

RAMLA, TRAIN STATION: GLASS FINDS

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Approximately 450 glass fragments were recovered during the excavation at the train station in Ramla (see Haddad 2018), of which about 250 were diagnostic. Of these, 51 representative specimens are presented here. The assemblage consists of a wide range of vessel types and includes tableware and luxury vessels. The earliest vessels are dated to the Umayyad period, the majority is from the Abbasid period and the beginning of the Fatimid period (ninth–eleventh centuries CE), and the latest are assigned to the Mamluk period. This assemblage adds to the large quantity of ancient glass finds from the numerous excavations undertaken in Ramla during the last decades (see Gorin-Rosen 2010; 2016 for a comprehensive list of excavations).

The vessels are presented in typological order. Comparative material comes mainly from the excavations at Caesarea (Pollak 2003), Yoqne‘am (Lester 1996), Bet She‘an (Hadad 2008), Tiberias (Lester 2003) and Ramla (Gorin-Rosen 2010). Comparisons from distant regions, such as Egypt (Shindo 1992; Foy 2001; Scalon and Pinder-Wilson 2001;) and Mesopotamia (Kröger 1995) are quoted sporadically. For the group of Fatimid vessels, parallels were also found in the assemblage retrieved from the shipwreck known as Serçe Limani, dated to 1025 CE (Bass et al. 2009).

The finds comprise bowls, beakers, bottles, jugs, lamps and several miscellaneous objects. The vessels are plain (Figs. 1–4) or decorated with techniques that were common in the Early Islamic period, such as a mold-blown decoration (Fig. 5), a tonged decoration (Fig. 6), a scratch-engraved decoration (Fig. 7), a wheel-cut decoration (Fig. 8), a marvered decoration (Fig. 9) and an applied decoration (Fig. 10). The group is characterized by colorless glass, which is often covered with a layer of hard black weathering. The vessels' wearing is of greenish, bluish, yellowish or brownish tinges and even purple and dark blue.

PLAIN VESSELS (Figs. 1–4)

Bowls and Beakers (Fig. 1).— Only a few fragments of bowls and beakers were recovered, all belonging to types common during the Abbasid period. They vary from shallow to deep.

No. 1 is a rounded rim (diam. 18 cm) and an out-curving wall of a large bowl with parallels from the Abbasid period at Bet She‘an (Hadad 2005: Nos. 550–552). No. 2 is a rim, a wall and the beginning of

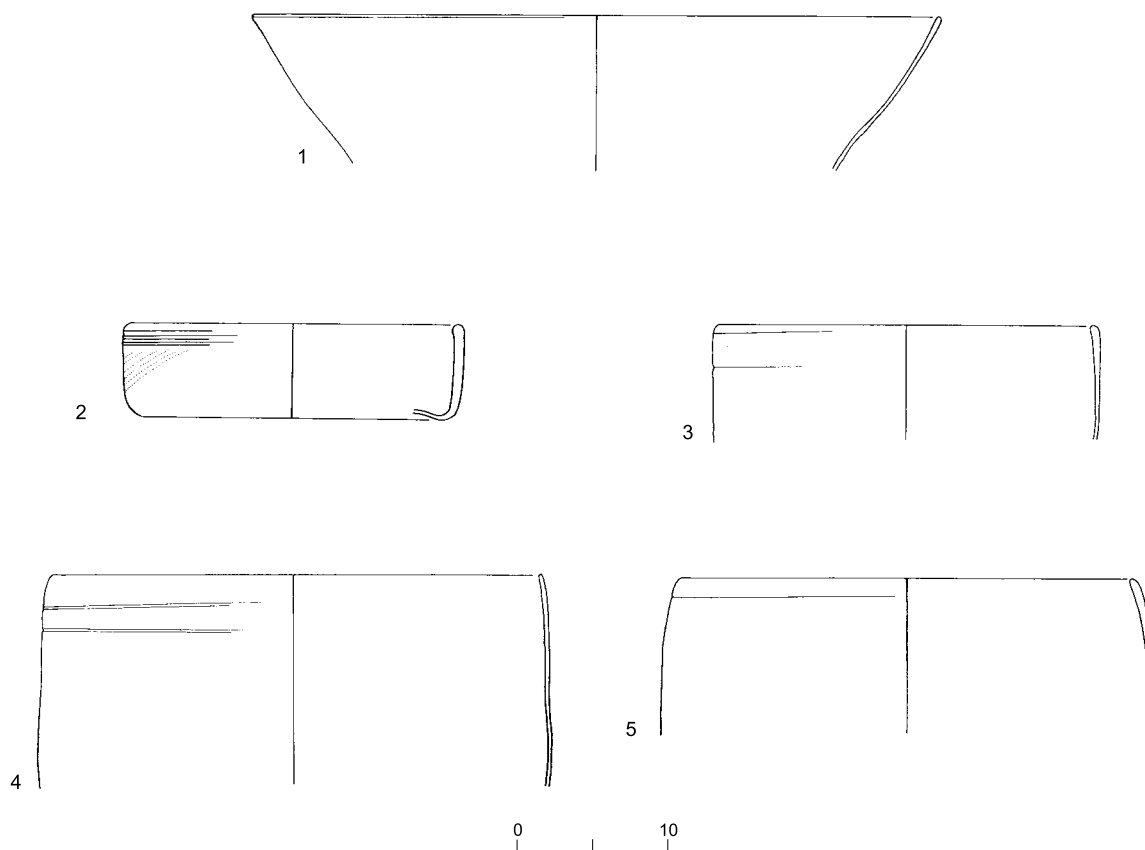


Fig. 1. Bowls and beakers.

No.	Type	Area	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Bowl	E	673	2894	Colorless with a very light yellowish tinge; silver weathering, iridescence and very severe pitting
2	Bowl	B	310	6170	Colorless with a very light yellowish tinge; silver weathering and iridescence; marks of polishing
3	bowl/beaker	D2	5028	3246	Colorless with a very light yellowish tinge; silver weathering and iridescence
4	bowl/beaker	D1	5058	3361	Colorless with a very light yellowish tinge; silver weathering and iridescence
5	bowl/beaker	E	635	2733	Light purple glass; silver weathering and iridescence

a base belonging to a small, shallow bowl. Its rim (diam. 9 cm) is rounded, and the wall is straight; it resembles bowls that are characteristic of the eighth–ninth centuries CE found in Ramla (Winter 2013: Fig. 36.2) and at Bet She’an (Hadad 2005: Nos. 491, 492).

