

# MYC IIIC IN THE LAND ISRAEL: ITS DISTRIBUTION, DATE AND SIGNIFICANCE

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Relations between the Aegean, Cyprus and the Levant in the 12–11<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE and the nature of the Philistine culture was a highly debated subject during the past generation (for recent studies and summaries see various papers in OREN [ed.] 2000; SHARON 2001; BARAKO 2000; 2003). This discussion largely resulted from the discovery of new data concerning Philistine settlement at a time when the theoretical aspects of archaeological interpretation went through dynamic changes. Understandably, then, some interpretations given to the Philistines and related phenomena were tied to the dominate lines of thought at the time of writing.

Some views postulated during the 1980's and later were motivated by the anti-diffusionist position of the "processual" or "New Archaeology" school or from socio-economic paradigms (BRUG 1985; BUNIMOVITZ 1990; SHERRATT 1998), while other recent writers feel free from such paradigms and return to older models, though using new data and new theoretical frameworks. My own ideas on these issues have been expressed in the past (MAZAR 1985a; 1985b; 1988; 1991; 1994; 2000; 2001) and I still adhere to most of them.

In this paper I will briefly explore the following subjects – all of which are related to the appearance of imported and locally-produced Myc IIIC in the Land of Israel:

1. Myc IIIC pottery from Beth Shean and other sites in northern Israel
2. Locally-made "Myc IIIC inspired" pottery from Beth Shean and other sites in northern Israel
3. The date and meaning of the locally-produced Myc IIIC of Philistia ("Philistine Monochrome")
4. The origin and nature of the Philistine settlement

## **1. MYC IIIC POTTERY FROM BETH SHEAN AND OTHER SITES IN NORTHERN ISRAEL**

Until recently, the small corpus of Myc IIIC or related pottery found in northern Israel was restricted to

a complete or almost complete stirrup jar, a few sherds from Beth Shean (HANKEY 1966; WARREN and HANKEY 1989: 164–165), a stirrup jar from Tel Keisan (BALENSI 1981), and a small number of sherds from Akko. A few sites along the northern Levantine coast (Tyre, Sarepta, Byblos, Tell Sukas, and Ras Ibn Hani) yielded additional small quantities of such sherds, except for the latter site where a large quantity of locally(?) produced pottery of this kind was found. NAA analysis has shown that the stirrup jar from Tel Keisan originated in the Kouklia region on Cyprus (for references see WARREN and HANKEY 1989: 162–163; YASUR-LANDAU 2003b: 235–239).

In the new excavations at Tel Beth Shean from 1989–1996 we discovered an additional 27 sherds of this pottery, representing at least 10 different vessels (for the excavations see MAZAR 2003; fig. 1 shows a selection of these sherds). The comments that follow are based on a study of these sherds by S. SHERRATT and me (in press).

The Beth Shean sherds were found in two distinct strata (S-4 and S-3), both equivalent to Level VI of the University of Pennsylvania and clearly dated to the time of the Egyptian 20th Dynasty. The uppermost level (S-3) was destroyed in severe fire that brought an end to the Egyptian garrison at Beth Shean. Suggested dates for these two strata are as follows:

*Stratum S-4:* the time of Ramesses III (1184–1153 BCE according to TRIGGER, Camp and O'CONNOR 1983: 184 and KITCHEN 2000: 49).

*Stratum S-3:* the time of Ramesses IV–VI (1163–1143 or 1153–1136 BCE).

Ten of the sherds (including the most elaborately decorated ones) came from the earlier Stratum S-4 and seventeen from Stratum S-3. Thus, Beth Shean provides the best stratigraphic/chronological anchor for dating this pottery. Stylistic analysis has shown that there is no difference between the Myc IIIC sherds of S-4 and S-3. It therefore appears that

