

IRON AGE, PERSIAN–HELLENISTIC, ROMAN, BYZANTINE AND CRUSADER–MAMLUK-PERIOD REMAINS AT ḤORBAT ‘OFRAT IN LOWER GALILEE

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2013, a salvage excavation was carried out on the southwestern slope of the Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat hill (Khirbat et-Ṭaiyiba; map ref. 219100–200/743400–600; 200 m above sea level) following damage caused to the site by mechanical earthworks undertaken by the Israel National Road Company in the course of widening an agricultural road (Fig. 1).¹ A previous report on archaeological excavations carried out in 2008 (Alexandre 2018) along the northern and eastern margins of Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat included a description of the site environment and an account of previous archaeological research at the site. This report will therefore only mention additional relevant data.

THE EXCAVATION

The present excavation was located on the agricultural road oriented northwest–southeast, which runs along the southern slope of Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat (Fig. 2). This road, partly asphalt, partly a dirt track, more or less followed the course of the old road from ‘Akko via the village of Shefar‘am (Shefa ‘Amr; Le Saffran) to Zippori (Seffurieh; La Sepphorie; Sepphoris) and Nazareth (Conder and Kitchener 1881:41). The excavation comprised a long narrow strip

¹ The excavation (Permit No. A-6907) was directed by the author on behalf of the IAA, with the assistance of Abdallah Mokary (field supervision), Yossi Yaakobi (administration), Ami Keinan (safety consultant), Rivka Mishayev, Mendel Kahan (field surveying and plans), Danny Syon (metal detector), Anastasia Shapiro (GPS, fabric examination, photography of Fig. 1), Zach Horowitz and Michal Peleg (IAA Lower Galilee and Valleys District archaeologists), Edna J. Stern (medieval pottery consultation), Victoria Nosikovsky and Ilya Reznitsky (metal laboratory), Dov Porotsky (final drafting), Leea Porat (pottery restoration), Hagit Tahan (pottery and finds drawing and plates), Yael Gorin-Rosen (glass), Nimrod Marom (archaeozoology), Donald T. Ariel (numismatics), Clara Amit (finds photography) and Yaron Bibas (field photography; Figs. 1, 2, 6–12, 14, 15, 17–21); the photographs in Figs. 3–5, 13, 16 were taken by the author. The author is grateful to all.

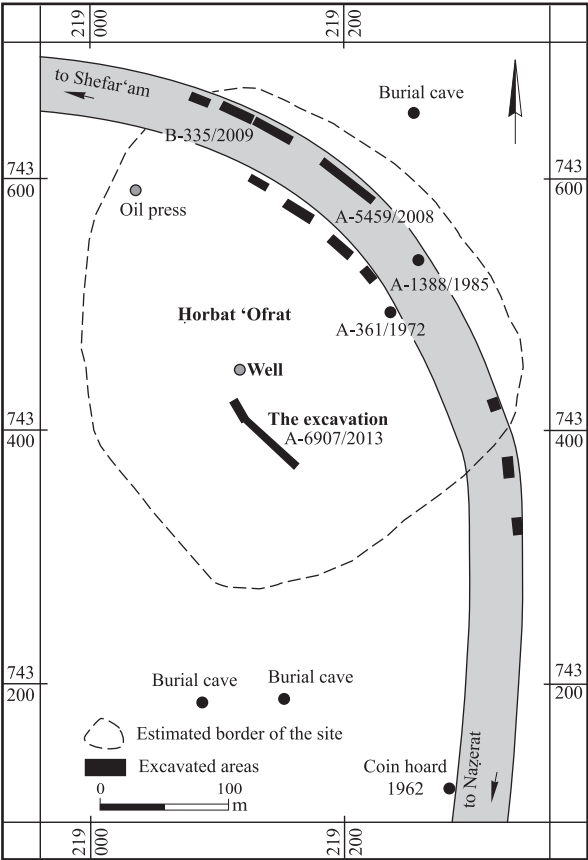


Fig. 1. Map of Horbat 'Ofrat showing the present and previous excavations.



Fig. 2. General view of the excavation area from the hilltop, looking west.

of eight rectangular squares (70 m long, 4 m wide) set against the damaged slope, and the excavation strip was extended northwestward for another fifteen meters by surface cleaning additional wall tops exposed at ground level (Fig. 3). The site's deep, hewn well, which still contains water today, is located about 20 m north of the excavated strip (Figs. 4, 5). The excavation focused on recording the damage caused to the archaeological site while taking care not to further damage the hillslope above the path. Therefore, the squares were mostly stepped upslope and were not excavated to bedrock.

The excavation exposed limited remains from Iron Age II and the late Persian–early Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Mamluk and Ottoman periods, with the narrow strip mostly



Fig. 3. General view of the excavation strip in its early stages, looking southeast.

precluding the exposure of coherent architectural units. Bedrock was not exposed, although in a very small probe in Sq 5, the excavation reached down almost to the base of a large Iron II wall, at a depth of 1.8 m below the path surface. This wall base comprised some large boulders and was almost certainly built directly on bedrock, possibly cutting through some pre-Iron II occupation.

The exposed building remains dated to periods that were earlier, later and contemporary with those found in the previous 2008 excavations, which necessitated a revision of the former site strata classification (Table 1).



Fig. 4. The mouth of the well, looking northeast.



Fig. 5. The interior of the hewn and built well.

Table 1. The Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat Site Stratigraphy

Newly Revised Stratum (A-6907/2013)	Former Stratum (A-5459/2008; Alexandre 2018)	Period	Approximate Dating in Centuries
XII		Pre-Iron II, possibly Middle Bronze II	18th c. BCE
XI		Iron IIA–B	10th–8th c. BCE
X		Iron IIB–C	8th–7th c. BCE
IX		Late Persian–early Hellenistic	Late 4th–2nd c. BCE
VIII	VI	Late Hellenistic	Late 2nd–early 1st c. BCE
VII	V	Early Roman	1st–early 2nd c. CE
VI	IV	Middle to Late Roman	3rd–mid-4th c. CE
V	III	Early Byzantine	Late 4th–early 5th c. CE
IV	II	Byzantine	Mid-5th–6th c. CE
III	I	Late Byzantine to Early Islamic	Late 6th–early 7th c. CE
II		Crusader–Mamluk	13th–16th c. CE
I		Ottoman	18th–19th c. CE

ARCHITECTURE AND STRATIGRAPHY

The architectural remains are described here from the earliest to the latest stratum, with reference to the square numbers marked on the plans and sections (Sqs 1–8; Plan 1). Strata VIII–VI and Stratum III do not appear in the plans as remains of these strata, namely from the late Hellenistic, the Early Roman, the Middle to Late Roman and the late Byzantine periods, were only uncovered in previous excavations.

Stratum XII: Middle Bronze Age II

In Sq 8, a very short segment of a wall top built of large stones (W181) was exposed in a small probe (Fig. 6). The limited exposure of this wall, whose upper course was subsequently incorporated in the later Stratum XI (Iron II) stone-paved and pebbled floor (L176), precluded dating its original construction period by associated sherds. Based on the appearance in the deeper probes of a few small MB II sherds and three flint sickle blades (not illustrated), as well as the identification of MB II sherds in the site surveys (Gal 1992:21, Site No. 1.37; Olami and Gal 2003:44*, Site No. 100), it can only be surmised that this wall may have belonged to the Middle Bronze Age occupation at the site.

Strata XI–X: Iron Age II

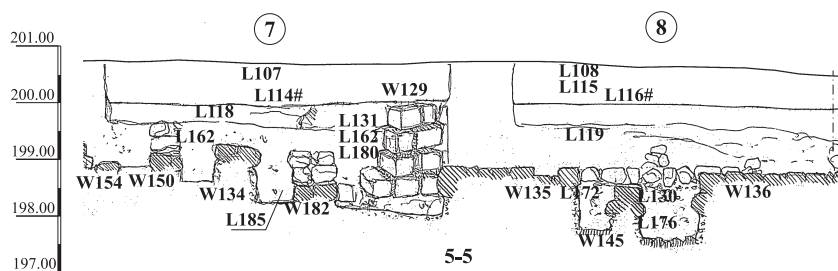
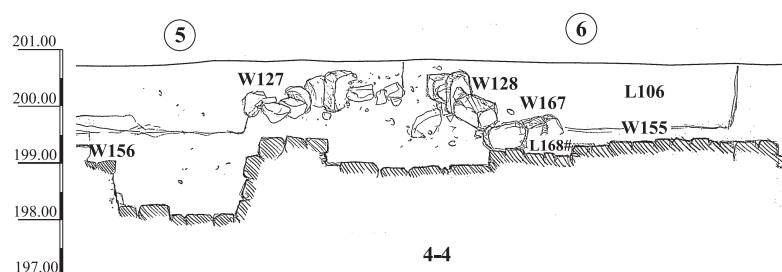
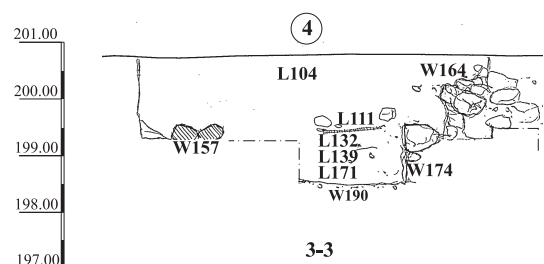
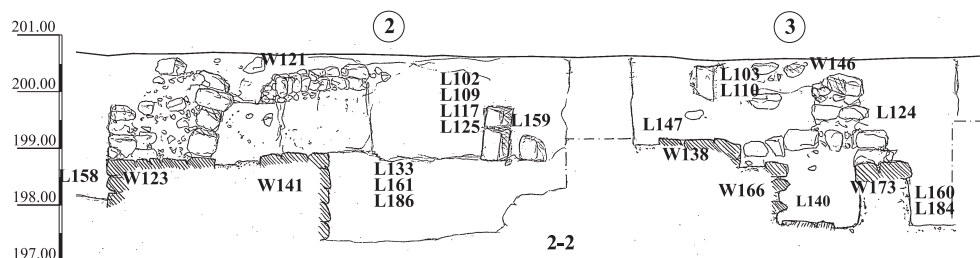
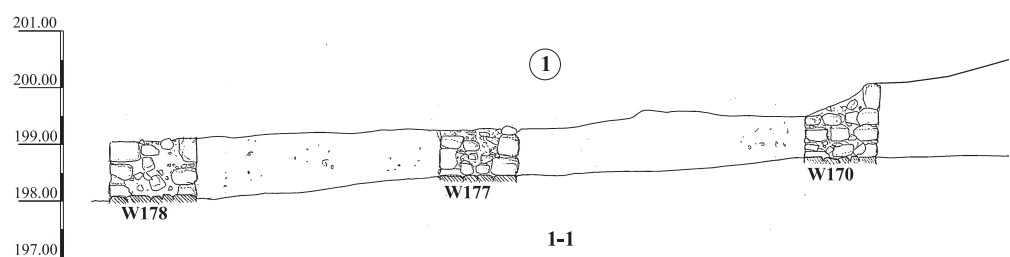
Architectural remains associated with Iron Age pottery were exposed in several probes that penetrated beneath the later building strata in Sqs 3–8, although the mostly small areas excavated again precluded the exposure of coherent building plans. No Iron Age remains



Fig. 6. Sq 8, Stratum XII W181 with its top course subsequently incorporated into the Stratum XI stone-paved and pebbled floor (L176), looking northeast.



Plan 1. Squares plan 1-8 and sections.



Plan 1. (cont.)

were uncovered in Sqs 1 and 2, since the excavation did not penetrate the thick Mamluk-period occupation layer (Stratum II).

Despite the small size of most of the probes, stone walls attributed to two consecutive Iron II building strata were discovered, reflecting an original building stratum dated to Iron IIA or Iron IIA–B (Stratum XI), and later walls overlying the earlier walls that may have been constructed sometime in the course of Iron IIB, or more likely in Iron IIC (Stratum X). The Strata XI and X accumulations exhibited a visible darkish brown organic texture, and contained Iron IIA, IIB and/or IIC sherds. This characteristic darkish brown matrix contained some ashy patches that may reflect some localized cooking or burning activities, or possibly some evidence of destruction. As both Strata XI and X date from Iron II, their limited architectural remains are presented here together.

In Sq 3, underlying the large Stratum II walls that were not removed, small segments of two walls (W173, W189) were exposed; the base of W173 was at a higher elevation than the base of W189, indicating that W173 was the later of the two walls (Fig. 7). These walls were associated with accumulated debris layers containing Iron II pottery sherds and sometimes also later sherds (L152, L160, L165, L184). In Sq 4, below the Stratum II walls that had been mostly removed by the mechanical earthworks, W190, attributed to Stratum XI, was overlain by later W174, attributed to Stratum X (Plan 1: Section 3–3; Fig. 8). The accumulation layer (L171), running up to W190, and the overlying accumulation layer associated with W174 (L132, L139) exhibited Iron IIA–B pottery, including an *in situ*



Fig. 7. Sq 3, Stratum XI W189 and Stratum X W173, visible below Stratum II Mamluk W146, looking northeast.

complete, large krater (Fig. 22:10). Some Iron IIC and a few Hellenistic sherds, as well as a small square lead artifact (Fig. 31:1), were also identified in the upper part of L171.

In Sqs 5–6 were substantial remains of a well-preserved wide wall (W148; 0.9–1.1 m thick, maximum height 1.5 m; Fig. 9) with up to 4–5 courses. The very slightly curving

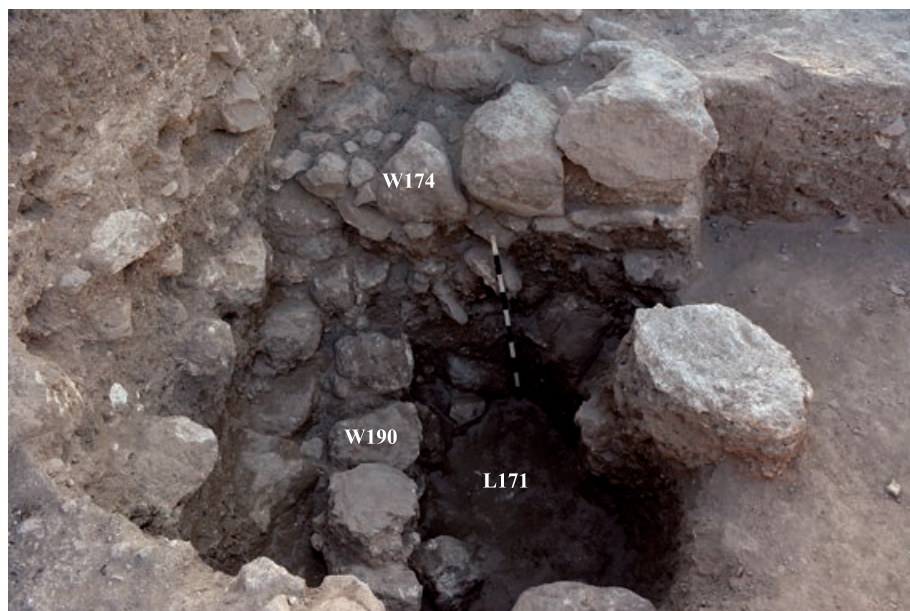


Fig. 8. Sq 4, Stratum XI W190 overlying Stratum X W174, looking east.



