

URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TEL YAFO (JAFFA): AN INTRODUCTION

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Until the 1990s, most archaeological efforts in Yafo (Jaffa) concentrated on the tell—the historical core of the city—yielding significant data on occupation phases from the Middle Bronze Age to Roman times (Bowman et al. 1955; Kaplan 1964; 1975; Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan 1993; Herzog 2008). However, the focus on the mound left open questions pertaining to issues such as urban expansion and contraction, demographic patterns, economy and commerce. Thus, we knew when Yafo was first settled and were familiar with the history of its center, whilst aspects of the city's character and development were reconstructed from subjective and often incomplete textual narratives. Furthermore, the excavations on the ancient mound mainly concentrated on the exposure of the earlier periods (Bronze Age to Roman), neglecting the potential contribution of archaeology to the study of the later periods (Byzantine through late Ottoman). The available archaeological data was thus markedly scarce for the later historical periods.

Results of the excavations carried out in recent decades between the mound and Jerusalem Boulevard altered this situation (Peilstöcker 2011; Arbel 2017d). Intensive salvage excavations, which were carried out as repercussions of the broad-scale urban renovations initiated by the Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality, were conducted along modern streets, within construction sites and under buildings singled out for conservation. This situation offered a rare opportunity for archaeologists, albeit constricted by the common limitations of urban archaeology, as the sites that required excavation were not necessarily those with the highest research potential, but those located in plots which were to be affected by the planned infrastructure work. Exposure beyond those plots was only seldom permitted. Moreover, development works were undertaken immediately upon the conclusion of the excavations, precluding a reexamination of the results in the field. The removal of architectural remains and the sealing of the archaeological strata rendered the excavators' records and recovered artifacts the only materials available to reviewers. Despite these constraints, the accumulated data gradually formed into imperfect, yet intelligible scenes, revealing vital aspects of Yafo's development, without which important historical processes would have remained obscure. Two aspects of Yafo's development processes are discussed in the five reports comprising this volume: urban expansion and the cemeteries (Fig. 1).

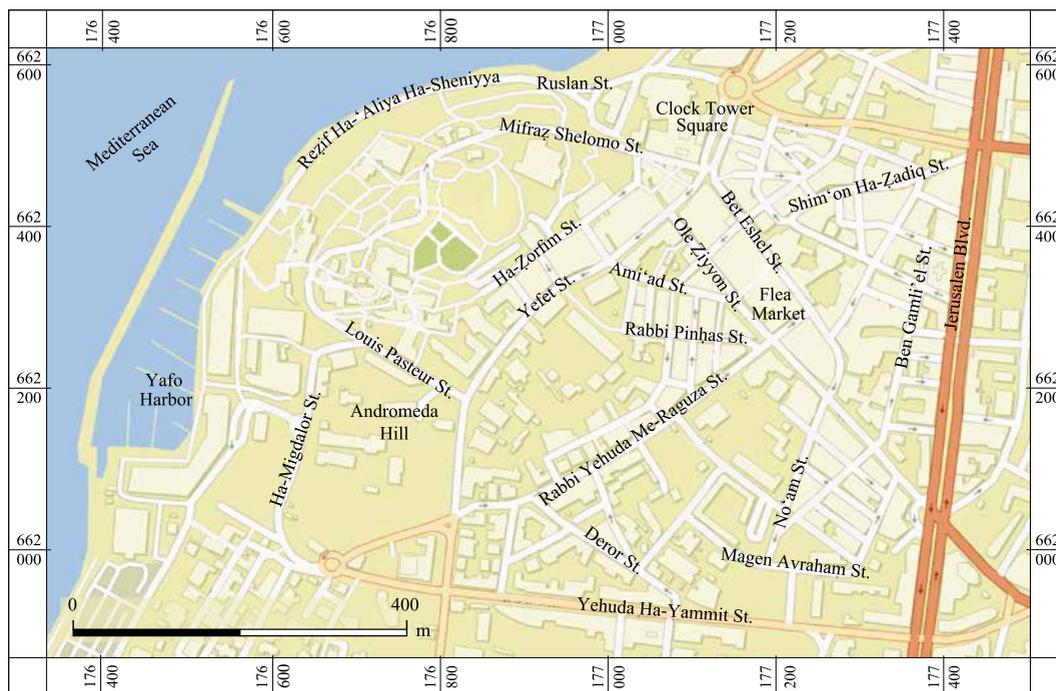


Fig. 1. Location map of streets in Yafo, where excavations took place and which are mentioned in this volume (© all rights reserved by the Survey of Israel, printed with Survey of Israel permission).

