

The use of pottery in funerary contexts during the Libyan and Late Period:

A view from Thebes and Abydos

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The use, function and production of pottery often reflect changes and developments on the administrative, social and religious level.¹ Thus, the study of Egyptian pottery during the first millennium BCE might provide interesting insights into various questions raised at the Prague symposium.

Almost two decades ago, David Aston's seminal study on pottery as part of tomb groups from the Late New Kingdom to the Third Intermediate Period was published.² The subtitle of the work, "*Tentative Footsteps in a Forbidden Terrain*", was meant to underline the then meagre state of research and "*the lack of well dated material*".³ Aston referred to a number of new excavations in the 1980s and early 1990s that yielded more material from the time period in question and between his publication in 1996 and today, further Third Intermediate Period pottery has been discovered at various sites all over Egypt.⁴ Especially noteworthy is recent archaeological fieldwork at Thebes and Abydos that has produced relevant material from the Third Intermediate Period up to Ptolemaic times. Nevertheless, the assessment by Aston that "*the study of pottery development during the Third Intermediate Period is still in its infancy*"⁵ still holds true today – especially if one considers the different states of research on periods like the Middle Kingdom or the New Kingdom.⁶ Late Period pottery and ceramics of the Ptolemaic era have received some attention,⁷ but for funerary contexts, especially at Thebes, the current state of both research and publication still falls far short.⁸

Although it is therefore still premature to offer a conclusive analysis of the use of funerary pottery of the first millennium BCE in Egypt, the present paper will highlight some aspects according to material from Thebes and Abydos during the Libyan and the Late Period. The study is based on current fieldwork at

¹ See e.g. Rice, 2005, 466–468; Seiler, 2005, 24.

² Aston, 1996a; this study was part of a Ph.D. dissertation (Aston, 1987), now published as Aston, 2009.

³ Aston, 1996a, 15.

⁴ Cf. Hope, 2001, 44–46.

⁵ Aston, 2009, 317.

⁶ Cf. e.g. Nagel, 1938; Bourriau, 1981; Hope, 1989; Arnold – Bourriau, 1993; Aston, 1998.

⁷ Cf. e.g. French – Ghaly, 1991, 93–124; French, 1992, 83–93; Aston, 1999a.

⁸ Pottery of these periods from Thebes was considered by Lecuyot, 1996, 145–169; Graefe, 2003; see now Budka, 2010a.

both sites: (1) an Austrian-German joint mission in the Asasif and (2) the activities of the German Archaeological Institute Cairo at Umm el-Qaab. The results presented here are offered for discussion and are not to be understood as conclusive, especially since work on material from the second site, Umm el-Qaab, is still in progress.⁹

1. Functional Analysis of Funerary Pottery

There has been a noticeable increase in the functional analysis of Egyptian pottery during the last years, especially for the Old and the Middle Kingdoms and the Second Intermediate Period.¹⁰ Egyptologists have become increasingly aware that functionally pottery from tombs and burials is not restricted to a single use but that it may have various types of use. An Egyptian tomb is *per definitionem* to be understood both as burial place and as cultic place: archaeological features attesting these uses are to be expected.

Consequently, as was, for example, already proposed for Aegean pottery in the 1960s,¹¹ funerary pottery from Egypt may be divided in two main functional classes: (1) pottery from the burial chamber as grave offerings, associated with the burial, and (2) pottery coming from the public area of the tomb and associated with a cult of the dead as ritual items.¹² The distinction between such *burial* and *cultic pottery* is more readily made in theory than in practise, and then most clearly in a specific archaeological context.¹³

In order to reconstruct the possible functional class, the most important aspects to consider are (1) find position, (2) formal aspects including technical features, and (3) traces of use.¹⁴ The find position gives the most important information and even if (2) and (3) indicate a specific function for a vessel, without a documented context the use remains dubious, and *vice versa*: without further ceramological evidence, a find position on its own may be misleading. Thus, only *in situ* finds and their corresponding formal characteristics, technical qualities and traces of use give secure data one can build analogies on. Aside from the necessary distinction between burial and cultic pottery, Seiler pointed out that it is important to consider whether the use of the pottery within its

⁹ I would like to thank the respective directors of these missions: Manfred Bietak (Asasif), and Günter Dreyer and Ute Effland (Umm el-Qaab). For many comments on an early version of this paper and for editing my English I am indebted to Cynthia May Sheikholeslami.

¹⁰ Seiler, 2005, *passim*; for the Old Kingdom: Rzeuska, 2006, *passim*; also Alexanian, 1998, 3–22 (Old Kingdom) and Op de Beeck, 2007, 157–165 (Middle Kingdom).

¹¹ Weinberg, 1965, 187.

¹² Cf. Seiler, 1995, 185–203; Seiler, 2005, 48–52; also Rzeuska, 2006, 428–458 and 511–515.

¹³ Cf. Weinberg, 1965, 187 and 194.

¹⁴ Rice, 2005, 207–243; Seiler, 2005, 46–48; Budka, 2010a, 373–380.

specific funerary context forms part of its prime use or is a reuse application.¹⁵ Equally important would be to take into account whether a ritual act associated with the cultic pottery happened pre-burial, at burial or post-burial. However, in most cases the archaeological evidence does not allow an attribution to a specific activity.¹⁶

Within the group of burial pottery (i.e., pottery used as grave offering), Seiler distinguished three groups: (1) prestigious objects such as imported or decorated vessels, e.g., pilgrim flasks; (2) miniature and model vessels as symbolic reproductions of commodities designed for the dead; and (3) actual containers for provisions.¹⁷ Symbolic and real containers are very well attested and probably show the most common function for funerary pottery in Egypt but such vessels may also have a possible prestigious function which is not as easy to ascertain.¹⁸

The scheme of Egyptian funerary pottery as falling into the two distinct classes of (1) burial pottery and (2) cultic pottery was developed and can be applied to material deriving from elite tombs of the Old Kingdom, the Second Intermediate Period and the New Kingdom.¹⁹ Tombs from these periods feature as distinctive areas (1) non-accessible subterranean burial chambers and (2) space open to the public for the cult of the dead, in most cases superstructures with open courtyards.²⁰ Tombs of the early first millennium BCE are architecturally different from typical New Kingdom tombs – with respect to this differentiation between inaccessible and public space: many Libyan Period burials were intrusive within New Kingdom rock tombs or simple shaft tombs. For the latter, a kind of superstructure can be assumed but has not survived in most cases.²¹ Elite burials in Thebes without a superstructure imply a change in the cult for the dead during the Twenty-First Dynasty.²² Bearing these architectural changes in mind, and on the basis of further consideration, as will be shown in this paper, a strict determination of pottery as grave offering or as cultic item is almost impossible to make for the first millennium BCE.²³ In general, the same types of vessels can have multiple functions, so the analysis has to refer to their individual context and the interpretation often remains uncertain.

¹⁵ Seiler, 2005, 48. For a general definition of the “prime use-life” and “reuse applications” of pottery see Peña, 2007, esp. 322–337.

¹⁶ Seiler, 2005, 51; Budka, 2010a, 390.

¹⁷ Seiler, 2005, 49–50; Budka, 2010a, 381.

¹⁸ Budka, 2010a, 381.

¹⁹ See Rzeuska, 2006, 428; Seiler, 2005, 48–52.

²⁰ Summarized by Kampp, 1996, 8–9.

²¹ Cf. Aston, 2009, 412; Budka, 2010a, 189. For the general lack of preserved superstructures of tombs of Dynasties 21–22 see also Dodson – Ikram, 2008, 270–273.

²² Cf. Dodson – Ikram, 2008, 270; Aston, 2009, 398.

²³ Budka, 2009a, 85–86; Budka, 2010a, 430–431; Budka, forthcoming a.

The distinction between pottery as burial offering or as cult-related object is therefore often an artificial one. In addition, for burials of the early first millennium BCE, evidence for public space for offerings to the dead is limited or missing and the above-mentioned division in burial and cultic pottery faces difficulties. For pottery of the later first millennium BCE, the cultic context further complicates interpretation: during this time period, funerary cult becomes more and more like temple cult, and tombs were considered to be temples or show at least some resemblance to sanctuaries of gods.²⁴ As Assmann has demonstrated, an increasing focus on the other-worldly aspects of the funerary beliefs can be noted since Ramesside times. This 'Osirianisation' is noticeable in the funerary cult, in the tomb architecture and in the tomb equipment which becomes strongly related to afterlife beliefs and finally refers almost exclusively to the funerary sphere in contrast to everyday objects as common burial gifts during the early New Kingdom.²⁵

As will be argued in the following, these major changes and developments in the cult of the dead towards the end of the first millennium BCE in Egypt also affected the use of pottery in funerary contexts. As a consequence, burial pottery and cultic/votive pottery were more and more assimilated and can only be distinguished with difficulty.²⁶ All in all, the above mentioned distinction between *burial* and *cultic pottery* does not seem appropriate for Egyptian funerary pottery dating to the period after 700 BCE.

2. Burial pottery of First Millennium BCE Egypt

"There is a great scarcity of pottery, and no provision of food."²⁷ Today, Guy Brunton's global assumption about burial customs for the general timespan from the Twenty-First – Twenty-Fifth Dynasties until the Ptolemaic Period has given way to a more differentiated evaluation, largely due to the above-mentioned fundamental studies by David Aston, and new excavations that have yielded additional material. Furthermore, funerary pottery is no longer viewed as restricted to a single function as a container for commodities and grave goods, and there is a general awareness of problems connected with identifying the functional use of pottery in tomb contexts. Whether it is possible to distinguish between these uses within certain time periods or at specific sites of the first millennium BCE will be discussed in the following.

²⁴ Cf. Budka, 2010a, 69–71 with references.

²⁵ Cf. Assmann, 1991, 6–8; Quack, 2009, 597–629, esp. 605; Budka, 2010a, 71.

²⁶ Budka, 2009a, 85–86; Budka, 2010a, 430–431.

²⁷ Brunton, 1961, 271 (for the Twenty-First to Twenty-Fifth Dynasties) and 279 (for a similar assumption for the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty until Ptolemaic times). Cf. Aston, 2009, 379–380 for a recent survey of food offerings in tombs of the Third Intermediate Period.

3. Case Study 1: Western Thebes – the Asasif

The part of the Theban necropolis known as the Asasif is situated in front of the cirque of Deir el-Bahari.²⁸ Despite a long history of use, the cemetery especially flourished during the Late Period (eighth to fourth centuries BCE).²⁹ The best known material expression of the necropolis at this time is the monumental “temple-tomb” of the highest officials of the Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth Dynasties in the Asasif (e.g., TT 37 Harwa, TT 34 Montuemhat, TT 197 Padineith, TT 414 Ankh-Hor and TT 27 Sheshonq). Parts of the mud brick superstructures of these huge, temple-like tombs are still well-preserved and have attracted the attention of travellers and scholars since the Eighteenth century CE.³⁰

The Austrian concession

In the eastern part of the Asasif, Austrian excavations directed by Manfred Bietak were undertaken from 1969 to 1977 (Fig. 1).³¹ This work uncovered various types of tombs, mostly dating to the Late Period.³² The major discovery of the mission was the monumental tomb of Ankh-Hor (TT 414, Twenty-Sixth Dynasty).³³ Similar to this type of monumental “temple-tomb” are smaller contemporaneous mud brick chapels with simple types of substructures. More than 20 such chapels were partly excavated in the Austrian concession. The earliest of this type are situated along the so-called Hill 104, dating to the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty.³⁴ The series of structures in the region of the Thutmoside causeway is a little later, dating to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty.³⁵

The ceramic material that comes from these small, temple-like tombs with mud brick chapels and from shaft tombs in the Asasif dates from the late Third Intermediate Period to the Persian Period and up to Ptolemaic and Roman times. Undisturbed find positions are rare since most of the material was recovered from debris; thus, there are some basic problems in attempting a functional analysis.³⁶ As a rule, open shapes are more difficult to assess than closed forms, which were generally used for the storage of various commodities.³⁷

²⁸ Cf. Kampp-Seyfried, 1999, 802; Polz, 2001, 140–142.

²⁹ For an overview of the history of the Asasif see Budka, 2010a, 38–41.

³⁰ For a concise study of these tombs see Eigner, 1984, *passim*.

³¹ Cf. Bietak, 1972; Bietak – Reiser-Haslauer, 1978 and 1982; Budka, 2007, 241–250; Budka, 2010a, *passim*.

³² Cf. Budka, 2010a, 79–164.

³³ Bietak – Reiser-Haslauer, 1978 and 1982; Eigner, 1984, 54–55; Budka, 2008a; Budka, 2009a.

³⁴ Cf. Budka, 2007, 241–242; Budka, 2010a, 186; Budka, forthcoming b.

³⁵ Budka, 2010a, 187.

³⁶ Budka, 2010a, 191.

³⁷ Budka, 2010a, 378.

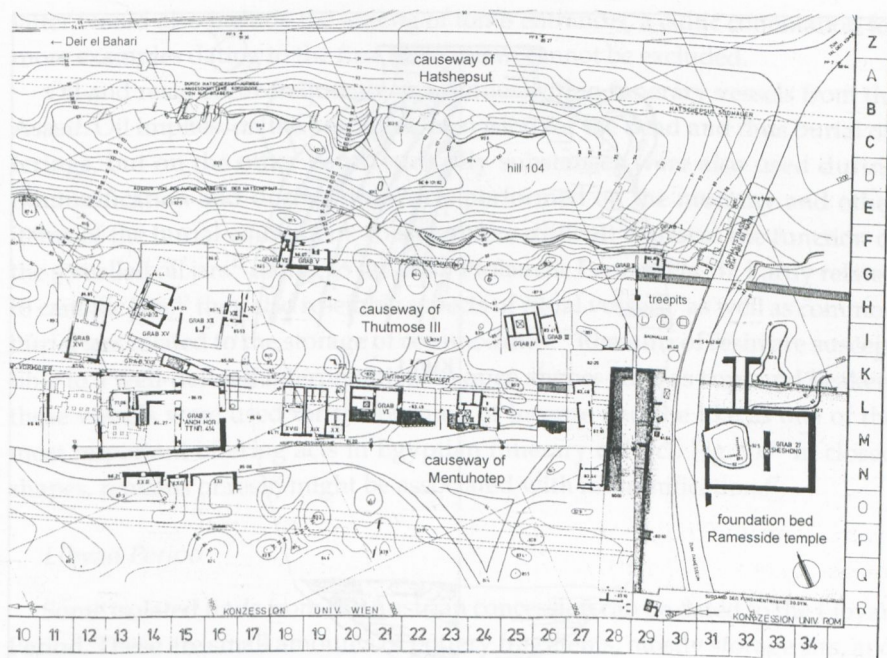


Fig. 1 Plan of the Austrian concession in the Asasif (after Budka, forthcoming b).

Various types of remains of contents were documented inside pottery vessels from the Austrian concession (Fig. 2). The most common residues are oil, bitumen and resin, followed by plaster and gypsum as well as charcoal and embalming material, including human remains and packages of linen. The occurrence of plaster within funerary pottery has already attracted some attention in the context of the Giza necropolis for burials dating to the Old Kingdom and also in Thebes for contexts dating to the Second Intermediate Period and the New Kingdom.³⁸ Several scholars have proposed an at least partially cultic character for these remains.³⁹ In the case of the Late Period pottery in the Asasif, there seems to be no single explanation for these plaster-filled vessels: some might be cult-related,⁴⁰ others clearly fall into a category which may be termed “building pottery” – vessels that are directly connected with the building process of the tomb.⁴¹ Since the

³⁸ See Rzeuska, 2006, 446–448, 515; Seiler, 2005, 117.

³⁹ Cf. Seiler, 2005, 117; Budka, 2010a, 374, note 2121.

⁴⁰ Cf. Budka, 2006a, 90.

⁴¹ Cf. a pot filled with plaster in the quarry at the tomb of Harwa (TT 37), see Tiradritti, 2004, 192; another vessel filled with mortar was found buried below the threshold of the entrance to the subterranean cultic rooms of TT 414, the tomb of Ankh-Hor (Reg. 804, still unpublished); Budka, 2010a, 374–376 (with other examples from the New Kingdom).

