

## THE GLASS FINDS FROM THE 'SLEEPY SPRING' AT SAFED (ZEFAT)

NATALYA KATSNELSON

The excavation at Safed yielded a small assemblage of glass finds, consisting of less than 60 fragments.<sup>1</sup> Most of the glass fragments were found in fills associated with three construction phases (I–III) of the Area 10 mausoleum; they were uncovered both within and outside the building (see Barbé, this volume). These finds include fragments of two beaker-shaped oil lamps, a small lid and two small cosmetic bottles of the Mamluk–Ottoman periods, as well as several beads, bracelets and glass vessels of the late Ottoman–British Mandate periods. A few fragments of the British Mandate period, including a decorated bowl of pressed glass and a complete decorated bracelet, were discovered in the fill of a cesspit (Area 30). No diagnostic glass was found in the fills covering the Ottoman-period cist tombs near the Area 10 mausoleum nor in Area 20.

### AREA 10

#### *Mamluk–Early Ottoman Periods* (Fig. 1)

Only two fragments, associated with the earliest phase of construction of the building in Area 10, can be clearly dated to the Mamluk period: an item that was either a beaker or a beaker-shaped oil lamp (Fig. 1:1) and a small glass lid (Fig. 1:2). The other finds from Area 10 may be generally ascribed to the Mamluk–Ottoman periods. All the pieces present common types that were probably manufactured locally.

*Beaker/Oil Lamp* (Fig. 1:1).— This specimen has a rounded rim and a cylindrical body with a horizontally tooled-out tubular fold. This piece may have been part of a suspended oil lamp, although the possibility that it was a beaker or perhaps even a bowl cannot be ruled out. Such a broad typological attribution was also suggested for similar fragments found among a glass assemblage of the fourteenth century CE at the el-Waṭṭa Quarter in Safed (Gorin-Rosen 2019: Figs. 1:4, 5; 2:8). A similar vessel found at the Old City of Jerusalem,

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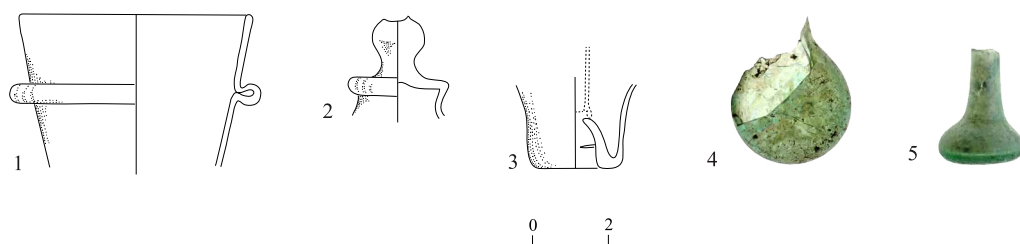


Fig. 1. Glass fragments from Area 10: the Mamluk–early Ottoman periods.

| No. | Object          | Locus | Basket | Context                    | Description  | Color                         | Weathering   |
|-----|-----------------|-------|--------|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|
| 1   | Beaker/oil lamp | 1013  | 10028  | Fill above 15th c. floor   | Rim and body fragment; upward rounded rim; cylindrical body with ext. horizontal fold pinched out 2 cm below the rim   | Colorless with greenish tinge | Black patches, iridescence, large bubbles with sand impurities |
| 2   | Lid             | 1011  | 10019  | Under mid-15th c. CE floor | Part of lid; rim slightly flaring with missing edge; short cylindrical body; beaded solid(?) top   | Yellowish brown               | Silver iridescence   |
| 3   | Oil lamp        | 1010  | 10020  | Beaten-earth floor         | Fragment of wall and base; small cylindrical body; concave highly-domed base with traces of interior wick-tube(?) in its center; pontil scar underneath; base diam. 2.4 cm | Greenish blue                 | Milky crust on int.; silver iridescence                        |
| 4   | Ampulla/phial   | 1005  | 10007  | Fill post-1837 CE          | Part of body and beginning of neck; small lentoid body, slightly concave on one of the sides   | Bluish-green                  | Crust of metallic iridescence                                  |
| 5   | Small bottle    | 1002  | 10006  | Fill post-1837 CE          | Lower part; narrow cylindrical neck; triangular-shaped shallow body; flattened base with a high kick and pontil mark   | Greenish                      | White-grayish crust; metallic iridescence; soil deposit        |

which displayed double folds on the body and had a stemmed footed base, was described as a beaker-shaped oil lamp and dated to the Mamluk period (Katsnelson 2009: Fig. 5:5).

