

APPENDIX
EGYPTIAN POTTERY FROM THE CEMETERY
AT EL-GAMAMIYA

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The pottery assemblage from the Kerma-Culture cemetery at El-Gamamiya has yielded ceramics imported from Egypt: one

complete vessel and fragments of at least two others. The vessel is a medium-sized globular pot, the others are sherds from different jars.¹

POT FROM EL-GAMAMIYA 19

A globular pot (GM19/2/07) was found intact in the burial of a child (*infans* II) excavated inside the tumulus tomb T.1 (see above, report on El-Gamamiya by P. Osypiński in this volume). The globular jar with profiled rim and characteristic hollowing on the inside (height 21 cm, maximum body diameter 19.3 cm, rim diameter 9.3 cm) was turned on the wheel using clay classified as Marl A2 in the Vienna classification system (Nordström and Bourriau 1993). Body and rim were formed separately and joined together in the neck part, the seam still visible on the inside. Exterior surface (5YR 5/6 yellowish red) is polished [*Fig. 1*].

The pot is a very typical representative of what the author working on the pottery material from Elephantine has termed as *Elephantine Pink Ware* (Rzeuska 2009a).

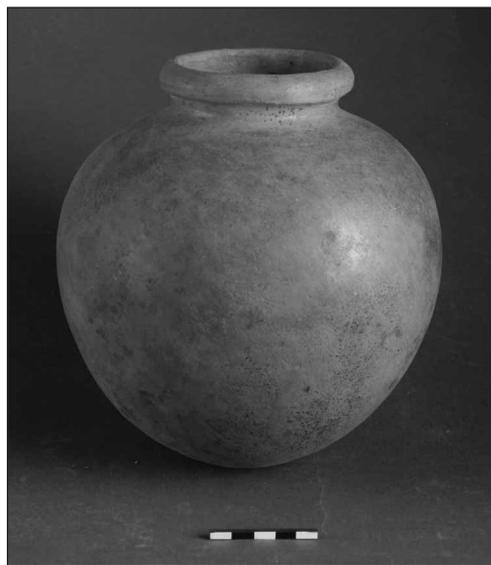


Fig. 1 Globular pot GM19/2/07 from burial T.1 (Photo P. Osypiński)

¹ The author has not had the opportunity to examine this material in person and has based her remarks on documentation, written, drawn and photographed, made available by Dr. D. Bagińska.

Pottery of this type made its appearance in the early years of the Twelfth Dynasty and remained popular through the end of the Middle Kingdom. It was undoubtedly one of the most elegant and high quality vessels in use at the time. At first the shape repertoire was limited to various types of medium-sized globular pots, most frequently with a short neck and profiled rim featuring a characteristic hollowing on the inside, exactly like the pot found at El-Gamamiya. The differences were reduced to rim shape and a bigger or smaller diameter. Over time new forms appeared, including, in the second half of the Twelfth Dynasty, jars with slightly flaring rim which could be either rounded or flat and wide, jars with ovoid body, bowls on ring bases with a characteristic inner ledged rim, plates with straight rim and round base, and potstands, the latter two types being much rarer than the others. Vessels representing *Elephantine Pink Ware* are almost always turned on the wheel (potstands of various kinds are an exception to this rule), the bottoms string-cut and smoothed by hand to obliterate practically all traces of forming. The fine exterior surface — which is pink, yellow, cream or a merging of all of the above — is almost always polished, less often burnished. With regard to restricted forms, such as all kinds of jars, only the exterior was meticulously polished; in plates it was the inside of the vessel. It should be emphasized that while jars had the exterior usually well finished, in the case of open forms the exterior was treated perfunctorily, at least when compared to the closed shapes. The

technological uniformity and homogeneity of the ceramics suggest that a single workshop or group of workshops could have been responsible for the manufacture. Hitherto, however, it has proved impossible to determine where the vessels of this type were produced. Considering that Marl A2 is typical of Upper Egypt, it is thought that the manufacturing center was at Thebes (Bourriau 2004: 12), but the Aswan region is also a distinct possibility. This is suggested not only by the quantities of ceramics of this ware found on Elephantine, but primarily perhaps by the richness of the repertoire encompassing beside the open forms, which are found at other sites of the period, also plates representing tableware.²

