

REMAINS OF A RURAL SETTLEMENT FROM THE LATE HELLENISTIC— EARLY ROMAN PERIODS AND A HIDING COMPLEX FROM THE ROMAN PERIOD AT ḤORBAT MAZRŪQ NEAR ABU GHOSH

DANIEL EIN-MOR

INTRODUCTION

Ḥorbat Mazruq was discovered in April 2009 after illegal excavations severely damaged this hitherto unknown site.¹ In October 2009, the site and its underground complex were surveyed and excavated (Ein-Mor 2015).²

Ḥorbat Mazruq is situated on the terraced shoulder of a spur descending south of the Qiryat Ye'arim ridge toward Naḥal Kisalon (Figs. 1–3; map ref. 210133/634104; c. 700 m asl). A section of the Roman road leading from Emmaus–Nicopolis to Jerusalem passed one kilometer to the north of the site (Fischer, Isaac and Roll 1996:116), close to the center of the village of Abu Ghosh (Qaryat al-‘Inab). Commanding the road is Deir el-‘Azar (Figs. 1, 2),

¹ The site was named based on the closest geographical feature appearing on a Mandate-period map (Ein Karem, Sheet 16-13, 1:20:000), ‘Ain el Mazruq. On a map of the area of Abu Ghosh from 1915, the valley south of the site appears as Wadi el-Mazrūk (Lauffs 1915), providing further evidence for the preservation of this name. The name Mazrūq probably stems from a phonetic error based on the Arabic مرزوق (Marzūq, “blessed, fortunate, prosperous, successful”). Active until the 1990s, the spring was then covered over with construction debris.

² The surveys and excavation (Permit No. A-5751), on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, were directed by the author, who conveys his thanks to the many colleagues who participated in the project: Rai’d Abu-Khalef (administration); Avraham Hajian and Mark Kunin (surveying); Sa’id el-‘Amala (metal detection); Elhanan Klein, Avner Ecker, Azriel Yehezkel, Eyal Tagar, Natalie Frydman, Mayan Alon, Amir Ganor, Sa’ar Ganor, Shay Bar-Tura, Guy Fitoussi, Uri Hofesh, Roi Porat (survey of the subterranean complex); Natalia Zak and Boris Atkin (drafting); Irena Lidsky-Reznikov (pottery drawing); Lena Kupersmidt (metal cleaning); Donald T. Ariel (numismatics); and Clara Amit (studio photography). Thanks are extended to Danit Levi, Ron Be’eri, Amos Kloner, Fanny Vitto, Benny Arubas, Debora Sandhaus, Gabriel Barkay, Eli Shukron, Eyal Marco, Pablo Betzer and Nathan Ben-Ari for sharing information and for their advice. Rachel Bar-Nathan, Renate Rosenthal-Heginbottom, Malka Hershkovitz and Shulamit Terem provided much assistance with the initial examination of the ceramic finds; any errors in the identification of the finds are my own. Last, the author thanks Alla Nagorsky (then Judea District archaeologist); without her direct involvement and efforts the excavation would not have been possible.

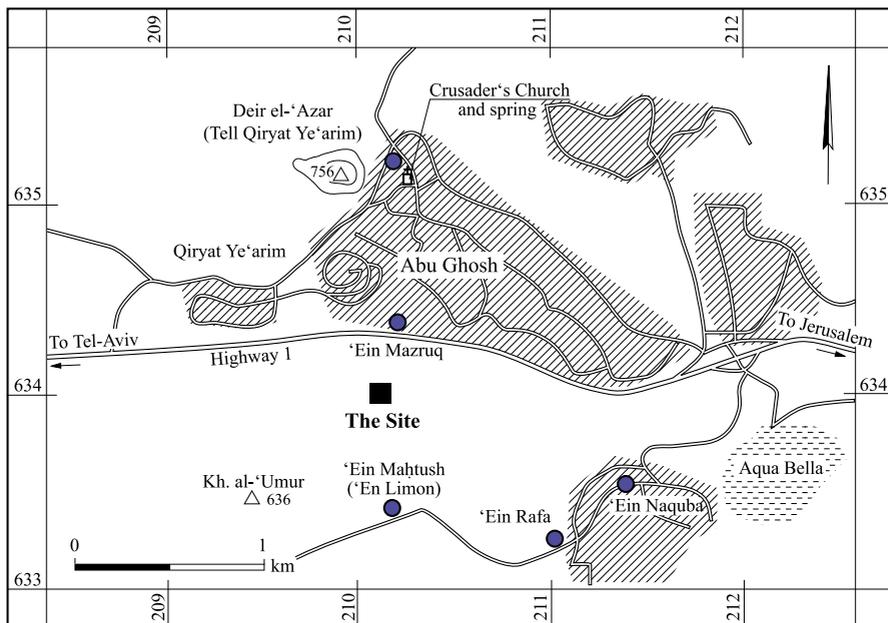


Fig. 1. Location map.

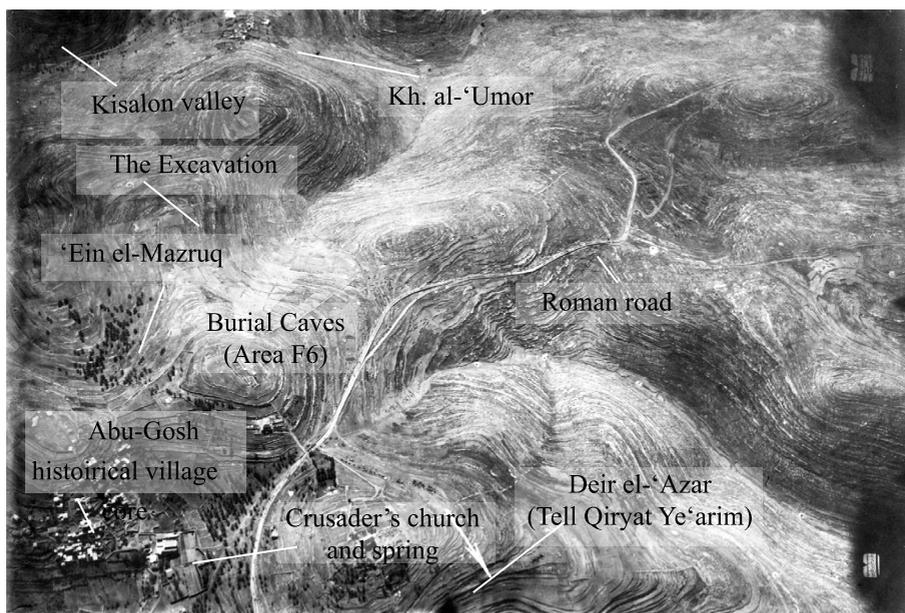


Fig. 2. Aerial view of the area of Abu Ghosh, 1918.

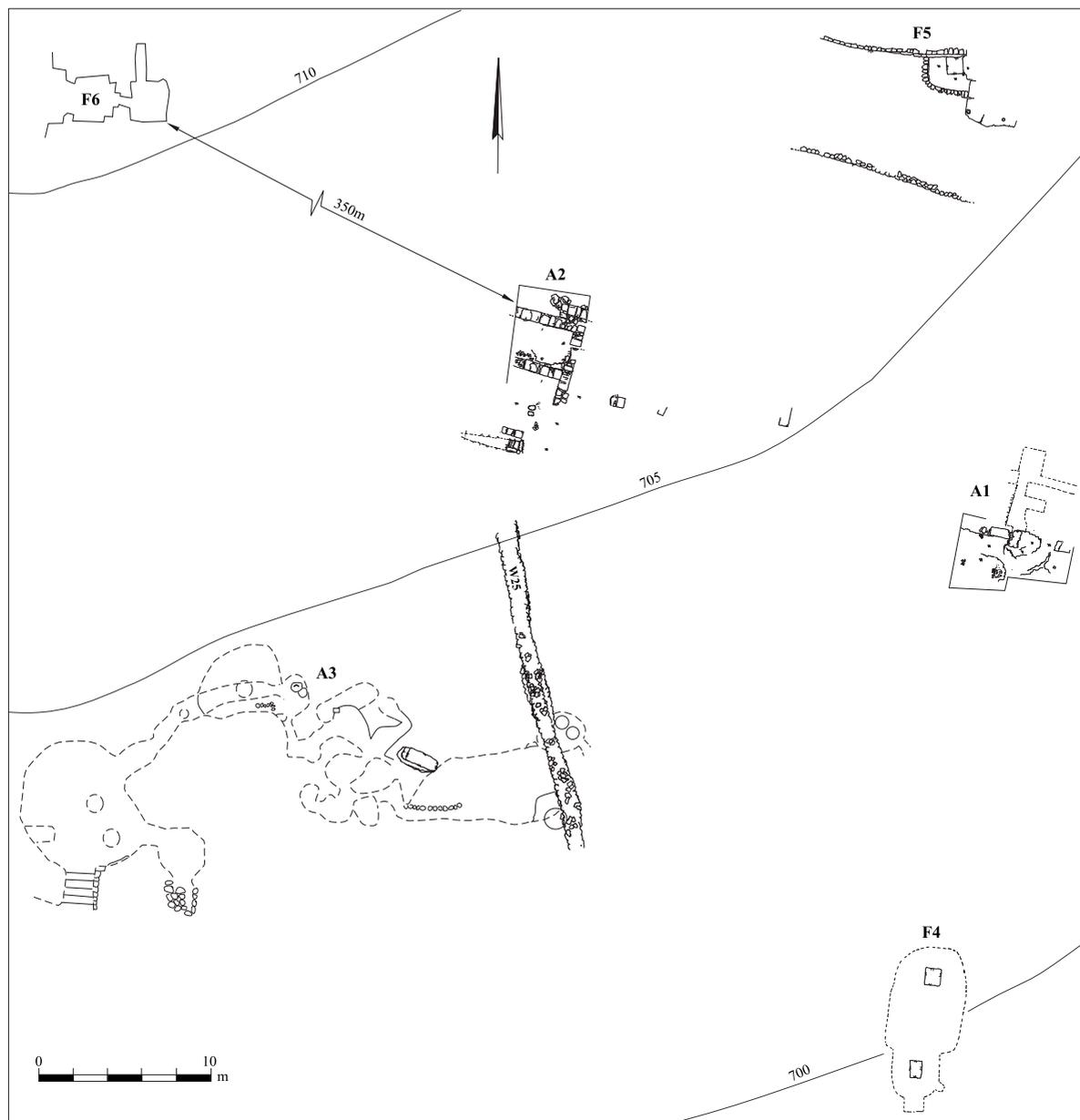


Fig. 3. The site prior to the excavation, looking southeast.

located at the highest point of the Qiryat Ye‘arim ridge, and identified by some scholars (after Eusebius *Onomasticon* 114, 23–27) as biblical Qiryat Ba‘al or Tell Qiryat Ye‘arim (Robinson and Smith 1841:334–336; Tsafirir, Di Segni and Green 1994:100 [Cariath Iarim]; Fischer, Isaac and Roll 1996:113; Finkelstein et al. 2018; McKinny et al. 2018). On the slopes of a spur some 650 m west of the site are the remains of a small Arab village and ruin, el-‘Ammur (or el-Ēmūr; Clermont-Ganneau 1896:57). Five perennial springs issue nearby from the aquifer between the dolomite and marl layers of the Soreq Formation (see Fig. 1).

The site and the underground complex exhibited characteristics typical of the hiding complexes well-known from Judea and elsewhere, particularly from the Judean Shephelah (Kloner and Zissu 2009; Zissu and Kloner 2014; see below). Three areas were excavated (A1–A3; Plan 1). In Areas A1 and A2, two structures were found, with shafts in their courtyards leading to underground chambers. In Area A3, a water reservoir that had been incorporated into a subterranean hiding complex (see below) was unearthed.

The unexcavated parts of this complex were surveyed and plotted, as were a second water reservoir and a cistern found near Areas A1 and A2 (F4, F5; Plan 1). Four burial caves



Plan 1. General plan of the excavation areas.

situated approximately 350 m northwest of Area A1 were also surveyed, but only one was fully plotted (see Plan 1: F6; Fig. 2).

The ceramic and numismatic finds date the architectural remains from the end of the second century BCE until the first century CE. The ceramic material found within the

hiding complex, which canceled the use of earlier installations at the site, is typical of the first century CE, with some types continuing into the first third of the second century CE (see below).

