

LATE OTTOMAN-PERIOD BUILDINGS AND LATE CHALCOLITHIC-PERIOD FINDS AT KAFR 'ANA, OR YEHUDA

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INTRODUCTION

In December 2010 and January 2011 a salvage excavation was conducted in the Newe Rabin neighborhood of Or Yehuda (map ref. 187833/659110).¹ This site is located in the Lod Valley (biblical Biq'at Ono), about 11 km east of Yafo and 1 km north of Nahal Ayyalon (Fig. 1), on the remains of the Arab village Kafr 'Ana (كفر عانة). This village is mentioned in

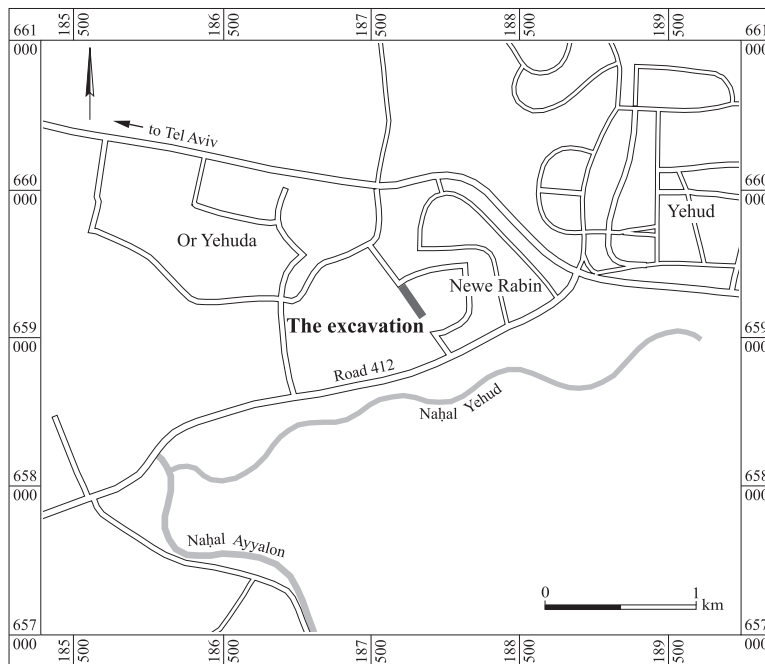


Fig. 1. Location map.

¹ Felix Volynsky directed the excavation on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority (Permit No. A-6070; Volynsky and Arbel 2015) with the assistance of Yoav Arbel (area supervisor), Eli Bachar and Yoni Amrani

Ottoman documents from the sixteenth century, when it had about 55 residents (Grossman 1994:239). By the late nineteenth century it was inhabited by some 800 individuals, residing in approximately 150 houses (Fig. 2). As with many similar communities, the local economy was based mostly on agriculture,² along with small-scale traditional manufacturing (Avitsur 1970:96, Table 1; 102, Table 2; Grossman 1994:21). The village grew rapidly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2007:6–8). By 1945

