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# Tel Rehov

The 1997–2012 Excavations

Volumes I–V

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## Editors' Comment

The final publication of the excavations at Tel Rehov, that were carried out between 1997–2012, is a lengthy process which hopefully will culminate in 2017 in the form of five volumes, to be published in Qedem, Monographs of the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Since some of the chapters were submitted a few years ago, we decided to enable the distribution of pre-print copies of these chapters. Please note that the page numbers are provisional.

For articles on the Tel Rehov excavations, see [www.rehov.org](http://www.rehov.org) and <http://huji.academia.edu/AmihaiMazar>



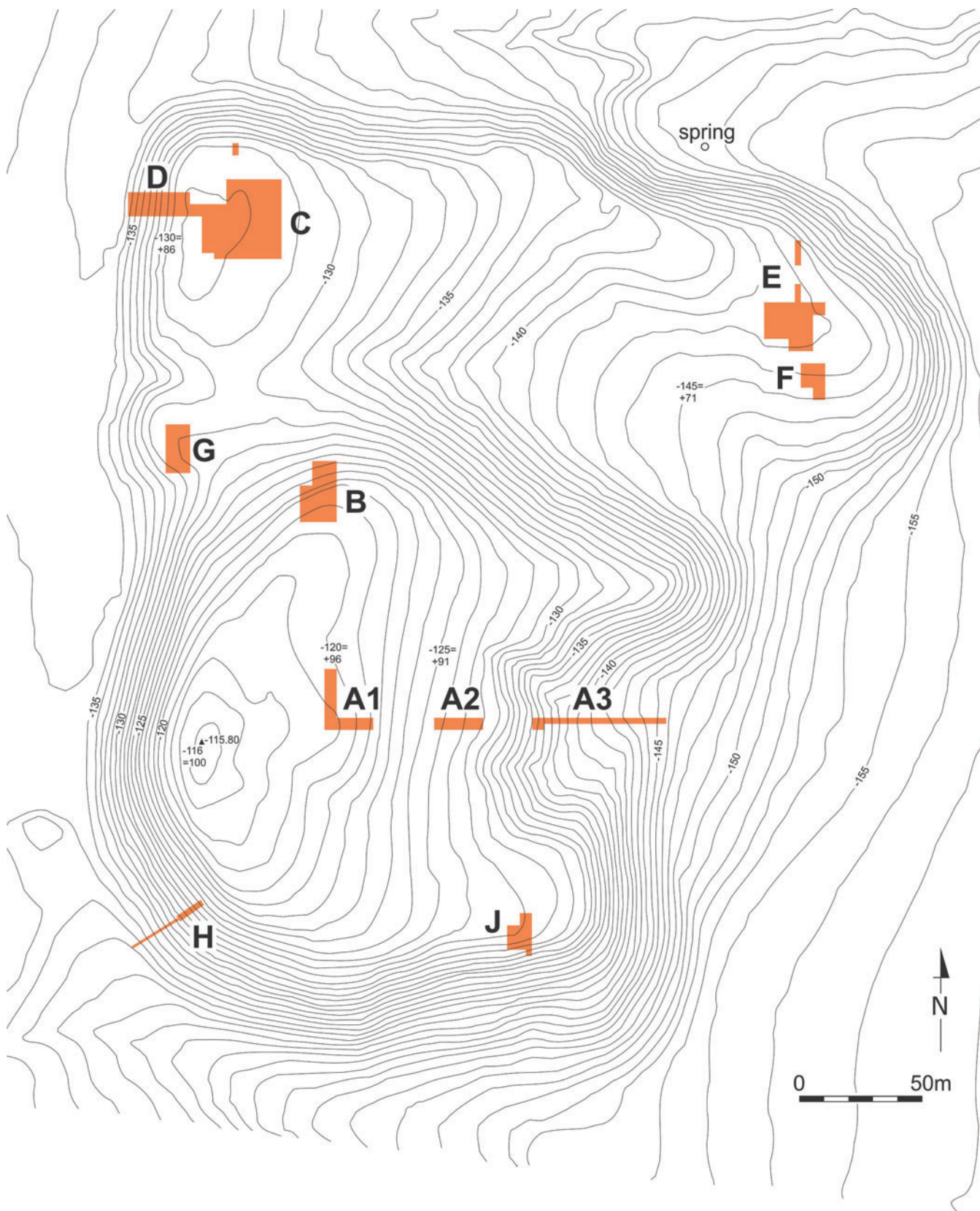
Tel Rehov, view to the east (Photo: Albatross)

