

## A MAMLUK-PERIOD SETTLEMENT AND CEMETERY AT GE'ALYA, NEAR YAVNE

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### INTRODUCTION

During September 2006 and February 2007, salvage excavations were conducted east of Moshav Ge'alya, between Kefar Gevirol, a neighborhood in the southwest of Rehovot, and Yavne (map ref. 178129–774/643303–904; Fig. 1) in anticipation of development works and the expansion of Road 410 (Gorzalczany 2009b). The excavations, conducted in four areas (A–D), uncovered a cemetery and a habitation site.<sup>1</sup> Road 410 lies on the same route as the ancient road that led from Jaffa to Gaza,

a branch of which passed through Yavne. This particular branch linked the cities of Yavne and Lod (Dorsey 1991:64, Map 1). Stone bridges, attributed to the Mamluk ruler Baybars, still stand in Lod and Yavne at both ends of the ancient road (Drori 1981:34–35; Taragan 2000:71; Petersen 2001:313–319; Fischer and Taxel 2007:262–263).<sup>2</sup>

The excavation site is located atop a low *ḥamra* hillock, which encompasses a *kurkar* (local sandstone) ridge, 2.5 km northeast of Yavne. The site apparently extended on both sides of Road 410 and seems to have been part

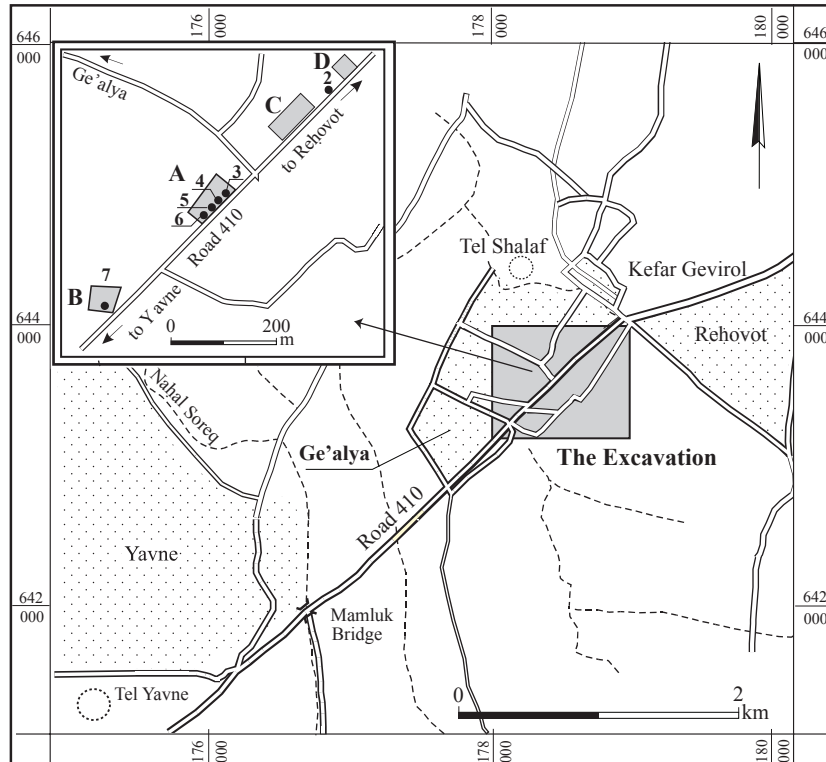


Fig. 1. Location map showing the excavations and the surrounding area.

of Khirbat el-Ajjuri and Khirbat ed-Duheisha, where their northern portions overlap with Tel Shalaf,<sup>3</sup> identified as Eltekeh, one of the Levitic cities in the tribe of Dan mentioned in Joshua 19:44, 21:23 and in Assyrian documents. Tel Shalaf was apparently inhabited from the Middle Bronze Age until its demise at the end of the First Temple period (sixth century BCE; Kaplan 1957:207).

Based on the ceramic finds collected in recent surveys, it seems that the earlier ancient remains, from the Bronze Age to the Umayyad period, are located in the southern part of the site and that later, in the post-Umayyad periods, the settlers moved northward (Fischer, Taxel and Amit 2008:13–14). After a settlement gap, the site was apparently reoccupied in the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, as attested by remains in the northern portion. A similar observation was made by Kaplan (1957).

It seems that during most periods, the site extended along the hill and the alluvial plain that surrounds it. The *kurkar* hill probed during the excavations served mainly as a cemetery. Modern development works, as well as agricultural exploitation, severely damaged the ancient remains.

### *History of Research*

The site was first mentioned in a report by Jacob Ory in 1934 (IAA Archives, Mandate File, Kh. ed-Duheisha). Ory, an inspector of the Mandate-period Department of Antiquities, reported the presence of a number of architectural elements, such as a column capital and bases, which suggested the existence of a public building (Fischer, Taxel and Amit 2008:13, Fig. 7). A more comprehensive survey carried out by Jacob Kaplan documented remains dated to the Middle Bronze Age II and the Roman and Byzantine periods. These finds included several tombs, marble slabs bearing Greek inscriptions and jar burials, defined by him as “Arabic” (Kaplan 1957:202). The survey conducted by Porath and Pipano (Pipano 1985) reported, in addition to tombs clearly dated

to MB II, jars made of a light-colored ware with handles on the shoulders decorated with delicate combing. These jars, discovered in the northern environs of the site, were described as “medieval”, without further details.

Results of recent surveys in the area of Kh. ed-Duheisha corroborate previous descriptions of the site. Pottery collected from the surface dates to MB II, and the Persian, Late Roman, Byzantine, Umayyad and Ottoman periods. Ashlars and remains of structures were documented, as well as coins from the Late Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad periods. Expansion peaked during the Byzantine and Umayyad periods, when the site extended over an estimated area of 70 dunams (Fischer, Taxel and Amit 2008:14).

A Byzantine female burial, dated to the late sixth century CE, was excavated by the author in 1994 (Gorzalczany 1997). Recently, Fischer and Taxel conducted an extensive survey at the site as part of the Map of Yavne Regional Survey (Map 75), the results of which, yet unpublished, seem to confirm and reinforce results of earlier observations (Fischer, Taxel and Amit 2008). In 2008, a small-scale excavation was conducted by Jenny Marcus (2010) on behalf of the IAA, which yielded scanty architectural remains dated to the Mamluk period. The recovery of a menorah fragment from Kh. ed-Duheisha has led researchers to propose the identification of the site with Judean Peqi'in, not to be confused with Peqi'in of the Galilee (Amit 2008:15–16). In addition, two fragments of an Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription were found in Kh. ed-Duheisha and nearby al-Qubeiba (Kefar Gevirol; Goldwasser 1992).

Several vessels dating to the Late Bronze Age II, which probably originated in the Tel Shalaf cemetery, were found close to the site (Gorzalczany and Teksell 2001: Fig. 170). It is noteworthy that explorers of the PEF, during the Survey of Western Palestine, reported and mapped a well, used by the inhabitants of the area (Conder and Kitchener 1880: Sheet XVI). We located this well (Fig. 2) during the excavation.<sup>4</sup>



Fig. 2. The well, documented by the PEF surveyors, located today within Farm 140, Moshav Ge'alya.

## THE EXCAVATIONS

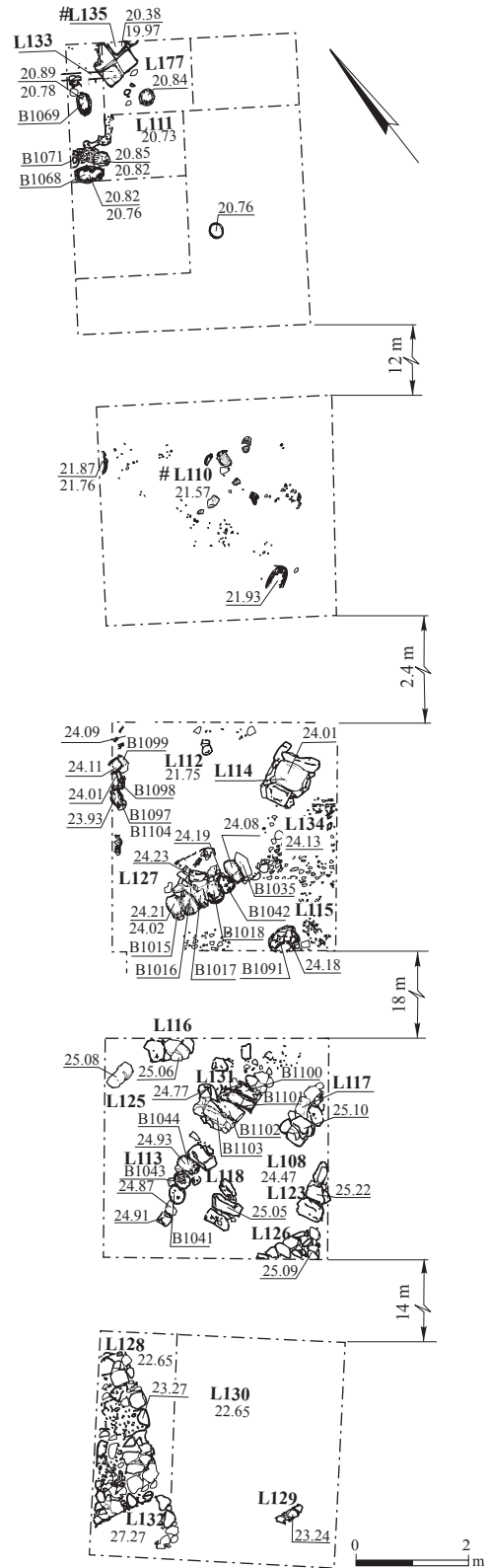
Only the western part of the site was excavated. Excavations in the northern part of the site, which falls within the limits of Tel Shalaf, included the area of the tell. Four areas were opened, all located between Road 410 and the easternmost houses of Moshav Ge'alya. Southern Areas A and B were excavated during 2006 and northern Areas C and D, in 2007 (see Fig. 1), a total of 30 excavation squares. The tombs that were unearthed were not excavated further due to limitations placed on the IAA.<sup>5</sup>

### AREA A (Plan 1)

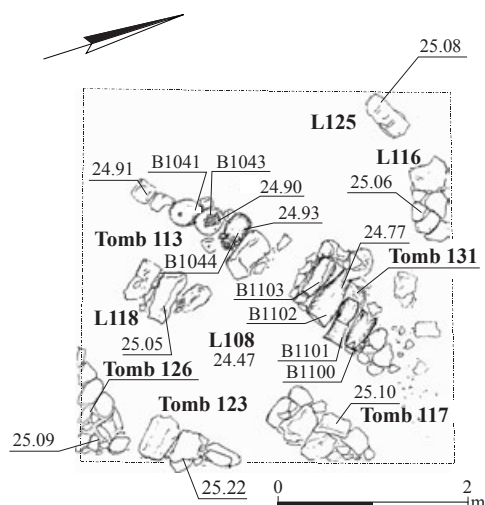
This area is located on the northern slopes of the *kurkar* hill. Five squares were opened, uncovering a cemetery dating to the Mamluk period. The tomb features were recorded in detail, but not excavated. Thirteen tombs were found, comprising four types.

*Type A* (Figs. 3–5)

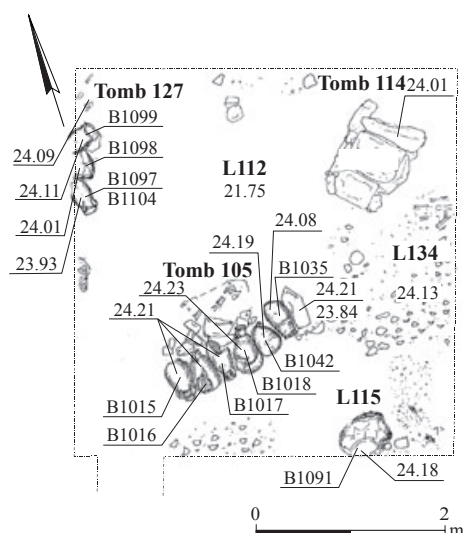
Type A consists of individual cist burials<sup>6</sup> laid out on a general east–west axis, ranging between 60° and 90° relatively to the north (azimuth 0°), for example Tomb 131 (Plan 2; Fig. 4), Tomb 105 (Plan 3; Fig. 3) and Tomb 127 (Plan 3; Fig. 5). As the tombs were not excavated, it is impossible to say whether the interiors were



Plan 1. Area A.



Plan 2. Tombs of Types A, B and C in Area A.



Plan 3. Tombs of Types A and C in Area A.

stone lined. Their dimensions average  $0.5\text{--}0.6 \times 1.5$  m. The most outstanding feature of this type of cist burial is that whole bag-shaped jars, placed horizontally side by side with their longitudinal axis perpendicular to the long axis of the grave, were used in place of covering slabs. To make a tighter fit and completely cover the tombs, they were deposited in an alternating arrangement of jars with the rims facing first north and then south, until the last vessel in the



Fig. 3. Tomb 105 (Type A), covered with complete ceramic vessels, looking south.



Fig. 4. Tomb 131 (Type A), covered with beehives and scoop (antilya) vessels, looking southwest.



Fig. 5. Tomb 127 (Type A), covered with complete ceramic vessels, looking southwest.

row—rim/neck to base (Fig. 3). In some cases, for example in Tomb 105, up to six vessels were placed on one tomb. Sometimes, a narrow row of pebbles surrounded the jars, encompassing the entire tomb. This phenomenon, which was not clearly distinguishable on the surface, was clearly visible at other sites, for example at Kafr 'Ana (Gophna, Tassel and Feldstein 2007). The covering vessels belong to well-known, Mamluk-period ceramic types (mid-thirteenth–





Fig. 6. Tomb 113 (Type B), covered with upright and upside-down storage jars; looking south. Note the upright stone slab close to the edge of the tomb.

early sixteenth centuries CE, see below), as reported also by Porath and Pipano (Pipano 1985), although it was not clear to them whether they were connected to burials.

