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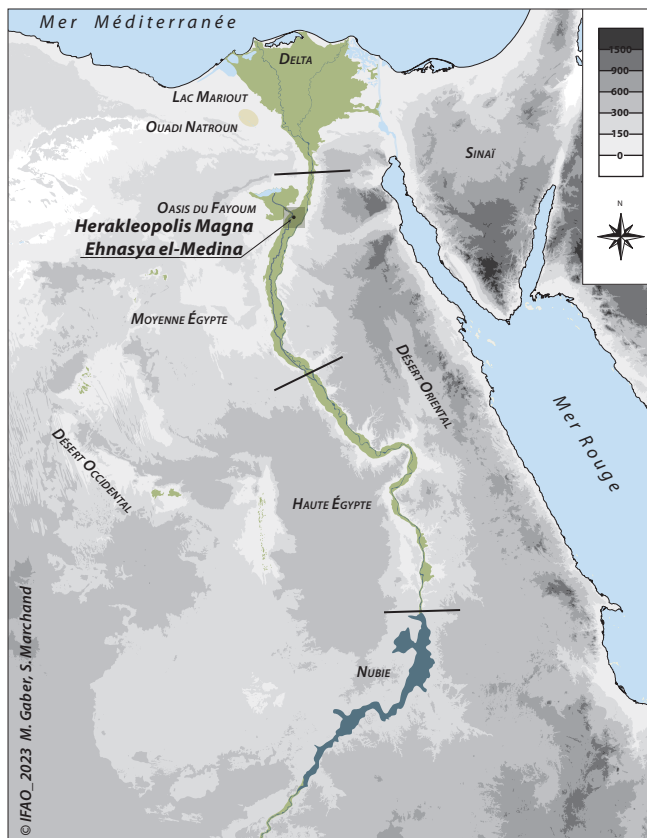
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# Moyenne Égypte



## **The Development of Pottery from the Late Old Kingdom to the First Intermediate Period at Herakleopolis Magna/Ehnasya el-Medina (Part 2)\***

### **Introduction**

The necropolis of the First Intermediate Period/early Middle Kingdom at Herakleopolis Magna/Ehnasya el-Medina continues to yield much new archaeological information on this time in which Egypt seems to have been divided into several regions in terms of material culture.<sup>1</sup> The site is situated about 120 km south of Cairo and c.18 km west of Beni Suef, and has been excavated by Spanish archaeologists for a considerable period of time.<sup>2</sup>

While the funerary culture between the end of the Old Kingdom and the beginning of the Middle Kingdom (here the re-unification of Egypt under Mentuhotep II) at Herakleopolis/Ehnasya el-Medina includes tomb architecture,<sup>3</sup> funerary stelae,<sup>4</sup> and offering tables for consideration, the focus of this article is on the pottery, which is the most abundant artefact type at the site. Other grave goods are, unfortunately, only very rarely preserved. Organic materials and human remains are only partially preserved due to the presence of subsoil water.

\* This article was written for the intended proceedings of the “Old Kingdom Pottery Workshop, Chapter II” held in Warsaw in 2011. Unfortunately, this volume did not come forward; thus, one part of that original article is presented here with updates. The original article was previously entitled “Change in Style or Change in Time?”, and originally UE 241 and UE 248 would have been published together. All the line drawings and photos of the pottery were prepared by the author.

1. SEIDLMAYER 1990; SCHIESTL, SEILER (eds.) 2012; BADER 2021.

2. LÓPEZ 1974; LÓPEZ 1975; PADRÓ 1998. For extensive overview, history of the site, and bibliography, see now PÉREZ DÍE (ed.) 2010. See also PÉREZ DÍE, BADER, forthcoming.

3. PÉREZ DÍE 2001; PÉREZ DÍE 2004; PÉREZ DÍE 2005a; PÉREZ DÍE 2005b; PÉREZ DÍE 2015.

4. PÉREZ DÍE 2010; PÉREZ DÍE, forthcoming.

The extension of the excavation area of the First Intermediate Period necropolis in the last decade allows complex stratigraphic considerations.<sup>5</sup> These are crucial for the appreciation of the history of the site and importantly for the chronological development of the pottery, in particular. Due to the lack of additional dating criteria, the pottery sequence can only be dated between rather wide temporal periods on its own virtue.<sup>6</sup> As at many other sites in Egypt, pottery represents the most numerous artefact group at Herakleopolis with only a few small finds such as beads, chipped stone tools, shells (worked or unworked), and rare stone vessel fragments found.

## Sector 15

This article concentrates on the thorough description of the ceramic material found in one stratigraphic unit in Sector 15, which lies at the easternmost edge of the excavated area of the necropolis. There, in a complex stratigraphy, several superimposed tombs were found. Most of them were not very elaborate with a simple rectangular mud brick superstructure and a vault, seemingly rather one structure per tomb<sup>7</sup> than a series of rooms like in other parts of the site.<sup>8</sup> It also remains unclear at this point which parts of these tombs—if any—were visible above ground at the time of burial as here no stelae were found, only one fragmented limestone offering table (in *unidad estratigráfica* [UE] 242).<sup>9</sup>

The reason for choosing to publish this particular context (UE 248) in full is that it represents one of a series of contexts showing a distinct difference to the ceramic repertoire in terms of fabrics and wares as well as shapes, and probably also percentages of different shapes to the pottery corpus known so far from Herakleopolis.<sup>10</sup> Whilst some of the material is definitely reminiscent of a late Old Kingdom pottery shape corpus as it is found, for example, at West Saqqara<sup>11</sup> as a convenient and spatially close reference point, some show clear affinities to the now quite well-known material of “later First Intermediate Period/early Middle Kingdom” as previously defined.<sup>12</sup> It seems relevant, for a change, not to present a typological study of several similar

5. A comprehensive report on the excavation, the stratigraphy, and the findings of Sector 15 by Carmen Pérez Díe, Antonio Gómez Laguna and the author is in preparation. See also BADER, GÓMEZ LAGUNA, forthcoming, which represents Part I of this article.

6. Cf. BADER 2009b; BADER 2011; BADER 2012a; BADER 2012b; BADER, forthcoming.

7. Excavated by A. Gómez Laguna (unpublished report). See also BADER, GÓMEZ LAGUNA, forthcoming.

8. Cf. PÉREZ DÍE 2005b, fig. 20 = BADER 2009b, fig. 1; PÉREZ DÍE 2015, pl. 2.

9. Personal communication by C. Pérez Díe.

10. Cf. BADER 2009b; BADER 2011; BADER 2012a; BADER, forthcoming; BADER, GÓMEZ LAGUNA, forthcoming.

11. Cf. RZEUSKA 2006, *passim*.

12. In BADER 2009b, pp. 37–38; and to a certain extent in LÓPEZ GRANDE et al. 1995, pp. 41–54.

contexts but to describe and show one larger find assemblage in greater detail. This presentation is intended to demonstrate the combination of rim variants from the same context at Herakleopolis Magna in one of the hitherto earliest phases found at the site. Of course, as the excavations were not finished in this sector but were disrupted by the events of the 2011 revolution the conclusions reached here must remain preliminary until, eventually, exploration can be continued.

Stratigraphic unit UE 248 (figs. 2–8) belongs to Phase III and was excavated in 2008. It is sealed on the top by the construction of the phases V–VI structures. UE 248 is a floor of clay/loam and dark brown sand that abuts wall UE 132, in Area 135 in Sector 15 (fig. 1a–b). It was only 6 cm thick on average (6.42 m to 6.48 m) and represents the last moment of use of the patio/space associated with the great tombs of the Sector 15, Phase III. It is further characterised by the large number of ceramics it contains. The deposit is inside the large “patio” or space between the tombs of the First Intermediate Period. For the construction of the individual phases V and VI graves, this UE 248 fill was levelled to form a floor (UE 262 Floor).<sup>13</sup> This context (UE 248) is particularly interesting in combination with the stratigraphically earlier pottery from phases I and II in this same Sector 15.<sup>14</sup>

## Ceramic material of stratigraphic unit UE 248

In the following the pottery found in stratigraphic unit UE 248 will be discussed firstly by fabric classification<sup>15</sup> and then by morphological shape with some of the key *comparanda* primarily centred on sites in the immediate vicinity of Herakleopolis Magna, because synchronisation with pottery from more distant sites remains problematic due to different regional developments in this period.<sup>16</sup>

13. I would like to thank A. Gómez Laguna for his painstakingly detailed analysis of the stratigraphy of Sector 15, his cooperation, and the explanations of the stratigraphy for this article.

14. UE 264, Phase I, and UE 241, Phase II, will be published in BADER, GÓMEZ LAGUNA, forthcoming. See the aforementioned publication for a more in-depth explanation of the phases and the stratigraphy.

15. The fabric system at Herakleopolis Magna follows largely the Vienna system (NORDSTRÖM, BOURRIAU 1993), but some adaptations were made due to the chronological period being dealt with here.

16. Some similarities in general shape can be found as far south as Elephantine (see RAUE 2020), and a few of those pottery examples are mentioned here, although they are not considered to be exactly the same in shape. No comment can be made about the similarity of the fabrics used, because there is no standardised sample collection published to which the Herakleopolis material could have been compared to. The fabric descriptions of the vessel types at Elephantine suggest a differential use of fabrics to Herakleopolis Magna on numerous occasions. Considering the abundance of mica on the surface of pottery of later date at Elephantine, which strongly suggests a local production process, it would be interesting to know if the same holds true for the material presented in RAUE 2020.

The pottery from stratigraphic unit UE 248 is more varied in terms of its type spectrum than that of UE 264 from Phase I and UE 241 from Phase II.<sup>17</sup> Whilst part of the repertoire seems to represent the same range of fabrics and general shapes, some appear in addition, while others seem to peter out. Of course, this may be chance within these singular contexts and needs further corroboration by analysing more material excavated from these phases. Thus, conclusions reached here need to be considered still preliminary.

### ***Nile clay fabrics: fine wares***

The pottery presented in this group may be addressed as “table ware”, because it is thin walled, very well executed and contains open vessel types such as plates, dishes, and bowls. Most probably they were used for the serving/consumption of food, either liquid or solid. Whether these fragments, none of which could be reconstructed to a complete profile, were used in a funerary feast, belonged to the original grave goods of nearby (robbed?) tombs, votive offerings or represent fragments of a re-deposition of settlement refuse, remains unclear at the moment.

### **Nile “A”**

This ware group is almost entirely represented by carinated dishes/bowls of the so-called “Maidum ware” (fig. 2a–f).<sup>18</sup> The dishes/bowls show a short carination close to the orifice plain, which may have been created by rolling the rim outwards and sometimes, there is an incised line at the bottom of this turn-over. The red slip shows sometimes an orange tinge, which may result from surface erosion of a dark red slip, which also occurs in other examples. Unfortunately, only rim fragments were found in this context, but one (fig. 2e) was a little better preserved, so that it seems to be quite certain that a slightly deeper form was present. This example might even have had a flattened base. Interestingly also, a sherd (fig. 2f) possibly belonging to the base

17. See BADER, GÓMEZ LAGUNA, forthcoming.

18. Parallels for Figure 2a and Figure 2b at Elephantine: RAUE 2020, respectively p. 133, 225000, Z 2943, Formation D1–D2 (“second half of 5th to early 6th Dynasty”), but the specimen was made from Upper Egyptian marl clay; and p. 107, 210800, Z 2994 (not the same though), Formation D2–D5 (“late 5th Dynasty to First Intermediate Period”). Parallel for Figure 2c: OP DE BEECK 2004, fig. 3.40, dated to the 6th Dynasty. Most of the morphological forms can be found in Ayn Asil: LE PROVOST 2017, figs. 2–5, all dating towards the late Old Kingdom and perhaps into the First Intermediate Period (parallel for Figure 2b: fig. 4.5).

of a stand was found. This interpretation is based on the observation of a polished red rim on the interior and the red slipped and polished exterior surface, at least as far as it was preserved. Thus, the sherd seems to belong to a stand rather than a bowl although the diameter is quite wide.

