

Kushite Pottery in Egypt: An Update from Thebes and Abydos

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Abstract

Based on recent archaeological fieldwork, a reassessment of Kushite pottery, both in Egypt and at selected Kushite sites in modern Sudan, is possible. Such a study promises answers to questions related with indigenous traditions and innovations during the time period of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. This paper focuses on new material from the South Asasif necropolis (TT 223 and TT 391) and Abydos (Umm el-Qaab) and attempts to address aspects of cultural contacts between Egypt and Kush.

Introduction

A detailed assessment of the contacts between Egypt and Kush, as reflected in the ceramics, is still clearly needed.¹ The question of a possible Kushite impact on ceramics of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty has not yet been addressed systematically, despite the fact that pottery datable to this era saw an important technical revolution: the introduction of the so-called kick wheel.² Vessels with marks of this new technological feature are attested in Lower and Upper Egypt as well as in Sudan. According to their specific marl clay fabric (Marl A4, variant 2), they were probably produced in the Theban region,³ but no workshops have yet been found.⁴

Recent archaeological fieldwork at Thebes and Abydos has produced significant material from the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.⁵ Material unearthed in the South Asasif necropolis, especially in the Kushite tombs of Karakhamun (TT 223) and Karabasken (TT 391), holds particularly rich potential. The majority of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty ceramic corpus from both tombs is Egyptian style vessels, but drinking vessels and beakers imported from Kush are also present.⁶

This paper attempts a reassessment of Kushite pottery, both in Egypt and at selected Kushite sites in modern Sudan, in order to address questions of indigenous traditions and innovations during the time period of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. As ceramic vessels were used in various contexts and functioned as objects of daily use, transport containers, funerary equipment, and also as ritual items, such an investigation promises new insights into cultural connections between the most important sites like Abydos, Thebes, and el-Kurru.

¹ See BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium*, 503–20.

² ARNOLD, in ARNOLD, BOURRIAU (eds.), *An Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Pottery*, 79–83. See also BOULET in this volume.

³ ASTON, *Elephantine* XIX, 186, pl. 156. See also BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium*, 509; VINCENTELLI, *Hillat el-Arab*, 48.

⁴ Of prime importance in this respect is the new material from Karnak, see BOULET, *BCE* 26 (2016), 213–26; BOULET, DEFERNEZ, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium*, 603–24. See also BOULET in this volume.

⁵ For Thebes, see BUDKA, *Bestattungsbrauch*, 211–3, 345, fig. 141; BUDKA, in BAREŠ, COPPENS, SMOLÁRIKOVÁ (eds.), *Egypt in Transition*, 32–4; BUDKA, in GODLEWSKI, ŁAJTAR (eds.), *Between the Cataracts*, 507; SULLIVAN, *A Glimpse into Ancient Thebes*, passim. For Abydos, see ASTON, *MDAIK* 52 (1996), 1–10; BUDKA, in BAREŠ, COPPENS, SMOLÁRIKOVÁ (eds.), *Egypt in Transition*, 55–8; BUDKA, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), 45–6, 50–1, 53–4.

⁶ For TT 223, see BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA (ed.), *Tombs of the South Asasif Necropolis*, 327–35.

The Ceramics from South Asasif

TT 223

The recording of the pottery from TT 223 was carried out in 2011, 2012, and 2014.⁷ The ceramics from the burial compartment (Area X) were of prime interest and have been studied in detail. Within an assemblage of mixed ceramics, demonstrating the multiple robberies of the tomb chamber, a small quantity of Twenty-fifth Dynasty vessels was identified that probably belonged to the original burial equipment of Karakhamun. Most interesting within this small pottery corpus are vessels that are not found among typical Egyptian tomb groups of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.⁸ Thanks to parallels from Kush and Kushite contexts at Thebes, it was possible to identify these vessels from TT 223 as imports from modern Sudan, attesting to the indigenous tradition of Karakhamun within his Egyptian temple-tomb.⁹

TT 391

In 2016, substantial parts of the pottery from the ongoing excavation in TT 391 were analysed.¹⁰ Work focused on the sectors of the burial compartment (VI: Burial Chamber; VI.1: Sarcophagus, V: Ramp) and the Pillared Hall (IV). Selected material from Area I, the Courtyard of TT 391, was studied as well. A total amount of 11,876 sherds from TT 391 were processed in 2016. Figs. 1a and 1b give the details of the distribution according to find spot.

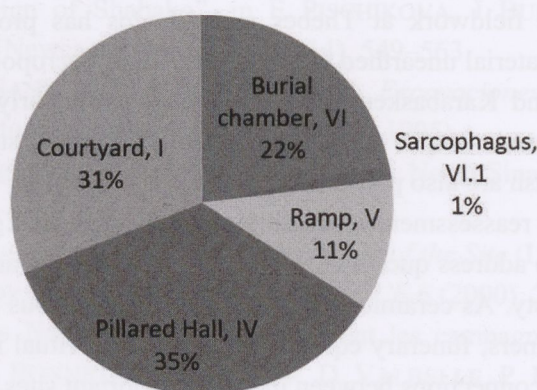


Fig. 1a: Distribution of pottery from TT 391, processed in 2016 according to areas

Area	Total amount	Twenty-fifth Dynasty
Burial chamber, VI	2577	26
Sarcophagus, VI.1	154	1
Ramp, V	1308	6
Pillared Hall, IV	4160	3
Courtyard, I	3677	18
	11876	54

Fig. 1b: Amount of processed pottery according to areas from TT 391, 2016

⁷ BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA (ed.), *Tombs of the South Asasif Necropolis*, 247–62; BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium*, 503–20; BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA (ed.), *Tombs of the South Asasif Necropolis: New Discoveries*, 327–35. For general information about the excavations, see PISCHIKOVA, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium*, 121–60.