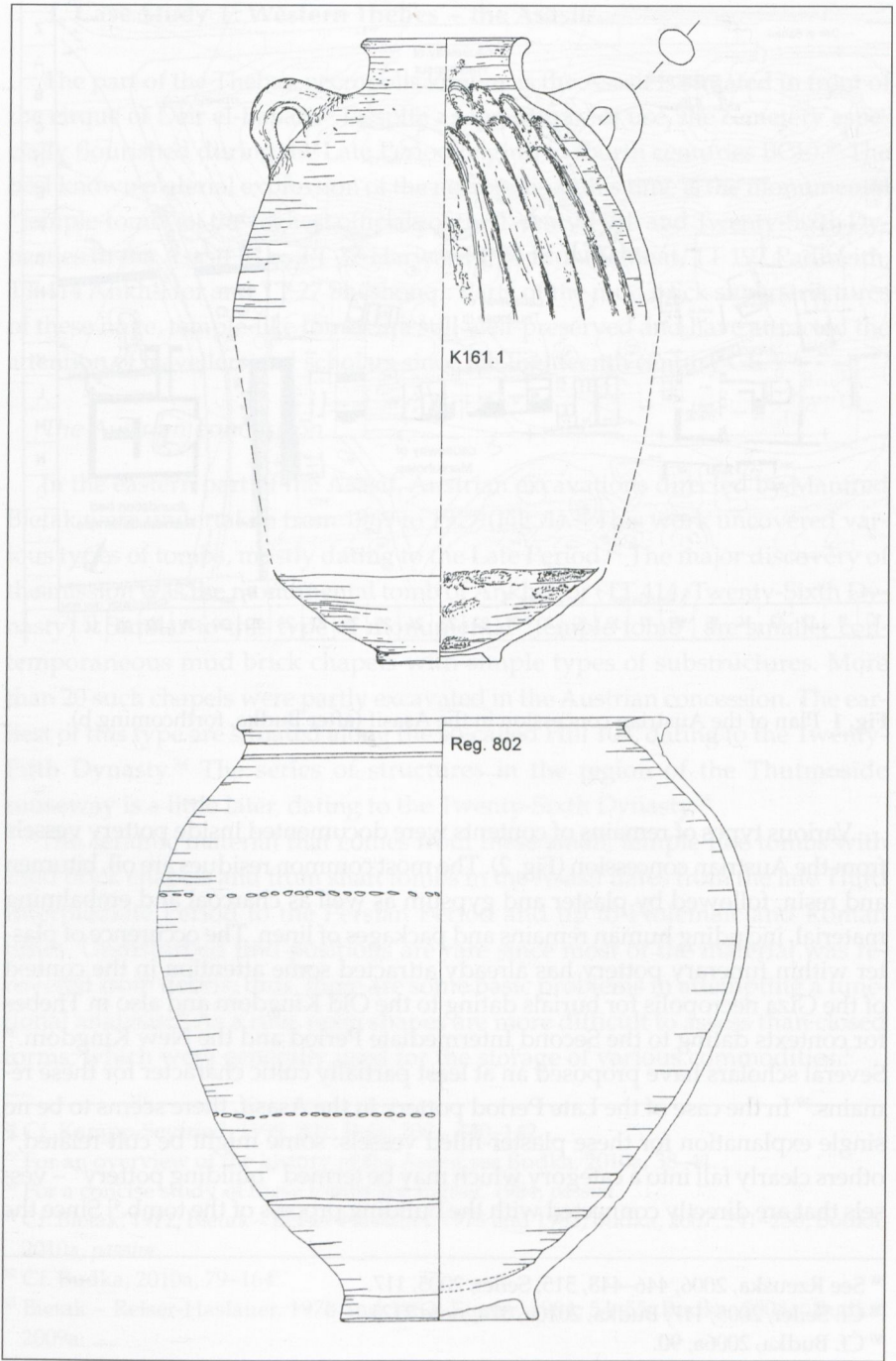


Fig. 2 Examples of pottery vessels with residues from TT 414: K161.1 with plaster; Reg. 802 with bitumen/oil (scale 1:4).

latter would also include the sealing of tomb entrances, a cultic connotation for more examples dating to the first millennium cannot be excluded.

Oil and resin occur frequently as residues within funerary vessels from the Asasif. Oil implies, on the one hand, provision for the dead and thus burial offerings, but on the other hand, such oily substances were also used during mummification and during ritual acts performed on the mummy and other items of the burial equipment. It is therefore difficult to assess the function of the so-called oil jars⁴² dating to the early Ptolemaic Period (Fig. 3). Partly related to canopic jars,⁴³ they also resemble aspects of ritual vessels⁴⁴ as well as common burial jars related to the storage of commodities.⁴⁵ Remains of resin are susceptible to a well-defined interpretation: in open shapes such as cups and beakers these vessels were used for the burning of incense and the like as one of the most important offering acts in Egyptian funerary cult (cf. Fig. 9).⁴⁶ In closed shapes, remains of resin might be associated with mummification.⁴⁷

Libyan Period

Some isolated finds from the Austrian concession can be dated to the Libyan Period. These are small amounts of pottery fragments, mostly storage jars, and some pieces of cartonnage,⁴⁸ coming from reused tombs and intrusive shaft burials in the area. The lower part of a tall-necked ovoid jar (Fig. 4) was found in the surroundings of tomb I, which was reused during the Libyan Period. The jar has a parallel from the temple of Merenptah and can be dated to the Twenty-First – Twenty-Second Dynasty.⁴⁹ Since the Asasif vessel was intentionally “killed”, it attests to a ritual and may be regarded – but because of its unsecure context only tentatively – as a cultic vessel.

In general, relatively little funerary pottery during the Libyan Period is definitely known to be burial equipment that comes directly from the burial chamber.⁵⁰ Aston recently raised the question of whether this picture is an illusion based on various factors like neglect by earlier excavators and difficulties in dating the relevant pots.⁵¹ New results from the excavations of the German

⁴² Schreiber, 2007, 342–343.

⁴³ Ghaly, 1994, 81–84.

⁴⁴ See Schreiber, 2007, 342 for the connection with the Ritual of Embalming; cf. embalming caches from Abusir where vessels with similar residues were found, see Bareš – Janák – Landgráfova – Smoláriková, 2008, 110–112.

⁴⁵ Budka, 2010a, 380.

⁴⁶ Cf. Budka, 2010a, 393–398.

⁴⁷ Cf. Ikram – Dodson, 1998, 106 for the use of resin in mummification.

⁴⁸ Budka, 2010a, 209–211 and pl. 41d.

⁴⁹ Aston, 2008, 276, nr. 2114, pl. 105.

⁵⁰ Aston, 2009, 348.

⁵¹ Aston, 2009, 317, 348.

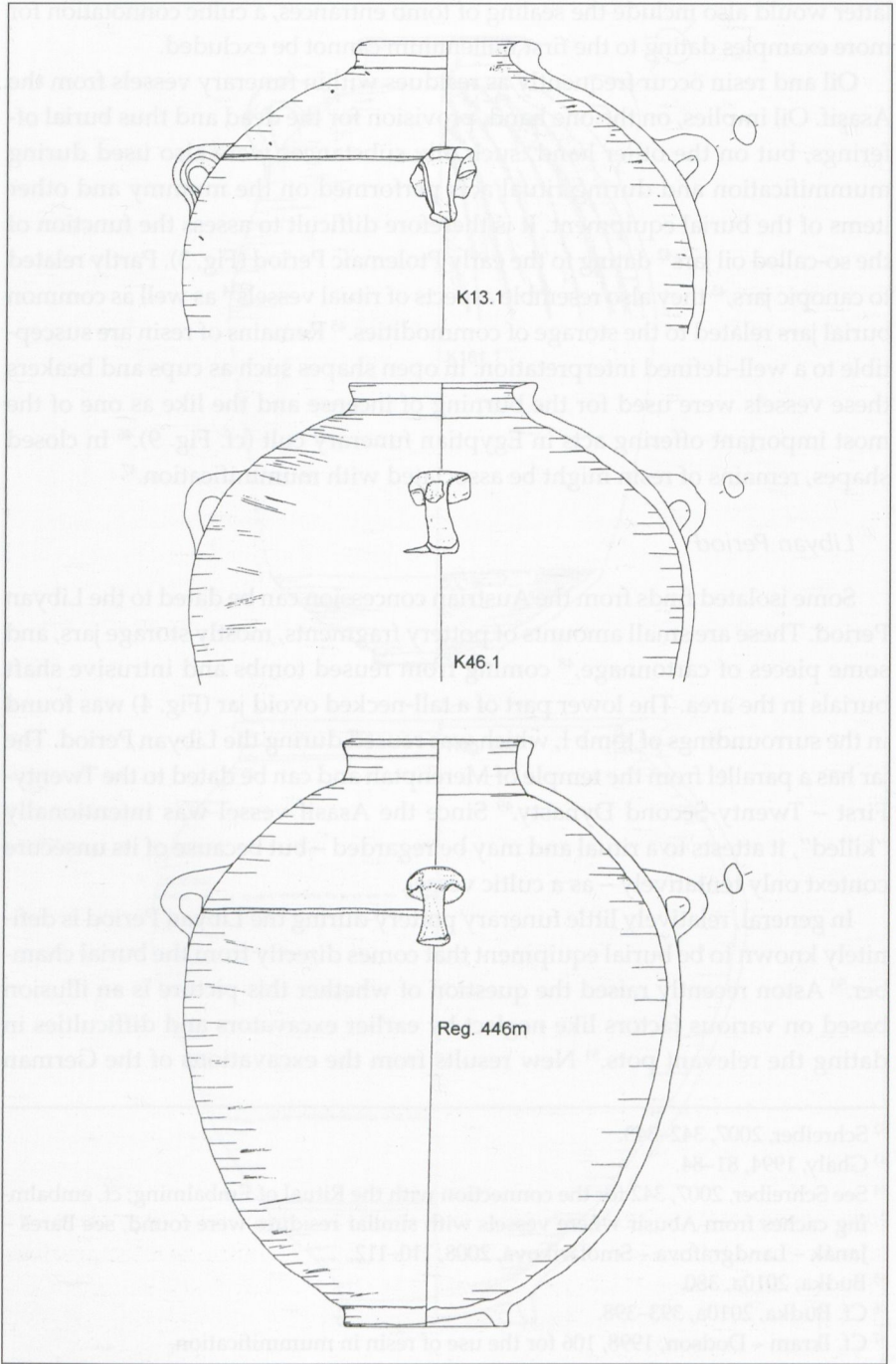


Fig. 3 So-called oil jars, dating to the fourth–third centuries BCE from the Austrian concession (scale 1:4).

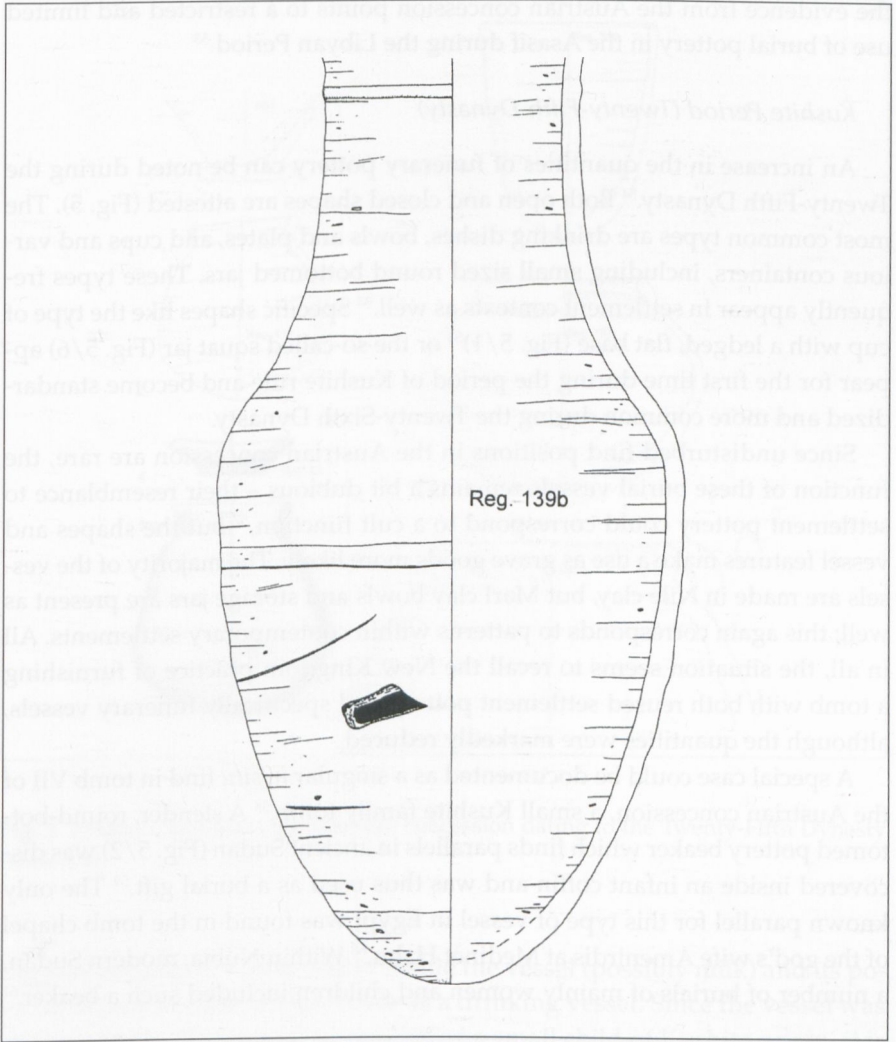


Fig. 4 Ovoid jar from the Austrian concession, Libyan Period (scale 1:3).

Mission working at Dra Abu el-Naga that yielded a lot of funerary pottery, tentatively dated to the Third Intermediate Period, might confirm that the previous picture is an illusion. However, since the relevant tomb in the German concession was used both as a burial and cultic place, it is still premature to propose a functional use for all of the related pottery finds.⁵² Thus, for the time being,

⁵² For the context as “temple-tomb” see Rummel, 2009. I am indebted to Ute Rummel and Susanne Michels for the opportunity to see some of the newly excavated material in 2008.

the evidence from the Austrian concession points to a restricted and limited use of burial pottery in the Asasif during the Libyan Period.⁵³

Kushite Period (Twenty-Fifth Dynasty)

An increase in the quantities of funerary pottery can be noted during the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty.⁵⁴ Both open and closed shapes are attested (Fig. 5). The most common types are drinking dishes, bowls and plates, and cups and various containers, including small sized round bottomed jars. These types frequently appear in settlement contexts as well.⁵⁵ Specific shapes like the type of cup with a ledged, flat base (Fig. 5/1)⁵⁶ or the so-called squat jar (Fig. 5/6) appear for the first time during the period of Kushite rule and become standardized and more common during the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty.

Since undisturbed find positions in the Austrian concession are rare, the function of these burial vessels remains a bit dubious – their resemblance to settlement pottery could correspond to a cult function,⁵⁷ but the shapes and vessel features make a use as grave goods more likely. The majority of the vessels are made in Nile clay, but Marl clay bowls and storage jars are present as well; this again corresponds to patterns within contemporary settlements. All in all, the situation seems to recall the New Kingdom practice of furnishing a tomb with both reused settlement pottery and specifically funerary vessels, although the quantities were markedly reduced.

A special case could be documented as a singular *in situ* find in tomb VII of the Austrian concession, a small Kushite family tomb.⁵⁸ A slender, round-bottomed pottery beaker which finds parallels in ancient Sudan (Fig. 5/2) was discovered inside an infant coffin and was thus used as a burial gift.⁵⁹ The only known parallel for this type of vessel in Egypt was found in the tomb chapel of the god's wife Amenirdis at Medinet Habu.⁶⁰ Within Nubia, modern Sudan, a number of burials of mainly women and children included such a beaker.⁶¹

⁵³ Cf. also the considerably smaller quantities of Libyan Period pottery found at high status burials such as in TT 320, cf. Graefe's "Cachette Datenbank des Instituts für Ägyptologie und Koptologie der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster", <http://www2.ivv1.uni-muenster.de/litw3/Aegyptologie/index04.htm> (25/01/2010).

⁵⁴ Aston, 2009, 348.

⁵⁵ Aston, 1999a, 159–162 with references and pls. 48–64.

⁵⁶ For an earlier type of beaker see below, Abydos/Umm el-Qaab (figs. 14.1–2).

⁵⁷ Cf. Seiler, 1995; Seiler, 2005, 48–52, 162; Müller, 2008, 357.

⁵⁸ Budka, 2007; Budka, 2010a, 111–134.

⁵⁹ Budka, 2010a, 211, 345–346; Budka, 2010b.

