

# COAST CONTRA INLAND: TELL EL-<sup>c</sup>AJJUL AND TELL ABU AL-KHARAZ DURING THE LATE MIDDLE AND LATE BRONZE AGES

By Peter M. Fischer

## INTRODUCTION

Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul, on the Eastern Mediterranean littoral, and Tell Abu al-Kharaz, in the Central Jordan Valley, flourished during the latter part of the Middle Bronze Age and the Late Bronze Age<sup>1</sup> (see Table 1). An overview of the cultural differences and also the similarities between these two sites is presented here. The geographical position and the topography of the two sites are the factors which had the most important influence on their material culture (Fig. 1). This comparative study is based mainly on the ceramic evidence. Certain vessel shapes turned out to be better diachronic triggers than others.

Tell el- <sup>c</sup> Ajjul	Synchronization based on ceramics		Tell Abu al-Kharaz
Phases	Conventional terms	Modified terms <sup>2</sup>	Phases
H8	MB second half	MB second half	
H7-6	MB late	MB III	IV/1-2
H5B and A	MB late / LB IA	MB III / LB IA	V
H4-3	LB IA-A/B	LB IA	VI
H2	LB IB/IIA	LB IB-C	VII
H1B	LB IIA/B	LB IC	VIII

Table 1 Synchronization between Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul and Tell Abu al-Kharaz based on the ceramic evidence and supported by radiocarbon dates<sup>3</sup>

## TELL EL-<sup>c</sup>AJJUL

The city of Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul, the “Mound of the Calves”, lies approximately 10 km south-west of the centre of modern Gaza in the Gaza Strip, Palestine, and close to the Mediterranean coast.



Fig. 1 Processed satellite map of the Southern Levant with the two sites indicated

The coordinates of Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul are E 93 250 and N 97 560 according to the Palestine coordinate system. The tell lies in a crucial position between Egypt and Lebanon/Syria with a convenient ancient harbour that permitted small vessels to

<sup>1</sup> Tell Abu al-Kharaz has been excavated by the author during eleven seasons between 1989 and 2001, and Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul with co-director M. Sadeq during two seasons in 1999 and 2000. For a more thorough study of the two sites in recently published/forthcoming literature see: FISCHER and SADEQ 2000, 2002; FISCHER 2003 for Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul; and FISCHER 2000 and FISCHER forthcoming 2 for Tell Abu al-Kharaz.

<sup>2</sup> The modified terminology is presented in two forthcoming publications: FISCHER forthcoming 1 and 2. LB

IA corresponds approximately to the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, LB IA/B to the period of the warfare of Thutmosis III in Palestine or the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, and LB IC to later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. LB II is approximately contemporaneous with the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasties.

<sup>3</sup> Eight radiocarbon dates from the period under discussion come from Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul and seven from Tell Abu al-Kharaz.

reach the city via the Wadi al-Ghazzeh, which runs to the west of the city. To the south is the main road, which has connected, through the millenia, Egypt with the Levant. The preserved size of the quite flat and rectangular Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul, which has suffered considerably from erosion and modern activities, is approximately 10–11 ha, but the tell was certainly larger in ancient times. The site was once surrounded by a moat, traces of which Petrie investigated (see PETRIE 1931–34; 1952). The highest spot of the tell today is 26.60 m above mean sea level. It is close to this summit and immediately south-east of Petrie’s “Palace Area” that the new excavations are taking place.

The new excavations have exposed substantial architectural remains of almost exclusively sun-dried mudbrick, as well as pottery and small finds from the latter part of the Middle and the Late Bronze Ages. Pottery series of locally produced wares were established and will in the course of the continued excavations at Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul be completed and modified. The amazing amount of imported material includes after the two seasons of the renewed excavations 945 sherds/complete vessels from Cyprus, the Central Jordan Valley/Southern Lebanon, Egypt, the Middle Euphrates and the Mycenaean sphere of culture, in addition to a number of small finds of mainly Egyptian origin.

Petrie claimed that Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul is ancient Gaza, a view which was contradicted by KEMPINSKI (1974), who suggested that ancient Gaza lies within the boundaries of modern Gaza and that Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul is Sharuhén, a site mentioned in Egyptian and biblical texts. The identity of the site is still under discussion, but it is indisputable that Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul is a good candidate for identification with the city of Sharuhén or Sharhan, which, according to the textual evidence, is in the south-western Levant (e.g. RAINEY 1993). This city was maybe ruled by the vassals of the Hyksos during the 16<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (see BIETAK 1994: 58).

## TELL ABU AL-KHARAZ

Tell Abu al-Kharaz, “The Mound of the Father of the Beads”, lies in the ancient landscape of Gilead in the Transjordanian Central Jordan Valley<sup>4</sup> approximately 160 km to the north-east of Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul. The settlement, which is best described as a small stone-walled town, is located just above the eastern border of the Jordan Valley, north of the perennial Wadi al-Yabis,<sup>5</sup> about 4 km east of the River Jordan. According to the Palestine Grid Coordinate System the coordinates of the summit are E 206 196.54 and N 200 623.07. The summit of Tell Abu al-Kharaz lies 116.00 m below mean sea level. The valley floor level at this latitude lies approximately 250 m below mean sea level. The impressive isolated mound of Tell Abu al-Kharaz, from which large parts of the Jordan Valley can be controlled, lies close to the main road which runs along the Transjordanian Jordan Valley from north to south. The area occupied by the tell is approximately 300 m by 400 m, viz. 12 ha. The plateau on the summit of the tell measures about 120 m by 90 m.

The author’s excavations at Tell Abu al-Kharaz were the first after a series of surveys. Substantial architectural remains, mainly of stone, from the EB IB – II, the MB III – LB II, and the Iron Age<sup>6</sup> were exposed. The Middle and Late Bronze Age remains are approximately contemporary with those from Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul. The detailed study of the local pottery series from the Middle and Late Bronze Ages has been completed (FISCHER forthcoming 2). Imports are limited to pottery from Cisjordan, Southern Lebanon and Cyprus.<sup>7</sup>

The possible identity of Tell Abu al-Kharaz in written sources has been discussed by various authors. GLUECK (1951: 268–275), for example, devoted special attention to the discussion of whether Tell Abu al-Kharaz or Tell al-Maqlub, located further east along the Wadi Yabis, was the Biblical site of Jabesh Gilead (mentioned in

<sup>4</sup> The extent of the region of biblical Gilead, east of the Jordan River, is not exactly defined. It covers approximately today’s North-West Jordan from the Wadi Yarmouk (the Syrian border) in the north to, in the south, the Wadi Mojib (River Arnon) east of the Dead Sea (cf. OTTOSSON 1969: 9 and map). There are various definitions of the term “Central Jordan Valley”; for a discussion see e.g. MAEIR 1997: 10–13.

<sup>5</sup> The name of this wadi has recently been changed to

Wadi el-Raiyan; however, the traditional name, Wadi al-Yabis, will be retained in the archaeological reports from Tell Abu al-Kharaz in order to avoid confusion when consulting references and older literature.

<sup>6</sup> There are also remains from post-Iron Age periods, for example, from late Roman and Islamic times.

<sup>7</sup> Observe though that there are Egyptian imports from the Early Bronze Age which came from the Naqada IIIB sphere of culture.

the Bible in: I Sam. 11:1–13; 31: 10–13; II Sam. 2:5–6; 21:12; I Chron. 10:11–12; Judges 21:8–14). He followed a common practice in the past of discussing the Biblical identity of sites in the “Holy Land” which have been surveyed or which are being excavated. Jabesh Gilead is quoted frequently in the Old Testament amongst other events in connection with King Saul’s and King David’s battles with the Philistines and Ammonites, which may correspond approximately to the 11<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C. In the light of his conclusions a positive identification of Tell Abu al-Kharaz with Jabesh Gilead was made. He expresses some valid points, but it is obvious that only distinct archaeological evidence could confirm his theory. In the author’s opinion, however, the present state of research does not allow any definite conclusions.

