

# TELL EL-DAB<sup>c</sup>A AND BYBLOS: NEW CHRONOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

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**Abstract:** *This article is one of several, which aimed to synchronise major excavation sites along the Levantine coast with the relative chronology of Tell el-Dab<sup>c</sup>a. Research was done in the frame of the EU MSCA project “Egypt in the Levant”. While the main part of this studies was to synchronise newly excavated sites with Tell el-Dab<sup>c</sup>a, also promising museum material from old excavations was taken into consideration. As the Byblos area was one of the most important trading partners for Tell el-Dab<sup>c</sup>a, it was decided to re-investigate the Royal Tombs of the Middle Bronze Age and try to synchronise their material with the stratigraphy of Tell el-Dab<sup>c</sup>a. Since their discovery in the early 1920s, there is an ongoing debate about their chronological dating, which was strongly influenced by the appearance of Egyptian prestige objects naming the kings Amenemhet III and IV inside two of these tombs (tomb I and II). With a few exceptions, most of the scholars tend to date the bulk of these burials into the MB IIA period, with the tombs I and II being contemporaneous with the reign of these late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty kings.*

*The re-investigation of the Egyptian, Egyptianising and local material from the Royal Tombs I, II and III as well as their synchronisation with the Tell el-Dab<sup>c</sup>a stratigraphy is presented in this study.*

**Keywords:** *Byblos, Royal Tombs, Tell el-Dab<sup>c</sup>a, chronology, Middle Bronze Age, synchronisation, Egypt*

After heavy rainfalls in the year 1922 the local population of Byblos discovered a tomb hewn into the rock close to the Mediterranean. They entered it and carried some of the objects discovered inside away. The Lebanese Antiquities Authorities

got wind of the situation and the head of all French excavations in Syria and Lebanon, Charles Viro- leaud himself, went up to the place and excavated this tomb.<sup>2</sup> He then published it in a detailed preliminary report in the same year.<sup>3</sup> The following year Pierre Montet took over this excavation area and uncovered eight more tombs<sup>4</sup> of which he thought they belonged to the rulers of Byblos of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.<sup>5</sup> The richest of these tombs, dating into the Middle Bronze Age, were the Tombs I, II and III. Inside the Tombs I and II objects were found bearing the names of two Egyptian kings. Amenemhet III was named on an ointment jar discovered in Tomb I and his son and successor Amenemhet IV on a little obsidian box coming from Tomb II. Thus it was obvious to the excavators that the tombs should be dated respectively,<sup>6</sup> an opinion which was broadly accepted amongst the scientific community.<sup>7</sup> Later some scholars started to doubt this dating and tended to a younger date. W.G. Dever observed that the content dates basically into the MB IIA and B.<sup>8</sup> P. Gerstenblith tended more to a dating at the end of the MB IIA period.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Ch. Lilyquist in her thorough studies on the Egyptian and Egyptianising small finds came to the conclusion that the sequence of the tombs extends beyond the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>10</sup> However, none of these suggestions for a younger date were taken over by the broader scientific communities. Till today these tombs are seen as being contemporary with the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty or the advanced MB IIA period.

O. Tufnell was the last person who studied part of the pottery. She has seen and drawn material from the tombs I–IV that was stored in the National Museum of Beirut during the late 1960s.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> It later became known as Tomb no. I.

<sup>3</sup> C. VIROLLEAUD, *Syria* 3 (1922), 273–290.

<sup>4</sup> For the dating of the Tombs IV and VI–XI based on archaeological and epigraphical evidences, see K. KOPETZKY, *MKS* 2 (2016), 143–159.

<sup>5</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, 143–238.

<sup>6</sup> C. VIROLLEAUD, *Syria* 3 (1922), 290. P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, 147.

<sup>7</sup> W.F. ALBRIGHT, *BASOR* 176 (1965), 39. K.A. KITCHEN, *Orientalia* 36 (1967), 40. W. HELCK, *Beziehungen*, 64.

<sup>8</sup> W.G. DEVER, *The Beginning of the Middle Bronze Age in Syria-Palestine*, 11.

<sup>9</sup> P. GERSTENBLITH, *The Levant at the Beginning of the Middle Bronze Age*, 103.

<sup>10</sup> C. LILYQUIST, *BASOR* 290–291 (1993), 44.

<sup>11</sup> O. TUFNELL, *Berytus* 18 (1969), figs. 2–7.

Although not very accurate, these drawings help to get a more precise date for those tombs.

All three of the here discussed tombs (I–III) were constructed with a vertical shaft leading into a side chamber.<sup>12</sup> Tombs I and II are connected with each other via a winding corridor that leads from the upper part of the shaft of Tomb II to the middle height of the shaft of Tomb I and to its burial chamber, thus connecting the two tombs. Tomb III lies east of Tomb I and southeast of Tomb II. To the east next to it Tomb IV is situated.<sup>13</sup> On the east wall of the shaft of Tomb III a small niche was found, a little bit higher than the entrance to the chamber on the opposite wall,<sup>14</sup> pointing in the direction of the shaft of Tomb IV. It is possible that this niche is the relic of an attempt to chisel a connecting corridor between the Tombs III and IV, but was given up due to unknown reasons, making Tomb IV the older of the two tombs.<sup>15</sup> This is supported by Montet's observations of the construction of Tomb IV, where he comes to the same conclusion.<sup>16</sup>

All three of the richly equipped Tombs I, II and III contained human bones. While inside Tombs I and II bones belonging only to one individual each were found, Montet remarks that Tomb III contained two burials.<sup>17</sup> This leaves the possibility that this tomb might have been reopened for a second entombment. And indeed, there might be evidence in the shaft of this tomb, which originally had in its northeastern corner a small 30 by 30 cm wide channel running from the top of the shaft to about the middle of the shaft. In a later stage this channel was covered by a stone wall and a second similar channel was constructed in the southwestern corner also reaching into the shaft of the tomb.<sup>18</sup> The construction of this wall and the moving of the channel could have happened after the shaft had been reopened and a second burial had taken place. However, it is also possible that the construction of the stone wall and the second channel occurred at a later point in time and moving the

channel was necessary to guarantee the communication between the ancestors and their descendants. The remains of a similar channel were discovered in the shaft of Tomb IV.<sup>19</sup>

Tombs I–III were found with most of their grave goods still present, while Tomb IV has been robbed severely in later times.<sup>20</sup>

## Egyptian objects found inside the tombs

### *Small finds*

Together in all three tombs five scarabs made of amethyst were found, which most likely were produced in Egypt (Figs. 1 – 3, 42). The features of their backs and legs are characteristic for Egyptian hard stone scarabs dating to the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasties. Four of the scarabs (640, 641, 642, 643)<sup>21</sup> are still mounted on golden rings, the fifth (636) is not. However, none of them are still in their original state. At a later point in time alterations were made to each of them.

Scarab (640/NMB 16249) comes from Tomb I and has its base covered with gold foil (Figs. 1/1 and 4/1, 2). Its ring is formed like a clamp, a mounting which is not very common. The golden base once bore an inscription which was painstakingly erased. With the help of Marcel Maree<sup>22</sup> it was possible to reconstruct this inscription, which was surrounded by interlocking spirals (Fig. 4/2). This ring once belonged to a *s3t nswt Nbw-m-Jwnt*, a princess, who is probably identical with a noble woman and princess named on a scarab housed in the Hänggi collection in Basel (Fig. 4/3).<sup>23</sup> The back and legs of the latter are typical for the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and have a good parallel in a scarab of Yantin, which was dated by D. Ben-Tor into the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>24</sup>

Three of the scarabs (641/BNM 16250, 642/BNM 16251 and 636/BNM 16240) were retrieved from Tomb II. In the case of scarab (641/BNM 16250) (Fig. 1/2) the once golden base bearing the inscription of its owner was very likely cut away,

<sup>12</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pls. LXXIV–LXXVI.

<sup>13</sup> For the plan, see P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. LXXII.

<sup>14</sup> See plan P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. LXXVI.

<sup>15</sup> The analysis of the remaining grave goods of Tomb IV showed that it was very likely older than Tomb III. See K. Kopetzky, *MKS 2* (2016), 143–159.

<sup>16</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, 203.

<sup>17</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, 199.

<sup>18</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, 148–150.

<sup>19</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, 152.

<sup>20</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, 199.

<sup>21</sup> The here mentioned numbers in ( ) are all referring to the object numbers in P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*.

<sup>22</sup> I thank him very much for his help by reading the inscription and for pointing out the scarab of the Hänggi collection to me.

<sup>23</sup> E. HORNUNG and E. STRAEHELIN, *Skarabäen und andere Siegelamulette aus Basler Sammlungen*, 550, pl. 62.

<sup>24</sup> D. BEN-TOR, *OBO Special Volume*, 178, pl. XXIII/2.

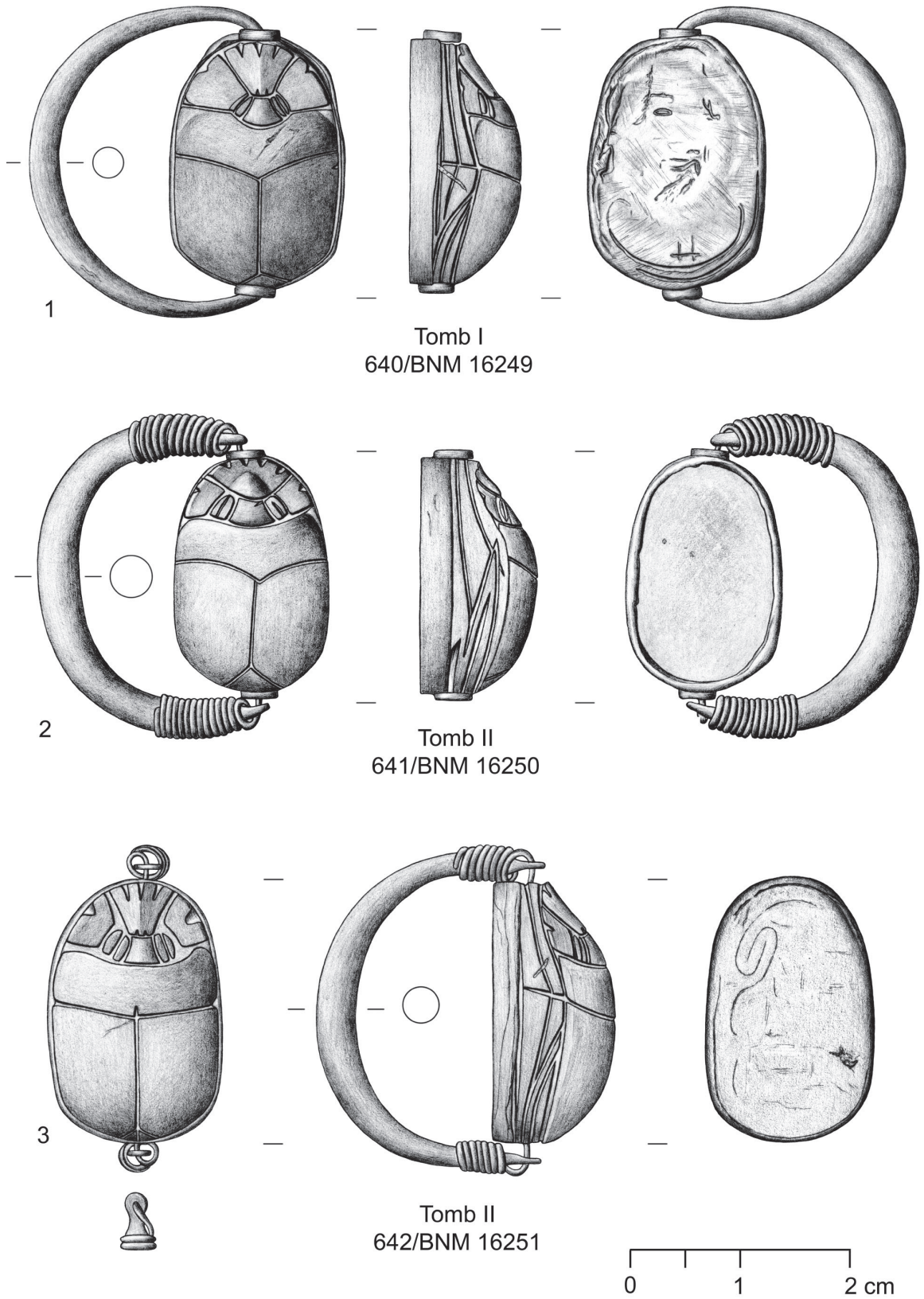


Fig. 1 Amethyst scarabs from Tombs I and II, set in gold with golden rings (drawings by M.A. NEGRETE MARTINEZ with the courtesy of the Beirut National Museum)



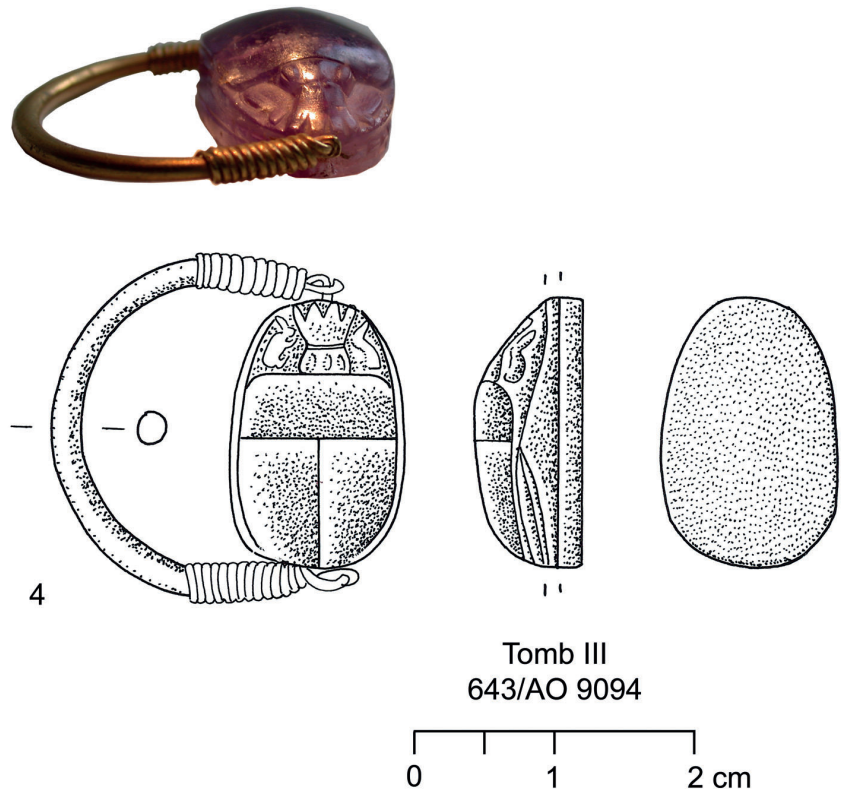


Fig 2 Amethyst scarab from Tomb III (drawing by C. FLORIMONT, photo by E. CZERNY, both with the courtesy of the Louvre)

leaving the unpolished base of the scarab bare to the beholder. The inscription at the golden base of scarab (642/BNM 162519) (Fig. 1/3) was however filed off, leaving only traces of the interlocking spirals once framing it. And scarab (636/BNM 16240) (Fig. 3), also from this tomb, was dismantled from its ring and in a second stage soldered on a golden bracelet. Its base was still covered with a gold foil as well as the golden rings on each side of the drilling, which once protected the fine wire that was used to fix the scarab to the ring. This scarab is of the highest quality.

The last scarab (643/Louvre AO 9094) (Fig. 2/4) comes from Tomb III and is the only one which has no base or legs covered with a gold foil. It is not clear if it once possessed such a covering or if it was always plain from the beginning.

If the identification of the royal princess mentioned on the ring of Tomb I with the scarab from the Hänggi collection is correct, it would prove that the production of high quality amethyst scar-

abs continued into the first part of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. A fact which is not so surprising given the assumption that the same workshops who made the beautiful scarabs found inside the tombs of the royal princesses at Lisht and Dahshur of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Fig. 5) continued very likely to exist and were producing high quality craftsmanship also in the decades following the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>25</sup> The high quality of the objects found in the tombs of King Hor and his daughter, Princess Nub-hotep,<sup>26</sup> support this theory. The obvious changes made to the various rings must have happened at a later point in time, very likely to adapt them to fit into the burial goods for the Byblian rulers buried inside these tombs. Whilst it seems that the scarab from tomb I (640) still has its original ring,<sup>27</sup> the ones from the other scarabs (641, 642 and 643) were very likely attached later, when the rings were altered.<sup>28</sup> Clamps for fixing a scarab are known only from examples of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Such a ring is found on a scarab in the British Museum,<sup>29</sup> with the scarab having parallels in 13<sup>th</sup>

<sup>25</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *Supply and demand*, forthcoming.

<sup>26</sup> J. DE MORGAN, *Fouilles a Dahchour 1894*, 91–117.

<sup>27</sup> For this kind of clamp, see British Museum EA 65316 and MMfA 15.3.135a.

<sup>28</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *Supply and demand*, forthcoming.

<sup>29</sup> EA 65316.



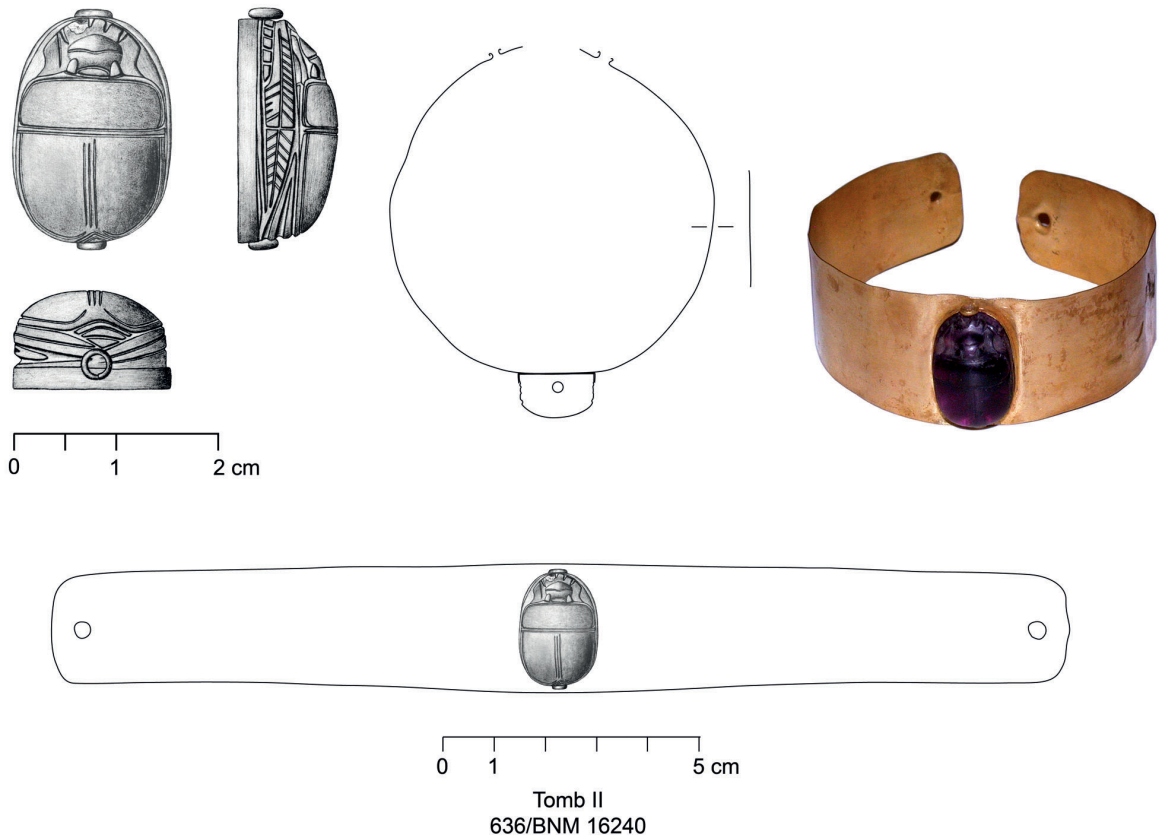


Fig. 3 Amethyst scarab from Tombs II mounted on golden bracelet (drawing by M.A. NEGRETE MARTINEZ with the courtesy of the Beirut National Museum)

Dynasty contexts in Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup><sup>30</sup> and Thebes.<sup>31</sup> A further comparison comes from Pit (453) in Lisht North, and dates again into the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>32</sup> Another technique seen at the Byblos pieces is that of fixing the scarab by the means of a wire which is inserted into the drilling. Its ends are stuck through a loop which is formed on each flattened end of the ring and was then twisted around the thicker parts of this ring. This is a mounting technique that is known in Palestine from the MB IIB period onwards,<sup>33</sup> while in Egypt it is not found before the late Hyksos period.<sup>34</sup>

It is the author's opinion that most of the Egyptian objects found inside Tombs I–III were robbed from burials of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasties in the Memphite region around the time of the collapse of the Middle Kingdom and shortly afterwards.<sup>35</sup> During the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty here and there older, mostly precious small finds, appear in burials of this time. Evidences are known i.e. from the site of Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup>, where jewellery<sup>36</sup> and other small finds<sup>37</sup> were found in tombs of Phase F (= transitional MB IIA/B). A toilet box bearing the name of Amenemhet IV was

<sup>30</sup> I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XVI*, 181, fig. 103a/4.

<sup>31</sup> A.-M. LOYRETTE *et al.*, *Memnonia IV–V*, 119, fig. 2.

<sup>32</sup> MMA 15.3.135b, G.T. MARTIN, *Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals*, pl. 13/9, 10.

<sup>33</sup> D. KIRKBRIDGE, *Scarabs*, fig. 288/5, 17 – Jericho Group II. Also: D.P. WILLIAMS, *Cemetery "500" at Tell el Farah*, Fig. 82/3 – MB IIB. E. GRANT, *Rumeileh*, pl. C – early MB IIB.

<sup>34</sup> C. LILYQUIST, *BASOR* 290–291 (1993), 43.

<sup>35</sup> The author lectured about this phenomenon already in 2004 at the 4<sup>th</sup> ICAANE in Berlin and in 2012 at the ASOR conference in Chicago. K. KOPETZKY, *Supply and demand, forthcoming*. This theory is also supported by A. AHRENS, *A "Hyksos connection"?*, forthcoming.

<sup>36</sup> I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XVI*, figs. 91/2 and 97a/7, 8.

<sup>37</sup> I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XVI*, fig. 97b/10.



