

Chapter 3

The Funeral Kit Model



The premise for the funeral kit is based on the MB II–LB tomb complex from Ashkelon.¹¹ This tomb complex yielded numerous burials and grave goods that had suffered relatively little post-depositional disturbance, which afforded me a unique opportunity to observe Canaanite burial practices.¹² As mentioned above, grave goods can be separated into three categories: personal, status, and essential (Binford 1972; O'Shea 1984; Parker-Pearson 2000; Shay 1983; Wason 2004). After examining the field notes and top plans relative to the burial groups and sorting the grave goods according to the three categories previously identified, it became clear that individuals were deposited with multiple ceramic vessels, scarabs, and toggle pins irrespective of sex or age; these were repeated with nearly every burial. Although stated in chapter one, it is worth reiterating here that the focus of this study is mortuary uniformity, specifically the essential grave goods that comprised the funeral kit. Therefore, the objects considered to identify mortuary variability, such as personal or status items, will not be addressed here. While these objects held significance in the funerary realm, the discussion of uniformity in the mortuary setting will focus on items that archaeologists consider to be essential for a proper burial.

The pattern of recurring vessel forms that emerged among the burials suggests that the deceased were buried with ceramic types that fit

into three basic groups: packaging for commodities (such as juglets for perfumes or oils), food-service vessels (such as platters, large bowls, and pitchers), and tableware (such as bowls and cups). These probably reflect the deceased's portion of the funerary meal that was held in their honor. Nonceramic items such as scarabs and toggle pins were also deposited with most individuals.¹³ It was the repetition of these items that led me to reconsider traditional interpretations of grave goods found in Canaanite tombs, which, until now, have tended to focused on personal identity, wealth, and social status. While the study of all grave goods is vital to our overall understanding of ancient mortuary practice, it quickly became apparent that the repeated items that comprise the essential category deserved greater attention. The analysis of this equipment and its relationship to the corpse offers a firm basis for establishing the existence of a designated funeral kit; specifically, a predictable set of ceramic and non-ceramic items that probably reflect the invisible ritual aspects of the funerary ceremony, which may not necessarily have been intended to reveal social complexity, position within the community, or a person's age or sex.

The notion that a defined and relatively fixed set of objects forming a recognizable pattern, specifically a funeral kit that is intentionally deposited with most interments, without discrimination, drastically alters the way in which some grave goods should be interpreted. The apparently egalitarian nature of the funeral kit would suggest that certain grave goods convey more than the traditional interpretations have allowed. The relatively fixed pattern of ceramic vessel types in the funeral kit would seem to suggest that each individual received equal funerary treatment. This sort of mortuary uniformity should be interpreted as the artifactual representation of a proper funerary ceremony, which was provided for all who died regardless of their age, sex, or status in the community. The funeral kit, then, reflects long-established, time-honored funerary rites and represents the deceased's portion of the funerary banquet. Presumably these provided the deceased with sustenance and may also have served as an offering to the ancestors and deities (Assmann 1990; Bloch-Smith 1992; Bunson 2002; Emery 1962; Garnsey 1999; Ginsberg 1992a, 1992b; Parker-Pearson 2005; Pitard 2002; Ritner 1997). This chapter will introduce the notion of the funeral kit based on my observations of the burials in Ashkelon's chamber tombs. In order to paint a full picture of the funeral kit, the

methodology, the tomb's architecture, the four phases of the funeral kit, and the burial clusters will be discussed.

Methodology

Thanks to meticulous recording during excavation, reconstructing ancient activity in the chambers was an almost-effortless task. During excavation, location of burials within the chamber, elevation, orientation, length and width of the skeleton, burial position, age, sex, placement of associated grave goods, and proximity to other burials were carefully recorded. Each burial was fixed onto a top plan, and photographed, and an inventory of each item and extensive notes were made. Based on these data, the disturbed burials (those that had been pushed aside to make room for the new interment) and the intact contexts were identified. Each interment's set of grave goods were then reassembled.¹⁴ Once the funerary sets were reconstructed, the repetitious pattern of some items was obvious, making their classification into the three categories (personal, status, and essential) straightforward. After identifying the essential equipment, the ceramics were sorted according to type and (perceived) function as commodities, food-service vessels, or tableware. From there, the burial groups were organized into chronological order based on ceramic typology. Among the nonceramic items, the repeated deposit of scarabs and toggle pins with most interments also became evident. Those items that were either nonrecurring or were repeated infrequently (with fewer than three to five burials) or appeared to be gender and/or age specific, were not considered to be part of the funeral kit as these were probably indicators of the persona and status of the individual with whom they were deposited. Although the items that address status and persona are equally important to our overall understanding of ancient burials, they will not be discussed in this study.

It has been suggested that due to the proximity of some burials, the assignment of grave goods to one burial over and against another may not be completely accurate. Certainly, there were several instances where individuals were deposited in clusters and their grave goods may have comingled. In such instances, taking into account the field data, the assignment of vessels to burial groups was based on the elevation, stratigraphy, proximity to the corpse, and information gathered from single, nonclustered burials, which suggested that grave goods could be

located up to 70 cm away from the corpse. Nevertheless, the possible misassignment of one or several vessels does not ultimately detract from the basic notion of the funeral kit.

It is important to note that the data recovered from Ashkelon's tomb complex and discussed here are preliminary and subject to change as a result of further analysis. The Ashkelon data presented here and subsequent discussion should not be considered a final report or interpretation on Ashkelon's mortuary material. When complete, the results of the mortuary analysis will be published in the final report series for Ashkelon. Nevertheless, even at this early stage it is possible to offer some preliminary observations, recognizing that once the entire corpus of mortuary data—material culture and physical remains—have been thoroughly analyzed, the observations and interpretations offered here may require revision. Finally, the observations and interpretations offered here are entirely my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon.

Architecture of the Ashkelon, Tomb Complex

The Ashkelon, chamber-tomb complex, situated in the northern half of Grid 50 (Figure 3.1), was excavated from 1996 to 2000, ranges in date from the MB IIB/C to the LB I–II periods,¹⁵ and was hewn into a large subterranean, sandstone block. The sixteen chamber tombs that have thus far been identified are oriented in a north-south direction and can be arranged into arranged into four subcomplexes, which will be described below.¹⁶ The earliest and most elaborate of the subcomplexes was Chamber 5 (Figure 3.1). The material it contained dated mostly to the MB IIB/C with limited remains from the LB I period, suggesting it may have been hewn in the MB IIB and went out of use in the very early LB I period. The intricacy of this tomb can be found in its ten components: the central floor, a series of seven subfloor niches or repositories, the doorway/passageway/shaft, and tunnel to Chamber 8.

The niches were situated around the perimeter of the tomb, next to the walls, where they extended below floor level. Their dimensions averaged 1.35 m in length, 0.88 m in width, and 0.70 m in depth. Originally, the niches appear to have housed primary burials and their grave goods. Varying quantities of primary interments of differing age and sex were contained within most of the niches. For example, the West Repository contained two burials: one adult male and one

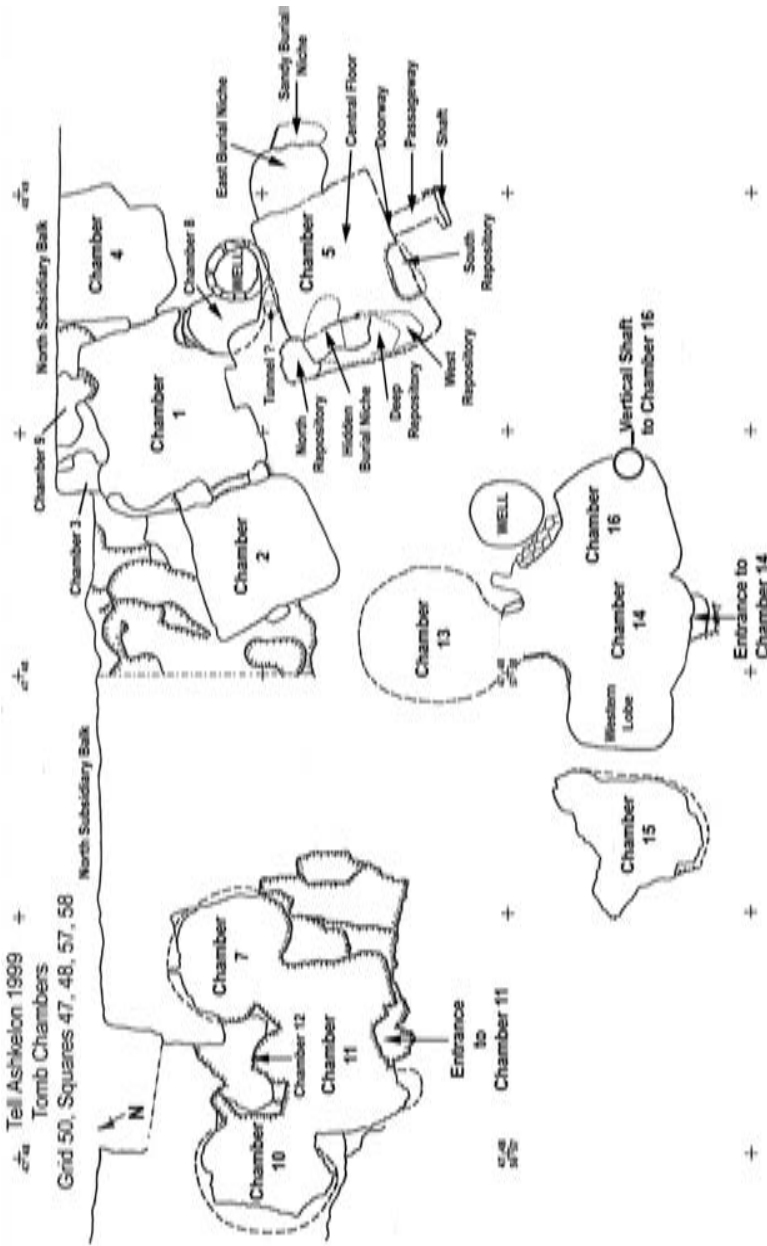


Figure 3.1. Ashkelon chamber tomb complex. Grid 50. Original plan adapted for use here. Courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. Used here with permission. Not to scale.