The jars used to cover the tombs belong to three main types—bag-shaped jars, water lifting devices (*antiliya*) and vessels that were defined as beehive containers (see below)—and were found full of earth. It remains unclear whether the fill was deposited intentionally, to make the vessels heavier and prevent them from moving, or was part of post-depositional processes. Careful sieving did not retrieve any finds from the soil in the jars.

#### *Type B* (Plan 2; Fig. 6)

This tomb type is similar to Type A, except for the vessels that cover the grave, which are positioned on their bases and alternately, upside-down, on their rims. Like Type A, the vessels were found filled with earth. An upright stone slab was found in Tomb 113 (Plan 2; Fig. 6), close to the eastern end of the tomb, while a smaller upright slab was observed on the western end. A similar phenomenon was observed in the Mamluk-period cemetery at Kafr 'Ana, where a chancel post was reused in an identical way (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007:18, Fig. 2.6). Close to the eastern vertical



Fig. 7. Tomb 116 (Type C), looking north.

slab in Tomb 113 was a jar positioned on its base, followed to the west by two upside-down jars, forming a row. As jars deposited upside-down are obviously less steady, small stones were placed around the shoulders to hold them in place and stabilize them.

#### *Type C* (Figs. 7–12)

This type, the most ubiquitous in the cemetery, is best represented by Tomb 116 (Plan 2; Fig. 7), Tomb 117 (Plan 2; Fig. 8), Tomb 123 (Plan 2; Fig. 9), Tomb 125 (Plan 2; Fig. 10), Tomb 126 (Plan 2; Fig. 11) and Tomb 114 (Plan 3; Fig. 12). It features a simple cist covered with



Fig. 8. Tomb 117 (Type C), looking south.



Fig. 11. Tomb 126 (Type C), looking south.



Fig. 9. Tomb 123 (Type C), looking south.



Fig. 12. Tomb 114 (Type C), looking south.



Fig. 10. Tomb 125 (Type C), looking north.

flat stones, the largest measuring  $0.2 \times 0.5 \times 0.3$  m. The tombs are oriented on a general east–west axis, similarly to those discussed above.

#### *Type D (Plan 3; Fig. 13)*

This type (T134) consists of a simple pit dug in the ground, without demarcation or even a covering. The skeletons were found in anatomic articulation, attesting to primary burial. In some cases, jars were found close to the burial, but we failed to identify a relationship between them. It is thus possible that this type of grave is one of the above types, damaged by activities that prevented its identification. The limitations placed on the excavation meant that the skeletons were not extracted from the tomb and thus, gender, age or other anthropological data could not be ascertained.

Stratigraphically, Tomb Types C and D seem to be located at a somewhat higher elevation than Types A and B. This could mean that





Fig. 13. Tomb 134 (Type D), looking northwest; note the scattered bones.



Fig. 14. Living surface L110, with scattered potsherds, looking southeast.

they are slightly later in date and represent a development of the earlier tombs. However, since no tomb was actually found atop or cutting another, this suggestion cannot be corroborated.

#### *Additional Features*

Beside the cemetery, a living surface (L110; Plan 1) comprising a thin layer of ashes and plaster was discovered in the northern part of Area A. Scattered, non-diagnostic body sherds of storage jars were found on it (Fig. 14). In the

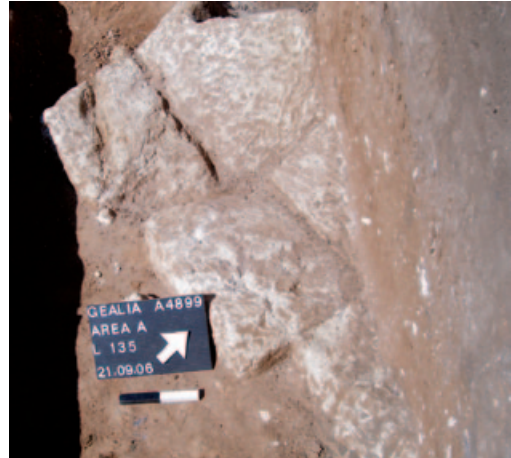


Fig. 15. Floor 135 in Area A, paved with flagstones, looking northwest.

southern part, the remains of a thick (0.57 m) stone floor or foundation (L128; Plan 1), built of rounded fieldstones and bonding material, were unearthed.

Remains of a floor paved with square flagstones (L135; Plan 1; Fig. 15) were exposed in the northernmost square, 1.5 m below topsoil. It appears to be associated with a living surface (L111), in which the bases of several storage jars were stuck (Fig. 16). One jar (Fig. 33:13) is a Gaza Ware type dated to the third or fourth century CE; it was found in the fill (L177) immediately above the living surface. No definitive conclusions can be



Fig. 16. Living surface L111 in Area A, looking northeast.  
Storage-jar bases are embedded in the floor.



Fig. 17. Locus 220 in Area B, looking west.

reached concerning the jar bases embedded in the living surface; however, these orange-red colored ribbed sherds differ from the jars found in the cemetery. This, as well as the depth of the architectural remains they were associated with, suggests a Late Roman period date for these remains.

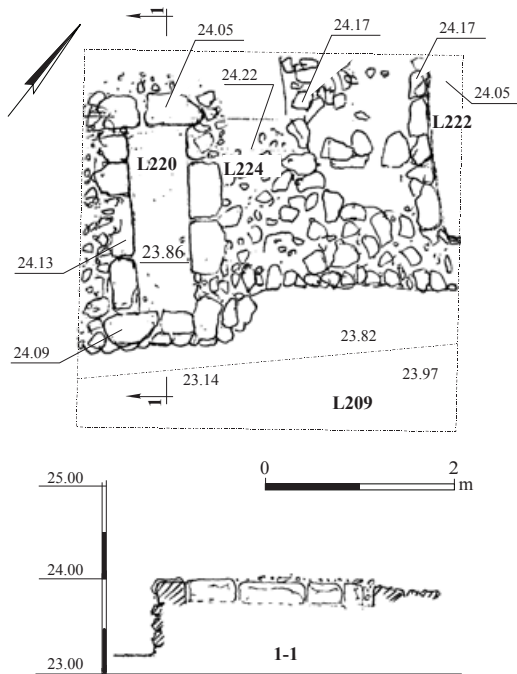
#### AREA B

Area B, the southernmost of the excavation areas, is situated some 300 m south of Area A;

it comprises merely one excavation square. The square was expanded in the course of the excavation, exposing two built tombs (T220, T222; Plan 4; Fig. 17).

Rectangular T220 ( $2.6 \times 1.2$  m) had ashlar-built walls (0.3 m thick); the burial compartment measured  $0.6 \times 1.9$  m. The grave was open, and no traces of slabs or other coverings were discerned nearby. Tomb 222 was north of T220; it was not fully exposed and only its southern wall and part of the burial compartment were unearthed. The wall (0.2 m thick), also built of





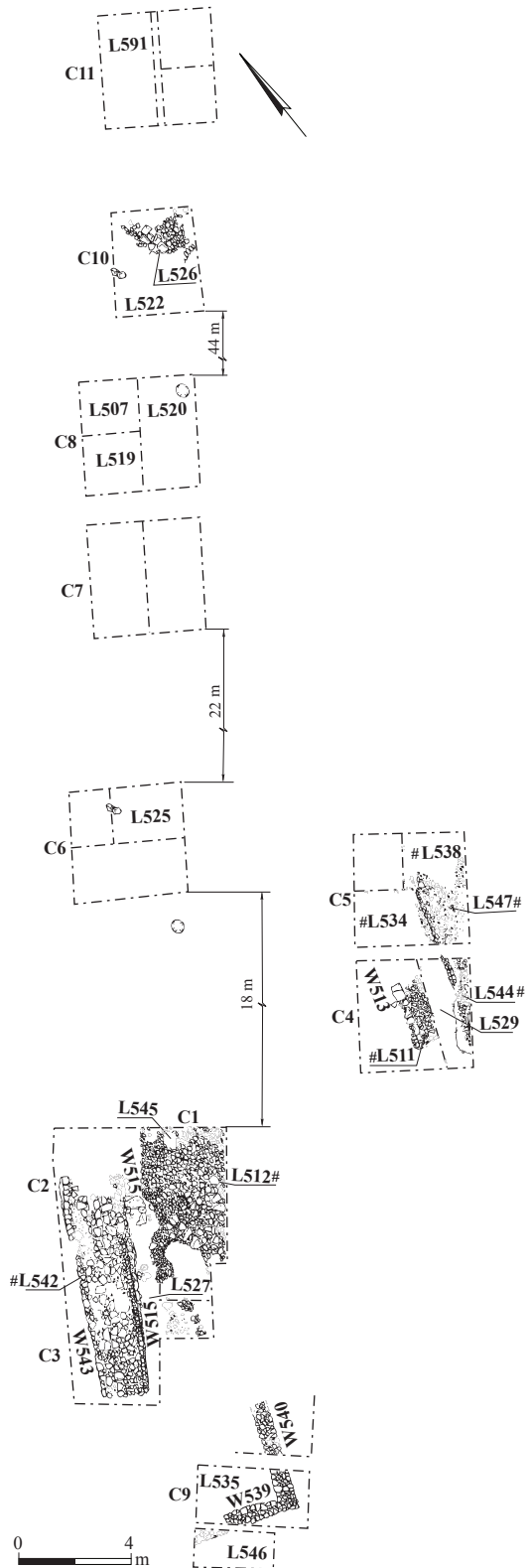
Plan 4. Tombs in Area B, plan and section.

crude ashlar masonry, was exposed to a depth of 2 m and appears to be similar in shape and style to the walls of T220. Between and abutting the tombs was a crudely constructed thick stone floor (L224), best preserved in the square's eastern portion. This floor was delimited on the east by a more substantial row of poorly dressed stones that could be the remains of a wall (0.15–0.20 m thick).

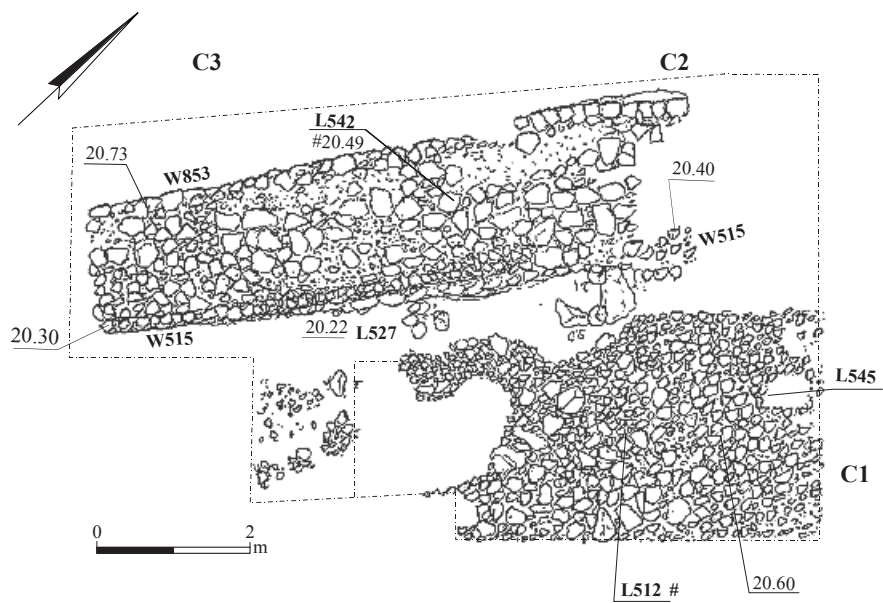
No anthropological data was available, as the tombs could not be excavated, and the burials could not be dated, since no diagnostic finds were recovered. Only a few scattered worn ribbed sherds (possibly Byzantine or Early Islamic) were spotted in the alluvial brown soil that surrounded the area, but the possibility that later burials had been dug into an earlier fill precludes any chronological conclusions.

#### AREA C (Plans 5–7)

This area (12 squares) is located approximately 100 m north of Area A, close to the main entrance to Moshav Ge'alya (Plan 5). It



Plan 5. Area C.



Plan 6. Alley 542 and Floor 512.



Fig. 18. Area C, Alley 542 to left, and Floor 512 to right, looking northeast.

contains brown, alluvial soil with deep pockets of sandy red *hamra*.

Two almost parallel alleys delimited by walls and abutted by stone floors were uncovered. The

first alley (L542; Plan 6; Fig. 18) was 8 m long, 2.1 m wide in the north and 1.7 m wide in the south. It was delimited by W515 and W853 and paved with a thick, coarse limestone pavement

of semi-hemispherical fieldstones, which were bonded with whitish gray cement. These walls (average width 0.3 m) were built of two rows of poorly dressed stones (mostly  $0.12 \times 0.15 \times 0.20$  m) preserved up to three courses high (0.16–0.22 m). Many stone heaps and remains of fallen walls were discerned alongside the lane.

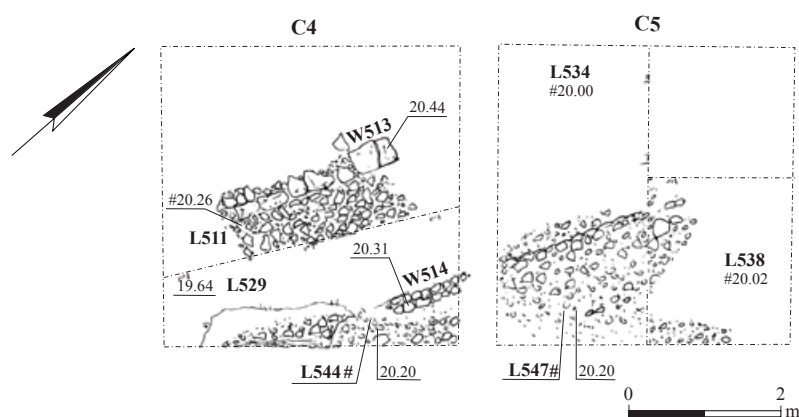
The second alley (L511, L544; Plan 7), located east of Alley 542, was a paved lane running in the same north–south direction. Some 6 m of the lane were cleared; its width ranged between 2 and 2.1 m. As Alley 542, the path was enclosed by two parallel walls, W514 in the east and W513 in the west. These walls (0.20–0.45 m wide) were not as well preserved as W515 and W543; however, their building style seems to be identical.

