In Centro

Collected Papers
Volume II

Memory

Editors:
Guy D. Stiebel
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Ido Koch

רשות העתיקות
ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

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Central Region

TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY
The Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology
The Jacob M. Alkow Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures
The Chaim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies and Archaeology
The Lester and Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities

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Old Memories and New Consciousness: Forging New Social Identity in the EB IB City of ʿEn Esur

Yitzhak Paz and Itai Elad | Israel Antiquities Authority

Introduction: Shaping the Social Memory of Settlements

One of the themes related to the emergence of urban life is the creation of a social memory forged with the rise of the city. Relating to the city and its immediate vicinity as an urban landscape, one may consider it as a mnemonic terrain, "landscape of memory"—or a "cultural memoryscape" (Basu 2013: 116). The study of memoryscapes focuses on the investigation of how people both shape and are shaped by this landscape of memory, how they inhabit it and transform it, how they negotiate its consistencies and inconsistencies and what this tells us of the nature of historical and mnemonic consciousness in particular socio-cultural contexts (Basu 2013: 117).

It is widely accepted that there is a connection between individual memories and the community, and some scholars tend to understand an individual's personal memory as part of being a member of a larger group (Boric 2010: 8). Communal memory can be manipulated through ideological projects that distort historical events. Thus, there may be a great gap between individual memory/private perception and manipulated communal memory (Boric 2010: 3).

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* All illustrations are courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

It should be noted that social memory emerges and evolves from acts of both remembering and forgetting (both building and razing may be considered to shape social memory)—acts that are often illuminated by archaeological practices alone (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003: 2).

At the same time, social memory can be "inscribed" or "incorporated": "Inscribed memory is manifested in materially visible commemorative activities such as the construction of monuments, whereas incorporated memory lends itself to obliterative or fleeting acts that leave few archaeological traces" (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003: 4).

Paul Connerton (1989: 79–84) stated that incorporated memory is embodied in and transmitted through routinized bodily practices. Thus, walking, sitting, eating and other culturally specific postural performances recall patterns of identity and group membership to both performers and observers (Connerton 1989: 74). Social memory may be also manifest in ritual behavior, reflected in activities. Apart from mortuary practices, other activities include, for example, intentional conflagration of structures and the deposition of votive objects just prior to abandonment as evidence for rituals of closure (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003: 4).

Various studies show that landscape and architecture reference the past as one way to legitimate socio-political authority and to create a sense of community identity through the creation of a fictitious genealogy emphasizing the great antiquity of the rulership (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003: 9; Wilson 2010: 4).

Gregory D. Wilson (2010: 5) has also argued that the use of architectural techniques that make buildings more durable serves to strengthen a social group's corporate solidarity and connections to place. As residential groups increase in size, they adopt a more formalized organization of domestic space. The spatial layout of these residential groups has probably channeled everyday movements, providing the means by which social memories and meanings of group identity and status were moved (Wilson 2010: 10).

Memory is not only stored in the built landscape. There is a significance in the negative aspect of memory (e.g., razing, erasing and dismantling). The

disappearance of a monument can implant a new memory instead of an old one (Boric 2010: 15).

In an article about daily practice and social memory at Çatalhöyük, Ian Hodder and Craig Cessford state that social rules, meanings and relations of power are not necessarily imposed by central authorities, but rather, are embedded within mundane practices of daily life practices and, therefore, changes in daily social practices could enable centralizing coordinating functions (Hodder and Cessford 2004: 18). Regulation was not imposed from above but was constructed through the habituation practices (Hodder and Cessford 2004: 31).

In sum, the research detailed seems to reflect the variety of realms within which "social" or "communal" memory resides. Ultimately, the extraction of material reflections of social memories should include both built and razed architectural features, both ceremonial and mundane everyday activities.

The present paper explores some of the manifestations of change in social memory at the protohistoric site of ʿEn Esur, in which village life was transformed into urban entity.

ʿEn Esur: A Protohistoric Site on the Coastal Plain of Israel

ʿEn Esur (Assawir) is located on the northeastern Sharon Plain, near the western opening of Naḥal ʿIron (Wadi ʿAra; Fig. 1). Situated on a large alluvial plain adjacent to the tributaries of Naḥal ʿIron, the site was preferable for human habitation in many periods. The site comprises three main elements: the mound (Tel Esur), the protohistoric site surrounding the area around the mound (ʿEn Esur) and the cemeteries to the east and south of the settlement.

The protohistoric site was first excavated in the 1990s by Eli Yannai. This salvage excavation was conducted along Highway 65 and its rather large scale led to the discovery of a continuous settlement that existed at the site between the fifth and late fourth millennia (Chalcolithic to the EB IB; see Yannai 2006).

