'Atiqot 110, 2023

A Terracotta Pen-and-Inkwell Case from Jerusalem

Nitzan Amitai-Preiss, Peter Gendelman, Ortal Chalaf and Anastasia Shapiro[1]

Excavations in the Strauss Building, located next to the Western Wall Plaza in the Old City of Jerusalem, yielded a unique ornamental two-level terracotta pen-and-inkwell case, comprising an upper level with a rectangular pencase and a bowl-shaped inkwell holder, and a lower level with two compartments. The sides of the pencase have incised decorations depicting a throne and a throne room, and the base bears an Arabic inscription composed of a paraphrase of two verses from a *maqāma* poem by Badī' al-Zamān, and the name of the poet or/and the owner, Mūsā. The dating of the pencase to the Fatimid period is determined by the lifetime of Badī' al-Zamān, who died in 1008 CE, and by eleventh-century CE pottery found with the pencase. The pen-and-inkwell case, made of Moẓa clay from the vicinity of Jerusalem, is a local production for a Jerusalem intellectual.

Keywords: Jerusalem, Fatimid period, terracotta pen-and-inkwell case, Arabic epigraphy, maqāma poetry, Badī' al-Zamān, Bilqīs Queen of Sheba, Bilqīs's throne room, Moẓa clay

Introduction

A terracotta pen-and-inkwell case was discovered in the 2013–2015 excavations carried out inside the Strauss Building, an early twentieth-century building located c. 50 m west of the northwestern corner of the Western Wall Plaza, and just south of the Great Causeway, the Roman bridge leading to the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem.[2] Eight

---

[1] Dr. Nitzan Amitai-Preiss, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem; Dr. Peter Gendelman, Ortal Chalaf and Anastasia Shapiro, Israel Antiquities Authority.

[2] The excavations (Permit Nos. A-6876/2013, A-7040/2014, A-7293/2015) were conducted on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority and funded by the Western Wall Heritage Foundation, under the direction of Peter Gendelman and Ortal Chalaf, with the assistance of Nissim Nechama (administration), Vadim Essman and Yaakov Shmidov (field plans), Assaf Peretz and Atalya Fadida (field photography), Benjamin Dolinka (ceramics), Robert Kool and Issa Baidoun (numismatics), Marina Shuiskaya (pottery drawing) and Clara Amit (find photography). Thanks are owed to Dr. Leigh Chipman for the initial English editing of this manuscript, and to Dr. Arie Kapitaikin, Dr. Housni al-Khateeb Shehada, Prof. Daniela Talmon-Heller and to the anonymous reader for their useful remarks. We also thank Prof. Benjamin Preiss for assistance in translation from German.

archaeological strata dating from the Umayyad period to modern times were exposed, the main remains attributed to a monumental building designated Building G, comprising two double-story rooms supported on the western side by massive walls, with the remains of a courtyard to the east (Gendelman and Chalaf 2016). The excavations revealed that Building G was first constructed in the Umayyad period, subsequently modified in the Abbasid period, and finally abandoned in the tenth or eleventh century CE (Monnickendam-Givon et al. 2021). The Early Islamic building's massive walls incorporated spolia from earlier periods, including late first-century BCE Corinthian capitals (Chalaf and Ben-Haim 2018) and a Latin inscription (Eck and Cotton 2018). The excavated room was paved with a plain mosaic floor (L670) and its upper story was supported by massive arches. The upper story was either later dismantled or it may have collapsed due to natural events, possibly the 749 CE earthquake that caused severe damage in Jerusalem (Fig. 1; Amiran, Arieh and Turcotte 1994:267).[3] In the second occupation stage, new partition walls divided the lower story room into four small rooms with groin vaults supported by pilasters installed next to the arches of the original building, and the original mosaic floor continued in use (Fig. 2). A thick layer of

Fig. 1. Building G, northern wall of the room showing marks of structural damage, looking north.

[3] Structural damage in an adjacent contemporary bathhouse, located c. 60 m to the south, was also attributed to the 749 CE earthquake (Barbé, Vitto and Greenwald 2014:36*).

accumulated fill overlaid the mosaic floor, postdating the occupation of the building; Figs. 3, 4). The fill layer (L622, L662, L671; c. 0.6 m thick) contained a large quantity of pottery, many coins, glass fragments, animal bones and charcoal, and the pen-and-inkwell case.

Fig. 2. Building G, second occupation stage, showing partition wall on mosaic floor, looking west.

Fig. 3. Building G, showing second stage additions and fill layer in foreground, looking west.

Fig. 4. Close-up of fill layer with collapsed wall stones, looking northwest.

The Pen-and-Inkwell Case

The rectangular pen-and-inkwell case (L622, B6427; 18.8 × 5.5–6.0 cm, 6 cm high) is composed of two levels, each with two compartments (Fig. 5). Carved runner slots indicate that it was originally equipped with three sliding lids that were not retrieved; they may have been made of terracotta, wood or another material. The upper level comprises two compartments, a rectangular pencase (12.7 × 4.3 cm, 2.8 cm deep) and a bowl-shaped inkwell holder (diam. 3.5 cm, 2.5 cm deep), and it has slots for a single horizontal sliding lid (Fig. 6). The lower level also comprises two compartments: a rectangular compartment (9.4 × 4.0 cm, 1.5 cm high), open on the long side with runner slots for a vertical sliding lid, possibly for a penknife, and a smaller compartment beneath the inkwell holder (9.4 × 3.2 cm, 1.3 cm high), open on the short end with slots for a vertical sliding lid. The pen-and-inkwell case (henceforth: pencase) was composed of several separate handmade parts that were subsequently joined together. The surfaces were smoothed, and the decoration and inscription were incised with a sharp tool on the leather-hard artifact before firing. A microscopic examination of the artifact revealed that it was locally made (see below).

