

IV. LEVANTINE PAINTED WARE AND RELATED POTTERY FROM OTHER SITES IN EGYPT

Examples of Levantine Painted Ware were first found in Egypt by Flinders Petrie at Kahun more than a hundred years ago. He grouped them with other painted fragments of Kamares Ware from Crete and Egyptian imitations of this type of import, recognising it all as foreign.¹⁶⁵ Petrie stated that all came from the rubbish heaps dating from the reign of Senwosret II, a date which has since been contested, as the site was apparently inhabited right into the beginning of Dynasty XIII.¹⁶⁶ In the 1940s a complete LPW dipper jug was subsequently found at Kôm el-Hisn by Abdel Hamada and Shafik Farid who published a detailed drawing, but, unfortunately, the context was even more uncertain than at Kahun. In 1973 Robert Merrillees collected what he termed Syrian pottery from Middle Kingdom Egypt including the Kahun examples together with two fine jugs from Lisht, one a good parallel to the LPW dipper from Kôm el-Hisn. Although they were found in connection with the pyramid of Amenemhat I the exact date again eluded us. All this material, however, naturally gains new importance when viewed against all the material from Tell el-Dab^a found in controlled stratified contexts. In addition to this, examples, albeit more fragmentary, from Tell Edfu and Elephantine in the very south of Egypt, can now be added to the corpus of LPW imports found in Egypt.

Levantine Painted Ware from these sites north to south, Kôm el-Hisn, Lisht, Kahun, Tell Edfu and Elephantine, is discussed below.

SITES WITH LEVANTINE PAINTED WARE

Kôm el-Hisn (Fig. 30a)

Kôm el-Hisn is located close to the western edge of the Nile Delta between Cairo and Alexandria, today

about 13km west of the Rosetta branch of the Nile. In Antiquity a branch of the Nile was probably nearer to the site and even the Mediterranean coastline now 90km away would have been closer.¹⁶⁷ Kôm el-Hisn was most extensively settled during the Old Kingdom Dynasties IV-VI¹⁶⁸ and subsequently burials of the First Intermediate period were performed here. Later during the Middle and New Kingdom periods the site was still occupied and from the New Kingdom it was the capital of the 3rd Lower Egyptian Nome, known as the 'Libyan or Western Nome'.

A. Hamada and S. Farid excavated literally hundreds of tombs in the 1940s. Unfortunately their publication is only very rudimentary¹⁶⁹ and most of the tombs seem to postdate the Old Kingdom.¹⁷⁰ During these excavations a complete LPW dipper surfaced,¹⁷¹ but regrettably the context is not clear. The investigations in the 1990s by R.J. Wenke and his team have largely dealt with the Old Kingdom settlement, although deposits of Dynasty XIII as well as evidence of the early Dynasty XII have now turned up; unfortunately there seems to be no evidence of more MB pottery¹⁷² that might indicate a date for MB imports to the site and for the jug Fig. 30a.

The LPW dipper jug from Kôm el-Hisn

The dipper from Kôm el-Hisn Fig. 30a is of the large, coarse type with monochrome alternating horizontal bands and wavy bands also known from, especially, Lisht and Byblos. The body is large and ovoid with a tapering small flat base so the jug cannot stand. The relatively short neck widens from the collar and the mouth is a pinched trefoil; the handle round.¹⁷³ The fairly coarse surface is beige with possible traces of original burnish. Lime inclusions are observed and the fabric is no doubt of a common MB type compa-

¹⁶⁵ PETRIE 1891, 9; pl. I: 'Aegean pottery, Kahun, XII Dyn.'.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. below in text, also for the following.

¹⁶⁷ WENKE 1999 for an overview of the site.

¹⁶⁸ CAGLE 2003.

¹⁶⁹ HAMADA and FARID 1947.

¹⁷⁰ HAMADA and FARID 1947, 195 dated the tombs to the 2nd Int., but already BRUNTON 1947, 143–145 contested this and dated most of them to the 1st Int.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, fig. 15.

¹⁷² C. Kirby, personal communication, has kindly provided the information and referred to the fact that the earlier work by R. Wenke had also revealed pottery of an early Dynasty XII date, from a borehole survey, cf. KIRBY *et al.* 1998.

