

Salvage Excavation Reports

No 2

Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology



Tel Aviv University



Salvage Excavation Reports

Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology  Tel Aviv University

No. 2

A GROUP OF IRON AGE WINERIES FROM ANCIENT JAFFA (JOPPA) <i>Alexander Fantalkin</i>	3
JALJULIA WEST <i>Guy Avivi</i>	27
PERSIAN PERIOD REMAINS AT RISHON LE-ZION <i>Oren Tal</i>	30
A MIDDLE BRONZE AGE IIA CEMETERY AT KHIRBET MUḤAYZIN <i>Assaf Yasur-Landau and Marta Guzowska</i> Appendix I: The Flint Assemblage - Ron Shimelmitz Appendix II: The Human Skeletal Remains - Y. Nagar	38
A BRONZE AND IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AT NETIV HA-ʿASARA <i>Alon Shavit and Assaf Yasur-Landau</i> Appendix I: Figurines - N. Goshen Appendix II: Arrowheads - N. Goshen Appendix III: Engraved Scaraboid - N. Lankin Appendix IV: Lithic Finds - N. Lev-Tov Appendix V: Petrographic Analysis - E. Buzaglo and A. Yasur-Landau	59
QIDRON: A WADI RABAH CULTURE SITE <i>Danny Rosenberg and Edwin C.M. van den Brink</i>	93
EL-MIDIAH <i>Assaf Nativ and Yitzhak Paz</i>	104
EXCAVATIONS AT LOD: Neolithic and Chalcolithic Remains and an Egyptian Presence in the Early Bronze Age <i>Yitzhak Paz, Danny Rosenberg and Assaf Nativ</i>	114

PERSIAN PERIOD REMAINS AT RISHON LE-ZION

Oren Tal

The salvage excavation (License No. G-117/1999) was conducted on behalf the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University. Dankner Investments Ltd. financed the project. The excavations were directed by J. Peersman, to whom I am indebted for entrusting me with the excavation records and finds. Excavation lasted some five weeks, intermittently, started from the 19th of September to the 4th of October 1999, and continued in the 19th of October towards the end of October. Field supervisors were A. Tass, R. Eran and Y. Gamrasni, and S. Brannon served as registrar. I am grateful to A. Perry who drew the pottery; A. Tass who drew the site plans and Y. Smertenko who prepared them for publication.

INTRODUCTION

The site discussed in this article (Holot Rishon Le-Zion [south], Map Ref. 1275 1525) is located upon the Gaza Formation which is of Quaternary Age (Horowitz 1979:112-115, Fig. 5.58). Prior to the excavations the site was covered by a thick layer of migrating sand dunes, stabilized in part by plants, and containing terrestrial snails, plant remains, a few animal bones and pottery, deposited in the last three to four thousand years and, therefore, it was never mentioned by the surveyors of ancient Palestine. This layer of sand dunes makes up part of the geological unit of the Hadera Dune Bed (Rishon Le-Zion Deposit) dominated by dunal morphology with typical cross bedding. This unit apparently overlies most of the archaeological sites along the southern Sharon plain and northern Philistia and is usually characterized by shrubs (Tal 1999a:78). Erosion sometimes removes this upper unit, thereby exposing the Tel Aviv *Kurkar* Bed (fossilized dune sandstone) or the Ta'arukha *Hamra* Bed underneath, and revealing archaeological sites.

The site reported here was discovered by inspectors of the Israel Antiquities Authority (henceforth IAA) after having been exposed by mechanical tools while preparing the area for residential building operations. In May 1999 a trial excavation, directed by M. Peilstöcker, was conducted on behalf of the IAA.

Seven squares (5×5 m each) were opened, and walls, segmented floors with pottery, animal bones and metal objects were found in the four western ones. The remaining three eastern squares yielded no other archaeological remains but for fallen mud-bricks. According to the excavator, the archaeological remains formed two phases probably dating to the Persian and Hellenistic periods. The excavated remains from the 1999 salvage excavations were removed at the request of the IAA as the site is now part of the Qiryat Hatanai Prass Nobel neighbourhood of Rishon Le-Zion, and located in Ma'agal ha-Shalom Street.

The site lies some 500 m to the southwest of the ancient mound of Rishon Le-Zion where recent excavations have discovered a MBIIB podium and a Neo-Assyrian fortress that may have remained in use in Persian and Early Hellenistic times (Peilstöcker 1999, 2000; Levy *et al.* 2004).