THE EXCAVATION

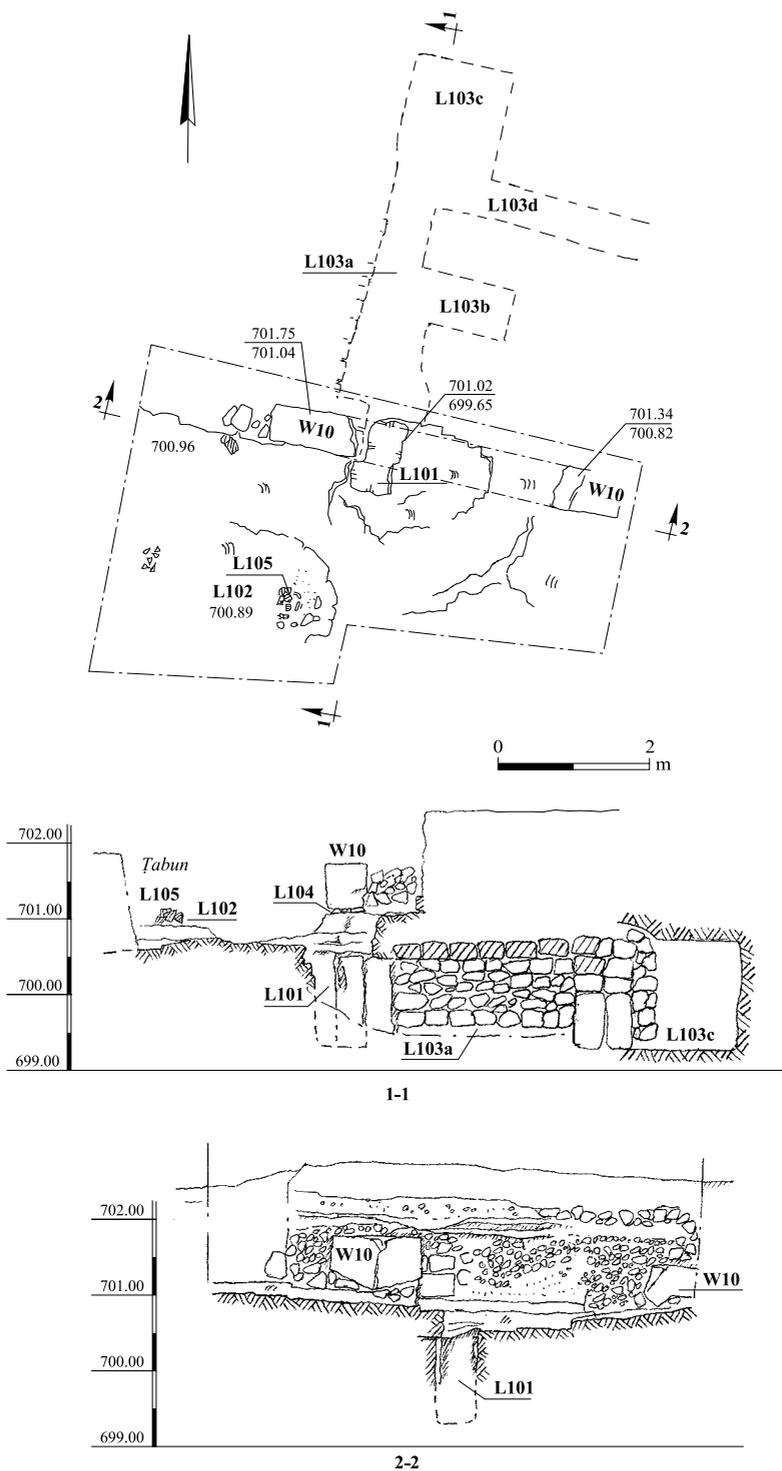
The architectural remains and additional surveyed features are presented below. Areas A1 and A2 are presented first, followed by a description of the installations and burial caves (F4–F6), and ending with a description of the hiding complex in Area A3. The finds from each area and feature are presented after the excavation results.

AREAS A1 AND A2

Area A1

This area (Plan 2) was plundered by robbers, who excavated a large pit ($6.6 \times 4.5\text{--}2.5$ m, 1.9 m deep) and severely disturbed the archaeological strata. A probe was conducted into the terrace fills south of the robbers' trench (L100; 3.8×0.9 m) in an effort to locate an undisturbed context. A segment from a leveled bedrock floor, probably part of a courtyard (L102; 1.6×1.2 m; Figs. 4, 5), was unearthed, upon which were the remains of a dark red *tabun* (L105; diam. 0.4 m, preserved height 0.4 m, 2 cm thick). To the north of the *tabun* were two large stones on both sides of a hewn shaft (L101) that may have been part of the southern limits of a structure (W10; Plan 2: Sections 1–1, 2–2; Figs. 4, 5). Wall 10 was founded on a fill (0.1 m thick) of *terra rossa* soil mixed with small fieldstones (L104; Plan 2: Section 1–1) laid on a rock-cut step 0.1 m higher than the level of the courtyard (a similar construction method was observed in Area A2; see below, L205). The length of W10 (4.7 m) was estimated based on the distance between its two remaining stones.

The hewn shaft (L101) between W10 and the courtyard (Plan 2; Figs. 4, 5) led to a tunnel roofed with large hard-limestone slabs (L103a). The tunnel's eastern side was hewn into the rock, while its western side was constructed of 5–6 courses of medium- to large-sized fieldstones (dimensions $0.2\text{--}0.5 \times 0.1\text{--}0.4$ m; Plan 2: Section 1–1). A rectangular niche (L103b; 0.8 m high) was cut 1.5 m from the base of the shaft, on the eastern side of the tunnel, which terminated in a narrow built passageway (0.45 m high, 0.45 m wide; Fig. 6) leading into a rock-hewn square room (L103c; 1.4 m high). From the room's southeastern corner, a hewn tunnel (L103d) continued east, terminating at a large boulder. The reconstructed outline of W10 passed approximately in the middle of Shaft 101, leading into this small underground complex. The extant remains may have indicated that the quarrying of the shaft dismantled a section of W10 and that the quarrying postdates the use of the structure; alternatively, W10 may have been built atop the already existing shaft (see below).



Plan 2. Area A1, plan and sections.



Fig. 4. Area A1, looking west.

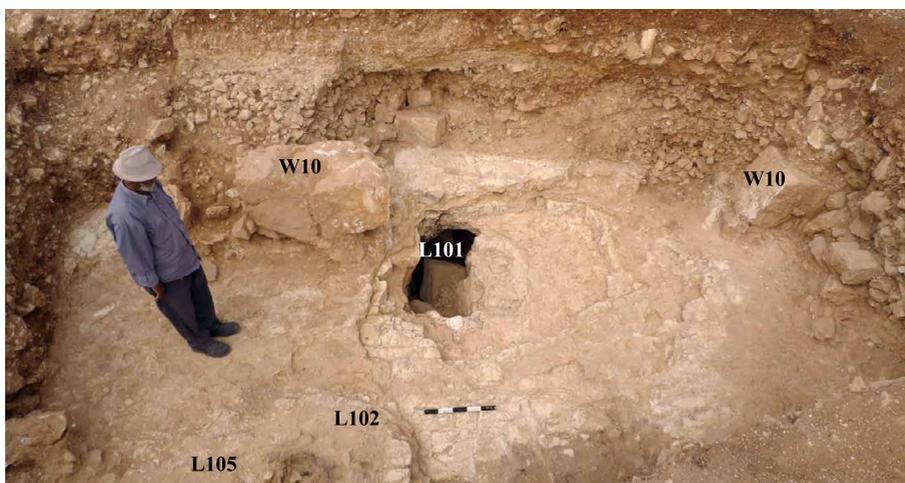


Fig. 5. Area A1, looking north.



Fig. 6. The passage between L103a and L103c, looking north.

The Finds from Area A1

The finds were few. A fragment of a closed cooking pot with a triangular rim and slightly everted neck (Fig. 7:1) was found near the remains of *Tabun* 105 in the courtyard, dating to the first century BCE–first century CE. This type was most popular in the mid-first century BCE, appearing in large quantities in the Jewish Quarter excavations in Jerusalem. Two fragments of domestic objects made of fine-grained basalt stone were found in L100 near the *tabun*. One is a broken round, three-legged mortar or bowl (Fig. 7:2) and the other is the lower part of a grinding stone (Fig. 7:3). Basalt three-legged mortars are common in late Second Temple-period strata in the Jewish Quarter (Geva 2010b:158). The grinding-stone has a wide chronological range, making it difficult to date. The broken edge of an iron blade (Fig. 7:4) and two coins were retrieved from the fills at the bottom of Shaft 101, which led to the underground chamber (L103a–d). The poorly preserved, deeply corroded blade may have been part of a long dagger. The earlier of the two coins dates to the end of the reign of Alexander Jannaeus or soon thereafter (see Ariel, below: Cat. No. 14) and the second coin dates to the second year of the First Revolt against the Romans in 67/68 CE (see Ariel, below: Cat. No. 24).

Many potsherds, mostly belonging to typical Early Roman-period storage jars and cooking pots, were documented on the floor of the underground chamber (L103c) during the preliminary survey of the site; these could not be retrieved due to safety limitations that prevented re-entering this chamber.

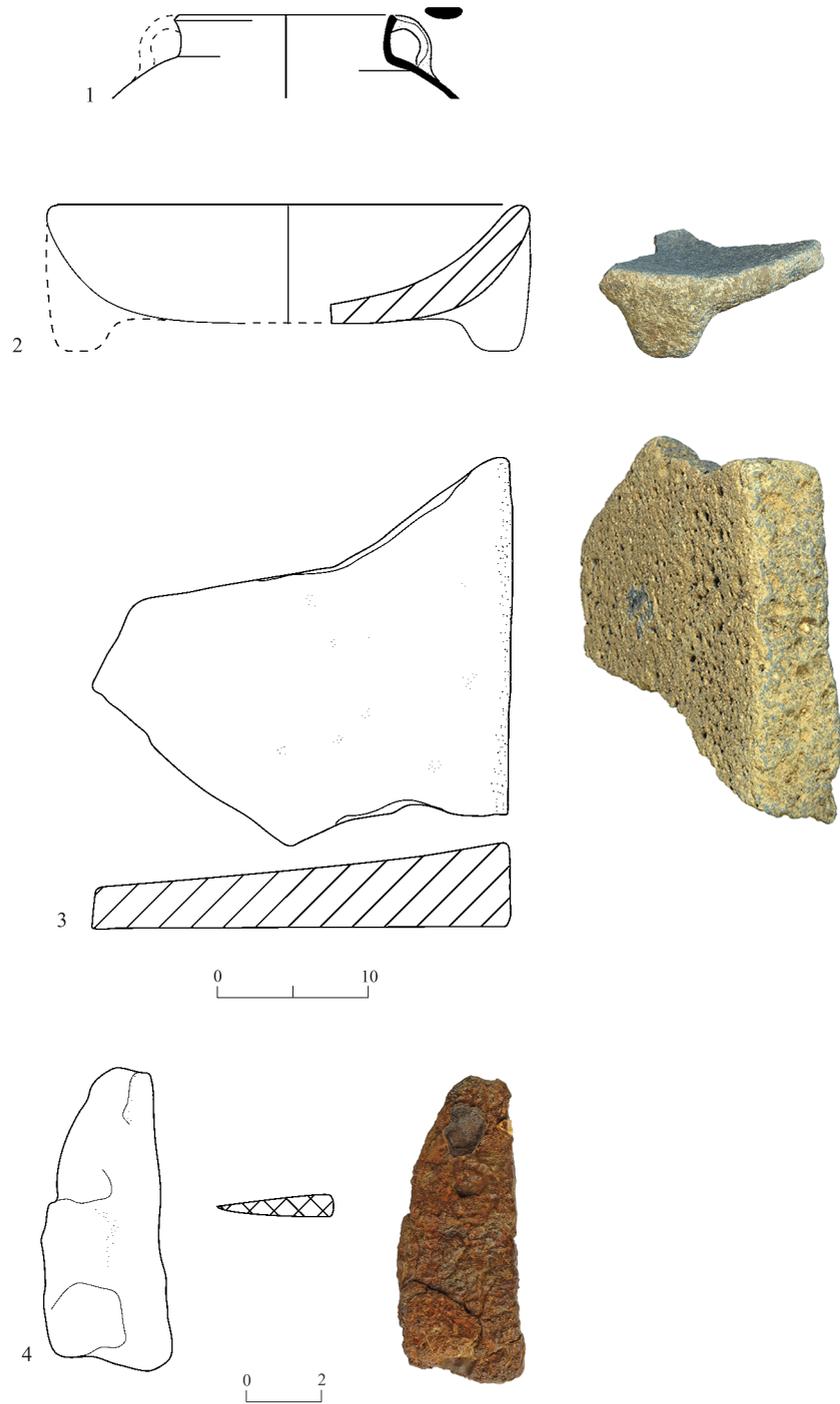


Fig. 7. The finds from Area A1.

No.	Type	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Cooking pot	102	1011	Light red clay, well-fired	Jerusalem: Geva and Rosenthal-Heginbottom 2003:180, Pls. 6.2:24–26; 6.5:38–41 Rosenthal-Heginbottom 2005:242:16
2	Mortar	100	1007		Geva 2010a:188, Pl. 5.1:1
3	Grinding stone	100	1012		
4	Blade	101	1005	Iron, deeply corroded	

Area A2

A natural rock step of the Soreq Formation, typical of the geological structure of the area, was utilized to erect a stepped structure with an integrated-enclosed courtyard (Plan 3; Figs. 8, 9).

The structure's foundations were laid after the masons had leveled the rock step, lowering the floor level of the rectangular room by 0.1 m (L205). Several patches of thin, light gray plaster were found on the leveled bedrock in the center of this room. Upon the step created around the room's floor, a foundation layer (0.1 m thick) of *terra rossa* soil mixed with small fieldstones was laid.

The structure's walls (W20, W21, W23) were solidly built of partially dressed medium- to large-sized fieldstones laid in a headers arrangement. A large stone (1.0×0.6 m, 0.4 m high) placed at the join between Walls 20 and 21 strengthened the southeastern corner of the structure, which was not supported by the rock step (Fig. 8). Wall 20 was built against the vertical drop of the step (Plan 3: Section 1–1; Figs. 8, 10) leaving a gap between its northern side and the leveled bedrock. This gap was filled with earth and small fieldstones (L206), then covered over with flat fieldstones placed at the same level as the leveled bedrock (L205). Wall 24 at the northern end of the area probably served as a pier for an additional, northern room.

