

THE GLASS VESSELS FROM KEFAR GABIROL, EL-QUBEIBE

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INTRODUCTION

The salvage excavations conducted in Kefar Gabirol, el-Qubeibe (see Jakoel, this volume)¹ yielded about 330 glass fragments, including some 250 non-diagnostic body fragments, nine of which are discussed here. The finds were found within accumulations above walls or within installations and date from the nineteenth to the first third of the twentieth century. They comprise bottles of various types, windowpanes and bracelet fragments. In Israel, similar material is known from other excavations, for example at Ḥorbat 'Eleq, Ramat Ha-Nadiv (Boas 2000); Kafr 'Ana, a rural settlement in the Lod Valley (Taxel 2007:73–74, Fig. 4.5:1–3); and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (Winter 2011). More recently, excavations conducted in Yafo (Jaffa), in the Qishle compound (Gorin-Rosen, forthcoming), on Jerusalem Boulevard (Ouahnouna 2017), on Ha-Zorfim Street and on Ruslan Street² have added valuable data to the growing glass corpus from this period.

THE FINDS

Medicinal Bottles (Fig. 1:1–3)

Medicine bottles have been the subject of several studies (Fike 1987). This group probably comprises the largest and most diverse group among bottles produced from the nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. The bottles come in a variety of shapes and sizes that can be categorized according to their cross-section. Most bottles are stamped on the bottom, indicating their capacity.

¹ I would like to thank Yael Gorin-Rosen for her help during the preparation of this paper. The finds were restored by Adrienne Ganor and photographed by Clara Amit.

² The glass finds from the excavations on Ha-Zorfim and Ruslan Streets were studied by the author and await the publication of their final reports.



Fig. 1. Vessels and bracelets.

Cylindrical Bottles (Fig. 1:1, 2).— Cylindrical bottles, which have a round cross-section, were used frequently by pharmacists to dispense their products. These bottles were made of colorless, greenish and brown glass, often having a number on the bottom to indicate their capacity.

1. L425, B3584. Complete bottle. Colorless glass, covered with sand deposits, weathering and iridescence. Made from a two-part mold, the seam clearly visible on the wall up to the rim's edge. Rounded, thick rim, short, cylindrical neck and plain cylindrical body. Molded inscription on bottom: "20". H 7.5 cm.

2. L522, B1797. Complete bottle. Greenish glass, covered with weathering and iridescence. Made from a two-part mold, the seam clearly visible on the wall up to the rim's edge. Rounded, thick rim, cylindrical neck and plain cylindrical body. Molded inscription on bottom: "10". H 6 cm.

Square Bottle (Fig. 1:3).— Bottle No. 3 is square in cross-section. Its metal stopper was preserved *in situ*. After it was opened carefully, a small glass rod was observed, still intact inside, which is very rare.

3. L360, B3523. Complete bottle. Brownish glass, covered with sand deposits, weathering and iridescence. Made from a two-part mold, the seam clearly visible on the wall up to the rim's edge. Square cross-section. Grooves on the rim to close the stopper. Stopper made of metal with a fine glass rod attached inside. Molded inscription on bottom: "0", and below, "7"; H 8 cm.

Inkwell(?) (Fig. 1:4)

This item is a complete, well-preserved small bottle, probably used as an inkwell. A similar bottle made of dark green glass, without an inscription, was found among the Late Ottoman and British Mandate finds at Kafr 'Ana (Taxel 2007:73–74, Fig. 4.5:3). Taxel suggested that it may have contained medicine or served as an inkwell. A similar specimen was found during excavations in Yafo, in the Qishle compound (Gorin-Rosen, forthcoming) and on Jerusalem Boulevard (Ouahnouna 2017).

4. L265, B1629. Inkwell(?). Greenish bluish glass, covered with silver iridescence. Made from a three-part mold, the seam clearly visible on the wall and above the base. Ridged rim with a short neck, steep shoulder and a short cylindrical body. The base is slightly concave, without an inscription. Base diam. 5.6 cm, H 6.5 cm.

"Bovril" Bottle (Fig. 1:5)

This is an old "Bovril" (an English beef extract) bottle, dated to the 1930s. The front and back have raised lettering: "2 oz. Bovril Limited"; one side has an additional "317" under the "Limited". Raised lettering on the bottom reads "Bottle made in England" around the edge with "By FGC" in the center, attesting to Forsters Glass Company Ltd., based in Lancashire, England. An identical specimen was found on Yehuda Ha-Yammit Street in Yafo (Ouahnouna 2019: Fig. 2:1).

5. L258, B1600. Complete bottle. Brownish glass covered with silver iridescence. Made from a two-part mold, the seam clearly visible on the wall up to the rim's edge. Round body with two flattened sides. H 8.4 cm.

Stopper (Fig. 1:6)

This glass stopper exhibits a common profile. It was used to close various kinds of bottles.

6. L312, B1786. Glass stopper. Light blue glass. H 3.4 cm.

Bracelets (Fig. 1:7–9)

These three items (Nos. 7–9) are small bracelet fragments from common bracelet types that were in use from the Mamluk till the Ottoman periods, continuing into modern times (see Shindo 2001).

Hebron was most likely the largest producer of glass bracelets during the Ottoman period and into the twentieth century (Spaer 2001:198, 204). This is attested by European travelers who visited the Holy Land during the nineteenth century and the German nineteenth-century traveler Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, who mentions that in the market in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher “beads and bracelets made in Hebron were being sold” (Seetzen 1854–1859:15). Later, during a visit to Hebron, he gives more detailed information about the production of bracelets and beads (Seetzen 1854–1859:49). One of the last glass workshops to produce bracelets and beads is the workshop run by the Al-Natsha family; they still produce these bracelets and beads (Vincenz 2017).

Bracelet Nos. 7–9 are trail-decorated bracelets with an obliquely pointed more-or-less triangular cross-section. They belong to Type D-4-4c in Spaer’s typology (1992:51, Table 3; Fig. 29) and were frequent during late Ottoman times.

7. L354, B3526. Trail-decorated bracelet fragment. Triangular section. Translucent light blue glass. Two trails in opaque light green.

8. L393, B3599. Trail-decorated bracelet fragment. Triangular section. Green glass covered with yellowish green surface coating. Twisted trails at bottom and top in black and white.

9. L393, B3608. Trail-decorated bracelet fragment. Triangular section. Translucent light blue glass. Twisted trails at bottom and top in black/brown and white. Very poorly preserved.

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