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# Trade and Commerce At Sepphoris, Israel

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1998 Honors Research  
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## Introduction

Trade patterns in the Near East are the subject of conflicting interpretations. Researchers debate whether Galilean cities utilized trade routes along the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean or were self-sufficient, with little access to trade. An analysis of material culture found at specific sites can most efficiently determine the extent of trade in the region. If commerce is extensive, a significant assemblage of foreign goods will be found; an overwhelming majority of provincial artifacts will suggest minimal trade.

This project will explore the trade patterns of one site, Sepphoris, located in the Lower Galilean region of Israel, about 5 kilometers northwest of present-day Nazareth. The city sits on both the major North/South and East/West trade routes of Galilee. This particularly suits the region for trade and commerce. Sepphoris is frequently mentioned in ancient Jewish literature. As one of only two *poleis* in the region, Sepphoris was the site of an extensive marketplace. The following study will focus on the first through fourth centuries CE, a time of prosperity at Sepphoris.

Sepphoris's location, within Lower Galilee, is significant. The slopes of Mt. Carmel in the west and the Sea of Galilee in the east bound the Lower Galilean region. Mt. Meiron at the sites of Kefar Hananya and Beersheba North (Bersabe) in the Beth ha-Kerem Valley border Lower Galilee to the north, separating it from Upper Galilee. The slopes of the Meiron massif define Upper Galilee, which extends from Akko-Ptolemais in the west to the Jordan Valley in the east. (Meyers 1976). Upper Galilee is adjacent to the Golan Heights in the east, indicating a close relationship between the two regions. However, Lower Galilee is separated from Upper Galilee by an elevation of a few hundred meters, suggesting that the trade between these two regions was not consistent or regular.

Import routes at Sepphoris have not yet been studied in relation to one another – this report will begin such an examination. Through the analysis of both published and unpublished materials (the latter courtesy of James F. Strange, director of The University of South Florida's Excavations at Sepphoris) this study will assert that import routes to Sepphoris were neither irregular nor random. Rather, they remained relatively constant over time to provide Sepphoris's residents with goods created outside of the city.

### **General Views of Trade at Sepphoris**

Sepphoris is located near the junction of two major roads: one North/South, linking Kefar 'Otnay with Akko-Ptolemais and Beth Shean, the other East/West, connecting Akko-Ptolemais to the Jordan Valley and Tiberias. Not surprisingly, thus, pottery was imported to the city as early as the Late Bronze I period. The identification of imported wares indicates relative wealth of this agricultural settlement, even during this early period. As the city matured, further wares were imported, leading one to believe that this city was not an isolated farming community. By the Roman period, Sepphoris's weights, measures, and coins were considered "standards" throughout the region, indicating the city's economic importance.

Commerce in Sepphoris may have been relatively constant both over time and between trading partners, though this has been widely debated. On the one hand, Sepphoris was generally a peaceful city: Ptolemy Lathyrus of Cyprus failed to capture Sepphoris circa 100 BCE. Its residents did not participate in the First or Second Jewish Revolts against Rome. Coins minted at Sepphoris indicated the city's pacifism -- those minted at the beginning of the third century were stamped "Covenant of friendship and mutual aid between the holy council and the senate of the Roman people" (Weiss 1993). Even Sepphoris's



location – enclosed by a wall – is strategic: it easily could be guarded against invasions. While other trading centers became sites of warfare and rebellion, Sepphoris remained on the sidelines. Consequently, amid the disruptions of war that affected other cities, Sepphoris could maintain its relationship with trading partners over time.

Conflicting research has presented the opinion that, though a peaceful city, Sepphoris did not consistently participate in a trade network. Eric M. Meyers has researched trade in Upper Galilee and believes its network of cities was completely separated from those of Lower Galilee, since the altitude of Upper Galilee was a few hundred meters higher than that of Lower Galilee. Sepphoris's accessibility may be questioned, too, as the city was not located on a coastline. Meyers's early research (1976, 1985) further indicates that trade among villages of Lower Galilee followed no set pattern. This research hopes to challenge Meyers's assertion of irregular trade in the region.

The discrepancy between literary and archaeological representations of the history of Lower Galilee must be considered in the study of trade patterns. As previously mentioned, literary works speak of hostilities between cities; Sepphoris, however, managed to stay out of any skirmishes.

Even more interesting is the archaeological evidence maintaining that the commerce of cities continued in a "business as usual" manner during literary times of turmoil. Groh (1997: 30) affirms this, stating, "the evidence from the local ceramic trade indicates no great interruption in the ceramic trading patterns of at least two Lower Galilean factories – Kefar Hananiah and . . . Kefar [Shikhin]". Sepphoris continued to import goods during hostile periods.

One might think that urbanization is necessary for trade. As far as we know, however, Sepphoris and Tiberias are the only *poleis* in Lower Galilee during this period. Further, Upper Galilee has no large cities at all. The region was composed largely of small towns and villages (Groh 1997). Industry was, in fact, concentrated in these towns – large metropolises were unnecessary. Political boundaries did not encumber commerce; villages traded freely with one another.

The remainder of this report will analyze various types of material culture found at Sepphoris: foodstuffs, mosaics, common pottery, finewares, coins, and glass. Each type of artifact and its trade routes will be considered independently. The trade routes may suggest distinct patterns of trade at Sepphoris not previously detected.

One final note: References will be made throughout this analysis to the chronological periods of the first through the fourth centuries CE. The following table summarizes those periods and their corresponding dates.

**Approximate Chronology:  
1st-4th Centuries  
CE**

Roman Period	37 BCE-324 CE
<i>Early Roman</i>	37 BCE-132 CE
<i>Late Roman</i>	132-324 CE
Byzantine Period	324-638 CE

Source: *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* 1993

## Foodstuffs

Arlene Fradkin of the Florida Museum of Natural History has completed a quantitative study of fish and aquatic mollusks found at the site. As the city is not situated on a coastline, these discoveries pose an interesting question: From where were the foodstuffs imported?

