

DOI: 10.53737/5092.2023.68.87.014

Svetlana Tarkhanova

**EARLY BYZANTINE “MEDALLION” CAPITALS IN THE HOLY LAND:
THEIR CONTEXT, STYLISTIC EVOLUTION, AND GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION***

In this paper, twelve marble “medallion” capitals of the Holy Land are collected together, stylistically analyzed, and dated for the first time. For a better understanding of their geographical distribution, the places of recovery were marked on the map. In the recent article of C. Barsanti (2017), only 40 capitals of this type were collected throughout the whole Mediterranean region, so the number of local artifacts is rather considerable. None of the local capitals was revealed in situ but only in secondary use in the Early Islamic context or scattered at the sites. In all cases, Early-Byzantine churches dated to the 5th — 6th centuries CE were located in close vicinity. The paper consistently provides them as apparent sources from which the capitals might be hypothetically generated. Stylistic analysis showed the process of order alteration: the recognizable morphological basis of the type was followed (though not strictly) in all specimens. At the same time, ancillary details might vary considerably from one capital to the other. This process implies gradual order decline moves from more complete and detailed to more laconic variations of the “medallion” type.

Key words: “Medallion” capitals, Early-Byzantine churches, Holy Land, marble imports, Constantinople workshops, order morphology.

About the author: Tarkhanova Svetlana, PhD (Cultural Studies), National Treasures Department of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Contact information: 9905543, Israel, Beth Shemesh, 203 HaMelacha St., National Treasures Department of the Israel Antiquities Authority; e-mail: svetlanat@israntique.org.il; foteini_t@yahoo.com.

Светлана Тарханова

**РАННЕВИЗАНТИЙСКИЕ «МЕДАЛЬОННЫЕ» КАПИТЕЛИ НА СВЯТОЙ ЗЕМЛЕ:
ИХ КОНТЕКСТ, СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКАЯ ЭВОЛЮЦИЯ
И ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКОЕ РАСПРОСТРАНЕНИЕ**

В данной работе собраны вместе, стилистически проанализированы и впервые датированы двенадцать мраморных «медальонных» капителей Святой Земли. Для лучшего понимания их географического распространения места обнаружения были отмечены на карте. В недавней статье К. Барсанти (2017) по всему Средиземноморью было собрано всего 40 капителей этого типа, так что количество местных артефактов довольно значимо. Ни одна из местных капителей не была обнаружена in situ. Все они находились во вторичном использовании в раннеисламском контексте или были разбросаны на поверхности земли вне археологического контекста. Но во всех случаях в непосредственной близости располагались ранневизантийские храмы V—VI вв. н.э. В статье они последовательно представлены как источники, из которых гипотетически могли происходить капители. Стилистический анализ показывает процесс развития ордера: узнаваемая морфологическая основа типа соблюдается (хотя и не строго) во всех экземплярах. В то же время вспомогательные детали могут значительно отличаться от одной капители к другой. Этот процесс «развития» подразумевал постепенный упадок ордерного канона и переход от более детализированных к более лаконичным вариантам капителей «медальонного типа».

Ключевые слова: капители-медальоны, ранневизантийские храмы, Святая земля, импорт мрамора, константинопольские мастерские, ордерная морфология.

Сведения об авторе: Тарханова Светлана, PhD (Cultural Studies), Департамент национальных сокровищ Управления древностей Израиля.

* Статья поступила в номер 16 июля 2023 г.
Принята к печати 30 июля 2023 г.

Контактная информация: 9905543, Израиль, г. Бейт Шемеш, ул. Хамелаха, д. 203, Департамент национальных сокровищ Управления древностей Израиля; e-mail: svetlanat@israntique.org.il; foteini_t@yahoo.com.

Introduction

Subject, methods, and historiography

This paper is devoted to one special and very few in number type of “medallion” marble capitals which might be allocated among the other types imported to the Holy Land during the Early Byzantine period¹. These “medallion” capitals were never collected together, systemized, adequately investigated, or dated, though some of them were recently published in disparate archaeological reports. In the recent article of C. Barsanti, three of them (Caesarea, Nazareth, Be’er Sheva) were mentioned among the general row of 40 samples with some short stylistic analysis (Barsanti 2017: 393—394, Figs. 4—6). Several examples (Caesarea, Constantinople) were analyzed in my Ph.D. dissertation (Tarkhanova 2016: 233—234), but in this article, the list is more complete, and the analysis is more detailed and broader. Some new ideas about the evolution of order morphology and style, as well as on genesis and meaning of separate elements, are presented. The geographical distribution of the known artifacts is shown on the map prepared by the author (Fig. 1).

Plenty, if not the majority, of all known “medallion” capitals were revealed in Constantinople. The dating of the “medallion” type is rather contradictive. In early German bibliography, the type was generally named “Kapitelle mit weich-zackigem Akanthus: Blattfächer unter den Außenhelices” (Kautzsch 1936: 52—53; transl. of the author: “Capitals with soft-pointed acanthus: fan-like leaflets under the outer helices”). R. Kautzsch has presented evolutionary development of the type (based on Constantinopolitan samples) starting from the early capitals in the Triumphal Arch of Theodosius (late 4th century CE; Kautzsch 1936: 42—43, no. 154 (Abbs. a-b); Fig. 2)², the pilaster capital in the Golden Gates (425—450 CE; Bardill 1999: 682, Fig. 1) and completing with other artifacts from various places in Constantinople, which he hypothetically dated to the 460—490s CE (Kautzsch 1936: 42—43, Taf. 12, nos. 162—167). Thus by Kautzsch, the chronological borders include the period from the late 4th till the late 5th century. In the review of Kautzsch’s monograph, Schunk criticized his dating and offered another upper chronological border — ca. 530—540s CE (Schunk 1937: 383—384, Abb. 2). Still, the author concentrated only on the style of acanthus leaves in his arguments. Barsanti is not going deep into the chronological and evolutionary problems maintaining (with the references to earlier bibliography) that the “medallion” type was spread from the 1st decades of the 5th century CE till the 6th century CE (Barsanti 2017: 391). P. Niewöhner included this type into the group of capitals dated to the earlier 4th century CE (erroneously (?)). The author is not discussing morphological or stylistic evolution, though he had accurately chosen capitals with exclusive design, highlighting the type’s diversity (Niewöhner 2021: 25).

The geographical distribution of the “medallion” capitals encompasses the whole Mediterranean area, though not very deep into the mainland. Barsanti collected 40 “medallion” capitals from various regions, including Italy, Constantinople, Asia Minor, Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus, Bulgaria, and the Holy Land (Barsanti 2017). Betsch published one sample from Chios Island (Betsch 1977: 201—202, 441, Fig. 147 (attributed as Corinthian with mask-acanthus)).

¹ The examples of the capitals and the general information about the churches were collected on the basis of the sections “Architectural members” and “Churches” of the Digital Corpus of Early Christian Churches and Monasteries in the Holy Land, directed by Dr. L.Di Segni, Prof. J. Patrich (henceforth — DCCMHL; dig.corps-cmhl.huji.ac.il: 1). It was carried out on behalf of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with a budget allotted by the Israel Science Foundation (ISF) (2014—2021). The section “Architectural members” was worked out by the author of this paper. Concerning general description of the corpus, including geographical and chronological borders of the material see Patrich, Backner, Burger, and Tarkhanova 2020: 11—31.

² Compare to the early sample of the “medallion” capital from the portico flanking the porch of the Theodosian Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (dated to 415 CE; Niewöhner 2021: 25, Fig. 40).

Niewöhner had mentioned that the “medallion” capitals were found in Constantinople, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Black Sea regions, for example, in Pamphylia (Niewöhner 2021: 25).

Notwithstanding the firm adherence to the uniform canon and anticipated manufacturing only in the Constantinopolitan area without regional replicas, there are some discrepancies in the capitals’ design. The sequent evolution of the type could explain some of them. But the details are also different on the coeval capitals. Regional reasons can’t explain this variety, as they were all manufactured in one circle of workshops from Proconessian marble.

Order morphology and its development

The order morphology of “medallion” capitals is relatively standard, displaying rigorous adherence to the established tradition/canon. In modern scientific research, this type is described as: “Corinthian capitals with reduced apparatus, no inner helices, but caules that enclose a rounded boss under the abacus knob” (Niewöhner 2021: 25). Early samples of “medallion” capitals of the Theodosian period (Kautzsch 1936: 42—43, no. 154 (Abbs. a-b), Bardill 1999: 682, Fig. 1, Niewöhner 2021: 25, Fig. 40) feature recognizable leaflets in their upper parts, but these leaflets are three pairs in number, small and not well articulated. The lower parts of kalathi bear two ranges of acanthus leaves. In their detailing, several characteristics are essential to outline for further discussion. The ranges are located so that the joints between the lower leaves and midribs of the upper leaves coincide with the axes of the capital sides. Midribs of upper leaves might be covered with lanceolate patterns, while spaces between them are filled with small paired acanthus bundles or semicircular segments. The further stylistic development of leaflets in the upper part of kalathos and their enlargement in scale has replaced the 2nd tier of acanthus leaves, but lanceolate patterns were not omitted.

In the later period, the order morphology of “medallion” capitals became more distinctive and typical. Each capital is topped by an abacus with concave (in horizontal section) sides and protruding knobs. Usually, the abacus and its knobs are embellished with a continuous horizontal line (in the middle); the sides of the abacus are slanted downwards (in the vertical section). The decorative composition of the upper part of kalathos is the main distinguishable feature. It is comprised of reduced soft volutes with tiny spirals at the ends. These volutes are leaning on the corner floral, geometric elements, or plain chamfers. On each side between the corners, there is single pair of symmetrical leaflets joined in the lower part and completed with lobes. The details of the leaflets differ on various capitals, but their standard features are pointed fan-like lobes (three-four), some of which (or all) are grooved. These grooves might continue towards the lower part of each leaflet or steeply bordered in the upper part. They also might be widening or tapering towards the lower ends, independent of each other, or joined. The inner lobes of stylized leaflets constitute oval medallions. The order meaning of these leaflets might be defined as a highly simplified and altered combination of cauliculi (caules) and calyxes. But a strict schematic form of the pattern and its almost heraldic character forces us to assume another source of inspiration; for example, it might be developed from the motif of two interlacing cornucopias arranged symmetrically (in a mirror-like manner). This pattern was popular in the Roman and Early Byzantine periods and was adopted in various arts, such as numismatics, mosaics, sculptural elements (including capitals), etc. On such a mask or another pattern might be placed on such capitals between two cornucopia a medallion n 1962: 125, 129, no. 344 (Abb. 652), Plate 86; Niewöhner 2021: 81).

The presence of large stylized leaflets on Early Byzantine “medallion” capitals omit or considerably reduce some other Corinthian order elements traditional for the upper part of kalathos, such as cauliculi, calyxes, volutes, helices. Oval bosses between leaflets might be bold or decorated with various patterns. The lower part of kalathos (on later capitals) features only one range of four, six, or eight acanthus leaves instead of the traditional two ranges of eight leaves. Traditionally the acanthus leaves on capitals of this type are soft-pointed³ with wide and soft midribs, squat in proportions. Astragalus is usually omitted.