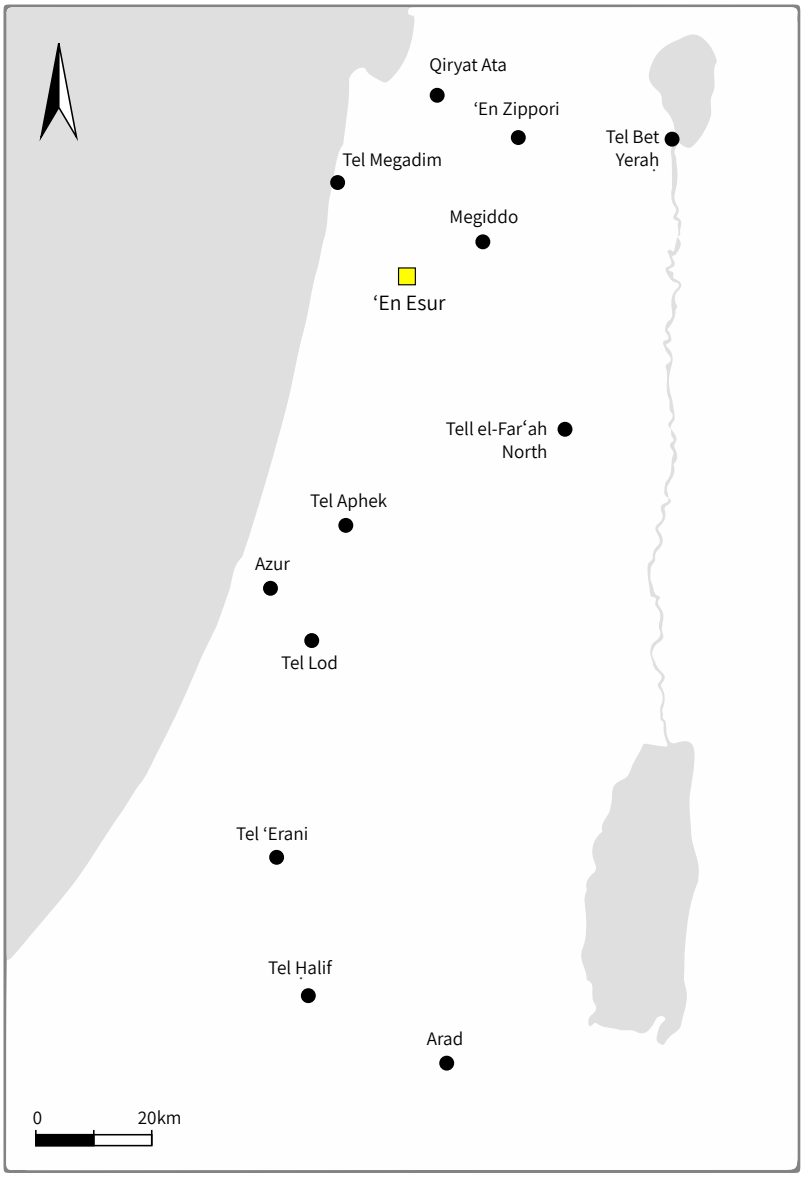

Fig. 1: ʿEn Esur: location map

The eastern cemeteries were investigated during salvage excavations that have been partially published (Yannai 2014).

The Renewed Excavations at ʿEn Esur

Between 2017 and 2019, a vast salvage excavation was conducted at ʿEn Esur, on both sides of Highway 65 and with a combined area of 41,250 m^2 (Fig. 2). The excavation was carried out on behalf of the IAA within the framework of the construction of an interchange and a road connecting Highway 65 with the new city of Harish (Elad and Paz 2018; Elad, Paz and Shalem 2018; 2019; 2020a; 2020b). The remains excavated date to the Pottery Neolithic period (sixth millennium BCE), the Early Chalcolithic period (fifth millennium BCE), the Late Chalcolithic period (mid-fifth–early fourth millennia BCE), the EB IA (3650–3300 BCE), the EB IB (3300–3050 BCE) and the Intermediate Bronze Age (2500–2000 BCE).

It should be noted that the present paper focuses on the settlement from the late EB IA to the late EB IB. During this period, the settlement peaked in size at 65 hectares, reflecting urban traits. Therefore, the other periods mentioned above are not discussed here. Nor does the current paper discuss each and every aspect of early urbanization as reflected at ʿEn Esur. It focuses instead on the material reflections of a change in social memory and identity at the site along its trajectory towards urbanization.

In focus here are specific test cases in which changes in material culture traits reflect alterations in social memory, most notably architectural features and the spatial layout of the settlement.