*Small Lid* (Fig. 1:2).— This fragment of a yellowish hew with a brownish beaded finish was discovered under a floor of the fifteenth century CE. Lidded containers of various shapes are known especially from the Mamluk period, although only a few examples of such items have

been found. Among the rare published parallels are a complete lidded bowl with marvered decoration held in the Metropolitan Museum of Art that is dated to the late thirteenth century CE (Jenkins 1986: No. 50), and a colorless lid bearing applied trail decoration found at Hama and dated to the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries CE (Riis 1957:60, Fig. 169). Two purple-colored fragments bearing white marvered decoration tentatively identified as lids were found in the el-Waṭṭa Quarter at Safed (Gorin-Rosen 2019:14, Fig. 6:3). The present example appears to be rather plain and carelessly made, likely belonging to a simple vessel of local manufacture, e.g., a plain purplish lid from Mary's Well in Nazareth (Alexandre 2012:95, Fig. 4.5:1).

*Miniature Vessel with a Wick-Tube* (Fig. 1:3).— This fragment constitutes the lower part of a small cylindrical vessel with a highly kicked base. Scant remnants of what may have been a wick-tube in the center of the base indicates that the vessel was perhaps an oil lamp. Lamps of this type are widely distributed among sites from the Byzantine, Early Islamic and Mamluk periods, and were found for example in the el-Waṭṭa Quarter excavations, among material from the fourteenth century CE (Gorin-Rosen 2019: Fig. 3:1–8). The unusual small size of the present example and its fabric, with weathering specific to modern glass wares, may indicate an Ottoman-period date.

*Small Cosmetic Bottles* (Fig. 1:4, 5).— Figure 1:4 is a thin-walled lentoid ampulla, resembling phials unearthed in Abbasid–Fatimid-period levels at Tiberias (Lester 2004:192, Figs. 116–120). Figure 1:5 is a miniature bottle with a triangular body and a tall cylindrical neck, closely resembling Roman-period candlestick bottles. However, the quite careless manufacture style and the rough fabric with a specific kind of metallic weathering are typical of late Mamluk–Ottoman glass. Moreover, the base design of bottle No. 5, with a high kick in the center, is another characteristic feature of late Islamic-period glass. A similar bottle, but with a globular body, was found at the Safed Castle, dated not earlier than the fifteenth century CE (Katsnelson 2022:277, Fig. 173:6, see therein further reference to Nazareth). Both fragments were found in fills post-dating 1837 CE (Loci 102 and 105) and are probably residual.

#### *The Late Ottoman–British Mandate Periods* (Figs. 2, 3)

In addition to the traditional hand-blown vessels discussed above, the vessels from these periods include several examples of modern industrial glass. These fragments testify to the use of production techniques and designs that were developed in European and American glass workshops in the second half of the nineteenth–first quarter of the twentieth centuries CE. Such vessels (Fig. 2:1–3, 5, 6) were mostly manufactured by semi- or fully automatic blowing or pressing machines, while the fragments in Figs. 2:4 and 3:1, 2 were likely part of modern, handmade decorated wares of serial production. Also found in Area 10 were glass beads and bracelets (Figs. 2:7–10; 3:3), representing small objects of traditional glass craftsmanship that has been preserved in Palestine through the Late Islamic and the British Mandate periods.

*Medical and Ink Bottles* (Fig. 2:1–3).— These fragments represent standard glass bottles of similar shapes that were produced in large quantities. Figure 2:1 has a yellowish brown hew and a simple, flared rounded rim; it seems to have originally had a tall cylindrical neck. The vessels in Fig. 2:2, 3 are colorless and display a ring around the rim; another ring at the junction between the short neck and the shoulder can be seen in Fig. 2:3. Such embellishment is characteristic of medicinal and ink bottles that were machine-blown in a broad diversity of shapes, sizes and colors (*Bottle Typing/Diagnostic Shapes: Medicinal/Chemical/Druggist Bottles; Household Bottles*). Fragments of similar bottles occur in almost every archaeological site in Israel yielding modern glass artifacts, e.g., at Majdal Yaba, a village of the late Ottoman–British Mandate periods (Tsuk, Bordowicz and Taxel 2016: Fig. 40).

