

PERSIAN AND HELLENISTIC REMAINS AT TEL YA'UZ*

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Abstract

The article summarizes the 1981 excavation at Tel Ya'uz, which revealed remains from the Persian and Hellenistic periods. The Persian period settlement extended over an area of at least 1.5 ha and was probably the largest settlement in the lower Naḥal Šoreq basin at that time. Remains of Greek-style fresco and stucco architectural elements seem to indicate that a monumental complex existed at the site during the Hellenistic period. In the second part of the article we propose identifying Tel Ya'uz with ancient Gazara, mentioned in Hellenistic sources.

THE SITE

Tel Ya'uz (Tell Ghazza) is located on the southern border of the Rishon LeZion dunes, ca. 1 km north of the bend in Naḥal Šoreq (Wadi Rubin) and ca. 1.5 km east of the Mediterranean shoreline (Israel Grid Reference 1241/1506; Fig. 1). The site is located on the Gaza Formation from the Quaternary Age (Horowitz 1979: 112–115, Fig. 5.58). The mound is covered by a few metres of stratified shifting sand, compacted and partially stabilized, which contains land snails, remains of carbonized plants, bones and sherds (see Gavish and Bakler 1990: 70–71). The layer of sand on and around the mound is part of the Ḥadera Dune Bed (Rishon LeZion Deposit). Dunes such as these, which have accumulated over long periods, cover many of the archaeological sites in the Sharon and northern Philistia (Nir 1992: 12–14). Indeed, from a distance, Tel Ya'uz looks like a high dune (Fig. 2). This is apparently the reason it was not identified as an archaeological site until the beginning of the 1930s. Two sources provided the site with water: a spring near the bend in Naḥal Šoreq south of Tel Ya'uz, known as 'En el-Maliḥa, and the pair of springs southeast of Nabi Rubin, called 'En el-Sultan. The structures uncovered at the site were mainly built of *kurkar* (fossilized dune sandstone), apparently of the Giv'at Olga Formation (Ramat Gan Member).

* This is a revised and updated version of a Hebrew article by the authors (Tal, Fischer and Roll 2005).

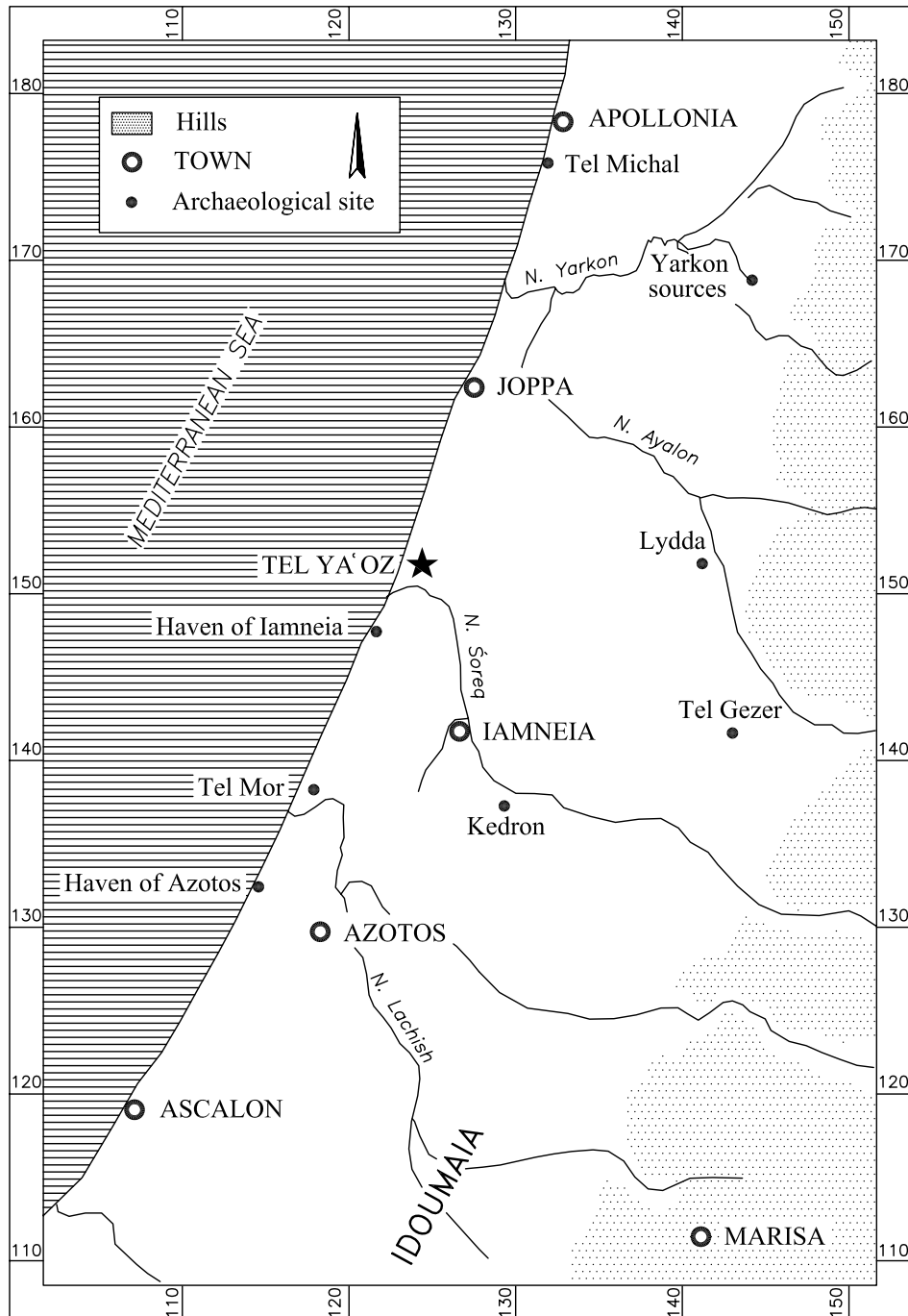


Fig. 1. Map of the southern Coastal Plain with settlements of the Seleucid and Hasmonean periods.



Fig. 2. Tel Yaʿoz—general view, looking northwest.

HISTORY OF RESEARCH

Tel Yaʿoz was officially declared an antiquities site in 1933 (*Government of Palestine*, 1933: 22, s.v. Tall Ghazza). This came in the wake of a survey conducted by antiquities inspector J. Ory, who collected flint tools and pottery dated to the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman periods at the site. Ory concluded that this was an artificial mound covered with sand (*Rashumot* 1964: 1429; *Department of Antiquities* 1976: 81).

M. Dothan (1952) surveyed Tel Yaʿoz during a comprehensive survey of the Naḥal Šoreq estuary in the 1940s and early 1950s. He retrieved a few Iron Age sherds and a rich variety of Persian and Hellenistic pottery, as well as architectural elements and coins of the ‘Philisto-Arabian’ type (Kindler, 1963: 3; see discussion on these coins in Gitler and Tal 2006: especially 49–51). Dothan concluded that during the Persian and Hellenistic periods Tel Yaʿoz was the most important site in the Naḥal Šoreq basin (1952: 112).

During the 1950s and 1960s, M. Brosh and other antiquities inspectors visited Tel Yaʿoz frequently. They noted damage done to the mound by *kurkar* quarries and illegal excavations.¹ Brosh and his colleagues collected important artefacts at the site, including clay figurines from the Persian and Hellenistic periods, an amphora handle with a stamp from Thassos dated between the 5th and 3rd centuries BCE and a stone weight in the form of a stag carved in typical Rhodian style (Stern 1982: 216–217, Fig. 364).

¹ This information is based on data from the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) archives. The authors wish to thank E. Ayalon, and the then Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums director, A. Eitan, for putting the material at their disposal.

In the 1970s, I. Roll conducted several surveys at the site and retrieved numerous finds, including Greek glazed ware and Hellenistic fine ware. In 1980, Roll determined that Tel Ya'oz had served as an acropolis for a large settlement that extended southward as far as the northern bank of Nahal Soreq and the nearby springs.² A fragment inscribed with eight letters in paleo-Hebrew script, apparently a writing exercise, was also found. On the summit of Tel Ya'oz, Roll discovered a portion of a wall constructed of 1.10 m wide *kurkar* blocks and nearby, a few fragments of stucco architectural elements in Greek style. The latter included a fragment of a triglyph bearing the remains of paint, and a fragment of a half column stuccoed in a fluted design (*canellurae*), which indicated the presence of a monumental building. Roll launched a trial dig at the site in August 1981, the results of which are the main subject of this report.

In August and September 1998, after bulldozers had damaged the southwestern edges of the mound, a salvage excavation was carried out at Tel Ya'oz by R. Kletter under the auspices of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA). This excavation revealed the walls of a structure made of ashlar piers of well-dressed *kurkar* blocks alternating with fieldstone construction built directly on the sand. The structure had a number of rooms that yielded finds from the Persian period (Segal, Kletter and Ziffer 2006). Notable among these was an almost complete anthropomorphic clay rhyton identified as the Egyptian god Amon-Ra (Ziffer, Kletter and Segal 2006).

THE 1981 EXCAVATION

STRATIGRAPHY AND ARCHITECTURE

The ten-day trial dig took place between August 12 and 21, 1981. It focused on two areas: Area A, located on the summit and the northern edge of the summit; and Area D, situated at the foot of the mound on its northeastern slope (Fig. 3).³

Area A

Area A (Figs. 4–5) consists of an 8 × 8 m square that extends on both sides of Wall A1, part of which had protruded from the sand prior to the excavation. The wall continues in both directions under the shifting sands that cover the top of the mound (Fig. 6). It is built mainly of dressed *kurkar* slabs with *hamra* used as mortar. *Kurkar*

² This conclusion was reached following a visit that took place on November 11, 1980 with the participation of E. Ayalon, J. Porath, M. Fischer and I. Roll (Roll 1981a).

³ The excavation was carried out under the auspices of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (permit no. A/1061/81). It was directed by I. Roll and the team included E. Ayalon (assistant director), M. Rorberger (Area A supervisor), and N. Feig (Area D supervisor). Students from the Department of Classical Studies of Tel Aviv University took part in the dig together with students from the Avshalom Institute and other volunteers.