The Early Bronze Age at ʿEn Esur: An Overview

The EB IA Village at ʿEn Esur

EB IA remains were found at the center of the site, adjacent and between the site's two springs. Five EB IA strata were observed, in which numerous

architectural remains were found, including about 15 nearly complete buildings. The remains from this period are all located in a quite restricted area ca. 100 m long, apparently reflecting a small rural settlement (see Elad, Paz and Shalem 2019).

The structures related to the EB IA were shaped either as circles or as ovals. Their walls were 0.4–0.6 m wide, made of two faces of small to medium-sized stones with gravel fill in between. The structures were small and narrow (less than 3 m wide) and the lack of stone pillar bases may hint that these were not needed for roof support.

The overall plan of the excavated EB IA strata shows no planning and no uniformity. No monumental architecture or signs for urban planning (such as streets, squares, large storage facilities, etc.) can be observed and, therefore, the settlement seems to have existed as a rural open village in the first half of the fourth millennium BCE.

An Early EB IB Settlement Phase: The Village Extends

By the beginning of the EB IB (around 3400/3300 BCE), the settlement at ʿEn Esur grew significantly and expanded outward in all directions. Nevertheless, it seems that dwelling units were dispersed in a way that kept rather large open spaces within the settlement, and no traces of connecting streets were detected. In general, the architecture of this phase tends not to follow any uniform orientation or architectural style and construction method. Houses were built with rather large spaces between them. However, unlike the common early EB IA oval or circular buildings revealed in the area, early EB IB structures were generally rectangular with rounded corners. Walls varied significantly in size and could be quite thin (0.5 m wide) or wider (up to 1 m). They were built of small to medium-sized stones, some of them much like in the EB IA strata at the site.

The maintenance of some aspects of village-based social memory between the EB IA and the early EB IB at the site is best reflected in Area O2, where a direct continuation between EB IA–EB IB strata can be seen (see discussion below).

Fig. 2: The proto-historic site of ʿEn Esur; the area excavated in 2017–2019 is marked in blue, the dotted line reflects the reconstructed size of the EB IB city, and the EB IA village is marked by a white ellipse (prepared by Moria Abu)

Fig. 3: A walk along the streets of ʿEn Esur, the communication channels of the EB IB city (photo by Assaf Peretz)

The Late EB IB: The Rise of Urban Perception

The transition between the early and late EB IB at ʿEn Esur is characterized by a revolutionary change in aspects of material culture. During the late EB IB, ʿEn Esur became a densely built, massive, 65-hectare settlement, the largest known to date in the southern Levant. Most buildings tend to have massive walls that reach at least 1 m in width, and many buildings have walls reaching a width between 1.3–1.5 m, possibly reflecting two-storey houses.

The inner arrangement of the settlement at ʿEn Esur went through a revolutionary change. The settlement was divided into quarters and residential clusters, connected by a network of streets and alleyways. Central squares were formed in street junctions and were probably used to regulate the movement of people, livestock, commodities, and information (Fig. 3). Such information could include necessary details relating to everyday economic activities as well as ideas that were spread in the streets just as modern-day data spreads in communication channels. Drainage channels were built in some of the

passages, and water management measures were taken in places where water was running inside the settlement.

The basic residential unit was now generally characterized by an insular shape: the main dwelling unit, an enclosed courtyard and various installations, including generally round silos (Fig. 4). Silos, used for grains or for vessels containing them, were found in large numbers throughout the settlement. They were round, built of stone, and varied in size. The smaller silos reached 1 m in diameter while the larger ones exceeded 2 m. They were placed either in open spaces between houses or within enclosed walled courtyards.

One of the most impressive architectural complexes is located at the western side of the site. This was a massive building, with an estimated size of 22 × 16 m and comprising several halls and enclosed spaces. The most notable element within this building was a huge stone basin, carved from one block in which a

Fig. 4: Typical dwelling unit during the late EB IB at ʿEn Esur (photo by Assaf Peretz)

rectangular space creates a shape of a basin. In addition to typical EB IB sherds, the basin contained pig bones. Cattle bones were found in the basin's immediate surroundings, as well as elsewhere in the building. The size, construction methods and finds from within the complex hint at a cultic function.

It seems that the settlement at ʿEn Esur was fortified with a wall that was 2 m wide, from which a segment 24 m long was excavated, as well as a semi-circular tower. The wall was made of one course of stones, which served as the foundation for mudbricks that have not been preserved. The fact that the stone foundations were preserved at the very same level throughout the excavated segment is the only hint for the existence of a mudbrick superstructure.