Nos. 3 and 4 are deep cylindrical bowls/beakers with an upward, thickened rounded rim (diam. 10 cm and 13 cm, respectively); one (No. 3) or two (No. 4) shallow grooves run about 1 cm below the rims. This type appeared during the Early Islamic period and was common during the Abbasid period. Bowls of this

type were found in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2005: No. 1) and at Bet She'an, where they were dated from the second half of the eighth century to the eleventh century CE (Hadad 2005: Pls. 25:489; 26:517–519). No. 4 has a distinct purple color. Although this tinge is very common during the Mamluk period, the fabric of this vessel indicates that it nevertheless belongs to the Abbasid period.

No. 5 is a deep bowl/beaker with an incurved, rounded and thickened rim (diam. 12.5 cm). This type appeared during the Umayyad period and became prominent in subsequent periods. An example from the Abbasid period has been found in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2005: No. 12).

Bottles (Fig. 2:1–12).— The excavation yielded numerous plain bottles, representing various types that were common during the Early Islamic period. They are usually made of colorless glass, with a greenish, bluish or brownish tinge. Two vessels (Nos. 10, 11) are of dark blue glass.

Nos. 1 and 2 have upright, rounded rims (diam. 2.7 cm and 4 cm, respectively) and belong to a type of bottles known as ‘bottles with a rounded rim and a cylindrical neck’. This type comprises small- and medium-sized bottles with an upright, rounded rim, a rather short neck, a globular or squat body and a

Fig. 2 ▶

No.	Type	Area	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Bottle	A	346	6441	Light greenish glass; silver weathering, iridescence, sand deposits and pitting
2	Bottle	D2	642	2871	Colorless with light brownish tinge; silver weathering, iridescence, sand deposits and severe pitting; low quality glass
3	Bottle	D1	5201	4056	Light bluish glass; layer of milky weathering and iridescence
4	Bottle	D1	5166	3914/1	Light bluish glass; layer of milky weathering and iridescence
5	Small bottle	D1	5166	3914/2	Light bluish glass; layer of milky weathering and iridescence
6	Bottle	D1	5155	3874	Colorless with light greenish tinge; black crust, silver weathering, iridescence and pitting
7	Bottle	B	324	6276	Colorless with light green tinge; black crust, milky weathering and iridescence
8	Bottle	D2	5108	3610	Colorless glass; black crust, silver weathering, iridescence and severe pitting
9	Ewer	D1	5040	3344	Brownish glass; layer of milky weathering, iridescence and severe pitting
10	Bottle	D2	5056	3359	Dark blue glass; patches of weathering and silver iridescence
11	Bottle	E	687	2809	Dark blue glass; layer of black crust, weathering and silver iridescence
12	Small bottle	D2	5044	3274	Colorless glass; layer of black crust, silver weathering, iridescence and severe pitting
13	Miniature bottle	D1	5111	3645	Colorless glass; layer of black crust, weathering and iridescence
14	Miniature bottle	D2	5032	3225	Colorless glass; layer of black crust, weathering and iridescence
15	Miniature bottle	D1	5024	3214	Light greenish glass; patches of black crust, weathering and iridescence
16	Miniature bottle	E	652	2624	Light greenish glass; silver weathering and iridescence
17	Miniature jar	B	337	6383	Light bluish glass; layer of milky weathering and iridescence