Given the location of Sepphoris, it is likely that the animals were imported from one of two bodies of water – the Sea of Galilee or the Mediterranean. Studying Fradkin's research, this indeed appears to be true (Table I). "The fish and aquatic mollusk remains analyzed clearly indicate a system of trade between Sepphoris and more distant regions in late antiquity" (Fradkin 1997: 108).

Thirty-three fish and molluscan taxa (categories) were studied in total. The vast majority of these originated in the Mediterranean Sea. The minimum number of individuals (MNI) found were calculated for each taxon. From this information, it is known that 60% of all fishes were drawn from the Mediterranean, as were 86.55% of all mollusks. This indicates potentially extensive trade with a number of coastal cities, including Akko/Ptolemais, Caesarea, Joppa, and Ascalon. Though largely used as foodstuffs, both fish and mollusk remains were often modified to create beads, pendants, necklaces, brooches, or amulets.

Approximately 40% of all fishes and 6.16% of all mollusks came from the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, or other coastal rivers. This import of foodstuffs is probably from Capernaum or Tiberias, as both are located on the coast of the Sea of Galilee. The Nile catfish and the tilapias are two popular forms of edible fish found at Sepphoris. The two molluscan species found at Sepphoris were edible forms as well. "Several sources have mentioned the thriving fishing industry around the Sea of Galilee. Some of these fish were

sold in local markets; the rest were probably exported in salted form to other regions” (Fradkin 1997).

One molluscan species did originate in the Nile River in Egypt. Though only accounting for 7.69% of the MNI, this specimen is significant as it indicates the most distant trade of foodstuffs to Sepphoris. The mollusk shell could serve both functional and ornamental uses through modification; however, the shells found at Sepphoris were too fragmented to ascertain whether modification had taken place.

A wide survey of Palestine indicates that other sites also have recovered remains of these taxa. Grouper and mullet remains from the Mediterranean were found at the sites En Boqeq (west of the Dead Sea) and Tamara (northeastern Negev). Mollusks from the Nile have been identified throughout Israel. Nile catfish and tilapias from the Sea of Galilee were discovered at the City of David, En Boqeq, and Tamara. These wide distributions indicate the existence of various trade networks throughout the Palestine and link trade originating in the Sea of Galilee.

## **Mosaics**

There is intangible evidence to indicate that Sepphoris participated in a kind of cultural trade. For instance, gentile and pagan motifs were found here. These discoveries are especially surprising, as the city is the most frequently mentioned site in ancient Jewish literature (other than Jerusalem). Cultic bronze figurines in cisterns and polychrome mosaics with Greek inscriptions are two examples of the above motifs (Groh 1990). There is also evidence of di- or triglossia at Sepphoris or at least a basic knowledge of both Greek and Aramaic in addition to Hebrew for religious and/or inscriptionary purposes (Meyers 1985).

Analyzing the mosaic features at Sepphoris is probably the most effective method of studying the cultural influence “imported” to this site. Each mosaic is handmade by artisans who place individual tiles of stone or glass – called tesserae – of various colors to create intricate designs and pictorial representations. When studied closely, it becomes clear that the mosaics have artistic influences outside of Lower Galilee. Artisans may have traveled from other regions to Sepphoris to contribute their work, or the influence itself may have traveled over time through artists and regions. Both possibilities are represented in the mosaics of Sepphoris. Further, both indicate a cultural exchange of artistic influence.

#### *The Birds and Fishes Mosaic*

This mosaic is located in Sepphoris’s basilical building, a huge structure occupying an entire city block, currently under excavation by the University of South Florida and Illinois Wesleyan's May Term Excavations in Israel. The Birds and Fishes Mosaic is, in fact, one of the largest mosaic pavements in Israel. The mosaic is dated to the third quarter of the third century CE. Mosaics in the basilical building “exhibit a high level of artistry and a wide range of stylistic influences from major centers of mosaic production around the Mediterranean” (Roussin 1996: 123). Most of this mosaic’s influences are from North Africa, probably Tunisia. The square panel in the center of the mosaic is more common (as is much of the geometric design) in North Africa than in Galilee during this period. The image of a hare nibbling grapes is a motif used in threshold mosaics in Tunisian villas. The *xenia* imagery (simply defined as a “still life” within a mosaic) is popular in Tunisia as well. A parallel to this mosaic has been found in Tunisia, dated to the first half of the third century CE. There is a link between these cultural artifacts, though we are unsure of its precise nature.

Other mosaics in the basilical building exhibit influences from Antioch and Apamea in Syria, including an acanthus scroll, a landscape of the Nile banks, and various geometric designs (Roussin 1996).

### *The Dionysos Mosaic*

This mosaic exhibits a Greek cultural influence. Its panels tell of the victory of Dionysos over Herakles in a drinking contest – the imagery of the gods clearly is not from Jewish culture. Created during the third century CE, this mosaic was made in the tradition of Roman mosaic art that dates back to the Hellenistic period. One scene in the mosaic is obviously different from the rest. Its clear depictions of the flora and fauna surrounding Egypt's Nile River eerily foreshadow the design of another mosaic at Sepphoris, created centuries later.

### *Mosaics of the Nile Festival Building*

Unlike the main scene of the Dionysos mosaic, the mosaics of the Nile Festival Building are reminiscent of many discovered in Antioch or Amapea. This is especially evident in the “arrangement of the mosaic as a single carpet comprising various images . . . particularly the hunting scenes” (Weiss and Netzer 1996: 130). The Nile River is portrayed with vegetation surrounding it. Two personifications border the river: one is Egypt, depicted as a woman; the other is the Nile, represented by a man.

