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# The Three Temples *in antis* at Megiddo

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## Abstract
The date of the Stratum XV Triple-Temple Complex at Megiddo has been the subject of debate since it was first uncovered by the University of Chicago in the 1930s. Generally, an Early Bronze Age III date became the status quo interpretation, but several problems with this date are apparent. First, there was already significant EB III stratigraphy at the site, consisting of a well-planned palace, elite quarter, and temple complex. The construction of the Triple-Temple complex completely put this EB III palatial phase out of commission. Therefore, if an EB III date for the temples is preferred, this infers that a completely new urban plan was envisioned within that period – a phenomenon not seen elsewhere for EB III palatial centers. Second, it leaves a significant architectural gap at the site during the EB IV/Intermediate Bronze Age, a period for which Megiddo produced a significant amount of material culture. The solution presented itself when the Tel Aviv University Megiddo Expedition discovered a cache of Egyptianized pottery below the temple complex. Originally thought to have come from underlying EB IB strata, ongoing excavation at the site and refinement of the stratigraphy of the cultic area led the present author to conclude that the pottery cache was a foundation deposit associated with the Stratum XV Triple-Temple Complex. The cache, fitting well, typologically, with Egyptian foundation deposits from the late Old Kingdom/First Intermediate Period, supports, in turn, an EB IV/IB date for the construction of the Megiddo Triple-Temple Complex.

This paper returns to this issue to properly place the architecture of the Triple-Temple Complex into its Northern Levantine EB IV world as temples *in antis* and to consider Northern Levantine and Egyptian contacts from the unique perspective of Megiddo.

## Keywords
Megiddo, Early Bronze Age, Byblos, Intermediate Bronze Age

## Introduction
The three temples *in antis* at Megiddo were uncovered in the 1930s by the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute (OI) expedition., who attributed the temples to their Stratum XV, dated to the Intermediate Bronze Age.[1] Loud characterized Stratum XV as "a period of massive building," which included the three large Temples 4040, 5192, and 5269, Altar 4017, retaining Wall 4114 to their east, and the large Building 3160 featuring two monumental stairways at the edge of the mound (Fig. 1).[2]

Of note is the fact that Area BB was excavated differentially by the OI. After a probe revealed the Middle Bronze and Late Bronze Age Temple 2048 (sitting roughly above Temple 4040, Altar 4017, and Wall 4114), the area east of this temple was first excavated down to bedrock during the 1935/1936, 1936/1937, 1937/1938 seasons. Stratum XV was first reached in the 1936/1937 season, revealing Building 3160 and the monumental staircases (Fig. 1). At this time, the western portions of the stratum, including Wall 4114, Altar 4017, and the three Stratum

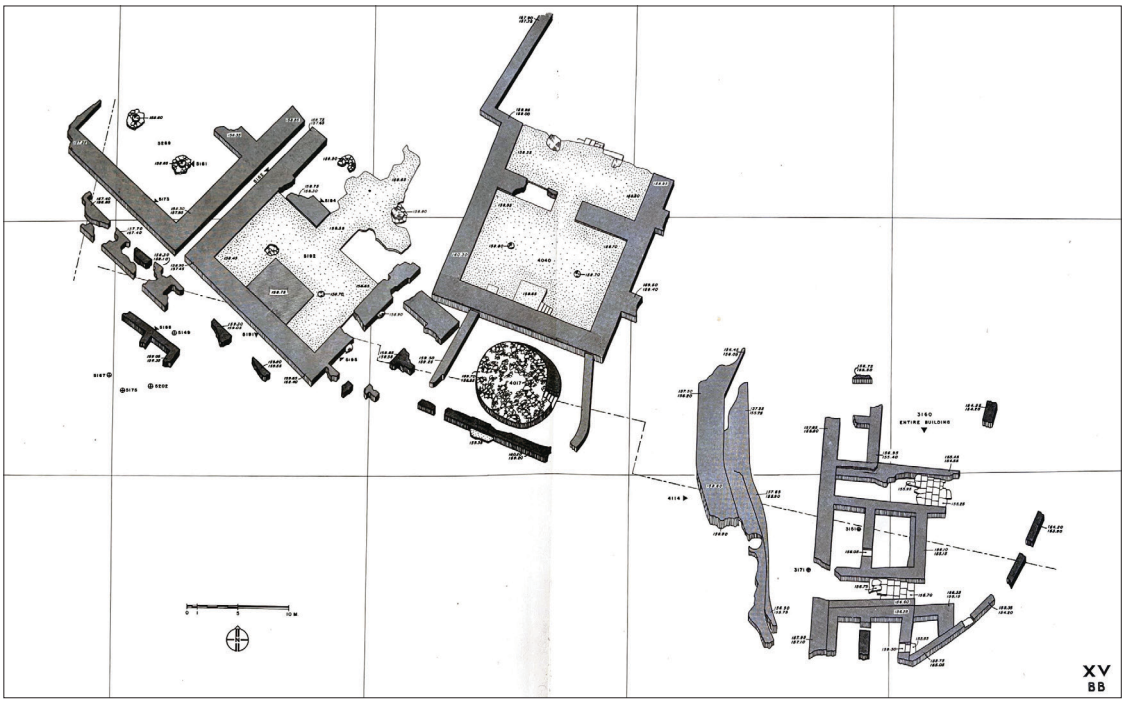


**Figure 1:** Stratum XV as presented by Loud (1948, fig. 395).

XV temples were still unexcavated beneath the ongoing work clearing and removing the Middle/Late Bronze Age Temple 2048. Only in the 1937/38 Season had Temple 2048 finally been cleared away and the central portion of Area BB, beneath its footprint, excavated to Stratum XV. Temple 4040 and Altar 4017 were also revealed during this effort, but nothing was uncovered farther west. Finally, in the last season at Megiddo, in 1938/1939, Area BB was expanded to the west, beginning from the Late Bronze Age layers located at the top of the mound, revealing Temples 5192 and 5269 by the end of the season. Ultimately, Stratum XV was revealed over four seasons in three chunks.[3] The largest contiguous exposure, the three temples, was the last stratum exposed in the area's central and western sections; only Building 3160 enjoyed excavation of strata above and below the structure. Hence, without the excavation of strata beneath the Triple-Temple Complex itself, the temples' stratigraphy and chronology would remain questionable.

After the OI expedition ended, the questions of whether the three temples were built together or in a particular sequence and their Intermediate Bronze Age dating were heavily debated.[4] Most of these discussions depended on reinterpreting the evidence presented by Loud, though the arguments of Dunayevski and Kempinski did result from additional on-site fieldwork,[5] and those of Mirsoschedji from novel metrological analyses.[6] These studies attempted to stratify Temple 4040 back into Strata XVII–XVI (Early Bronze Age II–III), thus becoming the first of the three temples to which Temples 5192 and 5269 were later added. By the 1990s, this proposal had become the status quo understanding of the three temples.[7]

From 1992 to 2010, the Tel Aviv University Megiddo Expedition (TAU) conducted renewed excavations in the area, renamed Area J (Fig. 2), refining much of the stratigraphic determinations made by Loud (Table 1).[8] This paper focuses on the results of the TAU excavations vis-à-vis OI Stratum XV (i.e., TAU Level J-7). In doing so, the remains of Strata XVI–XVII (TAU Levels J-5–6) beneath the Triple-Temple complex and those of Stratum XIV (Levels J-8–9) above the complex will be summarized. Because the new data renders many of the earlier studies moot, they will be only engaged as needed.[9]

## OI Strata XVII–XVI (TAU Levels J-5–J-6)

The overall shape of Megiddo's upper and lower eastern terraces was determined in the Early Bronze Age I with the construction of the Great Temple of Stratum XVIII (Level J-4; Fig. 3).[10] The Great

**Figure 2:** Aerial view of Area J (Area BB) after the TAU 2008 Season. Courtesy of the Megiddo Expedition.

| Level | Loud 1948 Stratum | Description | Absolute Dates | Period |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| J-10 | XIIIA/B | Domestic area with proto-palace | | MB I |
| J-9 | XIVA | Domestic area with repurposed Temple 4040 | | MB I |
| J-8 | XIVB | Domestic area with repurposed Temple 4040 | | MB I |
| J-7 | XV | Triple temples in antis (4040, 5192 and 5269) | | IB |
| J-6a | XVI | Palace Compound and Palace 3177 | 2700–2600/2500 BCE | EB III |
| J-6b | XVII | Palace Compound and Palace 3177 | 2800–2700 BCE | EB III |
| J-5 | XVII | Palace Compound and Palace 3177 | 2850–2800 BCE | EB III |
| J-4a | | Sporadic activity within the otherwise abandoned Great Temple. | 3020–2850 BCE | EB II |
| J-4 | XVIII | Great Temple complex | 3090–2920 BCE | EB Ib |
| J-3 | XIX | Temple 4050 | | EB Ib |
| J-2 | Undetected | Temple beneath 4050 and Picture Pavement | | EB Ib |
| J-1 | XX+ | Carved bedrock and associated structures | | EB I |

**Table 1:** Current Early Bronze to Middle Bronze I stratigraphy of Megiddo Area BB/TAU Area J (after Adams 2013b). Absolute dates are only included if known from radiocarbon samples from the site (n.b. maximum ranges are given, hence the apparent chronological overlap of some phases; Regev et al. 2014).

