

6. Some Late Helladic IIA pottery in the early Thutmosid Dra Abu el-Naga necropolis (Luxor, Egypt)

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1. Introduction

1.1. Synchronising the Aegean Late Bronze Age with the Egyptian New Kingdom

“Absolute calendar dates for the Aegean early Late Bronze Age, especially for the Late Minoan (LM) IA-B phases, and their Greek mainland equivalents, Late Helladic (LH) I-IIA, are still under discussion” (Höflmayer *et al.* 2013: 110)

The so-called traditional/conventional (‘low’) Aegean Late Bronze Age chronology is grounded on archaeological synchronisms with Egypt and the relatively precise Egyptian New Kingdom historical chronology (*ca.* 1550/1530 – *ca.* 1080/1070 BCE)³. These synchronisms are chiefly based on Egyptian artefacts (*Aegyptiaca*) found in Aegean contexts (like Egyptian stone vessels or inscribed scarabs) and Aegean artefacts (*Protohellenica*) in Egyptian contexts (like Minoan and Mycenaean pottery in tombs)⁴. To determine the strength of these cross-linkages, both artefacts and contexts need to be securely datable, with a manufacture date for the object and a horizon date for the context (homogeneous archaeological stratum or undisturbed burial assemblage). Nevertheless, as P. Warren and V. Hankey have already pointed out in their *magnum opus*, “despite all the discoveries of datable Egyptian objects in Aegean contexts or datable Aegean objects in Egyptian contexts, the ‘hard’ evidence available for a thoroughly secure chronology is still far from sufficient” (Warren & Hankey 1989: 120). To establish a more solid chronological framework, it is therefore essential to examine and publish fresh data as soon as possible to bring them into the current discussion.

As a part of the CHRONOS workshop held in Louvain-la-Neuve, one of the themes discussed and explored was the chronological interrelation between the Aegean early Late Bronze Age and Egypt. In the light of new archaeological investigations carried out by the Proyecto Djehuty, ceramic studies in the Ashmolean Museum’s storerooms and analysis of unpublished field notebooks in the Griffith Institute’s archives, this paper contributes

1 *Université catholique de Louvain & Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3*. I am very grateful to Jan Driessen and Tiziano Fantuzzi for their kind invitation to contribute to the proceedings of the CHRONOS workshop which I attended without submitting a paper at the time. I warmly thank Charlotte Langohr and Jeremy Rutter for their wise advice, critical feedback, and welcome suggestions. I also stress my gratitude to the numerous scholars who answered my questions in search of Aegean pottery in the storerooms of museums and archaeological sites, always with kindness and support. Finally, I would like to thank the following persons for giving me access to the documentation: Francisco Bosch-Puche (Griffith Institute), José Manuel Galán and Andrés Diego Espinel (Proyecto Djehuty), Claire Burton and Ilaria Perzia (Ashmolean Museum). This study was made possible thanks to two monthly scholarships: one granted by the *Institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire* (October 2021) and another by the *Maison française d’Oxford* (March 2023).

2 *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*. I would like to express my gratitude to José Manuel Galán (director of the Proyecto Djehuty) to give me the authorisation to publish the pottery material found in tomb SMDAN 1030 as well as David García González (archaeologist in charge of the excavation of this tomb) and María González Rodríguez (ceramologist who drew some of these pieces).

3 On the methods and argumentative demonstrations that make this relatively solid chronological framework for the Egyptian New Kingdom possible (with a margin of error of *ca.* 20 years for the beginning and *ca.* 10 years for the end of the New Kingdom), see notably Kitchen 2002; Hornung *et al.* 2006: 17-50, 197-217 & 492-493; Kitchen 2007; Schneider 2010; Gautschy 2014; Wiener 2015.

4 A new contextualised catalogue of *Aegyptiaca* and *Protohellenica* is currently being prepared by L. Dautais as part of his PhD dissertation. An updated seriation of key-contexts and sequences crosslinks will provide new insights into Aegean-Egyptian chronological synchronisation.

to the debate by considering some Late Helladic (henceforth LH) IIA pottery found within early Thutmosid tombs at the Dra Abu el-Naga necropolis and discusses their value for Aegean-Egyptian chronological synchronisation.

1.2. Dra Abu el-Naga necropolis in the early Thutmosid Era

Dra Abu el-Naga is located on the West Bank, opposite Thebes (modern Luxor, Egypt), in rocky hills four kilometres away from the Nile River (**Fig. 6.1**). It is one of the main areas that form the Theban Necropolis (see Porter & Moss 1960; Kampp 1996 and, recently, Slinger 2022), together with el-Asasif, Deir el-Bahari, el-Khokha, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, Qurnet Murai and Deir el-Medina (**Fig. 6.2**).



FIG. 6.1 LOCATION OF DRA ABU EL-NAGA, EGYPT (GOOGLE EARTH IMAGE MODIFIED BY AUTHORS)



FIG. 6.2 MAIN AREAS OF THE THEBAN NECROPOLIS, WITH DRA ABU EL-NAGA CIRCLED IN RED (AFTER SLINGER 2022: 2, FIG. 2)

The area of Dra Abu el-Naga has been explored since the 18th century (Miniaci 2009; Jiménez-Higueras 2020: 10-12); first by travellers and, inevitably, grave robbers.

In the early days of Egyptology, besides some epigraphic surveys made by J.-F. Champollion and I. Rosellini (French-Tuscan expedition, 1829), the first significant excavations were carried out by G.C.L. Passalacqua, an antiquities dealer in 1823 and later, some shaft graves and tombs were documented and published by C.R. Lepsius (Prussian expedition, 1844). Between the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century, several explorations took place in Dra Abu el-Naga. Archaeological work (excavation and clearing) and epigraphic documentation of individual tombs and grave clusters were carried out by European and American Egyptologists (e.g. Maspero 1894; Northampton *et al.* 1908; Gauthier 1908; Petrie 1909; Carnarvon & Carter 1912; de Garis Davies 1913; Fisher 1924; Kaczanowicz 2020: 40-41 on Jelf's excavations in 1909-1910). However, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive list of these works and their protagonists. Moreover, when published reports of their works appear, they fall far short of the standards expected today in archaeological publications.

After a long period characterised by epigraphic missions and the absence of archaeological excavations (*ca.* 1930s-1980s), there are currently six expeditions working here (Egyptian, American, Australian, German, Italian and Spanish), involved in the excavation, study and documentation as well as conservation and restoration of tombs in this necropolis.

Nowadays, Dra Abu el-Naga is best known as the burial place of the pharaohs of the 17th Dynasty and early 18th Dynasty (Polz 1995; 2005; Polz *et al.* 2014), until Hatshepsut chose to be buried in the Valley of the Kings (KV 20).

During the early Thutmosid Era (*ca.* 1493-1425 BCE)⁵, the Theban elites took over this formerly royal necropolis and built their own tombs alongside those of the members of the Ahmosid dynasty. At least 16 Theban Tombs (henceforth TT) dated to this period (**Fig. 6.3**) can be identified so far (after Porter & Moss 1960; Kampp 1996; Slinger 2022: 60-103, excluding the ill-known and mostly unexcavated ‘Kampp Tombs’, henceforth TKampp): TT 11 (Djehuty), TT 18 (Baki), TT 20 (Montuherkhepeshef), TT 24 (Nebamun), TT 144 (Nu), TT 145 (Nebamun), TT 146 (Nebamun), TT 154 (Tati), TT 155 (Intef), TT 164 (Intef), TT 234 (Roy), TT 260 (User), TT 262 (Name lost) and three lost tombs: those of Siuser (A.4), Thutnefer called Senu (A.6), and Thutnefer (A.10)⁶.

