

Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Pottery of Gerasa in view of International Norms in the Eastern Mediterranean

Introduction

The 1984-96 excavations of the Hippodrome headed by the late architect-restorer Antoni Ostrasz, the excavations at the Upper Temple of Zeus complex in 1999 and 2000 by IFAPO and, in particular, the latest excavations of the City Walls in 2000 and 2001¹ have brought to light Late Hellenistic and Early Roman pottery hitherto unknown and poorly represented in Gerasa. Whilst until recently one had usually resource to limited material of mixed assemblages from second century AD and later foundations or recycled tombs, the latest finds come from homogeneous, well-stratified and separated archaeological contexts of pre-Roman and Early Roman Jarash. The distinct loci and contexts of the pottery assemblages are associated with single period tombs, natural rock cavity fillings of which at least one is probably related to sacrificial offerings, pre-second century AD foundation trench levels and kiln waste dumps. The variety, quality and, above all, quantity of the pottery from each context permit a closer look at local manufacture, also with regard to commercial compatibility on an international market, offering archaeological evidence for historical and cultural interpretations of this early period in classical Gerasa.

The pottery forms (and wares) presented on FIGS. 1 and 2² fit securely, according to their stratified and homogeneous *Gerasa contexts*, within the first two centuries BC and AD. Some forms are known elsewhere in northern Jordan (e.g. Pella and Gadara) and in the neighbouring coun-

tries of the Levant (e.g. Beirut, Tall Anafa, Jerusalem, Caesarea) from the end of the second century BC (FIG. 1: 8 and FIG. 2: 9-10; no. 18 is discussed with the painted sherds in FIG. 2, see below). Some early or 'BC' fragments and pots like those shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 were often found mixed with later or 'AD' types in tombs or as part of the dirt fill for second century Roman foundations in Gerasa: in these cases, neither their *ante* nor their *post quem* of local manufacture and thus commercial circulation can be accurately determined without comparative contextual studies.

The rocky terrain, Roman building activities disturbing and dismantling earlier buildings down to their foundations, later occupations and multiple use of earlier hypogean tombs have often obliterated defined sequences of second and first century BC deposits in Gerasa. It is fortunate, therefore, that the bulk of the archaeological contexts dealt with here have provided a solid base for the chronological grouping of the assemblages as well as single forms, some of whose earliest contextual evidence date to the early first century BC, and before.³

The undisturbed stratigraphy and/or loci of the sites listed below made it possible to establish major relative sequences of the pottery assemblages per site and their contexts. These deposits and/or contexts are:

- The hypogean tombs close to Hadrian's Arch, sealed before its construction in AD 129 (Abu Dalu 1995; Kehrberg and Ostrasz 1997; Seigne and Morin 1995);

¹ The writer has collaborated with the hippodrome 1984-1996 excavations, sponsored by the DoA, and the IFAPO 1997-2000 excavations in the capacity of archaeologist and ceramicist. The final publications of the hippodrome excavations are in preparation (volume 1 by Antoni A. Ostrasz, p.h., with a contribution by I. Kehrberg, and volume 2 by I. Kehrberg, with contributions); it has been agreed by the editor of BAMA that both volumes will be submitted to BAMA for publication. The Jarash City Walls Project (JCWP) is still ongoing and is co-directed by the writer.

² The illustrations of this article show a selection of more or less known early Gerasene pottery and introduce painted pottery which is as yet unknown on other contemporary sites in Jordan, whether in contemporary contexts or scattered (see below notes 7 and 8). Photos

FIG. 2:11-17 were taken F. Bernel and J.-P. Braun, assisted by G. Humbert. The pottery shown here is from the writer's Jarash *corpi* of the hippodrome 1984-1996, the upper temple of Zeus complex 1997-2000 and the city wall 2000 and 2001 excavations.

