

2.9. Area M

2.9.1. Stratigraphy and Architecture

WOLFGANG ZWICKEL¹

Area M is the southernmost excavation area, and it was only excavated in 1997. It covers the squares CA 2 – CF 2 on the lower edge of the slope. The area supervisor was STEFAN MÜNGER and the area assistant was LAURA ARIAS FERRER. The strategic aim of this area was to discover the continuation of the Iron Age I city wall² and to connect it with the stratigraphy in area K.³ Therefore, a longitudinal trench was cut covering the lower two terraces of the southern slope of the hill. Area M is almost connected to area K in the north (cf. Fig. 2.7.1.1.) and in the south it extends close to the modern Mekorot service road and the steep slope down to the Sea of Galilee (distance from the road approximately 7 m). Bedrock is visible at the southern end of the trench. In squares CF 2, CE 2, and CD 2 we reached at least partly bedrock. The steep (in the average 12%) decline and erosion in this area made further digging activities very challenging.

The following local strata were observed in area M:

Local stratum	Site stratum	Absolute Chronology	Walls	Corresponding loci
M0	0			L. 6000 (CE 2), L. 6001 (CD 2), L. 6002 (CC 2), L. 6020 (CF 2), L. 6024 (CB 2), L. 6035 (CA 2)
M1	0	Mameluke? Ottoman?	W6013 (CE 2)	
M2	IV–IV	Iron Age I	W6005 (CC/CD 2), W6009 (CC 2), W6012 (CE 2), W6028 (CE 2), W6036 (CB 2), W6037 (CB 2), W6045 (CD 2), W6047 (CB 2), W6050 (CA 2)	L. 6003 (CE 2), L. 6004 (CC 2), L. 6006/6014/ 6031 (CB/CC 2), L. 6007 (CB/CC 2), L. 6008 (CD 2), L. 6011 (CD 2), L. 6015 (CE 2), L. 6016 (CE 2), L. 6017 (CE 2), L. 6018 (CC 2), L. 6019 (CC 2), L. 6022 (CD 2), L. 6027 (CB 2), L. 6030 (CD 2), L. 6032/6038 (CB 2), L. 6033 (CD 2), L. 6034 (CB 2), L. 6039 (CB 2), L. 6040 (CB 2), L. 6041 (CA 2), L. 6046 (CB 2), L. 6048 (CA 2), L. 6049 (CA 2)
M3	VIII	Middle Bronze Age II / Late Bronze Age I	W6042 (CD 2), W6044 (CE 2), W6052 (CE 2)	L. 6010 (CC 2), L. 6021 (CE 2), L. 6023 (CF 2, ?), L. 6051 (CD 2)
M4	IX–XIII	Early Bronze to Middle Bronze Age IIB/C	W6029 (CE 2, ?)	L. 6023 (CF 2, ?), L. 6025 (CE 2, ?), L. 6026 (CE 2, ?), L. 6043 (CD 2)

Table 2.9.1.1. Stratigraphy area M.

Post-Iron Age Remains⁴

Topsoil (local stratum M0) was removed in all five squares: L. 6035 (CA 2), L. 6024 (CB 2), L. 6002 (CC 2), L. 6001 (CD 2), L. 6000 (CE 2), and L. 6020 (CF 2). Pottery connected with topsoil was expectedly mixed (Early Bronze Age to Ottoman period) and not meaningful. However, a fibula (reg. no. 9024/60), a metal arrowhead (reg. no. 9088/60), and a metal needle (reg. no. 9120/60) were found within topsoil. They will be published together in the Iron Age I publication because they partly originate from the Iron Age I period.

¹ This report is partly based on the field report written by STEFAN MÜNGER.

² The continuation of the Iron Age I city wall was not found within area M.

³ The early Iron Age strata will be described in another volume of this excavation report.

⁴ Due to the few loci, which are not connected with Iron Age I structures, they were unfortunately not drawn.

W6013 (square CE 2; local stratum M1) was visible on the surface and was the reason why the search for the assumed Iron Age I city wall was conducted here.⁵ However, W6013, running parallel to the northwestern balk, was determined not to be part of the Iron Age I city wall but it is perhaps a supporting or terrace wall to hinder further erosion on the *tell*. Another possibility is that W6013 is a retaining wall of the Mameluke/Ottoman road which was observed in area R in Field I.⁶ The course of W6013 could well fit with the course of this road. If this interpretation is correct it served as the upper retaining wall of this 4 m broad road. We were unable to date the wall fragment W6013. If it belongs to the road it can tentatively be dated to the Mameluke/Ottoman period.