### The Comparative Study

In order to compare the two sites the bearers of the most significant chronological indicators, namely the ceramics, were investigated. After a comprehensive study the following shapes were considered the most suitable as chronological triggers: S-bowls, carinated bowls, juglets, jugs, biconical jugs and cooking pots.<sup>8</sup>

#### *S*-bowls (Fig. 2)

These bowls belong to a group of pottery for which the epithet “fine table ware” is appropriate. They take their name from their S-shaped profile without a distinct carination. At Tell el-*c*Ajjul they already exist in H8, which is the most ancient occupational horizon yet found during the new excavations there.<sup>9</sup> They continue with slight

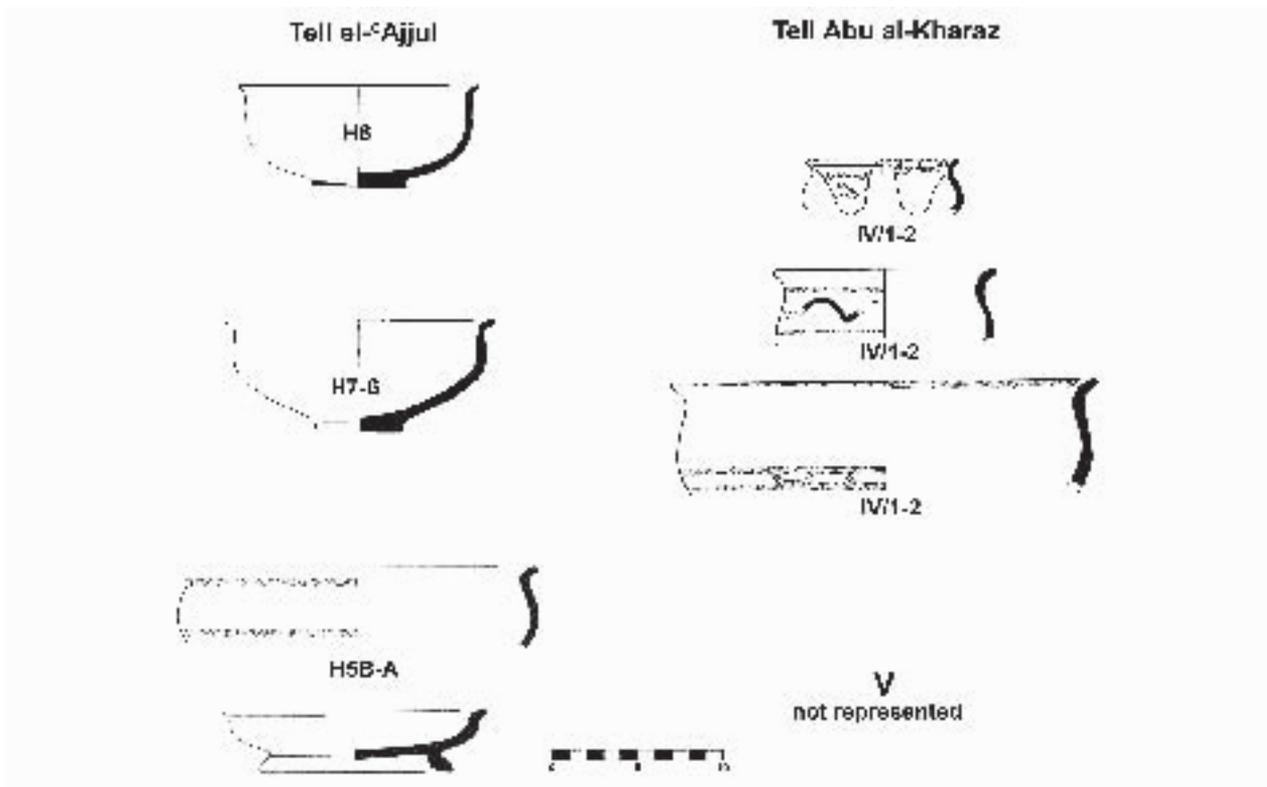


Fig. 2 Synchronization of S-bowls from Tell el-*c*Ajjul and Tell Abu al-Kharaz

<sup>8</sup> The proportion of the various vessel shapes and type or absence of decoration is listed for the material from Tell Abu al-Kharaz but not for that from Tell el-*c*Ajjul because of the limited data after only two seasons. The old material from Petrie’s excavations is not considered

in this study because of prevailing stratigraphical and chronological problems which are dealt with at present by the author.

<sup>9</sup> Horizon H8 is directly above virgin soil, viz. *kourkar*.

modifications in H7-6 and H5B-A, which is the last phase in which they appear. At Tell Abu al-Kharaz they are represented by only a few examples in the last phases of the Middle Bronze Age, i.e. Phases IV/1 and 2. The most striking difference between the assemblages of the two sites is that all the bowls from Tell Abu al-Kharaz are decorated, either monochrome or bichrome, mainly with framed wavy lines, whereas only a minority of the bowls from Tell el-*c*Ajjul are decorated with simple patterns.

*Carinated Bowls* (Fig. 3a, b)

These bowls are found during the entire Middle and Late Bronze periods of both sites except for the last phase at both sites, viz. H1B and VIII

respectively, but maybe this is accidental. The carinated bowl is in general superior to the bowls with rounded or straight profiles as regards manufacturing technique: certain carinated bowls are definite representatives of “fine table ware”. The earliest examples from the Middle Bronze Age have in general more pronounced carinations than their later counterparts. Apart from minor differences as regards their general profiles the most striking difference – so far – is the total absence of decoration on the carinated bowls at Tell el-*c*Ajjul. Tell Abu al-Kharaz produced decorated bowls in all periods except for Phase VI, which is certainly coincidental, since they were found prior to and after this phase.