³ The JCWP excavations of 2001 discovered the earliest classical-period archaeological evidence so far of Gerasa, going back to the late second century BC when the town was still called 'Antioch on the Chrysorroas', cf. Kehrberg and Manley 2002b; 2002c; 2002d. The Late Hellenistic or late second century BC tomb contents have confirmed my suggestions in this paper delivered in Sydney prior to the discovery about Gerasa's early population and ceramics, esp. in view of the *lagynoi* funerary cult at Gerasa.



1 (JH505)



2 (JH649)



3 (JZ1543)



4 (JH208)



5 (JH641)



6 (JZ1159)

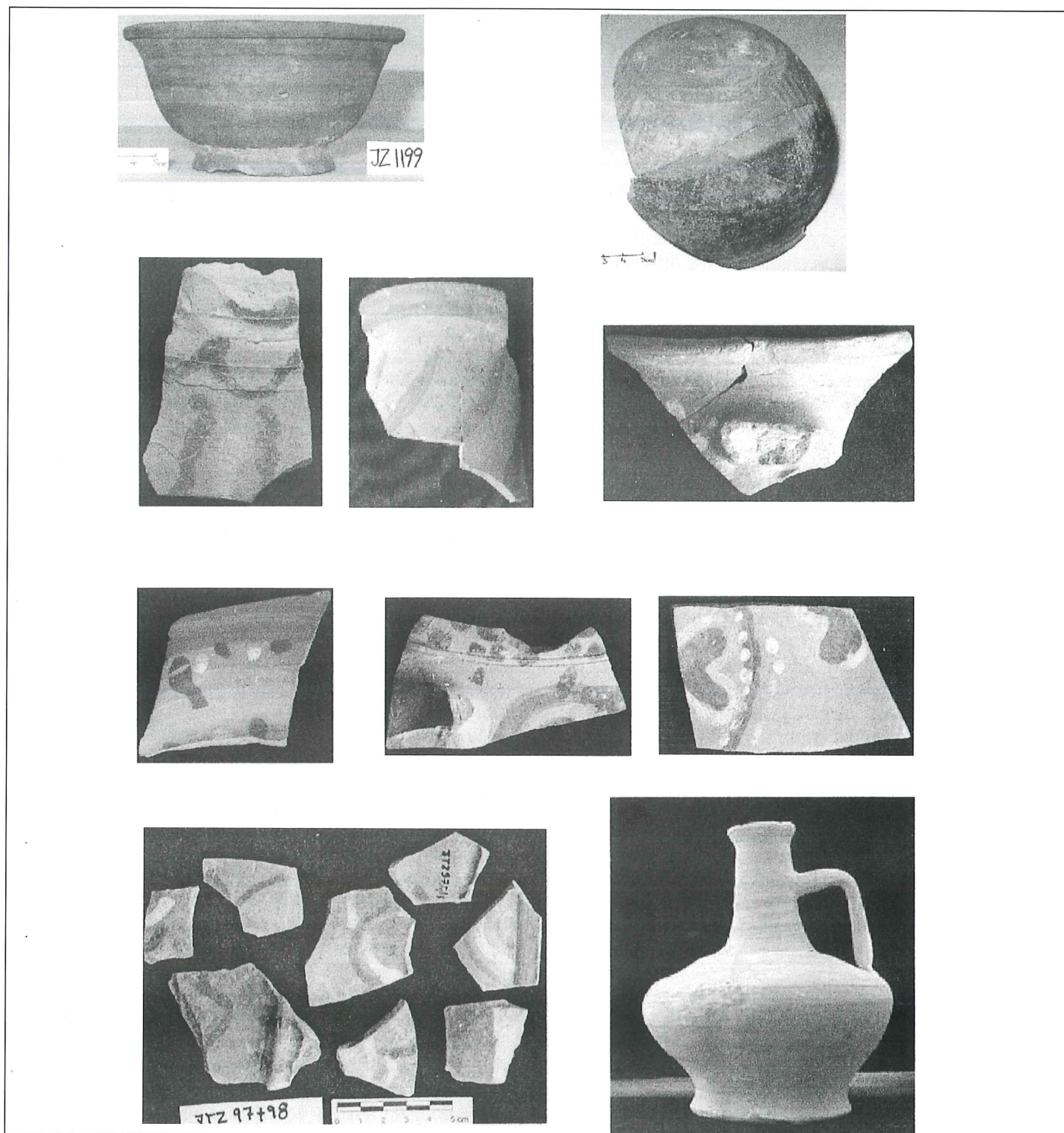


7 (JCW1)