**Table showing the correlation between the general strata and the local strata in each excavation area, as well as their assignation to periods and the suggested dates.**

General Strata	Local strata in excavation areas								Period	Dates*
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	J		
I	A-1	B-1a B-1b			E-0	F-0		J-1	Late Islamic burials Early Islamic	Unknown 8th–12th centuries CE
II	A-2	B-2						J-2 Post J-3	Iron Age IIB/C	late 8th/early 7th centuries (?)
IIIA	A-3	B-3						J-3	Iron Age IIB	<b>destruction</b> second half of 8th century–732
IIIB	A4' A4	B-4' B-4						J-4	Iron Age IIB	ca. 830?–first half of 8th century
IV	A-5	B-5a	C-1a	D-1a	E-1a	F-1	G-1a	J-5	Late Iron Age IIA	<b>destruction</b> early 9th century–ca. 840/830
V		B-5b	C-1b	D-1b	E-1b	F-2 F-3	G-1b	J-6a		late 10th–early 9th centuries
VI		B-6	C-2	D-2	E-2	F-4?	G-2a G-2b	J-6b	Early Iron Age IIA	Ca. 980/960–ca. 920
VII	Iron I phases in Area A3	B-7 B-8	C-3a C-3b C-4	D-3 D-4a D-4b D-5	E-3			J-7 J-8	Iron Age IB	11th century–ca. 980/960
				D-6a D-6b					Iron Age IA/B transition	second half of 12th century
				D-7a D-7b					Iron Age IA ("Late Bronze III")	first half of 12th century
	Late Bronze layer			D-8 D-9a D-9b					Late Bronze Age IIA/B	late 14th–13th centuries
				D-10					Late Bronze Age IIA	14th century
				D-11a D-11b					Late Bronze Age I/IIA	15th–early 14th centuries
Early Bronze II-III remains and fortification in Area H										

\* All dates are BCE except Stratum I





Topographic map of Tel Rehov showing excavation areas

## CHAPTER 42B

# THE GYPSUM VESSELS

Andrea Squitieri

This chapter includes a catalogue and discussion of 21 gypsum vessels, mostly fragmentary, belonging to various types. In addition, 21 small fragments of unidentified gypsum vessel types are presented in Table 42.11. All of the items come from Iron Age I and IIA contexts, except for No. 13 and Table 42.11:12 which are Iron IIB, and No. 14 and Table 42.11:1 which are Late Bronze Age. Overall, these items indicate the continuation of the gypsum-vessel tradition in the Central Jordan Valley which started in the Middle Bronze Age (Sparks 2001) and continued through the Iron Age II. Furthermore, they bear witness to the originality of the regional workshops in developing new and unparalleled shapes. We should note additional items made of gypsum as part of this industry, including the perforated stoppers discussed in Chapter 42A (Table 42.7) and the loomweights which were particularly popular during the Iron Age IIA in the Beth-Shean Valley (see Chapter 39).

### ***Raw Material and Manufacturing Tradition***

Gypsum is a soft rock (Mohs scale=2) made of the mineral composed of calcium sulphate. In Israel, gypsum deposits are located at Menahemia/Kibbutz Gesher (Jisr Mejamie) in the northern part of the Central Jordan Valley (Blake 1930: 27), only 18 km north of Beth-Shean. Others can be found further south in the Negev and near Timna' in the 'Arabah Valley, as well as east of the Dead Sea in Jordan (Blake 1930: 30). The presence of gypsum deposits in these regions prompted the emergence of several workshops, such as those in Jericho, Pella and Beth-Shean of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages (Sparks 2001; 2007: 157).

