

FUNERARY HOMOGENEITY. THE POTTERY FROM THE CEMETERIES OF STRATA d/2 (H) AND d/1 (G/4) AT TELL EL-DAB^{CA}

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE STRATA d/2 (H) AND d/1 (G/4) IN TELL EL-DAB^{CA}

In stratum d/2 (H)¹ the previously abandoned area of F/I (CZERNY, RVa) was resettled. Parts of a settlement and a cemetery to its south have been excavated (EIGNER 1985; BIETAK 1991c; SCHIESTL 2009). This period is documented at two further sites in Tell el-Dab^{ca}. In area A/IV, about 200 m east of F/I, settlement layers dating to str. H were reached as the lowest levels (HEIN 2006, 135–137; KOPETZKY 2010). In area A/II, the tell of Dab^{ca}, located about 400 m to the southeast of F/I, insubstantial installations correlating to str. H were uncovered. They consisted of irregular precincts enclosed by thin walls (BIETAK 1991b, 21; BADER 2009) and a system of pits and pot-holes (FORSTNER-MÜLLER 2007). Cutting directly into the *gezira*, these very simple structures are the earliest traces of settlement on the tell; however, this settlement was presumably not constructed for permanent use, but rather temporary use. It is clearly on the periphery of a town which has its center, or one of its centers, in the area of F/I and A/IV (BIETAK 1991b, 21). In the following str. d/1 (G/4),² in area F/I, there is continuity in its use as a residential area in the north and a cemetery in the south. However, there is a fundamental change in the character of both settlement and cemetery, reflecting a pronounced social development. The loose clustering of houses in the north was torn down and replaced by two neighboring monumental residences (the so-called palace). The cemetery to the south was incorporated into a planned garden, attached to the palatial residences. In this garden rows of new monumental tombs were erected, the so-called palace necropolis (SCHIESTL 2009). In Area A/II a new set-

tlement was built in str. G (BIETAK 1991b, 25). It is characterized by very simple rectangular houses of one or two rooms, often enclosed in asymmetrically shaped compounds.³ In this period this area does not seem to have been used as a cemetery (BIETAK 1991a, 34). Only in the later part of str. G were tombs built within the settlement (BIETAK 1991b; FORSTNER-MÜLLER 2008), however, chronologically they fall towards the end of str. G and thus are outside the scope of this article.

The study and publication of the pottery of this period is currently the following: In area F/I, the pottery of the cemetery of both strata has been comprehensively studied and published (KOPETZKY 1993; SCHIESTL 2009) and it is this material that will be presented in the following. The pottery of the settlements, both the community of str. d/2 and the palatial compound of str. d/1, has not yet been fully studied. Specialized studies on specific groups include material of this period: SZAFRANSKI 1998 (beer bottles), BAGH 2000, 2002b and 2003 (Levantine Painted Ware), BADER 2001 (Marl C pottery) and 2004 (selection of sherd material), ASTON 2004 (selection of complete vessels), KOPETZKY 2007/8 and 2010 (selection of sherd material). The pottery of area A/IV, str. H, awaits full study and publication. Selected contexts and pieces have been published in the studies cited above. The pottery of the settlement of area A/II, str. H (relative str. k), has been published by FORSTNER-MÜLLER (2007) in its entirety, but it constitutes only a small sample. The pottery of the settlement of str. G in area A/II is currently under study and will be published by B. BADER (forthc. d and in prep.) and I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER and K. KOPETZKY. The pottery from the tombs of str. G has been published by BIETAK 1991b and FORSTNER-MÜLLER 2008,

¹ The end of the 12th D (late A III) to the very beginning of the 13th D (ca. 1820–1790 B.C.).

² Approximately the first quarter of the 13th D (ca. 1790–1750 B.C.).

³ While no plan of the settlement of early str. G has yet been published, it is described as very similar in basic layout to that of the later str. G. For plans of the latter see BIETAK

1979, fig. 2; BIETAK 1991b, Plan 2; BADER, forthc. d, figs. 1 and 2; The recent excavations on the tell revealed a small section of the settlement of str. j, which is equal to str. G (FORSTNER-MÜLLER 2001, Abb. 3–4). The precise correlation of the two substrata j/2 and j/1 with the subdivisions of str. G is still under study (Forstner-Müller, personal communication).

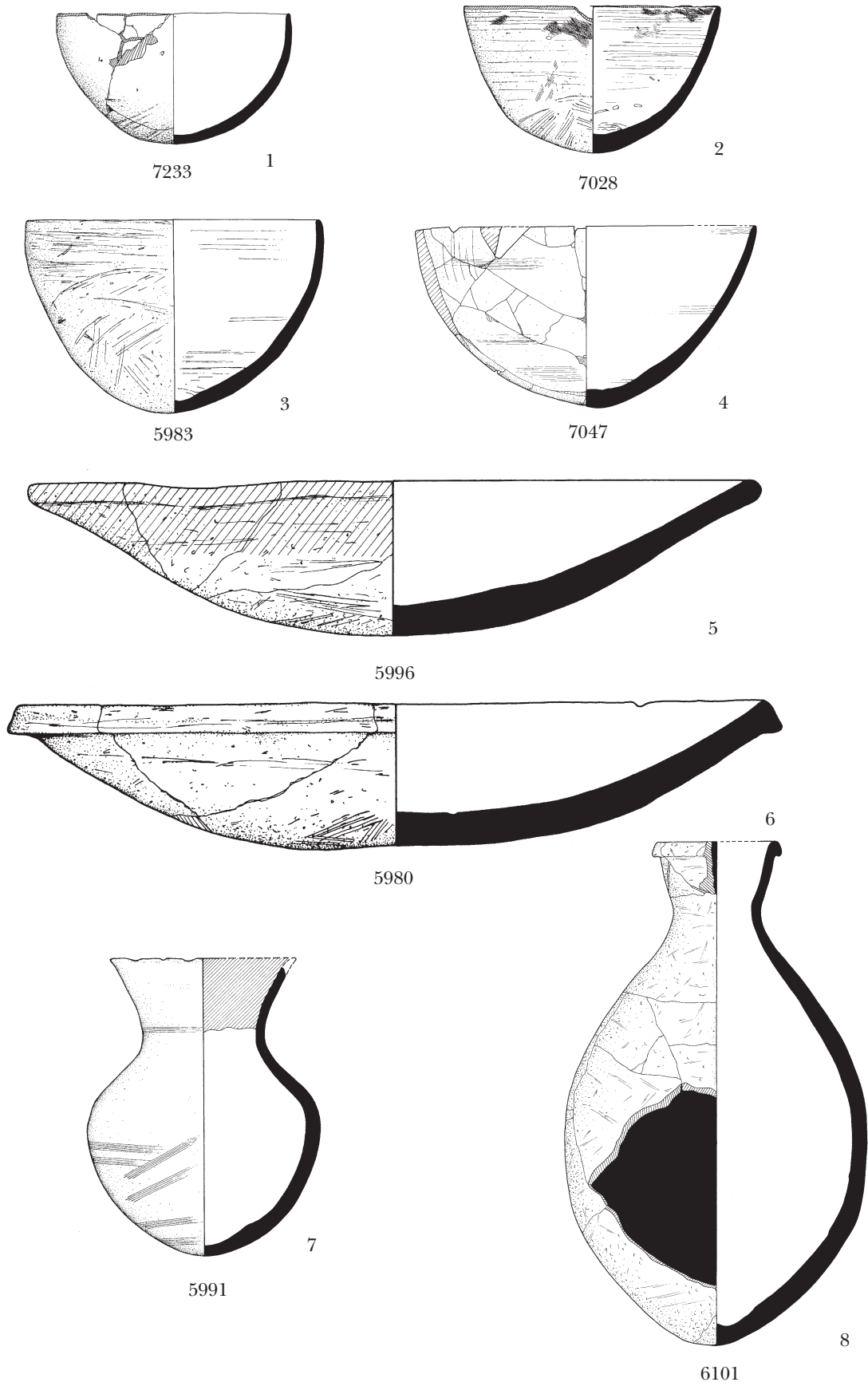


Fig. 1 Pottery from the cemetery of str. d/2; from tomb chambers, except for no. 1 and 3, from tomb pit; all 1:3, except for no. 8, 1:6

but, as mentioned above, chronologically it is restricted to str. G/1–3, which equals minor str. c in F/I (see KOPETZKY, RV, following article), in short, they are younger than the material discussed in this contribution.

To summarize the current state of knowledge on the pottery of this period from Tell el-Dab^a: We have a clear picture of the pottery used in the cemetery, while our knowledge of the settlement pottery of that period is currently only of a preliminary nature.

