

A LATE IRON AGE ROCK-CUT TOMB ON THE WESTERN SLOPE OF MOUNT ZION, JERUSALEM

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*In memory of Prof. Amos Kloner,
researcher of Jerusalem and excavator of the cave*

INTRODUCTION

In January 1975, a nineteenth century CE ashlar-built retaining wall, with a core of smaller stones, was dismantled on the western slope of Mount Zion, Jerusalem, below the southwestern corner of the Old City walls (Kloner 2001:167, Fig. 402.4). Beneath it, a First Temple period burial ground was revealed, among many burials from other periods.

The burial ground consisted of five rock-cut tombs (A–E), which were situated along a north–south axis in proximity to one another.¹ The four southernmost tombs (B–E) yielded finds and signs of later use, while the northern Tomb A (map ref. 13115/17159), which is the focus of this report, was still sealed with its original blocking stone (for a preliminary report, see Davis and Kloner 1978; Kloner and Davis 1994). The finds from Tomb A are of special importance as the cave was in use only during the late Iron Age and was not disturbed by later burials or looters. As such, the finds within the cave illuminate the burial practices of the people of Jerusalem and Judah in the seventh century BCE, albeit with some unanswered questions.

A section of the Lower Aqueduct, which conveyed water from Solomon's pools to ancient Jerusalem, was found nearby (Kloner 2001:128*, 166–167, Figs. 402.1, 2). As a result of these finds, the original plan to widen Ḥaṭivat Yerushalayim Road to a four-lane

¹ Rock-cut Tomb A (Permit No. A-508) was discovered on January 23, 1975, by Yossi Gat and Egon Lass, while inspecting the site on behalf of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (IDAM). The excavation that followed, which lasted one week, was conducted on behalf of the IDAM, directed by Amos Kloner and David Davis, with the assistance of the Temple Mount Archaeological Expedition, headed by Benjamin Mazar. The excavation was assisted by D. Bahar (surveying), A. Glick (field photography), Tsila Sagiv and Zeev Radovan (finds photography) and Carmen Hersch (pottery plates and small finds). An earlier unpublished report of the finds from Tomb A, written by Hanan Eshel with the aid of Amos Kloner, was still helpful more than four decades after the excavation of the tomb.

roadway was revised, and the remains were incorporated in the National Park surrounding the Old City walls.

THE EXCAVATION

The entrance to rock-cut Tomb B is situated c. 20 m south of Tomb A; rock-cut Tomb C is located c. 5 m south of Tomb B; Rock-cut Tomb D is c. 5 m south of Tomb C; and Tomb E is c. 22 m south of Tomb D—it had been destroyed during the construction of the Lower Aqueduct (see above). In February 1975, along with the very partial dig of Tombs C and D, the excavation of Tomb B was completed by Gershon Edelstein, with the assistance of Yitzhak Magen (Permit No. A-513). As no provisional or final reports of the excavations in rock-cut Tombs B–D have been published,² a short description of these tombs is offered below, followed by a detailed description of Tomb A.

TOMBS B–D

Tomb B. This tomb comprises a single burial chamber with three benches along its walls and a vertical, deep collecting pit south of the southern bench. The ceramic finds, found on the floor near the collecting pit, included three pinched lamps and a juglet dated to the second–first centuries BCE. Skeletal remains included bones and four skulls, one of them of a child. The remains of an additional skeleton were found on the eastern bench. The collecting pit consisted of many human bones and ceramic vessels of the late Iron Age and Hellenistic period.

Tomb C. This tomb is similar in plan to Tomb B. It yielded three Iron Age juglets, pottery sherds of the Iron Age and the Hellenistic period, scattered human bones, two bronze earrings and a glass bead.

Tomb D. Only the entrance and a small part of the floor of this tomb were excavated. It was generally dated by the excavator to the late Iron Age, continuing in use for burial during the second–first centuries BCE.

² During the construction activity at the site in 1975, rock-cut Tombs B, C and D were blocked and sealed to allow for the raising of the road level by 1.0–1.5 m (today's level). The brief information concerning Tombs B–D is based on information compiled in the IAA archives by Gershon Edelstein. The authors wish to thank Debora Ben-Ami, curator of the Iron Age and Persian periods, IAA; Silvia Krapiwko and Arie Rochman, of the IAA archive; and Hamoudi Khalaily, senior researcher and archaeologist, IAA, for their kind cooperation and assistance. We also thank Chavi Feingold-Deutch for her help with the English translation, and our colleague, Sherry Whetstone, for her insightful remarks.

Later, in the Second Temple period, four shallow burial pits were dug on the slope. Pits 1–3 contained collected bones that had been brought from elsewhere, alongside ceramic vessels, mainly bottles (Kloner 1980:171–173, Pl. 34). A decorated ossuary was placed in Pit 1; its sides were lined with flat stones and covered with plaster (Kloner and Zissu 2007:285). These four pits, extending along 67 m, are rare examples of Second Temple period burials. They are further evidence that the western slope of Mount Zion was used for burial in two periods: during the late Iron Age, in rock-cut tombs (three of which were reused in the Hasmonean and Herodian periods), and in the Second Temple period, in pits. It seems that the the Lower Aqueduct that passed near or through this burial ground was the trigger for the religious (*halachic*) debate in the Talmud concerning the purity of the water it had conveyed (see Kloner and Zissu 2007:25–28).

TOMB A

The entrance to the cave (c. 0.55×0.90 m) is on the west, approached through a recessed forecourt (c. 1.6 m wide; Plan 1; Fig. 1). A single low step is cut below the opening (Fig. 2), leading to two adjacent chambers (1, 2). Chamber 1 (c. 3.0×2.6 m, 1.8 m high) is the southernmost chamber. Along its southern and eastern walls are rock-cut benches (0.8–0.9 m wide), c. 0.9 m above the floor level. A doorway (0.75 m wide), extending from floor to ceiling, connects the two chambers (Fig. 3). Chamber 2 ($1.65\text{--}2.40 \times 2.15\text{--}2.30$ m, 1.8 m