¹⁷³ The jug was photographed in 1997, thanks to the former director of the Cairo Museum Mohamed Saleh and his staff.

rable to LPW from Tell el-Dab^{ca}. The decoration is monochrome red, a wavy band-zone on the mid-body with a band-zone B below and above. Below the collar is an additional wavy band and two bands at the collar and lower neck.

The Kôm el Hisn jug can only be dated with caution to the early Middle Kingdom as the excavators claimed that it was “from the rubbish in a higher level than that of the burials”,¹⁷⁴ being tombs of the 1st Int. (cf. above). The fact that the jug is preserved complete would point towards a tomb context and it cannot be excluded that it was either stolen from a tomb and abandoned, or was possibly an offering outside a tomb. Even without an exact context for the jug it is interesting to note that the site of Kôm el Hisn provides good parallels to some of the material found in the Montet Jar: gold *uraei* on a basket (*nb* sign) and scarabs, material that made William Ward suggest that the trade with Byblos at the end of the 3rd millennium went via Kôm el Hisn.¹⁷⁵ In addition, a fenestrated axe, the type of Levantine axe antedating the duckbill variety, was present at this site as well as a single veined dagger with a crescent-shaped pommel.¹⁷⁶

Lisht (Fig. 30b–d)

The site of Lisht, or el-Lisht, is about 65km south of Cairo on the western side of the Nile and close to the entrance to the Fayum area. It was chosen as the burial place for the first kings of Dynasty XII, Amenemhat I and Senwosret I. Their pyramid fields, especially Senwosret I's, copied their Old Kingdom ancestors and around them their queens and courtiers were buried. They chose a site far north of Thebes where their predecessors had been buried and south of the traditional pyramid field connected to the ancient capital of Memphis. This has traditionally, and reasonably so, been linked to the written evidence of the establishment of the new capital *Itj-Tawy* which must have been founded in the vicinity.¹⁷⁷ No direct archaeological verification of this has, however,

been discovered, apart from a “suburban” village-like settlement close to Lisht.¹⁷⁸

LPW from Lisht

The most interesting example of LPW from Lisht is a dipper jug (Fig. 30b) very similar to the specimen from Kôm el-Hisn but for its slightly smaller size. It was first published by R. Merrillees¹⁷⁹ who described the fabric as stuffed with white and grey grits, i.e. lime, as well what he saw as organic matter and mica.¹⁸⁰ The body is ovoid with a tapering lower part and a small flat base. The handle is round and attached a little below the pinched rim. The surface is burnished orange-buff with monochrome red decoration: the same type of wavy band-zone on the mid-body with band-zones B below and above like the Kôm el-Hisn jug Fig. 30a. At the collar/shoulder junction another wavy band-zone is visible and on the lower neck four bands, a slight variation of the Kôm el-Hisn jug.

A red burnished long-necked jug was found together with the painted dipper (Fig. 30c).¹⁸¹ It is not painted, but the shape is globular with a bilobate mouth and very similar to the LPW long-necked jugs from the Levant.¹⁸²

Both jugs were found in North Pyramid Tomb 756, lower north chamber (B); the ‘North Pyramid’ being the tomb of Amenemhat I. Tomb 756, nonetheless, seems to date from a later period when the related Egyptian pottery is taken into consideration. It includes a large beer jar and hemispherical cups from the middle of Dynasty XII, at about the time of the reigns of Senwosret II and III.¹⁸³

Another painted fragment (Fig. 30d) is recognised as from the fill on the west side of the Pyramid of Amenemhat I.¹⁸⁴ It may be from a similar, band-painted dipper as it displays a monochrome red band-zone B.¹⁸⁵ The date is unfortunately uncertain.¹⁸⁶ A rim fragment of a ‘semi-closed bowl’ with applied rope decoration and no painted decoration has been published

¹⁷⁴ HAMADA and FARID 1947, 198.

¹⁷⁵ WARD 1971, 55–56.

¹⁷⁶ HAMADA and FARID 1947, pl. LVI.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. for example HÖLZL 1999.

¹⁷⁸ F. ARNOLD 1996.

¹⁷⁹ MERRILLEES 1973, 53–54; fig. 4 down left.

¹⁸⁰ Dung and mica are common inclusions of Egyptian Nile clay, but it is very unlikely that the jug would be an Egyptian imitation. The jug MM15.3 1581 was studied in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in March 2010 thanks to Associate Curator Adela Oppenheim.

¹⁸¹ MERRILLEES 1973, fig. 4 down right.