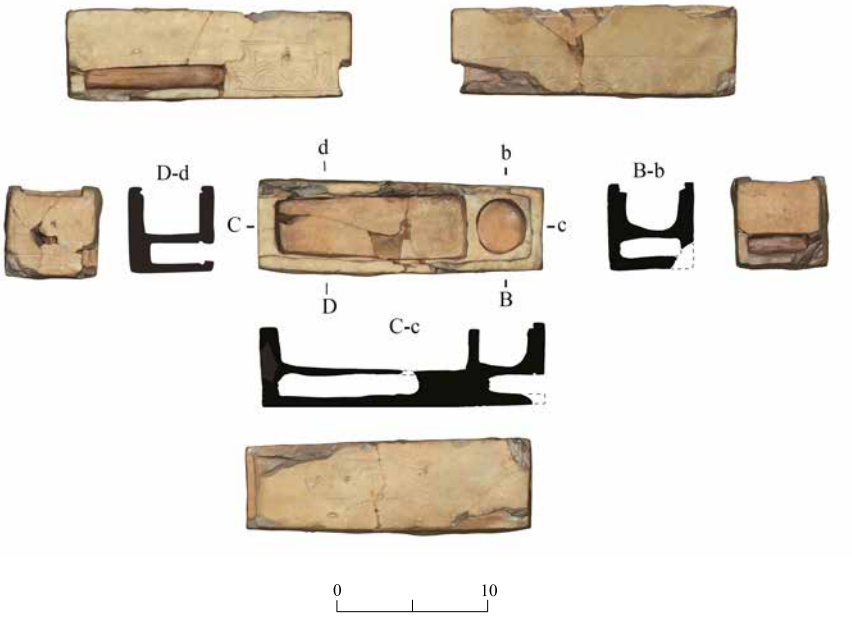

Fig. 5. The pen-and-inkwell case.

Fig. 6. The upper layer of the pen-and-inkwell case.

The Pencase Decoration

The four sides of the pencase have incised decorations and the base bears an Arabic inscription (see below). The long side with the lower compartment opening is decorated with a low couch depicted *en face*, with cushions and a high back decorated with a high floret-like element in the center and another one on the side (Fig. 7). The couch's right arm is decorated with scale-like incisions, probably imitating embellishment with jewels, while the couch's left arm is not depicted. This type of ruler's throne, suited for cross-legged seating, first appeared in the Abbasid period, and gained popularity during the Seljuq domination of

the Middle East (Kadoi 2006:272), probably corresponding with a throne type called *sarīr* in the Islamic written sources (Sadan 1976a:36–38). Such thrones are often depicted on pottery, as on a twelfth–early thirteenth-century Kashan Ware bowl in the Brooklyn Museum collection (86.227.61; https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/5074), and in Islamic illustrated manuscripts, as the one depicting the coronation of Aḥmad Sanjar, the Seljuq ruler of Khorasan (reigned 1097–1118 CE) in *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* Compendium of Chronicles by Rashid al-Din (written in 714/1314 CE; Or.Ms.20, Edinburgh University Library Special Collections).

The other long side of the pencase has a wide decorated band between the base and an incised line, with a combination of stylized floral designs, arch-like and spindle-like elements, and dots (Fig. 8); the central area is plain, and the two ends are decorated with stylized flowers. We suggest that this side represents an elaborate throne room.

One short side has an incised stepped structure on a low base decorated with vertical lines and a cross-like design (Fig. 9), probably depicting stairs leading to the throne, similar to those depicted in front of the throne in a scene from Ferdowsī's *Shāh-nāmeh* on a 772/1371 CE manuscript from Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul (Atasoy 2003: Pl. VI-l(b).5). The other short side is decorated with a double circle, possibly representing a window (Fig. 10).

Fig. 7. The pen-and-inkwell case: long side with throne depiction.

Fig. 8. The pen-and-inkwell case: long side with stylized floral design.

Fig. 9. The pen-and-inkwell case: short side with staircase.

Fig. 10. The pen-and-inkwell case: short side with double circle design.

The Pencase Inscription

The base of the pencase bears a three-line Arabic inscription incised before firing (Fig. 11):

احسن من ضجة النواقيس فردس نطوس

Δ عرش بلقيس Δ

Δ موسى Δ

Transliteration:

Ahsan min ḍajjat al-nawāaqīs firdus naṭūs

Δ *ʻarsh Bilqīs* Δ

Δ *Mūsā* Δ

Translation: Better than the tumult of the church bells is the garden of Naṭūs

The throne of Bilqīs

[by] Mūsā

Commentary

The first two lines of the inscription are probably a paraphrase of two verses from the thirty-fifth *maqāma al-Iblīsiyya* by Badīʻ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (969–1008 CE), a late tenth-century CE Persian poet renown as the originator of the genre known as *maqāmāt*.

Fig. 11. The pen-and-inkwell case: base with Arabic inscription.

The verses read:

امتدو فوف سرير كان ارفق بي
على تشعثه من **عرش بلقيس**
وزرت مضجعه قبل الصباح وقد
دات على الصباح **اصوات النواقيس**

Then he stretched himself on a couch which was finer to me,
In spite of its disordered condition, than the **throne of Bilqīs**,
And I visited his sleeping-place before the dawn
And when the **sound of the church bells** indicated the morning.[4]

The paraphrase on the pencase mentions *Bilqīs*, identified in Islamic tradition as the Queen of Sheba,[5] and *nawāqīs*, the church bells, in reverse order to the original verses in Badīʿ al-Zamān's *maqāma*. The rhyme in Badīʿ al-Zamān's *maqāma* consists of each verse ending in the letter *sīn*, a feature retained in the pencase inscription: *nawāqīs/naṭūs* and *Bilqīs*.