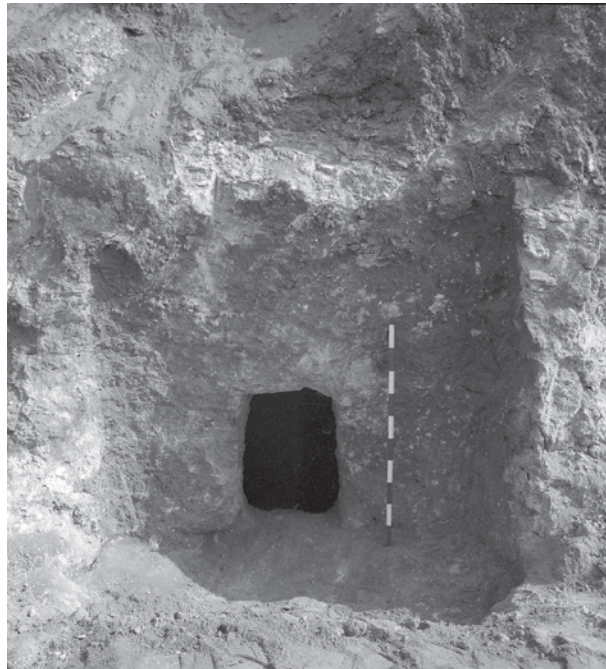
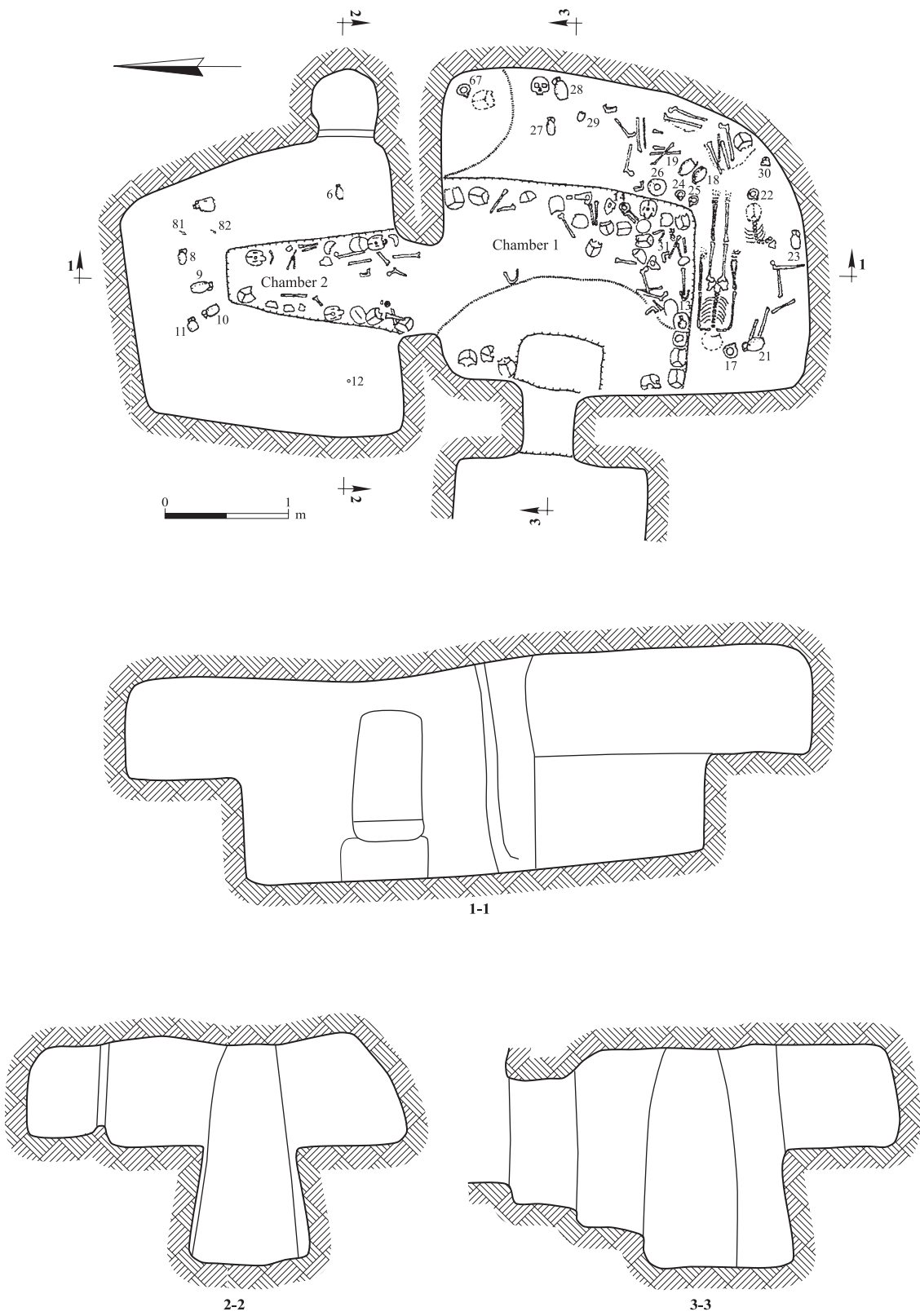


Fig. 1. Tomb A, forecourt and entrance, looking east.



Plan 1. Tomb A, plan and sections.



Fig. 2. Chamber 1, looking south; to right—a step and the entrance to the tomb, to left—the southern and eastern benches with the skeletal remains on them; note the pile of bones and skulls *in situ* at the foot of the benches.



Fig. 3. Chamber 1, the entrance to the tomb (left) and the doorway leading to Chamber 2 (right; before cleaning), looking west.

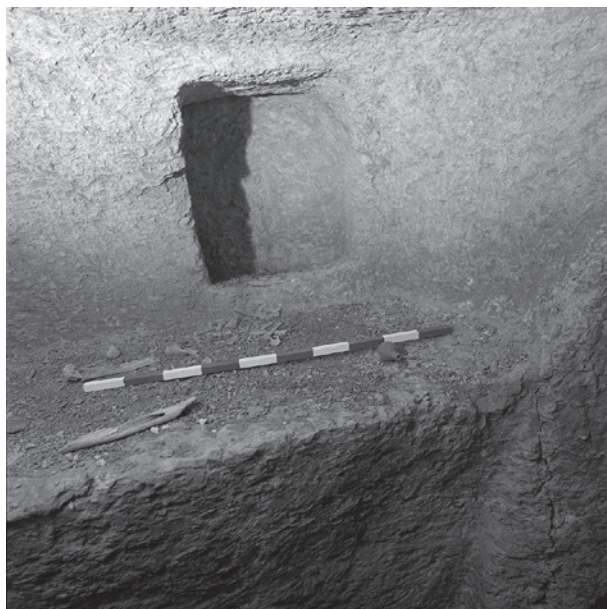


Fig. 4. Chamber 2, the niche cut behind the eastern bench.

high) has three benches cut along its walls (0.7–1.0 m wide), c. 0.9 m above the floor level. A small shallow niche (Fig. 4) is irregularly cut behind the eastern bench (c. 0.57×0.52 m). It is separated from the upper level of the bench by a low, narrow cut parapet, its floor slightly higher than the bench's upper level. The tomb walls are carelessly aligned and do not meet at right angles; however, it was well-planned, as the southern wall of Chamber 2 is cut at a safe distance from the northern wall of Chamber 1.

Anthropological Remains and Burial Practices

Some 43 individuals were buried in the cave: 26 adults (13 males, 5 females and 8 of unknown sex) and 17 juveniles and infants (for the anthropological report, see Arensburg and Rak 1985).