Tomb I  
640/BNM 16249

Fig. 4 1. Scarab from Tomb I (640/BNM 16249), 2. Scarab from Tomb I with reconstructed inscription (photos taken by K. KOPETZKY with the courtesy of the Beirut National Museum), 3. Yantín scarab of the Hänggi collection (after HORNING and STRAEHELIN 1976, pl. 62)

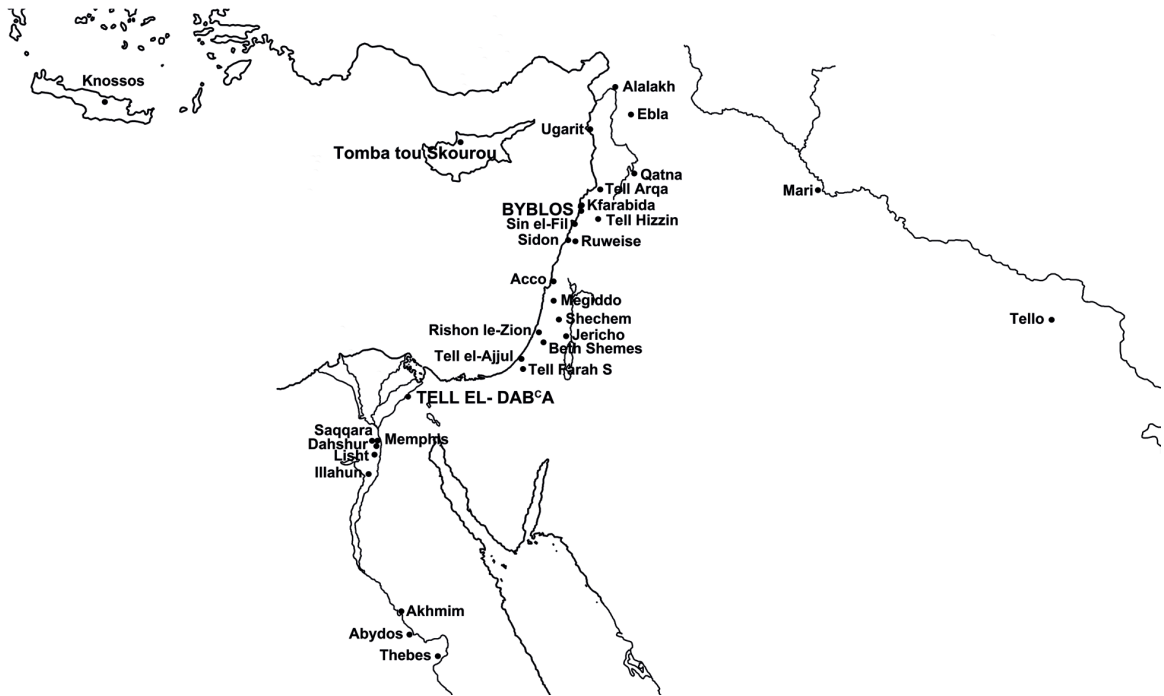


Fig. 5 Map of sites mentioned in the text

amongst the finds from Tomb CC 25 in Thebes.<sup>38</sup> Although the tomb was disturbed and robbed, the pottery found in it dates into the Second Intermediate Period.<sup>39</sup> The question that arises is how these objects of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, which must have come from burials, ended up in later tombs. One possible explanation is to be found inside these 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tombs themselves. Pottery dating into the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty was found inside the pyramid of king Amenemhet III at Dahshur. These vessels, which are clearly different from the “pyramid ware” and consist mainly of everyday shapes reused as lamps and oil containers, were found inside the chambers and corridors of the pyramid. Do. Arnold suggested that these were left behind when the pyramid was looted, calling this material “Räuberkeramik”.<sup>40</sup> Inside the pyramid of Senwosret III we also have evidence in the form of graffiti depicting Asiatics<sup>41</sup> and a dagger<sup>42</sup> that the pyramid was “visited” during the Second Intermediate Period. It is no coincidence that at the same time as the capital city of the Middle Kingdom, *Itj-tawi*, was abandoned, the first

Middle Kingdom objects start to appear in middle and late 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tombs. We know from the site of Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> that the burials there were looted shortly after the funerals had taken place, at a time when people still remembered their contents. As long as the king residing in *Itj-tawi* was powerful enough, the tombs in the Memphite region were well protected. However, the moment the king lost his grip over the whole country, the protection of the necropoli vanished, leaving them vulnerable to looting. The latter must have been intensive and did obviously not even stop at the royal burials. It seems that the Asiatic population of Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> was involved in the looting business and the city was used as an intermediary in the trade of stolen goods. Some of the above-mentioned alterations of Egyptian objects might have taken place there, but it is equally possible that Byblos, as one of the beneficiaries of these stolen goods, had specialised in doing this job, given that the above mentioned technique in which most of the rings were fixed originates from the MB sphere.

<sup>38</sup> E. of CARNARVON and H. CARTER, *Five Years' Explorations at Thebes*, pl. XLVIII f.

<sup>39</sup> After A. SEILER, *Tradition und Wandel*, 134 f., this burial should be dated, according to its pottery material, into the late 13<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

<sup>40</sup> DO. ARNOLD, *MDAIK* 38 /1982, fig. 12.

<sup>41</sup> J. DE MORGAN, *Fouilles a Dahchour en 1894–1895*, 93–95; D. ARNOLD, *The Pyramid Complex of Senwosret III*, 41 f.

<sup>42</sup> This type of this dagger is characteristic for the Hyksos period and the early New Kingdom. For this type see R. SCHIESTL 1994, 269, Cat. No. 374.



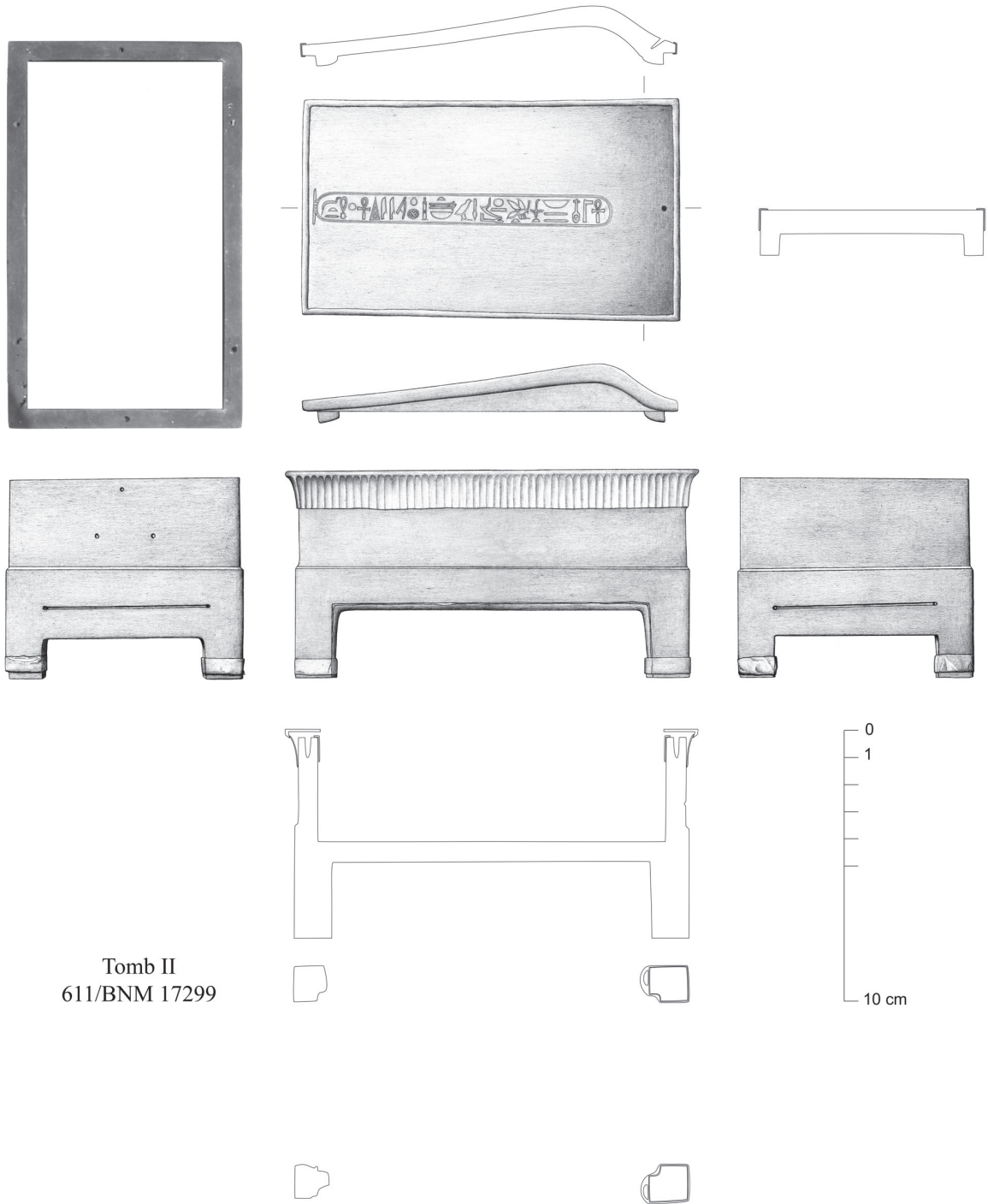
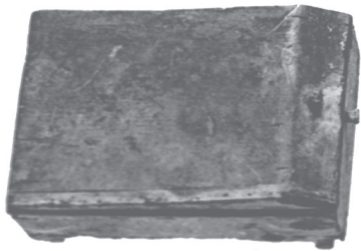


Fig. 6 Obsidian casket from tomb II (611/BNM 17299, drawing by M.A. NEGRETE MARTINEZ with the courtesy of the Beirut National Museum)

We know from some of the finds of the Royal Tombs that the Byblians also created locally produced objects in an Egyptian style. Especially Tombs I, II and III demonstrate that at this period Egyptian lifestyle and obviously also beliefs were essential for the rulers of Byblos.<sup>43</sup> They anticipated a trend, which then in the New Kingdom became *en vogue* for the whole Levantine region.

Very likely the little casket (611/BNM 17299) (Figs. 6, 43) and the ointment jar (610/BNM 17308) (Figs. 8, 9/1, 42), both made of obsidian, as well as two stone jars (613 and 614/BNM 76900) (Figs. 10/2, 11/1, 42) were such robbed goods that ended up in the tombs of Byblos. Three of them are inscribed with the names of Egyptian kings of the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The shape of the obsidian box (611/BNM 17299) which bears an inscription of Amenemhet IV has several parallels in Egypt. One, also made in stone, is housed in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (No. 41.29),<sup>44</sup> while a second one comes from CC 24 in Thebes and is made out of wood (Fig. 7).<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, the Baltimore piece, which names its owner, an official of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, was acquired on the antiquities market. The other box comes from a tomb which was heavily disturbed and robbed, but was later sealed by the construction of the temple of Deir-el-Bahari in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Inside this box, which comes from the northern chamber of this tomb, were several pieces of jewellery,



Thebes CC 24  
northern chamber

Fig. 7 Wooden casket from Tomb CC 24 (after CARNARVON and CARTER 1912, pl. XLV)

amongst them a scarab of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>46</sup> The pottery retrieved from this burial dates the whole tomb complex, which consisted of 8 chambers, into the late 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasties.<sup>47</sup> The Byblos piece reached Tomb II striped of its decoration. The pegs which were used to close the box are missing. One of the peg holes on one of the small sides of the box, however, was found with the hole covered by a gold foil framing. Either the Egyptian craftsman changed his concept during the production of the box or the golden framing was added at a later time. On the small side below the peg hole are two holes with a horizontal slot further below. Such a slot is also visible on the opposite small side, indicating that once something, maybe a gold foil with an engraved scene or inscription, was fixed there. Whatever the latter was, it was taken away before the box came into the tomb.

The ointment jar and its lid (610/BNM 17308) (Figs. 8, 9/1, 42) were found inside the sarcophagus of Tomb I.<sup>48</sup> On its lid is the throne name of Amenemhet III and another inscription, both set in gold. While the latter is engraved in a gold band framing the lid, the name of the king is set in an oval frame with a separate oval gold base on which the hieroglyphs were attached, soldered to the golden framing band of the lid, leaving the illusion of an golden seal-impression from an imaginary scarab which had once closed and sealed the vessel. The rim of the jar and part of the upper half of the vessel are covered with a thick gold foil. On it is another engraved inscription. Along the lower edge on top of this golden band was once a fine horizontal, possibly golden string soldered, from which on opposite sides small vertical strings led over the lid and were fixed under the golden seal impressions, imitating strings used to cord up vessels. The traces of this process are still visible on the jar and the lid.<sup>49</sup> The same traces can be seen on other obsidian ointment jars which were found inside a wooden box in the tomb of the princess Sithathoryunet in Lahun (Fig. 9/2),<sup>50</sup> who died during the reign of Amenemhet III. Another example made of the same material and dating to the same time span comes

<sup>43</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *BAAL* Hors Série X (2015).

<sup>44</sup> <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/4840/box-with-lid/>

<sup>45</sup> E. of CARNARVON and H. CARTER, *Five Years of Exploration in Thebes*, pl. XLV/1.

<sup>46</sup> E. of CARNARVON and H. CARTER, *Five Years of Exploration in Thebes*, pl. XLV/2A.

<sup>47</sup> E. of CARNARVON and H. CARTER, *Five Years of Exploration in Thebes*, pl. XLVII/fig. 1.

<sup>48</sup> C. VIRROLEAUD, *Syria* 3 (1922), fig. 4.

<sup>49</sup> For another vessel sealed with golden strings found in Byblos, see M. CHEHAB, *BMB I* (1937), pl. IV/36.

<sup>50</sup> G. BRUNTON, *Lahun I*, pl. IX.

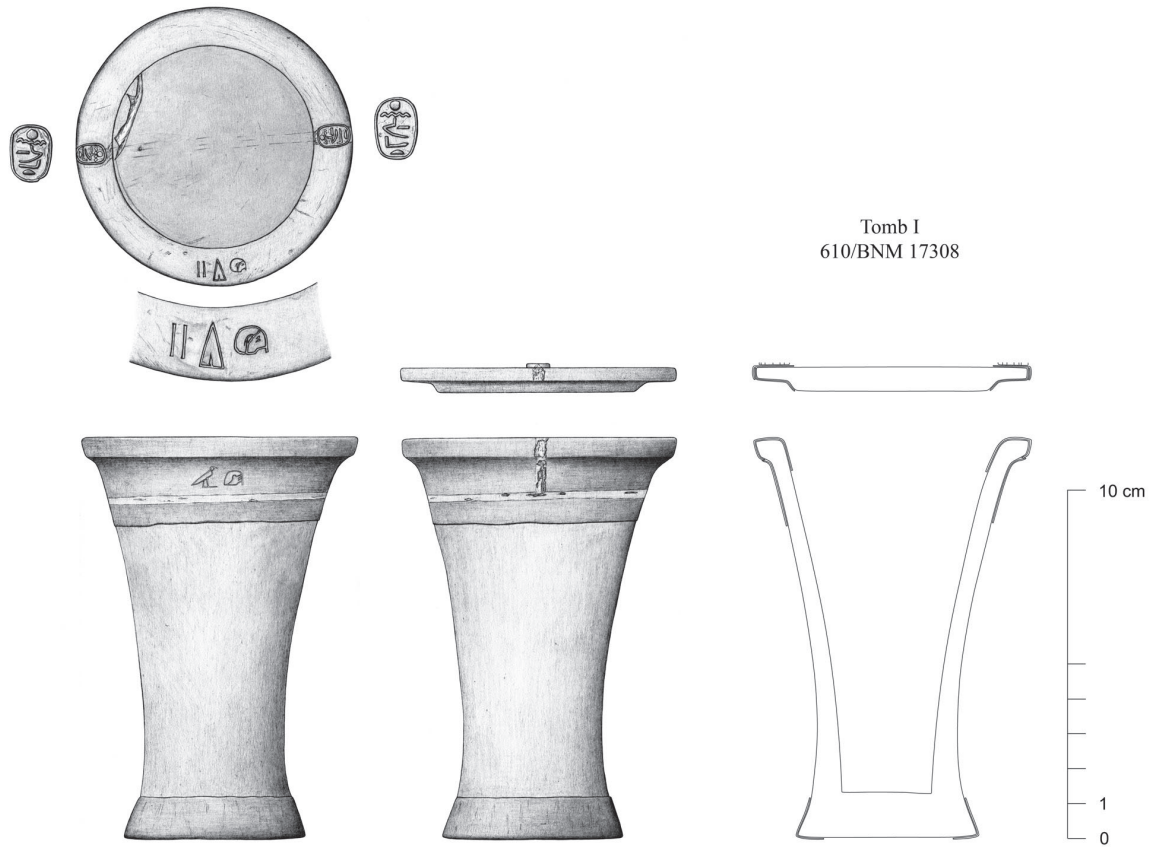


Fig. 8 Obsidian ointment jar from Tomb I (610/BNM 17308, drawing by M.A. NEGRETE MARTINEZ with the courtesy of the Beirut National Museum)



Fig. 9 Ointment jars: 1. Byblos Tomb I (photo taken by K. KOPETZKY with the courtesy of the National Museum Beirut), 2. Lahun Tomb of Sithathoryunet (after BRUNTON 1920, pl. IX bottom right), 3. Dahshur Princess galleries Tomb 6 (after DE MORGAN 1895, pl. 25/60)

from the second treasure of Dahshur, which was found in front of Tomb 6 in the princess galleries (Fig. 9/3).<sup>51</sup> This piece was, when discovered, also “sealed” with a golden band, which had a groove

in the middle and was positioned over the lid, imitating two strings. This band was fixed to the lid at both ends with an oval setting for a lapis lazuli stone, again indicating a sealing.<sup>52</sup> Inside the tomb

<sup>51</sup> J. DE MORGAN, *Fouilles de Dahshour 1894*, pl. XXV/60.

<sup>52</sup> W. VON BISSING, *CG Steingefäße I*, 168/18775.



of an unknown queen (rooms W11–W13)<sup>53</sup> in the pyramid of Amenemhet III at Dahshur another obsidian jar was discovered. According to Arnold, this queen was likely buried during the first part of the reign of king Amenemhet III.<sup>54</sup> These jars are the only obsidian ointment jars of the Middle Kingdom found in Egypt that still had their lids attached, simply because they escaped the looters. In the last case, several lids of the same material were found whilst the matching vessels were missing. Interestingly enough, we have several cases in late 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tombs, where such jars were discovered missing their lids.

It is possible that the Byblos example arrived in Tomb I still sealed. Positioning the lid in the right way on the jar brings the engraved inscriptions of jar and lid exactly above each other. Montet<sup>55</sup> and others<sup>56</sup> thought that these engravings refer to the content of the jar. However, it might be possible that one has to understand them as markers, to position the lid for the best fitting on the jar when sealing it.

A bulky jar made of diorite and covered with a simple lid (614/BNM 76900) (Fig. 10/2) was also imported from Egypt. The lid bears an inscription of a king Amenemhet. Unfortunately, neither the shape of the stone vessel nor the *ductus* of the inscription provide any information for identifying the king more specifically. However, with the help of palaeography it might be possible to narrow it down to a potential candidate. The cartouche of king Amenemhet IV on the inscription of the above-mentioned wooden box from Tomb CC 25 in Thebes has several matching hieroglyphs to the ones from the Byblos lid (Fig. 10/1). Therefore, it seems highly likely that the inscription dates into his reign. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily indicate that the jar dates into the same period, for there are no good parallels neither during the 12<sup>th</sup> nor the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasties. But stone vessels from the late Old Kingdom, when this material was very popular, exist, showing similarities.<sup>57</sup>

Parallels for the globular calcite jar (613) from Tomb I (Figs. 11/1, 42) come from a mastaba in

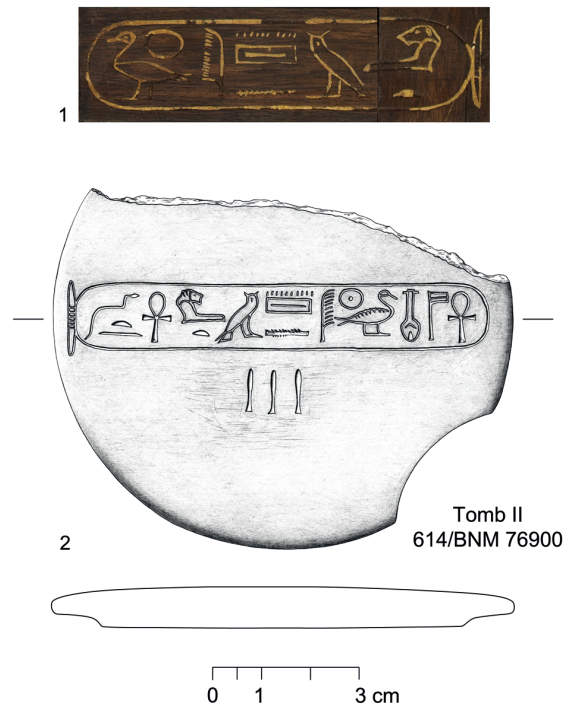


Fig. 10 1. Thebes CC25, detail from the box of Kementi (Eduard S. Harkness gift 1926 (MMA 26.7.1438), photo with the courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Arts), 2. Byblos jar lid from Tomb II (614/BNM 76900, drawing by M.A. NEGRETE MARTINEZ with the courtesy of the National Museum Beirut)

Dahshur (Fig. 11/2)<sup>58</sup> and a burial at Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> (Fig. 11/3).<sup>59</sup> Both were dated into the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

In each of the Tombs I and II a mirror was discovered. While from Tomb I only the reflecting silver disk (615) (Figs. 12/1, 42) was preserved, from the example of Tomb II (616/BNM 16400) the silver disk and the gold foil that once covered the handle survived (Figs. 12/2 and 13). Even though silver as material for mirrors was in general rather rare in ancient Egypt, it was used for elite burials of the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasties (Fig. 12/3).<sup>60</sup> According to their sizes, the two Byblos examples

<sup>53</sup> D. ARNOLD, *Der Pyramidenbezirk des Königs Amenemhet III in Dahschur*, 49–51; idem, *MDAIK* 36 (1980), 19f, pl. 14b.

<sup>54</sup> D. ARNOLD, *Der Pyramidenbezirk des Königs Amenemhet III in Dahschur*, 93.

<sup>55</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, 156f.

<sup>56</sup> E. NAVILLE, *Syria* 3 (1922), 293.

<sup>57</sup> From the period of Pepi II: M.G. JÉQUIER, *ASAE* 34, 100, fig. 9.

<sup>58</sup> J. DE MORGAN, *Fouilles a Dahchour 1894*, fig. 78.

<sup>59</sup> R. SCHIESTL, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XVIII*, fig. 150/2.

<sup>60</sup> J. DE MORGAN, *Fouilles a Dahchour 1894*, 62, 68, fig. 143. H.E. WINLOCK, *The Treasure of el Lahun*, pl. XV.

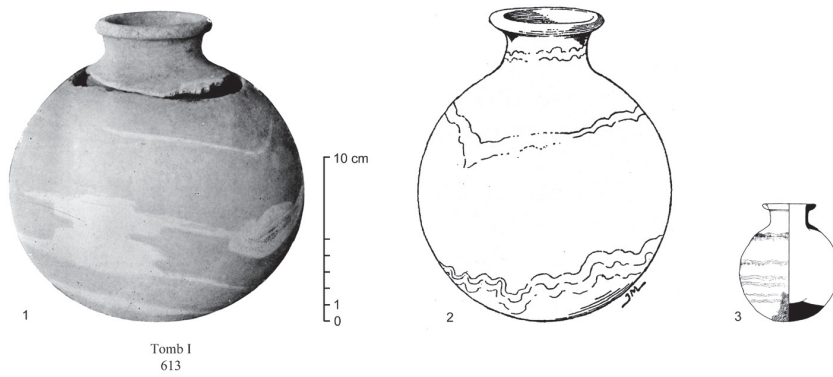


Fig. 11 Globular stone jars: 1. Byblos Tomb I (613, after VIROLLEAUD 1922, pl. LXII/1), 2. Dahshur (after DE MORGAN 1984, fig. 78), 3. Tell el-Dab'a (after SCHIESTL 2009, fig. 150/2).