¹⁸² The jug is now in Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago, OIM 28056, where it was studied in March 2010 with the kind help of Assistant Registrar Susan Alison.

¹⁸³ ARNOLD, ARNOLD and ALLEN 1995, 17–18, figs. 2; 6.1; 7.

¹⁸⁴ KEMP and MERRILLEES 1980, pl. 3, 1st row left.

¹⁸⁵ The fragment was studied in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in March 2010 thanks to Associate Curator Isabel Stuenkel.

¹⁸⁶ More LPW and MB imports from Lisht will be published by J. Bourriau, personal communication. Cf. also F. ARNOLD 1996, 2 mentioning imports from “MB IIA” Palestine.

from a robber's tunnel in the pyramid. It was cautiously dated in relation to the Pyramid of Amenemhat I, but a later date was not excluded.¹⁸⁷

Kahun (Fig. 30e–h)

The planned town associated with the Pyramid Field of Senwosret II at Illahun or Lahun is commonly known as Kahun.¹⁸⁸ It was inhabited until some time during Dynasty XIII¹⁸⁹ and finds can therefore often only be dated roughly to a time from Senwosret II's reign and into Dynasty XIII.

Kind

LPW from Kahun

Petrie published a page of watercolour images of what he termed 'Aegean pottery'¹⁹⁰ and in general described as foreign. At least three of the fragmentary vessels, which were also grouped by Petrie as of the same type, belong to the LPW class and a fourth seems to be related.¹⁹¹ They were all four later recognised as part of the 'Syrian Pottery from Middle Kingdom Egypt' published by Merrillees¹⁹² and they can now be considered as among the LPW vessels that were imported into Egypt.¹⁹³

The best-preserved example (Fig. 30g) from 'rubbish heaps' is a slender dipper missing part of the rim. The base is flat, the handle round and the rim was probably pinched.¹⁹⁴ The fabric is coarse with abundant lime and the surface horizontally combed, most clearly seen on the lower part. The decoration is now almost black, but it may have originally been dark reddish brown. On the mid-body is a broad band, below it a band-zone B and above a band-zone A with darker borders. On the upper shoulder, collar and neck additional bands are noted. The coarseness and simple band decoration on the lower part recall a base fragment from 'Ezbet Rushdi (Fig. 15k) and one from Elephantine (EZN2545, cf. below).

Another fragment from 'rubbish heaps' (Fig. 30f) is from the shoulder of another jug with part of a

double handle preserved. The neck is narrow and the walls very thick and the vessel was possibly rather a long-necked jug than a dipper. Again lime is clearly seen on the more orange surface with a possible slip. The decoration may be bichrome or dark and light reddish brown with a band-zone A below the handle on the shoulder and a dark collarette with an additional band above. With the thick wall, double handle and narrow neck it is most similar to, for example, the two long-necked jugs from Sidon (Fig. 68e, f) and the one from Megadim (Fig. 52e). The orange surface and thick wall are also similar to those of the large bichrome shoulder fragment from Megadim (Fig. 52f).

The neck with a double handle of a long-necked jug (Fig. 30e) was found in the 'town'. The rim is bilobate and with two ridges below the rim. Abundant lime is visible on the rough surface and possibly vertical burnish. The decoration of this vessel is also 'dark' bands on the neck and rim. The middle part of the neck is without bands and on the lower part they cover the collar as well. The upper part seems to display a wavy band-zone just below the upper handle attachment followed by more bands up to the rim. This is again similar to Fig. 52e from Megadim but coarser and with a somewhat narrower upper part of the neck.

The last painted vessel is also from the 'town' and in this case with a lighter surface, possibly a slip (Fig. 30h). Only the ovoid body with a very small, flat, pointed base is preserved and it may have been of the dipper type as the neck opening is relatively wide. The decoration is somewhat unusual with four band-zones C with very broad black bands bordering a smaller red one at the collar, shoulder, mid-body and below. No parallels are readily apparent, but the general coarseness and relatively thick walls are consistent with the other mentioned LPW vessels from Kahun although the light surface and painted decoration are different also with the clear bichrome colours.

¹⁸⁷ ARNOLD, ARNOLD and ALLEN 1995, 16–17; figs. 6.1 and 7.

¹⁸⁸ According to Petrie an old man first told him this name and so he stuck to it, PETRIE and BRUNTON 1924 (I). QUIRKE 2005, 1 refers to it as a 'mistake'.