³ Only once “broad-pointed” leaves are occurred on capital from Varna (Barsanti 2017: 396, Fig. 12).

“Medallion” capitals in the Holy Land

All capitals revealed in the Holy Land (and elsewhere) are carved from Proconessian marble of different greyish tints. Only once a reproduction of the upper stylized pointed leaflets with a medallion in between was detected on limestone capital of “basket” type (the church in Khirbet Et-Tell (Magen, Kagan 2012: 179, Fig. 57.1)). Two “medallion” capitals were found in a more or less definite ecclesiastical context (Nazareth, Caesarea Maritima). The others were revealed scattered at the sites or in secondary use in Early Islamic monuments but close to the churches with which they might be hypothetically associated. Usually, capitals are of medium scale. Due to the rareness and importance of the type, capitals revealed out of the ecclesiastical context are also included in the list.

Further description of the capitals is organized generally by geographical principle following the direction from south to north, from the Western coast towards Judea and the Sea of Galilee (with one exception for stylistic reasons — no. 8). Each capital and each site have its sequent numbers (capitals: nos. 1—12; sites: nos. (1)—(7)). No more than three capitals were revealed in each place.

(1) Nos. 1—2. Two “medallion” capitals are applicable in *Ashqelon (Ascalon)*. Both were never published.

Capital no. 1 was reused as spoliium in the *old Majdal mosque* (now *Khan Museum in Ashqelon*) over the column flanking the entrance. The nearest church is located in Khirbet Abu Fatun (Sheikh el-Kubakha; DCCMHL: NID# 12650, Huster 2015), at ca. 3 km to the southeast of the spot. There could be another church in the closer vicinity or under the mosque, from which the capital might have been obtained in the past.

The abacus of capital no. 1 (Fig. 3a-b) has concave walls and protruding bosses decorated with continuous horizontal lines. The abacus knobs are angular at the ends. The reduced soft volutes lean on the elongated tongue-like leaves with ribbed edges and bent tips. Their central surfaces are sunken. There are small slits between these corner tongue-like leaves and central stylized leaflets. Two outer lobes of the stylized leaflets are grooved, though only to half of their height. The virtuously carved grooves are shallow and tapering towards the lower parts. The inner lobes are wider and lower but flat; their tips are bent inwards. The bosses between the leaflets are almost round. Two of the opposite bosses are adorned with plain medallions with *crux quadrata* (with Ro (P) symbol) and *crux decussata* (with Chi Ro (XP) symbols). Two other bosses are bold, but the kalathos rims (double lips) are accentuated over them. The lower range is formed by eight acanthus leaves (severely chiseled). The joints between the leaves are located along the axes of the frontal sides (under the bosses) and at the corners. An unusual feature is an ancillary ring of the lanceolate patterns located between the eight acanthus leaves. They cover the corner tongue-like leaves and lower parts of the paired leaflets (directly under the bosses; see below no. 5). All decorative elements are uniform, symmetrical, and delicately accentuated with narrow grooves. The proportions of the capital are slim; the silhouette is nicely tapering towards the bottom. The upper part is almost twice higher than the lower range.

Capital no. 2 was revealed at the territory of *Tel Ascalon (Ashkelon National Park; Fig. 4a-b)*. It is currently located among the other marble details in the archaeological park. Some were published as part of the basilica decoration (Fischer 2008); the derivation of the others, including this capital, is inapplicable (it might be revealed together with plenty of other details at the site during the British Mandate). In the closest vicinity, at least four churches were identified and partially excavated (Ascalon (Tel) Church 1, DCCMHL: NID# 12618; Ascalon (Tel), Church 2, DCCMHL: NID# 12619; Ascalon (Tel), South Church, DCCMHL: NID# 4201; Ascalon (Tel), East Church (Saint Mary the Green?), DCCMHL: NID# 4852; Bagatti 2002; Tzaferis, Stager 2008: 399—405; Huster 2015). Initially, the capital might decorate one of them with some other ecclesiastical details scattered at the site. The churches are generally dated to the Early Byzantine period.

The abacus of the capital was preserved. The volutes existed, but only scanty remains of them are traceable. They are leaning on corner tongue-like leaves, similar to those of capital no. 1 but softer. The stylized leaflets in the upper part are broad. Their outer lobes are straight and grooved though not to the

bottom; inner lobes are curling inwards and grooved, but the grooves are shorter and narrower. These grooves are widening towards the lower parts and have pyramidal or arrow-like shapes. The bosses between the leaflets are bold. The lower range of the capital is adorned with four very wide acanthus leaves, which midribs are located directly under the bosses. Each leaf is comprised of a very wide flat midrib completed with a trefoil and flanked by long soft grooved lobes. The tips of the neighboring leaves were touching each other, comprising a globular silhouette. For a specific stylistic reason, only four leaves are presented; they are considerably stretched to cover the whole diameter. Four semicircular patterns (instead of lanceolate) were located between them, covering the corner leaves' lower parts. The proportions of the capital are squat with minor tapering of the silhouette towards the bottom; the upper part (without the abacus) is almost the same height as the lower range. This capital no. 2 is quite different from capital no. 1 and obtained from another import.

(2). Nos. 3—4. Two “medallion” capitals were revealed in Caesarea (Dalali-Amos 2021: 250, 280—281, nos. 58(T142)—59(T150); Barsanti 2017: 394, Fig. 4; Tarkhanova 2016: 233—234).⁴ One of them (no. 3) was discovered in secondary use in later structures (Dalali-Amos 2021: 280, no. 58) (Figs. 5, 8). Another (no. 4) (Figs. 6, 8) was left at the site near the Octagonal church by A. Negev (in 2006, it was still there), so apparently, it was derived from this church. Recently it was included in the permanent exhibition of the new museum in Caesarea National Park (Dalali-Amos 2021: 281, no. 59) (Fig. 7a-b). The Octagonal church from which this capital might be derived is dated either to the end of the 5th (before 491 CE, Shalev-Hurwitz 2016: 235—251) or to the beginning of the 6th century (Holum 2004: 109—111; Holum, Iamim 2021: 197—247, 249—300; DCCMHL: NID# 13365).

Dalali-Amos have joined these “medallion” capitals with two other small Corinthian capitals found at the site into Type E (Dalali-Amos 2021: 256—257, Fig. 9.9, Type E; 280—281, nos. 57, 58, 59, 61). All four capitals are close to each other by scale and morphology, but there are some considerable deviations between those attributed as “medallion” and two others. Capital no. 57 (Dalali-Amos 2021: 280) does not bear the main feature of the “medallion” type, which is a pair of heraldic leaflets on the kalathos; instead of them, it is decorated with the 2nd tier of four large acanthus leaves. Capital no. 61 is severely eroded (Dalali-Amos 2021: 281), but the character of acanthus leaves is similar to those of capital no. 57. In both of them, the leaves are broad-pointed (mask-acanthus). At the same time, in the “medallion” type, they are almost always “soft-pointed” (see reference no. 3). Dalali-Amos proposed dating to the 6th century (Dalali-Amos 2021: 280).

Both capitals no. 3 (=no. 58 by Dalali-Amos) and no. 4 (=no. 59 by Dalali-Amos) are similar, though not identical. The small rudimental volutes join at the corners and lean on the tongue-like leaves curved at the ends. The detailing of the leaflets is considerably varying. On capital no. 3 they are separated from the corner leaves by strips. All lobes of the leaflets are grooved from the tips to the bottom; the grooves of the central lobes are almost joining or joining in the lower part comprising semicircles. On capital no. 4, the stylized leaflets are joined with corner chamfers. The outer lobes of the leaflets are grooved to half of their height, while the inner lobes are flat. The bosses are almost round on capital no. 3 and oval on capital 4, but the bosses are joining with the abacus knobs on both of them. The kalathos rims are omitted, while they are applied on capitals nos. 1-2. The bosses on both capitals are decorated with the Maltese crosses with flat (no. 3) or grooved (no. 4) arms (without medallions). The lower range on each capital is comprised of six acanthus leaves. But their character is different. In one case (no. 3), the leaves are fleshy and thick with ridged protruding midribs. In the other case (no. 4), the leaves are flatter with even and wide midribs. Only on capital no. 4 four semicircular patterns (instead of lanceolate) are covering the corner chamfers (on capital no. 3, they are omitted). Their arrangement is not symmetrical towards the arrangement of acanthus leaves over kalathos. In both samples, the detailing of the acanthus leaves and leaflets are well correlated stylistically.

The proportions of capital no. 3 are taller: its height (0.50 m) exceeds the size of capital no. 4 (0.41 m) on 0.09 m, while their diameters are almost equal (0.44 m and 0.43 m). The difference in

⁴ The right-hand capital on Fig. 9.2 (Dalali-Amos 2021: 250, Fig. 9.2) was erroneously numbered as no. 52 in the caption; by its features it is the “medallion” capital, apparently, no. 58.

proportions is visible in the illustration where they are presented nearby (Dalali-Amos 2021: 257, Fig. 9.9, Type E, nos. 58—59) (Fig. 8).

(3). No. 5. “Medallion” capital was also revealed in *Apollonia (Sozousa, Reshef, Arsuf)*. Excavators recently published a photo and short description of this capital (Fischer et al. 2018: 446—449, Item 5) (Fig. 9). It was dated by Fischer to the 5th — 6th centuries CE and hypothetically attributed to the Early-Byzantine church excavated in 1962 and 1976 in Area K (Ovadia 1970: 155 (no.155); Oren 2017; the church was dated to the 6th century; DCCMHL: NID# 14446). It is located within one of the rooms of the Crusader fortress in Apollonia, where it was secondarily used.

Only less than half of the capital is preserved, but most of its morphological elements are traceable (except for the abacus). Some scanty remains of the volutes are visible. The leaves on which they are leaning are well articulated: their central surfaces are slightly sunken and tapering towards the tops, and the lateral sides are ridged and grooved. The pairs of stylized leaflets are separated from these corner leaves by slits (as on capital no. 1). The outer lobes of the leaflets are narrow and grooved to half of their height; the inner lobes are wide and flat. The bold bosses have an irregular shape of the ovals, narrowing towards the lower part. The lower range bears one ring of eight acanthus leaves with wide midribs. The leaves are arranged in such an order that their axes coincide with the corners and central axes of the sides. There is a range of eight flat lanceolate patterns between the acanthus leaves. They cover the lower parts of the stylized leaflets. The lower range is adorned with a ring of eight acanthus leaves and eight lanceolate patterns.

(4). No. 6. One “medallion” capital is included in the exhibition of the Davidson Centre in *Jerusalem* (Fig. 10). Apparently, it was found in the Early-Islamic context as most of the other Early Byzantine elements at the site (Ben-Dov 1985: 237). No further information was possible to gain. The nearest ecclesiastical buildings in the area are the New Church of Theotokos (built by Justinian I; Gutfeld et al. 2021; DCCMHL: NID# 2564, Jerusalem (Old City) — New Church of the Theotokos (Nea Church)) and the monastery of Virgins at Ophel (Mazar 2003: 3—67; DCCMHL: NID# 581, Jerusalem, Extramural) — Virgins (?). Another unknown Byzantine edifice with marble decoration was spoliated before the erection of the Umayyad complex at the Western Plaza (Monnickendam-Givon et al. 2021).

