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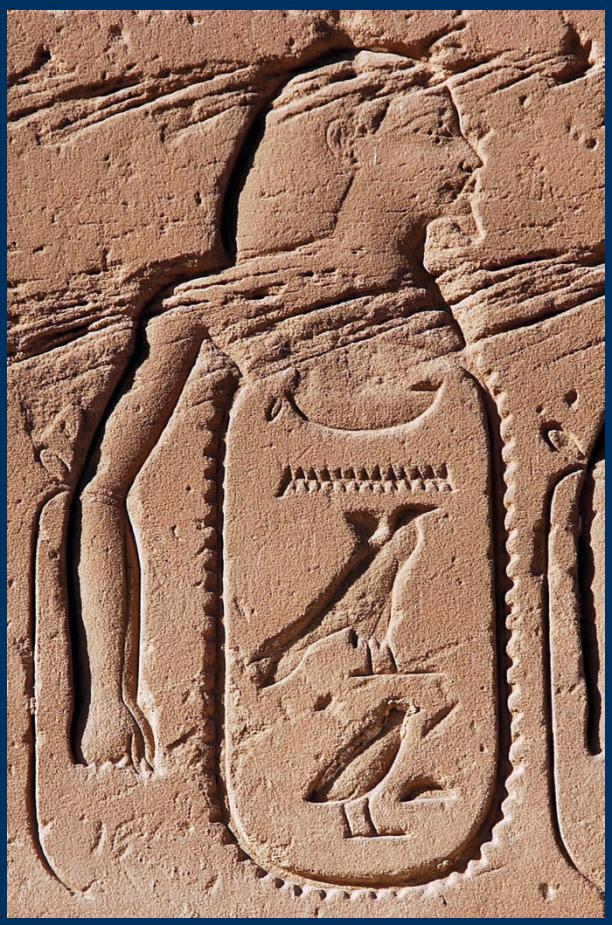
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ÄGYPTEN UND ALTES TESTAMENT 120



Kinneret II

Results of the Excavations at Tell el-ʿOrēme, 1994–2008

Vol. 1

The Bronze Age, Iron Age II, Post-Iron Age Periods, and Other Studies

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Cover illustration: A detailed view of the seventh pylon of the Temple of Amun at Karnak reveals the toponym Kinneret, portrayed in a stylized form resembling a captive. This depiction is part of the topographical list documenting Thutmose III's Asiatic campaign conducted during his 22nd–23rd regnal years. Captured in a photograph by Juha Pakkala; © Kinneret Regional Project.

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6. Summary: Settlement History of *Tell el-ʿOrēme*

JUHA PAKKALA / WOLFGANG ZWICKEL

This chapter summarizes the results of the excavations at *Tell el-ʿOrēme* excluding the Iron Age I period, which will be discussed in a separate volume. The Iron Age I period (strata IV to VI) was the focus of the excavations in the 1990s and in the 2000s,[1] but the excavations have revealed ten further strata dating from the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age I to the Iron Age II periods. Settlement activities from later periods were observed as well, but they were isolated buildings and structures, and were thus not assigned a separate stratum. The chart at the end of this chapter presents the settlement history of the site and marks the excavation areas where remains of the strata were discovered.

Several pre-Iron I strata were found in some areas (especially in area R), while in most areas pre-Iron Age I remains were isolated structures in one or two strata that were reached in small test trenches. Further pre-Iron I remains are expected in most excavation areas, but they lie buried under the Iron Age I architecture, which was not removed during the excavations. Dating isolated structures with only a small amount of associated pottery was difficult, but the combined results from different parts of the site offer a good overall picture of the settlement history. In this summary we also seek to connect our results with the general history around the Sea of Galilee and beyond,[2] which allows a better understanding of the historical background and significance of the excavation results.

Bedrock was reached in areas B, C, D, G-Fort, G, H, M, P, R, and U, and at many locations signs of human activity were found on bedrock. In area R the oldest remains on bedrock were up to 4 m below the topsoil, while in other areas, such as in area U, the remains on bedrock were partly visible before excavating. PAUL KARGE already mentioned early remains on the lower slope on the eastern side of the *tell*,[3] but his study is outdated. Flints were used not only in the (Pre-)Neolithic periods, as he dated the finds, but also in later periods.[4] Nevertheless, there is abundant evidence for early human activity in the vicinity.[5]

As indicated by the many early sites, the area around the lake provided good conditions for permanent human settlement in prehistoric times. The area receives regular rainfall and is warm enough to allow many annual crops and a wide variety of plant cultivation in the winter as well. The fertile plain of Ginnosar with volcanic soil was a hotbed for different plants. The freshwater reservoir of the Sea of Galilee with various edible fish species also attracted settlement from the earliest times onwards. The site of *Tell el-ʿOrēme* was especially attractive since *ʿAin eṭ-Ṭīne*, at the foot of the *tell* on its southern side, and other springs by the shore provided access to freshwater year-around.

Despite the good conditions and a number of other early sites in the proximity, evidence for a Neolithic or earlier habitation has not been found at *Tell el-ʿOrēme*. However, Neolithic flints found in different parts of the mound imply some activity during this period. There are caves around the mound and especially on its southern and western sides, which are potential locations for the earliest settlement. Some cave mouths are visible inside the *Mekorot* area, but they have not been excavated. It is probable that some caves and cave mouths were filled with alluvial/colluvial or human activity. Only one small cave excavated in area L has been investigated so far. Considering the extensive early human settlement in the area, the ideal location for habitation, stray Neolithic flints, and later settlement activity, *Tell el-ʿOrēme* is a very likely site for finding evidence for prehistoric human activity.

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[1] For a preliminary overview of the results of this period, see MÜNGER/ZANGENBERG/PAKKALA 2011.

[2] For a detailed discussion of the human activities in this area, see ZWICKEL 2013; ZWICKEL 2016b; ZWICKEL 2017a; ZWICKEL 2017b; ZWICKEL 2020.

[3] KARGE 1917, 172–177. He writes: "Hier finden sich allenthalben an der Oberfläche der Terrassen, die den Süd- und Ostabhang des Berges einnehmen, Bruchstücke von Silexklingen, Sägen und Sichelsteinen" (p. 173).

[4] Cf. also the study of the flints in *Tell el-ʿOrēme* cf. chapters 4.1. and 4.2. in this volume.

[5] The *ʿAmūd* caves with significant Paleolithic remains are just over 3 km from *Tell el-ʿOrēme* to the west (BAR-YOSEF/HOVERS 1993a). Prehistoric caves have also been found on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee (BAR-YOSEF 1993a; for more sites in the area, see SCHYLE 1996, 414–429). A prominent Acheulean site was excavated at *Ǧisr Bᵉnat Yaʿaqūb* on the shore of the Sea of Galilee some kilometers north of *Tell el-ʿOrēme* (GOREN-INBAR 1993). Ohalo II, one of the earliest larger settlements in the Near East predating the Neolithic period, is located 17 km south of *Tell el-ʿOrēme* close to the outlet of the Jordan River (NADEL [Ed.] 2002). Another important prehistoric site is located at *ʿUbēdīye*, directly south of the Sea of Galilee (BAR-YOSEF 1993b; GAUDZINSKI 2003).

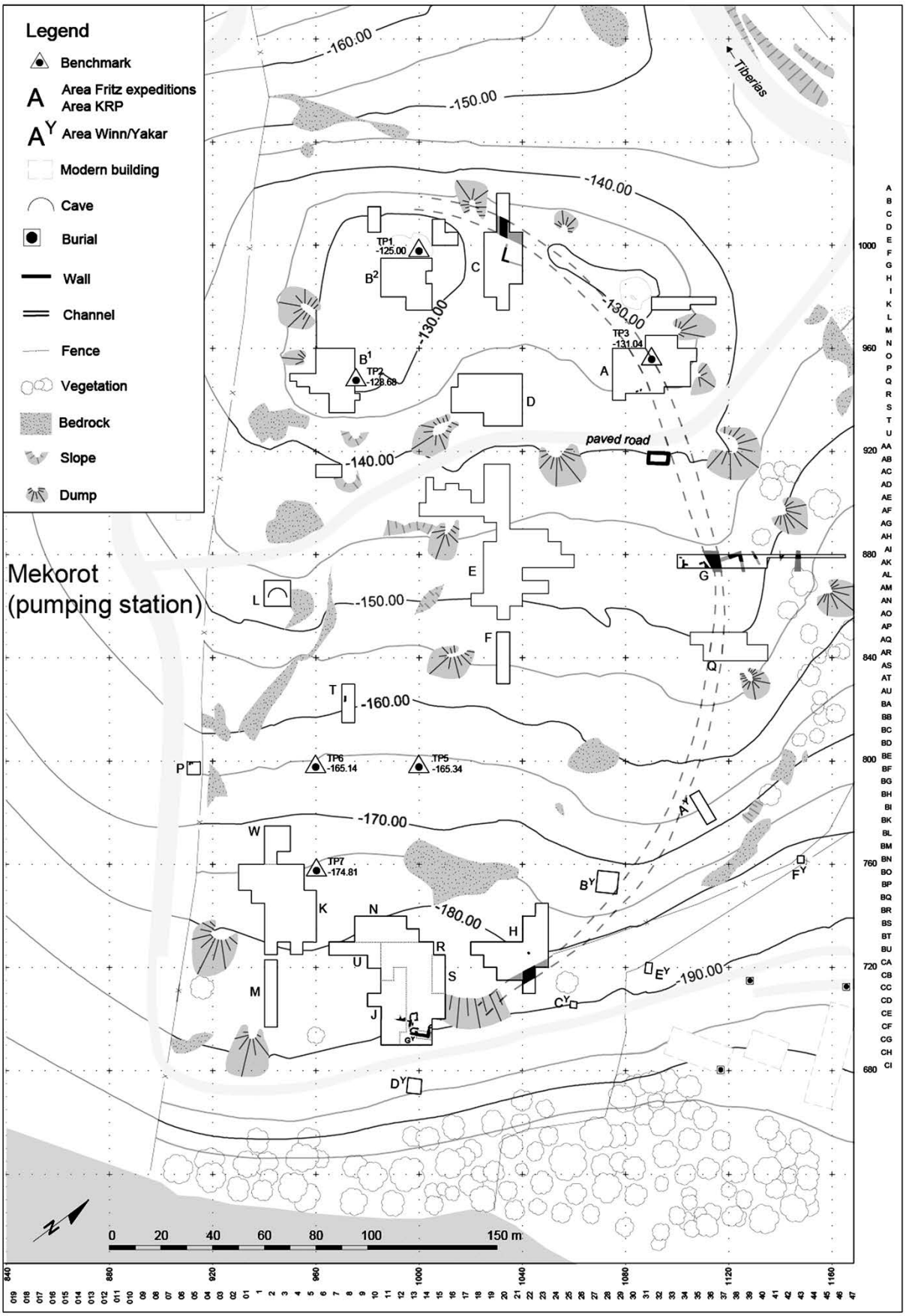


Fig. 6.1. Strata XIII–XI.

