

**STUDIES IN ANCIENT ART
AND CIVILIZATION**

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ET CIVILISATIONE
STUDIA VARIA**

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**STUDIES
IN ANCIENT ART
AND CIVILIZATION**

14

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Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka

Krakow 2010

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THE 14TH VOLUME OF *STUDIES IN ANCIENT ART AND CIVILIZATION*
IS DEDICATED
TO PROFESSOR JOACHIM ŚLIWA ON HIS 70TH BIRTHDAY

The first issue of *Studies in Ancient Art And Civilization* was published in 1991. The initiator of the series, as well as its creator and the editor of 12 volumes, was Professor Joachim Śliwa. The 14th issue is intended by the current editors as a homage to Professor, and expression of thanks for his activity so far.

Professor Śliwa is an excellent expert on archaeology and art of ancient Egypt and Middle East, as well as a prominent scholar in the field of the history of collections of antiquities and Mediterranean archaeology in Poland; he is the author of numerous books and several hundred articles. His whole career, starting with the studies under the supervision of Professor Maria L. Bernhard, up to now is connected with the Jagiellonian University. He defended his doctoral thesis here in 1969, in 1975 presented his habilitation dissertation, and in 1988 received professor's title. For many years (since 1978) he had been head of the Department of Mediterranean Archaeology, and after the reorganisation of the Institute of Archaeology became head of the Department of Egyptian and Near Eastern Archaeology; the latter post he holds until now.

The scientific activity of Professor Joachim Śliwa comprises four main topics. The first covers research on ancient Middle East and Egypt. It was in the land of the Nile, where he went for the first time in 1966 on a scholarship funded by the Egyptian government, that he made his most important discoveries. The excavations which he conducted in Qasr el-Sagha (1979-1988) resulted in the discovery and investigation of a so far unknown workers' settlement dating to the time of the Middle Kingdom. The art and culture of Egypt and Middle East became the most important topics of Professor Śliwa's books, textbooks and scientific articles.

His teaching activity is connected with this research, and he became the tutor and example of academic excellence for many generations of graduate and doctoral students. He promoted countless master's theses, more than ten doctoral dissertations, and several of his students are today professors themselves.



Professor JOACHIM ŚLIWA

Professor Śliwa's third passion is the research on history of Mediterranean archaeology and collections of antiquities in Poland. Apart from numerous articles on this subject one should recall the book *Egipt, Grecja, Italia... Zabytki starożytne z dawnej kolekcji Gabinetu Archeologicznego Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* (Kraków 2007), of which he was originator, editor, and for which he prepared the majority of texts. Thanks to his interest in the subject and Benedictine patience he restored the memory of many forgotten early researchers and collectors. He has always emphasized their achievements in the context of times in which they lived, and it would not be an overstatement to say that many of them owe their 'second lives' to the Professor.

The fourth area of Professor Śliwa's activity lies in the field of publishing. His first experience in this field was the editorial work for *Studia z Archeologii Śródziemnomorskiej* published as part of *Prace Archeologiczne*. He had redacted for many years the *Recherches Archéologiques* series, which presents in the first place field research of the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University. Professor Śliwa also edited or co-edited many books, but *Studies in Ancient Art And Civilization* became his 'most beloved child'. This periodical is an important forum for the exchange of scientific ideas; it also provides Professor's many students, as well as other scholars beginning their career, with the opportunity to publish their first scientific papers. Being always a demanding editor, Professor Śliwa never refused anyone his help and advice.

For all this we owe Him our deepest gratitude.

Krzysztof M. Ciałowicz
Janusz A. Ostrowski
Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka

Kraków, October 2010

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*Joanna Dębowska-Ludwin, Mariusz A. Jucha,
Grzegorz Pryc, Piotr Kołodziejczyk*
Kraków

TELL EL-FARKHA (2009 SEASON):
GRAVE NO. 100

Season 2009 was the 9th carried out on the necropolis in Tell el-Farkha. As a result, the total number of graves reached 108 (for details see Dębowska-Ludwin 2009). All the burials were spread over an area of c. 19 ares. The cemetery occupies the southern part of the Eastern tell, but unfortunately its range has not yet been fully defined. In general, burials from Tell el-Farkha have been divided into three main groups that reflect the successive phases of cemetery usage and are presently dated from Dynasty 0 to Old Kingdom times. It seems that particular groups of graves should be interpreted as activity remains of distinct and directly unrelated populations, although, all the people originated from the same cultural unit. Grave no. 100 (Fig. 1) – one of the most significant discoveries of the season – is from the oldest group of burials on the site.

