INTRODUCTION

Students of religion need to abandon the notion of ‘essence,’ of a unique differentium . . . as well as the socially impossible correlative of a community constituted by a systematic set of beliefs. The cartography appears far messier. We need to map variety, . . . which appears as a shifting cluster of characteristics that vary over time” (Smith 1982: 18).

For a period of 700 years—from the early third century B.C. through the fifth century A.D.—there was a cult and sanctuary at the mouth of the Jordan River dedicated to the Greek god Pan. When the cult was founded no one lived in the environs; it was a rural shrine, which the ancient historian Polybius referred to as “the Panion” for its religious association (Histories 16.18.2, 28.1.3). By the time the cult was abandoned, its surroundings had changed considerably: the sanctuary had long been integrated into the busy urban landscape of Caesarea Philippi, the city that Herod Philip established in 2 B.C. in the plain immediately below the old shrine. The sanctuary’s longevity has been an unremarked phenomenon, seen as proof of the popularity of the cult and the stability of local religious life. However, even a cursory outline of changes in the region’s history and the sanctuary’s situation suggests that although the name and nominal deity remained the same, cult ritual must have changed greatly over time. Here I offer a description of those changing rituals, in the hope that they will provide contours for the sort of map Smith envisioned (1982: 18).

Literary sources provide little information about the sanctuary, and none concerning activities or rituals; aside from the simple topographical reference...
provided by Polybius, only Josephus (Ant. 15.10.3, JW 1.21.3) and Eusebius (Ecc. Hist. 7.17) briefly mention the Panion. Six seasons of excavations (1988–1994) under the auspices of the Israel Antiquities Authority, however, have cleared the sanctuary terrace and produced ample archaeological remains, including 6 structures; 100 crates of terracotta roof tiles; about 200 kg of stone inlay fragments; about 2500 fragments of animal bones; 10 cartons filled with tiny pieces of blown and moldmade glass; 20 inscriptions; fragments of about 10 altars; about 200 fragments of marble and limestone sculpture; and about 2000 kg of pottery.1 Of these finds, the ceramic remains are the most informative for reconstructing ritual practices, for three reasons. First, they can be securely dated regardless of their findspots, and can thus be associated with their respective periods of use. Second, ceramics exist from every period of the sanctuary’s life, and so provide a comprehensive and continuous category of evidence. Third, ceramic remains are especially illustrative of the offerings of individual worshipers, since they constitute the most readily available and least expensive type of object.

J. Z. Smith has described offerings, the physical residue of ritual, as “linguistically impoverished” (1987: 102). Their recovery and explanation is, however, a crucial component of the study of religious life in antiquity. The rituals that they reflect are, as R. MacMullen has put it, the mechanisms “by which religion was established close to the center of daily life and therefore forced ... on people’s attention” (MacMullen 1981: 36). Studies of offerings at Greek sanctuaries have traditionally focused on their evidence for economic life and political cohesiveness, rather than on ritual significance (Snodgrass 1989–1990; Morel 1989–1990; Burkert 1987). Nevertheless, careful analysis of the sanctuary’s ceramic assemblages by period can provide insights on a host of fundamental issues, including the character of individual worship; the nature of ceremonies and offerings; the status of the deity (or deities) to whom those offerings were made; and the relationship between the sanctuary, the city of Caesarea Philippi, and the larger region, including Mt. Hermon, the Golan Heights, and the Hula Valley. Moreover, this large body of offerings from a pagan sanctuary that remained operative through the birth and early empowerment of the Church vividly documents MacMullen’s statement (1981: 134) that “the enormous thing called paganism ... did not one day just topple over dead.”

THE SANCTUARY’S SETTING AND ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS

The Sanctuary of Pan is located beneath the cliffs of Mt. Hermon, at modern Banias in the northwestern corner of the Golan Heights (fig. 1). The sanctuary lies on a 250 foot long narrow terrace, at one end of which is a huge natural cave, and beneath which is a ravine from which one of the sources of the Jordan issues forth. The name and location of the Sanctuary of Pan have been known since antiquity because of carved niches and inscriptions visible in the rock face above the springs. Explorers in the 19th and early 20th centuries identified the site, copied the inscriptions, surveyed the visible remains, and collected what carvings and artifacts there were. Detailed exploration and excavation were not, however, pursued, because the narrow terrace immedi-
ately beneath the niches was strewn with boulders, and enormous rock fall from an earthquake in 1837 had blocked the entrance and floor of the grotto. Archaeological survey and salvage excavations were conducted in and around the ancient city center after 1967. The sanctuary terrace itself was the site of active excavations from 1988 to 1994 (Ma'oz 1993; 1995; 1996).

