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Chapter 2

The Sanctuary Buildings

Yosef Garfinkel and Michael G. Hasel

2.1. Introduction

In the course of seven seasons of excavation (2007–2013), three cult rooms or sanctuaries dating from the Iron Age IIA were excavated at Khirbet Qeiyafa (Figure 2.1). Two were found in Area C, in Buildings C3 and C10. The first was discovered inside a large house (Building C3) abutting the casemate wall, a location suggesting that it served as a household sanctuary. The other two sanctuary buildings were public in nature, each located near one of the two entrance gates to the city on the opposite side of a large piazza (or open courtyard) adjacent to the gate. In Area C, Building C10 was found west of the southern gate of the city, immediately adjacent to the gate piazza. In Area D, Building D100 was excavated south of the western gate, immediately adjacent to the gate piazza. The buildings were identified as cult rooms based on the architectural features and objects found in the rooms, which included special installations (benches, standing stones, platforms, and basins) and exceptional artifacts (basalt altars, twin-cup vessels, a gigantic vessel of the cup-and-saucer type, portable shrines, and seals and Egyptian scarabs). In addition to these singular cultic installations and objects, these rooms contained numerous other artifacts related to the realm of daily life, such as pottery and stone vessels. Part of this data has been presented in preliminary reports (Garfinkel 2013; Garfinkel and Ganor 2012; Garfinkel, Ganor, and Hasel 2012a, 2012b, 2018; Garfinkel and Mumcuoglu 2013, 2016; Garfinkel, Ganor, and Mumcuoglu 2015), as well as in a detailed final report on the architecture and stratigraphy of Areas C and D (Garfinkel, Ganor, and Hasel 2014).

Collectively and individually they give a rare glimpse into the spiritual life and faith of the ancient inhabitants of the site, making a most significant contribution to the question of early Judahite religious practice. In this chapter, we will describe the architectural design and features of each sanctuary and relate very briefly to the artifacts found in them. The artifacts will be described together with the comparative material in subsequent individual chapters according to the various find categories.
2.2. The House Sanctuary of Area C (Building C3)

Building C3 is the third building east of the gate of Area C and incorporates the sixth and seventh city-wall casemates to the east of the gate (Figures 2.2–2.3). The size of the building is ca. $18 \times 11$ m and its total area is ca. 200 m$^2$. Eight different architectural units can be defined in the building: corridor (A), courtyard (B), four rooms (C, D, F, G) and two city-wall casemates (E, H) (Freikman and Garfinkel 2014:168–184).

![Figure 2.2](image-url)
Room G
Room G, in the eastern part of the building, was uncovered during the 2010 excavation season. The exceptional quantity and quality of its special architectural features, installations, and cultic paraphernalia indicated that it functioned as a cult room. The room was entered from Courtyard B via an opening in its western corner. Its inner size is ca. 6 × 5 m and its area is ca. 30 m² (Figures 2.4–2.5). The following installations were found:

![Detailed plan of Cult Room G in Building C3.](image)
Figure 2.4: Aerial view of Cult Room 6 in Building C3.
Figure 2.6: Bench C6178, built along the southern wall of Cult Room G.

1. **Bench C6178**: The bench, 3.7 m long and 50 cm wide, was constructed along the southern wall of the room, near the entrance (Figure 2.6). It was composed of a single layer of flat stones and was ca. 30 cm high above the floor level. The bench ran from the southwestern corner of the room and ended after 3.7 m, not reaching the southeastern corner. Benches are known from many temples and sanctuaries of the Bronze and Iron Ages (see, for example, Mazar 1980:69–70; Daviau and Steiner 2000).

2. **Sink-hole C6204**: Adjacent to the eastern edge of the bench, there was a sunken square area (C6204) lined with stones (Figure 2.7). This was a sink-hole, with a connection to a drainage system (C6232) that was found in the room to the south of this cult room (Freikman and Garfinkel 2014, Figs. 7.112, 7.115, 7.117). Together with the limestone basin and the libation pottery vessel described below, the sink-hole is evidence for the use of liquids in the cult. In this case, however, the liquids were not consumed, as can be the case with wine or milk, but were likely poured into the drain.
3. Standing Stones (*massebot*) C6235: These two standing stones were found in the western part of the room, in the higher section of the space (Figure 2.8). They are long slabs of local limestone. The main stone (C6235A) is large, ca. 80 cm in height, while the other (C6235B), adjoining the base of the other, is much smaller, standing only 25 cm in height (see Chapter 3).

The existence of two adjoining standing stones, one taller than the other, recalls finds made at the Arad sanctuary (Aharoni 1967). The stones at Arad differ from those at Khirbet Qei-[...](Khirbet Qeiyafa Vol. 4)

**FIGURE 2.7:** Sink-hole C6204 at the eastern edge of Bench C6178, which connects to Drainage System C6232 found in the adjacent Room 8 to the south.

**FIGURE 2.8:** Standing Stones C6235 (*massebot*) found in Cult Room G in Building C3.

**FIGURE 2.9:** Large, flat Stone C6446 at the foot of Standing Stones C6235.

**FIGURE 2.10:** Rounded Installation C6205 constructed on the floor of Cult Room G in Building C3.

**FIGURE 2.11:** Rectangular Installation C6451 constructed on the floor of Cult Room G in Building C3.
yafa in that (a) the height discrepancy between the stones is not pronounced and (b) each stone stands alone. However, it should be noted that the locations of the stones at Arad were reconstructed, as neither the standing stones nor the altars were found in situ. As a matter of fact, it is even possible that only one standing stone was in use at any given time at Arad.