The citation of the throne of Bilqīs, identified as the Queen of Sheba, was paraphrased from Badīʿ al-Zamān's *maqāma*, which in turn was inspired by its original appearance as *ʿarsh kabīr*, a giant throne, in the Quran (Sura 27 The Ants: 23). Bilqīs' throne is also described in Thaʿlabī's *Tales of the Prophets*:

> Made of gold with ruby stones and green emeralds, its back was made of silver with inlay of gems of various colors. Each one of its legs was made of another gem: one leg was of ruby stone the second of green sapphire stone, the third of green emerald and the fourth of yellow diamond and the broad thin plates of the throne are made of gold. And on them are 79 rooms

[4] Translation of the *maqāma al-Iblīsiyya* after Prendergast 1973:140. The words from Badīʿ al-Zamān's *maqāma* that appear on the Jerusalem pencase are emphasized in bold. For the complete text, see Prendergast 1973:138–142.

[5] On the identification of Bilqīs as the Queen of Sheba in Islamic tradition and literature, see Lassner 1993; Havemann 2003.

each one with a locked door. The throne is 80 × 80 cubits in length and in width in the air. She had a grand throne (Tha'labī 1960:279).

The third line of the inscription on the pencase from Bet Strauss bears the name Mūsā, who may have been the poet who paraphrased the two verses of Badī' al-Zamān's *maqāma* in reverse order, or the owner of the pencase, or possibly the artisan who engraved the verses.

Fabric Description of the Pencase

The fabric description of the terracotta pencase is based on a microscopic examination of the exterior surface and the accessible breaks after restoration. The pencase was examined under a binocular microscope at magnifications of ×20 to ×40, with the aid of a steel needle. Firing temperature was roughly estimated according to the sherd color and hardness, and the state of carbonate minerals (Rice 1987:80–110). The results were compared to the lithology of pottery from production and consumption sites previously examined by Shapiro and other researchers (see below).

The color of the artifact's thick-walled exterior is shades of very light brown and beige, and the color of its core is shades of brownish-gray and gray. The matrix is homogeneous and calcareous and contains some minute specks of iron oxide. The sand-sized non-plastic inclusions compose about 5% of the sherd's volume and comprise 0.1–1.5 mm calcareous grains, many of which demonstrate a clear rhombic shape, characteristic of dolomite crystals (Fig. 12). The calcareous inclusions on the exterior are chalky, while on the visible breaks they demonstrate the hardness of limestone/dolomite. Some lumps of ferruginous and silty soil/clay, probably terra rossa (Fig. 13), and one c. 0.3 mm rounded grain of transparent quartz (Fig. 14) were also observed. Rare 0.5–4.0 mm negatives left after vegetal inclusions vanished during the firing process, appear on the visible breaks as dark gray aureoles of the charred organic matter (Fig. 15). The calcareous inclusions and the vegetal material negatives are even visible to the naked eye.

The firing temperature was estimated at 750–800°C, as the calcareous inclusions on the exterior decomposed to chalk, and the vegetal inclusions completely vanished. Nonetheless, the gray core, and the gray aureoles around the vegetal inclusion negatives on the visible breaks, suggest that the firing time was not long enough for the charred organic material remnants in the core to entirely disappear.

The observed lithology represents the geological environs of dolomite and/or dolomitic sand, calcareous clay and marl, and limestone with occasional quartzite nodules. This aligns with the Lower Cenomanian sequence of the Judean and Samarian Hills, where the calcareous clay and marl of the Moẓa Formation are located between the dolomite of the Bet Meir Formation below, and the dolomitic sand of the 'Aminadav Formation above (Bentor 1966:48–52; Arkin and Ecker 2007; Sneh and Avni 2011).

The closest exposures of the Moẓa Formation to the Old City of Jerusalem are located 6–7 km to the west and northwest (Sneh and Avni 2011). Moẓa clay and marl are the best

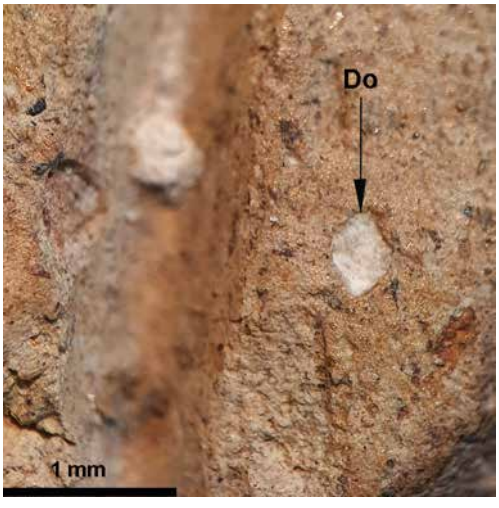

Fig. 12. Microphotograph of pen-and-inkwell case exterior. Do = dolomite.

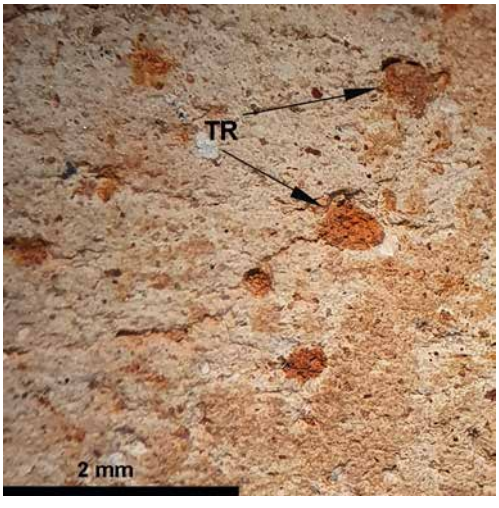

Fig. 13. Microphotograph of pen-and-inkwell case exterior. TR = lumps of terra rossa.