Description of the grave

Architecture

Grave no. 100 is a rather large (6.2 x 4.1m), mud bricked construction (regular in its form) of the mastaba type and therefore represents the oldest example of this kind of structure known from Lower Egypt. This massive construction was composed of a single burial chamber (2.7 x 1.6m) surrounded by thick walls of up to 2m wide built of numerous layers of standard shaped bricks interleaved with mats. The outer walls' surface was slightly sloping, plastered and from N, E and S decorated with niche facades. Four small niches were modeled in the northern wall,

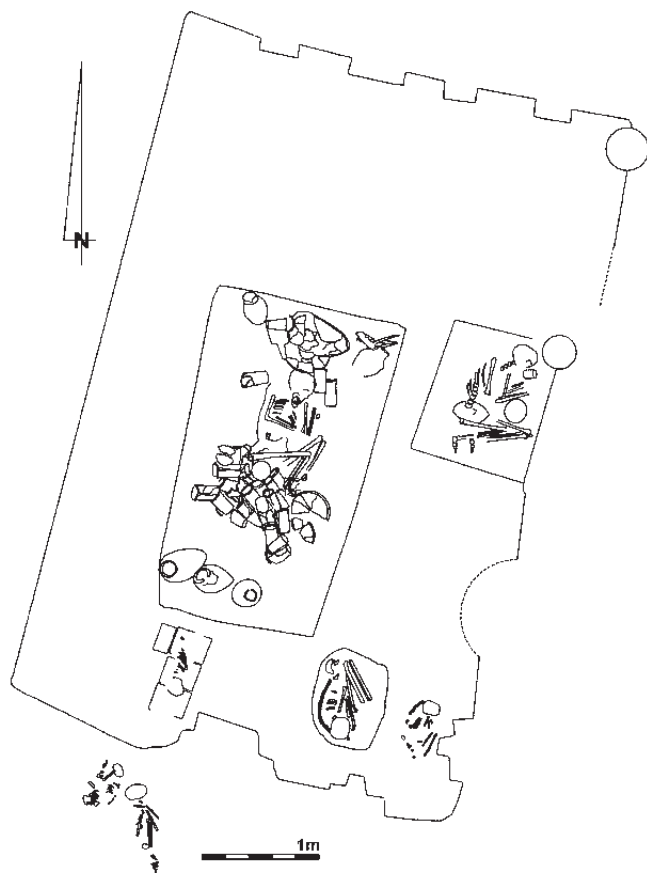


Fig. 1. Plan of grave no. 100. Tell el-Farkha Expedition Archive

with probably five (part of the facade was damaged by a younger grave) in the eastern and three in the southern one. From S and E the niches were more elaborate and were composed of two steps. Moreover, two postholes were found close to the NE corner of the structure. Since the area around the tomb has not yet been completely excavated, the preserved height of the mastaba is estimated at c. 3m. The construction was oriented along the NS axis with a small declination to E, which is typical for neighbouring graves from the site dated to the same period.

Burial

The tomb belonged to a 30-35 year-old male who was buried in the contracted, left-side position with his head turned to N. The body had been left on a mat, surrounded and partially pressed with numerous

grave goods and covered with another mat. Traces of a sort of burial ritual were preserved as some orange ochre and pure sand was found spread over the grave. The deceased had been offered 35 pottery and six stone vessels, one pottery shovel (decorated with a reed design and most probably four lion figurines), one grinder and one bead of carnelian. The discovery of some animal bones also suggests a kind of food offering. The largest pots were arranged along the shorter walls, while small cylindrical jars were concentrated mostly over the lower body. Compared to the significant size of the construction and the space offered by the chamber, the set of objects seems rather disappointing. It had, however, been carefully secured by the depth of the chamber (1.9m) and a layer of greasy silt had been poured inside the grave. The operation appears to have been fully successful as robbers did not manage to break into the chamber but, on the other hand, all of the contents of the structure were exposed to higher groundwater penetration and thus were badly preserved.

