

THE COLONIZATION/URBANIZATION OF THE TELL AREA A/II AT TELL EL-DABCA AND ITS CHRONOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The area A/II is particularly important at a time when the sacred precinct with its temples of Egyptian and Near Eastern types covered that part of the town.¹ In an earlier period (late 12th dynasty, MBIIA) (Fig. 1) the site was used as a settlement area. During spring 1997 a new investigation was initiated in which the lowest levels could be reached.²

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The layers presented here are the first traces of settlement on the Tell Area A/II, however, other parts of Tell el-Dabca like F/I and A/IV had already been occupied by settlers before (Fig. 2).

This stratum, relativ k (major stratum H) (Fig. 1), was reached only in square p/14. Two systems of pits and postholes which partly cut into those pits were found immediately on top of the gezira (Fig. 3).

The large pits vary in their diameter from around 1 m to 2,4 m and had been filled with mud and sand. The postholes vary from 19 to 26 cm in their diameter. In the middle of this posthole system a pit with a square column base of limestone set into it was found (base 22 cm, diameter of column 14 cm). The column itself was probably made of wood.

One could imagine some kind of workmen shelters for the settlers, the larger pits perhaps used for brick production.

The only finds were pottery, already in this early phase Egyptian types appear together with those of the MBIIA-culture.

EGYPTIAN SHAPES

Nile clay³

Nile B1 and 2

Hemispherical cups (Fig. 4)

These round-bottomed cups, (“U-Näpfe”) are characteristic of the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period. A distinctive change in vessel-index and dimensions can be attested,⁴ with a development from shallow, unrestricted bowls to deep, slightly restricted forms and a change in fabric: a shift from Nile B1 to Nile B2.

In this stratum there are about 75% Nile B1 and 25% Nile B2, the shape is still an open form, the rim diameter 10–13 cm.

Parallels are known all over Egypt⁵ and in Nubia from Buhen,⁶ Askut⁷ and other sites in Nubia.⁸

Nile C2

1. Large Nile C2 Dishes With Direct Rims and Rounded Bases (Fig. 5)

Large dishes with direct rims and rounded bases, made of fabric C2, are very common in this period. They are mostly uncoated or decorated with a red rim band. Usually they are carelessly made and often held together with string whilst drying to prevent them from collapsing outwards. The inner surface, however, and the upper part of the outer surface are generally wet-smoothed. Rim diameters are around 50 cm. Such dishes are extremely common in Middle Kingdom Egypt with other examples known from Dahshur,⁹ Riqqeh¹⁰ Harageh,¹¹ Hawara,¹² Lisht,¹³

¹ BIETAK 1986, 1991a, FORSTNER-MÜLLER in print.

² FORSTNER-MÜLLER 2001.

³ Based on the adapted Vienna system, published by BIETAK 1991a.

⁴ DO. ARNOLD 1988, 140; 1982a, 51 fig. 14; BIETAK 1991b, fig. 14.

⁵ For the parallels in detail s. ASTON 2004.

⁶ EMERY, SMITH, MILLARD 1979, 166, pl. 64 nos. 68–69.

⁷ TYSON SMITH 1995, 59, fig. 3.5A; 60, fig. 3.6A; 61, fig. 3.8A; 62, fig. 3.9A.

⁸ HOLTHOER 1977, 121; TYSON SMITH 1995, 66–69.

⁹ DO. ARNOLD 1982a, 33, fig. 9.1; ALLEN 1998, 45, fig. 3.4.

¹⁰ ENGELBACH 1915, pl. xxviii type 2.

¹¹ ENGELBACH 1923, pl. xxxiv type 2

¹² PETRIE, WAINWRIGHT, E. MACKAY 1912, pl. xxxiii .2, 4.

¹³ MACE, WINLOCK 1916, fig. 82.1; DO. ARNOLD 1988, 122; DO. ARNOLD, F. ARNOLD, S. ALLEN, 1995, 21, fig. 4, 11.

