

A MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR OF STYLES: THE NINEVITE 5 POTTERY OF NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA

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ABSTRACT

The elusive Ninevite 5 culture of northern Mesopotamia has repeatedly defied attempts by archaeologists to fathom its mysteries. In this article the relationship between the painted and incised styles of Ninevite 5 pottery is investigated with the help of Hercule Poirot who was present when Ninevite 5 was given its name.¹ The evidence from earlier excavations and from recent rescue work in northern Iraq is examined and a new verdict on the development of the Ninevite 5 pottery styles is reached.

Archaeologists are often compared to detectives, observing and gathering the clues, arranging and analysing the evidence, and finally, we hope, fitting the facts together to give a complete and accurate picture of what happened. Such a methodology was aptly expounded by Hercule Poirot in his first appearance in print.²

“One fact leads to another – so we continue. Does the next fit in with that? A merveille! Good! We can proceed. This next little fact – no! Ah that is curious! There is something missing – a link in the chain that is not there. We examine. We search. And that little curious fact, that possibly paltry little detail that will not tally, we put it here!” He made an extravagant gesture with his hand. *“It is significant! It is tremendous!”*

“Y-es—”

“Ah!” Poirot shook his forefinger so fiercely at me that I quailed before it. *“Beware! Peril to the detective who says: ‘it is so small it does not matter. It will not agree. I will forget it.’ That way lies confusion! Everything matters.”*

Unfortunately archaeological facts are not as well constructed as those in detective stories: many of the clues have been obliterated by time and the principal witnesses are long since deceased. Nevertheless, in this investigation into the mystery of the styles of Ninevite 5 pottery we will try to follow Poirot’s methods. First we will set the scene, then examine the evidence (noting the curious facts and paltry little details that do not tally), then we will cross-examine the witnesses, and finally we will suggest what we think is a plausible explanation.

THE SCENE OF THE MYSTERY

In the late twenties and early thirties the search for the prehistoric remains of

¹ He was engaged at that time on the case of *Lord Edgware Dies* see Christie 1981, 470.

² Agatha Christie, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (London, 1920), 55–56. The quotations in italics throughout

this article are all taken from this book. We owe the suggestion that the genius of Hercule Poirot should be employed on this case to Mrs. Susan Roaf.

Mesopotamia was all the rage.³ The excavation of the temples and palaces of historical sites was now supplemented by investigations of the earlier formative periods of Mesopotamian civilization. By 1930 the main cultures of the later prehistoric and the early historic periods in the south of Iraq had been successfully delineated and were given the labels 'Ubaid, Uruk, Jemdet Nasr, and Early Dynastic and this nomenclature has successfully survived the test of time.⁴ With rather less satisfactory results the same terminology has been transferred to regions further north: and this has proved particularly unfortunate for the ill-defined Jemdet Nasr and the better known Early Dynastic cultures, since they are not easily recognisable in the material culture of northern Mesopotamia.⁵ To cope with this problem the name Ninevite 5 has been adopted to describe the culture in the north of Iraq and the north-east of Syria at roughly this period.

The label "Ninevite 5"⁶ was coined a little more than fifty years ago and like the names of other cultures has been used to describe not just the culture and the chronological period but also the pottery. But in this case, curiously enough, the term has been used to describe several very different styles of pottery, including painted and incised wares with unrelated motifs and of totally different ware.⁷ This then is the mystery we are seeking to solve – what was the relationship between the different styles of pottery which have been called Ninevite 5?

"It is certainly curious," I agreed. "Still, it is unimportant, and need not be taken into account."

A groan burst from Poirot.

*"What have I always told you? Everything must be taken into account. If the fact will not fit the theory – let the theory go."*⁸

THE EVIDENCE OF THE EYEWITNESSES

Nineveh 1929–1932

The pottery, which was later to be called Ninevite 5, was first recognised as distinctive of a particular period in the 1929–30 season of excavations at Tell

³ "In archaeology, pre-history had suddenly become the fashion . . . They examined small, obscure mounds all over the country, picked up fragments of painted pottery wherever they went, labelling them, tying them up in bags, and examining the patterns – it was endlessly interesting. Although it was so old – it was *new!*" (Christie 1981, 471).

⁴ There have been some subdivisions and a few modifications; but attempts to dispose of the Jemdet Nasr culture have not proved successful (see Finkbeiner and Röellig 1986). Similarly the attempt to abandon Early Dynastic II outside the Diyala has not yet gained much support. See, however, Porada, Hansen, and Dunham in press.

⁵ The forcing of an unwilling northern sequence into a southern mould has frequently obscured the situation, particularly as authors have often not been explicit about whether the culture or period was intended. In

this article we use the term Late Uruk in a broad sense to include northern cultures which strictly speaking may be contemporary with the Jemdet Nasr period in the south. To indicate the ambiguity of the term we have often put Late Uruk in inverted commas.

⁶ Ninevite 5 seems to us preferable to Ninevite V, if only because it is less easy to misread.

⁷ Only the decorated styles have attracted much attention: there seems to be some ambiguity about whether the Ninevite 5 plain ware refers only to the fine grey ware or includes all types of undecorated Ninevite 5 pottery. In this article we will be almost exclusively concerned with the painted and incised styles. (As we will see below some painted pottery which has been called Ninevite 5 more properly belongs in a pre-Ninevite 5 "Late Uruk" or transitional phase.)

⁸ Christie 1920, 119–120.

Kuyunjik, the citadel mound of ancient Nineveh. Two plates of painted pottery and a single example of an incised jar were published.⁹

The following season Thompson and Hamilton published a further five plates of complete painted pottery vessels, one plate of complete incised vessels and a further two plates of painted and incised sherds.¹⁰ Hamilton concluded that "the two classes are evidently contemporary", though he noted and then ignored the fact that the two types had an "uneven distribution over the site": in squares N, O, and CC "both painted and plain examples were found, but few of the incised variety." In squares "U and V plain and incised sherds were found together . . . but painted specimens were rare" and in squares "Q and X a large group of all three types was found".¹¹

Furthermore he noted that in those areas where all three types were found together "many of these fragments and pots were found in and below a series of rooms which we were subsequently able to date, by means of sherds and bricks found in the walls, both to the Romano-Parthian period and to much later."¹²

In the 1931–32 season at Nineveh Campbell Thompson and his wife were joined by Max Mallowan and his wife. Mallowan's main task was to excavate the great Prehistoric Pit from the top of the mound down to virgin soil.¹³ In two months he had dug through 90 feet of stratified layers, most of it pre-Assyrian, and for the first time defined a succession of earlier cultures and pottery styles. He labelled these from the bottom upwards, Ninevite 1, Ninevite 2, and so on up to Ninevite 5. In stratum 5, the painted pottery style and the incised pottery style were found together. Mallowan admitted that lack of coherent building levels in the sounding and the presence of later disturbances meant that the lines of demarcation between each stratum "remain ill-defined".¹⁴ Nevertheless since painted and incised sherds were found at the same level, he assumed they were contemporary throughout the period.

Mallowan also stressed that "all the incised wares of this period as well as the accompanying painted pottery are sufficiently homogeneous to enable us to say that they belong to a single period of culture".¹⁵ The sequence in the Prehistoric Pit also allowed a more precise date to be assigned to Ninevite 5. The material from Stratum 4 had similarities to Late Uruk in the south and an Akkadian style sealing was found in the upper part of stratum 5. Mallowan therefore suggested that Ninevite 5 period was "possibly to be dated to the earlier half of the third millennium B.C."¹⁶

Tell Billa 1931–2

In 1931 and 1932 at the same time as the work of Hamilton and Mallowan the Joint American Expedition of the University Museum of Pennsylvania and of the American Schools of Oriental Research was excavating Ninevite 5 pottery in the lower levels (strata 6 and 7) at Tell Billa, about 25 kilometres north-east of Mosul. The site has yet to be published in full but in the earlier field reports Speiser recorded that grain silos were found in stratum 7 and that "five of them were opened, yielding numerous fragments of plain, painted and incised pottery".¹⁷ In the same report he

⁹ Thompson & Hutchinson 1931, Pls. XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXV.7.

¹⁰ Thompson and Hamilton 1932, Pls. LIII-LX.

¹¹ Thompson and Hamilton 1932, 83–4.

¹² Thompson and Hamilton 1932, 84.

¹³ Thompson and Mallowan 1933.

¹⁴ Thompson and Mallowan 1933, 130.

¹⁵ Thompson and Mallowan 1933, 174.

¹⁶ Thompson and Mallowan 1933, 133.

¹⁷ Speiser 1931, 13.

also stated that a tomb in stratum 6 contained "two large painted jars" and "three fine bowls with painted rims"¹⁸ and in the next year "Billah seven yielded also a large number of painted and incised parts of large chalices."¹⁹

It is odd therefore to read in the reports on the pottery written in the same year that "the decoration is either painted or incised, depending on the age of the deposit . . . the one occurs in stratum 7 at Billah, the other in Billah 6,"²⁰ or again "the most characteristic ceramic type of this period is the chalice, which is at first painted (7), later on incised (6)."²¹

Billa 7 and 6 were dated by Speiser to the Jemdet Nasr period, slightly earlier than Mallowan's proposed date, on the basis of the introduction of seals, contracted burials, and dubious pottery parallels.²² There may have been a dispute about the relative sequence of Ninevite 5 pottery but there was agreement that the painted and incised styles belonged to the same archaeological culture: "the differences were not so much cultural as chronological" and that Billa 6 and 7 represented "successive stages of one and the same culture".²³

Speiser also followed Frankfort who thought that Ninevite 5 "seems to be a late descendant of the Old Iranian Highland pottery"²⁴ and Speiser quoted parallels with pottery from Tepe Hissar, east of Tehran, (which was also being excavated by the University Museum) in support of this hypothesis.²⁵

Tepe Gawra 1931-37

At the same time that Speiser worked at Tell Billa, he was also excavating at Tepe Gawra about 15 km away, and here too there was confusion about the Ninevite 5 sequence. Only a few pieces of Ninevite 5 pottery are illustrated in the final report and those from stratum IV were thought to be out of place.²⁶ More types of Ninevite 5 pottery are discussed in the text than are illustrated, but it is not always clear which forms are being referred to. Painted chalices, ribbed chalices and other vessel types with horizontal ribbing are all said to appear in stratum VIII-A.²⁷ In stratum VII painted pottery continued while corrugated cups lost their popularity.²⁸ Speiser initially reported that in stratum VI "the pottery is usually incised. The painted ware seems to have been confined to chalices."²⁹ But in the final report we read that "painting was absent in stratum VI except for two examples with crude black

¹⁸ Speiser 1931, 12. This might well have been an intrusive grave of the early second millennium B.C.

¹⁹ Speiser 1932a, 6.

²⁰ Speiser 1932b, 6.

²¹ Speiser 1933, 267.

²² Speiser 1932b, 8-9; 1933, 266. The two arguments he uses are the appearance of a pot similar to Ninevite 5 painted ware "in the lowest layer of Fara", and therefore according to Speiser in the Jemdet Nasr period, which was illustrated by Frankfort (1929, Tafel 43¹, h opp. p. 86). Another Ninevite 5 pot was also illustrated in the same article and labelled as coming from Lagash (Tafel 43¹, g). In fact the caption suggested that they are "altsumer. Zeit" (and not necessarily the lowest layer) and were in the "Museum Konstantinopel". In any case as Frankfort wrote in a publication cited by Speiser in the same article (1933, 267 note 18) "their sources, as

given by the officials of the museum in Istanbul, are almost certainly wrong" (Frankfort 1932, 50). His second Jemdet Nasr parallel was a type of "squat pot with sharply marked shoulder and overhanging rim" found in Billa level 6 (Speiser 1933, Pl. LIII.6; but as Mallowan pointed out this type need not be earlier than ED III and could be later (Mallowan 1964, 150 note 35).

²³ Speiser 1933, 265.

²⁴ Frankfort 1932, 50.

²⁵ Speiser 1933, 267.

²⁶ D. Cross in Speiser 1935, 60.

²⁷ D. Cross in Speiser 1935, 41-42. See below for ribbed cups and ribbed chalices at Tell Mohammed Arab period 2.

²⁸ D. Cross in Speiser 1935, 45 and 47.

²⁹ Speiser 1931, 11.



Fig. 1. Map showing location of sites mentioned in the text.

dots".³⁰ Incised Ninevite 5 pottery is not discussed in the text and only one incised and one excised sherd are illustrated.³¹

Other investigations 1933–1972

Excavations of Ninevite 5 levels at Nineveh and Billa finished in 1932. Over the next forty years a few sherds and pots of Ninevite 5 styles were found in excavation and survey on a number of sites, Chagar Bazar, Tell Chuera, Mari, Tell Asmar, Ibrahim Bayis, Nuzi, and in the Rania plain, and the known area of its distribution correspondingly increased.³² But on none of these sites were substantial remains excavated which could solve the main problems associated with the Ninevite 5 culture which remained a term used to describe the painted and incised pottery and little else.

³⁰ Cross in Speiser 1935, 51.