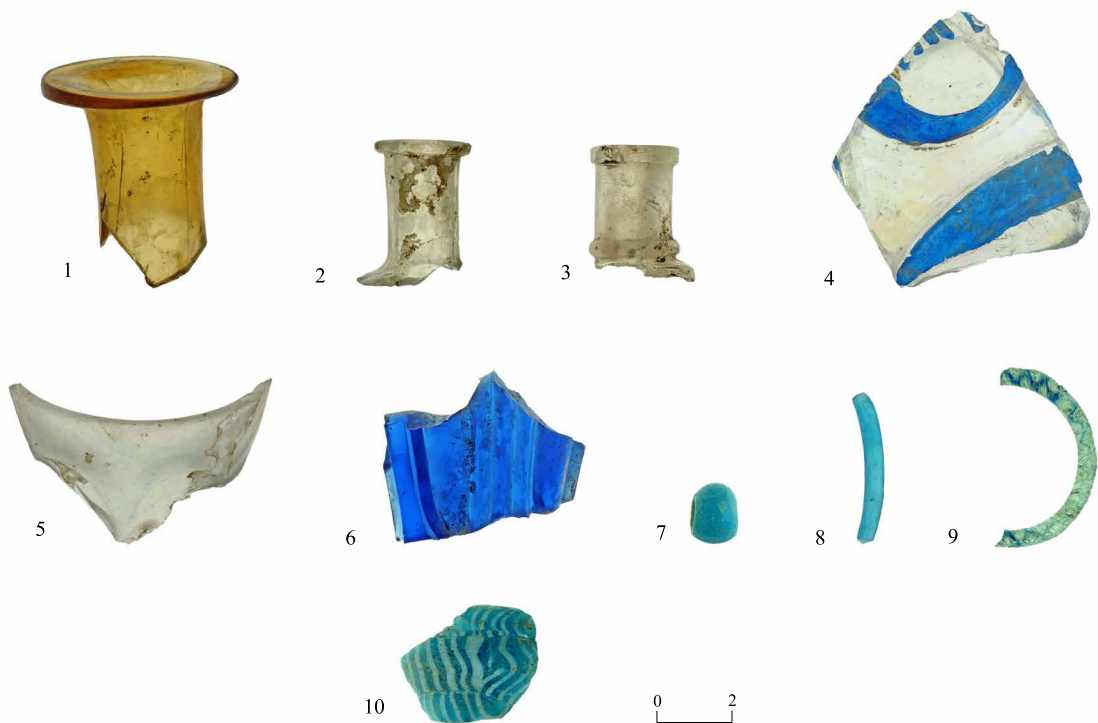


Fig. 2. Glass fragments from Area 10: the late Ottoman–British Mandate periods.

| No. | Object       | Locus | Basket | Context                        | Description  | Color     | Weathering                    |
|-----|--------------|-------|--------|--------------------------------|--|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 1   | Small bottle | 1019  | 10034  | Fill with coins (1861–1878 CE) | Upper part; thick walls; rounded flaring rim, uneven edge thickness; cylindrical neck                  | Yellowish | Iridescence; bubbly           |
| 2   | Small bottle | 1005  | 10037  | Fill post-1837 CE              | Upper part; thick walls; beaded rim, flattened at top; cylindrical neck; beginning of sloping shoulder | Colorless | Iridescence; black impurities |

◀ Fig. 2

| No. | Object                         | Locus | Basket | Context                        | Description  | Color  | Weathering  |
|-----|--------------------------------|-------|--------|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 3   | Small bottle                   | 1018  | 10030  | Fill post-1837 CE              | Upper part; thick walls; beaded rim, flattened at top; short cylindrical neck beaded at junction with shoulder   | Colorless  | White interior crust; black patches; iridescence and soil deposit |
| 4   | Vase/<br>water pipe            | 1005  | 10033  | Fill post-1837 CE              | Small body fragment; thick (0.6–0.8 cm) convex curving walls; wheel-cut and enameled design, fragmentally preserved: large, uneven rounded with a central oval facet and a band of vertically set short, uneven grooves in the middle(?); another wide, deep circular groove cut-off lower down(?) the body; the cut design is inlaid with opaque, deep blue enamel and framed with badly preserved gold paint | Clear colorless; deep blue enamel and gold paint   | Iridescence; soil deposits  |
| 5   | Beaker/<br>cup                 | 1019  | 10034  | Fill with coins (1861–1878 CE) | Small rim and body fragment; thick walls; upward, rounded rim; cylindrical body; row of impressed vertical lounges below the rim; rim diam. c. 6.5 cm  | Clear colorless                                    | White patches; iridescence  |
| 6   | Bottle/<br>ampulla             | 1018  | 10030  | Fill post-1837 CE              | Small body fragment; very thick walls (0.8 cm); molded in high relief with repeating vertical framed ovals divided by pairs of vertical sharp ribs   | Cobalt blue, translucent                           | White patches; iridescence  |
| 7   | Bead                           | 1002  | 10006  | Fill post-1837 CE              | Complete; chipped; barrel-shaped; wide conical perforation height 1; diam.: 1.5 cm   | Blue opaque  | White patches; iridescence  |
| 8   | Bracelet                       | 1019  | 10034  | Fill post-dating 1837 CE       | Fragment; flat cross-section; decorated with impressed shabby crosshatch design  | Blue translucent                                   | White patches; iridescence  |
| 9   | Bracelet                       | 1018  | 10030  | Fill post-dating 1837 CE       | Small fragment; circular in cross-section; spirally twisted with blue and white internal trails; diam. c. 5 cm   | Colorless with greenish blue tinge; blue and white | Grayish patches; iridescence; soil deposit                        |
| 10  | Bead/<br>whorl/<br>loom-weight | 1018  | 10030  | Fill post-dating 1837 CE       | Small fragment; biconical; very large perforation; wound of three wide strips decorated with white trails; diam. c. 4 cm   | Bluish translucent; white trail                    | Black patches; iridescence; pitting                               |