2. THE CEMETERIES OF STR. d/2 AND d/1

2.1. Introduction

The cemeteries discussed in the following were built by a community of Asiatics,⁴ who had settled at Tell el-Dab^a. This group constitutes the first evidence for Asiatic people living, and dying, at Tell el-Dab^a. The ethnic attribution of this population was based primarily on evidence from the cemeteries, such as the contracted position of the bodies, the donkey burials in front of the tombs and the exclusive use of Levantine weaponry. It should be noted that the presence of Levantine pottery in these cemeteries has no direct bearing on the issue of the ethnic background of the people who owned these pots. Imports of Levantine and Aegean pottery have a long history at Tell el-Dab^a, occurring in phases during which the site is considered to be an Egyptian community (see CZERNY, RVb; BAGH 1998b and 2002).

2.2. The Pottery of the Cemetery of Str. d/2 (H)

The pottery under discussion comes from two superimposed cemeteries: The first cemetery, of str. d/2, consists of 48 tombs. They are simple pit burials, a jar burial, small differently shaped cist tombs built of mud bricks and large chamber tombs built of mud bricks. The latter are the largest group, representing 73 % of all tombs from this stratum (SCHIESTL 2008c and 2009, Tabelle 3). Pottery is found in all types of tombs, with one exception. The burials of newborns and very small children (neonates and young infants I), placed in jars or small mud brick cist tombs, do not contain any pottery. Children of the age of older infants I and above are provided with one or two ceramic goods in their tomb (SCHIESTL 2009, 197–198). A pattern emerges where even the smallest children were placed in especially built tombs in the

cemetery, but only those above a certain age, around approximately age four, were equipped with pottery. A possible explanation might be the end of breast feeding, after which a child might have been considered able “to use pottery”. Most pottery was found with adult burials in the chamber tombs. A high degree of looting has left us with few intact assemblages. The average tomb chamber of str. d/2 is rather small, providing only limited space for pottery. The placement of the pottery in the chamber is basically the same as in str. d/1, where it will be discussed in detail (Fig. 2, and below). Remarkably, an intact burial of a man⁵ shows us that adults too could be buried without pottery. This man had been provided with various valuable items, such as a silver bracelet, a pair of tweezers, a bronze dagger and a pair of javelins with socketted bronze heads. Whatever the reason for the absence of pottery was, it was clearly not due to poverty.

The overall corpus of pottery of str. d/2 is very slender – both in absolute numbers and typologically (SCHIESTL 2009, 169, Abb. 104). There is a strong emphasis on vessels for presentation and consumption: 60 % of the whole corpus consists of dishes, made of coarse Nile clay (Nile C1 and C2). Most are round-based and have a direct rim (e.g. fig. 1.5); exceptionally they have a triangular-shaped rim (fig. 1.6). Such dishes contained cuts of meat. The most common were, in both strata, sheep or goat, followed by cattle/beef, and pig (SCHIESTL 2009, 176–177, Abb. 109). Some tombs are equipped with whole sets of dishes. For want of space, the dishes are sometimes stacked, with only the uppermost containing foodstuff, while the dishes beneath had been left empty (e.g. F/I-o/19–tomb 8, SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 189, 191); Only three complete hemispherical cups were found in tomb chambers (Fig. 1.2; SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 61) and one example was deposited outside the tomb chamber (Fig. 1.1; for discussion of context, see below). They are of hemispherical shape, but with slight differences among each other. Some shapes open wide (e.g. Fig. 1.2), while in others the contour’s upper most part is vertical (Fig. 1.1). The rim diameters range from 11.8 to 12.5 cm, the vessel indices range from 171 to 192.6. They are made of Nile B1 or B2 and all have a thin red rim. Related to this group are hemispherical bowls (Fig. 1.4) and restricted bowls (Fig. 1.3). The restricted bowls are

⁴ The term Asiatics is used in Egyptology to describe Near Eastern people.

⁵ F/I-o/20–tomb 17, SCHIESTL 2009, 282–283.

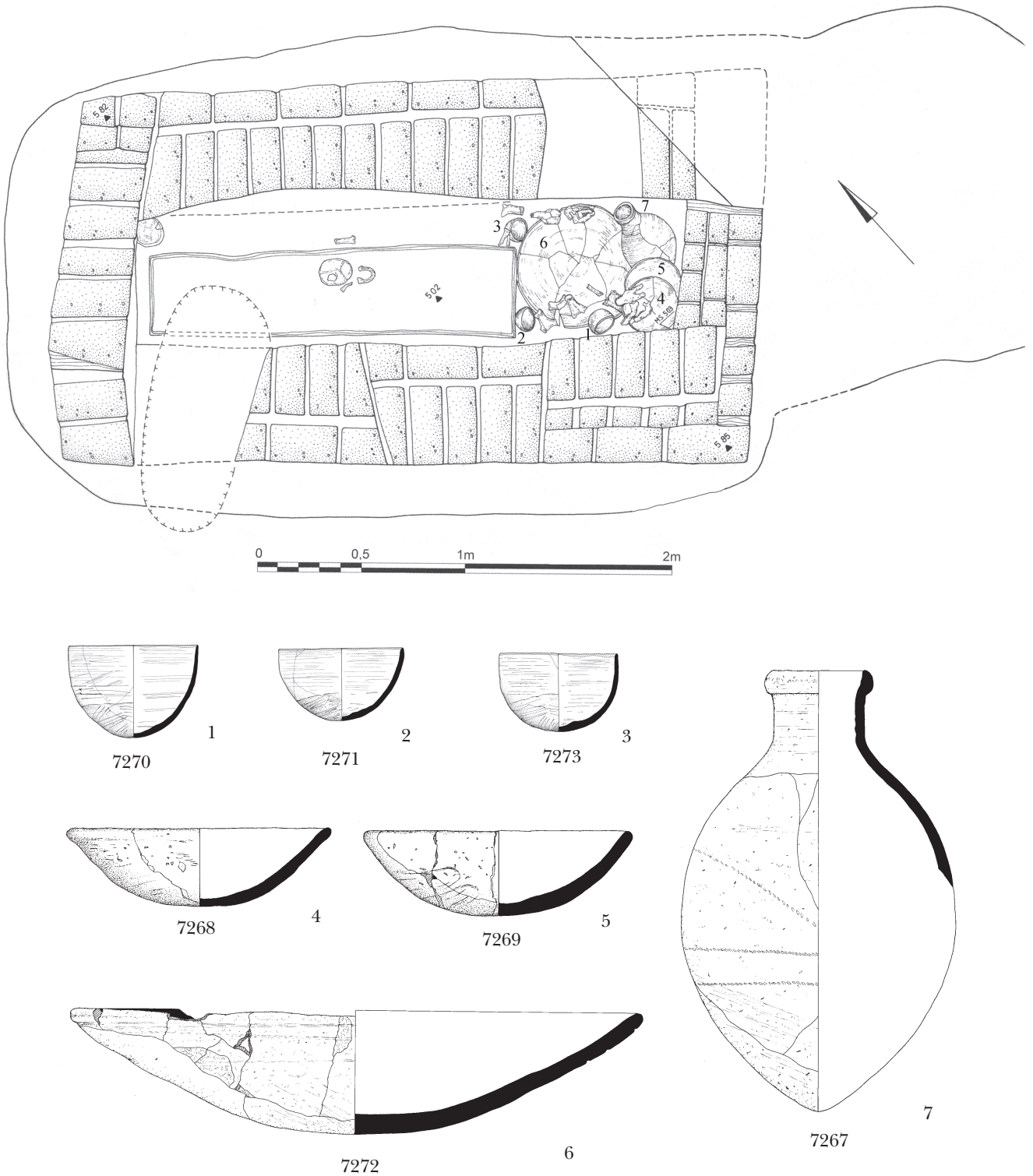


Fig. 2 Top: Tomb chamber, F/I-n/17-tomb 3, str. d/1, with pottery in situ; Bottom: The pottery from this ensemble, 1:6

set apart from the hemispherical cups by their different shape, their larger size and their surface treatment, which consists of a red coating inside and outside. The shape of the hemispherical bowl conforms to that of the hemispherical cups, but it too is dis-

tinctly larger and red coated inside and outside. Only two types of containers, one medium, one large-sized, are found in the cemetery: the globular bottle with a tall and wide flaring neck (Fig.1.7) is a medium sized short term container and can serve for the presenta-

tion of liquids. It is not documented in the cemetery of the following str. d/1 (G/4), but reappears in the cemetery of str. c (G/1–3; ASTON 2004, 70–71, group 26; KOPETZKY 1993, Abb. 14.36). The only large containers found in the tomb chambers are beer bottles made of Nile C2; the exterior is left either plain or red coated (Fig. 1.8; SZAFRANSKI 1998; SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 83). They have an ellipsoid or slightly biconical body and a flaring neck with an everted triangular shaped rim. Such vessels served for short term storage and for the presentation of liquids. No long term containers, such as zirs of Marl C, were found in the tombs. Imported pottery, primarily from the Northern Levant (COHEN-WEINBERGER/GOREN 2004; SCHIESTL 2009, 165–169), accounts for only 12.7 % of the pottery. The range of types is also very narrow: Canaanite jars (cf. Fig. 6.6), burnished jugs (Fig. 6.2), jugs of the Levantine painted ware (Fig. 6.4) and dipper juglets (cf. Fig. 6.3).

