

EXCAVATIONS IN JORDAN, 1953-1954

JERICHO, 1954

THE third season's work at Jericho, under the auspices of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, lasted from January to April 1954. As previously, work was carried out both on the Tell and in the tombs.

The outstanding discovery on the Tell was that beneath the town wall of the pre-pottery Neolithic period, which did not, as had been supposed, rest on bed-rock, there was a yet earlier wall. This wall rests on undoubted bed-rock, at a depth of 14.50 m. below the surface at that point. It is thus clear that there is no natural hill beneath the Tell, for the rock must slope down gradually from the west to the spring on the east of the Tell. The new wall is excellently built of undressed stones. It survives, in two phases, to a height of 5.50 m., with a face on a slight batter, and is no doubt built against a fill, representing the earliest occupation on the site, a fill which has yet to be excavated.

The duration of the pre-pottery Neolithic phase, as indicated by the depth of deposit, thus proves to be very much greater than was expected. Levels of this period, in fact, account for the greater part of the surviving height of the mound. It remains to establish the extent of the settlement and if possible the lines of the successive town walls, known at present only in the centre of the west side of the Tell. With this object in view, two new trenches have been started, at the northern and southern extremities of the Tell. So far, only levels of the Middle and Early Bronze Age have been reached in the new areas.

Above the debris covering the face of the newly discovered wall was found a building with the plastered walls and floors typical of the pre-pottery Neolithic stage, but unusual in plan. The central feature was a room of exceptional size, in the middle of which was a plastered basin. At either end of this room, which was rectangular, were annexes with curved walls. The size and unusual plan of this building, and the central basin, suggest a ceremonial use, and it is possible that it is a temple.

A further house-phase precedes the building of the later wall. This wall was found to be contemporary with a house of plan and structure now recognized as characteristic of the period. Beneath the floors of this house, and overlying the debris of the one below, were found a large number of skeletons. Some were intact, some had had the skulls removed, and others had been collected together as a jumble of limbs at a time when the flesh had partly but not completely decayed. The fact that these bodies lay beneath the floors of a house which was contemporary with a massive defensive wall suggests that they may represent the remains of a massacre, and that the wall may be a precaution against a repetition of such a disaster. Moreover, the fact that in some cases the skull had been removed suggests that it was from these bodies that were derived the skulls which formed the basis of the remarkable plastered portrait heads found last year, which had been treasured in the succeeding period.

The most interesting fact which emerged concerning the Early Bronze Age was that the foot of the mound on the west side was defended in the last period by a double ditch, above which was a steep slope crowned by a wall. There are indications that there were also ditches in earlier phases of the defences. The ditch of the last phase was found filled to a considerable depth by water-laid silt. Above this were built the houses of the Intermediate Early Bronze phase, probably to be attributed to invading nomadic Amorites of the 21st century B.C. It thus appears that there was an appreciable interval between the destruction of the last city wall of the Early Bronze Age by the newcomers and the building of their earliest houses, a period during which they no doubt continued to live in tents.

For the first time during the work of the present expedition, remains have been found of the settlement of the Late Bronze Age. Above the group of Middle Bronze Age houses being excavated on the east side of the Tell was found, immediately under the surface, the foundations of a wall, with adjoining it a small area of intact contemporary floor. On the floor there was a small clay oven, and lying beside it a juglet of 14th-century B.C. date. This provides confirmation that above the silt which accumulated over the burnt Middle Bronze Age city during a period of abandonment, there was, at least in this part of the site, a settlement of the Late Bronze Age, which has been almost completely denuded away. This could have been the town attacked by the Israelites under Joshua.

The finds in the tombs were not quite so rich as in previous years. Those found included a tomb of the Late Chalcolithic period, re-used in Early Bronze III, several other Early Bronze III tombs and a large number of the tombs of the Intermediate Early Bronze-Middle Bronze period which contain single burials. Some of these had been re-used in the Middle Bronze Age, and at the end of the season a new group of Middle Bronze Age tombs was found. The most interesting of these was a single burial of a young warrior, complete with his weapons, a bronze belt and some very fine pottery.

An important development in connection with the tombs was a study by Professor F. E. Zeuner of the conditions which led to the survival of so much perishable material, such as wood and basket work. His conclusion was that owing to the position of Jericho on the zone of crushed rocks at the edge of the Jordan rift, gases, especially carbon dioxide and bituminous gases, had penetrated upwards and accumulated in the chambers, thus arresting decay by killing the various agents of decay.

KHIRBET QUMRAN

With the collaboration of the *École Biblique et Archéologique Française* and the *Palestine Archaeological Museum* the second and third seasons of excavation were carried out during the springs of 1953-1954, under the direction of R. P. R. de Vaux, O.P. The whole of the main building has now been cleared, and subsidiary constructions to the south and west (Pl. VII, 1). Also a trench was run from a small wady on the north towards the main building. It has now been established that there were three main periods of occupation of the settlement, and thanks to a large number of coins

(more than 400), the dates of these periods can be fairly closely fixed. The earliest coins found are those of John Hyrcanus, 135-104 B.C., and the latest, in any quantity, of the First Revolt, 68 A.D. There was physical evidence, in the form of a great crack right across the building and a subsidence of the eastern part, of a very strong earthquake, and coins point to that recorded by Josephus of 31 B.C., at the time when Herod the Great was near Jericho with his army (Pl. VIII, 3). Debris from the clearance of the building after this disaster was found, together with coins, in the trench referred to above. It would appear that the site was abandoned for a short time about this period, for coins of Herod the Great are conspicuous by their scarcity, only one having been found so far. Many coins of the Procurators testify to a flourishing community then, which was brought to an end in 68 A.D. The building was totally destroyed, largely by fire, and partly rebuilt on the fill, which last phase was, as testified by coins, occupied briefly by the Xth Legion. The only sign of subsequent use of the place was a small cache of coins of the Second Revolt.

