

On March 10th, 2014, the Levantine Ceramics Project (LCP) hosted a workshop at the Albright Institute. In attendance were 56 archaeologists, gathered to hear 20 presenters share results of ongoing research on ceramic wares dating from the Early Bronze Age through the Medieval era. In addition to sharing new information, the workshop was an opportunity to learn about the LCP. The workshop was organized into four sessions, with time for discussion and questions in each. In advance of the day, all speakers submitted some of their data to the LCP website. Below is an overview of speakers and information presented; readers should consult the website to see images and further details.



Speakers and moderators, front row, kneeling left to right: Joe Uziel, Shlomit Bechar, Andrea M. Berlin, Adi Eliyahu Behar, Edna J. Stern. Back row, standing left to right: Nava Panitz-Cohen, Paula Waiman-Bark, Ortal Harush, Itzhik Shai, Anat Cohen-Weinberger, Liora Freud, David Ben-Shlomo, Matt Spigelman, Anastasia Shapiro, Peter Stone, Yona Waksman, Takuzo Onozuka, and Barak Monnickendam-Givon.

The first session, moderated by Nava Panitz-Cohen, was devoted to ceramic wares of the Jezreel Valley and the Galilee. **Shlomit Bechar's** paper was "Black Wheel-made Ware ("Megiddo Ware") of the Intermediate Bronze Age: Distribution, Typology, and Provenance." After a study of 39 samples from ten sites, from typological, stylistic, and petrographic vantage points, she concluded that this ware was neither wheel-made nor from Megiddo. Rather it was made by wheel-coiling, with the petrographic analyses inconclusive. The exact origin remains a question for further research. **Takuzo Onozuka** spoke about "Pottery from the LB and Iron I Strata at Tel Rekhes," a large tel in the lower Galilee known to be the source of at least three Amarna letters. Petrographic analysis of bowls from the Late Bronze and an early phase of Iron I showed that they shared similar fabrics, whereas bowls of a later phase of Iron I were made of a different fabric. Images of this material are on the LCP website; petrographers are invited to take a look and offer suggestions as to clay origin and type. **Ortal Harush** asked "Mommy, Where Do Hippios Come

From? A technological and typological analysis of Iron Age IIA Hippo Jars.” She measured 158 Hippo jars from sites in the Galilee, Beth She’an, Jezreel, and Jordan valleys by high-precision 3-D modeling and determined that they fell into two main groups and four sub-types. Correlations of these groups with petrographic analyses, potter’s marks and site distribution suggest standardized production and specific distribution, which in turn may suggest organized administration.



Left:
Shlomit
Bechar



Right:
Takuzo
Onozuka

The second session, moderated by Andrea M. Berlin, was devoted to ceramic wares and workshops of the north and the northern coast. **Peter Stone** and **Anastasia Shapiro** presented “Storage jar wares of the Upper Galilee and Mt. Hermon.” Large storage jars of the 2nd century B.C.E. found in the Persian-Hellenistic Administrative Building at Tel Kedesh had been originally identified as Hermon jars because they look very similar to large jars found at Kh. Zemel, in the Golan Heights. However petrographic analysis identified the fabric as coming from the western edge of the Hula Valley, meaning that the jars were in fact local to the region of Kedesh itself. **Paula Waiman-Barak**, Ayelet Gilboa and Yuval Goren presented “Phoenician Flasks from Selected Early Iron Sites in Israel – a petro-fabric perspective.” Detailed petrographic analyses of vessels from sites along the northern coast allow a high-resolution view of the region’s complex exchange systems, and reveal that the pattern of production and distribution is far more entwined than might be presumed.

Barak Monnickendam-Givon spoke about “Cooking Wares of the Northern coastal plain.” He demonstrated that a series of cooking vessels of similar shapes made in various sandy cooking ware(s) were in use throughout the Carmel coast plain in the Hellenistic period. In early Roman times, potters in this region began manufacturing vessels in more compact cooking ware(s), in shapes similar to those made at Kfar Hananya in the lower Galilee. Further study may clarify the precise locales and dates of beginning of manufacture. **Anastasia Shapiro and Dina Avshalom-Gorni** presented “Roman-era amphora workshops in the Northern coastal plain. In this region have been discovered several kiln sites that manufactured the same type of transport jar. Thin-sections of jars manufactured at the different sites all look the same, with the same matrix and temper. In fact at one site, Kh. Uza, which is located a bit inland and some distance from the coast, there was found a pile of the type of beach sand that was used for tempering the jars. The lesson is that even identical thin-sections do not necessarily mean that the vessels were all made at the same place.