Fig. 2.9.1.1. In the center of this photo the unexcavated remains of the upper retaining wall of the Mameluke/Ottoman road (W6013 and W4017/W6156/W6250) between areas M and R are visible. (photo JAANA HYVÄRINEN, 2001).

Pre-Iron Age I Remains

The architectural remains predating the Iron Age I levels are heterogeneous, and the recorded data are partly problematic. Here, we use the thesis of the excavators who regarded some loci as pre-Iron I. In square CF 2, the square closest of area M to the lake, bedrock was reached after only some centimeters of excavation. A *pisé* floor (L. 6023; approximately -61.76) and eventually an artificial fill below it (-62.68) was found. Since no datable pottery was discovered the attribution of this floor to any stratum remains hypothetical.

The Iron Age I wall remains are founded at elevation -61.32 to -61.43 in the northern part⁷ and at -61.67 to -61.75 in the southern and deeper part of the square CE 2. Three pre-Iron Age I wall fragments were found within this square: W6029, W6044, and W6052. W6029, sitting directly on bedrock, is running from northwest to southeast in a right angle to the northwestern balk. It survived only fragmentary and was at least partly two rows broad.

W6044 situated in the very southern corner of the square is 35 cm wide, built by 3 to 4 rows of small stones, and survived in two layers up to 20 cm. Its orientation is completely different from W6029. This makes the attribution to a specific stratum problematic or impossible. Parallel to this wall is W6052 which has the same orientation as the Iron Age I wall W6012, but it is situated below that wall. Possibly the few parallel wall remains of W6052 and W6044 belong to the same stratum but due to their fragmentary condition this assumption is hypothetical. No corresponding floors exist.

The rounded installation L. 6021 northwest of W6044 is built by three upright standing big rubbing stones in secondary use. A round perforated stone object (reg. no. 9108/50), usually considered as a weights for weaving,⁸ was lying in front of the installation. Nevertheless, for weaving activities in this area we should expect more of these stones. Since the stone was lying flat at -61.40,⁹ the excavators suppose an (otherwise not observed) floor at this height. L. 6021 was interpreted by the excavators as a silo, but no floor was observed at the upper rim of the stones. Therefore, we assume that this was rather a kind of support or storage construction that was not dug into the floor but was standing upright above a floor. Some Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age sherds were found inside the construction. Although there is no definite proof for it the excavators assumed that L. 6021 has to be connected with both W6044 and W6052.

⁵ Unfortunately, this wall was not drawn by the excavators.

⁶ Cf. the description chapter 2.13.1. Stratum R0.

⁷ The corresponding floors are likely at -61.18/-61.22, but the data in the locus cards are a little bit mistakable. L. 6017 (Iron Age I) coving W6029 was either dug until -61.15 or (more likely) -61.25.

⁸ MILEVSKI 2019, 318–320.

⁹ Unfortunately, there do exist plenty of heights within this square. -61.40 seems rather to belong to the Iron Age I layer and not to an older layer.



Fig. 2.9.1.2. L. 6021 features three grinding stones, in secondary use, standing upright (one is fallen) and describing a circle. On the left side the perforated stone (reg. no. 9108/50) is visible.

