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Molluscs from the Early Bronze Age Site at Qiryat Ata—Area N

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This report discusses 35 malacological remains excavated at Qiryat Ata—Area N (see Golani, this volume).[2] The shells were retrieved by manual collection, and sieving through a 1×1 cm mesh was undertaken on clearly stratified loci.

Table 1 presents a complete description of the shells, including species, provenance and state of preservation. Most of the specimens originated in EB II contexts, a few from surface loci. Their stratigraphic designation was determined by the excavators. A specimen is considered broken when more than half the shell is present, and a fragment, when less than half the shell is present.

The malacological evidence from Qiryat Ata indicates contacts with the Mediterranean during EB II, as reflected by the presence of *Glycymeris insubrica, Cerastoderma glaucum* and *Tonna galea.* In addition, the presence of the edible freshwater bivalve *Potomida littoralis delesserti* indicates exploitation of nearby Naḥal Qishon. This species is extinct today due to pollution of the Qishon, but it is known to have inhabited this stream in the past. The presence of the landsnail *Helix engaddensis,* which is a burrow snail, is probably of recent origin.

The three broken and abraded valves of the freshwater bivalve *Potomida littoralis delesserti* do not appear to have been collected fresh from Naḥal Qishon, although unabraded examples of this species were found in large quantities at Tel Qashish, from both EB I and EB II contexts, where it was apparently consumed (Bar-Yosef Mayer 2003:419).

Twelve of the 20 shells of the species *Cerastoderma glaucum* display an artificial, worked hole above the umbo. Although found in three different phases (Phases 1–3) within Area N (most in Sq E, one in Sq F), they were all manipulated in the same way (Fig. 1), and could have been part of a necklace, or perhaps functioned as tallies/counters, as suggested by Tubb and Dorrell (1994:63). Parallels that may have been used as tallies/counters or ornaments were found in Early Bronze Age contexts at Tel Bet She'an (Bar-Yosef Mayer 2006:690), Tel Qashish (Bar-Yosef Mayer 2003:420–421), Megiddo, Lod, Tel Yarmut, Tell es-Sa'idiyeh (Bar-Yosef Mayer 2007:198), Ashqelon-Barnea (Ktalav, forthcoming), and in a previous excavation at Qiryat Ata (Reese 2003:253). Another example of group of holed *Cerastoderma glaucum* was recovered at Early Bronze Age Jericho, in a brick in a wall, and was interpreted as a necklace (Biggs 1963:125–126).

Fig. 1. A collection of artificially holed *Cerastoderma glaucum* shells from Area N.

Table 1. Molluscs from Qiryat Ata—Area N

Period	Sq	Locus	Basket	Context	Species	Preservation	Hole	Origin	Comment
–	A	700	7123	Topsoil removal	*Helix engaddensis*	Broken	No	Landsnail	
–	A	700	7005	Topsoil removal	*Glycymeris insubrica*	Broken	Natural	Mediterranean	
–	A	700	7123	Topsoil removal	*Glycymeris insubrica*	Complete	No	Mediterranean	
–	A	701	7006	Topsoil removal	*Glycymeris insubrica*	Broken	No	Mediterranean	
EB II	E	702	7035	Debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Broken	No	Mediterranean	
EB II	E	702	7014	Debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Broken	No	Mediterranean	
EB II	E	702	7007	Debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	E	702	7007	Debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	E	702	7007	Debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	E	702	7021	Debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	E	702	7021	Debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	E	702	7014	Debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Tonna galea*	Fragment	No	Mediterranean	
EB II	A	706	7043	Below L701; debris upon floor and floor make-up south of W75	*Potomida littoralis delesserti*	Broken	No	Freshwater	
EB II	A	706	7015	Below L701; debris upon floor and floor make-up south of W75	*Potomida littoralis delesserti*	Broken	No	Freshwater	
EB II	G	712	7037	Below L704; debris south of W71	*Glycymeris insubrica*	Complete	No	Mediterranean	
EB II	E	717	7046	Debris upon floor	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Broken	No	Mediterranean	
EB II	E	717	7046	Debris upon floor	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Broken	No	Mediterranean	
EB II	E	717	7046	Debris upon floor	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	No	Mediterranean	
EB II	E	717	7046	Debris upon floor	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	No	Mediterranean	

Table 1. (Cont.)

Period	Sq	Locus	Basket	Context	Species	Preservation	Hole	Origin	Comment
EB II	E	717	7046	Debris upon floor	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	No	Mediterranean	
EB II	E	717	7046	Debris upon floor	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	E	717	7046	Debris upon floor	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	E	717	7046	Debris upon floor	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	E	717	7046	Debris upon floor	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	E	717	7046	Debris upon floor	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	E	717	7040	Debris upon floor	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	E	728	7093	Below L717; floor and floor make-up	*Potomida littoralis delesserti*	Fragment	No	Freshwater	
EB II	G	740	7187	Below L712; combined into L729	*Helix engaddensis*	Fragment	No	Landsnail	
EB II	E	742	7142	Below L728; debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Helix engaddensis*	Broken	No	Landsnail	
EB II	E	742	7142	Below L728; debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Helix engaddensis*	Broken	No	Landsnail	
EB II	E	742	7142	Below L728; debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Helix engaddensis*	Broken	No	Landsnail	
EB II	E	742	7155	Below L728; debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Helix engaddensis*	Broken	No	Landsnail	
EB II	E	742	7155	Below L728; debris upon floor and floor make-up	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	No	Mediterranean	
EB II	F	747	7160	Below L741; dark brown packed alluvial deposits	*Glycymeris insubrica*	Broken	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament
EB II	F	747	7160	Below L741; dark brown packed alluvial deposits	*Cerastoderma glaucum*	Complete	Artificial	Mediterranean	Ornament

NOTES

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