

THE HELLENISTIC POTTERY FROM  
THE 1961 and 1962 EXCAVATIONS  
AT IRAQ EL-EMIR

by  
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Excavations were first undertaken at 'Iraq el-Emir by Paul W. Lapp in 1961. One of the express purposes of the first campaign was to date the construction of the monumental building, the Qasr el-'Abd.<sup>1</sup> "Hardly a scrap of evidence" resulted from the spring campaign.<sup>2</sup> In the extensive excavations of the second and third campaigns a satisfactory number of sherds from the first half of the second century B.C. was unearthed, and although they were from Byzantine fills, that together with correlating literary and architectural evidence clearly indicated the attribution of the Qasr to Hyrcanus' building operations in the early second century B.C.<sup>3</sup>

Recently work has been resumed at the Qasr under the direction of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and a French expedition, principally for the purpose of preservation and restoration of the Monumental Building for tourism and maintaining Jordan's cultural heritage. With renewed interest in the site, it seems appropriate that the pottery evidence for the Hellenistic dating of the Qasr from the excavations of 1961 and 1962 should be

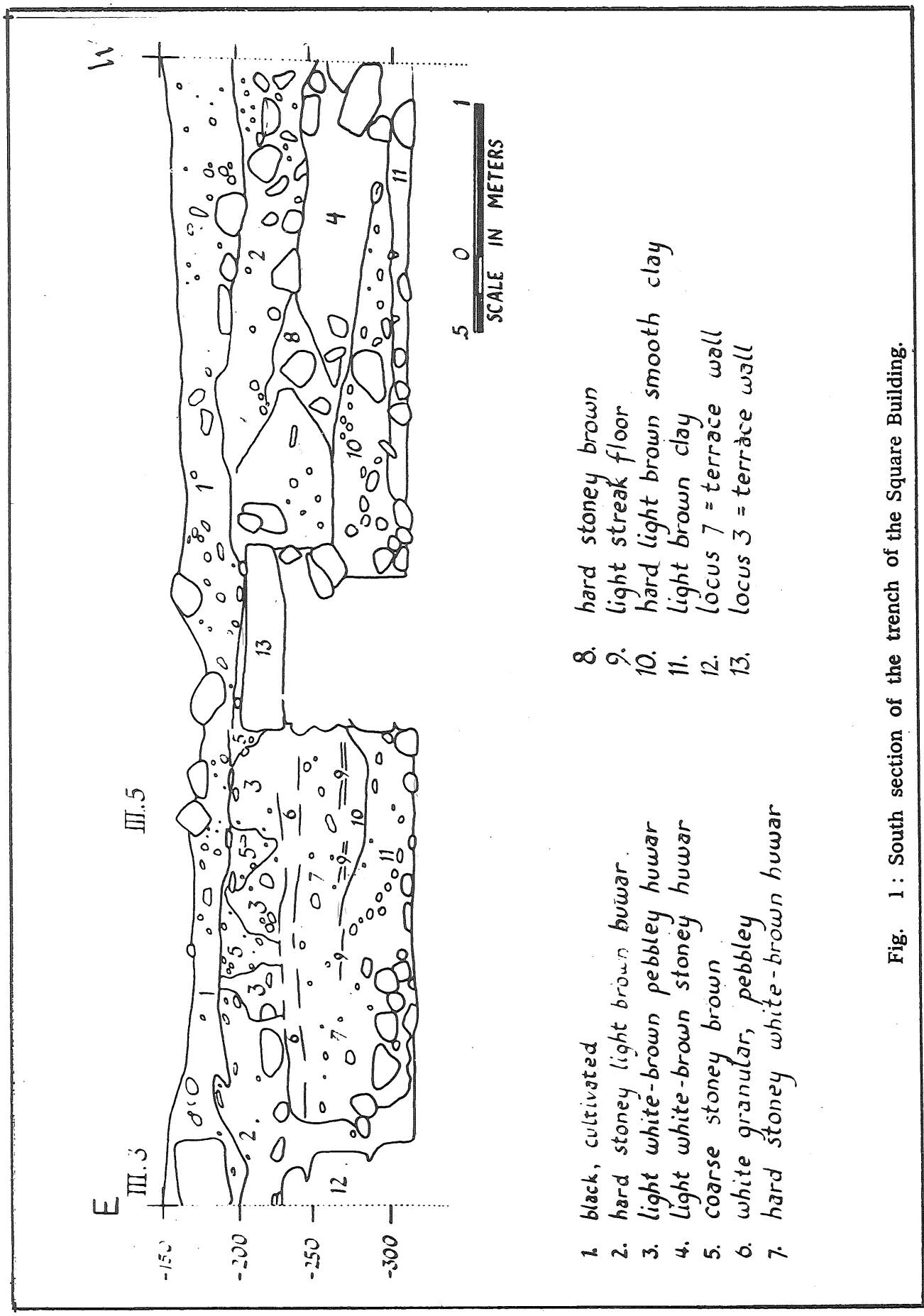
presented in detail.<sup>4</sup>

The feline fountain found near the end of P. Lapp's final campaign is well-known (Plate I) and has been competently published. Although it could not be dated by pottery stratigraphically related to it, artistically and culturally its early second century B.C. creation is certain.<sup>5</sup> That and other architectural features have established the Qasr as a second century B.C. building, most probably constructed by Hyrcanus.

Before the discovery of the fountain in the east wall of the Qasr extensive clearance had been carried on outside the northeast corner of the Qasr. A square had been opened here during the first week of the initial campaign. Two Byzantine floor levels were uncovered running against the outside Qasr wall, but pottery evidence for any Hellenistic occupation was entirely lacking (Plate II). An attempt to find a Hellenistic floor or closed locus was a particular aim of the two succeeding campaigns, but only occasional Hellenistic sherds were uncovered. By the time of the discovery of the feline<sup>6</sup>