6.1. Chalcolithic or Early Bronze Age I (Stratum XIII)

The oldest stratum excavated by the Kinneret Regional Project is stratum XIII, which was observed in area R as stratum R10. The remains from this stratum are few, and the limited number of pottery sherds only allows a general dating to the late Chalcolithic[6] or Early Bronze Age I period.[7] In their 1982–1983 excavations, WINN and YAKAR also found sherds dated to the late Chalcolithic period,[8] and a churn (reg. no. 5021/23) typical of the Chalcolithic culture was found in area G, but these finds were unstratified. No architectural remains dated to this period have been excavated in any area, but the finds imply settlement. The lack of architecture may be because the excavated area is very limited, but a settlement in huts, tents, or other temporary structures is possible too. Traces of ash found in area R (L. 6767) may mark the end of the Late Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age I settlement at *Tell el-ʿOrēme*, but the destruction may also be local. There is no evidence for habitation before the next permanent settlement in the Early Bronze Age I or II period.[9] An alluvial fill between the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age I stratum XIII and the Early Bronze Age II stratum XII, which was found in area R,[10] suggests that there was a substantial gap in settlement activity between these layers.

There was an extensive and well-explored Chalcolithic culture in the northern Golan and northern Upper Galilee between 4500 and 3600/3500 BCE.[11] Due to increased agriculture in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, the need for grinding stones and other basalt tools for processing grains increased and these were produced in the Golan and Upper Galilee with abundant sources of basalt.[12] At about 3600 BCE a drop in rainfall[13] disrupted agriculture, which contributed to the end of the Chalcolithic Golan culture, and the climate change probably occasioned broader cultural and economic changes as well. *Tell el-ʿOrēme* is the only known Late Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age I site along the northern shore of the Sea,[14] while other areas close to the Golan appear to have remained unsettled or mostly used by nomads during the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age transition period. Other sites dated to this period can be found more to the south, such as *Ḫirbet el-Kerak*, *eṭ-Ṭabarīye* and *Ḥammām Ṭabarīye* South.

6.2. Early Bronze Age II (Strata XII and XI)

Strata XII and XI can be dated to the Early Bronze Age II period (3200/3100–2900/2850 BCE). Evidence for Early Bronze Age II was found in areas A, C, J, K, and R (and possibly also in areas G and H, see below). With current knowledge and such a small amount of evidence, it is not possible to connect the local strata from different areas. Two clearly separate Early Bronze Age II strata were only found in area R, and no apparent continuity was detected

---

[6] The absolute dates of the Chalcolithic period have been debated in recent years. Some scholars assume a long Chalcolithic period, e.g., the chronology of the New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land (STERN 2008, 2126: 6400–3600 BCE) or SUSANNE KERNER (KERNER 2001: 5700/5600–3800). YOSEF GARFINKEL divides the Chalcolithic period into three stages: Early (5800–5300 BCE), Middle (5300–4500 BCE) and Late (4500–3600 BCE) Chalcolithic (GARFINKEL 1999, 307–310). Other scholars consider the Chalcolithic period to cover only the second half of the 5th and (partly) the 4th millennium BCE (e.g., GALLING [2]1977, 386: 4th millennium; WEIPPERT 1988, 120–122: 4000–3200; MAZAR 1990: 4300–3300; LEVY 1995: 4500–3500; BARTON/LEVY 2011: 4500–3600; ROWAN/GOLDEN 2009: 4500–3600/3500). In our context only the final phase of the Chalcolithic period, which should be dated about 3600/3500 BCE according to the newest C14 results, is applicable.

[7] C14 results have also changed the traditional dating of the Early Bronze Age period. A major problem in absolute dating is the mixture of sites from southern and northern Palestine, but regional differences have to be assumed. Based only on C14 data from northern Palestine, the absolute dates for the Early Bronze Age period are as follows (for references to specific data from northern Palestine, cf. ZWICKEL 2017a, 170–171):

Early Bronze Age I	3700–3200/3100 BCE
Early Bronze Age II	3200/3100–2900/2850
Early Bronze Age III	2900/2850–2500
Early Bronze Age IV/Middle Bronze Age I	2500–1950.

[8] WINN/YAKAR 1984.

[9] On the basis of the excavations by WINN and YAKAR in 1982 and 1983, it is possible that a further stratum from the Early Bronze Age I period has to be added between strata R9/XI and R10/XII, but this was not excavated by the Kinneret Regional Project. It is possible that walls W9995 and W9996 were originally built during the Early Bronze Age I period. See the report of local stratum R9 in chapter 2.13. for further discussion.

[10] See the area report of local stratum R10, chapter 2.13. in this volume.

[11] EPSTEIN 1998, 336; CARMI/SEGAL 1998. The only excavated site in Galilee with typical elements of the Golan culture is *Ḥorvat Dubšān* situated about 10 km north of *Tell el-ʿOrēme;* cf. SMITHLINE 2013. Our knowledge about the Chalcolithic period in eastern Galilee is limited.

[12] ZWICKEL 2017a, 166.

[13] MIGOWSKI 2004.

[14] Cf. the map in ZWICKEL 2017a, 178.

between them.[15] The Early Bronze Age II strata in other areas may be associated with strata XII and XI (local strata R8 or R9), but one cannot exclude the possibility that the Early Bronze Age II habitation was more complicated.

The limited Early Bronze Age II remains found in area A – already excavated in 1982–1985[16] – were found between and under Iron Age walls. They were only a short section of a wall (W173) and a connected plaster floor close to bedrock. Area C, also excavated in 1982–1985, revealed the remains of a 6.6 to 6.7 m wide city wall W538 and two further walls (W437 and W505) of a rectangular building. Both structures were directly on bedrock. The pottery in areas A and C date the remains to the Early Bronze Age II period. Unlike in area R, no Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age I remains were found between the Early Bronze Age II and the bedrock in areas A and C, but the area of excavation was small, especially in area A.

Besides the city wall in area C, a Bronze Age city wall W2033 was found in area G, but its dating is conjectural. FRITZ, VIEWEGER and MÜNGER dated the city wall in area G to the Middle Bronze Age period,[17] but ZWICKEL has reinterpreted the evidence and suggests dating the wall to the Early Bronze Age II period. Most connected loci contained pottery from the Early Bronze Age, and the few later sherds may be late disturbances.[18] The city wall W2033 was found above older building remains, which contained only Early Bronze Age remains (likely stratum XII). This would suggest that the city wall was predated by an Early Bronze Age settlement, but this does not exclude an Early Bronze Age II dating of the city wall. The outer face of W2033 is hidden under the Iron Age city wall. Area H also contains evidence of a Bronze Age city wall (W3010), but it is partly hidden under unexcavated younger remains and its dating remains uncertain. FRITZ and MÜNGER dated this city wall W3010 to the Middle Bronze Age period,[19] while ZWICKEL has argued that the wall should be dated to the Early Bronze Age II period.[20]

Most important for understanding the Early Bronze Age habitation is area R. The older stratum R9/XII is preserved in a large building of unknown function in squares CF 13–14 and CG 13–14, while the stratum R8/XI structures may be granaries or other storage buildings. Both strata have completely different orientations and there is also a fill between the strata, which suggests a gap in habitation or a comprehensive rebuilding for a different layout and function. The stratum R9/XII structures were probably destroyed by a fire, as suggested by the remains of ash, but this may also be a local event in area R and not evidence for a destruction of the entire site. A local violent destruction could explain why there was another Early Bronze Age II stratum in this area, while other areas have not shown evidence of two Early Bronze Age II strata. On the other hand, evidence from the other areas is much more fragmentary for this period than in area R. After the destruction of stratum R8/XI, possibly by a fire, the site was abandoned for about a millennium (see below).

In area K, small test trenches were opened to gain evidence for pre-Iron Age I habitation. Early Bronze Age material was scanty, but one of the trenches contained sherds of Abydos ware from the Early Bronze Age II period, which may indicate habitation at this time.

Pottery analysis clearly dates strata XII and XI to the Early Bronze Age II period.[21] Moreover, seven cylinder seal impressions from the Early Bronze Age II period have been discovered at the site, three in the excavations in 1982–1985 and four in the renewed excavations since 1994. Although they were all found in layers postdating the Early Bronze Age, they indirectly confirm the dating of strata XII and XI.

During the Early Bronze Age II period only settlements on the western and southern shore of the Sea of Galilee are known: *Ḫirbet el-Kerak*, *Ḫirbet el-Qunēṭira/Tel Raqqat*, *Nahal Raqqat*, and *Tell el-ʿOrēme*.[22] *Ḫirbet el-Kerak* became one of the most important sites of the whole area, being about 70 ha in size, while *Ḫirbet el-Qunēṭira/Tel Raqqat* was a small site of about 0.35 ha.[23] *Tell el-ʿOrēme* was at least 6 ha during the Early Bronze Age II period, but it may also have reached 10 ha in size if it included *ʿEn eṭ-Ṭīne*.[24]

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[15] The evidence from area G is inconclusive, but there may also be two separate Early Bronze Age II strata.
[16] FRITZ 1990, 19–24.
[17] See FRITZ/VIEWEGER 1996, 96, and FRITZ/MÜNGER 2002, 9–11. Thus also PAKKALA and ZANGENBERG in PAKKALA/MÜNGER/ZANGENBERG 2004, 13–16.
[18] See report of area G, chapter 2.4.1. in this volume.
[19] See FRITZ 1999, 95–98, and FRITZ/MÜNGER 2002, 9–11.
[20] See report of area H, chapter 2.5.1. in this volume.
[21] See the pottery analysis see chapter 3.1. in this volume.
[22] Cf. ZWICKEL 2017a, 179–187.
[23] *Nahal Raqqat* was likely only a cemetery and a small way station along the road connecting the Sea of Galilee with Lower Galilee.
[24] The southwestern sections of the city wall inside the Mekorot water station are unexcavated. It is possible that the city wall included the *ʿĒn eṭ-Ṭīne* at the foot of the mound. To include the spring inside the city would have secured access to fresh water in times of siege, but in this case the city wall would have had to run south of *ʿĒn eṭ-Ṭīne*.

