

## THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS IN THE SOIL DEBRIS REMOVED FROM THE TEMPLE MOUNT, JERUSALEM, 1999–2000

YUVAL BARUCH

Following the removal of soil and stones from the Temple Mount compound and their dumping in heaps at several sites in the Jerusalem area, an inspection of their contents and nature was carried out (see Seligman, this volume).<sup>1</sup>

Debris from the Temple Mount was removed on several occasions in December 1999 and again from September to December 2000, and dumped at Abu Dis, on to the western slope of the Kidron Valley, east of the Lions Gate (Figs. 1, 2), as well as in an area south of Kafr Azaiyim, alongside the Jerusalem–Maʿale Adummim road, and in a compound in central Jerusalem.

The archaeological inspection of the heaps involved scanning by means of a metal detector and the examination of some of the material.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, artifacts, most of them from the dump in the Kidron Valley, were gathered by citizens and turned over to the IAA. These artifacts are not presented in this report.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Nature of the Material*

The soil debris removed from the Temple Mount had a uniform, light gray shade. It was mixed with many stones, including ancient masonry stones and paving slabs, as well as modern refuse, such as construction iron, lumps of concrete and tree trimmings. In none of the dumping locations was it possible to isolate the modern refuse from the soil and the ancient stones.

The inspection of the soil heaps dumped on the western slope of the Kidron Valley and alongside the Jerusalem–Maʿale Adummim road focused primarily on removing all the building stones and examining them separately, in an attempt to discover distinctive building elements, architectural decorations and stone carvings. In addition, an excavation was conducted to sample some of the heaps. The inspection of the dumps in the compound in central Jerusalem was limited to its perimeter



Fig. 1. Soil debris on the western slope of the Kidron Valley, looking northwest.



Fig. 2. Soil debris on the western slope of the Kidron Valley, looking north.

and did not include an examination of individual stones.

From the start it was apparent that the debris had accumulated as part of the  $\square$ ll in the southeastern part of the Temple Mount. The presence of  $\square$ nds from the Ottoman period in the heaps hints at the period in which this work was carried out. It is likely that the leveling operations took place in the wake of the destruction caused by a devastating earthquake, which occurred at that especially vulnerable area of the Temple Mount (see Seligman, this volume).

Among the drawings of the famous Scottish explorer David Roberts is a landscape drawn from the Mount of Olives overlooking the southern part of the Temple Mount (Roberts 1841: List of Subjects Vol. I:15—Jerusalem, the Church of the Puri□cation), in which appears a section where the Temple Mount wall near the Double Gate is missing or completely destroyed. Beside the destroyed wall, one can discern a complex of vaulted cavities on top of which the Temple Mount platform was founded. Obviously, in order to repair this serious damage, the renovators of the site were compelled to rebuild the destroyed walls and level the ruined area to the south. This may explain the presence of so much  $\square$ ll speci□ally in this area. Clearly this leveling operation necessitated bringing in large quantities of soil,

some of which was moved from other areas of the Temple Mount and some probably hauled from outside the compound.

#### THE FINDS

The soil heaps from the Temple Mount yielded architectural elements, fragments of pottery—clay lamps and tobacco pipes—glass fragments, glazed tiles, stone vessels, metal objects, beads and coins. The  $\square$ nds span in time from the Iron Age II to the modern era.

Understandably, the inspection of the dumps was not performed as a methodical archaeological excavation, and as the  $\square$ nds were removed from their archaeological context, they have been stripped of their stratigraphic signi□cance. Furthermore, since the heaps were sampled randomly, the objects discovered obviously do not display the total amount and variety of  $\square$ nds in the  $\square$ lls.

Each relevant archaeological period is represented by a few, not all, characteristic diagnostic types, presented in chronological order. Some of the  $\square$ nds, particularly among the stone vessels and the small objects, are presented although they could not be dated. Among the  $\square$ nds recovered were also a few non-diagnostic fragments of glass vessels that are not included in this report.

*Architectural Elements* (Fig. 3)

Among the masonry collected from the dumps were a stone step made of hard limestone (*meleke*) and numerous paving slabs, which are not recorded here.