The items presented in this report may indicate that Tel Rehov was a center of an established tradition of gypsum-vessel production, based on the proximity to the gypsum deposits at Gesher and on the connection to the traditions found in other

centers, especially at Beth-Shean. The presence of a number of innovative shapes at Tel Rehov may be considered as indirect evidence for the activity of gypsum workshops at or around the site. Unfortunately, no direct evidence for production was found at Tel Rehov, as was found in a Middle Bronze IIC context at nearby Beth-Shean (Stratum R-3), where flat-pointed metal chisels were recovered in association with gypsum wasters, thus supporting their association with the manufacture of gypsum vessels (*TBS II*: Fig. 9.3:1, 4; *TBS III*: 752). Some of the gypsum vessels from Tel Rehov show clear marks of such chisels used to carve their interior, matching those visible on vessels from Beth-Shean (Ben-Dor 1945: 96–97). Given the soft nature of gypsum, metal tools such as chisels were particularly effective and no drilling devices were required, such as those employed to hollow out harder stone vessels.

### ***Catalogue and Discussion***

#### ***Lug-handled jars***

Nine examples of lug-handled jars, also known as pyxides, were found. These vessels have a squat body, a very low and profiled neck, two horizontally pierced handles and a flat or slightly convex base. This class was identified by Ben-Dor (1945: 107–108) as a typical product of local workshops, inspired by the two-handled Mycenaean pottery pyxis, hence the name. This vessel type originated in the Late Bronze II, with the earliest example coming from Beth-Shean Stratum VIII (James and McGovern 1993: Pl. 45j). It developed throughout the Iron Age I and IIA, with minor variations limited to the body proportions, the presence of a disc base and the decorative motifs on the handle (e.g., respectively, examples from Beth-Shean: James 1966: Figs. 1.7; 5.5; 50.11; Fig. 66.16). All the examples from Tel Rehov come from Iron IIA contexts, which may indicate the

continued production of lug-handled jars during this period.

The distribution of these vessels during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages shows a striking concentration in the Jordan Valley, with most of the examples appearing in Beth-Shean, Pella, Tell es-Sa'idiyeh and Tell Deir 'Alla, thus supporting the idea that this was the main area of production, from where such jars were also traded to other areas (Sparks 2007: 109). This gypsum-vessel industry initially aimed to imitate calcite vessels imported from Egypt (Sparks 2007: 156–157), but soon developed new shapes, such as in the case of the lug-handled jars.

A few lug-handled jars have also been found in Megiddo, Tell el-Far'ah South and Tell el-'Ajjul (Sparks 2007: 109). The closest Iron Age parallels to our Cat. Nos. 1, 2 and 5 come from Beth-Shean (James 1966: Figs. 6.31; 25.4; *TBS III*: 753; Fig. 16.10.1–6), Tel 'Ira (Beit-Arieh 1999: Fig. 4.33.29) and Tel Beth Shemesh (Ben-Dor 1945: Fig. F5).

These jars may have been used to contain unguents or cosmetics (Sparks 2007: 110) and possibly had a stopper, such as in the case of a jar from a Late Bronze IIB tomb in Tell es-Sa'idiyeh (Tubb 1988: 76), found with a matching stopper, which was probably secured by passing a string through the pierced handles.

1. Reg. No. 24717; Locus 2461; Area C; Stratum C-1b; level 85.92 m (Fig. 42.12:1; Photo 42.11:1)  
H 6.3 cm; Rim D 4.0 cm; Wall Th 0.9 cm

Upper part preserved, slightly profiled neck, one vertically pierced rectangular handle preserved; vertical chisel marks on interior, ca. 0.2–0.3 cm wide each.

2. Reg. No. 23126; Locus 2305; Area B; Stratum B-5; level 91.10 m (Fig. 42.11:2)  
H 3.5 cm; W 4.5 cm

Body fragment, one vertically pierced rectangular handle preserved; traces of vertical chisel marks on interior.

3. Reg. No. 42260; Locus 4223; Area B; Stratum B-5; level 90.95 m  
H 4.5 cm; L 2.6 cm; Th 1.9 cm

Vertically pierced handle fragment.

4. Reg. No. 62134; Locus 4223; Area B; Stratum B-5; level 90.97 m  
H ca. 2.8 cm; L 2.2 cm; Th 1.1 cm

Vertically pierced handle fragment.