⁶⁰ Hölscher, 1954, 74 and pl. 47, X 4; Aston, 2009, 322, fig. 21:40.

⁶¹ Williams, 1990, 8, group IV, note a with references, figs. 2.b and 21b; Dunham, 1950, 40, fig. 12C, Ku. 5; 28, fig. 10b, Nr. 19–3–50, Ku. 3; pl. 43D: Ku. 72, 19–3–1521; 105, fig. 35c; Dunham, 1955, 337, fig. A: 16 = 23–3–514 of W 678; 41, fig. 27d = W 643 (4–5).

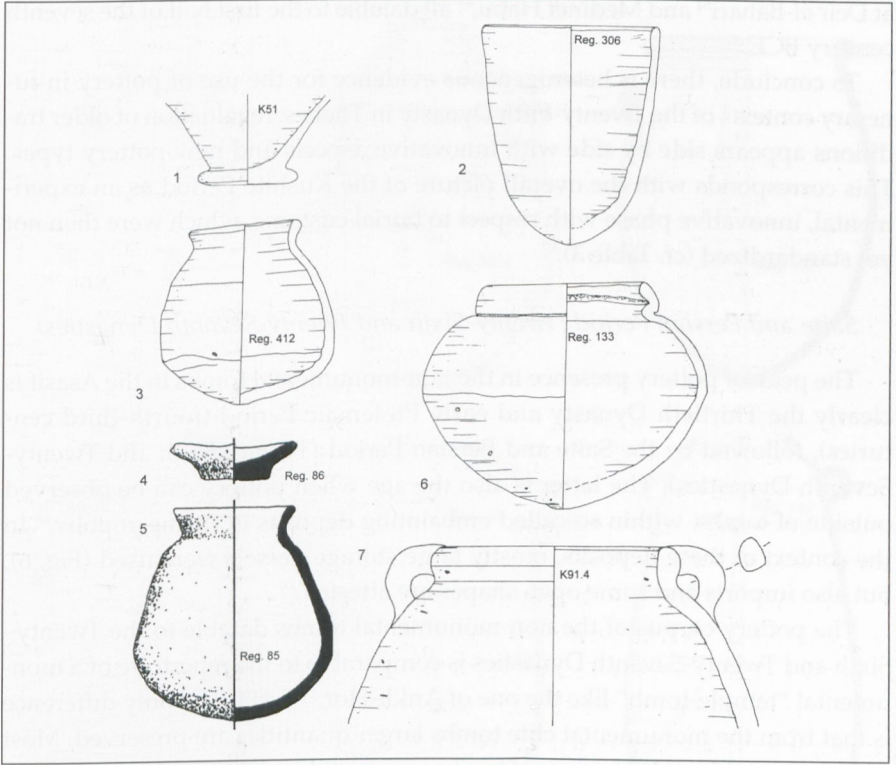


Fig. 5 Pottery types from the Austrian concession dating to the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty (scale 1:4).

Organic remains of a commodity inside the vessel (possibly milk) and its position within a coffin suggest a use as a drinking vessel. Since the vessel was imported from Nubia and accompanied a small child of Kushite origin, it is furthermore likely that it had a symbolic meaning, and maybe a prestigious character, for the Kushite family buried in tomb VII in the Asasif.⁶² This might serve as an example showing that a common grave good (here: its widespread use in Kush) may have additional implications according to its context (here: a restricted use outside of Kush in Thebes as an indigenous marker?).

Pottery canopic jars are specifically funerary vessels that are closely related to the burial. Aside from a small fragment which is not datable, these are not attested in the Asasif.⁶³ Some examples were found as part of elite tomb groups

⁶² Budka, 2010a, 346; Budka, 2010b.

⁶³ See Budka, 2010a, 701, cat. 770.

at Deir el-Bahari⁶⁴ and Medinet Habu,⁶⁵ all datable to the first half of the seventh century BCE.⁶⁶

To conclude, there is heterogeneous evidence for the use of pottery in funerary contexts of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty in Thebes: reevaluation of older traditions appears side by side with innovative aspects and new pottery types. This corresponds with the overall picture of the Kushite Period as an experimental, innovative phase with respect to burial customs, which were then not yet standardized (cf. Table 3).⁶⁷

Saite and Persian Period (Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh Dynasties)

The peak of pottery presence in the non-monumental tombs in the Asasif is clearly the Thirtieth Dynasty and early Ptolemaic Period (fourth-third centuries), followed by the Saite and Persian Period (Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh Dynasties). The latter is also the age when pottery can be observed outside of tombs, within so-called embalming deposits in the necropolis.⁶⁸ In the context of these deposits, mostly large storage vessels were used (Fig. 6), but also imports and some open shapes are attested.⁶⁹

The pottery corpus of the non-monumental tombs datable to the Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh Dynasties is comparable to the repertoire of a monumental "temple-tomb" like the one of Ankh-Hor, TT 414. The only difference is that from the monumental elite tombs larger quantities are preserved. Most of the material from both types of tombs was found in debris and mixed filling material from the structures. Thus, although an architectural division into inaccessible rooms and space open to the public seems at least possible for the monumental "temple-tomb",⁷⁰ the archaeological context does not allow a distinction between *burial* and *cultic pottery*.

Fig. 7 shows common types of funerary pottery of the Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh Dynasties from the Austrian concession that have parallels outside of the Asasif.⁷¹ Most numerous within this corpus are large containers for commodities, including transport amphorae originally used in daily life.

⁶⁴ E.g., four canopic jars of the priest of Montu, Nespakashuty (vi), discovered by Baraize; for the tomb group (without mentioning the canopic jars) see Aston, 2009, 216, TG 889.

I owe the knowledge of these vessels to Cynthia May Sheikholeslami who kindly provided me with photos of the objects.

⁶⁵ From OIC Tomb 6, see Aston, 2009, 262, TG 1021 and from the pottery magazine of Amenirdis I, Hölscher, 1954, 73, pl. 47, N 3; Aston, 2009, 263, TG 1030.

⁶⁶ For the more common limestone canopic jars see Aston, 2009, 293–299.

⁶⁷ Aston, 2009, 394–395; Budka, 2010a, 328–329; Budka, forthcoming b.

⁶⁸ Aston, 2003, 154–155; Budka, 2006a, 86–87.

⁶⁹ Cf. Budka, 2006a, 92–93.

⁷⁰ Cf. Eigner, 1984, 145–156, 185.

⁷¹ Rose, 2003, 203, figs. 1–2; Hope, 2001, fig. 65.

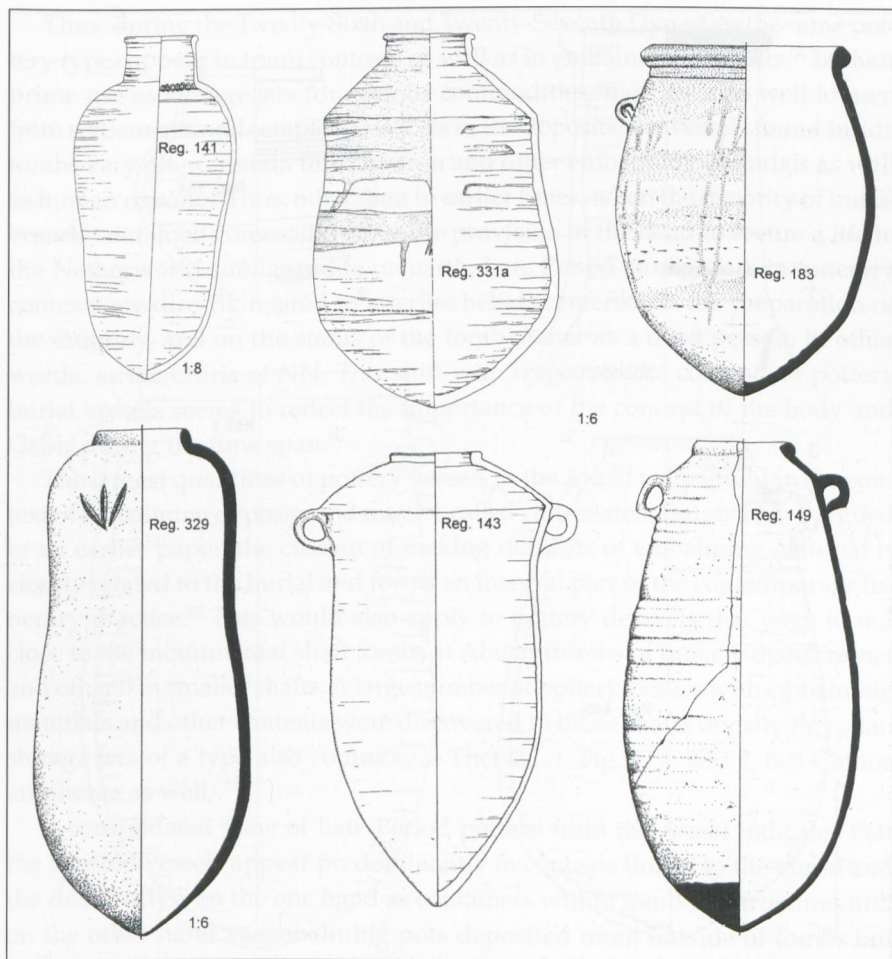


Fig. 6 Most common types of storage jars from embalmg deposits of the Austrian concession (all except reg. 141 1:6).

The use of most of these vessels in tombs seems to be a secondary one; often they have been reused and as such filled with embalmg material or bitumen instead of the original contents like wine or oil. A reuse as containers is especially obvious for imported vessels like wine amphorae from Chios.⁷² Imported

⁷² For such a reuse of amphorae, based on the Roman pottery record, see Peña, 2007, esp. 61–118. For Chiotic and other Greek amphorae, their prime-use (as wine containers, also during funerary ceremonies) and reuse in Egypt see Smoláriková, 2002, 69–70. Cf. also a Samian amphora reused within the embalmg cache in the shaft tomb of Menekhibnekau at Abusir, Bareš – Janák – Landgráfova – Smoláriková, 2008, 112.

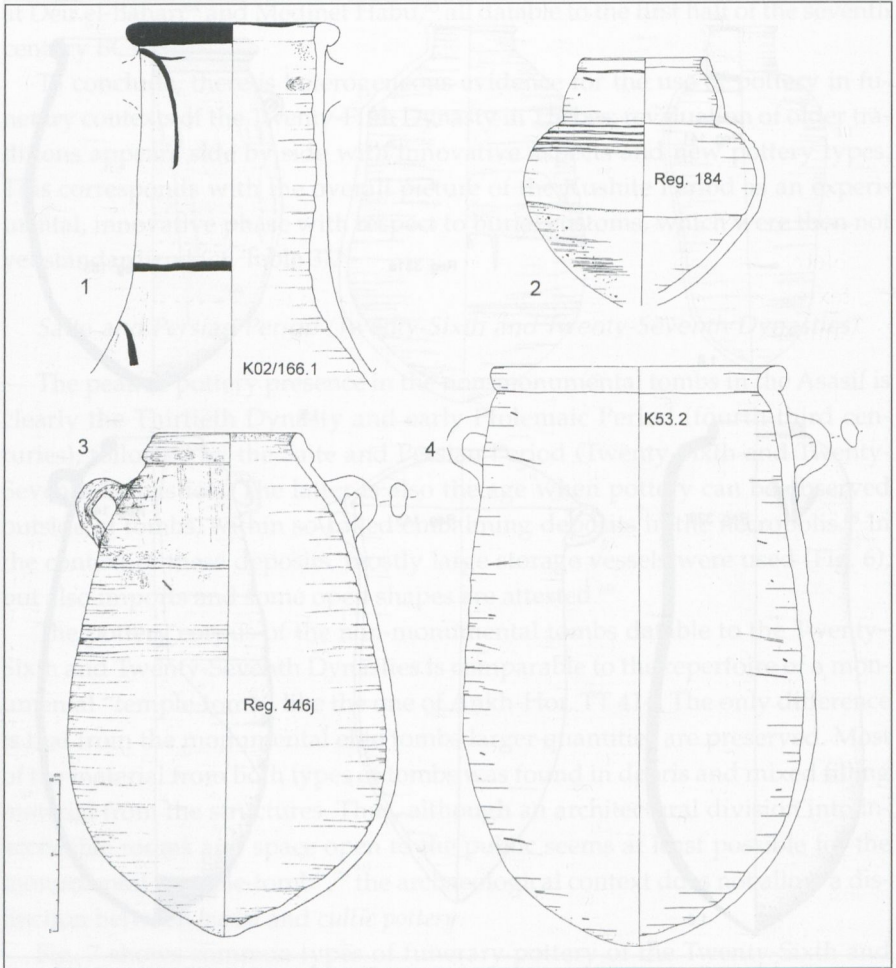


Fig. 7 Selected vessel types from the Austrian concession dating to the Twenty-Sixth – Twenty-Seventh Dynasties.

storage vessels were discovered in small quantities in the Asasif, both in non-monumental and monumental tombs as well as in embalming deposits (Fig. 7/1).⁷³ In contrast to the Egyptian storage jars, these foreign amphorae probably had some kind of value for their owners either because they were received as embodiment of their expensive, imported commodities (in general wine, sometimes also oil), or the vessels themselves were regarded as different (and hence more ‘valuable’?) than locally made products or even both.

⁷³ Budka, 2010a, 424.

Thus, during the Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh Dynasties the same pottery types appear in tomb contexts as well as in embalming deposits.⁷⁴ In their prime use as storage jars for various commodities, they are also well known from settlements and temple areas.⁷⁵ As in the deposits, the vessels found inside tombs very often contain linen, natron and other embalming materials as well as human remains. Thus, other than in earlier times, when the majority of burial vessels contained commodities for the provision of the dead to secure a life in the Netherworld similar to life on earth, Late Period storage jars in funerary contexts are directly related to afterlife beliefs centered on the preparation of the mummy, and on the status of the tomb owner as a dead person, in other words, as the Osiris of NN. This shift with respect to the contents of pottery burial vessels seems to reflect the importance of the concept of the body and Osiris during the time span.⁷⁶

The largest quantities of pottery vessels in the Asasif were found in the context of embalming deposits and may be called cult-related. But, as I have argued in an earlier paper, the custom of making deposits of embalming material is closely related to the burial and forms an integral part of the contemporary funerary practice.⁷⁷ This would also apply to pottery deposits that were found close to the monumental shaft tombs at Abusir (tombs of Iufaa, Udjhorresnet and others) in smaller shafts. A large number of pottery vessels with embalming materials and other contents were discovered in those shafts (mostly Egyptian storage jars of a type also common at Thebes, cf. Fig. 7/4, K53.2, but Chiotic amphorae as well).⁷⁸

A consolidated view of Late Period pottery from the Asasif indicates that the attested vessels appear predominantly in contexts linked to the burial and the dead body – on the one hand as containers within tomb substructures and on the other hand as embalming pots deposited often outside of tombs but closely connected to them or within the tomb itself. In contrast to the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty, a progressing standardization regarding pottery types and quantities is noticeable.

Outlook: The Later History of the First Millennium BCE

The last heyday of pots as storage jars in burial chambers is marked by the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty. In the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty and its aftermath there

⁷⁴ Cf. Seiler, 2003b, 364–368; Rose, 2003, figs. 1–2.

⁷⁵ Cf. e.g. Aston, 1999a, 212, pl. 65 and pl. 67, pls. 70–74.

⁷⁶ Budka, 2010a, 455–459 and 476–477.

⁷⁷ Budka, 2006a; cf. already Winlock, 1928, 25 who summarizes these deposits as “funerary custom”. See also the new finds from Abusir which point in the same direction: Smoláriková, 2007, 189–197 and Smoláriková, 2009, 79–88.