METHOD

A new excavation grid was laid out in accordance with the 'puncture line' of the planned residential area and thus eighteen 5×5 m squares, six 3×5 m squares and two 2.5×2.5 m squares were opened. Once virgin soil was reached, baulks and all exposed architecture were removed.

Three strata were exposed (I-III). The following study is dedicated to the finds unearthed in Strata III and II in TAU excavations at the site. Due to the fact that Stratum I was found to be more substantial in terms of architecture and small finds – a farmstead of Early Hellenistic date with a rich assemblage of pottery, metal objects and coins – unearthed in part by both IAA and TAU, its final publication awaits collaboration between the two bodies.

The natural topography slopes down to the south, and pits of Stratum III were actually cut into the Tel Aviv *Kurkar* Bed. The pre-existing landscape of Stratum II and I must have consisted of *kurkar* of varying hardness and mostly *hamra* soil, as both served as building materials. Both can be seen in most undisturbed sections made during the excavation. Soft *kurkar* overlies hard *kurkar* which is topped by *hamra* soil, thus demonstrating the geological sequence of Ta>arukha *Hamra* Bed (Fig. 1).

STRATUM III

This stratum is characterized by round or square pits of varying sizes (Fig. 2), rock-cut in the local rock which usually forms part of the Tel Aviv *Kurkar* Bed.

Pit A (Sq. O/10) is round, ca. 0.75 m in diameter and ca. 1.11 m deep. It was found covered with field stones of varying sizes and filled with *hamra* soil. No finds were recovered.

Pit B (Sq. O/10) is round, ca. 0.90 m in diameter and ca. 0.53 m deep; it was found covered with field stones of varying size and filled with

hamra with some greyish soil intrusions. Finds were scant and consist of a few unidentifiable pottery fragments, a worn coin and a pin.

Pit C (Sq. N/10) is square, ca. 1.40×1.20 m in diameter and ca. 1.54 m deep. It was found covered with field stones of varying sizes. Its upper half was filled with *hamra* and lenses of grey soil, whereas the lower part was filled with dune sand. The scant finds retrieved are restricted to its upper half and consist of a few unidentifiable pottery fragments.

Pit D (Sq. N-M/10) is round, ca. 1.50 m in diameter and ca. 0.41 m deep. It was found covered with field stones of varying sizes and filled with *hamra* with some grey soil lenses. Finds were scant and consist of a nearly complete bottle and cooking-pot (Fig. 3:1, 4) and a few unidentifiable pottery fragments, as well as some fragmented *ovis/capra* metapodia.

Pit E (Sq. O/8-9) is round, ca. 1.75 m in diameter and ca. 0.98 m deep. It was found covered with field stones of varying sizes and filled with *hamra* with some grey-coloured soil intrusions. Finds were scant and consist of few unidentifiable pottery fragments.

Pit F (Sq. O/8) is round, ca. 2.00 m in diameter and ca. 1.70 m deep. It was found covered with field stones of varying sizes and filled with *hamra* with some grey soil lenses. An adjoining round pit (F1, Sq. O/8), ca. 1.50 m in diameter and ca. 1.47 m deep, was discovered while excavating its base. The floors of both pits were

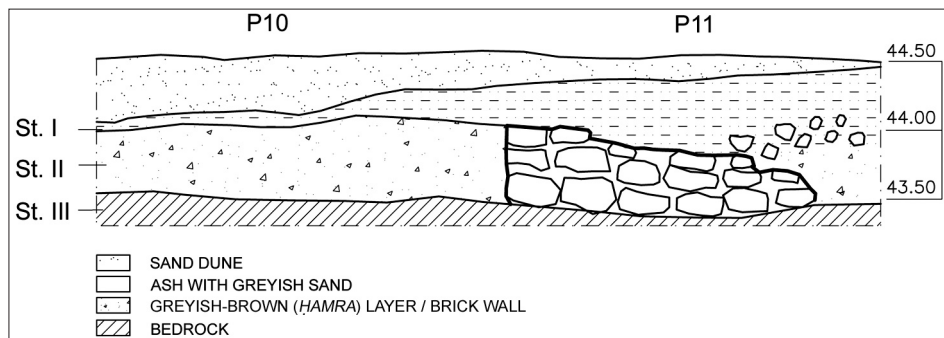


Fig. 1: Section through the country rock underlying Stratum III.