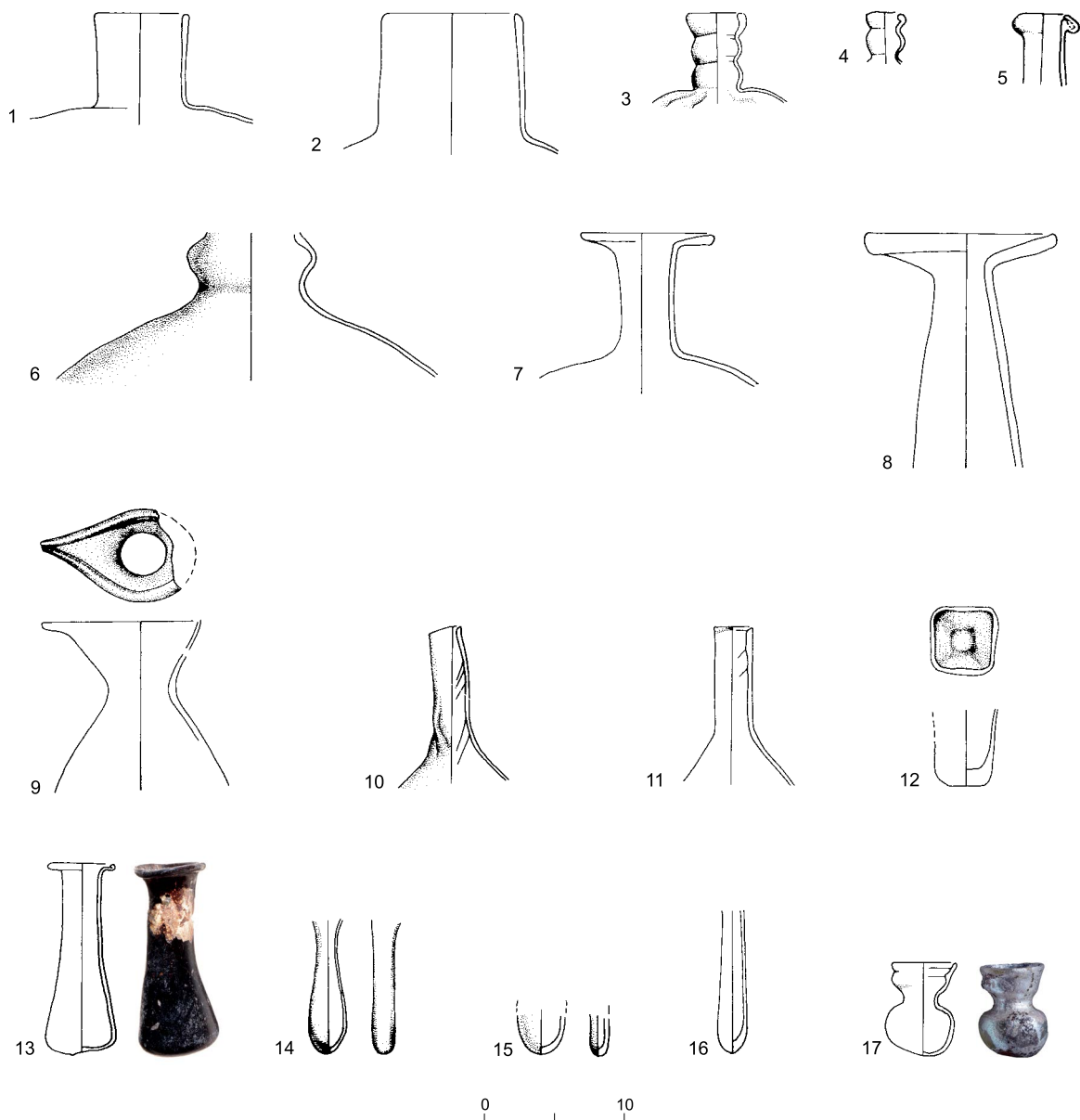


Fig. 2. Bottles and a jar.

flat or concave base. No. 1, from which a complete rim and neck survived, has a cylindrical neck and a slightly slanting shoulder. These bottles appeared during the Umayyad period and became common during the Abbasid period. They have been found in many excavations, such as at the White Mosque in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen 2010:233, Pl. 10.6:1, 2, and see an exhaustive list of parallels therein) and Fuṣṭaṭ (Shindo 1992: Fig. 6.14:34–36).

No. 3, a complete rim and neck, and No. 4, part of a rim and a neck, are good examples of the type known as ‘bottles with short-ridged neck’. Both have a narrow, cylindrical neck decorated with horizontal tooled ridges and uneven constrictions creating bulges; the number of ridges ranges from three to six, and they vary in depth. The rims (diam. 1.8 cm, 1.2 cm, respectively) vary in shape. These bottles may have first appeared during the Umayyad period and became very common during the Abbasid period (for an exhaustive list of examples, see Gorin-Rosen 2010:233–235).

No. 5 is part of an in-folded rim (diam. 1.6 cm) and a cylindrical neck of a small bottle of a type known as ‘bottles with an in-folded rim’, which belongs to a group comprising numerous variations. These bottles were common during the Umayyad period, and less so during the Abbasid period (Gorin-Rosen 2010:233–236, Pl. 10.6:3–6).

No. 6 comprises part of a short neck with a wide bulge and the beginning of a globular body belonging to a bottle with a bulging neck, probably the latest bottle in the assemblage. These bottles are typical Islamic vessels with the characteristic open bulge on the neck. Similar bottles appeared at Bet She’an, in strata of the second half of the eight–eleventh centuries CE (Hadad 1998: Pl. 43:722) and within a context dating from the twelve–fourteenth centuries CE (Hadad 1998: Pl. 57:957, 958). Numerous examples of this type were found in other excavations in Ramla (for an exhaustive list of examples, see Gorin-Rosen 2010:238–239, Pl. 10.6:20).

Nos. 7 and 8 are two complete rims and necks belonging to thick-walled bottles with a flaring ‘shelf-like’ rim and a tapering neck. No. 7 has an asymmetrical (diam. 3.6–4.0 cm), out-folded and flattened rim, and its neck is thick. No. 8. Has a wide, flaring and flattened rim (diam. 5.5 cm) with a rounded edge, and its neck is wide and cylindrical, tapering toward the shoulder, with very thick walls (thickness at rim 0.3 cm). Such bottles, both plain and decorated, were found at many sites in Israel, such as Ramla (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2005:113, No. 42); Caesarea, Stratum VI, where they were dated to the late ninth – mid-tenth centuries CE (Pollak 2003:167, Fig. 3:44, 50, 51); and Tiberias, in Stratum I, where two rims of this type were dated to the late tenth or eleventh century CE (Lester 2003:160, Fig. 2:16, 17). Numerous such vessels, bearing various decorations, were found in the shipwreck at Serçe Limani, dated to the first quarter of the eleventh century CE (Bass 1984:66, 68, Figs. 2, 5).

No. 9 is a free-blown and tooled fragment of a rim, a neck and the beginning of the body of an ewer fragment having an unusual brownish color. The rim (max. diam. 4.5 cm) is rounded, pinched and broken where the handle was probably applied. It has a drawn-out funnel mouth that looks like a beak, a short neck and tapering walls, and was probably pear-shaped. This type has a pinched mouth, massive walls and a short neck, is usually pear-shaped and has a high handle with a thumb-rest. A similar vessel—but with a linear-cut decoration—was found at another excavation in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2005: Fig. 1:5, and see further references therein).

Nos. 10 and 11 are the cut-off rims (diam. 1 cm) and elongated necks of irregular thickness belonging to two examples of a typical vessel from the Abbasid period: an asymmetrical, elongated bottle with a cut-off rim, a rounded base and usually blue-colored glass, known as medicinal bottles and found at other excavations in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen 2013:49*; Winter 2013: Fig. 37:3).

No. 12 is a small bottle with a square-sectioned body and a thickened, flat square base (diam. 1.8 cm) with a small pontil scar. This type usually has a short neck and an upright or funnel-shaped rounded rim. The square shape was formed by tooling or by blowing into a very simple mold. The earliest square bottles are found in Umayyad contexts, but they became more popular during the Abbasid–Fatimid periods. They were found in many excavations throughout Israel (Gorin-Rosen 2010:231, 232, Pl. 10.5:4–6, and see an exhaustive list of references therein).