³¹ Speiser 1935, Pl. LXXVI, 4; Speiser 1929, Fig. 73.

³² Abu al-Soof 1968.

In 1964 Mallowan published a review of the state of knowledge about Ninevite 5.³³ He and most other scholars who studied the question during this period³⁴ agreed with Speiser's chronological division of a phase with painted ware being followed by one with incised and with no overlap of the two styles. Mallowan also used the results of his excavations at Chagar Bazar to support this theory, by noting that painted and incised pots had not been found in the same graves.³⁵ Furthermore a verbal communication from the excavator of Tell Bardasti in the Rania plain where a thin stratum with painted pottery was said to lie below incised Ninevite 5 sherds concluded his case.³⁶

The date was still disputed,³⁷ as also was the origin of the Ninevite 5 styles.³⁸

A new development was the suggestion that Ninevite 5 and Uruk were closely connected: in his publication of the results of surveys by the Iraqi Directorate-General of Antiquities of Uruk, Jemdet Nasr and Ninevite 5 sites, Abu al-Soof stated that "Ninevite V wares, including the painted variety, at both excavated and surveyed sites, are almost always found in association with Uruk pottery"³⁹ and this view was accepted by his supervisor Joan Oates.⁴⁰ Confirmation of this also appeared to come from Abu al-Soof's excavations at Qalinj Agha where three sherds identified as painted Ninevite 5 ware were found in Level III and sherds identified as incised Ninevite 5 were found in levels II and III which he dated to the Uruk period.⁴¹

Tell V at Telul eth-Thalathat 1965

1974 saw the publication of the first modern excavation of a mound undertaken specifically to solve the problem of Ninevite 5, that of Tell V at Telul eth-Thalathat, between Tel Afar and Mosul, carried out in 1965 by a team from Tokyo University.⁴² Here for the first time a complete building of the Ninevite 5 period was excavated with its associated finds. This building measuring some 18 by 6 metres was interpreted as a granary; it appeared to belong to a single period of occupation and

³³ Mallowan 1964.

³⁴ Perkins 1949 and 1954, Mallowan 1964, Porada 1965.

³⁵ Mallowan 1964, 148.

³⁶ Mallowan 1964, 148.

³⁷ Perkins 1949, 196 protoliterate c (Jemdet Nasr); Mallowan 1964, 164 "both Jamdat Nasr and E.D. I" and *ibid.* 151 "since the Ninevite 5 painted ware began at the end of the J. Nasr period, or perhaps in E.D. I, the incised ware which succeeded it is likely to have been introduced in E.D. II., and although we have to reckon with the possibility that some specimens survived as late as E.D. III, the period of its *floruit* was probably E.D. II." Porada 1965, 159 wrote "the incised ware of Nineveh 5 has been tentatively taken by me to be contemporary with Early Dynastic II in the south, whereas the painted ware belongs to Early Dynastic I, possibly beginning at the end of the Jamdat Nasr period", and on the chronological chart on 176-9 Ninevite 5 starts in the Jemdet Nasr period and ends in the Akkadian period. Watson 1965, 77 followed Perkins "in northern Mesopotamia, the Ninevite period, char-

acterized by Ninevite 5 incised ware, is contemporary with late Protoliterate in southern Mesopotamia and hence more or less with 'Amuq G."

³⁸ Similarities with the pottery of Tepe Hissar levels I, II and III and Sialk III on the Iranian plateau, such as footed chalices, grey ware, and painted birds standing on top of each other were acknowledged by most scholars (Perkins 1949, 164; Mallowan 1964, 153; Porada 1965, 159; Dyson 1965, 238-9). But Behnam Abu al-Soof argued against an Iranian origin and suggested that "for the origins of Ninevite 5 painted ware one does not need to look far since the elaborate monochrome decoration of pottery is well-rooted in the Samarran tradition" (Abu al-Soof 1964, 42).

³⁹ Abu al-Soof 1968, 75.

⁴⁰ J. Oates 1967, 402, cited in Weiss 1985b, p. 329.

⁴¹ Abu al-Soof 1969, 21, 22, 24, 29. Drawings of these sherds have not been published. The date of Level III was "unquestionably Early Uruk" (Abu al-Soof 1968, 75). See below for further discussion.

⁴² Fukai 1974.

from it both painted Ninevite 5 and incised Ninevite 5 pottery was recovered. The Japanese archaeologists found a close correlation between the wares, method of manufacture, the shapes of the vessels, and the surface decoration. Thus cooking-ware vessels were restricted to a single globular shape normally with crescentic- or straight-lug handles and were the only vessels with burnished surfaces; hand-moulded common ware was restricted to one type of small spouted bowl; painted bowls always had pedestal bases (except for one example); painted jars always had pedestal bases; bowls with internal handles were always in common ware and not painted, and so on. For the first (and to date the only) time, a well-defined and usable typological study of Ninevite 5 pottery was published.⁴³

The excavators had found a single-period site with painted Ninevite 5 pottery clearly associated with incised Ninevite 5 pottery, showing that both styles were in use at the same time (as opposed to the current idea that incised ware replaced painted). For some reason in the publication it was stated that the excavation could not "add new facts concerning the problems of subdivision of Ninevite 5 period."⁴⁴

Tell Leilan 1979-80

In 1979-80 a step trench through the edge of the acropolis at Tell Leilan in north-east Syria was excavated by the Yale University expedition, directed by Harvey Weiss. The results were promptly published in considerable detail by Glenn Schwartz,⁴⁵ and these conclusions have been repeated and slightly modified in subsequent articles by him and by Harvey Weiss.⁴⁶ In the Leilan sounding, some 61 strata were identified and according to Schwartz "the temporal gap between Stratum 16 and Strata 15-13 . . . is the only apparent exception to an otherwise continuous sequence of occupations."⁴⁷ Strata 16-40 comprise the Ninevite 5 levels called Leilan period III. In the sondage 7168 diagnostic sherds were recovered, of which 2651 came from the period III layers.

On the basis of this sample, Schwartz stated that "we had achieved our aim - a continuous well-stratified ceramic sequence spanning the millennia of transition from late prehistoric to early historic times,"⁴⁸ and that "the Leilan sequence demonstrates that fine incised ceramics executed in the same style as the sherds recovered from level V at Nineveh were in use for a very extensive period of time and underwent recognizable changes in shapes and designs during that time span. 'Ninevite 5' style painted ware is shown to have a somewhat shorter period of use, restricted to Period III. The Leilan sequence documents the development of fine incised wares through time in Periods IV-II and the appearance of Ninevite 5 style painted ceramics in Period III."⁴⁹ Elsewhere Schwartz concluded that "painted ware did not precede incised ware in an early phase of the Ninevite V period but that the two varieties existed side by side throughout."⁵⁰

⁴³ It is still not possible, however, even with this excellent publication, to work out to which levels the illustrated pottery belongs.

⁴⁴ Fukai 1974, 66.

⁴⁵ Schwartz 1982.

⁴⁶ Schwartz 1985, Weiss 1983, 1985a, 1985b.

⁴⁷ Schwartz 1982, 44.

⁴⁸ Schwartz 1982, 18.

⁴⁹ Schwartz 1982, 240. The incised motifs in Level IV are not distinctively Ninevite 5 (see note 88). In Level IIa there are sherds of incised Ninevite 5 style (see Schwartz 1985, 57 and see below note 89).

⁵⁰ Schwartz 1982, 223.

Tell Brak 1978-84

One of the continuing goals of the recent excavations at the nearby site of Tell Brak (like that of Tell Leilan) has been the elucidation of the archaeological transition from the Late Uruk to the Akkadian periods and to "place the very distinctive pottery known as Ninevite V in a proper context."⁵¹ So far two destruction levels earlier than the administrative building of Naram-Sin have been found and a part of the associated pottery assemblage has been published.⁵² According to D. Oates this material only included "a very small number" of painted and incised Ninevite 5 sherds which were "clearly out of context", and according to J. Oates "no Ninevite V pottery whatsoever" was recovered from the destruction levels,⁵³ thus demonstrating that in north-east Syria at least the Ninevite 5 culture came to an end before the beginning of the Akkadian period.⁵⁴

The early date of incised Ninevite 5 pottery as proposed by Abu al-Soof and Schwartz also seemed confirmed by the observations that in two areas at Tell Brak (CH and ST) incised Ninevite 5 pottery was found with Late Uruk pottery including bevelled rim bowls.⁵⁵ As David Oates wrote there was "unequivocal evidence for the association of bevelled rim bowls and incised Ninevite V."⁵⁶

Summary

Thus there has been considerable disagreement about the relative chronology of the styles of Ninevite 5 pottery. In recent years, in contrast to Mallowan's and Speiser's division of the sequence into an earlier phase with painted pottery and a later phase with incised pottery, the evidence from Telul eth-Thalathat, Qalinj Agha, Tell Leilan and Tell Brak has been interpreted to support the view that the painted and incised wares were contemporary throughout the Ninevite 5 period. Clearly there are problems and contradictions in the published accounts.⁵⁷ Several hypotheses suggest themselves but how are we to prove which theory is correct?

*"Oh, my friend, have I not said to you all along that I have no proofs. It is one thing to know that a man is guilty, it is quite another matter to prove him so. And, in this case, there is terribly little evidence. That is the whole trouble. I, Hercule Poirot, know, but I lack the last link in my chain. And unless I can find the missing link —" He shook his head gravely.*⁵⁸

THE MISSING LINK

Tell Mohammed Arab 1982-1985

This then was the situation when the British Archaeological Expedition to Iraq started excavations at Tell Mohammed Arab in the Saddam Dam Salvage Project.⁵⁹

⁵¹ D. Oates 1982b, 67-8.

⁵² J. Oates 1982.

⁵³ D. Oates 1982b, 67; J. Oates 1982, 207.

⁵⁴ Recent work at Tell Brak has suggested that "even the latest examples [of Ninevite 5 pottery] significantly pre-date the end of ED III" (J. Oates 1985a, 175 or 1986, 248).

⁵⁵ Fielden 1981, 157; D. Oates 1982a, 194 and 197 ("bottom of ST, associated with Ninevite V pottery and bevelled rim bowls"); D. Oates 1982b, 67 and 68; J. Oates 1982, 207. Also D. Oates 1982a, 191 for incised Ninevite 5 pottery found in a supposedly immediately

post-Jemdet Nasr context.

⁵⁶ D. Oates 1982b, 68.

⁵⁷ Reade 1982, 72 wrote concerning the pottery of the third millennium "there seemed to be anomalies and complications, in the published evidence, which obstructed attempts at relative dating."

⁵⁸ Christie 1920, 235.

⁵⁹ Undertaken by the British Archaeological Expedition and the Iraqi State Organization for Antiquities and Heritage directed by M. Roaf. The excavation of the Ninevite 5 sounding was the responsibility of R. Killick.

The preliminary results have already been published⁶⁰ and more detailed publication of the site is in progress. Only the evidence of the lower layers concerns us here. Along the cliff section and in the stratigraphic sondage three distinct periods of occupation were recognised. These periods were separated from one another by stratigraphic breaks in the sequence of occupation and each period displayed clear differences in its material culture.

The earliest period (Mohammed Arab period 1) contained pottery related to that which is usually dated to the Late Uruk period. The assemblage includes bevelled rim bowls, incised four-lugged jars, spouted jars and ring-based carinated bowls.⁶¹ There was also a painted ware: four-lugged jars and carinated bowls were painted normally with extremely simple geometric designs (cross-hatched triangles) applied only to the upper half of the pot in red or red/brown paint (Fig. 2).

At the end of period 1, there was a period of abandonment which was followed by a Ninevite 5 occupation (Mohammed Arab period 2) with five distinct building levels. These levels contained painted pottery of typical Ninevite 5 style, indistinguishable from that found at Nineveh and at Telul eth-Thalathat. Characteristic vessel shapes include pedestal jars, pedestal bowls, and large hollow-stemmed bowls painted all-over in a variety of geometric and naturalistic motifs (Fig. 3). Unlike the earlier painted style of period 1 which was normally wheel-made in a pink to buff clay with grit temper, this painted Ninevite 5 pottery was often in a hand-made common ware, with a predominance of vegetable temper.

In association with the painted Ninevite 5 was a series of fine-ware cups and pedestal bowls in grey/green fabric with no visible temper. Many of these pots were ribbed or layered on the outside and some of these had notched horizontal bands; and a very few from the latest two building levels of period 2 had simple, lightly incised patterns (Fig. 4).⁶² The range of patterns on these sherds is very limited and compares closely with the Thalathat assemblage. The elaborate incised and excised designs familiar from Nineveh and Billa are completely absent in this period at Tell Mohammed Arab.

At the end of Mohammed Arab 2, the site was again abandoned and, after a period when it was used as a cemetery for people burying incised and excised fine-ware pots in their graves, was resettled by people who used fine-ware incised and excised pottery (Mohammed Arab 3). Painted pottery was not manufactured in this period.