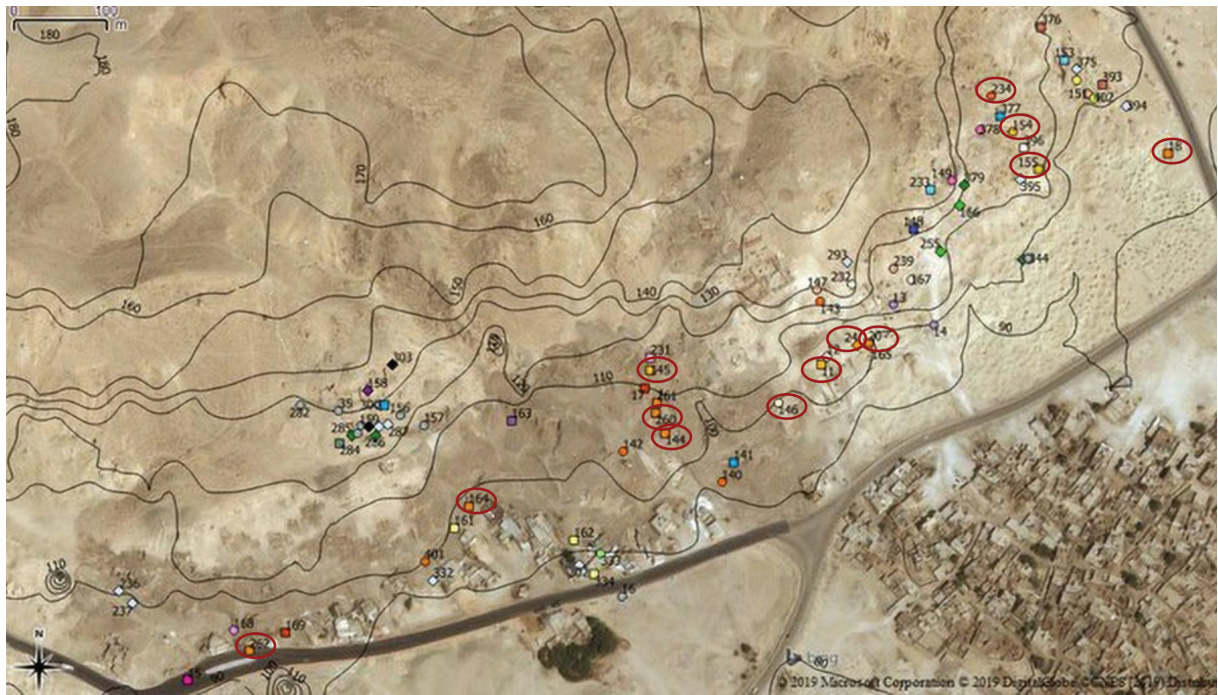


FIG. 6.3 LANDSCAPE OF DRA ABU EL-NAGA, WITH EARLY THUTMOSID TT CIRCLED IN RED (AFTER SLINGER 2022: 61, FIG. 68)

2. LH IIA pottery in context

This contribution examines all the LH IIA pottery (published or unpublished) from Dra Abu el-Naga contexts that has come to our attention through a study of both previous and current excavations⁷. It includes three vessels: a shallow semiglobular cup (FS218), a horizontal-handled piriform jar (FS21) and a small multi-carinated alabastron (FS80).

⁵ We define the Thutmosid Era as the period during which the family dynasty of the Thutmosids ruled in Egypt, namely from Thutmose I to Tutankhamun. The early Thutmosid Era is the period covering the reigns of Thutmose I, Thutmose II, Hatshepsut, and Thutmose III. The absolute dates are those given in Tallet *et al.* 2019: 420-421.

⁶ The tombs dated jointly to the Thutmose III (late?) – Amenhotep II reigns (*e.g.* TT 140, TT 142-143, TT 261, TT 378 and TT 401) are not considered here.

⁷ We are grateful to the directors and pottery specialists of the current expeditions (Bahaa Abd el-Gaber Badawy, Suzanne Onstine, Susanne Binder and Karin Sowada, Ute Rummel and Susanne Michels, Maria Carmela Betrò, José Manuel Galán and Zulema Barahona-Mendieta) for answering whether or not Late Bronze Age Aegean pottery had been found during their excavations (respectively TKampp 149-153; TT 16; TT 147-149, TT 233; TT 167, TT 232, TT 255, TKampp 130-131 and other tombs and shafts included in Areas E-F-G-H; TT 14 and surroundings; TT 11-12 and south-western surroundings). Only LH IIA pottery is published here; other, unpublished, Mycenaean sherds kindly shown to us in January and February 2023 are all exclusively dated to LH IIIA2-B.

2.1. TT 11

The owner of the TT 11 was Djehuty, a high official who served under the joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (Porter & Moss 1960: 21-24; Kampp 1996: 190-192; Jiménez-Higueras 2022: 1-5). His main administrative titles and duties seem to have been noble, leader, seal bearer of the *bj.t*, overseer of the Treasury, and overseer of works. Cut into the hillside, the tomb-chapel TT 11 is characterised by a large open courtyard while a rock-carved façade flanked the entrance. In the inner part, a transverse hall opens onto a corridor that leads to the shrine or worship chapel. At this level, a shaft gives access to the burial chamber (at a lower level).

Marquess Northampton excavations (1898-1899)

The excavations carried out in TT 11, under the auspices and with the financial support of Lord William George Compton, 5th Marquess of Northampton, represent the first known scientific activity in this tomb. At the beginning of November 1898, the Egyptologists W. Spiegelberg and P.E. Newberry started an archaeological season at Dra Abu el-Naga (Galán 2009: 158-160; Miniaci 2009: 43-45; Whelan 2013). The campaign lasted about three months and covered the entire hill of Dra Abu el-Naga, although work concentrated mostly on the foothills and the plain next to it. In the course of these excavations, the archaeologists spent almost one month (from the 18th of January to the 9th of February 1899) in the area of the tomb-chapel of Djehuty. They cleared the part of the courtyard closest to the façade, as well as the transverse hall and the corridor. We don't know if they excavated the shrine, the shaft, and the inner chamber. At least, they collected some objects from the burial chamber, but they did not excavate all the debris that filled this room, as the recent archaeological work carried out within the framework of the Proyecto Djehuty has shown.

As P.E. Newberry rigorously noted in his *Diary* ('Lord Northampton's Excavations 1898/9' kept in the Griffith Institute, University of Oxford), several dozen Egyptologists and travellers visited the concession during the excavations (list of persons in Whelan 2013: 246-250). One of these, the German Egyptologist F.W. von Bissing, appears to have spent the entire first post-excavation week (Monday 13 to Friday 17, February 1899) in the vicinity of the expedition according to the *Diary* (p. 28 and p. 31). P.E. Newberry even indicates that he "*had a long talk with him*" the last day of F.W. von Bissing's visit to the excavation site. At the end of the same year, F.W. von Bissing published a chronicle of finds and acquisitions from Egypt for the years 1897-1899 in the *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts – Athenische Abteilung* (the *Kairo Abteilung* was founded in 1907, and its *Mitteilungen* in 1930). He notably noticed some discoveries of Mycenaean objects; among them, he pointed out that "*during the excavations of Lord Northampton in Thebes, a third-style cup with handle was found in exactly the same shape and decoration as the one illustrated below from Abusir near Memphis, which has been in the Giza Museum for some time*"⁸ (von Bissing 1899: 57; information then taken over, without further examination, by Fimmen 1921: 99; Evans 1935: 267, n. 1; Kantor 1947: 35; Merrillees & Winter 1972: 117; Buchholz 1974: 453).

An excursus: the Mycenaean cup in Abusir

The Abusir cup (**Fig. 6.4**) was found in the *Puits des chiens*, probably in a now lost area of the Memphite necropolis (cf. Mynářová 2006 for a state of knowledge on Abusir during the New Kingdom). It entered the Egyptian Museum in Cairo in 1890 (inv. n° *Journal d'Entrée* 29158 and Special Register 5/1515, cf. Edgar 1911: 1, pl. 1, n° CGC 26124). Since August 1969, this vessel is kept in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria (inv. n° GRM 28813, pers. com. M.-D. Nenna 02.11.2021). According to C.C. Edgar (1911: 1), it has a rim diameter of 14.0 cm and is 9.5 cm high, but the height surely cannot be as high as 9.5, since the profile of this cup is a relatively shallow one. If the rim diameter is accurately measured at 14.0 cm, the height can be estimated fairly accurately from the photograph at slightly less than half of that or *ca.* 6.9 cm. The dimensions could not

⁸ Original version: "*Bei den Ausgrabungen des Lord Northampton in Theben wurde eine Henkelschale dritten Stils genau der gleichen Form und Dekoration wie die beistehend abgebildete aus Abusir bei Memphis, die schon länger im Gizehmuseum ist, gefunden*" (von Bissing 1899: 57).

be verified, and no new (colour) photographs could be taken, as the museum has been closed for renovation since 2005⁹. No further information is known about the discovery context of this well-preserved cup (year, inventor, precise location of the findspot, burial assemblage, *etc.*).

