

BAQA EL-GHARBIYA AREA: THE GLASS VESSELS FROM NAḤAL ḤADERA (NORTH)

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A group of sixteen glass vessels was recovered from Burial Cave 124 in Area B2 in Naḥal Ḥadera (North) in the vicinity of Baqa el-Gharbiya (see Gorzalczany, this volume).¹ Nine vessels were found intact, two were mended and are complete, while others were preserved in fragments. The largest assemblage (seven vessels) was collected from the central chamber of the cave (L2220: Figs. 2:4–6, 9; 3:11, 12; 4:14); smaller vessel groups were recovered from the *kokhim* (L2221: Fig. 3:10; L2222: Figs. 1:1; 2:7, 8; L2223: Figs. 1:2, 2:3, 4:13; L2224: Figs. 5, 6).

All the vessels are blown; one is mold-blown (Fig. 6). Leading colors are bluish green and yellowish green. One item is almost colorless (Fig. 1:2), and one has a yellowish brown tinge (Fig. 2:9). Most of the vessels are made of delicate, shiny fabric, but often with black impurities and bubbles. Only two open shapes (Fig. 1:1, 2) were found, both representing the Early Roman burial phase. Figure 1:1 is a fairly common bowl, while Fig. 1:2 exhibits a rare type of a vase-shaped jar. The rest of the vessels—bottles, cosmetic jars and tubes—belong to a later use of the cave, during the Late Roman period. Most of the vessels have simple shapes. A few items are decorated with a trail (e.g., Fig. 3:10), or pinched (e.g., Fig. 3:11). Indented patterns are common on the jars (e.g., Fig. 2:4–6). Two vessels—an *amphoriskos* (Fig. 5) and a small mold-blown hexagonal juglet (Fig. 6)—are notably rich in ornamentation.

Parallels to the assemblage come mainly from burials of the third–fourth centuries CE, e.g., at Ḥanita (Barag 1978), Kafr 'Ara (Sussman 1976), Samaria (Crowfoot 1957) and the Mount

of Olives, Jerusalem (Bagatti and Milik 1958). The elaborate juglet (Fig. 3:2), exceptional in form and decoration, presents a type rarely published in the country, yet recently registered at Khirbat Badd-'Isa—Qiryat Sefer (Magen, Tzionit and Sirkis 2004).

The group as a whole exhibits certain similarities in shape and pattern, marked by their slightly careless manufacture, probably presenting the work of a local craftsman.

Open Vessels (Fig. 1:1, 2)

1. Bowl. L2222. B22035. Intact. Slightly asymmetrical, deep shape. Rim splayed outward and down, with a broad hollow fold. Base pushed-in with a concavity and low tubular ring. Pontil mark: 2 cm. Light greenish blue. Black and silver patches of weathering. Iridescence. Pitting. Scratches on interior body. H: 6.3 cm; rim diam.: 13.5 cm; base diam.: 6.5 cm.

2. Open vessel. L2223. B22040. Almost complete, parts of body missing, large crack from neck downward. Rim rounded and slightly inverted. Cylindrical, short and broad neck. Bulbous body. Pushed-in base with low tubular ring. Very thin double trail, unevenly wound around neck with visible stem. Pontil mark: 0.8 cm. Colorless with greenish tinge at base. Fine fabric. Patches of blackish silver, enamel-like weathering. Iridescent film. Pitting on rim and lower body. Lime deposits. Elongated horizontal bubbles on rim. H: 7.5 cm; rim diam.: 5.5 cm; base diam.: 4.7 cm.

These two vessels (Fig. 1:1, 2) present the earliest types recovered from the cave. They may be assigned to the family of Roman fine glassware, mainly on the basis of the fabric



Fig. 1.

quality and workmanship, possibly indicating a late first–second-century CE burial phase.

Vessel No. 1 is of the free-blown, plain bowl type, characterized by a splayed-out rim, folded or rounded. This type appeared in the late first century CE both in the Eastern Mediterranean and in Italy (Whitehouse 1997:74, No. 91, and see further references therein). In Israel, similar bowls were found in burials at Gesher Ha-Ziv, generally dated to the second–third centuries CE, although including also earlier finds (Mazar 1994:78, Figs. 3; 14: left, top right photograph). Other parallels come from the first–second-centuries CE burials at Ḥorbat Qaṣṭra² and from the nearby cemetery of Jatt (Masarwa 2004:25*, Fig. 43:1). The similar glass fabric and workmanship characterizing Bowl No. 1 and the bowl from Jatt (despite the latter's cylindrical shape) might point to the existence of a local workshop.

