

THE HUMAN REMAINS

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INTRODUCTION

The cemetery at Kissufim Road in the northwestern Negev provides an important addition to our knowledge of population diversity in the Chalcolithic of the southern Levant, as well as to the extent of age and gender related differences in burial patterns. Within an area of less than 250 sq m, skeletal remains of 54 individuals were recovered from secondary burials, the majority in stone or ceramic ossuaries, jars and bowls (Chapter 2). Most of these containers were located in specially constructed pits, but two secondary burials of children were found in ceramic vessels in a mudbrick funerary chamber.

The taphonomic findings detailed in Chapters 10 and 11 indicate that the bodies of the dead were exposed to

the elements and to animal activity before being collected for burial in repositories or directly into graves. As a result there was considerable damage to the bones, which was compounded by diagenesis from chemicals in the soil, as well as by crushing and distortion from the weight of the overlying deposits. These factors complicated identification and analysis of the human remains.

Age and sex determination of adults was carried out on the bones using morphometric criteria outlined in Krogman (1962). A second independent estimate of age was then made from the teeth using dental attrition scores (Miles 1963). For infants and juveniles the stage of dental development, long bone length and degree of epiphyseal fusion were the criteria used (Krogman 1962). The results are shown in Table 10.1. They differ slightly from

Table 10.1. Number of Individuals Identified

Locus	N	Location	Children	Adults		
				Males	Females	Unknown Sex
503	1	Disturbed.				1
506	1	Long bones—on a fragment of an ossuary roof; skull—in a V-shaped bowl.				1
507	1	Half a holemouth jar.			1	
508	1	The second half of the holemouth jar—see L507.		1		
510	12*	Pit.	1 (<9 yrs)	5	5	1
513	1*	Pit.	1 (<1 yr)			
514	1	Krater in the funerary chamber.	1 (<9 yrs)			
515	1	Ceramic burial tub in the funerary chamber.	1 (8–9 yrs)			
518	6	Stone burial tub in L510.	1 (8–9 yrs)			5
99	29*	Bulldozer dump.	5			24
<i>Total</i>	54		10	6	6	32

*Damaged/incompletely excavated loci, so number of individuals identified may be less than that originally present.

*This chapter is published in memory of Tania Zagerson, who participated in the analysis of the skeletal remains described here and whose tragic death at a young age has left a painful void.