*Fragment of a Doorjamb* (Fig. 3:1; 1.15 × 1.63 m).— This piece was made of carefully carved reddish limestone (*mizzi aḥmar*). Its surfaces were smoothed after the stone-cutting was completed. This element is identical to a gate

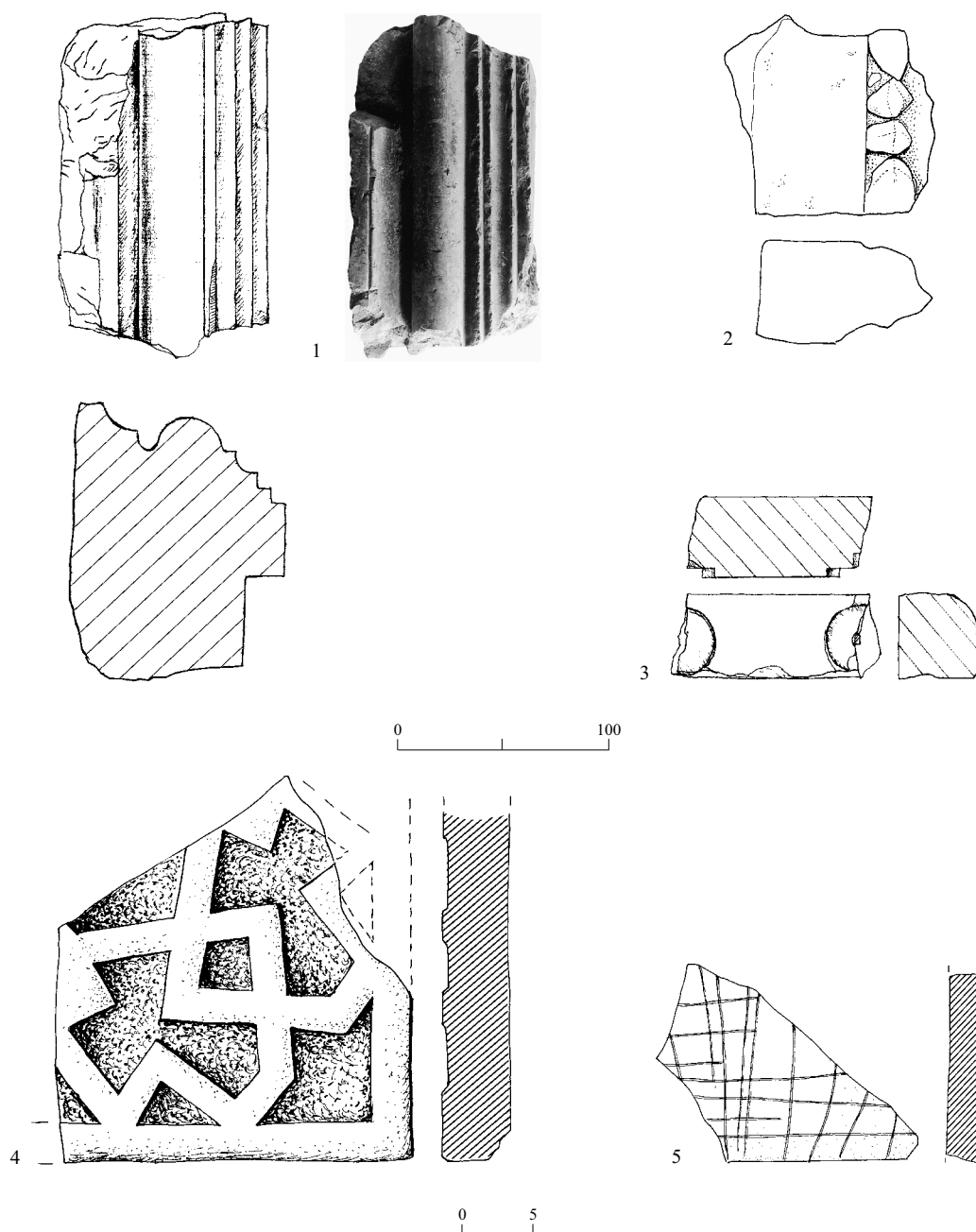


Fig. 3. Architectural elements: (1) doorjamb; (2) cornice; (3) column; (4, 5) slabs.

doorjamb attributed to the Crusader period, which was recovered in the excavations near the Abbey of St. Mary in the Kidron Valley (Johns 1939).<sup>4</sup>

*Crudely Worked, Decorated Cornice* (Fig. 3:2; 0.8 × 0.8 m, thickness 0.5 m).— This piece was made of white limestone. The date could not be determined.