Urban Expansion

The development of a “lower city” is a crucial stage in the history of ancient cities in the Levant, reflecting political, economic and social fortunes and fluctuations over time. Unlike several other classical and medieval sites, Yafo’s lower city remained obscure until the recent excavations on the outskirts of the ancient mound. Yafo’s renowned fertile farmland is mentioned in sources dated as early as the Late Bronze Age, reaching a peak in late Ottoman times; however, evidence regarding urban expansion outside the boundaries of the mound was left to archaeology to determine, as only general comments on the construction of a “new city” (*Bourg Neuf*) outside the Crusader citadel have survived (Tolkowsky 1924:124).

Archaeological evidence from recent excavations in Yafo indicates periods when the city was circumscribed to the mound alongside periods of urban expansion (Arbel 2017a). This situation of ebb and flow is irregular, for in most cases once a city expanded there was no returning to its narrow proportions, setbacks notwithstanding. In the case of Bet She’an, for example, the massive earthquake of 749 CE destroyed the Byzantine–Umayyad lower city center that abutted the mound, but the modest Abbasid settlement that replaced it was built within that center’s ruins, while on the mound, mostly mosques were erected, preserving its “acropolis” status (Bar-Nathan and Atrash 2011:14). Yafo, conversely, was reduced into the ancient limits of the mound at least twice in its history. Urban growth in the Ptolemaic, Byzantine, Early Islamic, Crusader and late Ottoman periods (prior to extensive

and irreversible construction under the British Mandate) covered mostly plots to the east of the mound. Correlated evidence was encountered in numerous excavation projects that preceded the excavations reported in this volume, such as the Ganor compound (Peilstöcker and Burke 2011; Jakoel 2017b), Jerusalem Boulevard (Jakoel and Marcus 2017), Yehuda Ha-Yammit Street (Haddad and Rauchberger 2019) and Shim'on Ha-Zadiq Street (Glick 2017). Among the finds were Crusader fortifications, Byzantine public buildings and industrial installations, as well as dwellings from various periods.

This volume includes five reports describing the material evidence of Yafo's extra-mound development. Late Ottoman irrigation ducts for the orchards uprooted to make way for urban construction survive under Rabbi Yehuda Me-Ragusa Street, along the eastern limits of the present-day Flea Market (Arbel and Rauchberger, this volume [b]). Burials dated to Middle Bronze Age II and the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods were found in various locations along the street, indicating that during those times the city had not spread out that far. Farther east, a similar conclusion was reached following the discovery of a large Byzantine industrial press and a nineteenth-century well house (*bayāra*) at the Magen Avraham Compound (Arbel and Rauchberger, this volume [a]). The remains of what may have been a nineteenth-century well house (*bayāra*) and of a Crusader moat were exposed under the French School on 27 Yefet Street, next to the southeastern bastion of Yafo's Ottoman fortifications (Arbel and Talmi, this volume). Strong indications of Yafo's southern historical boundaries were discovered at the site of the French Hospital, where it was found that this area was located outside the city limits, as attested by its intensive exploitation as a cemetery (Dayan, Levy and Samora-Cohen, this volume). Still, Early Islamic and Crusader dwellings, unearthed at the French Hospital site and on adjacent Louis Pasteur Street, as well as the later, southeastern Ottoman bastion and hospital, point to periods during which this area was part of the urban sphere (Re'em 2010; Arbel and Rauchberger 2018). The significance of the activities that took place outside the mound limits to the economy of Yafo must not be underestimated. Excavations at the Hellenistic site on 10 Ben Gamli'el Street (Arbel, this volume) yielded few architectural remains, but a rich assemblage of local and imported ceramic and glass finds, attesting to the wealth enjoyed by the owners of farmsteads located near the city. The same conclusion is also valid for other periods, when landowners resided in this area.

Burials

The cultural and demographic data embedded in tombs, often consisting of rich and well-preserved burial goods, made funerary research one of the most informative fields of archaeology. Yet, as cemeteries were excluded from settlements—a recurrent cross-cultural and cross-temporal custom—archaeological investigation thereof is usually restricted to the periphery of towns and villages. Few graves were discovered on Yafo's mound, most of which were pre-classical (Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan 1993:659), while graves of various types and extensive burial grounds came to light in numerous sites extending on the outskirts of the city. The first cemetery to be investigated was the Jewish burial ground at Abu Kabir,

approximately one mile to the east of Tel Yafo and dated to the Late Roman and Byzantine periods. In the late nineteenth century, the site was regularly looted for building material by the neighboring villagers, an unfortunate endeavor that continued well into the early twentieth century (Clermont-Ganneau 1874; Schick 1893; Tolkowsky 1924:168–169). Recent archaeological research at Abu Kabir revealed burial caves and funerary inscriptions that proved the Jewish identity of the deceased (Ecker 2010). Over a century later, another substantial cemetery was detected on Andromeda Hill, immediately to the south of the tell. The site and its surroundings served as the necropolis of Yafo's pagan population under Persian and Hellenistic rule, although they also contain burials from as early as the Late Bronze Age (Avner-Levy 1998; Haddad and Rauchberger 2019).