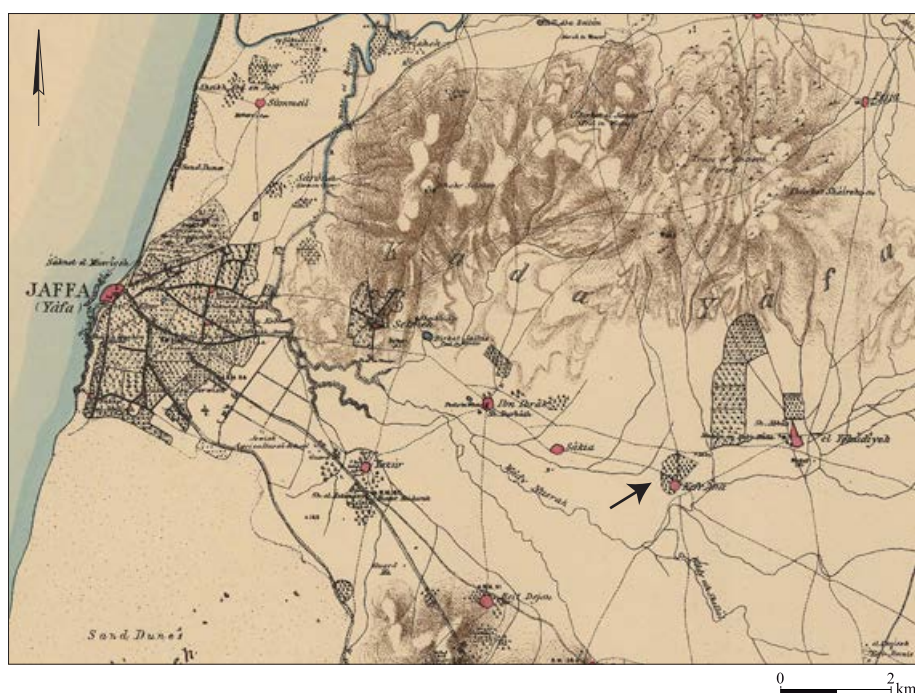


Fig. 2. Kafr 'Ana on the Palestine Exploration Fund map (1880), marked by an arrow.

(administration), and Oksana Ashkenazi (registrar and assistant area supervisor). The recording and analyses of the finds were undertaken by Anna de Vincenz (Ottoman pottery), Eli Yannai (Chalcolithic pottery), Alla Yaroshevich (flint tools), Elisheva Kamyeshki and Atalya Fadida (pottery restoration), Edwin C.M. van den Brink (stone vessels), Oded Raviv (stone restoration), Michael Hasel (metallurgical laboratory), Alexander Glick (firearm analysis), Moshe Sade (archaeozoology), Mark Kunin and Mendel Kahn (surveying), Asaf Peretz (field photography), Clara Amit and Amir Gorzalczany (finds photography), Marina Shuiskaya (pottery drawing) and Michael Smelansky (flint drawing). Aviva Bouchenino performed the pre-excavation trial trenches at the site.

² Palestine Exploration Fund surveyors mention only one well at Kafr 'Ana, and this was also the case for other agrarian villages in the region (Avitsur 1970:95). This is not necessarily an indication of poor land exploitation. Channel networks stemming from single wells could irrigate a large number of plots. Examples can be found at numerous sites, including those in the general region of Ono, such as Yafa and Nes Ziyayona (Golan 2015; Arbel 2017:82).

its population comprised roughly 3000 Muslims and 200 Jews.³ Kafr ‘Ana was partly destroyed in 1948 in the aftermath of the War of Independence.⁴

Other than a small exploratory excavation in 1962 (Kaplan 1962), the site received little archaeological attention until the early 1990s, when building and infrastructure development spurred a series of salvage excavations (Volynsky and Arbel 2015: Table 1). Most of these were small in scale and were conducted by teams of the Israel Antiquities Authority. A team from Tel Aviv University directed a larger salvage project in 1996–1997 (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2005; 2007).