It is one of the plainest capitals among the others of the “medallion” type. Its abacus and knobs are adorned with a hardly noticeable continuous strip. The volutes are entirely omitted. The corner parts are chamfered (chamfers are tapering towards the upper part). The lobes of the paired stylized leaflets are equalized, and all of them are grooved to the bottom, but the grooves of the inner lobes are not joining but sunken under the acanthus. The bosses with pointed lower parts are undecorated, except for one with the relief cross. The lower range is adorned with four large acanthus leaves. The proportions of the leaves are odd: their upper lateral bundles of lobes are elongated, and the tips of the midribs are steeply bent downwards. By these features and substantial reduction of the traditional order morphology, the capital might be accurately dated to the late 6th — 7th century CE. Still, from the other point of view, all elements are carved symmetrically and on a high artistic level, so omitting order morphology might be explained by intentional size reduction.

The rest capitals (except capital no. 9) comprise one group by their stylistic features.

(5). No. 7. One “medallion” capital was discovered in *the church of the Annunciation in Nazareth* (Bagatti 1967: 165, Figs. 131—134; Barsanti 2017: 394, Fig. 6; DCCMHL: NID# 13671) (Fig. 11). Bagatti dated the church to the late 4th — early 5th century CE; it was still in use in the 9th century CE (Bagatti 1967). Photos of its four sides are published (though in low quality), and some measurements are specified (height — 0.37 m, diameter of the base — 0.42 m). The volutes are mainly broken, but the chamfered corners (or leaves) they lean on are traceable. The grooved trefoils complete the paired stylized leaflets (the grooves join in the lower parts). The lobes are grooved to half of their height and join in the lower parts. There are slits between them and corner chamfers as on capitals nos. 1 and 5. Oval bosses bear different patterns: 1) plain empty medallion, 2) laurel medallion with defaced motif (cross?), 3) pomegranate, and 4) fleuron. Bagatti assumed that such images are traditional for

synagogue decoration and mentioned a parallel from Caesarea (Bagatti 1967: 164). Apparently, he meant capital no. 3. The lower range was adorned with six squat acanthus leaves.

(6). No. 8. The “medallion” capital was published in the catalog of the exhibition “Cradle of Christianity,” which took place in the Museum of Israel in 2000 (Segal 1988: 238; Israeli, Mevorah 2000: 124f; Govrin 2015: 69, Fig. 7; Barsanti 2017: 394, Fig. 5) (Fig. 12). Initially it was presented in the *Negev Museum in Be'er Sheva* but its exact provenance is unknown. Apparently, it derives from one of the churches in Be'er Sheva. There are four archaeologically known churches (Beer Sheba, Church 1, DCCMHL: NID# 17847; Beer Sheba, Church 2, DCCMHL: NID# 17850; Beer Sheba, Triapsidal church, DCCMHL: NID# 13303, Govrin 2015: 116—119, 121; Beer Sheba, Triconch church, DCCMHL: NID# 15195, Fabian, Ustinova 2020) and two monasteries (Beer Sheba (ed-Deir), DCCMHL: NID# 13543; Beer Sheba (Monastery ?), DCCMHL: NID# 13542, Figueras 1995: 401—450) within the central part of the modern city. They are all dated to the Early Byzantine period.

Some capital measurements are specified in the bibliography: diameter at the top — 0.75 m, diameter at the bottom — 0.42 m, height — 0.45 m (Segal 1988: 238). By its stylistic, morphological, and proportional features, it's very close to capital no. 7. The published photos of all four sides are of good quality, so it's possible to specify some essential details. There is a flattened circumference traceable on the upper side of the abacus. The stylized leaflets are separated from corners with grooves (without slits). Outer lobes are grooved to half of their height. The joining grooves of the inner lobes comprise a semicircle as on capital nos. 3, 10—11. The patterns decorating the bosses are 1) a medallion formed by a twisted rope pattern with the *crux quadrata* within it (with Ro (P) symbol (as on capital no. 1 from Ashqelon)), 2) a dolphin turned upwards, 3) a similar dolphin turned downwards, 4) pair of smaller dolphins turned upwards (located back to back to each other). Six acanthus leaves of the lower range are arranged asymmetrically: a) the axes of two sides coincide with the midribs; b) the axes of the two other sides coincide with joints between leaves. The lanceolate patterns that occurred on the capital are placed between the acanthus leaves. Inevitably they follow their asymmetrical arrangement covering either the center of the arched joint between the leaflets (manner a) or their lower parts (manner b). On the other capitals with six acanthus leaves in the lower row (nos. 3—4, 7, 10—12), the arrangement of the elements is identical.

(7). Nos. 9—11. Three “medallion” capitals were revealed in secondary use in the *Umayyad palace in el-Minya*. They are correctly attributed as “medallion” (Ritter 2017: 94—95, Taf. 31, nos. 3—4, nos. 6-8, Taf. 32, nos. 1—4).

The nearest churches are located in Tabgha/Heptapegon, which is ca. 4 km northeast of the place. The Miracle of the Multiplying of Loaves and Fishes chapel was built in the 4th century CE (Schneider 1937; Barkay, Shiler 1999; DCCMHL: NID# 12438). In the 2nd half of the 5th century CE colonnaded church was built over it (rebuilt in the 6th century CE, Schneider 1937; DCCMHL: NID# 12444). Another chapel, the Sermon on the Mount, was erected in the late 4th century CE and reconstructed in the early 6th century CE (Loffreda 1981: 22; DCCMHL: NID# 12439). The chapel Mensa Domini devoted to the Primacy of Peter was built in the 4th century CE and then several times rebuilt in the 7th century CE and later during the Medieval period (Barkai, Shiler 1999: 52—54; DCCMHL: NID# 12440).

For this group of capitals, it's necessary to mention that 5.4 km north of the spot, there is a synagogue in Horvat Kur, dated to the Late Roman — Early Byzantine period (Zangenberg 2013⁵).

Capital no. 9 (Ritter 2017: Taf. 31, nos. 3—4) bears some individual features (Fig. 13). It has a notable design of the stylized leaflets. Their inner lobes comprise the oval bosses, but the general character is relatively soft and not strictly geometric. All three lobes are grooved to half of their height and bent inwards. There are narrow strips between leaflets and corner ribbed chamfers which are comparatively narrow on this artifact. One boss is bold; the other one is adorned with a five-petal rosette. The petals are rounded and fleshy; the pestle is dot-like. Eight acanthus leaves are elongated

⁵ For more complete bibliography please follow the link to the Bornblum Eretz Israel Synagogues Website of Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee, synagogues.kinneret.ac.il: 1.

and closely attached to the kalathos together with the tips of the midribs. The lanceolate patterns are placed in a symmetrical manner covering the lower parts of the stylized leaflets (as on capitals nos. 1 and 5). At the edges, the patterns are emphasized with narrow recessing moldings. The proportions of the capital are taller than in all other samples. The row of acanthus leaves is higher than the upper part of the capital, which is an unusual proportional trait for the type.

Capitals nos. 10—11 (Figs. 14—15; Ritter 2017: 94—95, Taf. 31, nos. 6—8, Taf. 32, nos. 1—4) are almost identical to the capitals nos. 7—8. Only the decorative patterns of the bosses are different. On capital no. 10, there are: 1) branch completed with three lobes, 2) trefoil, 3) four-armed floral pattern resembling *crux quadrata*. The lobes and arms of all patterns are grooved. Bosses of capital no. 11 are decorated differently: 1) branch with four lateral leaves, 2) pomegranate (?), 3) forked branch, 4) four-petal rosette with a dot-like pestle. The midribs, arms, and lobes of these patterns are flat. The excavator mentioned that some of these motifs resemble Jewish symbols such as *lulav* and *etrog* (Ritter 2017: 94—95, Abb. 29). But I assume these associations are not enough for synagogue attribution of the capitals because 1) the interpretation of the floral motifs might be alternative, 2) more obvious Jewish symbols such as Menora are absent, 3) two symbols resemble crosses.

(8). Capital no. 12 was revealed in secondary use in the Early Islamic mosque during the excavations in *Tiberias* directed by Dr. K. Cytryn on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology of Hebrew University in Jerusalem⁶ (Fig. 16). The Early-Byzantine church is located in the closest vicinity to the mosque, and, most probably, the capital is deriving from it. The church was recently excavated and published (Cytryn-Silverman 2016; DCCMHL: NID# 15121). According to K. Cytryn-Silverman, it was built before 427 CE (apparently, in the 4th century CE) and rebuilt in the 1st half of the 6th century CE and the 7th — 8th centuries CE.

The abacus (0.42 m wide) and the lower part (diameter 0.32 m) of the capital are eroded. Proportions and design of the upper part, including stylized leaflets, are similar to those of capital no. 5. Still, morphology and irregular arrangement of the lower six acanthus leaves and lanceolate patterns are identical to those of capital no. 8 and its other variations. The general height of the capital is 0.37 m. Three bosses are bold, and the fourth one is destroyed, but the damage traces do not look like iconoclastic activity. Traces of claw chiseling are preserved all over the capital, but on the midribs and bosses, they are most prominent.

Discussion: stylistic development and variety of order elements

So, the analysis of local “medallion” capitals showed the following varieties of decoration.

Abacus and knobs

These elements are similarly decorated with a continuous horizontal line in all cases. Only on capital no. 6 the line is light and hardly noticeable. Interestingly, none of the knobs are adorned with any particular pattern, so the main decorative effect was focused on the bosses below.

The circumference on the upper side of the abacus

Such Classical feature as protruding circumference (inner diameter of the abacus) applies to capitals nos. 8, 10, 11. Probably, all capitals bear it.

⁶ From personal conversation with Dr. K. Cytryn-Silverman.

Corners

Rudimental volutes are applicable on all capitals, except no. 6, where the corners are chamfered. They are all carved very plainly with a single spiral at the ends, with narrow grooves separating them from the abaci. The ends of the volutes join at the corners without secondary patterns. Their lower parts are sunken under the bosses.

Corner leaves are also similar: they have a tongue-like shape with ridged lateral sides, sunken central fields, and bent semicircular tips. On capitals nos. 1—2, 4 the lower parts of the leaves are covered with semicircular or lanceolate segments. On capital no. 6, the corner chamfers are flat. On capitals nos. 3, 5, 7—9, 11, 1, 5, the leaves are sunken under the lower acanthus. Both variants (with and without lanceolate segments) are applicable to some capitals.

Stylized leaflets

Four sides of every other capital are always decorated with similar pairs of stylized heraldic leaflets, though the ancillary detailing varies from one specimen to the other. All pairs of leaflets are joined in the lower parts comprising oval bosses in the middle. Leaflets are completed with three tips. Compared with the lower ranges of acanthus, these decorative elements are more strictly following symmetry.

