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Magdalūma, Migdālīm, Magdoloī, and Majādīl: The Historical Geography and Archaeology of the Magdalu (Migdāl)

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Several lines of evidence permit us to characterize ancient Levantine settlements whose modern place names include variations of the Arabic term mājdāl. It has been suggested for some time that these sites preserve the locations of Bronze and Iron Age watchtowers, though this has not been unequivocally demonstrated. However, textual references to Bronze Age magdalūma, Iron Age migdālīm, and Classical magdoloī, when compared against the locations of majādīl, indeed support the identification of these sites as Bronze and Iron Age military observation towers. This fact is further supported by archaeological data available from nearly half of these settlements. The distribution of Arabic majādīl reveals a logical selection of strategic positions within the Levantine landscape for the establishment of towers that served as part of an integrated defensive network related to the major political centers of the Levant, principally during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.

Previous discussions of the Hebrew term *migdāl* and its Ugaritic equivalent *magdalu*—both of which were references to towers in Iron and Bronze Age texts—have been dominated by two concerns. The first of these preoccupations is with the identification of the settlement of Migdōl in Egypt (e.g., since Gardiner 1920: 107–10), which is associated with the Exodus tradition as well as later settlement during the Iron Age (if both of these references were, indeed, to the same settlement in Egypt). The other preoccupation is with the remains of Middle Bronze Age temples in the southern Levant that have been commonly, though probably mistakenly, identified as *migdāl*-temples (see discussion below).

Much greater attention should be given, however, to the evidence relating to the Arabic toponym *mājdāl* (pl. *majādīl*) and its variants, which have for quite some time been correlated with the Northwest Semitic (hereafter NWS) and Hebrew terms *magdalu* and *migdāl*, respectively. The retention of the earlier

toponyms among modern Arabic place names facilitates the location of these Bronze and Iron Age settlements throughout the Levant. The evidence relating to these toponyms is collected in this study in order to demonstrate how this term was frequently used to designate strategically located military settlements established from as early as the Middle Bronze Age through the Iron Age, which are best described as observation posts.

METHODOLOGY

Previous studies of the historical geography of the Near East have amply demonstrated that Arabic toponyms often preserve the ancient names of Near Eastern settlements. The classic case study of this fact is certainly the identification of biblical places in the southern Levant. Although much of this work was accomplished during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, similar efforts continue to be undertaken by scholars working with toponyms found in

ancient archives from the northern Levant (e.g., from Ebla, Alalakh, and Ugarit). Further possibilities remain, therefore, to exploit modern Arabic toponyms in order to identify the names (and functions) of ancient settlements, particularly in the northern Levant. This can be done quite effectively for settlements whose main characteristics are preserved in their name. Thus, settlements with names related to terms such as “fort” (Heb. *mešad*), “spring” (Heb. *‘āyn* > Ar. *‘ain*), “rural agricultural estate” (Ug. *gittu* > Ar. *jatt*),¹ and “house” or “temple” (Heb. *bêt* > Ar. *bayt*) reveal their role within the ancient landscape, and often such names were preserved through later Arabic toponyms (see Aharoni 1979: 108–12).

It is necessary to note, though, that the degree to which identifications arrived at in this manner are useful is, in my estimation, dependent upon three basic principles. First, the correlation of an ancient name for a particular type of site with a modern Arabic toponym must be consistent and lack other likely explanations. Second, it should be possible to identify a set of factors that governed the location of such settlements in the ancient landscape (e.g., the presence of water, a strategic location, proximity to certain features). Finally, it should be possible to account for any settlements with similar names that are not located where they would be expected according to the second principle.

The approach outlined above can be employed to identify settlements that were referred to in ancient texts with the NWS terms for fortified towers, *magdalu* (pl. *magdalūma*)² in Ugaritic and *migdāl* (pl. *migdālīm* or less frequently *migdālōi*) in Hebrew. It is not my contention that all of the towers from these periods were referred to as such by name. However, I will demonstrate that the oft-discussed Arabic term *mājdal* does preserve the locations of nearly 60 Middle and Late Bronze Age *magdalūma* as well as Iron Age *migdālīm*. While many of these sites were, of course, mentioned in textual sources, as will be discussed below, no exhaustive effort has been undertaken to correlate these references with the *majādīl* identified in the accompanying maps (figs. 1 and 2). This is because the descriptions of their locations in the textual sources are usually in-

adequate (for the results of previous attempts to do so, see table 1). Furthermore, in this article it will be shown that the locations of these *majādīl* reveal the adoption of a unique defensive strategy in the Levant during the course of the Middle Bronze Age which then continued through at least the early Iron Age. I will begin, therefore, by reviewing references to place names with the related terms *magdalūma*, *migdālīm*, and *magdoloi* in texts from the Middle Bronze Age through the Classical period. This is followed by a review of the archaeological data that support these observations, and the conclusions that can be drawn from the convergence of this evidence.

MAGDALŪMA, MIGDĀLĪM, AND MAGDOLOI IN TEXTUAL SOURCES

The unequivocal relationship of the terms *magdalūma*, *migdālīm*, and *magdoloi*, which occur in texts dated from the Middle Bronze Age through the Classical period, is established by references to one site in particular, which is located in the eastern Delta (or north Sinai), biblical *Migdōl*. The references to this site demonstrate that variant spellings of the same place name occurred in a variety of languages over a period of more than one thousand years: Gk. *Magdōlos* (Hellenistic) > Heb. *Migdōl* (Iron Age) > NWS *Magdala* and Egy. *Mktr* (Late Bronze Age; see table 1). All of these references are, therefore, identified as variants of a term whose original consonants were *mgdl*. Since little data can be deduced for many of the references discussed below, the discussion has been limited to only the most frequently attested references listed in table 1.

Although the root of the terms *magdalūma*, *migdālīm*, and *magdoloi* has been commonly identified as *gdl*, thus insinuating that the primary characteristic of these towers was their “great” or “large” size, this is a false etymology. An altogether more appropriate root is attested in Akkadian where the cognate of *mgdl* was *madgaltu*,³ which is also identified as a “watchtower” and is attested among Middle and Neo-Assyrian sources (see *CAD* vol. M, pt. 1: 21–25). At least one place name, ^{URU}Madgalte, is attested in the Middle Assyrian period, and the term occurs as an Akkadogram in Hittite. The verbal root of this noun was *dagālu*, the primary meaning of

¹ See discussion by Michael Heltzer (1982: 49–62).

² Although the vocalization of the Ugaritic term remains uncertain, this vocalization is considered standard for Ugaritic based on extant data and evidence from the Amarna letters (Dennis Pardee, personal communication, 2004).

³ I would like to thank Anson Rainey for calling my attention to this fact.

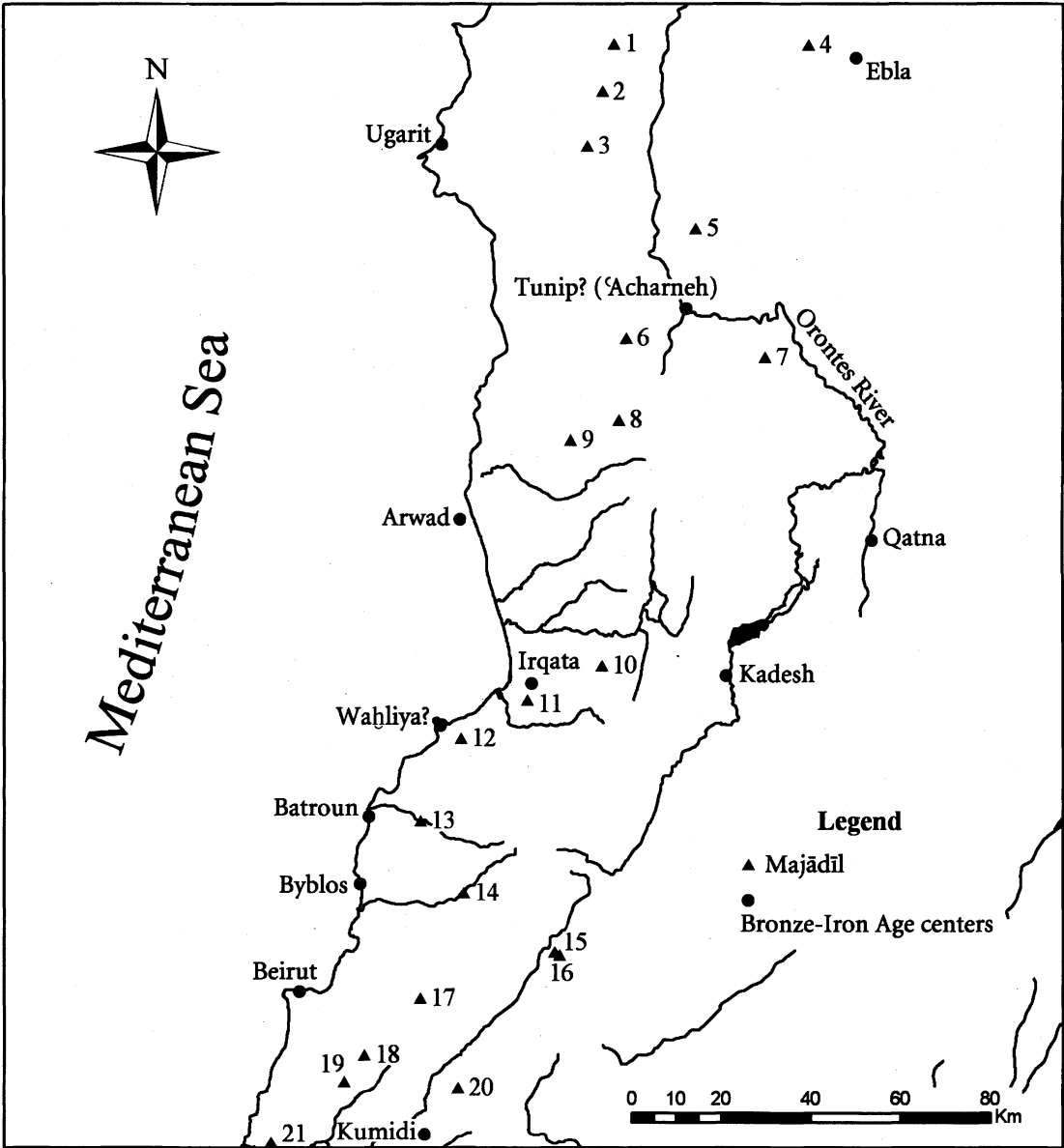


Fig. 1. *Majādīl* in the northern Levant. See Appendix 1 for names.

which is “to look”; and its earliest attestation is in the Old Babylonian period (CAD vol. D: 16). Thus, it would seem that the term was borrowed from Akkadian and that the change in spelling was the result of a metathesis of the consonants *gimel* and *dalet*. Since NWS place names (see discussion below) do not preserve the Akkadian spelling (though metathesis did occur later among many Arabic *ma-jādīl* place names; see below), the metathesis must have occurred when the noun was first borrowed in

the Levant.⁴ As demonstrated by the earliest attestation of the term outside of Mesopotamia (in Egyptian during the Middle Kingdom) as the Canaanite loanword *mktr*, the metathesis must have occurred no later than the Middle Bronze Age. This fact is confirmed by the lack of evidence for *dgl* as a productive

⁴ The feminine Akkadian suffix *-atu* was, of course, dropped at that time.