Miniature Vessels (Fig. 2:13–17).— Several specimens are examples of miniature vessels, which were very common during the Early Islamic period. They were intended to contain very small quantities of liquids, such as perfumes, cosmetic oils or medical concoctions. Miniature vessels are often well preserved, and in many cases the only intact glass finds unearthed in an excavation.

Nos. 13–16 are miniature tube-shaped vials, which were very common during the Abbasid period. No. 13 is a complete specimen (height 5.5 cm). It has a deformed, in-folded rim (diam. 1.9 cm), a long neck and a base flattened by a pontil. Nos. 14–16 are incomplete and have a flattened body. Earlier vessels of this type were discovered in an Umayyad shop at Bet She’an (Hadad 2005: Pl. 35:689, 690). Two groups of such vessels were discovered in Area C at Tiberias: one was dated to the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century CE; and the other, found in the ‘pharmacy’, was dated to the late tenth – early eleventh centuries CE (Lester 2003:161–162, Fig. 4:33–37, 41, and see discussion and references therein).

No. 17 is a well-preserved miniature jar. It has an uneven flaring, tooled rim (diam. 1.8 cm); a small, irregular globular body; and a flat base. Miniature vessels of similar shapes appeared during the Roman period, and then reappeared during the Umayyad period in different variations, as those, for example, from Bet She’an (Hadad 2005:28, Pl. 20:368) and from Yoqne’am, where they were dated to the Byzantine or Early Islamic period (Lester 1996:207–208, Fig. XVII.2:42, and see discussion therein). Two miniature jars ascribed to the Abbasid period were found in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen 2010:230–231, Pl. 10.5:1, 2). Undecorated miniature jars carelessly fashioned in various shapes from colorless glass were found at Nishapur, where they were dated to the ninth and tenth centuries CE (Kröger 1995:61–63, No. 56).

Various Bases (Fig. 3).— Three bases are described here in order of their complexity. No. 1, the simplest of the three, is a fragment of an almost flat, thick base (diam. 6 cm) with a pontil scar, which belongs to a bowl with slanting walls. Such bases, attributed to the Abbasid period, were found in Ramla (Gorin-

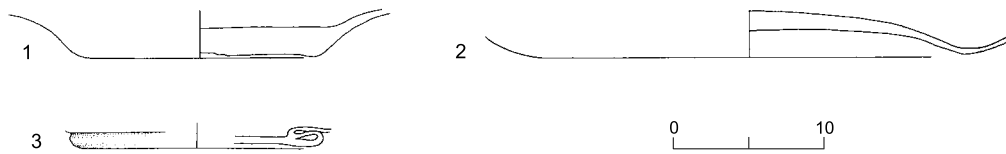


Fig. 3. Various bases.

No.	Type	Area	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Bowl	D1	3209	3209	Light greenish glass; layer of black crust, weathering, iridescence and severe pitting
2	Bottle	B	315	44	Colorless glass with yellowish tinge; weathering and iridescence
3	Bowl	D1	5210	4121	Greenish bluish glass; silver weathering and iridescence

Rosen and Katsnelson 2005:106, No. 16) and at Bet She'an (Hadad 2005:35–36, No. 570). At Caesarea, an example is dated from the mid-eight to the late ninth centuries CE (Pollak 2003:166–167, Fig. 1:20).

No. 2, a fragment of a thick, concave base (diam. 12 cm), with a pontil scar, seems to belong to a bottle with a globular body. The concave bottom or base was the most common type from the Roman period onwards; therefore, this specimen was ascribed to the Abbasid period due to its fabric.

No. 3 is a fragment of a base (diam. 6.5 cm) of a bowl with a double-fold at the join between base and wall. Similar bases were found at Khirbat 'Adasa in an Umayyad context (Gorin-Rosen 2008: Fig. 2:5, 6) and in the shipwreck at Serçe Limani, dated to 1025 CE (Bass et al. 2009: Fig. 41-6: BA 791, BA 800).

Lamps and Cupping Glasses (Fig. 4).— Nos. 1 and 2 are hollow, uneven, pinched stem-bases, roughly finished, with a knock-off pontil mark (height 6.5 and 5.5 cm, respectively) that belonged to lamps. This version of the traditional bowl-shaped lamps is known from the Byzantine period up to the Abbasid period and even later. It is the most prevalent type in early Islamic contexts found in salvage excavations in Ramla (e.g., Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2005: No. 19).

No. 3 is an asymmetrical, pinched stem-base with a knocked-off pontil mark belonging to a lamp with a small bowl and a solid-knobbed stem (total height 4.5 cm). This type parallels Hadad's Type 2, dated from the Byzantine through the Mamluk periods (Hadad 2005:29, 47, 61ff). However, here we may assign it to no earlier than the Abbasid period.

Nos. 4–6 are complete vertical tubes with cut-off rims (diam 1.0, 2.0, 1.3 cm, respectively; height 4.0, 3.8, 4.0 cm, respectively) belonging to lamps that were small bowls or cups with a vertical wick-tube or several vertical wick-tubes in the center. No. 2 has thick walls. These lamps have been found in numerous excavations. At Tiberias, this type of lamp was the predominant type during the tenth–eleventh centuries CE (Lester 2004:197–199, Nos. 142–149). At Bet She'an, this type appeared during the Abbasid period (Hadad 2005:47, Nos. 977, 978, Type 6). Such lamps are known from the Fustaṭ cemetery, where they

