

Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Giv'at Ze'ev, 2018 Season

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Abstract

In this article we present the preliminary report on the fourth season of excavations at the site the "Hill of Sixteen" in Giv'at Ze'ev near Jerusalem. The excavation was conducted by the authors of the article on behalf of Ariel University in August–September 2018. The article includes the report on the stratigraphy and architecture of the excavated areas B3 and B4 located on the hill slope near the old excavations. It also includes a preliminary report on the ceramic evidence and ground stone tools found in these areas. All of the pottery found at the areas B3 and B4 are dated to the Middle Bronze II period and confirm the relation of the structures to the areas excavated earlier. It seems that all of the structures served as parts of the same architectural complex, which developed significantly during the final phases of the MBIIa period.

Keywords: Middle Bronze II, Giv'at Ze'ev, Hill of 16

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Introduction

The "Hill of 16" is located between the modern road 443 and the settlement of Giv'at Ze'ev, and in the vicinity of the site of Give'on (Fig. 1). It was surveyed by the author in the year 2013, resulting in the discovery of massive architectural remains and pottery mostly dated to the Middle Age II period. Following the survey, the site was excavated during the years 2015–2016, on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The massive fortified compound, along with the auxiliary buildings located nearby, were confirmed to date back to this period of time (Freikman, Rabinovich and Hadad 2017). The fourth season of excavations at the site of Giv'at Ze'ev was conducted during August–September 2018 on behalf of Ariel University (excavation license no. 01-01-2018), in order to elaborate on our knowledge of this site, to better understand the sequence of this settlement, and to better understand its function. In continuation of the previous excavations at the site (Freikman et al. 2017), two additional excavation areas were opened and partially excavated, to the bedrock. These two excavation areas, designated B3 and B4 with an area of 100 m² and 50 m² respectively, are both located north of the previously excavated Area B2 and west of Area B1 (Fig. 2). A report on the 2018 excavation season is presented below.



Figure 1: Map with the location of the site



Figure 2: Aerial view of Areas B3 and B4 in relation to the previously excavated Areas B1 and B2

Area B3

Area B3 is located in the northern part of the "Hill of Sixteen" at an average elevation of 772 m above sea level. The area was chosen for excavation on the basis of a line of large stones that was visible in the topsoil. During the 2018 season, an overall area of 100 m² was excavated in four squares (Figs. 3–4). Two distinct archaeological strata were identified, both dating from the Middle Bronze Age II.

