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CHAPTER 4

CERAMICS

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The indicative pottery from the tomb at Tsur Natan dates consistently to the Early and Late Iron Age II. It is possible that some of the ceramics are even older and belong to the Iron Age IB. In terms of the current absolute dates of these periods, the earliest finds from the tomb may belong to the end of the 11th century BCE and the latest to the first half of the 9th century BCE.

THE ASSEMBLAGE

Open Vessels: Bowls, Chalice, Krater (Fig. 4.1:1-6)

Fig. 4.1:1. Bowl fragment with a brown-orange fabric and many white inclusions. The rim is turned inward. Parallels can be seen from Dor (Dor Iron IIA, or in general chronology Late Iron IIA [Gilboa 2001: Pl. Pl. 5.77:10]); also similar, but with red slip, was a type found near Tsur Natan, in a burial cave at et-Taiyiba (Yannai 2002: Fig. 2:19).

Fig. 4.1:2. Small fragment of a straight simple bowl rim with a buff fabric and fine inclusions. As this is a very small fragment it is difficult to compare to others, but parallels may include bowl types 33b and 38a at Megiddo (Arie 2011: 171,174). These types date to Early/Late Iron IIA and Iron IIB. As the rim is simple it most likely dates to Iron IIA. A similar bowl, but with a red slip, was found in the nearby et-Taiyiba burial cave (Yannai 2002: Fig. 3:7).

Fig. 4.1:3. Rim fragment of a red-slipped bowl with an orange fabric and medium-sized white and red inclusions. The rim is simple and slightly incurving. Such bowls are typical of Early and Late Iron IIA. The type can be identified with bowl type 33 at Megiddo (Arie 2011: 171). For a similar form see Dor (Dor Iron I/II, or in general chronology

Early Iron IIA [Gilboa 2001: Pl. 5.III: type BL33b]). Comparable also is a bowl found in the et-Taiyiba burial cave (Yannai 2002: Fig. 2:5,12; Fig. 3:7).

Fig. 4.1:4. This small rim fragment of a bowl is difficult to find comparisons for, due to its very small size. The fabric is buff orange with white and red inclusions. The rim is slightly thickened and the diameter is rather wide. It may be a fragment of a carinated bowl, such as one found at Dor (Area B1, Phase 9, Dor Iron I/II, or in general chronology Early Iron IIA [Gilboa 2001: Pl. 5.67:32]).

Fig. 4.1:5. Chalice with a stepped base and a red fabric, with large white inclusions. The simple rim of this chalice is rare. Similarly formed chalices usually have more elaborate, often flaring rims. They are typical of Iron IB-Late IIA. A parallel for this vessel was found at Megiddo (Arie 2011: Chalice 31). A chalice with a stepped base but a flaring rim was found in the et-Taiyiba burial cave (Yannai 2002: Fig. 5:3-4).

Fig. 4.1:6. Deep bowl with a folded rim and a dark orange fabric with medium-sized white inclusions. This is one of the most frequent types from Iron IB through Early Iron IIA. There are numerous parallels for this type, including from Megiddo (Arie 2011: krater type 32 [Early-Late Iron IIA]), Keisan (Stratum 9a-b, Early Iron IIA (Briend and Humbert

