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## Temple of Hatshepsut : Pottery from Excavations in the Royal Mortuary Cult Complex : Seasons 2004-2008

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# TEMPLE OF HATSHEPSUT: POTTERY FROM EXCAVATIONS IN THE ROYAL MORTUARY CULT COMPLEX SEASONS 2004–2008

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**Abstract:** Analysis of pottery finds from excavations in the Royal Mortuary Cult Complex has resulted in a preliminary typology of pottery forms from the Temple of Hatshepsut and a chronological classification of the assemblage.

**Keywords:** Deir el-Bahari, Temple of Hatshepsut, Royal Mortuary Cult Complex, Chapel of Hatshepsut, pottery, New Kingdom Period, Third Intermediate period, Coptic material

Work associated with the reconstruction of the Royal Mortuary Cult Complex in the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari (Pawlicki 1995: 53–56; Pawlicki 1996: 70–73; Barwik 2002: 191–194; Barwik 2003: 207–208) necessitated a program of excavations inside the complex to examine wall foundation structure and to check the present condition. The excavations were carried out successively in 2004–2008 [*Fig. 1*].

Inside the Chapel of Hatshepsut, testing revealed two burial shafts, S.7A/82 and S.1/04, hewn in bedrock by the north wall of the chapel. Shaft S.7A/82, which had been discovered (but not excavated) already in 1983, proved to be 6 m deep.

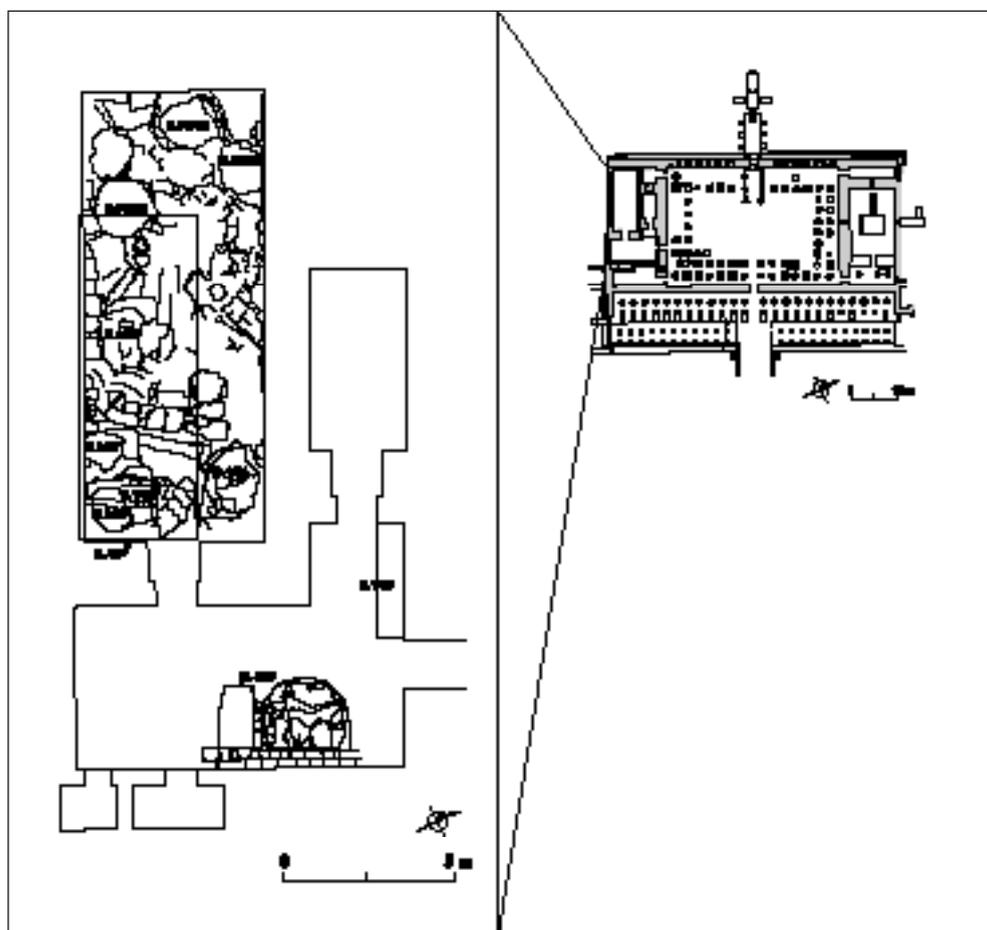
It led to an undecorated burial chamber. The fill contained remains of Third Intermediate Period burial equipment mixed with New Kingdom and Coptic material (Szafrński 2005: 226–229).<sup>1</sup> The other shaft, S.1/04, was situated close to the northeastern corner of the Chapel. The assemblage from the shaft was mixed with Coptic remains in the uppermost part (Szafrński 2005: 230). A third shaft from the Third Intermediate Period, S.7B/82, was discovered earlier, but was not excavated until 2005. It was located by the south wall of the chapel, close to the corner with the west wall. The tomb appears to have been plundered in modern times. The evidence for the original burials placed them