adult female. The Sandy Burial Niche had eight burials including seven adults, which included both males, females, and one child. In some cases, individuals were deposited very close to each other. For example in the East Burial Niche, Burial 81 was above Burials 82, 83, and 84, which were next to and overlapping each other. In one of the niches of the South Repository, no intact deposits were discovered. Instead, this niche appears to have functioned as a receptacle for older disarticulated interments. The orientation of interments was largely dependent upon the orientation of the niche.

Practically speaking, niches were useful in maintaining the integrity of the corpse and its grave goods. It may also have helped maintain familial organization in the tomb, which was probably shared by a larger kinship group. More will be said about this below. Although useful, the niches filled up quickly, requiring surviving family members to create more space, which resulted in a change of burial practice in Chamber 5. Sometime in the later phase of the MB IIC, rather than depositing the deceased into one of the niches, individuals were temporarily laid to rest on the central floor, surrounded by his/her grave goods. Later, when space was required for a new interment, older, decarnated remains and their associated grave goods were removed from the central floor to an area above the niches next to the chamber walls. It may be that the impractical nature of the niches led to a shift in the architectural configuration of tombs that were constructed later.

In the latter part of the MB IIC, Subcomplexes 1/2/4; 7/10/11/12 and 13/14/16 (Figure 3.1) were hewn and utilized through the LB IIA period.¹⁷ Instead of a central chamber with niches, as in Chamber 5, these subcomplexes consisted of a central room from which lobes or chambers extended. Interments and their grave goods, for the most part, were deposited in clusters next to chamber walls, leaving the central floor relatively empty.¹⁸ For example, Subcomplex 7/10/11/12 (Figure 3.1) consisted of a large central rectangular-shaped room with rounded corners; Chamber 11, and two other rooms, Chambers 7 and 10, which were roundish in shape, extended northward from the northeastern and northwestern corners respectively. Entry to a third room, Chamber 12, was gained through a doorway in the north-central wall of Chamber 11; however, this tomb has yet to be fully excavated, because it extends under the northern balk. In the middle of the southern wall, a kind of rocky protrusion jutted out into the chamber. This feature probably represents the remnant of steps leading down into the tomb

from the shaft and doorway, the remains of which were removed during quarrying activities. Subcomplex 13/14/16 (Figure 3.1) consisted of a central room, Chamber 14, which was flanked by three other rooms: Chamber 16 to the east, the Western Lobe to the west, and Chamber 13 to the north. Curiously, tomb builders chiseled through the sandstone block into the sand that supports it to a depth of 0.78 m, creating a soft, sandy floor onto which initial burials were placed. The earliest remains deposited in this subcomplex date to the MB IIC and extend through the LB I/IIA period (Baker 2006). This subcomplex was entered through a doorway in the southern wall of Chamber 14 (Figure 3.1). The doorway was accessed from above by a shaft, much of which was removed during ancient quarrying activities; however, traces of its outline can still be detected in the remaining unquarried block. The doorway consisted of a large stone slab held in place by round or oval boulders and mud mortar. Part of the slab and some of the boulders were found in situ (Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2. Ashkelon, Chamber 14. Doorway, slab, and steps. In situ door slab to Chamber 14 held in place by field stone and mortar. Courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon (photograph by J. L. Baker). Not to scale.

As with the niches in Chamber 5, orientation of the body was a practical matter, dictated by the chamber's design. For example, individuals placed along the northern wall of Chamber 13 (Figure 3.1) were oriented in an east-west direction, with the head toward the east. Those next to the western or eastern walls were oriented in a north-south direction, with the head in the north. To make space for new burials, older interments were either pushed aside or newer interments were placed in clusters, on top of or overlapping older ones. Subcomplexes 7/10/11/12 and 13/14/16 serve as the best examples of the form and function of this architectural style and contained the best preserved burials relevant to this study.

Identification of the Ashkelon Funeral Kit

The identification of the funeral kit at Ashkelon is based on forty-six primary and primary-disturbed (mostly intact or somewhat disturbed) and twelve secondary depositional (disturbed to pushed aside) groups from the sixteen excavated tombs mentioned above.¹⁹ The identification of primary and secondary depositional groups was made on the basis of the top plans, photographs, the daily journal, and the Burial Feature Sheets in the field notebooks, from which the clusters of grave goods and their relationship to a given skeleton were observed. The compilation of each funeral kit was based on the proximity and location of the components with respect to the skeletal remains at the time of excavation as noted in the field records.

Since many of the primary and primary-disturbed groups suffered relatively little postdepositional disturbance it was possible to observe the distance at which grave goods were placed vis-à-vis the body; up to approximately 50–70 cm away most cases. Additionally, grave goods were predictably placed around the head, torso, pelvis, and legs and/or feet of the deceased. From the tombs excavated thus far, approximately 1,441 ceramic vessels have been recovered. After assembling the primary/primary-disturbed and secondary depositional burial groups, roughly 873 ceramic items (61%) were treated as relevant to the current study of the funeral kit. Of these items, approximately 441 were assigned to the primary/primary-disturbed groups and 432 to secondary groups. The remaining 568 vessels could not be assigned to any group because of post-depositional disturbance. Of the ceramic corpus used in the sampling, 27% could be found near the cranium, 25% near the upper torso, 11% at the pelvis, and 15% around the legs and/or

feet. The remaining 22% came from undetermined locations around the body (Figure 3.3A). Table 3.1 illustrates the distribution of each vessel with respect to the specific locations around the corpse. Within the ceramic corpus, bowls/plates (39%) and juglets (39%) were deposited with burials in the greatest quantities. The next most frequently

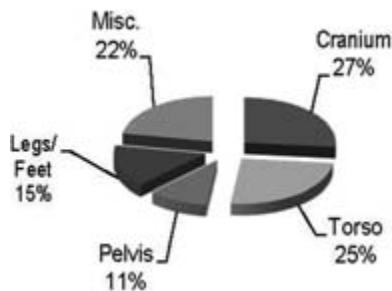


Figure 3.3A. Distribution of ceramic grave goods around the corpse by percentage.

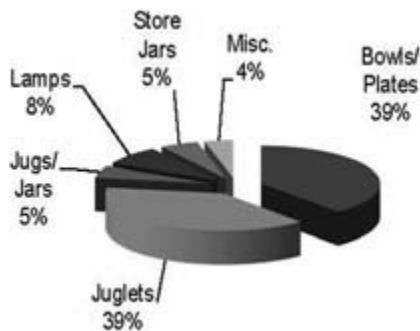


Figure 3.3B. Percentage of ceramic forms among the grave assemblages.

Table 3.1. Summary of the distribution of the ceramic vessels of the funeral kit at Ashkelon according to type around the corpse as observed at the time of excavation.

Location	Bowls/Platters	Juglets	Jugs/Jars	Lamps	Storage Jars	Misc.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Cranium	30.7	25.4	37.5	26.3	4.2	11.1
Upper Torso	26.3	24.7	20.8	21.1	12.5	55.6
Pelvis	6.7	16.8	4.2	15.8	0	0
Legs/Feet	18.4	12.4	16.7	23.7	8.3	5.5
Misc.	17.9	20.7	20.8	13.1	7.5	27.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

deposited types were lamps at 8%, followed by jugs and jars at 5%, and storage jars at 5% (Figure 3.3B). It seems that most ceramic vessels were clustered around the head and upper torso, while the next largest grouping was placed next to the leg and foot regions.

The overall character of the funeral kit assemblages exhibit both consistency and evolution over time. Consistency is demonstrated by the use of similar ceramic forms (bowls, lamps, juglets, jugs, jars) in all four phases of the funeral kit at Ashkelon; while evolution is observed by the disuse of certain ceramic types (earlier types replaced by later types), an increase in the quantity of vessels, and inclusion of imported wares, as time passed. Although the composition and character of the ceramic assemblages change over time, the basic functionality of vessel forms remained the same: vessels for food-service, tableware, and packaging for commodities. Thus the basic components of the funeral kit remained the same, reflecting typological, functional and ideological continuity from MB IIB/C–LB I/II.