There are several variants of leaflets detailing.

a) Outer lobes grooved, inner ones are flat; the grooves are steeply finished on half of the leaflets height: no. 1, 4, 5, 12.

b) All three lobes are grooved to half of the leaflets' height; the grooves of the inner lobes are shorter: no. 2.

c) All three lobes are grooved; outer ones – to half of the leaflets height or more but not to the bottom; inner ones comprise semicircular loop: nos. 3, 10—11.

d) All three lobes are grooved not to the bottom but more than to the half of the leaflets height; three grooves are of the same height, tied in the lower part: nos. 7, 9. This kind of groove is most close to those of the earlier “medallion” capitals.

e) All three lobes are grooved to the bottom: no. 6.

The other notable features are the short slits which separate stylized leaflets from comers, emphasizing their independent order meaning. These slits are used on capitals nos. 1, 7, and 10. On the other capitals, the leaflets are separated from the corners with narrow grooves (without slits): nos. 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 12.

Kalathos rim

The double rim is applicable on capital no. 1. Rim in the shape of the plain angular fold between the abacus and the boss are applied on capitals nos. 2, 6—8, and 10—12. The surface of the abacus knob is merged with the boss between leaflets on capitals nos. 3, 4.

Decoration of the bosses between stylized leaflets

The decorative pattern varies on each side of the capital, and no one repeats the other (on the same capital). The state of preservation of specimens and the available illustrations limit the set of the presented patterns.

The following patterns are applicable:

- 1) Undecorated (flat ovals): nos. 1, 2, 6, 12;
- 2) cross (without medallion): nos. 3, 4, 6, 10 (?);

- 3) floral pattern/-s without medallion: nos. 7, 9⁷;
- 4) fish/fishes: no. 8;
- 5) plain medallion with inapplicable pattern: no. 7;
- 6) plain medallion with a cross (*crux quadrata*, *crux decussata*): nos. 1;
- 7) laurel medallion with inapplicable pattern: no. 8; 8) medallion comprised of twisted rope pattern with cross: no. 8.

The crosses indicate the religious “affiliation” of six capitals quite clearly. The others are neutral in their character. It’s difficult to argue that some might belong to the synagogues, but this opportunity can’t be excluded (especially for nos. 9—11).

The lower range of acanthus leaves and lanceolate patterns

The lower ranges are adorned with one row of acanthus leaves. On the majority of the capitals, the lower acanthus leaves are also added with lanceolate (or semicircular) small segments between them (nos. 1, 5, 9—13). Such patterns are applied on the earliest “medallion” capitals with two ranges of acanthus (see above). In later specimens, the 2nd tier of leaves was omitted, but lanceolate elements were preserved.

The quantity of acanthus leaves does not always result from the capital’s size, so the capitals of the same scope might be decorated with various leaves. When there were four (nos. 2, 6) or eight leaves (nos. 1, 5), it was easier to arrange them identically on all four sides following the main vertical axes along with the abacus knobs and oval bosses. On capitals nos. 2, 5, and 6, the axes of sides coincide with the midribs of acanthus leaves. Alternatively, on capital no. 1, the joints between the leaves are coordinated with the axes. So, on the capitals nos. 1 and 5, there are similar rings of eight acanthus leaves and eight lanceolate patterns. Still, they are arranged differently, as if the whole range of these elements revolved around half of the leaf’s width around the inner vertical axis of the capital. When the arrangement of the acanthus leaves is symmetrical, the lanceolate patterns cover only corner tongue-like leaves or lower parts of stylized leaflets.

The symmetrical arrangement of six acanthus leaves and six intermediate lanceolate/semicircular patterns is more problematic as this quantity is not discrete to four (number of capital sides). Nevertheless, the capitals with six acanthus leaves are more frequent than the others. There are eight such capitals (nos. 3—4, 7—12), and the rearrangement of the lower elements is similar on all of them. Generally, the next order is being followed on each capital: on two sides, the vertical axes coincide with the midribs of the acanthus leaves, and on two others – with the joints between them. Consequently, the intermediate lanceolate patterns cover the corners or lower part of the semicircular joint (inverted “arch”) between the stylized leaflets. This asymmetry is sometimes balanced by thickening of the midribs and transforming them into lanceolate protrusions. The artistic decision to reduce the quantity of the acanthus leaves from eight to six, preserving at the same time the strict symmetry of the stylized paired leaflets of the upper range, is rather odd and causes noticeable deviations of the whole design and discoordination of the elements. Also, these capitals with six leaves are carved coarsely with substantial curvatures of other morphological features. Such negligence is not characteristic of marble capitals which are usually finely elaborated.

The analysis of the order morphology of “medallion” capitals shows that the earliest examples from Constantinople (Kautsch 1936: 42—43, no. 154 (Abbs. a—b); Niewöhner 2021: 25, Fig. 40) are more detailed and close to the Classical Corinthian order, its proportions, articulation of all morphological elements and their artistic meaning. There are no capitals of such kind in the Holy Land. All twelve specimens revealed here are later and bear different characteristics. Two of them are closer to prototypes featuring strict proportional symmetry, a balanced system of small ancillary elements (such as slits or patterns on the bosses), and a fine carving style (nos. 1, 5). The others are more coarsely carved and feature various deviations, asymmetries, and even discarding

⁷ The floral patterns are located over the oval bosses (exclusive design).

of some essential elements. Assuming that the process of order decline was chronologically consistent, capitals nos. 1 and 5 are earlier and might be dated to the middle or 2nd half of the 5th century CE. The other capitals are later and might be dated to the end of the 5th — beginning of the 6th century CE. Capital no. 6 might be the latest from the group, even Early-Islamic.

Conclusions

Twelve “medallion” capitals have been discovered in the Holy Land. There is a possibility that more of them were revealed but not yet published, and even more, might have been initially imported. Still, anyway, in comparison with more widespread standard Early-Byzantine Corinthian capitals, they are only a few in number (Tarkhanova, in work). It seems that their quantitative percentage of the other capital types is the same as in the different regions (literally, only a few). The churches with which they are associated in the Holy Land are dated to the 5th — 6th centuries CE. It’s not contradicting traditional dating of the type elsewhere. Only from this period did the “medallion” capitals start to be exported from Constantinople to the other regions, including the Holy Land. Their earliest samples (early 5th century CE) were shipped as none of them was revealed in any other region of the Mediterranean except Constantinople⁸.

By their general design, all “medallion” capitals are similar. Still, in ancillary details (quantity and style of acanthus leaves, type of corner leaves, detailing of stylized leaflets, patterns on bosses, etc.), the capitals of the Holy Land are similar to only some of those found in Constantinople (Kautzsch 1936: 52—53, Taf. 12, nos. 162—167; Barsanti 2017: 396, Fig. 15; Niewohner 2021: 25, Fig. 42) and Side (Barsanti 2017: 393, Fig. 3). So probably, there was more than one workshop where these capitals were manufactured, each with its artistic features and final destinations. A specific workshop might import specimens only to the Holy Land.

Measurements are applicable only in several cases, but it might be assumed that the scale of all capitals is corresponding. The lower diameters of local capitals fluctuate around 0.32—0.40/0.42 m (see also Pralong 2000: 292—294). This identity in scale is remarkable, as the capitals bear various quantities of acanthus leaves in the lower range and might have a different level of detailing and accuracy. It results in flexibility of style with preservation of morphological basis: some capitals are more general, the others are more accurate and diligent. Niewöhner assumed secondary positions of “medallion” capitals (Niewöhner 2021: 25), and this is undoubtedly fair for the capitals with a lower diameter of around 0.32 m. But the lower diameter of more than 0.40 m fits the scales of the main colonnades of local churches. Still, their exact spatial location in the ecclesiastical or other buildings is undetermined.

The stylistic diversity of the “medallion” capitals shows that there were probably several transportations to the harbors of the Holy Land and thence to the important Christian pilgrimage centers. The geographical distribution shows adherence to the most significant ports (Ashqelon, Caesarea, and Apollonia), cities with bishoprics (Be’er Sheva, Jerusalem, and Tiberias), or important *loca sancta* (Nazareth on the territory of bishopric Gaba Hippeum). In this sense, the sequence follows the general distribution of marble details through the Roman and Byzantine periods. Seemingly this type of capital was unique and might have been ordered for particular types of churches both by their function and architectural features (with ancillary galleries, porticos, ciboria, etc.). But these questions can’t be solved for the moment as any of the specimens in the Holy Land weren’t found in situ.

Interestingly, the “medallion” type continued to develop in local workshops after its production in main Constantinopolitan/Nicomedian workshops ceased. In the Early Islamic period, especially

⁸ Two marble capitals (one in the Islamic museum, the other — reused in the eastern gate of the Haram platform on the 2nd column from the north, Fig. 17) have design similar to that one of the early “medallion” type (Wilkinson 1987: 89—90, no. 43—44). Their kalathos rim also bears a row of stylized leaflets (six pairs), but the difference is that they do not comprise a medallion in the middle. So it might be considered as preceding link which contributed to the development of early “medallion” type. Kautzsch dated it the 4th century (Kautzsch 1936: 99, Pl. 19, no. 287).

Abbasid, variations of marble “medallion” capitals started to be locally manufactured (Fig. 18). Nine such capitals are located in the Islamic museum on the Temple Mount (Wilkinson 1987: 56—63). The type’s main feature, paired stylized leaflets, was adapted and transformed within new stylistic trends. The leaflets were widened (till four-five lobes each), multiplied in number (till four leaflets), and set close to each other so that the oval boss in the middle was considerably tapered and almost omitted, crowding out any decorative patterns or symbols. The leaflets on such capitals comprise the ancillary third row of acanthus lobes. Such crowded composition of the leaflets is close in a certain sense to the earliest capitals of the “medallion” type.