5. Reg. No. 54617; Locus 5481; Area C; Building CF; Room 5498; Stratum C-1a; level 86.39 m (Fig. 42.12:5; Photo 42.11:5)

H 6.2 cm; L 5.8 cm; W 4.8 cm

Complete vessel, damaged at rim; vertical chisel marks on interior, ca. 0.2 cm wide each; severely burnt.

6. Reg. No. 54577; Locus 5461; Area C; Building CF; Room 5460; Stratum C-1a; level 86.40 m  
H 3.3 cm; L 4.9 cm; W 0.9 cm

Body fragment, one vertically pierced rectangular handle preserved; severely burnt.

7. Reg. No. 54635; Locus 5461; Area C; Building CF; Room 5499; Stratum C-1a; level 86.25 m  
H 2.7 cm; L 2.4 cm; W 1.2 cm

Vertically pierced rectangular handle fragment; severely burnt.

8. Reg. No. 54324; Locus 5425; Area C; Building CF; Room 5460; Stratum C-1a; level 86.76 m  
H 2.2 cm; L 1.9 cm; W 0.9 cm

Body and handle fragment; severely burnt.

9. Reg. No. 44142; Locus 2485; Area C; Building CD; Stratum C-1b; level 86.74 m (Fig. 42.12:9)  
H 5.6 cm; Max D 5.6 cm

Complete vessel, very worn on exterior; wide perforation in base, perhaps due to secondary use; traces of rope-tying on the rim.

### **Lug-handled Bowls**

Two lug-handled bowls from Iron Age I contexts were found. These are small rounded bowls with projecting, vertically pierced square handles on the rim level. The earliest example of this class was attested in Pella (Tomb 20), dating to the Late Bronze Age I, found along with a finely decorated flat lid (Sparks 2007: Fig. 43.5). Other examples come from Beth-Shean Stratum VIII (James and McGovern 1993: Fig. 113.1) and Tell es-Sa'idiyeh (Tubb 1990: 40–41). Similar bowls made of ivory and bone were found in the “Mycenaean” tomb at Tel Dan (Biran and Ben-Dov 2002: Fig. 2.103; made from a deer antler), Tell es-Sa'idiyeh (Pritchard 1980: Fig. 3.8, Tomb 101) and Megiddo Stratum VIIA (Loud 1948: Pl. 200), all belonging to the Late Bronze Age II and Iron Age I. Examples of this type of bowl, made of stone and faience, were also found throughout Syria during the Late Bronze Age, attested in Alalakh Stratum IV, Hama and Ugarit (Barag 1996: 90), as well as