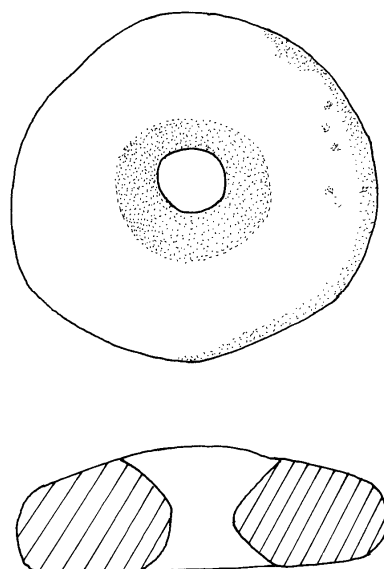
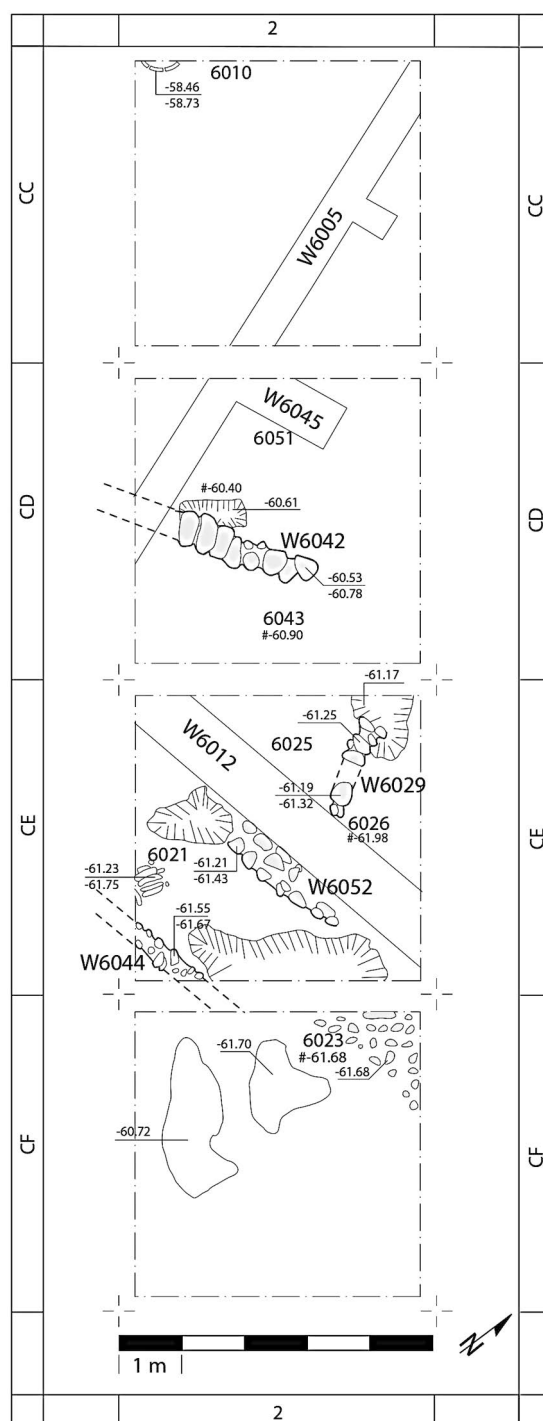


Fig. 2.9.1.3. Perforated stone reg. no. 9108/50.

Fig. 2.9.1.4. Walls and loci of strata M3 and M4.



W6042 was found in square CD 2. The wall is 45–52 cm wide and is nearly parallel to W6044 and W6052 in square CE 2. Similar to the other walls, it only survived in a limited length (about 2 m). Two horizons from the pre-Iron Age I period higher than W6042 were observed in square CD2. The few square centimeters of creed floor L. 6051, running to and partly even around W6042, yielded no pottery. The well-preserved screed floor L. 6043 runs under W6042 and must be attributed to an older stratum. The few pottery sherds found on this floor are from Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age I period.

A *tābūn* (L. 6010) preserved up to 30 cm height (lower edge -58.58; upper edge -58.31) was found in the westernmost corner of square CC 2. It is founded deeper than the Iron Age I wall W6009 and thus predates this wall. The surrounding pottery is dated to Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age. No other floors or walls were found in this square which can be attributed to this installation.

No pre-Iron I remains were found in squares CA 2 and CB 2.

Summary

Due to the limited available data reconstruction of the pre-Iron I remains in area M is challenging. The attribution to any strata is difficult because only a few small floor patches were detected. Walls W6052, W6044 (both CE 2), and W6042 (CD 2) have nearly the same orientation and could belong to the same stratum. The few surviving square centimeters of floor L. 6051 join W6042 and hence belong to the same stratum. According to the excavators, the installation L. 6021 may also belong to this stratum. This may also be true for *ṭābūn* L. 6010 (CC 2) since this installation was evidently only a few centimeters below the Iron Age I level. All these loci can be attributed to local stratum M3.

There is definitely another local stratum M4 but the only find that clearly belongs to this stratum is floor L. 6043 (CD 2). W6029 (CE 2) may belong to this stratum because its orientation is completely different from the other walls in this area but this is pure speculation. L. 6025 and L. 6026 situated on both sides of the wall should be attributed to the same stratum as W6029. The attribution of L. 6023 (CF 2) to either local stratum M3 or M4 is purely hypothetical as well.

Not only is the stratigraphy in Area M very complicated but the attribution of the two strata to any site stratum is likewise hypothetical. L. 6010 and L. 6021 yielded some datable Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age I pottery. Therefore, local stratum M3 can tentatively be attributed to this period and be linked with site stratum VIII. Local stratum M4 is older, but not datable, and can be from any final stratum IX-XIII. Few Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age I sherds found together with L. 6043 could date this stratum even to a second phase of stratum VIII. W6029 was sitting on bedrock. Since nearby areas have Early Bronze Age II remains, sometimes also directly above bedrock, we suppose that stratum M4 is likely from Early Bronze Age II period (strata XI/XII).