¹⁸⁹ KEMP and MERRILLEES 1980, 88–89; 102 discussed the date and more recently QUIRKE 2005, 40–42; 71–72.

¹⁹⁰ PETRIE 1891, 9–10; pl. I; Petrie explains that by 'Aegean' he means 'the Greek islands, and the coast of Peloponnesos and Asia Minor, without the limitations of places and age implied in the Greek name.' The Minoan and the Egyptian imitations were studied by KEMP and MERRILLEES 1980 and

also FITTON *et al.* 1998, including an NAA study. Cf. also QUIRKE 2005, 91–93.

¹⁹¹ PETRIE 1891, pl. I.11 (Fig. 30f); 16 (Fig. 30g); 19 (Fig. 30e) show LPW, cf. *ibid.* 10; pl. I.22 (Fig. 30h) is at least related, but not mentioned by Petrie.

¹⁹² MERRILLEES 1973, nos. 1–4.

¹⁹³ Curator Julie Anderson at the British Museum very kindly sent me colour photos of the vessels and I was allowed to study them in June 2009.

¹⁹⁴ As the pinched part is the more delicate it is always more ready to break.

Unfortunately it is not possible to date the LPW vessels from the 'rubbish heap' and 'town' to the time of Senwosret II with certainty or even shortly after his death, although it sounds most plausible that imports reached the settlement during this primary period of use.

Tell Edfu

Fragments of three LPW vessels have been identified from the excavations of Tell Edfu. Edfu was the capital of the second Upper Egyptian nome and the preserved part of the tell next to the Ptolemaic temple of Horus displays layers from the Old Kingdom till Early Islamic times. The French Institute in Cairo (IFAO) first excavated Tell Edfu from 1921 and in 1937–1939 a Franco-Polish team took over.¹⁹⁵ They concentrated on the upper layers with Early Islamic, Byzantine and Graeco-Roman remains and Old and Middle Kingdom cemeteries in the western and southwestern part of the site. The present project under direction of Nadine Moeller¹⁹⁶ was initiated in 2001 with a survey in order to gain an up-dated overview of the site. Excavations since 2005 have revealed an area with large silos from Dynasty XVII below which part of a columned hall has been exposed. The latter belonged to an important administrative building in Dynasty XIII dated by pottery and the discovery of many clay sealings.¹⁹⁷

*LPW from Tell Edfu (no Figs.)*¹⁹⁸

One of the LPW vessels from Tell Edfu was a bichrome long-necked jug having a black crisscross zone with a red band above and below as well as an additional black band further below. Fragments of the body are preserved, but the shoulder, neck and handle etc. are missing so it is not known whether the jug exhibited more decoration on these parts as is the case, for example, with the long-necked jug from Tel Nami (Fig. 51d), the best parallel to the Tell Edfu jug. Another fragmentary LPW vessel appeared from the same context as the bichrome long-necked jug, the

base of a band-painted dipper with a red band-zone B. The jug had a typical small flat base not made for standing and parallels are readily found for example from Aphek (Fig. 37e; g), Megadim (Fig. 52h), Kabri (Fig. 55e) and Beirut (Fig. 74g) as well as probably a base part from 'Ezbet Rushdi (Fig. 15m) and EZN2545 from Elephantine.

Another example also comprises fragments from a typical LPW vessel with monochrome red decoration of a spiral-zone with a band-zone B above and possibly also one below, as this part is not preserved. Three fragments exhibit the painted decoration and two additional burnished pieces almost certainly belong to the same vessel from the ring base and lower body. The vessel was thus most probably also a long-necked jug like the first example and the long-necked jug from Megadim (Fig. 52e) is a good parallel.¹⁹⁹ Another possibility is to identify the vessel as a handleless jar since the motif of spirals/concentric circles is also common on this vessel type in different variations, such as, for example, seen on a jar from Majdalouna (Fig. 73a), also with band-zone(s) above. This type of vessel, however, does not commonly have a ring base.²⁰⁰

Moeller dates all three of the LPW examples to the very late Dynasty XII or beginning of Dynasty XIII.²⁰¹ The long-necked jug with a bichrome crisscross motif was found together with the band-painted dipper on the abandonment layer of the columned hall. Between the columns, along the sides of the hall, a lot of rubbish had accumulated, such as pottery, small finds and animal bones. One of the pieces was found in 2007 in the currently exposed northeast corner of the building and the other one under Silo 303 towards the south.²⁰² The fragments with spiral motif were found in the foundation trench fill of Silo 405.²⁰³ The trench was dug into late Middle Kingdom layers, and the material was mixed with late Middle Kingdom pottery.