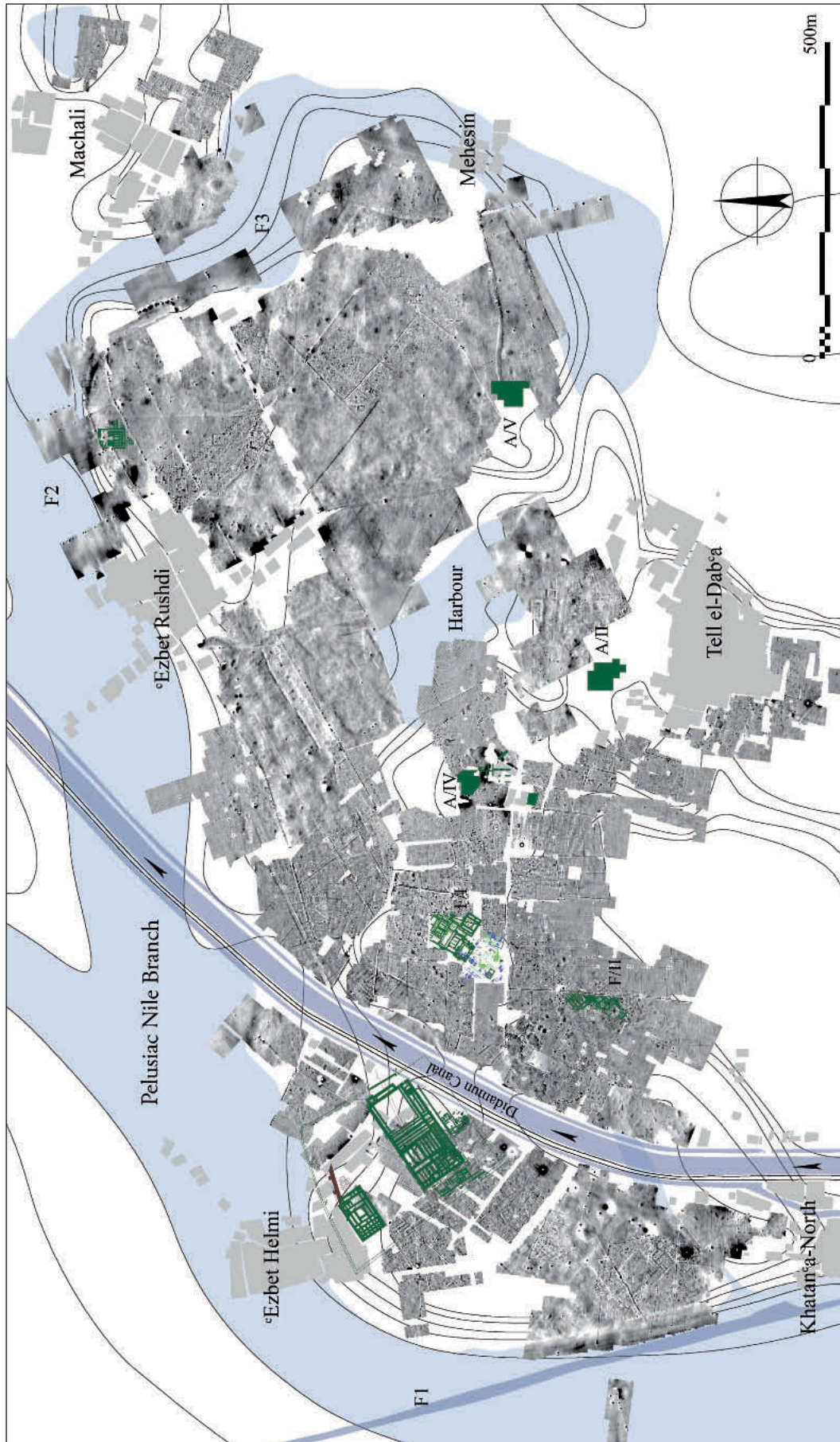


Fig. 1 Overall map of Tell el-Dab'a

MB-PHASES	B.C.	EGYPT RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY	TELL EL-DAB ^a					GENERAL STRATIGRAPHY
			TOWN CENTER (Middle Kingdom) ^a Ezbet Rushdi	NEW CENTER MB-Population	EASTERN TOWN		CITADEL ^c Ezbet Helmi	
			R/I	F/I	A/II	A/II 1997	H/I-IV	
LB I	1410	Dyn.						
	1440							
MB II C	1470	XVIII						
	1500							
	1530	AHMOSE						
MB II B	1560							
	1590	XV HYKSOS						
MB II A-B	1620							
	1650							
MB II A	1680							
	1710							
MB I	1740	XIII						
	1770							
?	1800							
	1830							
MB I	1860	XII						
	1890							
MB I	1920							
	1950							
MB I	1980	XI						
	2000							
	2050	X						

after Bietak/adapted by Czerny/Forstner-Müller/Wilson (2007)

Fig. 2

Lahun,¹⁴ Abydos,¹⁵ Armant,¹⁶ Thebes¹⁷ and Elephantine.¹⁸

2. Nile C2 Footed Bowls (Fig. 6)

Footed bowls made of Nile C2 have a flat hand-

made foot, the upper part was wheel made with undercut modelled rims. These vessels are well known in Late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period contexts at Lahun,¹⁹ Lisht,²⁰ Harageh²¹ and Riqqeh.²²

¹⁴ BRUNTON 1920, pl. xix.37, 45; W.M.F. PETRIE, G. BRUNTON, M.A. MURRAY 1923, pl. lvi. type 2.

¹⁵ PETRIE 1903, pl. xlvi. 193.

¹⁶ MOND, MYERS 1937, pl. xxxi.3A, 3C.

¹⁷ DO. ARNOLD 1966, 88, K871; LOYRETTE, NASR, BASSIOUNI 1993-94, 122, fig. 4j.

¹⁸ PILGRIM 1996, 348-9, fig. 155e.

¹⁹ PETRIE 1890, pl. xii.12.

²⁰ DO. ARNOLD, 1988, 115, fig. 61.

²¹ ENGELBACH 1923, pl. xl.90G, 90M.

²² ENGELBACH, 1915, pl. xxxiii.90G, 90J, 90M.

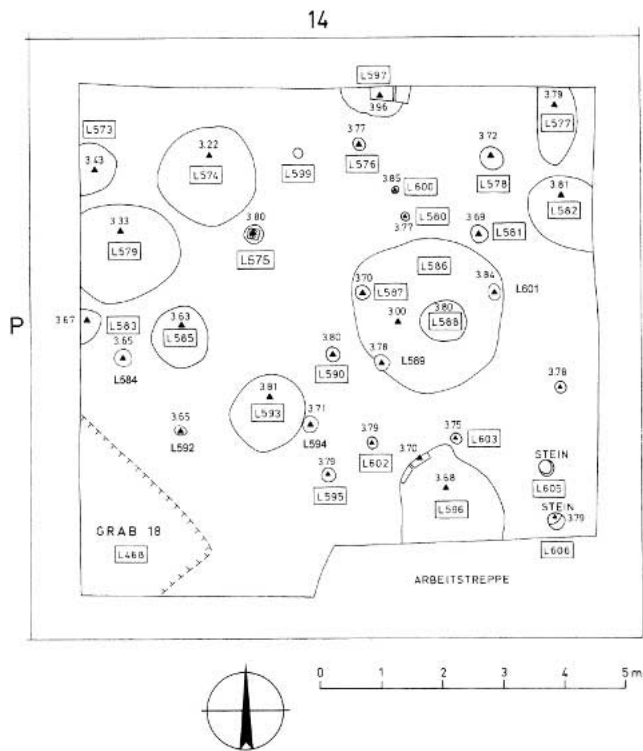


Fig. 3 Map of square A/II-p/14, situation in stratum k

3. Large Ovoid Jars (Beer Jars) (Fig. 7)

Large globular jars made out of fabric Nile C2 are very popular during the Late Middle Kingdom and early Second Intermediate Period.

These vessels are common amongst the Tell el-Dabca repertoire. A typology for this site was first established by Manfred Bietak,²³ and enlarged by Karin Kopetzky²⁴ and Zbigniew Szafranski.²⁵ From their work, a sequence of development can be observed.