The proportion of carinated bowls at Tell

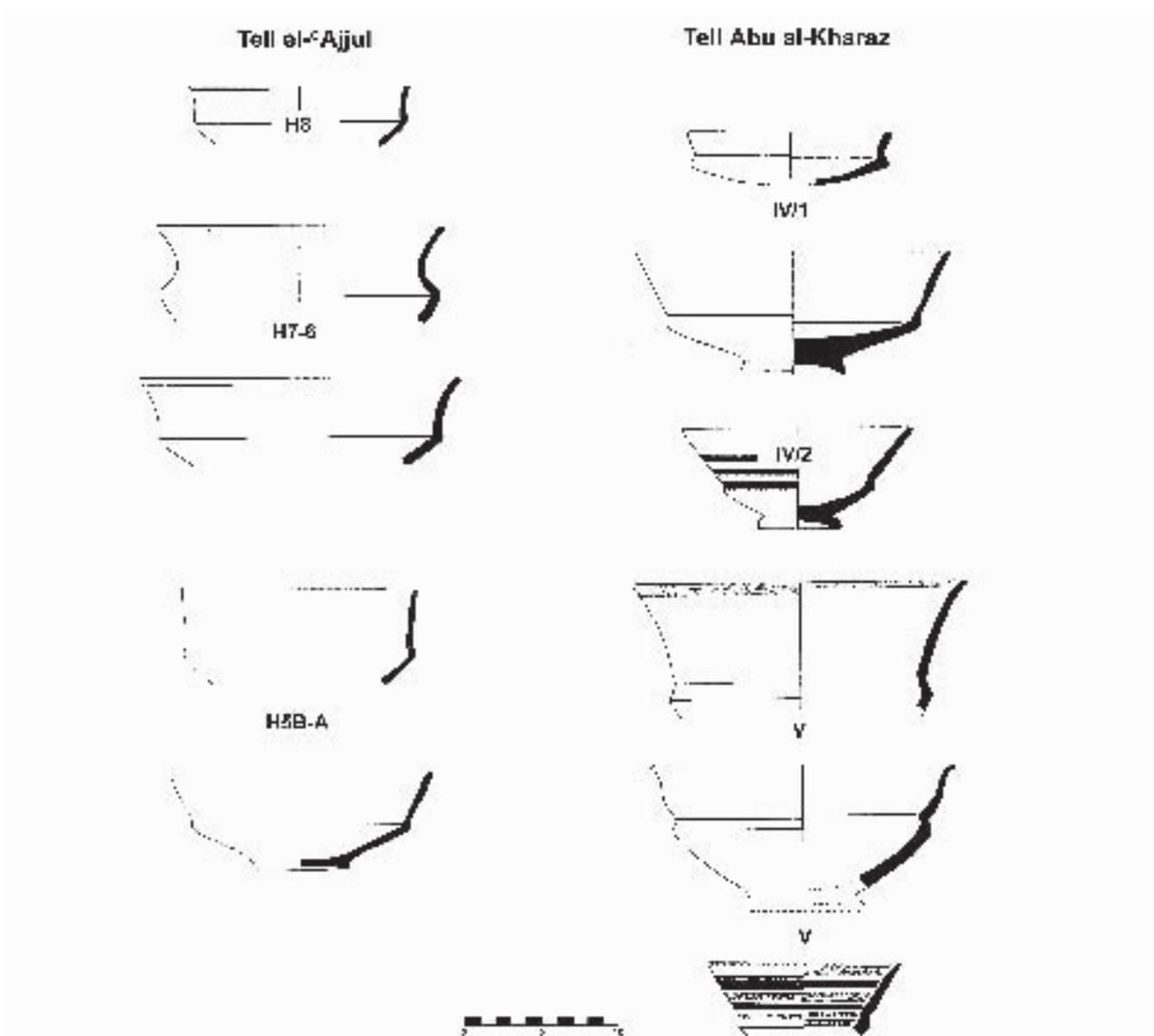


Fig. 3a Synchronization of carinated bowls from Tell el-*c*Ajjul and Tell Abu al-Kharaz

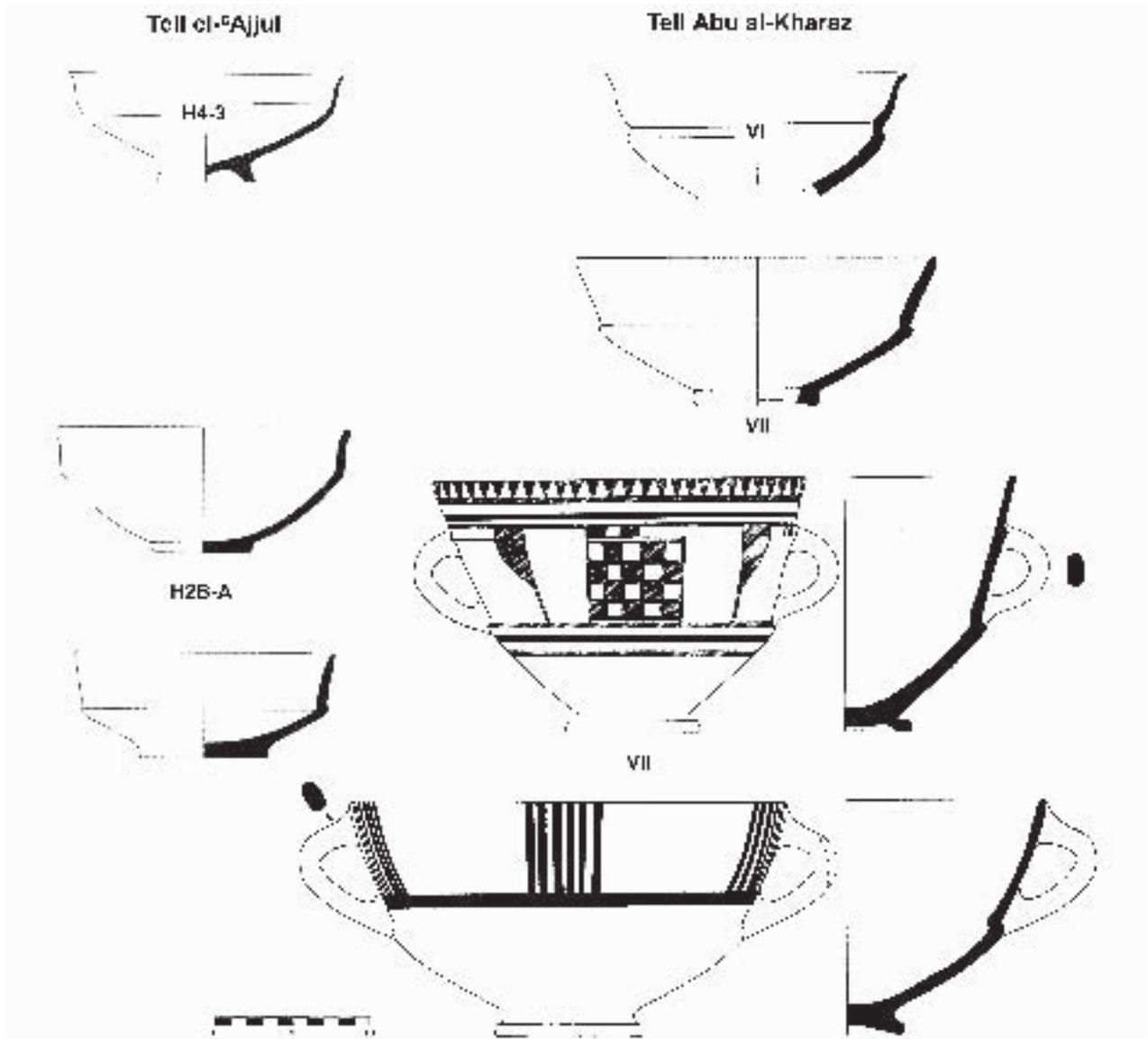


Fig. 3b Synchronization of carinated bowls from Tell el-ʿAjjul and Tell Abu al-Kharaz

Abu al-Kharaz, the small carinated votive bowls not included, is 4.0% of all pottery shapes and 13% of all bowls, rounded and straight-sided included. 86.2% of the carinated bowls are plain, 9.2% are monochrome-decorated and 4.6% are bichrome. One of the two large decorated bowls with two handles and a metope pattern from the temple of Phase VII at Tell Abu al-Kharaz shows a special trait in the shape of a double carination.

#### *Juglets* (Fig. 4)

The general shape of the dipper juglet is almost identical at both sites. Cylindrical juglets do not exist at Tell Abu al-Kharaz and are restricted to

the Middle Bronze Age at Tell el-ʿAjjul (latest appearance in H7-6). There are no decorated juglets at Tell el-ʿAjjul.

The great majority of the juglets at Tell Abu al-Kharaz, which represent 2.1% of all shapes, are undecorated: 91.8% are plain, 6.1% are monochrome-decorated and 2.1% are bichrome.