### *Mosaic Summary*

Stylistically, the art of these mosaics originated throughout the Mediterranean region of the Near East. Cultural artifacts, like most trade, are not limited to one region. Aesthetic appearance seems to be significant to those financing the creation of these mosaics.

Consequently, the cultural trade jumps – even ignores—political and regional boundaries.

Table II summarizes the mosaic influences.

One final note to consider: two debris layers in the corner of the basilica revealed tesserae of wall mosaics and hundreds of marble fragments. Marble was not available locally; all marble in Israel was imported from other regions of the Empire. This is one tangible suggestion of imported cultural artifacts.

## **Pottery**

Pottery sherds must be considered in this study of trade, as they constitute the largest assemblages found at Sepphoris. Two categories of crude wares (common pottery) are found at Sepphoris. Kitchenwares, such as jugs and juglets, cooking pots, pans, and bowls have been recovered. Amphorae – storage and transport jars – were also identified at the site. Both types of common pottery were made locally (that is, within Galilee). Previous research shows that common pottery is not imported over a great distance (Adan-Bayewitz 1993).

Kitchenwares and amphorae should be considered independently, however, since their trading patterns and overall form differ substantially. Again, this study will only consider trade from the first through fourth centuries. Crude ware forms outside these parameters will not be analyzed.

### *Kitchenwares*

Kefar Hananya was the main production center of household wares in Galilee. The site was active from the mid-first century BCE through the early fifth century CE and, according to one study, supplied 74% of all kitchenwares at Sepphoris (Adan-Bayewitz 1993). The pottery analyzed encompasses wares from the early through late Roman periods

recovered from the 1983 and 1985 excavation seasons. Crude wares were retrieved from both residential structures and subterranean cavities.

Specific kitchenwares made at Kefar Hananya include “common utility vessels most of which served usually for cooking, while some were probably used for serving table use, or other purposes” (Adan-Bayewitz 1993: 86). Specific characteristics of Kefar Hananya forms are listed below. A letter designation following the form numbers indicates form variations.

***Common Pottery from Kefar Hananya*** (Adan-Bayewitz 1993)

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| • Form 1(A,B,C,D,E): | Bowl or Pan  |
| • Form 2:            | Bowl   |
| • Form 3(A,B):       | Open cooking pot/casserole dish (wide-mouthed cooking vessel whose largest or near-largest diameter is at the rim) |
| • Form 4(A,B,C,D,E): | Closed cooking pot (cooking vessel whose maximum body diameter is substantially greater than its rim diameter)     |
| • Form 5(A,B):       | Jar/jug  |
| • Form 6(A,B,C):     | Jug  |
| • Form 7:            | Small storage jar (rare)   |

Almost all of the above forms have been found at Sepphoris (only two examples of form 7 have been recovered, both at Kefar Hananya). See Table III for a complete list of wares found in the sample taken at Sepphoris.

Crudeware forms at Kefar Hananya metamorphosed throughout the site’s centuries of production. That is, not all of the forms outlined above were created in 50 BCE; nor were all forms made until 430 CE. Dates in Table III represent the period of each form’s earliest origin and its disappearance. Most of the forms (1-2, 4-6) were produced through the beginning of the fifth century CE “ . . . even though competition now substantially restricted



Kefar Hananya's market, especially for the most important of the remaining functional forms, the closed cooking pot" (Adan-Bayewitz 1993: 149).

Competing wares account for 26% of the pottery assemblage at Sepphoris. Their fabric, composition, and form distinguish them from Kefar Hananya pottery. Table III lists Adan-Bayewitz's suggested dates of production. One production site of these competing wares, Kefar Shikhin, will be considered in detail in the next section. Its wares comprise 23-24% of the pottery assemblage at Sepphoris. A small number (1-2%) of the crude wares recovered at Sepphoris were manufactured at another competing production center, near Khirbet Ruma (James F. Strange, oral communication, Bloomington, IL 1998).

Both trade routes and methods of selling must be considered in the study of marketing from Kefar Hananya to Sepphoris. Paved roads were uncommon in Galilee during this time; as mentioned above, two Roman roads did run through Sepphoris. The city's ease of accessibility made it a primary marketplace in Lower Galilee. Much of Adan-Bayewitz's evidence indicates that potters traveled to Sepphoris to sell their wares. It is possible, too, that middlemen transported pottery from Kefar Hananya to market at Sepphoris. Extensive marketing of Kefar Hananya wares directly challenges previous claims that northern Galilee had limited contact with Sepphoris.

### *Amphorae*

Amphorae, or storage jars, are used as "trade-packaging" to transport liquid (e.g. wine and oils) and solid commodities (e.g. olives and fish). Their presence in an assemblage of pottery often indicates a movement of foodstuffs. Stamps in the clay of amphorae are extremely useful, indicating date and place of origin as well as contents of the vessel (Peacock

and Williams 1986). Often, the transport of foodstuffs in amphorae was the only way to supply remote areas with perishable commodities.

Amphorae were not made at Kefar Hananya; rabbinic sources cite Kefar Shikhin as the major manufacturing site of amphorae in Galilee. The Shikhin site was recently identified to be immediately north of Sepphoris (Strange, Groh, and Longstaff 1994). To trace the trade routes of Kefar Hananya and Kefar Shikhin, we must be able to differentiate between their wares. The *havit* (storage jar) was well known by the mid-second century as a volume measure. Literary sources mention these storage jars only as products of Shikhin; they are never attributed to Kefar Hananya. In addition, two of the region's most characteristic first-century bowls were manufactured at Shikhin: a bowl with incurving rim and a carinated bowl. Neutron activation analysis shows that Shikhin pottery differs in chemical composition from Kefar Hananya wares. We can distinguish Kefar Hananya wares from those of Kefar Shikhin using this type of archaeological evidence.

