

Mortuary Remains from the Byzantine Period at Ono (Or Yehuda) - 2009

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(Pp. 5*-26*)

This excavation was conducted along the southeastern fringes of ancient Kafr 'Anna, today known as Ono (Permit No. B-342/2009; map ref. NIG 1879/6589; Fig. 1). Two areas (A2, A3) were excavated prior to construction of planned buildings.

Area A2. Here were exposed two built tombs which shared an adjoining wall (Tombs I and II; Figs. 2, 6-7). Each tomb is quadrilateral in plan and divided into three burial troughs set against the tomb walls, with the entrance from the east via a corridor. The tombs contained numerous offerings, including pottery vessels and mirrors (Fig. 8). Several types of cosmetic glass vessels with a single or double tube were collected in the area (Fig. 9); most are complete, or are missing only a few small fragments. Rich metal artifacts were also recovered, such as a hammer, a key, kohl sticks, bells, cymbal, crosses and bracelets (Fig. 11). These tombs were originally built in the 5-6th centuries CE and apparently fell into disuse during the 9th century CE.

These two tombs probably belong to a type described as built tombs with vaulted ceilings, which were limited to the southern coastal plain where the soil is sandy and alluvial. Such built tombs have been discovered in Asdod, Ashqelon and lately in Khirbat el-Ni'ana.

Area A3. Two rectangular cist graves, oriented north-south and built of massive ashlar, were discovered here. Each grave contained piles of bones from secondary interments. No datable grave goods were recovered (Figs. 2-5).

Based upon their similar building materials and orientation, it would appear that the four tombs and graves were a burial plot belonging to an extended family. Metal crosses accompanying the deceased (Fig. 11:4-5) indicate that they were Christians.

Captions to Illustrations

- Fig. 1. The site location.
- Fig. 2. Plan and section of Areas A2 and A3.
- Fig. 3. Area A3 cist graves (facing west).
- Fig. 4. Cist grave (L4) (facing north).
- Fig. 5. Cist grave (L9) (facing east).
- Fig. 6. Tomb I (facing west).
- Fig. 7. Tomb II (facing west).
- Fig. 8. Ceramic finds.
- Fig. 9. Glass finds.
- Fig. 10. Beads.
- Fig. 11. Metal finds.