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<sup>1</sup> This material is commonly referred to as Coptic because of the location of a Coptic monastery in the ruins of the temple. This term will be used in this article for the sake of convenience.

in the late Twenty-second, Twenty-third and Twenty-fifth Dynasties (Szafranski 2007: 247–248). Two more shaft tombs, S.7C/82 and S.02/06, both apparently of Third Intermediate Period date, were found in 2006. S.7C/82 was located close to the west wall of the Chapel, next to S.7A/82, while S.02/06 was uncovered in the course of examining the foundations of the south wall of the Chapel (Szafranski

2008: 274–276). Further testing inside the Chapel in 2007, located in the southern part of pavement S/07, uncovered tombs S.1/07, S.2/07 and S.3/07. The Late Roman/Coptic Tomb S.1/07 in the southeastern corner of the Chapel, close to the entrance, covering the base of the south wall, had been tested in 1981/1982; fully excavated now, it produced a mixed archaeological assemblage, dated by the



*Fig. 1. Localization of shafts and trial trenches in the Royal Mortuary Cult Complex of the Temple of Hatshepsut (After T. Kaczor)*

excavator mostly to the early Byzantine period. S.2/07 was located close to the south wall of the Chapel, the shaft leading to a roughly executed and undecorated burial chamber. Shaft tomb S.3/07 was located in the southern corner of the Chapel, beneath the foundation of the south wall and below tomb S.1/07, partly destroyed when S.1/07 was built. The burial chamber was undecorated. Remains of Third Intermediate Period and what was referred to as Coptic material were found

in the fill (Szafrński 2010: 255–259). Trench S.5/07, located by the east wall of the Complex, permitted the building history and present condition of the wall to be examined; no tombs were discovered here (Szafrński 2010: 259–261).

Outside the Chapel, trench S.01/06 dug in 2006 was designed to examine the outer face of the south wall of the chapel. The assemblage derived from New Kingdom times, mixed with Coptic and even Late Roman artifacts (Szafrński 2008: 280).

## CATALOGUE OF SELECTED POTTERY

The pottery from the excavations covered a time horizon from the building and functioning of the Temple of Hatshepsut in New Kingdom times through the period when a Coptic monastery with burial ground was built into the ruins (Neville 1907: 5, Godlewski 1986: 22, 47–48). Pending completion of the excavation work and examination of the whole pottery assemblage, it has been deemed useful to present a preliminary catalogue of vessel forms. It should be noted that the assemblage, while abundant in number, was heavily fragmented; it is dated mainly by parallels as the contexts it came from were disturbed and mixed.

The presentation follows a breakdown by chronological period and type of vessel.