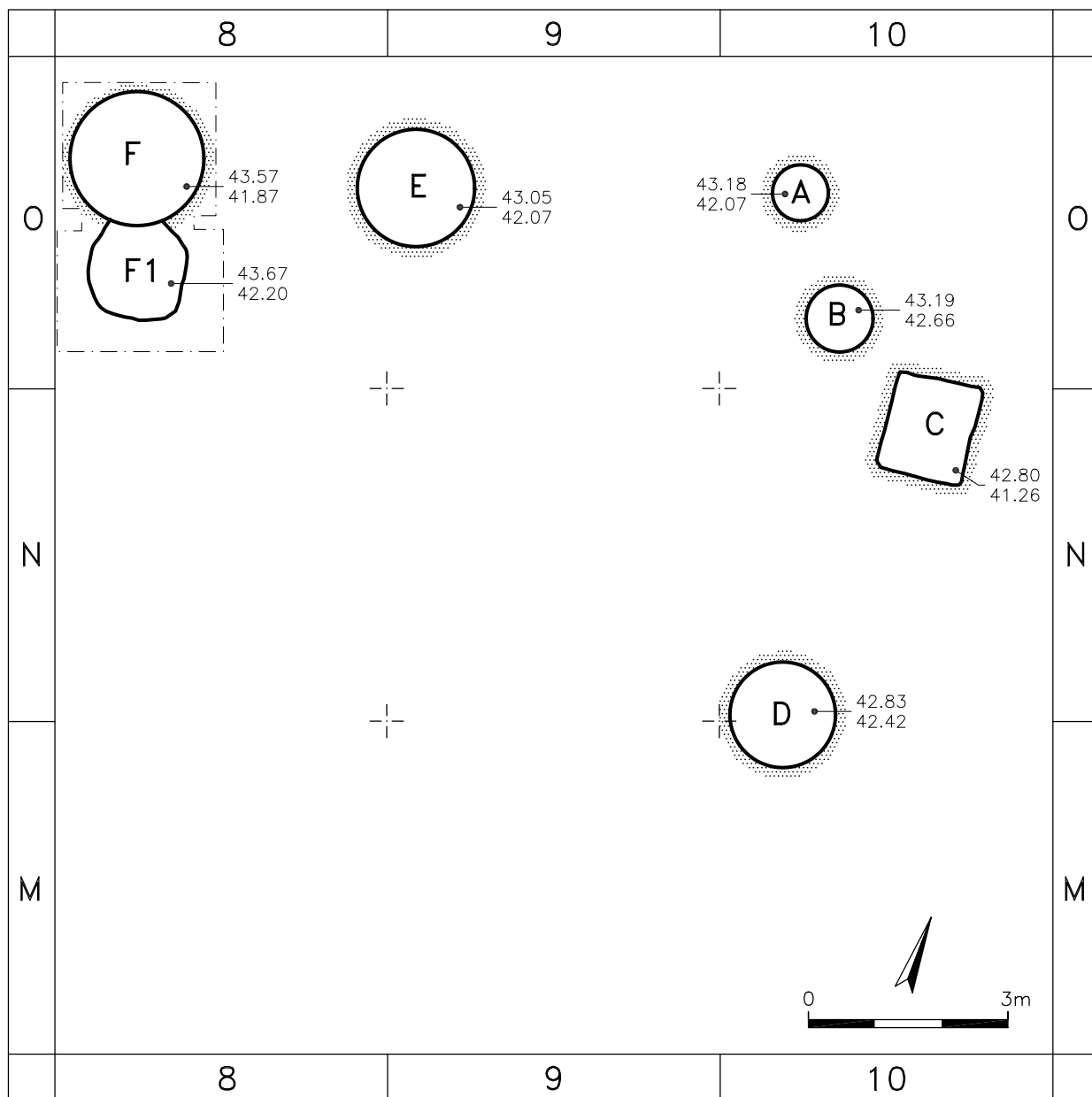


Fig. 2: Plan of Stratum III and cross-sections of the pits associated with it.

covered by *kurkar* slabs, testifying that both were connected and used in the same period of time. Finds were meagre and restricted to Pit F. They consist of two upper body fragments of storage jars and a few unidentifiable pottery fragments, as well as few fragmented *ovis/capra* metapodia.