2.3. The Pottery of the Cemetery of Str. d/1 (G/4)

In str. d/1 the greater part of the cemetery of str. d/2 was incorporated into a garden south of the newly erected palatial compound. After a period of unknown length the original garden layout was abandoned and the area began to be used as a cemetery again, the so-called palace necropolis. The layout and character of the tombs changed markedly (SCHIESTL 2008c; IDEM 2009, 31–34, 55–56, Tabelle 4, Übersichtsplan): The small box-like cist tombs disappeared and only very large rectangular chamber tombs were erected. 24 such chamber tombs have been excavated. They were organized in parallel rows, which, however, avoided disturbing the existing structures of str. d/2. The tomb assemblages of str. d/1 suffered even more from looting than those of the preceding stratum. There is not one entirely intact burial. However, as pottery was generally of no interest to the robbers, we find heavily plundered tombs with the pottery assemblages only slightly disturbed. An example of this is the chamber of F/I-n/17–tomb 3 (Fig. 2). The body had been pulled out through a tunnel cutting into the western end of the chamber. The pottery in the eastern end of the chamber was left largely intact. The pottery was arranged in the space between the coffin, which had been pushed against the back wall of the chamber, and the entrance to the chamber in the east. A very large Nile C dish (Fig. 2.6) took up the whole width of the chamber. In front of the large dish, a pair of stacked smaller dishes (Fig. 2.4–5), three hemispherical drinking cups (Fig. 2.1–3) and a beer bottle (Fig. 2.7) were tightly placed, using up the entire space available. The assemblage shows the strong

emphasis on ‘table ware’, that is, vessels for presentation and consumption. Vessels for long term storage, in the shape of Marl C zirs (Fig. 3.11), do appear now, in very limited numbers (two examples), among the goods deposited in tombs (SCHIESTL 2009, 155). Overall, compared to the corpus of the preceding str. d/2, the pottery from the cemetery of str. d/1 is characterized by a basic continuity in the shape groups deposited in the tombs, a slight expansion of the range of types and specific typological developments of some shapes (SCHIESTL 2009, 169–170, Abb. 105–107). Examples for continuity are the large dishes of coarse Nile clay, such as discussed above (Fig. 2.6), which remain a frequently found shape. Most pieces continue to have direct rims and are round based. Also the size, between 26.5 cm and 58.7 cm and on average 39.2 cm in diameter, is very similar to the repertoire of str. d/2. A change is the quantity: They are no longer the most common shape found within the cemetery corpus (SCHIESTL 2009, 141–142, Tabelle 20–21). While coarse Nile clay (Nile C1 and C2) does remain the most frequently used fabric in str. d/1 (44 %), there is a marked decline compared to str. d/2 (SCHIESTL 2009, 136–127, Abb. 56, 58). In particular, the proportion of fine Nile clay B1 has increased to 15%. Among the hemispherical cups (SCHIESTL 2009, 130–131, Tabelle 19, Abb. 62), more are made of Nile B1 (9) than of Nile B2 (6). Wide and open cups, as known from str. d/2, have disappeared. The cups’ sides are either straight at the top (Fig. 3.1–2, 5–6) or slightly inturned (Fig. 3.3–4, 7–8), the latter development appearing now for the first time. The sizes range from 10.5–13.8 cm in diameter, with an average of exactly 12 cm. The average index is 153. All cups display a red rim, mostly thin, but occasionally this red band can be quite wide (around 1 cm, e.g. Fig. 3.4). Beer bottles (SCHIESTL 2009, 145–152, Abb. 84) appear in various forms: The bottle with an ellipsoid body and a flaring neck with a triangular rim, known from str. d/2 (Fig. 1.8), remains in use. More common are ovoid body shapes with straight necks and a thick rounded rim with an indentation on the inner side (‘kettle mouth’), Fig. 2.7. This indentation can be very pronounced, as shown by a small example with a slightly flaring neck (Fig. 3.9). Necks become narrower and longer, and are capped with an angular version of the ‘kettle mouth’ rim (Fig. 4.7). This type is only documented among the bottles from the superstructures of tombs and could date somewhat later than str. d/1 (see discussion of superstructures below). Amongst the new shapes appearing in str. d/1 are large Marl C vessels. A bag-shaped jar with everted corrugated neck (Fig. 3.10) was found in the superstruc-

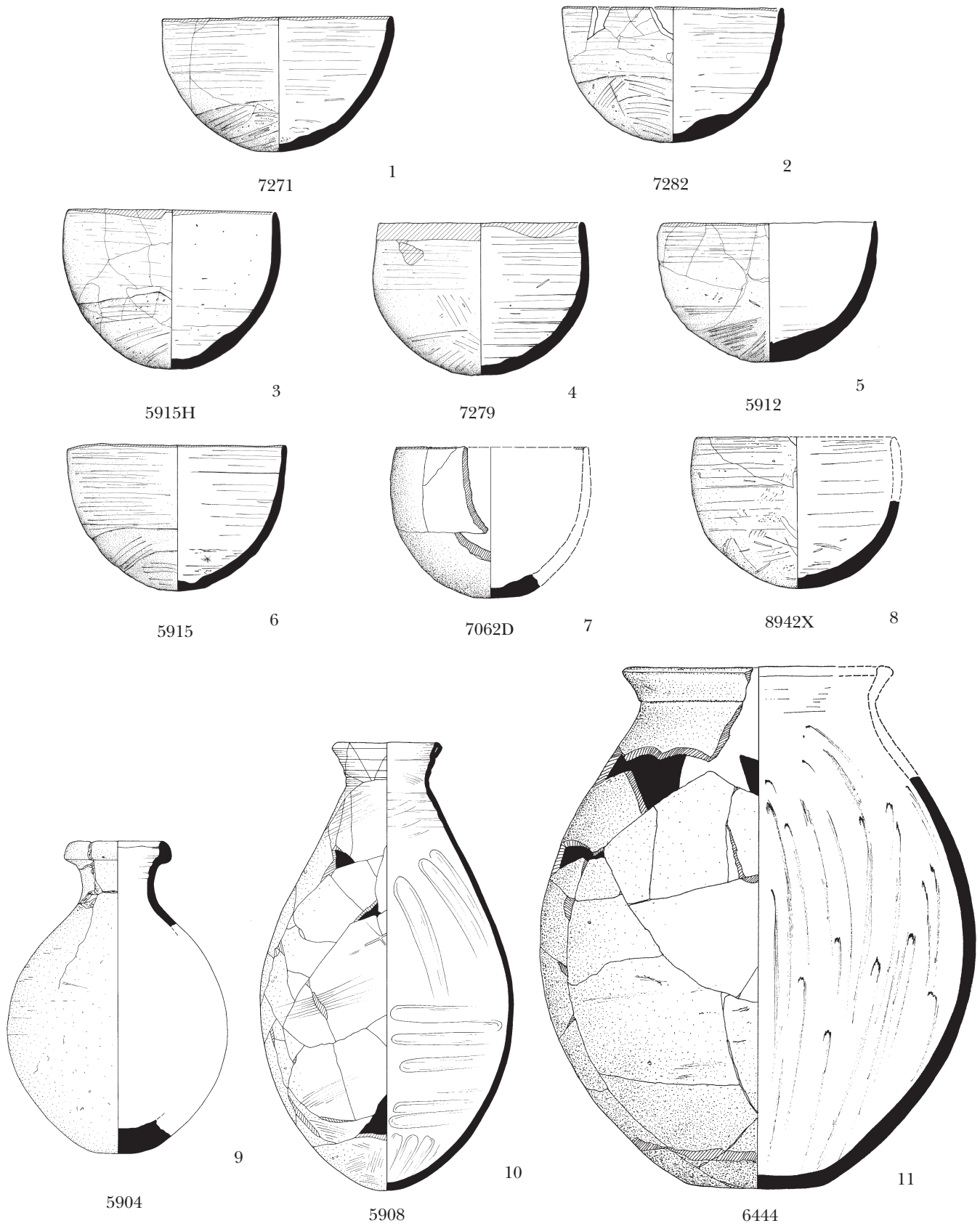


Fig. 3 Pottery from cemetery of str. d/1; from tomb chambers, except for no. 5–7 and 10 from superstructures, and no. 8 from tomb offering pit; no. 1–8, 1:3; no. 9–11, 1:6