*Rectangular Base* (Fig. 3:3; 0.4 × 1.0 m, thickness 0.4 m).— This piece was made of gray marble. On the flat part of the fragment (diam. 0.4 m, depth 5 cm) two rounded surfaces (c. 0.5 m apart) were turned on a lathe. These surfaces may have been used to secure chancel columns to the railing. Similar objects are usually found in association with religious buildings from the Byzantine period onward.

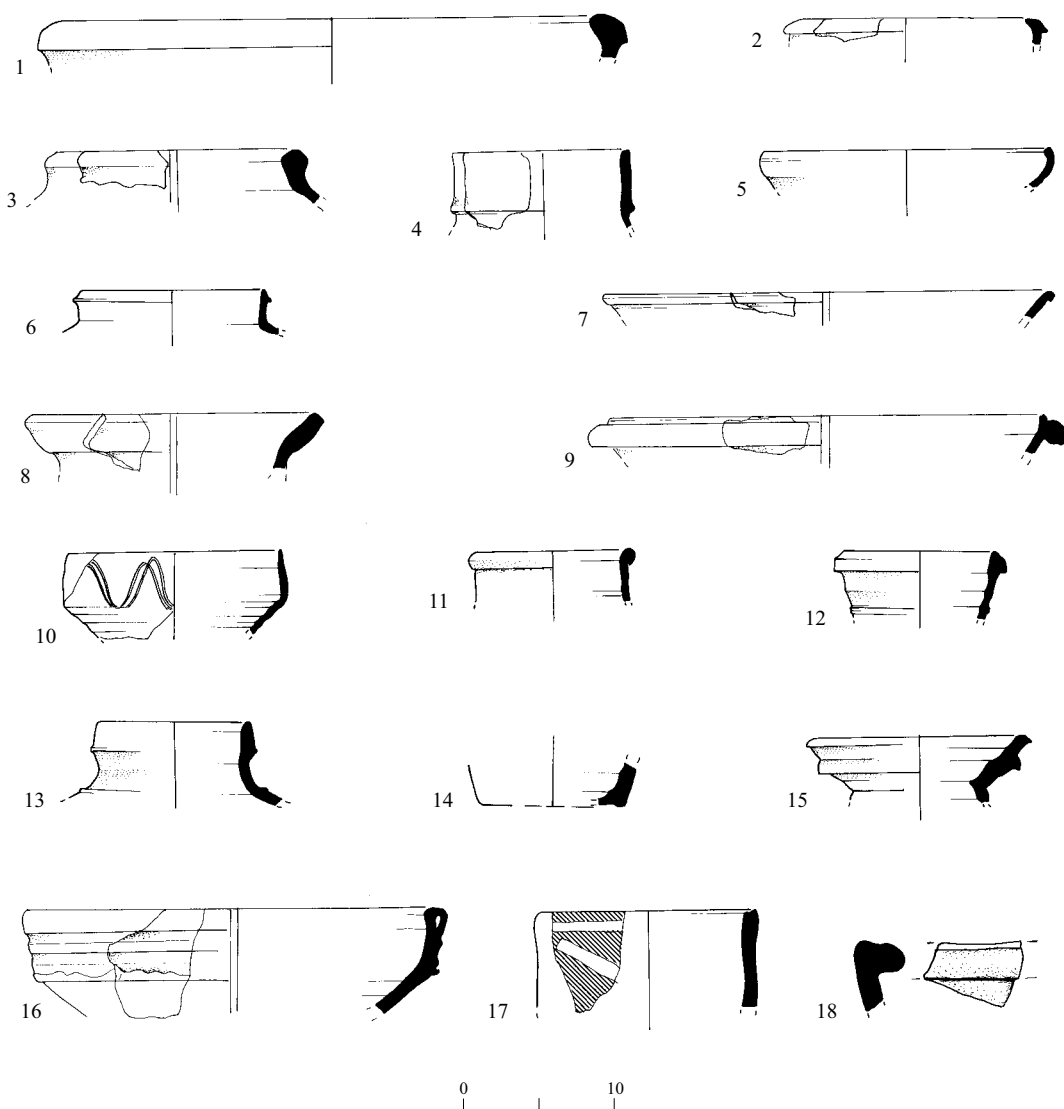


Fig. 4. Pottery: (1, 2) Iron Age II, III; (3, 4) Hellenistic (Hasmonean) period; (5, 6) Early Roman period (late Second Temple period); (7, 8) Late Roman period; (9) Byzantine; (10–14) Early Islamic; (15) medieval; (16) Mamluk; (17) Ottoman; (18) nineteenth century.

