

## AN Umayyad GLASS ASSEMBLAGE FROM RAMLA

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### INTRODUCTION

During excavations in the vicinity of Ramla (see Shmueli, this volume), a homogeneous assemblage of glass vessels was uncovered in the lower part of an installation (L103), which was apparently used as a cesspit.<sup>1</sup> The glass fragments were restored to produce at least 36 vessels, including bowls and beakers, bottles, jugs, a jar, an oil lamp and a miniature spouted vessel. Despite the diversity of vessel types, this group is homogeneous in its fabric, workmanship and date, and is therefore very important for the study of the chronology and typology of Early Islamic glass.

Part of the assemblage was previously published (Gorin-Rosen 2008), alongside a few of the more typical Umayyad vessel types from the excavations south of the White Mosque (Avni et al. 2008). The publication of Islamic glass from Ramla, including a section on Umayyad vessels, appears within the report on the Hebrew University excavations north of the White Mosque (Gorin-Rosen 2010). Another glass assemblage that includes some Umayyad types was found on Marcus Street, Ramla (Pollak 2007). Several Umayyad vessels are also mentioned in the report on the glass from the excavations at ‘Opher Park, Ramla (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2005). In addition, there is a growing body of published Umayyad-period vessels from glass assemblages excavated in Ramla (see, e.g., Gorin-Rosen 2011a; 2011b; Katsnelson 2011; 2013; Winter 2013).

Early Islamic groups with similar Umayyad vessels were found in the vicinity of Ramla, for example at Ḥorbat ‘Illin (Upper) (Katsnelson

2012), and at Khirbat el-Thahiriya (Jackson-Tal 2012).

The glass repertoire of the Umayyad period (661–750 CE) mainly represents the continuity of Roman and Byzantine traditions, with several new vessel types and decoration techniques. This is now widely accepted among glass scholars, who have abandoned the use of terms such as “Byzanto-Umayyad”, “Late Byzantine/Early Umayyad,” or the more general term “Early Islamic” to describe this group of vessels (see, for example, Meyer 1988:180–181; Lester 1996:202; Gorin-Rosen 2010:214–215, with further discussion and references therein). The major shift in shapes and fabrics occurred at the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century. This phenomenon was also noted by Yoko Shindo in studying the glass finds retrieved from Fustat (Shindo 2000:236):

Firstly, even after Egypt was conquered by the Arabs in the middle of the 7th cent., the Roman glass-making tradition persisted at least until the end of the eighth cent. We have seen in Fustat finds a continuity in glass fabrics, techniques and shapes that are common to those of Roman glass. Furthermore, ingots of the same composition found there indicates that those products were manufactured in Fustat. Secondly, it was between the late 8th cent. and the beginning of the 9th cent. that the style of the glass vessels shifted from Roman to Islamic.

The shapes and fabrics of the Ramla glass assemblage under discussion conform with this assessment.

Very few Umayyad glass assemblages from the eastern Mediterranean have been

published to date. There are several reasons for this. First, the material from this period is very similar to the late Byzantine corpus, and therefore, it was hard to distinguish and date the types to this very short period. Second, most well-dated, excavated complexes yielded a limited, fragmentary assemblage of simple daily tableware (e.g., the sealed Umayyad collapse found at Busra—Wilson and Sa'd 1984:75, 146–147). The most extensive work on Umayyad glass vessels was conducted on the finds from Bet She'an (Hadad 2005). On the other hand, luxury vessels, some of which even have dateable inscriptions, lack exact provenance or archaeological context. Moreover, the majority of complete examples of even simple shapes are found only in collections. For this reason, we often have to refer to parallels from collections in order to clarify the entire shape of a vessel.

An eighth-century dating—particularly the first half of the eighth century (i.e., Umayyad)—is cautiously posited for the glass assemblage in question. This assumption stems from the fact that all of the specimens in this group bear a large similarity to previous traditions, which were well-established in the region during the seventh century. Even if a few of the vessels continued in use later in the eighth century, our supposition still stands. Were the assemblage to be placed in the mid-eighth century, it would have been expected that beginnings of the later styles would be present in larger quantities. For this reason, it is assumed that the glass repertoire, belonging to the Umayyad period, represents the earliest use of this pit, whereas the pottery found continued to be deposited in later periods (see Shmueli, this volume).

#### THE FINDS

##### *Bowls, Oil Lamps and Beakers*

Early Islamic bowls and beakers differ in shape and decoration from their Roman and Byzantine predecessors, and subsequent later forms. Roman and Byzantine glass bowls

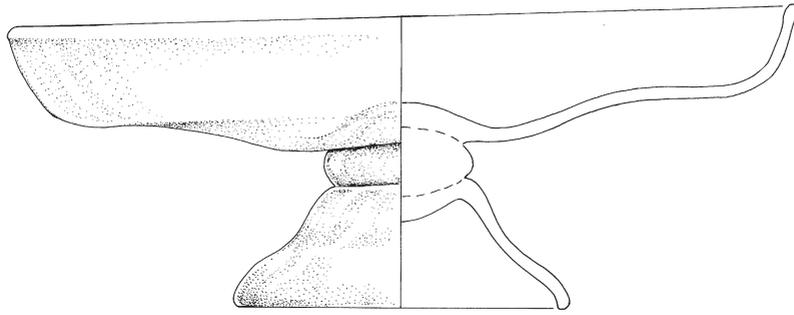
usually have flaring or upright out-folded rims, slanting walls or S-shaped profiles, and tubular base-rings. During the Umayyad period, this type almost completely disappears, save for a few specimens (e.g., Nos. 3–5).

Umayyad bowls and beakers are characterized by spherical shapes, curving walls, rounded rims and flat or concave bases (Nos. 6–16). The same shapes were used for bowls, beakers and oil lamps. Generally, the division between the functional forms was no longer clear when compared to earlier and later “classical” shapes in the history of glass production.

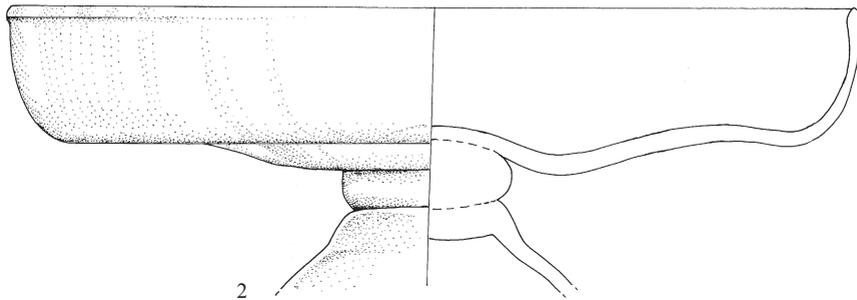
*Footed Shallow Bowls* (Fig. 1:1, 2).— Two unique footed bowls were found: the first is complete, and the second is missing its base. The bowls have three parts: the upper part is a shallow bowl; the middle is an applied blob, which could be described as a short beaded stem; and below this is an applied foot. There is no published parallel for this vessel from Israel and neighboring countries. The only parallel is a bowl published by Lamm, which was found in Šōsōin, China, in a burial dated to 754–756 CE (Lamm 1929–1930:29, Taf. 1:20). A fragment of a base and foot from a late Byzantine/Early Umayyad context in Jerash bears similarities to these vessels (Meyer 1988:202, Fig. 9:m).

