

EGYPTIAN MISSION RESCUE EXCAVATIONS IN TELL EL-RETABA. PART 1: NEW KINGDOM REMAINS

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Tell el-Retaba is a major Dynastic-period site in Northern Egypt and like many other sites in this region (as well as elsewhere in Egypt) it is under constant threat of destruction by ever encroaching modern life with its infrastructure projects designed to improve modern Egyptian living standards. While commendable in their essence, these projects often cause irreparable losses of archaeological heritage, like the asphalt road linking the Cairo-Ismailia Desert Road with the city of Salhiya, which was built through Tell el-Retaba some years ago. Current development of this road into a multi-lane speedway was approved by Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities on the condition that full archaeological excavations be carried out first.¹ The salvage project covered an area approx. 200 m long (N-S) and 10 m wide (E-W) on the eastern side of the existing road. The following report covers the settlement remains discovered in the northern part of this area (Figs 1, 2).

Knowledge of the site in Tell el-Retaba is still very limited despite the first excavations being carried out there already in the 19th century.² Petrie's work³ resulted in the identification of a large fortress existing in the 20th dynasty. Investigations by a Polish-Slovak Archaeological Mission, working on the site since 2007, have demonstrated that earlier defense walls, thought by Petrie to be of First Intermediate Period date, belonged in fact to a fortress built by Ramesses II.⁴ Still, almost nothing was known of the earlier history of the site. Rescue excavations carried out by the Egyptian Mission

from the Supreme Council of Antiquities have supplied important new data on the a long settlement history of the site, starting with the Second Intermediate Period and lasting (possibly with some interruptions) through the Late or even Ptolemaic Periods. The present report describes only discoveries dating to the 18th and 19th dynasties.

1. 18th DYNASTY SETTLEMENT

1.1. Description

1.1.1. Structures

The settlement remains encompassed the ruins of a large house with courtyard surrounded by a sinuoidal wall, a few silos and an oven (Fig. 3). The limits of this complex are difficult to determine as its western part, which lies under a modern road, could not be excavated and the eastern limits could not be reached in the relative narrowness of the excavated salvage trench. Apparently there are still some rooms (courts?) in the eastern part of the house awaiting exploration. While the house with its strong walls must have functioned for an extended period of time, the thin-walled silos were less durable structures and were replaced with new ones whenever the need arose.

1.1.1.1. House (Figs. 3, 4)

The present analysis is preliminary as the house was not fully excavated and will be supplemented with the results of further excavations, especially in the eastern part of the complex. The house is rec-

¹ This work was carried out by a mission directed by Mustafa Nour el-Din and staffed by Sameh Ahmed el-Sayed and Rizq Diab Ghadir Hassan. The excavations started on 20 November 2010 and lasted until 9 March 2011, when they were interrupted in consequence of the Egyptian Revolution of 25 January 2011. Works was resumed on 5 September and continued through 4 November 2011, then again from 6 December through 5 January 2012. The present publication of the results of these salvage excavations, prepared by members

of both the Egyptian mission and the Polish-Slovak Mission working at Tell el-Retaba, follows from a commendable cooperation between the two missions operating on the site.

² For the history of excavations on the site, cf. RZEPKA et al. 2009, 241–245.

³ PETRIE and DUNCAN 1906, 28 ff.

⁴ RZEPKA et al. 2011, 142–147.

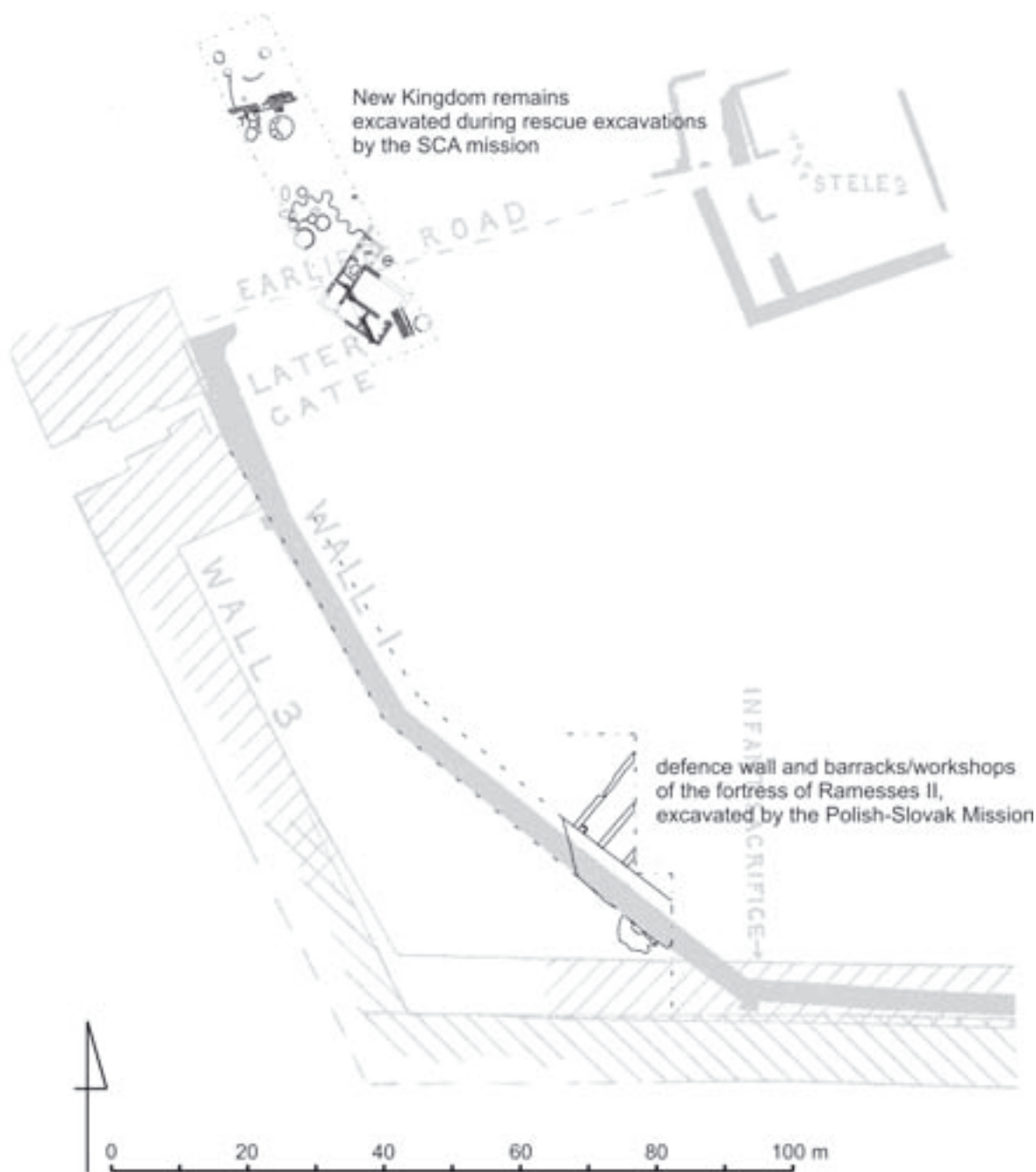


Fig. 1 Plan of the western part of the fortress with location of New Kingdom structures discovered by the SCA and the Polish-Slovak missions (drawing Ł. Jarmużek, with the use of PETRIE and DUNCAN 1906, pl. XXXV)

tangular in plan, the uncovered part measuring approx. 14 x 10.7 m. The total habitable surface can be estimated as at least 120 m². Two kinds of brickwork can be seen in the walls. Three walls of room 6 were 1.5 brick thick, the bonding pattern consisting of one row of headers and stretcher at the same level. Other walls were only 1 brick thick, the bonding pattern consisting of a series of alternate courses of headers and stretchers. The most popular brick

size was 33–36 x 20 x 12 cm and 36–38 x 18 x 10 cm.

The building, which contained at least 6 rooms, was probably divided into two parts. The entrance to the first part was situated in the southeastern wall of room 1 (the surface of the room being 8.2 m²), then a doorway in the southwestern wall led to room 2 (7.6 m²). Two occupation levels were identified in the second of the rooms described. In the



Fig. 2 General view of the area excavated by the SCA mission, looking south (photo S. Rzepka)

first phase there was a rectangular pit cut in the floor. Its upper edges were reinforced with a course of bricks. The pit could have served as a small underground storage bin (two imported juglets and a calcite ear plug were found in it, cf. below chapters 1.1.2.8. and 3.1; Figs 18, 57.1, and 59.1). In a later phase, about 1.15 m from the southwestern wall of the room, a thin and probably low wall was built to divide the space into two parts. Traces of fire were found on the northern face of this low wall. No traces of a door were observed between rooms 2 and 3, so it seems that the set of rooms 3, 4, 5, and 6 was accessible from a separate entrance, as yet not discovered (it could have been situated in the unexcavated western part of the house or in the eastern part, where the walls were preserved only at foundations level). Room 6 had the biggest surface (29.3 m²). Traces of fire were noted on the wall in the western corner, suggesting the existence of a fireplace there. Near the southern corner there was a doorway (1.05 m wide) to room 5 (8.6 m²). Next to the southeastern wall there was a row of bricks, which could be the remains of a bench. Walls of room 3 (6.8 m²) and room 4 (8.9 m²) were not preserved to a sufficient height to allow the doorway between them to be located.

1.1.1.2. Sinusoidal wall (Figs. 3, 5)

The area to the northwest of the house was a courtyard surrounded by a sinusoidal wall. The wall abutted the northern corner of the house. It ran about 8.3 m to the northwest where it turned to the southwest for a distance of 7 m. The wall was one brick thick. Brick dimensions were 36–40 x 18–20 x 10 cm. The surface of the excavated part of the court was approximately 73 m².

1.1.1.3. Oven (Figs. 3, 5)

An oven was found next to the northwestern face of the sinusoidal wall, outside the court. It was of rounded shape, the diameter being 1.15 m. The walls were raised of a single row of mud bricks. Only one course of bricks was preserved. Inside the oven there was a lot of ashes and charcoal.

1.1.1.4. Silos (Figs. 3, 5, 6, 7)

Several silos were found in the area around the house (see Table 1). A study of the stratigraphy of the area has led to the identification of three phases of silo construction. Silos nos 1, 2 and 3 belonged with the first phase, which was contemporary with house construction. Two of these installations were situated outside the courtyard but in the vicinity of the house, indicating that they had formed part of the complex. Another three silos (nos 4, 5 and 6), all of them situated in the courtyard, belonged to the second phase. The total capacity of the silos was similar on each level; 23.7 m³ on the first one and 21.4 m³ on the second. The calculations can only be tentative in view of the fact that the exact limits of the complex are not known and hence it cannot be excluded that more silos had once belonged to it.

Other silos were found further to the north and it would seem that they belonged to the next house or houses going this way (not excavated).

A large silo no. 7, which seems to belong to phase 2 of silo construction, lay about 10 m to the north of the sinusoidal wall of the courtyard. At 33 m³ capacity this silo was definitely the largest in the excavated area. The space inside the silo was partitioned by thin walls creating four small and one big compartment. The total capacity of the smaller compartments was about 35% of the capacity of the silo.

Several silos and some fragments of walls in the northern part of the excavated area belonged to phase 3 of silo construction. The state of preservation of all of the structures was poor. Silos nos 8

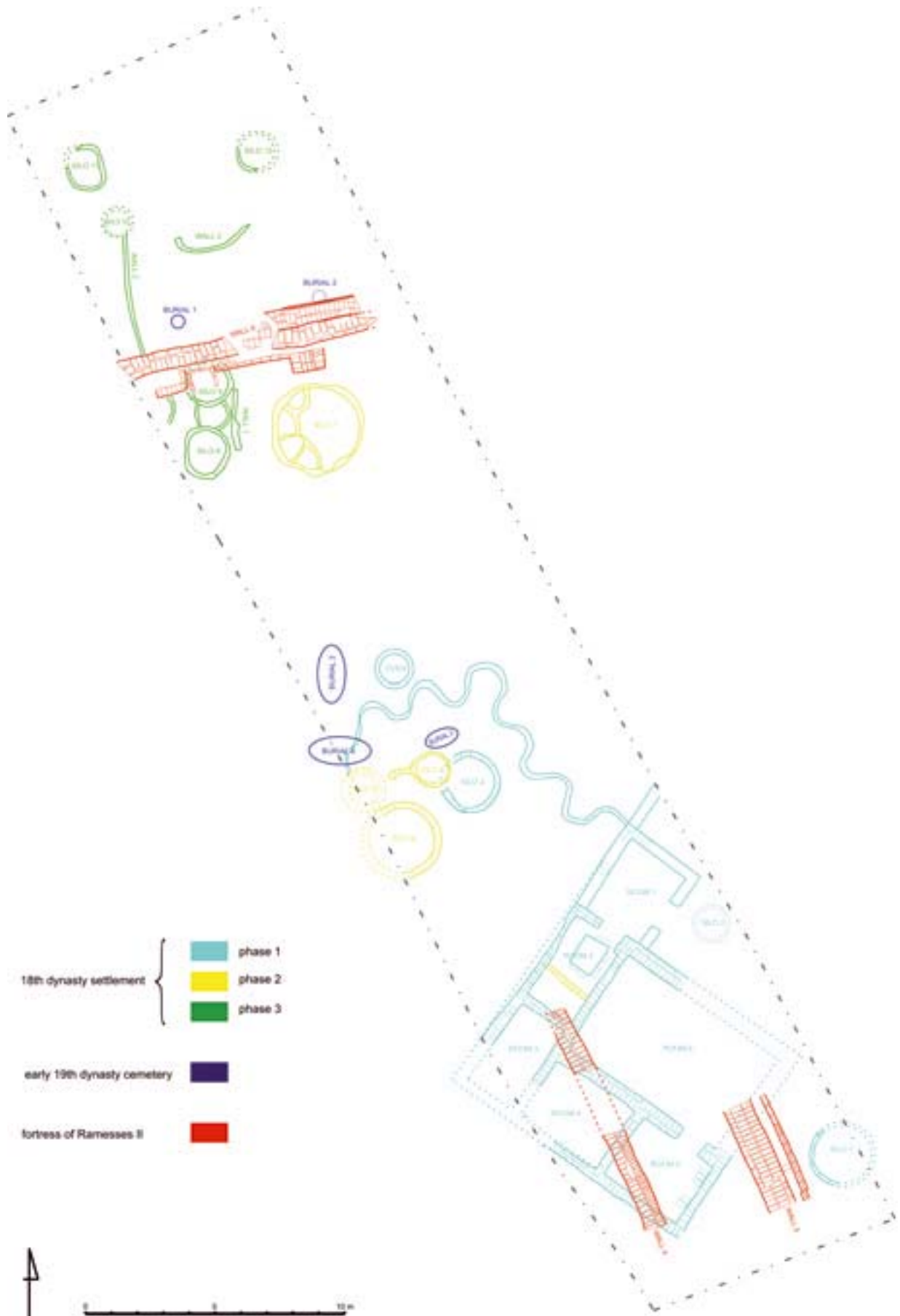


Fig. 3 Plan of the area excavated by the SCA mission (drawing Ł. Jarmużek)



Fig. 4 18th dynasty house (photo S. Rzepka)



Fig. 5 Sinusoidal wall (photo L. Hudáková)



Fig. 6 Silo no. 7 (photo L. Hudáková)

and 9 were connected by two thin walls. Remains of a similar wall just to the west may suggest that a similar set of silos was located there. A thin, straight wall (no. 1) was found on the eastern side of the set of silos. It ran from the south to the north at the distance of 2.5 meters. A similar wall (no. 2), 4.6 m long, was discovered just to the north. Its northern end abutted silo no. 10. About 2 m to the east there was a fragment of curved wall. Silos nos 11 and 12 were found in the northernmost part of the excavated area.