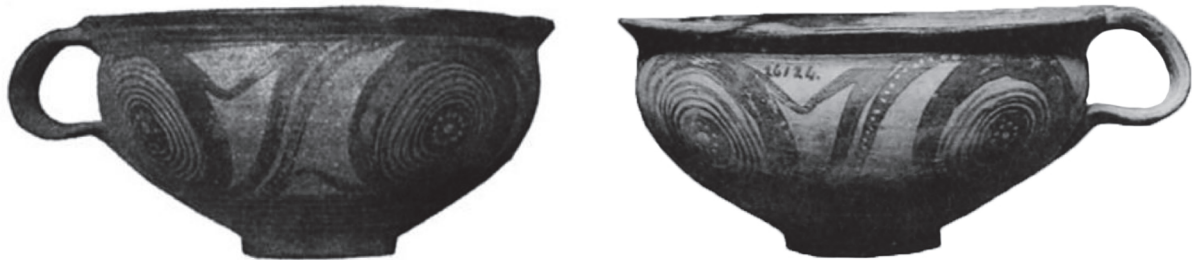


FIG. 6.4 LH IIA SHALLOW SEMIGLOBULAR CUP FS218 (ABUSIR) – MGR 28813. LEFT: VON BISSING 1899: 57, FIG. 1; RIGHT: EDGAR 1911: PL. 1, N° CGC 26124

This is a shallow semiglobular cup – Furumark Shape (henceforth FS) 218 (*cf.* Furumark 1941: 621, n° 218: 7). The inner surface is unpainted, apart from an inner lip dark-painted band. The outer surface is covered by a worn, yellow-buff slip and painted in black to lustrous brown with added white details. It is decorated with four spirals (a pair on each side) with a white dot-rossette in the centre of each and a line of white dots on the second of the two curved stripes between each pair. To this has been added a curving to V-shaped linking line filling each vacant space, above and below. This decoration is usual for this shape and can be described as a tangent-linked band-framed Running Spiral – Furumark Motif (henceforth FM) 46. The rim and foot are solidly painted, with thin lines added in white paint on the rim and foot bands. Three wide horizontal bands are painted on the handle.

As a ‘fossil type’ of the LH IIA period, the shallow cup FS218 with framed spiral FM46 is found in most areas of Mycenaean Greece (Mountjoy 1999: 23), including the Corinthia (Korakou: Blegen 1921: 37 and fig. 51.2-3), the Argolid (Prosymna: Blegen 1937: 56 [n° 396], fig. 104 & [n° 408], fig. 105), Laconia (Agios Stephanos: Mountjoy 1999: 258), Messenia (Ano Englianos: Mountjoy 1999: 323 [n° 22] and fig. 108), Triphylia (Makraysia: Mountjoy 1999: 377 [n° 24] and fig. 130), Boeotia (Dramesi: Mountjoy 1999: 651 [n° 14] and fig. 247), Euboea (Chalkis: Mountjoy 1999: 700 [n° 6] and fig. 268), and in some islands (Aigina, Kea and Melos, *cf.* Mountjoy 1999: 877, 900 & 1083).

Nonetheless, some details of the decoration could suggest a manufacture in the Argolid (Fig. 6.5). Indeed, the decoration of four spirals is unusual (more commonly comprising two or three spirals) but is found both in Messenia (Ano Englianos: Blegen *et al.* 1973: 198-199 and fig. 249.27) and the Argolid (Dendra: Persson 1942: 26 [n° 5-6] and fig. 29.1-2). The added white details (*i.e.* dot rosette in the centre of each spiral, line of dots on the second of the two curved stripes between each pair, thin lines on bands) are mainly attested in Argolis, as numerous examples come from Mycenae (Wace 1932: 103, n° 1 and pl. 1; Mountjoy 1999: 94, n° 340 with further references), Tiryns (Mountjoy 1999: 94 [n° 57] and fig. 15; French & French 1971: 35 & pl. 25:1; Döhl 1975: 141 [n° 27], fig. 3 & pl. 74:1), Prosymna (Blegen 1937: 103-104 [n° 1182], fig. 228, & 170, fig. 660), Midea (Walberg 2007: 232 [n° 1479] & fig. 129), Kokla (Demakopoulou 1993: 62, n° 19 & pl. 6:19) and several other places (*e.g.* Argos Aspis, *cf.* Mountjoy 1999: 94, n° 340). More rare examples with this feature are attested in the Corinthia (Mountjoy 1999: 205 [n° 12] and fig. 62), Euboea (Mountjoy 1999: 700 [n° 6] & fig. 268) and the Cyclades (Kea: Cummer & Schofield 1984: 118, n° 1415 & fig. 81; Melos: Mountjoy 1999: 900, unpublished), and these could mainly be imports from the Argolid.

It should also be remembered that, in the south-western Peloponnese (Messenia and Triphylia), shallow cups FS218 with framed spiral FM46 have a distinctive feature: a monochrome interior (likely a Minoan influence), in contrast to the much more conventional inner lip band (*cf.* Mountjoy 1999: 323 & Huber 2021: 582, with examples from Ano Englianos, Volimidia, Kakovatos, Kleidi-Samikon, Makraysia and Epitalion). All this indicates that this

⁹ The museum reopened very recently, in October 2023, but no authorisation to study this object has yet been granted. The cup is displayed in a showcase in the museum with the erroneous date “19th-20th Dynasty”. Thanks to the diligence of our colleague Valentina Gasperini, who provided us with some snapshots in December 2023, we are able to confirm the colours and description of the decoration given below.

vessel (FS218 with added white details) could be an Argive product¹⁰. From this perspective, it is worth noting that the added white itself is surely, like the handle type, an indication of metal prototypes, the color contrast being an imitation of inlaying in precious metal versions of the shape.



FIG. 6.5 COMPARANDA FS218 SHALLOW CUP WITH FM46 FRAMED SPIRALS, WITH ADDED WHITE, FOUND IN THE ARGOLID (MYCENAE: WACE 1932: 103, N° 1, PL. 1 & TIRYNS: DÖHL 1975: 141, FIG. 3, PL. 74:1)

The Mycenaean cup in TT 11: looking at the archives

Returning to the Dra Abu el Naga cup mentioned by von Bissing (1899: 57), it is neither mentioned nor illustrated in the excavation report (Northampton *et al.* 1908). However, in this report, the diggers state that “*everything – important and unimportant – has been catalogued in the Journal of the Excavations from November 7, 1898 to February 9, 1899, which is now deposited in the Egyptological Institute of the University of Strassburg, where it may be examined by any student*” (Northampton *et al.* 1908: ix). This “*Journal of the Excavations*” is actually Spiegelberg’s *Fundjournal*. Since the German Egyptologist W. Spiegelberg (1870-1930) had to leave the University of Strassburg after the *Traité de Versailles* (1919), and joined Heidelberg before assuming the chair of Egyptology in Munich in 1923, so this *Fundjournal* is no longer in Strassburg. After Spiegelberg’s death, part of his scientific archives was turned over in 1931 to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago as a gift to his most qualified private student at the time, W.F. Edgerton. When the latter died, G.R. Hughes deposited the diary in the Griffith Institute at Oxford in 1970 (Galán 2009: 159).

The diary is, more than anything else, a register of finds, as Spiegelberg himself entitled it: “*Fundjournal*” (Spiegelberg 1898-1899). TT 11 was not intact, and among the debris, Spiegelberg mentions – on the 2nd of February 1899 – a “*very thin-walled yellowish un-Egyptian sherd with volute motif, probably from a bowl*”¹¹ (Fig. 6.6). This sherd is illustrated with two drawings (decoration of the outer surface and shape of the pottery) and its relatively precise location is indicated by a cross on a rough sketch of TT 11: the sherd was found inside the tomb (“*Im Inneren des Grabes*”) at the end of the corridor, close to the entrance to Djehuty’s worship chapel. Thanks to these drawings and the short description made by Spiegelberg, one can recognise a ‘framed spiral’ FM 46 on the outer surface of the body. It is tempting, in this way, to identify it with the vessel mentioned in von Bissing’s chronicle. However, the latter seems to indicate the discovery of a complete cup, even specifying that it was fitted with a handle, and hence not just a decorated body sherd.

The accuracy of von Bissing’s indications can, nonetheless, be questioned when considering the information on the two other Mycenaean finds from Egypt in his 1897-1899 chronicle (von Bissing 1899: 57). He first mentions a metal stirrup jar at Dendera (W.M.F. Petrie, 1897-1898 season) but, as M.H.R. Bell (1983: 15) already clearly argued, it

¹⁰ Wace & Blegen (1939: 147) are confident that this cup has an Argolid fabric. Only petrographic or neutron activation analysis would be able to confirm or refute this hypothesis, but these destructive investigations are hardly feasible in Egypt, especially on material displayed in a state museum.

¹¹ Original version (Spiegelberg 1898-1899: 108): “*Sehr dünnwandiger gelblicher unägyptischer Scherben mit Volutenmotiv wohl von einer Schale*”.

is likely that von Bissing was mistaken and that this object never existed. Then, he referred to some Mycenaean body sherds belonging to stirrup jars found at the palace of Amenhotep III in Malqata (without indicating the name of the excavator or the year of the excavation). No legal excavation of the Malqata archaeological site is recorded during the years 1897-1899, and nothing is reported on this subject in the minutes of the *Comité d'Égyptologie*'s meetings for the years 1898-1899 under the chairmanship of V. Loret (pers. com. C. Jarsaillon, 19.04.2023). A first archaeological investigation of the site was conducted by the *Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* (henceforth SAE) in 1888 and directed by G. Daressy (1903). The following excavation at this site was carried out in 1901-1902 by R. de P. Tytus and P.E. Newberry (Tytus 1903). Their publications hardly mention any pottery material found during these excavations, and no Mycenaean sherd from these archaeological works reached the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (survey October 2021)¹². It would therefore seem that von Bissing made another mistake (for a similar opinion, see Merrillees 1972: 291; Helck 1995: 74, n. 27).