The incised pottery of Mohammed Arab 3 displays a much greater range of patterns than the few sherds from the earlier period. The decoration is also often cut as a continuous band of incision around the pot and many sherds are excised, with the clay removed to leave the decoration in relief (Fig. 5). The fine-ware assemblage also differs from that of period 2: the pedestal bowls and cups are not usually ridged or layered, and show a preference for a hemispherical shape.

⁶⁰ Roaf 1983 and 1984.

⁶¹ Roaf 1983, Fig. 2 and Roaf 1984, Fig. 8. For further discussion of the date and terminology see above note 5 and below notes 101 and 102.

⁶² 15 sherds of this incised ware have been found in reliably stratified Mohammed 'Arab period 2 levels. In

all cases they are in the latest two levels of period 2 and not earlier. As they are stylistically different from the "late incised and late excised" of Mohammed Arab period 3 they probably are not the result of "pottery drift" (see below).

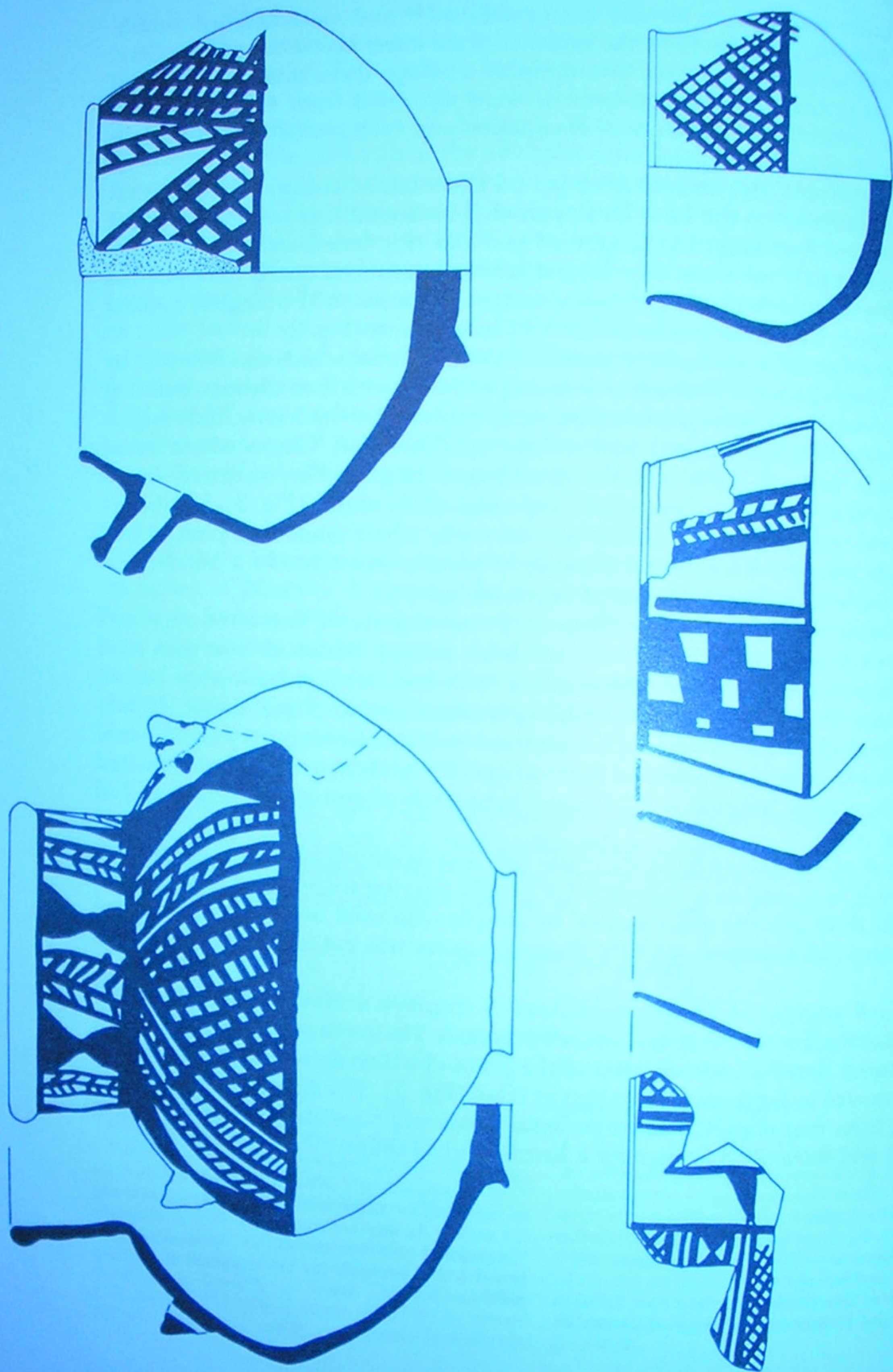


Fig. 2. Painted "Late Uruk" pottery from Tell Mohammed Arab period I.

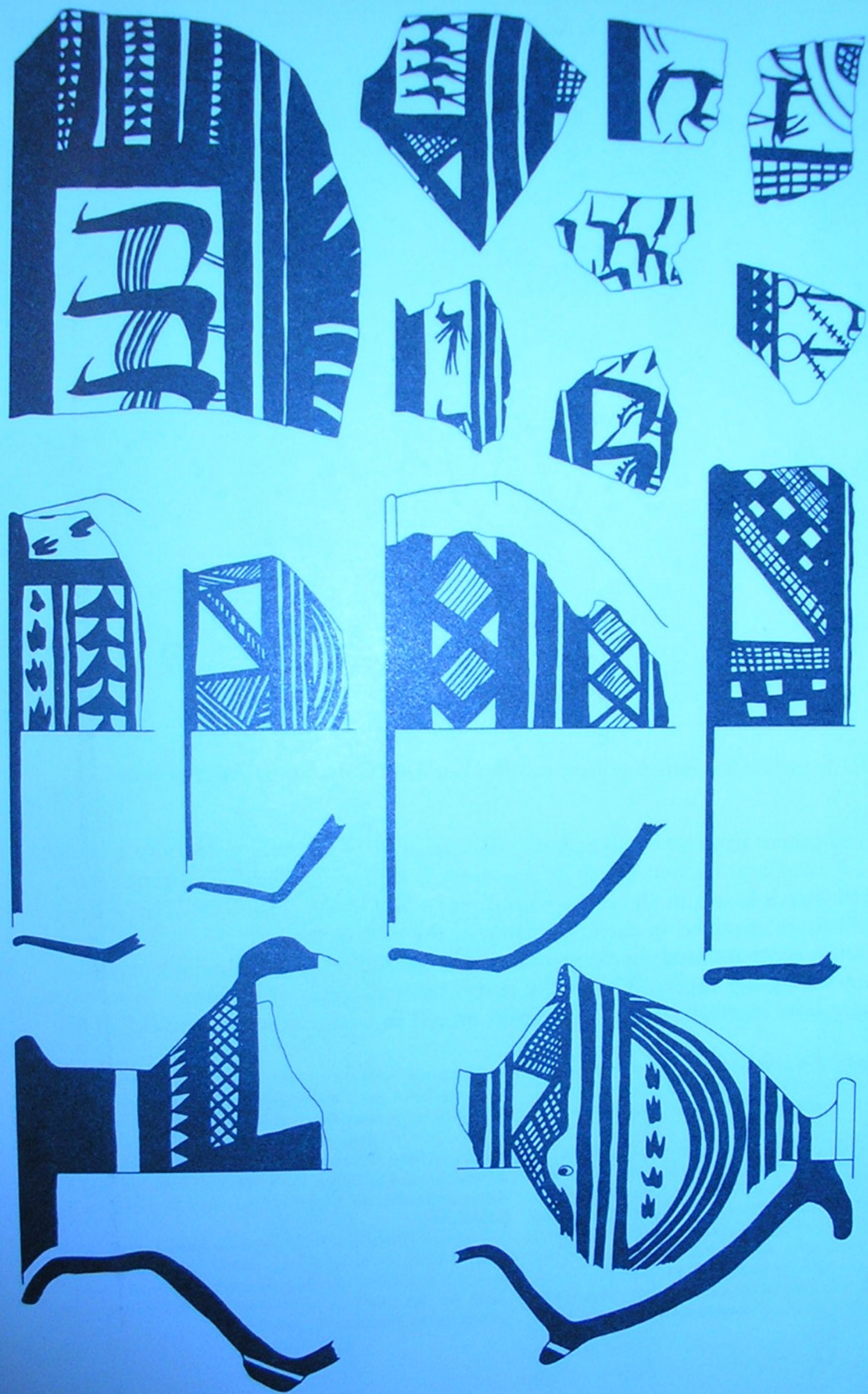


Fig. 3. Painted Ninevite 5 pottery from Tell Mohammed Arab period 2.

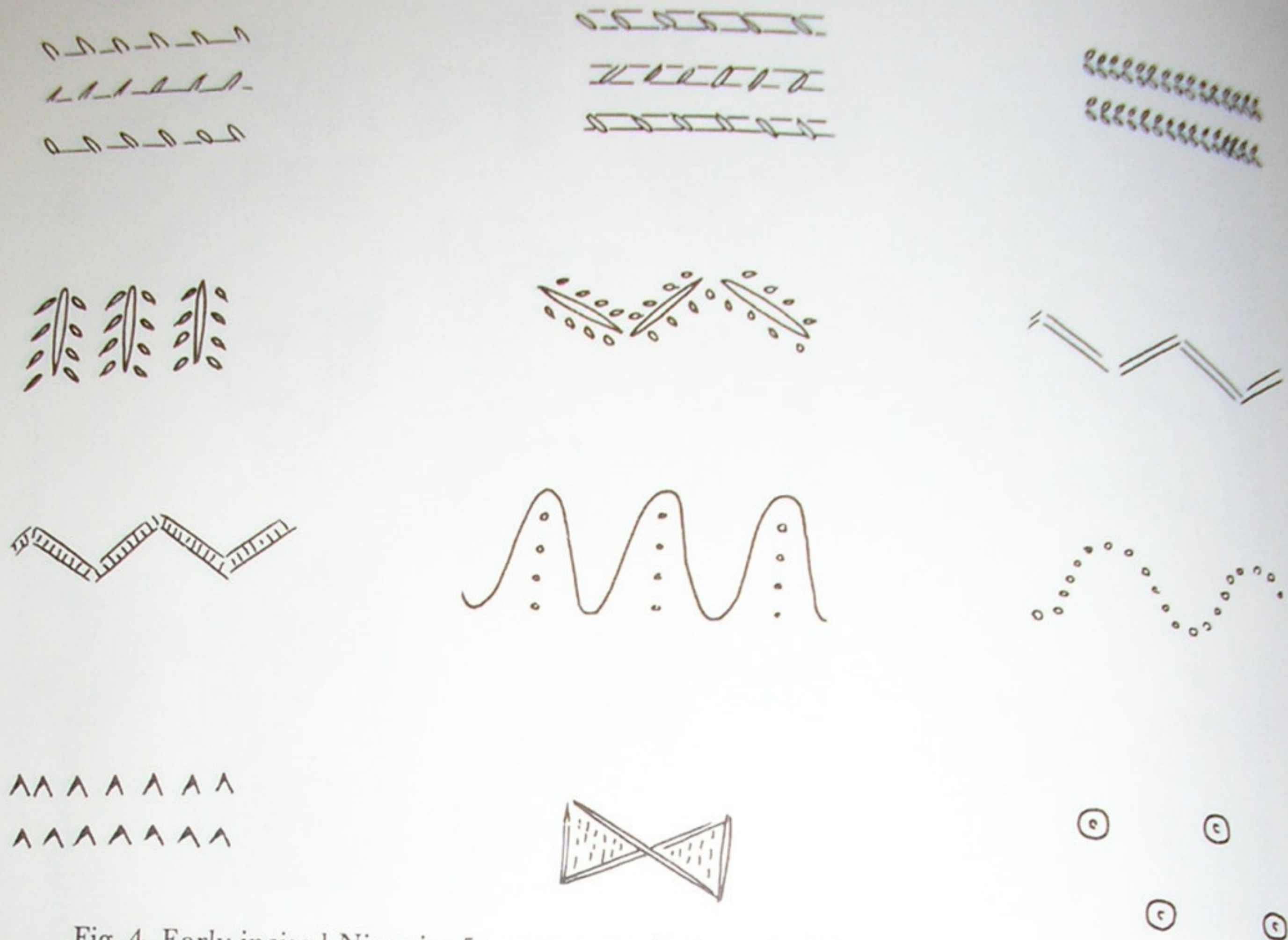


Fig. 4. Early incised Ninevite 5 pottery motifs from Tell Mohammed Arab period 2.

This development from an earlier phase with painted Ninevite 5 pottery to a later phase with incised and excised Ninevite 5 pottery is demonstrated by a sherd count of decorated sherds found in the main sounding in 50T-51V (Fig. 6).⁶³ The results complement those obtained in the excavation of the cliff section.⁶⁴

In this table, some painted sherds appear in the period 3 layers: these are residual sherds from the earlier layers. This is the respectable direction for sherds to move. Occasionally later intrusive sherds are found mixed in with earlier material.⁶⁵ This

⁶³ These figures are provisional: the final publication of the results of the main sounding is in preparation and it is possible that some changes to the phasing may be made.