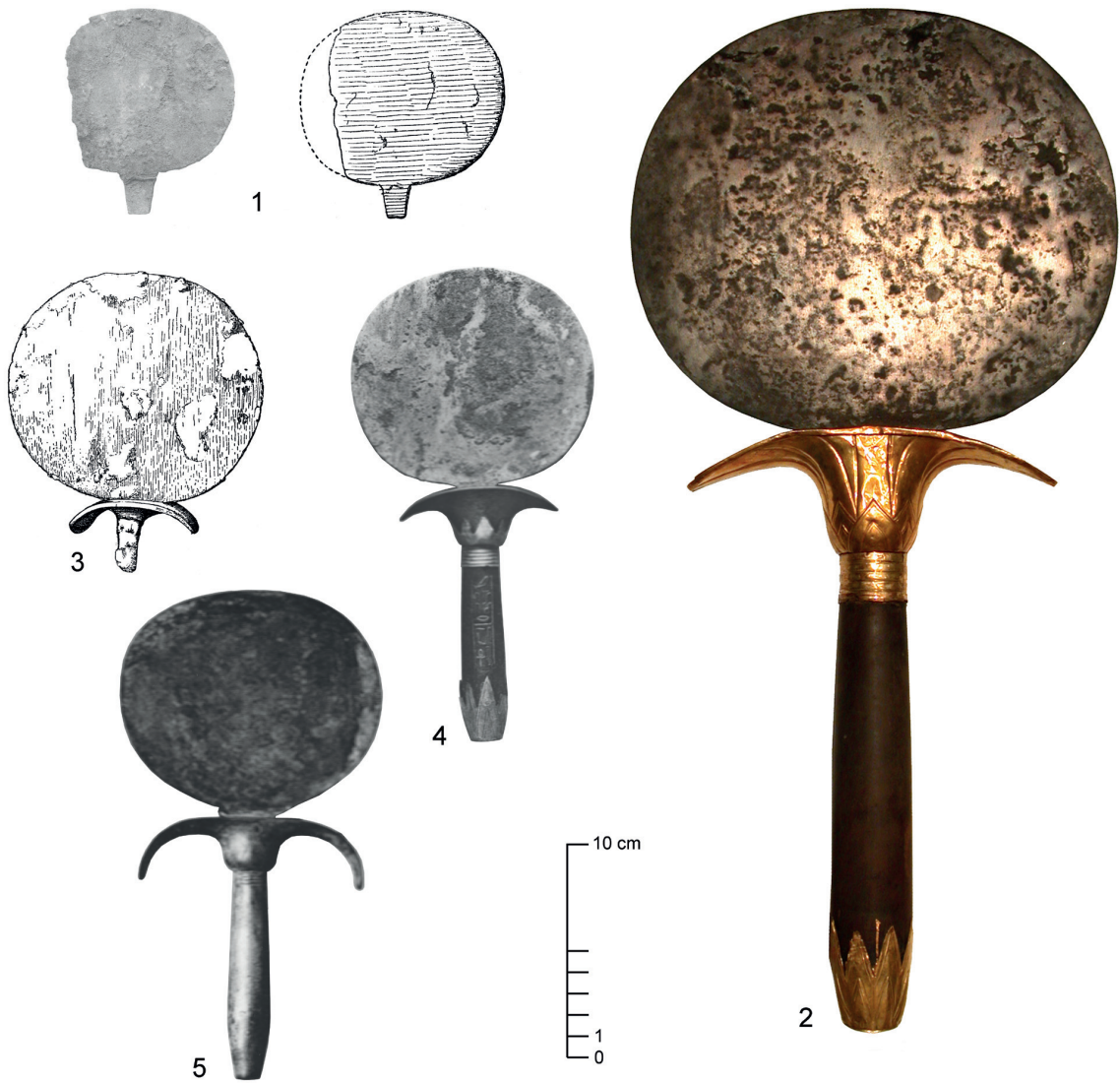


Fig. 12 Mirrors: 1. Byblos Tomb I (615, after VIRROLEAUD 1922, fig. 5, MONTET 1928, pl. XCVIII), 2. Byblos Tomb II (616/BNM 16400, photo taken by K. KOPETZKY with the courtesy of the Beirut National Museum), 3. Dahshur (after DE MORGAN 1895, fig. 143), 4. Thebes CC 25 (after CARNARVON and CARTER 1912, pl. LI), 5. Thebes CC 37-70 (after CARNARVON and CARTER 1912, pl. LXX)

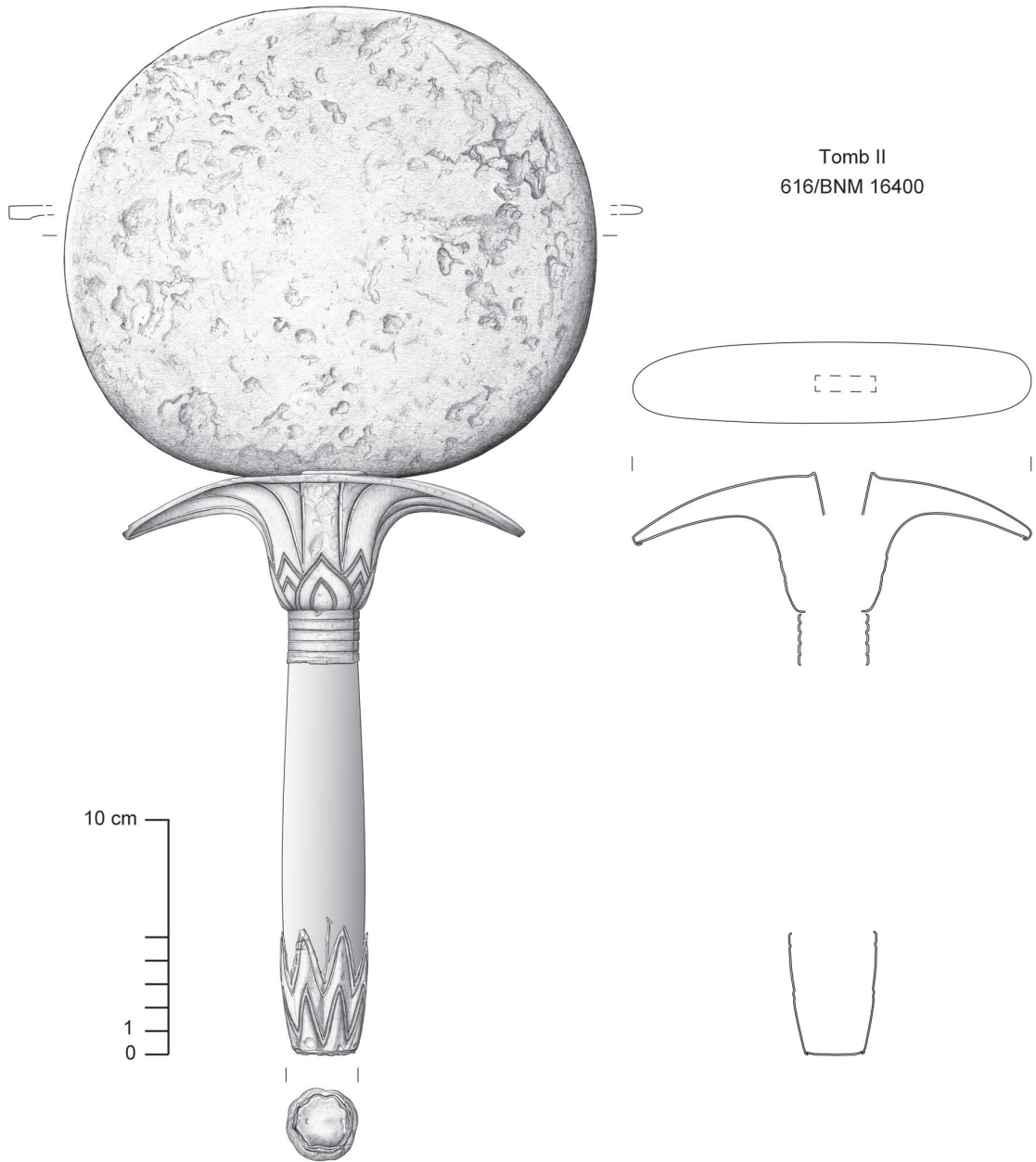


Fig. 13 Mirror from Tomb II (616/BNM 16400, drawing by M.A. NEGRETE MARTINEZ with the courtesy of the Beirut National Museum)

are to be found at both ends of the scale of mirrors found in Egypt. Tomb I's mirror is rather small with a size of about  $9 \times 7$  cm,<sup>61</sup> while Tomb II's example is at the larger end with  $22,8 \times 20,4$  cm. Here, the oval-shaped disk is mounted on a wooden handle in the shape of a papyrus plant. Such han-

dles are already known during the Old Kingdom.<sup>62</sup> During the Middle Kingdom the umbels are still rather small, but are extended during the SIP and become nearly as wide as the mirror during the New Kingdom. A piece that is close in shape and date, but not in size to the Byblos example, comes

<sup>61</sup> Horizontal  $\times$  vertical.

<sup>62</sup> C. LILYQUIST, *MÄS* 27, 58.



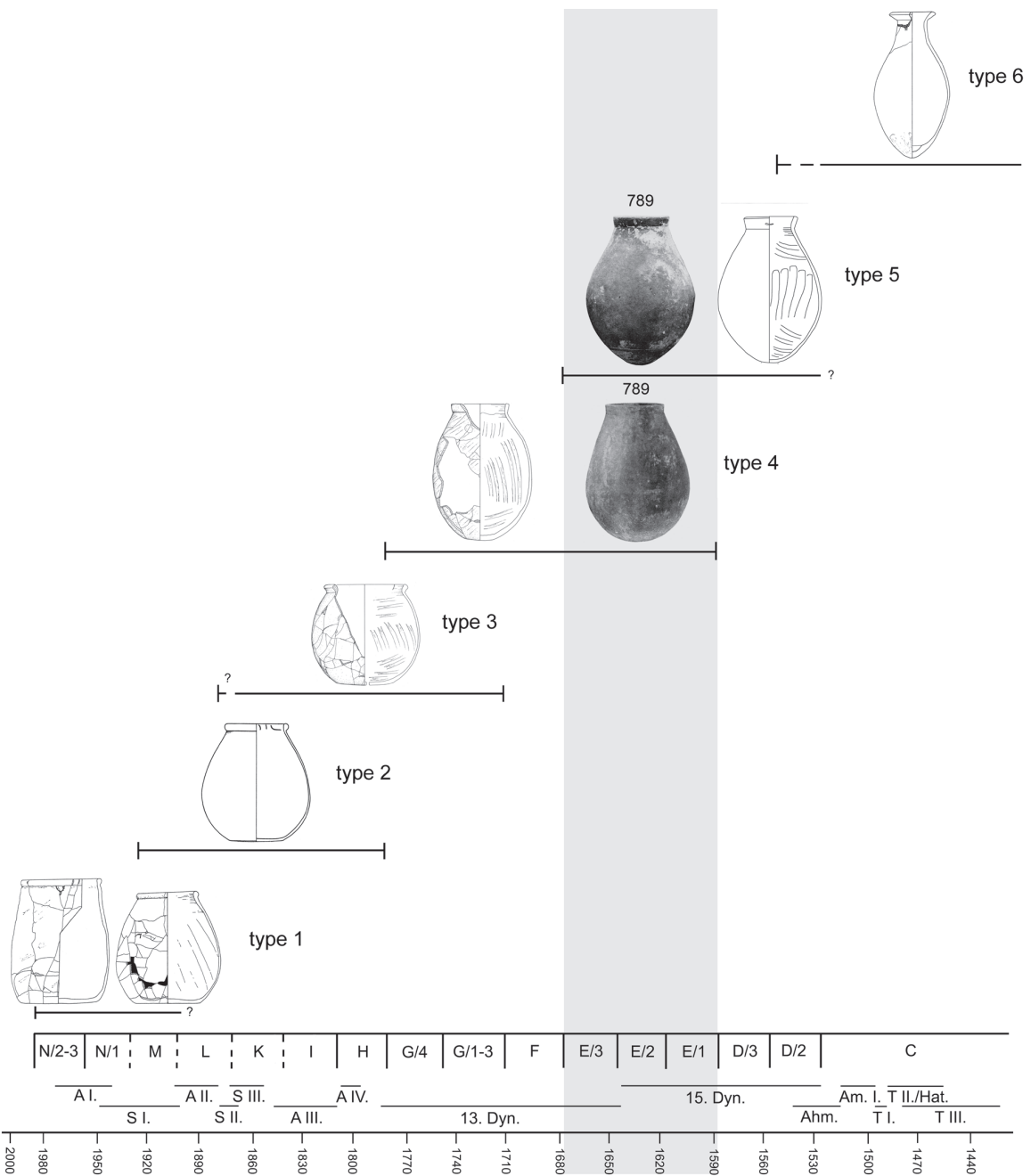


Fig. 14 Chronological development of zirs at Tell el-Dab'a after E. Czerny and K. Kopetzky (after FORSTNER-MÜLLER and KOPETZKY 2009, Fig. 5) with zir from Tomb II as type 4 and zir from Tomb III as type 5

from Tomb CC25 in Thebes (Fig. 14/4).<sup>63</sup> It was found inside a coffin on the chest of the deceased. Examples from the tombs CC41<sup>64</sup> and CC37–70

(Fig. 12/5)<sup>65</sup> in Thebes show into which shape this type has developed at the end of the SIP and the very early New Kingdom. While the one from

<sup>63</sup> E. of CARNARVON and H. CARTER, *Five Years of Explorations at Thebes*, pl. LI.

<sup>64</sup> MMA 16.10.381a, b. For a photo, see <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/546997>

<sup>65</sup> E. of CARNARVON and H. CARTER, *Five Years of Explorations at Thebes*, pl. LXX.



Tomb II  
789

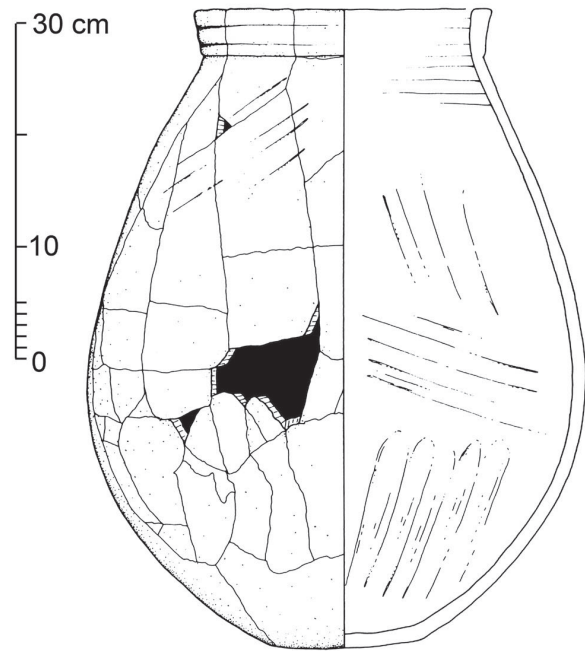
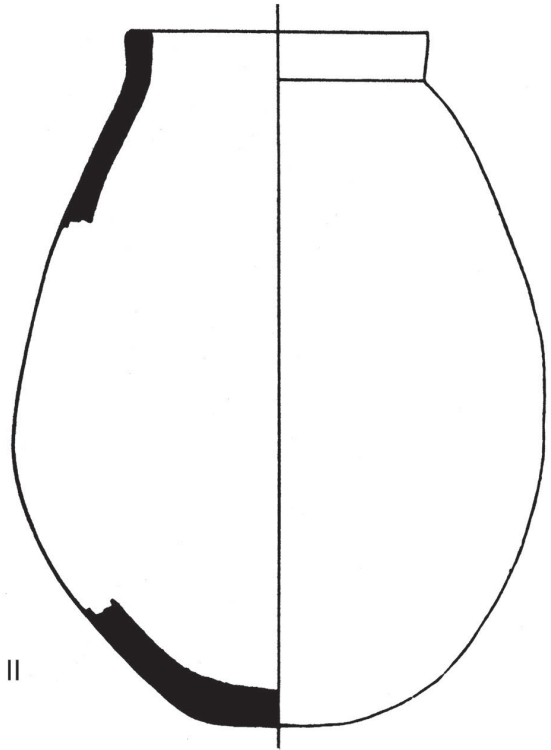


Fig. 15 Zirs type 4: 1. Byblos Tomb II (789, photo after MONTET 1928, pl. CXVIII; drawing after TUFNELL 1969, Fig. 7/59), 2. Tell el-Dab'a no. 6990 (photo OREA/ÖAI archives).

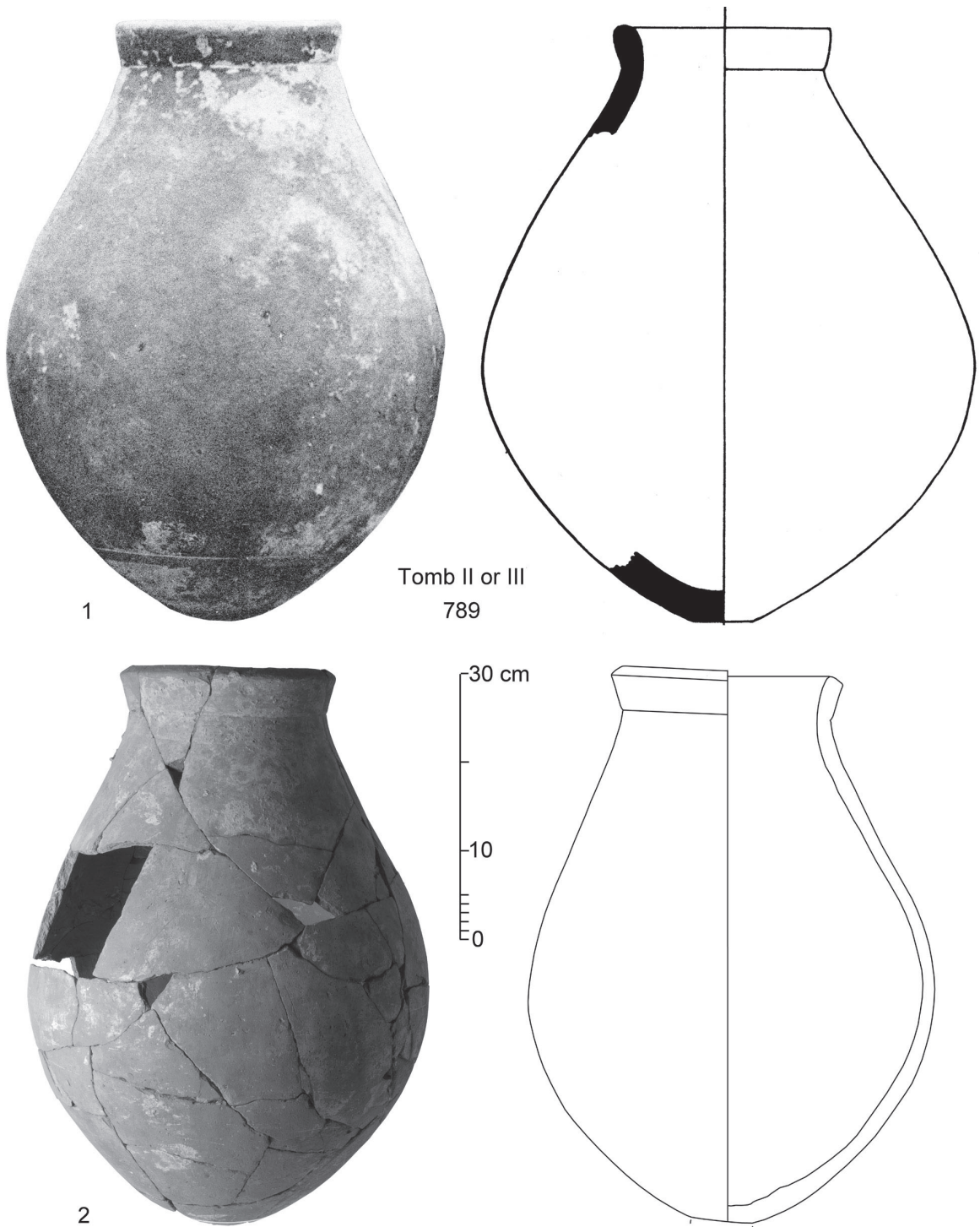


Fig. 16 Zirs type 5: 1. Byblos Tomb II or III (789, photo after MONTET 1928, pl. CXXIV; drawing after TUFNELL 1969, Fig. 7/60), 2. Tell el-Dab'a no. 9007A (photo OREA/ÖAI archives)

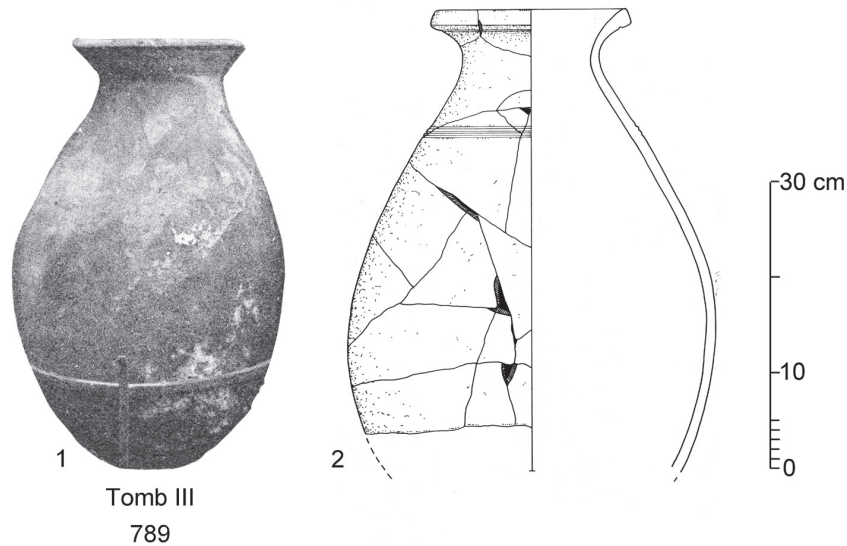


Fig. 17 Jars with everted rim: 1. Byblos Tomb III (789, after MONTET 1928, pl. CXXIV, second row from top, fourth vessel from left), 2. Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> no. 6854 (after HEIN and JANOSI 2004, fig. 64/10)

Tomb CC41 is not published and is dated into the late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasties,<sup>66</sup> the one from Tomb CC37–70 was found inside a coffin under the cheek of its female owner. The chamber where the burial was laid to rest was sealed during the reign of Thutmosis I in the very early New Kingdom.<sup>67</sup>

#### Pottery<sup>68</sup>

Amongst the large storage vessels found in the Tombs II and III already Montet mentioned three Egyptian jars (789).<sup>69</sup> Two of them were reinvestigated by Tufnell (789, Figs. 15/1 and 16/1).<sup>70</sup> Since the discovery of these tombs our knowledge of the Egyptian settlement material has increased and allows us to date these vessels, called zirs, more precisely. The shape of the zirs, especially their rims, show a certain development since their first appearance at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty until they vanished during the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Fig. 14).<sup>71</sup> These vessels are made of a

Marl fabric, called Marl C in the Vienna System,<sup>72</sup> which had its origin and production centres very likely in the Memphite-Fayyum region<sup>73</sup> from where they were distributed all over the kingdom. At the site of Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> these vessels appear in abundance and it was possible to establish a chronological appearance for each type.<sup>74</sup> The zir with the rim type 4<sup>75</sup> (Figs. 15/2, 43) is very characteristic for the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and was found at Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> in the Phases G/4 till E/1. The other one with a rim type 5 (Figs. 16/2, 43) appears from the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty until the end of the Hyksos period, during the Phases E/3 to D/2. The third vessel was a large jar with an everted rim and an ovoid body (Figs. 17/1, 44). In Montet's publication it is once depicted with its number (789)<sup>76</sup> and very likely again on a plate, where material from various tombs is shown.<sup>77</sup> On the latter one can see a groove that runs below the rim of this jar. At Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> these jars are known from the Hyksos period until the early New King-

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/546997?sortBy=Relevance&ft=16.10.381&offset=0&amp;rpp=20&pos=1>

<sup>67</sup> E. of CARNARVON and H. CARTER, *Five Years of Explorations at Thebes*, 65.

<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately, it was not possible to get access to the pottery material from these tombs, which is stored in magazines of the DGA at Byblos.

<sup>69</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, 199.

<sup>70</sup> O. TUFNELL, *Berytus* 18 (1969), 33/59, 60.

<sup>71</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XX*, 162, fig. 49.

<sup>72</sup> H.-Å. NORDSTRÖM and J. BOURRIAU, *Ceramic Technology. Clays und Fabrics*, 143–190.

<sup>73</sup> Do. ARNOLD, *Ägyptische Mergeltonne (»Wüstentone«)*, 171–191.

<sup>74</sup> K. KOPETZKY *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XX*, 161–171.

<sup>75</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XX*, fig. 49.

<sup>76</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CXVI/789.

<sup>77</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CXXIV/second row from top, 4<sup>th</sup> vessel from left.