The alley's floor comprises a dense agglomeration of small semi-rounded limestone pebbles (c.  $0.7 \times 0.8$  m,  $0.10 \times 0.18$  m). The pavement abuts W513 in the west, but a modern trench cuts it in the east, close to W514. Nonetheless, the structural remains in the compound seem to be related. Wall 513 (0.45 m wide) is wider than W514 (preserved up to 0.2 m wide). The western face of W514 is missing because of damage caused by the modern trench. We can speculate that L511 abutted W514 and was 0.2 m wide. Yet, it is possible that damaged W514 was originally as wide as western W513, in which case both alleys were similar in width and despite the light deviations, formed one

feature: two similarly built parallel lanes abutted by pavements and buildings. This arrangement appears to indicate the general plan of what could have been a small village.

In addition, a floor (L512), irregular in shape and measuring  $3.0 \times 4.8$  m, survived in the eastern part of Sq C1 (Plans 5, 6; Fig. 19). This floor pavement is similar to the pavements of the alleys, with rounded limestone fieldstones and smooth pebbles, which could be sorted into two different sizes ( $0.2 \times 0.4$  m and  $0.5 \times 0.7$  m). The floor was best preserved in the northern part of the square, and a relative abundance of finds was found on it. These include diagnostic glazed and plain sherds of bowls, jars and juglets, dated to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE (Fig. 32); a poorly preserved coin (see Kool, this volume: Cat. No. 3), dated to the second half of the fifteenth century CE; as well as an arrowhead (Fig. 34:1), a bracelet (Fig. 34:2), earrings (Fig. 34:3, 4) and spatulas (Fig. 34:5, 6), all fashioned in bronze.

In the southern end of Area C, in Sq C9, the southwestern corner of a building, comprising east–west W539 and north–south W540, was unearthed (Plan 5; Fig. 20). The walls, erected on *hamra* soil, are actually foundations below living surfaces; thus, no related floors were found. Wall 540 (0.6 m wide) was built of small and medium-sized fieldstones ( $0.12 \times 1.50$  m) preserved up to one course high, without any discernible binding material. Wall 539 runs into



Plan 7. Alley 511.





Fig. 19. Area C, thick Floor 512, looking northwest.



Fig. 20. Area C, corner formed by W539 and W540, looking east.

the western bulk of Sq C9. A small probe carried out southwest of Sq C9 revealed W551; only its southern face was uncovered. Wall 539/551 (0.6 m wide) was uncovered for a length of 3.8 m. Similarly to W540, it was built of fieldstones and preserved one course high, making it difficult to ascertain the function of this building; no



Fig. 21. Area C, remains of animal bones (goats), looking northwest.

floor or finds could be related to this corner. Its proximity to the alleys and its orientation, however, are further evidence of the existence of a planned, Mamluk-period, settlement. Clues as

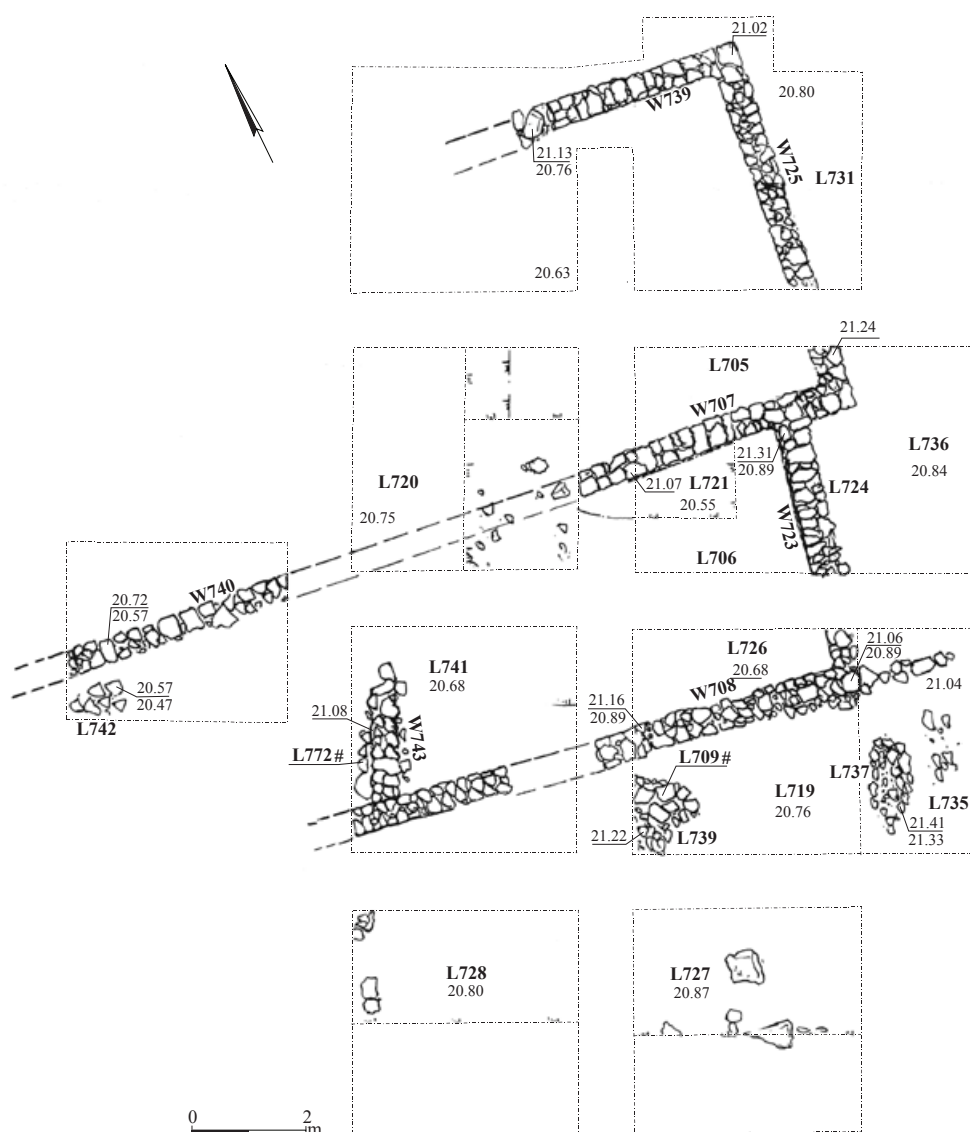
to the character of this settlement can be found in Sqs C3, C6 and C7, where habitation surfaces yielded bones of livestock, mostly goats, and other animals (Fig. 21).<sup>7</sup> These remains and two iron horseshoes unearthed in Area D (see below) indicate an agricultural or pastoral way of life.

#### AREA D

Area D, the northernmost area of the excavation, is located close to the Kefar Gevirol quarter

of Rehovot. In the past, olive trees and citrus orchards grew here; however, their roots barely damaged the remains. The area is covered by dark alluvial soil and below it, red *hamra* and pockets of sparsely distributed sandy soil. Modern debris and dumps covered the topsoil. Area D can be roughly divided into two sectors.

*The Southern Sector* (Plan 8).— This sector includes Sqs D1, D2, D6 and D15, where the foundations of a building were found, divided



Plan 8. Southern sector of Area D.

into two parallel rooms oriented east–west. The dimensions of the cleared part of the building were  $12 \times 14$  m, although excavations were not carried out in the western end, which seemed to continue



Fig. 22. Wall 725 in Area D, looking northeast.

beyond the excavation limits. The northern room (L705) was delimited by W725 in the east (Fig. 22), W739 in the north (Fig. 23) and W707 in the south (shared with southern Room 726). The western limits of Room 705 could not be traced. The southern room (L726) was enclosed by W723 in the east, W708 in the south, W743 in the west and W707 in the north. All the walls were similarly constructed of two rows of fieldstones, the outer face of the wall using smoother stones. The walls were 0.4 m wide and preserved to a height of three courses; the corner stones were more massive than the other stones.

The building was severely damaged by a modern trench, which cut it in the center from north to south, and is especially evident in W708 (overall length 9 m), the southern boundary of the building (Sqs D1, D6; Plan 8). Damage caused by the trench was evidenced again in the western part of the excavation, where W740, the continuation of W707 and common to both rooms, appears in the west after a gap (Fig. 24). Both W740 and W708 continue westward, beyond the limits of the development works.

A few carelessly laid floors, built with small stones and a gray-white binding material, were



Fig. 23. Walls 739 and 725, forming the northeastern corner of the building in Area D, looking northeast.





Fig. 24. Wall 740 in the eastern portion of Area D, looking southwest.

uncovered. Floor 737 is fairly close to the southeastern end of W708, and Floor 709 is close to the central segment of the wall. Floor 709 was also severely damaged by the modern trench. Floor 772 abutted W743 from the west, and Floor 742 was close to W740 from the south. The last floor is somewhat different from the others in that its stones were more carefully arranged.

The building was built on alluvial brown soil with small pockets of *hamra*. Very few sherds were retrieved from floors or sealed contexts. The finds consist mostly of very few worn jar body sherds, mostly of black Gaza Ware, dated to the late Ottoman period (eighteenth century CE), which is the date proposed for this building.

*The Northern Sector.*—This sector (Sqs D3–D5; not illustrated) was covered by a thick, massive layer of a modern dump and construction debris (0.3–0.4 m deep). After it was removed, the remains of a stone building were found, and vestiges of a thick plaster layer, sometimes of a bright clear green color, were discerned. Worn Ottoman-period sherds (not illustrated) were uncovered and a bronze bracelet was unearthed below the walls. The building is dated to the Ottoman period.

## THE FINDS

### THE POTTERY

#### *Area A*

One storage jar from the Late Roman period was found in a fill atop a living surface (Fig. 25). In the cemetery, three types of pottery vessels were used to seal the tombs, labeled Types A and B (Figs. 26–33). The ceramic assemblage is rather homogeneous, and includes 17 vessels, all fashioned from coarse, well-fired buff-colored clay, dated to the Mamluk period.

*Late Roman Storage Jar* (Fig. 25).— A fragment of a rim, thickened and slightly raised, with a groove on the interior, was recovered. The shoulder is ribbed and traces remain of the handle. This jar belongs to the well-known family of Gazan amphorae, this particular vessel belonging to Majcherek's Form 2 (1995:166–169, Pls. 5; 9:2, and see discussion therein), but known also as 52–53 (Zemer 1977:61, Pl. 19, Photograph XIX) or 48 (Peacock and Williams 1986:199). It dates to the third and fourth centuries CE.

*Beehives* (Figs. 26, 27, 29).— Conical vessels (n = 4), all of the same type, were among the jars in secondary use as tomb coverings at Ge'alya. These large vessels are truncated and rounded toward the wide, everted rim. They lack a base and it is obvious that here, at Ge'alya, they were purposely manufactured in this manner. A gentle ribbing appears on the lower third of the vessel, close to the base, with the exception

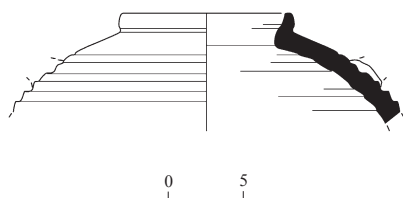


Fig. 25. Late Roman storage jar (Area A, L111, B1069; orange clay with very few white grits, folded rim, neck-less, ribbing).

of Fig. 29:3, which is more-or-less smooth-bodied. Similar vessels are known from Azor, where they were erroneously defined as “funnels” (Gudovitch 2001: Fig. 151:4); from Tel Mevorakh, where they were defined as a “holemouth jar with a small hole in the base” (Stern 1978: Fig. 1:3); and from Ḥorbat Zikhrin (Taxel 2006: Figs. 13:2, 14). Another specimen was recently found on Herzl Street, Ramla (Toueg 2008b:73, Fig. 5:6). Excavations at Khirbat el-Ni‘ana unearthed three fragments of vessels defined as “globular neckless jars with pinched rim”, which are tentatively identified as related to large zir jars (de Vincenz and Sion 2007:38, Fig. 11:1–3), but, in my opinion, could be part of conical vessels similar to ours.

Similar fragmentary vessels were recovered from Tel Afeq,<sup>8</sup> Ramla (Elisha 2005: Fig 12:13), in surveys at Yavne-Yam (Fischer and Taxel



Fig. 26. Assemblage of vessels used to cover Types A and B tombs in Area A.



Fig. 27. Beehives and scoop (antiliya) vessels, used to cover Type A tombs in Area A.



Fig. 28. Storage jars used to cover Types A and B tombs in Area A.

Fig. 29 ▶

No.	Locus	Basket	Description
1	105	1042	Buff clay, truncated conical smooth body, flat hollow base
2	131	1102	Buff clay, truncated conical body, flat hollow base, ribbing
3	131	1103	Buff clay, truncated conical body, flat hollow base, ribbing
4	131	1100	Buff clay, truncated conical body, flat hollow base, ribbing





Fig. 29. Beehives.