1. Footed shallow bowl, very large. Almost complete vessel, missing part of the rim. Mended. Greenish blue. No weathering. Small, medium and large bubbles, a few impurities and blowing spirals. Flaring rounded rim, shallow curving thick wall. The bottom is pushed in by the applied blob. High foot applied to the connecting blob with pontil scar (diam. 1.7 cm). The lower part of the foot is rounded. Rim diam. 20.8 cm, base diam. 8.8–9.0 cm, height 7.6 cm. See Gorin-Rosen 2008:45–46.

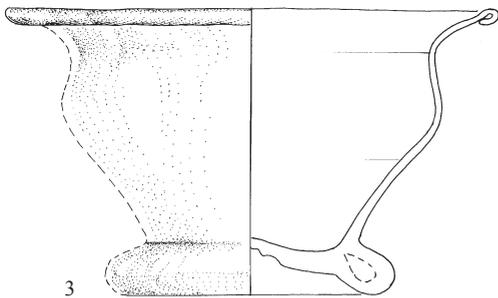
2. Footed shallow bowl, very large. Almost complete profile. Mended. Missing parts of the rim, body and base. Greenish blue. No weathering. Small- and medium-sized bubbles and blowing spirals. Flaring rounded rim, shallow curving thick wall. The bottom is pushed in by the applied blob. High foot applied to



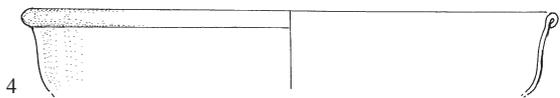
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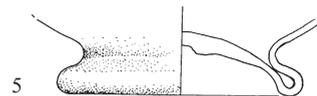
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3



4



5



Fig. 1. Bowls.

the connecting blob with pontil scar (diam. 1.5 cm). Fairly fine fabric. Rim diam. 22.5 cm, base diam. 8–9 cm, height ~8 cm.

*Bowls with Out-Folded Rims and Tubular Base-Rings* (Fig. 1:3–5).— One complete bowl (No. 3) and two separate fragments of a rim and base (Nos. 4, 5) were found in the installation. Bowl Nos. 3 and 4 bear similarities to Late Roman and early Byzantine forms, with some differences in workmanship and fabric. These fragments probably belong to the Umayyad period, representing the continuity of old traditions into the new Islamic world. They appear only in the Umayyad period and almost completely disappear afterward (although similar bowls are known in medieval times).

Bowls with flaring, out-folded rims were found on Marcus Street, Ramla (Pollak 2007:101–102, Fig. 1:1, 2). Pollak (2007:101) refers to parallels from Umayyad (Bet She'an and Caesarea) and later contexts for the first example; however, she dated it to the eleventh century. The second example was found in the lower fill of a pit or cistern (L213) that contained a large quantity of glass typical of the eighth and first half of the ninth centuries CE (Pollak 2007:101). Two rims of type No. 3 were found at Khirbat el-Thahiriya, within a group of glass vessels dated to the Early Islamic periods (Jackson-Tal 2012:57\*, Fig. 1:2, 4). A rim similar to No. 3 was found in an Umayyad context at Bet She'an (Hadad 2005:21, Pl. 3:54).

Base No. 5 is thinner and of better workmanship than that of No. 3. Similar bases were found on Marcus Street, Ramla, together with an out-folded rim with an applied basket handle, which probably belonged to the same vessel (Pollak 2007:101–103, Fig. 1:6). Pollak stated that “both fragments were recovered in Locus 213 that contained a large group of vessels of similar nature, pointing to an eighth or ninth centuries date.” Two bases of this type were found within an Umayyad assemblage in the excavations north of the White Mosque (Gorin-Rosen 2010:220, Pls. 10.1:9; 10.2:7,

and see there further references to Pella and Kh. Tinani, Haifa, dated to the seventh–eighth centuries).

3. Deep bowl. Complete profile. Mended. Complete base and small part of wall and rim. Most of the body is missing. Greenish blue. Slight sand deposits and iridescence. A few medium-sized bubbles, black impurities and spirals of blowing. Flaring, out-folded rim. S-shaped wall profile. Uneven, hollow tooled-out tubular base. Pontil scar with traces of glass (diam. 1.1 cm). Rather thick wall on the lower part of the bowl. The rim and the base show deformation, probably during the annealing process. Rim diam. 13 cm, base diam. 7.6 cm, height 7.5 cm. See Gorin-Rosen 2008:45–46.

4. Bowl. Rim and wall fragment. Light green. Slight sand deposits. A few small bubbles. Slightly flaring rim, unevenly folded-out with small hollow. Rim diam. 14 cm.

5. Bowl. Almost complete base and wall fragment. Light green glass with yellowish green streaks. Slight sand deposits and iridescence. Bubbly glass. Pushed-in concave bottom with tooled-out hollow ring base. Crude pontil scar with traces of glass from the pontil (diam. 1.5 cm.). Base diam. 6.4 cm.

*Oil Lamps* (Fig. 2:6, 7).— Only one fragment (No. 7) could be identified as an oil lamp with certainty. It is the lower part of an oil lamp with an applied wick-tube in its center. Rim No. 6 may belong to the same vessel. This type of oil-lamp, usually with three small applied handles, was very common during the Byzantine period and continues into the Umayyad period. The Byzantine specimens are usually characterized by tapering walls and flaring rims, while the Umayyad shapes are very similar to contemporary beakers with curving rims and more rounded shapes. Such beakers (e.g., Nos. 8–13) may have also been used as lamps.

A similar incurving rim, although with a slightly wider fold, was found on Marcus Street, Ramla, where two more examples with a vertical rim were catalogued (Pollak