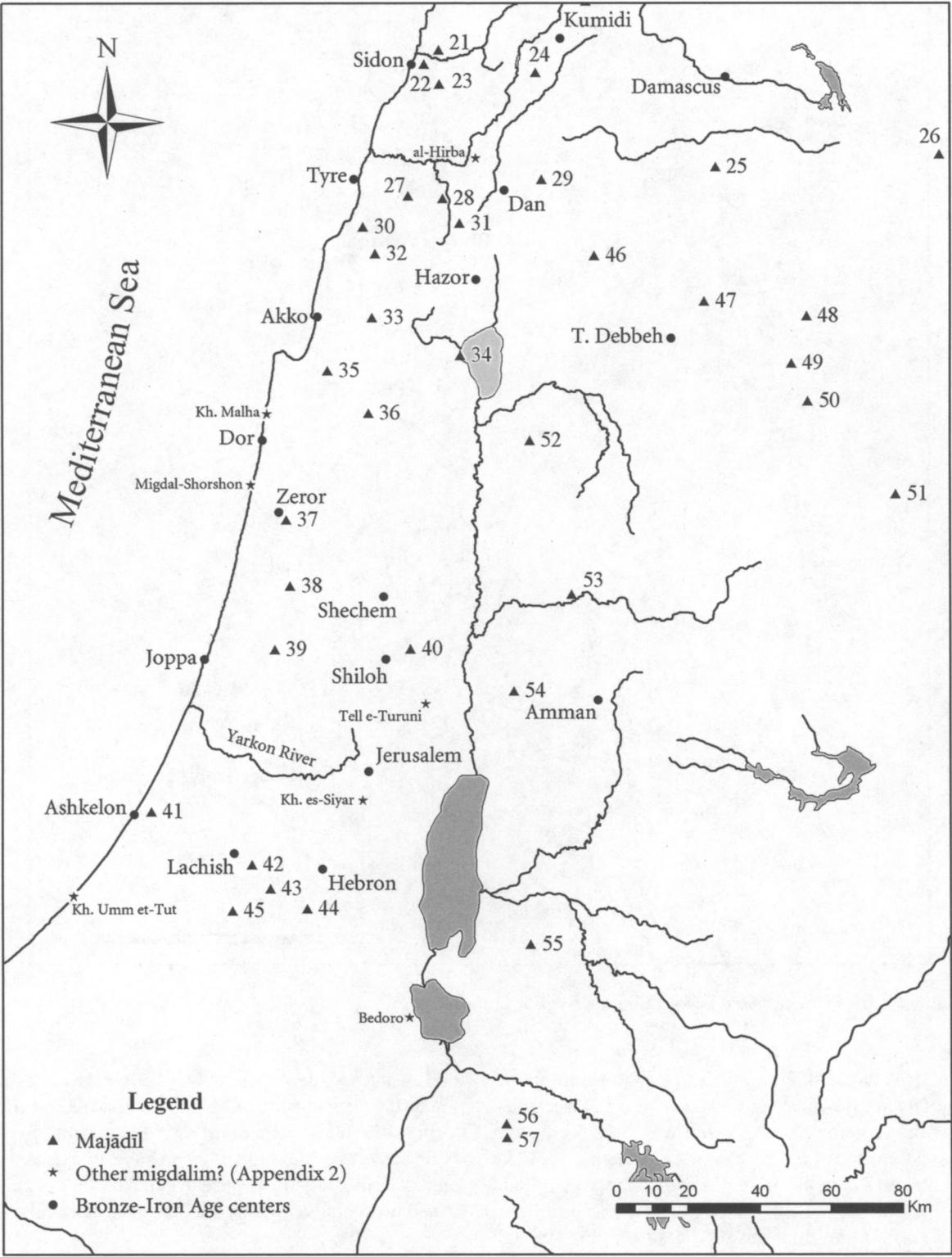


Fig. 2. *Majādīl* in the southern Levant. See Appendix 1 for names.

TABLE 1. *Migdāl* Toponyms Identified in Textual Sources

Ancient name	Date	Source(s)	Common Identification(s) Number in Appendix 1
Middle and Late Bronze Age <i>magdalūma</i>			
<i>Mktrj</i>	18th cent. B.C. (Dyn. XIII)	Execration Texts (E.5)	See <i>Mktr(a)len</i> ; Asiatic ruler was <i>ʾIbi3fi</i> (Posener 1940: 67)
<i>Mktr(a)len</i> or <i>Mktr-yen[eth?]</i>	15th–13th cent.	Topo. lists of Thutmose III (no.115), Amenhotep II, Seti I, Ramesses II, and Ramesses III (COS II, p. 22a)	Uncertain, but often Tel Zeror (cf. Aharoni 1959: 120–22), which is 3 km NW of Kh. al-Májdal (no. 37), which is a better option (cf. Ahituv 1984: 142)
<i>Magdalu</i> (1)	14th cent.	EA 69:20 [70:9]	Al-Májdal (no. 10), east of Tripoli (cf. Altman 1978)
<i>Magdalu</i> (2)	14th cent.	EA 185:29, 34–35; 186:28	Majdāloun (no. 15) in Amqu (Beqa), near Ḥasi (Tell Hizzin?) (cf. Moran 1992: 390); or Májdal-Mis (no. 31; cf. Marín 2001: 183)
<i>Magdalu</i> (3)	14th cent.	EA 234:29–30	See <i>Migdól</i> below
<i>Magdalu</i> (4)	14th cent.	EA 256:26	Al-Májdal (no. 34) in Garu (biblical Geshur?) (Moran 1992: 390), or in Hawran (cf. Marín 2001: 182–83)
<i>Magdalā</i>	13th cent.	RS 17.62+237, 17.366 (PRU 4, 63–67, 69–70)	Májdal (no. 1) near Bdama on NE border of kingdom of Ugarit (cf. van Soldt 1997: 690)
<i>Mktr</i> (1)	13th cent.	Ramesses II	See <i>Magdalu</i> (2); also equated with Májdal-Shams (no. 29) in TAVO
<i>Mktr</i> (2)—of Seti I and II	13th cent.	Karnak relief (Seti I); Papyrus Anastasi V (Seti II); see Morris 2005: 415, 420, 423 and n. 224	<i>Mktr n Mn-m3ʿt-rʿ</i> (Migdāl of Menmaatre)/ <i>Mktr n sthy-mr-n-ptḥ</i> (Migdāl of Seti-Merneptah); located in eastern Delta or north Sinai and identified with (1) T-78 east of T. el-Borg in the north Sinai (cf. Hoffmeier 2006: figs. 2, 3); (2) Tell Abyad south of Tell el-Herr; or (3) Iron Age <i>Migdól</i> (see below)
<i>Mktr</i> (3)—of Ram. III	12th cent.	Medinet Habu (see Morris 2005: 715–19)	<i>Mkdr n Rʿ-ms-sw ḥḳ3 iwnw</i> (Migdāl of Ramesses Ruler of Heliopolis); see <i>Mktr</i> (2)
<i>Mktr</i> (4)	10th cent.	Karnak: Bubastite portal (Sheshonq I)	Located in southern Levant; see <i>Migdāl-Eder</i>
<i>Mktr</i> (5)	? Demotic text	Cairo 31169 (recto, col. 3, line 20)	Located in east Delta; see Spiegelberg 1908: 273
<i>Mktr</i> (6)	? Demotic text	Cairo 31169 (recto, col. 3, line 21)	See <i>Mktr</i> (5), above
<i>Mktr</i> (7)	? Demotic text	Cairo 31169 (recto, col. 3, line 22)	See <i>Mktr</i> (5), above
<i>Mktr</i> (8)	? Demotic text	Cairo 31169 (recto, col. 3, line 23)	See <i>Mktr</i> (5), above
Iron Age <i>migdālīm</i>			
<i>Migdāl-Eder</i>	?	Gen 35:21; Micah 4:8	Lit. “Migdāl-of-the flock”; location uncertain; often identified with <i>Turris Ader</i> (see <i>TIR</i>), “Shepherd’s field” at Kh. es-Siyar el Ghanam, southeast of Bethlehem (see App. 2 and fig. 3)
<i>Migdāl-El</i>	?	Josh 19:38	Májdal-Salim (no. 28; cf. Boling and Wright 1982: 460)
<i>Migdāl-Gad</i>	?	Josh 15:37	Kh. al-Majdālah (no. 42; cf. Boling and Wright 1982: 385), or Kh. Mujeidilat (no. 45a)
<i>Migdól</i>	13th–6th cent.	Exod 14:2; Num 33:7; Jer 44:1, 46:14; Ezek 29:10; 30:6	Include (1) Bir-Makdal (or Bir Madkur) in the north Sinai, located 23 miles northeast of Ismaliya (cf. Ebers, see Gardiner 1920: n. 1, p. 110); (2) Iron Age remains at T. el-Herr (T-21) (cf. Oren 1984); as well as (3) <i>Mktr</i> (2)
<i>Migdāl-Shechem</i>	12th–11th cent.	Judg 9:46–49	Not usually distinguished from Shechem (Tell Balatah); see discussion below; identified with Mt. Ebal structure (cf. Naʾaman 1986); possibly Májdal Bani-Fadl (no. 40)

TABLE 1.—continued

Classical Period <i>magdoloī</i>			
<i>Magdala</i>	Rom.	See <i>Magdala, Taricheae</i> in <i>TIR</i>	al-Májdal (no. 34)
<i>Magdalsenna</i>	Hell.–Byz.	See <i>Magdalsenna</i> in <i>TIR</i>	Kh. Beiyudat (cf. Monson and Frank 1979), or <i>Mktr</i> (3) (cf. Schmitt 1995: 85)
<i>Magdiel</i> (I)	Rom.–Byz.	See <i>Magdiel</i> I in <i>TIR</i>	Kh. Malha (see App. 2 and fig. 2)
<i>Magdiel</i> (II)	Rom.	See <i>Magdiel</i> II in <i>TIR</i>	Májdal-Urkamas (no. 35)
<i>Magdōlos</i> (Gk.)	Hell.	Μαγδόλος Herodotus <i>Hist.</i> 2.159.2	See <i>Mktr</i> (2) above
<i>Magdolum</i>	Rom.	See <i>Magdolum</i> in <i>TIR</i>	See <i>Mktr</i> (2) above and <i>Magdolum</i>
<i>Magedan</i>	Rom.–Byz.	See <i>Magdala, Taricheae</i> in <i>TIR</i>	See <i>Magdala</i>
<i>Migdala</i>	Hell.–Rom.	Gk. Inscription: Ψυλῆς Μιγδαληνῶν;	See al-Májdal (no. 49)
<i>Migdāl-Aphek</i>	Rom.	See <i>Aphek Turris</i> in <i>TIR</i>	Májdal-Yaba (no. 39)
<i>Migdāl-Haruv</i>	Hell.–Rom.	?	<i>al-Hirba</i> (see App. 2 and fig. 2)
<i>Migdāl-Malha</i>	Rom.	See <i>Magdāl-Malha</i> in <i>TIR</i>	Kh. Malha (see App. 2 and fig. 2)
<i>Migdāl-Nunnayah</i>	Rom.	See <i>Magdala, Taricheae</i> in <i>TIR</i>	See <i>Magdala</i>
<i>Migdāl-Sabayya</i>			
<i>Migdāl-Shorshon</i>	Hell.–Rom.	Gk. <i>Stratonos Pyrgos</i> ; see <i>Qesaria</i> in <i>TIR</i>	<i>Straton's Tower</i> of 4th cent. at Caesarea (see App. 2 and fig. 2)
<i>Migdāl-Thauth(a)</i>	Rom.–Byz.	See <i>Thabatha</i> in <i>TIR</i>	Kh. <i>Umm et-Tut</i> (see App. 2 and fig. 2)
<i>Migdāl-Zohar</i>	Rom.	<i>Claudius Ptolemais</i> 5,15,5	Location uncertain, but often with <i>Bedoro</i> (cf. Schmitt 1995: 85–86; see App. 2 and fig. 3)
<i>Migtol</i> (Coptic)	?	?	See ref. in Gardiner 1920: 108
Abbreviations: See Appendix			
Sources:			
<i>ANET</i>	See References		
<i>AR</i>	See References		
Cairo 31169	Text in <i>Die demotischen Denkmäler II: Die demotischen Papyrus</i> (Spiegelberg 1908)		
<i>COS</i>	See References		
<i>EA</i>	Amarna letter (see Moran 1992)		
<i>PRU</i>	See References		
<i>RS</i>	Ras Shamra text		
<i>TIR</i>	See References		

verbal root among NWS languages in subsequent periods. The issue of the Akkadian *dimtu*, a term also meaning “tower,” will be dealt with in a future article in which I will discuss the evidence for *gittu* settlements in the Levant. It should suffice to note here that there is no direct relationship between the terms *májdal* and *dimtu* beyond their use as terms for towers, which I would suggest were of two types that served completely different functions.

Middle Bronze Age *magdalūma*

The earliest extra-biblical attestation of a site by the name of *magdalu* occurs in the Brussels group of the Execration Texts (Ahituv 1984: 142), which dates at the latest to the early 13th Dynasty (early

18th century B.C.). The reference is to *Mktrj* (E.5, Posener 1940: 67), possibly *Magdōlyâ(n)* (for this vocalization, see Rainey and Notley 2006: 58). However, due to a lack of geographical information in the Execration Texts, it is impossible to locate this *magdalu*. Nevertheless, it may be suggested that this settlement was by this time not merely a small strategically placed tower whose settlement was dependent on a larger settlement nearby, but may instead have consisted of a substantial occupation as suggested by the identification of its ruler, *ʾIbi3fi*. Thus, if any correlation is to be made between later attested *magdalūma* and this *mktr*, then one of the *magdalūma* located in the northern Levant and mentioned in the Amarna letters would be a likely candidate.