1. P.W. Lapp, "Soundings at 'Arâq el-Emîr (Jordan)", *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 165 (Feb., 1962), p. 16.  
2. *Ibid.*, p. 33.  
3. P.W. Lapp, "The Second and Third campaign at 'Arâq el-Emîr", *BASOR*, 171 (Oct., 1963), p. 24

4. The Final report of the excavations of P.W. Lapp, including a study of the pottery, is now in preparation.  
5. D.K. Hill, "The Animal Fountain of 'Arâq el Emîr", *BASOR*, 171 (Oct., 1963). p. 55.  
6. Lapp, *BASOR*, 171, p. 24.



- 1. black, cultivated
- 2. hard stoney light brown huwar
- 3. light white-brown pebbly huwar
- 4. light white-brown stoney huwar
- 5. coarse stoney brown
- 6. white granular, pebbly
- 7. hard stoney white-brown huwar

- 8. hard stoney brown
- 9. light streak floor
- 10. hard light brown smooth clay
- 11. light brown clay
- 12. locus 7 = terrace wall
- 13. locus 3 = terrace wall

Fig. 1 : South section of the trench of the Square Building.

fountain, the excavators were fairly certain that the Qasr had never been completed or actually used by its Hellenistic builders. However, the discovery of the fountain near the end of the third campaign did set off an intensive search along the east wall of the Qasr for a possible pair to it at the southern end. Nearly the length of the wall was cleared, but only more evidence of the Byzantine walls and floors against the east Qasr wall was uncovered—neither another feline fountain nor any Hellenistic occupation levels. Although very few Hellenistic sherds were noted during the excavation in this area in the fill and among the limestone chips laid in Byzantine times for a roadbed, the study of the pottery for final publication has made it possible to recognize parts of about seventeen Hellenistic vessels from the clearance outside the east Qasr wall which can be dated to the first half of the second century B.C. They were all found mixed with later Byzantine sherds of the Early Bronze fill on which the Qasr was laid, but there were enough to associate them with the early second century construction of the monumental building. Group I, fig. 2:1-17, are from outside the east Qasr wall in which the Hellenistic feline fountain was discovered.