4. **Offering Table c6446**: A large flat stone was found at the foot of the standing stones (Figure 2.9). It was placed on top of other stones, probably to overcome the slope of the bedrock here and to achieve a horizontal top surface. This stone may have functioned as an offering table. Similar flat stone slabs at the foot of standing stones were found in large numbers at Middle Bronze Age Hazor (Ben-Ami 2004:35, photograph in lower right corner). Flat basalt slabs in front of standing stones were also found in the Late Bronze Age temple in Area c at Hazor (Yadin 1975:46–47). It is possible that the small, well-dressed, flat basalt slab that was found in the sanctuary at Lachish (Aharoni 1975:26) also functioned as an offering slab.

5. **Rounded Installation c6205**: A rounded installation measuring 120 × 100 cm was found on the floor of the eastern part of the building, near the bench (Figure 2.16). It was a shallow depression encircled by small stones. Inside the installation were fragments of a juglet decorated with black slip and burnish. This type of vessel, known as a “black juglet,” is typical of the Iron Age II and has been found in large quantities at numerous sites (Amiran 1969:256, 259, 263). A black juglet was found in Sanctuary 49 at Lachish (Aharoni 1975, Pl. 42:9). This type of vessel, however, is rare in very early Iron Age IIA assemblages. At Khirbet Qeiyafa, out of dozens of juglets that were found, only four were decorated with black slip and burnish (Cohen-Weinberger and Panitz-Cohen 2014). Thus, the appearance of a black juglet in the cult room is a further indication of the special role of this building.

6. **Rectangular Installation c6451**: In the southeastern corner of the room, adjacent to the casemate, an elongated rectangular installation measuring ca. 150 × 100 cm was found, (Figure 2.11). It was constructed of one row of small stones. The function of this confined area is not clear.

7. **Limestone Basin c6191**: In the northeastern part of the room, a limestone basin measuring ca. 70 × 50 cm was found. It was carved from the soft limestone that characterizes the surroundings of the site. The basin was found upside down and in pieces, and seems to have been violently broken when the site was destroyed. The basin fragments were restored and it was returned to its find spot for the final photographs (Figures 2.12–2.13). Another large basin (C9178) was found on the floor of the adjacent Casemate H, also upside down and broken. It is probable that the basin in the casemate was used in the cult room during an early phase and, for some reason, was dumped into the casemate after falling out of use.

An alternative explanation is that the two basins functioned simultaneously in the room and that both were smashed during the destruction of the city. However, as the doorway leading from the room to the casemate had been blocked by Blockage c6452, it seems more likely that the second basin was dumped into the casemate while the city was still occupied.

Room G is also notable for the rich destruction debris that had accumulated on its floor. This included cultic paraphernalia, as well as a very large amount of pottery vessels, as follows:

1. **Pottery vessels**: Large quantities of pottery vessels were found in the room (Figures 2.14–2.16). One notable concentration was found on the southern side of the standing stones, including a number of storage jars.

2. **Basalt altar**: A basalt altar was found on the floor of the room in two restorable fragments (Figure 2.17, on the right; see also Chapter 7). One
FIGURE 2.12: Two views of limestone Basin C6191 as found in Cult Room 6, overturned and smashed (c). A fragment of a basalt altar (b) and a twin-cup libation pottery vessel (a) are visible next to it.
part was found near the bench and the other a few meters to its east. As basalt is a very hard material, it seems likely that the altar was intentionally broken and each part dumped in another place.

3. Twin-cup libation vessel: A pottery vessel used for libation was found near the limestone basin described above (Figure 2.17, on the left; see also Chapters 12 and 15). It is composed of two rounded cups set on a high base. Each cup has its own opening, but each is connected to the other. Similar libation pottery vessels are known from various sites, all found in cultic contexts.

4. Seal and Egyptian scarab: All sediments from the floors in the buildings of Khirbet Qeiyafa were sieved through a 2 × 2 mm screen. While most of the finds gathered from the sifting were pottery sherds and animal bones, a seal and an Egyptian scarab were recovered from the sediments in this room. The seal (Basket c8753) is conical in shape and depicts a lion attacking a gazelle (see Chapter 17). The Egyptian scarab (Basket c6155) depicts three standing figures (see Chapter 16).

The pottery assemblage from Room G yielded 31 complete vessels and 70 fragments, as summarized in Table 2.1. Presently, the lack of similar

![Figure 2.13: Portions of the limestone Basin c6191 from Cult Room G in Building c3, returned to their find spot after restoration.](image)

![Figure 2.14: Concentration of jars unearthed in the western part of the room, near the standing stones.](image)

![Figure 2.15: Destruction level on the floor of Cult Room G.](image)

![Figure 2.16: Destruction level on the floor of Cult Room G, with a sea shell.](image)
processed data from the other cult rooms, or other rooms in Khirbet Qeiyafa, precludes the assessment of the significance of these amounts. Comparison with vessel quantities from the other cult and non-cult rooms will allow for a meaningful interpretation in the future.

Two interesting pottery vessels were uncovered in the adjacent Room D to the south of Room G. Here a zoomorphic vessel of Ashdod I ware (see Chapter 13) and an imported barrel-shaped juglet of Cypro-Geometric bichrome ware (Gilboa and Waiman-Barak 2014) were uncovered. These prestige vessels may have had a connection to the activities that took place in the next room.

2.3. The Gate-Piazza Sanctuary of Area C (Building C10)

Building C10 is the first building in Area C to the west of the southern gate. It is located about 20 m from the gate, after the inner piazza, and includes the fourth, fifth, and sixth casemates west of the gate (Freikman and Garfinkel 2014:195–219). The size of the building, after reconstruction of the missing northern end, is ca. 17–20 m on a north–south axis and 16–19 m on an east–west axis, and its total area is ca. 300 m² (Figures 2.18–2.20).

Building C10 is divided into 16 different architectural units, arranged in two main wings. The eastern wing had 10 architectural units: one corridor (A), one central courtyard (E), six rooms (B, C, D, F, G, I) and two city-wall casemates (H, J). The western wing had six architectural units: one central courtyard (K), one corridor (O), three rooms (L, N, P), and one city-wall casemate (M).