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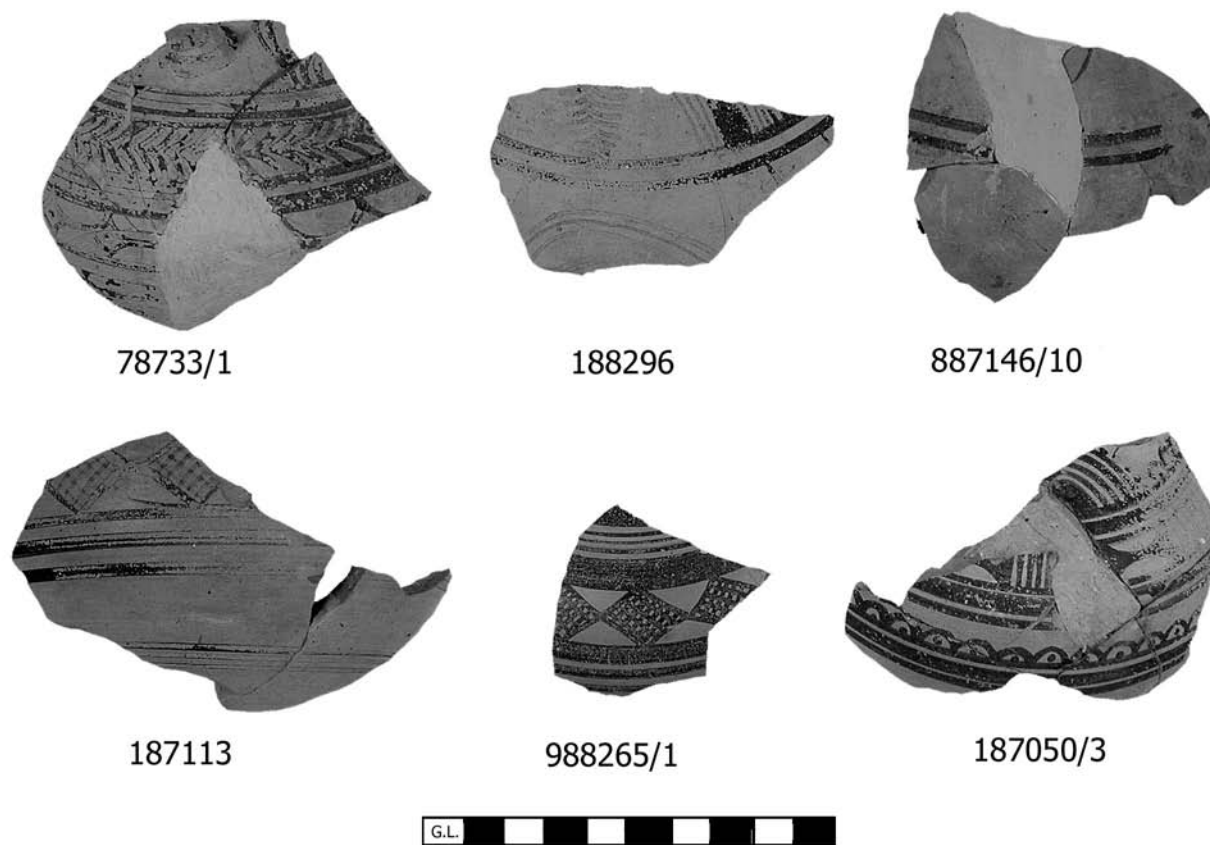


Fig. 1 Selected Myc III C sherds from Beth Shean Strata S4 and S3

this pottery was in use at Beth Shean throughout the lifetime of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>1</sup> Thirteen of the 27 sherds belong to stirrup jars, while two belonged to a jug, three to a small closed vessel,<sup>2</sup> four to skyphoi, and nine unidentified. The ratio between closed vessels (particularly stirrup-jars) and open vessels contrasts sharply with the assemblage of locally-made “Myc III C” in Philistia where stirrup jars are very rare.

Stylistic analysis of the sherds led Sherratt to conclude that the vessels arrived at Beth Shean from Late Cypriot III production centers in Cyprus and that they belong to the locally-produced Cypriot variation of Myc III C pottery that some call “Cypriot White Painted Wheelmade III”. According to Sherratt, the stirrup jar published by HAN-

KEY and the two large fragments of stirrup jars from the new excavations at Beth Shean came from eastern Cyprus and have parallels at Enkomi in late Stratum IIIa and early Stratum IIIb, though some of the motifs are variants of motifs on LH III B–C stirrup jars. Two jug sherds from Beth Shean are decorated in the Sinda-style typical of this period, which appears at Kition on the earliest LC IIIA floor. All these distinct sherds came from Stratum S-4. Stylistically, none of the other fragments can be regarded as later than these well-defined sherds.

Petrographic analysis carried out by Cohen-Weinberger has shown that the vessels could have come from Cyprus, Cilicia, or the northern Syrian coast. This conclusion is now also confirmed by NAA analysis.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sherratt suggests that the sherds found in the later Stratum S-3 originated from Stratum S-4.

<sup>2</sup> Ms. Penelope Mountjoy, who examined these three small sherds in Jerusalem, suggested that they belong to one small Hydria. The only parallel comes from Naxos (MOUNTJOY 1999: 948 No. 32). I thank Ms. Mountjoy for this suggestion.

<sup>3</sup> NAA analysis of the Beth Shean sherds was part of a wider study by A. Yasur-Landau, H. Mommsen, Y. Goren and A-L. D’Agata. The results point to Cyprus as the country of origin for these sherds. I thank A. Yasur-Landau for this information.

WARREN and HANKEY (1989: 164–165) defined the stirrup jar from Beth Shean as “LH IIIC Middle,” and made this definition their cornerstone for dating LH IIIC Early and Middle. The generally accepted date of *ca.* 1190 BCE for the destruction of Ugarit and Tell Deir ‘Alla (where the latest datable Myc IIIB pottery was found) left a time span of roughly one generation in WARREN and HANKEY’s view for “LH IIIC Early” (i.e. from *ca.* 1185/80 BCE to *ca.* 1150 BCE). LH IIIC Middle, on the other hand, was dated by them based on Beth Shean to the short time span between the last years of Ramesses III and Ramesses V/VI (the latest date being 1136 BCE). In contrast, Sherratt’s stylistic analysis of the Beth Shean group led her to conclude that:

“the use of the term ‘LH IIIC Middle’, when applied to the pottery recovered at Beth Shean, is essentially meaningless. Though it may well have a ‘LH IIIC Middle’ look about it, in the sense that some of its decoration is relatively elaborate and that it includes some motifs which, in certain parts of the Aegean, would normally be classified as ‘LH IIIC Middle’, the use of this label represents an ultra-normative form of classification based on general stylistic considerations alone, which of itself says nothing about the relative or absolute chronology of the Beth Shean fragments” (SHERRATT in: SHERRATT and MAZAR in press).