The area at the foot of the natural rock step, south of W20, was leveled and served as the structure's courtyard (L202; length 3.5 m, excavated width 3 m). A hewn elliptical depression (L210; 0.12 m deep), roughly located in the courtyard's center, probably accommodated a

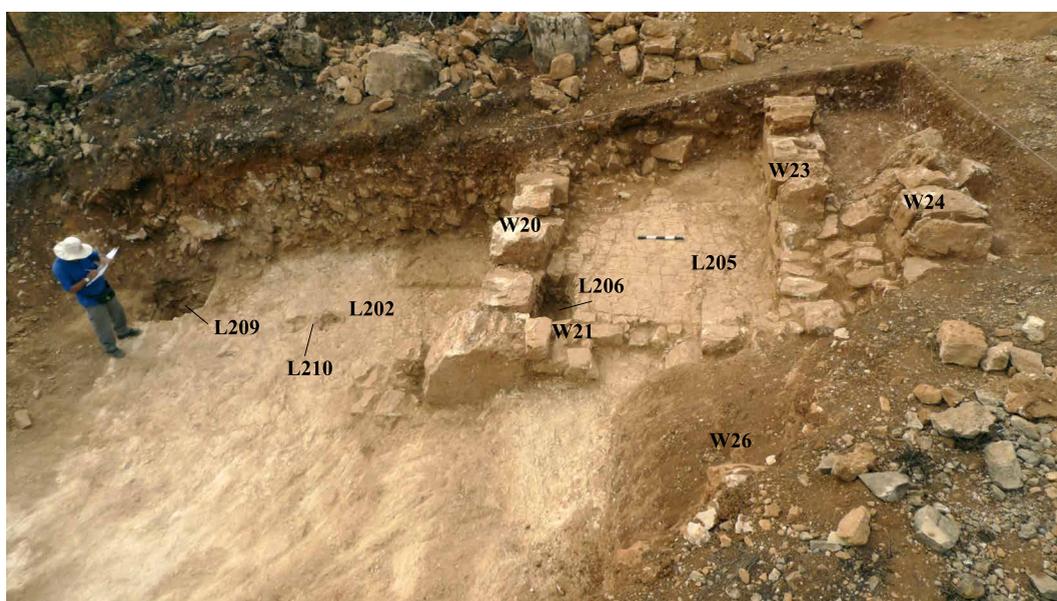


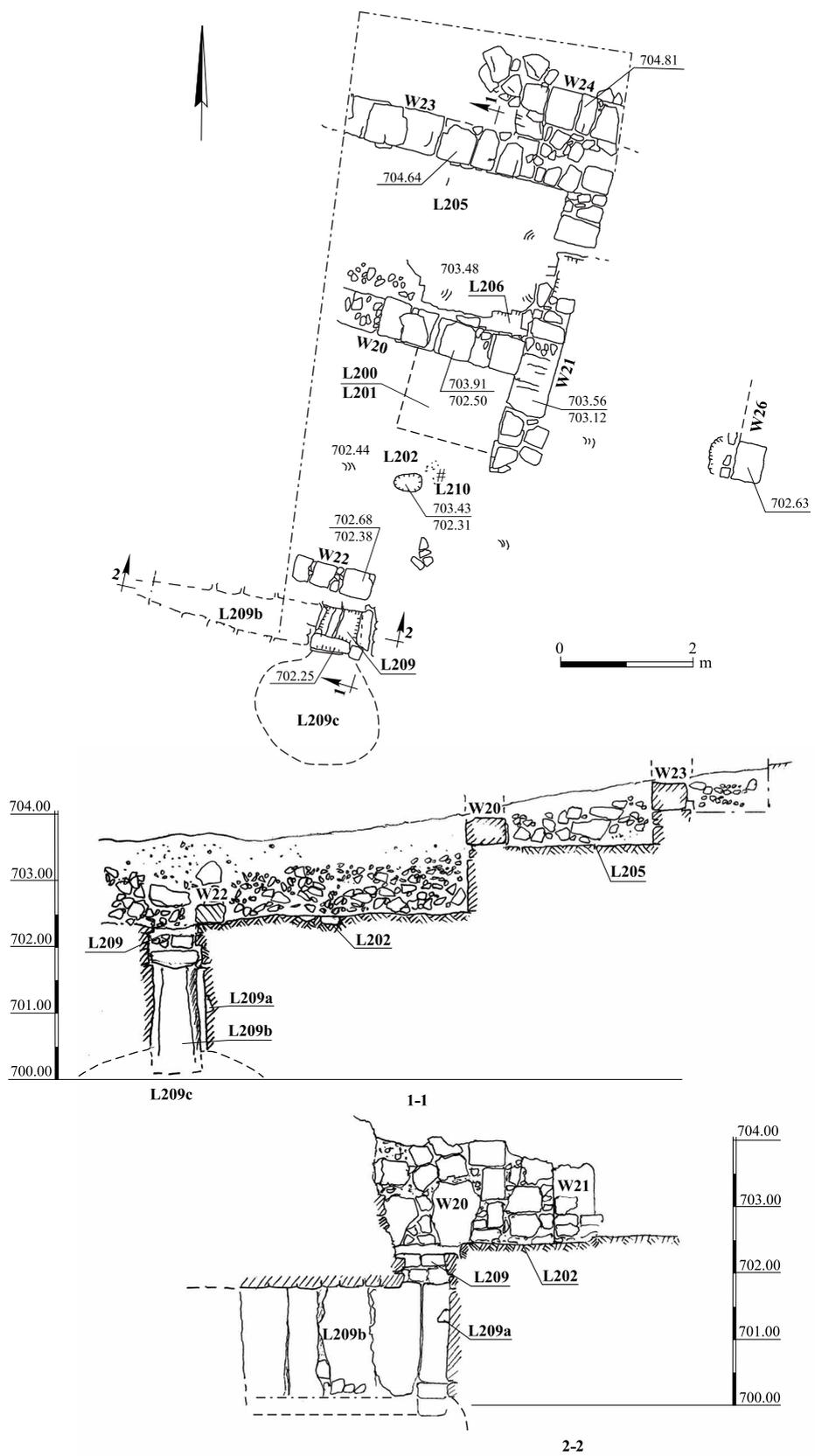
Fig. 8. Area A2, looking west.

wooden pole that could have supported a light covering over the courtyard. Around the depression were a few patches of thin light-gray plaster from the make-up of the courtyard's floor. After clearing the partial collapse of Walls 20 and 21 from the northeastern corner of the courtyard, a level of packed *terra rossa* soil mixed with plaster and ash was revealed (L201; 1.5 × 1.6 m). Several fragments of dark red *tabun* material were found in this level, along with finds that represent the latest activity that took place on the floor (see Fig. 11).

Adjacent to W22 from the south, a partly built rock-hewn rectangular shaft led into a small underground installation (L209; Plan 3: Sections 1–1, 2–2; Figs. 8, 9). A triangular niche cut 1 m below the top of the shaft (L209a) assisted in descending or ascending. This installation was not excavated, but only plotted. A tunnel extending west from the base of the shaft gradually narrowed, terminating at a large boulder (L209b; Plan 3: Sections 1–1, 2–2). It was similar in construction to the tunnel in Area A1 (L103a; see Plan 2). An



Fig. 9. Area A2, looking north.



Plan 3. Area A2, plan and sections.



Fig. 10. Wall 20, looking north.

irregular opening (0.3 m wide, 0.3 m high) hewn in the southern side of the base of the shaft led to a small rock-cut room with a low ceiling (209c; 1.2 m high) whose dimensions and situation require strenuous effort to enter.

The Finds from Area A2

Locus 200.— Several potsherds were retrieved from the collapse on the structure's courtyard (Plan 3). A flask (Fig. 11:1), dated to the first century BCE–first century CE, is rare in post-70 CE assemblages (Geva and Rosenthal-Heginbottom 2003:183). A pinched-nozzle Hasmonean lamp (Fig. 11:2) is typical of first-century BCE assemblages in Jerusalem, remaining in use until the end of that century (Geva and Rosenthal-Heginbottom 2003:140). A wheel-made Herodian lamp (Fig. 11:3) is also a feature of the first century CE, and is very common in layers attributed to that period in the Jerusalem Jewish Quarter excavations and in Jericho (Geva and Hershkovitz 2006:115). A thin trapezoid-shaped bronze plate (Fig. 11:4) may have been used as an inlay in a piece of jewelry, probably of silver, as a thin layer of silver residue was found on one of its sides.³ An iron nail (Fig. 11:5) was also found in L200, as well as six coins dating from the beginning of the second century BCE to the first third of the first century CE (see Ariel, below; Cat. Nos. 1, 7–9, 15, 22).

Locus 201.— An accumulation in the courtyard sealed under the structure's collapse yielded mainly storage jars. A bag-shaped or cylindrical storage jar with a short, pulled back squared-off rim and a short neck (Fig. 12:1) corresponds to Bar-Nathan's J-SJ4A1, the most characteristic jar type in the Hasmonean palace complex at Jericho and the most typical storage jar in Judea during the first century BCE (Bar-Nathan 2002:30–31).

³ My thanks to Lena Kupersmidt for this information.

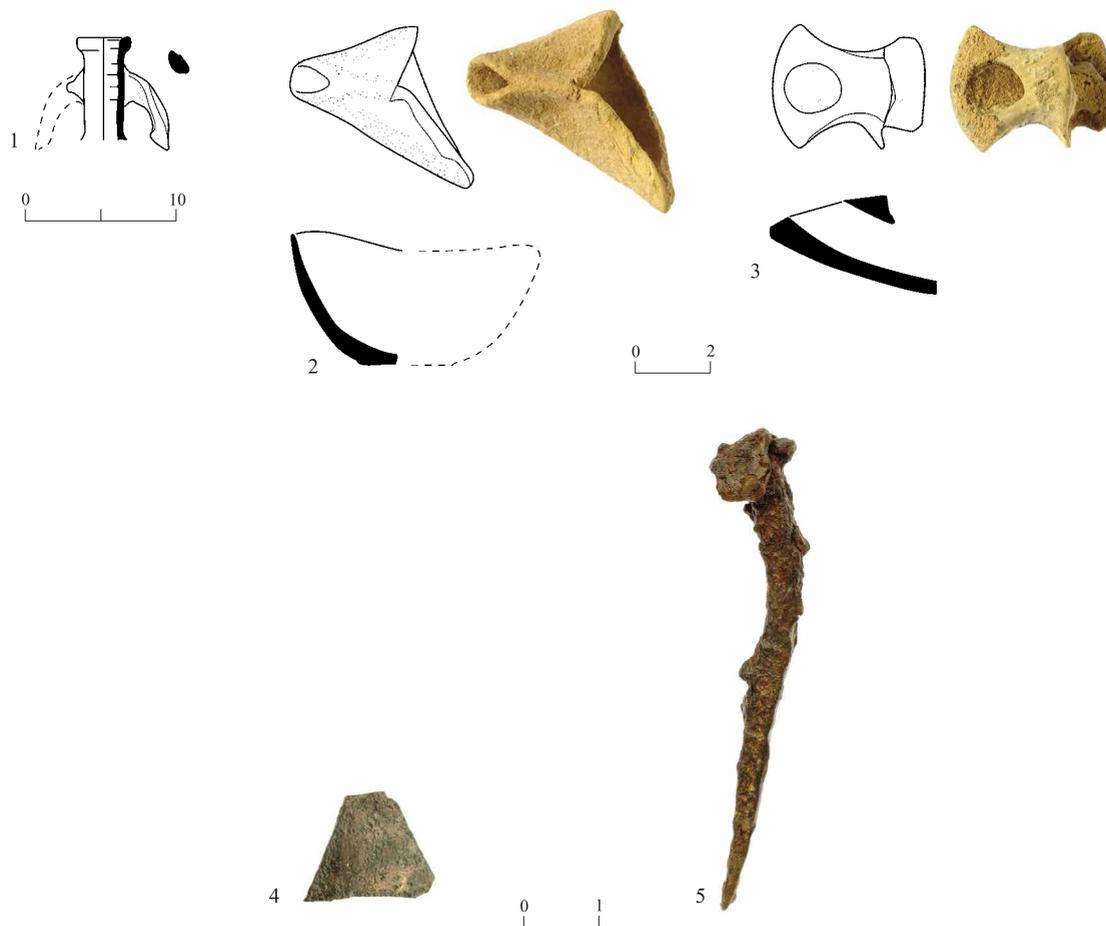


Fig. 11. The finds from L200.

No.	Type	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Flask	2000/2	Reddish-light orange clay	Jerusalem: Geva and Hershkovitz 2006:138, Pl. 4.11:11
2	Oil lamp	2001	Light brown clay	Jerusalem: Geva and Hershkovitz 2006:129, Pl. 4.6:1
3	Oil lamp	2000/1	Beige-light yellow clay	Jerusalem: Tchekhanovets 2013: Fig. 5.14:8–10 Jerusalem Hills: Tzaferis 1974: Fig. 3:13
4	Bronze plate	2012		
5	Nail	2008		

The three other illustrated storage jars (Fig. 12:2–4) are of a jar type having a ridge at the base of a straight neck and various rim types. Figure 12:2 has a prominent ridge at the base of a short, slightly everted neck and a ledge rim. In Jericho, it appears as early as the last third of the first century BCE, but it is more characteristic of assemblages from the first century CE (Bar Nathan 2002:36). In Jerusalem, an example was retrieved from a locus supporting the dating of the Burnt House, and further examples, from the destruction layers of the

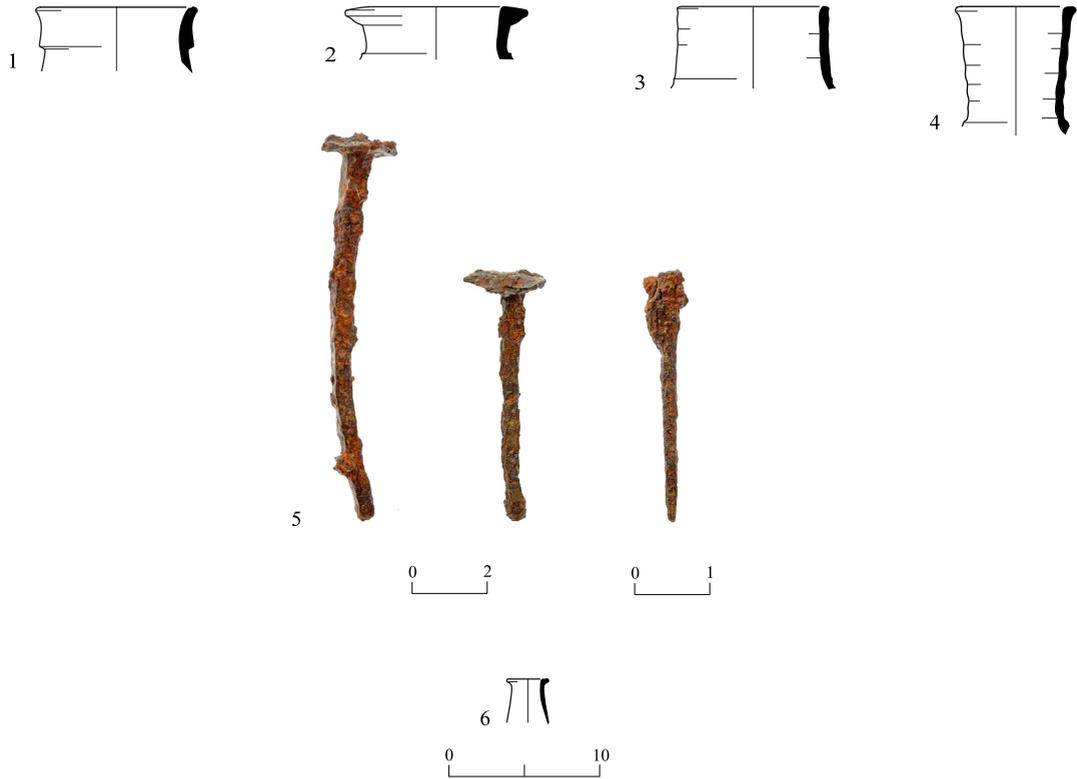


Fig. 12. The finds from Loci 201 (1–5) and 203 (6).