Burials were recorded in four of the excavations reported in this volume. The most extensive one was uncovered in the excavation at the former French Hospital (presently refurbished into the new Jaffa Hotel), which was part of the Andromeda Hill necropolis (Dayan, Levy and Samora-Cohen, this volume). This graveyard is the most diverse in historical and cultural terms, including graves dating from the Late Bronze Age to the late Ottoman period. Additional burials of the Andromeda Hill necropolis were detected on Rabbi Yehuda Me-Raguza Street (Arbel and Rauchberger, this volume [b]), 27 Yefet Street (Arbel and Talmi, this volume) and Yehuda Ha-Yammit Street (Haddad and Rauchberger 2019). The excavations on Rabbi Yehuda Me-Raguza Street also yielded a Middle Bronze Age II jar burial, similar to a contemporary one previously retrieved from the mound (Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan 1993:659)—both comprise Yafo's earliest discovered graves. Two Byzantine-period cist graves—rare funerary finds of the period outside Abu Kabir—were also exposed under the same street. At the Magen Avraham compound, a pre-nineteenth century Muslim burial plot, which preceded the foundation of Yafo's northern Muslim cemetery, was exposed but could not be precisely dated (Arbel and Rauchberger, this volume [a]).

Later Excavations

Urban development that took place after the excavations reported in this volume added valuable information concerning the two research issues discussed above.

Urban Expansion. Various discoveries related to urban expansion stemmed from the numerous salvage excavations in extra-mound Yafo. Table 1 presents the larger sites and their main finds. All the listed excavations were carried out on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Burials. Roman-period tombs and sarcophagi were exposed in various locations to the south, east and northeast of Yafo (Jakoel 2013, and see references therein). The most substantial site was a Jewish burial ground dated to the first century CE (Jakoel 2017a; see also Burke, Kaufman and Strange-Burke 2017:407–409). In recent years, several segments of an extensive Muslim graveyard used from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries were excavated to the north and northeast of the city core. The inauguration of this cemetery

Table 1. Recent Excavations on the Outskirts of Tel Yafo

Site	Year of Excavation	Location	Main Periods and Finds	References
Greek Market	2013–2014	East of the Clock Tower Square	Crusader structures; late Ottoman structures, well, irrigation channels, waste pits and cesspits	Arbel 2016
Pasteur Street	2015	South of the mound	Byzantine pottery layers; Early Islamic dwellings; Crusader ramparts, dwellings and forge waste pit; late Ottoman channels and fences	Arbel and Rauchberger 2018
Ha-Migdalor Street	2015	South of the mound	Persian-period pit graves; large Byzantine waste trench; Crusader track; late Ottoman perimeter wall	Haddad 2015
Ben Gamli'el Compound	2014–2015	West of Jerusalem Boulevard	Hellenistic structure; Byzantine pottery layers; late Ottoman irrigation channels and waste pits	Permit No. A-7071; Lior Rauchberger pers. comm.
Ole Ziyyon Street	2019	Northern end of the Flea Market	Hellenistic structures (several layers)	Permit No. A-8477, Michal Marmelstein, pers. comm.
Ha-Te'uda Ha-Aduma Street Complex	2017	South of the mound	Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century dwellings	Dayan 2018
Nicanor Street and Compound	2019–2020	'Ajami Quarter	Hellenistic tombstone; late Ottoman cesspits	Permit No. A-8047, Lior Rauchberger pers. comm.

ended centuries of sporadic Muslim burial outside the city, evidence of which came to light in graves discovered outside Yafo's mound (Arbel 2017c:94–97, and see references therein). A cemetery for military personnel monitoring the harbor during the Mamluk and early Ottoman periods was exposed between the Greek Market, the Flea Market and the Clock Tower Square (Nagar and Arbel 2017). This is one of very few testimonies directly related to the period when Yafo was derelict and only the harbor remained in operation.