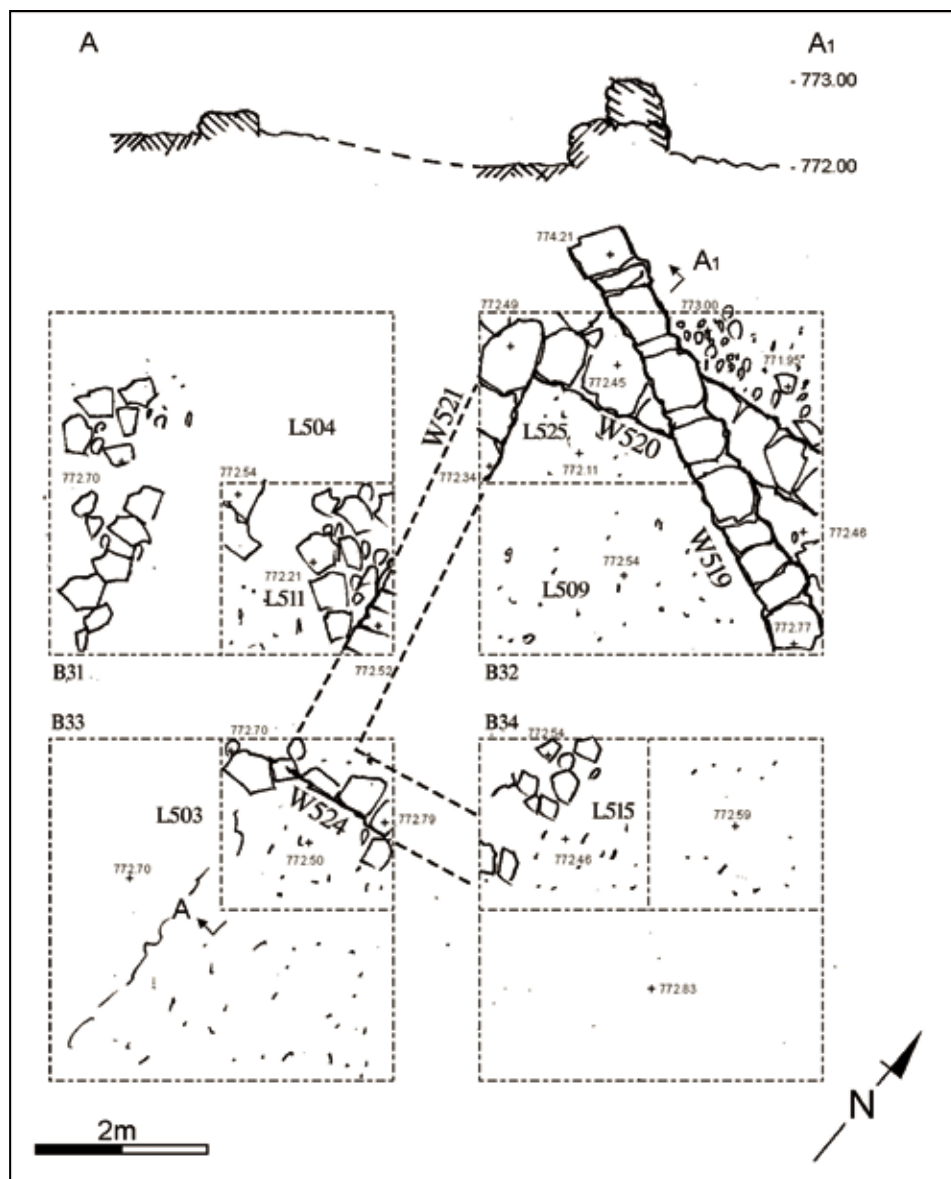


Figure 3: Plan and section of Area B3

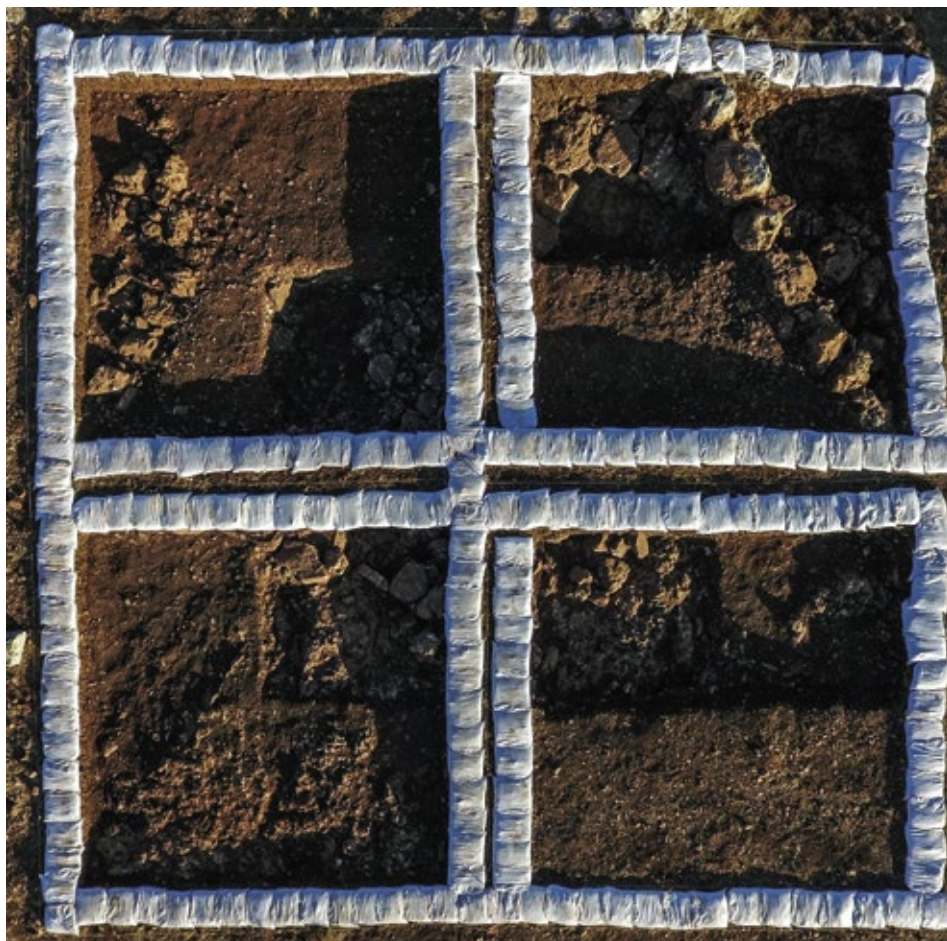


Figure 4: Aerial view of Area B3

Stratum 1

Stratum 1 consists of the remains of a single wall (W519) abutted by a living surface made of beaten earth. W519, oriented east–west, was exposed in the northwestern part of the excavation area. It was built of medium-sized fieldstones and preserved to the height of a single course, and it was exposed over a distance of ca. 6 m (Fig. 5). A constructional fill consisting of small stones and pebbles was exposed at the base W519 on its northern side. This fill was probably installed to support the stones of the wall where the natural topography is lower (Fig. 6).



Figure 5: Stratum 1 in Area B3



Figure 6: Constructional fill at the base of W519

The southern face of W519 is abutted by a living surface of beaten earth (L509). This surface consists of a thick accumulation of highly compacted dark-brown soil containing a large amount of potsherds and small stones. The same surface was exposed in all four excavation squares, except for the parts where the natural bedrock is higher.

Apart from those mentioned above, no other feature that can be related to Stratum 1 was found in Area B3.

Stratum 2

Stratum 2 is represented by the remains of a massive structure built directly on bedrock (hereinafter Building 525). Walls W520 and W521, which are exposed in the northwestern part of the excavation area, form one of the corners of this structure (Fig. 7). Both walls are built of large roughly hewn fieldstones and preserved to the height of a single course. W520, oriented northeast–southwest, is exposed over a length of ca. 5 m. W520 is superimposed by W519 of Stratum 1 (Fig. 8). The different orientations and building styles of W519 and W520 clearly indicate that W519 postdates W520 and thus belongs to a different stratum and to a structure with a different function, rather than being a structural repair. The preservation of W520 in the northern part of square B31 is poor, perhaps due to the re-use of its stones as building material by the builders of Stratum 1. W520 is joined at its southern end to W521 by a particularly massive cornerstone that forms the corner of Building B41 (Fig. 7). Wall W521, oriented northwest–southeast, runs in a straight line. It is exposed over a length of ca. 5 m in the western part of the excavation area. A stone collapse exposed south of W521 may represent remains of its upper courses.



Figure 7: W519 superimposed on W520

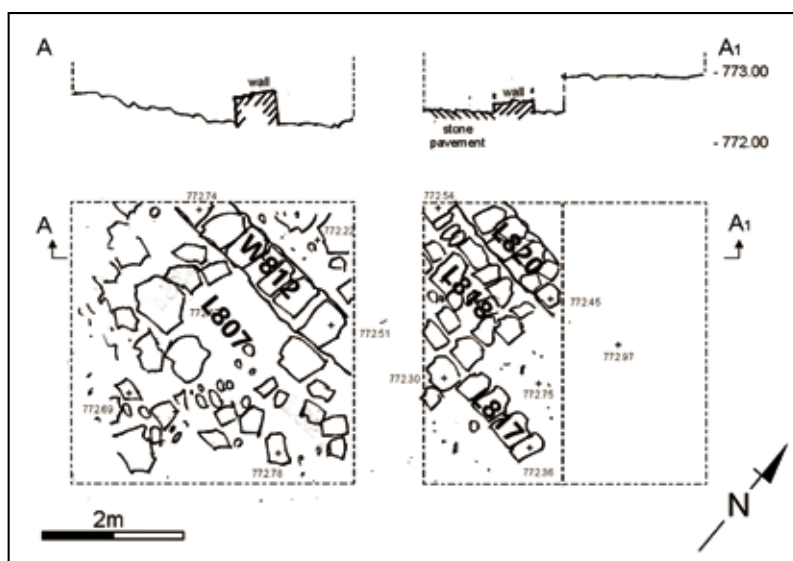


Figure 8: Plan and section of Area B4

A fragment of what may be the southern wall of Building 525 (W524) was partially exposed on the southeastern side of the excavation area. It is oriented northeast–southwest and runs parallel to W520, and thus should possibly be related to the same structure. However, further excavation is required in order to confirm this possibility.