Pots of *Elephantine Pink Ware* must have been a coveted luxury good considering how widespread they are. They have been recorded in assemblages far from Egypt, extending from the Levantine coast, e.g. Sydon (Doumet-Serhal 2006: 39, Fig. 13; Forstner-Müller, Kopetzky 2006), as far as Nubia (Privati 2000: Fig. 138; Bourriau 2004; Junker, Toschke: PL. XXII, Nos 355–357; Bietak 1968: 188, Pl. 19, Nos X.3–5 *Hellpolierte Ware*; Dunham 1982: 175, Pl. XIVc from tomb K5611, 187, Pl. XXVIa from tomb M41). They are, therefore, a precise chronological maker synchronizing Nubia with Egypt of the Middle Kingdom. The vessel from the El-Gamamiya cemetery originates from the beginnings of the Twelfth Dynasty and can be dated to the *Kerma Moyen I* phase distinguished at the Kerma cemeteries (Bourriau 2004: 3–4).

2 The author has been working on pottery from the Middle Kingdom within the framework of a project for the study of ceramics from the German Archaeological Institute's excavations on Elephantine since 1998; a final report on this pottery is being prepared for publication in the *Elephantine* series.

FRAGMENTS OF JARS FROM EL-GAMAMIYA 55

Fragments found on the surface of tumulus T.1 (GM55/9/07) represent at least two different types of vessels [Fig. 2]. Three pieces: a slightly flaring rim and two body sherds come from a biconical jar. No joins

between the pieces exclude a determination of whether they are from a single vessel or more. The differing exterior coloring of the sherds could suggest two different jars, but it should be remembered that sherds from the

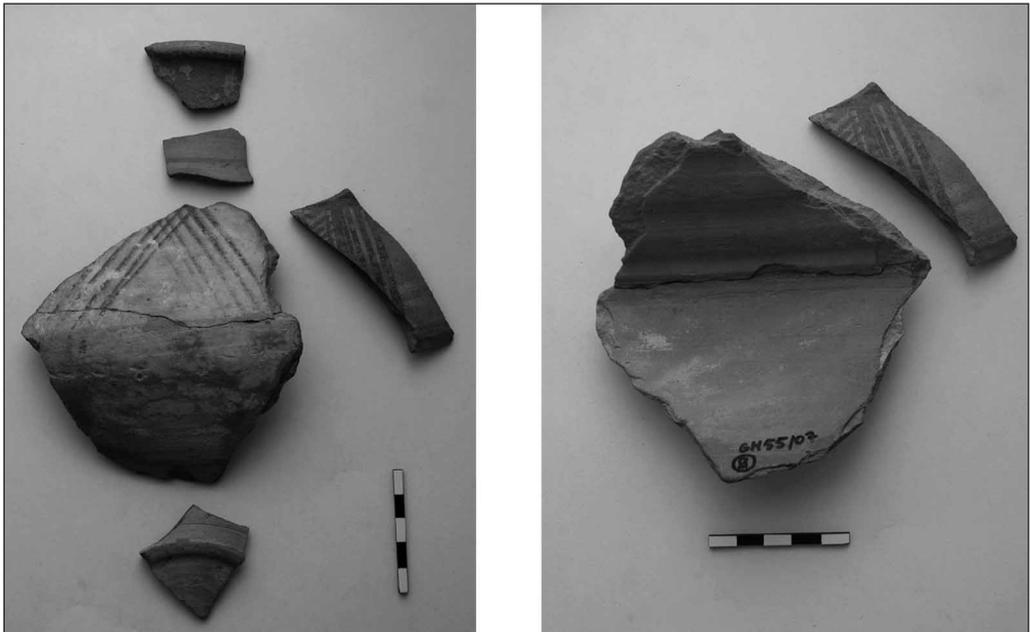


Fig. 2. Jar fragments GM55/9/07 from the surface of tumulus T.1, exterior and interior views (Photo P. Osypiński)