ture of a tomb. While this is the only complete piece found, fragments of such bottles have been found among the debris of plundered tombs (str. d/2: SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 230.13; str. d/1: SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 253.13). The zir (Fig. 3.11), appearing for the first time among the pottery in the cemetery, has a slightly bag-shaped, almost ellipsoid, body. The flat base is small, with a diameter slightly smaller than that of the aperture. The tall rim is everted and has a slightly obliquely trimmed top. The amount of Syro-Palestinian imports (Fig. 6) has doubled to 24 % in comparison to str. d/2. This is primarily due to the great increase in Canaanite jars, of which 18 pieces were found: 17 are of the two-handled 'amphora' shape, one is a handle-less jar (Fig. 6.5; for parallels see SCHIESTL 2002, fig. 13). The Canaanite jar has become the most important container from tombs of this period, far outweighing Egyptian shapes such as the beer bottles and zirs. The overall range of imported shapes remains small, and the relative quantity is lower within the cemetery than in the settlement. There is a wider range of areas from which pottery was imported, but all lie within Syria-Palestine, and the Northern Levant still dominates. Fragments of a Minoan cup were discovered in a part of the garden of the palace, but not connected to the cemetery. Since its initial publication (WALBERG 1991) this cup has been much discussed (MACGILLIVRAY 1995; WALBERG 1998; MERRILLEES 2003; for a further sherd, see BIETAK/KOPETZKY/STAGER/VOSS 2008, fig. 1.10). While jewelry of presumably Minoan origin has been discovered in a tomb of str. d/1 (SCHIESTL 2009, 93–95, Abb. 375.1; Taf. XVIc), no Minoan or Aegean pottery was found.

2.4. Beyond the Tomb: The Different Parts of the Cemetery

Although the cemeteries were heavily plundered, careful excavation enables us to discern different contexts within and around the tomb and the cemetery. The above discussion focused on material found in the tomb chamber with some other contexts briefly referred to. In the following, these separate contexts and the pottery finds from them will be presented: the superstructures of the tomb, the tomb offering pits, the cemetery offering pit, the tomb entrance pit, the tomb pit and the building sacrifice. These distinct depositions reflect various activities and are thus crucial for understanding ritual activities associated with burials. Only rarely are such dis-

crete parts of the cemetery presented in publications of Egyptian MK cemeteries. It is, however, legitimate to assume that such diverse funerary activities were not a unique phenomenon. Material which is not excavated, presented and discussed separately by context, has been evidently lumped together.

Building Sacrifice

During the construction of the vault of a tomb of str. d/1⁶ a hemispherical bowl (Fig. 5.12) was placed in the vault as a building sacrifice. After having been broken, it was deposited on a sandy bed in the SW corner of the vault. This is the only evidence of such a sacrifice from the cemetery and other instances have been rarely documented in Egypt (SCHIESTL 2009, 67). The location of the sacrifice in the SW corner might be significant, as it can be linked to the placement of offerings in the tomb pit, outside of the chamber, discussed in the following. The bowl is singular within str. d/1 – it is set apart from the contemporary hemispherical cups found in tombs and superstructures by its larger size (13.4 cm diameter) and the red coating inside and out. Its closest parallel is a bowl found in an offering deposit of str. d/2, discussed in the following.

Offerings Deposited in the Tomb Pit, Outside of the Chamber

Pottery can also be found in the tomb pit, outside the tomb chamber. The pots in the entrance pit are discussed separately below. The pots discussed here were deposited in other locations: Twice pots are placed in the SW corner of the tomb pit,⁷ both dating to str. d/2. The same location had been used for the building sacrifice, see above. They are a jar with spout (Fig. 5.10), found together with a flint, and a hemispherical cup and a hemispherical bowl (Fig. 5.8–9). In a double tomb of str. d/1, m/20–tombs 1 and 2, three footed bowls were found on top of the roof, between the two adjoining vaulted chambers (Fig. 5.11). Neither the spouted jar, nor the footed bowls formed part of the equipment found in tomb chambers. Presumably these pots had been used in some ritual associated with the burial and were then deposited.

Tomb Entrance Pits

A common feature of many tombs of str. d/1 is an expansion of the tomb pit in front of the tomb, creating an entrance pit. In these, sets of animal offer-

⁶ F/I-o/21-tomb 4, SCHIESTL 2009, 67, Abb. 416–417.

⁷ F/I-m/20–tomb 23, F/I-p/19–tomb 1.

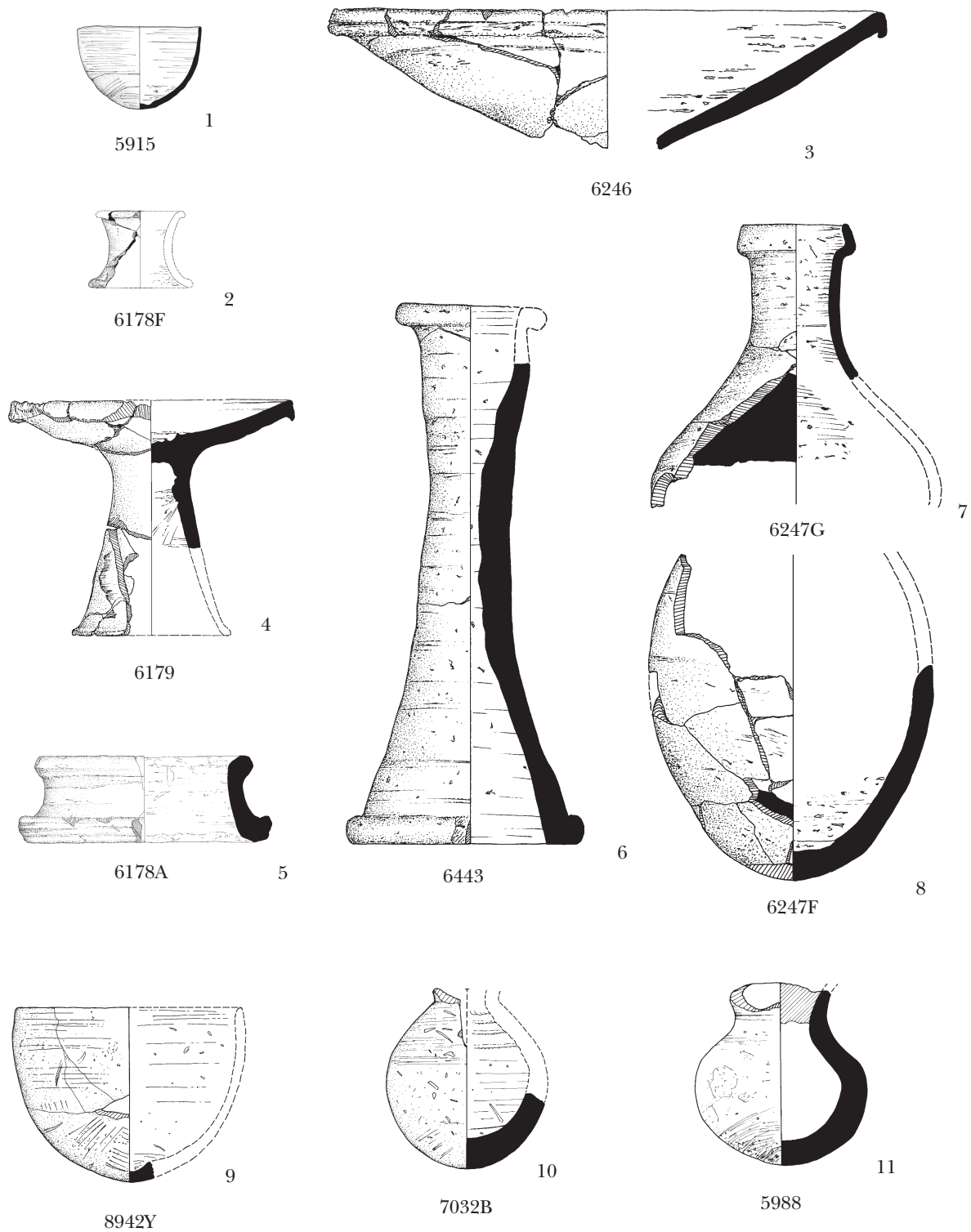


Fig. 4 No. 1–8: Pottery from superstructures of cemetery str. d/1, 1:6; no. 9–11: pottery from offering pits; no. 9–10, tomb offering pit, str. d/1, 1:3; no. 11, cemetery offering pit, str. d/2, 1:3

ings are deposited. Such sets always involve donkeys, between one and four, but most frequently a pair. Varying combinations of goats and sheep are usually added. Six of these entrance pits with animal burials also contain pottery (SCHIESTL 2009, 179–184). While

often disturbed in the course of the looting of the tombs, some of the in situ finds suggest that the pottery was deposited in connection with the donkey burials: one donkey's head lay on top of a dish, while in another case the remains of a smashed beer bottle

