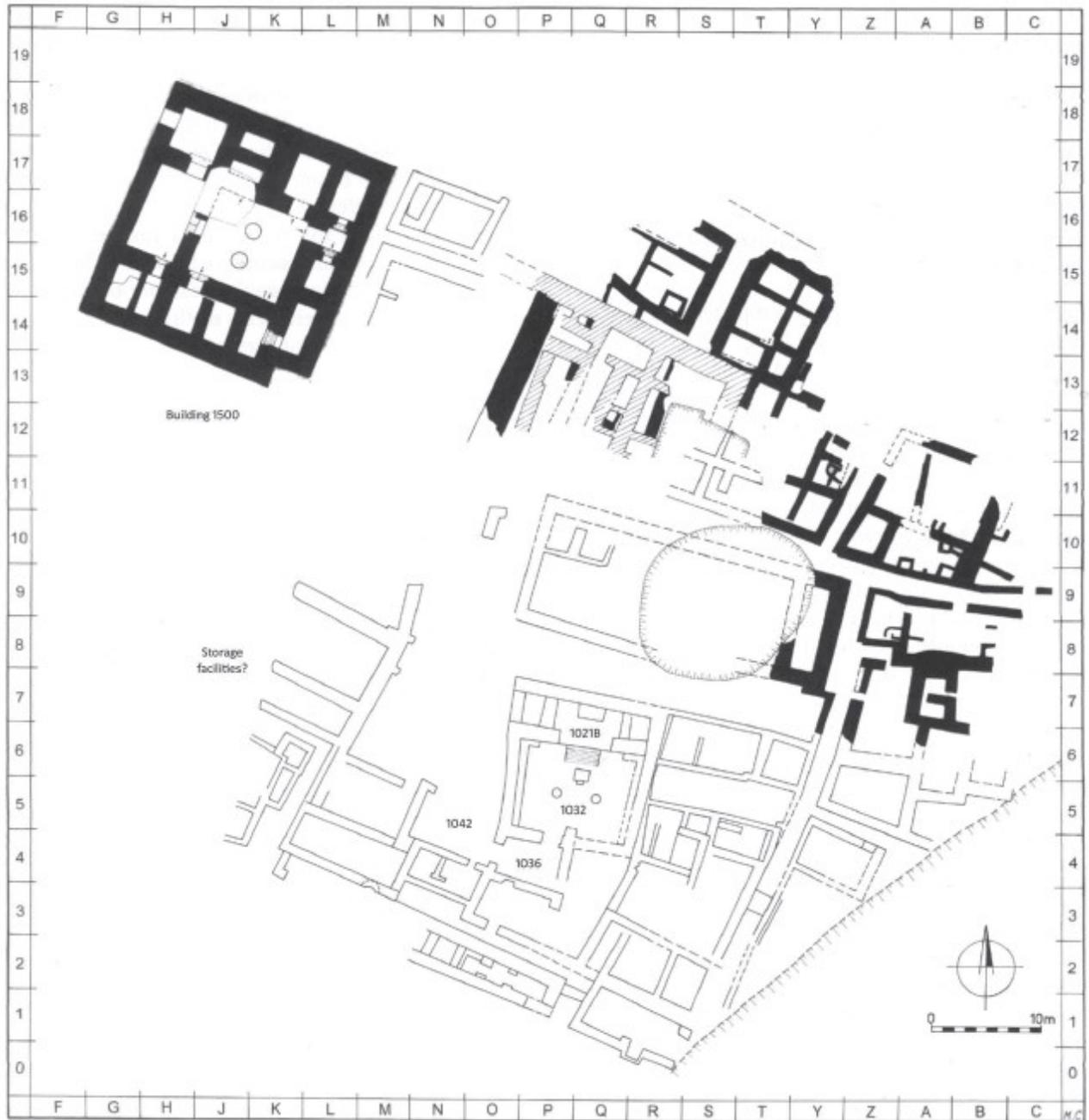


Fig. 6.26. Plan of Beth Shean's Level VI; note the location of Temple 1032 (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 10).

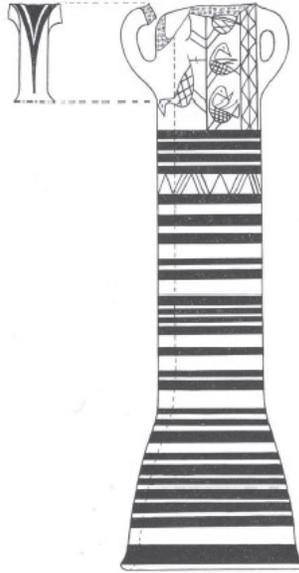


Fig. 6.27. Cylindrical stand from Beth Shean's Temple 1032 (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 16).

As for the settlement, a palace, Building 1500, was built in the northwestern sector of the site. This means that the garrison served both administrative and cultic personnel. As Mullins suggests, the statuette of Ramses III and the stele of Anat (found near the Northern Temple in Level V) probably originated from this stratum.

Pella

Pella (Ṭabaqāt Faḥil) is located 17 km southeast of Beth Shean on the eastern edge of the Beth Shean Valley. The mound was first identified by Robinson in 1852. The first probes were carried out by R.W. Funk and H.N. Richardson in 1958, which was later followed by salvage work from 1963–1964 (Funk and Richardson 1958; Bourke and Sparks 1995). R.H. Smith (1973) of the College of Wooster began excavating the mound in 1967, just prior to the outbreak of the Six Day War. Thereafter excavations halted and were not resumed until 1979. The University of Sydney jointly began excavating the mound with Wooster this same year. After Wooster left the excavations in 1985, work continued under the University of

Sydney (Smith 1985; Smith and Day 1989; McNicoll, Smith and Hennessy 1982; McNicoll *et al.* 1992; Bourke *et al.* 1994, 1998, 2003; Bourke, Sparks and Mairs 1999; Bourke 2006). A series of six Bronze and Iron Age temples were uncovered in Area XXXII from 1994–2009 (Bourke 2012; see Fig. 6.28–6.29 here).

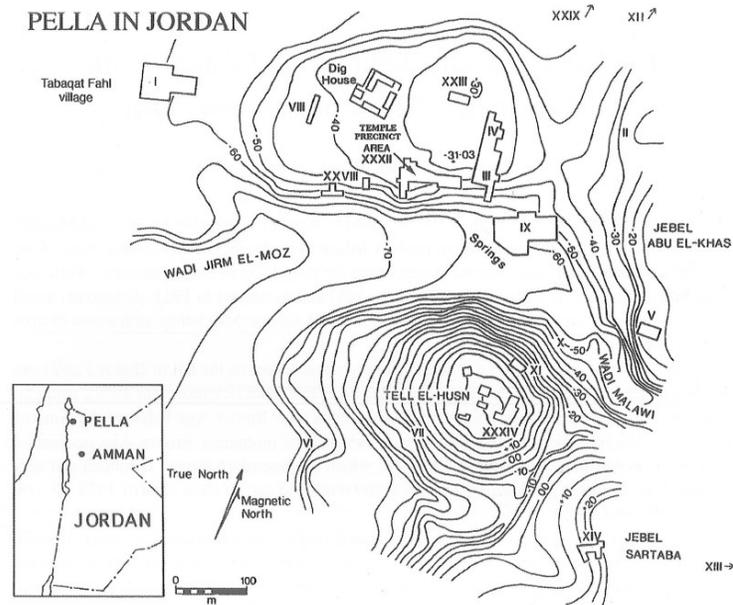


Fig. 6.28. Areas marked out on an aerial plan of Pella; note the location of the temple precinct Area XXXII (after Bourke 2012: Fig. 1).

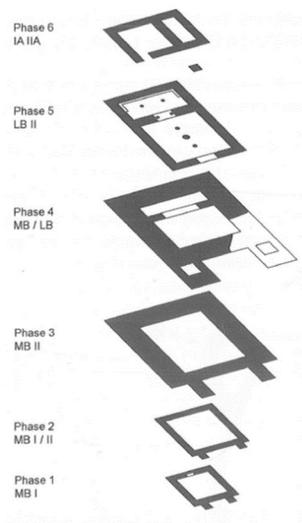


Fig. 6.29. Sequence of temples from Pella, by phase (after Bourke 2012: Fig. 3).

Phase 1–2: Green and Brown Mudbrick Temples

The Phase 1 Green Mudbrick Temple and the Phase 2 Brown Mudbrick Temple are the earliest cultic structures discovered in Pella’s temple series (Fig. 6.30). The Phase 1 temple (9 x 7 m) dates to the Middle Bronze I (1900–1850 BCE) and the Phase 2 temple (10 x 8 m) to the Middle Bronze I–II (1800–1750 BCE) (Bourke 2012: Figs. 3–6). Both temples are rectangular mudbrick structures with two protruding *antae*. Interestingly, each structure was carefully filled in with mudbricks cut from its walls. It is in this way that both temples seem to have been ceremonially cancelled, and it is possible that fill deposits were laid as the temple was being filled. The small finds found in the temples include “tiny flecks of gold foil overlays, small inlay pieces of blue faience, polished ivory and carved wood, fragments of tiny ivory statuettes and an enigmatic half-sphere of bitumen with spike impressions on the flat side” (*ibid.*: 163). Aside from these remains, no other building deposits were found (*ibid.*). Not much else has been published on the temples, and thus our knowledge on this topic remains limited.

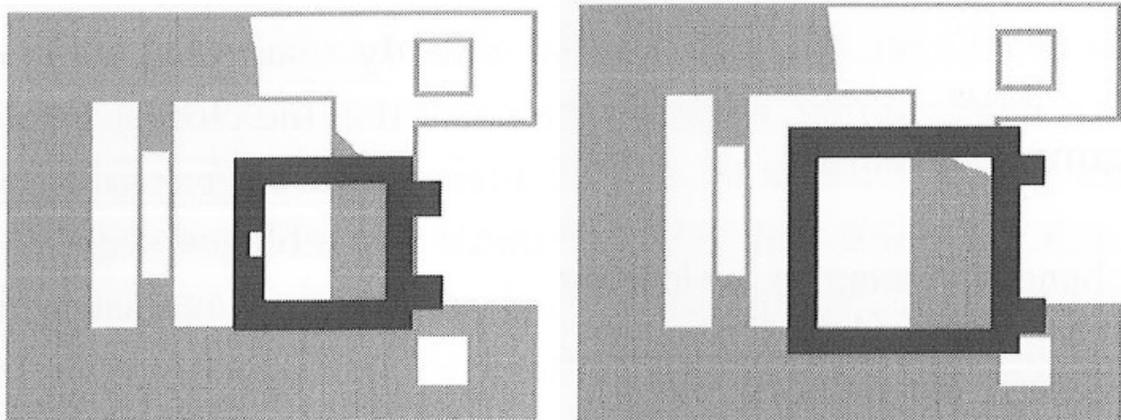


Fig. 6.30. Phase 1 (left) and Phase 2 (right) “Green and Brown Mudbrick Temples” at Pella overlaid on schematic plan of the Phase 4 “Migdal” temple (after Bourke 2012: Table 1).

Phase 3: Stone-Anten Temple

The third temple in the series is the Phase 3 “Stone-Anten” temple which dates to the Middle Bronze II (ca. 1700 BCE; see Fig. 6.31). The temple (22 x 16 m) is very similar in plan to the two temples that precede it (i.e. a rectangular with two protruding *antae*), but it is much larger in scale. The surrounding landscape was shaped by sub-surface terracing to accommodate the structure, outside of which a paved “piazza” was found (*ibid.*).

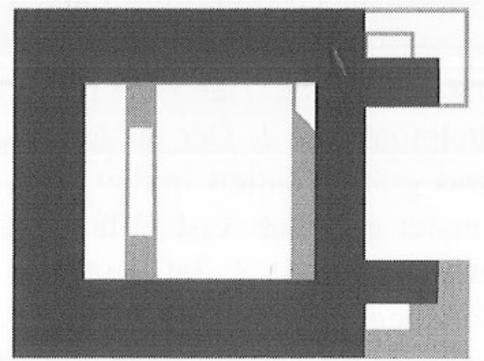


Fig. 6.31. Schematic plan of Pella’s Phase 3 “Stone-Anten” temple overlaid on the “Migdal” temple of Phase 4 (after Bourke 2012: Table 1).

Two fragmentary basalt statuettes, one the head of a man and the other of feet, were found in what appears to have been the constructional fill laid for the temple. Bourke has raised the possibility that these may represent foundation deposits, but ultimately dismisses this theory based on their find-spots (Bourke 2012: 164). It is possible that the statuettes were indeed deposited in a ritual manner, but their deposition is unorthodox. Fill deposits are typically buried at the closing of a cultic structure, when the temple is ceremonially filled in, rather than at the time of a building’s construction. Foundation deposits are often deposited more carefully, commonly in pits. These deposits may represent an uncommon form of fill/foundation deposit that was haphazardly mixed in with the materials that were laid for the construction of the temple.

A 4 x 4 m mudbrick “repository” building was uncovered southwest of the temple. Two phases of sub-surface, plaster-lined mudbrick bins were uncovered within the building, with the later phase cutting into the earlier. The bins contained a number of miniature vessels, including bowls, jugs and funnels, as well as stone vessels, an alabaster flask, a gypsum cup, a rams-head handled bowl and decorated pottery (Bourke 2012: Fig. 6: 1, 3–4; Taf. 39A). The excavators suggest that the repository building may be linked with libation activities, given that several pits joined together by drainage piping were discovered nearby (*ibid.*: 164). They further suspect that the repository building is related to funerary rites in light of the discovery of miniature funnels and the rams-head handled bowl. Another possible interpretation for the repository pits is that they represent favissae. It is possible that the small finds and pottery found within the pit originated in the temple and were ritually discarded after they were no longer of use. The excavators offer a similar suggestion, but do not outright refer to the pits as favissae. They believe the pits contain “decommissioned” objects that were used in ancestor worship. If this interpretation is correct, Pella’s temple was home to a number of different cultic activities—those carried out in the temple proper, as well as libation activities and funerary rites. In support of his claim, Bourke points out that temple complex at Haror is another case where evidence for multiple forms of ritual took place (Oren 1997; Bourke 2012: 165).

The excavators link the temple with the worship of El, the head of the Canaanite pantheon, based on the absence of attention-focusing installations or architecture in the “hollow-box” design of the temple (Bourke 2012: 165). They propose that similar Middle Bronze Age temples, at Shechem, Megiddo and Hazor, may be linked to the worship of this deity (*ibid.*). The lack of iconographic representations of El may be associated with his form

of worship, which could have been aniconic in nature. However, bronze statuettes possibly representing this deity have been found in numerous contexts (Negbi 1976). Other scholars link the succeeding temple (the Phase 4 “Fortress/Tower” temple) with the storm god Baal, based on several finds as well as the temple’s orientation relative to sunrise on the summer solstice (Polcaro, González-García and Belmonte 2013: 485). Given the continuity of Bronze Age traditions, one would expect that Baal worship would have been established earlier, perhaps in the Phase 1–3 temples. Bourke, on the other hand, believes that the spiritual focus shifted from El to Baal with the establishment of the Phase 4 temple (2012: 170–171).

Phase 4: The “Fortress/Tower” Temple

The Phase 4 temple at Pella is classified as a “Migdal”-style temple (Fig. 6.32). Parallels are known from Megiddo and Shechem and other sites in ancient Near East. The temple is dated, in absolute terms, to ca. 1500/1450–1350/1300 BCE (i.e. the 15th and 14th centuries BCE). It is a modification of the earlier, Phase 3 temple, wherein two towers were constructed on either side of the entrance, and a back-room was added to the open-room plan. It is likely that the buttressed stone foundations of the building were created to support a tall mudbrick superstructure. The courtyard east of the temple was re-paved with cobbled fieldstones, and a temenos wall was constructed south of the temple to delineate sacred space. The excavators postulate that this temple was damaged by an earthquake. It appears the temple was cleared out prior to the construction of the subsequent temple, as no pieces of cultic paraphernalia or ritual deposits were found (Bourke 2004: 4).

As mentioned above, Bourke, seeking to identify the deity worshipped in this temple, postulates a change in worship from El to Baal (2012: 170–171). However, this is based

purely on changes in the architectural elements from Phase 3 to 4 as well as the lack of cult paraphernalia and not on any other evidence.

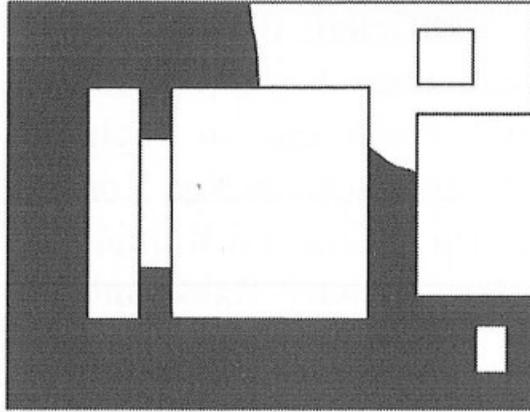


Fig. 6.32. Phase 4 “Migdal” temple at Pella (after Bourke 2012: Table 1).

Phase 5: Temple with Pillared Hall

The final phase of temples from the Late Bronze Age is ascribed Phase 5, which is dated in absolute terms to ca. 1300–1100 BCE (i.e. the 13th–12th centuries BCE). This new temple is characterized by a change in plan from the previous “Migdal”-style temple. The Phase 5 temple (18 x 12 m) consists of a central, pillared hall with a pillared entrance and backroom (Fig. 6.33); it is similar in many respects to the pillared cultic buildings of Megiddo, Horvat Tevet and Beth Shean (see below).

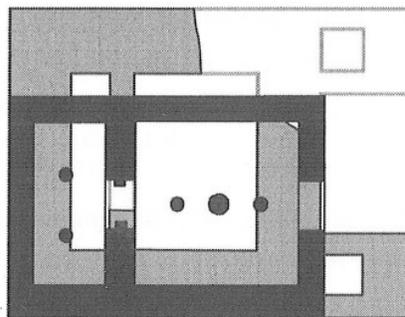


Fig. 6.33. Plan of Pella’s Phase 5 temple with pillared hall overlaid on plan of the “Migdal” temple of Phase 4 (after Bourke 2012: Table 1).

If there is a connection between these building styles, the Phase 5 temple would be the earliest example by far. The backroom, or cult room, of this temple was lined with mudbrick benches, presumably used as offering tables for votives. A foundation deposit including several faience plaques, gold foil and semi-precious stone beads was discovered beneath the threshold. A Mycenaean IIIA2 cup within the foundation deposit, which nicely dates the assemblage to the Late Bronze IIB–III.

A large cult stand decorated with sacred tree motifs and ibexes was found in the cult room (Fig. 6.34). Other finds associated with the temple include a fragment of a cult stand decorated with a bull. These finds point to Canaanite characteristics of worship within the temple. Bourke’s hypothesis that there were Egyptianizing elements within the temple should thus be called into question (2012: 174). Bourke’s main argument for the existence of an Egyptianizing presence within the temple is the foundation deposit. However, foundation and building deposits are known in Canaan, especially from the Canaanite “Migdal”-style Temple 2048 at Megiddo (Hall 2016: 60ff.).

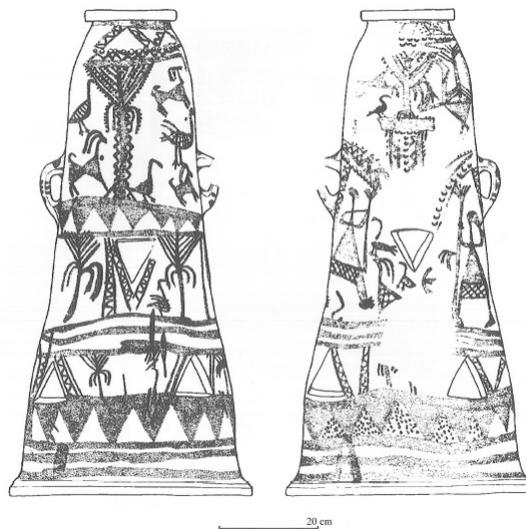


Fig. 6.34. Decorated cult stand from Phase 5 temple at Pella (after Bourke 2012: Fig. 17).

The destruction of the temple is dated ca. 1100 BCE, which seems suitable considering that several elements of the material culture found within the assemblage parallel finds from Megiddo VI (Bourke 2012: 184; cf. Martin, Finkelstein and Piasezky 2020).

Tell Abu al-Kharaz

Tell Abu al-Kharaz was excavated from 1989–2001 by P.M. Fischer. The Phase VII temple from Area 2 is conventionally dated to the Late Bronze IIA/IIB. It has, however, been re-dated based on pottery to the Late Bronze IB–C (Fischer 2004: Table 1). The temple, which is rectangular in plan, contained a flight of steps as well as four wooden pillars (standing on stone slabs) at the entrance to the building (Fischer 2006b: 88). A square, stone-built altar was discovered in the back corner of the building, on which on number of vessels were found (*ibid.*). Ceramics from the building include a significant number of Cypriot imports. Phase VII was apparently destroyed in a conflagration, as “pots were blackened by fire and ash” within the temple compound (*ibid.*: 88–89). It appears that crisis architecture was, to some extent, added to the building, as a room and an adjacent wall blocking entry to the building is apparent on the plan (*ibid.*: 91, Fig. 29). It appears that these walls were haphazardly constructed, as they look poorly made in comparison to the walls of the temple.

In terms of ceramics, bowls make up 47.7% of the assemblage of Phase VII (Fischer 2006b: Table 1; see Table 6.6 here). Jugs and cooking pots comprise the next highest percentages at 14.2% and 13.4%, respectively. The number of kraters is miniscule at 1.7%. Storage vessels are also not well-represented, at 3.4%. Jugs and juglets together make up 17.2% of the assemblage. It appears that the main activities of this phase were related to drinking, food preparation and consumption.

A number of small finds also derive from Phase VII, including bronze finds such as

an arrowhead, pins and toggle pins, beads of various materials, a ceramic figurine and a number of lithic and stone tools (see Fischer 2006b: Table 19).

Class	No.	Percentage
Bowls	111	47.4
Chalices	10	4.2
Cooking pots	31	13.4
Goblets	3	1.3
Kraters	4	1.7
Jugs	33	14.2
Juglets	7	3
Jars	19	8.2
Lamps	3	1.3
Storage jars	8	3.4
Flasks	1	0.4
Stands	1	0.4
Varia	1	0.4
Total	232	100

Table 6.4. Classes of pottery from Stratum VII at Tell Abu al-Kharaz (after Fischer 2006b: Table 1).

Samarian Highlands

The contexts to presently be reviewed include Mt. Ebal, the “Bull Site,” Tel Dothan and Shiloh. Some may wonder why Migdal Temple II at Shechem (Wright 1958: Fig. 4A) is not explicitly discussed. So little is known about this structure that no conclusions can be effectively drawn. Suffice it to say that there may have been continuity in cult at Shechem, in the sense that temples were constructed one above the other, from the Middle Bronze to the Late Bronze Age. A similar pattern in the continuity of cult is attested in Temple 2048 at Megiddo, with its series of temples dating from the Middle Bronze to the late Iron I (see below).

Mount Ebal

The “cultic site” on Mount Ebal (el-Burnat) was discovered in 1980 and excavated from 1982–1989 by Adam Zertal. Two strata were uncovered at the site: Stratum II and

Stratum IB–A. Zertal dated Stratum II to the second half of the 13th century BCE based on ceramics, a seal and two Egyptianized scarabs (cf. Brandl 1986–1987). Stratum I was dated to the 12th century BCE, ending ca. 1130 BCE (Zertal 1987: 109). Zertal, following traditional, or “high,” chronology, dated both strata to the Iron I. Stratum IB–A produced a pottery assemblage similar to Shiloh V, which dates to the 11th century BCE (I. Finkelstein, personal communication).

This site consists of outer and inner enclosure walls, with a podium (Stratum IB, Area A) situated within the inner enclosure (Fig. 6.35). The podium consists of a central, rectangular “platform” (6.25 x 4.65 m) within which sub-dividing/support Walls 16 and 13 were built (Fig. 6.36). On either side of this “platform” are additional support walls, which elongate into two closed courtyards at the front of the structure. A “ramp” consisting of two walls (Walls 2 and 7) divides the two courtyards (6 x 8m and 6 x 6.6 m), with the ramp rising to meet the platform ca. 2 m from its base.

Underneath the platform was a fill consisting of layers of earth, stones, ashes, animal bones and pottery sherds (Zertal 1987: 113). The fill was divided into four layers (A–D); the first, Layer A, was made up of “pure black ash” within which many animal bones and sherds were found. This layer was spread over the floor of Stratum II. Layer B was a fill consisting mainly of stones and earth with “a few bones and sherds;” and Layer C contained yet another black ash layer, containing bones and sherds (Zertal 1987: 113). Layer C slopes down on either side of Walls 13 and 16, indicating that this was probably the point from which the fill was dumped. Layer D was mostly made up of stones, which Zertal suggests may be the remains of a pavement used to seal the fill (*ibid.*: 114).

The excavators discovered an accumulation similar to that of Layer C outside the

northeastern corner of the platform (Loci 101, 103). One of the Egyptianized scarabs, dated to late in the reign of Ramses II, was uncovered there. This would date the fill inside the platform, if Loci 101 and 103 are associated with it, to the 13th century BCE—that is, if the scarab is not to be considered an heirloom. Zertal suspects that the fill, which pre-dates the podium, was taken from Stratum II deposits (1987: 115).

Ash, animal bones and installations were found inside the courtyards, which were partially paved. Since the fill inside the platform seemingly dates to Stratum II, only the remains from the courtyards can be associated with the use of the podium.

A number of stone-built installations dating from Stratum I–II were found around the site. About half of the installations contained vessels, including pithoi, jars, bowls, jugs and some cooking pots (Zertal 1987: 118). Zertal interprets these installations as receptacles for votive offerings (*ibid.*). The pottery from Stratum IB points to a high percentage of storage vessels, as pithoi and “jars” represent 36% of the assemblage (Zertal 1987: 125, Table 1; see Table 6.5 here). Jugs and juglets comprise 17.3% and 5.7% of the collection, respectively. Cook ware, on the other hand, accounts for a mere 6%. Bowls represent 17% of the assemblage, and kraters 8%. It is unclear from which loci this pottery analysis is based off, as it is important to isolate pottery from the courtyards of Stratum IB.

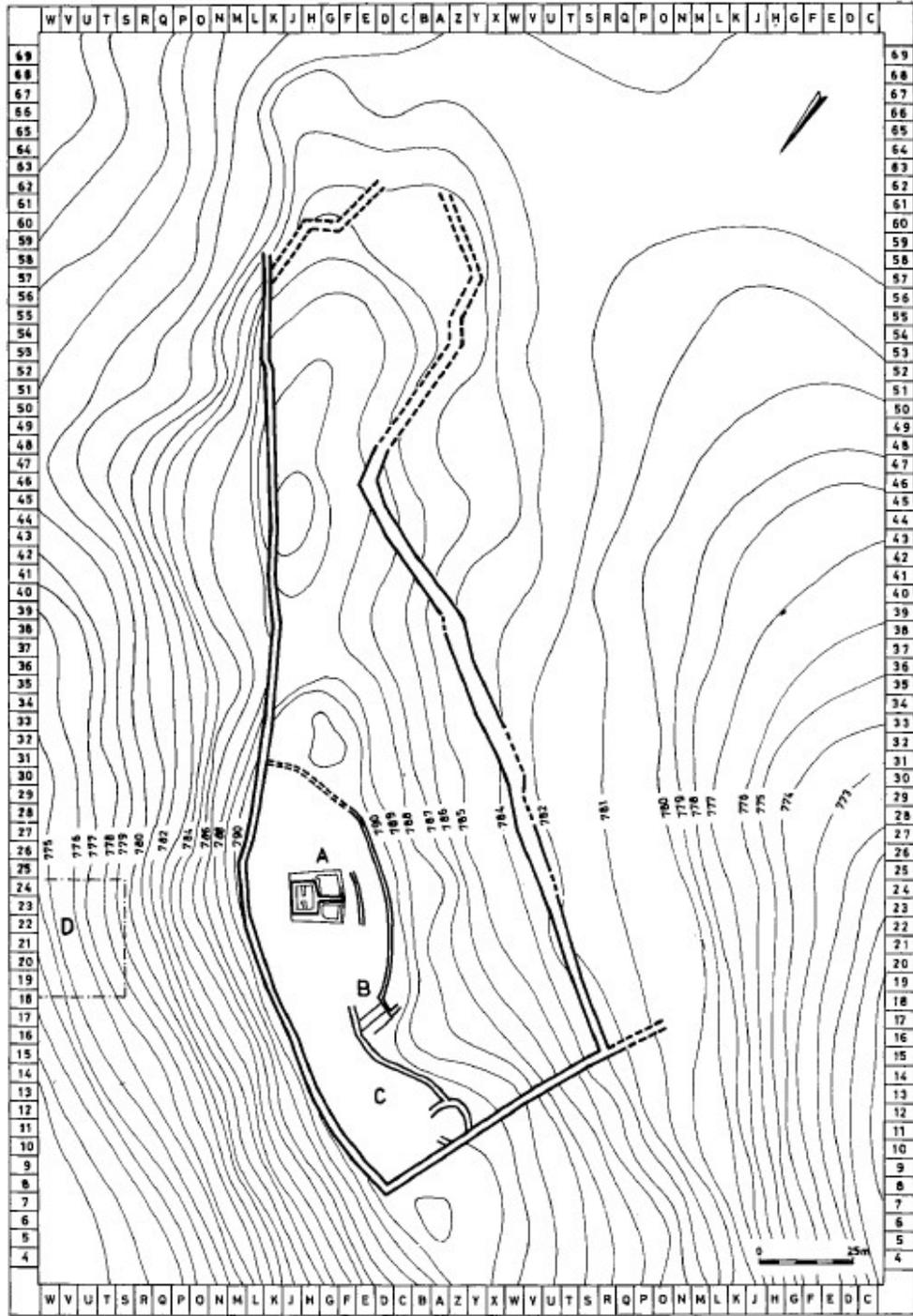


Fig. 6.35. Plan of the “cultic site” on Mount Ebal (after Zertal 1987: Fig. 4).

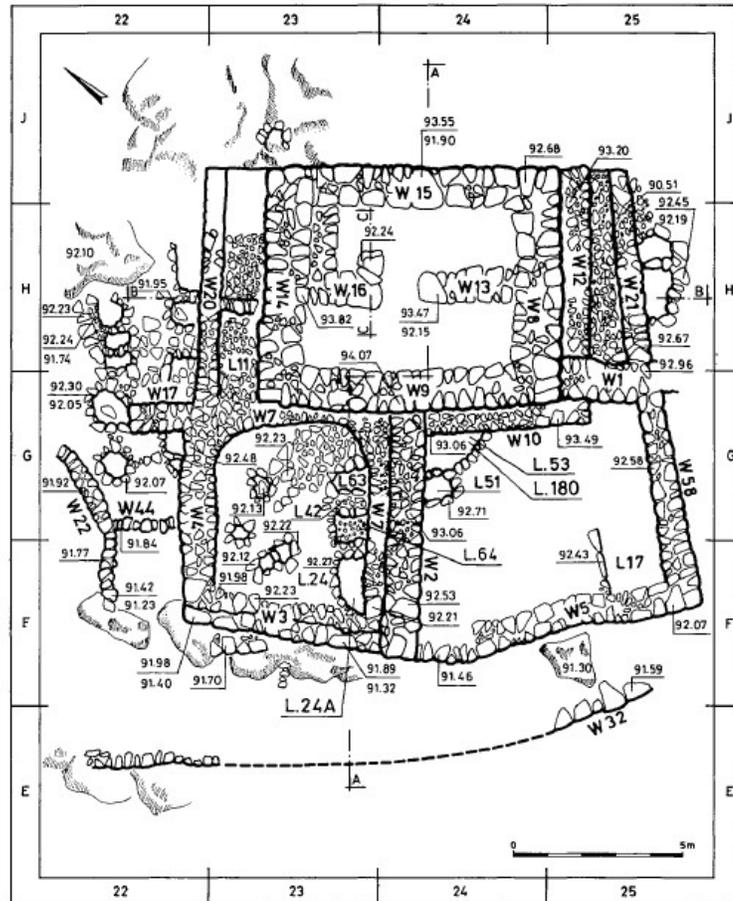


Fig. 6.36. Stratum IB structure at Mount Ebal, interpreted here as a cultic podium (after Zertal 1987: Fig. 5).

	Stratum II	Percentage	Stratum IB	Percentage
Bowls	39	14.2	139	16.9
Kraters	16	5.8	69	8.4
Cooking pots	12	4.4	51	6.2
Storage jars	32	11.6	49	6.0
Pithoi	78	28.5	250	30.0
Jugs	53	19.3	142	17.3
Juglets	4	1.5	47	5.7
Punctured design	9	3.2	60	7.3
LB tradition	8	3.0	2	0.2
Others	23	8.3	10	1.2
Total	274	99.8	819	99.02

Table 6.5. Pottery classes from Stratum II and Stratum IB at Mount Ebal (after Zertal 1987: Table 1).

As for Stratum II (Table 6.5), cooking ware represents even less of the assemblage at 4.4%. Jugs and juglets were particularly prominent, comprising 19.3% and 1.5% of the collection, but storage vessels are the most represented (40%). Bowls and kraters make up 14% and 6% of the assemblage, respectively. It seems that storage and drinking occurred in these contexts, but there is less evidence for food consumption.