Fig. 9. Sq 5, Stratum XI W148, showing W156 segment, looking east.

wall was built of large, coarsely worked stones (Fig. 10), whose base course incorporated some large boulders—an indication that it was almost certainly built directly on bedrock, although the bedrock surface was not reached. The accumulated debris layer associated with this Stratum XI wall exhibited Iron IIA pottery (L163, L169, L179, L187). A short segment of another wall (W156; partially visible in Fig. 9), subsequently constructed next to W148, may have been a Stratum X alteration or repair to the earlier wall, but the depth of the small probe precluded clarifying the stratigraphic relationship between the two walls. The pottery in the associated accumulation layer (L120) dated predominantly to Iron IIA–B, but also included some pottery attributed to Iron IIC. The thick Stratum XI W148 ran parallel to the



Fig. 10. Sq 5, Stratum XI W148, looking east.

hill slope and may possibly have been part of an Iron IIA fortification system or of a public building (see below).

In Sq 7, a segment of a wide wall built of large stones (W182; 0.9 m wide) and a very small segment of another wall (W154) were associated with Iron IIA–B accumulation debris (L149, L180, L185; Fig. 11). These Stratum XI walls were covered over by a corner formed by two adjoining walls that were attributed to Stratum X (W150, W151), and by an associated accumulation debris layer containing some Iron IIB–C pottery, as well as some Hellenistic sherds (L162).

In Sq 8, a short wall segment (W145; Fig. 12) was associated with a stone pebble floor (L176; floor visible in Fig. 6), the latter incorporating the top course of the earlier Stratum XII W181. The Stratum XI Floor 176 was overlain by an accumulation layer containing Iron II pottery (L172, L176), including a complete Iron IIC lamp and a basalt pestle (Figs. 24:5, 6). A long wall and two small segments of adjoining perpendicular walls (W135, W193, W194) defined part of a Stratum X room that was built above and partially cut into the Stratum XI layer; the associated accumulation layer (L130) exhibited Iron IIA–B and Iron IIC pottery.

Apart from the pebbled and stone-slab floor in Sq 8 (L172, L176), no clear Strata XI and X floors were reached. Nonetheless, significant quantities of Iron II pottery were retrieved from accumulations associated with the Strata XI–X walls. Although not sealed loci, the pottery in the accumulations associated with the Stratum XI walls was predominantly attributable to Iron IIA and Iron IIA–B, and the pottery in the overlying Stratum X accumulations exhibited mostly Iron IIB and Iron IIC vessel forms.



Fig. 11. Sq 7, Stratum XI W182 on right, Stratum X W150 and W151 on far left, and Stratum IX W134 between them, looking northeast.



Fig. 12. Sq 8, Stratum XI W145, overlain by Stratum X building (W135, W193, W194), subsequently overlain by Stratum IX W136, looking northwest.

The Strata XI–X accumulation layers contained several animal bones, including sheep, goat and cattle. The sample, albeit small, is consistent with a generalized broad animal husbandry strategy rather than specialized breeding (see Marom, this volume). The additional presence of wild boar, gazelle and deer in the Iron II settlement reflects a diverse diet and the practice of hunting amongst the population, which was considered a ‘status-enhancing’ activity in antiquity (see Marom, this volume).

Stratum IX: Late Persian–Early Hellenistic Periods

Architectural evidence for occupation in the late Persian–early Hellenistic period was limited to a couple of wall segments in Sqs 7 and 8. In Sq 7, a short segment of a wall with two rows (W134; Fig. 11) overlaid the Strata XI–X Iron II layers, and was associated with an adjacent accumulation layer containing late Persian–early Hellenistic-period pottery (L162, L131; L162 also exhibited some Iron II sherds). Wall 134 was cut, possibly by later Byzantine-period building activity. A wall (W136) in Sq 8, of similar construction and perpendicular to W134, cut and overlaid the earlier Strata XI–X walls (Fig. 12), and in turn was overlain by the later Byzantine-period living surface (L119). Adjacent to W136 and leaning against earlier Stratum X walls (W135, W194) was an accumulation (L130A), possibly a pit, which contained a large concentration of sherds of broken buff-ware storage jars (Fig. 25:7–9). Three Hellenistic coins retrieved amongst the sherds dated to the third quarter of the second century BCE (L130A; see Ariel, this volume: Cat. Nos. 1, 3, 4). The two Stratum IX walls (W134, W136) may have originally extended to form a corner delimiting a large room or a walled courtyard.

In Sq 3, an accumulation layer (L165) in a small probe dug below a Byzantine wall (W166) contained some late Persian–early Hellenistic sherds together with the Iron II sherds.

In addition, small late Persian–early Hellenistic sherds, comprising predominantly buff-ware storage jars and various other vessels, and including imported vessels, appeared sporadically in several later loci throughout the site.

Whilst the Stratum IX building remains are far too limited to reconstruct a coherent plan, the Hellenistic coins (see Ariel, this volume: Cat. Nos. 1–5) and the pottery are a clear indication that there was some settlement at the site in the late Persian and early Hellenistic periods.

Strata VIII–VII: Late Hellenistic–Early Roman Periods

In the present excavation, no building remains datable to the late Hellenistic or Early Roman periods were exposed. A few late Hellenistic and Early Roman sherds sporadically appeared in later strata (not illustrated), and a single Roman provincial coin, issued by Trajan (98–117 CE), was found in a Mamluk-period accumulation (Sq 2, L133A; see Ariel, this volume: Cat. No. 6). In the previous 2008 excavation, limited building remains from the late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods were found at bedrock level (Alexandre 2018).

Stratum VI: Middle–Late Roman Period

No building remains from the Middle to Late Roman period were exposed in the present excavation. In Sqs 2–3, a few Middle to Late Roman sherds (Fig. 26) appeared sporadically in the Mamluk debris layers, possibly pointing to the existence of a Roman-period settlement below the large Stratum II building, or in the near vicinity. Middle to Late Roman building remains were uncovered in the previous 2008 excavations (Alexandre 2018).

Strata V–IV: Byzantine Period

In Sqs 5–7, part of a Byzantine-period house (Room 113; Fig. 13) was exposed overlying the earlier walls, delimited by four fragmentary walls (W155, W167, W191, W192). Each wall was built of a single row of worn, fairly large, dressed *nari* limestone blocks and standing for only one to two courses. The entrance to the room was probably in W191 (Fig. 14). Room 113 (4 × 3 m) exhibited a crushed chalk or plastered floor (L113) that covered most of the room, whilst a lower, only partially extant stone-slab paved floor was exposed at its western side (L168; Fig. 14). It is probable that the stone-paved area was the original floor and the chalk-plastered area was a second phase within Stratum V. The accumulations on both floors (L168, L113) contained similar Byzantine pottery.

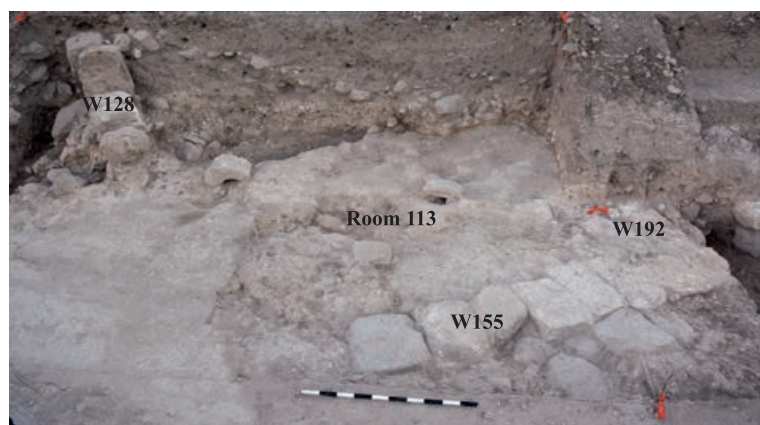


Fig. 13. Sq 6, Stratum V Room 113 with *nari* walls and crushed chalk floor (L113), looking northeast.

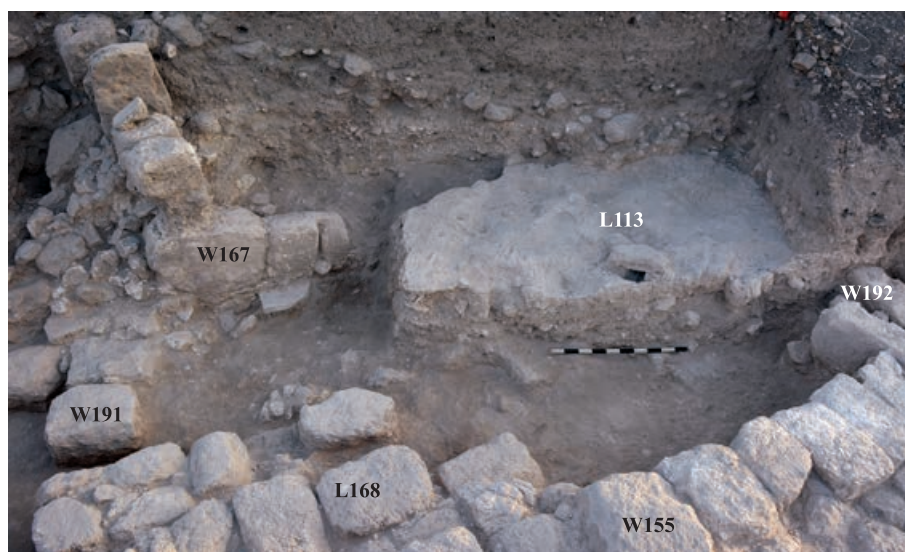


Fig. 14. Sq 6, Stratum V Room 113 with plastered floor (L113) and stone slab paving (L168) in left foreground, looking northeast.

The only noteworthy feature of the Byzantine-period house (Sqs 5–7) was a cooking pot containing a small worn coin that was found set in a small hollow that was purposely dug between the stone paving slabs (L168) near the entrance of Room 113 (Fig. 15). The coin inside the cooking pot was not identified, but based upon numismatic considerations of module and flan, Ariel considers that it dates to the later part of the fourth century CE (see Ariel, this volume: Reg. No. 1169). A second worn coin, found adjacent to the cooking pot, dates to 383–395 CE (see Ariel, this volume: Cat. No. 9). Intriguingly, in the previous 2008 excavation, a similar phenomenon of an intentionally buried similar Byzantine-period cooking pot containing a couple of worn low-denomination coins dating to the very end of the fourth century CE was found adjacent to the wall of a Stratum V Byzantine-period house of similar construction to this house (Alexandre 2018; and see below, *Discussion and Conclusions*).

A few nearby wall segments of dressed *nari* limestone blocks, including the southward continuation of W192, may be the remains of additional rooms of the house and/or of adjacent houses. To the east (Sq 7), one such wall (W129) was exceptionally well-preserved with four courses of limestone blocks (1.5 m high) where it was not damaged by recent mechanical works (Plan 1: Section 5–5; Fig. 16). The accumulation layers (L118, L119) associated with this wall contained some Byzantine pottery. To the west, in Sq 5, W148A was extant only as a single course of limestone *nari* blocks set directly on top of the still high-standing Iron II wall (W148; Fig. 9). In Sq 3, a short wall segment of similar *nari* blocks (W166), associated with an accumulation layer containing Byzantine sherds (L140), was overlain by the Stratum II walls.



Fig. 15. Sq 6, Stratum V cooking pot set in hollow between paving slabs (L168), looking north.



Fig. 16. Sq 7, Stratum V *nari* W129 on right, Stratum XI W182 in center, looking north.

The accumulations in and around the house yielded mainly Byzantine pottery (Fig. 27), albeit containing some later potsherds. A few terracotta roof tile fragments found in L118 and L140 (not illustrated) indicate that the Byzantine-period buildings had tiled roofs. Fragments of several Byzantine-period glass vessels, including bowls, wineglasses, bottles and lamps, appeared with the Byzantine pottery in the Stratum V accumulations (L119; see Gorin-Rosen, this volume). A few animal bones in the accumulations (L113, L118, L140) were identified as cattle, caprine and equid bones (see Marom, this volume).

In Sq 2, immediately below the Stratum II Mamluk walls and associated layers, accumulated layers not associated with architectural remains (L117, L125) contained some later Byzantine pottery, most notably sherds of Yassi Ada amphorae (Fig. 27:13), together with a single coin dating to the early sixth century CE (L125; see Ariel, this volume: Cat. No. 10). In the previous 2008 excavation, similar late fifth to sixth-century CE pottery was found in the Stratum IV Byzantine buildings (Alexandre 2018).

Stratum III: Late Byzantine–Early Islamic Periods

In the present excavation, no building remains and only sporadic sherds were attributed to the late Byzantine–Early Islamic periods. In the 2008 excavation, the isolated remains of an industrial installation with evidence for large-scale combustion may be an indication that there was no longer a settled village in this period.

Stratum II: Crusader–Mamluk Periods

The most substantial and extensive architectural remains exposed in the excavation belong to Stratum II, which was attributed to the Mamluk period, although probably first constructed in the Crusader period (see Fig. 28). In Sqs 1–5 and in the area north of Sq 1, several wide walls of a very large building or building complex were exposed close to the surface, mostly badly damaged by the mechanical earthworks. The northernmost W178 was almost certainly the external northern wall of the complex; no walls further north were exposed during the modern earthworks. The three thick parallel northern walls (W170, W177, W178; 1.3 m wide; Figs. 17, 18), lying about 4–5 m apart, probably delimited rooms or halls in the building. These three walls were exposed only at ground level, and the intervening spaces were not excavated as this area lay beyond the excavation squares. The walls were better preserved in the excavation squares, where they had not been damaged by the mechanical earthworks, and the thick layers of stone collapse and debris in the rooms between the walls were clearly visible here (Plan 1: Section 1–1). The walls were built of medium-sized roughly worked stones, not ashlar, and the thickness of the walls indicates that they may have originally supported vaulted ceilings and possibly an upper story.

