

GLASS VESSELS FROM THE LATE HELLENISTIC AND EARLY ROMAN PERIODS AT KHIRBAT BURNAT (SOUTHWEST)

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The excavation in the southern part of Site 8A at Khirbat Burnat (Southwest; see Torge, this volume) yielded some 90 small glass fragments, nearly two-thirds of which are diagnostic.¹ Most of the glass finds discussed below date from the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods. Several pieces, including beakers with a solid base (from L857 and L1039), date from the Late Roman period, and a few, including four fragments of bowl-shaped oil lamps (from L871, L894, L927 and L1000), date from the Byzantine period; these specimens are not addressed in this paper.

Most of the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman vessels were free-blown; a few were cast and one piece was mold-blown. The vessels are severely corroded, with a thick layer of crust or weathering and silvery iridescence. Thirteen

of the best preserved pieces, representing the various types of vessels found at the site, were selected for publication (Figs. 1, 2).

Cast Vessels (Fig. 1)

The cast vessels from the site include two types of bowls: thick-walled ribbed bowls (Fig. 1:1–3) and 'pillar-molded' bowls, distinguished by their fine execution and even ribs (Fig. 1:4).

Thick-Walled Ribbed Bowls (Fig. 1:1–3).—

These fragments belonged to bowls with a thick rim and short ribs on the exterior wall, generally with horizontal grooves on the interior below the rim. Three additional fragments of such bowls were discovered at the site (not illustrated; L865, L905, L950). These bowls are typical of the second half of the first century BCE.

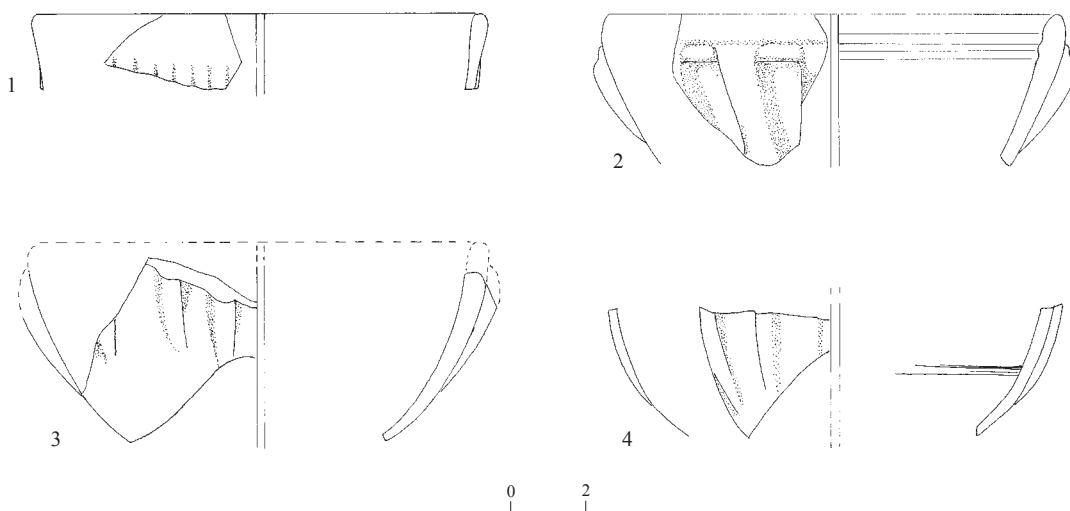


Fig. 1.

Numerous bowls of this type were uncovered in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, in contexts from the late second or early first centuries BCE through the early first century CE (Area A: Gorin-Rosen 2003:378–379, Subtype 2, and see discussion therein; Area E: Gorin-Rosen 2006:246). A bowl, which, like No. 1 has no horizontal grooves on the interior, was found in Area A of the Jewish Quarter excavations (Gorin-Rosen 2003:369, Pl. 15.4: G35). Bowls resembling Nos. 2 and 3 were uncovered in Area E of these excavations (for No. 2—Gorin-Rosen 2006: Pl. 10.3: G32; for No. 3—Gorin-Rosen 2006: Pl. 10.3: G26, G29).

1. Cast ribbed bowl (L1001, B8514). Rim (D c. 120 mm) and wall fragment. Thick, upright rounded rim. Evenly spaced, shallow, relatively thin ribs, of which six were partially preserved. No horizontal grooves on the interior below the rim. Horizontal polishing marks on the interior. Light blue glass, translucent. Silvery iridescence, slight pitting.

2. Cast ribbed bowl (L950, B8688). Rim (D at least 120 mm) and wall fragment. Thick slanted wall. Two wide horizontal grooves on the interior below the rim. Thick, short, protruding uneven ribs, of which two were partially preserved. Brownish yellow glass, translucent. Thick layers of black, brown, yellow and silvery crust, iridescence, severe pitting.