⁸ BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium*, 507–8.

⁹ For Kushite ceramics imported to Egypt, see BUDKA, *Bestattungsbrauchtum*, 197, 345, fig. 141, 583–5; BUDKA, in GODLEWSKI, ŁAJTAR (eds.), *Between the Cataracts*, 507, fig. 3, 514; BUDKA, KAMMERZELL, *MittSAG* 18 (2007), 172.

¹⁰ For previous work in the 2014 season, see BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA (ed.), *Tombs of the South Asasif Necropolis: New Discoveries*, 332–5. For the excavations in TT 391, see PISCHIKOVA, “Recreating Kushite Tombs”, in this volume.

The largest amount studied originated from the Pillared Hall (4,160 pieces, 35%), followed by 34% from the burial compartment (Burial Chamber, Sarcophagus, and Ramp). The 4,039 sherds from the burial compartment represent the complete amount of pottery excavated there; from the Pillared Hall, more pottery needs to be processed in upcoming seasons. From Area I, the Courtyard of Karabasken, a total of 3,677 sherds were looked at, sorted, and recorded according to their ware and vessel type (31%). Additional material from Area I still awaits processing.

Despite of a high degree of disturbed contexts and mixed material, the distribution of pottery datable to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty in TT 391 is significant. As illustrated by fig. 2, 61% of the material comes from the burial compartment of which all available ceramics have been studied. With only a total of 54 pieces, the Kushite pottery comprises less than 0.5% of the documented material. This small quantity compares well to the findings in TT 223 (see above).

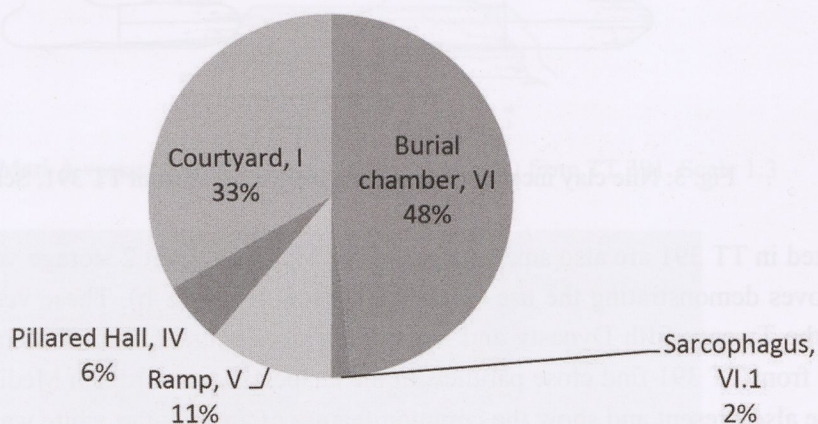


Fig. 2: The distribution of Twenty-fifth Dynasty material within the pottery studied in 2016 according to area (TT 391)

Pottery from the Burial Compartment of TT 391

In general, the material from the burial compartment of TT 391 shows parallels to the burial compartment of TT 223.¹¹ The material is completely mixed (comprising intrusive New Kingdom material as well as Twenty-fifth Dynasty, Late Period, Ptolemaic, Roman, Coptic, and Modern/Islamic pottery), but complete vessels could be reconstructed out of numerous fragments, including marl clay vessels of possible Late Period date.

Of special interest is the material datable to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, which possibly belongs to the original tomb group of Karabasken. Similar to TT 223, three functional groups of pottery are preserved in TT 391:¹² 1) storage vessels of Egyptian type, 2) incense burners and cups finding good parallels in Thebes, and 3) indigenous vessels of Kushite tradition.

Most common are Nile clay incense burners with a ledged base (fig. 3). These footed beakers appear for the first time during Kushite rule and later become standardised during the Twenty-sixth Dynasty.¹³ It is noteworthy that although incense burners have a long lasting indigenous tradition in Kush,¹⁴ only Egyptian types of burners were used in TT 223 and TT 391. These ritual vessels are therefore no identity markers, but relate to their context of deposition—and attest to the innovative aspects of pottery production during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.

¹¹ BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA (ed.), *Tombs of the South Asasif Necropolis*, 327–35.

¹² See BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium*, 511–3.

¹³ BUDKA, *Bestattungsbrauch*, 211; BUDKA, in BAREŠ, COPPENS, SMOLÁRIKOVÁ (eds.), *Egypt in Transition*, 32. See also ASTON, *Egyptian Pottery*, 75, fig. 219c.

¹⁴ BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium*, 511.