*Fragment of a Grayish Marble Slab* (Fig. 3:4; thickness 0.4 m).— The slab is decorated with an intertwining geometric pattern, carved within a frame. The recessed areas are coarsely worked. This marble tablet is characteristic of the stone carving associated with the decorative architectural repertoire of the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. A similar example of this pattern adorns the *sabil* located on the Temple Mount and built by the Mamluk Sultan Qaytbay (Kessler and Burgoyne 1978:258, 261; Fig. 8, Pl. XLIIIa).

*Fragment of a Light Gray Marble Slab* (Fig. 3:5; thickness 0.21 m).— On the surface of this slab are incised lines that were probably marked with a scribe, dividing the area into irregular quadrangles. These marks are indicative of the reuse of the marble tablet (originally intended to cover a floor or wall), possibly for the production of tesserae. Marble mosaics were found in a number of places in Jerusalem, either as an entire surface or in floor repairs. The better known examples were discovered in the excavations of the Umayyad Building III, south of the Temple Mount (Baruch and Reich 1999:132).

#### Pottery (Figs. 4, 5)

Dozens of pottery fragments were collected from the soil heaps; 51 are diagnostic pieces (Fig. 4), including clay oil lamps (Fig. 5), and are presented in Table 1 according to chronological distribution

**Table 1. Chronological Distribution of Pottery**

Period	Number of sherds
Iron II–III	5
Hellenistic	4
Early Roman	9
Roman	6
Byzantine	6
Early Islamic	8
Medieval	2
Mamluk	2
Ottoman	8
Modern era	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>51</i>

The pottery (Fig. 4) ranges from Iron II to the end of the Ottoman period. In presenting the sherds here, no statistical determination whatsoever is implied regarding the division of the entire ceramic assemblage into archaeological periods. Well-known typical specimens were selected to represent the different periods and they are

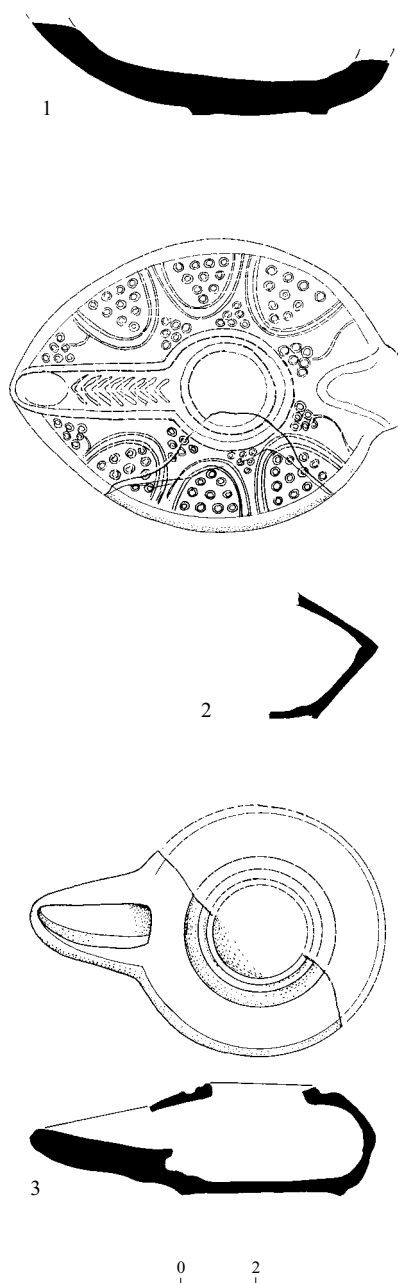


Fig. 5. Oil lamps: (1) Byzantine/Early Islamic; (2) Early Islamic; (3) Mamluk.

presented without typological discussion or parallels, as would be generally customary in archaeological research.

*Tobacco Pipes (Fig. 6)*

Two fragments of Turkish tobacco pipes dating from the beginning of the seventeenth century were among the finds. They appear in different variants throughout the Ottoman period (Poulsen 1957:281/1072).