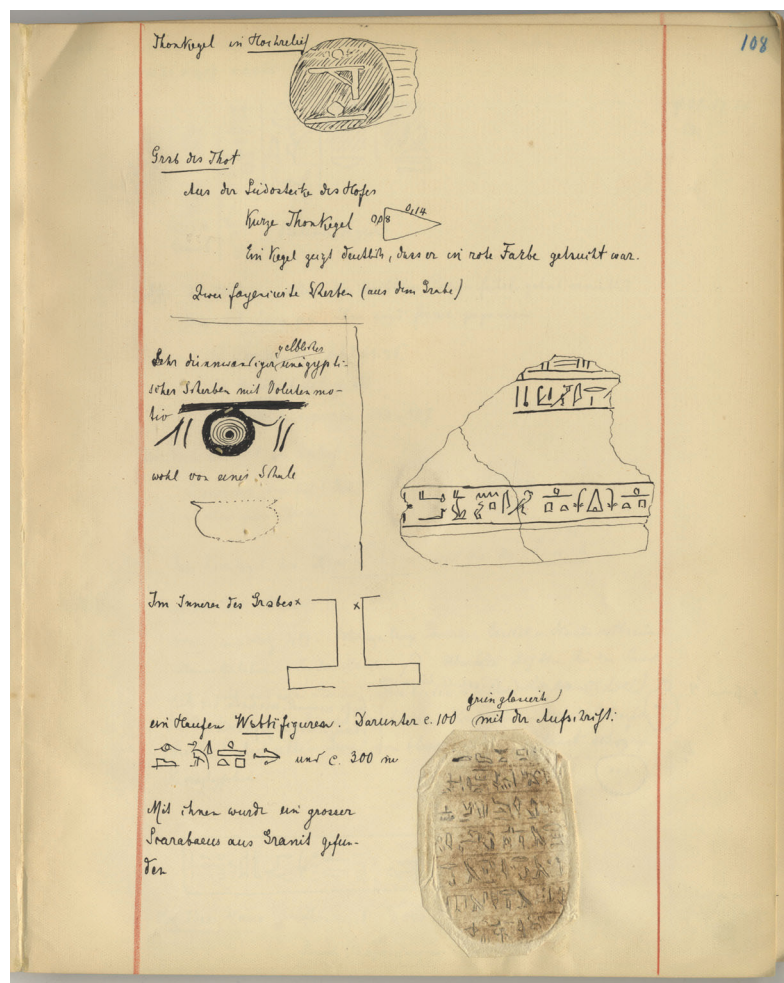


FIG. 6.6 SPIEGELBERG 1898-1899: 108 (©Courtesy of the GRIFFITH INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)

Considering these inaccuracies in von Bissing's chronicle, it is likely that the discovery of a Mycenaean cup at Dra Abu al-Naga during Northampton's excavations is this specific sherd attested in Spiegelberg's *Fundjournal* but that it was not complete as von Bissing suggested.

¹² It should also be stressed that no Mycenaean pottery was found at the Amenhotep III Palace in Malqata during the excavations undertaken by the Metropolitan Museum of Art Expedition (1910-1921 and since 2007, pers. com. D. Craig Patch, 30.01.2022), nor during those carried out by the University of Pennsylvania Expedition (1971-1977) and the Waseda University Expedition (1972-1980, 1985-1988).

It would be desirable to locate the current location of this sherd to allow a better description. According to the minutes of the meeting of 29 October 1898 of the *Comité d'Égyptologie* (archive number NAF 1657, *Département des manuscrits, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris*)¹³: “*The Marquis of Northampton offers to pay the costs of investigations in the necropolis of Dra Abul Nega and on the site of the temple of Amenhotep I at Gurna, leaving to the Museum of Giza all the objects which will be discovered* [our stress]. *M.M. Spiegelberg and Newberry would supervise this work. [...] The disinterested request of the Marquis of Northampton is gratefully granted*”¹⁴. In the meeting of 20 December 1898, the *Comité* reiterates: “*In its meeting of October 29, the Committee had granted permission to the Marquis of Northampton to excavate at Dra Abul Naggah on condition that he agrees with the Antiquities Service on the limits of the land granted. [...] Given the special conditions of this permission, all the objects found having to belong to the Museum* [our stress], *a modus vivendi was adopted; the Marquis of Northampton is currently excavating only in the part of the necropolis which is left to him without dispute*”¹⁵. Among the slightly less than one hundred objects recorded in the museum (JE 33436-33533) for Northampton’s excavations at Thebes between January and March 1899 in the *Bulletin de l’Institut Égyptien* (1899: 215-226), none of them correspond to the description of this sherd. Moreover, we consulted the *Journal d’Entrée* during a visit to the Registration Collection Management and Documentation Department (RCMDD) of the Egyptian Museum (Cairo) in October 2021 and came to the same conclusion.¹⁶

Since, according to the minutes of the meeting of 20 December 1898, V. Loret emphasises that pottery vessels, and especially sherds, are of no interest to the SAE or to tourists and antiquities dealers, it is possible that this sherd was given to the excavators (W. Spiegelberg or P.E. Newberry) or the sponsor (Lord Northampton), at their discretion. However, it is not kept in the institutions in which W. Spiegelberg worked and lived: neither in the *Institut d’Égyptologie* of the *Université de Strasbourg* (F. Colin, pers. com. 09.01.2023), the *Institut für Ägyptologie* of the *Universität Heidelberg* (J.F. Quack, pers. com. 26.10.2022 and D. Faltings, pers. com. 09.11.2022), nor in the institutions in Munich: the *Sammlungen des Instituts für Ägyptologie und Koptologie* (F. Hoffmann, pers. com. 09.01.2023), the *Staatlichen Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst* (J. Dahms, pers. com. 18.01.2023) and the *Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek* (J. Gebauer, pers. com. 12.01.2023). Alternatively, the sherd may have been held by P.E. Newberry and could then have been given to some other institution. If so, it would be even more difficult to trace it, since Newberry gave antiquities to many English museums according to A. Diego Espinel (pers. com. 24.10.2022), including the British Museum (London), the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford), the World Museum (Liverpool) and the Manchester Museum (Manchester). However, an extensive survey of all Aegean pottery found in Egypt and Nubia and documented in overseas (mostly European and North-American) museums, including these ones, rules out these possibilities. In a similar way, the sherd is not in the collections of the Northampton Museums & Art Gallery (J. Birrell, pers. com. 08.03.2023) and neither in the Castle Ashby private collections of the heirs of Lord W.G. Compton (5th Marquess of Northampton), following a discussion between Lord S.D.D. Compton (7th Marquess of Northampton) and L. Higson, Office Manager of the Compton Estates (pers. com. 23.03.2023).

Even though this decorated sherd received special attention in Spiegelberg’s excavation notebook and was mentioned by his colleague von Bissing in his chronicle of finds for the German Institute, it seems that it was not retained by the excavators as it is not a complete vessel – a common practice around the turn of the 20th century – and is thus currently lost.

¹³ Our heartfelt thanks to C. Jarsaillon for bringing these documents to our attention.

¹⁴ Original version (p. 7): “*Le Marquis de Northampton offre de faire les frais de recherches dans la nécropole de Dra-Aboul-Negga et sur l’emplacement du temple d’Amenhotep I^{er} à Gurna en laissant au Musée de Gizeh tous les objets qui seront découverts. M.M. Spiegelberg et Newberry dirigeraient ces travaux. [...] La demande désintéressée du Marquis de Northampton est accordée avec reconnaissance*”.

¹⁵ Original version (p. 22-23): “*Dans sa séance du 29 Octobre, le Comité avait accordé au Marquis de Northampton la permission de fouiller à Dra Aboul Naggah à condition de se mettre d’accord avec le Service des Antiquités sur les limites du terrain concédé. [...] Étant donné les conditions spéciales de cette autorisation, tous les objets trouvés devant appartenir au Musée, on a adopté un modus vivendi; M. le marquis de Northampton ne fouille actuellement que dans la partie de la nécropole qui lui est laissée sans contestation.*”

¹⁶ Thanks to the diligence of the head of the RCMDD department, Marwa Abdel Razek.

The Mycenaean cup in TT 11: a description

Only the information in the *Fundjournal* allows us to describe the sherd more precisely. Spiegelberg assumed the sherd was ‘*probably from a bowl*’: he drew the profile and reconstructed the whole shape in a dotted line (Fig. 6.7).

However, this precise profile (with a flattened flared lip), the fine yellow-buff slip (“*Yellowish un-Egyptian sherd*”) and the (black to brown?) painted decoration (FM 46 – the so-called ‘*volute motif*’, flanked by double tangent bands, and a curving band in the upper part of the vacant space, below a rim band) identify it as a typical LH IIA shallow semiglobular cup (FS 218), which is frequently attested in early Mycenaean sites (see above). Based on the drawing, a large spiral takes up a lot of space on the outer surface, leaving little space to include a second or even a half one on the same side. This sherd could thus correspond to the classic shallow cup decoration with one large spiral on each side: a well-preserved parallel comes from Dramesi, Boeotia (Fig. 6.8), among many others from the Mycenaean mainland and Aegean islands.