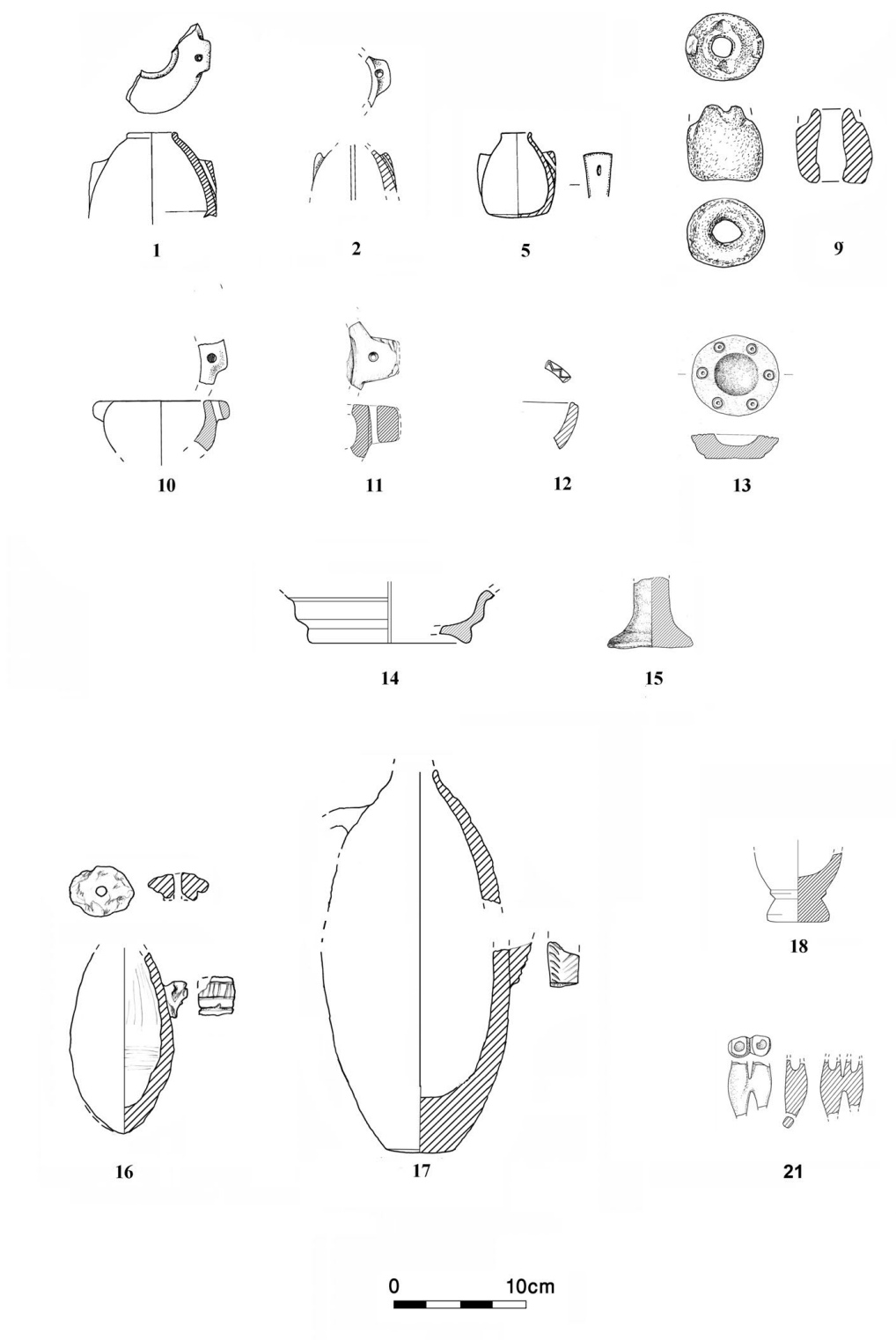


Fig. 42.12. Gypsum vessels

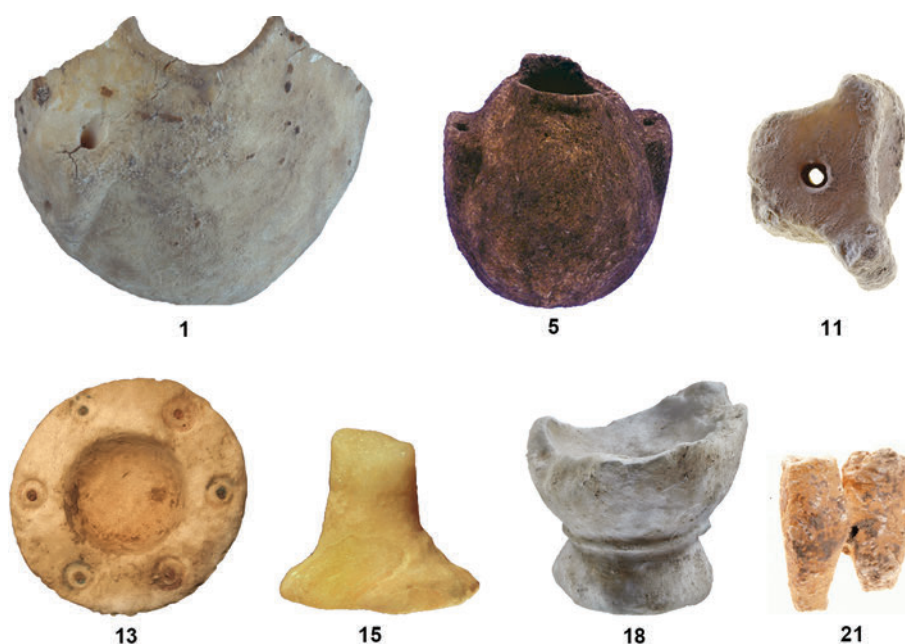


Photo 42.11. Gypsum vessels  
(scale 1:2)

in 13th century BCE Mari (Jean-Marie 1999: Pl. 35).