POTTERY

The scant identifiable finds came from two pits, D and F, and consist of a bottle, cooking-pot and two storage jars, made of medium to high temperature fired sandy ware with occasional components of temper (mainly calcareous). All were found mixed within the fills of the respective pits. The bottle (Fig. 3:1) has a bulbous body, elongated narrow neck and a

small ring-base. It has a type-characteristic painted red band on its lower neck. It is squat amphoriskos-like in shape, which derives from a Greek proto-type and mostly confined to Persian period coastal sites (e.g. Stern 1982:125, Type A1; Singer-Avitz 1989: 122, 135, Figs. 9.2:11-12 and 9.13:12; for a handled version see Syon 1998:34, Fig. 65, centre). The two storage jars (Fig. 3:2-3) are of the same type (Stern 1982:104-105, Type F [esp. F1], for additional comparative material see Tal 1999b:159, Fig. 4.40: 3-4) common throughout the Persian and Early Hellenistic periods. The cooking-pot (Fig. 3:4) is of a typical Persian coastal type (Singer-Avitz 1989:130, Fig. 9.8:6) which displays some characteristics of its Hellenistic successor, i.e., thin-walled, elongated flared neck and shallow ribbed base.

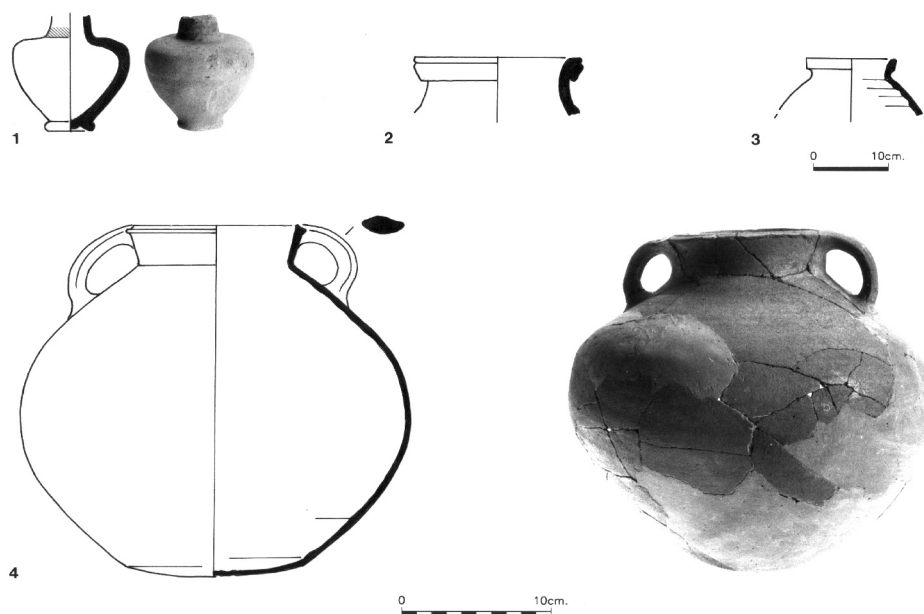


Fig. 3: Pottery from Stratum III.

No.	Type	Locus / Pit	Description
1	Bottle	185 / D	Pale orange clay; painted red band.
2	Storage jar	185 / D	Brown-orange clay.
3	Storage jar	187 / F	Brown-orange clay.
4	Cooking-pot	187 / F	Brown clay.

DISCUSSION

The pits probably all date from the Persian period. They were intentionally filled with earth and covered with stones when the area was levelled prior to the construction of Stratum II. The finds recovered from the pits most probably belong to Stratum III, but were swept away into the pits while founding Stratum II.

The nature of Stratum III was of storage; as pits were most likely connected with the storing of grains (Stager 1971). It is unlikely that liquids were stored in them as no indication of plaster was found and the local *kurkar* rock is too porous. Moreover, it can safely be said that more than 90% of the pottery finds retrieved, although unidentifiable in terms of typology, morphology and dating, belonged to storage vessels. The limited quantity of identifiable pottery precludes any exact dating within the Persian period, although some indication can be deduced from the finds of the following stratum (II), as it too is of Persian date.