8 (GZ1214)

1. nos. 1 – 8: **1.** 1st c. BC/AD miniature juglet-unguentarium, prov. context pre-hippodrome; **2.** 1st c. BC/AD unguentarium, prov. context pre-hippodrome; **3.** 1st c. to 2nd c. AD libation cup, prov. context pre-upper Zeus temple; **4.** 1st c. to 2nd c. AD libation cup, prov. context pre-hippodrome; **5.** 1st c. to early 2nd c. AD rouletted carinated bowl, prov. context pre-hippodrome; **6.** 1st c. BC/AD splash-painted carinated bowl, prov. context pre-upper Zeus temple; **7.** 1st c. BC to AD 2-handled basin, prov. context pre-city wall; **8.** late 2nd/1st c. BC cooking pot, prov. Context pre-upper Zeus temple.



2. nos. 9 – 18: **9.** 1st c. BC bowl, prov. context pre-upper Zeus temple; **10.** 1st c. BC bowl frgt, prov. context pre-upper Zeus temple; **11.** 1st c. BC bichrome and incised jug frgt, prov. context pre-city wall; **12.** 1st c. BC trichrome neck jug frgt, prov. context pre-hippodrome; **13.** 1st c. BC, prov. context pre-city wall; **14.** 1st c. BC bichrome dish frgt, prov. context pre-city wall; **15.** 1st c. BC trichrome 2-handled jar frgt, prov. context pre-hippodrome; **16.** 1st c. BC bichrome jar or jug frgt, prov. context pre-upper Zeus temple; **17.** 1st c. BC bi-and trichrome jug, jar and bowl frgts, prov. contexts pre-upper Zeus temple; **18.** late 2nd-early 1st c. BC lagynos, prov. context Late Hellenistic tomb pre-city wall.

- Other nearby tombs and those sealed by the neighbouring hippodrome and its arena, at the latest just after the arch was built (Kehrberg and Ostrasz 1997: 167-68; see also Iliffe 1945); (FIG. 1: 2, 4; FIG. 2: 12, 15);
- Foundation fills of the cavea of the hippodrome, built after 129 but latest by mid-second century AD (Ostrasz 1989; Kehrberg 1989); (FIG. 1: 1, 5);
- The rock cemetery or 'funerary gardens' (for parallel see Savvonidi 1994) immediately south of the upper temple of Zeus and east underlying the foundation of the grand staircase of the upper temple, latest sealing date being ca. AD 161-3 for the upper temple construction (Welles 1938: 380-381, inscriptions nos. 11 and 12; cf. also Braun 1998) (FIG. 1: 3, 6; FIG. 2: 8-10, 16, 17). An earlier or at latest a first century AD 'closing date' of the cemetery space or 'open-air sanctuary' (for parallels see Dar 1993 and Kron 1999) in order to install the upper Zeus temple complex, is borne out by artefactual evidence from the stratified contexts under its foundations; an early closure date for urban redevelopment plans is furthermore corroborated by the neighbouring South Theatre whose construction began in the 80s (Welles 1938: 398-399, inscriptions no 51-AD 81-83; no 52-AD 83-96), and by the latest discoveries of an early second century AD city wall (see below). The lower terrace of the Zeus sanctuary belongs to the first century (Seigne *et al.* 1986; Seigne 1993), additional indication of the whole area having been closed off by the Roman-period city council for urban development before building was actually carried out, or at least to allow for phased implementing.
- Last — and perhaps most importantly — is the discovery of the foundation trench of the early second century AD city wall northwest of the South Theatre (Braun, Kehrberg and Manley 2001; Kehrberg and Manley 2002a). The trench was cut into a first century BC pottery kiln waste dump which had ceased to be used by the end of the first century AD (FIG. 1: 7; FIG. 2: 11, 13, 14). Apart from a few forms which are known to have survived until the early second century AD (or have been found in such a dated context), there is no second century AD material in this rich artefactual and undisturbed context with a single coin of Obodas III.⁴ The filling of the trench can be securely dated to the early second century AD (Kehrberg and Manley 2002a), perhaps to the same time as the first use of the South Theatre where a later inscription suggests that the theatre was not actually used or completed until then (see Welles 1938: 399, inscription no 53-AD 119-120). The findings of three further sondages along