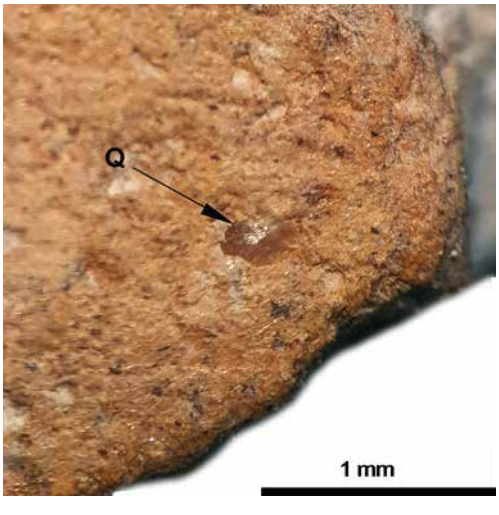

Fig. 14. Microphotograph of pen-and-inkwell case exterior. Q = quartz.

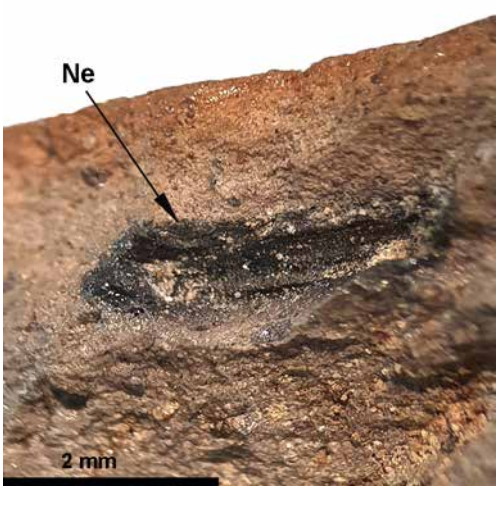

Fig. 15. Microphotograph of pen-and-inkwell case visible break. Ne = negative after vegetal inclusion.

materials suitable for pottery production within the Judean and Samarian Hills, and previous provenance studies have revealed that they were preferred by the potters of the region from the Chalcolithic to the Mamluk periods (Glass et al. 1993; Shapiro and Stern, forthcoming). Consequently, the possible provenance for this pencase should be limited to the area of the Judean and Samarian Hills, characterized by exposures of Moẓa Formations. A more exact pinpointing of the provenance, for example, to Jerusalem, should be based on typological, archaeometric and historical considerations.

The Coins and the Pottery in the Fill Layer

The coins and the pottery retrieved together with the pencase in the thick fill layer overlying the mosaic floor in Building G may furnish a dating range for the pencase.

Coins

The fill layer yielded twenty-eight bronze coins, six of which were unidentifiable due to heavy corrosion. The identified coins include seven coins dating from the Byzantine period, seven coins from the Umayyad post-reform period, dated to 697–750 CE, and six coins from the Abbasid period, the latest coin minted at al-Ramla (Ramla) in 832 CE. The other two coins—one of al-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf dated to 1189 CE and the other, from the Mamluk period—were clearly intrusive. The numismatic evidence thus furnishes a *terminus post quem* for the fill after 832 CE.

Selected Pottery Vessels and Oil Lamps

The fill layer contained a great deal of pottery, including local and imported glazed wares and locally produced table and storage vessels. The assemblage comprises pottery types dating from the ninth to the eleventh century CE, including several well-dated ones—Polychrome Splash-Ware Sgraffito bowls, 'cyma-recta' bowls, golden luster bowls, Cream (Buff) Ware juglets with pseudo-calligraphic incisions, and a lidded saucer-type oil lamp—supporting dating the deposition of the fill layer to the late tenth–early eleventh centuries CE. A few selected vessels of these types are presented here.

Glazed Table Wares (Fig. 16:1–6).— The glazed table wares are represented by several groups, both local and imported. The locally manufactured vessels include fragments of Polychrome Splash-Ware Sgraffito bowls (Fig. 16:1–3). These bowls with a 'corkscrew' pattern, were produced between the late ninth/early tenth and the late tenth/early eleventh centuries CE (Avissar 1996a:81–82, Type 7, Fig. XIII.7; Arnon 2008:194–196, 233, Nos. n–p; Stacey 2004:117, Fig. 5.25:11; Color Pl. 3:19). A single 'cyma-recta' bowl (Fig. 16:4) was found—sometimes with one or two handles—this bowl type being a *fossile directeur* of late tenth–eleventh-century CE assemblages in and around Tiberias (Stacey 2004:117, 119–120, Fig. 5.25:5; Yehuda 2007:145, Fig. 9:1–8).

The imported glazed bowls are mostly Egyptian or Egyptian imitations, including two fragments of golden luster bowls with delicate floral decoration over opaque white glaze (Fig. 16:5, 6). These vessels are dated to the tenth–early eleventh centuries CE (Jenkins 1992: Fig. 10; Arnon 2008:42, 239–240, Pl. XXII; Taxel 2014:126–129, 132, Fig. 4:5–7).