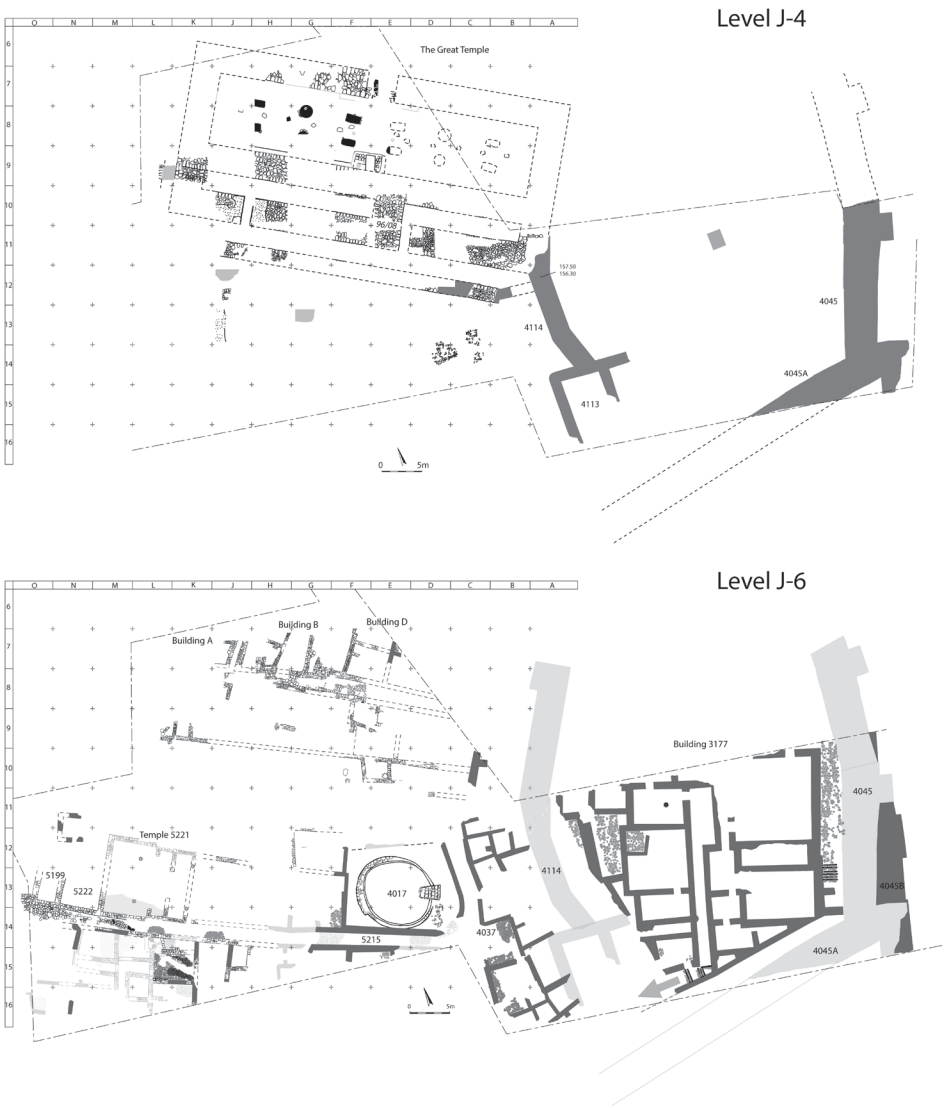


**Figure 3:** The Level J-4 EB Ib Great Temple (top), with the Level J-5/6 composite plan (below) showing reused terraces.

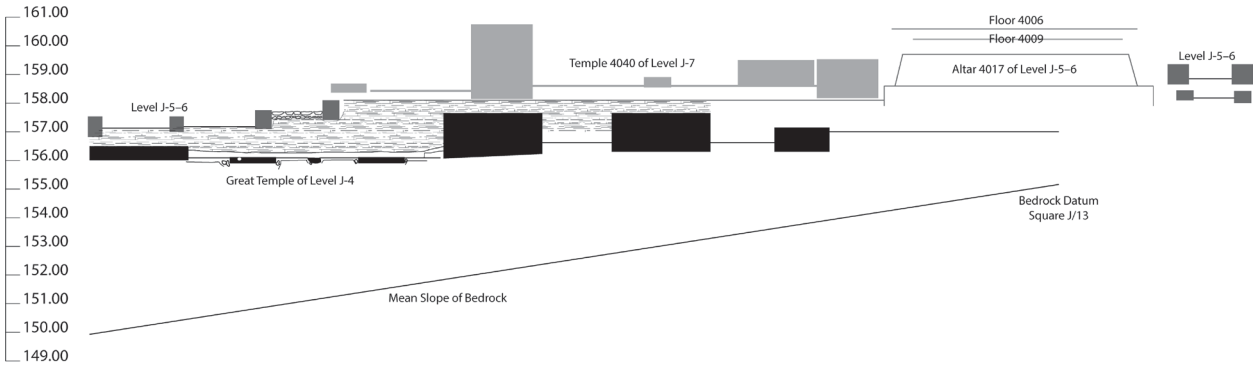


**Figure 4:** A schematic north–south (right–left) section showing sloping and terraced structures in Levels J-4 (black), J-5–6 (dark gray), and J-7 (light gray).

Temple was built to maximize the east–west width of a bedrock spur, with a temenos/retaining wall immediately to its west and its eastern wall serving as a terrace wall bonded to Terrace Wall 4114.[11] To the east, a lower terrace was formed by Wall 4045, some 30+ m downslope.[12] To the south of the Great Temple, a large exterior space is terraced up to higher ground. Succeeding strata would contend with this topographic arrangement well into the Middle Bronze Age (OI Stratum XII) when major terraforming activities took place in the cultic area.

Strata XVII–XVI (TAU Levels J-5–J-6) are best understood as a single cohesive stratum with multiple subphases and rebuilds (Fig. 3). The OI detected two subphases (Strata XVII and XVI); TAU found that in most areas excavated, three phases could be identified (hence Levels J-5, J-6b, and J-6a). It should be noted that most of the architecture uncovered by the OI in this stratum was on the lower eastern terrace, with only some exposure on the upper terrace, while the TAU excavations exposed significant remains from the upper terrace only. The OI dated this stratum to the Early Bronze Age, and subsequent commentators and the TAU excavations have confirmed this general date with a more specific attribution to the EB III.[13] Radiocarbon models for samples taken from these strata indicate that the three subphases can be dated, according to their maximum extremes, from 2850 to 2600/2500 BCE.[14]

Strata XVII–XVI (TAU Levels J-5–J-6) consist of a large building (3177) occupying the lower eastern terrace, which the original excavators interpreted as a Palace due to its layout of courtyards and rooms paved variously with pebbles and plaster, an interpretation still generally agreed upon in the literature today (Figs. 3–4).[15] The upper terrace was laid out in an orthogonal grid of streets that continued the general orientation of Palace 3177. The buildings on the upper terrace step down from south to north, with each of the east–west streets acting as a terrace (Figs. 3–4). The streets slope down dramatically from east to west, and near the westernmost section of Street 5215, a series of steps control the downward slope. The central terrace, occupying much of the center of the exposed area, was obliterated by the construction of the later Stratum XV Triple-Temple Complex. Of note in this regard is the better-preserved northern street and associated buildings, which survived destruction because they were lower than the foundations of the temples, and the better-preserved Street 5215 and the buildings to the south, which were higher but not cut by the later Stratum XV foundations (see below).