The large natural grotto at one end of the terrace was, presumably, the site of the earliest cult activity (although no remains have been found inside). Construction atop the terrace itself began in the early Roman period (late first century B.C.), with the first building placed immediately in front of the cave. Successive constructions were added east of that building, until the entire length of the terrace was filled (fig. 2). The buildings include (from west to east, i.e., earliest to latest): (a) an elaborate limestone and marble propylon, probably the Augusteion mentioned by Josephus (Ant. 15.10.3; cf. Roller 1998: 190–92); (b) an open-air court fronting an artificial cave in the cliff face, called the “Court of Pan and the Nymphs” (after a later inscription over a niche above the cave); (c) a tetraprostyle temple dedicated in the reign of Trajan or Hadrian, called the “Temple of Zeus and Pan”; (d) a second, narrow, open-air court fronted by a staircase from the road above the spring, called the “Nemesis Court” (after a dedicatory inscription over a niche in the cliff face at the rear of the court); (e) a building with three long halls, fronted by a paved street, called the “Tripartite Building”; and (f) an apsidal structure with two tiny back rooms, probably a shrine or small temple, called the “Temple of Pan and the Goats” (Ma'oz 1996).3

RITUAL PRACTICES: THE EVIDENCE OF THE POTTERY

Almost all of the Hellenistic and early Roman pottery found at the sanctuary was recovered from soil deposits around the natural bedrock outcrops
Fig. 3. Total number of diagnostic ceramic fragments and vessels found at the Sanctuary of Pan, by period.

Fig. 4. Total number of diagnostic Hellenistic ceramic fragments found at the Sanctuary of Pan, by function.

along the edge of the terrace slope. Despite its unstratified findspot, most of this material can be confidently dated on the basis of a ware's known periods of production (as in the case of Eastern Sigillata A, or ESA), or well-dated comparanda. Middle to late Roman pottery (later first/early second to mid-fifth century A.D.) was found under structures built on the terrace itself. This material is datable by a combination of associated numismatic or inscriptive evidence, as well as by comparison with similar forms from nearby sites. The amount of pottery from each period varied greatly; figure 3 indicates the total number of identifiable fragments or vessels found at the sanctuary.4

Hellenistic Period (Third to Mid-First Century B.C.)

From the topographic reference provided by Polybius, we can infer that the Panion must have been established by the year 200 B.C. It is thus reasonable to identify the Hellenistic pottery found on and below the terrace as the residue of cult activities there.5 More than 95% of that pottery was found in soil pockets below the Court of Pan and the Nymphs and the Temple of Zeus and Pan. These Hellenistic finds must be taken as representative of the period as a whole, because the lack of stratified contexts and the continued production of many third century B.C. wares and forms into the second century B.C. precludes our knowing precisely when vessels were brought to the sanctuary. The Hellenistic corpus consists of extremely small, worn fragments that rarely make a partial profile. In this earliest period of the sanctuary's life, before buildings and courtyards covered the terrace, offerings would have been periodically cleaned from altars within or immediately in front of the grotto and swept over the sloping hill, thus accounting for the lack of joining fragments or restorable vessels. As a consequence, some of these periods' ceramic remains are probably missing, and caution must be exercised when comparing total quantities.

The Hellenistic ceramic assemblage reflects a good deal about the character of that period's cult activities. Over 90% of the offerings consist of cooking vessels, of which most show signs of use, and table vessels intended for eating or drinking (figs. 4–5). While these may have been proffered as dedicatory offerings (the cooking vessels presumably holding some food), a more likely explanation is that this assortment is evidence for dining at the sanctuary. Table and kitchen vessels could be “official” possessions of a cult. Plates and cups are specifically cited, for example, on a fourth century B.C. inventory from a sanctuary of Hera in Boiotia, Greece (Tomlinson 1980: 221–24). Within a cave in the precinct of Poseidon at Isthmia, fourth century B.C. cooking pots, casseroles, kraters, and jugs were found.
in a pithos in a deep hole dug into the ground (Broneer 1962: 4–7). At the Panion, however, the lack of buildings that could have held such goods makes it more probable that they were brought by visitors.6

The preparation and consumption of food and drink at the sanctuary might be characterized as "ritual dining," but it could also be interpreted, more informally, as picnicking. During the Hellenistic period, the Sanctuary of Pan was a rural site, situated at one of the most abundant perennial water sources in the region. There was no city anywhere nearby, the closest settlements being some small pastoral encampments and farmsteads in the northern Golan Heights, on the slopes of Mt. Hermon, and in the Hula Valley.7 The largest of this area’s Hellenistic period sites was the villa at Tel Anafa, about 6 km to the southwest, in the northern Hula Valley (Herbert 1994). In other words, the sanctuary, though not out of the way, was also not especially convenient to any settled place, and a visit must have required some time and planning. At least some of the many vessels found at the site are likely to be the residue of informal visits to the grotto, the terrace, and the spring. Ancient authors describe such activities at rural sanctuaries elsewhere, for example at the Sanctuary of Aphrodite at Knidos, where “shady trees [covered] couches for those who wished to feast themselves there” (Ps.-Lucian, Amores 12). The mise-en-scène of Menander’s Dyskolos comes to mind as well: At a cave sacred to Pan and the Nymphs in Phyle (Attica), many people, including slaves and a cook, arrive laden with food, both to sacrifice to the god and to laze away the afternoon feasting; as the hero of the play says, “Look at these thieves at their sacrifice! They bring in beds, wine by the cask—for their own pleasure, not the gods!” (lines 447–49; Vellacott 1967: 78).

