# GLASS VESSELS, METAL ARTIFACTS AND BEADS FROM THE BURIAL CAVE AT 'EN LAVAN, NAḤAL REFA'IM

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## INTRODUCTION

In March 1998, a salvage excavation was conducted in a burial cave at 'En Lavan, following damage caused by the installation of a sewage line (see Solimany, this volume). The burial cave, which was found sealed, yielded about 50 glass fragments, metal objects and beads of various materials (Loci 101–105 and 107). The glass vessels are typical of the Syria-Palestine region, and are dated to the Byzantine and Umayyad periods. The metal artifacts and the beads are characteristic of the Late Roman and Byzantine periods.

## THE GLASS VESSELS

Among the glass fragments from the burial cave are diagnostic pieces representing 13 vessels. Most of the specimens were made of translucent light greenish blue glass and dotted with whitish brown lime deposits. Several fragments were adorned with applied glass trails and with rows of pinches. Nine well-preserved specimens were selected for discussion (Figs. 1, 2); their details and descriptions are presented in the figure-adjoining tables. Additional vessel fragments (not illustrated) include a bowl rim (from L103), a bottle neck and a handle (from L105), and a small bottom and a mold-blown piece (from L107).

Two groups are presented below, one includes plain bottles (Fig. 1), and the other—decorated vessels (Fig. 2). These glass vessels are typical of Jerusalem and the Syria-Palestine region in the Byzantine and Umayyad periods, particularly during the sixth–eighth centuries CE. They comprise mostly bottles, as customary in burials of the period.

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# Plain Bottles

This category is represented by three rim-and-neck fragments (Fig. 1:1–3) and two body-and-bottom pieces (Fig. 1:4, 5). The rim in Fig. 1:1 and the bottom in Fig. 1:4 may have belonged to the same bottle. Bottles of this type have a rounded rim, a funnel-shaped mouth, a globular or pear-shaped body and a flat or concave bottom. The neck occurs in many variations: long or short, cylindrical or funnel-shaped, with or without a constriction at its base. Plain bottles of this type appeared in the Late Roman period, and were widespread throughout Syria-Palestine during the Byzantine period. Bottles resembling those illustrated in Fig. 1:1, 2, 4 were uncovered in excavations in and around Jerusalem, for example, in

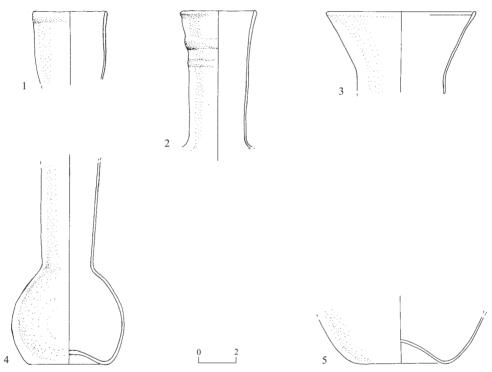


Fig. 1. Plain glass bottles, L105.

| No. | Basket | Description  |  |  |
|-----|--------|--|--|--|
| 1   | 1026   | Bottle with a rounded rim (D 40 mm) and a nearly cylindrical neck; light greenish  |  |  |
|     |        | blue; small and medium oval bubbles  |  |  |
| 2   | 1026   | Bottle with a rounded rim (D 40–42 mm) and a cylindrical neck with shallow bulge on one side; light greenish blue; small and medium round and oval bubbles |  |  |
| 3   | 1026   | Bottle with a rounded rim (D 80 mm) and a wide funnel-shaped mouth; light greenish blue  |  |  |
| 4   | 1026   | Bottle with a cylindrical neck, a globular body, and a concave bottom (D 45 mm); light greenish blue; small, medium and large round and oval bubbles       |  |  |
| 5   | 1026   | Bottle with a globular body and a concave bottom (D 55 mm); light greenish blue  |  |  |

a burial cave of the Late Roman–Byzantine periods in the Naḥalat Aḥim quarter (Kogan-Zehavi 2006: Figs. 3:8, 9; 8:38; 17–19), in a burial cave of the Byzantine–Early Islamic periods in the Gonen quarter (Solimany, Winter and Vincenz 2006: Fig. 4:1), and in a Byzantine-period glass assemblage at Ras Abu Ma'aruf, north of Jerusalem (Gorin-Rosen 1999:208, Fig. 1:9, 10). Similar bottles were also collected in a Byzantine-period fill in a painted tomb in Ashqelon (Katsnelson 1999:73\*–74\*, Fig. 3:10–15, and see references therein).