Though located within Sepphoris's jurisdiction, Shikhin was an economically successful village on its own. A 1988 survey of pottery sherds indicates a virtually parallel occupation to Sepphoris. A heavy concentration of Roman period pottery has been noted (109 of 144 sherds analyzed). Therefore, like Sepphoris, Shikhin prospered in the first through fourth centuries CE.

The wasters (discarded in the failed manufacturing of pottery) and sherds found in the 1988 survey are identical to one of the main pottery groups at Sepphoris (Strange et al 1994). Comparisons of this sort show that 23-24% of the pottery found at Sepphoris and the majority of storage jars throughout Galilee were made at Shikhin. Amphorae found here are uncommon outside of the three regions of northern Israel, however, substantiating the

assertion that crudewares were traded locally. Though the focus of this study is trade at Sepphoris, it is informative to note the cities to which Shikhin sold storage jars:

<b>Lower Galilee</b>	<b>Upper Galilee</b>	<b>Golan</b>
Sepphoris	Meiron	Susita
Tiberias	Nabratein	Gamla
Tabgha	Sa'sa'	'En Nashut
Capernaum		Dabiya
Horvat Hazon		
Rama		

Shikhin's location -- immediately north of Sepphoris -- might lead us to believe that it was the production site for most of Sepphoris's common pottery. In fact, only one-quarter of the wares were produced there, while three-quarters were manufactured at Kefar Hananya, a site located much further from Sepphoris. Kefar Hananya wares may have been preferred because of a greater durability of the site's clays. However, the extensive marketing of both Kefar Hananya and Kefar Shikhin crude wares imply a dependence of Galilean and Golan villages on the products of rural settlements (Adan-Bayewitz 1993). This concurs with rabbinic literature, which describe Shikhin's storage jars and Kefar Hananya's household wares as "well-known" throughout the region.

## **Fine Wares**

Fine wares are the rarest pottery found at Sepphoris – much less common than kitchenwares and amphorae. All fine tablewares were imported from abroad. Fine wares found during the 1996 excavation season at Sepphoris' basilica have been analyzed by Dr. Dennis E. Groh to be used in this report. The seventy examples recovered in 1996 represent five fine ware forms. See Table IV for a quantitative summary of the discussion below.

Two of the forms from this sample were manufactured during the late Hellenistic/Early Roman period of the first century CE. Eastern Terra Sigillata A originated in Syria (possibly Antioch) as a red-gloss ware and is common throughout the eastern Mediterranean region. It is distinguishable by occasional potter's stamps and decoration that differs from that of earlier and later wares. Five examples of this form were recovered at Sepphoris in 1996.

Western Terra Sigillata, the other ware of this period, was manufactured in Gaul and Italy. The type was established in 10-15 CE and is distinguishable by its bright red gloss. By 50 CE, it was the most common decorated Western ware on the Mediterranean market. Two examples of this ware were recovered at Sepphoris in 1996.

The three other fine tableware forms found at Sepphoris date from the late third through seventh centuries CE. There was a major gap in fine ware imports between the opening decades of the second century and the last decades of the third centuries. This pattern existed throughout northern Galilee and the Golan during the same period.

Though outside the time frame addressed by this study, it is important to note the extensive presence of fine wares imported during the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries.

These finds suggest that, though there was a break in the trade patterns, contact was not completely severed between Sepphoris and these three fine ware production sites.

The first form, Phocaen Red Slip Ware was imported from Phocaea, Turkey (ancient Asia Minor). The form has a small, distinctive range of shapes, a smooth interior, and is most often decorated with rouletting (grooves around a vessel's body) or stamping. This fine ware has been found throughout Galilee, most frequently in mid/late Byzantine contexts (Groh 1981). Thirty-one examples of Phocaen Red Slip Ware have been recovered in the 1996 season at Sepphoris, all dating from the sixth through seventh centuries CE.

Cypriot Red Slip Ware forms were simple wheel-made products. This tableware was made of a smooth fabric and finished with a glossy slip (completed by dipping the vessel into a solution of its own clay before firing). Discolored rims suggest that the vessels were fired in stacks. Some wares were smoothed with a brush while the clay was wet, while others have tool marks along the outside and/or inside. A site of manufacture for Cypriot Red Slip Ware has not yet been determined, though Cyprus was probably not its source. The twenty representations of Cypriot Red Slip Ware found at Sepphoris date from the mid-sixth through late-seventh centuries CE.

African Red Slip Ware is the final type of fine ware recovered at Sepphoris during 1996. Most African Red Slip Ware was produced in the Carthage region of North Africa. This fine ware has a variety of form and slip characteristics, but is usually coarse with lime impurities. The color of the clay ranges from orange-red to brick-red; its slip is of a deeper color than the body clay. Many varieties are undecorated, though some have rouletting around the rim. North African workshops manufactured and exported this tableware from the end of the first century through the seventh century CE, with a hiatus in the fifth century due

to the Vandal conquest. The twelve fragments of African Red Slip Ware recovered at Sepphoris were all produced in the sixth and seventh centuries CE.

"Precisely because fine tableware is imported, it serves as evidence of trade links between sites in Israel and other Mediterranean areas" (Groh 1996: 495). Fine wares identified at Sepphoris represent all of the Mediterranean exporting factories. The assemblage parallels those at other sites throughout northern Galilee.

### **Coins (Numismatic Evidence)**

According to Eric M. Meyers, "[an argument for regionalism would be] reflected in coin mints" (Meyers 1976: 99). Conversely, numismatic evidence at Sepphoris will reflect the argument that Sepphoris's trade regularly crossed political and cultural boundaries. Mints from diverse regions spanning the first through fourth centuries suggest regular import to this city.