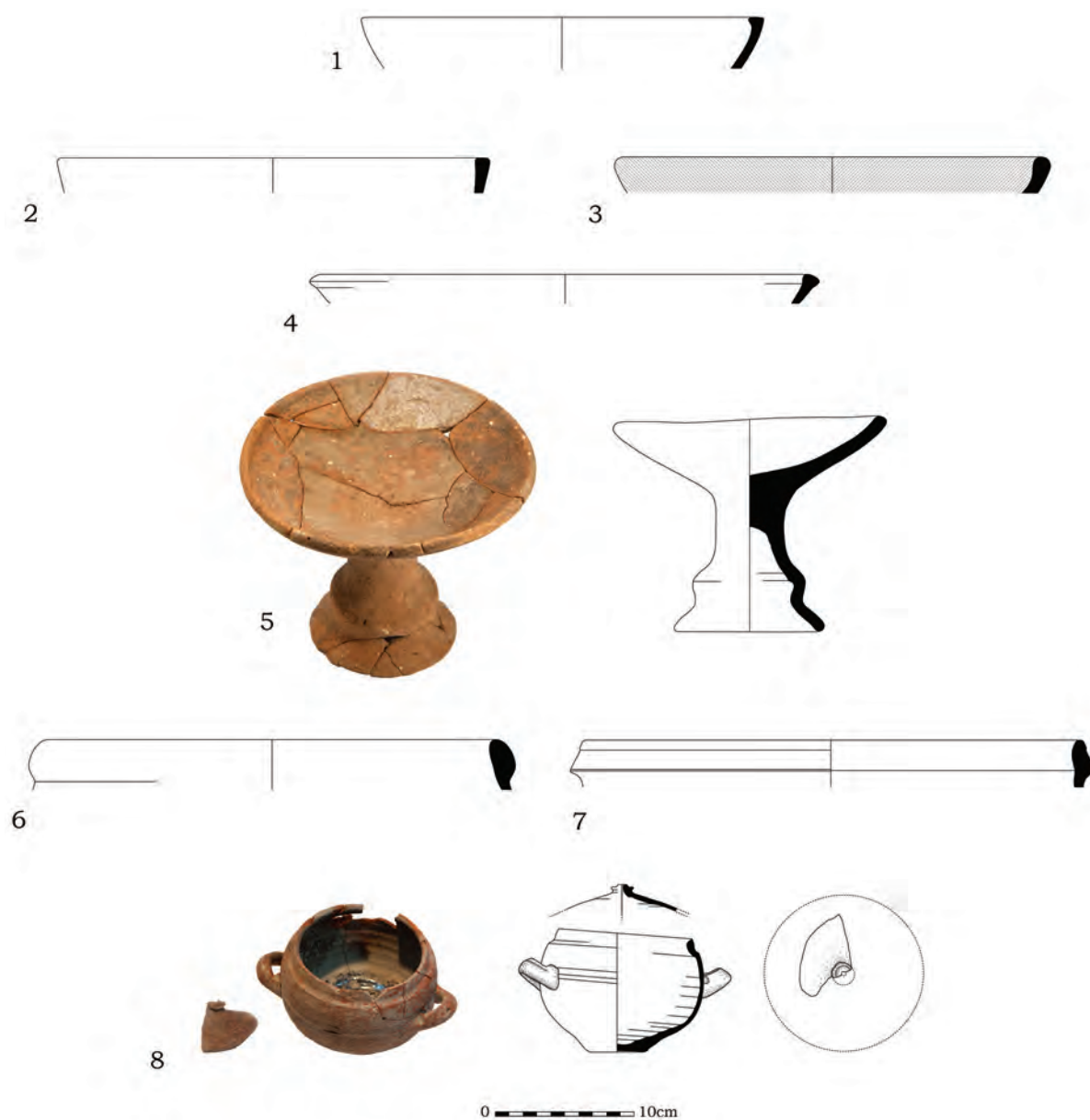


Figure 4.1. Open vessels, bowls (1-4), a chalice (5), a deep bowl / krater (6) and cooking pots (7-8) from the tomb.

No.	Object	Reg. no.	Locus	Period	Description
1	Bowl	107/10	L2	IA IIA	Brown-orange fabric, many white inclusions
2	Bowl	107/5	L2	IA IIA	Buff fabric, fine inclusions
3	Bowl	107/8	L2	IA IIA	Orange fabric, medium-sized white and red inclusions; red slip
4	Bowl	107/13	L2	IA IIA	Buff orange fabric, white and red inclusions
5	Chalice	48	L2	IA IB-IIA	Red fabric, large white inclusions
6	Krater	107/14	L2	IA IIA	Dark orange fabric, medium-sized white inclusions
7	Cooking pot	107/6	L2	IA IB-IIA	Light brown fabric
8	Cooking pot	107/9	L2	Abbasid/ Fatimid	Interior base glazed

1980: Pl. 64:8), and Dor (Dor Iron I/II, or in general chronology Early Iron IIA [Gilboa 2001: Pl. 5.VI: type KR21]). A similar vessel type was found in the et-Taiyiba burial cave (Yannai 2002: Fig. 5: 5-10), but these are apparently cooking pots.