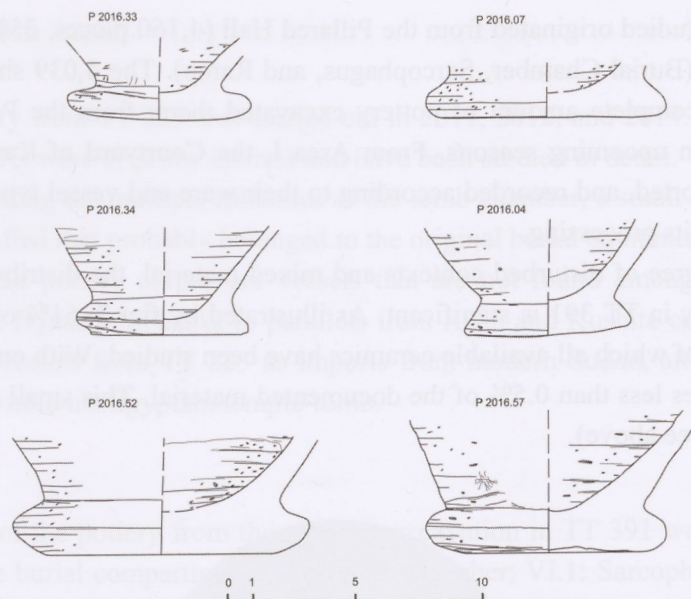


Fig. 3: Nile clay incense burners with ledged bases from TT 391. Scale 1:3

Well attested in TT 391 are also small fragments of Marl A variant 2 storage vessels with a modelled rim and deep grooves demonstrating the use of the kick-wheel (figs. 4a–b). These vessels seem to represent innovations of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and show a distinct evolution until Ptolemaic times.¹⁵ Four handled marl clay jars from TT 391 find close parallels in the chapel of Amenirdis in Medinet Habu.¹⁶ Nile clay storage vessels are also present and show the common feature of an irregular white wash, well attested in Thebes and also Abydos.¹⁷

Besides the Egyptian wheel-made material, also some un-Egyptian beakers and one hand-made cooking pot were found (fig. 5). As with TT 223, they seem to indicate the Nubian tradition for drinking and cooking vessels.¹⁸ As observed for the tomb of Karakhamun, it is remarkable that the long lasting Nubian tradition of depositing cooking vessels as burial gifts¹⁹ is also found within Egyptian monumental tomb architecture in the South Asasif.²⁰ This contrasts considerably from the Egyptian tradition of equipping the dead with storage vessels holding provisions,²¹ but finds a parallel in the Kushite infant burial within Tomb VII in the Northern Asasif.²² Like in this case, the Kushite beakers and cooking pots from TT 223 and TT 391 seem to attest to specific Kushite aspects of burial pottery. The Kushite type of beaker is very common at Kushite sites in modern Sudan, in different social strata, not only in royal contexts, but also in simple non-elite burials such as Qustul.²³ It is striking that Kushites buried in Egypt did not simply use Egyptian equivalents of this vessel shape or adapted the vessel type according to their preference, but that they used authentic vessels that had to be imported from Kush. Here it might be relevant that some kind of special native function of

¹⁵ ASTON, *CCE* 8 (2007), 427, fig. 5; MASSON, *CCE* 9 (2011), figs. 20–7. For parallels from Twenty-fifth Dynasty contexts, see, e.g., ASTON, *Burial Assemblages*, 325, 345 (fig. 37, nr. 159); SCHREIBER, *The Mortuary Monument of Djehutymes*, 62–3, pl. 58. See also BOULET in this volume.

¹⁶ ASTON, *Egyptian Pottery*, fig. 175.

¹⁷ ASTON, *MDAIK* 52 (1996), 5–6, 9–10.

¹⁸ BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium*, 510–1.

¹⁹ See, e.g., LOHWASSER, *Aspekte der napatanischen Gesellschaft*, 200 [type J, cooking pots without traces of use].

²⁰ BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium*, 510–2.

²¹ See ROSE, in STRUDWICK, TAYLOR (eds.), *The Theban Necropolis*, 202–9; ASTON, *Burial Assemblages*, 321–48.

²² BUDKA, *Bestattungsbrauchtum*, 583–5; BUDKA, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium*, 510–11.

²³ WILLIAMS, *Twenty-Fifth Dynasty and Napatan Remains*, 54, fig. 2.

Nubian style vessels, like the black-topped and red rimmed beakers, could have also existed at Napatan cemeteries, as recently proposed by Lohwasser.²⁴