Although exact chronological dating is not critical to my argument for the existence and development of the funeral kit, it is nevertheless important to recognize the contemporary cultural setting in which these groups existed. I have divided the ceramic groups, and therefore the funeral kit at Ashkelon, into four phases and have dated them according to the chronology adopted by the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon (Table 3.2) (Stager 2001:633–35, 2002; Stager, et al. 2008; see also Bietak 1996:6, Figure 3; 1997:90).²⁰ A distinction should be made regarding the ceramics of the MB IIA and the MB IIB/C periods, since certain types found in the earliest deposits in Chamber 5 and Subcomplex 7/10/11 could be assigned to either Phase 4 of the MB IIA²¹ or to the MB IIB periods. The absence of certain ceramic forms in the earliest deposits of the tombs led me to conclude that the earliest deposits—and therefore Phase 1 of the funeral kit—date to the MB IIB rather than to Phase 4 of the MB IIA. These missing forms include “collarlette” and “candlestick” rim juglets, which usually represent Phases 2–4 of the MB IIA and/or the MB IIA–IIB transition (Ilan 1991; S. Cohen 2002) as well as carinated bowls typical of the MB IIA. The presence of red-slipped and burnished piriform juglets—some with a button base²²—plain ware juglets with an elongated or torpedo-shaped body, and carinated bowls typical of the MB IIB also reinforce this chronology. Furthermore, the supine-flexed position (described below) of the MB IIB burials is distinctly different from most MB IIA burials,

which favor the flexed or fetal position as in the tombs at Gesher (Garfinkel 1990; 1993; Garfinkel and Cohen 2007; S. Cohen 2003). The distinction between LB I and IIA is less crucial, because the progression between these two chronological periods represents cultural continuity rather than one of development, as in the case of the transition between MB IIA–MB IIB periods. Most individuals were arranged in a similar position at the time of final deposition: supine, with arms crossed over the chest and the legs flexed upward or extended, that is in a “supine-flexed” or “supine-extended” position. Once decay set in, the legs slid forward, fell apart in an outward or bowed position, fell together to the left or right side, or fell in some combination thereof (Figure 3.4).

The arms fell in a less dramatic manner either slipping down to the abdomen or along the sides of the torso. The supine-extended and supine-flexed positions are most clearly represented in Burials 121 and 157 (Figures 3.5A and 3.5B). While this was certainly the dominant arrangement, it was by no means the only position into which corpses were manipulated. Some were placed on their left or right side, in a flexed or fetal position as with Burials 106 (Figure 3.12 below).

Arranging the corpse into a specific position has been widely practiced and has been used as an indicator to distinguish ethnic groups



Figure 3.4. Burial positions. Upper left—MB IIA—the flexed or fetal position. Upper right—MB IIB/C–LB IIA—the supine-flexed and supine-extended positions. Lower row, the random positions into which some skeletal remains fell into during decomposition. Not to scale.

and trace cultural influences (Parker-Pearson 2005:6). It has been suggested that the flexed position imitates a fetus in the mother's womb, suggesting rebirth (Ilan 1995:135–136; Parker-Parson 2005:54). Other positions, such as supine, are thought to represent the individual in sleep or eternal repose. Some cultures went so far as to bind the legs of the deceased in order to keep the person's spirit from wandering or walking and disturbing the living (Binford 1971:12; Parker-Pearson 2005:54). Additionally, orientation of the body within the tomb may be deliberate or may simply correspond to the practical constraints of the tomb architecture. In many cultures, orientation of the corpse to predetermined direction may indicate certain beliefs with regard to the afterlife. For example, in many Egyptian burials, individuals are placed in an east-west direction, which suggests a solar analogy; "...on one hand is death at sunset...[and] new life at sunrise" (Tylor 1871 cited in Binford 1971:12; Ritner 1997:132–35). At Ashkelon, however, orientation of the body seems to have been a practical matter corresponding to architectural constraints.

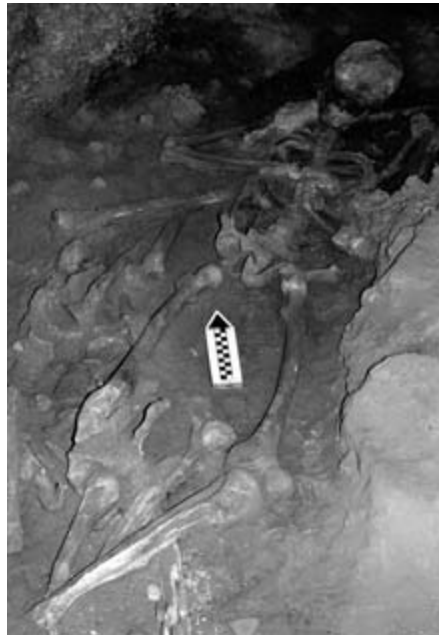


Figure 3.5A. Ashkelon Burial 121 in situ. Example of the supine-extended position—corpse on its back with the legs extended. Courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon (photograph by I. Stzulman). Used here with permission.



The Four Phases of the Funeral Kit at Ashkelon

The identification of the funeral kit at Ashkelon involved five factors: vessel type, location of vessels around the body, evolution of the components from the MB–LB, the items that constitute the “ideal” funeral kit, and the function of the scarab and toggle pin. In this study, discussion of the physical remains primarily focuses on the location and orientation of the individual in the tomb, the position in which the deceased was interred, their sex, and their age.²³ For the purpose of this discussion, only the burial deposits that best illustrate, either in part or as a whole, the components of the funeral kit and their arrangement around the corpse during each of the four phases of the funeral kit will be presented below. The relevant deposits will be represented in an illustration that reconstructs the burial or secondary deposit with associated grave goods depicted around a generic skeleton.²⁴ To the extent possible, drawings of the actual vessels in each group have been used, but since only selected items from each group have thus far been drawn, depictions of vessel types from other contemporaneous groups have been substituted when necessary.²⁵ The approximate chronological dating for the phasing is as follows in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Chronological Phasing of the Funeral Kit Model at Ashkelon.

Major Period	Date Range	Phase at Ashkelon
Middle Bronze IIA (MB IIA)	1950/1925–1700 BCE	Phase I–MB IIB (may represent transition from MB IIA to MB IIB)
Middle Bronze IIB/C (MB IIB/C)	1700–1530 BCE	Phase 2–MB IIB/C (may represent transition from MB IIB/C to LB I)
Late Bronze I (LB I)	1530–1400 BCE	Phase 3–LB I (early)
Late Bronze IIA (LB IIA)	1400–1300 BCE	Phase 4–LB I/II (may represent transition from LB I to LB II)

Phase 1 of the Funeral Kit at Ashkelon (MB IIB)

During the first stage of its development, the components of the funeral kit were rather modest, mostly consisting of ceramics of domestic type and manufacture. The composition of the Phase 1 funeral kit at Ashkelon is best illustrated by Burials 81–84 (Figure 3.6). In this phase, the funeral kit could include as few as three and as many as eight ceramic components in combinations of the following: two to three bowls, mostly carinated (Figure 3.7:13–15, usually located around the cranium, upper torso, and/or legs); two to four juglets of the piriform, and elongated, dipper types (Figure 3.8:36–44; 1A:24–27, usually located around the cranium, shoulder, pelvis, and/or legs); and/or one lamp or bowl reused as a lamp (usually located next to the cranium). Although lamps were associated with the set at this time, they were few in number and appear mostly as bowl-lamps, that is as carinated bowls broken at the carination and reused as lamps, which is evidenced by the burnt markings on the broken edges.²⁶ Additionally, the curious practice of placing a juglet on each side of the pelvis is evident in this phase (e.g., Burial 83).

Drawing from the discussion above, some of the ceramic indicators for Phase 1 of the funeral kit could date to Phase 4 of the MB IIA, or to the MB IIB, or to the transition between the two, since some vessels exhibit affinities with both the MB IIA and B periods. For example, red- or black-slipped and burnished juglets with a piriform or ovoid body and a disc or button base have been found both in MB IIA, Phase 4 and MB IIB contexts. At Aphek these are common in the last phase of MB IIA, for example, in Area A Tombs 428 and 490, Str. XIVa (Str.=Stratum. Beck 2000b:214–15, Figure 10.21; S. Cohen 2002:55, Figure 6). At other sites, however, these juglets are present in both the MB IIA and IIB, for example, Megiddo in Str. XIII–IX (Loud 1948 Pls. 24: 32–33, 40), which spans the MB IIA and IIB/C. The same is true at Hazor in Str. IV