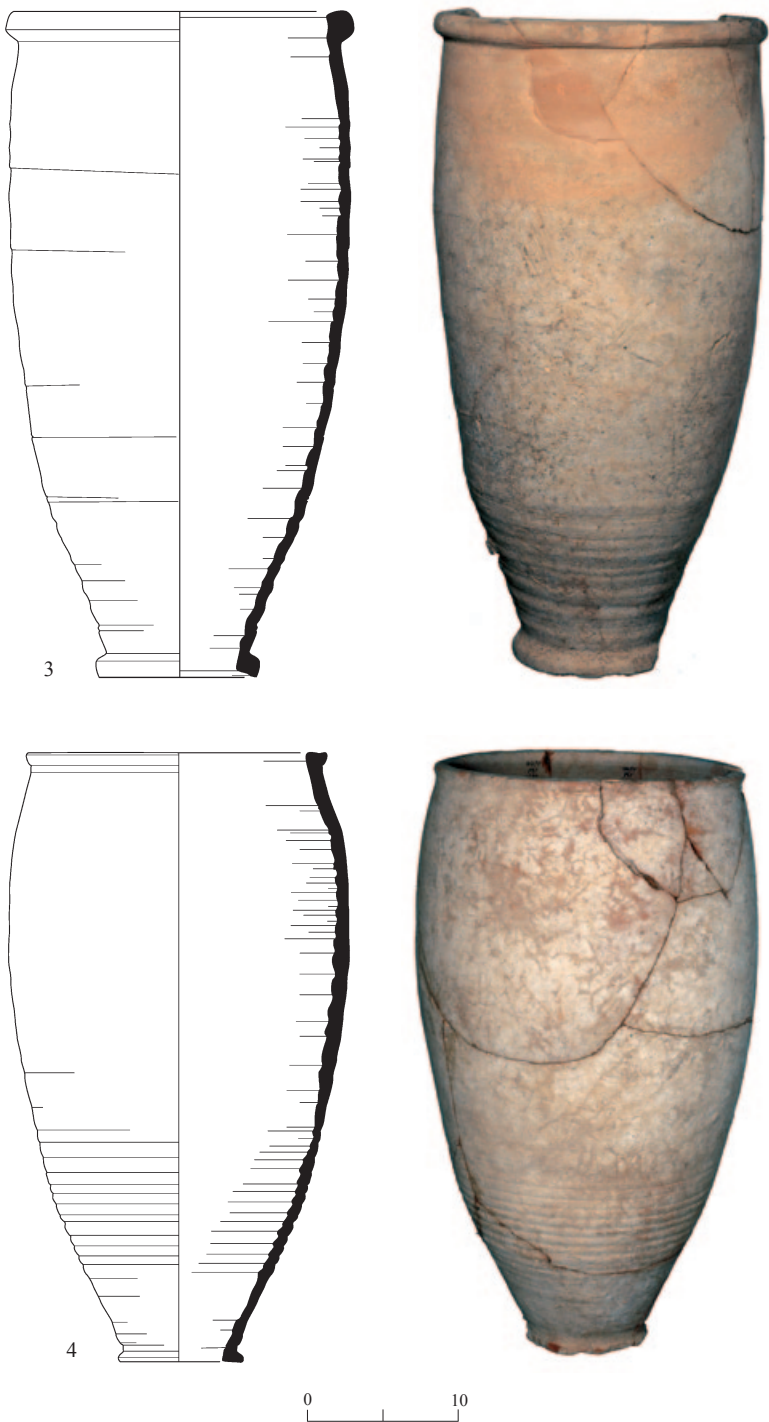


Fig. 29. (cont.).

2007: Fig. 34:1–3), from el-Haddariya (see below), and possibly, from el-Qubab (Avissar 2006: Fig. 7:15).<sup>9</sup> Identical vessels were found during the 2008 excavation of a small-scale industrial installation at Bir ez-Zeibaq near Ramla, close to the Ta'avura Junction (described as a “molasses” jar, see Talmi 2010: Fig. 5:7).

In the past, these intriguingly shaped vessels were often misunderstood and incorrectly identified, as for example, at Azor (Gudovitch 2001). Recent studies, based on ethnological comparisons, propose that the vessels are beehives used by Mamluk-period beekeepers (Taxel 2006). This conclusion is founded on abundant comparative material; the purpose of particular features, such as the hollow bases, is clearly explained (see, e.g., Avitsur 1972:235; 1976: Fig. 190; Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2007:217).<sup>10</sup>

Three types of beehives are known in Israel, but only one (Taxel's Type C) is represented in archaeological contexts, mostly in secondary use as tomb coverings or as improvised coffins for infants, as at Tel Mevorakh (Stern 1978: Fig. 1:3; Pls. 6:4, 5; 21:3). It should be stressed that there are other explanations for the use of these vessels, for example, as dovecots or nests for laying eggs. The provenance of these vessels is limited to the area between the basins of Naḥal Yarqon in the north and Naḥal Soreq in the south. This geographical distribution has already been noted (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007:54) and could well reflect a regional cultural preference during the Mamluk period, and perhaps, during the Early Ottoman period as well.

*Scoop Vessels* (Figs. 26, 27, 30).— Cylinder-shaped vessels (n = 2) with a simple rim and an ogival base were found. The high neck has an incised groove around it, approximately mid-height, and delicate ribbing. This vessel is typical of water-wheel lifting devices powered by beasts, usually oxen, camels or donkeys (see Gorzalczany 2009c, and references therein). At Ge'alya, vessels of this kind are dated to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries CE (Avissar and Stern 2005:104) and are known from 'Atlit (Johns 1936:48, Fig. 14:9), Al-Burj al-Aḥmar (Pringle 1986:144, Fig. 44:25) and Ramla (Toueg 2008a: Fig. 5:13; 2008b:73, Fig. 5:7, Photograph 2). A pot similar to the Ge'alya examples is known from Yavne-Yam (Ayalon 2000:225: Fig. 3:10), and other examples are known from Ramla (Elisha 2010: Fig. 11:5).

*Bag-Shaped Storage Jars*.— The most ubiquitous vessel in the excavation (n = 11) (Figs. 26, 28, 31) is a slightly asymmetric bag-shaped storage jar with a rounded base, which has several variants. The vessels are manufactured from coarse, light-buff clay and have a high vertical or ridged neck, the ridge located below the rim or mid-neck. Two loop handles are attached to the rounded, drooping shoulders and the body is adorned with a combed incised pattern of wavy or horizontal parallel lines, often in combination. The incised decoration usually appears on the lower third of the vessel's body, while the upper third sometimes has a delicate, at times almost imperceptible, ribbing.

This jar, dating from the second half of the thirteenth century to the fifteenth century CE,

Fig. 30 ▶

No.	Locus	Basket	Description
1	131	1101	Buff clay, simple rim, cylindrical high neck, rounded body, pointed base, groove under neck
2	105	1012	Buff clay, simple rim, cylindrical high neck, rounded body, pointed base, groove under neck



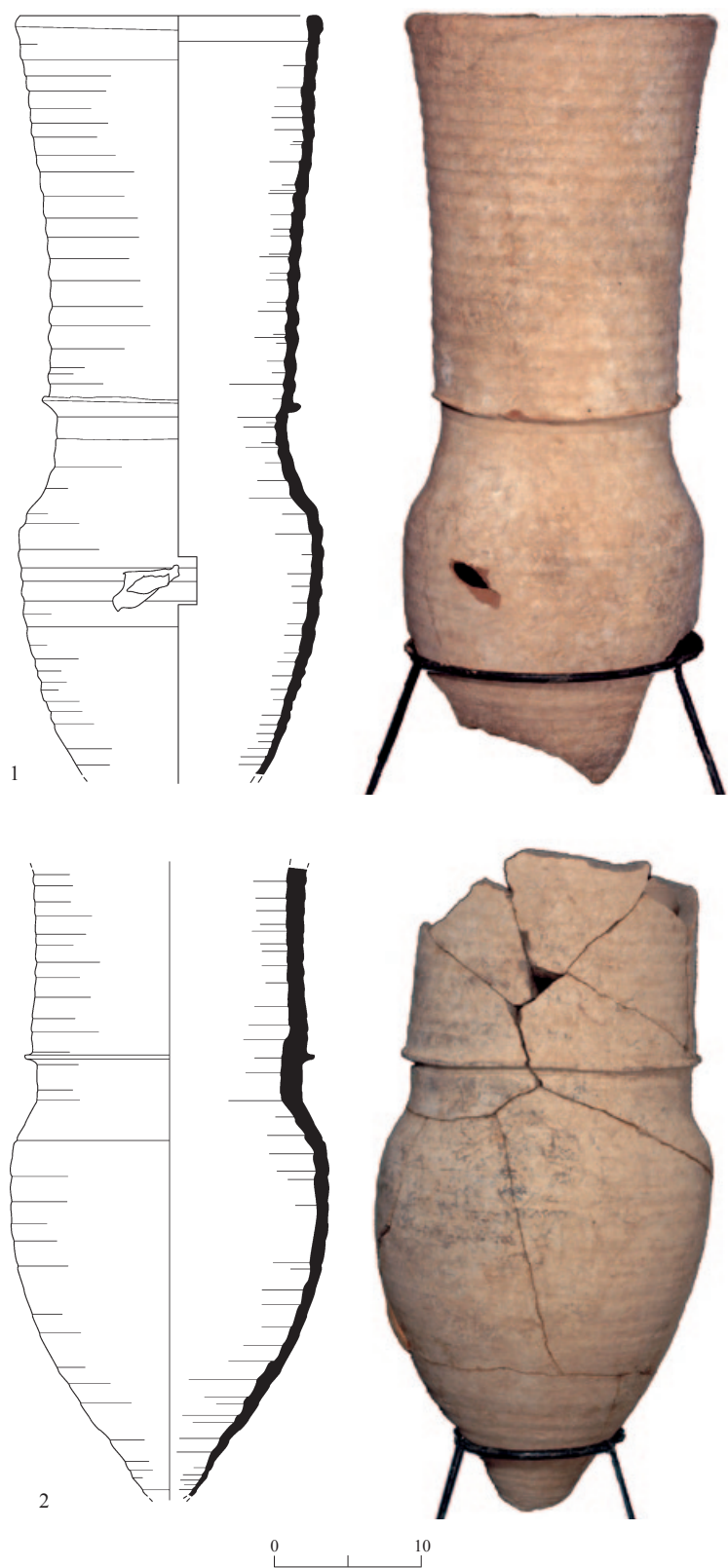


Fig. 30. Scoop (*antiliya*) vessels.

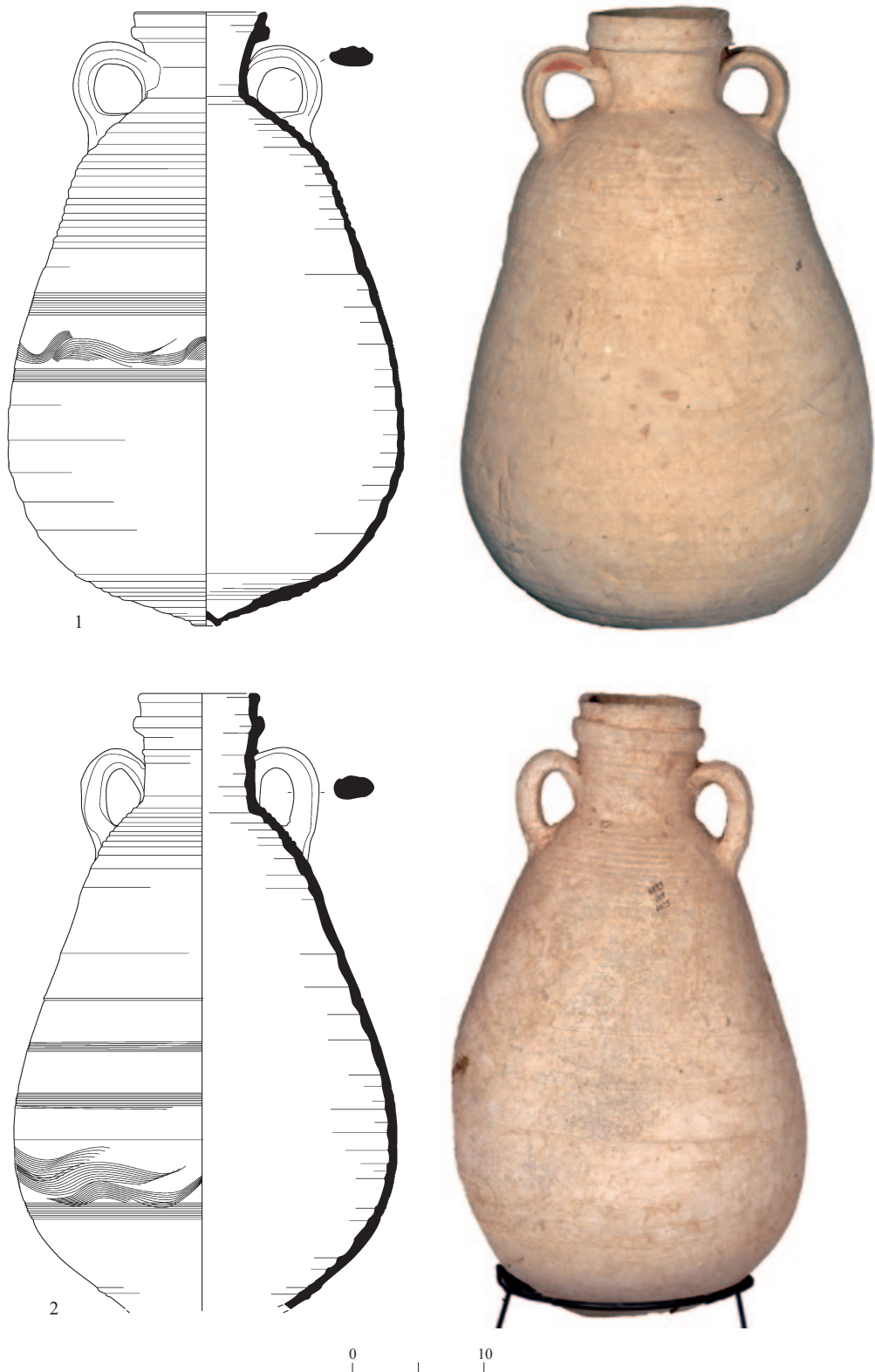
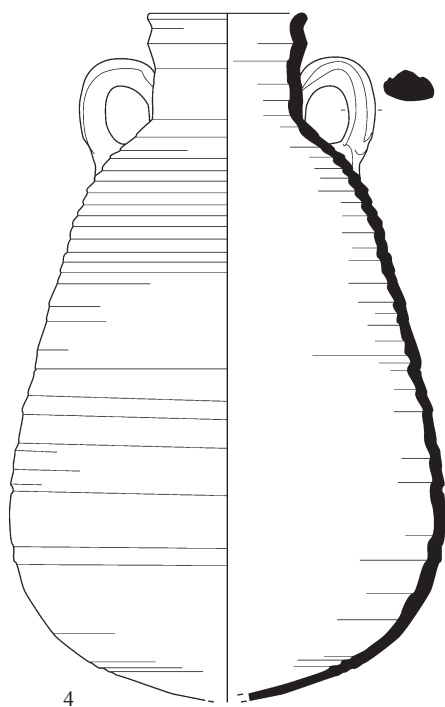
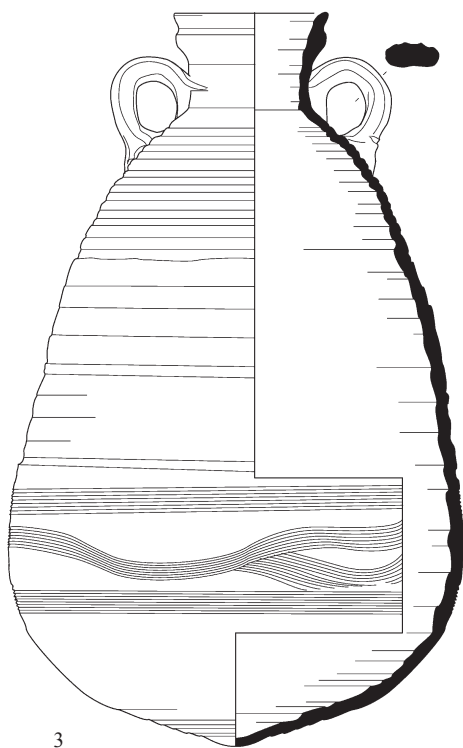