It has also been established that the first construction was erected on foundations of a building of the Iron Age, as evidenced by sherds and even an ostraca. There is also a pottery kiln which, by its position beneath the walls of what we consider to be Level I, appears to belong to this early period.

The disentangling of the various levels of walls is extremely difficult, owing to frequent rebuildings and alterations, and is further complicated by the fact that the earthquake caused a 50-cm. sinkage of the eastern section of the building. Pottery does not as yet help much, as most forms are common to all periods, but a few are beginning to emerge which would seem to be characteristic of the first period.

Up to date five large cisterns have been cleared, each with a flight of steps leading down into it, and with a sump for collecting some of the mud from the water before it finally flowed into the cistern. The water was conducted from the waterfalls and rain pools in the Wady Qumran through a rock tunnel and open channel. A potters' quarter has been cleared, complete with shallow plaster-lined pits in which the clay was levigated, and two kilns, one large and one small (Pl. VIII, 2). Towards the end of the last season the purely domestic quarters were beginning to appear, including a room in which flour was ground in a conical basalt mill (Pl. VIII, 1). Parts of the mill were found in different areas of the building.

The main building includes a high tower at the north-west corner, reinforced with a glacis after the earthquake and what may be a dining-room with a low plaster bench running all round the room and three cupboards in the wall. In an adjoining room, but apparently fallen from an upper storey, were the remains of a long table-like structure of mud brick faced with plaster, and a bench, and a curious low plaster structure with two shallow cup-like depressions in it. From the fact that two inkpots were found among the debris one might assume that we have here the remains of the scriptorium, perhaps the very place where many of the scrolls were written. The cup-like depressions may have contained water for ritual washing of the scribes' hands before writing the sacred name.

Outside, but adjoining the outer wall on the south, was the largest room in the place,

the roof of part of which was supported on brick pillars (Pl. VIII, 4). This would appear to be the place of congregation and worship. A smaller room opened from this at right angles near the south-west corner, and in the main room a circular area in front of this door was paved with stones. The rest of the floor was plastered, and two different levels can be distinguished. In the second period the smaller room was divided into three, and in the southern part a large store of pottery, more than 1,000 vessels, many intact, was found *in situ*. Four main forms were represented, jars, large deep bowls, plates and beakers (Pl. VII, 2).

The main outline of the history of the settlement, as summarized in the first paragraph, is now clear, and it seems unlikely that further excavation will cause any radical modification of the story. At least one more season's work is necessary to complete the clearance, and the Department plans this year some conservation work on the existing walls to consolidate what is almost the only large building which has survived in Jordan unchanged from the time of Christ.

BETHLEHEM, 1951-1953

I. Excavations of the Custodia di Terra Santa in KHIRBET SIYAR EL GHANAM (east of Bethlehem), conducted by Father Virgilio Corbo, Franciscan

Not far from Bethlehem, in the property of the Custody known under the name of Khirbet Siyar el Ghanam, excavations have been made in two periods which have resulted in a complete exploration of those ruins.

1st Period: February 15th-September 30th, 1951

The work was begun at the west side of the ruins excavated by Guarmani; so there has been discovered all the west side of the 6th-century monastery, with a fine installation of oil-presses and wine-presses. Towards the angle south-west of the Byzantine building, under the pavement of the presses, a cave has been found; this cave was inhabited during the Herodian epoch, with remains of a small pool, walls and stones for presses.

In the north-west side in a cave-store, fragments of lunar-form table for an altar have been discovered. Of special interest is the mosaic of the bakery, with Greek inscriptions and with the new iconographic motive of the Calvary representation. In the west side has been excavated the courtyard with the stairs for access. In the background of the courtyard there were materials in great quantity left from a 4th-century building.

In the north-east angle of the monastery have been excavated the foundations of two apses belonging to two successive churches. Most archaic is that of the 4th/5th centuries, while the other apse, of the 6th century, is built with materials taken from the polygon of the Constantinian Basilica of the Nativity.

2nd Period: May-December 1952

The excavations were continued to determine some problems of the building masses. In the east behind the apses of the churches has been discovered a big water-pool

in which were precipitated many elements of the 6th-century apse. In the south side we could identify some walls belonging, together with the archaic apse, to a primitive monastery of the 4th/5th centuries. In the west side we continued the exploration of the caves of the Herodian-Roman epoch still buried under the mosaic pavements of the 6th-century monastery; while by the north side the drainage of the buildings was being cleaned.

The abundant materials explored will be published as soon as possible by Father Corbo. The monastery is identified with the ancient Poimnion or Monastery of Shepherds' Field.