⁶⁴ Compare the counts for trench 51V of the Cliff Section published in Roaf 1984, 151. For a section showing the levels see Roaf 1983, Fig. 1 (lower) and for the plans of the levels see Roaf 1984, Fig. 7. Subsequent excavation in the stratigraphic sounding directly to the north has shown that small modifications should be made to the stratigraphy and phasing in trench 51V but that the main conclusions are valid and are confirmed.

⁶⁵ The reasons are many: a workman may put a sherd

in the wrong finds tray, a pit or other intrusive feature may not have been recognised, the sherds may have moved through animal action in the soil, they may have got mixed in washing or, in sorting, the wrong number may have been written on the sherds. Normally such a mistake is caught before the finds are published and is then suppressed, but occasionally it may be unwittingly published.

The two Ninevite 5 style sherds in level L may be a case of such intrusive pottery drift. The scale of the problem of residual sherds is illustrated at Mohammed Arab by the presence of several hundred Ninevite 5 sherds in the Middle Assyrian levels.

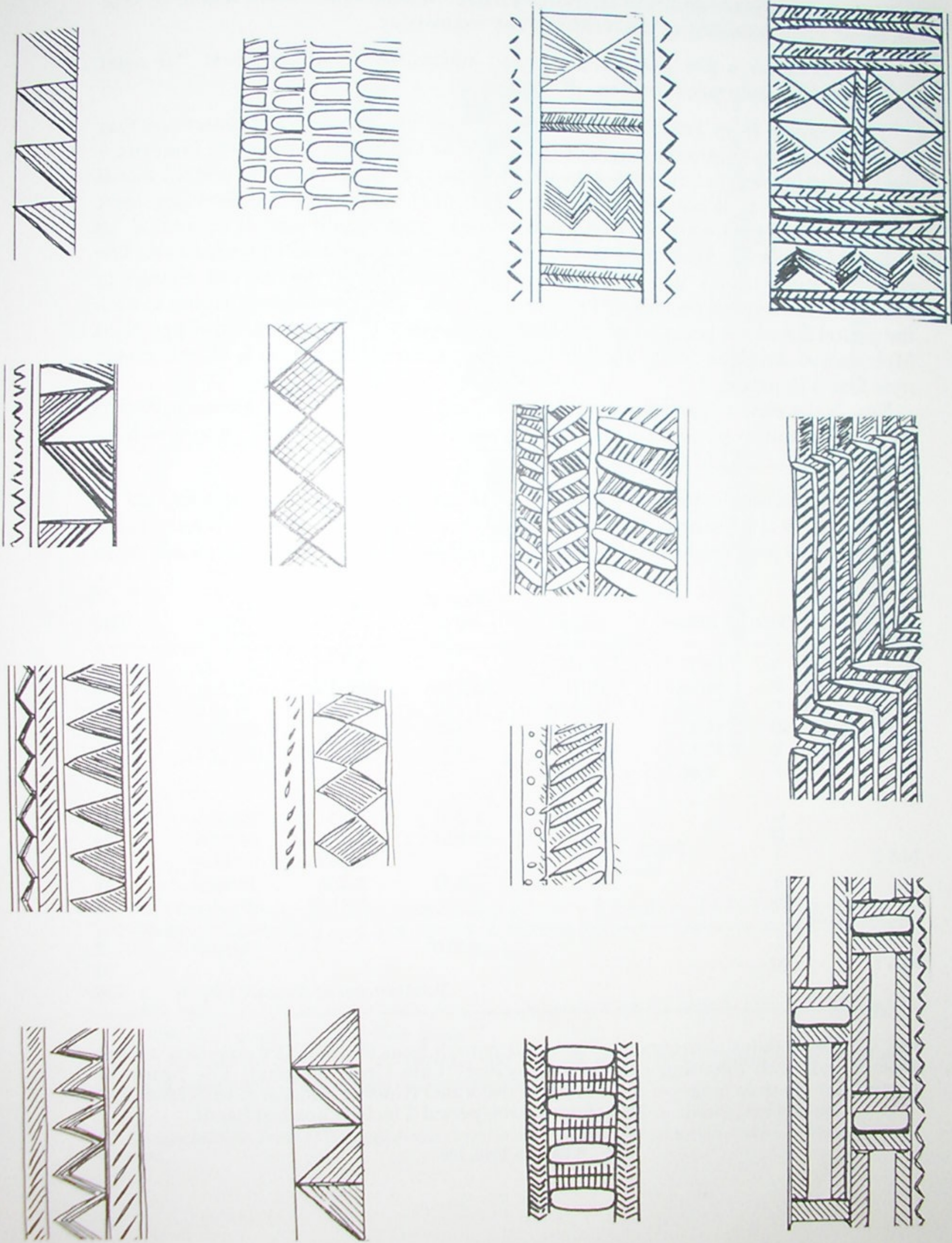


Fig. 5. Late incised and excised Ninevite 5 pottery motifs from Tell Mohammed Arab period 3.

phenomenon, the possibility of of "pottery drift" (in either direction), should be kept in mind when considering the results of any excavation.

*"Which is a very good, or a very bad explanation," remarked Poirot. "It covers everything, and explains nothing."*⁶⁶

The evidence from Tell Mohammed Arab, therefore, supports the contention that painted Ninevite 5 pottery was more common in the earlier part of the Ninevite 5 period and incised more common in the later part. Except for a few residual sherds painted pottery died out before the later part of the period and excised and most types of incised grey ware were only introduced in the second part of the period.

But Mohammed Arab does not have the complete Ninevite 5 sequence. The observed stratigraphic gap between periods 2 and 3 and the abrupt change in pottery styles suggests there may be another phase, where perhaps attributes of both the period 2 and the period 3 assemblages are combined. We can also distinguish at Mohammed Arab an "early incised" style, found in period 2 and a "late incised" style found in period 3.

Now is the time to gather together all the suspects and confront them, to review their stories and to try to reconcile all the various statements, which up to now have been more than a little mixed up.

"The mind is confused? Is it not so? Take time, mon ami. You are agitated; you are excited – it is but natural. Presently, when we are calmer, we will arrange the facts, neatly, each in his proper place. We will examine – and reject. Those of importance we will put on

PERIOD	Phase	Excised	Incised	Notched bands	Ribbed/ Layered	Painted	Total
MA 3	A	10(22.7)	30(68.2)		3(6.8)	1(2.3)	44
	B	54(50.9)	33(31.1)	3(2.8)	12(11.3)	4(3.8)	106
	C	21(42.0)	12(24.0)	1(2.0)	10(20.0)	6(12.0)	50
	D	41(53.2)	21(27.3)	2(2.6)	6(7.8)	7(9.1)	77
	E	37(17.1)	109(50.5)	7(3.2)	39(18.1)	24(11.1)	216
Cemetery	F	2(66.7)	1(33.3)				3
MA 2	G		5(14.3)	1(2.9)	7(20.0)	22(62.3)	35
	H		7(5.0)	12(8.6)	33(21.6)	87(62.6)	139
	I				6(14.0)	37(86.0)	43
	J			1(3.7)	1(3.7)	25(92.6)	27
	K				3(11.5)	23(88.5)	26
MA 1	L			1(50.0)		1(50.0)	2
	M						0
Total number of decorated sherds							768

Fig. 6a. Sherd count of decorated Ninevite 5 pottery from the 50T-51V sounding at Tell Mohammed Arab (omitting painted and incised "Late Uruk" pottery). The figures in parentheses are percentages of the number of decorated Ninevite 5 sherds in each level. 4 of the incised sherds in Mohammed Arab period 2 include notched bands.

⁶⁶ Christie 1920, 156.

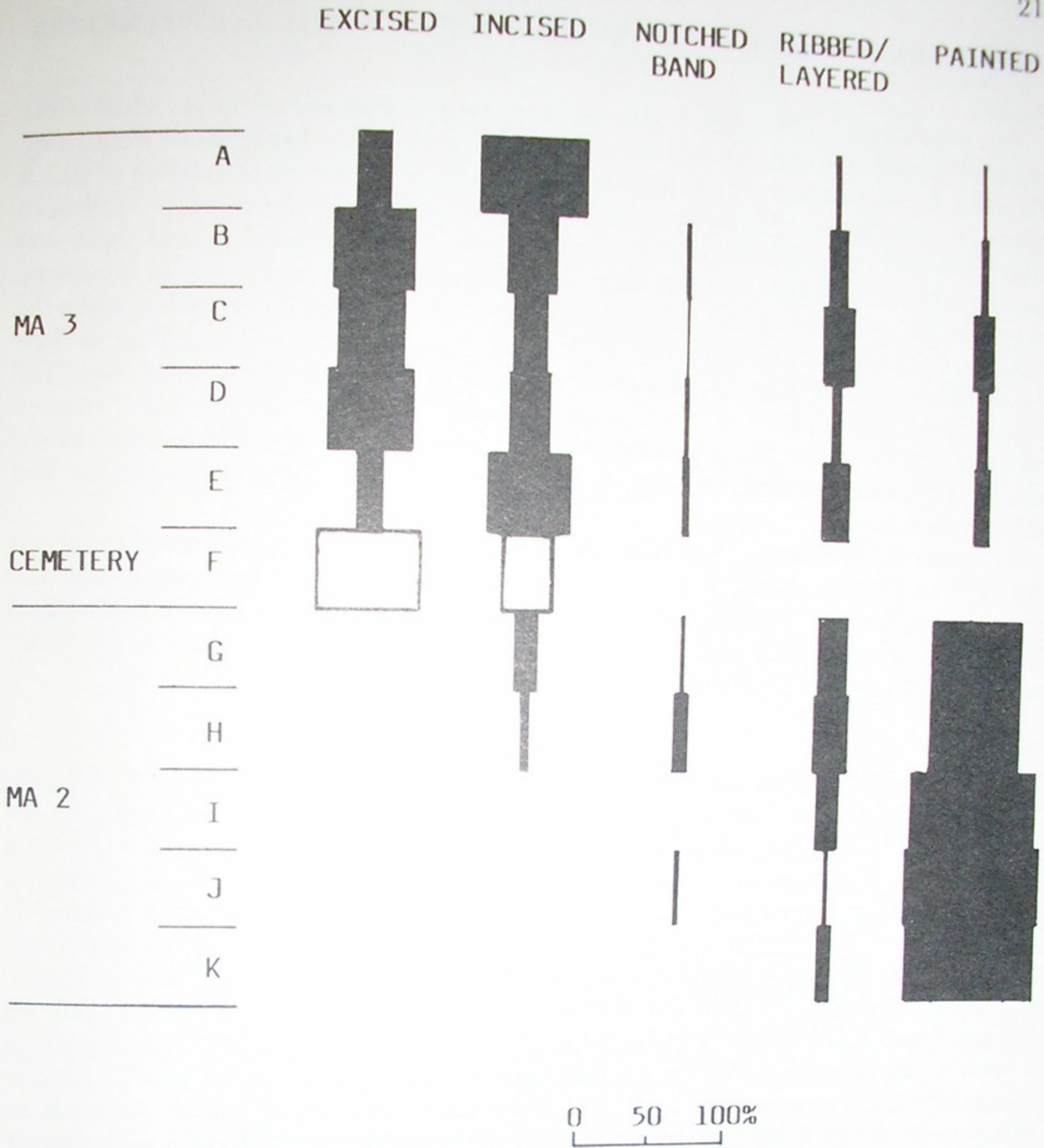


Fig. 6b. Chart of the percentages of decorated Ninevite 5 sherds in the 50T-51V sounding at Tell Mohammed Arab. Level 5 is shown in outline because there were only 3 decorated sherds.

one side; those of no importance, pouf!” – he screwed up his cherub-like face, and puffed comically enough – “blow them away!”

“That’s all very well,” I objected, “but how are you going to decide what is important, and what isn’t? That always seems the difficulty to me.”⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Christie 1920, 55. For once Hastings seems to have hit upon a major problem, and one which we do not attempt to answer.

THE RE-EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE OF THE EYEWITNESSES

Nineveh

The publication of Nineveh is sketchy, being subjective and selective. Most of the illustrated pottery is effectively unstratified and really only Mallowan's Prehistoric Pit offers the opportunity for stratigraphic analysis and here too the choice of which pots were published seems to have been fairly arbitrary. Furthermore as Mallowan later admitted the Ninevite 5 levels "at Nineveh were confused"⁶⁸ and there was considerable stratigraphic uncertainty in the excavation so that it would be unwise to rely on the evidence of any particular piece of information. Nevertheless when the published sherds from the Nineveh Prehistoric Pit are tabulated according to their depth below datum (Fig. 7), the pattern that emerges is similar to that from Tell Mohammed Arab given a certain amount of "pottery drift".⁶⁹ The "uneven distribution" of painted and incised Ninevite 5 pottery found by Hamilton should also be remembered and certainly gives support to the sequence found at Tell Mohammed Arab.

