

APPENDIX: BYZANTINE AND EARLY ISLAMIC CERAMICS FROM GIV'OT BAR

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INTRODUCTION

The excavations at Giv'ot Bar, located near Rahat in the northern Negev, yielded a ceramic assemblage from the late Byzantine–Early Islamic periods. The assemblage is homogenous and thus described typologically; the dates of the various types are included in the discussion. The description of the ware was carried out using the 1998 edition of the Munsell Soil Color Charts. The parallels for the late Byzantine vessels in the assemblage are from nearby sites in the northern Negev, such as Be'er Sheva' (Ustinova and Nahshoni 1994; Israel, Seryi and Feder 2013), Horbat Be'er Shema' (Erickson-Gini, Dolinka and Shilov 2015) and Ashqelon (Nahshoni 1999; Israel and Gini 2013), as well as 'En Gedi (Vincenz 2007) in the Dead Sea region. For the Early Islamic period the site with the closest parallels is Ramla (Kletter 2005; Barbé 2006; Cytryn-Silverman 2010; Shmueli 2016a; 2016b).

Although the ceramic assemblage is rather small, it comprises a large variety of types, including numerous fine-ware bowls, of which some are imported; large bowls and basins; various cooking vessels; as well as storage jars and small containers, such as jugs and a flask. An animal figurine was also part of the assemblage.

BOWLS

Phocaean Red Slip Bowl (Fig. 1:1).— Only one imported fine ware bowl, originating from Phocaea/Asia Minor, was noted. The fragment was identified as related to Hayes' LRC Form 3H dated to the sixth century (Hayes 1972:329–338).

Fine Byzantine Ware Bowls (Fig. 1:2–6).— All six vessels are made of very thin, well-levigated ware. Two (Fig. 2:2, 6) bear remains of painted decoration, and the others have smoothed or burnished

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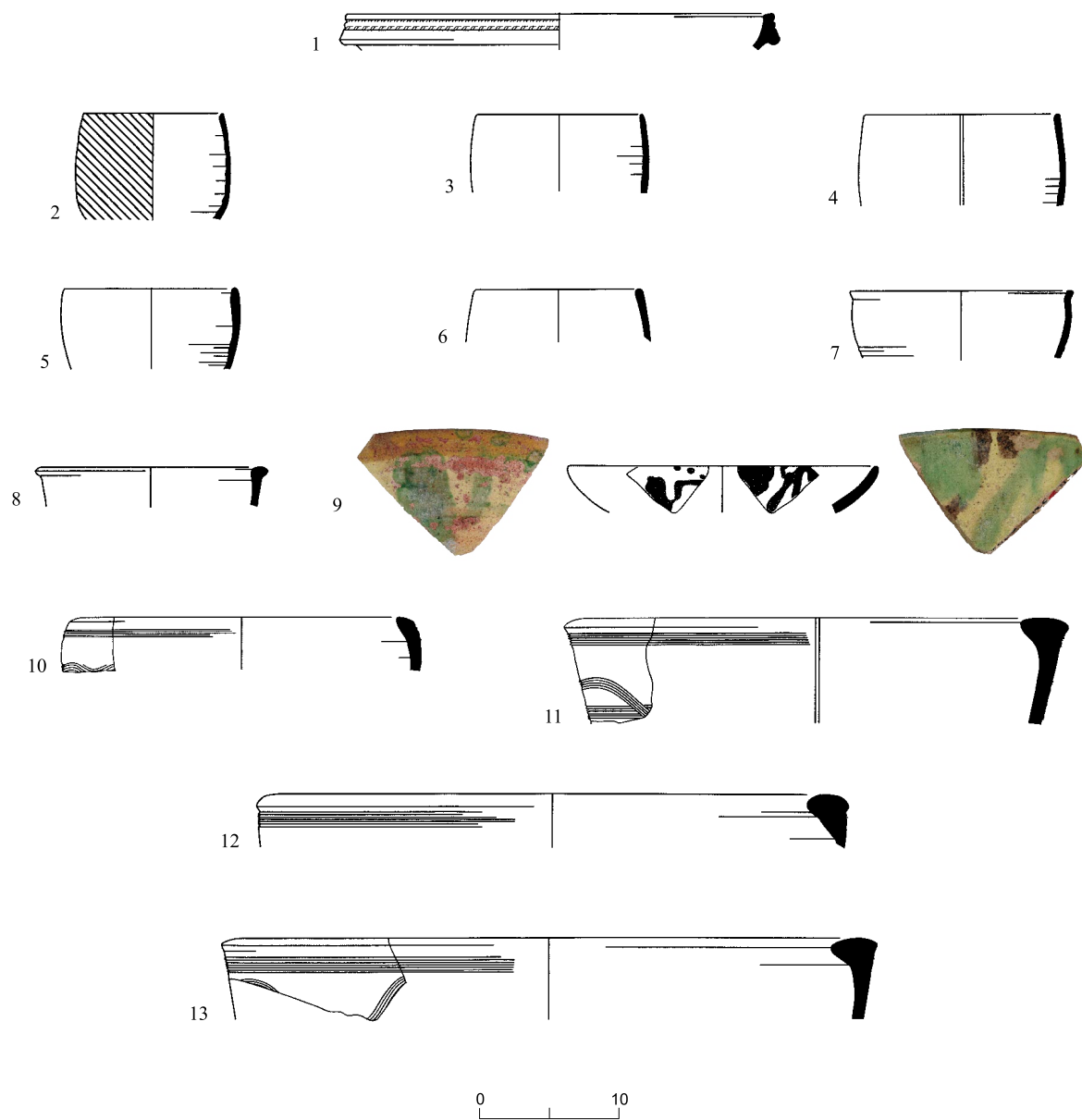