A prominent feature of the central terrace is Altar 4017, already exposed by the OI, found surrounded with the remains of animal sacrifice.[16] To the west, the OI excavation revealed a part of Building 5221, which was reinvestigated by the TAU excavations. This well-built structure featured a white plastered floor and walls, and a finely carved pillar base similar to those in Building 3177.[17] Based on the renewed work, the excavator suggested that these were the remains of the Strata XVII–XVI (TAU Levels J-5–J-6) temple.[18] Indeed, this proposal solves the issue of the 'missing' temple for this period. In addition, it is supported by the fact that the building is similar to the temples at Khirbet ez-Zeraqon, which are also in the proximity of a round altar.[19]

Between Temple 5221 and Altar 4017 was found much evidence of cultic activity. Locus 98/J/152 in Square J/13 consisted of a highly burnt ash and bone accumulation on a floor located just before the temple's entrance.[20] The accumulation included pottery items such as a cult stand.[21] In the adjacent Square G/13, a large, amorphous plaster installation with grooves was also surrounded by ash and bone deposits.[22] The overall impression of this material is of an open cultic activity space situated between the temple and the altar.

While Building 3177, on the eastern lower terrace, does appear to have palatial characteristics,[23] the Upper Terrace is more difficult to characterize. Clearly, there is an altar that can be linked to sacrificial remains and an adjacent temple. Both, however, are integrated into a well-planned orthogonal system that would seem characteristic of a 'city' plan: streets with buildings serving a variety of functions, including elite households and other public structures. However, this is a far-from-clear way to define the space. First, there is a clear overarching plan with streets terraced to create leveled spaces, yet there are no distinct stand-alone buildings, as one might expect when dealing with private houses. All the structures, if these can even be defined as separate structures, share walls. The finds from the various rooms are also difficult to discern. Indeed, there is evidence of so-called domestic activities in some rooms, such as hearths and grinding installations. However, several of the rooms yielded quite specialized finds, including

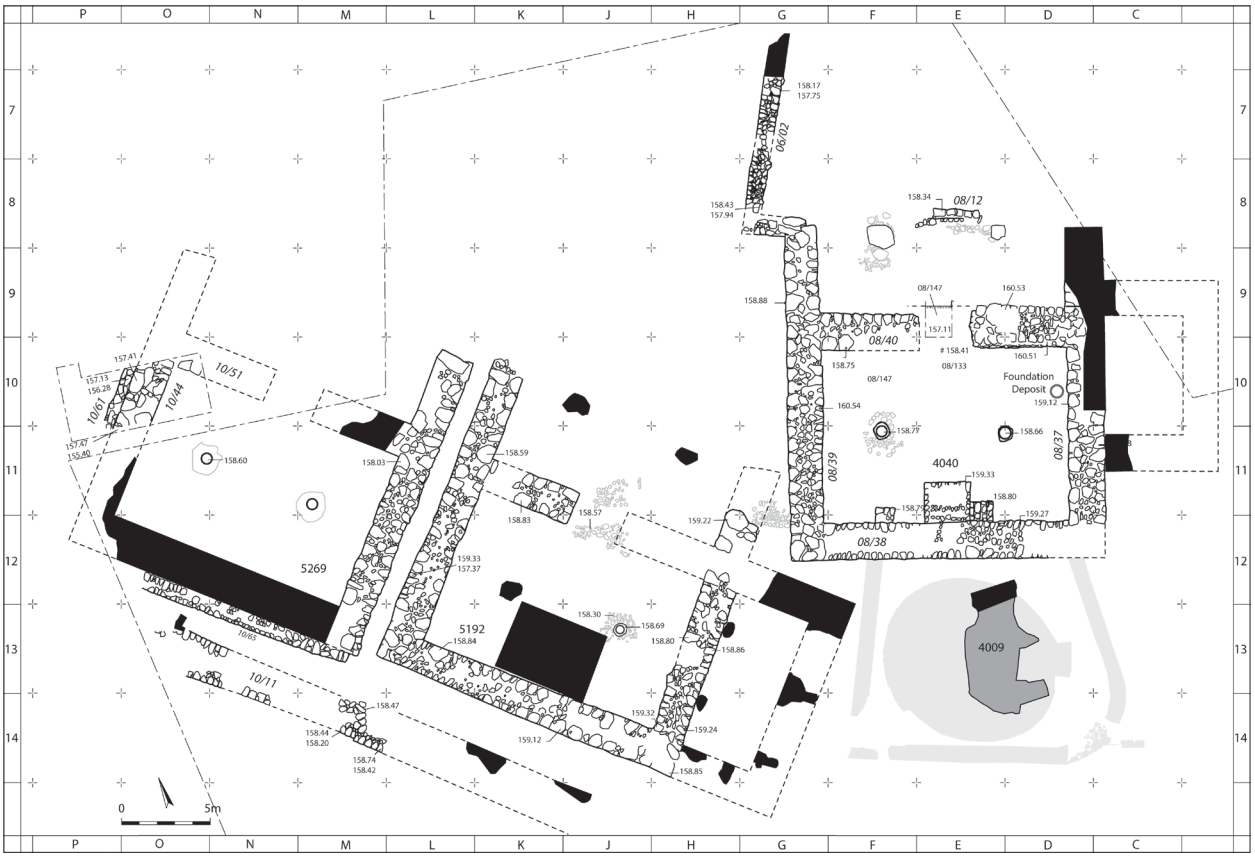


**Figure 5:** Plan of Level J-7 after the TAU excavations. Elements planned in the field by TAU appear as stone-by-stone, while elements seen by Chicago but not replanned appear in black.

mace heads,[24] an Egyptian cylinder seal,[25] abundant specialized lamps,[26] pebbled floors similar to those in Building 3177,[27] and a room paved with imported red-burnished pottery.[28] Overall, the impression is of a highly integrated architectural unit that comprised both the upper and lower terraces and featured consistently specialized finds centered on the more obviously cultic Altar 4017 and Temple 5221.

### OI Stratum XV (TAU Level J-7): The Triple-Temple Complex

The renewed excavations' broadening of the Strata XVII–XVI (TAU Levels J-5–J-6) exposure on the upper terrace made it clear that the strata ended at the same time and that Stratum XV (Level J-7) was a distinct and new stratum across the site (Fig. 5). Attempts to see Temple 4040 being constructed already within the life of Stratum XVI,[29] cannot be sustained by the coherency of the newly revealed architecture and stratigraphic subphases now known to be beneath it. In addition to the internal stratigraphic coherency of both Stratum XVI and XV, constructional aspects of the Triple-Temple Complex demonstrate the seeming contemporaneity of some elements of the Stratum XVI plan with the Stratum XV temples is an artifact of mistakes in the original excavation, as shall be seen below.

The topography of the Stratum XVI compound sloped from south to north on terraces formed by each of its streets (Figs. 3–4). The compound also sloped down dramatically from east to west. Those responsible for the Triple-Temple Complex had to take this into consideration, as reflected in the foundations of each of the temples; each wall from east to west was founded progressively deeper such that the western wall of Temple 5269 is more than 2.5m deeper than the eastern wall of 5192 (Fig. 6). Despite this dramatic slope, the builders intended the floors of each of the three temples to be at the same level, so each wall of each temple was effectively a terrace wall, with the western