Cooking Pots (Fig. 4.1:7-8)

Fig. 4.1:7. Cooking pot with a triangular rim and a light brown fabric. The short rim and straight orientation are typical of Iron IB-Late IIA, a period in which this is one of the most common cooking pot types. It is equivalent to cooking pot types 31a, 32a and 34 at Megiddo, dating to Early and Late Iron IIA (Arie 2011). More parallels have been found at Dor (cooking pot types 16 and 17, dating to Dor Iron I/II or in general chronology Early Iron IIA [Gilboa 2001: Pl. 5.68]). That this type appears already during Iron IB is demonstrated by an example from Tell Keisan Stratum 8 (Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 55:3).

Fig. 4.1:8. This cooking pot most likely dates to the late Abbasid or early Fatimid period (Edna Stern, pers. comm.).¹ Even though it is very similar to Crusader-period cooking vessels, the coarseness of the walls seems to point to an earlier date. Similar cooking vessels were found at Caesarea: type 732b, dated to the late 9th to mid-10th century CE (Arnon 2008: 41, 218); also type 741b, dated to the mid-10th to early 11th century CE (Arnon 2008: 43, 243). Parallels from Yoqne'am are also available: type 2 (Avisar 1996: 132, Fig. XIII.89).

Jugs and Juglets (Fig. 4.2:1-12)

The Fig. 4.2:1-3 pieces are juglet bases. They probably come from vessels similar to Fig. 4.2:6 and 7.

Fig. 4.2:1. Base of a juglet with a cylindrical body shape above the base. The fabric is coarse and of reddish-brown color, with large white inclusions and a dark gray core. This is equivalent to Arie's type JT31a from Megiddo (Arie 2011: 196). Other parallels from that site came from Stratum VA-IVB (Finkelstein *et al.* 2000: Fig. 11.40:6), and elsewhere

from Rosh Zayit Stratum II (Gal and Alexandre 2000: Fig. III.86:7).

Fig. 4.2:2. Base of a juglet, red-slipped, and made from a fine reddish-brown fabric.

Fig. 4.2:3. Base of a juglet, from a fine red-brown fabric. This is probably the same type as the Fig. 4.2:6 complete juglet from this tomb.

Fig. 4.2:4. Squat small juglet with a red slip and a reddish-buff fabric and large white inclusions, which is typical of vessels in this tomb. We found no exact parallels for this juglet type.

Fig. 4.2:5. Squat small juglet, red-slipped with dark red-painted horizontal lines, and a buff fabric with small white inclusions. There is a carination in the lower part under the handle, at the point of maximal diameter. The fabric is similar to Fig. 4.2:4. The same form, but without red slip, was found in Megiddo Locus 2100 (Stratum VA-IVB), dated to Late Iron IIA (Loud 1948: Pl. 88:17).

Fig. 4.2:6. Juglet with a short round body and a straight neck. The vessel has a fine reddish-brown fabric with a light buff surface. It is typical of Early and Late Iron IIA. Parallels have been found in the et-Taiyiba burial cave (Yannai 2002: Fig. 7:4), Taanach Stratum IIB (Rast and Glock 1978: Fig. 62:10), Dor DJ3 (Dor Iron IIA, or in general chronology Late Iron IIA [Gilboa 2001: Pl. 5.76:9]) and Megiddo (Arie 2011: type JT31).

Fig. 4.2:7. Juglet with an oval body and a straight, tall neck, red-slipped. This is the same as type JT31 from Megiddo (Arie 2011: 196), dated to Early-Late Iron Age IIA. Other parallels come from Shadud Burial 18 (Arie 2011: Fig. 9.4.3:6), Taanach Stratum IIB (Rast and Glock 1978: Fig. 40:7) and the nearby et-Taiyiba burial cave (Yannai 2002: Fig. 7:10).