No.	Type	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Storage jar	201	2016/3	Light orange clay, dark gray core	Jerusalem: Tchekhanovets 2013: Fig. 5.6:13
2	Storage jar	201	2016/2	Bright beige clay, red core	Jerusalem: Geva 2010a:134, Pls. 4.1:2, 137; 4.2:9; Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2011:72, Fig. 10:1 Jericho: Bar-Nathan 2002: Pl. 7:47 Judean Desert: Yadin 1963: Pls. 34:4.6; 35 RC.4 Judean Shephelah: Kloner and Tepper 1987:342, Figs. 160:9, 346; 162:12; 352, Fig. 166: 2 Jerusalem Hills: Zissu et al. 2011:278, Fig. 13:9
3	Storage jar	201	2016/1	Light pink clay, dark gray core	
4	Storage jar	201	2016/4	Light pink clay, dark gray core	
5	Nails	201	2015, 2016, 2021		
6	Miniature bottle	203	2022/2	Light brown clay	Jerusalem: Geva 2010a: 141, Pl. 4.4:11–14; Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2011:70, Fig. 8: 12

Burnt House (albeit in these layers with a taller neck). This type was also found in another destruction layer dated to 70 CE, in the large structure unearthed in the Giv'ati Parking Lot excavations in the lower city of Jerusalem (Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2011). At Masada, it is found only in Zealot contexts and is dated there to 66–73/74 CE (Bar-Nathan 2006:63; Type M-SJ13), with variations continuing into the first third of the second century CE. It appears in unstratified contexts, such as the refuge caves in the Judean desert, notably in the Cave of Letters, where similar storage jars with ribbed shoulders were found alongside Herodian lamps; they were assigned by Yadin (1963) to the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132–135 CE). The type has been found in various hiding complexes in the Judean Shephelah, e.g., Ḥorbat Midras, Rasm Dihna and Aḥuzat Ḥazzan (Kloner and Tepper 1987:342; 346; 352), as well as in Me'arat Ha-Te'omim (Twins Cave) in the Jerusalem mountains, where it was part of a rich assemblage of finds dated to the Bar Kokhba Revolt (Zissu et al. 2011).

Figure 12:3 belongs to a storage jar with a delicate ridge at the base of a tall neck ending in a simple rim; this type too was found in the destruction layer of the Burnt House in Jerusalem (Geva 2010a:122). Shown in Fig. 12:4 is a jar bearing wheel ridges on the shoulder and a tall, everted neck with a prominent ridge at its base; the rim is slightly outturned.

Three iron nails (Fig. 12:5) similar to the nail found in L200 (see Fig. 11:5) were also found.

Locus 203.— An accumulation of soil and collapse, in which relatively few potsherds were found, covered L205. This is the only locus that yielded the rim of an Iron Age bowl from the seventh century BCE (not drawn) and a fragment of a miniature bottle—part of a conical neck and a slightly everted rim (Fig. 12:6). Similar miniature bottles, albeit straight-necked, were found in Early Roman-period contexts in Jerusalem.

Locus 205.— Floor 205 was covered with substantial collapse from the structure's walls (L203). Among the pottery finds was a cooking pot with a triangular rim and slightly everted neck (Fig. 13:1) that dates to the second half of the first century BCE; the type remained in use throughout the first century CE. A bag-shaped storage jar with a long cylindrical neck and a short, thickened squared-off everted rim (Fig. 13:2) corresponds to Bar-Nathan's J-SJ3 from Jericho, where it appears toward the end of the second century BCE (Bar-Nathan 2002:27–28; Sandhaus 2013:90), but does not occur in Jericho in Herodian contexts (Bar-Nathan 2002:27–28). A storage jar with a long, slightly everted neck, a squared profile and a pronounced ridge at the base of the neck (Fig. 13:3) appears in Jericho mostly in Herodian contexts (Bar-Nathan 2002:33) and in Jerusalem, in destruction levels dated to 70 CE. Figure 13:4 shows a jar with a long-collared rim and a high upright neck. In Jericho, it is characteristic of the Hasmonean period (c. 150–37 BCE), but was also in use at the beginning of the Herodian period. It is the dominant type in the Jerusalem Jewish Quarter excavations in strata dating to Herod's reign (second half of the first century BCE), and seems to have continued in use until the beginning of the first century CE (Geva and Hershkovitz 2006:104). The flask (Fig. 13:5) is similar to the one displayed in Fig. 11:1 from L200.

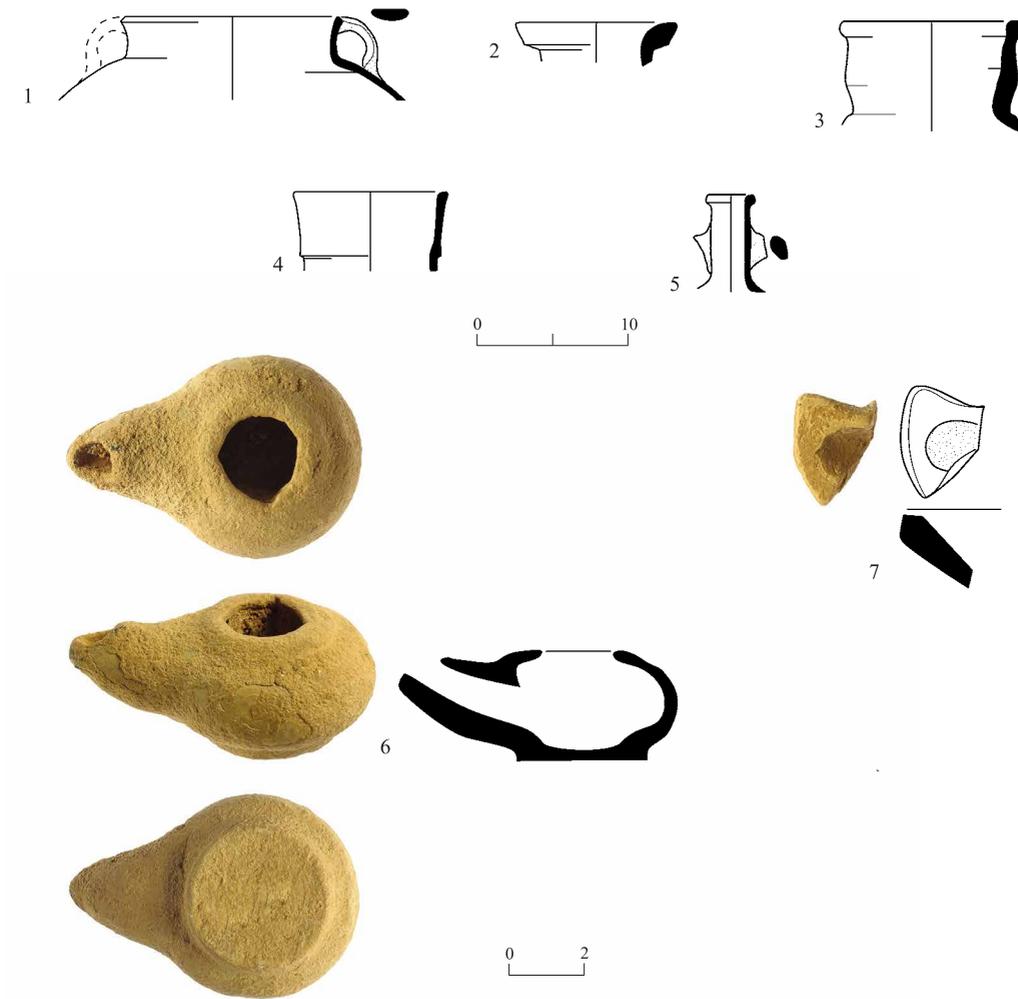


Fig. 13. The finds from L205.

No.	Type	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Cooking pot	2027/1	Red-light orange clay	Jerusalem: Geva and Hershkovitz 2006:111, Pl. 4.5:18
2	Storage jar	2030/2	Light brown clay	Jerusalem: Sandhaus 2013: Fig. 4.6:10
3	Storage jar	2027/2	Light pink clay	Jericho: Bar-Nathan 2002: Pl. VIII:5
4	Storage jar	2030/2	Light brown clay	Jerusalem: Geva and Hershkovitz 2006:123, Pl. 4.3:10
5	Flask	2027/3	Light orange clay	Jerusalem: Tchekhanovets 2013: Fig. 5.18:3
6	Oil lamp	2028	Light brown clay	Jerusalem: Geva and Hershkovitz 2006:121, Pl. 4.2:18
7	Oil lamp	2029	Beige-light yellow clay	Jerusalem: Tchekhanovets 2013: Fig. 5.14:8–10 Jerusalem Hills: Tzaferis 1974: Fig. 3:13

On the room's floor was a complete oil lamp (Fig. 13:6) with round shoulders, a low ridge around the filling hole and a short nozzle, a popular type in Judea throughout the second century BCE. It appears alongside the traditional folded lamp and it ceased use in the beginning of the first century BCE (Geva 2003:141). The nozzle of a Herodian lamp (Fig. 13:7) was found, similar to the lamp from L200 (Fig. 11:3).

Two coins were retrieved from L205: One is Seleucid (see Ariel, below: Cat. No. 6), and the other was struck by Alexander Jannaeus or soon after (see Ariel, below: Cat. No. 13). A third coin—a Hasmonean coin of unclear date (see Ariel, below: Cat. No. 19)—was discovered by a metal detector between the first and second courses of the southern face of W20 (see below).

Locus 206.— The few potsherds discovered in this locus originated from sealed construction fills that were excavated between W20 and L205, and are therefore of some importance in establishing the construction date of this structure: A storage jar with a squared-off collar rim (Fig. 14:1) is of the same type as found in L201 but with a taller neck and a shorter rim (see Fig. 12:1). As mentioned previously, this was a common type in the late second–first centuries BCE. Another jar has a sharply everted squared-off rim (Fig. 14:2); it is a common find at late second century BCE sites and is especially typical of the early first century BCE (Sandhaus 2013:90, Type SJ4).

Locus 209c.— This small subterranean room contained alluvial fills mixed with ceramic finds. A few human bones (a femur and part of a cranium) belonging to an adult male found during the preliminary survey of the site could not be retrieved due to safety limitations. The sole find from this room is a flask (not drawn) identical to those found in L200 and L205 (see Figs. 11:1; 13:5).

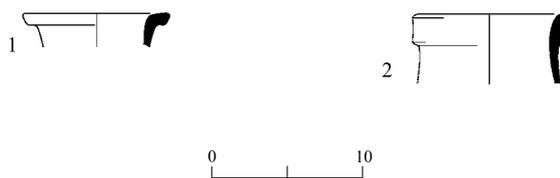


Fig. 14. The pottery from L206.

No.	Type	Reg. No.	Description	Parallels
1	Storage jar	2032/4	Light brown clay	Jerusalem: Tchekhanovets 2013: Fig. 5.2:4
2	Storage jar	2032/3	Light pink clay	Jerusalem: Sandhaus 2013: Fig. 4.6:15

Summary: Areas A1 and A2

Most of the finds from Areas A1 and A2 were locally produced pottery vessels used for the storage and consumption of food and liquids. The ceramic and numismatic finds from Area A1 date the activity in this area to the Early Roman period. The *ṭabun* and stone vessels found in the courtyard indicate that they were domestic in nature, used for cooking and the pounding and grinding of grain. The location of the shaft leading to the underground chamber in Area A1 impedes determining its stratigraphic correlation to W10. The assumption that the shaft was hewn after the construction of W10 appears reasonable for two main reasons: (1) If the shaft was hewn before the construction of W10, the builders would have filled the cavity on both sides of the wall's foundation to prevent the sinking of the floor that abutted the wall; (2) based on the characteristics of the hewing, it seems that the shaft was hewn in haste and remained unfinished. The tunnel extending from the underground chamber in Area A1 (L103d; Plan 2) may have been an attempt to extend this small underground complex.

