

THE GLASS FINDS FROM ARAB KEFAR SAVA

NATALYA KATSNELSON

A small number of glass fragments were retrieved during salvage excavations conducted in 2004 on the southern border of Arab Kefar Sava (see Gorzalczany, this volume). The site yielded 42 poorly preserved items originating in the Early Islamic occupation (Phase II) and a cemetery dating to the Ottoman period (Phase I); in addition, two specimens are assigned to the fourth–early fifth centuries CE (Fig. 1:1, 2). The vessel fragments in Fig. 1:1–6 originated in the earthen fill of Phase II, which covered a kiln and graves (Loci 100–102, 110). A decorated bracelet (Fig. 1:7), a plaque (Fig. 1:8) and a group of resin and glass beads (Fig. 2) were recovered in the burial of an adult female from the Ottoman period (L107, see discussion in Gorzalczany, this volume). In addition, small chunks of raw glass retrieved together with minor remnants of blown vessels (L110, B1039) may be indicative of glass-production activities in the area during the Byzantine–Early Islamic periods. A number of sites providing evidence of glass production have been reported in surveys in the area of Kefar Sava (Roll and Ayalon 1989:161, 169, 217–221).

The Byzantine Period

1. Beaker; L101, B1019. Flat, solid base and beginning of walls. Bluish-green blown glass. Crust of rusty yellow and silver weathering, iridescence, large round bubbles. Large pontil mark underneath the base (1.8 cm). Base diam: 3.5 cm.

2. Bowl(?); L101, B1019. Small fragment of trail-wound base. Three winds of trail preserved. Pale greenish blown glass. Crust of silver weathering, pitted. Base diam.: c. 8 cm.

Fragments Nos. 1 and 2 belong to vessels characteristic of the fourth–early fifth centuries CE. They may be indications of the earliest settlement phase (not supported by ceramic evidence).

No. 1 is a very common type of beaker characterized by its solid base. Dating from the fourth century CE, it was widespread in northern Israel, as well as in other regions. A large quantity of similar beakers was found at Khirbat el-Ni'ana near Lod, and may possibly have been produced there (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2007:93, Fig. 8:3–9).

No. 2 is a small part of a wound base formed by a trail. Dozens of similar bases attributed to bowls of the fourth–early fifth centuries CE were found at Khirbat el-Ni'ana, where this type was evidently manufactured (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2007:88–90, Fig. 7).

The Early Islamic Period

3. Bottle; L100, B1037. Fragment of rim, neck and beginning of shoulder. Upright rim, misshapen, short cylindrical neck. Pale, greenish blue blown glass. Crust of rusty black weathering, iridescent film, severely pitted. Rim diam.: 2.5 cm.

This type of bottle has a short cylindrical necks and usually a globular or squat body. This type first appeared during the Umayyad period, but was common in the Abbasid period. Similar fragments have been found in the Abbasid levels at Ramla (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2005:103, 110, Figs. 1:4; 3:30; see there further references to Bet She'an and Caesarea).

4. Beaker; L102, B1009. Part of body and base. Flat thickened base, slanting walls. Colorless blown glass with greenish tinge. Rusty black and silver weathering on interior, iridescence, severely pitted.