Table 2.1. Frequencies of pottery vessel types found in Cult Room G in Building C3 (before completion of restoration).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VESSEL TYPE</th>
<th>COMPLETE PROFILES</th>
<th>FRAGMENTS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bowl</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage jar</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jug</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juglet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krater</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking pot</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking tray</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamp</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libation vessel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The cultic activity here was concentrated in the southeastern corner of the building, mainly in Courtyard E, Room F, and Room G. In addition, some cultic activities apparently took place in Courtyard K, which is adjacent to Courtyard E on the west. These architectural units are described here in order to present a comprehensive picture of the cultic activity in the building.

**Figure 2.18**: Detailed plan of Building C10, located west of the southern gate piazza.
COURTYARD E

This is a large courtyard located in the center of the building (Figure 2.21). The inner size of the unit is ca. 6 × 5.5 m and its area is ca. 33 m². The following installations had been constructed in this area:

1. **Tabun C6871**: This cooking installation was found on the floor along the periphery of the courtyard in the northeastern corner (Figure 2.22).

2. **Tabun C6960**: This tabun was unearthed near the previous tabun, near the entrance to the room (Figure 2.23).
Chapter 2: The Sanctuary Buildings

Figure 2.20: Building C10, view to the south.

Figure 2.21: Aerial view of Courtyard E of Building C10.

Figure 2.22: Tabun C6871 in Courtyard E of Building C10.

Figure 2.23: Tabun C6960 in Courtyard E of Building C10.

Figure 2.24: Hearth C6959 in Courtyard E of Building C10.
3. **Hearth c6959:** This is a small rounded hearth, uncovered adjacent to the southern wall of the courtyard (Figure 2.24). It was paved with pottery sherds and ashes.

4. **Pit c6962:** This is a rounded shallow pit, dug from the floor level to a depth of ca. 40 cm (Figures 2.25–2.26).

5. **Stones c6993:** This is a short line of stones that demarcated the southern side of the courtyard from the rest of the area. The stones run from east to west, ending with a large rectangular limestone slab, found adjacent to Pit c6962. This flat stone seems to have been a base, perhaps for a pillar.

6. **Basin c6878:** A rounded basin, with an outer diameter of ca. 80 cm, was sunk into the floor in the southeastern corner of the courtyard (Figure 2.27). It was constructed of flat stone slabs placed on their narrow side, with a large flat stone as the floor. This installation is located in front of the entrances to Rooms F and G, and in fact one could not have entered these rooms without first encountering the basin. A drain began under the basin and ran to the south into Room G.

7. **Pavement c6964:** Near Basin c6878, in the southeastern corner of Courtyard E, is a rectangular area paved with flat stones.

The floor of the courtyard, and the debris
above it, were rich in finds, including typical cultic objects:

a. Fragments of a fenestrated stand (see Chapter 8).

b. Half of a basalt altar, similar in size and shape to the basalt altar uncovered in Room G of Building C3 (see Chapter 7).

c. Two conical stamp seals (see Chapter 17).

d. A large amount of restorable pottery vessels found in the southeastern part of the courtyard, in the area behind Pit C6962 and Stones C6993 (Figure 2.28).

ROOM F
This room is located at the center of the eastern side of the building, opposite Courtyard E (Figures 2.29–2.30). The inner size of the room is ca. 2.5 × 2 m and its area is ca. 5 m². It has two entrances, one from the courtyard in the west and the second in the southeastern corner leading to Room G. The provision of two openings for one room is not common in the architecture of the site and indicates a close connection between Rooms F and G. Room F includes:

1. Stone Construction C6881: The western edge of the room was built with this very thick stone construction, which seems to be the closing wall of the room from the west. Stone Pavement C6964 in Courtyard E abuts this construction from the west. Constructions of such exceptional thickness were not observed elsewhere in the site. As only the lower part of this stone construction had survived, it is possible that it was in fact not a wall but a raised platform like Platform C6863 in Room G. The two constructions are located exactly one behind the other.

2. Tabun C6879: This cooking installation was built adjacent to Wall C6607 on the eastern side of the room. It was supported from the north and south by a large stone on each side (Figure 2.31). The rounded wall of the tabun was poorly preserved. Although this is the smallest cooking installation uncovered at the site, very large quantities of fine ash were found near it.

Room F included the following cultic paraphernalia:

1. Cup-and-saucer pottery vessel: An exceptional pottery vessel was uncovered near the northern wall. It is a giant libation vessel of the cup-and-saucer type, composed of two parts (see Chapter 12). Two more fragments that both probably belong to another very large cup-and-saucer were found in Room K, which is located west of Courtyard E. Thus, both of the vessels of this type are associated with the cultic activity in Building C10. The items uncovered at Khirbet Qeiyafa are three times the size of the average cup-and-saucer discovered at other sites. The vessel from Room F has three handles, also a unique feature on such a vessel. The only parallel to the Khirbet Qeiyafa cup-and-saucers known to us is a broken item that came from the antiquities market (Weinberg 1979).

ROOM G
This room is located in the southeastern corner of the building and functioned as the core of the cultic activity in this complex (Figures 2.29–2.30). Its main entrance is in the northwestern corner of the room, leading from Courtyard E. The entrance included a well-built staircase (C6852) with four steps, leading down from the courtyard surface to the lower floor level inside the room (Figure 2.32). Two other entrances were found in this room, one leading to Room H (a city-wall casemate) in the southeastern corner and the other to Room F in the northeastern corner. The inner size of the room is ca. 5 × 5 m and its area is ca. 25 m². The floor of the room is composed of beaten earth, with leveled bedrock in the room’s northwestern part. A number of installations were found in Room G:

1. Bench/Drain C6789: Adjacent to the western wall of the room was a bench built over a drain running on a north–south line, comprising a wide trench covered by well-made, relatively large flat stone slabs. The trench drained liquids from the basin in Courtyard E near the entrance
FIGURE 2.29: Detailed plan of Cult Rooms F and G in Building C10.
FIGURE 2.30: Aerial view of Cult Rooms F and G in Building C10.
to the room and is clearly seen under the staircase. A similar installation consisting of a bench and a drain was uncovered in Room K.