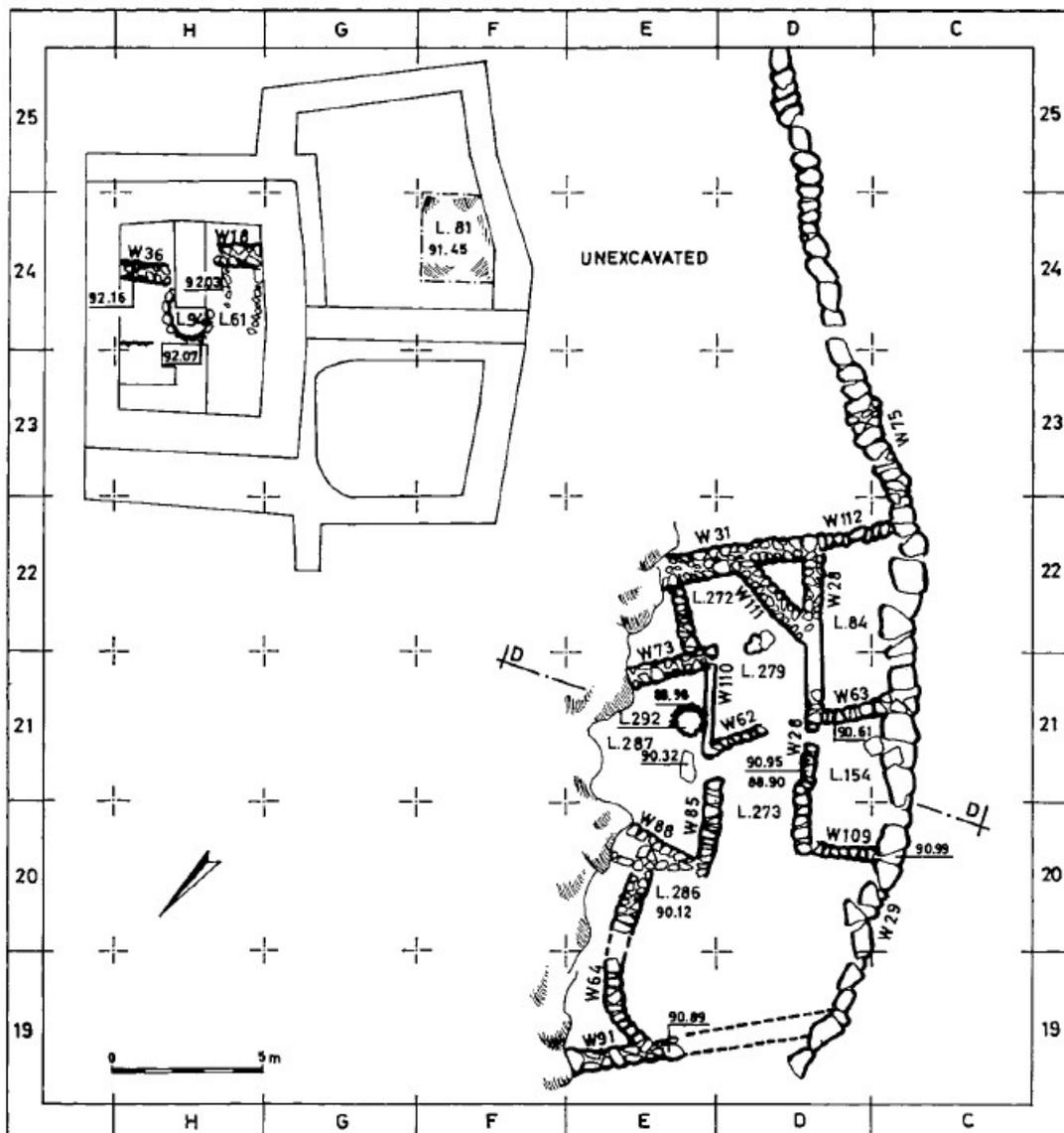


Fig. 6.37. Plan of Stratum II at Mount Ebal with the plan of Stratum IB superimposed (after Zertal 1987: Fig. 3).

Regarding the interpretation of Stratum II (Fig. 6.37), Zertal believes Area A is cultic, especially in light of Installation 94, which was found “full of ash and burnt animal bones,” and Surface 61—which was paved with pithoi fragments and also contained ash and bones (1987: 151). The fact that Installation 94 and Surface 61 were found directly under the platform of Stratum IB may give it some cultic dimension. Furthermore, the Stratum II fill found underneath the Stratum IB platform supports the theory that cultic activities were carried out in this stratum. The “four-room” house in Area B (located north of Area A) is interpreted as a domicile for those who looked after the cult place of Stratum II (Zertal 1987: 151). However, this is highly conjecturable and it is questionable whether this domestic building indeed represents a typical “four-room” house known from other sites and regions in the Iron Age. Looking at the plan of Stratum II (Zertal 1987: Fig. 3), the architecture may simply represent domestic dwellings, including the area beneath the altar.

As for the faunal assemblage of the site—2,862 bones were uncovered, 770 (27%) of which were identifiable (Horwitz 1986–1987: 173). Ninety-six percent of the assemblage comprised sheep, goat, cattle and fallow deer. The remaining 4% was composed of smaller animals, including but not limited to lizard, dove, partridge, tortoise and fish (*ibid.*). Sheep and goat make up most of the assemblage at 65%, and at least seven of the caprids were identified as juveniles. A large amount of fallow deer (10%) is present at the site, as is a significant amount of cattle (21%) (*ibid.*: 174). A total of 128 (17%) burnt bones were uncovered, 7% (n=57) of which were found within the podium; 3% (n=25) bones with cut marks, 1% (n=9) of which come from the podium, were also identified (*ibid.*: 179). It can be suggested based on this evidence that consumption occurred within these contexts, given the percentage of burnt bones, but not butchery.

The faunal remains from inside the platform, however, should not be associated with activity from Stratum IB. Only the remains from the courtyards are worth considering. The southern courtyard (n=61) contained more bones than the northern (n=17). Within the southern courtyard 9% of sheep/goat were represented, 8% cattle and 8% fallow deer (Horwitz 1987: Table 1). Nearly equal percentages of these species indicate that all three animals were used for consumption. One piece of evidence that does point to sacrifice is the fact that cranial remains and other body parts from sheep/goat, fallow deer and cattle are attested (Horwitz 1987: Table 3). Horwitz, who studied the bones, concluded that the finds reflect a pastoral economy, with “a different pattern of utilization at Mount Ebal to that found at other Iron Age habitation sites” (*ibid.*: 187).

The podium, which Zertal interprets to be a sacrificial altar, admittedly may have other functions (1987: 154–156; see Fig. 6.38). Zertal recognizes, but ultimately dismisses, the possibility that this structure could have served as a farmhouse/domestic building, storehouse or tower (1987: 151–154). However, I agree with Zertal that this building does not fit the typical construction of a domestic unit, nor do I see why a storehouse or tower would have been constructed in an area far and remote from other settlements. The most logical conclusion, in my opinion, and in light of the finds, is that this was indeed a cultic podium, or *bamah*. It is questionable, however, whether that sacrifice occurred on or near the podium given the low percentage of bones with butchery marks. Nevertheless, the large amount of bones, coupled with the high percentage of cranial remains and other body parts, points to animal consumptions as well as dismemberment activities. In light of the pottery, drinking activities also occurred here. Ultimately, it is worth considering whether this altar, in addition to being sacrificial, would have been used for libation ceremonies as well.

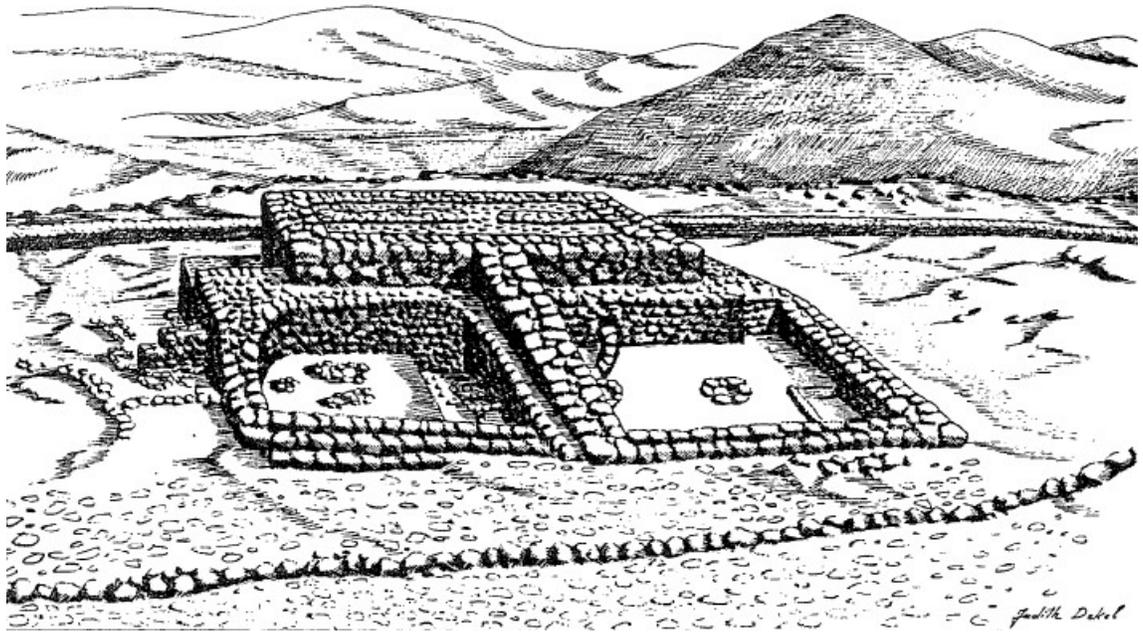


Fig. 6.38. Reconstruction of the podium of Stratum IB at Mount Ebal (after Zertal 1987: Fig. 22).

In sum, it makes sense to view the altar at Mount Ebal as being cultic in nature.

Hawkins, who applied Zevit's list of criteria for identifying a site as cultic, notes that the Mt. Ebal material satisfies the majority of the characteristics referred to in Zevit's list (2012: 72). Hawkins presents all the arguments, whether they be in favor of a secular interpretation of the nature of the site, or a cultic one. Ultimately, we agree with Zertal that the site, when taking all aspects into account, was probably cultic in nature. The architecture and animal bones present support such a conclusion. Given that the site's pottery demonstrates parallels to Shiloh V, it is safe to date Stratum IB to the Iron I. Stratum II perhaps represents an earlier phase of the Iron I, as the scarab found within the debris may represent an heirloom. This phase may also have been cultic, though not enough of it was uncovered beneath the podium to draw strict conclusions.

The “Bull Site”

The “Bull site,” Dhahrat et-Tawileh, is located near the modern village of Zababda, along the road to Tell el-Far‘ah N./Tirzah and Tel Dothan. A bronze bull statuette (17.5 cm long, 12.4 cm high) was found near the western wall of the “Bull site,” excavated by A. Mazar in 1978 and 1981 (see Fig. 6.39). Close inspection of the site revealed a circular structure (21 x 23 m) with an entrance in the eastern wall (Fig. 6.40). The entrance cuts the circle at a right angle, so that the reconstructed plan looks like two semi-circles conjoined on the western side.

Very few finds were preserved due to erosion, but some pottery sherds and a few animals remains were uncovered. Two “cultic” objects were found next to a stone that Mazar identifies as a *maṣṣebah* (0.55 x 0.97 x 1.30 m) (Mazar 1982: 33–34). One of these objects is suspected to be part of an incense burner or shrine model (Mazar 1982: 36; Fig. 10). The second object is a folded piece of bronze which, from the photograph provided, may be modern (Mazar 1982: Fig. 11). If ancient, Mazar has suggested that it could be a Late Bronze Age mirror (Mazar 1982: 36). In this case, it would have been ritually broken or terminated. Other than these two examples, together with the bull statuette, the site lacks cult finds, which one would expect to find in a cultic place. However, the lack of cult finds may be explained by the poor preservation of the site.

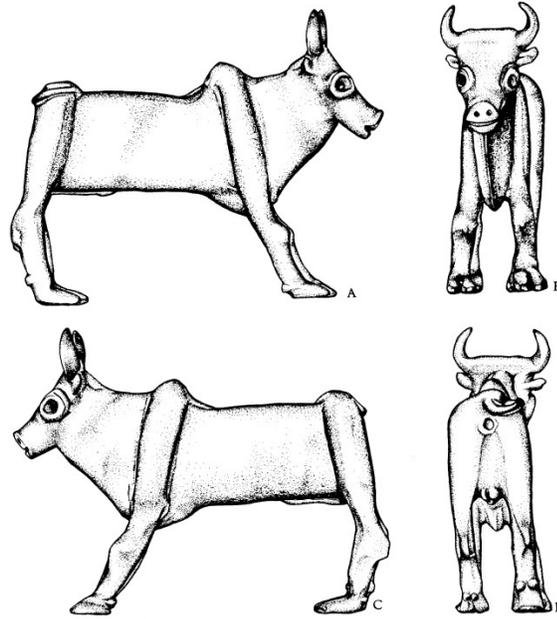


Fig. 6.39. Drawing of the bronze bull figurine from the “Bull Site” (after Mazar 1982: Fig. 2).

As for the *maṣṣebah*, rather than standing on its narrow end, like many *maṣṣebot* in the ancient Near East, it lies on its side. A pavement was found next to the *maṣṣebah*, upon which many of the finds were discovered. According to A. Mazar, the pottery best fits the early Iron I ceramic horizon. He interprets the site as an open-air altar, or *bamah* (Mazar 1982: 36–39).

In terms of pottery represented, the repertoire contains both Late Bronze Age and Iron Age types. Two cooking pots, which are characteristic of the Late Bronze Age, were uncovered, yet these continue in use into the early Iron I (Mazar 1982: 35). Rounded bowls with inverted rim and cooking pots with triangular rim continue Late Bronze traditions (Mazar 1982: Fig. 9: 1, 5, 11, 12, 13). As none of the pottery, aside from a possibly cooking jug (Mazar 1982: Fig. 9: 10), are indicative of the Iron I, a Late Bronze III–early Iron I transitional date can be suggested.

However, there is another issue to consider when dating the context, regarding A. Zertal's survey of the site. According to Finkelstein, 90% of the ceramic assemblage from Zertal's survey was composed of Middle Bronze Age "Einun" pottery (Finkelstein 1998b: 97; cf. Zertal 1992: 169–170). According to Finkelstein, the bull better fits Middle Bronze rather than Iron I traditions, in light of the discovery of a bronze bull inside a shrine model at Middle Bronze Ashkelon (Finkelstein 1998b: 97), but he admits that it is possible the statuette may have been found in the Iron I and re-used. Finkelstein thus concludes that the "Bull site" first functioned as a cultic place in the Middle Bronze.

Mazar, on the other hand, notes that only 13 diagnostic sherds were collected from the site during surveys, most of which were Iron I, making the claim that there was "90% 'Einun pottery" a mistake on the part of Zertal (Mazar 1999: 146). Furthermore, no 'Einun pottery was found during Mazar's excavations at the site (1999: 146). Lastly, as Mazar points out, bronze bulls are very much part of the bronze-working tradition in the Late Bronze and Iron Age I (1999: 146–147; cf. Negbi 1976). According to Mazar, there is therefore no reason to rule out an Iron I date for this artifact based solely on the parallel at Ashkelon.

In my opinion, the site should be dated to the Late Bronze III/early Iron I transition in light of the pottery. Although I do not dispute that the 'Einun type pottery is indicative of the Middle Bronze II–III, the majority of the assemblage is Late Bronze III/early Iron I and the bull is indicative of Late Bronze bronze-working traditions.

questions surrounding the function of the four-room house in Area A. For the time being, it is difficult to conclude whether cultic activities—be they domestic or public—were conducted there, given that other finds from the building have not yet been published. If the building was indeed used for cultic activities, this may explain the cache’s proximity to it.

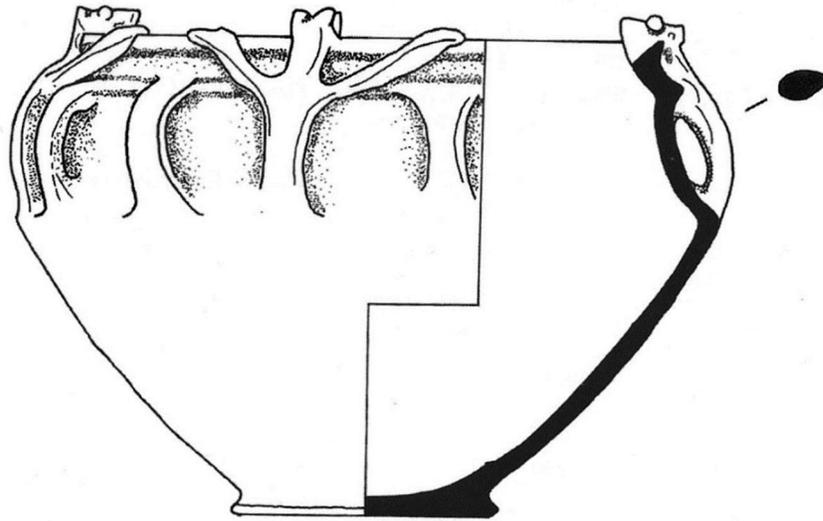


Fig. 6.42. Iron I cultic vessel from Tel Dothan (after Master *et al.* 2005: 9.23: 4).

Shiloh

Shiloh (Khirbet Seilun), the southernmost site mentioned in this study, is located 16 km north of Bethel. Excavations were carried out on behalf of Tel Aviv University from 1981–1984 under the direction of Israel Finkelstein, Shlomo Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman. The main strata for discussion are Stratum VI (Late Bronze Age) and Stratum V (Iron I).

Stratum VI consists of a large amount of debris (Debris 407) dumped over the Middle Bronze III city wall in Area D; this debris contained an “enormous” amount of ash, pottery and animal bones (Lederman and Finkelstein 1993: 43). Some Late Bronze I–II vessels filled with ash and animal bones were uncovered in this dump (Lederman and Finkelstein 1993: 45, Fig. 3.14). Many sherds were too fragmentary for restoration or identification, however 104 vessels were partially or fully restored (Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993: 127). The

ceramic assemblage of sherds and complete vessels is mainly comprised of bowls and kraters (60%) and cooking pots (9.9%) (*ibid.*: 128–129, Table 6.9; see Table 6.6 here). The excavators concluded that, based on typological comparisons, this assemblage corresponds to the Late Bronze IA–early Late Bronze IIA.

Class	No.	Percentage
Bowls	1,506	57.4%
Cooking pots	259	9.9%
Decorated sherds	72	2.7%
Goblets	28	1.1%
Imports	62	2.4%
Kraters	52	2%
Lamps	47	1.8%
Jugs/storage jars	67	2.6%
Juglets	32	1.2%
Storage jars	24	0.9%
Varia	30	1.1%
Bases	442	16.9%
Total	2,621	100%

Table 6.6. Pottery classes from Shiloh Area D (after Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993: Table 6.9).

Analysis of the animal bones (n=2,973) suggest a minimum number of individuals (MNI) of 106 (Hellwing, Sade and Kishon 1993: 314). The bones indicate a high percentage (20%) of young animals, with mostly sheep represented (92.1%) (*ibid.*). The large amount of young sheep, a sacrificial animal, may indicate that sacrifices took place in the context from which this debris derives. Sheep/goat are the most represented species in the assemblage, at 88.2% (n=2,623) (*ibid.*). Cattle comprise 8.5% (n=253) and other animals, including red deer, horse, donkey, camel, gazelle and domestic fowl, make up only 1.6% (n=49) (*ibid.*).

In light of the animal bones and ceramics, the excavators' interpretation of this debris as a favissa is appropriate in the sense that these remains probably came from a sacred

context (Lederman and Finkelstein 1993: 45). The material was discovered inside an oval-shaped deposit that ranged in depth from 0.5 to 1.5 m (Lederman and Finkelstein 1993: 43–45). There is no layering inside the dumped to suggest that the refuse was deposited sequentially. It is likely, based on the animal bones and date as well as the number of ceramics pertaining to food consumption and preparation, that this context represents prolonged feasting activities. The refuse was probably removed from a sacred context, perhaps an open-air cult site, that was dedicated to feasting activities, and dumped over the Middle Bronze fortifications. The dumping may probably occurred all at once, when the area was cleared out.

There is as yet no evidence for an Iron I sanctuary at Shiloh, apart from a dump found in the northern part of Area C (Locus 623) which contained “fragments of a cult stand, sherds of two (votive?) vessels decorated with animal heads and many animal bones” (Finkelstein 1993: 385; cf. Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993: Fig. 6.54: 1, 2, 4, 6). The fragments of a cult stand may represent the façade of a ceramic altar (Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993: Fig. 6.54: 1). It is significant that as many as three to four fragments of cultic paraphernalia were found in the dump, which calls for an analysis of the ceramics and animal bones found therein.

Pottery from Locus 623 totals 1,164 sherds. Of this, the majority comprise cooking pots (40%), with jugs represent 17%. Storage vessels make up 22% of the overall assemblage, and bowls and kraters 6.5%. As for the animal bones, the debris from Locus 623 was pooled together with other Iron I faunal remains. In general terms, 1,350 bones from the Iron I were identified, with 75.1% of the total representing sheep/goat. Although there is a general preference for right limbs in the overall Shiloh assemblage, this was not the case for

the Iron I (Hellwing, Sade and Kishon 1993: 318). Age-wise, most of the sheep/goat butchered were mature (88.2%), as were the cattle (72%) (*ibid.*: 315).

It would be difficult to identify this context as one of feasting, since storage jars make up such a large percentage of the total. I would imagine that this debris is taken from a domestic context that may have had cultic connotations, given the ceramic, zoomorphic paraphernalia found within the debris. The animal bones do not point to sacrificial activities, although it is worth bearing in mind that the remains from Locus 623 were not separated. However, the data from the Iron I probably well represent the debris from Locus 623. As the excavators mention, the debris is homogenous and does not appear to be layered, indicating that it was probably dumped in a single event.

Summary

The present chapter reviewed the archaeological contexts of cult in the northern highlands and valleys during the Late Bronze and Iron I. The presence of open-air sanctuaries, together with cult in settled sites, in the northern highlands is clear. In terms of the valleys, a common thread throughout the discussion of Late Bronze Age contexts has been the appearance and continuity of temples. This will be explored further in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 7: CULT IN THE IRON IIA AND IRON IIB

Jezreel Valley

The following section reviews cultic contexts from Megiddo's Building 12/Q99, Building 2081 and Building 338 as well as Ta'anach's "Cultic Structure" and Tel Kedesh's structure with the four-horned altar.

Megiddo

Building 12/Q/99

Building 12/Q/99 was uncovered in the northern end of Area Q (Fig. 7.1). The structure is a long, ca. 10 x 15 m pillared hall with side rooms to its west and a back room to its south. It is attributed to Tel Aviv University's Level Q-5, which is dated to the late 10th and early 9th centuries (Kleiman *et al.* 2017: Table 3). Metallurgical remains were found just outside of the northeastern corner of this building, and represent evidence for the continuity of metal production in this sector of the mound (Yahalom-Mack *et al.* 2017). In the subsequent phase, Level Q-4, the building was re-used and its architectural elements modified (*ibid.*: 27). The pottery of both phases dates to the late Iron IIA (*ibid.*: 27; Kleiman forthcoming). A number of cult-related finds were found scattered around the building in both Level Q-5 and Level Q-4 contexts (Kleiman *et al.* 2017: Table 2; Taf. 6-8). Most of the objects were found, however, in Level Q-4 (Fig. 7.2). Objects include fragments of decorated cult stands, chalices, a votive bowl and figurines.

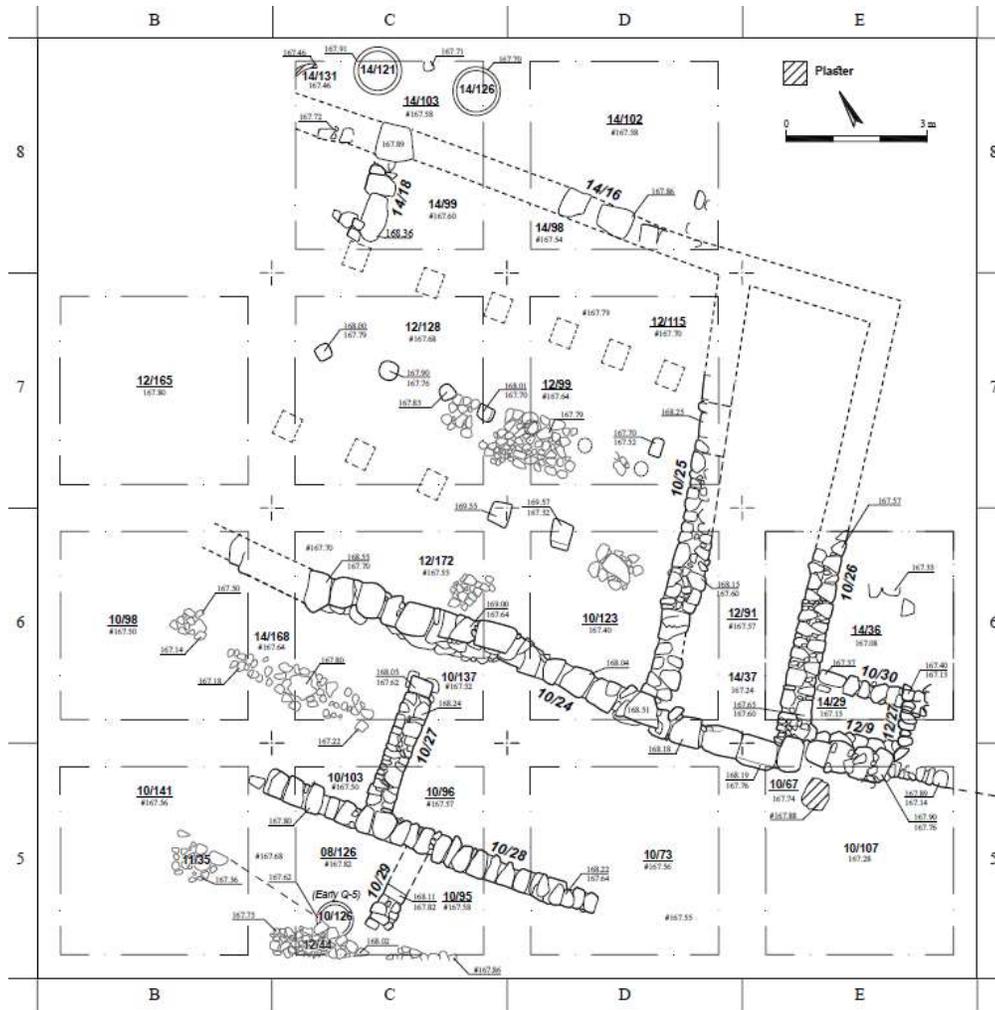


Fig. 7.1. Plan of Megiddo's Level Q-5 pillared building 12/Q/99.

As Kleiman *et al.* (2017) have argued, it seems Building 12/Q/99 of Level Q-5, which may have functioned as a temple, was abandoned with arrival of the Omrides. It is also worth noting that a cache of broken limestone altars (May 1935: Pl. XII: 2984, 2983, 2982) and ceramic shrine models (*ibid.*: Pl. XIII–XV) were found during the University of Chicago's excavations within the vicinity of this building.

It is believed that these cultic objects, as well as the objects found scattered around the building in Level Q-5 and Level Q-4, originated in the Q-5 building and were removed when renovations were made to the building in Q-4 (Kleiman *et al.* 2017: 39). At least part of

the interior of the building was then used for metalworking (*ibid.*: 27, 43). It may have been an Omride initiative to expand metalworking activities in this area and to move cult to a more elite and administrative sector of the mound. The cache of limestone altars may represent a favissa that was created after the Omrides cancelled cult activities within Building 12/Q/99.

In terms of the spatial distribution of cult finds, most items were concentrated in the southeastern room of the Level Q-4 building. They were found together with the “Great Burnt Debris,” or GBD, which consists of a large dump of ash and charcoal. The finds were probably dumped here after the clearing out of Building 12/Q/99, and this space was probably used for further dumping throughout Level Q-4.

A. Kleiman has recently presented and analyzed the ceramic assemblage from the Iron II in Area Q (Kleiman forthcoming). According to Kleiman’s analysis, serving vessels make up 46.9% of the assemblage in Level Q-5. Small containers comprise 22.1%, cooking vessels 14.4%, storage jars 10.14% and varia, including lamps and chalices, 6.4% (Kleiman forthcoming). Considering that cult finds were found in Level Q-4 contexts, especially the “Great Burnt Debris,” it is worth considering that the percentages of classes represented in the assemblage remains fairly reflective of the Level Q-5 breakdown presented above. It is worth noting the lack of imports in any context in Area Q, as this stands in contrast to the situation in the Building 2081, located in the elite residential quarter (see below).

An assemblage of cultic items was found in the southwestern corner of the building's courtyard (*ibid.*: Figs. 101–102; see Figs. 7.4–7.5 here). The assemblage is comprised of two horned altars made of limestone, three offering stands, a perforated storage jar,¹³ an astragalus bone hoard and other votive offerings (*ibid.*: Fig. 102). Several large altars horns were also found just south of this building but within the later 8th century, Iron IIB stratum (Lamon and Shipton 1939: 24, Fig. 31). It is unclear whether these stones derive from Building 2081 or if they were used in a kind of open-air sanctuary by the Iron IIB inhabitants.

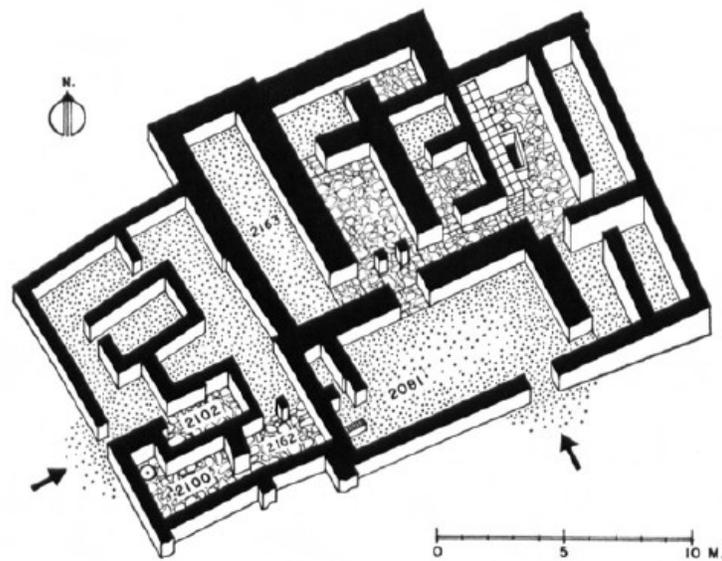


Fig. 7.3. Reconstructed plan of Megiddo's Building 2081 (after Loud 1948: Fig. 100).

There is debate as to whether Building 2081 represents a temple (Ussishkin 1989), an *in situ* cultic corner or shrine (Zevit 2001: 223–224), or a secondary deposit. The latter interpretation was suggested by Ze'ev Herzog, who believes that the assemblage was actually removed from the nearby gate complex and placed within the corner of Building 2081, just

¹³ A Black on Red juglet was found inside the strainer jar (Arie 2013: 714; cf. Loud 1948: Pl. 89: 6).

prior to the site's destruction.

Although it is unclear whether the objects were originally located in the city-gate, there is good reason to believe that the finds were removed from their initial find-spot. Support for this theory is evidenced by the awkward positioning of several elements along the southern wall of the building. Additional evidence for intentional burial can be seen in a photograph of the finds *in situ*, in which a stone object (a 731), lies at the top left of one of the altars (Zevit 2001: Fig. 3.54). It clearly sits above a pile of fill and, according to Loud, six clay game pieces were found just beneath it (Loud 1948: Fig. 101). A stone slab, which may have had some cult significance, also lay over many complete vessels on the left-hand side of the photo. The assemblage may, however, have been used for one last time just prior to its cancellation, as the remains of grain were found just in front of the altars (Zevit 2001: 224, Fig. 3.55). In short, it is obvious that the finds were probably removed from their original loci of cult activity and that this was done prior to the site's destruction. It is also clear from plans of the northern sector that the 8th century inhabitants did not build over Building 2081, perhaps out of respect for the sacred area (Loud 1948: Fig. 389).

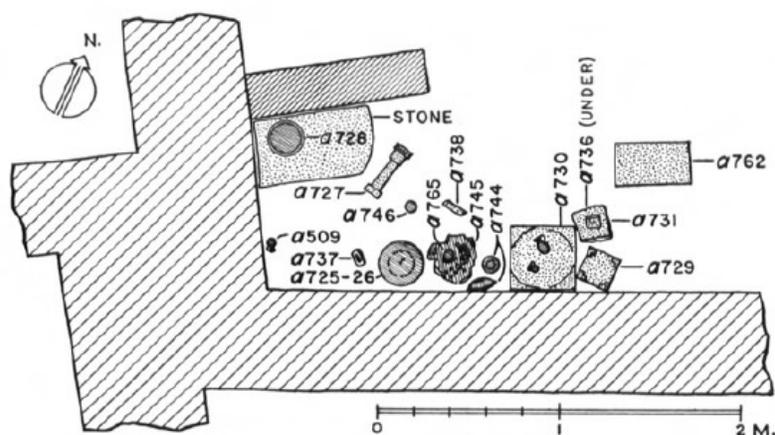


Fig. 7.4. Plan of finds as they were discovered in the southwestern courtyard of Building 2081 (after Loud 1948: Fig. 101).



Fig. 7.5. Photograph of the cultic paraphernalia from Building 2081 (after Loud 1948: Fig. 102).

Class	No.	Percentage
Amphoriskoi	3	4.6
Bowls	16	24.6
Chalices	2	3.1
Cooking pots	0	0
Cooking jugs	0	0
Kraters	4	6.2
Jugs	7	10.8
Juglets	16	24.6
Pyxides	2	3.1
Storage jars	1	1.5
Varia	2	3.1
Imports	12	18.5
Total	65	100

Table 7.1. Classes of pottery from Megiddo's Building 2081 (after Arie 2013: Table 13.22).

E. Arie analyzed the pottery present in Building 2081 (Arie 2013a: Table 13.22; see Table 7.1 here). According to his calculations, a total of 65 complete vessels were uncovered from the structure. Bowls make up 24.6% of the assemblage, jugs 10.8%, juglets 24.6%,

amphoriskoi 4.5% and pyxides 3.1%. No cooking pots or cooking jugs were found, and storage jars comprise a very small percentage at 1.5%. The total number of imports, consisting of Cypriot Black-on-Red pottery, comprises a large amount of the assemblage at 18.5%. It is safe to say based on these numbers that serving and drinking vessels make up most of the collection. Furthermore, the number of imports present indicates that this was an elite context, probably dedicated to feasting and drinking activities.

Building 338

Building 338, or the “Templeburg,” is located in the eastern sector of the mound, in Area BB (Figs. 7.6–7.8). The structure was first excavated by Schumacher in the early 1900’s and later by the University of Chicago. Schumacher identified Room 340 as the “temple proper,” where he found two *maṣṣeboth*, a stone table and a stone with a circular depression, beside a layer of charcoal and animal remains (Schumacher 1908: 111–112; May 1935: 5; Ussishkin 1989: 154; see Fig. 7.9–7.10 here). He also found part of a pottery shrine west and north (Room 332) of Room 340 (May 1935: 5; Ussishkin 1989: 163; Pl. 18A). According to Schumacher (1908: 110) and May (1935: 5), Building 338’s mudbrick superstructure was destroyed. Unfortunately, the pottery from the building was never properly presented and thus it is not possible to do a ceramic analysis on the finds.