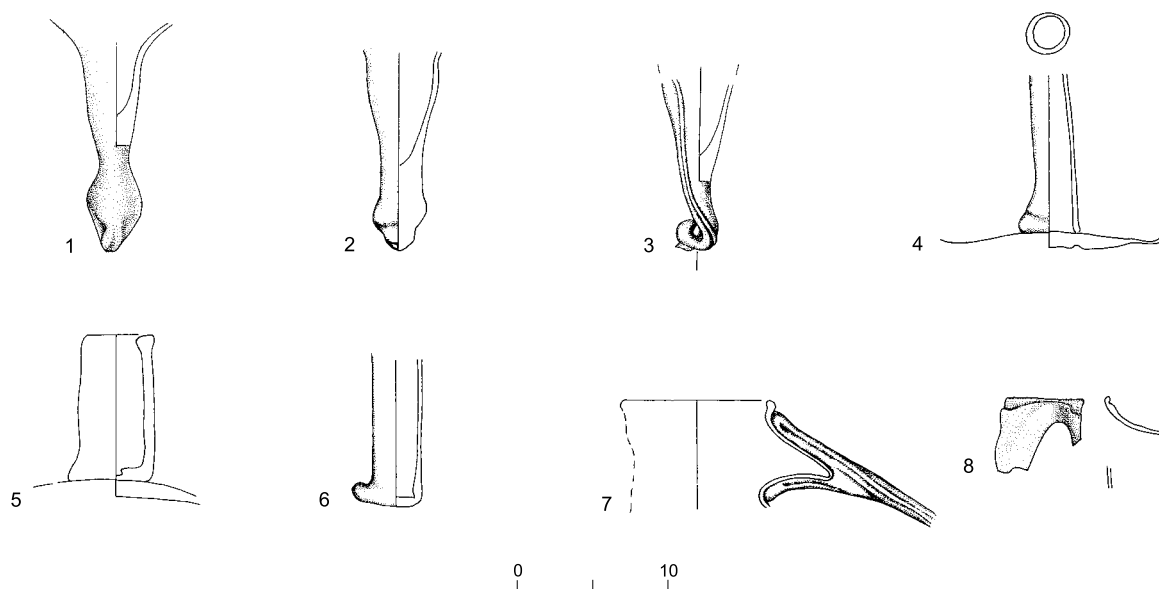


Fig. 4. Lamps and cupping glasses.

No.	Type	Area	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Lamp	A	321	6167	Greenish glass; patches of black crust, silver weathering and iridescence
2	Lamp	A	279	1962/1	Colorless glass; layer of black crust, silver weathering and iridescence
3	Lamp	A	333	6447	Light greenish glass; silver weathering and iridescence
4	Lamp	A	279	1962/2	Colorless glass with light green tinge; weathering and iridescence
5	Lamp	E	679	2848	Colorless glass with light green tinge; weathering and iridescence
6	Lamp	D1	5029	3189	Colorless glass; layer of black crust, weathering and iridescence
7	Cupping glass	E	651	2627	Light bluish glass; milky weathering and iridescence
8	Cupping glass	E	634	2533	Light bluish glass; black crust, weathering and iridescence

were dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries CE, although two such lamps were dated to the eighth century CE (Foy 1999: Fig. 4:13, 27).

Cupping glasses (Nos. 7, 8) are small bowls with a folded-out rim and a long, narrow, straight spout. No. 7 has a very irregular spout attached to the rim (diam. 4 cm); No. 8 is a small fragment of a rim with the beginning of the spout. A variety of suggestions have been brought forth regarding the use of these vessels. Some have suggested that they were used as cupping glasses for medical purposes or for feeding the sick. Kröger is of the opinion that these vessels “were used as alembics, probably in connection with a distillation apparatus, in chemistry or alchemy experiments” or possibly to produce rose water or date wine in the homes (Kröger 1995:186). Such cupping glasses have been found at Bet She’an, where they date from the Umayyad period up to the Fatimid period (Hadad 2005:29, 47, Nos. 453–455, 979–981, and see a list of further references therein). One such specimen was retrieved at a recent excavation in Ramla (Katsnelson 2013: Fig. 12:6).

DECORATED VESSELS (Figs. 5–10)

Mold-Blown Vessels (Fig. 5).— Bowls and bottles with a mold-blown decoration were common during the Abbasid–Fatimid periods. Such vessels were found in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2005:107, 110, Nos. 21, 22, 34, 35; Gorin-Rosen 2010:246–248, Pl. 10.9:1–10), Bet She’an (Hadad 2005:36–37, Nos. 567–607, and see an exhaustive list of references therein) and Tiberias (Lester 2004:201–204).

The vessels of this type found in the excavation are made of colorless glass with bluish, greenish or yellowish tinges, and their decorations belong to two groups. The first group (Nos. 1–4) is decorated with shallow geometric patterns, such as ovals, lozenges, circles and vertical panels. No. 1 is part of an outcurving rim (diam. 14.8 cm) and part of a body with curving walls, exhibiting the beginning of a slight mold-blown pattern of vertical, elongated panels. No. 2 is a very small body fragment, which may belong