Wall 123 in Sqs 1–2 was wider than the other walls (1.8 m; Fig. 19); it may have been the original outer wall of the building, with the three northern walls being another building or a later addition. To the south of W123, short segments of narrower Stratum II walls (W138, W146) overlaid the Stratum IV and Stratum X walls, aligning reasonably well with the wide walls and probably defined rooms within the building complex (Fig. 20). The area enclosed by W138 and W146 was paved with fieldstone slabs (L126), which was probably originally



Fig. 17. Stratum II W177, looking east.



Fig. 18. Sq 1, Stratum II W170, looking east.



Fig. 19. Sqs 1–2, Stratum II W123, looking east.



Fig. 20. Sq 3, Stratum II W138 and W146, with stone paving (L126), looking northeast.

the upper course of another wall, but the stratigraphic relationship between the two adjacent walls could not be established.

In Sqs 7–8, there were no Stratum II walls, but a rather large area of a thick plastered floor (L114, L116; Fig. 12) lay at a level compatible with the Stratum II walls exposed in the other squares, also overlying the earlier building remains. This may have been the courtyard area of the large Stratum II building complex.

The narrow width of the excavation precluded the exposure of a coherent plan of this large building complex. The foundations of the walls and the original floors of the building were mostly not reached, but the areas exposed between the walls (L143, L158 in Sq 1; L133, L161, L186 in Sq 2; L147 in Sq 3; L112, L120A in Sq 5; L106, L144 in Sq 6) comprised thick layers of stone collapse from the walls, containing Mamluk-period pottery (Figs. 21, 29, 30). Copious quantities of Mamluk pottery were retrieved from these Stratum II accumulations above the presumed floors, indicating that the occupation of the large building came to a sudden coerced end in the course of the Mamluk period, possibly in a destruction, and that it was subsequently abandoned. A few Crusader-period pottery sherds were also retrieved amongst the plentiful Mamluk pottery (Fig. 28).

In addition to the pottery, the many glass fragments found in the accumulated debris (e.g., in L113, L133) comprised a few Crusader and mostly Mamluk-period vessels and bracelets (see Gorin-Rosen, this volume). The contextualized coins from this stratum are fourteenth-century Mamluk issues (L101, L114, L126; see Ariel, this volume: Cat. Nos. 11, 12, 14).



Fig. 21. Sq 2, Stratum II stone collapse and debris between W123 and W141, looking east.

A significant quantity of bones of domestic animals was found in the accumulated debris overlying the floors (especially in L110, L111, L112), including sheep and goat—representing culling from flocks under a general husbandry regime—and some cattle, equid, a camel and a chicken (see Marom, this volume). The game animals were surprisingly diverse, comprising gazelle, deer, a large cat, a large carnivore that was possibly a bear, and possibly a wild boar.

Some tentative understandings on the nature and the settlement history of the building are presented below (see *Discussion and Conclusions*).

Stratum I: Ottoman Period

A couple of very fragmentary, single small-stone rows overlying the Mamluk-period debris layer may be evidence for an ephemeral Ottoman-period presence at the site (W121, W121A; Sqs 1, 2; Fig. 21).

THE FINDS

Pottery

Pottery from the Iron Age, late Persian–early Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Crusader and Mamluk periods was retrieved. The pottery processing involved recording all the pottery types in each locus according to period, consequently enabling attributing most of the loci

to the different building strata and periods. Regarding the thick accumulated debris layers in the Stratum II building, the majority of the pottery was Mamluk, with some Crusader, and many Iron II, Roman and Byzantine sherds. It is proposed that the Crusader sherds may well reflect the building's construction and original occupation period, whilst the Mamluk pottery certainly reflects its final use and destruction. The presence of the Iron II, Roman and Byzantine sherds in the Stratum II accumulations, however, is attributed to the thick walls of the Stratum II building cutting through earlier remains, such as the Iron II and Byzantine strata, and possibly a Roman-period building that may have stood in close proximity to the excavated area.

At the beginning of the chronological spectrum, a few sporadic MB II body sherds (not presented here) appeared with the far more predominant Iron IIA–B pottery in the loci attributed to Strata XI–X, and may possibly be associated with an earlier building stratum that was not reached.

Since no intact architectural units (rooms) were exposed in the excavation, and almost no restorable vessels were retrieved, the pottery is not presented according to loci or rooms. The presentation is typological, focusing on the ceramic evidence from relatively clean loci.

The illustrated pottery represents, for the most part, examples of the different ceramic types described, as well as their variations. Parallels for the pottery types are cited in the tables accompanying the pottery plates.

Iron Age (Figs. 22–24)

The Iron II pottery appeared in the accumulation layers associated with the Strata XI and X walls, as well as sporadically in later loci, for example in the Mamluk debris loci.

The Iron II repertoire comprises bowls, kraters, cooking pots, holemouth jars, storage jars, jugs and lamps, with the cooking pots and storage jars clearly predominating. The pottery includes forms that are characteristic of Iron IIA–C; however, it is presented together as the small size of the probes that reached the Iron II strata precluded exposing distinct Iron IIA, B or C loci and repertoires. Some general tentative observations were nonetheless made in the course of the excavation and the processing of the material. Whilst the large quantity of pottery attributed to Iron IIA–B mostly came from the lower Stratum XI levels, the smaller quantity of the later Iron IIB–C pottery forms appeared mostly in the overlying Stratum X level, and included several broken *in situ* Iron IIC storage jars. The pottery contexts led to the understanding that there was probably a significant Iron IIA–C occupation at the site, with a break sometime in the Iron IIB, and that this occupation came to a final end in Iron IIC, possibly in the first half of the seventh century BCE.

The Iron II pottery sherds illustrated are mostly single examples of the different pottery types present. Preference for illustration was given to vessels that came from the distinct Iron II contexts rather than the thick Mamluk accumulations. The parallels cited are predominantly from two Iron II sites, Ḥorbat Rosh Zayit and Tel Yoqne'am, located along the western edge of the Galilee, as the publications of both sites present typologies of large, well-stratified Iron II pottery repertoires with comprehensive discussions, including

parallels and dating. At Ḥorbat Rosh Zayit (Gal and Alexandre 2000), located 11 km north of Ḥorbat 'Ofrat, an Iron IIA fort (Stratum IIA–b), containing large quantities of well-stratified Iron IIA pottery, was dated to the tenth–ninth centuries BCE, and an Iron II house (Area A), containing Iron IIB pottery, was dated to the eighth century BCE (Gal and Alexandre 2000:150–152, 159–160). At Tel Yoqne'am (Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005), located 15 km southwest of Ḥorbat 'Ofrat, Strata XVI–XII produced much Iron IIA and IIB pottery that was dated to the tenth–eighth centuries BCE, and Stratum XI exhibited some Iron IIC pottery (formerly designated as Iron III), dated to the seventh–sixth centuries BCE (Zarzecki-Peleg 2005:9). Additional references are made to the pottery from Tel Kisan (Briend 1980; Chambon 1980; Nodet 1980; Salles 1980), located 11 km north–northwest of Ḥorbat 'Ofrat, where Levels 8–6 produced Iron IIA–B pottery, dated from the tenth to mid-ninth century BCE (Briend 1980:189, 195), and Levels 5–4 produced a wealth of Iron IIC pottery, dated from the late eighth to the beginning of the sixth century BCE (Chambon 1980:176–177; Salles 1980:151). Some references are also made to the pottery of Tyre (Bikai 1978) and Ḥazor (Yadin et al. 1961).

The parallels to the Iron II pottery forms permitted some observations regarding the cultural affiliations of the site of Ḥorbat 'Ofrat. In the Iron IIA–B horizon, some pottery forms are characteristic of northern Israel repertoires; others are more similar to pottery from Phoenician or south Levantine coastal contexts. In the Iron IIC horizon, the wares are characteristic of Phoenician coastal repertoires. Possible ramifications of this observation are discussed below (see *Discussion and Conclusions*).

Bowls.— The Iron II bowls exhibited much variety. Most of the bowls were carinated, often red-slipped on the interior and over the rim, some with simple rims (Fig. 22:1), and others with thickened rims (Fig. 22:2). The carinated bowls are common in Iron IIA–B northern Israel repertoires. There were a few shallow rounded bowls or plates with a horizontal ledge rim (Fig. 22:3), and one with a drooping ledged-out rim (Fig. 22:4). These bowls are characteristic Phoenician Iron IIB–C forms.

A small, delicate bowl with a thickened rim and a burnished dark red slip exterior (Fig. 22:5) is similar to Samaria Ware bowls. A bowl rim with a horizontal handle (Fig. 22:6) is a Cypriot Black-on-Red bowl, and a base decorated with black concentric circles and a red band (Fig. 22:7) belongs to a Phoenician Bichrome bowl. These three bowl forms are common in repertoires along the Phoenician coast and in inland northern Israel in Iron IIA, and wane by the Iron IIB period.

Kraters and Basins.— A clear-burnished, bar-handled rim of a large basin or krater (Fig. 22:8) may bear similarity to kraters with applied bar handles found in Iron IIB contexts. One krater or large bowl has a simple, slightly outflaring rim (Fig. 22:9). Several deep kraters, including a complete two-handled vessel found *in situ*, have thickened convex rims and were red-slipped on the exterior, or on the interior and over the rim (Fig. 22:10–12). These latter kraters were common in northern Israel repertoires in Iron IIB, continuing to appear