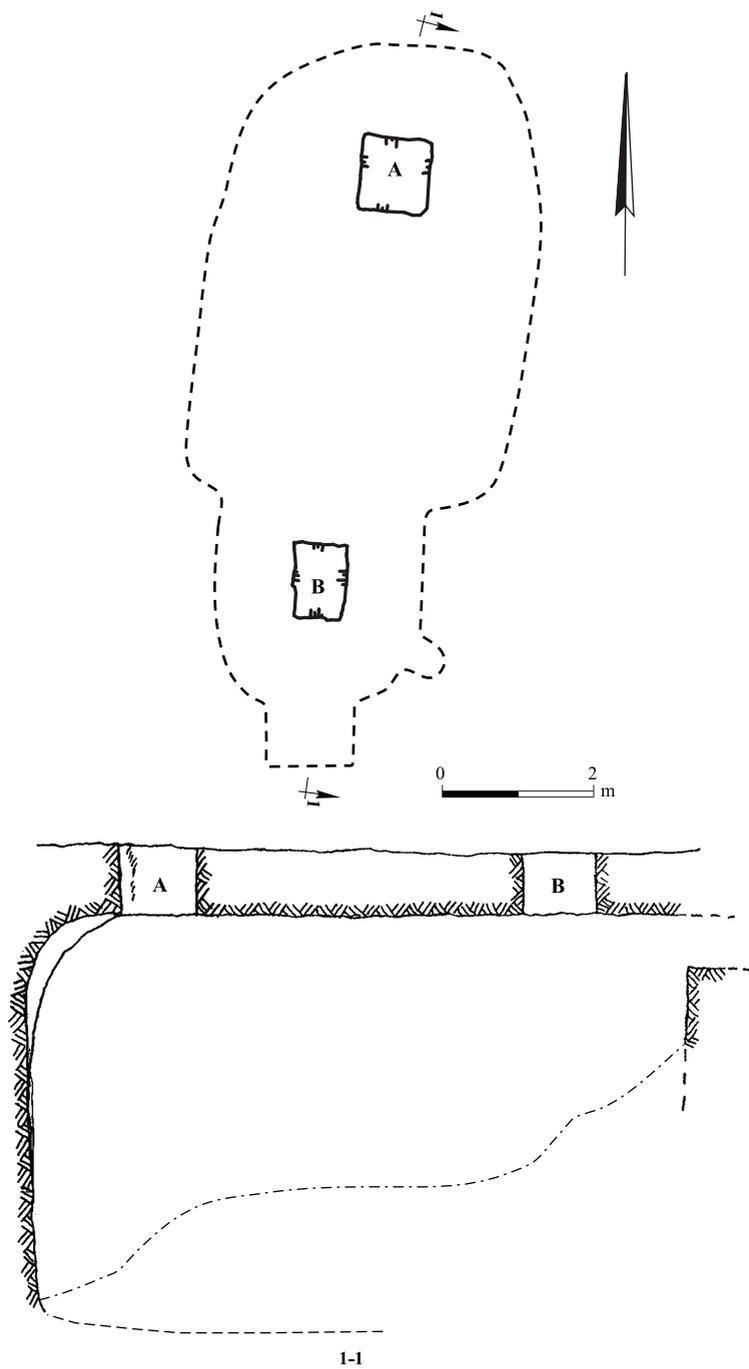
The Area A2 pottery from Loci 200 and 201 dates from the second half of the first century BCE to the first century CE. The coin found in L201, attributed to the second year of the First Jewish Revolt (67/8 CE; see Ariel, below: Cat. No. 25), constitutes a *terminus ante quem* for dating this assemblage. The chronological range of the pottery assemblage from L205 is longer—from the second century BCE to the end of the first century CE, indicating that this structure may have been in use for a long time or, that this was a disturbed locus. The pottery from L206 and the coin retrieved from between the first and second courses of the southern side of W20 assist in providing a tentative date for the structure's construction—the first quarter of the first century BCE (see *Discussion and Conclusions*, below). The underground tunnel in Area A2 (L209b; Plan 3) was probably built for domestic purposes, and may have served as a pantry, as the shaft leading into it is wide and comfortable, and its high ceiling allowed the inhabitants to walk upright. However, the small irregular opening cut at the base of the shaft demands extreme effort to enter the small hewn room, and thus appears to be a later addition.

In the unexcavated area between Areas A1 and A2 the top upper courses of a few walls were observed and plotted (see Plan 1). The walls are for the most part buried under terrace fills and therefore, it is reasonable to assume that they belong to structures adjacent to those unearthed in the excavation.

INSTALLATIONS AND BURIAL CAVES (F4–F6)

Feature F4

Some 20 m south of Area A1 (see Plans 1, 4), a large elongated and oval water reservoir with a flat ceiling was surveyed and plotted (measured to a depth of 5.3 m from the ceiling at the northern end to the top of the fills on its floor). Its opening, on its southern side along



Plan 4. F4, plan and section.

the axis of its length, was found blocked by alluvial fills and fieldstones. Two rectangular shafts, 4.5 m distant from one another, were cut into its ceiling (A, B). The white-grayish plaster preserved on its walls is similar to the plaster found on the walls of Cistern E and Installation B, which were incorporated into the hiding complex (see below, Area A3). The plan and measurements of this reservoir resemble those of another water reservoir that was incorporated into the hiding complex as its main hall (Plan 6:M; see below).

Feature F5

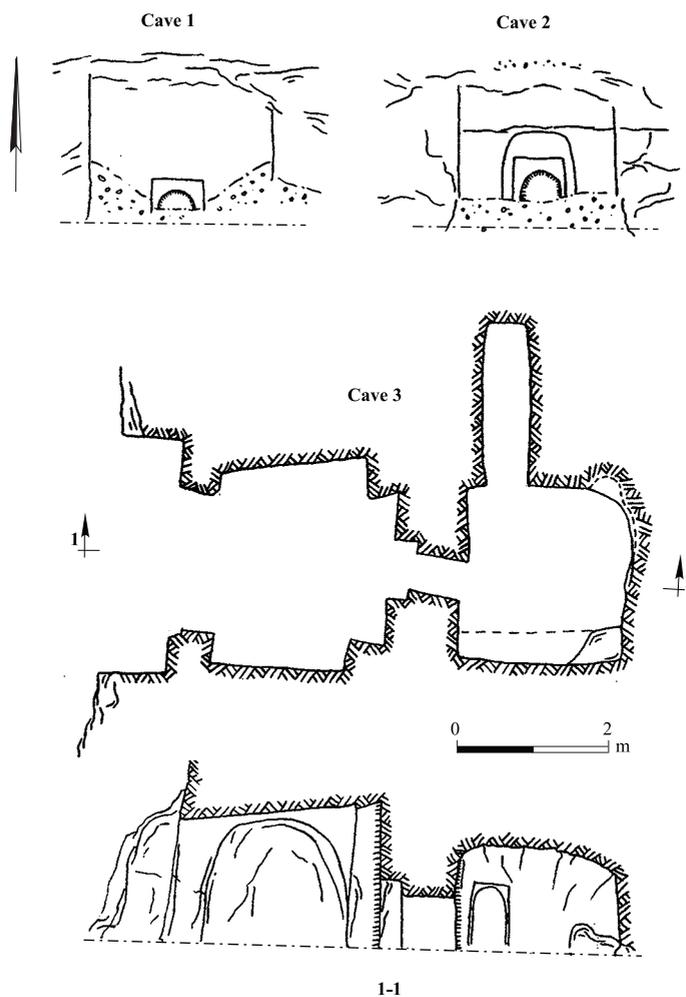
The rectangular opening of a rock-cut cistern was found 22 m north of Area A1, on the upper reaches of the hill, among the cultivated terraces that extend over the site (see Plan 1). It is apparent that the terraces were built around the cistern, integrating it into the agricultural unit that seems to have been in use until recently. Just 2 m southeast of the cistern's opening were two rock-cut cupmarks (0.5×0.5 m, 0.2 m deep). The inside of the cistern was not excavated nor surveyed.

Feature F6

Four adjacent burial caves were surveyed 350 m northwest of the site (see Plan 1; Fig. 2). Their facades were hewn into a rock scarp above a steep ravine that flows west into the Kisalon Valley (see Figs. 1, 2). Caves 1–3 were fronted by a hewn courtyard. The openings of Caves 1 and 2 (Plan 5) led directly into the burial chambers, which were found almost completely filled with alluvium. Three arched *loculi* could be discerned in Cave 1 (Fig. 15), while Cave 3 was found cleared of alluvium, perhaps due to robbing. Cave 3 was more



Fig. 15. Cave 1, with three *loculi* in the wall opposite the entrance.



Plan 5. Facades of Caves 1 and 2; plan and section of Cave 3.

elaborate (see Plan 5; Fig 16), with a wide rectangular opening (hewn to a depth of 0.9–1.0 m) in the southeastern corner of its courtyard (3.1 m wide) leading into a vestibule (Fig. 17) with rock-cut arches on its southern and northern sides. A third arch cut into a rectangular frame led into the burial chamber, which had only a single *loculus*. One meter to its east were quarrying marks of another *loculus*, left incomplete. In the southeastern corner of the burial chamber was a short rock-cut bench.

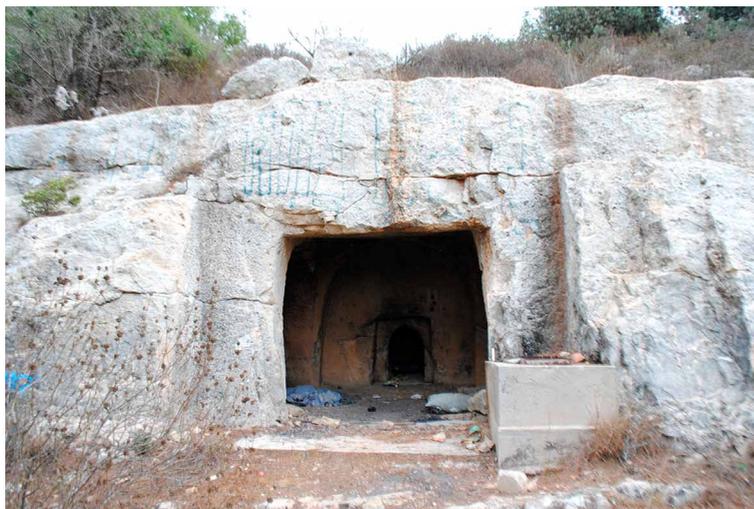


Fig. 16. The facade of Cave 3, looking east.

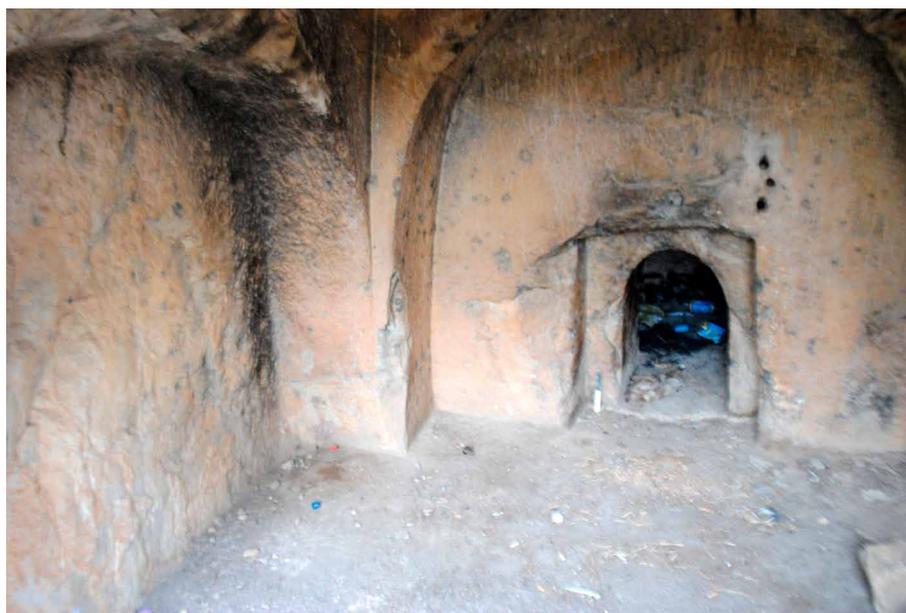


Fig. 17. The vestibule of Cave 3, looking east.

These burial caves are characteristic of the Early Roman period (Kloner and Zissu 2003b). Tombs with a vestibule are more common in larger burial caves and are attested in the Jerusalem necropolis, as well as in various sites in the Judean Shephelah (Kloner and Zissu 2003b:22, and see No. 20 therein). Cave 3 shows a higher standard of hewing than Caves 1 and 2, suggesting that the tomb belonged to a wealthy family. The single *loculus* in this cave, and the quarrying marks indicate the preparation of an additional, incomplete *loculus*, implying that the cave was in use for a short time.

The collapsed ceiling of Cave 4, several meters south of Cave 3 (Fig. 18), rendered it impossible to observe its plan and arrangement. An almost complete piriform bottle (Fig. 19) was retrieved from the collapse in front of the cave; this vessel type often appears in

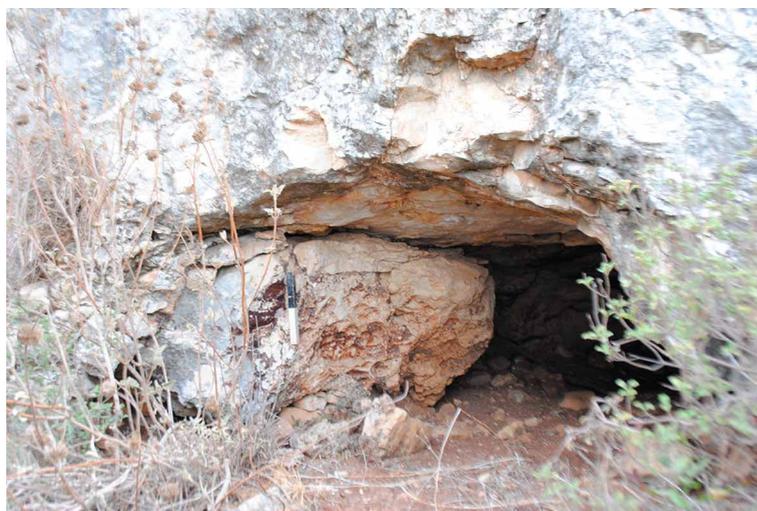


Fig. 18. Cave 4, showing the findspot of the piriform bottle, looking southeast.

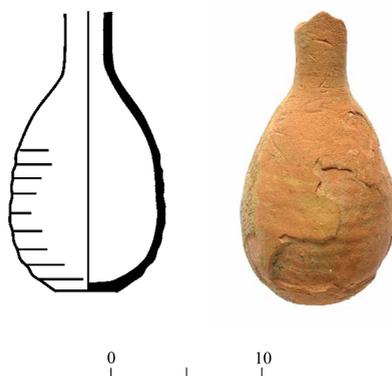


Fig. 19. Complete piriform bottle from Cave 4 (L999, Basket 3000, light orange clay).

