

## POTTERY OF THE OTTOMAN PERIOD: AN INTRODUCTION

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Beginning in the seventeenth century, the influx of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land had an effect on the development of Yafo. Hospices and hostels were founded and elaborately furnished and stocked with imported European goods. Imported tableware of European manufacturers, including porcelain and hard-paste vessels, arrived by ships at a time when such wares were not yet produced within the Ottoman Empire, as the first porcelain factory opened in Istanbul in 1876. Germany, which cultivated close economic and political ties with the Ottoman Empire, was especially active in this trade, catering to the growing demand by European visitors and settlers, and to a lesser extent, by locals. On rare occasions, especially around the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese and Japanese porcelain was also imported.

Common imported tableware in Yafo included simple white-glazed dinner plates and bowls—probably used in pilgrim hostels and monasteries, and possibly, also in less affluent homes of European settlers—as well as handle-less “Turkish” coffee cups and European-style tea and coffee cups. These vessels largely mirror the decorative styles common in Europe at that time, such as the blue-and-white color and the Willow Pattern on vessels of British manufacture. Oriental-style decorations—for example, the half-moon and stars, and floral decorations—also commonly occur in late Ottoman-period sites in Yafo. Some of these vessels were produced in German, French and Dutch factories but bear inscriptions in languages of the Ottoman Empire, such as Turkish, Greek, Bulgarian and Armenian. The German Meissen factory even went as far as to replace its brand stamp of crossed swords, which was deemed offensive by Muslims for its resemblance to the cross, with an especially designed pseudo-Chinese mark.

Other household vessels, such as those for cooking and serving, were imported from production centers within the Ottoman Empire: glazed earthenware was brought from Greece and Turkey; glazed cooking pots, from Cyprus and southern France; and large glazed basins, from Spain and Italy.

Pottery production for local use also flourished within Ottoman-period Palestine, manufacturing a wide variety of vessel types, mainly of Black Gaza Ware and other coarse wares. Handmade vessels, mainly cooking pots, basins and jars or *zirs*, were also produced at the village or on clan level.

The import of construction materials was instigated by the increase in building activity in Yafo, especially during the nineteenth century, coupled with the introduction of European architectural designs, such as the sloping tiled roof. These included bricks and roof tiles, particularly the well-known heart-mark tile invented in Marseille in 1841.

The beginning of Jewish immigration from Europe further contributed to the urban development of Yafo and increased the occurrence and popularity of European items that were now more widely found in domestic contexts. Many Jewish merchants were involved in the export of porcelain from Europe to Palestine, and vessels stamped with the names of such merchants were found in Yafo.

The study of Ottoman-period ceramic vessels is still in its infancy and it is hoped that the publication of this volume will contribute to our understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of this period in Yafo and at other local urban centers.

## METHODOLOGY

The Ottoman-period assemblages discussed in this volume comprise tableware and kitchen vessels; architectural elements, such as roof tiles, bricks, floor tiles, vaulting elements and air pipes; and smoking pipes and ceramic heads of narghile water pipes. The typology and type designations used for describing these assemblages are based on an extensive study of the ceramic material unearthed in the large-scale excavations within the Ottoman Military Compound in Yafo (Qishle; Vincenz, in press),<sup>1</sup> as well as on material from other recent excavations in Yafo, such as the French Hospital,<sup>2</sup> Ha-Zorfim Street<sup>3</sup> and Ruslan Street;<sup>4</sup> additional parallels are also included. Several types were identified after the conclusion of the Qishle study, especially among the Gaza and Coarse Wares; these are included in the present volume.

Much of the research concerning hard-paste and porcelain vessels was retrieved from online resources, including databases of American and Canadian universities where historical archaeology is thriving. In addition, Swiss and German salvage excavations have generated many helpful reports on European hard-paste, porcelain and stoneware vessels. The information gleaned from these scientific databases was complemented by information from auctions' or collectors' websites. The latter aided in the identification of certain vessel

<sup>1</sup> This excavation was directed by Yoav Arbel on behalf of the IAA (Permit No. A-5037/2007). The ceramic report is available online: [https://www.academia.edu/6699060/Vincenz\\_A.\\_de.\\_Forthcom.\\_Porcelain\\_and\\_Ceramic\\_Vessels\\_of\\_the\\_Ottoman\\_Period](https://www.academia.edu/6699060/Vincenz_A._de._Forthcom._Porcelain_and_Ceramic_Vessels_of_the_Ottoman_Period)

<sup>2</sup> These excavations were directed by Amit Re'em and Peter Gendelman (Permit Nos. A-5170/2007, A-5522/2008) and Yossi Elisha (Permit No. A-5389/2008).

<sup>3</sup> This excavation was directed by Yoav Arbel (Permit Nos. A-5378/2008, A-5577/2009), and the report is in preparation.

<sup>4</sup> This excavation was directed by Yoav Arbel on behalf of the IAA (Permit Nos. A-5883/2010, A-6115/2011). The report is in preparation.

types, their shapes and decorations, especially considering the fragmentary state of much of the ceramic material from the Yafo excavations.

Valuable information regarding the provenance and chronology of the ceramic vessels from Yafo was retrieved from backstamps, indicating the identity of manufactures. For many fragments without the backstamp, the manufacturer could be identified by locating the type of decoration in factory pattern books (for example, those of the Utzschneider factory in Sarreguemines) and price lists.

The author has also consulted reports on salvage excavations in Turkey, Greece and the Balkans, as well as colleagues from those countries, to identify ceramic vessels such as glazed earthenware, produced in the former Ottoman Empire.

The ceramic reports included in this volume offer a refinement of the existing typological corpora, for example, the addition of certain types of Black Gaza Ware that are not included in Israel's (2006) extensive publication. A large amount of Coarse Ware vessels was retrieved from recent excavations in Yafo and has allowed considerable elaboration of the typological description of this hitherto little studied group. This is also the case with the ceramic heads of narghile water pipes. These studies also allow for a refinement of the chronology of Ottoman-period vessels.

## REFERENCES

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