## Nile B1

The pottery assigned to this fabric group, also very finely processed with very few inclusions such as the odd quartz particle or small organic inclusion, shows the same kind of surface treatment as the previous fabric/ware group, although the surface colour of the slip is more frequently of a deep dark red and is less often found with an orange tinge (less erosion?). Very shallow plates occur rarely comprising vessels with an out-turned (fig. 2g)<sup>19</sup> or in-turned lip (fig. 2h).<sup>20</sup> The variation within the carinated dishes/bowls is wide, and in subtle ways each one is comparatively short with a low “shoulder” compared to earlier forms.<sup>21</sup> The same holds true for pots from Ayn Asil.<sup>22</sup> Note also that it was only rarely possible to type rim sherds to an existing drawing within this context as these rim profiles are very individual and sometimes irregular. A feature worth mentioning is seen in the fragment shown on Figure 2i, where the “carination” sits very high up the body almost directly under the rim indicated by a physical incision.<sup>23</sup> The fragment on Figure 2l is similar to a piece from Elephantine occurring in Formation D2–4 (“late 5th Dynasty to late 6th Dynasty”) from a Nile clay fabric that was not further specified. Moreover, the deep groove below the rim is lacking there.<sup>24</sup>

19. Due to the size of the rim sherd, the identification of the type is very difficult. Perhaps it is similar to West Saqqara example: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 238–239, 411, pl. 98.485, Form 141, dated to phases I–II (reigns of Teti to Merenre).

20. Parallel at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, p. 105, 405, pl. 84.387, Forms 210–211, dated to Phase IV (second half of the reign of Pepi II to terminal Old Kingdom, “7th–8th Dynasty”).

21. SEIDLMEYER 2005, pp. 285–286, fig. 1. See also EDEL 2008, vol. 1, p. 154, fig. 273/480, tomb QH 25/26 in fill of shaft.

22. LE PROVOST 2017, figs. 2–5, late Old Kingdom in three different qualities (p. 187).

23. Parallel at Herakleopolis Magna: LÓPEZ GRANDE et al. 1995, pl. 13c–d. At West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 232–233, 410, pl. 95.465, Form 132, Nile B1 with red slip, dated to phases III–IV (first half of the reign of Pepi II to terminal Old Kingdom). At Ashmunein: SPENCER 1993, Type 1.3.35, pl. 102.35. At Ayn Asil: SOUKIASSIAN et al. 2002, fig. 281; LE PROVOST 2017, fig. 7.1, dated to the end of the reign of Pepi II or the beginning of the First Intermediate Period. At Qubbet el-Hawa: EDEL 2008, vol. 1, p. 144, fig. 252/445, from tomb QH 25/26 (Pepi II), but not *in situ*.

24. RAUE 2020, p. 135, 226100, Z 2195, Nile clay, uncoated and polished.





Fig. 1a. Photo of UE 248. © Herakleopolis Magna Project, A. Gómez Laguna.

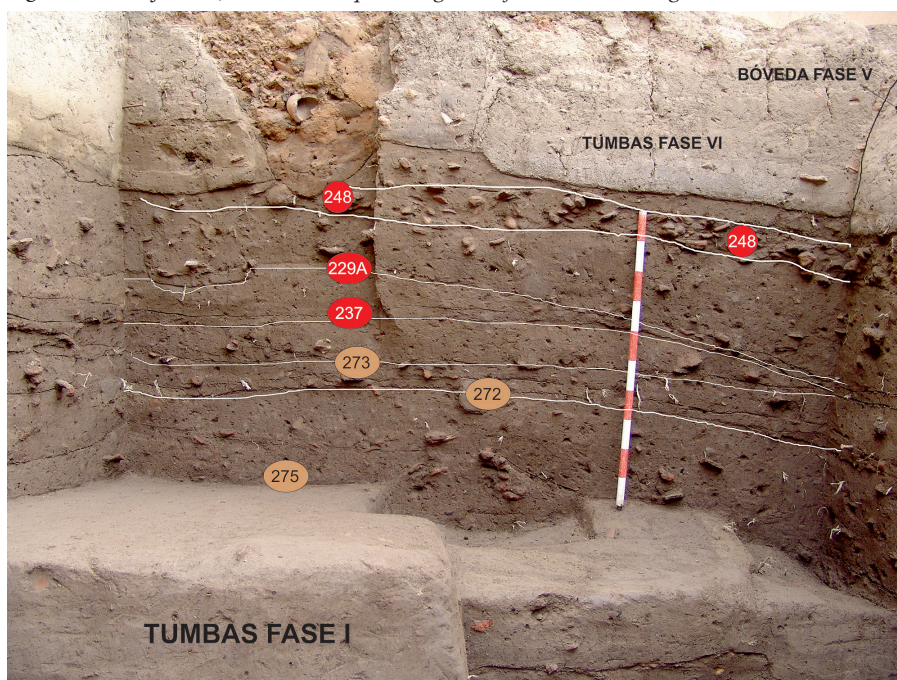


Fig. 1b. Photo of UE 248. © Herakleopolis Magna Project, A. Gómez Laguna.

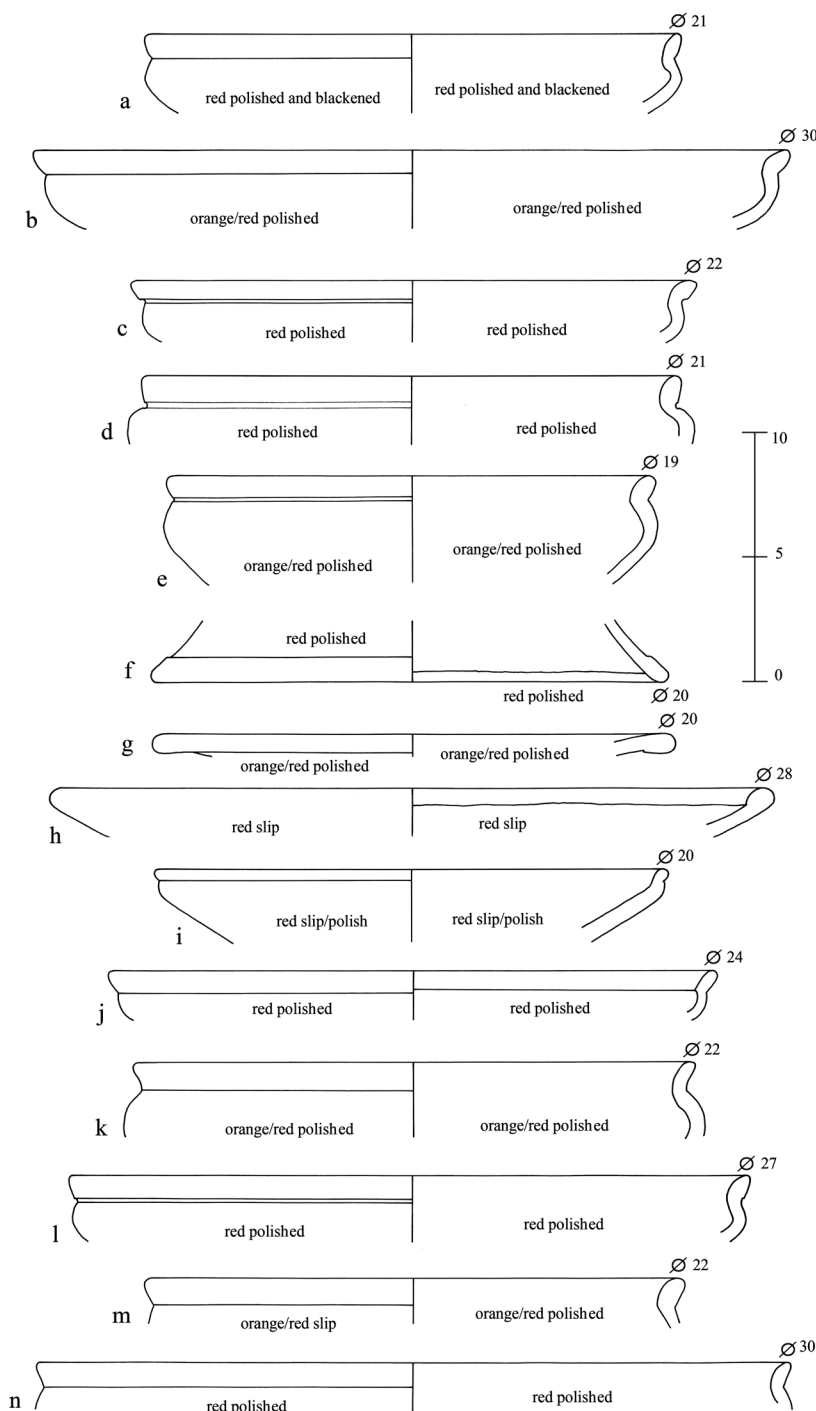


Fig. 2. Stratigraphic Unit 248: a–f: Nile A; g–n: Nile Br.

a. HM08 b.39, Sherd 5, Nile A; b. HM08 b.39, Sherd 2, Nile A; c. HM08 b.39, Sherd 7, Nile A; d. HM08 b.39, Sherd 4, Nile A; e. HM08 b.39, Sherd 1, Nile A; f. HM08 b.39, Sherd 48, Nile A; g. HM08 b.39, Sherd 45, Nile Br; h. HM08 b.39, Sherd 42, Nile Br; i. HM08 b.39, Sherd 26, Nile Br; j. HM08 b.35, Sherd 2, Nile Br; k. HM08 b.35, Sherd 1, Nile Br; l. HM08 b.39, Sherd 6, Nile Br; m. HM08 b.39, Sherd 8, Nile Br; n. HM08 b.39, Sherd 11, Nile Br.



The range in depth is here also different. It seemed important to show all rim variants as they were found together (figs. 2j–n, 3a–j),<sup>25</sup> because over time detailed publication of other sites may lead to a more informed overview of the inner workings of workshops and working traditions in a morphological sense. Overall, the similarity to bowls (“*Wulstrandschalen*”) dating to the 6th Dynasty from Elephantine seems valid, where the carination is also very close to the orifice plain of the vessel and goes from quite shallow (e.g. fig. 3f)<sup>26</sup> to moderately deep (fig. 3d).<sup>27</sup> Caution has to be applied though because again no complete profile was found in this ware group. Two more unusual shapes are also noteworthy in this group: Figure 3l represents most probably a restricted basin (or a *smw* jar?),<sup>28</sup> whilst Figure 3m may belong to a beaker or carinated cup.<sup>29</sup>

## Nile B2

The Nile B2 fabric group contains a greater shape variation within the ceramic repertoire, but again mainly comprising open forms. Simple direct rims, more or less out-turned or flaring (fig. 4c–d), occur as well as dishes or bowls with in-turned rims (fig. 4e) and deeper forms, probably bowls, with a variety of out-turned and thickened lips (fig. 4f–g). The slightly rougher ware group Nile B2 very rarely includes (fig. 4j) so-called “*Maidum Bowls*” proper (i.e., very thin walled and highly fired)

25. Parallel for Figure 2l at Dendera: MARCHAND 2004, fig. 22.17, Phase 2, First Intermediate Period. At Ayn Asil: LE PROVOST 2017, fig. 3.3. At Edfu: LE PROVOST 2015, figs. 1, 2.9–11, late Old Kingdom, Nile B1–B2. Parallel for Figure 3a at Ayn Asil: LE PROVOST 2017, fig. 4.5. Parallel for Figure 3j from the 11th Dynasty: OP DE BEECK 2004, fig. 3.43.