*Glazed Tiles (Fig. 7)*

Several dozen glazed tile fragments were discovered in each of the heaps examined. They were all made of soft frit and treated with a

flaking alkali glaze in blue, turquoise, black and white. The tiles are decorated with geometrical and floral patterns. They are c. 2 cm thick, except for one which is c. 0.5 cm thick. This type of tile is a local imitation of Kutaya tiles, which were produced in Jerusalem no earlier than the seventeenth century. Glazed tiles were used to cover buildings, including the walls of the Dome of the Rock and other religious edifices of the Ottoman period located in the Temple Mount compound.

*Stone Artifacts (Fig. 8)*

The stone finds included a pyramidal piece, possibly a weight (Fig. 8:1), and a fragment of

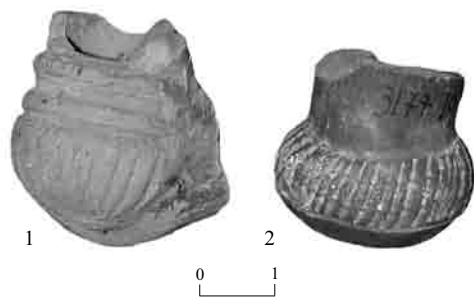


Fig. 6. Tobacco pipes: (1) Buff ware, bright light brown slip. Radial lines around the bowl and vertical ones on its base. (2) Gray ware, glossy, burnished, dark brown slip. Grid pattern on bowl.

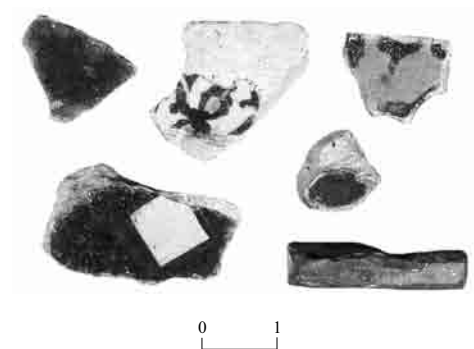


Fig. 7. Glazed tiles.

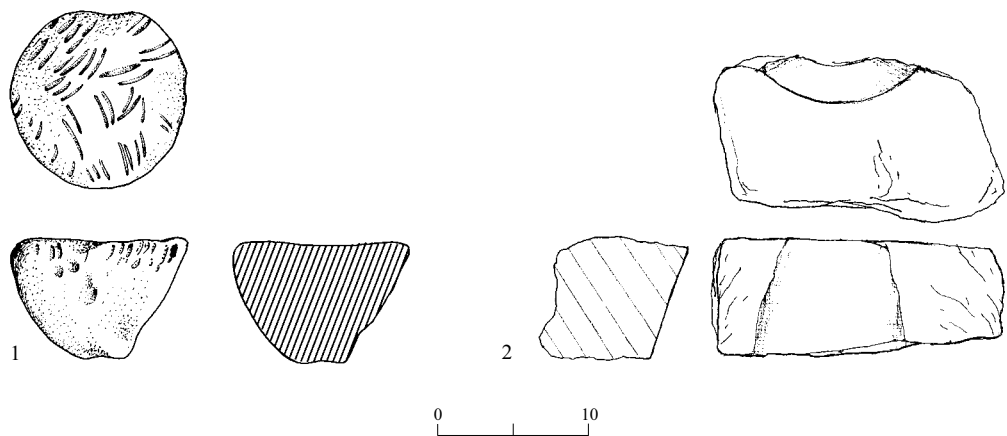


Fig. 8. Stone artifacts: (1) weight(?); (2) grinding basin.

a grinding basin (Fig. 8:2), both made of hard limestone.

#### *Marble Pavements (Fig. 9)*

Six pieces of light gray marble were cemented with white lime bonding material mixed with ash. Four of the pieces are quadrangle, one is rhomboid and one elliptical. They were used as floor inlays in a style common from the Early Islamic period up to the Middle Ages.

#### *Metal Objects (Fig. 10)*

*Quadrangle Lead Plates* (Fig. 10:1— $3 \times 4$  cm; Fig. 10:2— $2.7 \times 3.0$  cm).— Figure 10:1 is decorated with a reticular pattern the length of one side. The use of the plates is unclear. A lead plate, dating to the Byzantine period and decorated with an unclear scene, was discovered in the City of David.<sup>5</sup> It is likely that these plates were used as raw material in construction, as was customary in Mamluk and Ottoman architecture.

*Heads of Two Mushroom-Shaped Copper Nails* (Fig. 10:3—diam. 2.2 cm; Fig. 10:4—diam. 1.5 cm).— The head of Fig. 10:3 is rounded; that of

Fig. 10:4 is pointed. These nails were probably used to secure metalwork, e.g., on furniture, doors and windows.