Vessel No. 2 is peculiar in its fine, almost colorless fabric. Its shape is rare, distinguished by its wide bulbous body and very short cylindrical neck; its rim diameter equals that

of its base. A delicate trail below the vessel's neck is also quite unusual. Several comparable versions of the type have a taller neck and incised linear decoration, e.g., a “vase” from Tebtynis, Egypt (Nenna 2000:22, Fig. 3: second vessel in right row) and Ḥorbat Qaṣṭra (*Castra* 1999:19, left photograph), dated to the late first–second centuries CE. Another jar assigned to the first–second centuries CE is in the Israel Museum collection (Israeli 2003:235, No. 295).

Small Jars (Fig. 2:3–6)

3. Jar. L2223. B22042. Intact. Funnel mouth with rounded rim, folded below with uneven ridge, partly closed and partly open. Very short and broad neck. Globular body. Concave base with no pontil mark. Light greenish blue. Patches of blackish silver weathering. Iridescent film. Pitting on rim. Lime deposits. Rounded bubbles at body. H: 8 cm; rim diam.: 6.5 cm; base diam.: 4.7 cm.

4. Jar. L2220. B22033. Intact. Asymmetrical shape. Uneven funnel mouth with rounded rim and open ridge below. Almost no neck. Sack-shaped body



0 2

Fig. 2.

with five rounded asymmetrical indents unevenly set around lower part. Concave base with circular pontil mark: 0.7 cm. Light greenish blue. Patches of blackish silver weathering. Iridescent film. Pitting on rim. Lime crust. Rounded bubbles on body. H: 5.5 cm; rim diam.: 4.3 cm; base diam.: 3.2 cm.

5. Jar. L2220. B22027. Most of body and base missing. Thin-walled. Funnel mouth with rounded rim and shallow open ridge below. Cylindrical, short neck. Oval body with uneven oval-shaped indents around body (four intact). Pale greenish blue. Black patches of enamel-like weathering. Iridescent film. Pitting. Lime deposits. Rim diam.: 4 cm.

6. Jar. L2220. B22025. Intact. Asymmetrical shape. Uneven funnel mouth with rounded rim. Two lines of uneven constrictions at junction of mouth and neck. Sack-shaped body with seven asymmetrical rounded and elongated indents unevenly set around body. Concave and flattened base, with circular pontil mark: 0.5 cm. Light greenish. Iridescent film. Lime crust. Black impurities on rim. Bubbly. H: 5.4 cm; rim diam.: 4.2 cm; base diam.: 2.7 cm.

Jar Nos. 3–6 are of local types. They are made of similar bluish-green glass. Three of the vessels (Nos. 4–6) were found together in L2220 (central chamber). No. 3 was found in the *kokh* (L2223). This type of container usually has a globular (No. 3), ovoid (No. 5) or sack-shaped (Nos. 4, 6) body with a short neck and funnel mouth. All, except No. 6, have a typical fold or open ridge below the rim that was “designed to help tie the covering over the mouth” (Israeli 2003:234). The largest jar (No. 3) is plain; a fold below the rim creates a rounded hollow. It is probably the earliest subtype of these small jars, differing from them in its proportions and more delicate fabric.

Such vessels were used during the third–fifth centuries CE for storing cosmetics or medical ointments. Close parallels are dated to the late third–early fourth centuries CE (Barag 1970:151, Pl. 34: Type 7) and include the Mount of Olives (Bagatti and Milik 1958: Fig. 35:3, 4) and Tomb E220 at Samaria (Crowfoot 1957: Fig. 94:16).

Jar Nos. 4–6 are characterized by their asymmetrical body and decoration of rounded or oval indents. They are miniature versions of a subtype common up to the early fifth century CE. The general form is typically found in burial contexts in the central hills and the foothills of Judea and Samaria, e.g., Beit Fajjar, Tell en-Nasbeh (Barag 1970:151, Pl. 34: Type 7-1), Giv‘at Sharet (Seligman, Zias and Stark 1996:50, Fig. 15:4) and Rafidiya, Shekhem (Hizmi 1997:126, Fig. 6:16).

Parallels dated from the late third to the fifth centuries CE were found nearby, in a burial cave at Kafr ‘Ara (Sussman 1976:99, Pl. 28:3, 4). These jars were probably made in the same local workshop as the jars from Naḥal Ḥadera.