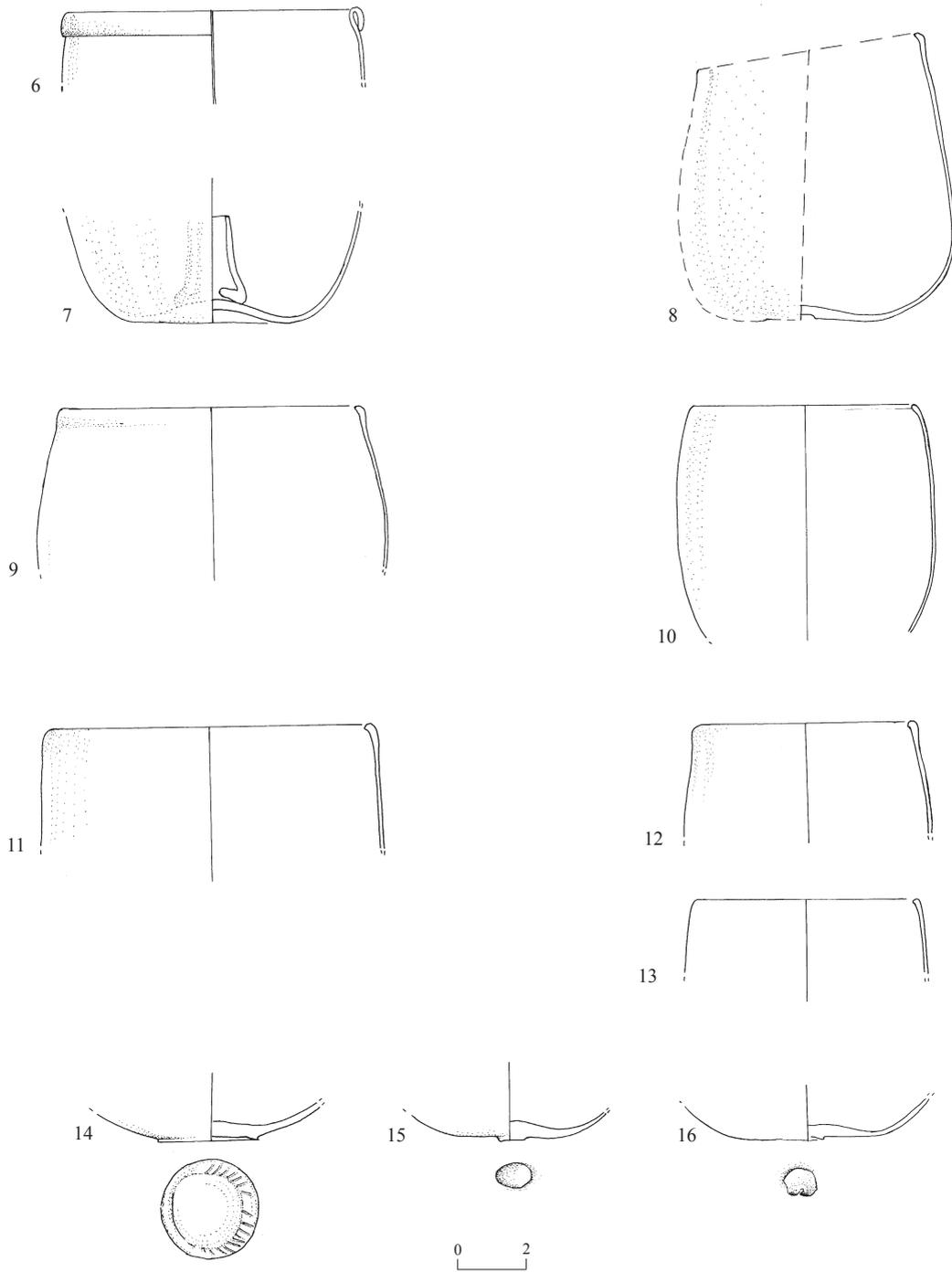


Fig. 2. Oil lamps (6, 7) and bowls/beakers (8–16).

2007:101–103, Fig. 1:8). The date of this rim was based on other finds found in the same context, dated from the ninth to eleventh centuries. One of the other bowls from the same excavation, with a vertical out-folded rim, was found just above the sand with several ceramic vessels characteristic of the eighth century CE (Pollak 2007:101, Fig. 1:7). Two types of oil lamps were found in the excavations north of the White Mosque at Ramla, dating to the Umayyad period (Gorin-Rosen 2010:221–222, Pl. 10.1:11, 12): one follows the Byzantine tradition, with a flaring out-folded rim and three handles, while the second, with a rim similar to No. 6, is decorated with an applied vertical trail in a different color from the rim downward. This type of decoration seems to replace the typical Byzantine handles, and indicates that beakers were used as oil lamps.

Two lower portions of oil lamps with wick-tubes were found on Marcus Street, Ramla (Pollak 2007:114–116, Fig. 7:40, 41). Pollak stated that “At Ramla, most of the lamps with wick tubes appeared in loci of eighth and mainly ninth century CE contexts.” Her No. 41 is most similar to the fragment presented here, which was made of two different colors: the body is of deep bluish green glass and the wick-tube is of purple brownish glass (Pollak 2007:116, No. 41). Both colors, as well as the combination of the two, are very characteristic of the Umayyad period and were identified on various types of vessels and decorations attributed to the Umayyad tradition. The lower part of an oil lamp of the same type was found at Bet She’an in an Umayyad context (Hadad 2005:29, Type 1, Pl. 22:423, and further references therein).

6. Bowl/oil lamp. Rim and wall fragment. Light yellowish green glass. Few sand deposits. A few medium-sized bubbles. Slightly curved-in, hollow, uneven out-folded rim. Thin wall. Rim diam. 8.6 cm.

7. Oil lamp. Lower part of vessel. Yellowish green glass. Sand deposits. Bubbly glass with black impurities. Slightly concave bottom, with applied

short wick-tube in its center. The upper part of the wick tube is knocked-off unevenly. Curving wall. Remains of the pontil (diam. 0.7 cm). Base diam. ~5 cm. See Gorin-Rosen 2008:45–46.

*Bowls and Beakers with Rounded Incurving Rims* (Fig. 2:8–16).— These vessels have a slightly thickened, rounded, incurving rim (Nos. 8–13), and a flattened or slightly concave base (Nos. 8, 14–16). Only No. 8 shows the complete shape, while all the rest are fragments of additional beakers.

Rims of this type are characteristic of the late Byzantine and Umayyad periods (see further discussion in Gorin-Rosen 2010:215, 218). They belong to deep bowls or beakers, sometimes decorated with applied fused-in trails of a color different from the vessel. The trail decoration usually appears on the rim’s edge or below the rim. The beakers found in this assemblage are plain, unadorned and characterized by very thin and delicate walls in comparison to their parallels (see below). These beakers were probably used for drinking, replacing the Byzantine wineglasses, but also as oil lamps, as attested by the addition of a wick-tube in their center or the addition of trail decorations (Gorin-Rosen 2008:45).

Many vessels of this type were found at Ramla in various salvage excavations. A complete vessel, although larger and with a different color trail on the rim’s edge, was found in an Umayyad assemblage found north of the White Mosque (Gorin-Rosen 2010:215–218, Pl. 10.1:1, and see further references therein to Marcus Street, Ramla, Caesarea, Ashdod, Khirbat al-Karak, Siyar el-Ghanam near Bethlehem and Jerash).

As mentioned above, all of the rims from this assemblage (Nos. 8–13) are characterized by their fine thin walls and incurving plain rims. Similar vessels, as well as delicate rims, have a wide distribution, with some complete examples displaying rows of pinched decoration on the body, another characteristic of the Umayyad period. A few examples were found in Umayyad contexts at Bet She’an (Hadad 2005:21, Pls.

1:2, 14–15, 23–26—plain; 4:80–81—with pinched decoration, and see further references therein to Umayyad-dated parallels, including Caesarea and Khirbat el-Shubeika, and Qal‘at Sem‘an and Palmyra in Syria).

