

THE GLASS FINDS FROM THE BYZANTINE MONASTERY IN NAḤAL QIDRON, JERUSALEM

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The glass finds from the monastery in Naḥal Qidron (see Zelinger and Barbé, this volume) are associated with the late Byzantine–early Umayyad periods, particularly the sixth–seventh centuries CE.¹ They resemble specimens in contemporary glass assemblages from the Jerusalem area, many of them originating in Christian ecclesiastical complexes.

The glass was collected from all areas of the monastery, including fills above the northern courtyard (L1094), above the ‘bakery’ floor (L1043) and under and above the flour-mill floor (L2053, L2060). The assemblage comprises some 170 small glass fragments, about 110 of which belong to windowpanes. Most of the vessels are free blown, plain and made of translucent glass, mostly colorless, blue, greenish blue and green. Eleven pieces, representing various types of vessels and several windowpanes, were selected for publication.

Bowls

The glass finds from the site include a few bowls, one with an outfolded rim (Fig. 1:1), as well as a rounded rim fragment from L2046 and a base fragment from L1022.

Bowl with an Outfolded, Hollow Rim (Fig. 1:1).— This large, probably shallow bowl may be dated to the Byzantine period based on its shape and fabric, although such bowls were not common. A similar rim was excavated at the Jerusalem International Convention Center (Binyane Ha-Umma; Gorin-Rosen 2005:201, Fig. 2:16, and see discussion therein). A large, outfolded, hollow rim with a nearly horizontal wall from Khirbat Ṭabaliya may have been

part of a shallow bowl or a windowpane (Gorin-Rosen 2000:92*, Fig. 3:40). Similar bowls are also known from the Late Roman–early Byzantine periods (see Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2007: Figs. 2:1–3; 27:3).

1. L1037, B10097. Outfolded, hollow rim (D 240 mm) with thin wall. Light green. Iridescence; pitting; sand deposit.

Wineglasses

The wineglasses from the site are represented by a rim and wall fragment adorned with applied trails (Fig. 1:2), bases (Fig. 1:3, 4) and two additional bases from L1066 and L3002.

Wineglass Adorned with Applied Trails (Fig. 1:2).— This type of wineglass usually has a rounded, slightly incurving rim, a beaded stem and a hollow ring base, as in Fig. 1:3, 4. On and below the rim are applied horizontal trails of varying quantity and density, and generally of a darker color than the vessel. These wineglasses are characterized by their distinct shape, decoration, workmanship and fabric, suggesting local production.

Wineglasses adorned with horizontal trails applied on and below the rim were recorded in contexts of the sixth–seventh centuries CE in Jerusalem and its vicinity, as at the Jerusalem International Convention Center (Gorin-Rosen 2005:202–203, Fig. 2:20, 21) and Ras Abu Ma‘aruf (Gorin-Rosen 1999:210–211, Fig. 2:23, 24). Other examples were discovered in various parts of the country, as at Ḥorbat Ḥermeshit (Winter 1998:174–175, Fig. 2:5, 11), in the Byzantine fill of a painted