3. Cast ribbed bowl (L917, B8512). Wall fragment (estimated rim D 120 mm). Thick curved wall. The ribs, three of which were partially preserved, were probably thick and short, and unevenly spaced. Light brownish-yellow glass, translucent. Thick layers of silvery crust, iridescence, severe pitting, sand deposits.

Pillar-Molded Bowl (Fig. 1:4).— This body fragment belonged to a ribbed bowl of the ‘pillar-molded’ type (its small size and condition do not enable determination of its subtype). ‘Pillar-molded’ bowls are assigned to the first century CE (Gorin-Rosen 2003:379–380, and see discussion therein; 2006:248).

A similar bowl, with long, even ribs and pairs of horizontal grooves on the interior wall below the rim and farther down close to the bottom, was uncovered in Area A in the Jewish Quarter (Gorin-Rosen 2003:374, Pl. 15.8: G87).

4. Cast ribbed bowl (L889, B8696). Wall fragment (estimated rim D 120 mm). Curved wall. Evenly spaced, relatively thin, long ribs, of which three were partially preserved. Shallow horizontal grooves on the interior. Light greenish-blue glass, translucent. Black weathering, silvery iridescence, pitting, sand deposits.

Blown Vessels (Fig. 2)

The blown vessels in this assemblage are characteristic of the Early Roman period in the region, and probably date from the second half of the first century CE; some may have continued into the second century CE.

Bowl with Crimped Trails on the Rim (Fig. 2:5).— Bowls with crimped trails on the rim were widespread throughout the Roman Empire, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean. In Palestine, they appeared in the late first century (not before 70 CE) and disappeared after the Bar-Kokhba Revolt in 132–135 CE (Winter 2006:77–79, Fig. 1:14–16, and see therein a comprehensive discussion and many examples). Similar rims were unearthed not far to the east of Khirbat Burnaṭ, at Khirbat Badd ‘Isa (Magen, Tzionit and Sirkis 2004:215, 232–233, Pl. 9:1–3).

5. Bowl (L1001, B8514). Rim, wall and base fragments (mended). Shallow bowl. Hollow outfolded rim (D 180 mm) with an applied trail tooled to create uneven vertical ribs. Thin wall. Low ring base (D 80 mm) pushed-in at the center. Light greenish-blue glass, translucent. Black, white and silvery crust, iridescence, severe pitting.

Bowl with a Low Ring Base (Fig. 2:6).— This thin, low, hollow tubular base belonged to a bowl of a type distinguished by its fine delicate fabric; this bowl type was widespread during the Early Roman period. Bowls of this shape,