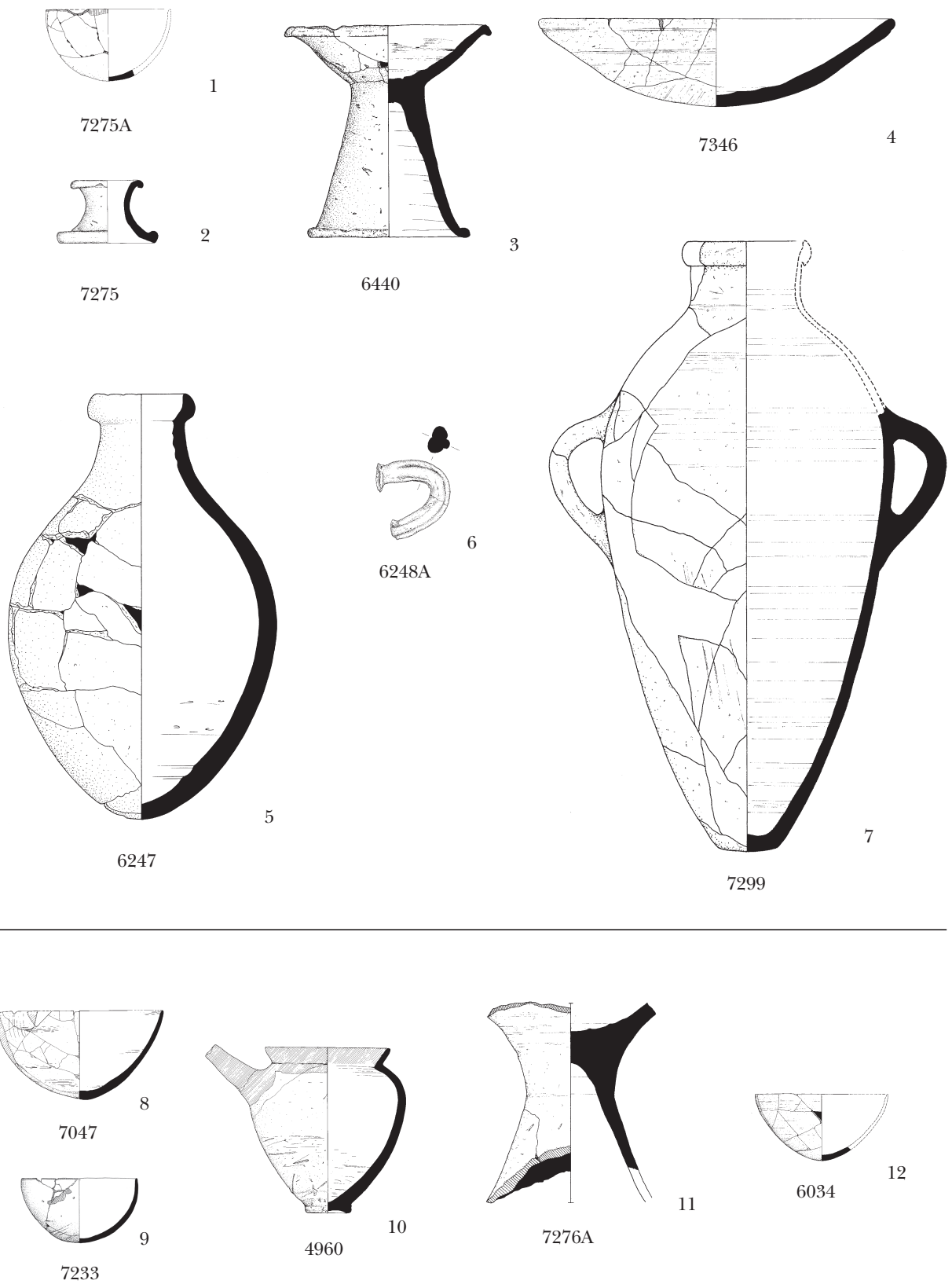


Fig. 5 No. 1-7: Pottery deposited in tomb entrance pit, str. d/1; no. 8-10: pottery deposited in tomb pit, str. d/2; no. 11: Pottery deposited on roof of vaulted tomb chamber, str. d/1; no. 12: building sacrifice in vault, str. d/1; all 1:6

were found on top of a donkey's head. The majority of types of pottery is the same as found in the tomb chambers: hemispherical cups, small ring stands, large dishes, beer bottles and Canaanite jars (Fig. 5.1–2, 4–5, 7). The offering dish on a stand (Fig. 5.3) is, however, not found in tomb chambers. In front of the entrance to the tomb, two had been set up as a pair, and possibly there was no direct link to the animal offering, but it was associated with a ritual performed during and after the closing of the tomb.

Superstructures

Traces of superstructures were excavated above one tomb of str. d/2 and thirteen tombs of str. d/1 (SCHIESTL 2009, 59–65). Only the lowest layers of bricks remain, leaving the reconstruction of the architectural shape up for interpretation.⁸ In three cases, all from str. d/1, remains of offerings were found associated with these structures (Fig. 4.1–8). The pottery deposited here can be separated into two groups: The first group consists of shapes which are not encountered among the finds from the tomb chamber: a very large bowl with a triangular-shaped rim (Fig. 4.3), which is to be reconstructed as a bowl with a closed foot. Very tall offering stands (Fig. 4.6) and footed offering dishes (Fig. 4.4) were also placed in superstructures. These items were used for rituals performed in the superstructure. The second group consists of pottery shapes found in tomb chambers as well, namely beer bottles (Fig. 4.7–8) and hemispherical cups (Fig. 4.1). The hemispherical cups, with straight sides below the rim, are close to the shape of the cups from the tomb chambers. Among the cups from the superstructure, there is very little variation – they form an internally homogenous group. The beer bottles, in contrast, show a range of differently shaped necks and rims. The shape with a cylindrical neck and very angular 'kettle mouth' rim (Fig. 4.7) is also known from tomb chambers; but a later development of this type, with a taller and narrower neck (SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 116.3–4) appears only in the material from superstructures, or in later tombs, indicating a long period, possibly up to 50 years, during which offerings continued to be deposited in the superstructure (SCHIESTL 2009, 190). Two further aspects set these items apart from those

deposited in the tomb chambers: first, the quantity, second, the way they are set up, or arranged. From a single superstructure, F/I/19–tomb 1, the remains of 42 beer bottles were found. These numbers underline the scope and importance of the offering activity taking place in the superstructures. The second point concerns the way the pottery was displayed. The large amounts of beer bottles are found together with large ring stands made of Nile C (Fig. 4.5) and the hemispherical cups with small ring stands made of Nile B (Fig. 4.2). While the original arrangement is lost, these types occurring together permit a reconstruction: The round based pottery was carefully 'set up' in ring stands, it stood, while the same types of bottles and cups in tomb chambers simply lean against the walls, without such ring stands. The superstructures functioned as an organized stage for the presentation of offerings and the performance of rituals; this performance required specific props, which can be made out among the pottery. Another point to consider in this regard: The individual pot of this period is in general not an indicator of social status⁹ – beer bottles found in very simple burials and in tombs of members of the royal court display no difference. If social status and pottery can be linked, it is through quantity, not quality, of the pots. The forum of this display is the superstructure. Superstructures of MK tombs are very rarely preserved, but originally must have existed in most cemeteries. In view of the above discussed crucial role these buildings played, it is important, when analyzing Egyptian MK cemeteries, to keep in mind we are dealing with only part of the picture; as concerns pottery, possibly the distinctly smaller part of the picture.

Tomb Offering Pits

Tomb offering pits (SCHIESTL 2009, 191–191) are placed in front of, that is to the east of, the tomb. They are dug separately from the tomb, but intended for a specific tomb, as opposed to the following collective cemetery offering pits. Tomb offering pits¹⁰ make their first appearance during str. d/1. Beginning with the late 13th D (str. E/3) they become very common at Tell el-Dab^ca (MÜLLER 2008, I, 298–307). Two types can be separated in str. d/1: Pits which contain only animal offerings¹¹ and pits which contain

⁸ For detailed discussion and suggested reconstructions, SCHIESTL 2009, 59–65, Taf. XXXII.

⁹ For exceptions see the discussion of 'Pyramid Ware' by ALLEN, RV.