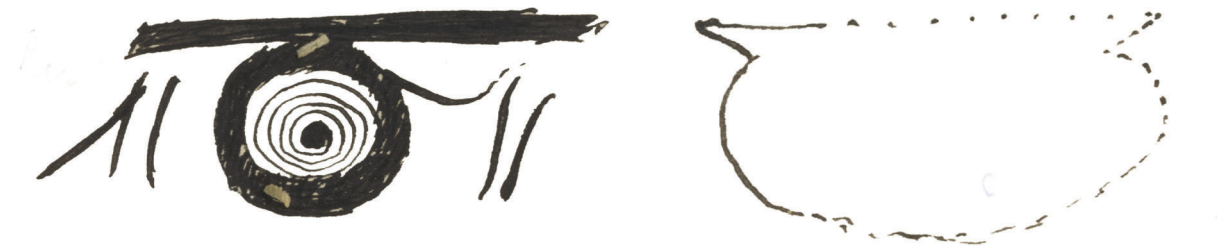


FIG. 6.7 LH IIA SHALLOW SEMIGLOBULAR CUP FS218 (TT 11) – CURRENT LOCATION UNKNOWN (©Courtesy of the GRIFFITH INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, MODIFIED BY L. DAUTAIS)

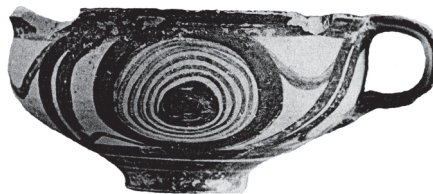


FIG. 6.8 COMPARANDA FS218 SHALLOW CUP WITH FM46 FRAMED SPIRALS, WITH ONE LARGE SPIRAL ON EACH SIDE (DRAMESI, BOEOTIA: PAVÚK & HOREJS 2012: 82, FIG. 11.3)

The Mycenaean cup from TT 11: understanding its archaeological context

When discovered in 1899, Tomb TT 11 was not intact. The profiles of some of the pottery found during the limited excavation of the tomb was carefully drawn by Spiegelberg (1898-1899: 106-115): all of it is to be dated to the Late and the Ptolemaic Period, except for a neck of a Late Cypriot IB vessel (Spiegelberg 1898-1899: 106, n°6, described below). Recent systematic excavations carried out in this tomb by the Proyecto Djehuty also yielded a large quantity of post-Thutmosid Era material; mostly from the Late Period, but also from the Ramesside and Greco-Roman periods (currently under study by Z. Barahona-Mendieta). All this indicates that this Mycenaean sherd from a shallow cup – which lay among the debris at the end of the corridor (close to the entrance to the worship chapel) – was most likely found in a highly disturbed fill.

Although one could envisage the possibility that this Mycenaean sherd was part of the original funerary apparatus of (one of) the deceased, buried in this tomb, both the circumstances and methodology of the 1899 excavations and the (looted) state in which the tomb was discovered make any reconstruction of the primary archaeological context uncertain.

It can be observed that other so-called “*mykenischen*” objects were described and drawn in Spiegelberg (1898-1899: 16, 65 & 106). Nonetheless, all three should be identified as Cypriot Base Ring I juglets (Late Cypriot IB, ca. 1525-1450 BCE), so-called “*Bilbils*”. The first, found on 22 November 1898 in an unknown tomb (Spiegelberg 1898-1899: 16, n° 2, with illustration), is an intact vessel (published in Merrillees 1968: 120, n° 1, JE 33470). The

second, found on 12 January 1899 in an unknown tomb (Spiegelberg 1898-1899: 65, n° 7, with illustration), is an almost complete vessel (only the handle is missing). The third, found on 31 January 1899 in the shaft located at the western wing of the TT 11 transverse hall (Spiegelberg 1898-1899: 106, n° 6, with illustration; mentioned in Galán 2009: 160-161), is the upper part (mouth, neck and top of the body) of a vessel. At the very end of the 19th century, identifications of Aegean, Cypriot and Levantine pottery were still inaccurate: for example, it was not uncommon to indicate ‘a Syrian vase’ when it concerned a Mycenaean stirrup jar.

2.2. TT 20

The owner of the TT 20 was Montuherkhepeshef, an official who served under the reigns of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (Porter & Moss 1960: 34-35; Kampp 1996: 201-203; Jiménez-Higueras 2022: 18-20). His main administrative titles and duties seem to have been noble, fan-bearer and governor of the 10th Upper Egyptian nome (‘Cobra land’) whose main centre was Tjebu, nowadays Qaw el-Kebir. Cut into the hillside, the tomb-chapel TT 20 is characterised by an entrance opening onto a transverse hall. From the latter, a corridor leads to an unfinished room (shrine or burial chamber?). A shaft is located in the corridor, leading to a lower room. The walls of the transverse hall and the corridor are carved in painted bas-relief; the ceilings of these rooms are also painted.

In January 1882, a team of the SAÉ supervised by G. Maspero (1894: 435) cleared the transversal hall and partially the corridor, removing much rocky debris that resulted from the collapse of the ceiling and the disintegration of the walls which obstructed the innermost part of tomb TT 20. No burial furniture is mentioned¹⁷. The entrance door was blocked, so the diggers entered this tomb through a hole in the wall of the neighbouring tomb of Nebamon (TT 24), which dated to Thutmose II-Thutmose III’s reigns. Maspero mainly carried out epigraphic surveys, completed by U. Bouriant in 1889-1890, which he published five years later (Maspero 1894: 436-468). In 1910, A. Weigall, then in charge of the protection and management of archaeological sites in Upper Egypt for the SAÉ, included TT 20 in its safeguarding programme for the tombs of the Theban necropolis, with work then mainly carried out under the direction of Rushdy Effendi, the local inspector of the West Bank, Luxor. During the twenty or so years following the work of Maspero and Bouriant, the tomb had suffered further damage and had been revisited by looters and dealers of antiquities, cutting out whole sections of the bas-reliefs.

Egypt Exploration Fund excavations (1911-1912)

After making copies of the remaining reliefs and paintings in late 1910, N. de Garis Davies (1913: 1-19, pl. 17 & pl. 41:1-2) extensively excavated inside and in front of the tomb in 1911-1912 thanks to a small grant secured by the Egypt Exploration Fund. No archival records of this excavation are held at the EES Office (London), nor in the Griffith Institute (Oxford). According to his brief published report, de Garis Davies (1913: 2) cleared all the inner parts: entrance, transversal hall, corridor (with shaft and lower room, *i.e.* the so-called ‘burial-shaft’), the unfinished room and, also, a portion of the open courtyard. De Garis Davies (1913: 4) pointed out that the lower room accessible by the shaft had already been partially cleared before the work by the SAÉ, probably by looters.

This excavation was mainly motivated by the discovery of fragments of decorated and inscribed bas-reliefs to reconstruct the puzzle presented by the scenes on the walls. However, he also identified the remains of burial equipment in the tomb, which had been much disturbed by previous looting and earlier works (de Garis Davies 1913: 5).

The Mycenaean piriform jar from TT 20: a description

Among the recorded items, de Garis Davies (1913: 6, n° 32 & pl. 41) listed ‘a dozen’ sherds (rim, neck, shoulder, body, base and two handles) belonging to a horizontal-handled piriform jar (**Fig. 6.9**) while we counted 15 sherds during the study of the vessel. In addition, two more should be added according to a pen note on the object’s Index Card in the Ashmolean Museum: “*Two further frags. Found in situ, 1982 (M. Bell): see file*”. No record of this

¹⁷ De Garis Davies (1913: 5) pointed out that “*Interesting material must surely have been forthcoming at the first clearance, but the statement by M. Maspero of the conditions on which it was conducted renders inquiry useless*”.

file has been found in the Ashmolean Museum archives and the scientific records of M.H.R. Bell have not yet been rediscovered.¹⁸ It is therefore impossible to know to which part of the vase the two sherds found ‘*in situ*’ (in TT 20?) should be attached. L. Bell led an epigraphic mission to Dra Abu el-Naga between 1967 and 1974 (Miniaci 2009: 75), but none of his publications indicate that he or his wife surveyed TT 20.