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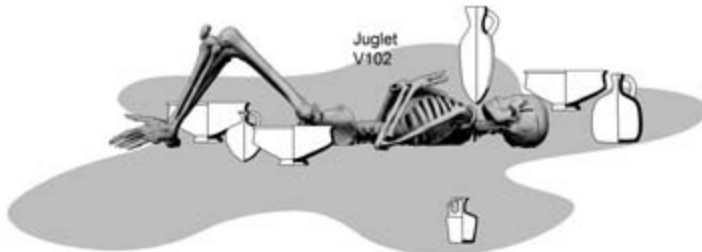
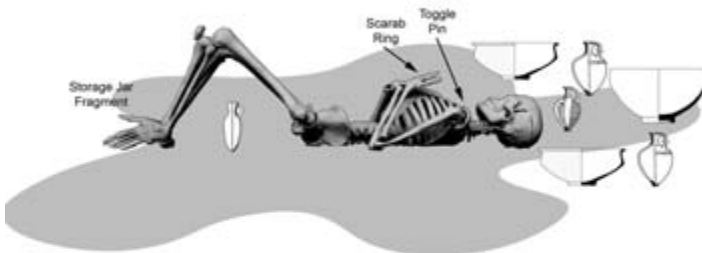
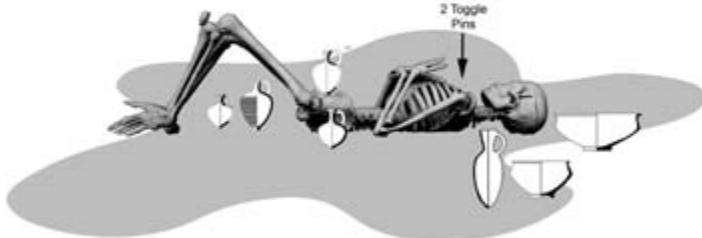
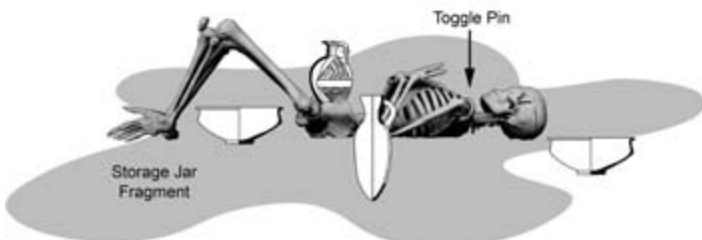
**Burial 81****Burial 82****Burial 83****Burial 84**

Figure 3.6. Phase 1 of the funeral kit at Ashkelon. The reconstruction of Burials 81–84 illustrate the presumed burial position, components of the funeral kit, and distribution of them around the corpse during this phase. Ceramic drawings courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. Not to scale.

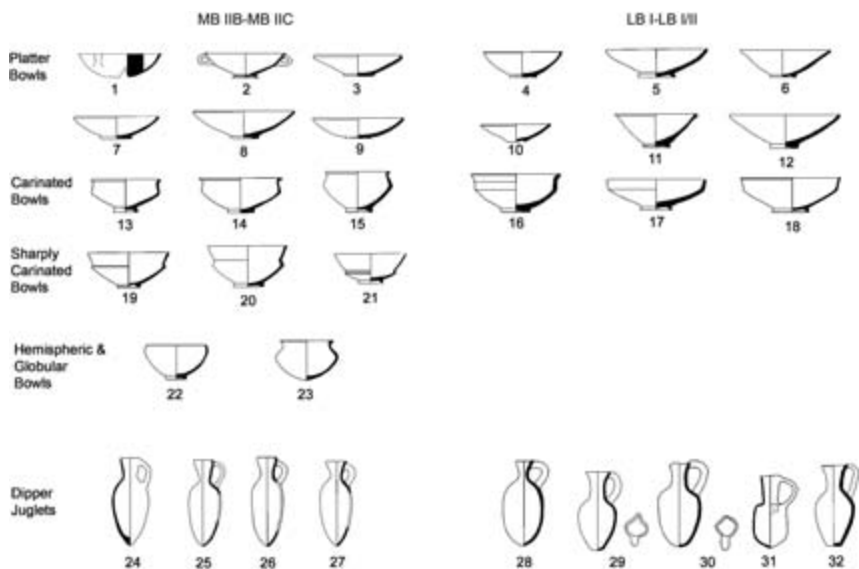


Figure 3.7. A chronological representation of bowls and jugs present in the Ashkelon tomb complex during the MB IIB–MB IIC and LB I–LB I/II periods. The vessel forms illustrated in this chart are those that are most relevant to the discussion of the funeral kit. They do not represent the entire ceramic assemblage found in the tomb complex. The complete ceramic corpus will be analyzed and presented in the Ashkelon final report series. Ceramic drawings courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon.

(Yadin et al. 1961, Pl. C:8) and Tomb 1181 (Maeir 1997, Figures IV.4:4; IV.5:9, 11), and at Jericho in Tombs K3 (Kenyon 1965, Figure 93:16–17) and B48 (Kenyon 1965, Figure 97:12, 14–15). In contrast, the carinated bowls show greater compatibility with the MB IIB than with the MB IIA because of their everted rim, lower carination, wider body, and ring or disc base. Similar bowls have been found at Tell el-Far‘ah (South) in Cemetery 500 (Price-Williams 1977, Figs. 35:2, 43:4–5, 66:3) and Megiddo Str. XIII–IX (Loud 1948, Pls. 21:9 [Tomb 312], 28:6 [Tomb 2142] 36:8 [Tomb 5046]). While the dipper-juglets with an elongated body were often slipped, burnished, or polished, they appear more frequently without surface treatment. Similar juglets were also found at Aphek, Area A Str. XII (Beck 2000b, Figure 10.23:7–8 [Tomb 498]), Tell el-Far‘ah (South) (Price-Williams 1977, Figure 57:10–13), Hazor Tomb 1181 (Maeir 1997, Figure IV.6:1, 8), Megiddo Str. XIV–IX (Loud 1948, Pls. 26:1–10, 33, 32, 41:8–13), and Tell Dan Str. IXb (Ilan 1996, Figure 4.100:6 [Tomb 8096]). Although these forms were present in both Phase 4 of the MB IIA and in the MB IIB, examples from the Ashkelon

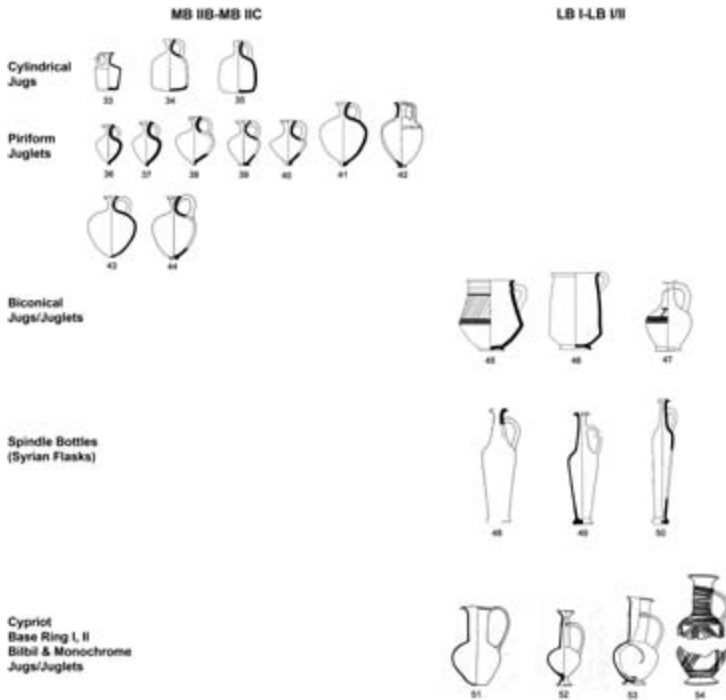


Figure 3.8. A chronological representation of jugs, juglets, and bottles present in the Ashkelon tomb complex during the MB IIB–MB IIC and LB I–LB I/II periods. As with items illustrated in Figure 3.7, the vessel forms illustrated in this chart are those that are most relevant to the discussion of the funeral kit. They do not represent the entire ceramic assemblage found in the tomb complex. The complete ceramic corpus will be analyzed and presented in the Ashkelon final report series. Ceramic drawings courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon.

tombs should be placed in the MB IIB since the carinated bowls from Burials 81–84 (Figure 3.6) appear to share more characteristics with those of the MB IIB. Finally, as mentioned above, the noticeable lack of “candlestick” and “collarete” rim juglets among the earliest deposits—specifically in Chamber 5—also point to the early phases of the MB IIB.

The nonceramic components of the funeral kit, toggle pins, and scarabs were predictably associated with certain areas on or near the corpse. Toggle pins were generally found near the left or right shoulder (Burials 82–84), which would suggest use of a burial garment.²⁷ Similarly, scarabs were found either on the chest area or near the wrist or fingers. Scarabs located on the chest or near the wrist, may have been worn either as a pendant or bracelet; occasionally scarab rings were still on the fingers they once adorned as, for example, at Jericho (Kenyon

1966:266). Most of the scarabs found with the Ashkelon burials were made of white steatite, with decorations on the back, base, and sides.²⁸ A few scarabs were made of amethyst; some had thin gold bands around the base, and one had a base entirely covered in gold sheeting.

Phase 2 of the Funeral Kit at Ashkelon (MB IIB/C)

Based on ceramic typology, the second phase in the development of the funeral kit dates to the MB IIB/C period (Oren 1969; Johnson 1982; Bergoffen 1989). The characteristics of this phase are represented by an increase in the quantity of ceramic vessels; greater variation in vessel type, and the introduction of foreign wares into the assemblage. During this phase, the number of ceramic items in the funeral kit could be as many as twelve vessels. These sets could include combinations of four to seven bowls, mostly carinated, with one to four of them located around the cranium, one or two placed next to the torso, and one to three deposited near the legs/feet; one to three dipper-juglets with elongated bodies, which were usually situated around the cranium and/or legs, and one to two cylindrical juglets placed around the cranium or torso, and/or pelvis. This configuration is best illustrated by Burials 59 and 73 and Secondary Depositional Group 62 (Figure 3.9).