In square p/14 we have only two examples – both represent an earlier group (Kopetzky type 2) which is typical for the late Middle kingdom – red slipped, with a funnel shaped neck. The rim is 14 cm in diameter. Parallels are known from Dahshur,²⁶ Riqqeh,²⁷ Harageh,²⁸ Hawara,²⁹ Lahun,³⁰ Abydos,³¹ Armant³² and Thebes.³³

The typical “beer jar” of the late Thirteenth Dynasty with a tall cylindrical neck and “kettle-shaped” mouth was not found in this stratum.

Marl C-vessels

1. Large Storage Jars (Zîrs) (Fig. 8)

Zîrs are generally made out of Marl clays and typically hand made with the rim fashioned on a slow wheel. Many vessels have potmarks on their rim or body (Fig. 9).

This type (Kopetzky’s type 3, equal to Bader type 3³⁴) occurs from stratum H until G, the rounded rim is never trimmed, its diameter is variable.

Parallels are known from Dahshur: complex 6,³⁵ Lisht,³⁶ settlement of Lisht/North,³⁷ Kom Rabia,³⁸ Kahun,³⁹ Qasr el-Sagha,⁴⁰ and Mirgissa.⁴¹

2. Marl C Medium Sized Jars (Fig. 10)

These jars can be divided into handmade and wheelmade vessels. The two examples presented here are all wheelmade (Bader type 36b⁴²), the range of diameter lies normally between 6 and 12 cm, one vessel here measures 14,5 cm. Parallels can be found at Lisht North,⁴³ Lahun,⁴⁴ Qasr es Sagha,⁴⁵ Quila el-Dabba,⁴⁶ Serabit el-Khadim⁴⁷ and Elephantine.⁴⁸

²³ BIETAK 1991b, 36 fig. 7.

²⁴ KOPETZKY 1993.

²⁵ SZAFRANSKI 1998, 95–119.

²⁶ DO. ARNOLD 1982a, 29 fig. 5.

²⁷ ENGELBACH 1915, pl. xxx types 40, 41.

²⁸ ENGELBACH 1923 pls. xxxvi–xxxviii types 40–41.

²⁹ PETRIE, WAINWRIGHT, MACKAY 1912, pl. xxxv. 100–104.

³⁰ PETRIE, BRUNTON, MURRAY 1923, pl. lvi.40K.

³¹ PEET, LOAT 1913, pl. v. 28; WEGNER 1996, 259, fig. 6; idem 2001, 300, fig. 10.

³² MOND, MYERS 1937, pl. xxxiii type 52.

³³ PETRIE 1909, pl. xiii.23–28; DO. ARNOLD 1968, 88 type K2174, eadem 1972, 40, fig. 4; SEILER 2005, 61, fig. 25, type DAN 1.

³⁴ BADER 2001, 161–163, fig. 45.

³⁵ DE MORGAN 1895, 41 fig. 83; DO. ARNOLD 1982a, fig. 8.3, 8.5.

³⁶ DO. ARNOLD 1988, 134, fig. 74.84.51, 84.60.

³⁷ BADER 2001, 161, fn. 801.

³⁸ BADER 2001, 161.

³⁹ PETRIE 1890, pl. XIV.16, 17; BOURRIAU, QUIRKE 1998, 62–64, fig. 1.1–3.

⁴⁰ BADER 2001, 161, fn. 803.

⁴¹ VILA 1963, fig. 13.14.

⁴² BADER 2001, 118ff.

⁴³ BADER 2001, 161, fn. 801.

⁴⁴ BOURRIAU 1981, 66, no. 119.

⁴⁵ D. and DO. ARNOLD 1979, 34, fig. 19.7.

⁴⁶ DO. ARNOLD 1982b, 45, 55, pl. 11.n, 62G.

⁴⁷ BOURRIAU 1996, fig. 4.10.

⁴⁸ PILGRIM 1996, 338, fig. 150.f; BADER 2003, fn. 136.