Late Bronze Age *magdalūma*

The evidence for a number of *magdalū* toponyms among Ugaritic, Amarna, and Egyptian New Kingdom texts certainly supports the suggestion that, no later than the Late Bronze Age, the toponym had become quite a common name for Levantine settlements. While attempts have been made to correlate references to different *magdalūma* in Late Bronze Age sources, given the often generic nature of the use of this toponym, it is not possible to be certain that any of the settlements being referred to among these different corpora is the same (and for this reason they are listed separately in table 1). In the Amarna correspondence, the name *Magdalu* referred to at least three separate cities in the Levant (EA 69:20; 70:9; 185:29–30, 34–35; 186:28; and 256:26), as well as a fourth in Egypt (EA 234:29–30). They are described as cities with the Akkadian determinative URU and compared to and listed among other cities (e.g., EA 186).

The comparison of towns, like Akko, to “*Magdalu* in Egypt” also hints that *magdalūma* featured a commonly recognized strategic role (EA 234). And while it is always difficult to determine the relative size of towns mentioned from only the references to them in the Amarna letters, the small size of *magdalūma* may be suggested by one reference to “hardly one family” having escaped from a *Magdalu* located in the Beqa Valley when it had been sacked, plundered, and burned by the ‘Apiru (EA 185). In addition to these references, a *Magdalā* is identified as a disputed settlement along the border of the kingdom of Ugarit. It is almost certainly to be identified with the modern settlement of Mājdal (fig. 1:1; Appendix 1: no. 1) in the pass near the town of Bdama, as suggested by van Soldt and others (see van Soldt 1997: 690).

New Kingdom Egyptian sources also preserve settlement names in the southern Levant with the term *mktr* (or *mkdr*), which has for some time been identified as a NWS loanword (*magdalu*) into Egyptian (see entry in Hoch 1994: 169–70; and references in Ahituv 1984). The exact vocalization of the Egyptian term, however, is unknown. While many of the references are found in New Kingdom topographical lists of the Levant, other Egyptian texts refer to at least one other *mktr*, though possibly as many as four, in the north Sinai (see *Mktr* nos. (5) to (8) in table 1). Presumably these *mktr* were part of a string of Egyptian road forts, most of which bore non-*mktr* names, located along the road between Egypt and

Canaan (Morris 2005: 817–20). These *mktr* included *Mktr* of Seti I and II (probably one and the same entity; Morris 2005: 415–20, 423 and n. 224) and *Mktr* of Ramesses III (Morris 2005: 715–30). Ellen Morris concluded that neither unique archaeological remains nor a distinct iconography could be specifically identified with the *mktr* and that, therefore, the term may have been employed “to provide variation among the names of structures that were otherwise difficult to differentiate” (Morris 2005: 818). However, Morris does not address the likelihood that these settlements were originally ethnically Canaanite based on the use of this unmistakably Semitic name. The very robust trade during the Middle Bronze Age, for example, along the road between Levantine Amorite lands and the Amorite capital of the Hyksos at Avaris (Tell ed-Dab’a) in the Delta would have necessitated at least a few such way stations or observation posts. It can be asserted, therefore, that the original use of the term *mktr* for any of a number of settlements along the coastal road should probably be identified with Canaanite settlement along this road during the Middle Bronze Age, prior therefore to Egyptian imperial expansion into the Levant from ca. 1530 B.C. onward.

A number of other *mktr* have been identified in a Demotic papyrus (Cairo 31169) which is thought to preserve an onomasticon of Late Bronze or Iron Age date. At least three, if not four, *mktr* are individually listed in this text (see *Mktr* (5) to (8) in table 1).⁵ The second, third, and fourth references are each followed by unidentified place names that each possessed its own determinative for “city”—essentially meaning that *mktr* appears to have been used in construct as part of a place name for a settlement (i.e., *Mktr*-PN). All of these *mktr* have been located within the eastern Delta, based on their order within the list in column three of this papyrus (Gardiner 1920: 108), though no specific sites have been identified with these names.

Despite their abundance, none of the Late Bronze Age textual references are particularly revealing concerning the exact locations or function of *magdalūma* as a type of settlement. Still, it is clear from some of these texts that many of these settlements had at least grown in size to the point that they accommodated a significant number of inhabitants—more than would

⁵ It is possible that only three *mktr* are listed if the first, which did not include a place name after it, represented a heading, as occurs elsewhere in the same text (Jacco Dieleman, personal communication, 2005).

have been required as part of an observation post—though exactly how many remains unclear.

Iron Age migdālīm

The *migdāl* settlement type was, of course, first identified in the Hebrew Bible, and most of these have been assumed to be at least Iron Age in date, though many were probably founded earlier. *Migdāl* toponyms in the Hebrew Bible include Migdāl-Eder (Gen 35:21), Migdāl-El (Josh 19:38), Migdāl-Gad (Josh 15:37), and Migdōl in Egypt (Exod 14:2; Num 33:7; Jer 44:1, 46:14; Ezek 29:10). There has been no shortage of suggestions concerning the identification of biblical *migdālīm* with sites in the southern Levant (see again, table 1). While accurate dates for the biblical stories in which these settlements are mentioned are difficult to determine with any precision—and likewise the dates of these settlements—the context in which the sites are mentioned provides a general range of occupation between the end of the Late Bronze Age and the Iron II period.

As an element in various toponyms, the Hebrew term *migdāl* has been traditionally defined as “tower” or “watchtower” (*BDB* 153–54), and it does appear in some cases to refer simply to a tower within a settlement, such as at Penuel (Judg 8:9) and Thebez (Judg 9:51). However, through a flawed attempt by G. Ernest Wright to associate an occurrence of the term in Judg 9:46 with a specific building, which he had excavated at Shechem, the misidentification of *migdālīm* unfortunately first began. It was through this association, derived from the assumption that the reference to *migdāl-Shechem* was to “the temple of El-Berith” in Judg 9:46 (NRSV), that the notion of a “fortress-temple” (i.e., *migdāl*-temple) was introduced.⁶ Thus, Wright’s identification effectively caused references to *Migdāl-Shechem* to be excluded from consideration as a place distinct from the settlement of Shechem itself.

A closer examination of the text is therefore necessary to demonstrate why *Migdāl-Shechem* should be identified as an independent settlement. Essentially all that can be concluded with certainty regarding the verse in question in Judges 9 is that, following the expulsion of the “lords of Shechem” from Shechem (v. 41) and the complete destruction of Shechem (v. 45), all of the “people of Migdāl-Shechem”

were massacred in a rock-cut vault (Heb. *ṣrīah*, v. 49) within the “temple of El-Berith” (v. 46).⁷ However, the location of the “temple of El-Berith” is ambiguous in this passage, though it should probably be situated within a settlement identified as *Migdāl-Shechem*, since both the “Lords” and the “people” within the “stronghold” are identified as belonging to “Migdāl-Shechem.” Whether or not the “stronghold of the temple of El-Berith” was located at Migdāl-Shechem, there is no reason that *Migdāl-Shechem* cannot be identified as a settlement separate from Shechem itself, especially since in the verse that precedes this entire episode, Shechem is said to have already been destroyed. Nevertheless, Wright concluded that the “*migdāl* of Shechem” was, in fact, the very “temple of El-Berith,” which he understood to be a building located within Shechem. Thus, to Wright, the Late Bronze Age temple he discovered presented an obvious candidate for the “temple of El-Berith,” which he assumed was to be found in Shechem (Wright 1964: 80–102), and to this day this identification continues to be widely propagated. This identification can be further disputed on the grounds that no *ṣrīah* (“vault”) has been identified within the structure or with any part of the structure. The buildings mentioned in this text and the archaeological remains cannot, therefore, in my opinion be plausibly identified as one and the same structure.⁸

Our understanding of the functional significance of the term *migdāl*, in comparison with more common Hebrew terms for settlements, such as *ʿir*, is unfortunately limited. Based on the biblical references to *migdālīm* and the potential relationship between the Hebrew term and Arabic *májdal* (which is discussed further below), Frank Frick has speculated that *migdālīm* were probably “small urban settlements that were grouped around a nuclear citadel” (Frick 1977: 47). While this may be true, the biblical references do not in and of themselves support this assertion. Furthermore, due to what was clearly a more general use of the term *migdāl* to identify a specific type of building (i.e., a tower), it is not likely that the *migdāl* of Penuel (Judg 8:9, 17), for instance, should be identified as a *migdāl* settlement per se. Therefore, it is not clear to what extent Iron Age *migdālīm* in the Bible constituted self-sufficient settle-

⁷ For translation of *ṣrīah*, see Koehler and Baumgartner 1994: 1056.

⁸ Despite this reappraisal, the archaeological facts surrounding the Late Bronze temple and its continued use into the Iron I are not challenged by this analysis (Stager 1999).

⁶ It is worth noting that the same temple type is referred to more appropriately in Syria and Mesopotamia as merely a temple *in antis* (Ger. *Antentempel*).

ments rather than fortified look-out towers about which we know very little concerning their occupation, layout, or size.

In addition to the biblical *migdālīm*, there is, of course, the isolated reference to one *mktr* in the Bubastite portal inscription of Sheshonq I, the events of which are dated to ca. 925 B.C. This reference even features the determinative for “tower,” thus corroborating the identification of *migdālīm* as towers. However, because of the debate regarding Sheshonq’s itinerary within the southern Levant, this text does not aid in the identification of a particular site as the *mktr* mentioned.

Classical-Period *magdoloī*

As table 1 shows, numerous *magdoloī* (Gk. sing. *magdōlos*, Lat. sing. *magdolum*) are attested in Classical sources from the Hellenistic through the Byzantine periods, with most attested among Roman and Byzantine sources. Unfortunately, despite frequent references to them in onomastica, such as that of Eusebius, textual references to *magdoloī* in Classical literature do not illuminate the role of these settlements during this period (or any other, for that matter), except for the fact that at least two names clearly demonstrate the continued identification of the term with towers. The references in question are in Greek, *μυγδαλίων* (*Migdala*; see Appendix 1, no. 49), and in Latin, *Turris Ader*, which is presumably to be identified with *Migdāl-Aphek* (see table 1).

Despite that a number of *mktr* attested in a Demotic onomasticon from Egypt were probably Late Bronze Age settlements (discussed above), there is no evidence of the occurrence of the Arabic toponym *mājdal* in Egypt to suggest that the locations of either *migdālīm* or *magdoloī* have been preserved in modern times.⁹ All that can be concluded, therefore, from the numerous occurrences of the toponym during the

Classical period is that similar concerns—namely, the strategic concerns that had once necessitated the construction of towers in these places—were again significant during these later periods, especially during the Roman and Byzantine periods.

MAJĀDĪL AND MAGDALŪMA

It has been recognized for quite some time that the Arabic term *mājdal* (pl. *majādīl*) most likely preserved the location of sites with *magdalu* and *migdāl* toponyms. Efforts to explore the subject have, for the most part, been limited to associating references to *migdālīm* in the Hebrew Bible with a handful of *majādīl* known to historical geographers (see, for example, table 1). However, no effort has been made to document the geographical phenomenon represented by numerous *majādīl* located throughout the Levant.¹⁰ In this section I will briefly discuss the Arabic term *mājdal* and demonstrate its relevance to a study of the historical geography of the Levant during the Bronze and Iron Ages.

It should be noted that variant spellings and forms of the Arabic term *mājdal* include all of the following terms (for a list, see Wardini 2002: 405): (1) *Mājdal*, (2) *Majdla*, (3) *Majd(a)lūn(a)* (lit. “our *mājda*l”), (4) *Majdal*, (5) *Majdlayn*, (6) *Majdlayya* or *Majdleya*, (8) *Majādīl*, (9) *Mjēdel*, (10) *Mjēdle*, (11) *Kh. (al-)Majdaleh* (i.e., modified by a topographic term, usually Arabic *khirbet*), and (12) *Mājdal* as the first or last element of a proper name in construct (e.g., *Mājdal-Islim* or *Cheikh Aali Mājdal*). It also seems that the variant *Majd(a)/Mejjed* should be included with these (e.g., Appendix 1, nos. 18, 25, and 26), as is evident, for example, with the attestation of *Majd al-Kurum* (see reference in Census of Palestine: Mills 1932) for *Mājdal-Kurum* (see Appendix 1, no. 33) and *Majda-Baʿana* for *Mājdal-Baʿna* (no. 18).¹¹ Similarly, during the Classical period, the variant

⁹ With regard to the preservation of *migdāl* and *magdoloī* place names in Egyptian Arabic, it is important to note that the ancient Egyptian place names with *mktr*, *mkdr*, and *mktl* elements are not likely to have been identified with the Arabic term *majādīl* in the same manner in which *magdalu* and *migdāl* were in the Levant. Examination of British War Office maps of the Delta and Fayum supports this conclusion, since no *majādīl* or the expected variants of the term are present. It is possible, therefore, that terms preserving the consonants of the Egyptian term may, in fact, preserve the locations of ancient *migdālīm* and *magdoloī*. The modern town of el-Maqāṭla (30°58'E, 29°23'N), for instance, may perhaps be identified with *Magdolos* of the Fayum, and similarly el-Maqāṭil in the eastern Delta (31°4'E, 30°28'N) may preserve the name of another *migdāl*.