Bottles with a wide funnel-shaped mouth, resembling the one illustrated in Fig. 1:3, were found, for example, at Ras Abu Ma'aruf (Gorin-Rosen 1999:209, Fig. 1:15) and at the 'Dominus Flevit' compound on the Mount of Olives, in Tomb 97, dated to the second half of the fifth century CE (Bagatti and Milik 1958: Fig. 34:2, 3; Barag 1970:32).

#### Decorated Vessels

This category is represented by four decorated vessels (Fig. 2:1–4) from L104, and a bottle neck adorned with a thick wavy trail (not illustrated) from L105. The decoration schemes adorning these vessels were widespread in the Syria-Palestine region during the seventh–eighth centuries CE.

Bottle Adorned with a Thin Trail (Fig. 2:1).— This decoration scheme, comprising a thin trail wound several times on the mouth and/or neck, adorned bottles and jugs of various types, generally resembling their plain counterparts (see Fig. 1). The trail windings vary in number and density. The trails may be of the same color as the vessel (see Fig. 2:1), or of a darker hue, generally blue or turquoise (see Fig. 2:4). The closest analogous examples for this bottle (see below) suggest a date in the sixth–seventh centuries CE.

This thin-trail decoration appeared in the Syria-Palestine region around the mid-fifth century CE, and was widespread particularly in the sixth–seventh centuries CE (Barag 1970:194–196, Pl. 43: Types 15:22–15:29). A specimen, closely resembling the bottle illustrated in Fig. 2:1 in its constricted neck and style of trail winding, was discovered in a crypt north of Damascus Gate, Jerusalem, where it was dated to the late sixth–early seventh centuries CE (Re'em 2009: Fig. 9:7). Globular bottles adorned with a sparsely-spaced trail wound around the neck, which is generally constricted at its base as is the bottle from 'En Lavan, were also discovered in Umayyad-period contexts at Bet She'an (Hadad 2005: Pl. 12:223–230) and Hammat Gader (Cohen 1997: Pl. VII:8, 10, 11, 14).

Bottle Adorned with a Thick Wavy Trail (Fig. 2:2).— This bottle is characterized by a thick wavy trail wound on the lower part of its funnel-shaped mouth. A thick wavy trail decoration appears also on another bottle from the same provenance (Fig. 2:3) and on a neck fragment from L105 (not illustrated). This decoration was one of the most distinctive in the Syria-Palestine region during the seventh–eighth centuries CE.

A globular bottle adorned with a thick wavy trail on its funnel-shaped neck was uncovered in a burial complex near a monastery in Naḥal Qidron (Winter 2017:103, Fig. 1:5, and see

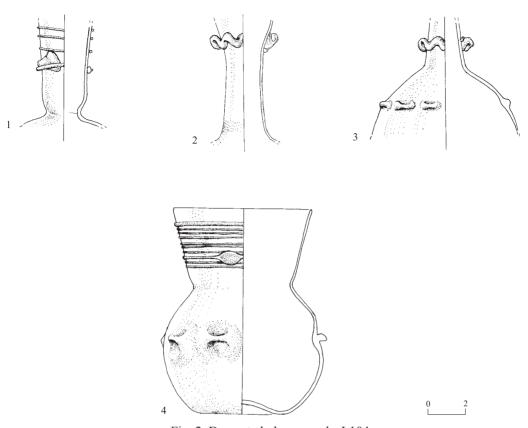


Fig. 2. Decorated glass vessels, L104.