Fig. 4.2:8. Small base fragment, of a white-grayish fabric. As this is a very small sherd, it is difficult to find parallels for it.

Fig. 4.2:9. Base of a jug, red-orange to buff fabric with large white inclusions and a dark gray core. The fragment lacks more specific traits that would help identify the type.

Fig. 4.2:10. A jug with a spout and an angular-shaped body with red-slipped, hand-burnished

¹ This identification was made on the basis of photographs and drawings only, so should be treated with some caution.

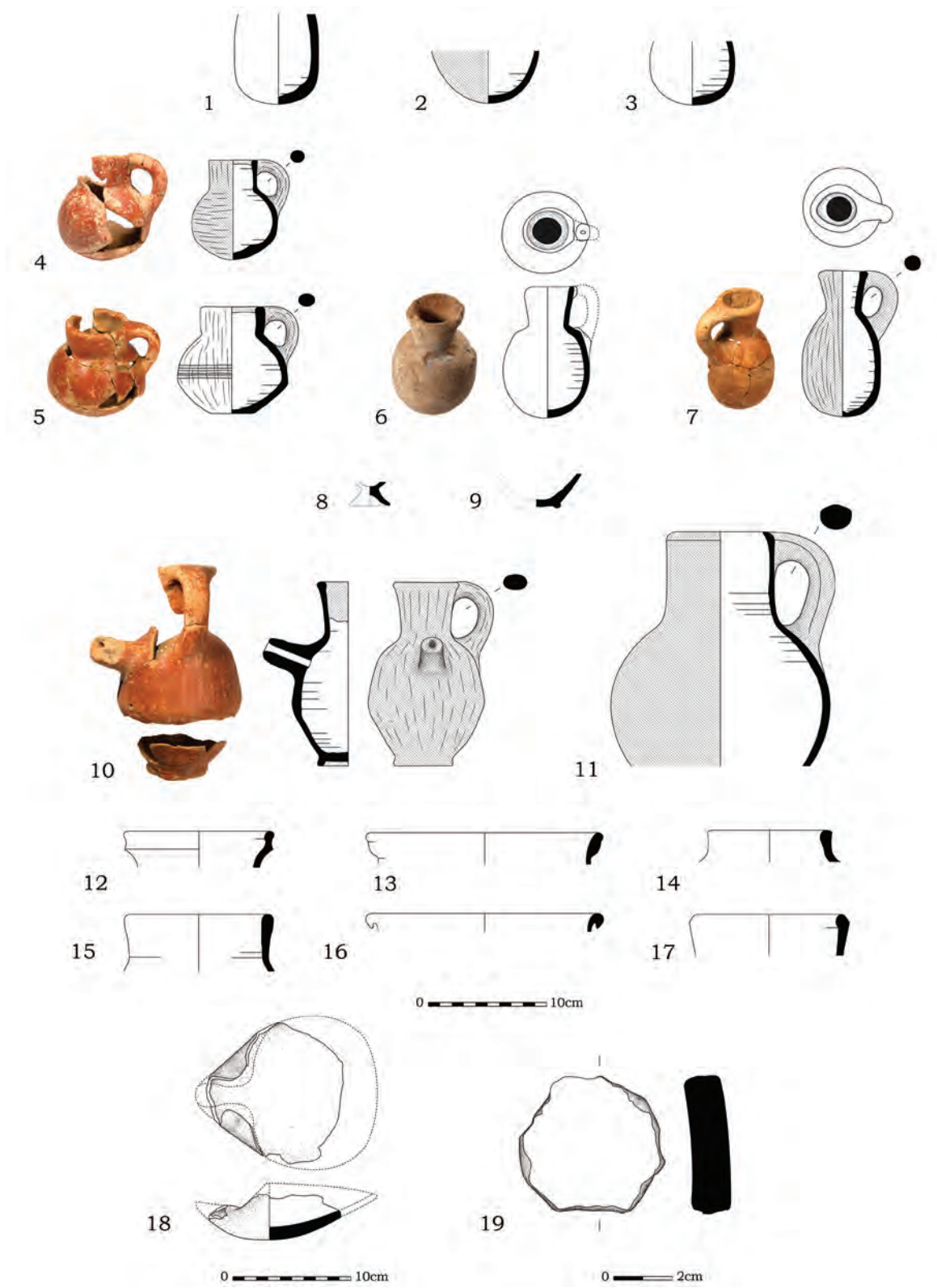


Figure 4.2. Closed vessels (1-17), lamp (18) and stopper/lid (19) from the tomb.