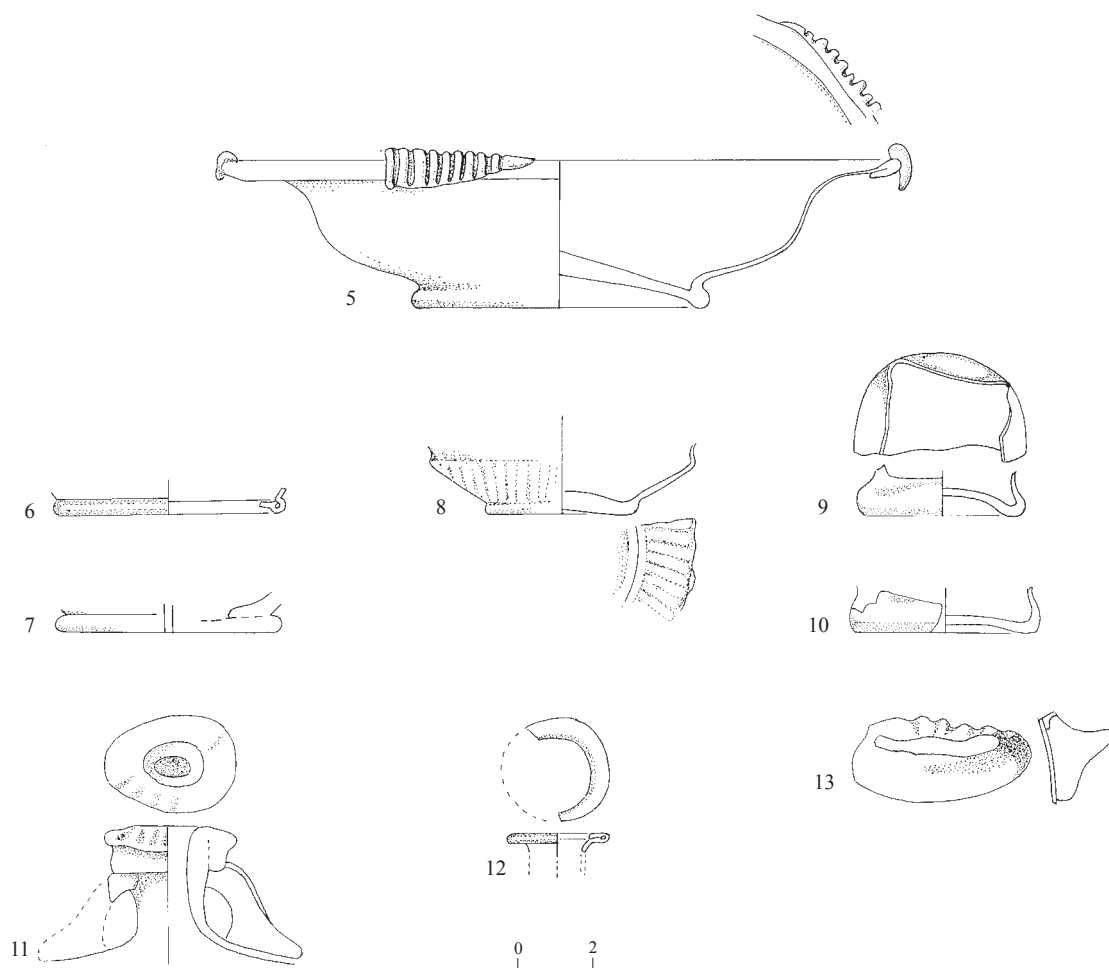


Fig. 2.

yet cruder, continued to be used in the Late Roman period. Two outfolded hollow rims of similar fabric, unearthed at the site (not illustrated; L1001), probably belonged to this type of bowl.

Such bowls were discovered farther north, at 'Ein ez-Zeituna, where they were dated from the mid-first century CE to the first third of the second century CE (Winter 2006:77, Fig. 1:1–13, and see therein many additional examples). A similar base fragment was found at nearby Khirbat Badd 'Isa (Magen, Tzionit and Sirkis 2004: Pl. 9:13). Similar bases were also unearthed in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, Stratum 4, assigned to the

second third of the first century CE (Gorin-Rosen 2003:372, 382, Pl. 15.6:G63, G64).

6. Bowl (L869, B8157). Base fragment. Thin-walled, hollow tooled-out ring base (D 50–60 mm). Light greenish-blue glass, translucent. Black and silvery crust, iridescence, severe pitting.

Small Bowl or Beaker (Fig. 2:7).— This base fragment belonged to a small bowl or beaker from the first century CE, which generally bore vertical ribs.

Similar bases were uncovered in excavations in Jerusalem, e.g., on the City of David spur, in Locus 1 “understood to have been in use until 70 CE” (Ariel 1990:151, 161–163, Fig. 33:GL84,

GL85, GL86, and see therein contemporaneous examples from Ashdod and the Judean Desert). Additional pieces were discovered at Ḥorbat Zalit² in the southern Hebron Hills and at 'En Gedi (Jackson-Tal 2007:480, 482, Pls. 4:4, 5; 5:5, and see therein more examples from the region).

7. Small bowl or beaker (L972, B8751). Small base and wall fragment. Thick flat solid base (D c. 50 mm), thickened where it joins the wall. Light blue glass, translucent. Thick white and silvery crust, iridescence, severe pitting.

Mold-Blown Vessel (Fig. 2:8).— This piece is part of a mold-blown vessel, probably a small bowl or beaker; the fragment is too small to reconstruct its shape. Although there is no mold-blown pattern on the bottom of the base, the vessel's fine mold and carinated wall attribute it to a group of vessels known as 'Sidonian', manufactured during the second and third quarters of the first century CE throughout the Roman Empire, including the eastern Mediterranean (Price 1991; Israeli 1964; 1983).

An inscribed mold-blown beaker of this group from Jerusalem was dated by analogous examples from the mid-first century CE (Gorin-Rosen 2005:196–197, Fig. 1:4, and see more examples therein).

8. Small bowl or beaker (L874, B8180). Wall and base fragment. Mold-blown, vertically ribbed walls, tapering down toward a thick solid base (D 40 mm). Light green glass, translucent; few round bubbles. Thick layer of brown and white crust, iridescence, severe pitting, sand deposits.

Indented Beakers (Fig. 2:9, 10).— These two bottoms belong to beakers with a cylindrical body indented on four sides. These beakers were widespread during the first and second centuries CE.

A similar bottom from the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem was assigned a date in the first century CE and the first half of the second century CE (Gorin-Rosen 2006:254, Pl. 10.5:G65, and see discussion and more

examples therein). A complete indented beaker with a similar bottom, kept in the collections of the British Museum, is said to have come from Bet Guvrin. It is an early example of the type, probably from the mid-first to the second centuries CE (Barag 1985:103, Pl. 18:154).