¹⁰ Frank Koucky (unpublished manuscript, n.d.) has recently noted the phenomenon, and notably near Asheklon, but he never undertook a broader study of the toponym’s occurrence. I thank David Schloen for calling this reference to my attention.

¹¹ Wardini states that the meaning of this term is unknown, though variants include *Mejday*, *Mejjediyye*, and *Mejjedin*. However, of these variants, only *Mejjedin* is attested in Lebanon (Wardini 2002: 405). *Mejjedin* (Wardini 2002: map 16, no. 24) has not been included in this study due to difficulty in identifying precise coordinates for its location; it is said to be located at 160 m ASL approximately 8.5 km southeast of Beirut (Wardini 2002: 230). If correctly located, it would have linked *Majdāl*-Meouch with Beirut for communication.

Magedan and possibly Magedane occur as references to Magdala on the Sea of Galilee (no. 34).

The common translation of *májdal*, which is usually listed as *mijḏāl* in dictionaries, is “strongly-built palace or mansion” (Groom 1983: 195), following the entry in Edward Lane’s lexicon (Lane 1865: bk. 1, pt. 2, pp. 391–92). However, the term lacks a discernible Arabic root, such that the most likely explanation is that the term entered Arabic as a loanword in the Levant, and thus the geographic extent of its attestation is now limited to this and immediately adjacent regions, as demonstrated below. The frequent employment of the phonologically identical toponym *migḏāl* prior to the Islamic period, as discussed above, also supports this conclusion. Finally, the use of the Arabic term *burj* (Groom 1983: 64), a more common term for “tower,” which was seemingly used widely for such sites that were founded from the Roman period onward (see *Burj* toponyms in Lehmann 2002: 108–10), suggests that the toponym *májdal* was an archaic term in Arabic during the Islamic period. Thus, it appears to have been applied only to settlements that had been occupied prior to this period.

While it is certainly possible that Arabic towns could have been given archaizing names like *májdal* during the Islamic period, especially during the 20th century, evidence from Ottoman-period records indicates that modern sites with *májdal* toponyms certainly predate the 20th century. Also, as will be demonstrated below, almost all *majādīl* for which there are archaeological data feature evidence from earlier periods. Thus, the occurrences of these toponyms suggest the locations of ancient *magdoloi*, *migḏālīm*, or as will be demonstrated below, more probably Bronze Age *magdalūma*. While no exhaustive effort is undertaken in this work to trace the earliest occurrence of all *májdal* toponyms among Islamic records, sources such as Hütteroth and Abdulfattah’s register of 16th-century Ottoman settlements (1977) reveal that all *majādīl* identified on mid-19th century or later maps of the Levant existed at least during the Ottoman period. A number of these settlements ceased, however, to be occupied later.¹² Further consultation of other Islamic-period

records would undoubtedly reveal an even larger corpus of *majādīl* than I have identified here (see Appendix 1), though difficulty would then be encountered in attempting to determine the correct locations of these *majādīl* on maps. We may conclude, therefore, that some *majādīl*, which had been inhabited during an earlier phase of the Islamic period, ceased to be inhabited when the maps used in this study were prepared (i.e., after the mid-19th century).

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR MAGDALŪMA

With an awareness of the variants of the Arabic term listed above, 59 *majādīl* have been identified as a result of examining mostly pre-World War II maps of the Levant (see Appendix 1; note that no. 45 represents a cluster of *majādīl*). Sites in Syria and Lebanon were primarily identified on the 1:50,000 Levant map series published between the late 1930s and 1945, while those in Palestine were primarily identified on maps from the *Survey of Western Palestine* (SWP) and in Jordan on 1:250,000 scale maps of Jordan. Plotting *majādīl* reveals that they are clustered within a region ranging from southwest of Aleppo to the northern Sinai (for the northern Levant, see fig. 1, and for the southern Levant, see fig. 2). Therefore, *májdal* appears to constitute an exclusively Levantine toponym. This is also significant in that the evidence for the occurrence of the Arabic toponym *májdal* very clearly aligns with the region associated with references to *magdalūma*, *migḏālīm*, and *magdoloi* from textual sources (discussed above). The only exceptions to this are references to *mktr* (see table 1) that are usually placed within the eastern Delta and north Sinai. However, these settlements may be reasonably identified as Amorite enclaves that were founded no later than the Hyksos period (Dynasty XV). The qualification of *mktr* with Pharaonic names, such as *mktr n Mn-m3ʿt-rʿ*, should probably be understood, therefore, as attempts by New Kingdom pharaohs to appropriate settlements evidently identified with Amorite occupation and Hyksos rule.

¹² Several other *majādīl* that cannot be located on later maps are attested in Hütteroth and Abdulfattah’s work. One settlement called Majḏāl-Fathil was located in Judaea supposedly northwest of Hebron (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 123). Hütteroth and Abdulfattah also placed Majḏāl-ʿAlīya al-Qela just north of Majḏāl-Kurum (1977: 191), but it is important to note, as Grootkerk’s work demonstrates, that no earlier settlement of this site is evident (2000:

191). Majādīl is also to be located southeast of the Sea of Galilee, though its exact location is uncertain (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 200), and Majḏāl-Qazaza may also have been located 15 km north of Bosra in the Hawran (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 220). Similarly, a Migḏāl-Humzin (MR 1641.2725) is attested during the Crusader period (see Grootkerk 2000: 7).

Archaeological evidence is available for 26 of these 59 sites (see Appendix 1). At these 26 sites, occupation included Chalcolithic (2 sites), Early Bronze Age (3 sites), Middle and Late Bronze Age (10 sites), Iron Age (10 sites), Hellenistic (4 sites), Roman-Byzantine (11 sites), as well as Islamic and Ottoman (6 sites) evidence (see table 2). Through a combination of textual, geographic, and archaeological data, it is possible, therefore, to define an explicit function associated with *majādīl* and, furthermore, to suggest how this function correlates with the presence of *magdalūma/migdalīm* within the settlement landscape of the Levant during the Bronze Age and also, potentially, during the Iron Age.

Topographical Situation

The quite even distribution or spacing of *majādīl* throughout the Levant is an evident characteristic of these settlements. However, a close inspection of the topographical positions of *majādīl* supports the conclusion that the dominant characteristic of *majādīl* was their elevated view of the terrain around them. This would have enabled them to function, first and foremost, as observation posts, as has been suggested by the etymology of the term (discussed above). Like many small Crusader castles throughout the Levant that served primarily as observation posts, as isolated settlements *majādīl* were probably not intended to withstand sieges. Since these settlements appear to have infrequently achieved any considerable size, it can be concluded that they constituted dependent, though strategic satellites of larger settlements. The question, therefore, is: during which period or periods were *majādīl* primarily occupied and, thus, functioning?

Chronological Evidence

The archaeological data for 26 of these *majādīl*—all of those that feature such data—are presented in table 2. Initial examination of the evidence for these *majādīl* reveals that their occupation is related to three main periods: the Middle and Late Bronze Ages (10 sites, 38 percent of these sites),¹³ the Iron

Age (10 sites, 38 percent), and the Roman-Byzantine (15 sites, 58 percent)¹⁴ periods. Occupational evidence from the Hellenistic (6 sites, 23 percent) and Islamic to Ottoman (8 sites, 31 percent) periods, while not insubstantial, are revealed as essentially inconsequential since this evidence could at most imply that one *magdoloi* was founded during the Hellenistic period and two during the Islamic and Ottoman periods. Considered in this light, the data reveal three main periods during which *majādīl* could have been founded, beginning with the Middle Bronze:¹⁵ the Middle and Late Bronze Age (10 sites, percent not applicable), the Iron Age (3 sites, 12 percent), and the Roman-Byzantine period (8 sites, 31 percent). The number of *majādīl* that were first inhabited in each period strongly suggests, therefore, that *majādīl*, or more appropriately *magdalūma*, represent a phenomenon originating as part of the Middle and Late Bronze Age settlement pattern. This phenomenon then presumably continued during the Iron Age, particularly in areas that were intensively occupied for the first time, such as the highlands of the southern Levant (see discussion below).

The evidence in support of the Middle Bronze Age as the period of origin for the *majādīl* phenomenon is also supported by the reference to *Mktr* in the Execration Texts, which is then followed by many such attestations in Late Bronze Age sources. Additionally, the archaeological evidence derived from cemeteries excavated at three of the sites with Middle Bronze Age data (Majdal near Ashkelon [no. 41], Migdal Ha-Emeq [no. 36], and Majdāluna [no. 21] in Lebanon) demonstrate that these sites were indeed inhabited in this period. These data support, therefore, the recognition of the Middle Bronze Age as

Late Bronze Age are present. Thus, in the absence of such sherds—which, in fact, constitute a small percentage of the Late Bronze Age assemblage—a finer chronological resolution is not usually possible with survey data.

¹⁴ The evidence for Roman-Byzantine *magdoloi* is detrimentally skewed by the artifactual evidence dated to this period, which primarily originates from *magdoloi* in the Hawran (Appendix 1, nos. 48–51, and 54–56). The data constitute inscriptions dated to this period (see TAVO maps BV 18 and BX 12), though no survey data are available for any of the other periods of occupation at these sites.

¹⁵ The discontinuity between the settlement patterns of the Early and Middle Bronze Ages as a result of the EB IV interlude, especially in the southern Levant, is sufficient to identify the occupation of *majādīl* during the Middle Bronze Age as constituting the foundation of completely new settlements—certainly without any relationship to the settlement pattern of the previous period.

¹³ For many reasons it is quite common to lump the Middle and Late Bronze Ages together in the analysis of survey data. The most significant reason, however, is that the identification of Late Bronze Age occupation based on ceramics is usually only possible to do with any certainty when imported ceramics exclusive to the

TABLE 2. Survey and Excavation Data for the Occupation of 26 *Majādīl*

No.	Chalcolithic	EB	MB–LB	Iron	Hellenistic	Rom–Byz	Islamic/ Ottoman
1						Rom	
5						Rom–Byz	Islamic
15							Ottoman
16		I–III	MB	I–II	X	Rom–Byz	
20	X	I–III	MB–LB	I			Isl./Ottoman
21			MB–LB				
24							Ottoman
29						Rom–Byz	
33			LB	X			
34					X	Rom–Byz	
35						Rom–Byz	Islamic
36			MB			Rom–Byz	Islamic
37			MB–LB	X			
38	X	I	MB	X	X	Rom	Islamic
39				X	X	Rom	
40				X			
41			MB				
45a			LB	X			
45b			LB				
48						Rom	
49						Rom	
50						X	
51						Byz	
55	X	X		I–II	X	Rom–Byz	Isl./Ottoman
56				I	X	Rom–Byz	
57		X		X		Byz	Islamic
Total	3	4	10	10	6	15	8
% of 26 sites	12%	15%	38%	38%	23%	58%	31%
No. first occupied	3	2	7	3	1	8	2
% first occupied	12%	8%	27%	12%	4%	31%	8%

the origin of the phenomenon of *majādīl*, such that hereafter these sites will be referred to as *magdalūma*. Furthermore, the evidence for the foundation of *magdalūma* aligns well with the settlement pattern that developed in the southern Levant during the second half of the Middle Bronze Age (see, for example, Broshi and Gophna 1986). This basic pattern can be correlated with the emergence of MB II (IIB–IIC) kingdoms in the southern Levant, such as Ashkelon (Burke 2004: esp. 257–69).

While the main period to which the *magdalu* phenomenon should be attributed is certainly the most difficult issue to address, based on the combination

of both textual and archaeological data I would argue that the period from the Middle to Late Bronze Age offers the most appropriate context. However, within this period the evidence more precisely supports the foundation of the majority of *magdalūma* during the period between ca. 1700 and 1300 B.C. For one, the absence of *magdalūma* around several important early Middle Bronze Age Amorite centers in the northern Levant, such as Ḥalab (Aleppo) and its vassal Ebla (Tell Mardikh), which were established polities with well-defined settlement patterns already during the late third millennium, suggests a terminus post quem date for *magdalūma* of ca. 1950 B.C. This

fact is also corroborated by the earliest reference to a *magdalu*, the reference to *mktr* in the Execration Texts. Thus, the first phase of *magdalu* construction was probably contemporary with the MB I [IIA] in the Levant.

The evidence, however, for the fortification of major centers such as Ugarit, Tunip (Tell 'Acharneh?), and those located to the south of Yamḥad (see Burke 2004) suggests that the start of the MB II [IIB] (ca. 1700 B.C.) constituted the main phase of fortification construction in the Levant during the Middle Bronze Age. It is likely, therefore, that most *magdalūma* were constructed as part of a defense initiative when earthen rampart fortifications were raised around the largest Levantine settlements. Thus, the second phase of the construction of *magdalūma*, when most of those in the southern Levant were probably constructed, should be dated no later than the start of the second half of the Middle Bronze Age, shortly after ca. 1700 B.C.