Some ceramic types that were abundant in Phase 1, such as the red-slipped and burnished piriform juglets, were present in some of the Phase 2 sets; however, their quantities diminished and were eventually replaced by the cylindrical juglet (Figure 3.8:34–35). Both plain and red slipped and burnished carinated bowls continue to appear; however, large carinated bowls, some with sharper carinations and wider flairs at the rim were incorporated (Burial 59 and Secondary Deposit 62, Figure 3.9).

Parallels can be found at Lachish in Tombs 1542 and 1502 (Tufnell 1958:270, Pl. 69:540–541; 254, Pl. 69:542–543) Hazor Tomb 1181 (Maeir 1997, Figure IV.2:2–3), Megiddo Str. X Tombs 2027, 3030, and 4054 (Loud 1948, Pl. 44:16–17, 19, 22), and Tell el-Far‘ah (South) (Price-Williams 1977, Figs. 13:6 [T551], 43:9 [T564], 57:8 [T569]). For the first time in Ashkelon’s funerary repertoire, platter-bowls appear as two types: large, straight-sided plain ware platter-bowls, with simple rounded rims and ring or disc bases and those with interior and exterior burnish, in-turned rims, and ring or disc bases (Figure 3.7:3, 7–9, and Burials 59 and 73, Figure 3.9). Similar platter-bowls were found at Megiddo Str. X, Tombs 3039, 3048, and 4054 (Loud 1948, Pl. 44: 37, 41–42), Tell Dan Str. X and

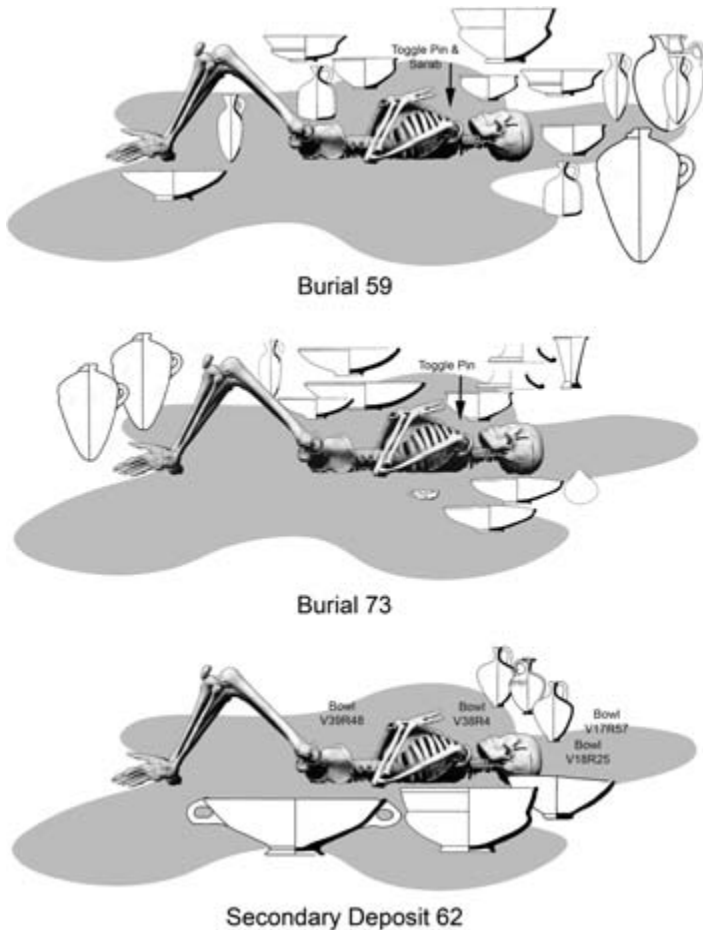
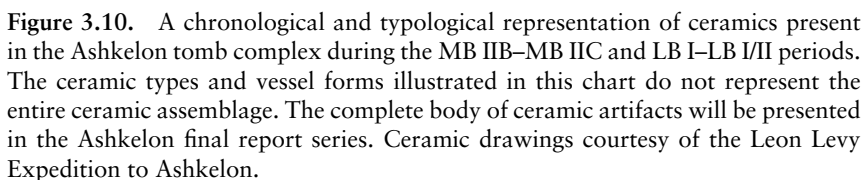


Figure 3.9. Phase 2 of the funeral kit at Ashkelon. The re-creation of Burials 59, 73 and Secondary Deposit 62 illustrate the presumed burial position, components of the funeral kit, and their distribution around the corpse during this phase. Ceramic drawings courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. Not to scale.

IX. Tombs 4663, 187, and 8096 (Ilan 1996:213–17, Figure 4.77), Hazor Tomb 1181 (Maeir 1997, Figure IV.1:4–6), and Tell el-Far‘ah (South) (Price-Williams 1977, Figs. 8:8 [Tomb F550], 35:10 [Tomb F559], 81:1 [Tomb F582]). A third kind of platter-bowl, with two vertical handles, a simple rounded rim, and a ring base, some with a red cross painted in the interiors, also appears during this phase (Figure 3.7:1, Secondary Depositional Group 62, Figure 3.9). Parallels can be found at Lachish in Tombs 1552 and 129 (Tufnell 1958:272, Pl. 59: 578–579, 229, Pl. 69:580). Another

The final component introduced into the repertoire during Phase 2 was imported wares. They were few in number, however, only consisting of Tell el-Yahudiyeh and Cypriot wares and only appearing in the form of juglets. Tell el-Yahudiyeh juglets were usually piriform- or ovoid-shaped vessels with punctated dots, chevrons, bands, and/or lotus decoration filled in with the white plaster that is typical of Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware (Figure 3.10:73–75; Kaplan 1980:5–46).



Cypriot material included White Painted IV–VI juglets with a globular body decorated in the Cross Line and Pendant Style (Figure 3.10: 59–63; Åström 1972 [Part IB], Figure IX:12), similar to those from Megiddo Str. IX Tomb 3017 and Str. XI Tomb 4109 (Loud 1948 Pls. 51:5, 34:13, respectively) and Lachish (Tufnell 1958, Pl. 79: 823). Even though imported ceramic vessels appeared during this phase, domestic wares dominated the assemblage. Regarding nonceramic components of the Phase 2 funeral kit, just as with Phase 1, scarabs and toggle pins continued to adorn the corpse. These were consistently found at the neck, upper torso, and hand/wrist areas (Burials 59 and 73, Figure 3.9). The dominant position into which the corpse was fashioned continued to be supine-flexed/extended.

Phase 3 of the Funeral Kit at Ashkelon (LB I)

There were three developments that characterized this phase of the funeral kit: a considerable increase in the quantity of ceramic vessels, new domestic forms were incorporated into the set, and the quantity of imported vessels increased; but they did not exceed the number of domestic wares. Among the imported vessels, Cypriot wares occurred in greater quantity than those from other foreign localities; however, items from both Egypt (Figure 3.11:77–80) and Syria (Figure 3.8:49–50) were also present. Phase 3 of the funeral kit at Ashkelon is represented by

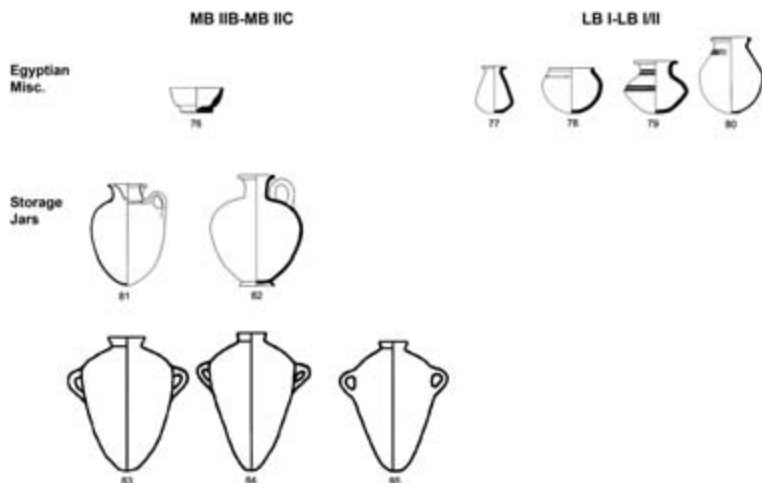
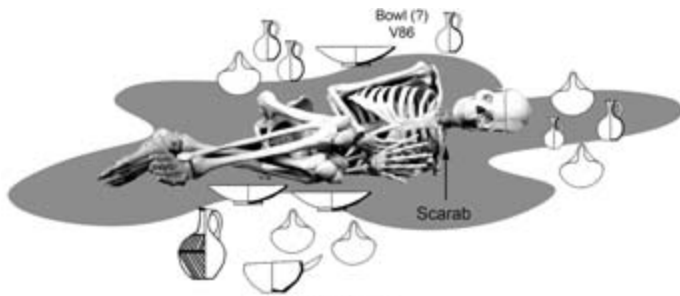


Figure 3.11. A chronological representation of storage jars and miscellaneous Egyptian forms present in the Ashkelon tomb complex during the MB IIB–MB IIC and LB I–LB II periods. Ceramic drawings courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon.