II. Excavations of the Custodia di Terra Santa in KHIRBET ABU GHUNNEIM (north-east of Bethlehem) conducted by Father Virgilio Corbo, December 1952

The digging, which lasted a few days, brought to light a Byzantine hermitage (24.75 × 18.40 m.). While the area of the hermitage seemed to have been sacked, the church has been found in better condition. The church, of rectangular form and fairly long, is composed of the nave and an elevated presbytery closed by chancels. Of the mosaic pavement only some traces in the presbytery and near the chancels remain. The nave of the church has been divided—probably in the Arab period—by three small walls to make rooms.

The ruins are identified with the Fotino Hermitage (5th century).

III. Excavations of the Custodia di Terra Santa in BIR EL QUTT (north-east of Bethlehem), conducted by Father Virgilio Corbo, January-June 1953

With the excavations of Bir el Qutt has been discovered the beautiful Georgian monastery of the Abbot Anthony dedicated to St. Theodore. The identification has been made possible by the discovery of different inscriptions in the Georgian language.

The monastery has a square form, with the doors on the east, a cloister with a corridor around in the centre. In the north side were found the remains of the church, with a funeral crypt underground. The monastic cemetery was situated on the east side. At the south were the big stable and the workplants for the oil and the wine. In the west flank were the refectory and the kitchen. Not far from the east side a tomb of the Herodian-Roman epoch has been cleared. This tomb has been re-used in the 6th century by the Georgian monks.

The results of all these explorations will be published as soon as possible in a monograph which is being prepared by Father Virgilio Corbo, O.F.M.

Soundings at KHIRBET JUHZUM (Custodia di Terra Santa) conducted by Father Virgilio Corbo¹

Khirbet Johzum (map. ref. 123, 177) soundings have been made in that part of the ruins which are as yet unoccupied by the small but growing Bedouin village.

¹ *Bibliogr.* P. Virgilio Corbo, O.F.M., 'Ritrovamenti cristiani a Khirbet Giohdom (Betlemme),' in *La Terra Santa*, 1954, pp. 144-148.

The soundings revealed a long room (20 × 6 m.) with the pavement of fine mosaic; this mosaic overlay another more ancient one of rougher type but with the identical geometrical design. South of this room, another with mosaic of geometrical design was also found. In the wall which divides the two rooms was a tomb, in close proximity to which was a funeral 'stela.' This 'stela' has on one side a carving representing the concept of resurrection and immortality; the other side has the following inscription:

Κ[ύρι]ε Ἰ[ησο]ῦ Χ[ριστ]ῆ ἐλ[λή]σον τὸν ταπ[ε]ι[νὸν]
 Ἑλίας καὶ ἀν[ά]παυσον τὸν δ[ο]υλό[υ]σσου
 Θεόδου[λον] μετὰ τῶν ἀγί[ων].

Among other objects worthy of note are the remains of beds used by the monks constructed of stones and lime, and three capitals on which are carved doves and snakes; the decoration of one of the capitals is intended to be a pictorial comment on Matt. x, 16.

Cut into the rock are tombs of a large, completely robbed necropolis.

The ruins belong to a Byzantine monastery of the 6th century.

The soundings at Khirbet Biyar Luqa have been stopped after two days of work because of quarrels between the two families which occupy the place. It is hoped to continue the work before long.

DOTHAN, 1954

Wheaton Archaeological Expedition, directed by Dr. Joseph P. Free

The second season of excavation at Dothan, 100 km. north of Jerusalem, was carried on in the spring of 1954 by the Wheaton Archaeological Expedition. The first two weeks were spent on the slope of the Tell to make certain that no important structure would be buried by the expanding dump. The slope area again yielded, as in the 1953 excavations, successive levels of Iron Age sherds, followed by Late Bronze, Middle Bronze and several levels of Early Bronze materials. At the base of the slope, Early Bronze materials appeared at the surface and continued through eleven levels, measuring a total of 7.15 m. We went into virgin soil 1.20 m. without finding a single sherd. The lower slope yielded the remains of the lower part of a great Early Bronze Age city wall, surviving to a height of 2.20 m. and measuring 3.5 m. in thickness.

During the last six weeks we excavated a main section of the Iron Age city of ancient Dothan on top of the tell. Towards the centre of the tell, on top of the Iron Age city, we found remains of the Hellenistic colony, attested by a Greek coin bearing the inscription 'Antiochus the King,' Hellenistic lamps and lamp fragments, five Rhodian jar handles, all inscribed, and sherds of typical Greek glazed ware. As we moved from the sub-areas closer to the centre of the tell towards the outer edge of the tell, the Hellenistic materials disappeared and we had Iron II materials in the upper levels.

On the top of the tell we excavated an over-all area 23 × 24 m. (circa 77 × 80 feet), which yielded the walls, houses and little streets of the Iron II period at ancient Dothan. In the upper Iron Age stratification we found an Assyrian bowl of the 'Palace-ware'

type, datable to the end of the 8th or the early 7th century (cf. G. Lankester Harding, 'Four Tomb Groups from Jordan,' *P.E.F. Annual*, VI, 1953, Fig. 21, 70). This Assyrian bowl, and a fragment of another, were among the many criteria which showed that in the first metre closer to the edge of the Tell we were in the first two centuries of Iron II (900-700 B.C.). So far no clear materials from the later part of the 7th century have appeared.