While it seems that most Levantine *magdalūma* were originally Middle Bronze Age settlements, those in the highlands west of the Jordan Valley actually may have been established between the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, while those east of the Jordan Valley appear to have been founded during the Iron Age. Regarding Iron Age *migdālīm*, it is important to stress that the Iron Age settlement pattern in essence picks up where the Middle Bronze Age left off. Therefore, like the Roman-Byzantine *magdoloī*, some Iron Age *migdālīm* were no doubt founded *de novo* while others continued to be inhabited for the same strategic reasons that Middle Bronze Age *magdalūma* were originally founded. Due to limited archaeological exploration, however, there is less certainty regarding the foundation dates of *majādīl* south of Damascus, about which only evidence for their Classical-period occupation has been reported. But the evidence from the Roman-Byzantine period at these sites only suggests that these sites continued to be occupied or were revived in this period due to their strategic location along major routes.

Settlement Distribution

The strategic placement of *magdalūma* throughout the Levant can be demonstrated through a more detailed assessment of each of the *majādīl* (see Appendix 1). In the northern Levant, *magdalūma* were primarily situated along passes through the Jebel al-Ansariye (Appendix 1; nos. 1–3; see also fig. 1) and

behind centers on the Lebanese coast (nos. 10–14, 17–23, 27, and 28), while in the southern Levant, *magdalūma* often lined the main road through the Beqa Valley (nos. 15, 16, 20, and 24) and the coastal plain (nos. 37–41). The main value of these positions would have been oversight of the main roads between the larger centers starting during the Middle Bronze Age. Here it should also be noted that the distribution of *magdalūma* throughout the Levant is most consistent with a period of significant political and military parity in the Levant. Given our understanding of the history of the Levant, this further supports the identification of the Middle Bronze Age as the zenith of *magdalu* building. The strategic positioning of *magdalūma* may also have facilitated the role of these observation posts as part of a communication system, employing fire and smoke signals to relay messages between major centers (cf. ARM IV 32).¹⁶

Three *magdalūma* were situated on the eastern border of the kingdom of Ugarit (nos. 1–3), one of which is mentioned in the Ugaritic texts (no. 1). All three presided over routes leading into Ugarit from the east. Likewise, those located north, southwest, and southeast of Tell 'Acharneh (nos. 5–7), which should probably be identified as ancient Tunip, guarded the major approaches to this Bronze Age center. It is particularly curious that toponyms from the landscape around Qatna reveal no evidence of a single *magdalu*, though this does not mean that other perhaps already extant settlements did not function in such a capacity within the landscape. The presence of only one *magdalu* in the vicinity of Ebla (no. 4) suggests that such considerations had, not surprisingly, been taken into account around Ebla prior to the Middle Bronze Age. This lone *magdalu* can be considered a supplement to its existing network of settlements and may, therefore, have been intended to address the rise of the kingdom of Ugarit during the Middle Bronze Age. The same might be said of the lone *magdalu* 6 km north of Kadesh (no. 31).

Magdalūma nos. 8 and 9 presided over the highland route between the Orontes Valley and the

¹⁶ It is important to note here that such a communication network need not have been entirely composed of *magdalūma*; other well-positioned settlements may have relayed signals between settlements where one *magdalu* did not have a direct view of the next *magdalu*.

coastal zone east of the island of Arwad, while nos. 10 and 11 watched the route between Kadesh (Tell Nebi Mend) and Tell 'Arqa (ancient *Irqata*). In the Lebanese Mountains, the arrangement of *magdalūma* with respect to major centers also follows this distinctive pattern. These sites are situated inland and above the major coastal towns of Tripoli—identified with ancient *Wahliya* (no. 12), Batruna (no. 13), Byblos (no. 14), Beirut (nos. 17–19), Sidon (nos. 21–23), and Tyre (nos. 27–30). Farther east, two *magdalūma*, north and south of Kamid el-Loz (ancient *Kumidi*) in the Beqa Valley (nos. 20 and 24, respectively), are probably to be identified with *Kumidi*'s defensive network, along with *magdalūma* nos. 15 and 16 to the north of no. 20. The *magdalūma* located in the highlands of southern Lebanon no doubt also facilitated rapid communication between the coast and inland sites in the southern Beqa and upper Huleh valleys (esp. nos. 27, 28, and 31). Nos. 27 and 28 were associated with what Anson Rainey has identified as the "Way of the Sea" (Rainey and Notley 2006: 12), the road between Tyre and the Upper Huleh Valley mentioned in Isa 8:23 (Heb. versification).

The evidence for *magdalūma* south of the Galilee suggests primarily a need for *magdalūma* along heavily traveled routes through the region. Four *magdalūma*, three of which are known to have featured Middle Bronze Age occupation, guarded the main coastal highway from the mouth of the Aruna Pass to Ashkelon (nos. 37–41). Two others were situated to the northeast of Akko along routes passing over the mountains (nos. 32 and 33), while another two were located along roads leading through the Jezreel Valley from the coast south of Akko (nos. 35 and 36).

Four *magdalūma* located inland from Lachish (nos. 42–45a/b), two of which are known to have been occupied during the Late Bronze Age, may have been established in order to protect the eastern approach of Lachish and routes leading toward Hebron from the south. Other isolated *magdalūma* served in a similar capacity to those discussed above, such as the famous site of Magdala (no. 34) on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The archaeological evidence to date from the lone examples of *magdalūma* in the Hawran (no. 52), Ammon (nos. 53 and 54), Moab (no. 55), and Edom (nos. 56 and 57) suggests that these may only have been occupied from the Iron II onward and should therefore probably be identified as *migdālīm*. In a similar fashion,

magdalu no. 40 may have been established to observe traffic on the most direct route approaching Shechem from the Jordan Valley. Although survey data have only indicated Iron II occupation of the site (though it is necessary to note that a modern town now lies over the site), this is, in fact, a more likely candidate for Migdāl-Shechem in Judg 9:46 discussed above. Thus, as suggested by its name, this *magdalu* would have been an integral part of the defenses of the Shechem polity and its territory.

An impressive arrangement of *magdalūma* can also be related to the defensive network south of Damascus, which was the capital of the Bronze Age kingdom of Apum. These *magdalu* would have provided Damascus with advance warning of threats approaching from the southwest (nos. 29 and 46), south (nos. 25 and 47), or even from pastoral-nomadic groups to the east (no. 26). *Magdalūma* nos. 48–51 functioned in a similar capacity as those along the coastal plain, protecting in this case the two main roads leading south of Damascus toward the Azraq Oasis (for these routes, see TAVO map B V 18).

THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF MAGDALŪMA IN THE LEVANT

Regarding the role of *magdalūma* in the settlement landscape of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, it can be concluded that the position of most *magdalūma* seems to have been of strategic importance to the security of the largest settlements during this period. In this regard, *magdalūma* probably served primarily as signal towers, a function that is especially suggested by *magdalūma* located in the highlands of the Levant where communication by all other means would have been considerably slowed. Furthermore, in most other regions *magdalūma* were evidently positioned so as to serve as part of an early warning system for specific regional centers, which are usually identifiable as the primary centers of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. This role is most clearly demonstrated by *magdalūma* positioned in the mountains east of Ugarit, inland from the coastal centers of Lebanon, on the ridge east of Ashkelon, as well as those arrayed to the south of Damascus. While Ashkelon's position on the coast was advantageous to maritime and caravan commerce, it was not well suited to observing movement on the plain to the east which was substantially elevated above Ashkelon. This disadvantage would, therefore, have been rem-

edied with a watchtower positioned on the ridge, as has been observed by Frank L. Koucky.¹⁷ Similarly, ancient *magdalūma* in the kingdom of Ugarit were all positioned in passes to the east such that they could relay warnings of approaching threats to Ugarit and its territory.

The evidence for *magdalūma* suggests, therefore, that landscape analysis cannot be solely concerned with rank-size analysis or a region's agricultural potential. Rather, other functional considerations, which also include defense, must be addressed as part of any examination of settlement patterns. After obvious concerns regarding proximity to water sources, the potential for agricultural yield, and location along major routes, a very real concern was always defense. I propose that six main types of settlement can be identified within a settlement hierarchy for the Levant (both north *and* south) during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. These types account not only for the rank-size relationships between settlements, but also for the role that each of these settlement types played within the hierarchy. Since these categories account for the nature of these sites as much as for their size, it is unnecessary (if not inherently useless) to propose a precise size criterion for each category. The primary settlement types that can be identified, therefore, include (1) massive, well-fortified centers (e.g., Qatna, Hazor, Ashkelon), (2) smaller and usually less intensely fortified towns (e.g., Megiddo, Tell 'Arqa), (3) fortresses (e.g., Tel Poleg, Zureikiye, Qiryat Shemona), (4) unfortified villages (e.g., Kefar Ruppin and Hamadiya), (5) watchtowers (e.g., Mājdal near Ashkelon), and undoubtedly (6) farms (yet unattested, though undoubtedly extant). Emphasizing fortified sites, this range in the settlement hierarchy of Israel is likewise attested during the Iron Age in 2 Kgs 17:9 and 18:8 by the phrase "from watchtower (*migdāl*) to fortified city" (NRSV).

The suggestion, therefore, that most of these settlements were founded during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages best accounts for all of the evidence presented above. This includes (1) the earliest textual references to *magdalūma*, (2) considerable archaeological data from the Middle and Late Bronze Ages at these sites, (3) the locations of *magdalūma* with respect to the Middle and Late Bronze Age

settlement patterns and their major centers, as well as (4) the military and political history of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, which featured considerable squabbling among the polities surrounded by the *magdalūma* identified in this study.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARALLELS FOR MAGDALŪMA

Various archaeological parallels from the Bronze and Iron Ages are available for the type of structures that might be expected at *magdalūma* or *migdālīm*, given their function and location as discussed above. The two main sources for parallels include the iconographic representations of Late Bronze Age fortified structures depicted on Egyptian monuments and archaeological excavations of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age towers in the southern Levant. Because the data for Iron Age towers are most familiar, we begin with an analysis of these sites.

Iron Age

The archaeological remains of a number of Iron Age towers in Israel, the West Bank, and Jordan, while not preserving an association with *migdāl* place names, may serve as a basis for identifying the ground plan of Bronze Age *magdalūma*. The Hebrew Bible, the primary textual source for Iron I *migdālīm*, reveals that such sites did function as part of the defensive complex at that time (see esp. discussion of Judges 9 above). As noted by Amihai Mazar (1982: 106), such structures are also said to have been built in connection with the fortification strategy of Judah during the Iron II, as mentioned in 2 Chron 27:4. Despite the limited amount of archaeological data associated with sites that are identified in this study as Bronze Age *magdalūma*, excavations of Iron Age *migdālīm* at Giloh, Mt. Ebal, Kh. el-Makhruq, and around Amman shed light on the nature of the earlier towers.

Giloh. The remains of Iron I and II towers have been excavated at Giloh (Mazar 1990b: see esp. fig. 2). The remains of the Iron I tower consisted of a solid foundation of stones on the north side of the site; it was nearly square and measured 11.24 × 11.58 × 11.1 × 11 m, with an area of 125 m² (Mazar 1990b: 79). The site, which is located 7.5 km southwest of Jerusalem, overlooks the approach to

¹⁷ F. L. Koucky, "Early Maps and Records of Ashkelon," unpublished manuscript, to be published in Volume 1 of the final report series on the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon.

Jerusalem through the Rephaim Valley and would have been well suited to serve as an observation tower for Jerusalem. This structure was replaced during the Iron II (ninth to sixth centuries B.C.) by a similar tower built about 40 m to the southwest. However, this structure did not feature a solid base but rather only its outline built of wide walls (2.1–2.2 m thick), the plan of which was bisected by a 1.65-m-wide wall (Mazar 1990b: 96). This square structure was 11.15 m on a side (124 m²), dimensions nearly identical to those of the Iron I tower. The thickness of the walls certainly would have been sufficient to support a tall superstructure of mudbrick and timber. Ceramic evidence also attests to occupation at Giloh during the Middle Bronze Age (Mazar 1990b: 90), though no ceramics from the Late Bronze Age have been recovered.

Mt. Ebal. Although the remains of an Iron I building found on Mt. Ebal (see fig. 3) have been interpreted by Adam Zertal as the remains of a cultic altar (1987), Aharon Kempinski was probably correct to suggest that this structure was, in fact, an Iron I tower (1986). Mazar has followed Kempinski by comparing the structure to the Iron I tower he exposed at Giloh (1990b: 84). The structure at Mt. Ebal measured 9 × 7 m (63 m²) and featured 1.4-m-thick walls (Zertal 1987). According to Kempinski, the farmhouse of the second phase of the settlement was destroyed during the 11th century, and after that the tower was constructed over these remains (1986: 44). Although the building may have functioned as a tower, there is not a clear line of sight between Shechem and this site (Zertal 1987: 106, fig. 1). Ceramic evidence indicates occupation of the site also during the Late Bronze Age (Stratum II; Zertal 1987: 142). The historical name of this site is unknown.