There is some debate as to whether Building 338 was built in the late Iron IIA or the Iron IIB. Ussishkin (1989; 2017) continues to favor the former option, despite results from Tel Aviv University’s recent check excavations that indicate the building dates to the Iron IIB (Kleiman, Kaplan and Finkelstein 2016). In presenting their results, Kleiman, Kaplan and Finkelstein have persuasively argued for an Iron IIB date. Not only do the building’s levels correspond poorly with Stratum VA–IVB architecture, but Iron IIB pottery was found in fills



Fig. 7.7. Plan of Buildings 338, 10 and 1A of the University of Chicago excavations (after May 1935: Pl. 1).

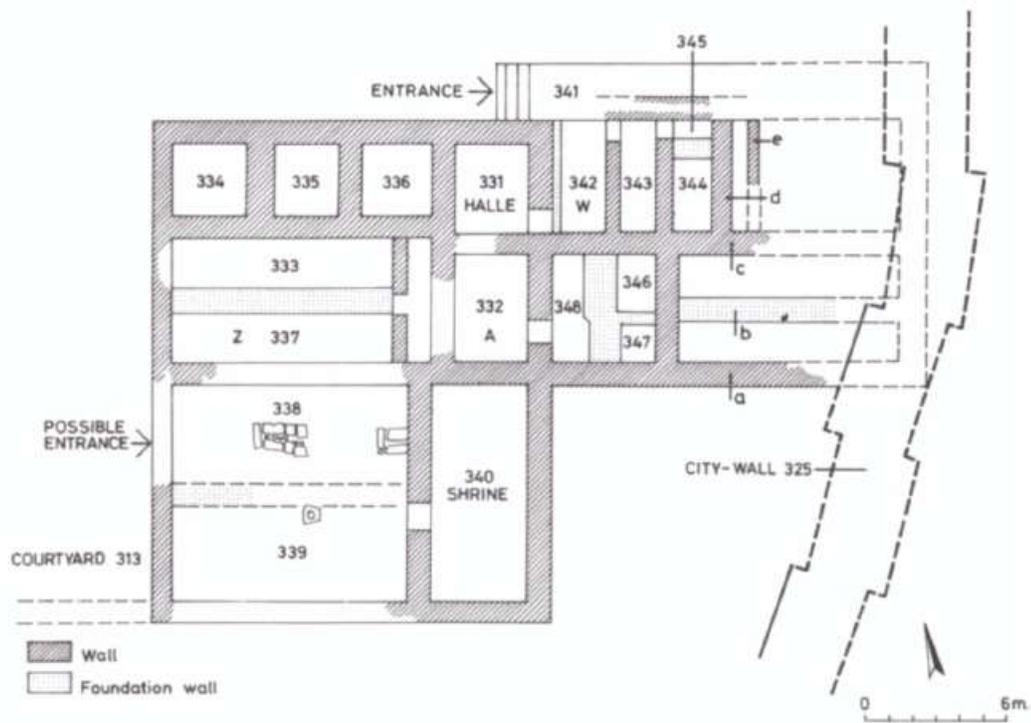


Fig. 7.8. Restored plan of Building 338 (after Ussishkin 1989: Fig. 4).

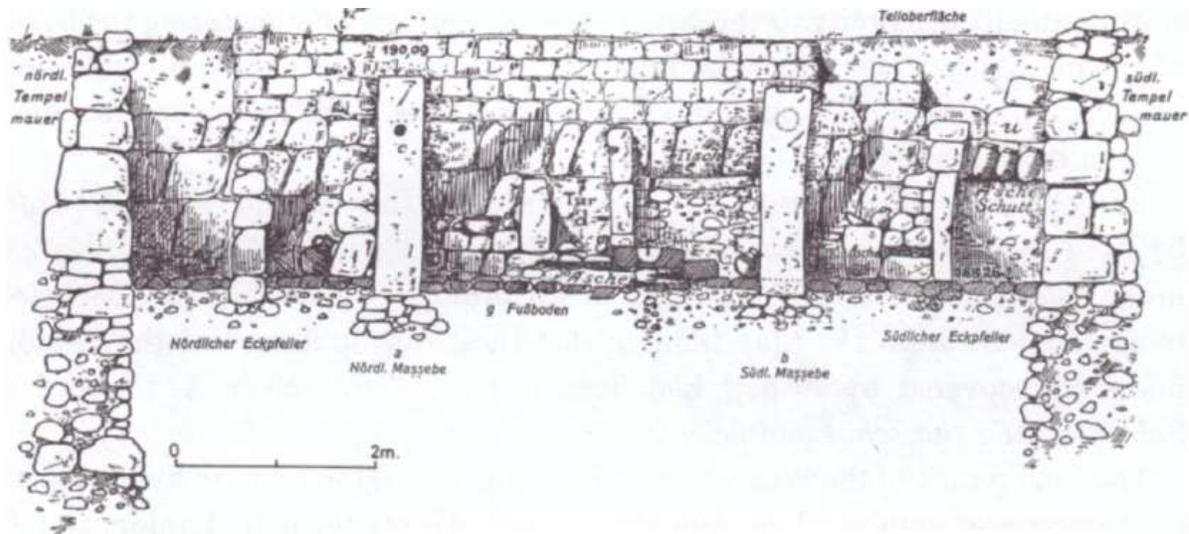


Fig. 7.9. Cross-section of the “Templeburg”/Building 338 (after Schumacher 1908: Tafel XXXVI).

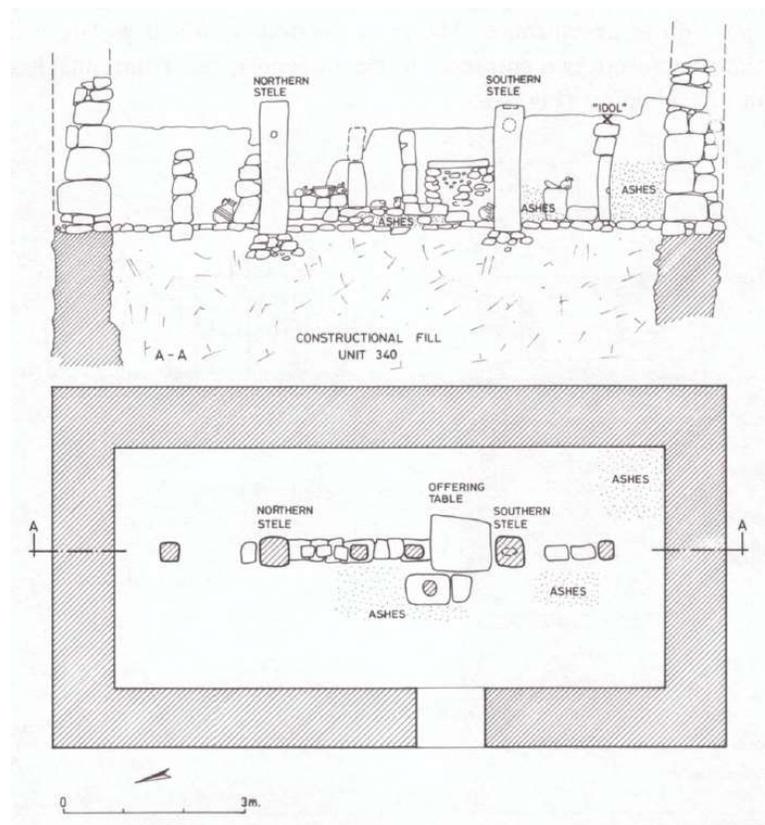


Fig. 7.10. Reconstruction of the interior of Building 338 (after Ussishkin 1989: Fig. 5).

Ta'anach

Ta'anach's "Cultic Structure" is centrally located in the southern portion of the upper mound. Only the two northwestern rooms of the building were preserved (Fig. 7.11). A "basin" containing a possible *maṣṣebah* was found east of these rooms (Sellin 1904: 76; Lapp 1964: 29–30, Figs. 12, 14; Lapp 1967: 19–20, Fig. 11; see Fig. 7.12 here). A large amount of restorable pottery was found *in situ* on the building's floors (Lapp 1964: 28, 37–39, Figs. 18, 20; Rast 1978: 23, 27–35, Figs. 30–51). Although the site's excavator dated the Cultic Structure to the 10th century BCE and associated its destruction with Shoshenq I's campaign (Lapp 1964: 28), it is now clear that the building dates to the late Iron IIA and was probably destroyed by Hazael (Finkelstein 1998a).

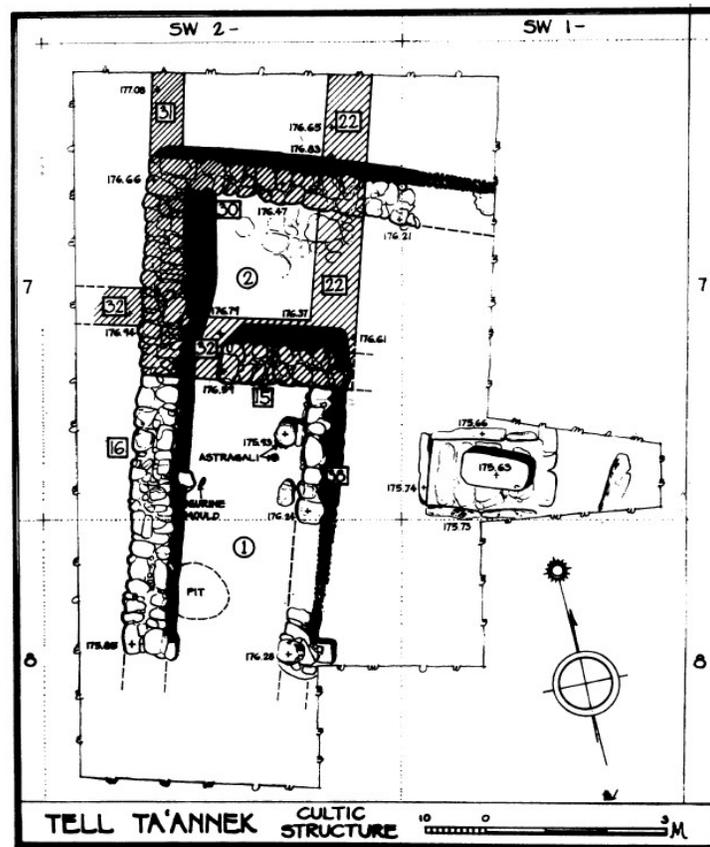


Fig. 7.11. Top plan of Ta'anach's "Cultic Structure" (after Lapp 1967: Fig. 10).

The cultic assemblage, which was found in Room 1, includes 140 astragali, 58 loomweights, metallic weapons, stone tools, weights and a complete figurine mold (Lapp 1964: 28; see Fig. 7.13 here). Fragments of two cult stands/ceramic altars—one tall and decorated (TT 1500; Lapp 1969: 42–44, Fig. 29; Frick 2000: 114–129, Fig. 20; see Fig. 7.14 here) and the other cylindrical and undecorated (TT 1830; Rast 1978: 36, Fig. 54: 1)—were also discovered at the bottom of Cistern 69 (Frick 2000: 117). The decorated stand is similar to a ceramic altar found during E. Sellin’s excavations in 1902 (1904: Pls. 12–13; Beck 1994: Figs. 1–2; Frick 2000: 118–119, Fig. 18). Its pieces were scattered around the Cultic Structure (Frick 2000: 117). This may mean that some of the artifacts from the Cultic Structure were intentionally destroyed. The discovery of tuyères, copper ore, copper spillage and a large amount of iron artifacts around and within the Cultic Structure has led Stech-Wheeler *et al.* (1981) to postulate that a metalsmith was active in this area.



Fig. 7.12. “Basin” or possible *massebah* from Ta’anach’s “Cultic Structure” (after Lapp 1964: Fig. 14).



Fig. 7.13. Photograph of the finds from Ta'anach's "Culture Structure," *in situ* (after Lapp 1964: Fig. 13).



Fig. 7.14. Photograph of the Ta'anach cult stand discovered by Lapp (after Lapp 1969: Fig. 29).

In terms of ceramics, 126 rims, complete or nearly complete vessels were discovered in the Cultic Structure (Table 7.2). Bowls are the most represented, at 43.7% and storage vessels are the second-most, at 18.3%. Cooking pots and cooking jugs make up only 4.8% of the assemblage. Bowls and kraters together make up more than half of the collection, at 50.8%. Jugs and juglets together represent 16.6% of the assemblage. Red-slipped, hand-burnished vessels comprise 60% and the percentage of Black-on-Red imitations is 1.58%.

Class	Count	Percentage
Amphoriskoi	5	4.0%
Bowls	55	43.7%
Cooking pots	3	2.4%
Cooking jugs	3	2.4%
Jugs	10	7.9%
Juglets	11	8.7%
Kraters	9	7.1%
Lamps	2	1.6%
Pithoi	1	0.8%
Stands	1	0.8%
Storage jars	22	17.5%
Tripod cups	1	0.8%
Total	126	100%

Table 7.2. Counts and percentages of pottery classes from Ta'anach's Cultic Structure.

It should be mentioned that M.D. Fowler has attempted to refute the interpretation of the Cultic Structure as being related to ritual in some way. He believes the structure was domestic. The astragali, in his opinion, could have been used as gaming pieces (Fowler 1984a: 32) and the three small stones that Lapp identifies as stelae or maṣṣebot are too small to represent standing stones (*ibid.*). The "basin," or maṣṣebah, to the east of the structure he interprets as an olive press (*ibid.*: 34). However, Fowler has a hard time explaining away the cultic stands, figurine mold and other items of cultic significance found within the building.

All these items taken together seem to represent a cultic assemblage, and thus I agree with the excavator that the structure should be viewed in ritualistic terms.

Tel Kedesh

Tel Kedesh (Tell Abu Qudeis) is a ca. 1-hectare mound previously excavated by E. Stern and I. Beit-Arieh in 1968. Their excavations revealed four phases of Iron Age strata. They note that a large structure with a central hall was discovered in Stratum IV (Squares C7–C9). A four-horned altar (45 cm high, 28 x 25 cm at its base) made of limestone was uncovered on the western side of the hall (Stern and Beit-Arieh 1979: 5; see Figs. 7.15–7.16). A number of unbaked loom-weights were also found in Square C8, next to the altar.

The end of Stratum IV is characterized by destruction. The pottery from this phase was dated by the excavators “from the beginning of the 9th to the middle of the 8th century BCE,” but ceramics from this phase, together with ceramics from Strata VI–V, were “treated as a homogeneous group” (*ibid.*: 6). Unfortunately, not much pottery was published from this stratum, and so it is difficult to discern a relative date for this phase. Although the destruction seemingly fits that of Hazael, the authors make mention of Iron IIB forms within this horizon. A comprehensive overview of the pottery from this stratum is needed to better discern the period to which the altar and its structure belong.

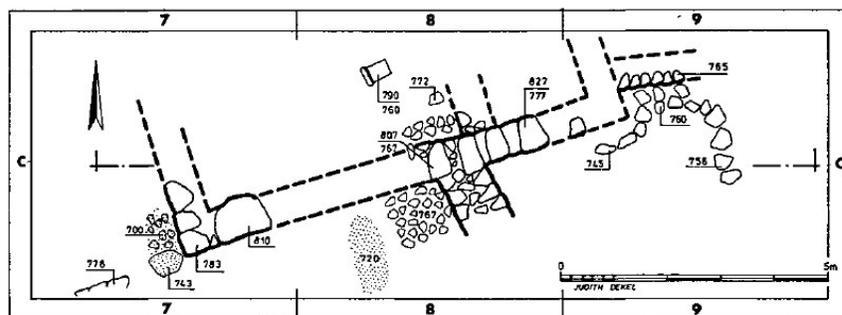


Fig. 7.15. Location of the four-horned altar at Tel Kedesh (after Stern and Beit-Arieh 1979: Fig. 4).

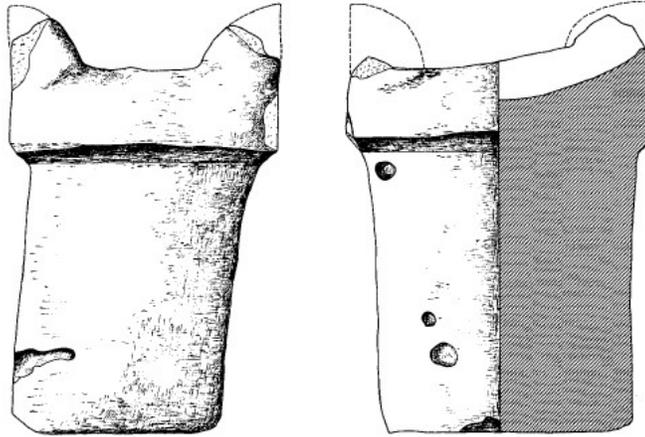


Fig. 7.16. Tel Kedesh Stratum IV four-horned altar (after Stern and Beit-Arieh 1979: Fig. 5).

Beth Shean Valley

This section presents the cultic contexts at Beth Shean (the Lower Level V Southern and Northern Temples), Tel Rehov, Tel 'Amal and Pella.

Beth Shean

The Northern and Southern Temples of Level V are the latest in the temple series at Beth Shean. The dating of these temples is problematic given that they were investigated using pre-modern excavation methods and techniques. Amihai Mazar argues that the buildings served as temples in the Iron I and were re-used for secular purposes in the Iron IIA (1993: 221–223; 2001: 300; 2006: 34; 2009: 27–28). Eran Arie, however, believes that cultic activity continued, as evidenced by the discovery of late Iron IIA pottery on the temples' floors (2017: 3–4).

The Northern and Southern Temples of Beth Shean are built opposite one another in the central and southern sector of the mound. The Southern Temple (24.10 m east–west, 18.40 m north–south) is a long, pillared hall surrounded by a series of smaller rooms to its

north and south (Rowe 1940: 23; Pl. X; see Fig. 7.17 here). All the outer walls are made of mudbrick and stand on basalt stone foundations. In some places, traces of wooden beams were found between the brick and stone. The inner room's (Locus 1029) walls, into which basalt column bases were set (at a level of 95.25 m), are made of free-standing mudbrick. The site's excavators suggest that these walls may be a later addition to the temple since they are poorly aligned with the building's plan (*ibid.*: 23–24). Several other changes were made to the temple during a second stage of use (James 1966: 38).

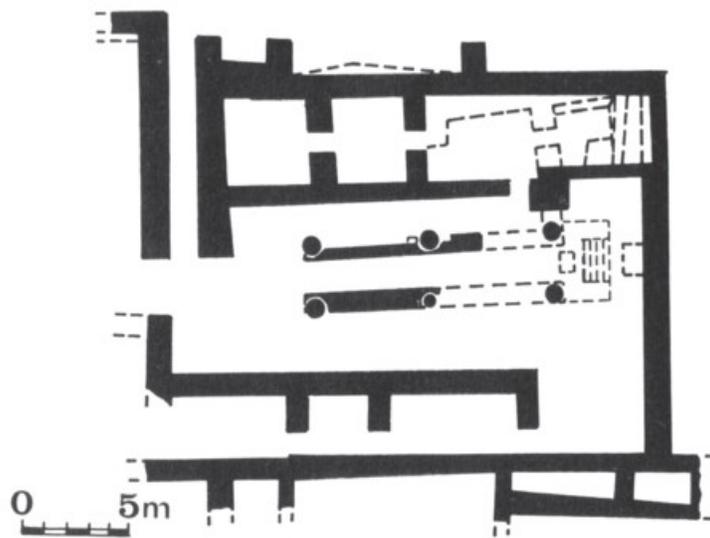


Fig. 7.17. Plan of the Lower Level V Southern Temple at Beth Shean (after Mazar 1992: 180, Fig. 30).

The temple contained a significant amount of cult finds. Fragments of nine cult stands were found in Locus 1021 and another ten cult-related objects were found in Locus 1021-a (*ibid.*: 39; see Figs. 7.18–7.19). Several of the cylindrical cult stands are decorated in styles that are reminiscent of stands from Iron I strata at Qasile (Mazar 1980: Fig. 25, 27). The stele of “Amen-em Apt ‘overseer of the granaries of the two lands’” was also found on the floor of

Locus 1010.

Two foundation deposits were buried next to the central pillar bases. One jug (James 1966: Fig. 5: 7) was buried next to one of the northern pillar bases and contained a significant amount of electrum (Rowe 1940: Figs. 1–2). The jug is red-slipped and burnished (James 1966: 38; Fig. 3: 7) and has parallels in Megiddo VB and VA–IVB (Lamon and Shipton 1939: Pl. 6: 155, 160; Arie 2013a: Fig. 13.14: J31). Since foundation deposits are typically buried at the time of a building’s construction or modification, the deposit was probably interred when the columns were constructed. There is thus good reason to believe that these were constructed in the Iron IIA. The second foundation deposit was found next to a southern pillar base and contained a significant amount of hacksilver (Rowe 1940: Fig. 3; James 1966: Fig. 5: 8).

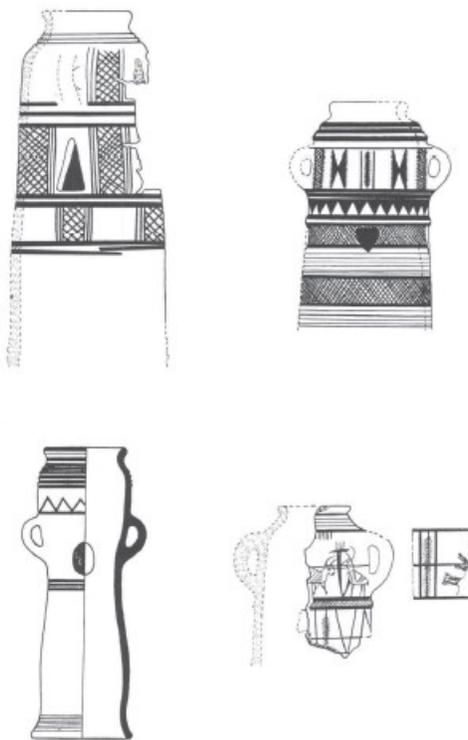


Fig. 7.18. Cylindrical stands from the Southern Temple (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 16).

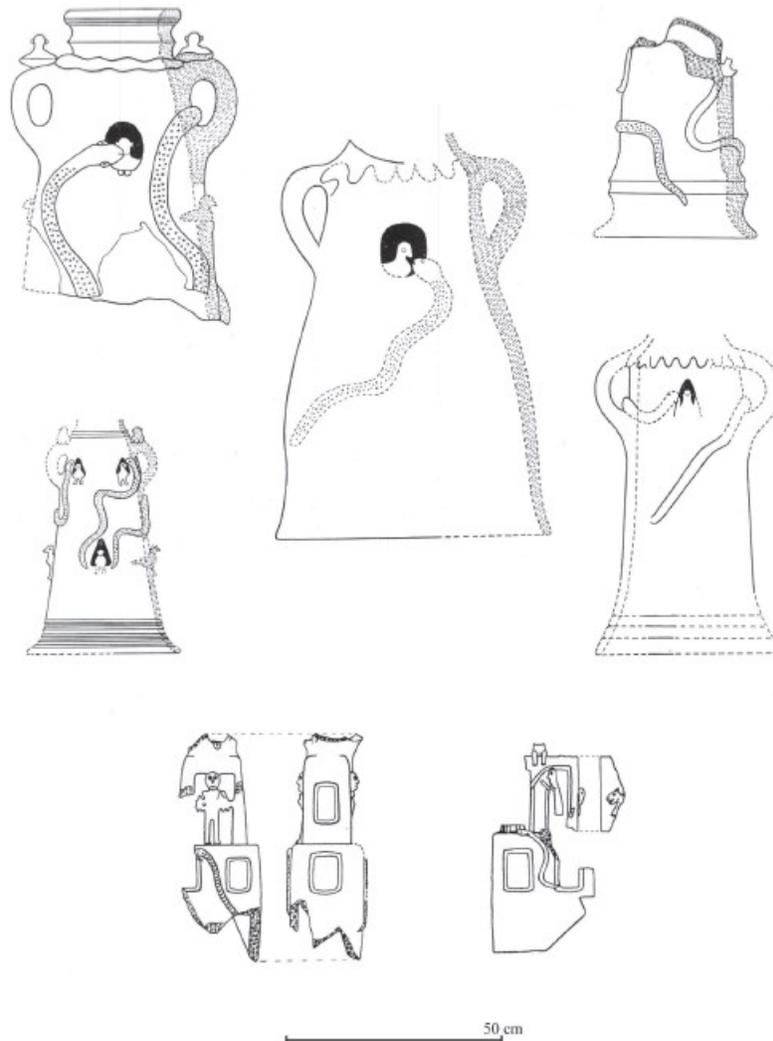


Fig. 7.19. Cult stands from the Northern and Southern Temples of Beth Shean (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 17).

Among the Iron IIA types found on the floor are a vertically burnished juglet, red-slipped burnished bowls (*ibid.*: Figs. 6: 1, 3, 8) and a funnel (*ibid.*: Fig. 6: 23). A few late Iron IIA sherds that were also found on the floor include a fragment of a Black-on-Red juglet (*ibid.*: Fig. 6: 14) and a burnished, black slipped juglet (*ibid.*: Fig. 6: 9).

The Northern Temple (19.50 m east-west, 11.22 m north-south) is significant in that its original floor was sealed by a secondary clay floor (Rowe 1940: Pl. XII; James 1966: 33–

34; see Fig. 7.20 here). The original floor, with its four column bases, was reached in 1925 by Alan Rowe and Fitzgerald (James 1966: 33). The original floor contained a cult cylinder, a shrine house fragment and part of a “box” decorated with a snake, among other cult-related finds (*ibid.*: 34). Also found on the original floor was a stele dedicated to the goddess Antit by Hesi-Nekht (Fig. 7.21).



Fig. 7.20. Plan of Lower Level V Northern Temple at Beth Shean (after Mazar 1992: 174, Fig. 24).



Fig. 7.21. Stele of the goddess Antit by Hesi-Nekht (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 18).

The temple itself is of the “Bent-Axis” type. All the walls were made of mudbrick and, apart from the eastern wall, were set on a layer of wood and basalt stone foundations (Rowe 1940: 32). The temple’s original floor contained Iron IIA pottery, including red-slipped and hand-burnished table wares (James 1966: Fig. 3: 4–6). Pottery from the secondary clay floor contained a red-slipped, vertically hand-burnished amphora, a possible Hippo jar rim fragment, a hole mouth jar and a slipped and burnished jar fragment (*ibid.*: Fig. 47, Nos. 11, 8, 7). Based on the ceramic assemblage, it appears that occupational activity occurred in the temple during two different phases of the Iron IIA. The secondary floor should probably be dated to the late Iron IIA based on the appearance of the amphora, the Hippo fragment and the hole mouth jar. It is unclear whether some of the ceramics are bowls or chalices since their bases are missing (*ibid.*: Fig. 47: 17–18). One does, however, appear to be the neck of stand or chalice (*ibid.*: Fig. 47: 6). The presence of this vessel may suggest that cultic activities continued in the Northern Temple during its second phase of activity, although no other cultic objects were found on the upper floor.

West of the temples, in Locus 1016, broken stelae of Seti I and Ramses II were discovered, lying one on top of the other (*ibid.*: 34; Fig. 81: 1; see Fig. 7.22 here). They lay next to the bases upon which they stood, which were measured at roughly the same level as the original floor of the Northern Temple (95.88) (*ibid.*: 34–35). A basalt statue with cartouches of Ramses III was found just east of these stelae (Locus 1009), against the southwestern closing wall of the Northern Temple (*ibid.*: 35; Fig. 81: 3). Like the stelae, it seems that the statue was intentionally mutilated, as its head was found *in situ*, lying beside the statue.

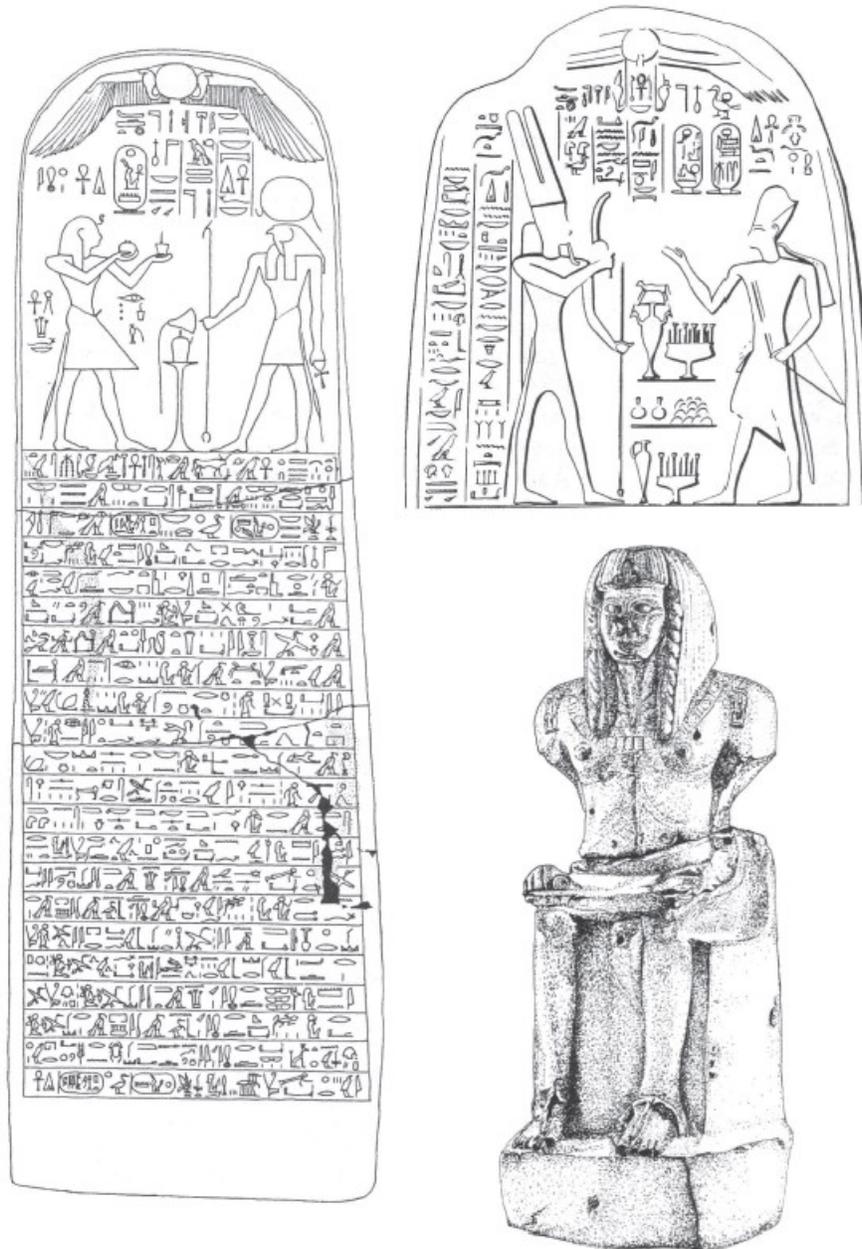


Fig. 7.22. Stelae of Seti I and Ramses II, as well as the Ramses III statuette (after Mullins 2012: Fig. 19).

Based on a comparison of levels, it appears that the stelae room was contemporaneous with the first phase of the Northern Temple (cf. *ibid.*: 35). A significant amount of pottery was found on the floor of the Stelae Room, including 15 late Iron IIA

holemouth storage jars and a burnished red slip trefoil jug (*ibid.*: Fig. 4: 5). When factoring in the high number of restorable jars and the mutilation of the stelae and statue, it appears that sort of disturbance—perhaps a destruction—took place here. Since the stelae and statue were found *in situ*, it is possible that this area was filled in, to the level of the secondary floor of the Northern Temple (96.52 m). According to James, a later surface around the southwestern corner of the temple can be seen in one of Fischer’s photographs (*ibid.*: 35 after Rowe 1930: Pl. 28: 1).

Lastly, it should be noted that M. Ottosson (1980: 63–76) suggested that the Southern Temple of Beth Shean is actually a palace and that the cult finds found on its floor should actually be attributed to the temple of Level VI. But as Mullins points out, the temple complex is located above earlier temples – which increases the likelihood that these structures were also considered sacred (Mullins 2012: 145). There is also no reason to think that the cult objects found on the Southern Temple’s floor do not belong to it. The discovery of cult objects on the original floor of the Northern Temple also points to its cultic function.

In terms of the date of the temples, the stratigraphy of Level V was re-assessed by Francis James in her monograph on the Iron Age levels at Beth Sean. James argued that the stratum should be divided into two separate phases, Lower Level V and Upper Level V. Lower Level V included the Northern and Southern Temples as well as structures surrounding them (Blocks B and D). Upper Level V consisted of the Israelite gate and structures to its east (Blocks A and C). The discovery of Egyptian objects in and around the Northern and Southern Temples led James to conclude that the temple complex dated to “a period of Egyptian suzerainty which cannot have ended earlier than the first half of the 12th century BCE” (James 1966: 30). She dated Upper Level V, on the other hand, to the

“Israelite” period based on the ashlar masonry found throughout the level. According to James, the lack of Egyptian finds in the latter stratum also pointed to an Israelite date.

However, the pottery from both Lower and Upper Level V by and large dates to the Iron IIA. As we have seen above, ceramics from the temples and Stelae Room, include Hippo jar fragments, hole-mouth jars and Cypriot Black-on-Red pottery, which put the date of these structures in the late Iron IIA. Upper Level V pottery consists of red-slipped, hand-burnished bowls (*ibid.*: Fig. 63: 5–9, 12, 16), Hippo jars (*ibid.*: Fig. 64: 1–3, 10, 12; Fig. 65: 2) and hole mouth jars (*ibid.*: Fig. 40: 1–14; Fig. 64: 4–7). According to the latest pottery from these assemblages, both phases date to the late Iron IIA.

As mentioned previously, A. Mazar (1993: 221–223; 2001: 300; 2006: 34; 2009: 27–28) believes that the temples were constructed in the late Iron I and were re-used as administrative buildings in the Iron IIA. James arrived at the same conclusion, given that no evidence for the continuity of cult was found on the secondary clay floor of the Northern Temple. On the other hand, the presence of cult objects on the floor of the Southern Temple points to cultic continuity. Arie agrees with Mazar that the temples were constructed in the late Iron I. But ceramically, there is no evidence for the temples having been constructed in the late Iron I.