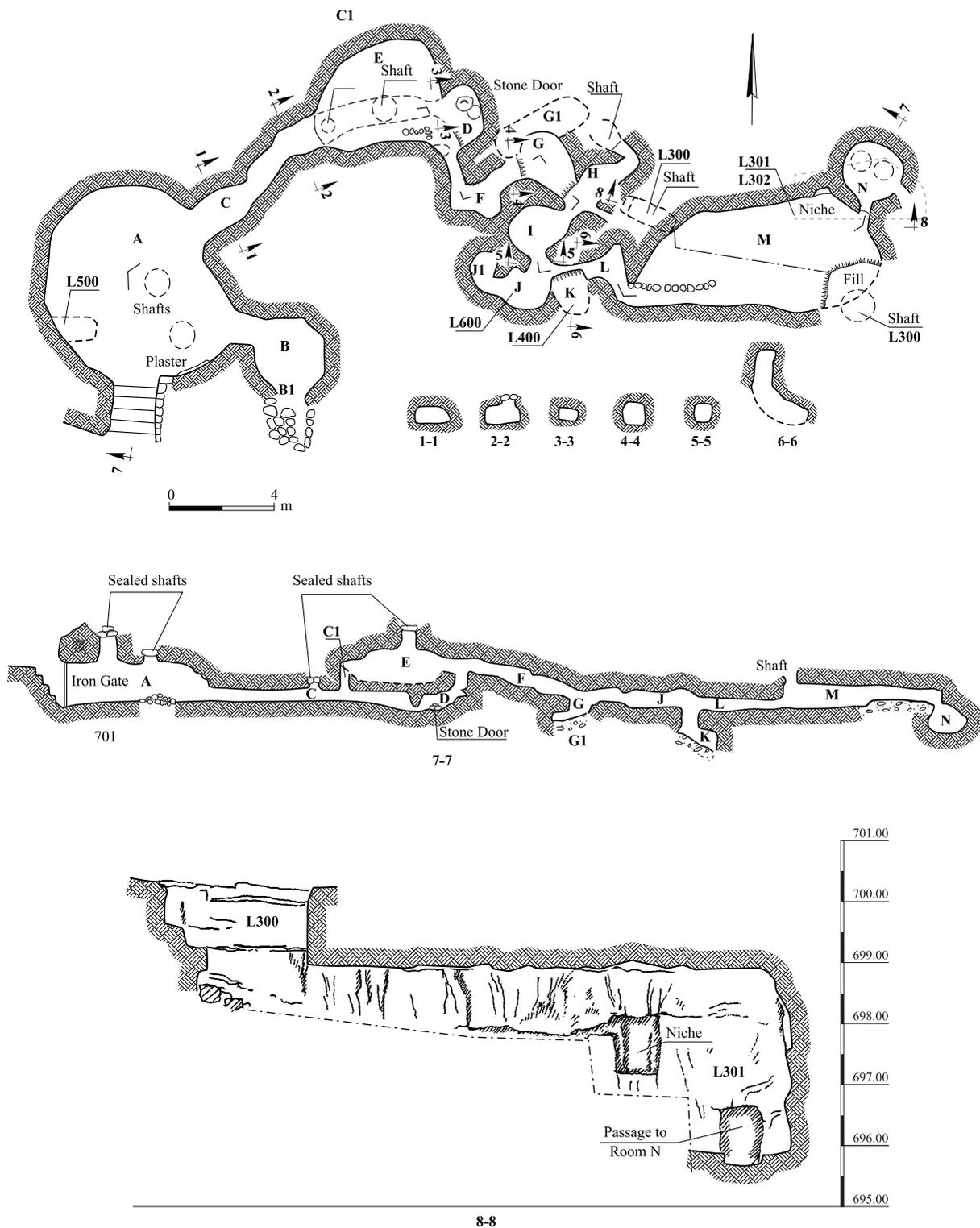
burial contexts and is common in the first century CE (Kloner and Zissu 2003b:56–58, Fig. 36:5–7, 10, 11). It corresponds to Bar Nathan's Type J-UN2C, often found in Second Temple-period tombs (Bar-Nathan 2002:165).

HIDING COMPLEX A3

The hiding complex, which was surveyed and partially excavated, extends over an area of 550 sq m (Plan 6). Four earlier installations were cancelled by its preparation, and their original openings were intentionally sealed (Plan 6:A, B, E and M). Hewn tunnels (total length 35 m, average height and width 0.4–0.6 × 0.4–1.2 m) cut into the hard dolomite rock connect the western side of the complex (Plan 6:A) with the eastern side, where a large reservoir (Plan 6:M) was incorporated into the complex, probably as its main hall. Unlike the majority of the hiding complexes in the Judean Shephelah, the cross section of the tunnels at the site is not uniform in shape and measurements due to the natural features of the rock into which they were hewn. Shafts, a locking facility, narrow passages, different height levels and sharp turns all served to secure the complex from possible intrusion (see below).

Prior to the excavation, the single entrance to this underground complex was gained through a modern breach in the southern side of a large cistern (Plan 6:A), which served as a storing space for a local family from Abu Ghosh, who cultivates an olive grove on the terraces extending over the site. The oval-shaped cistern had a curved ceiling with two circular shafts, found blocked with large fieldstones. Remains of dark gray plaster were observed on its southern wall, and soot marks, on its ceiling. A robber's trench, which was dug into its southwestern portion (L500; 1.6 × 1.0 m, 1 m deep) revealed that the cistern filled up with alluvium and small fieldstones prior to its use in modern times. The cistern's floor could not be seen in this trench, leading to the conclusion that its depth was at least 2.5 m.

There were two breaches on the cistern's eastern side. The southern breach (1 m wide, 0.3 m high, 1 m long) cut through the western side of a rectangular installation (Plan 6:B; 1 m high from the ceiling to the fills), originally accessed from the south along its longitudinal axis at its fore (Plan 6:B1); it was found blocked by a heap of large fieldstones (Fig. 20). Alluvial soil penetrated through this opening and spilled over what appeared to be the installation's stairs. Remnants of white-grayish plaster containing small pebbles, crushed charcoal and pottery (Fig. 21) covered the installation's sides, ceiling and entrance. The plan of Installation B and the plaster remains covering its entirety, raised the possibility that it originally served as a ritual bath (*miqveh*), although this premise cannot be determined without excavation. The second, northern opening in the eastern side of Cistern A (1.3 × 0.6 m 0.4 m high) led into a hewn tunnel (C; 10.90 × 0.45–1.50 m, 0.4 m high). Nearly 5 m from the entrance to this tunnel, toward the northeast, the bottom of a hewn shaft cut into its ceiling was found blocked with large fieldstones (diam. 0.4 m; Plan 6:C1; Fig. 22). This shaft breached the floor of Cistern E and canceled it (see below). Tunnel C terminated in a narrow opening (0.45 high, 0.35 m wide, 0.4 m long; Fig. 23), which led into the base of a



Plan 6. Area A3, the hiding complex, plans and sections.

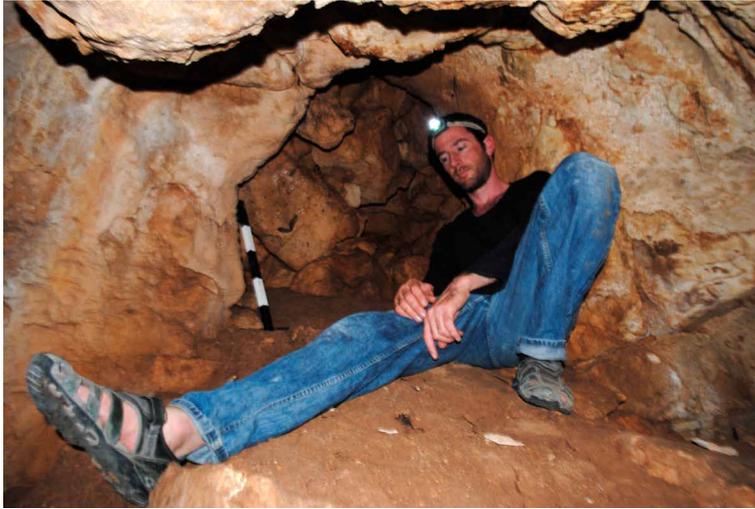


Fig. 20. The blocked entrance to Installation B, looking south.



Fig. 21. Plaster remains in Installation B.

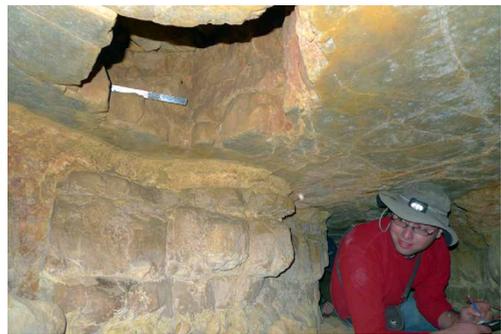


Fig. 22. Shaft C1 in the ceiling of Burrow C, looking southwest.

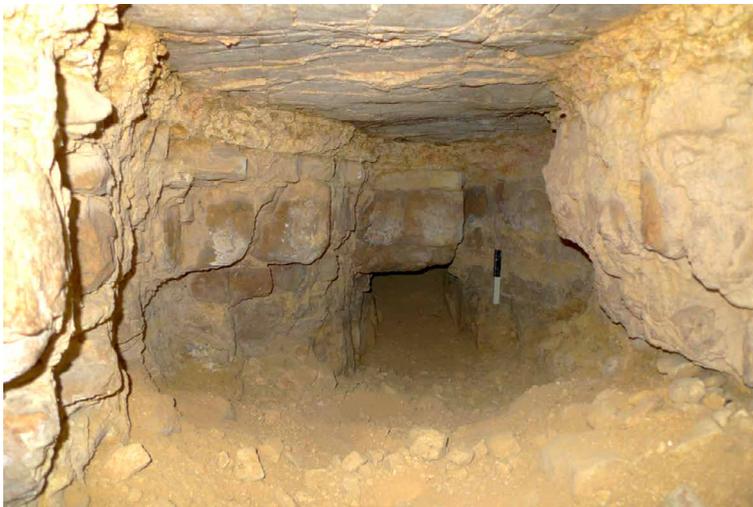


Fig. 23. The passage between Burrow C and Shaft D, looking east.



Fig. 24. Blocking device at the base of Shaft D.

second shaft (Plan 6:D; 1.6 m high). Passage from Tunnel C into this shaft required crawling with hands close to the body or outstretched forward (Fig. 24). A rectangular closing stone (0.5×0.4 , 0.1 m thick), originally used to block this passage, was found lying at the center of the shaft (Fig. 24). It was made of hard limestone; one side flat, while the other had a carved handle (18 cm long, 8 cm wide), which facilitated its placement and removal (Fig. 25). West of the shaft head was an opening (0.9 m wide, 0.4 m high), cut into the eastern side of Cistern E (0.8 m from the ceiling to the top of the fills and quarrying waste). Approximately mid-center in its ceiling is a round shaft (diam. 0.9 m, 1.2 m high) found blocked with large limestone slabs (Fig. 26). Plaster remains on the cistern's sides consisted of a thick (4–5 cm) layer of lime mixed with crushed potsherds, gravel and charcoal covered with a well-smoothed layer of gray plaster (5 mm thick). The cistern was partially filled with quarry waste.

A rock-cut niche in the cistern's southwestern side served as the access point to the head of Shaft C1, connecting the cistern with Tunnel C (see above), thereby creating two separate points of entry and exit from this installation. From the southern side of the head of Shaft D a narrow tunnel (0.35–0.50 m high) extended southward (Plan 6:F), after which it diverted east at an almost 90° angle, sloping northeast, and terminating at a rock-cut step (0.6 m high) that descended into a small elliptical room (1.2 m high; Plan 6:G). From the room's northern side there was a descent into a small rectangular cavity (room? 0.4 m high; Plan 6:G1). At a junction southeast of Room G, a tunnel led northeast (Plan 6:H), veering northwest, and terminating at a shaft, blocked by collapses of fieldstones and alluvium. A second tunnel led southwest into a circular space (0.8 m high) with a leveled bedrock floor (Plan 6:I; Fig. 27). A passage to the south led into another irregularly hewn space (Plan 6:J; 0.6–0.7 m high), with a short tunnel in its western side leading into an oval niche (Plan 6:J1; $1.0 \times$



Fig. 25. Blocking device, close up.

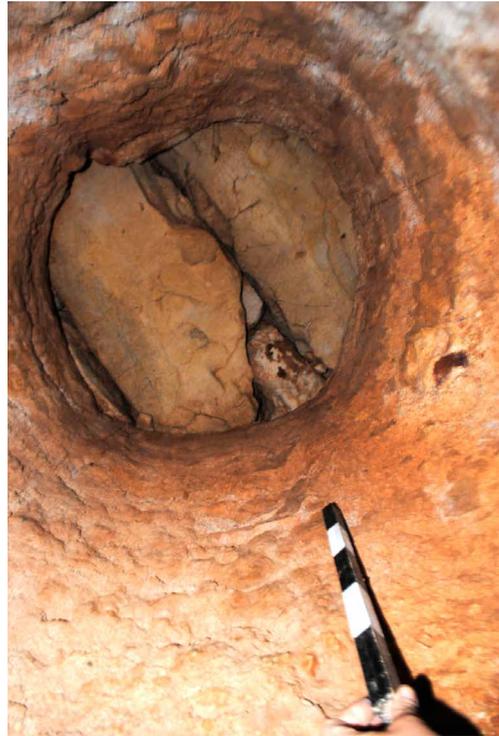


Fig. 26. View of the shaft head of Cistern E.

1.1 m, 0.4 m high) and another tunnel (L) on its eastern side extended toward Reservoir M (see below). Hewn down from the level of Tunnel L's floor was a small installation (Plan 6:K; 1.5 m deep), which was found undisturbed when the complex was first plotted; it was later excavated by robbers, who disposed of the fills, including the potsherds in them, on the floor of Room J (see below, L400 and L600). Tunnel L turns sharply south, where it entered Reservoir M. This reservoir ($9.0 \times 1.5\text{--}4.0$ m, 3.5 m high) was documented during the survey prior to the excavation.

An oval shaft (L300; 2.5×1.0 m; excavated to a depth of 2 m) in the northwestern corner of the reservoir, was located and breached from the surface to facilitate the excavation of a probe into the accumulation in the northeastern corner of the reservoir (L301/302; 2×3 m). This shaft was found blocked with large boulders and fieldstones covered with *terra rosa* soil. The probe was carried out from west to east in steps, for safety reasons, into the mixed fill of alluvial soil and collapse from the ceiling and sides of the reservoir, exposing part of the northern side of the reservoir (Plan 6: Section 8–8), where a rectangular niche was found, 0.9 m below the reservoir's flat ceiling (0.9 m high, 0.75 m wide, 0.4 m deep). At a lower depth, 2.2 m below the ceiling, a passage that had been breached in the northeastern corner of the reservoir was found (1.0×0.7 m, 0.4 m deep). The passage led into a small circular space (diam. 2 m, 0.9 m high; Plan 6:N; Fig. 28), where an installation consisting of two circular pits connected at their bottom via a channel (L700; diam. 1.2 m, 1.4 m



Fig. 27. View from Room J to Room I.