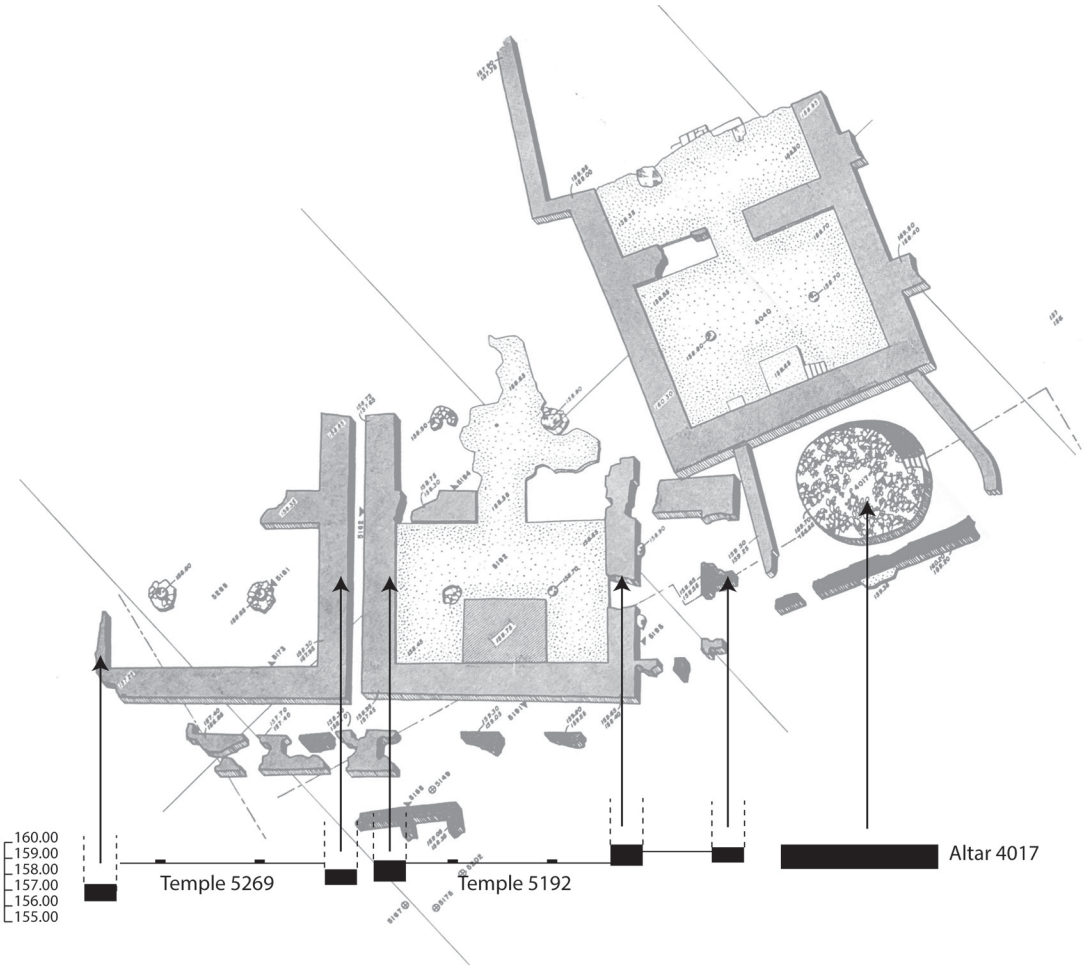


**Figure 6:** Plan and schematic section of the Triple Temple Complex looking north showing the dramatic east–west slope and the progressively deeper foundations required in that direction.

wall of 5269 supporting the entire complex on the western side. Indeed, a stone revetment (Wall 10/J/61) was added to the foundation's outer face at some point (Fig. 5). This western expansion of the upper terrace is a process that can be seen in each successive stratum from as far back as the EB Ib at least; throughout the EB and MB, new terraces were constructed farther and farther west to extend the acropolis.[30]

The south–north slope was also a feature with which the Stratum XV builders had to contend. However, in this direction, their approach was different; they did not adjust the foundations to accommodate the slope but instead created a flat space by cutting down the higher areas of the mound to the south at precisely the planned location of the back walls of each temple. This was done with some precision, indicating that the temples had been laid out in their location ahead of time, and diggers were assigned the task of cutting the mound (and the strata within) at the determined spot. This can be clearly seen behind temples 5192 and 5269 in both plan and section (Figs. 4; 7–8). The foundations cut right through Stratum XVI at the back of the temple wall. In the case of 5192, the cut and the location of the temple's back wall were so precise that the walls of the underlying J-6 appear to abut the later temple. The cut for Temple 5269 was too large, and the Stratum XV builders filled in the extra gap with stones, Wall 10/65 (Figs. 5, 7–8). Behind the Triple-Temple Complex, Stratum XV remains did exist, but on a higher level (the level from which these foundations were cut). Behind Temples 5192 and 5269, a thick wall (Wall 10/11) was built at a level at least 60 cm higher than the base of the temple walls (Figs. 5, 8).


**Figure 7:** Plan of Level J-6, showing the cutting of the Level J-7 architecture.

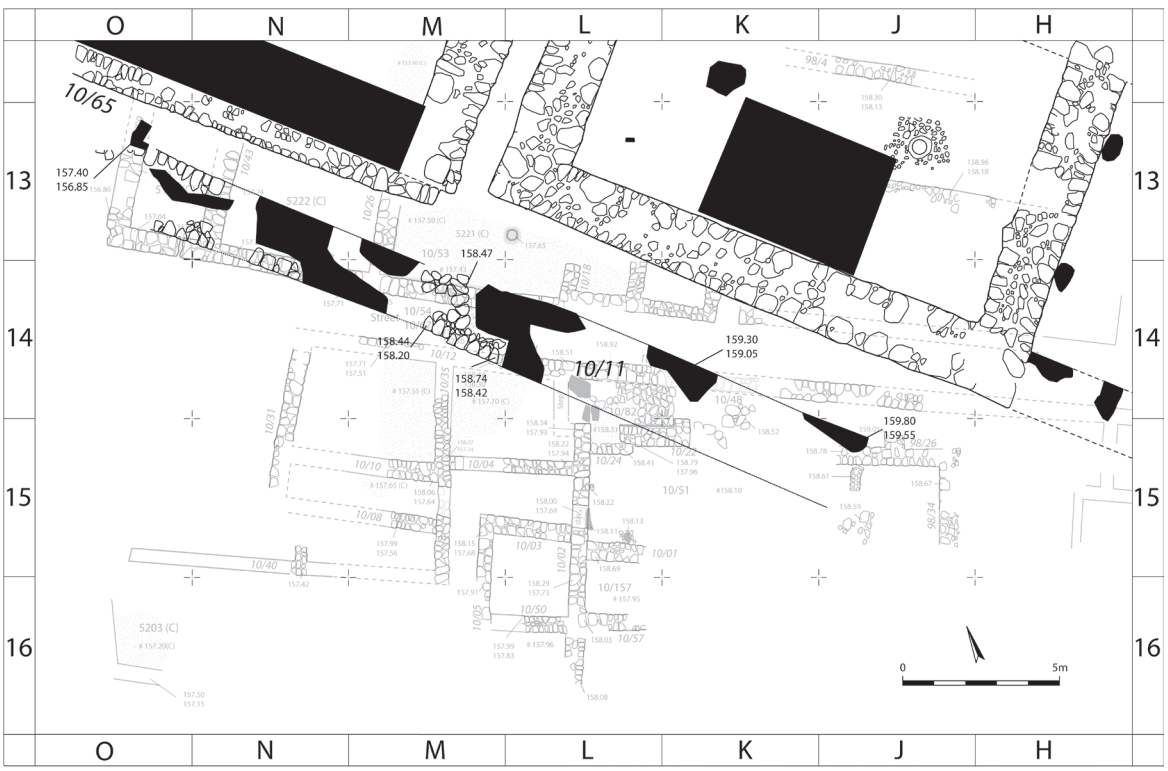


**Figure 8:** Plan of Level J-7, showing the underlying cut architecture of Level J-6.

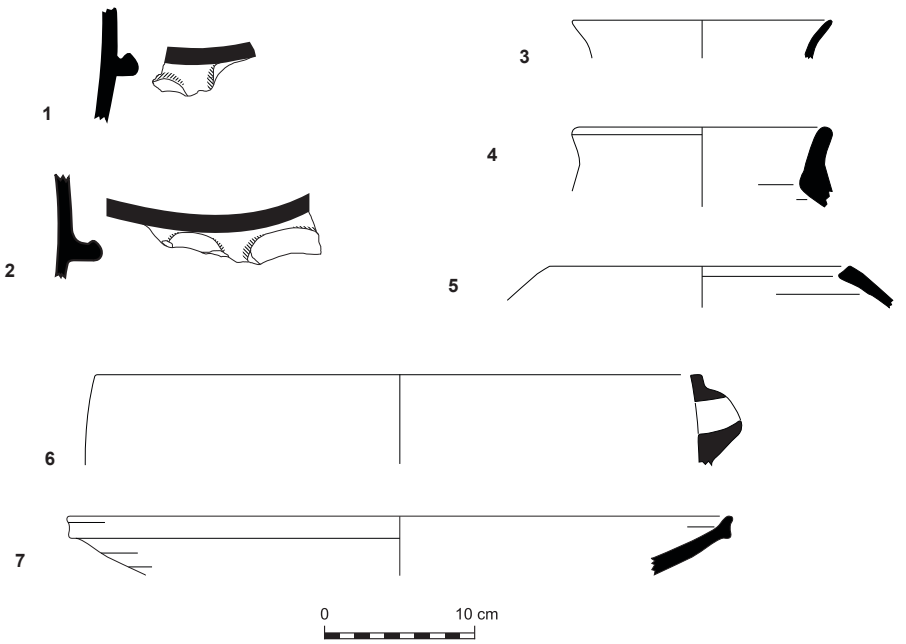


**Figure 9:** Ceramics from the threshold's foundation trench of Temple 4040. Courtesy of the Megiddo Expedition.

Turning to Temple 4040, when the same principles are applied, walls that the excavators considered abutting Temple 4040's foundations now appear to be cut by the structure. These include the 'fence' walls of Altar 4017, all belonging to Stratum XVI.[31] The actual contemporary walls and surfaces behind Temple 4040 are higher and appear on the XIIIB plan by the OI (i.e., Locus 4009) (Figs. 4–5).[32] It should be recalled here that Temple 4040 and Altar 4017 were excavated the season prior to Temples 5192 and 5269, so the realization of the cutting down of these temples was not apparent until later. Further, Wall 10/11 behind Temples 5269 and 5192, which overlays the Level J-6 walls, rises dramatically from west to east such that the easternmost preserved fragment is nearly as high as the top of Altar 4017.