As mentioned above, both of the Stratum 2 walls were built on bedrock. The building's floor was poorly preserved. No destruction layer or complete vessels were found on its floor, which may indicate that it was intentionally abandoned by its inhabitants. The ceramic material found in the context of both strata in this area is very similar in nature and is dated to the Middle Bronze Age II.

Area B4

Area B4 is located to the northwest of Giv'at Ze'ev, some 30 m west of Area B3. The overall area excavated in Area B4 is 50 m² (Figs. 8–9). It is located next to an exposed, slightly sloping, elongated stone structure of indefinite date and function, and is covered by fertile alluvial soil mixed with Roman/Byzantine potsherds and modern finds. One architectural stratum built directly on the bedrock was identified in Area B4 (stratum I). It was partially covered by massive collapse, mostly in its western part, and removal of this collapse exposed the architectural remains that were designated Building 818 and described below. W812, which is preserved to a height of one to three courses of stones, and W820 enclose a large area paved with roughly worked slabs of medium size (L818). Floor L818 was found to be considerably disturbed, and some of the stones are cracked and appear to have suffered a considerable shock (Fig. 10). The northern wall (W820) is of unusual construction: there is a niche between its stones, leaving an empty space in which remains of a large storage vessel were found (Fig. 11). It was possibly used as a shelf or a niche for storage. Cleaning of the collapse south of W812 revealed a poorly preserved feature (L807) partially constructed of middle-sized to large field stones and partially dug into the bedrock, which can be interpreted as a pit or

an installation of some sort. The partially preserved wall W817 abuts the structure from the east (Fig. 12). It may possibly be interpreted as a part of an entrance hallway leading into the paved area from this direction, but the partial state of preservation makes it impossible to draw clear conclusions. The processes that led to the destruction and abandonment of this structure are also, so far, unclear. However, the possibility of slow decay and destruction cannot be ruled out at this stage of research. A large amount of pottery, all dated to the Middle Bronze Age II, and some stone tools including a flint grinding stone were found in the context of Building 818. The partial excavation of the building carried out so far is insufficient for speculation on its function, and we hope that further investigation will clarify this issue.



Figure 9: Aerial view of Area B4



Figure 10: Paved area L818



Figure 11: Installation inside W820



Figure 12: W817 (left) abutting paved area L818

Pottery

As in the previously excavated Areas B1 and B2, the great majority of the potsherds collected in the 2018 season in Areas B3 and B4 dates from the Middle Bronze Age II.

Open vessels are represented by three main types:

1. Shallow or hemispherical open bowl with inverted rim (Fig. 13). Similar bowls were found at the burials of Gibeon (Pritchard 1963: Fig. 20: 1–15; Fig. 28: 1; Fig. 40: 1–7), Hebron (Ben-Shlomo 2017: Fig. 7.2: 1–3), Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig. 7.1: 9–13; Fig. 7.17: 3–5; Fig. 7.20: 7–8, 12), Lachish (Singer-Avitz 2004: Fig. 16.4: 7, 9; 16.13: 1; Fig. 16.22: 1), Aphek (Beck 2000a: Fig. 10.10: 10–11; Yadin 2009: Fig. 7.2: 4, 6), Jericho (Kenyon and

Holland 1983: Fig. 22: 4; Fig. 72: 5; Fig. 106: 1, 8, 16–17) and Tell Beit Mirsim (Ben-Arieh 2004: Fig. 2.7), among others.