The richly-ornamented fragment in Fig. 2:4 is part of a handmade vessel of lead-crystal glass, first introduced in Europe at the end of the seventeenth century CE. Its thick curving walls are decorated with large, rounded facets and bear a linearly stylized pattern that has preserved badly and could not be identified. The wheel-cut decorative design is overlaid with enameled paint in cobalt blue and gold. An exact parallel for this vessel was not found, and it may be tentatively attributed to a vase-shaped water pipe or narghile. Such lavishly decorated items, used as smoking vessels and made of either colorless or colored glass, were common across the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth–early twentieth centuries CE, and mostly imported from Bohemia, one of the largest European centers of lead-crystal glass production of that time (Brosh 2000:13, Figs. 3, 7, 11).

The assemblage includes two examples of pressed or molded glass: a colorless beaker or cup with elongated indentations on the wall (Fig. 2:5) and a container of a cobalt-blue hew with thick curving walls, decorated with pronounced vertical ribs (Fig. 2:6); the latter example may have been used for holding perfume or opium. The shape and ornamentation of these vessels were formed by pressing of molten glass with the aid of a hand-operated plunger within a specially designed mold. A large variety of such decorated vessels were mass produced in America and Europe from the mid-nineteenth century onward as cheap imitations of expensive handmade glass vessels with cut or mold-blown patterns.

*Beads and Bracelets* (Fig. 2:7–10).— These fragments comprise plain and decorated jewelry of opaque and translucent, colorless or bluish-colored glass. They may have been manufactured in Hebron, or at a glass-production center in northern Palestine of the Ottoman and British Mandate periods.

Figure 2:7 is a plain barrel-shaped bead with a simple, uneven shape and opaque fabric. Figure 2:8 is a monochrome bracelet of a transparent blueish hew, decorated with an impressed crosshatch design. Cheap bracelets with similar ornamentation were produced throughout the Ottoman Empire, and particularly in Hebron (Spaer 1992:49, Type B7, Fig. 3). A complete bracelet of this type was found in the cesspit of Area 30 (see below, Fig. 3:3).

Figure 2:9 is a twisted colorless bracelet with a rounded cross-section decorated with spirally wound trails in blue and white. Bracelets of this subtype are common in local contexts of the Mamluk–Ottoman periods, and have been previously found in Safed (Katsnelson 2014: Fig. 1:11, 12). Many fragments of such bracelets were found in Late Islamic pools, wells and springs, where glass bracelets could have been easily broken while women fetched water. Twisted, colorless such examples, with blue and white internal trails, were retrieved from Ottoman-period loci at Mary's Well, Nazareth (Alexandre 2012:104–106, Fig. 4.10:10, 11), suggesting that the bracelet in Fig. 2:9 may have been of the same date.

Figure 2:10 is an especially large bead, a whorl or a loom weight decorated with white trails applied to and marvered into the surface. A very large perforation indicates that this item may have been used as part of the trappings for a donkey or camel. It has been suggested that this type of jewelry was produced in Hebron or another production center in Egypt in the pre-Ottoman or early Ottoman periods (Spaer 2001:146–147, Fig. 64, Pl. 22:274).