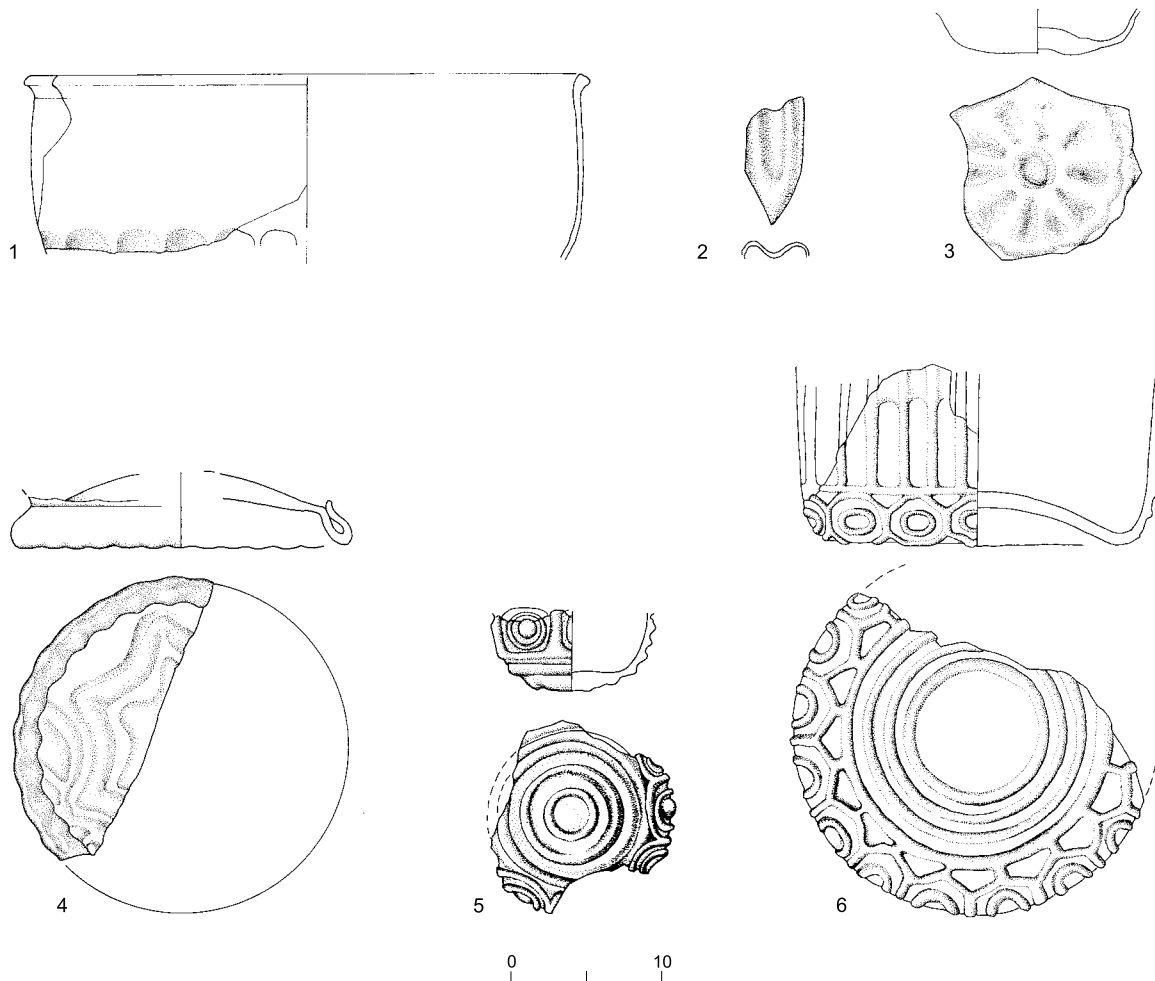


Fig. 5. Mold-blown vessels.

◄ Fig. 5

No.	Type	Area	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Bowl	D1	5132	3778	Colorless glass; a thick layer of black crust, weathering and iridescence
2	Bottle?	D1	5058	3434	Light bluish glass; weathering and iridescence
3	Bowl	D2	5155	4146	Colorless glass with light greenish tinge; black crust, weathering and iridescence
4	Bowl or beaker	D2	5118	3756	Yellowish glass; patches of black crust, silver weathering and iridescence
5	Beaker or bottle	D2	5014	3616	Bluish greenish glass; layer of black crust on the bottom, silver weathering, iridescence and pitting
6	?	C	613	2399	Greenish glass; a thick layer of black crust, weathering, iridescence and pitting

to a small bottle resembling a specimen previously found in Ramla (Winter 2013: Fig. 37:4). It bears a vertical, elongated mold-blown pattern. No. 3 is a base (diam. 4.5 cm) with a pontil mark, decorated with a mold-blown pattern comprising elongated triangular panels around a central circle. No. 4 is a fragment of a tubular ring base (diam. 9 cm) of a bowl or a beaker. It exhibits the remains of a mold-blown decoration of shallow, vertical ribbing and a star on the bottom. Vessels with a similar decoration were found at Bet She'an (Hadad 2005:595) and Fuṣṭaṭ (Shindo 1992: Fig. IV-6-3:19). The star motif was also found on bases from Bet She'an (Hadad 2005:592) and the White Mosque in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen 2010: Pl. 10.9:10), and was a very common decoration on the vessels from the shipwreck at Serçe Limani, dating from the first quarter of the eleventh century CE (Bass et al. 2009:28–31).

The second group (Nos. 5, 6) bears very deep decorations. No. 5 is the base (diam. 3.5 cm) of a small, rounded bowl decorated with three deep concentric circles. On its wall, one can see a pattern of small concentric circles in vertical bands. No. 6 is a concave base (diam. 9 cm), similarly decorated with concentric circles. On the join between the base and the wall is a band of hexagons with ovals in their center, and above them are vertical ribs.

Vessels with a Tonged Decoration (Fig. 6).— No. 1 is a body fragment and No. 2 is a rounded, slightly incurving rim (diam. 9.3 cm) and part of a wall. Both belong to bowls that bear tong-impressed decorations, but the sherds are too small to reconstruct the patterns, except for one deep line on No. 2. Shard No. 3—a rounded, upright rim (diam. 11 cm) and part of the wall of a bowl—bears an exceptional and rare pattern of semi-circles, for which no parallel could be found

Tonging was an innovation of the Islamic period. The technique comprises the impression of designs into the wall of the vessel with metal tongs. The obverse side bears the design (the positive), while the reverse side is either plain or bears the design's negative (Lane 1987:69ff; Pinder-Wilson 1991:122; Kröger 1995:95–99). This method of ornamentation was performed mainly on open vessels during the Umayyad period, and became widespread during the Abbasid period. Many fragments bearing this type

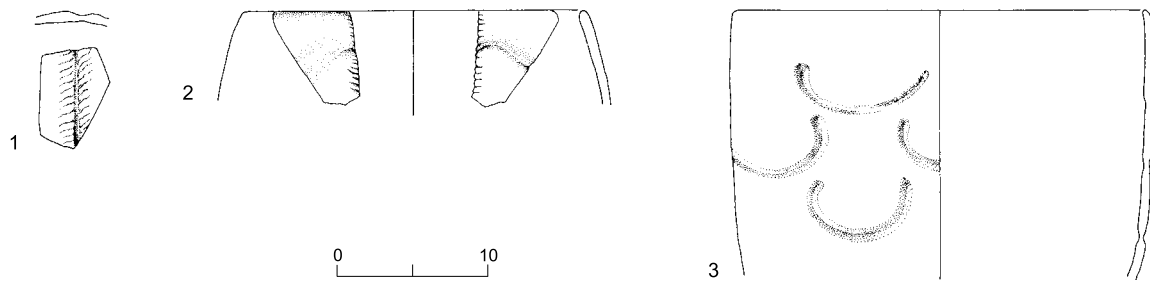


Fig. 6. Vessels with a tonged decoration.