⁷⁸ Smoláriková, 2007, 189–197; Bareš – Janák – Landgráfova – Smoláriková, 2008, 110–112; Bareš – Smoláriková, 2008, 192–202; Smoláriková, 2009.

is a decline which is reminiscent of the situation during the Third Intermediate Period.⁷⁹ As in the case of the Libyan Period, the restricted use of funerary pottery can be linked to the contemporary tradition of grave construction: no independent burial places were built, but old, already existing tombs were reused for intrusive burials (Table 3).⁸⁰ This phase of reuse flourished especially during the fourth and third centuries BCE, a phase when a remarkable reduction in the quantity of pottery associated with burials is noticeable (Fig. 8).⁸¹ This is best illustrated by the almost intact tomb group of Wahibra dating to the Thirtieth Dynasty, which was discovered in shaft 10 of TT 414.⁸² Two large storage vessels (Fig. 8, bottom) with corresponding lids comprise all of the individual ceramic burial offerings that were deposited in the subterranean burial chamber.⁸³ Aside from the reuse of subterranean burial shafts and chambers of TT 414, the Saite cultic installations of the monumental “temple-tomb” were reactivated during the Thirtieth Dynasty as well. Material evidence for rituals was discovered in particular in the open courtyard, the so-called light well (“Lichthof”).⁸⁴ Here, in addition to stone offering plates and offering stands, a large amount of pottery linked to the cult of the dead was documented.⁸⁵ The most common types are ring stands, small votive dishes, so-called *situlae* and incense burners in the shape of small cups (Fig. 9). In smaller numbers, amphorae that imitate Greek transport vessels came to light.⁸⁶ Thus, the majority of the vessels used in tombs during the fourth–third centuries BCE clearly has a cultic connotation: pottery was primarily used as ritual objects, as is seen explicitly in the quantities of miniature and cultic vessels.⁸⁷ The bulk of this pottery was found not in burial chambers and shafts but in the so-called subterranean cultic rooms (“unterirdische Kulträume”)⁸⁸ and especially in the light well. Since we know from textual sources that the front part of the subterranean cultic rooms, up to and including the light well, was designed to be accessible to the living during the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty,⁸⁹ it is reasonable to

⁷⁹ This holds true even if one considers the dating difficulties connected with material from the Persian Period, cf. Aston, 1999b, 17–22.

⁸⁰ Aston, 2003, 157; Budka, 2010a, 79–80.

⁸¹ Budka, 2010a, 222–224.

⁸² Bietak – Reiser-Haslauer, 1982, 183–220.

⁸³ Bietak – Reiser-Haslauer, 1982, 191–193, fig. 85; Budka, 2010a, 362.

⁸⁴ Cf. Budka, 2009a.

⁸⁵ For cult niches and inventory like offering plates and stands which were in use during the Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth Dynasties and again in the fourth–third centuries BCE in “temple-tombs” see Eigner, 1984, 185–194.

⁸⁶ These vessels are still unpublished; as parallels see Marchand, 2007, figs. 1–6; Lecuyot, 2007, fig. 4.1 and photo IC.

⁸⁷ Cf. Budka 2009b.

⁸⁸ Eigner, 1984, 115–130, 146, 154 with fig. 121. For the scarcity of pottery see already Bietak – Reiser-Haslauer, 1982, 166.

⁸⁹ Kuhlmann, 1973, 205–213; Eigner, 1984, 118.

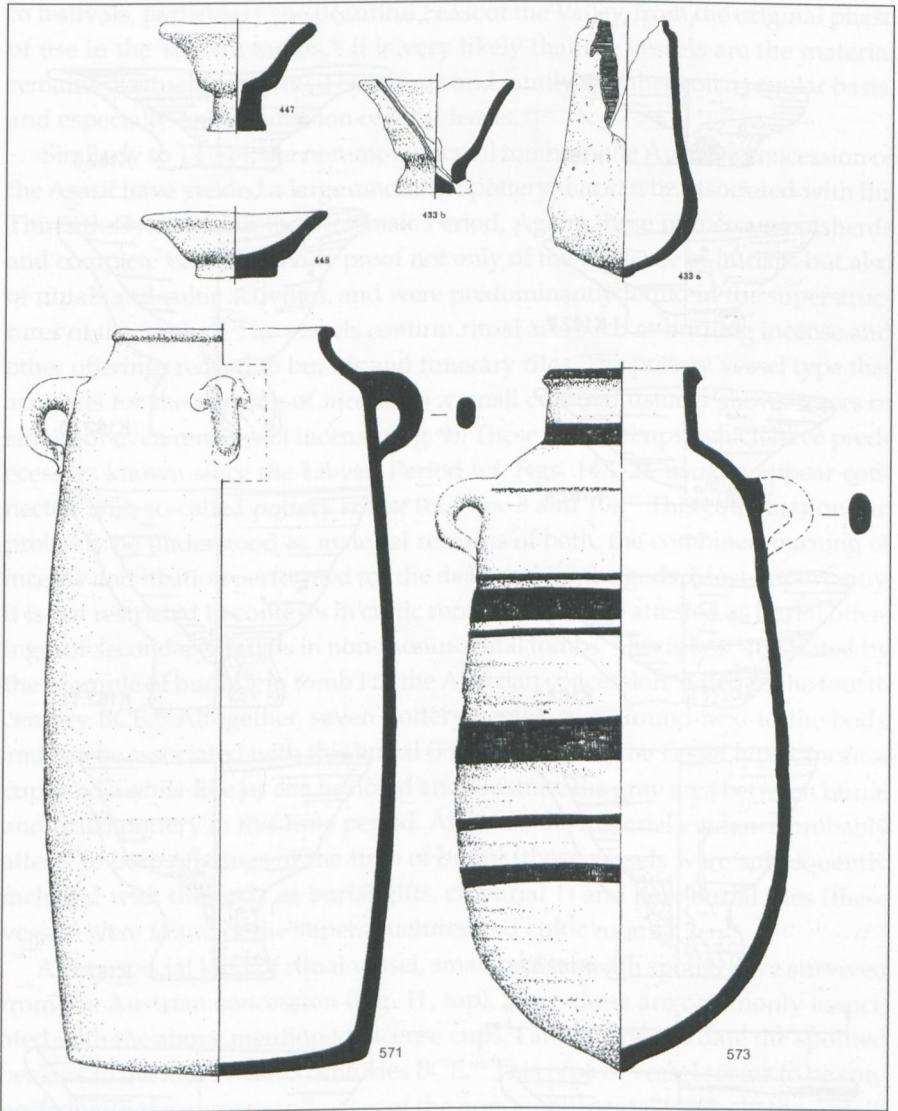


Fig. 8 Selected vessel types from TT 414 dating to the fourth–third centuries BCE (scale 1:3) (after Bietak – Reiser-Haslauer, 1978 and 1982).

assume that these quantities of pottery from later times were not all deposited together at the burial ceremony, but that they attest particularly to post-burial rituals. As will be demonstrated below, this pottery from cultic rooms of Theban elite tombs resembles the contemporary pottery from the tomb of Osiris at Abydos. Considering this analogy and taking into account the multiple references

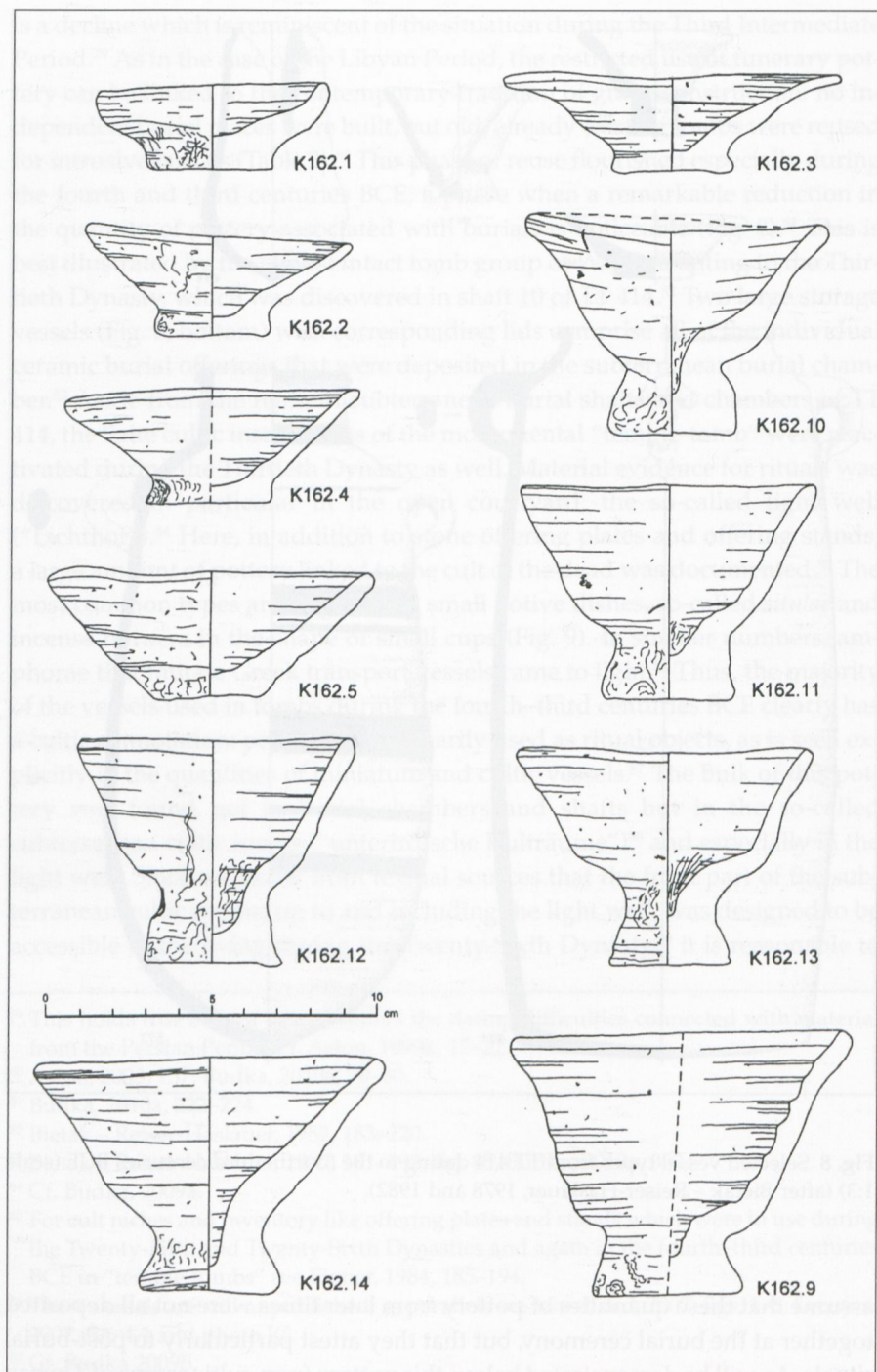


Fig. 9 Small dishes and beakers from TT 414 (after Budka, 2008a, fig. 15).

to festivals, particularly the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, from the original phase of use in the Theban tombs,⁹⁰ it is very likely that the vessels are the material remains of rituals performed by priests and family members on a regular basis, and especially on the occasion of local feasts.

Similarly to TT 414, the non-monumental tombs in the Austrian concession of the Asasif have yielded a large amount of pottery that can be associated with the Thirtieth Dynasty and the Ptolemaic Period. Again, these numerous potsherds and complete vessels provide proof not only of the existence of burials, but also of rituals and cultic activities, and were predominantly found in the superstructures of the tombs.⁹¹ The vessels confirm ritual acts such as burning incense and other offerings related to burials and funerary rites. The pottery vessel type that accounts for the burning of incense is a small cup that usually shows traces of smoke or even remains of incense (Fig. 9). These incense cups, which have predecessors known since the Libyan Period (cf. Figs. 14.1-2), usually appear connected with so-called pottery *situlae* (cf. Figs. 8 and 10).⁹² This combination can probably be understood as material remains of both, the combined burning of incense and libation performed for the dead and for the gods. Most importantly, it is not restricted to contexts in cultic rooms, but is also attested as burial offerings for secondary burials in non-monumental tombs. This is best illustrated by the example of burial 1 in tomb I of the Austrian concession, dated to the fourth century BCE.⁹³ Altogether, seven pottery vessels were found next to the body and can be associated with this burial (Fig. 10). Among the vessel types, incense cups and a *situla*-like jar can be noted and illustrate the gray area between burial and ritual pottery in this time period. All in all, the material evidence probably attests to both offerings at the time of burial (these vessels were subsequently included with the body as burial gifts, cf. burial 1) and post-burial rites (these vessels were found in the superstructures and cultic rooms).

A very special kind of ritual vessel, small beakers with spouts have survived from the Austrian concession (Fig. 11, top). Since these are commonly associated with the above mentioned incense cups, I am inclined to date the spouted beakers to the fourth–third centuries BCE.⁹⁴ This type of vessel seems to be connected with the owners and users of the non-monumental tombs in the Asasif; as yet, not a single one has been found within a monumental “temple-tomb”. Maybe these small spouted beakers are alternatives to the larger, painted libation jars like the ones coming from TT 414 (Fig. 11, bottom).⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Cf. Budka, 2010a, 483.

⁹¹ Budka, 2010a, 427–430.

⁹² Cf. the *in situ* assemblage from the “Lichthof” of TT 414, Bietak – Reiser-Haslauer, 1978, 146–151, fig. 63.

⁹³ Budka, 2010a, 361–362, fig. 148.

⁹⁴ See Budka, 2010a, 412–415 with references and parallels (esp. Aston, 2003, fig. 17).

⁹⁵ Cf. Budka, 2010a, 414.

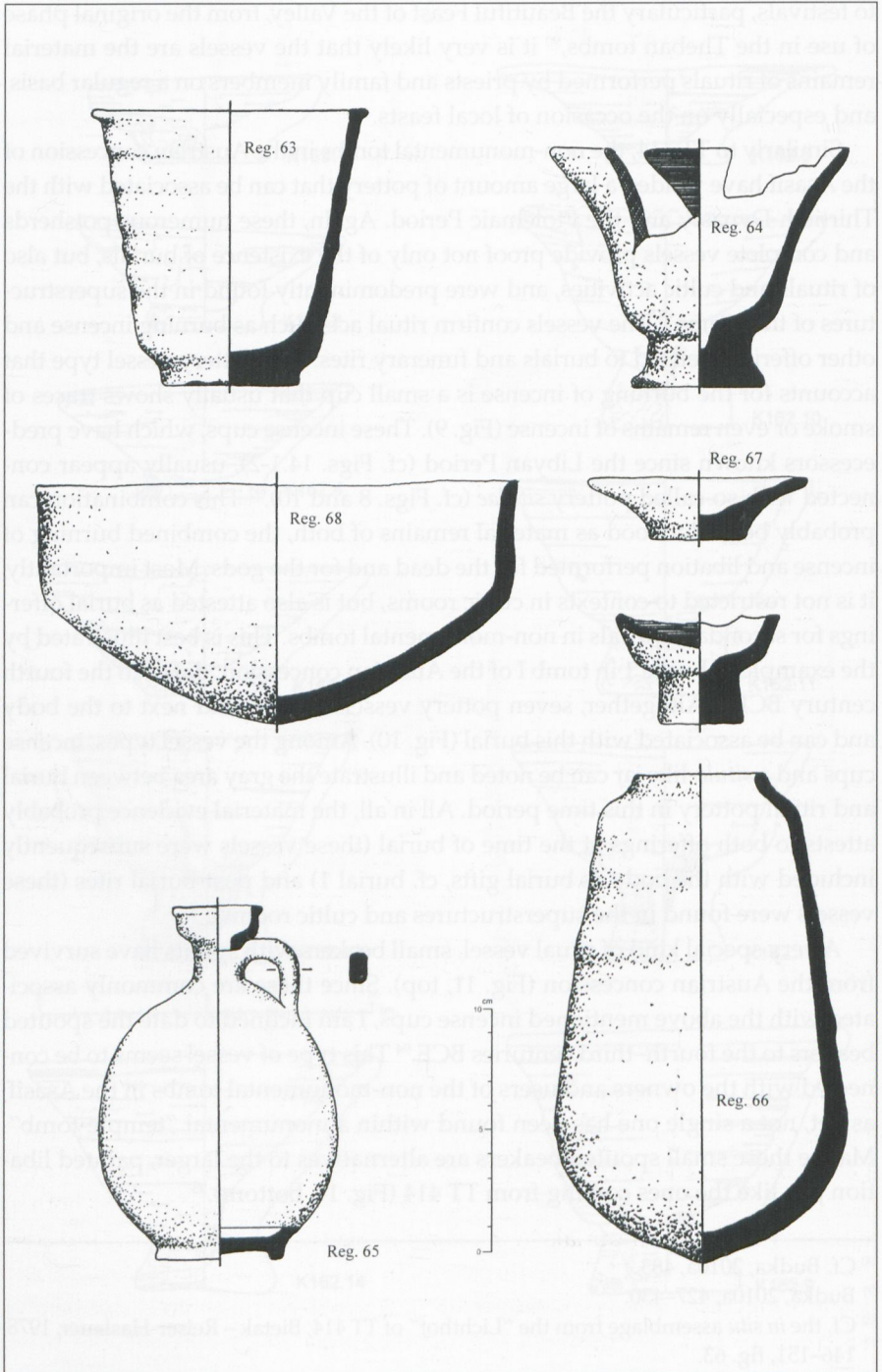


Fig. 10 Pottery of burial 1 in tomb I of the Austrian concession (fourth–third centuries BCE).