Tubes (Fig. 2:7–9)

7. Tube. L2222. B22036. Rim and upper body missing. Narrow tube-shaped body, unevenly shaped, slightly convex at the middle. Convex, thickened base. Bluish green. Silver iridescence. Pitting. Lime deposits. Body diam.: 1.2 cm.

8. Tube. L2222. B22037. Lower part. Cracked. Contains remains of solid material, possibly soil. Cylindrical body, narrow convex toward base. Base thickened and flattened by the pontil, with small scars of glass underneath. Greenish blue. Silver iridescence. Pitting. Lime deposit. Body diam.: 1.9 cm.

Fragment Nos. 7 and 8 are the lower parts of long tubular vessels. Their complete shape and exact function are uncertain. They may belong to long tubes, widening in mid-section. Such tubes have flaring rims, often unfinished or, probably, broken after extracting their context. The type, found mainly in tombs, was common in the fourth century CE, e.g., Rehovot (Sussman 1969:70, Pl. 13), Rafidiya (Hizmi 1997:125–126, 128, Figs. 6:1, 2; 8:6–8) and Tel Zif (Kapitaikin 1997:103, Fig. 6:23). See also Gorin-Rosen 2002:296, 314, Figs. 5:29–31; 6:32–34, and references therein.

9. Kohl tube. L2220. B22032. Complete. Slightly asymmetrical. Flaring rim, folded inward. Elongated, bag-shaped body, slightly deformed at upper part and

at joint with base. Pushed-in base, forming uneven tubular ring. Uneven constriction at junction of body and base. Originally, two handles might have risen from upper part of body to rim. One handle is missing; the other is partially preserved on rim and body. Pontil mark: 0.5 cm. Yellowish brown. Black and silver patches of weathering. Iridescent film. Lime deposit. Bubbly: large vertical bubbles at neck and body. H: 8.3 cm; rim diam.: 2.7 cm; base diam.: 2.8 cm.

Tube No. 9 is a tubular container with a pushed-in base, plausibly for kohl. It probably had two handles and represents a local type that dates

from the mid-third to the fourth centuries CE (Barag 1970: Pl. 35: Type 1-1; Israeli 2003:227, No. 283, and see further references therein). A very similar vessel with three short handles around the rim, termed a jar, was found in Tomb 4 at Jatt, which was used continuously from the first century until at least the fifth century CE (Porath, Yannai and Kasher 1999:45, Fig. 33:1).

Bottles (Figs. 3, 4)

This group comprises five bottles with either globular (Fig. 3:10, 11), piriform (Fig. 3:12)



Fig. 3.

or cylindrical (Fig. 4:13, 14) bodies. Two of them (Fig. 3:10, 11) are decorated. Although different in shape and proportions, these bottles form a homogenous assemblage distinguished by their fabric quality and craftsmanship. The yellowish hue of the delicate glass dominates this group, as opposed to the bluish green glass that is more common on bottles of the period. Funnel-shaped mouths, constrictions at the junction of necks and bodies, and slightly sloppy shapes, characterize these containers. Most bottles have plain, slightly concave bases, lacking a pontil mark. Figure 3:12 differs in its hollow ring base.

10. Globular Bottle. L2221. B22034. Intact. Funnel mouth with rounded rim. Cylindrical, tall neck. Neck's base misshapen by constriction. Globular body. Thick uneven trail wound twice around mouth. Concave base with pontil mark: 0.8 cm. Light bluish green. Iridescence. Lime crust at mouth and small deposits at body and base. Long vertical bubbles at neck. H: 10.2 cm; rim diam.: 3.3 cm; base diam.: 3.4 cm.

11. Globular Bottle. L2220+2222. B22026+22036. Two fragments: upper and lower parts, most of body missing. Mended. Funnel mouth with uneven rim, partly rounded and partly folded. Cylindrical, tall neck with constriction at junction with body. Globular body with short vertical pinches around lower part (2 intact). Slightly concave base without pontil mark. Yellowish. Silver patches of weathering. Iridescent film. Lime crust at mouth, neck and base. Small black impurities at rim. Bubbly. H: c. 16.5 cm; rim diam.: 4.5 cm; base diam.: 4.8 cm.

12. Piriform bottle. L2220. B22024. Intact. Funnel mouth with unevenly rounded rim. Cylindrical, tall neck with constriction at junction with body. Pear-shaped body. Low base with tubular ring and no pontil mark. Greenish yellow. Blackish patches of weathering. Iridescent film. Lime crust. Large round bubbles at bottom. H: 17.2 cm; rim diam.: 4.4 cm; base diam.: 3.8 cm.