Subsidiary burials

Another significant element of the tomb are four subsidiary burials. Small and very simple graves devoid of any objects were placed in between the layers of bricks which the southern wall of the mastaba was built of. The burials have been labeled 100A, 100B, 100C and 100D. The two first sub-graves belonged to children from five to six years old, the third one was burnt and therefore in such a bad condition that its identification was impossible, while the last one contained an older child left in an almost rectangular pit carefully inlaid and covered with mats. In general, the deceased were placed in the tightly contracted side position and wrapped in mats. The bodies were oriented along the main axis of the structure with their heads turned to N or S. It should be stressed that the case of subsidiary burials found within grave no. 100 is exceptional in many respects. Firstly, the location of the burials in between the bricks of the main structure wall is highly unusual. Secondly, it was not customary in early Egypt to bury such young people in subsidiary burials. Finally, the very early date of the small complex makes the examples in question the oldest known from Lower Egypt.

Grave no. 108

This burial was cut into the large structure with no. 100, too. However, in this case we are dealing with a grave that represents the younger, second group of graves from the site. Construction no. 108 is a rather small

(1.5 x 1.2m) pit grave lined with a row of hardly visible mud bricks. The body of an adult who was 30-40 years old was placed in the contracted left-side position with his head turned to N. The deceased was found on a mat and was covered from above by another one. Considering the size of the structure, the offerings represent quite a large set of objects: one pottery jar, two stone vessels and three game pieces made of bone.

The example of a large mastaba grave (no. 100) being intersected by a younger, rather small tomb (no. 108) is repeated in another impressive mastaba (no. 63), which is cut by a much smaller structure (no. 71). This observation – among others – could lead to the conclusion that the people who constructed the smaller and younger graves did not realize the presence of such impressive structures below. Situations in which a burial construction damaged another one are rare in Egyptian burial history and are mainly limited to some unintentional mistakes. Hence the idea that the more ancient population had left the site and, after a period long enough for the large and probably free-standing structures to be covered with new ground layers, another unrelated people settled there. They must have been strangers to the site since they had no memory of the old cemetery, but they most probably had the same cultural roots as they were looking for the same kind of location for their own burial place. What is more, the younger phase of the cemetery represents the next evolutionary step of the older tradition.

J. D.-L.

The pottery vessels

The pottery assemblage of grave no. 100 comprises 35 vessels. Only a few of them were complete or almost complete. The others were very badly preserved, although in most cases it was possible to reconstruct the form of those pots.

Among the pottery vessels, the largest group (27 examples) consists of cylindrical jars with a decoration situated beneath the rim (Fig. 2: 1-2). In most cases (22 examples¹), the decoration, composed of a cord impression (Petrie 1953, Pl. IX: 48s, t), was clearly visible. In several further examples (five jars²), although the surface of the pots was badly preserved, it seems

¹ G100-6; G100-9; G100-10; G100-12; G100-13; G100-15; G100-17; G100-19; G100-20; G100-21; G100-22; G100-23; G100-24; G100-25; G100-26; G100-27; G100-28; G100-29; G100-30; G100-32 (It was found inside a cylindrical stone vessel G100-3k); G100-36; G100-37.

² G100-7; G100-11; G100-14; G100-18; G100-31.

that the same type of decoration was applied. These jars, in most cases, belong to the fine ware. The surface (yellow to cream, coated or uncoated) was very well smoothed: horizontally in the upper part and vertically or diagonally in the lower part (slightly below the cord decoration). The jars were generally made of fine Nile clay (or Nile clay mixed with marl clay?) with fine sand inclusions and a high amount of white particles (crushed limestone). The presence of conspicuous inclusions of the latter is quite characteristic of this fabric group. Moreover, small fragments of grog (crushed pot sherds) or unmixed clay may also occur in a small amount. Particles of very fine organic inclusions occur too, yet in a different quantity. Fabrics included in that fabric group differ from each other, mainly in the frequency of certain inclusions (e.g. crushed limestone) and the presence or lack of the others (e.g. grog and organic inclusions). Moreover, there is also a fabric of similar characteristics which contains less abundant inclusions of white particles (crushed limestone). In the case of jars made of coarser Nile clay fabric, the material contains coarse rounded sand grains and fine to medium organic inclusions beside the fine to medium sand. Limestone particles were uncommon in this type of fabric at that time.