Exploring Aspects of Social Memory at ʿEn Esur: Some Test Cases

The data from the excavation at ʿEn Esur enables a reconstruction of the settlement's history during the EB I and a thorough study of each change in architectural features between strata and phases relating to this long period. It is important to stress that, in general, every architectural change can be explained according to practical explanations and due to logical ancient engineering considerations. Even so, one should try and go one step further and look for the ideological reasoning underlying some of the changes that occurred between the EB IA and early EB IB villages and the late EB IB city. While we cannot discuss the entire set of ideas that probably guided the ancient inhabitants of ʿEn Esur, the current paper aims to illuminate aspects of social memory and communal identity that can be reflected in material culture, mainly in architecture.

For the sake of the present discussion, we selected structures from several excavation areas located roughly in the central portion of the site. These were chosen to demonstrate the rise of urban perceptions with relation to earlier social memories and group identity that was based upon village life.

The first test case discusses the relationship between late EB IA and early EB IB architecture as found in Area O2, located in the middle of the site (Fig. 5). In this area, a rectangular building with rounded corners and oriented east–west, Building U50250, was excavated and associated with the latest stratum

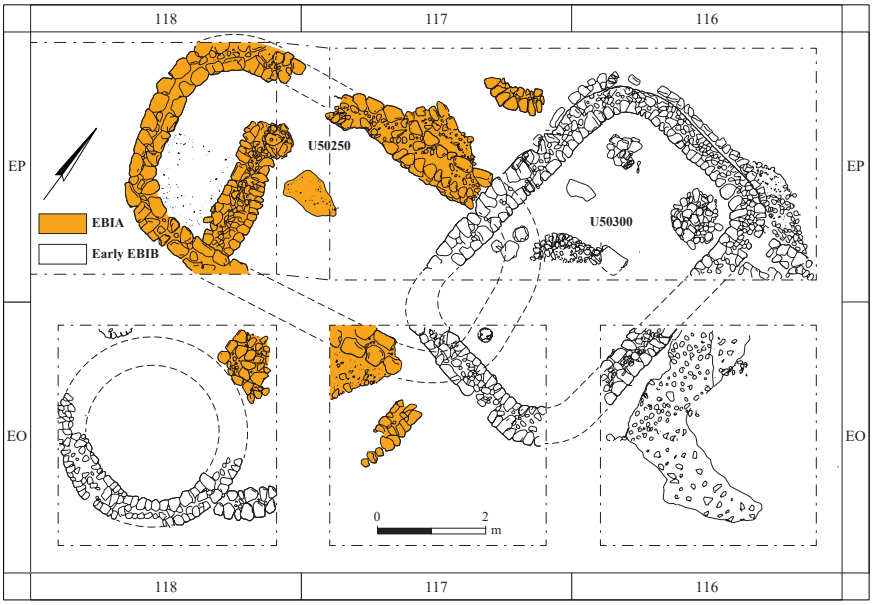

Fig. 5: Area O2: the early EB IB Building U50300 and its relationship to the earlier EB IA Building U50250 (prepared by Moria Abu)

of the EB IA. While the inner dimensions of Building U50250 are not fully known (the eastern part of the building was partly razed, probably during the building activities of the following stratum), it was 3 m wide. Its walls were 0.6 m wide and built of two faces of small–medium-sized stones with rubble fill in between. Use of Building U50250 finally ended once the later EB IB Building U50300 was built on top of it. Building U50300 is also rectangular with rounded corners, but unlike Building U50250, it is orientated north–south. The full plan of the building indicates inner dimensions of 5.4 × 3.1 m and walls 0.6 m wide. The walls were built with a similar technique to those of Building U50250, made of two faces of small to medium-sized stones with rubble fill in between. A pillar base was found in the central axis of the Building U50300 (the other pillar base was not found).

It can therefore be suggested that Building U50300 (early EB IB) reflects both a preservation of some basic earlier concepts (summed up in EB IA

Building U50250) and also a new perception, manifest in a different orientation. These activities may be interpreted as actions that were meant to forge a new understanding of the domestic unit (see, e.g., Boric 2010: 15). Moreover, the creation of a similar (but not identical to the earlier EB IA) structure during the early EB IB and its reorientation in the other direction can testify to the creation of a new set of everyday activities relating to a new and different spatial organization of the house, and that those activities could have forged incorporated memories (see also Connerton 1989: 74).

However, it appears that the change described above between EB IA and early EB IB architecture did not totally transform the nature of the whole settlement. It is most plausible that the dwellers of the (now much larger) settlement still practiced village life with no apparent central organization or authority or any sign of planning.

It may be thus suggested that the early EB IB structures that were spread across the settlement were actually "mediators" between village (EB IA) and urban (late EB IB) life at ʿEn Esur and, therefore, one may expect them to contain at least some aspects of the earlier village characteristics. Conversely, they may have created the basis for the new memoryscape, being spread along dozens of hectares, the terrain in which the late EB IB city was later established.