| No. | Basket | Description   |  |  |  |
|-----|--------|---|--|--|--|
| 1   | 1025   | Bottle with a nearly cylindrical neck constricted at its base; a thin trail, of the same color as the vessel, is wound around the neck, with four sparsely-spaced windings and an end-blob intact; light greenish blue; small and medium oval bubbles   |  |  |  |
| 2   | 1025   | Bottle with a funnel-shaped mouth and a cylindrical neck; a thick wavy trail, of the same color as the vessel is wound around the top of the neck, at the base of the mouth; light greenish blue  |  |  |  |
| 3   | 1025   | Bottle with a neck widening downward and a globular body; a thick and wavy trail of the same color as the vessel is wound above the neck base; the upper part of the body is adorned with a row of horizontal pinches, four of which are intact; light greenish blue; small and medium round and oval bubbles   |  |  |  |
| 4   | 1024   | Complete jar with a rounded rim (broken; D 75 mm), a wide funnel-shaped mouth, a globular body and a concave bottom (D 50 mm); the mouth is adorned with a densely wound turquoise-color trail, displaying ten windings and the end-blob; the central part of the body is adorned with a row of seven uneven horizontal pinches, about 25–35 mm apart; light greenish blue; several small round bubbles |  |  |  |

references therein to the Jerusalem area). Similarly-decorated bottle necks were also found south of Jerusalem, in a monastery at Khirbat Umm Leisun (Katsnelson 2015:201–202, Fig. 1:6, 7) and at Ramat Raḥel (Jackson-Tal 2016:583, Fig. 37.5:6).

Complete bottles adorned with a thick wavy trail on the mouth or neck were discovered in a Byzantine-period monastery at Samaria-Sebaste (Crowfoot 1957:418, Fig. 99:1) and in Jericho, in a context dated to the seventh-mid-eighth centuries CE (Sellin and Watzinger 1913:165, Pl. 45:III, 9; Barag 1970:51–52). Rim and neck pieces with a thick wavy trail set at the base of the mouth were found, for example, at Ḥammat Gader (Cohen 1997: Pls. VI:5; VIII:17), and additional specimens were unearthed in Umayyad-period contexts in Bet She'an (Hadad 2005:24–25, Pls. 13:261–268; 14:270–273).

Bottle Adorned with a Thick Wavy Trail on the Neck and Pinches on the Wall (Fig. 2:3).— This bottle is noteworthy as it combines two decorative elements: a thick wavy trail wound around the neck (see Fig. 2:2), and a row of horizontal pinches on the wall. Although these features were coeval, they rarely appeared together on a single vessel. Both decorations, which were widespread in the Syria-Palestine region during the seventh–eighth centuries CE (see also Fig. 2:4), determine the date of the bottle.

A bottle adorned with a thick wavy trail wound on its funnel-shaped neck and vertical pinches on its globular body was recovered in an Umayyad-period assemblage in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen 2016:49, Fig. 3:22). An ovoid jug with a pinched rim from Ḥammat Gader is adorned with a wavy trail wound on the base of the neck and vertical pinches on the body; it was attributed by Cohen to the Late Roman period (Cohen 1997:415–416, Pl. V:2). A two-handle jar adorned with a thick wavy trail on the base of the neck and two rows of horizontal pinches on the body was discovered in an Abbasid-period context at Pella (O'Hea 1992:259–261, Fig. 15).

Jar Adorned with a Trail Wound on the Mouth and Pinches on the Wall (Fig. 2:4).— The jar is adorned with two decorative elements: a densely-wound trail around the mouth and horizontal pinches on the wall. The combination of these two features on a single vessel was less customary than the appearance of each feature separately. Both decorative elements were widespread in the Syria-Palestine region during the late Byzantine and Umayyad periods; hence, the jar may be dated to the seventh–eighth centuries CE.