The range of wares and forms in the sanctuary’s Hellenistic-period assemblage is parochial; 84% of the vessels are of “local” manufacture, with fabrics that derive either from the northern Golan Heights, the slopes of Mt. Hermon, or the Hula Valley (fig. 6). Foremost among the local vessels are those made of spatter painted ware, which were produced in the Hula Valley (Berlin 1997a: 7–9). Imports consist almost exclusively of Phoenician semifine, BSP (Black-Slipped Predecessor), and ESA vessels, which were manufactured on the Phoenician (and Syrian?) coast (Berlin 1997a: 9–10; 1997b: 77–78; Slane 1997: 269–71). The only imported vessels from outside the Levant are two Greek island amphoras. Whether locally manufactured or imported, examples of all forms have been found at nearby sites, an indication that they were readily available from area markets or peddlers. The preponderance of local, or locally available, vessels is not surprising, especially at a site so removed from major population centers. At other sites in this region, however, more “exotic” ceramic offerings have been found, including among other items mold-made bowls, Italian (Campanian) table vessels, and painted lagynoi probably made in Alexandria (Cornell 1997; Slane 1997: 347–48; Berlin 1997a: 42–45). The absence of such finer wares at the sanctuary suggests not only that this period’s dedicants came from the immediate environs, but also that they were neither well off nor generous. The Hellenistic sanctuary may thus be inferred to have been a local and fairly poor cult place.

**Early Roman Period (Late First Century B.C. to Late First Century A.D.)**

Towards the end of the first century B.C. two events occurred that had a significant impact on the sanctuary. The first was the decision by King Herod the Great in 19 B.C. to dedicate a temple to Augustus at the cult site itself (Josephus Ant. 15.363–64). In so doing, Herod introduced not only another “deity” to the sanctuary, but also a certain amount of official attention, money, and status. Shortly thereafter, in 2 B.C., Herod Philip, the youngest of Herod’s sons and successors, chose the area below the Panion springs for the location of his new capital city, Caesarea Philippi. With this event, the sanctuary was transformed from a rural to an urban cult, its prestige and reputation connected to that of the new capital city.8

None of the buildings dated to this period (the Augusteion, the Court of Pan and the Nymphs, and the Temple of Zeus and Pan) contained pottery that may be associated with their use. Rather, as with the Hellenistic ceramic assemblage, that of the early Roman period is unstratified and very fragmentary. Almost all of this pottery was found in soil pockets in and around the bedrock boulders of the terrace edge, and it probably comprises debris cleared from the cave and/or the terrace.

The quantity and ratio of types within the early Roman-period assemblage reveals changes in ritual at the sanctuary. The most notable difference is the marked increase in lamp dedications (fig. 7). Lamps
Fig. 5. Hellenistic table and cooking vessels found at the Sanctuary of Pan.

1. Bowl, incurved rim (531/5335/1).
   Single small rim fragment. Spatter painted ware (5YR 7/8), light gray core. Slip fired brownish orange out (2.5YR 5/8), dull gray in (5YR 4/1). Berlin 1997a, PW 135, pl. 16.

2. Bowl, incurved rim (328/3346/5).

   Two joining fragments preserve small section of rim and upper wall. Spatter painted ware (10YR 7/6), fully fired. Thin, matte gray to brown-gray slip (10YR 4/1–2) in and out. Berlin 1997a: 72–75, PW 141, 142, pls. 16, 76.

   Single small fragment. Spatter painted ware (7.5YR 7/4), fully fired. Polished slip fired pale pink out (5YR 7/4),
are, of course, not unusual in sanctuary assemblages (e.g., Broneer 1977; Edlund-Berry 1989–1990: 336). Nevertheless, during the entire Hellenistic period remarkably few lamps—a total of seven—were dedicated at the Panion (fig. 4). During the early Roman period, on the other hand, lamps were the most popular category of ceramic offering. Fragments of 141 lamps have been found, of which over half are imported discus lamps, of Italian, Cypriot, and Syrian manufacture. Lamps are an easier type of dedication than a cooked offering. The startling rise in the number of lamps reflects an increase in brief visits and more casual gifts. This circumstance may be a result of the sanctuary's new status as an urban cult. In the previous period, when the site was a simple rural shrine, dedicants traveled some distance to visit, and would thus have more readily chosen to linger. Now public buildings replaced the forest just below the spring, and a beautiful stone building stood before the grotto. Some of this period's dedicants were surely residents of the new city, perhaps stopping at the sanctuary while in the center of town, and giving the token offering of a lamp to either Augustus or Pan.

A large number of early Roman-period cooking vessels were also recovered, indicating that, concurrent with the increase in simple lamp dedications, cooked meals continued to be made as well (figs. 7, 8.4–7). As with the Hellenistic cooking pots and casserole, many of these show signs of use, whether from preparation of a sacrificial offering or of an on-the-spot repast. The plates, dishes, and bowls that have been found (fig. 8.1–3) could have served several similar functions: for individuals' drinking and dining while visiting the sanctuary, for the more elegant presentation of a cooked offering, or as dedications in and of themselves. The continuation of dining within the setting of the sanctuary is consistent with Phoenician cult practices elsewhere; for example, there were small dining rooms within the second century B.C. complex of the Sanctuary of the Syrian Gods on Delos (Starcky 1949: 62–67).

Many more of this period's vessels are imports: 69 percent of the early Roman-period assemblage was made outside the Golan Heights–Mt. Hermon–Hula Valley area (fig. 6). Compared to the late Hellenistic assemblage, of which only 16 percent was imported, such a figure might support the suggestion that a real shift in the character of the cult and its dedicants occurred at this time. Some of the imported table wares do come from quite far afield, such as a single Pergamene dish, several Italian sigillata plates and bowls, and two Cypriot sigillata vessels; these certainly represent more generous benefactions than any given previously. The two most common imports, however, are ESA and Kfar Hananya ware, which are also common at other sites in this region (e.g., Tel Anafa, Caesarea Philippi),

Fig. 5. Cont.