Yafo's Present State of Research

The density of architectural remains and other finds uncovered in excavations between 2016 and 2020 distinctly decreases in comparison with those retrieved from the earlier projects in extra-mound Yafo. This could be expected, as the recent excavation sites are located at a larger distance from the mound and the historical core of the city. With only a few exceptions, such as the Hellenistic remains on 10 Ben Gamli'el Street (Arbel, this volume), pre-nineteenth-century layers in the more distant periphery of Yafo yielded mostly Byzantine-period pottery, glass shards and other scattered artifacts, with only few architectural features. At this stage

of research, it seems that pre-Ottoman-period material is likely to be encountered in small excavations within the urban core; however, the present excavations are reaching the limits of the historical urban sphere of Yafo and its directly related periphery. Archaeological contributions relating to the establishment and development of Yafo during the late Ottoman and British Mandate periods are still significant.

The scarcity of published information regarding a large number of excavations conducted in Yafo since the mid-twentieth century impedes on the research of this historical city. It sustained the misconception of an “old city” on the mound alone, as opposed to the “new city” that developed, supposedly, only in the last fifteen decades. Salvage excavations near the mound and in its broader periphery proved otherwise, but crucial related data was scattered in dozens of preliminary reports or brief final reports of small-scale sites. Almost all of these were published in *Hadashot Arkheologiyot—Excavations and Surveys in Israel (HA-ESI)*, where excavators usually focused on what was directly relevant to their sites. A wider archaeological and historical spectrum was to await the final publication and research articles. In fact, until 2017, a few excavation squares on Ruslan Street, between the former military compound (Qishle) and the sea promenade, comprised the only site in Yafo to have been published as a final report in *‘Atiqot* (Kletter 2004).

Authors of popular articles discussing Yafo were usually more interested in the attractive aspects of the mound, such as the so-called Ramses Gate and Lion Temple. Aiming at tour guides and the general public, they described what can still be visited and seen. Unfortunately, remains unearthed in salvage excavations are seldom preserved. As illustrated by the inclusion of archaeological chapters in two recently published books on the history of Yafo (Navon 2019; Shiller 2019), awareness of the importance of the extra-mound archaeological perspective is gradually taking hold; however, much of the accumulated large and varied data still awaits publication in comprehensive scientific reports.

Recently, a growing corpus of such reports has finally seen print, and others are forthcoming. The discoveries on Jerusalem Boulevard and in parts of the Ganor Compound were published in *‘Atiqot* 88 (Jakoel and Marcus 2017; Jakoel 2017b). *‘Atiqot* 95 includes a detailed survey of Persian, Hellenistic, Crusader and late Ottoman remains exposed on Yehuda Ha-Yammit Street (Haddad and Rauchberger 2019), and an extensive report on Haddad’s harbor excavations is forthcoming. The second volume of the Jaffa Cultural Heritage Project (JCHP) series contributed much to the study of Yafo, with a final stratigraphic report of four areas of Kaplan’s mound excavations (Keimer 2017) and final reports of three extra-mound excavations at the Postal Compound (Jakoel 2017a), the Armenian Convent (Arbel 2017b; Rauchberger 2017) and Be’eri school (Burke, Kaufman and Strange-Burke 2017). An article dedicated to an Armenian inscription from the harbor, which is of much significance to the history of Yafo’s resettlement in the seventeenth century, also includes a detailed survey of the layers exposed at the site (Glick, Stone and Terian 2014). A broad preliminary report on JCHP excavations on the mound between 2008 and 2014 (Burke and Peilstöcker 2017) also includes articles on artifact assemblages from several sites. The recently published third JCHP volume is dedicated to the rich artifact assemblage from Kaplan’s mound excavations

(Tsuf 2018), and the fourth JCHP volume, scheduled for publication in 2020/2021, covers the excavations at the Ottoman Military Compound (Qishle; Arbel, in press). Results from later excavations at the same site, conducted on behalf of Tel Aviv University, will also be printed in the near future (Edrey and Gross, forthcoming). Another JCHP volume (edited by M. Peilstöcker and A.A. Burke) will present the extensive excavations at the Flea Market and within the Ganor Compound (for a preliminary report, see Peilstöcker et al. 2016), where layers from the Late Bronze Age to the late Ottoman period were exposed. Final reports on large-scale excavations on Ha-Zorfim and Ruslan Streets (edited by Y. Arbel and A. de Vincenz), and on the large excavation project at the French Hospital in 2007 (edited by A. Re'em and A. de Vincenz), are on the editors' table.

The five final reports comprising this volume were compiled to contribute to this gradually expanding pool of information concerning Yafo's past. It is the hope of the authors that the subjects presented herein will be of use and interest not only to archaeologists and researchers of Yafo and urban archaeology, but also to a broader audience of students and scholars of the history of the Holy Land, as well as to the general public.

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