In Chamber 1, the remains of five interments were found *in situ* on the benches. Two articulated skeletons were placed side by side on the southern bench. The head of one is facing east and that of the other, west (Fig. 5). Both skulls were severely crushed. A lamp was placed at the head of each skull (Fig. 9:21, 22); a decanter, at the feet of the southernmost skeleton (Fig. 9:15); and two decanters, at the feet of the skeleton next to it (Fig. 9:13, 14). Remains of three skeletons—skulls and long bones—were found on the eastern bench. Two skulls were found on the northern part of the bench and one, on its southern end. Here also, a lamp accompanied the northern skull (Fig. 9:24). Several other pottery vessels were found on the benches of this chamber, primarily decanters and juglets (Fig. 9:5, 11, 19, 20).



Fig. 5. Chamber 1, the southern bench with two skeletons placed side by side, looking south; a lamp was placed at the head of each skull and a decanter at the feet; note the pile of bones and skulls *in situ* at the foot of the bench.

In addition to these five skeletons, this chamber contained many skull fragments and long bones that already in ancient times had been removed from their original resting places and arranged in a pile on the floor, along the base of the benches or nearby, covering almost the entire floor. Pottery, jewelry and other personal belongings, originally buried with the deceased, were placed near the bones (see below).

In Chamber 2, the benches were apparently cleaned from bones to make room for other burials, and therefore, they were found almost empty. In this chamber, just like in Chamber 1, the skulls were removed from the benches and placed at their feet. Also, the small shallow niche contained a few scattered bones; it might have served for collecting bones.

The pile of skeletal remains found on the floor of Chamber 2 (Figs. 6, 7) offers a new understanding of the burial practices at that time. It is noteworthy that in order to place new burials on the benches, the body carriers must have stepped on the bones scattered on the floor. The possibility of stepping on human bones and crushing them provides evidence of a different perception of the dead, in which “old” burials held no religious or social importance. This is in contrast to other contemporary tombs, such as in the Silwan cemetery (Ussishkin 1993) and at Tel Goded (Yezerki 2009: n. 6), where the deceased retained their social status. The practice of stepping on ‘old’ burials may indicate that in Judah, during the time of the monarchy, there was no belief in resurrection. Hence, the placing of a lamp and a decanter (with liquids?) next to the dead may be interpreted as an act of honoring the dead rather than an expression of a belief in the afterlife.



Fig. 6. Chamber 2, looking north; note the pile of skeletal remains on the floor.



Fig. 7. Chamber 2, looking north; note the skeletal remains on the floor and on the benches.

The Pottery

The pottery assemblage retrieved from Tomb A is dated to the seventh century until 587/6 BCE (Iron Age III, or Iron Age IIC). The pottery assemblage contains a restricted number of types (Figs. 8, 9), some of which are unique (see below, Types Bo and B/Jr). The Iron IIB–C pottery is characterized by some typical traits: the ware contains white limestone grits of varying sizes and quantities; the use of slip, mainly red, pink or orange, is limited to bowls and small containers; the vessels are well-fired; and wheel-burnish was applied directly on the vessel surface or on the slip. Today, more than three decades after the excavation of Tomb A, the slip and burnish are almost invisible.

Comparative material for the Tomb A assemblage was published from various excavations in Jerusalem, e.g., the City of David, Area E, Strata 12 (eighth century BCE), 11 (seventh century BCE) and 10 (second half of the seventh century to 587/6 BCE) (De Groot and Ariel 2000; De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012); the City of David, Area G, House of the Bullae (Shiloh 1986) and Stratum 10, Layers 10-1–10-4 (second half of seventh–early sixth centuries BCE; Yezerski and Mazar 2015); and in excavations within the Jewish Quarter,



Fig. 8. Selected pottery from Tomb A.

such as the Burnt House (Area B), the Nea (Area T-1) and Areas J and N (mid-eighth beginning of the sixth century BCE (Yezerki 2010; 2012; 2014 respectively). Comparisons from Judah are found in Lakhish Levels III (701 BCE) and II (seventh–early sixth centuries BCE; Zimhoni 2004a; 2004b), ‘En Gedi Stratum V (630–582 BCE; Yezerki 2007) and Tel Malhata Strata IVA (eighth century BCE), IIIB (first half of seventh century BCE) and IIIA (second half of seventh century BCE) (Freud 2015).

Bowls (Type B) (Fig. 9:1, 2)

The bowls are of the folded rim type, which was the most popular type during the late Iron Age in Judah, from the late eighth through the seventh–early sixth centuries BCE. This type includes bowls of various sizes and forms. An early typological scheme dividing this large group into three subtypes, taking into consideration bowl size, rim shape and chronology, was applied in the final reports of the excavations in the Jewish Quarter and ‘En Gedi (De Groot, Geva and Yezerki 2003:5–6; Yezerki 2006:85; 2007:87–88, Type B 1; 2010:100–101; 2012:269–270; 2014:122–123). A later, revised version of this typological scheme was applied in the publication of the bowls retrieved from the excavations in Area G (Yezerki and Mazar 2015:248, Type B 9:247–248), with a further division into four subtypes. The bowls from Tomb A conform with Subtype I in the earlier scheme, or Type B 9:II in the later one (Yezerki and Mazar 2015:248; see also De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012:64, Type B8b1; Gitin 2015:346–347, Pl. 3.31:8–13).

