They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself …

*Andy Warhol*

**Introduction**

One of the goals set forth by the directors—one of which is Israel Finkelstein—of the Expedition of Tel Aviv University to Megiddo was to launch a “renewed investigation in areas previously excavated, intended to deal with stratigraphic, chronological, architectural and historical problems which remained unsolved by former excavations” (Finkelstein et al. 2000: 3). As a team member of this expedition I will suggest a solution for one of these problems.

Most research dealing with material from the Middle Bronze tombs in Megiddo ignored the tombs on the slope (Kenyon 1969; Tufnell 1973; Hallote 2001). In other studies the latter were only partially investigated (Wright 1965: Chart 5; Dever 1976: Chart 2; Gerstenblith 1983: 26), but they were never examined independently. This article explores the chronological, stratigraphic, and spatial aspects of these tombs in order to understand what occurred on the southeastern slope of Tel Megiddo during that period. The two main research questions are:

1. What were the land uses of the southeastern slope of Tel Megiddo during the Middle Bronze Age?
2. Are we actually familiar with the extramural cemetery of the Middle Bronze II–III in Megiddo?
Prior to the beginning of the excavations at Megiddo by the University of Chicago Expedition, an area was prepared for the depositing of debris from the excavations (Guy and Engberg 1938: 2). C. S. Fisher had excavated the southeastern slope for that purpose in 1925, and his successor, P. L. O. Guy, enlarged the dump area in 1927 after debris had filled it (Fig. 1). During the last expansion of this area between 1930 and 1932, the well-known Early Bronze stages were revealed.

The published plan of the dump grounds presents only about half of its area and the only documentation available for the rest of the area is an aerial photograph taken from the famous balloon (Guy and Engberg 1938: Pl. 2). In all, an area of ca. 15,000 m² of the grounds used for the dump was excavated and approximately 125 tombs were discovered. In addition to the tombs, several architectural elements were found in Squares Q-S/15–16. The finds were assigned to three strata distinguished from those of the tell by the prefix ES (Eastern Slope).

Due to the excavation methods that characterized the field work conducted in Palestine during the 1920s and the 1930s, the results of the excavation of the southeastern slope of Tel Megiddo are difficult to reexamine. Many finds were not published, and others were collected selectively and not systematically documented. The excavations of the University of Chicago Expedition on the slope concentrated mainly on the tombs, and it seems that the architectural elements were overlooked. As described by Guy and Engberg: “there were few buildings or other remains of high interest in the area, so the work went quickly” (Guy and Engberg 1938: 2). Furthermore, some of the sparse architectural finds that were documented (ibid.) were never published.

Ever since the southeastern slope of the tell was excavated, it has been interpreted as part of the extramural cemetery of the city. All activity that took place in this area from the Early Bronze Age to the Iron Age I and even later has always been considered funerary (Guy and Engberg 1938: 135; Broshi and Gophna 1986: 75; Kempinski 1989: 189; Gonen 1992a: 41, 87; Hallote 1994: 22). It should be noted that during 1927, while the northwestern part of the slope—where most of the Middle Bronze II–III\(^1\) tombs are concentrated—was being excavated, the

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\(^1\) The terminology used here is: Middle Bronze I: 2,000–1,800; Middle Bronze II: 1,800–1,650; Middle Bronze III: 1,650–1,500; after Ilan 1995: 298; cf. Bietak 2002: 41, Fig. 15.