¹⁰ F/I-p/18–pits 2 and 3 (SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 398)

¹¹ F/I-p/17–offering pit 9 (SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 369)

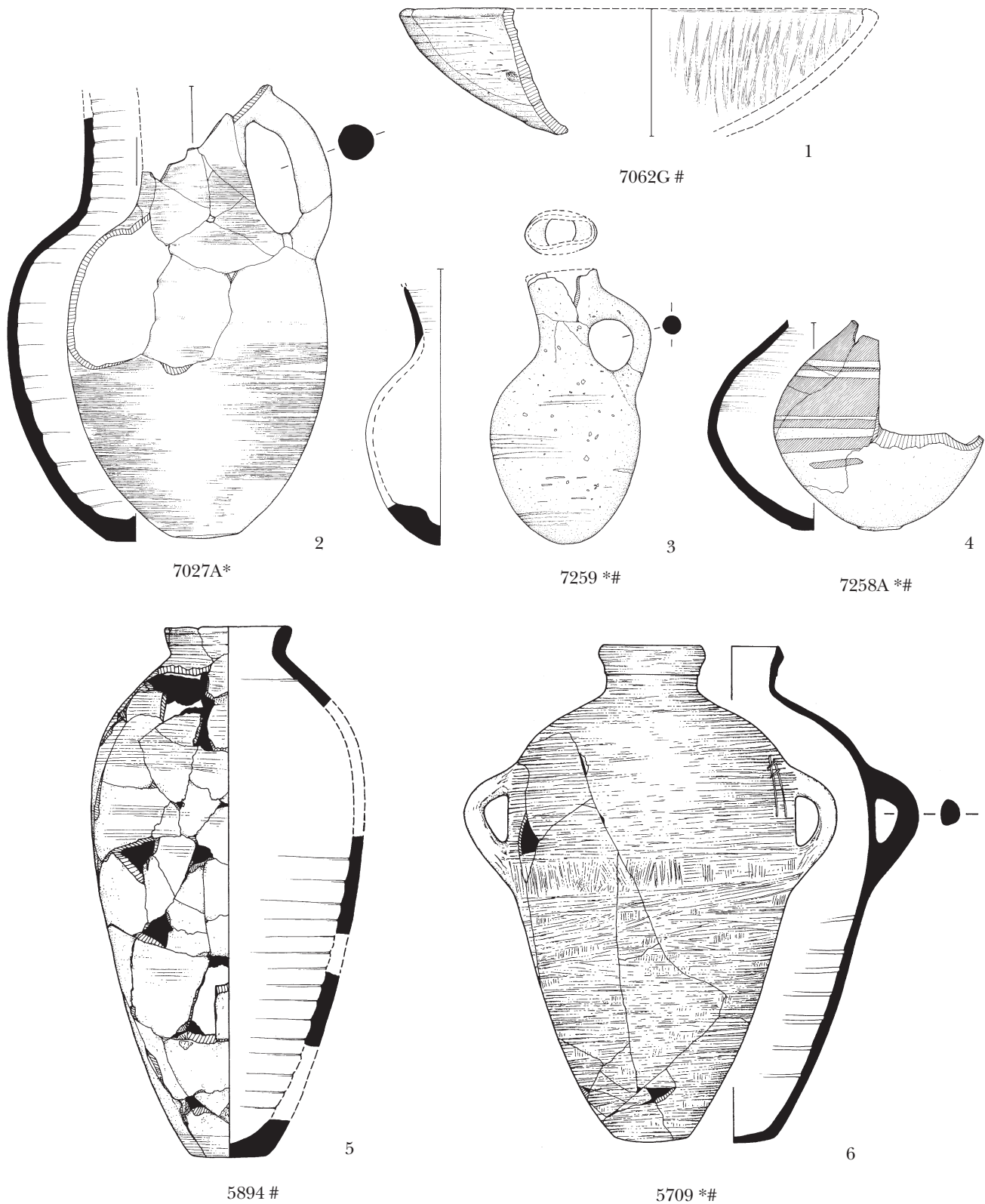


Fig. 6 Syro-Palestinian imported pottery from cemeteries of str. d/2 and d/1; all from tomb chambers, except for no. 1, superstructure, no.1-4, 1:3; no. 5-6, 1:6 (* type only present in str. d/2 # type only present in str. d/1 *# type present in both strata)

pottery and animal offerings. As only the second type contains pottery, it is discussed further here: These two pits contained five rather small hemispherical

cups, with a slightly closed shape (Fig. 4.9; SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 403). Size and shape are very similar to pieces from superstructures (e.g. the cups from F/I-

p/21–tomb 1, superstructure, SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 63). The pit was constructed after the burial had been closed and thus a date at the very end of str. d/1 or in str. c is most likely. A small globular model jar (Fig. 4.10) was also found in the pit. It is similar to the piece found in the cemetery offering pit, discussed below.

Collective Cemetery Offering Pits

Offering pits which are not linked to a specific tomb, but were built collectively for a group of tombs are called cemetery offering pits. Two such pits are documented in this period (SCHIESTL 2009, 191–192); both contained mainly animal offerings. In one pit of str. d/2, a globular model pot (Fig. 4.11) was deposited under the neck of a donkey, together with a flint knife (SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 174). It should be noted that model pottery is restricted to the context of offering pits (see also above, tomb offering pit). It is entirely absent from the tomb chambers.

3. CEMETERY AND SETTLEMENT: FUNERARY HOMOGENEITY

Our knowledge of Egyptian pottery continues to derive primarily from cemetery sites. Once the settlement pottery of the strata d/2 and d/1 at Tell el-Dab^ca is fully analyzed, it will offer the rare opportunity to compare the ceramic corpus of contemporary cemeteries and settlements.¹² The particular importance lies in the fact that we are not only dealing with material from the same period and the same site, but

most likely from the same community. The archaeological relationship between cemeteries and settlements is rarely addressed from the point of view of material culture,¹³ primarily due to the lack of excavated settlement sites. A case study for such a comparison was undertaken by J. BOURRIAU in her discussion of pottery from the Upper Egyptian sites of Ballas and Qurna dating to the late Second Intermediate Period and the early New Kingdom (BOURRIAU 1986/87). Her basic observation that the settlement corpus is much larger, “in every respect, quantitatively and qualitatively” (BOURRIAU 1986/87, 55), holds true for Tell el-Dab^ca as well. J. BOURRIAU identified three groups among the settlement pottery which were absent in the cemetery pottery: (1) trays for bread production, (2) a specific group of large storage jars and (3) Nubian pottery, both coarse cooking ware and fine ware. Conversely, two classes are present in the cemetery material, which are absent, or underrepresented, in the settlement material. Both at the Upper Egyptian sites and at Tell el-Dab^ca, the cemetery corpus is clearly a selection of the pottery produced for the settlement. Fig. 7¹⁴ attempts to illustrate this point. In addition, the relationship to two further ‘corpora’ is shown, namely the pottery from tombs of the residential elite¹⁵ and the pottery of the large cemeteries at Riqqeh and Harageh.

The largest ellipse with the lightly speckled interior contains pottery from the settlement at Tell el-Dab^ca. The smaller shaded circle contained in it, represents the selection of shapes from the settlement

¹² The strata under discussion are the earliest where both settlement and cemetery have been excavated. For the earlier MK material, only the settlements are known (see CZERNY, RVa and b).

¹³ For a recent discussion of the potential of comparing cemeteries and settlements, from a historical-archaeological perspective, see SEIDLMEYER 2006.

¹⁴ The pots shown in fig. 7 are from the following publications: central shaded circle, cemetery Tell el-Dab^ca: from the top: dipper juglet, SCHIESTL 2009, Abb. 94, 368.2; medium-sized dish, IDEM 2009, Abb. 252.6; large dish, IDEM 2009, Abb. 352.8; hemispherical drinking cup, IDEM 2009, Abb. 62, 352.4; globular jar with flaring neck, IDEM 2009, 184.2; large beer bottle, IDEM 2009, Abb. 248.4; stand, IDEM 2009, Abb. 300.5; large water jar (zir), IDEM 2009, Abb. 308.14; top right, Canaanite jar, IDEM 2009, Abb. 338.18; settlement ellipse, outside of cemetery circle, from top left to bottom: bread mould and straight sided cooking pot, ASTON 2004, pl. 186, no. 675; pl. 149, no. 591; globular cooking pot with thickened rim, KOPETZKY 2007/8, fig. 5, no. 59; carinated bowl, BADER 2001, Abb. 11d and EADEM 2002, fig. 5; jar with multiple spouts/protuberances, ASTON 2004, pl. 181, no.

664; straddling settlement ellipse and the two lower ellipses: bag-shaped jar, BADER 2001, Abb. 24e; EADEM 2002, fig. 7; ellipse with Riqqeh-Harageh corpus, from top left to bottom right: hyperboloid bowl, ENGELBACH 1923, pl. XXXIV.5L2; conical cup, pl. XXXIV.5M; model canopic style jar, IDEM 1923, pl. XXXVIII.56B; model carinated jar, IDEM 1923, pl. XXXIX.61B; model ovoid jar, pl. XXXIX.59Y4; model hes-jar, IDEM 1923, pl. XXXIX.59B2; beaker, IDEM 1923, pl. XXXIX.67N; canopic style jar, IDEM 1923, pl. XXXVIII.54T; ovoid jar with short neck, IDEM 1923, pl. XXXIX, 57L; wavy neck jar, IDEM 1923, pl. XXXVIII.49M; ellipse tombs of residential elite: Dahshur, deep bowl, ALLEN 2000, fig. 1.4; EADEM 1998, fig. 2.11; carinated jar with flat base, EADEM 1998, fig. 2.7; bottle, EADEM 2000, fig. 2.1; EADEM 1998, fig. 2.5; carinated jar with round base, EADEM 2000, fig. 2.3; EADEM 1998, fig. 2.3.