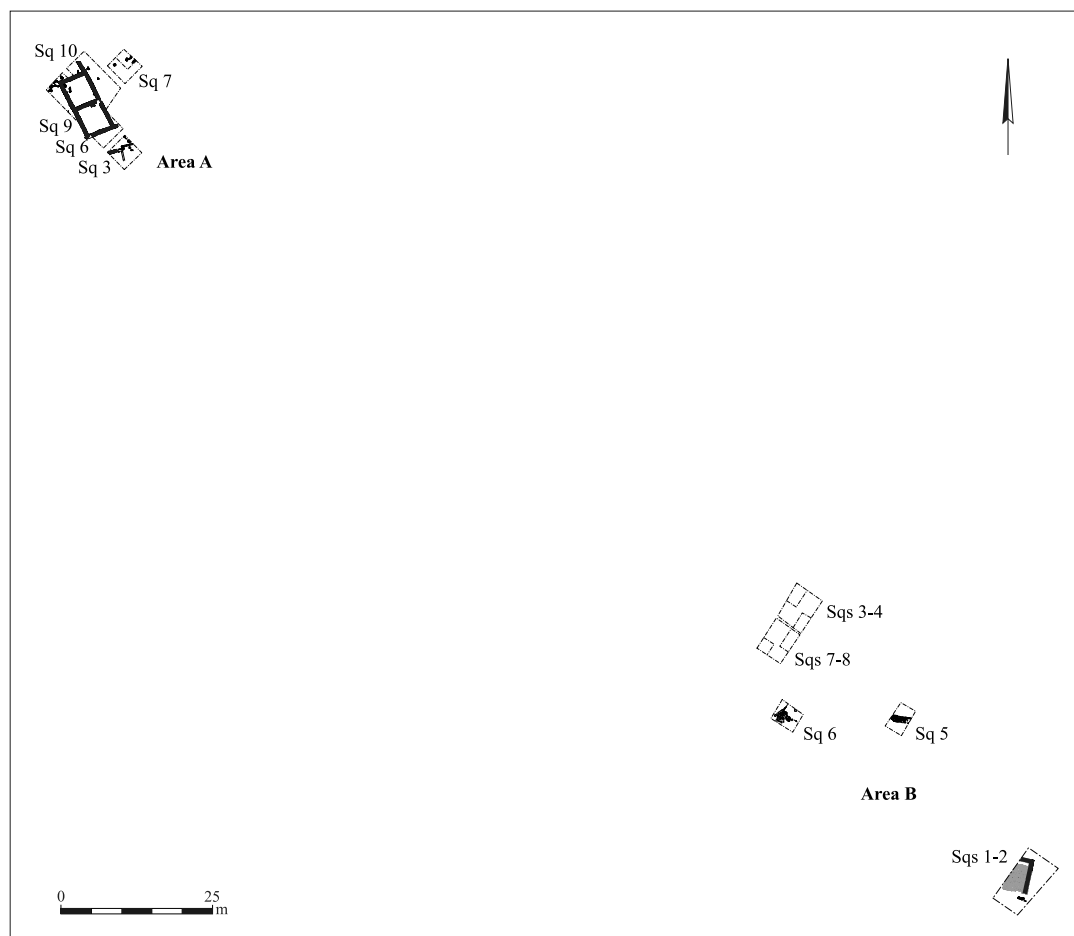
Finds from the late Byzantine and Early Islamic periods from this area were first reported by Kaplan (1962:15). More recent discoveries from these periods, ranging from architectural remains to cist graves, rubbish pits and ceramic production waste, are mentioned by Shmueli (1998), Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein (2005; 2007), Gorzalczy (2000), Kogan-Zehavi (2011), Golan (2004), Barkan and Jakoel (2010), Sion and Rapuano (2010) and Marcus (2010). Evidence of Chalcolithic occupation was found in two locations (Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2005; 2007; Buchennino 2002a). An extensive cemetery dating to the Mamluk period was also excavated at the site (Buchennino 2002b; Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein 2005; Vitto, forthcoming). Gophna, Taxel and Feldstein (2007:56–64) refer also to remains from the Late Ottoman and British Mandate periods, which are discussed in this report as well.

THE EXCAVATION

In all, nineteen squares in three concentrations (Plan 1) were opened, labeled Areas A (eleven squares) and B (eight squares), based on the results of pre-excavation mechanical exposure. Area A is located on the northwestern edge of the site, and Area B is located in its southeastern part—two squares were excavated on the edge of the site and six squares, somewhat closer to its center. The main architectural remains were exposed on the very margins of the site, belonging to buildings that were erected in the Late Ottoman period, but were probably still in use until 1948. Fragmentary structural remains from the same period were also unearthed nearer the center of the site. Chalcolithic layers with considerable accumulations of finds, but no architectural remains, were reached in the northwestern part of Area B (see van den Brink, this volume; Yannai, this volume; Yaroshevich, this volume). Pottery from the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods, also disassociated from any building or installation, was recorded in most of the squares. It is likely that the poor state of preservation of the site

³ These figures are presented by Avitsur and in a Palestinian history website (www.palestineremembered.com).

⁴ Khalidi (1992:247) claims that the occupation of Kafr ‘Ana took place in September 1948. *Palestineremembered.com* recalls the date as April of that year. Avitsur (1957:15) mentions “a settlement of [Jewish] immigrants in deserted Kafr ‘Ana” in the 1950s.

