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# The Khirbet Kerak Publication Project

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Work on the preparation of the Early Bronze Age material from Khirbet Kerak continued throughout the year. The main effort was concentrated primarily on the later Early Bronze II-III periods (3100-2300 B.C.). The pottery corpus of EB II-III material has been established, and it now includes most of the standard forms found at the site.

In addition to the day to day operation of drawing, organizing, and registering finds from the various trenches, I have begun to enter onto the computer the extensive statistical information recorded during the 1963-64 seasons at Khirbet Kerak. Such careful tabulation of sherds from excavated sites was unusual in the early 1960's when the site was excavated, and we are fortunate that these techniques were employed by the excavators. These "sherd counts" will enable us to conduct a more thorough study of the Early Bronze Age wares excavated from Khirbet Kerak than has been done at any other Early Bronze Age site in Palestine.

Such a ware study becomes increasingly more important as I begin the study of the Early Bronze I material. The EB I period is far different from EB II-III in both material culture and in subsistence pattern. The EB I period exhibited far more regional variants than are seen in the later EB II-III periods. Ceramic types from EB I found at Khirbet Kerak are localized

in style. In fact three of the main ceramic types, Grain Wash Ware, Gray Burnished Ware, and Cracked Ware, are found only in northern Palestine, and in the case of Cracked Ware possibly only in the eastern half of the northern region.

Although this ceramic regionalism is helpful in determining cultural boundaries, it also sharply limits the amount of comparative material available. Thus, the internal chronology of the site becomes of crucial importance. A thorough quantitative ware study will allow us to begin formulating a strong internal and then regional chronology.

Because of the complete lack of inscriptions from the Early Bronze Age, we are forced to rely on archaeological evidence, primarily changing pottery styles and settlement patterns, to arrive at a fairly complete picture of life in third millennium B.C. Palestine. The transition from EB I to EB II-III is clearly a case where both ceramic and settlement pattern evidence coincide. Although regional distinctions certainly existed in EB II-III, it is apparent that the pottery repertoire throughout Palestine was much more homogeneous than is evident in the more localized styles of EB I. The limited regional and intraregional styles gradually became standardized in EB II-III.

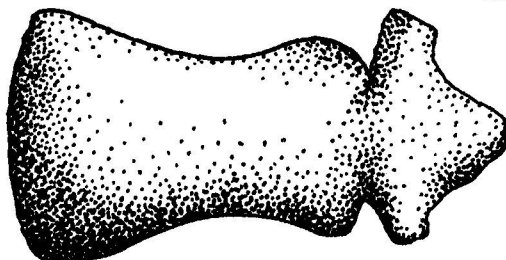
Settlement pattern evidence corroborates such a shift. The EB I settlements



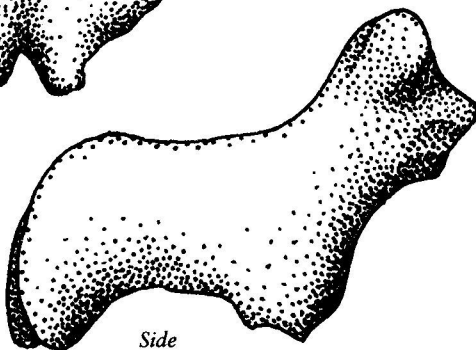
*Ram's head applied to a notched jar handle. From Khirbet Kerak. By III-77.*

were fairly numerous, and were mainly small unfortified agricultural villages. In EB II-III the number of settlements dropped substantially, but many of the remaining settlements underwent a dramatic increase in size. The resulting population agglomeration was accompanied by the construction of massive fortifications and public buildings. In short, the EB II-III period witnessed the establishment of urban life in Palestine. The increase in trade and interaction at both the interregional and international level affected the more parochial cultural traditions and led to the more homogeneous material culture of the latter part of the Early Bronze Age.

The EB II-III periods at Khirbet Kerak have been analyzed in detail.



*Top*



*Side*

*Early Bronze Age figurine of a bovine. Top and side view. BY III-47. (Drawing by Timothy E. Gray). Scale 1:1.65*

The preparation of the manuscript for publication will be the main goal of this next year's work. I have also begun the process of sorting and analyzing the EB I pottery and objects. During the next year I will establish a pottery typology for the EB I and complete the stratigraphic analysis of the Khirbet Kerak trenches.