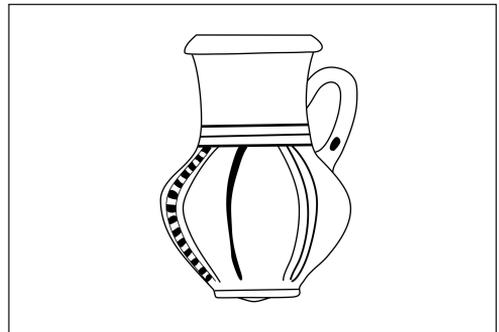
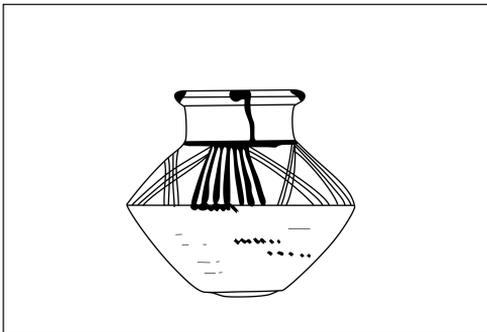


Fig. 3. Reconstruction of Egyptian jars from El-Gamamiya (Drawing D. Bagińska; digitizing E. Czyżewska)

same pot can react differently to external factors like soil, sun, water and salt etc., and after lying for a few thousand years could look different. The vessels were wheel-made in separate pieces: the two parts of the body then joined at the carination, and the neck. In a manner typical of the kind of clay, Marl A2 or A4 according to the Vienna Classification system, the exterior is covered with scum, a thin coating that forms automatically on the surface of a vessel during the drying process. The vessel was painted before firing. The bottom part of the neck bears one horizontal band, the upper shoulders are covered with a pattern consisting of two alternate motifs: six vertical lines and an X-shaped cross composed of two crossing sets of six lines each [Fig. 3, left]. This kind of decoration is very typical of the early Eighteenth Dynasty, corresponding to the late *Kerma Classique*–early Late Kerma phase (Bourriau 1981: 135, no. 264; Edwards 2004: 94–97, 102). Analogous vessels are often found in Nubia (Holthoer 1977: 136–137, 141, Pl. 31, type CV 1 broad-necked).

The neck and bottom can belong to a single vessel made on the wheel of Marl A4 clay. The ring base was thrown on the wheel, pointing to the times after the Second Intermediate period. Three painted

horizontal lines appear on the lower part of the neck: a red one is sandwiched between black ones. The decoration is typical of medium-sized jars with rounded rim, straight broad neck, globular body and ring-base (Holthoer 1977: 92–93, 95–96, Pl. 21, type JU 1 ordinary). Assuming the reconstruction is correct, it should have had a handle from the neck to the shoulders [Fig. 3, right]. The body was decorated probably with vertical lines. It is not to be excluded, however, that the neck comes from an entirely different pot, that is, a tall jar with straight rim, slightly flaring body and rounded bottom, decorated in the upper part with horizontal red and black lines. This kind of bichrome decoration, occasionally adorned with large-size dots on the color bands, “swallows on a wire”, is typical of the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty, that is, the reigns of Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III (Bourriau 1981: 78–79, no. 150). Vessels of this type were extremely popular in Egypt and a large quantity is known from Nubia (Holthoer 1977: Pl. 21, type JU 1 ordinary, IIP).

In conclusion, the vessel from the burial itself comes from the early Twelfth Dynasty, while the fragments found on top of the funerary mound are from the first half of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

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