This “release” of the Beth Shean vessels and sherds, as well as their Cypriot counterparts from the definition “LHIIIC Middle”, fits their appearance in two separate strata dated to the time of the Egyptian 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. As mentioned above, the earlier level which must belong to the time of Ramesses III, yielded some of the largest and more elaborate sherds in our collection. This pottery originated from “a horizon which covers the later part of Level IIIa at Enkomi and perhaps also the early stages of Level IIIb” (SHERRATT, *op. cit.*), which should be dated to the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE (see also YASUR-LANDAU 2003b:237–239). This date also fits the radiometric dates of *ca.* 1200 BCE for the transition from LCIIIC and LCIII (MANNING *et. al.* 2001).

SHERRATT suggests that this Cypriot “Myceanean-related” pottery arrived through limited and casual trade between Cyprus and the Levant during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, most probably via the ports of Akko and/or Tyre. Thus, during the time of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Beth Shean retained trade relations of some sort with the coast. This explanation is preferred by Sherratt as part of her concept of trans-

Mediterranean trade developed by Cypriots and other entrepreneurs after the collapse of the centralized authorities, *ca.* 1200 BCE (SHERRATT 1998; 2003: 44–51).

In my opinion, the imported pottery from Beth Shean is an isolated phenomenon that should be tied to specific circumstances. A possible explanation is that such pottery was brought as a luxury item by Cypriot mercenaries who served in the Egyptian garrison at Beth Shean. Such an import could have been part of a framework of local profit-making initiatives. This would explain why such pottery is so rare at Beth Shean itself and absent at major sites like Megiddo and Dor. At Beth Shean, this pottery is rare compared to the large amount of locally-produced Egyptian and Canaanite pottery.

At this time, Beth Shean was an Egyptian garrison and it is reasonable to assume that the imported Myc IIIC pottery was associated with Egyptian activity at the site. It seems that the wide scale trade system of the 13<sup>th</sup> century came to an end in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to be replaced by local, small scale and exceptional initiatives which cannot be explained as part of a larger trade system.

The lack of Myc IIIC in Stratum VIIA Megiddo was interpreted by FINKELSTEIN (1996) as reflecting chronological differences between Megiddo and Beth Shean. In his view, both Strata S-4 and S-3 at Beth Shean postdate Megiddo VIIA. This view cannot be accepted, however, since the Myc IIIC sherds of Cypriot origin from Beth Shean were found in two distinct levels of a dwelling area contemporary with the Egyptian 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, a time range of about 60–70 years in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Finkelstein’s view would leave no time slot for Megiddo VIIA, a city which must also be contemporary with the Egyptian 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Therefore, Megiddo VIIA and Beth Shean VI (our Strata S-4 and S-3) must have been contemporary.

The lack of Myc IIIC imports at Megiddo should be understood in light of the limited import of such pottery to Beth Shean as explained above. Unlike the Egyptian garrison of Beth Shean, Megiddo VIIA was a major Canaanite city of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and belonged to a period postdating the intense trade connections with Cyprus and the Aegean (MAZAR 2001). A lack of imported Myc IIIC at Megiddo should be viewed as the normal state of affairs in the period following the demise of the international trade of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. The phenomenon of small-scale imported Cypriot “Myc IIIC” at Tel Keisan, Beth Shean, and few other sites along the Levantine coast is the