In the second campaign the Square Building was excavated in order to obtain indirect evidence for the dating of the Qasr since architectural fragments indicated contemporary construction.<sup>7</sup> The original building with foundations below the remains of the Byzantine building with reused Hellenistic blocks can be attributed

7. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

8. *Ibid.*, fig. 14 and pp. 35-36; see below.

to the early second century B.C. on the basis of convincing ceramic evidence.<sup>8</sup> Inside the building below Stratum II (Byzantine) disturbance in fill associated with the laying of the slabs for the Hellenistic floor a Rhodian jar sherd (fig. 2:18) was found<sup>9</sup> mixed with Early Bronze pottery. Outside the building in the south trench (Plate III) a homogeneous group of Hellenistic sherds came from below a floor (section: fig. 1, no. 9) in clayey fill (section: fig. 1, nos. 10, 11; sherds fig. 2:23, 28-32, 34). In hard stoney fill at the west end of this trench only Hellenistic sherds were found beneath a burned area (section: fig. 1, No. 4; sherds fig. 2:20, 24-27), and a couple Hellenistic jar rims were in the hard stoney fill above (section: fig. 1, No. 2; sherds, fig. 2:21, 22). A sandy layer outside the Square Building which separated Hellenistic Stratum III from later material above (section: fig. 1, no. 6)<sup>10</sup> was present in the southern part of the eastern trench and below this in the hard stoney fill at least one Hellenistic sherd was found (fig. 2:19).

However, here the sandy layer was disturbed in places (see section: fig. 1, east end no. 2) and late sherds were also present (reg. nos. 366-368). A Hellenistic jug rim (fig. 2:33) also occurred at about this level north of the large cistern in the eastern strip outside the square Building.

This pottery with stratigraphical significance in and around the Square Building provides indirect evidence for the dating of the Qasr. It is shown as Group II, fig. 2:18-34.

Besides these Hellenistic groups from

9. *Ibid.*, p. 36 and fig. 15.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

outside the east Qasr wall and the Square Building, only scattered Hellenistic sherds were found in clearing inside the Qasr walls and selected areas outside. The significant forms are presented here as Group III, fig. 2:35-58.

### The Pottery

#### Group I

Jar rims are typically out-turned and rounded. Fig. 2:1 has a remnant of an undercut, an early Hellenistic feature.<sup>11</sup> The rounded rims, fig. 2:2 and 3, are lengthened and out-turned,<sup>12</sup> but only 1 rim, fig. 2:5, approaches the "collared" type, which becomes popular later in the second century B.C. Rounded rims of a varied type continued to the end of the second century B.C., but are lacking in the first century.<sup>13</sup>

Jar handle sections are oval; some come to a point at the side. Fig. 2:9 is from a small jar, the handle has a central ridge, pointed side, and a thumb imprint at the bottom where the handle was attached to the vessel.

Three fragments of a Rhodian jar were found outside the East Qasr wall in the south (fig. 2:10a-c). They may be from one vessel, although more than one could be represented.

Fig. 2:11-14 are probably jug rims,

11. c. f. N. L. Lapp, "Pottery from some Hellenistic Loci at Balâtah (Shechem)", *BASOR*, 175 (Oct. 1964), p. 17, fig. 1a: 1 (Stratum III B, ca. 250-225 B.C.): P. W. Lapp and N. L. Lapp, eds., *Discoveries in the Wâdî ed-Dâliyeh, Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, XLI (Cambridge, MA, 1974), pl. 19:3 and p. 31 (late 4th century B.C.), F. Zayadin, *Early Hellenistic Pottery*, *ADAJ*, XI (1966), pl. XXXVII: 2, 6 (First half third century B.C.).

12. cf. P. W. Lapp, *Palestinian Ceramic Chronology*, 200 B.C. - A.D. 70, (henceforth PCC),

similar to jar rim forms. They are still rounded,<sup>14</sup> and No. 11 is crescent-shaped with an undercut.<sup>15</sup> Rounded jug rims continued at Tell el-Fûl down to the end of the second century.<sup>16</sup>

Two small bowl bases are typically late Hellenistic-flat and carelessly made. They are probably from small incurved rim bowls. These were found in the third century B.C. at Balâtah<sup>17</sup> and were popular by late in the century. They continue into Roman times.<sup>18</sup>

Varied mortarium rims are part of the second century B.C. corpus.<sup>19</sup> Fig 2:17 has a plain rounded rim similar to one from the fill for the Hellenistic Fort Wall at Samaria (pre-150 B.C.), but it is from a deeper bowl.

