'Atiqot 79, 2014

Skeletal Remains from the Gezer–Ramla Aqueduct (Qanat Bint al-Kafir)

Yossi Nagar

Human skeletal remains were found in simple pit graves, dated to the Late Islamic or Mamluk period, during the excavation of the Gezer–Ramla aqueduct (Qanat Bint al-Kafir; see Gorzalczany, this volume). As the bones were in a poor state of preservation, and were only visually inspected on-site, it was impossible to fully reconstruct the anthropological parameters. However, the burial posture of all the deceased was determined, and the age of 80% of the individuals was estimated, by means of tooth development or attrition stages (Hillson 1986:176–201).

Results

Each grave contained a single individual in a primary burial. The anthropological remains represented a total of nine individuals. The results of the anthropological analysis are presented in Table 1.

Discussion and Conclusions

According to the results, all the deceased were interred similarly. The bodies were placed on their right side, in an east–west direction,

Table 1. Anthropological Description of the Skeletons

Locus	Posture	Burial Direction	Age Estimation (years)	Sex Estimation
101	Primary burial, right side on the ground	East–west, head in the west facing south	7–15	-
105	Primary burial, right side on the ground	East–west, head in the west facing south	30–50	?
107	Primary burial, right side on the ground	East–west, head in the west facing south	12–15	-
109	Primary burial	East–west, head in the west	?	?
110	Primary burial, right side on the ground	East–west, head in the west facing south	12–15	-
111	Primary burial, right side on the ground	East–west, head in the west facing south	35–50	?
112	Primary burial, right side on the ground	East–west, head in the west facing south	40–60	?
209	Primary burial, right side on the ground	East–west, head in the west facing south	18–30	?
210	Primary burial, right side on the ground	East–west, head in the west facing south	Adult	?

with the head in the west facing south. Similar results were found in an earlier excavation at the site (Onn 2008), when four individuals were found. This burial custom is typical of a Muslim population. It was recently discerned in several burial grounds around the Muslim city of Ramla (Table 2). Individuals oriented differently, or with the head facing a different direction, have not yet been found. This strengthens our estimation as to the Muslim nature of the burial.

Table 2. Burial Customs around the Muslim City of Ramla

Period	Site	Sample Size	Burial Direction		Body Posture		
			East–West	Other	Supine	On Right Side	Unknown
Early Islamic	Ramla Railway Station[i]	7	7	-	-	5	2
	Ramla Motke Aviv[ii]	4	4	-	-	-	4
Late Islamic	Ramla Bialik Street[iii]	17	17	-	-	13	4
	Qanat Bint al-Kafir[iv]	13	13	-	-	11	1
Total		41	41	0	1	29	11

[1] Internal anthropological report (Ramla Railway; IAA Archives).
[2] Elisha 2010.
[3] Parnos and Nagar 2008.
[4] Combined with the earlier season of excavation; see also Onn 2008.

REFERENCES

Elisha Y. 2010. Ramla. *HA–ESI* 122 (September 16). http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.aspx?id=1501&mag_id=117 (accessed December 4, 2013).

Gorzalczany A. This volume. A Section of the Gezer–Ramla Aqueduct (Qanat Bint al-Kafir) and a Mamluk-Period Cemetery near Moshav Yashresh.

Hillson S. 1986. *Teeth*. Cambridge.

Onn A. 2008. Ramla. *HA–ESI* 120 (May 29). http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.asp?id=797&mag_id=114 (accessed November 18, 2009).

Parnos G. and Nagar Y. 2008. Ramla, Bialik Street. *HA–ESI* 120 (August 19). http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.asp?id=857&mag_id=114 (accessed November 20, 2008).