STRATUM II

This stratum is characterized by walls built of sun-dried mud-bricks (*hamra* soil mixed with grits and organic matter) without stone foundations that have simply been placed after Stratum III was leveled, in places down to bedrock (Fig. 4). All the bricks seem to be of a standard size (the few intact ones are ca. 0.40 m in length, 0.25 m in width and 0.10 m in height), and walls were built in courses of three bricks set lengthwise to form a wall ca. 0.75 m thick. Stratum II was severely damaged in the course of the building operations of Stratum I so that the plan of this stratum is rather disjointed; a maximum of three to four courses of bricks reflecting the remains of several rooms. An opening facing east between Walls 164 and 151 was also recorded. A grey and yellowish ashy channel found below this opening was probably used for sewage. The floor level consisted of a dark brown ashy layer at approximately the second course of bricks. West of wall 161 a thick black ash layer (Locus 127), possibly a fire hearth, was uncovered next to a patch of earth

packed with small stones that may have formed a paved surface. To its southeast, three walls are part of another room (Locus 156), and the same applies to the north-west (Locus 159). Walls were found also in the north part of the excavated area.

POTTERY

Finds securely belonging to this stratum were scarce, and the few identifiable floors were normally found clean. The pottery is made of medium to high temperature fired sandy ware with occasional components of temper (mainly calcareous). The cylindrical wide neck, folded rim jug (Fig. 5:1) resembles an example from Tell en-Naşbeh (Stern 1982:116, Type F). The body of the perfume juglet (Fig. 5:2) is of a well-known Persian period type (Stern 1982:124, Type 7), common throughout the country. The Greek-style amphora (Fig. 5:3-4) is of uncertain origin, although resembling in shape late 5th and 4th century BCE Chian examples (Whitbread 1995:135-153). The pointed bases of the two storage jars (Fig. 5:5-6) belong to basket handle jars of Persian date (Humbert 1991).

DISCUSSION

The remains of Stratum II seem to belong to a farmstead, the nature of which is still uncertain because of the restricted extent of excavations and finds. The finds from Stratum III represent the date of foundation of Stratum II. However, finds from both strata are scarce, and can be dated to either the 5th or 4th century BCE. Therefore, both strata can be allocated within this time span. Since occupation of the site may be regarded as continuous, these two strata are likely to cover the 4th century BCE. This assumption can be confirmed by several vessel types found in both strata.

As a Persian period storage facility (Stratum III) and later a farmstead or other rural structure (Stratum II), it is tempting to understand the *raison d'être* of the site as connected to the occupation of the nearby mound of Rishon Le-Zion (Levy *et al.* 2004). The nature of that settlement is still uncertain and awaits final publication, but a military occupation is plausible.