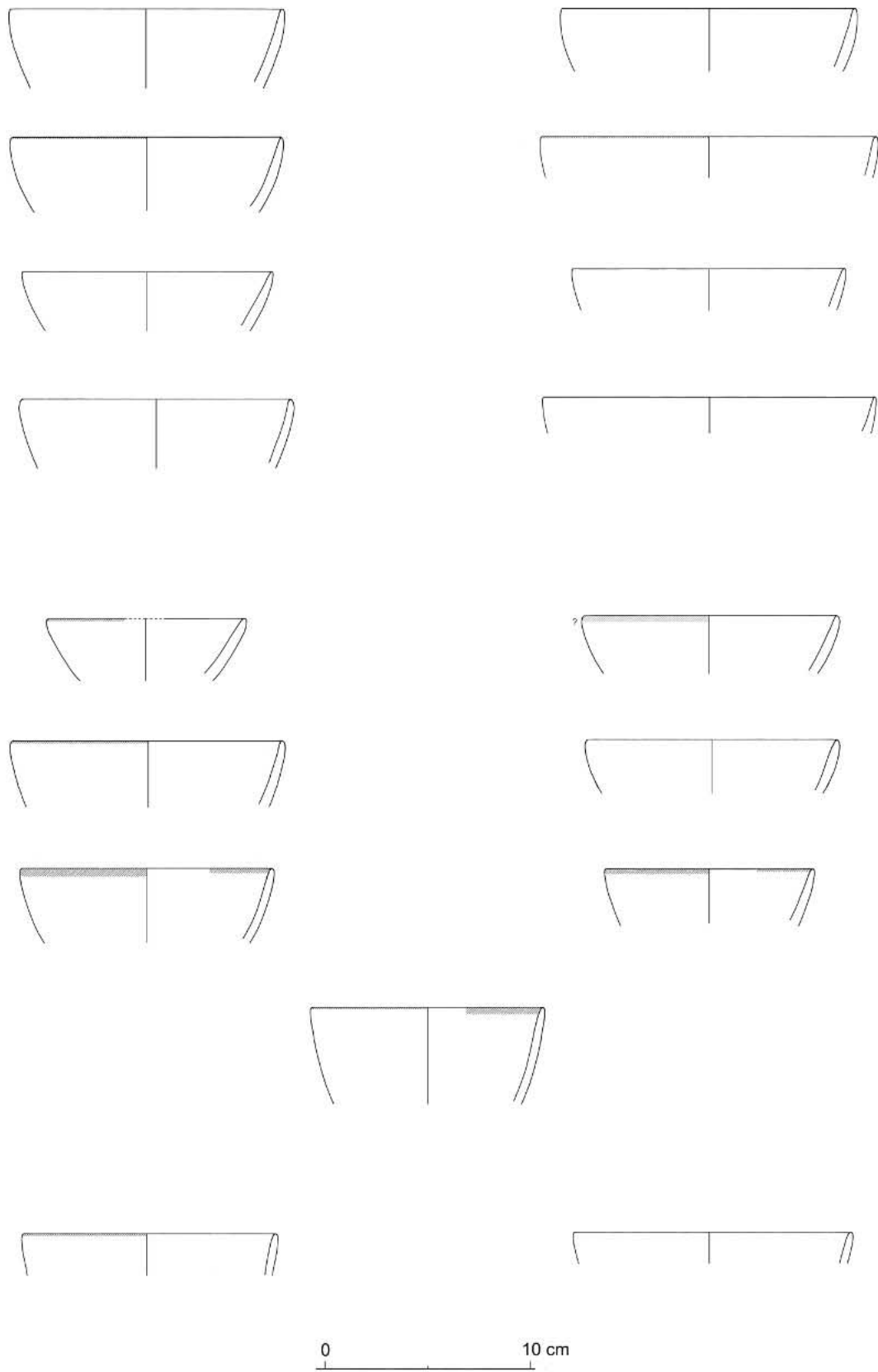


Fig. 4 Hemispherical cups

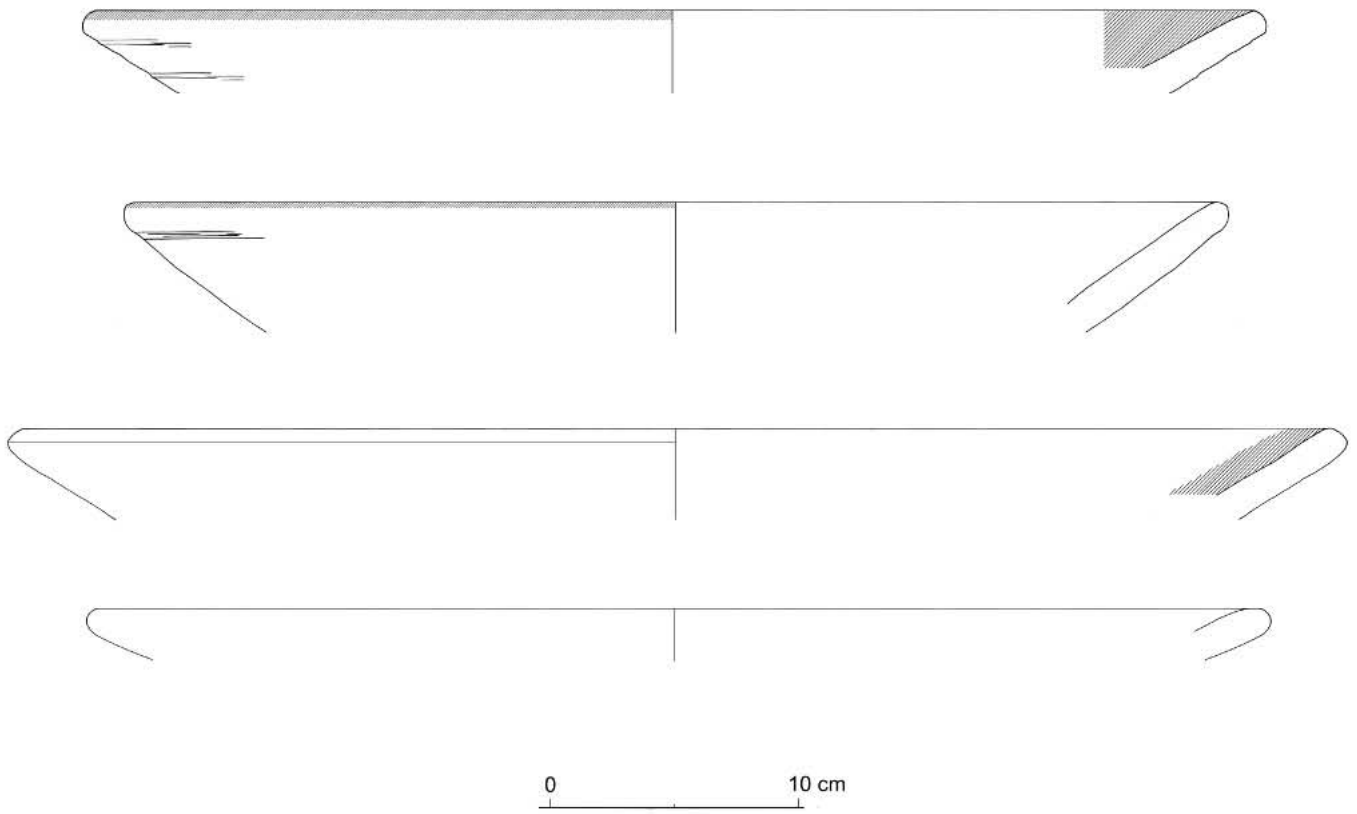


Fig. 5 Large Nile C2 dishes with direct rims and rounded bases

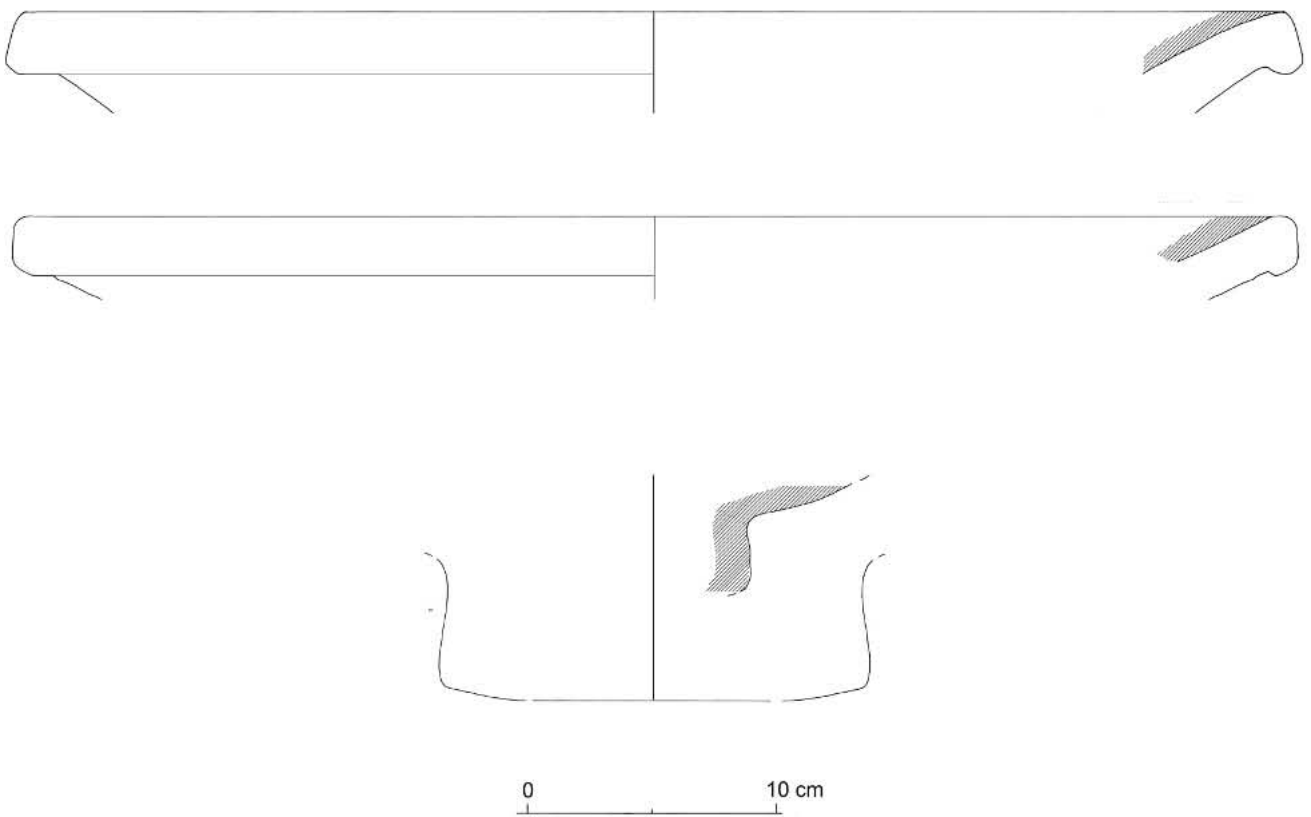


Fig. 6 Nile C2 footed bowls

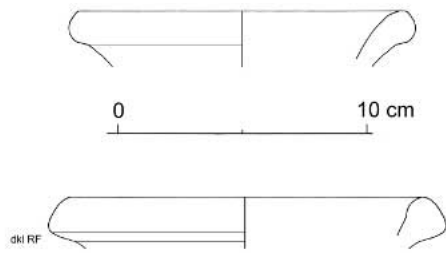


Fig. 7 Beer jars

3. Marl C Slender Jars with Ribbed Necks (Fig. 11)

Within the marl slender jars (Bader Typ 46)⁴⁹ two groups can be distinguished:⁵⁰ the earlier group (Kopetzky type 1) occurs in the late 12th Dynasty (strata H to G/4), the distance between the rim and the first rill is much shorter than with the later versions. By the 13th Dynasty (G/4 to E/3) they have become larger and cruder (type 2), the lip on these vessels longer.

The earliest jars tend to be made of Marl C compact which is not the case in the examples presented here.

Parallels have been found in Northern Sinai,⁵¹ Memphis,⁵² Dahshur,⁵³ Lisht,⁵⁴ Hawara,⁵⁵ Kahun,⁵⁶ Lahun,⁵⁷ Harageh,⁵⁸ Qasr el-Sagha⁵⁹ and Serabit el-Khadim.⁶⁰

EGYPTIAN OR MBII-SHAPES

Nile E-2

Holemouth Cooking Pots (Fig. 12)

Holemouth cooking pots with round bases, and rolled or folded rims, appear for the first time in the earlier 12th dynasty (stratum e/3) settlement contexts at ^cEzbet Rushdi in stratum e/3, then made of local Nile clay.⁶¹ Few imports made from Levantine fabric are known at Tell el-Dab^ca,⁶² most examples are locally made from Nile clay E2, only in stratum F mica is added sometimes, whether for the firing or to imitate an import remains unclear.