The bases are usually thick and slightly concave, like No. 15, or flat, like No. 14, as in the examples from Ashdod (Barag 1967a:36–37, Fig. 16:14) and Siyar el-Ghanam (Corbo 1955: Fig. 25:4). A complete beaker of this type, with a rim similar to those mentioned above and a base like Nos. 15 and 16, was found in Burial Cave 1 at Khirbat el-Shubeika; it is decorated on the lower body with pinches and dated to the Umayyad period (Gorin-Rosen 2002:299–300, Fig. 7:53, and see further references therein to Bet She’an and Pella).

8. Bowl/Beaker. Complete profile. Mended. Two separate fragments: rim and base, many fragments missing. Light greenish blue. A few medium-sized bubbles and black impurities. Slight iridescence. Rounded, slightly incurving rim, uneven. Almost cylindrical body. Thickened flat base with pontil scar and traces of glass (diam. 0.8–0.9 cm). Rim diam. 7 cm, base diam. ~4 cm, height ~8 cm. See Gorin-Rosen 2008:45–46.

9. Bowl/beaker. Rim and wall fragment. Mended. Light greenish blue. Few sand deposits. Few small bubbles. Rounded, slightly incurving rim. Curving thin wall. Rim diam. 8.4 cm.

10. Bowl/beaker. Rim and wall fragment. Mended. Light greenish blue. Few sand deposits. A few small and medium-sized bubbles. Rounded, slightly incurving rim. Curving thin wall. Rim diam. 6.6 cm.

11. Bowl/beaker. Rim and wall fragment. Light greenish blue. Some iridescence. Blowing spirals. Rounded, slightly incurving rim. Thin wall. Rim diam. 9.6 cm.

12. Bowl/beaker. Rim and wall fragment. Light greenish blue. Some iridescence. Small bubbles and a few impurities. Rounded, slightly incurving rim. Curving thin wall. Rim diam. 6.4 cm.

13. Bowl/beaker. Rim and wall fragment. Light greenish blue. Sand deposits. Small bubbles and a few impurities. Rounded, slightly incurving rim. Curving thin wall. Rim diam. 6.4 cm.

14. Bowl/beaker. Base fragment. Greenish blue. Few sand deposits. Small and medium-sized bubbles. Flat, slightly thickened base with pontil scar and traces of glass (diam. 2.8–2.9 cm). This may also be a stamped base. Base diam. 3 cm.

15. Bowl/beaker. Base fragment. Greenish blue. Few sand deposits. Bubbly glass. Flat, slightly thickened base with concavity in its center. Pontil scar off center (diam. 0.7–1.0 cm). Base diam. ~3 cm.

16. Bowl/beaker. Base fragment. Greenish blue. Few sand deposits. Flat, slightly thickened base with concavity in its center. Pontil scar (diam. 0.8–0.9 cm). Base diam. ~3.8 cm.

### *Bottles*

#### *Bottles with a Funnel Mouth* (Fig. 3:17–23)

This group includes plain and decorated bottles characterized by a funnel-shaped mouth, usually widening from the shoulder upward. These bottles have practically no neck (e.g., Nos. 17, 18, 21–23) or a short cylindrical neck (No. 20).

*Plain Bottles* (Fig. 3:17–20).— Many bottles with a funnel mouth were found in Umayyad contexts at Bet She’an, but only very few were preserved with their necks. Among these are two bottles similar to Nos. 17 and 18 (Hadad 2005: Pl. 8:143, 145).

Vessel Nos. 19 and 20 represent the continuity of Byzantine traditional shapes into the Umayyad period, for example, the bottle from the Byzantine church at Shave Zīyyon (Barag 1967b:65–67, Fig. 16:3) or a Byzantine-period bottle from Ḥorbat Rozez (Winter 2010: Fig. 3:2). Bottles with a short neck and a funnel mouth were found in the Roman baths at Ḥammat Gader, dated, based on parallels, to the end of the Byzantine period (Cohen 1997:426, Pl. VIII:8, 9).

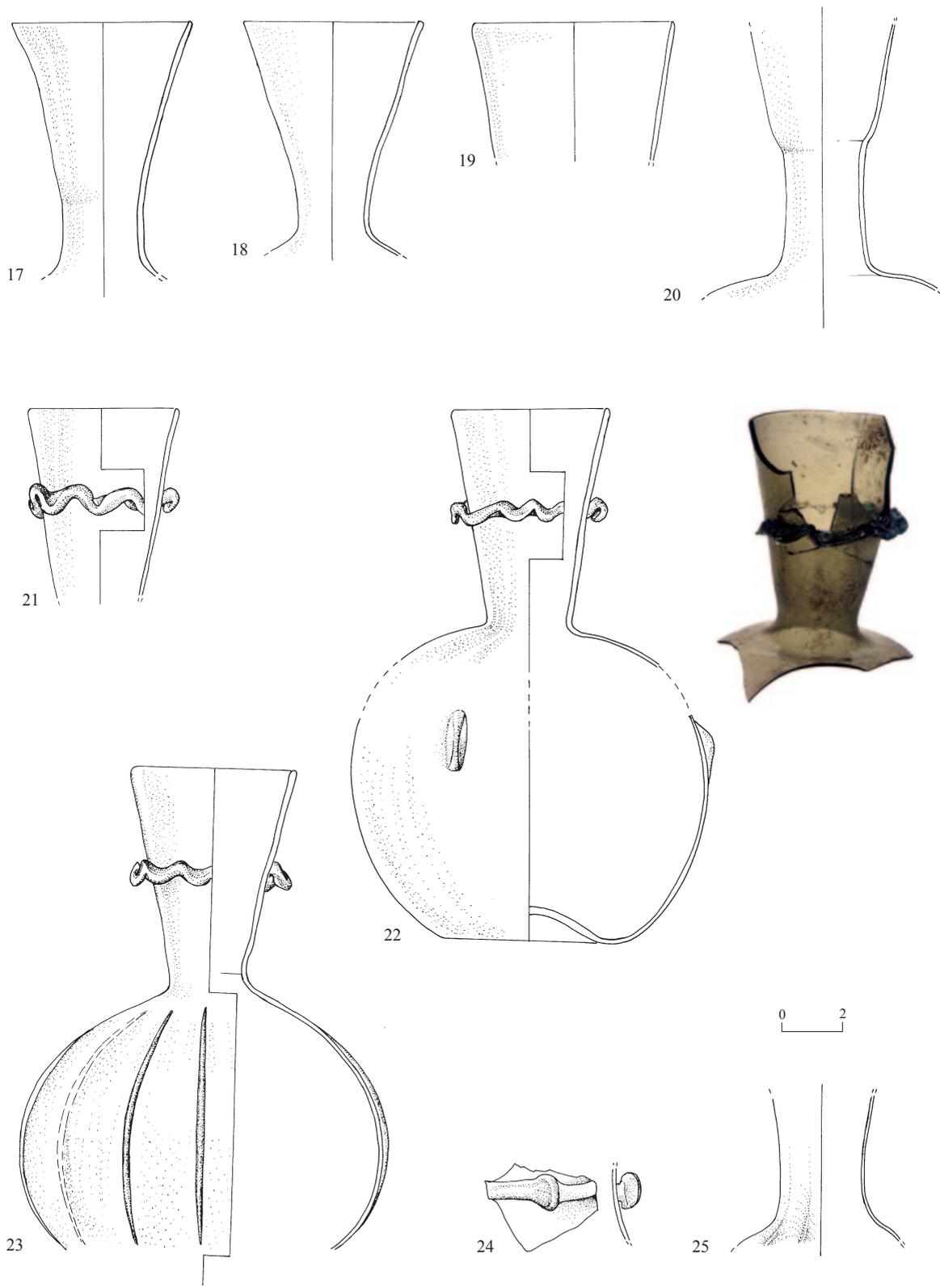


Fig. 3. Bottles.