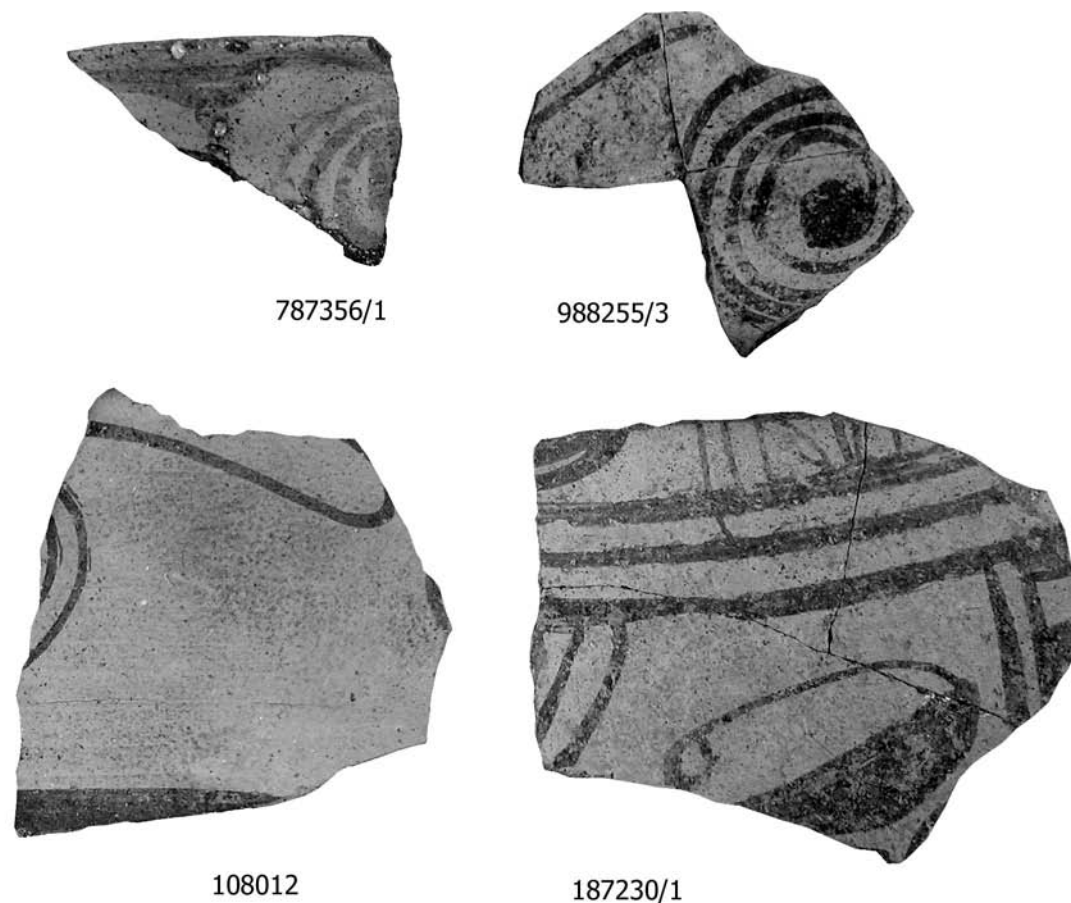


Fig. 2 Locally made “Myc IIIC inspired” sherds from Beth Shean Stratum S3

exception – not the norm.<sup>4</sup> Finkelstein’s expectation that contemporary sites would yield similar pottery assemblages in a given geographic zone is correct in principle, yet cannot be rigidly applied when dealing with a very specific and small pottery group like the imported Myc IIIC. The limited distribution of this pottery at certain sites, and its lack in others, should not be taken as a decisive chronological factor (see also YASUR-LANDAU 2003b: 237–239).

## 2. LOCALLY-MADE “MYC IIIC INSPIRED” POTTERY FROM BETH SHEAN AND OTHER SITES IN NORTHERN ISRAEL

Four pottery sherds from Beth Shean Stratum S-3 (Fig. 2) belong to vessels inspired by the Myc IIIC repertoire, yet were most probably produced in the Levant (SHERRATT and MAZAR, in press). All four

sherds are decorated in a single color – red paint.

The first is a sherd from a small skyphos painted with spirals; the second is a sherd from a large skyphos showing part of an antithetic spiral; the third is a body sherd of a krater or other closed vessel with a painted spiral and the fourth is a krater sherd painted with metopes and a bird motif which differs in details from the common Philistine bird motif.

From all appearances, these four sherds belong to a small group of “Aegean-related” pottery found at several sites in northern Israel like Akko, Dan, and Megiddo.<sup>5</sup> One might suggest that this group is related to “Sea People” groups that supposedly settled in northern Israel. These include the *Shkl/r* and *Shrdn* mentioned in the Onomastikon of Amenemope, or

<sup>4</sup> At Tel Rehov, 5 km south of Beth Shean, we found three small sherds of Myc IIIC pottery. Two (a false neck of a stirrup jar and a small body sherd) were found in Phase D-6 and one (a skyphos rim sherd) in Phase D-4 – both in Area D (MAZAR 1999:10–17). Phase D-6 is contemporary with Beth Shean Level VI of or Stratum S-3 (late 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty)

while Phase D-4 is dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century (BRUINS, MAZAR and VAN DER PLICHT in this volume). The identity of these sherds was confirmed by Ms. P. Mountjoy.

<sup>5</sup> For examples see, DOTHAN (1993a): 21 and ILAN (1999: pl. 59:1). A stirrup jar from the new Megiddo excavations is not yet published.

the *Shkl/r* known from the Wen Amun tale (STERN 2000).<sup>6</sup> Yet, unlike the circumstances at Philistia (see below), I doubt whether such a small amount of pottery with its very limited geographic distribution justifies such an ethnic label or explanation. It may be that this pottery was produced at coastal Levantine workshops that imitated Cypriot “Mycenean-related” pottery of the LCIIIC/LCIIIA periods. Thus, the few sherds found at Beth Shean may represent a limited import from such Levantine coastal production centers. The discovery of this pottery in clear stratigraphic contexts at Beth Shean prior to the end of Egyptian domination is a significant chronological anchor for dating this little known group.

### 3. THE DATE AND MEANING OF THE LOCALLY-PRODUCED MYC IIC OF PHILISTIA (“PHILISTINE MONOCHROME”)

The local Myc IIC assemblage and accompanying domestic wares (e.g. cooking pots and “lakinae”) of Aegean types found so far at Ashdod and Tel Migne in the main has been the subject of vast discussion in recent years (DOTHAN 1998a; DOTHAN 1998b; 2000; KILLEBREW 1998; SHARON 2001; YASUR-LANDAU 2003b: 239–241; DOTHAN and ZUKERMAN 2004 [the latter being the most comprehensive discussion of this pottery to date]). This pottery group was dubbed “Myc IIC1b” or “Philistine Monochrome” (DOTHAN and ZUKERMAN 2004). I prefer the term “local Myc IIC” as the most fitting. Since the initial discovery of this pottery at Ashdod in 1968, the excavations at Ashdod and Tel Migne have provided a wealth of new information, which supports in my opinion, the initial interpretation as suggested by DOTHAN and myself (DOTHAN 1982: 36–41; MAZAR 1985a: 101–106). In the following paragraphs I will limit my comments to several debated issues regarding this pottery.