26. Cf. EDEL 2008, vol. 2, p. 1917, fig. 140, tomb 207. For Figure 3a–b, see RAUE 2020, p. 133, 225100, Z 2943, upper Egyptian marl clay, Formation D1–D2 (“second half of 5th to early 6th Dynasty”). For Figure 3b: RAUE 2020, p. 135, 226000, no Z number, second row, second from the left, Nile clay fabric, uncoated and polished, Formation D2–D4 (“late 5th to late 6th Dynasty”). For Figure 3d (similar but not the same carination and upper Egyptian marl clay): RAUE 2020, p. 133, 225100, Z 3661, Formation D1–D2 (“second half of 5th to early 6th Dynasty”). For Figure 3f (similar but much smaller): RAUE 2020, p. 148, 232300, Nile clay fabric, uncoated with “selfslip”, Formation D1–D3 (“second half of 5th to mid-6th Dynasty”). For Figure 3j (similar): RAUE 2020, p. 137, 228200, ZA 1472, Nile clay fabric, uncoated and polished, Formation D4–D5 (“mid to late 6th Dynasty”).

27. Parallel at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 294–295, 416, pl. 126.636, Form 179, Nile A, dated to phases III–IV (first half of the reign of Pepi II to terminal Old Kingdom).

28. Possible parallel: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 252–253, 413, pl. 105.538, Form 154, Nile A with red slip, dated to phases III–IV (first half of the reign of Pepi II to terminal Old Kingdom).

29. Cf. BÁRTA 2006, p. 319, Type XXIV.Z. A similar example at Elephantine: RAUE 2020, p. 301, 624700, Nile clay fabric, red slipped and polished, Formation D3–D4 (“early to late 6th Dynasty”).

but more other carinated dishes or bowls with a direct rim and low carination (fig. 4h).<sup>30</sup> Another type of carinated bowl that seems to exist in considerable variation is thicker walled and shows a more rounded rim (fig. 4i, k–l)<sup>31</sup> and variable depth. Also note that the red slip here very rarely shows an orange tinge in this ware group (perhaps due to less severe erosion, differential pigment use, or different firing temperature).

## Nile D

Nile D fabric is only represented very rarely in this context (see Chart 1). Again, a restricted basin with rolled and flattened rim and incised horizontal lines (fig. 4n) can be found as well as an open bowl with a horizontal incision close to the rim (fig. 4m). Part of an offering stand was also found (fig. 4b).

## *Nile clay fabrics: medium to coarse wares*

This Nile clay fabric group, slightly coarser than Nile B2 but not quite as coarse as Nile C in the Vienna system, is also represented in the context of UE 248, mostly adding to the open vessel repertoire with one base and at least one ring stand. I consider those the rougher end of the Nile B2 fabric group, not the least because the vessel type repertoire partly overlaps.<sup>32</sup>

30. A similar but deeper example at Elephantine: RAUE 2020, p. 87, 171200, drawing without number, Nile clay fabric, not polished, Formation D1–D2 (“second half of 5th to early 6th Dynasty”).

31. Approximate parallel for Figure 4i at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 232–233, 410, pl. 95.466, Form 132, Nile B1, dated to phases III–IV (first half of the reign of Pepi II to terminal Old Kingdom). Parallel for Figure 4k: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 252–253, 413, pl. 105.537, Form 154, Nile B1, dated to phases III–IV (first half of the reign of Pepi II to terminal Old Kingdom).

32. Unfortunately, the definition of Nile clay fabrics seems to have become a bit diverse as there was never an original standard fabric sample set travelling across Egypt. Thus, in certain periods the finest Nile clay fabric existing seems to have been considered Nile B1, the next finer one Nile B2 and so on, although they might not have had a direct relation to the fabrics as defined in NORDSTRÖM, BOURRIAU 1993 based on their samples of sherds of Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period.

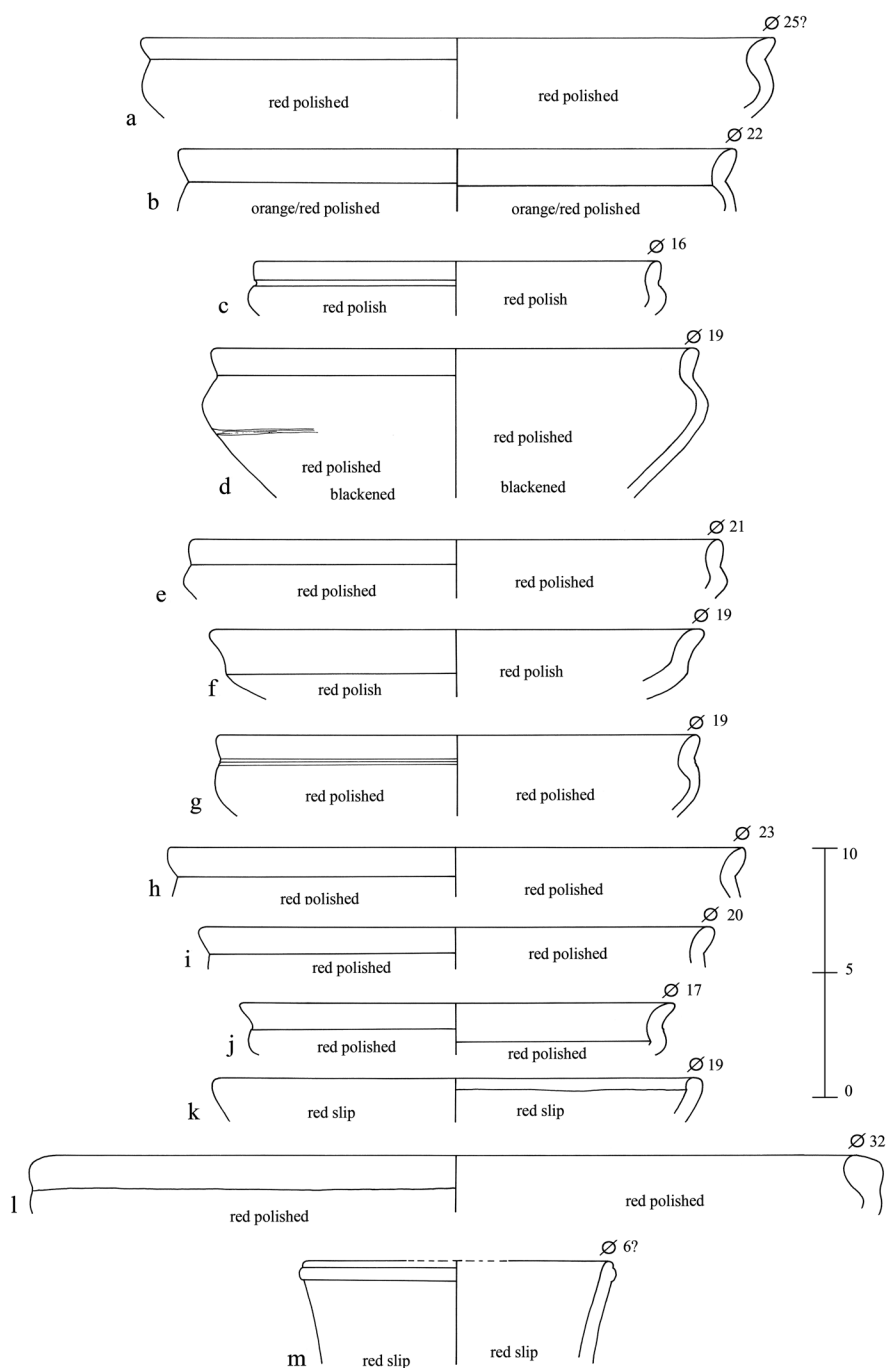


Fig. 3. Stratigraphic Unit 248: a-m: Nile Br fabric.

a. HM08 b.39, Sherd 13, Nile Br; b. HM08 b.39, Sherd 3, Nile Br; c. HM08 b.39, Sherd 10, Nile Br; d. HM08 b.39, Sherd 9, Nile Br; e. HM08 b.39, Sherd 14, Nile Br; f. HM08 b.39, Sherd 15, Nile Br; g. HM08 b.39, Sherd 16, Nile Br; h. HM08 b.39, Sherd 18, Nile Br; i. HM08 b.39, Sherd 19, Nile Br; j. HM08 b.39, Sherd 20, Nile Br; k. HM08 b.39, Sherd 47, Nile Br; l. HM08 b.39, Sherd 46, Nile Br; m. HM08 b.39, Sherd 37, Nile Br.

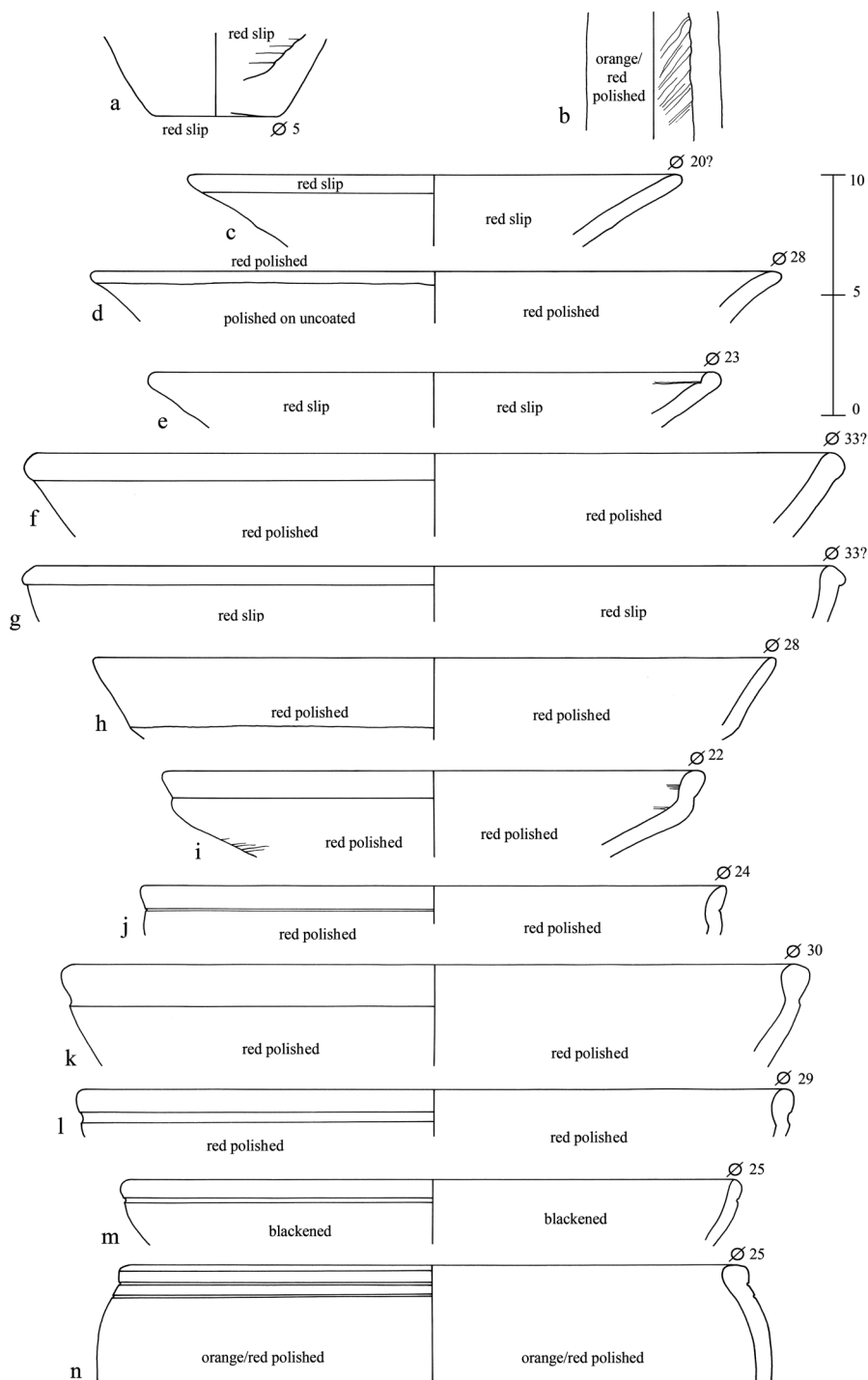


Fig. 4. Stratigraphic Unit 248: a, c–l: Nile B2; b, m–n: Nile D.  
a. HM08 b.40, Sherd 22, Nile B2; b. HM08 b.39, Sherd 60, Nile D; c. HM08 b.35, Sherd 7, Nile B2;  
d. HM08 b.39, Sherd 41, Nile B2; e. HM08 b.35, Sherd 3, Nile B2; f. HM08 b.35, Sherd 12, Nile B2;  
g. HM08 b.39, Sherd 29, Nile B2; h. HM08 b.39, Sherd 40, Nile B2; i. HM08 b.39, Sherd 21, Nile B2;  
j. HM08 b.39, Sherd 17, Nile B2; k. HM08 b.39, Sherd 23, Nile B2; l. HM08 b.39, Sherd 27, Nile B2;  
m. HM08 b.39, Sherd 22, Nile D; n. HM08 b.35, Sherd 5, Nile D.