Other discoveries this season include an infant jar burial associated with Iron II lamps and sherds. The mouth of the large jar is somewhat smaller than the head of the infant, which makes it puzzling to determine with certainty how the child was placed in the jar. Not far from the child burial we found the skeleton of a man, also from Iron II, with fists still clenched and his back broken in two places, as reported by two doctors who visited us during the time we were excavating this area.

Towards the edge of the Tell we began to get Iron I materials at a depth of one metre. One cache yielded nine whole bowls and jars, including an unusual crater 40 cm. in diameter with fourteen handles about its circumference. Four of the handles ended in stylized animal heads.

This season we found some 130,000 sherds and recorded over 5,000 of them. The sherds from the slope again emphasized, as in the 1953 season, the more or less continuous history of ancient Dothan from the beginning of Early Bronze (*circa* 3000 B.C.) through Middle and Late Bronze and into the Iron Age (1200 B.C.). The pottery from the top of the tell showed the existence of a colony in the Hellenistic period (*circa* 300-100 B.C.) towards the centre of the tell, preceded in lower levels by the Iron II and Iron I cities.

AMMAN

Department of Antiquities

An important small temple has been discovered on the new aerodrome in the course of levelling operations, and was excavated by the Department of Antiquities under the direction of Mohamad Mustafa Saleh. A large quantity of objects and pottery has been recovered so far, and work is still proceeding. Finds include, among the pottery, Mycenaean ware, base-ring ware, Cypriote milk bowls, as well as local ware of the period. Among the objects may be mentioned fragments of stone vases in alabaster, diorite, breccia and basalt, small plaques of gold leaf, scarabs, cylinder seals, a bronze 'Khepesh' sword, bronze daggers, arrowheads, spearheads, axes, etc.

The lower part of some of the rooms was filled with ashes and burnt animal and bird bones, presumably from offerings. So far there is no indication as to whom the temple was dedicated, and it is in a curiously isolated position in the middle of a flat plain some 2 kilometres east from the centre of Amman.

The finds clearly indicate that it covers the period Middle Bronze II to end of Late Bronze, and it is the first time in East Jordan that these imported wares have been found in quantity. A full report will be published in a forthcoming *Annual*.

KHIRBET ISKANDER

Ashmolean Museum Expedition under the direction of Peter Parr

Two small trenches were dug at Kh. Iskander, in East Jordan, in June 1955, under the auspices of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. The site lies on the north bank of the Wadi el Wala, a few hundred metres from the point where the modern—and ancient—road from Amman to Kerak crosses the stream (map. ref. 223107). It was first visited by Nelson Glueck, and is fully described in Vol. III of his *Explorations in Eastern Palestine* (*AASOR*, XVIII-XIX (1939), pp. 127-129). It is a fairly large site, although low, and surface indications suggest that it consists of two distinct parts, an eastern and a western, on both of which the remains of house and/or fortification walls can be seen. The pottery collected by Glueck seemed to belong exclusively to the end of the E.B. and the beginning of the M.B. periods; that is, to what Glueck calls E.B. IV-M.B. I.

The first trench was dug on the eastern crest of the eastern half of the site, and reached bed-rock at a depth of almost 3 metres. Three main building places were discovered. To the lowest belonged the remains of a strongly built defensive wall, about 2 metres thick, built up against an artificially cut scarp in the natural slope of the hill. This wall was almost entirely destroyed, and was stratigraphically sealed by successive layers of occupation debris and beaten mud floors streaking down the slope, and representing a second building phase. Finally, the walls of new domestic buildings were set in this debris; and it is the remains of these buildings which appear on the surface today. The pottery from this trench has not yet been studied in detail, but that from the latest place seems to belong to a mixed E.B. IV-M.B. I culture (using Wright's terminology); while from the middle phase came a good example of a thumb-indented ledge-handle of early type (cf. Wright's Form 1a; and Jericho, pre-1st E.B. town wall: *PEQ*, 1952, p. 77, no. 4). The importance of this for dating the defensive wall will only be fully appreciated when the rest of the material is studied.

The second trench was dug on the northern edge of the eastern part of the site. Unfortunately there was insufficient time for bed-rock to be reached here. In the upper part of the trench several stone walls were uncovered, which seem to belong in general to the same phase as the latest walls in Trench I. From these levels came a mass of pottery which will probably make up into complete, or near-complete, vessels of typical M.B. I (E.B.-M.B.) form. Below these late walls was a thick deposit of alternating mud floors and ashy occupation material, seemingly of the same nature as that found in the second phase of Trench I.

A full report of the excavation will be published in a future edition of the *Annual*.

