

## Results of the 2006 Season Kabri Regional Archaeological Survey Project

Eric H. Cline and Assaf Yasur-Landau

### 1. Introduction

The military situation in northern Israel and Lebanon during the summer greatly affected our planned work at Tel Kabri. Katyusha rockets fired by Hezbollah scored direct hits both on the Tel itself and the Kibbutz Kabri, as well as the nearby cities of Nahariya, Acco, and Haifa. Although the archaeological site of Tel Kabri itself was unharmed and no lives were lost at the kibbutz (except for 4,000 chickens in a demolished chicken coop), we were compelled to leave the area without finalizing our work. Despite these conditions, and due in large part to the immeasurable help of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) archaeologists in the North and the financial assistance of INSTAP, we managed to achieve many of our planned goals.

Three projects had been planned for the summer:

1. A Thematic Survey of the Middle Bronze (MB) II Sites in the Area of Tel Kabri, Israel
2. A Re-Planning of the Palace and Re-Mapping of the Site of Tel Kabri
3. A Chronological and Typological Re-Examination of the Pottery in the IAA store rooms.

The regional survey, which in our opinion was the most important, and which was also the most important and labor-intensive of the three planned projects, was fortunately conducted and completed during the field season, with the survey work ending just a few days before the beginning of the war. After the break of hostilities, IAA archaeologists Dr. Rafi Frankel and Mr. Nimrod Getzov very generously permitted us to take the survey pottery from the store-rooms in Kibbutz Beth Ha'emek (which was under continuous rocket attacks) to Tel Aviv to be studied.

Unfortunately, the portion of our team which was in charge of the re-planning of the palace and re-mapping of the site at Tel Kabri, led by Dr. Michal Bieniada, had arrived only a few days before the start of the war. They had only just begun to make preparations for the digital documentation of the site, including high-resolution balloon photographs, when the war started.

When rockets began to hit Tel Kabri and nearby areas, we (i.e. E.H. Cline and A. Yasur-Landau) decided to temporarily stop our work in order not to risk the lives of our team members. However, when the war continued without apparent letup, and we still could not return to Kabri, the team led by Dr. Bieniada had to return to Poland without completing its project. Moreover, balloon flights were not allowed by the Israeli Air Force for the rest of the summer, thus preventing us from completing any portion of our second planned project.

The third planned project, namely the re-examination of the pottery from the older excavations contained in the IAA general storeroom, also had to be postponed since the storerooms were closed because of the war until September 15<sup>th</sup>. By that time, or soon afterwards, all of our participants, including both directors, had left the country, due to previous commitments (E.H.

Cline returned to The George Washington University and A. Yasur-Landau took up a Fulbright Fellowship at Harvard University for the 2006-2007 academic year).

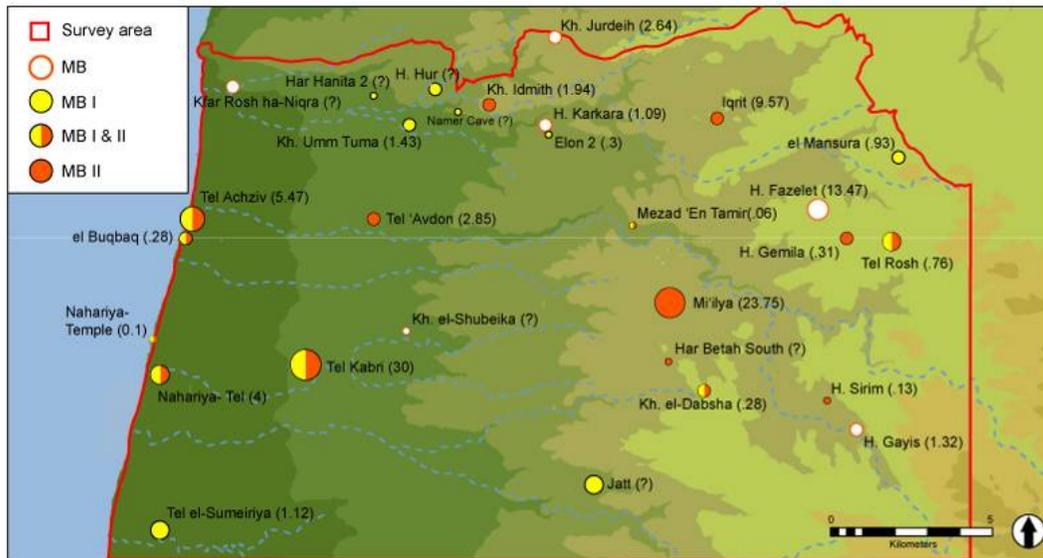
On the bright side, as conditions seem to be more stable now in northern Israel, we do hope to finish the rest of our planned projects during the coming field season, in addition to our other planned activities.