In sum, the Triple-Temple complex was constructed on a flat surface cut into the underlying stratigraphy. The Level J-6 architecture, including Altar 4017, was already buried by the time of the construction, but due to the sloping nature of the underlying strata, appeared to the original excavators as contemporary with the Level J-7 temples. The architecture contemporary with Level J-7 behind Temples 5192 and 5269 is represented by Wall 10/11. The architecture behind and contemporary with Temple 4040 can only be the remains found directly above Altar 4017, which the OI placed on the Stratum XIIB plan (i.e., Locus 4009) (Figs. 4–5), to which we shall return below.

Other than the Triple Temple Complex itself, the large, monumental staircase to the east is worth recalling. These stairs, built on the lower terrace of Stratum XVI, provided access to the area south of the temple complex, demonstrating that Megiddo in Stratum XV was more than just a cultic area, perhaps a larger town occupying much of the later footprint of the modern tell.

### Finds from and Date of Stratum XV (Level J-7)

Finds from the newly reconstituted Stratum XV (Level J-7) present a unified picture dating these buildings to the Southern Levantine Intermediate Bronze Age.

TAU excavations in the threshold of Temple 4040 exposed the remains of the continuous foundation trench of its front closing wall sealed by the original floor of the temple (Fig. 5).[33] Pottery from the foundation trench included items paralleling "post-Khirbet-Kerak" phases from sites in the Galilee and several forms clearly associated with Intermediate Bronze Age types. The latter include two ledge-handles (Fig. 9:1–2) of the flattened 'envelope' type, which are characteristic of the period (=EB IVB).[34] The thin flaring rim (Fig. 9:3) and the thick flaring rim with an interior ridge at the joint of neck and

shoulder (Fig. 9:4) are characteristic of the bag-shaped jars and amphoriskoi of the Intermediate Bronze Age.[35] The holemouth cooking-pot with a thickened rim and ridged lip (Fig. 9:5) has Intermediate Bronze Age parallels at Jebel Qa'aqir.[36] The open bowl with the exterior grooved rim (Fig. 9:7) has its best parallels from the Intermediate Bronze Age single-period site of Ḥorvat Qishron, where there are several permutations of this style of bowls and 'cooking bowls,' characterized by the grooved exterior rim, wheel finish and sooted exteriors associated with cooking.[37] Examples with affinities to this open bowl can also be found at Bet Yeraḥ BS local phase 5 (Period F [MB I]),[38] and may represent the continuation of the form into the MB I. It is also possible that the bowls from Ḥorvat Qishron and the sherd from Megiddo anticipate the traditional MB I open bowl forms with profiled rims.[39] Overall, the latest ceramics from the foundation trench of Temple 4040, which was sealed by the plaster floor of the temple, are of an Intermediate Bronze Age date.

The TAU renewed excavations also discovered a foundation deposit associated with Temple 4040.[40] The unique cache was located just before the entrance to the eastern side chamber of Temple 4040 in a pit beneath the plastered floor of the temple (Figs. 5, 10) (i.e., the cache was placed in the pit during the building's construction process – hence a foundation deposit.[41] It consisted of 16 vessels of local production, but Egyptian in form and manufacture (i.e., straw tempered; Goren 2000). The forms of the vessels are peculiar, hence the difficulty of earlier commenters on the vessels to date them typologically (Fig. 11).[42] In fact, the typology of these vessels is unique to their function as foundation deposits, and the best parallels for both the individual forms and the assemblage come from the foundation deposits of Mentuhotep (11th Dynasty) at Deir el-Bahari (Fig. 12).[43] The four deposits shown in Fig. 12 comprise nearly the same repertoire forms of the Megiddo cache (Fig. 11), including large and medium flaring bowls, small saucers (not lids, *contra* Ilan and Goren),[44] tall U-shaped bowls, and tall drop-shaped bottles with a narrow opening. Small–medium flaring bowls and drop-shaped bottles with a narrow opening are also well-known from other First Intermediate Period assemblages, for example, at Mendes in the T-A Vaults cemetery (Fig. 13).[45] Many of these forms are not part of a standard domestic assemblage and are unique to foundation deposits of the Late Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period. The Megiddo cache also contains two beer jars ('Rolled Rim Storage Jar' according to Joffe),[46] which are classic Old Kingdom forms.

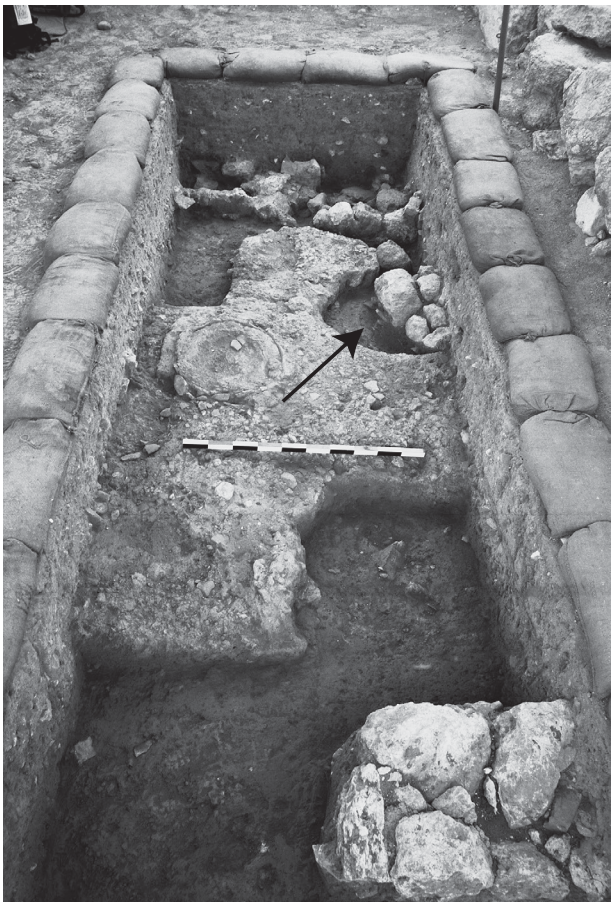

**Figure 10:** Excavation beneath the floor of Temple 4040, looking north. The pit for the Foundation Deposit is on the right, covered with stone capping (black arrow) and cutting through earlier Level J-6 surfaces. Courtesy of the Megiddo Expedition.

The significance of the Mentuhotep foundation deposits is that they give a *terminus ante quem* for the Megiddo cache. During the reign of Mentuhotep, foundation deposits underwent a typological change that can be documented within the development of the Deir el-Bahari complex itself.[47] In the later architectural developments of the complex, a new type of deposit was introduced that included a wider variety of objects, including plaques with the ruler's name, a feature that would become standard for foundation deposits to the end of the Pharaonic period. The parallels to the Megiddo cache, however, fit into the earlier deposits