HANI' TEXT No. 73

Since writing the account of this text and drawings in the *Annual*, Vol. II, p. 30, Miss Florence Day of the Metropolitan Museum of New York has drawn my attention to an illustration of an animal in *Al Munjid* (1931 edition), p. 19 of the illustrations at the end of the book. This beast closely represents the animal shown on the reverse of our stone, and is called *tytl*, which is identified with *Antilope bubalis*. Dr. Morrison-Scott, of the British Museum (Natural History), does not, however, consider this identification likely, as the evidence for the existence of *bubalis* outside Africa is not satisfactory. (See Harper, F., 1945, *Extinct and Vanishing Mammals of the Old World*, Special Publication No. 12 of the American Committee for International Wild Life Protection, New York Zoological Park, N.Y. 60, p. 647.) He suggests a more likely identification is with the Oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*). I am much indebted to Dr. Morrison-Scott for the trouble he has taken in examining this problem.

In any case, the scene is now transformed into one of hunting, not of defence as I suggested before, and the various figures must be interpreted accordingly.

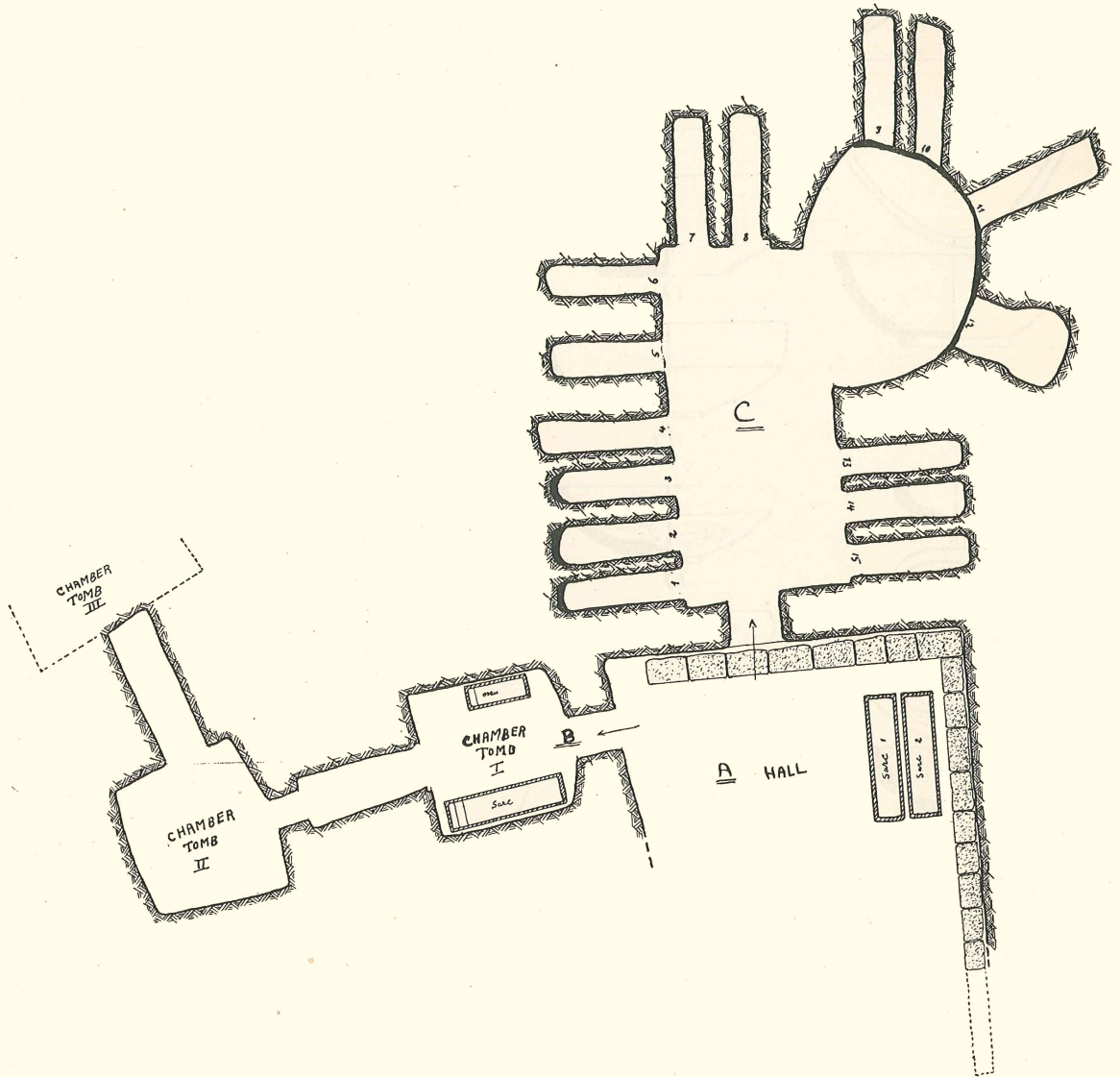
G. LANKESTER HARDING

ERRATA

Figs. 18 to 22 were inadvertently omitted from the *Annual*, Vol. II, and refer to the articles by Awni Dajani, viz.:

- 'An Iron Age Tomb at Al Jib.'
- 'A Hyksos Tomb at Kalandia.'
- 'An Herodian Tomb at Wadi el Badhan.'

Excavations at Wadi el-Badān



SCALE.