- Squared lip casserole (328/3337/1). Single fragment rim and wall fragment. Sandy bright orange brown fabric (2.5YR 6/8), many fine and small rounded gray and white, medium angular gray, some medium and large angular white inclusions, many small and medium rounded voids, narrow dark gray core. Berlin 1997a: 94–98, PW 240, pls. 28, 80.
and so must have been in regular supply (Slane 1997: 272; Berlin 1997a: 14–15, 30–32; Adan-Bayewitz 1993: 215–19; S. Israeli, personal communication). This preponderance of imported table and cooking wares probably reflects a diminished local ceramic industry, and concomitant dependence on outside manufacturers. It is this circumstance, rather than an upswing in fortune specific to the sanctuary, that best accounts for the high number of early Roman-period imports. The Panion remained a relatively simple shrine in this period, similar to the contemporary small sanctuaries found on Mt. Hermon (Dar 1993). The few physical accommodations and the continuation of modest, individual rituals stand in contrast to contemporary sanctuaries east and south in the Hauran, such as the theater and temple complex dedicated to Baal-shamin at Seeia (Si²), the theater and temple complex at Sahr, and a similar complex at Sur (Butler 1915: 373, 379, fig. 324 [Si²], 429–30, ill. 371 [Sur], 442–45 [Sahr]).

**Middle Roman Period (End of the First to Second Century A.D.)**

By the middle Roman period, the Sanctuary of Pan had become a religious and cultural fixture for the population of Caesarea Philippi and its vicinity. The Augusteion and the Court of Pan and the Nymphs, with its small artificial cave, filled the terrace’s western side, their architectural elaborations providing physical evidence of the cult’s wealth and status. At the end of the first century, probably concurrent with the city’s centennial, the construction of the Temple of Zeus and Pan began (Maçož 1996: 1–2). Probably after this temple was completed during the second century, several dedicatory niches were carved into the western cliff face (behind the Court of Pan and the Nymphs), and the Nemesis Court was laid out east of the new temple. These structures provided both the opportunity and the incentive for displays of largesse, reflected in the dedications of imported marble sculptures made during these years. These include a Nemesis and a Roma, both colossal; seven life-sized statues of nymphs and deities, including Asclepios and Apollo; and smaller statues of Artemis and Hermes (Friedland 1997: 272). The buildings, the niches, and the sculpture all provide evidence for steady and generous patronage of the sanctuary during this period. It is therefore surprising to find remarkably few ceramic remains (fig. 3).

Stratigraphic and historical circumstances provide a partial explanation. First, the Temple of Zeus and Pan and the Court of Nemesis were both constructed directly on the surface of the terrace (even incorporating particularly large bedrock boulders within their foundations or walls), and situated so that their front ends ran up to and parallel with the terrace edge. One small, stratigraphically intact soil deposit was found within the pronaos of the Temple...
of Zeus and Pan; but other than this, no soil fills lay beneath any walls or floors. Further, medieval-period occupants of the Temple of Zeus and Pan completely dismantled and rearranged the cella, thus destroying that building's interior fills. Thus, with the exception of the Temple pronaos fill, no pottery can be directly associated with the sanctuary's second century A.D. buildings.

Stratigraphic circumstances cannot, however, account for the overall drop in middle Roman ceramics at the site. After all, with the exception of one lamp embedded within the Augusteion side wall, no pottery was found in or directly associated with the Augusteion or the Court of Pan and the Nymphs either. Yet 457 ceramic fragments contemporary with those structures were found on and below the terrace, but only 52 fragments datable to the middle Roman period (fig. 3). Such a significant decline indicates that small-scale worshipers essentially abandoned the cult.

A breakdown of this period's ceramic finds by function highlights a further shift in the rituals practiced by those few worshipers. The assemblage consists essentially of two categories: lamps and...
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Late Roman Period (Third to Fifth Century A.D.)

By the beginning of the third century A.D., the only remaining open space on the sanctuary terrace lay at the far eastern edge. The Tripartite Building and the Temple of Pan and the Goats were installed here, connected by a paved path. Both of these contained an identical, and distinctive, corpus of pottery consisting of a series of small saucer lamps (fig. 10), table vessels (fig. 11), serving bowls (fig. 12.4–5), and cooking vessels (fig. 12.1–3, 6–8). All of these vessels were made in one or both of two new wares, one made in the area around Caesarea Philippi (Banias ware), and one made at the site of Khirbet el-Havarit, in the northern Golan Heights (Havarit ware; Hartal 1989: 11 [English], 29–30 [site 1.24, Hebrew], pl. 13 [titles are on p. 244]). A large deposit of this pottery was found below the floor of the Tripartite Building along with a coin of Julia Maesa (220 A.D.), indicating that its manufacture had begun by the early third century A.D.