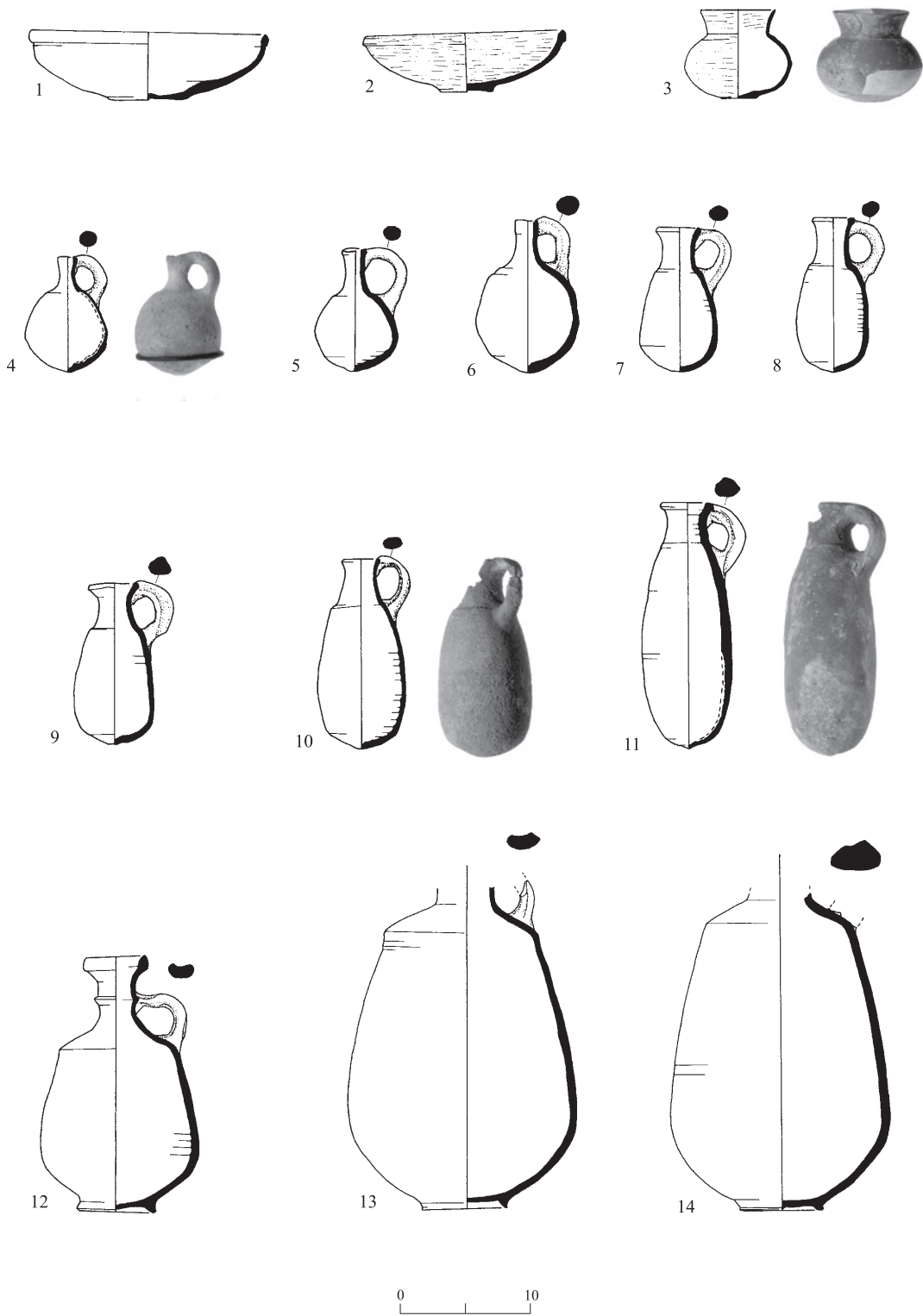
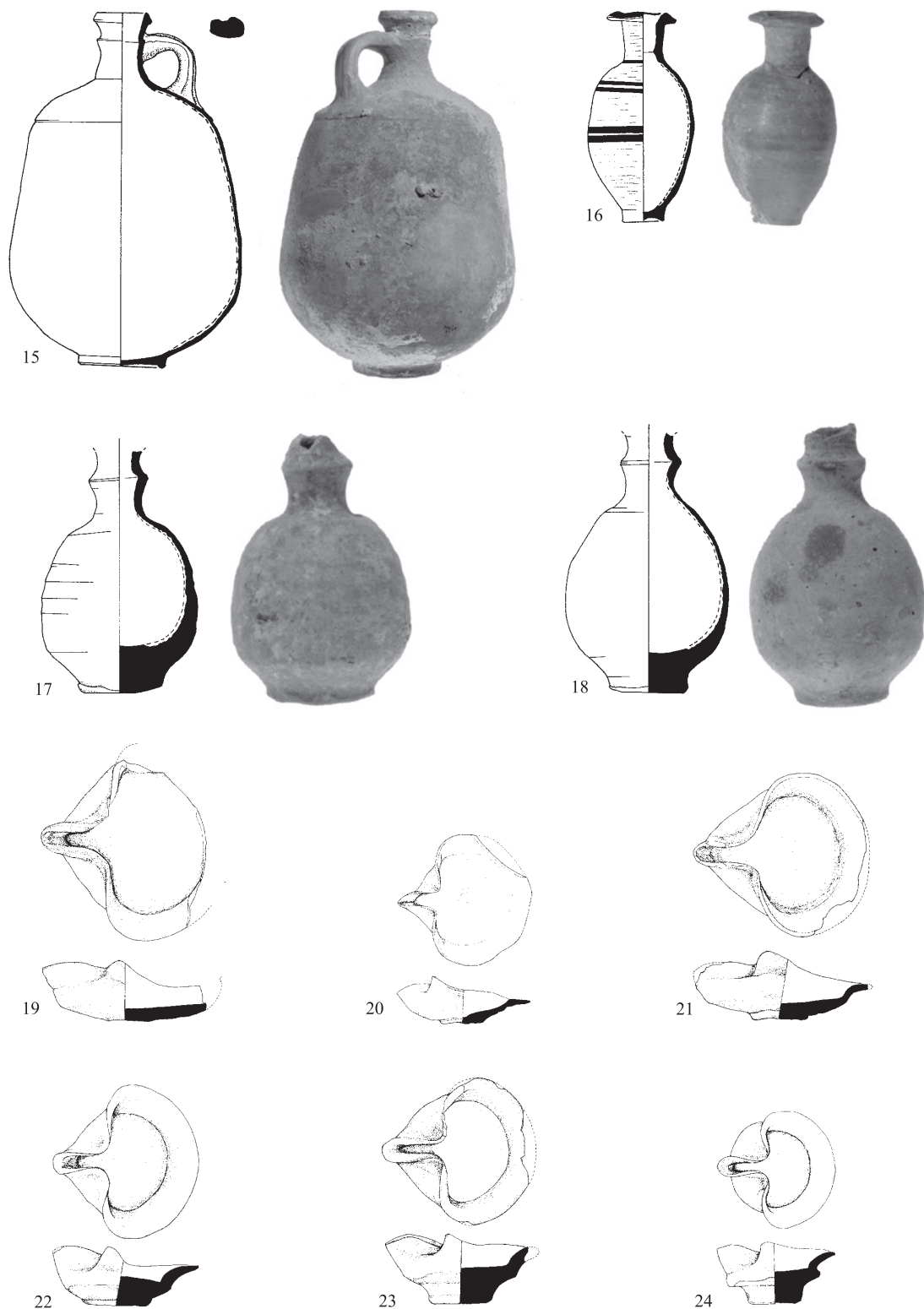


Fig. 9. The pottery.



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Fig. 9. (cont.)