Tel Rehov

Tel Rehov was the largest mound in the Beth Shean Valley during the Iron IIA. Both the upper and lower mounds were occupied at this time, putting the settled area at approximately 10 hectares. Stratum VI should probably be affiliated with the early Iron IIA whereas Stratum V and IV, which experienced much architectural continuity, both date to the late Iron IIA. Cultic contexts were found in late Iron IIA strata (Fig. 7.23). In Stratum V, two

important cultic objects were discovered in the apiary of Area C. One is a horned pottery altar with two female figures standing on either side of a sacred tree (Mazar 2016a: Fig. 21; see Fig. 7.24 here). The other is a painted ceramic chalice with petals drooping from below its neck (*ibid.*: Fig. 22; see Fig. 7.25 here). A similar chalice was found in Megiddo's Building 12/Q/99 (Kleiman *et al.* 2017: Fig. 1: 5; Taf. 6: 7). The two objects were found in proximity (Mazar 2015: 21; 2016a: 28e), and together support the notion that cultic activities were once performed in the apiary.



Fig. 7.23. Plan of Area E, Stratum IV, at Tel Rehov (after Mazar 2015: Fig. 2).



Fig. 7.24. Ceramic altar from Area C apiary at Tel Rehov (after Mazar 2016a: Fig. 21).



Fig. 7.25. Drooping petal chalice from Area C apiary at Tel Rehov (after Mazar 2016a: Fig. 22).

A Hippo storage jar inscribed with the phrase “belonging to Nimshi,” was also found in the apiary (Mazar 2016a: 28e; Fig. 23, 82; see Fig. 7.26 here). Additional references to the name Nimshi appear on storage jar inscriptions from Iron IIA contexts in Rehov’s Building CF and at Tel ‘Amal (Mazar 2015: 41–42; Ahituv and Mazar 2013: Fig. 6 after Levy and Edelstein 1972: Fig. 5). This may mean that the Nimshi family was strongly connected—at least administratively—to sites within the Beth Shean Valley, especially at Tel Rehov. The discovery of this storage jar within the apiary may mean that the Nimshi family was associated with the site’s honey and beeswax production facility. Whether they were aware of or sanctioned the cultic activities that occurred in the apiary is unknown.



Fig. 7.26. Storage jar inscribed with “belonging to Nimshi” from Area C apiary at Tel Rehov (after Mazar 2016a: Fig. 23).

The apiary is the only place on the mound that experienced destruction in Stratum V (Mazar 2015: 27; 2016a: 25e). It is unclear whether its destruction was accidental. Mazar believes that an earthquake may be the cause (2016a: 31e), but the fact that the devastation was localized calls this theory into question. Eran Arie has recently argued that the destruction may have been caused by the Omrides (2017: 14). If the Omrides are indeed responsible for its destruction, it is possible that their intention was to harm the Nimshides' local bee-keeping economy. Stratum IV buildings were built over the ruins of the Stratum V apiary while others either continued in use or totally replaced earlier architecture.

The layout of a piazza surrounded by architectural units continued to exist in Stratum IV of Area C. Two of these architectural units yielded important cultic finds. Building CF, which is located just north of the piazza, was constructed in Stratum V and continued in Stratum IV with some slight modifications (Mazar 2016a: 32e; see Fig. 7.27 here). The building yielded two cult-finds worth noting: a complete shrine model from Hall 1 and fragments of a cult stand or horned pottery altar from Room 3 (*ibid.*: 33e; see Fig. 7.28–7.29 here). A Hippo storage jar containing the inscription “belonging to the cupbearer of Nimshi” was also uncovered in Room 4 (*ibid.*: 32e–33e; Fig. 29; Mazar 2015: 41–42). Other noteworthy finds include 100 loom-weights (Hall 1), ground stones, seals, a tabun (Hall 1) and over 100 restorable vessels (Mazar 2016a: 32e–33e). The building's layout has been compared to Megiddo's Building 2081 (*ibid.*: 33e; Mazar 2015: 42), but is also very similar in appearance to Building 161 of Stratum VIIa₁–VIIb at Tell el-Far'ah N./Tirzah (Chambon 1984: Figs. 2, 9).

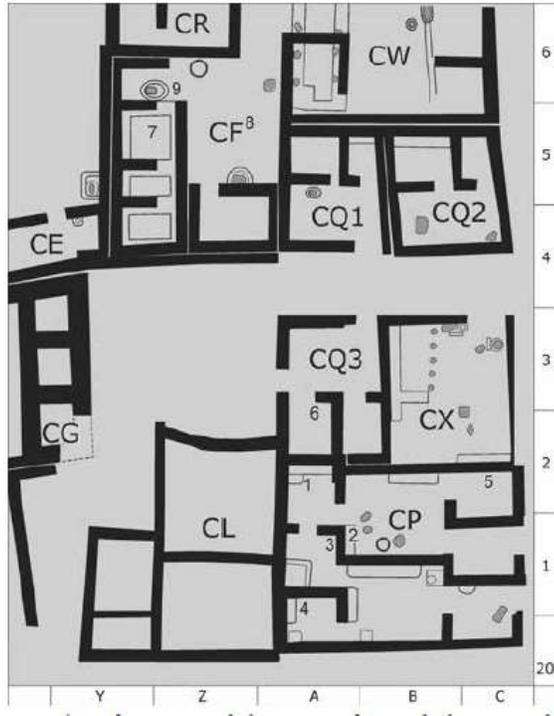


Fig. 7.27. Plan of Tel Rehov's Buildings CP and CF (after Mazar 2015: Fig. 9).



Fig. 7.28. Shrine model from Building CF, Stratum IV, at Tel Rehov (after Mazar 2015: Fig. 5).

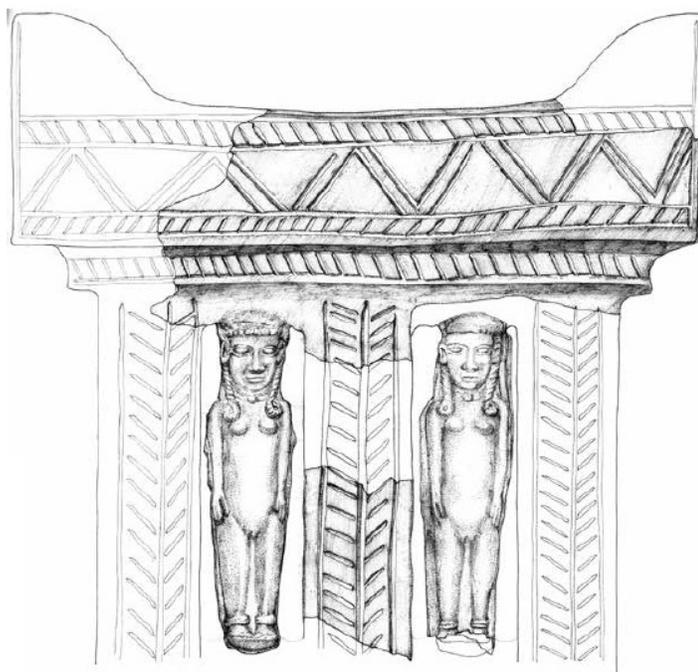


Fig. 7.29. Façade of possible ceramic altar from Building CF (after Mazar 2015: Fig. 4).

According to Mazar, it is possible that this building served a cultic function for elite families living within the building's vicinities (2015: 42; 2016: 33e). The discovery of cult-related items and loom weights in close proximity to one another is also interesting, especially given that industry and cult seem to have shared a special relationship at Tel Rehov.

Building CP was built upon earlier Stratum V remains (Fig. 7.27). It is located in the southeastern corner of the excavated area and was accessed through two entrances at the eastern end of the building. According to excavators, the layout of this building is unique and shares no parallels with contemporary sites (Mazar 2016a: 33e-34e). Two four-horned clay altars were found outside each doorway of Room 1, which seems to have served a special function (*ibid.*: 34e; Fig. 34; see Fig. 7.30 here). Additional cult-related items found within in the building include an tripod cup/incense burner, a figurine mold, a strainer (Room 7) (*ibid.*:

Fig. 38) and a ceramic stand decorated with petals (*ibid.*: Fig. 37, 53). The latter is reminiscent of a limestone cult stand from Megiddo's Building 2081 (Loud 1948: Pl. 254: 4). According to excavators, the faunal assemblage may also indicate that cult activities were carried out in the building, as several cow femurs and 24 astragali were found (Mazar 2015: 43; 2016a: 35e).

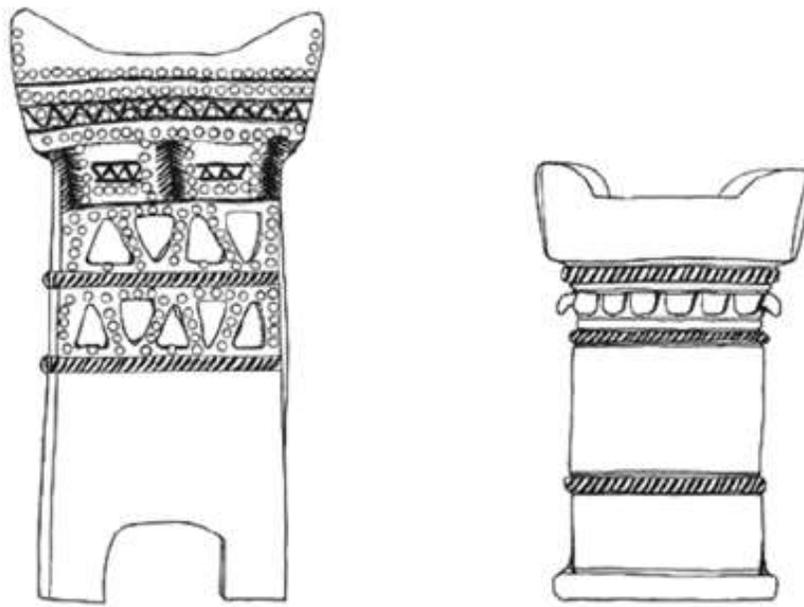


Fig. 7.30. Ceramic altars from Building CP at Tel Rehov (after Mazar 2015: Fig. 3).



Fig. 7.31. *Elisha* Inscription from Building CP, Tel Rehov (after Mazar 2015: Fig. 8).



Fig. 7.32. Cylindrical stand and other remains from Building CP (after Mazar 2016a: Fig. 37).

Other finds from Building CP include 170 loom weights and over 220 restorable vessels (*ibid.*: 34e; see Fig. 7.32 for finds *in situ*). We can infer that both feasting and storage activities took place within this building, given the relatively high percentages of cooking, serving and storage vessels that were found (*ibid.*: 35e). As Mazar points out, the size of this assemblage is too large to suggest that the building served a basic domestic function (2015: 44; 2016a: 35e). It seems that the building not only served as a space for communal feasting and storage activities, but also for food and textile production.

Lastly, and one of the most important discoveries to come from Building CP, is an ostrakon bearing the inscription [']š' (Mazar 2015: 43–44, Fig. 8; 2016: 34–35, Figs. 35, 85; see Fig. 7.31 here). Mazar reads this as a possible reference to the biblical prophet Elisha who, according to the Bible, was born 15 km south of Tel Rehov (2015: 44). He suggests that Building CP may have been the “seat” of Elisha, who aided the Nimshide family as Jehu

prepared to take the throne (*ibid.*). Mazar, however, admits that this proposal is highly speculative (*ibid.*; 2016a: 35e).



Fig. 7.33. Platform from Area E at Tel Rehov (after Mazar 2016a: Fig. 46).

A fourth cultic context was discovered in Area E, on the eastern side of the lower mound. It is described as an “open-air sanctuary” from Stratum IV, although activities may have begun in Stratum V (Mazar 2015: 27). A platform upon which three standing stones were found was discovered in the northeastern corner of Building EB (Fig. 7.33). A possible stone offering table stood in front of this feature (Mazar 2016a: 37e–38e). A broken horned pottery altar, which may have been broken intentionally, was found next to the platform (Mazar 2016a: 38e; see Fig. 7.34 here). In the open courtyard to the north of the platform, a large amount of animal bones were found along with clay bins, ovens and benches. Mazar suspects that this area may have been used for ritualistic feasting activities (2016: 38e). He believes the building in which the platform was found may have been either a “priest’s

dwelling” or administrative in nature (*ibid.*: 38e). It is also worth noting that in Stratum V, this area contained evidence of a metal-working and flint-scraping industry (Mazar 2015: 31). Whether ritualistic activities were carried out at the same time is unclear, though there seems to be continuity between Stratum V and IV in this area. Mazar clearly states, however, that the platform only functioned in Stratum IV (*ibid.*: 29).

Lastly, it should be noted that the Stratum IV buildings were destroyed in a heavy conflagration.



Fig. 7.34. Altar from Tel Rehov's Area E (after Mazar 2016a: Fig. 47).



Fig. 7.35. Figurines from Tel Rehov (after Mazar 2015: Fig. 6).

Tel 'Amal

Tel 'Amal is a small, 0.3-hectare site located ca. 5 km west of Tel Beth Shean (Fig. 7.36). The site is divided into two mounds, the western of which was excavated by N. Zori in

1958. Zori identified five strata dating to the Iron II, Persian, Byzantine and early Islamic periods. Large-scale excavations were later conducted by S. Levy and G. Edelstein, from 1962–1966, on behalf of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums. These excavations were carried out on the eastern mound in preparation for the construction of the Museum for Mediterranean Archaeology. N. Feig returned to the site in the early 1980's to excavate an east-west salvage trench south of Levy and Edelstein's excavated area. Here, several phases were uncovered: Early Bronze IV (Stratum V), Iron IIA (Stratum IV–III) and Iron II B–C (Strata II–I).

During S. Levy and G. Edelstein's excavations, cult objects were found in Stratum IV and III during. Strata IV and III both date to the late Iron IIA and should probably be equated to Tel Rehov's Strata V and IV (Arie 2017: 1, 14). Like at Tel Rehov, both phases experienced violent conflagrations (*ibid.*: 1, 5; Levy and Edelstein 1972: 328, 340). Although the destruction of Rehov V was limited to the apiary in Area C, it appears that several buildings were destroyed in Tel 'Amal IV. Arie believes that these buildings were destroyed by the Omrides during their attempt to take over the Beth Shean Valley (*ibid.*: 17 contra Kleiman 2016: 62, Table 1). The destruction of Stratum III, on the other hand, may be attributed to Hazael (Arie 2017: 14). Recovery from the destruction of Strata III must have happened rapidly, since some rooms were found in both Strata III–IV, and in some cases walls from Stratum III lay directly on top of those from Stratum IV.

In Stratum IV, a ceramic stand with a detachable bowl was found in Room 36 (Levy and Edelstein 1972: Pl. XXI: 2; see Fig. 7.37 here). A similar cylindrical stand with a removable bowl was found in Megiddo's Stratum VIA (Loud 1948: Pl. 87: 12).

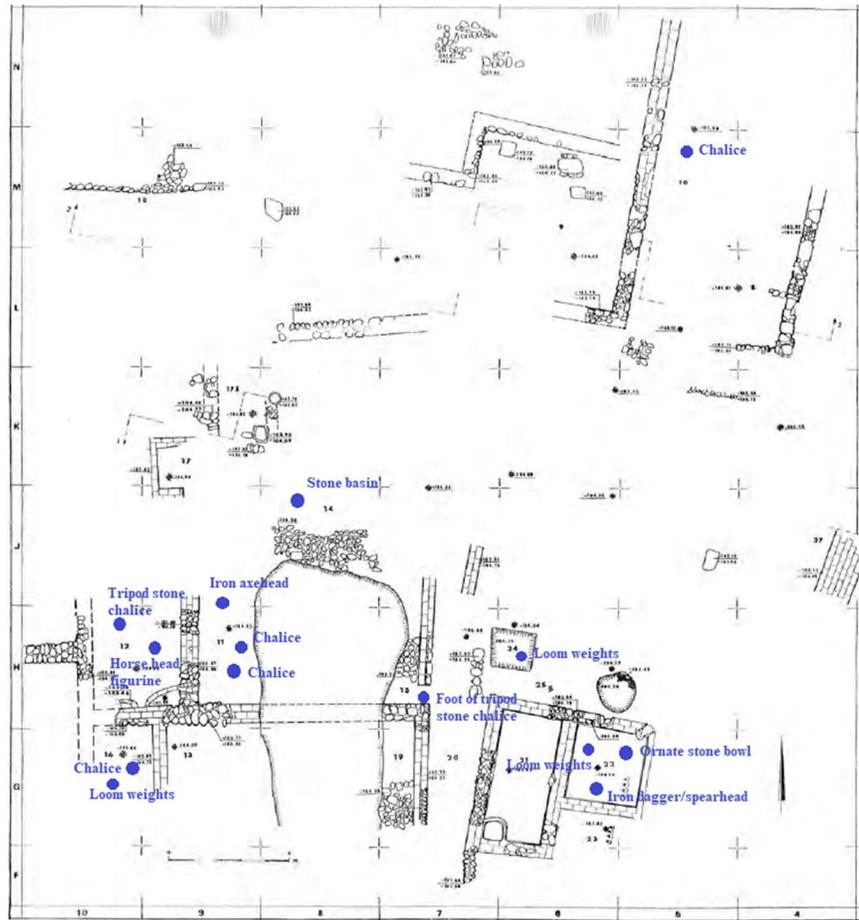


Fig. 7.36. Distribution of cult finds from Tel 'Amal's Niveau III (after Levy and Edelstein 1972: Pl. XIX).

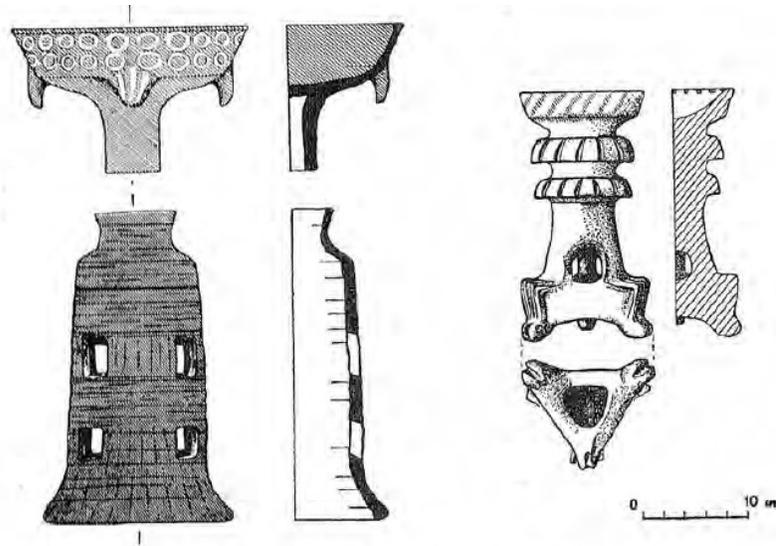


Fig. 7.37. Cylindrical stand and tripodal stone cult stand from Tel 'Amal (after Levy and Edelstein 1972: Pl. XXI).



Fig. 7.38. Inscribed Hippo jar from Tel 'Amal Niveau III–IV (after Levy and Edelstein 1972: Fig. 5).

Most of the cult finds were found within several rooms of a building attributed to Stratum III. A tripodal stone cult stand (Levy and Edelstein 1972: Pl. XXI: 1; see Fig. 7.37 here) with a “Phoenician-style” bowl, as well as a horse head figurine, were found in Stratum III’s Locus 12, along with a Black-on-Red juglet, a lamp, several bowls and a few juglets (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: Fig. 3.2). The tripodal cult stand was found inside one of two mudbrick tabuns filled with ash and is similar in appearance to a limestone cult stand from Megiddo’s Building 2081 (Loud 1948: Pl. 254: 4). Three chalices were also discovered within the building, as was the foot to a tripodal stone cult stand like the one discovered in Locus 12. The building itself may have been a courtyard-style structure, and it is worth questioning whether this building served both a public (given its size) and cultic function. It is also worth noting that an inscribed Hippo jar was found in Niveau III–IV (Fig. 7.38).

To the east of the courtyard-style building is a structure comprised of two small rooms (Loci 21, 22). Within one of the rooms, an iron plow point, an iron dagger/spearhead and an

ornate stone bowl (Locus 22) were discovered. The bowl may have been used in the cultic activities carried out within the courtyard-style building. Dozens of loom-weights were also found within this room, which is interesting given their proximity to the cultic area. Other loom weights were found within the cultic building itself (Locus 16), and within an installation (Locus 24) north of the building with two small rooms.

A decorated chalice with drooping petals, similar in form to several chalices from Tell es-Safi/Gath (Gadot *et al.* 2015: 1–3; Dagan, Eniukhina and Maeir 2018: Fig. 5), was also uncovered from an unknown locus (cf. Edelstein and Feig 1993: 1449). The only photograph of this find appears in Edelstein and Feig’s summary of the site (1993: 1449). The decoration on the Tel ‘Amal chalice is similar to three examples of decorated chalices from Tell es-Safi (Gadot *et al.* 2015: 1–2). All four are painted with diamond designs composed of diagonal lines, and the foot of the chalices are also painted, with diagonal lines or with varying decoration styles. Two of the Tell es-Safi chalices belong to the late Iron IIA Stratum A3, located on top of the mound, and one to the late Iron IIA Temple D3, located on the lower mound in Area D.

Pella

Bent-Axis Temple (Phase 6)

The last temple in the temple series from Pella, from Phase 6 (Fig. 7.39), is the only one dated to the Iron Age (Bourke 2004; 2012). It is classified as “Bent-Axis” (12 x 8 m) temple (Bourke 2012: 184; Table 1) and is associated with a number of cultic objects, including an “Ashdoda” figurine (*ibid.*: Fig. 23: 2) and a basalt mortar that shares a parallel with an object from Megiddo’s late Iron IIA Building 2081 (*ibid.*: Fig. 23: 1; cf. Loud 1948: Pl. 263: 22; see Fig. 7.40 here). Several pits containing broken cultic items and animal bones

were apparently cut into the temple's floor (Bourke 2004: 22). A stone altar was discovered in an open courtyard 5 meters east of the temple. A “box” decorated with bulls’ heads, perforated incense cups and a decorated chalice were found near the altar (*ibid.*; Bourke 2012: Fig. 21: 1–2; see Figs 7.41–7.42 here).

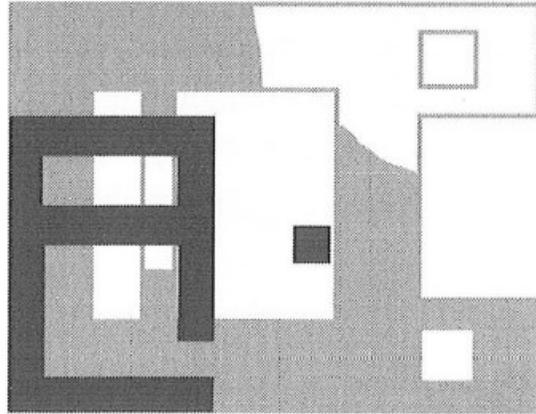


Fig. 7.39. Pella's Phase 6 “bent-axis” temple overlaid on plan of Phase 4 “Migdal” temple (after Bourke 2012: Table 1).

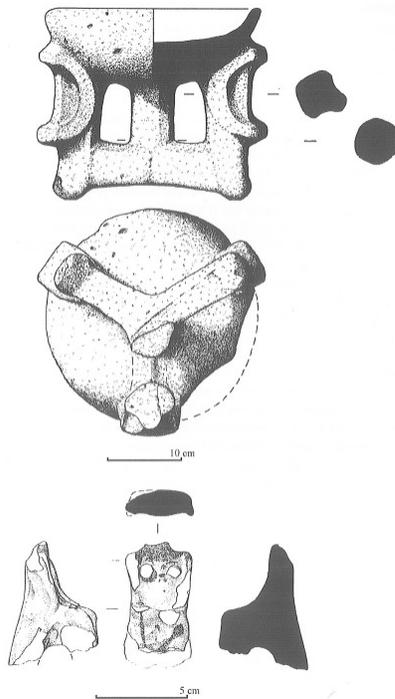


Fig. 7.40. Basalt tripod and “Ashdoda” figurine from Phase 6 temple at Pella (after Bourke 2012: Fig. 23).

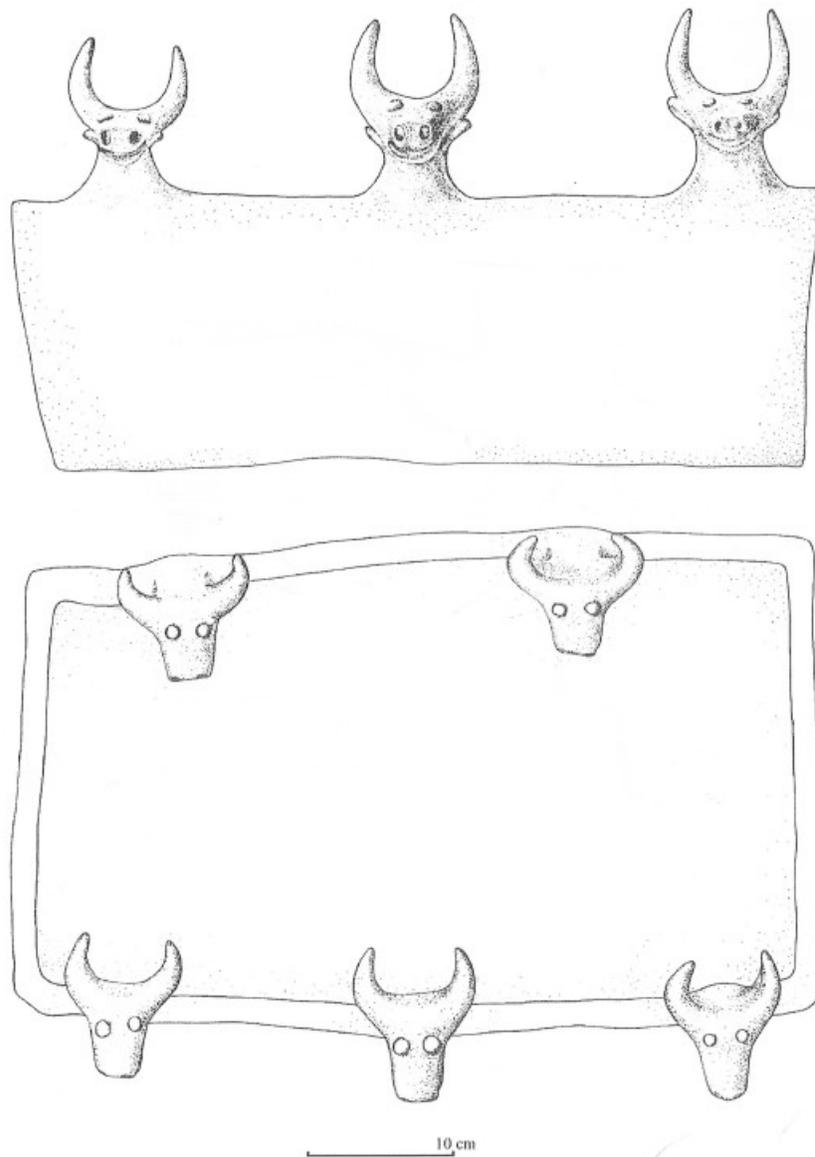


Fig. 7.41. "Bull-box" from Phase 6 temple at Pella (after Bourke 2012: Fig. 21).

Excavators have radiocarbon dated the stratum from 950/900 to 800 BCE (Bourke 2012: 190; Table 1). The temple's plan breaks with the Migdal-style Bronze Age tradition, although the Late Bronze III temple that preceded it shares a similar layout (see the "Phase 5" temple in *ibid.*: Table 1). S. Bourke believes that the changes in Pella were influenced by

contact with the Coastal Plain (*ibid.*: 191). However, the material culture, especially the pottery and basalt mortar, is closer in nature to finds from the Beth Shean and Jezreel Valleys. The pottery from the temple looks typical to late Iron IIA (*ibid.*: Figs. 19–20, 22).

Interestingly, the temple is located just east of a large administrative building that the excavators compare to the Stratum VIII Citadel in Hazor's Area B (Bourke 2012: 184, n. 5; cf. Yadin *et al.* 1960: 51-54, Pl. CCV). As far as I am aware, the plan of the building from Pella has not yet been published. It is unclear whether this structure should be affiliated with Hazael, the Omrides or perhaps a local ruler. In his survey of the temples, Bourke noted that the Iron Age temple and surrounding settlement were destroyed by fire (Bourke 2004: 22; 2012: 190–191). If the structure was erected by Hazael, one must seek an explanation for its destruction. If, however, this stratum was under the control of the Omrides or a local ruler, it is possible that this phase was destroyed during the events of Hazael's campaign.

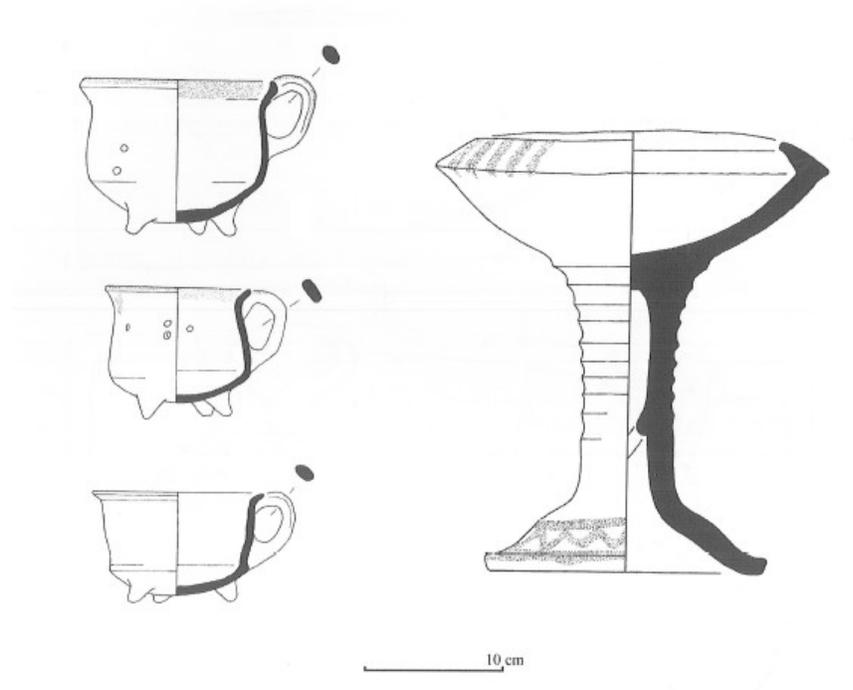


Fig. 7.42. Tripod cups and decorated chalice from Phase 6 temple at Pella (after Bourke 2012: Fig. 22).

Ceramic Altars

It should also be noted that two ceramic incense altars were also discovered at Pella, in the East Cut IVE (Locus 21.2). One is a four-horned altar (RN 72064) decorated with clay applique discs along the tray/rim of the altar, an incised “rope” appliqué midway up the stand and incised “sacred trees” on the center of its four sides, one above the rope decoration and one below (base width ca. 25 cm, 50 cm high; Smith and Potts 1992: 97, Pl. 70). The entire stand appears to have been red-slipped and there is no evidence of the altar having been used for burning.

The other altar is potentially “four-horned” (RN 72066) with a possible window decorated on either side by female plaque figurines (23.0 cm wide, 1.3–2.0 cm thick, 59.5 cm preserved height; Smith and Potts 1992: 98, Pl. 71). The figurines feature curling hair similar to Astarte/Hathor figurines from the Bronze Age. Also featured on this cult stand is a horse head, located beneath one of the female plaque figurines. One “horn” of the cult stand is a representation of human head; a second head, which was not preserved, probably adorned the other side, making this the front of the altar. An altar with two heads for “horns” is a very unique example within the southern Levantine corpus.

Little survived of the structures near which these stands were found, and the excavators suspect that this area may have been used as a dumping ground for pottery from elsewhere in the site (Smith and Potts 1992: 97). It is possible that it served as a refuse area for finds that were thrown out of the nearby Phase 6 temple in Area XXXII, although this is purely conjectural.

Samaritan Highlands

The contexts to presently be reviewed include those of Tell el-Farah N./Tirzah, Tel Dothan, Shiloh and Samaria. Although two four-horned altars were found at Shechem (Sellin 1926: Tafel 31b–c; cf. Gitin 1989: Table 1, Nos. 36–37), there is insufficient evidence regarding these artifacts to warrant a separate sub-section. It is nevertheless important to note their existence, and they will be included in the cult catalog in the subsequent chapter.

Tell el-Far'ah N./Tirzah

Stratum VIIa at Tell el-Far'ah N./Tirzah is a small (1 ha.) rural settlement mainly concentrated in the western sector of the mound (Chantier II) (Finkelstein and Kleiman 2019: 288). It is characterized by a few domestic buildings and Building 490, a rectangular pillared building (Sq. I–J/6), oriented north-south, with a slightly elevated broad room or cella (Chambon 1984: Plan 1; see Fig. 7.43 here).

Although de Vaux's reconstruction of Building 490 must be approached with caution, it is still useful for consideration. De Vaux reconstructed two rows of pillars which divided the main hall into three aisles. Since the long room/cella is slightly higher than the rest of the structure, de Vaux added a stair or steps that may have been used to access this room. The main hall was probably accessed via a small entry room built off the building's southeastern corner; entry from this room would have been gained through the western aisle. It is worth noting that the entry room was an important feature of the building—it leads to the question as to whether this should be seen as a public, possibly cultic, building, or a four-room house.

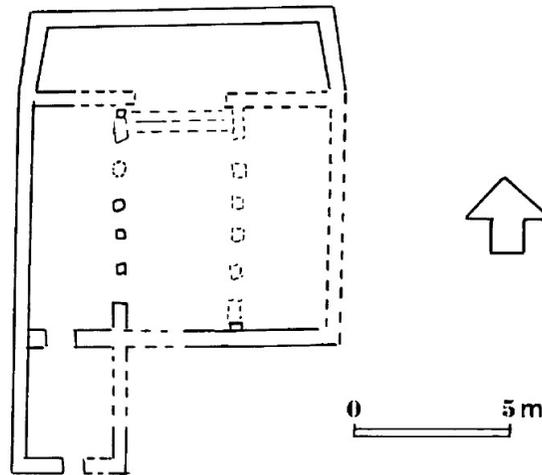


Fig. 7.43. De Vaux's reconstruction of Building 490 at Tell el Far'ah N./Tirzah (after Burdajewicz 1990: Fig. 34).

A clue that this structure could have served as a cultic building or temple is indicated by its location. Building 490 is situated just above the subterranean part of the Middle Bronze temple. Another argument in favor of the sacred nature of the building is the discovery of a silver and bronze statuette of female deity in the southern part of Locus 491, the eastern aisle of the building. It is also possible that two chalices found in Stratum VIIb Building 442 should be assigned to Stratum VIIa, since no floors clearly sealed the activity in this space. Apart from these discoveries, the building was largely devoid of finds, aside from a storage jar and an amphora(?). It seems as though the building was probably cleared out before the end of the settlement/beginning of the next phase (Stratum VIIb).