Similar to the lug-handled jars, these bowls may have been used to contain unguents or cosmetics, with the handles used to secure a matching lid.

10. Reg. No. 28174/2; Locus 2817; Area D; Stratum D-3; level 86.01 m (Fig. 42.12:10)  
H 1.6 cm; Rim D 6.6 cm; Th 1.2 cm

Rim and body fragment with vertically pierced handle.

11. Reg. No. 89280; Locus 8926; Area D; Stratum D-7b; level 80.62 m (Fig. 42.12:11; Photo 42.11:11)  
H 3.4 cm; W 2.8 cm

Rim and body fragment with vertically pierced handle.

#### *A Rounded Bowl*

Cat. No. 12 is a small fragment of a small thin-walled, rounded bowl with a zigzag decoration on the rim that comes from an Iron IB context. Such a decorative motif appears on one gypsum bowl from Jericho (Tomb H18) dating to the MBIIC-LBI (Kenyon 1960: Fig. 187.7). As with the other gypsum vessels, this specimen bears witness to continuity in the tradition of such items from the Late Bronze Age into the Iron Age I.

12. Reg. No. 18703; Locus 1855; Area D; Stratum D-5; level 83.02 m (Fig. 42.12:12)

H 2.2 cm; L 4.0 cm; Th 0.7 cm

Bowl rim fragment, incised zigzag line on top.

#### *A Cosmetic Bowl*

Cat. No. 13 is a small complete bowl from an Iron IIB context of a type known as a cosmetic bowl or palette. Such bowls are thought to have been used to grind small quantities of cosmetic powders or pastes (Thompson 1972: 148), although direct evidence for such a use has not yet been identified. The most commonly used raw material is a hard and compact variety of limestone, sometimes mistaken for marble due to the presence of irregular veins (cf., Lamon and Shipton 1939: Pl. 108), but gypsum (such as our example), calcite and faience are also attested, although at a lower frequency (Thompson 1971). The color traces on the rim surface that are still visible on the Tel Rehov bowl are remains of a type of decoration which can also be found on other such bowls, e.g., from Beth-Shean (*TBS I*: Fig. 13.8.2) and Gezer (Thompson 1971: Fig. 2). In some cases, a colored inlay was used to fill the drilled holes, as found at Megiddo (Lamon and Shipton 1939: Pl. 109.17) and Tell Beit Mirsim (Albright 1943: Fig. 27.8). A variant of such bowls with incised geometric patterns instead of drilled



holes on their rim surfaces is also widely attested; rarely, a combination of the two techniques is found as are plain undecorated examples.

Up to date, some 140 cosmetic bowls have been published, the majority of them coming from Iron Age IIB–C contexts, although a few examples date to the Iron IIA (from Tell Keisan: Briend and Humbert 1980: Pl. 83.9; Beth Shemesh: Grant and Wright 1939: Pl. 53.44; Hazor: Ben-Tor et al. 2012: Fig. 15.3.1 and Tell Abu al-Kharaz: (Fischer 2014: Fig. 156). A few others come from Persian period levels (Megiddo: Lamon and Shipton 1939: Pl. 108.1–6; Tell Mazar: Yassine 1984: Fig. 56.180; Tel Batash/Timnah: Cohen-Weinberger 2001: Pl. 99.4; see also Barag 1996). Three Iron IIB cosmetic bowls were found at Beth-Shean, one of them made of calcite, with drilled holes on the rim top, similar to ours (*TBS I*: 491; Fig. 13.8.1–3). Although Albright (1943: 80–81) suggested these bowls may have had a Phoenician origin, their distribution points to the area of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah as the place of origin, where the bulk of them were found (115 out of 140), whereas 17 have been retrieved so far from Jordan and only three from Lebanon, three from Syria and two from Iraq (for detailed discussion and references, see Squitieri forthcoming).