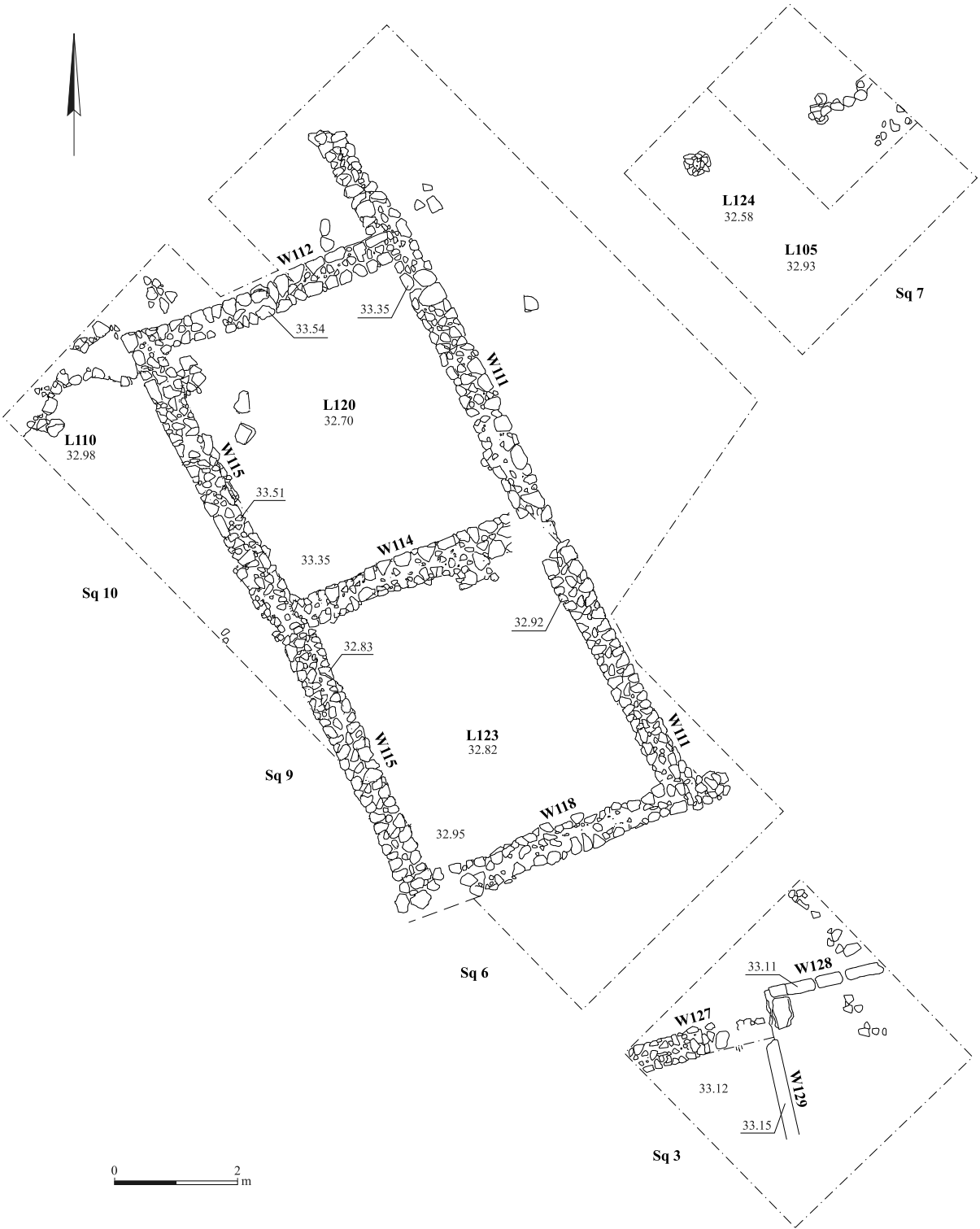


Plan 1. Plan of the excavation areas.

is attributable to destruction during the twentieth century and to resettlement processes in recent decades.

AREA A

The architectural remains in this area belong to a structure that was probably built in Kafr 'Ana during the Late Ottoman period and used until the mid-twentieth century (Plan 2; Fig. 3). Two rooms of similar size (4.5×3.8 m), sharing a common wall (W114), were exposed in Sqs 6, 9 and 10. The northeastern wall of the structure (W111) extended beyond the northwestern room (L120) and clearly continued past the limits of the excavation, indicating that there was at least one additional room. The walls were built of uncut, or roughly worked, small fieldstones with no mortar, and were preserved to a height of three courses (0.5 m). To the southeast of this complex we found the remains of another building of similar elevation and stratigraphic context. Only parts of the walls of this second structure could be excavated;



Plan 2. Area A, the Late Ottoman building.



Fig. 3. Area A, the Late Ottoman building, looking southeast.

its plan remains unknown. Its main exposed wall (W127) was built parallel to W118 and exhibits a similar construction style. Wall 127 appears to have originally formed a corner with two additional walls of the same structure (W128, W129).