Although the lack of cult finds (besides the chalices and statuette) poses a challenge to the argument that this building served as a cultic building, it must be reiterated that the building was probably cleared out at the end of or during its period of use. Public buildings such as temples were often periodically cleaned and/or cleared of their cultic paraphernalia, as can be seen in the Megiddo Stratum VI "Migdal" temple in Area BB and the Level Q-5

temple in Area Q. Microarchaeological analysis from Level Q-5 points to “cleaning” of the temple (Regev *et al.* 2015: 152–153; samples of organic and ashy material were taken from Squares B–E/5–6, in the western rooms of the structure, but note that the authors mention a lack of unheated clay, ash, etc. in the main hall), and so it is not unreasonable to assume that Building 490 may have been periodically swept or cleared. Cult finds from temples are also often buried in pits, or favissae, after their periods of use. A pit (L. 241) containing a shrine model (Fig. 7.44) was found in Stratum VIIb, and this pit may have been opened at the end of Stratum VIIa. The model may be associated with Building 490 in some capacity (Chambon 1984: Plan III), especially since it was found ca. 15 m from Building 490 in Square K/4.

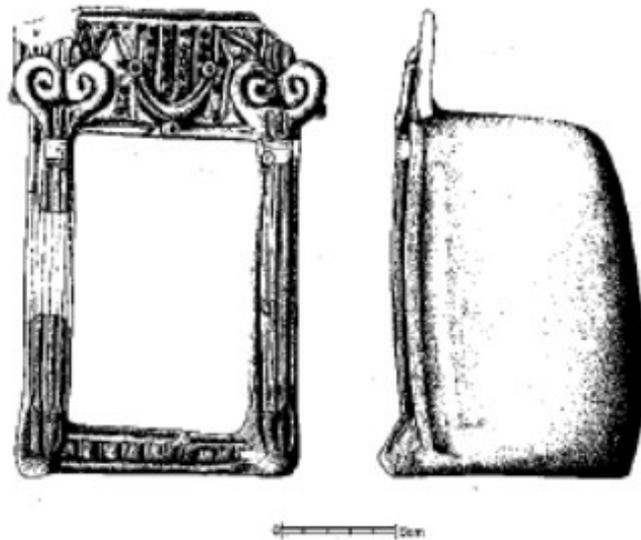


Fig. 7.44. Tell el-Far‘ah N./Tirzah shrine model (after Chambon 1984: Pl. 66: 1).

There are thus a few reasons to view Building 490 as cultic rather than as a standard four-room house. The similarities between it and the four-room house type are, however, striking (for examples of four-room houses, see Faust and Bunimovitz 2003: 23; for

reconstructions of the evolution of the four-room house type see Herzog 1984: Fig. 32; Shiloh 1987: Fig. 2–3). It is possible that the plan of the four-room house inspired similar plans for cultic buildings/temples. After all, temples were houses of the deity, and so it is possible that early in the Iron Age, the plans of cultic buildings/temples were adaptations of and conceptualized similarly to domestic households. The similarity of the plan of Building 490 to other cultic buildings, including those at Megiddo, Beth Shean and Horvat Tevet, is a topic that will be touched upon later in this thesis. Furthermore, although Chambon points out that there is no evidence to suggest that this building was specifically reserved for ritual use, he does, however, admit that it is possible this building may have played an “occasionally” cultic role (1984: 20). He sees a strong connection between ritual and whatever domestic activities may have been carried out in this building and admits that this building may testify to the mixing of worship with daily life (Chambon 1984: 20).

There is possible evidence for cult in the subsequent phase, Stratum VIIb. Stratum VIIb at Tell el-Far‘ah N./Tirzah is comprised mainly of domestic houses, most of which are of the four-room variety.¹⁴ Right outside the ancient Middle Bronze gate, a 12.50 x 7.50 m structure (Building 153) was constructed, in front of which lay a stone basin beside a square stone pedestal. Herzog believes that the walls of the old gate were adapted to include a broad-room sanctuary within the old gate complex: “this reconstruction is supported by the fact that a wall was built across the gate between the door jambs thus converting the gate into a closed room with a shallow niche in the back wall” (Herzog 1997: 218). On either side of the “niche” (Locus 123) were benches (*ibid.*). The building in question contains what may

¹⁴ Herzog suggests, following de Vaux, that the nature of the city in Stratum VIIb was relatively egalitarian given the nature of the buildings (many of them four-room houses of similar sizes) and the lack of heterogeneity in the finds (1997: 218).

have been an open courtyard (Locus 153) and at least two small rooms to the east (Locus 166, 166A). Unfortunately, exact counts of the pottery from Tell el-Far'ah N./Tirzah were not recorded, and so a ceramic analysis is not possible at this time.

A figurine, nearly identical to one found at Tel Rehov, was discovered in Locus 440 in Stratum VIIb (Chantier II) (cf. Chambon 1984: Pl. 2 and Mazar 2015: 38–39, Fig. 6.3). Locus 440 is the center aisle of a pillared building/four-room house in Square J/6, adjacent and east of Building 442. The Tel Rehov figurine derives from Stratum G-2 (Rehov VI). Since both figurines may derive from the same mold (Mazar 2015: 38–39), they must date to roughly the same period. The Tel Rehov figurine, however, was found in an earlier phase than that of Tell el-Far'ah N./Tirzah (Stratum VIIb).

It is also worth mentioning that a perforated tripod cup was found in the narrow east-west passageway between Building 161 and 176 in Locus 169 (Chambon 1984: Pl. 54: 12).

Tel Dothan

An Iron II settlement was discovered in two areas at Tel Dothan. In Area A, a four-room house and the remains of other structures and installations were uncovered; in Area L, a large, courtyard-style building (House 14) was unearthed (Fig. 7.45), along with several houses. J. Free interpreted House 14 (Phases 4 and 3) to be an administrative building that made profit from the collection of agricultural produce. S. Gibon, T. Kennedy and J. Kramer visited Tel Dothan in the 2000's and published what they saw (2013). Apparently clandestine excavations and weathering have revealed more of House 14, which Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer believe to be a cultic building (2013: 317).

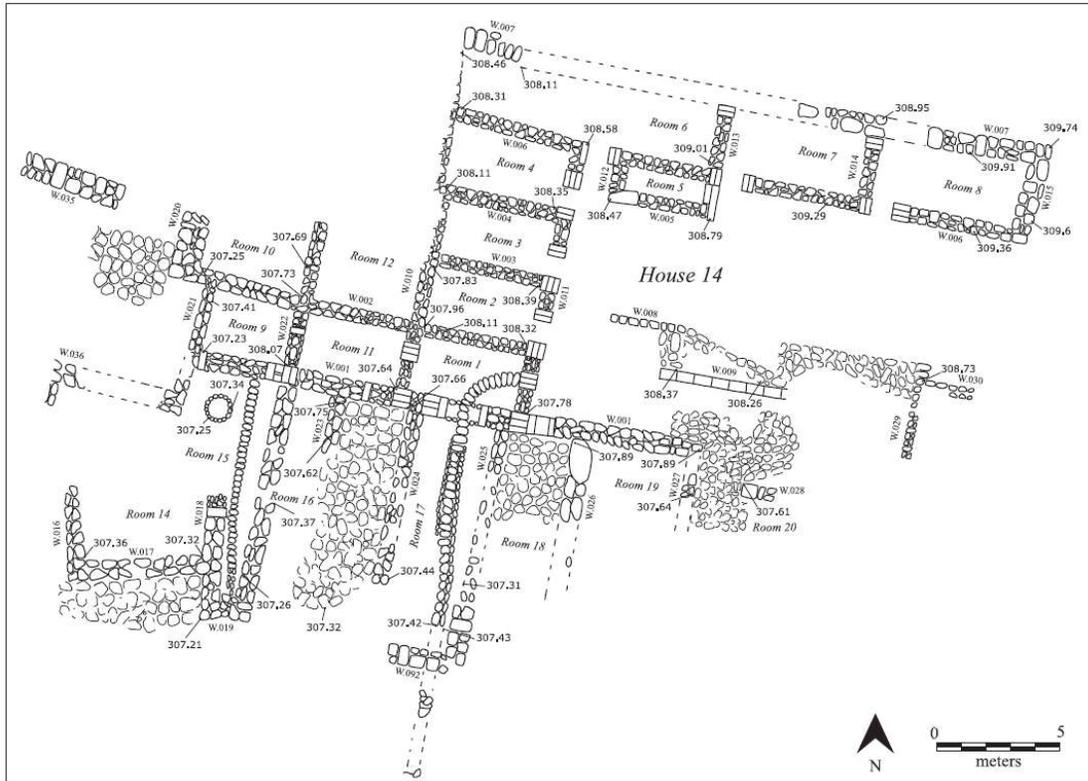


Fig. 7.45. Top plan of House 14 at Tel Dothan (after Master *et al.* 2005: Fig. 10.25).

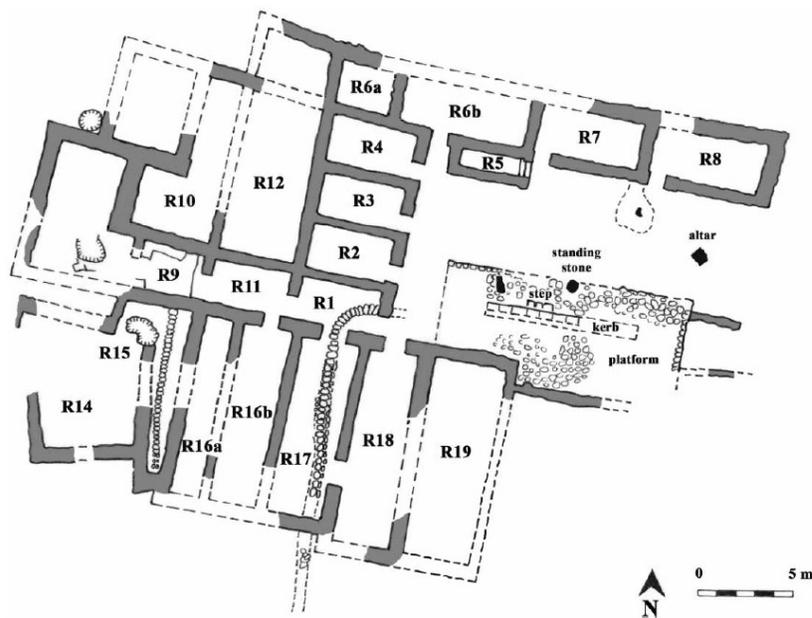


Fig. 7.46. Reconstructed plan of House 14 with altar and platform (after Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer 2013: Fig. 5).

Although the excavators make note of several destruction layers in House 14, Master *et al.* argue that there was only one conflagration, dated with radiocarbon to the end of the 9th century BCE (2005: 103). However, a secondary occupation of House 14 has been proposed in both the final report and, more strongly, by Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer. The latter argue that this secondary phase dates to the early-to-mid 8th century BCE (Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer 2013: 314). This is relevant given that Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer believe that a four-horned altar fragment, which they found upon visiting the site, was placed in secondary use within an installation dating to this period.¹⁵ They believe that the four-horned altar fragment was originally part of an altar set up in the courtyard of House 14 in the 9th century BCE (Fig. 7.46–7.48). They conclude that House 14 served a cultic, rather than administrative, function in the 9th century BCE (Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer 2013: 317). However, cult and administration perhaps operated side by side. The first phase of the building, which Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer reconstruct as cultic, clearly had rooms for storage (see Fig. 7.4). Grain offerings were found next to the altar in Megiddo's Building 2081, and so it is not out of line to suggest that grain, and probably other forms of produce, were offered ritualistically during this phase.

¹⁵ Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer suggest that the four-horned altar fragment was originally part of an installation abutting Wall 31 (2013: 314). Wall 31 itself abuts the southern wall of Room 7 and seems to have been added, according to Master *et al.* (2005: Fig. 10.35), in a secondary phase.



Fig. 7.47. Four-horned altar from Tel Dothan (after Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer 2013: Fig. 11).

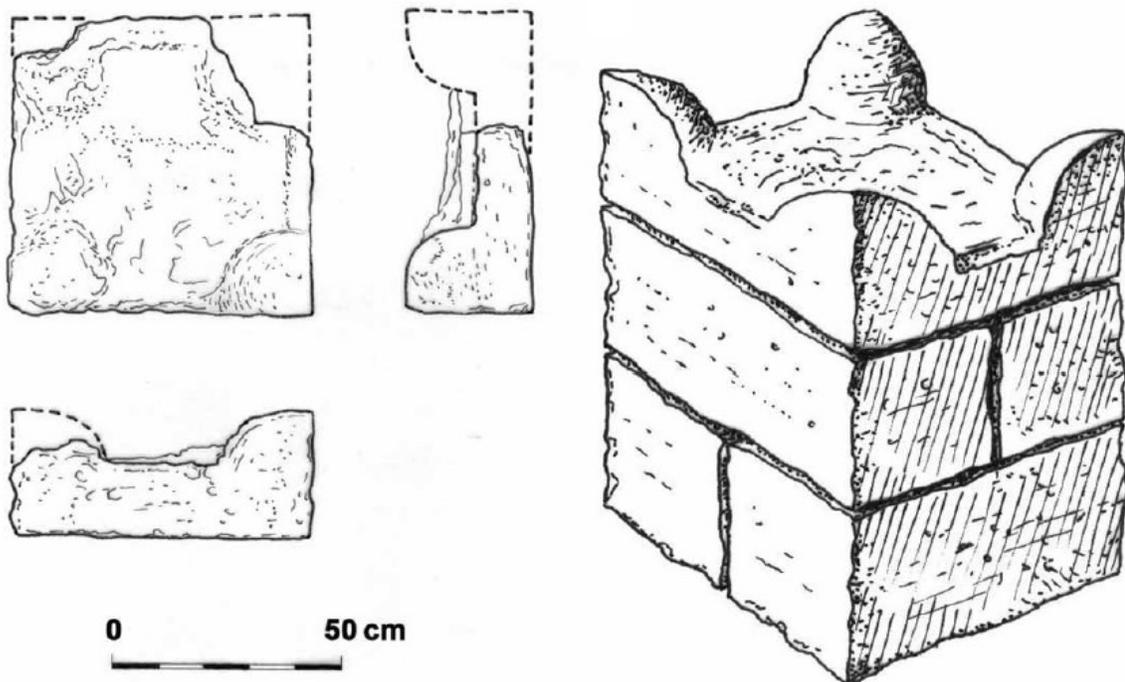


Fig. 7.48. Reconstruction of the Tel Dothan altar (after Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer 2013: Fig. 13a–b).

Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer identify two other pieces of evidence which would indicate a cultic function in the first phase of the building: 1) the existence of one, possibly two, *maṣṣeboth* and 2) a kern which may have served as part of a *bamah*. There are no other published finds that would indicate a cultic function of the building, besides a tripod strainer cup from Room 11 (Master *et al.* 2005: Fig. 10.55: 15). However, this may be due to the fact that the pottery and small finds have not yet been published in full.

With regard to the secondary phase of the building, it is true that some distinctive 8th century types were found in Area L; specifically, in Loci 30, 41 and 43 (Master *et al.* 2005: Fig. 10.53: 12, 13; Fig. 10.54: 12, 13). But Locus 43 is located in House 8—a domestic house attributed to Phase 4 (which Free dated to the 10th–9th centuries BCE). Locus 30 is part of House 13, also of Phase 4, and Locus 41, though not listed in the final report, does not appear to be a part of House 14. As for forms with Iron IIB parallels in House 14, they include a bowl from Locus 21—not located in House 14 (Master *et al.* 2005: Fig. 10.56: 7)—and a red-slipped burnished krater from Locus 113, Room 17 (*ibid.*: Fig. 10.56: 21). Two bowls may also be distinctive of the Iron IIB (Master *et al.* 2005: Fig. 10:56: 2, 4), which appear in Locus 2 and 3 (Room 4 and 5). Overall, the pottery from House 14 does not seem to have been published in full, and when it is it would be interesting to see if more 8th century BCE pottery appears in this area.

If both phases within the building date to the 9th century BCE (see Master *et al.* 2005: 114 for a similar conclusion), this would have implications for understanding the nature of cult in this area, especially with regard to whether cultic activities were cancelled in this building prior to its destruction.

If the secondary phase of the building indeed dates to the 8th century BCE, as

Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer suggest, House 14 then probably served both administrative and cultic functions. Rims of over 200 hole-mouth jars were found in the destruction, along with a significant amount of charred grain (Master *et al.* 2005: 114). Grain was, in some cases, found inside the jars, which would indicate that they were primarily used for storing this agricultural by-product (see Butcher 2020: 67). The sheer number of holemouth jars suggests that House 14 served as a collection center for grain and other produce, and—similar to the *lmlk* jars of Judah—they may have been turned into profit or used for redistributive purposes (Lipschits 2018: 30–31; Greenhut 2006: 287; Butcher 2020: 12, 67).

It should also be noted that a cultic vessel was found in Area A, Locus 2 of Free's excavations (Fig. 7.49). It was found inside a Phase 4–3 four-room house (11 x 13 m), which Master *et al.* note was found to have two surfaces: one dating to the Iron I and another to the Iron II (2005: 69). Evidence for destruction was found between the two floors, which indicates that the Iron I building was probably destroyed and re-used in the Iron II. As noted by Master *et al.*, the cultic vessel is similar in appearance to Tyrian/Galilean pithoi (2005: Fig. 9.26: 9), however a striking difference between this example and the latter type is that this vessel is equipped with handles. This may make it more like the multi-handled kraters found at Megiddo and Ta'anach (Lamon and Shipton 1939: Pl. 21: 125; Rast 1978: Fig. 41). The Megiddo example is decorated similarly to this vessel, however the latter is punctuated. Master *et al.* attribute this vessel to the late Iron IIA destruction of the area (2005: Fig. 9.26). Other ceramics found together with this vessel do indeed point to a date in the late Iron IIA (cf. Master *et al.* 2005: Fig. 9.26).

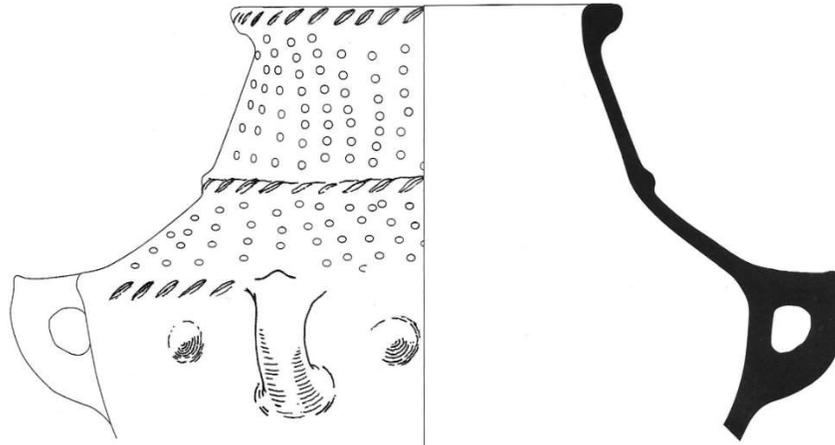


Fig. 7.49. Iron IIA cultic vessel from Tel Dothan (after Master *et al.* 2005: Fig. 9.26: 15).

Shiloh

A rock-hewn altar was discovered 1.5 km west of Shiloh, in an open area, half-way up the slope of a hill (Givat Harel), not close to any archaeological finds (Fig. 7.50). The altar is roughly cut from the surrounding Moza marl, with four unevenly shaped horns at its top. Unlike other stationary altars, this example is squat, wider at the base than at its top, which measures 2.20 x 2.10 x 2.15 x 3.25 m (Elitzur and Nir-Zevi 2003: 31). It stands 3.20 m high at its tallest. A “piece of blackened rock” was found at the foot of the altar, which the discoverers take to be from the upper layer of the altar (Elitzur and Nir-Zevi 2003: 32). They date the altar, based on a comparison of altars from Mount Ebal and Zorah, to the Iron I (*ibid.*: 34). However, an Iron IIA date (or later) makes more sense given that limestone four-horned altars only begin to appear in this period (see below). Other altars mentioned include an altar found at the foot of Samaria (Sukenik 1942). A second stationary altar was also recently found at the ongoing Shiloh excavations. It was found in secondary reuse in a wall associated with the Byzantine church. The altar is preserved with one horn, though it was

probably originally four-horned (see Fig. 7.51). It, like the Givat Harel altar, probably dates to the Iron IIA.



Fig. 7.50. Rock-hewn altar found near Shiloh at Givat Harel (after Elitzur and Nir-Zevi 2003: Fig. 1).

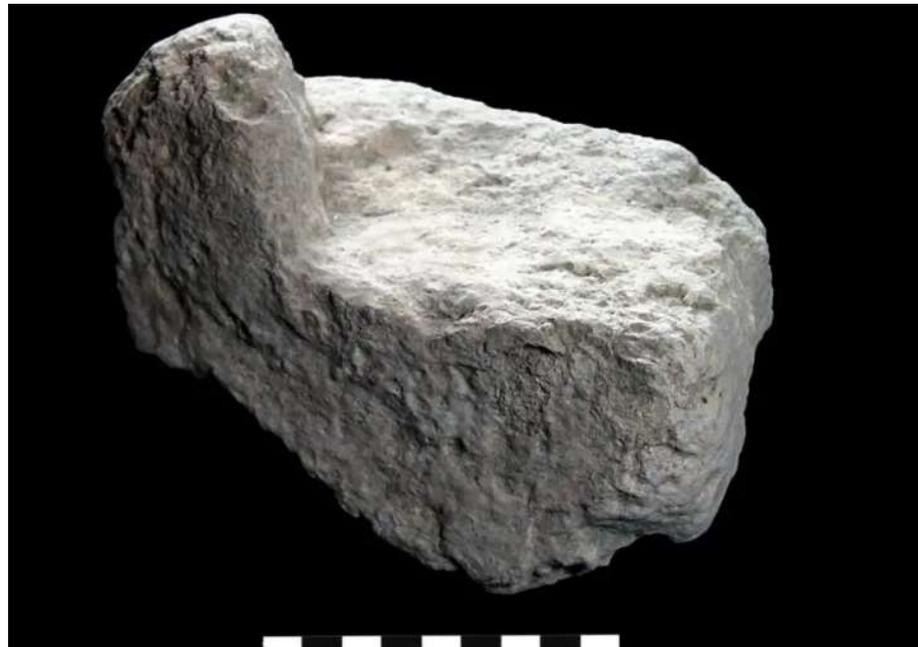


Fig. 7.51. Single-horned altar found at Shiloh (after <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/was-the-corner-of-gods-altar-found-in-shiloh-west-bank-606477>).

Samaria

E.L. Sukenik excavated a system of rock-cut trenches, ca. 500 m north of the mound of Samaria, from 1931–1933/1935. Inside the system (Locus E 207) was found a large amount of potsherds, figurines, animal bones (some with evidence of burning), rattles and other small finds, and it was thus interpreted as the remains of an Israelite cult place (Sukenik 1942: 23–24). Seven inscriptions were found inside the trench, three of which were ostraca and four apparently belonged to inscribed vessels. Approximately 1,100 rim fragments were found within the system and 150 figurine fragments, mostly belonging to zoomorphic figurines—one of which, a horse, had a name inscribed on its head (Steiner 1997: 19–20). Female figurines, horse/horse-and-rider figurines and figurines of cows or sheep/goats are attested. Of the female figurines, some were of a woman holding an object in her arms, most likely a drum or a baby, whereas other were of a woman holding her breasts. There were also figurines of a seated woman and of a woman drawing a veil over her face. Two molds for a plaque female figurine holding a drum/baby were found, as were a few plaque figurines themselves (Steiner 1997: 20).

Most of the pottery found within the trenching system dates to the late 8th century BCE. According to Steiner, this was probably the period when Samaria was used as a cultic site (1997: 20–21). It is perhaps more likely that the trenches, long after they were cut, served as a dumping ground for worn-out or broken vessels and animal remains. Since a relatively large amount of figurines were found, as were rattles and other potentially cultic objects, it would not entirely be out of line to suggest that rituals related to the royal household were practiced at Samaria.

The pottery found within the trench is noteworthy: according to Steiner, 69% of the

rim fragments found in E 207 represent serving vessels, 9% cooking vessels, 6% storage vessels and 16% lamps (1997: 24). A note on communal feasting is appropriate with regard to these percentages, and in light of the fact that animal bones—some of them burnt—were found within the trenching system. The significant amount of serving vessels and the high number of lamps points to feasting activities in the late 8th century at Samaria. Elaborate feasting is part of ritual life, and the number of lamps found indicate that these activities may have taken place at night.

The Samaria Ostraca reference the ḥ-men, individuals who were involved in the exchange of “aged wine” and “washed oil” in the form of elite goods (Nam 2012: 155). Nam supports the idea that the ḥ-men were recipients of aged wine and washed oil and argues that these men participated in a redistributive system of competitive feasting (*ibid.*). According to Nam, clan elites would have received gift offerings from the leaders of Samaria at communal events and this, in turn, would strengthen the power of the Israelite kings (*ibid.*). Symbolically, the recipients of aged wine and washed oil were tied to the Israelite kingship through their consumption of elite products (*ibid.*: 160). H.M. Niemann argues that the corpus represents king-clan relations. He believes that the ostraca represent “the first stage of the development of state administration” and that, through inviting the local clan leaders as “honored guests,” the kings Joash and/or Jeroboam II were able to consolidate their power (Niemann 2008: 249).

Perhaps the large amount of serving vessels, animal remains and other objects found within E 207 represent remains of similar competitive feasting activities. Since most of the sherds date to the late 8th century, it attests to the continuity of feasting relations from the early 8th century (the time period from which the ostraca derive) to the days leading up to the

kingdom's downfall. The discovery of such an assemblage ca. 500 m from the mound may indicate that the feasts hosted by the royal family were held outside of the city proper.

Excursus: The Huleh Valley and Tel Dan

Tel Dan is a ca. 60 hectare site located at the northeastern end of the Huleh Valley. The site was excavated by Avraham Brian from 1966 to 2003, on behalf of Hebrew Union College. Excavations have continued at the site under the direction of David Ilan, who is affiliated with the same college. Seven areas are present at the site, including the “temple complex” of Area T, which contains most of the cult-related Iron Age finds.

A. Davis has cogently argued for the cultic nature of Area T (Davis 2013: 22ff.). The area itself is divided into sectors (Davis 2013: 21). T-North and T-Central contain the cultic *bamot*, whereas other sectors of Area T contain less ritually relevant, yet informative data on both the nature and stratigraphy of this part of the site (*ibid.*: 21–22). Davis argues that the *bamot* are evidence for attention-focusing devices (cf. Renfrew 1985: 16), and that the cultic paraphernalia found in T-Center and T-West points to the ritualistic nature of the remains.

Strata III–II are the main phases of cultic activity in Area T at Tel Dan. They date to the 9th and 8th centuries BCE, respectively. Although the stratigraphy is complex in Area T, there were two main stratigraphic “anchors” found in this area: a yellow floor dated by excavators to the 9th century BCE and a destruction layer which is assigned to Tiglath-Pileser III's destruction of the site in the 8th century BCE (Davis 2013: 29). Regardless of these anchors, the dating and nature of this sector of the mound are complex. Pottery comes from fills at the base of the podium's foundations and, furthermore, the ceramic report remains unpublished.

The T-North “podium” has been identified by some as a cultic *bamah* and by others

as a palace, or at least as a sort of public, elite building. It is therefore worth investigating the remains from Strata III–II, at least in terms of the cultic paraphernalia and animal bones present at the site.

In T-Center, a four-horned altar, two incense altars and figurine/mask fragments were uncovered. In T-West, two additional incense altars were uncovered along with a “sacrificial altar” found in association with an iron fire pan/shovel and a sacrificial pit (Davis 2013: 26). A few other cultic elements were found in T-South (*ibid.*).

Of the ceramics from Stratum III that have been published, most indicative types have parallels in late Iron IIA strata at other sites in the north (Biran 1982). Although E. Arie (2008) has argued in favor of combining Strata III–II into one “final Iron IIA”/Iron IIB stratum, as Davis points out—this argument is only based on the currently published ceramic remains (Davis 2013: 31, n. 2). There is good reason to believe that there is indeed a late Iron IIA stratum in Area T in light of testimonies from the excavators (D. Ilan and Y. Thearani, personal communication). This being the case, there may have existed a substantial open air *bamah*/podium at the site in the late Iron IIA.

An important question remains: with which local/political entity was this *bamah* affiliated? The location of the site means that it would have probably fallen within the domain of Hazael king of Damascus. However, cultic continuity from the late Iron IIA to the Iron IIB means that we must leave room for the possibility that this late Iron IIA–IIB site was controlled by a cultural entity that shared the same practices and beliefs, despite however modified these beliefs may have been over time. According to Davis and J. Greer, who has provided a holistic analysis of animal bones from Area T, the Omrides were in control of the site in the late Iron IIA (Davis 2013: 53–55; Greer 2013: 130–133); others, however, point

out that the material culture is reflective of Aramaean occupational activity (Arie 2008; Finkelstein 2013: 106–107). Unfortunately, a well-informed answer to this question is impossible to arrive at in this point in time given that the final report still awaits publication.

Regardless of this issue, many scholars do agree that the site was in Israelite (“Nimshide”) hands in the Iron IIB (cf. Davis 2013: 67; Greer 2013: 133; Finkelstein 2013: 139)—at which point several modifications were made to the *bamah* in Area T. The *bamah* was clearly still in use during this time. In my opinion, this remains a contentious issue and the site’s affiliation cannot be assumed until the final report is published and can be properly analyzed. However, it should be kept in mind that the continuity of cult practice from one phase into the next probably means that the same local and over-arching political entities were in control of the site from the late Iron IIA to the Iron IIB.

Summary

The present chapter reviewed cultic contexts in the northern highlands and valleys dating to the Iron IIA–IIB. The cultic contexts have been presented in terms of architecture, ceramics, faunal remains and cultic paraphernalia. Patterns apparent in these aspects of cult will be discussed further in Chapter 9, as will an analysis of the interrelations apparent in cult and administration during the Iron IIA (and perhaps during the Iron IIB). It is also noteworthy that numerous cultic contexts appear in the Iron IIA and that fewer sites with appear during the Iron IIB, the ramifications of which will be explored further below.

CHAPTER 8: CATALOG OF CULT FINDS

The following chapter presents a catalog of various cult finds from the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. The appearance, typology and function of these objects will be discussed.

Four-horned Altars

Four-horned altars are often classified as “tower models,” since they are interpreted as representing models of towers, or other aspects of ancient Near Eastern architecture.

Tower models/altars may symbolize roof rituals wherein incense was burnt on the rooftops of dwellings or public architecture (Gitin 2002: 99). The horns of these altars are reflected in many aspects of ancient Near Eastern art—in Anatolia (Diamant and Rutter 1969: 176–177), Mesopotamia (Black and Green 2000: 183, Fig. 152), Cyprus (Karageorghis 1982: 92–106; Karageorghis 2003: 215) and the Aegean (for Minoan examples see: d’Agata 1992: Pl. LXIa–LXIIa). However, there is disagreement within Eastern Mediterranean studies as to what exactly the horns symbolize (cf. Bilić 2013 contra Banou 2008).

The earliest four-horned altars known from the ancient Near East were made from ceramic and were discovered in Late Bronze Age contexts in Emar (Tour A, Tour J; Muller 2002: Fig. 55, 60; possibly Fig. 62, 71, 73–74), Mumbaqa (Frank *et al.* 1982: 60, Fig. 39; Machule *et al.* 1993: 88, Fig. 11a; Muller 2002: Fig. 116–118), Tel Fray (Muller 2002: Fig. 88) and Tell Faq’ous (Muller 2002: Fig. 86–87; cf. Margueron 1982: 65, Pl. III3; Gitin 2002: 96). There is a resurgence in the Iron IIA at sites like Tel Rehov (Mazar 2015: Fig. 3) and Pella (Smith and Potts 1992: 97–98, Pl. 70–71). The earliest *limestone* portable altars appear only in Iron IIA and later contexts. Iron IIA contexts featuring such altars include Megiddo (Loud 1948: Fig. 102) and Lachish (Aharoni 1975: 26; Fig. 5).

As more altars are discovered, it becomes increasingly necessary to divide them into

types. Types include: 1) portable four-horned limestone altars (“Type I,” e.g. one at Ḥorvat Tevet); 2) portable non-horned limestone altars (“Type II,” e.g. one at Megiddo, two at Arad); 3) portable ceramic four-horned altars (“Type III,” e.g. two at Pella); 4) portable ceramic non-horned altars (“Type IV,” e.g. at Ta’anach); 5) non-portable four-horned limestone altars (“Type V,” e.g. one at Shiloh, one at Tel Dothan, one at Tel Beersheba); 6) non-portable non-horned limestones altars (“Type VI,” e.g. one at Tel Moza). All of the aforementioned examples date the Iron IIA. In the Iron IIB, Types I, II and IV appear at sites like Tel Kedesh (Type I), Tel Dan (Type II), Tel Beer-sheba (Type IV).¹⁶

In terms of function, most scholars now presume that the altars were used for burning incense (Gitin 2002: 99) or even for sacrificing small animals, such as pigeons (Fowler 1984b: 184; Mazar in press), burning grains (Haran 1993) or parts of animals (Zevit 2001: 310). Some, though by no means all, altars were found with soot or other evidence of burning. Recent residue analyses on the altars from Arad show that cannabis and frankincense were burned on the altars (Arie, Rosen and Namdar 2020: 14–20). As Arie, Rosen and Namdar argue, their results “justify naming this group of objects incense altars” (2020: 21). However, the functionality of each altar should be studied based on its individual context as well as on scientific studies conducted on the residues, when possible (Arie, Rosen and Namdar 2020: 21–22). For example, the discovery of grain beside the larger of two Megiddo altars in Locus 2081 (Loud 1948: 162) may mean that these particular altars were used for burning grain.

Lastly, it should be noted that Gitin claims that the high number of altars in northern Israel represents a less centralized religious tradition (1989: 63*). It could be argued,

¹⁶ For a more detailed typology of portable four-horned and non-horned limestone altars, see Gitin 1989: III. 2.

however, that the appearance of a regular, specialized object type in the north instead reflects a *more* centralized religious focus. The altars were, in a sense, standardized. Although not found in every site, their popularity means that they were a regular feature of the northern Israelite cult.