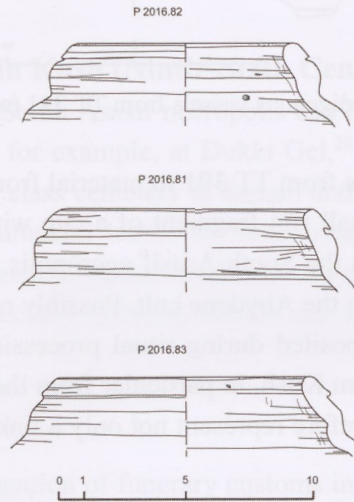


Fig. 4a: Marl A variant 2 storage vessels (rim fragments) from TT 391. Scale 1:3

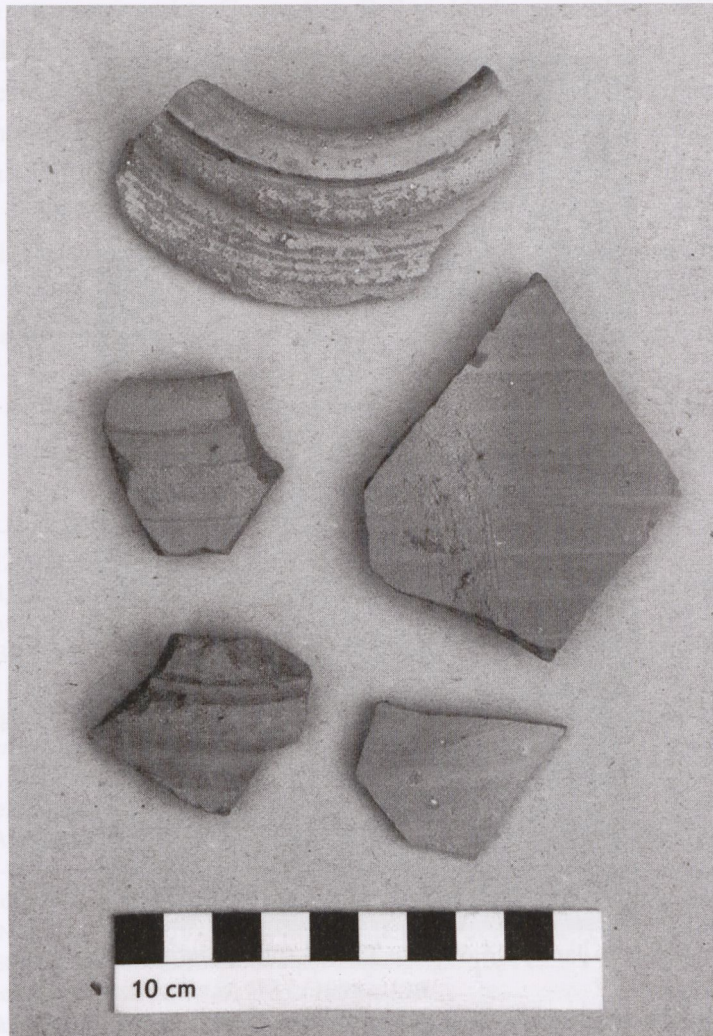


Fig. 4b: Marl A variant 2 storage vessels (rim fragments and body sherds) from TT 391 (photo: Julia Budka)

²⁴ LOHWASSER, *Aspekte der napatanischen Gesellschaft*, 208 (with Sanam as case study).

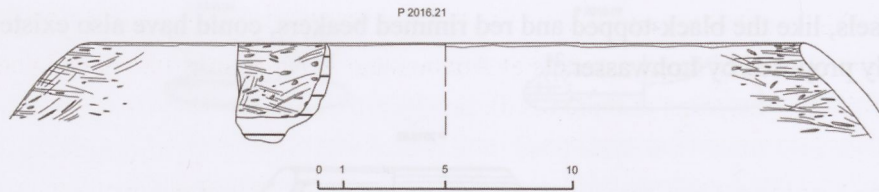


Fig. 5: Kushite indigenous vessels from TT 391 (cooking pot). Scale 1:3

Especially remarkable are parallels from TT 391 to material from Umm el-Qaab, Abydos, connected with the cult for Osiris (see below). A small rim fragment of a cup with inverted rim (P2016.20) represents the first attestations of a '*qaab*'-vessel in the South Asasif necropolis. These *qaabs*, attested in their millions at Umm el-Qaab, are closely linked with the Abydene cult. Possibly recalling a specific type of votive cup from the Middle Kingdom, they were deposited during ritual processions for Osiris.²⁵ Interestingly, outside of Abydos, *qaabs* are mostly known from Kush, in particular from the royal necropolis of Nuri (see below, fig. 7).²⁶ The new finds from TT 391 therefore represent not only a link between Thebes and Abydos, but also to Kushite sites.

One complete vessel from the courtyard of TT 391 is of particular interest. P2015.69 (fig. 6) represents a close parallel to storage jars from Umm el-Qaab, possibly giving material evidence for Osirian festivals in the courtyard of Karabasken.²⁷



Fig. 6: Jar P2015.69 from TT 391 (photo: Julia Budka)

²⁵ BUDKA, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), 35–69; BUDKA, in JURMAN, ASTON, BADER (eds.), "You Had Better Look Twice", in press.

²⁶ BUDKA, *Sokar* 29 (2014), 57. See also BUDKA, in JURMAN, ASTON, BADER (eds.), "You Had Better Look Twice", in press.

²⁷ BUDKA, *Sokar* 29 (2014), 58–9.

All in all, the Twenty-fifth Dynasty sherd material from TTT 391 compares to TT 223, but covers a wider corpus. The pottery also finds close parallels at Abydos and Kushite sites like Kurru and Nuri—these connections will therefore be explored in more detail.

The Homeland: Napatan Ceramics in Kush (Ninth–Sixth Centuries BC)

Many parallels for the material from the South Asasif necropolis can be found in the old homeland, present Sudan, of Karakhamun and Karabasken, for example, at Dukki Gel,²⁸ Hillat el-Arab,²⁹ Qustul,³⁰ and at the royal cemetery at el-Kurru.³¹ The middle class cemetery at Sanam and the site of Kawa provide equivalents as well.³² Similar to the Egyptian monumental tombs in South Asasif, these Napatan burials display a thought-provoking mixture of both traditions: Egyptian marl clay storage vessels are well attested, but indigenous, locally made ceramic vessels, especially drinking vessels and cooking ware, as well as different jars complement the assemblage.

Kurru

Kurru has played a key role in the investigation of funerary customs in Kush as reflected by ceramics.³³ The case of the royal cemetery at Kurru illustrates the adaption of Egyptian traditions and the development of a specific Napatan tradition with close links to Egypt.³⁴ Some of the early tombs at the site, especially Ku. 19 and Ku. Tum 6., which were assigned to Generation B,³⁵ yielded a special type of pottery.³⁶ Reisner discovered hundreds of sherds of large painted vessels and of footed offering bowls with ‘crude Egyptianizing decoration’.³⁷ These vessels were most probably deliberately broken at the tombs after having been used during the funerary banquet. Since an offering chapel was built at Ku. Tum. 6, it is convincing that the pottery was specially produced for the funerary ceremony and destroyed after the funerary meal.³⁸

Most of the broken pottery was red slipped and polished ware with white or black painted decoration.³⁹ The painted vessels fall into two main categories: large handled jars and footed bowls. In recent years, relevant parallels for these vessels were unearthed in Egypt, at Umm el-Qaab. They do not represent full equivalents, but give close comparisons to the style of decoration (black with white outline) and to funerary rites like smashing pots.⁴⁰

²⁸ RUFFIEUX, *Geneva* 55 (2007), 183–246.

²⁹ VINCENTELLI LIVERANI, *CRIPEL* 17/2 (1007), fig. 3; VINCENTELLI, *Hillat el-Arab*, 49–50 and passim.

