Tel Burna is situated in the western Judean Shephelah along Nahal Guvirin. The site was settled almost continuously from the Early Bronze through the Persian period (c. 3500-400 BCE). Since 2009 Tel Burna has been investigated by a team led by I. Shai (Ariel University).

Cultic and Prestige Related Finds

Mycenean and Cypriot figurines and c. 370 charred grass pea seeds (Lathyrus sativus) from a set of storage jars (figurines, chalices, goblets, and jars containing the western side of the wall of the cultic enclosure. Comparing Late Bronze Age contexts: Cypriot and with smashed pitoh, Burna from Tel Migdal/Sharon, and Tel Batash.

A miniature three-cupped votive vessel that was determined to have contained type of oil in each one of its cups. This votive vessel was purposely placed on a flat rock in the center of the courtyard where it was found in situ.

Faunal material from Area B1 shows the highest concentrations of both animal bones and high-value bones in rooms adjacent to the cultic area. Burned bones from these rooms indicate primarily roasting and other cooking activities.

The Cultic Space at Tel Burna

The variety of prestige and religious related items in Area B1 conclusively point to its cultic quality. As such, its discovery is a significant source for furthering our knowledge of Canaanite cult. Numerous other cultic contexts have been excavated previously (e.g., Lachish, Megiddo, Hazor, etc.). However, most of these were excavated in much earlier stages of archaeological research and did not use the up-to-date archaeological field methodology and techniques (e.g., archaeobotanical and zooarchaeological analyses, archaeo-magnetometry, etc.). Area B1 has also served as a test case for the adoption and implementation of digital tools such as digital registration using PlanGrid (McKinny and Shai 2017, 2018b) alongside photogrammetric imaging using PhotoScan. In light of all of the above, we hope to continue to explore more of this important area of Tel Burna in the 2019 season and beyond.

Understand late bronze age canaanite cultic space: tel burna, israel

TINA GREENFIELD1, CHRIS MCKINNY2, JANE GAASTRA2, ANDREA ORENDI3, SARA DOUGLAS1, AND ITZICK SHA1

Area B1 has a uniform chronological picture throughout the area, and a homogeneous architectural layout across the platform. The majority of the area appears to be related to a very large stone enclosure constructed on bedrock (Building 29305). This building has a series of small rooms on its eastern edge just below the rise of the tell. There is also another set of rooms west of and along the western wall (W29305). This enclosure is characterized by bedrock courtyards with varying degrees of preservation depending on the proximity of an excavated area to the tell and W29305. On the eastern side of W29305, a bedrock courtyard (L33112) was uncovered filled in situ finds of a cultic and prestigious quality dated to the 13th century BCE.

Composite Aerial Image of Area B1 and Building 29305 at Tel Burna

Despite its significant Iron II settlement, it seems that the 13th century BCE/Late Bronze IIB was the peak of settlement activity at Tel Burna - at least in terms of size. While we have yet to reach this period on the summit, we have exposed a wide area (c. 350 square meters). On a lower platform located to the west of the summit - known as Area B1, there are indications that the site was settled in earlier parts of the Late Bronze. The platform was only inhabited during the 13th century BCE with a monumental building (29305) situated directly beneath the top soil and the bedrock.

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Legend for bioarchaeological remains

- Greater than 300
- Between 100 and 300
- Less than 100
- Botanical deposit

Area B1 Publications

1. University of Saskatchewan, Departments of Religion and Culture and Archaeology and Antiquities Department, University of Saskatchewan, 2018.
2. Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi, Texas.
3. University of Exeter, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Exeter, United Kingdom.
4. Archaeological Workshop, Institute for Archaeological Sciences, Clermont-Ferrand University of Talence, Talence, France.
5. Institute of Archaeology, Ariel University, Ariel, Israel.

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