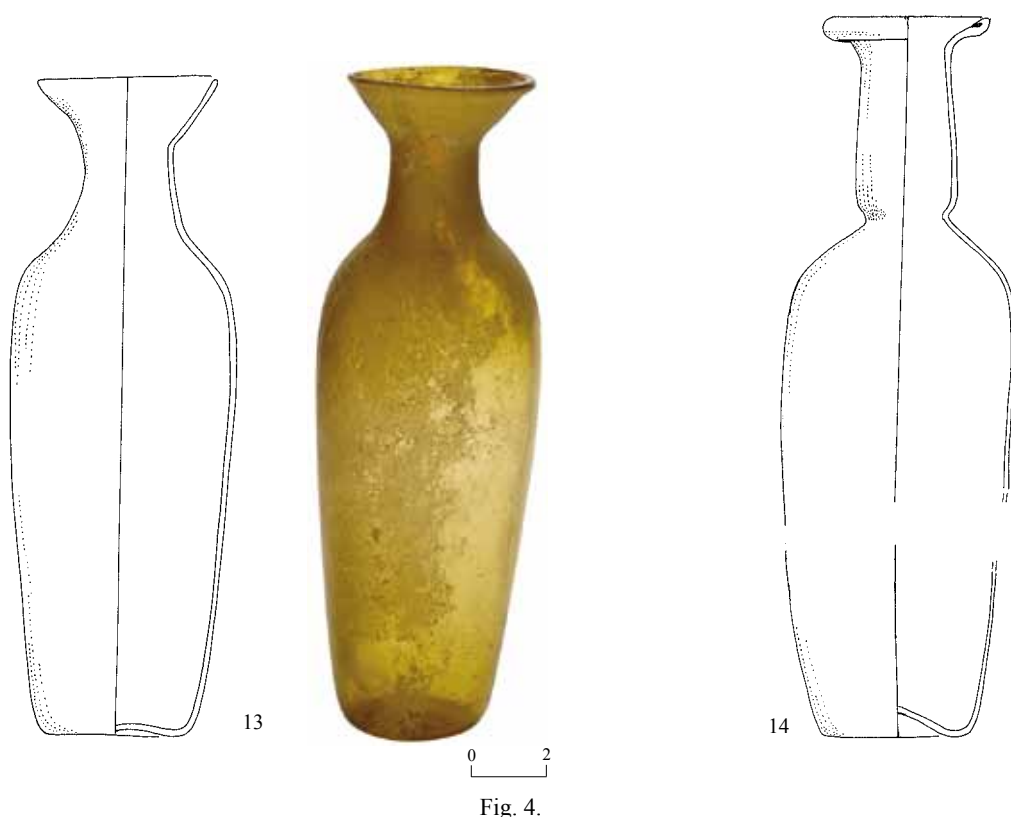
Such bottles exhibit characteristic funnel mouths with rounded rims. They were

probably used for mixing liquids. Number 10, distinguished by its small size, is decorated with a trail below the rim. A similar bottle was found in Tomb 230 at the Mount of Olives (Bagatti and Milik 1958:142, Fig. 33:24). Barag attributed its shape to the fourth century CE (1970:193, Fig. 44: Type 17). Bottle Nos. 11 and 12 are characterized by tall funnel mouths and long cylindrical necks, constricted at the base. Number 11 is exceptional in its pinched decoration. These bottles, with the tall funnel mouth, appeared in the Late Roman period; both Nos. 11 and 12 may be attributed to the late third–fourth centuries CE; however, such versions are rarely published from the country. The type was possibly produced in the region, as attested by two such bottles found at Kafr 'Ara (Sussman 1976: Pl. 28:8, 9); a pinched decoration on one of the bottles resembles that of Bottle No. 11. Bottles decorated with various kinds of pinched ribs are typically found in Tomb XV at Hanita, dating from the late third or possibly early fourth century CE (Barag 1978:34, Fig. 12, Nos. 49, 50). Some of these bottles have low tubular ring bases, similar to that of No. 12.

13. Cylindrical bottle. L2223. B22041. Intact. Slightly asymmetrical. Funnel mouth with partly rounded, partly folded rim. Cylindrical, short neck. Cylindrical narrow body. Almost flattened base with no pontil mark. Greenish yellow. Blackish white patches of weathering. Iridescence. Lime crust. Small rounded bubbles on body. H: 17.3 cm; rim diam.: 4.8 cm; base diam.: 3.5 cm.

