

# Pottery Artifacts from the Qumran Site

Locating pottery, coins, and written material at an archaeological site establishes a relative and an absolute chronological framework for a particular culture. Pottery vessels found in the immediate area of Qumran and items from the surrounding caves and cliff openings are identical. The area seems to have been a regional center and most likely was supplied by a single pottery workshop.

A large number of cylindrical scroll jars were found at Qumran. Utilitarian items found in Qumran include small jugs, flasks, drinking cups, cooking pots, serving dishes, and bowls. A storeroom found during the excavation contained more than a thousand pottery items arranged by function. This trove included vessels for cooking, serving, pouring, drinking, and dining.

## References

De Vaux, R. *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. London, 1973. Lapp, P. *Palestinian Ceramic Chronology, 200 B.C.-A.D. 70*. New Haven, 1961.

- [Jar with Lid](#)



Pottery, first century B.C.E. - first century C.E.

Some of the scrolls found by Bedouin shepherds in 1947 were discovered in cylindrical pottery jars of this type, which are unknown elsewhere. Many authorities consider the discovery of these unique vessels in the Qumran excavations as well as in the caves, as convincing evidence of the link between the settlement and the caves. These jars, like the other pottery vessels recovered at Qumran, were probably manufactured locally.

KhQ 1474

Lid: Height 5 cm (2 in.)

Diameter 17.8 cm (7 in.)

Jar: Height 49.8 cm (19 1/2 in.)

Diameter 24 cm (9 3/8 in.)

Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority (57, 58)

- [Two-handled Jar](#)



Pottery First century B.C.E.-first century C.E.

KhQ 1634

Height 37.25 cm (14 1/2 in.)

Diameter 18.7 cm (7 1/4 in.)

Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority (55)

This elongated barrel-shaped jar has a ring base, a ribbed body, a very short wide neck, and two loop handles. The vessel was probably used to store provisions.

- [Herodian Lamp](#)



Pottery with fiber wick First century B.C.E.-first century C.E.

52.2

Height 4.3 cm (1 11/16 in.)

Length 10 cm (4 in.)

Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority (74)

This type of lamp was found in strata associated with Herod's reign (37-4 B.C.E.). A similar lamp was uncovered in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem, in strata dating to the destruction of the Second Temple (70 C.E.), thus raising questions as to the date of the lamp.

Characteristic features of this lamp type are a circular wheel-made body, a flat unmarked base, and a large central filling hole. The spatulate nozzle was hand-built separately and later attached to the body. Traces of a palm-fiber wick were found in the lamp's nozzle.

- [Plates](#)



Pottery First century B.C.E.-first century C.E.

KhQ 1591 a-o

Height 2.6-5.5 cm (1-2 3/16 in.)  
Diameter 13.6-16.4 cm  
(6 7/16-13 3/8 in.)  
Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority (40-54)

Plates, bowls, and goblets were found in one of the rooms at Qumran, with dozens of vessels piled one on top of the other. This room probably served as a "crockery" (storage area) near the assembly room, which may have functioned as the dining room.

These fifteen, wheel-made plates are shallow, with a ring base and upright rim. The firing is metallic. Hundreds of plates were recovered, most of them complete, some with traces of soot.

- [Stacked Goblets](#)



Pottery First century B.C.E.-first century C.E.

KhQ 1587 a-h  
Height 26.5 cm (10 7/16 in.)  
Diameter 16 cm (6 1/4 in.)  
Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority (65-72)

During the excavation of the Qumran ruin, these V-shaped drinking goblets were found stacked in what had been a storeroom. The quality of their construction and craftsmanship leads some contemporary archaeologists to argue that the site was a Roman villa, because the presence of vessels of this quality would not be in keeping with the austerity of an ascetic community.

---

- [More artifacts from the Qumran Site](#)