## Nile B2/C1

The vessel shape corpus of the slightly coarser fabric comprises dishes with in-turned rim (fig. 5a),<sup>33</sup> a carinated bowl type with noticeably thicker walls and rounded rim (fig. 5b)<sup>34</sup> as well as bases of a presumably ovoid jar or bottle type (fig. 5c–d) and a rim of such a vessel (fig. 5e). All of these fragments show only a moderately dark red slip but were not polished.

## Nile C1

Beside dishes with direct out-turned rim (fig. 5f) and an irregular, carelessly made example (fig. 5g) that may, in fact, be a lid (with a deep groove on the interior), a dish fragment with undulating rim was found (fig. 5h). It is not clear from the preserved size of the fragment if it were regularly undulating or if it had a smaller number of in-turned lobes/pouring spouts similar to Sedment type Group 38<sup>35</sup> or even only one like some vessels found at Saqqara.<sup>36</sup> A shallow shape with trimmed rolled rim (fig. 5i) also made its appearance, whilst deeper carinated bowls with a carination situated lower down and trimmed rolled rims were met more frequently (fig. 5j–l).<sup>37</sup> These bowls, if indeed they belong to the same type, occur with a red slip some of them polished afterwards and some not. Presumably to another type belong the

33. A parallel type at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 210–211, 405, pl. 84.385, Form 105, Nile B1, dated to Phase IV (second half of the reign of Pepi II to terminal Old Kingdom). Compare at Elephantine: RAUE 2020, p. 174, 281200, Nile clay fabrics, red slipped and polished, Formation D3–D4 (“mid to late 6th Dynasty”). Note that the example from Herakleopolis was not polished.

34. A parallel at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 252–253, 413, pl. 105.531, Form 153, Nile B1, dated to Phase I (reign of Teti to Userkare). A similar example was found at Elephantine: Raue 2020, p. 168, 27100, cooking bowl, Z 23229, Nile clay fabric, Formation D2–D4 (“late 5th/early 6th to late 6th Dynasty”). The Herakleopolis example does not show any smoke blackening.

35. PETRIE, BRUNTON 1924, pl. XXX.

36. Cf. RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 276–291, 415–416, types 170–175, Nile B1 and B2, phases I–IV (reign of Teti to terminal Old Kingdom).

37. Parallel for Figure 5l at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 268–269, 414–415, pl. 113.577–579, Form 166A, but Nile B1 and red slipped, dated to Phase I (reign of Teti to Userkare—“Bent-sided bowl”); see also FALTINGS 1998, fig. 3a–b, esp. nos. 7–14, 19–20, for existing variation. At Elephantine somewhat similar examples: RAUE 2020, p. 166, 261340, Nile clay fabrics, Formation D1–D3 (“second half of 5th to mid-6th Dynasty”); these have been used for cooking there and remained unpolished. There is a possibility that the polishing was obliterated by the firing temperature (personal communication by Vera and Ludwig Albstin, summer 2021).

fragments on Figure 6a–c<sup>38</sup> and Figure 6d–e. They also show a steep stance and partly bear rolled rims, which were not trimmed. One thick walled carinated dish/bowl sports the carination quite high up (fig. 6f). It was finished with a red slip. Finally, a ring stand base needs to be mentioned (fig. 6h), which represents an exceedingly rare type at Herakleopolis Magna. There can be no doubt in the identification because the fragment shows the typical trimming applied to stands on the interior. Whether the rim fragment (fig. 6g) really belongs with the base fragment or to a different type of closed vessel cannot be ascertained until a complete profile has been found. The rim of a smoke blackened and polished closed vessel type (fig. 6i) and the eroded base of a presumably closed shape (fig. 6j) also belong to this fabric group.

### ***Nile clay fabrics: coarse wares***

Coarse wares are represented by the Nile C2 fabric,<sup>39</sup> although sometimes the coarseness of the straw might justify labels like Nile “C3” or even “C4”. Further observations of this material might lead to the introduction of such terms into the recording system at Herakleopolis for the pottery of these, and similar contexts should prove to be chronologically relevant. This coarseness is paralleled in Old Kingdom pottery.<sup>40</sup>

38. Close parallels for Figure 6a–b at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 242–243, 412, pl. 100.505, Form 145, but Nile B1, not datable. Similar examples for Figure 6b at Elephantine: RAUE 2020, p. 166, 261340, Nile clay fabrics, Formation D1–D3 (“second half of 5th to mid-6th Dynasty”).

39. As defined by fabric classification at Tell el-Daba: BIETAK 1991, pp. 325–326.

40. Personal communication by Stan Hendrickx in April 2019 during work on drill core pottery at Deir el-Bersha.

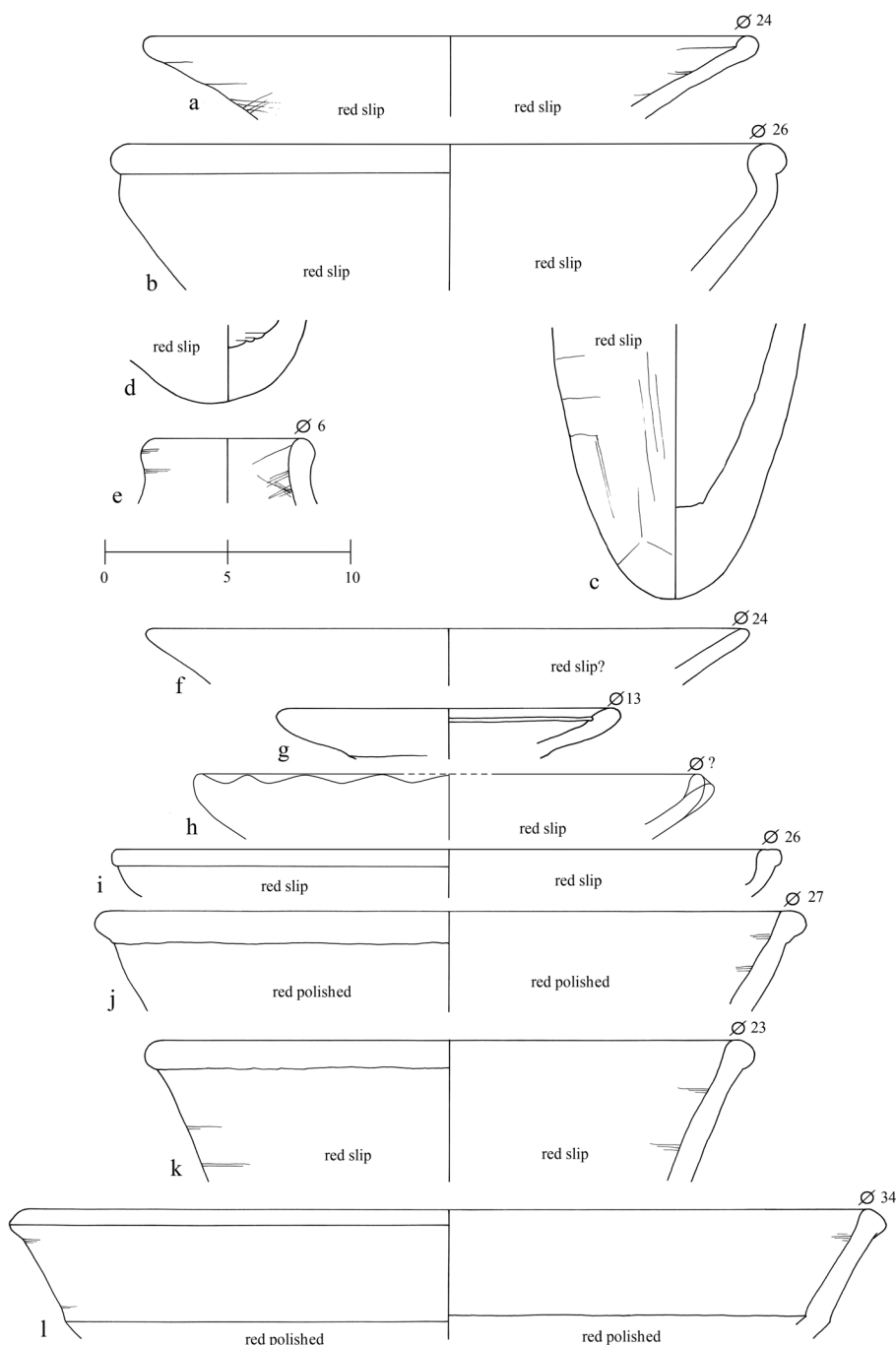


Fig. 5. Stratigraphic Unit 248: a–e: Nile B2/Cr; f–l: Nile Cr.

a. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 36, Nile B2/Cr; b. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 24, Nile B2/Cr; c. HMo8 b.40, Sherd 25, Nile B2/Cr; d. HMo8 b.40, Sherd 28, Nile B2/Cr; e. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 55, Nile B2/Cr; f. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 43, Nile Cr; g. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 44, Nile Cr; h. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 49, Nile Cr; i. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 28, Nile Cr; j. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 31, Nile Cr; k. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 30, Nile Cr; l. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 34, Nile Cr.