³⁰ E.g., WILLIAMS, *Twenty-Fifth Dynasty and Napatan Remains*, 54, fig. 2, 70, fig. 21.

³¹ See HEIDORN, *JARCE* 31 (1994), 115–131; BUDKA, in WELSBY, ANDERSON (eds.), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond*, 641–54.

³² Sanam: BUDKA, *Beiträge zur Sudanarchäologie* 11 (2012), 221; GRIFFITH, *AAALiv* 10 (1923), 73–171; LOHWASSER, *Aspekte der napatanischen Gesellschaft*, 199–234; Kawa: WELSBY, *SudNub* 12 (2008), 34–9.

³³ For a recent summary, see BUDKA, in WELSBY, ANDERSON (eds.), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond*, 641–54. See also LOHWASSER, *Aspekte der napatanischen Gesellschaft*, 347.

³⁴ BUDKA, in WELSBY, ANDERSON (eds.), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond*, 641–54; LOHWASSER, in CZERNY *et al.* (eds.), *Timelines III*, 133–8.

³⁵ KENDALL, in WENIG (ed.), *Studien zum antiken Sudan*, 18–25.

³⁶ BUDKA, in WELSBY, ANDERSON (eds.), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond*, 641–54; DUNHAM, *Kurru*, 72, 74, fig. 24d, pl. 42B; KENDALL, in WENIG (ed.), *Studien zum antiken Sudan*, figs. 10–11.

³⁷ KENDALL, *Kush*, 22; see also HEIDORN, *JARCE* 31 (1994), 120.

³⁸ BUDKA, in WELSBY, ANDERSON (eds.), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond*, 641, with further references; KENDALL, *Kush*, 23; KENDALL, in WENIG (ed.), *Studien zum antiken Sudan*, 21.

³⁹ DUNHAM, *Kurru*, figs. 5b–c, 18c, 24b; KENDALL, *Kush*, fig. 17; KENDALL, in WENIG (ed.), *Studien zum antiken Sudan*, figs. 10–11.

⁴⁰ BUDKA, in WELSBY, ANDERSON (eds.), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond*, 641–54.

The jars with special painted decoration from Umm el-Qaab picture mummified figures/gods and they bear cartouches and short texts.⁴¹ The inscribed pieces either give royal names or the names of Theban High Priests of Amun. They can thus be safely dated to the Libyan Period, in particular, to the late Twenty-first Dynasty up to the middle of the Twenty-second Dynasty (c. 960–800 BC).⁴² All of these jars were red-slipped and none were found complete. There are good reasons to assume that these vessels have been deliberately broken at the site. Thus, within the context of the cult for Osiris, an apotropaic ritual can be proposed for which we still lack the precise name.⁴³

Nuri

Why king Taharqa moved the royal cemetery from Kurru to Nuri is still unclear.⁴⁴ The necropolis of Nuri, which was used after Taharqa by later Napatan kings and queens as a burial ground, provides various links to Abydos; monumental ones like the resemblance of the subterranean part of Taharqa's pyramid and the Osireion, but also small-sized references, like parallels for the votive cups from Umm el-Qaab, the so-called *qaabs* (fig. 7).⁴⁵ These *qaabs* were found in foundation deposits in Nuri. Since no pottery was safely attributed to Taharqa's reign, the cemetery of Nuri is less relevant for comparisons with Twenty-fifth Dynasty material, but provides several parallels for Twenty-sixth Dynasty material.⁴⁶ Egyptian style marl clay vessels produced on the kick-wheel testify the influence of Egyptian traditions in Napatan royal burial examples and speak for links between Kush and Thebes.⁴⁷ On a broader level, the site of Nuri is especially relevant for its stone sarcophagi of the Napatan rulers Anlamani and Aspelta, which attest to a profound knowledge of Egyptian funerary texts and rituals during the Kushite period.⁴⁸

Comparison with Abydos: Votive Pottery of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty

The votive pottery of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty from Umm el-Qaab illustrates activities connected with the cult of Osiris. Within the long tradition of votive offerings around the royal tombs of the Early Dynastic Period, the Kushite Period marks the beginning of some specific vessel shapes. The most significant new type is the so-called *qaab*, which continued into the Ptolemaic era.⁴⁹ The *qaab*, responsible for the modern name of the site Umm el-Qaab ('Mother of Pots'), most probably recalls miniature vessels of the Middle Kingdom and in some respects canopic jars.⁵⁰ The only close parallel for this specific vessel type in votive contexts outside of Abydos can be found at the royal Kushite necropolis of Nuri (see above, fig. 7).

In situ deposits of *qaabs* at Umm el-Qaab, which frequently held organic remains as contents, illustrate that the vessels were carefully laid out reflecting organised votive activities embedded in the annual festival of Osiris.⁵¹ Apart from the *qaabs*, a specific type of storage vessel, the so-called Late Period bottles are most common during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty at Umm el-Qaab. These large bottles are a very special type of vessel, clearly locally made, produced in very large numbers, and arranged to form two parallel rows marking pathways (fig. 8).⁵² Until recently, no traces of any content within the bottles were observed.⁵³ The

⁴¹ EFFLAND, EFFLAND, *Abydos*, 74–89.

⁴² EFFLAND, EFFLAND, *Abydos*, 92.

⁴³ BUDKA, in WELSBY, ANDERSON (eds.), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond*, 641–54.

⁴⁴ See KENDALL, in GODLEWSKI, ŁAJTAR (eds.), *Between the Cataracts*, 117–47.