Type	Description	Site	Stratum/Date	Reference
I	Portable four-horned limestone altars	Megiddo (8)	Stratum VA–IVB (6); Stratum III (1); surface (1)	May 1935: Pl. XII: 1–2, 4–6; cf. Kleiman <i>et al.</i> 2017: 24, 38; Loud 1948: Fig. 102; Gitin 1989: Table 1: No. 21
		Dan (2)	Stratum IIIB (1); not <i>in situ</i> (1)	Biran 1974: 106–107
		Nineveh (1)	Stratum XXIV 6	Thompson and Hutchinson 1927: Pl. 56: 335, No. 24.6
		Tel Kedesh (1)	Stratum IV	Stern and Beit-Arieh 1979: Pl. 1:2
		Shechem (2)	Iron IIB–C	Sellin 1926: Tafel 31b–c
		Gezer (1)	Iron II	Macalister 1912: 424
		Ekron (17)	Stratum IB	Gitin 1989: Ill. 2; Gitin 2002
		Ashkelon (1?)	Iron I	Master and Aja 2011: Fig. 7
		Lachish (1)	Stratum V	Aharoni 1975: Pls. 5: 1, 43: 7
II	Portable non-horned limestone altars	Megiddo (1)	Surface	May 1935: Pl. XII: 3
		Dan (4)	Stratum IIIA (1); not <i>in situ</i> (3)	Biran 1981: Pl. 19: 3; Biran 1987: Fig. 9; Biran 1988: 14–15
		Arad (2)	Stratum VII	Aharoni 1967: Pls. 46, 47

		Ekron (2)	Stratum IV (1), Stratum IB (1)	Gitin 1989: Table 1, Nos. 25, 33
		Ashkelon (2)	Unknown	Gitin 2002: 107
III	Portable ceramic four- horned altars	Shiloh (1)	Iron I	Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993: Fig. 6.54: 1
		Pella (2)	10th century	Smith and Potts 1992: Pl. 70–71
		Tel Rehov (5)	Stratum V (1), Stratum V–IV (1), Stratum IV (3)	Mazar 2015: Figs. 3–4; Mazar in press: Table 35.1
		Hazor (1)	Stratum X	Ben-Tor, Ben- Ami and Sandhaus 2012: 63, Photo 2.16
		Yavneh (1)	Late 9th–early 8th century BCE	Zwickel 2010: 105–109, Pls. 27: 1–2, 162– 163
		Khirbet ‘Atarus (2)	Temple Phase II	Ji 2012: 213– 214, Fig. 3; Pl. 47
		Tell el-‘Umayri	Iron IIC?	Dabrowski 1991: Pl. 1–2
IV	Portable ceramic non- horned altars	Megiddo (1)	Stratum VIIB (1), Stratum VIB (1), Stratum VA– IVB (2), <i>Schicht</i> V (1)	Loud 1948: Pl. 251–252
		Ta’anach (2)	Period IIB?	Sellin 1904: Pls. 12–13; Lapp 1969: Fig. 29
V	Non-portable four-horned limestone altars	Tel Dothan	Phase 4?	Gibson, Kennedy and Kramer 2013: Fig. 13
		Shiloh (2)	Iron IIA?	Elitzur and Nir- Devi 2003: Fig. 1; unpublished
		Tel Beersheba	Stratum III	Aharoni 1974; Herzog, Rainey

				and Moshkovitz 1977
VI	Non-portable non-horned limestones altars	Tell Abu al- Kharaz	Late Bronze IB– C	Fischer 2006b: 88
		Beth Shean	Late Bronze IIB	Mullins 2012
		Tel Moza	Iron IIA?	Kisilevitz 2015: Fig. 3

Table 8.1. Typology and distribution of horned and non-horned altars.

Shrine Models

Shrine models are thought to be miniature facsimiles of cultic places with one large opening, or door (Muller 2002: 85). In past research, they have been classified as a sub-type of architectural models, the earliest of which known from the Levant date to the early dynastic period in Mesopotamia, e.g. Tell Agrab (Heinrich 1957: 66, Fig. 71; cf. Muller 2002: Fig. 1) and Assur (cf. Muller 2002: Nos. 2–13, Figs. 2–13 and references therein). The earliest shrine models derive from the southern Levant appear in Early Bronze Age contexts at Tel Arad (Stratum II, Amiran *et al.* 1978: 28, 52; Pls. 66, 115; cf. Muller 2002: Fig. 131) and Tel Yarmouth (De Miroschedji 1982: 190–195, Fig. 1, Pl. 25; 1988: Pl. XX; 2001: 67–70, 77–80; Fig. 15–16; cf. Muller 2002: Fig. 159). They also appear in the Early Bronze–Middle Bronze Age at Lagash (Barrelet 1968: No. 114, Pl. X; cf. Muller 2002: No. 32, Fig. 32) and in the Middle Bronze Age at Kish (Barrelet 1968: No. 739, Pl. LXX; cf. Muller 2002: No. 21, Fig. 21) and Ashkelon (Stager 1991: 50–52; cf. Muller 2002: No. 132, Fig. 132).¹⁷ They become more common in the northern Levant in the Late Bronze Age (e.g. Kamid el-Loz, Ugarit and Mumbaqa),¹⁸ and appear in some southern Levantine contexts (e.g.

¹⁷ It is unclear whether the Middle Bronze Age “shrine models” found at Nippur (Muller 2002: No. 22, Fig. 22) and Mari (*ibid.*: No. 113) should be classified as such, or if they represent another sub-type of architectural model. The reasons for this being that the Nippur and Mari examples are not hollow, unlike shrine models from the Early Bronze down the Iron IIA–B. The Mari example was furthermore never illustrated, making its classification more difficult.

¹⁸ For shrine models from Kamid el-Loz see Muller 2002: Nos. 95–98, 99–100; Figs. 95–98, 99–100; for examples from Ugarit see *ibid.*: Nos. 128–129, Figs. 128–129 and from Mumbaqa/Ekaltē see *ibid.*: Nos. 114–115, Figs. 114–115.

Tel Hadar, Kinrot, Tel Dan, Tel Qasile and Tell Zira'a in Jordan)¹⁹ during the Iron I. Two altars from the Iron I–IIA transition are also known at Khirbet Qeiyafa (Garfinkel and Mumcuoglu 2013: Figs. 4, 8–9).

Studies documenting shrine models from the Iron II often do not distinguish between sub-period. After reviewing the stratigraphic contexts of these finds, it can be concluded that Iron IIA layers containing shrines models include Megiddo (Loud 1948: Pl. 253: 3; May 1935: Pls. XIII–XV; Schumacher 1908: Fig. 18), Tel Rekhesh (surface find, cf. Garfinkel and Mumcuoglu 2015: Fig. 9–10), Tel Rehov (Stratum IV, cf. Mazar 2015: Fig. 5; Mazar in press), Tel el-Far'ah N. (Stratum VIIb, cf. Chambon 1984: Pl. 66: 1, Plan III) and Qeiyafa (although Qeiyafa is transitional Iron I/IIA; see Garfinkel and Mumcuoglu 2013; Garfinkel 2017: Fig. 30–33; Schroer 2017). It is unclear to which sub-period of the Iron II the Achziv shrine model dates (Culican 1976: 53; Tafel 1b). To the Iron IIA models we may now include the shrine model fragments from Ḥorvat Tevet. A number of unprovenanced shrine models are known from museums, but efforts to trace their origins are often unreliable. It may be concluded based on the distribution of shrine models that, in the Iron IIA, they are generally a northern Israelite phenomenon.

R. Kletter has presented an excellent typology of shrine models, and so there is no need to present a new typology, only to summarize his (see Kletter 2015: 32–48). According to Kletter, types are divided as follows: 1) Type A: Round-like jar models; 2) Type B: Phoenician/Cypriot shrine models; 3) Type C: “Jordanian” shrine models; 4) Type D: Early rectangular shrine models; 5) Type E: Box-like objects without figures. Jars of Type A first

¹⁹ For the example from Kinrot Stratum V see Nissinen and Munger 2009: Fig. 4: 2 and Berkheij-Dol 2012: Fig. 22–24; for Tel Hadar Stratum IV example see Kochavi 1996: Photo 15; for Tel Dan see Biran 1994: 151–153, Fig. 4:18; for a *naos* from Tell Qasile see Mazar 1980: 82–84; Fig. 20; Pl. 30; for Tell Zira'a see Wieweger and Haser 2012: 27 picture b.

appear in the Middle Bronze II and are commonly found in the Late Bronze and Iron I (Kletter 2015: 51). However, as Kletter notes, round shrine models are also attested in Iron II contexts, such as at Tel Rehov (*ibid.*). Type B shrine models mostly date to the Iron IIB–C and are common in Phoenicia and Cyprus. Type C models are “hard to date” as most derive from unclear contexts (Kletter 2015: 51). Those that are provenanced derive from the Iron II. As for Type D, rectangular shrines models appear earlier, in the Late Bronze Age and often appear in the Iron I. Type E shrines are “widely distributed” throughout the northern and southern Levant, and thus their dates have not be analyzed (Kletter 2015: 51).

Regarding the function of shrine models, they are most often interpreted as representing temples, other cultic buildings or houses (Kletter 2015: 52). Often these facsimiles are thought to contain miniature representations of the deity (*ibid.*). Indeed, de Miroschedji takes a small statuette of a calf was found inside a shrine model from Ashkelon to represent the god Ba‘al (2001: 74–77). He also notes that shrine models are not exact copies of temples or shrines (Kletter 2015: 52). H. Katz comes to a similar conclusion, that shrine models are representation of houses of the deity, but they are not exact copies (Katz 2006: 171–196). She also believes that they contained images of the deity worshipped in miniature. It is worth considering, however, that the image associated need not always be a god or gods, but rather can represent worshippers. Furthermore, as Kletter points out, shrine models need not always be associated with an image of deity/worshipper (cf. Kletter 2015: 51, Type E).

Cult Stands

Cult stands with removable bowls are known from a number of the contexts mentioned above, including Beth Shean, Tel ‘Amal, Tell Qiri and Megiddo. Although such

cult stands existed in the Early, Intermediate and Middle Bronze Ages, they are rare in these periods and did not rise in popularity until the Late Bronze and Iron I–II (Katz 2006: 1). H. Katz has conducted a thorough analysis on such stands, which she classifies as “tower-like” models (Katz 2006: Pl. 46: 1–7). In terms of function, the stands with removable bowls were most likely used to burn incense (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 69).

“Petalled” Cult Stands and Chalices

Petaled chalices are known as early as the late Iron I in contexts at Hazor XI (Yadin *et al.* 1960: Pl. 204: 1) and Kinrot V (Fassbeck 2008: 15, Fig. 1). Iron IIA parallels are known from Tel Rehov (Mazar *in press*), Megiddo (Kleiman *et al.* 2017: Fig. 1: 5; Tafel 6: 2, 7), Tell es-Safi/Gath (Maier and Shai 2006: Fig. 7: 2, 3, 6; Shai and Maeir 2012: Pls: 14.4: 4, 14.14: 12, 14.16: 5), Tel Miqne/Ekron (Gitin 1993: Fig. 5) and Tel ‘Amal (Stern 1993: 1449).

Beck (2002: 210–214) has suggested that the petals represent lotus flower leaves, with the decoration originating from local craftsmen inspired by Egyptian and Syrian styles. Others argue that this type of object imitates the palm tree motif and that it may be related to Asherah (Gitin 1993: 254; Mazar *in press*) or to the biblical menorah (Hachlili and Merhav 1985: 257–259). Fassbeck’s (2008: 28–30) suggestion that these chalices mirror the petalled Late Bronze–Iron I *thymiateria* from Cyprus is most logical, although as Mazar points out, petalled chalices continue in much later contexts such as at ‘En Ḥaḏeva and Arad X (Ben-Arieh 2011: Fig. 34: Cat. Nos. 37–38).

In terms of distribution, Gadot *et al.* (2015: 69–70) point out that the discovery of petalled chalices in domestic contexts means that they are not always associated with cultic buildings. They may, however, represent cultic activities within the household.

Iconographically speaking, chalices appear to have been used for burning offerings to the

gods in prayer (cf. Gadot *et al.* 2015: 70; Fig. 7). Although Gadot *et al.* suggest that they were used for burning incense, a number of bronze cult-stands, which resemble chalices, were found with remains of burnt animal fat inside of them (e.g. at Megiddo, cf. Schumacher 1908: 85). Results from residue analysis indicate that at least some of the chalices were used for burning incense, as remnants of trimyristin, a plant residue that may have had hallucinogenic effects, was discovered (Gadot *et al.* 2015: 71). One example, however, showed the use of a chalice for the heating animal fat (*ibid.*). This could have been used as fuel, as Gadot *et al.* suggest (*ibid.*), or it may symbolize a different type of sacrifice intended for the deity or deities.

Horned Funnels

Horned, or “petalled,” funnels are known from Tell Afis, Syria, where they were apparently stationed in niches along the exterior of the temple (Soldi 2009). Five large horns, like the kind found at Ḥorvat Tevet, are attested at Tell Afis (Soldi 2009: Fig. 9–10) and Megiddo (Kleiman *et al.* 2017: Fig. 2: 1–3). Smaller horns, like Nos. 3 and 7, are also attested at Tell Afis. At Tell Afis, the horned funnels were originally identified as pipes, and were thought to collect rainwater (Soldi 2009: 108). Similar items are known from Hazor, where they were interpreted by Zuckerman as functioning as stands (Yadin *et al.* 1960: Pl. LXII: 5; Zuckerman 2014). More recently, Soldi has suggested that these served as dovecots or bird nests, with the horn intended to be a perch for birds (Soldi 2012: 465; 2019: 201). But Soldi’s explanation is less convincing, since they appear to have cultic significance, as such horns appear mainly in cultic contexts. A more preferable explanation of its function is that it served as a wall decoration along the exterior of the temple walls or roof (cf. Zuckerman 2014: 310).

Strainer Jars

Fragments of strainer “storage” jars are known from late Iron IIA contexts at Megiddo (Arie 2013a: Fig. 13.22: SJ34), Tell es-Safi/Gath (A. Meir, personal communication), Horvat Tevet (see above), Beth-Shean Lower Level V (James 1966: 54, Fig. 13: 5) and Samaria E 207 (Crowfoot, Crowfoot and Kenyon 1957: Fig. 26: 14). Such jars were also found in an Iron IIC context at Timna/Tel Batash II (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001: 140, Pl. 35: 9). In terms of function, Arie—following Mazar and Panitz-Cohen (2001: 140)—suspects that these containers were used for burning incense (Arie 2013a: 714). As Arie points out, a Cypriot Black-on-Red juglet was found inside one of the strainer jars from Megiddo, which may indicate that the jar was used to burn perfumed oil (Arie 2013a: 714).

Perforated Cups

Perforated tripod cups (with a handle) and goblets (lacking a handle) are known from a number of contexts throughout the southern Levant. A typology based on form includes the following types: 1) perforated cups with tripod (“Type I,” e.g. at Tel Dan); 2) perforated cups lacking tripod (“Type II”); 3) unperforated tripod cups (“Type III,” e.g. at Hazor); 4) perforated goblets with tripod (“Type IV,” e.g. at Kamid el-Loz, Horvat Rosh Zayit); 5) perforated goblets lacking tripod (“Type V,” e.g. at Tel Dan); 6) perforated chalices (“Type VI,” e.g. at Megiddo); 7) strainers (“Type VII,” e.g. at Megiddo).

In the southern Levant, the earliest perforated goblets and perforated tripod cups appear in the late Iron I. Such examples are known from Tel Dan Stratum IVB (for both a perforated goblet and tripod cup see Ilan 1999: Pl. 67: 3–4), Tel Hadar Stratum IV (A. Kleiman, personal communication), Kamid el-Loz (for two perforated goblets see Hachmann and Kuschke 1966: Fig. 25: 1, 3) and Megiddo VIA (for a strainer see Finkelstein, Zimhoni

and Kafri 2000: Fig. 11.14: 2).

Mazar (in press) has presented a distribution of Iron IIA perforated tripod cups throughout the southern Levant. His parallels, in addition to the two cups and five lids from Tel Rehov, include those from: Hazor Stratum X (Yadin *et al.* 1960: Pl. LI: 17; see also Yadin *et al.* 1961: Pl. 171: 16–17); Megiddo Stratum V (Lamon and Shipton 1939: Pls. 23: 20; 31: 146–147; Arie 2013a: 719); Ta'anach Period IIB (Rast 1978: Fig. 51: 3); Tell el-Far'ah (N.) Stratum VIIb (Chambon 1984: Pl. 54: 12–13), Tell el-Hammah (Mazar in press), Horvat Rosh Zayit (Gal and Alexandre 2000: Fig. VII.6: 18) and Tell er-Rumeith (cf. Rast 1978: 33).

To this one can add Iron IIA cups from Beth Shean S-1 (Mazar 2006: Fig. 12.9: Type PC), 'En Gev Stratum III (Mazar *et al.* 1964: Fig. 8: 9) and Hazor X–IX (Ben-Ami 2003: Type Bowl VIb) as well as later examples from Megiddo IV–III (Lamon and Shipton 1939: Pl. 23: 21–24). Unperforated tripodal examples are known from Hazor Area A Stratum VIII (Yadin *et al.* 1960: Pl. LIV: 20–22).²⁰

In terms of use, Yadin suggested they were used as strainers (Yadin *et al.* 1961: Pl. 171: 16–17). De Vaux, on the other hand, suggested the vessel were made for cheese-making (1951: 412). Crowfoot (1940: 151) was the first to interpret these cups as censers based on modern Greek parallels. Although many examples appear clean—lacking ash or soot—a goblet from Horvat Rosh Zayit contained gray sediment in the bowl (Gal and Alexandre 2000: 185). This conclusion seems most likely since, as the Z. Gal and Y. Alexandre point out, the cups were constructed to withstand high heating temperatures (*ibid.*: 185).

Interestingly, however, many vessels do not show signs of soot marks or other forms of use

²⁰ For a hoard of tripod cups in an Iron Age tomb at Wadi Afrit (near Mount Nebo) see Saller 1966: 206–207, Figs. 15–16. See also Iron II tomb near Amman (Dajani 1966: Pls. VII: 47, 129; VIII: 48, 56, 57).

(Arie 2013a: 719). Residue analysis on these vessels is thus necessary to ultimately ascertain their function.

Type	Description	Site	Stratum/Date	Reference
I	Perforated cups with tripod	Megiddo (3)	Stratum IV–II	Lamon and Shipton 1939: Pl. 23: 20, 22, 23
		Tel Dan (1)	Stratum IVB	Ilan 1999: Fig. 67: 4
		Tel Rehov (1)	Stratum IV	Mazar in press
		Tell el-Far'ah N. (1)	Stratum VIIc	Chambon 1984: Pl. 54: 12
		'En Gev	Stratum III	Mazar <i>et al.</i> 1964: Fig. 8: 9
		Samaria	E 207	Crowfoot, Crowfoot and Kenyon 1957: Fig. 26: 5
		Gezer		Crowfoot 1940: Fig. 1.1
II	Perforated cups lacking tripod	Megiddo (3)	Stratum IV–III (2); Stratum VIA (1)	Lamon and Shipton 1939: Fig. 23: 21(?), 24; Finkelstein, Zimhoni and Kafri 2000: Fig. 11.14: 2
III	Unperforated tripod cups	Hazor	Stratum VIII	Yadin <i>et al.</i> 1960: Pl. LIV: 20–22
		Jofeh Tomb	Iron IIC	Dajani 1966: Pls. VII: 47, 129; VIII: 48, 56, 57
IV	Perforated goblets with tripod	Kamid el-Loz (2)	Iron I	Hachmann and Kuschke 1966: Fig. 25: 1, 3
		Megiddo (3)	Stratum VA–IVB (1); sealed by Courtyard 1693 (2)	Arie 2013: Fig. 13.26: TC31; Finkelstein, Zimhoni and Kafri 2000: Fig. 11.25: 2, 5

		Ta'anach (1)	Stratum IIB	Rast 1978: Fig. 51: 3
		Tel Rehov (1)	Stratum IV	Mazar in press
		Tell el-Far'ah N. (2)	Stratum VIIb	Chambon 1984: Pl. 54: 13; de Vaux 1951: Fig. 10: 14
		Horvat Rosh Zayit (1)	Building 307, Phase b=Stratum IIa-I	Gal and Alexandre 2000: Fig. VII.6: 18
		Hazor (1)	Stratum IX	Yadin <i>et al.</i> 1961: Pl. CCVIII: 34
V	Perforated goblets lacking tripod	Tel Dan (1)	Stratum IVB	Ilan 1999: Fig. 67: 3
VI	Perforated chalices	Megiddo (2)	Stratum III	Lamon and Shipton 1939: Pl. 33: 11, 13
VII	Strainers	Megiddo (2)	Stratum VIA (1); Stratum VB (1)	Finkelstein, Zimhoni and Kafri 2000: Fig. 11.14: 2; 11.25: 3

Table 8.2. Typology and distribution of perforated cups.

Figurines

The following sub-section is devoted to the most frequently occurring figurine types in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. Types to be discussed include female drummer figurines, woman-and-child figurines, standing female figurines, pillar figurines and horse or horse and rider figurine.

The drummer figurine appears commonly in northern assemblages. These figurines depicted a naked, clothed or partially clothed woman holding a drum up to the side of her chest. This type appears in the Iron IIA, becoming most popular in this period (Mazar forthcoming). According to Mazar, naked figurines appear at Megiddo Stratum V (May 1935: Pl. 28: M5418), Beth Shean Lower Level V (Rowe 1940: Pls. 35: 20; 64A: 2; James

1766: Fig. 111: 6), Tell el-Farah N./Tirzah Stratum VIId (de Vaux 1952: 572, Pl. 15: 14; Chambon 1984: 74, Pl. 63: 3) and Hazor VIII (Yadin *et al.* 1960: Pls. 126: 14, 163: 3), as well as in the Transjordan.²¹

In terms of meaning, Paz (2007) interprets the figurines as being part of a female fertility cult, in contrast to the “official” male-dominated cult. As Mazar (forthcoming) points out, the distinction between “male and female, official and unofficial” is hard to accept, especially given that centralized cults do not seem to appear in the late Iron IIA (see below). Sugimoto, on the other hand, interprets the figurines as representing a cult of Astarte that failed to develop further in terms of “monotheistic” belief. However, as Mazar mentions, it is difficult to draw such conclusions based off figurines. The more likely explanation, in my opinion, is that these figurines represent an aspect of a pluralistic belief system regarding the deity or deities, related in some way to fertility (cf. Beck 1999: 390; Paz 2007: 94–95).

The fertility connection comes from the fact that drummer figurines are often stylistically similar to woman-and-child figurines. In some cases, such as at Tel Rehov, the woman holds a drum and a child simultaneously (Mazar forthcoming: Fig. 34.1: 9). A unique example of the woman-and-child motif is found at Tel Rehov. As Mazar points out, this was a common motif in the Beth Shean Valley, as woman-and-child are also found at Beth Shean (James 1966: Fig. 112.7) and Pella (Potts *et al.* 1988: Pl. 22: 3). This motif may begin in the Late Bronze Age (cf. Rowe 1940: Pl. 68A: 4), although they are certainly most common in the Iron II.

Pillar figurines, though most common in the south, also appear in the north in the Iron IIA. The figurines depict a free-standing naked female, sometimes with hair, often holding

²¹ For drummer figurines with headdresses see Megiddo (May 1935: Pl. 27: M1138) and Tel Hadar (Kletter 1996: 5.V.1.29; Paz 2007: A41, Fig. 2.2: 9).

her breasts. Examples are known from Megiddo (May 1935: Pl. XXIII: M1389, M4090, M2925) and Beth Shean (James 1966: Fig. 115: 1, 3) as well as other northern sites (cf. Holland 1975: Figs. 1–18). There is a debate as to whether these figurines are reflective of goddess worship, female religion or “popular” religion (Terry 2016: 8; cf. Darby 2017: 195). One interpretation sees the figurines as representing the goddess Asherah (Kletter 1996: 12–16). The argument suggests that the “pillar-like” nature of the figurines represent the tree associated with the goddess Asherah. Others see the figurines as reflecting a female fertility cult, although the theory that they were used as a form of worship in popular, or better, household religion is gaining traction (Darby 2017: 208). Whatever the case may be, the popularity of these figurines means that the veneration for women through figurative art should not be understated.

In terms of zoomorphic figurines, horses with bridles are some of the most common. According to Mazar (forthcoming), examples are known from Iron IIA Samaria (Reisner, Fisher and Lyon 1924: Pl. 75r: 3), Megiddo (May 1935: Pl. 36, M5035) and Tel Rehov (Mazar forthcoming: No. 28). Horse figurines, in general, appear often throughout the northern and southern Levant during the Iron II (Mazar forthcoming). Horse and rider figurines, which are known from Judah, also appear in the north in the Iron IIA. There is a debate regarding whether these figurines represent nobleman riding horses (Kletter 1995: 193–208, Mazar 2001: 158; Moorey 2003: 48, 63), or the deity/deities (Stern 2001: 208–210, 2003: 318–319). Kletter and Saarelainen (2014) as well as Mazar (forthcoming) reason that they represent mortal men, given that double horse and rider figurines do exist. Instead, Mazar highlights the fact that horses were a mark of prestige, and owning horses was not

universal. These figurines probably then represent status, and they represented an “ideal picture” rather than the lives of those who owned them (Mazar forthcoming).

Summary

The above chapter discussed the most common elements of cultic paraphernalia present at cultic contexts in the northern highlands and valleys from the Late Bronze to the Iron IIB. Most items of cult paraphernalia, such as the four-horned altars, cult stands, strainer jars and perforated cups are related to the sacrifice of offerings. Since altars and stands are a part of the Late Bronze cultic milieu and continue into the Iron Age, it can be concluded that part of the emphasis in ritual practice was on the giving of sacred offerings. Late Bronze Age incense burning traditions carry on into the Iron Age, and thus it can be surmised that the essence of the Late Bronze sacrificial cult remains the same into the latter period. The conception of shrine models as “houses for the deity” and of figurines as perhaps iconographic representations of god(s) also continued from one period to the next. A more detailed discussion of continuity and change apparent in cultic paraphernalia from one period to the next will be discussed in the following chapter, as will as discussion of the standardization of certain aspects of cultic paraphernalia. As we will see, this is a complicated topic that may have ramifications for the understanding of cult centralization in the Iron Age, in particular.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION

The following section presents a discussion on various aspects related to cult in the northern highlands and valleys during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. The research questions mentioned above (Chapter 4) are considered, as are patterns related to architecture, ceramics, faunal remains and cult paraphernalia. A close look at regional and inter-regional patterns in cult is presented, as is a review on continuities and innovations that were made to cult throughout the periods. The section concludes with a discussion on cult centralization—a multi-faceted concept—in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.

A Holistic Approach to Cult

One of the major contributions this dissertation provides is a holistic approach to the study of cult. This section uses this approach to discuss the architecture, ceramics, faunal remains and cult paraphernalia present in each cultic context reviewed above. A comparative approach will show patterns in the usage of space and objects within various cultic contexts. Conclusions will be based off patterns and dissimilarities, which will provide a better understanding of the nature of cult in the north.

Architecture

The cultic buildings of the northern highlands and valleys have several architectural features that are worth considering. The Migdal temple, for one, is common to all regions during the Late Bronze Age. This type includes temples characterized by long-room plans with two tower-like features at the entrance. The towers may alternately be replaced with pillars. Additionally, the back of the long-room, opposite the point of entry, typically featured an attention-focusing device such as a platform or niche (e.g. the successive niches and platforms in Megiddo's Temple 2048).

The Migdal type was apparently a standard building plan in the Late Bronze Age, with its appearance at sites such as Megiddo, Pella and Beth Shean Stratum IX. This tower-temple type continues into the Iron I at Megiddo, supporting the notion of continuity from the Late Bronze to the Iron I (for the concept of “New Canaan” for see Finkelstein 2013: 11, 28–32). The tower-temple of Beth Shean’s Building 1230 does not continue, however, into Strata VIII–VII, perhaps since the city became more Egyptianized during this period. Migdal temples were thus part of the Canaanite cultural milieu, since they are not found at sites with Egyptianized strata (i.e. Beth Shean VIII–VIII), where temples follow a different plan.

Migdal temples first appear in the Middle Bronze Age, with the erection of temples at Megiddo, Pella and Shechem. This style extends further north and south, with the appearance of temples at Hazor, Tel el-Hayyat and Tel Haror (Susnow, Behar and Yasur-Landau 2020: Table 1). Migdal temples may be connected to Syrian influence given that a Migdal temple dedicated to the “Storm God” was discovered at Aleppo (Kohlmeyer 2009: 194). Other Migdal-style temples known from Syria include those at Ebla, Mari and Alalakh (Ilan 2003: 339; Homsher 2013: 86). This Syro-Canaanite style even extended to Egypt, where a tower temple was discovered at Tell el-Daba‘ (Homsher 2013: 86). It is clear that Migdal temples were a popular form of temple plan in the Late Bronze Age, and there is evidence, at least at Megiddo, that they continue to the Iron I. In terms of the discontinuity of this temple type in the Iron IIA, see below.

At Pella, we can see a shift in the temple plan with Phase 5 of the Late Bronze III. The Phase 5 temple, characterized by its backroom and pillared long-room, may be a precursor to the pillared hall temples seen in the Iron Age II. The pillared hall temples are aligned along a similar axis to the Migdal temples of the Bronze Age. With the Migdal

temples, entry was through a single access point, which opened into a long-room with an attention-focusing feature (either a platform or niche) at the back. This continues with the pillared halls, which could be trafficked along a central axis until reaching the narrow back-room at the end of the hall.

In the mid- and late Iron IIA, cultic buildings follow the form of pillared halls at several sites, such as Megiddo, Horvat Tevet and Beth Shean. These halls may be an evolution of the Migdal temple type, given that space was conceptualized in similar ways. On the other hand, it is also possible that these pillared halls, which are similar in appearance to “four-room” houses, reflect the four-room house type of building construction. The pillars of the pillared halls divided the space similarly to four- or three-room houses (Ji 1997: Figs. 1–3). A purely northern Israelite concept, it is possible that the pillared buildings are an amalgamation of both tower-temples and four-rooms houses. There may have been a cosmological or symbolic meaning to mirroring the four-room house type. There is also something to be said for the relative similarity in plan of Tell el-Far‘ah N./Tirzah’s Building 161 (Chambon 1984: Plan III), which borders the cultic area near the gate, and Building CF at Tel Rehov (Mazar 2015: Fig. 9). The space is divided similarly in each building, with four small rooms lined on one side and with entry to the building accessed through a small “bent-axis” opening in the corner. Although Building 161 is interpreted as a house, it may have some connection to the potentially cultic Building CF at Tel Rehov. The idea of houses influencing cultic space is thus an interesting idea that should be explored further.

Regarding the pillared halls, temples of this type are also found at Kition in the Iron IIA as well as at Tel Miqne/Ekron in the Iron IIC. Although the pillared halls were an Israelite innovation, it appears that their influence extended as far as Cyprus and Philistia,

even into the Iron IIC. However, the connections between Cyprus and the southern Coastal Plain in the late 7th century BCE may explain the similarity of the Ekron temple to that of Kition. Temple 650 at Ekron may be indirectly influenced by northern Israel through the Cypriot connection. This does not explain Kition, on the other hand. Perhaps there is a Phoenician link between northern Israel and the export of the pillared hall temple-style to Cyprus in this period. This may sound far-fetched, however, given that pillared halls do not appear in Phoenicia proper (cf. Edrey 2018).

Bent-axis temples are another type of temple that appears in the Iron IIA. This type is attested at Pella and Beth Shean in the late Iron IIA, and perhaps at Tell Qiri in the Iron I. This was apparently an alternate type to the pillared hall, as both types are contemporaneous, even at one and the same site (Beth Shean Lower Level V). Edrey (2018: 112–113, 145) has connected the bent-axis plan to Phoenician material culture, arguing that it is the “Phoenician-type temple” of the Bronze and Iron Ages. Although Phoenician influence could certainly be a factor in this temple design, the existence of the bent-axis at Pella complicates this argument. The Phase 6 bent-axis temple at Pella follows a similar plan to the pillared hall of Phase 5. It seems like a natural progression, from one temple to the next, with the only change being a shift in the point of entry (in addition to a lack of pillars in Phase 6). The axis changes, but the long-room and back-room stay the same. It is thus worth considering if the bent-axis plan, at least at Pella and Beth Shean, was an Israelite innovation rather than a Phoenician influence.

In relation to the pillared halls, the excavators at Ḥorvat Tevet argue that the building is actually an administrative structure. Furthermore, there have been questions regarding the cultic nature of the Southern Temple at Beth Shean (see above). However, if they are to be

considered administrative, such buildings may also have had cultic aspects. This is certainly the case with Megiddo's Building 338, for example, which in the Iron IIB primarily served an administrative function. The building featured a cult room, and was not entirely devoted to cult. This is also the case with Palaces 2041 and 2072 at Megiddo, as well as perhaps Building 2081, where administration was in focus. It is becoming more and more clear that when questioning whether a given space is cultic or administrative, the answer is it that can be both.