Sherd descriptions include identification of fabric according to the Vienna System (Arnold, Bourriau 1993: 168–182); firing defined as mixed when fractures reveal black or dark gray zones and oxidized when there is no core in the fracture; surface description as either uncoated or coated; in the latter case, ‘slip’ refers to a pre-firing coating and ‘wash’ to a surface when coating is applied after firing. Clay color descriptions follow the Munsell Soil Color Charts (Munsell 1994). Sherd hardness was measured using Mohs’ scale: 1 soft, 2–3 medium hard, 4 hard.

All photos and drawings of the material presented in this report have been prepared by the author.

## NEW KINGDOM

### Flower pots [Fig. 2]

Flower pots were common during the New Kingdom Period and are present at almost all period sites. Even so, their function is not certain. They could have served as containers for dry goods like fruit or for pastes. Holthoer has suggested a function

similar to bread molds: the flower-pot type vessels without a hole in the base held the dough, while upturned vessels with a hole acted as the upper part of the mold, the holes being vents for releasing air from inside the mold during baking. A votive function is also possible, the vessels being

found commonly in graves, together with beer jars (Holthoer 1977: 83).

**DeB HT.28** (trench S.1/06)

Dimensions: H. pres. 8 cm, Diam. base 10 cm, Th. wall 1.1–1.3 cm.

Preservation: base fragment with part of lower body (approx. 5%).

Fabric: Nile B2.

Firing: mixed.

Hardness: 3, medium hard.

Technology: wheel-made.

Surface treatment: uncoated; surface color: exterior 2.5YR 4/8 (red), interior 2.5YR 4/6 (red), fracture color 3/N (very dark clay); porous clay, clearly visible on interior surface.

Description: base, unmodeled, flat, finger prints distinct near the base. Hole in base pierced, prior to firing, roughly from