The second test case relates to the transition between the early and late EB IB, and the emergence of the 65-hectare city at ʿEn Esur. The rather revolutionary revision in the settlement's history is best exemplified in Area M2, where an accumulation of several EB IB architectural phases helps to illustrate our discussion. As mentioned above, the early EB IB settlement at ʿEn Esur was a large village that was characterized by sparsely distributed dwellings with large open spaces between them. It seems that each unit was home to a nucleated family who worked agriculture and stored agricultural products in pottery vessels and in round silos that were built outside the dwelling structures. No uniformity can be discerned in the orientation of dwellings nor can any sign of planning be discerned.

Building U31750 (Fig. 6), revealed in Area M2, belongs to the early EB IB. This building was oriented east–west and was rectangular with rounded corners. The

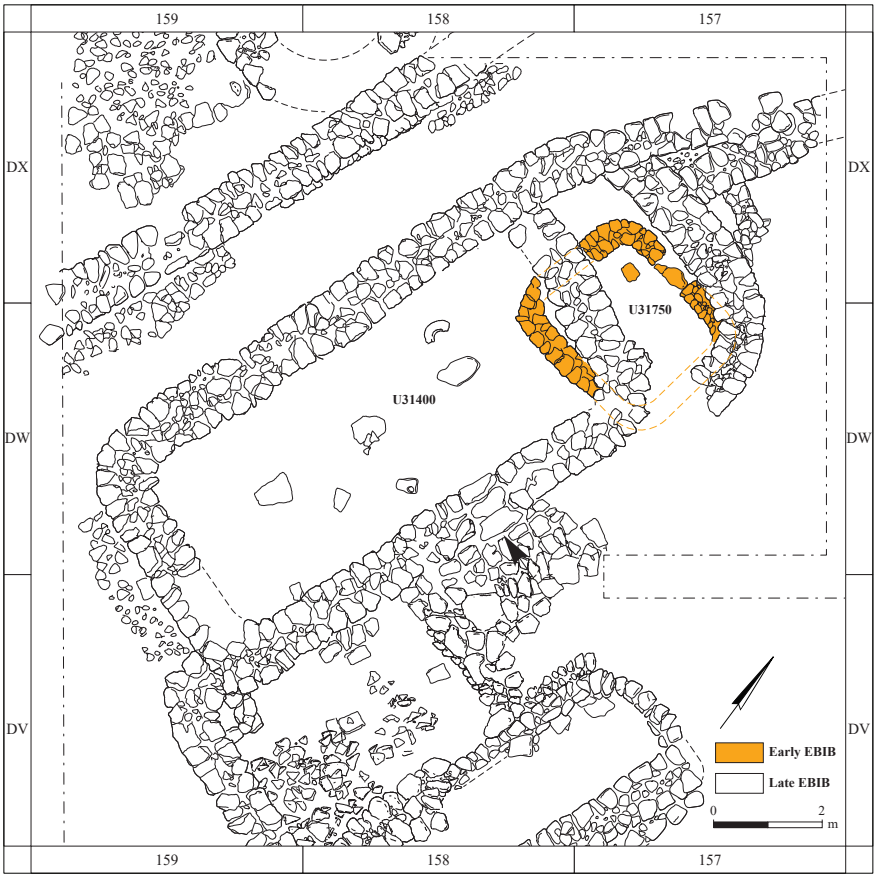

Fig. 6: Area M2: the early EB IB Building U31750 superimposed by the late EB IB Building U31400 (prepared by Moria Abu)

inner width of Building U31750 is 2.05 m. Although its inner length is unknown, it probably did not exceed 3 m. The walls of the building were made from two faces of medium-sized stones with rubble fill in between. The width of the walls was ca. 0.5 m.

By the late EB IB, the whole area was densely built in the scope of an overall urban layout. Building U31750 was directly overlaid by Building

U31400, which was itself part of a quarter that was surrounded and accessed by streets and alleys from north, south and west sides. The new settlement plan that can be seen in the late EB IB was based upon a completely different space syntax compared to the EB IA and early EB IB settlements. First, the settlement was now divided into sectors and quarters that were linked by a network of streets and alleys, joined in junctions that marked the divisions between the quarters. The alleys were generally up to 2 m wide, while the streets exceeded 3 m.

The basic dwellings were now much larger comparing to the earlier EB settlements. The average inner dimensions for a dwelling were ca. 10 × 3.5 m, with a row of three or four pillar bases located in the middle of the length axis. The enclosing walls of the structures were very solid—more than 1 m wide, made from two faces of medium-sized stones with rubble fill between them. However, the principle that characterized EB IA and early EB IB architecture—the rounded corners—was still employed. Thus, most structures that were now a part of an urban settlement were still rectangular with rounded corners or capsular with two apse-like ends.