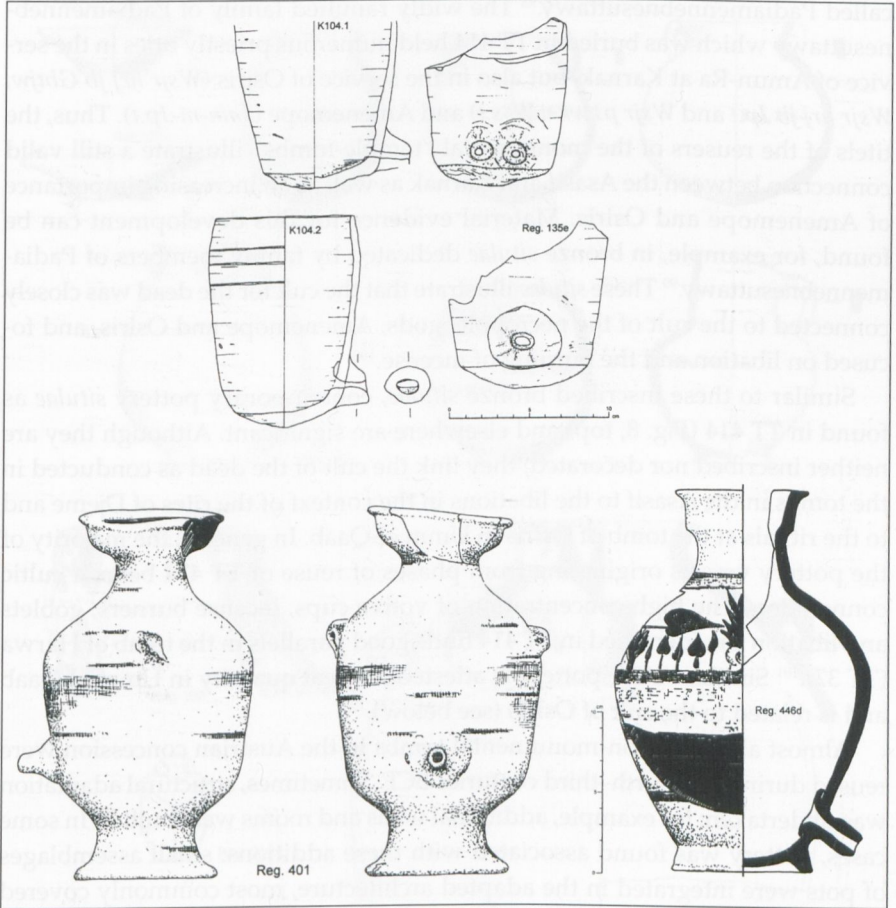


Fig. 11 Libation vessels from the Austrian concession dating to the fourth–third centuries BCE.

Since only a small percentage of pottery from monumental “temple-tombs” in the Asasif has so far been published,⁹⁶ it is premature to conclusively compare it with the characteristics of the material from the tomb of Ankh-Hor (TT 414). In the present state of documentation, the pottery seems to reflect both its intense reuse for later burials in the tomb as well as its cultic aspects linked to its location in front of Deir el-Bahari and opposite Karnak,⁹⁷ at this time related to the importance of the rites of Djeme and the role of Amenemope (see below). The reuse of TT 414 in the fourth century BCE was initiated by a Amun-priest

⁹⁶ Cf., e.g., Graefe, 2003, pls. 120–139.

⁹⁷ Budka, 2008a, 78–79; Budka, 2009a, 85–86.

called Padiamennebnesuttawy.⁹⁸ The widely ramified family of Padiamennebnesuttawy which was buried in TT 414 held numerous priestly titles in the service of Amun-Ra at Karnak, but also in the service of Osiris (*Wsjr hrj jb Gbtjw*, *Wsjr hrj jb Jp.t* and *Wsjr p3 wr n W3s.t*) and Amenemope (*Jmn-m-Jp.t*). Thus, the titles of the reusers of the monumental “temple-tombs” illustrate a still valid connection between the Asasif and Karnak as well as an increasing importance of Amenemope and Osiris. Material evidence for this development can be found, for example, in bronze *situlae* dedicated by family members of Padiamennebnesuttawy.⁹⁹ These *situlae* illustrate that the cult for the dead was closely connected to the cult of the necropolis gods, Amenemope and Osiris, and focused on libation and the burning of incense.¹⁰⁰

Similar to these inscribed bronze *situlae*, contemporary pottery *situlae* as found in TT 414 (Fig. 8, top) and elsewhere are significant. Although they are neither inscribed nor decorated, they link the cult of the dead as conducted in the tombs in the Asasif to the libations in the context of the rites of Djeme and to the rituals at the tomb of Osiris in Umm el-Qaab. In general, the majority of the pottery vessels originating from phases of reuse of TT 414 bears a cultic connotation. The high concentration of votive cups, incense burners, goblets and libation jars identified in TT 414 finds good parallels in the tomb of Harwa (TT 37).¹⁰¹ Similar votive pottery is attested in great quantity in Umm el-Qaab and is related to the cult of Osiris (see below).¹⁰²

Almost all of the non-monumental tombs in the Austrian concession were reused during the fourth–third centuries BCE. Sometimes, structural adaptation was undertaken: for example, additional walls and rooms were built.¹⁰³ In some cases, pottery was found associated with these additions: small assemblages of pots were integrated in the adapted architecture, most commonly covered by an added wall.¹⁰⁴ These accumulations seem to have had a cultic function similar to that of foundation deposits¹⁰⁵ and attest to pre-burial rituals.

The best example of such a pottery deposit was found in the courtyard of tomb V, below the western wall of the neighbouring tomb, tomb VII. It includes

⁹⁸ Bietak – Reiser-Haslauer, 1982, 251–256.

⁹⁹ See, e.g., the *situlae* kept in the British Museum, BM 38212 and 38214. Donatelli, 1990, 174 proposed as findspot of BM 38212 the tomb of Ankh-Hor itself.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Jansen-Winkel, 1995, 59; Bommas, 2005, 257–272.

¹⁰¹ See the preliminary remarks by Tiradritti, 2005, 170; the pottery from TT 37 is currently being studied by S. Laemmel; for first results see Laemmel, forthcoming.

¹⁰² Cf. for example the small offering *qaabs*, see Müller, 2003, 100–102 with fig. 11; Budka, forthcoming a.

¹⁰³ Budka, 2010a, 82–83.

¹⁰⁴ Budka, 2010a, 427–430.

¹⁰⁵ For Egyptian foundation deposits see Weinstein, 1973; Müller, 2008, 376–379; deposits in connection with architectural features are common throughout the ages and in various cultural settings, cf. Beilke-Voigt, 2007, *passim*.

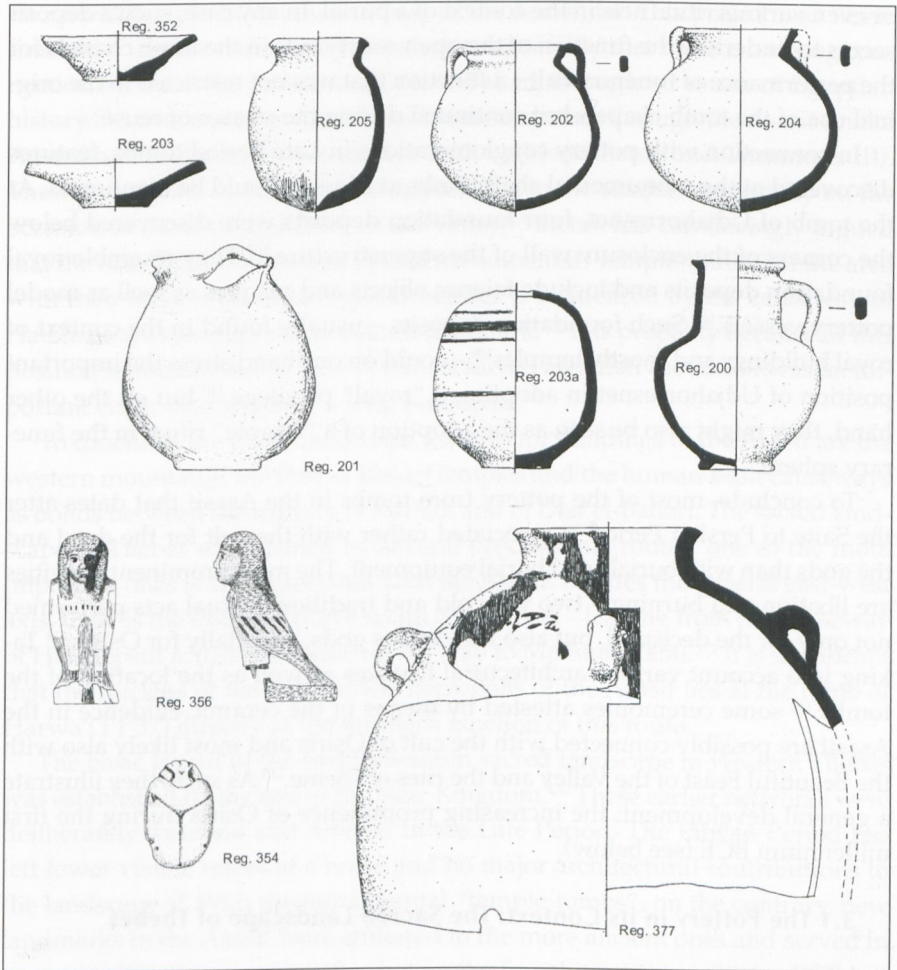


Fig. 12 The contents of a pottery deposit found in the courtyard of tomb V of the Austrian concession (scale 1:3).

eleven pottery vessels – both miniature vessels and a large storage jar were used – as well as a small wooden statuette of a *ba* bird and a faience scarab from a bead net (Fig. 12).¹⁰⁶ The latter are both damaged and the implications of their discovery within the deposit are unclear. The types of vessels deposited bear a funerary connotation but their specific function remains open to discussion. They could be associated with provisions for the dead, a funerary meal, libation

¹⁰⁶ The combination of small finds and pottery vessels is also attested in the context of embalming deposits, cf. Budka, 2006a, 91.

or even various ritual acts in the context of a burial. In any case, such a deposit seems to underline the function of the open courtyards in the tomb chapels for the performance of funerary cult – a function that was not restricted to the original use of the tomb chapels but continued during the phases of reuse.

In connection with pottery conglomerations in Late Period tombs, features discovered at the monumental shaft tombs at Abusir should be mentioned. At the tomb of Udjahorresnet, four foundation deposits were discovered below the corners of the enclosure wall of the superstructure.¹⁰⁷ They resemble royal foundation deposits and include faience objects and plaques as well as model pottery vessels.¹⁰⁸ Such foundation deposits – usually found in the context of royal buildings and mostly temples¹⁰⁹ – could on one hand stress the important position of Udjahorresnet in adopting a “royal” privilege,¹¹⁰ but on the other hand, they might also be seen as the adoption of a “temple” ritual in the funerary sphere.

To conclude, most of the pottery from tombs in the Asasif that dates after the Saite to Persian Period is associated rather with the cult for the dead and the gods than with burials and burial equipment. The most prominent activities are libation and burning – two very old and traditional ritual acts performed not only for the deceased, but also for various gods, especially for Osiris.¹¹¹ Taking into account various architectural features as well as the location of the tombs,¹¹² some ceremonies attested by means of the ceramic evidence in the Asasif are possibly connected with the cult of Osiris and most likely also with the Beautiful Feast of the Valley and the rites of Djeme.¹¹³ As such, they illustrate a general development: the increasing prominence of Osiris during the first millennium BCE (see below).

3.1 The Pottery in its Context: The Sacred Landscape of Thebes

The Asasif valley is surmounted by the mountain enclosing the royal temples of Deir el-Bahari built by Mentuhotep Nebhepetre, Hatshepsut and Thutmosis III. These three kings have considerably modelled and altered the sacred landscape of the area. Ramses IV tried to continue this work by means of an

¹⁰⁷ Bareš, 1996; Bareš, 1999, 65–66.

¹⁰⁸ See Smoláriková, in: Bareš, 1999, 97–98, cat. 29, fig. 17.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Bareš, 1999, 65, note 324 with references.

¹¹⁰ Foundation deposits for private tombs, which are attested since the Twelfth Dynasty, usually contain pottery only, see Weinstein, 1973, 43; Müller, 2008, 378.

¹¹¹ Budka, 2010a, 403–406.

¹¹² The majority of the votive offerings are coming from the light well, where offering plates orientated towards Karnak were found. Since Saite patterns of votive cult were revived, it is likely that the Osirian function of the light well was recognized as well (cf. Budka, 2009a).

¹¹³ Budka, 2009a, 85.

enormous temple in the eastern part of the Asasif, but this project was never finished.¹¹⁴ Bietak and others have shown repeatedly that there is a strong connection between the Asasif and Deir el-Bahari throughout much of Egyptian history.¹¹⁵ Most importantly, the royal causeways run through the Asasif (in the Austrian concession: the causeways built by Mentuhotep and Thutmose III). These functioned as processional approaches to the temples, especially on the occasion of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley.¹¹⁶ Bietak has convincingly argued that the orientation of the Late Period monumental “temple-tombs” of the area with their huge mud brick superstructures is influenced by the causeway of Hatshepsut as an important cultural landmark.¹¹⁷ It is probably because of this position in relation to the Deir el-Bahari sacred area that the Asasif was an important cultic landscape for a long time span.¹¹⁸

To conclude, the major landscape features for buildings in the Asasif are the western mountains, the Deir el-Bahari temples and the human-built causeways as bonds between the temples of Karnak and of Deir el-Bahari. The sacred landscape of Thebes was formed by several processional routes; one of the more important ones is also associated with the Asasif. Besides the general east-west axis, there is the essential north-south connection – leading from the causeway of Hatshepsut across the Asasif all the way to Medinet Habu.¹¹⁹ It is significant that the nucleus of the Late Period necropolis of the Asasif lies at the tomb of Harwa (TT 37) directly at the northern junction of this route.

The basic layout of the first millennium sacred landscape in Western Thebes was established by the end of the New Kingdom.¹²⁰ These earlier networks were deliberately resumed and revived in the Late Period. The Libyan Period has left fewer visible traces of a reuse and no major architectural contributions to the landscape.¹²¹ With the monumental “temple-tombs”, on the contrary, new landmarks in the Asasif were affiliated to the more ancient ones and served in turn as cultic places, especially during the fourth to third centuries BCE but

¹¹⁴ Budka, 2008b; Budka, 2010a, 48–60.

¹¹⁵ Bietak, 1978, 19–29; Eigner, 1984, 21; Strudwick, 2003, 174 with note 83; Lajtar, 2006, *passim*.

¹¹⁶ For this important festival of the Theban necropolis see Schott, 1953; Bleeker, 1967, 137–139; Graefe, 1986, 187–189; Naguib, 1991, 21–32; Budka, 2010a, 479–486.

¹¹⁷ Bietak – Reiser-Haslauer, 1978, 19–37. For the monumental tombs as following the concept of tombs “*am Tempeldromos*” (cf. Quack, 2006) see Budka, 2010a, 77–78.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Budka, forthcoming b.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Budka, 2010a, 71–74, fig. 14 with reference to the long tradition of this axis after Eigner.

¹²⁰ Cabrol, 2001, pls. 4–6 and compared to pls. 7–8.

¹²¹ But the distribution of relics of this period indicates that the layout of the New Kingdom was adopted (major sites of interest were: Dra Abu el-Naga, Deir el-Bahari, Ramesseum and Medinet Habu on the West Bank and Karnak on the East Bank).

also until Roman times.¹²² The position of these “temple-tombs” was influenced by the causeway to Deir el-Bahari (see above) and in some respects their architecture seems to reflect that of the Osirieion at Abydos (see below).