#### *Jugs* (Fig. 5a, b)

The shape of jugs is in general an inferior chronological trigger and the least useful of the pottery shapes discussed here as regards the comparison of the material from the two sites and their chronology. Jugs will, however, be mentioned here because of a repetitive pattern which also

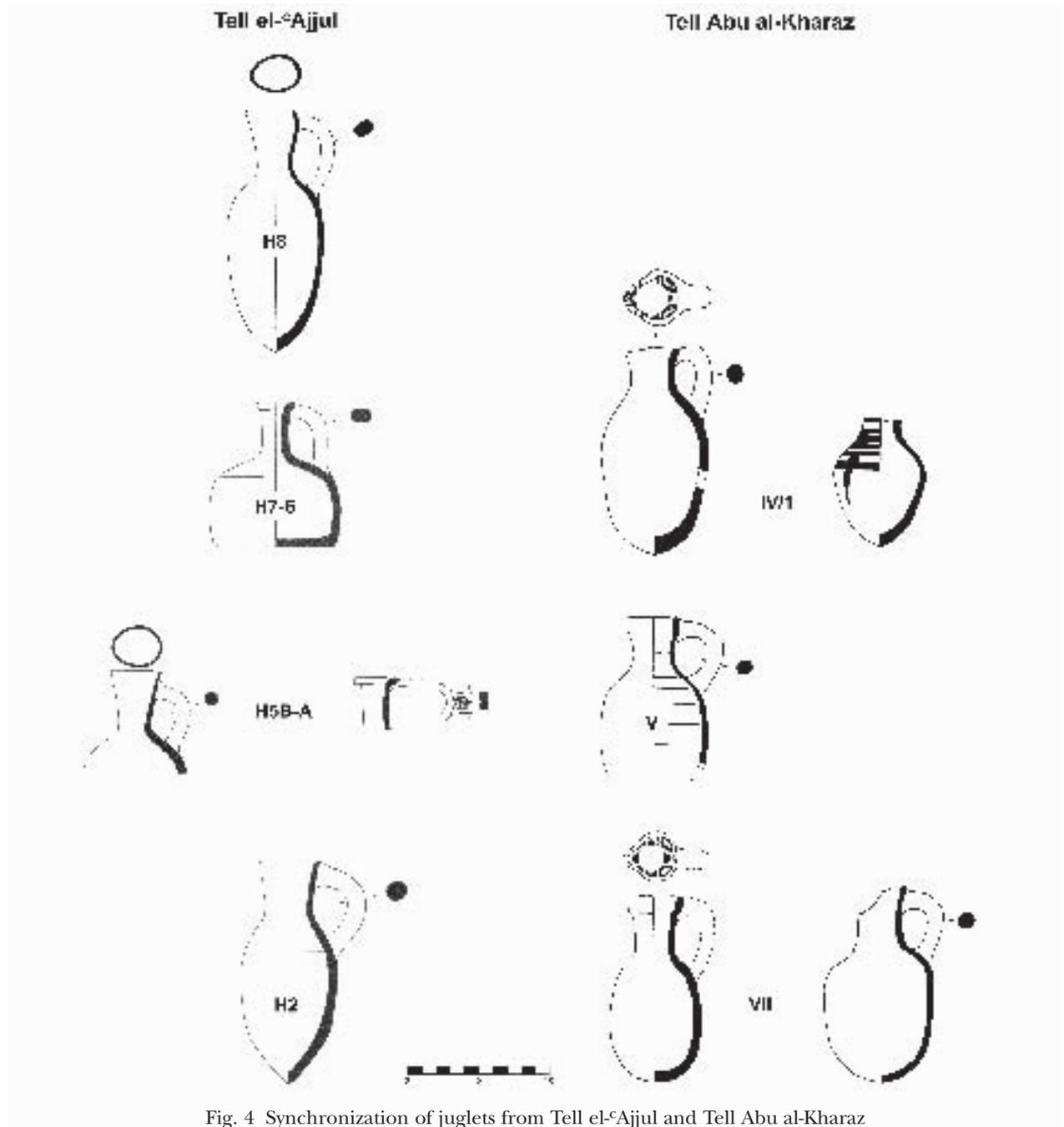


Fig. 4 Synchronization of juglets from Tell el-ʿAjjul and Tell Abu al-Kharaz

appears in these vessels: decorated jugs have not so far been found at Tell el-ʿAjjul but are well represented at Tell Abu al-Kharaz.

At Tell Abu al-Kharaz, the proportions are as follows: jugs are the second most common vessel after the bowls and represent 23.8% of all pottery: 75.1% are plain, 14.4% are monochrome-decorated and 10.5% bichrome. The metope pattern seems to appear at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age but an earlier appearance cannot be

ruled out. The only figurative example is from the Phase VII temple at Tell Abu al-Kharaz and shows a bird in bright red.

#### *Biconical Jugs* (Fig. 6)

These vessels belong to the group which – with some reservations – may be called “fine table ware”. They are usually well-manufactured and carefully decorated. This vessel shape (without handles?) is so far limited to H4–3 at Tell el-