Cream (Buff) Ware.— Many locally produced Cream (Buff) Ware jugs and juglets were found in the fill, including fragments of small globular juglets with eggshell-thin walls, and necks decorated with various pseudo-calligraphic incisions and glass-cut decoration (Fig. 16:7–10). Similar vessels were found in late tenth–late eleventh-century CE deposits

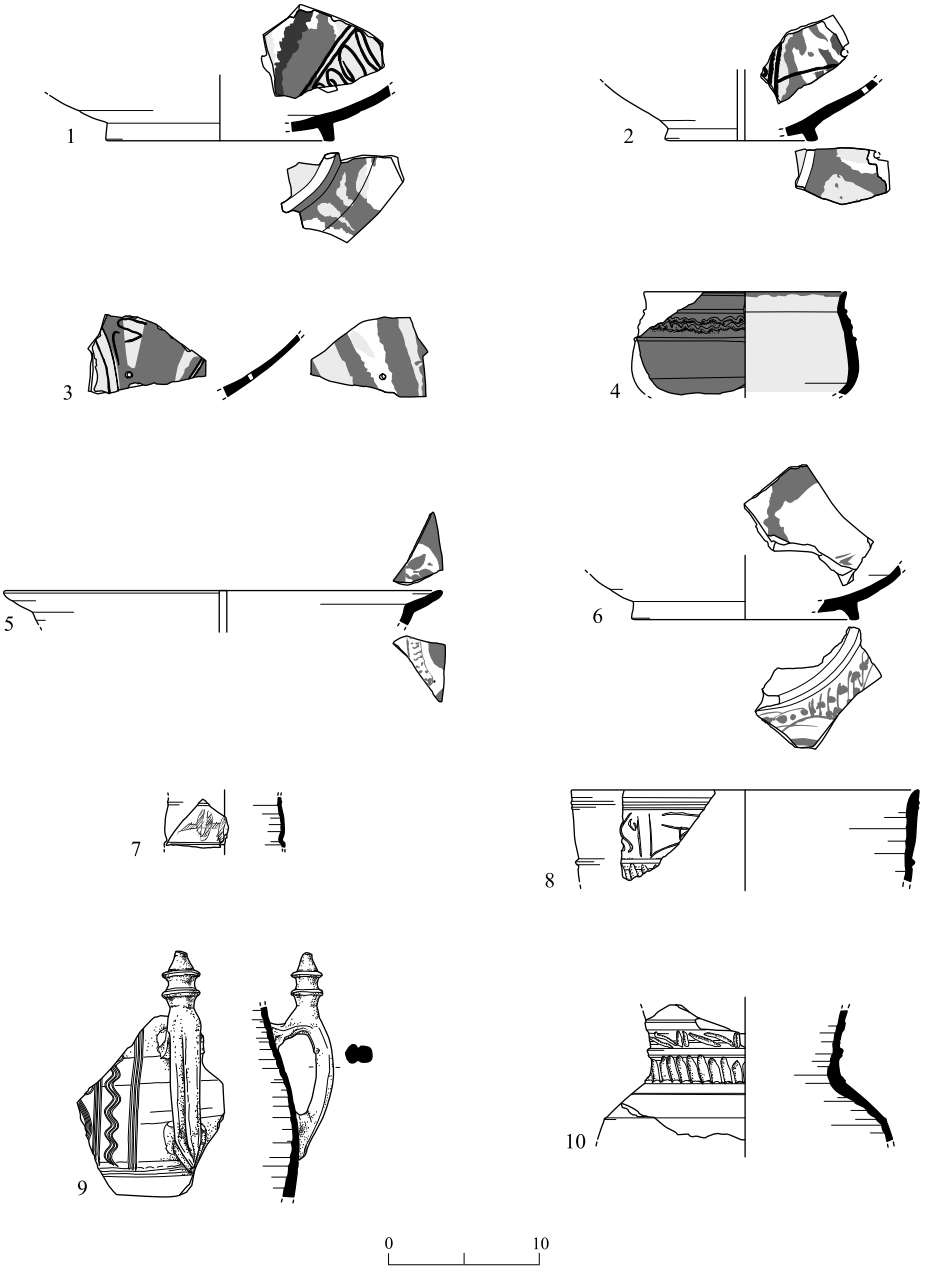

Fig. 16. Pottery from the fill layer: glazed table wares (1–6), Cream (Buff) Ware (7–10).

at Tiberias (Stacey 2004:131–132, Figs. 5.41:6–8, 5.60:1–6), Jerusalem (Cytryn-Silverman 2013:173, Fig. 7.7:9–10; Reuven 2020:447, Fig. 13.63:11) and Caesarea (Arnon 2008:36–37, 41–43, 241, Pl. XXIII:1, Type 541a).

Oil Lamps.— A lamp mold fragment and dozens of complete and fragmentary ceramic oil lamps were found in the fill layer, most classifying as the well-known almond-shaped lamps with high tongue handles (Fig. 17), dating from the late eighth to the tenth or early eleventh centuries CE (Avissar 1996b:191–193, Fig. XV:18–27; Stacey 2004:153–157, Figs. 6.8; 6.9). A single wheel-made, multi-nozzle oil lamp made of local clay is a lidded saucer type with a shallow domed lid, a high-rimmed filling hole and a low flange protruding between

Fig. 17. Almond-shaped oil lamps.

Fig. 18. Wheel-made, multi-nozzle oil lamp.

the upper (lid) and lower (bowl) parts (Fig. 18). It is fairly similar to the glazed Kubiak Type E lamp from Fustat, dated to the tenth–eleventh centuries CE (Kubiak 1970:9–10, Figs. 6a, 6b, 8).