Bibliography

MILEVSKI, J.

- 2019 The Stone Tools and Vessels from Tel Miqne-Ekron: a Report on the Bronze and Iron Ages, in: SQUITIERI, A./EITAM, D. (Ed.s), *Stone Tools in the Ancient Near East and Egypt. Ground Stone Tools, Rock-Cut Installations and Stone Vessels from Prehistory to Late Antiquity* (Archaeopress Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology 4; Oxford), 305–344.

2.9.2. Locus List

- Locus no.:* 6010 *Square:* CC 2
Local stratum: M3 *Site stratum:* VIII
Short description/characterization: Installation
Description: In the very small L. 6010 a *tābūn* was found, which was in fragments still up to approx. 30 cm high (lower edge -58.58; upper edge -58.31). Only a part of the oven protruded from the northwestern balk. Around the *tābūn* several large pieces of ceramic were found (partly belonging together), which date the installation in Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age. As can be ascertained from the findings in L. 6046, the *tābūn* cannot in any way coincide with W6009, because it is more deeply founded than W6009 (with L. 6046 it is sufficiently clarified that the Iron Age occupation layer in this area is very close to the Middle and Late Bronze Age layers).
The Iron Age layers, which would belong to L. 6010, must be eroded long ago, like L. 6004.
Baskets of locus: 9012, 9018, 9068
Upper level: -58.50 (the starting level does not match with the final level of L. 6002 because of the slope.) *Lower level:* -58.73
Finds of the locus: *Pottery of the locus:* Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age
Index to the text: p. 330. *Index to the plates:* Fig. 3.1.8:10.
- Locus no.:* W6013 *Square:* CE 2
Local stratum: M2 *Site stratum:* 0
Short description/characterization: Wall
Description: The wall consists of several layers of basalt and chalk stones. The lower row was built with rather big stones. Above it are two, partly three rows of medium sized stones. It could be a terrace wall stabilizing the slope against erosion.
Baskets of locus:
Upper level: *Lower level:* -60.74/-60.98
Finds of the locus: *Pottery of the locus:* Early Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age I, Iron Age I, Islamic. Pottery was found when the stones of the wall were removed.
Index to the text: p. 328. *Index to the plates:*
- Locus no.:* 6021 *Square:* CE 2
Local stratum: M3 *Site stratum:* VIII
Short description/characterization: Installation, silo
Description: Three big, secondary used, rubbing stones stood still upright, arranged in a circle (only one rubbing stone was tipped over in the direction of the lake and leaned on the upper edge of the stone facing the lake; another rubbing stone only slightly protruded out of the baulk). Around the rubbing stones several stones were placed that surround them in a circle. The floor of the installation was covered with tamped clay, interspersed with many small pebbles. Northeast of the installation, at -60.40, a circular, perforated stone, which was lying flat on the ground, was found (basket 9108).
Baskets of locus: 9085, 9093, 9099, 9108
Upper level: -61.40 *Lower level:* -61.75
Finds of the locus: *Pottery of the locus:* The installation contained only few shards, but several parts of a broken vessel could be recovered, which dates the installation to Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age (basket 9099).
Index to the text: p. 329, 330, 826. *Index to the plates:* Fig. 4.4.63:662.
- Locus no.:* 6023 *Square:* CF 2
Local stratum: M3? M4? *Site stratum:* VIII? IX–XIII?
Short description/characterization: Destruction debris
Description: After only a few centimeters work in the debris layer, an occupation layer in the upper left corner of the square was unveiled (-61.76), which ran up to the adjacent rock (-61.72) and broke out southeastwards in the upper third of the square. In the upper right corner of the square was a stone packing (floor lining?) at -61.68. There are no architectural elements that could be used to correlate the occupation layers; conceivable would be a temporal matching of L. 6023 with W6044 and the installation L. 6021, because of the level.
Baskets of locus: 9096, 9101, 9103
Upper level: -61.60 *Lower level:* -62.22
Finds of the locus: *Pottery of the locus:* No datable pottery was found in this small locus.
Index to the text: p. 328, 330. *Index to the plates:*
- Locus no.:* 6025 *Square:* CE 2
Local stratum: M4 *Site stratum:* IX–XIII

Short description/characterization: Destruction debris

Description: Underneath the gray filling layer of L. 6017, there was a brown-red collapse debris of adobe, which was bounded to the right by wall W6029. The working area was too small to continue work.