the northern city wall foundations in the JCWP 2001 season have confirmed the early second century AD foundation date of the west wall (Kehrberg and Manley 2002b; 2002c; 2002d).

The above loci were sealed at the latest in the early to mid-second century AD by what are now the remains of building activities, and have not been disturbed since. Inscriptions, coins and other finds have provided an upper date of these Roman activities and 'occupations' succeeding the first century BC and AD contexts. Some of the pottery and associated contextual finds, which also contained coins at least providing a lower date limit, have been corroborated in dated contexts at other sites of Jarash, as for instance the remains of the so-called temple of Dionysus under the Cathedral, last excavated in the 1990s by a Swiss team and dated to the first century AD, with a second building phase, much like the temples of the Zeus and Artemis sanctuaries, in the second century AD (Jäggi *et al.* 1997: 313; 1998: 426).

The pottery is not shown, however, to discuss its dating, nor each to be compared individually with pottery from excavations of other monumental sites in Jarash: the former is already known and the latter needs more archaeological investigation. Excepting the *lagynos* (see below), there are no specific typological analogies drawn with parallels from their Late Hellenistic and Early Roman cousins of the Greek and Roman world (on specific form studies and chronological markers see e.g. Hayes 1991: 18ff.; 2000; Rotroff 1997a; 1997b). In spite of obvious contemporaneity, suggestions are by no means conclusive, my study of the early Gerasa *corpi* (see above listed sites) being at an early stage where one cannot yet talk, for example, of *popularity* of any type in a *local* historical context.⁵ The number of pots and sherds from the combined contexts is sufficient, however, to look at the range of types produced in Gerasa, at the standard of manufacture and calculate quantitative estimates. The general adherence to or ignorance of 'international' norms by potters may be inferred, but the associated contexts are still too few, too specific and too similar to infer *ipse dixit* a wide range of use or popularity for one specific type or another (and their fluctuation) during the first two centuries BC and AD.

The pottery of FIGS. 1 and 2 are some examples of forms and wares shared by above cited assemblages. What one sees is not specifically representative, there are other forms and many variations within each form category, notably among the smaller vessels, the bowls or cups (FIG. 1). It is important to note, however, that the different types

⁴ The coin had been tentatively identified before cleaning as Aretas IV; it has since been cleaned and read by Christian Augé to represent Obodas III; C. Augé will publish the coin. The dating of the context JCW00.55 is not effected as both kinds of Nabataean coinage were in circulation until then.

⁵ The city wall excavations in September-October 2001 (JCWP2001,

cf. Kehrberg and Manley 2002b; 2002c; 2002d) has added valuable stratified contexts and quantitative material for in-depth scrutiny and will bring us closer to a balanced picture of early Gerasene pottery manufacture. Another JCWP season of excavation along the east and centre west city walls has been carried out in September-October 2002.

were found in clusters, each in their separate find contexts. Their intimate artefactual association and independent dating make these homogeneous assemblages a reliable database for Gerasa pottery studies of that period. Thus we find libation cups, carinated bowls or cups, with rouletted decor, painted or plain, shallow dishes, unguentaria (more rarely in pottery) and juglets side by side with 'cooking pots', larger bowls, basins and jugs. In non-industrial repertoires such as these it stands to reason that the sherds of the smaller vessels outnumber those of large containers.