Other Islamic Pencase Artifacts

No identical terracotta pen-and-inkwell case has been published to date. The most similar artifact is a glazed terracotta pen-inkwell case with molded decoration inscribed with the Islamic verse: La Ilhah illa Allah (No God other than Allah), from Kashan, eastern Iran, dated to c. 1200 CE (Collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Art: Accession No. 50.46.442a,b; https://collections.artsmia.org/art/1101/pen-box-with-ink-well-iran). A rectangular wooden pen-inkwell case with a pen compartment, and a metal inkwell in a second compartment, covered with a single wooden lid, was found in Egypt, probably dating from the Islamic period (British Museum: Reg. No. 1906,0611.11.1; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA43048_6). Another fairly similar but less elaborate pen-inkwell case made of soapstone was found in the Nishapur excavations and dated to the ninth–eleventh centuries CE (Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund, 1939: Accession No. 39.40.34; https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/449568). Several metal pen-and-inkwell cases, some bearing an inscription mentioning the owner

and/or the artisan, have survived. Examples include a bronze pencase dated to 542 AH/1148 CE from the Hermitage Collection, bearing an inscription with the name of the owner, ʻAlī ibn Yūsuf ibn ʻUthmān al-Ḥājj, and the artisan, ʻUmar ibn al-Faḍl ibn Yūsuf (Giuzalian 1968:98); and one in the Freer Gallery in Washington, dated to 1210/1211 CE, made by Shazi for Majd al-Mulk al-Muzaffar (Atil, Chase and Jett 1986:15, 104–110). A closely related group of richly decorated Iranian pencases made from, or decorated with precious metals, bear calligraphic inscriptions attributed a date as early as the thirteenth century CE (Melikian-Chirvani 1986:83–92, Figs. 19, 20a, 23, 24). These state pencases, designated as *dāvat o qalam* in Persian, are mentioned in written sources as early as the eleventh century CE (Melikian-Chirvani 1986:70–71).

Pencases in Written Sources in the Islamic World

Pencases for reed pens, *miḥbarah* in Arabic (Lane 1980:500), *qalamdân* in Persian and *qalmarīn* in Hebrew (Hai Geon, *Kelīm* 82, 36–38), are mentioned in numerous written sources. In one anecdote, for example, al-Baghdādī mentioned a man named Muḥammad ben Aḥmad ben Mukhlid (died 357/967 CE), who served as a *muḥtasib* of Baghdad under the Abbasid Caliph al-Muṭī (reigned 946–974 CE), and whose mother-in-law broke his *miḥbarah* when she was angry with him (al-Baghdādī 1349/1931:1.321; Ghabin 2009:48). In another anecdote, a person broke someone else's *miḥbarah* to take his *danānir* gold coins (al-Maqdisī 1990:15:464; https://shamela.ws/book/19188/7583). The al-Maktaba al-Shamila site, housing thousands of Arabic books, contains about 300 mentions of a *miḥbarah*, citing, for example: "Ahmad ben Hanbal had a *mihbarah* covered in skin and he had a pen" (Ahmad ben Muḥammad ibn Hajar al-Haythamī, *Kitāb al-khayrāt al-ḥusān fī manāqib al-imām Abī Ḥanīfa al-Nuʻmān*:356). In another text, the words *miḥbarah*, inkwell, pens and a knife are mentioned together (al-Jawzī 1992:13:238). These *maḥābir* (pl.) also appear in poetry, such as in the *Dīwān* of Kushajam, who wrote about pens and a *dawāt* type of inkwell that was carried on the shoulder (Kushajam 1997:14, *Dīwān* p. 30).[6] For an Umayyad-period *dawāt* from ʻEn Gedi, see Porat, Eshel and Frumkin 2007:4, 10.

Pencases are also mentioned in contemporary Jewish sources, such as in the Babylonian Talmud commentary by Hai Geon (c. 939–1038 CE), the last of the important Geonim of Babylonia. In his Perush Ha-Geonim commentary on *Kelīm* 82, 36–38, he wrote:

> קלמרין בלשון ישמעאל מחברה בטיט
>
> *Kalmarīn* in the language of Ishmael [= in Arabic]: mihbarah of clay
>
> *Mahbarā* of glass [to differentiate from one made of clay] in the *ʻaruch*, you put the ink in it and there are [people] who make for it a case of wood and the case is called *qalmarīn* (Epstein 1921:12, Line 4).

[6] For Kishajam, a poet born in Ramla in Palestine, who died elsewhere in 970 CE, see al-Dahhān 1961:13–30.

A thirteenth-century CE Genizah document (T-S K 3/28) mentions a collection of writing instruments, including metal knives, a wooden *makat* to cut off the edge of a pen, and rulers to mark straight lines for writing and for inscription borders (Allony 1975; Sadan 1976b).

Conclusions

The rare Jerusalem terracotta pen-and-inkwell case, comprising a pencase and an inkwell holder on the upper layer, and two compartments on the lower layer, was manufactured locally of Moẓa clay in the vicinity of Jerusalem. The decorations and the inscription on the pencase evidently complement each other: the throne, the throne room and the high steps depicted on the pencase sides illustrating the throne of Bilqīs cited in the inscription on its base. The citation of the throne of Bilqīs, identified as the Queen of Sheba, was paraphrased from Badī‘ al-Zamān's *maqāma*, which in turn was inspired by its original appearance as *‘arsh kabīr*, a giant throne, in the Quran (Sura 27 The Ants: 23).

The author of the pencase verses (Mūsā?) was probably an intellectual acquainted with Badī‘ al-Zamān's *Maqāma al-Iblīsiyya*. Familiarity with the *adab* (manner) literature[7] was an essential requisite for Baghdadi, Iraqi and Cairo intellectuals' success in society in the Fatimid period, and this was also true in contemporary Jerusalem. The locally manufactured pencase engraved or owned by one familiar with Badī‘ al-Zamān's *Maqāmat al-Iblīsiyya* may be a reflection of an intellectual "*adab*-consuming" society.