⁴⁵ DUNHAM, *Nuri*, 125, fig. 125 (Nu. 9), 157, fig. 118 (Nu. 10), pls. 134–5. See also BUDKA, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), 45–6; PUMPENMEIER, *MDAIK* 54 (1998), 134.

⁴⁶ See DUNHAM, *Nuri*, passim.

⁴⁷ See BUDKA, in ROEDER, MYLONOPOULOS (eds.), *Archäologie und Ritual*, 88, with further literature in n. 32.

⁴⁸ See WELSBY, *Kingdom of Kush*, 82.

⁴⁹ BUDKA, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), 45; MÜLLER, *MDAIK* 62 (2006), 82.

⁵⁰ See BUDKA, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), 58.

⁵¹ EFFLAND, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), 29–30.

⁵² BUDKA, in BAREŠ, COPPENS, SMOLÁRIKOVÁ (eds.), *Egypt in Transition*, 56–7.

discovery of a new very large ceramic deposit along the eastern edge of the subsidiary tombs of Djer, O-
 NNO, allowed an updated assessment of Kushite votive activity at Umm el-Qaab. Complete examples and
 fragments of *qaab*-dishes and remains of their filling (botanical remains and sand) were discovered together
 with the so-called Late Period bottles. In some cases, the votive dishes were obviously positioned in already
 laid out storage vessels. In other cases, small groups of *qaabs* were put next to the Late Period bottles.⁵⁴
 Thus, for the first time, the deposition of the large bottles can be directly associated with the ritual deposition
 of *qaabs*.⁵⁵ As mentioned above, one Late Period bottle type was discovered in the courtyard of TT 391 (fig.
 6), suggesting some rituals associated with this vessel in the South Asasif necropolis, which might be similar
 to activities in Umm el-Qaab.

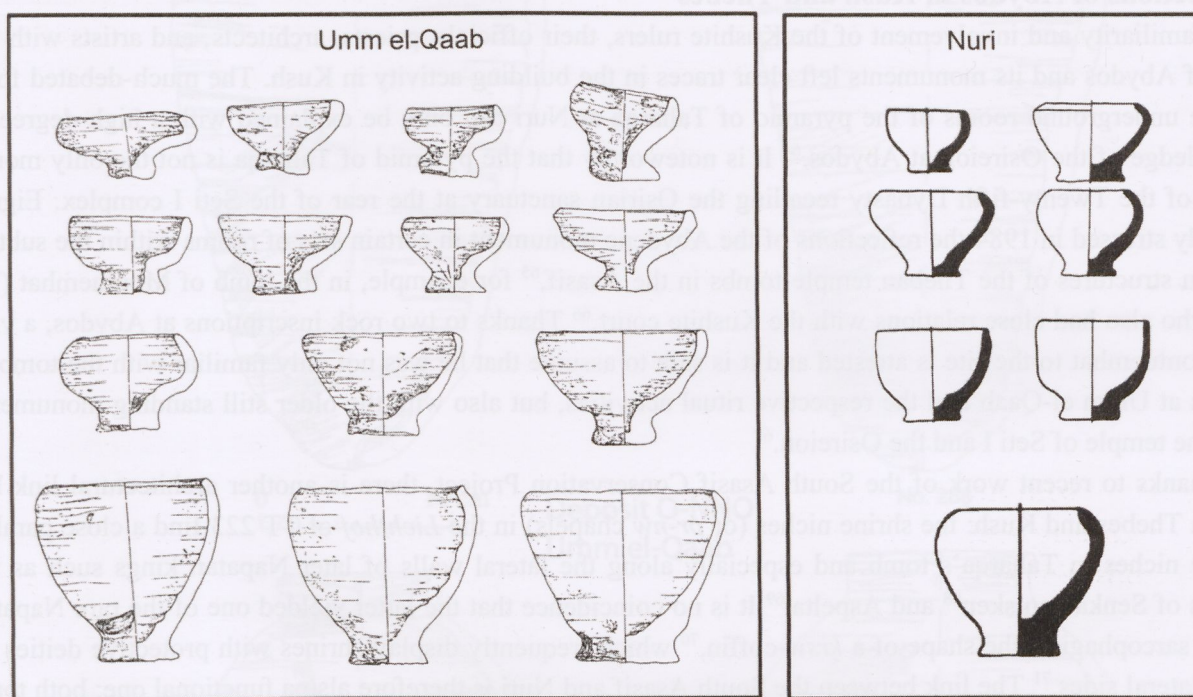


Fig. 7: Qaabs from Umm el-Qaab, tomb of Osiris (Budka, Osiris cult project) and from Nuri, foundation
 deposits (after Dunham 1955)

There are several references to rituals in the pottery deposit O-NNO at the tomb of Djer/Osiris.⁵⁶ First of
 all, a large number of ‘killing holes’ was recognised (fig. 8, bottom right).⁵⁷ Secondly, several traces of
 irregular red paint, possibly also with an apotropaic character, were documented on various types of vessels,
 both on *qaabs* as well as Late Period bottles. It seems noteworthy that the smashing of vessels, and here of
 red vessels, is also attested in Kushite context, at the royal cemetery at Kurru (see above).⁵⁸ These parallels
 between Kurru and Abydos are striking and imply close connections between the sites and associated per-
 sonnel/priests.

The votive pottery at Umm el-Qaab can be associated with deposits at other locations and landmarks
 throughout the site of Abydos. Investigations by Ute and Andreas Effland have clearly shown that there are
 several important connections between North Abydos, Umm el-Qaab, the Seti I complex, and also South

⁵³ See BUDKA, in BAREŠ, COPPENS, SMOLÁRIKOVÁ (eds.), *Egypt in Transition*, 55.