At Ashdod, Myc IIC pottery was found in two excavation areas: Area G from Stratum XIIIb

(DOTHAN and PORATH 1993) and Area H from Stratum XIII (DOTHAN and BEN-SHLOMO 2005). In both strata, the Myc IIC appears in substantial quantities alongside local Canaanite pottery of the early 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, before the appearance of Bichrome Philistine pottery. In the succeeding Stratum XIIIa in Area G and Stratum XII in Area H, Philistine Bichrome first appears along with a continued appearance of local Myc IIC.<sup>7</sup> This later mixture of local Myc IIC and Bichrome Philistine can be explained in three ways: 1. continued production of the local MycIIC in a time when the Bichrome style was already produced; 2. continued use (but not production) of local MycIIC vessels in the following period; 3. stray sherds found in later level. I prefer the last two possibilities as more plausible.<sup>8</sup>

A similar stratigraphic sequence emerged at Tel Migne (DOTHAN 1989, 2000, 2003 and in this volume) where Stratum VII contained large quantities of local Myc IIC pottery while Bichrome Philistine only started to appear in Stratum VI when the local Myc IIC is still found. It seems that both Ashdod XIII and Tel Migne VII were constructed on the terminal level of the Late Bronze Age city which contained both imported Myc IIIB and Cypriot wares.<sup>9</sup>

Moshe DOTHAN claimed that the local Myc IIC in Philistia (called by him “Myc IIC1”) represented an early wave of Sea Peoples that preceded Year 8 of Ramesses III (DOTHAN 1992b: 96 and to some extent Trude DOTHAN 1982: 295). A while back I suggested that this pottery was produced locally by the first Philistine settlers at the time of their initial settlement following Ramesses III’s 8<sup>th</sup> year (MAZAR 1985a; 1988). At the same time, Ussishkin published his claim that the absence of such pottery in the Canaanite/Egyptian city of Lachish Stratum VI, securely dated to the time of Ramesses III, indicates that the local Myc IIC pottery at Ashdod and Tel Migne started to be produced after the end of

<sup>6</sup> The transliteration of these names varies: Teukrians and Shardana (REDFORD 1992), Sikilis and Sherden (STERN 2000: 197).

<sup>7</sup> Note that at Ashdod Area G only Stratum XIIIb contained local Myc IIC pottery while in Stratum XIIIa Bichrome Philistine pottery started to appear. It seems that Stratum XIIIb in Area G correlates with the entire Stratum XIII in Area H while Stratum XIIIa in Area G correlates with Stratum XIIb in Area H.

<sup>8</sup> Note that the Bichrome Philistine style also includes vessels painted in one color, either red or black (e.g. MAZAR 1985: figs. 13:2; 7; 15:15–16; 16:7 etc.). Such vessels, though “monochrome” can be easily distinguished from the earlier

local Myc IIC (“Philistine Monochrome”) on the basis of fabric, production techniques and stylistic analysis. This may cause confusion, and for this reason, I prefer to avoid the latter term.

<sup>9</sup> The presentation by KILLEBREW (1998) of a level without any imported ware separating the 13<sup>th</sup> century level from the initial appearance of local Myc IIC at Tel Migne was based on a local feature in one excavation square. Gitin and Dothan rejected her conclusions on the basis of new data that was gathered when the same excavation area was expanded and the upper part of Field I at Tel Migne was revealed (S. Gitin and T. Dothan, oral communication).