2. **Platform C6863**: A square platform (a high place – Hebrew *bamah*) was constructed adjacent to the northern wall of the room (Figure 2.33a–b). It was built of stones, of which only one course was preserved, and measured ca. 1.3 × 1.3 m. A well-shaped square stone was attached to its southeastern corner. This square platform is unique in the more than sixty rooms excavated at Khirbet Qeiyafa; the only similar feature is Stone Construction C6881 in Room F.

3. **Cup-Mark C6801**: An irregular cup-mark was cut into the bedrock in the northwestern part of the room, near the platform. It was found covered with a flat stone (Figure 2.34).

4. **Grinding installation**: A massive lower grinding slab was found on the floor, tilted on its side (Figure 2.34).

This room too was notable for the rich destruction debris that had accumulated on its floor. It contained a large number of pottery vessels and cultic paraphernalia, as follows:

1. **Portable shrine made of clay**: This artifact, measuring 11 cm wide and 16 cm high, was made of fired clay (Figure 2.35a; see Chapter 5). The sides and back are plain and the façade was elaborately decorated to represent the entrance of a temple, including two lions, two columns, ribbons tied to the columns, and four beams above the entrance, above which was a rolled curtain. On the beams are circles with parallel lines, apparently indicating the roofing beams.
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FIGURE 2.34: Grinding installation with lower grinding slab tilted on its side. Note natural bedrock and part of Ashdod Ware vessel.

FIGURE 2.35: Two portable shrines from Room G in Building C10 after restoration.
that extended perpendicular to the entrance. Three birds are perched on the roof.

2. **Portable shrine made of limestone**: This artifact was carved from a single block of soft limestone (Figure 2.35:b; see Chapter 6).

3. **Large decorated bowls**: Massive shallow bowls, which are very rare at the site, were found in Room G. Some of them were decorated with red slip and irregular hand burnish.

4. **Large pilgrim flask**: A large pilgrim flask, the only large flask to be found at Khirbet Qeiyafa, was found in Room G.

**CASEMATE H**

This is the fourth casemate in the city wall, west of the gate in Area C. It has a single entrance, from Room G, located in its northwestern corner. The inner size of the room is ca. 4.2 × 1.5 m and its area is ca. 6.5 m². The casemate room had a beaten-earth floor on which were found several storage vessels and other objects, specified below.

1. **Bench c6843**: This bench was built on the western side of the casemate, adjacent to the western wall (Figure 2.18). It was constructed from medium-sized stones and was ca. 25 cm high above the floor level.

2. **Fragments of clay portable shrine**: On the floor of this casemate were found several fragments of the clay portable shrine from Room G (see above), including the upper part of the façade with roof beams and three birds.

3. **Scarab C11133**: An Egyptian scarab incised with a *nfr* sign surrounded by a geometric design of lines was found in this casemate (see Chapter 16).

4. **Decorated bone pendant C11132**: A bone pendant decorated with rows of circles with a dot in the center was found in this casemate (see Chapter 11).

**COURTYARD K**

This unit is located adjacent to Courtyard E on the west. It seems to be part of a dwelling unit, together with Rooms L–O in the building (Figure 2.18–2.19). Although this area was not an integral part of the cultic area, two features may indicate some cultic activities here as well:

1. **Bench/Drain c6988**: This installation was built in the southeastern corner of Courtyard K, along the eastern wall. This is a bench built over a drain running on a north–south line, comprising a trench covered by well-made, relatively large flat stone slabs (Freikman and Garfinkel 2014, Fig. 7.18). A similar installation consisting of a bench and a drain was uncovered in Courtyard E.

2. **Gigantic cup-and-saucer vessel**: Fragments of this vessel were found in the courtyard. This object could have been stored in Room K, or have been dumped there when the entire building was destroyed.

**THE OPEN PIAZZA NEAR BUILDING C10**

The cult room of Building C10 is located adjacent to the gate piazza of the southern city gate (Freikman and Garfinkel 2014:145–146). Two discoveries made in the piazza seem to relate to the cultic activity carried out in this room:

1. **Standing Stone C5184**: A large unworked standing stone (*massebah*), nearly 2 m high and weighing over one ton, was found still standing on its narrow side (Freikman and Garfinkel 2014, Fig. 7.72; see also Chapter 3). When it was excavated, its significance as a standing stone was not recognized, as it was found incorporated into a Late Persian–Early Hellenistic building. However, after a few seasons, it became apparent that the massive standing stone was located in the center of the open piazza, near the cult room.

2. **Bronze cup**: A shallow bronze cup was uncovered in a small cavity in the bedrock (Freikman and Garfinkel 2014, Fig. 7.75–7.77). Similar drink-
ing vessels were sometimes engraved with the owner’s name, indicating that the cup (Hebrew kos) belonged to a specific person. An extensive discussion has recently been devoted to this category of finds and their significance in ritual and feasts (Koller 2012).

The gate piazza was presumably the location of gatherings of the population for holidays and festivals. It was here that various activities such as animal sacrifices, feasting, and dancing would have taken place, near the cult room with the two portable shrines.

2.4. The Gate-Piazza Sanctuary of Area D (Building D100)

The gate-piazza sanctuary of Area D was discovered and excavated in 2010–2011 to the south of the western gate of Area B (Hasel 2014a:276–308). Building D100 is the first building encountered after the large open piazza (Figures 2.36–2.39). It is evident from its architectural features and material culture that parts of the building were used for cultic purposes, a pattern also found in Area C to the east of the southern gate complex. Cultic architecture possibly includes two stand-
FIGURE 2.38: Aerial view of Building D100 south of the western gate.