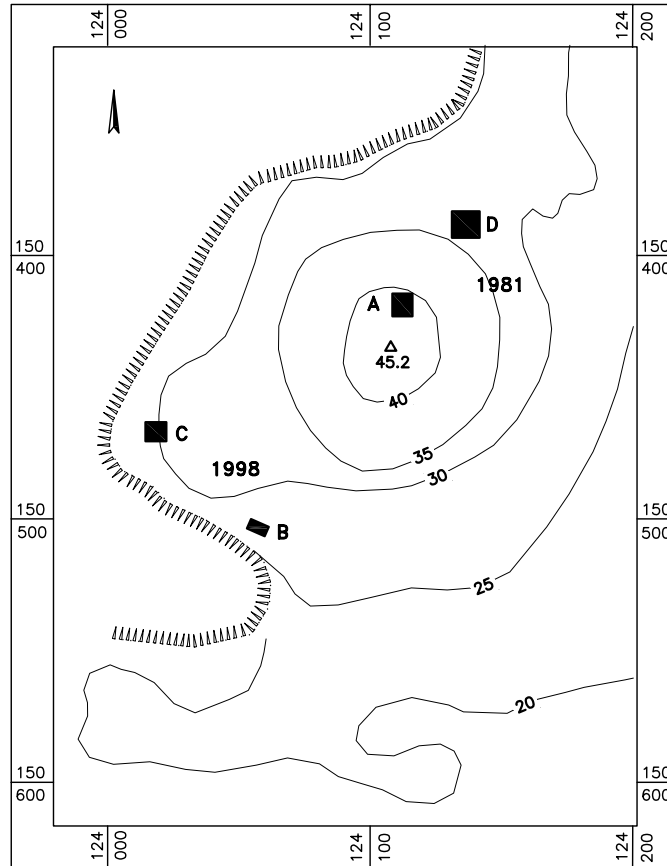


Fig. 3. Tel Ya'oz—the excavated areas.

fieldstones of varying sizes were added at the base of the wall and along its core in order to stabilize it. The wall is preserved to a maximum height of six courses. The two lower courses served as the foundation. The third course seems to have separated the foundation from the upper construction. The top of this course may also indicate the height of the floor that extended from the wall southward. The three upper courses of Wall A1 were laid mainly as alternating headers and stretchers, with some segments laid only as stretchers.

Remains of sun-dried bricks were found scattered in the southern part of Area A. It seems, then, that the stone wall served as the foundation for a brick wall. The nature of the wall cannot be determined; yet, its location near the top of the mound, its width and its precise east-west axis, all suggest that it may have been an enclosure wall of a complex that contained a monumental building.

Wall A2 is built of smaller *kurkar* blocks, some of which are dressed. Two of the blocks have vestiges of plaster, indicating that they were in secondary use. Its

courses abut Wall A1 but are not integrated with it. It can therefore be deduced that Wall A2 is later than Wall A1. It seems to belong to a small structure built subsequent to and outside of Wall A1.

The layer of shifting sand (Locus 1 and beneath it 3 and 4 south of Wall A1, and Locus 2 and beneath it 6 to its north), yielded meagre finds, most of which date to the Hellenistic period. They date the period of the use of the wall. Noteworthy among these finds are stucco architectural elements and two bricks found in Locus 2, a complete Iron Age II bowl found in Locus 4 and a lamp filler/baby feeder together with a Hellenistic coin found in Locus 6. The ashy soil under the shifting sand (Loci 5, 8 and 9 south of Wall A1 and 7 and 10 to its north) yielded meagre finds, most of which date to the Persian period. Noteworthy among them are a complete juglet

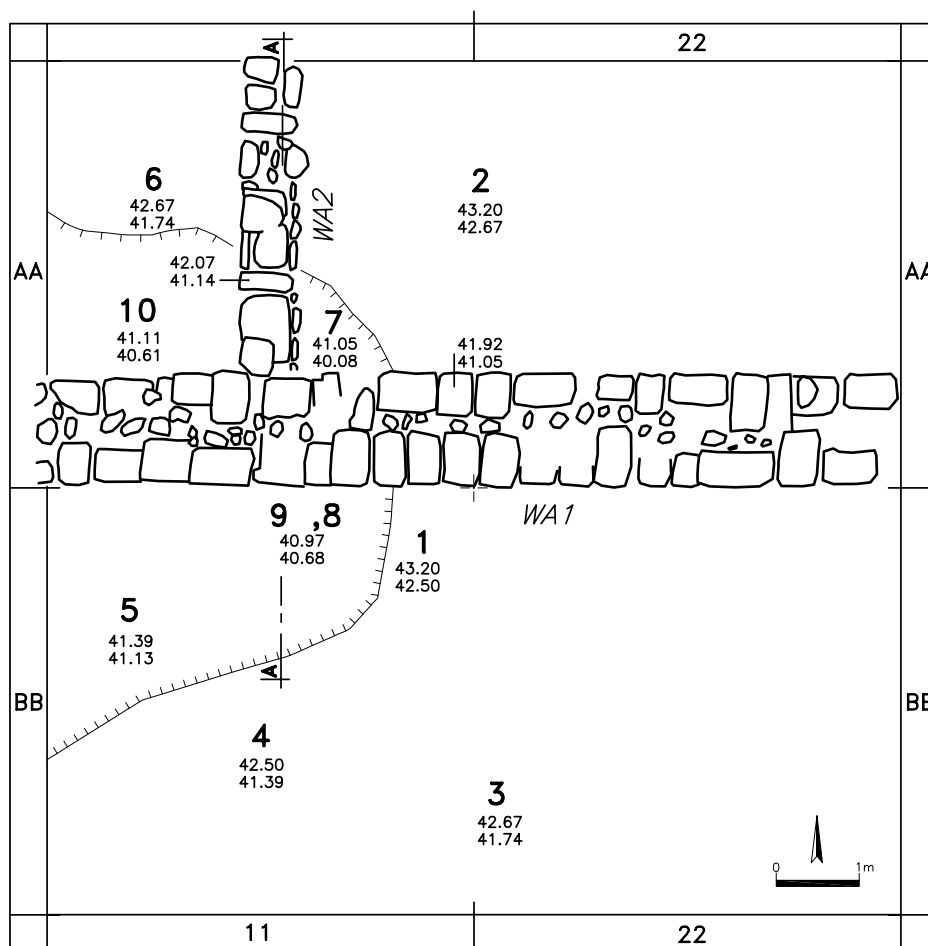


Fig. 4. Area A.

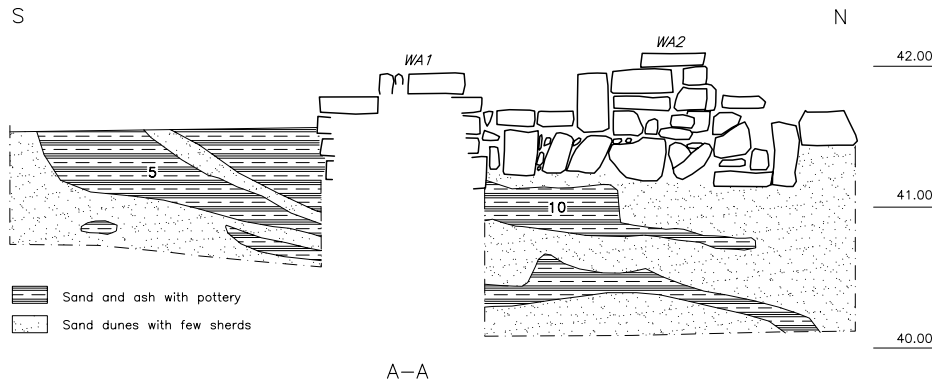


Fig. 5. Area A, Section A–A.

and a Hellenistic coin from Locus 5, the base of a limestone statue from Locus 7 and two complete juglets from Locus 9. This material was either gravitated up from the Persian stratum when the area was levelled or originated from the foundation trench for Wall A1.

Area D

Walls of a building were accidentally unearthed by a bulldozer on the northeastern slope of the mound prior to the excavation and therefore no grid was applied on the excavation area. To understand the nature of the structure, a 10 × 10 m excavation area was opened (Fig. 7).

The walls of the structure are built in a technique known as ‘Phoenician’, characterized by ashlar piers alternating with fieldstone construction (cf., e.g., Van Beek and Van Beek 1981; Sharon 1987; Stern 1992; Elayi 1996, and see below). This structure too was built on a layer of shifting sand. Each segment (from the centre of one pier to the centre of the next) measured ca. 1.5 m, and consisted of a solid pier of *kurkar* fieldstones with shallow, delicate margins laid as alternating headers and stretchers, with the space between the piers filled with fieldstones of varying sizes bound with *hamra* (apparently from the Netanya *Hamra* Bed) (Fig. 8). The corners of the walls and the joints between the walls and the doorjambs were made of ashlar well-incorporated into the piers. Wall D4 enclosed the building on the east. Its joint with Wall D8 was made of ashlar, and comprised the northeastern corner of the building. The four piers south of this corner were reasonably well-preserved. However, the southern corner of the wall and the pier to its north were destroyed by the bulldozer prior to excavation. Wall D4 was the only complete external wall of the building discovered during excavations. External Wall D1 served as the southern wall of the structure (Fig. 9). The preserved portion was 6.5 m long and included



Fig. 6. Area A, Wall A1, looking north.

four piers. The original entrance to the building was east of the pier, incorporated into Wall D2; it was blocked at a later time with fieldstones bound with mortar (Fig. 10).

Wall D6 apparently served to separate the southern wing of the building from a large hall to its north. The following rooms can be observed: Locus 400 originally served as an entrance corridor to the building (Fig. 11). A low shelf (0.22 m high) was found in the northeastern corner of Locus 403 along with another, smaller shelf (0.36 m high) abutting the end of Wall D5. The floor, walls and shelves of this room were uniformly well-plastered. The room appears to have served as a pantry that was coated on all sides. The southeastern part of the room was destroyed by a bulldozer prior to excavation.

The original floor of Loci 402 and 405 had been composed of a dark and compacted layer of sand mixed with ash that had been laid on the shifting sand. The original level of the floor was 33.02 m. With time, as layer upon layer of ash—possibly the residue of cooking stoves and other installations—and sand were strewn across the floor, it rose to a level of 33.42 m. It seems that the entire space of Loci 402 and 405 and apparently the area to the west of them served as an enclosed courtyard for the building. The height difference between the floor of the courtyard and the floor of the building in Locus 400 (ca. 0.40 m) necessitated the placement of three steps