Figure 4.2.

No.	Object	Reg. no.	Locus	Period	Description
1	Juglet	101	L2	IA IIA	Coarse red-brown fabric, large white inclusions, gray core
2	Juglet	63	L2	IA IIA	Fine red-brown fabric; red slip
3	Juglet	33/3	L2	IA IIA	Fine red-brown fabric
4	Juglet	33/1	L2	?	Red fabric, large white inclusions; red slip
5	Juglet	33/2	L2	IA IIA	Red fabric, large white inclusions; red slip, dark red painted horizontal lines
6	Juglet	51	L2	IA IIA	Fine red-brown fabric, light buff surface
7	Juglet	28	L2	IA IIA	Red slip
8	Jug base	107/12	L2	?	White-gray fabric
9	Jug base	107/2	L2	?	Red-orange to buff fabric, large white inclusions and dark gray core
10	Jug	30	L2	IA IIA	Coarse, orange-buff fabric, large white inclusions, gray core; red slip, hand burnish
11	Jug	55	L2	IA IIA	Red fabric, large white inclusions; red slip
12	Jug	107/4	L2	IA IIA	Light yellowish fabric, large white inclusions; red slip
13	Jar?	107/7	L2	?	Orange fabric, large white and red-brown inclusions
14	Jar	31	L2	IA IB-IIA	Orange fabric, small white inclusions
15	Jar	24	L2	IA IB	Orange fabric
16	?	107/3	L2	?	Buff orange fabric, white and red inclusions
17	Cooking jar	107/11	L2	IA IIA	Red-brown fabric, many white inclusions
18	Lamp	50	L2	LB-IA IIA	
19	Stopper	107/1	L2	?	

surface. The fabric is coarse and of orange buff color with a grayish core and large white inclusions. Angular body shapes, associated with various spout forms, begin to appear in Iron IB and occur until Late Iron IIA. The best parallels for this vessel date to Late Iron IIA. Similar angular body shapes have been found at Dor Area G, Phase 6a (Dor Iron IIA, general chronology Late Iron IIA [Gilboa 2001: Pl. 5.79:2]), Taanach IIB (Late Iron IIA [Rast and Glock 1978: Fig. 36:1]) and the et-Taiyiba burial cave (Yannai 2002: Fig. 6:9,11).

Fig. 4.2:11. Red-slipped jug, made from a red fabric with large white inclusions. There are few red-slipped jugs with similar incurving rims and these must be differentiated from the numerous cooking jug types which have comparable forms. Cooking jugs, however, are made from different fabrics than this vessel. The only close parallel was found in the et-Taiyiba burial cave (Yannai 2002: Fig. 6:10). This and other aforementioned ceramic parallels indicate that the burial caves at Tsur Natan and et-Taiyiba were almost definitely contemporary. Similar

jugs—without red slip—were also found at Dor Area D2, Phase 8b (Dor Iron IIA, or in general chronology Late Iron IIA [Gilboa 2001: Pl. 5.74:13 (type JG2a) and 18 (type JG6c)]).

Fig. 4.2:12. Fragment of a jug rim evincing remains of red slip. Light yellowish fabric with large white inclusions. This fragment lacks more specific criteria for dating. However, a similar rim appears on a vessel from the et-Taiyiba burial cave (Yannai 2002: Fig. 6:14).

Jars (Fig. 4.2:13-17)

Fig. 4.2:13. Fragment of a rim thickened on the outside, made from an orange fabric with large white and reddish-brown inclusions.