The material published from Nineveh seems to include examples from throughout the Ninevite 5 period. Some types from Nineveh such as painted ring-based and round-based bowls are not represented in the pottery from Telul eth-Thalathat and Tell Mohammed Arab 2 and 3.⁷⁰ These types, in fact, belong to the "Late Uruk" and "Transitional" phases (see below).

Tell Billa

In the first reports on Tell Billa it was stated that painted and incised "Chalice ware" or "Billa ware" sherds were found together in grain silos belonging to the earliest level (stratum 7), though no mention of this was made in the later reports on the pottery. Was there an intermediate phase of occupation at Tell Billa, and the evidence later suppressed, or did Speiser correct the inaccurate field observations? It is clear that the published material (limited as it is) does not all belong to a single cultural assemblage: in particular some of the graves and other pottery in level 6 appear to have belonged to the Akkadian period or even later.⁷¹ In all only 29 incised sherds said to come from level 6 and 13 painted sherds said to come from level 7 have been illustrated. Of the incised sherds 3 have early incised motifs, 13 late incised motifs, 9 have excised designs, 1 has a rocker pattern (probably very late in the sequence) and 3 have uncertain designs. This might suggest that the sequence at Tell Billa was very similar to that at Tell Mohammed Arab. But whichever version of Speiser's story one believes the Billa strata can be fitted into the Mohammed Arab scheme.

Tepe Gawra

Generally, the excavation of the lower strata of Gawra seems to have been more reliable than that of the upper strata which clearly contained a mixture of pottery of

⁶⁸ Mallowan 1964, 148

⁶⁹ For example the incised sherd labelled MM-21 may have been from MM-12 and mislabelled, or fallen in from higher up the section or have been in a pit or animal hole, or wrongly attributed to that findspot.

⁷⁰ In particular, Thompson & Hamilton 1932, Pl. LIII.3, 4, 6, 15 and Pl. LIV.1, 5 and 8. See below note 108.

⁷¹ E.g. Speiser 1933, Pl. LII, 9-12.

	<i>Excised</i>	<i>Incised</i>	<i>Notched band (rope pattern)</i>	<i>Ribbed or Layered</i>	<i>Painted*</i>
+8					
+7					1
+6					
+5					
+4					
+3					
+2					
+1					
0					
-1					1
-2					2
-3					3
-4					
-5					1
-6					2
-7	2				1
-8	3				4
-9				1	7
-10	3	9	1		2
-11					13
-12	3	5			9
-13					2
-14		1	1		9
-15		1			21
-16					
-17					1
-18					9
-19					
-20					
-21					1
-22					1

*including Painted Ninevite 5, Transitional, and "Late Uruk".

Fig. 7. Frequency of published decorated sherds from the Prehistoric Pit at Nineveh at different depths in feet.

different periods.⁷² Thus Gawra VII and VI contained painted Ninevite 5 pottery and also much later Akkadian pottery.⁷³ Because of the close proximity of the two sites, it would be surprising if the Ninevite 5 sequence at Gawra was different from that at Billa. The complete Ninevite 5 sequence is not represented at Gawra so that a gap in occupation at the site during this period has to be suggested. Other discrepancies which we cannot now resolve may be ascribed to less exacting standards of excavation and recording.

⁷² Although Speiser would have disagreed with this: "To establish the individual strata with precision is the principal task of the excavator. Now, if this is to be accomplished successfully, the site must be dug level by

level, as has indeed been the case with the first ten strata" (Speiser 1931, 11).

⁷³ Reade 1968, 245.

Other sites

At Chagar Bazar, levels 4 and 5 of the Area M "Prehistoric Pit" sounding were considered by Mallowan to belong to the Ninevite 5 period.⁷⁴ Nearly all the illustrated material from this area was found in graves and thus its use for dating the levels as a whole is limited. The painted pottery from this area seems to be a local style, in imitation of painted Ninevite 5.⁷⁵ Incised pottery was found in two graves and displays patterns which link it to the early incised style of period 2 at Mohammed Arab and of Tell V at Telul eth-Thalathat (Fig. 4).⁷⁶ However, the presence in one of these graves of an excised jar and early incised pottery suggests that this grave at least is later than Tell V at Telul eth-Thalathat.

Since the material from Tell Bardasti has not been illustrated one cannot tell if the later level above the one with painted Ninevite 5 wares contained early or late incised Ninevite 5 sherds.

The association of Uruk and Ninevite 5 wares on survey is illusory.⁷⁷ Even on the published statistics only 20 sites out of 117 Uruk sites and 85 Ninevite 5 sites had both Uruk and Ninevite 5 material on the surface. Furthermore some of these sites had Early or Middle Uruk material or incised or excised Ninevite 5 material and were not occupied during the transition from Uruk to Ninevite 5.

The sherds identified as painted Ninevite 5 from Qalinj Agha do not form a significant component of the pottery assemblage of that site and it is quite possible that they are examples of "pottery drift" or have been wrongly identified. The incised sherds identified as Ninevite 5 are probably a type of decorated ware found in Gawra XII and XI and in Early Uruk levels at Tell Brak.⁷⁸

Telul eth-Thalathat

At Telul eth-Thalathat the excavations provided a pottery assemblage which appeared to belong to a single period, with a short time-span. It was clearly demonstrated that painted Ninevite 5 pottery and some forms of incised Ninevite 5 pottery were in use at the same time. The pattern repertoire of the incised material is similar to that of period 2 at Mohammed Arab and the incised patterns typical of Mohammed Arab period 3 are not found. As in Mohammed Arab period 2, excised jars and bowls were not found at Thalathat. Thus Thalathat supports the distinctions we have made at Tell Mohammed Arab between early incised pottery and late incised and late excised pottery.

The excavators with commendable thoroughness seem to have published all the decorated sherds with recognisable motifs that they found and it is therefore reasonable to look at the relative proportions of different types and motifs. There appears to be a high percentage of incised to painted sherds at Thalathat when

⁷⁴ Mallowan 1936, 11.

⁷⁵ Mallowan recognised that they were different from the Nineveh examples, suggesting that they represented "the degeneration of the older Tell Halaf technique" (Mallowan 1936, 39). A hand-made incised pedestal bowl with typical early incised Ninevite 5 design can also be identified as a local product (Mallowan 1936, Fig. 18, 8).

⁷⁶ G67 and G68, Mallowan 1936, 58 and Figs. 18 and 19.

⁷⁷ See Killick 1986, 231; Weiss 1985b, 327, 329. On Abu al-Soof's own figures this claim is not substantiated.

⁷⁸ Tobler 1950, Pl. LXXIXa (for reasons for suggesting that this stamped and incised ware also occurred in level XII see Porada 1965, 145 and Fig. IV.11); J. Oates 1985a, Pl. XXXIb (=J. Oates 1986, Pl. 7).

<i>Excised</i>	<i>Incised</i>	<i>Notched band (rope pattern)</i>	<i>Ribbed or Layered</i>	<i>Painted</i>
0(0.00)	45(21.1)	12(5.6)	8(3.8)	148(69.5)
Total number of decorated sherds 213				

Fig. 8a. Frequency of decorated wares according to counts of published sherds from Telul eth-Thalathat Tell V. The figures in parentheses are the percentages. 21 of the incised sherds include notched band patterns.

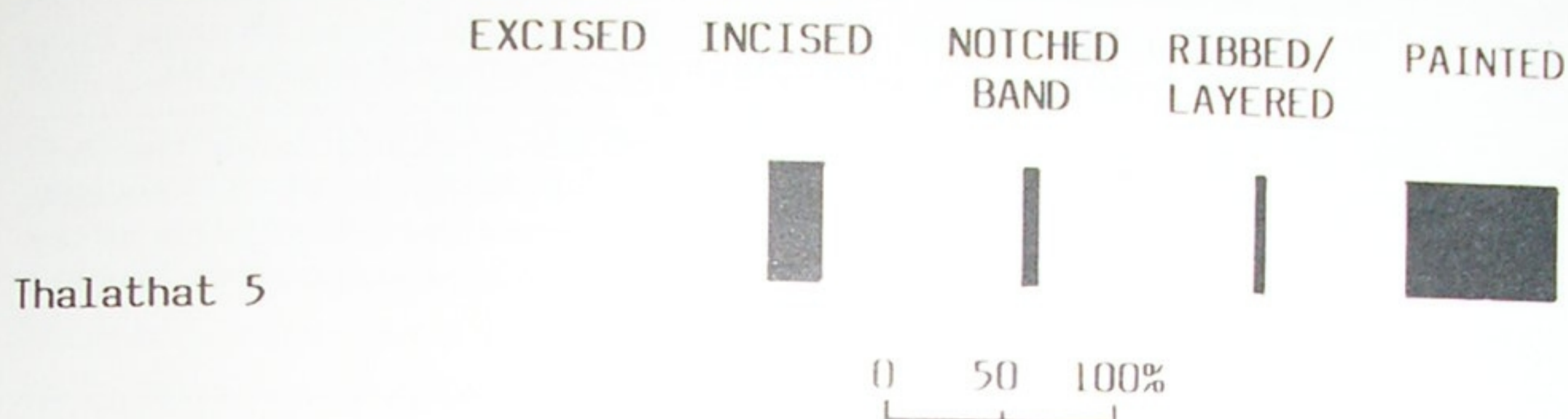


Fig. 8b. Chart of the percentages of decorated sherds from Telul eth-Thalathat Tell V.

compared with Mohammed Arab period 2 (Fig. 8).⁷⁹ Furthermore, there are some new types which are not found in period 2 at Mohammed Arab.⁸⁰ Tell V at Telul eth-Thalathat may therefore be slightly later than Mohammed Arab period 2.

Tell Leilan

In his analysis of the pottery from the Operation 1 step trench at Tell Leilan Schwartz grouped the strata into 20 phases in order that there be sufficient sample size from each phase⁸¹ and then by means of a computer analysis based on rather confusing idiosyncratic typological traits⁸² divided the material into five periods (Leilan II–VI). Leilan III, containing Ninevite 5 pottery, was sub-divided by the computer into three periods, IIIa (phases 7–8, strata 35–40), IIIb (phases 4–6, strata 21–34), and IIIc (phases 2–3, strata 16–20) the latest.⁸³ Fig. 9 gives the

⁷⁹ If the illustrated sherds represent some unrepresentative subsample of what was actually found at Tell V at Telul eth-Thalathat, then these statistics have little value. The similarity in incised motifs with Mohammed Arab period 2 still remains valid.

⁸⁰ E.g. Fukai 1974, Pl. LI, 6; Pl. XXIII, 3.

⁸¹ Schwartz's tables list the motifs by phase and not by stratum, so we have had to follow this in our study. The excavated Level III deposits in Operation 1 totalled 85.5 cubic metres (the equivalent of one 5 by 5 metre trench excavated to a depth of 3.5 metres).

⁸² Idiosyncratic because his terminology is different from that of other scholars and because he does not use a typology based on the shapes of whole vessels (in fact he

claims this as a virtue). Confusing because the types and motifs and their ranges are not defined. Furthermore a motif such as a horizontal painted band of unknown width is given the same importance in the computer analysis as quite specific patterns (such as lined zigzag), or again notched bands are considered significant only when found on a sherd without other motifs.

⁸³ There is little justification for this tripartite division in the published material and since Schwartz's typology is an unusual one it is difficult to use his tripartite division. For an attempt to impose the Leilan tripartite sequence on the whole of the Ninevite 5 period see Schwartz 1985, Tables IV on p. 57 and Table VI on p. 59.

PERIOD	phase	strata	Excised	Incised*	Notched band† (rope pattern)	Ribbed or Layered	Painted‡	Total
IIIc	2	16-18	12(13.2)	62(68.1) 40(44.0)	8(8.8)	4(4.4)	5(5.5)	91
	3	19-20	22(15.3)	87(60.4) 78(54.2)	5(3.5)	18(12.5)	12(8.3)	144
	4	21-24	1(1.8)	24(42.1) 17(29.8)	1(1.8)	10(17.5)	4(7.0)	40
IIIb	5	25-31		48(23.1) 33(15.9)	6(2.9)	143(68.8)	11(5.3)	208
	6	32-34		10(28.6) 2(5.7)	3(8.6)	8(22.9)	14(40.0)	35
IIIa	7	35-38		19(30.1) 8(12.7)	5(7.9)	18(28.6)	21(33.3)	63
	8	39-40		16(48.5) 4(12.1)		2(6.1)	15(45.5)	33
IV	9	41-42		17	0	7	58	
	10	43-44		9	0	5	49	
Total number of decorated motifs in period III								614§

*Calculated by taking Schwartz's distribution of incised motifs and subtracting excised ("panelled" (motif 6) and "grooved" (motif 11)), notched bands (motif 3), and ribbing (motif 5). The first figure includes incised motifs which may not be Ninevite 5 such as horizontal lines. The figure in italics is calculated taking just Schwartz' motifs 1,2,7,8,9,10,11,and 12 which are almost certainly Ninevite 5 (see note 84 for further details).

†Only those notched bands with no other motif are included here.