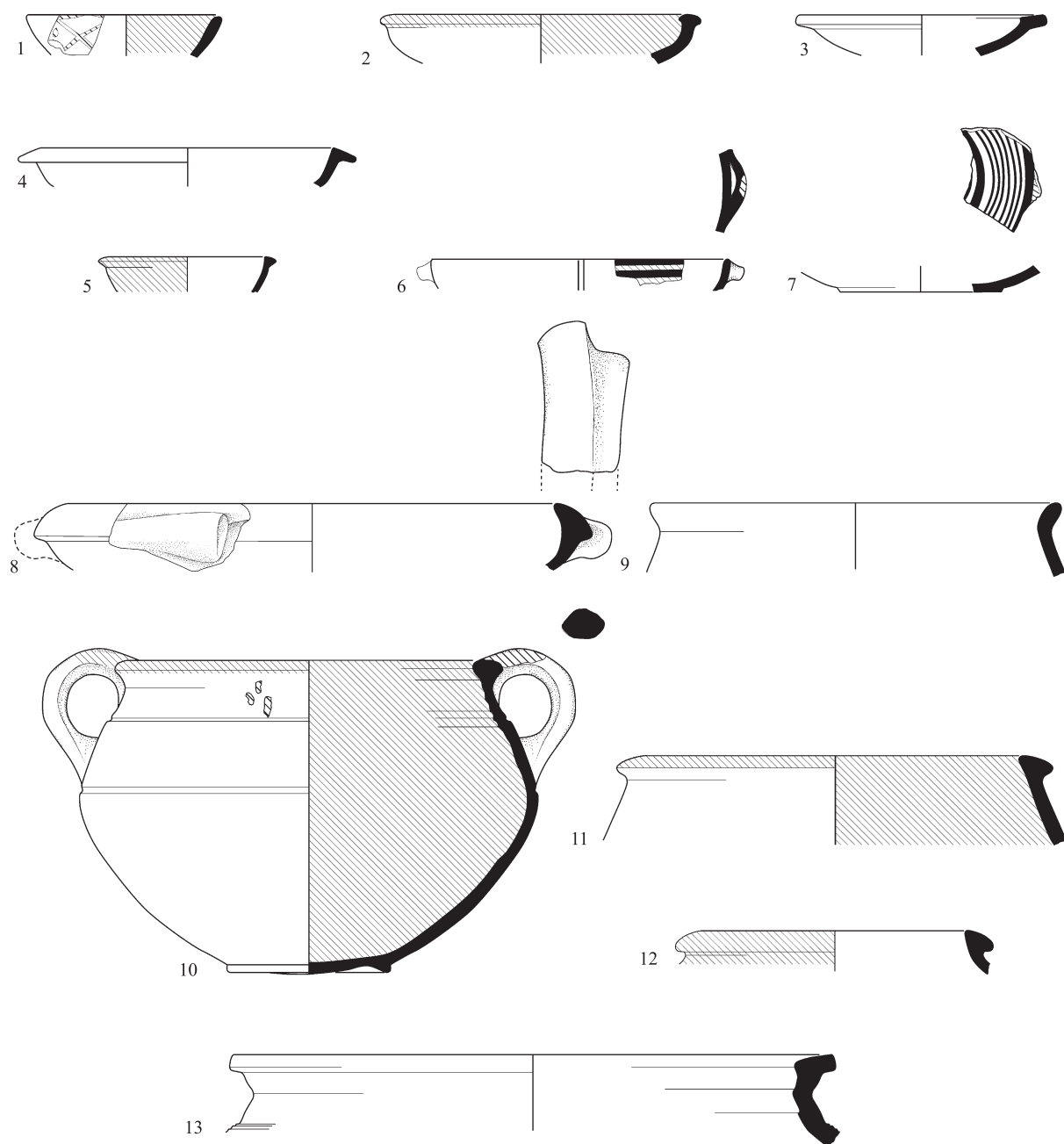


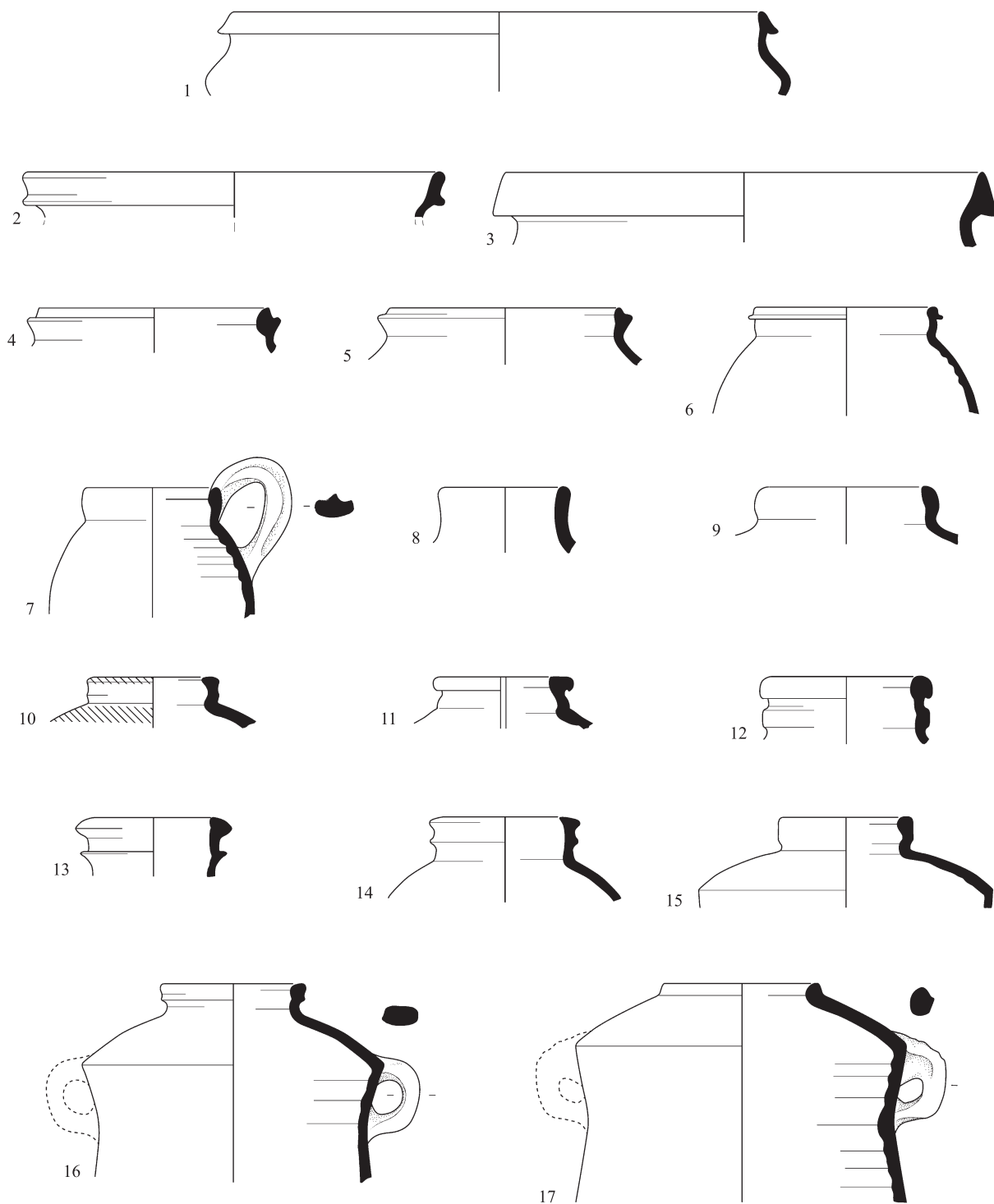
Fig. 22. Iron Age II pottery.

◀ Fig. 22

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Bowl	163	1135/1	Light brown core, pinkish brown, red-slipped int., red-painted strokes on ext.	Gal and Alexandre 2000:36, Type B III
2	Bowl	160	1122	Reddish brown fabric, red-slipped int. and rim	Gal and Alexandre 2000:36, 167, 184, Type B I Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:240–241, Fig. II.2:1, Type B IIA1
3	Bowl	171	1152/2	Orangey-brown ext., cream int.	Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCLI:27 Bikai 1978:22, Pl. VIIIA, Plate Type 2
4	Bowl	163	1147	Orangey-brown, smoothed and worn transparent burnish	Bikai 1978: Pl. IX:5, 6, Plate Type 4 Chambon 1980:168–171, Pl. 40:1–5
5	Bowl	163	1135/2	Samaria Ware; pinkish brown fabric, dark red slip on ext. and over rim	Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:251–252, Fig. II.9:16, Type B IXB
6	Bowl	120	1024/1	Black-on-Red Ware; gray fabric, black matt painted bands on a darkish reddish brown slip	Gal and Alexandre 2000:68–74 Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:250–251, Type B VIII
7	Bowl	171	1152/3	Phoenician Bichrome Ware; pinkish brown fabric, thin black concentric lines and bands, fragment of a broader reddish brown band	Briend 1980:188, Pl. 53:1 Gal and Alexandre 2000:38 Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:248, Fig. II.7, Type B VII
8	Krater/ large basin	125	1041	Light brown; bar handle; transparent, burnished int. and ext.	Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCXXVII:3 Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:269, Fig. II.18, Type K VI
9	Krater	171	1159	Orangey-brown fabric	Gal and Alexandre 2000: Fig. III.82:24.
10	Krater	139	1112	Reddish brown fabric, red-slipped int. and rim	Gal and Alexandre 2000: Figs. V.5:9, 11; VI.12:2 Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:268–269, Fig. II.16, Type K IV
11	Krater	160	1151/1	Light brown fabric, red-slipped int. and rim	As No. 10
12	Krater	187	1160/2	Reddish brown fabric, red-slipped rim	As No. 10
13	Large krater	187	1160/1	Brown fabric, gray core, possible worn burnish	

in Iron IIC. A single thick ledged rim was of a huge krater whose body form is not known (Fig. 22:13).

Cooking Pots.— Most of the cooking pots in the Iron II accumulations were open with triangular rims, exhibiting some variation of the rims, often slightly pinched (Fig. 23:1, 2). These are characteristic Iron IIA cooking pots in northern Israel repertoires. A single large open cooking pot manufactured of a different fabric had a thick triangular rim (Fig.



0 10

Fig. 23. Iron Age II pottery.

◀ Fig. 23

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Cooking pot	171	1152/3	Red cooking ware	Gal and Alexandre 2000:40–42, Type CP I Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:276–277, Fig. II.21:3–5, Type CP V
2	Cooking pot	163	1124	Red cooking ware	As No. 1
3	Cooking pot	120	1024/3	Thick-walled, light brown fabric	Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:274, Fig. II.20:7, Type CP III
4	Cooking pot	120	1024/4	Red cooking ware	Gal and Alexandre 2000:157–158, Type CP III Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:277–278, Fig. II.22:1–3, Type CP VI
5	Cooking pot	163	1117/1	Red cooking ware	As No. 4
6	Cooking pot	152	1090	Red cooking ware	
7	Cooking jug	120	1024/2	Thick-walled, red cooking ware	Gal and Alexandre 2000:42, Type CP II Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:279–280, Fig. II.23: Type CP IX
8	Storage jar	163	1117/2	Brown fabric	Gal and Alexandre 2000:50–51, Type SJ III
9	Storage jar	130	1116	Light brown fabric, gray core	Gal and Alexandre 2000:48–50, Type SJ II
10	Storage jar	176	1146/2	Reddish brown fabric, gray core, red-painted band on shoulder and rim	As No. 9
11	Storage jar	130	1106	Reddish brown fabric, gray core	As No. 9
12	Storage jar	168	1114	Brown fabric, light greenish gray ext. face, metallic finish	Gal and Alexandre 2000:44–48, Type SJ Ia
13	Storage jar	120	1040	Reddish brown fabric, gray core	Gal and Alexandre 2000:48, Type SJ Ib
14	Storage jar	130	1127	Reddish brown fabric, gray core	Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CCXXIX:11–13 Gal and Alexandre 2000:158–159, Type SJ VI Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:305–307, Fig. II.32:2, Type SJ IVB1
15	Storage jar	160	1151/1	Brown fabric, light green ext.	As No. 14
16	Storage jar	139	1112/2	Orangey-brown fabric	Bikai 1978:47, Pls. II–IV, SJ Type 5
17	Storage jar	112	1016	Orangey-brown fabric	Bikai 1978:47, Pl. 3:7, 8, SJ Type 4 Salles 1980:143–144, Pl. 26

23:3)—a rim form that is characteristic of the late Iron IIA Marked Cooking Pots from Yoqne'am and the western Jezreel Valley (see Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:283–293 for a comprehensive discussion).

There were also several closed, globular cooking pots, mostly neckless, with ridged rims (Fig. 23:4, 5); only one example has a short neck and a ridged rim (Fig. 23:6). In northern Israel repertoires, the deeper, globular, ridged-rim cooking pots first appear in Iron

IIB, superseding the Iron IIA more open, shallower triangular-rim cooking pots, and they continue in use into Iron IIC. In the Iron II loci at Ḥorbat 'Ofrat, it was observed that the open, triangular-rim cooking pots continued to appear together with the globular, ridged-rim cooking pots, indicating a more extended duration for the earlier triangular rim form. Indeed, it has long been acknowledged that the earlier triangular-rim cooking pot form continues in use in Iron IIB at sites along the Phoenician coast, such as at Tel Kisan (see Gal and Alexandre 2000:43 for the relationship and development of the Iron II cooking pot types). A single cooking jug had a short neck and a raised loop handle (Fig. 23:7). At Ḥorbat Rosh Zayit, it was noted that cooking jugs are found in northern Israel repertoires in Iron IIA, whose presence then wanes or ceases in Iron IIB, possibly due to the introduction of the deeper globular cooking pots, which rendered the cooking-jug form superfluous (Gal and Alexandre 2000:42–43).

Storage Jars.— The many storage jars uncovered in the Strata XI–X Iron II accumulations include several different jar types. The Iron IIA–B jar types align with the Ḥorbat Rosh Zayit storage jar classification (Gal and Alexandre 2000:44–53, 158–159, 171–173), whilst parallels to the Iron IIC jars are brought from Phoenician coastal repertoires, specifically at Tyre and Tel Kisan. There are a few high-necked oval storage jars (Fig. 23:8), a form characteristic of Iron IIA from inland northern Israel. The short-necked oval storage jars are more common, most having a thickened simple neck and rim (Fig. 23:9). A single jar exhibits a more profiled convex neck and a flattened rim with red-painted band decoration (Fig. 23:10), and another jar has a ledged-out rim (Fig. 23:11). The short-necked jars are dated to Iron IIA–B.

A few jar rims are ridged-neck, large hippo jars manufactured of a characteristic greenish gray metallic ware (Fig. 23:12), a jar form attributed to Iron IIA that wanes in Iron IIB (see Gal and Alexandre 2000:44–48 for a discussion of this jar form). One jar with a profiled ridged neck is made of the regular storage jar ware (Fig. 23:13), a type that is also dated to Iron IIA.

Several short-collared necks (Fig. 23:14, 15) are of jars that had a fairly long cylindrical body, designated as cylindrical torpedo jars. These jars are dated to the later Iron IIB (eighth century BCE), and this jar form seems to have developed from the Iron IIA–B short-necked storage jar Type SJ II (Gal and Alexandre 2000:48–50). Additional sharply profiled cylindrical jars with collared necks (Fig. 23:16) were exposed as fragments in a pile within the upper layer of the Iron II loci (L120, L132, L139). These jars are characterized by a fairly narrow cylindrical body, sometimes waisted, a sharply carinated shoulder with slightly twisted handles, and a sharply profiled collar on the rim. The sharper features reflect an Iron IIC development of the Iron IIB cylindrical collared-neck jar. The ware of these jars is orange and uniform, without a gray core. The examination of the ware with the aid of a binocular microscope with a $\times 40$ magnification showed the presence of foraminifers in the fabric, indicating that the vessels originated along the South Lebanese coast, specifically between Mansur and Tyre, or slightly further north (Anastasia Shapiro,

pers. comm.). The large quantities of these jars in Stratum II at Tyre, dating to the latter half of the seventh century BCE, confirms the Tyrian region as the origin of these vessels. A single cylindrical jar with a sharply carinated shoulder, slightly twisted handles, a simple rim and no neck (Fig. 23:17) is made of the same orange ware. This jar is larger and the neck-less opening wider than that of the more common cylindrical collared neck jars, and has parallels from Tel Kisan Level 4, supporting an Iron IIC date (Salles 1980:143–144, Pl. 26). A few flattened or slightly convex infolded rims (Fig. 24:1) are of jars with a narrow cylindrical body, sometimes waisted, a sharply carinated shoulder and a couple of small slightly twisted handles. At Yoqne‘am and Tel Kisan, this jar form is characteristic of Iron IIC, around the late eighth–seventh centuries BCE. A plain thickened convex rim belonged to a holemouth jar (Fig. 24:2), a characteristic form in Iron IIB contexts. A handle exhibiting a thumbmark impressed prior to firing and a cross incised after firing was of a storage jar (Fig. 24:3).

Jugs and Juglets.— Almost no jugs or juglets were found. A grayish body sherd decorated on the exterior with a red band and black lines and bands may be a Phoenician Bichrome jug, characteristic of Iron IIA (Fig. 24:4).

Lamps.— There were small fragments of pinched lamps with curved bases, probably datable to Iron IIA–B (not illustrated). A complete lamp, found in an accumulation over an Iron II floor, has a flattened base and an emphasized carination between the ledged rim and the inner wall, and was the characteristic lamp form of Iron IIC (L172; Fig. 24:5).

Late Persian–Early Hellenistic Periods (Fig. 25)

A small quantity of transitional Persian–Hellenistic pottery was found, predominantly consisting of a concentration of broken storage jars in a possible pit dug into the Iron II accumulation layer (L130A dug into L130; Sq 8). A few other vessels appeared in thin accumulations overlying the Iron II layers (L162 in Sq 7; L165 in Sq 3), sometimes mixed with the Iron II pottery. Parallels are cited mainly from the Persian and Hellenistic-period pottery repertoires at Dor, where similar vessels from well-stratified contexts are presented with discussions and additional parallels (Guz-Zilberstein 1995; Rosenthal-Heginbottom 1995; Stern 1995). The parallels point to dating most of the limited quantity of Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat pottery to the transitional late Persian–early Hellenistic period (late fourth–early third centuries BCE).

Bowls.— The two bowl-rim sherds were of imported bowls. A medium-sized incurved rim bowl made of fine ware with a matt slip, black on the exterior and red on the interior (Fig. 25:1), was an eastern Greek import common in the late fourth–second centuries BCE. A small deep bowl with a sharply sloping-down ledge rim was made of a finely levigated ware, red-slipped on the interior and on the rim (Fig. 25:2). Similar bowls appear at Tel Kisan in the late Persian period (Nodet 1980:122).