17. Bottle. Almost complete rim and funnel mouth. Greenish blue. Some iridescence. Bubbly glass: small, medium and large bubbles. Blowing spirals. Rounded rim. Low quality fabric. Rim diam. 5.8 cm.

18. Bottle. Rim and funnel mouth fragment. Light green with yellowish green streaks. Sand deposits. Bubbly glass: small bubbles. Blowing spirals. Rounded uneven rim. Beginning of shoulder. Rim diam. 5.6 cm.

19. Bottle. Rim fragment. Light greenish blue glass with yellowish green streaks. Few sand deposits and iridescence. Bubbly glass. Poor quality fabric. Rounded rim. Rim diam. 6.4 cm.

20. Bottle. Part of mouth, neck and shoulder fragment. Greenish blue glass with green streaks. Sand deposits. Elongated narrow bubbles. Short cylindrical neck and beginning of shoulder.

*Bottles Decorated with Applied Trails* (Fig. 3:21–24).— Such bottles were common during the Late Roman and Byzantine periods, and continued to appear in the Early Islamic period, but with different fabrics, designs and workmanship. The fragments uncovered at Ramla represent various subtypes, which can be assigned to the Umayyad period.

The vessels were decorated with applied trails of the same color as the vessel or, more often, of a color darker than the vessel. This was one of the most common decorative techniques during the late Byzantine and Umayyad periods.<sup>2</sup> Especially common is the horizontal wavy trail, applied on the mouth or neck (e.g., Nos. 21–23). This decoration appears in the seventh century and continues into the eighth century CE.

Various bottle types with wavy trails on their necks were found in Umayyad contexts at Ramla, e.g., in the excavations north of the White Mosque (Gorin-Rosen 2010: Pls. 10.1:14; 10.2:8, 12). Similar bottles with a funnel mouth and one wavy trail were found in Umayyad contexts at Bet She'an as well (Hadad 2005:25, Pls. 13:267, 268; 14:271–275,

279, 280).<sup>3</sup> Bottles with a high and narrow funnel mouth and decorated with a thick wavy trail, were found at Hammat Gader (Cohen 1997:427, Pl. VIII:16–17, and see references therein to Jericho and Khirbat al-Karak). A bottle with a longer mouth or neck, with a similar wavy trail, was found in a sealed Umayyad context at Busra (Wilson and Sa'd 1984:75, 146–147, Fig. 567).

The applied tooled and pinched trail on No. 24 is also very typical of the Umayyad repertoire, as, for example, the bottle from the al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait (Carboni 2001:39, Cat. No. 1.5), attributed to the Syrian region and dated to the seventh–eighth centuries CE.

21. Bottle. Rim and mouth fragment. Light greenish blue glass with yellowish green streaks. Few sand deposits and iridescence. Rounded rim. Thick wavy trail applied on the mouth below the rim. Rim diam. 5 cm.

22. Bottle. Almost complete profile: rim, mouth and most of the body and base. Yellowish green vessel with greenish blue trail. Slight sand deposits. Bubbly glass: large and medium-sized bubbles. Blowing spirals. Rounded rim. Thick wavy trail applied on the mouth below the rim. Almost globular body with pinched decoration on the widest part of the body: one pinch remained. Concave bottom. No pontil mark. Rim diam. 5 cm; Base diam. 6 cm. See Gorin-Rosen 2008:46–47.

23. Bottle. Almost complete profile: part of rim, mouth and most of the body. Bluish green glass with yellowish green streaks. Very bubbly glass with black impurities. Rounded rim. Thick wavy trail applied on the mouth below the rim. Almost globular body with mold blown widely spaced ribs from shoulder to above base. Rim diam. 5.5–6.0 cm.

24. Bottle. Small neck fragment and two more fragments probably of the same vessel (not illustrated). Greenish blue glass with yellowish green streaks. Sand deposits. Pinched applied trail wound around the lower part of the neck. The trail is of the same color as the vessel.

*Bottles with Mold Blown Decoration* (Fig. 3:23, 25).— Bottle Nos. 23 and 25 were decorated with mold-blown vertical ribs on their bodies. A large fragment of Bottle No. 23 was preserved. On it, widely spaced mold-blown ribs are visible. Bottle No. 25 is broken, and only part of the decoration appears on the lower part of the neck and the beginning of the shoulder.

Mold-blown ribbed decoration was common during the Byzantine period, as seen for example in a group from Ashqelon (Katsnelson 1999:75\*–78\*, Fig. 4:9–16), and continued into the Early Islamic period. The decoration differs in the mold patterns, the workmanship and the fabrics, as well as the vessel shapes.

A neck with remains of mold-blown ribs, similar to No. 25, and an additional wavy trail on the neck, was found at Bet She'an, dated to the Umayyad period (Hadad 2005: Pl. 16:322). Bottle No. 23 displays protruding spaced ribs on the body. The lower part of a glass vessel with spaced ribs was found on Marcus Street, Ramla, in a sink pit, dug in the ninth century CE (Pollak 2007:123–124, 126, Fig. 10:68). Pollak (2007:123) noted that “the locus contained pottery from the ninth–tenth centuries CE and numerous glass vessel fragments. Most of the glass is from the eighth and ninth centuries CE or early tenth century CE.” From the description of its color, it seems that the bottle from Marcus Street belongs to the eighth century, rather than the later dates suggested.

The decoration on No. 23 is similar to a vessel found in Burial Cave 2 at Khirbat el-Shubeika, dated to the Umayyad period (Gorin-Rosen 2002:318–319, Fig. 9:46). This bottle is also decorated with a typical Umayyad wavy trail.

25. Bottle. Part of neck and shoulder fragment. Light greenish blue glass with yellowish green streaks. Few sand deposits and iridescence. Beginning of shoulder with remains of shallow mold-blown ribbing.

*Bottles with Pinched Decoration* (Figs. 3:22; 4:26).— Bottle No. 22 and body fragment No. 26 represent a very common decorative technique,

usually called pinching, which was widespread during the late Byzantine and Umayyad periods. The decoration mainly adorns the bodies of bottles and jars, but in some cases, it can also be seen on beakers and wineglasses. In most of the vessels, the pinching creates a horizontal pattern, whereas in fragment Nos. 22 and 26 the pinching is vertical, which is thus far thought to be rare. Vertical pinches decorating a beaker, similar in shape to No. 8, were found at Khirbat el-Shubeika, Burial Cave 1, dated to the Umayyad period (Gorin-Rosen 2002:299–300, Fig. 7:53). The lower part of a vessel with vertical pinching was found in an Umayyad context in the excavations north of the White Mosque (Gorin-Rosen 2010:219, Pl. 10.1:6).