The uniformity of the local ware or wares, that is the fired fabrics, is remarkable and the small variety is not noticeably restricted to any particular form, including the lamps of this period. They can be loosely described as shades of red and beige wares with a thinnish red slip or drip-wash tending also towards brown and the 'beigish' variety with a darkish brown to grey toned surface treatment. Methods of application are the same. Rarer is a grey deliberate firing of the same fabric, more often than not it seems the result of poor firing, especially evident from the kiln waste dumps, of course. The quality of the fired fabrics of both the redder and beige kind, may be roughly categorised as smooth to almost soapy, the least common, and slightly gritty or sandy, the regular ware. In almost all cases, the surface finish is a slurried slip (also wet-smoothed or self-slurry) and the added colour 'slip' is what I term a slip-wash or 'dip-wash', the red to brown to dark grey colour depending on the firing. The same kind of surface treatment can be seen on contemporary pottery of northern Jordan. At Tall Anafa in the upper Galilee, pottery with this type of slip is called "spatter ware" (Berlin and Warner Slane 1997: 7-9).

A last word about the fabrics: I have reservations about the definitions "common" or "fine" ware because often, the terms are too rigidly or too loosely applied for either plain or decorated pottery. Nor would I describe the pots shown here as coarse ware although there are schools that refer to the grittier fabrics as coarse, especially for larger bowls and other simple forms for table and kitchen. The two plain or decorated extremes, true Fine Ware (e.g. egg-shell Nabataean pottery, cream ware, sigillata) and Coarse Ware (e.g. 'Aqaba ware' — a new class introduced by B. Dolińska, transport amphorae, pithoi), tend to be made for rather specific purposes. Ignoring their secondary uses not designed for by the potter, coarse wares were in the main for transport, storage conditions, installations and constructions; fine wares seem to be destined specifically for the dining table, ex-voto (or both) and, even more to the point, for those who can afford to buy and regularly replace the fragile class of table wares. The bulk of Gerasa's early pottery best fits the description of plain and decorated common ware. It has the normal range of simple and more refined pottery forms, each usually with appropriately treated suitable clays, thickness or thinness of walls and firing.

And as elsewhere, there are exceptions to the rule which need not concern us here.

What is readily discernible from the small selection, especially in FIG. 1, is the 'rustic' look, but the pottery is well-made and the quantity of same forms and variations (including decorations) bear the marks of professional stream-lined manufacture. The pottery must have been produced on a large scale over a good period of time to have been stream-lined and to achieve the quality of consistent uniformity. This does not mean the same kiln or potter, there were obviously many potters at work in different areas of early Gerasa, borne out by the quantity in the different find contexts from north to south which, apart from ex-voto, in many cases included misfired pots.

There is very little imported pottery and the few Late Hellenistic pieces shown here (FIG. 2: 9-10) are more or less representative. The fine grey ware of that period is not included here but its actual presence does not alter the poor ratio of imported to local Gerasene pottery. The same remains true throughout most of the Roman, Byzantine and Early Islamic periods, when Jarash still mass-produced its own wares. The marked 'low key' presence of imported western and eastern pottery may be partly due to lack of excavated finds (wrong loci for artefactual material ?) or their publications. It is all the more interesting and important to note that the forms of the Gerasene assemblages are easily recognizable and classifiable. They conform to the 'international' standard shapes or types found on contemporary sites within and without Jordan. The pottery is rather more than less up-to-date with that found on international markets of the Eastern Mediterranean which have a greater import ratio. Adequate local production may explain the lack of demand for imported Hellenistic and Early Roman pottery.