Fig. 18 Falcon collars: 1. Tomb I (621, after VIROLLEAUD 1922, pl. LXXV/3), 2. Tomb II (620, photo taken by K. KOPETZKY with the courtesy of the National Museum Beirut), 3. Tomb III (619/AO 9093, photo taken by E. CZERNY with the courtesy of the Louvre)

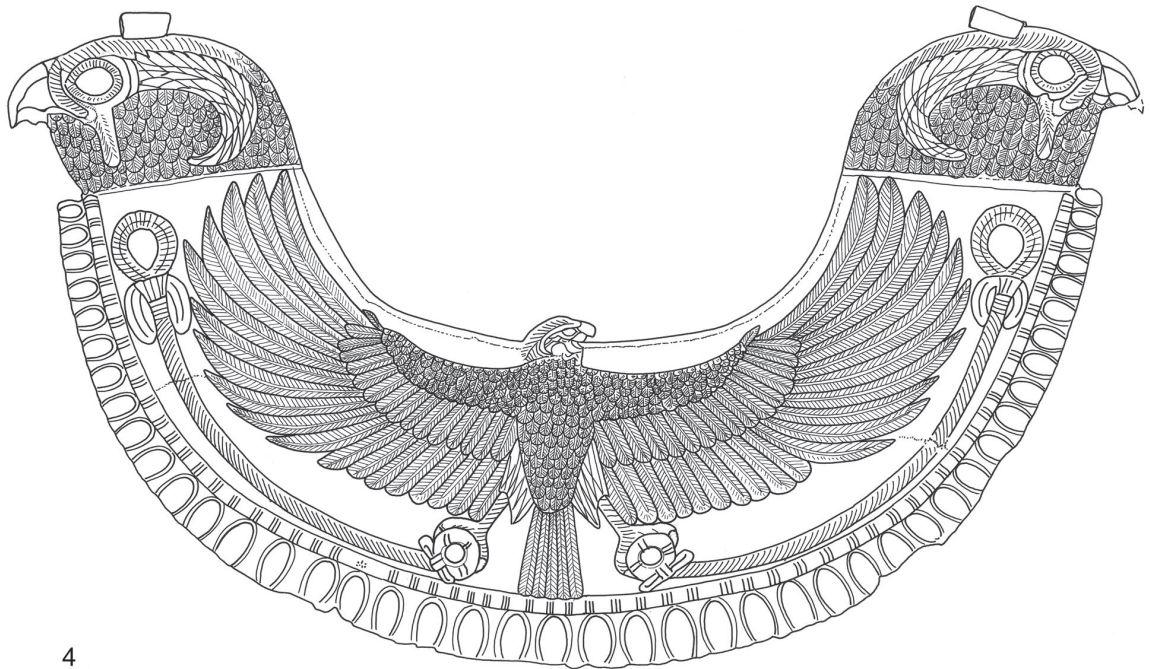
dom and were made of Nile clay.<sup>78</sup> A piece which fits the Byblos example in rim and body shape was found in Phase D/2 of Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> (Fig. 17/2).<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, Montet give no precise information which jar was found in which tomb. But in one of his preliminary reports on the tombs he depicts the

oldest of the vessels, zir type 4, with the figure text clarifying “Poteries trouvées à Byblos (tombeau II) (Musée de Beyrouth)”.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, one may assume that the older zir came from Tomb II, while the younger one was likely from Tomb III and the Nile clay jar can only have come from the

<sup>78</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XX*, 97–99.

<sup>79</sup> I. HEIN and P. JANOSI, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XI*, fig. 64/10.

<sup>80</sup> P. MONTET, *Monuments et Mémoires* 27 (1924), fig. 22.



4

Tomb III  
619/AO 9093

0 1 5 cm

Fig 19 4. Falcon collar from Tomb III (drawing by C. FLORIMONT with the courtesy of the Louvre)

latter. Even if both zirs came from Tomb II they could not have been earlier than Tell el-Dab'a Phase E/3 (Fig. 14), which falls at the beginning of the MB IIB period.

### **Egyptianising objects found inside the tombs:**

#### *Small finds*

In each of the tombs a falcon collar was found made of gold. While the one from Tomb I (621-622, Fig. 18/1) was found only fragmented, the other two were complete, with the one from Tomb II (620, Fig. 18/2) being simpler in its finishing than the more elaborated example from Tomb III (619/AO 9093, Figs. 18/3 and 19/4). Being all the same size, it further seems that all of them were hammered over the same mould and only then in a second step the decoration was added individually. It is the combination of the various Egyptian

motifs on the collars from Byblos that identifies them as not being Egyptian. A fact that already Montet stated.<sup>81</sup> Falcon collars are known from the Old Kingdom onwards, but none of the surviving examples are made purely of a sheet of gold, which was once fixed onto a wooden(?) surface. In Egypt this technique of production for collars was observed in the tomb of the three foreign wives of Thutmose III for the first time.<sup>82</sup> It is thought that these women originated from the Near East. Therefore, it is possible that the idea to produce falcon collars of gold sheets and to decorate them in repoussé technique was adapted in the Levant, during the MB II and was then imported into Egypt during the early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

#### *Pottery*

Beside the actual imports from Egypt some of the pottery found inside the tombs seemed to be local

<sup>81</sup> P. MONTET, *Monuments et Mémoires* 27 (1924), 15–19.

<sup>82</sup> C. LILYQUIST, *The tomb of the three foreign wives of Thutmose III*, 199.

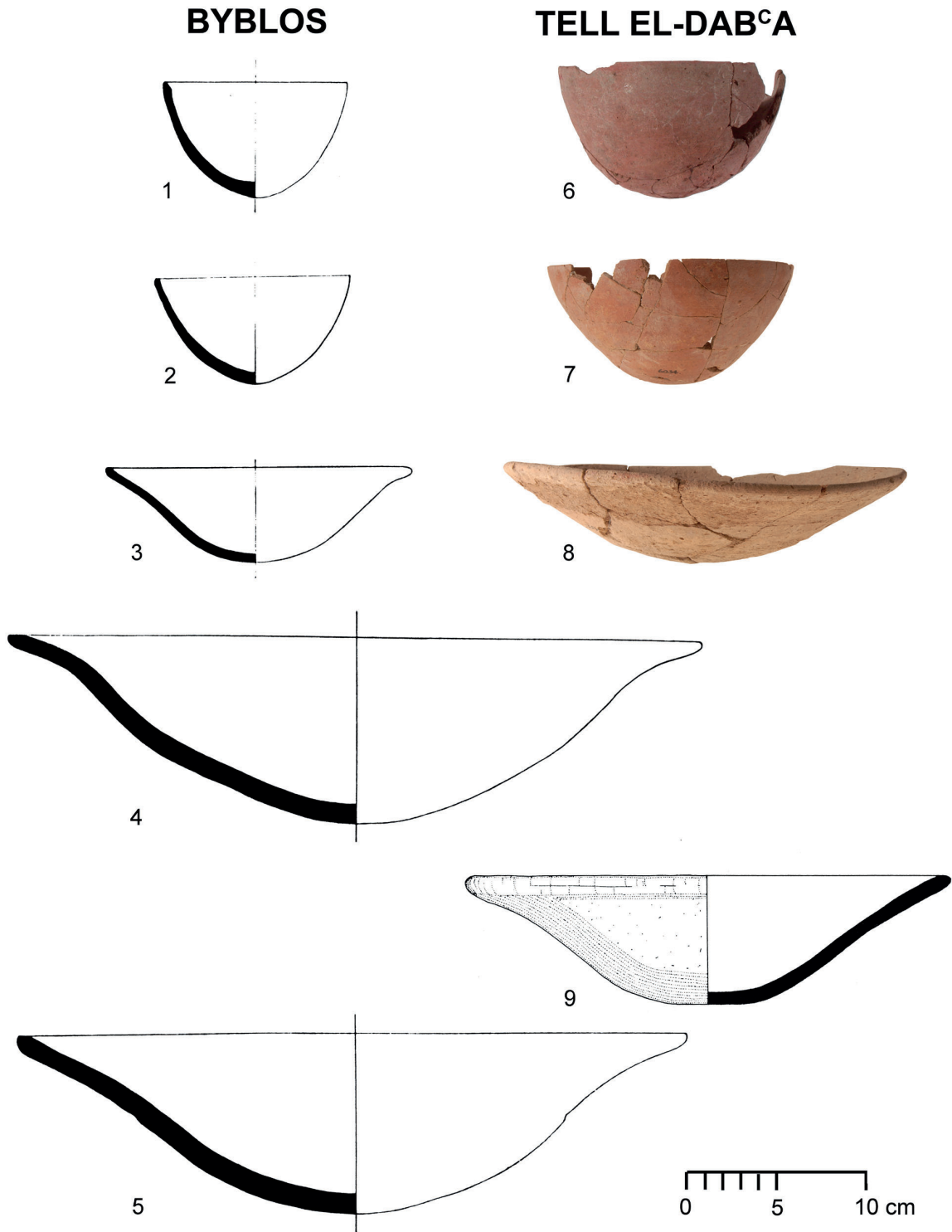


Fig. 20 Egyptianizing pottery left: Byblos: 1. and 2. Hemispherical cups (after TUFNELL 1969: figs. 2/3, 4), 3.–5. Bowls with flaring rims (after TUFNELL 1969: figs. 3/29–31). Right: Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup>: 6. Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> no. 7024A – Ph. H, 7. Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> no. 6034 – Ph. G/4, 8. Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> no. 5690 – Ph. F, 9. Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> no. 1910 – Ph. F (after BIETAK 1991, fig. 28/24) (photos OREA/ÖAI archives)

imitations of common Egyptian types, although from a by-gone era (Fig. 42). Round bottomed cups (Figs. 20/1, 2) are the typical drinking vessels of the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period. Do. Arnold<sup>83</sup> and M. Bietak<sup>84</sup> established a chronological typology for these Nile clay vessels for the northern parts of Egypt. There, they develop from an open shallow shape in the Middle Kingdom towards a closed and higher one during the Second Intermediate Period. The Byblos examples resemble with their open shapes the cups of the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasties (Figs. 20/6, 7), but are smaller in size.<sup>85</sup> The Egyptian prototypes are made on the slow wheel with their bases trimmed by a tool. In some cases the rim slightly bevelled inwards due to a last shaping by the potter, a finishing that is also seen on one of the Byblos examples (Fig. 20/1). We know from a cup found at Sidon<sup>86</sup> that Egyptian pottery was indeed produced in Lebanon although on a faster wheel as it was local custom. Such a cup was also found in the tombs 28<sup>87</sup> and 74<sup>88</sup> at Ruweise. While the first tomb dates into the late MB IIA period, the second ranges between the latest MB IIA and the transitional MB IIA/B period. It is, however, important to differentiate these cups from a rounder and semi-globular version,<sup>89</sup> which might have come from local pottery traditions.<sup>90</sup>

The second group that might have been produced locally are large bowls with round bases and flaring rims (Figs. 20/3–5, 43). Although they occasionally appear in Egypt until the Hyksos period,<sup>91</sup> they were much more common during the Middle Kingdom (Figs. 20/8, 9).<sup>92</sup> There, they were produced on the slow wheel and had their bases trimmed by a tool. Made of straw and sand tempered Nile clay (Nile C), they were low-fired and broke easily and were thus difficult to transport. We know from another tomb in Byblos, which was discovered under the “Hyksos” rampart, that these bowls were found already at the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty in Byblos.<sup>93</sup>

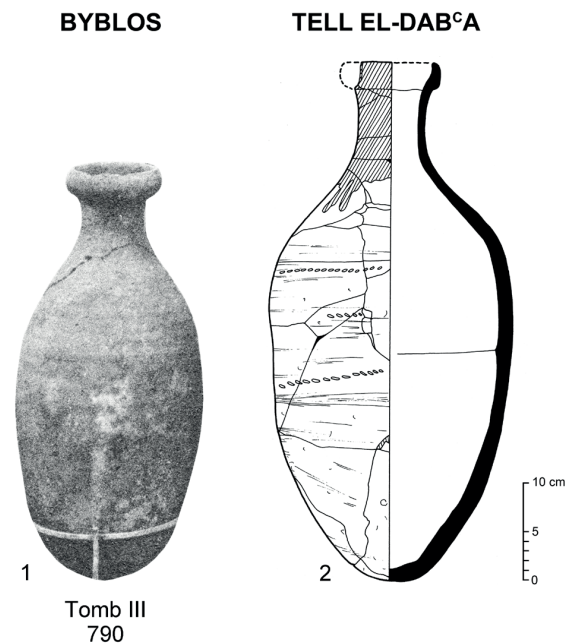


Fig. 21 Bottle: 1. Byblos Tomb III (790, after MONTET 1928, pl. CXXIV, second row from the top, third from left), 2. Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> 7084 – Ph. F (after SZAFRANSKI 1998, pl. 6/28)

A large bottle with an ellipsoid body and a modelled rim (790) was found inside Tomb III (Fig. 21/1). Such vessels are known in Egypt as beer bottles.<sup>94</sup> As with the above-mentioned zirs and cups, these also show a chronological development in Egypt from the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty<sup>95</sup> towards the beginning of the Hyksos period.<sup>96</sup> From the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards a type with a gutter at its rim appears. This so-called “kettle-rim” becomes the dominant rim type during the 13<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> Dynasties at Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup>.<sup>97</sup> While in the early 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty the necks of these bottles were still rather short, they stretched over time (Fig. 21/2). In Egypt these bottles were made of the same fabric and technique as the above-mentioned bowls. Slight ridges on the upper body

<sup>83</sup> DO. ARNOLD, *MDAIK* 38 (1982), 60–62.

<sup>84</sup> M. BIETAK, *AJA* 88 (1984), 480–482.

<sup>85</sup> R. SCHIESTL and A. SEILER, *CChEM* 31, 84–111.

<sup>86</sup> I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER and K. KOPETZKY, *BAAL Hors-Series VI* (2009), fig. 8.

<sup>87</sup> P.E. GUIGUES, *BMB I* (1937), fig. 28/g.

<sup>88</sup> P.E. GUIGUES, *BMB II* (1938), fig. 93/3.

<sup>89</sup> O. TUFNELL, *Berytus* 18 (1969), fig. 2/2.

<sup>90</sup> H. GENZ, *Berytus* 53–54 (2010–2011), fig. 7/3.

<sup>91</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *Tell el-Dabªa XX*, 127.

<sup>92</sup> R. SCHIESTL and A. SEILER, *CChEM* 31, 198–203.

<sup>93</sup> M. DUNAND, *BMB* 17 (1964), pl. 2/2, 3.

<sup>94</sup> Z.E. SZAFRANSKI, *Ä&L* 7 (1998), 95–119.

<sup>95</sup> R. SCHIESTL and A. SEILER, *CChEM* 31, 640–683.

<sup>96</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *Tell el-Dabªa XX*, 133.

<sup>97</sup> It is to note here that from the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty regional pottery developments take place, which do not allow to standardise Egyptian pottery anymore as this was the case for the bulk of the Middle Kingdom and the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty material.



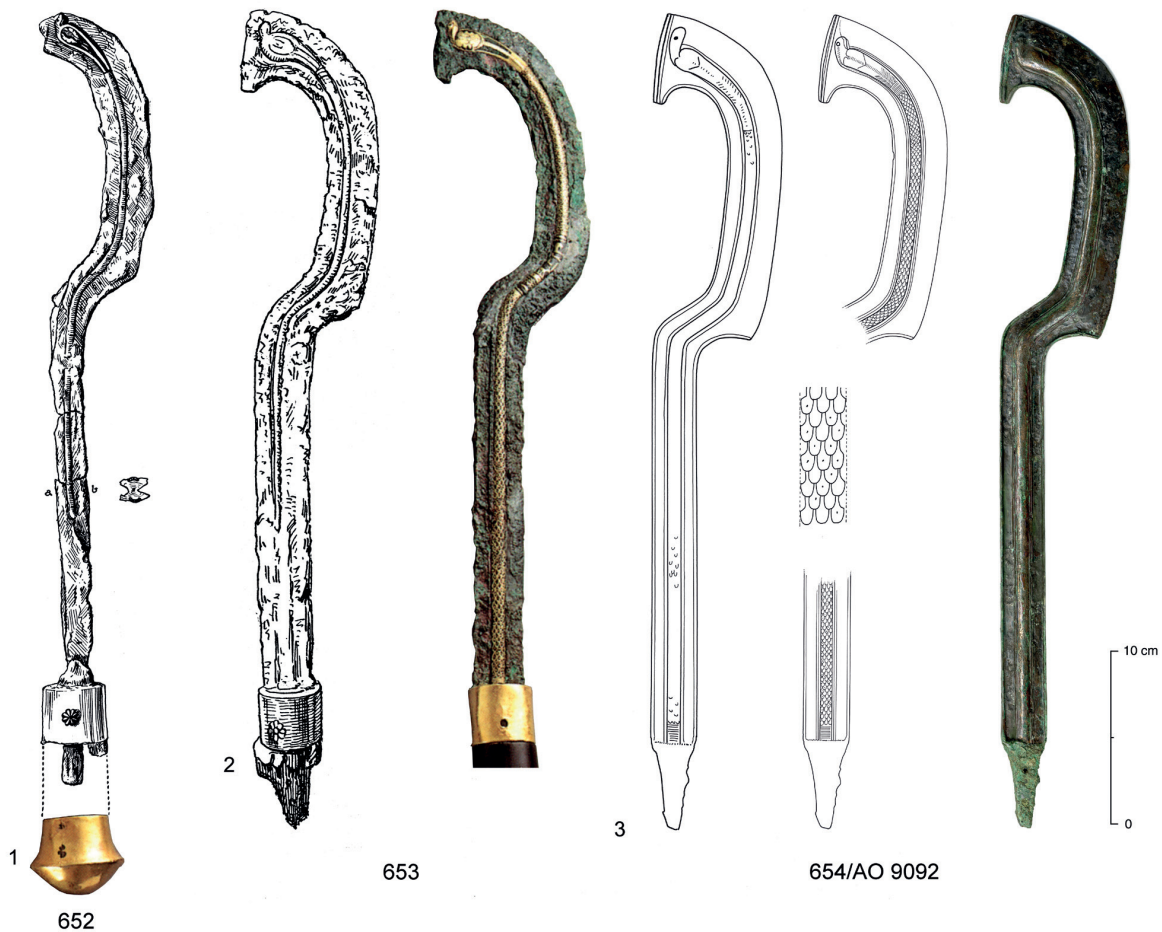


Fig. 22 Sickleswords from Byblos. 1. Tomb I (652, after VIROLLEAUD 1922, pl. LXV/8), 2. Tomb II (653, after MONTET 1924, fig. 1; photo after LIBAN 1998, 56), 3. Tomb III (654/AO 9092, photo and drawing by C. FLORIMONT with the courtesy of the Louvre)

of the Byblos example suggest a fabrication of this piece on the fast wheel and as such marking it as a local production. For this theory speaks also the rather slender body in proportion to its short neck. Egyptian beer bottles with such a short neck normally feature a rounder body shape.<sup>98</sup>

One might assume that sometime during the Middle Kingdom Egyptian pottery has found its way in larger quantities to Byblos. Since some of them break easily, it is likely that they were later produced locally to satisfy obvious local demands. Unfortunately, our knowledge about the pottery coming from the settlement of Byblos during the Middle Bronze Age is practically non-existent. But from the recent finds of Egyptian pottery at

sites like Sidon<sup>99</sup> and Tell Fadous<sup>100</sup> one can assume that an extensive exchange of goods between Byblos and Egypt must have taken place during the Middle Kingdom.<sup>101</sup>

In the Tombs II and III slender faience vases, so called *hes*-vases (811) were found. During the late MB II period faience vessels were not only made in Egypt, but also in the Levant, where the latter were usually of a smaller size.<sup>102</sup> In Egypt this vessel type is known since the pre-Dynastic period. It was essential for various rituals and thus was also depicted amongst the tomb goods inside the coffins of the Middle Kingdom. Only a few *hes*-vases survived in various materials and

<sup>98</sup> R. SCHIESTL and A. SEILER, *CChem* 31, 664–673.

<sup>99</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *AHL* 34–35 (2011–2012), 163–172.

<sup>100</sup> H. GENZ, *Berytus* 53–54 (2010–2011), 118.

<sup>101</sup> Still nowadays one sees fragments of Egyptian pottery scattered over the surface of the site when walking over the ruins.

<sup>102</sup> C. SAGONA, *ZDPV* 96/2 (1980), 101–120.



Fig. 23 Sickleswords (continue): 4. Tello (after MÜLLER 1987, fig. 35/5), 5. Tell el-Dab'a no. 8909 (after FORSTNER-MÜLLER 2008, fig. 103a/3, photo OREA/ÖAI archives), 6. Museum München (after FORSTNER-MÜLLER 2007–2008, fig. 4)

shapes. It is therefore difficult to establish a chronological development for this shape. Such elongated and slender pieces as the Byblos examples are known in silver from the tomb of Neferuptah, daughter of Amenemhet III at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup>

Dynasty<sup>103</sup> and in gold from king Ahmose at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>104</sup> Another example made of alabaster comes from the Brooklyn museum and is dated to the period between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasties.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> N. FARAG and Z. ISKANDER, *The discovery of Neferuptah*, figs. 8, 9.

<sup>104</sup> The piece was found inside the tomb of Psusennes I. For the find position, see *Tanis. L'or des pharaons*, 225.

<sup>105</sup> Brooklyn Museum no. 55.180.

## Middle Bronze Age objects found in the tombs

### Small finds

In each of the three tombs a sickle-sword<sup>106</sup> was found (Figs. 22/1–3, 42) of which only the piece from Tomb I (Fig. 22/1) was found still *in situ*.<sup>107</sup> The piece from Tomb II (Fig. 22/2) names its owner and his father. Although the Byblos pieces are the most elaborate made examples of the known sickle-swords, they stand in a chain of development of this type of weapon of which only very few have a more or less certain origin.<sup>108</sup> Sickle-swords are already known from depictions since the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium. According to H.-W. Müller, an example from a burial in Tello/ancient Girsu (Fig. 23/4), which should be dated into the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>109</sup> is chronologically closest to the Byblos examples. Its blade is decorated at both ends with a volute, a kind of decoration that is echoed in a sickle-sword from Tell el-Dab<sup>c</sup>a (Fig. 23/5) which is dated into the transitional MB IIA/B period (=Ph. F).<sup>110</sup> There the tip of the blade is still formed as a spiral, while the lower end has already lost its spiral, but still persevered a pronounced edge, which is again to be found on the Byblos examples. The Tell el-Dab<sup>c</sup>a piece was found still resting in its scabbard under the bended arms of the deceased with his head resting on the blade at the right side of the body.<sup>111</sup> Unfortunately, only the base of the handle, which was inlaid in bone, was still preserved, while all wooden parts were decayed. The latter, however, were still preserved on a nearly identical example, that was bought on the Antiquities market and supposedly came from the area of Achmim/Egypt (Fig. 23/6).<sup>112</sup> One step further in the chain of development or demonstrating a different origin of production, is a sickle-sword found at Abydos (Fig. 24/7).<sup>113</sup> This weapon still has the decoration of the blade like its predecessors, but instead of the tip ending in a volute it is decorated with an incised lotus flower, thus representing the link between the Tell el-Dab<sup>c</sup>a example and one found at Sicheim (Fig. 24/8).<sup>114</sup> The lat-



Fig. 24 Sickle-swords (continue): 7. Abydos (after MÜLLER 1987, pl. XIII/c), 8. Sicheim (after MÜLLER 1987, pl. IV/a)

ter is decorated in the same technique as the Byblos pieces. The Abydos scimitar was found by Garstang during his excavations 1907. Kemp and Merrillees were able to identify the excavation areas where Garstang had worked during this year<sup>115</sup> and Snape showed that the tombs excavated

<sup>106</sup> For the development of the sickle sword in the Near East, see A. MASSAFRA, *Le Harpai*. The Byblos examples belong to A. Massafra group 3, fig. 3.3.

<sup>107</sup> C. VIRROLAUD, *Syria* 3 (1922), fig. 4.

<sup>108</sup> H.-W. MÜLLER, *Der Waffenfund aus Sicheim-Balâta*, 107–176.

<sup>109</sup> H.-W. MÜLLER, *Der Waffenfund aus Sicheim-Balâta*, 116.

<sup>110</sup> I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER, *Tell el-Dab<sup>c</sup>a XVI*, fig. 103a/3.

<sup>111</sup> I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER, *Tell el-Dab<sup>c</sup>a XVI*, 177–184, figs. 101b, 103a/3.