Fig. 31. Storage jars.



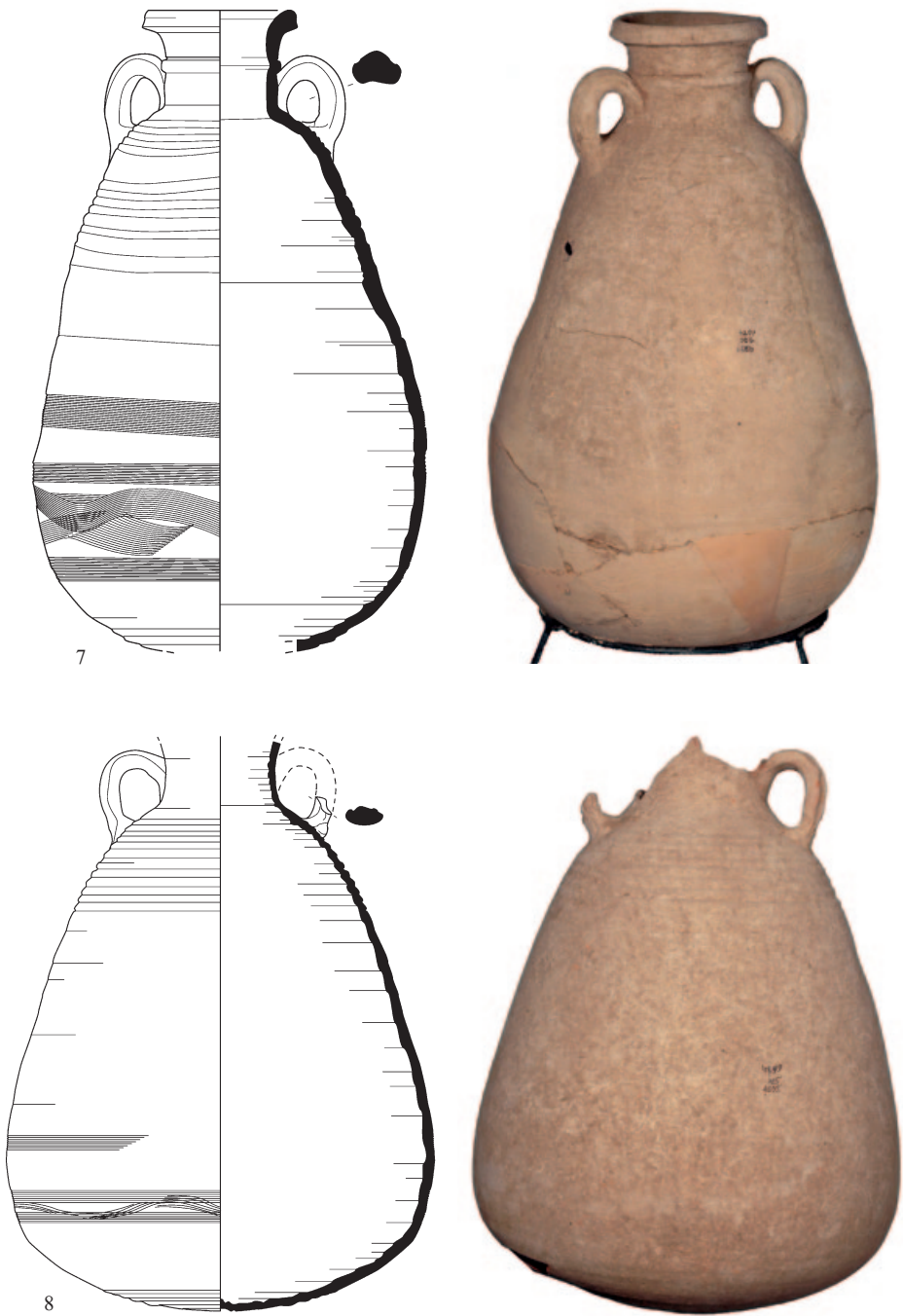
0 10

Fig. 31. (cont.).





Fig. 31. Storage jars (cont.).



0 10

Fig. 31. (cont.).

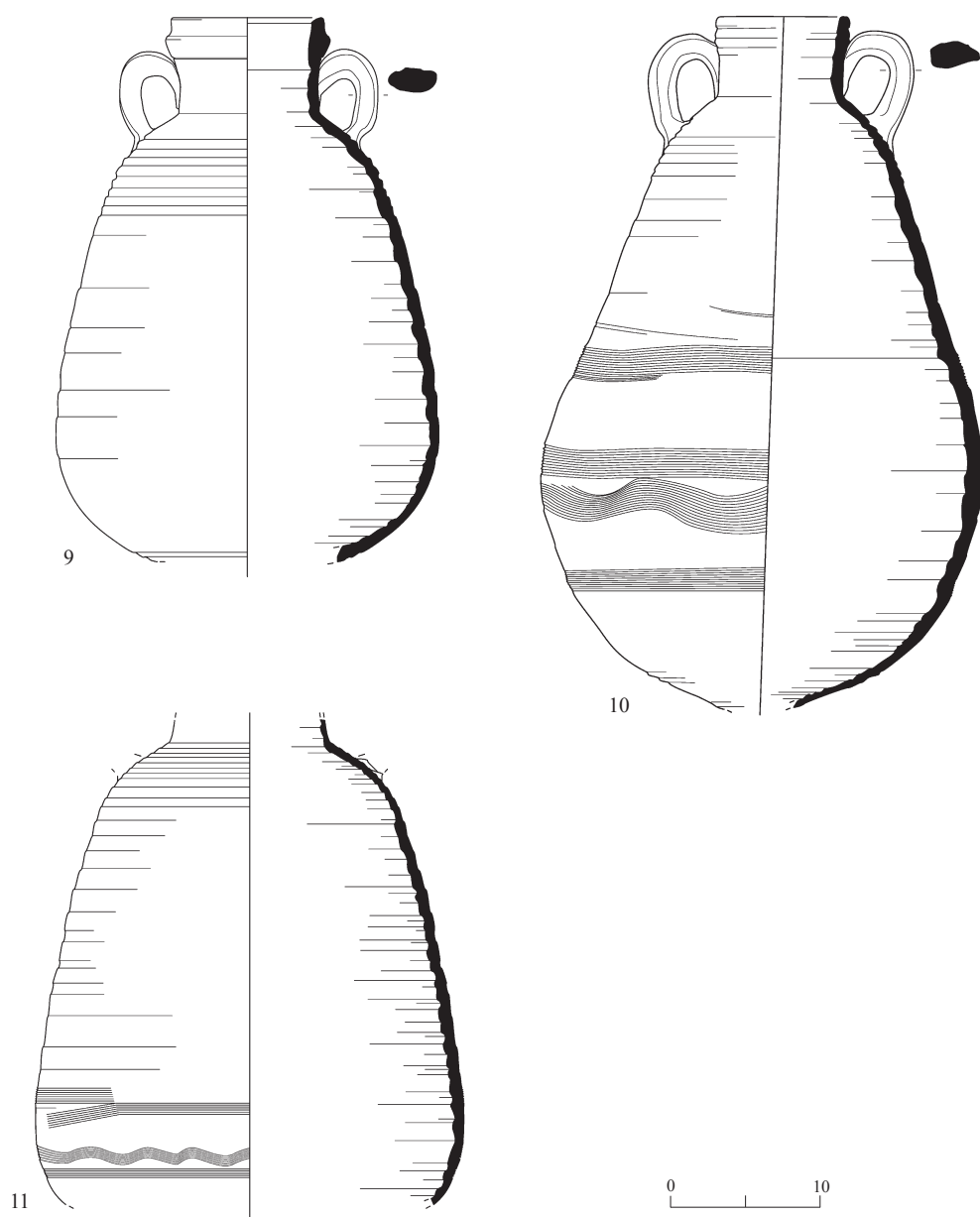


Fig. 31. (cont.).

is considered typical of the Mamluk period. It is known from Yoqne'am and Tel Mevorakh (Stern 1978: Fig. 1:2; Avissar 1996:154, Fig. XIII:124; Avissar and Stern 2005:102, Fig. 42:5, 6, with references and discussion therein). Several examples identical to the jars from Ge'alya were recovered from Herzl

Street (Toueg 2008b:70, Figs. 4:1–9; 5:1) and the Northern Star Compound (Elisha 2010: Fig 11:1–4), Ramla. The excavations at Khirbat el-Ni'ana, not far from Ge'alya (Sion 2007), uncovered a large variety of Mamluk-period storage jars, represented by fragmentary rims and necks. Some of them clearly resemble



◀ Fig. 31

No.	Locus	Basket	Description
1	113	1044	Buff clay, external folded ridge rim, high ridged neck, bag-shaped body, dropped shoulders, loop handles, ribbing, wavy and straight parallel lines mid-body
2	105	1015	Buff clay, external ridge rim, high ridged neck, bag-shaped body, dropped shoulders, loop handles, ribbing, wavy and straight parallel lines on lower part of body
3	113	1043	Buff clay, external folded ridge rim, high ridged neck, bag-shaped body, dropped shoulders, loop handles, ribbing, wavy and straight parallel lines on lower part of body
4	113	1041	Buff clay, flaring ridge rim, high ridged neck, bag-shaped body, dropped shoulders, loop handles, smooth body with delicate ribbing
5	105	1016	Buff clay, external folded ridge rim, high neck, bag-shaped slightly asymmetric body, dropped shoulders, loop handles, ribbing, wavy and straight parallel lines on lower half of body
6	127	1104	Buff clay, external ridge rim, high ridged neck, bag-shaped slightly asymmetric body, dropped shoulders, loop handles, gentle ribbing, wavy and straight parallel lines on lower part of body, combed not quite horizontal lines
7	105	1017	Buff clay, flaring thickened rim, high ridged neck, bag-shaped slightly asymmetric body, dropped shoulders, loop handles, gentle ribbing, wavy and straight parallel lines on lower half of body
8	105	1035	Buff clay, high neck, bag-shaped body, dropped shoulders, loop handles, gentle ribbing, narrow wavy and straight parallel lines on lower part of body
9	127	1097	Buff clay, external ridge rim, high ridged neck, bag-shaped body, dropped shoulders, loop handles, gentle ribbing
10	105	1018	Buff clay, external ridge rim high ridged neck, bag-shaped body, dropped shoulders, loop handles, gentle ribbing, wavy and straight parallel lines on lower part of body
11			Buff clay, bag shaped body, dropped shoulders, gentle ribbing, wavy and straight parallel lines on lower half of body

the ridged necks of the bag-shaped jars from Ge'alya (de Vincenz and Sion 2007:38, Fig. 11:12, 13, 16–22).

#### *Area C*

*Bowls* (Fig. 32:1–7).— Bowl No. 1 is shallow, rounded, gently ribbed and carinated, with a low, flat disk base. Avissar and Stern (2005:82, Fig. 35:1) classified it as Type II.1.1.1, dating to the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century CE. This small plain bowl is one of the most ubiquitous wares and appears in most medieval sites and assemblages, although it is not as popular as the glazed bowl of medieval times, e.g.,

at Yoqne'am (Avissar 1996:123–124, Type 14, Fig. XIII.77) and Emmaus-Qubeibeh (Bagatti 1993:127, Fig. 31:2–6). Included in this group are Fig. 32:2, 3 (Avissar and Stern 2005:82, Fig. 35:8, 10).