13. Reg. No. 70492; Locus 7073; Stratum J-4 (III); level 86.38 m (Fig. 42.12:13; Photo 42.11:13)  
H. 1.7 cm; outer D 6.2 cm; inner D 3.1 cm

Complete rounded bowl with a wide flat-topped rim and a shallow hollow in the center; rim top surface decorated with a series of six drilled holes, filled with the remains of alternating blue and red powder.

### *Tazze*

Two tazza fragments were found, No. 14 from a late 13th century BCE context and No. 15 from a 12th century BCE context, both belonging to the Canaanite type; the former has a wide ring base and the latter, a narrow trumpet base. Canaanite tazze, inspired by their Egyptian counterparts, differed in their being carved in two separate pieces (the base and the bowl body), and for their different raw material (gypsum). This form reached the Southern Levant from Egypt through trade approximately at the same time when the local imitations started to be made (Sparks 2007: 96–97).

These vessels enjoyed great popularity during

the Late Bronze Age, with the earliest example appearing in Beth-Shean Stratum IX, dating to LBIB–IIA (Sparks 2007: 98). At the end of the Late Bronze Age and beginning of the Iron Age, this vessel type gradually went out of fashion. The latest examples come from Beth-Shean Stratum VI (Ben Dor 1945: 106; *TBS II*: 634, Fig. 10.3; *TBS III*: 753, Fig. 16.10.9) and Tell el-Far'ah South (Petrie 1931: Pl. XXV.8). The trumpet base fragment (No. 15), from an Iron Age IA context, represents one of the few later examples of this class.

14. Reg. No. 19109; Locus 9904; Area D; Stratum Post D-8; level 80.32 m (Fig. 42.12:14)  
H 4.4 cm

Wide flat base fragment with external ribbing.

15. Reg. No. 79397; Locus 7948; Area D; Building DC; Room 8907; Stratum D-7a; level 81.78 m (Fig. 42.12:15; Photo 42.11:15)  
H 4.7 cm; Base D 5.1 cm

Solid trumpet base, broken at top, near join to bowl; slightly uneven bottom.

### *Varia*

16. Reg. No. 24533; Locus 2456; Building CB; Room 1520; Stratum C-2; level 85.29 m (Fig. 42.12:16)  
H 13.0 cm; Wall Th 1.0 cm

Bottom part of a juglet, tapering base, square vertically pierced handle decorated with vertical incised lines enclosed by a rectangular frame; vertical chisel marks visible on the interior. It was found with a poorly preserved mushroom-shaped perforated gypsum lid that was most likely used with it (the lid, not numbered, is shown in the drawing of the juglet). For additional gypsum lids, see Chapter 42A, Table 42.7.

Juglets with a tapering base are quite rare in stone and the shape most likely derived from the ceramic dipper juglets. One example in gypsum comes from Jericho, Tomb B5, belonging to the Middle Bronze IIB–C (Kenyon 1965: Fig. 171.17); no other examples in stone are known from Late Bronze Age and Iron Age sites (Sparks 2007: 106). The decoration on the Tel Rehov handle is also unparalleled. This specimen, coming from an Iron Age IIA context, is witness to the high degree of innovation reached by the gypsum workshops that served the inhabitants of Tel Rehov, experimenting with new shapes in stone.

17. Reg. No. 54498; Locus 5481; Building CF; Room 5498; Stratum C-1a; level 86.42 m (Fig. 42.12:17)

H 16.0 cm; Max D 11.0 cm; Base D 5.7 cm; Max wall Th 2.0 cm

Six fragments of one large jar, the upper part severely deformed and burnt; flat narrow base, part of body and two rectangular loop handles are partially preserved, one with an incised herringbone pattern.

The closest parallels to this jar appear to come from Beth-Shean Lower Stratum V, one displaying a flat narrow base, ovoid body, loop handles and a profiled rim and the other, a smaller one from the same level, with solid vertical handles (James 1966: Fig. 62.12–13). A stone jar handle bearing an indentation like the one on the handle of the Tel Rehov example was also found in this level (James 1966: Fig. 6.29). Such jars were not found elsewhere and therefore, these could represent a specific product of workshops that served Beth-Shean and Tel Rehov.

