

AN INSCRIBED JAR HANDLE FROM KHIRBAT KA‘KUL

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A large jar handle (B4024, L411), impressed with an Arabic inscription (Fig. 1), was found. The inscription comprises three lines:

بركة Blessing (to)
أيوب Ayyūb
بن عثمان b. ‘Uthmān



The inscription should be dated, at the latest, to the end of the second century AH/early ninth century CE, according to the script. The name ‘Uthmān should have an alif after the *mīm*. This is a common feature of early Arabic orthography, called *scripto defectiva* (Wright 1986, I:9–10), which also appears in names on rock inscriptions (Sharon 1990:14), papyri (Hopkins 1984:12–13) and coins (Ilisch 1980:18, 21). Ayyūb b. ‘Uthmān was the owner of the storage jar with this inscription.

Other cases of stamped jar handles are recorded in Jerusalem and its vicinity, though the inscriptions are different (Hamilton 1940:16, Fig. 11; Tushingham 1985:327, No. 5773, Fig. 35:13; Sharon 1999:291).

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