Fig. 28. View from Room N through the passage to Hall M.

deep; Fig. 29) was found. Southeast of Room N was an additional hewn space that was not excavated; it is possible that the complex extended further in this direction.

The shaft of Cistern E was found sealed with large stone slabs, which canceled its use. The use of the cistern as a disposal cavity for quarrying debris found inside it may have been the means by which the hewers of the complex facilitated its progress and at the



Fig. 29. Installation 700, inside Room N.

same time concealed the quarrying waste so that its location would not be revealed.⁴ While it is possible that the cistern was filled with the quarry waste prior to its sealing and the installment of the hiding complex, the breaching of its sides and its incorporation into the hiding complex suggested otherwise.

It is noteworthy that the area between Tunnel F and Hall M (see Plan 6), did not pass through or cancel earlier installations and therefore must represent quarrying activity corresponding solely to the installment of the hiding complex. The small installation (K) found in this section of the complex may have been a storage space.

The Finds from the Hiding Complex (Area A3; Plan 6)

The pottery retrieved from the hiding complex originated from three loci: L301, L400 and L600. Prior to the excavation of L301, a large quantity of potsherds, mostly of storage jars, was discerned on the surface. These originated in part from the illicit excavations which left several shallow pits that could be observed in different areas of Reservoir M.

⁴ Gichon noted a similar phenomenon in the hiding complex at Ḥorbat 'Aqd (Gichon 1982:38–39) and recently, a similar occurrence was observed in a refuge cave from the Early Roman period at Naḥal Arza (Ein-Mor et al. 2019:54–55).

Locus 301 yielded an additional, substantial amount of storage jar fragments, representing approximately 20 jars.

The bulk of the diagnostic storage jar fragments found in Loci 301 and 302 belongs to two main types. One type has a ribbed bag-shaped body, a rounded shoulder, a short and slightly everted neck, and a ledge rim that is sometimes channeled (Fig. 30:1). Similar jars were found at Giv'at Ram, Jerusalem (Hershkovitz 1987) and at the Roman estate in Jericho in an assemblage dated to 70–112 CE (Bar-Nathan and Eisenstadt 2013: Type J-SJ24). The second type has a cylindrical body with pronounced ribbing on the body and neck, a ridge—prominent or delicate—at the base of a tall straight neck, and a plain, sometimes slightly out-turned, rim (Fig. 30:2). In the Jewish Quarter excavations, this jar first appears sometime during the early first century CE (Geva 2010a:122). Similar storage jars were also found in Area A2 (see Fig. 12:2, 4), albeit they are not the dominant type as they are within the hiding complex, where they appear in large quantities.

A cooking jug (Fig 30:3) from L301 with an everted neck, a triangular rim and two handles corresponds to Bar-Nathan's M-CJG1B from Masada (Bar-Nathan 2006:181), where it was dated to the Zealot occupation (66–73/4 CE). This type continued into the first third of the second century CE. It appears at Giv'at Ram in Jerusalem, where it was found in an assemblage originating from the area identified as the center of the settlement, dated from 72 CE until the second century CE (Hershkovitz 1987:314–315). Two-handled jugs of this type are relatively unusual. The Masada parallel includes three complete cooking

Fig. 30 ▶

No.	Type	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels
1	Storage jar	301	3009/1	Red-light orange clay	Jericho: Bar-Nathan and Eisenstadt 2013: Pl. 1.11:703
2	Storage jar	301	3009/2	Red-light orange clay	Jerusalem: Geva 2010a: Pl. 4.2:3 Jericho: Bar-Nathan and Eisenstadt 2013: Pl. 1.2:598
3	Jug	301	3000	Light orange clay	Masada: Bar-Nathan 2006: Pl. 31:90
4	Oil lamp	301	3005	Brown-light orange clay, soot marks around mouth	Jericho: Bar-Nathan and Eisenstadt 2013: Pl. 1.7:650
5	Storage jar	400	4600	Light red clay	Masada: Bar-Nathan 2006: Pl. 12:64
6	Storage jar	400	4000/1	Light orange clay	Jerusalem: Tchekhanovets 2013: Fig. 5.7:3
7	Oil lamp	400	4000	Light orange clay	
8	Storage jar	600	6000/1	Red-light pink clay	Jerusalem: Weksler-Bdolah 2011:107, Fig. 122:36
9	Cooking pot	600	6000/3	Dark red clay	Jerusalem Hills: Fischer 2012: Fig. 5.27:20 Judean Desert: Porat, Eshel and Frumkin 2009: Pl. 3:3

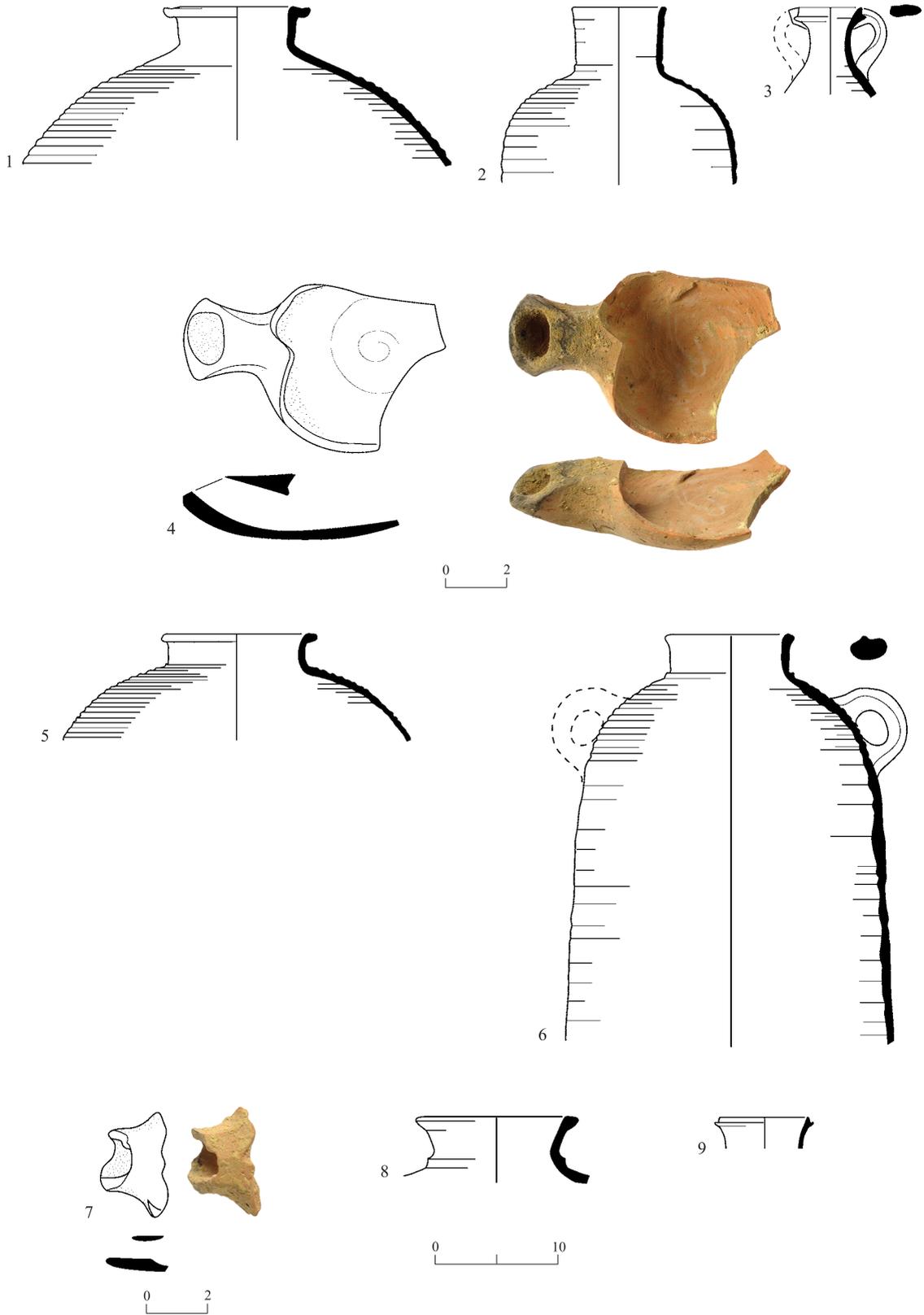


Fig. 30. The pottery from Area A3, the hiding complex.

jugs with two handles but these have a straight neck and a ledge rim (Bar-Nathan 2006: Pl. 31:90). A Herodian-type oil lamp was also retrieved from L301 (Fig. 30:4).

A large storage jar found in Installation K has a bag-shaped ribbed body, a short neck and a ledge rim (Fig. 30:5). While I did not find an exact parallel for this vessel, a storage jar from Masada has a similar outline and profile, albeit the Masada jar has a prominent ridge at the base of the neck as opposed to our example, which has no ridge. The storage jar from Masada was dated by Bar-Nathan to 66–73/74 CE; this type in general was assigned to the last third of the first century BCE until the first third of the second century CE (Bar-Nathan 2006:62). Another storage jar, likewise from Installation K (Fig. 30:6), has a ridge at the base of a long, straight neck and a simple, slightly everted and thickened rim. A fragment of a Herodian-type lamp (Fig. 30:7) from Installation K is apparently of the same type as the lamp (Fig. 30:4) found in L301.

A storage-jar fragment found on the floor of Space J (L600; Plan 6) has a prominent ridge at the base of an everted short neck and a thickened everted ledge rim (Fig. 30:8). This jar is a variant of the jar from L301 (Fig. 30:1) and, as mentioned above, is a type found in first-century CE contexts that remained in use until the first third of the second century CE. A similar jar was found in the *Cardo* excavations in Jerusalem (Weksler-Bdolah 2020) in earthen fills that accumulated in quarries sealed under the northern section of the street's paving stones. The pottery from these fills was dated by Rosenthal-Heginbottom to 70/75–125/130 CE (Weksler-Bdolah 2011:107, Fig. 122:36; 2020: 38).

A rim of a small, closed cooking jug also found in Space J (Fig. 30:9) has an everted neck and concave grooved rim. It is dated to the first–second centuries CE.

THE COINS

Donald T. Ariel

Twenty-five coins were found at Ḥorbat Marzuq (see Catalogue; Fig. 31), all bronze and all identifiable.⁵

While the number of coins is too small to allow us to draw conclusions regarding the chronological horizons of the settlement, there is nothing in what has been found to suggest that this rural settlement was not occupied continuously, beginning sometime in the second century BCE. All the major coin groups are in evidence, with no gaps or peaks, relative to the production quantities of the coin types.

Two coins (Cat. Nos. 14 and 24) were found at the bottom of the shaft leading into the hiding complex. Number 24, a bronze of the second year of the First Jewish Revolt, is the latest coin found in the excavation. Therefore, based on the coins, the last use of the hiding

⁵ The coins were cleaned in the IAA laboratories by Lena Kuperschmidt, and were photographed by Clara Amit of the IAA photography studio.



Fig. 31. The coins.

complex, and probably, the end of occupation at the site, would appear to date to just before or immediately upon the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

This conclusion is reinforced by the discovery in 2014 of the hoard of 114 coins from the First Jewish Revolt in what is likely to have been the same site (Ariel, Marco and Betzer 2018). Having noted this, it must be admitted that the hiding complex could nevertheless have been prepared before or during the Bar Kokhba Revolt, as First Jewish Revolt coins are found at sites with Bar Kokhba occupations, e.g., ‘Ein el-‘Arrub (Tsafirir and Zissu 2002:32, Figs. 20:5–12; 21:1–8), together with Bar Kokhba Revolt coins, for example Naḥal Me‘ara (Zissu et al. 2009:443, Cat. No. 8). However, such finds are rare, and it is reasonable to believe that the continued circulation of First Jewish Revolt coins after 70 CE was extremely limited (Ariel 1982:291). Another factor is the near absence of finds related to the Bar Kokhba Revolt in this sector—on either side of the road between Jerusalem, where the Tenth Roman Legion was based from roughly 70 CE, and Emmaus, the base of the Fifth Roman Legion (Fischer and Gur 2008:105) and Lod (Eshel 2009:2, Map 1).⁶ Along this route, at Ḥorbat Meḏad, this absence is particularly noted (Gur 2012:233), as the three First Revolt coins found at Ḥorbat Meḏad are regarded as belonging to the end of a long and continuous period of settlement.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that one of the ten isolated finds from the 2014 excavations carries out at Ḥorbat Marzuq subsequent to the finding of the hoard was issued by Trajan (Ariel, forthcoming: Cat. No. 10). This find raises the possibility that, while the excavation in this section of the village at Ḥorbat Mazruq appears to have been abandoned around 70 CE, activity may have continued in other parts of the village, related, perhaps, to the events surrounding the Bar Kokhba Revolt.

⁶ It is unclear why Khirbat el-‘Aqd does not appear on Eshel’s map. The site, 2 km east–southeast of Emmaus, is unequivocally connected to the Bar Kokhba Revolt (see Zissu and Eshel 2000–2002:158–159).