18. Reg. No. 80366; Locus 8053; Area G; Building GB; Stratum G-2a; level 85.88 m (Fig. 42.12:18; Photo 42.11:18)

H 4.8 cm; Base D 3.8 cm

Fragment of a high, slightly flaring disk base and part of the body, joined by a ridge; goblet?

The only comparison that can be cited is a gypsum goblet with a trumpet-shaped base and a decorated

ridge found in Jericho Tomb J14, Group II, dated to Middle Bronze IIB (Kenyon 1965: Fig. 154.13). No other similar goblets have been found in stone and this fragment apparently represents another innovation of the local workshops.

19. Reg. No. 54574; Locus 5487; Area C; Building CF; Room 5487; Stratum C-1b; level 85.95 m

H 3.2 cm; L 2.6 cm; W 2.6 cm

Loop-handle fragment belonging to an unidentified gypsum vessel, possibly similar to a jar with loop handles from Beth-Shean Lower Level V (James 1966: Fig. 62.12).

20. Reg. No. 74819; Locus 7442; Area C; Building CQ2; Room 7500; Stratum C-1a; level 85.70 m

H 1.9 cm; L 2.3 cm; W 0.7 cm

Fragment of a rectangular vertically pierced handle, possibly belonging to a lug-handled jar; very worn.

21. Reg. No. 24958; Locus 2491; Stratum C-2/C-1b; level 86.30 m (Fig. 42.12:21; Photo 42.11:21)

H 3.6 cm; L 3.1 cm; W 1.7 cm

Fragment of a vessel (?), composed of two tubular solid pieces attached in the center; each piece is slightly hollowed out on top. The original shape is difficult to reconstruct and no parallels are known. Possibly it was intended to be shaped as a tubular kohl pot, but was left unfinished.

**Table 42.11. Unidentified gypsum vessel fragments (Late Bronze, Iron I–IIA)**

No.	Object	Reg. No.	Locus	Level (m)	Area/local stratum	Measurements (cm)			Remarks
						H	L	Wall Th	
1	Base fragment	99118	8929	80.51	D-8	1.7	2.5		
2	Base fragment	28565	2817	85.77	D-3	3.4	3.1	1.1	
3	Body fragment	72080	7207	89.78	B-5	4.0	6.4	0.7	
	Body fragment	62561	6251	90.38	B-6	0.4	2.4		
4	Body fragment	62639	6316	91.24	B-6	2.6	4.2		Lug-handled jar?
5	Body fragment	62491	6251	90.29	B-6	3.6	3.2	0.7	
6	Body fragment	62289	6223	90.62	B-5	6.2	5.7	2.1	
7	Body fragment	42148	3253	91.19	B-5a	0.9	4.0		
8	Base fragment	41137	4124	87.04	B-5?	2.2	2.6	1.0	
9	Body fragment	62492	6241	91.42	B-5–6	2.6	3.2		Lug-handled jar?
10	Base? fragment	32310	3238	91.80	B-5	2.8	3.7		High-footed bowl or goblet?; possibly re-used as a stopper
11	Base and body fragment	62290	6224	91.60	B-5a	2.5	5.0		
12	Body fragment	22228	2254	93.46	B-3	3.3	4.7	1.3	
13	Amorphic chunk	15550	1556	85.88	C-2	3.1	1.2		Very worn, possibly re-used as a burnisher
14	Body fragment	74084	6475	85.35	C-2	4.8	1.3	0.3	
15	Base fragment	24478	2440	86.33	C-1b	1.6	3.4	0.9	
16	Stopper?	74539	7457	86.18	C-1b	1.7	4.8	1.3	
17	Pedestal base fragment	104487	10431	86.05	C-1a	5.1	4.0		Tazza?
18	Base fragment	18600	1804	87.05	D-1a	4.0	5.8	1.8	
19	Body fragment	56198	5634	72.49	E-1a	1.2	4.3		Alabaster?
20	Body fragment	79321	Topsoil		Topsoil	5.2	3.8	1.3	
21	Amorphic chunk	18455	1843	78.25	Topsoil	5.9	5.3		Manufacturing waste?

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