The late Roman assemblage is astonishingly different from preceding ones. Foremost among the differences is the enormous number of lamps: 2930 fragments or complete vessels (figs. 10, 13). Lamp dedications comprise 75% of this period’s ceramics, as compared to 33% of the early Roman period’s (and 62% of the middle Roman; fig. 14). An increase of this magnitude must reflect the introduction of new rites requiring lamps or of a different style of worship; the available evidence makes the latter explanation more probable. Rites that would require lamps, especially in such quantity, ought to relate to a mystery cult, or perhaps an oracular shrine. An example where a sharp rise in the number of lamps reflects just that comes from the Sanctuary of Poseidon at Isthmia. There the exceptional abundance of first century A.D. lamps (as compared to every other period) indicates the popularity of the nightly mysteries necessary for the cult of Palaimon (Bronner 1977: 2–3, 92). In the region around the Panion, a contemporary oracular shrine probably did exist, at the

table vessels (fig. 9). The presence of only one cooking vessel (the handle of an imported pan) reveals that people no longer dined on site or presented cooked offerings. The 18 dishes and bowls found should therefore be understood as gifts given in and of themselves, as were the lamps. Individual visitors to the sanctuary thus made only the simplest of dedications, and probably did not linger long. By the end of the second century A.D., the sanctuary was at its most visually impressive, the previously empty terrace filled with buildings. Yet the number and type of ceramic finds show that the level of individual involvement in the cult was at its lowest point.

The character of the Panion during this period seems similar to that of the contemporary sanctuary of the Dea Syria of Hierapolis as described by Lucian. He notes that “in the temple are many expensive artifacts, . . . many marvelous things and statues befitting the gods” (§10), and further that “outside stand . . . myriads of other bronze statues of kings and priests” (§39; Attridge and Oden 1976). In addition to the wealth of objects displayed, his description of the cult and its rituals highlights the animated nature of the statuary (§10), the wild yet gentle animals within the temenos (§41), and the sacrifices of the priests (§§42–44). These last have the aspect of high drama, with the priest, robed in purple, performing before a very large but silent audience. What is easily overlooked in his remarkably detailed treatise, however, is that Lucian never mentions a single rite of or dedication by an individual worshiper. The cult at Hieropolis had the character of a show rather than a sanctuary. The written evidence provided by Lucian evokes much the same picture as does the material evidence from the Panion.

Late Roman Period (Third to Fifth Century A.D.)

By the beginning of the third century A.D., the only remaining open space on the sanctuary terrace lay at the far eastern edge. The Tripartite Building and the Temple of Pan and the Goats were installed here, connected by a paved path. Both of these contained an identical, and distinctive, corpus of pottery consisting of a series of small saucer lamps (fig. 10), table vessels (fig. 11), serving bowls (fig. 12.4–5), and cooking vessels (fig. 12.1–3, 6–8). All of these vessels were made in one or both of two new wares, one made in the area around Caesarea Philippi (Banias ware), and one made at the site of Khirbet el-Havarit, in the northern Golan Heights (Havarit ware; Hartal 1989: 11 [English], 29–30 [site 1.24, Hebrew], pl. 13 [titles are on p. 244]). A large deposit of this pottery was found below the floor of the Tripartite Building along with a coin of Julia Maesa (220 A.D.), indicating that its manufacture had begun by the early third century A.D.

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Fig. 9. Total number of diagnostic middle Roman ceramic fragments found at the Sanctuary of Pan, by function.
second–third century A.D. temple at Kedesh (Fischer, Ovadiah, and Roll 1984; Ovadiah, Roll, and Fischer 1993; Magness 1990). The facade of this building is similar in design to that of the famous shrine of Apollo at Didyma in that the central portal is raised and closed off by a grate or screen, making it both impressive and inaccessible (Aviam 1985). In addition, there are two side doors flanked by niches through which libations might be poured; and there is a spacious forecourt in which visitors might gather. At the Panion, however, neither of this period’s new buildings had sufficient audience capacity or provision for oracular dissemination. Further, most of the almost 3000 lamps from this period’s assemblage do not appear to have been used at all, which would not be the case if they had been an integral part of some new rite. Their condition, in fact, indicates that they were ceremonial rather than functional. These lamps, like those from previous periods, therefore, most likely represent simple individual offerings. Their radically increased quantity thus reveals a sanctuary far more heavily visited at this time than at any other in its history. Such enthusiastic small-scale patronage is in vivid contrast to the situation in the previous century, when private dedicants had largely abandoned the cult.

The quantity of the late Roman-period lamp dedications is not matched by their quality: most (87%) are miniature saucer lamps (fig. 10), regular-sized versions of which have been found in the Caesarea Philippi excavations (S. Israeli, personal communication), at Tel Dan (Biran 1994: fig. 192.1–2, 4), on the northern plateau of the Golan Heights at Dabura and Dardara (Hartal 1989: pl. 14.2, 6, 8), on the slopes of Mt. Hermon at Jebel Somak and Haruya (Dar 1978: pl. 3.2–4), and at Har Senaim (Dar 1993: pl. 1.1–9; these are misdated to the Hellenistic period). No examples of regular size have been found at the sanctuary and, conversely, few of the miniatures have been found elsewhere. Vessels of both sizes were made of the local Banias ware, and so were readily available; the miniatures may well have been manufactured specifically for the Panion. Though finished off with a variety of rim types, these