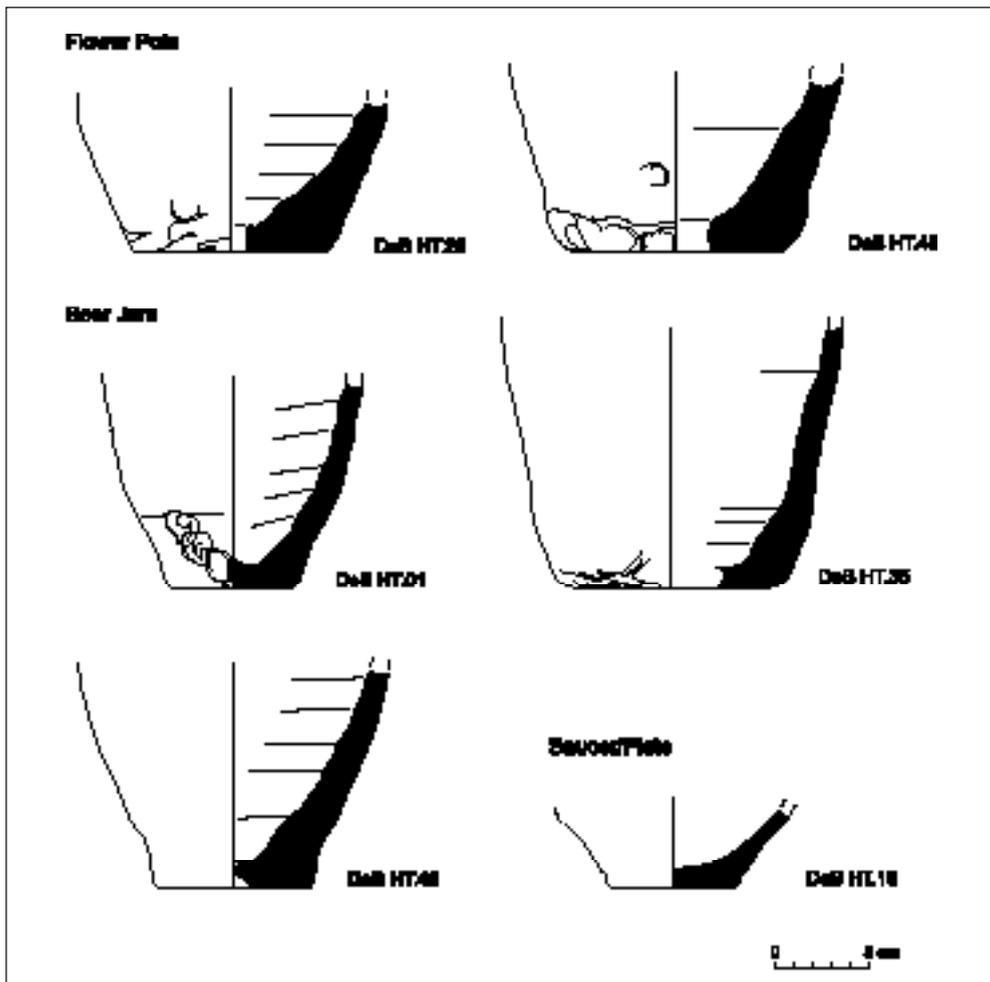


Fig. 2. New Kingdom pottery: flower pots, beer jars and saucer plate

outside to inside (excess clay bulging around hole on the inside of the vessel).

**DeB HT.42** (tomb shaft S.1/04)

Dimensions: H. pres. 9.2 cm, Diam. base 11.4 cm, Th. wall 1.5 cm.

Preservation: base fragment with part of lower body (approx. 7%).

Fabric: Nile B2.

Firing: mixed.

Hardness: 2, medium hard.

Technology: wheel-made.

Surface treatment: uncoated; exterior and interior surface color 7.5YR 5/4 (brown), fracture color 7.5YR 4/2 (brown). Both surfaces smooth.

Description: base, unmodeled, flat, finger prints distinct near base. Hole pierced, prior to firing, with more precision than in example DeB HT.28.

Parallels: Deir el-Bahari, Temple of Hatshepsut, no. 8, discovered in fill behind wall of northern colonnade on the Middle Terrace (Szafranski 1992: 54; 57:8; Szafranski 1995: 63, 65; Daszkiewicz, Jelitto 1992: 65–66, 71–72, 75–78). Classified by Holthoer as FP 2 (1977: 84, Pl. 18); flower pot, Inv. no. 603/6, from Tell Hebua, dated to the Eighteenth Dynasty (Dorner, Aston 1997: 42, Pl. 1:7). Two other fragments from the present assemblage might belong to this type referred to as 'flower pots', but they are preserved in fragments and their attribution is uncertain.

**Beer Jars** [Fig. 2]

Beer jars are the most numerous group of vessels in the examined assemblage: 30 fragments (only lower parts preserved) plus nine sherds that are uncertain due to fragmentary preservation. They were common during the New Kingdom Period

and survived with little change into the Third Intermediate Period. Without full forms and particularly the rims, it is impossible to date these examples more precisely.

Deeply impressed finger prints are characteristic of this form, similarly as in the case of flower pots. Holthoer (1977: 86) has suggested that fingerprints were perhaps intentionally produced to facilitate the holding of a vessel. In Bourriau's opinion, deep finger prints were made in the wet clay when lifting a heavy vessel from the wheel (Martin *et alii* 1985: 34–35); in support of this idea, one may note that smaller, lighter vessels with thinner walls do not bear such deep impressions. Differences in how deeply finger prints were impressed can be observed on the examples mentioned from the present assemblage: DeB HT.01 does not have as deeply impressed finger prints as the other beer jars.

**DeB HT.01** (trench S/07)

Dimensions: H. pres. 18.8 cm, Diam. base 7 cm, Th. wall 0.9–1.1 cm.

Preservation: base with part of lower body (25%).

Fabric: Nile B2.

Firing: mixed.

Hardness: 2, medium hard.

Technology: wheel-made.

Surface treatment: uncoated; surface color: exterior 5YR 5/4 (reddish brown), interior 7.5YR 5/4 (brown), fracture color 5Y 2.5/1 (black). Interior surface smooth, exterior rough.