## **2. Initial Results of the Regional Survey and Study of Pottery from Previous Surveys**

### **Field Survey**

Members of the survey team included, apart from the present authors, George Pierce from UCLA, Nurith Goshen from Tel Aviv University, and Dr. Helena Tomas of Zagreb University.

The survey enjoyed the generous and enthusiastic cooperation of the IAA representatives. We were frequently joined by Nimrod Getzov, IAA Counselling Archaeologist of the North, who had conducted previous surveys in the Galilee. IAA inspectors Yoav Lerer and Hana Abu-Uksa also travelled with us to several sites and provided information on unpublished excavations in the area.



***Fig. 1. Map of Surveyed Sites with both Chronological Phases and Estimated Areas noted (areas are in dunams [0.1 Ha.])***

The survey team visited 28 Middle Bronze Age sites in the Area of Kabri (see Fig. 1 and Appendix 1). At the majority of these sites it was possible to establish their size using GPS, by following the boundaries of each site according to the surface distribution of MB II pottery. The use of such modern and accurate methods to measure site sizes enabled us to correct many of the previous estimates for the sizes of MB sites in the Galilee, and now enables us to generate an improved estimate of past population sizes in this region.

Thus, for example, the hilltop site of Mi'ilya, previously estimated to be of only 1.5 ha. in size, turns out to actually be 23.8 ha. in size, making it a new major MB and LB site in the Western Galilee. An opposite example is the border fortress site of Mezaḏ 'En Tamir. Previously estimated by Nimrod Getzov to be 0.3 ha. in size, this site, according to our measurements, is apparently comprised of only a single sturdy structure and measures only 0.056 ha. in size.

There has been rapid development in the area, with the result that some MB II sites reported by previous surveys, such as Kfar Rosh Haniqra and Tel Nahariya, are now completely invisible and inaccessible; some may have been removed completely. [As a side note, our accurate mapping and recording of the borders of the sites has been made available by us to the IAA and will be used for the future protection of archaeological sites from building activities in this area.] In addition, upon occasion, our visit to other sites previously reported as having MB pottery or structures, such as the site of H. Sirim, yielded no MB pottery. In such cases, the pottery boxes of the previous surveys were double-checked, and if no MB pottery were found there either, these sites were erased from the IAA register of MB sites.

When the analysis of these results is complete, it will provide important insights regarding the demographic and economic base of the Kingdom of Kabri. However, we can already note that visits to several sites revealed unexpected and exiting results.



*Fig. 2. The sea from the MB II anchorage at el-Buqbaq*

Among the most notable initial results from our field survey is the discovery of a Middle Bronze Age anchorage at el-Buqbaq, south of Achziv (Fig. 2). The site yielded MB cooking pots with a sequence dating to both MB IIA and MB IIB, while large beach-rock boulders disturbed by recent activity indicate the existence of an enclosure or a fort. This may be an example of an anchorage not connected to a settlement, but rather — perhaps similar to the situation at Nahariya — found near a coastal fort or shrine.

### **Pottery Study**

The massive and well organized pottery collection from the IAA storerooms in Kibbutz Beth Ha'emek, reflecting more than 50 years of systematic surveys and surface collections in the Galilee, was made available to us by the director Dr. Rafi Frankel. Most of the pottery from the sites surveyed by the IAA was located and separated into chronological periods in the storerooms.

Following the outbreak of the war in July, all of the MB pottery and some of the LB pottery from the IAA collection was shipped to Tel Aviv for study, where it was typologically analyzed by A. Yasur-Landau, assisted by N. Goshen. Initially the entire corpus of MB pottery was photographed. A large selection, including more than 220 items, was then selected for drawing by our artist N. Mesika.

After the cessation of hostilities in August, the pottery was returned to the IAA storerooms. The analysis of the pottery enabled us to date the surveyed sites and divide them into phases within the MB. It also allowed us to more accurately document changes in settlement patterns from the Intermediate Bronze Age (IBA) to the MB IIA, MB IIB and into the early LB (Fig. 1). Notable ceramic finds include, for example, Cypriot Base Ring I, Bichrome, and White Slip II sherds from Ma'ilia, which indicates a continuation in trade and international contacts in the area during the LB I period, even after the fall of Kabri (Fig. 3).