FIGURE 2.39: Plan of Building D100 south of the western gate.
ing stones and a bench. Cultic paraphernalia include a twin-cup libation vessel together with several weapons that seem to have been placed there.

Although Building D100 was not completely excavated, when partially reconstructed it consists of eleven units, Rooms A–K (Figure 2.40). The dimensions of the building are approximately 15 m (N–S) long by 20 m (E–W) wide for a total of 300 m², although the eastern border is not altogether certain. The entrance to the building appears to be from the east into Room A, although only a portion of the building's eastern wall (D2504) was uncovered and it is composed of a single course of four stones. Since the bedrock is very high here, excavation did not reveal a great deal of architecture. The cultic area of Building D100 appears to be limited to three rooms, Rooms A, I, and J. These rooms are immediately adjacent to the southern gate piazza, a deliberate placement mirroring the location of the gate-piazza sanctuary of Area C (Building C10).

The rooms of the gate-piazza sanctuary Building D100 will be described below, followed by a brief discussion and interpretation.

**ROOM A**

This entrance room leading into Building D100 was enclosed by faint remnants of Wall D2504 to the east (Figures 2.41–2.42). There is still some doubt as to whether these stones are actually remnants of the room's eastern wall, due to the lack of preservation and connection to other walls in Area D. The dimensions of Room A are 10 m long (N–S) and 4.5 m wide to the balk. More than 65% of Surfaces D2477, D2446, D2458, D2468, D2325, D2395 are located directly on Bedrock D2324 and D2479. The pottery on these floors was dated predominantly to Iron Age IIa, including two restorable storage jars found on Surface D2395. The bedrock and floors of Room A are significantly higher than those of Rooms I and J. The NW border of the room is marked by a sharp, manmade cut in Bedrock D2324, evidently the
result of Iron Age quarrying (Figure 2.43; see Keimer 2014; Keimer, Kreimerman, and Garfinkel 2015). There is a drop of more than two meters into Room I. Room A, then, formed a kind of upper room in Building D100 before entry to the lower level, consisting of Rooms I and J.

The finds in Room A were significant and provide an indication of the use of this room in relation to the other cult rooms in Building D100. Surfaces D2395, D2446, D2458, and D2468 were rich in Iron Age IIA pottery. Types of vessels included bowls, storage jars, a twin-cup libation vessel, and a chalice. Two iron knife blades were also found.

1. **Twin-cup libation vessel**: The twin-cup libation vessel (basket D4239) was found on Surface...
D2395. It resembles the vessel found in the Area C sanctuary room (Figures 2.44–2.45; see Chapters 12 and 15).

2. Iron knife: Only a few centimeters away from the twin-cup libation vessel, an iron knife blade were found with rivets (Baskets D4233, D4285; Figure 2.46).

There are several possible interpretations of the function of Room A. As an entrance into the large compound of rooms in Building D100, it serves as a focal point for the rest of the building. The walls and entrances of Rooms I, C, and D all

**Figure 2.43**: Manmade cut in Bedrock D2324 with difference in elevation between Room A and I, Building D100.

**Figure 2.44**: Twin-cup libation vessel (Basket D4239) on Surface D2395.

**Figure 2.45**: Drawing of twin-cup libation vessel (Basket D4239).
angle toward and face Bedrock D2324. Was this some kind of elevated platform that served in the cultic activities of the site? Or was this simply the result of the changing angle of the outer casemate wall, which caused the walls to angle toward the face of the bedrock quarry? The standing stone in Room I is located to the west in front of the bedrock platform area. What relationship did it, and the room associated with it, have with the libation vessel found in Room A? There could have been a connection, since standing stones and a libation vessel were found in close proximity in Cult Room g in Building C3 (Area c).

ROOM I
There is a dramatic drop of more than two meters where Bedrock D2324 in Room A is cut to the west. This forms the eastern boundary of Room I (Figures 2.47–2.48). The entrance into Room I is to the south of Bedrock D2324, where there is a gradual descent into Corridor c. Here Bedrock D2240 is high as well, and forms the foundation for Wall D2484 serving as the southern border of the room. The dimensions of the room are 4.5 × 4.5 m for a total of 20.5 m². Bedrock D2440 is plastered to the north of Wall D2484 as it descends onto the floor surface of Room I. Was the surrounding Bedrock D2240 used as a seating area within Room I as people faced the standing stone? Very little associated pottery was found on the bedrock in this area.

The Iron Age IIA occupation phase was identified by Surface D2465 and Surface D2515 located to the north of Bedrock D2240. Roughly centered on a north–south axis toward the rear of the room is Standing Stone D2462. The largest concentration of Iron Age pottery was found in the area surrounding Standing Stone D2462 (possibly a massebah), where two partially restorable Iron Age IIA jars were found (Figure 2.49).

1. Standing Stone D2462: The focal cultic element in the room is Standing Stone D2462, 90 cm in height and approximately 24–32 cm in diameter (Figure 2.50). These dimensions are very similar to those of the large Standing Stone C6235, which is 80 cm high and was found in Building C3. Standing stones are known from many periods and in various cultic contexts, such as city gates, temples, courtyards, and cultic buildings. This well-known phenomenon has been discussed in detail in various publications (e.g., Mettinger 1995; de Moor 1995; Block-Smith 2007; Garfinkel 2009; see Chapter 3).

ROOM J
The Iron Age IIA architectural remains in Room J were largely reused in the olive press installation of the Late Persian–Early Hellenistic period (Hasel 2014a:266–276; Hasel 2014b; Figures 2.38–2.39). Wall D2212 was built by the later occupants to enclose the olive press on the north. That Wall
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Figure 2.47: Aerial view of Room i in Building D100.