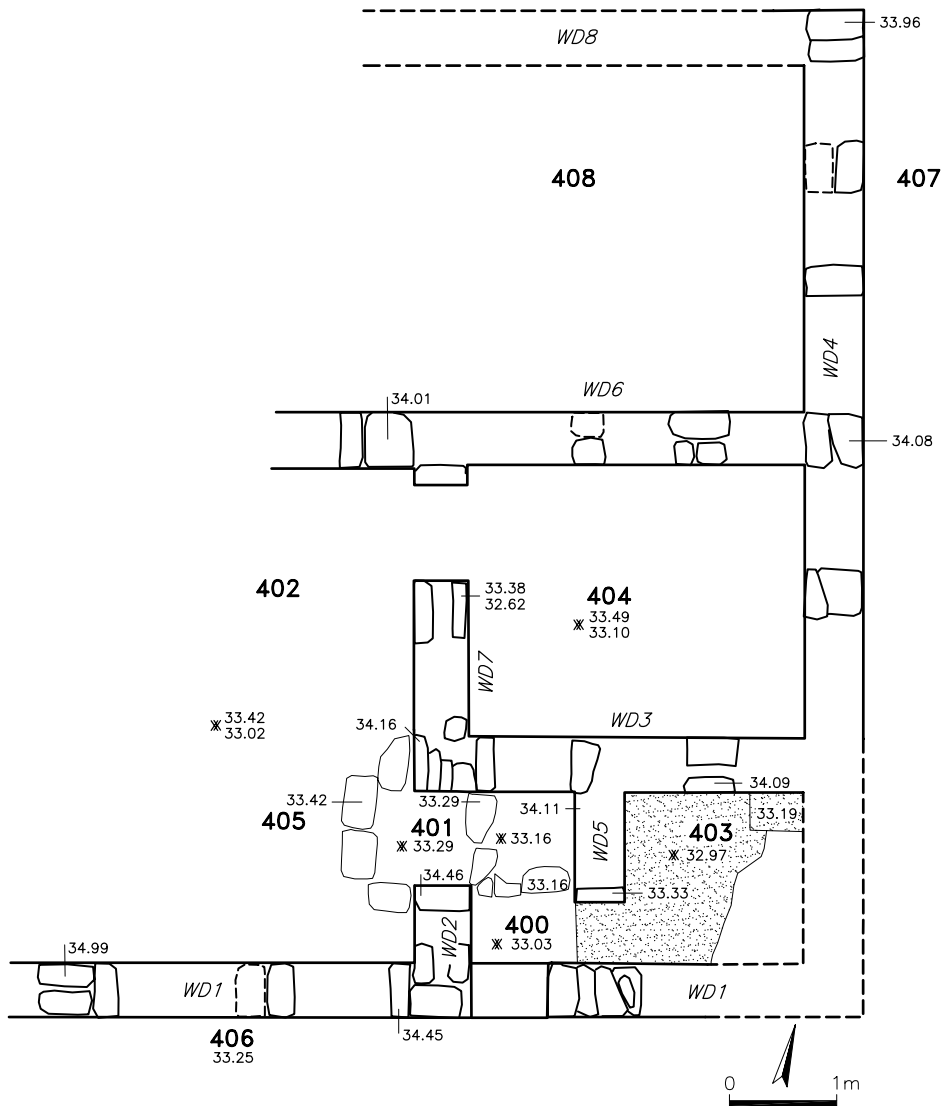


Fig. 7. Area D (excavation conducted without grid).

to connect the units (Fig. 11). The upper step was composed of four *kurkar* slabs. The two lower steps were made of smaller slabs. The height differential between the steps was a uniform 0.13 m. At the later phase of the life of the building the entrance through Wall D1 was blocked. Thus, the purpose of the steps was to connect the enclosed space with the plastered room. The floor of the middle room (L404) revealed a development similar to that of the courtyard (Fig. 12). The original floor was made of compacted earth, and above it was an accumulation



Fig. 8. Area D, general view, looking west.



Fig. 9. Area D, Wall D1, looking west.



Fig. 10. Area D, entrance to the building after it was blocked, looking south.



Fig. 11. Area D, Loci 400 and 403, looking north.



Fig. 12. Area D, Locus 404, looking south.

of alternating layers of ash, sand and *hamra* that added an additional maximum height of 0.40 m. Due to the thick accumulation of sand, the floor of Locus 408 was not reached. The lack of signs of any interior wall extending from Wall D6 northward strengthen the assumption that this was an elongated space that might have extended across the entire building. If our identification of Loci 402 and 405 as interior courtyard of the structure is correct, it can be assumed that the space west of it was divided into rooms, like the eastern wing described above.

The majority of meagre finds uncovered in the building date from the Persian period, although some may be earlier, i.e., from the later phase of the Iron Age. Among the most important finds were fragments of a jar with signs of incising made after firing, a fragment of a granite bowl from Locus 404, a glass seal of the Greco-Persian type from Locus 405 and a complete Assyrian style jug found in a fill in Locus 407, outside the structure (Figs. 29–30).

This building seems to have served as a private dwelling of the open courtyard type (Fig. 13). This type, known in many early periods (Kenyon 1957: 54–55; Horowitz 1980: 108–109; Fischer, Gichon and Tal 2000: 19), became a permanent model in sites of urban, rural as well as a military nature beginning in the Assyrian period at the end of the 8th century BCE (Amiran and Dunayevsky 1958). Its place in the Persian period was discussed by Stern (1982: 54–57). The form, construction

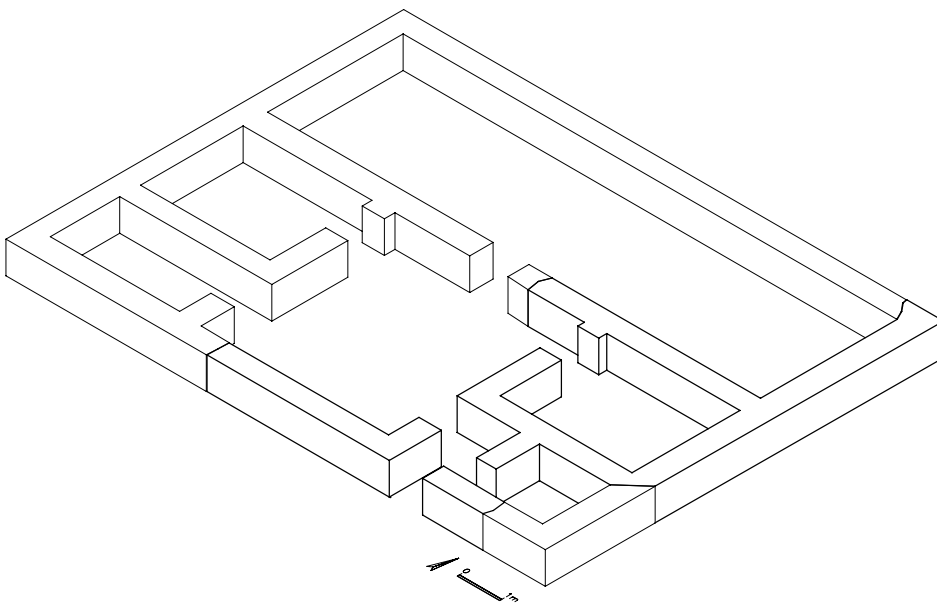


Fig. 13. Area D, proposed isometric reconstruction of the building.

method and dating of the building are similar to a courtyard structure recently uncovered in the western part of the mound (Area C). The latter was partially preserved, built of well-dressed *kurkar* piers (Segal, Kletter and Ziffer 2006: 1*–4*). The walls of both structures were built using ashlar piers alternating with fieldstone construction. The origin of this model is contested: Some scholars see it as Canaanite (Reich 1992: 211–212; Barkay 1992: 315–317; and especially Shiloh 1979: 82–87), others as Phoenician (Van Beek and Van Beek 1981; Sharon 1987; Elayi 1996; Stern 1992; 2001: 69–71). Elayi (1996) proposed a renewed typology for this construction method; the walls of the structure excavated in Area D belong to her Types A and B (*régulier*) (*ibid.*: 88, Fig. 4). This type of construction can apparently be seen further to the south, at Ashdod, in Area G, Stratum 3, which dates from the early Hellenistic period (cf., e.g. Fortuna, Wallace and Yeivin 1971: 141, Plan 17, Pl. 66, 1 [W4059]).

The presence of the Phoenician-style building technique in the structure of Area D at Tel Ya'oz, along with the structure of Area C of the IAA excavations, and the walls of the buildings of the Persian stratum in Area A of Yavneh-Yam (Fischer 2005: 183–184, Fig. 12), comprise additional links to the use of this building method in the southern Coastal Plain. This type of construction was in use from the Late Bronze Age to the end of the Hellenistic period, with its heyday during the Persian period. The delicate marginal masonry of the stones in the walls is an indication of an Israelite/Judahite tradition that was preserved or adopted by stone masons (Shiloh 1979: 61–63).

THE FINDS

Area A

Pottery and other finds in this area were primarily retrieved from loci dated to the Persian and Hellenistic periods. They come from the foundation trenches of the walls. Most of the pottery was broken and scattered, and restoration (and then only partial) was possible for only a few vessels.

Pottery

Most of the vessels and sherds are of types common to the Iron Age and the Persian and Hellenistic periods. They are well- to medium-fired, of semi- to well-levigated clay with varying sizes of temper derived mainly from chalky rock.

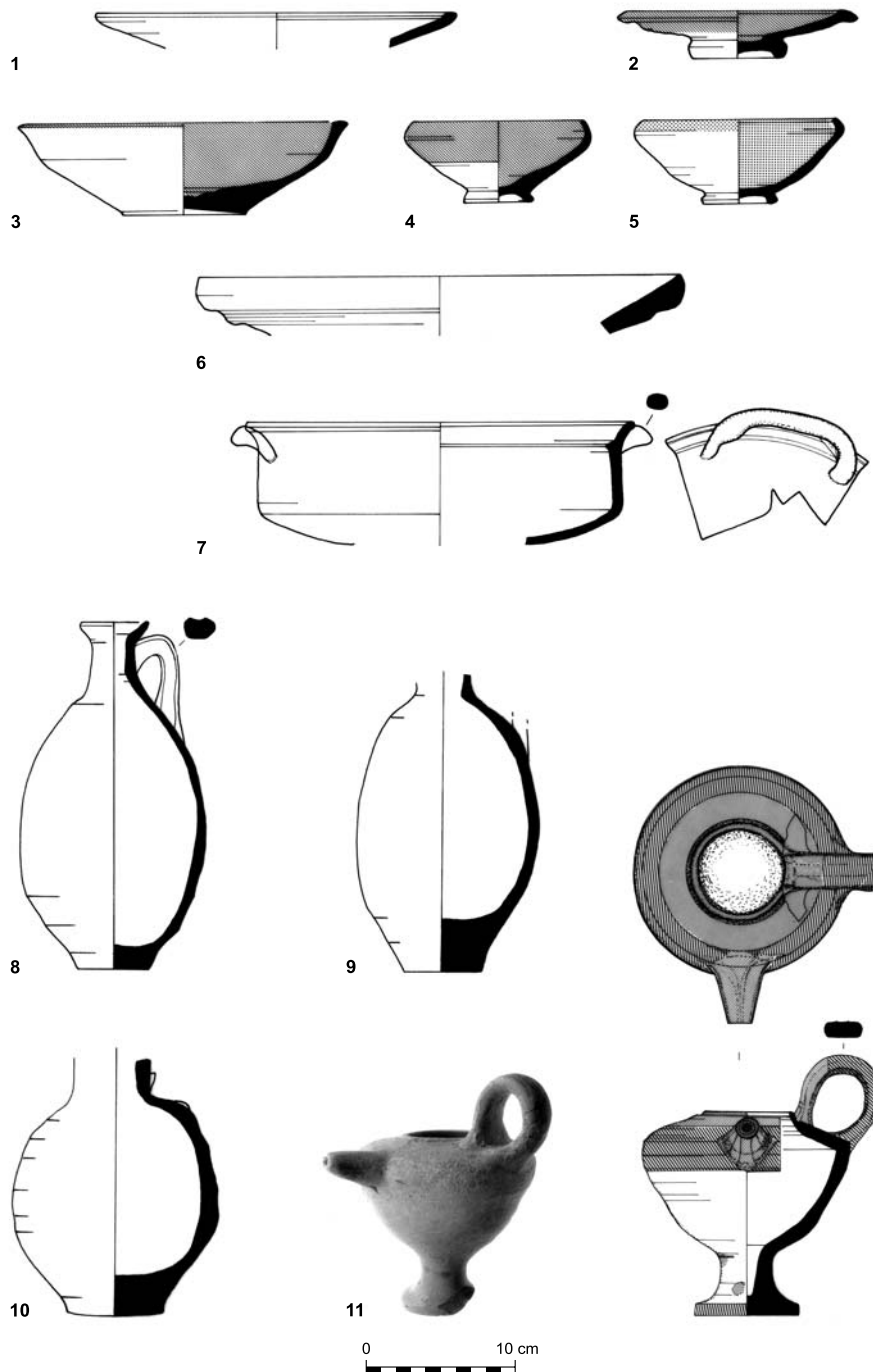


Fig. 14. Area A pottery.