The rim diameter of these holemouth cooking pots varies from around 12–14 cm to over 50 cm, the average range between 25–35 cm.

All the examples shown here are covered in a white slip.

Parallels are found both in the Levant during the Middle Bronze Age and within Egypt.⁶³

It is a matter of debate, however, as to whether this type of vessel was developed within Egypt, or whether it copies Middle Bronze shapes. David Aston has recently suggested an independent development within both the Egyptian and Canaanite worlds.⁶⁴ Another possibility would suggest that the shape had entered the Egyptian repertoire very early (before the settlement at Rushdi) and by then was already imitated in Egyptian clay. The earliest examples from the site of Ezbet Rushdi seem to hint at an Egyptian origin.

MB II-SHAPES

1. Large Storage Jars (*Amphoren*) (Fig. 13)

The large storage jars imported from the Levant are found in large number at Tell el-Dab^ca. Most of them are attached with strap handles on both sides.

In earlier periods, these jars are made from a bigger variation of fabrics than in the Second Intermediate Period.⁶⁵

Among the examples presented in this paper two are made of fabric IV.1 (Fig. 11.1. und 2) and two of fabric IV.2 (Fig. 11.3 and 4). All are wheel-made and the exterior surface was smoothed. Three rims are everted and folded over (Fig. 11.2–4), one rim is probably incurved and slightly thickened (Fig. 11.1).