Description: base, unmodeled, flat, cut, deeply impressed finger prints near base.

**DeB HT.35** (tomb shaft S.7B/82)

Dimensions: H. pres. 14.1 cm, Diam. base 12 cm, Th. wall approx. 1 cm.

Preservation: base fragment with part of lower body (30%).

Fabric: Nile B2.

Firing: mixed.

Hardness: 3, medium hard.

Technology: wheel-made.

Surface treatment: uncoated; surface color: exterior 2.5YR 4/6 (red), interior 7.5YR 4/3 (brown), fracture color 2.5YR 5/2 (weak red). Exterior and interior surfaces quite smooth. Traces of later burning on both surfaces and fracture.

Description: base, unmodeled, flat, cut, deeply impressed finger prints near base; base roughly shaped.

**DeB HT.48** (tomb shaft S.1/04)

Dimensions: H. pres. 11.5 cm, Diam. base 8.5 cm, Th. wall 1.0–1.2 cm.

Preservation: base with part of lower body (20%).

Fabric: Nile B2.

Firing: mixed.

Hardness: 3, medium hard.

Technology: wheel-made.

Surface treatment: uncoated; surface color: exterior 10R5/6 (red), interior 10R 4/8 (red), fracture color 5Y 3/1 (very dark gray).

Description: base, unmodeled, flat, cut, very deeply impressed finger prints near base. Roughly made base; irregular narrow hole in vessel bottom.

Comment: Interior surface splashed with a white substance mixed with straw and soil stuck to the wall (substance visible on the fracture), probably after the jar had been broken and deposited in the shaft. The hole or crack(?) in the base was due to careless finishing, the base becoming too thin at this point. An example of a beer jar with similar hole made accidentally during firing is known from Elephantine (Aston 1999: 27 [60. no. 19822a:01], Pl. 3:60).

Parallels: Deir el-Bahari, Temple of Hatshepsut, no. 11, discovered together with 'flower pot' no. 8 in fill behind wall of northern colonnade on the Middle Terrace (Szafranski 1992: 56, 55:11; Szafranski 1995: 63, 65; Daszkiewicz, Jelitto 1992: 66, 73, 74, 75–78). Vessel no. F.6261 from the Temple of Thutmose III at Deir el-Bahari (Rzeuska 2001: 312, 313 Fig. 9); beer jar no. 21877f:02 from Elephantine, phase I, Nineteenth Dynasty (Aston 1999: 16, Pl. 1:4) and nos 19827B:01, 19822a:01, phase IIA, Late New Kingdom (Aston 1999: 26–27, Pls 3:57, 60); red-slipped beer jar from Memphis, from area RAT 238, level I/II, Ramesside Period (Aston, Jeffreys 2007: 40–41, Fig. 23:74); beer jar K94.3 from Asasif from Tomb VI, Eighteenth Dynasty, clay I-b-2 equivalent to Nile B2 (Budka 2010: 571 and Pl. 243).

**Saucer/Plate** [Fig. 2]

**DeB HT.16** (trench S/07)

Dimensions: H. pres. 4.1 cm, Diam. base 6.5 cm.

Preservation: base with fragment of lower body (approx. 40%).

Fabric: Nile B2.

Firing: mixed.

Hardness: 3, medium hard.

Technology: wheel-made.

Surface treatment: exterior surface uncoated, color 2.5YR 4/2 (weak brown), interior surface 7.5YR 4/3 (brown) coated red 10R 5/6 (red), but the coating fragmentary. Fracture color 2.5Y 4/2 (dark grayish brown).

Description: base, unmodeled, flat, roughly made.

Parallels: saucer F8983-14 from the Temple of Thutmose III at Deir el-Bahari, found in the foundation deposit on the Djoser-akhet Platform (Szafranski 1997: 54, 59:4).