‡This figure includes all painted sherds not just Ninevite 5 ones. These are sherds or pots not the number of pots.

§Apparently 614 motifs on 563 (481 incised of all sorts and 82 painted) sherds.

Fig. 9a. Frequency of decorated motifs in periods III and IV of Operation 1 at Tell Leilan. The figures in brackets are percentages of the total number of decorated sherds in each phase.

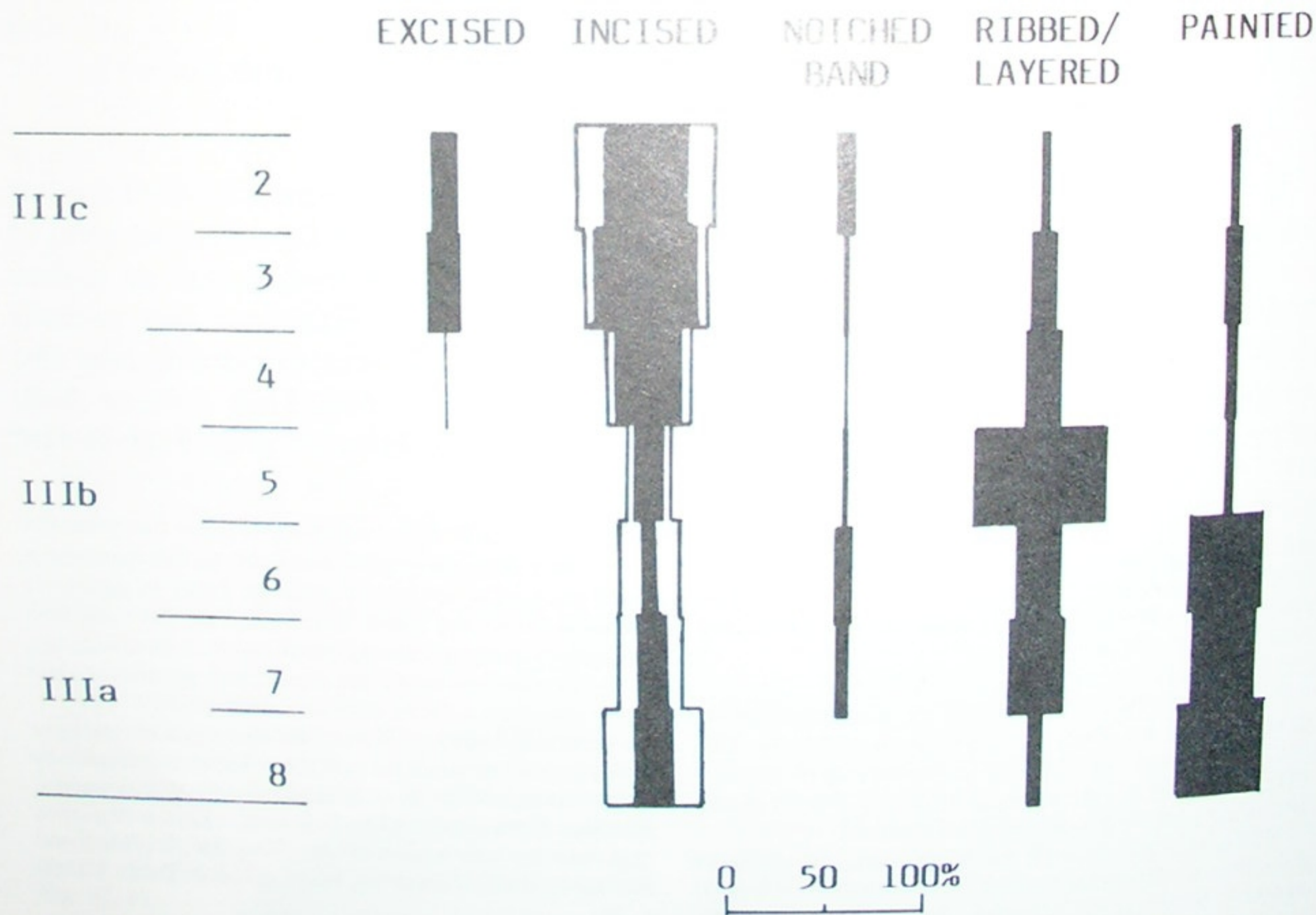


Fig. 9b. Chart of percentages of decorated motifs in period III of Operation 1 at Tell Leilan. Incised motifs which may not be of Ninevite 5 style are shown in outline only.

frequency counts for the different categories of decorated pottery.⁸⁴ When these figures are plotted out as a frequency chart as we have done with Tell Mohammed Arab and other sites, it is clear that Leilan phases 8-3 belong to the phase when painted pottery was in use at the same time as early incised pottery,⁸⁵ and that a greater proportion of the decorated ware was painted in the earlier phases and more was incised later.⁸⁶ Phases 8-6, therefore, correspond to Tell V at Telul eth-Thalathat (and perhaps the end of period 2 at Mohammed Arab) and are earlier than period 3 at Mohammed Arab. The excised sherds (called "panelled" and "grooved" by Schwartz) found in phase 3 indicate that this stratum may be later than Thalathat, which had no excised pottery, and show the existence of a phase when painted, incised and excised wares were in use at the same time.

In the latest phases of Leilan III there is a particular form of excised ware called by Schwartz "grooved", which combines shallow vertical channels with incised patterns in the early Ninevite 5 style.⁸⁷ This material, missing at Mohammed Arab, may be an early form of excised Ninevite 5 pottery.

Schwartz has not given convincing evidence to support his assertion that incised Ninevite 5 pottery preceded painted in Leilan IV.⁸⁸ But evidence from Tell Leilan itself contradicts his assertions that the 'painted ware did not precede incised ware' and 'that the two varieties existed side by side throughout', for in levels of Operation 57F02 excised and incised Ninevite 5 sherds were found without any painted material.⁸⁹ Schwartz, however, did not discuss this pottery as a Ninevite 5 style but treated it within a general discussion of period II pottery.⁹⁰ It seems more likely that the pottery from Operation 57F02 corresponds to the later part of the Ninevite 5 period roughly contemporary with Mohammed Arab period 3 when incised and excised pottery were in use but the painted style had died out.⁹¹

⁸⁴ From Level III of Operation I came 82 painted sherds (not necessarily of Ninevite 5 style) and 481 incised sherds with 532 motifs (including 203 ribbed sherds, which many would not classify as incised, and including 107 examples not distinctive of incised Ninevite 5 ware as known from other sites): these include motifs 4 (horizontal lines 14 occurrences), 13 and 14 (fingernail rounded 9 and fingernail other 30), 15 (thin vertical applied bands 9), 16 (motifs with thin vertical lines 4), 17 (thumb impressions 3) and 19 ("outliers" 38). These motifs are not illustrated by Schwartz and some probably are Ninevite 5, but his descriptions are not sufficient and there is no indication of the fabric of the pottery. What is meant by outliers is uncertain but these might be sherds that Schwartz himself recognised as being residual or intrusive. Eliminating these and ribbed and notched bands gives a total of 222 occurrences of incised motifs.

⁸⁵ Although the percentages of painted sherds in the upper levels are low and some might be thought residual the presence of complete pots in a grave (called by Schwartz Pit 1) of stratum 19 shows that they were still being used as late as Leilan III phase 3. A question mark must hang over Leilan III phase 2 where only 5 painted sherds were found, four of which had only horizontal bands of paint, and all five might have been residual.

⁸⁶ Schwartz 1985, table II on p. 55 shows a similar development, but the different types of incision and excision are not separated out.

⁸⁷ Schwartz 1982, Figs. 38.5 and 6; 39.23; 40.6. Schwartz 1985, Fig. 5.23.

⁸⁸ The incised sherds found in Leilan IV, which Schwartz called incised Ninevite 5, were 9 sherds with horizontal ribbing and 12 sherds with horizontal lines, a motif admitted by Schwartz to occur in all periods (Schwartz 1982, 81). Neither motif is particularly diagnostic for incised Ninevite 5, though they might be if they were in the typical Ninevite 5 grey ware: Schwartz did not indicate what the fabric of these sherds was.

⁸⁹ Schwartz 1982, 223. In strata 4-7 of Operation 57F02, which have been assigned to Leilan IIa by Schwartz (1985, 56-57), large numbers of sherds with lined zigzag, plain vertical zigzag (Schwartz 1985, Fig. 6), slashed incision and panel incision (Schwartz's term for a type of excision) were found in strata 4-7. So many that Schwartz wrote that "gaining popularity in late Period III, they attain their maximum popularity in early Op. 57F02 Period II" (Schwartz 1982, 188).

⁹⁰ Schwartz 1982, 186ff.

⁹¹ This is accepted by Schwartz 1985, 57: 'if the incised sherds are not simply residual from a IIIc context, Leilan IIa [Operation 2 and 57F02 soundings] must represent a very late stage of Ninevite V.' He has

If the frequency charts for Tell Mohammed Arab, Tell Leilan period III and Tell V at Telul eth-Thalathat are combined (Fig. 10), it can be seen that Leilan period III fits very well between periods 2 and 3 at Tell Mohammed Arab and that Thalathat is closely related to the end of period 2 at Mohammed Arab and the beginning of period III at Tell Leilan.⁹²

Leilan III, therefore, documents very clearly the period of transition from painted to incised with the ratio of painted to incised changing from more painted than incised in Leilan phases 6–8 to more incised than painted in Leilan phases 2–4. Clearly the Leilan Operation 1 sequence, contrary to what the excavators asserted, does not span the whole of the Ninevite 5 period but only the middle part of it with large gaps before and after.⁹³

Tell Brak

The problem of “pottery drift” due to residual sherds and levelling fill had been recognised at Tell Brak in a number of areas early in the recent excavations.⁹⁴ This explanation has now been adopted for the seemingly early occurrences of incised Ninevite 5 with Late Uruk pottery.⁹⁵ The pottery which provided the “unequivocal evidence for the association of bevelled rim bowls and incised Ninevite V” has now itself become “not unequivocally stratified”.⁹⁶

Until recently very little Ninevite 5 pottery from Tell Brak had been published. But now 7 excised sherds, 4 incised sherds, and 1 painted sherd have been illustrated in drawings and a further 44 incised and excised sherds are illustrated in photographs.⁹⁷ The painted sherd belongs to the Transitional “Late Uruk”/Ninevite 5 style rather than to genuine painted Ninevite 5. Amongst the incised and excised sherds there are some examples of the “grooved” style combining typical early

not appreciated the significance of this observation and suggested that Leilan III covered the whole period putting Leilan IIa contemporary with Tell Brak Late Early Dynastic III and other post-Ninevite 5 levels (Schwartz 1985, table VI on p. 59).

⁹² The high incidence of notched bands, ribbed/layered and painted sherds in period 3 at Tell Mohammed Arab when compared with Leilan period III may be because excavation units, such as mud-bricks or levelling fill, which were likely to contain residual material, were excluded from the Leilan statistics.

⁹³ Weiss 1985a, 25 and 1985b, 328 (following Roaf 1984) has partly acknowledged this placing period 3 at Mohammed Arab after stratum 16 and before stratum 15, while still retaining the term Leilan IIIc to cover this phase (Weiss 1985, 20). He still postulated that Leilan IIIa started at the beginning of the Ninevite 5 period. Schwartz 1985, Table VI on p. 59 placed the whole of the Mohammed Arab sequence within the Leilan III sequence and ascribed the differences to “regional variation” (p. 58). There is a possibility that Leilan III may have overlapped the end of period 2 or the beginning of period 3 at Mohammed Arab.

⁹⁴ J. Oates 1982, 205: ‘it is not always appreciated that sherds, even quite large sherds and in large quantity, can derive from bricks and levelling fill, and thus be very misleadingly “stratified”.’ D. Oates 1982b, 70: ‘The fill within the structure contained a mass of Late Uruk and some Ninevite V sherds, but the surface actually associated with it yielded two sherds of painted Khabur ware, c.1800 B.C.’ See also D. Oates 1985, 164.

⁹⁵ Thus for Area CH: ‘The example illustrated by Dr. Fielden (one of a number found in the 1978 deep sounding) derives from this same Early Dynastic horizon and is, of course, not contemporary with the Uruk materials with which it is published’ (J. Oates 1985a, 176 or J. Oates 1986, 249). And for area ST: ‘The architectural evidence and the stratification proved to be exceptionally complicated, and require much more work before a coherent interpretation can be offered’ (D. Oates 1985, 165).

⁹⁶ J. Oates 1985a, 176. There is, however, a marked reluctance to abandon this theory altogether. Thus, ‘the possible contemporaneity of incised Ninevite V and brb [bevelled rim bowls] will be noted elsewhere on the site’ (J. Oates 1986, 247).

⁹⁷ J. Oates 1986, Fig.5 and Pls. 1–3.