Silo number	Phase	Diameter [m]	Height [m]	Surface of base [m ²]	Capacity [m ³]
1	1	2.21	3.31	3.83	12.67
2	1	1.20	1.80	1.84	3.39
3	1	1.87	2.80	2.73	7.64
4	2	1.14	1.71	1.02	1.74
5	2	1.05	1.57	0.84	1.31
6	2	2.50	3.75	4.90	18.37
7	2	3.04	4.56	7.25	33.06
8	3	1.50	2.25	1.76	3.96
9	3	1.44	2.16	1.62	3.49
10	3	0.94	1.41	0.69	0.97
11	3	1.46 x 1.16	1.96	1.69	3.31
12	3	1.32	1.98	1.36	2.69

Table 1 Silo dimensions⁵

1.1.2. Small finds

1.1.2.1. Scarab (Fig. 8)

Length: 1.8 cm, width: 1.3 cm

Material: steatite

State of preservation: fragment of the edge of the base broken off

Location: found in a corner between the outer wall of the house and the sinusoidal wall, together with objects 1.1.2.2.; 1.1.2.3.; 1.1.2.5. and a Cypriot Red Lustrous Ware spindle bottle, cf. Figs. 57.1, 58

Notes: SCA inventory no. 689.

On the base an inscription with the name Menkheperre. The sign *hpr* flanked by two *mꜣꜥt* feathers. Under this group, the sign *nb*.

Quite a common composition with the scarab sign in the name of Menkheperre flanked by two *mꜣꜥt* feathers.⁶

⁵ Silo heights were calculated by the method presented in TIETZE 1986, 68.

⁶ See, for example, a number of scarabs in the British Museum, HALL 1913, 81, no. 816; 83, nos. 834-839; 84, no. 850; 85, no. 866. Cf. also PETRIE 1917, pl. XXVIII, nos 82, 83;



Fig. 7 Silos nos 8 and 9 (photo L. Hudáková)

1.1.2.2. Cowroid (Fig. 9)

Length: 2 cm, width: 1.2 cm

Material: greywacke (?)

state of preservation: complete

Location: found in a corner between the outer wall of the house and the sinusoidal wall, together with objects 1.1.2.1.; 1.1.2.3.; 1.1.2.5. and a Cypriot Red Lustrous Ware spindle bottle, cf. Figs. 57.1, 58

Notes: SCA inventory no. 690

On the base, a cartouche with the name Menkheperre, flanked by two red crowns.

This type of decoration is well attested on scarabs and cowroids from the reign of Thutmosis III. Some securely dated examples were found in foundation deposits in Deir el-Bahari, where both the name of Menkheperre⁷ and the name of his core-



Fig. 8 Scarab with the name of Menkheperre [1.1.2.1.] (photo M. Nour el-Din)



Fig. 9 Cowroid with the name of Menkheperre [1.1.2.2.] (photo M. Nour el-Din)

NEWBERRY 1907, 45, pl. III (CG 36178). The decoration on a scarab with the throne name of Amenhotep II (Aakheperure) is similarly composed and executed: MMA 05.3.372, cf. <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100016472>.

⁷ Cowroid: MMA 27.3.311, cf.: <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/100006897>; scarab: MMA 27.3.312, cf.: <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100006900>



Fig. 10 Cowroid with the name of Menkheperre [1.1.2.3.] (photo M. Nour el-Din)



Fig. 11 Cowroid with representation of two red crowns [1.1.2.4.] (photo M. Nour el-Din)



Fig. 12 Group of beads of various types [1.1.2.5.] and scarab [1.1.2.1.] at the moment of discovery (photo M. Nour el-Din)

gent Hatshepsut⁸ occur in such compositions. This type of decoration is also attested earlier: in the time of Amenhotep I,⁹ maybe even during the Middle Kingdom.¹⁰ In general, this type of decoration: a central motif (usually a name) flanked by two red crowns, seems to be particularly popular during the first half of the 18th dynasty.¹¹

1.1.2.3. Cowroid (Fig. 10)

Length: 1.4 cm, width: 0.7 cm

Material: steatite

State of preservation: tip of the base broken off

Location: found in a corner between the outer wall of the house and the sinusoidal wall, together with objects 1.1.2.1.; 1.1.2.2.; 1.1.2.5. and a Cypriot Red Lustrous Ware spindle bottle, cf. Figs. 57.1, 58

Notes: SCA inventory no. 692

Base with inscription: *Mn-hpr-r^c, ntr nfr, Imn ?.*

The sign under the name of Amun is not clear. One would expect *tjt* ("image of Amun")¹² or *mry* ("beloved of Amun"),¹³ but the oval sign is none of them.

A cowroid with almost exactly identical decoration is in London.¹⁴ Unfortunately the context of its discovery is unknown, but according to B. Jaeger this cowroid belongs to a group of scaraboids contemporary with the 18th Dynasty.¹⁵

⁸ MMA 27.3.219, cf.: HAYES 1959, 86, Fig. 48, second row, second scarab from the left; <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100017808>.

⁹ Scarab from tomb CC 43 in Asasif, MMA 26.7.134, cf.: <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/100003626>.

¹⁰ PETRIE 1917, pl. XIII, 12.5, no. 3 (scarab of Senuseret III ?).

¹¹ Cf., for example, scarab with the name of the princess Neferura in the British Museum (BM 24215; HALL 1913, 57, no. 543), or scarab from the burial of Rennofer (tomb of Neferkhawt [MMA 729]), dated to the times of Thutmose I – Thutmose III (MMA 35.3.81; <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100018180>. Here, the ankh sign replaces the name as the central motif).

¹² JAEGER 1982, 60, § 232.

¹³ JAEGER 1982, 50, § 149.

¹⁴ BM 42034, cf.: HALL 1913, 73, no. 714; JAEGER 1982, Fig. 163.

¹⁵ JAEGER 1982, 232; 1073 n. 362; 1075 n. 286.



Fig. 13 Group of beads of various types [1.1.2.5.]
(photo M. Nour el-Din)



Fig. 14 Group of beads of various types [1.1.2.5.]
(photo M. Nour el-Din)

1.1.2.4. Cowroid (Fig. 11)

Length: 2.6 cm, width: 2 cm

Material: steatite

State of preservation: complete

Location: inside the house

Base decorated with two red crowns, their spiral elements intertwined.

1.1.2.5. Group of beads and pendants (Figs. 12–14)

Maximum size of beads of diverse types: between 0.3 cm and 2.5 cm

Material: steatite, faience, carnelian

State of preservation: some items damaged

Location: found in a corner between the outer wall of the house and the sinusoidal wall, together with objects 1.1.2.1.; 1.1.2.2.; 1.1.2.3. and a Cypriot Red Lustrous Ware spindle bottle, cf. Figs. 57.1, 58

Over 200 beads of various types: melon, ball, lentoid, barrel, tubular segmented beads, ring beads, drop-shaped beads, one lily-shaped bead. This group also included a fish shaped pendant made of carnelian.

A significant part of this ensemble is made up of melon and lentoid beads. Melon beads are known from the Middle Kingdom and were quite popular in the New Kingdom.¹⁶ Examples from well dated early 18th Dynasty contexts include beads from the tomb of three princesses of Thutmosis III¹⁷ and from Tomb CC 37 in Asasif.¹⁸ Lentoid beads be-



Fig. 15 Crude pottery beads (?) [1.1.2.6.]
(photo S. Rzepka)

¹⁶ LILYQUIST 2003, 184.

¹⁷ LILYQUIST 2003, 184–185; 241, Fig. 196; 305, Fig. 233.

¹⁸ MMA 26.7.1365, cf.: HAYES 1959, 181, Fig. 100, sixth string of beads from the bottom; <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100004286>.



Fig. 16 Crude pottery beads (?) [1.1.2.6.] (drawing M. Piorun, Ł. Jarmużek)

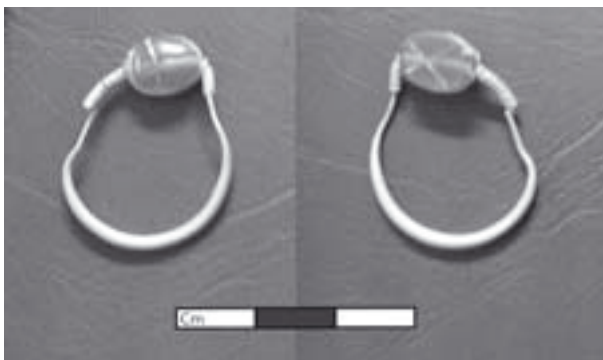


Fig. 17 Scarab ring [1.1.2.7.] (photo M. Nour el-Din)

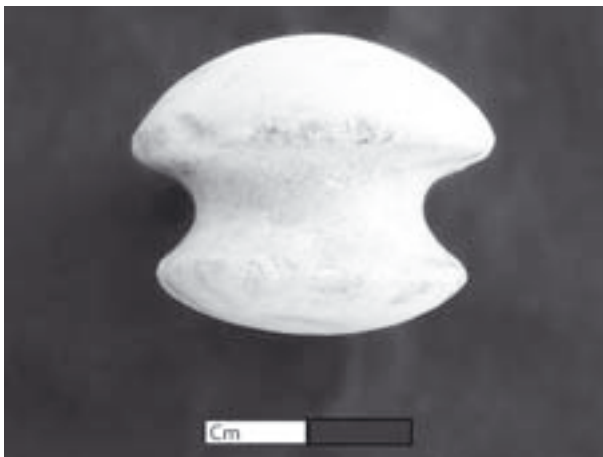


Fig. 18 Ear plug [1.1.2.8.] (photo M. Nour el-Din)

came popular at the beginning of the New Kingdom.¹⁹ Strings of such beads made of faience or Egyptian blue are usually interpreted as a cheap version of golden *shebiu* necklaces.²⁰

Pendants in the form of tilapia fish are attested in the early 18th Dynasty. Golden objects of this type may have belonged to the equipment of the tomb of general Djehuti.²¹ Carnelian tilapia fish pendants (possibly also from this tomb), of a similar size as the pendant found in Tell el-Retaba, are now in Leiden.²²

The beads (together with the scarab and two cowroids with the name of Menkheperre) were found in a compact group and may have formed a single necklace.

1.1.2.6. Crude pottery beads (?) (Figs. 15–16)

Length: 3–5 cm, diameter: 2–3 cm

Material: pottery

State of preservation: some of the beads slightly damaged

Location: found north of the sinusoidal wall

Group of 28 ovoid objects of poorly fired Nile clay, pierced along the longer axis. Their function is quite obscure. As objects of personal adornment, they are hardly on par with the beads described above, both in material and in execution, but necklaces of similar beads are known from tombs.²³

1.1.2.7. Scarab ring (Fig. 17)

Diameter of ring: 2.7 cm; length of scarab: 1 cm

Material: gold, carnelian

State of preservation: complete

Location: found inside the house

Ring made of golden wire, the scarab of carnelian. A very simple pattern of two crossing lines on the base of the scarab.

Scarab rings first occurred in the Middle Kingdom and became quite popular in the Second Intermediate Period and in the New Kingdom. They appear to have been used frequently as signets; this is probably the case of the ring found in Tell el-

¹⁹ Some examples from this period: MMA 36.3.154, cf. HAYES 1959, 181, Fig. 100, fifth string of beads from the bottom; <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100005790>; MMA 36.3.70, cf. HAYES 1959, 181, Fig. 100, sixth string of beads from the bottom; <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100005647>.

²⁰ For the discussion of the origin and meaning of this type of beads, cf. LILYQUIST 2003, 136–137.

²¹ LILYQUIST 1988, 42–44, Figs. 69, 71, 72.

²² Leiden AO 4a, cf. LILYQUIST 1988, 60–61; <http://www.rmo.nl/collectie/zoeken?object=AO+4a>.

²³ MMA 27.3.52b, cf. <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100014567>; found in tomb TT 110 and dated (vaguely) between the 11th and 18th dynasty.



Fig. 19 Mirror [1.1.2.9.] before conservation
(photo M. Nour el-Din)



Fig. 20 Mirror [1.1.2.9.] after conservation
(photo M. Nour el-Din)

Retaba. Examples of similar construction are known from all of the above mentioned periods.²⁴

1.1.2.8. Ear plug (Fig. 18)

Diameter: 3.5 cm, height: 3.5 cm

Material: calcite

State of preservation: complete

Location: found in the house, in room no. 2, inside a storage pit (?), together with two imported juglets (cf. below chapter 3.1; Figs. 57.1, and 59.1)

During the 18th Dynasty a peculiar form of earring, the so-called ear plug, became quite popular. These were disks or flattened balls with a grooved edge, the groove being for fastening the earring in a large hole in the earlobe. Earplugs of a diameter reaching 6.5 cm are known.²⁵ The example found

in Tell el-Retaba is smaller and quite simple: the large convex side of the plug (the one, which was visible, when the plug was worn) is polished without any decoration. A close parallel is known from Gurob, from one of the burnt deposits found by Petrie in New Kingdom houses.²⁶ Ear plugs of quite similar shape and without ornamentation (but made of ivory, not stone) were found in tomb G 70 in Abydos, dated to the first half of the 18th Dynasty.²⁷

²⁴ Cf. HAYES 1959, 185, Fig. 102, third row, second from the left; fourth row, fourth and fifth from the left; VERNIER 1907–1927, 76, pl. XXIV (CG 52193); 78, pl. XXIV, (CG 52199); 79–80, pl. XXII (CG 52204); 84, pl. XXI (CG 52216).