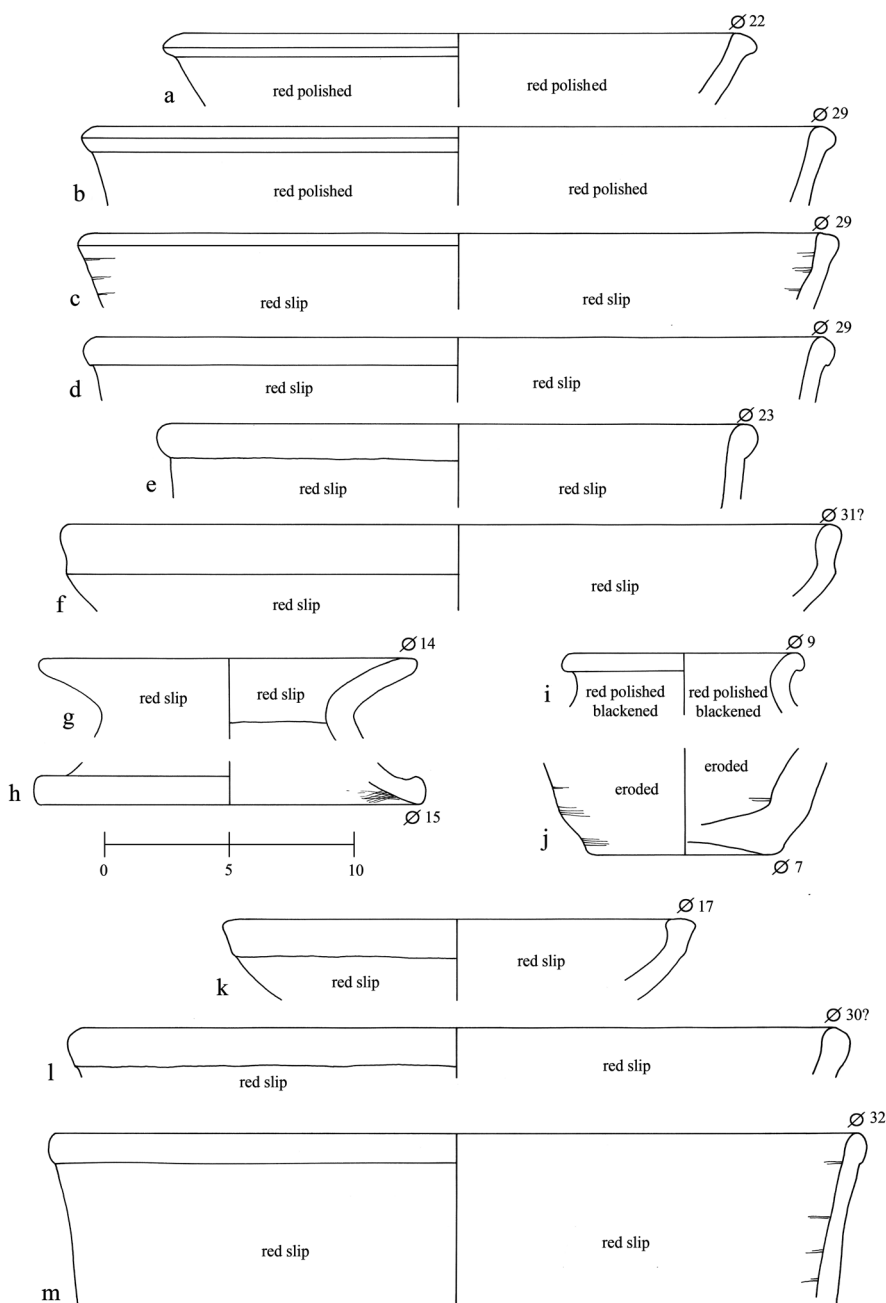


Fig. 6. Stratigraphic Unit 248: a–j: Nile C1; k–m: Nile C2.

a. HM08 b.35, Sherd 4, Nile C1; b. HM08 b.35, Sherd 6, Nile C1; c. HM08 b.39, Sherd 38, Nile C1; d. HM08 b.39, Sherd 53, Nile C1; e. HM08 b.39, Sherd 50, Nile C1; f. HM08 b.39, Sherd 25, Nile C1; g. HM08 b.39, Sherd 52, Nile C1; h. HM08 b.39, Sherd 54, Nile C1; i. HM08 b.35, Sherd 8, Nile C1; j. HM08 b.40, Sherd 21, Nile C1; k. HM08 b.39, Sherd 33, Nile C2; l. HM08 b.39, Sherd 39, Nile C2; m. HM08 b.39, Sherd 32, Nile C2.



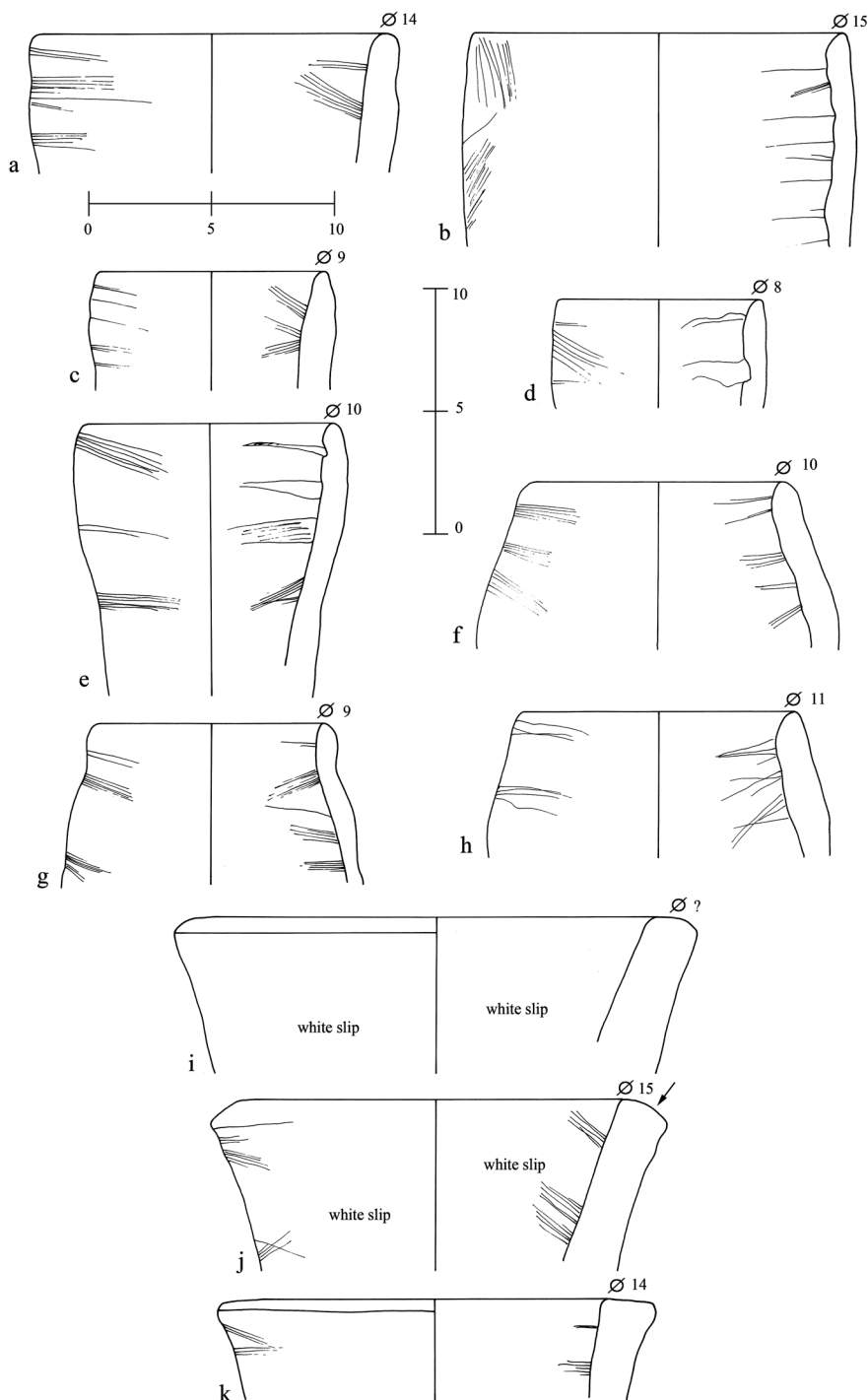


Fig. 7. Stratigraphic Unit 248: all Nile C2.

a. HM08 b.40, Sherd 16, Nile C2; b. HM08 b.40, Sherd 19, Nile C2; c. HM08 b.40, Sherd 18, Nile C2; d. HM08 b.39, Sherd 57, Nile C2; e. HM08 b.35, Sherd 9, Nile C2; f. HM09 b.40, Sherd 15, Nile C2; g. HM08 b.35, Sherd 10, Nile C2; h. HM08 b.39, Sherd 56, Nile C2; i. HM08 b.35, Sherd 14, Nile C2; j. HM08 b.40, Sherd 7, Nile C2; k. HM08 b.40, Sherd 8, Nile C2.

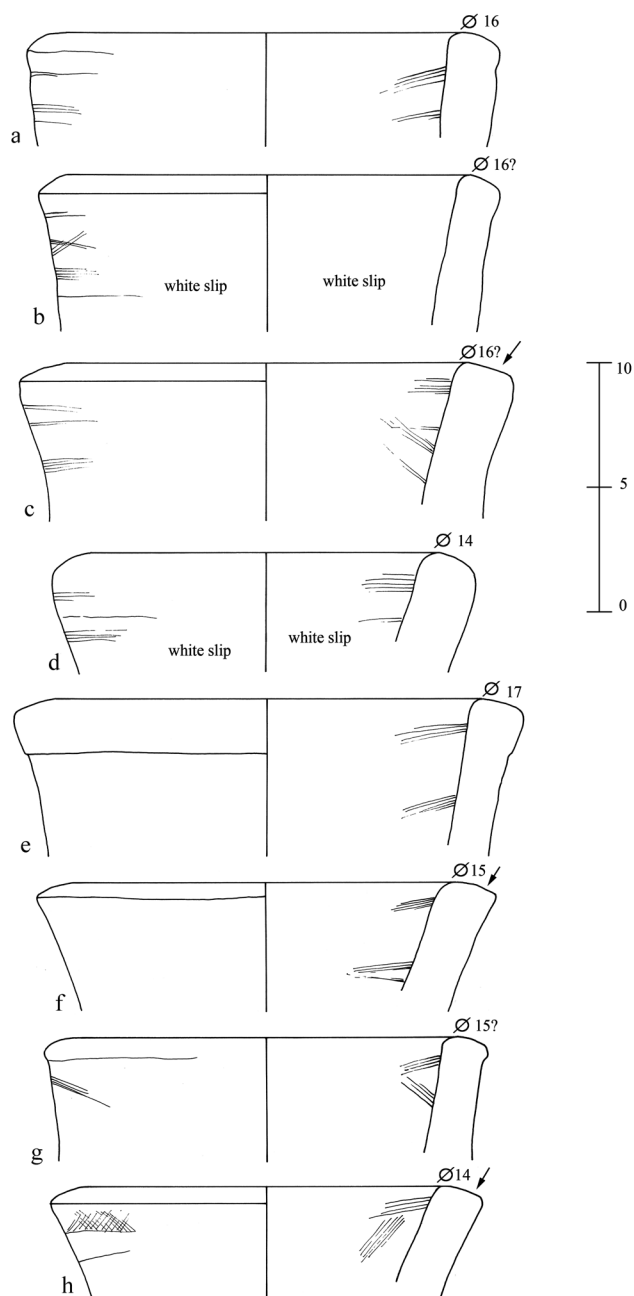


Fig. 8. Stratigraphic Unit 248: all Nile C2.

a. HM08 b.40, Sherd 9, Nile C2; b. HM08 b.40, Sherd 10, Nile C2; c. HM08 b.40, Sherd 11, Nile C2; d. HM08 b.40, Sherd 13, Nile C2; e. HM08 b.40, Sherd 12, Nile C2; f. HM08 b.40, Sherd 1, Nile C2; g. HM08 b.40, Sherd 5, Nile C2; h. HM08 b.40, Sherd 6, Nile C2.