FIG. 14. AREA A POTTERY

<i>No.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Locus (basket)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Parallels</i>	<i>Date</i>
14:1	Plate	6 (1057)	Dark orange; light brown core	Guz-Zilberstein 1995: 292, Fig. 6.3: 20–21; Fischer and Tal 1999: 237, Fig. 5.12: 1–2	Hellenistic
14:2	Plate	6 (1057)	Dark orange; light brown core, dark red slip	Guz-Zilberstein 1995: 292, Fig. 6.3: 25–26; Fischer and Tal 1999: 237, Fig. 5.12: 3	Hellenistic
14:3	Bowl	4 (1082)	Orange; light brown core; red slip	Zimhoni 1990: 10, Fig. 4: 12 and more recently, Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, 2001: 40–41, Type BL 11	Iron Age II
14:4	Bowl	6 (1061)	Orange; red slip	Stern 1982: 94, Type A1; Guz- Zilberstein 1995: 289–290, Fig. 6.1: 1–24; Fischer and Tal 1999: 230, 238, Figs. 5.7: 7–8, 5.12: 11–14	Hellenistic
14:5	Bowl	4 (1082)	Orange; light brown core; red slip		
14:6	Heavy bowl	5 (1073)	Orange	Stern 1982: 96–98; Tal 1999: 97–98; Fischer and Tal 1999: 230	Persian
14:7	Pan	6 (1057)	Dark red; dark orange core	Guz-Zilberstein 1995: 300, Fig. 6.22: 1; Fischer and Tal 1999: 238, Fig. 5.13: 3	Hellenistic
14:8	Juglet	9 (1113)	Yellow; orange core	Stern 1982: 122; Type 3; 1995: 65, Fig. 2.11: 4; Singer-Avitz 1989a: 137, Fig. 9.15: 9	Persian
14:9	Juglet	9 (1115)	Dark orange		
14:10	Juglet	5 (1073)	Dark orange		
14:11	Oil lamp filler	6 (1070)	Light orange; light gray core; red slip over brown	Roll and Ayalon 1989, Fig. 12; see also Bliss and Macalister 1902: Pl. 60: 22; Yeivin 1966: 108, Fig. 6: 7–8; Fisher 1938: 559, Fig. 37: x92; Berlin 1997: 52–54, PW 63–64	Hellenistic
Not shown	Wheel- made lamp	6 (1070)	Dark orange	Unavailable	Hellenistic

Bone and Metal Objects

Bone flute, Locus 7, Basket 1076 (Fig. 15.1).

A fragment of an Ovis/Capra limb bone. A hole drilled in the centre and the fact that it is hollow hints at its use as a musical instrument (probably a flute). Animal bones made into flutes are known from various periods, although mainly later ones, because the material from which they are made disintegrates (Braun 1999: 167–168; Ayalon 1999: 46).

Bronze fibula, Locus 8, Basket 1094; weight 2.8 gr (Fig. 15.2).

The fibula is of the bow type, with spiral ribs on either side of the bow, and a spring-catch. Fibulae, which have their origin in the Cypro-Greek world, are common in Palestine from the Iron Age to the Hellenistic period, with slight changes that are not necessarily related to chronology. This fibula has parallels to similar decorated items from a number of coastal sites, usually from Persian assemblages (Elgavish 1968: 53, Plate 64: 177; Porath 1974: 49, Plate 14: 17, 10; Muhly and Muhly 1989: 288, Fig. 25.13: especially 254).

Sculpture

Statue fragment, limestone, Locus 7, Basket 1114 (Fig. 16).

The fragment is 17 cm long, 16.5 cm wide and survived to a height of 7 cm. It includes two components: One is a flat, square base (ca. 3 cm tall), on the upper surface of which is a pair of shod feet (the heels were not preserved), slightly outturned, with the left foot in front of the right.

The statue, which dates to the 5th–4th centuries BCE according to Gjerstad's terminology (*SCE IV.2*: 109–124, *passim*), is typical of archaic Cypro-Greek and

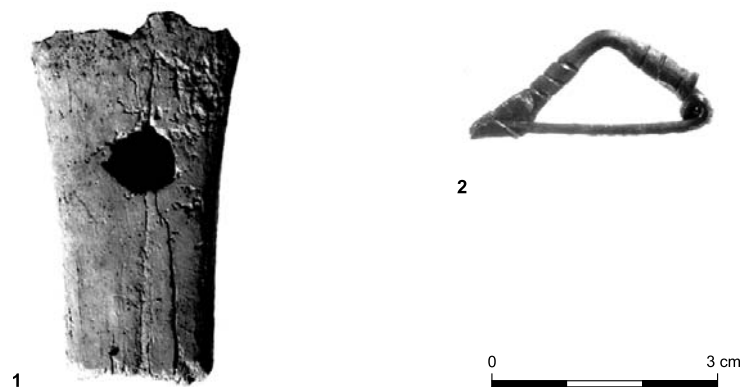


Fig. 15. Area A, bone and metal objects.

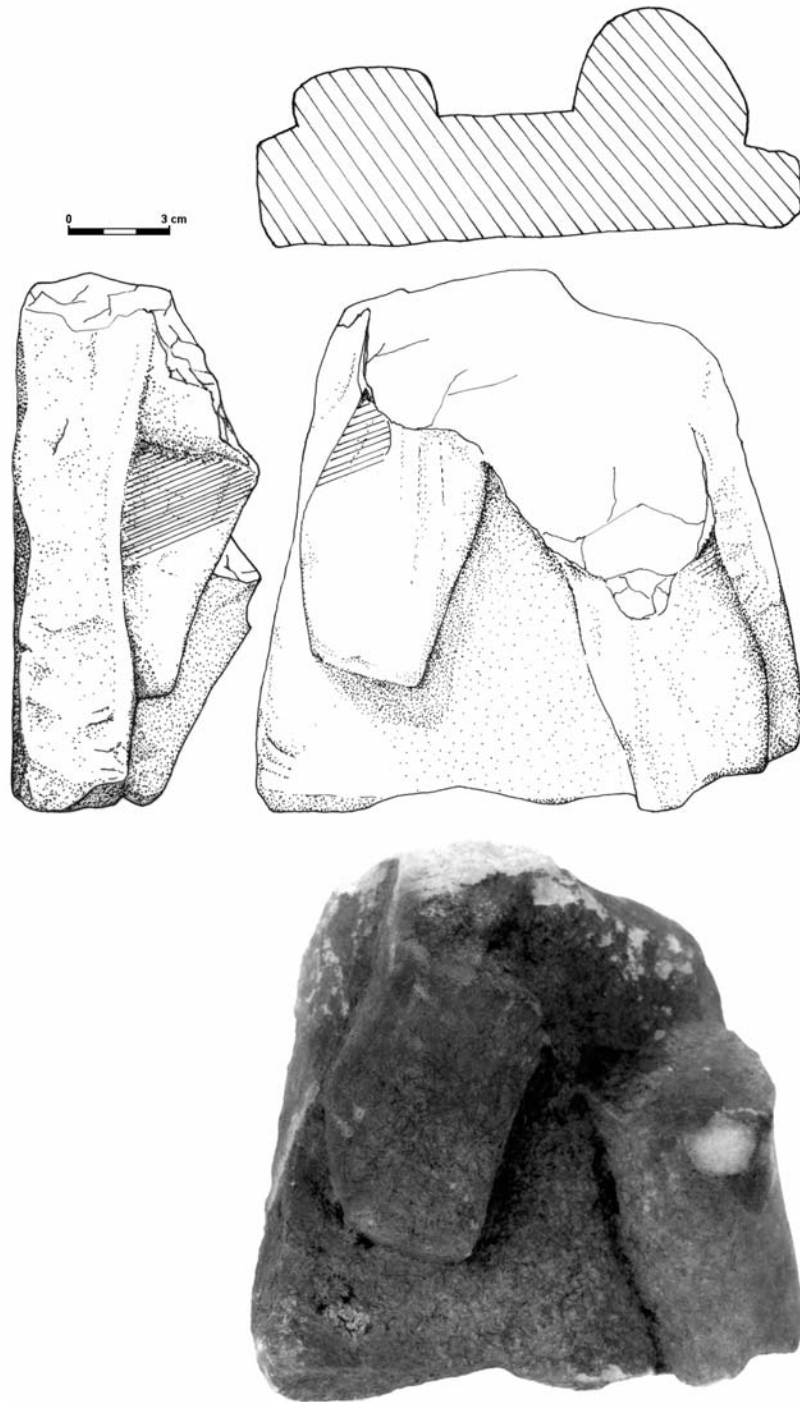


Fig. 16. Area A, statue fragment.

proto-Achaemenid style. It has been discussed by Stern (1982: 162–165), and more recently by Brandl (2000: 199–200). It is unique in the limestone statuary of Palestine in that it is the only fragment in the country that features a pair of feet. Parallels can be found in Cyprus, usually in examples from Kition; thus our fragment may be compared to Kition Style II, III and IV, which has been dated ca. 500 to 380 BCE (*SCE IV.2*: 112, 119, 122; see also Stern 1982: 162). For parallels to Kition Style II (mainly II B) see e.g. *SCE III*: Pls. 11: 3–4, 13: 5–6; for parallels to Style III (IIIA and IIIB) see, e.g., *SCE III*: Pls. 19: 3; 21: 2; 23: 2–3; 24: 1; for parallels to Style IV (especially IVA) see, e.g., *SCE III*: Pls. 30: 3; 32: 1–2; 33: 5–6. Another noteworthy example was uncovered in Sidon under the temple of Eshmun (Stucky 1993: Nos. 24–25).

Architectural Decorations and Painted Stucco

- *Item 1, pilaster segment that may have served as a base, Locus 2, Basket 1033; diameter 61 cm, height 18 cm (Fig. 17).*

The outer face is level and covered with smoothed stucco. Two grooves incised around the outside were apparently for ease of attachment to the plaster. The plaster was applied in two layers, one rough and the other smooth. On the lower side, a groove of an average width of 5 cm crosses most of the surface, to attach it to the segment below it.