Figure 2.48: Plan of Room i in Building D100.
D2364 was originally an Iron Age wall is indicated by the pebble-plaster floor Surface D2427, on which were several restorable Iron Age IIA storage jars and a krater (Figures 2.51–2.52). This is also true for Wall D2352, which is a continuation of Wall D2364. Wall D2352 was associated only with Iron Age IIA pottery in the surface and debris material of D2465 and D2517 to its south. From this evidence, it is possible to conclude that the Iron Age IIA room is bordered by Wall D2275 on the north, the inner casemat Wall D2506 on the west, Walls D2364 and D2352 on the south, and Wall D2291 on the east. The entrance into Room J seems to have been between Walls D2364 and D2352, where a press weight was found reused in the wall. This suggests an original opening that was blocked in the Late Persian–Early Hellenistic period, when the room was closed off to function as an olive press.

1. **Bench D2299**: Bench D2299 abuts the eastern Wall D2291 of Room J. The bench consists of a
row of flat stones about 50 cm wide and forming a clean line running along Wall D2291 for about four meters (Figure 2.53). Bench D2299, which was preserved one or two courses in height, was constructed with boulder-and-chink. People who sat on the bench would have been facing west toward the casemate wall and the possible massebah Pillar D2539 (see below). Benches are known from many temples and sanctuaries of the Bronze and Iron Ages (see Mazar 1980:69–70; Daviau and Steiner 2000), and one is found in Building C3.

2. Pillar/Standing Stone (?) D2539: The enormous Pillar D2539, which stands to a height of 142 cm in the center of Room J slightly to the east, has been interpreted differently by the directors of the project (Figure 2.54). Two of the directors suggest that it served as a standing stone for the Iron Age Building D100. There are several arguments in favor of this interpretation. First, people sitting on Bench D2299 would have been facing the standing stone. In support of this interpretation, Bench C6178 in Building C3 suggests a similar function; there, Bench C6178 faces north and the large Standing Stone C6235 is slightly to the left or west of the bench. Second, the bench would have had less significance if it lacked a focal point such as a standing stone in front of it.

An alternative suggestion is that Pillar D2539
served as an architectural support for the roof of the Late Persian–Early Hellenistic period. There are several arguments in favor of this interpretation. It is located 2.43 m from Wall D2275 and 2.44 m from Walls D2352 and D2364. This precisely central position is unlikely to be coincidental and suggests that the pillar supported a roof. The proposal that Pillar D2539 belongs to the Late Persian–Early Hellenistic period is supported by four observations. First, the pillar's perfect symmetry and location in the center of the olive press building suggest an architectural function in that building. Second, the artifacts found all around the pillar consisted solely of Hellenistic pottery. Third, the pillar's dimensions are nearly identical in shape and size to Pillar D2547 in Room B3 of Building D200, which served a similar architectural support function in the Late Persian–Early Hellenistic period. This pillar was 136 cm in height and 59 cm in width, comparable to D2539 with a height of 142 cm and width of 58 cm. Moreover, one should note that both of these pillars are much taller than the standing stone found in the adjacent Room 1, which was only 90 cm in height. The standing stones D2462 of Room 1 in Area D and C6235 in Building C3 are very similar to one another in width and height. Fourth, Standing Stones D2462 and C6235 are both roughly hewn, while Pillar D2539 and Pillar D2547 of Room A4 in Building D200 are smoothly hewn. In their general shape these pillars resemble the type of large stones known as “cigar” monoliths. Such stones, though somewhat shorter at ca. 90 cm, are also found at Khirbet Qeiyafa in the stable, Room G of Building C3 in Area C.

The only clean Iron Age floor in the room not disturbed by later building activities of the Late Persian–Early Hellenistic period olive press was Surface D2307, located in front of Bench D2299 outside the olive press room. It stretches from north to south and measures 108 cm in length and 77 cm in width. The surface contained a
restorable Iron Age IIA storage jar with finger-impressed handles and other flat-lying pottery (Figure 2.55), as well as three long iron blades that may be swords.

1. **Iron blades**: A cache of three long iron blades was excavated in Locus 2253. They were located in the proximity of the surface in front of the southern end of Bench D2299 (Figure 2.56). They were not found intact but were each broken into several pieces (see Chapter 10).

Room J was completely devoid of Iron Age pottery west of Wall D2212. Despite the varying opinions as to whether Pillar D2539 served as an architectural pillar or a cultic standing stone, other adjacent evidence suggests that this was part of a larger cultic complex. Notwithstanding the later construction activities of the Late
Persian–Early Hellenistic occupation, which disturbed some of the Iron Age remains to the northwest of the building, the presence of a bench, standing stone, and cultic paraphernalia (twin-cup libation vessel and chalice) suggests that Building D100 served a cultic function. This conclusion is supported by the similar architectural plan in Area C, where a large open piazza inside the southern city gate is located immediately adjacent to the cultic area of Building C10.

2.5. Discussion: Cult Rooms in the Iron Age I and Early Iron Age II

The cult rooms at Khirbet Qeiyafa raise numerous questions:

1. What did the three cult rooms represent? Did these rooms function as shrines, with the cultic paraphernalia being used where it was found in the excavation, or as storage facilities from which objects were taken out and used in another location? Or were they a combination of both, with the rooms being used for regular daily activities and occasionally for cultic ceremonies as well?

2. If these rooms were the venue for cultic practices, which rituals were performed in them? Is there evidence for typical ceremonial behavior, such as the intensive food consumption that points to feasting (cooking installations, large and/or many cooking and serving vessels, concentrations of animal bones)? Is there evidence for the use of liquids for libation (special vessels, basins, drainage channels)? Can the special objects, such as the architectural models and the seals, provide an indication of the deity that was worshiped?

3. Was there a hierarchy among the three sanctuaries? Can it be argued that the two rooms near the gates represent a public cult, while the room located inside a row of houses represents a household cult? Was Room C10 near the southern gate more important than the other two? Are the finds uncovered in each cult room an indication of their relative importance within the site?

4. Who used the cult rooms: the inhabitants of the site alone or a population from a broader geographical region as well? The latter may be an indication of pilgrimage. If so, how can pilgrimage be identified by the artifacts uncovered in the cult rooms?