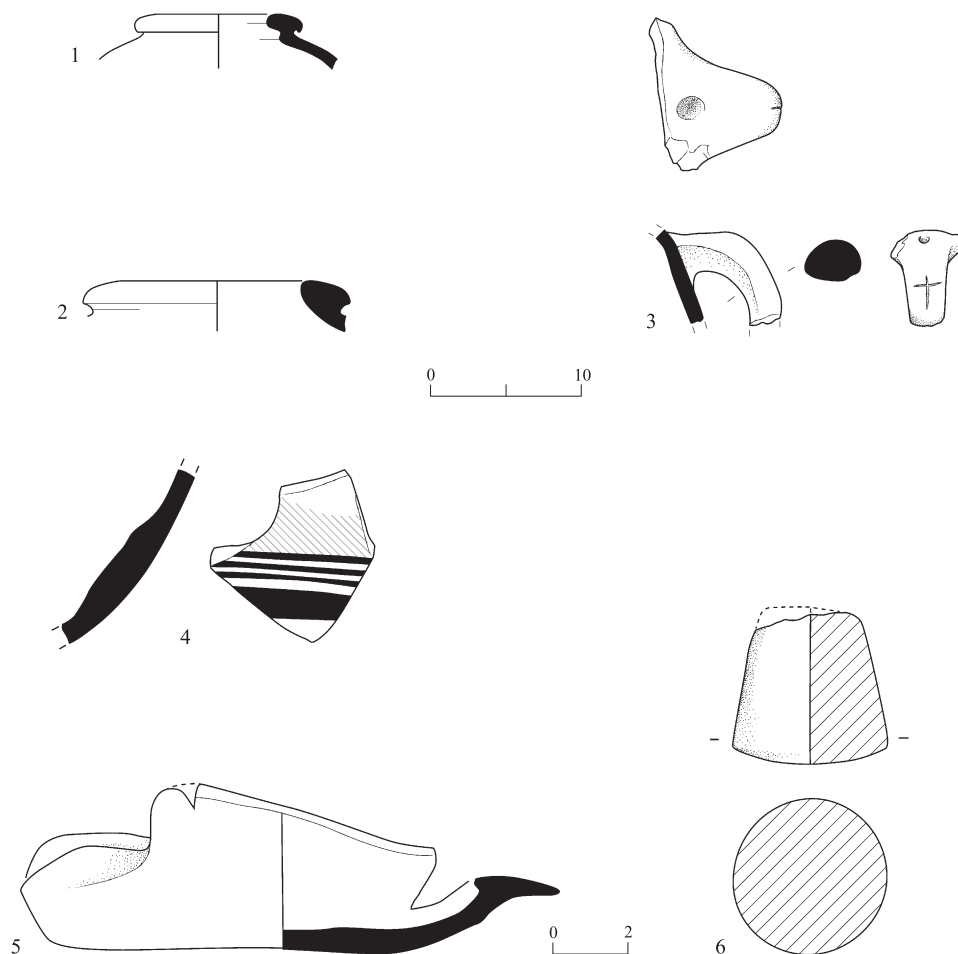


Fig. 24. Iron Age II pottery.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Storage jar	176	1146/1	Sandy buff fabric	Salles 1980:144–146, Pl. 27:1–5 Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:306–307, Fig. III.32:5, Type SJ IVC2
2	Holemouth jar	139	1112/3	Light brown fabric, gray core	Gal and Alexandre 2000:174, Type HM IIa Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:307–308, Fig. II.33:1, Type SJ VA1
3	Jar handle	187	1160/4	Light brown fabric, gray core; impressed fingerprint, incised cross	Yadin et al. 1961: Pl. CLXXXVII:14–18
4	Jug sherd	171	1142	Phoenician bichrome jug sherd; buff fabric, black lines and red band	Gal and Alexandre 2000:79–80
5	Lamp	172	1138	Reddish brown fabric, blackened from use	Salles 1980: Pls. 32:8–9; 44:6–8 Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar and Ben-Tor 2005:262, Fig. II.12:3, Type LIII
6	Pestle	172	1138	Basalt	Gal and Alexandre 2000:123, Fig. III.116:5–7

Mortaria.— A couple of mortaria have thickened rims and high ring bases, and are made of buff to greenish buff gritty ware (Fig. 25:3, 4); these features are characteristic of the late Persian and early Hellenistic mortaria.

Cooking Pots.— The few examples of cooking pots are globular. One is straight-necked with thick walls and a simple rim (Fig. 25:5), and is characteristic of the late Persian period. The other has thinner walls and a triangular rim (Fig. 25:6), and is common in the early Hellenistic period.

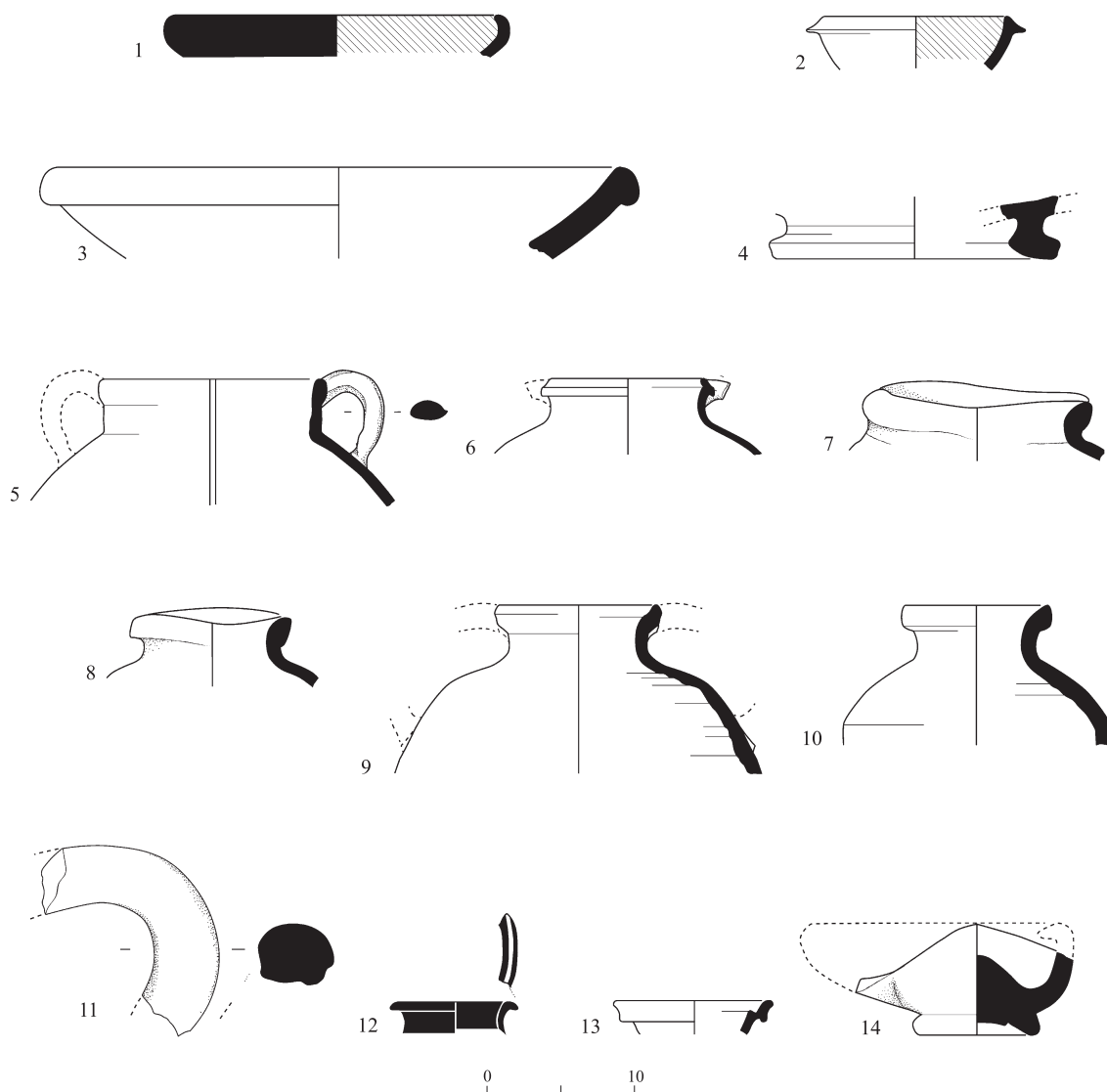


Fig. 25. Late Persian and early Hellenistic-period pottery.

◀ Fig. 25

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Incurved rim bowl	162	1115	Fine ware; black-slipped ext., red-slipped int., imported	Guz-Zilberstein 1995:289–290, Type BL 8
2	Fine bowl	165	1141/2	Fine ware; red-slipped int. and rim	Nodet 1980:122, Pl. 20:7
3	Mortarium bowl	130A	1116	Gritty greenish buff fabric	Stern 1995:53, Fig. 2.2:12, 14
4	Mortarium bowl	165	1141/1	Gritty buff fabric	As No. 3
5	Cooking pot	130A	1082	Blackened red cooking ware	Stern 1995:55, Fig. 2.4:5, 6
6	Cooking pot	162	1144/1	Dark red cooking ware	Guz-Zilberstein 1995:299, Type CP 3
7	Storage jar	130A	1118	Buff ware, warped	Stern 1995:58, Fig. 2.6 Alexandre 2006:156
8	Storage jar	130A	1082/2	Buff ware, warped	As No. 7
9	Storage jar	130A	1082/1	Buff ware	As No. 7
10	Storage jar	162	1144/2	Buff ware	As No. 7
11	Basket handle	130A	1051	Sandy buff fabric	Salles 1980:136–141, Pls. 23, 24 Stern 1995:62, Fig. 2.10
12	Amphora rim	171	1152	West Slope amphora; fine ware; black lustrous slip	Rotroff 1997:120–121, Fig. 24:407–410
13	Jug	130A	1067	Semi-fine white fabric	Berlin 1997:48–49, PW 38
14	Lamp	162	1144/2	Attic import; fine ware; black-slipped int.	Rosenthal-Heginbottom 1995:234, Fig. 5.13:1, Type 4:1

Storage Jars.— The broken jars in L130A were buff ware, bag-shaped jars with short necks and thickened, often warped, cylindrical rims (Fig. 25:7–9). A single narrower and smaller buff-ware jar came from a different locus (L162; Fig. 25:10). At Dor, similar jars are attributed to the latter part of the fourth century BCE. Many similar jars, also characterized by warped forms, were uncovered in storerooms at Nahal Tut, where they were dated to around 332 BCE, the time of the conquest of the country by Alexander the Great (Alexandre 2006:156). A heavy buff ware handle (Fig. 25:11) belongs to a basket-handled jar, which has a long chronological range, from the late sixth to the fourth century BCE.

Table Amphora and Jugs.— A small rim sherd (Fig. 25:12) was identified as belonging to a West Slope table amphora. Similar vessels were manufactured from Italy to Asia Minor in the mid–late third century BCE (Rotroff 1997:120–121, Fig. 24:407–410; Peter Gendelman, pers. comm.). In the context of a few West Slope fragments identified at ‘Akko, it was noted that the West Slope drinking and serving vessels were uncommon in Israel (Berlin and Stone 2016:134). A folded rim sherd of whitish gray fabric (Fig. 25:13) bears some similarity in form and fabric to Semi-Fine Folded Rim Table Jug forms at Tel Anafa, dated to the second century BCE (Berlin 1997:48–49).

Lamp.— A wheel made, round-shouldered closed lamp with a heavy, cone-shaped base was made of a well-levigated clay with a mottled red-and-black slipped interior (Fig. 25:14). These Attic lamps first appeared in the Levant in the latter half of the fourth century BCE.

Roman Period (Fig. 26)

The Roman-period pottery sherds that appeared sporadically in the Mamluk debris layers comprised vessel forms characteristic of Middle and Late Roman Galilean repertoires (second–fourth centuries CE), as for example at Zippori (Balouka 2013). The cooking-ware vessel sherds included open bowls (Fig. 26:1, 2), open casseroles (Fig. 26:3) and cooking pots (Fig. 26:4)—all Kefar Hananya vessel forms in use from the second to fourth century CE (Adan-Bayewitz 1993). A thick-walled basin with an everted rim (Fig. 26:5) is made

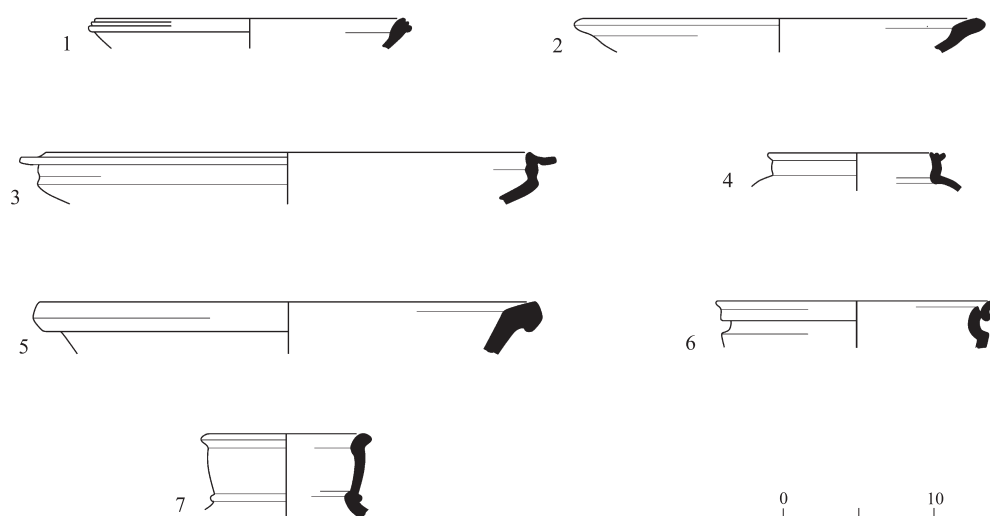


Fig. 26. Roman-period pottery.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Bowl	114	1025	Cooking ware	Adan-Bayewitz 1993:91–97, KH Form 1B Balouka 2013:32, Type GB 1b
2	Bowl	113	1053/1	Cooking ware	Adan-Bayewitz 1993:103–109, KH Form 1E Balouka 2013:33–34, Type GB 1e
3	Open cooking casserole	109	1029	Cooking ware	Adan-Bayewitz 1993:119–124, KH Form 3B Balouka 2013:28, Type OCP 1b
4	Cooking pot	161	1107	Cooking ware	Adan-Bayewitz 1993:128–130, KH Form 4C Balouka 2013: Type CP 3b
5	Basin	111	1012	Gritty light brown fabric	Balouka 2013:47, Type BS 1
6	Krater	111	1031	Brown fabric	Diez Fernández 1983:178, Type 21.4 Balouka 2013:46, KR 1b
7	Storage jar	110	1030	Brown fabric	Diez Fernández 1983:139, Type T1.7 Balouka 2013:37, Type SJ 3

of a gritty ware and was an import from the Mediterranean basin, possibly Cyprus, with a chronological range between the second and fourth centuries CE. The kraters (Fig. 26:6) are of the Shihin type, and the baggy storage jar rims with the ridge at the base of the neck (Fig. 26:7) are also characteristic of the third to fourth centuries CE.