◄ Fig. 9

No.	Type	Origin	IAA No. (Inventory No.) ⁱ
1	B bowl	Chamber 1, on eastern bench	75-992 (26)
2	B bowl		75-991 (2)
3	B/Jr Bowl/jar		75-1013 (66)
4	Jt-1 juglet	Chamber 2, on northern and western benches	75-1011 (11)
5	Jt-1 juglet	Chamber 1, on southern bench	75-1012 (30)
6	Jt-1 juglet		75-1007 (20)
7	Jt-2 juglet	Chamber 2, on northern bench	75-1006 (10)
8	Jt-2 juglet	Chamber 2, on northern bench	75-1008 (8)
9	Jt-2 juglet	Chamber 1, on eastern bench	75-1005 (27)
10	Jt-3 juglet	Chamber 2, on northern bench	75-1009 (9)
11	Jt-3 juglet	Chamber 1, on southern bench	75-1010 (23)
12	J jug	Chamber 2, on eastern bench	75-987 (7)
13	J jug	Chamber 1, on eastern and southern benches, near legs	75-988 (19)
14	J jug	Chamber 1, on eastern and southern benches, near legs	75-989 (18)
15	J jug	Chamber 1, on southern bench, near legs of the southernmost skeleton	75-986 (21)
16	Bo-1 bottle	Chamber 1, on floor in the corner between southern and eastern benches	75-1014 (31)
17	Bo-2 bottle	Chamber 1, on floor, at the foot of the southern bench	75-1015 (13)
18	Bo-2 bottle	Chamber 2, on the eastern bench, near the niche	75-1016 (6)
19	L-1 lamp	Chamber 1, on southern end of eastern bench	75-995 (25)
20	L-2 lamp	Chamber 1, on southern bench, near skull	75-998 (22)
21	L-2 lamp	Chamber 1, on southern bench, near skull	75-994 (17)

ⁱ Inventory nos. of illustrated finds appear on Plan 1.

Fig. 9 (cont.)

No.	Type	Origin	IAA No. (Inventory No.) ⁱ
22	L-3 lamp	Chamber 1, on southern end of eastern bench, near lamp 20; two additional, similar lamps were found (not drawn)	75-996 (24)
23	L-3 lamp	Chamber 1; on floor, at the foot of the eastern bench; three additional, similar lamps were found (not drawn)	75-997 (14)
24	L-3 lamp	Chamber 1; on northern edge of eastern bench, near skull	75-999 (67)

Bowl/Jar (Type B/Jr) (Fig. 9:3)

This small, thin-walled vessel, with a simple rim, out-curving neck, rounded body and flat base, is unique. It is made of well-levigated red-brown clay, burnished on the outer surface. Its morphology resembles the black pyxides that were found in Ketef Hinnom Tomb 25, dating from the late First Temple period (Hadley 1984:71–72); however, its typological classification is not clear.

Juglets (Type Jt) (Fig. 9:4–11)

Fourteen juglets conforming to three subtypes were found in the tomb, eight of which were illustrated.

Type Jt-1 (Fig. 9:4–6).— These juglets have a small globular or swollen body, with a high neck and a simple rim. Parallels are found in the City of David, Area E (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012:74, Types Jt4), and ‘En Gedi (Yezereski 2007:92, Type Jt1).

Type Jt-2 (Fig. 9:7–9).— These dipper juglets have a small cylindrical body, with a slightly out-curving simple rim. Parallels are found in the City of David, Areas E (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012:72, Type Jt1c) and G (Shiloh 1986: Fig. 6:11; Yezereski and Mazar 2015:250, Type Jt1), ‘En Gedi (Yezereski 2007:92, Type Jt2) and Tel Malḥata (Freud 2015:210, Type JT1).

Type Jt-3 (Fig. 9:10, 11).— These dipper juglets are large, with a cylindrical elongated body and a slightly out-curving simple rim. Parallels are found in the City of David, Area E (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012:71–72, Type Jt1b), and Tel Malḥata, in a mixed assemblage of Strata IV–III (Freud 2015: Fig. 4.96:14).

Jugs (Type J) (Fig. 9:12–15)

At least nine jugs/decanter were found in the tomb; four are illustrated. All exhibit a typical seventh-century body shape, i.e., elongated and bulging at the lower part, above the base.

Bag-shaped decanters of the late seventh–early sixth centuries BCE, found, e.g., at Ketef Hinnom (Hadley 1984:12–15, 18–20), are absent from the assemblage. Decanters were probably used as wine containers (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001:119). They are found as early as the late eighth to the early sixth centuries BCE throughout Judah in domestic contexts and in burials (see, e.g., De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012:75–76, Type Dk1; Beit-Arieh and Freud 2015:368; Gitin 2015:350; Yezerski and Mazar 2015:251, Type J1).

Seven jugs of various types were found in the tomb, broken into small pieces. Among them are a small, thick red-slipped jug (Inventory No. 1106; not illustrated) of the type known throughout Judah in the seventh century BCE (see Yezerski and Mazar 2015:252, Type J4, and references therein) and a large jug with a trefoil-shaped neck and a pronounced ridge midway up (not illustrated). This type lacks surface treatment (see Yezerski and Mazar 2015:251, Type J3, and references therein).

Bottles (Type Bo) (Fig. 9:16–18)

Two types of bottles are local Judahite versions, made under the influence of Ammonite vessel morphology. They are not identical: Bo-1 has a ring-base, whereas the Ammonite bottle has a rounded-pointed base; and Bo-2 has a high, thick base, whereas the Ammonite bottle has a flat base. The three bottles are unique finds in Judah.

Type Bo-1 (Fig. 9:16).— This tiny elongated bottle has a long neck ending in a projecting, triangular-sectioned rim. It is made of well-levigated clay and decorated with painted parallel black stripes. Parallels from Transjordan were found in several rock-cut tombs (Harding and Henschel-Simon 1945:71, Nos. 21, 22, Pl. XVIII:55–60; Harding 1947:98, Nos. 31–37; 1951: Fig. 1:12–14; Dajani 1966: Pl. II, Fig. 4:44–47, with slip and vertical burnish with horizontal black stripes).

Type Bo-2 (Fig. 9:17, 18).— These bottles have a small, globular body with a long, narrow carinated neck and a thick high base. Based on the shape of the bottles, they seem to be of foreign influence. Parallels are found in Transjordan, in rock-cut tombs (Harding 1947: Fig. 7:64, 65, 70; Dajani 1966: Fig. 3:18–22; Saller 1966: Fig. 20:4, 5, 7, 17, 20; Hadidi 1987: Fig. 13:9) and in Cypro-Phoenicia (Hadley 1984:73, Fig. 17:5). A close parallel may be found at Tel Malḥata, with a handle extending from the ridged neck (Freud 2015: Fig. 4.164:13).

Lamps (Fig. 9:19–24)

The lamps are divided into three subtypes: one appeared continuously during Iron Age IIA–B (Type L-1), and the other two (Types L-2 and L-3) developed from Type L-1 (see also Beit-Arieh and Freud 2015:369; Gitin 2015:351).

Type L-1 (Fig. 9:19).— This type of rounded-base lamp first appeared in the late tenth century BCE, and is still part of late Iron IIC assemblages, albeit in very small quantities.

For parallels in Jerusalem, see De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012:90–91, Type L1; Yezereski and Mazar 2015:257, Type L 1, with references therein.