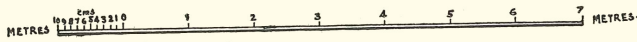


FIG. 18

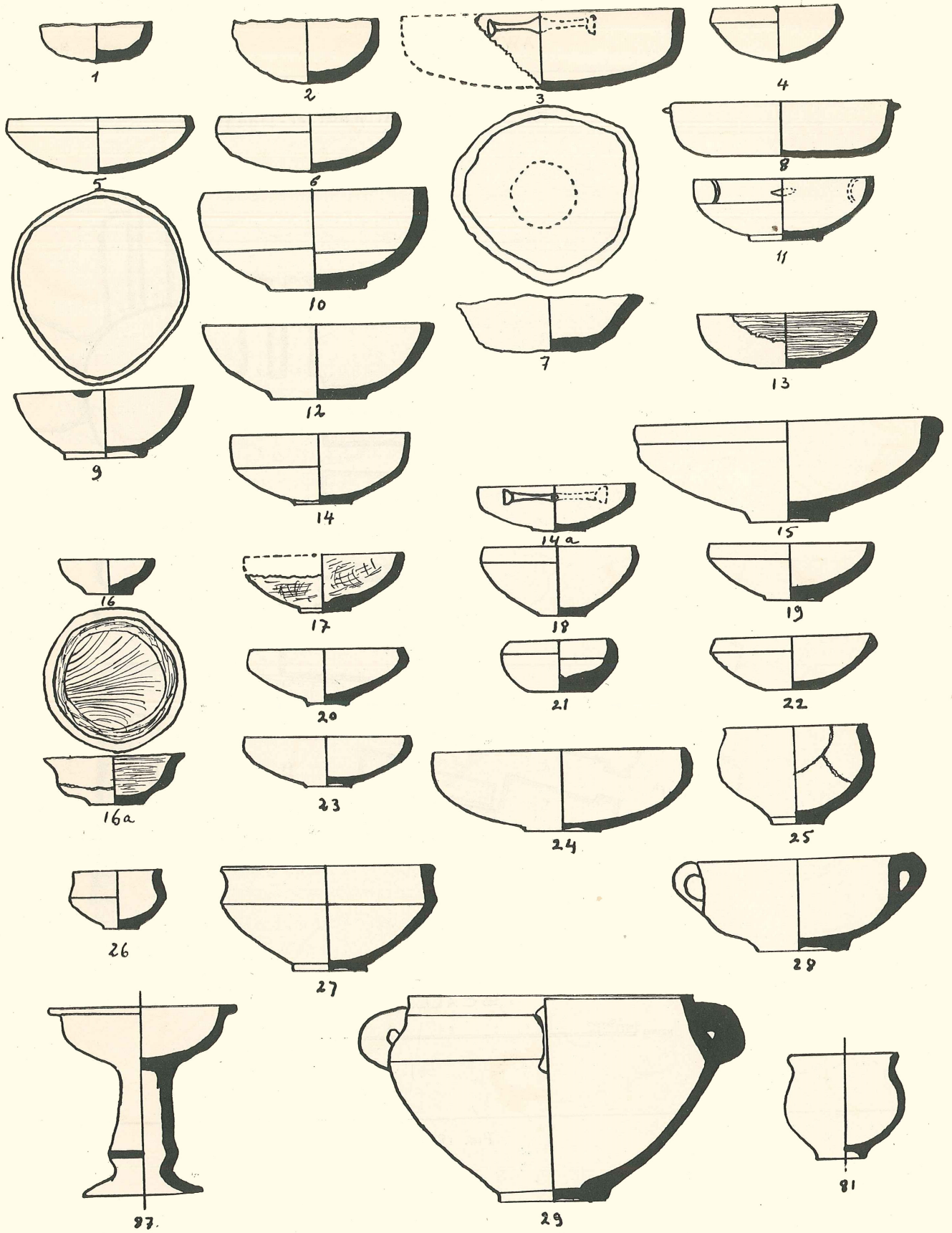