9. Beaker (L1029, B8933). Bottom and wall fragment. Thin indented wall, with three indents partially preserved. Irregular concave bottom (D 40 mm). Light greenish-blue glass, translucent. Brown crust, silvery iridescence, severe pitting, sand deposits.

10. Beaker (L918, B8520). Bottom and wall fragment. Thin indented wall, with one indent partially preserved. Thick, slightly concave bottom (estimated D 45–50 mm). The glass is not homogeneous: the wall is colorless, while the bottom is light purple, translucent. Silvery iridescence, slight pitting.

Aryballos (Fig. 2:11).— This two-handled fragment belonged to an aryballos. The coarse, low-quality fabric and careless workmanship of this globular vessel may indicate that it was produced in a local glass workshop.

Glass and clay aryballoi were used during the Early Roman period as oil containers in bathhouses. They appeared in the northern provinces of the Roman Empire around the mid-first century CE and were popular during the last quarter of that century (Isings 1957:78–80, Form 61).

A neck and shoulder fragment of an aryballos was found at Khirbat Badd 'Isa (Magen, Tzionit and Sirkis 2004: Pl. 9:29). Two aryballoi were unearthed at Bet Yerah Tomb 7 (Delougaz and Hains 1960: Pl. 50:2, 3), dated by Barag (1970:53) from the mid-first to the mid-second centuries CE. Two additional pieces were discovered at 'En Gedi, one of them beneath the bathhouse floor (Jackson-Tal 2007:477, 480, Fig. 4, Pls. 2:4; 4:7, and see therein examples from Jordan).

11. Aryballos (L869, B8211). Rim, neck and shoulder fragment, deformed. Sloppily executed, thick, irregular, oval ledge rim (L 35 mm, max. W 25

mm) with a collar; tooling marks on the rim. Short, irregular, oval-sectioned neck. Two thick irregular handles, one intact and the other partially preserved, drawn from the shoulder to the bottom of the rim collar. Thick shoulder. Light greenish-blue glass, translucent. Brown crust, silvery iridescence, severe pitting, sand deposits. Very coarse, low-quality fabric, careless workmanship.

Bottle with an Infolded Rim (Fig. 2:12).— This thin infolded rim belonged to a type of bottle widespread during the mid-first through the second centuries CE. A similar bottle rim (not illustrated) was discovered in the same basket. These rims most likely belonged to small pear- or tube-shaped bottles, or to small candlestick-type bottles. Examples of both were discovered close by, in a Roman burial cave near Ben Shemen (Reich 1982: Fig. 3:4–11).

12. Bottle (L1009, B8614). Rim fragment. Small, thin, hollow, unevenly infolded rim (D 25 mm). Light greenish-blue glass, translucent. Brown crust, silvery iridescence, pitting, sand deposits.

Jug (Fig. 2:13).— This ribbed handle belonged to a cylindrical or globular jug of a type that was widespread in the Roman Empire during the late first and second centuries CE. An additional ribbed handle (not illustrated; L972) was discovered at the site.

An incomplete jug with a strap handle, adorned with nine ribs, was discovered at 'Ein

ez-Zeituna, within an assemblage dated from the mid-first century CE to the mid-second century CE (Winter 2006:81–82, Fig. 3:29, and see therein references to complete examples).

13. Jug (L874, B8193/b). Handle fragment. Thick ribbed handle (W at least 45 mm), six ribs partially preserved. Light blue glass, translucent. Brown crust, silvery iridescence, pitting, sand deposits.

SUMMARY

The glass assemblage from Khirbat Burnat is typical of the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods. Glass of these periods from this geographical region has scarcely been published, hence its significance.

The glass finds represent two groups of vessels: the cast bowls (Fig. 1) are typical of the second half of the first century BCE, while the blown vessels (Fig. 2) are characteristic particularly of the second half of the first century CE. The blown group is roughly contemporaneous with the glass assemblage from the settlement excavated at Shu'fat, north of Jerusalem (Katsnelson 2007), which was inhabited between the Great Jewish War and the Bar Kokhba Revolt (70–135 CE); both corpora include bowls with crimped trails on the rim (Fig. 2:5), low ring bases (Fig. 2:6), indented beakers (Fig. 2:9, 10), aryballoids (Fig. 2:11), candlestick-type bottles (Fig. 2:12) and jugs with a ribbed strap handle (Fig. 2:13).

NOTES

¹ I wish to thank Hagit Torge, who excavated the site on behalf of the IAA, for the opportunity to study the glass finds, and Yael Gorin-Rosen for her assistance. The finds were mended by Olga Shorr and drawn by Michael Miles and Carmen Hersch.

² The glass finds from the excavations at Ḥorbat Zalit were studied by Yael Gorin-Rosen. The final report of the excavations, conducted by David Alon and Peter Fabian, has not yet been published.

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