FIG. 6.9 LH IIA HORIZONTAL-HANDLED PIRIFORM JAR FS 21 (TT 20) – AM AN.1911.446 (©Courtesy of the ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD; PHOTOGRAPHS L. DAUTAIS)

The vessel was restored when it entered the Ashmolean Museum in 1911. In its present condition, it has a maximum diameter of 23.4 cm and is 26.8 cm high. This object (inv. n° AM AN.1911.446, *cf.* Hogarth 1911: 12, fig. 3; Hardwick *et al.* 2003: 45, n° 1) is on display in the Sackler Gallery of Egyptian Antiquities in the University of Oxford's Museum of Art and Archaeology (Room 24, Case ‘An international Age’, object on display n° 26). It has long been listed in the *Protohellenica* catalogues as one of the first Mycenaean vases to arrive in Egypt (Pendlebury 1930a: 113; 1930b: 86; Evans 1935: 275-276, fig. 208; Wace & Blegen 1939: 146 [n° B.1]; Kantor 1947: 33, pl. 8:D; Furumark 1950: 212-213, fig. 21; Stubbings 1951: 57; Merrillees 1972: 284; Merrillees & Winter 1972: 117; Buchholz 1974: 453; Helck 1995: 70 [n° e]; Judas 2010: 25 [n° 67], 604; Hassler 2015: 1994).

The light orange fabric is coated on the exterior with a pale cream to yellow slip (that appears to have been burnished) and is decorated with a lustrous black paint. The flattened top of the lip is painted with curved stripes (FM67:2). Below a solidly painted neck and rim, the shoulder and the body are decorated with four rows of curved stripes (FM67:2), separated by horizontal double lines. A torus disc base, a flat shoulder, a high neck and three grooved and painted horizontal handles, identify it as a horizontal-handled piriform jar (FS21), added to this typical (FM67:2) and uniform decoration (Mountjoy 1999: 87, 502): all these are characteristics of a LH IIA date. Regarding the decoration, it should be stressed that the multiple zones of curved stripes are a kind of FM67:2 ‘variant’ with the added black dots at the top, and in this way look like the outlines of boar’s tusks with perforations allowing them to be attached to the leather cap that forms the interior of such helmets.

During this phase, piriform jars (FS21 and FS27) are more generally decorated with rows of zigzag (FM61) and curved strips (FM67) patterns that alternate as shown by examples from the Aegean islands (*e.g.* Kea: Agia Irini, *cf.* Mountjoy 1999: 869, n° 7, fig. 353; Melos: Phylakopi, *cf.* Mountjoy 1999: 894; Kos: Serraglio, *cf.* Mountjoy 1999: 1083), but also from Laconia (Agios Stephanos, *cf.* Mountjoy 1999: 254) and Attica (Athens: Graef & Langlotz 1909: pl. 3:71b).

Only a few parallels (FS21 vessels) with such a uniform decoration throughout the different superimposed decorative friezes (FM67:2 ‘variant’) are known, like some sherds in Attica (Kiapha Thiti, *cf.* Maran 1992: pl. 32:972; Athens, *cf.* Mountjoy 1981: 2, n° 137 & fig. 13, 42, n° 314, & fig. 24, 50, n° 421, & fig. 31, and

¹⁸ These are supposed to have survived with her husband Lanny Bell at least until the death of the latter in late 2019 (pers. com. K. Brancoforte 31.10.2022).

especially a rim which is a perfect parallel (Athens, *cf.* Mountjoy 1981: 27, n° 133 & fig. 13). Another large sherd decorated with FM67:2 ‘variant’ alternating with FM67:7 (an ‘alternating style’ known as FM67:11) was discovered during Schliemann’s excavations on the acropolis of Mycenae (**Fig. 6.10**)¹⁹. Due to the rarity of parallels, it is not possible to interpret such a decoration (FM67:2 ‘variant’) on FS21 as characteristic for a workshop in Attica and/or the Argolid²⁰. The ones decorated in this way and found in Messenia (Malthi, *cf.* Mountjoy 1999: 317, n° 9-10 [FS21 variant as ‘truncated piriform jar’], fig. 105) could both be imported, as those found on Crete (*e.g.* at Knossos, Makrygialos and Zakros, *cf.* Galaty & Rutter 2022: 442-443, table 3).



FIG. 6.10 COMPARANDA LH IIA PIRIFORM JAR (LARGE BODY SHERD) FOUND AT MYCENAE (FURTWÄNGLER & LOESCHCKE 1886: PL. 25:188 [UPSIDE DOWN])

The Mycenaean piriform jar in TT 20: understanding its archaeological context

The excavator (de Garis Davies 1913: 7) states that “*the chief fragments were found just outside the tomb, but others were subsequently added from the back chamber and from the burial-shaft*”. As both de Garis Davies (1913: 4) and later Kampp (1996: 201) demonstrated, chapel-tomb TT 20 was built after the adjacent TT 24 and the burial-shaft under the TT 20 corridor. Nonetheless, these constructions, and thus burials, are very close in time since TT 24 can be dated by inscriptions to the reigns of Thutmose II – Thutmose III, and TT 20 is related by stylistic and iconographic details of the decorations to Hatshepsut – Thutmose III (Serrano 2017: 592). Among the funerary furnishings in the debris of TT 20 were canopic jars of Amenmes in the ‘burial-shaft’ and in the corridor were funerary cones of Nebamun (the owner of TT 24). These can be dated to the first half or the middle of 18th Dynasty (de Garis Davies 1913: 5-7, pl. 17).

M.H.R. Bell has seriously questioned the date given to the context of the Mycenaean piriform jar. First, she claims that “*the attribution of this piece to the disturbed burial of Amenmes is quite arbitrary and suspect. The date of Hatshepsut-Thutmosis III cannot be relied upon and should not be used as a synchronism to establish any absolute chronologies*” (Bell 1982: 154, n. 2). And that a “*re-examination clearly shows that this rather odd*

¹⁹ Already mentioned in Evans 1935: 275, fig. 209 and Furumark 1941: 588, FS21:1.

²⁰ Wace & Blegen (1939: 147) are confident that this piriform jar has an Argolid fabric. Only petrographic or neutron activation analysis would be able to confirm or refute this.

tomb of uncertain history was thoroughly disturbed and is useless for chronology. The vase must not be used for absolute chronology” (Bell 1985: 76, n. 121). Because of this, Hankey (1987: 46) and Warren (Warren & Hankey 1989: 172, n. 22) discarded this context from the discussion for a chronological synchronisation (see also Höflmayer 2012a: 162-164, fig. 67), going so far as to refer to Evans (1935: 275, n. 2) for whom “*this tomb itself is of the 19th Dynasty*” and that the Mycenaean piriform jar “*was an intrusive object*”. Helck (1995: 70) adds that “*the usual dating of the tomb under Thutmosis III is not certain!*”²¹. It turns out that the mention of a “*19th Dynasty*” dating for this tomb goes back to Pendlebury (1930a: 113; 1930b: 86) in his seminal publications on Egypto-Aegean relations in the Late Bronze Age. On what is this claim for a 19th Dynasty dating of the tomb based? It is likely that he either only referred to the publication of the tomb by Maspero (1894: 36) who dated the tomb to the reigns of Seti I – Ramesses II, or that he erroneously mixed the deceased Amenmes of the burial shaft in TT 20 with the occupant of another tomb carrying the same name – a priest living during the early 19th Dynasty whose tomb is some 150 m further north-east, TT 19 (Kampp 1996: 200-201).

When de Garis Davies (1913: 7) states that “*it is regrettable that so interesting a find as this is not securely dated*”, he refers mainly to the fact that there is “*no proof of the burial of Montuherkhepeshef, in the tomb*” and, therefore, he prefers “*to assign this and other burial furniture to Amenmes, who can scarcely be earlier than Hatshepsut or later than the reign of Thutmose III*”. However, since no objects inscribed with Montuherkhepeshef’s name were found, this does not rule out the possibility that this individual was once buried there, but that the objects inscribed with his name had all been looted before the excavations. It is therefore impossible to assign, with certainty, the objects of the (uninscribed) funerary furniture belonging to a particular individual: the Mycenaean piriform jar is no exception to this. It is important to underline, nonetheless, that the excavator already dated the grave goods found inside and in front of the tomb to the reigns of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III.

As shown above, despite the important disturbance of the tomb, this cluster of burials (TT 24, TT 20 and lower room below shaft) can be securely dated to the early Thutmosid Era. Moreover, as there are no late (intrusion) objects recorded among the material collected by de Garis Davies (1913: 5-7, pl. 17), it is reasonable to assume that the Mycenaean piriform jar was part of the funerary apparatus of one of the deceased in one of the three tombs²², even if the sherds were found in different spots (in front of the tomb, in the unfinished room and in the so-called ‘burial-shaft’).

2.3. TC 1030

Since 2002, a Spanish Mission has been working in the necropolis of Dra Abu el-Naga (= SMDAN, cf. Galán & Jiménez-Higueras 2015; García González & Galán 2016; Galán 2021). Led by J.M. Galán, the Proyecto Djehuty (<https://proyectodjehuty.com/>) first focused on the excavation of TT 11 and its courtyard (Galán 2007a; 2007b; 2009; 2014a; 2014b; 2015; 2023) and later on the surroundings of the tomb. To the southwest of the courtyard of the tomb of Djehuty is an area now called Sector 10. This area was occupied by a village that was demolished during the winter of 2006-2007, and its inhabitants were relocated to New Gurna. After removing the debris, the excavation area was extended in 2011 and several funerary structures have been unearthed since, dating to the 11th to 19th Dynasties.