No.	Type	Area / Stratum	Locus	Basket	Description
1	?	B	340	6506	Light blue glass; silver weathering and iridescence
2	Bowl	D1	5088	3525	Light blue glass; silver weathering and iridescence
3	Bowl	D2	657	2693	Yellowish glass; patches of black crust, silver weathering and iridescence

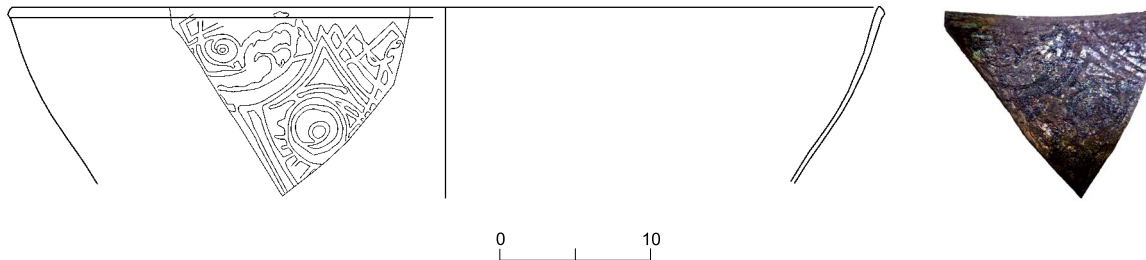


Fig. 7. Bowl with a scratch-engraved decoration (Area D2, B2692; dark purple glass, highly pitted).

of decoration have been found throughout Israel, for examples in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2005:101–103, 107, Nos. 2, 20; Pollak 2007:105, Fig. 3:17; Gorin-Rosen 2010:242–245, Pl. 10.8:1–6) and at Bet She’an (Hadad 2005:37, Pls. 31:608–649; 32, and see an exhaustive list of references therein).

Bowl with a Scratch-Engraved Decoration (Fig. 7).— This is a rim (diam. 24 cm) and wall fragment of a bowl made of dark purple glass with a white trail applied onto the rim. As it is so severely pitted, it is very difficult to distinguish the geometric pattern of lines and circles it bears. Two similar vessels in a better state of preservation are presented in the catalogue of the Corning Museum of Glass, where they are both dated to the eighth–ninth centuries CE (Whitehouse 2010: Nos. 1, 2).

This bowl fragment is very interesting, as it illustrates one of the simplest types of engraving on glass in the Early Islamic period: an engraving achieved by scratching the surface with a pointed tool (Carboni and Whitehouse 2001:76–81). Kröger (2005:142–143) lists the range of vessel types with scratched-engraved

ornaments: dishes and bowls, cylindrical cups, bottles and jars. He also states that the colors of most scratched-engraved glass vessels are dark. These vessels have a wide distribution, from Egypt, through Israel and the Syro-Palestinian region, to Iraq and Iran (Whitehouse 2010:13, and see an exhaustive list of references therein).

Vessels with a Wheel-Cut Decoration (Fig. 8).— These vessels, described below according to their decoration motif, continue a Sasanian tradition of decorative techniques of cutting and engraving with the aid of a wheel. This technique became highly popular in the ninth–eleven centuries CE in the manufacturing of luxury goods (Carboni and Whitehouse 2001:71–73). The shapes of such vessels are quite diverse, ranging from both shallow and deep bowls to bottles of various sizes and goblets. Such objects were produced in the entire Islamic world—Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt—and it is often difficult to determine their origin.

Monochrome cut-glass vessels are divided into numerous groups; all the vessels in Fig. 8 belong to Whitehouse’s Group 3 of linear-cut objects (Whitehouse 2010:37–38). They were made by cutting into the surface of the glass with a rotative wheel fed with abrasive slurry, producing lines of various widths and depths, which formed both the outlines and the details of the ornament.

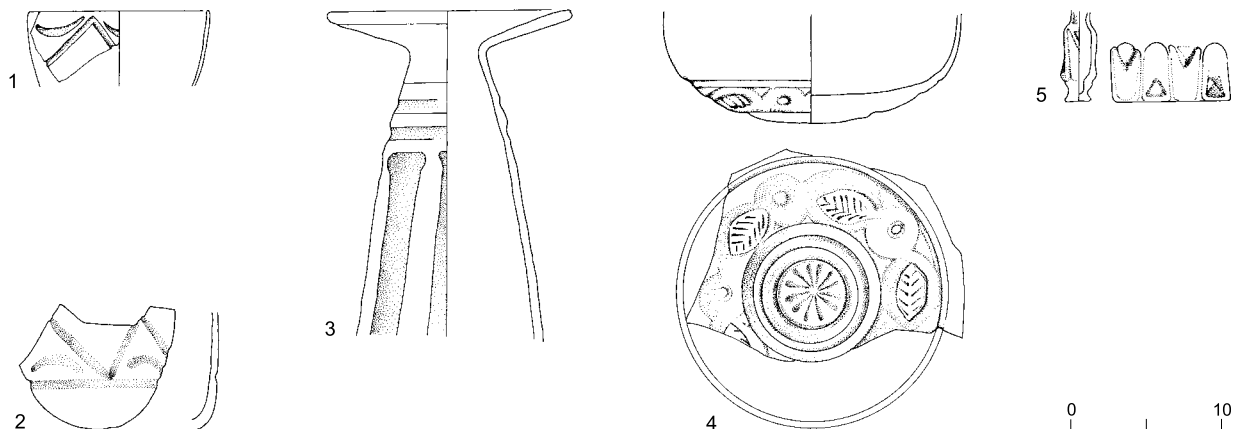


Fig. 8. Vessels with a wheel-cut decoration.