Fig. 1. Bowls (1-10) and basins (11-13).

◄ Fig. 1.

No.	Type	Locus	Basket	Diameter (cm)	Rim preservation (%)	Description
1	Bowl	116	1022/1	22	7.5	Reddish yellow ware (5YR 6/6); light reddish brown slip (2.5YR 6/4)
2	Bowl	130	1043/2	9	27.5	Light red ware (2.5YR 6/6) with a thick gray core and a few very small round white inclusions; reddish gray surface (5YR 5/2) with orange and white painted decoration
3	Bowl	192	1154	10	12.5	Dark grayish brown ware (10YR 4/2) with a few very small round white inclusions; light gray surface (10YR 7/2)
4	Bowl	209	1178	10	17	Light red ware (2.5YR 6/6) with a thick core and a few small angular and round black inclusions; very pale brown to pale brown surface (10YR 7/2–6/3)
5	Bowl	208	1174	10	7.5	Light red ware (2.5YR 7/6) with a few small angular white inclusions; pink surface (5YR 7/4)
6	Bowl	130	1043/3	11	12.5	Light red ware (2.5YR 7/6) with a few very small round black inclusions; light reddish brown surface (2.5YR 7/4) with white painted bands
7	Bowl	167	1145	12	22.5	Yellowish red ware (5YR 5/6) with many small round white inclusions; fired to buff surface (2.5Y 8/2 pale yellow)
8	Bowl	116	1022/2	10	9	Pale yellow ware (2.5Y 8/2) with a few small angular black inclusions; pale yellow surface (2.5Y 8/2)
9	Glazed bowl	126	1175/2	20	8	Pink ware (5YR 7/4) with a few small round black and grog inclusions; white slip; green and brown splashes under transparent glaze
10	Large bowl	134	1056	18	7	Brown ware (7.5YR 5/4) with a few small round white inclusions; light brown surface (7.5YR 6/3)
11	Basin	207	1177	36	<5	Brown ware (7.5YR 5/4) with a few small round white inclusions; light gray surface (10YR 7/2)
12	Basin	153	1075	34	7	Red ware (2.5YR 5/8) with a few small angular white inclusions; light reddish brown to reddish yellow surface (5YR 6/4–6/6)
13	Basin	161	1094	36	8	Yellowish red ware (5YR 5/6) with a few small angular white inclusions; pink surface (7.5YR 7/3)

surfaces. Most of them have a deep body (Fig. 1:2–6) and a round rim, while one (Fig. 2:7) has a more shallow and round body and an everted pinched rim. This type of deep bowl is characteristic of the Early Islamic period and has been found in contexts dated to the eighth and ninth centuries CE (Magness 1993:193–196, FBW Bowls Form 1E). The painted variant was also found in contexts dated to the Abbasid period, such as Ramla (for a discussion and comparison, see Cytryn-Silverman