Left to right: Peter Stone, Paula Waiman-Barak, Barak Monnickendam-Givon, Anastasia Shapiro

The third session, moderated by Joe Uziel, focused on provenience studies of various Bronze Age wares. **Adi Eliyahu Behar, Itzick Shai, David Ben-Shlomo, Haskel Greenfield and Aren Maier** presented “Technological and Typological Analysis of Early Bronze Age Plastered Ware.” A group of jars and open bowls covered with a whitish material have been found at various sites in the Shephelah. Previous researchers have termed the material a lime slip, wash, or coating. FTIR analysis identified the material as plaster, and the suggestion was made to group such vessels under the rubric of EB plastered ware, despite the fact that petrographic analysis of many of the vessels indicate that they were made in a variety of fabrics.



Left to right: Adi Eliyahu Behar, Ezra Marcus, Anat Cohen-Weinberger, and Liora Freud

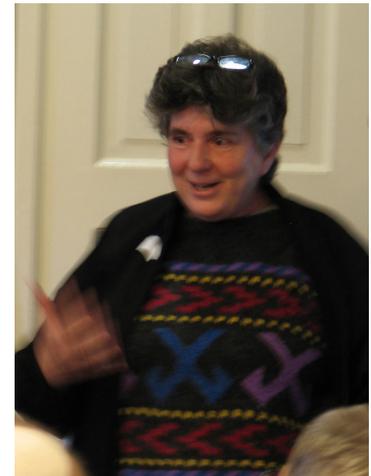
Ezra Marcus presented “Selected Pottery Groups from Early Middle Bronze Age II Tel Ifshar,” a medium-sized site in the Sharon plain occupied intermittently between the MB I and Byzantine periods. The site, which was excavated from 1979-1992, has an unusually dense sequence dating to the 155 years of the MB Ila-b, with eight phases and four discrete destruction horizons. Much of the analyzed pottery appears to be local, with a matrix of hamra, Aeolian sand, and kurkar. But there are also a surprising quantity of imported wares, including Egyptian Middle Kingdom vessels

in both Marl A, from Upper Egypt, and Marl C, from the Fayum/Lower Egypt. Five jar fragments were identified as Akkar ware, from the region around Tel Arqa on the northern Lebanese coast. A complete tall flat-bottomed cylindrical jar and fragments of similar vessels are probably from the region of Ugarit, as suggested by one analyzed sample analyzed. Finally over 300 individual pieces of Levantine painted ware were found at Tel Ifshar. Before these were identified at Tel Ifshar none had been attested south of Lebanon. The quantities found here may suggest that they were local productions. Notably much of the imported and decorated pottery was found in contexts with vessels that held precious liquids.

Anat Cohen-Weinberger presented “Connecting the dots on the Tell el-Yahudiyeh Ware.” Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware is a well-acknowledged group of vessels distinguished by a common decorative technique of tiny, grid-like punctuated dots. Petrographic study of over 50 vessels of this ware from many sites has shown conclusively that many different fabrics occur, indicating production in multiple locales. In addition, some vessels decorated in this fashion are wheel-made and others are hand made. The question then arises: can Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware still be considered a ware, according to the definition proposed in the LCP, which defines a ware as a group of vessels that share a common clay source and origin, as well as a common manufacturing tradition? Since these vessels do not follow the LCP definition of ware, a new definition was proposed, as follows: wares share distinctive visual characteristics that separate them from other vessels of the same geographical and chronological milieu, are distributed commonly along a wide geographic region, and can be made from the same or different raw materials. Vigorous discussion ensued. Some people said that the proper conclusion is that the petrographic analysis shows that vessels decorated in the Tell el-Yahudiyeh technique do not comprise a ware; others thought that the LCP should change the definition. Since it is unlikely that all ceramics specialists will agree on a common definition, and also since the goal of the LCP is to gather as much information as possible and also to foster discussion, the decision was made to add a definition field to the LCP ware submission page so that when people submit ware information, they can explain exactly what they mean.



Workshop attendees in the Albright Institute’s seminar room.



Smadar Gabrieli, taking issue.

The last paper in this session, by **Liora Freud**, was “Origin of Edomite Cooking Pots in Iron IIB.” An assortment of 22 cooking pots and jugs from Tel Malhata, Aroer, Qitmit, H. Uza, and B. Sheva, was analyzed by both INAA and petrographic thin-section. The vessels represented three different

styles of cooking vessels: coastal, Judean, and Edomite. Petrographic analysis revealed four groups: terra rossa, hamra, loess, and sandstone. All three cooking vessel styles were made in both the loess and sandstone fabric groups, which suggests that the characterization of these styles by “ethnic” monikers gives a misleading idea of their actual association.