Similar bowls are commonplace in excavations that yielded Mamluk and early Ottoman pottery at Ramla (for example, Elisha 2005: Fig. 2:6–9; Parnos and Nagar 2008: Fig. 15:1; Kletter 2009: Fig. 8; Cytryn-Silverman 2010:121–122, Pls. 9.28; 9.34:4, Photographs 9.26–9.29; Korenfeld 2010: Fig. 6:7, 8; Talmi 2010: Fig. 5:1–4). Considerable numbers of such bowls were also found in other Mamluk district capitals, e.g., at Banias (Avissar

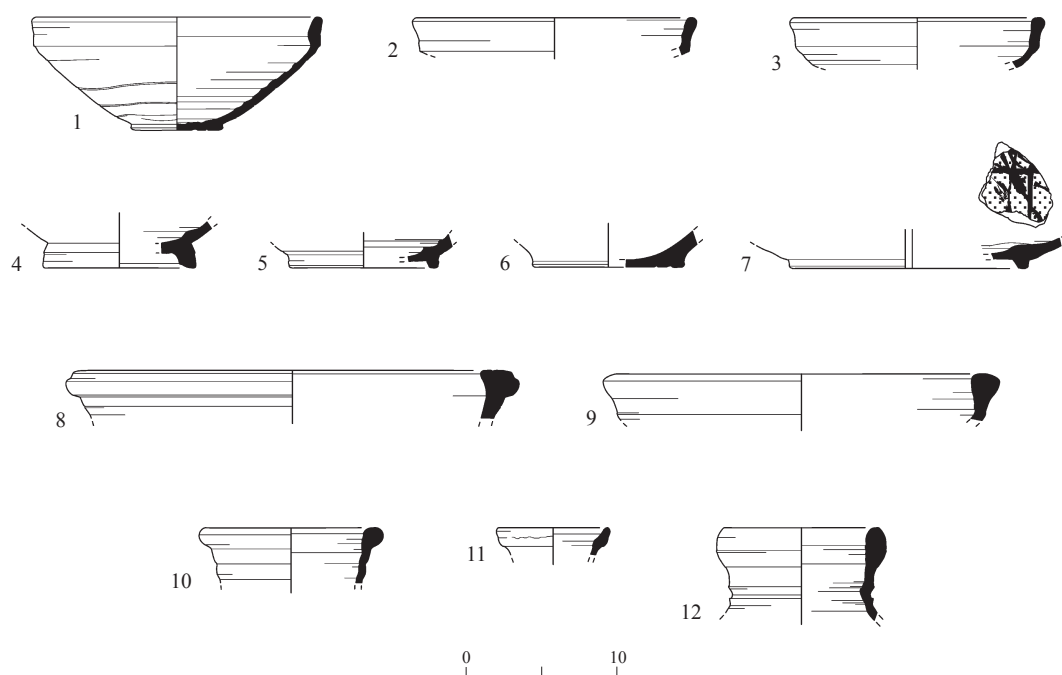


Fig. 32. Mamluk-period pottery from Area C.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Bowl	524	5061/1	Orange clay, gray core, very few sorted white small and large grits, shallow rounded and carinated, gently ribbed, flat base
2	Bowl	524	5061/9	Orange pinkish clay, gray core, very few white grits, shallow rounded and carinated, gently ribbed
3	Bowl	524	5061/12	Dark orange clay, gray core, shallow rounded and carinated, gently ribbed
4	Bowl	524	5061/2	Pinkish gray clay, curved shallow, low ring base
5	Bowl	524	5061/10	Orange clay, gray core, very few large white grits, curved shallow bowl with low ring base
6	Bowl	524	5061/6	Orange clay, light gray core, very few small white grits curved shallow bowl with flat base
7	Bowl	524	5061/7	Dark orange clay, light gray core, ring base, yellow gritty glaze, random pattern of incised lines in brown and black under glaze
8	Basin	524	5061/5	Orange clay, gray core
9	Basin	524	5061/11	Orange clay, gray core, very few white small grits
10	Jug	524	5061/4	Buff clay, gray core
11	Jug	524	5061/8	Buff clay, gray core, very few white grits
12	Jar	524	5061/3	Orange clay, gray core, dark gray small grits and large white grits

2008:95, Fig. 6.3:7, 8) and at Safed, where simple unglazed bowls were found in the al-Watta Quarter excavations and outnumbered all other types of unglazed wheel-made wares

(Barbé 2014:118, Fig. 8:3–5; Dalali-Amos and Getzov, forthcoming).

In addition to the large centers, plain unglazed bowls were found at rural sites, albeit not in

great quantities. These sites include villages near Ge'alya, such as Khirbat el-Ni'ana (de Vincenz and Sion 2007:35, Fig. 9), Giv'at Dani (Lazar 1999:130\*, Fig. 4:1–6) and to the north, at Kafr 'Ana (Gophna and Taxel 2007:47, Fig. 3.8:3). Further to the north, these bowls were reported at Ḥorbat Burin (Kletter and Stern 2006:184–185, Fig. 15:1) and at Nazareth, which, during this period, was no more than a small village (Alexandre 2012:69, Fig. 3.7:1–10).

The illustrations in Fig. 32:4–6 are the bases of crude bowls from a group featuring hemispherical, conical and carinated bowls with a ring base. These vessels fall under Avissar and Stern's Type II.1.1.3 and date to the Mamluk period (Avissar and Stern 2005:82, Fig. 35:7, 8).

Figure 32:7 is a bowl with a low ring base, gently curving walls and, when complete, has a ledge rim. The surface is treated with yellow glaze, gritty in appearance because of inadequate melting, perhaps due to insufficient firing. The interior bears random, incised, straight and curved lines in brown and black under the glaze. This vessel is termed Type II.1.2.1 by Avissar and Stern (2005:8, Fig. 2:1) and dates from the second half of the twelfth to the first half of the thirteenth centuries CE. It occurs at Bet Zeneta (Getzov 2000:87\*, Fig. 24:7), Yoqne'am (Avissar 1996:90–93, Figs. XIII:22–25), Caesarea (Pringle 1985: Figs. 3:12–15; 7:40–44, 45; 8:46, Pl. XVII:3) and Jerusalem (Tushingham 1985: Figs. 35:23; 39:21).

*Large Bowls and Basins* (Fig 32:8, 9).— Large, crude basins with a thickened, flattened rim that protrudes inside and out were found. Such vessels were defined by Avissar and Stern (2005:84, Fig. 36:5) as Type II.1.2.3 (Large Plain Bowls), which they dated from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth centuries CE, and possibly later. They occur at Safed, Yoqne'am, Jerusalem (Avissar and Stern 2005:84) and at Giv'at Dani (Lazar 1999:130\*, Fig. 4:8, 10).

*Jugs* (Figs. 32:10, 11).— Two jugs were found. Figure 32:10 is a jug with a swollen neck, Avissar and Stern's Type II.4.2.1

(2005:108, Fig. 45:4, 5, Pl. XXX:2, 3). This type has parallels at Safed, Nazareth, Al-Burj al-Aḥmar, Jerusalem and Ḥorbat Burin, and dates to the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries CE or later (Avissar and Stern 2005:110). Jug No. 11 has a straight neck and belongs to Avissar and Stern's Type II.4.2.3 (2005:111, Fig. 45:7–9, Pl. XXX:4). It occurs in Safed, Jerusalem and Ramla, where it is dated to the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries CE (Avissar and Stern 2005:111).

*Jar* (Fig. 32:12).— One storage jar with a thickened rim and ridged neck was recovered, identified by Avissar and Stern as Type II.3.1.3 (2005:100, Fig. 42.4) and dated from the second half of the twelfth to the end of the fourteenth centuries CE. This jar type seems to have been ubiquitous during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, especially in the central and southern parts of the country, and less common in the north. Examples are known from Kh. al-Bireh near Ramallah, Ḥorbat Burin (Avissar and Stern 2005:100), Jerusalem (Tushingham 1985:149) and Emmaus-Qubeibeh (Bagatti 1993: Fig. 25:1, 4–8).

#### COINS

Eight coins were unearthed, of which only five (copper *fulus*) could be identified (see Kool, this volume). All belong to the Mamluk period, and three were securely dated. The earliest datable coin was minted in Alexandria during the second reign of the Burji sultan al-Zāhir Sayf al-Din Barquq (792–801 AH/1390–1399 CE). One coin belongs to the second reign of Faraj (814–818 AH/1412–1416 CE) and the latest datable *fals* was minted during the reign of al-Ashraf Qa'itbay (873–901 AH/1468–1495 CE).

#### METAL ARTIFACTS

##### *Iron*

*Horseshoes* (Fig. 33:1, 2).— Two horseshoes were retrieved. Three similar items from





Fig. 33. Iron objects: (1, 2) horseshoes; (3) tacks; (4–6) nails.

the Crusader period were retrieved from the southwestern stables of the Pilgrims' Castle at 'Atlit. The 'Atlit horseshoes seem to have been made for Arab horses or an Arab crossbreed and not the Crusader war-horse (Johns 1936:43, including n. 1; 48, Fig. 8; Raphael 1999:131, Fig. 9). Eight Crusader-period horseshoe fragments, as well as iron nails, were retrieved from Horbat Bet Zeneta (Getzov 2000: Fig. 30: 7–13; Rosen 2000:107\*–108\* and discussion therein). Another (Crusader) example is known from Yoqne'am (Khamis 1996:220; Boas 1999: Pl. 6.17). Interestingly, one of the horseshoes from 'Atlit was found in clear relation to an *antiliya* vessel similar to our example (Johns 1936: Fig. 14:9, Pl. XXVI:1). Circumstantial evidence hints that the horseshoes from Ge'alya should be dated to the Mamluk period.

However, since they were not found in a clear-cut stratigraphic context, the possibility that they are later, e.g., Ottoman, cannot be ruled out.

*Nails.*— Four square-sectioned iron nails, varying in size from small tacks (Fig. 33:3) to spikes (Fig. 35:4–6), were found. Similar nails dating to the Mamluk period are known from H. Bet Zeneta (Getzov 2000:98\*, Fig. 30:1, 2) and 'Atlit (Johns 1936:48, Fig. 13:14).

#### *Bronze*

*Arrowhead* (Fig. 34:1).— One corroded flat arrowhead was found, triangular in shape with a long tang. Similar items, dated to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE, are known from Me'zad 'Aṭeret and 'Atlit (Johns 1936:48, Fig.

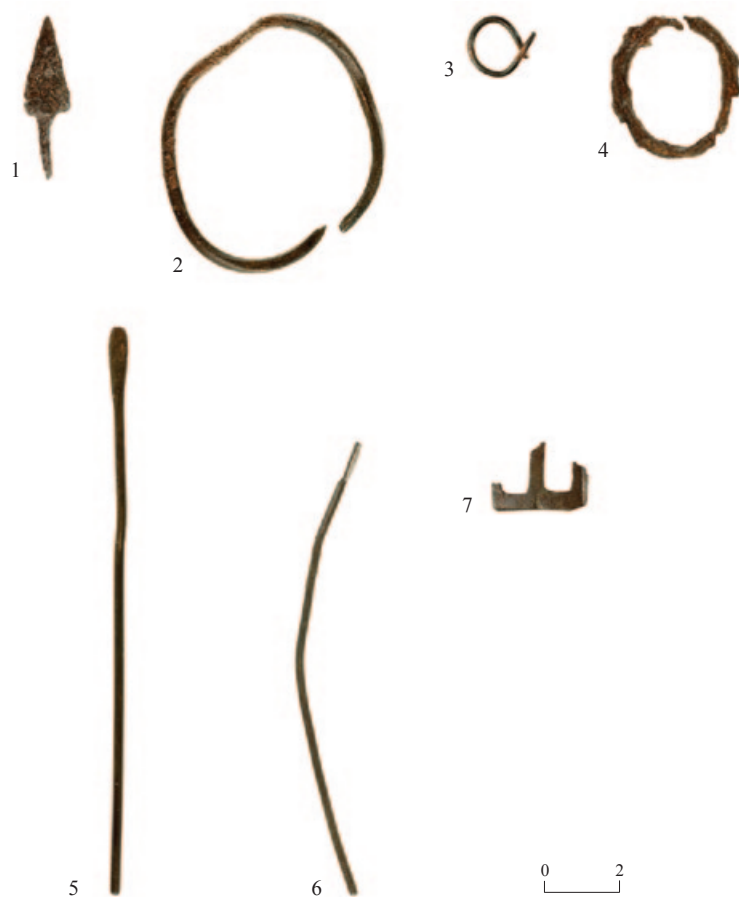


Fig. 34. Bronze objects: (1) arrowhead; (2) bracelet; (3, 4) earrings; (5, 6) spatulae; (7) buckle.

15:3, 4; Raphael 1999:130, Fig. 7), Vadum Iacob (Boas 1999: Fig 6.3; Raphael 2008:262\*, Fig. 2 and see discussion therein), Yoqne'am (Boas 1999: Pl. 6.17) and Tell Arqa (Thalmann 1978:29, Fig. 6 upper left).

*Jewelry.*— A bracelet (Fig. 34:2) and two earrings (Fig. 34:3, 4) were found. Similar pieces were reported from the Mamluk-period cemetery at Pella (Walmsley 1997–1998:138). Bracelets resembling those from Ge'alya were found at Tell el-Ḥesī, where they were dated to the Late Islamic period (Eakins 1993: Pls. 89, 90), and at Kefar Sava (Gorzalczany 2009a: Fig. 7:1–5).

*Spatulas.*— The spatulas (Fig. 34:5, 6) are similar to items dated to the Mamluk period from Giv'at Dani (Lazar 1999:134\*, Fig. 7) and from the cemetery on Bialik Street, Ramla (Parnos and Nagar 2008: Fig. 16:3).