Cylindrical jars with a decoration beneath the rim are generally dated to the Naqada III (Protodynastic) period (Petrie 1921, Pl. XXX; Petrie 1953, Pls VIII-IX; Kaiser 1957, Taf. 24) and a band of decoration resembling a cord impression occurs mostly in Naqada IIIB (Hendrickx 1996, 62, Tab. 7; Hendrickx 1999, 31, Fig. 9). At Minshat Abu Omar, cylindrical jars with a similar decoration occur in the graves of group III (Dynasty 0-Naqada IIIa-c1) (Kroeper and Wildung 1985, 60, 94-95, Abb. 173; Kroeper 1988, 14-16, Figs 86-88; Kroeper and Wildung 1994, 154: 340/2; Kroeper and Wildung 2000, 27: 881/1, 40: 866/20, 105: 109/9, 162: 415/6). However, it has been observed that in the earlier graves of this group³ there were mostly cylindrical jars with a decoration (cord impression or other types of impressed or incised pattern). By contrast, in the later graves of the same group⁴, mostly cylindrical jars without any decoration occur (Kroeper 1986/87, 75-76, 80-81, Fig. 89; Kroeper and Wildung 2000, 27: 881/1-2, 40: 866/20-21). Therefore, considering the occurrence of only cylindrical jars with the cord impression in Tell el-Farkha grave no. 100 and the absence of cylindrical jars without decoration, it seems that the abovementioned grave is contemporary especially with these earlier graves included into Minshat Abu Omar group III (Kroeper 1988, 14-15, Figs 85-

³ Group 3b – according to: Kroeper 1988.

⁴ Group 3c.

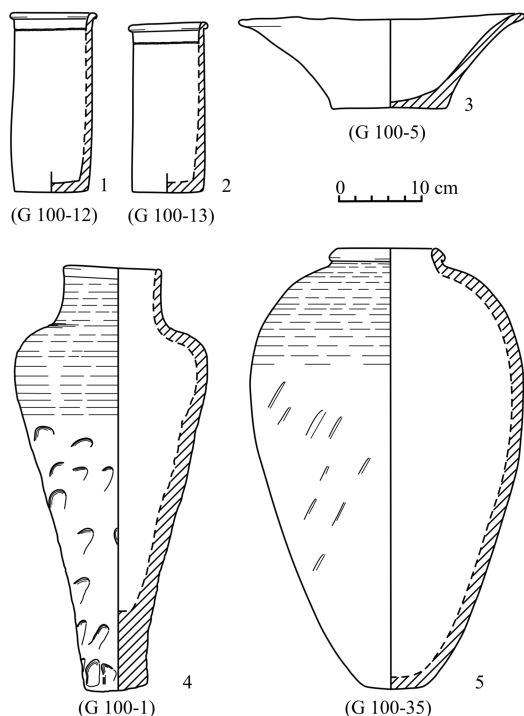


Fig. 2. Main pottery types from grave no. 100.
Tell el-Farkha Expedition Archive

of Iry-Hor other types of decoration (a horizontal line and a wavy line) are dominant while other decorative patterns as well as undecorated examples occur rarely (Köhler 1996, Abb. 17-18). Although the occurrence of the cord impressed pattern has also been attested later – in the times of Ka, Narmer and Aha (together with other types of decoration, cylindrical jars without decoration and wine jars with three rope-bands) – it is rather uncommon (Kaiser 1964, 94; Köhler 1996, 55-56, Abb. 17-18). A similar observation was also made at Tell el-Farkha, where cylindrical jars with the cord impression (Jucha 2008, 71, Fig. 8: 1-2) occur quite rarely in later graves, excavated here previously (during the 2001-2008 excavation seasons), and dated to the end of Dynasty 0/beginning of the 1st Dynasty. In these graves (among them also two graves with the name of Iry-Hor), there are mostly cylindrical jars without decoration⁵ and, less frequently, jars decorated with a straight line beneath the rim (Jucha 2002, Fig. 25; Jucha 2008, 71-74, Figs 8-9). The above justifies the dating of grave no. 100, as it contains cylindrical jars