The Ottoman complex in Area A underwent at least one renovation phase, as indicated by concrete additions over the fieldstone courses of W128 and W129. Based on the use of concrete and the type of concrete, which included shells for consolidation, this additional phase may be dated to the British Mandate. The concrete addition was probably introduced during a phase of significant refurbishment; it must have replaced the original courses that were likely made of stone, as the use of stone foundations for a concrete wall in the original plan would be most unusual (Fig. 4). As no entrances, installations or floors were exposed, the remains in Area A likely represent foundations.

The dominant finds from the accumulations in the building dated to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Late Ottoman domestic pottery (see Vincenz, this volume) and glass bracelets of the Hebron glass industry (Fig. 5), whose products are found throughout the region (Boas 2000; Katsnelson 2009:128–129; for records of travelers



Fig. 4. Area A, concrete additions on fieldstone courses in the building, looking east.

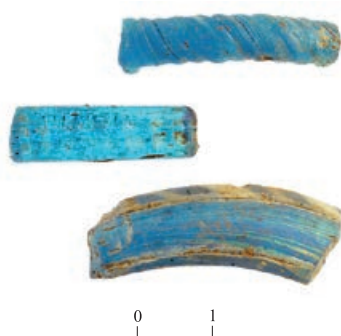


Fig. 5. Late Ottoman glass bracelets.

and explores from the period, see Seetzen 1854:15; Rogers 1862:27; Pierotti 1864:146). Imported artifacts include roof tiles from the Roux Brothers factory in Saint-Henri, a quarter of Marseilles (see Vincenz, this volume: Fig. 3:5).⁵ A very small number of imported

⁵ Roof tiles and bricks from this factory, marked by the familiar heartshaped logo, are by far the most common of their kind in this region, and are prevalent in Late Ottoman layers in various excavations conducted in Yafa in recent years.

porcelain sherds was also found (see Vincenz, this volume: Fig. 3:1–3). It should be noted that the scarcity of porcelain vessels in rural areas compared with their abundance in cities has been documented also in other villages of the same period (Arbel, Greenvald and Ben-Ari 2013). The prevalence of local and imported artifacts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within the building, and in some places abutting its foundations, supports a Late Ottoman date for its construction and original use, with probable continuity into the days of the British Mandate. Additional evidence for this date is a 1942 coin found next to the outer face of the southwestern wall of the structure (L110, W115). The function of the building is unclear; its plan resembles that of storage or commercial facilities rather than of domestic structures. It should be noted that the fast development of commerce and transportation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries impacted villages such as Kafr ‘Ana, which is located near Yafo, one of the main harbors of the land and on the road leading to Jerusalem and other inland trade destinations (Grossman 1994:239).

Below the Ottoman remains was a layer that contained a thin scattering of pottery from the late Byzantine or the Early Islamic period. Most of the sherds were worn and belonged to ribbed storage jars; they were not associated with any buildings. In Sq 7, northeast of the Late Ottoman structure, were scant remains of installations and a crudely executed stone-lined posthole (L124; Fig. 6), which were incongruent with the plans of the solidly built Ottoman building. These may also be assigned to the late Byzantine or the Early Islamic period, on the basis of the many potsherds from these periods found in their vicinity. It should be noted that there were also some Ottoman-period sherds in this layer, but considering their proximity to the surface and the fact that the layer was not sealed, these may well be incidental intrusions.



Fig. 6. Area A, posthole (L124).

AREA B

Chalcolithic Remains

A layer rich in Chalcolithic artifacts was found in four adjacent squares in the northern part of the area at a general elevation of 31.10–31.90 m asl (Sqs 3, 4: L204, L210; Sqs 7, 8: L218, L219). The layer was discovered under a mixed fill (c. 1.3 m thick) containing artifacts from the Byzantine, Ottoman and British Mandate periods (L201; 31.90–33.26 m asl). The Chalcolithic finds originated in a dense, dark matrix, homogenous in both color and inclusions. No occupation layers, floors, nor any architectural remains were discerned. A small number of light-colored, relatively dense patches were observed in the sections—these may have been mud-brick fragments; however, this remains uncertain.