## AREA 30

*Late Ottoman-Period* (Fig. 3)

These items were found in the fills of a built cesspit, dated to the second half of the nineteenth–first third of the twentieth centuries CE.

*Pressed-Glass Bowl* (Fig. 3:1).— The fragments shown in Fig. 3:1 belong to a colorless bowl decorated with aquatic motifs. Its unusual decorative design consists of rows of ribs densely set around the rim, scallop-shaped shells below the rim and a garland of snail-shaped shells set around mid-body. A serpentine figure of a stylized sea creature/dolphin with a folded tail is applied to the walls, rising from the vessel's bottom toward the rim and forming a splayed-out footed base and a kind of a side handle. Its head is depicted with long hair, bulged pupils, nostrils and a large closed mouth. The bowl and its relief decoration were formed by pressing molten glass into a machine mold (see discussion above, Fig. 2:5, 6). The molds for glass-pressing comprised one or more parts, depending on the size of the vessel and intricacy of its decoration. The present example bears visible vertical seam marks of such a mold on the walls and foot from the pressing process.

Parallels for this vessel include bowls with three dolphin-shaped feet from the early twentieth century CE, produced by the Sowerby pressed-glass factory of England (*Sowerby Glass Catalogues – 1933:6*), and lidded footed bowls manufactured by the Portieux Vallérysthal factory of France (*Vallérysthal & Portieux 1908 - Collection de Dessins:308, Foil 305:3828*) and the American Westmoreland Glass Company in Pennsylvania, where these bowls were produced in a variety of colors in the twentieth century CE (*Antique Westmoreland Glass, Argonaut Sea Shells Dolphin Covered Dish: a very similar colorless bowl, Pattern No. 1048, and other colored examples*).

*Beaker/Bottle with Enamel-Painted Decoration* (Fig. 3:2).— This colorless lower-body part of an unidentifiable cylindrical vessel is decorated in the enamel painting technique that employed a vitreous substance made of finely powdered glass colored with a metallic oxide substance. The monochrome enameled design on body fragment Fig. 3:2 is quite simple and consists of alternating bands of small yellowish white triple or single dots and elongated drops. In addition, the painted pattern is framed by two horizontal bands of wheel-cut incisions. Remnants of additional decorative enameled patterns in dark blue, probably of similar motifs, are observed at the top of the fragment. This vessel may be a beaker, a bottle or possibly a decanter, one of a multitude of inexpensive varieties of enameled vessels produced throughout Europe during the late nineteenth–early twentieth centuries CE. Examples of such vessels made of red glass painted in gold, white and black were found at Majdal Yaba (Tsuk, Bordowicz and Taxel 2015: Fig. 42:1, 2).

*Monochrome Bracelet with Pressed Decoration* (Fig. 3:3).— A complete bluish monochrome bracelet presents a very common variety of cheap bracelets produced at Hebron in the late