Reference

- Bagatti, B. 1967. *Gli scavi di Nazaret*. Vol. 1. *Dalle origini al secolo XII*. Gerusalemme: Tipografia dei PP. Francescani, 1967—1984 (Publications of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum 17).
- Bagatti, B. 2002. *Ancient Christian Villages of Judaea and Negev*. Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press. (Publications of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Collectio minor 42).
- Bardill, J. 1999. The Golden Gates in Constantinople: A Triumphal Arch of Theodosius I. *American Journal of Archaeology* 103/4 (Oct.), 671—696.
- Barkay, G., Shiler, E. 1999. Tabgha and its Churches. *Ariel* 139, 51—61 (in Hebrew).
- Barsanti, C. 2017. Capitelli Corinzi del Tipo Cosiddetto ‘a Medaglione’ con Insetti Decorativi. In: Caprioli, F., Pensabene, P. (eds.). *Decor. Decorazioni e architettura nel Mondo Romano. Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Roma 21—23 maggio 2014*. Rome: Roma Edizioni Quasar, 391—400 (Thiasos monografie 9).
- Ben-Dov, M. 1985. *In the Shadow of the Temple: the Discovery of Ancient Jerusalem*. Jerusalem; New York: Harper and Row.
- Betsch, W.E. 1977. The History, Production, and Distribution of the Late Antique Capital in Constantinople. PhD Thesis. Philadelphia.
- Cytryn-Silverman, K. 2016. Tiberias’ Houses of Prayer in Context. In: Patrich, J., Peleg-Barqat, O., Ben-Yosef, E. (eds.). *Arise, Walk Through the Land. Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Land of Israel in Memory of Yizhar Hirschfeld on the Tenth Anniversary of His Demise*. Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 235—248.
- Dalali-Amos, E. 2021. Chapter 9. Byzantine Architectural Elements from the Temple Platform in Marble and Other Materials. In: Holum, K.G. (ed.). *Caesarea Maritima Excavations in the Old City 1989—2003 Conducted by the University of Maryland and the University of Haifa, Final Reports*. Vol. 1. *The Temple Platform (Area TP), Neighboring Quarters (Area TPS and Z), and the Inner Harbor Quays (Area I): Hellenistic Evidence, King Herod’s Harbor Temple, Intermediate Occupation, and the Octagonal Harbor Church*. Alexandria, VA: American Society of Overseas Research, 249—300 (Archaeological Reports 27).
- dig.corps-cmhl.huji.ac.il: 1: A Digital Corpus of Early Christian Churches and Monasteries in the Holy Land. Available at: <https://dig.corps-cmhl.huji.ac.il/> (accessed 15.07.2023).
- Figueras, P. 1995. Monks and Monasteries in the Negev Desert. *Liber Annuus* 45, 401—450.
- Fischer, M. 2008. Sculpture in Roman Palestine and its Architectural and Social Milieu: Adaptability, Imitation, Originality? The Ascalon Basilica as an example. In: Eliav, Z.Y., Friedland, E.A., Herbert, S. (eds.). *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East; Reflections on Culture, Ideology, and Power*. Leuven: Peeters Publ., 483—508.
- Fischer, M., Tambakopoulos, D., Maniatis, Y. 2018. Recycling of Marble: Apollonia/Sozousa/Arsuf (Israel) as a Case Study. In: Poljak, D.M., Marasović, K. (eds). *ASMOSIA XI. Interdisciplinary Studies on Ancient Stone At Split, Croatia, 18—22 May 2015*. Split: Arts Academy in Split University of Split and University of Split Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Geodesy, 443—456.
- Govrin, Y. 2015. The Settlement Pattern in the “Negev of Judah” in the Byzantine Era. PhD Thesis. Haifa.
- Gutfeld, O., Avigad, N., Geva, H. (eds). 2012. *Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969—1982*. Vol. V. *The Cardo (Area X) and the Nea Church (Areas D and T). Final Report*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society; Institute of Archaeology; Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- Holum, K.G. 2004. The combined Caesarea Expeditions’ Excavations: The Warehouse Quarter Alongside the Harbor and Temple Platform, *Qadmoniot* 37/128, 102—112 (in Hebrew).
- Holum, K.G., Iamim, A. 2021. Chapter 8. The Octagonal Church: Excavated Evidence. In: Holum, K.G. (ed.). *Caesarea Maritima Excavations in the Old City 1989—2003 Conducted by the University of Maryland and the University of Haifa, Final Reports*. Vol. 1. *The Temple Platform (Area TP), Neighboring Quarters (Area TPS and Z), and the Inner*

- Harbor Quays (Area I): Hellenistic Evidence, King Herod's Harbor Temple, Intermediate Occupation, and the Octagonal Harbor Church*, ed. Alexandria, VA: American Society of Overseas Research, 197—248.
- Huster, Y. 2015. Survey of Settlements Patterns by Periods. In: Huster, Y., Master, D., Press, M. (eds.). *Ashkelon 5: The Land Behind Ashkelon (Final Reports of The Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon)*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbraus, 13—87.
- Israeli, Y., Mevorah, D. (eds.). 2000. *Cradle of Christianity*. Jerusalem: Israel Museum.
- Kautzsch, R. 1936. *Kapitellstudien; Beiträge zu Einer Geschichte des spätantiken Kapitells im Osten vom Vierten bis ins Siebente Jahrhundert*. Berlin: Berlin W. de Gruyter & Co. (Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte 9).
- Magen, Y., Kagan, E.D. 2012. *Christians and Christianity*. Vol. I. *Corpus of Christian Sites in Samaria and Northern Judea*. Jerusalem: Staff Officer of Archaeology, Civil Administration for Judea and Samaria (Judea and Samaria Publications Israel Antiquities Authority 13).
- Mazar, E. (ed.). 2003. *The Temple Mount Excavations in Jerusalem 1968—9 Directed by Benjamin Mazar, Final Reports*. Vol. II. *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods*. Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology; The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Qedem Reports 43).
- Mercklin, E. von. 1962. *Antike Figuralkapitelle*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Monnickendam-Givon, B., Chalaf, O., Sadiel, T., Chernin, M. 2021. The Urban Development West of Temple Mount/Al-Haram as Sharif: A View from the Western Wall Plaza Excavations. *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and its Region* 14, 231—247 (in Hebrew).
- Niewöhner, P. 2021. *Byzantine Ornaments in Stone Architectural Sculpture and Liturgical Furnishings*. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter.
- Oren, T. 2017. Apollonia-Arsuf Excavation Project site. Available at: http://archaeology.tau.ac.il/?page_id=4668 (accessed 15.07.2023).
- Ovadiah, A. 1970. *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land*. Bonn: P. Hanstein (Theophaneia 22).
- Patrich, J., Backner, T., Burger, S., Tarkhanova, S. 2020. Churches of the Holy Land. A New Digital Corpus Introduction and Some Preliminary Results. In: Coniglio, A., Ricco, A. (eds.). *Holy Land Archaeology on Either Side. Archaeological Essays in Honour of Eugenio Alliata, OFM*. Milano: Franciscan, 11—31. (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Collectio Maior 57).
- Pralong, A. 2000. Les chapiteaux. In: Duval, N., Marin, E. (eds.). *Salona III: Manastirine. Établissement préromain, nécropole et basilique paléochrétienne à Salone*. Rome; Split: École Française de Rome, 292—294 (Collection de l'École Française de Rome).
- Ritter, M. 2017. *Der umayyadische Palast des 8. Jahrhunderts in Hirbat al-Minya am See von Tiberias Bau und Baudekor*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert (Studien zur islamischen Kunst und Archäologie 1).
- Schlunk, H. 1937. Review of Kapitellstudien. Beiträge zu einer Geschichte des spätantiken Kapitells im Osten vom vierten bis ins siebente Jahrhundert, by Rudolf Kautzsch. *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*. Bd. 6. H. 5/6, 381—388.
- Schneider, A. M. 1937. *The Church of the Multiplying of the Loaves and Fishes*. London: A.A. Gordon.
- Segal, A. 1988. *Architectural Decoration in Byzantine Shivta, Negev Desert, Israel*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports (British Archaeological Reports British Series).
- Shalev-Hurwitz, V. 2015. *Holy Sites Encircled: The Early Byzantine Concentric Churches of Jerusalem*. Oxford Studies in Byzantium. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- synagogues.kinneret.ac.il: 1: Kur. Available at: <https://synagogues.kinneret.ac.il/synagogues/kur/> (accessed 15.07.2023).
- Tarkhanova, S. 2016. The architecture of the Late Antique Synagogues (3rd — 4th centuries CE) at the Territory of Northern Palestine: Typology, Compositions, Decoration. PhD Thesis. Moscow.
- Tarkhanova, S. *Architectural Elements of the Early Christian Churches and Monasteries in the Holy Land: A Typological and Stylistic Synthesis*. Berlin: De Gruyter (in print).
- Tzaferis, V., Stager, L.E. 2008. The Church by the Jerusalem Gate. In: Stager, L.E., Schloen, J.D., Master, D.M. (eds.). *Ashkelon I: Introduction and Overview (1985—2006)*. Winona Lake: Eisenbraus, 399—405.
- Wilkinson, J. 1987. *Column Capitals in Al-Haram Al-Sharif (From 138 A.D. to 1118 A.D.) (With Over 200 Photos and 36 Illustrations And 94 Diagrams)*. Jerusalem: Adm. of Wakfs and Islamic Affairs, Islamic Museum, al-Haram al-Sharif.
- Zangenberg, J. 2013. Horbat Kur preliminary report 2011. *Hadashot Arkheologiyot-Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 125. Available at: http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.aspx?id=2230&mag_id=120 (accessed 15.07.2023).

Table 1. Early Byzantine “Medallion” Capitals in the Holy Land






Item no.	Place of find/present location (if appl.)	Church associated and its dating	Figure
1	The old Majdal mosque (Khan museum in Ashqelon) in secondary use.	Khirbet Abu Fatun (Sheikh el-Kubakha) (Early Byzantine)	
2	National Park of Ashqelon	Ascalon (Tel) Church 1; Ascalon (Tel), Church 2; Ascalon (Tel), South church; Ascalon (Tel), East Church (Saint Mary the Green?) (all — Early Byzantine)	
3	Caesarea Maritima	Caesarea Octagonal church (the end of the 5 th (before 491 CE) — the beginning of the 6 th century CE)	
4	Caesarea Maritima	The same as no. 3.	
5	Apollonia	Church in Apollonia (Sozousa, Reshef, Arsuf) (5 th — 6 th centuries CE)	

Table 1. Early Byzantine “Medallion” Capitals in the Holy Land (continued)






Item no.	Place of find/present location (if appl.)	Church associated and its dating	Figure
6	Jerusalem (Davidson Center Museum)	u/a	
7	Nazareth	The church of the Annunciation in Nazareth (late 4 th — early 5 th century CE; still in use in the 9 th century CE)	
8	Negev Museum in Be'er Sheva	Beer Sheba, Church 1; Beer Sheba, Church 2; Beer Sheba, Triapsidal church; Beer Sheba, Triconch church; Beer Sheba (ed-Deir); Beer Sheba (Monastery ?) (all — Early Byzantine)	
9	Khirbet el-Minya, in secondary use.	Chapel and church of the Miracle of the Multiplying of Loaves and Fishes in Heptapegon (4 th century CE; 2 nd half of the 5 th century; rebuilt in the 6 th century); Chapel of Sermon on the Mount (late 4 th century, reconstructed in the early 6 th century CE); Chapel Mensa Domini devoted to the Primacy of Peter (4 th century, rebuilt in the 7 th century CE and later during the Medieval period); synagogue in Horvat Kur (Late Roman — Early Byzantine period).	
10	Khirbet el-Minya, in secondary use.	The same as no. 9.	

Table 1. Early Byzantine “Medallion” Capitals in the Holy Land (continued)



Item no.	Place of find/present location (if appl.)	Church associated and its dating	Figure
11	Khirbet el-Minya, in secondary use.	The same as no. 9.	
12	Tiberias (mosque)	Tiberias (center) church (4 th century CE, rebuilt in the 6 th — 8 th centuries CE)	



Fig. 1. Map of the Holy Land with the distribution of the marble “medallion” capitals (Map by S. Tarkhanova based on ArcGIS free online resource).