Jerusalem was an important scholastic center in the tenth–eleventh centuries CE, housing many madrasas and religion teachers, for example Ibn al-‘Arabī (1075–1148 CE), who stayed in Palestine, mostly in Jerusalem, in 1092–1095 and again in 1098 CE. Ibn al-‘Arabī mentions many madrasas with teachers, and Jerusalem abounding with pious and God-fearing people (Drori 1993:102). In another paragraph, he mentions Abū ‘Uqbā's madrasa al-Ḥanafiyah (Drori 1993:97; Abd Rabo 2012: 274). Ibn al-‘Arabī teacher in Jerusalem was al-Zanjanī (Drori 1993:142, n. 46). An incident of a man interrupting a teacher Qaḍī al-Riḥānī and his circle of students in a place of learning is mentioned elsewhere (Drori 1993:97). Several heads of madrasas (*ṣāḥib al-madrasa*), such as qaḍī (judge) Yaḥyā ben Mafraj al-Maqdisī, head of the *Madrasa al-Shāf‘iyya* at Bāb al-Asbaṭ (Drori 1993:112; exact location of gate unknown) are known from Jerusalem.[8]

The combined data suggest that the pencase belonged to an intellectual in Jerusalem's vibrant center of learning for teachers, and local and incoming students. The owner (Mūsā?) may have been a scholar who taught in a madrasa or learning circle, or possibly a clerk in the Fatimid administration in Jerusalem. The attribution specifically to the Fatimid period

---

[7] Badī‘ al-Zamān's *makamāt* are part of the *adab* literature, as seen in Zaghlūl 1995:9.

[8] In a study of the tenth–eleventh-century scholars in Jerusalem, Abd Rabo counts 57 scholars born in Jerusalem, 69 scholars settled in Jerusalem, and a group of 85 scholars who visited Jerusalem to learn hadith (Abd Rabo 2012:147). He also mentions several scholarly institutions in Fatimid and Seljuq Jerusalem, including an institution of Ṣūfī Muslims, Dār al-‘Ilm, the house of Muḥammad ben Bakr al-Wāsiṭī, the *zāwiya* of Sheikh Naṣr al-Muqaddasī (Abd Rabo 2012:274) and Mihrāb Mu‘awiya in al-Aqsā Mosque, where learning sessions were held (Abd Rabo 2012:277, n. 1512).

is thus supported both by the paraphrase of the poetry by Badīʿ al-Zamān, who died in 1008 CE, and also by the eleventh-century CE pottery vessels retrieved from the fill together with the pencase.

References

Abd Rabo O. 2012. *Jerusalem during the Faṭimid and Seljuq Periods: Archaeological and Historical Aspects.* Ph.D diss. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Jerusalem (Hebrew; English summary).

Allony N. 1975. Two 13th Century Book-Lists. *Alei Sefer: Studies in Bibliography and the History of the Printed and the Digital Hebrew Book* 1:35–58 (Hebrew).

Amiran D.H.K., Arieh E. and Turcotte T. 1994. Earthquakes in Israel and Adjacent Areas: Macroseismic Observations since 100 B.C.E. *IEJ* 44:260–305.

Arkin Y. and Ecker A. 2007. *Geotechnical and Hydrogeological Concerns in Developing the Infrastructure around Jerusalem* (Report GSI/12/2007). Jerusalem.

Arnon Y.D. 2008. *Caesarea Maritima: The Late Periods (700–1291 CE)* (BAR Int. S. 1771). Oxford.

Atasoy N. 2003. Islamic Miniatures. In E. Ihsanoğlu ed. *The Different Aspects of Islamic Culture* 5: *Culture and Learning in Islam*. Paris. Pp. 589–602.

Atıl E., Chase W.T. and Jett P. 1985. *Islamic Metalwork in the Freer Gallery of Art*. Washington, D.C.

Avissar M. 1996a. The Medieval Pottery. In A. Ben-Tor, M. Avissar and Y. Portugali. *Yoqneʿam* I: *The Late Periods* (Qedem Reports 3). Jerusalem. Pp. 75–172.

Avissar M. 1996b. The Oil Lamps. In A. Ben-Tor, M. Avissar and Y. Portugali. *Yoqneʿam* I: *The Late Periods* (Qedem Reports 3). Jerusalem. Pp. 188–197.

al-Baghdādī, Hafīẓ Abī Bakr ibn ʿAlī al-Khaṭīb. *Tarīkh Baghdād*. Cairo 1931.

Barbé H., Vitto F. and Greenwald R. 2014. When, Why and by Whom the Mughrabi Gate Was Opened? Excavations at the Mughrabi Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem (2007; 2012–2014). In G.D. Stiebel, O. Peleg-Barkat and D. Ben-Ami eds. *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region*. *Collected Papers* VIII. Jerusalem. Pp. 32*–44*.

Bentor Y.K. 1966. *The Clays of Israel: Guide-Book to the Excursions (The International Clay Conference, Jerusalem, Israel, 1966).* Jerusalem.

Chalaf O. and Ben-Haim A. 2018. New Evidence of a Late Second Temple-Period Monumental Building West of the Temple Mount. In J. Uziel, Y. Gadot, Y. Zelinger, O. Peleg-Barkat and O. Gutfeld eds. *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region: Collected Papers* XII. Jerusalem. Pp. 56–77 (Hebrew).

Cytryn-Silverman K. 2013. The Islamic-Period Pottery. In D. Ben-Ami. *Jerusalem: Excavations in the Tyropoeon Valley (Givʿati Parking Lot)* I (IAA Reports 52). Jerusalem. Pp. 167–204.

al-Dahhān Sāmī. *Qudamāʾ wa-muʿāṣirūn*. Cairo 1961.

Drori J. 1993. *Ibn el-Arabi of Seville, Journey to Eretz Israel (1092–1095)*. Ramat Gan (Hebrew).