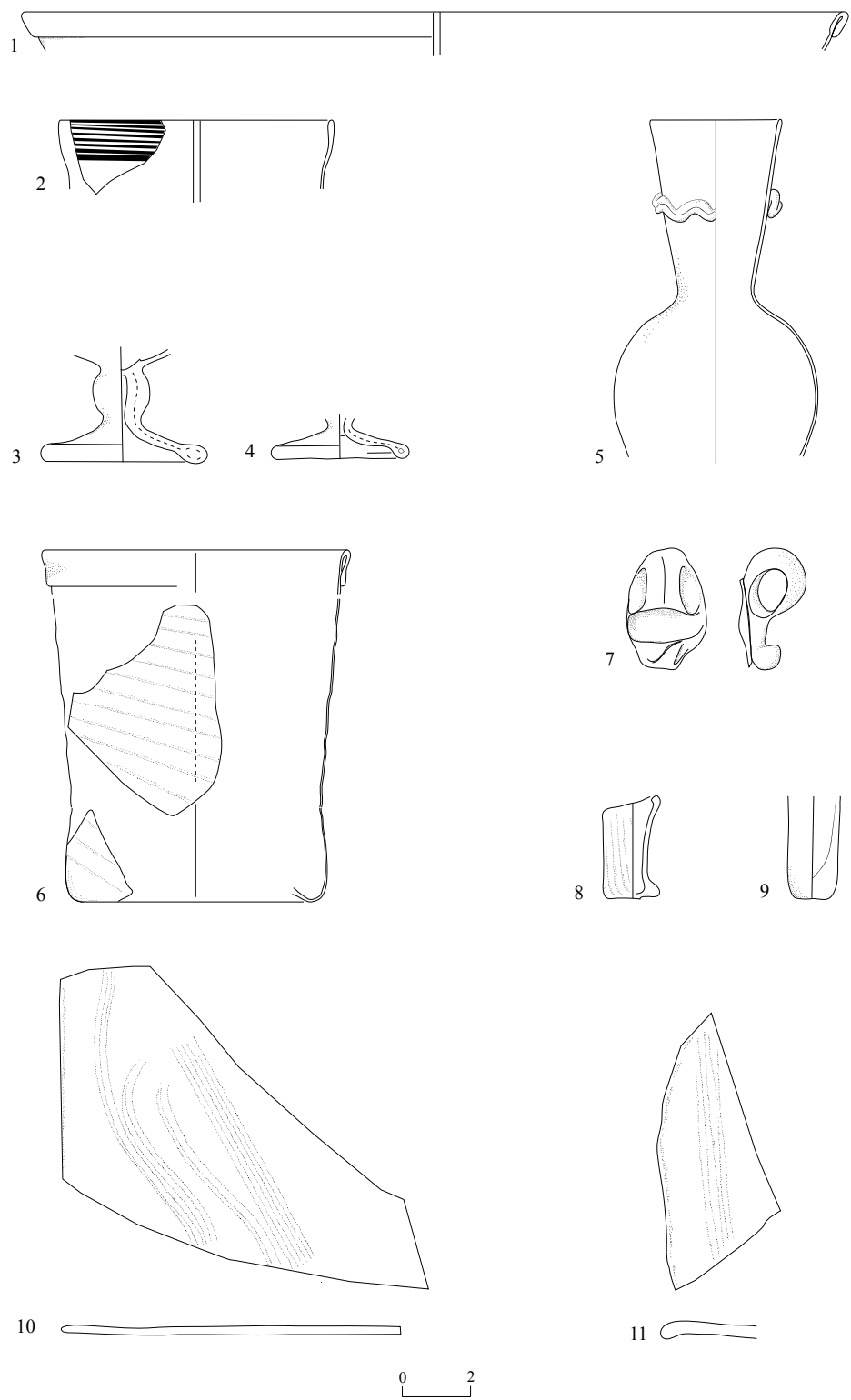


Fig. 1. Glass finds.

tomb at Ashqelon (Katsnelson 1999:70*–71*, Fig. 2:9–11), and in the ‘En Boqeq fortress on the shore of the Dead Sea (Gichon 1993: Pl. 60:25a, b).

2. L1066, B10234. Upright, rounded rim (D 80 mm) with a blue trail, horizontally applied and fused-in, on and below the rim. Colorless wall; dark blue trail. Iridescence; sand deposit.

Wineglass Bases (Fig. 1:3, 4).— Wineglasses were generally mounted on a stem, cylindrical or beaded, and had a hollow or solid base. The two illustrated wineglass bases, and another from L3002, are hollow ring bases. That in Fig. 1:3 has a single-bead stem, whereas the stem in Fig. 1:4 is missing.

Hollow wineglass bases with a beaded stem were widespread in Jerusalem and its vicinity in the late Byzantine–early Umayyad periods, as attested by the finds from excavations in the Jerusalem International Convention Center (Gorin-Rosen 2005:203–204, Fig. 2:25, 26), the City of David spur (Ariel 1990:161, Fig. 32:GL72), Khirbat Ṭabaliya (Gorin-Rosen 2000:84*–86*, Fig. 2:15), Ras Abu Ma‘aruf (Gorin-Rosen 1999:211–212, RAM26, Fig. 2:26), the northwestern corner of Jerusalem’s Old City wall (Gorin-Rosen 2006:116*, Fig. 14:4) and the monastery at Khirbat Siyar el-Ghanam, southeast of the city (Corbo 1955:75–76, Fig. 25:15).

3. L1094, B10238. Irregular, single-bead stem on a hollow, concave ring base (D 48–49 mm). Light blue; bubbly. Iridescence; sand deposit.