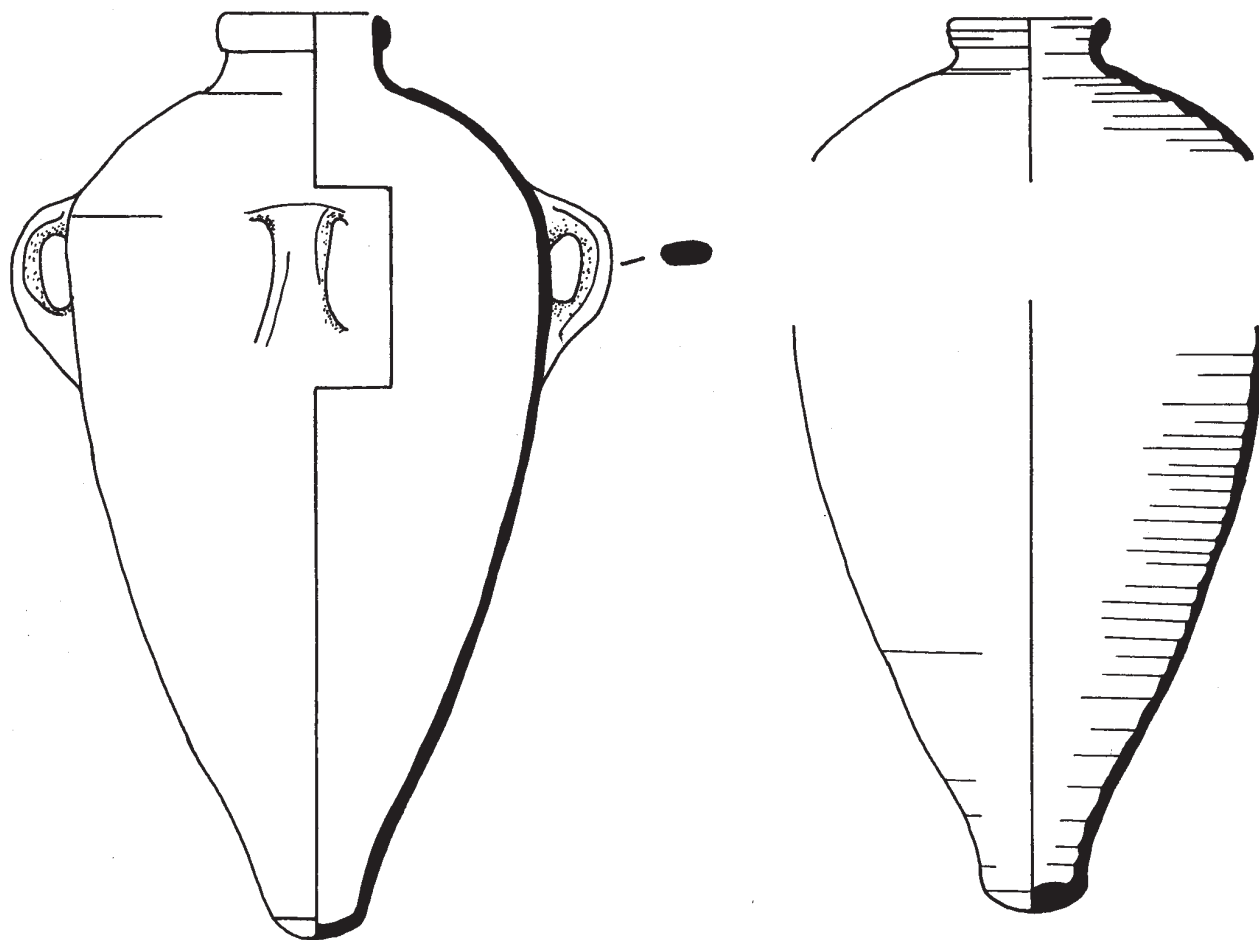


Fig. 3 Local storage jars from Ashdod Stratum XIII (right) and Lachish Stratum VI (left)

the Egyptian control over Canaan ca. 1240 BCE (USSISHKIN 1985). This assertion was the starting point of Finkelstein's "Low Chronology" for the Iron Age (FINKELSTEIN 1995; 1998; 2000:162–165; for response see MAZAR 1997). Against this hypothesis I would emphasize the following:

1. The Canaanite pottery in Ashdod XIII (DOTHAN and BEN-SHLOMO 2005:70–78) and Tel Miqne VII includes types typical to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and is identical to that from Lachish Stratum VI (YANNAI 2004: 1051–1055; 1122–1140). While it may be claimed that this is not a sound criterion, since Canaanite pottery forms continued to survive throughout the Iron Age I, I nevertheless refer the reader to few specific forms that started to appear in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and disappeared after the end of the Egyptian presence in Canaan.

Most distinctive are the jars with narrow knob base found at Lachish Stratum VI (YANNAI 2004:1130 fig. 19.45:1–7; 1135 fig. 19.49) and Ashdod (DOTHAN and BEN-SHLOMO 2005:75, fig. 3.6:6–9) (Fig. 3). Such distinct pottery type indicates that Lachish VI and Ashdod XIII must have been contemporary.

2. The local MycIIIC is very much related to and inspired by the Myc IIC pottery from Cyprus and elsewhere in the Aegean that disappears after the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Studies of this pottery have shown a relationship to the local Myc IIC pottery in Philistia to that of Cyprus during the LCIIIA period and to that of the Aegean in LHIIC Early. It is hard to believe that such pottery would have been produced in Philistia at a time when the style had disappeared on Cyprus and in the Aegean regions (SHERRATT 2003: 46–47).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Following examination of the Philistine Monochrome (local Myc IIC) pottery from Ashdod and Tel Miqne, Ms. Penelope Mountjoy indicated to me its early date in terms of the internal Aegean sequence. See MOUNTJOY's paper in this

volume. Prof. J. Maran, in a lecture during a visit to Jerusalem in March 2004, also commented on the resemblance of the local Myc IIC pottery of Philistia to Myc IIC Early in the Aegean.

3. USSISHKIN (1985) and FINKELSTEIN (1995; 1998; 2000) contend that it is inconceivable that local Myc IIC did not reach other sites in Philistia and the Shephelah when such pottery was produced in the major Philistine cities of Ashdod, Ashkelon and Tel Miqne. This claim was contested by myself (1997: 157–159) and by BUNIMOVITZ and FAUST (2001). Ussishkin's and Finkelstein's view would lead to the inevitable conclusion that most of the southern coastal plain and the Shephelah suffered from wide-scale occupation gaps at a time when local Myc IIC was produced at the major Philistine cities.<sup>11</sup> Is it realistic to suppose that such a gap existed when the Philistines settled and produced their earliest ware – the local Myc IIC? Such occupation gaps do not fit the evidence from sites like Gezer with a clearly defined stratigraphic continuity between LBIIIB and Iron I (DEVER 1986: 8–9, fig. 2 and 51–86).

The explanation for the production and distribution of the local Myc IIC pottery only in the major Philistines cities must be cultural – not chronological. This phenomenon may teach us something about the dynamics of what appears to be a unique and unusual immigration process virtually unparalleled in the archaeology of our region.<sup>12</sup> The production on large scale of both fine table ware and cooking ware of Aegean forms, production techniques, and decorative style in a limited number of sites should be regarded as evidence for the manifestation of a foreign culture that has been implanted into a new cultural environment (MAZAR 1985; 1988; STAGER 1995).

