

PREFACE BY THE EDITOR

Levantine Painted Ware (LPW) is an important and attractive ceramic creation of the early Middle Bronze Age. It used to be produced in different regions around the Levant and exhibits a variety of fabric, form and decorative pattern. In a number of inland regions, its derivatives continued to straddle the Middle Bronze Age.

Tell el-Dab^a is not the only site in Egypt where LPW turned up as an import from the Levant. However, the site is important for an appraisal of this ware because its appearance and development are traceable throughout the stratigraphy over seven to eight phases from the mid-12th until the first part of the 13th Dynasty (c. 1920–1700 BC). This series includes the absolute chronological fixed point at the beginning of Phase K with the founding of the temple at ‘Ezbet Rushdi, likeliest in the 5th regnal year of Sesostri III.

What was collected at Tell el-Dab^a within the relevant strata is a combination of different LPW products with other imports from the Levant and the Aegean and can be deemed to mirror and reflect trade in the eastern Mediterranean at that time. Such materials are also found embedded within Egyptian material culture, including Egyptian pottery, the forms and shapes of which have meantime been thoroughly investigated at other sites in Egypt included well-dated royal contexts. Another important point is that this ware appears as early as the inception of the Middle Bronze Age in the Levant. It seems that this heralding and ushering-in of a new cultural era in the Near East can in relative and absolute terms be plotted within the succession of strata at this tell.

The author had marshalled the material at Tell el-Dab^a as a student and has meticulously studied, documented and recorded this ceramic family. She has since travelled widely in investigating relevant LPW finds from other sites in the Near East. On the lines of Jonathan Tubb who coined the name of this ware, she shows in her researches and investigations the overlap of LPW with Syro-Cilician Ware and the Khabur Ware and its remoteness from those ceramic families as also the chronological proximity of those wares to each other.

Over the years Tine Bagh’s work has matured into an excellent PhD dissertation at the University of Copenhagen. The author has also since worked on many other projects in Egypt and the Levant, so it was especially important for her to be able to expand considerably her knowledge of the material culture of Egypt and the Levant from the time of the Middle Kingdom and the Middle Bronze Age. Backed by such expertise, her dissertation was afterwards refined, expanded and re-revised in a most conscientious and diligent way, so we are very happy to present it in this form to our readers long after the author had already made for herself an international name with standing as an expert in this field. Now everything is available with full documentation and major comparanda. It is, without doubt, a textbook on LPW going far beyond Tell el-Dab^a and can be looked upon as a standard contribution to the early phase of the Middle Bronze Age Culture in the Levant.

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