Saucer from Rifeh, reign of Thutmosis I (Petrie 1907: Pl. XXVIID, no. 8), classified

by Holthoer as PL 4 – medium deep saucer (Holthoer 1977: 122, Pl. 59:5).

## THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

### Bowl with inverted lip [Fig. 3]

DeB HT.07 (trenches S/07 and S.7B/82)

Dimensions: H. 8.3 cm, Diam. rim 19 cm, Th. wall 0.5–0.7 cm.

Preservation: 90%, complete profile, two sherd fragments missing.

Fabric: Nile B2.

Firing: oxidized.

Hardness: 4, hard.

Technology: wheel-made.

Surface treatment: uncoated; surface color: exterior 10YR 7/3 (very pale brown), interior 2.5YR 6/4 (light reddish brown), fracture color 10R 6/6 (light red).

Description: base, rounded. On exterior surface traces of a black substance (resin), possibly post-depositional.

Parallels: bowl from the Temple of Thutmosis III at Deir el-Bahari, Nile clay B1, uncoated, Third Intermediate Period (Rzeuska 2001: 317 Fig. 13). Bowl no. 19826c:03 from Elephantine, phase IIB, Twenty-second Dynasty, Nile clay B2,

but here interior surface is slipped (Aston 1999: 122, Pl. 35 No. 1082).

### Dish [Fig. 3]

DeB HT.10 (trench S/07)

Dimensions: H 7.6 cm, Diam. rim 19 cm, Diam. base 7 cm, Th. wall 0.8–1.1 cm.

Preservation: 30%, complete profile.

Fabric: Nile B2.

Firing: mixed.

Hardness: 3, medium hard.

Technology: wheel-made.

Surface treatment: uncoated; exterior and interior surfaces color 2.5YR 4/6 (red), fracture color 5Y 3/2 (dark olive gray).

Description: base, unmodeled, flat, cut.

Parallels: dish from Dakhleh Oasis, Twenty-fifth–Twenty-seventh Dynasty (Hope 2004: 113, Fig. 1q); dish no. 17251a:06 from Elephantine, Third Intermediate Period (Aston 1999: 166, Pl. 48:1537); pottery phase III S, Group 4 (Aston 1996: 73, Fig. 216p l,n p. 318); probably base

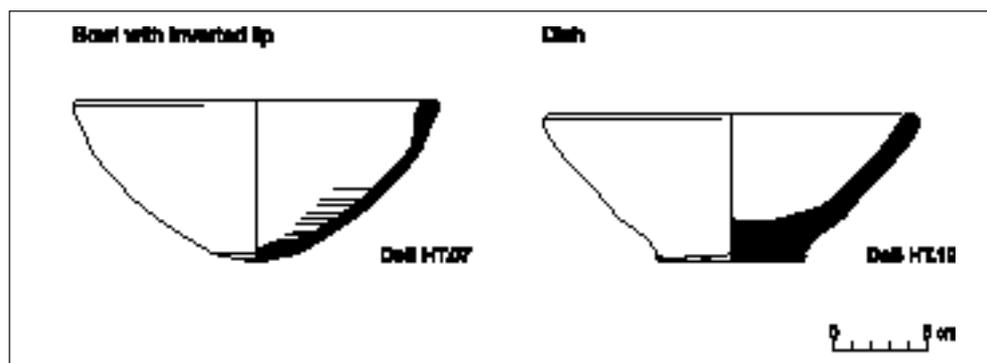


Fig. 3. Third Intermediate Period pottery: bowl with inverted lip and dish

of vessel no. 296 from Memphis, Third Intermediate Period, clay G1 equivalent to Nile clay B2 in the Vienna System, from

deposit RAT-210 dated to the 8th–7th century BC (Aston, Jeffreys 2007: 36, 43, Fig. 33:296).

## 5TH–8TH CENTURIES AD

### Frying pan [Fig. 4]

**DeB HT.08** (trench S/07)

Dimensions: H. pres. 4.4 cm, Diam. rim 33 cm.

Preservation: 1%, rim fragment.