If we assume 250 inhabitants/hectare, up to about 1500 people may have lived at *Tell el-'Orēme* in the Early Bronze Age II period. Large cities are typical of the Early Bronze Age II and III periods.[25] Typical of the period, both *Ḫirbet el-Kerak* and *Tell el-'Orēme* were protected by thick city walls.[26] The breadth of the city wall (6.6–6.7 m) in area C matches well with walls found at other sites of this period (normally 5 to 7 m).[27] Evidence for the city wall has not been found close to the sea, and the following explanations for this can be proposed:

1) It was largely removed in this area when the service road and other later structures were built
2) It lies buried under the unexcavated sections closer to the lake
3) No city wall was needed here, because the bluff functioned as a defensive line towards the sea.[28]

The population size of the site can be roughly estimated, and a similar population density may be assumed for all strata that form a town that covers most of the mound.[29] With an estimated population of about 1500 people during the Early Bronze Age II, one may approximate the food requirements of the inhabitants. ARYE BEN-DAVID calculated a minimum ground area of 6.26 ha per family during the Byzantine period.[30] Since no fundamental improvements in agricultural techniques had taken place, the amount of field required to sustain a certain number of people remained roughly similar. Since the plain of Ginnosar is exceptionally fertile, it produced more crops and variety than most other regions in Palestine, and maybe less than 6 ha per family were sufficient to support a family at *Tell el-'Orēme*. With an average family of 4 to 5 people the inhabitants of *Tell el-'Orēme* would need about 2000 hectares (or 20 km^2) of regular agricultural land, unless other sources of nutrition were available. However, fish had been widely consumed at *Tell el-'Orēme* since the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age I period (stratum XIII), and it substantially added to the diet of the inhabitants in terms of variation and alternative supply. The plain of Ginnosar contains about 700 hectares of cultivable land.[31] Fields in areas immediately to the northeast, especially around *eṭ-Ṭabġā*, add another 20–30 ha,[32] but parts of the coastal areas further to the northeast and the adjacent hills and valleys to the northwest[33] may also have been used for agriculture, potentially adding 100–300 hectares. The hills northwest of the site are ideal for olive trees, as is shown by their prevalence even now.[34] All these fields are at a maximum distance of approximately 6 km from *Tell el-'Orēme*, which is a reasonable distance for a daily walk to utilize them from *Tell el-'Orēme*. Summing up these areas, 700 ha of exceptionally good and 300 ha of mostly good agricultural land would have been easily accessible for the inhabitants of *Tell el-'Orēme*. This would cover perhaps half of the nutrition needed for 1500 people. However, the site had other sources of sustenance as well.

Olives may also have been used to produce olive oil, based on the several cylinder seals and impressions found at *Tell el-'Orēme*. Cylinder seals have been connected with the olive oil industry,[35] and seals have also been found in areas with ideal conditions for olive oil production.[36] Since olive oil was a valuable export item, the cultivation of olive trees would have generated additional income. Common cereals and pulses (such as lenses and *vicia*) were thus probably supplemented by olives, which could be cultivated outside the plains. Figs were probably also cultivated in the rocky hills (paleobotanical evidence for figs is from the Middle Bronze Age IIB/C,[37] but they may also have been cultivated earlier). Considering the possibly for many crops in this area, supplementary nourishment from fish, olives, figs, and wild plants, and the production of olive oil for export, the areas surrounding *Tell el-'Orēme* were easily sufficient to nourish the postulated population of at least 1500 people.

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[25] HERZOG 1997, 73, notes: "Twelve of the 30 cities dated to the EB II are 10 ha. or larger and make up 75% of the total urban area in this period … illustrating the tendency to congregate in large rather than small urban centres."
[26] Cf. DOUGLAS 2007.
[27] KEMPINSKI 1992, 68. But cf. the Early Bronze Age bastion in the upper city of *Ḫirbet ez-Zeraqōn* which, together with the city wall, is more than 12 m broad.
[28] A similar situation can be found in *Ḫirbet ez-Zeraqōn,* where the gently sloping hill is surrounded by a city wall, while a bluff in the northeast was left unprotected, as it was impossible to attack from this direction.
[29] For example, a fortress town on the acropolis may be slightly different from a town with a sizeable urban population.
[30] BEN-DAVID 1974, 137.
[31] Cf. the calculation in ZWICKEL 2017a, 36 no. 53.
[32] ZWICKEL 2017a, 36 nos. 49–52.
[33] ZWICKEL 2017a, 36 nos. 11, 12, 20, 21, 23–32.
[34] Olive bits were found on floors L. 6773 and L. 6783 of stratum XII/R9 (in baskets 11424, 11456 and 11467), which shows the use of olives during the Early Bronze Age II period.
[35] FLENDER 2000, 302.
[36] This is the case in the eastern and western Galilee, the northern Golan, the Jordan Valley north and south of the Sea of Galilee, the Carmel ridge and in the northern Transjordanian hill country. Cf. the map in FLENDER 2000, 297. Pollen analysis at *Birket er-Rām* in the northern Golan territory demonstrated elevated levels of olive pollen during the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age I/II periods (NEUMANN 2005, 68–70 and attachment A [Beilage A]). The chronological data of attachment A must be corrected according to the new chronological system. Only in the Hellenistic to Byzantine periods was the amount of olive pollen higher than in the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age period.
[37] See the report of local stratum R6 in chapter 2.13.

Square[38]	Early Bronze Age II	Both Early Bronze Age II and III	Only Early Bronze Age III	Difference
		Number of sites		
19.26	3	1	1	-66%
19.25	1	1	1	0
19.24	2	2	2	0
19.23	2	0	0	-100%
19.22	2	1	1	-50%
20.26	10	9	10	-10%
20.25	3	0	0	-100%
20.24	0	0	0	-
20.23	2	2	2	0
20.22	5	4	5	-20%
21.26	14	1	1	-93%
21.25	10	1	1	-93%
21.24	10	0	0	-100%
21.23	7	0	0	-100%
21.22	9	6	6	-33%

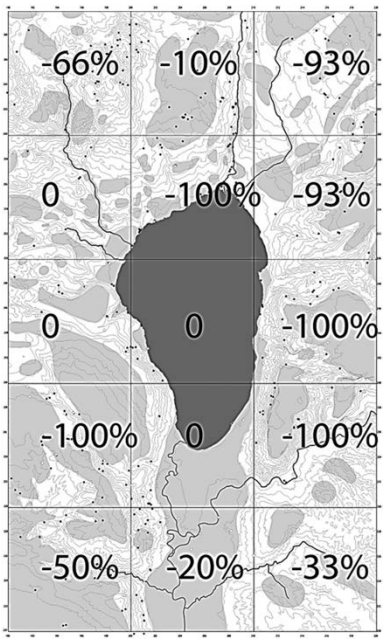


Table 6.1. and Fig. 6.2. Sites in the surroundings of the Sea of Galilee in the Early Bronze Age II and III periods.

Ḫirbet-Kerak Ware, typical of the Early Bronze Age III period,[39] has not been found at *Tell el-ʿOrēme*, which suggests that the site was abandoned at the end of the Early Bronze Age II period. Early Bronze Age sites were often settled in the Early Bronze Age II and III period,[40] but around the Sea of Galilee the number of settlements dropped after the Early Bronze Age II period (see Table 6.1. and Fig. 6.2.).[41] This may be connected with the abandonment of *Ḫirbet el-Kerak* at the end of the Early Bronze Age II period and its resettlement, perhaps by a new population, in the Early Bronze Age III period.[42] Considering the importance of *Ḫirbet el-Kerak*, the change must have encompassed the entire region. DOUGLAS I. ESSE has proposed that an earthquake destroyed the Early Bronze Age II settlement at *Tell ez-Zanbakīye/Yaqūš*, about 10 km south of the Sea of Galilee in the Jordan Valley.[43] A large earthquake would explain the end of settlement activities at many sites and the following migration and resettlement of some sites by new settlers, sometimes called the "Khirbet Kerak Ware people."

6.3. Gap between Strata XI and X

Tell el-ʿOrēme remained unsettled during the Early Bronze Age III and Early Bronze Age IV/Middle Bronze Age I periods. Although an international trade route may have passed by the site in the Early Bronze Age III period,[44] human activity was limited during this time. There was a cluster of small sites of about 0.1 to 0.5 hectares in size in the nearby *Wādi el-ʿAmūd* during the Early Bronze Age IV/Middle Bronze Age I period.[45] The conditions during this period may not have allowed the use of the site's potential, or the inhabitants were not in a position to sustain a major town.

6.4. Middle and Late Bronze Age (Strata X, IX, VIII, and VII)

After a gap in habitation of about 1000 years, *Tell el-ʿOrēme* was resettled in the Middle Bronze Age IIB period. The dating of the habitation is indicated by the pottery analysis and the seal finds.[46] No Middle Bronze Age IIA

[38] The quadrants are the same as those used during the Archaeological Survey of Israel. We use the coordinates of the Palestine or Old Israel grid, because the New Israelite grid is not used in Jordan. The first two numerals refer to the coordinates in the west-east direction, the following two numerals to the coordinates in the north-south direction.
[39] Cf. the map in ZUCKERMAN et al. 2009, 140.
[40] Cf., e.g., GOPHNA 1995, 275–276.
[41] Table 6.1. and Fig. 6.2. are based on the statistics in ZWICKEL 2017a, 179–187. NIMROD GETZOV came to a similar result when he mapped the Early Bronze Age sites of northern Israel (see especially his table in GETZOV 2006, 125).
[42] GREENBERG et al. 2012, 102.
[43] ESSE 1993, 1503.
[44] Cf. ZWICKEL 2017b, Fig. 11.
[45] Cf. ZWICKEL 2017a, 188–200.
[46] See chapters 3.1. and 4.8. in this volume.

pottery was found. Traditionally, Middle Bronze Age IIB starts at about 1750 BCE or "sometime during the third quarter of the eighteenth century B.C.E.,"[47] but some recent research dates the beginning later, about 1680 BCE.[48] Nonetheless, it is unknown whether the oldest Middle Bronze Age IIB building remains at *Tell el-ʿOrēme* should be dated to the beginning of this period, or some decades later.

Although the site was inhabited until the end of the Late Bronze Age I period, the different strata imply some discontinuity and destructions, at least locally in area R where the strata can be distinguished. Other areas show less discontinuity and destruction, but information from them is more limited. There is no evidence for a Late Bronze Age II stratum, and no stray pottery that can be unambiguously dated to this period. Therefore, the site appears to have been abandoned sometime in the Late Bronze Age I period.