²⁵ Cf. FREED 1982, 231–233, nos. 301–303.

²⁶ PETRIE 1891, 18, pl. XVIII, no. 47. Petrie dated this deposit to the times of Ramesses II.

²⁷ AYRTON ET AL. 1904, 50, pl. XVII.9.

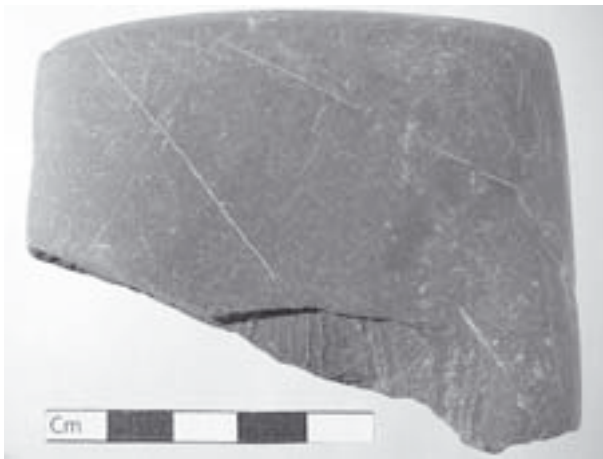


Fig. 21 Cosmetic (?) palette [1.1.2.10.] (photo Ł. Kumkowski)

1.1.2.9. Mirror (Figs. 19–20)

Height: 24.5 cm; width of the disk: 12 cm

Material: bronze

State of preservation: disk broken into fragments; surface corroded

Location: found north of the house, in a court surrounded by the sinusoidal wall

Notes: SCA inventory no. 614

Oval disk attached to a handle in the form of a slender papyrus column with spreading umbel. This type of handle was extremely common in Egyptian mirrors starting from the Middle Kingdom.²⁸ At the beginning of the New Kingdom handles (previously made of wood or ivory) were cast in bronze and they became much more slender as a rule. The size, material and proportions of the described object are typical of mirrors from the early 18th Dynasty. Very similar objects were found, for example, in tomb 1370 in Deir el-Medina (dated to the times of Hatshepsut-Thutmose III)²⁹ and in the early 18th Dynasty Tomb CC 37 in Asasif.³⁰

1.1.2.10. Palette (Fig. 21–22)

Preserved length: 5.6 cm, width: 7.5 cm, thickness: 1 cm

Material: schist

State of preservation: large fragment broken off

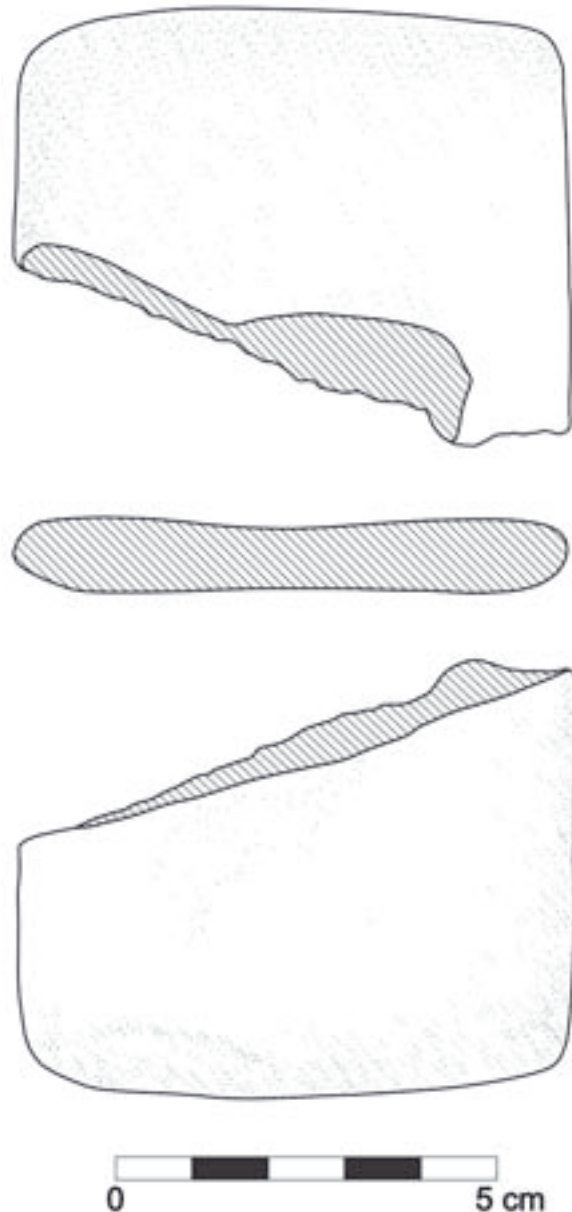


Fig. 22 Cosmetic (?) palette [1.1.2.10.]
(drawing M. Piorun, Ł. Jarmużek)

Cosmetic palettes are well known from Predynastic and Archaic Periods, when they often took on elaborate shapes and decoration. Objects of similar function must have existed later, too, but are much less known.³¹ Two small slate slabs found in

²⁸ LILYQUIST 1979.

²⁹ Louvre E. 14465, cf. VANDIER D'ABBADIE 1972, 172–172, no. 764.

³⁰ MMA 26.7.837a, cf. HAYES 1959, 64, Fig. 33; cf. also: <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100004273>. Very similar mirrors are also in the collection of the Cairo Museum (CG 44022, 44024, cf. BÉNÉDITE 1907, pl. V, VII), but the context of their discovery is not known.

³¹ A small serpentine slab with a shallow depression on its upper surface, found in Semna and dated to the New Kingdom, was interpreted as a palette for grinding pigments, cf. FREED 1982, 285 (no 393). It was included in the category of scribe utensils, but it is arguable whether one can tell the actual purpose for which the grinded pigments would have been used.

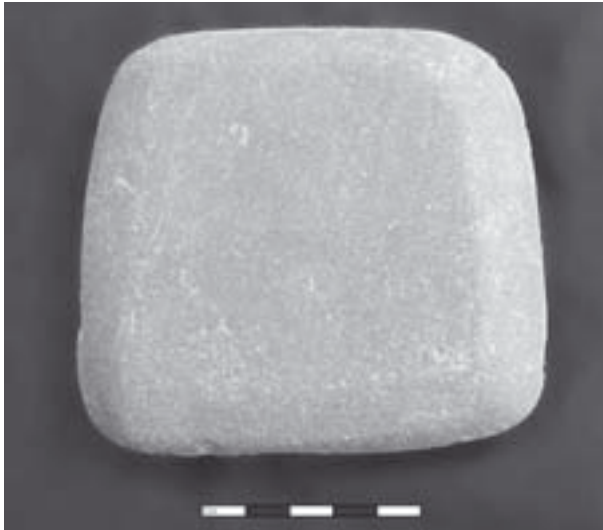


Fig. 23 Cosmetic (?) palette [1.1.2.11.] (photo M. Nour el-Din)



Fig. 25 Calcite globular jar [1.1.2.13.] (photo S. Rzepka)



Fig. 24 Calcite model vessel [1.1.2.12.] (photo M. Nour el-Din)

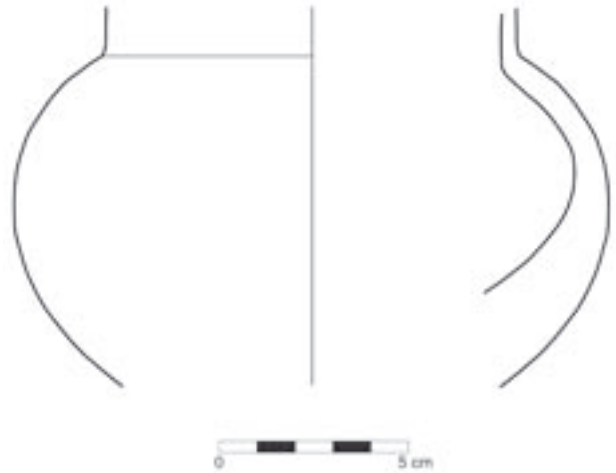


Fig. 26 Calcite globular jar [1.1.2.13.]
(drawing B. Adamski, Ł. Jarmużek)

Tell el-Retaba (cf. also 1.1.2.11 below) probably belong in this category, although they are simpler in form and less carefully executed. Assuming this interpretation is correct, then the depressions on both sides of the palette could be attributed to use, that is, the grinding of some hard substances. Pigments would seem the most probable substance in this case, although no evidence in favor of this idea has been observed on any of the palettes.

1.1.2.11. Palette (Fig. 23)

Length: 11.2 cm, width: 10.3 cm

Material: schist

State of preservation: complete

1.1.2.12. Stone model vessel (Fig. 24)

Height: 2.4 cm, diameter of body: 2 cm

Material: calcite

State of preservation: part of the rim broken off

Location: found inside the house

Globular vessel with low rim; rather too small to have been used as an actual container, hence apparently a model of a *nw* jar. A vessel model found in domestic context is quite surprising.

1.1.2.13. Stone globular jar (Figs. 25–26)

Diameter of body: 16 cm, preserved height:

10 cm

Material: calcite

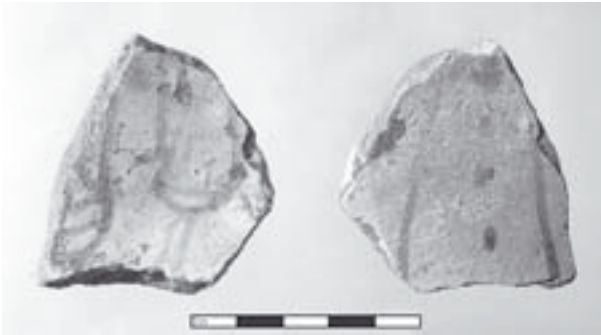


Fig. 27 Fragment of a faience bowl [1.1.2.14.] (photo S. Rzepka)

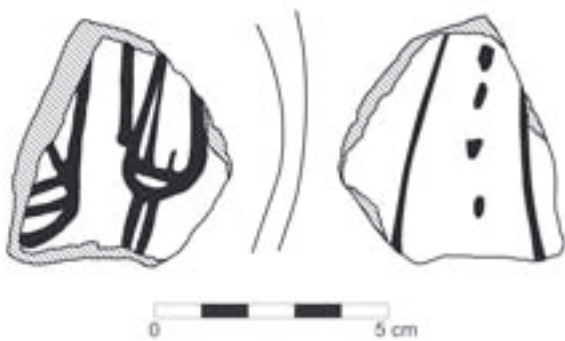


Fig. 28 Fragment of a faience bowl [1.1.2.14.] (drawing M. Piorun, Ł. Jarmużek)



Fig. 29 Sickle blade [1.1.2.15.] (photo Ł. Kumkowski)

State of preservation: large fragment of body and neck

Location: found within the sinusoidal wall enclosure

Calcite globular jars were used for storing ointment, as confirmed by laboratory analyses of residues.³² Similar examples of 18th Dynasty date are well known from funerary contexts, e.g. the tomb of three princesses of Thutmosis III.³³

1.1.2.14. Faience bowl (Figs. 27–28)

Max. dimensions of preserved fragment: 5 x 5.5 cm; estimated diameter of complete vessel: approx. 20 cm

Material: faience

State of preservation: fragment of body

Vessel from the category of so-called “Nun-bowls”. Interior decorated with lotus blossoms and buds. The underside shows the petals and sepals of an open lotus. The glazing is light grey, the painting grayish-black, but the original colors were most probably blue (glazing) and black (painting).

The so-called “Nun-bowls” are typical of the early 18th Dynasty.³⁴ Blue-glazed bowls are decorated with lotus flowers and there is often a square depression in the center of the bowl. Additional elements like papyrus plants, tilapia fish, Hathoric emblems appear occasionally. This type of vessels is well attested in temple contexts, especially in sanctuaries of Hathor. Nun-bowls are also a frequent item of tomb equipment.³⁵

1.1.2.15. Sickle blade (Figs. 29–30)

Length: 6 cm, width: 3 cm, thickness: 0.5 cm

Material: flint

State of preservation: complete

Location: found inside the house

Flat, triangular piece of flint with dented cutting edge, presumably inlaid at the tip of a wooden sickle frame.

³² LILYQUIST 2003, 139–140.

³³ LILYQUIST 2003, 141–142; 205, Fig. 125–126; 206, Fig. 127. For an overview and discussion on this type of container, cf. LILYQUIST 1995, 4.

³⁴ STRAUSS 1974, 65–66.

³⁵ Several such bowls, discovered in Theban tombs of the early 18th Dynasty, are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, e.g.: MMA 35.3.44, cf. <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100006147>; MMA 35.3.77, cf.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100006172>; MMA 35.3.78, cf. <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100004355>; MMA 26.7.905, cf. <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100004277>; MMA 36.3.8, cf. <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/100001542>; MMA 22.3.73, cf. <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/100004236>.

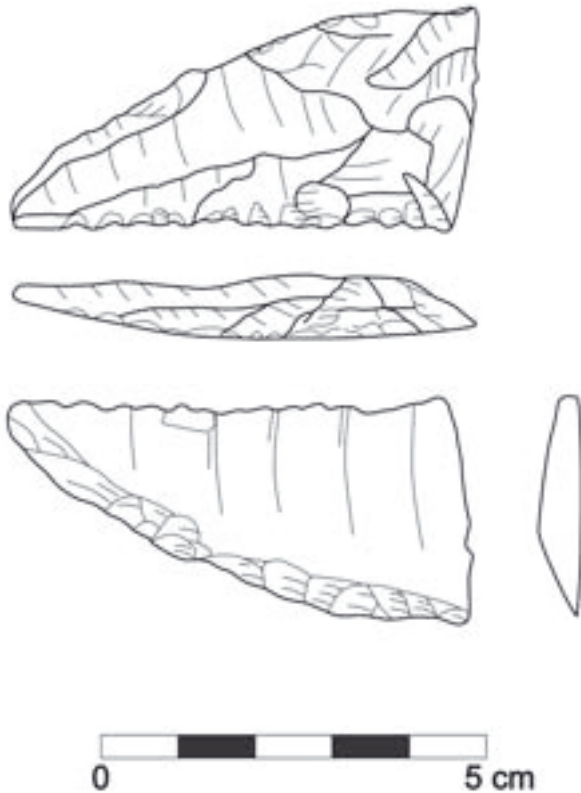


Fig. 30 Sickle blade [1.1.2.15.]
(drawing M. Piorun, Ł. Jarmużek)

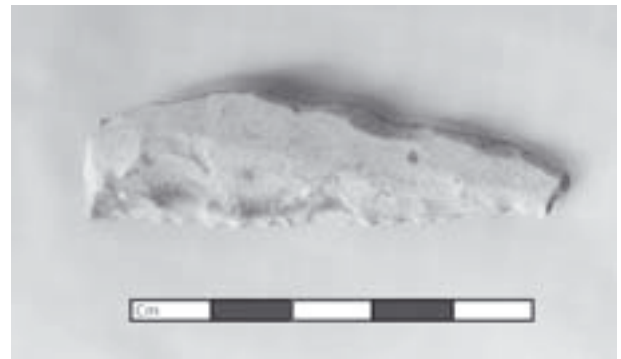


Fig. 31 Sickle blade [1.1.2.16.] (photo M. Nour el-Din)



Fig. 32 Sickle blade [1.1.2.17.] (photo Ł. Kumkowski)

Flint sickle inlays are well known from domestic contexts throughout the Dynastic period.³⁶ A number of similar examples dating from the New Kingdom are known, e.g., finds from Lisht North,³⁷ Kahun,³⁸ Gurob³⁹ and Qantir.⁴⁰

1.1.2.16. Sickle blade (Fig. 31)

Length: 6 cm, width: 1.8 cm
Material: flint
State of preservation: complete
Location: found near silo no. 7
Notes: SCA inventory no. 647

Flat, trapezoidal piece of flint with dented cutting edge.

1.1.2.17. Sickle blade (Figs. 32–33)

Length: 4.7 cm, width: 2 cm, thickness: 0.5 cm
Material: flint
State of preservation: complete

Flat, trapezoidal piece of flint with dented cutting edge.

1.1.2.18. Whetstone (Figs. 34–35)

Length: 7.3 cm, width: 7.4 cm, thickness: 3.4 cm
Material: sandstone
State of preservation: complete

Flat rectangular piece of stone, with numerous narrow grooves irregularly covering all the sur-

³⁶ On the development of this type of tools in dynastic Egypt, cf.: TILLMANN 2007, 129–132; typology of New Kingdom sickle flints: TILLMANN 2007, 70–73.

³⁷ MMA 09.180.1605, cf. HAYES 1959, 409, Fig. 259; <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100001040>; MMA 09.180.1748, cf. <http://www.met->

[museum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100026849](http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100026849); MMA 09.180.1606, cf. <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100026836>

³⁸ PETRIE 1891, pl. VII.

³⁹ PETRIE 1890, pl. XVI.

⁴⁰ TILLMANN 2007, Taf. 32–33, 37.



Fig. 33 Sickle blade [1.1.2.17.]
(drawing M. Piorun, Ł. Jarmużek)



Fig. 34 Whetstone [1.1.2.18.] (photo S. Rzepka)



Fig. 35 Whetstone [1.1.2.18.] (drawing Ł. Jarmużek)



Fig. 36 Spindle whorl [1.1.2.19.] (photo S. Rzepka)

faces. The grooves are the result of the stone being used as a tool sharpener.⁴¹

1.1.2.19. Spindle whorl (Figs. 36–37)

Diameter: 6.5 cm, height: 3 cm, diameter of hole: 1 cm

Material: limestone

State of preservation: broken into two parts, some fragments missing

Flat-convex spindle whorls first occurred in the late Middle Kingdom and remained popular throughout the New Kingdom.⁴² Some very close parallels can be quoted from Amarna,⁴³ Lisht North⁴⁴ and Qantir.⁴⁵

⁴¹ A comparable object (but made of slate), dated to the 19th-20th dynasty, was found in Lisht North: MMA 22.1.830, cf. HAYES 1959, 217, Fig. 129, second row, second from the right; cf. also <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100027069>.

⁴² HEROLD 2006, 8.

⁴³ KEMP and VOGELSANG-EASTWOOD 2001, 287–288.

⁴⁴ MMA 15.3.691, cf. <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100026873>; MMA 22.1.756, cf. <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/100026889>.

⁴⁵ HEROLD 2006, 250–251.

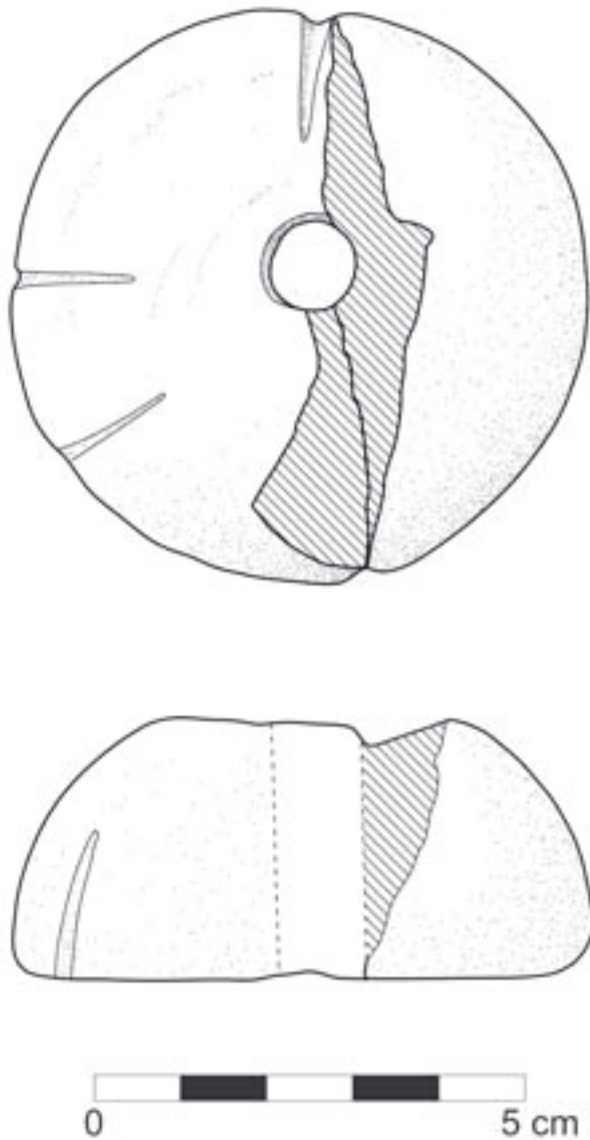


Fig. 37 Spindle whorl [1.1.2.19.]
(drawing M. Piorun, Ł. Jarmużek)

1.2. Discussion

1.2.1. Social status of the inhabitants of the house

Some of the small finds from inside and around the house give the impression of substantial wealth. This set of objects (mirror, some jewelry of gold and semiprecious stones, calcite vessel for unguents, Nun-bowl, Cypriot pottery) bears striking similari-

ties to the tomb equipment of middle class burials from the early 18th Dynasty.⁴⁶

The size of the house and the capacity of its granaries also suggest middle class status of the inhabitants. In his analysis of the social structure in Amarna,⁴⁷ which took into consideration a number of features, like house dimensions, number of rooms and the dimensions of courtyard, garden and storage facilities, Christian Tietze distinguished three main types of houses and three social classes. With respect to total house surface, the Retaba house practically matches the average surface of Amarna houses of Tietze's second type (although the room number is below the average of 9.46 rooms per house). The same can be said when comparing the volume of silos (average 32 m³) and surface of the courtyard (average 382 m²). Tietze described inhabitants of houses with similar parameters from Amarna as members of the middle class.

In Tell el-Retaba, among the inhabitants of the 18th Dynasty settlement also an upper class may have been present. The "Great House" discovered by Petrie⁴⁸ was dated by him to the 18th Dynasty (a controversial issue but impossible to either confirm or reject at present). The total surface of the Great House (approx. 400 m²) is even bigger than the average surface of houses of Tietze's type 3e (330 m²), which he ascribed to members of the upper class. Nonetheless, conclusions of this kind must be considered with some reservations, as it is arguable whether types of houses and social structure can be compared between the capital and a provincial settlement in Wadi Tumilat.

1.2.2. Function of sinusoidal walls

The sinusoidal wall enclosing the courtyard is a noteworthy feature. Walls of this sort are considered a characteristic element of Middle Kingdom architecture.⁴⁹ Sinusoidal walls are interpreted either as symbolic walls enclosing funerary complexes or as temporary barriers preventing sand from covering up construction areas. Their presence was also noted in urban contexts. Examination of this kind of wall found in Mirgissa proved that the sinusoidal shape increased resistance to sand pressure by 100%. The use of sinusoidal walls is not

⁴⁶ Cf., for example, tomb of Maket in Gurob, PETRIE 1891, pl. XXVI, XXVII. For the correct dating of this tomb (to the times of Thutmose I – Thutmose III), cf.: JAEGER 1982, p. 125; HANKEY and TUFNELL 1973.

⁴⁷ TIETZE 1985, 48–84 ; TIETZE 1986, 44–55.

⁴⁸ PETRIE and DUNCAN 1906, 29, pl. XXXVA.

⁴⁹ ŚLIWA 1992, 525; ARNOLD 2003, 63.



Fig. 38 Burial no. 1 (photo M. Nour el-Din)



Fig. 39 Burial no. 2 (photo M. Nour el-Din)

limited to the Middle Kingdom. They have also been recorded on New Kingdom Sites, in settlement contexts at Amarna,⁵⁰ Medinet Habu,⁵¹ and Tell Dab'a.⁵²

Sinusoidal walls are known also from iconographic sources. A very close parallel for the Retaba wall can be found in a scene painted on a wall in the tomb of Ineni at Thebes.⁵³ The scene seems to represent Ineni's house surrounded by a wall with rounded crenellations on the top.⁵⁴ But since we are probably dealing with the typical Egyptian "aspective" way of showing three-dimensional reality in two dimensions, it is likely that the picture shows both the facade and the sinusoidal plan of the wall surrounding Ineni's estate.⁵⁵ There are two silos, a tree and an unidentified building in this courtyard. In the context of New Kingdom settlements, sinusoidal walls functioned as ordinary structures enclosing courtyards.

1.2.3. Fortress or open settlement?

Considering Tell el-Retaba's location on a strategic route linking Egypt with Sinai and Syro-Palestine, it is quite understandable that an important fortress existed there at least from the times of the early 19th Dynasty. The question is: did fortifications exist there before this time? Could the settlement re-

mains described above have belonged to an early 18th Dynasty fortress?

So far there has been hardly any evidence of such a fortress. During the Ramesside period the fortress in Tell el-Retaba was called *ḥtm Tkw*.⁵⁶ A graffito from Serabit el-Khadim (IS 60),⁵⁷ from the time of Thutmose IV, mentions *ḥry pd.t n(y) Tkw* (overseer of troops of Tjeku). This could suggest the existence of some kind of military installation in Tell el-Retaba at that time, but conclusions of this kind need to be approached with caution. Firstly, during the 18th Dynasty the name Tjeku could have been applied not (or not only) to a specific place, but to a larger area: the entire Wadi Toumilat or its central part. This was apparently the case later, which would explain why during the Late Period the name Tjeku was taken over by Tell el-Maskhuta, which lies 10 km east of Tell el-Retaba. Secondly, both Egyptian and Polish-Slovak missions have found clear traces of settlement dating to the early 18th Dynasty, covered by remains of the early 19th Dynasty, but no sign of human presence on the site during the second half of the 18th Dynasty. Thus, the evidence of the graffito from the times of Thutmose IV does not fit in with the archaeological record in Tell el-Retaba and it should not be used as an

⁵⁰ HÖLSCHER 1939, 70–71.

⁵¹ BORCHARDT and RICKE 1980, pl. 54; FRANKFORT and PENDLEBURY 1933, 5, pl. III.

⁵² JANOSI 2002, 203–205. The wall is dated to the end of Hyksos Period or the beginning of the New Kingdom.

⁵³ ROIK 1988, 52–53, pl. 84; DZIOBEK 1992, pl. 23; DAVIES 1963, pl. 23.

⁵⁴ So the scene was interpreted i.a. by ROIK 1988, 52–53, pl. 84.

⁵⁵ Cf. FREED 1982, 27, Fig. 9.

⁵⁶ GOEDICKE 1987.

⁵⁷ GIVEON 1978.

indication that an 18th Dynasty fortress had existed there.

Neither does the spatial structure of the settlement support the idea of an 18th Dynasty fortress. One would expect a much more compact and better structured organization of space within a limited area surrounded by defense walls.⁵⁸ Therefore, so long as there are no 18th Dynasty defense walls discovered at Tell el-Retaba, the settlement should be considered as “civilian” rather than military in nature.

2. EARLY 19TH DYNASTY CEMETERY

2.1. Description

2.1.1. Burials⁵⁹

Remains of five burials were discovered (for their position cf. Fig. 3). The first group, localized in the northern part of the area, contained two infant burials.

2.1.1.1. Burial no. 1 (Figs. 38, 63)

An infant, less than two years old (could be even a newborn), buried in a large amphora. Lower part of the vessel broken to insert the body. Amphora mouth oriented to the east. The skeleton supine, head to the east, facing right (i.e., northward), legs slightly contracted.

No burial equipment.

2.1.1.2. Burial no. 2 (Fig. 39)

An infant, approximately one year old, buried directly in the ground. Skeleton supine, head to the east, legs not preserved. White substance on the skull and some bones – possibly remains of a mat in which the body had been wrapped. No burial equipment.

The second group was found about 15 m to the south of the first one.

2.1.1.3. Burial no 3 (Fig. 40)

Skeleton of an adolescent woman (?). The body was laid on the right side, head pointing north, face looking west. Arms were crossed on the chest, legs



Fig. 40 Burial no. 3 (photo M. Nour el-Din)



Fig. 41 Burial no. 4 (photo D. Wiczorek)

extended. Judging by the position of the bones, the body must have been wrapped tightly in some kind of shroud or mat (no traces of it have been preserved). The burial did not contain any kind of equipment.

2.1.1.4. Burial no. 4 (Fig. 41)

Skeleton of an adult man, supine with head oriented to the west, the face turned slightly to the north. Right arm stretched by the side, left crossed on the chest. No traces of any funerary equipment were found.

2.1.1.5. Burial no. 5 (Figs. 42–43)

Skeleton of a sow.⁶⁰ The animal was laid on the left side, the head oriented to the northeast. The body was wrapped in a reed mat (or covered by it) – white traces of the mat were visible on the skeleton. Left front leg was extended forward, right front leg backward. The rear part of the skeleton was poorly preserved.

⁵⁸ As for example in the fortress on the island Sai in Nubia, built at the beginning of the 18th dynasty, cf. MORRIS 2005, 86 (Fig. 13), 106–108.

⁵⁹ For the comments on the skeletons (based on photographic documentation) we would like to thank Dr. Arkadiusz Sołtysiak and Dr. Alena Šefčáková.

⁶⁰ We would like to thank Richard Redding for the identification of the animal based on photographic documentation made by the Egyptian mission. It is not possible, however, to determine on these grounds whether the animal was a domesticated pig or rather a wild boar.

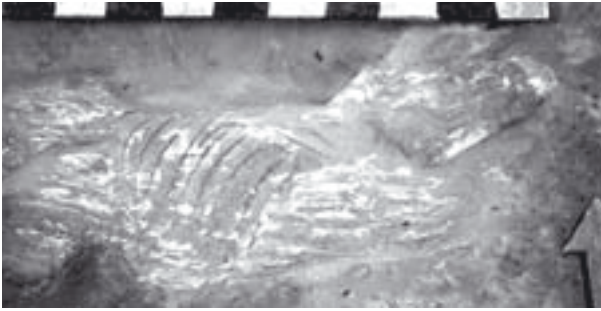


Fig. 42 Burial no. 5: white remains of reed mat covering the skeleton of a sow (photo M. Nour el-Din)



Fig. 43 Burial no. 5 (photo M. Nour el-Din)

2.2. Discussion

2.2.1. Dating of the cemetery

Only burial no. 1 contains material, which can be used for determining its chronology. The amphora, in which the child's body was deposited can be dated to the early 19th Dynasty (cf. chapter 3.2. below). Burial no. 2 lacks any datable material, but was found on the same level, not far away from the burial no. 1. The burials apparently belonged to a larger cemetery. Several infant burials have been found by the Polish-Slovak Mission about 26 m to the south, on the western side of the modern road;⁶¹ it is therefore viable to assume that more such burials had existed once in the area destroyed by this road. In most cases the children were buried in amphorae dated to the early 19th Dynasty.

Dating of burials nos 3, 4 and 5 is less secure, as they did not contain any datable material. Stratigraphic observations lead one to the presumption that these burials were later than the 18th Dynasty settlement but earlier than the fortress of Ramesses II. It seems probable that they belonged to the early 19th Dynasty cemetery, in which mostly children had been buried.

2.2.2. Sow burial

Burial no. 5 is clearly an intentional burial of a sow: all the bones are in articulated position, furthermore the animal was wrapped in a reed mat. It was found not far from the human burials nos. 3 and 4, but it does not seem to be directly linked with any of them.

The attitude of ancient Egyptians toward pigs was an ambiguous one. Pigs were surely raised and pork was eaten throughout the whole dynastic period.⁶² The meat, however, was considered as food for the poor and for people of lower status, while the elites preferred beef. This can be observed in the Old⁶³ as well as New Kingdom. Faunal remains from the workers settlements in Amarna and Deir el-Medina confirm that for their inhabitants – people of surely low rank – pork was an important item in the diet.⁶⁴ Low appreciation of pork by the elite could explain at least in part why attestations of pigs in religious and funerary contexts are rather scarce.⁶⁵ Pigs were represented in several tombs of nobles from the early 18th Dynasty, showing that at least at that time they were not taboo in a funerary context. However, they were rarely used as sacrificial animals for the deceased.

Animal burials during the New Kingdom are quite rare. We know of burials of sacred bulls and there is also a number of cases of pet animals (dogs, monkeys, even a gazelle or a favorite horse)⁶⁶ buried with or near their owners. The sow burial in Tell el-Retaba, in itself unique, does not fit any of these categories. The assumption that the sow was a sacred animal is not convincing, although figurines showing a sow (with piglets) described as the goddess Nut are known from the Third Intermediate and the Late Periods.⁶⁷ The sow as a pet animal is even less convincing.

⁶¹ GÓRKA and RZEPKA, 2011.

⁶² IKRAM 1995, 31.

⁶³ REDDING 2010, 65, 75.

⁶⁴ HECKER 1982, 62.

⁶⁵ But not completely absent, cf. HECKER 1982, 60; HOULIHAN 2001.

⁶⁶ IKRAM and DODSON 1998, 131–133.

⁶⁷ HOULIHAN 1996, 28 Fig. 22.

It is tempting to compare burial no. 5 from Tell el-Retaba with the donkey burials from Tell el-Dab'a.⁶⁸ The donkeys (single or in pairs) accompanied some elite burials, but there were also instances where the animal was deposited in a separate pit without clear connection with any specific human burial. The animals were buried complete, contrary to other offering animals, of which usually portions of meat (seldom complete carcasses) were deposited near to a deceased human. Donkey burials in Egypt occurred only in Tell el-Dab'a during the 13th Dynasty and the Hyksos period. This custom was evidently brought from Syro-Palestine by an Asiatic population, which settled in the eastern Nile Delta. As it is well documented that this population settled also in Wadi Tumilat,⁶⁹ one is tempted to speculate that such an 'Asiatic' population following its own traditions may have still been living in the area during the New Kingdom.⁷⁰ Going a step further, it can be observed that both donkeys and pigs were associated with the god Set.⁷¹ The weaknesses of this purely hypothetical idea are too many, however, for it to be taken seriously. Firstly, the Hyksos population apparently abhorred pigs and pork, at least in cult.⁷² No pig burials are known from Hyksos times and are generally extremely rare in the entire eastern Mediterranean.⁷³ Secondly, nothing can be said about the ethnicity of people buried in graves nos 3 and 4. Neither the SCA mission nor the Polish-Slovak Archaeological Mission have been able to find any proof of the presence of a foreign population in Tell el-Retaba during the New Kingdom. Consequently, the sow burial remains mysterious and should be considered perhaps as being a manifestation of a very local, Wadi Tumilat tradition, of which nothing is known so far.

3. FORTRESS OF RAMESSES II

The Polish-Slovak Archaeological Mission working in Tell el-Retaba in 2009 and 2010 discovered

two long parallel walls, oriented NW-SE (walls 4 and 5 on the plan in Fig. 3). The building, to which they belonged was poorly preserved: only two or three courses of bricks in foundations, no floor preserved and was thus difficult to date. Then, barracks/workshops were found in much better state of preservation in the southern part of the site excavated by the Polish-Slovak Mission. These structures were built of similar bricks laid in a similar bonding pattern. Rooms were 3.5 m wide, which is exactly the distance between walls 4 and 5. The barracks/workshops were part of the fortress of Ramesses II and the pottery material found in their occupation layers can be dated to this reign;⁷⁴ the barrack/workshops walls abutted a strong defense wall built by Ramesses II (cf. Fig. 1). Thus, walls 4 and 5 must have also belonged to the 19th Dynasty fortress. In the northern part of the excavated area the SCA mission found some walls (marked as wall 6 on the plan), which were built of similar bricks as the barrack/workshops and clearly also belonged to the fortress of Ramesses II. Nothing can be said about the form and function of the building to which these walls belonged owing to their rather poor state of preservation. Their identification was useful, however, for a stratigraphic dating of under- and overlying deposits.

3. POTTERY

Anna Wodzińska

The ceramic assemblage recovered from rescue excavations by the SCA in Tell el-Retaba corresponds well with the pottery found in other areas of the site, but is much more diverse owing to the substantial area covered by the salvage digging. The period covered by this material is securely identified as the New Kingdom, but with only the early 18th and the early 19th dynasties represented. The present report covers a sample of pots from the two periods. Statistical analyses were not conducted.

⁶⁸ BOESNECK and VON DEN DRIESCH 1992, 23, plans 1–9.

⁶⁹ The only site in Wadi Tumilat with published Hyksos material is Tell el-Maskhuta, cf. HOLLADAY 1982, 44–50. Egyptian missions found Hyksos cemeteries and settlements on other sites in this region, e.g. Tell Koa and Tell Omm Bordi, unfortunately these discoveries have not been published. In 2010 and 2011 the Egyptian mission directed by Mustafa Nour el-Din, carrying out rescue excavations in Tell el-Retaba, found a number of Hyksos tombs.

⁷⁰ The presence of Asiatic Shasu Bedouins in Wadi Tumilat during the Ramesside Period is explicitly confirmed by pap. Anastasi VI, cf. GOEDICKE 1987.

⁷¹ HOULIHAN 1996, 29, 32.

⁷² BOESNECK and VON DEN DRIESCH 1992, 12–23, 45.

⁷³ An intentional burial of three wild boars, a female and two young, was found in Enkomi, in a Late Bronze Age house, cf. DALIX and VILA 2007, 365.

⁷⁴ WODZIŃSKA in RZEPKA et al. 2011, 163–165.

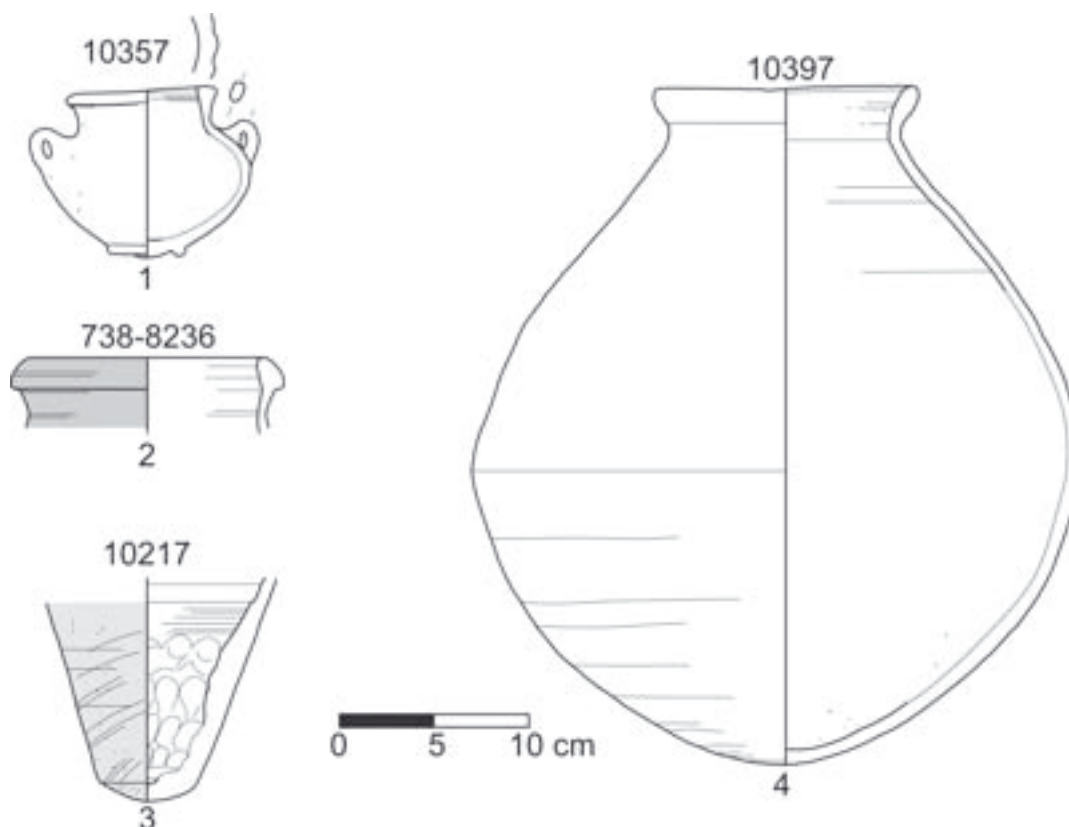


Fig. 44 Jars made of marl fabrics from the early 18th dynasty
(All drawings of the pottery were made by Bartosz Adamski, Sylwia Gromadzka, Malwina Piorun and Anna Wodzińska; digitized by Anna Wodzińska)

3.1. Early 18th dynasty

The early 18th dynasty assemblage is represented by a rich and differentiated set of pottery from domestic contexts. Both Egyptian and imported vessels are present.

Egyptian pots in this group were produced of either marl or Nile fabrics. The marl fabrics included a small squat jar of marl A4 fabric with a short neck, triangular rim and ring base (Fig. 44.1). Two small handles were attached to the shoulder. The shape is a bit peculiar for a pot of the early 18th Dynasty,⁷⁵ hence doubts about the attribution.

Wine amphorae were made of marl D with cream burnished slip; they were present in the assemblage mainly as rims (Fig. 44.2) and as pointed molded bases (Fig. 44.3).

A jar of marl A4 fabric (Fig. 44.4 and Fig. 45), found complete, represented a well known shape



Fig. 45 Jar made of marl fabric (no. 10397)
(photo L. Hudáková)

among 18th Dynasty vessels. A pot of similar shape, although the fabric cannot be determined, was found in Tell el Yehudiya in context with other early 18th Dynasty vessels.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Pamela Rose, personal communication.

⁷⁶ PETRIE and DUNCAN 1906, pl. XIIA, bottom row, second from right.

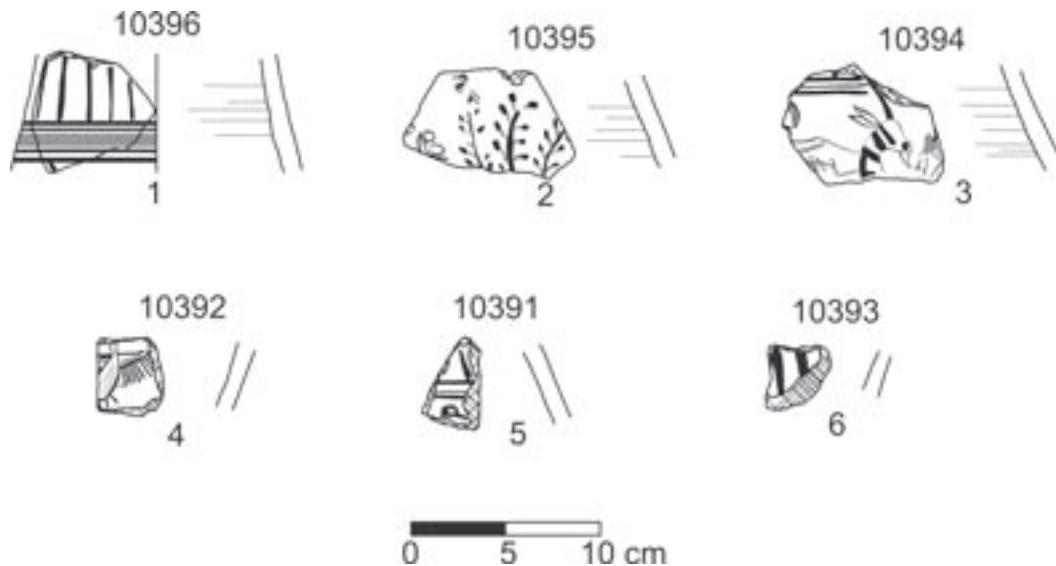


Fig. 46 Painted body sherds from the early-mid 18th dynasty

Six sherds representing jars made of marl A4 were painted on the outside (Fig. 46). Although no joining fragments were noted, the sherds could come from a single vessel, probably a jar with elongated ovoid body, round base, narrow neck and flaring rim.⁷⁷ The colors used (red/brown and black, presumably applied after firing) are very faint, but in some cases figural and floral patterns can be recognized. Branches of some sort were painted on one sherd (Fig. 46.2). Images of two eggs in a basket and a bird probably sitting on a branch were depicted on another. One sherd (Fig. 46.3) bears a very faint image of a black-painted gazelle/ibex and a man with characteristically red-painted body in front of the animal. Pots with painted gazelle/ibexes include a jar found by W.M.F. Petrie in Thebes,⁷⁸ now in the Petrie Museum,⁷⁹ dated to the reign of Amenhotep II. Another example was published by Hope.⁸⁰ A small sherd (Fig. 46.4) has a bird with spread wings, another frequent motif in New Kingdom scenes, also on pottery. Parallels include a ceramic fragment from Amarna, now in the Petrie Museum, depicting a similar bird.⁸¹ And two jars published by Hope featuring painted ducks with

outstretched wings.⁸² One of the jars was made of marl A4⁸³ as was the sherd from Tell el-Retaba.

All of the sherds can be attributed to Hope's variant a – red and black decorated fine marl A, variant 4 jars, dated generally to the early 18th dynasty, to the reign of Thutmose III.⁸⁴ The elaborate nature of the painted motifs, however, points to the innovativeness characterizing the reigns of Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV in the mid-18th Dynasty, when animal representations were introduced next to simple linear patterns.⁸⁵

Cypriot Bichrome Ware imitations were numerous in the material; they were represented by body sherds, including three sherds with handles (Fig. 47). External pot surfaces were painted red/brown and black. Motifs were simple, usually straight parallel lines or wavy lines flanked by straight strips. All of them were made of marl fabric, A4. Some may even be original Cypriot pots, but their place of production cannot be determined without more sophisticated lab analysis. Cypriot Bichrome ware has been found in early 18th Dynasty contexts in Egypt,⁸⁶ but there were also pots evidently manufactured locally.⁸⁷ The vessels from Tell el-Retaba

⁷⁷ Based on the material published by HOPE 1987.

⁷⁸ PETRIE 1897, pl. V, no. 10.

⁷⁹ UC15939, see <http://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/detail.aspx>.

⁸⁰ HOPE 1987, 99–100, pl. XXXIVB.

⁸¹ UC24660, see <http://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/detail.aspx>.

⁸² HOPE 1987, 98–99, pl. XXXIII.

⁸³ HOPE 1987, 99, pl. XXXIII B.

⁸⁴ HOPE 1987, 105, 109.

⁸⁵ HOPE 1987, 114.

⁸⁶ BOURRIAU 1981, 148–149, no. 150, also 134–135, nos. 263–264.

⁸⁷ BOURRIAU 1981, 133–134, nos. 261–262.

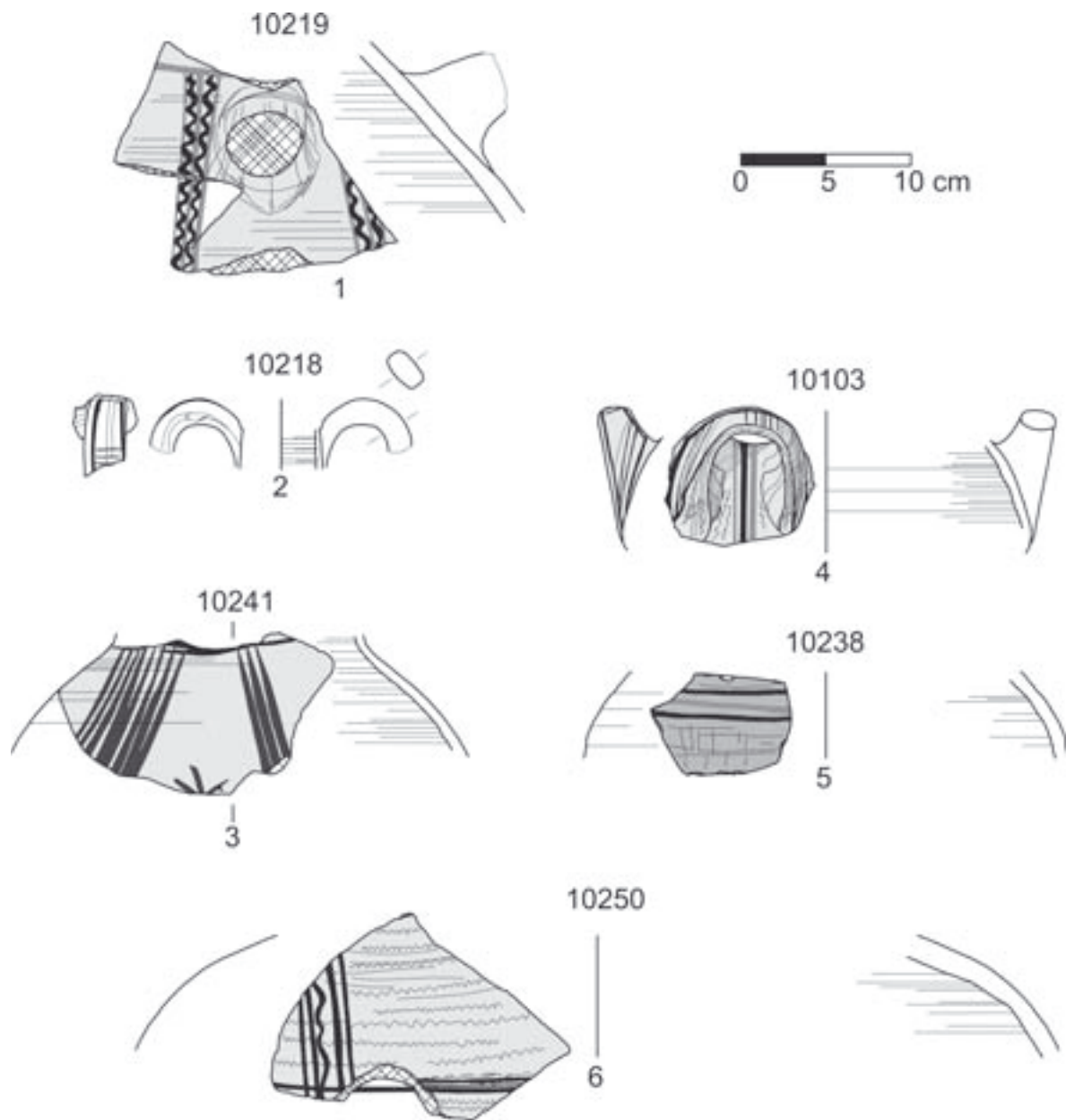


Fig. 47 Bichrome ware from the early 18th dynasty

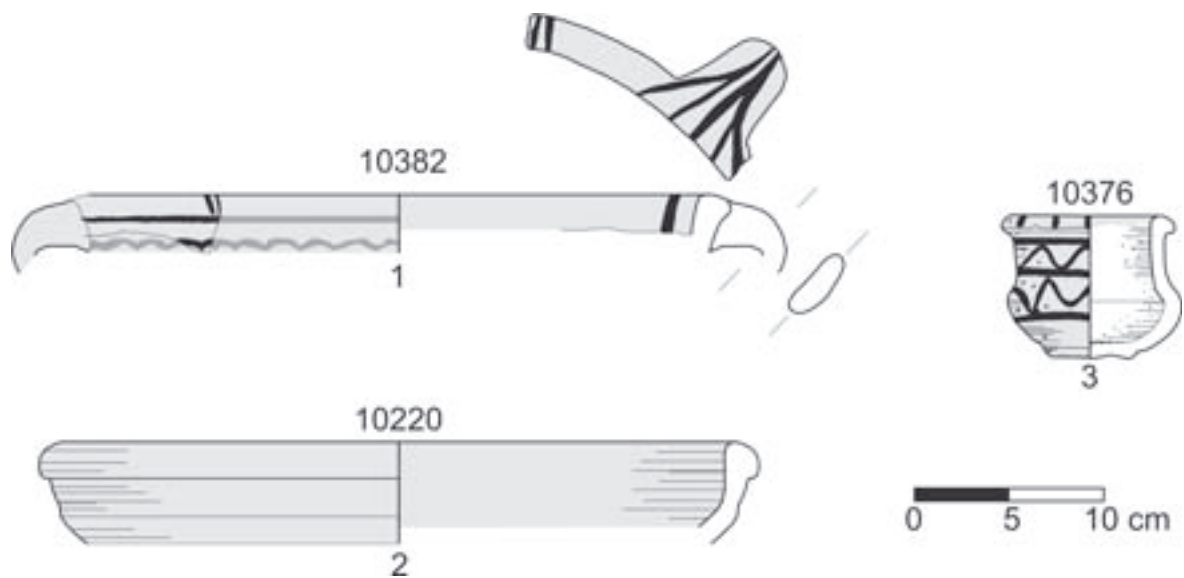


Fig. 48 Bowls made of marl fabric from the early 18th dynasty

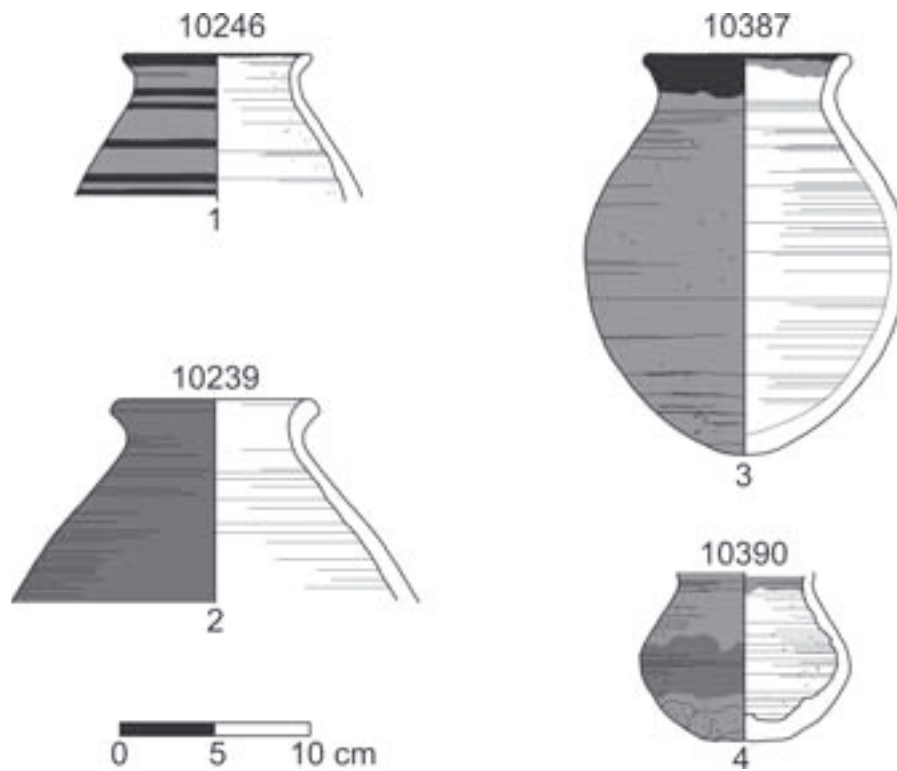


Fig. 49 Jars made of Nile fabrics from the early 18th dynasty

can generally be considered locally made, judging by the fabric and manufacturing method.⁸⁸

Also characteristic of the early New Kingdom were bowls made of marl clay, especially fabric D, with cream slip applied both on the inside and the outside (Fig. 48). Black sinusoidal decoration was often painted on the exterior, together with short black-painted strokes on the rims (Fig. 48.1, 48.3). Similar patterns were painted on bowls made of Nile fabrics (see Fig. 54).

Pots made of Nile fabrics were represented by jars with short simple recurved rims (Fig. 49.1–3). Their body was red-slipped and polished. Some of them have black-painted rims (Fig. 49.3), a custom typical of the early 18th Dynasty.⁸⁹ One of the discovered jars is decorated with painted black parallel horizontal lines (Fig. 49.1). A jar with similar decoration was found in Saqqara.⁹⁰ Its shape is more elongated than the one from Tell el-Retaba, but both can nevertheless be dated to the earlier 18th dynasty.

The closest parallel came from Tell el-Yehudiya, dated by Petrie to the reign of Thutmose III.⁹¹

Two complete jars were found *in situ* in the excavation area (Figs. 50–51). One of them has a biconical body, round base, simple flaring rim and a narrow collar around the neck of the vessel. The red-coated pot was made of Nile B2 fabric. A jar with visible collar but with slightly elongated body was found in Rifeh dated by Petrie to the reign of Thutmose I.⁹² The second jar of similar shape, but without a collar was already discovered in Tell el-Retaba in the 2010 season.⁹³ An almost complete jar was found in Ezbet Helmi (near Tell el-Daba), in stratum c dated to the reigns of Amenhotep II – Thutmose IV.⁹⁴

An almost complete (part of the rim is missing) large uncoated jar made of Nile B2 fabric (Fig. 52) also belongs to the group of early 18th Dynasty pottery. Its elongated ovoid body resembles closed vessel shapes from the discussed period.⁹⁵

⁸⁸ Irmgard Hein, personal communication.

⁸⁹ For similar pots, see Tell el Yehudiya and Saft in PETRIE and DUNCAN 1906, pl. XIIA, especially from context 413, and pl. XXXIX, nos. 56–57 respectively; also Rifeh in PETRIE 1907, pls. XXVIID-E, nos. 69–70, 79.

⁹⁰ RZEUSKA 2003, 150, Fig. 7.

⁹¹ PETRIE and DUNCAN 1906, pl. XIID, in the middle of the plate, from the 404 context.

⁹² see PETRIE 1907, pl. XXVII G, no. 181. The shape of the jar shows similarities to earlier storage jars made of marl C. It is probably a later variant of Middle Kingdom storage jars – Pamela Rose and Teodozja I. Rzeuska, personal communication.

⁹³ WODZIŃSKA 2011, 1019, 1032, Fig. 4.9.

⁹⁴ ASTON 2007, 233, Fig. 4a.

⁹⁵ Pamela Rose, personal communication.

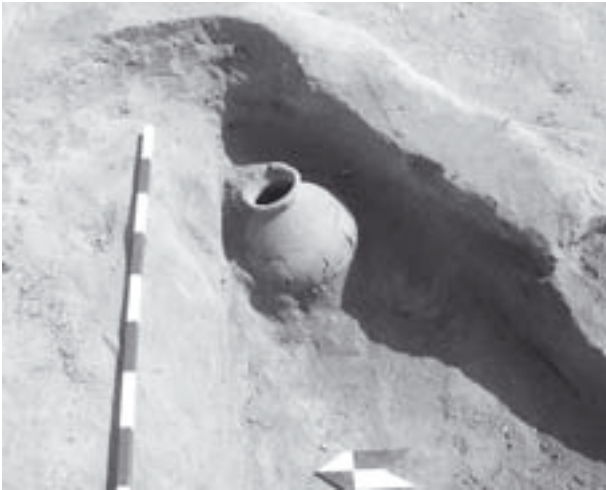


Fig. 50 Jar made of Nile fabric coated with red slip (photo L. Hudáková)



Fig. 51 Jar made of Nile fabric coated with red slip (photo A. Wodzińska)

A unique closed form, probably a bread mold, was made of Nile C fabric (Fig. 53). The base is not preserved, but the rim and body shape recall vessels well known among New Kingdom pots, for example, from Amarna.⁹⁶

Bowls made of Nile fabrics predominated in the early 18th Dynasty material (see Figs. 54–55). Large



Fig. 52 Large jar made of Nile B2 fabric from the early 18th dynasty

carinated basins coated with cream or red slip were often black-painted on the outside (Fig. 54). Patterns resembled those on marl bowls: simple wavy lines between narrow stripes and oblique strokes on the rim (Fig. 54.3). Some of the bowls had vertical handles, also black painted on the outside (Fig. 54.2). Black strokes on the rim and black wavy lines flanked by two horizontal lines are well known from the New Kingdom material; similar decoration was typical of pots from Amarna.⁹⁷

Bowls of Nile fabric took on mostly simple hemispherical or carinated shapes (Fig. 55). Hemispherical bowls were usually red-slipped. Red slip was applied sometimes only to the rims (Fig. 55.1–2). Some of the hemispherical and most of the carinated bowls were red-slipped and then painted black on the rim (Fig. 55.3–7). This manner of

⁹⁶ ROSE 2007, 232, nos. 362–364.

⁹⁷ ROSE 2007, 298, no. 214.

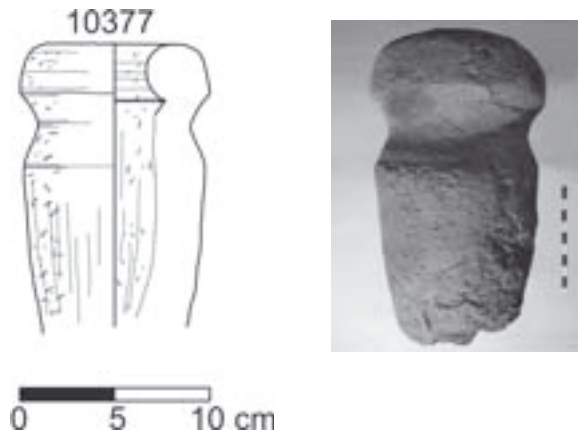


Fig. 53a-b Closed vessel made of Nile C fabric (photo S. Rzepka)

decoration has been observed at other sites in Egypt, especially Memphis⁹⁸ and Tell el-Daba.⁹⁹

Two small juglets with pointed bases (“Schöpfkannen”) represent a different category of pots found in early New Kingdom contexts (Fig. 56). One of them (Fig. 56.1) is made of Nile D fabric.

Its external surface is coated with dark pink slip and burnished. Juglets of this kind are known in the Eastern Delta, especially from Tell el-Daba.¹⁰⁰ The second pot (Fig. 56.2) seems to be an import from the Levant. Its fabric is very brittle with many white particles of various sizes.

Imported pottery from the early New Kingdom layers at the reported excavations in Tell el-Retaba came mostly from Cyprus. Two groups of Cypriot wares were recognized: Red Lustrous Wheel-made Ware (RLW-m) and Black Lustrous Wheel-made Ware (BLW-m).

The four RLW-m Ware sherds included two ring bases, one neck, and a large fragment of body from a juglet with small ring base (Figs. 57–58). The largest preserved pot (Fig. 57.1 and Fig. 58) has a tall and slender body and small ring bases; the rim and handle are missing. According to Kathryn Eriksson it can be classified as a spindle bottle, type VI, especially VIA1b:340.¹⁰¹ A small fragment of a wide base can be classified as type VIA1a:215–216 according to Eriksson;¹⁰² a potmark in the form of

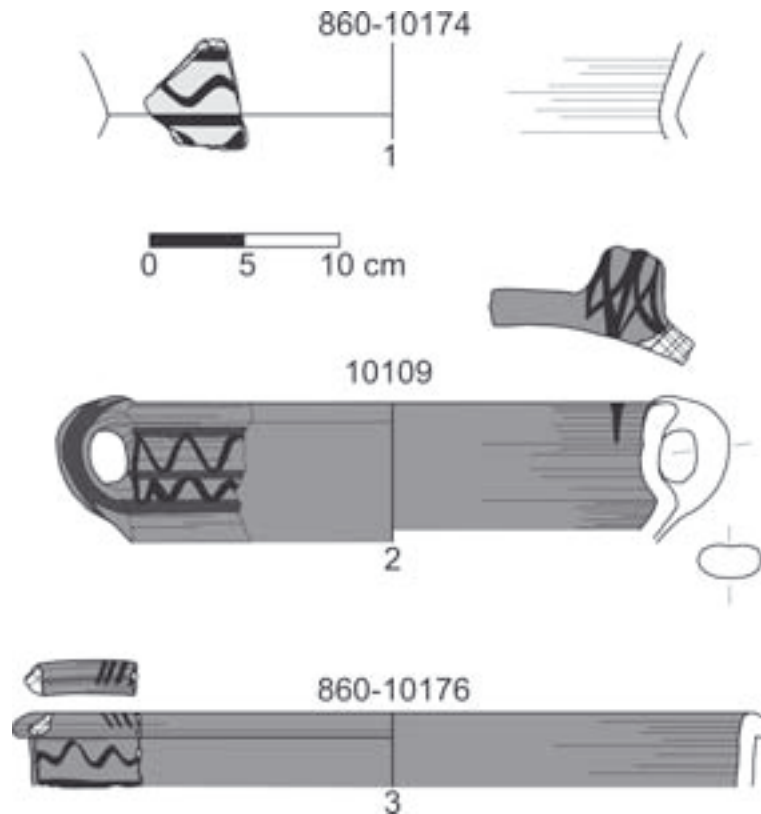


Fig. 54 Bowls of Nile fabrics from the early 18th dynasty

⁹⁸ BOURRIAU and ERIKSSON 1997, especially context RAT 530 from the early New Kingdom, Fig. 8.2, 8.5–6, 8.8.

⁹⁹ ASTON 2007, early New Kingdom material from Ezbet Helmi, Fig. 12c–e.

¹⁰⁰ FUSCALDO 2000, 101, Fig. 54.

¹⁰¹ ERIKSSON 1993, 22, Fig. 5a.

¹⁰² ERIKSSON 1993, 22, Fig. 5a.

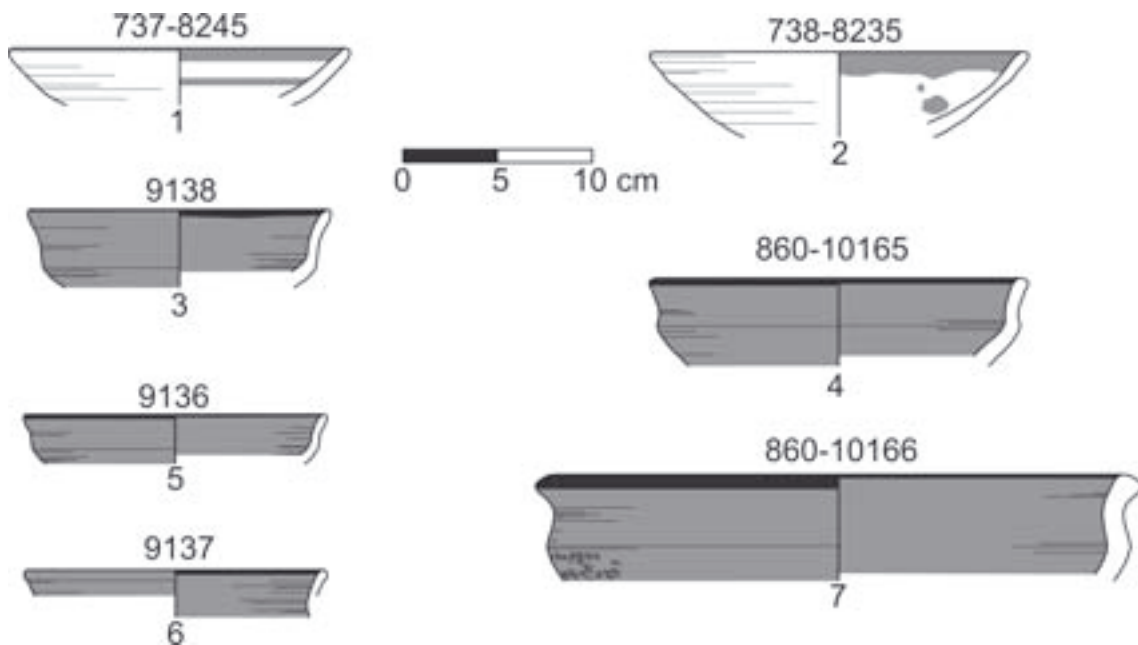


Fig. 55 Bowls of Nile fabrics from the early 18th dynasty

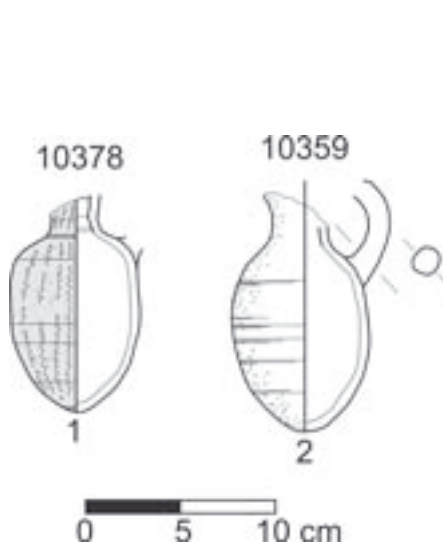


Fig. 56 Two "Schöpfkannen" jugs from the early 18th dynasty

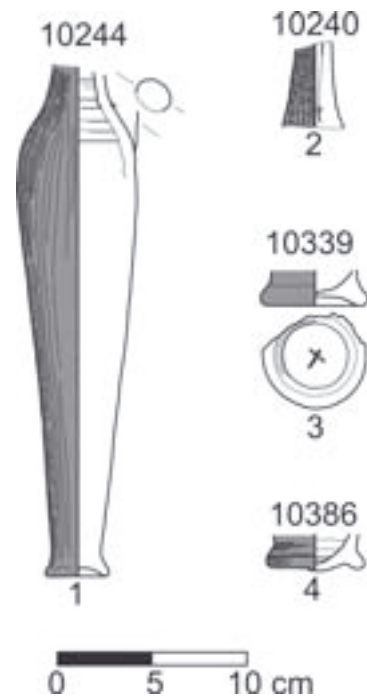


Fig. 57 Juglets of Red Lustrous Ware from the early 18th dynasty

a small cross was incised on the base before firing (Fig. 57.3). RLW-m Ware had been found in Tell el-Retaba by Petrie, in so called "Great House" dated to the early 18th Dynasty.¹⁰³

Small juglets with black slipped and burnished external surface (Fig. 59.1–2), identified as BLW-m

Ware,¹⁰⁴ are extremely characteristic of the very early 18th Dynasty. A conical cup on a flat base and with a recurved rim (Fig. 59.3), recovered from a similar archaeological context, was also intentionally black-slipped and burnished. The fabric allows it to be classified as BLW-m Ware as well.

¹⁰³ PETRIE and DUNCAN 1906, pl. XXXVc, bottom row, second pot from right.

¹⁰⁴ For instance ÅSTRÖM 2007.