It is an interesting fact that LPW is dated at Tell Edfu to the same time as str. d/2–1 in Area F/I in Tell

¹⁹⁵ HENNE 1924; IDEM 1925; GUÉRAUD 1929; ALLIOT 1933; IDEM 1935; BRUYÈRE 1937; MICHALOWSKI 1938; IDEM 1950.

¹⁹⁶ Nadine Moeller is now Assistant Professor at the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.

¹⁹⁷ MOELLER and FAROUT 2007; MOELLER 2008, 1–5.

¹⁹⁸ Nadine Moeller very kindly sent me photos and information on the examples of LPW from Tell Edfu and allowed me to mention them here. A visit to Tell Edfu in November 2010 moreover confirmed the identification of the fragments as good examples of LPW.

¹⁹⁹ The long-necked jug from Ifshar (missing the neck etc.) Fig. 40a also has a ring base.

²⁰⁰ Fig. 48a from Gesher has a relatively low ring base with notches.

²⁰¹ N. Moeller personal communication. The following description of the find contexts was also very kindly provided by N. Moeller.

²⁰² MOELLER and FAROUT 2007, 15 (plan).

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

el-Dab^{ca}. Two of the examples are, moreover, both of the same general type with more elaborate decoration as known from Tell el-Dab^{ca}/Area F/I and the contexts also correspond. At Tell Edfu LPW is from the phase of occupation of the administrative columned hall and some of the best examples from Tell el-Dab^{ca}/Area F/I are from the foundations of the so-called d/I palace and contemporary with the underlying *Mittelsaal* house. It seems to be the case that the apparently more luxurious versions of imported LPW were used in elite areas at the very end of the Middle Kingdom at both sites. The LPW vessels that arrived at Edfu were most likely imported via Tell el-Dab^{ca} as the main centre receiving Levantine goods, which were subsequently re-distributed from one administrative centre to another. If this is indeed the case the close bonds between north and south of Egypt were still evident at the time of the late Middle Kingdom when Levantine influence is first making an impact in the north. It will be interesting to see how the many clay sealings from Tell Edfu may possibly clarify this impression.

Elephantine

LPW reached as far south as Egypt's southern border to the island of Elephantine near present-day Aswan where three good examples have been noted, all with monochrome red band decoration.²⁰⁴

LPW from Elephantine (no Figs.)

Two fragments belong to a classic burnished LPW dipper jug with a red band-zone A below the lower broken handle attachment. This type with slight vari-

ations is known from many sites including Tell el-Dab^{ca}. In the Levant it is found from Aphek in the south to Ras Shamra in the north and several examples were retrieved in two tombs at Kabri and other jugs are known from Tell Arqa, Byblos and Beirut. The Elephantine fragments were unearthed in a house belonging to stratum XIV dated to the time from Senwosret I to Senwosret III. This is unfortunately not a very exact dating, but nevertheless within the expected time frame.

Another fragment is from the shoulder of a jug with red horizontal bands of varied thickness, possibly a band-zone B. The ware is coarser than the fragments just-mentioned and there are no traces of burnishing. This fragment was found in a context dated to the time of Senwosret I, which is one of the earliest LPW contexts dated from Egypt outside Tell el-Dab^{ca}/Ezbet Rushdi. If the date is correct it is exceptional that LPW reached the south so early and possibly even earlier than Ezbet Rushdi.

The last example from Elephantine is the base of a jug with a pointed shape and a very small flattened base. The fabric is very coarse with lime inclusions visible on the horizontally combed surface. The decoration is three thin horizontal bands on the upper part of the preserved base part. The colour is almost black/dark purple and might originally have been reddish.²⁰⁵ More bands would be expected on the upper part of the jug. It has parallels in Ezbet Rushdi (Fig. 15k in particular) as well as from Kahun (Fig. 30g, especially the fabric and the darkened colour). The dating of this piece was tentatively referred to Dynasty XI, which would indeed be very early.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ The information on the context and dating has kindly been supplied by Cornelius von Pilgrim who also allowed me to see the fragments at Elephantine. They were previously studied by Anne Seiler and will now be published by Teodozja Rzeuska. For the Middle Kingdom/2nd Int. settlement of Elephantine cf. VON PILGRIM 1996.