The fourth session of the day, moderated by Edna J. Stern, was devoted to Provenience Studies of ceramic wares from outside Israel. **Itamar Taxel** spoke on “Egyptian coarse wares in early Islamic Palestine: types and distribution.” He identified three classes of Egyptian products, all made of Nile valley alluvium, found in early Islamic Palestine. First are Egyptian Red-Brown Ovoid Amphoras. These vessels are similar in form to early Islamic Palestinian bag-shaped jars but are a little smaller and slimmer, with a few small morphological differences; they appear at sites of all types and sizes in the central hills. Second are Egyptian coarse ware basins, of which only a few examples have been published so far from Caesarea, Jaffa, and Yavne-Yam, all coastal sites. Lastly are two interesting hand-made rattles, both found at Mishmar David, a small site near Lod. **Lisa Yehuda** presented “Egyptian (?) ware of the 11th & 12th c. CE from Apollonia.” The vessels, all open bowls with interior decoration, come from houses built in the 11th century and used through the 12th century. Five ware classes are represented: Imitation Fatimid Luster Ware, Monochrome Ware, Fayumi ware, Egyptian Red Ware, and Egyptian Sgraffito Ware. Petrographic analysis show that all share a similar matrix and inclusions, which may be identified as Egyptian.



Left to right: Itamar Taxel, Lisa Yehuda, Gunnar Lehmann, and Matthew Spigelman

Moving back in time from the Islamic era, **Gunnar Lehmann, Yiftah Shalev and Ayelet Gilboa** presented “New finds relating to pottery production at Kelendris.” Their focus was on a series of Achaemenid-era small bowls with interior painted bands that had long been identified as “east Greek.” This identification has been questioned because none have been found in Ionia, yet they are frequent in the Levant, from Cilicia and Cyprus down to the southernmost Levantine coast and Egypt (though there is a notable gap from sites in southern Phoenicia). Analysis by petrography, INAA, and XRF revealed two groups. Surprisingly, a small group of bowls matched chemically to samples from Crete. The great majority perfectly matched wasters from the Cilician harbor town of Kelenderis. Excavations indicate that a ceramic industry was underway in the 7th century B.C.E., and that the products travelled as far as Naukratis. Wasters of Roman cooking pots and bowls suggest that ceramic production continued for at least another millennium. The final session paper, by **Matthew Spigelman**, focused on “Middle Bronze Age Cypriot Wares.” These

wares were originally excavated and classified by the Swedish Cyprus Expedition; a sample of each had been sent to the laboratory at the University of California at Berkeley for INAA. Three broad chemical groups had originally been identified, keyed to three large sectors of the island. A re-analysis shows that the data is better understood as dividing into five groups, which can be correlated with five geologically distinct zones: the Kyrenia range and Karpass peninsula, the Mesoaria plain, the Troodos mountains, the western coast, and the southern coast.

The workshop concluded with a presentation by Andrea Berlin about submitting data to the LCP website. The website is designed to address a critical frustration in the discipline: the inability to access, connect, and marshal the ever-swelling river of information that has been emerging from excavations since the 19th century. Traditional stylistic analyses and an ever-increasing array of scientific analytical techniques such as Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis, X-Ray Fluorescence, and petrographic thin-section, have resulted in a torrent of information and, more problematically, in information of very different types—stylistic, elemental, mineral, stratigraphic. The result, multiplied over the masses of excavated pottery, is a disparate deluge, couched in various specialized vocabularies and published in a sprawling array of articles, books, reports, and unconnected specialist websites. Researchers can neither keep up nor make the best use of the increasingly distended, hyper-specialized character of information that they can find. This leads to the current situation: research that is often overly narrow, missing relevant information, at odds with other ideas and results, and all too often simply a rediscovery of things already known. That this is the case even with excellent intentions, hard work, and peer-reviewed publications indicates that the existing system for doing and communicating research is broken, and that a new paradigm is needed.

The LCP offers that new paradigm. The project's fundamental innovation is the development of a common platform for diverse specialists to connect with quantities of quite disparate information and with each other. The LCP website and workshops work in concert: the website's relational database accepts and links analytical, descriptive, illustrative, and contextual data, even when it is submitted piecemeal by different contributors; and the workshops bring together researchers with distinct specialties in order to address and resolve specific questions. Scholarship is a human activity, and its benefits are best developed within a community. With the website and workshops, the LCP hopes to change the dynamic of scholarly communication among Levantine archaeologists.