*Fig. 3. Cypriot Base Ring I, Bichrome, and White Slip II pottery from Mi'ilya*

### **Preliminary Interpretative Observations Concerning Settlement Patterns**

Already at this point we can reach several preliminary observations on settlement patterns in the Western Galilee during the MB II period, based upon our survey results. The difference in landscape between the Intermediate Bronze Age (IBA) period in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE and the MB II period during the early 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE in the Acco valley must have been striking. The small, rural, dispersed settlements of the IBA, probably villages not too dissimilar from each other, were replaced by a network of urban settlements with imposing fortifications and large villages serving as regional centers, as well as individual forts, temples, and harbours.

The change in landscape may be manifested through three competing and complementing aspects which shaped human impact on the environment in the Western Upper Galilee. The first is the landscape of rulership, including the impact of rulership on the shape and function of sites, such as the building of palaces, fortifications, and royal forts. The second is the ancestral landscape, the manifestation of the interests of kinship group. This can be reflected, for example, in the possession of the ancestral house (the Canaanite *Bet `Ab*) in the settlement, hereditary agricultural lands, and traditional burial grounds. The third is the mythical landscape, connecting places and landmarks to the realms of the gods. Here we find sacred temple precincts (e.g. the Nahariya Temple) and geographical features connected to mythology (e.g. the Carmel Ridge).

During the MB IIA period, the settlement landscape included mostly villages, some of them, such as Um Tumma, located in valleys close to the agricultural soil. Through most of this period, Acco seems to have been the only fortified town in the area. Although a proto-palace may have existed at Kabri during this time, and could be seen immediately below the later palace during our 2005 excavations at the site, it appears that the site itself was unfortified at that time. Pottery imports begin to arrive from Cyprus at the end of the period.

The MB IIA-B transition appears to be a period of competition between rising polities. For instance, Kabri and Achziv are both fortified either during this period or early in the MB IIB period. However, the small, rural settlements of the MB IIA do not continue into MB IIB. The phenomenon is most striking in the area north of Nahal Khziv: abandoned sites include Hanita, En Hur, Um Tuma, Mearat Namer, and Elon in the west, and El Mansura in the east. A striking example of a major lowland village that was deserted after MB IIA is Sumeriya/Yasaf. Located between Acco and Kabri, its desertion may be due to the conflict between these two rising polities early in the MB IIB period, the time during which the large palace at Kabri was built. Similarly, the abandoning of Jatt after the MB IIA period may be due to its proximity to the border between Kabri and the important highland site of Mi'ilya.

The post-MB IIA settlement landscape includes only hilltop sites, with newly-founded sites at Idmith, Iqrit, Gemila and Avdon. This phenomenon may well be indicative of a deterioration in the security situation, perhaps due to aggravation in inter-polity competition.

During the MB IIB period, we note what seems to be the rise of another regional center in the Highlands east of Kabri, i.e. on the eastern and northeastern slopes of Har Meiron, perhaps serving as a buffer polity between Kabri and Hazor. Major settlements in the area include Mi'ilya (possibly the principle settlement) and the imposing Tel Rosh. Several smaller sites were established in their vicinity, including Gemila, Dabsha and Betah.

At this same time, during the MB IIB period, Kabri reaches its zenith, as can be seen in the last two phases of the palace, including the penultimate phase during which the palace was decorated with Aegean-style frescoes. Cypriot pottery continues to be imported at Kabri, as well as at most other sites in the vicinity, with the important exception of the highland sites for some reason.

The Kabri polity is distinguished by a varied settlement landscape, with several specialized settlements, reflecting the interests of the elite. Such specialized settlements include the coastal Nahariya temple, which had been founded already in the MB IIA period, yet which reach much prosperity during the MB IIB period. Overlooking the temple is the fort at Nahariya, which is most likely connected to the trading activities of Kabri during this period. The fort at Mezd En Tamir, which existed for a short time during the transitional MB IIA-B period or early MB IIB period, may be a border fort of the same kingdom. In addition, there is an anchorage, and a very small site/structure, functioning at el-Buqbaq at this time (Fig.2).

After the destruction of Tel Kabri at the end of the MB IIB period, trade with Cyprus still continued through the very same ports and anchorages, with the exception of el-Buqbaq which went out of existence at approximately the same time as Kabri itself. The regional vacuum was filled in part by an increase in the political power of Acco but also by a continuation in the habitation of major hilltop sites such as Avdon, Tel Rosh, and Mi'ilya.

### **3. A Note on the Condition of Tell Kabri**

In beginning our work at the site in early July, before the outbreak of hostilities, the previously-excavated area at Tel Kabri was cleaned of vegetation, and the fence was checked to make sure that it would survive the winter.