#### Group II

Unfortunately the Rhodian jar sherd, fig. 2:18, from inside the Square Building was not part of a handle or rim, but the shape indicates it was probably from the neck, and the ware is characteristically orange-pink and very finely levigated.

From outside the Square Building, jar rim fig. 2:19 is typically out-turned and rounded, a form particularly characteristic of the 3rd century B.C.<sup>20</sup> It is fuller and more rounded than most late 2nd century B.C. rounded jar rims<sup>21</sup> but may not be

Corpus 11.3: *BASOR* 175, p. 19.

13. N. L. Lapp, ed., *The Third Campaign at Tell el-Fûl, Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (in press), pl. 73:22-38 and text. (Henceforth TEL.)

14. cf. PCC, Corpus 21.1.A-C.

15. Zayadin, Pl. XXVIII: 20, 22.

16. TFL Pl. 75:1-7.

17. *BASOR* 175, p. 18.

18. PCC, Corpus 51.1.

19. PCC, Corpus 41.1.

20. Zayadin, pl. XXVII: 1-5.

21. PCC, Corpus 11.3; TFL, pl. 73:22-38.

out of place in the early 2nd century. Fig. 2:20-24 are flattened on the exterior to varying degrees, a Hellenistic characteristic that begins in the third century B.C. and is the most typical form by the late 2nd century.<sup>22</sup> Fig. 2:21-23 are of the somewhat squared type, while fig. 2:24 approaches the collared-type. Nos. 22 and 23 may be from the same vessel though no. 22 came from above the burned level in the west end of the southern strip outside the building while no. 23 came from beneath the floor to the east. Quite a number of Hellenistic rim, handle and body sherds came from below the burned level, but it is difficult to tell how many vessels are represented. Several handle sections are illustrated (fig. 2:25,27). A number of other handles (fig. 2:28-31) as well as a fragment of a storage jar base (fig. 2:32) came from a similar depth below the floor in the east.

Jug rim fig. 2:33, out-turned to an upper point, can be compared to those from Balâtah Stratum III A (275-190 B.C.) and Stratum II (190-150 B.C.)<sup>23</sup> Fig. 2:34 is the section of a cooking pot handle fragment with stub attachment.

### *Group III*

About 23 other Hellenistic sherds were found in the Byzantine fills and layers in and around the Qasr. The vast majority of them were jar rims a common phenomenon at sites where Hellenistic occupation occurs.<sup>24</sup> Most of the Hellenistic sherds are represented, fig. 2:35-58. Many of them can be compared to forms already presented in the stratigraphical im-

portant groups, but a few other common and important Hellenistic forms will be noted.

Jar rims are rounded and out-turned; most are somewhat lengthened, and these characteristics are those common early in the second century B.C. Some rims are flattened on the exterior (fig. 2:44-48; cf. nos. 5, 20-24 above) a trend which has begun and will be the dominant type by the end of the second century B.C. Fig. 2:46 and 47 are squared similar to nos. 21-23 above. Only one sherd (fig. 2:49) of the characteristic Hellenistic collar-rim type-folded over and impressed-has been identified in the excavations.<sup>25</sup> This becomes one of the most typical late second and early first century B.C. forms.

Only a couple Hellenistic storage jar handles could be identified and their sections are shown, fig. 2:50,51. In addition there was another Rhodian jar handle fragment, fig. 2:52, and a nearby Rhodian handle stub fragment most probably came from the same vessel.

Jug rims, fig. 2:53-56, are similar to those above, nos. 12-14. These rounded, out-turned jug rims are common through the second century. Fig. 2:56 rounds to a decided lower point.

One of the two Hellenistic sherds identified from the first campaign<sup>26</sup> is the base of a small bowl of Hellenistic Decorated Ware (fig. 2:57). The offset and the fair quality black paint, place the bowl easily in the first half of the second century B.C.<sup>27</sup>

22. *BASOR*, 175, pp. 17, 19; *TFL*, pl. 73:1-20.

23. *BASOR*, 175, figs. 2:9-12 and 3:1.