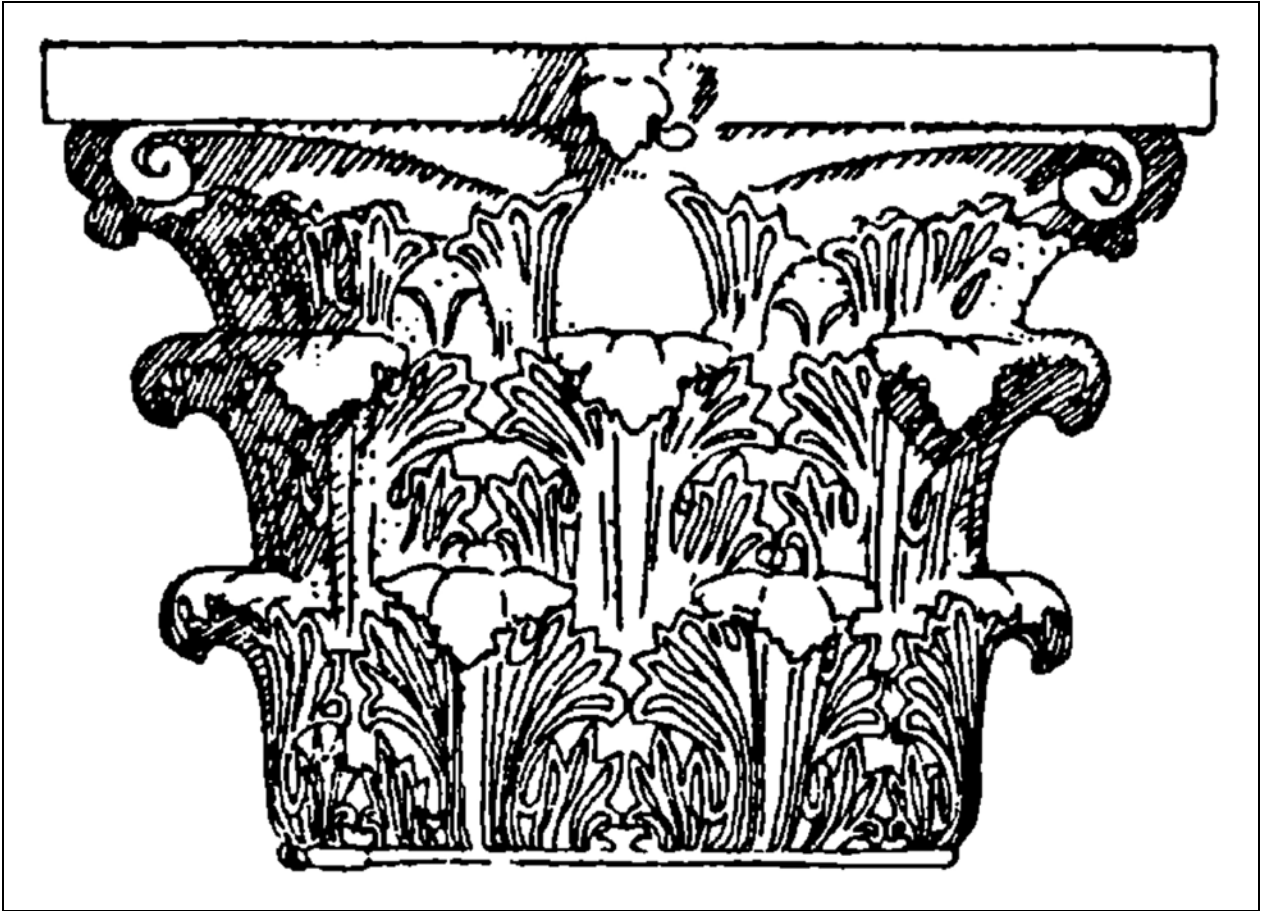


Fig. 2. Early capital from the Triumphal Arch of Theodosius in Constantinople (after Kautzsch 1936: 42, Abb. I, no. 154a; late 4th century CE).

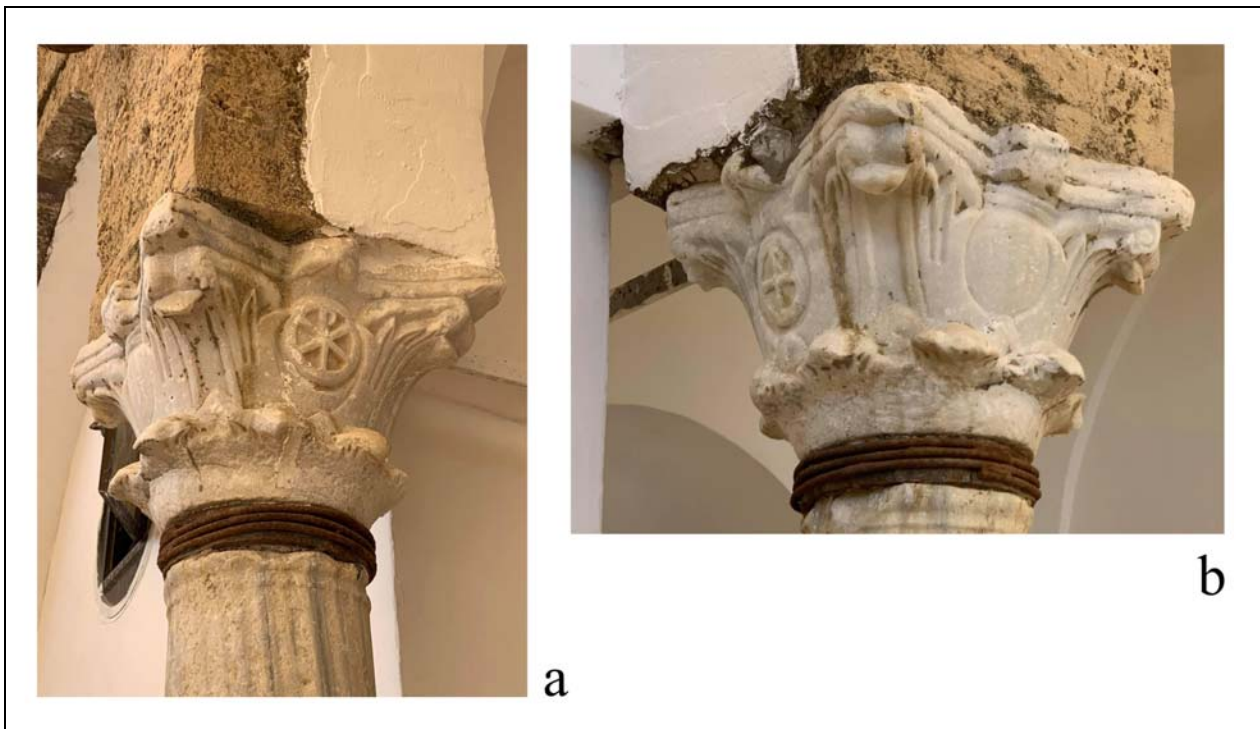


Fig. 3a-b. Capital no. 1 reused in the old Majdal mosque, now Khan museum in Ashqelon (Photo and courtesy of Dr. M. Tuval).



a



b

Fig. 4a-b. Capital no. 2 scattered at the site of the National Park in Ashqelon (Photos of the author).

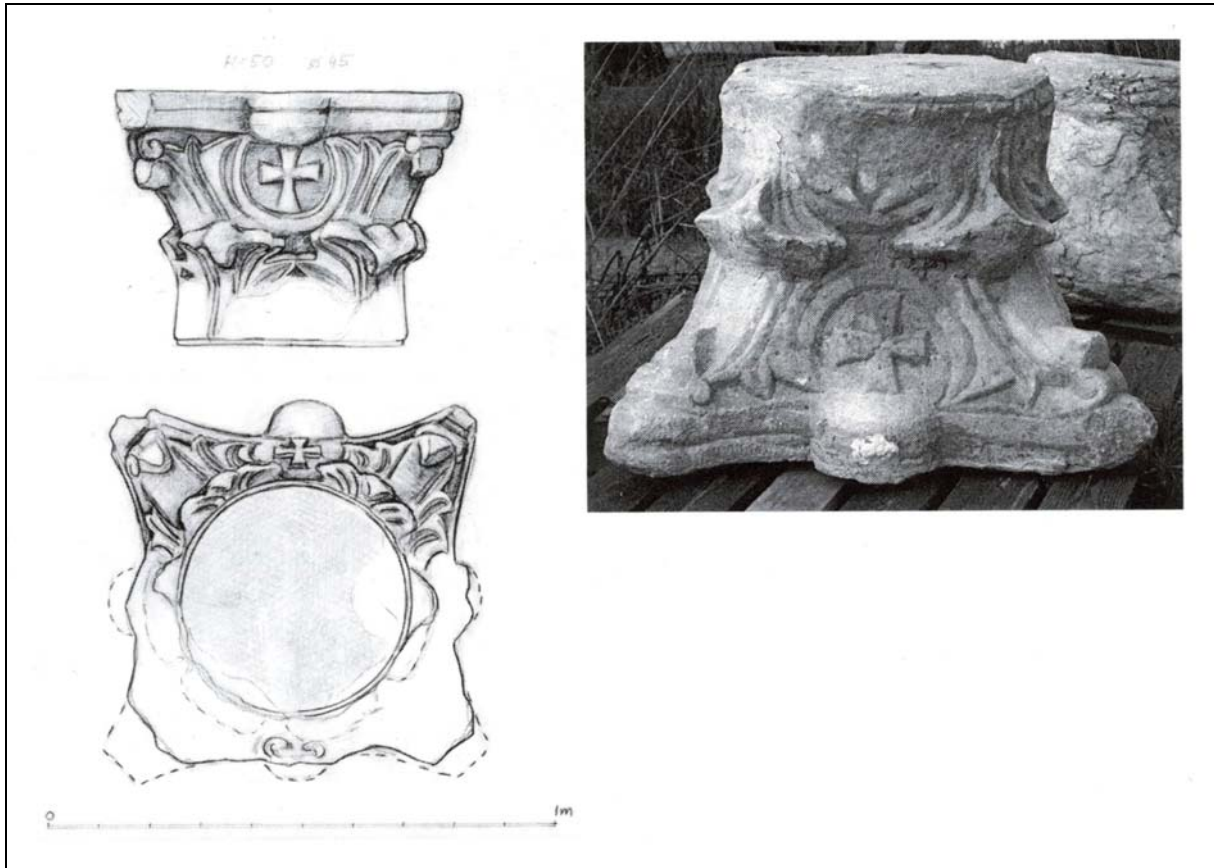


Fig. 5. Capital no. 3 found in secondary use in later structure in Caesarea Maritima (after Dalali-Amos 2021: 280, no. 58; courtesy of E. Dalali-Amos).