A rock-cut tomb-chapel with an open courtyard was recorded during the 2016 and 2017 excavation seasons by García González and was labelled tomb-chapel (TC) 1030. Even though there is insufficient data to identify its owner, its morphology and the size of its mudbricks suggest an 18th or early 19th Dynasty date (García González 2019: 111-113). This tomb was robbed and reused, mostly during the Third Intermediate and Ptolemaic Period (García González *et al.* 2020; Villar Gómez & García González 2022).

21 Original version: “*Die übliche Datierung des Grabes unter Thutmosis III. ist aber nicht sicher!*”.

22 It should be kept in mind that the individuals buried in TT 20, TT 24 and the lower room below the shaft may have been others than Nebamun, Amenmes or Montuherkhepeshef, such as family (or friends?), as indicated by other anthroponyms (*e.g.* Amenemheb, Mentou, Kha, Thanefer, Tjentamun, Padjef and Ankhefenamun) found among the debris of TT 20 burial assemblages (de Garis Davies 1913: 6-7, n° 9, 14-19, 21, 23, 25-26).

Spanish National Research Council excavations (since 2002)

The Mycenaean alabastron in TC 1030: a description

During the excavation of the courtyard of TC 1030 in 2016, four sherds of an imported vessel (SMDAN 5362, mentioned briefly in Villar Gómez & García González 2022: 581, n. 8) were discovered. The vase would have a maximum diameter of 10.5 cm and its preserved height is 3.5 cm (Fig. 6.11).

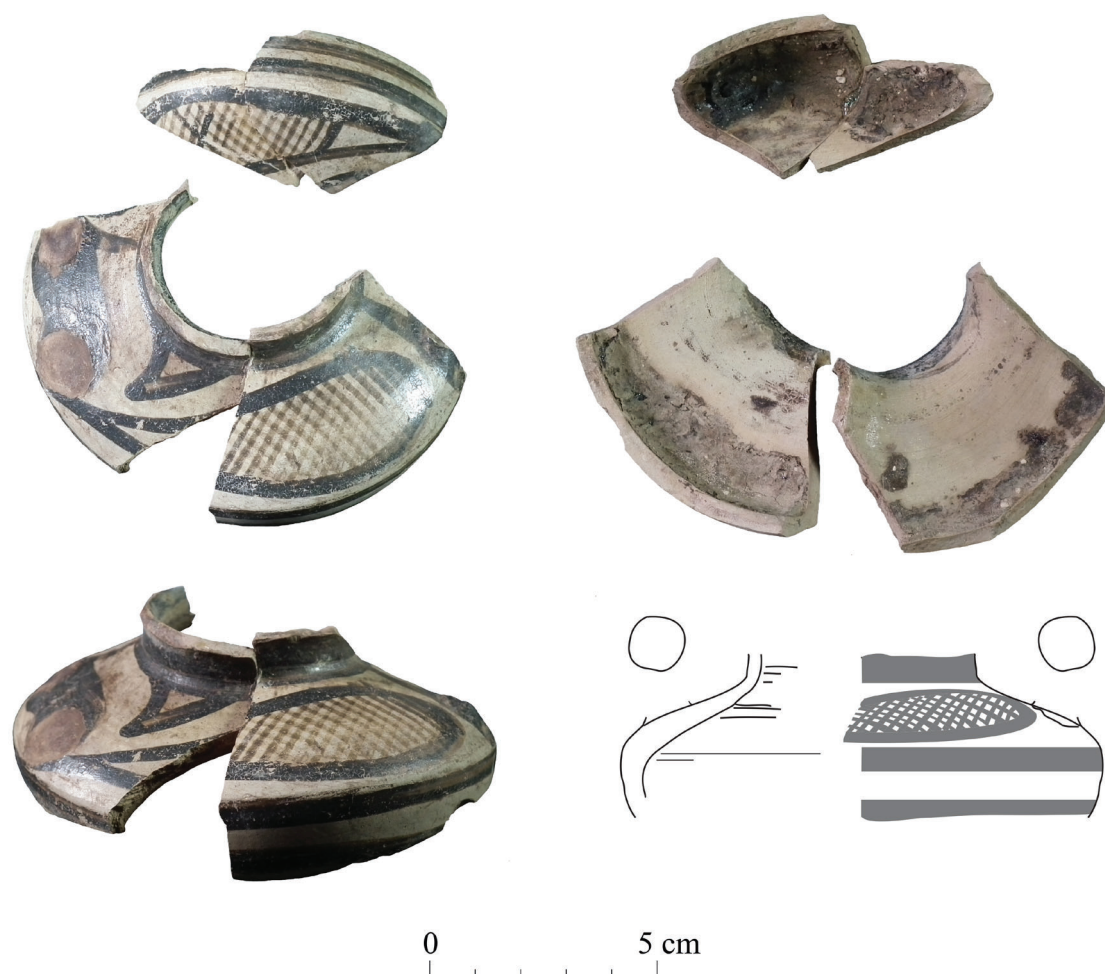


FIG. 6.11 LH IIA SMALL, MULTI-CARINATED ALABASTRON FS80 (TC 1030) – SMDAN 5362 (©Proyecto DJEHUTY; PHOTOS & DRAWING Z. BARAHONA-MENDIETA)

The four sherds of this piece mend up into two non-joining fragments. The fabric is fine, homogeneous very pale brown in colour in the fracture, with some orange and grey/white rounded and very small inclusions. It is coated on the exterior with a thick whitish to pale cream slip that appears to have been burnished prior to the application of the lustrous black painted bands and patterns. The inner surface is still covered with a layer of black residue, crystalline in appearance and shiny in places where it has been slightly fractured. The general appearance of this residue does not correspond to any kind of dirt or soil adhering to the surface and is compatible with some kind of organic content. The handles are missing, and it is difficult to be precise about their cross-section (vertical?), but the two surviving handle *stumps* are certainly more elliptical than round. The rim is not preserved, and the neck appears to have been broken at roughly mid-height and almost perfectly horizontally, so one is tempted to

suggest that this break marks a coil-join in the vessel's shaping. Below this solidly painted neck, the shoulder zone is decorated with two large, hatched loops (FM63) and an accessorial filling ornament, a pendant and hollowed 'adder mark' (FM69) placed above the right side of the handle. The shoulder decoration is separated from the handle zone by a curving bar running from the base of the neck to the base of the shoulder zone, just to the left of the handle. The upper part of the body is decorated with two large bands. The precise shape of this alabastron might be straight-sided (FS89) due to the angular profile between body and shoulder, but similar examples in shape (two-handled alabastron) and in decoration (two hatched loops with accessorial filling ornaments on shoulder; two bands on body; curving diagonal bar) from the Peloponnese (Messenia, Argolis and Laconia, cf. **Fig. 6.12**) suggest that this vessel corresponds to a small multi-carinated alabastron (FS80). All these features of shape and decoration indicate a LH IIA date for this Mycenaean two-handled alabastron.



FIG. 6.12 *COMPARANDA* MULTI-CARINATED ALABASTRA FS80 WITH FM63 HATCHED LOOPS AND AN ACCESSORIAL FILL ON SHOULDER. LEFT: EPIDAVROS LIMERA (LACONIA), TOMB LOST-NB (SPARTA MUSEUM INV. N° 5517, CF. DEMAKOPOULOU 1968: 155, N° 17, PL. 70B, RIGHT); MIDDLE: PROSYMNA (ARGOLIS), TOMB 44 (ATHENS NATIONAL MUSEUM INV. N° 6624, CF. BLEGEN 1937: 211, N° 1005, FIG. 667); RIGHT: EPANO ENGLIANOS (MESSENIAN), TOMB E8 (CHORA MUSEUM INV. N° 2872, CF. BLEGEN *ET AL.* 1973: 200, N° 27, FIG. 250:6A)

The Mycenaean alabastron in TC 1030: understanding its archaeological context

TC 1030 was not intact during its 2016-2017 discovery and the four fragments of the Mycenaean alabastron were found in a disturbed fill (SU 1043) with mixed-dated pottery lying in the courtyard of the tomb. This fill has a *terminus post quem* related to the 25th-26th Dynasties according to the ceramics found. The main forms recorded are vessels from the 17th or early 18th Dynasty (Galán & Barahona-Mendieta in press: fig. 23), a handle with black line decoration from a mid- to late 18th Dynasty Marl D jar (Aston *et al.* 2000: fig. 83), fragments of elongated jars from the Third Intermediate Period (Michels 2016: fig. 7.3) and a half-preserved large jar of the 25th/26th Dynasties (Aston 1999: pl. 56:1699) made of Marl A4 var. 2 paste from the Medamud production (Barahona-Mendieta 2014; Relats-Montserrat *et al.* 2016; Barahona-Mendieta & Relats-Montserrat 2017). These data suggest that vessel SMDAN 5362 is in a secondary position. We cannot determine whether this vessel was part of the original grave goods of TC 1030 or of another nearby Early Thutmosid tomb, such as TT 11.