2010:108–109). Whitcomb found many examples of the painted variant in his recent sondages at Khirbat el-Mafjar, where he calls it ‘Palace Ware’ and dates it to the Abbasid period.²

Buffware Bowl (Fig. 1:8).— This bowl fragment made of buffware has a thickened round rim and seems to be undecorated. It can be dated to the Early Islamic period. A small bowl similar in shape was found in Ramla (Kletter 2005: Fig. 14:2).

Glazed Bowl (Fig. 1:9).— This glazed bowl has a simple round rim and is decorated with green and brown splashes on a white slip that concealed the color of the clay. It belongs to the group of ‘Splash-glazed’ bowls (cf. Cytryn-Silverman 2010:111–112) and is dated from the ninth–eleventh centuries CE. This type of bowl is commonly found in Ramla (see e.g., Kletter 2005: Fig. 11:1–10).

LARGE BOWL AND BASIN

Large Bowl with Incurved Rim (Fig. 1:10).— The bowl is made of light brown ware and has an incurved round rim. It is decorated with straight combed lines under the rim and wavy lines on the body. Bowls similar to this one were found in Ramla, where they were dated to the eighth–ninth centuries CE (Cytryn-Silverman 2010: 99–100, Pl. 9.3:7).

Round Rim Basins (Fig. 1:11–13).— The typical characteristic of these basins is the combed decoration on their body. It is usually a combination of straight and wavy lines. Some of these basins have small loop handles. This type of basin is common in the south of the country, where it has been found at many sites, as for example Ramot Nof, Be’er Sheva’ (Ustinova and Nahshoni 1994: Fig. 3:18), the Migdal neighborhood in Ashqelon (Nahshoni 1999: Figs. 4:12; 5:9), the ‘Third Mile Estate’ in Ashqelon (Israel and Erickson-Gini 2013: Fig. 35:5, 6) and Ḥorbat Be’er Shema’ (Erickson-Gini, Dolinka and Shilov 2015: Fig. 27:5, 6, with additional parallels therein). This type of basin was even more common further north, at the site of Nesher-Ramla during the Late Byzantine period (Vincenz 2010: Figs. 8.2:3; 8.3:2; 8.7:5; 8.12:11, 12; 8.17:2; 8.30:7; 8.31:2; 8.34:6) and even more so in the Byzantine-period Wine Presses at that site (Vincenz 2015: Figs. 5.1:5; 5.5:9; 5.10:7; 5.11:3, 4; 5.12:1; 5.14:8, 9; 5.19:30–39; 5.26:4; 5.27:12–14; 5.29:12–14; 5.31:7). This type of basin although very common during the Byzantine period can also be found in Early Islamic assemblages, such as in Ramla (Cytryn-Silverman 2010:99, Pls. 9.3:1–3; 9.8:3; 9.9:2; 9.10:4; 9.14:3; 9.15:1; 9.18:6; 9.23:1; Kletter 2005: Fig. 13:1–7).

² Personal communication. I wish to thank D. Whitcomb for sharing with me his thoughts on the ceramics from Khirbat el-Mafjar.

COOKING VESSELS

Cooking Bowl (Fig. 2:1).— This is a carinated bowl made of coarse ware; as the bottom part of the vessel is burnt, it was identified as a cooking bowl. A similar bowl made of brown-red ware was reported from Ramla (Kletter 2005: Fig. 15:3). Although our example is classified as a cooking bowl, it may have not been originally intended for cooking; it is also possible that the burning resulted from a fire other than on a stove. The vessel can be dated to the Early Islamic period.

Casserole (Fig. 2:2).— This casserole is made of red, brittle ware. Its walls are straight and rather thin, its rim is beveled with a short flange on the exterior, and it has horizontal handles. The body is smooth and does not show any ribbing. Casseroles dated to the Late Byzantine period were found for example at Ramot Nof, Be'er Sheva' (Ustinova and Nahshoni 1994: Fig. 6:7), at the 'Third Mile Estate' in Ashqelon (Israel and Erickson-Gini 2013: Fig. 38:2) and at Ḥorbat Be'er Shema' (Erickson-Gini, Dolinka and Shilov 2015: Fig. 30:3). The same type of casserole was also used during the Early Islamic period (e.g., Kletter 2005: Fig. 18:7; Barbé 2006: Fig. 5:10; Cytryn-Silverman 2010:112–113, Pl. 9.6:8–11).