The extent of the city in the Middle and Late Bronze Age is not well known. No architecture from the Middle and Late Bronze Ages was found on the acropolis, while areas A and C, and perhaps also G, indicate that at least the Early Bronze Age II city encompassed the acropolis. Nonetheless, stray pottery from the Middle and Late Bronze Ages was found on the acropolis (in areas A, B, C, and D),[49] and therefore it is probable that the acropolis was used for some purposes during the Middle and Late Bronze Age periods as well. If there were buildings in these periods, they would have been removed when the acropolis was leveled for new buildings in the Iron Age period. Only some of the deep-lying Early Bronze Age architecture was spared from the leveling. The builders of the Iron Age II habitation may have removed Iron Age I architecture on the acropolis as well, since Early Bronze Age II buildings were found directly under Iron Age II remains in areas A and C. Middle and/or Late Bronze Age architecture was found in areas E, G, H, R, K, M, and U, which implies a city of at least 4 ha, but if it also encompassed the acropolis and *ʿAin eṭ-Ṭīne*, it might have been up to 10 ha in size.

Middle and Late Bronze Age remains were found as follows: E (local stratum E6?), G (local strata G-Fort5 and G4), H (local strata H3 and H4), K (local stratum K5), M (local strata M3 and M4?), N (local stratum N4), P (local stratum PC), R (local strata R4, R5, R6 and R7), and U (local stratum U5?). The most detailed stratigraphy was found in area R, which is thus key for the stratigraphic overview of the site in the Bronze Age, while the stratigraphy in other areas is less differentiated. Acknowledging that the association of local strata from different areas is uncertain, Table 6.2. should be regarded as a tentative suggestion.

The Middle Bronze Age II is preserved in at least two strata (strata X and IX), of which the older is poorly known. Stratum VIII may also be from the Middle Bronze Age II, but since there was not enough pottery to be more specific, a Late Bronze Age I dating is possible as well. In some areas only one stratum associated with the Middle Bronze Age II or Late Bronze Age I was found (local strata E6?, K5, PC/PD, U5?), but the excavations of the Bronze Age were very limited in these areas. Areas G, H, M and R contained successive strata from this period, but area R was the only one that contains evidence of four different strata. The dating of local strata E6, M4, M3, and U5 is very uncertain; local strata E6 and U5 can only generally be dated to the Bronze Age.

In area R, fragments of stratum X/R7 walls were found. Local strata R7 and R6 are clearly two separate Middle Bronze Age strata, which also follow independent orientations and architectural layouts. No continuity between the strata could be observed. Debris and an artificial fill can be seen between the structures of strata IX/R6 and X/R7, but no alluvial fill was detected, and therefore there may not have been a gap in habitation, or it was very short. Of the other areas only area M may contain two subsequent Middle Bronze Age strata (local strata M4 and M3), but the dating of local stratum M4 is very uncertain. M4 might be associated with X/R7.

The architecture of stratum IX/R6 is well preserved and is best connected with the similarly well-preserved local stratum H4 and perhaps also with the poorly known remains of local strata M3 and N4. Stratum IX appears to be a new foundation that shows no continuity with stratum X. This is clear for local strata R6 and H4, while evidence in area M is uncertain. With current knowledge it seems probable that stratum IX represents the main habitation of the Middle Bronze Age IIB. All excavated architecture of this stratum was domestic. The discovery of several Middle Bronze Age IIB seals and seal impressions in area K suggest that administrative or other important buildings may have been located in this area.

The circumstances concerning the end of stratum IX/R6 are not known. There is evidence for a violent destruction in area R (especially in the eastern courtyard),[50] but this may be a local destruction. Similar evidence for destruction was not found in area H. Fragmentary remains of a squatter habitation in area R suggest continued settlement on the older ruins after the destruction of stratum IX/R6.

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[47] Cohen 2002, 139.
[48] Bietak 2002, 41; Ilan et al. 2019, 6.
[49] See Fritz 1990, 18.244–245.
[50] See chapter 2.13. in this volume.

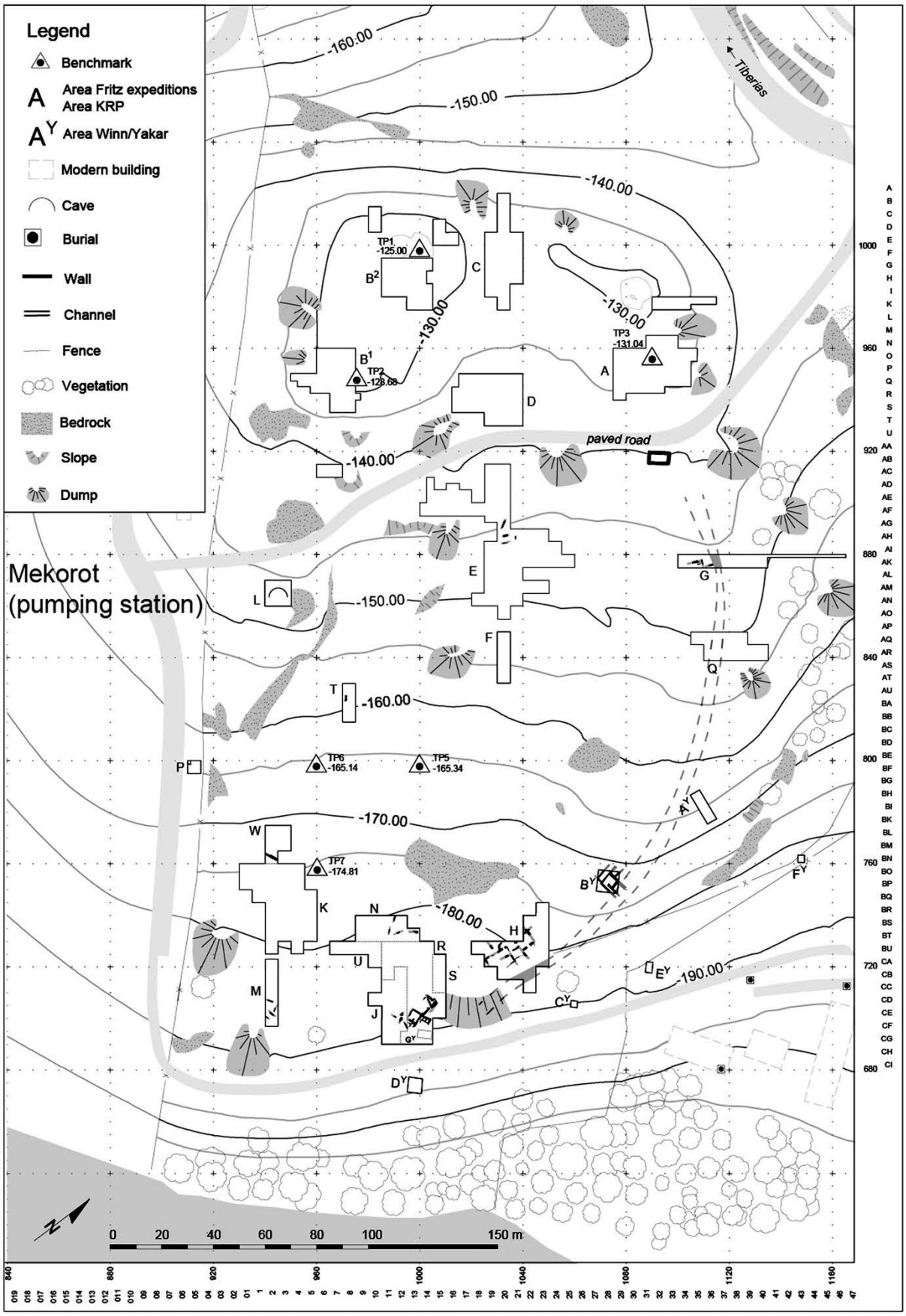


Fig. 6.3. Strata X–VII.

<table>
<tr><td>Site stratum</td><td>Period</td><td colspan="9">Local strata</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>E</td><td>G</td><td>H</td><td>K</td><td>M</td><td>N</td><td>P</td><td>R</td><td>U</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Early Bronze Age</td><td rowspan="5">E6?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td rowspan="2">M4?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td rowspan="5">U5?</td></tr>
<tr><td>X</td><td>Middle Bronze Age IIB</td><td rowspan="3">G4,
G-Fort5?</td><td></td><td rowspan="4">K5</td><td rowspan="3">N4</td><td rowspan="3">PC
PD</td><td>R7</td></tr>
<tr><td>IX</td><td>Middle Bronze Age IIB</td><td>H4</td><td>R6</td></tr>
<tr><td>VIII</td><td>Middle Bronze Age IIB/C
/Late Bronze Age I</td><td rowspan="2">H3</td><td>M3?</td><td>R5</td></tr>
<tr><td>VII</td><td>Late Bronze Age I</td><td>G-Fort5?</td><td></td><td>R4</td></tr>
</table>

Table 6.2. Possible distribution of Middle and Late Bronze Age local strata.

Stratum VIII is dated to the Middle Bronze Age II or Late Bronze Age I period. Discontinuity with stratum IX can be seen in area R: The walls of stratum VIII/R5 were built on stratum IX/R6 walls partly using the older walls as a foundation, but the orientation of the buildings remains roughly similar. A fill between the strata can be seen in some locations, but it may be an artificial fill to level the debris of ruined older structures. If there was any gap in habitation, it was not long. The walls of stratum VIII/R5 were probably built shortly after the destruction of stratum IX/R6 buildings, and the above-mentioned squatter habitation between strata IX/R6 and VIII/R5 may be temporary buildings of the same population. The stratum VIII city is poorly known. Only parts of domestic buildings and a courtyard without any significant finds were found in area R. Some traces of burning or violent destruction were found, but the remains are scanty and difficult to interpret. A heap of stones with ash and charcoal may indicate destruction and a collapsed wall. Since no pottery *in situ* was found in any locus associated with stratum VIII/R5 and the stray pottery sherds could not be dated very precisely, the stratum can only be roughly dated to the Middle Bronze Age IIC and Late Bronze Age I period. Stratum VIII/R5 cannot explicitly be connected with any local stratum in the other excavated areas.

Stratum VII/R4 shows no continuity with stratum VIII/R5. Excavated architecture of stratum VII/R4 was found on top of the stratum VIII/R5 walls and the strata follow completely different orientations. A fill between the strata is also evident, but it cannot be determined whether there was a gap in habitation. The stratum can be dated to the Late Bronze Age I period. No evidence of destruction was observed in stratum VII/R4, which implies a gradual abandonment of the site rather than a violent single event as a cause of the site's decline. The scattered remains of a later phase in stratum VII/R4 further indicate a gradual decline. The resettlement in phase R4b, using older buildings of the stratum's main phase, appears to have been limited in size and timespan, and perhaps no new buildings were built anymore. After it was abandoned, the site was not settled until the Iron Age I period. This is indicated by the alluvial fill (e.g., L. 6259) above the stratum VII/R4b buildings.