3. Discussion

H.-G. Buchholz (1974: 443, 443 n° b-c, 445, n° a, 453, 456, n° 3, 5 & 8-12) compiled the most comprehensive list of Mycenaean LH IIA pottery found in the Egyptian Nile Valley nearly half a century ago and his corpus only comprised 13 pieces, all from grave contexts, highlighting three geographical clusters (the Memphite, Fayumite and Theban regions). To our knowledge, the only LH IIA pottery from a habitation context is a sherd found very recently, in 2019, within the urban settlement (Area A, Phase F2) of the first half of the 18th Dynasty at Tell el-Retaba (Wadi Tumilat, between the Eastern Delta and Sinai) by a Polish-Slovak team led by S. Rzepka and J. Hudec (*Wydział Archeologii UW* and *Nadácia Aigyptos*). From the only photograph published to date (Hudec *et al.* 2020: 127 & fig. 14 left), it can be identified as a shoulder fragment of an alabastron (FS82, 89 or 91) decorated with rock pattern (FM32) and stone pattern fill (FM76).

Based on Buchholz's list (1974: 443, n° b), Hassler re-examined and published a LH IIA vessel with its burial assemblage, rediscovered in the *Ägyptisches Museum Berlin's* storerooms, at the occasion of the 10th International Congress of Egyptologists held in Rhodes in 2008 (Hassler 2015: 1990-1997, figs 5-6, already mentioned in Helck 1995: 69, n° a with previous literature). This LH IIA vase (ÄMB 1244), found in an early Thutmosid tomb (n° 16) at Saqqara by Lepsius in 1843, is a closed angular-cylindrical alabastron (FS91) decorated with a zigzag band on the body (FM61) and hatched loop on the shoulder (FM63). It has repeatedly served as a 'textbook case' for Höflmayer (2009: 193; 2011: 65; 2012a: 133-135, fig. 50; 2012b; *et al.* 2013: 111-114, fig. 9.1) for a chronological synchronisation between the LH IIA phase and the early Thutmosid period.

Similarly, we re-examined the two pieces found at Dra Abu el-Naga listed by Buchholz (1974: 453): on the one hand, the cup sherd found in TT 11 for which the fieldwork archives are presented (Spiegelberg's *Fundjournal* and Newberry's *Diary*) and, on the other hand, the fragmented piriform jar found in TT 20 for which the archaeological context and the previous literature are critically reviewed. Extending our field of investigation to the whole of the Dra Abu el-Naga necropolis, it turns out that another LH IIA vessel was recently uncovered in the framework of the Proyecto Djehuty: two non-joining fragments of an alabastron in TC 1030, for which we provide a descriptive and contextual analysis.

To what extent can the three Mycenaean LH IIA pottery at Dra Abu el-Naga discussed here contribute to the current discussion of Aegean-Egyptian chronological synchronisation?

None of the vessels discussed was found intact and in primary position and all are fragmentary and in secondary position. Are they hence useless in the discussion? We don't think so. These vases were certainly part of a more global framework that deserves to be highlighted. All come from layers containing at least some grave goods from the first half of the 18th Dynasty, located near or within tombs dated stylistically and architecturally to the Early Thutmosid Era. This said, these are the only LH IIA vessels discovered and known to date from the entire 250 hectare-large Theban necropolis and the surprising thing is that they were all found only about 50 m from each other, a truly 'spatial cluster' on the same terrace on which a particularly intense building activity took place in the Early Thutmosid Era (**Fig. 6.13**).

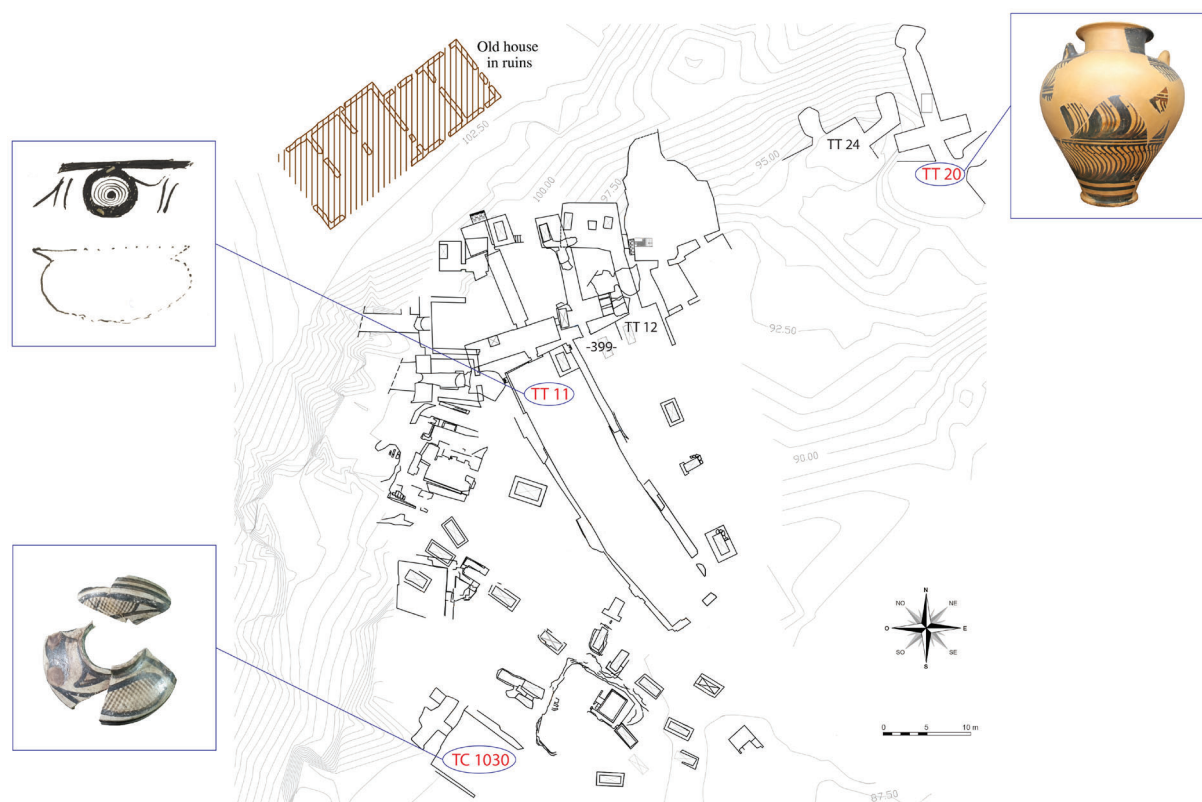


FIG. 6.13 SPATIAL CLUSTER OF EARLY THUTMOSID TOMBS WITH LH IIA POTTERY IN DRA ABU EL NAGA (©PROYECTO DJEHUTY [PLAN AFTER GALÁN 2021: FIG. 1 AND KAMPP 1996: PL. 7, MODIFIED BY THE AUTHORS])

Based on these considerations, we argue that these LH IIA vessels cannot be used as chronological locks in ‘primary’ but rather in ‘secondary’ key-contexts that support a chronological synchronisation between the Aegean LH IIA period and the Egyptian Early Thutmosid period, already well-known in literature (see Höflmayer 2009: 191-194; 2011).

The stylistic and morphological study, supported by numerous *comparanda*, suggests a provenance from mainland Greece for each of the LH IIA vessels found at Dra Abu el-Naga. Several regions within the Peloponnese (e.g. Argolid, Laconia and Messenia) and Central Greece (e.g. Boeotia and Attica) are good candidates for the original provenance of these vessels but here only non-invasive scientific studies can contribute more clarity.

We have argued that the vases were probably part of the initial funerary assemblage of the owners of the respective tombs (TT 11, TT 20 and TC 1030) who lived during the early Thutmosid period, *ca.* 1493-1425 BCE. It is precisely in this period that the first depictions of Aegean emissaries are attested in two tombs of the Theban necropolis, in that of the architect Senenmut-TT 71 and that of the vizier Useramon-TT 131 (Wachsmann 1987), two key ‘ministers’ during the joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, *ca.* 1479-1458 BCE. These LH IIA imports clustering within tombs of high officials and middle class men at Dra Abu el-Naga indicate that the Theban elite of the early Thutmosid period collected exotica. In this respect, these sporadic pieces materialise the proto-contacts, perhaps indirect via Cretan, Cypriot and/or Levantine intermediaries (e.g. explorers, traders and/or sailors), between Mycenaean Greece and Pharaonic Egypt at the dawn of the 15th century BCE.

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