No.	Type	Area	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Beaker	D2	5051	3322	Colorless glass; completely covered by black crust
2	Beaker	B	337	B6453	Colorless glass with light yellowish tinge; weathering and iridescence
3	Bottle	D1	5010	3045	Colorless glass; a thick layer of black crust, weathering, iridescence and pitting
4	Bowl	E	635	2559	Yellowish glass; layer of milky weathering, iridescence and pitting
5	Miniature bottle	B	309	6160	Colorless glass; silver weathering and iridescence

Nos. 1 and 2 are beakers with walls bearing a wheel-cut pattern of upright and rounded lines. No. 1 is an upright rim (diam. 4.7 cm) and part of a very thin wall, and No. 2 is a fragment of a wall from near the base. Wheel-cut beakers are very common, found for example at Bet She'an, and are dated from the mid-eighth to the eleventh centuries CE (Hadad 2005:38, Nos. 671–674, and see further references therein). A large assemblage of such vessels comes from the shipwreck at Serçe Limani, dating from the first quarter of the eleventh century CE (Bass et al. 2009:41–75). A very small body fragment, probably belonging to a beaker of this type, was found in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2005:107, No. 23).

No. 3 is a fragment of a thick-walled bottle with a wide, flaring, flattened rim ('shelf-like'; diam. 6.5 cm) with a rounded edge and a wide cylindrical neck tapering toward the shoulder. It is decorated with two horizontal, wide and deep cuts below the rim and vertical facets below them, on the neck. Such bottles, both plain and decorated, were found in many excavations in Israel, such as in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen and Katsnelson 2005:113, No. 42); Bet She'an (Hadad 2005: Pl. 42:863–865); Caesarea, Stratum VI, where they were dated to the late ninth – mid-tenth centuries CE (Pollak 2003:167, Fig. 3:44, 50, 51); and Tiberias, Stratum I, where two rims of this type were dated to the late tenth or eleventh century CE (Lester 2003:160, Fig. 2:16, 17). Many vessels with various decorations were found in the shipwreck at Serçe Limani, dating from the first quarter of the eleventh century CE (Bass 1984:66, 68, Figs. 2, 5).

No. 4 is the base (diam. 6 cm) and the beginning of the wall of a bowl bearing a complex and delicate pattern with a rosette in the middle of concentric circles surrounded by leaves alternating with circles. A base of a rounded bowl decorated with linear-cut concentric circles and dated to the ninth–tenth centuries CE is on display at the Corning Museum (Whitehouse 2010:98, No. 150).

No. 5 is an almost complete miniature bottle (preserved height 2.5 cm); only the rim is missing. It is decorated with deep, wheel-cut vertical facets on the body, with a motif of triangles or hearts. Similar vessels have been found in Ramla (Gorin-Rosen 2013: Fig. 1.3), at Bet She'an (Hadad 2005:44, Pl. 41:857), and in Fuṣṭaṭ, where they were dated to the tenth century CE (Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson 2001:91–94, Fig. 42).

Marvered Vessel (Fig. 9).— Marvering is one of the oldest forms of glass decoration, dating back to the new Kingdom in Egypt (1450–1100 BCE; Tatton-Brown and Andrews 1991:26–33, 38–47). In this technique, the vessel is decorated with trailed glass, using a color or colors different from that of the vessel itself. The trails were applied to a wide variety of vessels. Once applied, the trails were flattened on a flat working surface (the marver, hence the name of the technique), and in most instances they were reheated and combed into feathered designs or undulating patterns. The marvered vessels of the Islamic period are both free and mold-blown.

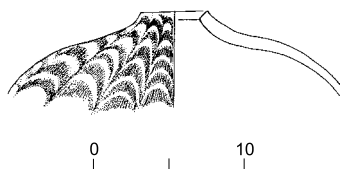


Fig. 9. Marvered vessel (Area A, L321, B511; dark blue[?] glass; gold weathering and iridescence).

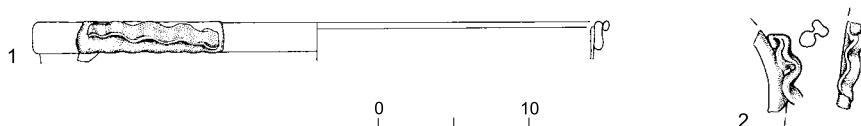


Fig. 10. Vessels with an applied decoration.

No.	Type	Area	Locus	Basket	Description
1	Bowl	D1	5200	4066	Colorless glass with light yellowish tinge; silver weathering and iridescence
2	?	E	2861	702	Blue glass; silver weathering and iridescence

The marvering process of decoration was most widely used and distributed during the Mamluk era (Brosh 2005, and see therein an exhaustive list of the sites where marvered glass was recovered). However, the fragment in Fig. 9—the rim (diam. 1.8 cm) and part of the body of a small bottle decorated with fused-in marvered opaque white trails in a festoon pattern—seems to belong to an earlier period, judging by its fabric. A marvered fragment found in Ramla dates as early as the eighth–tenth centuries CE (Winter 2013: Fig. 37:6).

Vessels with an Applied Decoration (Fig. 10).— A decoration made of threads applied in various shapes and designs was the most common ornamentation of glass vessels in the Umayyad period. It began to be used in the Byzantine period, but apparently became richer and more diverse in the later period (Hadad 2005:24–25, and see examples and references therein). No. 1 is a fragment of a colorless rim (diam. 15 cm) with a horizontally applied ruffle; this is a very rare combination, for which no parallel could be found. No. 2 is a small fragment of a handle with an applied ruffle; the fragment is too small for identifying the vessel. The handle resembles the “scalloped decorative handles” found in the shipwreck at Serçe Limani, dating from the first quarter of the eleventh century CE (Bass et al. 2009:413, Fig. 39.3, Type HN11).

SUMMARY

The glass assemblage retrieved from the excavation at the train station in Ramla displays a variety of shapes and decorations that comprise the most common types known in the eastern Mediterranean during the Early Islamic period. They include daily wares as well as some luxurious items, such as the vessels with deep mold-blown decorations (Fig. 5:5, 6), the bowl with a scratch-engraved decoration (Fig. 7) and the very fine bowl with a wheel-cut pattern (Fig. 8:4). Some of these vessels were probably made in local glass workshops, while others may have been brought from afar. This assemblage augments our knowledge of glass corpus in the city of Ramla.

NOTES

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