



Israel Museum Studies in Archaeology

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**Israel Museum Studies in Archaeology**

Volume 12 2025

An annual publication of The Samuel and Saidye Bronfman  
Archaeology Wing, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

This volume was made possible by The Montgomery  
Securities and Friends Endowment Fund of the Israel Museum

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Design: Masha Pozina, adapted by Konstantin Chuvashov

Printed by Maor Wallach Ltd., Jerusalem

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ISSN 1565-3617

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# In Memoriam

Yael Israeli, 1933–2025

Yael Israeli was a distinguished archaeologist, researcher, and longtime senior curator at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. She was born in Haifa on December 25, 1933, where she studied at the Hebrew Reali School—one of Israel’s oldest and most renowned institutions—and completed her military service in the Nahal Brigade. In the early 1950s, she earned a B.A. in archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. During and after her studies, Yael participated in numerous Hebrew University excavations and surveys, including Hazor, Machmish–Tel Michal (in collaboration with the newly opened Eretz Israel Museum), Masada, Rehovot in the Negev, and the Upper City of Jerusalem. These projects were led by some of Israel’s most prominent archaeologists—Yigael Yadin, Nahman Avigad, and Michael Avi-Yonah—and during this period, Yael formed a close bond with the esteemed archaeologist Ruth Amiran. In 1976, she submitted her master’s thesis on Byzantine plaques and figurines, then a little-known subject—reflecting her lifelong fascination with classical archaeology.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Yael worked at the young Eretz Israel Museum, collaborating with archaeologist Pnuel Kahane on the museum’s archaeological finds. She studied and published the Glass Pavilion collection (1964a) and assisted Ruth Amiran and Pirhiya Beck in curating the Ceramic Pavilion exhibition.

In 1959, Yael married Uri, an agronomist specializing in plant protection in southern Israel. Their son Hadar was born

in 1962, and the family later moved to Be’er Sheva, where their second son, Gal, was born in 1965. During this time, Yael worked at the Negev Museum, focusing on the region’s salient archaeological finds.

On the first day of the Six-Day War, June 5, 1967, Uri, an officer and platoon commander in the Nahal Brigade, was killed in battle near Khan Yunis. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Courage for his exceptional bravery, daring, and determination.

Following Uri’s death, Yael returned to Jerusalem with her sons and began working in the archaeology wing of the Israel Museum in December 1968. She became curator of the Late Periods—later defined as the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Periods—in the newly opened museum, once again working alongside Ruth Amiran and other colleagues.

Yael was deeply committed to her work: building and expanding the museum’s collections, curating the permanent exhibition, and cultivating relationships with donors and collectors. She was highly respected by her peers and served twice as Chief Curator of the Archaeology Wing, mentoring colleagues and leading with vision and dedication.

Her passion for ancient glass led her to establish the museum’s Department of Ancient Glass and the Eliahu Dobkin Glass Gallery, made possible by the latter’s generous donation that forms the core of the museum’s glass collection. Yael was

instrumental in fostering professional relationships both in Israel and abroad. She founded the Israel Glass Committee within the International Association for the History of Glass, where she remained an active and enduring member, regularly participating in conferences.

She curated several landmark exhibitions, that were a subtle combination of thorough research and straightforward and engaging presentation to the public. These include, to name just a few: Archaeological discoveries in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem (1976), Roman Sculpture of Greater Beit Shean (1992 with Dudi Mevorah), Promise and Redemption – A synagogue mosaic from Sepphoris (1996 with Dudi Mevorah), In the Light of the Menorah: Story of a Symbol (1998 with Iris Fishof and Daisy Raccach-Djivire), Cradle of Christianity (2000 with Dudi Mevorah), Handled with Care (2002 with Yigal Zalmona and Dudi Mevorah).

Yael retired from the Israel Museum in 2003, but remained active in scholarly writing, attending conferences, traveling and experiencing the world and enjoying time with her family. A prolific scholar, Yael's publications are cornerstones in the field. Her pioneering research on ancient production techniques, especially the origins of glassblowing (1991; 2006), her comprehensive studies of glass finds from the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem (2005b; 2006; 2010; 2014a; 2023a; 2023b), and her work on mold-blown masterpieces by the Roman glass artist Ennion and beyond (1964b; 1983; 2011; 2014b) are widely cited. Her monumental catalog of the Eliahu Dobkin Glass Collection (2003) and numerous exhibition and collection catalogues (1964a; 1973; 1988; 1998; 1999; 2000; 2011) remain essential resources for archaeology students and researchers.