⁵⁴ BUDKA, *Sokar* 29 (2014), 62–3, figs. 15–7; BUDKA, in REGULSKI (ed.), *Abydos*, in press.

⁵⁵ See, however, the pit A 4 with a Late Period bottle and several *qaabs* already excavated at the Heqareshu hill; PUMPENMEIER, *MDAIK* 54 (1998), 134.

⁵⁶ BUDKA, *Sokar* 29 (2014), 57.

⁵⁷ See BUDKA, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), 61; BUDKA, *Sokar* 29 (2014), 62.

⁵⁸ See BUDKA, in WELSBY, ANDERSON (eds.), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond*, 641–54.

Abydos. A significant landmark at Umm el-Qaab was the so-called 'southern hill'.⁵⁹ Obviously, the votive vessels laid out in rows marked the main cultic axes constructing the sacred landscape of Abydos as the processional ways during the festival for Osiris. For example, the deposit O-NNO seems to be orientated towards the 'southern hill'.⁶⁰ During the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, already existing structures and processional features set up during the New Kingdom were revived. A similar Kushite reconstruction of the sacred landscape can be observed at Thebes.⁶¹ The underlying concepts for this were the conscious references to earlier periods also known as 'archaism'⁶² and especially the wish to legitimise Kushite rulers by embedding them and their monuments into previous traditions.⁶³

Reflections of Abydos in Kush and Thebes

The familiarity and involvement of the Kushite rulers, their officials, priests, architects, and artists with the site of Abydos and its monuments left clear traces in the building activity in Kush. The much-debated form of the underground rooms of the pyramid of Taharqa at Nuri can only be explained with a high degree of knowledge of the Osireion at Abydos.⁶⁴ It is noteworthy that the pyramid of Taharqa is not the only monument of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty recalling the Osirian sanctuary at the rear of the Seti I complex. Eigner already stressed in 1984 the reflections of the Abydene monument in certain sets of rooms within the subterranean structures of the Theban temple-tombs in the Asasif,⁶⁵ for example, in the tomb of Montuemhat (TT 34) who also had close relations with the Kushite court.⁶⁶ Thanks to two rock inscriptions at Abydos, a visit by Montuemhat to the site is attested and it is safe to assume that he was not only familiar with the tomb of Osiris at Umm el-Qaab and the respective ritual activities, but also with the older still standing monuments like the temple of Seti I and the Osireion.⁶⁷

Thanks to recent work of the South Asasif Conservation Project, there is another architectural link between Thebes and Kush: the shrine niches (or *pr-nw* chapels) in the *Lichthof* of TT 223 find a close parallel in the niches in Taharqa's tomb and especially along the lateral walls of later Napatan kings such as the tombs of Senkamanisken⁶⁸ and Aspelta.⁶⁹ It is no coincidence that the latter yielded one of the rare Napatan stone sarcophagi in the shape of a *krsw*-coffin,⁷⁰ which frequently display shrines with protective deities on their lateral sides.⁷¹ The link between the South Asasif and Nuri is therefore also a functional one: both tomb architecture and coffins focus on the resurrection of the deceased as Osiris.⁷²

⁵⁹ EFFLAND, BUDKA, EFFLAND, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), 82–3, fig. 52; EFFLAND, EFFLAND, *MOSAIKjournal* 1 (2010), 137–9.

⁶⁰ BUDKA, *Sokar* 29 (2014), 60; EFFLAND, EFFLAND, *Abydos*, 78, figs. 1–2.

⁶¹ BUDKA, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), 60–1 with references.

⁶² See BUDKA, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), 60; BUDKA, *Sokar* 29 (2014), 63, with further references. See also MASSON, in ASTON *et al.* (eds.), *Under the Potter's Tree*, 645–77.

⁶³ BUDKA, in JURMAN, ASTON, BADER (eds.), *"You Had Better Look Twice"*, in press. See also LOHWASSER, BECKER, BLÖBAUM in this volume.

⁶⁴ KENDALL, in GODLEWSKI, ŁAJTAR (eds.), *Between the Cataracts*, 117–47.

⁶⁵ EIGNER, *Die monumentalen Grabbauten*, 163–83; see also BUDKA, *Bestattungsbrauchtum*, 71, 78.

⁶⁶ See BUDKA, *Bestattungsbrauchtum*, 65, with further references in n. 346. Also remarkable is the 'Osirian monumental tomb' section of TT 33, see here most recently TRAUNECKER, in PISCHIKOVA, BUDKA, GRIFFIN (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium BC*, 217–21.

⁶⁷ See EFFLAND, EFFLAND, *Abydos*, 81.

⁶⁸ DUNHAM, *Nuri*, Nu. 3, chamber C, pls. 16–17; cf. PISCHIKOVA, in PISCHIKOVA (ed.), *Tombs of the South Asasif Necropolis*, 61, n. 80.

⁶⁹ DUNHAM, *Nuri*, Nu. 8, chamber C, pls. 30–33.

⁷⁰ DUNHAM, *Nuri*, Nu. 8, figs. 57–68.

⁷¹ For the appearance of *pr-nw* chapels on *krsw*-coffins (an innovation of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty), see EIGNER, in PISCHIKOVA (ed.), *Tombs of the South Asasif Necropolis: New Discoveries*, 78–81.

⁷² BUDKA, in JURMAN, ASTON, BADER (eds.), *"You Had Better Look Twice"*, in press. Note that also the burial chambers in Nuri which are equipped with shrines on their lateral sides represent models of *krsw*-coffins with barrel vaults, see DUNHAM, *Nuri*, Nu. 3, fig. 26 and Nu. 8, fig. 52.