Type L-2 (Fig. 9:20, 21).— This type of low flat-based lamp has parallels in Jerusalem (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012:92, 94, Type L3; Yezereski and Mazar 2015:257, Type L 2, with references therein).

Type L-3 (Fig. 9:22–24).— These small lamps, with a coarse high string-cut base, are of the most common type during the seventh–early sixth centuries BCE. For parallels in Jerusalem, see De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012:90–91, Type L-3; Yezereski and Mazar 2015:257, Type L-3).

Small Finds

Beads (Figs. 10, 11)

Some 41 beads were found scattered in burial Chambers 1 and 2. They are made of various minerals, such as black amber (Golani 2013:37–38), amethyst (Golani 2013:32–33), Carnelian (Golani 2013:31–32) and shells. One of the beads (Fig. 11:5) shows traces of light color paste. Parallels are found in many Judahite First Temple period sites and burial places. The most comprehensive study is Golani 2013; later publications include Tel Ḥalif (Borowski 2013: Fig. 3.62) and Tel Maḥata (Freud and Reshef 2015).

Earrings (Figs. 12:1–12; 13:6–9)

About 18 intact and broken earrings were retrieved. Some of them seem to have been made of silver; however, since silver oxidizes quickly (Golani 2013:16), it is sometimes difficult to determine whether they are silver or corroded bronze. The earrings were divided into two



Fig. 10. Carnelian and amethyst beads from the burial cave.

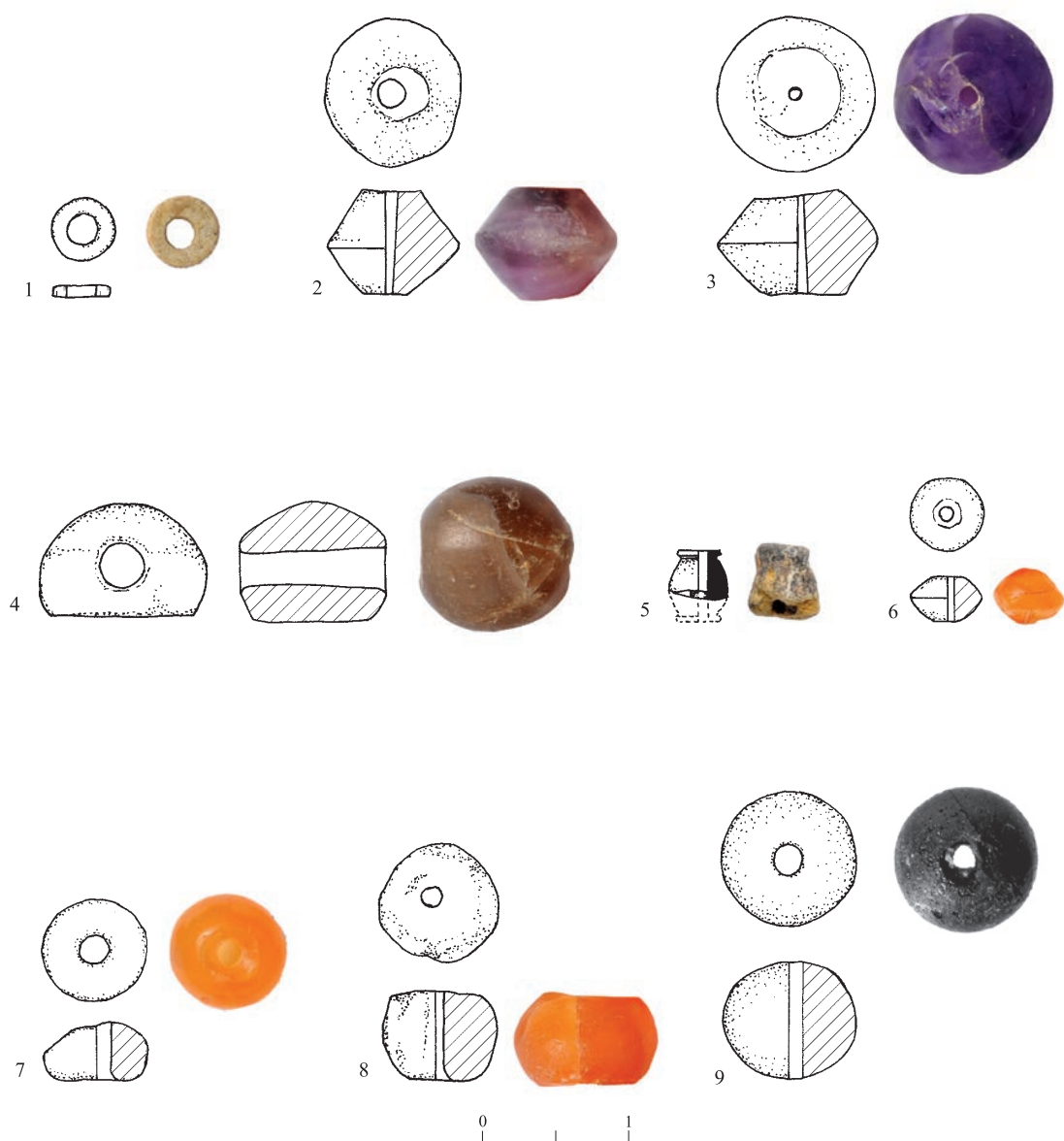


Fig. 11. Beads from Chambers 1 and 2.

No.	Description	IAA No. (Inventory No.) ⁱ	Typology (see Golani 2013)
1	Shell, flat disc	75-1183	Type VI.1, Fig. 35:1
2	Amethyst, bicone	(17)	Type II.3, Fig. 29:10
3	Amethyst, bicone	75-1182	As No. 2
4	Quartz, dome shape	(15)	
5	Carnelian, bicone	(93)	As No. 2
6	Pottery, barrel shape	(62)	
7	Carnelian, oblate circular	75-1033	Type II.2, Fig. 29:4
8	Carnelian, oblate circular	75-1189	As No. 7
9	Black amber? Oblate circular	(30)	As No. 7

ⁱ Inventory Nos. of illustrated finds appear on Plan 1.

types: plain loops, in most cases thickened at the bottom (Figs. 12:3–11; 13:6–9; see Golani 2013: Fig. 8, Type I.1; Fig. 12:12 may belong to Golani's Type I.3a [2013: Fig. 8:16]); and loops with attached clusters of tiny balls/pendants in filigree technique (Fig. 12:1, 2; see Golani 2013: Fig. 9, Type II.1a). Both types were known during the Iron Age. Parallels are found, among others, in the cemetery at Tel 'Ira (Beit-Arieh and Baron 1999: Figs. 4.29:9–12; 4.47:11–15; Freud 1999) and Tel Ḥalif (Borowski 2013: Pl. 16:13–23).

Stone Bowl (Fig. 13:1)

The bowl, made of light gray rock crystal, was probably used as a cosmetic bowl (max. diam. 5.2 cm, 4.2 cm high).