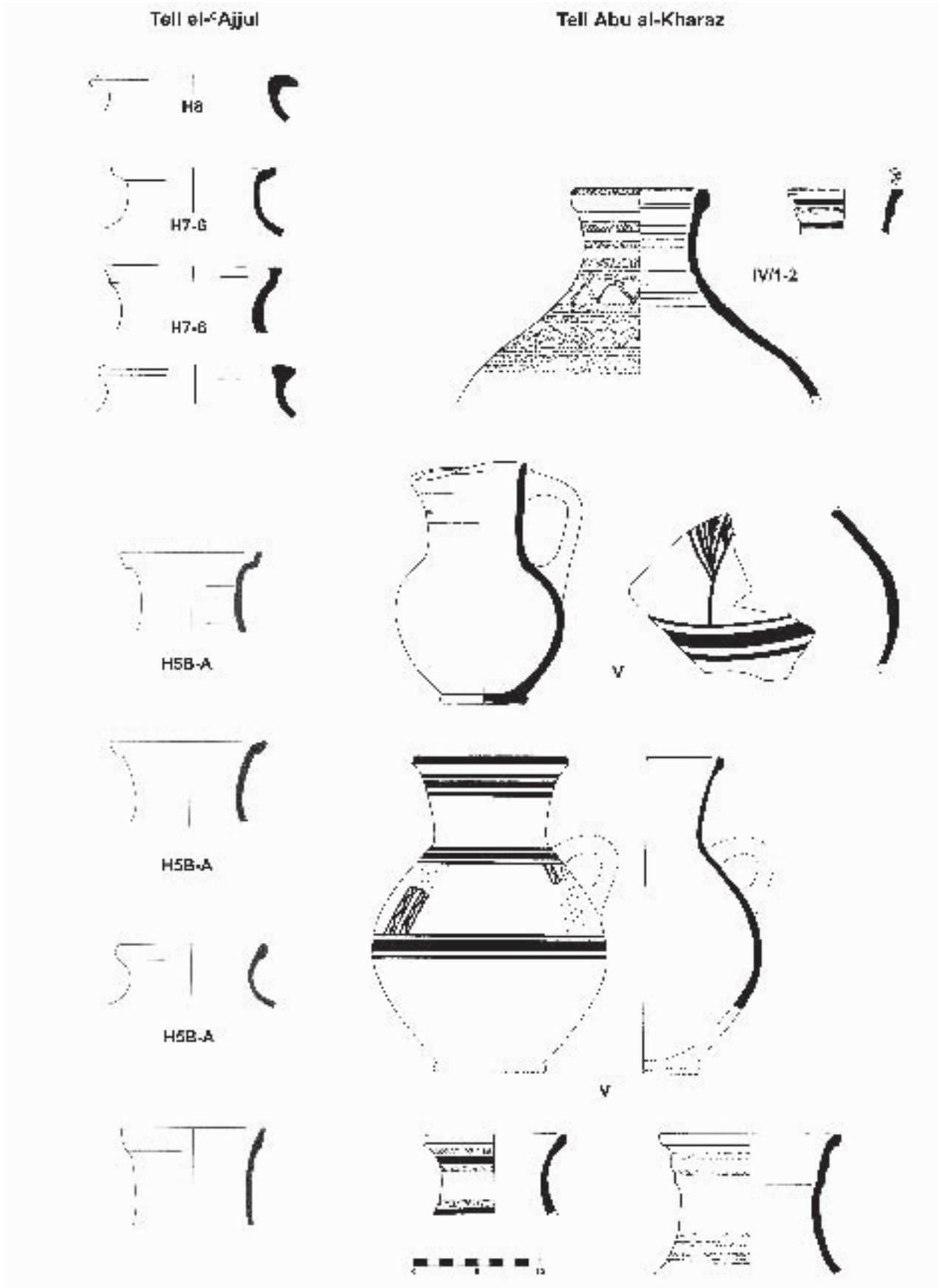


Fig. 5a Synchronization of jugs from Tell el-Ajjul and Tell Abu al-Kharaz

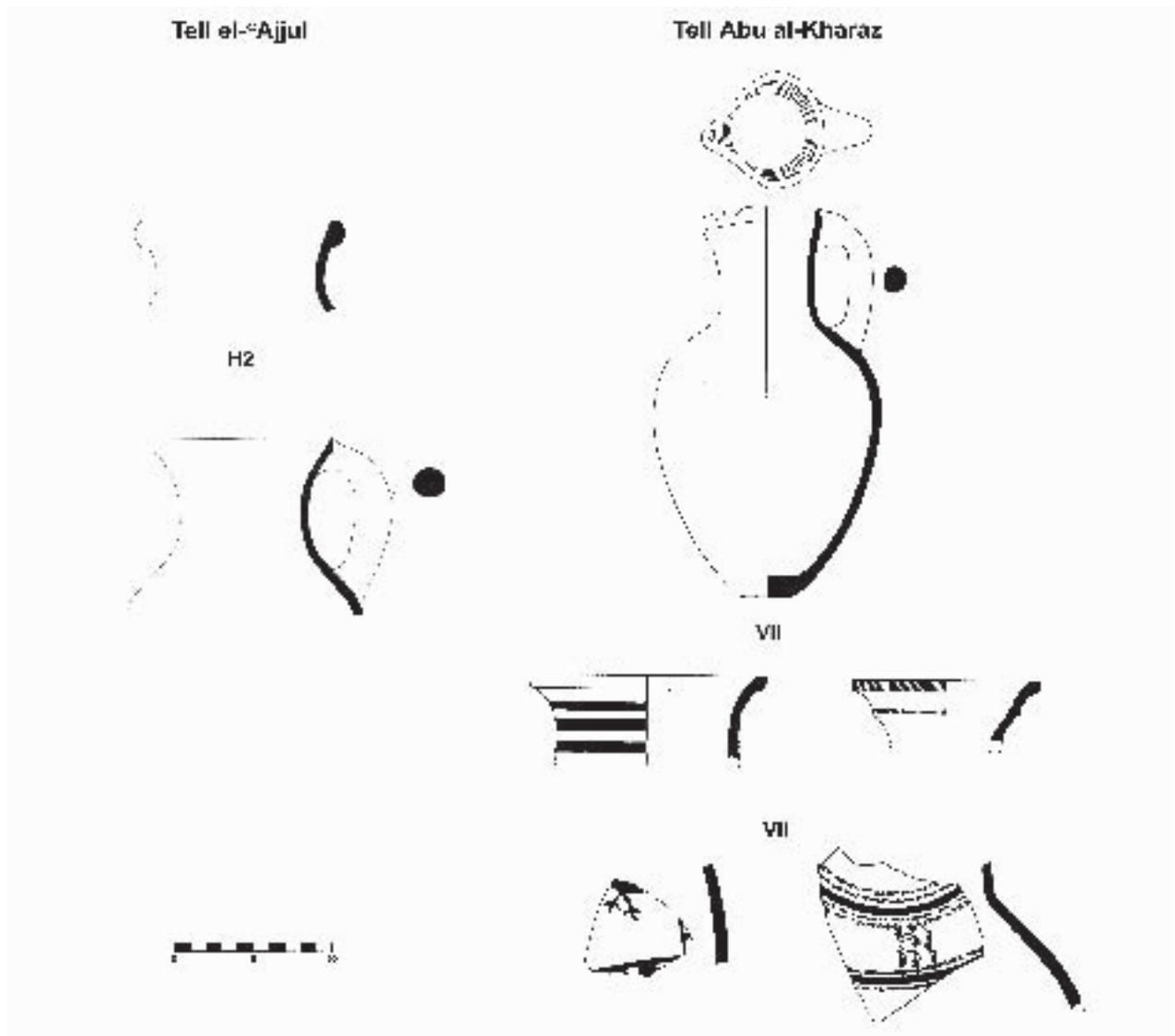


Fig. 5b Synchronization of jugs from Tell el-ʿAjjul and Tell Abu al-Kharaz

ʿAjjul, which is very likely by chance. At Tell Abu al-Kharaz the biconical jug appears by Phase IV/1 and was in use until Phase VII. There is a tendency for the earliest examples to have a lower carination than the later ones. The latest examples derive from the temple area. Single handles are common on the examples from Tell Abu al-Kharaz. This type of vessel accounts for the highest proportion of decorated pottery. The most common decorative element is the metope pattern, which appears at the end of the Middle Bronze Age in Phase IV at Tell Abu al-Kharaz.

The following statistics deal with the material from Tell Abu al-Kharaz: biconical jugs account for 1.5% of all pottery; 51.5% of them are plain,

27.3% are monochrome-decorated and 21.2% bichrome-decorated.

#### *Cooking Pots* (Fig. 7a, b)

This category of vessels is an excellent archaeological trigger in connection with diachronic discussions. The majority of these vessels were certainly “on-site-produced” and only a few of these quite brittle vessels might have been imported. This statement is supported, *inter alia*, by the type of inclusions in the fabric which was used to improve the heat resistance of the vessel: the cooking pots from Tell el-ʿAjjul very frequently contain crushed shells from the nearby Mediterranean, whereas the vessels from Tell Abu al-Kharaz are tempered with crushed calcite or limestone from local sources.