²⁰⁵ Cf. the Kahun examples mentioned above.

²⁰⁶ Since the date is not certain it has not been taken into consideration in the general conclusions here.

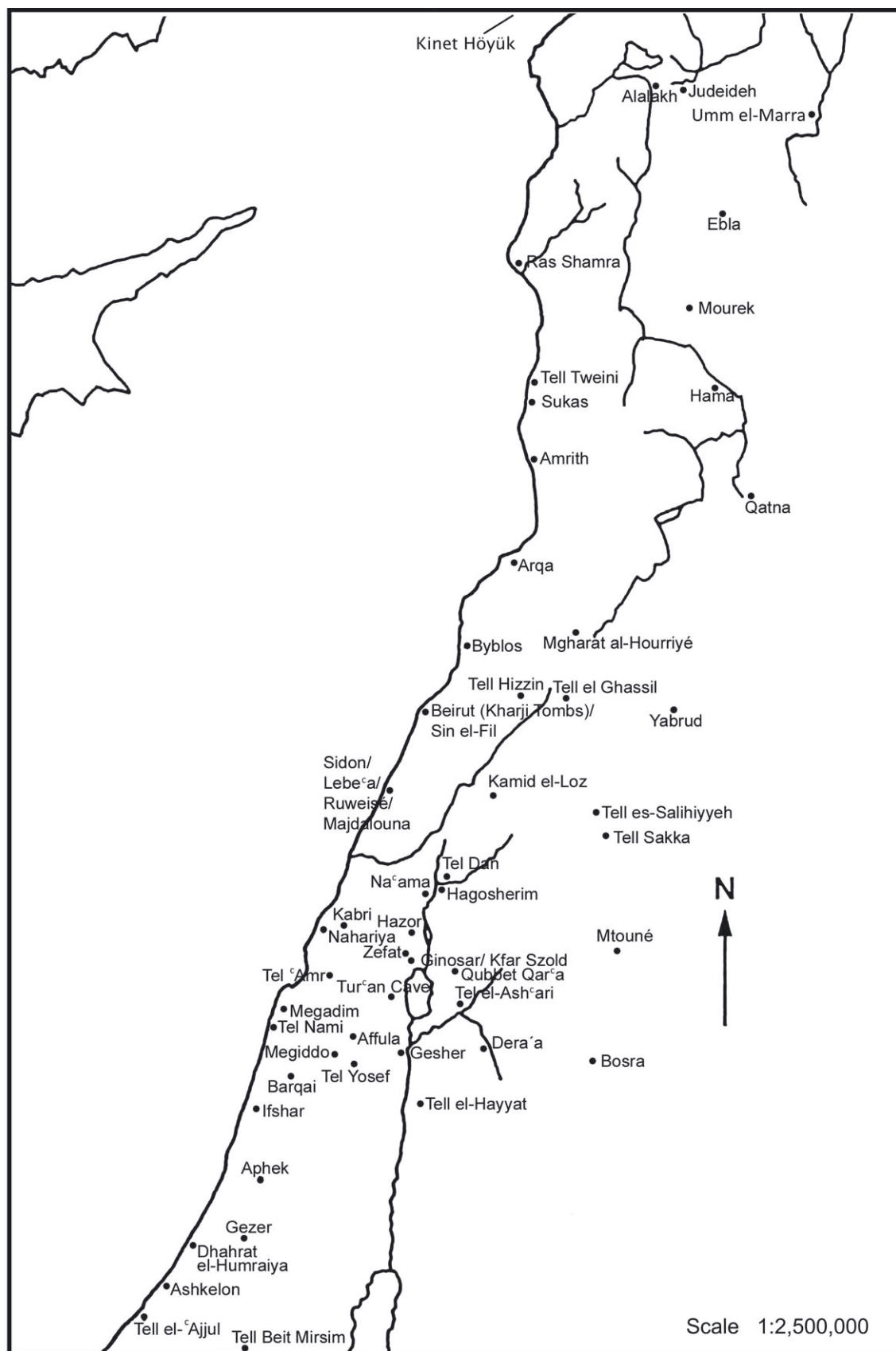


Fig. 9 Map of the Levant