Lids (Fig. 2:3, 4).— One lid (Fig. 2:3) is made of brittle cooking-pot ware and has a perforated knob positioned centrally in a depression on the lid. Similar lids dated to the Byzantine period have been found in excavations in the region and beyond (see, e.g., Ustinova and Nahshoni 1994: Fig. 6:23–26; Israel and Erickson-Gini 2013:38:5; Israel, Seryi and Feder 2013: Fig. 14:9–11). In Ramla they are dated to the Early Islamic period (Cytryn-Silverman 2010: Pl. 9.6: 3–7). The second lid (Fig. 2:4) is made of coarse ware and has a folded rim. No satisfactory parallel was found for it.

STORAGE VESSELS

Storage Jars (Fig. 2:5–8).— All storage jars found have a bag-shaped body and a long neck (more than 5 cm long), with a rim that is either folded (Fig. 2:5), round (Fig. 2:6, 7) or slightly everted and round (Fig. 2:8). The jar in Fig. 2:7 is made of thick buffware, while the others are made of coarse pinkish or red ware. Similar jars dated to the Early Islamic period were found in Ramla (Kletter 2005: Fig. 19:3; Barbé 2006:5:13; Cytryn-Silverman 2010: Pl. 9.2:1–6).

Pithos (Fig. 2:9).— The pithos is made of pink ware. Pithoi were a common vessel during the Early Islamic period, but many of them were made of gray and coarse red ware (cf. Stacey 2004: 127–129, Fig. 5.36).