Most of the coins found at Sepphoris do not have an identifiable mint mark (see Table V). Of those that do, the most frequent mints are Tyre, Akko, Neapolis, and Antioch. The coins sampled here also have mint marks from Caesarea, Tiberias, Scythopolis, and Constantinople. Over 8,000 coins have been recovered from Sepphoris. Coins have been recovered from as far away as Bythynia. The discovery of coins from Tyre and Akko, the main mints that appear in Upper Galilee, again challenges Meyers's assertion that the commercial pattern of the villages of Upper Galilee differed from that of Lower Galilee.

In addition, though Sepphoris had its own mint during much of this time, no coins minted at Sepphoris have been found at the site. This is peculiar, though it is a distinct possibility that coins minted here were traded to other sites for goods brought to Sepphoris.

The greatest number of coins identifiable by mints was from the first century CE. However, as shown in Table V, coins have been found throughout late Hellenistic, Roman, and early Byzantine periods at Sepphoris. This is further evidence that Sepphoris maintained trading partners over time.

## **Glass**

Glassmaking was a common craft in Jewish cities during the first through fourth centuries CE. Writings of the Mishna and Talmud inform us of the glassmaking industry's laws and regulations. These sources are considered especially accurate since many of their rabbinical scholars earned their livings in ordinary occupations, one of which was glassmaking.

These writers suggest that “the glass business in some form or another was carried on frequently as a home industry in ancient Palestine. The products would then be marketed by peddlers circulating around the countryside, collecting merchandise to be sold at the great fairs at Akko, Tyre, and Sidon” (Keller 1994: 1). It is possible that Sepphoris banded with these and other cities along major trade routes in marketing arrangements.

Glass found at Sepphoris is dated from the mid-Hellenistic period (mid-second century BCE) through the Arab II period (thirteenth century CE). The highest concentration of glass was from the fourth century CE. Bowl and bottle fragments are most commonly found. Most forms are utilitarian: “there are innumerable fragments of window glass, lamps, jugs, cups, and objects such as tubes, cosmetic tools, and jewelry” (Keller 1994). The specific categorization of pieces is as follows:

Bowls	238	Lamps	12	Small objects	18
Bottles	142	Jewelry	13	Unidentifiable:	244
Cups	81	Jugs	10		
Jars	16	Goblets	16		

Two-thirds of the above items were recovered from the mercantile area at Sepphoris. However, little information is available regarding the production centers of these artifacts. Three Byzantine-period glass-making ovens have been found at Sepphoris (James F. Strange, oral communication, Bloomington, IL 1998). The ovens suggested that Sepphoris manufactured raw glass for export. Thus, much of the glass recovered here may have been produced on-site, rather than imported.

## Conclusion

The evidence of Sepphoris's imports suggests that the city's trade, at periods, extended throughout the eastern Mediterranean region during the first through fourth centuries. Sepphoris prospered, and its regional trade did not stagnate significantly at any time during this period.

As expected, aquatic foodstuffs were brought to Sepphoris from cities on the coast of the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee, as well as the Nile River in Egypt. Though specific dates of import are not available, all of the foodstuffs analyzed here were acquired during the Roman and Byzantine periods. There is no evidence that Sepphoris changed its trading patterns with these cities at any time—fish were plentiful and Sepphoris's relationship with its trading partners was not compromised by disagreements.



Cultural tradition, represented in this study by mosaic remains, was not limited to influences from Lower Galilee. The earliest examples we have found are from the early third century CE. It is more difficult to measure cultural trade simply because of its subjective artistic nature. The examples found at Sepphoris – *The Birds and Fishes Mosaic*, *The Dionysos Mosaic*, and the *Mosaics of the Nile Festival Building* – show that the artists at Sepphoris had a wide range of stylistic influences from the Greco-Roman world, especially the regions of Syria and North Africa. In this case, artistry was unencumbered by designated regional and political boundaries.

The recovery of pottery sherds has proved to be of unparalleled value in this study. We have a larger assemblage of pottery than of any other artifact at Sepphoris. Kefar Hananya wares were marketed to Sepphoris throughout the Roman and Byzantine periods. Through study of Table III we find that two of the seven forms made at Kefar Hananya were not found at Sepphoris (form 2 and form 7). Only two examples of form 7 have been found (both at the Kefar Hananya site); five examples of form 2 have been recovered (four at Kefar Hananya). The dates of the rim fragments recovered for the study of the remainder of the Kefar Hananya wares represent trade to Sepphoris throughout the period studied here. There are no noticeable inconsistencies in trade of kitchenwares from Kefar Hananya. Less plentiful information is available regarding trade of amphorae from Kefar Shikhin, located just north of Sepphoris. We do know, however, that 23-24% of Sepphoris's pottery did originate at Shikhin, as did much of the pottery found elsewhere both in Galilee and the Golan Heights. All evidence suggests a friendly relationship between the cities; Sepphoris was the likely marketplace where Shikhin wares could be sold. The 1988 survey by Strange, Groh, and

Longstaff shows a level of prosperity at Shikhin that parallels the one attributed here to Sepphoris.

Fine wares are a third class of pottery represented at Sepphoris. Early forms – Eastern Terra Sigillata A and Western Terra Sigillata – were traded during the first century to Sepphoris from Syria and Gaul/Italy, respectively. Phocaen Red Slip Ware, Cypriot Red Slip Ware, and African Slip Ware were imported to Sepphoris from the third through seventh centuries CE – this assemblage parallels those at sites in northern Galilee and the Golan.

Numismatic evidence also indicates that Sepphoris's trade was consistent throughout the first through fourth centuries. Although most coins do not have an identifiable mint mark, those that do reveal trade throughout the period with cities in Lower Galilee, Syria, and Turkey.

The glass analyzed from Sepphoris is one example of a product that may have been produced at the city for export. Glass found here dates from the mid-second century BCE through the thirteenth century CE. It is likely that much of the glass manufactured during the Byzantine period was done so in ovens on-site. Other products were made at Sepphoris as well, and sold at the city's marketplace. Literary sources report that clothing was woven and dyed at Sepphoris. Historical references cite Sepphoris as a wheat-producer (James F. Strange, oral communication, Bloomington, IL 1998). It is at this marketplace where those imports that had moved along trade routes to Sepphoris met.