Fabric: Nile C.

Firing: mixed.

Hardness: 4, hard.

Technology: wheel-made.

Surface treatment: uncoated; both surfaces color 2.5YR 4/6 (red), fracture color 2.5YR 4/1 (dark reddish gray).

Parallels: Frying pans fluted inside were often also slipped on the inside, giving a good non-stick surface. Examples from Ashmunein, type D1, were common from the 5th to the 8th century AD (Bailey 1998: 38–39, Pl. 20:D1), E407, context 37:B10 North Pit (Bailey 1998: 68, 126, Pl. 42:E407). Vessels from hermitages in Esna, type A9, clay I (brown chocolate, well-fired clay, with particles of mica and quartz), (Jacquet-Gordon 1972: 10, 16, Pl. CCXIX:9) and type A15, clay Ia (rouge-brown, coarse ware with straw) (Jacquet-Gordon 1972: 11, 16, Pl. CCXIX:15)

### **DeB HT.17** (trench S/07)

Dimensions: H. pres. 6 cm, Diam. rim 11 cm, Th. wall 0.7 cm.

Preservation: rim fragment with part of body (approx 30%).

Fabric: Nile B1.

Firing: oxidized.

Hardness: 3, medium hard.

Technology: wheel-made.

Surface treatment: uncoated; surface color: exterior 5YR 5/6 (yellowish red), interior 5YR 4/6 (yellowish red), fracture color 2.5YR 4/8 (red). Surface splashed with white substance.

Base: missing.

Parallels: Bowls with flat bottom from a hermitages in Esna, type C1, clay I (brown chocolate, well-fired clay, with particles of mica and quartz); used as kitchen pottery, AD 500–550 (Jacquet-Gordon 1972: 7, 10, 17, 89, Pl. CCXX:1).

### Jar [Fig. 4]

**DeB HT.57** (trench S/07, tomb shafts S. 2/07 and S.1/04, trench S.1/06)

Dimensions: H. pres. 38.3 cm, Diam. rim 43.5 cm; Diam. max. 4.5 cm, Th. wall 1.5–1.8 cm.

Preservation: 60% of vessel; base and lower part of body missing.

Fabric: Nile C.

Firing: mixed.

Hardness: 3, medium hard.

Technology: wheel-made.

Surface treatment: coated; slip-covered slip exterior; surface color: exterior 10R 5/8 (red), interior 10R 4/6 (red), fracture color 5Y 3/2 (dark olive gray). Traces of a black substance observed on the wall inside.

Decoration: slip on the rim and below the rim from outside 5–6 cm, color 10R 6/4 (pale red), painted bands on the body and dots on the rim, color 2.5YR 2.5/1 (reddish black). Impressions and fragmentary pre-