24. J. L. Kelso, *The Excavation of Bethel, Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research XXXIX* (Cambridge, MA: 1968), p. 78; This was also noted at Tell el-Fûl.

25. cf. *PCC*, Corpus 11.21.B-C, dated 175-100 B.C. *BASOR* 175, fig. 2:3, Stratum III A, 225-190 B.C.

26. *BASOR*, 165, p. 33.

27. *PCC*, Corpus 153.1.

One cooking pot rim and handle is of the high neck type and thick ware; it is an early Hellenistic form<sup>28</sup> with a history back to Exilic times.<sup>29</sup>

The total collection of jar rims from the Qāsr and Square Building excavations at 'Iraq el-Emīr are perhaps the most certain evidence of the early second century Hellenistic presence at the site. Rims are predominantly out-tourned, rounded, and somewhat lengthened. There are a few remnants of the more rounded Early Hel-

28. *Wādī ed-Dāliyah*, pl. 23:2.

lenistic-type rims, and one sherd had a distinctive undercut, a late 4th century and third century characteristic. On the other hand, there are a few somewhat squared rims, common late in the second century, and some collar rims, which becomes the dominant type by the second half of the second century and early in the first century B.C. One sherd was of the most characteristic collared form, folded over and impressed.

29 *TFL*, pl. 69 : 9-22, 78:1.

Figure 2

	Reg.	No.		Description
1	II.11.9	354	jar rim	2.5 YR 5/8 red with 5 YR 5/1 gray core; some medium inclusions
2	II.11B.9	356	jar rim	5YR 4/2 dark reddish gray with 6/3 light reddish brown surfaces; few small and medium inclusions
3	II.11B.4	338	jar rim	10 YR 7/3 very pale brown; many small and some medium inclusions
	II.11B.5	339		
4	II.11A.2	331	jar rim	7.5 YR 6/4 light brown; small and medium inclusions
5	II.11C.1	350	jar rim	5 YR reddish yellow with 6/1 light gray/gray core; small and few medium inclusions
6	II.11A.2A	333	jar handle	complete handle, non-aligned on body; 10 YR 7/3 very pale brown; medium and small inclusions
7	II.11C.8	342	jar handle	10 YR 6/4 light yellowish brown; small and few large inclusions
8	II.11A.3	334	jar handle	5YR 6/6 reddish yellow with 7.5 YR N4/dark gray core; small and medium inclusions
9	II.11A.2	330	jar handle	complete handle; smaller than usual, poor lower attachment; 7.5 YR 6/4 light brown; small and few medium inclusions
10a	II.11B.7	341	Rhodian rim	2.5 YR 6/8 light red; very few small and medium inclusions
10b	II.11B.7	340	and handle	
10c	II.11B.1	337	fragments	lower (?) attachment
11	II.11A.3	335	jug rim	7.5 YR 6/4 light brown; medium and small inclusions
12	II.11A.3	336	jug rim	7.5 YR 6/4 light brown; small and few medium inclusions
13	II.11B.5	355	jar base	5 YR 5/1 gray with 6/3 light reddish brown surfaces; small and few medium inclusions
14	II.11A.2	332	jug rim	7.5 YR 5/4 brown; few medium inclusions
15	II.11.13	329	bowl base	whole, roughly finished flat base; 7.5 YR 5/4 brown; medium inclusions
16	II.11.8	353	bowl base	roughly finished, discernible wheel marks;