<sup>112</sup> I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER, *AHL* 26–27 (2007–2008), 208.

<sup>113</sup> H.-W. MÜLLER, *Der Waffenfund aus Sicheim-Balâta*, 124–127.

<sup>114</sup> H.-W. MÜLLER, *Der Waffenfund aus Sicheim-Balâta*, 37–49.

<sup>115</sup> B.J. KEMP and R.S. MERRILLEES, *Minoan Pottery in Second Millennium Egypt*, fig. 36.

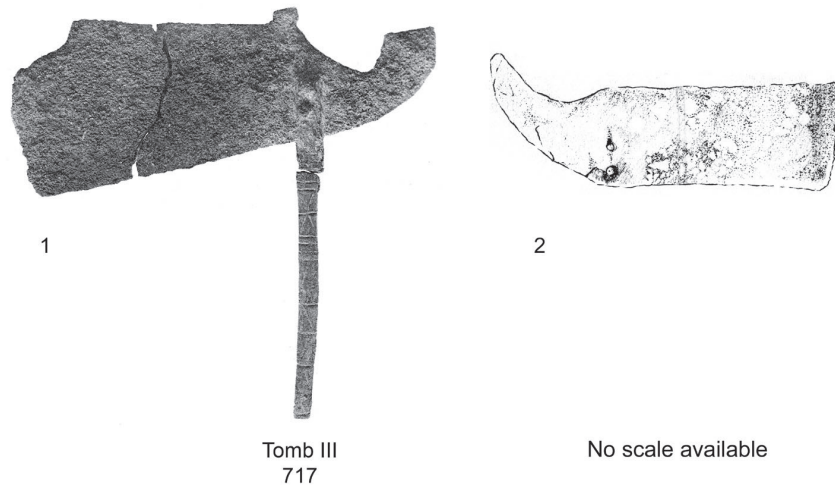


Fig. 25 Razor blades: 1. Tomb III (after MONTET 1928, pl.CIX), 2. Toumba tou Skourou, Tomb I (after VERMEULE ET AL. 1990, pl. 107)

that year date between the late Middle Kingdom and the earlier 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>116</sup> For the SicheM piece, which was part of a hoard, Müller was not only able to reconstruct the area where it was found, but also dates it to the Hyksos period.<sup>117</sup> The Byblos examples fall perfectly in between the Abydos and the SicheM pieces, being typologically closer to the latter. We know from archaeological (Tell el-Dab'a) and textual evidences that the sickle-sword, which the ancient Egyptians called *hpš*, came to Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period. The papyri Abbott, Amherst and Leopold II all deal with a systematically and well organised robbery of royal tombs during the reign of Ramses IX. Amongst these tombs were burials of the Theban kings of the 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. One passage of pLeopold II describes the way the robbers come upon these tombs: "...We opened their sarcophagi and their coffins in which they were, and found the noble mummy of this king equipped with a *hpš* (sickle-sword); a large number of amulets and jewels of gold were upon his neck, and his headpiece of gold was upon him. The noble mummy of this king was completely bedecked with gold, and his coffins were adorned with gold and silver inside and out and inlaid with all kinds of precious

stones..."<sup>118</sup> The royal tombs of Byblos must have presented a similar picture.

A bronze razor blade (717) was retrieved from Tomb III (Fig. 25/1).<sup>119</sup> Similar blades are known from tombs in Cyprus and Egypt. Since this type of razors appears in Egypt not before the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty,<sup>120</sup> an Egyptian origin for this shape should be excluded.<sup>121</sup> It seems that this type of razor was rather introduced to the Egyptians after the unification of Egypt at the beginning of the New Kingdom, when the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty started to regain interest in the Eastern Mediterranean. One specimen was found inside a collective chamber tomb on Cyprus (Fig. 25/2).<sup>122</sup> This tomb was used from the Middle Cypriote III until the Late Cypriote IA–B periods<sup>123</sup> and is therefore partially contemporary with the Byblos tombs. However, it also overlaps with the early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and thus the razor might be from the later occupation of the tomb. But since on the island this razor type is rather scarce, it has been suggested that its origin lies elsewhere.<sup>124</sup> Unfortunately, this type is also unknown to the Middle Bronze Age culture of the Levant and is for the time being the only such blade found in this cultural sphere.

<sup>116</sup> S.R. SNAPE, *Mortuary Assemblages from Abydos*, 422–489.

<sup>117</sup> H.-W. MÜLLER, *Der Waffenfund aus SicheM-Balâta*, 92.

<sup>118</sup> pLeopold II, 2,13. J. CAPART, A.H. GARDINER and B. VAN DE WALLE, *JEA* 22 (1936), 171, pl. 13.

<sup>119</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CIX/717.

<sup>120</sup> K.O. ERIKSSON, *A close Shave*, fig. A.

<sup>121</sup> Uroš Matic is currently studying the occurrences of these razors in archaeological contexts as well as their depiction and mentioning in written sources and wall paintings.

<sup>122</sup> E.D.T. VERMEULE and F.Z. WOLSKY, *Toumba tou Skourou*, fig. 107.

<sup>123</sup> E.D.T. VERMEULE and F.Z. WOLSKY, *Toumba tou Skourou*, 396.

<sup>124</sup> K.O. ERIKSSON, *A close Shave*, 197.



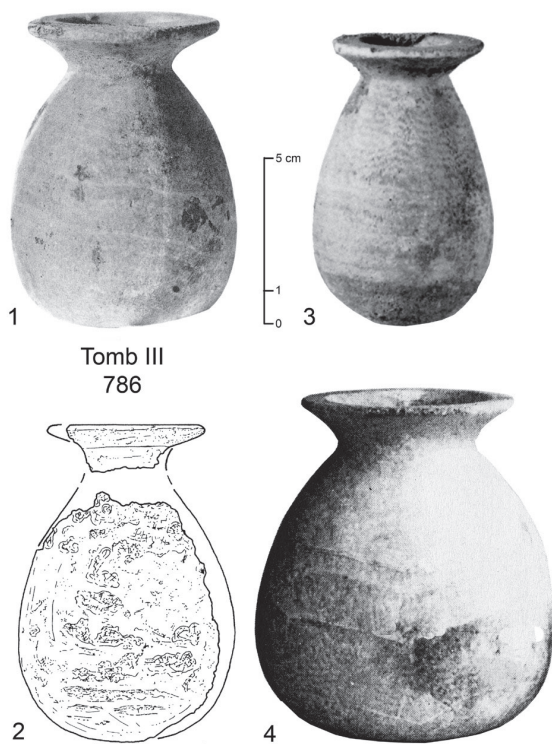


Fig. 26 Small bag-shaped calcite jars: 1. Byblos Tomb III (786, after MONTET 1928, pl. CXVIII); Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> no. 2880 (after FORSTNER-MÜLLER 2008, fig. 265); Ebla (after SCANDONE-MATTHIAE 1986, pl. XIII/3); Alalakh (after WOOLLEY 1955, pl. LXXX/AT/39/252)

From Tomb III comes a small calcite-alabaster jar with an everted rim and a broad wobbly base (786) (Figs. 26/1, 44). In Egypt this type of vessel is very rare, with only one example from a Second Intermediate Period burial at Abydos<sup>125</sup> and another from a disturbed burial of the Hyksos period (Ph. D/3) at Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> (Fig. 26/2).<sup>126</sup> In contrast to this situation, the appearance of such jars in the Levantine region of the MB IIB period seems to be quite common. Such jars were retrieved from

the tomb of the Lord of the Goats at Ebla (Fig. 26/3),<sup>127</sup> from Alalakh VII (Fig. 26/4)<sup>128</sup> and several MB IIB and MB IIC tombs in Palestine.<sup>129</sup> Hence, a Levantine production for these vessels should be assumed. Whether the raw materials were imported from Egypt or other provenances, needs to be considered.<sup>130</sup>

### Pottery

All three tombs provided an ample amount of dipper juglets (800, 801) of various shapes. While Montet has depicted only the red burnished examples with a ring base (800),<sup>131</sup> Tufnell also found plain ones (801) coming from these tombs during her re-examination of the material in the National Museum in Beirut (Figs. 27/1,5,8 and 28/12,15, 43)<sup>132</sup> and one piece found its way into the Louvre (Fig. 27/2). Plain dipper juglets are known already from the MB IIA period and exist in the Lebanese coastal areas until the MB IIC period. Their production centre was very likely the Byblos area. They all feature a very characteristic production technique. Thrown on a faster spinning wheel, their bases were closed by either pushing the walls over the tiny hole at the base or by inserting a lump of clay over the hole and smoothing it on the still rotating wheel. In the latter case the surface shows traces of horizontal combing. Such dipper juglets were found at Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> from the late 12<sup>th</sup> (Ph. H) (Figs. 27/6, 10) until the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasties (Ph. F) (Figs. 27/11 and 28/16).<sup>133</sup> Although their production continued in the Levant, for some reason the Egyptians and/or the people of Avaris ceased to import them in the MB IIB and C periods. At Tell-Fadous-Kfarabida three such juglets were found inside two MB burials (Figs. 27/9 and 28/13,14). While two came from an MB IIA burial,<sup>134</sup> one was found inside a burial which contained material of the early MB IIB.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>125</sup> T.E. PEET, *The Cemeteries of Abydos II*, pl. XIII/6.

<sup>126</sup> I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XVI*, fig. 265.

<sup>127</sup> G. SCANDONE-MATTHIAE, *Les Relations entre Ébla et l'Égypte au III<sup>e</sup> et au II<sup>e</sup> Millénaire av. J.-Chr.*, pl. XIII/3.

<sup>128</sup> L. WOOLLEY, *Alalakh*, pl. LXXX/AT/39/252.

<sup>129</sup> R.T. SPARKS, *Stone Vessels in the Levant*, Cat.nos. 89–123.

<sup>130</sup> T. KÖSTER, *QS Supplementum* 3, 225–241.

<sup>131</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CXVIII/800.

<sup>132</sup> O. TUFNELL, *Byblos* 18 (1969), fig. 4/33–42.

<sup>133</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *The Dipper Juglets of Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup>*, 227–229.

<sup>134</sup> H. GENZ, *Berytus* 53–54 (2010–2011), figs. 9/1,2 and 10/4. Burial 637 had two dipper juglets and a Levantine painted jug. For the latter, see T. BAGH, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XXII*.

<sup>135</sup> H. GENZ, *Berytus* 53–54 (2010–2011), figs. 7/4, 9/3–5, 10/1. Burial 736 has a *piriform 1b* Tell el-Yahudiya juglet, a type which appears in Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> in the Phases G/1–3 – E/3, see D.A. ASTON and M. BIETAK, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> VIII*, catalogue figs. 27–34. Further a tall narrow dipper juglet, H. GENZ, *Berytus* 53–54 (2010–2011), fig. 9/5, which finds a parallel in a late 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb in Harageh, see B.J. KEMP and R.S. MERRILLIES, *Minoan Pottery in Second Millennium Egypt*, fig. 16. The latter is associated with two *piriform 1c* Tell el-Yahudiya juglets, R. ENGELBACH, *Harageh*, pl. XLI/99f, j, which appear in Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> in the Phases F–E/2, see K. KOPETZKY, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XX*, 222.

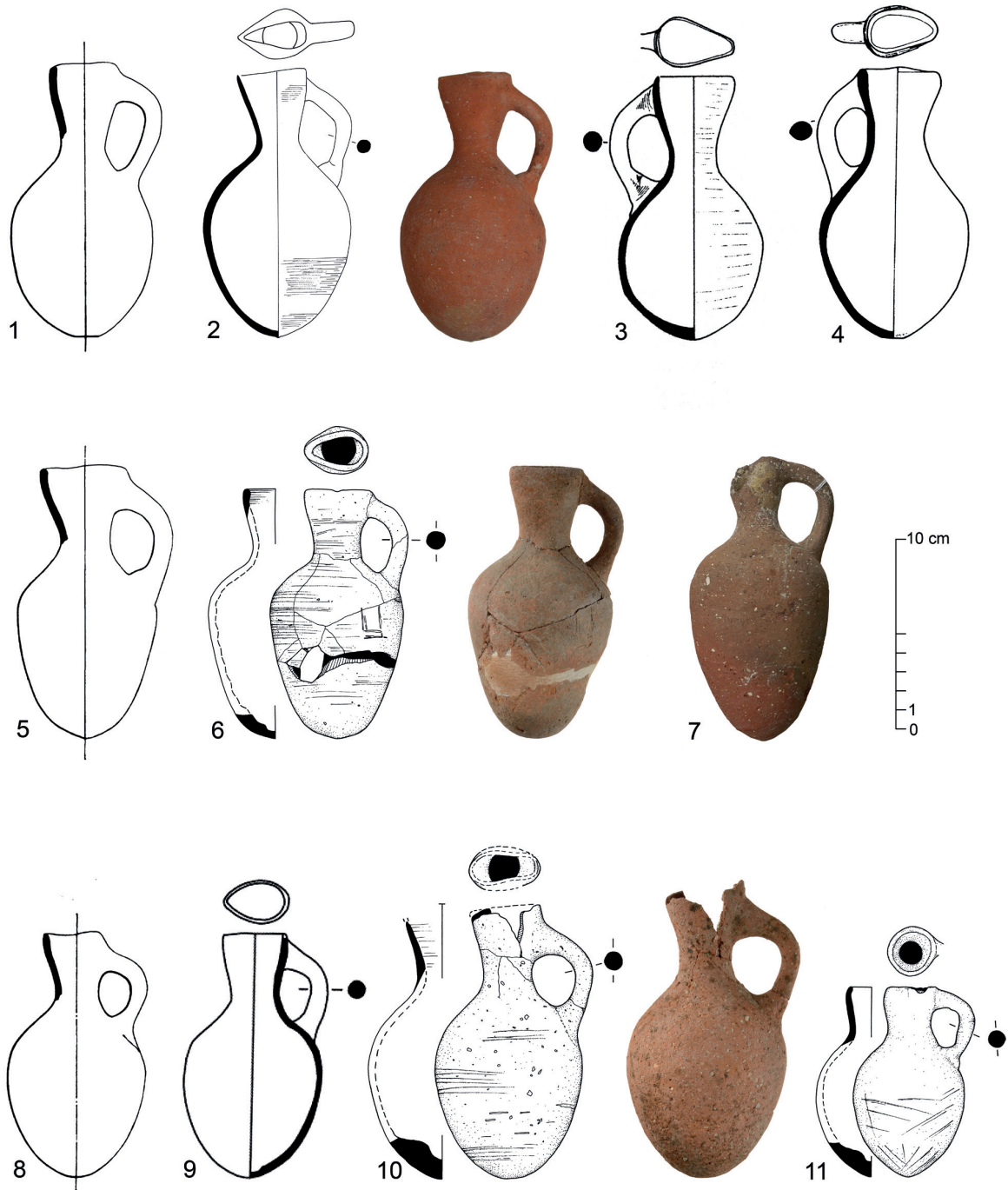


Fig. 27 Plain dipper juglets: 1. Byblos (after TUFNELL 1969, fig. 4/33), 2. Byblos (AO 800.11, drawing by C. FLORIMONT, photo by K. KOPETZKY, both with the courtesy of the Louvre), 3. and 4. Sidon (after DOUMET-SERHAL 2004, figs. 37/S/1875 and 28/S/1772), 5. Byblos (after TUFNELL 1969, fig. 4/36), 6. Tell el-Dab'a no. 4958 (after SCHIESTL 2009, fig. 139/2, photo OREA/ÖAI archives), 7. Arqa (95/274.002, photo with the courtesy of J.-P. Thalmann), 8. Byblos (after TUFNELL 1969, fig. 4/38), 9. Tell Fadous (after GENZ 2013, fig. 9/2), 10. and 11. Tell el-Dab'a (after SCHIESTL 2009, fig. 368/2 and KOPETZKY 2002, fig. 1/4304, photo OREA/ÖAI archives)

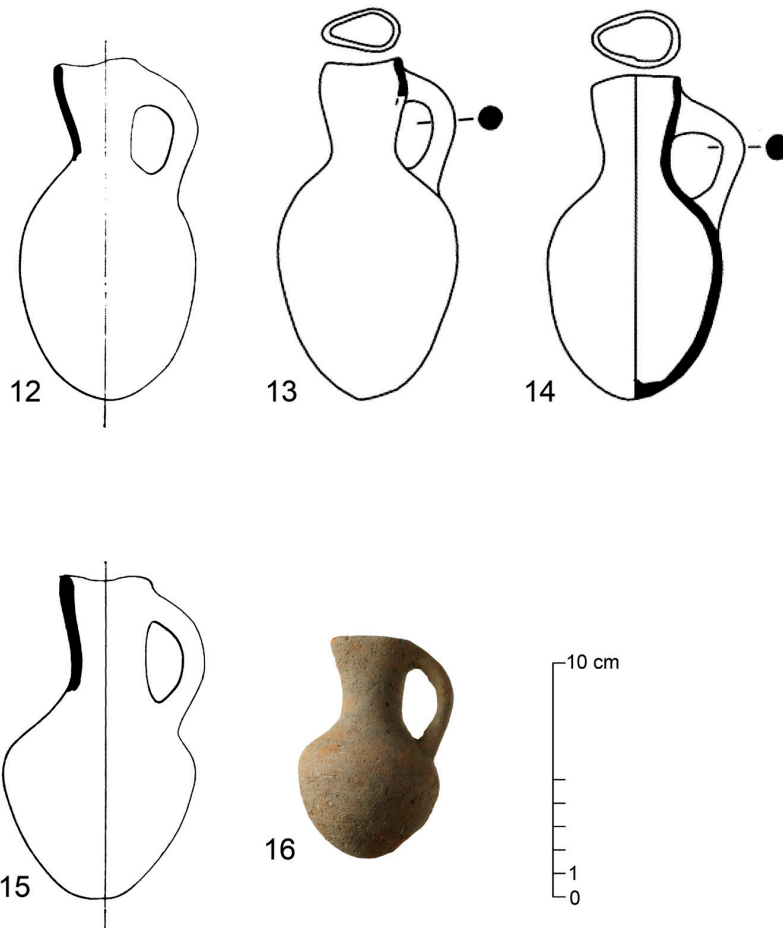


Fig 28 Plain dipper juglets (continue): 12. Byblos (after TUFNELL 1969, fig. 4/42), 13. and 14. Tell Fadous-Kfarabida (after GENZ 2013, figs. 9/1, 3), 15. Byblos (after TUFNELL 1969, fig. 4/35), 16. Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> no. 4172 (photo OREA/ÖAI archives)

Several examples appear in MB IIA<sup>136</sup> and MB IIB<sup>137</sup> burials at Sidon (Figs. 27/3, 4), and in an MB IIB burial at Tell Arqa (Fig. 27/7).<sup>138</sup> Further examples are known from the tombs 66<sup>139</sup> and 73<sup>140</sup> from Ruweise. These burials started during the transitional MB IIA/B and lasted into the MB IIB period. Nineteen such juglets were retrieved from a burial cave in Sin el-Fil,<sup>141</sup> which was in use from the MB IIA<sup>142</sup> till the very early MB IIB periods.<sup>143</sup>

While the plain dipper juglets come from the Tombs II and IV, the red burnished ones equipped

with a ring base (800) were found only in Tomb I and II (Figs. 29/1–4, 42). Such juglets are known from Lebanon, northern Palestine and Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> and come exclusively from MB IIB and MB IIC contexts. The earliest examples were found in the destruction level of an older building situated below the Hyksos palace of area F/II at Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup><sup>144</sup> and date into the Phases E/3–2 (Fig. 29/5). A further example was found in the vicinity of a thoroughly robbed tomb of the latest Hyksos phase (Ph. D/2) (Fig. 29/6).<sup>145</sup> Such juglets are known

<sup>136</sup> C. DOUMET-SERHAL, *Levant* 36 (2004), figs. 14/S/1816, 28/S/1772, 37/S/1875.

<sup>137</sup> Burial 59. I thank C. Doumet-Serhal for this information.

<sup>138</sup> I am indebted to the late J.-P. Thalmann for this information.

<sup>139</sup> P.E. GUIGES, *BMB II* (1938), fig. 67/e–f, j. See also O. TUFNELL, *Berytus* 24 (1975–1976), fig. 2/23–27.

<sup>140</sup> P.E. GUIGES, *BMB II* (1938), fig. 77/h.

<sup>141</sup> M. CHERHAB, *Tombe Phénicienne de Sin el Fil*, fig. 2c.

<sup>142</sup> Cleary from this earlier phase are M. CHERHAB, *Tombe Phénicienne de Sin el Fil*, figs. 7b; 8a, c; 10a, c; 12.

<sup>143</sup> Into the later phase fall M. CHERHAB, *Tombe Phénicienne de Sin el Fil*, figs. 2a, d; 3a, b; 4a; 5a–c; 6a, b; 7a; 10d; 11.

<sup>144</sup> BIETAK *et al.*, *Ä&L* 22 (2013), 32–35.

<sup>145</sup> For the tomb, see I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XVI*, 377–382.