Other jars displaying both decorative elements are as yet unfamiliar. However, several globular bottles adorned with a densely-wound trail around the neck, bearing horizontal pinches on the shoulder or the body were recorded in the region; among them are two bottles from Beirut, dated to the early Byzantine period (Jennings and Abdallah 2001–2002: Fig. 7:3, 4). Additionally, one of two bottles, from the collections of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, was labeled "probably from Bet She'an" (Fleming 1999: Figs. E.64:b; E.67). A bottle in the Yale University Art Gallery is supposedly from the eastern Mediterranean, and was assigned a date in the fifth–sixth centuries CE (Matheson 1980:125–126, Fig. 337).

Similarly-proportioned jars adorned with wound trails on the neck and mold-blown ribbing on the body were unearthed in a crypt north of the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem, and were dated to the late sixth–early seventh centuries CE (Re'em 2009: Fig. 9:1, 2). Densely-

wound trails on other types of vessels from the Byzantine period, such as bottles and wineglasses, were uncovered, for example, at the compound of the Jerusalem International Convention Center (Gorin-Rosen 2005:203–204, Fig. 2:20–24, 29–31).

Vessels adorned with rows of horizontal or vertical pinches are characteristic of the late Byzantine and Umayyad periods. Analogous contemporaneous examples from the Jerusalem area include a bowl/beaker from Khirbat Siyar el-Ghanam (Corbo 1955:75, Fig. 25:3), a fragment from a burial cave in the Gonen quarter (Solimany, Winter and Vincenz 2006: Fig. 4:6), two specimens from Ramat Raḥel (Jackson-Tal 2016:578, Fig. 37.4:2; Katsnelson 2016:709, Fig. 44.24:5) and two pieces from Khirbat Ṭabaliya (Gorin-Rosen 2000:86\*, Fig. 2:12, 13). Concurrent complete jars adorned with rows of pinches were also unearthed in other locations in the Syria-Palestine region, for example, at Ḥammat Gader (Cohen 1997:413, Pl. IV:5, 6) and Ḥorbat Liqit in the northern Negev (Gorin-Rosen 2002: Fig. 156:1), as well as at Gerasa (Baur 1938:536, Fig. 18:67[244]), Pella (Smith and Day 1989:110, Pl. 51:21) and Umm al-Rasas (Alliata 1994:287, No. 9) to the east of the Jordan River.

# THE METAL ARTIFACTS

The metal finds comprised six copper/bronze bracelets from Loci 101, 102 and 107 (Fig. 3:1–6), five of which are nearly complete, as well as a copper/bronze buckle from L107 (Fig. 3:7) and two severely-weathered iron wires from L101 (not illustrated). These types of artifacts were customary in the Syria-Palestine region during the Late Roman and Byzantine periods.

*Plain Bracelets* (Fig. 3:1–5).— Five plain copper/bronze bracelets were recorded in Loci 101 and 107; three of them (Fig. 3:1–3) have overlapping ends.

Plain metal bracelets were common grave goods in burials of the Late Roman and Byzantine periods in the Syria-Palestine region, for example, in a tomb at Beit Fajjar (Husseini 1935:176–177, Pl. 86.I:1, 3, 8). A bronze bracelet with overlapping ends was discovered in Tomb R2 at Dibon (Dhiban) in Jordan, dated to the early seventh century CE (Tushingham 1972:108, Reg. No. 6, Fig. 26:21). A bracelet with non-overlapping ends was unearthed at Kisra, in Burial Cave 2 that was in use in the fourth–early fifth centuries CE (Stern 1997:123, 131, Fig. 12:50).

Twisted Bracelet (Fig. 3:6).— This bracelet was made of three intertwined wires.