*Buckle.*— The buckle (Fig. 34:7) is similar to an item found at 'Atlit (Johns 1936:51, Pl. 16:5). A similar buckle was unearthed in the cemetery on Bialik Street, Ramla (Parnos and Nagar 2008: Fig. 16:2).

#### BONE

*Comb.*— A fragment of a two-sided comb, of a type well-known from the Byzantine and Islamic periods, was found at Ge'alya (Fig. 35). The fragment is the almost rectangular, transversal part of the comb's body (4.5 × 2.0 cm) with remains of two rows of teeth visible at both ends. The teeth are of two sizes, coarse and fine, and the distance between them varies according to the row, thus creating lines of

different densities. This arrangement may have been used for different hair types, or, most probably, served a double use: the coarse teeth were used for combing hair and the fine teeth, for extracting lice or lice-eggs. These parasites affected large portions of the population in the ancient world (Mumcuoglu and Zias 1989:69). Microscopic analysis of ancient combs shows their existence in diverse locations from Egypt to Pre-Columbian South America (Mumcuoglu and Zias 1988:545).

Combs are known since prehistoric times (Schick 1995:199), but few have been published, especially items dated to the Islamic and other periods relevant to our site. Combs from well-attested provenances and contexts are rare. Wooden combs were found at 'En Gedi in tombs dated to the Second Temple period (Hadas 1994:51, Fig. 15:20, Pls. 4 [left], 11). The majority of published combs, of bone or wood, date to the Roman period, and derive from Wadi ed-Daliyeh (Lapp 1974: Pl. 32:1–3) and the Judean Desert. Several carved bone combs decorated with high-quality glyptics depicting horsemen were found at Antinoe, Egypt, and dated to the fifth and sixth centuries CE (Lewis 1973: Fig. 29).

In Islamic contexts, two combs similar to our examples were discovered at the nearby site of Şarafand el-Kharab (Nes Zīyyona; Gorzalczany 2004:44–45, Fig. 5:1, 2), some 5 km northeast of Ge'alya, and four were retrieved from Bet She'an (Avshalom-Gorni 2004: Fig. 14:4). Additional examples are known from Tiberias (Ariel Berman, pers. comm.), the baths at Ḥammāt Tiberias,<sup>11</sup> Bir el-'Abed, close to Kibbutz Ha-Ma'apil (Eli Yannai, pers. comm.), Zūr Natan (Eitan Ayalon, pers. comm.) and Petah Tiqwa (Shlomo Gudovitz, pers. comm.).

#### GLASS

The meager glass finds (not illustrated) include a fragment of a thick bottle base and part of its handle, and a white quartz bead. They were fragmentary and poorly preserved, and thus, could not be dated.



Fig. 35. Bone comb.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The remains excavated in Areas A–D at Ge'alya can be dated, based on the numismatic and ceramic evidence, to the Mamluk period (mid-thirteenth–early sixteenth centuries CE); Areas A and B revealed evidence of third- and fourth-century CE occupations as well. An occupation gap is evident between the two time spans. In the north of the site, evidence was found of continuity into the Ottoman period. This accords with the results of previous surveys and excavations, and thus reinforces the conclusions of previous researchers (Fischer and Taxel 2007; Fischer, Taxel and Amit 2008). Nevertheless, it is clear that the main occupation period of the site was Mamluk.

During the Mamluk period, the site was most probably a small village or a farm, part of the agricultural hinterland of Yavne (for Yavne during the Mamluk period, see Petersen 2001:313–319; Taragan 2005; Taxel 2005:155–162; Fischer and Taxel 2007:248–250). Its function was probably the same as many small rural settlements in the vicinity, such as el-Mughar, Khirbat 'Asfura, Zarnuqa, Bet Hanan, Horbat Hermes, el-Qubeiba, Khirbat Diran, Qatra, Khirbat el-Furn and Khirbat Shaḥma (for rural settlement in the Yavne area during other periods, see Fischer, Taxel and Amit 2008). Simple tombs sealed with flat stone slabs are very common throughout the Muslim period and were found in numerous cemeteries. Additional burial fields have been surveyed or excavated and await publication (see Gorzalczy 2009c and references therein).<sup>12</sup>

The most intriguing feature of the excavation is the cemetery in Area A. The general layout of the cemetery—tombs oriented in a general west–east axis with the deceased facing Mecca—corresponds well to burial customs from the Islamic periods. It is well attested from the earliest phases of Islam, as reflected in poetry from the Umayyad period (al-Farazdaq 1960, I:283:10, 338:10). In an earlier article (Gorzalczy 2007), I suggested that the slight differences in the orientation of the tomb axes

is a combination of the customary Muslim interment of the deceased with the face toward Mecca and annual variations in the direction of the sunrise.

The best published parallel to the cemetery at Ge'alya is the Mamluk-period cemetery at Kafr 'Ana, located 20 km north of Ge'alya, excavated for several seasons during 1999 and 2000 (Buchenino 2002; Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007; Vitto, forthcoming). The number of graves in this large cemetery, located in the northeastern corner of the site, is estimated at 200 (although only 167 were excavated). The excavators divided the tombs, some of which are similar to the ones excavated at Ge'alya, into six types (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007:16–17). For instance, our Type A compares well to Kafr 'Ana's Type 2 (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007:17; Figs. 2.8; 2.9), except that at Kafr 'Ana, the jars are separated one from the other by a narrow line of small fieldstones, whereas at Ge'alya, the jars touch each other. It is worth noting that our Type B has no parallels at Kafr 'Ana, and seems to be unattested elsewhere. Our Types C and D closely resemble Kafr 'Ana's Type 1, (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007:17–18; Figs. 2.5–7), although at Ge'alya, the use of architectural remains in secondary use is less common and occurs only once. It is possible that those tombs, which were not excavated, would have had features of Types 4 or 5 if fully investigated.

The use of jars as burial coverings, as at Ge'alya, is relatively rare. It is possible, though, that the phenomenon of the reuse of jars and other ceramic vessels as grave covering slabs was not previously recognized by archaeologists due to the excavation limitations or the poor condition of the remains. In a small-scale excavation at Azor (Gudovitch 2001), the remains were described as "...inside the tomb, beneath two broken jars *in situ*, from the Mamluk period, were the crumbling skull and the neck vertebrae..." and later on, "...on a higher level, next to the tombs, were several broken pottery jars and a funnel...". It seems plausible that the



tombs described above are similar or identical to Ge'alya's Types A or B, the more so since the bag-shaped jars are identical to the vessels found at our cemetery (Gudovitch 2001: Fig. 151:3, 4). Moreover, a vessel defined at Azor as a "funnel" (Gudovitch 2001: Fig. 151:5) is in fact a beehive (see above) of the same type used as tomb covering slabs at Ge'alya. We know of a handful of attested cases in which complete ceramic vessels replaced tomb capstones during the Mamluk period; however, little can be said about these cemeteries. One such cemetery, at el-Haddariya, on the bank of the Yarqon River, is reported in two unsigned short reports, from 1944 (*QDAP* 10:202) and 1950 (*Bulletin of the Department of Antiquities of the State of Israel* 2:16; and see the IAA Archive British Mandate period files: el-Haddariya), most likely filed by Jacob Ory, an antiquities inspector of the Palestine Department of Antiquities. The vessels from el-Haddariya were mistakenly attributed to the Byzantine period, and described as "...Two amphorae and a jar with hollow base... the neck of one amphora inserted into the base of another, which was broken for the purpose..." It is not clear what the anonymous reporter (Ory?) saw, and no plans or pictures are presented to reinforce his description. Another archive file, from 1970, describes a site labeled "Eser Ṭaḥanot" (Hebrew: ten mills), or Hadar Yosef (Jacob Kaplan, IAA Archive File A-230/1970). The plan of the tomb uncovered at the site depicts two bag-shaped jars laid horizontally in opposing directions and separated by a 'beehive' vessel (most probably the intentionally perforated base of a jar reported in 1944 by Ory (*QDAP* 10:202). This particular arrangement fits the formation at Ge'alya. Taxel (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007:27) includes this case among the parallels for Kafr 'Ana because of the typological similarity of the vessels.<sup>13</sup> A much closer comparison to Ge'alya, both geographically and typologically, is the Northern Star Compound in Ramla, where four tombs similar to Ge'alya's Type A (each with four to six horizontally positioned jars)

were unearthed (Elisha 2010).<sup>14</sup> Also worthy of mention is the site on Herzl Street, Ramla (Toueg 2008b), where a series of Mamluk-period bag-shaped storage jars, identical to the ones from Ge'alya, were found. The jars were deposited close to each other in parallel rows and carefully arranged in up to three superposed layers. This particular arrangement led the excavator to relate the jars to a storage facility of a presumed ceramic workshop (Toueg 2008b:73). I suggest that these jars are part of a cemetery similar to the one at Ge'alya, perhaps more sophisticated, but essentially alike, based on similarly oriented built tombs covered with stone slabs that were found in close vicinity to the jars, showing that the area was used as a burial ground during the Early Ottoman period. This use may have begun during Mamluk times, using the jar-covering burial method of Ge'alya. Moreover, no traces of a kiln or a ceramic workshop (e.g., kiln remains, distorted wasters, a pottery dump, ashes or soot) were discerned in the excavation. In addition, the small finds, including metal artifacts, retrieved from some of the jars make it difficult to accept that the vessels were in storage waiting to be sold. Another site, Dhahr el-Khirba (within Ben Gurion Airport), is yet another cemetery from this period, augmenting our knowledge of Mamluk cemeteries. Two Ge'alya-type burials, Type 1a and Type B, were found there (Haddad 2011: Figs. 13, 14).

Another cemetery, at Şarafand el-Kharab, a site located north of Margolin Street, Nes Zīyyona, was excavated during several seasons in 1990 (Levy 1991), 1992 (Glick 1998) and 1995 (Gorzalczany 1998:74; 2004:38). Some 30 Islamic tombs were reported (an undetermined number in 1990, 26 in 1992, and 2 in 1995), most of them common cist tombs covered with flat rectangular stones. The ceramic assemblage from Glick's excavation—that I examined in the IAA stores at Bet Shemesh—includes bag-shaped jars and beehive vessels, albeit dated somewhat later, to the Ottoman period.<sup>15</sup> It is impossible to deduce the spatial distribution of the vessels in his excavation from the

published material. However, note that Glick excavated only two squares, in which 26 tombs were unearthed, and it is difficult to attribute these vessels to features other than the graves. Furthermore, Glick reported at least four cases of jar infant-burials (Glick 1998:74). For these reasons, albeit with caution, the Nes Ziyayona cemetery should probably be included among the necropolises under discussion.

As stated above, the most remarkable characteristic of the site is the existence of a burial style that covers graves with whole ceramic vessels.<sup>16</sup> So far, this kind of tomb is known from a limited geographic area, from the Naḥal Yarqon basin in the north to the Naḥal Soreq basin in the south (Fig. 38), at Ge'alya, Kafr 'Ana, Ramla (two cases), Azor, Dhahr el-Khirba, el-Haddariya and probably, Nes Ziyayona (in my opinion, the case of the child burial inside a beehive in secondary use at Tel Mevorakh is different and irrelevant). The three types of vessels are the same as those from Ge'alya: bag-shaped storage jars, scoop vessels and beehives. Indeed, there is a clear and close relationship between the geographical distribution of this burial practice and the particular choice of vessels. These particularly large vessels seem to have been deemed especially suitable for this purpose, creating an efficient grave covering. It is also possible that the choice was motivated by deep-rooted cultural preferences. Who were these people? Can they be recognized as an ethnic or cultural entity?

### *The Turcoman Presence*

Attempts have been made to establish the ethno-religious affiliations of the inhabitants of the settlements in the region of Yavne (Fischer, Taxel and Amit 2008). Excavations conducted by Tel Aviv University (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007:23–24) and the IAA (Nagar 2003:154; Fanny Vitto, pers. comm.) at the Kafr 'Ana cemetery, which shows striking typological similarities to the cemetery excavated at Ge'alya, unearthed the remains of a population whose osteological

remains showed them to be from a different, foreign provenance. These remains were characterized by cranial vaults exhibiting a particular morphology,<sup>17</sup> present at Kafr 'Ana, at Tel Tanim (Nagar 1999), and perhaps, in a cemetery at Pella (Walmsley 1997–1998:138). Based on these specific characteristics, it was suggested that the population interred at Kafr 'Ana could represent people from tribes of solely Turcoman origin. For a more detailed account of the Turcoman presence in the area of Syria and Palestine, see Gorzalczyński 2009c and references therein.<sup>18</sup>

Ethnic groups collectively known as *Ghawarna*—known locally as “swamp dwellers”—established a presence in the northern valleys of Palestine as late as the nineteenth century CE.<sup>19</sup> Other groups with the same ethnic association are known to have settled in the center of the country during the Mamluk and early Ottoman periods (Greenberg 1996:28–32; Nagar 2003:154 and pers. comm.). It should be noted that morphological characteristics similar to those from Kafr 'Ana were observed in the cemetery at Tel Tanim and related to the *Ghawarna* people (Nagar 1999).<sup>20</sup>

There appears to be clear-cut evidence for a regional distribution pattern for the cemeteries, as shown from the six or seven burial grounds displaying, albeit not in all of the tombs, the burial-covering technique found at Ge'alya (Fig. 36). The unpublished burial at el-Haddariya (Hadar Yosef) should be added to this group. With the exception of the child burial at Tel Mevorakh, all these sites are located between the basins of Naḥal Yarqon in the north and Naḥal Soreq in the south, an area that can be defined geographically as the northern part of the southern central coastal plain of Israel. Interestingly, the phenomenon is conspicuously absent in other Mamluk-period cemeteries recently excavated in this same area, some of them of substantial size, e.g., Bet Dagan (112 tombs; Yannai 2008).