A closer look at the Gerasene pottery may provide more detail but the greater picture introduced here would not alter with depth. One is indeed impressed upon by the competent, regular, and it appears routinely produced repertoire of shapes and wares. If perhaps a little monotonous, the economic or efficient productions seem to have satisfied the local market and made redundant a serious demand for imports by certain official or social groups of the community. There are obvious implications with regard to culinary traditions. The professional, social and ethnic inter-relationships between kitchens, diners and pottery are well-known and cannot be dealt with here. However, it would be rash to interpret Gerasa as a backwater, its richer or influential citizens not being socially (or politically) obliged to display their own and pay heed to their guests' elevated position through costly imports used at table. Nothing has been found throughout its archaeological explorations to posit that Gerasa was any poorer or culturally more inapt than its neighbours in northern Jordan and Palestine. The well-known historical accounts narrated by Flavius Jos-

ephus in the first century AD also suggest that Gerasa was a vibrant town of some standing already in the second century BC. The most recent discovery of a late second century BC tomb with locally made but nonetheless elaborate and even unique pottery in the form of models, as well as the rich gold-leaf pectoral fits well with Josephus' stories of 'Antioch on the Chrysorhoas' as Gerasa was then known.⁶

Other sites like Gadara and Pella appear to have a larger proportion of imported pottery during the same periods. Future ceramic studies would do well to bring together the stratified assemblages of similar sites, especially the Decapolis cities, and compare the local productions and imports, also with regard to pottery trade between the sites. It is significant, however, that there is now substantive evidence to support the claim that Hellenistic Gerasa appears to have had self-sufficient pottery production, satisfying the needs of an, it seems, fair-sized and developed township already by the end of the second or beginning of the first century BC.

FIG. 2 introduces just a few of the very unusual and so far uniquely early Gerasene painted pottery sherds (nos. 11-17) which were first located and identified in the 1980s excavations of the hippodrome and its underlying tombs (FIG. 2: 12 and 15).⁷ Others have since been found in the excavations of the upper temple of Zeus complex and the very recent City Wall dig (FIG. 2: 11, 13, 14, 16, 17; see also Kehrberg and Manley 2002a: Figs. 7 and 10). The sherds of the latter two sites are in the majority (in spite of smaller areas of excavation) and belong exclusively to assemblages of first centuries BC and AD deposits (some with possible extension back into the late second BC). The examples from the hippodrome site were found in pre-hippodrome tombs dating from the first to early second century AD and in second century AD foundation fillings together with BC/AD ceramics and the occasional Late Bronze and Iron Age pottery sherd (not an unusual admixture in Roman foundation dirt fills at Gerasa of earlier second century constructions). In most cases, however, the bichrome and sometimes trichrome painted and incised early Gerasa ware comes from the same Late Hellenistic and Early Roman one-period con-

texts as the pottery shown in FIG. 1.

Comparative study and library research have thus far failed to reveal parallel pottery in Jordan and beyond (see also note 8). This may be partly due to the scarcity of known Late Hellenistic and first to early second century AD levels elsewhere and in the north in particular.⁸ But there are other sites, especially relevant ones like Gadara, which have contemporary and similar contexts with pottery assemblages. It seems, therefore, quite extraordinary that they do not contain this type of early painted ware. The fact remains that this type of pottery is completely unknown outside Jarash and this can be seen as a first indicator for its local production. Their number is not large but their occurrence is so persistently regular in these levels and contexts (see above), that they seem to be part of the Gerasene Late Hellenistic and immediately following Early Roman material culture.

Contrasting the contemporary decorated common ware pottery of the Eastern Mediterranean with that of Gerasa (which was part of that cultural and political space), the second and first centuries BC painted ware, also in manner of application, is not unlike the examples on FIG. 2. Striking similarities are in brushwork, range and combination of motifs, quality and colours of the slip used for painting, matte bichrome tradition sometimes combined with incised linear decor (also occurring alone), a preference for closed and larger vessel forms (but not exclusively), and the common ware fabric itself. All these shared features make the early Gerasa painted or otherwise decorated ware a contemporary Eastern Mediterranean production of the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman (first century) period. The plain forms on FIGS. 1 and 2 are contemporaries and their compatibility with the rest of the Mediterranean provides the quantitative back-drop for the painted vessels. From Spain to Jordan, differences may be observed in, and explanations sought for the varying intensity of local adaptations and ceramic productions, imports and adoptions of alien cults seen through artefacts: be it superficial, one thing that remains is a pertinent impression of the overall cultural uniformity and conformity.