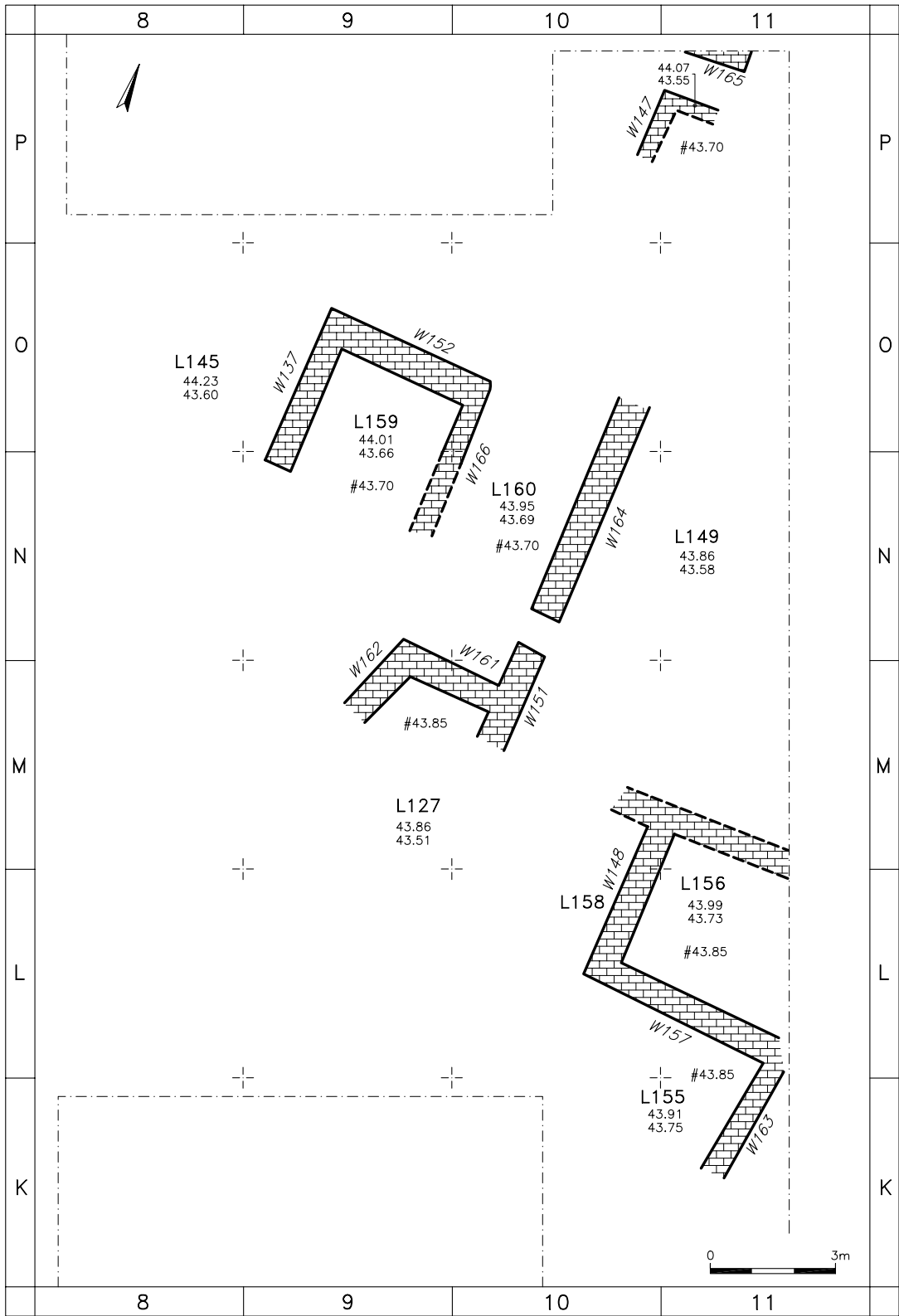


Fig. 4: Plan of Stratum II.

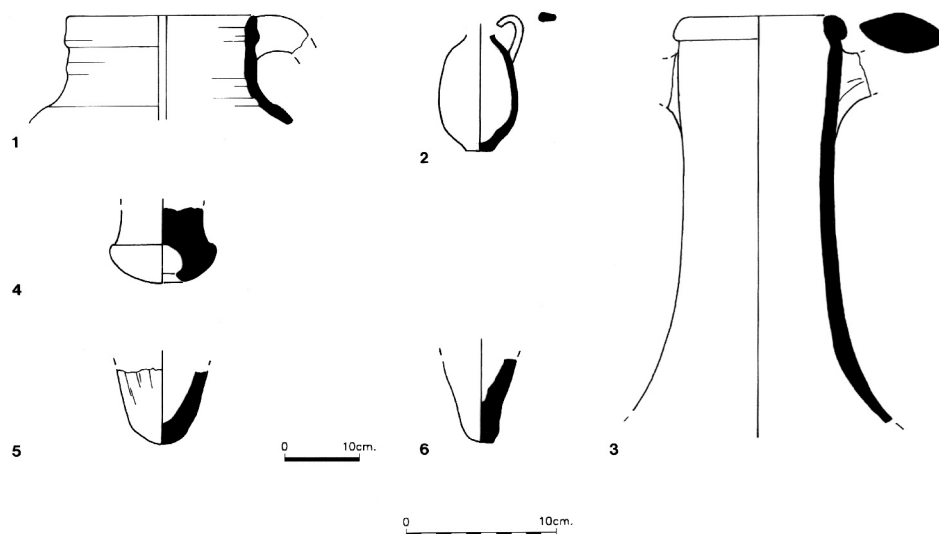


Fig. 5: Pottery from Stratum II.

No.	Type	Locus	Description
1	Jug	149	Buff; pale brown core.
2	Juglet	147	Orange.
3	Amphora	159	Pale orange.
4	Amphora (toe)	159	Pale orange.
5	Storage jar (base)	147	Orange; brown core. Handmade.
6	Storage jar (base)	147	Orange.