Burials 158 (not illustrated) and 106, 130, 149, and 157²⁹ (Figure 3.12). During this phase, the funeral kit could contain as many as seventeen ceramic vessels in combinations of two to four bowls (around the cranium, upper torso, and/or legs); two to five Cypriot Black Lustrous, Wheel-made juglets (around the cranium, upper torso, and/or pelvis); one to two Cypriot Base Ring I juglets (usually around the cranium and/or upper torso); and two to four plain ware lamps (usually around the cranium and/or legs).

Domestic wares included plain ware platter-bowls (Figure 3.7:4–6, 10–12) and plain ware carinated bowls (Figure 3.7:16–18). In this phase, large- and medium-sized platter-bowls often outnumbered carinated bowls, a change from the first two phases. Curiously, these platter-bowls were often warped or made of inferior quality materials. In the previous two phases, the vessels most often placed on or next to the pelvis were the piriform and/or cylindrical juglets; however, in this phase the Cypriot Black Lustrous, Wheel-made juglets (Figure 3.10:66–69, Burial 157, Figure 3.12), and occasionally Base Ring I juglets (Figure 3.8:52, p. 76) and Cypriot White Painted VI spouted juglets (Figure 3.10:64–65, p. 76 Burial 149, Figure 3.12), replaced them. Additionally, in Phases 1 and 2, make-shift, bowl-lamps illuminated the tomb. In this phase, the use of proper lamps occurred in greater quantities.

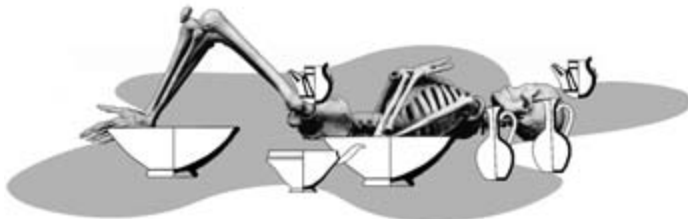
The Phase 3 ceramic assemblage dates to the LB I period. The domestic wares that represent this period included: carinated bowls with a rounded, straight, or slightly everted rims and concave disc, ring, or pedestal bases, similar to those from Megiddo Str. VIII (Loud 1948, Pl. 61), Hazor Tomb 8112 (Yadin et al. 1961, Pl. CCXL:1–2); large platter-bowls, some V-shaped, with a simple rounded rims and ring or disc bases, similar to those found at Megiddo in Str. IX–VII (Loud 1948, Pls. 54:9; 61:13, 17–18; 16:11, 16), and Hazor in Str. II of the Lower City and Str. XV of the Upper City (Tombs 3178, 8130, and 8205 [Yadin et al. 1961, CCXL:11, 13–14]); dipper-juglets with a bulbous bodies and pinched mouths, similar to those from Megiddo in Str. VIII (Loud 1948 Pl. 58:4–8); and biconical jugs, similar to those found at Megiddo in Str. IX Tomb 3013 (Loud 1948, Pl. 49:15) and Str. VIII Tomb 2099 (Loud 1948, Pl. 57:19); as well as tankards, in Str. IX Tomb 3018 (Loud 1948, Pl. 49:18), Str. VIIB–VIIA (Loud 1948, Pl. 63:3), and Str. VIII Tomb 3006 (Loud 1948, Pl. 58:3). New in this phase were plain ware dipper-juglets with flat bases, similar to those found at Megiddo in Str. IX–VIII, Tomb 3028 (Loud 1948, Pl. 50:8).



Burial 106



Burial 130



Burial 149



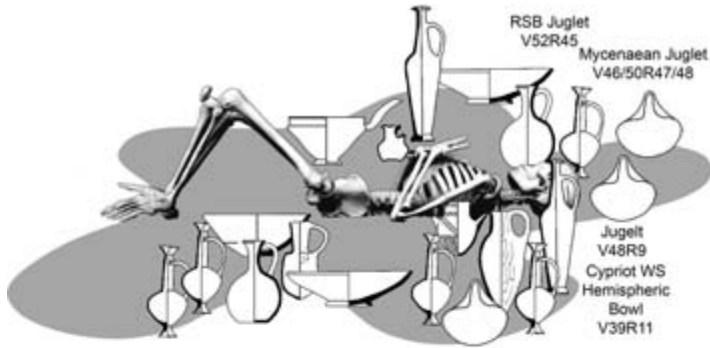
Burial 157

Figure 3.12. Phase 3 of the funeral kit at Ashkelon. The re-creation of Burials 106, 130, 149, and 158 illustrate the presumed burial position, components of the funeral kit, and the relationship of the artifacts to the corpse as they were distributed during this phase. Ceramic drawings courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. Not to scale.

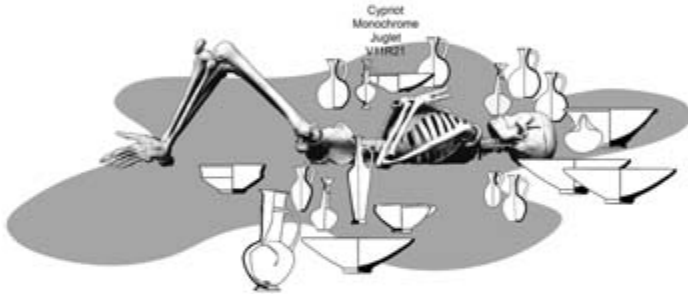
As with the first two phases, scarabs and toggle pins were deposited with the deceased. They continued to be associated with the neck, upper torso, and finger/wrist regions of the body. Additionally, the corpse was manipulated into a supine-flexed/extended position; however, on rare occasion, individuals were left in a flexed position (Burial 106, Figure 3.12).

In the fourth and final phase of the funeral kit at Ashkelon, the character of the components changed in two ways: the quantity of vessels increased substantially, and imported wares often outnumbered domestic in many of the groups. Regarding imported goods, Cypriot vessels were the most numerous; although Mycenaean, Egyptian, and Syrian vessels were present as well. Domestic items, such as plain ware platters and carinated bowls, were often of poor quality. Even though most of the ceramic types were similar to those of the previous phase, there were a few additions including Cypriot Base Ring II juglets and jugs (Figure 3.8:53–54) and Cypriot White Shaved dipper-juglets (Figure 3.10:70–72). Numerous burials from this phase were located in the uppermost layers of the chambers, which had been disturbed by quarrying activities in the 7th century BCE, leaving few discernable groups to represent this phase. Nevertheless, Secondary Deposits 39, 64, and 65 were identifiable (Figure 3.13).

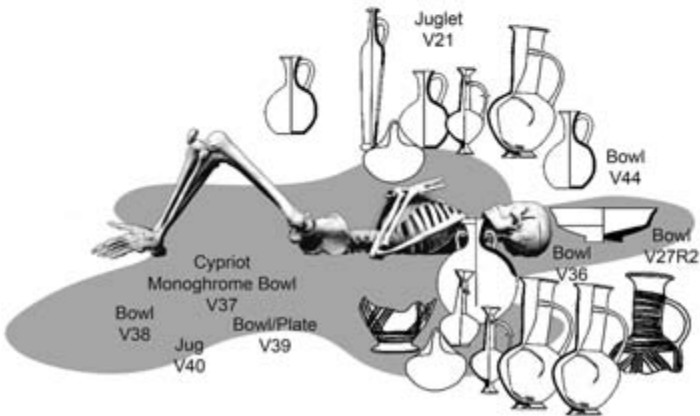
Baker, J. L. (2013). The funeral kit : Mortuary practices in the archaeological record. ProQuest Ebook Central http://ebookcentral.proquest.com Created from brynmawr on 2021-02-08 08:45:15.



Secondary Deposit 39



Secondary Deposit 64



Secondary Deposit 65

Figure 3.13. Phase 4 of the funeral kit at Ashkelon. The re-creation of Secondary Deposits 39, 64, and 65 illustrate the presumed burial position, components of the funeral kit, and their location around the deceased during this phase. Ceramic drawings courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. Not to scale.

lower torso/pelvis, and/or legs); one to two Cypriot White Shaved, dipper-juglets (usually placed around the cranium and/or legs); and one to three Cypriot Base Ring I juglets (around the cranium and/or legs); one to two Cypriot Base Ring II jugs (around the cranium); one to four Cypriot Black Lustrous, Wheel-made juglets (around the cranium and/or pelvis); one to three plain ware lamps (around the head and/or legs); and one plain ware pitcher (often near or between the legs).

The majority of the ceramics that represent this phase can be dated to the LB I/IIA period. These distinctive types include: Cypriot Base Ring II jugs and juglets, similar to those found at Megiddo in Str. VII. (Loud 1948, Pl. 67:20). Hazor in Str. Ib (Yadin et al. 1960, Pl. CXXXVI:2–9 [Tombs 8144–8145]; Yadin et al. 1961, Pl. XXVII:3), and Lachish (Tufnell 1958, Pls. 80:842–847, 858–867; 81); Cypriot White Shaved dipper juglets, also found at Megiddo in Str. VII (Loud 1948, Pl. 71:12), Hazor (Yadin et al. 1960, Pl. CXXXI:1–2 [Tombs 8144–8145]), and Lachish (Tufnell 1958, Pl. 79:819–822); plain ware platters and carinated bowls, similar to those found at Megiddo in Str. VII (Loud 1948, Pl. 65:14–15, 18, 21), and Hazor in Str. Ib (Yadin et al. 1961, Pls. CLXII:23–24, CCLXXI:1–3, 8–9); globular bowls/cooking pots like those found at Hazor in Str. Ib (Yadin et al. 1961, Pl. CC:25); and pilgrim flasks, similar to those from Megiddo Str. VIIA (Loud 1948, Pl. 70:9) and Hazor (Yadin et al. 1960, Pl. CXXX:11–13 [Tombs 8144–8145]).