Vessels with horizontal pinches were found in other excavations at Ramla, for example, in the excavations north of the White Mosque, in Umayyad contexts (Gorin-Rosen 2010: Pl. 10.2:13, 14). Vessels with similar decoration are very common in Israel and Jordan, dating from the late sixth to the eighth centuries CE. One such bottle was found at Bet She'an in an Umayyad context (Hadad 2005:24, Pl. 12:222, and see references therein).

26. Bottle? Small body fragment. Yellowish green glass. Sand deposits and iridescence. Small body fragment with vertical pinched decoration. Thin wall.

*Bottle(?) with Applied Trail and Pinched Decoration* (Fig. 4:27).— Vessel No. 27 is a wall fragment decorated with unevenly pinched shallow trails. The trails are of the same color as the vessel. This type of decoration was very common in Israel during the late Byzantine and Umayyad periods, mainly on bottles, but also on beakers and wineglasses.

A few vessels with variations of this decoration technique were found in Umayyad contexts north of the White Mosque (Gorin-Rosen 2010:225–226, Pls. 10.1:18; 10.2:13–15, with further references to vessels from Bet She'an, Caesarea, the Metropolitan Museum collection and Nishapur).

27. Bottle? Body fragment. Light bluish green glass with yellowish green streaks. Sand deposits. Small bubbles. Small fragment with remains of mold-blown ribbing and pinched decoration. Thin wall. Delicate vessel.

*Large Bottles with Knocked-Off Rims and Concave Bases* (Fig. 4:28–32).

Three bottles of the same fabric and workmanship are characterized by a thick neck, tapered upward to a knocked-off rim. Bottle No. 29 has a scar on its upper neck, which was made during the separation of the bottle from the blowpipe. Bottle No. 30 is decorated with an applied horizontal trail. Base Nos. 31 and 32 probably belong to such bottles according to their size and fabric.

The unfinished rim and careless workmanship may suggest that these fragments were ‘moils’—leftovers of the blowing process; however, the decoration on No. 30 shows that they were used as vessels. The question is, why did the glassmaker produce such vessels with thick walls, globular bodies and knocked-off rims?

A rather large group of similar bottles was found in the excavations south of the White Mosque (Gorin-Rosen 2008:47, Color Pl. 1:2). This group is very similar in its characteristics, although with shorter necks, and is considered to be of local production, and to have served a special purpose for commercial use or storage, rather than use as tableware. Bottles with short knocked-off rims and thick walls were also uncovered at Bet She’an (Hadad 2005:27–28, Pls. 19:365; 20:366), on an Umayyad street lined with shops (destroyed by the 749 CE earthquake). Hadad suggested that these vessels were for commercial use.

The fabric, shape, size and careless workmanship of the bottles from Ramla indicate a local production, perhaps for some special purpose. These vessels seem to have been used locally or sold in the local markets of the period, e.g., at Bet She’an, although the nature of their contents remains a mystery.

A bottle of this type was found in an Umayyad context at Usais in Egypt (Brisch

1965:173, Abb. 39). Bottles with globular bodies and cut-off rims, roughly knocked-off from the blowpipe, are also known from Nishapur, Iran, where they were dated to the ninth–tenth centuries CE (Kröger 1995:71–74, Nos. 91, 92). Kröger mentioned that in some cases they were also decorated with an applied trail around the neck.

The concave base was most common for bottles, from the very beginning of glass blowing until the industrial revolution. For this reason, the shape itself is not diagnostic and in many cases, the context, fabric, color and workmanship are necessary for conclusive dating. The bases found in this excavation probably belong to large bottles such as Nos. 28–30, and therefore date to the same period. Large concave bases were found in Umayyad assemblages, such as Busra (Wilson and Sa’id 1984:75, 146–147, Fig. 569).

28. Bottle. Possible rim, neck and part of the shoulder. Greenish blue glass. Sand deposits. Bubbly glass with black impurities and blowing spirals. Knocked-off rim, broken. Tapered neck with rounded shoulder. Probably globular body.

29. Bottle. Rim and neck fragment. Bluish green glass. Sand deposits. Knocked-off rim with scar from the blowpipe. Tapered neck with beginning of the seemingly rounded shoulder. Probably globular body. Thick wall.

30. Bottle. Possible rim, neck and part of the shoulder. Greenish blue. Sand deposits. Bubbly glass with blowing spirals. Knocked-off uneven rim. Tapered neck with rounded shoulder. Probably globular body. A horizontal trail of the same color as the vessel is applied mid-neck.

31. Bottle. Part of base and lower wall. Greenish blue. Sand deposits. Bubbly glass. Probably globular body.

32. Bottle. Base and lower wall. Greenish blue. Sand deposits. Bubbly glass. No pontil. Probably globular body. Thick wall.