Due to extensive modern building operations in the sand dunes of Rishon Le-Zion during the last decade, a few previously unknown Persian and Early Hellenistic sites have come to light, all unfortunately as yet unpublished (Peilstöcker 1999, 2000). According to recent archaeological excavations, these sites stretch as far south as southern Philistia, and have similar characteristics to the one published here. Its location in the northern part of the southern coastal plain (i.e., Philistia/the Judaeian Coastal Plain), was most probably oriented to Jaffa (Joppa) (Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan 1993), Tel Ya'oz (Kletter *et al.* 2000; Tal *et al.* 2005) and Yavneh-Yam (Fischer 2002:5-6); all located within a radius of less than 10 km from it. In terms of

landscape, the region was characterized by outcrops of rich fertile soil stemming from the Ta'arukha *Hamra* Bed, and was most suitable as an agricultural hinterland for the major coastal settlements. Isolated storing facilities and farmsteads may have characterized other Persian period remains previously documented in neighbouring areas such as Messubim interchange (Finkelstein 1990), Azor, Bat Yam (Shapira 1966) and Holon (see also Or *et al.*, undated: Sites no. 111, 112, 125, 127, 142, 146, 147 and 148). Such agricultural production-oriented sites may well fit a 'Central Place Theory' model, with the urban coastal settlements as major administrative centres and the productive, storage facility sites as interacting hamlets.

REFERENCES

- Finkelstein, I. 1990. Soundings at ancient Bene-Beraq. *Atiqot* 10:29-40. (Hebrew with English summary)
- Fischer, M. 2002. Yavneh-Yam 1992-1999 – Interim report. *Qadmoniot* 123:2-11.
- Horowitz, A. 1979. *The Quaternary of Israel*. New York.
- Humbert, J.-B. 1991. Essai de classification des amphores dites à anses de panier. *Revue Biblique* 98:574-590.
- Kletter, R., Segal, O. and Ziffer, I. 2000. Tel Ya'oz. *Hadashot Arkheologiyot - Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 112:72*.
- Kaplan, J. and Ritter-Kaplan, H. 1993. Jaffa. In: Stern, E. et al., eds. *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land Vol. 2*. Jerusalem. pp. 655-659.
- Levy, Y., Peilstöcker, M. and Ginzburg, A. 2004. An Iron Age fortress in the sand dunes of Rishon Letzion. *Qadmoniot* 128:92-94.
- Peilstöcker, M. 1999. News in Brief: Rishon Le-Ziyyon Sand Dunes. *Hadashot Arkheologiyot - Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 110:94*.
- Peilstöcker, M. 2000. News in Brief: Rishon Le-Ziyyon Sand Dunes. *Hadashot Arkheologiyot - Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 111:102.
- Or (Ordentlich), E., Ayalon, E., Shacham, Z., Feder, S. and Shalev, S. Undated. *Archaeological Sites in Tel Aviv – Jaffa and its Vicinity*. (Eretz Israel Museum) Tel Aviv. (Hebrew with English summary)
- Shapira, Y. 1966. An ancient cave at Bat-Yam. *Israel Exploration Journal* 16:8-10.
- Singer-Avitz, L. 1989. Local pottery of the Persian period (Strata XI-VI). In: Herzog, Z., Rapp, G. Jr. and Negbi, O., eds. *Excavations at Tel Michal, Israel*. (Publications of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University 8) Tel Aviv. pp. 115-144.
- Stager, L. E. 1971. Climatic conditions and grain storage in the Persian period. *Biblical Archaeologist* 34:86-88.
- Stern, E. 1982. *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538-332 B.C.* Warminster and Jerusalem.
- Syon, D. 1998. Migdal Ha-^śEmeq. *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 18:33-34
- Tal, O. 1999a. The natural environment. In: Roll, I. and Tal, O. *Apollonia-Arsuf: Final Report of the Excavations, Volume I: The Persian and Hellenistic Periods (with Appendices on the Chalcolithic and Iron Age II Remains)*. (Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University 16) Tel Aviv. pp. 76-82.
- Tal, O. 1999b. The Persian period. In: Roll, I. and Tal, O. *Apollonia-Arsuf: Final Report of the Excavations, Volume I: The Persian and Hellenistic Periods (with Appendices on the Chalcolithic and Iron Age II Remains)*. (Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University 16) Tel Aviv. pp. 83-222.
- Tal, O., Fischer, M. and Roll, I. 2005. Persian and Hellenistic remains at Tel Ya'oz – Towards the identification of Hellenistic Gazara. In: Fischer, M., ed. *Yavneh, Yavneh-Yam and their Neighborhood: Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Judean Coastal Plain*. Tel Aviv. pp. 259-302. (Hebrew with English summary)
- Whitbread, I. K. 1995. *Greek Transport Amphorae: A Petrological and Archaeological Study*. (The British School at Athens. Fitch Laboratory Occasional Paper 4) Exeter.