**Fig. 10. Late Roman saucer lamps found at the Sanctuary of Pan.**
1. Saucer lamp, inturned rim (249/2387/13).
   Single fragment preserving complete profile, about one-third circumference. Banias ware (5YR 7/6).
2. Saucer lamp, inturned rim (750/7594/1).
3. Saucer lamp, ledge rim (750/7615/2).
   Single fragment preserving complete profile, about one-quarter circumference. Banias ware (5YR 7/6). Burned on rim.
4. Saucer lamp, delta rim (401/4215).
   Two joining fragments preserve about one-quarter circumference rim and wall. Havarit ware (5YR 6/6).
5. Saucer lamp, flanged lip (157/1369/2).
   Single rim and wall fragment. Banias ware (5YR 6/6).
Fig. 11. Late Roman table vessels found at the Sanctuary of Pan.
1. Large carinated bowl (712/7979, 7986, 8002).
   Three joining fragments preserve one-quarter circumference rim and wall. Havarit ware, fully fired. Upper exterior
   wall fired dark brown from stacking in kiln.
2. Small bowl, cut rim (722/8176/9).
3. Goblet (729/8166/3).
   Six joining fragments preserve complete profile, entire bottom, most of rim and wall. Banias ware. Exterior wet-
   smoothed.
4. Small bowl, carinated (716/8100/2, 726/8238).
   Eleven joining fragments preserve complete profile, entire bottom, most of rim and wall. Banias ware. Exterior wet-
   smoothed.
5. Small bowl, carinated (712/7979, 7986).
   Four joining fragments preserve complete profile, half circumference rim and body, entire base. Banias ware, fully
   fired. Exterior wet-smoothed.
   Four joining fragments preserve complete profile, about one-third circumference rim and wall, entire base. Banias
   ware, fully fired. Neat string-cut base.
7. Shallow phiale (726/8247).
   Single fragment preserves about one-sixth circumference rim to bottom. Banias ware, fully fired. Exterior wet-
   smoothed. Finger impressions around upper wall.
8. Deep phiale (723/8176/6).
   Five fragments, four joining, preserve complete profile, one-quarter circumference rim to bottom. Banias ware, fully
   Eight joining fragments preserve complete vessel save for two small holes, partially restored in plaster. Banias
   ware, fully fired. Finger impressions around mid-wall.
Fig. 12. Late Roman table and cooking vessels found at the Sanctuary of Pan.

1. Cooking pot, plain rim (699/7612/5, 7365).
   Three joining fragments preserve about half circumference rim to shoulder. Banias ware, fully fired. Unused.

2. Cooking pot, plain rim (712/7974/2, 7944).
   Fourteen joining fragments preserve complete profile, about half circumference, one handle, partially restored in plaster. Havarit ware, light orange slip. Two small burned areas on exterior.

3. Cooking pot, grooved rim (708/7836/12).
   Nine fragments: six join to preserve one-quarter circumference rim to lower wall, one handle; one nonjoining rim piece; two joining wall pieces. Havarit ware, fully fired. Kiln blush over one side of rim and wall.


   Eight fragments join to preserve two large nonjoining pieces: a) one-third circumference rim and upper wall, one handle; b) one-third circumference foot and lower wall. Banias ware, fully fired. Exterior wet-smoothed.

   Two joining fragments preserve complete profile, one-quarter circumference. Havarit ware, fully fired. Burned on rim and lower outer wall.

7. Cooking bowl, cut rim (725/8217/12).
   Two joining fragments preserve complete profile, about one-third circumference, one handle. Havarit ware, fully fired. Kiln blush on upper wall.

8. Cooking bowl, cut rim (705/7820, 7822, 7833, 7919).
   30 joining fragments preserve three-quarters circumference rim to beginning of bottom. Havarit ware. Smoked on exterior.
saucer lamps were otherwise simple, open forms, reminiscent of pre-Classical pinched lamps. The remaining late Roman-period lamps are locally produced derivatives of imported moldmade discus lamps, which are marginally more decorative than the saucer lamps; the types are known as “bilanceolate” and “northern stamped” (Rosenthal and Sivan 1978: 111–12; Sussman 1989). These “fancier” varieties constitute a mere 13% of a lamp corpus that, in its entirety, is remarkably dull. Dedicants may have visited the sanctuary in droves during this period, but they largely presented only the plainest and least expensive of offerings.

Lamps were probably not the only vessels to have been given as offerings. The quantities and condition of the dining, serving, and cooking vessels suggest that they too were primarily dedications, as opposed to functional objects. Practically all of the ceramics, including the cooking vessels, appear to be new, as if they had just been purchased and taken immediately to the sanctuary. Further, the ratios between vessel types is peculiar: there are twice as many cooking as serving and dining vessels in the late Roman assemblage, compared to a one-to-one correspondence in both the Hellenistic and the early Roman assemblages (fig. 14). In those earlier periods, such vessels represented the detritus of on-site dining. The skewed proportions in this assemblage, coupled with the vessels’ unused condition, indicate that in late Roman times ritual activity was restricted to dedications alone, as opposed to more communal rites.

The identification of this mass of vessels as dedicatory rather than utilitarian sheds light on the function of the Tripartite Building. Several points are relevant. First is the position of this building, tucked behind but accessible from the Temple of Pan and the Goats. Second, about half of the vessels recovered inside were at least partially restorable. Third, the vessels appeared fresh and new, as if they were placed here soon after they were given. The building’s location, along with the quantity and condition of its finds, combine to suggest than the Tripartite Building was used as a repository for dedications, in effect, a treasury (contra Ma’oz 1996: 3). Offerings made in the Temple could have been carted off for storage here, since, once given over to the deity, the vessels became sacred and as such had to be “curated” someplace within the temenos. A similar example of “curating” apparently quotidian objects within a cult precinct, in this case for up to 400 years, is attested from the hero shrine of Glaukos at Knossos, Crete (Callaghan 1978).