4. L1022, B10109. Fragment of a deformed, hollow, concave ring base (D 40 mm) with large bubbles in its perimeter. Light blue; bubbly. Iridescence; sand deposit.

Bottles

Several bottles were found at the site, including one adorned with a wavy trail wound around the neck (Fig. 1:5), along with a dozen small rim, neck and base fragments.

Bottle Adorned with a Thick Wavy Trail Around the Neck (Fig. 1:5).— This bottle belongs to a type characteristic of the late Byzantine and early Umayyad periods throughout Syria-Palestine. The fragment was unearthed in a burial complex (Area 30) that was disturbed by later activities, and therefore may be associated with a phase later than that of the monastery.

A neck fragment adorned with a wavy trail was discovered at Ras Abu Ma‘aruf (Gorin-Rosen 1999:210, Fig. 1:20), and another, narrower neck was unearthed in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem (Gorin-Rosen 2003:384, Pl. 15.9:G93). Two necks with a wavy trail were excavated in the southern cemetery at Bet Guvrin–Eleutheropolis (Winter 2008:181, Figs. 6.1:3; 6.3:18, and see additional examples therein).

5. L3013, B30020; L3014, B30021. Bottle with a rounded rim (D 35–40 mm); funnel-shaped neck with a thick, wavy trail of the same color wound around it at about mid-height; convex wall of a probably globular body; the bottom is missing. Light blue; elongated bubbles on neck, round bubbles on body. Iridescence; sand deposit.

Lamps

Two major types of glass oil lamps present in this corpus were widespread during the Byzantine and Umayyad periods: the bowl- or beaker-shaped lamp with three handles (Fig. 1:6, 8), and the stemmed, bowl-shaped lamp (Fig. 1:9). One of the handles (Fig. 1:7) may have belonged to a globular lamp (see Gorin-Rosen and Winter 2010:173–174).

Bowl- or Beaker-Shaped Lamps with Three Handles (Fig. 1:6, 8).— This type of lamp is represented by a beaker-shaped receptacle (Fig. 1:6), uncommonly adorned with a mold-blown pattern of diagonal ribs, and by wick tubes (Fig. 1:8, and three others from L2012, L2046), which were occasionally set in the floor center of the lamps.

Bowl- or beaker-shaped lamps with three handles probably first appeared in Syria-

Palestine in the late fourth century CE, and were widespread throughout the Byzantine and Umayyad periods and later (Crowfoot and Harden 1931:205, Pls. 28:7; 30:40, 41; Barag 1970:184–185, Pl. 40:12–14). They were used to illuminate public structures, both religious and secular, as well as private dwellings.

Finds from excavations in Jerusalem and its surroundings include rim and beaker-shaped bottom fragments, as well as handles and wick tubes, as at the Jerusalem International Convention Center (Gorin-Rosen 2005:205–206, Fig. 2:32–35, 38–40) and Khirbat Ṭabaliya (Gorin-Rosen 2000:89*–91*, Fig. 3:27–33, and see additional references therein). A three-handled, bowl-shaped lamp with a tall wick tube was recovered from the Church of the Visitation at 'En Kerem (Bagatti 1948:77–78, Fig. 34:1), and dated to “the late Byzantine or early Arab periods” (Barag 1970:105). Wick tubes were also unearthed in strata dated to the fifth–eighth centuries CE at the northwestern corner of Jerusalem's Old City wall (Gorin-Rosen 2006:116*–117*, Fig. 14:6, 7). Examples of this type of lamp were also uncovered in ecclesiastical complexes dated from the fifth–seventh centuries CE in other parts of the country, as in the Church of St. John the Baptist at Samaria-Sebaste (Crowfoot 1957:418–419, Fig. 99:2, 3) and the cemetery church at Ḥorbat Karkur 'Illit in the northern Negev (Katsnelson 2004:268–271, Fig. 59, and see additional examples therein).

Glass lamps rarely bear decoration, yet some of the bowl- or beaker-shaped lamps with an outfolded rim are adorned with mold-blown decoration, as is the lamp in Fig. 1:6. An example decorated with shallow mold-blown ribs was recovered from Paneas in northern Israel (Gorin-Rosen and Jackson-Tal 2008:83, Fig. 5.2:6), and a lamp fragment unearthed in Catacomb 20 at Bet She'arim displays a seemingly mold-blown pattern of twisted ribs, which was described as “shallow diagonal corrugations on the body” (Barag 1976:205, Fig. 98:8). A bowl-shaped lamp recovered from an Umayyad-period context at Gerasa

was adorned with a mold-blown diamond pattern over the entire body, including a multi-petal rosette on the bottom (Meyer 1988:212, Fig. 12:Q). A beaker-shaped lamp adorned with diagonal, double mold-blown ribbing on the body was discovered in the ecclesiastical complex on Jabal Harun near Petra, and associated with Phase 7, dated to the seventh century CE (Keller 2010:188, Pl. 12:2).