Yael was a devoted and loving mother to her two sons, five grandchildren, and three great-granddaughters. She was known for her sharp wit, keen eye for detail, strong sense of justice and adventure, and deep appreciation for nature and culture—from classical music to literature.

Yael passed away at home in Jerusalem on October 13, 2025. Her absence will be felt deeply by all who knew her, especially by her family, her Israel Museum colleagues, and the many friends and professionals whose lives she touched in Israel and around the world.

Dudi Mevorah and Ruth E. Jackson-Tal

## Selected Publications by Yael Israeli:

- 1964a *Ancient Glass: Museum Haaretz Collection*. Revised by G. Lehrer; translated from Hebrew by E. Heinemann. Tel-Aviv.
- 1964b Sidonian Mold-Blown Glass Vessels in the Museum Haaretz. *JGS* 6: 34–41.
- 1973 *Inscriptions Reveal: Documents from the Time of the Bible, the Mishna and the Talmud*. Jerusalem. (With Ruth Hestrin And Yaakov Meshorer).
- 1983 Ennion in Jerusalem. *JGS* 25: 65–69.
- 1988 *Oil-lamps from Eretz Israel: the Louis and Carmen Warschaw collection at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem*. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem cat. 408. (With Uri Avida).
- 1991 The Invention of Blowing. In *Roman Glass: Two Centuries of Art and Invention*, eds. M. Newby and K. Painter. 46–55. London.
- 1998 *The wonders of ancient glass at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem*. Jerusalem.
- 1999 *In the Light of the Menorah: Story of a Symbol*. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem cat. 425.
- 2000 *Cradle of Christianity*. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem cat. 438. (With David Mevorah).
- 2003 *Ancient Glass in the Israel Museum: the Eliahu Dobkin Collection and Other Gifts*. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem cat. 486.
- 2005a The Glass Vessels from Zippori. 'Atiqot 49:107\*–111\* (Hebrew; English summary, pp. 141–42).
- 2005b What did Jerusalem's First-Century BCE Glass Workshop Produce? *Annales de l'Association Internationale pour l'Histoire du Verre* 16: 54–57.
- 2006 Refuse of a Glass Workshop of the Second Temple Period from Area J. In *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969–1982 III: Area E and Other Studies; Final Report*, ed. H. Geva. 411–60. Jerusalem. (With Natalya Katsnelson).
- 2008 The Glass Vessels. In *Archaeological Excavations at Caesarea Maritima, Areas CC, KK and NN; Final Reports I: The Objects*, by J. Patrich. 367–418. Jerusalem.
- 2010 Glass Vessels. In *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969–1982 IV: The Burnt House of Area B and Other Studies; Final Report*, ed. H. Geva. 221–35. Jerusalem.
- 2011 *Made by Ennion: Ancient Glass Treasures from the Shlomo Moussaieff Collection*. Israel Museum, Jerusalem cat. 573. Jerusalem.
- 2012 A First Millenium Glass Amphoriskos. In *Hazor VI: The Selz Foundation Hazor Excavations in Memory of Yigael Yadin. The 1990–2009 Excavations, The Iron Age*, eds. A. Ben-Tor, D. Ben-Ami and D. Sandhaus. 624–25. Jerusalem.
- 2014a Glass Vessels from Stratum 3, Area J. In *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969–1982 VI: Areas J, N, Z and Other Studies; Final Report*, ed. H. Geva. 288–301. Jerusalem.
- 2014b The Ennion Jug from Jerusalem. In *Ennion: Master of Roman Glass*, by C. S. Lightfoot. 57–59. New York.
- 2015 A Foreign Family's Tomb?— Reconsidering the Glass Finds from Geva–Abu Shusha. *Annales de l'Association Internationale pour l'Histoire du Verre* 20: 207–14. (With Natalya Katsnelson).
- 2023a Early Roman Glass Vessels from Areas F-2, P and P-2. In *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969–1982 IX: Small Finds: The Palatial Mansion (Areas F-2,) and Other Studies; Final Report*, ed. H. Geva. 308–33. Jerusalem. (With Yael Gorin-Rosen).
- 2023b Selection of Mold-Blown Glass Vessels and Vessels of the Ennion Workshop from the Jewish Quarter. In *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969–1982 IX: Small Finds: The Palatial Mansion (Areas F-2) and Other Studies; Final Report*, ed. H. Geva. 363–76. Jerusalem. (With Ravit Nenner-Soriano).