Kh. el-Makhruq. The remains of an Iron Age tower, originally measuring 9.5 × 13 m (123.5 m²), were also exposed at Kh. el-Makhruq (Yeivin 1978). The site is situated at the mouth of the Wadi Fari'a (MR 1983.1710). This tower, which was later expanded to 18 × 23 m (414 m²), was probably originally the only structure at the site (see fig. 3), thus being similar in function to the *magdalūma* discussed above. Both the earlier and later structures appear to have featured a mudbrick superstructure. The site also included a round tower dated to the Iron Age (Yeivin 1993). The site also featured evidence of occupation during the EB II–III and Middle Bronze Age (Damati 1993; Eisenberg 1993). The historical name of this site is unknown.

Amman towers. Nineteen Iron Age towers have been identified encircling Amman (Thompson 2000). Four of these have been explored, including Rujm al-Malfuf North (22 m dia.; 380 m²), Kh. el-Hajjar (11.7 m dia.; 107.5 m²), Rujm al-Malfuf South (13 m dia.; 132.7 m²), and Rujm el-Mekheizin (square: 12.2 × 12.25 m; 149.45 m²). Although each of these was occupied during various later periods, all of these sites shared in common Iron Age occupation. Two of the sites even yielded sling stones, further suggesting their role as part of what was most likely an Iron II defensive network around Amman.

While a number of other Iron II fortresses in the southern Levant in Judah (e.g., Mazar 1982), Ammon and Moab (Stern 2001: 263–64), Edom (Stern 2001: 275–76), and Philistia (Stern 2001: 317) could be discussed, an examination of fortresses in these regions does not directly bear on the use of the Hebrew toponym *migdāl*, since *migdālīm* should not be described as fortresses.¹⁸ However, the evidence from the three Iron Age sites featuring small free-standing towers discussed above reflects a single type of structure that is, no doubt, a late manifestation of the *magdalu*, though these sites do not retain *migdāl* place names. It is noteworthy nevertheless that each of the sites west of the Jordan featured some ceramic evidence dated to the Middle or Late Bronze Ages that may indicate the strategic importance of their locations even at this early time.

There is no direct evidence for the identification of these many exemplars of Iron Age towers with any variant of the toponym *mājdal*. In light of this observation, it is not unlikely that during the Iron Age in Israel, sites founded during this period were, in fact, identified by the Hebrew term *mizpah*, which also meant “watchtower” or “outlook-point” (BDB 859–60). A number of biblical settlements were named Mizpah as, for example, in Benjamin (e.g., Josh 18:26), in Judah (e.g., Josh 15:38), and in Moab (1 Sam 22:3).¹⁹ However, in these attestations, no direct emphasis is placed on the construction or identification of a tower at these settlements, despite the etymology of the term and, therefore, the evidence for associating the above archaeological sites with the toponym *mizpah* remains equally limited.

¹⁸ The ineffectiveness of the *migdāl* tower as a fortress or place of refuge is amply demonstrated in Judges 9.

¹⁹ I would like to thank Anson Rainey for calling this to my attention during his review of the original draft of this article.

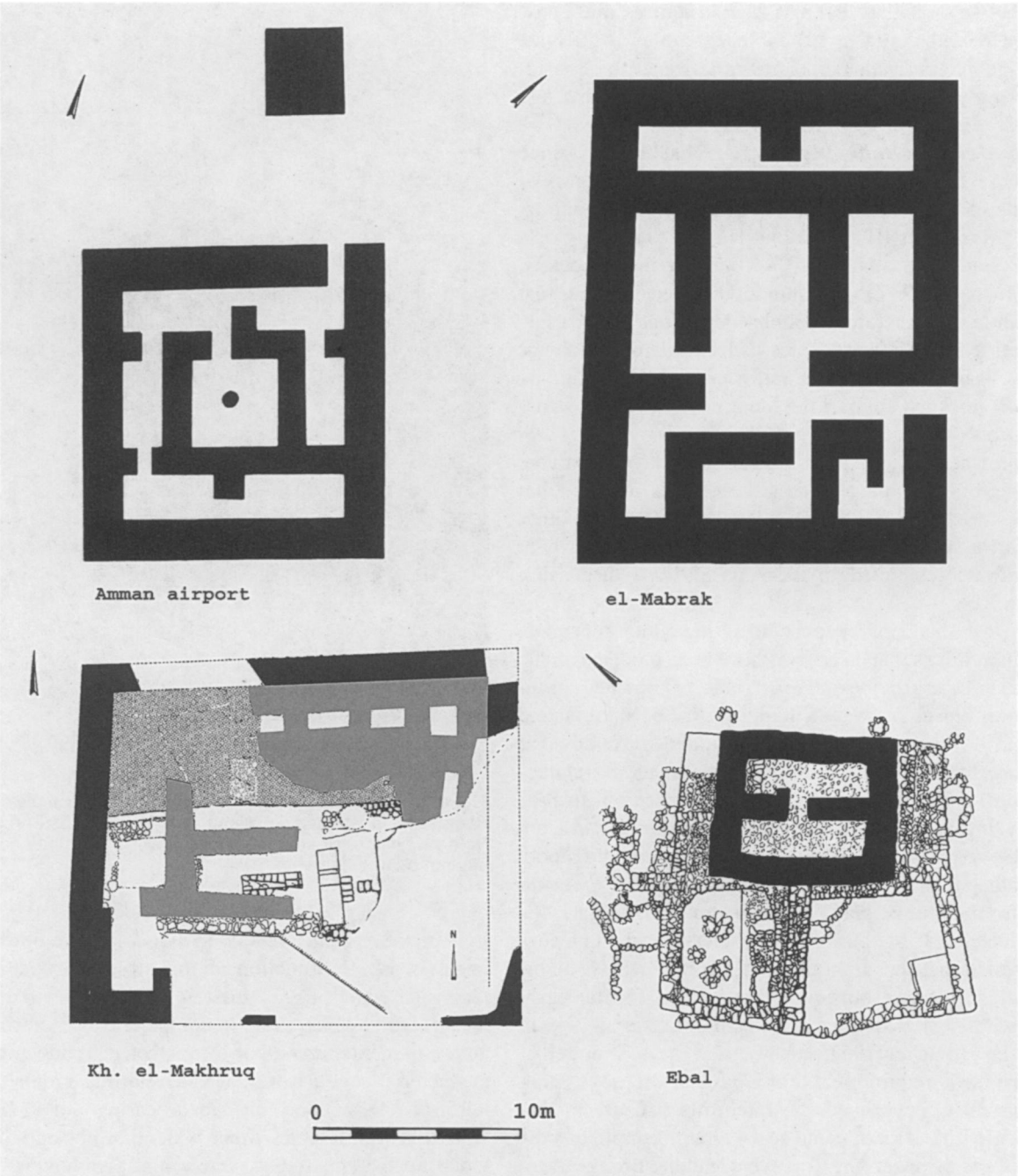


Fig. 3. Plans of Late Bronze *magdalūma* and Iron Age *migdālīm*. Amman plan after Herr 1983: unnumbered figure on p. 225; el-Mabrak plan after Yassine 1983: fig. 1; Kh. el-Makhrūq plan after Damati 1993: figure on p. 930; Mt. Ebal plan after Zertal 1986–1987: fig. 5.

Late Bronze Age

Although it has been stated that freestanding towers belonging to the Late Bronze Age (Mazar 1990b: 84)—and, for that matter, to the Middle

Bronze Age—have yet to be identified, similar structures were necessary for the adequate defense of fortified centers during the Bronze Age. Why, therefore, do such structures still remain unidentified? In light of the conclusions of this study, it can be argued

that several Late Bronze Age structures must now be reconsidered as probable examples of Bronze Age *magdalūma*. Let us begin, however, by considering supposed representations of Late Bronze Age *magdalūma* in Egyptian reliefs.

Medinet Habu. Egyptian archaeologists since R. O. Faulkner have suggested that the remains of the eastern fortified gate of the mortuary complex of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu was a “copy of a Syrian *migdôl*” (1975: 244–45; see more recently, Morris 2005: 718). It should be noted, though, that while the structure resembles depictions of *mktr* fortresses in reliefs of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu as well as those of Seti I and Ramesses II at Karnak, this does not support the identification of this structure as a replica of a *migdôl* (i.e., *mktr*). This is significant because, as these scholars have observed, there is nothing about the depictions of *mktr* that distinguishes their representation from those of other fortresses in the north Sinai and eastern Delta, which are also depicted in these reliefs (see discussion above).

All that can be concluded regarding this gate, therefore, is that it seems to have been modeled on the architectural styles characteristic of fortified structures during the New Kingdom in the north Sinai and the Levant, some of which included fortresses that have been identified as *mktr*. The general architectural style of this structure is better suited to providing an idea of the overall appearance and even the height to which such structures probably stood, rather than evidence of a ground plan for *magdalū* (for the ground plan of the eastern fortified gate, see Hölscher 1951: pl. 7). Nevertheless, it might be suggested that the structure at the core of what remains of the western portion of the eastern fortified gate (see fig. 4), which measures approximately 9 × 11 m (see Hölscher 1951: fig. 4), serves as a model of the basic requirements for a *magdalū* to have functioned effectively as a watchtower. Thus, in this sense, this structure can serve as an example of how a Late Bronze Age (or even Middle Bronze Age) *magdalū*—that is, the tower at these sites—might have looked to the passerby.

Amman airport. One very probable example of a Late Bronze Age *magdalū* is the oft-debated Amman airport “temple.” Unfortunately, this building has been incorrectly identified in the original excavation reports (Hennessy 1966; 1985; Herr 1983) as well as in subsequent appraisals (Mazar 1990a: 255–57; 1992; Gonen 1992: 229) as a Late Bronze Age temple or even funerary complex. However, in



Fig. 4. Eastern fortified gate of the mortuary complex of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu (photo by K. S. Burke). Note that mudbrick superstructure flanking the stone core has not been preserved.

light of the evidence related to *magdalūma* reviewed in this work, the function of this structure must be reconsidered (see fig. 3). First, it should be noted that the structure, which stood in complete isolation from any settlement, bears all of the expected architectural characteristics of a tower: a small rectilinear plan (15 × 15 m; 225 m²) and thick load-bearing walls (2 m wide), as well as thick inner walls that not only divided up the small space but would also have supported the building’s upper stories, presumably the living quarters for the tower’s inhabitants. Nothing about this structure (or its contents) suggests that it was domestic, palatial, agricultural, pastoral, or sacred (as noted by Fritz 1971; also Herr 1983).²⁰ All

²⁰ Edward Campbell and G. Ernest Wright’s attempt to interpret this structure as a “tribal league shrine” was completely misguided (1969).

of the effects found in and around the structure are in keeping with the “international” character of a Late Bronze Age roadside tower located astride a main trade route leading into and out of Amman. Second, the site possesses unequivocal military paraphernalia: a Late Bronze sickle-sword, four daggers, an ax, and more than forty arrowheads were recovered from within the structure. Furthermore, a cylinder seal might have been associated with the administration of this building. Third, the site’s position is quite revealing of its function: it lies 6 km to the northeast of Amman along the road to Zarqa. Thus, the expected evidence for a building to be identified as a tower comes together in this single structure which can, therefore, be identified as a *magdalū*.

Umm ad-Dananir. Since the layout of Umm ad-Dananir is often compared with that of the Amman airport structure, this building should probably also be identified as a *magdalū*. Although its entire plan was never exposed (McGovern 1989: 33–36), it is estimated to have been approximately 15 × 15 m. The site was strategically located along a road “on a cliff overlooking the pass into the Baq‘ah through the south branch of Wadi Umm el-Dananir” (McGovern 1989: 33, fig. 3a). The building, like the Amman airport structure, featured a pillar base that was misidentified as an “altar” (60 × 60 cm) in the center of the building, around which the rooms of the lower floor were arranged (McGovern 1989: 35). Carbonized remains of burned roof beams were also found in the building.

el-Mabrak. In accordance with the parallels also drawn between the Amman airport structure and the building at el-Mabrak just on the outskirts of Amman (Yassine 1983), this building may also have served as a *magdalū* (see fig. 3). The rectangular structure was approximately 18 × 24 m (432 m²) and featured a stairwell leading to the second story and an entrance on the north side of the building. Its walls, like the Amman airport building, were 2 m thick, as were the inner dividing walls that formed the cen-

tral room, off of which doorways led to side rooms. Ceramics recovered from the structure date only to the Late Bronze Age. While the layout of the building might evoke courtyard-style houses of the period, its isolated position—located 4 km southeast of the Amman airport on the road between Amman and Zarqa—is in keeping with the locations of *magdalūma*; the Amman airport structure would also have been visible from el-Mabrak.