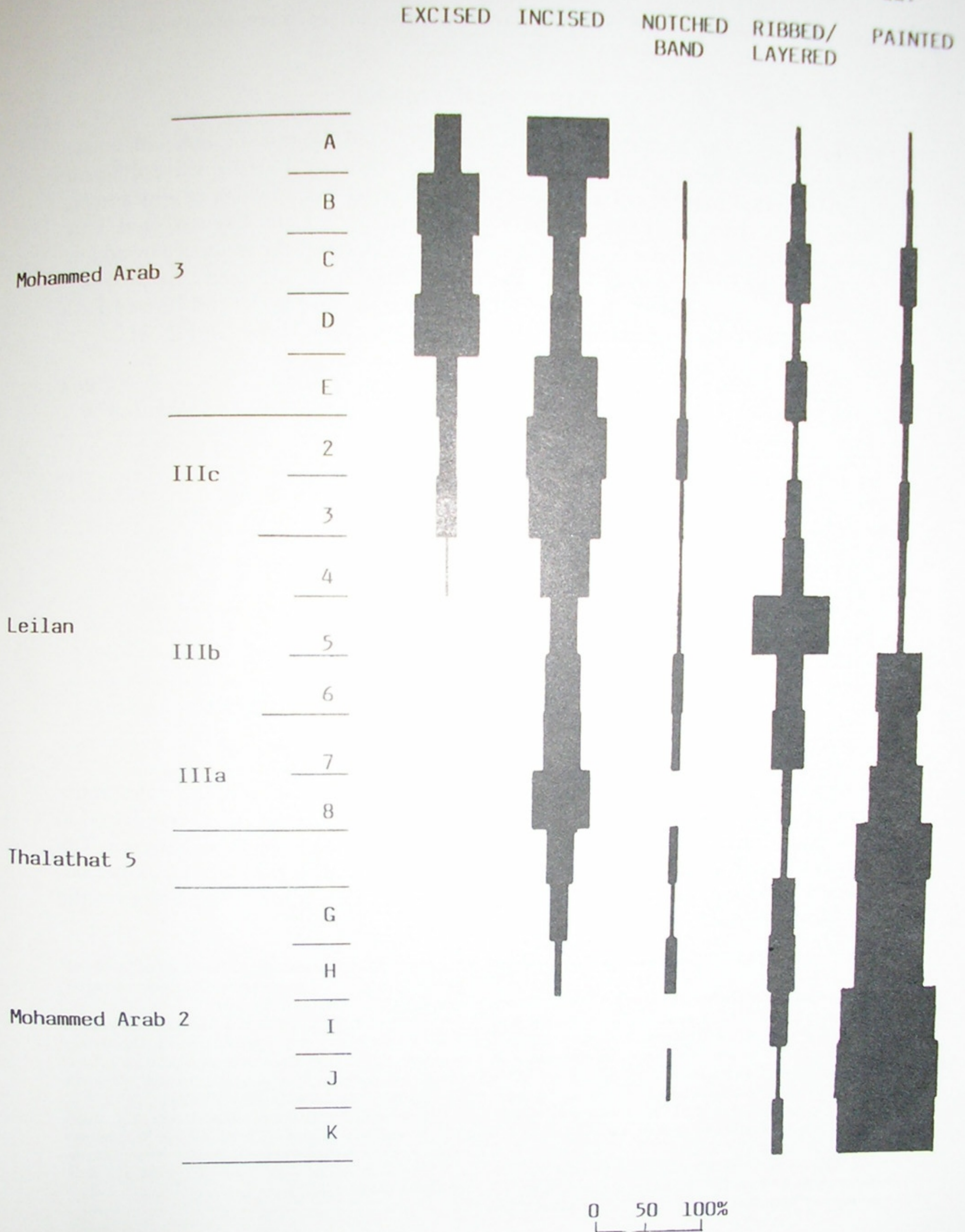


Fig. 10. Combined frequency chart of decorated pottery from period 3 at Tell Mohammed Arab, period III at Tell Leilan, Tell V at Telul eth-Thalathat, and period 2 at Tell Mohammed Arab.

incised motifs with shallow vertical excision such as we have observed at Tell Leilan.⁹⁸

THE DENOUEMENT

The excavations at Mohammed Arab have provided the missing link which now enables us to reconstruct the Ninevite 5 pottery sequence based on five different styles of decorated pottery.⁹⁹ These key Ninevite 5 styles are, in order of appearance, Painted, Early Incised, Early Excised ("grooved"),¹⁰⁰ Late Excised, and Late Incised. In addition to these Ninevite 5 styles, we can extend the sequence by adding at the beginning the following styles, Painted "Late Uruk", Incised "Late Uruk", and Painted Transitional "Late Uruk"/Ninevite 5 style, and at the end Incised Taya IX style.¹⁰¹ The relationship between these pottery styles is shown in Fig. 11.

Pottery Style	Period	NINEVITE 5				URUK LATE
		TAYA IX*	LATE	EARLY	TRANS	
INCISED TAYA IX		_____?				
LATE INCISED NINEVITE 5			_____?			
LATE EXCISED NINEVITE 5			_____?			
EARLY EXCISED NINEVITE 5				_____		
EARLY INCISED NINEVITE 5					_____	
PAINTED NINEVITE 5						_____
PAINTED TRANSITIONAL "LATE URUK"/NINEVITE 5						_____
PAINTED "LATE URUK"						_____
INCISED "LATE URUK"						_____

*variously called Late Early Dynastic III, Leilan II, etc. in the Habur.

Fig. 11. Decorated pottery styles and period terminology.

Painted "Late Uruk" and Incised "Late Uruk" are the earliest of the styles under discussion. They precede the introduction of Ninevite 5 material and were found in period 1 at Mohammed Arab with pottery related to that known from Nineveh, Tell Brak, Habuba Kabira, Uruk itself, and other sites dated to the Late Uruk period. However, the forms are degenerate when compared to the international types of the Late Uruk period.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ J. Oates 1986, 251–252. For example Figs. 5.98 and 99.

⁹⁹ It is also possible to distinguish changes in the undecorated pottery. For example the ribbed/layered fine ware forms of the "painted and early incised" period are superseded by plain fine-ware equivalents in the "late excised and late incised" period. Or again hollow-stemmed bowls are found only in the "painted and early incised" period. Further examples will be noted in the final publication of the excavations at Tell Mohammed Arab.

¹⁰⁰ There is no evidence that this "grooved" ware is earlier than the Late Excised ware: at Leilan there is 1 example of "panelled" (= Late Excised) in phase 4 and

7 in phase 3, while there are no examples of "grooved" ware in phase 4 and 15 in phase 3. It does, however, disappear before the Late Excised.

¹⁰¹ "Late Uruk" is written in inverted commas to indicate that it may not be contemporary with what is generally called Late Uruk pottery or the Late Uruk period in southern Mesopotamia. Incised Taya IX includes the styles found in Taya IX–VII.

¹⁰² Compare, for example, Roaf 1983a, Fig. 2.1–3 with Surenhagen 1978, Tab. 7. Period 1 at Mohammed Arab may be contemporary with Jemdet Nasr in southern Mesopotamia and with "Latest Uruk" at Tell Brak (J. Oates 1985a, 178).

Significantly, on a few of the Painted "Late Uruk" sherds there are motifs reminiscent of Ninevite 5 designs, suggesting that Painted Ninevite 5 pottery was a development from the Painted "Late Uruk" pottery. This has been confirmed by other excavations in the Saddam Dam Salvage Project which have revealed layers of the transitional period which is missing at Tell Mohammed Arab. At Jigan, at Tell Fisna, and above all at Tell Karana 3 pottery has been found which resembles the "Late Uruk" pottery from Tell Mohammed Arab in fabric and shape but bears on it painted designs typical of Painted Ninevite 5 pottery from later layers at Tell Mohammed Arab or at Telul eth-Thalathat.¹⁰³

The distribution outside the Eski Mosul area of these "Late Uruk" and Transitional styles is not yet clear. The Painted "Late Uruk" style can be identified on other sites in northern Iraq,¹⁰⁴ perhaps in south-eastern Turkey¹⁰⁵ and on one site in north-eastern Syria.¹⁰⁶ A form of the Incised "Late Uruk" style has also been noted at Tell Brak¹⁰⁷ and Painted Transitional ware was present at Nineveh and probably also at Tell Brak and Chagar Bazar.¹⁰⁸

The earliest Ninevite 5 phase was found in period 2 at Tell Mohammed Arab, where Painted Ninevite 5 pottery occurred with a limited repertoire of simple incised grey ware, initially only ribbed, layered and notched bands and then with an increasing number of incised motifs including lightly incised feather patterns, running chevrons, curvilinear designs formed with dots, impressed triangles and so on. This phase was found at Tell V of Telul eth-Thalathat and in most of period III at Tell Leilan. The upper layers of period III at Leilan which contain painted and excised pottery belong to the final part of the Early Ninevite 5 period or the beginning of the Late Ninevite 5 period.

There is no obvious development within the Painted Ninevite 5 ware (as there is in the incised). But further research may well show both chronological and regional variations in the style.¹⁰⁹

The following stage, the Late Ninevite 5 period, when Incised and Excised pottery were in use but Painted ware was not, was found in period 3 at Tell Mohammed Arab. The Late Incised and Late Excised Ninevite 5 styles appear to manifest

¹⁰³ Fales et alii, in press; Fujii et alii, in press.

¹⁰⁴ Nineveh (Thompson and Hamilton 1932, Pl. LIII, 15); Tepe Gawra (Tobler 1950, Pl. CXXI, no.339).

¹⁰⁵ Behm-Blancke 1981, Abb. 21.1a-b, 23.6.

¹⁰⁶ See Meijer 1985, Fig. 24b for one Painted Late Uruk sherd from Tell Qarāsa. The published painted sherds from Tell Brak and from grave G188 at Chagar Bazar are more in the Transitional style than in the painted Ninevite 5 style (J. Oates 1986, Fig. 5.107; Mallowan 1937, Figs. 25.1 and 25.3).

¹⁰⁷ J. Oates 1986, Fig. 3.46.

¹⁰⁸ Painted ring-based bowls from Nineveh are similar to examples from "Late Uruk" Mohammed Arab period 1 (Thompson and Hamilton 1932, Pls. LIII.15 & LIV.5). Other bowls appear closer to the pedestal shape characteristic of Painted Ninevite 5 but retain the "Late Uruk" geometric patterns. These may be classified as Transitional (ibid. Pl. LIV.1 and 8). Round-bottomed cups with geometric designs are also "Late

Uruk" (Thompson and Hamilton, Pl. LIII.3,4 & 6). This shape is not known in Painted Ninevite 5 ware at Mohammed Arab so where it occurs at Nineveh with naturalistic patterns (Thompson and Hamilton, Pl. LIII, 8 and 12), it may also represent an aspect of the Transitional style. See also note 106.

¹⁰⁹ The distinction between the painted designs from Telul eth-Thalathat and those from Nineveh which was pointed out by the Japanese excavators (Fukai 1974, 67 and Fig. 6 on 102 of the Japanese text) is not a regional variation but a chronological development. The Nineveh sample includes examples of the earlier Transitional style, where painting is usually restricted to above the carination (see above note 70). The difficulty in recognising a development in Painted Ninevite 5 pottery is perhaps due to the small size of the sample rather than the homogeneity of Painted Ninevite 5 pottery from different sites.

regional differences. The variety and quality of the Late Excised and Late Incised pottery from period 3 at Mohammed Arab and stratum 6 at Tell Billa are not reflected in the limited repertoire of the Habur material. In turn, this latter pottery displays elements of a strong regional style not found to the east.¹¹⁰

The latest pottery style in Fig. 11 is called Incised Taya IX. This style has been chosen because we are dealing primarily with decorated pottery styles. It is clearly derived from the fine Incised Ninevite 5 style and has in the past been misidentified as the latter¹¹¹ but there are differences in vessel shape and surface treatment. Thus pedestal bowls have disappeared in Taya IX; excised pottery is also absent and the repertoire of incised patterns is restricted to a few simple patterns such as slanting rows of dots and slashed zigzags.¹¹²

The change from the Late Incised Ninevite 5 to the Incised Taya IX style appears in many ways abrupt and, indeed, no site has yet produced evidence of a gradual transition between the two.¹¹³ Nevertheless, the similarities are such that we can suppose that such a transition did occur and that at least in pottery there was a continuum in Northern Iraq from the Ninevite 5 period to the Taya IX period.

The Incised Taya IX style represents a regional style, one of a group of fine-ware styles which are present in post-Ninevite 5 levels in North Syria and Iraq. These styles have been variously called 'burnished black ware', 'metallic ware', 'stone ware', and 'fine clinky ware'.¹¹⁴ Like Incised Taya IX they may be considered partly derivative from Ninevite 5 fine wares but there is as yet no agreement amongst the excavators about what is meant by these terms.

The implication of this seriation of ceramic styles for the relative dating of sites of the Ninevite 5 period is summarized in Fig. 12. This requires little additional comment except to repeat that many uncertainties remain, largely because of the way in which the sites have been dug and published. As more sites are published in greater detail it will be possible to refine the relative chronology.