Spirally twisted copper/bronze bracelets are customary in Byzantine-period contexts in the region. Similar bracelets were discovered in a tomb dated from the mid-fifth to the early seventh centuries CE near Netiv Ha-Lamed He (Barag 1974:87, Nos. 18, 19; Pl. XXVII:11); in Burial Cave 2 at Kisra, dated to the fourth–early fifth centuries CE (Stern 1997:121–123, 131, Fig. 12:46); and in Arcosolium 2 in Tomb 200 at Giv at Sharet, which was in use from the last quarter of the fourth century to the first quarter of the fifth century CE (Seligman, Zias and Stark 1996:56–57, 59, Fig. 18:2). Bronze bracelets and torques made of twisted wire were also unearthed in Byzantine-period graves at Dibon (Tushingham 1972:113–114;

K Grave 1: Reg. Nos. 5, 10, Fig. 28:5, Pl. XXXV:12, 15; K Grave C: Reg. No. 9, Fig. 28:16, Pl. XXXV:35).

Buckle (Fig. 3:7).— The copper/bronze buckle is adorned with a geometric pattern.

Metal buckles of various types were occasionally found in burials of the Roman and Byzantine periods, for example, at 'Dominus Flevit' Tomb 223, dated to the third century CE (Bagatti and Milik 1958:160–161, Fig. 36:21, 22). A bronze buckle, resembling the one from 'En Lavan in shape and decoration, was unearthed in Burial Chamber B at el-Jish (Makhouly 1939:47, Pl. 31:4); it may probably be assigned to the sixth century CE, as were the glass vessels from that burial (Barag 1970:63–64). Similarly-shaped buckles were discovered in the eastern cemetery of Pella (Area II H), in Tomb 7, dated to the sixth–midseventh centuries CE (Smith 1973:219–220, Pls. 66:367; 68:15, 352).

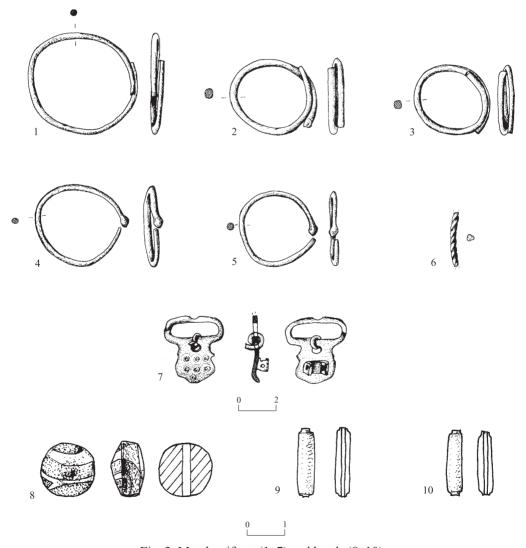


Fig. 3. Metal artifacts (1–7) and beads (8–10).

# **◆** Fig. 3

| No. | Locus | Basket | Description   |  |  |  |  |
|-----|-------|--------|---|--|--|--|--|
| 1   | 101   | 1013   | Copper/bronze bracelet (inner D 48–52 mm, outer D 54–59 mm) with overlapping ends; the slightly oval hoop has a circular cross-section of uneven thickness (2–4 mm) |  |  |  |  |
| 2   | 101   | 1012   | Copper/bronze bracelet (inner D 33–37 mm, outer D 40–45 mm) with overlapping ends; the slightly oval hoop has a circular cross-section of uneven thickness (2–4 mm) |  |  |  |  |
| 3   | 101   | 1015   | Copper/bronze bracelet (inner D 30–35 mm, outer D 37–43 mm) with overlapping ends; the slightly oval hoop has a circular cross-section of uneven thickness (2–4 mm) |  |  |  |  |
| 4   | 107   | 1019   | Copper/bronze bracelet (inner D 37–42 mm, outer D 43–50 mm); the circular hoop has a circular cross-section of uneven thickness (2.0–3.5 mm)                        |  |  |  |  |
| 5   | 101   | 1014   | Copper/bronze bracelet (inner D 35 mm, outer D 40 mm); the circular hoop has a circular cross-section of uneven thickness (2.0–3.5 mm)                              |  |  |  |  |
| 6   | 102   | 1010   | Fragment of a copper/bronze spirally-twisted bracelet (D c. 100 mm) made of three intertwined wires; severe weathering  |  |  |  |  |
| 7   | 107   | 1018   | Copper/bronze buckle (L 35 mm; W 33 mm) adorned with seven small circles, arranged in three rows  |  |  |  |  |
| 8   | 107   | 1021   | Squat bead (D 14 mm) made of gray- and brown-striped agate  |  |  |  |  |
| 9   | 101   | 1006   | Cylindrical bead (L 18 mm; D 4 mm) made of blue glass   |  |  |  |  |
| 10  | 101   | 1006   | Cylindrical bead (L 17 mm; D 4 mm) made of blue glass   |  |  |  |  |