*Copper Buckle* (Fig. 10:5;  $0.8 \times 3.6$  cm).— The buckle was coated with a thin layer of flaking gold. It is decorated with geometric motifs and its edges are adorned with a frame resembling a string of beads. Based on its size, it was probably used as a garment buckle.

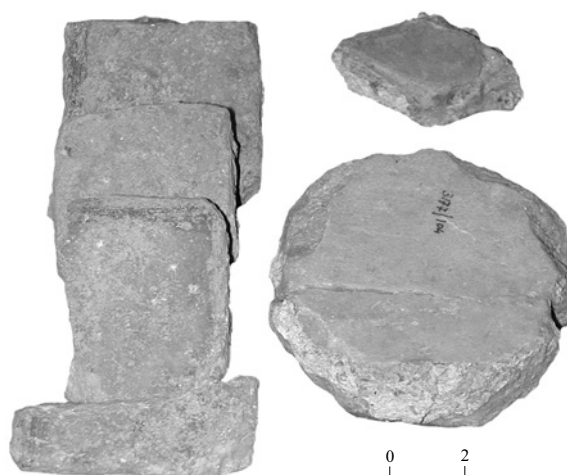


Fig. 9. Marble pavements.

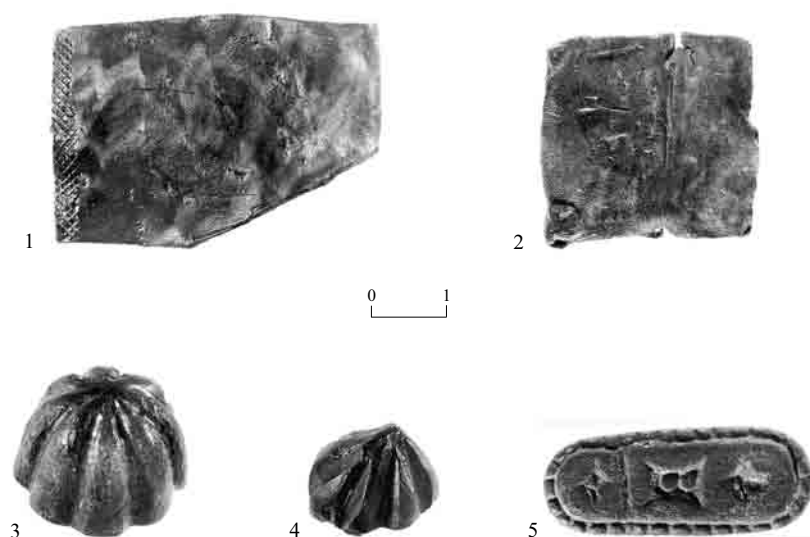


Fig. 10. Metal objects: (1, 2) plates; (3, 4) nail heads; (5) buckle.

## Coins

Ariel Berman

Nineteen coins, thirteen of which were identified, were discovered in the debris removed from the Temple Mount during 1999–2000.<sup>6</sup>

## 1. IAA 92107.

Tiberius; Prefect: Pontius Pilate, Jerusalem, 30 CE.

*Obv.*: TIBEPLOY KAICA[POC] Lituus.

*Rev.*: LIZ within wreath.

Æ, ↑, 2.25 g, 15 mm.

*TJC*:258, No. 333.



## 2. IAA 96309.

Justinian I, Carthage, 548–565 CE.

*Obv.*: Diademed and draped bust r.

*Rev.*: ⚡ within double border.

Æ *nummus*, ↗, 0.56 g, 10 mm.

*MIBE* 1:162, No. 206a.

## 3. IAA 92474.

Constans II, Constantinople, 641/2 CE.

*Obv.*: [- - -] Emperor stg. facing; in r. staff; in l. *globus cruciger*.

*Rev.*: **m** To l.: A/N/A; to r.: ΝΕΟϚ

Æ *folles*, ↑, 4.11 g, 21 mm.

Cf. *DOC* 2:443, No. 59.

## 4. IAA 92472.

Anonymous Umayyad, Iliya Filistin?, Pre-Reform.

*Obv.*: Caliph stg. facing.

*Rev.*: **m**.

Æ, 2.94 g, 16 × 17 mm.

Cf. *Ilisch* 1993:10, No. 3.