Two strata connected with the Middle and Late Bronze Age were discovered in area H. Local stratum H3 is a squatter habitation after the abandonment of the main building phase, local stratum H4. Most of the pottery from these strata is from the Middle Bronze Age II to Late Bronze Age I period, but only some vessels can be dated more precisely. One bowl (reg. no. 6319/4) from stratum H4 is typical of the Middle Bronze Age II period and one may thus connect this stratum with the Middle Bronze Age II. Its good preservation and dating of pottery associate stratum H4 with the similarly well-preserved local stratum R6 and thus with the final stratum IX. Local stratum H3 may be associated with final stratum VIII, VII, or with a similar squatter habitation postdating stratum R6.

The isolated remains in other areas can roughly be dated to the Middle and Late Bronze Age period. Pottery dates local stratum M3 to the Middle Bronze Age or Late Bronze Age, while stratum M4 is from the Early or Middle Bronze Age. The association of these local strata with the site strata can only be conjectured: stratum M3 = VIII or VII; stratum M4 = IX, X and/or XI. Local stratum PC and PD in area P contained some sherds from the Middle/Late Bronze Age and on their basis the strata can only roughly be attributed to final strata X to VII. No destruction debris was found, and thus a more specific end of these strata cannot be determined.

Data from area K is also limited. Local stratum K5 yielded Middle Bronze Age II and Late Bronze Age I pottery, and thus the stratum is only roughly associated with the final strata X to VII. Nonetheless, four Middle Bronze Age IIB seals were found in area K,[51] which suggest habitation in this general area in the Middle Bronze Age IIB period, and since seals were not common items, perhaps there was an administrative or public building in the proximity. Area N contained Middle Bronze Age II to Late Bronze I pottery in local stratum N4, which can only generally be attributed to final strata X to VII. No destruction level was observed in this area. Since no datable and stratified pottery was found in local stratum U5, its dating is uncertain. The relative position of the stratum

[51] See chapter 2.7.1. in this volume.

nonetheless suggests that it predates the Iron Age I period. Area G is exceedingly complicated and open to differing interpretations, but it is evident that there are a number of strata from the Early, Middle, and Late Bronze Age periods in this area.[52] Local stratum G3 may be linked with the Middle Bronze Age period. Very little is known about stratum E6 in area E, but the area appears to have been settled during the Early and/or Middle Bronze Age.

Some areas contained no evidence for a Middle or Late Bronze Age between the Iron Age and Early Bronze Age strata. In area T the architecture from the Iron Age I was found directly on top of local stratum T4 from the Early Bronze Age II period. A similar picture was also received on the acropolis in areas A and C, where Early Bronze Age II was found directly below Iron Age layers. This could indicate a small settlement in the Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age I period. As an alternative, the builders of the Iron Age I city may have removed older remains when the foundations for a new settlement were laid, as noted above. In area T the reason for the lack of Middle or Late Bronze Age architecture could be terracing in the Iron Age I period, but the area of excavation was also limited to a 1 m trench, and it may not give a proper picture of the stratigraphy here. The steep slope necessitated terracing and cuts were made in the slope for building in this area. Although one cannot completely exclude the possibility that there was no habitation in this area during the Middle or Late Bronze Age period, it is located in the middle of the mound and is likely to have contained habitation at least in some stages of this long period. It is thus more likely that the architectural remains of these periods were not found because of the small trench or they were removed during the building of Iron Age I period terraces.

Evidence for a city wall in the Middle and Late Bronze Age period is inconclusive. FRITZ, VIEWEGER and MÜNGER assumed a glacis and a city wall in area G and a city wall in area H (thus also PAKKALA and ZANGENBERG),[53] but ZWICKEL has reinterpreted the evidence in both areas.[54] According to ZWICKEL, there is no evidence for a city wall in the Middle and Late Bronze Age on the acropolis or in areas G and H. More excavations in other parts of the mound are needed to gain a better view. However, the lack of a fortification system in the Middle and Late Bronze Age would not be exceptional. In Western Galilee, only at *Tell el-Qedaḥ*/Hazor, *Tell Abīl el-Qamḥ*/Abel Beth-Maacah and *Tell el-Qāḍī*/Dan were rampart systems excavated,[55] which was typical of the other parts of Palestine. At *Tell el-Qāḍī*/Dan, no wall was found on top of the rampart. During the Late Bronze Age most sites were unwalled,[56] perhaps because the Egyptians wanted to control the city states and make rebellions more difficult.

With the above-mentioned uncertainties of dating, it is challenging to connect the strata with the broader history very precisely, but some associations may be suggested. In written sources, the city of Kinneret, identified with *Tell el-ʿOrēme*, is mentioned in the Late Bronze Age. They imply that it was recognized as a notable city during this time. Kinneret is met as no. 34 in the Thutmosis III list of subjugated cities, which is found inscribed in the Karnak Temple. The absolute dating of the end of the Middle Bronze Age is debated. Traditionally, it lasted until about 1550 BCE and accordingly Thutmosis III (1479–1426 BCE) would be dated to the Late Bronze Age I period. Some scholars have challenged this.[57] Especially in the north of Palestine, changes in material culture would have begun later, only in the time of Thutmosis III.[58] This theory is supported by the lack of Late Bronze Age pottery at many Galilean sites mentioned in the Thutmosis III list.[59] The heavy decline of settlements in the Late Bronze Age I (see. Figs. 5.1.1. and 5.1.2.) could be associated with a violent destruction of the Middle Bronze Age culture by Thutmosis III.

Not all sites mentioned in the Thutmosis III list were destroyed. A hieroglyphic stela found at *Tell el-ʿOrēme* and dated by STEFAN WIMMER to the time of Thutmosis III[60] implies that the Pharaoh considered Kinneret important. Since the preserved section of the stela is poorly legible, not much can be said of the historical circumstances, but it nonetheless marked the pharaoh's control over this area and it may have been a sign for the inhabitants that Egypt rules here. That the Egyptians allowed the city to be inhabited after conquest is corroborated by archaeological evidence for continued habitation at *Tell el-ʿOrēme* at least till the end of the 15th century BCE. There is also no evidence for a violent destruction in the stratum VIII remains that could be associated with the time of Thutmosis III's campaign. The location was important for the main trade route towards the north, which would also speak against its destruction. Kinneret is mentioned in Papyrus Leningradensis/St. Petersburg 1116A

[52] For an interpretation and discussion, see chapter 2.4.1. of this volume.
[53] See FRITZ/VIEWEGER 1996, 96, and FRITZ/MÜNGER 2002, 9–11. Thus also PAKKALA and ZANGENBERG in PAKKALA/MÜNGER/ZANGENBERG 2004, 13–16.
[54] See chapters 2.4.1. and 2.5.1. in this volume.
[55] BURKE 2008, 229, 250–254, 265–270.
[56] GONEN 1984.
[57] Cf. BIETAK 1991, 57–58; BEN-TOR/BONFIL 2003; MAEIR 2007, 281–282; ILAN et al. 2019, 6.
[58] The battle of Megiddo would be dated to the end of the Middle Bronze Age; see BONFIL 2012 and chapter 5.1. in this volume.
[59] Cf. ZWICKEL 2017a, 215–217.
[60] See chapter 1.4. in this volume.

written during the days of Amenhotep II (1427–1401 BCE), which implies importance still during this time, and it thus confirms that the city continued to prosper after Thutmosis III. The reign of Amenhotep II might be associated with either one of the Late Bronze Age strata, stratum VIII, and VII.

Although the city was already in decline by the beginning of the 14th century BCE, a scarab bearing the name of Tiye, wife of Amenhotep III (1390–1353 BCE), was found on the site's surface,[61] which might indicate a settlement still in this century. Although one cannot make far-reaching conclusions on the basis of a single scarab, the scattered remains of a later phase of stratum VII, especially in area R (stratum R4b), could be associated with this habitation in decline. Kinneret is not mentioned in the Amarna letters written during the later years of the reigns of Amenhotep III (1390–1353 BCE) and Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (1353–1336 BCE), which suggests that the site was abandoned, destroyed, or just merely lost its importance sometime in the first half of the 14th century BCE. The city's decline in the latter part of the Late Bronze Age I period accords well with the archaeological evidence. There is a gradual decline seen from the main phase of stratum VII/R4 to a squatter habitation in its later phase, stratum R4b, and finally to a complete lack of evidence in the Late Bronze Age II period.

The decline of *Tell el-ʿOrēme* may be connected with the general decline of the area, which can be seen at other sites. *Tell el-Muḫarḫaš*/Anaharat about 13 km southwest of the Sea of Galilee is mentioned for the last time during the reign of Amenhotep II. Besides *Tell el-Qedaḥ*/Hazor[62] and *ed-Dūra*/Aduru,[63] no other site in the surroundings of the Sea of Galilee is mentioned in the Amarna letters or any other written source of the 14th century BCE.[64] These sites had been abandoned or substantially reduced in the first half of the 14th century BCE, and the reasons may partly be connected with the *Ḫabiru* groups who destabilized the area.[65] Another reason for the area's decline might be the new political and economic reality created by the Egyptian conquest. Before Thutmosis III's campaign and thus during Hazor's hegemony, *Tell el-ʿOrēme* had been a significant regional center and one among many prosperous cities in Palestine connected to Egypt and Syria. Under the Egyptians, *Tell el-ʿOrēme* became a periphery of a new power that may not have been interested in investing in the insecure borderlands in its northern and distant corner. During the military campaigns of Thutmosis III, Amenhotep II, and Thutmosis IV (1400–1390 BCE) the site and the general area had military significance, but during the reigns of Amenhotep III (1390–1353 BCE) and especially of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaton (1353–1336 BCE) Egypt turned inwards and interest in distant borderlands and military campaigns outside Egypt declined. Egyptian troops were still stationed in *Kāmid el-Lōz*/Kumidi, *Tell el-Ḥōṣn*/Beth-Shan, *Yāffā*/Jaffa and *Ġazza*/Gaza, but the Amarna letters show that Egypt was losing control of areas outside the main centers on the coast and in the main valleys, and this development especially affected the peripheral regions such as Upper Galilee. Like *Tell el-ʿOrēme*, several other sites in the area also do not contain a clear destruction layer,[66] which implies a gradual decline and eventual abandonment rather than a violent conquest and destruction. This is in line with the slowly declining control of Egypt, increased insecurity, instability, and decreased international trade. This temporarily changed during the reign of Seti I (1290–1279 BCE) who reestablished Egyptian domination and chose *Tell el-Ḥōṣn*/Beth-Shan as a new garrison in the wider region. The Egyptian presence at this site is expressed by typical Egyptian cultural elements, which was not the case during the preceding pharaohs. Nonetheless, the Egyptians had obvious problems with the *Ḫabiru* groups in lower Galilee as the smaller one of the Beth-Shan stelae from the time of Seti I (the so called "Second Stela") indicates. Pharaohs Seti I and Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE) subsequently built a new international road in the early 13th century, which diverted international trade to a more eastern route. It crossed the Jordan River near Beth-Shan and ran east of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains thus bypassing Galilee.[67] This further contributed to the decline of settlements in the Galilee, and it would have especially hit those that had profited from being directly on a trade route like Kinneret/*Tell el-ʿOrēme*. During the time of these two pharaohs, *Tell el-ʿOrēme* had ceased to be an urban center.