## Nile C2

A shallow dish seems to be rather unusual for the shape repertoire of the Nile C2 fabric (fig. 6k). Perhaps an offering stand is represented here. Two deep basins of large size, with respectively thickened and rolled rims, round off the repertoire (fig. 6l–m). A handmade beaker-like vessel shape is also represented in this fabric group (fig. 7a–b) with a rim diameter of 14 to 15 cm. These uncoated fragments are on the one hand different from the handmade beakers frequently found in the First Intermediate Period/early Middle Kingdom phase of Herakleopolis<sup>41</sup> but on the other hand also need to be distinguished from a group of more irregularly shaped rim fragments that may belong to the late Old Kingdom “beer jar”<sup>42</sup> type (fig. 7c–h). Their rim diameters range from 8 to 11 cm and they show a variety of stances: straight and irregular but roughly direct rims (fig. 7c–d),<sup>43</sup> slightly turned inwards (fig. 7f, h),<sup>44</sup> tapering (fig. 7e), and straight at first and then becoming wider towards the maximum width of the vessel (fig. 7g).<sup>45</sup> For these fragments parallels can be found in West Saqqara, but again it is very difficult to identify any of these types with certainty by means of fragmentary material. Only a general trend can be ascertained.

A range of different fragments suggesting a variety of wide bread moulds was also found in this context (figs. 7i–k, 8a–h).<sup>46</sup> These fragments, none of them sufficiently preserved to reconstruct the complete profile, range in diameter from 14 to 17 cm.

41. Cf. BADER 2009b, fig. 4c–d. See also LÓPEZ GRANDE et al. 1995, pl. 10a–b, although the manufacturing technique is not indicated in the drawings.

42. See FALTINGS 1998, fig. 16a–i for the wide variation of such vessels. There are a few suitable parallels for our corpus, such as nos. 72–73, 84, 88–89, 101, 119, 121, 151, 184–200.

43. A vague parallel for Figure 7d: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 68–69, 383, pl. 13.17, Form 3, dated to Phase II (reign of Pepi I to Merenre).

44. Parallels for Figure 7f: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 66–67, 387, pl. 12.16, Form 2, dated to Phase I or Phase IV; MALYKH 2019, p. 82, fig. 5.14/60/107, probably late Old Kingdom; RAUE 2020, p. 249, 511600, Z 3221, Nile clay fabrics (but seemingly finer at Elephantine), Formation B8–C1 (“late 2nd to first half of 3rd Dynasty”). Similar pieces to Figure 7h: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 72–73, 387, pl. 15.26, Form 4, dated to Phase IV (second half of the reign of Pepi II to terminal Old Kingdom), but also maybe pp. 66–67, 382–383, pl. 12.16, Form 2 or 11, dated to Phase I (reign of Teti to Userkare).

45. Possible parallels: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 66–67, 387, pl. 12.16, Form 2, dated to Phase I (reign of Teti to Userkare). Somewhat similar pottery at Elephantine: RAUE 2020, p. 247, 511400, Z 2282, Nile clay fabrics, but wider at the bottom, Formation C4–D1 (“mid/late 4th to second half of 5th Dynasty”). It remains unclear if the “type” is really the same, as at Herakleopolis no complete profile of such vessels could be reconstructed and these handmade vessels are quite individual.

46. Cf. JACQUET-GORDON 1981 for the overall typology. Parallel for Figure 7j at Abusir: BÁRTA 2006, p. 324, Type LII.CX. Parallel type for Figure 8a at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 332–333, 422, pl. 145.734–738, Form 208, dated to Phase III (first half of the reign of Pepi II). For a recent overview, see MARCHAND 2017, pp. 223–227.

Their walls are quite thick, while the rims are often square and even trimmed with a tool at an oblique angle on top of the rim. Some examples were white slipped on the interior and exterior, but hitherto never only on one surface. All the other examples are uncoated. One example shows a slightly rounded rim (fig. 8d).<sup>47</sup> A similar sherd but slightly larger is represented by Figure 9a.<sup>48</sup> Another quite sizeable subgroup is formed by “platters” or perhaps “bread trays” (fig. 9b–g), three of which were sufficiently preserved to inform about the profile of such vessels. However, it cannot be ascertained whether they were actually oval or totally round, due to their rough manufacture and fragmentary preservation.<sup>49</sup> The first one is a very flat platter or tray (fig. 9b) with not much of a vessel wall. Thus, it can be assumed that this “vessel”, roughly hand-formed on the ground as the underside of the base demonstrates, was not used to contain anything liquid due to the lowness of its walls. It could have been used to prepare or hold flat bread for example or some similarly solid food stuff.<sup>50</sup> The platter shown in Figure 9f<sup>51</sup> may well represent the same type as the other rim fragments (fig. 9c–e).<sup>52</sup> Their bases were also formed on the ground but the vessel wall was (possibly coiled &c) turned and even trimmed with a tool on the top edge quite deeply. The last complete profile (fig. 9g) was not trimmed on the top of the rim, and the vessel wall is rather turned inwards but the preservation of the fragment was not very good. The next platter or dish fragment belongs to a group of vessels that can frequently be found in late Old Kingdom contexts, namely shallow plates with a field of tight combing on the interior surface of the everted rim (fig. 9h).<sup>53</sup> Figure 9i represents a large vat or basin with uncoated surface and is seemingly handmade although the rolled rim was thickened (by turning in onto itself).<sup>54</sup> So far a unique

47. The bread moulds published from Ayn Asil may be similar as well: SOUKIASSIAN et al. 2002, fig. 91.297/02, 19–20, 24, fig. 238.1368/31, fig. 327.

48. For the existing variation in the profiles, see FALTINGS 1998, figs. 9–10.

49. Cf. FALTINGS 1998, fig. 6a–b.

50. For a recent overview, see MARCHAND 2017, pp. 227–229.

51. Parallel at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 167–177, 400, pl. 67.281–283, Form 62, dated to Phase III (first half of the reign of Pepi II). At Elephantine similar vessels: RAUE 2020, p. 352, 721300, Formation D2–D5 (“late 5th/early 6th to late 6th Dynasty”).

52. Parallel at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 166–167, 399, pl. 67.254, Form 47, not datable. At Ayn Asil: SOUKIASSIAN et al. 2002, fig. 329.

53. Parallel at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 192–193, 401, pl. 75.330, Form 86, dated to Phase IV (second half of the reign of Pepi II to terminal Old Kingdom); and also maybe pp. 188–189, 401, pl. 73.319, Form 82, not closely datable. At Elephantine (not exactly the same): RAUE 2020, p. 200, 351200, Formation D1–D2 (“second half of 5th to early 6th Dynasty”).

54. Cf. FALTINGS 1998, fig. 11 for a probable kind of vessel from which such a fragment might be derived.

piece is the restricted basin (?), the surface of which was eroded (fig. 10a).<sup>55</sup> Although it has a relatively small diameter of 16 cm the shoulder widens quite considerably towards the maximum diameter, suggesting a large overall shape. The “gutter” on the inside of the rim suggests a resting place for a lid of some sort.<sup>56</sup> The last fragment belonging to this fabric group is the base of a closed vessel (red slip only on the exterior) with a base diameter of 7 cm (fig. 10b).

### *Marl clay fabrics: fine wares*

Marl clay fabrics constitute a minority among the fabrics at Herakleopolis Magna in general, as well as in this particular context (see Chart 1). The range of marl clay fabrics comprises various groups known from the Vienna system<sup>57</sup> but also one, a “sandy” marl, which was unknown when the Vienna system was established.<sup>58</sup> The rim shapes are quite varied, but in the current state of knowledge this should not be over-interpreted at the moment because it is impossible to tell whether the body shapes are also widely different or not. The two rims of closed vessels possibly made from Marl A4 (fig. 10c–d) almost certainly belong to different jar types. To the Marl A4 group belongs the body sherd (fig. 10e) which most probably comes from a small- to medium-size round-based vessel that was coiled (and wheel/turning device turned). Figure 10c may derive from a smallish, globular vessel, whilst it is more difficult to interpret the rim and neck in Figure 10d,<sup>59</sup> which may well have belonged to a larger closed vessel type.

55. Possible parallels at Elephantine: RAUE 2020, p. 334, 671000. Particularly smaller examples are morphologically closer, e.g. Z 3714, Formation B4–C3 (“Nagada IIIc1 to early 4th Dynasty”). Note, however, that the Herakleopolis example does not show a hole (it was not stated whether it was made pre- or post-firing). Thus, it remains unclear if our incomplete sherd can be paralleled to this vessel type particularly due to its early dating.

56. It is well conceivable that the form is similar to that of Dendera in Phase 2: MARCHAND 2004, fig. 72, dated to the First Intermediate Period. Another possibility is the vessel form from Ayn Asil: SOUKIASSIAN et al. 2002, fig. 166.1244/06. See also CZERNY 1999, p. 178, NG130; the example is at least roughly similar, but certainly later.

57. NORDSTRÖM, BOURRIAU 1993.

58. It also looks like this particular fabric did not occur anymore in the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period, the system being ultimately based on sherds of these periods.

59. In Ayn Asil appears similar pottery in the transition from the 6th Dynasty to the First Intermediate Period (personal communication by Valérie Le Provost).

The (early) Marl C fabric group provides the largest range and also numerically the largest part of the marl clay fabric repertoire.<sup>60</sup> However, it still represents only a small part of the overall assemblage (see Chart 1). The closed vessels are in the majority, without the possibility to be more precise, about the overall vessel shapes (fig. 10f–k, m–n, q),<sup>61</sup> Only for Figure 10l, o, and r the possibility exists to reconstruct a pointed marl clay vessel with funnel neck (cf. Type 90d from Sedment).<sup>62</sup> Figure 10m may be reconstructed as a more or less globular jar. It is unusual in that it shows a field of narrow grooves on the shoulder, which is more reminiscent of Nile clay vessel types. This fragment may have parallels at West Saqqara.<sup>63</sup> Figure 10n probably belongs to a type with a broad shoulder. Remarkable here is also the bowl manufactured from Marl C2 with a relatively wide rim diameter. It is possible that this bowl also had a carination lower down the body (fig. 10s). Finally, the painted fragment (fig. 10q) belongs to a probably quite large closed vessel that was handmade and painted with red pigment. The remains of the design may be reminiscent of a floral motif, but this is by no means certain. Unfortunately, neither the stance nor the diameter could be reconstructed. Painted marl clay vessels are better known from the later First Intermediate Period/early Middle Kingdom pottery corpus although these would appear to be smaller overall.<sup>64</sup>

A hitherto unidentified marl clay fabric with abundant mineral particles of sand size was represented in UE 248 (fig. 10t–v). The shapes comprise the neck and base of closed shapes<sup>65</sup> as well as the rim of a restricted bowl or basin. The diameter of that piece could not be measured (fig. 10v).<sup>66</sup>

60. This fabric is characterised by a yellowish-greenish scum, and only exceptionally argillaceous inclusions are visible on the surface of the vessels, which is one of the hallmarks of it; cf. pl. 1d.

61. Possible parallels for Figure 13a at Giza, 4th Dynasty: WODZIŃSKA 2009, p. 235, fig. 11, second pot from the right; WODZIŃSKA 2013, fig. 3, top left. It must remain totally unclear whether the example from Herakleopolis is a remnant of the 4th Dynasty or a development thereof. The first possibility would appear at least unlikely at the moment, because there is not much other supporting evidence for this hypothesis. Figure 10j seems to have parallels at Ayn Asil: personal communication by V. Le Provost.

62. PETRIE, BRUNTON 1924, pl. XXV.

63. RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 126–127, 392, pl. 42.143–144, Form 20A, but made from P60, dating unclear.

64. PETRIE, BRUNTON 1924, pl. XXXIII.74p; BADER 2012c, fig. 8c.

65. Possible parallels for Figure 10f at West Saqqara: RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 132–133, pl. 45.159, Form 22, but made from P60; also pp. 120–121, 390–391, pl. 39.125–126, Form 17B, P60, dating to phases III–IV (first half of the reign of Pepi II to terminal Old Kingdom).