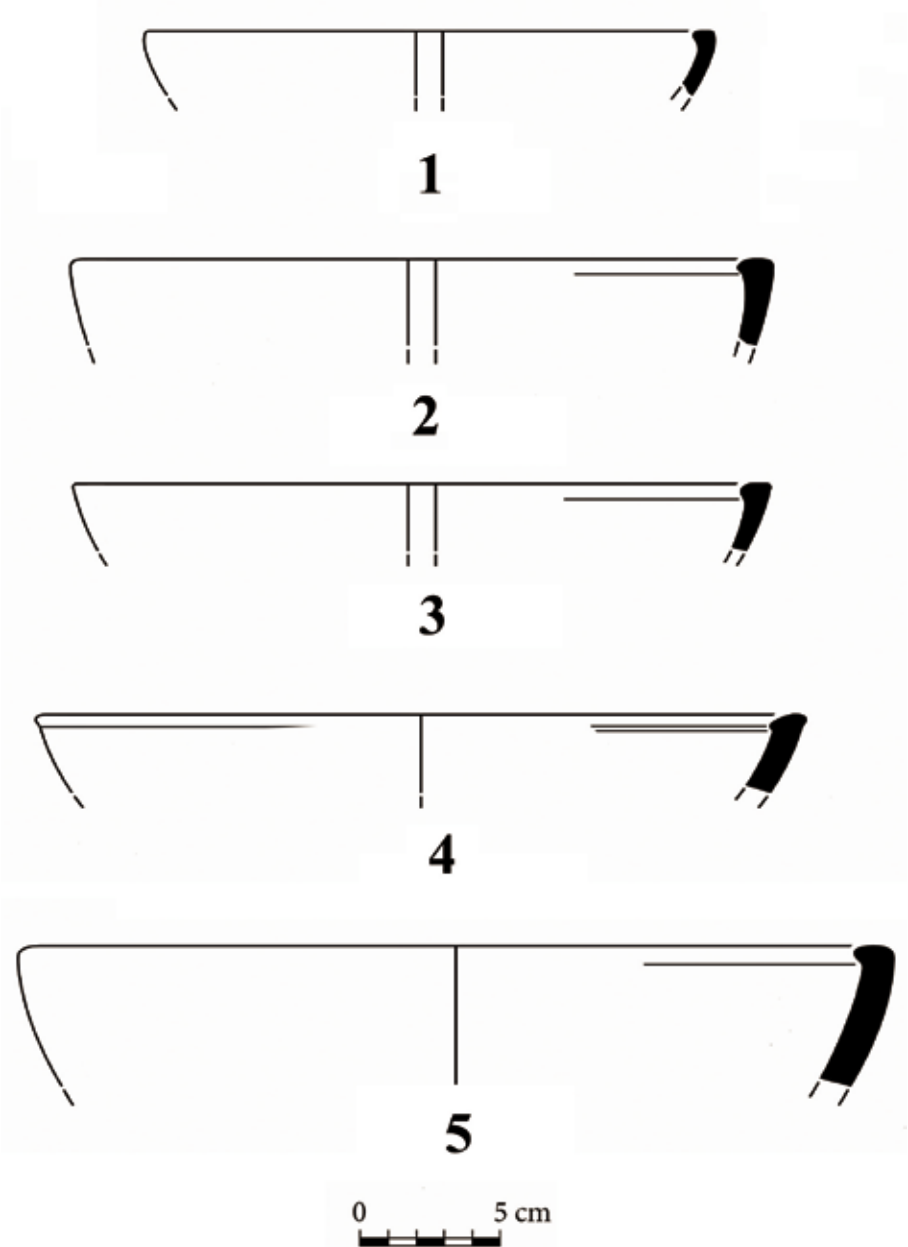


Figure 13: Shallow bowls

Table 1: Figure 13 – Shallow Bowls

No.	Locus	Basket	Type	Notes
1	513	748	Bowl	Brown clay, grits
2	511	740	Bowl	Brown clay, grits
3	511	743	Bowl	Brown clay, grits
4	502	706	Bowl	Brown clay, grits
5	803	913	Bowl	Brown clay, grits

2. Deep bowl with everted flattened rim (Fig. 14: 1–3). This type of bowl is relatively rare. Similar bowls were found at sites such as Apehek (Beck 2000a: Fig. 10.1: 19; Yadin 2009: Fig. 7.9: 4–5) and Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig. 7.3: 1, 5).
3. Krater with thickened everted rim (Fig. 14: 4). Similar vessels are attested at Apehek (Beck 2000a: 174, Fig. 10.1.16, 17). Closed vessels are represented primarily by cooking pots and storage jars.

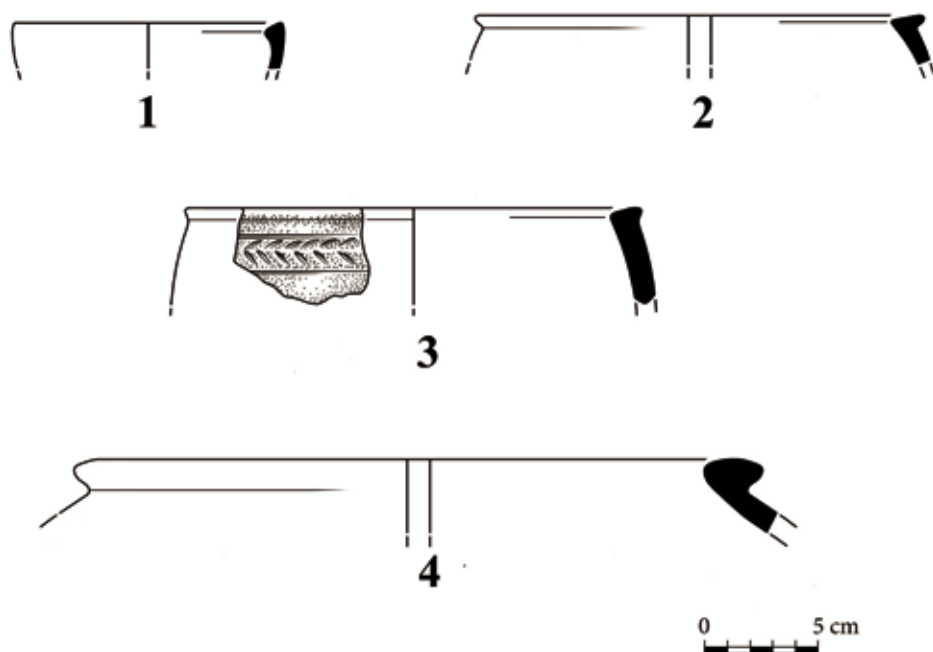
**Figure 14:** Deep bowls and kraters

Table 2: Figure 14 – Deep Bowls and Kraters

No.	Locus	Basket	Type	Notes
1	511	740	Bowl	Brown clay, grits
2	903	800	Bowl	Brown clay, grits
3	503	718	Bowl	Brown clay, grits
4	510	733	Bowl	Brown clay, grits

4. Cooking pots are represented by two main types:

- a. Handmade straight-walled cooking pot with applied decoration (Fig. 15: 1–3). This type is characterized by coarse clay fabric with numerous, relatively large inclusions. The wall of this pot is relatively thick and straight, though in some cases it is slightly inverted. The rim is simple, sometimes slightly inverted or everted. In most cases, the upper part of the pot's wall is decorated on the exterior with an applied rope pattern and with a line of pierced holes or punctures below the rim. This type of cooking pot is most characteristic of the earlier part of the Middle Bronze Age II. It was found at various sites, including Gibeon (Pritchard 1963: Fig. 41: 2), Khirbet 'Addasa ('Adawi 2013: Fig.4: 2), Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig. 7.3: 8–11; Fig. 7.13: 6; Fig. 7.16: 4), Jericho (Kenyon and Holland 1983: Fig. 106: 10; Fig. 163: 8, 6–7; Fig. 164: 4–6), Lachish (Singer-Avitz 2004: Fig. 16.5: 12; Fig. 16.9: 15), and Aphek (Beck 2000a: Fig. 10.2: 12; Fig. 10.10: 22–23), among others.
- b. Wheel-made cooking pot with everted rim (Fig. 15: 4). This type of cooking pot is characterized mainly by its globular shape and its sharply everted rim. Such vessels were found at several sites such as Aphek (Yadin 2009: Fig. 7.1: 4–5; Fig. 7.3: 7–9), Efrata (Gonen 2001: Fig. 46: 2), Ramla (Yasur-Landau 2008: Fig. 2.5), and Jericho (Kenyon and Holland 1982: Fig. 120: 11).

