

The unique Chalcolithic burial cave was unexpectedly discovered in Peqi'in, Upper Galilee in the summer of 1995. It was clear from the first glance that the view spread before the excavators of stalagmites, stalactites, ossuaries, burial jars and skeletal remains was of an outstanding nature.

The cave was first used for temporary occupation during the early Chalcolithic period. Later, it was converted into an extraordinary cemetery where a large variety of objects was found, attesting to cultural connections with other regions and particularly, with the Golan Heights. The main findings were dozens of ossuaries decorated with hitherto unknown painted and sculpted iconography. The vast number of ossuaries, burial jars and skeletons representing at least 600 individuals indicate that the cave served as a central burial ground where these Chalcolithic peoples practiced ancestor worship. The findings illustrate the high cultural, technological and artistic level of the makers of these items as well as the rich spiritual life of their community. The selection of Upper Galilee as the final resting place for their tribal ancestors demonstrates for the first time the significant role played by this hitherto poorly known region.

This volume concludes the excavation and research that followed it and opens new horizons for the study of the Chalcolithic period.



LAND OF  
GALILEE 2

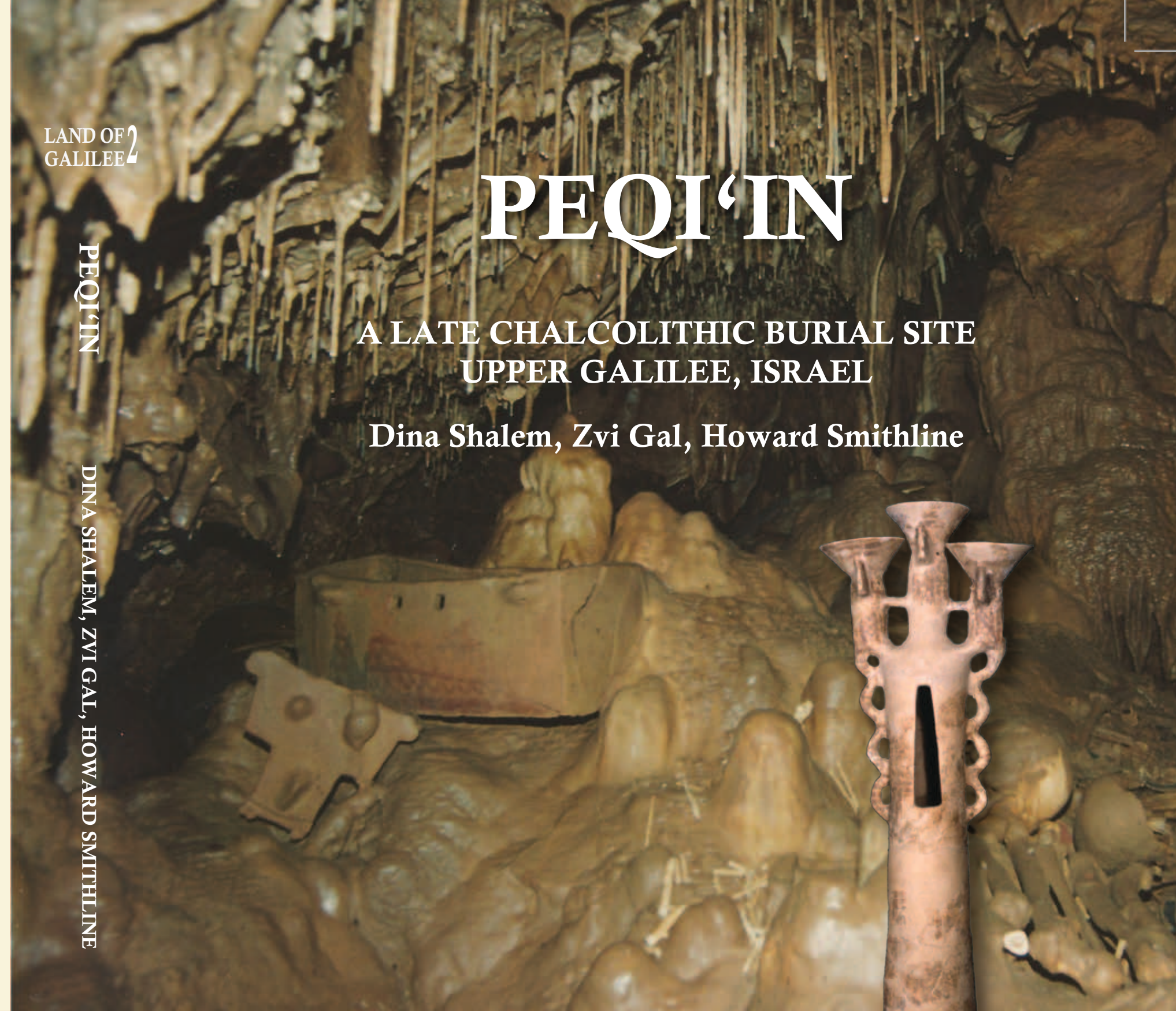
PEQI'IN

DINA SHALEM, ZVI GAL, HOWARD SMITHLINE

# PEQI'IN

A LATE CHALCOLITHIC BURIAL SITE  
UPPER GALILEE, ISRAEL

Dina Shalem, Zvi Gal, Howard Smithline



LAND OF GALILEE 2

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