¹⁵ The residential elite is here defined as members of the royal court, buried in vicinity to the royal tomb. Specifically, I have chosen pottery published by S. Allen from tombs surrounding the pyramid of Senwosret III at Dahshur, dating from the period of late Senwosret III and Amenemhet III (ALLEN 2000, EADEM 1998).

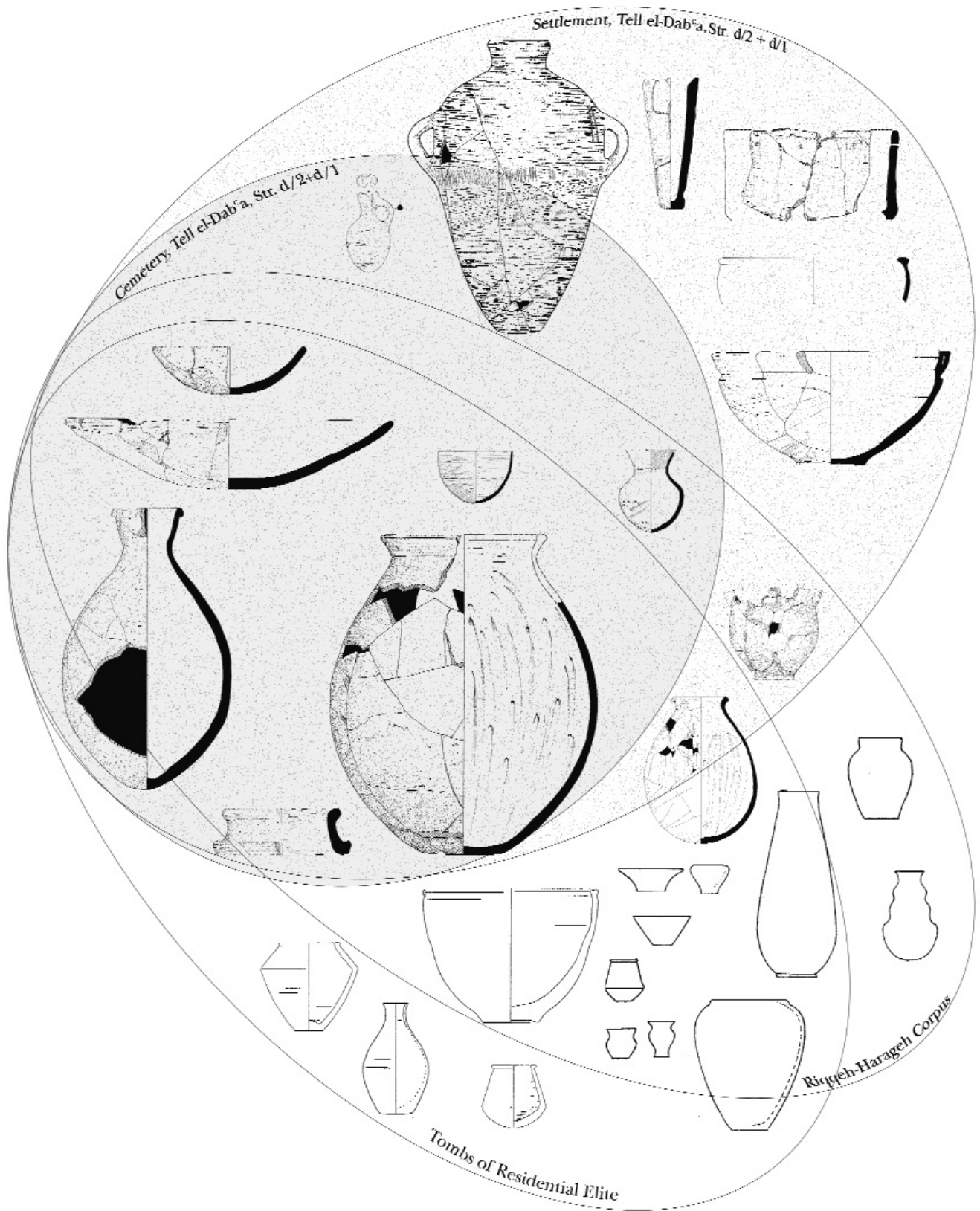


Fig. 7 The pottery from tombs at Tell el-Dab^a, str. d/2 and d/1, in comparison to contemporary settlement pottery from Tell el-Dab^a, the 'Riqqeh-Harageh corpus' and tombs of the residential elite, pottery 1:10; for detailed information on the pottery, see footnote 14

corpus which forms the pottery used in the cemetery. What the illustration emphasizes is that settlement pottery is the core of MK cemetery pottery of this period. Before discussing the illustration in detail, three points need to be made: First, the illustration itself is highly selective, as it only serves to emphasize the point of what is shared and what is not. Second, the proportions of the ellipses are not correct: the settlement ellipse should be much bigger in proportion to the Tell el-Dab^{ca} cemetery circle. Third, the illustration only shows presence or absence of shapes, and does not address the crucial point of quantity.

The settlement pottery not included in the cemetery corpus falls into two main categories: The first category is functional vessels used in the household, such as tubular bread-moulds (III.G.1) and cooking vessels (III.F). Of the latter, two classes are present in the settlement: straight walled hand made Levantine cooking vessels and globular vessels with a rolled or modelled rim. While this exclusion may seem obvious, it is by no means an iron clad rule. Bread moulds for example have been documented at MK cemeteries, where they may have been used as containers for the bread offered or as symbolic representations of bread offerings.¹⁶ The second category is less easily defined. It contains numerous classes of open and closed vessels which are not documented in the cemetery. Notable in particular is the much greater range of different types of bowls found in the settlement.¹⁷ The depicted piece is a carinated bowl made of Marl C;¹⁸ the rest of the cited examples are made of Nile fabric. The Marl C bowl, and many of the other cited bowls, is by no means rare among settlement material. No reason why specific bowls and dishes were excluded can be offered. To state the obvious: The great variety of classes among the settlement material contrasts starkly with the reduced range in the cemetery, emphasizing the process of selectivity. A result of this process is a 'funerary homogeneity', that is, a high degree of similarity between the individual tomb assemblages from one cemetery.

Moving beyond the particular site, comparing Tell el-Dab^{ca} to other regional cemeteries would suggest itself. Remarkably, there are none available. Even today, this cemetery remains the only fully published cemetery of the MK from the Delta. In short, no local or regional comparanda exist. It therefore also remains impossible to verify whether the Delta constituted a distinct cultural region in the FIP and earlier MK, as suggested by J. BOURRIAU (1991, 5). While her regional model was borne out for the other regions, namely Memphis-Faiyum, Middle Egypt, Upper Egypt and Aswan, the Delta lacks those classes of objects (coffins, statues, stelae, pottery) which could serve as evidence. Moving to the supra-regional level, it becomes clear, however, that the funerary homogeneity is observable all over the country.¹⁹ If we take only the Egyptian pottery, which remains the bulk of the cemetery assemblage, into consideration and, for the time being, leave the Levantine imports out of the picture, nothing sets the Tell el-Dab^{ca} Egyptian pottery apart from that of other Egyptian sites. J. Bourriau has described the phenomenon of "cultural homogeneity of the late Middle Kingdom" as the result of the disappearance of local funerary traditions (BOURRIAU 1991, 9). While this is clearly the case, one wonders to what extent settlements of this period exhibit the same homogeneity. If, hypothetically, settlements had maintained regional traditions in this period, the homogeneity of the funerary culture would be even more remarkable. The tomb sets would not have been chosen from country-wide homogenous settlement material, but would represent the local implementation of a 'national' concept of 'funerary homogeneity'.

Some vessels, which are documented in the settlement, but not found in the cemetery, are also found in the Riqqeh-Harageh corpus, such as the ovoid jar with multiple protuberances or spouts (ASTON 2004, pl. 181, group 161; ENGELBACH 1923, pl. XL.70G-70G3). Another closed vessel not documented in the Tell el-Dab^{ca} cemetery, but found in other tombs of

¹⁶ For example at Dahshur, site of the Mastaba of Siese (SCA excavation, information kindly provided by A. Okasha) at the cemetery of Asyut (BM 4582) and Deir el-Bersha (OP DE BEECK/PEETERS/WILLEMS, RV, fig. 17).

¹⁷ ASTON 2004, 59–60, 67, 74, 78–79, 81–82, 90; pl. 7–8, 12, 23–24, 32, 37, 39, 52; group 9, 11, 18, 32, 42, 47–48, 59a

¹⁸ BADER 2001, Abb. 11d; EADEM 2002, fig. 5; ASTON 2004, 90, pl. 52, group 59a.