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (BCE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
Alexander Jannaeus (104–76 BCE)												
9*	200	2004	2.47	15		ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ [ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ] Inverted anchor	Star; between rays: [- -]	104–80/79	Same	TJC:209– 210, Group K		138448
10		0010	1.55	15		ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΑΛΕΞΑ ΝΔ[ΡΟΥ] Same	Same; between rays: [- -]	Same	Same	Same		138444
11*	200	2010	0.85	13		[- -] Anchor in circle	[- -] Eight-pointed star in border of dots	80/79	Same	TJC:210, Subgroups L1–6		138451
12		0004	0.61	9×12		Same	Eight-pointed star in border of dots	80/79 or later	Same	TJC:210, Subgroup L7		138438
13	205	2034	1.58	13		Same	Same	Same	Same	Same		138458
14	101	1003	0.45	8×10		Anchor in circle	Six-pointed star	Same	Same	TJC:210, Subgroup L14		138446
15	200	2007	1.27	11×32		Same	Illegible	Same	Same	TJC:210, Subgroups L1–7		138450
16		0009	0.26	10		Illegible	Eight-pointed star	Same	Same	Same		138443
17		0007	0.44	9		[Circle]	[Border of dots]	Same	Same	Same		138441
Unclear Hasmonean ruler												
18		0005	1.67	14	↑	Inscription in wreath	Double cornucopias with pomegranate between horns		Same			138439
19	W/20	2020	2.14	15		Wreath?	Same		Same			138459

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (BCE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
Herodians												
Herod (37–4 BCE)												
20*		0008	1.23	13	↗	BAC[AE HPW AOY] Anchor	Galley (double struck)	c. 12?	Same	<i>TJC</i> :223, No. 65; Ariel and Fontanille 2012:63, Type 17; Pl. 95: O13– R16	New die connection	138442
Archelaus (4 BCE–6 CE)												
21		0001	1.20	13×15		[- - -] Prow I. [- - -]	within wreath		Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> :225, No. 72g		138435
Roman Prefects in Judea Tiberius (14–37 CE)												
22	200	2005	1.97	16	↑	In wreath: [TIB]KAI/CAP	Palm branch; in fields: [IOV- IA] L-E	Year 5 = 18/9 CE	Same	<i>TJC</i> :258, No. 328		138449
Herodians Agrippa I (37–44 CE)												
23		0006	2.34	17×19	↑	[BAC] AEW[C A P O A] Canopy	Three ears of corn; in fields: [- -]	Year 6 = 41/2	Same	<i>TJC</i> :231, No. 120		141051
First Jewish Revolt (66–70 CE)												
24*	101	1002	2.61	17	↖	שנ[ת-]שת[ת]ם Amphora	זרת צינ[ן] Vine leaf and tendril	Year 2 = 67/8		<i>TJC</i> :241, No. 196		138445
25	201	2018	3.45	17	↑	שנת-]שת[ת]ם Amphora	זרת צינ[ן] Vine leaf and tendril	Same		Same		138455

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The numismatic and ceramic evidence at the site attest to activity during the early Hellenistic period. However, the lack of secure loci yielding ‘clean’ pottery types from the third–beginning of the second centuries BCE does not allow us to determine when activity began at the site.

Ceramic finds from securely dated L206 and W20 suggest a date for the construction of the structure in Area A2 in the late Hellenistic/Hasmonean period (150–37 BCE). Most of the finds from L206 may be more precisely attributed to the end of the second century–first quarter of the first century BCE, overlapping the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (104–76 BCE).

Locus 201, under the collapse of the structure in Area A2, represents the last activity there, yielding local pottery types dating from the end of the first century BCE to the first century CE, all well-known and attested from documented destruction layers in Jerusalem from 70 CE. The latest coin found in L201 dates to the second year of the First Jewish Revolt (67/68 CE), joining a similar coin that was retrieved from the base of the shaft leading to the underground chamber in Area A1 (L101), together determining a *terminus ad quem* for the structures.

Remains of three rooms were unearthed in an excavation conducted in 2014, c. 200 m north of Areas A1 and A2 (Ariel, Marco and Betzer 2018), all revealing three phases (first third of the first century BCE–first century CE). Among the finds was a hoard of 114 coins from Year 4 of the First Jewish Revolt against the Romans (69/70 CE) (Ariel, Marco and Betzer 2018). The proximity of these rooms to Areas A1 and A2 suggests that they were part of the same site. The relatively small area of the site that was excavated makes it difficult to define the nature of the settlement at Ḥorbat Mazruc but the site was apparently a permanent settlement or village, as indicated by the installations related to water storage (F4, F5, Cisterns A, E and Reservoir M) constructed during this period. All are coated with a similar plaster admixture and all were canceled by the hiding complex. The burial caves surveyed 350 m to the northwest of Area A1 (F6; Plan 1) probably served the residents of the site and may represent its western limits.

An excavation conducted c. 450 m to the northeast of Area A1 revealed part of an irrigation system consisting of a pool and a channel (Ben-Ari 2015). The spring that fed this irrigation system—‘Ein el Mazruc (Fig. 1)—is c. 200 m north of the excavated area. Most of the potsherds from this excavation were assigned to the late Iron Age and the Early Roman period (Ben-Ari 2015:25, Fig. 27). Therefore, it would seem that ‘Ein el-Mazruc was the closest permanent water source to the site in the Roman period.

The lack of a clear stratigraphic relationship between the structures and the underground complexes raises a question regarding the establishment and use of the complexes. The small underground chambers in Area A (L103c and L209b) were accessed by means of crawling or squeezing through narrow, irregular openings, and therefore were not used for domestic purposes. Locus 209c clearly shows that a previous installation, probably a pantry,

was reused, while L103c seems to have been specifically installed to serve as a hideout. The finds from the shaft leading to L103c (L101) and the pottery found in L103c and L209c during the survey undertaken before the excavation indicate that they were in use during the Early Roman period.

Small underground complexes termed unsophisticated hideouts and dated to the first century CE were found in rural sites near modern-day Jerusalem, both in the north of the city (Pisgat Ze'ev; Shukron and Savariego 1994) and in the southeast (East Talpiyot; Vitto 2011a). Similar complexes were found in the Judean Shephelah (Ḥorbat 'Etri; Zissu and Ganor 2009) and the Lod Valley (Modi'in; Nahmias and Gal 2000:63–64; Ben Shemen interchange; Zelinger 2005), most notably at the Nesher-Ramla site 5 km northeast of Ramla, one of three hiding-complex types known from the site (Melamed 2010:96; 2018:76). Most of these complexes are small, having a single entry and exit point usually gained by means of a shaft, and have a short tunnel terminating in one or two vertically arranged rooms (Shukron and Savariego 1994: Fig. 65; Nahmias and Gal 2000: Fig. 93; Zissu and Ganor 2009: Fig. 4:IV–VI; Vitto 2011a: Fig. 2:U12; Melamed 2018: Figs. 3.3; 3.9; 3.11; 3.13–3.15; 3.24). These complexes were dated to the Early Roman period based on the pottery and coins found within them (Shukron and Savariego 1994; Nahmias and Gal 2000:63–64; Zissu and Ganor 2009; Kloner and Zissu 2014:63–64; Melamed 2018:76) and based on the date assigned to other structures or installations at the site (Vitto 2011a), or on the ceramic material and the stratigraphic context of the access shafts to the superstructures above them (Zissu and Ganor 2009:95).

Sites that may serve a relatively sound base for comparison are Ḥorbat 'Etri and Nesher-Ramla. Zissu and Ganor (2009:95) dated Ḥorbat 'Etri according to the stratigraphic context of the access shafts to their superstructures; according to them, some of the underground complexes were found sealed; the ceramic material dated to the first century CE (these finds remain unpublished). A half-sheqel from the third year of the First Jewish Revolt was found in one of these systems (Kloner and Zissu 2003a:188). The large number of systems excavated at the Nesher-Ramla site provides a detailed typological study of this phenomenon. Excavation of several systems of the first type yielded complete vessels dating to the Early Roman period (Melamed 2018:36, 39, 69).

The ceramic and numismatic evidence from Areas A1 and A2, the dates of the complexes at Ḥorbat 'Etri, and the dates of some of the complexes at Nesher-Ramla seem to corroborate that the 'hideouts' in Areas A1 and A2 were prepared following events related to the First Jewish Revolt (66–73 CE). Their small size suggests that they could have accommodated a single nuclear family. However, while the ceramic and numismatic finds from Areas A1 and 2 support the chronology offered above, the limited excavations conducted at the site and the insufficient finds retrieved from the hideouts requires caution regarding a secure date for them.

Dating the larger hiding complex in Area A3 based solely on finds retrieved during its survey and excavation is problematic, as the vessel types found in the complex are characteristic of the first century CE but they remain in use during the first third of the

second century CE. The closest hiding complex sharing similar characteristics to the system at Ḥorbat Mazruq is situated approximately 6 km as the crow flies toward the west, at the Shmurat Shayarot site, where a Hellenistic–Early Roman farmstead was surveyed and partially plotted (Zissu 2001:79–80).

The hiding complex at Shmurat Shayarot is also of the type documented in Area A3, and its preparation canceled earlier installations, among them a ritual bath (*miqveh*; see Zissu 2001: Fig. 28). The northern part of the system includes a winding tunnel, 10 m long, and two rooms; the southern part includes a room connected via a 6 m long tunnel to the head of a water reservoir. The breach into this section of the reservoir allowed the water that accumulated within to be in continuous use (Zissu 2001:79). It is not possible yet to determine when the system was established, but Zissu dates the pottery found in the debris left by antiquity robbers to the Early Roman period and to the time spanning the two revolts against the Romans (Zissu 2001:79).

In the 1980s, Kloner and Tepper proposed dating the hiding complexes to the days of the Bar Kokhba Revolt (Kloner and Tepper 1987:361–365). Later, in the early 2000s, Kloner and Zissu suggested a relative chronology for the hiding complexes based on the types of documented systems from the Judean Shephelah, Hebron and Bet El Mountains, Galilee and other regions of the country (see Kloner and Zissu 2003a:191–199; Zissu and Kloner 2014:110–114 with further references therein). They maintained that these systems reflect a phenomenon related mainly to the days of the Bar Kokhba Revolt, but accepted that, “Some systems, mainly small unsophisticated ones, should be dated to the first half of the first century CE, clearly preceding the Jewish War against Rome (66–70 CE)” (Zissu and Kloner 2014:100).

The Ḥorbat Mazruq hiding complex exhibits all the elements of a sophisticated, elaborate system, such as locking facilities, narrow passages, height differences between levels, multiple entrances and exits. According to Kloner and Zissu’s typology, it should be defined as a public hiding system (Kloner and Zissu 2003a:184; Zissu and Kloner 2014:113) and therefore dated to the time of the Bar Kokhba Revolt. However, this assumption is difficult to accept for several reasons: the finds recovered are insufficient to determine whether the complex was established during the First Jewish Revolt or during the Bar Kokhba Revolt. It is of note that both the excavations conducted on surface level indicate that the site was abandoned sometime around 68–69/68 CE and there is no evidence for later activity, except for a single coin issued by Trajan which was found in the 2014 excavation north of Areas A1 and A2 (see Ariel, above).

Zissu and Kloner’s assumption that hiding complexes of the ‘developed type’ did not exist prior to the time of the Bar Kokhba Revolt is inconsistent with the finds from several such documented systems, in particular the Nesher-Ramla site, whose establishment was dated, based in part on *in situ* complete vessels, from the first century CE to the First Jewish Revolt (Melamed 2018:58). Melamed suggests that the complexes at the site were dug and planned no later than the mid-first century BCE and were in use during the First Jewish

Revolt. Use of some of the systems continued during the first third of the second century CE—the time of Bar Kokhba—or close to it (Melamed 2018:77).

Placing Ḥorbat Mazruq within the framework of other contemporary settlements in the mountainous rural area west of Jerusalem may add to our knowledge concerning when the ‘developed’ hiding complex in Area 3 was established. A recent survey of the major sites along the Emmaus–Nicopolis–Jerusalem road (Ein-Mor et al. 2019), focusing on the pattern of settlement between the second century BCE and the third century CE in this area,⁷ revealed that most of the sites were abandoned with the advance of the Roman army into this region during the First Jewish Revolt (Ein-Mor et al. 2019:60). Fischer suggested that the inhabitants of the area between Emmaus–Nicopolis and Jerusalem left no later than 68 CE (Fischer 2009:105). Renewed activity at sites within this area, which postdates 70 CE (or possibly 69 CE), was attributed by Fischer to soldiers or veterans of the Roman army who settled in this region (Ein-Mor et al. 2019:61). This is the case at Abu Ghosh, where epigraphic finds,⁸ and, to a lesser extent, architectural and ceramic finds,⁹ indicate that a camp of Legio X Fretensis or an auxiliary cohort, was established no later than 71/72 CE (Eck 1999:109–120). A military unit manning an outpost/camp at Abu Ghosh would have commanded the section of the Roman road passing close to Deir el-‘Azar (Fischer, Isaac and Roll 1996:116) and the slopes of the spur to the south, the location of Ḥorbat Mazruq (Fig. 2). The close proximity of Ḥorbat Mazruq to Abu Ghosh, and the distribution pattern of settlement in this region, emphasize the difficulty in dating the hiding system at Ḥorbat Marzuq to the days of the Bar Kokhba Revolt.¹⁰

Therefore, the developed hiding system at Ḥorbat Marzuq seems to have been prepared and used during the events of the First Jewish Revolt (66–70/74 CE), and was abandoned in its aftermath.

⁷ The sites along the road include road stations/forts such as those excavated at Ḥorbat Meẓad (Fischer 2012) and Giv‘at Shaul (Ma‘ale Ha-Roma‘im; Tzaferis 1974), a spring tunnel system at ‘Ein Naqa‘a (Ein-Mor 2013; Storchan 2016), two caves excavated at Naḥal Arza and identified as ‘refuge caves’ (Ein-Mor et al. 2019:54–55); settlement remains at Bet Neqofa (Be‘eri 2015) and near Tel Moza (Lower Moza; Eisenberg 1974:64; Fischer, Issac and Roll 1996:222–229; Zissu 2001; Eisenberg and Sklar-Parnes 2005; Thiede and Lass 2005; Eck 2012; Mizrahi 2015; Ein-Mor et al. 2019:55–56); and the pottery production center at Binyene Ha-‘Umma (Arubas and Goldfus 2005; 2007; Levi and Be‘eri 2010; Vitto 2011b; Be‘eri and Levi 2012; Storchan 2018; Be‘eri and Levi, forthcoming).

⁸ Four Latin inscriptions were found in Abu Ghosh and its surroundings (Fischer, Isaac and Roll 1996:119; Eck 1999; 2012:11, No. 712, 25–26, Nos. 722–723, 38–39, No. 735).

⁹ Several burial caves and ossuaries dating to the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods were found in and around the village of Abu Ghosh, as were potsherds, collected in the course of surveys (Fischer, Isaac and Roll 1996:118; Zissu 2001:78; Finkelstein et al. 2018:39–41). Very few architectural remains from these periods have been unearthed in this area to date.

¹⁰ The only settlement in which there is clear evidence for activity during the Bar Kokhba Revolt is Khirbat el-‘Aqd, located in the foothills of the Jerusalem Mountains (map ref. 200890/638161; Gichon 1982:36–42; Hizmi, Haber and Aharonovich 2013).

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