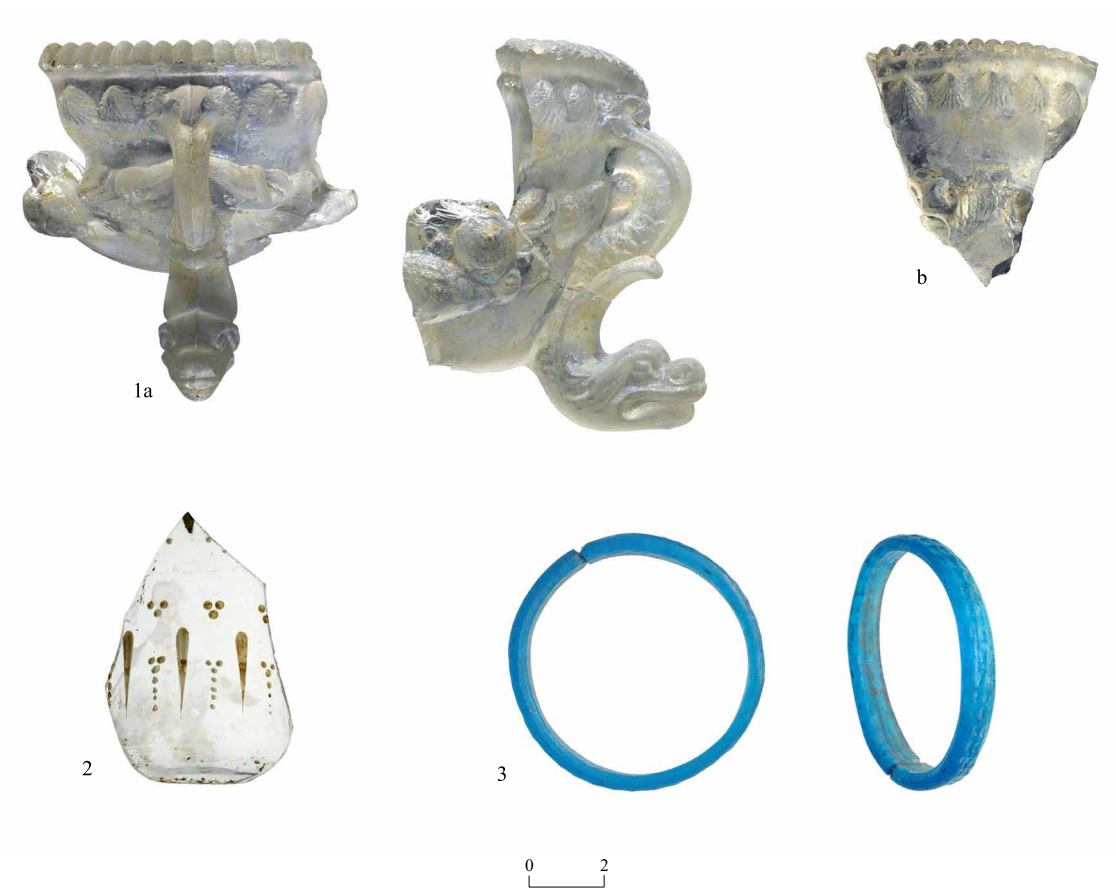


Fig. 3. Glass fragments from the cesspit in Area 30.

| No.         | Object      | Locus | Basket | Context            | Description  | Color     | Weathering                 |
|-------------|-------------|-------|--------|--------------------|--|-----------|----------------------------|
| 1<br>(a, b) | Footed bowl | 3001  | 30031  | Early 20th c. fill | Three fragments: two mended from a rim, body and footed base (Fig. 1a) and an additional rim and body fragment (Fig. 1b); upward, crimped rim, stepped on the interior; thick walls, slightly curving downward; body decorated with two bands of shell motifs in relief: one below the rim and another around the mid-body; stylized sea creature figure applied upside-down to the bowl's side to form a high footed base; only one of the three original feet preserved (Fig. 1a); seam mark of mold arranged vertically, extending from rim to footed base; rim diam. c. 17 cm, thickness at top of body 0.7 cm | Colorless | Milky clouds; sand deposit |



◀ Fig. 3

| No. | Object            | Locus | Basket | Context               | Description  | Color                                  | Weathering                       |
|-----|-------------------|-------|--------|-----------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| 2   | Bottle/<br>beaker | 3001  | 30031  | Early 20th<br>c. fill | Lower part of cylindrical body and beginning of base; walls thickened at joint with base; wall painted with yellowish white enameled design: a horizontal band of small triple dots and vertical bands of triple and single dots alternating with elongated drops lower down on the body; bands of horizontal incisions frame the enameled design at the top and the bottom; small remnants of unclear geometrical pattern in blue enamel at the top of the fragment; body diam. c. 6 cm | Colorless;<br>white and<br>blue enamel | Milky<br>patches,<br>iridescence |
| 3   | Bracelet          | 3001  | 30031  | Early 20th<br>c. fill | Nearly complete, mended and cracked; rounded and flattened cross-section; band of impressed crosshatched design, broad and with uneven thickness; diam. 6 cm, width 0.7–0.9 cm   | Blue<br>translucent                    | Iridescence,<br>soil deposit     |

Ottoman period. Although these bracelets were hand-tooled, they are mainly of low-quality production. The present bracelet is flat in cross-section and bears a crosshatched motif of impressed decoration that could not be precisely identified (for a similar decorative motif, see Fig. 2:8).

### CONCLUSIONS

The small glass assemblage found in the excavation near the Sleepy Spring at Safed corresponds with the dating of the remains between the fifteenth and early twentieth centuries CE. It comprises common locally produced artifacts of the Late Islamic period and items dating to the late Ottoman and British Mandate periods, some of which were imported. The glass items, originating from glass workshops in Bohemia/Czechia, England, France or the USA, attest to wide-ranging trade relations between the Ottoman Empire and the western world during the late nineteenth–early twentieth centuries CE. These imported finds indicate that the town of this period was inhabited at least in part by households of relative wealth. Late Ottoman-period bracelets and beads belong to common types of the locally produced repertoire of such jewelry.

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