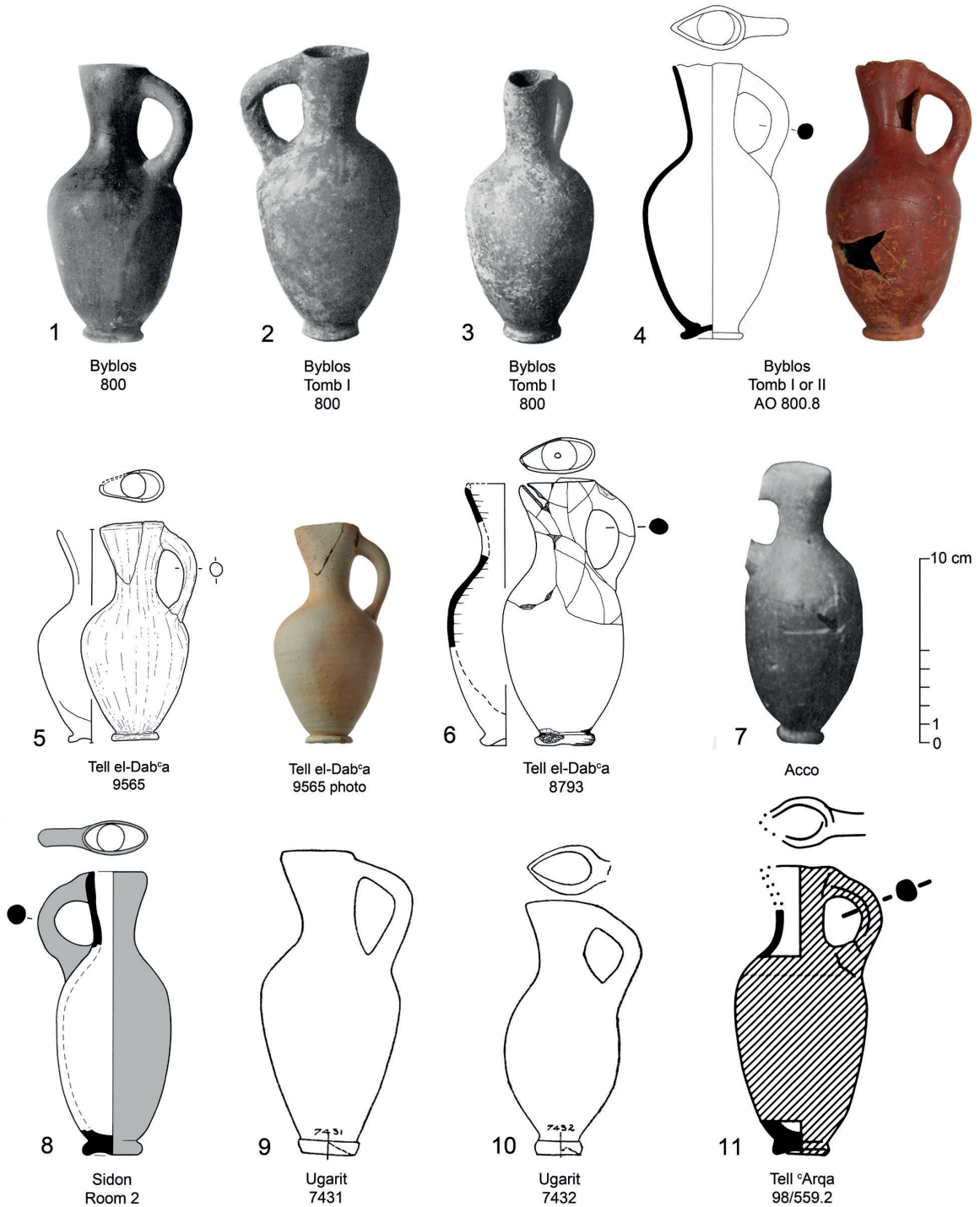


Fig. 29 Red burnished dipper juglets: 1. Byblos (after MONTET 1928, pl. CXVIII), 2. and 3. Byblos Tomb I (after VIROLLEAUD 1922, pl. LXIII/1,3), 4. Byblos Tombs I or II (AO 801.8, drawing C. FLORIMONT, photo taken by K. KOPETZKY, both with the courtesy of the Louvre), 5. and 6. Tell el-Dab'a no. 9565 (photo OREA/ÖAI archives) and no. 8793, 7. Tell Acco (after DOTHAN 1993, 20/top photo), 8. Sidon (after DOUMET-SERHAL 2009, pl. 8/1), 9. and 10. Ugarit (after SCHAEFFER 1936, figs. 18/P, Q), 11. Tell Arqa (after THALMANN 2006, pl. 109/14)





Tomb III  
805/AO 10974



2



3

Tomb III  
806

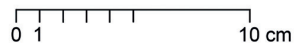


Fig. 30 Brown burnished jugs: 1. Byblos Tomb III (805/AO 10974, drawing by C. FLORIMONT, photo taken by K. KOPETZKY both with the courtesy of the Louvre), 2. Byblos Tomb III (806, after MONTET 1928, pl. CXIX/806), 3. Tell Acco (after DOTHAN 1993, 19)

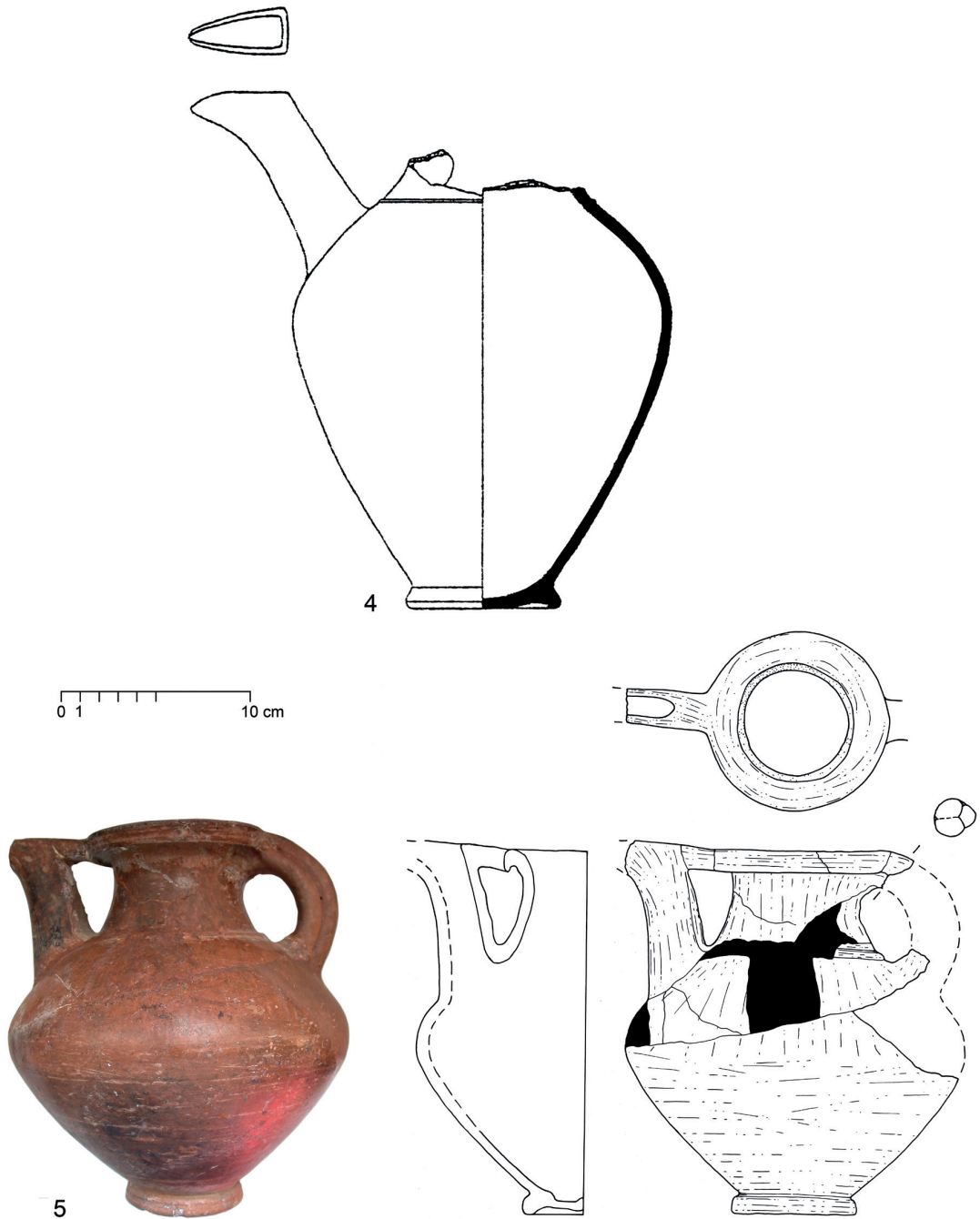


Fig. 31 Brown burnished jugs (continue): 4. Megiddo (after GUY 1938, pl. 25/6), 5. Tell el-Ajjul (no. 33.1391, photo and drawing with the courtesy of the Rockefeller Museum)

from MB IIB–C tombs at Acco (Fig. 29/7),<sup>146</sup> and were found in large numbers amongst the relicts of a ritual activity at Sidon (Fig. 29/8) dating to the very end of the MB II period.<sup>147</sup> Into the latest MB

II phase dates also a burial chamber found at Ugarit, where such juglets were amongst the burial goods (Figs. 29/9, 10).<sup>148</sup> Finally, one piece was found at Tell Arqa in a burial (Fig. 29/11) that

<sup>146</sup> M. DOTHAN, *Tel Acco*, 20/top photo, first to the left of second row.

<sup>147</sup> C. DOUMET-SERHAL, *BAAL Hors –Série VI* (2009), pl. 8/1–3.

<sup>148</sup> C.F.-A. SCHAEFFER, *Syria* 17 (1936), figs. 18/P, Q.





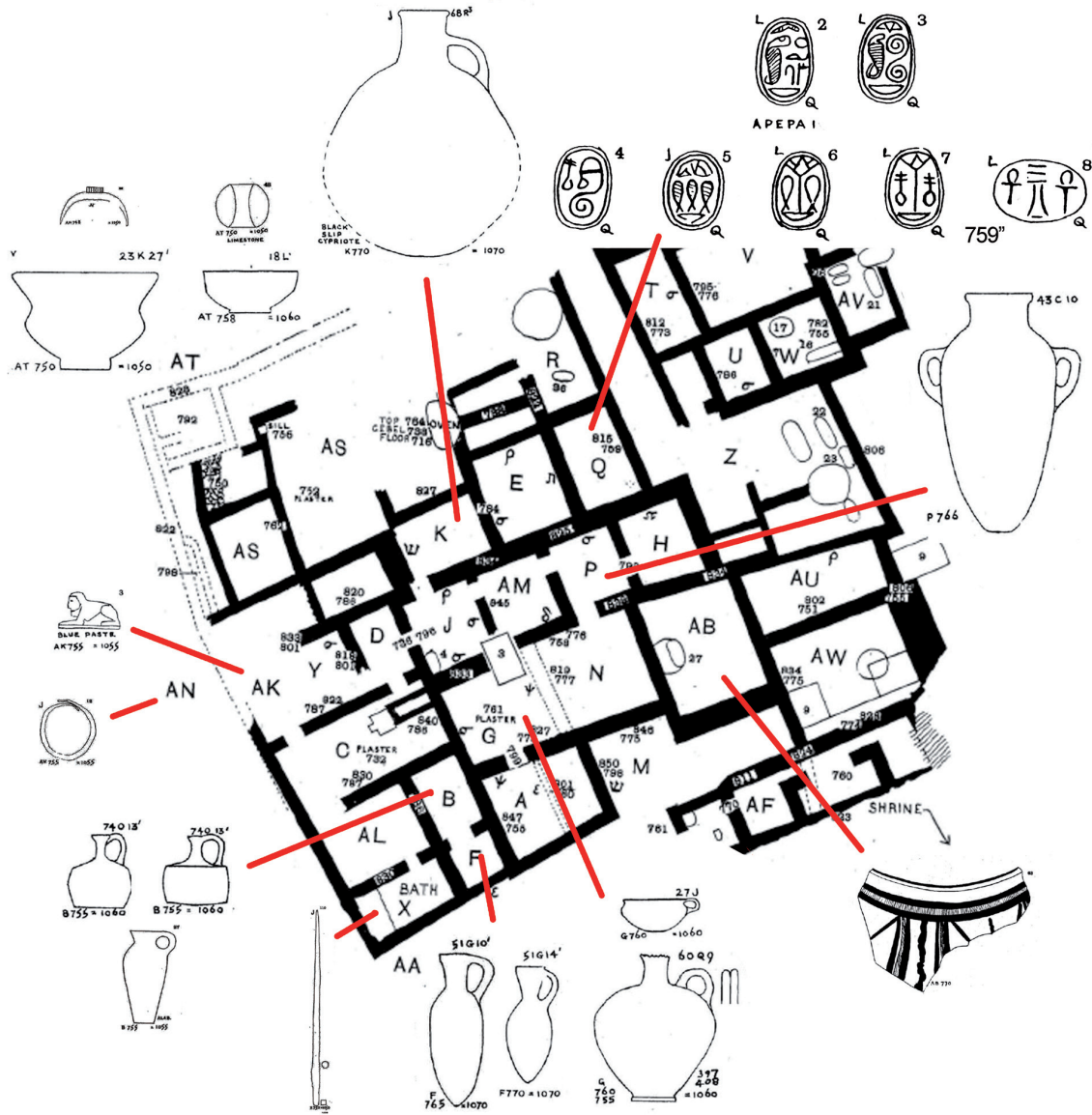


Fig. 33 Building AM from Tell el-Ajjul with finds above the destruction level between 750<sup>''</sup>–770<sup>''</sup> (after PETRIE 1931, pl. LIV)

plex AM (Fig. 31/5), dated by Petrie into his level III.<sup>154</sup> The lowest level of this house was covered under a thick layer of burnt material. The latter was found – according to Petrie – at a level between 726<sup>''</sup>–744<sup>''</sup>.<sup>155</sup> The material coming from this lowest level dates to the later MB IIB/C period (Fig. 32), amongst it the jug from room AK. Directly above the burnt layer, at the levels

between 750<sup>''</sup>–770<sup>''</sup>, one finds material belonging to the proper MB IIC phase (Fig. 33). In this level we find for the first time Cypriote *Bichrome Ware*, which at Tell el-Dab'a is not attested before Phase D/2.<sup>156</sup> One large jug from room K was classified by Petrie as a Cypriot *Black Slip Ware*.<sup>157</sup> Granted that Petrie's identification of this type of vessel is correct,<sup>158</sup> *Black Slip Ware* appears on Cyprus dur-

<sup>154</sup> W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza III*, pl. XXXIX/67U.

<sup>155</sup> W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza I*, 9.

<sup>156</sup> M. BIETAK, *KVHAA Konferenser* 54 (2001), 175.

<sup>157</sup> W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza III*, pl. XXXIX/68R<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>158</sup> According to L.C. MAGUIRE, *Tell el-Dab'a XXI*, 198, AJJ 597 seems to be a similar piece, where the identification as Black Slip/Reserved Slip was confirmed.



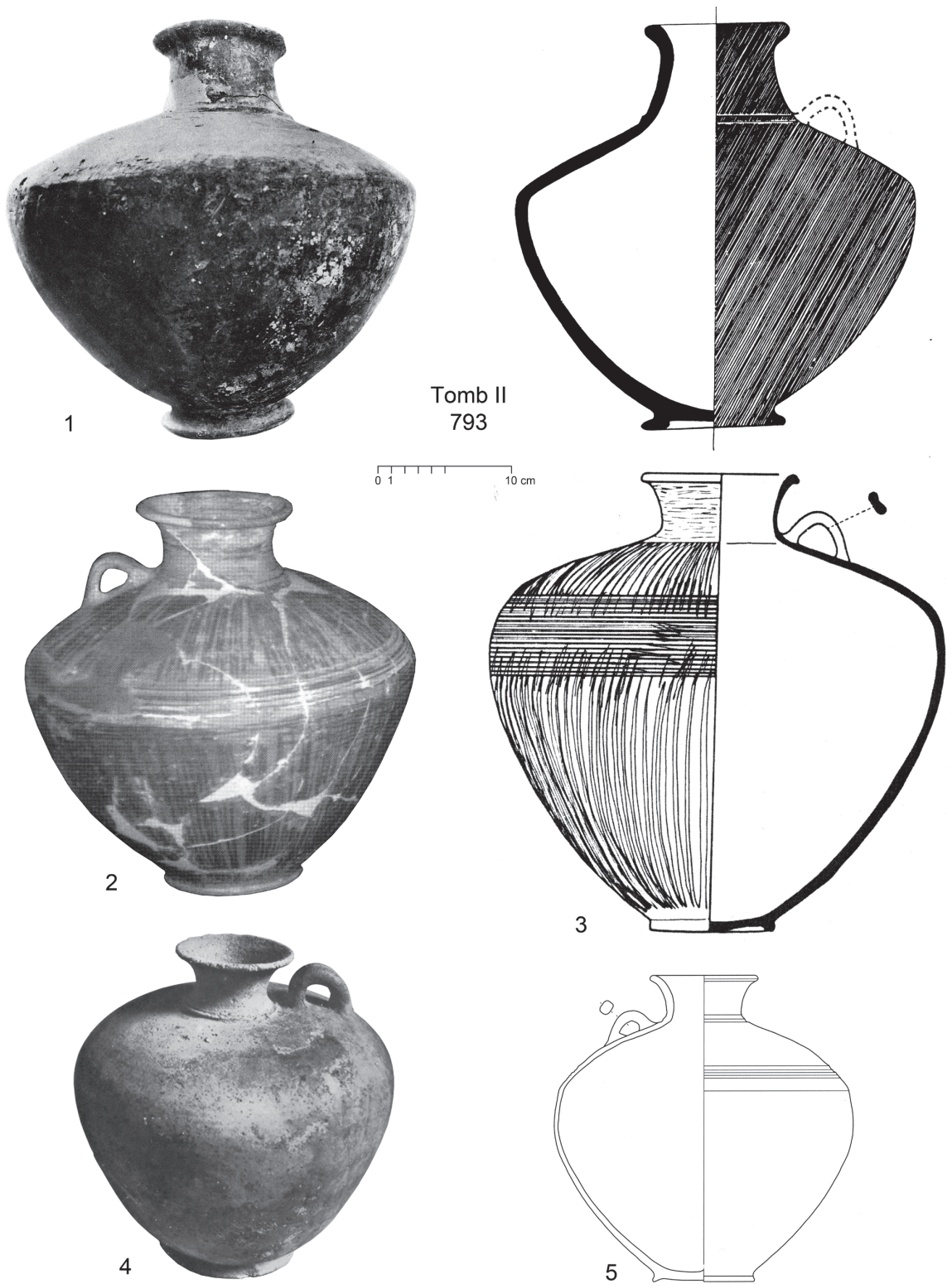


Fig. 34 Large burnished jugs with shoulder handle: 1. Byblos Tomb II (793, photo after MONTET 1928, pl. CXIX/793; drawing after TUFNELL 1969, fig. 5/51), 2. Tell Nebi Mend (after PÉZARD 1931, pl. XLI), 3. Ebla Tomba del Signore dei Capridi (after NIGRO 2009, tav. XVII/4), 4. Ugarit Tomb 57 (after SCHAEFFER 1938, pl. XXIV), 5. Qatna (after PAOLETTI 2011, fig. 7, upper right corner)

ing the MC III and LC I periods. In Tell el-Dab'a only a handful of sherds belonging to this ware was found. All of them are handmade and come from the Phases D/2 and C.<sup>159</sup> At Tell 'Arqa this fabric appears for the first time in Level 12, which marks the beginning of the LB I at the site.<sup>160</sup> At Tell el-'Ajjul, in room Q of this phase at level 759", seven scarabs were discovered. Two of them (L2/Apepi and L3)<sup>161</sup> belong to the Second Intermediate Period, however, the other five are dated to the early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (4, J5, L6–8).<sup>162</sup> Thus, the "Byblos jug" coming from the older layer, as we have seen above, clearly dates into the Hyksos period. A second such jug<sup>163</sup> comes from area K–L and was found in room LZ<sup>9</sup> at a level of 1006".<sup>164</sup> In this room, at a slightly lower level (990"), a nearly identical scarab<sup>165</sup> to one of the New Kingdom scarabs (L 4) from the above-mentioned room Q was discovered. Adjacent to the south in room LZ<sup>8</sup> an Egyptian zir was excavated at an even lower level.<sup>166</sup> Rims of this type are known from the Hyksos period onwards,<sup>167</sup> its body shape fits into the latest Hyksos period and even more likely into the early New Kingdom.<sup>168</sup> The MB material from the surrounding rooms L<sup>6</sup>, L<sup>7</sup>, L<sup>8</sup>,<sup>169</sup> and L<sup>10</sup><sup>170</sup> which was found between the levels 980"–1020", marks the very end of the MB II and the transition to the LB I period. The origin of the third example from area KJ cannot be verified.

Although some of the above-mentioned material might have come from pits that were overlooked during the excavation at Tell el-Ajjul,<sup>171</sup> there is still enough evidence that the material below the

burnt layer is a generation older than the material coming from above this layer.<sup>172</sup>

The large jar (793) from Tomb II was re-examined and drawn by Tufnell during her check-up on the material from the royal tombs (Figs. 34/1, 43).<sup>173</sup> She describes the jar as having a thick red slip with burnishing, whose surface was badly worn and flaky. It seems that during her examination she could not see the traces of decoration in the form of a wavy line made by a five-pointed tool that Montet had described<sup>174</sup> and as such did not show it in her drawing. Although Montet writes that this jar had no handle, it is easily possible that due to the worn and flaked-off surface the position of a handle was overlooked. L. Nigro suggested that this jar is actually a jug<sup>175</sup> and belongs to a group of burnished jugs with a bulge around the base of the neck and a small shoulder-handle, which started late in the MB IIA and developed during the MB IIB period. The oldest examples of this type come from the "Tomba della principessa"<sup>176</sup> and the "Tomba delle Cisterne"<sup>177</sup> at Ebla. Dated to the earlier MB II<sup>178</sup> period is a younger example from the "Tomba del Signore dei Capridi" (Fig. 34/3)<sup>179</sup> in Ebla whose shoulder is much flatter and the max. diameter has moved higher up at the body of the vessels. Since these jugs in Ebla have a distinguished burnishing, Nigro named this group "Orange Burnished Ware".<sup>180</sup> However, jugs of this shape appear in other parts of the Levant in different fabrics and colours of burnishing. It seems that due to its shape the Byblos piece lies in

<sup>159</sup> L.C. MAGUIRE, *Tell el-Dab'a XXI*, 157, DAB 318–321. DAB 318 was dated to the Phase F–E/3. However, it comes from a foundation trench of a wall that cuts in from the surface and as such must be treated with caution.

<sup>160</sup> H. CHARAF, *Arqa during the Bronze Age*, 140.

<sup>161</sup> W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza I*, pl. III/L2=Apepi, L3.

<sup>162</sup> W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza I*, pl. III/4, J5, L6–8. I am indebted to C. Mlinar for this information.

<sup>163</sup> According to the fabric of this jug, it was an import to the site, most likely from the Lebanese coast.

<sup>164</sup> W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza III*, pls. XLVII, XXXIX/67U.

<sup>165</sup> W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza III*, pl. III/103.

<sup>166</sup> W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza III*, pl. XXXIII/31Y<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>167</sup> I. HEIN and P. JANOSI, *Tell el-Dab'a XI*, figs. 94/14 and 197/50).

<sup>168</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *MKS 2* (2016), fig. 18. See also I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER and K. KOPETZKY, *BAAL Hors-Series VI* (2009), fig. 5. The Byblos example depicted there is identical to the Ajjul piece.

<sup>169</sup> W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza III*, pls. XXXVIII/52S; XXVI/28; XXXIII/32D<sup>5</sup>, 32E<sup>9</sup> and 31Y<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>170</sup> J.G. DUNCAN, *Corpus of Palestinian Pottery*, pl. VI/15U<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>171</sup> W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza I*, pl. XLIX/85B.

<sup>172</sup> W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza I*, pls. XXXIX/23Z<sup>3</sup>, XLIV/34B<sup>6</sup>, XLIX/65D<sup>8</sup>; W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Gaza III*, pls. XXX/10W, 10H<sup>4</sup>, 16N, 18L<sup>5</sup>, 18N<sup>2</sup>, 18K<sup>3</sup>, 18J<sup>11</sup>, XXXI/20Q, 21E, 23J<sup>3</sup>, 23K<sup>25IV</sup>, 23K<sup>25V</sup>, 23K<sup>29</sup>, 24U<sup>2</sup>, XXXII/31V<sup>8''</sup>, XXXIV/34A<sup>5</sup>, 34P<sup>6''</sup>, XXXVI/38O<sup>3''</sup>, 38N<sup>3</sup>, 40H, 43A<sup>2</sup>, XXXVII/ 43D<sup>3</sup>, XXXVIII/56K<sup>4</sup>, 57F<sup>3</sup>, XXXIX/62Q, 65O, 67Z<sup>7</sup>, 74O<sup>16''</sup>, 74O<sup>03</sup>, 74O<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>173</sup> O. TUFNELL, *Berytus* 18 (1969), fig. 5/51.

<sup>174</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, 200.

<sup>175</sup> L. NIGRO, *BAAL Hors-Série VI* (2009), 163.

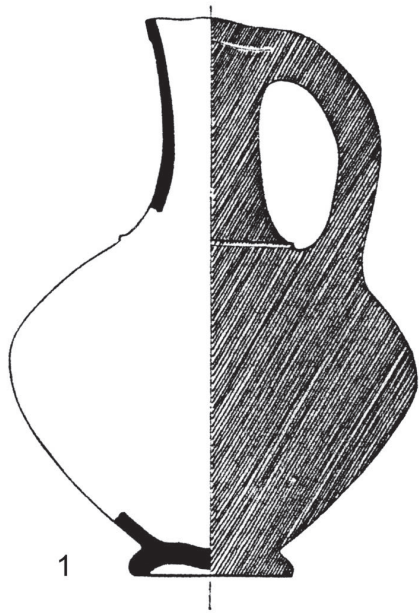
<sup>176</sup> L. NIGRO, *MSAE VIII*, 157, tav. XI/4.

<sup>177</sup> L. NIGRO, *MSAE VIII*, 272, 275, tav. XXXIII/1,2.

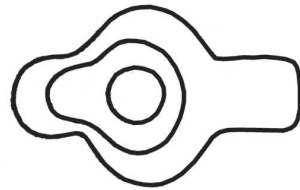
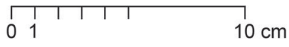
<sup>178</sup> Note that the MB II in the Northern Levant include the MB IIB and partly MB IIC in the Southern Levant.

<sup>179</sup> L. NIGRO, *MSAE VIII*, 241, 244, tav. XVII/4.

<sup>180</sup> L. NIGRO, *CChem IV*, 355–359.