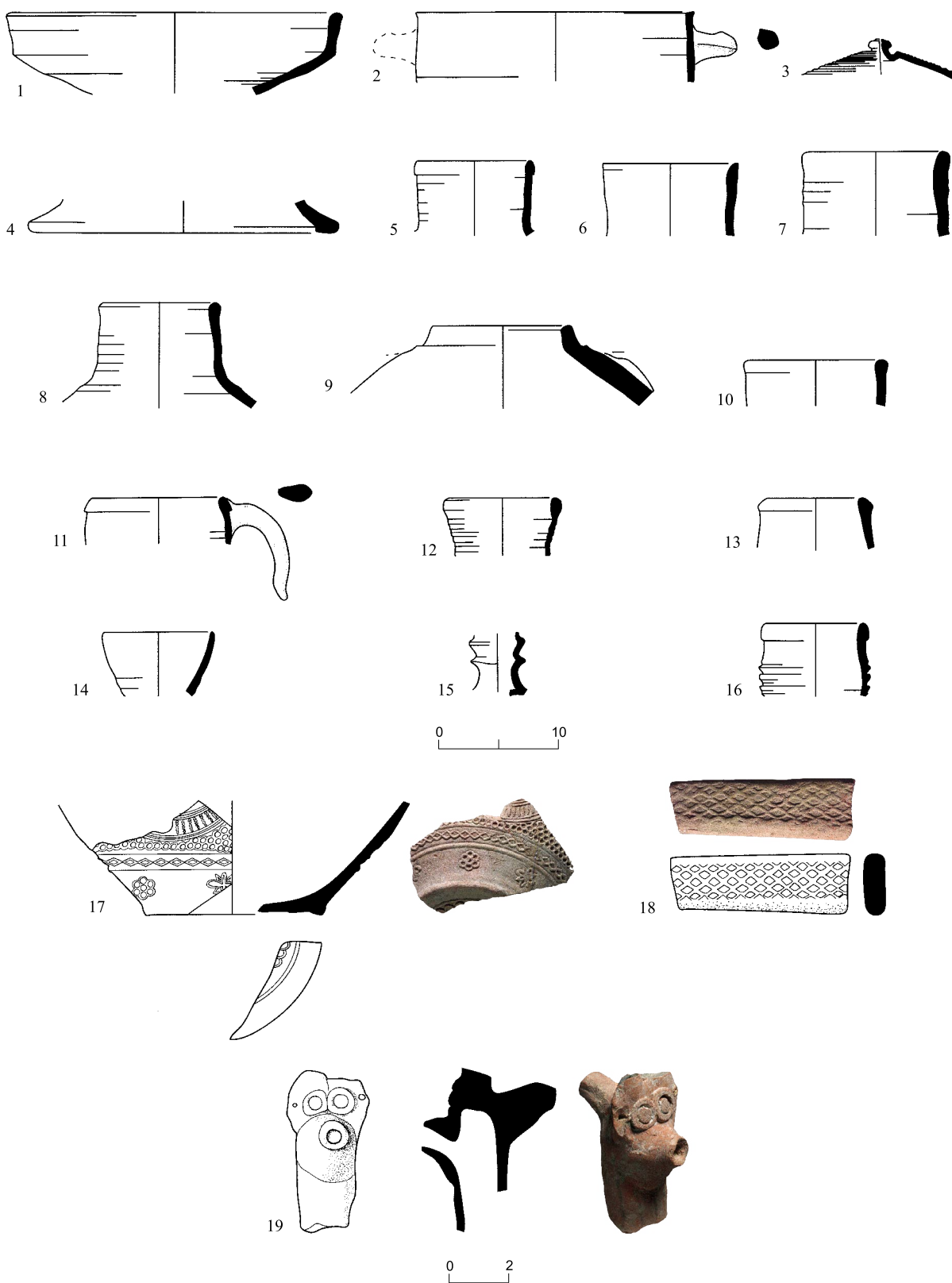


Fig. 2. Cooking vessels (1-4), storage vessels (5-9), jugs (10-14), flasks (15, 16), molded vessels (17, 18) and a figurine (19).

◄ Fig. 2.

No.	Type	Locus	Basket	Diameter (cm)	Rim preservation (%)	Description
1	Cooking bowl	172	1108/2-3	34	17	Red ware (2.5YR 5/6) with a medium amount of small, round white inclusions; light reddish brown surface (2.5YR 6/4); burnt
2	Casserole	126	1179/1	22	7	Red ware (2.5YR 4/6) with a few medium round white and a few small round black inclusions; reddish brown surface (2.5YR 5/4); burnt
3	Lid	182	1108/1			Reddish brown ware (5YR 4/4) with a few small round white inclusions; brown surface (7.5YR 4/3); burnt
4	Lid	156	1077	22	8	Reddish yellow ware (5YR 6/6) with a few small round white inclusions; encrusted surface
5	Storage jar	157	1092	9	12.5	Reddish yellow to yellowish red ware (5YR 6/6-5/6) with a few small angular white inclusions; reddish yellow surface (5YR 6/6)
6	Storage jar	124	1040	9	12.5	Light red ware (2.5YR 6/6) with a few small angular white inclusions; very pale brown surface (10YR 7/4)
7	Storage jar	111	1031	11	20	Very pale brown ware (10YR 7/3) with a few small round white inclusions; very pale brown surface (10YR 8/2-8/3)
8	Storage jar	209	1183/1	10	25	Reddish yellow ware (5YR 7/6) with a few small angular white inclusions; reddish yellow surface (5YR 7/6)
9	Pithos	172	1108	12	28	Light red ware (2.5YR 6/6) with a few small round white inclusions; light reddish brown to light red surface (2.5YR 6/4-6/6)
10	Jar/jug	163	1090	8	12	Reddish yellow ware (5YR 6/6) with a few small angular white inclusions; light reddish brown surface (5YR 6/4)
11	Cooking jug	203	1160	11	9	Red ware (2.5YR 5/8) with a few very small round white inclusions; reddish brown surface (2.5YR 4/3)
12	Cooking jug	130	1043	10	7.5	Red ware (2.5YR 5/8) with a few small angular black inclusions; encrusted surface
13	Jar/jug	184	1128	8	21	Brown ware (7.5YR 5/4) with a few very small round white inclusions; light brown surface (7.5YR 6/4)
14	Jug	209	1171	10	20	Very pale brown ware (10YR 8/3); very pale brown surface (10YR 8/2)
15	Flask	209	1183/2			Very pale brown ware (10YR 7/3); gray surface from burning
16	Flask	111	1023	9	35	Very pale brown ware (10YR 8/3); very pale brown surface (10YR 8/2)
17	Molded base	184	1128/3			Reddish yellow ware (5YR 7/6) with a few small round white inclusions; pink surface (7.5YR 8/3-7/3)
18	Molded handle	176	1112			Reddish yellow ware (5YR 7/6) with a few small round white inclusions; very pale brown surface (10YR 8/3)
19	Figurine	209	1178/2			Light red ware (2.5YR 6/6) with a thick core and a few small, angular white inclusions; light red surface (2.5YR 6/6) with traces of red paint