¹⁹ Admittedly, the data is not balanced, as we lack large Middle and Upper Egyptian cemeteries of the late MK (A III-mid 13th D) on the scale and level of publication of the Riqqeh-Harageh cemeteries. The evidence available, however, from cemeteries at such sites as Thebes (SEILER 2005), el-Kab (QUIBELL 1898a), el-Hosh (Hendrickx/Huyge, pers. comm.) confirms the above outlined homogeneity. Cemeteries from Nubia can be cited in this respect as well, such as Mirgissa (VILA 1975; KNOBLAUCH 2008) and Buhen (RANDALL-MACIVER/WOOLLEY 1911).

this period is the medium sized bag-shaped Marl C jar (BADER 2001, Abb. 24e; EADEM 2002, fig. 7), shown straddling the settlement ellipse and the two lower cemetery ellipses. While not found in the contemporaneous Tell el-Dab^{ca} cemetery material, it is present in other necropoleis of that period and is incorporated into the cemetery corpus at Tell el-Dab^{ca} by the following str. c (BADER 2001, 108–121). They serve as examples for a fluctuation between these assemblages – the borders of the ellipses can shift. Two factors stimulating such fluctuations are time and status. As concerns the first, by the following str. c (KOPETZKY 1993; EADEM, RV), for example, the cemetery repertoire has been broadened by the addition of more shapes from the settlement repertoire. Concerning the second, a trickledown effect is observable regarding the distribution of some shapes. In the MK there is a small group of pottery which is exclusively funerary in purpose and ownership of these shapes is socially highly restricted. These shapes are represented in the lower right part of the ‘residential elite ellipse’. This group of pottery, called Pyramid Ware (Do. ARNOLD 1982, 57–58) or Queen’s Ware and discussed in detail by S. ALLEN (RV; EADEM 1998), is characterized by its shapes, harking back to the Early Dynastic period and the OK, and its fabric, in particular the red burnished surface treatment. These pots are separate from the settlement corpus, but also distinct from other funerary corpora. This group of pots is originally restricted to members of the royal family and very elite private individuals. Over the course of time, however, the social exclusivity was reduced, and some shapes were incorporated into the assemblages of less elite private individuals (ALLEN, RV; SCHIESTL 2009, 173–176). Tell el-Dab^{ca}, however, was never reached by these developments.

What sets the Tell el-Dab^{ca} cemetery material apart from other contemporary cemetery corpora

are two things: First, it is the absence of particular groups of funerary vessels, such as the ‘democratized Pyramid Ware’ and others, which are found in the Riqqeh-Harageh corpus. An example is the range of model vessels, often representing, en miniature, the exclusive shapes of Pyramid Ware (shown in Fig. 7 in the overlap of the residential elite ellipse and the Riqqeh-Harageh ellipse). As models these shapes were less exclusive and within reach of larger groups in society. This tradition passes Tell el-Dab^{ca} by entirely. Two globular model vessels, however, were discovered in offering pits (Fig. 4.10–11), and constitute the only shape which is found in the cemetery at Tell el-Dab^{ca} and not in the contemporary settlement. The second point distinguishing the Tell el-Dab^{ca} cemetery corpus is the substantial amount of imported Syro-Palestinian pottery. As this group of pottery was part of the settlement repertoire, its use in the cemetery is entirely in keeping with the principle of choosing from the settlement pottery. This point is emphasized by the fact that both the (proportional) quantity and the range of shapes of imported pottery are larger in the settlement than in the cemetery, much as is the case with Egyptian pottery. In this phase, the Levantine imports do not seem to replace Egyptian shapes in the cemetery, but seem to be added on to ‘intact’ Egyptian assemblages. Be that as it may, their presence in the Tell el-Dab^{ca} tombs dilutes the picture of funerary homogeneity. In archaeology we have the privilege of being able to look into the future and thus realize that we are observing the beginning of a development with far reaching consequences: time will show that eventually from this specific mixture of imported and local pottery, a distinct regional corpus will be created, thus clearly marking the end of homogeneity and establishing a distinct cultural region.

List of Clays for Pottery on Figures 1–6

Fig. 1:

- 1) 7233, F/I-p/19-tomb 1, tomb pit; Nile B1; p;
- 2) 7028, F/I-o/21-tomb 20, Nile B2, plain; smoked, used as lamp;
- 3) 5983, F/I-n/21-tomb1, Nile B2, red coated, inside and outside
- 4) 7047, F/I-p/19-tomb 1, tomb pit, Nile B2, red coated inside and outside
- 5) 5996, F/I-o/19-tomb 8, Nile C1, red coated inside and upper half outside
- 6) 5980, F/I-n/20-tomb 2, Nile C2; plain
- 7) 5991, F/I-o/19-tomb 6, Nile B2, red coated outside and neck on inside;
- 8) 6101, F/I-n/21-tomb 10, Nile C2, red coated

Fig. 2:

F/I-n/17-tomb 3:

- 1) 7270, Nile B1; red rim
- 2) 7271, Nile B2; red rim
- 3) 7273, Nile B1; red rim
- 4) 7268, Nile C2; plain
- 5) 7269, Nile C2; plain
- 6) 7272, Nile C2; plain;
- 7) 7267, Nile C2; plain

Fig. 3:

- 1) 7271, F/I-n/17-tomb 3; Nile B2; red rim
- 2) 7282, F/I-o/17-tomb 1; Nile B1; red rim
- 3) 5915H, F/I-m/18-tomb 12; Nile B1; red rim
- 4) 7279, F/I-o/17-tomb 1; Nile B1; red rim
- 5) 5912, F/I-m/18-tomb 3, superstructure; Nile B2; red rim
- 6) 5915, F/I-m/18-tomb 3, superstructure; Nile B2; red rim
- 7) 7062D, F/I-p/21-tomb 1, superstructure; Nile B1; red rim
- 8) 8942X, F/I-p/18-offering pit 3; Nile B1; red rim
- 9) 5904, F/I-m/18-tomb 3, Northern chamber; Nile C2; red coated
- 10) 5908, F/I-m/18-tomb 3, superstructure; Marl C; plain
- 11) 6444, F/I-l/19-tomb 1, chamber; Marl C; plain

Fig. 4:

1–8: From superstructures of tombs:

- 1) 5915, F/I-m/18-tomb 3, Nile B2; red rim

- 2) 6178F, F/I-m/18-tomb 3; Nile B1; plain
- 3) 6246, F/I-m/18-tomb 3; Nile C2; plain
- 4) 6179, F/I-m/18-tomb 3; Nile C2; plain
- 5) 6178A, F/I-l/19-tomb 1; Nile C2; plain
- 6) 6443, F/I-l/19-tomb 1; Nile C2; plain
- 7) 6247G, F/I-m/18-tomb 3; Nile C2; plain
- 8) 6247F, F/I-m/18-tomb 3; Nile C2; plain

9–11: From offering pit

- 9) 8942Y, F/I-p/18-offering pit 3; Nile B2; plain
- 10) 7032B, F/I-p/18-offering pit 3; Nile C2; plain
- 11) 5988, F/I-o/18-animal offering pit 3; Nile C1; red coated

Fig. 5:

1–7: From entrance pits with animal offerings:

- 1) 7275A, F/I-p/17-tomb 14; Nile B2; plain
- 2) 7275, F/I-p/17-tomb 14; Nile B2; plain
- 3) 6440, F/I-m/19-tomb 22; Nile C2; plain
- 4) 7346, F/I-m/17-tombs 1 and 2; Nile C2; plain
- 5) 6247, F/I-m/18-tomb 3; Nile C2; plain
- 6) 6248A, F/I-m/18-tomb 3; IV-2; plain
- 7) 7299, F/I-o/19-tomb 6; IV-2; plain

8–10: In SW corner of tomb pit, outside of tomb chamber

- 8) 7047, F/I-p/19-tomb 1; Nile B2, red coated inside and outside
- 9) 7233, F/I-p/19-tomb 1; Nile B1; p;
- 10) 4960, F/I-m/20-tomb 23; Nile B2; red coated upper part
- 11) On top of roof of vaulted chamber
- 11) 7276A, F/I-m/17-tomb 1 and 2; Nile C1; plain

12: in SW corner of vault;

- 12) 6034, F/I-o/21-tomb 4, Nile B2; red coated inside and outside

Fig. 6:

- 1) 7062G, F/I-p/21-tomb 1, superstructure; IV-2-b, burnished inside;
- 2) 7027A, F/I-o/20-tomb 20; IV-2; red coated burnished
- 3) 7259, F/I-o/17-tomb 5; IV-1-2; plain
- 4) 7258A, F/I-o/17-tomb 5; IV-2; red decoration
- 5) 5894, F/I-m/18-tomb 3, Southern chamber; IV-3; plain
- 6) 5709, F/I-m/18-tomb 3, Northern chamber; IV-1-2; plain