Tomb III  
799



2

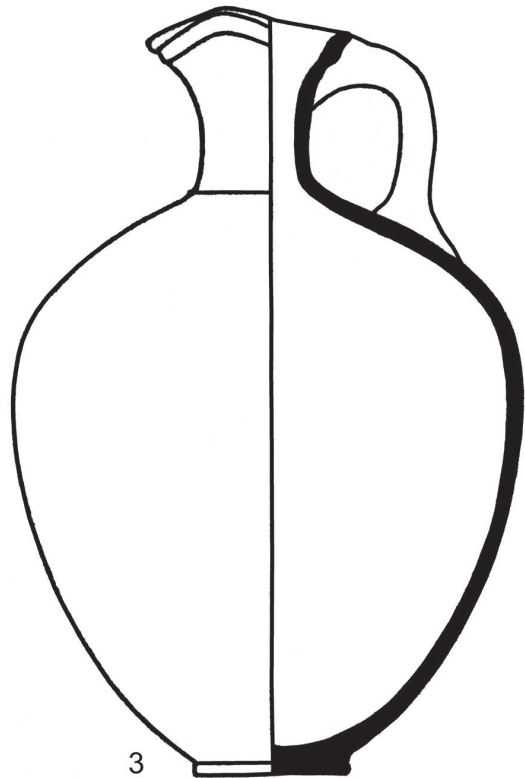


Fig. 35 Burnished jugs: 1. Byblos Tomb III (799, drawing after TUFNELL 1969, fig. 5/50; photo after MONTET 1928, pl. CXIX/799), 2. Ruweise Tomb 25 (after GUIGES 1937, fig. 38j), 3. Megiddo Tomb 5259 (after LOUD 1938, pl. 25/14)



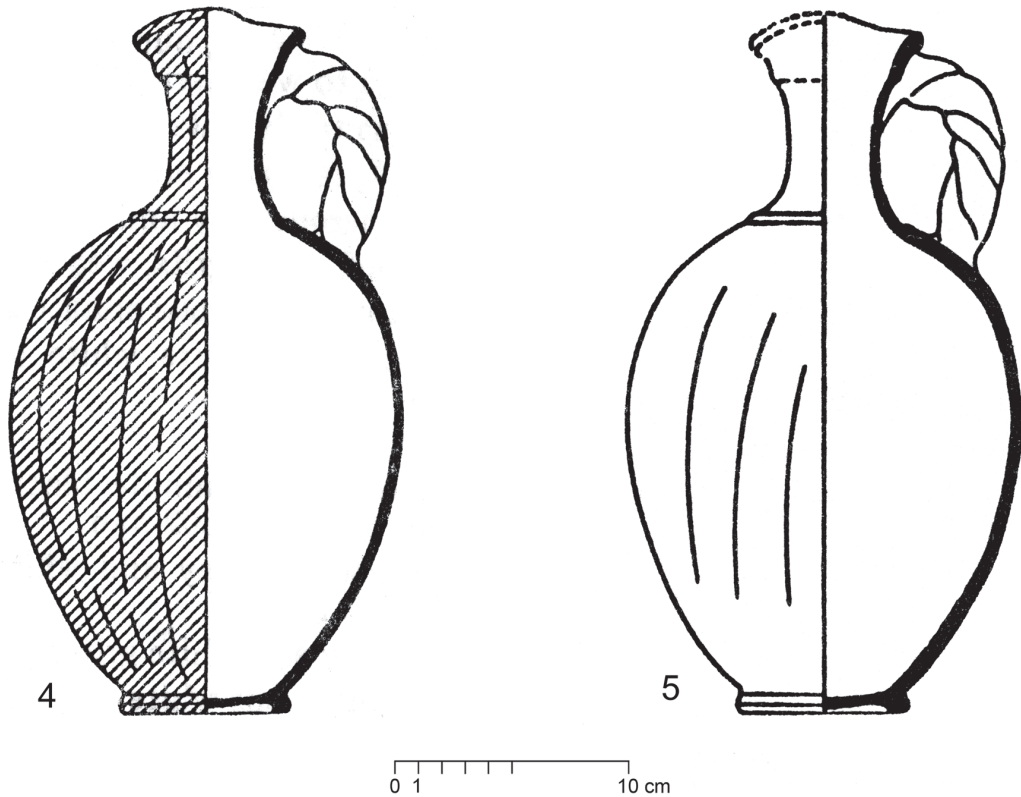


Fig. 36 Burnished jugs (continue): 4. Megiddo Tomb 2145 (after LOUD 1938, pl. 25/8), 5. Megiddo Tomb 2130 (after LOUD 1938, pl. 34/11)

between the Ebla jugs. Similar pieces, all dating to the Syrian MB II, come from Tell Hizzin,<sup>181</sup> Tell Nebi Mend (Fig. 34/2)<sup>182</sup> as well as from chamber 3 in the Royal Tomb of Qatna (Fig. 34/5).<sup>183</sup> Another example was found in the upper MB level of tomb 57 at Ugarit (Fig. 34/4),<sup>184</sup> which again dates to the MB II period.

In Tomb III a large biconical jug (799) was found, equipped with a trefoil rim, a bulge at the base of its neck, a ring base and a single handle (Fig. 35/1, 44).<sup>185</sup> According to Tufnell, the vessel was coated with a thick red slip.<sup>186</sup> The latter is often the only thing that is left of a former burnishing, when stored for a long time under humid conditions.<sup>187</sup> Although there is no exact parallel to this

piece, it nevertheless stands in a long tradition of larger burnished jugs with trefoil rims. Probably late in the MB IIA falls a biconical jug from Megiddo.<sup>188</sup> Like the Byblos piece it has a trefoil rim and a ring base, but a triparted handle and the bulge around the neck is missing. A jug with the same attributes as the Byblos example and with a bulge around the neck and a piriform body shape comes from tomb 25 in Ruweise (Fig. 35/2).<sup>189</sup> This rock-cut chamber tomb contained four burials, which date into the early MB IIB period. The photo of the publication shows at the rim of the jug a small lump of clay. It is very likely that two such lumps were attached, possibly indicating eyes. At Sidon in tomb 67, dating also to the early MB IIB, another example with a piriform body, but without

<sup>181</sup> H. GENZ and H. SADER, *Berytus* 53–54 (2013), figs. 5/5 and 6.

<sup>182</sup> M. PÉZARD, *BAH* 15, 68, pl. XXXVI/1.2 and XLI.

<sup>183</sup> V. PAOLETTI, *Qatna Studien* 1, fig. 7, upper right corner.

<sup>184</sup> C.F.-A. SCHAEFFER, *Syria* 19 (1938), pl. XXIV/lower left, fig. 35/D. Note the difference between the photo and the drawing.

<sup>185</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CXIX/799.

<sup>186</sup> O. TUFNELL, *Berytus* 18 (1969), 24, no. 50.

<sup>187</sup> Montet writes that inside the chamber an about 70 cm thick mud layer was covering the finds. P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, 151.

<sup>188</sup> G. LOUD, *Megiddo II*, pl. 20/4.

<sup>189</sup> P.E. GUIGES, *BMB I* (1937), fig. 38j.



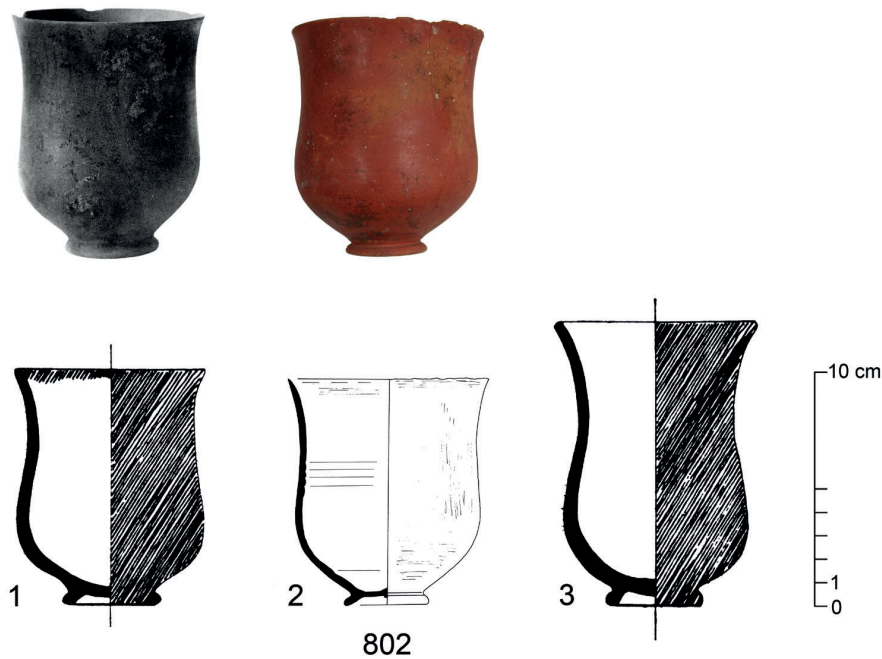


Fig. 37 Beakers: Byblos from tombs II and III, 1. (photo after MONTET 1928, pl. CXVIII; drawing after TUFNELL 1969, figs.4/46), 2. (AO 802.4, drawing by C. FLORIMONT, photo taken by K. KOPETZKY both with the courtesy of the Louvre) 3. (after TUFNELL 1969, figs.4/47)

the budge at the base of the neck was excavated.<sup>190</sup> A nearly identical piece to the Sidon example and also dating into the early MB IIB comes from Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup>.<sup>191</sup> A little bit later in the MB IIB and with a similar body shape as the previous example plus the budge at the neck, dates a plain jug from Megiddo Tomb 5259 (Fig. 35/3).<sup>192</sup> The same trefoil rim, a budge at the neck and a ring base can be found on two piriform examples again coming from Megiddo. One piece is red burnished (Fig. 36/4)<sup>193</sup> and comes from the middle of the MB IIB period, while the other was plain burnished (Fig. 36/5)<sup>194</sup> and dates more towards the end of that period. Both, however, are equipped with a twisted handle. A double handle with a third twisted strap attached to it, was found in Tomb VII of Byblos.<sup>195</sup>

Red burnished beakers with a ring base (802) are reported to come from Tombs II and III.<sup>196</sup>

Tufnell documented two different kinds of these beakers, a shorter, more bulkier one (Figs. 37/1, 2, 43) and a slimmer, more elongated one (Figs. 37/2, 44).<sup>197</sup> Seven vessels of the former type were published by Montet on a photo,<sup>198</sup> which showed these pieces associated with other pottery. The same assortment was photographed a second time, but from a different angle and was published by Montet with the remark “Poteries trouvées à Byblos (tombeau II)”.<sup>199</sup> Clearly stating that the bulkier type was found in Tomb II. The author likes to assign the more elongated examples to Tomb III, not only because of the above shown evidence, but also due to the fact that there is a tendency for many pottery shapes to get stretched during the course of their chronological appearances.<sup>200</sup> Similar, although not identical beakers were found in a tomb at Sidon<sup>201</sup> and in the tombs 66<sup>202</sup> and 73<sup>203</sup>

<sup>190</sup> I thank C. Doumet-Serhal for this information.

<sup>191</sup> TD 9605 was found inside a small pit (L337) in area R/II that was dug next to a constructed tomb of Phase E/3 (L454).

<sup>192</sup> G. LOUD, *Megiddo II*, pl. 25/14.

<sup>193</sup> G. LOUD, *Megiddo II*, pl. 25/8, T. 2145.

<sup>194</sup> G. LOUD, *Megiddo II*, pl. 34/11, T. 2130.

<sup>195</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *MKS 2* (2016), 155.

<sup>196</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CXVIII.

<sup>197</sup> O. TUFNELL, *Berytus 18* (1969), figs. 4/46, 47.

<sup>198</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CXVI/top.

<sup>199</sup> P. MONTET, *Monuments et Mémoires 27* (1924), fig. 22.

<sup>200</sup> i.e. Egyptian zirs and jars, Egyptian cups, MB dipper juglets, see for their developments K. KOPETZKY, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XX*, 61, 88, 98, 170, 226.

<sup>201</sup> Tomb 42. I thank C. Doumet-Serhal for this information.

<sup>202</sup> P.E. GUIGES, *BMB II* (1938), fig. 67/d.

<sup>203</sup> P.E. GUIGES, *BMB II* (1938), figs. 77/p, s.

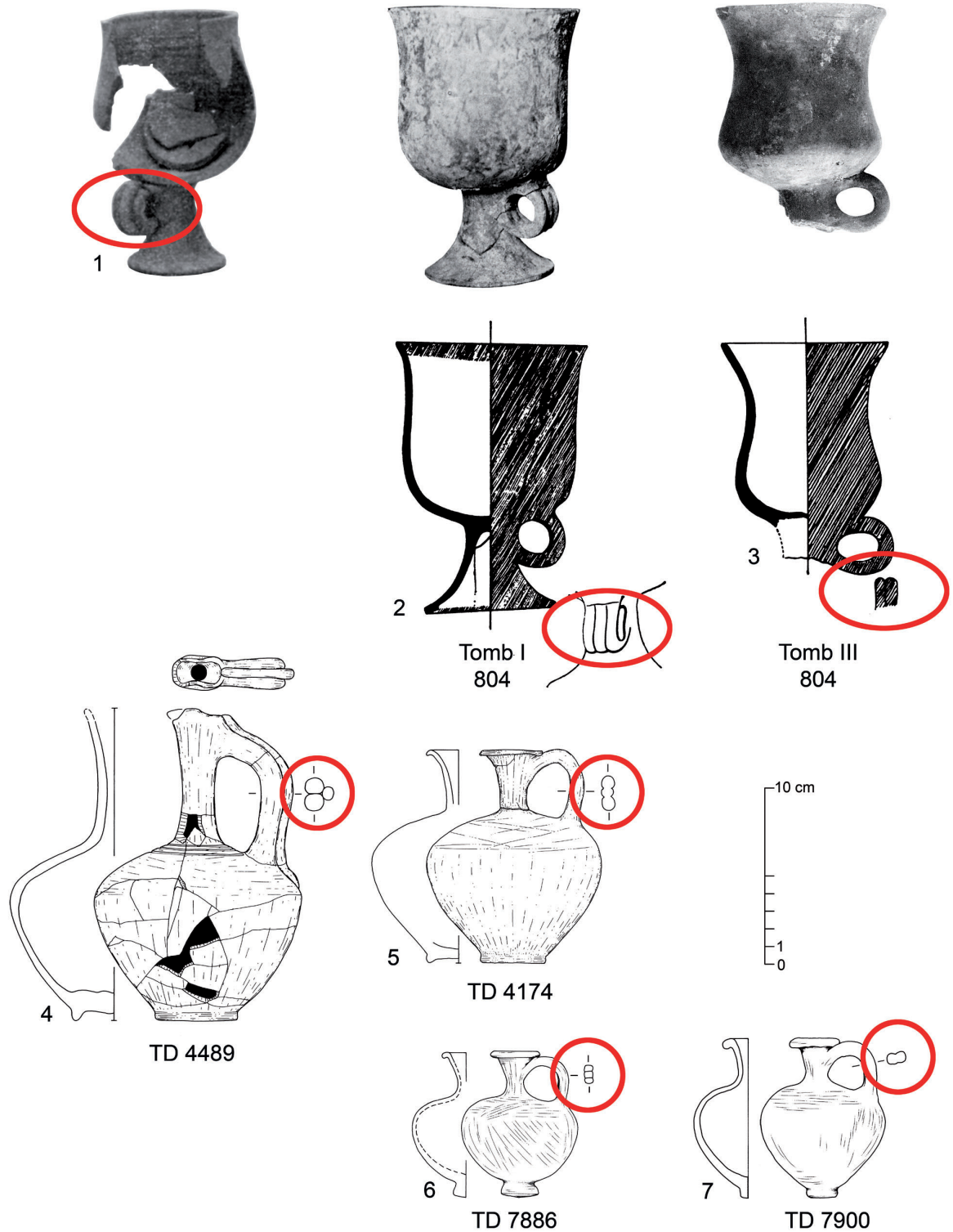
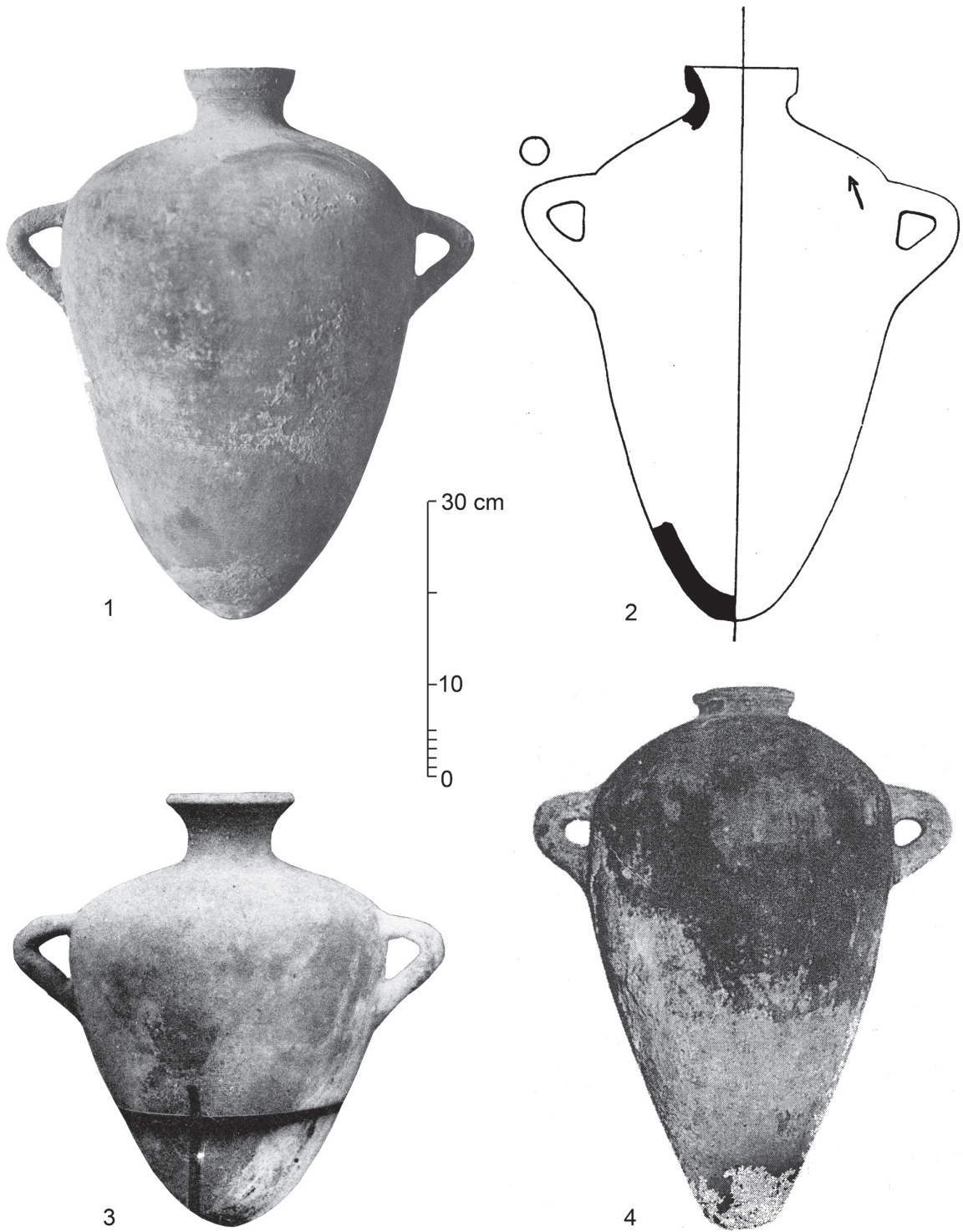


Fig. 38 Goblets: 1. Sin el Fil (after CHEHAB 1939, fig. 2a), 2. Byblos Tomb I (804, photo after VIROLLEAUD 1922, pl. LXII/3; drawing after TUFNELL 1969, fig. 5/48); 3. Byblos tomb III (804, photo after MONTET 1928, pl. CXVII; drawing after TUFNELL 1969, fig. 5/49), 4. Tell el-Dab'a no. 4489, 5. Tell el-Dab'a no. 4174, 6. Tell el-Dab'a no. 7886 (drawing with the courtesy of I. HEIN), 7. Tell el-Dab'a no. 7900 (drawing with the courtesy of I. HEIN)



791

Fig. 39 Canaanite storage jars from Byblos: 1. Tomb I (791, after VIROLLEAUD 1922, pl. LXIII), 2. (791, after TUFNELL 1969, fig. 6/54), 3. (791, after MONTET 1928, pl. CXXIV/upper row, first from left), 4. (791, after MONTET 1928, pl. CXVIII).

from Ruweise. All three date to the transitional MB IIA/B and early MB IIB periods, with the latter probably being in use until the early Hyksos phases.

Six high footed goblets with loop handles at the connection between the foot and the body (804) were retrieved from all three tombs.<sup>204</sup> Although these vessels are very rare in MB contexts, it seems possible to establish a typological development. The wall of the goblet from Tomb I (Figs. 38/2, 42)<sup>205</sup> is not as curvy as the one from Tomb III (Figs. 38/3, 44).<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, it has a triple handle, where the individual straps are attached in one line, a feature found on juglets in Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> not before and mainly during Ph. E/3 (Figs. 38/5, 6). Earlier, during the late MB IIA (Ph. G/1–3) and transitional MB IIA/B (Ph. F), triple handles were organised as a double strap handle with the third strap set in the gap in between (Fig. 38/4). Such a handle was attached to a goblet found inside the *tomb phénicienne* in Sin el Fil (Fig. 38/1).<sup>207</sup> The body there has a more compact and closed shape than the Byblos examples. As mentioned above, the material from that tomb has an early MB IIA burial phase and a transitional MB II/A/B to very early MB IIB phase. It seems that the goblet came from the latter and is thus slightly older than the pieces from Tomb I. The goblet from Tomb III seems to be, like the above-mentioned beakers, slimmer and more elongated and was equipped with a double handle, which again seems to be a later feature for this type of vessel. While quintuple and triple strap handles are to be found at jugs and juglets dating to the later MB IIA and very early MB IIB at Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup>, during the second half of the MB IIB only strap

and double handles (Fig. 38/7) existed. The latter are absent in the pottery repertoire of Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> from the second half of the Hyksos period onwards. Due to these features, the author would like to date the goblet from Tomb III younger than the one from Tomb I.

Bowls with incurved rims, as drawn by Tufnell,<sup>208</sup> are already known from the MB IIA,<sup>209</sup> but they are much more common during the MB IIB and C periods (Fig. 43).

A large amount of Canaanite storage jars (791), about ten pieces per chamber, were found inside all three tombs. The bulk of these storage jars have either folded and nearly triangular rims (Fig. 39/2)<sup>210</sup> or elongated and folded ones (Figs. 39/1, 42).<sup>211</sup> The latter are typical for the region between Byblos and Sidon during the main part of the MB II period.<sup>212</sup> They are attested for the Tombs I<sup>213</sup> and II,<sup>214</sup> where they were the dominant rim shape. Jars with this rim type made the bulk of the imported storage jars to Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> during the MB IIA, most likely coming from the Byblos region.<sup>215</sup> Several of these examples reached the Nile delta also during the MB IIB period. With their distinctive piriform body shape, their triangular handles and their small bases the depicted examples from these tombs fit more into the later part of the MB period.<sup>216</sup> In opposite, storage jars from the Lebanese coast south of Tripolis dating into the MB IIA do have more ovoid bodies with broader bases.<sup>217</sup> The smaller jars from the Byblos tombs with their rolled or trimmed rims (Fig. 39/3)<sup>218</sup> fit better into the later MB IIB and C repertoire. At least one of them was found inside Tomb II.<sup>219</sup> The rest,<sup>220</sup> however, might originate

<sup>204</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CVII/804.

<sup>205</sup> C. VIROLLEAUD, *Syria III* (1922), pl. LXII/3.

<sup>206</sup> P. MONTET, *Monuments et Mémoires* 27 (1924), fig. 23.

<sup>207</sup> M. CHERHAB, *Tombe Phénicienne de Sin el Fil*, fig. 2a.

<sup>208</sup> O. TUFNELL, *Berytus* 18 (1969), figs. 3/17–28.

<sup>209</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XX*, 185f.

<sup>210</sup> O. TUFNELL, *Berytus* 18 (1969), figs. 6/54–57.