**Figure 11:** Egyptianized Foundation Deposit of Temple 4040. Courtesy of the Megiddo Expedition.

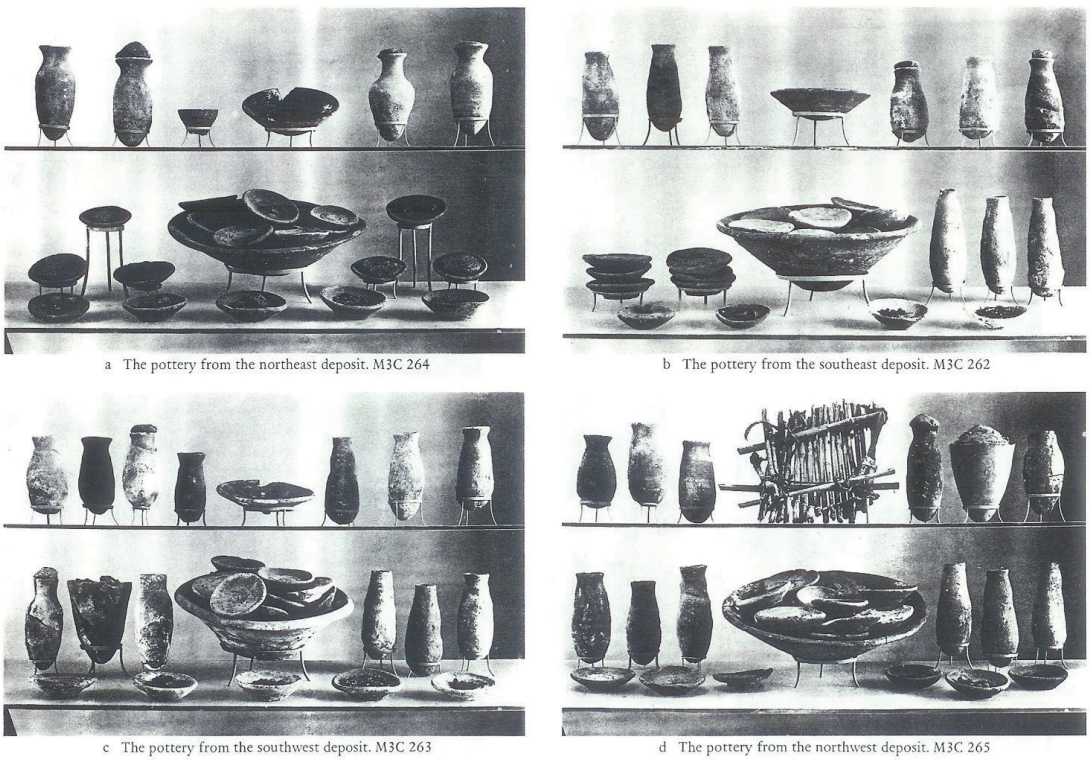


**Figure 12:** Eleventh Dynasty foundation deposits from the tomb of Mentuhotep II at Deir el-Bahari (from Arnold 1979 pl. 32). (a) pottery from the northeast deposit, M3C 264; (b) pottery from the southeast deposit, M3C 262; (c) pottery from the southwest deposit, M3C 263; (d) pottery from the northwest deposit, M3C 265.

at Deir el-Bahari, which typify foundation deposits from the later Old Kingdom (6th Dynasty) such as those from Hierakonpolis.[48] Foundation deposits from the earlier Old Kingdom (i.e., 5th Dynasty and earlier) are typologically different from those of the later Old Kingdom[49] and are not parallel to the Megiddo cache. Perhaps providing a *terminus post quem* is the foundation deposit from the mortuary complex of Raneferef at Abu Sir, which has a quite different ceramic assemblage.[50]

Locus 4009, the paved structure above Altar 4017, argued above to belong to Stratum XV, yielded several finds dating to the Intermediate Bronze Age (Fig. 14).[51] These include an Intermediate Bronze Age jar (Fig. 14.1),[52] typical IB cups (Fig. 14:2–4),[53] a "Nahariya lamp" (Fig. 14:5);[54] an axe (Fig. 14:5),[55] and a copper-alloy double axe (Fig. 14:7).[56] The double axe is of Minoan or Anatolian origin.[57]

In the subsequent Stratum XIV (Level J-8), dating from the early Middle Bronze Age I, Temple 4040 was remodeled into a condensed shrine with an adjacent platform of standing stones.[58] A small room was prepared within the larger room, with the space in between filled with debris. Within this debris was a copper-alloy fenestrated axe (Fig. 14:6).[59] The axe is of a "transitional" type dated to the Intermediate Bronze Age.[60]

## Discussion

The data gathered above provides an unexpected dimension to late 3rd-millennium Megiddo, and several discussion points are in order.

The date of the temples can be determined from various strands of evidence. First, the ceramics sealed beneath the floor of the threshold of Temple 4040 clearly date to the Intermediate Bronze Age. Second, the Egyptianized foundation deposit has a specific typological window of time dating from the 6th Dynasty to the reign of Montuhotep II at the latest. In absolute dates, this is approximately 2400–2050 BCE, squarely within the local Intermediate Bronze Age.[61]

We should also consider another Intermediate Bronze Age assemblage from Megiddo, the Black Wheel-Made Ware (BWMW). More than fifty tombs from the Intermediate Bronze Age were excavated on the east slope, many of which contained pottery connected with northern traditions, especially large quantities of BWMW pottery;[62] thus, Megiddo appears to be the southernmost large site within its distribution range.[63] This assemblage became a


**Figure 13:** Mendes T-A Vault #3 showing medium flaring bowls and tall drop-shaped bottles as a burial assemblage of the First Intermediate Period. Courtesy of the PSU Expedition to Mendes.

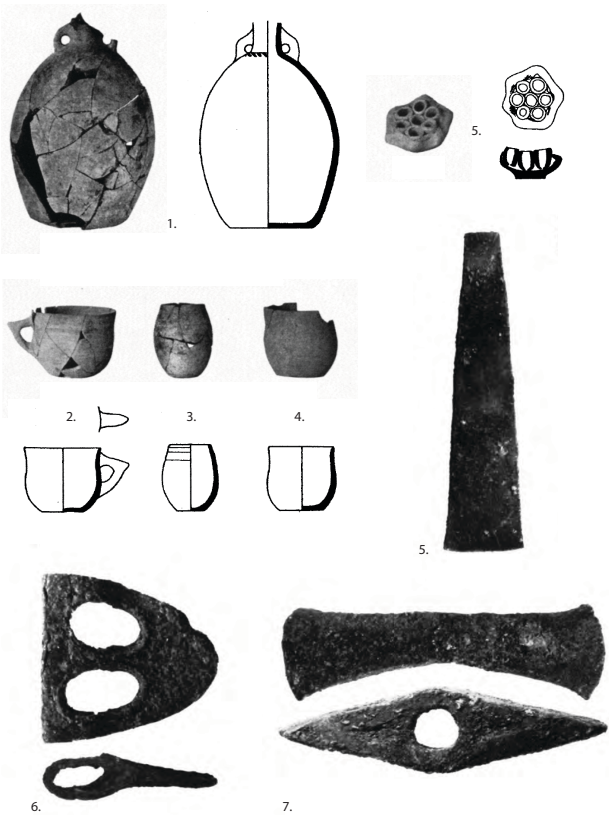


**Figure 14:** Finds from Locus 4009 (compiled from Loud 1948).

hallmark of the northern pottery tradition of the Intermediate Bronze Age, known as "Megiddo Ware".[64] Subsequently, BWMW has been identified at several sites in northern Israel, particularly in the Jezreel Valley and Hula Valley, most numerously at Hazor.[65] One important aspect of BWMW pottery is that it is a style imported from the north,

Lebanon and Syria, where it defines the Syrian Calceiform Culture.[66] Bechar's typological study of BWMW compared to parallels in Syria and Lebanon demonstrated southern Levantine BWMW contemporary with the later styles in Syria dating from the local EB IVb, c. 2300–2000 BCE.[67] These dates were further supported by the radiocarbon study of the Intermediate Bronze Age levels at Tel Hazor, where the largest assemblage of BWMW was found. The samples provided a modeled date range of 2300–2200 BCE (2σ), synchronous with the beginning of the EB IVb in the northern Levant.[68]

It is also to the northern Levant that we must look for parallels to the architectural form of the Triple-Temple Complex. These temples fit well into the Syrian temples *in antis*. Many are known from Syrian sites such as Tell Bi'a, Tell Chuera, Tell Rawda, Tell Halawa A and B, Tell Kabir, Ebla, and so on.[69] The closest parallel to the Megiddo Triple-Temple Compound is the "Temple en L" and the "Chapelle Orientale" at Byblos, of *Piqueté* I–III,[70] especially in the "Temple en L," where the temple form appears in triplicate, like the Megiddo Triple-Temple Complex.[71] These temples are dated to the northern Levantine late EB III and mostly to the EB IV, that is, after 2500 BCE and the end of the southern Levantine EB III.[72]

### A Note on the Typological Sequence of Temples in Third Millennium Megiddo

The sequence of temples at Megiddo shows several typological changes throughout the Bronze Age. The earliest temples at Megiddo are the three Early Bronze Age IB ones (Levels J-2–J-4), which are broad-room in shape and feature tables within the sanctuary—"Broad-room Table Temples"—culminating in the enormous Great Temple which dominated the upper terrace (Fig. 3).[73] A significant change was introduced to the cultic complex in the EB II–III (OI Strata XVII–XVI), with the introduction of a palatial compound at the center of which was round Altar 4017 and at least one temple (5221) of smaller dimensions and a different architectural plan than those preceding it. While still broad or square in *cella*-shape, this temple can be reconstructed with two column bases within the *cella* and a partially enclosed porch, also presumably supported by columns (Fig. 3). The only other regional parallel for both this temple form and its proximity to a round altar is from Khirbet ez-Zeraqon, where Temples B.04 and B.05 match the symmetry, column bases, and enclosed porch of the Megiddo Strata XVII–XVI temple.[74] Bietak has classified this type "Broad-room Temples with Pseudo-antae."[75]