It is in this 'global frame' that an explanation of the

⁶ Kehrberg and Manley 2002b; 2002c. Except for two items, the pottery is of local ware and its zoomorphic modeling in local character which continues to make its mark throughout classical Gerasa/Jarash. The importance of the Late Hellenistic tomb find lies with the contents: the models seem to suggest that the deceased belonged to a well-to-do merchant family engaged in the caravan trade of wine, judging by the modeled amphoras (Chos or Rhodian types) strapped on the back of the camel figurines.

⁷ On the early painted ware, its identification and interpretation, see also my comments in Kehrberg and Manley 2002a: s.v. "The pottery finds, their contexts and interpretation". Some years after they had been identified at the hippodrome excavations in the early 1980s, some fragments of this early painted ware were also found at the lower terrace of the Zeus sanctuary excavations, directed by J.

Seigne. During the ceramic round table gathering at IFAPO - 'Amman in 23-26 August 2000 and after her presentation of later Roman pottery from the lower terrace of the Zeus sanctuary, A.-M. Rasson-Seigne showed the early painted sherds from the lower sanctuary excavations but no insight was gained as to its presence in Jarash and absence elsewhere. The publication of the Round Table is in preparation.

⁸ Another reason for being 'inconnu' among scholars may be the paucity of publications or funded work on ceramics in northern Jordan of this and later periods. On sites like the Decapolis cities, where architecture looms so large, there is hardly room for ceramics and other artefacts and their studies receive little or no attention during and after excavation.

unique early Gerasa painted ware has to be sought and in order to do that the find contexts provide a vital key. As shown earlier, contexts isolated the factors which determined the identification of the painted ware as Early Gerasene and dated its circulation exclusively to the Late Hellenistic (end second/early first century BC) and Early Roman (first century BC to early first AD) periods. Thereafter it only occurred as part of the dirt debris filling in foundations of the second century AD.

A possible functional explanation for this ware was given by the defined cultural nature of the contexts: the necropolis grounds, the hypogean tombs, the contemporary and associated pottery kiln waste and 'open-air sanctuary'. Comparisons with other contexts/sites, especially tomb deposits provided further insight, also in view of the other associated ceramics. Cultic sites and tombs in the Levant, Cyprus, Spain, Egypt, Aegean islands and even Athens, in short the Mediterranean, not uncommonly had a pottery vessel called the *lagynos* (FIG. 2: 18). This jug, painted, incised and plain, was also found in isolated tombs in 'Ammān, Pella and last year in Jarash itself (Kehrberg and Manley 2002b; 2002c). Much has been written on *lagynoi*, their origin of production and association with the Dionysiac funerary cult and funerary banquets (discussions in e.g. Hayes 1991; Rotroff 1997a; Metzger 1994; Masson 1984; Pierobon 1979). It appears from perusal of the publications that almost all Mediterranean contemporary sites contain examples of this jug. Hayes has located the production centre in Cyprus and specifically Paphos (Hayes 1991: 18ff.) and has provided a predominantly late second and first century BC context for their occurrence in the Levant, but occurring until the first century AD (Hayes 1997: 75f.). Joining other authors, he discusses the connection with the Egyptian contemporary painted Hadra vases (Hayes 1991: 58 and note 52), which has also been found in Cypriot tombs together with the *lagynos* (Dray and Plat Taylor 1951: 60 and Pl. 25).