## THE BEADS

Several beads were found in Loci 101 and 107 (Fig. 3:8–10).

Agate Bead (Fig. 3:8).— This squat bead is made of gray- and brown-striped agate.

Agate beads of various shapes were discovered at Samaria-Sebaste (Beck and Crowfoot 1957:397, Fig. 92:65, 71; no date noted), at Dibon Tomb R3, dated to the early seventh century CE (Tushingham 1972:108, Reg. No. 1, Fig. 26:29, Pl. XXXVI:21) and at Araq el-Emir (Cooke and Lapp 1983:38, Reg. No. 81; 41, Reg. Nos. N-12, N-19, N-27, N-43; no stratigraphic context recorded; Fig. 18).

Cylindrical Glass Beads (Fig. 3:9, 10).— Cylindrical glass beads were common in the Late Roman and early Byzantine periods. Blue-green cylindrical beads stringed on a necklace were found in Samaria-Sebaste Tomb E220, dated to the Late Roman period (Beck and Crowfoot 1957:398, Fig. 92:91). Two cylindrical beads were discovered at Khirbat el-Ni'ana, together with a large assemblage of glass vessels dated to the fourth–early fifth centuries CE (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2007:73, 122, Fig. 23:24, 25).

*Tree-Resin Bead.*— One of the beads (from L102, B1008, not illustrated due to its poor state of preservation) was made of orange-brown tree resin. Resin beads were discovered at Khirbat esh-Shubeika Burial Caves 1 and 2, which were in use from the Late Roman to

the Umayyad periods (Katsnelson 2002:323, 327). Similar beads were also unearthed in Byzantine-period graves at Dibon (Tushingham 1972:113–114; K Grave 1: Reg. No. 3, Fig. 28:3, Pl. XXXV:3–5; K Grave C: Reg. No. 1, Fig. 28:8, Pl. XXXV:22).

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The glass vessels from the burial cave at 'En Lavan are typical of the Jerusalem area and of the Syria-Palestine region during the late Byzantine and Umayyad periods, particularly the sixth–eighth centuries CE.

The plain bottles from the burial chamber (L105; Fig. 1) were widespread in the Byzantine period and possibly throughout the seventh century CE. This chamber also yielded a bottle neck adorned with a thick wavy trail (not illustrated), dated to the seventh–eighth centuries CE. Among the pottery from the burial chamber, only two oil lamps were assigned a date in the late Byzantine–Early Islamic periods (see Vincenz, this volume: Fig. 8:4, 5).

The decorated glass vessels (Fig. 2) are characteristic of the seventh–eighth centuries CE. Their shared ornamentations and the unusual combinations of those features (Fig. 2:3, 4), suggest that these decorated vessels were produced in a local glass workshop. It seems that the artisan was familiar with the trends of his day, and chose to apply these features in unusual combinations.

The metal artifacts and the beads from the cave are typical of the Late Roman and Byzantine periods. As these objects were valuable and made of durable materials, they were probably passed on among family members, and therefore, may have been used over a long period of time. The dating of the metal artifacts and the beads is also corroborated by the date of the pottery (see Vincenz, this volume).

As an assemblage, the glass vessels from the sealed burial cave may be dated to the seventh-early eighth centuries CE. However, as the cave also contained metal artifacts, beads and pottery, dated mostly up to the seventh century CE, the entire material corpus may probably be assigned to that century.

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