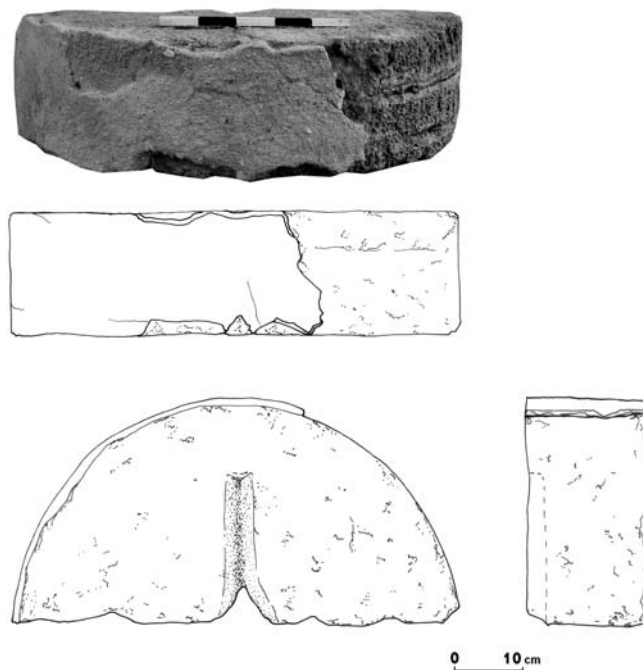


Fig. 17. Area A, Item 1, pilaster segment.

- *Item 2, pilaster segment, outer surface divided into two sections, Locus 1, surface measurements: diameter 61 cm, height 18 cm (Fig. 18).*
The lower section is smooth and upper section is fluted. The stucco corresponded to this division: half is smooth and half is fluted. Each flute averages ca. 10 cm in width. A groove with an average width of 5 cm was carved around most of the lower portion in order to attach it to the item below it. Another groove was cut perpendicular to the groove along the width.
- *Item 3, pilaster segment, outer surface divided into two sections, Locus 1, surface measurements: diameter 62 cm, height 18 cm (Fig. 19).*
The lower section is smooth and the upper section is fluted. The stucco corresponded to this division: half is smooth and half is fluted. Each flute is on average ca. 10 cm wide. A ca. 5 cm wide groove was carved around most of the lower portion for the purpose of attaching it to the item below it. Another groove was cut perpendicular to the groove along the width, as with the item described above.

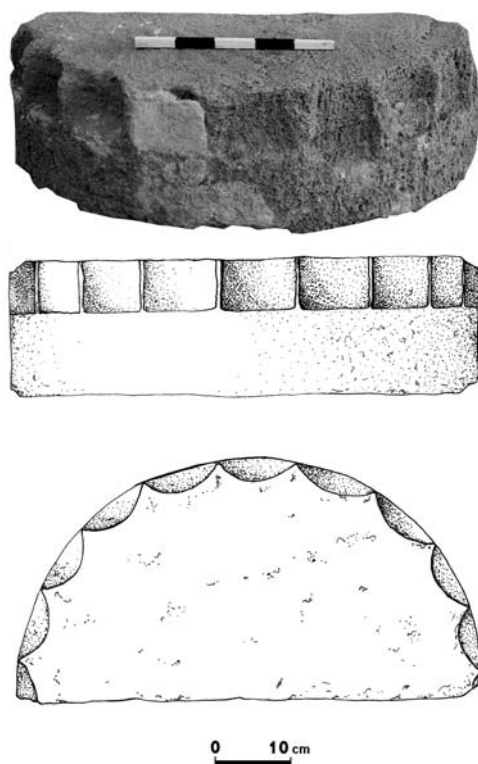


Fig. 18. Area A, Item 2, pilaster segment.

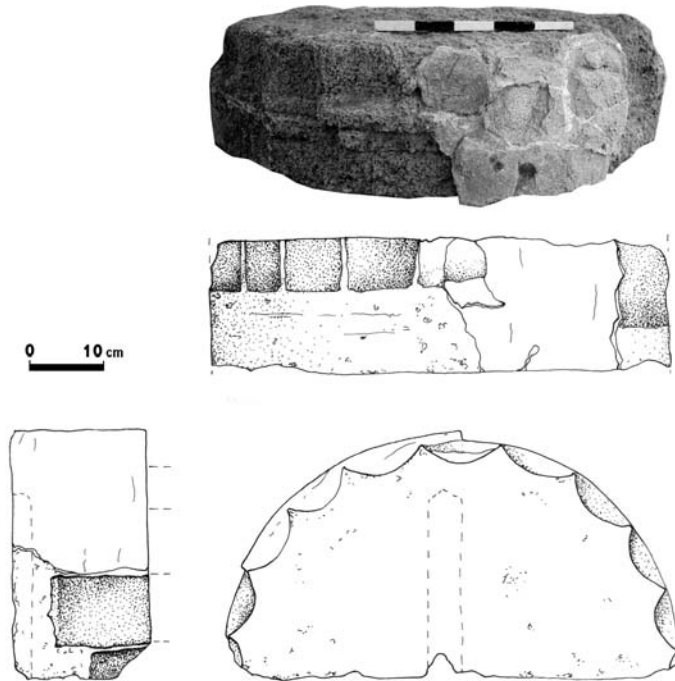


Fig. 19. Area A, Item 3, pilaster segment.

- *Item 4, fluted pilaster segment, Locus 1, surface, possible diameter ca. 50 cm (Fig. 20).*
Additional fragments of fluted pilaster segments were found. Based on their measurements, they apparently came from a column drum or a number of such drums situated at the top of the pilaster (Fig. 21).
It should be noted that the pilasters uncovered, including the fragments of pilaster segments, were narrow, allowing nine flutes and two half-flutes to fit around the outside, in keeping with the accepted proportions since the 4th or 3rd centuries BCE (cf. Roux 1961: 138–140, Fig. 30).
- *Item 5, fragments of a triglyph (Fig. 22). Locus 1, surface, fragment height 23 cm; maximum height (based on another fragment), 30 cm, length, 25 cm.*
- *Item 6, stucco fragments (Fig. 23). Various loci.*
Some fragments belong to attachments between pilasters and the wall to which they were attached.
- *Item 7, fragments of wall or floor coverings (Fig. 24). Various loci.*
These consist of pieces of stucco covered with a thick layer of plaster (ca. 3–4 cm thick) interspersed with sherds and small pebbles (1–2 cm).

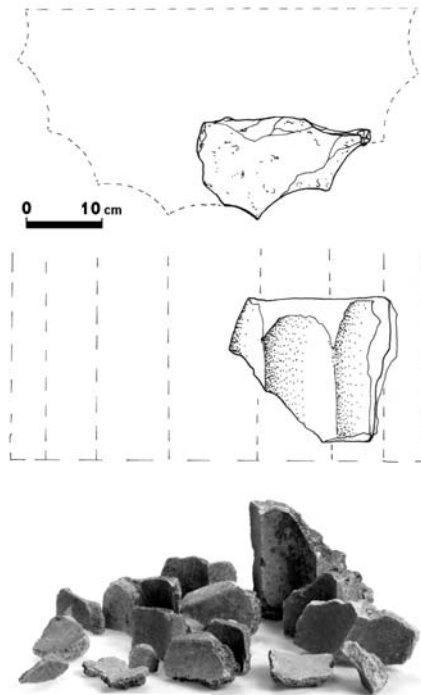


Fig. 20. Area A. Item 4, fluted pilaster segment (and other items).

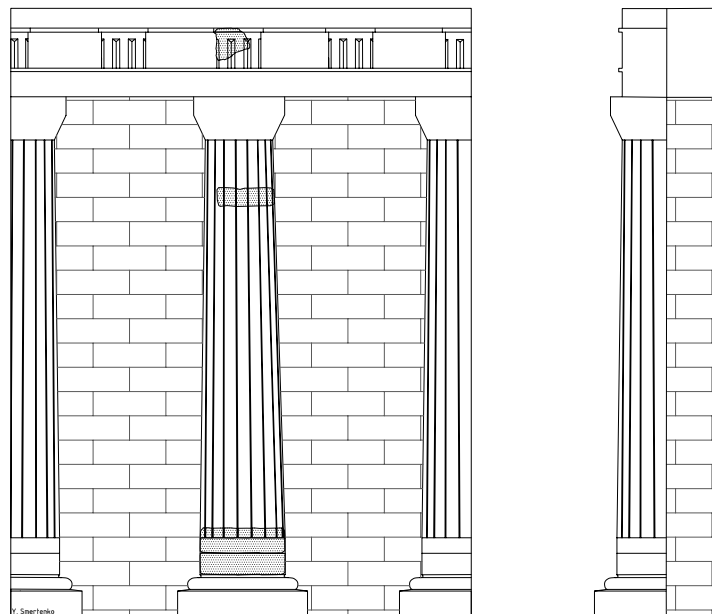


Fig. 21. Area A, general reconstruction of the architectural decorative items.

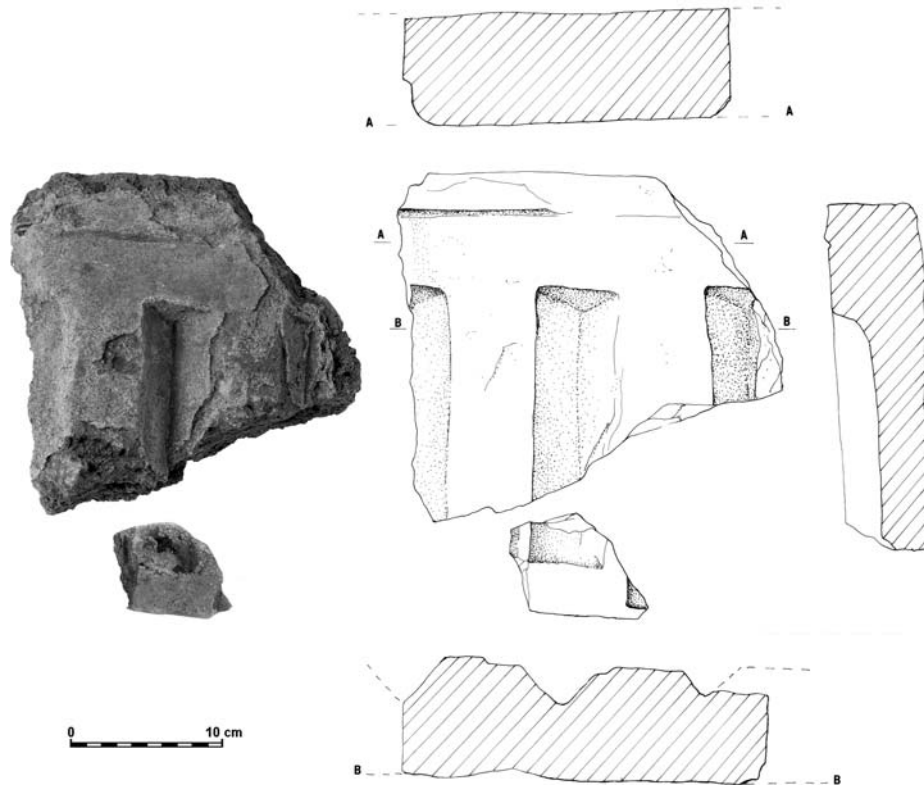


Fig. 22. Area A, Item 5, fragments of a triglyph.