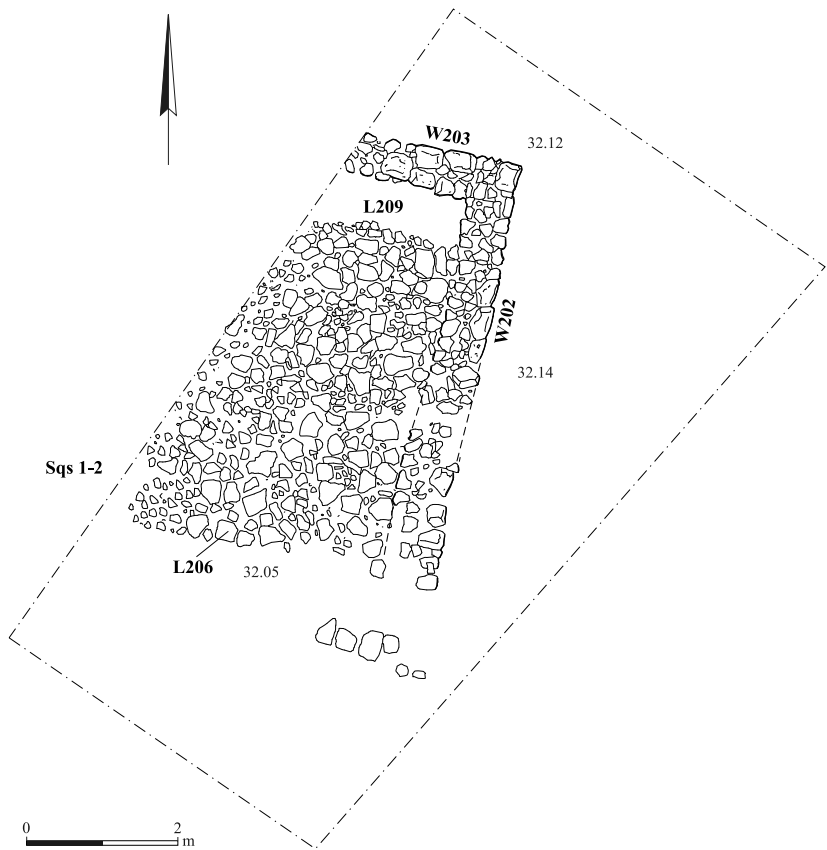
The finds include a wide variety of flint (see Yaroshevich, this volume), pottery (see Yannai, this volume) and stone artifacts (see van den Brink, this volume), as well as two spindle whorls (Fig. 7) and animal bones, mostly of domesticated species, such as sheep, goat, cattle, pig and dog (see Sade, this volume). The diagnostic artifacts belong to the late Chalcolithic horizon, including some Ghassulian-related basalt items and contemporaneous ceramic types common in the central part of the country, with some affiliations to the Be'er Sheva' region. Chalcolithic layers of a similar nature were identified also in Sqs 1, 2 and 6, beneath the Ottoman and Byzantine–Early Islamic strata. Overall, the evidence of the Chalcolithic period from our excavation accords well with the findings from previous excavations at Or Yehuda and its immediate vicinity (see, *Introduction*, above).

Late Ottoman–British Mandate Period

In Sqs 1 and 2, near the southeastern limits of the site, the remains of another building were exposed; it was originally built during the Late Ottoman period and continued in use through the British Mandate years (Plan 3; Fig. 8). Two adjoining walls create the northeastern



Fig. 7. Area B, spindle whorls from the Chalcolithic layer.



Plan 3. Area B, the Late Ottoman building.



Fig. 8. Area B, the Late Ottoman building, Paving 206, looking southeast.

corner of this structure (W202, W203), enclosing a room or a courtyard (L206) covered with a layer of tightly packed unworked stones. Walls 202 and 203 were preserved to a maximum height of 0.2 m and rarely exceeded a single course. They were constructed of fieldstones, most of which are uncut, with no bonding material. Several larger, roughly cut stones were used for the construction of the segment of W203 that is nearest the corner—a measure taken to reinforce the building. The absence of installations or entrances suggests that these remains are the foundations of a building with no surviving superstructure. If this is indeed the case, the stones in L206 may have been laid as a bedding for an earth floor rather than as paving. Finds from the soil accumulations inside the structure, as well as sealed materials collected under the stone paving (L209), date to the Late Ottoman period. The pottery includes domestic vessels (see Vincenz, this volume) and fragments of Marseilles roof tiles, a few of which were almost complete (see Vincenz, this volume: Fig. 3:6). There were two unusual finds: a well-preserved bronze chain with a pendant in the form of a small receptacle attached to it, possibly for an aromatic substance or cosmetic, which served an apotropaic or medicinal purpose (Fig. 9); and an unusual pistol from the early twentieth century, still in the remains of its holster (Fig. 10; see Glick, below). As in Area A, several fragments of Ottoman glass bracelets were found.