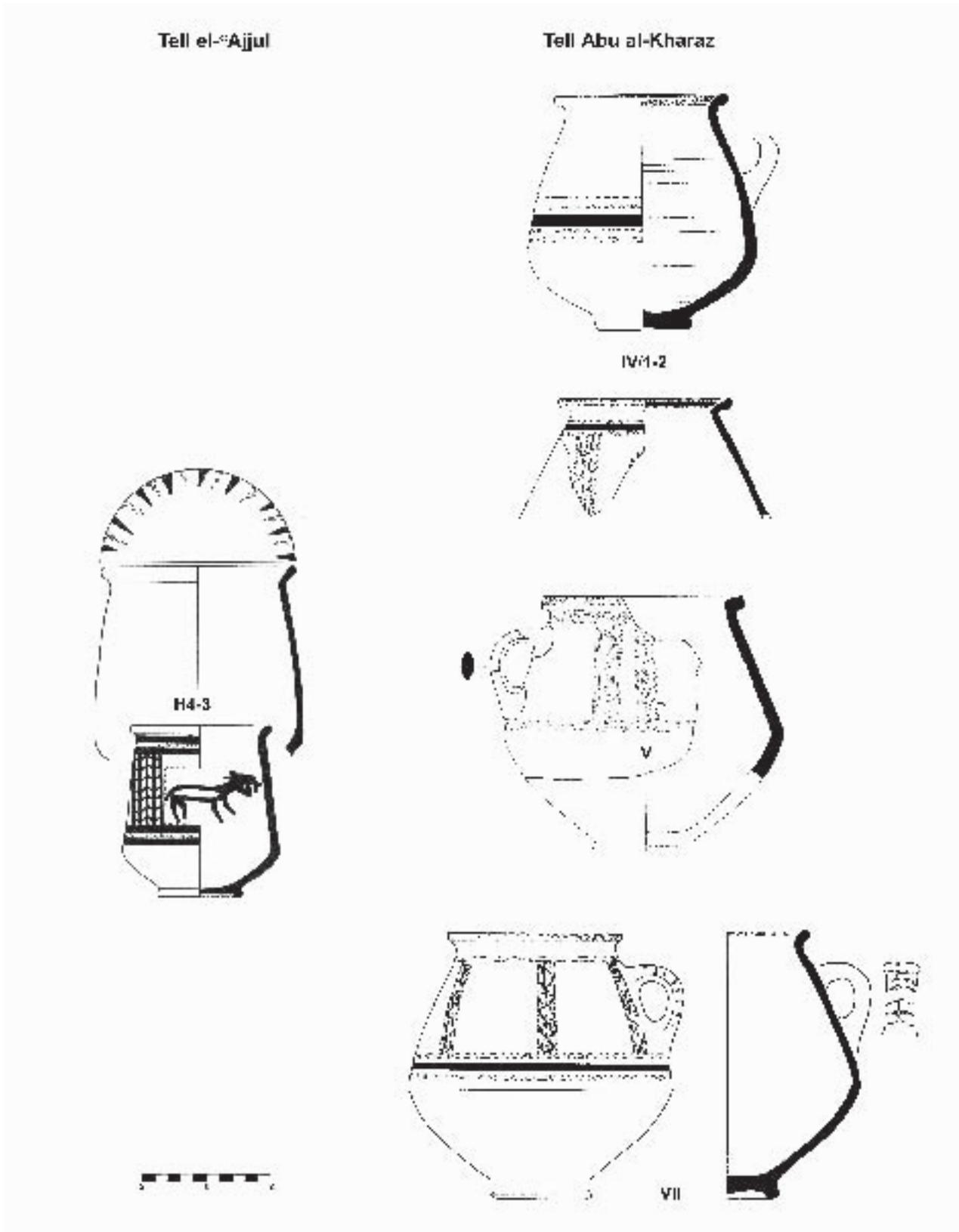


Fig. 6 Synchronization of biconical jugs from Tell el-ʿAjjul and Tell Abu al-Kharaz

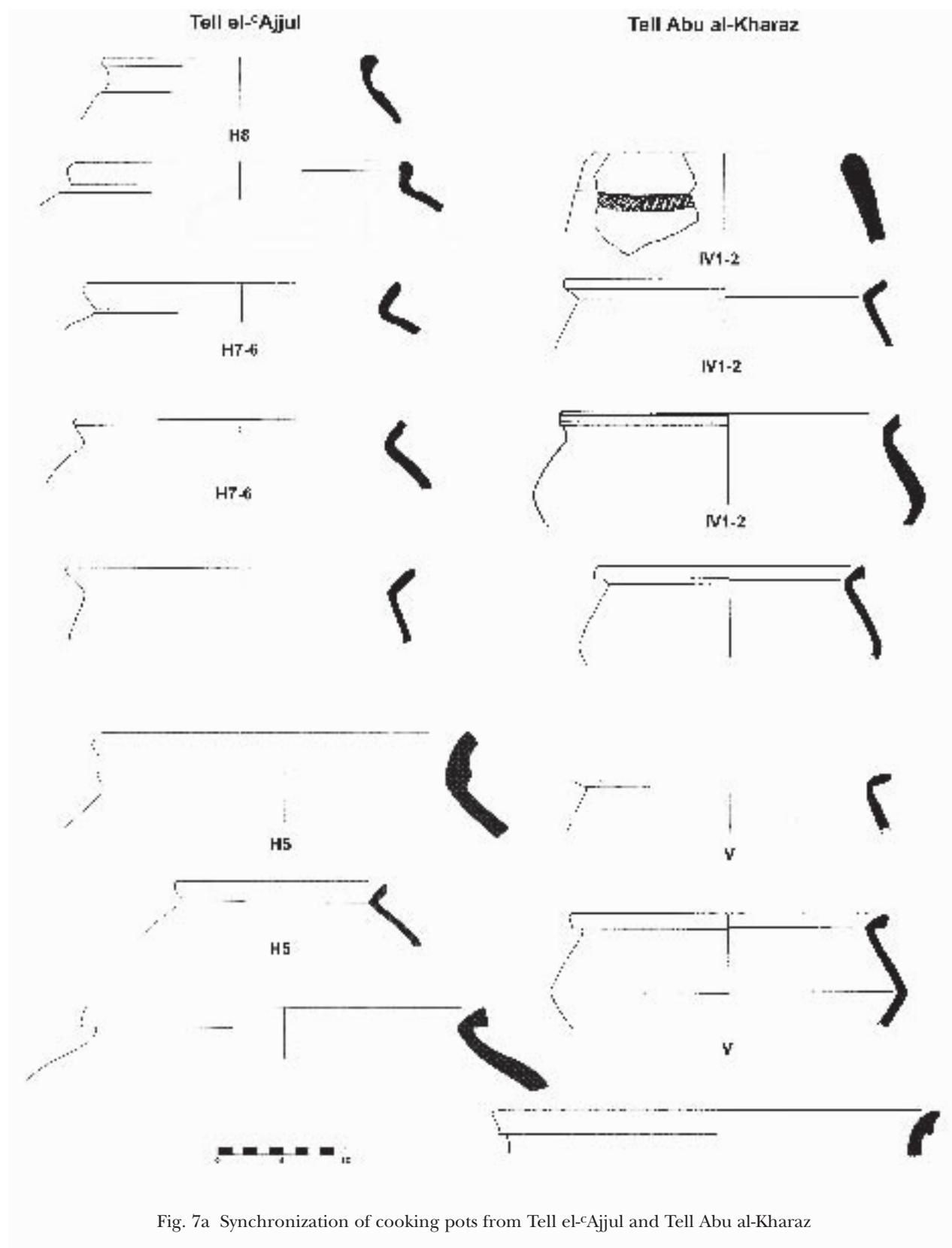


Fig. 7a Synchronization of cooking pots from Tell el-Ajjul and Tell Abu al-Kharaz