Whilst decorated examples like at Pella and other sites in the Mediterranean are usually imports from Cyprus, the plain *lagynos* no. 5 (FIG. 2: 18) from the late second century BC Gerasa/Antioch on the Chrysorhoas tomb is locally made. This is also true for the rest of the Gerasene painted sherds (FIG. 2: 11-17) and all other sherds not shown here. It has already been suggested (see above) that the painted tradition fits the contemporary tenet of common household ('kitchen') ware. The motifs, colours, syntax and their application, as well as the profiles of the sherds, strongly hint at an inspiration derived directly from these Cypriot *lagynoi*. To cite but one of many published parallels for painted, incised and plain *lagynoi*, the Late Hellenistic *lagynos* from Famagusta, published by O. Masson, is the most compelling piece of evidence and can leave little doubt as to Cypriot productions being the source of inspiration. In his article Masson discusses an inscribed and

painted jug with almost identical syntax and mode of bichrome decoration on the shoulder which can also be seen on the fragments in FIG. 2 number 17 (Masson 1984: Pl. 48). The difference is equally telling: whilst the Cypriot *lagynos* has a cream slipped and polished upper body, the Gerasa sherd surface, like the other sherds, is only self-slipped with no added colour.

Inspiration rather than copying seems the appropriate term because the characteristics of the Cypriot proto-type are only loosely applied by the Gerasene potter and to some degree also recall the bichrome and trichrome painting on the contemporary Egyptian Hadra hydria. Between those two classes, their origin and the Gerasa finds there is a link in contexts and ritual use (carrying liquid, funerary banquets, Dionysiac funerary cult) and that cultural/religious link is also manifest between the Late Hellenistic cities where they have been found (on second century BC Ptolemaic Dionysiac cults see e.g. Nilsson 1957: 30-31).

The functional association of the pottery, first understood from the contexts, adds weight to a *lagynos* as origin of inspiration, indeed the reason for the presence of the jug. The Dionysiac funerary cult or the '*lagynoi*' (Pierobon 1979; Metzger 1994), after which the jugs have been named, is associated with funerary rituals and banquets in which the jug is used: the majority of the Gerasa finds come from sites previously having been part of the large necropolis (whether cultic or tombs) before they were closed for urban development. They cease to occur in second century Roman non-foundation contexts and once urbanisation has set in. The inferences are historical: the Late Hellenistic-Early Roman (second BC to first AD) necropolis was closed and with this the Greek or Late Hellenistic Dionysiac cult ceased to be practiced in Gerasa, because no later second century AD hypogean tombs and temples or shrines appear to contain *lagynoi*. The demand for the ritual ware had also ceased. If *lagynoi* had belonged to the normal household, even to be used at symposia, there should have been a much larger number found in the kiln dumps or as residual sherds.

These are small, but I think significant indications to suggest an end-date of production of Gerasene improvised *lagynoi* and related painted forms by the first century AD. Some of the sherds from the second AD kiln dumps and Roman foundation fills show that they were deliberately broken and worked on to flake them into suitable sherd tools (on sherd tools see Kehrberg 1992; 1995). The tools were probably fabricated in the second century AD. It is additional supportive evidence that the Dionysiac cult practices had ceased in the first century AD and with it the local production of the *lagynoi*. Some jugs may have been found broken or damaged littering the once sacrificial open-air grounds and their sherds were used for tool-making because of their hardy and very suitable fabrics. And thus, in a very small way, the end of the *lagynoi* also

heralds the end of the last vestiges of the Greek city and ushers in Roman Gerasa.

In conclusion, the Late Hellenistic pottery and their contexts, especially the Late Hellenistic tomb (see above), bear out Kraeling's historical synthesis of Greek or Hellenistic Gerasa. He states that although Gerasa's (then Antioch on the Chrysorhoas) contact with Seleucids was not for very long "...its seems to have been of great significance. As a Hellenistic foundation the town obtained a measure of standing at least in its own district and thereby acquired those prerogatives and that claim on the future which it exploited so successfully in the Roman period of its history" (Kraeling 1938: 32).

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