Here it is important to stress that the cultic practice associated with the Asasif was subject to major changes during the centuries. Textual data attest to a specific adaptation of the theology of Amun in Late Period Thebes and corresponding changes in the ritual and festive practice that also affected the area in front of Deir el-Bahari. Most significantly, the Festival of the Valley was combined with the Feast of the Decades in the rites of Djeme.¹²³ Thus, the cult of Osiris and a cult for the ancestor gods became more prominent and set the ritual practice apart from earlier traditions.¹²⁴ As Cooney put it: “*During the Third Intermediate Period and the ensuing Late Period, the Osirian cycle of Amen becomes increasingly popular at Thebes*”.¹²⁵ Visual evidence of this popularity can be found at Karnak: newly built chapels for Osiris which also include the worship of Amun, dedications of statues to both Amun and Osiris and, e.g., the building of Taharqa at the Sacred Lake.¹²⁶ It is significant that the owners of the large “temple-tombs” in the Asasif, the High Stewards of the Divine Adoratrice and other high officials like mayors, were directly involved in the building of small Osirian chapels in Karnak. Both the god’s wives of Amun and their officials, were depicted in reliefs and named in texts.¹²⁷ Thus, the High Stewards like Harwa not only had a tomb built with references to the tomb of Osiris and the Osirieion at Abydos,¹²⁸ but they also participated in the annual Osirian procession at Karnak and dedicated statues to the god.¹²⁹

Subsequently, a merging of the cult for the dead, the cult of Osiris and festivals with a funerary connotation took place.¹³⁰ These processes seem to be displayed in the material evidence from fourth (to third) century BCE Asasif, especially in the use of pottery.¹³¹ The pottery from the “temple-tombs” in the Asasif has parallels not only at Umm el-Qaab (see below) but also in the material found in association with the small chapels for Osiris at Karnak.¹³²

¹²² Cf. Budka, 2010a, 475. For modifications of the network of processional routes in Thebes during the Late Period in general see Cabrol, 2001, 743–744 and pls. 6–7.

¹²³ See Traunecker – le Saout – Masson, 1981, 134–137 and 145–146; cf. Cabrol, 2001, 742.

¹²⁴ Budka, 2008a, 78.

¹²⁵ Cooney, 2000, 41.

¹²⁶ Cf. Cooney, 2000, 15–47; Coulon – Defernez, 2004, 135–190; Kucharek, 2006, 117–133.

¹²⁷ Kucharek, 2006, 124–126; cf. also Ayad, 2009, 29–49.

¹²⁸ Cf. Eigner, 1984, 169–174; Budka, 2010a, 69–71.

¹²⁹ Kucharek, 2006, 127.

¹³⁰ Cf. Traunecker – le Saout – Masson, 1981, 134–137 and 145–146.

¹³¹ Budka, 2009a, 85–86; Budka, 2009b, 27–28; Budka forthcoming b.

¹³² See, e.g., Coulon – Defernez, 2004, 180–187, esp. 187 for material dating from the Twenty-Seventh to Thirtieth Dynasties. Since the pottery from the French excavations dedicated to the chapels of Osiris is as yet not fully published, further comparisons between this corpus and the Asasif might eventually be possible.

4. Case Study 2: Abydos – Umm el-Qaab

Abydos, being closely linked to the cult of Osiris, was an important necropolis during much of Egyptian history.¹³³ Also during the first millennium BCE the site had a significant impact on Egyptian culture, especially the burial customs: members of the royal families of the Libyan and Kushite Periods were buried there as well as high officials.¹³⁴ Especially noteworthy is a strong “Theban connection” and burials of Theban officials.¹³⁵ It seems that due to its importance as the cult centre of Osiris, the site was also attractive for non-locals.¹³⁶ Several types of tombs are attested; particularly notable are superstructures in the shape of pyramids which probably reflect a much older tradition.¹³⁷ Burials of the first millennium BCE are mostly found in the northern part of the site, notably along the processional valley leading to Umm el-Qaab where the purported tomb of Osiris was located.¹³⁸ The pottery associated with these burials is as yet largely unpublished.¹³⁹

At present, only very little pottery material dating to the Libyan Period has been published from tombs at Abydos. The largest corpus comes from the “Cemetery of Ibises”, published by Ayrton (Fig. 13).¹⁴⁰ As at Thebes, the types are mostly closed shapes that find parallels in settlements and at temple sites. A later phase of the ibis cemetery dates to the Late Period – again, common storage jars were used as coffins for the birds.¹⁴¹ For most of these vessels a reuse rather than production specifically as a container for a bird mummy seems likely.

Some tomb groups found at Abydos contained pottery that can be dated to the Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth Dynasties, as was shown by D. Aston.¹⁴² Once again, the majority of these vessels are large storage jars that appear in limited numbers for individual burials.

In general, the scarcity of pottery as part of the tomb equipment between the end of the New Kingdom and the Late Period fits the evidence presented

¹³³ A summary of the history of Abydos and its monuments may be found in O’Connor, 2009.

¹³⁴ Leahy, 1977, 232–235 and *passim*; Leahy, 1994; O’Connor, 2009, 131–135; cf. Budka, 2010a, 335 for a summary with further literature.

¹³⁵ Leahy, 1977, 235–242; Leahy, 2007, 65 with references; Aston, 2009, 408.

¹³⁶ O’Connor, 2009, 205.

¹³⁷ Cf. Aston, 2009, 408–410, fig. 57 (type “Abydos III”); Budka, 2010a, 184.

¹³⁸ O’Connor, 2009, 131; Aston, 2009, 141, fig. 3 for a sketch of the locations of these cemeteries.

¹³⁹ See e.g. Ayrton – Currelly – Weigall, 1904, 6–10, pls. XXII.4, XXXIV–XXXV; summarized by Aston, 1996a, 46–47, figs. 131–137a.

¹⁴⁰ Ayrton – Currelly – Weigall, 1904, pls. XXII.4, XXXIV–XXXV.

¹⁴¹ Aston, 1996a, figs. 132: 57–58, 133: 59–60, fig. 135: 69.

¹⁴² Aston, 1996a, 47.

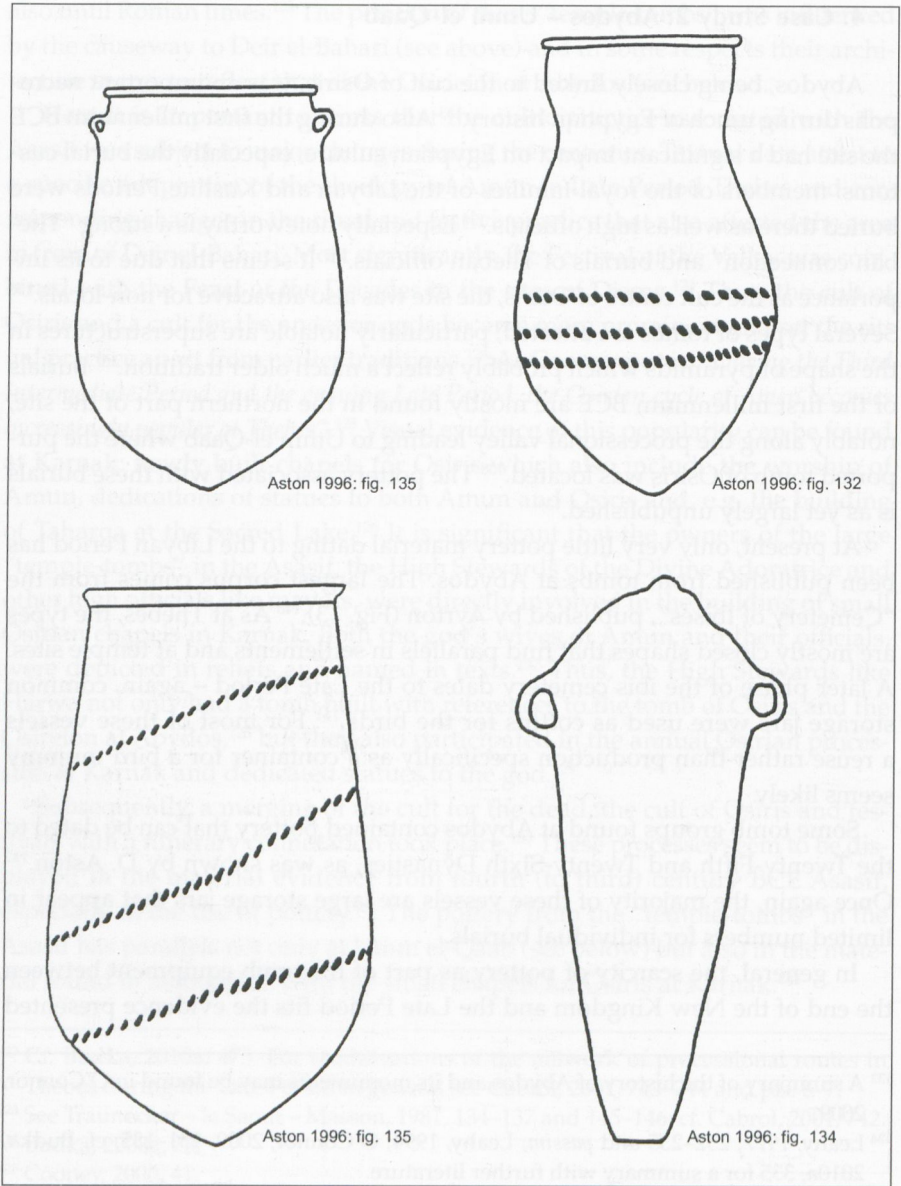
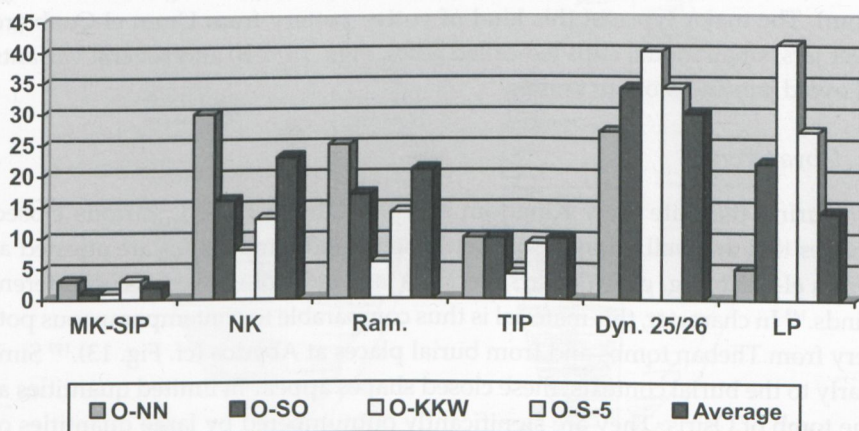


Fig. 13 Pottery from the “Cemetery of Ibises”, Abydos, dating to the eleventh–tenth centuries BCE (after Aston, 1996a).

from Thebes. The situation at the cultic tomb of Osiris is in this respect of interest. Is the use of pottery at this holy place, which was regarded as the tomb of the god, comparable to contemporary tombs for the elite?

Umm el-Qaab and the tomb of Osiris

The amounts of pottery deposited at Umm el-Qaab around the Early Dynastic Royal Tombs and especially around the tomb of Djer, the supposed burial place of the god Osiris, are uncountable. These numerous relics of votive activities are usually dated from the New Kingdom to the Late Period.¹⁴³ A detailed study of the material from the new excavations at the tomb of Djer has been in progress since 2008 and has enlarged our knowledge and revealed certain heydays of use (Table 1).¹⁴⁴ The ceramic material unearthed by the German Archaeological Institute since 2006 confirms that the tomb of Djer became the focus of the cult of Osiris as early as during the Middle Kingdom and that cultic activities were conducted there until the Ptolemaic Period.¹⁴⁵ A first zenith of activity is noticeable during the Ramesside time and an increase in and revival of cultic activity at the site took place especially during the Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth Dynasties. The New Kingdom and the Late Period cover together



Find position	MK-SIP	NK	Ram.	TIP	Dyn. 25/26	LP
O-NN	3	30	25	10	27	5
O-SO	1	16	17	10	34	22
O-KKW	1	8	6	4	40	41
O-S-5	3	13	14	9	34	27
Average	2	23	21	10	30	14

Table 1. Percentage of each period in the total amount of pottery from the Tomb of Osiris (based on four assemblages; note the average value at the bottom).

¹⁴³ Cf. Kemp, 1975, 37 ("from the 18th to 26th Dyns.")

¹⁴⁴ Budka, forthcoming a.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Effland – Budka – Effland, forthcoming.

almost 90% of the material. The Libyan Period produced a minimum of 10% of the material, an amount that is comparable to the activity of the Eighteenth Dynasty (Table 1).¹⁴⁶

The pottery datable to the Libyan Period from Umm el-Qaab derives special importance since there is, especially for Upper Egypt, the need for further research on the pottery tradition within the period of 1000/950-750 BCE.¹⁴⁷ Parallels from new excavations at Dra Abu el-Naga by German and Spanish missions give some hope that we will be able to solve a number of questions in the near future based on the larger and currently growing corpus of material (see above).

Since the tomb of Osiris is a special category of funerary monument – being a conceptual and not a real tomb, and as such a very important cultic place and pilgrimage site – it may come as no surprise that the pottery connected with it features a variety of characteristics: it is both comparable to funerary pottery associated with tombs (especially during the Middle Kingdom) and to votive pottery connected with temples and festivals (especially during the New Kingdom). The major types of this kind of votive pottery from Umm el-Qaab are beer jars, small model cups (so-called *qaabs*, Figs. 15/7-8) and several variants of ovoid jars and storage vessels.

Libyan Period

During the Late New Kingdom and the Libyan Period, various closed shapes that are well known from settlements and temple sites are attested at Umm el-Qaab, e.g. globular jars, neckless jars and storage vessels of different kinds.¹⁴⁸ In character, this material is thus comparable to contemporaneous pottery from Theban tombs and from burial places at Abydos (cf. Fig. 13).¹⁴⁹ Similarly to the burial contexts, these closed shapes appear in limited quantities at the tomb of Osiris. They are significantly outnumbered by large quantities of vessels having a votive character, especially so-called beer jars and incense cups. Both types of vessels were specifically produced as votive offerings at the tomb of Osiris.¹⁵⁰ Compared to the New Kingdom, these beer jars and incense cups can be regarded as innovations: the common Ramesside beer jar was altered to a much larger scale of the now common type (Figs. 14/4-6), and

¹⁴⁶ Budka, forthcoming a. This is the first estimation – since dating of Libyan pottery is often difficult, it would come as no surprise if the total percentage of this material would increase and cover a larger share of the material.

¹⁴⁷ Vgl. Aston, 1999a, 68.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Aston, 1999a, pl. 7, 20–21; Aston, 2007, figs. 45–51; Aston, 2008, 76; Aston, 2009, 323; for funerary contexts cf. Seiler, 2003a, 344–346, figs. 9 and 13.

¹⁴⁹ Budka, forthcoming a.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. large amount of such beer jars at Thebes, especially from Dra Abu el-Naga (cf. note 52) and in small quantities from TT 320 (cf. note 53).

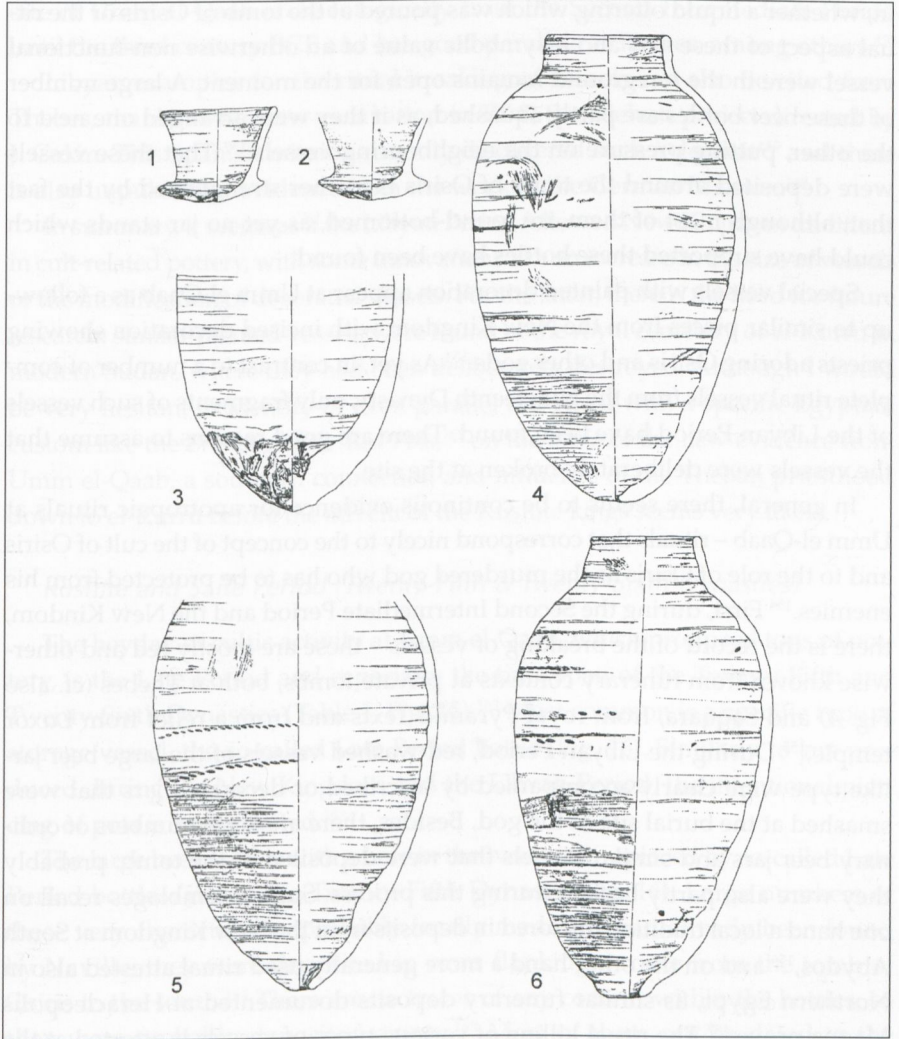


Fig. 14 The main types of offering pottery dating to the Libyan Period from Umm el-Qaab (scale 1:4).

the special incense cups (Figs. 14/1–2)¹⁵¹ replaced former ordinary dishes and plates used as burners. In addition, many of the large beer bottles of the Libyan Period show a pierced bottom, created during the production of the vessels. Thus, these jars were never designed to hold liquid contents permanently. The vessels seem to have been produced specifically for the context they were used

¹⁵¹ Pumpenmeier, 1998, fig. 26, right.

in; whether a liquid offering which was poured at the tomb of Osiris or the ritual aspect of these acts and a symbolic value of an otherwise non-functional vessel were in the foreground remains open for the moment. A large number of these beer bottles are partly squashed, as if they were arranged one next to the other, putting pressure on the neighbouring vessels.¹⁵² That these vessels were deposited around the tomb of Osiris is further strengthened by the fact that, although most of them are round-bottomed, as yet no jar stands which could have supported these bottles have been found.

Special vessels with painted decoration appear at Umm el-Qaab as a follow-up to similar pieces from the New Kingdom with incised decoration showing priests adoring Osiris and other gods.¹⁵³ As yet, in contrast to a number of complete ritual vessels from the Nineteenth Dynasty, only fragments of such vessels of the Libyan Period have been found. There are good reasons to assume that the vessels were deliberately broken at the site.

In general, there seems to be continuous evidence for apotropaic rituals at Umm el-Qaab – rituals that correspond nicely to the concept of the cult of Osiris and to the role of Osiris as the murdered god who has to be protected from his enemies.¹⁵⁴ First, during the Second Intermediate Period and the New Kingdom, there is the record of the breaking of vessels – these are mostly red and otherwise known from funerary contexts at private tombs, both at Thebes (cf. also Fig. 4) and Saqqara, from royal Pyramid Texts and from a relief from Luxor temple.¹⁵⁵ During the Libyan Period, red-washed vessels of the large beer jar-like type were clearly accompanied by inscribed or decorated jars that were smashed at the burial site of the god. Besides, there are large numbers of ordinary beer jars and similar vessels that were deposited at the tomb: probably they were also partly broken during this process. Such assemblages recall on one hand a local tradition mirrored in deposits from the New Kingdom at South Abydos,¹⁵⁶ and on the other hand a more generally used ritual attested also in Northern Egypt, as similar funerary deposits documented at Heracleopolis Magna prove.¹⁵⁷ The ritual killing of various types of vessels is attested at the

¹⁵² These bruises are also indications that the votive vessels were produced locally – to be that easily deformed, one has to assume that they were deposited soon after firing or even in a ‘leather-hard’ state.

¹⁵³ Cf. Efficand, forthcoming.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Budka, forthcoming a.

¹⁵⁵ Budka, 2010a, 390–393.

¹⁵⁶ Deposits in front of the pyramid of Tetisheri as well as at the so-called terrace temple of Ahmose, all dated to the early Eighteenth Dynasty and mostly comprising beer jars and beakers, see Budka, 2006b, 109–112.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Grande-Lopez – Quesada, 1992, 417: the authors compared these deposits of broken beakers (a vessel type similar to beer jars) with the function of foundation deposits; for the pottery as possible evidence of “a magical ritual of the breaking of jars” see Pérez Die, 2009, 319.

site of Umm el-Qaab archaeologically from the Second Intermediate Period until the third century BCE and has good parallels at Thebes, among others.¹⁵⁸

Libyan examples for the ritual breaking of vessels can also be cited from Thebes, thanks to the new excavation in TT 8, the Djehuti project directed by J. Galán. This Spanish mission recently discovered such a deposit¹⁵⁹ and there is also unpublished evidence from the work of the German Mission.¹⁶⁰

In summary, it seems as if the Libyan Period followed New Kingdom traditions in cult-related pottery, with some innovations like an increase in the size of vessels or the modification of decorated vessels. For the latter, there is the need for future research: similar painted vessels were found at the royal cemetery of el-Kurru in modern Sudan, where they had been deliberately destroyed. Although I would be very hesitant to identify or even parallel this ritual with a specific Egyptian custom like the *Breaking of the Red Pots*,¹⁶¹ on the basis of the new evidence from Umm el-Qaab, a southern connection and influence of the Theban priesthood down to el-Kurru before the advent of the Kushite kings seems very likely.

Kushite and Saite Period (Twenty-Fifth & Twenty-Sixth Dynasties)

The heyday of cultic activity at Umm el-Qaab, which produced tons of pottery, is the Late Period and especially the time span of the Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth Dynasties (Table 1, Fig. 15).¹⁶² Most common is a specific type of storage vessel, the so-called Late Period bottle (Fig. 16). Similarly to jars produced during the New Kingdom and the Libyan Period, the intentional piercing of pots is well attested.¹⁶³

The large beer bottles with a hole in the base were replaced by so-called Late Period bottles/jars in the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty (Fig. 16). Large numbers of these very characteristic, probably locally made jars had already been found by Naville; they were deposited in rows flanking a route from the tomb of Osiris to the south.¹⁶⁴ There are no traces of any content within the bottles, so they were probably deposited empty.¹⁶⁵ Most of them can be dated to the

¹⁵⁸ Budka, forthcoming a. An increase in killing of vessels during the Ptolemaic period can be noted at Thebes; cf. Budka, 2010a, 407–412.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Grande-Lopez – Torrado de Gregorio, 2008: dated there erroneously to the Eighteenth Dynasty.

¹⁶⁰ Personal communication by Anne Seiler, Ute Rummel and Susanne Michels.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Yellin, 1995, 243–263. For a detailed study on the evidence from el-Kurru see Budka, forthcoming c.

¹⁶² Naville estimated the number of vessels as 20 million; cf. Budka, forthcoming a.

¹⁶³ Budka, forthcoming a.

¹⁶⁴ Naville dated them to the New Kingdom (Naville, 1914, 38, pl. XVIII.4 and pl. XIX.1); cf. Aston, 1996b, 2; Müller, 2006a, 81–83; Müller, 2006b, 46–47; Müller, 2009, 16–18.

¹⁶⁵ This contrasts them to the Libyan Period beer jars – these show a thin, silty film on the interior, typical for beer jars or, in general, for containers of liquid.

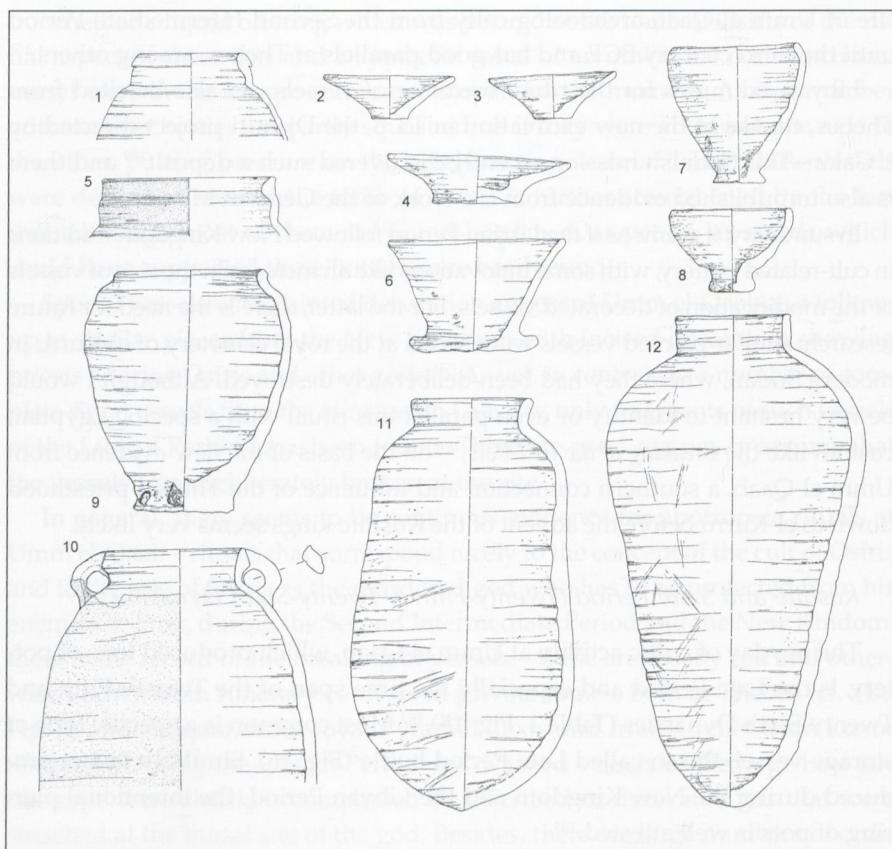


Fig. 15 Pottery dating to the Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth Dynasties from Umm el-Qaab (scale 1:4).

Twenty-Fifth Dynasty; some are already Twenty-Sixth Dynasty in date.¹⁶⁶ Several variants of this specific vessel type do not have parallels outside of Abydos and may be regarded as local types. I have tentatively suggested that the vessels were perhaps influenced by Early Dynastic storage jars associated with the prime-use of the royal tombs at Umm el-Qaab.¹⁶⁷

The large conglomerations of Late Period pottery vessels at Umm el-Qaab, especially the bottles arranged in rows, share some conceptual aspects with the embalming deposits attested at Thebes, although the Abydos vessels lack any

¹⁶⁶ Type 4 of Aston (Aston, 1996b, Fig. 2b) is attested until the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, see Seiler, 2003b, 364. Rare at Umm el-Qaab, it was discovered at Abydos as a container for an infant burial, see Patch, 2007, 241, 244 (Aston, 2009, 151, here pot as “type 130”).

¹⁶⁷ Budka, forthcoming a.

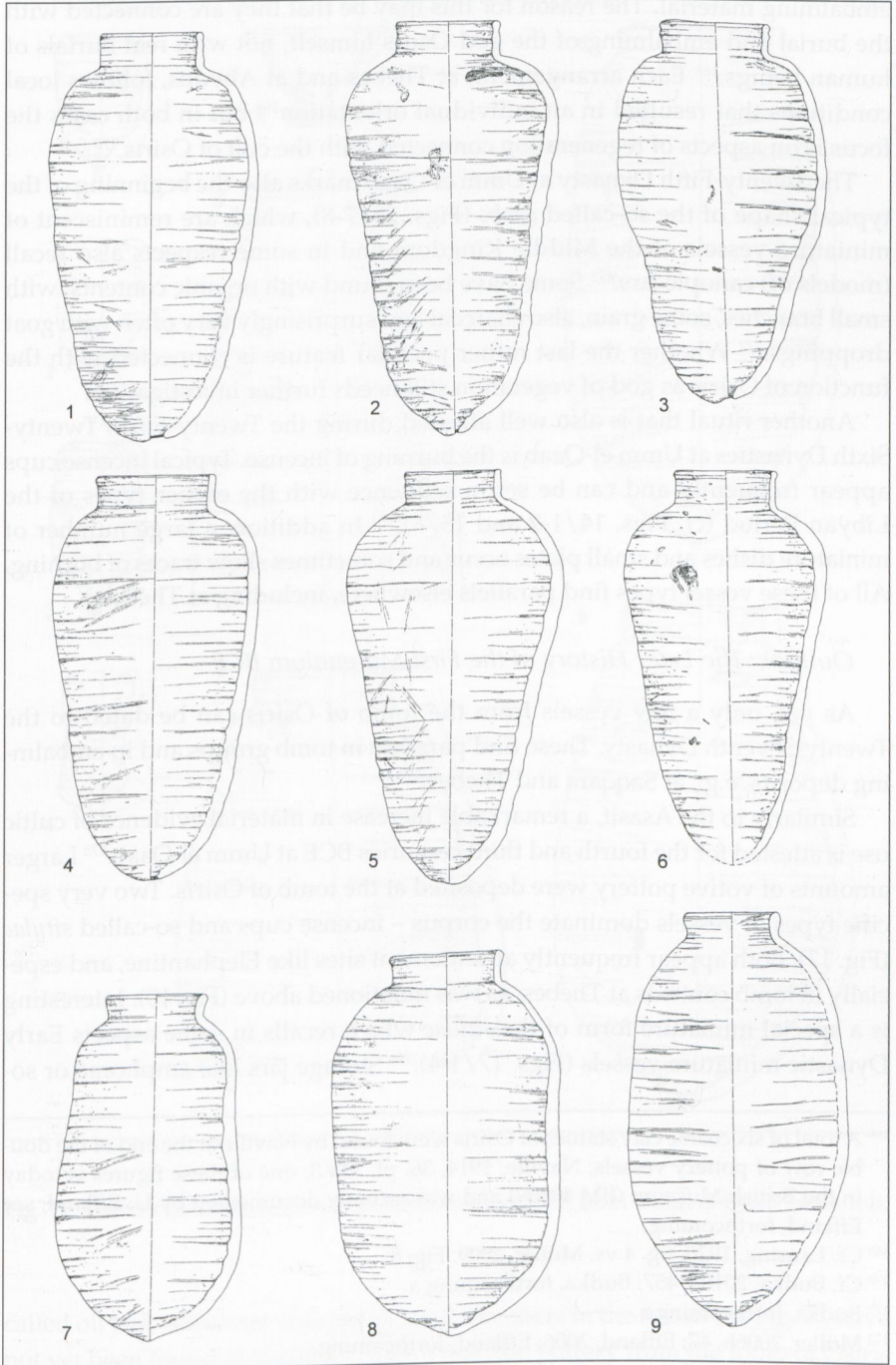


Fig. 16 The so-called Late Period bottles that were deposited in rows at Umm el-Qaab (scale 1:6).

embalming material. The reason for this may be that they are connected with the burial and embalming of the god Osiris himself, not with real burials of human beings.¹⁶⁸ Each arrangement, at Thebes and at Abydos, follows local conditions that resulted in an individual orientation¹⁶⁹ but in both cases the focus is on aspects of regeneration connected with the cult of Osiris.¹⁷⁰

The Twenty-Fifth Dynasty at Umm el-Qaab marks also the beginning of the typical shape of the so-called *qaabs* (Figs. 15/7-8), which are reminiscent of miniature vessels of the Middle Kingdom and in some respects also recall (models of) canopic jars.¹⁷¹ Some have been found with organic contents: with small branches, some grain, also charcoal and surprisingly very often with goat droppings.¹⁷² Whether the last rather peculiar feature is connected with the function of Osiris as god of vegetation still needs further investigation.

Another ritual that is also well attested during the Twenty-Fifth/Twenty-Sixth Dynasties at Umm el-Qaab is the burning of incense. Typical incense cups appear frequently and can be set in sequence with the earlier types of the Libyan Period (cf. Figs. 14/1-2 and 15/6).¹⁷³ In addition, a large number of miniature dishes and small plates occur and sometimes show traces of burning. All of these vessel types find parallels elsewhere, including at Thebes.