Contemporaneous with these shapes were rectangular structures that were generally part of the agglomeration of structures that formed crowded compounds.

The new architectural syntax included spatial traits that dictated alterations and changes in bodily behavior. As seen in Fig. 6, Building U31400 was not directly accessed from the adjacent street but from an inner courtyard (see discussion below).

It seems that ʿEn Esur's vast area of 65 hectares was divided during the late EB IB into sectors and quarters. Within each quarter, the inner division was probably not imposed from above by a central authority, but even still, the vast majority of structures in the city were built in only two orientations: north–south or east–west. Furthermore, all structures were built according to the street layout, and they were probably not allowed to penetrate any public space.

In light of the assumed growth in population during the late EB IB, a practical explanation for the growth in building size becomes available: the need for

larger structures that could possibly hold a second story and thus accommodate more people. However, going one step beyond practical considerations, it can also be suggested that these massive structures were meant to survive throughout history and to demonstrate socioeconomic strength, especially in comparison with earlier periods (see also Wilson 2010: 5). The flexibility of the new structures thus created new perceptions of durable might and power and a justification for the existence of the new "order."

As has been described so far, the turning point between the early EB IB village and the late EB IB city was accompanied by major changes in planning and in most aspects of architecture. At the same time, the basic concept of the house, mainly its general shape, was kept and expanded. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that, in order to accept drastic changes in movement, accessibility and communication within the settlement, not to mention restrictions on private construction activities, authorities needed to ascribe legitimacy to these acts. One should recall that in many cases, early EB IB structures were razed or dismantled, thus reflecting the tension between individual memory and a manipulated communal memory (Boric 2010: 3).

In fact, the late EB IB city layout at ʿEn Esur does reflect a formalized organization of space and a standardization of building techniques, all of which have channeled everyday movements, providing the means by which social memories and meanings of group identity and status were moved (Wilson 2010: 10). The maintenance of the basic shape of the dwelling unit and its incorporation within the new urban layout of ʿEn Esur may, however, point to a desire to legitimate the drastic changes that were set upon the dwellers by allowing them use the same old memories of the house. On the other hand, it may also reflect a voluntarily acceptance of the new perceptions, incorporating them into the settlement and thus creating a new set of everyday activities that accorded with the new order without neglecting the basic principles and importance of the house (see also Hodder and Cessford 2004: 18).

Recreating Social Memory at ʿEn Esur: The Establishment of a New Space Syntax and the Manipulation of Old Social Memories

The major change that took place at ʿEn Esur during the late EB IB altered the entire space syntax of the settlement from rural to urban. Most notably, the large open spaces that stretched between houses during the early EB IB were replaced by an elaborate system of streets, alleyways and squares. These open spaces were transferred from the settlement-level public sphere into the insular quarter or neighborhood sphere. Thus, the pre-urban domestic space syntax that comprised two levels (a private, large and open space leading into the house) was replaced by a three-leveled urban syntax, as demonstrated in Fig. 7: a public street (1), leading into an insular neighborhood (2) and onward into a house (3). A fourth level can also more rarely appear in the form of a courtyard separating the house from the insular neighborhood levels.

In a recent article, Ziva Kolodney (2016) has portrayed the various ways in which a new memoryscape was created in post-1948 Haifa. The post-war Jewish cityscape was incorporated into the general narrative of Israeli heroism. New "memory strategies" were employed, which was reflected at Haifa in the new "memorial garden" that stood as a monument adjacent to the old Arab neighborhoods of pre-1948 Haifa and also in the "memorial route" that was established among the streets of the cities (Kolodney 2016: 113–118). This route enabled the creation of a new "incorporated memory" (Connerton 1989) using memorial slabs and emblems that were implanted within the memorial route. The new memoryscape created and established new social memory and identity that excluded the "old" pre-1948 Arab existence in the city.