Fig. 4.2:14. Storage jar with a short conical rim and an orange fabric, with small white inclusions. During the excavation the sack-shaped body of this jar was noted (reg. no. 31; see also Fig. 2.3 plan), but it was impossible to recover and restore the many small and deteriorated sherds. Exact parallels for this jar were difficult to find. Similar vessels, dating from Iron IB through Iron IIA, have been found at Megiddo (Early and Late Iron IIA [Arie 2011: Storage Jar type 31]), Dor (Late Iron IB [Gilboa 2001: Pl. 5.XIV: types JR8 and 9], Iron IB [*ibid.* Pl. 5.XIII: type SJ5b] and Area B1, Phase 9, Early Iron IIA [*ibid.* Pl. 5.69a:18]) and the et-Taiyiba burial cave (Yannai 2002: Fig. 6:7).

Fig. 4.2:15. Storage jar fragment, made from an orange fabric and exhibiting a straight, tall and simple rim, and a steep sloping shoulder. This vessel appears to be older than most of the other pottery in this tomb. The best parallels date to the end of Iron Age IB: from Megiddo Stratum VIA (Arie 2011: storage jar type 3?) and Dor (Gilboa 2001: Pl. 5.XIII: type JR1).

Fig. 4.2:16. A small rim fragment of buff orange fabric with white and red inclusions. We did not find any parallels for this rim.

Fig. 4.2:17. Rim fragment of a cooking jar dating to Iron IIA. Red-brown fabric with numerous white inclusions. Parallels include one from Megiddo (Iron IA-IIA [Arie 2011: cooking jar type 31]) and others from Dor (Dor Late Iron IB, Iron I/II and Iron IIA, or in general chronology Early-Late Iron IIA [Gilboa 2001: Pl. 5.XIX: type 6c] and Dor Iron I/II, or in general chronology Early Iron IIA [*ibid.* Pl. 5.XIX: type 8]).

Oil Lamp (Fig. 4.2:18)

Lamp with a simple round base. Similar lamps were produced between the Late Bronze Age and Late Iron IIA, with little typological differentiation. Therefore it is difficult to date this lamp more precisely. Several similar lamps were found in the nearby et-Taiyiba burial cave (Yannai 2002: Fig. 9).

Stopper/lid (Fig. 4.2:19)

This stopper was made from a pot sherd, and was used to close vessels. We could not date this object.

Zoomorphic Vessel (Fig. 4.3)

Zoomorphic vessels start to appear in Iron I and continue in circulation until the end of the Iron Age (Arie 2011: 210 type ZO31). They are particularly typical of Iron Age IIA (Early and Late) and are often found in burials (Bloch-Smith 1992 *passim*). Well-dated parallels have been found at Iron IIA Dor (Gilboa 2001: Pl. 5.72:10), Rosh Zayit Stratum II-I (Gal and Alexandre 2000: 80-81) and Megiddo Stratum VA-IVB (Finkelstein *et al.* 2000: Fig. 11.33:10).

CONCLUSIONS

This assemblage clearly dates to Iron Age IIA, possibly beginning in Iron IB. The reddish-buff fabric with large white inclusions is typical of vessels in this tomb. The many parallels between them indicate that the burial caves at Tsur Natan and et-Taiyiba should be considered contemporary and encoded with a shared socio-economic and cultural messaging, as expressed in the burial goods.

DISCUSSION

Conn Herriott

Typological Trends

Bloch-Smith (1992: 38-39) has noted that the grave offering assemblages of Bronze Age-Iron Age cave/chamber/shaft tombs tend to be made up mostly of locally-made bowls, lamps, jars, jugs and juglets, mixed with a variety of other forms, 'household items and personal possessions' (the latter being interpretive-descriptive terms which will be examined below). Almost all 13-11th century burial kits included imported pottery (Beth Shean, Tel Dothan,