Bone Seal (Fig. 13:2)

The bone seal (diam. 13 mm, 7 mm thick) is pierced lengthwise. It is engraved with a fish with fins and a tail. Above and below the fish are engraved the names of the owner and her father: לְחַמִּי אֵהֶל בַּת מְנַחֵם, *lḥmy'hl bt mnḥm*, i.e., “(belonging) to Ḥami'ahel, daughter of Menaḥem.” Components of the name Ḥami'ahel appear in the Bible in names like Ḥamutal, Aholi'ab, Aholibah, and in the epigraphy of the First Temple period—Ḥami'eden, Aholiba'al and Aholimelekh. Menaḥem is a common biblical name. The seal is dated to the seventh century BCE based on paleographical considerations and the pottery assemblage. It is of great importance, as it was found in a defined archaeological context, whereas most of the other known First Temple period seals were not found *in situ* or reached the antiquities markets (see also Hestrin and Dayagi-Mendels 1979:51; Avigad and Sass 1997:63).

Bone Implements (Fig. 13:3–5)

Three pieces of worked bones were found in Chamber 2. The piece in Fig. 13:3 (3.1 cm) is engraved with four clusters of four horizontal bands. The two other pieces (Fig. 13:4, 5) share similar dimensions (2.3 cm long, diam. 0.7 cm); each has three drilled holes. The function of the three pieces is not clear; they might have been inlays.

Iron Arrowheads (Figs. 12:13; 13:10, 11)

Three iron arrowheads were found in the tomb, one of them was discovered while sifting the earth fill from the tomb floor, and the other two are from the northern bench in Chamber 2. The latter remained on the bench after the flesh had decomposed and the bones were removed for new burials. The arrowheads probably caused the death of one or two of the deceased. We may suggest that in days of war or siege, the dead were buried quickly in the nearest available tomb to avoid epidemics. It is possible that issues of ownership of an existing rock-cut tomb were not important in days of major violent crisis, such as during the Babylonian siege, but other scenarios are possible as well.



Fig. 12. Metal finds from Chamber 1.

No.	Artifact	IAA No. (Inventory No.)	Description
1	Pair of earrings	75-1184, 1034 (88, 95)	Bronze/silver?
2	Pair of earrings	75-1199 (32, 33, 34)	Silver
3	Earring	75-1025 (35)	Silver
4	Earring	75-1024 (36)	Bronze/silver?
5	Earring	75-1028 (37)	Bronze/silver?
6	Earring	75-1027 (38)	Bronze/silver?
7	Earring	(70)	Bronze/silver?
8	Earring	75-1020 (74)	Bronze/silver?
9	Earring	(76)	Bronze/silver?
10	Earring	75-1021 (77)	Bronze/silver?
11	Earring	(78)	Bronze/silver?
12	Earring	75-1022 (79)	Bronze/silver?
13	Arrowhead	75-1185 (69)	Iron

ⁱ Inventory nos. of illustrated finds appear on Plan 1.

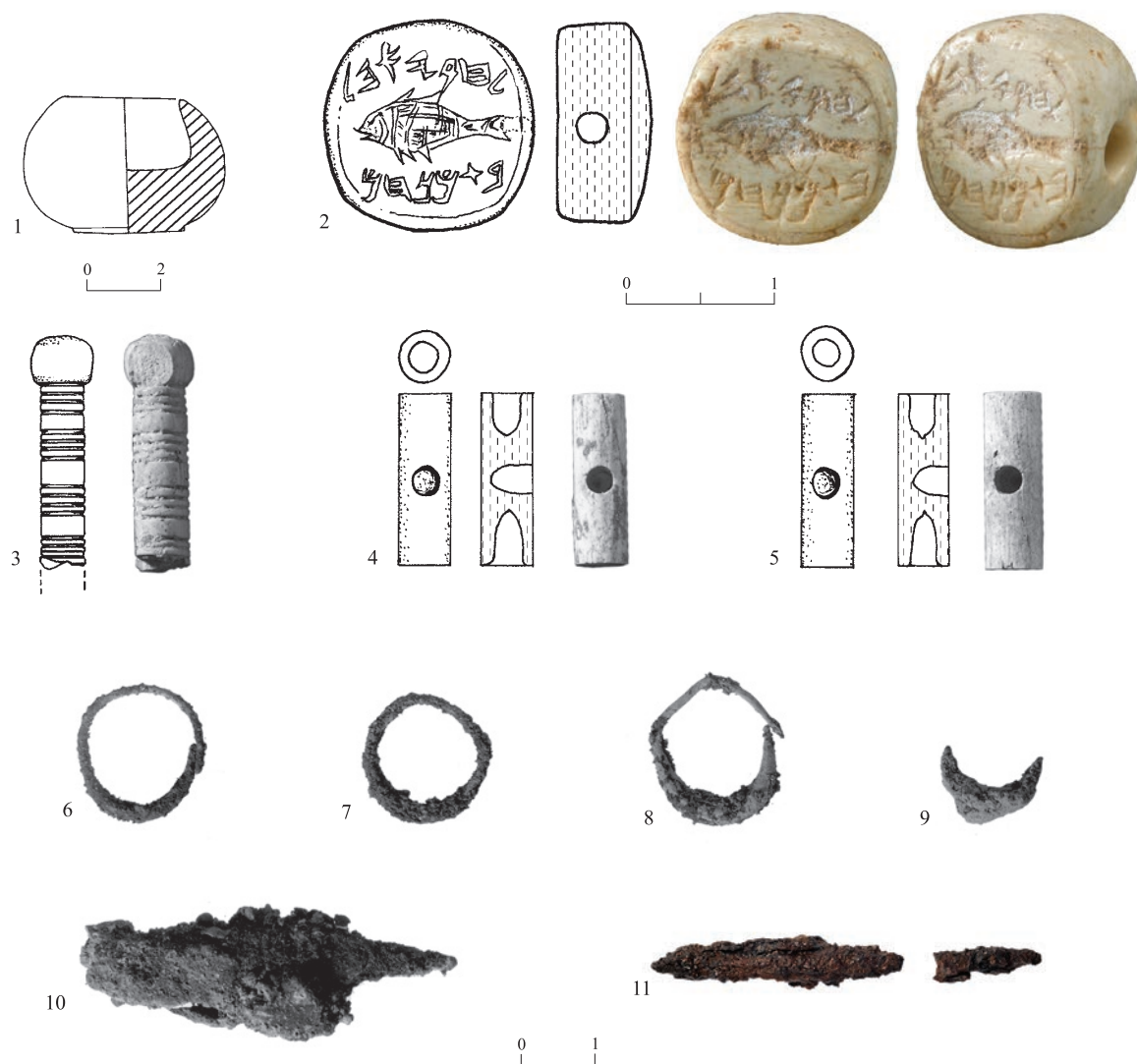


Fig. 13. Small finds from Chamber 2.