<sup>211</sup> C. VIROLLEAUD, *Syria* 3 (1922), pl. LXIII.

<sup>212</sup> H. GENZ, *Berytus* 53–54 (2010–2011), figs. 11, 12/5–7. R. SAIDAH, *Berytus* 41 (1993–1994), pls. 7, 8 – MBIIA; P.E. GUIGES, *BMB II* (1938), figs. 63, 77/a, 86, 87.

<sup>213</sup> C. VIROLLEAUD, *Syria* 3 (1922), pl. LXIII/5.

<sup>214</sup> P. MONTET, *Monuments et Mémoires* 27 (1924), fig. 22.

<sup>215</sup> For those imports, see A. COHEN-WEINBERGER and Y. GOREN, *Á&L* 14 (2004), tab. 1. The Byblos imports are to be found under group B3.

<sup>216</sup> Similar triangular handles, but still a less pronounced shoulder see: P.E. GUIGES, *BMB II* (1938), fig. 77/a.

<sup>217</sup> R. SCHIESTL, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XVIII*, figs. 281/4; 338/18. H. GENZ, *Berytus* 53–54 (2013), fig. 11. R. SAIDAH, *Berytus* 41 (1993–1994), pl. 8. P.E. GUIGES, *BMB II* (1938), figs. 49/a; 63.

<sup>218</sup> O. TUFNELL, *Berytus* 18 (1969), fig. 6/53.

<sup>219</sup> P. MONTET, *Monuments et Mémoires* 27 (1924), fig. 22, the first on the left.

<sup>220</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CXVI/791. These are either identical with the pieces shown on pl. CXXIV/upper row, first and second from left, or the latter are two different vessels.





Fig. 40 Metal bowls: 1. Byblos Tomb I (748, after VIROLLEAUD 1922, pl. XLIV; drawing idem, fig. 5/11). 2. Mycenae Schachtgrab V (after MATTHÄUS 1980, pl. 75/7)

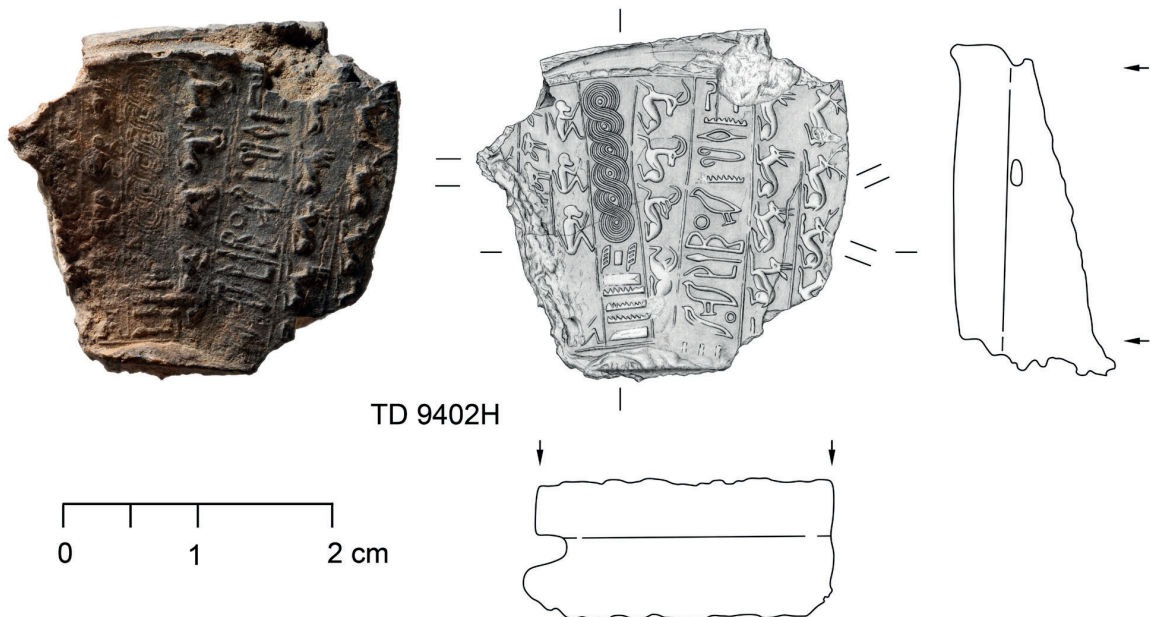


Fig. 41 Seal impression from Tell el-Dab'a no. 9402H (after KOPETZKY and BIETAK 2016, fig. 3)

from Tomb III. It is possible that a piriform example with a possible nail-head rim<sup>221</sup> and a very small base (Figs. 39/4, 42) also comes from this tomb.<sup>222</sup> Generally, it has been noted that over time the bases of Canaanite storage jars have the tendency to get smaller the later they appear in the MB II period.

### Possible Cretan Origin

In Tomb I (748) (Fig. 40/1)<sup>223</sup> and possibly also in Tomb II (749)<sup>224</sup> open silver cups decorated with running and interlocking spirals were found, whose origin of production are an issue in literature.<sup>225</sup> A. MacGillivray sees the so called *Preci-*

<sup>221</sup> According to R. BONFIL, *EI* 23 (1992), these rims appear occasionally for the first time late in the MB IIA and have their main appearance during the MB IIB.

<sup>222</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CXVIII.

<sup>223</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CXI/748.

<sup>224</sup> P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte*, pl. CXIII/749.

<sup>225</sup> For the literature, see F. HÖFLMAYER, *CChEM* 32, 106–108.

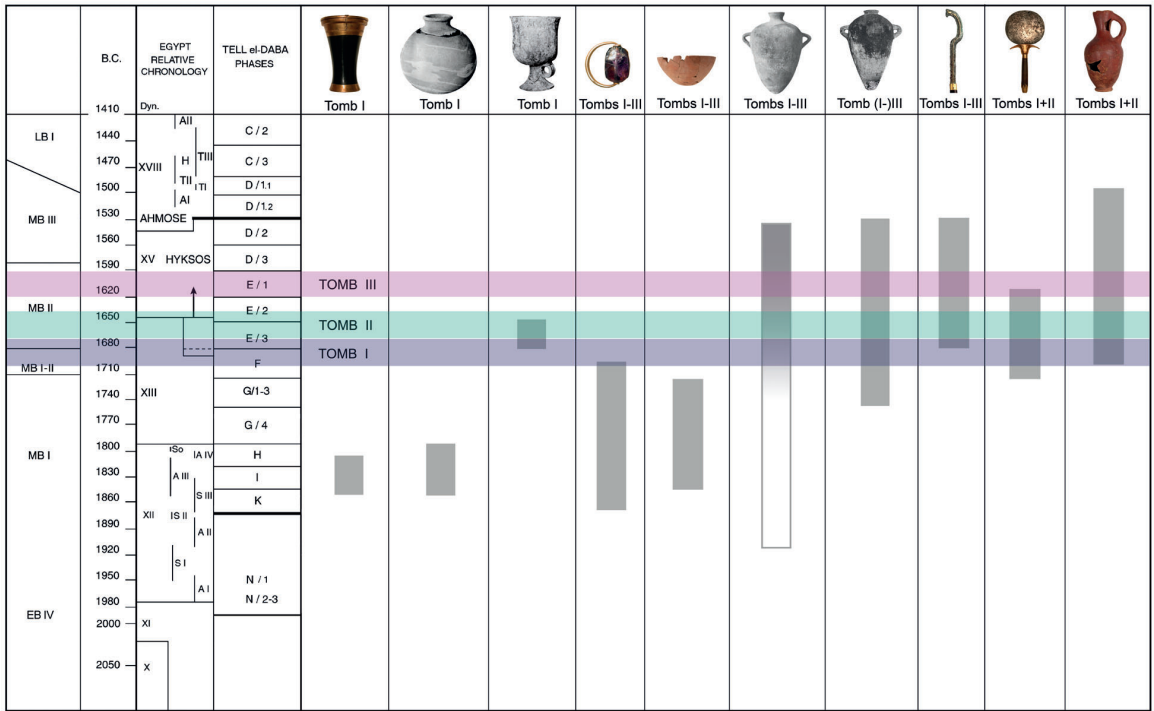


Fig. 42 Distribution of shapes from the Tombs I, II and III related to the Tell el-Dab'a stratigraphy and the historical Egyptian chronology after Kitchen

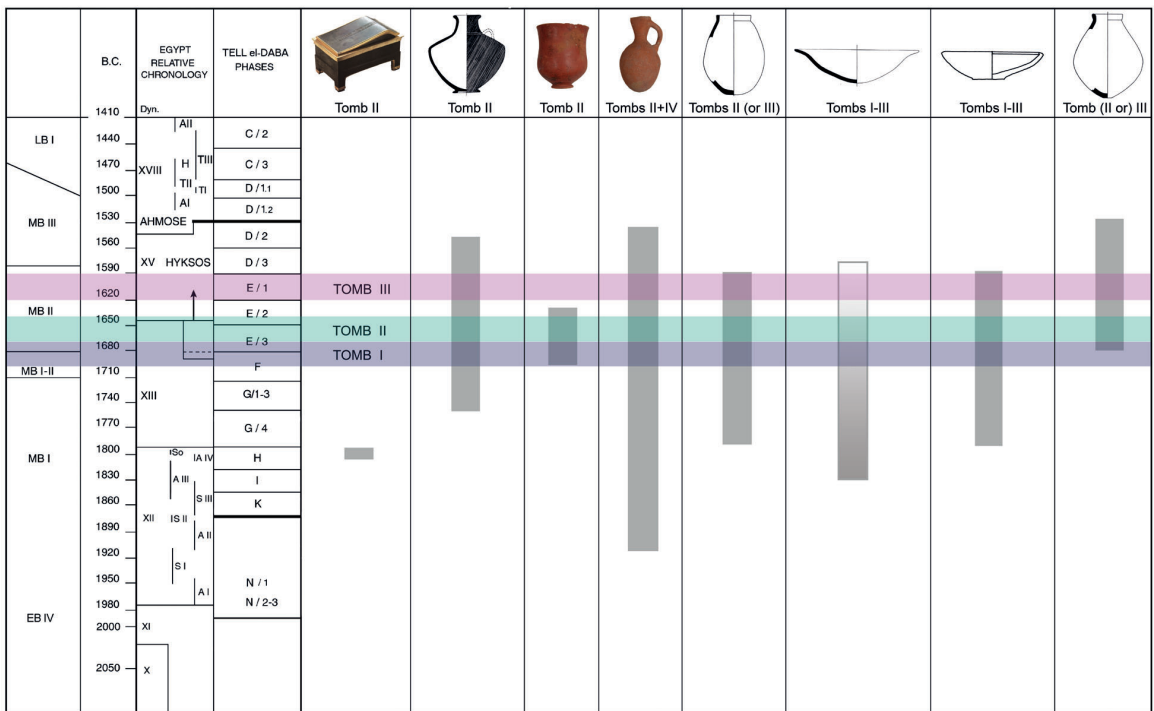


Fig. 43 continue distribution of shapes from the Tombs I, II and III

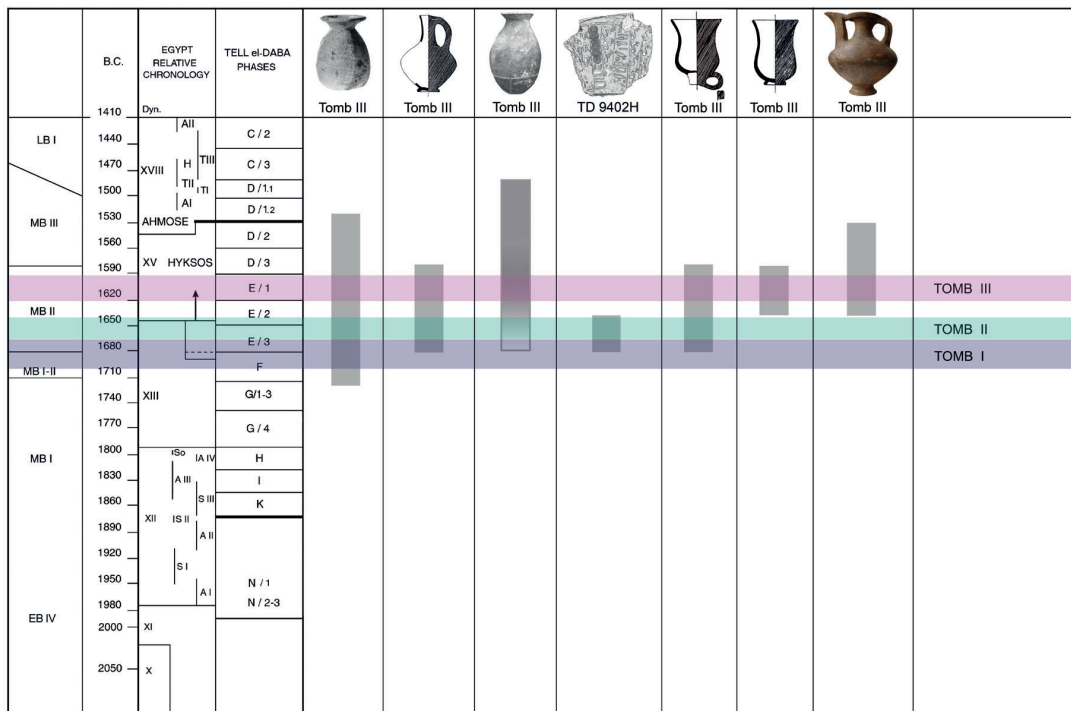


Fig. 44 continue distribution of shapes from the Tombs I, II and III

tion *Stamped Ware*, which he dates into the MM IIB period, as related in design and shape to these vessels.<sup>226</sup> Unfortunately, no similar metal vessel from the MM period has survived. However, from Schachtgrab V in Mycenae comes a golden cup (Fig 40/2),<sup>227</sup> which has a similar decoration as the Byblos piece. According to the pottery found in this tomb, it dates to the LH IB period<sup>228</sup> and is thus younger than the Byblos pieces.

Finally, there exists another link that connected Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> with Byblos, a seal impression naming a “*ruler of Retenw, great chieftain of chieftains, Ipi-shemw, justified*” (Figs. 41, 44).<sup>229</sup> The impression was found in area F/II in a storeroom belonging to a building which was totally destroyed by a massive fire. This building predates an extensive palace of the Hyksos period. Squeezed between luxury items, broken pottery and valuable raw materials, this seal impression of a papyrus indicates that close ties existed between

the ancient cities of Avaris and Byblos during the first half of MB IIB period. The seal impression belongs to the *green Jasper style*, whose production center is said to be located at Byblos.<sup>230</sup> Amongst the pottery material that was associated with this seal impression were several of the above-mentioned dipper juglets with ring bases typical for the Lebanese coast during the MB IIB and C periods. The Egyptian material plus locally made MC III *White Painted Pendant Line Style* juglets<sup>231</sup> put this context into the Phases E/3–E/2 of the Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> stratigraphy. The name *Ipi-shemw* is otherwise only attested in Byblos for the more or less contemporary owner of Tomb II, *Ipi-shemw-Abi*. Whether we are dealing with a diminutive of the latter’s name or a different person, probably closely associated with the reigning family of Byblos, the seal nonetheless stresses the close connection between the northeastern Delta and the region of Byblos during this period.

<sup>226</sup> A. MACGILLIVRAY, *Knossos: Pottery Groups of the Old Palace Period*, 106, pls. 19/437, 83/436–439.

<sup>227</sup> H. MATTHÄUS, *Die Bronzegefäße der kretisch-mykenischen Kultur*, pl. 75/7.

<sup>228</sup> S. DIETZ, *The Argolid at the Transition to the Mycenaean Age*, 248–249.

<sup>229</sup> K. KOPETZKY and M. BIETAK, *Ä&L* 26 (2016), 358–375.

<sup>230</sup> D. COLLON, *FS Porada* 1986; eadem, *AHL* 13 (2001); V. BOSCHLOSS, *From Egypt to Byblos*.

<sup>231</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *BdCE* 25 (2015), 312, fig. 5.

## Summary

In the past the dating of the Royal Tombs I, II and III was based only on the glamorous Egyptian objects found inside these tombs. And again, it were the Egyptian objects, namely *zirs* that caught the attention of the author. In combination with the local MB-pottery and more recent finds at various sites in the Levant and at Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup>, they triggered the revised dating of these tombs. The order of the burials with Tomb I being the oldest and Tomb III the youngest has not changed, however, a dating at the beginning of the MB IIB period for Tomb I, contemporary with Ph. E/3 of Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup>, Tomb II slightly younger contemporary to Ph. E/3–2 and Tomb III somewhere in the Hyksos period between the Ph. E/2 to D/3 should be considered for these burials. This dating would imply that these tombs were constructed after the end of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt. We know from the way their owners, very likely the rulers of Byblos, were buried that they had a strong affinity towards the Egyptian way of life and afterlife.<sup>232</sup> Connections between Byblos and Egypt go back to the early Old Kingdom<sup>233</sup> and very likely even further.<sup>234</sup> The earliest Middle Kingdom material found at Byblos are the scarabs from the famous “Montet jar”, which D. Ben-Tor dates “*within the range of the early Middle Kingdom, somewhere during the late 11<sup>th</sup>–mid 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty*”,<sup>235</sup> although the youngest material found in this jar are currently still the cylinder seals which were dated by E. Porada into the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>236</sup> Chronologically, the next archaeological evidences for contacts to Byblos are found at Ezbet Rushdi in the shape of Levantine Painted Ware juglets.<sup>237</sup> Those come from a settlement that dates very likely to the period of Amenemhet II.<sup>238</sup> The latter seems to be responsible for a renewed exchange trade between Egypt and the Levant as he himself gave account

of in his famous Mit Rahina inscription.<sup>239</sup> E. Marcus’s in depth study of this text<sup>240</sup> showed the varieties and the geographical distributions of Egypt’s possible Levantine trading partners during that period. Judging from a text of the period of Senwosret III it is not certain if Byblos was the main trading partner of Egypt during the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>241</sup> This text from the Tomb of Khnumhotep III at Dahshur refers to a military conflict between Ullaza and Byblos, where Egypt’s authority was asked by the former to intervene, thus implicating that Egypt was the most powerful state in the Eastern Mediterranean and that Ullaza might have been Egypt’s main trading partner for timber at this time.<sup>242</sup> It seems that Egypt’s demands for timber and other raw and crafted materials kept the economies of the Eastern Mediterranean flourishing. Assured evidence of imports from the Byblos region to Egypt appears again with the settling of Canaanites at Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> (Ph. H) during the later reign of Amenemhat III and his successors.<sup>243</sup> These people brought *Levantine Painted Wares*, hand-made flat-bottomed cooking pots, dipper juglets and Canaanite storage jars with them, of which a significant amount might origin from Byblos. At Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> imports from Byblos were found until the end of the Hyksos period, although the bulk of them reached the site during the later MB IIA period, the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>244</sup>

The decline of the Middle Kingdom was not a rapid but rather a gradual process, as can be seen in the material culture of the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasties.<sup>245</sup> Finally in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty *Iti-tawy*, the capital of the Middle Kingdom (near modern Lisht), ceased to be the administrative centre for the whole country. In the following the trade with the Eastern Mediterranean dropped dramatically.<sup>246</sup> This seems to have happened during Ph. F of Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup>. More or less

<sup>232</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *BAAL Hors Série X*.

<sup>233</sup> W. HELCK, *Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien*, 21.

<sup>234</sup> U. HARTUNG *et al.*, *Ä&L* 25 (21015). It is very likely that amongst the several hundred imported vessels found in Tomb UJ at Abydos pieces from Byblos will be identified.

<sup>235</sup> D. BEN-TOR, The Absolute Date of the Montet Jar Scarabs, 12.

<sup>236</sup> E. PORADA, *Syria* 43 (1966), 257.

<sup>237</sup> T. BAGH, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XXIII*, Fig. 6. For the petrography, see A. COHEN-WEINBERGER and Y. GOREN, *Ä&L* 14 (2004), tab. 1.

<sup>238</sup> For the dating, see E. CZERNY, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XXII*, 2015.

<sup>239</sup> See H. ALTENMÜLLER and A.M. MOUSSA, *SAK* 18 (1991), 1–48.

<sup>240</sup> E.S. MARCUS, *Ä&L* 17 (2007), 137–190.

<sup>241</sup> J.P. ALLEN, *BASOR* 352, 32–37.

<sup>242</sup> J.P. ALLEN, *BASOR* 352, 37.

<sup>243</sup> A. COHEN-WEINBERGER and Y. GOREN, *Ä&L* 14 (2004), tab. 1.

<sup>244</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XX*, fig. 66, IV-1.

<sup>245</sup> Until today small finds of the early 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty are not distinguishable from the ones of the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, while pottery traditions kept their Middle Kingdom features way into the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

<sup>246</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XX*, fig. 52.



at the same time another important power in the Levant, the city of Mari was destroyed by the Babylonians. The forfeiture of such a powerful and influential city state in the region together with an economically declining Egypt must have led to a shift in the balance of powers in the region. A shift that is clearly visible amongst the various city states in the Levant.

Keeping in mind that we are still lacking the tomb of the rulers of Byblos from the MB IIA period, we nevertheless witness that at the beginning of the MB IIB period they had adopted Egyptian burial customs and afterlife ideas and integrated them into their political and religious view of the world.<sup>247</sup> Very quickly they recognised the emerging political and economical vacuum which the end of the Middle Kingdom created in the Eastern Mediterranean and thus stepped in as the ideological heirs to the Egyptian Crown in the area, usurping the power which Egypt had once exerted over this region.

There exists however another phenomenon that is well known to Egyptologists working at the southern frontiers of the Middle Kingdom. In Nubia the people of the so-called C-group stubbornly kept to their own burial traditions as long as Egyptian sovereignty over this region was intact. The moment the Egyptians retreated from this area the C-group people – like the Byblians – integrated Egyptian burial customs into their local traditions. It was Stefan Seidlmayer who remarked for the First Intermediate Period in Egypt, a time when the central administration over the whole country had collapsed, that although ancient Egyptian literature conveys the impression that the whole country had dissolved into decline and chaos, archaeology presents a somehow different picture of individual provinces flourishing under the leadership of their local rulers both in artistic as well as economic terms once the tight fist of the centralised administration exerted from the capital had ceased.<sup>248</sup>

The wealth of the Royal Tombs attests to the prosperity of Byblos during the second half of the MB period. It is possible that during this time a flourishing market for Egyptian and Egyptianising objects developed in Byblos. High quality objects might have come on the one hand from looted tombs in Egypt and on the other from local pro-

duction to satisfy the demands of customers near and far. Some of the Egyptian objects were altered for the local and wider market. This happened either in Byblos or already back in Egypt or at both places. For Egypt, the site of Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> presents itself as an ideal candidate to eliminate any signs of former ownership from looted objects. Being very likely Egypt's most important harbour to the Eastern Mediterranean since the Middle Kingdom, the craftsmen and traders in the city had the required knowledge, skills and contacts to customise the looted goods to the tastes of foreign buyers and the means to ship them abroad. This happened at a time when the decline in imports also started to effect the inhabitants of Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> at the beginning of the MB IIB period.<sup>249</sup> It seems that the people tried to substitute their economical losses by dealing with looted objects.

Other Egyptian objects found during that period further inland and in Syria were clearly redesigned in the Levant, such as the famous sceptre of Hotep-ib-Ra in Ebla, which was found inside the tomb of the "Lord of the goats".<sup>250</sup> Byblos with its intimate knowledge of the Egyptian culture seemed to be a likely candidate for the production of these Egyptianising objects, as can be seen also in the Royal Tombs. In many ways these tombs reflect the political and economic situation in the northern Levant during the second half of the Middle Bronze Age.

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<sup>247</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *BAAL Hors Series X* (2015), 393–412.

<sup>248</sup> S. SEIDLMEYER, *SAGA* 1, 440f.

<sup>249</sup> K. KOPETZKY, *Tell el-Dab<sup>a</sup> XX*, 175, Fig. 52.

<sup>250</sup> H. Sader mentioned at a MB conference in Beirut 2010 that similar sceptres have appeared on the antiquities market in the Beqaa Valley.

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