CONCLUSIONS

The convergence of three main lines of evidence dealt with in this study now permits a functional analysis of sites bearing variants of the Arabic toponym *mājdal*. This evidence consists, first, of a corpus of textual references to *magdalūma* during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, *migdālīm* during the Iron Age, and *magdoloī* during the Classical period. Evidence from these references, when compared against the second line of evidence—the geographic distribution of *majādīl* throughout the Levant, which have been traditionally related to these earlier terms—affirms that the Arabic toponyms do, in all likelihood, identify Bronze Age *magdalūma* as well as Iron Age *migdālīm*. This deduction is verified by a third line of evidence—namely, the archaeological data available from a number of these settlements. These data reveal an occupational history that confirms that the preponderance of evidence for the foundation of *majādīl* relates to the Middle Bronze Age. A reexamination of the distribution of Arabic *majādīl* reveals as well a logical selection of strategic locations for the establishment of watchtowers that served as part of an integrated defensive network for major political centers in the Levant beginning during the Middle Bronze Age and continuing through the Iron II period. It still remains, however, to excavate a *mājdal* with the precise objective of identifying the character, size, and occupational phases of a *magdalū/migdāl*.

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national University), and Matthew Suriano (UCLA), each of whose assistance was instrumental to this article’s completion. I must also thank the Ryerson Fellowship Committee at the University of Chicago for their support of my dissertation research in Syria and Lebanon in 2002, when I first began making observations regarding the locations of *majādīl*.

APPENDIX 1: LEVANTINE MAJĀDĪL

Majādīl nos. 1 to 20 are shown in fig. 1; nos. 21 to 56 are shown in fig. 2. Note that the main catalog names have been normalized, and these are not necessarily the most commonly cited variant of the toponym. After the name, map coordinates are provided which locate the site; these are either from the Palestine Grid (MR) or the Deir ez-Zor grid (DZ). Below this, other variants of the site's name are listed as they occur on maps. These do not always include the element *mājdal*. Ancient *magdalu*, *migdāl*, or *magdoloī* toponyms identified with the Arabic term are cited following Arabic variants. The identifications listed in table 1 must, of course, be regarded with caution, as not one ancient *magdalu* can be unequivocally identified with a single ancient reference.

Maps and databases consulted for this catalog include the following, in addition to those cited in the bibliography by their abbreviations (e.g., *SWP*, *TAVO*):

ASI	Archaeological Survey of Israel. Jerusalem
JADIS	Jordan Antiquities Department Information Service website ²¹
Jordan	Archaeological Map, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (1:250,000). Jordan National Geographic Centre, 1978–1982
Lev.	Levant maps (1:50,000). Service géographique des forces françaises libres au Levant. Paris, 1942–

Further comments concerning the location of the site and attested phases of occupation follow the references to maps used in the identification of these toponyms. Other sources cited include *NEAEHL* (Stern 1993), Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977, Lehmann 2002, Marfoe 1995, and Wardini 2002. Note also that on the *SWP* maps, Majdal was regularly transliterated as Mejdal.

1. Májdal (DZ 1960.4300)

Late Bronze *Magdalā*; see table 1; see also fig. 5

Maps: Lev. NI-36–XXIV

This site is probably to be identified with *Magdalā* in the kingdom of Ugarit, located in a mountain pass

near Bdama 45 km northeast of Ugarit. Roman occupation is attested (Lehmann 2002: 89).

2. Májdal-Kikhia (DZ 1937.4192)

Maps: Lev. NI-37–XIX-3a; see also fig. 5

Located 38 km northeast of Ugarit on the Jebel al-Ansariye ridge.

3. Májdal-Saleh (DZ 1905.4070)

Maps: Lev. NI-37–XIX-3a; see also fig. 5

Located 32.6 km east of Ugarit at 940 m ASL on the Jebel al-Ansariye ridge.

4. Majdālaiya (DZ 2395.4313)

Maps: Lev. NI-36–XXIV and NI-37–XIX-4C

It is located 11 km west–northwest of Ebla, and is strategically positioned to provide warning of approaching threats from the west on the road to Ugarit through the Ghab Valley.

5. al-Májdal (DZ 2150.3890)

Rasm al-Majdāl

Maps: Not on Lev. map; see Lehmann 2002: 325

The site is located 18 km north–northeast of Tell 'Acharneh (ancient *Tunip*?). Occupation includes Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic.

6. Cheikh Aali Májdal (DZ 2000.3645)

Maps: Lev. NI-37–XIX-1b

Located 15 km southwest of Tell 'Acharneh (ancient *Tunip*?) at 1200 m ASL.

7. al-Májdal (DZ 2310.3608)

Maps: Lev. NI-37–XIX-2a

Located 15.8 km northwest of Hama and 20 km southeast of Tell 'Acharneh (ancient *Tunip*?) at 318 m ASL. Strategically situated to provide advanced warning of approaching threats from the southeast, the direction of Hama and Qatna.

8. Májdal (DZ 1987.3463)

Maps: Lev. NI-37–XIX-1a

Located 29 km southwest of Tell 'Acharneh (ancient *Tunip*?) at 1020 m ASL.

9. Májdal (DZ 1870.3418)

Mjaidel

Maps: Lev. NI-36–XXIV and NI-37–XIX-1a

Located in a mountain pass from the coast to the Orontes Valley at 600 m ASL.

²¹ See <http://www.nis.gov.jo/pls/anti/sitetype>; for site locations see <http://gaialab.asu.edu/home/JadisTM.html>.



Fig. 5. SPOT satellite image illustrating the location of *majādīl* in passes leading through the Jebel Ansariye to the kingdom of Ugarit from the east.

10. al-Májdal (DZ 1959.2918)

Maps: Lev. NI-37–XIII-3a

Located 16 km east–northeast of Tell ‘Arqa (ancient *Irqata*) at 591 m ASL.

11. Majdla (DZ 1794.2840)

Maps: Lev. NI-37–XIII-1c

Located 3.7 km south–southwest of Tell ‘Arqa (ancient *Irqata*) at 220 m ASL on the ridge above Tell ‘Arqa.

12. Majdālaya (DZ 1648.2752)

Majdlaya

Maps: Lev. NI-36–XVIII-2d

Located 3.7 km southeast of old Tripoli (ancient *Waḥliya?*; EA 104 and 114) at 125 m ASL.

13. al-Májdal (DZ 156.257)

Majādīl; Late Bronze Age *Magdalu* (1); see table 1

Maps: Lev. NI-36–XVIII-2d

Located 12 km east of Batroun (ancient *Batruna*) at 337 m ASL (Lehmann 2002: 325). This site may be identified with one of the *Magdalu* of the Amarna texts (e.g., EA 69 and 70), as suggested by A. Altman (1978).

14. al-Májdal (DZ 1660.2410)

Maps: Lev. NI-36–XVIII-2b

Located 23 km east of Byblos at 1220 m ASL.

15. Majdāloun (DZ 1876.2275)

Magdalu (2); see table 1

Maps: Lev. NI-37-VII-3c

Situated at 1039 m ASL in the Beqa Valley. It is site no. 450 in Marfoe's survey of the Beqa (1995: 289). Occupation includes Ottoman. Relationship to neighboring sites is comparable to no. 16 below.

16. Tell Majdālun (DZ 1865.2282)

Maps: Lev. NI-37-XIII-1a

This is site no. 234 in Marfoe's survey of the Beqa (1995: 242). It is located approximately 7 km west-southwest of Baalbek and 4 km to the northeast of Tell Hizzin (ancient *Hazi*). The site rises 10 m above the surrounding area. Phases of occupation include EB I-III, possibly Middle Bronze Age, Iron I-II, Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine.

17. Májdal-Tarshish (DZ 1567.2173)

Maps: Lev. NI-36-XII-4d

Located at 1440 m ASL, 2 km northeast of Tarshish (DZ 1562.2153), which is across the Nahr el-Rhamka. See also Wardini 2002: 229.

18. Májdal-Ba'na (DZ 1444.2046)

Majda-Ba'ana

Maps: Lev. NI-36-XII-3d/4c

Located at 1060 m ASL, 20 km southeast of Beirut and 7 km northeast of Májdal-Meouch. The name means "tower of the sheep/small cattle" (Wardini 2002: 229).

19. Májdal-Meouch (DZ 1400.1987)

Májdal-M'ush

Maps: Lev. NI-36-XII-4a

Located at 820 m ASL, 22 km southeast of Beirut.

20. Májdal-ʿAnjar (DZ 1655.1977)

Tell ʿAyn al-Khanzira

Maps: Lev. NI-36-XII-4b

Located at 884 m ASL, 5 km southwest of ʿAnjar on the east side of the Beqa Valley south of the Damascus-Beirut road. It is site no. 140 in Marfoe's survey of the Beqa (1995: 217). It rises 5 to 7 m above its surroundings and is approximately 150 m in diameter. Occupation includes Late PN/Chalcolithic, EB I-III, MB II (IIB-C), LB II(?),

Iron I, Islamic, and Ottoman. See also Lehmann 2002: 35.

21. Majdāluna (DZ 124.185)

Maps: Lev. NI-36-XII-3b

Located at 430 m ASL, 9 km northeast of Sidon. Datable evidence includes late Middle to Late Bronze Age ceramics and scarabs, artifacts recovered during salvage operations (Chéhab 1940). See also Lehmann 2002: 325.

22. Májdal-Youm (DZ 1198.1810)

Maps: Lev. NI-36-XII-3b

Located 3.5 km east of Sidon at 215 m ASL.

23. al-Májdal (DZ 1246.1761)

Maps: Lev. NI-36-XII-3b

Located 9.6 km southeast of Sidon at approximately 300 m ASL. The nearest site, Wadi al-Laymun (DZ 125.177), yielded Early and Middle Bronze Age remains (Lehmann 2002: 619).

24. Májdal-Bal'is (DZ 1510.1780)

Maps: Lev. NI-36-XII-4a

Located 11.6 km southwest of Kamid el-Loz (ancient *Kumidi*) in the Beqa Valley at 1209 m ASL. It is site no. 410 in Marfoe's survey of the Beqa (1995: 289). Only Ottoman occupation is attested.

25. Majdye (DZ 2008.1505)

Maps: Lev. NI-37-VII-1d

Located 25 km south of Damascus at 696 m ASL.

26. Mjeide (DZ 2650.1527)

Maps: Lev. NI-36-XVIII-2d

Located 64 km southeast of Damascus at 337 m ASL.

27. Majādīl (MR 1840.2926)

Maps: SWP Sheet 1, Lev. NI-36-XII-1b; TAVO B X 12
Located in south-central Lebanon at 437 m ASL. See also Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 180.

28. Májdal-Salim (MR 1937.2919)

Májdal-Islim; biblical *Migdāl-El*(?), see table 1

Maps: SWP Sheet 1; Lev. NI-36-XII-1b; TAVO B X 12

Located 3.5 km east-southeast from Kh. Islim at 500 m ASL (line of sight along W. Oaissiye) and approximately 26 km east-southeast of Tyre. See also Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 181. Although Lehmann equates Kh. Islim with Májdal-

Islim, which featured Middle and Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, and Ottoman occupation (2002: 295), the two are in fact separate sites.

29. Májdal-Shams (MR 2215.2979)

Late Bronze Age *Mktr*; see *Mktr* (1) in table 1
Maps: Lev. NI-36–XII-2d; TAVO B III 3 and B X 12
Located at 1200 m, 21.5 km west–northwest of Tell es-Shams (1012 m ASL), which is on line of sight. Occupation includes Roman and Byzantine periods (Lehmann 2002: 325).

30. Májdal-Zun (MR 1714.2839)

Májdal-Zurayd
Maps: SWP Sheet 3; Lev. NI-36–XII-1a; TAVO B X 12
Located at 400 m ASL, 14 km east–southeast of Tell el-Hamra up W. el-‘Ain Chamaa. See also Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 181.

31. Kh. al-Májdal (MR 1985.2850)

Májdal-Mis; biblical *Migdāl-El*(?); see table 1
Maps: SWP Sheet 4; TAVO B IV 6
Located in southern Lebanon less than 6 km north–northwest of Kadesh. See also Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 181.

32. Kh. Májdal (MR 1748.2764)

Mujeidil, Kh. Mujeida
Maps: Grootkerk 2000: no. 9 on map 3
Located 14.2 km northeast of Kabri at 493 m ASL guarding road toward Hazor from the coast (on Route G3; Dorsey 1991). Villagers refer to the monastery of Kh. Mujeida (Grootkerk 2000: 43).