6.5. Iron Age I (Strata VI–IV)

After a gap in habitation for about 250–350 years, *Tell el-ʿOrēme* was resettled in the Early Iron Age. Strata VI to IV represent the Iron Age I period when the site became one of the largest and most important urban centers in the country. The decline of the Late Bronze Age cultures began in the peripheries, but the peripheral location also

[61] See MADER 1930, Pl. 4,4.
[62] Cf. EA 148, 41; 227, 3, 21; 228, 4, 15, 23; 364, 18.
[63] Cf. EA 197, 2; 256, 24.
[64] Cf. the table in ZWICKEL 2017a, 238.
[65] DAVIES 1997, 34–40, line 10.
[66] Cf. the table in ZWICKEL 2017a, 221.
[67] ZWICKEL 2018.

facilitated a new ascent and rise to regional dominance during the Iron Age I period. The Iron Age I strata will be published in the second volume of the excavation report.[68]

6.6. Iron Age II (Strata III–I)

After the decline of the Iron Age I city (strata VI–IV) and a possible gap in habitation, a small fortress was built on the eastern part of the acropolis in the 9th century BCE (stratum III). Prior to the excavations in the 1980s by FRITZ,[69] parts of the fortress were already excavated in 1939. A reexamination of the pottery found in 1939[70] indicated that many sherds should be dated to the 9th century BCE and they may thus be associated with stratum III. The report of the 1939 excavation is largely unusable for a reconstruction, and thus reliable information about this stratum can only be found in the excavation report of 1990 by FRITZ. There is no historical information about who built this small fortress. The Omride dynasty ruled the area in the 9th century and the building of a fortress in this area would fit well with the expansion of Israel as an emerging regional power, but this connection cannot be substantiated by archaeological finds from the site. International trade also played a major role during the Omrides, and Kinneret could have been a fortress to protect the road to *Tell el-Qedaḥ*/Hazor situated one day's journey to the north. The architecture of stratum III was not excavated in 1994 to 2008.

The excavations in 1982–1985 found the remains of a heavily fortified town that was most probably built by the kingdom of Israel in the mid-8th century BCE (stratum II).[71] Although the site was less than 1 ha in size, it was surrounded by a city wall with four heavily built towers. The military function of the town is probable and it may have been used as a garrison and a military outpost in the north of the country, but it also protected the trade route towards the north. Since the town was not affected by the earthquake around 760 BCE, mentioned in Amos 1:1 and attested by cores taken at the Dead Sea,[72] the stratum II town was probably founded after 760 BCE. The building of the garrison fits well with the increased threat posed by the Assyrian expansion during the 8th century BCE. The Kinneret Regional Project conducted limited excavations in area D in the two-chamber gate and in the adjacent tripartite building in 2004. The excavations confirmed that the tripartite building was used as a storage facility. Samples taken from the floor contained large amounts of wheat residue, mostly emmer, probably kept in sacks when the building was burnt in connection with the Assyrian conquest in 733/732 BCE. The Assyrian conquest in 733/732 BCE resulted in a significant depopulation of nearly all sites in Galilee.[73]

Because of its good location along a major road, *Tell el-'Orēme* continued to be settled after the destruction. Stratum I structures are mostly isolated and they do not form a connected town. There was a small settlement of approximately 0.25 ha on the western acropolis (area B), which was only settled for some decades in the last quarter of the 8th and perhaps the early 7th century BCE. It was protected by a city wall and a bastion, but the small number of domestic buildings suggest a population of less than 100 people. Some luxury items[74] imply prosperity which is unlikely for a small rural site. Besides profits from trade, the stratum I settlement might be associated with the Assyrian administration which funded its upkeep.

A separate and large building complex was found in area E,[75] and it is similar to Assyrian and Persian palaces found within Palestine. During the excavations in the 1990s the excavations in area E were enlarged and yielded some additional simple buildings. Similar palaces have been excavated in *Tell el-Qedaḥ*/Hazor,[76] *Ayyelet ha-Šaḥar*,[77] and *Tell el-Muḫarḫaš*/*Tel Reḥeš*,[78] while *Tell el-Qādi*/Dan was the major and only regional Assyrian center in the north.[79] This chain of Assyrian palaces, which were probably also used in the Persian period, was part of a well-organized Assyrian postal and communication system with horse-changing stations which allowed a very fast transport of news within the Assyrian kingdom.[80] While the regional governor lived in the palace the simple buildings were likely used as stables.

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[68] Cf. the preliminary descriptions in MÜNGER/ZANGENBERG/PAKKALA 2011; PAKKALA/MÜNGER/ZANGENBERG 2004.
[69] FRITZ 1990, 41–42.
[70] Cf. the publication of this material in this volume, chapter 1.6. in this volume.
[71] FRITZ 1990, 43–68.
[72] ZWICKEL 2015 and chapter 5.2. in this volume.
[73] GAL 1998.
[74] E.g., a lion bowl made of blue frit, also called Egyptian blue, see FRITZ 1990, 110–113, a seal made from steatite in a trifoliate shape, see FRITZ 1990, 121–123, and cosmetic palettes, see FRITZ 1990, 123–124.
[75] FRITZ 1990, 99–102.
[76] REICH 2011; BEN-TOR 2016, 167–169.
[77] REICH 1975; KLETTER/ZWICKEL 2006.
[78] HASEGAWA 2020, 29–34.
[79] THAREANI 2016; THAREANI 2018a; THAREANI 2018b; THAREANI 2018c.
[80] RADNER 2015; ZWICKEL 2016a, 443–444; ZWICKEL forthcoming; cf. FRITZ 1979.

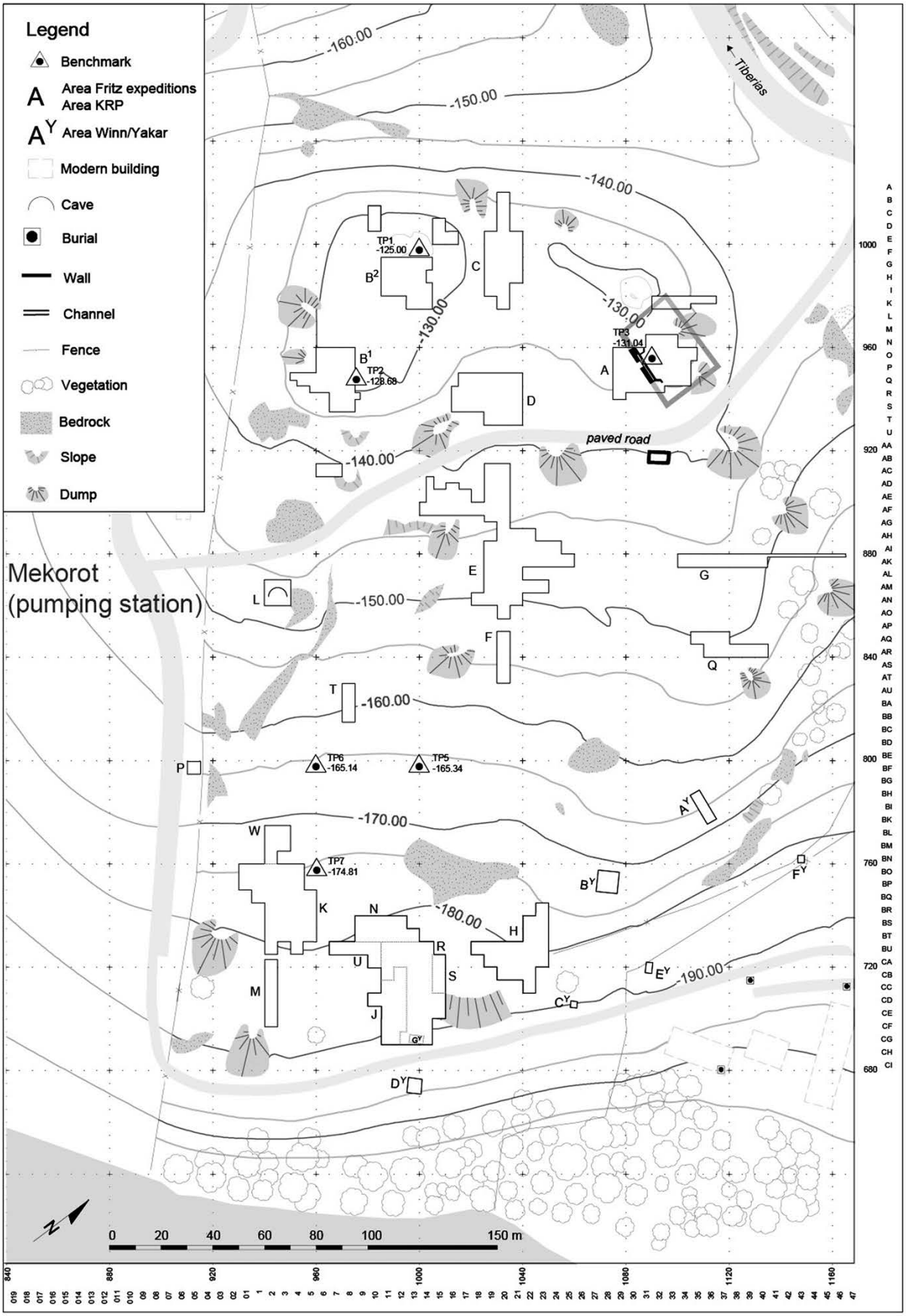


Fig. 6.4. Stratum III.