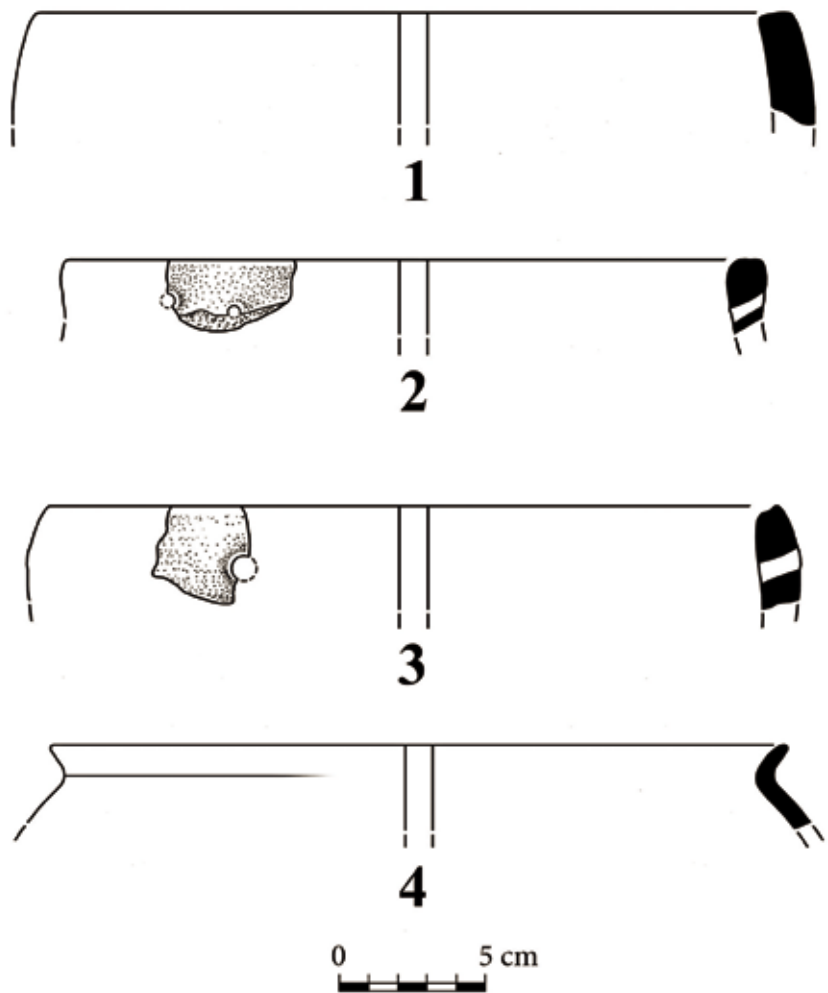


Figure 15: Cooking pots

Table 3: Figure 15 – Cooking Pots

No.	Locus	Basket	Type	Notes
1	803	952	Cooking Pot	Dark-brown clay, large grits
2	800	910	Cooking Pot	Dark-brown clay, large grits
3	800	903	Cooking Pot	Dark-brown clay, large grits
4	505	712	Cooking Pot	Brown clay, grits

5. The storage jars assemblage consists of three different types, divided by their rim form:
 - a. Storage jar with elongated folded rim (Fig. 16: 1–3). Rims of this type are known from various Middle Bronze Age II sites. They were found at the burials of Gibeon (Pritchard 1963: Fig. 24: 88; Fig. 50: 37), Shiloh (Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993: Fig. 6.6: 2; Fig. 6.9: 5–6), Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig. 7.13: 7, 18), Hebron (Ben-Shlomo 2017: Fig. 7.2: 12–13), Efrata (Gonen 2001: Fig. 49: 1–2; Fig. 25: 2), a burial at Tell Beit Mirsim (Ben-Arieh 2004: Fig. 2.25), Lachish (Singer-Avitz 2004: Fig. 16.14: 5; Fig. 16.18: 3, 5; Fig. 16.19: 4), and Jericho (Kenyon and Holland 1983: Fig. 167: 12; Fig. 173: 14).
 - b. Storage jar or jug with simple everted neck (Fig. 16: 4–5). Such a rim type is relatively rare. It was found on some jars and jugs at sites such as Lachish (Singer-Avitz 2004: Fig. 16.14: 5; Singer-Avitz 2004: Fig. 17.10: 4), Shiloh (Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993: Fig. 6.23: 11), Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig. 7.5: 1–2), Shechem (Cole 1984: Pl. 40: e–h), and Nahal Refa'im (Gershuny 2017: Fig. 8: 6).
 - c. Storage jar with flaring profile and folded rim in different variations (Fig. 16: 6–7, Fig. 17). Both non-ridged and ridged types are attested. Similar types are known from nearby sites such as Khirbat 'Addasa ('Adawi 2013: Fig. 4: 4–6) and Gibeon (Pritchard 1963: Fig. 24: 90), and from many other Middle Bronze Age II sites such as Lachish (Singer-Avitz 2004: Fig. 16.31: 5; Fig. 16.22: 15), Hebron (Ben-Shlomo 2017: Fig. 7.2: 14–15), Jericho (Kenyon and Holland 1983: Fig. 71: 2; Fig. 106: 5; Fig. 167: 11–12), Shechem (Cole 1984: Pls. 33–36), Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig. 7.15: 19–25), and Shiloh (Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993: Fig. 6.7: 8–9; Fig. 6.9: 9–12; Fig. 6.11: 11–12).