I believe that the Mamluk-period jar-covered burials represent the burial customs of a specific ethnic group with its clear

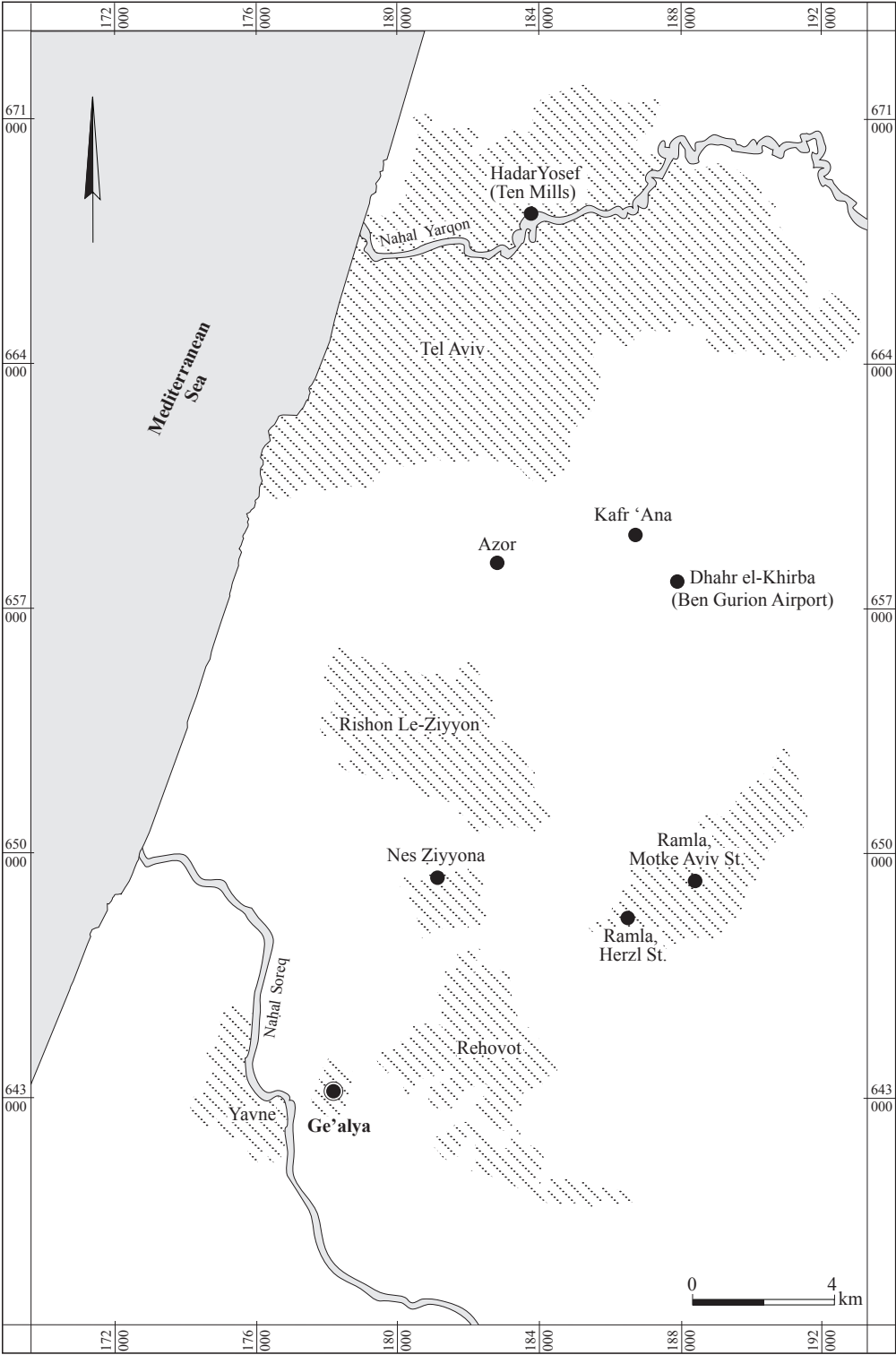


Fig. 36. Distribution map showing Mamluk-period cemeteries where tombs covered by complete ceramic vessels occur.

cultural preferences reflected in this interment tradition. This group may have belonged to one of the Turcoman tribes that settled in the area during the Mamluk period. This premise seems to correlate well with the identities for the ethnic groups associated with the rural settlements in the vicinity of Yavne proposed by Fischer, Taxel and Amit (2008:29–31, Fig. 1). Models of similar settlement patterns, which have been intensively studied for the Byzantine period, may perhaps be applicable to later periods such as the Mamluk, when many 'ethnic' newcomers entered and settled in the area. This pattern revealed a relationship between the villages and ethnic groups (Fischer and Taxel 2007; Fischer, Taxel and Amit 2008; Taxel 2013). The Turcomans may have been one of the groups who established a presence in the area under discussion. While no exact parallels for the burial style discussed here

have yet been found in Central Asia and Asia Minor, a tomb covered by ceramic vessels, mostly cooking ware, discovered inside a well in Ayasuluk (Ephesus), fits the time of a Turcoman revolt against the Ottomans—in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries CE (Gorzalczany 2009c).

The typological similarity between the cemeteries, the restricted range of ceramic vessels used and a well-defined and narrow geographic distribution in which at least one foreign ethnic entity was recognized, hint to a possible parallel interment tradition. The evidence is far from conclusive, and further research is needed. For now, the site at Ge'alya and its intriguing cemetery constitutes an important addition to the increasing amount of data and a valuable addendum to the regional, typological and ethnological picture that has begun to emerge.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The excavations (Permit Nos. A-4899, A-4999) were directed by the author on behalf of the IAA with the participation of Dor Golan, Eriola Jakoel and Jenny Marcus (area supervisors), Tzila Sagiv (field photography), Clara Amit (studio photography), Eli Bachar (administration), Anjelina Dagot (GPS/GIS), Avraham Hajian and Tania Kornfeld (surveying and plans), Elisheva Kamaisky and Olga Shorr (pottery restoration), Robert Kool and Ariel Berman (numismatics), Lena Kupersmidt and Raisa Vinitzky (metal treatment), Yael Gorin-Rosen (glass), Marik Molokondov (preliminary survey and probe trenches), Natalia Zak, Boris Entin and Irina Berin (final plans), Marina Shuiskaya (pottery drawing), Moshe Sade (archaeozoology), Svetlana Vadinsky (recording) and Yussuf Assam (mechanical equipment). ArieH Rochman-Halperin and Silvia Krapiwko (IAA Archives) were of great assistance in tracking files. Special thanks are due to Uzi Efrat (Moshav Ge'alya secretary) and the Zarfati family (owners of the property where the well reported by the PEF is located). Miriam Avissar, Fanny Vitto, Katia Cytrin-Silvermann, Peter Gendelman and Yael Arnon were of great help in ceramics identification and discussion. Yoav Arbel and Lilly Gershuny

kindly commented upon an earlier version of this report. The Aharonson Company (development contractor), especially David Prissenger (deputy project director), Vadim Glick and Valentina Rondell (surveyors), kindly assisted in the course of the excavation. Itamar Taxel (Tel Aviv University) and Eitan Ayalon (Eretz Israel Museum) kindly provided useful information. The excavation was financed by the National Roads Company and conducted with the valuable help of groups of workers from Ashqelon and Tel Aviv (2006), as well as Rehovot and Qiryat Gat (2007).

<sup>2</sup> The bridge, located in the northern fringes of Lod, is still in use, whereas the one at Yavne was recently bypassed by a new road and bridge after minor local stabilization works were carried out in 1997 under the supervision of the IAA Conservation Department (Yaacov Schaffer, former Head of the IAA Conservation Department, per. comm.). The ancient bridge at Yavne currently serves as a monument.

<sup>3</sup> The site of Ge'alya was declared an antiquities site on January 22, 1992 by Central District Archaeologist Yossi Levy, unifying the previously declared sites of Kh. el-Ajjuri and Kh. ed-Duheisha. This statutory act was decided upon because of the



difficulty in recognizing and distinguishing between the two sites. However, elder inhabitants of the area still remember that Kh. el-Ajjuri was located west of the road while Kh. ed-Duheisha was situated to the east. During an inspection trip in 1998, I observed scattered, well-preserved massive ashlar after an accidental fire burned a substantial portion of a citrus orchard east of the road. These ruins, which should probably be attributed to Kh. ed-Duheisha, are once again obscured by dense vegetation.

<sup>4</sup> The well is located on the property of the Zarfati family, Farm 140, in Moshav Ge'alya. According to moshav elders, a stone covering slab, easily seen in the yard, was still in use as late as 1948. The author is grateful to the Zarfati family, who kindly granted permission to record the well.

<sup>5</sup> We were restricted from excavating these and all the other tombs in the cemetery due to the intervention of the Ultra-Orthodox community and the dictates of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

<sup>6</sup> As we could not excavate the tombs, we assume they are single burials based on comparisons with other contemporary cemeteries known in Israel. However, cases in which more than one deceased are located in the same burial are known, for instance, at Kafr 'Ana, especially when the deceased are a female and her children (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007:34) or at Ramla, where multiple child burials were unearthed (Parnos and Nagar 2008).

<sup>7</sup> The author is grateful to Moshe Sade, who kindly identified the animal remains.

<sup>8</sup> These vessels are yet unpublished, but briefly mentioned by Taxel (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007:54).

<sup>9</sup> The rim at El-Qubab was identified by Miriam Avissar as belonging to a krater. However, Itamar Taxel (pers. comm., 2008) believes that the sherd is actually the rim of a 'beehive' vessel. It is stressed that he did not personally examine the sherd and his proposal is based on analysis and reinterpretation of the published material.

<sup>10</sup> It may be worth noting that despite abundant iconographical depictions and textual evidence, only recently were remains of apiaries uncovered in an archaeological context in the ancient Near East. A well-organized, large-scale honey industry dating to the tenth–ninth centuries BC was unearthed at Tel Rehov, in northern Israel (Mazar 2007; 2008:63; Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2007).

<sup>11</sup> The comb from Hammat Tiberias was found by Ariel Berman (Permit No. A-783) and was examined by me in the IAA stores.

<sup>12</sup> For example, at Tel Te'o (Eisenberg, Gopher and Greenberg 2001:46), Tel Mevorakh (Stern 1978:4–

9), Tel Zeror (Ohata 1967:6), Horbat Gelilot (Kletter 1999), Kefar Sava (Gorzalczany 2007), Bet Dagan (Yannai 2008), Tel Gat (Yeivin 1961:3–11, Pl. I:1), Tel Nagila (Guérin 1868:295; Amiran and Eitan 1965:117) and Tell Hesi (Toombs 1985; pocket insert 1; Eakins 1993:22–26). Additional burial fields have been surveyed or excavated and await publication (e.g., Kerem Maharal, Tirat Ha-Karmel, Naḥal Tut, Horbat Sib, Jaffa, Nebi Yamin, Ramla, Tel Haror, Tel Shari'a and Tel Tanim). I am grateful to my colleagues, who kindly permitted me to study the plans. For burial and mourning customs during the Ottoman period in Israel, see also Bar-Tzvi, Abu-Rabia and Kressel 1998. For Islamic death and burial rites, see Halevy 2007. For a comprehensive summary, discussion and list of Muslim cemeteries excavated in Israel and Transjordan, see Gorzalczany 2007:75, Table 1; Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007:25, Table 2.1.

<sup>13</sup> In 2000, Rachel Bar-Nathan of the IAA was appointed to publish Kaplan's legacy, which included 35 files of unpublished excavations carried out between 1949 and 1989 (Bar-Nathan 2002). Bar-Nathan checked Ory's files from el-Haddariya as well. In her opinion, the plan found in the Ten Mills/Hadar Yosef file was mistakenly archived there; to the best of her knowledge, it actually belongs to Ory's el-Haddariya file. Since both sites are located close to each other, on opposite banks of Naḥal Yarqon, the mistake is highly plausible (Rachel Bar-Nathan, pers. comm., 2008). This would explain the striking similarity between Ory's textual descriptions of el-Haddariya and the plan from Hadar Yosef. One way or the other, it is clear that we deal with one more instance of this type of cemetery, and thus I believe that the grave at el-Haddariya should be added to our list.

<sup>14</sup> I had the opportunity to examine the vessels from the excavation at the Mamluk cemetery at Ramla (the Northern Star Compound), while they were temporarily stored in the IAA Regional Office in Tel Aviv, prior to publication. The jars are identical to those from Ge'alya. I thank Yossi Elisha, who kindly showed me the vessels and allowed me to quote the relevant data here.

<sup>15</sup> I am grateful to Ayala Lester, curator of the Islamic periods at the IAA, who called my attention to these vessels.

<sup>16</sup> It is noteworthy that in a Mamluk cemetery excavated at Tell Deir Alla in the eastern Jordan Valley, graves were discovered, in which large sherds of sugar pots were used to seal the tombs, along with mud bricks (van der Kooij 1993:342). I am grateful to Edna Stern, who kindly provided this information.

<sup>17</sup>The skulls are shorter than the average, tending to be flat in the occipital area and displaying an evident asymmetry; the left side projects and protrudes more than the right.

<sup>18</sup>I am indebted to Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) who kindly shared their expertise on the Mamluk period.

<sup>19</sup>The name *ghawarna*, used here for the sake of convenience, is a later general denomination. It does

not refer to a specific ethnic entity, but rather to a conglomerate of tribes and groups that originated in Central Asia and migrated to Israel.

<sup>20</sup>Since the tombs at Ge'alya were not excavated (and no anthropological data are available from el-Haddariya, Azor, Nes Ziyayona or Ramla), there were no anthropological facts upon which to base solid conclusions.

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