- *Item 8, dozens of pieces of white plaster bearing dark- and light-red frescoes (Fig. 25). Various loci.*
- *Item 9, fragments of red stucco (Fig. 26). Various loci.*
Some convex, showing they apparently originated from transition points between walls and ceilings.

The main elements of the architectural remains at Tel Yaʿoz are half-column pilasters (Fig. 27), also termed engaged columns/attached columns/semi-detached columns (Büsing 1970: 1, Fig. 2). They abutted or were attached to walls without being incorporated into them. Thus, they cannot be considered as *antae* or piers (Pfeiler) (Büsing 1970: 3–4, Fig. 2). The use of half-columns is known as early as monumental Classical Greek architecture, and has its local parallels (e.g., Jericho, Netzer 2001: 14, Fig. 18). In the Hellenistic period, half-columns were incorporated into more modest structures, such as altars, dwellings and tombs. This development stemmed, among other things, from the design of dual-surface walls, both in façades and interiors. The house at Mareshah (Area 53) is a good



Fig. 23. Area A, Item 6, Stucco fragments.

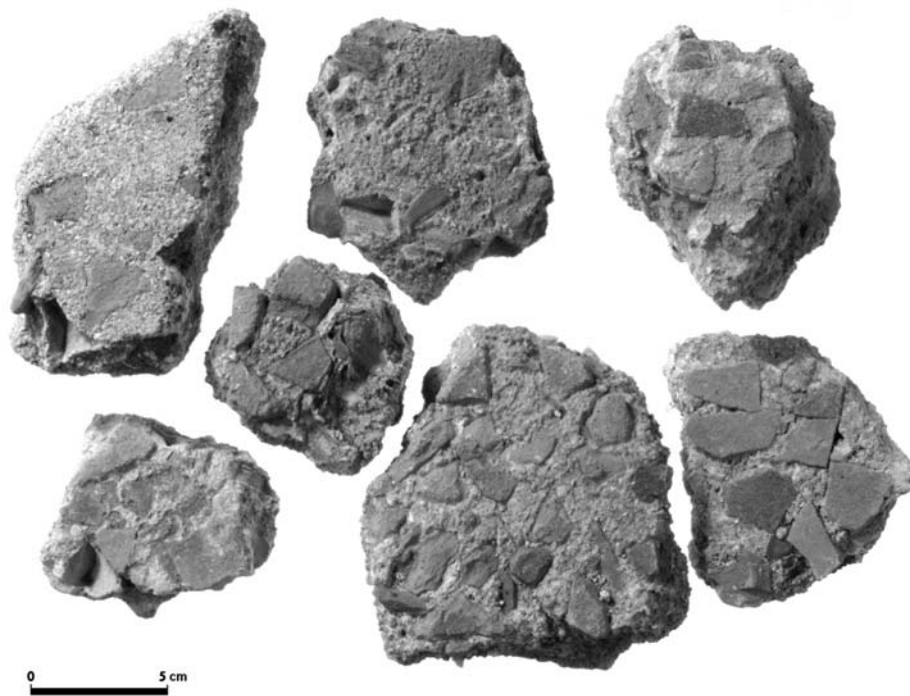


Fig. 24. Area A, Item 7, wall or floor covering fragments.

example, assuming that the reconstruction is faithful to the find (Kloner 1991: Fig. on p. 81). The architectural element of the half-column was developed mainly in Alexandria (McKenzie 1996: 116–118), and contributed greatly to Hellenistic and Roman Baroque architecture (Lyttelton 1974: 38). The Egyptian artistic roots of Alexandria were to some extent the basis for this preference (Lauter 1971), contributing to the spread of this design in Rome, Greece (Olympia), Petra, etc. (McKenzie 1996; cf. also 1990).

Items from Tel Yaʿoz provide important information on the use of the Doric style in Palestine during the Hellenistic period. In various stages of this period, the three Classical orders seem to have been in use (Fischer and Tal 2003). Alexandrian architecture seems to have had decisive influence on the dissemination of the Doric style, at least in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE (Pensabene 1993: 79–83, cf. 84–85; Hoepfner 1971: 76–78). The power of Alexandrian decorative architecture once again came to the fore with the spread of its unique Corinthian style (Fischer 1990; McKenzie 1996).

The Doric style items from Tel Yaʿoz presented here recall those of the previously known Doric façade from the Tomb of the Sons of Hezir in the Kidron Valley (Avigad 1954: 42–48) and the façades from Hasmonean Jericho (Netzer 1999: 20, Fig. 19). In addition to these, many decorated elements from Samaria can be mentioned although there the dating is not sufficiently clear (Fischer and Tal 2003: 20–21, 24).⁴

The design of the frieze from Tel Yaʿoz is consistent with similar items from Hellenistic Palestine, such as those found at Mareshah (Peters and Thiersch 1905: Fig. 2, Plate 1), Samaria (Reisner, Fisher and Lyon 1924: 161–162, Fig. 76: 11), Jerusalem (Avigad 1954: 42–48, especially Figs. 30–31) and Jericho (Pritchard 1958: 41, Fig. 2). The frieze from Tel Yaʿoz lacks a *regula* and *guttae*, which are normally the most accepted components of a frieze. On the other hand, it seems that some triglyphs from the Hellenistic period were designed with a *regula* only, or *guttae* instead (Dentzer-Feydy 1991: I: 181–182, 185–190; II: Pls. 60–64).

The use of stucco, which featured painted designs, originated in the East (Kröger 1982: 210–211), and became common in the Mediterranean basin during the Hellenistic and early Roman period (Ling 1973; Mielsch 1975). This method was also common in Alexandria (Pensabene 1993: 89–91, Figs. 75–76).

On the assumption that all these items were part of the same architectural complex, and since no bases, column segments or capitals of free-standing architectural style were found, the architectural arrangement can be reconstructed as based on the covering of walls ('attached architecture'/'architecture appliquée'/'Fassadenarchitektur'), that is, unconnected to free-standing architecture (Fig. 21).

⁴ Portions of walls covered with coloured stucco, among them a portion of a triglyph, were uncovered at nearby Yavneh-Yam, not far from the southern bank of Naḥal Šoreq (Fischer 2005: 188, Fig. 21).

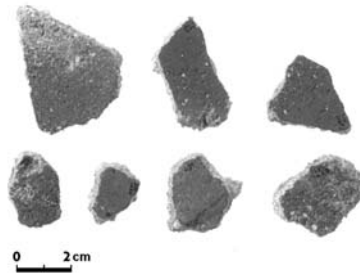


Fig. 25. Area A, Item 8, fresco fragments.

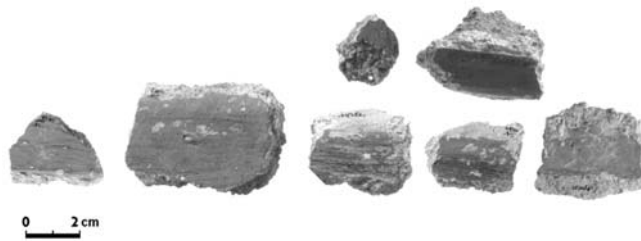


Fig. 26. Area A, Item 9, red stucco fragments.

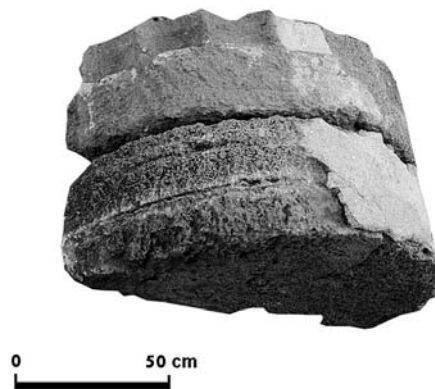


Fig. 27. Area A, reconstruction of two plain and fluted drums.

This is consistent with complexes of the same character dated to the Hellenistic period (Hoepfner 1971: 85–87; Lauter 1986: Figs. 19b, 37), such as the tombs of the Macedonian kings in Vergina, from the end of the 4th century BCE (Andronikos 1984), Tel Anafa (Gordon 1979: Figs. 13a, 19, 24), ʿIraq el-Amir (Dentzer-Feydy 1991: Fig. 67) and the tombs of Alexandria (Pensabene 1993: 124).⁵

Numismatic Finds

Three Seleucid bronze coins were found (Fig. 28, scale is 2:1):

(1) *Antiochos III, undated issue, 223–187 BCE: Fig. 28.1.*

Obv.: Laureate head of Apollo, resembling portrait of Antiochos III, r.; dotted border.

Rev.: [B]ΑΣΙΑΕ[Ω]Σ [A]NTIOXOY

Naked Apollo standing l., holding arrow in extended r. hand and resting l. on bow. Control-mark off flan.

Æ, 1.66 gr. Axis 12. Antioch or uncertain mint associated with Antioch (Houghton and Spaer 1998: 92, nos. 641–642). D. Syon has contested the attribution of this coin type to the mint of Antioch and suggested attributing it to the mint of Akko-Ptolemais (see Houghton and Lorber 2002: 416–417, no. 1096).

(2) *Antiochos IV, undated issue, perhaps minted before 168 BCE: Fig. 28.2.*

Obv.: Diademed, radiate head of Antiochos r.; to l., traces of control-mark monogram J fillet border. Serrated edge.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ

Veiled and draped goddess standing facing, holding long sceptre or torch; dotted border.

Æ, 2.26 gr. Axis 2. Akko-Ptolemais. (Houghton and Spaer 1998: 156, no. 1130). Based upon recent finds from excavations in Israel, G. Bijovsky reinforces the alleged attribution of this coin type to Akko-Ptolemais (1994–99: 39–45). See also the discussion of G. Voulgaridis 2000: 59–65.

(3) *As No.2 but control-mark off flan: Fig. 28.3.*

Æ, 2.01 gr. Axis 2.

⁵ Given our identification of the site with Hasmonean Gazara (below), it is much tempting to connect these architectural decorations, painted stucco and architectural remains found in Area A with Simon's building operations at the site (1 Macc. 13:48):

καὶ προσωχύρωσεν αὐτὴν καὶ ὑκοδόμησεν ἑαυτῷ ἐν αὐτῇ οἴκησιν.

The presence of a Hasmonean royal dwelling can also be inferred from the Pampras inscription which was found in Tel Gezer: Πάμπρα[ς] Σίμωνος κατοπάζη π[ύρ] βασιλείου (Boffo 1994: No. 13, with earlier bibliography). It should be stressed, however, that this inscription does not provide direct testimony of the existence of a Hasmonean palace at Tel Gezer.



Fig. 28. Area A, numismatic finds.

