CHAPTER ELEVEN

INSCRIBED VESSELS, OSTRACA, AND PLASTER

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INTRODUCTION

During the five seasons of excavation in Building 600, a variety of inscribed objects were recovered from both secure and contaminated loci. These items include architectural elements, artefacts, ceramic vessels, and lamps, which were inscribed either in Greek or Arabic. Although special studies of several items have already been published (Daviau and Pietersma 1994; Daviau and Beckmann 2001), this chapter includes documentation concerning artefacts and ceramic vessels with incised or painted inscriptions (for inscriptions on mould-made lamps, see Chapter 10 above).

THE GREEK INSCRIPTIONS

Inscribed Juglet (Figs. 8.8:4; 11.1:1)

The first Greek inscription discovered at Tall Jawa was incised on a sherd (TJ 138=D2:11/19.1=V618) recovered in Room 601. This sherd mended with a small jug (Daviau and Pietersma 1994: figs. 2–4) which is unique in the ceramic corpus, although it fits well within the Umayyad repertoire as a whole. The inscribed name (ΝαΟυΜα) is found in various forms in the Byzantine onomasticon. This particular form is also attested at Maresha, Mukhayyat,1 and Umm al-Rasas (Daviau and Pietersma 1994:76). Along with the Arabic inscriptions recovered at the site, this

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1 This mosaic fragment is currently located in the basilica church at Siyāgha/Mount Nebo.
jug reflects the multicultural situation during the transition period from the late Byzantine to the early Islamic period in Jordan.²

Ostrich Shell (TJ 590; Fig. 11.1:2)

Scattered throughout B600 were 37 fragments of ostrich egg shell, one of which was inscribed. Fragment TJ 590 (Sh-44;³ D32:43/68) is shaped like a right-angle triangle, measuring 3.0 cm across the base by 3.2 cm to the apex. It is a very pale brown (10YR 8/4) and painted on it, in light reddish-brown (5YR 6/4), are the faint remains of Greek letters. A digital photograph of the shell revealed it to be a palimpsest, on which there are about five lines of superimposed lettering.

² For a discussion of the formal features of V618, see Chapter 8 above. In view of the thorough study of the name by Pietersma in the original publication, his analysis is not repeated here.
³ Ostrich egg fragments received shell numbers along with marine shells and fossils.