5. Does the location of two cult rooms near the city gates (Figure 2.57), as well as the large number of seals and scarabs uncovered in some of the cult rooms, point to a connection between cult and administration? Many cylinder seals have been found in Late Bronze Age Canaanite temples at sites such as Beth-Shean (Rowe 1940), Hazor (Beck 1989), and Tel Mevorakh (Stern 1984).

6. What was the function of the three buildings in which the cult rooms were found? Were the houses adjoining the gates components of the site’s administration, the dwellings of priestly families, or regular dwellings? Comparison of the three buildings in which the cult rooms were found with other buildings at the site will help to address this question.

7. How many people participated in the cultic activities? Were these large-scale or small-scale ceremonies?

8. Aside from the contexts described above, several cultic objects, such as a portable shrine, standing stones, and many chalices, were found in other rooms as well. What is the meaning of these objects? Which cultic activities were conducted in private houses by the inhabitants themselves? Were there any daily activities that involved what we would recognize today as cultic practices?

The three cult rooms of Khirbet Qeiyafa are not unique. Comparable examples were uncovered at three other sites dated to the 11th–9th centuries BCE, that is, the Iron Age I to the early Iron Age II A (Figure 2.58).
1. Tel Qiri: A cultic building with two rooms was found in Stratum VIII, dated to the 11th century BCE. It yielded various finds including a standing stone, a limestone basin, a libation vessel, an incense burner, a chalice, and a cup-and-saucer (Ben-Tor and Portugali 1987, Ph. 33–34). In the faunal assemblage from this building, most of the bones belonged to the right forelimbs of sheep and goat, apparently the remains of sacrifices of the kind described in the biblical tradition of Exod 29:22 and Lev 7:32, where the portion of the right leg is repeatedly mentioned (Ben-Tor and Portugali 1987:89, Ph. 35).

**Figure 2.57**: Schematic plan of cult rooms/sanctuaries near the city gates.
2. Megiddo: Room 2081 is a large rectangular open space, part of a larger building of Stratum VA–IVB dated to the 10th or early 9th centuries BCE. In the southwestern corner of the room was a rich concentration of cultic paraphernalia, including two four-horned altars made of limestone, tall cylindrical clay cult stands, a standing stone (found lying on its narrow side), a rounded tripod stone bowl, chalices, other pottery vessels, and four seals (Loud 1948, Figs. 100–102, Pls. 163:23–26; 254:1–4; 263:22). No human or animal figurines were reported from this sanctuary. Extensive discussion has been devoted to this room and its finds (see, for example, Shiloh 1979; Kempinski 1989:187; Ussishkin 1989; Negbi 1993; Zevit 2001).

3. Lachish: Sanctuary 49 is a small rectangular room, part of a larger complex that continues beyond the excavated area and was attributed by the excavator to Level V (Aharoni 1975:26–32, Pl. 60; but see Ussishkin 2004:105–109). The room is surrounded by benches and a rich concentration of cultic paraphernalia, including a limestone altar, four cylindrical clay cult stands, and seven chalices, was found on its floor. Quotidian pottery vessels were found as well. The animal bones associated with the building did not present a specific pattern (Lernau 1975). A further discussion of this assemblage has been published recently (Zukerman 2012).

Initial comparative analysis of the cult rooms of Khirbet Qeiyafa with those of Tel Qiri, Megiddo, and Lachish (Table 2.2) shows that several aspects are common to all these rooms, while others are unique to each context. Most of these rooms had benches, standing stones, and altars, as well as offering tables. At Khirbet Qeiyafa, the bamah of Room G in Building C10 could have functioned as an offering table. Regarding the cultic paraphernalia, it is notable that none of these rooms contained zoomorphic or anthropomorphic figurines. This is in sharp contrast to Canaanite and Philistine cultic contexts, which are characterized by figurines. A few observations on the cultic data can be made:

1. State of preservation of the cultic paraphernalia: A repeated pattern characterizes the cultic artifacts uncovered at Khirbet Qeiyafa. In Building C3, the basalt altar was broken into two and each part was discarded in a different part of the room. The limestone basin was overturned and smashed. The libation vessel was broken and its parts were scattered throughout the room. In Building C10, the fragments of the clay portable shrine were scattered throughout two rooms, and the limestone portable shrine was smashed into many small fragments. It is clear that these artifacts were deliberately subjected to very violent treatment when the city came to its end. This recalls the way in which various statues were intentionally mutilated when the Late Bronze Age city of Hazor came to an end (Ben-Tor 2006), as well as the deliberate destruction of other objects on various occasions (Garfinkel 2013).
2. Cult associated with the city gates: Two of the cult rooms were found adjacent to piazzas inside the city gates. Both piazzas were bordered by a wall that created a confined area, restricting access to the rest of the city. Such an arrangement would not have been necessary if the piazza were used only by the inhabitants of the city. The location of the two cult rooms thus seems to indicate that they served the needs of a population that also came from outside the city, possibly making a pilgrimage to a holy place. Petrographic analysis of pottery has revealed the presence of pilgrims in shrines at Gilat and En Gedi during the Chalcolithic period (Goren 1995). On the other hand, petrographic analysis of cultic vessels from the Iron Age II favissa at Yavneh showed that almost all the vessels and cult stands were made of very similar local clay, pointing to a local “temple industry” (Ben-Shlomo and Gorzalczany 2010).

3. Hierarchy of the cult rooms: It seems that the cult area in Building C10 played a more important role than the other two rooms. This can be deduced from its location near the main gate to the city, the distribution of cultic activity over several rooms, the bamah inside the room, and the rich cultic paraphernalia, which includes two portable shrines (particular the one made of stone, which is a unique artifact).