33. Májdal-Kurum (MR 1739.2584)

Majd al-Kurum; Classical *Beth-Ha-Kerem*
Maps: SWP Sheet 3; TAVO B X 12
Located 15 km north of Tel Hannaton. Ceramics are dated between 1400 and 300 B.C. (Grootkerk 2000: 183); thus LB II, Iron I–II, and Persian occupations are attested. See also Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 191.

34. al-Májdal (MR 1986.2478)

Rom.–Byz. *Magdala*, also *Magedan* (Heb. *Migdāl-Nunnayah*, Lat. *Tarichaea*); also *Migdāl-Sabayya*; see table 1
Maps: SWP Sheet 6; TAVO B V 17 and 18, B VI 10, and B X 12

Located on the west side of the Sea of Galilee 1 km north of Tiberias on the main route around the lake. Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine occupations. See also *TIR*: 187; Schmitt 1995: 321.

35. Májdal-Urkamas (MR 1614.2435)

al-Májdal; Ḥorvat Migdāl-Usha; Rom.–Byz. *Magdiel* (II); see table 1
Maps: SWP Sheet 5; ASI: Map of Shefar‘am (24), no. 85
Located in the Galilee, south–southeast of Akko and 2 km northeast of Tell el-Far (Tel Par), no. 111 in ASI survey. Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic occupations are attested. See also “Magdiel II” in *TIR*: 174; Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 193; Schmitt 1995: 246–47.

36. al-Mujeidil (MR 172.2318)

Migdāl-Ha-Emeq; Rom.–Byz. *Magdiel*; see table 1
Maps: SWP Sheet 5; *GRP* (p. 77).
Located 3.8 km southeast of Tell Shimron at approximately 200 m ASL. EB IV, Middle Bronze Age (five jar burials), Roman, Byzantine, and early Islamic occupations are attested (Covello-Paran 1999; Grootkerk 2000: 280–81). See also Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 187.

37. Kh. al-Májdal (MR 1497.2017)

Kh. Májdal; Middle Bronze Age *Mktrj*; see table 1
Maps: SWP Sheet 11; TAVO B IV 6 and B X 12
Located 3 km southeast of Tel Zeror and 5 km west–northwest of Jatt (ancient *Gath-Padalla*?; EA 250). Occupations included Middle and Late Bronze Age (see ASI Hadera Map [53], site no. 100), as well as Persian and later periods (Aharoni 1959: 120–22).

38. al-Májdal (MR 1508.1832)

Ḥorvat Migdāl, Ḥorvat Minha, Májdal-Yibwa, Zur Nathan
Maps: SWP Sheet 11
Located in the modern settlement of Sur Natan in Israel (Ayalon, Neidinger, and Matthews 1991). Excavations in Area A revealed occupation dating to the Chalcolithic, EB I, as well as the MB (IIA), Iron II, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, and Islamic (14th–16th centuries) periods. The site takes advantage of the limestone ridge to provide a view to the west above the main coastal highway. See also *TIR*: 186; Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 139. Ehud Galili has, however, suggested that the

town could have been named after a tower that would have been built on the bedrock in the water (Aviam 1997).

39. Májdal-Yaba (MR 1461.1654)

Májdal es-Sadiq; Hell.–Rom. *Migdāl-Aphek* (Gk. *Aphekou pyrgos*); Crusader *Mirabel*

Maps: SWP Sheet 14; TAVO B IV 6, B V 17.1 and 18, and B X 12

Located 3.8 km southeast of Aphek on a small hill. Occupations included Iron Age, Hellenistic, and Roman (Kochavi, Beck, and Yadin 2000: 9–15). Like no. 38, this site avails itself of the limestone ridge to provide a strategic view of the coastal highway to the west. See also “Aphek Turris” in *TIR*: 64; Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 137.

40. Májdal Bani Fadl (MR 1845.1655)

Májdal; biblical *Migdāl Schechem*; see table 1

Maps: SWP Sheet 15; TAVO B IV 6, B X 12

Not to be mistaken with Kh. Bani Fadl, which is located to the south and features Iron II occupation, and has often been identified with *Mktr* (see *Mkdr* on TAVO B IV 5). Májdal Bani Fadl is located 16.6 km from Shechem on the road leading down to Jericho to the southeast (Route S22; Dorsey 1991: 177). Iron Age occupation is attested. See also Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 133.

41. Májdal (MR 1118.1198)

Rom. *Peleia*

Maps: SWP Sheet 16; TAVO B VI 10, B X 12

The site is strategically placed along the coastal highway and is today located in the Arab town northeast of Tel Ashkelon. A Middle Bronze Age cemetery was excavated here (Gershuny 2002). See also *ANET*: 247; Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 144; Aharoni 1979: 166–68; “Peleia” in *TIR*: 200; Schmitt 1995: 274; and Petersen 2001: 210–12.

42. Kh. al-Majdāl(ah) (MR 140.105)

Biblical *Migdāl-Gad*(?); see table 1

Maps: SWP Sheet 20

Located 6 km southeast of Lachish on the south side of the road to Hebron.

43. Kh. al-Majd (MR 145.098)

Maps: SWP Sheet 21

Map coordinates are approximate. Located 16.1 km west–southwest of Hebron. Listed in the Census

of Palestine as a settlement in the subdistrict of Hebron near Dura (Mills 1932).

44. Kh. Májdal-Baʿ (MR 1554.0925)

Maps: SWP Sheet 21; TAVO B IV 10

Located 12.5 km south–southwest of Hebron. See *TIR*: 153.

45. Tell Majādīl (MR 1344.0920)

Biblical *Migdāl-Gad*(?); see table 1

Maps: SWP Sheet 20, TAVO B III 3

This site includes two other sites with related names located on both sides of Wadi Majādīl (lit. the “wadi of Majādīl”): (a) Kh. Mujeidilat (Horvat Migdalit, MR 1350.0913) to the south with Late Bronze Age and Iron Age (see TAVO B III 3); and (b) Kh. Majadil (MR 1327.0926) to the north, with surface finds from Late Bronze Age (TAVO B III 3). See also *TIR*: 174.

46. Tell Májdal (MR 2361.2758)

Majdouliye

Maps: Lev. NI-36–XII-2b; TAVO B X 12

Located at 820 m ASL, 7 km west–northwest from Tell el-Harra (1094 m ASL). It overlooks the road to Damascus from Tell Debbah (DZ 2272.0980), which is located 9 km to the south. No ceramic data are published (Braemer 1984: 242).

47. Májdal (MR 267.263)

Maps: Lev. NI-36–XII-2b

See Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 210.

48. Majādīl (MR 2956.2589)

Maps: TAVO B V 18 and B X 12

East of the western track leading from Damascus south to the Azraq Oasis. A Classical inscription was found (TAVO B V 18); Roman occupation is attested (Schmitt 1995: 251). See also Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 218.

49. al-Májdal (MR 2914.2456)

al-Májdal an-Naydat; Mujaydil; Rom. *Migdala*; see table 1

Maps: Jordan; TAVO B V 18 and B X 12

West of the western track leading from Damascus south to the Azraq Oasis. Roman occupation (Schmitt 1995: 251; Lehmann 2002: 325). See also Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 219.

50. Májdal-Sawda (MR 296.235)

Majādil

Maps: Jordan; TAVO B V 18

East of the western track leading from Damascus south to the Azraq Oasis. A Classical inscription was found (TAVO B V 18). See also Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 218.

51. Májdal (MR 3206.2090)

Májdal aš-Šor

Maps: TAVO B V 18, B VI 10, and B X 12

West of the eastern track leading from Damascus south to the Azraq Oasis. A Byzantine inscription was found (TAVO B VI 10). See also Schmitt 1995: 251.

52. Majādīl (MR 218.224)

Maps: MZ 11 in Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 200

Coordinates for MZ 11 have been approximated by means of the location provided on map 5 of Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977.

53. al-Májdal (MR 2297.1808)

Maps: Jordan; TAVO B X 12

Located approximately 4 km southwest of Jerash, it overlooks the Wadi Zarqa (Jabbok) from the north at approximately 500 m.

54. Majdāla (coordinates NA)

Refs: JADIS (no. 2115023)

Located at 520 m ASL, 21 km west of Amman. Only modern village occupation is attested. Not shown on Jordan archaeological map.

55. Majdālein (MR 2181.0826)

Majdālein

Maps: Jordan; JADIS (no. 2108009), TAVO B IV 6 and B X 12

Located 3 km west of the road to Dhiban on a wadi terrace at 905 m ASL. Chalcolithic, Early Bronze Age, Iron I–II, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, and Ottoman occupations are attested. See also Miller 1979: 86 and map.

56. Majādīl (MR 2111.0322)

Maps: Jordan; JADIS (no. 2103006); TAVO B IV 6 and B X 12

Situated on a high spur overlooking a wadi to the north at 1157 m ASL. Iron I, Hellenistic, Roman,

and Byzantine occupations are attested. Site covers 4 ha (see MacDonald 1980: 179, pl. 107.2).

57. Kh. Majādel (coordinates NA)

Maps: Jordan; JADIS (no. 210200)

Kh. Majadel is located several kilometers south of Majādīl, no. 55 above, at 1160 m ASL. Early Bronze Age, Iron Age, Byzantine, and Islamic occupations attested.

APPENDIX 2: SITES IDENTIFIED AS MIGDĀLĪM BASED ON TEXTS

Although the sites in this appendix are not identified with *majādīl* toponyms, they are included because they are commonly identified with *migdāl* place names.

Bedoro (MR 1843.0622)

Rom.–Byz. *Migdāl-Zohar*; see table 1

Maps: TAVO B IV 6 and B V 18; see fig. 2
Iron Age fort (see TAVO B IV 6).

Caesarea, Migdāl-Shorshon (MR 1399.2115)

Hell.–Rom. *Straton's Tower*; see table 1

Maps: TAVO B V 18; see fig. 2

Located at Caesarea north of the medieval fortifications (see *NEAEHL*: 270). It was the site of a fourth-century B.C. Phoenician settlement. Whether any earlier settlement existed at the site is unclear.

Tell el-Herr (MR 0911.0460)

Gk. *Magdōlos?*/Rom. *Magdolum?*; see table 1
(Migdōl)

Maps: TAVO B IV 23

Persian-period occupation (*NEAEHL*: 1392–94).

al-Hirba (MR 2030.3030)

Hell.–Rom. *Migdāl-Haruv*; see table 1

Maps: TAVO B V 18; see fig. 2

Located 2 to 3 km southwest of Tell Dibbin.

Kh. Malha (MR 1444.2313)

Rom.–Byz. *Magdiel* (I) (Heb. *Migdāl-Malha*); see table 1; Horvat Migdāl-Malha

Maps: TAVO B VI 10; *SWP*; *TIR*: 174; see fig. 2

Located 20 km north of Caesarea. Described as 5 miles north of Caesarea by Eusebius (see “Magdiel II” in Freeman-Grenville, Chapman, and Taylor

2003: 73). See also "Magdiel I" (*TIR*: 187); Schmitt 1995: 237–38.

al-Quseir (DZ 429.418)

Byz. Gk. Tetrapyria/Syr. *Magdala*

Maps: See Lehmann 2002: 261–62

Located on road to Euphrates north of Resafe, which was a Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic fortified town. Roman and Byzantine occupation (Lehmann 2002: 461–62).

Kh. es-Siyar (MR 1710.1230)

Biblical. *Migdāl-Eder*(?); see table 1; Rom. *Turris Ader/Poimention* (*TIR*: 252–53)

Maps: *GRP* (p. 80); see fig. 2

Located 8.5 km south–southwest of Jerusalem. If it is indeed to be identified as the location of *Migdāl-Eder*, which is not certain, then it would have watched the road leading to Jerusalem.

Tell et-Turuni (MR 1888.1501)

Hell.–Byz. *Magdalsenna*; see table 1

Maps: TAVO B VI 10; *GRP* (p. 80); see fig. 2

Located in Jordan Valley north of Jericho. See also Schmitt 1995: 237.

Kh. Umm et-Tut (MR 090.096)

Rom–Byz. (*Migdāl*–) *Thauth(a)*; see table 1

Maps: *GRP* (p. 80); TAVO B VI 10; see fig. 2

See also "Thabatha" in *TIR*: 246.

APPENDIX 3: MAJĀDĪL IDENTIFIED OUTSIDE OF THE LEVANT

This appendix includes the only Arabic *mājdal* toponym that I have identified outside of the Levant.

Tell Majdel

Ref: Lyonnet 2000: 21, 34.

Located 11 km northwest of Hassake in Syria, within several hundred meters of the Khabur River. T.8 in B. Lyonnet survey (2000: 21, 34, 44, and fig. 4). Early Bronze, Mitanni, and Late Bronze/Iron Age occupation has been attested.

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