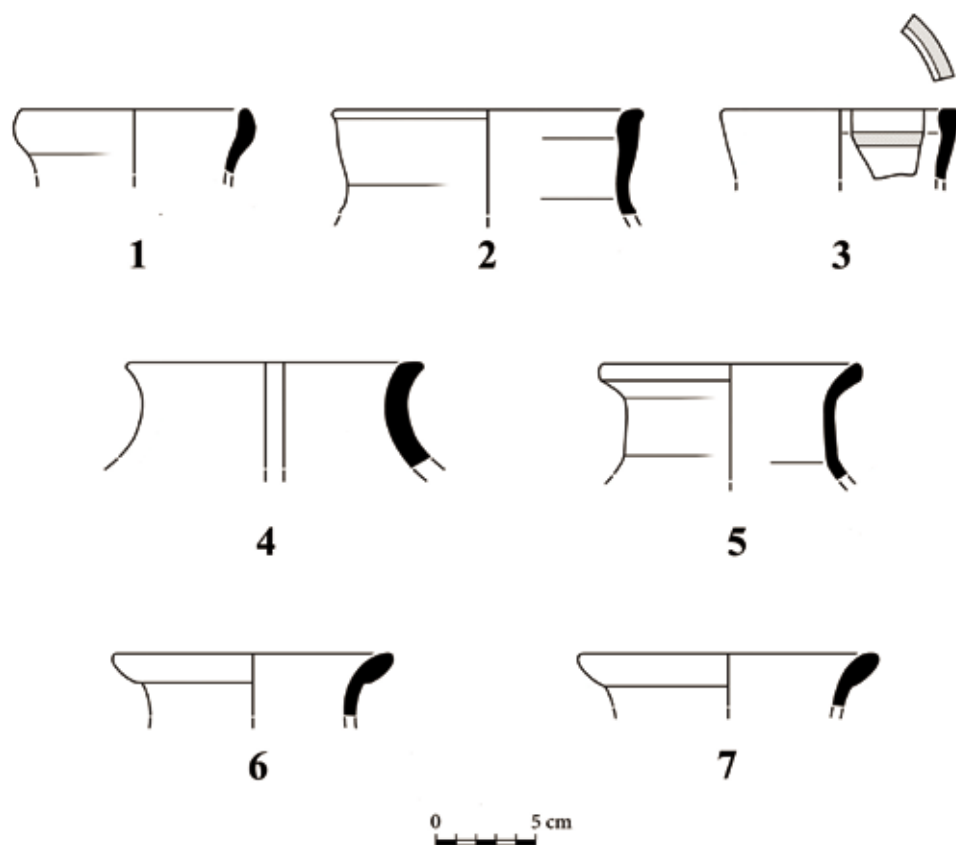


Figure 16: Storage jars

Table 4: Figure 16 – Jars a

No.	Locus	Basket	Type	Notes
1	511	740	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
2	800	903	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
3	505	722	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
4	503	730	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
5	512	736	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
6	512	736	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
7	508	730	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits

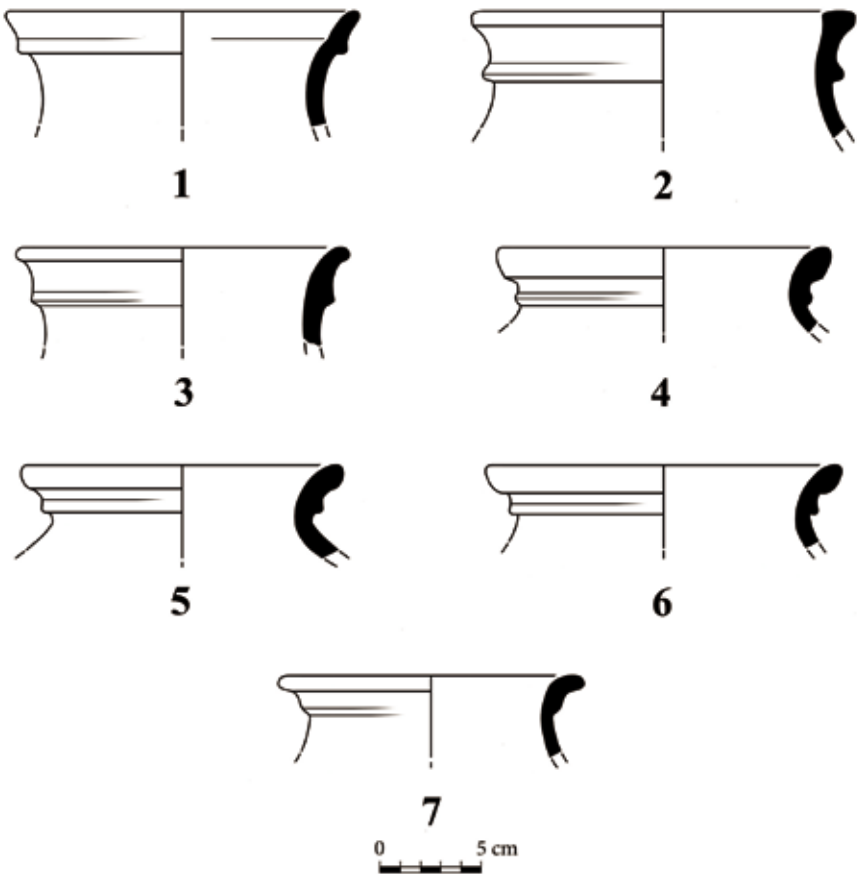


Figure 17: Storage jars

Table 5: Figure 17 – Jars b

No.	Locus	Basket	Type	Notes
1	806	917	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
2	817	956	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
3	512	736	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
4	501	716	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
5	503	732	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
6	516	753	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits
7	807	953	Storage Jar	Brown clay, grits

6. Jugs and juglets were not found during the 2018 season, except for some single and double handles typical of Middle Bronze Age II vessels (Fig. 18: 7). This type of handle is known from several sites such as Hebron (Ben-Shlomo 2017: Fig. 7.2: 20), Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig. 7.4: 14; Fig. 7.15: 8), Efrata (Gonen 2001: Fig. 24: 1–3, Fig. 47: 3–4), Lachish (Singer-Avitz 2004: Fig. 16.21: 2; Fig. 16.22: 9), Jericho (Kenyon and Holland 1983: Fig. 173: 8; Fig. 174: 4), Shechem (Cole 1984: Pl. 27: j–k; Pl. 28: a, b, o–s), and Ramla (Yasur-Landau and Samet 2008: Fig. 2.7: 2).