Eck W. and Cotton H.M. 2018. A Latin Inscription from Building G in the Western Plaza (CIIP I 2 727). In J. Uziel, Y. Gadot, Y. Zelinger, O. Peleg-Barkat and O. Gutfeld eds. *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region: Collected Papers* XII. Jerusalem. Pp. 43*–46*.

Epstein Y.N. 1921. *Geonic Commentary on Seder Taharot*. Berlin (Hebrew).

Gendelman P. and Chalaf O. 2016. Excavations of the Strauss Complex in the Western Wall Plaza: A Preliminary Report on Building G. In G.D. Stiebel, J. Uziel, K. Cytryn-Silverman, A. Re'em and Y. Gadot eds. *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region: Collected Papers* X. Jerusalem. Pp. 115–127 (Hebrew).

Ghabin A. 2009. *Ḥisba, Arts and Crafts in Islam* (Arabisch-islamishe Welt in Tradition und Moderne 7). Wiesbaden.

Glass J., Goren Y., Bunimovitz S. and Finkelstein I. 1993. Petrographic Analyses of Middle Bronze Age III, Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I Pottery Assemblages. In I. Finkelstein, S. Bunimovitz and Z. Lederman eds. *Shiloh: The Archaeology of a Biblical Site* (Tel Aviv University Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series 10*).* Tel Aviv. Pp. 271–286.

Giuzalian L.T. 1968. The Bronze Qalamdan (Pen-Case) 542/1148 from the Hermitage Collection (1936–1965): To the Memory of My Teacher, Academician I.A. Orbeli. *Ars Orientalis* 7:95–119.

Havemann A. 2003. 'Die Königen von Saba' in der religiösen und kulturellen Tradition des Islam und des Christentums in Äthiopien. *Der Islam* 80:122–141.

al-Jawzī, Abū Faraj 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muḥammad. *Al-Muntaẓam fī tārīkh al-mulūk wal-umām*. Beirut 1992.

Jenkins M. 1992. Early Medieval Islamic Pottery: The Eleventh Century Reconsidered. *Muqarnas* 9:56–66.

Kadoi Y. 2006. Furniture and Furnishings. In J.W. Meri ed. *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia* 1 (Routledge Encyclopedias of the Middle Ages 13). New York–Oxford. Pp. 272–273.

Kubiak W.B. 1970. Medieval Ceramic Oil Lamps from Fusṭāṭ. *Ars Orientalis* 8:1–18.

Kushajam Maḥmūd ibn al-Ḥusayn. *Dīwān*. Cairo 1997 (Arabic).

Lane E.W. 1980. *An Arabic-English Lexicon* 2. Beirut.

Lassner J. 1993. *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba: Boundaries of Gender and Culture in Postbiblical Judaism and Medieval Islam.* Chicago–London.

al-Maqdisī, Shams al Dīn Abū al-Faraj 'Abd al Rahman ibn Muḥammad ibn Ahmad. *Al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr*. Cairo 1990.

Melikian-Chirvani A.S. 1986. State Inkwells in Islamic Iran. *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 44:70–94.

Monnickendam-Givon B., Chalaf O., Chenin M. and Sadiel T. 2021. Urban Development West of the Temple Mount/Haram esh-Sharif: A View from the Western Wall Plaza Excavations. In Y. Zelinger, O. Peleg-Barkat, J. Uziel and Y. Gadot eds. *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region: Collected Papers* XIV. Jerusalem. Pp. 231–247 (Hebrew).

Prendergast W.J. 1973. *The Maqamāt of Badī‘ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī, Translated from the Arabic with an Introduction and Notes*. Guildford.

Porat R., Eshel H. and Frumkin A. 2007. A Bronze Scribe's Case from En Gedi. *Israel Museum Studies in Archaeology* 6:3–12.

Reuven P. 2020. The Early Islamic Pottery. In D. Ben-Ami, Y. Tchekhanovets. *Jerusalem: Excavations in the Tyropoeon Valley (Giv‘ati Parking Lot)* II: *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods* (IAA Reports 66). Jerusalem. Pp. 375–521.

Rice P.M. 1987. *Pottery Analysis: A Sourcebook*. Chicago–London.

Sadan J. 1976a. *Le mobilier au Proche Orient médiéval*. Leiden.

Sadan J. 1976b. The World of Clerks, Officers and Scribes. *Alei Sefer: Studies in Bibliography and the History of the Printed and the Digital Hebrew Book* 2/2:35–51 (Hebrew).

Shapiro A. and Stern E.J. Forthcoming. The Mamluk-Period Handmade Wares from Giv‘at Oger: Petrography and Discussion. *‘Atiqot*

Sneh A. and Avni Y. 2011. *Geological Map of Israel 1:50,000. Sheet 11-II (Jerusalem)* (Geological Survey of Israel). https://www.gov.il/he/departments/general/jerusalem-map (accessed May 2022).

Stacey D. 2004. The Pottery. In D. Stacey ed. *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974: The Early Islamic Periods* (IAA Reports 21). Jerusalem. Pp. 89–147.

Taxel I. 2014. Luxury and Common Wares: Socio-Economic Aspects of the Distribution of Glazed Pottery in Early Islamic Palestine. *Levant* 46:118–139.

Al-Tha‘labī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Nīsābūrī. *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' al-musammā bi-‘arā'is al-majālis*. Beirut 1960.

Yehuda L. 2007. Khhirbet al-Khurrumiya: A Fatimid Farmhouse in Northern Israel. *Salvage Excavation Reports* 4:139–154.

Zaghlūl Muḥammad Salām. *al Adab fī al-‘aṣr al-Fatimī,* 2, *Jalāl Hazī wa-Sharkāhu.* Alexandria 1988