This large, peaceful city provided a market for potters, artists, fishermen, and glassmakers, as well as middlemen who specialized in the sale of others' products (Adan-Bayewitz 1993). Sepphoris was not isolated from cities in the eastern Mediterranean by

cultural, regional, or political boundaries, as shown by the extensive trade patterns analyzed here.

**Table I. Fish and Aquatic Mollusk Remains at Sepphoris  
(Roman and Byzantine Periods)**

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<b>Taxon</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>MNI</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<u>Fish</u>			
<i>Clarias gariepinus</i>	Sea of Galilee/Jordan River	2	20.00
<i>Epinephelus aeneus</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	10.00
<i>Epinephelus guaza</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	10.00
<i>Epinephelus</i> spp.	Mediterranean Sea	2	20.00
Serranidae	Mediterranean Sea	1	10.00
Tilapiini	Sea of Galilee/Jordan River	2	20.00
Mugilidae	Mediterranean Sea	1	10.00
			100.00
<u>Mollusks</u>			
<i>Anadara diluvii</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Glycymeris violaceus</i>	Mediterranean Sea	4	6.15
<i>Mytilus galloprovincialis</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Ostrea stentina</i>	Mediterranean Sea	2	3.08
<i>Unio terminalis terminalis</i>	Sea of Galilee/Jordan River	2	3.08
<i>Aspatharia rubens</i>	Nile River	5	7.69
<i>Loripes lacteus</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Acanthocardia tuberculata</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Cerastoderma glaucum</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Donax trunculus</i>	Mediterranean Sea	3	4.62
<i>Donax</i> sp.	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Gibbula adansonni</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Clanculus cruciatus</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Melanopsis praemorsa jordanica</i>	Sea of Galilee/Jordan River	2	3.08
<i>Cypraea spurca</i>	Mediterranean Sea	3	4.62
<i>Charonia tritonis variegata</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Boinus brandaris</i>	Mediterranean Sea	3	4.62
<i>Buccinulum corneum</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Pisania striata buccinidae</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Columbella rustica</i>	Mediterranean Sea	16	24.62
<i>Pyrene scripta</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Nassarius circumcinctus</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Nassarius gibbosulus</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Nassarius mutabilis</i>	Mediterranean Sea	1	1.54
<i>Conus mediterraneus</i>	Mediterranean Sea	8	12.31
<i>Bulla striata</i>	Mediterranean Sea	2	3.08
			100.00

Source: Fradkin 1997.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Influence</b>
The Birds and Fishes Mosaic	Late 3rd century CE	North African, primarily Tunisian
The Dionysos Mosaic	Early 3rd century CE	Hellenistic
The Nile Festival Building Mosaics	Early Byzantine	Antioch/Amapea (Syrian)

Sources: Meyers, C., Meyers, E., Netzer, and Weiss 1996  
Roussin 1996  
Weiss and Netzer 1996

**Table III. Kefar Hananya Wares Recovered at Sepphoris**

Form	Number of Rim Fragments	Approximate Dates *
<i>Kefar Hananya</i>		
1A	5	50 CE
1B	20	50/150 CE
1C	4	150/250 CE
1D	4	150/250 CE
1E	64	150/250 CE
2	0	150/250 CE
3A	22	50 BCE
3B	8	50/150 CE to 350 CE
4A	102	50 BCE
4B	41	50 CE
4C	46	50/150 CE
4D	7	150/250 CE
4E	1	150/250 CE
5A	3	50/150 CE
5B	1	150/250 CE
6A	0	150 CE
6B	6	150 CE
6C	1	150/250 CE
7	0	n/a
TOTAL	335	
<i>Competing Wares</i>		
C3A	21	n/a
C4A	34	n/a
C4B	26	n/a
other cooking ware	35	n/a
TOTAL	116	

\* *Kefar Hananya forms 1,2,4,5, and 6 were produced through early fifth century (~430 CE)*

Source: Adan-Bayewitz 1993.

**Table IV. Fine Wares Recovered at Sepphoris**

25

<b>Form</b>	<b>Number of Examples</b>	<b>Approximate Dates</b>	<b>Production Center</b>
Eastern Terra Sigillata	5	first century CE	Syria
Western Terra Sigillata	2	first century CE	Gaul/Italy
Phocaen Red Slip Ware	31	sixth-seventh centuries CE	Phocaea, Turkey
Cypriot Red Slip Ware	20	mid-sixth to late- seventh centuries CE	undetermined
African Red Slip Ware	12	sixth-seventh centuries CE	Carthage, North Africa