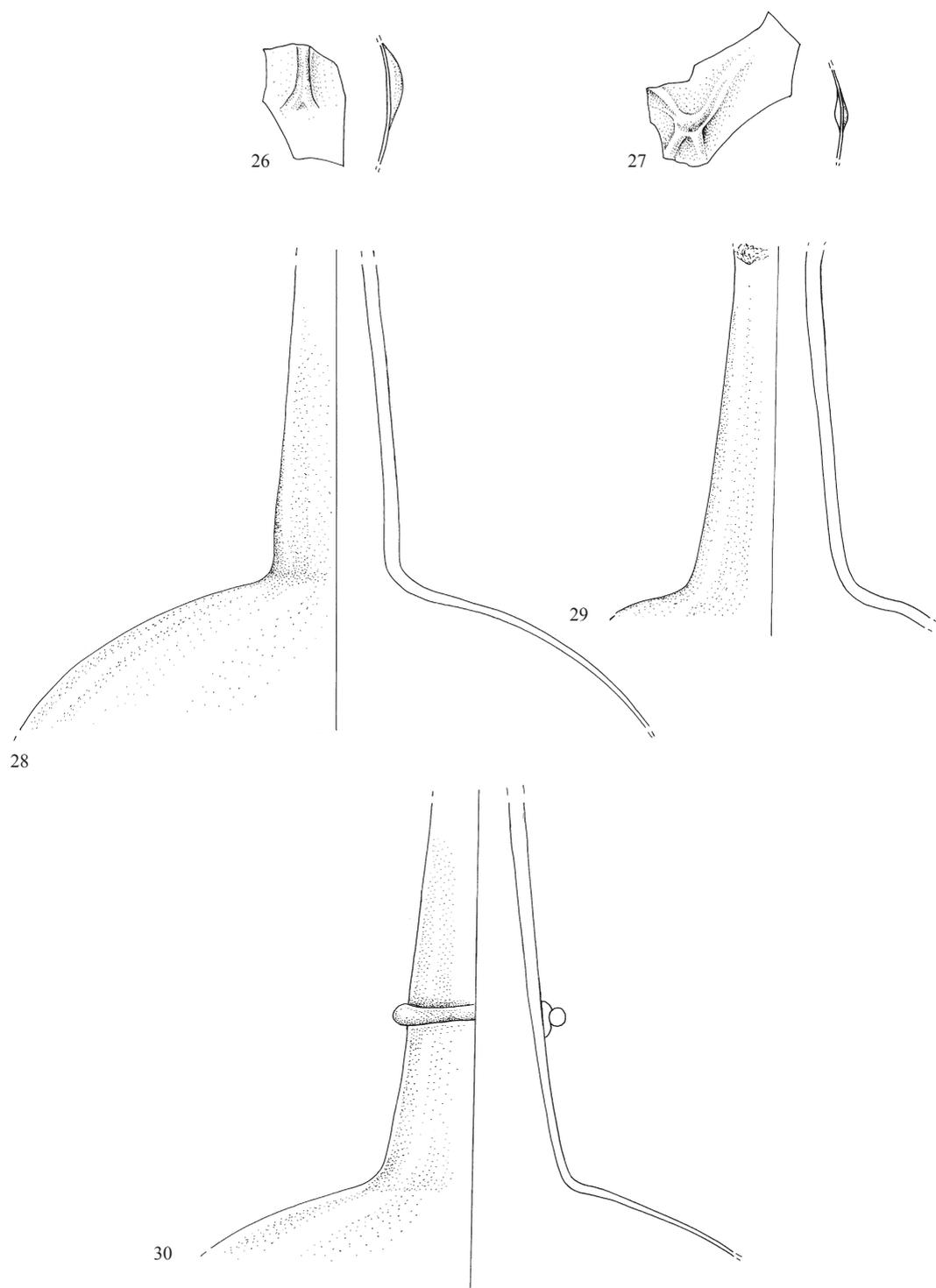


Fig. 4. Bottles.

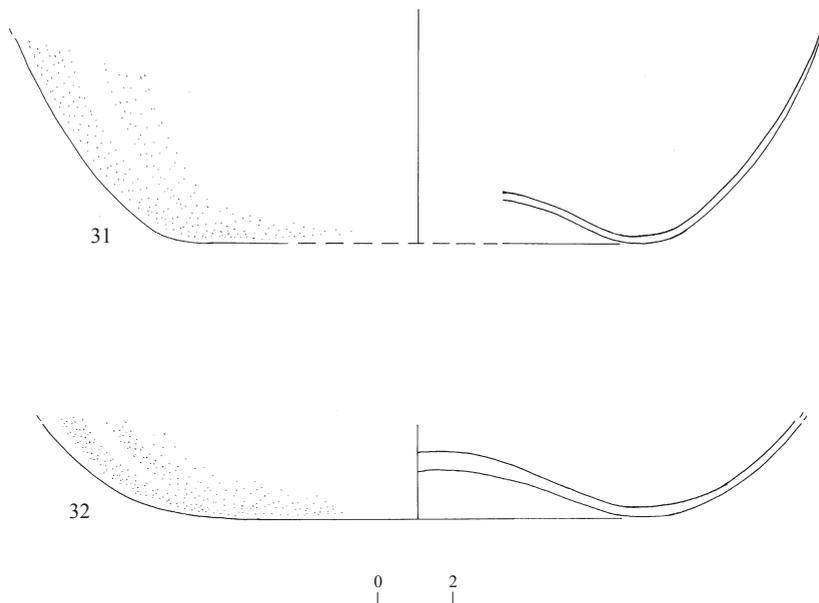


Fig. 4. (cont.).

### Jugs

*Jugs with In-Folded Rims* (Fig. 5).— Two large jugs were found in the installation. Both are characterized by an in-folded rim, an almost cylindrical long mouth, without a neck, and a crude trail handle. Jug No. 34 is decorated with a wavy trail applied on the lower part of the mouth.

A few jugs with applied wavy trails on the neck, like No. 34, were found in the excavations south of the White Mosque and dated to the Umayyad period (Gorin-Rosen 2008:47, Color Pl. 1:3). They bear similarities to Nos. 33 and 34 and could have been made in the same local workshop, in or in the vicinity of Ramla. A similar vessel with an in-folded rim and strap handle, with a different workmanship of the upper part of the handle, was found at Ashdod, Locus 9, which “yielded several vessels of the late Byzantine period” (Barag 1967a:37, 72–73, Fig. 16:12).

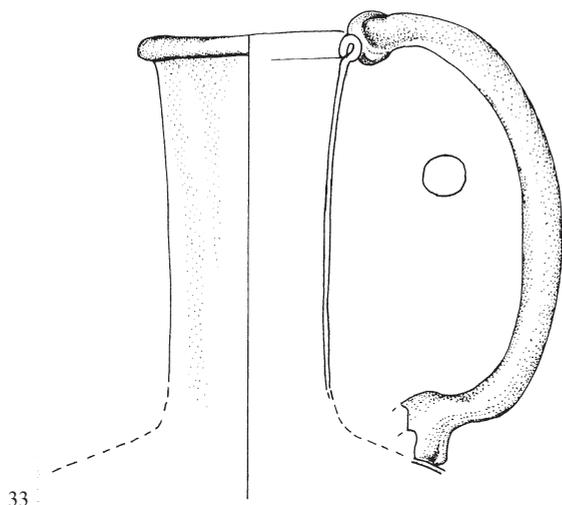
33. Jug. Almost complete rim, mouth and handle. Mended. Bluish green glass with yellowish green streaks. Sand deposits and some iridescence.

Small bubbles and black impurities in the handle. Cylindrical mouth. Crude trail handle drawn from the shoulder up to the rim. Rim diam. 5.8 cm.

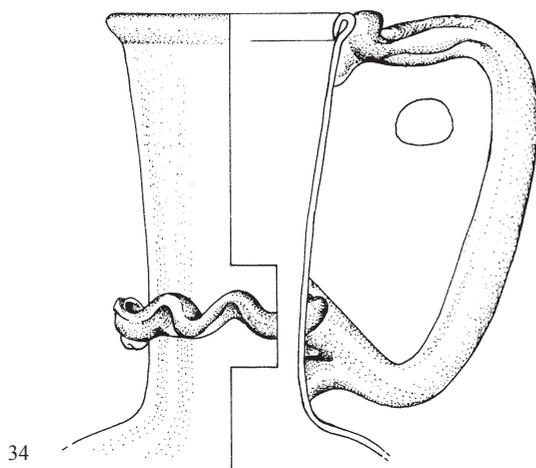
34. Jug. Almost complete rim, mouth and beginning of shoulder and handle. Part of the mouth missing. Greenish blue with green streaks. Few sand deposits and iridescence. A few large and medium-sized bubbles and black impurities (mainly in the handle). Cylindrical mouth. Beginning of sloping shoulder. Crude trail handle drawn from the lower part of the mouth or neck up to the rim. Thick wavy trail applied around the lower part of the mouth/neck. Rim diam. 6.5 cm.

