

## GLASS VESSELS FROM YAFO (JAFFA), JERUSALEM BOULEVARD AND ITS VICINITY

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The salvage excavations conducted on Jerusalem Blvd. and its vicinity in Yafo yielded about forty glass objects (see Jakob and Marcus, this volume). Nine are fragments of bracelets (see de Vincenz, this volume) and the rest are various bottles from the end of the nineteenth to the first half of the twentieth centuries (British Mandate).

The study of glass vessels from this period has just begun and only a few have been published to date. In Israel, such finds have been recorded at Horbat 'Eleq, Ramat Ha-Nativ (Boas 2000), in Kafr 'Ana, a rural settlement in the Lod Valley (Taxel 2007:73–74; Fig. 4.5:1–3), at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (Winter 2011) and more recently, on Ha-Zorfim Street in Yafo (Ouahouna, forthcoming).

In this excavation, the major finds are medicine bottles, medical ampules and cosmetic or perfume containers. The excavations on Ha-Zorfim Street also show evidence of this phenomenon, indicating the existence of a pharmacy.

All the vessels were mass-produced. They are made of colorless, brown or yellowish glass; two of them bear inscriptions (Nos. 8, 21).

### *Medicine Bottles (Fig. 1:1–7)*

Medicine bottles have been the subject of several studies (Fike 1987). They are probably the largest and most diverse group among bottles produced from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. The contents of the bottles were written on paper labels of which



Fig. 1. Medicine bottles.

few have survived. These bottles come in a variety of shapes and sizes that can be classified according to their cross-section.

*Cylindrical Bottles* (Fig. 1:1–3).— Cylindrical bottles, which are round in cross-section, were frequently used by pharmacists to dispense their products. Of the five specimens that were found, three are presented. Two are colorless and one is yellowish. Their heights vary from 3.5 to 10.5 cm and their diameter, from 1 to 3.5 cm.

Over the centuries, colorless glass was the goal of glass manufacturers. It was difficult to produce because it required virtually impurity-free materials. Improved chemistry and advanced glass-making methods in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries made clear, colorless glass easier and much cheaper to produce by using various additives to the glass mixture. Bottles of colorless glass were relatively uncommon prior to the 1870s, but became quite popular after the widespread use of automatic machines in the second half of the first decade of the twentieth century (Fike 1987).

*Hexagonal Bottles* (Fig. 1:4–7).— Four identical bottles with hexagonal cross-section were unearthed. They are made of colorless glass. Their height is 12 cm.

#### *Perfume Bottle* (Fig. 1:8)

Bottle No. 8 is clearly identified by its inscription. It is made of colorless glass and is well-preserved. It is 13 cm high and has an oval cross-section. It is made from a two-part mold, the seam clearly visible along the wall up to the edge of the rim. A deep groove separates the neck from the body, on which an inscription is engraved: GELLE FRERES on the top line, a star in the middle, and PARIS on the bottom line.

In 1826, the GELLE FRERES (French for Gelle brothers) bought the formulas of the perfumer Jean-Louis Fargeon—a descendant of a family of pharmacists dating back to the seventeenth century (see *Gelle Freres: History*).



Fig. 2. Ampules.



Fig. 3. Cosmetic or medicine bottle.

#### *Ampules* (Fig. 2)

A group of twelve ampules (small sealed vials) was found. Eight are made of colorless glass, three of brownish glass, and one is colorless on one half and brown on the other. Ten ampules have a cylindrical shape with two tapered ends; their length is between 5.5 and 8.5 cm. Two ampules have only one tapered end and a rounded base. There is no information concerning their contents.

*Cosmetic or Medicine Bottle (Fig. 3)*

A small bottle bearing an inscription is made of dark blue glass. The body is rectangular (2.5 cm high) and the neck and rim have not been preserved. Both sides are embossed with writing: ROBIN on one side and NUCLEAR\_\_ on the other. The last two letters (SO?) are not clear.

The blue color is common in certain types of bottles, for example those intended for poisonous substances and cosmetics. It is usually produced with the addition of a strong coloring agent of cobalt oxide to the batch of glass.

## SUMMARY

This modest repertoire of glass finds represents an aspect of daily life in Palestine at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although far from being luxury or valuable items, these objects are none-the-less important because they were found in an archaeological context. Archaeological interest in recent periods is in its infancy; we anticipate that the importance of such discoveries will gradually become more acknowledged in future research.

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