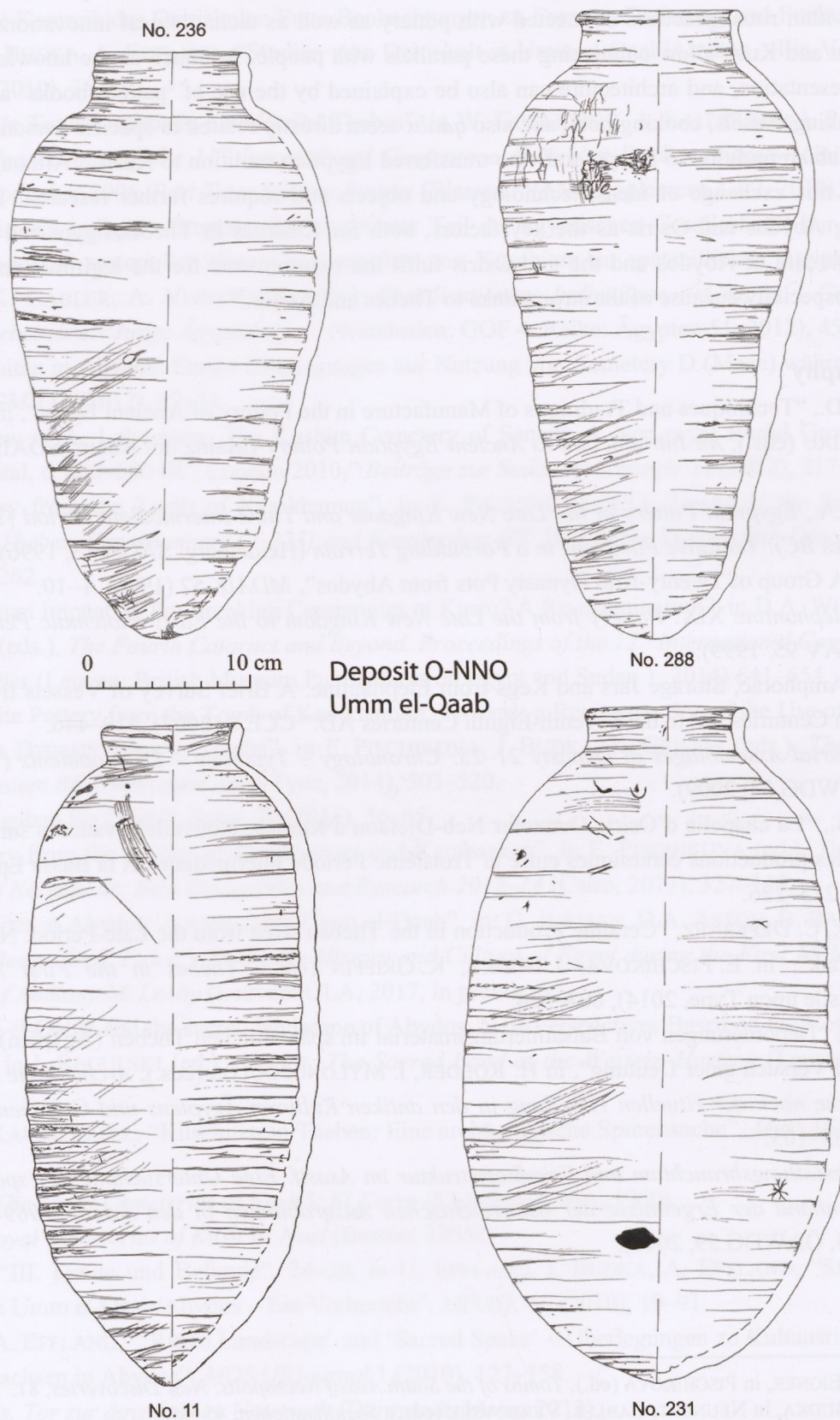


Fig. 8: Late Period bottles from deposit O-NNO, Umm el-Qaab. Scale 1:4 (© DAI Osiriskultprojekt, Julia Budka)

Summary

This paper has aimed to illustrate that pottery can add important aspects to the picture derived from monuments, art, and texts. Strong links between Thebes, Abydos, and Kush have already been noted earlier, but matches within ritual practices connected with pottery as well as technological innovations in ceramics in both Egypt and Kush allow connecting these parallels with people. As much as the knowledge of funerary texts, representation, and architecture can also be explained by the use of ‘pattern books’ and ‘master copies’,⁷³ drinking vessels, cooking pots, and also *qaabs* seem directly related to specific persons—persons who brought Nubian tradition to Egypt, and who transferred Egyptian tradition to Kush.⁷⁴ Although the complete pattern of this exchange of ideas, technology and objects still requires further research, I would suggest identifying Abydos and Osiris as the key factors, both for Kushites in Thebes/Egypt and for Kushites in Kush.⁷⁵ The site of Abydos and the god Osiris fulfil the requirements for the legitimization of the Kushite kingship, especially because of the strong links to Thebes and Amun.⁷⁶

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⁷³ See, e.g., EIGNER, in PISCHIKOVA (ed.), *Tombs of the South Asasif Necropolis: New Discoveries*, 81.

⁷⁴ See also BUDKA, in NEUNERT, GABLER, VERBOVSEK (eds.), *Sozialisationen*, 45–55.

⁷⁵ See BUDKA, *GM* 232 (2012), 29–51.

⁷⁶ BUDKA, in JURMAN, ASTON, BADER (eds.), “You Had Better Look Twice”, in press. See also LOHWASSER, BECKER, BLÖBAUM in this volume.

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Fig. G-1. Outer anthropoid coffin of *Am-ur-priest of Month Padiamenope* (photo: Cynthia May Sheikholeslam)