Stone layers interspersed with Late Ottoman pottery were exposed in Sqs 5 and 6. Their preservation was fragmentary and no associated walls were found. The stones were covered with modern waste, indicating their long-term exposure. Such exposure could explain their poor preservation. Finds retrieved from soil that could be separated from the modern waste dated to the Late Ottoman period.

As in Area A, thin scatterings of Byzantine–Early Islamic sherds, with no architectural affiliations, were found under the Ottoman layers throughout Area B.



Fig. 9. Area B, a Late Ottoman bronze pendant.

An Early Twentieth-Century Pistol

Alexander Glick

A poorly preserved iron pistol, including fragments of its leather holster, were discovered near topsoil, in a fill that comprised artifacts from the Late Ottoman and the British Mandate periods. The pistol is very small, measuring 9.8 cm in length and 7.2 cm in height (Fig. 10). The remains of a 5–6 mm cartridge were found inside it. Apparently, the pistol had no magazine and was single-loaded (one cartridge at a time). The left side of the muzzle (Fig. 10:a) was marked in relief with the letters “SIT.” Toward the rear of the slide there is a vertical incision that appears in larger handguns as part of the cocking mechanism. The incision on this firearm, however, is longer than usual, in relation to the pistol size. While it is possible that a shorter incision would not have been effective in facilitating cocking in such a small weapon, it is doubtful that this pistol could have been cocked in the first place, and therefore, the incision seems to have been decorative.

The top of the pistol’s steel handle plates was stamped with an oval frame that probably bore the manufacturer’s mark, which was not preserved (Fig. 10:c). There is no trace of a trigger hold, and there may not have been one to begin with.

An identical, yet significantly better-preserved specimen, surfaced in the collectors’ market, and was presumed to have been a toy. It bore the inscription “MI GERMANIA” under the letters “SIT,” and the letters “DRGM” on the opposite side. The latter represent



Fig. 10. Area B, an early twentieth-century pistol.

the words *Deutsches Reich Gebrauchsmuster*, the mark of a German design registration system used between the years 1891 and 1949. This may suggest a *terminus ante quem* also for the production date of the pistol from Or Yehuda. Another hint for its date is its obvious stylistic affiliation with early twentieth-century Browning pistols. The most similar model of these dates to 1906 (Ezell 1991:226), providing a viable *post quem* dating for the pistol's archaeological context.

Was the Or Yehuda pistol used as an actual weapon? The above-mentioned item from the collectors' market was sold along with a box of fifty cartridges. Notably, a broken cartridge was found also inside the firearm from Or Yehuda. Thus, it could be argued that our pistol was also simply a toy, hazardous though that may seem, for such playthings apparently did exist. Alternately, it is also possible that this item was used as a starting pistol for sporting events.

CONCLUSIONS

The picture emerging from the later remains at the site is one of a continuous occupation of the village of Kafr 'Ana, from the seventeenth through the mid-twentieth century. While the settlement grew in size and population, there was little change in the construction methods and the vessel and tool assemblages that were in daily use until the latest phase. European artifacts, found abundantly in urban sites dating to the same period, were scarce, with the exception of French roof tiles. Such tiles were a cheap commodity imported *en masse*, offering a convenient, economic and practical alternative to the traditional stone, plaster or wooden beam roofing. Kafr 'Ana, therefore, although a relatively large village at a short distance from important centers such as Yafo and Ramla, characterizes the rural nature prevalent across the land until the establishment of the State of Israel and the subsequent urban-based modernization.

The poor remains associated with the Byzantine–Early Islamic periods correspond with the results of previous excavations at the site, where these periods are represented mostly by scattered burials.

Chalcolithic finds such as sickle blades (see Yaroshevich, this volume: Figs. 2, 3), grinding vessels (see van den Brink, this volume) and bones of herd animals (see Sade, this volume) were unearthed also in prior excavations at the site and in its immediate surroundings, reflecting the agricultural and pastoral lifestyle typical of the period. The ceramic assemblage contains types known from the central part of the country and the Be'er Sheva' region. Other than farming and herding, finds from the excavation indicate activities such as flint tool industry (see Yaroshevich, this volume); limited textile production, indicated by the find of spindle whorls; and some trade, evidenced by the basalt vessels (see van den Brink, this volume: Tables 1, 2). It is hoped that future comparative analysis with results from parallel layers at other sites in the Lod Valley will provide a more comprehensive picture of this phase in the region.

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