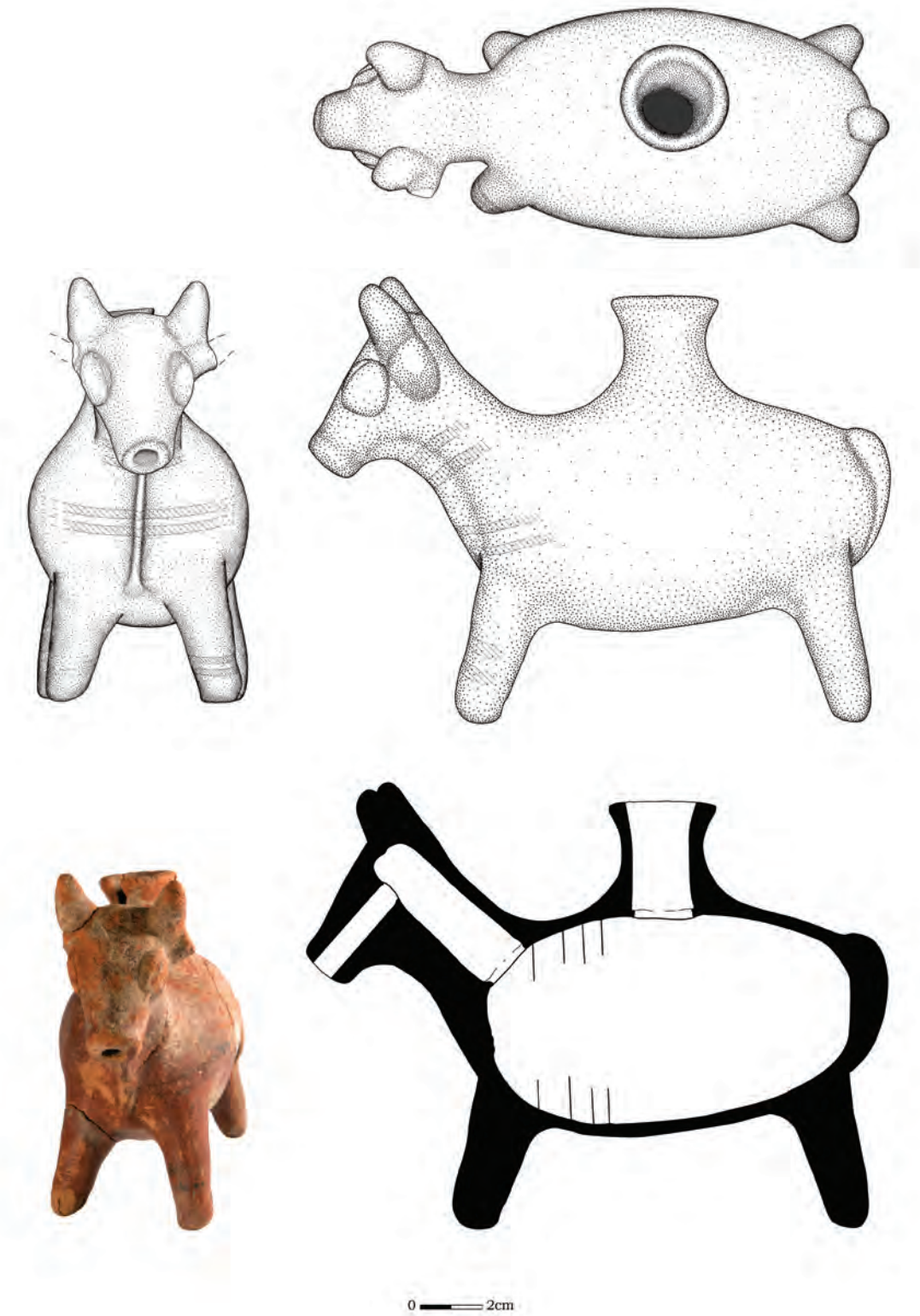


Figure 4.3. Iron Age IIA zoomorphic vessel (reg. no. 25).