In Fig. 12 there is also an indication of the relative chronology with respect to Babylonia and the Diyala. This too is very approximate: only a few connections between the Ninevite 5 and other cultures have been observed. On Ninevite 5 sites no items of foreign manufacture have been definitely identified,¹¹⁵ and only the seals

¹¹⁰ The most common incised motif found in Syria, a hatched zig-zag or "step pattern", was long ago recognised by Mallowan as a regional design (Mallowan 1937, 149 and Fig. 25, 4). The ware of many of these sherds, a whitish or buff clay, and the coarse quality of the incision also differentiate them from much (but not all) of the Mohammed Arab period 3 material. The possibility of regional variations as well as of chronological ones should be recognised. But in the absence of definite evidence to the contrary we assume that the Ninevite 5 ceramic sequence followed a similar (though perhaps not identical) development in both Northern Iraq and the Upper Habur.

¹¹¹ Reade 1968, 237 note 8.

¹¹² Reade 1968, 244ff.; Reade 1982, 74.

¹¹³ The evidence of the transition on these sites may, however, have been destroyed by the major building operations of this period which reflect, in the Eski Mosul

area as in the 'Afar plain and elsewhere, the concentration of the population at this time into larger often fortified settlements (Reade 1982, Weiss 1983, Fujii et alii in press).

¹¹⁴ Burnished black ware: Mallowan 1937, 117; stoneware: J. Oates 1982, 206-207; metallic ware: Kühne 1976, 33-72; fine clinky ware: Schwartz 1982, 202.

¹¹⁵ Abu al-Soof (1972, 6-7) suggested that a painted sherd found at Thalathat was related to the Scarlet Ware pottery found in the Diyala during the Early Dynastic I period, but the design in fact is more similar to Ninevite 5 motifs and accepted as such by the excavators (Fukai 1974, 68). There are some similarities between Ninevite 5 and Scarlet Ware including both particular motifs and the amount of the pot decorated; there is no clear evidence to suggest that one style exerted a definite influence on the other.

Site:	Period	TAYA IX*	NINEVITE 5				TRANS	URUK LATE
			LATE	EARLY				
NORTH IRAQ								
Mohammed Arab			—3—		—2—		—1—	
Tell Billa		5	6		7			
Thalathat Tell V					V			
Nineveh MM			?8—12		?12—18	18	18—	
Karana 3							—3—2—1—	
HABUR								
Tell Leilan Op. 1		—13—15—		?16—18—19—40				
57F02		—2—3—	—4—7—					
Tell Brak CH		—5—8—						—9—12—
Chagar Bazar graves				68 67		?188		
DIYALA								
SEQUENCE	AKKADIAN		EARLY DYNASTIC			PROTOLITERATE		
			III	II	I	d	c	b a
BABYLONIAN								
SEQUENCE	AKKADIAN		EARLY DYNASTIC			JEMDET	LATE	
			III	II	I	NASR	URUK	
Absolute chronology:		2500				3000		

*variously called Late Early Dynastic III, Leilan II, etc. in the Habur.

Fig. 12. Ninevite 5 sites and periods.

and seal impressions may be related to other regions. The numerous seal impressions from Thalathat, Nineveh, Billa, Mohammed Arab and Leilan are in the widely distributed and misleadingly named "Piedmont Jemdet Nasr" or "glazed steatite" style, which in the Diyala and Hamrin is found in Early Dynastic I contexts.¹¹⁶

A few examples of Ninevite 5 pottery have been identified at sites outside its normal range. One painted sherd found in an Early Dynastic I context at Tell Asmar has been identified as Ninevite 5¹¹⁷ and also a plain fine-ware cup from level IVb at Gubba (also Early Dynastic I).¹¹⁸ At Mari, three incised sherds (two Early and one unidentifiable),¹¹⁹ a single Late Excised sherd,¹²⁰ and two "metallic-ware" sherds¹²¹ have been found within that part of the Trench B sequence dated to the

¹¹⁶ Killick 1986, 232-3; Porada 1985, 91. Hansen has reassigned Sin Temple Level IV at Khafaje to the Early Dynastic I period and so this type of seal need not start earlier than Early Dynastic I (Porada, Hansen, and Dunham in press). Similar style sealings come from Susa Acropole 16-14 and from Middle Banesh levels at Tepe Malyan. We are grateful to Edith Porada and Holly Pittman for information about these seals.

¹¹⁷ The motifs are not exactly duplicated on Ninevite 5 materials from the north. It was, however, recognisably different from the local Diyala pottery. Delougaz 1952, Pl. 64.16 (As.34:240 from H18:14) p. 141. This drawing differs in various details from the original publication in Frankfort 1934, 21 and Fig. 20. Perkins 1949, 197 note 298 also suggested that Delougaz 1952,

Pl. 133i was of Ninevite 5 style. This sherd which was found in a protoliterate(?) context at Tell Agrab (Ag.326:581c Hill B, room V, 5th layer from the top) shows a column of birds standing on each other's backs in red and black paint. It could well be Scarlet Ware or even Jemdet Nasr in style. Delougaz cites parallels from Jemdet Nasr, Susa, Hissar and Sialk.

¹¹⁸ Ii and Odani 1981, Fig. 20.5 on 44 and p. 159. The shape of bowl appears more similar to those of period 2 rather than period 3 at Tell Mohammed Arab. The same level at Tell Gubba contained a bevelled rim bowl.

¹¹⁹ Lebeau 1985, Pl. 27.10, Pl.28.12 and Lebeau et alii 1986, Pl. IV.15.

¹²⁰ Lebeau 1985, Pl. 24.23.

¹²¹ Lebeau 1985, Pl. 27.26 and 27.29.

Early Dynastic I period. This would suggest that both "metallic-ware" and the Late Excised Ninevite 5 phase started as early as Early Dynastic I. The relative dating of Ninevite 5 fine wares and "metallic wares" is still not certain but there is no convincing evidence for any overlap between the styles. The evidence from Mari, if correctly dated and if there was no intrusive pottery drift, would imply that the Ninevite 5 period ended before the end of Early Dynastic I. But there is no internal evidence to date the Trench B sequence and few pottery parallels with other sites.¹²² As Lebeau remarked "hormis un seul tesson de "cut ware", la céramique dynastique archaïque I de Mari n'est presque en rien comparable à celle du sud mésopotamien, de la basse vallée de l'Euphrate."¹²³ This lack of strong connections between Mari and the south and between Mari and the north make it an unreliable guide for determining the relative chronology between north and south. Two Ninevite 5 sherds have so far been reported from stratified contexts at Tell Chuera,¹²⁴ but since the chronology of Tell Chuera is disputed the value of these sherds for elucidating Ninevite 5 chronology is dubious.¹²⁵

The duration and absolute dates of the period of Ninevite 5 pottery remain uncertain and the absence of any epigraphic evidence from Ninevite 5 sites¹²⁶ and the apparent unreliability of Carbon 14 determinations for this period¹²⁷ make it impossible to propose any chronological scheme with confidence. The upper limit is fixed by the clear Late Uruk connections of the pre-Ninevite 5 period 1 occupation at Mohammed Arab.¹²⁸ Painted Ninevite 5 pottery follows on from this, after a period with a transitional style. The start of the Early Ninevite 5 period may therefore be placed towards the end of the Jemdet Nasr period, perhaps about 3000 B.C.¹²⁹ The lower limit is fixed by the pre-Akkadian context of the post-Ninevite

¹²² Some of the parallels used for dating the layers at Mari are from sites which are not well-dated or from layers which are usually considered later than Early Dynastic I, e.g. Chagar Bazar 3, Tell Billa Stratum 5, Barri Scavo B. A later date for this part of the Trench B sequence would explain the absence of Ninevite 5 pottery in a similar assemblage of the same date at Tell Melebiya (Lebeau et alii 1985, 8; Lebeau et alii 1986, 10)

¹²³ Lebeau in press.

¹²⁴ Kühne 1976, 103 and Abb. 404 and 405.

¹²⁵ Moortgat originally proposed an Akkadian date for Tell Chuera (Moortgat 1965, 14-15 and 47). The site was re-dated to the Early Dynastic II period by Kühne (Kühne 1976, 31), but this has been disputed by Zettler (Zettler 1978) who supports the Akkadian date.

¹²⁶ Since Late Uruk inscribed tablets have been found at Brak and Nineveh (Finkel 1986, 187-189; Collon and Reade 1983, 33-34), there may be written documents yet to be discovered. So far no Ninevite 5 temple or public administrative building, except possibly at Chagar Bazar (Mallowan 1937, 115 and Fig. 7), where tablets might be expected has been excavated.

¹²⁷ Not only is there increased inaccuracy because of the calibration curve but also there may be some systematic problem at least with the results from Tell Brak (D. Oates 1982a, 197; J. Oates 1985b). Four determinations from stratum 20 (phase 3) at Tell Leilan which were sent to laboratories in America and Japan all cluster in

the 27th century B.C. and may be reliable (2673 B.C. ± 70 (Weiss 1985a, 23 and 25). The two determinations from stratum 19 both seem unlikely. Three of the four determinations from phases 6 and 7 seem considerably too early and Schwartz's method of averaging the determinations from phase 6 is not theoretically justified (Schwartz 1982, pp. 177ff.). The two determinations from Telul eth-Thalathat have large standard deviations and so do not give much better information. For further details see Schwartz 1985, Table V.

¹²⁸ The Painted "Late Uruk" may be related to monochrome painted pottery from Jemdet Nasr (Field and Martin 1935, Pl. XXXV.2, 4-6, 13; Oates and Oates 1976, p. 46) and from protoliterate contexts in the Diyala (Delougaz 1952, Pls. 28c-d, 29b, 32a-c, 134a-b, 186.c.603.253a), though the designs are so simple that the similarity may be fortuitous.

¹²⁹ This is a guess. Some scholars think that the Jemdet Nasr period lasted from 3100 to 2900 B.C. (e.g. Porada, Hansen, and Dunham in press) while others from 3500 to 3100 B.C. (e.g. Vertesalji and Kolbus 1985, 97 and Fig. H between pp. 96 and 97). There seems to be no definite way of telling which is more correct without many more radiocarbon determinations. Compare for the duration of Leilan III (rather than the whole Ninevite 5 period) "at Tell Leilan, the eight reliable dates from period III delimit a duration of as much as a millennium, ca. 3500-2500 B.C., an unexpectedly long lifespan" (Schwartz 1985, 58).

5 destruction levels at Tell Brak.¹³⁰ The Late Ninevite 5 period may, therefore, have begun at the end of the Early Dynastic I period and finished in the middle of the Early Dynastic III period, perhaps c. 2500 B.C.

Thus we have been able to reconstruct the sequence of events which led up to the 'Mysterious Affair of Styles'. We have seen that much of the uncertainty and confusion arose out of the conflicting testimonies of the eyewitnesses. These have now been reconciled so that the relationships between the different Ninevite 5 pottery styles and their relative sequence have been firmly established. Many other aspects, however, remain unresolved. We may be wiser on the subject of the decorated pottery but the Ninevite 5 culture as a whole still eludes us. It remains a culture out of focus, represented only by its pottery: a clearer definition of its particular characteristics is still one of the major goals of Mesopotamian archaeology.

Hercule Poirot, our infallible companion in this investigation, would not have been so easily satisfied with such a conclusion: for him there was always a solution in which every little fact was neatly explained.

... At last he heaved a deep sigh.

"It is well. The bad moment has passed. Now all is arranged and classified."¹³¹

But here the analogy between detective stories and archaeology breaks down.

Addendum September 1987

Since writing this article we have received a copy of *Researchs on the Antiquities of the Saddam Dam Basin Salvage and other Researches* (State Organization of Antiquities and Heritage, Saddam Dam Basin Salvage Project, Baghdad, 1987). This includes the reports on Karana 3 and Tell Jigan referred to above as Fales *et al.* in press (pp. 99–128) and as Fujii *et al.* in press (pp. 33–62), as well as preliminary reports on other excavated sites, Tell Baqaq 1, Tell Abu Dhahir, Tell Fisna, Tell Ger Matbakh, Tell Jambur, Tell Jessari, Tell Jigan, Kutan, Tell Rijim, Tell Sa'ud, Siyana Ulya, in which Ninevite 5 pottery of various styles has been found. Other sites in the Salvage Project from which Ninevite 5 pottery has been reported are Tell Dhuwajj (Tell Zummar), Khirbet Hatara, Tell Jaloqa, Tell Karana 1 and 2, and Tell Sellal. It has not been possible to integrate the results of these excavations into the above discussion and indeed much more detail will be available when the final reports are published, but this new evidence confirms the pottery sequence as outlined above.

A recent note in *Antiquity* (M. S. Tite, S. G. E. Bowman, J. C. Ambers, and K. J. Matthews, 'Preliminary statement on an error in British Museum radiocarbon dates (BM-1700 to BM-2315)', *Antiquity* 61/232 (July 1987), 168 confirms that, as suggested in note 127, there is an error in the Tell Brak Carbon 14 determinations which may be approximately 200–300 years too young.

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¹³⁰ J. Oates 1985b.

¹³¹ Christie 1920, 122.

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