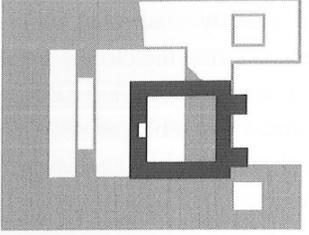
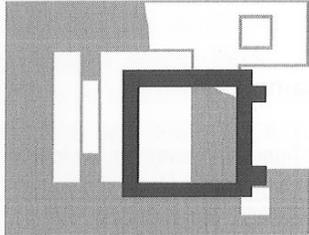
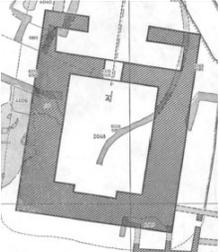
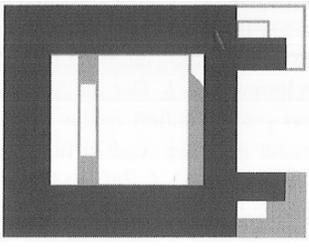
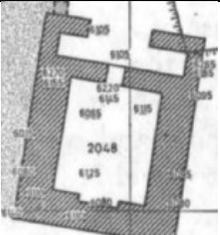
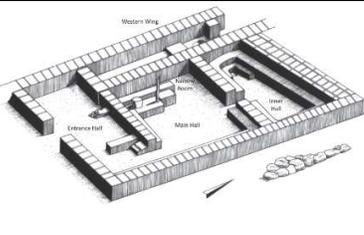
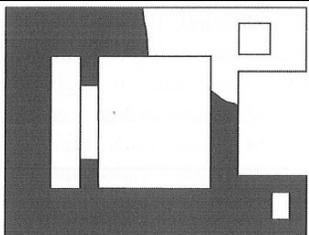
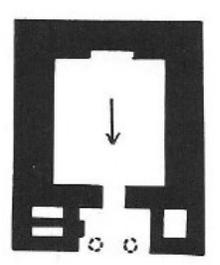
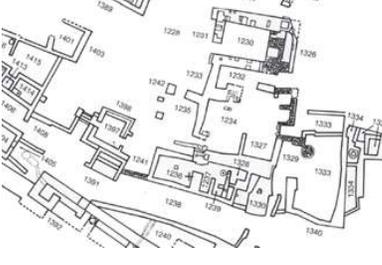
In terms of continuity, temples were a long-established institution in the valleys, and the three main sites that exhibit temple continuity throughout the Late Bronze Age are Megiddo, Beth Shean and Pella (see Table 9.1). Perhaps it is no wonder why these are the three sites where temples (should the pillared halls be considered temples) were constructed in the Iron IIA. Megiddo, Beth Shean and Pella were important administrative centers in the Late Bronze Age. This continued into the Iron IIA, although Beth Shean took up a lesser administrative role compared to the larger mound of Tel Rehov. However, each was a strategically placed center where it is likely that inhabitants from surrounding villages came to worship during the Late Bronze Age. There is nothing to suggest that tell-centered worship changed in the Iron IIA. Megiddo, Beth Shean and Pella thus were important centers for cult in both the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.

As a counter to the tell-centered worship of the valleys, in the northern highlands cult appears in open-air sanctuaries such as at Mount Ebal and the "Bull Site." The construction or "plans" characterizing each of these buildings is unique unto its own design. Although the altar at Mount Ebal has been compared to Giloh, the structure at Giloh is interpreted as a tower and thus does not serve as a cultic parallel. It is interesting that there

were no specific layouts for cultic space in the highlands, and that cult does not seem to have been “prescribed” by any architectural convention.

The same can be said for several other sites in the northern highlands and valleys in the Iron IIA, where there does not seem to be a prescribed building convention for ritual spaces. Unfortunately, the building plans of Tel Dothan’s House 14 and Tel ‘Amal’s potential cultic building have not been well preserved. But from what can be discerned from their plans, it seems that they feature different layouts. Ta’anach’s Cultic Structure has been reconstructed and compared to Megiddo’s Building 2081 (Frick 2000), however the former is so poorly preserved that it is difficult to accept such arguments. Tel Rehov certainly features a unique structure in the form of Building CP, parallels for which have not been found.

In as much as there is a similarity in the layouts of temples/cultic buildings at Megiddo, Beth Shean and Pella, it seems that the cultic buildings in other Iron IIA sites are incomparable. How does one explain continuity or similarity at some sites, located in different regions, and idiosyncrasies at others? This may be due to the interaction of a central authority with cult in Megiddo, Beth Shean and Pella, and an absence of such at other sites. Perhaps this authority concentrated its efforts on the main urban centers, while letting smaller, peripheral sites act on their own accord. But this does not explain the lack of uniformity in cult at Tel Rehov, the largest and most significant site in the northern valleys during the Iron IIA. Other explanations, it seems, must be sought.

Periods	Megiddo	Beth Shean	Pella
Middle Bronze I	Gap	No temples yet found	
Middle Bronze I-II			
Middle Bronze II			
Middle Bronze III –Late Bronze IA			
Late Bronze IB			Continuity?
Late Bronze IIA			Continuity?

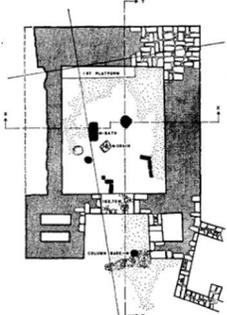
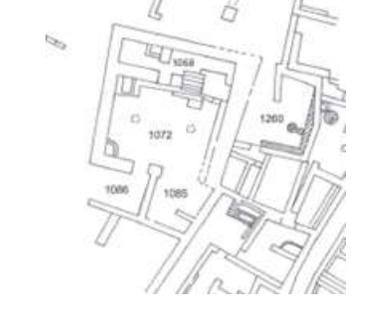
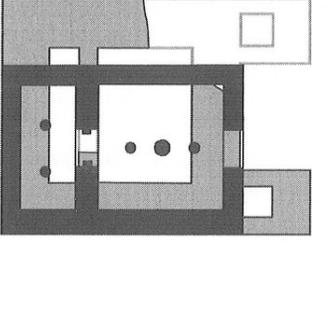
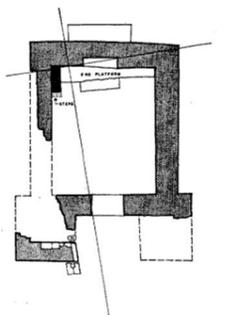
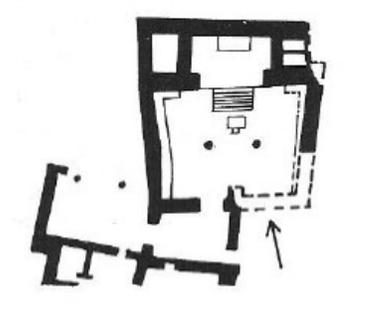
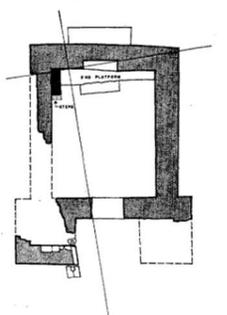
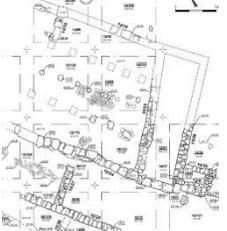
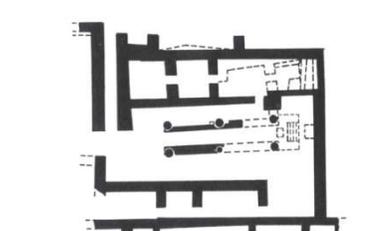
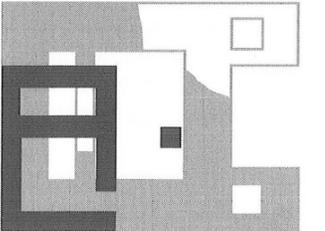
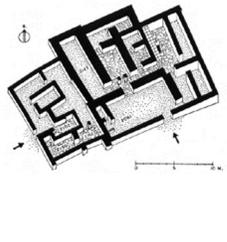
Late Bronze IIB			
Late Bronze III			
Iron I		Gap?	Gap?
Early Iron IIA			
Late Iron IIA			

Table 9.1. Plans of temples found at Megiddo, Beth Shean and Pella in Late Bronze and Iron Age strata.

Ceramics

Ceramics are an important tool for understanding activities carried out in various spaces. A large amount of serving vessels, for one, can indicate that eating and drinking were the primary activity undertaken in a certain context. A significant amount of imports within an assemblage may imply that it is a context of wealth. Many storage vessels, on the other hand, can indicate that the main purpose of a context was for storing goods. An analysis of the ceramics in the cultic contexts reviewed above is presented here. Comparative approaches are also incorporated into this study to see if cultic spaces stand out against other types of contexts.

Unit	AM	BL	CV	CH+G	J	JT	K	PX	SV	LP	Varia	IM	Total
Mount Ebal Stratum IB	0	139	51	0	142	47	69	0	299	--	72	0	819
%	0	16.9	6.2	0	17.3	5.7	8.4	0	36	--	8.7	0	100
Shiloh ²²	0	1,506	259	28	67	32	52	0	24	47	30	62	2,107
%	0	71.5	12.3	1.3	3.2	1.5	2.5	0	1.1	1.8	1.4	2.9	100
Temple 1072	3	26	5	2	7	3	5	0	10	2	9	5	77
%	2.8	33.3	6.4	2.6	9	3.8	6.4	0	12.8	2.6	11.5	5.5	100
Building 2081	3	16	0	2	7	16	4	2	1	--	2	12	65
%	4.6	24.6	0	3.1	10.8	24.6	6.2	3.1	1.5	--	3.1	18.5	100
Ta'anach	5	55	6	0	10	11	9	0	23	2	2	0	126
%	4	43.7	4.8	0	7.9	8.7	7.1	0	18.3	1.6	1.6	0	100

Table 9.2. A comparison of pottery classes from various cultic contexts in the north.

The assemblages from Mount Ebal Stratum IB, Shiloh's Locus 407, Beth Shean's Temple 1072, Megiddo's Building 2081 and Taanach's Cultic Structure have been singled out (Table 9.2; Fig. 9.1). This is either because their pottery has been analyzed or published

²² Jugs and storage jars were considered together in the case of Shiloh (Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993: Table 6.9).

in full, they represent cultic feasting activities or they have a large enough amount of pottery for analysis. The results indicate that bowls are overwhelmingly represented at Shiloh and together with cooking pots they make up most of the assemblage. At Ta'anach bowls are also well represented together with storage vessels. Storage vessels comprise much of the vessels at Mount Ebal, however jugs and bowls are also well represented. Bowls, juglets and imports make up most of the assemblage in Megiddo's Building 2081, where hardly any storage jars are present. Shiloh also lacks storage jars, indicating that the pottery from Debris 407 came from a very specific place.

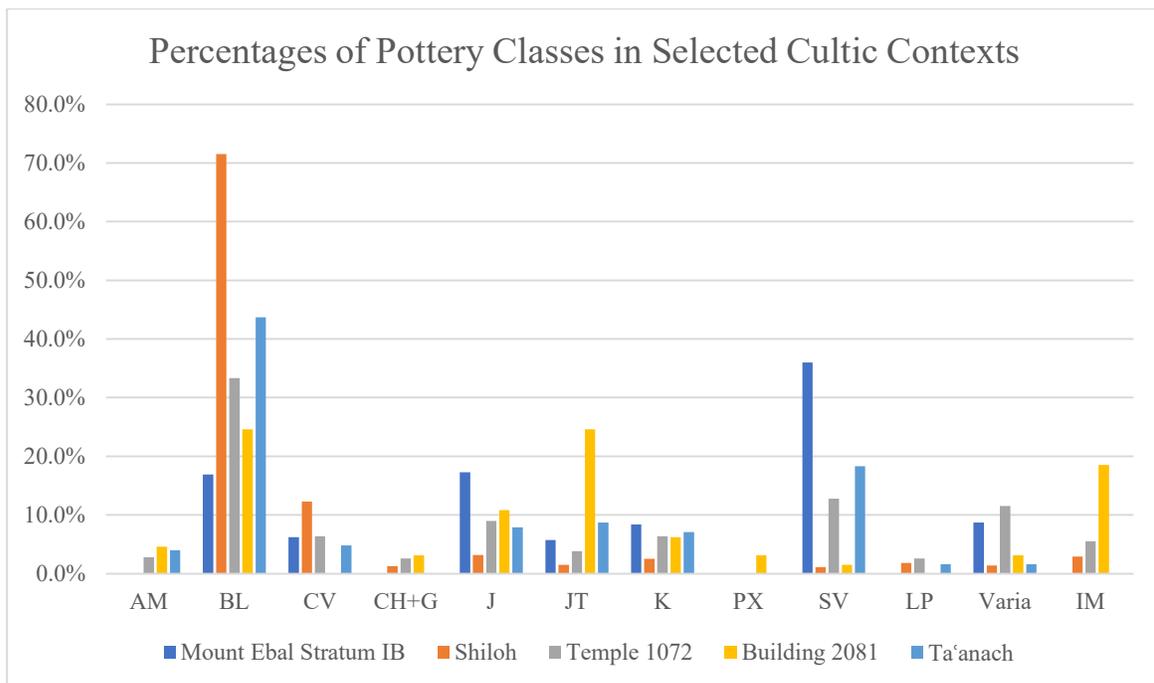


Fig. 9.1. Percentages of pottery classes in selected cultic contexts.

Overall, the preparation and consumption of food seems to have occurred at Shiloh. The amount of bowls and cooking vessels indicates as much, and as stated previously it is likely that this is a feasting context. At Mount Ebal, the primary concern seems to have been storage, however bowls, jugs, juglets, kraters and even cooking pots are represented in

significant numbers. It is likely that a diverse range of activities went on there, including storing, eating and drinking. At Beth Shean's Temple 1072, bowls and kraters make up a large portion of the assemblage, however jugs and storage vessels are present. Food preparation seems to have been less of a concern in this context, however eating and storing activities are represented. Building 2081 has the highest number of imports, though imports are also present at Shiloh and Temple 1072. Building 2081 was clearly an elite context where food consumption, though not food preparation, occurred. At Ta'anach, storage and consumption were two main activities. In general, looking at the results, it seems that food consumption was of primary or secondary concern in every context.

It is also useful to compare these results to non-cultic contexts. Taking a closer look at Megiddo (Table 9.3; Fig. 9.2), bowls and storage vessels are overwhelmingly represented in palatial contexts (cf. Palace 6000), where a surprising lack of imports is apparent. Cooking vessels, jugs, juglets and kraters are all present in similar percentages. This seems to indicate that Palace 6000 was a diversified space where numerous types of activities took place. Building 51, on the other hand, which Arie classifies as an elite living quarters, is low on bowls. It might be that eating activities did not take place often within this space. Also low on bowls is Area B, a domestic context, wherein several jugs and juglets were present, as well as some cooking vessels and storage jars. These contexts seem to indicate that the use of the space, like Palace 6000 above, was more diversified than what is typically found in cultic contexts. Whereas eating and drinking is the main emphasis in cultic areas, a variety of other activities are present in non-cultic contexts. Although this is a bit of a generalization, there is an avenue in future research for a more elaborate comparison of cultic to non-cultic contexts.

Unit	AM	BL	CV	CH	J	JT	K	PX	SJ	Varia	IM	Total
2081	3	16	0	2	7	16	4	2	1	2	12	65
%	4.6	24.6	0	3.1	10.8	24.6	6.2	3.1	1.5	3.1	18.5	100
6000	1	45	16	1	11	8	11	0	38	9	1	141
%	0.7	31.9	11.3	0.7	7.8	5.7	7.8	0	27	6.4	0.7	100
51	3	7	5	0	5	9	3	0	7	1	10	50
%	6	14	10	0	10	18	6	0	14	2	20	100
Area B	5	72	14	7	32	18	13	4	16	14	4	200
%	2.5	36	7	3.5	16	9	6.5	2	8	7	2	100
10	6	23	3	0	15	14	5	0	23	3	3	95
%	6.3	24.2	3.2	0	15.8	14.7	5.3	0	24.2	3.2	3.2	100

Table 9.3. Comparison of ceramic classes from various context types at Iron IIA Megiddo.

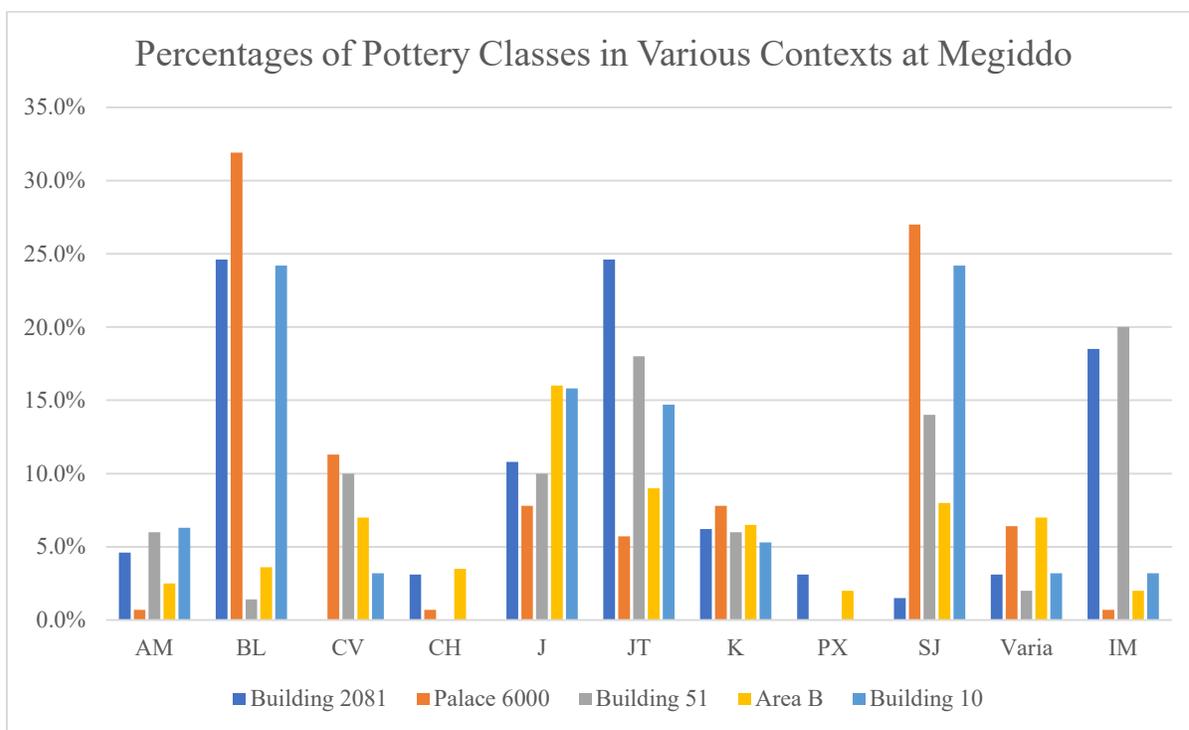


Fig. 9.2. Percentages of pottery classes in various contexts at Megiddo.

To make one last comparison of a cultic to non-domestic context, I compared Palace 2072 to Building 00/K/10 (Table 9.4; Fig. 9.3). Storage jars are overwhelmingly represented in Building 00/K/10. There is an even spread of bowls and cooking vessels as well as of jugs, juglets and flasks. Once again, it appears that a variety of activities took place in this context.

Worth noting is that more chalices appears in Building 00/K/10 than in Palace 2072, which may have cultic connotations. This highlights the fact that the number of chalices is not always indicative of cultic in a given context. In Palace 2072, there is clearly more of an emphasis on eating and drinking activities, though storage and cooking activities are also represented.

Unit	AM	BL	CV	CH+G	J	JT	K	FL	PX	SJ	Varia	IM	Total
2072	4	15	7	2	19	11	12	11	1	14	7	0	101
%	4	14.9	6.9	2	18.8	10.9	11.9	10.9	1	13.9	7	0	100
00/K/10	0	13	13	7	6	6	2	8	0	40	3	0	99
%	0	13.1	13.1	7.1	6.1	6.1	2	8.1	0	40.4	3	0	100

Table 9.4. Comparison of ceramic classes in Palace 2072 and Building 00/K/10 at Megiddo.

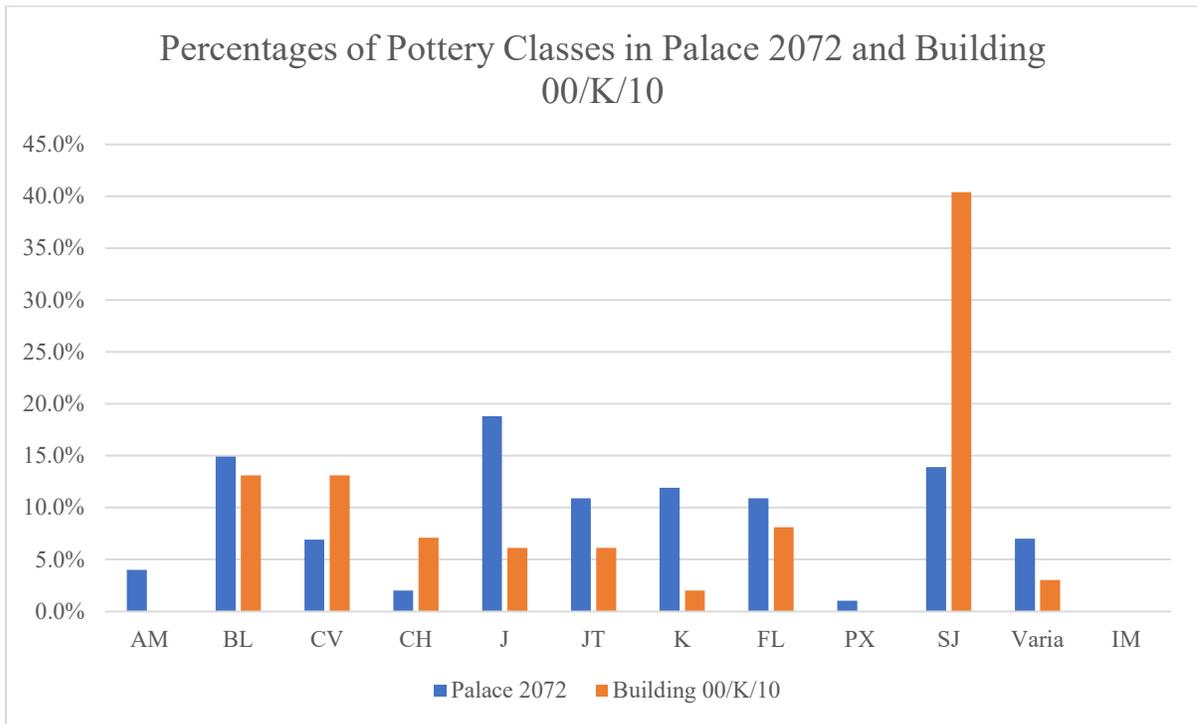


Fig 9.3. Comparison of ceramic classes in Palace 2072 and Building 00/K/10 at Megiddo.

Faunal Remains

The following compares faunal remains from selected sites. Unfortunately, a comparison of the faunal remains from most cultic contexts mentioned above is not possible. This is because the final reports lack data on faunal remains, the animal bones were not collected or the reports are outdated. Data is taken from Mount Ebal, Shiloh and Tell Qiri. However, it was not possible to gain information on certain aspects of the faunal remains in some cases. The species represented and the amount of right to left forelimb and hindlimbs are the only substantial pieces data that could be presented and compared.

To begin with the species represented at Mount Ebal and Shiloh, in both cases sheep/goat are, unsurprisingly, the dominate species (Table 9.5). At Mount Ebal, cattle are represented at 18%. Also at Mount Ebal, there is a large percentage of fallow deer, which may indicate hunting in the environs around the site. Pig is represented in miniscule numbers at Shiloh and is not at all present at Mount Ebal. Shiloh has a wider range of species, including *canis familiaris*, *cervus* and *dama dama mesopotamica*, which together make up 2.4% of the assemblage. Taken together, sheep/goat are the predominate species off which subsistence was based.

In terms of right to left percentages (Table 9.6), there is an overwhelming preference for right forelimb and hindlimbs at Tell Qiri. This Iron I site is a bit of an outlier in terms of its right to left ratio, as such ratios are not present at other sites in the northern valleys during this time.²³ At Shiloh, one could argue for a preference for right fore- and hindlimbs, as 209 left and 243 right were uncovered. Overall, Tell Qiri stands out as a highly selective context in terms of its preference for right over left.

²³ For the preference of right limbs over left, see also Lachish (Croft 2004) and Tel Dan (Greer 2011).

Site	Species	NISP	Percentage
Mount Ebal ²⁴	Bos	14	17.9%
	Fallow deer	6	7.7%
	Ovis/Capra	58	74.4%
	Other	0	0
	Total	78	100%
Shiloh	Bos	253	8.5%
	Cervus sp.	16	0.5%
	Canis familiaris	10	0.3%
	Dama dama mesopotamica	49	1.6%
	Ovis/Capra	2,623	88.2%
	Sus	5	0.2%
	Total	2,956	100%

Table 9.5. Counts and percentages of species represented in Mount Ebal and Shiloh's Debris 407.

Site	Goat/Sheep	Element	No. of Left	No. of Right	
Tel Qiri ²⁵	Forelimb	Scapula	2	53	
		Humerus	4	44	
		Radius+Ulna	0	25	
	Total			0	122
	Hindlimb	Femur	0	1	
		Tibia	1	1	
	Total			1	2
Complete Total			1	124	
Shiloh	Forelimb	Scapula	40	50	
		Humerus	33	32	
		Radius+Ulna	40	51	
		Metacarpal	19	9	
	Total			132	142
	Hindlimb	Femur	22	29	
		Tibia	32	29	
		Metatarsal	12	21	
		Astragalus	11	22	
	Total			77	101
Complete Total			209	243	

Table 9.6. Comparison of right to left forelimb and hindlimbs in Mount Ebal and Shiloh's Debris 407.

²⁴ Data taken only from the Mount Ebal altar's northern and southern courtyards.

²⁵ Data taken only from Locus 1044 and Locus 1064 of Stratum VIII B in Tell Qiri's Area D.

Marom and Zuckerman (2012: 583) compared Late Bronze I and Late Bronze II animal bones from a royal/ritual and domestic context at Hazor, arguing that the right limbs are typically present in ritual contexts whereas the left limbs, the parts that were left over, are more commonly found in domestic contexts. Tell Qiri may represent this same sort of preference, which is apparently a continuation of Late Bronze Age traditions. Wapnish and Hesse (1991), analyzing faunal remains from the Iron II cult place at Tel Dan, argued that evidence for sacrifice was evident given the existence of slaughter debris and a preference for younger animals. In terms of butchery, they state that phalanges are considered evidence of butchery activities and can be indicative of the location where slaughter took place. As mentioned above, Megiddo's Level Q-7 may be indicative of such butchery activities.

In terms of the symbolic significance of sheep and goats, liver models were often based off these animals, as was divination (i.e. haruspicy, astragali throwing) (Lev-Tov and McGeough 2007: 96–97). Sheep, overall, were generally more symbolically important than goats, which may in part be due to the uses of sheep and to their relationship with humans (Sapir-Hen 2019: 232). Sacrificial burials of sheep are more common than of goats, and they are typically found in articulation (*ibid.*). For these and other reasons, scholars suspect to find a preference for sheep over goat in ritual contexts. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to determine sheep vs. goat, and therefore these categories were combined at the sites mentioned above.

Nevertheless, it is clear from the faunal remains that sacrifice was a key component both in the Late Bronze and Iron Age cults. The essence of the southern Levantine cult—being one of sacrifice—thus did not much change over time. Although the selection and

treatment of animals for slaughter may have altered, the nature of the sacrificial cult continued.

Cult Paraphernalia

Patterns in the distribution of cult paraphernalia are apparent from one period to the next. The termination of the Late Bronze Age marked an end for the appearance of Egyptianized cult places, apart from Beth Shean, where there is still evidence for the veneration of Egyptian artifacts into the late Iron IIA. But in their plans the Lower Level V temples at Beth Shean are northern Israelite in origin. It is nevertheless important that an interest in Egyptianized objects continued into the Iron IIA at Beth Shean. This can be viewed in terms of the “Canaanite enclave” theory, wherein it is thought that continuity of Canaanite traditions lasted even into the Iron IIA in the Beth Shean Valley (Arie 2017: 4).

In terms of continuity of cultic paraphernalia from the Late Bronze into the Iron Age, there is a continuation of altars or attention-focusing devices from one period to the next (Table 9.7). Iron II horned altars appear at many sites, including Ḥorvat Tevet, Tel Dothan, Shiloh, Megiddo, Tel Kedesh, Tel Rehov and Pella—the latter two in the form of ceramic altars. In Late Bronze Age contexts, stationary stone-built altars occur in Beth Shean’s Temples 1072 and 1032 as well as at Tell Abu al-Kharaz. In the Iron IIA, altars become portable and more prevalent. Their portability might suggest that the altars could shift with the cultic space, and their prevalence indicates a rise in popularity of incense/grain burning ritual practice. Their prevalence also speaks to the widespread nature of incense and/or grain burning, which is reflective of a cultic koiné in the Iron IIA.

In terms of innovations in cult paraphernalia, these occur mainly in the Iron Age with the appearance of the aforementioned portable limestone four-horned altars as well as with

the appearance of horned funnels, perforated cups, petalled chalices (see Table 9.8), strainer jars and drummer figurines. In terms of continuity, stationary, constructed altars continue into the Iron Age, but these become rarer. The use of ceramic four-horned altars, shrine models and cult stands is also a Bronze Age tradition that is carried over into the Iron Age. The four-horned altar, though appearing in Late Bronze contexts in ceramic form, is very much a convention of the Iron II. The appearance of four-horned limestone altars in the north may be explained on the background of cultic continuity. I believe that they are a direct continuation of the Late Bronze Age ceramic four-horned tower model, and that they became a symbol of the northern Israelite cult in the Iron IIA. It is difficult to explain the reason why horned altars became a symbol, but perhaps it is related to the preservation of tradition.

There is also an apparent standardization in cultic paraphernalia, with the increase in the number of four-horned altars, drummer figurines and petalled chalices. This may indicate a consolidation of ritual practice and provides more evidence for a cultic *koiné* in settled sites during the Iron II. However, it was not as though each cultic context had a requisite number or type of cult item to include within their rituals. In some cases, a certain element, such as a four-horned altar, is either present or absent. Cult is unprescribed in the sense that each cultic context is idiosyncratic, but a standardization exists in terms of cultic paraphernalia used.

When plotting the pieces of cult paraphernalia present in the Late Bronze and Iron Age structures described above (see Table 9.7–9.8), it is clear that not every piece need be present in order for the context to be considered cultic. Indeed, the cultic nature of a given context depends on more than just the presence of cultic paraphernalia as, for example, Temple 50866 at Beth Shean was found nearly devoid of finds.

We can, however, note trends and changes in the archaeological record over time.

For example, it is worth noting that stationary altars are not common in the Late Bronze, but become much more popular in the form of portable ceramic or limestone altars in Iron Age—particularly late Iron IIA—contexts. The first appearance of limestone altars may be dated to the late Iron IIA, except for a strange four-horned installation from Ashkelon which dates to the Iron I (Master and Aja 2011: Fig. 7). However, such altars were, of course, preceded by their ceramic counterparts, which date as early as the Late Bronze and can be interpreted as, at first, representing “tower-models.”

Looking at the Table 9.8, which presents paraphernalia from Iron IIA and Iron IIB contexts, it is clear that the greatest variety of cult finds is found at Megiddo and Horvat Tevet. While one may look at this table and determine from a quick viewing that these sites are the “most cultic,” it is important to keep in mind that other sites—such as Beth Shean’s Southern Temple—may have less of a variety of finds but still contain certain types (in this case, cylindrical cult stands) in large quantities.

The most important thing to keep in mind in terms of cult paraphernalia is its function. Many of the pieces of cultic equipment outlined below were used for gift offerings. Regarding those that were not, they seem to have served a figurative, artistic or symbolic purpose, such as *maṣṣeboth* or figurines. But the use of many items is sacrificial in nature—related to either the burning of incense or grain. This highlights the fact that in the cult of both periods, the offering of dry goods was as central as animal sacrifice. Again, the nature of cult does not change from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age in the sense that cult remains sacrificial.

	Mount Ebal	The “Bull Site”	Tel Dothan Iron I	Shiloh	Megiddo Palace 2072	Megiddo Temple 2048	Megiddo Level Q-7	Tell Qiri	Beth Shean Temples 1230 and 1234	Beth Shean Temple 1072	Pella Phase 3 Temple	Pella Phase 4 Temple	Pella Phase 5 Temple	Tell Abu al-Kharaz
Stationary altar	x													x
Ceramic altar														
Shrine models														
Cult stands					x			x					x	
Cultic vessels			x								x			
Chalices					x			x	x					
Figurative art					x				x	x				x
Statuettes		x			x	x					x			
Stelae							x		x	x				
<i>Maşşebah</i>							x							
Sacrificial pits/ <i>favissae</i>				x					x		x			
Wall brackets					x									
Ritual hoards						x					x		x	

Table 9.7. Cultic paraphernalia present in Late Bronze and Iron I contexts in the northern highlands and valleys of the southern Levant.

	Tell el-Farah N.	Tel Dothan Phase 4	Shiloh	Megiddo Building 12/Q/99	Megiddo Building 2081	Megiddo Building 338	Ta'anach Cultic Structure	Tel Kedesh	Horvat Tevet	Beth Shean Southern Temple	Tel Rehov	Tel 'Amal	Pella Phase 6 Temple
Limestone altar	x	x	x	x	x			x	x				
Ceramic altar				x			x		x		x		x
Shrine model	x			x					x		x		
Cult stands				x	x				x	x		x	
Cult vessel		x										x	x
Chalices				x					x				x
Petalled chalices				x									
Horned funnels				x					x				
Strainer jar					x				x				
Perforated cups									x				x
Figurines				x					x				
Stelae							x						
<i>Maṣṣebah</i>	x					x	x						
Sacrificial pits													
Astragali					x		x						

Table 9.8. Cultic paraphernalia present in Iron IIA and IIB contexts in the northern highlands and valleys of the southern Levant.

A note on sacrifice is thus in order here. L.M. Feldman (2020) has recently discussed the idea of sacrifice in ancient Israel. In it, she looks at three different approaches to the study of sacrifice: archaeological, comparative and literary. From the literary-biblical perspective, the most commonly discussed types of sacrifice are those of animals, followed by grain offerings and tithing. The types of animals prescribed for sacrifice generally include cattle, goat and sheep, in addition to birds—typically pigeons and turtledoves (*ibid.*: 4). These kinds of animals are, perhaps not surprisingly, the same types of animals most often found in the Iron Age Southern Levant. Questions exist as to whether the types of animals consumed reflected the sacrificial prescription, or vice versa. It seems that from a Bronze Age perspective, these were the types of animals most commonly eaten, and thus this tradition carried over, later influencing the biblical prescriptions.

Feldman also speaks of grain and incense offerings, though in her article they are underplayed due to the lack of preservation of such finds in archaeology (*ibid.*: 4). Nevertheless, the data collected in this dissertation puts a significant emphasis on the importance of incense in the Late Bronze and Iron Age cults. Many types of cultic paraphernalia are associated with the burning of incense, and this insight should not be neglected. The role of scent and perhaps psychoactive elements (cf. Arie, Rosen and Namdar 2020) in ritual and sacrifice was an important one in the Northern Israelite cult. This leads to a holistic understanding of ritual, wherein all five senses were activated throughout religious performative practice (cf. Chadwick 2012: 296).

Feldman refers, as I do, to sacrifices as being defined (generally) as gifts to the gods. Votive offerings, such as money or other intrinsically valued items, she concludes were mainly reserved for dedication in temples (*ibid.*: 4). This being the case, we should not

expect to find votive offerings in non-temple settings, such as in cultic buildings, open air sanctuaries, etc. However, we do find evidence of votive offerings, such as figurines, in various contexts. Although figurines are not intrinsically valuable, they can nevertheless be seen as “gifts to the gods” from the perspective that they were offered by less affluent peoples.