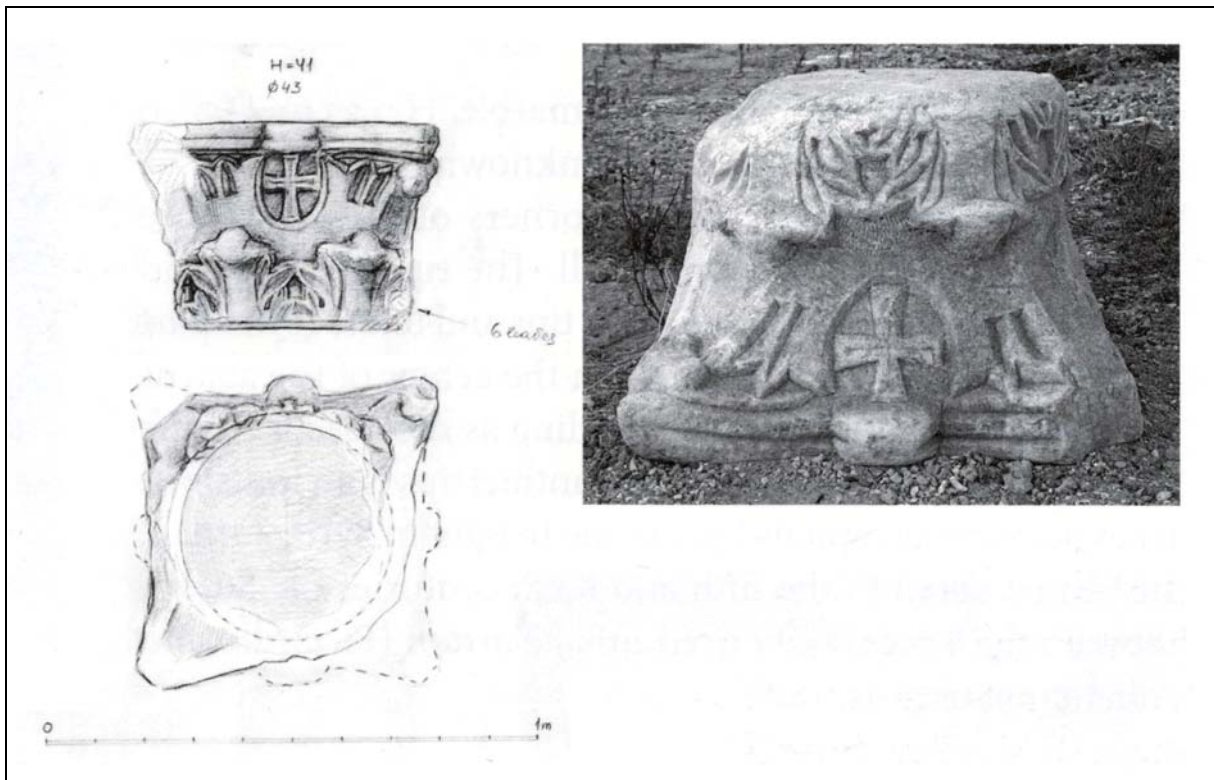


Fig. 6. Capital no. 4 found in earlier excavations near the Octagonal church in Caesarea Maritima (after Dalali-Amos 2021: 281, no. 59; courtesy of E. Dalali-Amos).



a



b

Fig. 7a-b. Capital no. 4 exhibited in the recently opened museum in Caesarea National Park (Photos of the author).

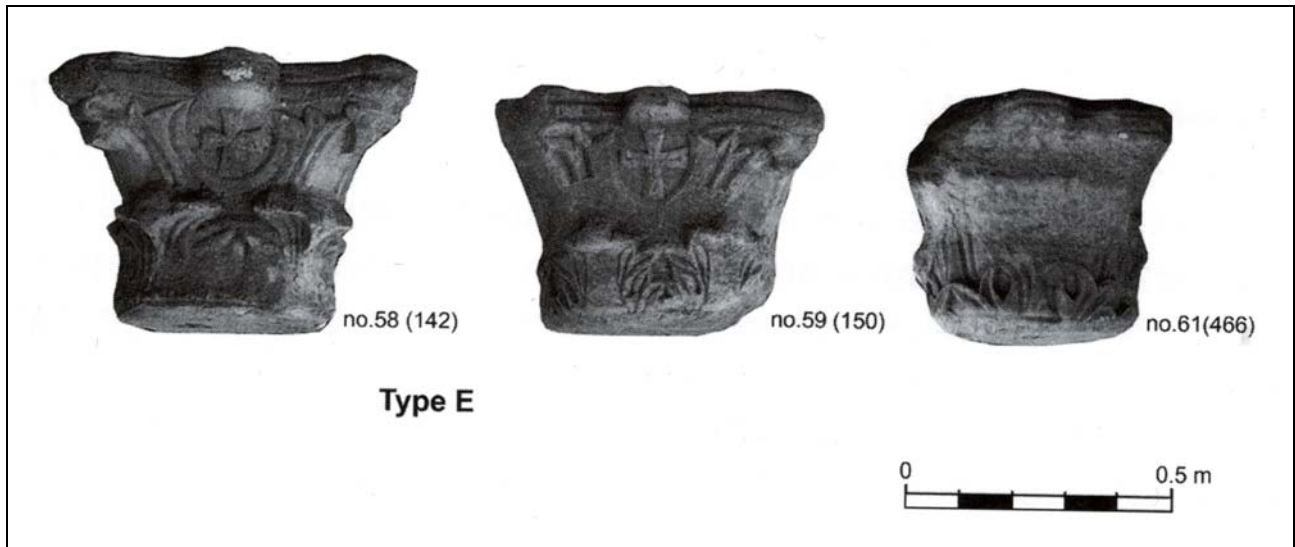


Fig. 8. Capitals of Type E from Caesarea Maritima (after Dalali-Amos 2021: 257, Fig. 9.9, Type E, nos. 58—59, courtesy of E. Dalali-Amos).



Fig. 9. Capital no. 5 found in secondary use in Crusader building in Apollonia (after Fischer et al. 2018: 446—449, Item 5; courtesy of Apollonia-Arsuf Excavation Project).

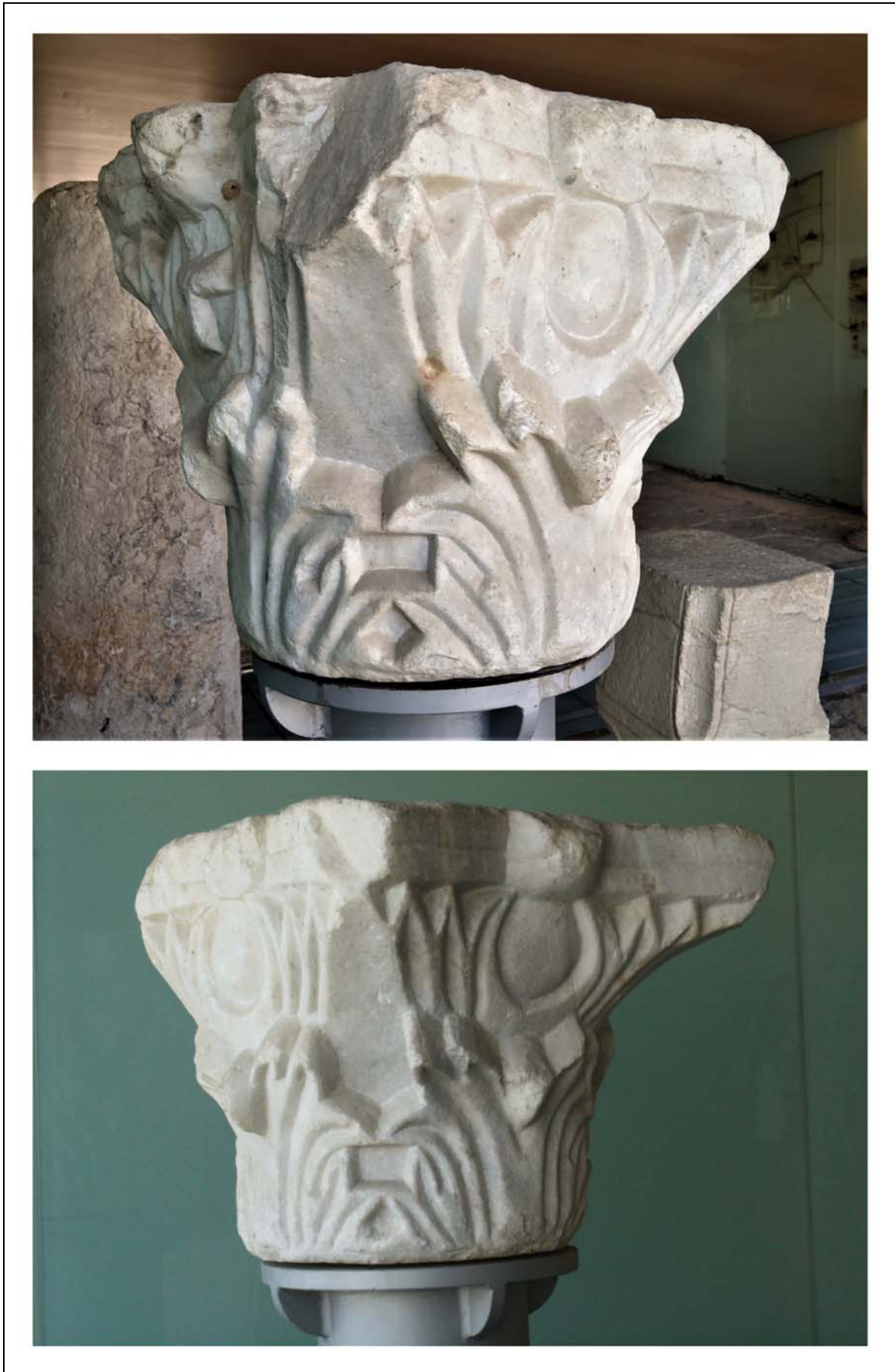


Fig. 10. Capital no. 6 in the exhibition in Davidson Center in Jerusalem (Photo of the author).