14. Cylindrical bottle. L2220. B22030+22027. Two fragments: upper and lower parts, probably the same vessel. Crack at rim and neck. Flaring rim, unevenly folded inward. Cylindrical, short neck with constriction at junction with body. Cylindrical, narrow body. Concave base with no pontil mark. Greenish yellow. Iridescence. Pitting. Lime deposits. H: c. 19 cm; rim diam.: 4.5 cm; base diam.: 4 cm.

Numbers 13 and 14 belong to a type characterized by its cylindrical narrow body and cylindrical short neck. Bottle No. 13 has a



funnel mouth with a rounded rim. Bottle No. 14 differs in its higher neck and flaring, folded inward rim. Similar bottles of both forms were found at Samaria-Sebaste (Hamilton 1939:68, Fig. 2a, b). Bottle No. 13 appears from the late third to the fourth centuries CE, while Bottle No. 14 was common mainly in the late fourth century CE (Barag 1970:206, 207, Type 18, Fig. 45:1, 4).

Amphoriskos-Shaped Bottle (Fig. 5)

15. *Amphoriskos*. L2224. B22044. Intact. Asymmetrically shaped. Everted rounded rim. Cylindrical tall neck with slight constriction at junction with body. Piriform body with eight oval-shaped, uneven vertical indents around lower part. Pushed-in base with tubular uneven ring. Scar of pontil underneath (diam. 1.2 cm). Two small handles join neck's bottom and top of body, continuing down the sides in notched trails with unevenly shaped edges. Greenish yellow.

Pale greenish handles and trails. Black impurities at trails. Blackish patches of weathering. Iridescence. Light lime deposits. Lower body bubbly, with large open bubble, oval shaped. H: 16.5 cm; rim diam.: 2 cm; base diam.: 4 cm.

This *amphoriskos*-shaped bottle has a typically elongated body and two small ring handles, probably for suspension. The handles are of a color different from the rest of the vessel, running in notched trails down the sides of the body. Such vessels are characteristic of the fourth century CE, and are found in many collections, yet rarely have they been published from excavations (Israeli 2003:264, No. 347, and see further references to Petra, 'Amman and Ḥorbat Qaṣṭra). A violet bottle similar in shape to No. 15, but with a plain body, was recently found in a fourth-century tomb at Ḥorbat Raqiq, north of Be'er Sheva' (Negev 1998:105, Fig. 199:1). Number 15, with its