## 5. IAA 96308.

Abbasid, ninth century CE.

*Rev.*: □\ □□□\ □□□

Æ *fals*, 0.87 g, 13 × 16 mm.

## 6. IAA 92473.

Abbasid, ninth century CE.

*Obv.*: and *Rev.*: obliterated.

Æ *fals*, 1.54 g, 15 mm. Identification based upon flan.

## 7. IAA 92475.

Guy de Lusignan, Cyprus, 1192–1194 CE.

*Obv.*: [REX GUIDO] Facing crowned bust of the king; pellet l. and r.

*Rev.*: DE IERV[SALEM] Rotunda of the Holy Sepulchre.

Æ *denier*, ↙, 0.96 g, 16 mm.

*Metcalf* 1998:198, No. 7.



## 8. IAA 96224.

Al-Naṣir Naṣir al-Din Muhammad, Dimashq, 1310–1341 CE (= AH 709–741).

*Obv.*: [- - -]

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*Rev.*:

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Æ *fals*, 2.78 g, 18 × 21 mm.

Cf. *Balog* 1964:150–151, Nos. 222–226.

## 9. IAA 92109.

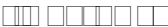
Al-Naṣir Naṣir al-Din Ḥasan, Dimashq, 1348 CE (=AH 749).

*Obv.*: Field divided by two horizontal lines.

Upper segment: □□□□□□

Central segment: □□□ □□ □□□□□□



Lower segment: 

Rev.: Two interwoven tetralobes;

center: 

*Æ fals*, 2.87 g, 16 × 20 mm.

Cf. Balog 1964:187, No. 327.

10. IAA 92471.

Al-Šaliḥ Šalaḥ al-Din Ḥajji II, Dimashq, 1381 CE (= AH 783).

Rev.: Within circle, *eur-de-lis*. Marginal legend obliterated.

*Æ fals*, 2.09 g, 16 × 18 mm.

Balog 1964:243, No. 524.

11. IAA 96310.

Mamlūk, fourteenth century CE.

Obv. and Rev.: obliterated.

*Æ fals*, 1.56 g, 19 × 22 mm. Pierced. Identification based upon flan.

12. IAA 92106.

Mamlūk, end of fourteenth century CE.

Obv.: Field divided by two horizontal lines into three segments

[- - -]



[- - -]

Rev.: Linear hexalobe.

*Æ fals*, 1.24 g, 10 mm. Half coin.

13. IAA 92108.

Mamlūk, fifteenth century CE.

Obv. and Rev.: obliterated.

*Æ fals*, 2.37 g, 18 mm. Identification based upon flan.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In the inspection of the heaps on the slope of the Kidron Valley I was assisted by three workers using a backhoe, whereas the inspections elsewhere were carried out solely by myself (Permit No. A-3177). I would like to thank Yeshu Dray and Amir Ganor (metal detection), Tania Kornfeld (drawing of architectural elements), Carmen Hersch (pottery drawing) and Clara Amit (studio photography). The metal finds were cleaned in the IAA laboratories. The coins were studied by Ariel Berman. Special gratitude is extended to Miriam Avissar for the pottery reading.

During the years 2004–2006 meticulous sifting of the debris heaps in the Kidron Valley was carried out by Gabriel Barkay and others (Barkay and Zwi 2006).

<sup>2</sup> While working on the heaps in the Kidron Valley we noted the remains of a massive wall, built of *debesh* cemented with a hard light gray bonding material; its nature and date are unclear. Very large quantities of

pottery sherds were discovered scattered around the area where the soil heaps were concentrated.

<sup>3</sup> The finds were gathered without authorization by students from Bar-Ilan University, who turned them over to the IAA; they are kept at the IAA, separate from the objects discussed in this report. A paper regarding these finds was presented by Echi Zwi at the 11th conference on new studies on Jerusalem held at Bar-Ilan University in 1999 (unpublished).

<sup>4</sup> The existence of this architectural element was made known to me by IAA colleague Gabi Mazor, to whom I am grateful. I also wish to thank Naomi Sidi, curator at the IAA, for her help in locating the data.

<sup>5</sup> I wish to thank Donald T. Ariel for bringing to my attention the lead plate from the City of David.

<sup>6</sup> The coins were cleaned in the IAA laboratories headed by Ella Altmann, and photographed by Clara Amit. Nos. 1, 2 were identified by Donald T. Ariel; No. 7—by Robert Kool.

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