2. Handmade Flat-Bottomed Straight-Sided Cooking Pots (Fig. 14)

This group of vessels appears very rarely in Tell el-Dab^ca and exclusively in MBIIA-layers. In Stra-

⁴⁹ BADER 2001, 129–145, typ 46.

⁵⁰ BIETAK 1991b, 37, fig. 8.

⁵¹ OREN 1997, 276, fig. 8.23 no. 16.

⁵² BADER 2001, 129.

⁵³ DE MORGAN 1895, 74, fig. 164; DO. ARNOLD 1982a, 32 fig. 8 nos. 10, 12.

⁵⁴ DO. ARNOLD, F. ARNOLD, S. ALLEN 1995, 23 fig. 5.8.

⁵⁵ PETRIE, MACKAY, WAINWRIGHT 1912, pl. xxxv.105.

⁵⁶ PETRIE 1890, pl. xii.11

⁵⁷ PETRIE, BRUNTON, MURRAY 1923, pl. lvii.46M2–3.

⁵⁸ ENGELBACH 1923, pl. xxxviii.46M.

⁵⁹ GINTER *et al.* 1982, 124, fig. 16.7–13; DAGNAN–GINTER *et al.* 1984, 81 fig. 33.1–2; SLIWA 1988, 208, fig. 23, 211 fig. 35.1–2.

⁶⁰ BOURRIAU 1996, 22–23, fig. 2.10.

⁶¹ CZERNY 2002, 138, fig. 23

⁶² ASTON 2004, 165, group 157.

⁶³ For the parallels s. ASTON 2002, 46–47.

⁶⁴ ASTON 2002, 46.

⁶⁵ A detailed study on the fabric of this group is being done by K. Kopetzky; for the moment s. BIETAK 1991a, 328–9.

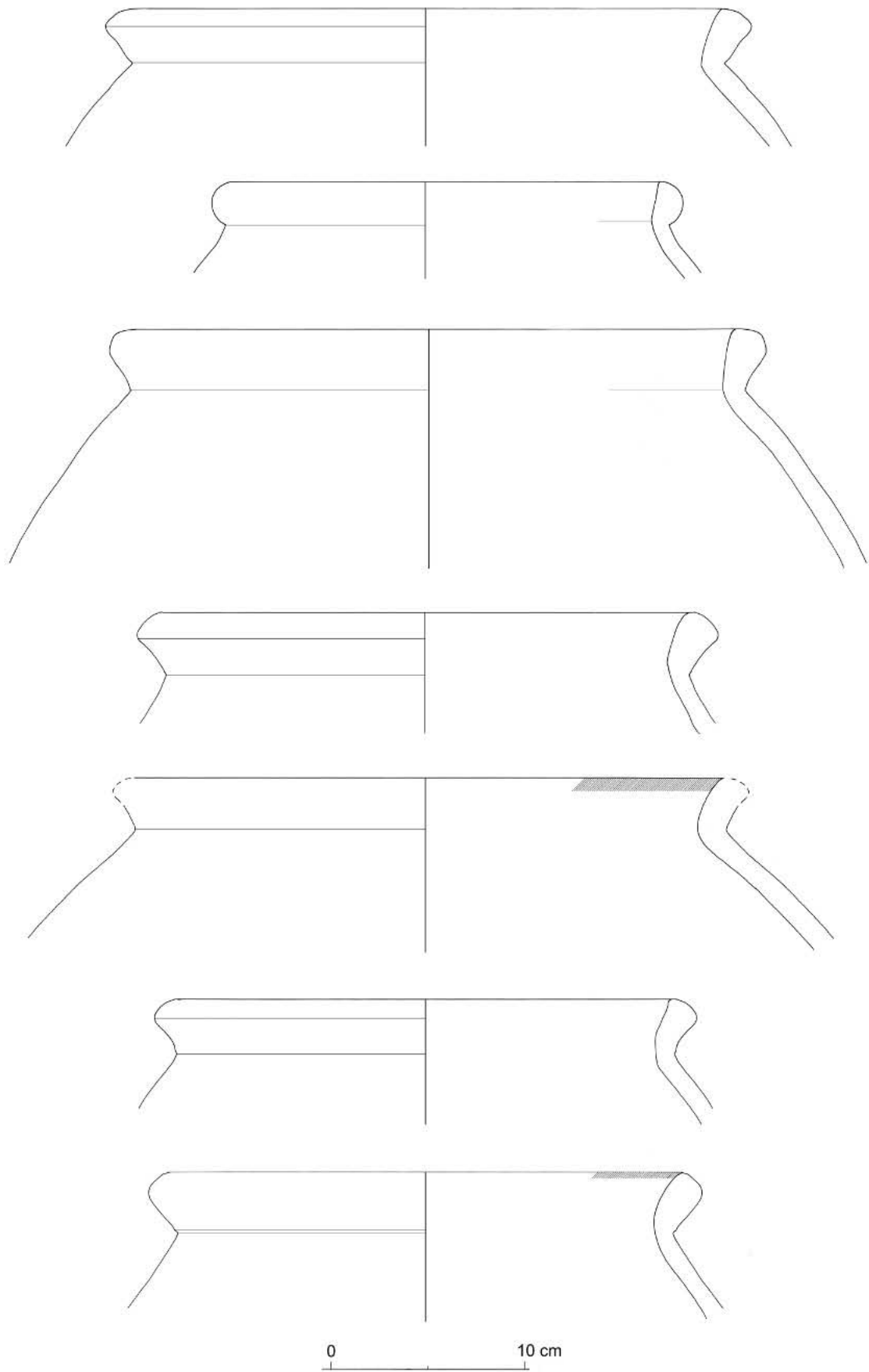


Fig. 8 Large storage jars (zirs)