Baskets of locus: 9115

Upper level: -61.25

Finds of the locus:

Index to the text: p. 330.

Lower level: -61.35

Pottery of the locus: Mixed pottery of Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age and Early Bronze Age

Index to the plates:

Locus no.: 6026

Local stratum: M4

Short description/characterization: Destruction debris

Description: With the emergence of W6029 this locus was opened. At the beginning, the excavated material was still pervaded by the backfill, characterized by L. 6017, but gradually it became a purer brown mudbrick material. This continued to W6012 and undercut this wall. The locus was continued to the adjacent rock (-61.98 respectively -62.04).

Baskets of locus: 9119, 9128, 9134

Upper level: -61.25

Finds of the locus:

Index to the text: p. 330.

Square: CE 2

Site stratum: IX–XIII

Lower level: -62.04

Pottery of the locus: Mixed pottery of Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age and Early Bronze Age

Index to the plates:

Locus no.: W6029

Local stratum: M4

Short description/characterization: Wall

Description: The wall sat directly on the big rock and was only in fragments. It is constructed partly in a single-row with larger stones, partly double-row with smaller stones and undercuts W6012. If it continues south of this wall in a pavement-like stone setting (cf. L. 6052), cannot be decided.

Baskets of locus:

Upper level:

Finds of the locus:

Index to the text: p. 328 with n. 7, 330.

Square: CE 2

Site stratum: IX–XIII

Lower level:

Pottery of the locus:

Index to the plates:

Locus no.: W6042

Local stratum: M3

Short description/characterization: Wall

Description: The wall is between 45 and 52 cm wide, single-row built and stands one to two stones high (approximately 25 cm). The wall is disturbed to the east. Because of the small work area we could not decide if the wall is plugged with the adjacent rock. At the height -60.40, a screed floor connects to the wall.

Baskets of locus:

Upper level:

Finds of the locus:

Index to the text: p. 330.

Square: CD 2

Site stratum: VIII

Lower level:

Pottery of the locus:

Index to the plates:

Locus no.: 6043

Local stratum: M4

Short description/characterization: Screed floor

Description: The screed floor, which had already been found in the investigative trench L. 6030, was further uncovered. South of the wall W6042, the earth was dark red/brown, it became increasingly harder near the patch. The uneven screed floor is about 2 cm thick and lies on level -60.90. The floor undermines W6042 and breaks out at its (vague) right end, thus in the middle of the square.

Baskets of locus: 9149, 9153, 9156, 9166

Upper level: -60.88

Finds of the locus:

Index to the text: p. 330.

Square: CD 2

Site stratum: IX–XIII

Lower level:

Pottery of the locus: Few pottery, Middle Bronze Age II/Late Bronze Age

Index to the plates:

Locus no.: W6044

Local stratum: M3

Short description/characterization: Wall

Description: The wall is about 35 cm wide and was built in 3 to 4 rows of small stones. It survived in two layers (height up to approximately 20 cm). Their stratigraphical connection cannot be clarified because there is no connecting floor. However, a matching with the installation L. 6021 is very well conceivable due to the heights.

Baskets of locus:

Square: CE 2

Site stratum: VIII

Upper level:
Finds of the locus:
Index to the text: p. 328, 329, 330.

Lower level:
Pottery of the locus:
Index to the plates:

Locus no.: 6051
Local stratum: M3

Square: CD 2
Site stratum: VIII

Short description/characterization: Screed floor

Description: L. 6051 is a screed floor adjoining W6042 from the northwest. Only a few square centimeters are preserved. The connection to W6042 is still available over approximately 10 cm (the floor leads around the westernmost stone in the plan and could therefore mark an entrance.)

Since a large part (1.25 m to the northwestern balk) of the L. 6011 has not yet been removed, the screed floor could be further exposed with the removal of the layers above L. 6051 and pottery resting on it could be recovered.

Baskets of locus:

Upper level: -60.40

Finds of the locus:

Lower level:

Pottery of the locus: Actually, the locus cannot be dated because the working area is much too small and no dateable pottery was recovered on the floor stump.

Index to the plates:

Index to the text: p. 330.

Locus no.: W6052
Local stratum: M3

Square: CE 2
Site stratum: VIII

Short description/characterization: Wall/plaster fragment

Description: Unclear wall or plaster fragment below W6012.

Baskets of locus:

Upper level:

Finds of the locus:

Index to the text: p. 328, 329, 330.

Lower level:

Pottery of the locus:

Index to the plates: