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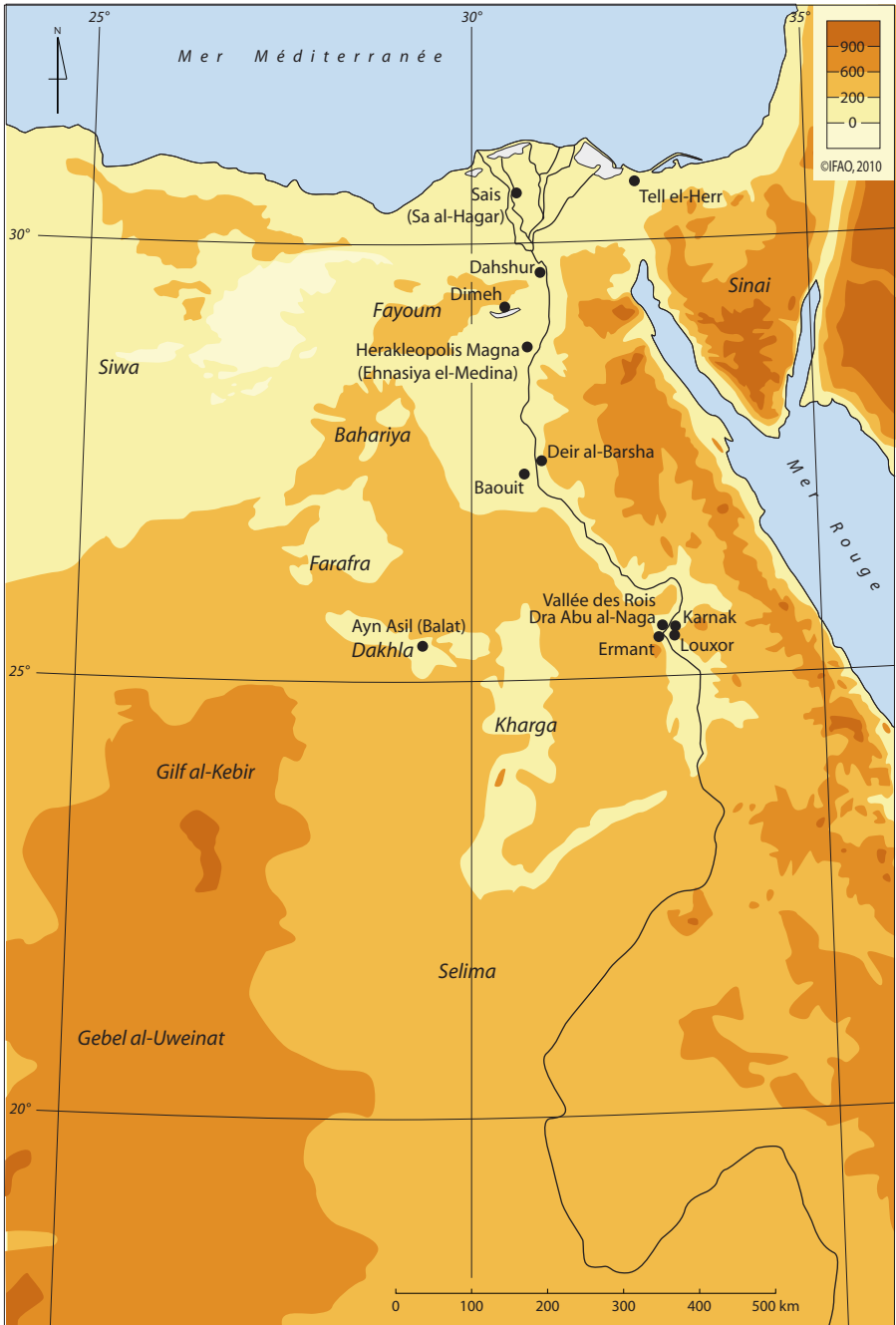
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7. Herakleopolis Magna – Ehnasya el-Medina, Autumn 2003

IN the autumn season of 2003 it was possible to study ceramic material excavated by the Spanish Mission to Egypt supported by the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid and directed by Carmen Pérez-Die.¹

A cemetery of the First Intermediate Period/early Middle Kingdom² has been excavated at Herakleopolis Magna since 2000. So far two rows of tombs, partly built of stone and partly built of mud brick have been discovered.³ This necropolis was already known earlier,⁴ but not systematically explored, as it is now.

For the material excavated during the 2003 season in Areas 15 and 16, which contained two tombs, preliminary dates could be assigned. The date ranges from the First Intermediate/early Middle Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom proper, the New Kingdom to the Persian Period (27th Dynasty). The material of the later periods was mostly found in later fills of the tombs.

Area 9

One *in situ* pottery assemblage was discovered during cleaning work in 2003 in the south-western corner of the tomb in Area 9.⁵ It consisted of four ceramic vessels, three medium to large jars like the one shown in fig. 1.a (HMO3-9) and one model jar (fig. 1.b, HMO3-12). All four jars were made from a medium coarse Nile clay (Nile C1/C2 following the Vienna System,⁶ natural surface colour according to Munsell soil colour chart 7.5 YR 6/6 reddish yellow⁷). A red slip was applied (Munsell colour

1. For preliminary reports see PÉREZ-DIE 2001, p. 6-25; PÉREZ-DIE 2004, p. 21-24; PÉREZ-DIE 2005a, p. 239-254; PÉREZ-DIE 2005b, *passim*.

2. The early Middle Kingdom is understood here beginning with the reunification of Egypt under Nebhepetré-Mentuhotep II. of the 11th Dynasty.

3. Cf. the plan in BADER 2009, fig. 1, which was reproduced from PÉREZ-DIE 2005b, fig. 20.

4. LÓPEZ 1974, p. 299-316 ; LÓPEZ 1975, p. 57-78.

5. Cf. BADER 2011, p. 59-60, fig. 5.66-69.

6. NORDSTRÖM, BOURRIAU, 1993, p. 145-190.

7. MUNSELL 1994.

7.5 YR 4/6 red) on their exterior. The height of the tall jars measures around 25.0 cm, the model jar is 9.0 cm. The jars were manufactured in two parts starting with a very lumpy base to which coils of clay were gradually added. The top parts of the vessels also seem to have been made by hand – presumably by coiling. The two parts were then joined approximately in medium height and smoothed on a slow spinning turning device as becomes obvious on examination of the rilling lines.⁸ The join is often noticeable as a bulge or by the presence of particular smoothing patterns (see fig.1.a). This manufacturing technique is a typical trait of the First Intermediate Period and the early Middle Kingdom pottery in this region. Some ceramic types continued to be made in this way even later. The model jar was made in one piece out of a lump of clay situated on a slow wheel. At the end of the manufacturing process the jar's base was cut off with a string, which leaves a very distinctive pattern on the underside of the pot.⁹

There can be little doubt that this assemblage dates to the First Intermediate Period or the early Middle Kingdom (late 11th Dynasty), since such pottery types do not seem to appear in the ceramic repertoire of the early 12th Dynasty¹⁰ in the Memphis Fayum region. Type 86k from the nearby cemetery of Sedment (ca. 8 km to the north) is sufficiently similar to be cited as a parallel for the large jars¹¹ as well as some vessels in the Teti pyramid cemetery.¹² It is noteworthy that from the nearby FIP cemeteries Harageh C and D no exact parallels are known¹³, which may support the view that the tombs at Herakleopolis are later in date. How much later is not quite sure. The scarcity of exact parallels at sites further south¹⁴ or north (than Saqqara area) lends corroboration to the view that the ceramic material in the various regions of Egypt is quite different to each other in this period, with only a few types overlapping.¹⁵

8. Cf. ARNOLD 1993, p. 36-41.

9. ARNOLD 1993, fig. 60A and B.

10. In the foundation deposits of the Pyramid complex of Senwosret I. for example model jars were discovered, which are similar in shape, but their crude workmanship makes it hard to cite them as direct parallels, see ARNOLD 1988, p. 106-109.

11. PETRIE, BRUNTON 1924a, pl. 36. Recent research of the cemetery material supports the dating of type 86k into the earlier phase of that cemetery, which may well date to the FIP, although an early MK date can at this point not entirely be excluded. Cf. BADER 2012.

12. SOWADA, CALLAHAN, BENTLEY 1999, p. 77 and pl. 44. TNE94:32B dated to the 11th – early 12th Dynasty.

13. Cf. ENGELBACH, GUNN 1923, pl. 31-33. This may mean than they are to be dated earlier, which was already suggested by SEIDLMAYER 1990, p. 236, 395.

14. A similar ceramic type exists at Beni Hasan, but it shows a wider mouth and is slightly taller. Cf. GARSTANG 1907, pl. XIII.29.

15. Cf. SEIDLMAYER 1990, *passim*; SPENCER 1993, *passim*; and the newer publications of BADER 2011, p. 60-62; EDEL 2008, *passim*; HOPE 2006, *passim*; ZITMAN 2010.

Analytical work was done also on the pottery from Sector C Areas 14, 4, 12, 13 and 5 excavated in the First Intermediate Period/early Middle Kingdom cemetery uncovered in the previous year 2002. Some investigation was done as well on ceramic material excavated in 2000.

Area 14

The large amount of pottery from area 14 was analysed and drawn in full. The ceramic material from that area came from several archaeological features. Feature 5 comprises two stelae set at right angles east of the painted tomb and may belong to the mortuary cult of the tomb owner.¹⁶ This area was particularly rich in ceramic remains. The bulk of the material consisted of bases of more or less pointed design deriving from bottles or jars, similar to those shown in fig. 1.c.¹⁷ Also the rims of such bottles were found, with and without turned over lip. They were made from Nile clay (Nile B2 or Nile C1, rarely with a higher limestone content) and sometimes red slipped on the exterior.

Beside these bottles there are several other types of closed vessels, which were manufactured in a more careful manner and, thus, suggest a better quality. Their bodies were ovoid and although the technique is basically the same as explained above, careful smoothing of the exterior gave those vessels a much improved appearance (see fig. 1.d). They were made from Nile B2, which has a slightly finer texture than Nile C1. The natural surface colour according to the Munsell chart is 5 YR 6/6 reddish yellow and the red slip is 5 R 5/6 red. This type of vessel is known from the First Intermediate Period as well as from the early Middle Kingdom. The best parallel is the frequently occurring pottery type 64g from the Sedment cemeteries.¹⁸ It is consistent with the present example almost to the centimetre. Similar vessels are known from the Teti pyramid cemetery.¹⁹

Another common jar shape found in feature 5 consists of the so-called beaker jar. One of them was well enough preserved to allow reconstructing the profile (fig. 1.e). It was manufactured on a slow wheel, the base cut off and roughly smoothed. The reconstructed example had a red natural surface colour (Munsell colour 5 YR 7/8 reddish yellow) and was red slipped (Munsell colour 7.5 YR 5/6) on the exterior. Parallels

16. PÉREZ-DIE 2004, p. 21.

17. Further work ascertained that there are various different vessel types with very similar bases.

18. PETRIE, BRUNTON 1924a, pl. 32. Another parallel can be found in cemeteries C and D of Harageh, see ENGELBACH, GUNN 1923, pl. 33.II2-II3.

19. SOWADA, CALLAGHAN, BENTLY 1999, pl. 42.TNE94:59 - unstratified; TNE94:83, dated to the 12th Dynasty.

for this ceramic type are also known from Sedment within type family 36, especially 36c, 36d and 36h although they are smaller.²⁰ Similar shapes are known from Akhmim.²¹

A considerable number of fragments of open vessels were found in the interior of the tomb (feature 2) in Area 14. They were either red slipped or red slipped and then polished (see fig. 2.a-b) and showed a very simple form with direct rims and presumably rounded bases. The red slip is usually quite dark and applied to the interior as well as to the exterior. Their rim diameter ranges from 16.0 to 32.0 cms.²² Also a very distinctive neck fragment of a large jar with an added knob of clay (false spout?) and two grooves made of Nile clay B2/C1 with a red slip was found within the tomb. A complete vessel of this type was discovered in Area 13 (see below). Worth mentioning is a very pointed base made of Marl Clay C1 comparable to Sedment type family 90²³ and bread mould bases of a narrow type, although sometimes with a relatively wide base diameter (around 6.0 cms).²⁴ Another interesting find from feature 1 (in front of the tomb) in Area 14 is a burnt and therefore completely preserved mud stopper with the impression of the jar rim with a rim diameter of approx. 7.0 cms on the underside of the stopper and string impressions on top of it that show how it was tied on to the vessel.²⁵

Area 4

The material found in Area 4 is derived from two different features: ceramic material found inside the tomb (tumba 1, capa 3) and pottery found in a stratum underneath the offering table and stela east of the tomb, with the lowest level of the tomb still lower. The relatively few pottery vessels found inside the tomb consisted mainly of jars made from various Marl clays (Vienna System A2, C1 and C2) amongst which was the very pointed type mentioned above and a wide bodied type presumably with round base. The pottery from feature 3 under the offering table comprised many open and presumably round based dishes either with dark red slip or dark red slipped and polished on the interior and the exterior, made of Nile B1 and B2, similar to those found in Area 14 (cf. fig. 2.a-b).

20. PETRIE, BRUNTON 1924a, pl. 30.

21. HOPE 2006, fig. 4.AIIa.1ai-AIIa.2aii and fig. 5 in various sizes and techniques. Handmade beakers were also found at Herakleopolis Magna, cf. BADER 2011, fig. 1.14, 2.32-33.

22. For these ceramic types many parallels can be found, that span a quite long period of time. E.g. CZERNY 2001, p. 136-139.

23. PETRIE, BRUNTON 1924a, pl. 35. See BADER 2009, fig. 7.a-c; BADER 2011, fig. 3.37 and 3.42.

24. In the meanwhile it seems established that at least one intermediary type of bread mould exists between the wide Old Kingdom type and the tall narrow Middle Kingdom type. Cf. JACQUET-GORDON 1981, p. 11-24; MARCHAND 2004, fig. 74, 77, 78, 79. Cf. BADER 2011, cat.no. 39.

25. Cf. BADER 2011, cat.no. 11.

A significant number of carinated bowls and dishes with rim diameters of 15.0 cms to 25.0 cms have also been found. They are mostly matte red polished on interior and exterior, consisting of Nile B1 or B2 clays and their shapes are reminiscent of the so-called “Meidum-bowl” of the Old Kingdom (fig. 2.c-e). The vessel fragment in fig. 2.e finds a close parallel in Akhmim.²⁶ It may be possible that the ceramic vessels found at Ehnasya do not date to the Old Kingdom but rather to the First Intermediate Period or even the early Middle Kingdom. The more so as due to the fact that the pottery sequence of the First Intermediate Period is not well defined in this area, we are not in a position to rule out that this type could have continued to be produced and used at Herakleopolis Magna until the First Intermediate Period and perhaps even later.²⁷ The dating of the tombs themselves is unfortunately not fixed as independent dating evidence in the form of king’s names on stelae is absent.²⁸

One vessel made of Nile B2 with a relatively high shoulder shows a similar contour to some of the carinated bowls (see above, fig. 2.d). It could be reconstructed to a complete profile and turned out to be a flat-based slightly restricted bowl with a spout (fig. 2.f). The base was presumably made in a mould and the upper part coiled. After this manufacturing step it was very well smoothed, perhaps even on a slow turning device. The surface on the interior and the exterior was coated with a thick red slip (Munsell colour 10 R 5/6 red) over the natural reddish brown surface (Munsell colour 5 YR 3/4) and polished probably with some sort of cloth as no clearly discernable burnishing strokes were visible. The rim diameter measured 22.0 cms, the base diameter 9.0 cms and the height 17.1 cms. A parallel with a red slip on the outside was found in Balat, where it dates to the end of the Old Kingdom or some time after. The shape is very similar, although the spout is longer and points upwards, which seems to be a special trait of Balat in the oasis of Dakhla.²⁹ Other parallels are from Denderah,³⁰ currently dated to the First Intermediate Period, and from Qau dated to the Old Kingdom.³¹

26. HOPE 2006, fig. 1.BIIIb.3.

27. Cf. SEIDLMAYER 2005, p. 285-286.

28. Cf. PÉREZ-DIE 2005a, *passim*. The study on the stelae has appeared: PÉREZ-DIE 2010, *passim*.

29. SOUKASSIAN, WUTTMANN, PANTALACCI 2002, p. 238, fig. 207, no. 919/2, Maison 3, phase 2, dating: end of the Old Kingdom or some time after.

30. SLATER 1974, p. 487, C7c, the carination sits lower down the body of the vessels and the rim is turned outwards, not formed as a bulge, like in our example; dated to the FIP. Also from Denderah but from the settlement, MARCHAND 2004, fig. 53, upper part, fig. 56 with slightly different proportions, dated to phases 2-3, FIP to the 11th Dynasty.

31. BRUNTON 1928, pl. 78. 19D. According to Seidlmayer this pottery type dates to the late 5th/beginning 6th Dynasty although it occurs only once as a pot burial. Cf. SEIDLMAYER 1990, fig. 81, fig. 168. Perhaps this pottery tradition continued further at HM past the OK like the “Meidum bowls” seem to. Thorough analysis will help to see clearer in this question.

Jars like those shown in fig. 1.a and 1.c made of Nile B2 or C1 mostly red slipped on the exterior were also found. Further, the material consisted of numerous pointed and also more rounded jar bases made of Nile C2 and some large so-called bread trays made of the same material most of them uncoated. Their rim diameters range from 20.0 to 30.0 cms.

Particularly interesting was the rim of a seemingly imported amphora from Syria/Palestine³² the only one so far located that was certainly not of a later date. It has to be said though that the identification of Palestinian fabrics in this period is particularly difficult, because of the presence of many Nile/Marl clay fabric mixes that look macroscopically very similar to imports.³³ Only petrography could clarify this issue beyond any doubt.

Area 12

In this area a later trench cut into a painted tomb of the First Intermediate Period/early Middle Kingdom,³⁴ so that the context was disturbed and only a selection of most typical and well identifiable vessels were drawn and analysed. Beside the typical jars with more or less pointed bases (see fig. 1.a, c) and intrusive sherds from the New Kingdom, the Persian Period and later periods a remarkable number of Marl clay sherds, partly reconstructable, came from this area.³⁵ It is hoped that further work on reconstruction of these more unusual vessels can be done in future seasons.³⁶

Area 13

The pottery from this area was looked through and dated preliminarily to the First Intermediate Period/early Middle Kingdom with very few later intrusive pieces, particularly one amphora handle made of a well known New Kingdom amphora fabric.

The complete or near complete vessels were drawn, amongst them several jars with pointed base (see fig. 1.a, c) with straight neck and turned over lip or with straight

32. See BADER 2011, fig. 4.55, cat. no. 55.

33. M.F. Ownby, personal communication.

34. Cf. PÉREZ-DIE 2005a, p. 241-244.

35. Feature 22, Layer/Capa 7. Cf. BADER 2009, fig. 7.d, f; BADER 2011, fig. 4.61.

36. During the season of 2009 it was possible to reconstruct one vessel to a complete profile. See this volume, Ehnasya season 2006, fig. 7. Whether this means that they all show the same shape of the body must remain uncertain until more reconstruction has been done.

necks and direct rims. As in all the other cases these were made of Nile B2 or C1 and red slipped. Their heights measure around 24.0 cms.³⁷

One of the most striking vessels of this season was a large jar made of Nile C1, red slipped on the exterior (Munsell colour 10 R 5/6, natural surface 2.5 YR 5/8 red) with rounded base, an additional “knob” of clay on the shoulder and a very long neck with two deep grooves (fig. 3). This vessel was reconstructed from sherds. For this reason it was possible to study the manufacturing technique in some detail. The vessel was manufactured in three parts: the base, the body and the neck. The joining lines of these parts were clearly discernible. After construction the vessel was turned on a slow turning device, which led to the overall non-symmetrical shape. The base had been smoothed vertically on the outside as is typical for most of the repertoire of Herakleopolis Magna. The measurements are the following: rim diameter 5.5 cms, height 42.8 cms. An exact parallel can be found in Petrie’s publication of the cemetery at Sedment,³⁸ and at Herakleopolis itself, although this example is slightly larger and slimmer as well as covered with a dark red polish on the outside.³⁹

The remainder of the material contained many red slipped or polished dishes of Nile B2 some of them fairly large, “Meidum style” bowls, very pointed Marl clay jars of type family 90 (see above), and handmade beaker-jars.

37. See BADER 2011, p. 56-57, cat.nos. 57-58.

38. PETRIE, BRUNTON, 1924a, pl. 34. 87q.

39. LÓPEZ GRANDE, QUESADA SANZ, MOLINERO POLO 1995, p. 44, 138, Lám. 4.a.

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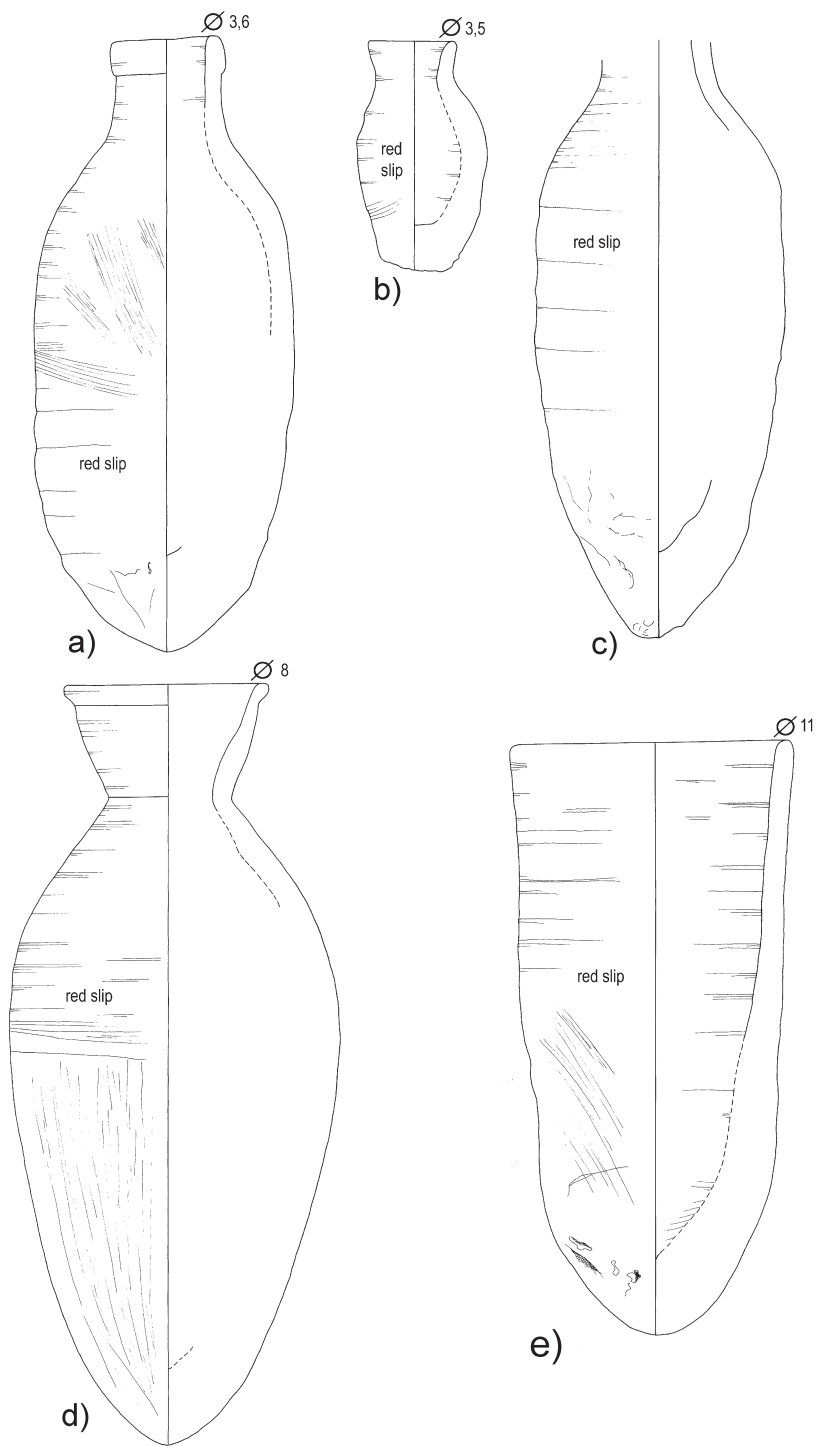


Fig. 1. Pottery from Ehmasya el-Medina, scale 1:3.

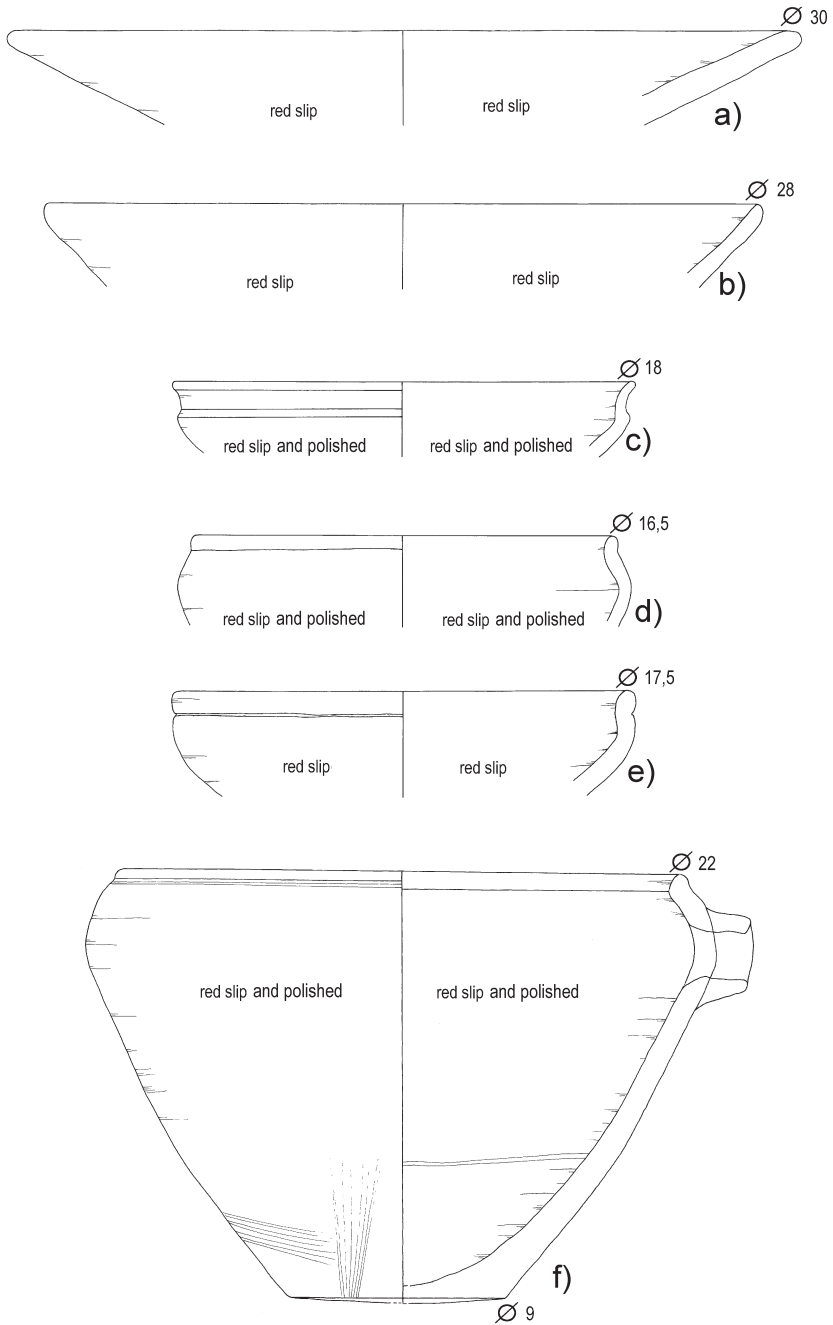


Fig. 2. Pottery from Ebnasya el-Medina, scale 1:3.

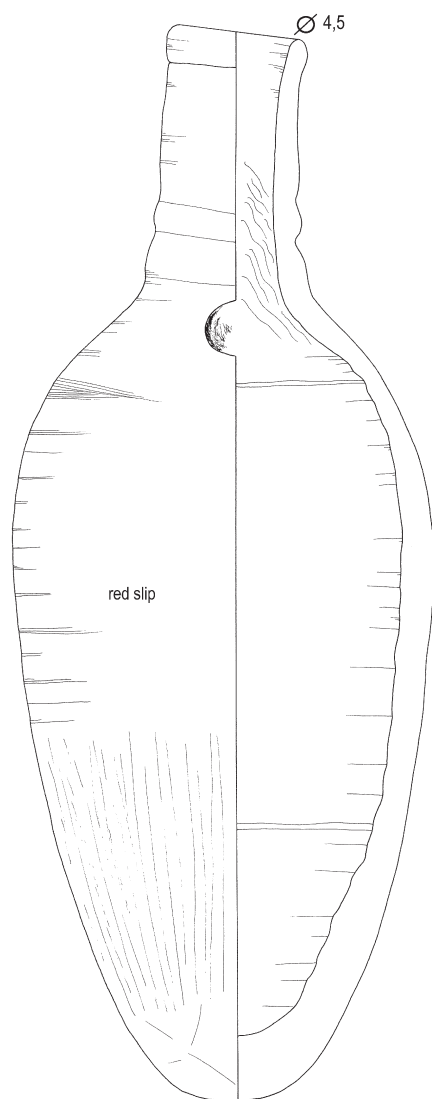


Fig. 3. Pottery from Ehmasya el-Medina, scale 1:3.