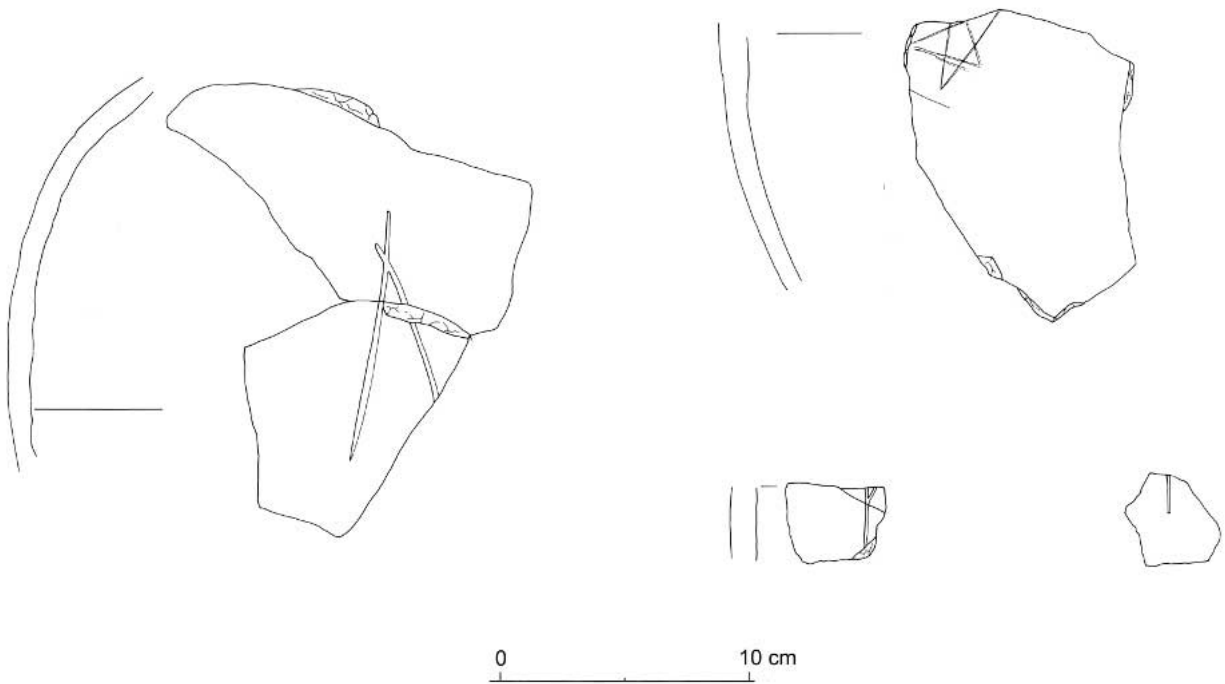


Fig. 9 Potmarks on Marl C jars

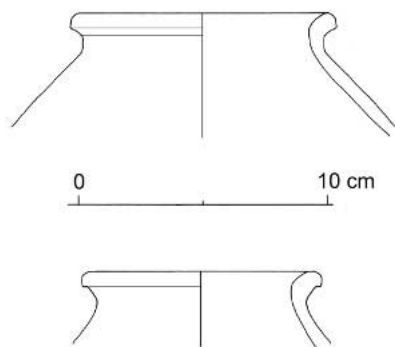


Fig. 10 Marl C medium sized jars

tum F (Fig. 2) where many of them can already be considered as residual sherds. Similar vessels have been found in the Eastern Delta, Northern Sinai and Palestine.⁶⁶

Only one example is definitely made of Levantine clay, the others are produced in Nile E3.⁶⁷ This fabric group was attributed by P. Mc. Govern to a Nile clay by neutron activation.⁶⁸ However, as A. Pape has pointed out⁶⁹ and D. Aston has assumed on basis of Papes research,⁷⁰ the basaltic inclusions in the Nile E3 do not imply a normal local production. Pape suggests an origin in the

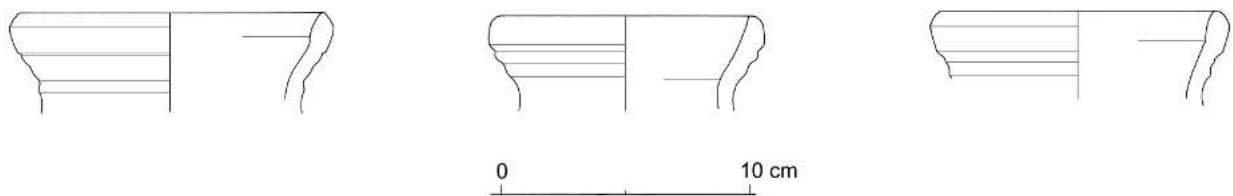


Fig. 11 Marl C slender jars with ribbed necks

⁶⁶ Parallels, although mostly from the MBII B-period s. ASTON 2002, 46. For Ashkelon s. STAGER 2002, 355, fig. 7.

⁶⁷ ASTON 2004.

⁶⁸ MC GOVERN 2000, 123.

⁶⁹ PAPE 1991, 65–66.

⁷⁰ ASTON 2002, 46.