In her concluding remarks, Feldman underscores that the practice of sacrifice within the ancient Israelite cult was far from standardized (*ibid.*: 8), with which I agree. There are, however, repeating elements and motifs (i.e. the cultic *koiné*) that we see time and again: an emphasis on animal sacrifice, incense and votive offerings, both in temples and non-temple contexts. It is important to keep in mind that while we may not see the type of standardization that is discussed within the Bible, we do however see common threads of ritualistic behavior throughout northern Israel. There are very rarely surprises in terms of the kinds of animals offered, for instance, and I would not be surprised to find evidence of various types of incense, including psychoactive elements, being used in the plant-offerings made. In general, there are more commonalities and less surprises throughout the sites presented in this dissertation, and the basic practices of ritual behavior seems to represent a *koiné* throughout the northern Kingdom.

In terms of the relationship between ritual and sacrifice, B. Hesse, P. Wapnish and J. Greer argue that one is imbedded within the other (Hesse, Wapnish and Greer 2012: 230). The sacrifice of animal and plant-offerings was and is, from this perspective, an inherently ritualistic behavior. The connection between the ancients and the goods and flocks they offered to the gods was a personal, devotional act, which should be emphasized in any future research on sacrifice.

Continuity and Change in Cult Practices

Late Bronze–Iron I

In more general terms, temple continuity is attested in settlement sites, especially in the valleys at sites such as Megiddo (Temple 2048), Beth Shean and Pella. In some cases, like at Megiddo and Beth Shean VIII–VI, the plan of the building continues with small modifications made in subsequent strata. The longevity of cult is important, as it means that significant changes to cultic practice, at least at Megiddo and Beth Shean VIII–VI, were likely not made during the Late Bronze Age. A major change of course occurred at Beth Shean from Stratum IX to Stratum VIII–VII, with the town becoming more Egyptianized. The Egyptianization process included a change in the conception of cultic space, with a shift from the Migdal-style temple in Stratum R-1 (Building 1230) to a more Egyptianized plan in Stratum VIII–VII. The shift from a Canaanite to Egyptian cultural milieu is attested at Beth Shean, but not at Megiddo and Pella where Canaanite material culture is maintained. This is not to say that Canaanite material culture does not continue into Strata VIII–VI at Beth Shean, only that more Egyptian elements come into play during these periods.

As for the highlands, in the Late Bronze III/early Iron I, open-air sanctuaries begin to appear whereas none is attested in the periods prior. This may be due to the discontinuation of temples at sites like Shechem, which no doubt served as a central meeting point for ritual practice in highlands during the Middle and Late Bronze I–II. Shiloh may also have served as such a meeting point, given the evidence for feasting found in Debris 407. With the increased sedentarization of nomadic peoples, there may have been a change in the way cult was conceptualized. The altar at Mount Ebal and the open-air sanctuary at the “Bull Site” may be reflective of these changes, as well as of the nature of cult practiced by these peoples. The

sacrificial nature of Mount Ebal is clear, whereas that of the “Bull Site” less so. This may be because the “Bull Site” is more poorly preserved, and therefore less faunal material is present. Nevertheless, the emphasis on sacrifice, at least at Mount Ebal in the Late Bronze III/early Iron I, is clear. This may extend earlier given that Stratum II also contained many animal remains.

Iron I–Iron IIA

The destruction of the last of the Migdal-style temples in the late Iron I and their lack of renewal in the Iron IIA can be viewed in light of a change in cult practice from one period to the next. The break from the Migdol-style layout of the Late Bronze Age and the introduction of the pillared hall in the early/mid-Iron IIA marks a change from traditional styles of worship to a new building plan. Perhaps, as mentioned, the pillared hall of the Iron IIA reflects and is connected to the layout of the four-room house type of building plan. Space seems to have been conceptualized similarly, with the house of the deity no longer resembling a “fortress” in Migdal-style, but rather a typical house or home. Although there is a continuity of temple worship in the early and mid-Iron IIA, with the practice of cult in pillared halls, by the late Iron IIA more locally-based, idiosyncratic cult-related structures appear that cannot be identified as temples proper. The worship of cult in temples—temples being houses to the deity—which is so characteristic of the earlier periods, seems to all but disappear by the late Iron IIA. Instead, the deity/deities are worshipped in more personal ways; the layout of the space becomes less important and the cultic accoutrements more prominent. Public places of worship begin to resemble architectural layouts of non-cultic buildings, perhaps because cult was no longer part of, i.e. subsidized by, the elite apparatus.

Iron IIA–IIB

In the late Iron IIA, cultic contexts appear at sites which previously did not have ritual connotations. There is thus a contrasting picture—one of both continuity and change—in the northern highlands and northern valleys during this period. In the northern highlands, we see less evidence for open-air sanctuaries, as existed in the preceding period, and more of an emphasis on cult in settled sites. This again is probably due to sedentary nature of the north in the late Iron IIA. We begin to see more interaction between the highlands and the valleys in the sense that cultic paraphernalia, in the form of four-horned altars and drummer figurines, appear in both regions. This is interesting given the theory that the highlanders expanded to the lowlands during the early and late Iron IIA. Perhaps territorial expansion led to an increase in the fluidity of cultic traditions from one region to the next.

In the late Iron IIA, cult is worshipped in domestic-like cultic buildings and in open-air spaces. This changes in the Iron IIB, when cult is worshipped in administrative-like buildings, at least at Megiddo Building 338. Not enough is known about the building in which the four-horned altar was found at Tel Kedesh, though one can assume that this was an administrative, agricultural site. The influence of the administrative apparatus over cult will be explored further below.

Regional and Inter-regional Aspects of Cult

Jezreel Valley

There are some interesting aspects of cult in the Jezreel Valley that stand out as unique. Ritual hoarding, for example, was practiced at Megiddo, though it is not well attested at other sites reviewed here. This may be because hoarding at other sites has not been studied extensively, or because ritual hoards often go unnoticed in archaeological excavations. But

the significant number of hoards attested in Temple 2048 is evidence that this particular practice was an important one to Megiddo's inhabitants. Furthermore, palatial rituals and ceremonies were also carried out at Megiddo. The ties between administration and cult are strong at Megiddo in the Late Bronze (Palace 2041) and Iron I (Palace 2072). Such practices may continue into the Iron IIA, with the elite and possibly administrative nature of Building 2081. Administration and cult are also strongly connected in the Iron IIB at Megiddo, where a shrine was incorporated in the construction of Building 338.

In terms of regional aspects, the similarities in the cultic contexts at Megiddo's Building 2081 and Ta'anach's Cultic Structure have often been stated. However, what has not been mentioned is the fact that metallurgy also occurs in both contexts. There was a close relationship of industry to cult in the valleys, with evidence for industrial activities appearing at sites such as Megiddo, Ta'anach, Ḥorvat Tevet and Tel Rehov. So far, no evidence for cult and industry has been found in the highlands, and this may be due to the levels of administrative oversight over cult in the highlands vis à vis the valleys.

Beth Shean Valley

It should also be mentioned that several sites in the Sukkot Valley in Jordan, in an area east of the Beth Shean Valley, show evidence for cult. These include Tell Deir 'Alla, which contains evidence for Late Bronze/Iron I and Iron II cult activity, as well as the site of Tell Damiyah. Although Tell Damiyah shows some evidence for cult activity in the Iron IIA, most of its finds date to the Iron IIC (Petit and Kafafi 2016: 18, Table 1) and are therefore outside of the scope of this study. It is nevertheless worth pointing out that the excavators assume continuity in cult from the Iron IIA to the late Iron Age. Analysis of the connections

between this site and cult in the Northern Kingdom of Israel must, however, await publication of the final report.

Tell Deir 'Alla is a worthy site for comparison given the connections its Late Bronze/Iron I temple have to sites in the Beth Shean Valley, particularly Beth Shean itself. This temple (Phase E = Phase 12) is perhaps most famous for the discovery of 11 tablets (three of which were inscribed) found within two of its rooms (Kafafi 2004: 123). The temple itself was excavated in the 1960's and is located in the northern sector of the site. The structure features several building phases (or periods of reuse) and it consists of a cella and several auxiliary rooms. The sanctuary was destroyed in a serious conflagration, and within it were found many vessels, cylinder seals, beads, gold rings and a faience vessel inscribed with the cartouche of the Pharaoh Taouert (ca. 1214–1194 BCE) (Kafafi 2004: 122; cf. Franken 1992: Fig. 3–9.5). Also found in association with the temple are a large vat with many handles and a stand painted with red palm trees, lattice and geometric designs (Kafafi 2004: 123; cf. Franken 1964: 421, Pl. IX). A red-painted flask featuring a man “leading” a goat and a dog was also uncovered, in addition to as many as eight shrine models (Kafafi 2004: 123).

A question arises as to the level of Egyptian influence on the settlement phase with the temple structure, in light of the discovery of the faience vessel with the name of Pharaoh Taouert inscribed on it, as well as in relation to the question of Egyptian influence over sites near Deir 'Alla in the Late Bronze Age (cf. Fischer 2019). I agree with Z. Kafafi that the script found on the tablets reflects a local dialect, and I would even go further in positing that most of the cultic finds found at the site are reflective of local Canaanite traditions rather than Egyptianizing influences. There is no doubt that the Egyptians had a stronghold at Beth Shean and influence over other sites in the Beth Shean and Central Jordan Valleys, such as

Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, but the extent to which they “controlled” the Late Bronze Age settlement at Deir 'Alla should be contested (see also Fischer 2019: 229).

Turning to the Iron IIA, in 1967, a text mentioning the seer Baalam was found written on fragments of wall plaster that were discovered inside one of the rooms at Phase IX Deir 'Alla. This famous text has a parallel in the Bible, in Numbers 21–24, in which Balaam is mentioned. The text was found on the floor of a room with four benches, which—as Steiner points out—are often associated with cultic activity (Steiner 2019). The room itself comprises part of a larger, late Iron IIA complex. No other cult finds were found inside this room, although according to Steiner's reconstruction, there is evidence for cultic/industrial textile production, which she interprets as being related to weaving activities associated with Shagar, a goddess who appears in the Balaam text. An inscribed stone and a goblet were also found at the site, though their cultic associations are not clearly related to the room where the Balaam inscription was found.

The most interesting aspect of this context is the mention of Balaam, a well-known figure from the Bible. The connection between this site and the biblical text are significant for reconstructing interrelations between the Bible and the archaeological evidence we see on the ground. Not only that, but the connection between this site and cult in the Northern Kingdom of Israel is an important one. The evidence linking the Northern Kingdom to cult at Deir 'Alla is a question that must be explore going forward and is an important subject for future study.

Returning to the overall picture of cult in the Beth Shean Valley during the Iron II, it has been suggested that cult differs to the extent that the Beth Shean Valley exhibits its characteristic of having its own unique features (Arie 2017). The preference for ceramic four-

horned altars is apparent, however the procedure in using limestone and ceramic altars was probably the same. Furthermore, the appearance of drummer figurines, shrine models, cult stands, petalled chalices and perforated cups in both the Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys during the Iron IIA attests to a cultic koiné. However, there are elements that do stand out as being unique to the Beth Shean Valley. At Beth Shean Lower Level V, there is a persistence of the veneration of Egyptianized objects in the Northern and Southern Temples. At Tel Rehov, cult is worshipped in many different contexts, including in an apiary, in cultic buildings and in an open-air cult place. The de-centralized nature of Tel Rehov is an interesting element that will be explored further below.

Samaritan Highlands

As mentioned above, it is clear that open-air sanctuaries were important to cult in the Late Bronze III/early Iron I, as attested at Mount Ebal and the “Bull Site.” It is possible that the feasting debris at Shiloh is also from open-air cult activities that occurred over a prolonged period. At Tel Dothan, there is potentially evidence for domestic cult in the form of a cultic vessel discovered in an Iron I context. Tel Dothan, unlike Mount Ebal and the “Bull Site,” is a settlement site where it is likely domestic cult practices took place.

In the Iron IIA, cult becomes more “settled” in the northern highlands, with the appearance of cultic contexts in Tell el-Far‘ah N./Tirzah and Tel Dothan. Too little is known about the four-horned altars uncovered at Shiloh, but it is nevertheless significant that such objects were found both there and at Tel Dothan. This may attest to a koiné in cult in the northern highlands during this period, with four-horned altars symbolizing an approach to cult that is similar in both sites. Furthermore, the appearance of four-horned altars in the northern valleys shows that there was similarity in the way cult was conceptualized both

there and in the highlands. The burning of incense and potential offering of grain were an important aspect of cult in all three regions. There is also a strong similarity in the cult finds at sites like Tell el-Far'ah N./Tirzah and Tel Rehov, which speaks to the interaction of the northern highlands with the valleys in the Iron IIA.

It should be noted that evidence for feasting, which has not been found in settled sites in the valleys, was uncovered at both Shiloh in the Late Bronze I–II and Samaria in the Iron IIB. This may mean that feasting was more of an “institution” in the highlands, but it is probably instead related to the nature of excavations given that it is rare for archaeologists to excavate dumped debris in settlement sites. The feasting activities uncovered at Samaria were most likely related to the royal personnel who inhabited the site in the Iron IIB. As stated above, it is possible that this represents a kind of cultic centralization around Samaria as a place where feasts and thus political consolidation occurred.

Synthesis

Although each region stands out as having its own unique approach to cult, the similarities in ritual practice within these various areas outweigh the differences. There is certainly a *koiné* in cultic paraphernalia, in the sense that four-horned altars and drummer figurines appear in all regions. The most salient differences include an emphasis on administration at Megiddo, the continuation of the veneration of Egyptianized objects at Beth Shean, the variety of places of cultic worship at Tel Rehov in the Iron IIA and the emphasis on feasting at Samaria in the Iron IIB.

Cult Centralization and the Relationship of Ritual to Power

Late Bronze–Iron I

Centralization need not be related to prescribed reforms as attested in the Bible. Instead, centralization can reflect the centrality of a given place at a specific point in time. There is certainly centralization in the Late Bronze Age in the sense that cult was centralized around temples. Temples served as the primary locations where rituals took place during this period and it is more than likely that temples functioned as centers of worship not only for elites living on the tell, but also for residents of nearby rural populations. The fact that cult was centralized around temples does mean that an over-arching administrative apparatus was in charge. Each temple functioned of its own accord in tell sites, just as each tell site functioned independently during the Late Bronze Age. In the northern highlands during the Late Bronze III/early Iron I, there is evidence for a movement away from practicing cult in settled sites with the appearance of open-air sanctuaries at Mount Ebal and the “Bull Site.” Mount Ebal, which was probably ritually significant given its size and location near Shechem, seems to have been cultically important in the Iron I. This particular site probably served as a regional center for cultic worship, from Shechem to areas further beyond.

In the Iron I, the change of cult place from Temple 2048 to the *Südliches Burgtor* indicates a shift in areas considered sacred at Megiddo. Such a shift is not apparent at sites like Beth Shean and Pella, where successive temples were built one on top of the other from the Late Bronze down to the Iron IIA. Perhaps this is due to the inability of Megiddo’s inhabitants to organize a labor force large enough to construct a building as grand in scope as Temple 2048. However, there is also something to be said for the change of cultic space and perhaps this is due to a waning or cancellation of activities at Temple 2048 and the

establishment of activities closer to the mound's acropolis.

Evidence for a possible domestic cult is apparent at sites such as Tel Dothan and perhaps Tell Qiri, however domestic cults are less attested in the archaeological record during the Late Bronze Age in the highlands and valleys. The results may be skewed, on the other hand, given that this dissertation deals only with public cult places.

It is also clear that relationship of cult and ritual to political power was similar in the southern Levant during the Late Bronze and Iron I. However, a similar relationship seems to continue into the early Iron IIA. This is because temples were constructed on a monumental scale in the Late Bronze Age, Iron I, as well as in the early Iron IIA (see below), and thus it is tempting to see ritual performance as being subject to elite oversight. Questions as to whether temples were restricted to elite personnel or were incorporative of many members and classes of society are difficult to answer. However, one would assume that if the temples were run for and by elites, their subsistence would still depend on the lower classes. The setting up, experience of and running of a temple by and for elites, at the exclusion of the lower classes, would still have an impact on the latter, creating asymmetrical power relations (Inomata and Coben 2006: 22).

Iron IIA

There may have been an attempt at centralization in the Iron IIA, with similar building plans appearing at Megiddo, Ḥorvat Tevet and Beth Shean. These buildings, which are similar in layout, may be identified as temples where the administrative and elite residents of the tells or peripheral areas practiced rituals. However, it seems that the late Iron IIA administration may have had a hand in re-organizing cult according to its standards. This is attested at Megiddo, and to some extent at Beth Shean and Ḥorvat Tevet. During the period

attributed to Omride rule, cult in pillared halls was cancelled at Megiddo and potentially cancelled at Ḥorvat Tevet and Beth Shean. At Megiddo, the pillared hall was turned into a metallurgical facility and at Ḥorvat Tevet a new building was constructed over the ruins of the Level 5 structure. At Beth Shean, it is possible that the Northern and Southern Temples were turned into administrative buildings, but there is little evidence to suggest either continuity or discontinuity.

The date of Ḥorvat Tevet's Level 5 has still not been fully analyzed, except for a cursory look at the ceramics, which appear to date to the late Iron IIA (O. Sergi, personal communication). If, as the excavators believe, this phase dates to the late rather than mid-Iron IIA, it must be explained why cult activities in pillared halls were cancelled at Megiddo and Beth Shean in this period, but cultic practices were established and continued at Ḥorvat Tevet. One possible explanation is that the structure was constructed in the mid-Iron IIA, and that cultic activities continued at the site until its destruction. So much currently remains unknown about Ḥorvat Tevet, since excavated data is still being analyzed. It is therefore difficult to draw conclusions; however, if the Omrides allowed cult at Ḥorvat Tevet to continue, it may have been because the main activity carried out within the pillared building was administrative. It may have been important for the Omrides not to cancel cult or to alter any other activities carried out within the building, since the building served as a crucial administrative structure within their economic system. The pillared halls at Megiddo and Beth Shean, on the other hand, could be turned into administrative and industrial facilities in order to better benefit the administration.

Returning to centralization in the late Iron IIA, cult appears at many sites in the valleys, including Ta'anach, Tel 'Amal and Tel Rehov. Evidence for cult is strong at Tel

Rehov, where rituals were practiced in a variety of contexts. This supports the notion that cult was de-centralized in this period, given that a plurality of contexts is attested at a single site. There is nevertheless a standardization in cultic paraphernalia, with the increase in the number of four-horned altars, drummer figurines and petalled chalices. This may indicate a consolidation of ritual practice, or that there was a cultic koiné of sorts in settled sites during the Iron II. However, it was not as though each cultic context had a requisite menu of cult items to include within their rituals. In some cases, a certain element, such as a four-horned altar, is either present or absent. There is thus a freedom to worship that is unprescribed in the sense that each cultic context is idiosyncratic, but standardization in terms of cultic paraphernalia used.

The worship of cult in a variety of cultic contexts, especially at in the Beth Shean Valley, also means that the local populations also probably had more access to cult than they did in the Late Bronze, Iron I and early Iron IIA. Cult was no longer restricted to temples, and therefore entry into cultic contexts was open to a wider range of people.

Iron IIB

It is worth looking at the archaeological remains in the northern valleys prior to drawing conclusions about cult centralization, given that cult centralization in the Iron IIB is thought to precede cultic reforms in Judah (Finkelstein 2020). Painting a picture of the archaeological remains from various sites will better inform conclusions drawn about the nature of cult in the north during this period.

Beginning with the Jezreel Valley, there is evidence for a build-up of occupational layers at sites like Yoqne'am and Megiddo. At Yoqne'am, structures were uncovered in Stratum XII, including a massive fortification wall and dwellings (Ben-Tor, Zarzecki-Peleg

and Cohen-Anidjar 2005: 184). The re-use of a water system first detected in Stratum XIV is also attested (*ibid.*: 186). According to the excavators, Stratum XII lasted a significant amount of time (*ibid.*: 189) and they expect that it ended with the incursions of Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 BCE. Since there is no evidence of destruction, the site may have been abandoned around this time. At Megiddo, two sets of large stables and several administrative buildings, including Building 338, were uncovered (cf. Cantrell and Finkelstein 2016; Franklin 2018: 190–192). The amount of effort taken to construct these buildings is indicative of a large labor force and organizational strength. Tell Qiri and Tel Kedesh were relatively small administrative, agricultural centers at this time.

As for Beth Shean Valley, Beth Shean Area P features Building 28636—a large occupational structure that was destroyed (Mazar and Fink 2006: 212). At Tel Rehov, Areas B, A and J contain Iron IIB occupational layers.

Despite the revival of some sites in the Iron IIB, Na'aman (2002) hypothesizes that Hazael's destructions led to a significant decrease in the number of cultic places in the valleys. According to his reconstruction, there seems to have been a *de facto* centralization process during this period, due to the destructions (cf. Na'aman 2002). However, this change should instead be explained on the background of developments in the northern Israelite kingdom during the 8th century BCE. After all, the worship of cult in many local places could have gone back to the way it was in the late Iron IIA. It seems that the practice of cult in various contexts all but ceased during this time. However, there is no evidence for the centralization of cult around a specific site, as has been postulated by scholars (e.g. von Rad 1953: 60, 68; for a review see Greenspahn 2014; but see Römer 2018: 82). Although there is a significant cult at Tel Dan and perhaps a cult existed at Bethel, the former is located far

from the center of administrative activities and the latter does not exhibit evidence for an Iron IIB cult. One may argue that cult was centralized at Megiddo in the sense that Building 338, an administrative building, contains a shrine. But it seems that only the elite personnel stationed at Megiddo has access to this space. Furthermore, if the Tel Kedesh altar does indeed date to the Iron IIB, there is evidence for cult being practiced outside of major tell sites. Perhaps cult shifted in this period from tell sites to small, rural villages and agricultural outposts and although cult was no longer emphasized in urban centers, it was still practiced by the rural populations.

There may, to some extent, be evidence for centralizing activities in the northern highlands. Evidence for feasting is apparent at Samaria E 207. This may have to do with the consolidation of power around Samaria in the Iron IIB. However, it does not appear that the administrative personnel in charge of the northern Israelite Kingdom were concerned with organizing cult around tell sites in the northern highlands nor in the Jezreel or Beth Shean Valleys.

In a recent article, Finkelstein (2020: 263–264) suggested that cult centralization in Judah was undertaken to unify Israelite refugees into the Judahite cultural and religious milieu. Although I do not contest this supposition, I am reluctant to conclude that there is evidence for reforming practices in the north of the kind later suspected in Judah under Hezekiah and Josiah (see references above). While the Omrides of the late Iron IIA may have had a hand in cancelling or manipulating cult worship in pillared halls, this is the strongest extent to which I see reforming practices having taken place. Although this may have set a precedent for reforms in Judah, it appears that the Omrides' cancellation or manipulation policies were largely undertaken to benefit themselves. The pillared halls were turned into

industrial and perhaps administrative buildings, off which the Omrides' could profit. They nevertheless allowed cult to be worshipped in a variety of settings in the Iron IIA and conducted nothing of the sort of cult reforming practices as depicted in the Hebrew Bible.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation provides an overview of cult in the northern highlands and valleys of the southern Levant during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. Taken together, it presents:

- A holistic approach to understanding cult, one that takes not only architecture and cultic paraphernalia into consideration, but also ceramics and faunal remains.
- Cult from the perspective of continuity and change, as well as from regional and interregional perspectives. Conclusions include the following:
 - It has been suggested that cult continues from the Late Bronze to Iron II with significant innovations made during the Iron Age.
 - Although changes in cult paraphernalia occur, the essence of Late Bronze Age traditions is maintained in the Iron Age. There is still the use of ceramic altars as incense and dry-goods burners and there is also a continued use of cult stands, shrine models and chalices. The essential elements of ritual practice do not change much over time, and at the core of things southern Levantine cult remains essentially one of sacrifice.
 - In terms of regionality, there are more similarities in the northern valleys than there are substantial differences. It has been argued that a cultic koiné of sorts existed in both the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. Although, as mentioned above, cultic items change in style, their essence is the same.

- The cessation of cultic worship in Migdal-style temples, or houses to the deity, from the late Iron I to the Iron IIA means that the ways in which cultic spaces were conceptualized changed in the latter period.
- A new approach to the concept of centralization. It argues that centralization need not be focused on reforming policies, but rather the centrality of a place or places. The salient conclusions to be drawn concerning centralization are:
 - Although cult was still worshipped in temples in mid-Iron IIA pillared halls, this all but ceases in the late Iron IIA under Omride rule. The Omrides, it seems, cancelled or manipulated cult in the pillared halls—instead preferring to connect these buildings with industrial or administrative functions.
 - The Omrides did not enact a singular approach to cult. The movement of cult toward Building 2081 at Megiddo, for example, may mean that at least at this site, the Omrides wanted to bring cult further under their control. Tel Rehov, on the other hand, presents a contrasting picture—one in which cult is practiced in many different contexts contemporaneously throughout the site.
 - In the late Iron IIA, public cult was made more accessible to the local populations, such as at sites like Ta'anach.
 - The late Iron IIA Omride administration allowed for plurality of worship at various sites in the regions under their control. Their focus seems to have been less on cult and more on elements which could perhaps benefit the administration in more salient ways.

- In the Iron IIB, there is a shift in terms of the number of cult places represented. The significant number of cult places from the Iron IIA is reduced to two sites in the Iron IIB—Megiddo and Tel Kedesh. Although one could argue that this is indicative of cult reforms, the presence of a four-horned altar at Tel Kedesh means that cult was still worshipped in the countryside, not far from major tell sites.

What all this means for Israel's cultic or centralizing influence over Judah is an interesting question indeed. The cancellation or manipulation of cult certainly occurred first under the Omrides, though it is not clear whether this model could or would have been undertaken by the kings of Judah. Instead, according to the Bible, the kings of Judah sought to erect one central high place in Jerusalem, which would be the focus of the kingdom's religious life. But, despite some opinions to contrary, there is no archaeological evidence that such reforms were undertaken in the northern Kingdom prior to this supposed process.

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תקציר

מטרתו של מחקר זה היא להתחקות אחר התפתחות הפולחן הציבורי בהרי שומרון ובעמקים הצפוניים בכנען ובממלכת ישראל הצפונית במהלך תקופת הברונזה המאוחרת IIא-III ותקופת הברזל I-II (המאות ה-14-8 לפנה"ס), באמצעות בחינה וניתוח ארכיאולוגי של המכלולים והשרידים הפולחניים מן האזור. על אף שנערכו מספר מחקרים העוסקים בפולחן בדרום הלבנט, מרביתם התמקדו בעיקר בתקופת הברזל מבלי להתייחס לביטויי הפולחן בכנען במהלך תקופת הברונזה המאוחרת, להתפתחות הפולחן ולמשך הארוך של התופעה. יתרה מכך, הפולחן בממלכת ישראל הצפונית והיבטיו הארכיאולוגיים טרם נחקרו באופן מקיף ועצמאי, בנפרד מן המתרחש בממלכת יהודה. המכלול העשיר של חפצי הפולחן שנחשפו לאחרונה בחפירות ארכיאולוגיות באיזור, כמו גם השינויים ברצף הסטרטיגרפי ובתיארוכך של שכבות ארכיאולוגיות בדרום הלבנט במהלך 30 השנים האחרונות, דורשים הערכה מחודשת ועדכנית של המכלולים שפורסמו בעבר וההשערות המקובלות במחקר כיום. ההערכה המחודשת, כפי שמוצגת במחקר זה, כוללת ניתוח מקיף של שני מכלולים פולחניים שטרם פורסמו ממגידו וחורבת טבת (המתוארכים לתקופת הברזל I ותקופת הברזל IIא', בהתאמה) וכן בחינה ביקורתית של מכלולים פולחניים נוספים שפורסמו בעבר. ניתוח המכלולים הפולחניים נעשה על בסיס כרונולוגי ואזורי, תוך השוואה בין מכלולים מתקופת הברונזה המאוחרת והברזל באתרים שונים בהרי שומרון ובעמקים הצפוניים (עמק יזרעאל ועמק בית שאן).

עמק יזרעאל ועמק בית שאן מהווים מרכיב חשוב בנסיון לעמוד על התפתחות הפולחן בממלכת ישראל הצפונית, שכן שני אזורים אלו היוו מוקדי פעילות פולחנית ומילאו תפקיד גיאופוליטי מרכזי במהלך התקופות הנידונות. לכן, מחקר זה מתמקד בגבולות הגיאוגרפיים של עמק יזרעאל ועמק בית שאן, יחד עם הרי שומרון, משום שאלו מהווים את הליבה של ממלכת ישראל הצפונית. שילובם של הנתונים הארכיאולוגיים החדשים ממגידו וחורבת טבת עם מידע שפורסם בעבר מאתרים משוכבים היטב באיזור, מאפשרים למקם את המכלולים החדשים הללו במסגרת הפעילות הפולחנית שהתקיימה בעמקים הצפוניים. ייחודם של עמק יזרעאל ועמק בית שאן מתבטא במידע הרחב שהם מספקים אודות הרצף הפולחני למן תקופת הברונזה המאוחרת IIא' ועד לתקופת הברזל IIב'. בנוסף לממצאים ממגידו וחורבת טבת, מכלולי הפולחן כוללים את אלו ממגידו, בית שאן, פלה, תל אבו אל-חרז, הר עיבל, אתר "הפר", תל פארעה צפון/תרצה, שילה, שומרון, תל דותן, תל קירי, תל קדש (בעמק יזרעאל), תענך, תל רחוב ותל עמל. בנוסף, המחקר מציג ניתוח טיפולוגי ומרחבי מקיף של חפצי פולחן מתקופת הברונזה המאוחרת והברזל בצפון כנען/ישראל. מטרתו של ניתוח זה היא להבין טוב יותר היבטים שונים אודות התפוצה, השימוש בחפצי פולחן שונים במהלך התקופות הנידונות.

בכדי לבחון את ההמשכיות והשינויים במסורות הפולחן, כמו גם השפעות כנעניות וזרות על מסורות הפולחן בממלכת ישראל, המחקר משווה בין הפעילות הפולחנית בתקופת הברזל לזו של תקופת הברונזה המאוחרת. השוואה זו מאפשרת התבוננות רחבה על ריכוזיות הפולחן, או היעדר ריכוזיות בממלכת ישראל/כנען ובאזורים נוספים ברחבי המזרח הקדום. מלבד ניתוח מכלולי פולחניים שטרם פורסמו, המחקר מספק מסד נתונים רחב עבור מחקרים עתידיים. תוצאותיו של מחקר זה צפויות להשפיע על מחקרים רב-תחומיים אשר מבקשים לשלב בין הארכיאולוגיה של הפולחן בממלכת ישראל הצפונית עם חקר המקרא, אנתרופולוגיה וסוציולוגיה וכן לסייע בהבהרת אופי הפולחן באזורים אחרים ובנקודות זמן נוספות.

המסקנות העיקריות המוצגות בעבודת מחקר זו הן:

- קיימת המשכיות באופי הפולחן בין תקופת הברונזה המאוחרת לתקופת הברזל, אך עם שינויים וחידושים מהותיים במהלך תקופת הברזל.
- על אף שקיימים שינויים בחפצי הפולחן, מהותה של המסורת הפולחנית נשמרת במהלך תקופת הברזל. ישנו שימוש מתמשך במזבחות חרס, כנים פולחניים, דגמי מזבחות וקובעות. המאפיינים העיקריים של מנהגי הפולחן אינם משתנים באופן מהותי לאורך זמן והפולחן בדרום הלבנט ממשיך להתבסס בעיקרו על מנחות והקרבת קורבנות. המשכיות זו נתמכת על ידי תפוצתן של מנחות (צלמיות, מטמונים טקסיים ועוד), קובעות (לקטורת) ועצמות בעלי חיים בהקשרים פולחניים.
- מבחינה אזורית, מופיעים קווי דמיון רבים בין עמק יזרעאל לעמק בית שאן, העולים על ההבדלים ביניהם. המחקר גורס כי במהלך תקופת הברונזה המאוחרת והברזל התקיים "קויינה" (koine) פולחני בעמקים הצפוניים.
- במהלך תקופת הברזל I המאוחרת פסק השימוש במקדשי מגדול. פרט זה מעיד על שינוי בתפיסה בנוגע למרחב הפולחני בתקופת הברזל II א'.
- על אף שפולחן עדיין התקיים במקדשי עמודים סביב אמצע תקופת הברזל II א', מנהג זה חדל מלהתקיים תחת שלטון בית עומרי בשלהי תקופת הברזל II א'. נראה שמלכי בית עומרי ביטלו או שינו את אופי הפולחן במקדשי העמודים והסבו את המבנים האלו לצריכים תעשייתיים או אדמיניסטרטיביים.
- מלכי שושלת בית עומרי לא התייחסו לפולחן באופן זהה לקודמיהם. נראה כי במגידו, למשל, מלכי בית עומרי ניסו לשלוט בפולחן באופן הדוק יותר, במבנה יחיד, מוגדר ויעודי. מצד שני, תל רחוב מציג תמונה הפוכה, כשמספר מסורות פולחניות וכן מספר מוקדי פולחן נחשפו באתר.

- בתקופת הברזל II'א' המאוחרת, פולחן ציבורי הפך נגיש יותר לאוכלוסיות המקומיות. כך למשל, בתל תענך.

- במהלך תקופת הברזל II'ב', מספר מוקדי הפולחן מצטצם לשני אתרים בלבד: מגידו ותל קדש (בעמק יזרעאל). שינוי זה יכול להעיד על רפורמות פולחניות. עם זאת, מציאתו של מזבח ארבע קרניים בתל קדש יכול להעיד על קיומו של פולחן באיזורים הכפריים שבסמוך לתלים המרכזיים.

המסקנות המוצגות לעיל, מעלות מספר שאלות בנוגע לריכוזיות הפולחן והשפעותיה של ממלכת ישראל על יהודה. על אף שביטול והסבה של מבני פולחן התרחשו בממלכת ישראל תחת שלטון בית עומרי, לא ניתן לקבוע בבירור אם תהליך דומה התקיים ביהודה. לפי המקרא, מלכי יהודה שאפו להקים מרכז פולחני יחיד בירושלים שיהווה את המוקד הדתי בממלכה. יחד עם זאת, ולמרות מספר דעות מנוגדות, אין בידינו עדויות ארכיאולוגיות שרפורמות שכאלה התקיימו קודם לכן בממלכת ישראל.

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מאת

ארין הול

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