Similar Middle and Late Roman vessel forms were retrieved in the previous 2008 excavations at Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat, in the Stratum IV (newly revised Stratum VI) building that was dated from the third to fourth century CE (Alexandre 2018).

Byzantine Period (Fig. 27)

A small quantity of Byzantine-period pottery was retrieved, mostly from the accumulation layers on the Stratum V house floors (L113, L118, L119, L168), whilst some Byzantine sherds also appeared sporadically in the thick Mamluk debris layers (L117, L133). The pottery is similar to the more plentiful Byzantine repertoire uncovered in the previous 2008 Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat excavation in Stratum V, and to a lesser extent in Stratum IV (formerly Strata III and II), and is characteristic of Byzantine repertoires at sites in the north of the country, Byzantine *Palaestina Secunda*. Parallels are cited from the Byzantine pottery repertoire at Jalame, located 12 km southwest of Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat, where discussions of the types and additional references are found (Johnson 1988). The main pottery assemblage at Jalame, including several imported Late Roman Red Ware (LRRW) bowl forms, was dated by the excavators to the late fourth century CE based on the coins (Weinberg and Weinberg 1988:3–4), whilst Hayes dates these LRRW bowl forms to around the mid-fifth–late fifth centuries CE on the basis of comparable assemblages from other sites (Hayes 2001:278). The dating of the LRRW bowls here follows Hayes, although the issue of dating these wares still remains to be resolved.

Bowls.— All the bowls were imported fine LRRW bowls, belonging to the group designated CRS, Cypriot Red Slip Ware (Hayes 1972:385–386; 2001:277–278). Some bowls classify as CRS Form 1/2 (Fig. 27:1–3), dated to the late fourth or fifth century CE (Hayes 2001:279, n. 44), others, as CRS Form 2 (Fig. 27:4), dated from the mid-fifth to mid-sixth century, and the large bowls or basins, classified as CRS Form 7 (Fig. 27:5, 6), dated by Hayes to the mid-sixth–mid-seventh centuries CE.

Basin or Krater.— A basin with a heavy knob rim (Fig. 27:7) bears a similarity to a basin from Jalame.

Cooking Vessels.— The cooking vessels consisted of open cooking bowls or frying pans with horizontal handles (Fig. 27:8) and globular cooking pots, some with a high neck and a groove at the rim (Fig. 27:9) and others with a lower slightly convex-shaped neck (Fig. 27:10). At Jalame, these are dated to the late fourth century CE (Johnson 1988).

Jug Spout.— Similar jug spouts (Fig. 27:11) were found at Jalame and were dated to the late fourth century CE (Johnson 1988).

Storage Jars.— The gray storage jar rims lacking a ridge at the base of the neck (Fig. 27:12) align with the characteristic Byzantine-period development of the gray baggy storage jars dated to the late fourth and fifth centuries CE.

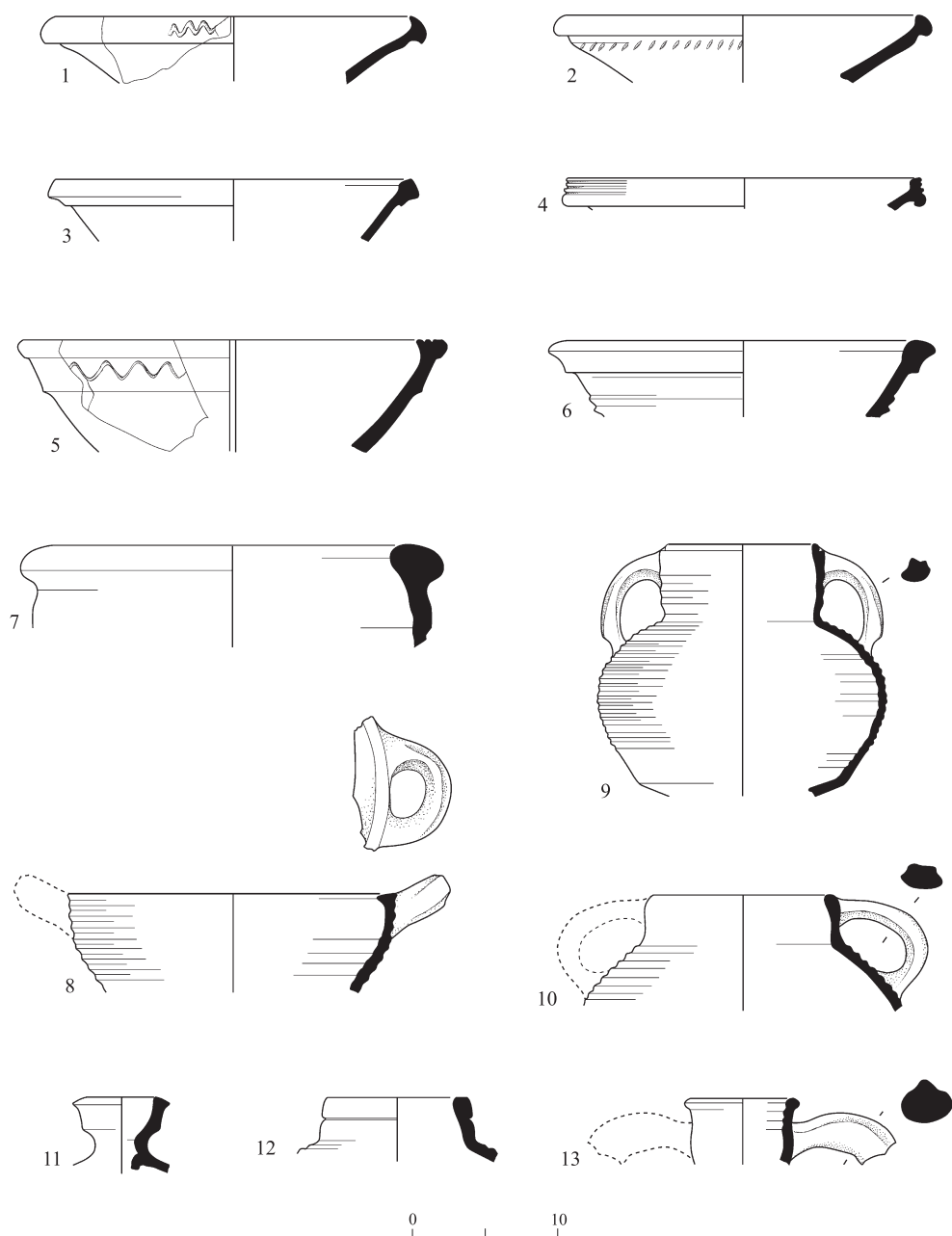


Fig. 27. Byzantine-period pottery.

◀ Fig. 27

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Bowl	113	1065/3	Imported fine ware; red-slipped	Johnson 1988:160–163, Figs. 7–15, 7–16 Hayes 2001:277–278, CRS Form 1/2
2	Bowl	168	1114/2	Imported fine ware; red-slipped	As No. 1
3	Bowl	168	1148/1	Imported fine ware; red-slipped	As No. 1
4	Bowl	113	1053/3	Imported fine ware; red-slipped	Hayes 1972:373–376, CRS Form 2 Johnson 1988:160–163, Figs. 7–15, 7–16
5	Large bowl	133	1057	Imported fine ware; red-slipped	Hayes 1980:377–379, CRS Form 7 Johnson 1988:159–160, Fig. 7–14
6	Large bowl	113	1065/2	Imported fine ware; red-slipped	As No. 5
7	Heavy basin	113	1053/2	Red fabric, blackened rim	Johnson 1988: Fig. 7–33:521.
8	Cooking bowl	119	1039/2	Cooking ware	Johnson 1988:200, Fig. 7–43
9	Cooking pot	168	1154/2	Cooking ware	Johnson 1988:196–198, Figs. 7–40:605; 7–41:608
10	Cooking pot	113	1039/3	Cooking ware	As No. 9
11	Jug spout	113	1165	Brown fabric, gray core	Johnson 1988:208–209, Fig. 7–48
12	Storage jar	113	1065/4	Gray fabric	Johnson 1988:214–219, Fig. 7–53
13	Amphora	117	1037	Yellowish buff fabric	Peacock and Williams 1986:185–187, Class 44

Amphora.— The few amphora sherds of a yellowish buff ware with small black grits (Fig. 27:13) were not found in the Stratum V Byzantine house, but instead appeared sporadically in the later Mamluk debris layer. The sherds belong to amphorae, which were classified by Peacock and Williams (1986) as Class 44; they can also be designated as Yassi Ada amphorae, after the location of the shipwreck on which they were found, which is dated from the fifth to seventh century CE.

Several similar amphora sherds were retrieved in the previous 2008 Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat excavation in Stratum III (formerly Stratum I), dated to the late Byzantine period (Alexandre 2018).

Crusader Period (Fig. 28)

A few Crusader-period pottery sherds were distinguished amongst the mass of Mamluk sherds in the thick Stratum II accumulation debris layer between the walls of the large building in Sq 2. The small quantity of Crusader pottery may possibly be due to the fact that the floors of the large building were not reached and that the building was periodically cleaned, rather than an absence of a Crusader-period occupation in the building. The pottery

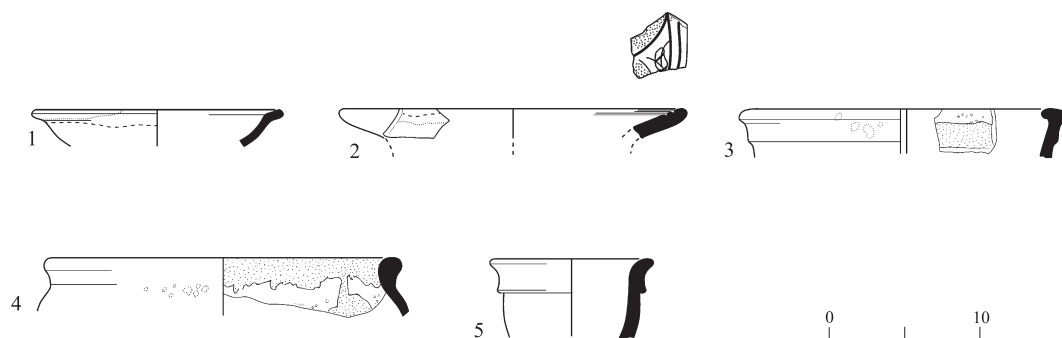


Fig. 28. Crusader-period pottery.

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Bowl	125	1041	Beirut Glazed Ware; red fabric, white slip, transparent green gritty glaze	Stern 2012:44–47, Type BE.GL.2, Pl. 4.19:11–25
2	Bowl	125	1041/2	North Syrian Glazed Ware; buff fabric, white slip, sgraffito design, green and yellow glaze	Stern 2012:55–58, Type NSY.GL.3, Pl. 4.31:22
3	Cooking bowl	161	1110	Beirut Cooking Ware; red cooking ware, brown glaze int.	Stern 2012:41–44, Type BE.CW.2, Pl. 4.14:14
4	Cooking pot	125	1041/1	Beirut Cooking Ware; red cooking ware, brown glaze int.	Stern 2012:44–47, Type BE.CW.2, Pl. 4.16:3–11
5	Table jar	161	1150/2	Acre Plain Ware; sandy buff fabric	Stern 2012:34–38, Type AC.PL.5, Pl. 4.9:4, 5

is presented with reference to the Crusader-period pottery repertoire from ‘Akko, wherein parallels and chronological ranges of the vessels are found (Stern 2012).

Beirut Monochrome Glazed Bowl.— A thin-walled bowl with an out-turned ledge rim was made of a red ware and has a gritty transparent green glaze over a white slip (Fig. 28:1). These bowls are dated to the twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth centuries CE.

North Syrian Glazed Ware Bowl.— The ledge rim of a bowl exhibiting a sgraffito vegetal design and splashes of green and yellow glaze (Fig. 28:2) is a form dated to the thirteenth century CE.

Beirut Baking Dish.— A baking dish or open cooking bowl rim with somewhat thick sloping walls, a flattened rim and a glossy brown glazed interior (Fig. 28:3) is characteristic of the thirteenth century CE.

Beirut Cooking Pot.— A thick-walled rim with a dark brown glazed interior (Fig. 28:4) belongs to a deep cooking pot, dated to the second half of the thirteenth century CE.

Acre Table Jar.— The folded rim of a vessel manufactured from a buff sandy fabric (Fig. 28:5) is probably a table jar—a vessel form attributed to the twelfth–thirteenth centuries CE.

Mamluk Period (Figs. 29, 30)

The Mamluk-period pottery, found in the thick Stratum II accumulation and destruction debris layer that lay between the walls of the Mamluk building, consisted of a large quantity of glazed bowls and smaller quantities of a variety of other vessels. The pottery is presented with reference to Avissar and Stern's classification of Crusader and Mamluk pottery, wherein almost all the vessel types are classified with descriptions of the ware and parallels provide a chronological range (Avissar and Stern 2005). Most of the vessels have parallels in the Mamluk-period pottery uncovered at Mary's Well in Nazareth—a repertoire comprising many restorable vessels dated to the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries CE (Alexandre 2012).

Plain Bowls.— A carinated bowl (Fig. 29:1) is one of very few wheel-made unglazed bowls. Similar plain bowls were found stacked in piles in a basin unit at Mary's Well, Nazareth (Alexandre 2012).

