The vase in general is a rather common motif in ancient Jewish art. Various kinds of vases appear in architectural decoration, mainly on religious buildings, but also on various secular and funerary artifacts. The meaning of vase depictions in Jewish art has been discussed chiefly by Erwin Goodenough, but also by Rachel Hachlili, Levi Rahmani, and Pau Figueras. Yet, the shapes and materials that the depicted vases are imitating have gotten little attention. Among these vases, many are of indefinite shape. Those identifiable compose a rather interesting group of amphorae and kraters.

It is not the aim of this study to present a corpus of amphorae and kraters in Jewish art, nor to deal with their significance per se, though their significance will be discussed when required. Rather, the purpose is to define the various types that are depicted, trace their visual sources of inspiration and the raison d’être of certain emblems, and locate the representations within the framework of Roman and Byzantine art. The types are presented first, then the materials are dealt with, followed by a brief comparative analysis of contemporary non-Jewish examples, and concluding with a synthesis and interpretation of the data presented.

Types of Amphorae and Kraters

Ancient Jewish art provides representations of amphorae and kraters of certain Hellenistic and Roman types in addition to a number of unidentified types, which are schematically depicted and lack any specific features to indicate their relation to familiar types. The definitions of amphora and krater in this study follow the definitions used by modern scholars: vessels with a rim

* Department of Classics—Greece and Rome, Tel Aviv University, and Department of Art, Oranim Academic College of Education, Israel, gersht@post.tau.ac.il

** Israel Antiquities Authority, Israel, petergen@israntique.org.il
diameter less than the maximal diameter of the body are amphorae, otherwise the vessels are referred to as kraters.

**Amphorae**

A.1 **Globular Amphorae**

The globular type refers to amphorae with globular bodies, short flaring necks, and S-shaped handles attached to the rims and shoulders. Representations of amphorae of this type vary in decoration and foot shape, and are incorporated into mosaics, architectural members, ossuaries, and furniture.

*Mosaics:* Globular amphorae are depicted at the corners of the mosaic pavement of the small synagogue attached to the house of Leontis in Beth Shean (Fig. 8.1:1; Bahat 1981, 83–84; Hachlili 1988a, 312–13, Pl. 85; 2009, 125–26, Fig. vi–10). The body of each amphora, from which ivy stems sprout, is decorated with zigzags on the shoulder and a horizontal strip with light spots imitating inlaid jewels on mid body. The foot is composed of a spherical member and a trumpet base.

*Architectural Members:* A pair of confronted amphorae with wreath and pomegranates between them is carved on the façade lintel of the Qaṣrin synagogue. The amphorae have a plain body and a simple trumpet base (Hachlili 1988a, 216, Fig. 53a on p. 215; 1995, 192–93). The amphorae carved on a stone from En Gedi (Peleg 2007, 326–27, Fig. 9.3-3, Photo 9.3-4) and on a lintel from Eshtemoa (Goodenough 1953–1968, 1:235, 3: Fig. 613) also feature a plain body and simple trumpet base. Those on the western and eastern pilasters of the Torah Shrine in Umm el-Qanaṭîr, on the other hand, are gadrooned (Ben David, Gonen, and Drei 2006, 114–15; Hachlili 2013, 196–97, 651, Fig. IV–51). The handles and trumpet foot of the western amphora are simple (Fig. 8.1:2); the eastern has S-shaped handles and a tripodal foot (Fig. 8.1:3). From within each amphora a vine abounding with leaves and grapes climbs the pillar all the way to the top.

*Funerary context:* One of the ossuaries in The Israel Museum, of unknown provenance, bears three depictions of stylized globular amphorae (Rahmani 1994, 34, 247, Pl. 120/815: F, L, R); all have zigzag lines on the body, neck, and

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1 Three out of the original four amphorae remain.
2 The stone was found in secondary use at the Roman bath. According to the publisher, it could have originated from the Second Temple-period Jewish village of En Gedi.
3 Similar depictions are seen on a square pillar from Beth Guvrin (Goodenough 1953–1968, 1:212, 3: Fig. 537), possibly an architectural member of the synagogue mentioned in an Aramaic inscription (Naveh 1978, 109–11), and on a fragmentary doorpost (?) from the vicinity of Yavne‘el (Ilan 1987, 63).
4 The fourth amphora identified by Rahmani is nothing but a rosette shifted to look like a vase.