During the earliest phase of Philistine immigration the locally-produced Aegean type pottery was not a trade good or an exchange item, but a production line intended for the newly arrived immigrants that imitates the style known to them at home. Some differences between the local Myc IIC at Ashdod and Tel Miqne (mainly in decorative motifs) may have resulted from slightly different traditions brought by different potters or population groups that moved

into the region (YASUR-LANDAU 2003a: 47–50).<sup>13</sup> This early stage might have lasted one generation, during which time the few major Philistine cities maintained their own foreign culture and kept only casual connections with the Canaanite cities at their periphery. The locally produced MycIIC should be regarded a cultural marker and item of self identification, and thus its distribution remained limited to the communities of immigrants. Tel Lachish is located 25 km distance from each of the major Philistine cities of Ashkelon, Ashdod and Tel Miqne-Ekron. This is clearly far enough for there to be a cultural border between the zone of Philistine settlement and the Canaanite city in the inner Shephelah. Thus, the lack of local Myc IIC pottery in Stratum VI at Lachish, Gezer, and other sites outside the Philistine heartland should not be viewed as indications of chronological separation, but as a result of the cultural isolation of the new settlers.

Supporting this view are other examples of pottery groups that were restricted to specific regions and having a clear distribution border between them. In the past, I have mentioned the case of the Khirbet Kerak ware of EBIII (MAZAR 1997: 158; see now ZUCKERMAN 2003: 181). Another parallel is the Colored Rim jar. Such jars were popular from the Yarkon basin northwards and from the border zone between the Shephelah and the Judean hills eastwards. From some reason, pithoi of this type (indeed, pithoi of any kind) were not in use in Philistia and the northern Negev and were extremely rare in the Shephelah during the Iron Age I.<sup>14</sup> This again indicates a cultural border rather than chronological phasing.

FINKELSTEIN (1995; 1998; 2000) believes that Philistine settlement could not have occurred during the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty since Egyptian domination would not have permitted such wide-scale settlement. This issue was addressed in the past by several authors. Bietak, for example, followed by Stager, suggested

<sup>11</sup> Attempts to identify local Myc IIC at other sites (FINKELSTEIN 1995) have either failed (like at Gezer) or remain unproven (like at Tel Gerisa and Tell el-Hesi). The only site where a small amount of such pottery was probably found is Tel Haror, yet this is based on oral information provided by E.Oren.

<sup>12</sup> The only parallel is perhaps the Egyptian colonization of southern Palestine during the late Fourth Millennium BCE. See VAN DEN BRINK and LEVY (eds.) 2003.

<sup>13</sup> YASUR-LANDAU (2003b: 240) suggested that differences between the locally-produced Myc IIC at Ashdod, Tel Miqne and Ashkelon should be regarded as indicators of

slight chronological differences between the settlement of these sites by different groups of Philistines. If such differences existed at all, they may signify somewhat differing traditions carried simultaneously by groups of immigrants, each with its own tradition. Yet it seems to me that the material available today is too limited to warrant such a conclusion.

<sup>14</sup> Only few sherds have been found at sites of the inner Shephelah such as Beth Shemesh and Tell Beit Mirsim. Note their lack at Gezer and Tel Batash, while they do appear at Aphek and Tell Qasile.

that a “cordon sanitaire” separated the Philistines from the Egyptians (BIETAK 1993; STAGER 1995). In my view, a better explanation can be found in the status of Egyptian power during the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Egyptian presence in Canaan at that time seems to have been much weaker than during the previous 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. A good number of Egyptian strongholds from the former period were abandoned, including Deir el-Balah (DOTHAN 1993: 344), Jaffa, and Aphek (BECK and KOCHAVI 1993: 68). The situation at Tell el-Far<sup>ah</sup> (South) remains unclear. Egyptian presence during the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty is only known from Tell Sera<sup>c</sup>, Lachish (?)<sup>15</sup> and Beth Shean. At Beth Shean there were a number of elaborate buildings and monuments during the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, such as the governor building (Building 1500) (JAMES 1966: 8–11; MAZAR 2006: 61–82). But such impressive buildings and monuments should not deceive us, since they may actually conceal an internal weakness. Egyptian dominion in Canaan during the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, particularly after the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Ramesses III, appears to be on decline. Thus, the establishment of massive urban settlements during this time at several key sites in Philistia by Philistine immigrants should not be dismissed, and it may in fact be hinted at in Papyrus Harris I. In my view, Philistine settlement occurred immediately after Year 8 of Ramesses III. The production of local MycIIIC pottery marks the initial stage of their settlement. In a later stage, probably from the last decades of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE Philistine Bichrome pottery slowly emerged. Certain individual vessels like the skyphos bowl from Ashkelon and the jug from Tel <sup>c</sup>Eton (DOTHAN 1982: 100: fig. 3; 145: pl. 62) illustrate this gradual transition: while their decoration remains similar to Myc IIIC, they are painted in two colors, red and black.

#### 4. THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE PHILISTINE SETTLEMENT

Until the 80's of the last century, the notion of Achaean immigration into Cyprus during the LCIII period as suggested by Furumark, Catling, Dikaios and KARAGEORGHIS was dominant. Achaean settlers in Cyprus during LCIII were thought to have been responsible for a number of new features on the island, among them, the wide-spread use of Myc IIIC1b pottery of local manufacture as the main ware, replacing the previous hand-made Cypri-

ot pottery groups. In contrast, the “Sea Peoples” were regarded as marauders, destroyers of cities and pirates. This latter notion can still be found today (e.g. BETANCOURT 2000: 300 who refers to the wars with the Sea Peoples as one possible reason for the economic decline at the end of LHIIIB on the Greek mainland).