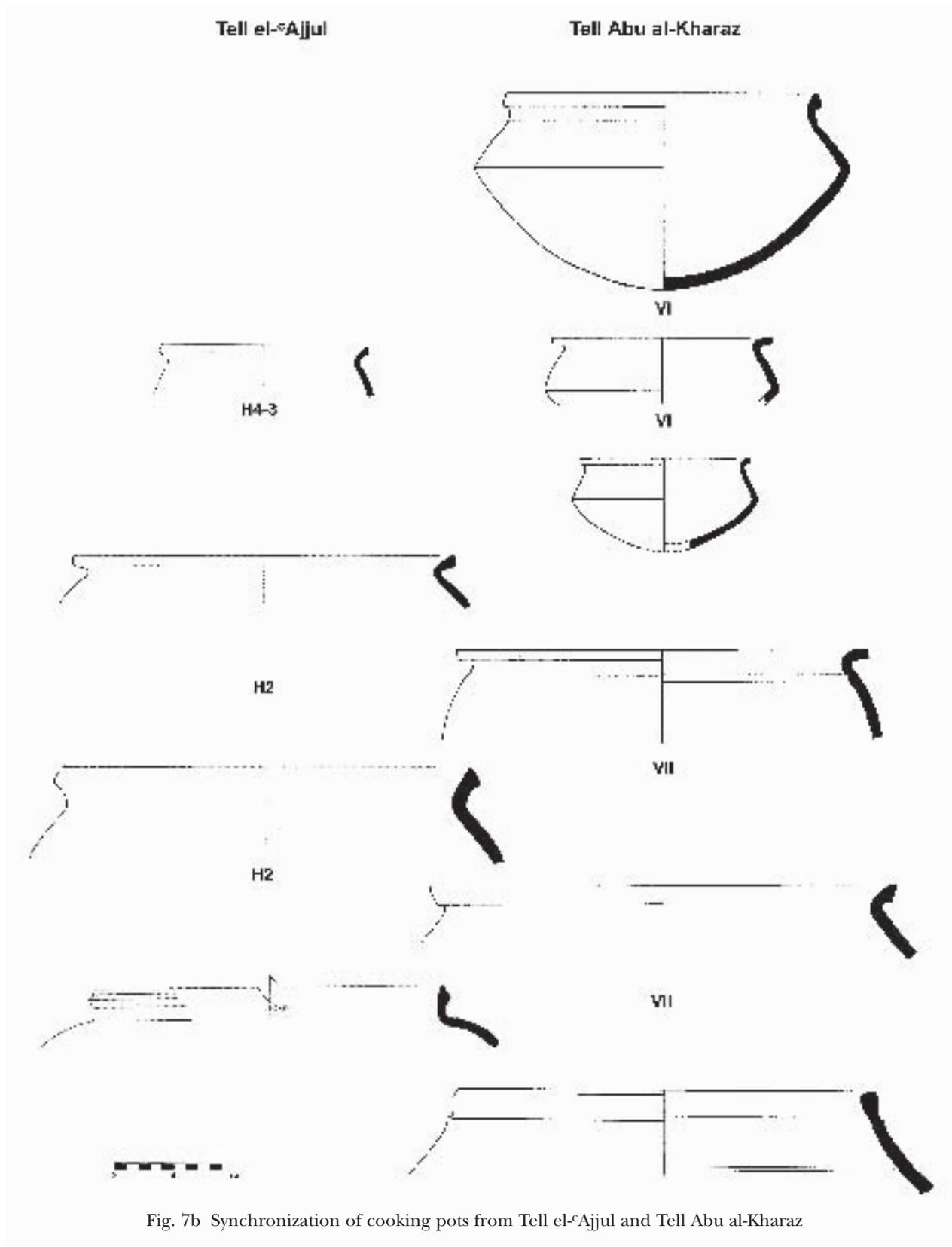


Fig. 7b Synchronization of cooking pots from Tell el-ʿAjjul and Tell Abu al-Kharaz

The most prominent difference between the shapes of the cooking pots from our two sites occurs during the earliest phases, viz. H8 to H7–6 and IV. The “collared cooking pot” from Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul H8 (FISCHER 2003: 272), the appearance of which is the result of joining the wheel-made rim and neck with the very probably mould-made body, is non-existent at Tell Abu al-Kharaz. However, Tell Abu al-Kharaz produced a rare cooking pot type with an inwardly oblique stance profile with a rounded lip and a relief pattern just below the “neck”; this appears in Phase IV/2, although it is evident through parallels from other sites that this shape belongs to an older tradition and must have been used in Phase IV/1 even though not attested at the site (cf. Beth Shean in MAEIR 1997: pl. 14; CP 2b). During H7–6 at Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul and the later part of Phase IV at Tell Abu al-Kharaz the uniformity of the cooking pots increases and the triangular rim becomes dominant. It is also of a certain diachronic value that the cooking pots from Phases IV/1 and 2 reflect a mixture of old and new traditions, whereas the vessels from Phase V and, to a certain extent, Phase VI show a greater uniformity. The vessels from Phases VII and VIII again represent a mixture of the “traditional” shapes from Phases V and VI, and shapes which are harbingers of the early Iron Age. Despite the “uniformity” of the cooking pots of the two sites in the later periods, differences still occur: there is, for example, a cooking pot with quite a pronounced neck ridge from Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul H5, a counterpart of which has not been found at Tell Abu al-Kharaz. In contrast, the inwardly projecting cooking pot with a neck ridge from Phase VII, which resembles a very early tradition at Tell Abu al-Kharaz from Phase IV, has not so far been verified at Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul.

18.4% of all vessels at Tell Abu al-Kharaz are cooking pots.

## CONCLUSIONS

It has already been mentioned that the geographical locations of the two settlements are the main differentiating factor as regards the material culture, the life style of their societies and their intercultural relations. Without any prior knowledge of the two sites it would not come as a surprise to find the remains of a cosmopolitan society at a site close to the Mediterranean, and those of a society of more provincial character at a site relatively remote from the Mediterranean. The material cultural remains from Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul confirm the international character of the city, which is particularly reflected in the high number of imported ceramics (see Table 2). The numerous finds of high-quality jewellery, including elaborate gold work, and the unparalleled number of scarabs (c. 1,250; see FISCHER 2000) point to a rich society, whose wealth was certainly based on trade which was not limited to luxury items. The vast quantity of Cypriote imports, the number of which cannot be equalled by any other site in the Eastern Mediterranean, suggests that Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul functioned as the main trading centre in the area by virtue of its geographical and topographical position. Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul seems to have had a sort of monopoly of the trade with certain major Cypriote production/trading centres from the end of the Middle Bronze Age onwards. We know very little about the ruling class of Cyprus during this period, but the rulers and the supervisors of the trade of Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul may have been sovereign kings or Hyksos-dependent governors during the MB III period, or Egyptian governors under the regime of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties during the Late Bronze Age.

Provenance	Cyprus	Jordan Valley/ S-Lebanon <sup>10</sup>	Egypt	Middle Euphrates/ N-Syria	Mycenae	BLWM <sup>11</sup>	Total
T. el- <sup>c</sup> Ajjul	830	55	31	2	5	22	945
T. Abu al-Kharaz	10	608 <sup>12</sup>	0	0	0	0	618

Table 2 Ceramics imported to Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul and Tell Abu al-Kharaz

<sup>10</sup> This refers to Chocolate-on-White Ware.

<sup>11</sup> The provenance of Black Lustrous Wheel-made Ware is not ascertained. This “ware” very likely comprises a number of subtypes of various provenance.

<sup>12</sup> Not all examples of Chocolate-on-White Ware were investigated by petrography. Some derive from Southern Lebanon but the majority seems to have been produced in the Jordan Valley.

After the collapse of the Hyksos regime in the area it was certainly in the interest of the rulers of the following dynasties not to disturb the trading traditions between Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul and Cyprus (cf. also FISCHER 2003). In consequence, the distribution of goods continued from there to all parts of the Southern Levant and Egypt.

There is a certain conservatism and a lack of innovation as regards the production of local ceramic wares at Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul. The proportion of decorated wares and of slipped and burnished wares, for example, is very low, much lower than that in the material from Tell Abu al-Kharaz. In order to explain this phenomenon one has again to consider the general situation: there was no urgent need for the traders of Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul to satisfy the demands of the local population and the customers of Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul with locally produced “fine table wares” when high-quality and colourful ceramics could be acquired from Cyprus, which was the chief supplier of these goods in the Eastern Mediterranean: incense, wine and oil, which were exported in the “Canaanite jars” and which are frequent finds, especially during the Late Cypriote period, were traded in exchange.