115). Cylindrical jars with the type of decoration pattern described here were also found in the Protodynastic strata (IIIe-f) at Buto (Köhler 1998, 49). Fragments of jars with a decoration beneath the rim occur also in the settlement strata at Tell el-Farkha belonging to phases 4 (Naqada IIIA1-B; Naqada IIIa2-b) and 5 (Naqada IIIB-C1; Naqada IIIB/c1) (Jucha 2005, 59-60, Pls 99-100). Moreover, it seems that the discussed decoration pattern is rather more popular during the period before Iry-Hor. The examination of different types of impressed decorations which occur on cylindrical jars in Abydos clearly shows that in the time

⁵ These jars occur together with wine jars with three rope bands.

with only the cord decoration and none of the other types of cylindrical jars or wine jars before the time of Iry-Hor.

Another group of vessels comprises five shouldered jars with a high neck, simple rim and flat, an irregularly formed base (Fig. 2: 4)⁶. These belong to the rough ware. The neck and shoulders were smoothed horizontally and the part of the vessel slightly below the maximum diameter was formed irregularly. These were made of medium Nile clay tempered with fine to medium straw and fine to medium sand as well as a small amount of coarser sand grains.

Such jars are known from the Protodynastic/Early Dynastic period (Petrie 1921, Pl. XLVII: L34C; Petrie 1953, Pl. XVII: 73f-s; Kroeper and Wildung 1985, Abb. 117, 119, 135; Hendrickx 1993, 91; Köhler 1998, Taf. 11: 2). At Minshat Abu Omar similar jars occur in graves of group III (Kroeper and Wildung 2000, 104: 109/4) rather in the middle of that group⁷, together with cylindrical jars with decoration, bowls with concave sides and 'granary' vessels (Kroeper 1988, Fig. 99)⁸. At Buto the jars described above were found in Protodynastic strata IIIe-f (Köhler 1998, 46, Taf. 11: 2; Ihde 2000, 152-153, Abb. 8: 16, 18-19). Similarly, at Tell el-Farkha, fragments of such jars occur in phases 4 and 5 (Jucha 2005, 45, Pl. 35: 2-4) and were not found in the previously explored graves from the end of Dynasty 0/beginning of the 1st Dynasty.

Furthermore, two ovoid jars with a flat base (Fig. 2: 5)⁹ belong to the pottery assemblage of the grave. The first of them belongs to fine ware. It was made of Nile clay with fine sand inclusions. A small amount of white particles (crushed limestone) and, quite sporadically, small particles of straw also occur. The surface was very well smoothed: horizontally above the maximum diameter and diagonally below. The other fine ware jar has no fresh fracture, although it seems that it was made of similar fabric. Likewise, in that case small white particles were also visible on the surface. It was smoothed in a similar way to the first of the abovementioned jars.

These jars show an affinity to examples coming from the graves included into Minshat Abu Omar group III (Kroeper and Wildung 1985, 52, 94-95, Abb. 147; Kroeper and Wildung 2000, 39: 866/14, 116: 126/4).

⁶ G100-1; G100-2; G100-8; G100-33; G100-34.

⁷ Group 3b.

⁸ For associated vessels see Kroeper 1988, Figs 86-88, 101, 106.

⁹ G100-4; G100-35.

Rims probably belonging to such jars were also found in the settlement at Tell el-Farkha, where they occur in phases 4 and 5 (Jucha 2005, 43, Pls 27-29).

Only one example of a bowl with a flat base, a concave contour of divergent sides and a direct rim (Fig. 2: 3)¹⁰ comes from that grave. It belongs to the medium rough ware with a slightly smoothed surface.

It was made of medium Nile clay, tempered mostly with fine to medium straw and fine to medium sand as well as a small amount of coarser sand grains.