With the exception of four jar fragments imported from the Aegean, all of this period’s 3919 ceramic fragments are purely local productions, either from Banias or Khirbet el-Havarit (fig. 6). Such complete insularity is surprising, for by the later third and early fourth centuries A.D. the pottery trade went throughout the Mediterranean area (Reynolds 1995; Peacock 1977). During the third through the
fifth century A.D., the busiest producers and exporters of ceramics were the Tunisian manufacturies, which concentrated on table and cooking wares. The best known of these is African Red Slip, which is, in fact, a group name representative of many separate, but visually indistinguishable, production centers (Kenrick 1985: 341–78). Many Palestinian sites began to receive African Red Slip wares by the middle to late fourth century A.D., including Jerusalem (Magness 1993: 181), Caesarea Maritima (Riley 1975: 39–40), Tell Keisan (Landgraf 1980), Jalame (Johnson 1988: 145–68), and Gush Halav (Groh 1990). However, Caesarea Philippi, the Hula Valley, and the Golan Heights as far south as Hammat Gader seem to have been completely isolated. Virtually no late Roman imported ceramics have been found in the excavations of Caesarea Philippi (S. Israeli, personal communication), Tell el-Wawiyyat (A. Onn, personal communication), or Tel Dan (Biran 1994: 233, fig. 192; M. Hershkovitz, personal communication), the northern and central Golan Heights (M. Hartal, personal communication), or Hammat Gader (Ben-Arie 1997: 356–59). In their dependence on local wares, then, the sanctuary’s visitors were no different than the rest of the immediate population. Since the city and region were so secluded economically (and socially?), it seems reasonable to conclude that the Panion received few worshipers from outside this area. The pottery indicates that, despite its longevity, its compelling natural surroundings, and its aesthetic improvements, in late Roman times the cult was relevant only to local residents.

**THE SANCTUARY’S DEMISE**

The archaeological evidence provides clear testimony that the Sanctuary of Pan was abandoned. There was no trace of destruction, even though by late Roman times the Panion was a pagan cult site in an increasingly Christian city. Rather, the site appears to have lain, deserted and uncared for, for a significant period. Eventually people began to use the terrace again; four discrete architectural and/or ceramic phases were excavated above the sanctuary’s ruins. These later occupations within and above buildings mean that most of the late Roman deposits were contaminated by later material. Despite this situation, however, ceramic evidence from both the sanctuary and parts of the city suggests that the Panion was probably deserted by about the middle of the fifth century A.D.

The most compelling piece of evidence is that the late Roman assemblage is almost wholly comprised of vessels made in either Banias or Havarit ware, production of which ceased sometime in the fifth century A.D. This alone would not indicate abandonment of the sanctuary, since nothing precluded the acquisition and dedication of other wares. In fact, the assemblage from the next, post-sanctuary, phase of the terrace contains several other wares, including later imported wares such as Cypriot Red Slip (J. Magness, personal communication). However, except for the occasional stray fragment, no examples of any of these later wares were found within late Roman-period structures. In other words, none of these late sixth–early seventh century wares seem to have been used during the life of the sanctuary itself. Apparently, after the manufacture of pottery stopped at Banias and Khirbet el-Havarit, the cult received no other ceramic dedications. Other kinds of dedications also ceased. The latest sculptural dedications are two miniature, free-standing fragments (an Eros torso and the forequarters of a bovine) that are dated on stylistic grounds to the fourth century A.D. (Friedland 1997: 70). An almost complete gap in the site’s numismatic record between the early fifth and the later sixth century A.D. may be interpreted as indicating that no activity occurred on the site during this period (D. Ariel, personal communication). The latest inscription from the site dates to 222 A.D. (B. Isaac, personal communication).

Architectural activity and/or maintenance is attested elsewhere in and around the city of Caesarea Philippi in the fourth century A.D., but by the middle of the fifth century large parts of the city were deserted. This includes several villas located just outside the city proper (M. Hartal, personal communication), as well as some public buildings in the center of town (S. Israeli and V. Tzaferis, personal communication). The most significant structure to have been abandoned was the high-level aqueduct, on which maintenance clearly ceased. Excavation of the channels found them filled with silt and pottery (Hartal 1995; M. Hartal, personal communication). All pottery fragments were of vessels made either in Banias or Havarit ware, which could only have accumulated before production of these wares stopped. If the aqueduct was abandoned by the middle of the fifth century, the city had probably been gradually losing population over the preceding generation.

The abandonment of the sanctuary and the depopulation of Caesarea Philippi is of a piece with a
general decline throughout eastern Upper and Lower Galilee and the Hula Valley from the mid-fourth through the early fifth century A.D. (Adan-Bayewitz 1993: 240–43). Settlements just outside this region, however, flourished. At Beth Shearim, in the western Galilee, evidence exists for a wealthy domestic and industrial settlement from the mid-fifth to the mid-sixth century A.D. (Vitto 1996: 137–41). At Beth Shean, just south of the Sea of Galilee, construction activities in the city center continued with fervor throughout the fifth and the sixth centuries A.D. (Foerster and Tsafir 1993: 6–7 [basilica], 22 [shops along Valley Street], 26 [Roman colonnade and southwest], 28 [Byzantine “commercial” street]; Bar-Nathan and Mazor 1993: 38–41 [the bathhouse], 42–44 [Palladius Street exedra and shops], 45 [the odeon]). At Hammat Gader, just southeast of the Sea of Galilee, the baths underwent a large reconstruction around 450 A.D., after which they were active until the middle of the eighth century (Hirschfeld 1997: 123–43, 478–79).