FIG. 19. Scale 1:5

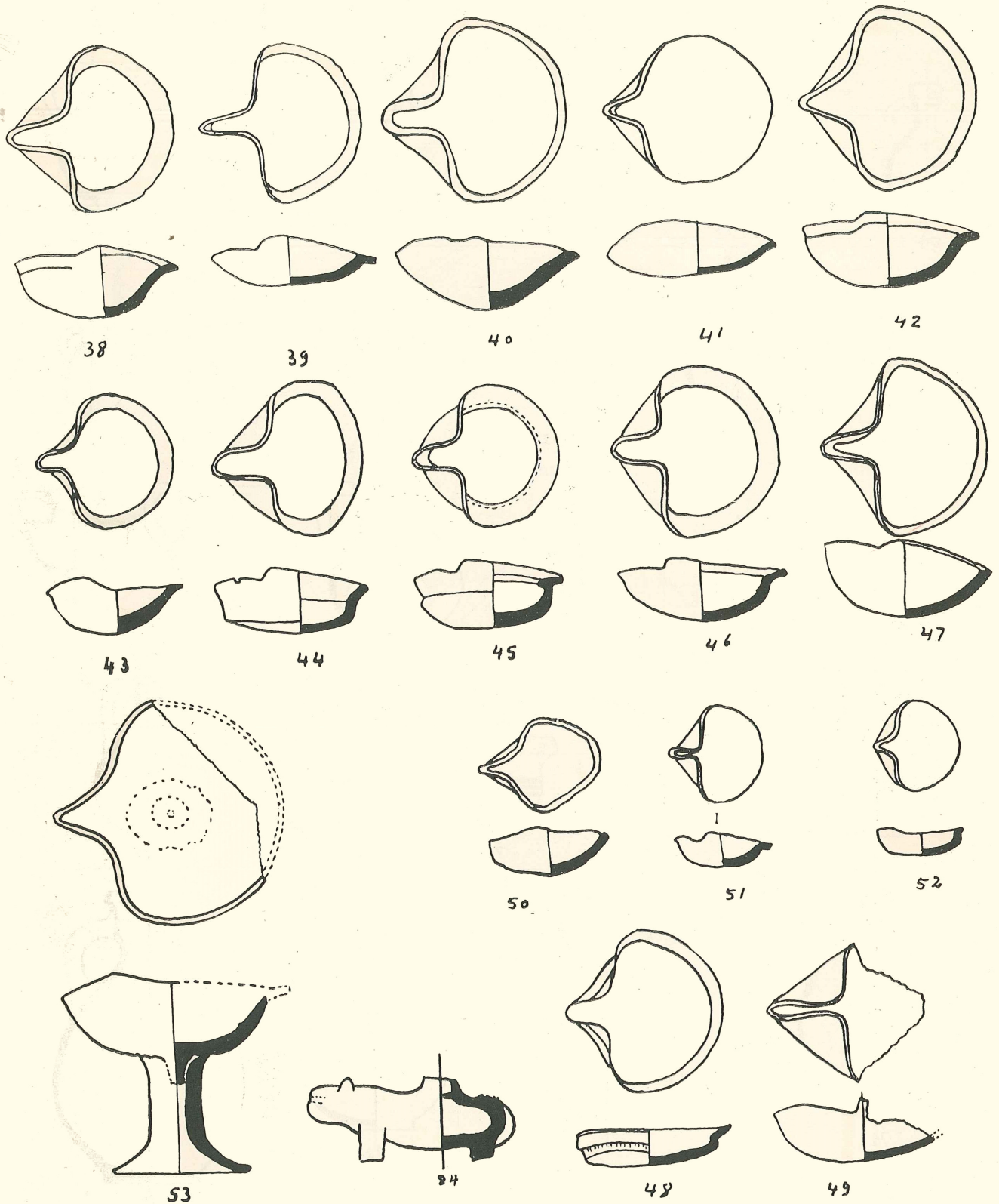


FIG. 20. Scale 1 : 5

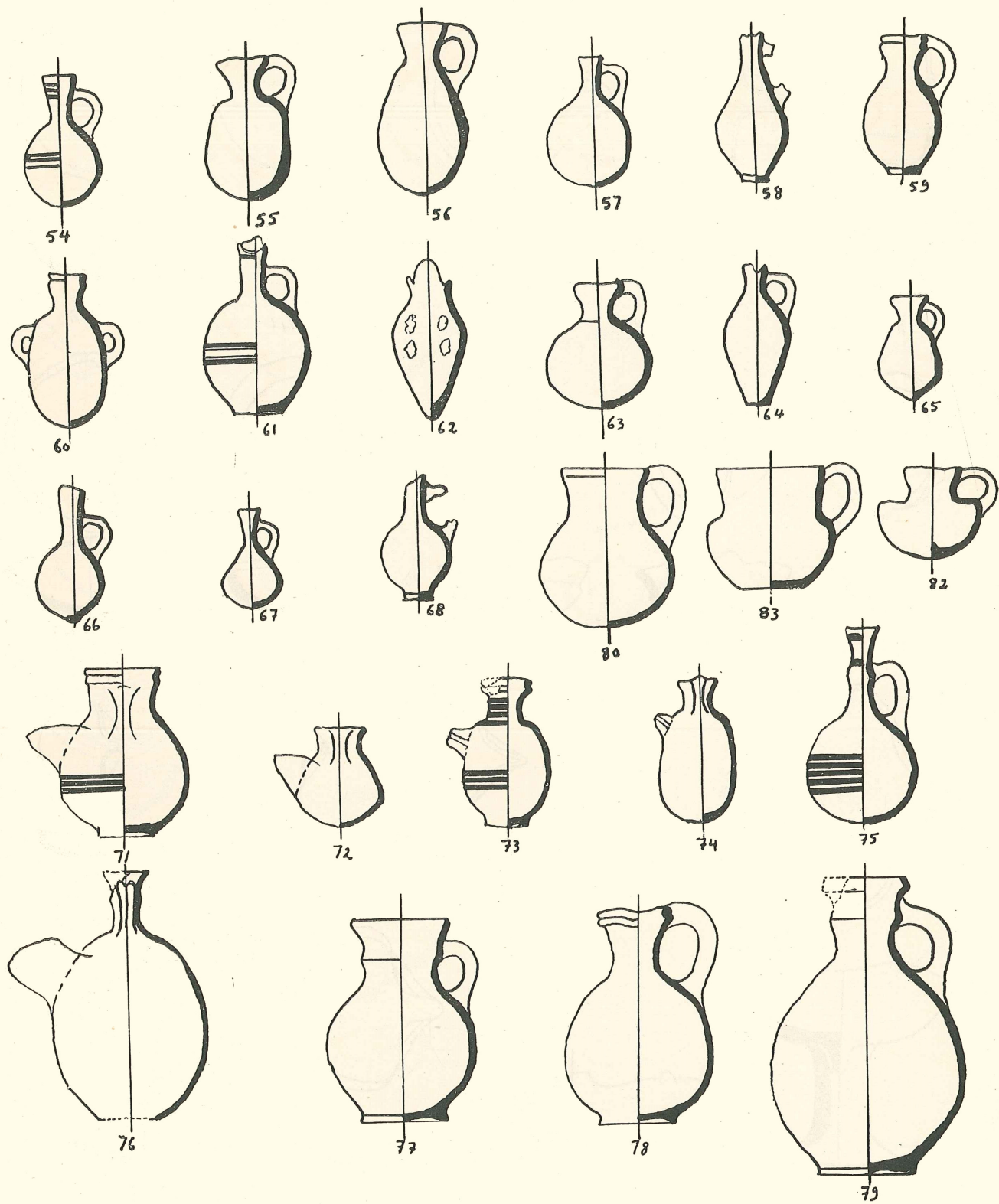