Irbid, Lachish).² Lamps were most numerous in the Tel Dothan and Gibeon tombs, and bowls most common at Lachish and Irbid. In 10-6th century burials, Cypriot (Gezer, Lachish, Tell en-Nasbeh), Phoenician (Tell Abu Hawam, Amman, Samaria), Cypro-Phoenician (Tell Abu Hawam, Tell Bira, Madeba, Tell en-Nasbeh, Mt Nebo, Tambourit), Greek (Tambourit) and Assyrian (Amman) imported wares have been present. From the 10th century, the jug, juglet and dipper juglet become the more frequent (e.g. Aitun, Amman C, Jebel Jofeh esh-Sharqi, Ein Sarin, Lachish Tombs 120 and 218, and Tell en-Nasbeh Tombs 32 and 54). The bowl's popularity increased as demonstrated by its being the predominant form in a significant number of tombs (although it is the most common find only in the tombs of the Mount Nebo area).

The Tsur Natan pottery assemblage appears to be broadly in keeping with patterns discussed by Bloch-Smith (1992: 72-75), whereby highland cave and bench tombs often contained bowls, lamps, jugs, juglets, chalices, jars and few of the pilgrim flasks, pyxides and kraters prevalent in other regions of the southern Levant. One may presume both functional and aesthetic reasons for these burial gift choices, but details regarding such questions of culture and meaning remain elusive.

Soot Stains

Soot on vessels, as was found in several Tsur Natan cases,³ is known also from roughly contemporaneous (10-8th century) Tel Aitun Tomb 1 (Bloch-Smith 1992: 106-7). Cooking pots, lamps and other vessels are blackened by soot at many sites (see Ussishkin 1974: 125).

Zoomorphic Vessel

Bloch-Smith (1992: 94) sees ceramic models such as our zoomorphic vessel as religiously important, not frivolous and to be dismissed. Holland (1975: 326) argued that such items date particularly to Iron Age II and expressed popular religion born out of a Canaanite past. In his anthropological study of these figurines, Ucko (1962) concluded that they were never representations of a deity but rather were given as grave gifts for particular reasons or as 'vehicles for sympathetic magic' (Ucko 1962: 46).

Quadruped figurines—usually interpreted as dogs or horses—have been found in 10th century Beth Shemesh Tomb 1, 10-6th century Mt Nebo Tomb UCV-84, 9-8th century Tel Aitun Tomb A1, 8-6th century Beth Shemesh Tomb 2, Jericho Tomb WH1, Sahab Tomb B and Lachish Tomb 106, and perhaps also Tell Abu Qudeis (Bloch-Smith 1992: 101). Dog imagery may have been chosen because—according to cuneiform records—dogs were believed to ward off demons (*ibid.*, citing Lichty 1971: 26). Horses figured in the sun cult, 'a feature of the cult of Yahweh' (*ibid.*, citing 2 Kings 23.11; Ps. 68.18; Hat. 3.8, 15; Ahlström 1984: 220; Smith 1988 and Taylor 1989), so perhaps horses could thereby be seen as relevant to burials. Horse-and-rider figurines are well attested, so maybe quadruped figurines such as that from Tsur Natan were horses separated from their riders. Holland (1977, cited by Bloch-Smith 1992: 102) noted many such figurines from lowland Levantine sites, and also from Jordan. Only five had been found in burials by the time of Bloch-Smith's writing (1992: 102), all dating to the 8-6th centuries: Beth Shemesh Tomb 8, Lachish Tomb 106, Khirbet el-Qom Tomb I, Amman Tomb A and Maqabelein.

2 Non-ceramic elements of such common assemblages include scarabs and other Egyptian amulets (Azor, Baqah Valley, Beth Shean, Beth Shemesh, Tel Dothan, Gezer, Gibeon, Lachish, Sahab), as well as blades, spearheads, arrowheads, needles, spindle whorls, jewelry, toggle pins, fibulae, rattles and female pillar figurines (Bloch-Smith 1992: 38-39).

3 Fig. 4.1:1 (reg. no. 107/10), Fig. 4.1:4 (reg. no. 107/13), Fig. 4.1:7 (reg. no. 107/6) and Fig. 4.2:3 (reg. no. 33/3).

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