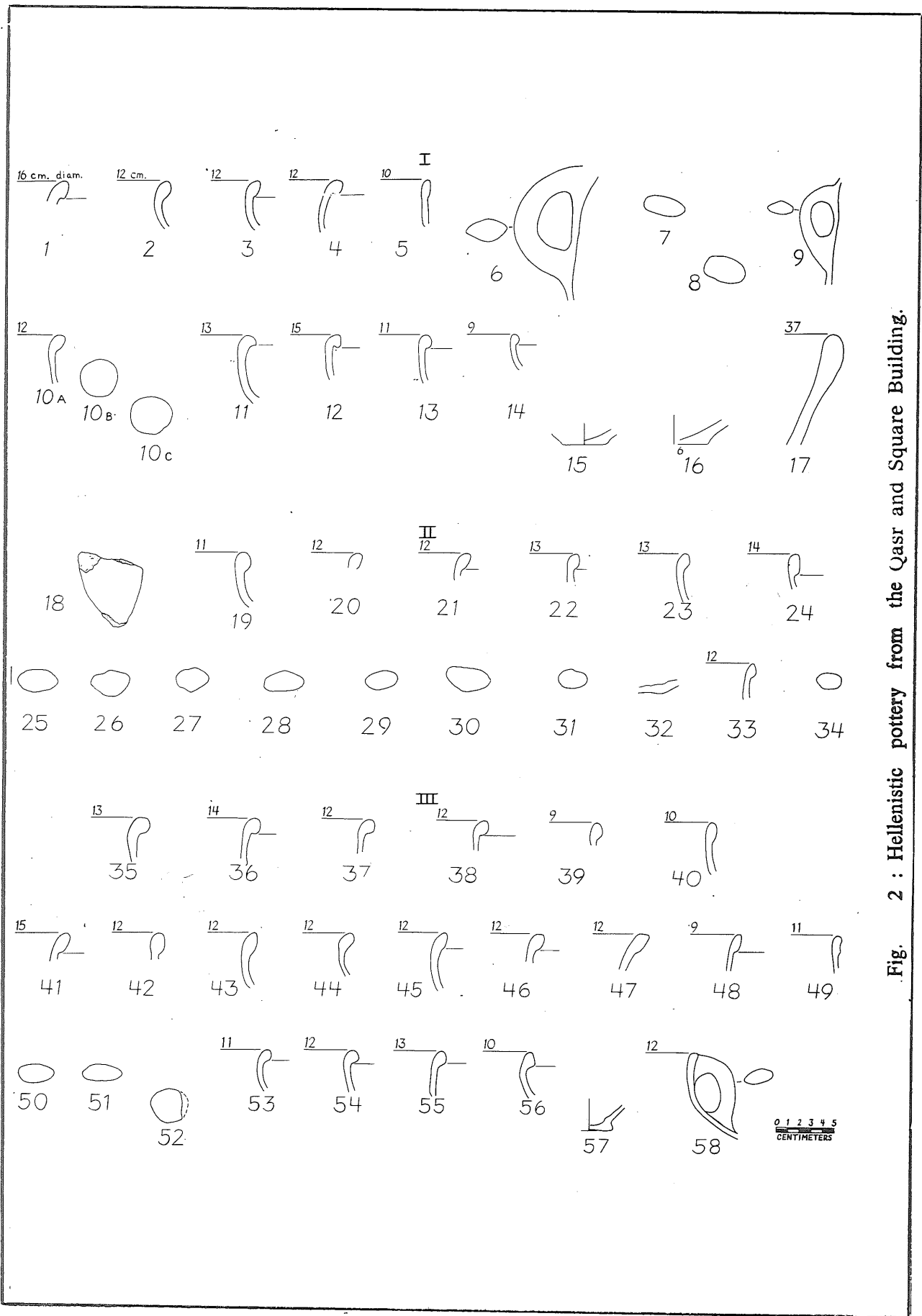


Fig. 2 : Hellenistic pottery from the Qasr and Square Building.