Glazed Bowls.— Almost all the bowls were glazed, and have chronological ranges in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries CE. Most common were the monochrome glazed bowls, rounded and carinated bowls with incurved or slightly outflaring rims and a green or yellowish green-glazed interior (Fig. 29:2–6). The high-ring base of a green-glazed bowl (Fig. 29:7) is also of this type; the higher bases continue to appear in the sixteenth century CE (early Ottoman period). Several glazed bowls are sgraffito ware, exhibiting sgraffito decoration mostly on the bowl interior (Fig. 29:8–10), and less commonly, on the exterior (Fig. 29:11, 12). A couple of bowl sherds are common Mamluk slip-painted ware bowls with white-slip painted lines and a transparent glaze (Fig. 29:13, 14). A small body sherd, with protruding ribbing and a yellow-glazed interior and a green-glazed exterior (Fig. 29:15), is a bowl with molded decoration. There were a couple of sherds of soft-paste ware bowls painted in black and blue (Fig. 29:16). Several Italian imports comprised a body sherd of a light brown ware decorated with white slip, a fine sgraffito curving line and a transparent glaze, and a molded rim sherd with a green glaze, which were identified as Italian monochrome-glazed sgraffito bowls (Fig. 29:17, 18). A small rim sherd of a delicate bowl with reddish brown bands and a partial green glaze (Fig. 29:19) may belong to a group of painted and glazed wares dated to the late Mamluk to early Ottoman periods, as described at Khirbat Din'ila in western Upper Galilee (Stern 2014:91).

Large Handmade Basins and Cooking Pots.— Two large handmade basins have thick walls and applied handles, one having an upcurving horizontal handle, and the other a double-knob handle and a red-painted rim (Fig. 30:1, 2). A smaller handmade vessel also exhibits a pulled-up horizontal handle and clear burning marks (Fig. 30:3). The handle forms and the

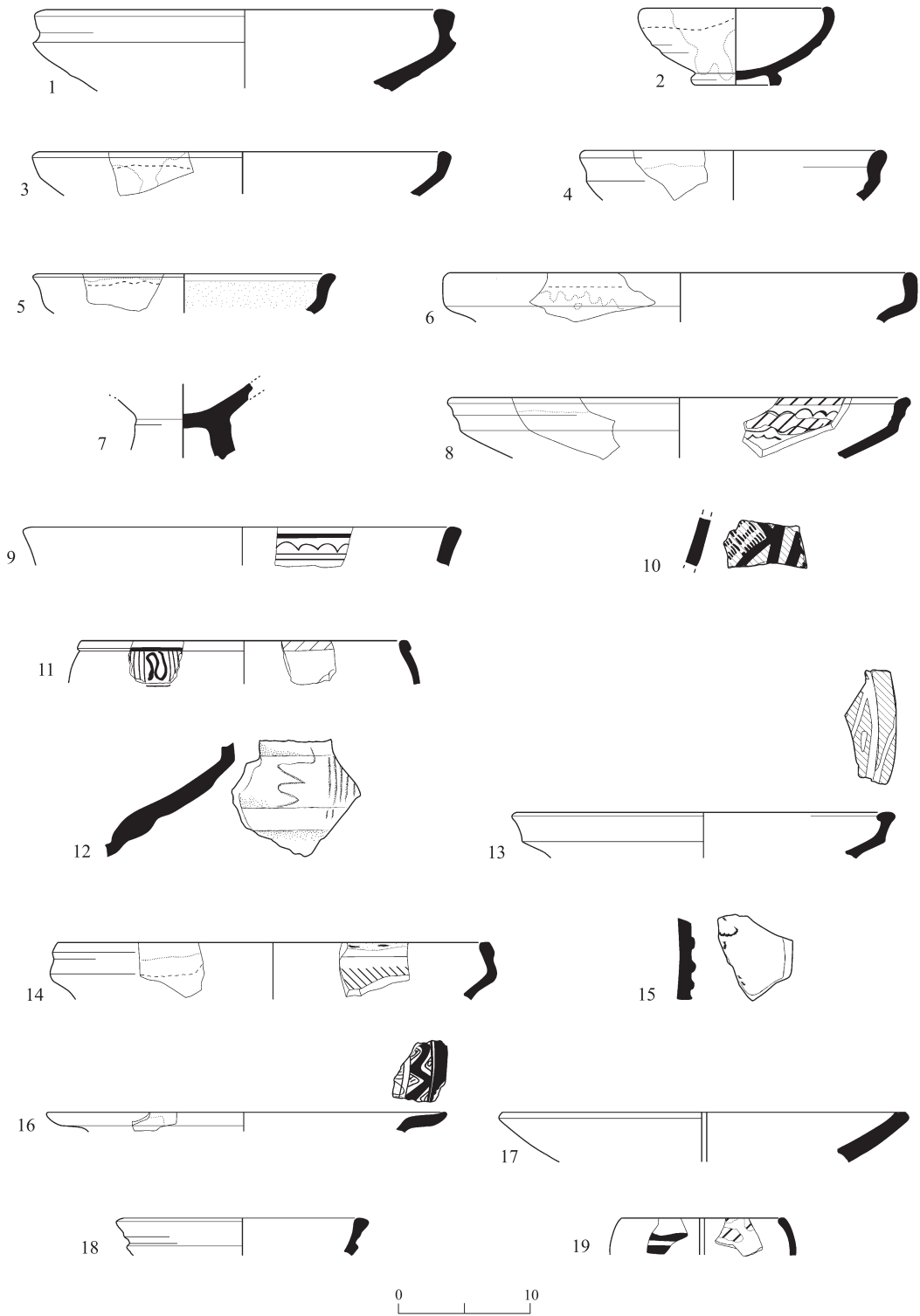


Fig. 29. Mamluk-period pottery: bowls.

◀ Fig. 29

No.	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	161	1110	Reddish brown fabric	Alexandre 2012:69–71, Fig. 3.7:1–7
2	112	1014	Red fabric, partial white slip, green glaze	Avissar and Stern 2005:12, Type I.1.4.1, Fig. 4
3	161	1121	Red fabric, white slip, yellowish green glaze	Avissar and Stern 2005:12, Type I.1.4.1, Fig. 4 Alexandre 2012: Fig. 3.9:1, 2
4	112	1016/1	Red fabric, white slip, green glaze	As No. 3
5	112	1016/2	Red fabric, white slip, green glaze	Avissar and Stern 2005:12, Type I.1.4.1, Fig. 4
6	110	1011	Reddish brown fabric, white slip, yellowish green glaze	As No. 5
7	104	1004/3	High ring base, reddish brown fabric, green glaze	Avissar and Stern 2005:12, Type I.1.4.1, Fig. 4 Alexandre 2012: Fig. 3.9:5
8	104	1004/1	Reddish brown fabric, white slip, mottled yellow and green glaze, sgraffito decoration	Avissar and Stern 2005:16–18, Types I.1.5.2, I.1.5.3, Fig. 6 Alexandre 2012: Fig. 3.9:7
9	111	1023/1	Reddish brown fabric, white slip, yellow glaze, sgraffito decoration	As No. 8
10	111	1023/2	Body sherd, red fabric, white slip, yellowish green glaze, sgraffito gouged decoration	Avissar and Stern 2005:16–18, Types I.1.5.2, I.1.5.3, Fig. 6 Alexandre 2012: Fig. 3.9:8
11	161	1107	Red fabric, white slip, green glaze, sgraffito decoration on ext.	Avissar and Stern 2005:16–18, Types I.1.5.2, I.1.5.3, Fig. 6
12	161	1132/3	Body sherd, red fabric, white slip, yellow glaze, sgraffito decoration on ext.	As No. 11
13	112	1024/6	Reddish brown fabric, white slip-painted decoration, transparent glaze	Avissar and Stern 2005:19–20, Type I.1.6.1, Fig. 7
14	161	1132/4	Red fabric, partial white slip-painted decoration, transparent and brown glaze	As No. 13
15	133	1076/1	Buff fabric, molded decoration, green glaze ext., yellow glaze int.	Avissar and Stern 2005:22–24, Type I.1.7.2, Fig. 8 Alexandre 2012: Fig. 3.9:10
16	133	1057	Soft white pasty fabric, black and blue decoration, transparent glaze	Avissar and Stern 2005:28–29, Type I.2.3.3, Fig. 11
17	125	1041/2	Light brown fabric, white slip and transparent glaze int., fine sgraffito	Avissar and Stern 2005:73–74, Type I.9.6; Fig. 31
18	105	1005	Red fabric, slightly molded rim, green glaze	As No. 17
19	112	1024/5	Red fabric, white slip, brown bands, green glaze	Stern 2014:91

burning marks on these rather crude vessels indicate that they were exposed to fire and that they may have been used for cooking. The handmade bowls and basins bear some similarity to the open vessels found at Khirbat Din‘ila, which are considered to have been popular at rural sites in the Levant between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries CE (Stern 2014:73, Fig. 2).

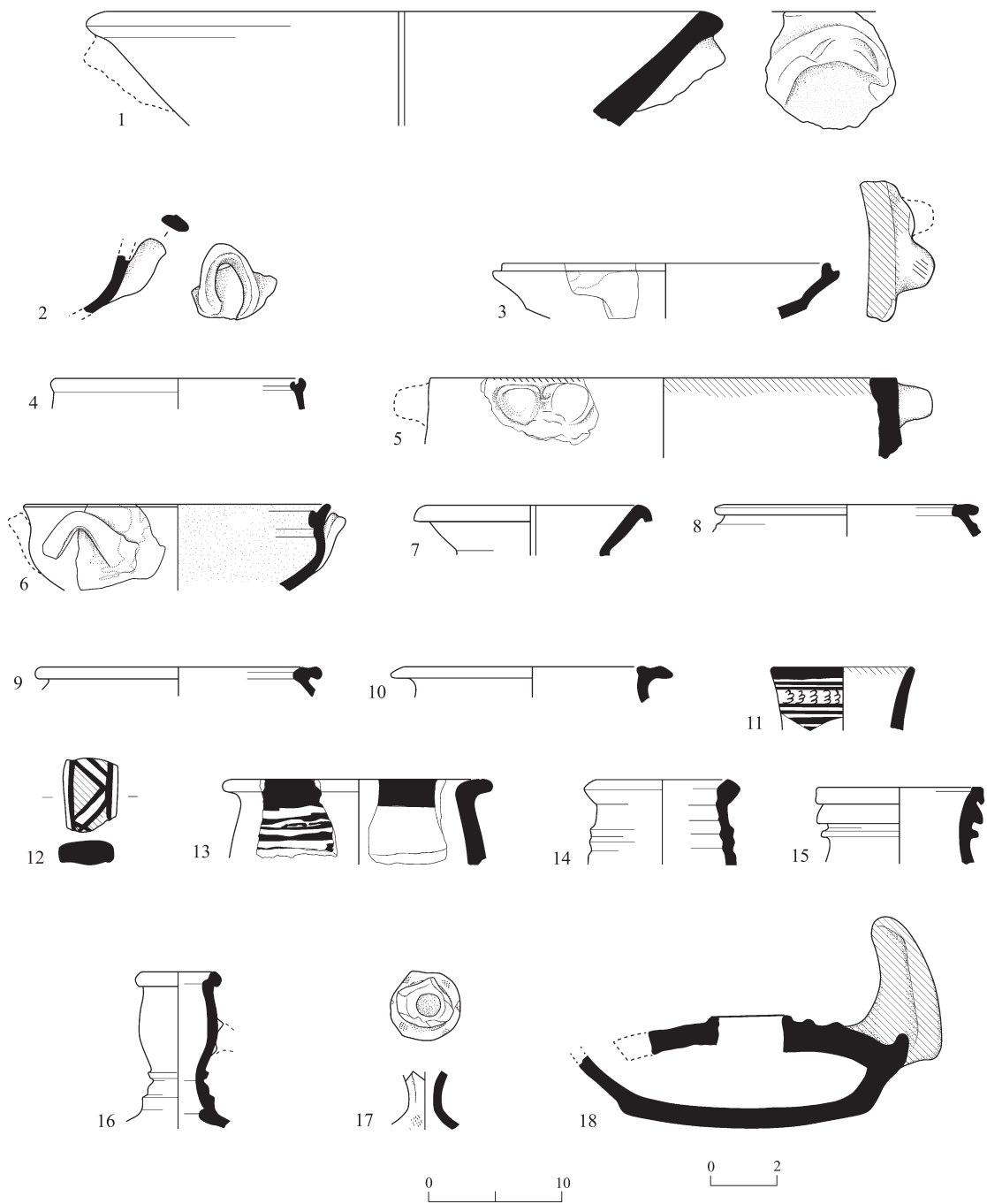


Fig. 30. Mamluk-period pottery.

◀ Fig. 30

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Handmade basin	133	1091	Coarse light brown fabric, black core	Stern 2014:73, Fig. 2
2	Handmade basin	110	1022/1	Coarse brown fabric, grayish black core, dark red-painted rim	As No. 1
3	Handmade cooking pot	133	1061	Light brown fabric with quartz inclusions, burned	As No. 1
4	Cooking bowl	133	1076/2	Red cooking ware, brown glaze	Avissar and Stern 2005:97, Types II.2.3.4, II.2.3.5, Fig. 41:6–9
5	Cooking bowl	112	1016/3	Red fabric, smoothed, shiny brown glaze	As No. 4
6	Cooking bowl	161	1132/2	Brown fabric, yellowish brown glaze	As No. 4
7	Cooking bowl	139	1102	Reddish brown fabric, chocolate brown glaze	As No. 4
8	Cooking pot	110	1022/2	Reddish brown cooking ware	Avissar and Stern 2005:92, Type II.2.1.5, Fig. 39:9–11 Alexandre 2012: Fig. 3.11:1–3
9	Cooking pot	113	1033	Reddish brown cooking ware	As No. 8
10	Cooking pot	161	1132/1	Reddish brown cooking ware	As No. 8
11	Hand-painted jug	125	1041/3	Light reddish brown fabric, dark brown paint on white slip	Avissar and Stern 2005:113, Type II.4.4, Fig. 47
12	Hand-painted jug handle	110	1030	Coarse buff fabric, black lines on white slip	As No. 11
13	Hand-painted jar	133	1076	Coarse buff fabric, black lines on white slip	As No. 11
14	Storage jar	125	1041	Reddish brown fabric	Avissar and Stern 2005:102, Type II.3.1.4, Fig. 42:5–7 Alexandre 2012: Fig. 3.12
15	Storage jar	104	1004/2	Reddish brown fabric	As No. 14
16	Jug	125	1041/1	Reddish brown fabric	Avissar and Stern 2005:108–109, Type II.4.2, Fig. 45:4, 5
17	Fine jug	133	1091/2	Greenish buff fine ware	Avissar and Stern 2005:111, Type II.4.3.2, Fig. 46:3–6
18	Lamp	112	1015	Red fabric	Avissar and Stern 2005:126, Type III.2.1.2, Fig. 53:2–4

Glazed Cooking Bowls.— The cooking bowls or frying pans are shallow open bowls with wide flat bases and a glazed interior. The cooking bowls have either gutter rims (Fig. 30:4–6), or out-turned rims (Fig. 30:7). These cooking bowls, one of which exhibits a pulled-up horizontal handle (Fig. 30:6), are characteristic of the Mamluk period, the gutter-rim type dating from the late thirteenth to the late fourteenth century CE and the out-turned rim type, from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries CE and possibly later.