Such bowls are generally dated to the Protodynastic period and occur less frequently in the Early Dynastic period (Petrie 1953, Pl. I: 3A-C; Emery 1961, 213, Fig. 122: 26; Klasens 1961, Fig. 3: J1; Kroeper 1988, Fig. 106; Gophna 1995, 73-74, Fig. 1; Köhler 1998, 25, Taf. 33: 2-7). They are known among others from Minshat Abu Omar, where they occur in graves of group III¹¹ together with the types of vessels described above (Kroeper and Wildung 1985, 55, 94-95, Abb. 155; Kroeper 1988, Fig. 106). At Buto, such bowls were also found in the Protodynastic-Early Dynastic strata (Köhler 1992, 14 - 15, Fig. 4: 1; Köhler 1998, 46, Taf. 33: 3). Similarly, at Tell el-Farkha, they were found in the settlement strata of phases 4 and 5 (Jucha 2005, 48, Pls 48: 5-8 and 49: 1). As in the case of the other types of vessels from the discussed grave, the type of bowl described here is also rather uncommon in the graves explored previously at Tell el-Farkha.

The pottery assemblage of grave no. 100 described above shows an affinity to the assemblage from most of the other graves discovered in the same year (2009). On the other hand, it shows strong differences compared to the assemblage of the graves explored at Tell el-Farkha during the previous seasons (2001-2008) and dated to the end of Dynasty 0 (Naqada IIIB-C1)-beginning of the 1st Dynasty (Naqada IIIC1-C2). It is even different from the pottery assemblage of two graves (grave no. 2, grave no. 69) where the name of Iry-Hor was found. This allows us to allocate that grave (as well as most of those explored in 2009) chronologically in the Protodynastic period, around Naqada IIIB (probably at its beginning, Naqada IIIB1 according to the chronology of W. Kaiser), and prior to Iry-Hor.

M. A. J.

¹⁰ G100-5.

¹¹ Group 3b.

Stone vessels

As mentioned above, six stone vessels were found among the objects in grave no. 100 at Tell el-Farkha. All of the vessels were deposited in the southern part of the grave between the pottery. These vessels have forms typical for many such objects discovered in graves in Upper and Lower Egypt. However, besides the numerous standard forms, quite unique ones were also found, such as vessel GR100-4K made of diabase¹². Most of the vessels, however, were made of travertine (an easily workable material) and basalt (hard rock). Stone vessels were considered luxury goods during the discussed period. The fact that they appear in graves and other places (e.g. settlements) indicates that the place they were deposited may be identified as special. In the case of graves we may also speak of the high social status of the deceased. A few dozen vessels deposited in grave no. 100 point to the fact that we are dealing with one such special burial. It is interesting, however, that the entire necropolis had relatively few graves so well equipped. Most probably the current state of research is insufficient and the research area is still too small to conduct a more thorough investigation and analysis.

Stone vessels from grave no. 100 may be divided into the groups below:

Group I: cylindrical vessels (two vessels: GR100-3K, GR100-5K).

Group II: cups (three vessels: GR100-1K, GR100-2K, GR100-6K).

Group III: large dish (one vessel: GR100-4K).

Group I

Inv. no.: GR100-3K. Fig. 3: 1. Dimensions¹³: H: 10.7cm; RoD: 12.3cm; BtD: 11.7cm. Travertine.

Cylindrical vessel. In this case the rope-band pattern decoration beneath the rim is badly preserved. The rim is round. The walls are straight. The bottom is massive and flat.

Inv. no.: GR100-5K. Fig. 3: 2. Dimensions: H: 18.9cm; RoD: 10.9cm; BtD: 9.5cm. Travertine.

¹² Fragments of vessels made of basalt/diabase are still being mineralogically analyzed, information on these objects is subject to change.

¹³ Basic measurements: H – vessels's height from the bottom's outer surface to the rim's edge; RoD – rim's outer diameter; BD – maximum body diameter; BtD – bottom's diameter.