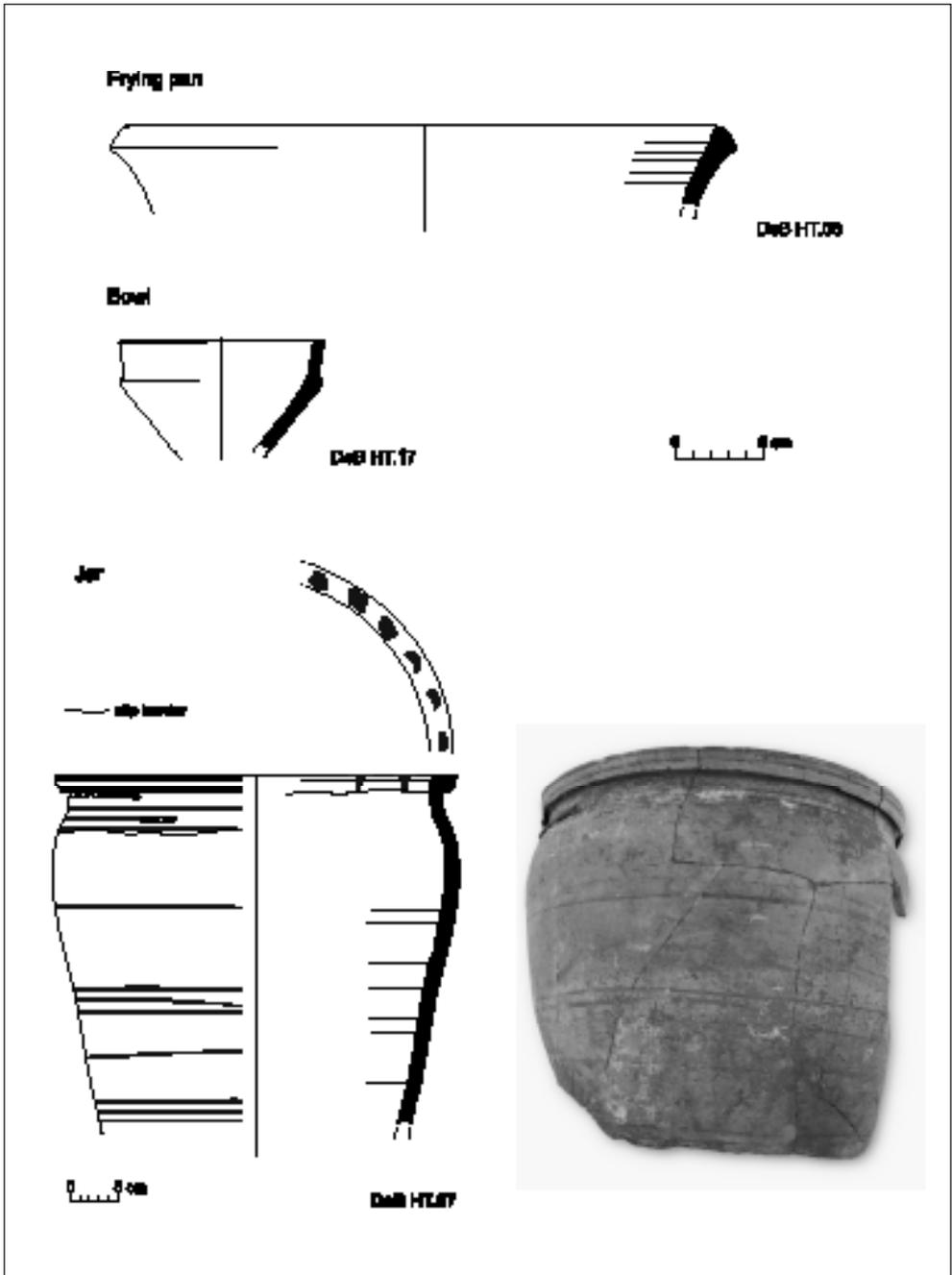


Fig. 4. Pottery of the 5th–8th century AD: frying pan, bowl and painted jar

served piece of strings below the rim on the exterior surface of the vessel.

Parallels: jar from Tod, rim fragment with similar decoration painted on the body, AD 400–550 (Pierrat 1996: 196, Fig. 4:54); examples from a hermitage in Esna, Type G15, AD 500–550 (Jacquet-Gordon

1972: 17, 24, 27, Pl. CCXXIII); jar from Elephantine, type K 502, 3rd–4th century AD, that is, earlier than the examples from Tod and Esna (Gempeler 1992: 180–181, Pl. 113:1).<sup>2</sup> Examples of the same type of vessel were found in Gurna, in tomb 1152 (T. Górecki, personal communication).

## SUMMARY

A preliminary typology of ceramics from the excavations in the Royal Mortuary Cult Complex at the Hatshepsut Temple in Deir el-Bahari was established and a chronological classification was made.

Analysis and documentation of ceramic material in forthcoming seasons will allow more vessel types to be examined in order to complete a detailed typology of pottery from the temple.

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<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Tomasz Górecki, director of the PCMA project in Sheikh Abd el-Gurna, for kindly consulting this find and suggesting the dating

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