6. L2056, B20115. Cylindrical thin-walled beaker (H c. 100 mm) with a hollow, outfolded rim (D 90 mm). The body is decorated with shallow, mold-blown, diagonal ribs. Colorless with an olive-green tinge; bubbly. White weathering; iridescence; sand deposit.

7. L1057, B10156. Thick handle and small part of wall. Green. White weathering; pitting.

8. L1047, B10125. Cylindrical wick tube (H 30 mm). Light green(?). Thick white weathering; iridescence; sand deposit.

Stemmed Lamps (Fig. 1:9).— The stem illustrated is cylindrical and hollow, and represents the most common type of stem during the Byzantine period. Stemmed oil lamps were widespread in the eastern Mediterranean basin during the sixth–seventh centuries CE, and continued into the Umayyad period and later (Crowfoot and Harden 1931: Pl. 29; Barag 1970:182–183, Types 13:3–9, Pl. 40:3–9; Peleg and Reich 1992:155, 158–159, 165, Fig. 20).

Similar stems were recovered from many sites associated with the sixth–seventh centuries CE in and around Jerusalem, as at the Jerusalem International Convention Center (Gorin-Rosen 2005:205–206, Fig. 2:36, 37), Khirbat Ṭabaliya (Gorin-Rosen 2000:91*–92*, Fig. 3:35) and the monastery at Khirbat Siyar el-Ghanam, southeast of the city (Corbo 1955:75–76, Fig. 25:8).

9. L1084, B10199. Hollow, cylindrical stem, thick at the bottom (D 10 mm). Pontil scar on most of

the bottom area. Greenish blue. White weathering; iridescence; pitting; sand deposit.

Windowpanes

Glass windowpanes were in use in Syria-Palestine in public structures, both religious and secular, as well as in private dwellings. They were fitted into plaster or wooden frames, which were set into window openings. In Jerusalem, the use of windowpanes, both quadrangular and circular, was widespread, particularly in the sixth–seventh centuries CE.

Some 110 fragments of glass windowpanes (Fig. 1:10, 11) were collected at the monastery site in Nahal Qidron. The ones that could be classified are of the quadrangular type, which generally had two sides cut, one side rounded by fire and the fourth side chipped-off.

Quadrangular windowpanes were excavated in the Jerusalem area, for example, at the Jerusalem International Convention Center (Gorin-Rosen 2005:207–208, Fig. 3:44, and see technical details and discussion therein) and Khirbat Ṭabaliya (Gorin-Rosen 2000:92*, Fig. 3:38, 39).

10. L1022, B10109. Fragment of a quadrangular windowpane (max. Th 4 mm) with a rounded, wavy edge (surviving L c. 60 mm). Greenish blue;

bubbles. White weathering; iridescence; pitting; sand deposits.

11. L1022 B10109. Fragment of a quadrangular windowpane (max. Th 5 mm) with a rounded wavy edge (surviving L c. 45 mm). Greenish blue with olive-green streaks; bubbly. White weathering; iridescence; pitting; sand deposit.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The assortment of glass finds from the monastery in Nahal Qidron resembles other glass assemblages of the period from the Jerusalem area, many originating in Christian ecclesiastical complexes. The glass vessels from Nahal Qidron are mostly plain; however, the beaker-shaped lamp (Fig. 1:6) is adorned with a mold-blown pattern, rarely seen on lamps.

Nearly all the glass finds retrieved from the monastery date from the late Byzantine and early Umayyad periods, particularly the sixth–seventh centuries CE. A bottle (Fig. 1:5), unearthed in a tomb that had been disturbed by later activities (T3001, L3013), is adorned with a thick wavy trail, a common decoration from the early seventh through the eighth centuries CE; this vessel may, therefore, be associated with a phase later than that of the monastery.

NOTE

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glass finds were mended by Olga Shorr and drawn by Carmen Hersch.

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