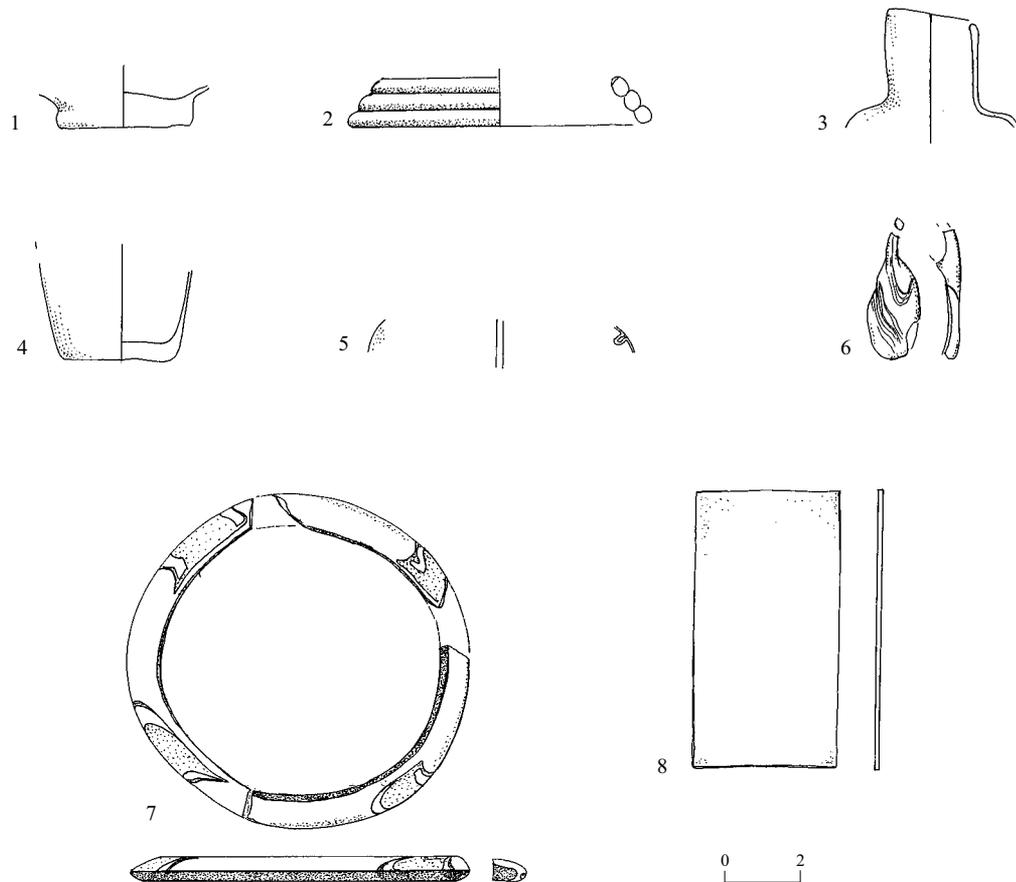


Fig. 1. Glass finds.

Pontil mark on base bottom: diam. 1.5 cm. Base diam.: 2.7 cm.

The shape and colorless fabric of this vessel are characteristic of Early Islamic beakers. A similar fragment was found at Tiberias in Stratum I (tenth–eleventh centuries CE; Lester 2004:174–175, Fig. 7.3:41, see there further examples dating from the eighth–thirteenth centuries CE).

5. Oil lamp or bottle; L100, B1037. Small body fragment with inner fold. Thin-walled, delicate fabric. Greenish blown glass. Iridescence.

This small fragment belongs to a small lamp or bottle. The inner fold between the neck and the shoulder may have had an aesthetic or functional purpose. A similar colorless fragment identified as a small Fatimid lamp was found in Stratum II at Tiberias (Lester 2004:199, Fig.

7.11:151, see there further examples from the late Byzantine to Medieval periods).

6. Oil lamp; L102, B1005. Part of wall and small handle. Colorless blown glass. Small patches of blackish silver weathering, iridescence, severely pitted.

No. 6 is the handle of a suspended lamp with the typical flattened-drop shape of ‘mosque’ lamps. Similar handles, varying in size and thickness, were recovered at Tiberias in Strata III–I, dating from the late eighth to the eleventh centuries CE (Lester 2004:199–201, Fig. 7.12:153–157; see further references therein).

The Ottoman Period

7. Three fragments of a bracelet; L107, B1041. Obliquely pointed cross section with flattened top and underside. Yellowish brown, transparent glass coated

on the outer surface with a layer of pale green opaque glass; pattern on the top combines dark brownish red patches and creamy yellow and green trails. Brownish gray weathering on the inner side, pitted.

This piece of jewelry was found in a woman's burial assigned by the excavator to the eighteenth century CE, although the actual date of the bracelet is problematic. Its obliquely pointed shape, flattened at the top and bottom, and the style of decoration resemble 'colorful' pre-Ottoman bracelets that were produced in the Levant during the late thirteenth–sixteenth centuries CE (Spaer 2001:196, Fig. 85; 203, Cat. No. 471). However, the design of No. 7 is simpler than that of the Mamluk examples and may also represent a later version (Spaer 2001:203, Cat. Nos. 474, 475).

8. Plaque; L107, B1040. Flat, rectangular shape, smoothed on both sides, finished on all four edges. Colorless glass. Thin layer of milky silver iridescence. Length: 7.4 cm, width: 3.7 cm, thickness: 1.2 cm.

The actual function of this object is uncertain. It may have been a mirror plaque or plain inlay that bears no trace of paint. The plaque was probably affixed to a textile, remains of which were also discerned in the tomb. Such mirror plaques played a role in magical rituals known in Syro-Palestinian burials from the fifth century CE and in Europe from the Late Medieval period. A very similar plaque was recovered from the Mamluk occupation phase at Khirbat el-Ni'ana (Gorin-Rosen and

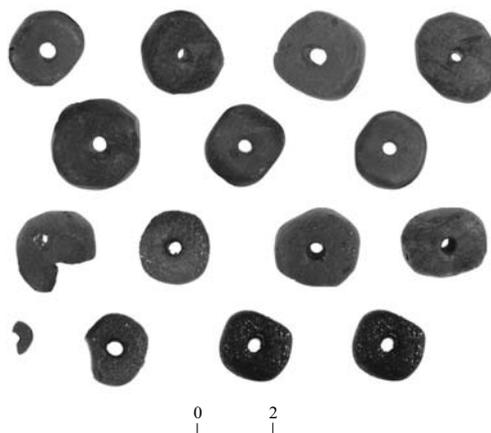


Fig. 2. Glass beads.

Katsnelson 2007:149, Fig. 40:5, see there further references to inlaid objects serving in burial practices in the region).

9. Small beads; L107, B.1043 (Fig. 2). Fourteen resin beads, two beads of colorless glass, one bead of red opaque glass. All the beads are small, rounded and flattened. The resin beads are strongly weathered and partially broken.

These small plain beads may have comprised a necklace. Resin beads used as a cheaper substitute for amber and stone beads are common finds in local burials from the Byzantine period onward (Katsnelson 2002:323, 327, Figs. 1:27; 2:21). The fabric and workmanship of the glass beads point to local workshops of the Ottoman period.

NOTE

¹ I wish to thank Amir Gorzalczany for enabling me to publish this material. The artifacts were

restored by Olga Shorr, drawn by Carmen Hersh and photographed by Clara Amit.

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