FIG. 21. Scale 1 : 5

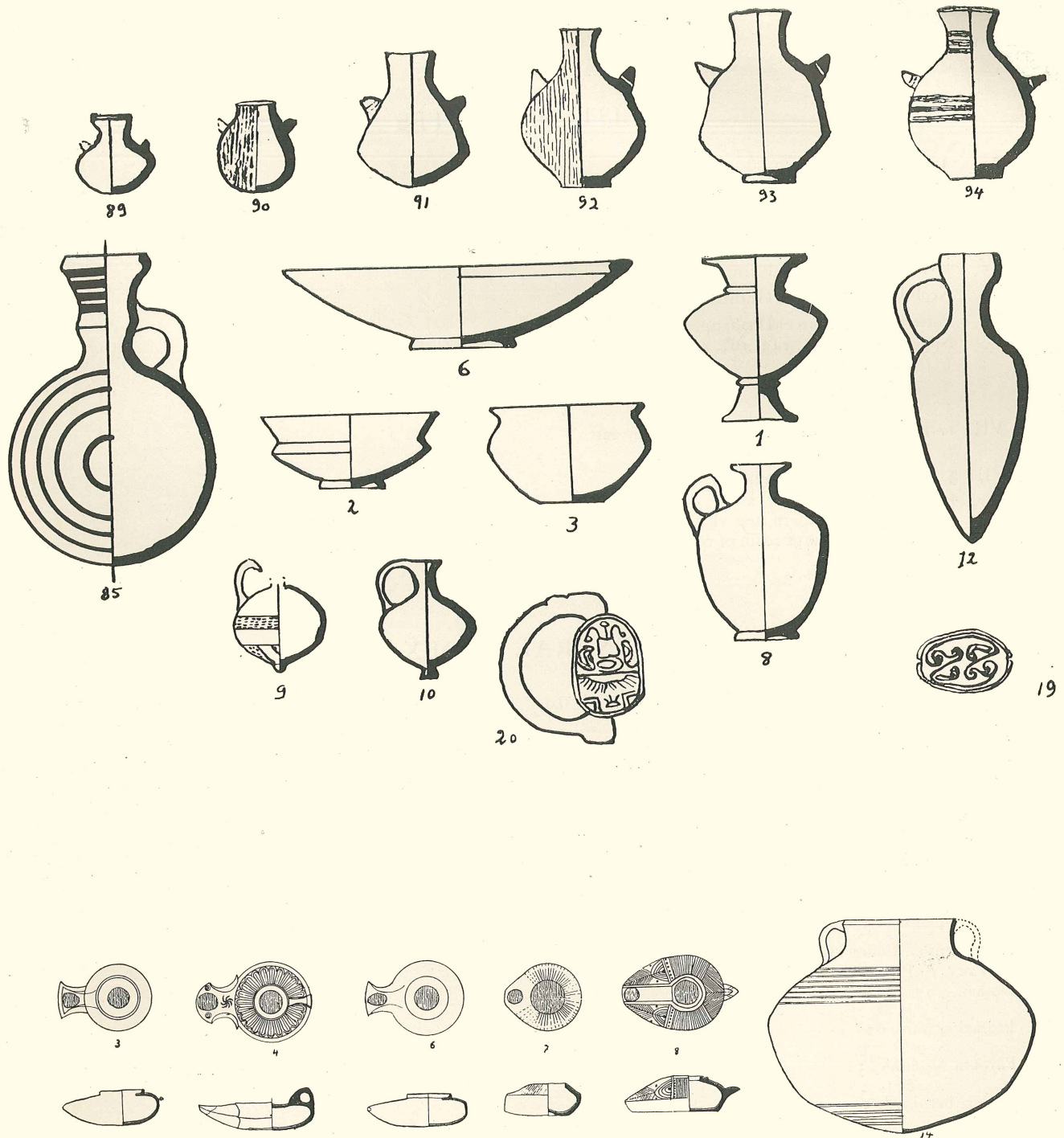


FIG. 22. Scale 1:5