JUGS

Jar/Jug with Round Rim (Fig. 2:10).— This jar/jug has a straight neck and a round rim. A two-handled jug with a similar profile comes from Ramla (Shmueli 2016b: Fig. 8:3, and see parallels therein).

Cooking Jugs (Fig. 2:11, 12).— The two jug fragments are made of cooking-pot ware and thus were probably used for cooking or heating liquids. Cooking jugs are rather common at southern sites with Byzantine-period occupation layers, such as the Byzantine Village at ‘En Gedi (Vincenz 2007: Pl. 60:15) and in the Synagogue excavated there,³ and should be dated to the sixth or seventh century CE.

Jar/Jug with Triangular Rim (Fig. 2:13).— This jar/jug, which is made of buffware and has a triangular rim, can probably be dated to the Early Islamic period. A jar from Ramla has a similar profile (cf. Cytryn-Silverman 2010: Pl. 9.10:2).

Jug with Flaring Neck (Fig. 2:14).— This thin-walled jug or juglet is made of pale buffware. Similar jugs and juglets are well known from the Early Islamic period and are frequently decorated with incised patterns (e.g., Shmueli 2016a: Fig. 17:2, 8).

Flasks (Fig. 2:15, 16).— A stepped neck (Fig. 2:15) and a rim and bulging neck (Fig. 2:16) belonging to flasks are shown here. Both are made of pale buffware. Similar flasks dated to the Early Islamic period were found in Ramla (Cytryn-Silverman 2010: Pl. 9.24:9, 10; 2016a: Fig. 18:2; Shmueli 2016b: Fig. 9:1).

Molded Jugs (Fig. 2:17, 18).— A molded base (Fig. 2:17) and a molded handle (Fig. 2:18) also belong to buffware jugs. These jugs are found rather frequently at sites dated to the Early Islamic period, such as Ramla (for a discussion of the dating of molded vessels and parallels, see Cytryn-Silverman 2010:104–108, Pls. 9.1:7; 9.12:6; 9.20:3; 9.24:2. See also Barbé 2006: 4:17; Kletter 2005: Fig. 16:6, 7).

ANIMAL FIGURINE (Fig. 2:19)

Animal figurines are well-known items from the Early Islamic period, but their use is still uncertain. Almost always only fragments—either the head or body parts—are found. The figurine here seems to represent an animal with long ears. It has round eyes, the mouth serves as a spout, and it is painted

³ Several complete and fragmentary cooking jugs were found while excavating the synagogue at ‘En Gedi. The excavation was directed by Gideon Hadas, and the ceramic material was studied by the present author and awaits publication.

red. Similar zoomorphic figurines have been found in Ramla (Kletter 2005: Fig. 22:1–3) and in Tiberias (Stacey 2004: Fig. 5.56). They are usually dated to the Umayyad period, but they have been found in later contexts as well. A complete glazed zoomorphic vessel was found in Caesarea, where it was dated to the Fatimid period (Arnon, Lester and Polak 1999: Fig. 2k).

CONCLUSIONS

As can be seen from the typological discussion, the material in the excavation can be dated to the Late Byzantine through the Abbasid period. Quite a variety of vessels was found, with no single outstanding type. The assemblage appears to represent household items, as it includes table wares and pouring vessels, as well as cooking vessels, large utilitarian basins and storage jars. It is interesting, though, that no lamps were found. The material is mainly locally made—for example, jars and basins—while bowls are imported from Phocaea, Jerusalem or the vicinity of Jerusalem, if we accept that the FBW bowls were indeed made there.

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