In 1985, I suggested comparing the Achaean immigration into Cyprus with the Philistine immigration into Philistia. To support this hypothesis, I noted the similarity in phenomena taking place on Cyprus and in Philistia at the same time. This included the existence of thriving urban cultures in both regions during the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the wide-scale use of locally-produced Myc IIIC pottery. I suggested that these phenomena were probably related to one another and that Philistine immigration should be regarded as an extension of Achaean immigration into Cyprus (MAZAR 1985a, 1988; also DOTHAN 1982: 293). The question that faces us now is to what extent this proposal is still valid today?

Over the past 20 years a number of new interpretations have been set forth with reference to Cyprus and Philistia. The notion of continuity in Cyprus from LCIIIC to LCIII called some scholars for a reduction in the impact of massive immigration from the Greek mainland at the beginning of LCIII. Instead, Sherratt, Kling and others proposed that local developments rather than outside invasion lay behind the changes in Cyprus. But there are still differing assessments as to the weight of local developments vis-à-vis ideas introduced into Cyprus by newly arrived people. As KLING (2000: 291) puts it, “Clearly a balance must be achieved between those interpretations that emphasize continuity and those that focus on change”. DEGER-JALKOTZY (1994) and KARAGEORGHIS (2000) still opt for the idea of an influx of people from the Aegean into Cyprus during LCIII (see also YASUR-LANDAU 2003a: 45–47).

Concerning Philistia, BRUG (1985) suggested that Philistine culture owes more to local developments than to massive immigration from the Aegean, and SHERRATT (1998) has attempted to explain Philistine pottery as a manifestation of a new economic pattern in the Levant during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, negating immigration of any sort. On the other hand, DOTHAN, STAGER (1985; 1995), myself (1985), and most recently SHARON (2001), BARAKO (2003) and

<sup>15</sup> It remains unclear whether Lachish VI was an Egyptian stronghold or just a Canaanite city with some Egyptian presence and much Egyptian influence.

YASUR-LANDAU (2003a) maintain that the Philistine phenomenon represented immigration from somewhere in the Aegean world, even if there is no agreement as to the precise origin or route. The components of Philistine material culture as revealed in the archaeological record at Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Tel Miqne-Ekron strengthen the immigration hypothesis as the most plausible one. These components include the locally-produced Myc IIIC which appears together with domestic wares of Aegean types (cooking pots and *lakinae*), clay figurines of Aegean or Cypriote type, hearths, bathtubs, clay loom weights, ring topped knife handles, and more (DOTHAN 2003). Many of these features also appear in LCIII Cyprus as new features (KARAGEORGHIS 2000).

The archaeological evidence indicates that the early Philistine settlers were accustomed to an urban way of life. Tel Miqne is probably the best demonstration of the nature of the Philistine settlement: they founded a large and fortified city of ca. 18–20 hectares in a site which was previously a rather small Late Bronze town; it is an inland site, located far from the main trade routes or harbors.<sup>16</sup> Due to its location, Tel Miqne could in no way be part of an international trade system (contra SHERRATT 1998). It therefore appears that the settlement strategy of the Philistine settlers was oriented towards a convenient location for establishing a large, well planned city with a spacious and fertile agricultural hinterland. The same may be deduced from their choice of Tel Şafit (Gath) as the location of another major

Philistine city (MAEIR and EHRLICH 2001). Of the three coastal cities of the Philistine Pentapolis (a definition based on the biblical narrative), only Ashkelon and Ashdod are known archaeologically to some extent. At Ashdod the earliest Philistine city (Stratum XIII) seems to be well planned. Ashkelon also appears to be well planned, though the earliest phases of Philistine occupation are still unknown. It should be emphasized that at both Ashdod and Ashkelon the precise size of the Philistine cities are unknown.<sup>17</sup>

According to at least some recent views, most notably that of KARAGEORGHIS (2000), Aegean settlers on Cyprus may have contributed to the continuation and flourishing of large urban centers along the western, southern, and eastern coasts of the island in LCIII. In this way, we can view urban Philistine culture as an extension of the contemporary phenomena in Cyprus. Moreover, both events were probably related to the circumstances of the crisis in the Aegean at the end of LHIIIB. Thus, Aegean immigration into Cyprus and Philistine immigration into Philistia may have been part of similar historical processes. We are unable at this time to be more precise regarding the origin of the Philistines and the role played by Cyprus in the process of their immigration. Thus, in spite of various trends and scholarly suggestions, it seems that the discoveries in Philistia during the last decades support my views presented some 20 years ago concerning both the date and the nature of the Philistine immigration.

<sup>16</sup> During the symposium at Vienna, Ussishkin suggested that the city walls found in Fields I and X at Tel Miqne should be dated to the Iron Age II and that the Iron Age I lower city at Tel Miqne was much smaller than presented by the excavators. This view stands in contrast to the data published so far and should be rejected (DOTHAN 2003 and her paper in this volume).

<sup>17</sup> In the Vienna symposium, Finkelstein suggested a shift of power between the Philistine cities based on their changing sizes. Alas, only the size of Tel Miqne can be established with any confidence. At all other Philistine sites (i.e. Ashkelon, Ashdod and Tel Safit-Gath) the size of the settled area during the 12–11<sup>th</sup> centuries remains unknown.

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