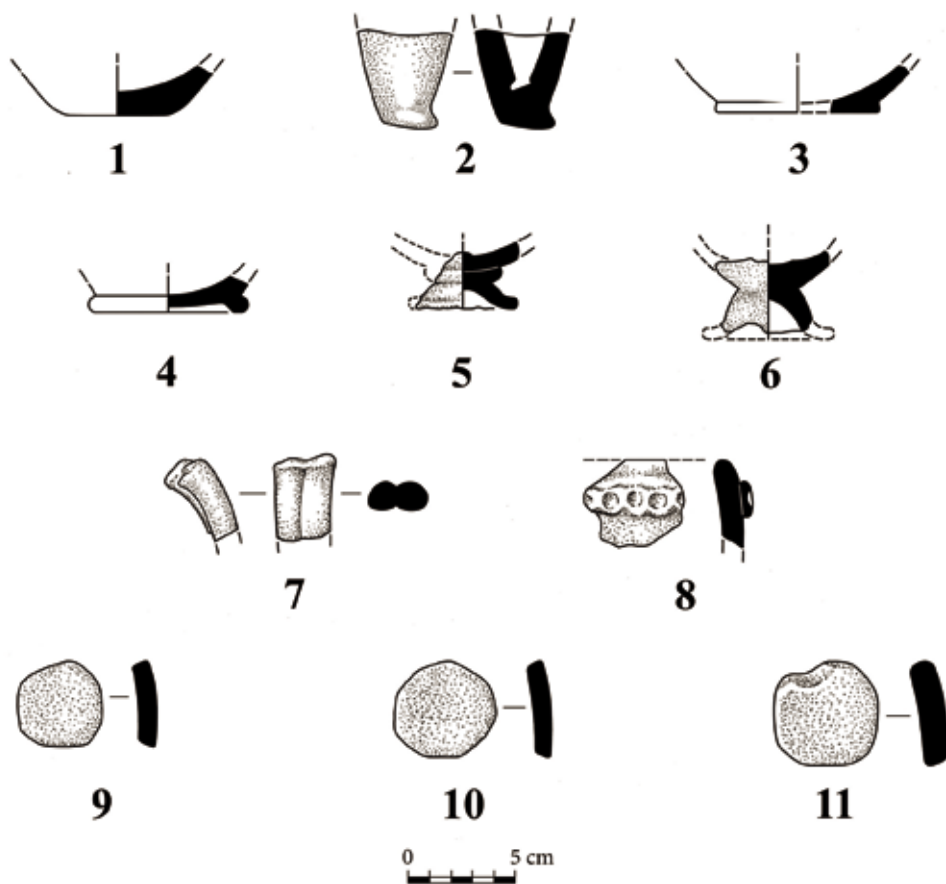


Figure 18: Bases, handles, decorations, and reshaped potsherds

Table 6: Figure 18 – Various Sherds

No.	Locus	Basket	Type	Notes
1	503	732	Base	Brown clay, grits
2	801	905	Base	Brown clay, grits
3	506	721	Base	Brown clay, grits
4	800	910	Base	Brown clay, grits
5	506	721	Base	Brown clay, grits
6	504	705	Base	Brown clay, grits
7	807	953	Rope decoration	Dark-brown clay
8	503	731	Handle	Brown clay, grits
9	510	739	Reshaped sherd	Brown clay, grits
10	506	721	Reshaped sherd	Brown clay, grits
11	514	749	Reshaped sherd	Brown clay, grits

7. Bases are represented by three different types:

- a. Simple base (Fig. 18: 1–2). These are known from numerous sites. One base (Fig. 18: 2) is of particular interest: it belongs to a bottle-like vessel, for which no parallels are known so far in this part of Israel during this period.
- b. Disc base (Fig. 18: 3). Similar bases were found on various vessels from sites such as Shechem (Cole 1984: Pl. 21) and Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig. 7.2:19–20; Fig. 7.11:16), among many others.
- c. Shallow ring base, typical mostly of the earlier phases of the Middle Bronze Age II (Fig. 18: 4). This type of base was found at many sites, such as Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig. 7.10: 3) and Shechem (Cole 1984: Pl. 20: a–j), among others.
- d. Trumpet base, typical of the later phases of the Middle Bronze Age II (Fig. 18: 5–6). It usually belongs to a carinated bowl or a chalice. Similar bases were found in Middle Bronze Age IIB tombs at Tell Beit Mirsim (Ben-Arieh 2004: Fig. 2.9), Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig.

7.2: 19–22; Fig. 7.12: 26–27), Shechem (Cole 1984: Pl. 22), Shiloh (Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993: Fig. 6.5: 21–23), and Jericho (Kenyon and Holland 1982: Fig. 178: 5–6).

8. **Decorations:** Some of the sherds found during the 2018 season are adorned with an incised or plastic decoration (Fig. 18: 8). One rim sherd, found on the beaten-earth surface of Stratum 1, bears a herringbone decoration (Fig. 14: 3). Similar decorations appear on Middle Bronze Age II potsherds from several sites such as Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig. 7.3: 5), Hebron (Ben-Shlomo 2017: 3–4, 6), Tell Beit Mirsim (Ben-Arieh 2004: Fig. 2.21), Shechem (Cole 1984: Pl. 10: h–i; Pl. 26: c–d), and Aphek (Beck 2000b: Fig. 8.19). A noteworthy sherd found during the 2018 season is decorated with incised dots within a geometrical pattern, the typical decoration of the Tell el-Yahudiyeh Ware (Fig. 19). The sherd is relatively thin and is made of the dark gray clay typical of this ware. Similar sherds and vessels were found at several sites in the general vicinity of Giv'at Ze'ev, such as Gibeon (Pritchard, 1963: Fig. 30: 9), Jerusalem (Eisenberg 2012: Fig. 7.8: 1–5), Nahal Refa'im (Gershuny 2017: Fig. 11), Efrata (Gonen 2001: Fig. 36: 1–2; Fig. 24: 5–6), and Lachish (Singer-Avitz 2004: Fig. 16.37: 3–4).



Figure 19: Fragment of Tell el-Yahudiyeh Ware

9. At least five reshaped pottery sherds of circular form (Fig. 18: 9–11) are attested. Sherds of this kind are interpreted as ad hoc jar stoppers or as tokens (Freikman et al. 2017: *24; Freikman 2016).

Groundstone tools are represented by two main types.

- a. A grinding stone was found in the area (Fig. 20) in the rubble of collapsed stones near the wall W521. It is made of Mashash flint, which occurs in the general vicinity of the site, and is similar to other

such tools found earlier at Giv'at Ze'ev in Areas B1 and B2 (Freikman et al. 2017: *22, Fig. 27: 2).

- b. Globular tools made of flint were found in both areas. They are 8–11 cm in diameter and bear numerous marks of impact with hard surfaces (Fig. 21). They are similar to many other such tools found in Areas B1 and B2 in domestic contexts related to the preparation and storage of food (especially in Area B1), and should be interpreted as hammerstones or tools used for grinding cereals.