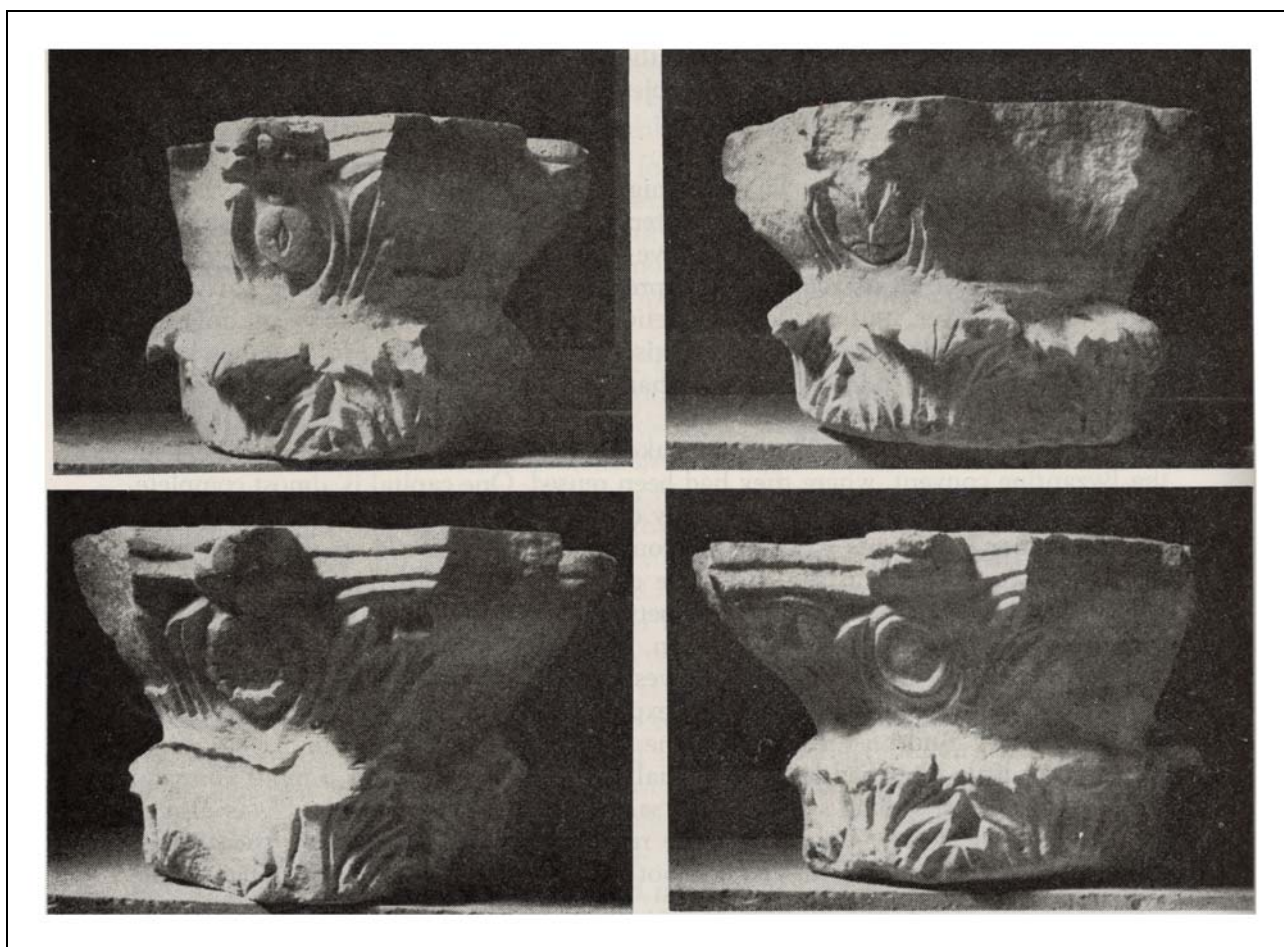


Fig. 11. Capital no. 7 from the Church of Annunciation in Nazareth (after Bagatti 1967: 165, nos. 131—134, courtesy of Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Photographic Archive).



Fig. 12. Capital no. 8 from Negev Museum in Be'er Sheva (after Israeli, *Mevorah* 2000: 124f; courtesy of Museum of Israel in Jerusalem).



Fig. 13. Capital no. 9 from Khirbet el-Minya (after Ritter 2017: Taf. 31, nos. 3—4; courtesy of Prof. M. Ritter).

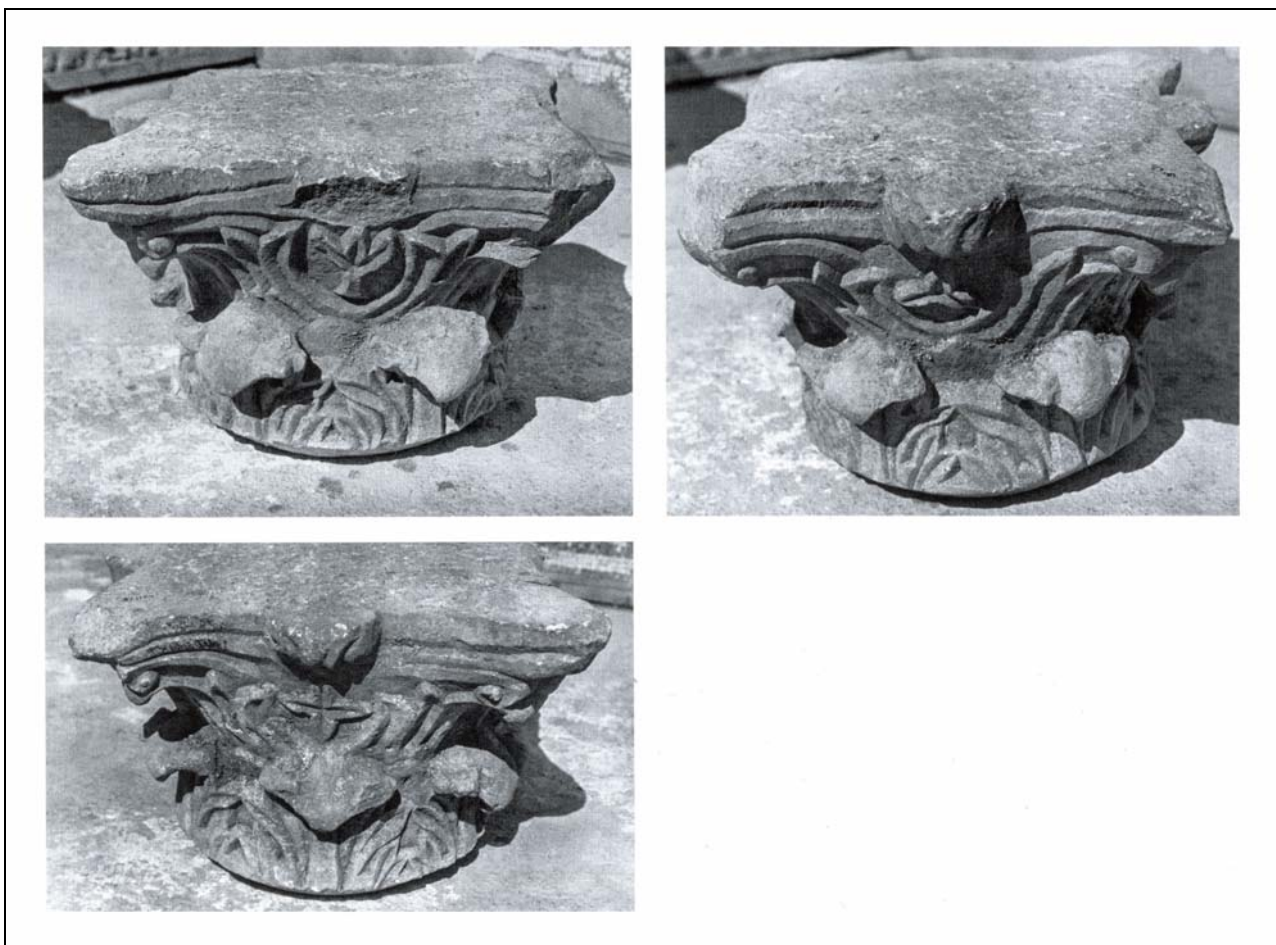


Fig. 14. Capital no. 10 from Khirbet el-Minya (after Ritter 2017: Taf. 31, nos. 6—8; courtesy of Prof. M. Ritter).



Fig. 15. Capital no. 11 from Khirbet el-Minya (after Ritter 2017: Taf. 32, nos. 1—4; courtesy of Prof. M. Ritter).



Fig. 16. Capital no. 12 from the excavations in Tiberias (Courtesy of Dr. K. Cytryn).

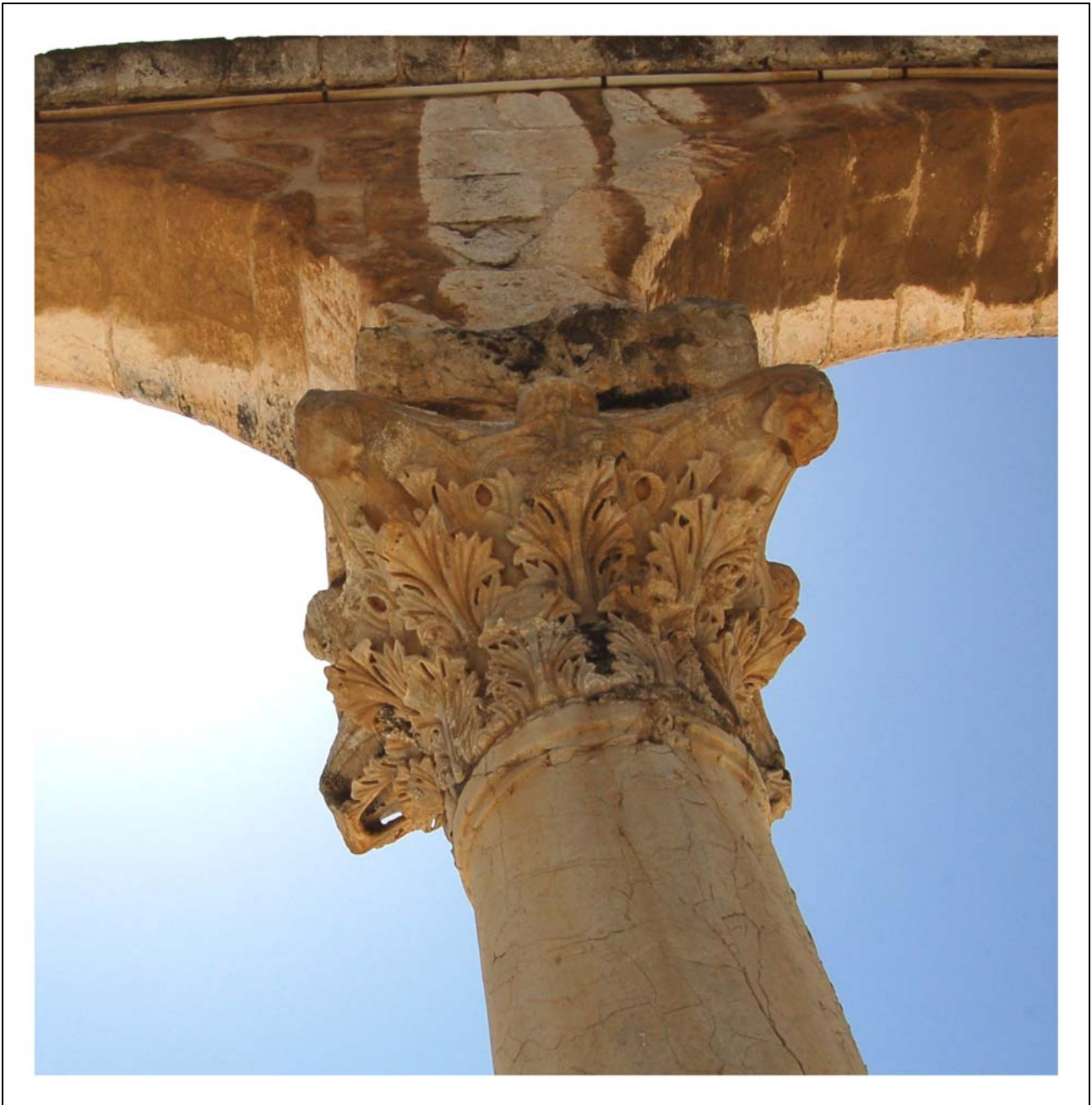


Fig. 17. Marble capital with stylized leaflets reused in the eastern gate of the Haram platform on the 2nd column from the north (Photo of the author).



Fig. 18. Abbasid limestone capital from the Islamic Museum on the Temple Mount (Photo of the author).