In keeping with the previous phases, the dominant burial position continued to be supine-flexed/extended. Correspondingly, scarabs and toggle pins were predictably found in the neck, upper torso, and finger/wrist regions of the deposits.

Summary of the Phases

The Pottery

The progressive development of the Ashkelon funeral kit can be observed from the MB IIB through the LB IIA periods. Phase 1 of the funeral kit (MB IIB) consisted of relatively few components that were of primarily domestic manufacture. In Phase 2 (MB IIB/C) the quantity of ceramic vessels increased slightly; some types that dropped out (red- and black-slipped and burnished piriform juglets) were replaced with new types (cylindrical jugs); additional new types that were also incorporated into the assemblage included large carinated platter-bowls and imported ceramics such as Tell el-Yahudiyeh and Cypriot wares,

which appeared in small quantities and limited forms. In Phase 3 (LB I) there is a noticeable increase in the quantity of ceramic vessels with the appearance of new domestic forms such as biconical jugs, a larger quantity and variety of imported wares, and discontinued use of forms that were no longer produced in this time period. In the final phase of the funeral kit (LB IIA) the number of items multiplied substantially, with foreign wares dominating some assemblages. During Phases 2, 3, and 4 of the funeral kit, domestic ware, specifically plain ware platters and carinated bowls, were frequently made of inferior materials and were very poorly manufactured, as many of these bowls were warped. The imported ceramics, however, were always of excellent quality.

The supine-flexed or supine-extended position remained the dominant pose into which the body was manipulated at the time of deposit throughout the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. Curiously, beginning in Phase 1, one or two juglets were often left on the pelvis. The way in which these juglets were discovered suggests that they were placed directly on the body, with the base sitting on the lower torso and the rim and neck resting against the upward flexed thigh. Burials 149 (Figure 3.12) and 157 (Figures 3.5B and 3.12) of Phase 3 illustrate this point, as a Cypriot White Painted VI tea pot was resting *in situ* on top of the left and right femurs (Burial 149) and two Cypriot Black Lustrous, Wheel-made juglets were left on both pelvic sides in Burial 157. The type of juglet placed on the pelvis changed from red- or black-slipped, burnished piriform juglet in the MB IIB (Burial 83, Figure 3.6), to cylindrical shaped juglets in the MB IIC (Burial 59, Figure 3.9), to Cypriot Black Lustrous, Wheel-made juglets (Burial 157) and/or Cypriot White Painted tea pots in the LB I, and finally to Cypriot Black Lustrous, Wheel-made and/or Base Ring juglets in the LB IIA period (Burial 149). What this practice may have meant remains unclear; however, it is possible that the commodity(ies) contained within the vessels possessed some medicinal or olfactory qualities.³⁰

The distribution of ceramic vessels around specific zones of the body may also have been important. It was evident from the top plans and field photographs that the majority of the ceramic vessels were clustered around the cranium and upper torso regions. This distribution was especially evident in the later phases with the larger ceramic groups. By way of speculative interpretation, it may be that the various zones around the corpse indicate various beliefs. Perhaps food and drink items placed around the cranium and upper torso regions represent the portion of

the offering meant as sustenance for the deceased; items placed near the mid-torso or hands represent food offerings to the ancestors and/or deities in the after world; and items near the lower torso and/or legs/feet may relate to notions of fertility.

The fact that the components and character of the funeral kit changed over time does not diminish its overall meaning and function within the mortuary setting. As has been demonstrated, vessel types and quantity evolved as time elapsed from the MB–LB; vessel types were commensurate with the chronological periods in which they appeared and quantities increased. The common thread that can be found throughout the evolution of the funeral kit is that vessel forms largely remained the same (bowls, juglets, lamps, jars and storage jars), consistently corresponding to the three categories identified above: vessels for serving a meal, table ware, and packaging for commodities. So, in spite of the evolving individual typologies of the funeral kit, its basic function remained the same: as the deceased's portion of the funerary banquet that was held in honor of him/her. Additionally, the increased quantity of ceramic items, that is the larger portion of the meal, may be indicative of a funerary banquet that became more elaborate over time, hence the prohibitive Old Testament references to an out-of-control *marzēah*.³¹

The Scarab

Most individuals interred in the Ashkelon tombs were buried with at least one scarab irrespective of age or sex.³² Scarabs in Canaan are often interpreted as being personal items (Palumbo1987; Yassur-Landau 1992); especially when they bear personal names or offices (D. Ben-Tor 1994). However, their repeated presence with nearly every burial suggests that scarabs were in some way essential to the individual whom they accompanied and should be regarded as a nonceramic component of the essential equipment that comprised the funeral kit at Ashkelon.

Like the Egyptians, MB and LB people of Ashkelon wore scarab amulets around their necks, wrists, or as fingerings (Figure 3.14). This was determined by observing the area of the body with which the scarab was associated. The scarabs at Ashkelon are similar to those from Egypt in their size and shape, the materials from which they are made, and the carved decoration of their backs and bases. As with most Canaanite scarabs, the differences between the scarabs at Ashkelon and those from Egypt may be found in the detail of the carved back, side,



Figure 3.14. Selected scarabs from the Ashkelon chamber tombs. Courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon (photograph by J. L. Baker). Not to scale.

and base. The backs of the scarabs from Ash were carved with minimal detail compared to some Egyptian scarabs, on which the clypeus, head, prothorax, and elytra were intricately carved, closely rendering the features of the beetle. The designs on the bases of the scarabs fit into the design classes suggested by Ward (1978, 1987) and Tufnell (1940, 1958) and recently updated by D. Ben-Tor (2007).³³

Clearly, scarabs were important to the MB and LB people of Ashkelon; however, as an Egyptian symbol, what did it mean to the Canaanites and what was its role in their mortuary context? At first it would seem logical to argue that scarabs, some of which invoke the names of Egyptian pharaohs and deities for protection and good fortune, suggest that these were made and worn by Egyptians living abroad. However, D. Ben-Tor (2007:118–119, 155–156, 186–187) has shown that many of the Canaanite scarabs originated in the Levant suggesting that the Canaanites probably adopted and adapted scarabs and their designs for their own administrative and apotropaic uses (Goodenough 1988). Ashkelon was a coveted location for the Egyptians because of its fertile land, produce, and its location as a gateway for trade and commerce not only in the Levant but also with the Mediterranean basin and inland to points north and east. Egypt (especially the Asiatics who inhabited the eastern Delta, for example, at Tell el-Dab'a) and the peoples of the Levant had a well-developed commercial relationship in the MB (Gerstenblith 1973; S. Cohen 2002; D. Ben-Tor 2007), which probably accounts for the cultural transmission of the scarabs' symbolism and magic to the Canaanites. Based on these ties, it may be assumed that there was an exchange of ideas between the peoples of the Levant (Ben-Tor 2007; Goodenough 1988). Like the Egyptians, the Canaanites, and specifically the inhabitants of MB and LB Ashkelon, may have valued scarabs for their magical protective qualities during life and for their regenerative qualities in

the afterlife. Their importance is underscored not only by the sheer quantity of scarabs found in Canaan, but also by the fact that they were used in the funerary context.

Toggle Pins

Toggle Pins, like scarabs, are often considered to be a personal item, but because they were consistently found with skeletal remains, it seems appropriate to include them as a component of the funeral kit. Approximately seventy-nine toggle pins were recovered from MB-LB tomb context at Ashkelon.³⁴ Of these, 34 (43%) were directly associated with a burial, and 45 (57%) were discovered in the debris of secondary sweeps. They were usually situated either on or near the shoulder, the neck, or on the ground above the shoulder. As mentioned above, it is known from several sources that the corpse was washed, anointed, and dressed in a garment for burial (Genesis 50:2–3; I Samuel 28:14; 2 Chronicles 16:14; Mt. 27:59; Mk. 15:46; Lk. 23:53; Jn. 11:44, 19:39–40; Epic of Gilgamesh in Speiser 1969; A. Cohen 2005; Bloch-Smith 1992; Gonen 1992:20; Hallote 2001; Xella 1995). At Jericho, Kenyon (1960) observed that enough burial garments had survived to suggest that bodies were in fact clothed and that a toggle pin was utilized to secure the garment usually on the left shoulder or ribs; although, there were instances where the pin was discovered on the right shoulder. At Ashkelon, although the fabric had disintegrated, the presence of toggle pins and the fact they were discovered on or near the left or right shoulder suggest these corpses were also adorned in a burial garment. Additionally, the preservation of toggle pins at Ashkelon was also not very good; although some managed to survive they are badly corroded and fragmented as a result of the harsh climate. Most of the toggle pins were made of bronze while a few were made from bone, silver, and gold. Those that were not too badly corroded fit into Henschel-Simon's typological groups 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, or 8. Among those that survived, there seem to be two types of pins: long and short. The longest pin is as much as 10.1 cm. The shortest is approximately 3.6 cm, and the thickest approximately 6 mm.