Ground stone tools, such as grinding slabs and hammerstones, were found in numerous Middle Bronze Age sites. However, until recently they were barely presented in archaeological reports (Rosenberg 2012: 166, 168). However, several assemblages were recently published and discussed by several scholars, providing us with parallels from Megiddo (Sass 2000: 355–362), Tel Manahat (Milevsky 1998), and Qiryat Shemona (Rosenberg 2012).



Figure 20: Grinding stone, "Mashash" flint

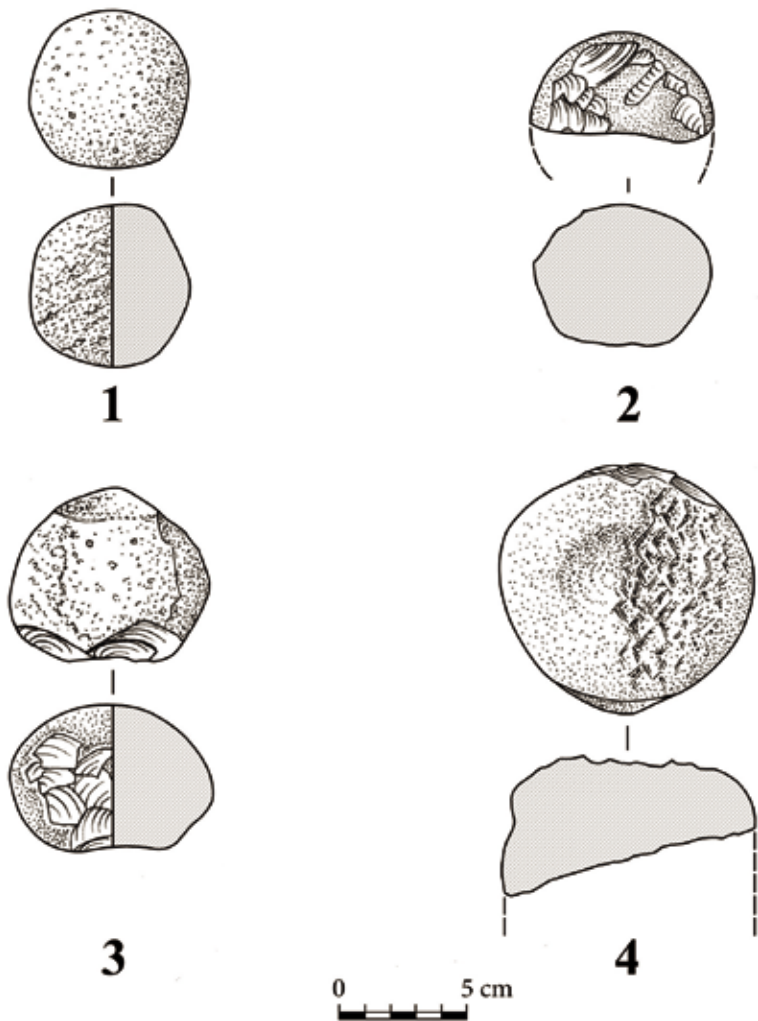


Figure 21: Hammerstones

Table 7: Figure 21 – Hammerstones

No.	Locus	Basket	Type	Notes
1	500	701	Hammer stone	Flint
2	805	909	Hammer stone	Flint
3	819	954	Hammer stone	Flint
4	500	701	Hammer stone	Flint

Conclusions

In general, we may conclude that, despite the partial preservation of the architectural remains in the field, the results of the excavation season of 2018 confirm the conclusions reached after the previous seasons. We may cautiously speculate that the two strata (1 and 2) in Area B3 correlate with Strata 2a and 2b in Area B1 and Strata 1 and 2 in Area B2, and represent two phases in the development of the site. The relation of area B4 remains unclear so far. The pottery found in the context of both strata is very similar to each other. The preliminary analysis of the material enables us to propose that both of them existed during a limited span of time in the late Middle Bronze IIa or the initial phases of the Middle Bronze IIb period, roughly parallel with the earlier stages of Afek (Kochavi and Beck 2000). In the first phase it was a small site, possibly a farm with a central building (Building 525) that was accompanied by a storage building in Area B1 and a graveyard in Area B2. Later on, the site underwent considerable changes. Building 525 was dismantled and its stones were probably reused in other structures, and its place was taken by an open courtyard enclosed by crude walls (W519 was one found *in situ*). At the same time the storage building in Area B1 was considerably enlarged and the place of the graveyard (Area B2) was taken by a massive fortified compound.

The massive fortifications found at the site can be compared to somewhat later Middle Bronze walls found in Jerusalem (Maier 2000), but they resemble even more the small fortified settlements located along the main trade routes dated to the final stages of the Middle Bronze IIa period, such as Afek (Kochavi and Beck 2000), 'Ain Zurekiyeh (Gophna and Ayalon 1982), and Kiryat Shemona (Yasur-Landau 2012: 214–215).

The development of a small rural settlement into a fortified site, which occurred at Hill of Sixteen, may reflect a larger process of transition from land that was mostly settled by pastoralist and agricultural, rural communities into a society based on hierarchical relations among the larger urban centers and smaller fortified sites – such as Hill of Sixteen, 'Ain Zurekiyeh, or Kiryat Shemona, which

were used to guard the network of roads connecting these centers (Dever 1987: 152–153). Much like the above process, the small rural settlement of the Hill of Sixteen developed into a large fortified site located on a major trade route, probably in order to control the road and to protect the people passing through this part of the country. In addition, it might have served as a caravanserai for merchants or other travelers passing along the Maaleh Beth Horon road (see discussion in Freikman et al. 2017).

To sum up, the discovery of the fortified site at the Hill of Sixteen may contribute to our better understanding of the Judean hillside during the early stages of the Middle Bronze Age, and enhance our understanding of the process of urbanization of the local society during this period. Of course, since the archaeological remains discovered are very fragmentary, these conclusions are offered with substantial reservations. Further excavations at the site should clarify whether this picture is accurate and to what degree the function and development of Hill of Sixteen is similar to Afek, Qiryat Shemona, and other small fortified sites in the Middle Bronze Canaan.

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