Archaeozoological Finds⁶

The archaeozoological finds from Area A derived from Loci 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10, all attributed to the Persian period. The finds included ca. 300 animal bones. Ovis/Capra bones constituted 95% of the finds, cattle bones ca. 3% and birds, ca. 2%. The birds were not identified by species since only broken fragments of limbs were collected. Of the Ovis/Capra bones, the minimum number of individuals identified was six. Both the finds and the quantity made identification of systematic butchering of the bones difficult.

Area D

The pottery and other finds uncovered in this area were limited and found mainly on the floors and it is to be assumed that they represent the last years of activity during the Persian period. Only a few vessels could be partially restored.

Pottery

The assemblage is typical of the Persian period. Like the case of Area A, the items were well- to medium-fired, their clay was sandy and well-levigated, with varying sizes of temper of medium density deriving mainly from chalk.

⁶ The authors wish to thank M. Sade for writing the sections on the archaeozoological finds.

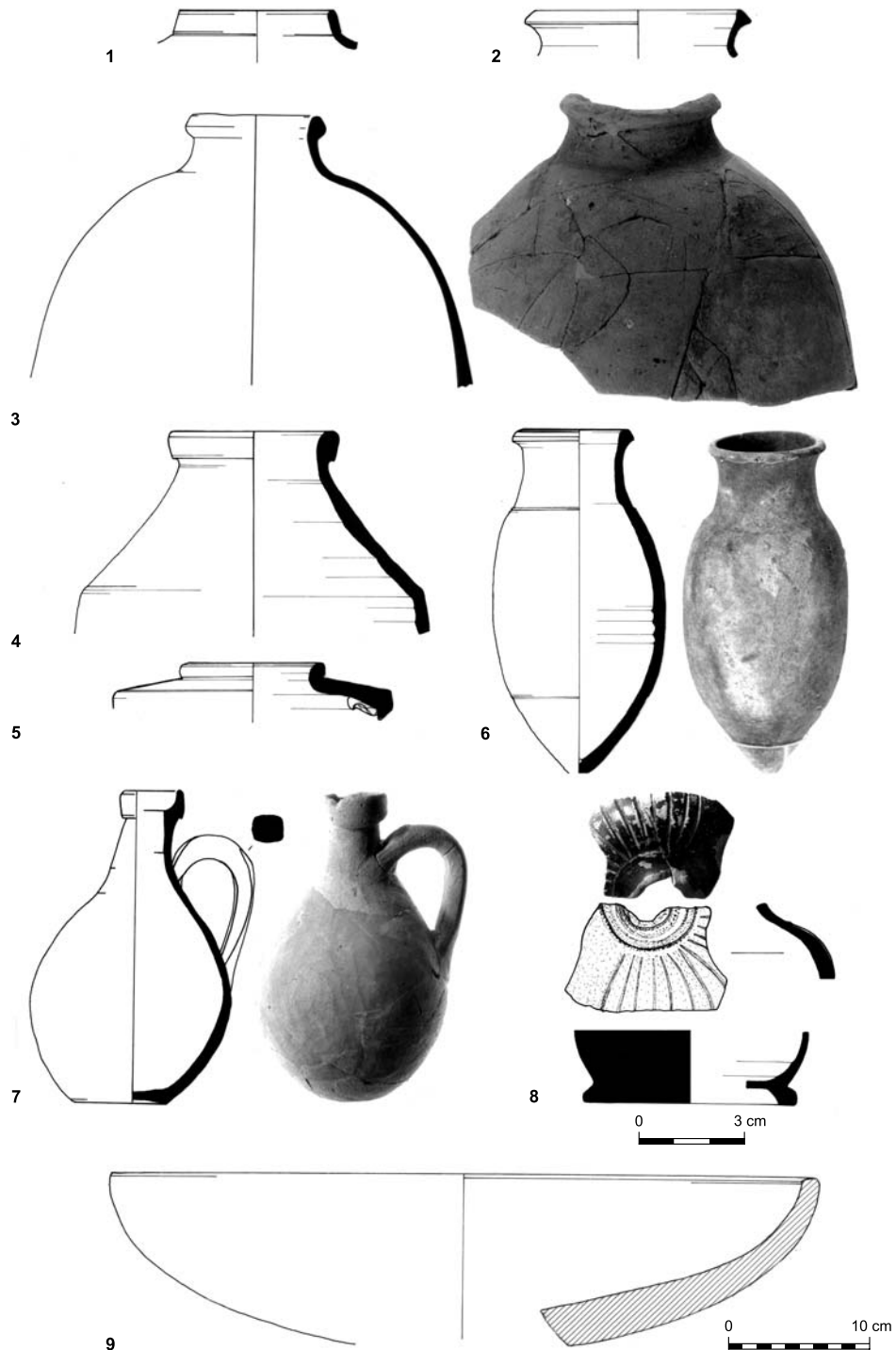


Fig. 29. Area D, pottery and a stone vessel.

FIG. 29. AREA D, POTTERY AND A STONE VESSEL

<i>No.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Locus (basket)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Parallels</i>
29:1	Cooking-pot	404 (4042)	Dark orange	Tal 1999: 99, Fig. 4.12: 6
29:2	Cooking-pot	405 (4028)	Dark orange	Singer-Avitz 1989a: 116, Fig. 9.1: 4
29:3	Jar	404 (4015)	Light orange	Stern 1982: 104–105, Type F; Tal 1999: 102
29:4	Jar	400 (4018)	Orange	Stern 1982: 105–106, Type G; Tal 1999, 103; Bettles 2003: 104–109, Types A1–A2
29:5	Jar	400 (4018)	Orange	Stern 1982: 107–110, Type J; Tal 1999: 103–104
29:6	Jar	407 (4040)	Yellowish	Lamon and Shipton 1939: Pl. 9: 1, 8–9; Chambon 1980: 165–166, Pl. 37: 10; Gilboa 1996: 127, Fig. 12: 2; Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001: 129–130, Type BT1
29:7	Juglet	405 (4028)	Orange	Stern 1982: 122, Type 4
29:8	Lekythos	404 (4023)	Orange, glossy black	Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 153, 314, No. 1120, Pl. 38

OTHER FINDS

- *Stone bowl, Locus 404, Basket 4043 (Fig. 29: 9).*
This bowl is the only stone vessel uncovered in the excavation of Area D. The grey granite was hewn with a hammer and chisel, and was buffed both inside and out. Its rim is slightly rounded; it is shallow and thickens toward the bottom, which apparently served as its base. The bowl has morphological parallels in basalt and limestone from Persian-period assemblages (Singer-Avitz 1989b: 351–353, Figs. 31. 3: 2–3, 31.4: 6).
- *Incised glass seal, Locus 405, Basket 4033; weight 1.3 gr, 6th–4th centuries BCE (Fig. 30).*
The seal depicts a muscular nude male figure (apparently bearded) kneeling, head tilted to the right; his wavy hair ends at the base of his neck; his left hand rests on his hip; his right hand holds a vessel, apparently an amphora. The seal and the design were cast from greenish-yellow transparent glass with silver patina and tiny ovoid bubbles on the surface of the body. It is 1.3 cm high and is

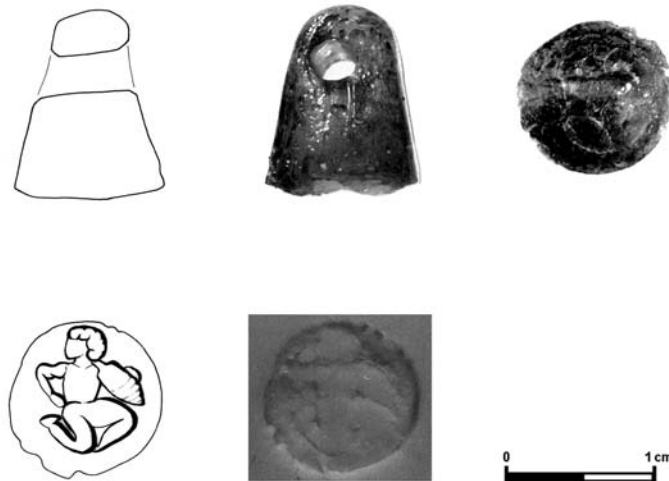


Fig. 30. Area D, glass seal.

1.05 cm wide (maximum width at base). A hole (diameter 0.25 cm) in its upper part was made by perforation while the glass was semi-molten.

The seal is in the Greco-Persian style (Boardman 1970: 325–326). The figure's well-defined musculature attests to its archaic style and is identified with Heracles. The kneeling position in which one foot touches the knee of the other leg is typical of the archaic period (Boardman 1978: Pl. 12: 62–65). If this position (kneeling and carrying an amphora) indicates intoxication then this should be seen as another representation of Heracles alongside the more typical one in which he is depicted bent over and brandishing a club and/or urinating (cf. *LIMC IV*: 770–772, Nos. 875–910).⁷

A noteworthy parallel comes from a disturbed shaft tomb of a later date in the Khirbet el-Bira area on the western slopes of Samaria. At the bottom of the shaft is a standing pit flanked by vaults. It is dated (based on remaining finds) to the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods (Scheftelowitz and Oren 1996: 6–8). The seal (a scaraboid) is made of blue glass, on which the image of a bearded nude man appears holding a small vessel identified as a krater in his right hand. Lalkin (in Scheftelowitz and Oren 1996: 7, Fig. 8: 11, Photo. 12: 1;

⁷ This model (Heracles and the amphora) may be associated with the myth of Heracles who came to Admetos King of Pherai in Thessalia on his way to Diomedes King of Thracia. The king concealed the death of his wife, Alcestis, and ordered his servants to host Heracles. Heracles whose hunger and thirst knew no bounds, became extremely drunk and begged the servants to drink with him. When the servants dissuaded him and told him of the death of Alcestis, Heracles decided to compensate for his behaviour by bringing Alcestis back from the dead and restoring her to her husband (cf. *LIMC IV*: s.v. Heracles, passim).

1997: Fig. 92) linked the design to the chariot of Helios given to Heracles, because some artistic representations replace the chariot with a krater (e.g. *LIMC IV*: Pls. 2550–2552).

Archaeozoological Finds

The archaeozoological finds in Area D come from Locus 405. The finds include seven Ovis/Capra bones, of which the minimum number of individuals was one.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF TEL YA‘OZ

For the past 300 years, scholars have deliberated the identification of Gazara, mentioned in a number of sources related to the Coastal Plain and the northern Shephelah during the Hellenistic period. One of the main difficulties was the need to relate this place to additional toponyms such as Gadara, Gadaris, Gaza, Gazer, and Gazera (see, e.g., Reland 1714: 778–780, 809; Stark 1852: 454; Neubauer 1868: 243–245; Schlatter 1893: 44–51; Thomsen 1907: 47; Abel 1938: II: 323–324).