Before the current stratigraphic realization that the Megiddo Altar 4017 does not belong to the Triple-Temple Complex but solely to the Level J-5–J-6 compound, scholars often compared the ez-Zeraqon temples with the Triple-Temple Complex based primarily on the presence of the round altars.[76] This comparison did not sit well with D'Andrea, who argued that they were from two distinct traditions from different influences in Syria and Lebanon.[77] We agree that the comparison is inappropriate, especially since we can now show that the Level J-7 Triple-Temple Complex is significantly later in date than the ez-Zeraqon complex and that we have identified a temple of a "Broad-room Temple with Pseudo-antae" type in Level J-5–J-6 with more concrete parallels at ez-Zeraqon. Megiddo and ez-Zeraqon represent an EB II–III development; whether local or imported remains to be determined.

The Megiddo Triple-Temple Complex of Stratum XV should be seen as a distinct temple type bearing only superficial comparison to the earlier Megiddo Level J-5–J-6 and ez-Zerqaqon compounds. The closest parallel to the Megiddo Triple-Temple Compound is the "Temple en L" and the "Chapelle Orientale" at Byblos, of *Piqueté* I–III,[78] especially in the "Temple en L." where the temple form appears in triplicate like the Megiddo Triple-Temple Complex. It appears that the Stratum XV temples are directly influenced by the architecture and the cult from the north-central Lebanese coast, centered in Byblos.[79]

## Summary and Conclusions

During the EB III, Megiddo featured a large palatial complex with a "Broad-room Temple with Pseudo-antae" (5221) and Altar 4017 at its core (Strata XVII–XVI; Levels J-5–J-6; Fig. 3). The settlement was abandoned around 2500 BCE along with many of the other major centers of the EB III in the southern Levant. The tell was resettled in Stratum XV (Level J-7) with the construction of the Triple-Temple Complex and the monumental staircase to its east—it was a large undertaking that emerged fully formed, not through a slow process of resettlement (Figs. 1, 5). Further to the east, beyond the edges of the town, a cemetery was founded on the bedrock slope.

The Triple-Temple Complex introduced a new style of architecture to the region, that of Temples

*in antis*, a style that emerged in the northern Levant and Upper Euphrates in the local late EB III and EB IV, equivalent to the southern Levantine Intermediate Bronze Age. Finds from the TAU excavations beneath the floor of Temple 4040 yielded Intermediate Bronze Age pottery (Fig. 9) and OI Locus 4009, a built surface overlaying Altar 4017, also provided restorable pottery dated to the Intermediate Bronze Age (Fig. 14). The eastern cemetery also yielded tombs of the Intermediate Bronze Age, several comprising Black Wheel Made Ware, a style from EB IV Syria, whose presence in the Hula and Jezreel Valleys was dated at Hazor by radiocarbon to the 23rd century BCE. Further, two calibrated radiocarbon dates from IB contexts at Megiddo have returned dates of 2334–2149 calBCE and 2200–2060 calBCE (unmodeled), further supporting the dating of IB activity at the site to the later part of this time.[80] Overall, the dates for Stratum XV and its cemetery place it firmly in the 23rd–22nd centuries BCE, that is, the second half of the Intermediate Bronze Age, equivalent to the northern EB IVb.

One peculiar feature of the Triple-Temple Complex is the presence of a clearly Egyptian-style foundation deposit discovered beneath the floor of Temple 4040 (Figs. 10–12). The typology of the deposit matches well deposits in Egypt from the 6th–11th Dynasties, paralleled most strongly by the early deposits of Montuhotep II at Deir el-Bahari, which also provide a *terminus ante quem* for this foundation deposit type. According to the latest radiocarbon study of Dynastic Egypt, this period would range from c. 2400 BCE to c. 2050 BCE.[81] This period matches well the dates provided by the temple *in antis* parallels in Syria and Lebanon and the relative and absolute dates provided by the BWMW.

Stratum XV appears to have ended in abandonment, only to be resettled in the Middle Bronze Age I (Stratum XIV; Level J-8). For the most part, domestic structures were built over the Triple-Temple Complex;[82] however, Temple 4040 was reconfigured into a small shrine with an adjacent open-air space with standing stones.[83] Radiocarbon studies from the earliest MB I levels at Megiddo date these levels to the early 20th century BCE.[84]

With new data and updated stratigraphic analysis, the Megiddo Stratum XV Triple-Temple Complex can be better understood within the broader scope of the late 3rd-millennium Levant. Stratum XV at Megiddo stands out as enigmatic only when it is considered in light of the southern Levantine Intermediate Bronze Age. This is an era generally understood as an age of post-urban collapse, village-level society, and pastoral nomadic subsistence. The suggestion that a monumental city such as Megiddo Stratum XV could exist in this context would immediately cause incredulity and disdain. Indeed, that is what basically happened. The re-attribution of the Triple-Temple Complex from the Intermediate Bronze Age, as suggested by the excavators, to the Early Bronze Age III by Dunayevsky and Kempinski, de Miroschedji, and others, was based on the seeming impossibility of Intermediate Bronze Age southern Levantines to build cities and monumental architecture.

However, Stratum XV Megiddo does not seem so enigmatic when considered in light of the northern Levantine EB IV. It would hardly stick out on the Lebanese coast, in the Orontes plain, or in the upper Euphrates. We need to change our perception to understand that Megiddo (and perhaps Hazor), in the second half of the Intermediate Bronze Age, is within the cultural sphere of the northern Levantine EB IV and represents the southernmost sprawl of the northern Levantine culture.

In this regard, Megiddo Stratum XV can be understood alongside some of the better-known historical scenarios known from that time. Stratum XV dates roughly to the 23rd–21st centuries BCE, EB IVB in the north, and, in Egyptian Chronology, the 6th–11th Dynasties. I believe the Egyptian connection helps to pare down the date range. The Egyptian-style foundation deposit is uniquely Egyptian in manufacture and suggests the presence of actual Egyptians, probably with state sponsorship. It seems unlikely that this could have been achieved during the bulk of the First Intermediate Period. On the bookends of the chronology, however, during the 6th Dynasty or the reign of Montuhotep, it is entirely plausible that an Egyptian expeditionary force could visit Megiddo;[85] in the 6th Dynasty, especially during the reign of Pepi I and Merenre, when Iny and Weni carried out several expeditions to locations in the Levant, including Byblos.[86]

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## Notes

1 That is, their "Middle Bronze Age I," as it was known in contemporary terminology; Loud 1948, 5. In consultation with Albright, he also attributed it to Tel Beit Mirsim I–H; Loud 1948, 5; Albright 1949, 2151. Wright (1950), Kenyon (1958), and Thompson (1970) made similar attributions.

2 Loud 1948, 78–84.

3 Cline 2020, *passim*.

4 For the details and references to these debates, see Ussishkin 2015, 95. In light of the new data presented here and elsewhere (Adams 2013b; 2017a; 2017c), much of this debate remained purely academic.

5 They carried out small soundings over a few days in 1965; Dunayevsky and Kempinski 1966; 1973; Kempinski 1989.

6 de Miroschedji 2001.

7 Esse 1991.

8 The main stratigraphic results are discussed in Adams 2013a; 2013b; Adams and Bos 2013. For additional relevant data and studies, see Adams 2017a; 2017b; 2017c; Ussishkin 2015; 2018; and the present paper.

9 The reader is directed to summaries of these earlier studies in Ussishkin 2015.

10 Adams, Finkelstein and Ussishkin 2014. The temple is dated by the excavators to EB Ib (ESL 3 according to the ARCANE terminology based on ceramics, radiocarbon, and stratigraphy).

11 Adams 2013b, 71–72.

12 Adams 2013b, 72–74.

13 Loud 1948; Joffe 2000; Greenberg 2006; Adams 2013c. There is some discussion about whether or not there is any EB II occupation at the site, which is outside the scope of this paper.