Outlook: The Later History of the First Millennium BCE

As yet, only a few vessels from the tomb of Osiris can be dated to the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty. These find parallels in tomb groups and in embalming deposits, e.g., at Saqqara and Thebes.¹⁷⁴

Similarly to the Asasif, a remarkable increase in material evidence of cultic use is attested for the fourth and third centuries BCE at Umm el-Qaab.¹⁷⁵ Larger amounts of votive pottery were deposited at the tomb of Osiris. Two very specific types of vessels dominate the corpus – incense cups and so-called *situlae* (Fig. 17). Both appear frequently at settlement sites like Elephantine, and especially in tomb contexts at Thebes, as was mentioned above (Fig. 10). Interesting is a special miniature form of the *situlae* which recalls in some aspects Early Dynastic miniature vessels (Figs. 17/1-4).¹⁷⁶ Storage jars like amphorae or so-

¹⁶⁸ A total of six coarse clay statues of Osiris were found by Naville at the end of the double row of pottery vessels; Naville, 1914, 36, pl. XIV.3; one of these figures is today in the British Museum (BM 49309) and was recently documented by U. Effland, see Effland, forthcoming.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Lansing, 1920, fig. 4 vs. Müller, 2009, Fig. 8.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Budka, 2010a, 457; Budka, forthcoming a.

¹⁷¹ Budka, forthcoming a.

¹⁷² Müller, 2006b, 47; Effland, 2006; Effland, forthcoming.

¹⁷³ Budka, forthcoming a.

¹⁷⁴ Budka, forthcoming a.

¹⁷⁵ Budka, forthcoming a.

¹⁷⁶ For these miniature vessels cf. Müller, 2006, 81, figs. 5c-d.

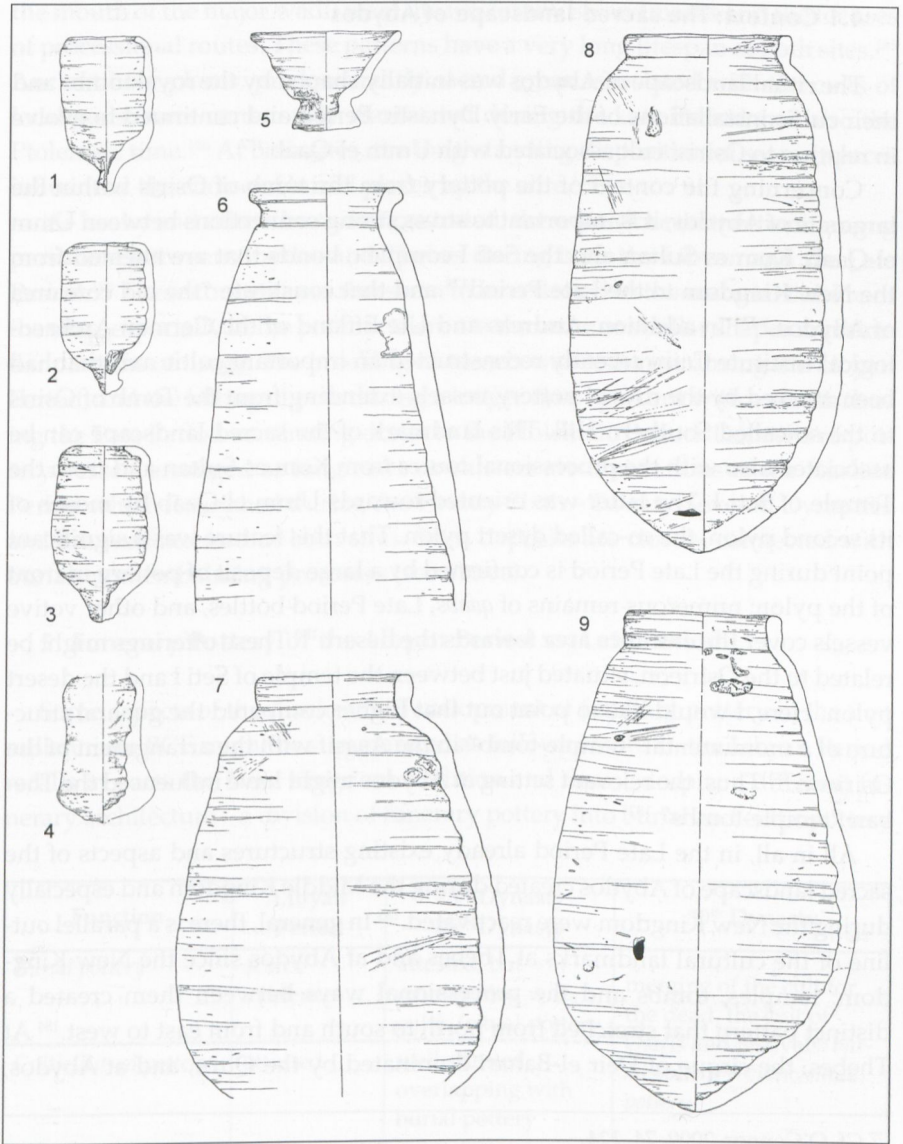


Fig. 17 Pottery dating to the fourth-third centuries BCE from Umm el-Qaab (scale 1:4).

called oil jars, which are attested in small numbers in the Asasif (cf. Fig. 3), have not yet been found at Umm el-Qaab. Thus, the pottery from the tomb of Osiris datable to the fourth and third centuries BCE is comparable to contemporary pottery associated with the cultic rooms of Theban tombs rather than with vessels coming from the burial chamber.

4.1 Context: The sacred landscape of Abydos

The ritual landscape of Abydos was initially shaped by the royal tombs and their cultic installations of the Early Dynastic Period and continued to evolve in relation to Osiris' cult associated with Umm el-Qaab.¹⁷⁷

Concerning the context of the pottery from the tomb of Osiris within the large site of Abydos, it is important to stress strong connections between Umm el-Qaab, Kom es-Sultan and the Seti I complex, bonds that are attested from the New Kingdom to the Late Period¹⁷⁸ and that constitute "the old core area of Abydos."¹⁷⁹ In addition, Andreas and Ute Effland of the German Archaeological Institute Cairo recently reconstructed an important cultic axis that had been marked by the row of pottery vessels extending from the Tomb of Osiris to the so-called Southern Hill. This landmark of the sacred landscape can be associated also with the processional routes from Kom es-Sultan and from the Temple of Seti I. The latter was oriented towards Umm el-Qaab by means of its second pylon, the so-called desert pylon. That this feature was a significant point during the Late Period is confirmed by a large deposit of pottery in front of the pylon: numerous remains of *qaabs*, Late Period bottles, and other votive vessels cover the entrance area towards the desert.¹⁸⁰ These offerings might be related to the Osirion, situated just between the temple of Seti I and the desert pylon. Here, I would like to point out that Eigner compared the general structure of a monumental "temple-tomb" in the Asasif with the arrangement of the Osirion.¹⁸¹ Thus, the relevant setting at Abydos might have influenced the Theban "temple-tombs".¹⁸²

All in all, in the Late Period already existing structures and aspects of the sacred landscape of Abydos created during the Middle Kingdom and especially during the New Kingdom were reactivated.¹⁸³ In general, there is a parallel outline of the cultural landmarks at Thebes and at Abydos since the New Kingdom: temples, tombs and the processional ways between them created a distinct pattern that stretched from north to south and from east to west.¹⁸⁴ At Thebes, the cirque of Deir el-Bahari dominated by the Qurn, and at Abydos,

¹⁷⁷ Cf. O'Connor, 2009, 74–124.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Harvey, 1998, 88–92, 446–448; Eaton, 2004, 443–446 for the New Kingdom; O'Connor, 2009, 121–123 and Effland – Effland, forthcoming, for the later tradition.

¹⁷⁹ O'Connor, 2009, 122.

¹⁸⁰ Effland – Effland, forthcoming.

¹⁸¹ Eigner, 1984, 171, fig. 136.

¹⁸² Budka, 2010a, 78. Kucharek, 2006, 117 has proposed that the processional topography of the Osirian chapels at Karnak "may have been a transposition of the processional route of Osiris at Abydos".

¹⁸³ Cf. as summary: O'Connor, 2009, 122.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Eaton, 2007, 231–250; O'Connor, 2009, 203, puts, despite these clear analogies, emphasis on the unusual aspects within the Abydos landscape.

the mouth of the major wadi, were the westernmost landmarks and the focuses of processional routes. These patterns have a very long lifespan at both sites.¹⁸⁵ Ancient holy places, predominantly sacred areas associated with the cults of local gods, were consciously reactivated during the Late Period and also the Ptolemaic time.¹⁸⁶ At both sites, the long-standing disposition of sacred spaces influenced the choice of burial places by the elite.¹⁸⁷

As Leahy and others have demonstrated, there are close connections among personnel between Abydos and Thebes during both the Libyan and the Late Period.¹⁸⁸ These connections also seem to be reflected in the material culture of the sites, especially in the pottery: there are the same or similar shapes and similar patterns of usage. The breaking of vessels was common during the Libyan Period, and the killing of pots during a longer time span but with a zenith during the Late Period continuing down to the Ptolemaic Period. Deposits of pottery vessels arranged as long rows or clusters are innovations of the Kushite Period which flourished during the Twenty-Sixth – Twenty-Seventh Dynasties and are well attested at both sites. Such deposits are closely connected with burials and embalming processes (see above).

5. Funerary Pottery of the Libyan Period vs. Late Period

Some aspects of the diachronic development of funerary pottery in the first millennium BCE might be summarized as follows (Table 2): the Libyan Period recalls in parts the New Kingdom tradition and thus – despite a different funerary architecture – a division of funerary pottery into burial and cultic pottery

Function	Libyan Period	25 th Dynasty 26 th Dynasty	30 th Dynasty
<i>Burial pottery</i>	scarce evidence	attested, but overlapping with cultic/ritual pottery	merging of the cult for the dead, the cult of Osiris and festivals: <i>burial pottery = cultic/ritual pottery</i>
<i>Cultic/Ritual pottery</i>	attested	well attested, overlapping with burial pottery	

Table 2. Sketch of the development of possibilities of differentiating between burial and cultic pottery during the first millenium BCE.

¹⁸⁵ For “regional differences in temple ritual between Abydos and Thebes”, however, see Eaton, 2004, 454 and *passim*.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Budka, 2010a, 41 with references.

¹⁸⁷ At Thebes: especially Deir el-Bahari, the Asasif, Ramesseum and Medinet Habu; at Abydos: the general arrangement of the cemeteries as overlooking the royal wadi.

¹⁸⁸ Leahy, 1977, 235–242; Aston, 2009, 408.

is possible. Pottery associated with the cult of the dead can be closely linked to earlier traditions during the New Kingdom. In contrast to the New Kingdom, the function of pottery as burial gifts is not well attested during the Libyan Period, reflecting the changes in burial customs and the marked modifications in funerary architecture that took place after the end of the New Kingdom. The use of pottery as burial offering significantly increased during the Late Period, starting with the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty. The Twenty-Sixth Dynasty saw a special reference to the funerary and afterlife character of pottery and there were overlapping borders between tomb equipment and material from embalming caches outside of the tombs. The latter form a significant part of the funerary customs of the Late Period.¹⁸⁹ Other than in the New Kingdom, the coherent focus was not on grave goods and food offerings for the dead, but rather on votive offerings, in this case, symbolic offerings, for the gods.¹⁹⁰

From the Thirtieth Dynasty onwards, the majority of pottery from cemeteries clearly bears a cultic connotation. This has been demonstrated in the growing correspondence in the two case studies discussed here: the material from a cemetery (Asasif) finds more and more parallels on a cultic site, venerated as the tomb of the god Osiris himself (Umm el-Qaab). This increasingly specifically votive character of pottery reflects a general development in the funerary cult during the first millennium BCE.¹⁹¹ The function of funerary pottery as cultic pottery is attested for all periods studied but it gradually increases in the fourth century, thus towards the Ptolemaic Period.

6. The Use of Funerary Pottery in the Context of Burial Customs

Five main phases of the funerary culture can be distinguished in first millennium BCE Egypt based on the architectural evidence and the material culture (Table 3). The characteristics of each phase underline the common features that can be derived from architecture, tomb groups, and pottery.¹⁹²

Starting with the New Kingdom, the cult at Umm el-Qaab shows increasing features of temple cult. This phenomenon is not restricted to the conceptual tomb of Osiris as cultic monument nor to Abydos, but was gradually applied to true burials as well and is traceable all over Egypt.¹⁹³ Since Ramesside times, the concept of regeneration is a focus of interest, and at Thebes the regenerative aspects of Amun and Osiris gradually merge in the theology behind the rites

¹⁸⁹ For embalming caches before the Late Period see Budka, 2006a, 85; Budka, 2010a, 433.

¹⁹⁰ Budka, 2010a, 476.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Quack, 2009, 597–629.

¹⁹² Cf. Budka, forthcoming b.

¹⁹³ For late Egyptian funerary cult as cult for the gods, see Quack, 2006, 127; for a strong assimilation of Osiris and Amun see also Cooney, 2000, 34 with further literature in footnote 34.

Period	Phase	Characteristic architecture	Characteristic tomb groups	Characteristic pottery
1070–750 BCE	<i>Essential</i>	predominantly reuse of architecture/tombs; shaft tombs with limited superstructures	focus on body; limitation to coffins, cartonnage, papyrus, stela; almost no burial offerings	almost no burial pottery; cultic use: breaking of pots & burning of incense
750–700 BCE	<i>Experimental</i>	new types with individual and alternating elements; partly with superstructures	innovations and new elements, but not yet standard forms, no fixed norm	little burial pottery
700–670/60 BCE	<i>Innovative</i>	various new types including superstructures		new deposits of pottery – cultic aspects
670/60–525 BCE	<i>Developmental</i>	standardized architecture (referring to older types, partly modified; with superstructures)	standardized tomb groups & objects (referring to older types, partly modified)	standardized pottery in both tomb groups and deposits
after 525 BCE	<i>Restrictive</i>	reuse only, no new structures (cf. <i>essential phase</i>)	modified shape and quantity of objects with archaizing tendencies ('reuse')	limited quantities; predominance of cultic vessels

Table 3. Reconstruction of the main phases of the funerary culture in the first millennium BCE (based on the architectural evidence and the material culture from Asasif and Umm el-Qaab).

focused on Djeme.¹⁹⁴ This general development of interest in regeneration is also to be found in burial customs and tombs.¹⁹⁵

Fundamental changes in the Egyptian funerary belief system started as early as in the New Kingdom¹⁹⁶ and markedly increased during the Third Intermediate Period.¹⁹⁷ This shift found its architectural expression in the perception

¹⁹⁴ Cf., e.g., Cooney, 2000, 33–34; Bommas, 2005, 259–260.

¹⁹⁵ Budka, 2010a, 477.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Assmann, 1973, 30–32; Assmann, 1984, 284; Assmann, 1991, 6–8; Gnirs, 2003, esp. 191–192.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Cooney, 2007, 272; Aston, 2009, 397–400.

of the tomb as a “temple-tomb”¹⁹⁸ which is as much reflected in the mud brick chapels of medium and small size commonly known at Thebes as in the monumental tombs in the Asasif.¹⁹⁹ As Quack pointed out, the most significant aspect of the “temple-tombs” of the first millennium BCE is an emphasis on the funerary cult of the gods, especially numerous references to Osiris and to temple processions towards the god’s tomb.²⁰⁰ This also holds true for the elite tombs at Abydos.

Although the present study is undertaken from a southern point of view, some aspects might stimulate the discussion of religious development in all of Egypt, despite the “north-south divide”.²⁰¹ Various matters still require future research, but general tendencies are nonetheless meaningful. The major changes in funerary customs of the first millennium BCE are influenced by the increasing importance of the Osirian concept, the merging of Amun and Osiris and the idea of a tomb as a temple, culminating in the practice of funerary cult as temple cult for the gods.²⁰² These aspects, illustrated among others by bronze *situlae* from Thebes, are reflected in the use of pottery and also highlight the specific afterlife character of the burial equipment of the first millennium BCE in contrast to former periods, notably the New Kingdom.

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¹⁹⁸ Cf. Quack, 2006, 113–132.

¹⁹⁹ Budka, 2010a, 77–78.

²⁰⁰ Quack, 2006, 128–132.

²⁰¹ Cf. Taylor, 2009, 375.

²⁰² Cf. Quack, 2006, 128 for the essential concept of the “Grab am Tempeldromos”: “Der Totendienst für die entsprechenden Verstorbenen kann damit an die Prozession zum Göttergrab gekoppelt werden, die im Rahmen des Tempelkultes stattfindet”.

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