Returning to EB IB ʿEn Esur, it seems that the urban-planned late EB IB city changed most earlier architectural traditions, and thus a new set of ideas and norms was reflected in architecture, largely replaced earlier traditions and can be considered to have created a multifaceted "urban" social memory. The change in space syntax at ʿEn Esur, with the appearance of urban planning as

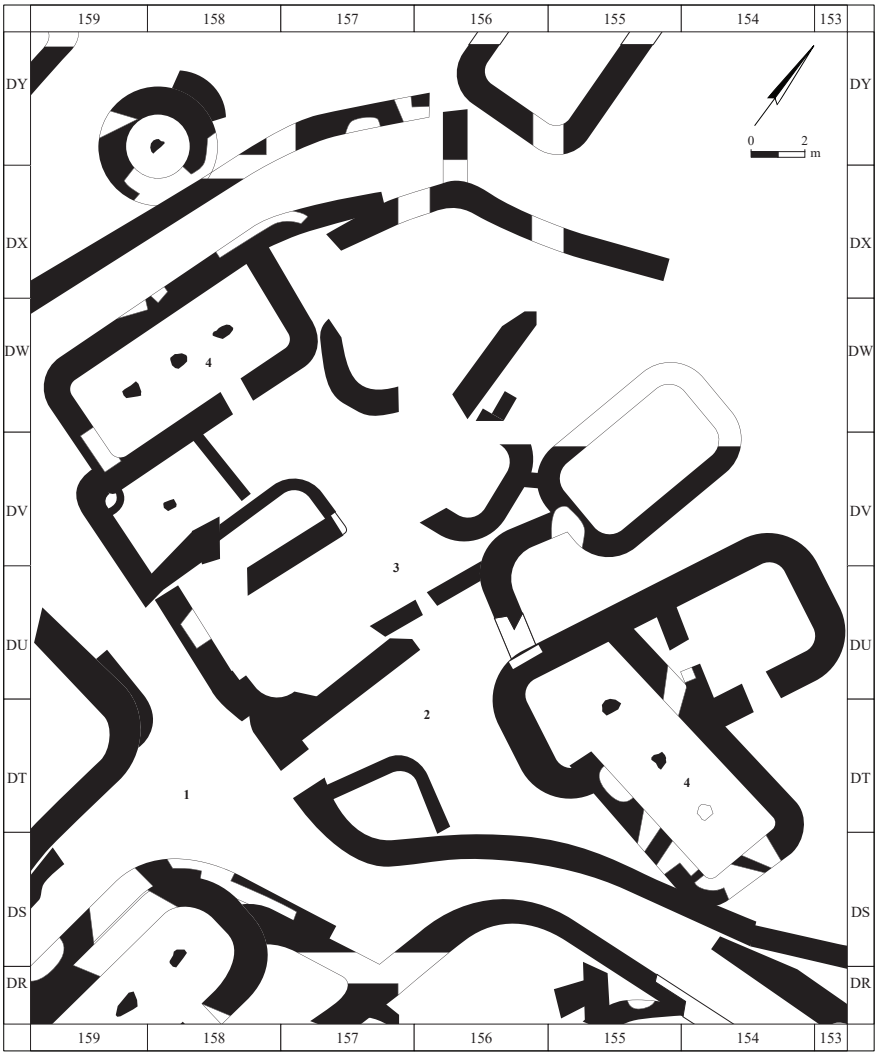

Fig. 7: The four-leveled space syntax at EB IB ʿEn Esur (prepared by Moria Abu)

well as the fortification of the site, must have affected each inhabitant, who would have needed to change daily bodily behavior and thus adjust to a new incorporated memory.

One may also postulate an opposite direction of memory creation and manipulation, from the individual/family level up to the ruling body, be it a local elite or a heterarchical council. The creation of a new, individual incorporated memory that was adjusted to urban space syntax left space for the family-level creation of microcosmos oriented toward the inner quarter. Within this sphere, other rules may have prevailed and other bodily behaviors would have been centered around the family, thus creating a sense of resistance to rules enacted and enforced at the city level. As noted by Kolodney (2016: 111), "the cityscape is both a site for symbolic control and symbolic resistance." Therefore, symbolic acts of resistance to enforced urban space syntax could have been manifested, among other ways, by the creation of open inner spaces within domestic quarters (versus the reduction of private open spaces that took place when the late EB IB city was established).

Discussion

The data gathered from the renewed excavations enable us to suggest that during the EB IB, two main shifts in aspects of social memory occurred at ʿEn Esur. The first, earlier, shift happened during the early EB IB and can be assigned to a change in memoryscape as a whole, namely, the creation of a much larger settlement. There can be little doubt that the extensive growth between the small and crowded EB IA village (maximum 2 hectares) to a much larger settlement (several dozen hectares) was accompanied by a new relationship between the people and their immediate surroundings and led to the creation of a new cultural memoryscape (Basu 2013).