Cooking Pots.— The Mamluk deep globular cooking pots have an everted, almost ledge rim with no neck (Fig. 30:8, 9), or an everted, almost-ledge rim with a short neck (Fig. 30:10), and are characteristic of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries CE.

Hand-painted Jugs and Jars.— A jug, a jug handle and a jar, all with geometric painted decoration in brown, black and sometimes red over a white slip (Fig. 30:11–13), represent hand-painted vessels, with its floruit in the Mamluk period.

Storage Jars.— The reddish brown ware storage jars have tall necks with thickened rims, some having a more profiled neck (Fig. 30:14, 15). These jars were common at Mary's Well in Nazareth, where it was proposed that their principal function was as water jars (Alexandre 2012).

Jugs.— The Mamluk high-necked jugs had a mid-neck handle (Fig. 30:16) and usually a spout. They were made of the same reddish brown clay as the jars, and were certainly used for water.

Jug with Incised and Pinpricked Decoration.— A single neck sherd of a light greenish gray fabric had a shaved finish with pinpricked diamond shaped impressions (Fig. 30:17). This was a common jug type from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century CE, and possibly later.

Lamp.— An almost complete almond-shaped mold-made slipper lamp was found, with a pointed nozzle, a small filling hole and a high, slightly pointed forward, curved tongue handle (Fig. 30:18). The impressed decoration is not clear. These lamps are attributed to the thirteenth century CE and likely did not continue into the fourteenth century CE.

Stone Artifacts

A few basalt stone artifacts were recovered. A basalt pestle, smoothed from use, came from an Iron II locus, and is a characteristic of the Iron Age (Fig 24:6). In addition, a few fragments of basalt mortars were found (not illustrated).

Metal Artifacts

A few metal artifacts were retrieved (Fig. 31). A very small, rectangular object was found, made of a folded lead strip (weight? $14 \times 10 \times 5$ mm; Fig. 31:1). Part of a small bronze ring or buckle was found in the Byzantine-period house (Fig. 31:2). From the Mamluk accumulations came a bronze spatula with a herringbone decoration (Fig. 31:3), three iron nails (Fig. 31:4) and two iron lumps (not illustrated).



Fig. 31. Metal artifacts.

No.	Artifact	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Weight?	171	1166	Lead; 7.7 g (8.57 g before cleaning)
2	Ring or buckle	168	1163	Bronze
3	Spatula	101	1001	Bronze; herringbone decoration
4	Nails	139	1063	Iron
		144	1080	
		161	1107	

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This section supplements the discussion in the 2008 Horbat 'Ofrat excavation report, where preliminary understandings were formulated on the basis of the archaeological data retrieved in that excavation and from former finds at the site (Alexandre 2018). The new excavation has enriched our knowledge of the site, predominantly regarding the Iron II period and the Crusader–Mamluk periods, as remains from these periods were not exposed in the previous 2008 excavation. In effect, almost all the archaeological periods exposed in the excavations of 2008 and 2013 were already identified by the sherds retrieved in the 1970s survey (Olami and Gal 2003:44*). As the archaeological data is very limited, our tentative conclusions on the settlement history of the site in these periods are proffered with reservations and as a basis for possible future research.

Middle Bronze Age

The present excavation hints at the early, maybe earliest, occupation at the site close to bedrock, possibly in MB II. The Stratum XII wall top and the few sherds supplement the MB II sherds that were retrieved in the surveys (Gal 1992:21, Site No. 1.37; Olami and Gal 2003:44*).

Iron Age II

The exposed segments of large Stratum XI and X walls, including a possible fortification wall, in association with Iron II pottery, led to the understanding that a small town was established on the hilltop in Iron IIA. Occupation at the site continued in Iron IIB, with some evidence for a probable destruction and/or an abandonment in the course of Iron IIB, and new buildings were erected in Iron IIC. The Iron IIA–C pottery from the excavation supports an occupation at the site from the tenth to the seventh century BCE. Iron II pottery was previously identified in the surveys; it was tentatively proposed that a 3 m high stone terrace wall, supporting the southern side of the flattened hilltop just north and above our excavation, was founded on an Iron II fortification wall (Gal 1992:21; Olami and Gal 2003:44*). The Iron II settlement was thus located on the hilltop or tell, and its area was estimated to be about 20 dunams (Gal 1992:21). In the present excavation, it was observed that the Iron IIA–B pottery shared a cultural material horizon with contemporaneous pottery repertoires at northern Israel sites. The Iron IIC, or possibly Iron IIB–C pottery, exhibited closer affinities to the Phoenician coastal sites, noticeably Tyre. Whilst the contexts and the samples are far too limited to provide a basis for reconstructing the settlement history of the site in Iron II, these observations may reflect some cultural, economic, ethnic or political affiliations.

Turning briefly to the wider context and to additional sources of evidence, the Biblical descriptions of the tribal allotments place Asher in the 'Akko plain and Zevulun in central Lower Galilee, with a shared border that is not described in detail (Joshua 19:10–16, 24–31). Horbat 'Ofrat, located 5 km west of the large, as yet unexcavated, Iron II city of Hannaton, probably lay just within the tribal allotment of Zevulun, as the western fringes of the low Shefar'am-Allonim hills were the border region (Gal 1992:98–103). Lehmann, in processing his survey of the 'Akko plain during Iron II and into the Persian period, and additional sources, deduced that the 'Akko plain was under Phoenician control, specifically under Tyre (Lehmann 2001:94). The excavations at Horbat Rosh Zayit, located 11 km to the north on the western hill fringes bordering the 'Akko plain, led to the understanding that it was a border site between the Israelite kingdom and the Phoenicians in Iron IIA (Gal and Alexandre 2000:199–200). In this context, the Biblical statement of the cession of the Land of Kabul by Solomon to Tyre (1 Kings 9:11–13) is to be understood as a reflection of Phoenician expansion into the Galilee in Iron II. This expansion into the western Lower Galilee is considered to have been motivated in part by the potential of exploiting the agricultural hinterland (Lehmann 2001:94–95).

Regarding the end of the settlement at Ḥorbat 'Ofrat in Iron IIC, it is probable that this occurred in the wake of the Assyrian incursions into the 'Akko plain, possibly around the time when Ashurbanipal destroyed 'Akko in 644/643 BCE. The continued settlement at Ḥorbat 'Ofrat into the seventh century CE accentuates its location at the marginal area between western Lower Galilee and the 'Akko plain, as the Lower Galilee was mostly depopulated with its conquest by Tiglath-Pileser III in 733 BCE.

Late Persian–Early Hellenistic Periods

The few buff-ware storage jars and some sherds of imported vessels in Stratum IX reflect a presence at the site during the transitional late Persian to early Hellenistic period around the late fourth century BCE. Although the evidence is very limited, it may align with the understanding that the western Lower Galilee served as the agricultural hinterland for the large towns of the Phoenician coastal strip (Olami and Gal 2003:12*).

Late Hellenistic–Roman Periods

The present excavations did not uncover remains from the late Hellenistic and Early Roman period settlement (revised Strata VIII, VII). Limited remains of the late Hellenistic to Early Roman settlement were exposed in the 2008 excavations, and it is probable that it was a small, probably Jewish, settlement, located only on the northern part of the site. Remains of the Middle to Late Roman continuation of this village, dating to the third–fourth centuries CE, were exposed in the previous excavation (revised Stratum VI), evidenced here only by the presence of Roman-period sherds, and it is probable that the village now expanded and covered a larger area, including the hilltop. The Jewish identity of the Roman-period village of Ḥorbat 'Ofrat is supported by its location on the road from Usha and Shefar'am to Bet She'arim and Zippori, all four seats of the Sanhedrin in the second to third centuries CE, as well as by architectural elements, possibly from a later Byzantine-period synagogue observed previously at the site (see below).

Byzantine Period

The Stratum V Byzantine-period houses, or parts thereof, that were exposed in the present and in the 2008 excavations, at a distance of about 200 m apart, indicate that the Byzantine-period village in the fourth–fifth centuries CE was fairly large, possibly 40–50 dunams, with its peripheral outskirts potentially covering an area of up to 100 dunams (marked with a dashed line in Fig. 1). The two houses shared the same uncommon phenomenon of Byzantine-period cooking pots with worn late fourth century CE coins purposely deposited next to the base of the walls and close to the entrance, possibly a local Jewish foundation deposit of apotropaic significance.

Some scattered architectural elements, including a heart-shaped corner column, that were observed on the hill in the late nineteenth century point to the presence of a Roman or early Byzantine-period public building, possibly a synagogue (Conder and Kitchener

1881:321). Further support for the Jewish identity of the Stratum V early Byzantine village may be the fact that the village was probably abandoned by the late fifth century.

Regarding the Stratum IV (former Stratum II) remains exposed in the previous 2008 excavations, it was tentatively suggested that this Byzantine-period settlement may have been inhabited by Christians (see Alexandre 2018). From the Byzantine period, Christian churches have been documented in archaeological excavations carried out at sites along the western margins of the Lower Galilee, for example in Qiryat Ata, Shefar‘am, Bet She‘arim and Ramat Yishay, and it has become evident that the western margins of Lower Galilee underwent a process of ‘Christianization’ in this period.

The appearance of the Yassi Ada amphorae points to some activity here in the sixth or seventh century CE (and see Alexandre 2018). The absence of Early Islamic-period pottery in the present excavation and the localized area of intensive burning in the 2008 excavation (former Stratum I) may attest that the probably abandoned site was used for some industrial activity.

Crusader–Mamluk Periods

The Stratum II architectural remains comprised short segments of several wide parallel walls of a large building standing next to the deep rock-hewn well, and thick plaster floors of an adjacent courtyard. Whilst the narrow strip excavated precluded the exposure of a coherent building plan, it is probable that the exposed wide walls were the ground floor of a building that had vaulted ceilings supporting an upper story. The thick plaster floors were probably part of a large open courtyard, either next to or probably within the building complex.

The presence of some Crusader pottery and a few Crusader glass fragments in the accumulated debris suggests that the Stratum II building was first constructed in the Crusader period. Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat, located 3 km southwest of the old nucleus of Shefar‘am, would have been part of the Crusader rural *burgus* of Le Saffran (Shefar‘am), where a twelfth century CE Templar castle stood, the albeit unidentified remains of which are presumed to be incorporated in the still-standing Ottoman fortress (Pringle 1997:115; Syon and Hillman 2006). In 1187, following the Battle of Ḥaṭṭin, Shefar‘am fell into Ayyubid hands, and between 1190–1191 it served the Ayyubids as a military base for attacking Crusader-controlled ‘Akko (Peterson 2001:276–280). In 1229, Nazareth was conceded to the Frankish Christians (Bagatti 2002:18), and the road from ‘Akko via Shefar‘am and Zippori to the Crusader holy site at Nazareth was again secured under Frankish control. Shefar‘am was still in Crusader hands in 1283 (Khamisy 2014), and it finally fell to the Mamluks before 1291. The architectural remains exposed at Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat were too limited to produce a coherent plan; therefore, it can only be conjectured that the original Crusader-period building may have been part of a Frankish farm complex, or possibly, of a road inn within the rural *burgus* of Shefar‘am. Similarly, we have no data on the fate of the presumed Crusader-period building at Ḥorbat ‘Ofrat, but it was almost certainly closely linked with the fortunes of Shefar‘am.

There was considerably more evidence for a Mamluk-period usage of the Stratum II building. The rooms were full of accumulated debris containing Mamluk pottery, exhibiting a clear preponderance of glazed bowls. There were fragments of Mamluk glass vessels and a few coins dating to the fourteenth century CE. The Mamluk pottery indicates that the building ceased to function before the late fifteenth century CE.

The animal bones in the debris overlying the floors comprised both domestic animals, namely sheep, goat, cattle, equid, camel and some chicken, and diverse game animals, including gazelle, deer, jungle cat and bear (see Marom, this volume). Following Marom, the zooarchaeological evidence of the hunting activities suggests the presence of high-status individuals in the building, although the faunal data did not allow to determine whether the hunters were Christians or Muslims.

It is unclear whether the building was still intact or was in a damaged state during the Mamluk period. The large quantity of discarded bones in the debris indicates that dining was a major activity at the site, and that the diners were not concerned with tidying up after themselves. This is further supported by the high proportion of glazed bowls in the pottery assemblage, together suggesting that the occupants may well have been temporary visitors, stopping at the site to eat and to drink at the well, and then continuing their journey. A similar phenomenon of overwhelming quantities of animal bones and glazed bowls was observed at a late Mamluk to early Ottoman site excavated in the center of Kafr Kanna. At Kafr Kanna, the location and the early pilgrim accounts strongly support the identity of the diners as Christian pilgrims venerating the site as the location of Jesus' Water to Wine Miracle (Alexandre, forthcoming).

The location of the building along the 'Akko–Nazareth road (Road 79) via Shefar'am and Zippori could also support the tentative understanding that the building may have functioned as a roadside inn for Christian pilgrims in the Mamluk period (see Fig. 1). In the medieval period, two parallel roads ran southwestward from 'Akko into the Lower Galilee (Riley-Smith 1991:43). The more northerly route followed the Roman imperial route via I'bellin and Tel Ḥannaton (Tell al-Badawiye), across the Bet Neṭofa plain to the Sea of Galilee, with a large Mamluk *khan* that controlled the road at Tel Ḥannaton. The more southerly route running via Shefar'am and Ḥorbat 'Ofrat to Zippori and Nazareth may have been used by the pilgrims to Nazareth. A possible scenario is of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century CE western Christian pilgrims disembarking Venetian ships at the port of 'Akko, setting out and staying overnight or dining in the possibly partially standing building at Ḥorbat 'Ofrat, before resuming their journey to Nazareth.

Ottoman Period

The Stratum I ephemeral wall fragments and a couple of clay pipe fragments (not illustrated) indicate a presence on the hill in the course of the Ottoman period.

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