CONCLUSION

Sanctuaries received the offerings of various peoples, from private individuals to civic officials to rulers. Ceramics, being both easily available and inexpensive, are the best evidence for visitors of the first category (although others could and did give them as well); and the ceramics found at the Sanctuary of Pan reveal much about both the cult and its worshipers. In its earliest phases, as a rural shrine, visitors came from nearby settlements, bringing local household pottery in which both meals and dedications were made. Though offerings were poor, and the ritual casual, the visits were probably of some duration. The quantity of Hellenistic finds from the Panion demonstrates that in those years the cult was a focus of continuous individual worship. By the early first century A.D., the sanctuary had become both a royal and a civic cult spot. Deities and visitors continued to enjoy cooked meals, however, which is evidence that the terrace retained some of its rural aspect, and that worshipers must have felt welcome to linger. The large number of early Roman ceramics shows that individuals continued to support the cult. At the same time its new status as both a royal and a civic cult spot encouraged a few more generous offerings, as well as faster, less onerous dedications.

By the late second century A.D., the sanctuary had become a showcase. The terrace was adorned with buildings, open-air courts, and carved niches, all providing opportunity and incentive for displays of wealthy largesse. An abrupt decrease in the number of middle Roman ceramic offerings, however, reflects the abandonment of the cult by small-scale worshipers. The site was by no means deserted. Rather, it became formal and fashionable, which apparently discouraged visits by the common people who had long sustained it.

In the early third century A.D., the cult’s caretakers responded to the decline of individual ritual activity by commissioning new buildings designed to draw crowds. As the quantity of ceramic remains attests, they were successful (fig. 3). This renewed vigor is of a piece with evidence of vitality from other pagan shrines in Palestine at the same time (MacMullen 1981: 134). Throughout the fourth century A.D. the Panion was a focus of local patronage, and more people visited than ever before. Their dedications were, however, off-hand; worshipers no longer took the time to prepare and share a meal. Active involvement gave way to passing, and passive, attendance. In the final phases of its existence, the Panion must have had the character more of a spectacle than of a cult, with its visitors more an audience than dedicants. In the end, despite its spectacular setting and elaborate structures, the sanctuary was abandoned. Some former worshipers surely converted to Christianity. Others may have turned to one of the new “ascetic stars” who rose to religious prominence during the late fourth and fifth centuries in Syria (Brown 1971a; 1971b: 80). Ironically, the period of the sanctuary’s most abundant remains proved to be its last.

NOTES

1 Z. Ma’oz directed the excavation and is responsible for publication of the architectural remains. I was responsible for field analysis and subsequent study and publication of the ceramics from the Persian through the late Roman period. Other material remains were studied in the field or after excavation: the glass by Y. Gorin-Rosen, the animal bones by G. Carver, the sculpture by E. Friedland (Friedland 1977), the inscriptions by B. Isaac, and the coins by D. Ariel. I thank Z. Ma’oz for sharing information about the buildings, B. Isaac for sharing his dating and translations of the inscriptions, and D. Ariel for information about the coins.
There is some fragmentary evidence that in the Hellenistic period access to the cave was eased by a path and an improved road bed; a small structure may have been built at the foot; see Ma’oz 1996: 4–5.

On Pan and his cult in Greece from the sixth through the fourth century B.C. see Borgeaud 1988. The most obvious similarity between Pan cults in Greece and those in the sanctuary discussed here is a predilection for locating them in or near caves and scenic rural sites (Borgeaud 1988: 49–51).

The totals indicate the number of individual, nonjoining, positively identifiable, diagnostic fragments. Diagnostic fragments (such as rim pieces) that joined to make a single vessel were counted as one. Individual body sherds were not counted.

Persian period vessels have been found, but no positive evidence exists for the identification of a cult spot during that period, assertions concerning the antiquity of the cult or the shrine notwithstanding (Wilson and Tzaferis 1998: 56, but contra Tzaferis 1992: 132*-33*). The Persian-period vessels—cooking pots, jars, a perfume bottle—have all been found in domestic contexts elsewhere in this region, and may well represent a temporary encampment.

On dining in sanctuaries in general, see MacMullen 1981: 36–38.

For Hellenistic settlement in the Golan Heights, see Hartal 1989: 7–8 (English), 126–27 (Hebrew); for Mt. Hermon, see Dar 1993: 17–22; for information about settlement in the Hula Valley I am indebted to Idan Shaked, who is conducting an archaeological survey of this area.

On the results of excavations in Caesarea Philippi itself, see Tzaferis and Israeli 1995; 1996.

A complete description of both of these fabrics, their chronology, and the various shapes produced in them, will appear in a chapter I wrote for Panion I: Excavations at the Sanctuary of Pan at Caesarea Philippi/Banias 1988–1993 (Ma’oz, in press).

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