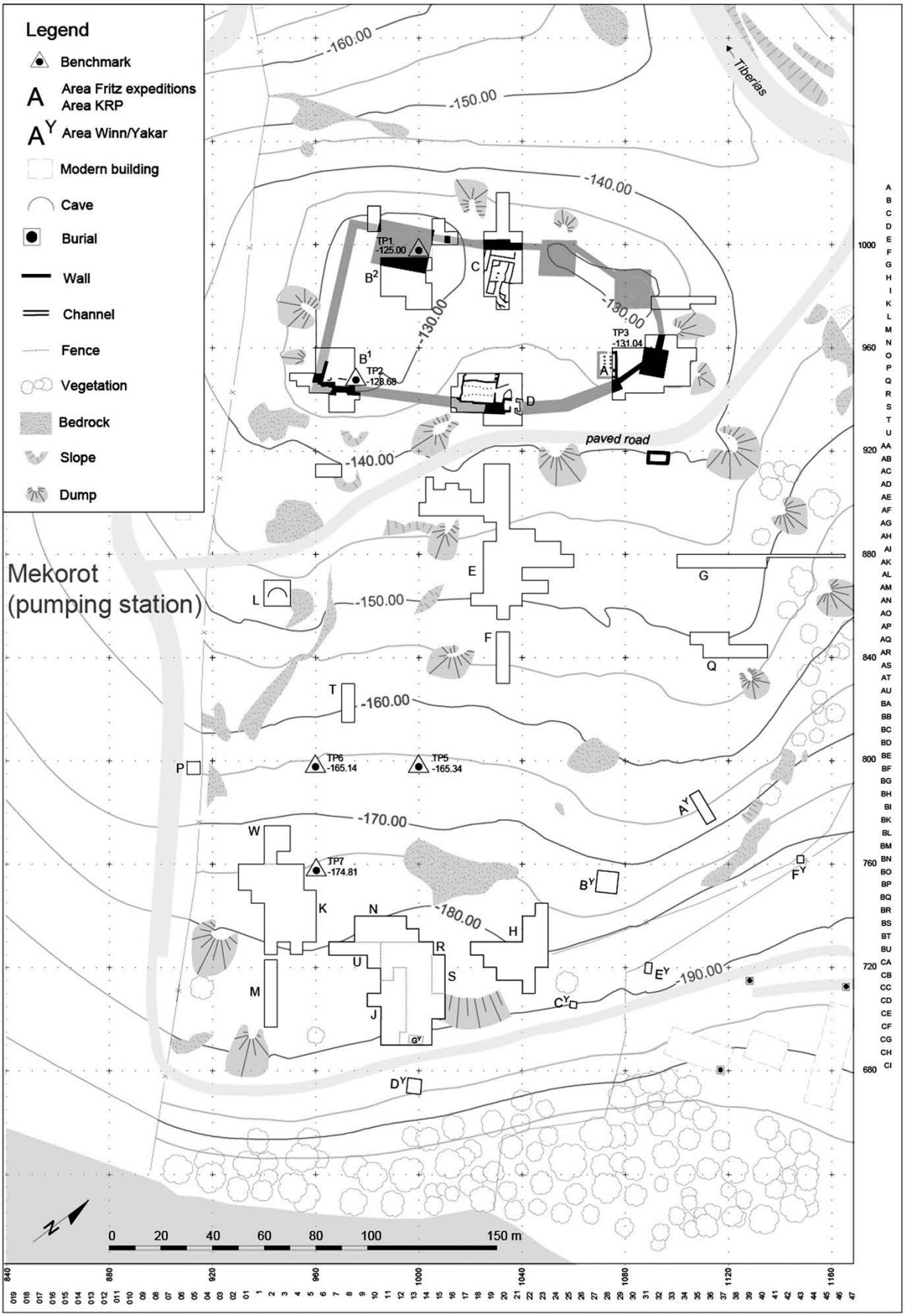


Fig. 6.5. Stratum II.

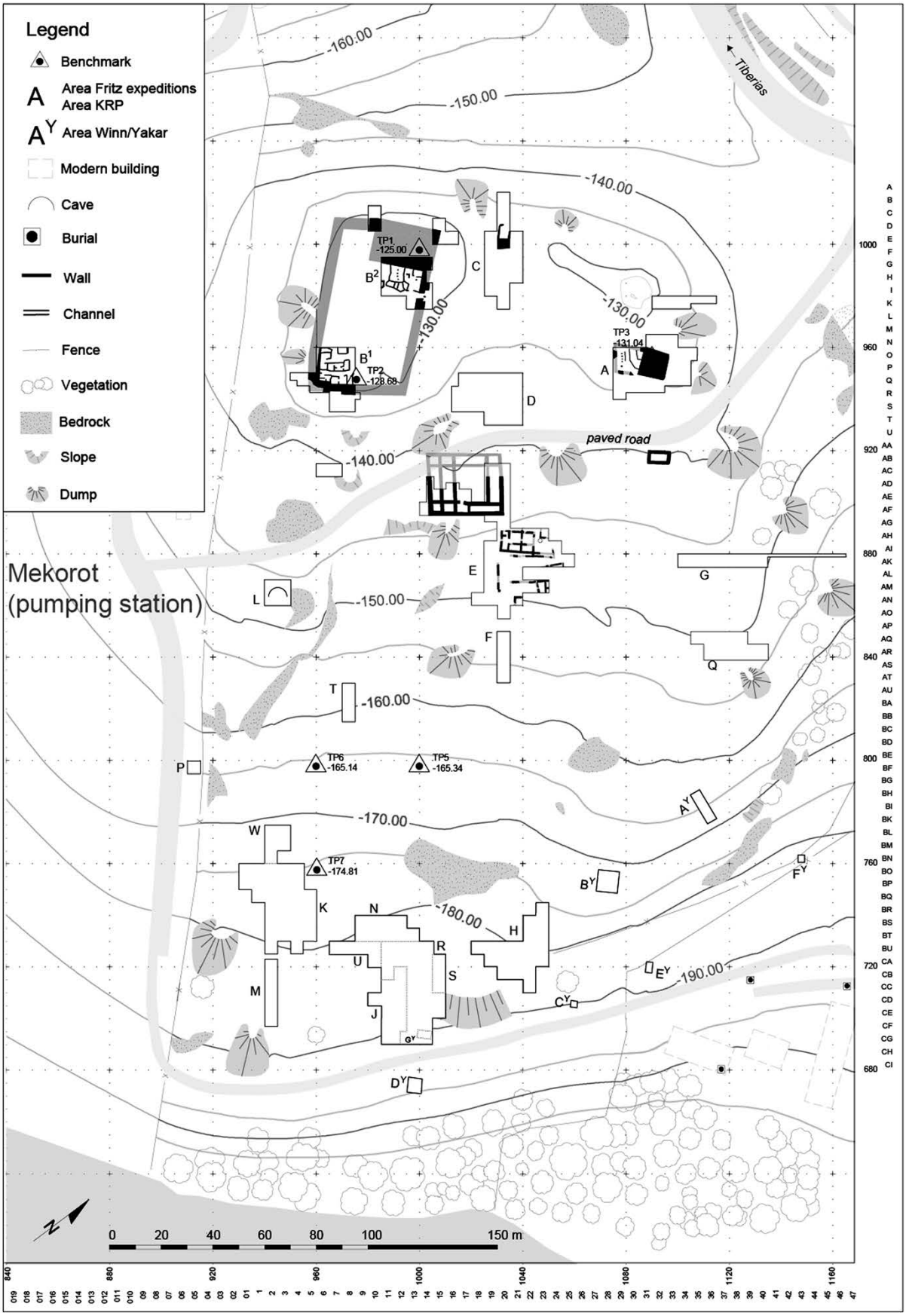


Fig. 6.6. Stratum I.

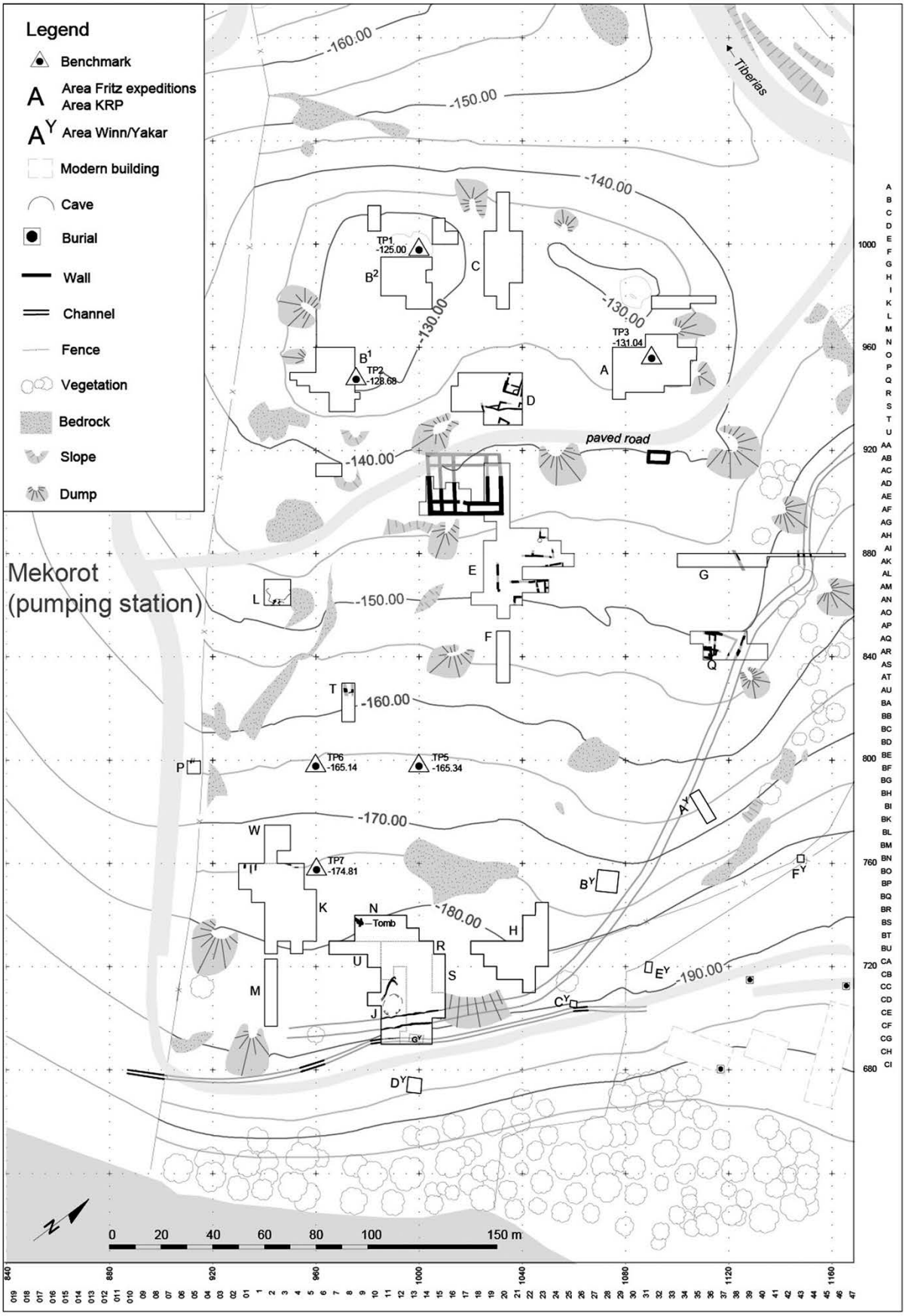


Fig. 6.7. Stratum 0.