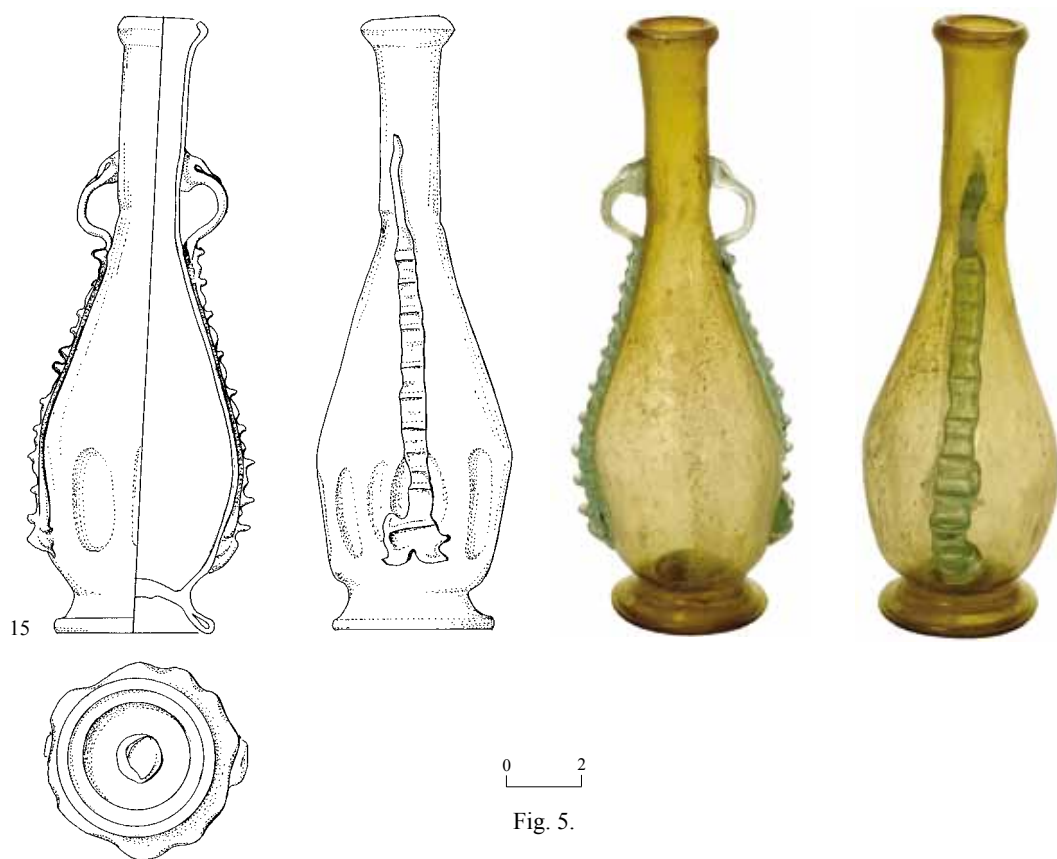


Fig. 5.

lower body decorated with a row of elongated uneven dents, has no parallels in the country. The indented decoration style of this vessel resembles that of the cosmetic jars discussed above (Fig. 2:4–6), which may well have been made by the same craftsman.

Mold-Blown Juglet (Fig. 6)

16. Juglet. L2224. B22043. Intact. Small interior crack at neck's base. Mold-blown. Unevenly shaped (pinched?) funnel mouth with an inward folded rim. Octagonal body with mold-blown design of diagonal relief ribbing (ribs closely set). Concave, rosette-shaped base, thickened in the center, each of the petals finished with rounded bosses. Pale bluish green. Iridescent film. Pitting. Light lime deposits. Small black impurities at rim. Horizontal bubbles

below rim, vertical bubbles at neck; rounded bubbles with inclusions on upper body and handle; elongated twisted bubbles around base. Polished scar of pontil (diam. 1.5 cm). H: 13.4 cm; rim diam.: 3.8–4.5 cm; base diam.: 4.5–4.7 cm.

Number 16 is a rare polygonal juglet; its body is decorated with spiral ribs descending from left to right. A rosette, with petals ending in eight rounded bosses, adorns the bottom of its base. The body of the vessel is double-blown into a mold, while the neck is free blown. First, its diagonal pattern was obtained by rotating the bubble when it was removed from the mold with the rib pattern. Then the vessel was inflated into an octagonal, smooth-walled mold, with an ornamented bottom. The upper borders of the mold are visible around the shoulders. Such



Fig. 6.

decoration, which occurs already in the third century CE, was especially popular on vessels of the fourth century CE and later (Barag 1978:27, No. 52); however, the octagonal shape of the container rarely appears during that period. The few excavated examples include a fourth-century CE jug, very similar to No. 16 in color, shape and decoration, from Khirbat Badd 'Isa—Qiryat Sefer (Magen, Tzionit and Sirkis 2004:216, Pl. 9:34). Another parallel, from the Ernesto Wolf Collection, is a jug made of deep purple glass, which differs slightly from No. 16 in form and lacks a pattern on the bottom. It is dated to the late fourth century CE and its provenance is in the northwestern part of the Roman Empire (Stern 2001:184–185, Cat. No. 77, see references therein for Thessaloniki and Lower Pannonian graves).

CONCLUSIONS

The vessels retrieved from the unexcavated burial cave at Naḥal Ḥadera form an incomplete, yet significant, assemblage of mainly intact vessels. They reflect two burial phases: one from the late first–second centuries CE and the other, from the late third–fourth centuries CE. This group provides new data concerning glass offerings in burial caves of the coastal plain during the Roman period. The cited parallels point to a certain resemblance to the repertoire from the Sharon plain and Samaria. Compared with other similar tomb-groups from the country, this assemblage includes a rare version of a mold-blown juglet (Fig. 6), alongside fairly common types, apparently produced in the same local workshop, possibly located in Samaria.

NOTES

¹ I wish to thank Amir Gorzalczany for inviting me to publish these vessels. The artifacts were restored by Olga Shorr, drawn by Carmen Hersh and photographed by Clara Amit. Thanks are due to Yael

Gorin-Rosen for her assistance and helpful advice during the preparation of this report.

² Courtesy of Ze'ev Yeivin and Gerald Finkielsztejn, IAA.

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