66. A possible reconstruction is suggested by a vessel found in Ayn Asil: SOUKIASSIAN et al. 2002, fig. 354.738/18.

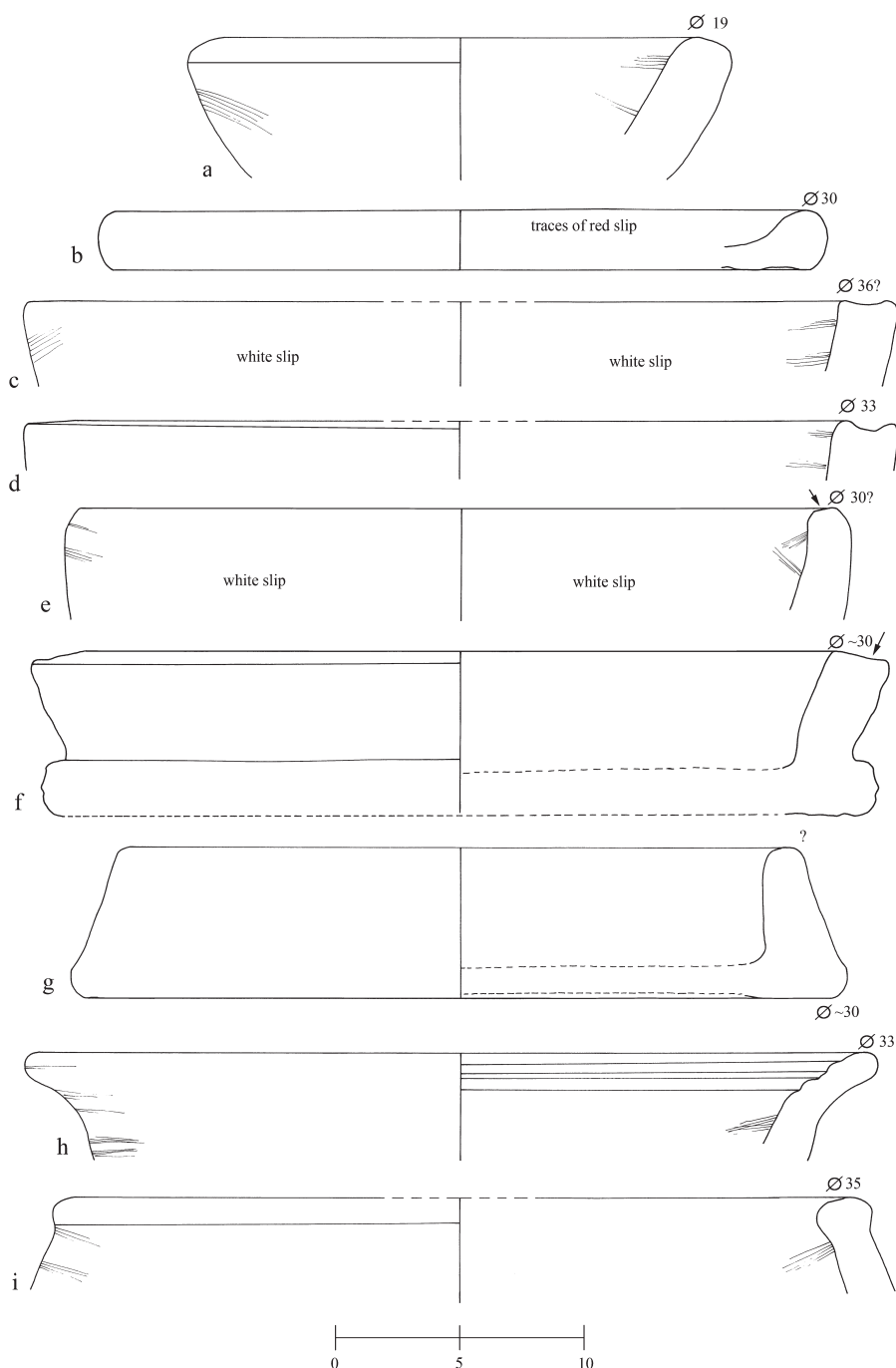


Fig. 9. Stratigraphic Unit 248: all Nile C2.

a. HM08 b.40, Sherd 14, Nile C2; b. HM08 b.35, Sherd 13, Nile C2; c. HM08 b.40, Sherd 2, Nile C2; d. HM08 b.40, Sherd 3, Nile C2; e. HM08 b.40, Sherd 4, Nile C2; f. HM08 b.35, Sherd 15, Nile C2; g. HM08 b.40, Sherd 23, Nile C2; h. HM08 b.40, Sherd 20, Nile C2; i. HM08 b.40, Sherd 17, Nile C2.

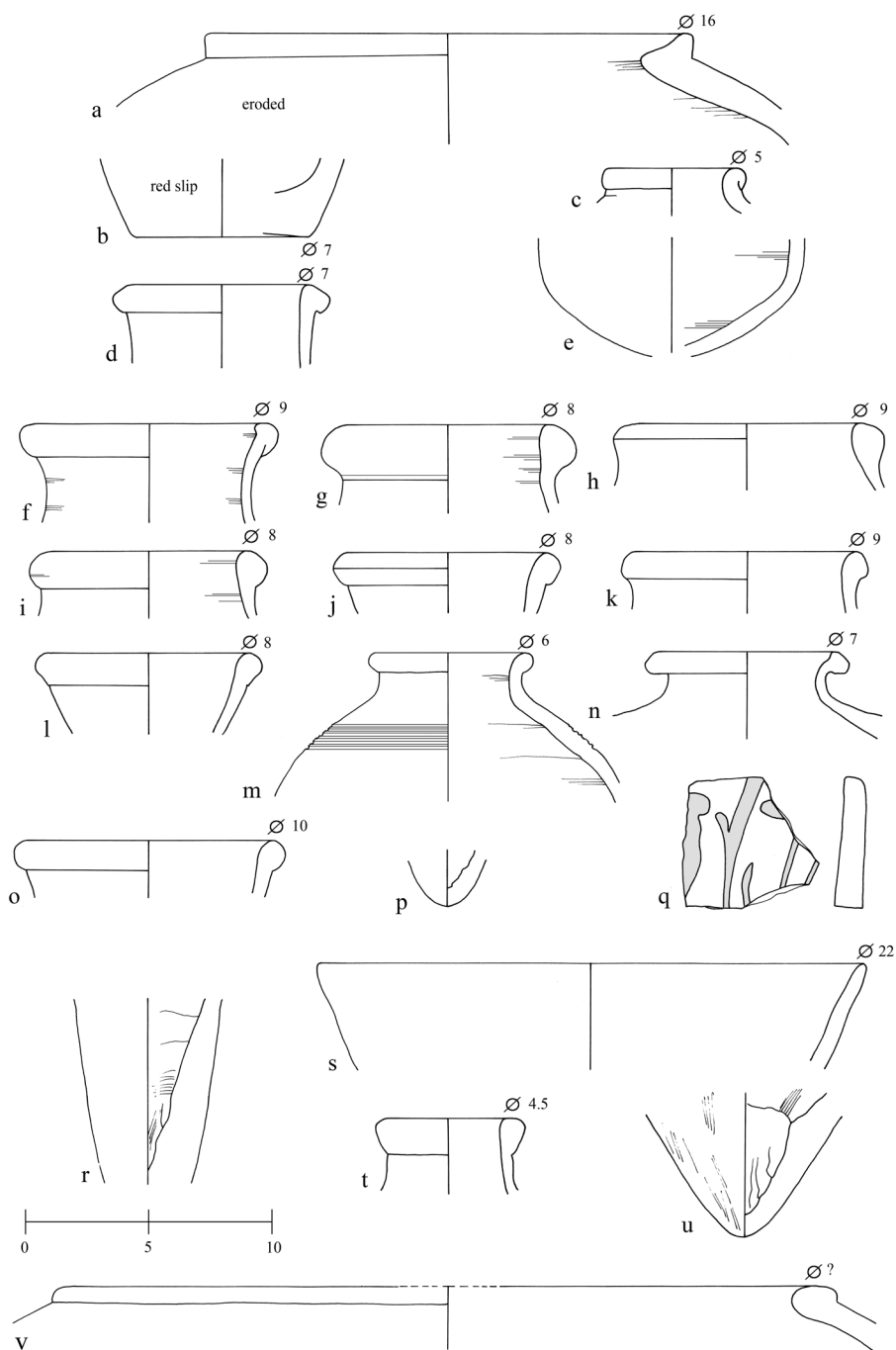


Fig. 10. Stratigraphic Unit 248: a–b: Nile C2; c–d: Marl A2; e: Marl A4? f–r: Marl C1; s: Marl C2; t–v: sandy Marl clay fabric.

a. HMo8 b.40, Sherd 26, Nile C2; b. HMo8 b.40, Sherd 24, Nile C2; c. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 11, Marl A2; d. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 8, Marl A2; e. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 16, Marl A4 (?); f. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 1, Marl C1; g. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 2, Marl C1; h. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 4, Marl C1; i. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 3, Marl C1; j. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 5, Marl C1; k. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 6, Marl C1; l. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 7, Marl C1; m. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 10, Marl C1; n. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 59, Marl C1; o. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 58, Marl C1; p. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 14, Marl C1; q. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 12, handmade painted, Marl C1; r. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 15, Marl C1; s. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 13, Marl C2; t. HMo8 b.41, Sherd 9, sandy marl; u. HMo8 b.40, Sherd 27, sandy marl; v. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 51, sandy marl.



The fabric of the sherd with the pre-firing mark clearly belongs to the marl clay fabric group, but it was not possible to identify it with any more precision without damaging the sherd (fig. 11c).

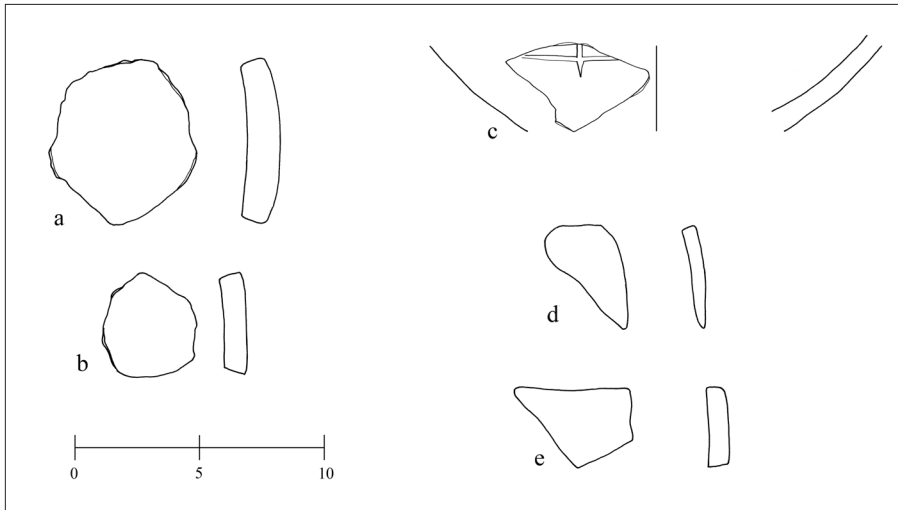


Fig. 11. Stratigraphic Unit 248: worked sherds, and sherds with potmarks.

a. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 61, Nile C1; b. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 62, Nile B2/C1; c. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 64, with pre-firing pot mark, burnt, prob. Marl clay; d. HMo8 b.39, Sherd 63, Maidum sherd, drill?; e. HMo8 b.35, Sherd 16, scraper, Marl C1.

Among the ceramic material of the UE 248 context were also several tools repurposed from sherds obviously no longer used. The rounded pottery discs (fig. 11a–b) could have been lids, gaming pieces, or devices to wind thread around in order to keep it tidy.<sup>67</sup> It is interesting to note that they have not been extremely well rubbed, but clear marks of beginning abrasion were noticed (pl. 1h).

The very specialised secondary tool made from a “Maidum Bowl” may have served as an awl or a very fine scraper or drill (fig. 11d, pl. 1g) whilst the top and right-hand edge of the tool in Figure 11e were repeatedly used for scraping or smoothing something.

67. Cf. BADER 2013, p. 18, with references.

## Some considerations of the frequency distributions

For a characterisation of the quantitative element of the assemblage, a few frequency distribution calculations are also included to start comparative quantitative analyses. These distributions are based on the preserved portion of the rims (rim Estimated Vessel Equivalents [EVEs]),<sup>68</sup> which are recorded in tandem with the rim diameter of the vessel fragments and may be added up in various ways to show frequencies of certain features such as fabrics, surface treatments, vessel types, or the relation of fine wares and rough wares to each other. Over time it will be better known if usage, chronology, or type of deposition in the various assemblages is also reflected in the frequency distributions.

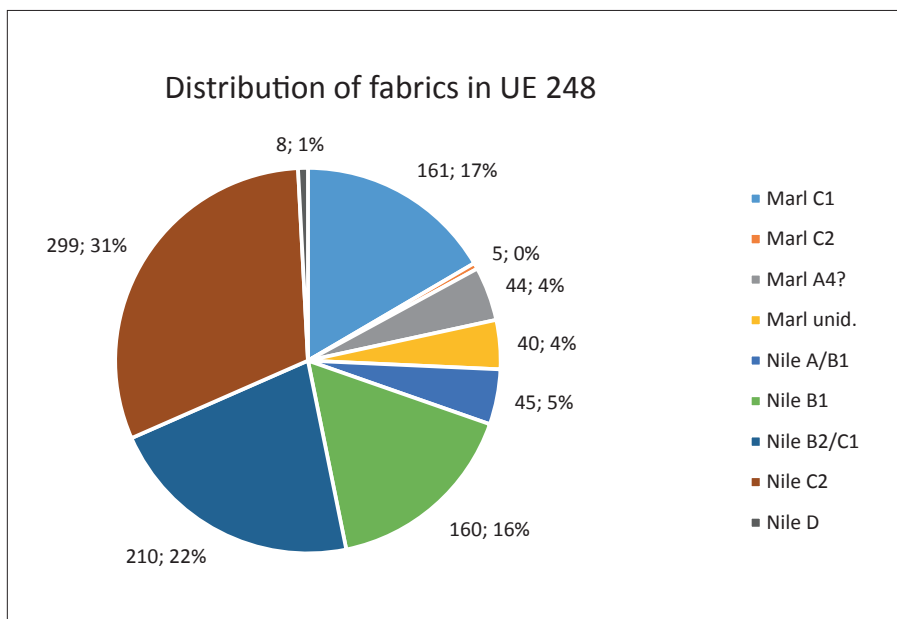


Chart 1. *Distribution of fabrics in UE 248.*

The distribution of fabrics is in favour of the roughest, Nile C2 fabric, followed by Nile B2/C1 and the marl clay fabrics as a group (together they can be added up to 25%), while the finest fabrics also make up 21%.

68. For the concept, see ORTON et al. 1993, pp. 168, 171–173. For the use of this kind of data, see BADER 2009a; BADER 2010; BADER 2016; BOURRIAU, GALLORINI 2016.

Considering the frequencies of open and closed vessels in relation to bread moulds and rough trays made of Nile C2, Chart 2 shows a quite even distribution between open and closed vessel types with the remaining percentage dominated by bread moulds and a small number of rough trays.

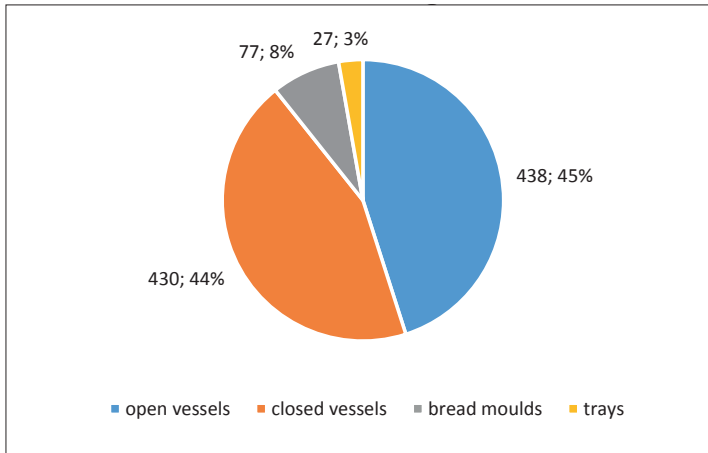


Chart 2. *Distribution of vessel categories in UE 248.*

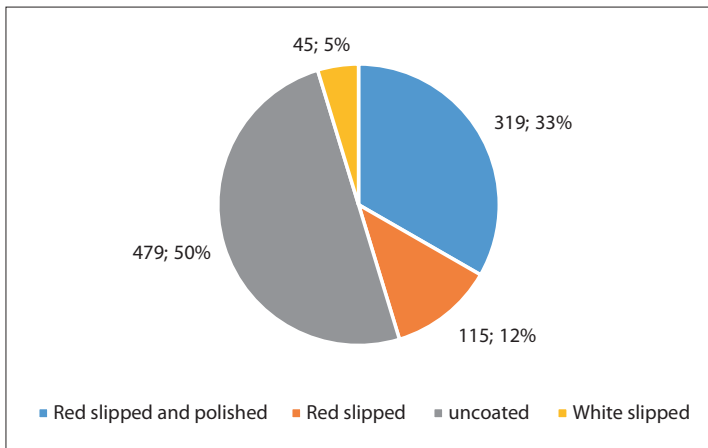


Chart 3. *Distribution of surface treatments in UE 248.*

The dominating surface treatment is the one left uncoated as can be seen in Chart 3, while next most common is red slipped and polished. This contrasts later deposits at Herakleopolis Magna, but the frequency data still has to be analysed in greater detail in future. White slipped surfaces are restricted exclusively to the wide bread moulds, while red slip is not uncommon but also not overwhelmingly frequent.

The distribution of fine wares, coarse wares, marls, and medium wares is shown in Chart 4.

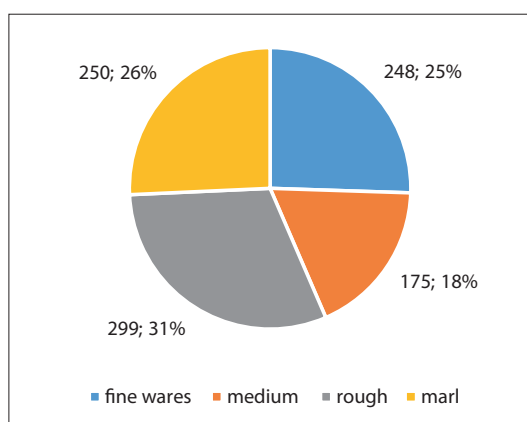


Chart 4. *Distribution of wares in UE 248.*

While the rough wares slightly dominate, the portions of fine and medium wares amount to almost a quarter of the total of the rim EVEs in the assemblage. The same holds true for the marl clay corpus mainly consisting of closed vessels. It will be interesting to see whether this is a recurring pattern in other stratigraphic units in Sector 15 or whether there are other changes and differences.

## Conclusions and prospects

The pottery of Phase III in Sector 15 complements the picture gained from that of phases I and II published elsewhere;<sup>69</sup> only a few points of interest will be repeated here.

Unfortunately, this find context (UE 248) *per se* does not answer the question whether the early material was re-deposited between the tombs or not, yet. The nature of the deposit as a floor between tombs seems to point to a re-deposition of at least partly older material. Further, the material's quite broken state and lack of reconstructable pots (in contrast to other sectors of the site) might likewise suggest a re-deposition of material. UE 248 of Phase III includes repurposed "sherd tools", which might also hint at an affinity to settlement refuse. The question whether such items are perhaps more frequently found in settlement debris than in a funerary environment must await more detailed publications of numerous other sites to obtain an overview of distributions of such finds in multiple context types.

69. BADER, GÓMEZ LAGUNA, forthcoming.

As noted before<sup>70</sup> frequent *comparanda* connect the pottery corpus of the “late Old Kingdom/early First Intermediate Period” phase of Herakleopolis Magna to that from West Saqqara, mainly the two last phases, III and IV, which are dated to the reign of Pepi II and the terminal Old Kingdom (“7th and 8th Dynasty”) by Teodozja Rzeuska.<sup>71</sup> This picture might, at least in part, be due to the fact that the recent published corpus of West Saqqara is comprehensive and detailed. However, some of the pottery shapes still remain unparalleled in the West Saqqara corpus. The congruence to the pottery corpus from Abusir is not as comprehensive in comparison.<sup>72</sup>

The circumstance that open vessel types find parallels at more Egyptian sites, even further south, than the closed vessel types has also been remarked in greater detail,<sup>73</sup> but at least in one case, further south at Asyut, recent publications do not suggest too much similarity in both open and closed vessel types.<sup>74</sup> As for Elephantine, some general trends in the open vessel corpus are similar but if compared in detail with the publication the parallels are not exactly the same. Whether the superficial similarity of some of the open vessel corpus includes the use of fabrics and fabric variations can, currently, not be ascertained with any degree of precision, due to the way the pottery from Elephantine has been presented.<sup>75</sup> A general overlap of dating in the late Old Kingdom (i.e. “the second half of the 5th to the late 6th Dynasty”) can be stated, but it would be stretching the evidence to make any statements as to workshop traditions or transfer of knowledge.

The reasons for the incongruence, particularly in closed vessel types, might be sought either in temporal differences or in regional peculiarities that are difficult to pinpoint at the current state of knowledge. The more obvious differences in closed vessel shapes at various sites further distant from Herakleopolis are beginning to emerge,<sup>76</sup> pointing to regional variation, which also needs more investigation. Beside more petrographic analyses, observation of the *chaîne opératoire* of pottery production undoubtedly will clarify some of those open questions.

Finally, the question about the temporal scale of the sequence of phases I, II, and III is very difficult to answer at this stage, even only as a hypothesis. On the one hand, the ceramic material is quite similar in these three phases, with perhaps

70. BADER 2011, p. 60; BADER, GÓMEZ LAGUNA, forthcoming.

71. RZEUSKA 2006, pp. 380–383.

72. See BADER, GÓMEZ LAGUNA, forthcoming, for *comparanda* of phases I and II, with bibliography.

73. BADER, GÓMEZ LAGUNA, forthcoming.

74. RZEUSKA 2017; KILIAN 2019.

75. RAUE 2020.

76. BADER 2021; CORTEBEECK 2021.

a slight development towards more diverse and more frequent use of closed vessel types (judging from rims only) made of marl clay fabrics in Phase III. On the other hand, this may be due to the still restricted data available. However, there is a clear difference to the ceramic material of other sectors of the site, which are likely to be dated later.<sup>77</sup> Thus, the ceramic material found in phases I–III is definitely closer in resemblance to each other than to the later material.

This restricted pilot study (in tandem with the pottery of phases I and II published elsewhere) is thought to provide a preliminary framework of pottery development at Herakleopolis Magna/Ehnasya el-Medina until the details of this sequence and the interpretation of the results in the next research step can be achieved.



Pl. 1. a. HM08 b.39, Sherd 34, Nile C1; b. HM08 b.39, various carinated bowls with red slip and polished; c. HM08 b.39, Sherd 10, Marl C1; d. HM08 b.41, Sherd 12, handmade painted; e. HM08 b.41, various marl fragments; f. HM08 b.41, various marl fragments; g. HM08 b.39, Sherd 63, Maidum sherd, possible drill/borer? h. HM08 b.39, Sherd 61, Nile C1, and Sherd 62, Nile B2/C1.

77. Cf. BADER 2009b; BADER 2011.

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