No.	Artifact	IAA No. (Inventory No.) ⁱ	Description
1	Small bowl	75-1180 (4)	Light gray rock crystal
2	Stamp	75-1174 (12)	Bone; inscribed; found on western bench
3	Bone inlay?	75-1181 (103)	Carved; L 3.2 cm, diam. 0.8 cm
4	Bone inlay?	75-1029 (97)	Drilled; L 2.3 cm, diam. 0.7 cm
5	Bone inlay?	75-1030 (89)	Drilled; L 2.3 cm, diam. 0.7 cm
6	Earring	75-1019 (85)	Bronze/silver?
7	Earring	75-1026 (98)	Bronze/silver?
8	Earring	75-1023 (87)	Bronze/silver?
9	Earring	75-? (39)	Bronze/silver?
10	Arrowhead	75-1186 (81)	Iron; found on northern bench
11	Arrowhead	75-1187 (82)	Iron; found on northern bench

ⁱ Inventory nos. of illustrated finds appear on Plan 1.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Burial Practices

During the First Temple period, three main burial grounds are known to have surrounded the city of Jerusalem on all sides, as well as some 130 scattered tombs (see Barkay 1985; Kloner 1992; 2001–2002; Yezerski 2009; 2013b). The most important burials are the two uncovered in the St. Etienne Monastery, dated to the late Iron Age, which may have been used by the last kings of Judah (Kloner 1986; Barkay 1997). The burial ground on the slope of Mount Zion is part of the western cemetery extending along the Hinnom Valley. Close to it are the rock-cut tombs near the Western Wall (Broshi, Barkay and Gibson 1983), on Mamilla Road (Amiran 1956; Reich 1993; Reich and Shukron 1995) and at Ketef Hinnom (Hadley 1984; Barkay 1994; 1998). All these tombs are of the “bench-tomb” type (Yezerski 2013b, with references therein), except for some unique architectural features. The tombs generally have a small forecourt leading to a small opening; a square or rectangular burial chamber with a flat ceiling; and one to three benches, hewn out of the rock along the walls, for multiple and simultaneous burials. Although bench-tombs usually comprise a single chamber, two-chambered tombs and multi-chambered burial systems have been found, albeit in very small numbers, throughout the Land of Benjamin and Judah and to the south as far as Tel Goded (Yezerski 2013b:56). The deceased were usually placed on the benches, and after a while, when a place was needed for new burials, they were removed with their accompanying burial gifts to a collecting pit.³ Tomb A lacks a collecting pit, and so the bones were piled up at the foot of the benches.

Whereas hundreds of tombs have been found robbed and empty, Tomb A was found intact, and hence its great importance for reconstructing First Temple period burial practices. The burial practices observed in Tomb A shed light on multiple treatments of the deceased. They also attest to the large repertoire of burial gifts compared with the finds in the Iron Age IIB burials (Ussishkin 1974; Yezerski 2013a; Yezerski and Nahshoni 2013), and burial customs, such as placing a lamp and a decanter with the deceased.

Chronology

Hundreds of rock-cut tombs, mostly dated between the second half of the eighth century BCE to the end of the Judahite kingdom (587/6 BCE), were found throughout Judah and Jerusalem. Only a few of them were intact or partially looted (see Yezerski 2013b), enabling the study of their chronological, sociological and cultural affinities. These studies revealed that the tombs were not in use during a long period of time, regardless of the number of the interred or the amount of pottery vessels that accompanied them. Non of the rock-cut tombs were used sequentially from the second half of the eighth century BCE until the Babylonian destruction.

³ For burial practices in the bible, see Hurowitz 2000.

Kloner and Davis (1994:110) dated Tomb A from the late eighth to the seventh century BCE; however, the pottery assemblage is safely dated from the seventh century until 587/6 BCE. Within this chronological framework, it seems that Tomb A was in use only a few decades during the seventh century BCE, possibly confined to within its first half. This dating is based on the following observations:

(1) Black juglets are absent from the tomb. They are also absent from rock-cut Tomb 5 at Mamilla (Reich 1993:105–106) and from intact Collecting Pit 25 at Ketef Hinom (Hadley 1984). As the use of black juglets gradually decreased during the course of the seventh century BCE, probably ending toward the end of that century, a late seventh-century BCE date for Tomb A seems probable (see also Cohen-Weinberger and Panitz-Cohen 2014).

(2) Small bowls with a flattened folded rim, which are characteristic of the second half of the seventh century BCE (Yezerki 2007:87, Type B 1.1; 2014:123, Subtype III; Yezerki and Mazar 2015:248, Type B 9:IV), are absent from this assemblage.

(3) Red jugs, a typical late seventh-century type usually found in burial contexts (Gitin 2015:350, Pl. 3.3.6:8; Yezerki and Mazar 2015:252, Type J 4, with further references therein), are absent from the tomb.

(4) Most of the ceramic finds retrieved from Tomb A are lamps and decanters securely dated to the seventh century BCE. A comparison of this assemblage with those of two other tombs that were in use from the seventh to the early sixth century BCE—e.g., Bet Shemesh Cave 14 (Grant and Wright 1938: Pl. XLVIII) and Ketef Hinnom Collecting Pit 25 (Hadley 1984:88–89)—attests that the latter contain different types of late bag-shaped large decanters and large lamps with low flat bases. As neither of these types is present in Tomb A, the use of this cave could not have continued till the Babylonian destruction.

(5) Two of the three arrowheads found in Chamber 2 were found in close proximity to one another on the northern bench, to the right of the entrance. Although the bones may have been removed from the benches at the eve of the Babylonian siege, the arrowheads point to an earlier date. The third arrowhead was found while sifting the fill above the floor of Chamber 1—an archaeological context disturbed in antiquity. The presence of the arrowheads in the burial cave makes it tempting to date the end of its use to the Babylonian destruction of 587/6 BCE; however, the pottery finds do not support a date in the beginning of the sixth century BCE.

Alongside the characteristic pottery types usually found within seventh-century BCE tombs—i.e., decanters, bowls and lamps—the tomb yielded also unique vessels and artifacts, such as two types of bottles (Bo-1, Bo-2; Fig. 9:16–18), a bowl/jar (B/Jr; Fig. 9:3), a bone seal (Fig. 13:2), a tiny crystal bowl (Fig. 13:1), many beads of various materials

(Figs. 10, 11), silver/bronze jewelry (Figs. 12:1–12; 13:6–9) and arrowheads (Figs. 12:13; 13:10, 11). The seal of Ḥami'ahel is of special significance, as it is the earliest evidence of an affluent and powerful woman who owned such a seal. It is noteworthy that the distinct pottery vessels and small finds, attesting to a specific family tradition, customs and taste, stand in contrast to the traditional architecture of the tomb.

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