				5 YR 5/6 yellowish red; small and few medium inclusions
17	II.11B.3	463	mortarium rim	7.5 YR 5/2 brown to 6/4 light brown surfaces; small inclusions
18	III.2.25	364	Rhodian sherd	body sherd, approximately 7×5 cm. 7/4 pink; very few small inclusions
19	III.3.16	410	jar rim	2.5 YR N6/gray; medium and large inclusions
20	III.5.12	423	jar rim	fragmentary; 10 YR 6/3 pale brown; small and few medium inclusions
21	III.5.11	420	jar rim	5 YR 6/4 light reddish brown; small inclusions
22	III.5.11	421	jar rim	5 YR 6/1 gray, 6/6 reddish yellow toward surfaces; small to large inclusions
23	III.5.11	412 413	jar rim	5 YR 6/6 reddish yellow with 5/1 gray core; small to large inclusions
24	III.5.12	422	jar rim	10 YR 6/3 pale brown; small to medium inclusions
25	III.5.12	424	jar handle	2.5 YR 5/6 red; small to large inclusions
26	III.5.12	427 426	jar handle	2.5 YR 5/6 red with N5/gray core; small and medium inclusions
27	III.5.12	428 429 425 430	jar handle	jar handle fragments 429 and 425 and ware fragment 430 probably same vessel; 2.5 YR N5/gray with 5 YR 5/6 yellowish red surfaces; medium and large inclusions
28	III.5.5	414	jar handle	10 YR 6/3 pale brown; many small and medium inclusions
29	III.5.5	415	jar handle	10 YR 5/4 yellowish brown; many small and medium inclusions
30	III.5.5	416	jar handle	5 YR 6/8 reddish yellow to 5/1 gray; small and medium inclusions
31	III.5.5	418	jar handle	7.5 YR 5/4 brown with N6/gray core; small and medium inclusions
32	III.5.5	419	jar base	7.5 YR N5/gray core with 5/6 strong brown

				surfaces; few small inclusions
33	III.3.18	411	jug rim	2.5 YR 6/6 light red; small inclusions
34	III.5.5	417	cooking pot handle	5 YR 4/8 yellowish red; few medium inclusions
35	II.12.9	230	jar rim	2.5 YR 5/8 red with 5 YR 5/1 gray core; medium and few large inclusions
36	II.8.19	327	jar rim	5 YR 6/6 reddish yellow; small and medium inclusions
37	II.8.15	326	jar rim	5 YR pink; small and medium inclusions
38	II.17.1	346	jar rim	10 YR 6/6 brownish yellow; medium inclusions
39	II.5.4	320	jar rim	5 YR 6/4 light reddish brown; small inclusions
40	II.1.8	313	jar rim	5 YR 6/4 light reddish brown with 7/1 light gray core; small and few large inclusions
41	II.7.20	324	jar rim	5 YR 4/4 reddish brown with 4/1 dark gray core; small and medium inclusions
42	II.12.1	343	jar rim	5 YR 7/6 reddish yellow with 6/1 gray core; small and medium inclusions
43	II.1.23	315	jar rim	5 YR 6/6 reddish yellow with 6/1 gray core, small with some medium and large inclusions
44	II.8.23	328	jar rim	5 YR 6/6 reddish yellow to 5/3 reddish brown toward center; small, medium, and few large inclusions
45	II.1.23	314	jar rim	5 YR 7/4 pink with 6/1 gray core; small inclusions
46	II.16.3	345	jar rim	10 YR 7/3 very pale brown; small, medium, and few large inclusions
47	II.2.27	317	jar rim	5 YR 6/4 light reddish brown with 7/1 light gray core; small inclusions
48	II.2.2	352	jar rim	5 YR 6/4 light reddish brown; small and medium inclusions
49	II.3.1	318	jar rim	7.5 YR 6/4 light brown; small inclusions
50	II.1.39	316	jar handle	lower attachment; 5 YR 5/6 yellowish red with

				5/1 gray core; few small inclusions
51	II.15.5	344	jar handle	5 YR 6/8 reddish yellow; small inclusions
52	II.6.10	322	Rhodian jar handle	near attachment; 5 YR 6/4 light reddish brown
	II.6.9	321	Rhodian handle	6/6 reddish yellow; very few medium inclusions stub with attachment; probably same vessel as 322
54	II.8.15	325	jug rim	5 YR 6/6 reddish yellow; medium inclusions
55	II.3.5	319	jug rim	7.5 YR 6/4 light brown with 5 YR 5/6 yellowish red toward surfaces; small and few medium inclusions
56	II.9.7	349	jar rim	5 YR 5/8 yellowish red with 5/2 reddish gray core; small, medium, and few large inclusions
57	II.2.37	203	bowl base	Hellenistic Decorated Ware; 7.5 YR 6/4 light brown; very fine inclusions; worn 7.5 YR 2.5/black paint
58	II.2.1		cooking pot rim & handle	5 YR 4/6 yellowish red with 4/1 dark gray core; medium inclusions

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