Similar toggle pins have been discovered at sites such as Megiddo in Str. XIIIb, types 3 and 8a (Loud 1948, Pl. 219:11, 12), Str. XII, types 2, 3, 6a, 8a, b (Loud 1948, Pl. 229), Str. XI, types 3, 6a, 8a (Loud 1948, Pl. 221), Str. X, types 3, 5, 6a, 7 (Loud 1948, Pl. 222), and Str. IX, types 3, 6a, 7, 9 (Loud 1948, Pl. 223); Lachish, in the Middle and Late

Bronze Ages, including types 3, 7, 8a, b, c, and 9b (Tufnell 1958, Pl. 24). At Tell Dan five pins were discovered in burial contexts and include types 7 and 6b (Ilan 1996:234); at Aphek pins from the MB IIA context include types 2 and 8a (Bunimovitz 2000:276); and at Tell el-Far'ah (South) in tombs F570, F567, and F556 (Price-Williams 1973) and at Gibeon in tombs 18, 22, 44, and 45, types 3, 5, 6b, 7, and 9b (Pritchard 1963). Thus the types of toggle pins found at Ashkelon are similar to those from contemporaneous sites in Canaan.

The Food

Because food was an essential element in the funerary ceremony, it is reasonable to ask what sort of culinary delights were included in the funerary menu (Horwitz 1996, 2002; Lev-Tov and Maher 2001). Preliminary observations of the flora and fauna remnants identified in Ashkelon's tombs indicate that the funerary meal remained largely unchanged over time; although the quality of the meat cuts became increasingly better as time went on (Lipovitch 2002).³⁵ Sheep/goat skeletal remains were abundant in the chambers and were often found in clusters on the chamber floor near human remains, under overturned bowls, or *in situ* inside platter-bowls. For example, a large open plain ware bowl from Chamber 14, Secondary Depositional Group 105, still contained the skulls of two sheep/goats (Baker 2003). Other food remnants included olives, grapes, fish, shellfish, and turtles.

From a variety of sources we know much of what comprised the ancients' diet and by extension the funerary meal and offering. In Egypt, for example, bread, cakes, vegetables, figs, dates, raisins, wheat corn, barley, fish, fowl, bulls, calves, and beer were included in the funerary meal (Roth 1988; Silverman 1997). In Mesopotamia, the menu could consist of sheep/goat, three jars of beer, eighty loaves of flat bread, three measures of grain, one bed, one head support and one chair (Grinsell 1975; Roth 1992; Katz 2008). In the third millennium BCE, a decree by Urukagina, king of Lagash, limited the amount of food items left in graves, apparently because too much food was being deposited in the tombs, which rotted and/or attracted vermin. At Jericho, where the state of preservation was quite good in the tombs, the funerary feast consisted of bread, pomegranates, grapes, raisins, figs, wine and roasted meat or mutton, served on large ceramic or wooden dishes (Kenyon 1960; Gruber 1995). The funerary meal found in the later tomb of King Midas

at Gordion consisted of grape wine, barley beer, honey mead, roasted sheep/goat, lentils, olive oil, and flat bread (McGovern 2000). These food items seem to have been consumed not only in the mortuary setting, but during other festive occasions and on a daily basis as well (Gruber 1995). Other daily food items included fish, fowl, vegetables, and fruits, as well as condiments such as salt, cumin, honey and date jam (Gruber 1995; MacDonald 2008). The artifactual evidence indicates that the daily diet was mirrored in the mortuary setting either in part or in whole, underscoring the intention of providing daily sustenance for the deceased.

Burial Clusters

Earlier in this chapter, reference was made to the clustering of burials in specific zones of the tomb. A burial cluster consists of two or more individuals who were deposited next to, on top of, or overlapping each other. It became apparent while analyzing the field notes and top plans relative to the funeral kit, that burials were clustered in what appear to be clearly defined zones of the chamber tombs. This observation led me to consider the possibility that the placement of interments in the tombs may not necessarily be random or entirely based on available space, but instead according to the predetermined space that each familial group occupied within it. If this is true, then clusters probably represent smaller family units (nuclear or extended) within the larger clan that is assumed to have owned these tomb complexes.³⁶

As previously stated, the crudely carved subfloor niches found in Chamber 5 initially accommodated primary deposits providing enduring resting places for the deceased as well as a convenient way to preserve the integrity of the body (Gonen 1992). The niches contained varying quantities of burials in differing combinations of age and sex, which may suggest that these clusters represent familial organization within the clan (Baker 2003; 2010).³⁷ If this is true then the niches would also offer well defined spaces within the tomb to delineate the smaller family units and maintain familial organization. To illustrate, several clusters in Chamber 5 will be considered (Figure 3.1; Appendix A). In the North Repository, three adults—Burials 112, 113, and 114—were deposited one on top of the other. These were oriented in an east-west direction; two were placed with their heads toward the east, one to the west. The East Burial Niche and the Sandy Burial Niche each contained a cluster of four individuals. These were oriented in a north-south direction with the heads toward the

north. The Sandy Burial Niche cluster included a child. In two instances, an adult was buried with a child or an infant. For example, in the Hidden Burial Niche, an adult female held an infant in her arms. At some point the niches were filled and could no longer accommodate additional interments, so new burials and their grave goods were deposited on the central floor, which had been free of burial deposits. It is difficult to imagine that familial organization was maintained once interments were deposited on the central floor, and then swept aside for new interments.

The importance of familial organization within the extended clan may be underscored in the later chambers wherein maintenance of the nuclear family may have been achieved by the clustering of individuals in specific zones of the tomb but without the use of niches. The architectural layout of these tombs (Subcomplexes 7/10/11/12 and 13/14/16) appears to have addressed the issue of the limited capacity of the niches while at the same time providing space for the clan to distinguish the smaller family units that comprised it. There are several examples (Figure 3.1; Appendix A) that illustrate the clustering of burials in the later subcomplexes. In Chamber 11, three deposits, Burials 59, 60, and 61, represent a cluster in the southwest corner of that tomb. This cluster comprised of three individuals: two adults (one male, one female) and a child (male). The two males (Burials 60 and 61) were oriented with their heads toward the north and one (Burial 59) with her head to the south. Several clusters in Chamber 13 contained multiple individuals. Located next to the western wall, Burials 121, 122, and 150 were placed on top of and overlapping one another. All were oriented in a north-south direction with their heads toward the north. All three were adult males. The largest concentration of successive deposits was located in Chamber 13 next to the eastern wall. This cluster contained about eight individuals that were situated next to, on top of, and overlapping each other; although, several were disturbed as the result of making space for the newer interment. This cluster consisted of six children and two adults, one male and one female. Another example in Chamber 14 includes an older adult male and adult female (Burials 158 and 157) who were deposited facing each other adjacent to the western wall. In some clusters, all were deposited in the same direction while in others, individuals were deposited in a crisscross manner, facing each other. Perhaps the crisscross orientation was intended to underscore the intimate relationship between husband and wife, parent(s) and child(ren). On the whole, this later stage in burial practices, where interments and their grave goods were either pushed aside to make room

for a new deposit or the newcomer was placed next to, overlapping, or on top of the earlier burial(s), was much less destructive to the integrity of the individuals' remains than the later secondary sweeps attested to in Chamber 5, where the skeleton and grave goods were swept from the center of the chamber as debris into or near a niche.

The purpose of multiple-burial, chamber tombs is multifaceted; with one aspect being to demonstrate familial organization; death did not sever kinship ties but instead defined and reinforced them. Ritual, persona, and status were demonstrated by accompanying grave goods; but, familial relationships may have been demonstrated by burial clusters. At Ashkelon, architectural features and use of interior space within the chamber tombs probably demonstrates familial organization, represented by burial clusters deposited either in niches or specific areas of the chamber tombs.

Concluding Remarks

It is from these data that the concept of a funeral kit was born. After observing the repetitive nature of ceramic vessel types and the predictable presence of scarabs and toggle pins that accompanied those buried in Ashkelon's tombs, it became apparent that more than merely persona and status were being communicated by the grave goods. Personal characteristics and stratified wealth were usually denoted by items unique to a single individual or group who share the same status. However, the recurring portion of grave goods considered to be essential equipment, suggests that each individual was buried in accordance with well-established rites, rituals, and ceremonies. Archaeologically, the ceramic vessels of the funeral kit serve as the artifactual evidence of the last meal shared with and in honor of the deceased, binding the survivors both with the deceased and with each other. These standardized mortuary practices reflect well-established traditions that bound families, friends, and communities as they mourned their loss. Furthermore, the presence of essential equipment in the form of foodstuffs reflect the Canaanite afterlife scenario wherein the deceased must be outfitted with sustenance by surviving family, as it will not be provided for them in the netherworld. Amulets, in the form of scarabs, may have ensured magical protection of the spirit on its journey into the next life, and toggle pins reflected the practical aspect of dressing the deceased for the wake as well as for the journey to and arrival in the afterlife.