4. Animal sacrifice and feasting: The characteristic activities in cultic areas usually include animal sacrificing and feasting. At Khirbet Qeiyafa, only a small number of animal bones were found in the cult rooms, as in the other rooms excavated. and the exceptional concentration of animal bones that is sometimes reported from cultic areas was lacking. It is possible that the sacrificial remnants were discarded in the open piazzas and not kept in the cult rooms themselves. If indeed such remains accumulated there, the construction of large buildings of the Late Persian–Early Hellenistic period on bedrock in the piazzas may have removed them.

The cultic compound in Building C10 is outstanding in the number of cooking installations it contained. Courtyard E had two tabuns and one hearth, and a small tabun was found in nearby Room F and a large tabun in Room K. Two more hearths were found as well, one in Room C and the other in Room 1. In general, the large buildings of Khirbet Qeiyafa contained only one or two cooking installations. The existence of seven such installations in a relatively small area is a clear indication of cooking on a large scale, a requirement for feeding a large number of people in feasting ceremonies.

5. Libation: Libation seems to have been a major element of the rituals carried out in the Khir-

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Table 2.2. Cult rooms in the 11th–9th centuries BCE.

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<tr>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>ALTAR</th>
<th>STANDING STONE</th>
<th>OFFERING TABLE</th>
<th>BENCH</th>
<th>BASIN</th>
<th>LIBATION VESSELS</th>
<th>STANDS</th>
<th>FIGURINES</th>
<th>PORTABLE SHRINE</th>
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<td>Tel Qiri</td>
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bet Qeiyafa sanctuaries. This is apparent from both the infrastructure and the objects. The cult rooms in Buildings C3 and C10 were equipped with basins and drains that enabled drainage of liquids from these rooms. The cultic paraphernalia included two examples of a unique type of twin-cup pottery libation vessel, which were uncovered in Room 6 of Building C3 and in Building D200. Two large vessels of the type known as cup-and-saucer were found as well, both associated with the cult room of Building C10. It seems that libation, the biblical nesakim (Haran 1968; Dohmen 1998), was widely practiced. Indeed, the biblical tradition described libation of water as part of the cultic rituals in this period, such as when Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah: “So they gathered at Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, ‘We have sinned against the LORD’” (1 Sam 7:6; RSV).

6. Portable shrines: Two portable shrines, one of fired clay and one of limestone, were found in the cult room in Building C10. These two artifacts belong to a category of finds in the form of closed boxes that emulate the shape of a building. Due to this shape, they are commonly called in the literature “building models” or “maquettes architecturales” (Muller 2002), naos/naiskos (see, for example, Mazar 1980:82; Moscati 1988:163, 353) or “tabernacles” (de Miroschedji 2001). We prefer the term “portable shrine” (see also Katz 2016).

The portable shrines were made in the form of a closed box with one opening, usually located in one narrow side. This side was quite often elaborately decorated to resemble a building façade. Two small holes or handles that flank the opening clearly indicate that these shrines could be opened and closed. In light of the clay or metal figurines often associated with such artifacts, it is obvious that they functioned as a box in which to keep symbols of the god.

The discovery of two portable shrines in the same room raises various questions. If each box was used to keep a divine symbol, there may have been two gods. If two gods were worshiped simultaneously in the same room, they were probably a couple, a male and female. Indeed, the smaller item, made of clay, is decorated with lions and birds, the typical attributes of a fertility goddess. The other item is much larger and was made of limestone. The different sizes and raw materials seem to indicate a hierarchy of the two gods. Moreover, the stone shrine was carved with a totally different aesthetic concept from that of the clay shrine, with a geometrically recessed doorway and triglyphs. It is very tempting to suggest that the male god El (YHWH?) and the female deity Asherah are represented here (on this, see Dever 2005).

7. Absence of cult images: Iconicism or aniconicism is a major issue today in the study of early biblical cult. It has been suggested that a distinction should be made between de facto aniconic behavior and a “programmatic” ban (Mettinger 1995). The former entails a habit performed de facto for economic, ecological, or social reasons that became sanctified over time and thus was detached from its authentic background. If we accept the development from de facto behavior to a programmatic ban, then the end result of the process was ideology. An opposite process has been suggested to explain the lack of pig bones at Iron Age sites: in order to differentiate themselves from their Philistines or local Canaanite neighbors, the Israelites created an ideological ban on pork consumption (Bunimovitz and Lederman 2008). These two examples exemplify a “chicken and egg” question – which came first? The data from Khirbet Qeiyafa and the three other sites (Tel Qiri, Megiddo, and Lachish) can shed light on the roots and expressions of aniconic behavior.

Rich iconographic paraphernalia have been found in cultic places of various ethnic groups in the region: Canaanites (Yadin 1975), Philistines (Mazar 1980; Nahshoni 2009; Ben-Shlomo 2010), Moabites (Daviau and Steiner 2000), and Edomites (Beck 1995; Ben-Arieh 2011). In these
cases, the cult was practiced in buildings specifically designated for this purpose, and cult images were frequently found. An entirely different picture emerges from the four sites of Tel Qiri, Megiddo, Lachish, and Khirbet Qeiyafa (see Table 2.2), where dwelling units had an additional function as cultic venues. They were not pre-planned for this function, but were used in what seems to be an ad hoc manner. This repetitive pattern cannot be accidental. It indicates that aniconic cult existed in the early Iron Age before the development of large and wealthy urban centers. The archaeological data of rich figurative assemblages in later phases of the Iron Age (Kletter 1996), as well as the biblical tradition, seem to reflect the development of a struggle between two co-existing and opposed theological world views with regard to iconic representation of supernatural entities.

2.6. Summary

Khirbet Qeiyafa has yielded evidence of the earliest known Iron Age cultic activities in the region of Judah. The site's date in the late 11th and early 10th centuries BCE makes this evidence earlier than the other archaeological cultic contexts uncovered in Judah at Lachish, Beersheba, and Arad, and even earlier than the biblical tradition of the temple of Solomon. This important and fascinating discovery provides crucial data to fill the gaps in our knowledge of the earliest cult in that period and region.

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