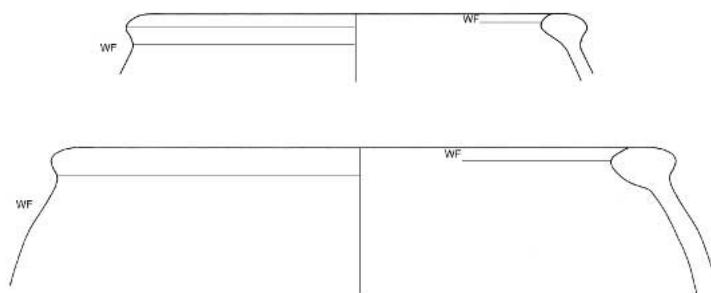


Fig. 12 Holemouth cooking pots

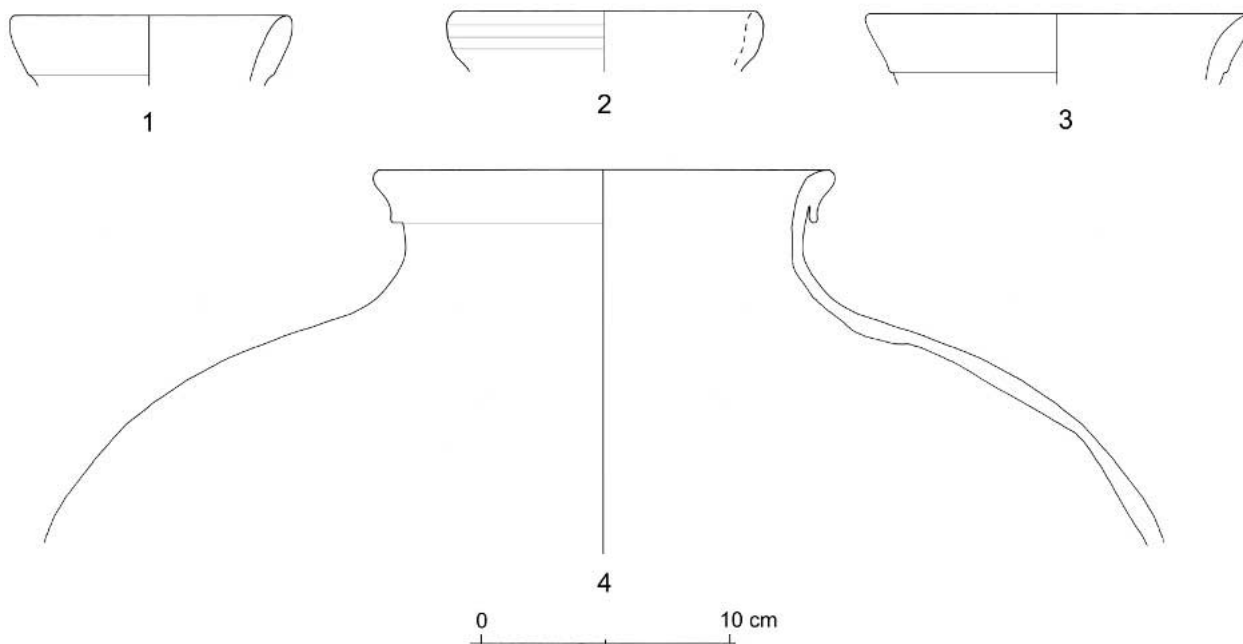


Fig. 13 Large storage jars

Hauran Region east of the Golan Heights,⁷¹ Oren would like to seek the origin in the Northern Sinai.⁷² In Karin Kopetzky's and my opinion, this group seems consists of several different fabrics which come from different sites.⁷³

A connection with a nomadic culture⁷⁴ seems unlikely as many examples of these vessels were found in urban contexts. Recently, Stager has suggested a functional difference for the contemporary appearance of the different types of cooking pots.⁷⁵

CONCLUSIONS

The earliest settlement layer in A/II can be dated to the late 12th Dynasty/ later MBIIA-period (Fig. 2). In contrast to other areas of the town like F/I and A/IV which had by then been densely settled this part may be considered as an Eastern suburb, the starting point of a development which in the following periods culminated into the sacral temple precinct, one of the major religious centers of Avaris.

⁷¹ PAPE 1991, 66 no. 41.

⁷² OREN 1997, 278, fig. 8.25 nos. 4–13.

⁷³ The material is currently being analyzed by A. Cohen Weinberger.

⁷⁴ BIETAK 1991b, 31; HOLLADAY 1982, 190; idem 1997, 190.

⁷⁵ STAGER 2002, 355.

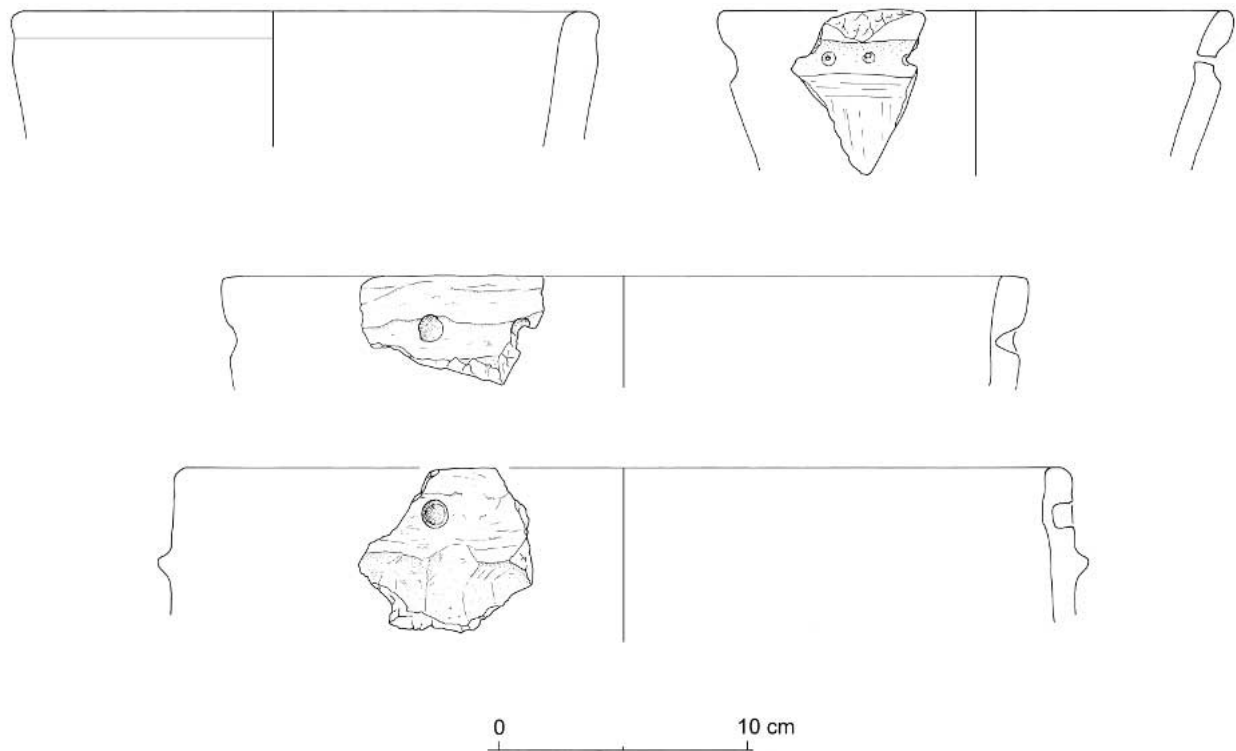


Fig. 14 Handmade flat bottomed straight sided cooking pots

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