Fig. 58 Juglet of Red Lustrous Ware from the early 18th dynasty (photo S. Rzepka)

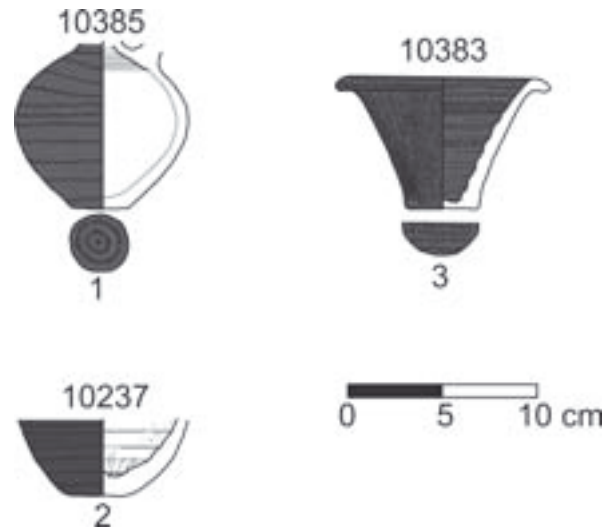


Fig. 59 Black Lustrous Ware pots from the early 18th dynasty

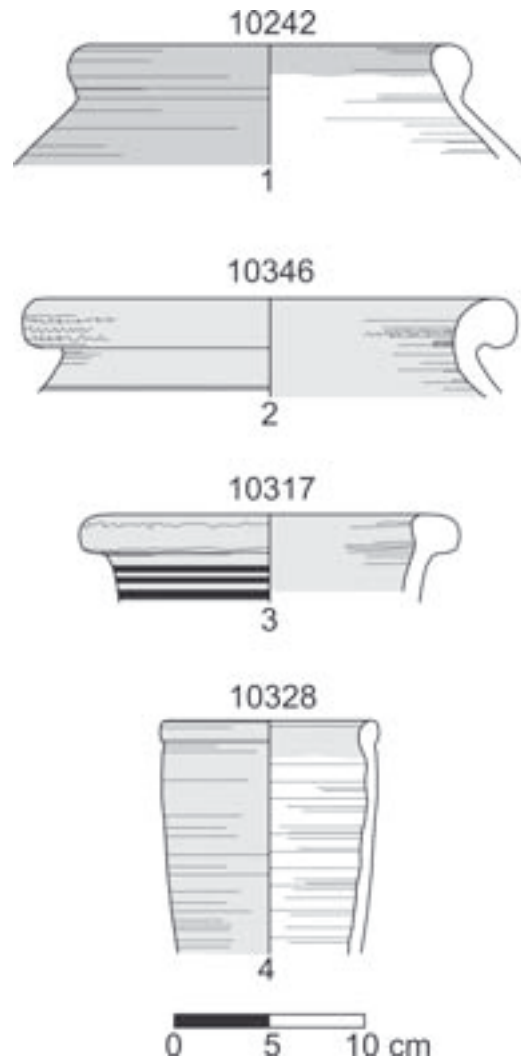


Fig. 60 Jars made of marl fabrics from the 19th dynasty

Cypriot Black Lustrous Wheel-made Wares, especially juglets, are known from many Egyptian sites between Tell Hebua in the north and Aniba in the south, from tombs especially, but also from domestic contexts,¹⁰⁵ as in the case of Tell el-Retaba.

In conclusion, the early New Kingdom dynasty pots found during the rescue excavations can be dated generally to the reign of Thutmosis III. Some pots seem to be a bit earlier, probably from the reign of Hatshepsut. The recovered vessels correspond well to the pottery found by the Polish-Slovak mission in other parts of the Tell el-Retaba site, Area 4

¹⁰⁵ HÖRBURGER 2007, 109–111.



Fig. 61 Pilgrim flask made of marl from the 19th dynasty
(photo M. Nour el-Din)

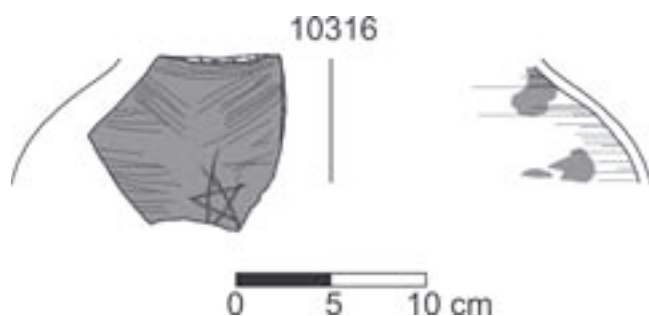


Fig. 62 Body sherd with potmark

in particular. On the other hand, six painted sherds made of marl A4 are perhaps of later date, Amenhotep II-Thutmose IV, representing the transition between the early and late 18th Dynasty.

The assemblage consists mostly of table ware, including numerous red-slipped bowls used probably as serving dishes. Storage jars were present in the excavated material, but their number is relatively small, especially in comparison to other ceramic vessels. Some of the pots, such as the marls jars with painted figural decoration, may have been



Fig. 63 19th dynasty amphora used as a coffin for a child burial
(photo M. Nour el-Din)

luxury products made for prominent individuals (only six small sherds have survived).

3.2. 19th Dynasty

A small group of 19th Dynasty vessels included typical storage jars made of marl fabric (Fig. 60). The most common were large storage jars of marl D with cream-coated and burnished external surface. So-called meat jars were also identified (Fig. 60.1),¹⁰⁶ as was a jar with sharply recurved round rim (Fig. 60.2) and a jar with square-shaped rim (Fig. 60.3). The latter usually bears brown-painted bands running around the neck just below the rim. The rim of an Egyptian wine amphora was also recorded (Fig. 60.1). Amphorae of this kind were made of marl D fabric, coated with cream slip on the outside and burnished. Similar amphora rims were excavated in quantity from Ramesside Qantir.¹⁰⁷

Another Ramesside type in the presently studied Tell el-Retaba material is a pilgrim flask (Fig. 61) made of marl, featuring a regular circular body, narrow neck and flaring rim. The one preserved handle was applied between the neck and upper part of the shoulder. Pots of this kind were found in Amarna¹⁰⁸ and are well attested in Qantir.¹⁰⁹

A body sherd made of marl D belonged to a jar with pink-slipped external surface (Fig. 62). A potmark was scratched after firing just below the neck. It is not complete, but a five-arm star (pentagram) is distinct.

A large amphora was used as coffin for a child burial discovered within the excavated area (Fig. 63). The vessel was made of marl D. Its external surface was coated with cream slip and burnished.

¹⁰⁶ ROSE 2007, for instance 276, nos 600–602; see also ASTON 1998, 478–487, nos 1799–1908.

¹⁰⁷ ASTON 1998, 472–473, nos. 1763–1785.

¹⁰⁸ ROSE 2007, 285, no. 638.

¹⁰⁹ ASTON 1998, 462, nos. 1691–1693.

Such amphorae used as coffins are well attested in Tell el Retaba.¹¹⁰ The elongated shape and the small handles on the shoulder indicate that the pot can be dated to the late 18th – beginning of 19th Dynasties.¹¹¹

3.3. Catalogue of pots

Fig. 44.1 – Number: 10357. Fabric: Marl A4. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Rim diameter: 8 cm.

Fig. 44.2 – Number: 738-8236. Fabric: Marl D. Surface ex: pink slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Rim diameter: 14.5 cm.

Fig. 44.3 – Number: 10217. Fabric: Marl D. Surface ex: cream slip smoothed. Surface in: partly smoothed. Manufacture: mold-ed base, thrown upper part. Decoration: none.

Fig. 44.4 and Fig. 45 – Number: 10397. Fabric: Marl A4. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Rim diameter: 14 cm.

Fig. 46.1 – Number: 10396. Fabric: Marl A4. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – red and black horizontal lines and black vertical strokes.

Fig. 46.2 – Number: 10395. Fabric: Marl A4. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – red and black motif of branches with leaves and bird sitting on top of one of them; basket with two eggs depicted at the left edge of the sherd.

Fig. 46.3 – Number: 10394. Fabric: Marl A4. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – red and black motif of a gazelle/antelope with a man (?) painted red.

Fig. 46.4 – Number: 10392. Fabric: Marl A4. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – red and black motif of a bird with spread wings.

Fig. 46.5 – Number: 10391. Fabric: Marl A4. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – red and black horizontal lines and head of a bird.

Fig. 46.6 – Number: 10393. Fabric: Marl A4. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – black vertical lines.

Fig. 47.1 – Number: 10219. Fabric: Marl A4? Surface ex: cream slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – red horizontal/vertical and black wavy lines.

Fig. 47.2 – Number: 10218. Fabric: Marl A4? Surface ex: cream slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted – black lines along vertical handle with three red lines painted across handle.

Fig. 47.3 – Number: 10241. Fabric: Marl A4? Surface ex: cream slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted – black band around neck and several vertical lines on shoulder.

Fig. 47.4 – Number: 10103. Fabric: Marl A4? Surface ex: cream slip burnished. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – red and black vertical lines; black line also along the horizontal handle with some red lines painted across the handle.

Fig. 47.5 – Number: 10238. Fabric: Marl A4? Surface ex: pink slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted – red and black horizontal lines.

Fig. 47.6 – Number: 10250. Fabric: Marl A4? Surface ex: cream slip burnished. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted – brown (wavy) and black (straight) lines.

Fig. 48.1 – Number: 10382. Fabric: Marl D. Surface ex: cream slip smoothed. Surface in: cream slip smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – black wavy lines between two horizontal ones; black strokes also on handle and rim. Rim diameter: 35 cm.

Fig. 48.2 – Number: 10220. Fabric: Marl D. Surface ex: cream slip smoothed. Surface in: cream slip smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Rim diameter: 38 cm.

Fig. 48.3 – Number: 10376. Fabric: Marl D. Surface ex: cream slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – black wavy lines between two horizontal ones; black strokes on rim. Rim diameter: 9.25 cm.

Fig. 49.1 – Number: 10246. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – black horizontal lines. Rim diameter: 10 cm.

Fig. 49.2 – Number: 10239. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Rim diameter: 11 cm.

Fig. 49.3 – Number: 10387. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted – black rim. Rim diameter: 11 cm.

Fig. 49.4 – Number: 10390. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Remarks: large blackened area on external surface.

Figs. 50-51 – Numbers: 10402 and 12722. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none.

Fig. 52 – Number: 10399. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Rim diameter: 15 cm.

Fig. 53 – Number: 10377. Fabric: Nile C. Surface ex: smoothed, lower part treated with brush. Surface in: roughly smoothed. Manufacture: handmade. Decoration: none. Rim diameter: 10 cm.

Fig. 54.1 – Number: 860-10174. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: cream slip smoothed. Surface in: cream slip smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted – black wavy lines between horizontal ones.

¹¹⁰ WODZIŃSKA 2011, 1020–2021, 1033, Fig. 8.

¹¹¹ ASTON 2007, 496–497, no. 1955, NAGEL 1938.

Fig. 54.2 – Number: 10109. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: red slip smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted – black wavy lines between horizontal ones, black strokes also on handle. Rim diameter: 30 cm.

Fig. 54.3 – Number: 860-10176. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: red slip smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted – black wavy lines between horizontal ones. Rim diameter: approx. 50 cm.

Fig. 55.1 – Number: 737-8245. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted – red rim and one horizontal line below rim inside. Rim diameter: 18 cm.

Fig. 55.2 – Number: 738-8235. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted – red rim on the inside. Rim diameter: 20 cm.

Fig. 55.3 – Number: 9138. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: red slip smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted black rim. Rim diameter: 16 cm.

Fig. 55.4 – Number: 860-10165. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: red slip smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted black rim. Rim diameter: 20 cm.

Fig. 55.5 – Number: 9136. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: red slip smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted black rim. Rim diameter: 16 cm.

Fig. 55.6 – Number: 9137. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: red slip smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted black rim. Rim diameter: 16 cm.

Fig. 55.7 – Number: 860-10166. Fabric: Nile B2. Surface ex: red slip smoothed. Surface in: red slip smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: painted black rim. Rim diameter: 32 cm.

Fig. 56.1 – Number: 10378. Fabric: Nile D. Surface ex: pink slip burnished. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none.

Fig. 56.2 – Number: 10359. Fabric: Levantine – many white particles. Surface ex: smoothed. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none.

Fig. 57.1 and Fig. 58 – Number: 10244. Fabric: Cypriot. Surface ex: red slip burnished. Surface in: roughly smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Base diameter: 3.3 cm.

Fig. 57.2 – Number: 10240. Fabric: Cypriot. Surface ex: red slip burnished. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none.

Fig. 57.3 – Number: 10339. Fabric: Cypriot. Surface ex: red slip burnished. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Base diameter: 5.6 cm.

Fig. 57.4 – Number: 10386. Fabric: Cypriot. Surface ex: red slip burnished. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Base diameter: 5 cm.

Fig. 59.1 – Number: 10385. Fabric: Cypriot/Nile B1. Surface ex: black slip burnished. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none.

Fig. 59.2 – Number: 10237. Fabric: Cypriot/Nile B1. Surface ex: black slip burnished. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none.

Fig. 59.3 – Number: 10383. Fabric: Cypriot/Nile B1. Surface ex: black slip burnished. Surface in: black slip burnished. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Rim diameter: 11.3 cm.

Fig. 60.1 – Number: 10242. Fabric: Marl D. Surface ex: cream slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed, cream slip only on the rim. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Rim diameter: 21 cm.

Fig. 60.2 – Number: 10346. Fabric: Marl D. Surface ex: cream slip burnished. Surface in: cream slipped, burnished. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – red horizontal line below rim. Rim diameter: 26 cm.

Fig. 60.3 – Number: 10317. Fabric: Marl D. Surface ex: cream slip burnished. Surface in: cream slipped, burnished. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration ex: painted – three black horizontal lines below the rim. Rim diameter: 20 cm.

Fig. 60.4 – Number: 10328. Fabric: Marl D. Surface ex: cream slip smoothed. Surface in: smoothed, cream-slipped rim. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Rim diameter: 15 cm.

Fig. 61 – Number: 10400. Fabric: Marl D?. Surface ex: cream slip well smoothed. Surface in: roughly smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none.

Fig. 62 – Number: 10316. Fabric: Marl D. Surface ex: red slip well smoothed. Surface in: smoothed, traces of red slip. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none. Remarks: potmark made after firing on the external surface.

Fig. 63 – Number: 10401. Fabric: Marl D. Surface ex: cream slip burnished. Surface in: smoothed. Manufacture: thrown. Decoration: none.

4. SUMMARY

Information on the settlement history of Tell el-Retaba has been greatly augmented by the results of a few months of rescue excavations carried out in difficult conditions. A larger section of the early 18th dynasty settlement has been cleared, uncovering structures and artifacts (including imported luxury goods) that leave no doubt that at least part of this settlement was inhabited by a fairly wealthy population. More of the settlement remains needs to be excavated before it can be determined what the source of this wealth was and what was the nature of the settlement. In any case, this thriving community disappeared before the end of the 18th dynasty. The settlement was turned into a graveyard consisting of a number of poor burials (mostly infants) without any grave furnishings. A surprising feature of this cemetery is a pig burial. The situation changed radically in the times of Ramesses II, who chose the site to build a strong fortress guarding the Wadi Tumilat route which linked Egypt with Sinai and Palestine.

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