The situation at an inland site such as Tell Abu al-Kharaz is different. Tell Abu al-Kharaz is definitely not an isolated site, mainly because of its position in the Jordan Valley close to the north-south trade route, over which the ruler of the town certainly had full control during the late Middle and Late Bronze Ages: there is no other elevated site in the area which would provide better conditions for defence, or better control of large parts of the Jordan Valley, than this mound. With its fairly flat top it rises approximately 60 m above its surroundings. Not only could a large area in all directions be surveyed from the top of the mound, but also the rocky western slope, fac-

ing the Jordan Valley, and the steep northern and eastern slopes are all natural obstacles to presumptive invaders.<sup>13</sup> It also seems quite probable, on the evidence of the topographical situation and the defence systems of the site, that the walled part of the mound was utilized as a *Fluchtburg* during times of war: people who dwelled in the immediate surroundings of Tell Abu al-Kharaz moved there during unsafe times not only for protection but also to take part in the defence of the town.<sup>14</sup>

The main source of the prosperity of the populations of Tell Abu al-Kharaz was almost certainly agriculture and cattle-breeding. The charred plant remains from Tell Abu al-Kharaz include various types of grain, among which are emmer, einkorn and barley. Other cultivated species are broad bean, lentil, flax, olive, grape including dried fruit, fig and pistachio. The osteological remains consist mainly of caprines, i.e. sheep and goats, and cattle. Pigs were found but they are of subordinate economic value. Other animal remains include fallow-deer, gazelle, dog, equid, rodent, cat, fox, brown bear, different birds and hippo (ivory). A small amount of fish remains was also found, deriving very likely from the River Jordan, and possibly also from the Nile, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

The surplus from agriculture, cattle-breeding, and – to a certain extent – gathering and hunting was used for trading for coveted goods, mainly copper and/or copper alloys, “exotic” ceramics and other luxurious commodities such as cosmetic oils. An additional source of income may have been the trade in incense. The question of which trading routes were used has its answer in the strategic position of Tell Abu al-Kharaz in the Jordan Valley.<sup>15</sup> An important trading route was undoubtedly the north-south Transjordanian

<sup>13</sup> The large area of the Central Jordan Valley which could be controlled from the summit of Tell Abu al-Kharaz includes, from the north-west to the south-west: the hills around Nazareth, Mount Tabor, Beth Shan and the various parts of the Beth Shan Valley, parts of the Harod Valley, the Samaritan hills and the area north of Tell es-Sa’idiyeh. The view to the east is restricted by the rising hillocks of western Gilead, which are the outcrops of the Transjordanian plateau further to the east.

<sup>14</sup> The author prefers to call Tell Abu al-Kharaz a “walled town” during the Bronze Age. There are at present no clear or well-established criteria for the terms “city”,

“town”, “village” etc. And even if we all agreed on a list of criteria which would then create an equivalent between a certain term and the nature of an occupied area, we cannot compare urban settlements in the Southern Levant with, for example, those in Syria or Mesopotamia, because there would be only one site in the Southern Levant (Hazor) which is comparable with the large urban centres in Syria and Mesopotamia; cf. MAEIR’s (1997: 230–231) discussion, with which I largely agree.

<sup>15</sup> Communication routes were primarily terrestrial and not via the wadis.

main road, which connected the site with the Sea of Galilee, 35 km to the north, and further north with Lebanon and Syria, and in the opposite direction with the Dead Sea some 70 km to the south. It has been shown by petrography that two fine ceramic wares were imported from the southern Lebanon: the Metallic Wares of the Early Bronze Age and representatives of the Chocolate-on-White Ware from the end of the Middle and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. Taking advantage of the strategic position of Tell Abu al-Kharaz, from which all movements through the Jordan Valley could be controlled, the rulers of the site may also have claimed *in natura* tributes from caravans passing the valley along the north-south Transjordanian route. There were certainly also trade routes from the northern shore of the Dead Sea to Cisjordan and the southern Shephelah and the western Negev, where a number of trading stations were situated. Another similarly important trade route was the one to the north-west, which connected Tell Abu al-Kharaz with Beth Shean, Megiddo and the Mediterranean Sea in the Mount Carmel area, a distance of approximately 80 km or a journey of 2–3 days for traders. The

Mount Carmel area contained important harbours near settlements such as Tell Abu Hawam and, later, Tel Nami (ARTZY 1998).

The Cypriote-produced ceramic wares from the end of the Middle and the Late Bronze Ages certainly reached Tell Abu al-Kharaz this way. It is likely that relative remoteness from the Mediterranean is a factor to consider as regards the type of pottery which has been found at Tell Abu al-Kharaz: Cypriote ceramics may have been too expensive to be imported in larger amounts. Therefore the demands of the people of Tell Abu al-Kharaz for colourful high-quality ceramics was satisfied by a “substitute”,<sup>16</sup> namely Chocolate-on-White Ware, Palestine’s most elaborate ware, and locally produced slipped, burnished and decorated wares which were more frequently found here than at Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul. The situation at Tell Abu al-Kharaz may be compared with that of another inland site, namely Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Arqa in Lebanon (e.g. THALMANN 2000): this is a rural site with a provincial society with a limited import of luxury items but which produced excellent ceramics in order to satisfy man’s perpetual desire to own attractive items.

---

<sup>16</sup> High-quality Chocolate-on-White Ware is by no means inferior to the best ceramic products of Cyprus as regards production technique and surface treatment (FISCHER 1999).

## Bibliography

- ARTZY, M.  
1998 Routes, Trade, Boats and “Nomads of the Sea”, 439–448, in: S. GITTIN, A. MAZAR and E. STERN (eds.), *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition. Thirteenth to Early Tenth Centuries BCE*, Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.
- BIETAK, M.  
1994 Bietak in: *Pharaonen und Fremde. Dynastien im Dunkel*, Catalogue: 222, Ausstellungskatalog, Wien, September 1994: Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.
- FISCHER, P.M.  
1999 Chocolate-on-White Ware: Typology, Chronology and Provenance. The Evidence from Tell Abu al-Kharaz, Jordan Valley, *BASOR* 313, 1–29.  
2000 A Synthesis of Ten Campaigns at Tell Abu al-Kharaz, Jordan Valley: The Early, Middle, Late Bronze and Iron Ages, 447–470, in: P. MATTHIAE, A. ENEA, L. PEYRONEL and F. PINNOCK (eds.), *Proceedings of the First International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Rome, May 18<sup>th</sup>–23<sup>rd</sup> 1998*, Rome.  
2003 The Preliminary Chronology of Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul: Results of the Renewed Excavations in 1999 and 2000, 263–294, in: M. BIETAK (ed.), *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C., Vol. II. Proceedings of the SCIEEM 2000 – EuroConference, Haindorf 2<sup>nd</sup> of May – 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2001*, CChEM 4, Vienna.  
forthc. 1 The Late Middle and the Late Bronze Ages in the Levant: Problems of Terminology, *Proceedings of the Third International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (3ICAANE)*, Paris.  
forthc. 2 *Tell Abu al-Kharaz in the Jordan Valley, Vol. II: The Middle and Late Bronze Ages*, CChEM, Vienna.
- FISCHER, P.M. and SADEQ, M.  
2000 Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul 1999. A Joint Palestinian-Swedish Field Project: First Season Preliminary Report, *E&L* 10, 211–226.  
2002 Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul 2000. Second Season Preliminary Report, *E&L* 12, 109–153.
- GLUECK, N.  
1951 Explorations in Eastern Palestine IV, *AASOR* 25–28, 261–275.
- KEMPINSKI, A.  
1974 Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Ajjul – Beth-Aglayim or Sharuhem? *IEJ* 24 (3–4), 145–151.
- MAEIR, A.M.  
1997 *The Material Culture of the Central Jordan Valley during the Middle Bronze II Period: Pottery and Settlement Pattern*, Diss. Hebrew University, Jerusalem.
- OTTOSSON, M.  
1969 *Gilead. Tradition and History*, Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series 3, Lund.
- PETRIE, F.  
1931 *Ancient Gaza I. Tell el Ajjul*, BSAE 53, London.  
1932 *Ancient Gaza II. Tell el Ajjul*, BSAE 54, London.  
1933 *Ancient Gaza III. Tell el Ajjul*, BSAE 55, London.  
1934 *Ancient Gaza IV. Tell el Ajjul*, BSAE 64, London.  
1952 *City of Shepherd Kings; Ancient Gaza V* (by E.J.H. MACKAY and M.A. MURRAY), BSAE XX, London.
- RAINEY, A. F.  
1993 Sharhan / Sharuhem – The Problem of Identification, 178–187, in: S. AHITUV and B.A. LEVINE (eds.), *Avraham Malamet Volume, Eretz Israel* 24, Jerusalem.
- THALMANN, J.-P.  
2000 Tell Arqa, *BAAL* 4, 5–74.