6.7. The Hellenistic Period (Stratum 0)

All remains younger than the Persian period were attributed as stratum 0. Current knowledge of the site suggests that there are small and isolated buildings and other structures in different periods. Remains of walls dating to the Hellenistic period were found above the stratum II city wall.[81] These walls are probably the remains of a farmstead, built in connection with the slope's use for agriculture. Two bronze coins found in the building were minted under Ptolemy II (285–246 BCE), which roughly matches with the dating of the pottery to ca. 250–100 BCE. The building may be associated with the new settlement activity around the Sea of Galilee in the Hellenistic period, and especially since Ptolemy II.[82] No evidence for a settlement during the Hellenistic period was found in the lower town.

6.8. The Roman-Byzantine Period (Stratum 0)

No settlement from the Roman-Byzantine period has been found, but Roman-Byzantine sherds have been discovered in many areas on the lower slope, and this was especially the case close to the Ottoman/Mameluke road (see below). A coin minted during the reign of Constantine I and another coin from the 6th century CE were found in surface material in area R.[83] A still unknown small settlement, such as a farm, at *Tell el-ʿOrēme* or in the vicinity during this period, is well possible, but these finds may also be connected with *eṭ-Ṭābġa*/Heptapegon, which became an important site for Christian pilgrimage in the 4th century CE. Apart from the erection of three churches at *eṭ-Ṭābġa* in the late 4th century, there was a bathhouse on the southwestern side of the mound close to *ʿĒn et-Tīne*. According to BEZALEL RAVANI, who excavated the bathhouse, it was probably built during the Byzantine period, but the Umayyad period is also possible.[84] Recent, still unpublished salvage excavations in 2021 by HAIM MAMLIYA of the IAA have suggested a late Byzantine/Early Umayyad dating for the pottery found in the bathhouse (personal communication). The water channel, partly excavated by GERSHON EDELSTEIN and surveyed by JÜRGEN ZANGENBERG, is dated to the Roman-Byzantine or Umayyad period, and it may have brought water to the bathhouse from the springs at *eṭ-Ṭābġa*. The construction of the channel during the Roman-Byzantine period would explain the Roman-Byzantine sherds in this area.

6.9. The Umayyad Period (661–750; Stratum 0)

A palace was erected at *Ḫirbet el-Minye* on the western side of *Tell el-ʿOrēme* during the Umayyad period. The building, which was likely commissioned by the Umayyad Caliph Walid I (705–715), was partly destroyed by an earthquake in 749. The above-mentioned bathhouse and the palace, which were only 300 meters apart, could be contemporary. Some sherds found in the cave excavated in area L can also be dated to the Umayyad period. The cave may have been used during or after the building of the palace.

6.10. The Mameluke Period (1250–1516; Stratum 0)

The above-mentioned cave in area L was reused during the Mameluke period, and it might be connected with the reuse of *Ḫirbet el-Minye* as a way station on the caravan route from Damascus to Cairo. The building was also used to produce sugar from sugarcane, which became an important source of income in the region. Despite its proximity to *eṭ-Ṭābġa* and other sites of Christian interest,[85] no evidence for Crusader activity has been found at *Tell el-ʿOrēme*. In the following centuries the main road crossed the Jordan River at *Ǧisr Benāt Yaʿqūb* close to Lake Huleh, where a bridge was built during the reign of the Mameluke Sultan Baibars I (1260–1277). The new route reconnected *Tell el-ʿOrēme* and its surroundings with international trade routes, and accordingly, *Ḫān el-Minye* at the western foot of the *tell* was built sometime after 1247 but before 1444, and it was actively used as a

[81] FRITZ 1990, 99, 103–109.
[82] ZWICKEL 2013. *Et-Tell*/Beth-Saida, which was still then located just next to the sea (see SHRODER/INBAR 1995; SHRODER et al. 1999), had been continuously settled since the Persian period, but it became important in the Hellenistic period (among other publications, see the summary of KUHN 2015). Another important site is *Ḫirbet Kerak*, which was also founded under Ptolemy II.
[83] For discussion of the coin, see chapter 4.9. in this volume.
[84] GRABAR 1993.
[85] The churches and the monastery at *eṭ-Ṭābġa* were abandoned in the 10th century BCE, but Christian use of the site of the church of St. Peter re-started in the 12th century; cf. PRINGLE 1988, 334–339.

caravanserai at least until 1667.[86] Its ruins continued to be used by caravans, at least as a shelter, until the early 20th century, as observed by ARTHUR HJELT in 1911.[87]

A 4 m wide road excavated in areas J and R may have been built during the Mameluke or Ottoman period. That the Mamelukes improved the infrastructure and connections in the region would speak for a Mameluke dating. The building of a new road in connection with the building of the caravanserai would be plausible, but no definite proof from pottery or other finds was found to substantiate this assumption. The road may be from the Ottoman period as well.

6.11. The Ottoman Period (1516–1917; Stratum 0)

A farmstead was erected in area Q during the Ottoman period. These buildings are not mentioned in 19th century travel reports, and their ruins are not marked in the otherwise detailed maps of *Tell el-ʿOrēme* by GOTTLIEB SCHUMACHER in 1889 and ANDRES EVARISTUS MADER in 1930. It is thus probable that the farm had fallen out of use long before the late 19th century. However, the site is not mentioned in a tax list of the late 16th century, a major source of information for the early Ottoman period in the area,[88] and therefore the farmstead is most likely from the 17th–18th centuries. Isolated farmsteads were typical in the region around the Sea of Galilee during the Ottoman period, and only some of the sites had more than 100 inhabitants.[89] Two modest tombs from the Islamic period were found in area N. They could not be dated more precisely, and they could be connected with the Ottoman farm or they could also be Bedouin tombs. An unexcavated Bedouin cemetery is marked close to *Ḫān el-Minye* on Schumacher's map from 1889, but is clearly different from the finds in area N.

Possible remains of a temporary military camp, checkpoint or other military presence were found in area R: A metal button from military trousers used by the British army in the early 20th century and two cartridge cases. Since the remains were found just next to the 4 m road built in the Mameluke or Ottoman period, it is possible that there was a checkpoint to control the road. A 13 cm metal stick with grooves at one end, perhaps a tent peg, was found among the many metal items (made of iron, aluminum, and lead) in the same limited area.

After the acquisition of the land by the "Deutscher Verein vom Heiligen Lande," German monks built several buildings at the foot of the *tell* (the so-called Knopp-Farm, the Pilgrim house and other associated buildings). They are well documented and known. The last building activity on the *tell* was an excavation house built in 1939, but this simple building was never used due to the outbreak of the 2nd World War and has completely disappeared today. During the excavations in 1982–1985 several modern metal items were found on the acropolis which were not mentioned in the excavation report (personal communication DR. NORBERT RABE).

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[86] CYTRYN-SILBERMAN 2010, 132–135.
[87] See HJELT 1917, 94–98.
[88] HÜTTEROTH/ABDULFATTAH 1977; HÜTTEROTH 1978.
[89] ZWICKEL 2016b, 96–97.

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A	B	C	D	E	F	G-Fort	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	U	W	Site Stratum	Period	Absolute dates
Local strata																							
						G-Fort0	G1		J0	K0-Post-K1		M0		PA	Q1	R0 British army	S0	T0	U1	W0	0	Modern	1917 to present
						G-Fort1?					X		Np Tombs		Q2-Q3	R0					0	Ottoman	1516 – 1917
						G-Fort2?						M1	Np		Q4						0	Fatimid and Mameluke	1291 – 1516
						G-Fort3/ G-Fort4					X										0	Crusader and Ayyubid	1099 – 1291
											X										0	Ummayyad and Abbasid	638 – 1099
																					0	Roman and Byzantine	37 BCE – 638 CE
			X	E2, E1																	0	Hellenistic	332 -37 BCE
																					0	Babylonian and Persian	586 – 332
I	I	I	I																		I	Iron Age III	732 – 586
II	II	II	II	E3b																	II	Iron Age IIB	760 – 732
III																					III	Iron Age IIA	9th century – 760
IV–VI	IV–VI	IV–VI	IV–V	E4, E3a	F1, F2, F3	G-Fort5	G2a, G2b, G2c	H1, H2	J1, J2	K1, K2, K3, K4		M2	N0, N1, N2, N33	PB	Q5	R1, R2, R3	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5	T1, T2, T3	U2, U3a, U3b, U4	W1, W2, W3	IV–VI	Iron Age I	1150 – 950
						G-Fort6			J3												Gap	Late Bronze Age II	1400 – 1150
				E6		G-Fort7,		H3								R4			U5		VII	Late Bronze Age I	1458 – 1400
						G-Fort8, G-Fort9	G3	H4		K5		M3	N4?	PC?		R5	S6?	T4			VIII	Middle Bronze Age IIC/Late Bronze Age I	16th century – 1458
								H4				M4				R6					IX	Middle Bronze Age IIB	1750 – 1600
																R7					X	Middle Bronze Age IIB	1950 – 1750
																					Gap	Early Bronze Age IV/ Middle Bronze Age I	2500 – 1950
																						Early Bronze Age III	2900/2850 – 2500
X		X				G-Fort 10?, G-Fort 11?	G4	H5		K6?						R8					XI	Early Bronze Age II	3200/3100 – 2900/2850
						G-Fort 12?										R9					XII	Early Bronze Age II	3200/3100 – 2900/2850
							G5									R10					XIII	Early Bronze Age I or Late Chalcolithic	Early Bronze Age I: 3700 – 3200/3100 Late Chalcolithic: until 3700/3500
																							Bedrock

Table 6.3.: Overview of the stratigraphy in excavated parts of *Tell el-'Orēme* (gray = bedrock.)