It may be argued that some traits of the early village life that characterized the EB IA settlement were still employed, as can be seen with the structures that characterized the early EB IB at the site. However, the seeds for greater

change had already been sewn: the expansion of the settlement and the population growth must have altered daily activities and the way people moved, communicated and negotiated in this new situation. The fact that early EB IB inhabitants spread far beyond the immediate vicinity of the springs and preferred to live in a sparsely built village may indicate a change in perception, when people needed more space between dwelling units and, as a result, their modes of communication and daily movement in the landscape all changed. Another aspect of change between the EB IA and the early EB IB is evident in the pottery. Although they retained the same general categories of vessels (serving, cooking, storage) between the EB IA and the early EB IB, a change may be observed in the proportions between the categories: during the EB IA, serving vessels constitute the majority, while during the EB IB, cooking vessels seem to be the majority, thus reflecting a different behavioral pattern that can be related to the forging of a new incorporated memory (Connerton 1989: 74).

The later and more extensive shift can be related to the shift between the early and late EB IB, and here, many aspects of social memory were changed.

In terms of size, the settlement grew and reached the vast size of 65 hectares. The late EB IB settlement was now densely built, reorganized and fortified. The enclosing city wall now clearly differentiated between "in" and "out," while the newly established alleys, streets and squares now channeled activities, people, animals and ideas in different ways and thus dictated different behaviors than previously enabled.

Comparing urban ʿEn Esur to a living organism, the overall size and built environment can be seen as the skeleton and muscle tissue from which it was created. The massive nature of domestic structures, the monumentality of public buildings and the city wall were all probably actors in the consolidation and the strengthening of a social group's corporate solidarity and connections to place and, long term, of a durable social memory that connected the city's inhabitants to the site (see Wilson 2010: 5). The complicated network of streets and alleyways that traversed the city can be compared to arteries through which

vital materials passed to organs. The streets were the main communication system through which every aspect of human interaction could travel: commodities were traded and supplied, while people traveled between various parts of the settlements, spreading and sharing ideas, feelings, impressions and behaviors, all of which were transmitted throughout the settlement.

The existence of public architecture, drainage systems and other installations as well as a city wall all hint at the existence of some kind of central authority at ʿEn Esur, be it elite rulership or heterarchical counsel. In the first case, some aspects of social memory and group identity may have been dictated from above and some activities held across the settlement were intended, among other things, to manipulate social memory and community identity in favor of the ruling elite (see, e.g., Boric 2010: 3). The other possibility is of course that social rules, meanings and relations of power were not necessarily imposed by central authorities but were created by the whole public through mundane practices of daily life practices and, therefore, changes in daily social practices could enable centralizing coordinating functions (Hodder and Cessford 2004: 18).

It seems that the urban fabric found at ʿEn Esur was characterized by processes that were rooted in the pre-urban social structure. In these types of processes, kinship-based groups played active role in the creation of the new fabric of the settlement and their "collective memory" had a significant impact on its development (Portugali 1999: 83).

Conclusions

The site of ʿEn Esur reached its zenith during the late fourth millennium BCE when a city was established at the site, creating a new type of settlement that was also beginning to appear in other regions in the southern Levant. The establishment of the city changed many aspects of everyday life, as evidenced from the study of material culture. Those changes can be interpreted, as present research does, from a social point of view that examines aspects of social identity and, mainly, social memory.

It seems that the social memory created by everyday activities and embedded in the fabric of the EB IA village at ʿEn Esur underwent two main changes. The first change occurred at the beginning of the EB IB, when the settlement was enlarged and became significantly larger than the small EB IA village. The second and more dramatic change took place in the late EB IB, when the settlement became crowded, planned, massively built and fortified. The creation of an urban political entity no doubt changed most aspects of livelihood and forged a new set of social memories that were fueled by ideas and activities that were now centered not only in residential quarters but also in newly established public complexes. Ideas, impressions and behaviors reached every corner of the settlement through a network of streets that played a central role in the forging of a new social identity and the creation of common memories that were centered within the city walls (see Fig. 6).

It should be borne in mind that ʿEn Esur was not the sole case in the early urbanization of the southern Levant during the late fourth millennium BCE. As already stressed by Paz and others (Paz 2002; Getzov, Paz and Gophna 2001: 22–24), there was a "proto-urban" settlement process in which EB IB settlements such as Tel Bet Yeraḥ, Tel Megiddo, Tell el-Farʿah (North), Tel Afek and others developed urban characteristics. Furthermore, recent research and excavations seem to prove that the very beginning of urbanization in the southern Levant may be found even earlier in the EB IB. The renewed excavations at Tel ʿErani clearly show that the early EB IB settlement was fortified with a massive brick wall that was 8 m wide (Yegorov and Milevski 2017; Shalev 2018). In addition, the excavations at ʿEn Ẓippori (Milevski and Getzov 2014) testify to the early emergence of an urban entity during the EB IB.

In light of the above, it may be assumed that the study of shifts in social identity and social memory during the late fourth millennium BCE within this early urbanized settlement system is challenging but of great importance for future research.

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