During the war itself, the Tel was directly hit by at least five Katyusha rockets, according to Mr. Micha Roded of Kibbutz Kabri, who surveyed the damage. After the ceasefire, A. Yasur-Landau visited the site in person in order to assess the damage. Fortunately, the excavated areas were not hit.



*Fig. 4. Burnt area by Ein Shefa on Tel Kabri*

However, several rockets did land in open areas in the middle of the Tel, near the Ein Shefa spring, causing fires that had to be put out by members of the Kibbutz (Fig. 4). The soil here

was wet from constant irrigation, which prevented the fire from spreading to the east, towards the MB palace, while the Ein Shefa pond kept the fire from spreading to the upper tel.

#### **4. Financial Report**

We enclose below a brief record of our INSTAP-related expenditures (budgeted and actual), noting that \$9,417 went unspent because of the abbreviated season. This has already been returned to INSTAP and will hopefully be made available to us for next summer, so that we may finish the re-mapping of the site and re-planning of the palace, in addition to our other plans for next season.

Budget for Kabri Survey 2006 (received from INSTAP: \$30,000)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Proposed (after approved revisions)</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Room and board	\$21,000	\$11,910
Pottery/GIS/Maps	\$6,000	\$6,000
Rental cars	\$1,800	\$1,943
Fuel	\$900	\$345
Equipment	\$300	\$385
Total:	\$30,000	\$20,583

Summary:

INSTAP GRANT:	\$30,000
AMOUNT SPENT	\$20,583
AMOUNT RETURNED TO INSTAP	\$9,417

**Appendix 1: Preliminary Size and Chronology of Surveyed MB II sites**

ID	x	y	z	Site Name	IAA survey size (dunams = 0.1 Ha.)	KKRS survey size (dunams)	Diff.	Period
2	208951	762940	28	Tell el-Sumeiriya	45	11.2	-33.8	MB IIA (mid-late), (no MB IIB?)
5	208951	767740	10	Nahariyya-Tel	40	?	?	MB IIA, MB IIB (fortification MB IIB)
6	208751	768840	8	Nahariyya-Temple	1	1	0	MB IIA, MB IIB
12	209751	771940	15	el-Buqbaq	10	2.8	-7.2	MB IIA, MB IIB
15	209951	772540	15	Tel Akhziv	70	54.7	-15.3	MB IIA, MB IIB (fortification MB IIA trans. or MB IIB)
31	213451	768040	61	Tel Kabri	300			MB IIA middle, MB IIB. (fortification MB IIA late)
50				Kh. Shubeika				MB II (findspot, not mapped Y. Lerer 2006 pers. inf.)
73	211250	776540	43	Kefar Rosh Ha-Niqra	10	?	?	MB II?
95	215551	772540	146	Tel 'Avdon	20	28.5	8.5	MB IIB (perhaps also MB IIA?)
97	215550	776340	170	Har Hanita 2	1	?	?	Late MB IIA
106	216650	775440	90	Kh. Umm Tuma	20	14.3	-5.7	MB IIA middle and late (main period) (little MB IIB?)
114	217450	776540	367	H. Hur	20	?	?	MB IIA Middle (late?) (no MB IIB)
123	218150	775840	200	Me'arat Namer	1	?	?	MB IIA
132				Idmith	16	19.4	3.4	MB IIB?

149	222351	764341	400	Jatt	30	?	?	MB IIA (Middle and Late)
160	224651	768141	530	Har Betah (south)	8	?	?	MB IIB
161	224751	769941	515	Mi'ilya	15	237.5	222.5	MB IIB
168	225751	767241	590	Kh el-Dabsha	10	2.8	-7.2	MB IIA-MB IIB, more likely MB IIB
181	229551	766941	510	H. Sirim	6	1.3	-4.7	MB IIB
188	220850	775441	271	H. Karkara	19	10.9	-8.1	?
189	220950	775141	302	Elon 2	2	3	1	MB IIA possibly late (Getzov 2006 pers. Inf.)
196	221150	778141	493	Kh. Jurdeih	10	26.4	16.4	?
199	223551	772341	500	Mezad 'En Tamir	3	0.56	-2.44	Late MB IIA or early MB IIB
213	226150	775641	592	Iqrit	25	95.7	70.7	MB IIB
233	229251	772841	635	H. Fazelet	50	134.7	84.7	MB IIA Tomb material published
239	230451	766041	500	H. Gayis	10	13.2	3.2	?
277	230151	771941	688	H. Gemila	15	3.1	-11.9	MB IIB
280	231551	771841	630	Tel Rosh	90	7.6	-82.4	MB IIA, MB IIB
282	231751	774441	700	el-Mansura	12	9.3	-2.7	MB IIA
	222000	775500		Har Uchman				MB? Summit Not visited