

On Two Pithoi from the Beth-Shean Region and the Jordan Valley

ON TWO PITHOI FROM THE BETH-SHEAN REGION AND THE JORDAN VALLEY

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The two pithoi concerned in this article, and shown in Figs. 1 and 2 and Pls. XXVI, XXVII, were both discovered during the digging of drainage channels. The first of them was found in 1958 very close to Shikkun Vaw at Beth-Shean (Grid reference 19 674 21 099) cp. also *P.E.Q.*, 90, 1950, p. 50, fig. 4. The other was discovered about 100 m to the east of Kh. Delhamiye (grid ref. 20374 22 892) in November 1965. Despite the distance between them—about 20 km—they were installed in a similar manner in pits dug into the virgin soil of the Lisan formation, and unconnected with any architectural structure.

The first pithos was found at a depth of 1.50 m below street level. The clay of the vessel (Pl. XXVI A and Fig. 1) is mixed with many black stone grits; it is buff-coloured, and excellently

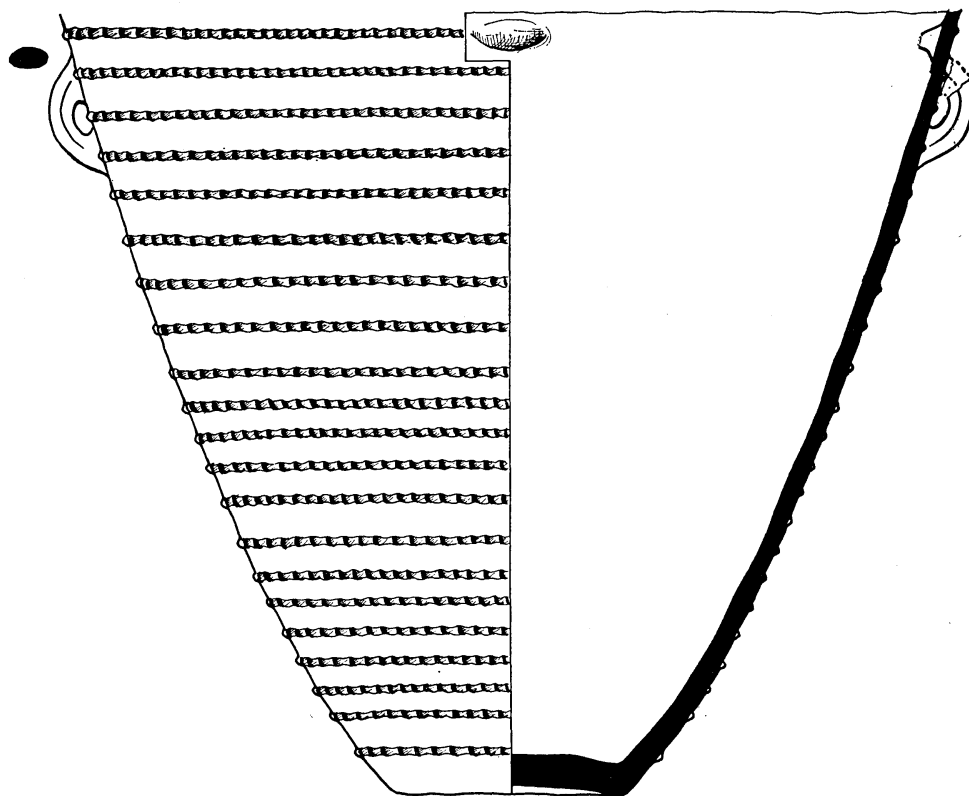


Fig. 1

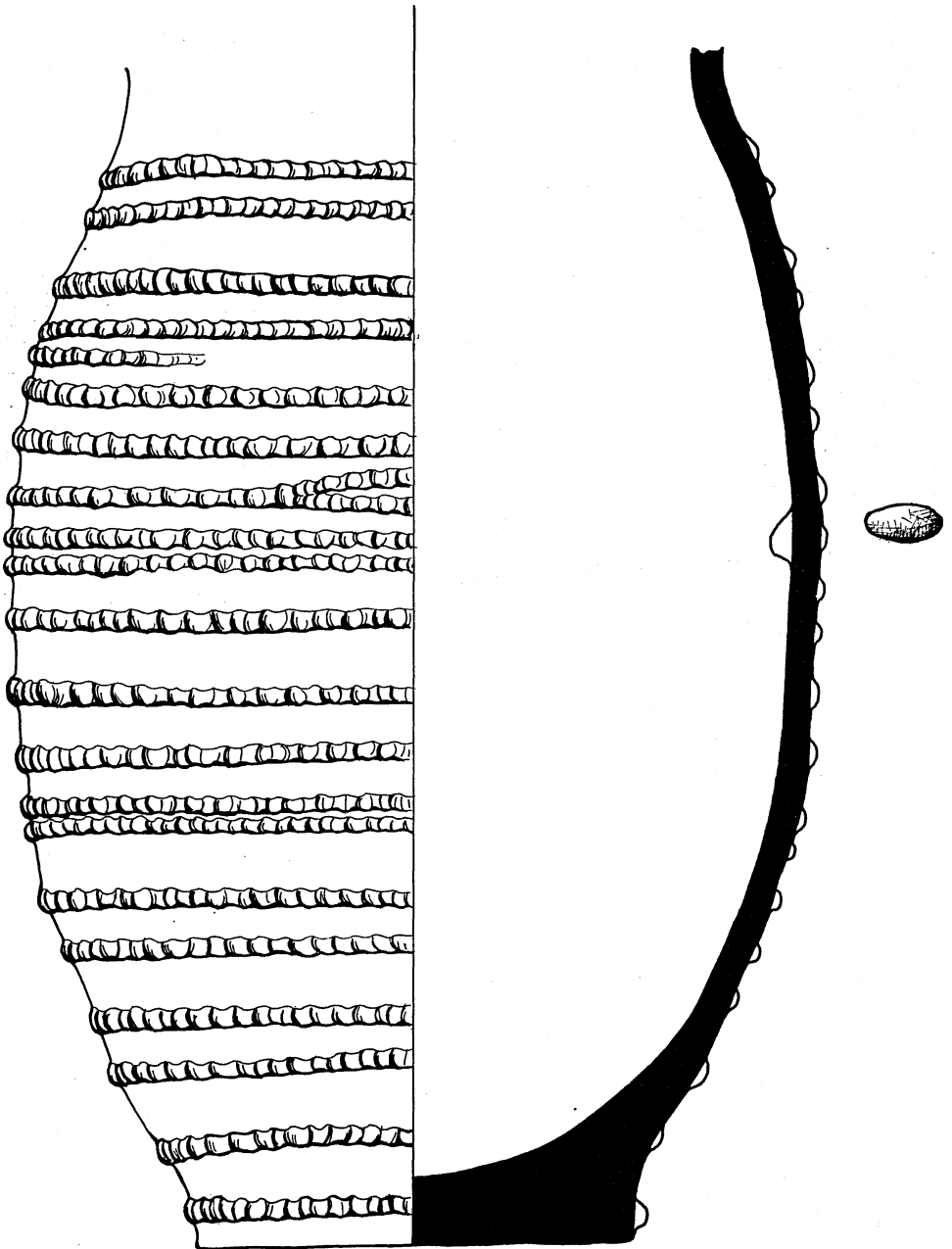
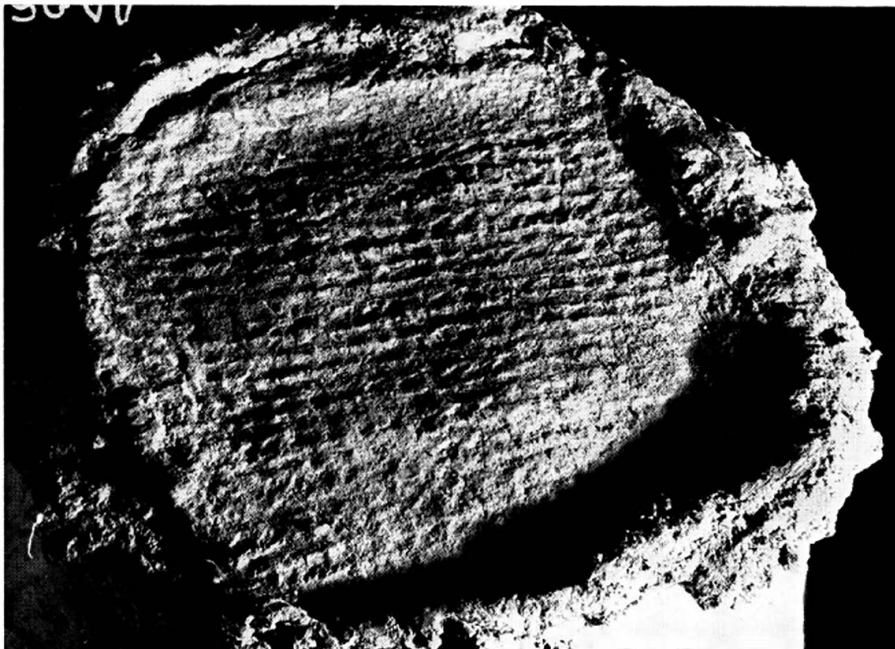