### Jar

*Jar with Cylindrical Wide Mouth and Rounded Rim* (Fig. 6).— This jar is made of a special fabric, which is different from all the other vessels in the assemblage. The color, its corrosion and quality are known from other Early Islamic vessels, appearing in the Umayyad period, but becoming more common during the Abbasid period. This jar is similar in shape to a vessel from Egypt, dated to the



33



34



Fig. 5. Jugs.

seventh–ninth centuries CE (Lamm 1929–1930:32, Taf. 2:7). The body of No. 35 may be squat or more cylindrical. A jar of this type was found in an Umayyad context at Usais, where the body is squat, but the rim and the base are similar to No. 35 (Brisch 1965:173, Abb. 40).

35. Jar. Separate rim and base fragments. Dark green glass. Black and gold crust partly removed. Iridescence and pitting. Bubbly glass: small, medium

and large bubbles. Blowing spirals. Upright, slightly flaring rounded rim. Almost horizontal shoulder. The base is pushed-in concave with a crude pontil scar (diam. 2.6 cm).

#### *Miniature Spouted Vessel (Fig. 7)*

This unique miniature vessel (No. 36) is characterized by its small spout, applied to the shoulder of a probably globular or squat body.

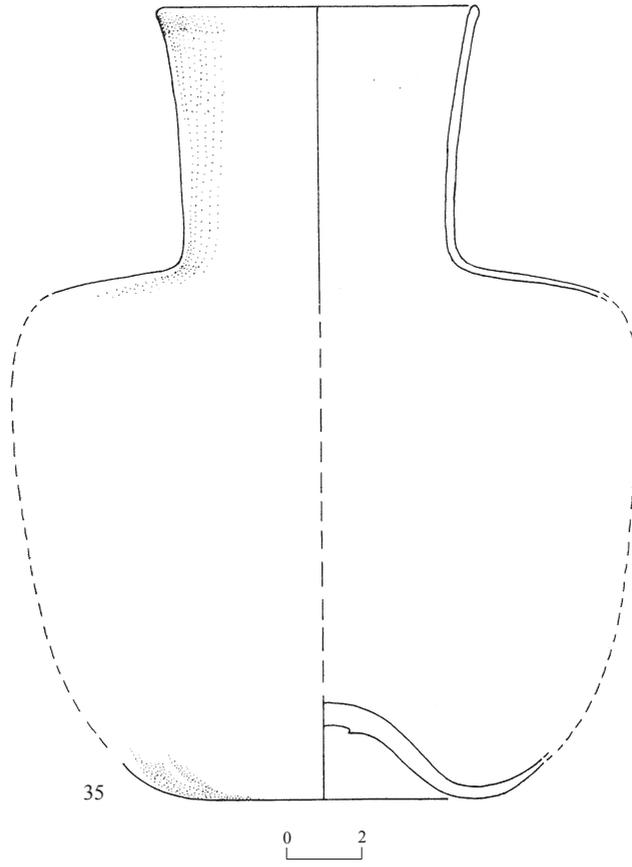


Fig. 6. Jar.

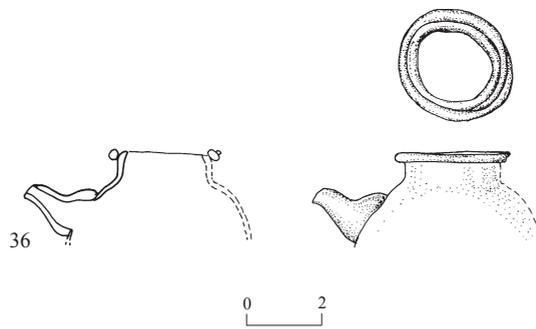


Fig. 7. Miniature vessel.

The short mouth is decorated with an applied trail. Its delicate shape and workmanship differ from the other glass vessels found with it, but its fabric and the combination of two colors is typical of the Umayyad repertoire.

Irregular and unique vessels presenting a free artistic spirit and special characteristics, which may have had a special use, are quite common when dealing with Umayyad glass finds in Israel, as seen in the flask with the four tubes protruding from its body found in the excavations south of the White Mosque (Gorin-Rosen 2008:47, Color Pl. 1:5). Israeli (2003:293) noted—regarding one of these special vessels with a few tubes—that “here, too, it appears that the craftsman was motivated mainly by the desire to produce a ‘conversation piece’.” This observation seems true also for the miniature vessel found in this context.

Spouted vessels appeared in the Umayyad period in the shape of alambics, but they are different in shape from vessel No. 36 (for Umayyad alambics from Ramla, see, e.g., Gorin-Rosen 2008:47, Color Pl. 1:4; 2010:227, Pl. 10.2:18–21). However, this type of miniature vessel may have served for filling oil lamps, perfume bottles or for medical purposes. Alternatively, it might have been a glass oil lamp imitating the terracotta oil lamps of the period.

36. Miniature spouted vessel. Complete rim, spout and part of the body. Bluish green body with

yellowish brown trail and spout. Rounded uneven rim decorated with applied darker trail, unevenly wound. Thin wall body, small spout. Rim diam. ~3 cm. See Gorin-Rosen 2008:47.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The glass assemblage unearthed in this excavation is very homogeneous in fabric, quality and workmanship. Although it includes various types, they all belong to the same chronological group. The characteristic fabric is bluish green or greenish blue, with some yellowish green vessels, mainly without corrosion and weathering, but with sand deposits and some iridescence. The glass is bubbly and in many vessels includes black impurities, which point to rather poor quality or mass production in local workshops. Only one vessel is exceptional (No. 35) by its different fabric, color and weathering, although also seemingly belonging to the same period. The decoration of the vessels mostly exhibits very common, simple techniques, such as applied trails, mold-blowing and pinching. The parallels for most of the vessels are from the late Byzantine and Umayyad periods from various sites in Israel and neighboring countries. The importance of this group stems from the lack of glass assemblages dating to the beginning of the Islamic Era, mainly to the first half of the eighth century CE, during the Umayyad period, or very shortly thereafter.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank the excavator, Oren Shmueli, the conservator, Olga Shorr, and the draftsman, Michael Miles. This glass assemblage was first discussed at a conference dedicated to the Umayyad period (21.3.2001), as an example of a typical Umayyad assemblage.

<sup>2</sup> This is true to such an extent that the absence of this type of decoration in an Early Islamic glass assemblage could affect the dating of that assemblage (e.g., at Yoqne‘am—Lester 1996:202).

<sup>3</sup> Bottles 279, 280 in Hadad 2005: Pl. 14 are probably presented upside down, as in this type, the decoration is on the funnel mouth and the neck is narrower. Hadad (2005:25) states that “Nos. 279 and 280 are unique in their shape and the position of decoration in the middle with one ruffle”, without any parallels for this. In my opinion—based on many glass assemblages from a wide distribution and the relevant literature—these are not unique, but just wrongly set, making them a common vessel in the Umayyad period.

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