Sources: Hayes 1972 and Groh 1998

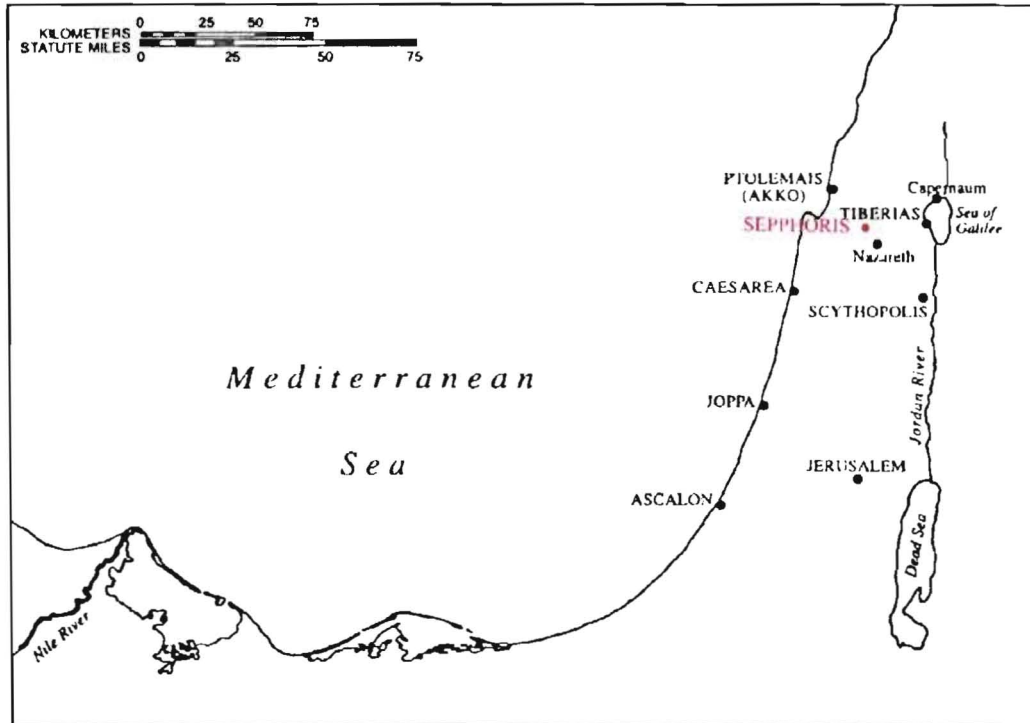
<i>Date</i>	<i>Ruler/Period/ Place of Manufacture???</i>	<i>Number of Coins</i>
Found in C127	?????	2
??	Caesarea City Coin (??)	1
Late Roman	Unknown	6
1st/2nd century CE	Constans???	1
??	Philippus/Coin of Tyre	1
33 CE	Herod Antipas	1
56-96 CE	Agrippa I	1
59-62 CE	Festus	1
70 CE	Jewish War, year 3	1
98-117 CE	Akko-Trajan	1
120 CE	Hadrian; Tiberias	1
135-62 CE	Caesarea; M Aurelius	1
161-80 CE	Nysa/Scythopolis	1
189 CE	Tyre	1
192 CE	Commodus	1
218-22 CE	Agabalus	1
218-22 CE	Petra; Elagabalus	1
218-22 CE	Tyre; Elagabalus	2
222-35 CE	Akko-Severus Alex	1
232-35 CE	Julia Mamcea/Bostra	1
238-44 CE	Gordian III	1
238-44 CE	Gordianus III/Tyre	1
247-49 CE	Philip Sr/Jr; Neapolis City Coin	2
249-51 CE	Trajan Decius	1
251-53 CE	Neapolis; Volusianus	1
252-58 CE	Valerianus	1
253-59 CE	Valerianus	1
253-60 CE	Gallienus	1
253-60 CE	Valerian I/Denarius	1
253-68 CE	Akko; Gallianus	1
268-70 CE	Claudius Gothicus	1
276-82 CE	Probus	1
284-305 CE	Diocletianus Imperial Coin	1
285-95 CE	Maximianus	1
286-310 CE	Maximianus	2



307 CE	Constantius I	1	27
307-330 CE	Constantius I	5	
317-24 CE	Licinius II	1	
320 CE	Constantius I	1	
324-330 CE	Constantius I	1	
324-330 CE	Constantius I/Coin of Antioch	2	
330 CE	Constantius	2	
330-35 CE	Constantius I/Constantinople	1	
330-37 CE	Constantius I	6	
330-37 CE	Constantius I/Coin of Antioch	1	
335 CE	Constantius I	1	
>337 CE	Constantius	3	
337 CE	Constantius Augustus	1	
337-41 CE	Constantius II	5	
340 CE	Constantine Divos	1	
341-46 CE	Constantius II	4	
346-50 CE	Constantius II	1	
350-66 CE	Constantius I	1	
351-54 CE	Constantius Gallus	2	
361-63 CE	Julian the Apostate	1	
364-78 CE	Valens	1	
367-75 CE	Val Valens and Gratian	1	
367-75 CE	Valentinian/Valens	1	
395-408 CE	Arcadius	1	
395-423 CE	Honorius	2	
<b>Total Coins</b>		<b>91</b>	