Fig. 2



A. Pithos from Shikkun Vaw, near Beth-Shean



B. Base of Pithos from near Khirbet Delhamiye.



Pithos from near Khirbet Delhamiye.

fired. Since the upper part is missing, it is hard to decide its exact shape, but its present height is 1.20 m and the widest part is 1.30 m in diameter, while the diameter of the base is 34 cm, and the thickness of the walls is $2\frac{1}{2}$ -3 cm. On the flattened base the impression of the potter's mat is visible. The pithos had two loop handles and four inside ledge handles. Three of them are 11 cm wide, the fourth is 20 cm wide. Twenty-two rows of raised bastic rope bands ($1-1\frac{1}{2}$ cm) decorate the vessel, the lowermost band being 8 cm above the base. Within the pithos, traces of red paint are visible here and there. Some potsherds, basal grinding stones, and flints were found in the pithos.

The second pithos¹ (Pl. XXVII, and Fig. 2) was found 1 m below the main road level. Its height is 1.53 m, the thickness of its walls is 4 cm, the diameter 1 m and the diameter of the base is 48 cm. The rim is broken but it seems to have curved outward. Inside the vessel there are two very coarsely made ledge handles, 90 cm above the base.

On the flat base, the impression of the potter's mat is visible (Pl. XXVI B). The vessel is badly fired; 57 cm above the base there was a layer of three blackened basalt stones and brick debris, and the pithos had been blackened inside from this level down to the base.

Decoration consists of irregular raised pattern bands, in thickness $1-3\frac{1}{2}$ cm, and irregularly spaced. It is noteworthy that the uppermost band is 7-11 cm below the rim line, while the lowermost is $1-1\frac{1}{2}$ cm above the base.

Within the pithos, some potsherds, grinding stones, flints and other objects were found.

The two pithoi belong to the Ghassulian culture, though they are rather bigger than those found at Tuleilat Ghassul (cf. A. Mallon, R. Koepfel, R. Neuville, *Teleilat Ghassul*, I, Rome, 1934, p. 103, figs. 53, 54). Pithos 2 also possesses an elegance of shape not found until now. It is now on exhibition in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, being a beautiful relic of the fourth millennium B.C.

¹ The author wishes to thank Mr J. Luzi of Kibbutz Ashdodh-Yaaqov for notification of this find, and him as well as his wife and other members of the settlement,

together with Mrs J. Roth and M. Golani of Sha'ar HaGolan for their help in excavating it.