14 Regev et al. 2014. The less-precise end date of 2600/2500 BCE results from the fact that no radiocarbon samples from the succeeding Stratum XV (Level J-7) were available for the study and were thus not included in the model to constrain the date of the last sample beyond the $\pm 1\sigma$ range of the latest sample, which could date from as early as 2600 or as late as c. 2500 BCE.

15 Loud 1948; Ussishkin 2015; 2018.

16 Finkelstein, Ussishkin, and Peersmann 2006; Wapnish and Hesse 2000.

17 Loud 1948, fig. 393 (Square N/12). Cf. Loud 1948, fig. 393 (Square N/14); Loud 1948, fig. 174.

18 Adams 2013b, 117.

19 Ibrahim and Mittmann 1994; Genz 2002; D'Andrea 2020.

20 Finkelstein, Ussishkin and Peersmann 2006, 42 fig. 3.22.

21 Greenberg 2006 fig. 10.2: 12, erroneously attributed to Level J-4.

22 Finkelstein, Ussishkin and Peersmann 2006, 42 fig. 3.22.

23 E.g., Miroschedji 2001.

24 Blockman and Sass 2013, 889, No. 407, fig. 15.9.

25 Brandl 2013, 993–1000, figs. 18.1–2.

26 Adams 2013c, 305–324.

27 Loud 1948, figs. 177, 393; cf. Loud 1948, figs. 172–175.

28 Adams 2013c, 324–327, table 8.1; Greenberg 2006.

29 E.g., Kempinski, 1989; de Mirsoschedji, 2001.

30 See Adams and Bos 2013, 120, 125–126, fig. 2.82; Schumacher 1908, 39–40.

31 This includes the fragment of a wall originally used by Dunayevsky and Kempinsky (1973) ("Wall A") to suggest that Temple 4040 predated Temples 51129 and 5269. They understood this wall as bonded to the foundations of Temple 4040 and going under the adjacent Temple 5129. The TAU excavations also rechecked this wall and found the description of Wall A as 'bonded' to be overstated, with no clear point of contact between that wall and Temple 4040 (more than 15 cm between them). As we can see now, all the

cut walls of the earlier Strata XVI–XVII appear to be bonded because the foundations for the triple-temple complex were so precisely cut.

32 Loud 1948, Fig. 369.

33 Adams 2013b, 96–99; 2013c, 328–329.

34 Guy and Engberg 1938, 148; Richard 1980, 13 fig. 1:2, 3, 7; Prag 1974, 1986; Wightman 1988; Helms 1989, 19–20, fig. 7: a–d; Palumbo 1990, fig. 47; Palumbo and Peterman 1993, figs. 1–2; Covello-Paran 2009, fig. 9.

35 Guy 1938, e.g., pls. 20, 21; Amiran 1970, pls. 22–23; Schaub 1973, fig. 6.2.

36 Gitin 1975, figs. 2.3–2.4.

37 Smithline 2002, figs. 10.8, 13.4–13.5, 13.7; see especially his discussion of cooking bowls and parallels, p. 30; examples also known from the IB at ʻEin el-Hilu.

38 Greenberg et al. 2006, fig. 5.100, especially No. 2.

39 See, for example, Amiran 1970, pl. 25.

40 Adams 2017a, 2017c.

41 see detailed discussion in Adams 2017c, 156–158.

42 Joffe 2000; Ilan and Goren 2003.

43 Arnold 1979, 49–57, pls. 28–32.

44 Ilan and Goren 2003, 44.

45 Redford 2010, fig. 4.18, 21; Redford 2020.

46 Joffe 2000.

47 Arnold 1979; Weinstein 1973.

48 Weinstein 1973, 32.

49 Weinstein 1973, 30.

50 Verner, Bárta and Český 2006, 48.

51 Loud 1948, 176.

52 Loud 1948, pls. 16:8, 117:5.

53 Loud 1948, pls. 16:16–18; 117:8–10.

54 Loud 1948, pls. 16:21; 117:11. These lamps are usually associated with the early MB I, so they might be out of place here or represent an early version of these cultic lamps.

55 Loud 1948, pl. 182:8.4

56 Loud 1948, pl. 182:7.

57 Miron 1992, 80, 85; Yasur-Landau 2015, 146; 2020. In general, quite a large number of Intermediate Bronze Age finds are associated with OI Loci affiliated with Strata XV–XVI, which probably originate in Stratum XV. See Loud 1948, *passim*; Guy and Engberg 1938, *passim*.

58 Adams, forthcoming. Stratum XIV has traditionally been dated to the Intermediate Bronze Age (see, e.g., Ussishkin 2015; 2018), primarily on the conceptual basis that such an "ugly" reuse of the Stratum XV Temple 4040 could only be the product of the Intermediate Bronze Age people. The current excavations uncovered parts of Stratum XIV in Area J (Adams and Bos 2013), demonstrating that the stratum unequivocally dates to the early Middle Bronze Age I and represents the re-establishment of settlement at Megiddo in that Period. This will be dealt with in detail in Adams, forthcoming.

59 Loud 1948, pl. 182:3; Kempinski 1989, fig. 26:15; Miron 1992, pl. 15:231; Yasur-Landau 2015, 146–147.

60 Miron 1992, 58; Ussishkin 2018, 164–166.

61 Bronk Ramsey et al. 2010; Regev et al. 2012; 2014.

62 Guy and Engberg 1938, 148–149.

63 Welton and Cooper 2014, fig. 1; Bechar 2015.

64 Amiran 1970.

65 Bechar 2015.

66 Guy and Engberg 1938; Ussishkin 2015, 166–170; Bechar 2015; Bunimovitz and Greenberg 2004; 2006. It should also be noted that Intermediate Bronze Age plain ware ceramics from northern Israel, Syria, and Lebanon show strong affinities with each other as well; for example, with envelope ledge handles, as seen in the foundation trench of Temple 4040 (Braemer and Échallier 2000; Braemer 2002, 12–15). Megiddo Tomb types with IB pottery are also recognized to have inspiration in Syria (Greenhut 1995).

67 Bechar 2015, 49–54.

68 Lev, Bechar, and Boaretto 2021.

69 see Castel 2008; Castel 2010; Cooper 2006.

70 Lauffray 2008, 331–353.

71 Lauffray 2008, 331; Sala 2008, 190–201.

72 Castel 2010.

73 See discussion of this classification in Adams, Finkelstein and Ussishkin 2014, 298–299, fig. 9. To this architectural tradition, one can assign the Stratum II sanctuary at Hartuv (Mazar and Miroschedji 1996), the Acropolis Temple at ʻAi (Marquet-Krause 1935), Sanctuary B at Bab edh-Dhra (Rast and Schaub 2003), Temple F1 at Khirbet al-Batrawy (Nigro 2008), and the Bâtiment Blanc at Yarmut (Miroschedji 1988).

74 Genz 2002. Recently, what appears to be another example of a round altar has been excavated at Qiryat Atta (Assaf Kleiman, personal communication).

75 Bietak 2019. M. D'Andrea has suggested that this type should be traced to the Tell Halawa B

in *Bau* II and the "Latest Temple" at Al-Rawda in north Syria (D'Andrea 2020), though this hypothesis does not yet have wide acceptance.

[76] Kamlah, 2012; Sala 2015; Ussishkin 2015.

[77] D'Andrea 2020.

[78] Lauffray 2008, 331–353. D'Andrea (2020, 4) makes a distinction between broad vs. long temples *in antis*, in this particular case paralleling the Megiddo Triple-Temple Complex only with the earlier EB III strata (*Piqueté* I). While in the long run, a trend from broad to long rooms does seem to be the case (see Matthiae 2015 for Ebla), I am not convinced that this feature of temples *in antis* has, by itself, a significant typological meaning or any chronological decisiveness, especially in this relatively narrow window of time during which the transition toward a long-room form is occurring differentially across space and time.

[79] D'Andrea 2020, 16. However, she saw this as two influences occurring at the same time from different directions, whereas we can now see it as a chronological shift—from the Euphrates in the EB II–III (Megiddo J-5–6; ez-Zeraqon) to Lebanon in the Intermediate Bronze Age (Megiddo Stratum XV).

[80] Adams et al. forthcoming.

[81] Bronk Ramsay et al. 2010.

[82] Adams and Bos 2013; Adams and Cradic 2022.

[83] The re-urbanization of Megiddo in the MB I, and in particular, the ongoing development of the cultic compound during that time, is addressed in Adams, forthcoming.

[84] Unmodeled; Adams et al., forthcoming.

[85] Several texts from the reign of Montuhotep II allude to a campaign and trade in that direction. Redford 1993, 69–70; Ward 1971.

[86] Marcolin and Espinel 2011.