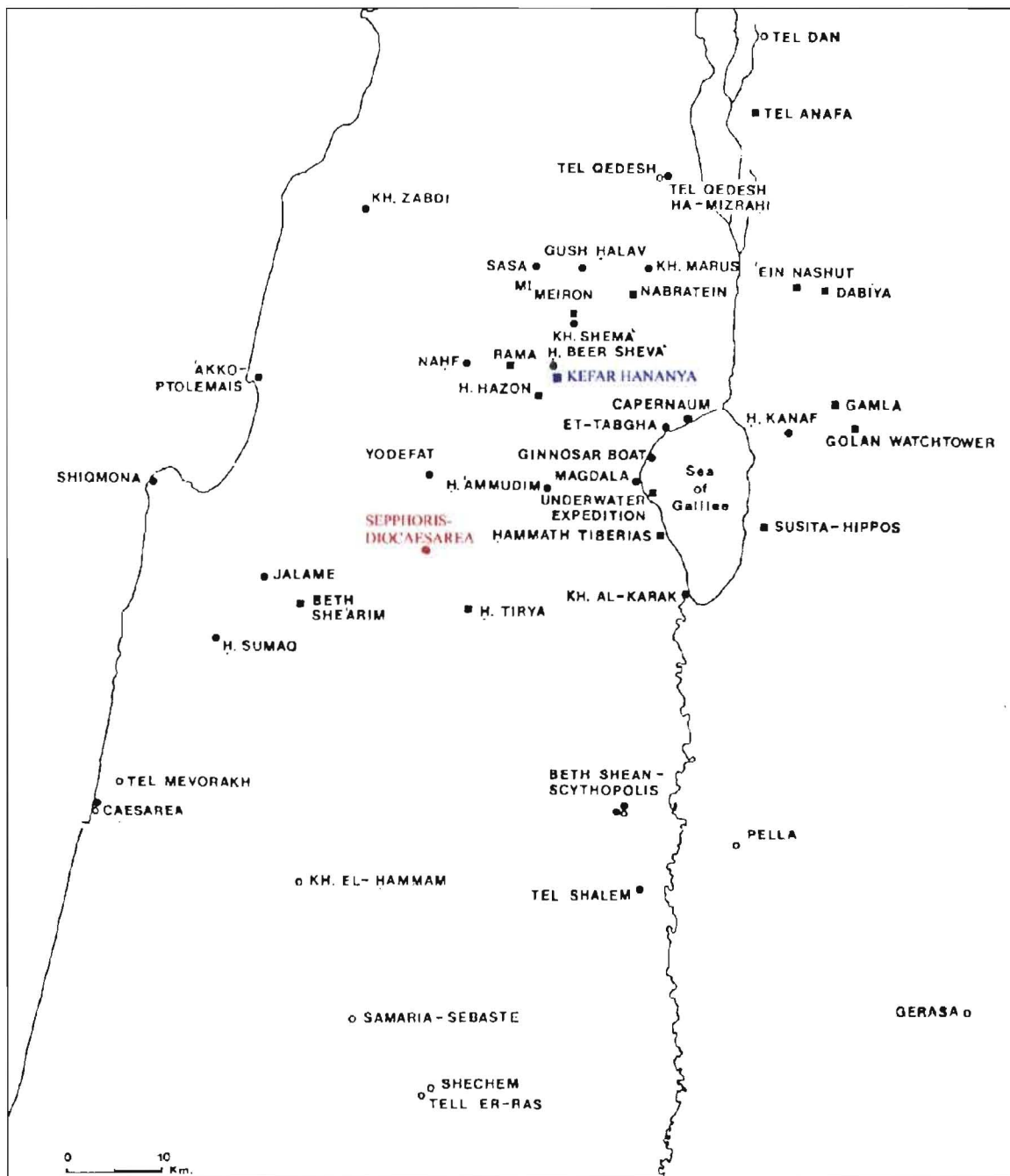
Source: *Artifact and Coin List* 1983-1997

## Sites Exporting Aquatic Foodstuffs to Sepphoris Roman and Byzantine Periods



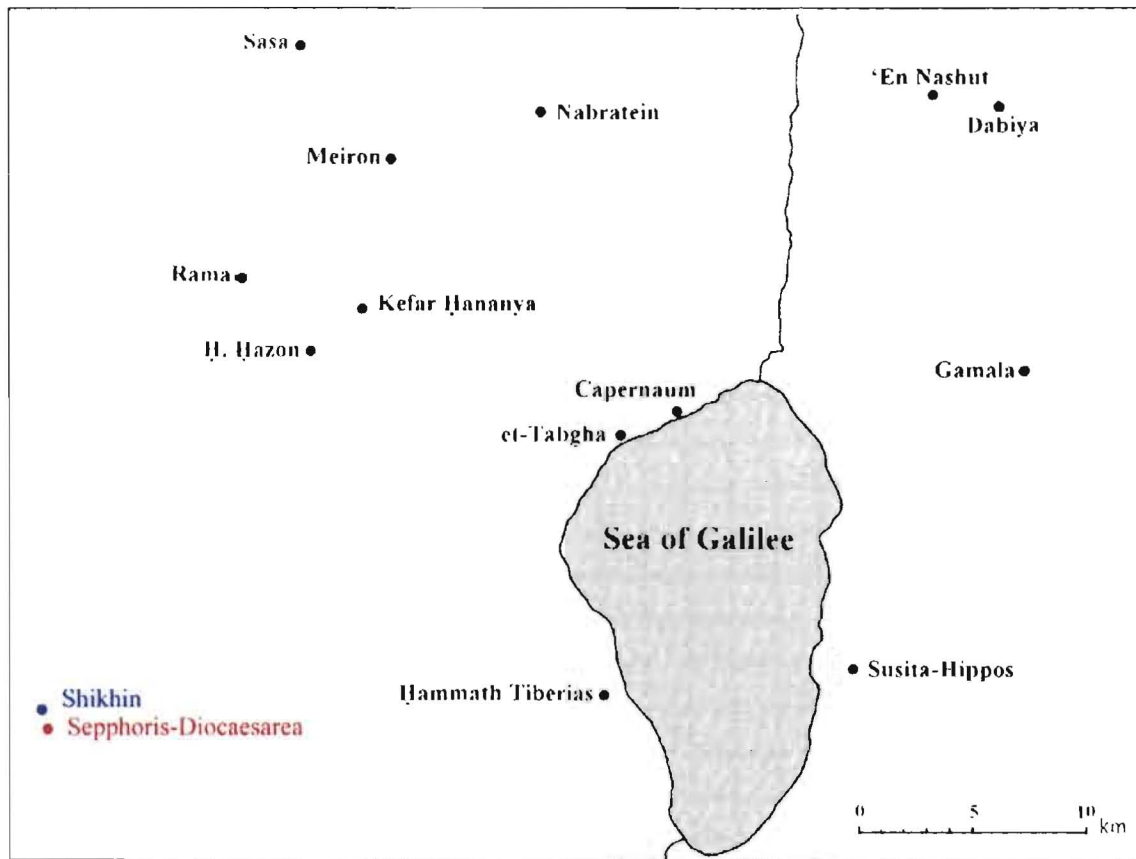
Source: Fradkin 1997

# Distribution Map of Kefar Hananya Showing Geographical Relationship of Kefar Hananya and Sepphoris



Source: Adan-Bayewitz 1993

## Distribution Map of Shikhin Showing Geographical Relationship of Shikhin and Sepphoris



Source: Strange, Groh, and Longstaff 1995

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