The place-name Gazera (distinct from Gazara) appears twice in the Books of Maccabees, in the context of two military campaigns waged by Judas Maccabaeus against the Seleucid army. It appears once in the context of the events following Judas’ great victory in the battle of Emmaus in 165 BCE, when the Jewish warriors pursued the Seleucid army “as far as Gazera (Γάζηρα) and the plains of Idoumaia, to Azotos and Iamneia...” (1 Macc. 4:15). It is mentioned again regarding Judas’ even greater victory over Nicanor in 161 BCE, in the battle of Adasa, when the Jewish warriors “pursued them a day’s journey, from Adasa unto Gazera” (1 Macc. 7:45). In both these cases the place in question is spelled Gazera (Γάζηρα) and not Gazara (Γάζαρα). The topographical analysis of the military movements connected to Gazera clearly show that the reference is to Tel Gezer in the Ayalon Valley.⁸

After the death of Judas Maccabaeus and the fall of Jonathan (in 161 BCE), Bacchides, commander of the Syrian army, took a series of steps to restore Seleucid rule in the country. His most important act was to establish a system of fortresses that controlled the main roads to Jerusalem, as well as the Akra, Beth-Zur and Gazara (Γάζαρα, to differ from Gazera mentioned above—1 Macc. 9:50–52). Scholars did not attribute major significance to the difference between Gazara and Gazera and usually saw the two as variants of one place name—Gezer. They therefore identified the Gazara on Bacchides’ list with Gezer. We maintain that Gazara can be identified as Tel Ya‘oz—Tell Ghazza.

From a linguistic point of view, Greek Gazara is Semitic Gazar; the suffix *-a-*

⁸ On the topographical and military aspects of the events connected to Gezer, see Clermont-Ganneau 1896: II: 244–245; Abel 1949: 76–77, 138–144; Plöger 1958: 163–166, 176–182; Wibbing 1962: 164–167; Goldstein 1976: 265, 341–342; Avi-Yonah 1979: 48–49; Bar-Kochva 1989: 270–271, 367–368; Fischer, Isaac and Roll 1996: 161–162.

is clearly a Greek one, and is attested in other adaptations of Semitic GNs in the Hellenistic Near East (e.g., Dor/Dora, Gezer/Gazera, Gadar/Gadara, Geresh/Gerasa) (see Elitzur 2004: 338). It is noteworthy that the toponym Tell Ghazza (the Arabic name of Tel Ya'oz) may form a *nachbenennung* of Gaza as one of the dominant sites in the region of the southern Coastal Plain. At the same time the assimilation of the GN Ghazza with Gazara may suggest that the site maintained its ancient name. The absence of the suffix *-r-* in the Arabic place name (that is, Tell Ghazza and not Tell Ghazzar) can be compared to other such linguistic phenomena, e.g., the Arabic al-Ġib preserved the toponym Gibeon (biblical) or Gabaon (classical); the Arabic al-Midye preserved the toponym Modi'in (Apocrypha); and the Arabic ʿĀqer the toponym ʿAqqaron (biblical Ekron) (see Elitzur 2004: especially 336–337).

Tel Ya'oz is located in the greater Yavneh area, which was populated by Jews during the Hellenistic period. Evidence for this can be found in the story of Judas Maccabaeus' punitive raid against the polytheistic population of Yavneh and its port, because they constituted a threat to the Jews there (2 Macc. 12:8–9). Strabo notes that "the place was so well supplied with men [meaning Jews] that it could muster forty thousand men from the neighbouring village Iamneia, and the settlements all round" (XVI, 2:28). These statements support the idea that the region under discussion was considered problematic by the Seleucid rulers, who found it necessary to establish a stronghold there with a properly supplied garrison.⁹

1 Maccabees 13:43–48 contains a detailed description of the siege of Gaza[ra] by Simon the Hasmonean in 142 BCE, its conquest and purification from idol worship and worshippers and its restoration as a fortified Jewish town. The text relates that Simon built a residence in Gaza[ra] and settled there with men who observed the (Jewish) law. He also strengthened its fortifications.¹⁰

This conquest is also mentioned in 1 Maccabees 14:7 and 34, which sum up Simon's activities. In both cases the site is called Gazara. Therefore, there is no doubt that in the text mentioned above (1 Macc. 13:43), the name should be filled out from Gaza to Gazara.

1 Maccabees 14:34 notes that Simon "fortified Joppa, which is by the sea, and Gazara, which is on the borders of Azotos.... He settled Jews there, and provided them with whatever was necessary for their restoration there." Gazara is, therefore, a town on the border of Azotos (Ashdod) whose main area extended along the

⁹ For a discussion of 1 Maccabees 9:50–52 and the various approaches to understanding it see Abel 1925: 202–208; 1949: 172–175; Goldstein 1976: 386–387; Shatzman 1991: 38–43; Fischer, Isaac and Roll 1996: 284–288. On Hellenistic Yavneh and its Jewish population, see Schürer 1979: II: 109–110; Shachar 2005: 114–117; Fischer and Taxel 2007: 219–221.

¹⁰ On the conquest of Gazara by Simon and the transfer of control over it to John Hyrcanus, see Abel 1926: 513–517; 1949: 244–247; Schürer 1973: I: 191; Goldstein 1976: 482–483; Kasher 1990: 108–110; Shatzman 1991: 40–41; Bar-Kochva 1996: 123–129. As noted, all these scholars identify Gazara with Tel Gezer.

Mediterranean Sea; it is not a settlement located in the interior (Fig. 1). Thus, here, too, Tel Ya'oz is better suited to the description than Tel Gezer.

Four years later the Seleucid King Antiochos VII Sidetes demanded that Simon either return Joppa, Gazara and the Akra (in Jerusalem—1 Macc. 15:28) or pay for the loss of tax revenues and damages. Simon responded with great restraint: “We are firmly holding the inheritance of our fathers. As for Joppa and Gazara, which you demand, they were causing great damage among the people in our land; for them we will give you a hundred talents” (1 Macc. 15:33–35). This exchange has greater logic if Gazara is Tel Ya'oz than if it is Tel Gezer: From the Hasmonean perspective, Tel Ya'oz would have created a corridor enabling Jews access to the Mediterranean along a portion of the coast. From a Seleucid point of view, it would have been a mainly hostile wedge cutting off territorial contiguity of the kingdom and the overland connection with the southern Coastal Plain and Egypt. Support for our proposed identification of Gazara can be found in Antiochos Sidetes' response to Simon's counterproposal. The king sent Cendebeos south at the head of an army that included infantry and cavalry, and ordered them to fight the Jews in the area of the coast. For this purpose he also appointed him specifically στρατηγὸς τῆς παραλίας—commander of the Coastal Plain, and ordered him to fortify Kedron—identified with Katra, a site with superior control over the upper basin of Nahal Šoreq—and raid Yavneh and the roads going up to Judah (1 Macc. 15:38–41).

Josephus also documents the events described above. It is important to emphasize two major points in his account of the events:

- (1) Josephus' account, based primarily if not entirely on 1 Maccabees, and apparently only its Greek version (Bar-Kochva 1992: 115–117), is clearly a secondary source, composed 200 to 250 years after the events. One item that does not appear in the Book of Maccabees, however, is the text of the resolution by the Roman senate dating from the 3rd decade of the 2nd century BCE, in which Rome recognized the right of the Jews to hold ἰόππη καὶ λιμένες καὶ Γάζαρα καὶ πηγαὶ—“Joppa and its ports, and Gazara and its springs” (*Jewish Antiquities* XIII, 9, 2 [261]). The springs in this passage are usually identified with Pegae near Rosh Ha'ayin. However it seems more likely to us that the intent was in fact the springs of Gazara. The existence of rich water sources in the area south of Tel Ya'oz supports this identification.¹¹
- (2) Josephus uses only one version of the site's name: Gazara. This form of the toponym also appears in conjunction with Judas Maccabaeus' battle at Emmaus,

as opposed to the toponym in 1 Maccabees 4:15, where it is cited as Gazera. The

¹¹ On this document and the entire relationship between Hasmonean Judah and the Roman Republic at the time of John Hyrcanus, see Stern 1965: 143–165; Schürer 1973: I: 194–197. For the water sources south of the site, see Nir and Eldar-Nir 2005.

form Gazara also appears when Josephus specifically mentions biblical Gezer, e.g., in *Jewish Antiquities* VII, 12, 2 [301] and VIII, 6, 1 [151]. This phenomenon may be explained by the fact that Josephus wrote his works almost 200 years after Gazara “on the borders of Azotos” had lost its importance. Consequently, the location of Gazara in the area of Yavneh, and perhaps even its existence as a town, was simply forgotten. Josephus knew only one name—Gazara—and that is the one he used in whatever context of a similar sounding name he thought relevant.

Strabo, too, seems to mention the town under discussion, when he writes of the towns of the Syro-Palestinian coast. After discussing Joppa and its agricultural hinterland, and before continuing his description of the coastal towns of the southern Shephelah, he writes: “In the interval one comes to Gadaris, which the Judaeans appropriated to themselves; and then to Azotos and Ascalon” (Strabo XVI, 2:29). Strabo wrote his work almost 100 years after the town ceased to exist and it appears that due to a lack of current knowledge on the subject he employed the erroneous form Gadaris instead of Gazara. Later in the same paragraph he even confuses Gadaris and Gadara of the Decapolis, assigning to the former the birthplace of four famous Greek philosophers, who were actually born in the latter. Nevertheless, two important pieces of information about the location of Gazara and its identity can be gleaned from Strabo’s work:

- (1) He mentions the name of the town as part of his discussion of coastal towns, without alluding to a settlement in the interior.
- (2) The additional explanation by Strabo that this is a town “which the Judaeans appropriated to themselves” clearly connects it with the same Gazara whose conquest by Simon the Hasmonean was described in detail in 1 Maccabees 13: 43–48 (for a discussion of the above passage in Strabo see Stern 1974: I: 293).

After Strabo, the name Gazara disappears from the written sources. The settlement Gazara, mentioned in the Onomasticon of Eusebius (66:21–22) as a village located four miles from Nicopolis, should clearly be located at Tel Gezer. The same is apparently true for Gazaris, mentioned by Hierocles (*Synecdemus* 719: 10).

Based on our reexamination of the primary source, i.e., 1 Maccabees, we embrace the idea that Tel Yaʿoz may be identified with Hasmonean Gazara.¹²

¹² The identification of Tel Yaʿoz with Gazara of 1 Maccabees was first proposed by Roll (1981b). It was rejected by Shatzman (1991: 41, Note 22), but accepted by Tsafir, DiSegni and Green (1994: 131, s.v. Gazara I). Tal (forthcoming) is of the opinion that Persian period Tel Yaʿoz should be identified with *kzr* (*kdr*), which appears on the erased *Customs Account* from 5th century BCE Elephantine published by Porten and Yardeni (1993: §C3.7). The account documents customs collected from Ionian and Phoenician ships and handed over to the Achaemenid royal treasury. *Kzr* which assimilates *gʾzr* (Aramaic, to decree, to cut, etc.) is a place mentioned in relation to Phoenician ships (*spynt kʾzry*) in one of the erased papyrus sheets (FV 3, 25).

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