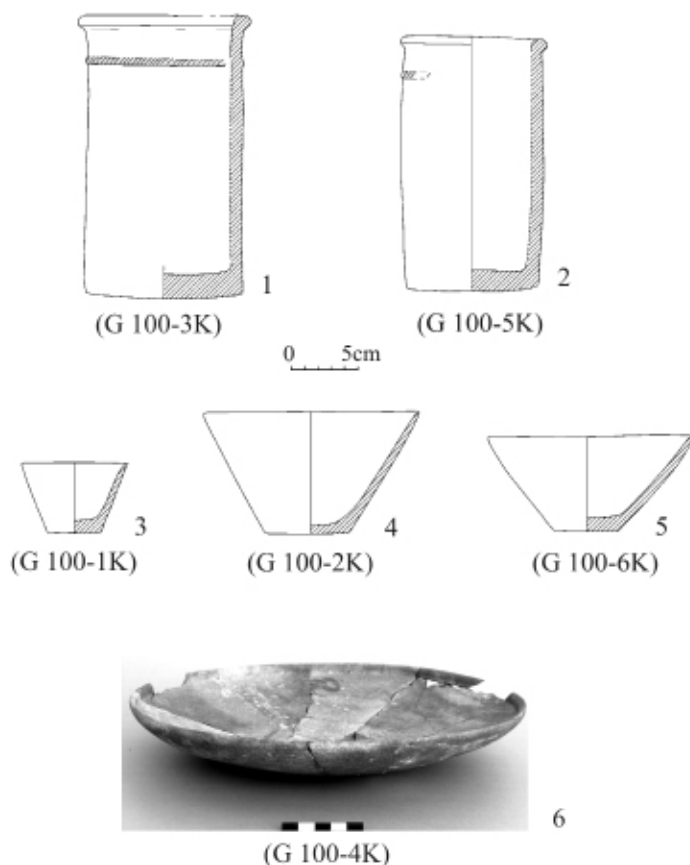


Fig. 3. Stone vessels from grave no. 100.
Tell el-Farkha Expedition Archive

Cylindrical vessel. In this case the rope-band pattern decoration beneath the rim is badly preserved. The walls are straight. The bottom is massive and flat.

The cylindrical stone vessels from grave no. 100 are generally badly preserved. They were made of travertine, the soft stone which was very popular for making stone vessels (Shaw 2000, 59-60). The most interesting object in this group was the vessel with inv. no. GR100-1K. A pottery jar¹⁴ was found inside it. Due to an unremovable attachment of cemented clay on the surface of GR100-1K no distinguishing designs or features could be identified. All of them feature a quite distinct decoration of rope-band

¹⁴ Cylindrical jar: inv. no. G100-32.

patterns with diagonal incisions under the rim. Similar cylindrical vessels to those from grave no. 100 are typical and have been found at the Tell el-Farkha cemetery and other sites. Some examples have also been discovered in graves, e.g. in burial no. 55 dated to the end of the 1st Dynasty-2nd Dynasty (Pryc 2009a, 55-66) and no. 63 – dated to the end of Dynasty 0/beginning of the 1st Dynasty-middle of the 1st Dynasty (Pryc 2009b, Fig. 92: E08/48). A lot of examples in this case have concave walls. Fragments of clay jars with decorations below the rim also occur in the settlement strata of Tell el-Farkha (phase 4 and phase 5) (Jucha 2005, 59). Vessels with the rope-band pattern decoration below the rim are generally dated to Naqada III-1st Dynasty (Bevan 2007, 196). Due to their form and decoration they belong to Petrie's class 52b (S.D. 79) (Petrie 1913, Pl. XXXIX: 52b). Analogies for this group may be found in the Minshat Abu Omar cemetery graves (Kroeper and Wildung 2000, examples 137: 886/2, 137: 886/5-6, 192: 862/6, 203: 434/11, 862: 6 – in this case the decoration is slanting to the left; 886: 2, 886: 5-6, 434: 11 – small size cylindrical vessels). All of them occur in the grave group dated to MAO III (Dynasty 0) (Kroeper and Wildung 2000, 34, 124, 169). A similar cylindrical vessel was found in a grave at Zawiyet el-Aryan (Dunham 1978, Z91: x1). Other examples of cylindrical vessels were discovered in a grave (dated to the 1st Dynasty) at the Tell Ibrahim Awad site (van den Brink 1988, 65-81). In this case the vessel is tall with slightly concave sides and the single rope band pattern decoration lies just below the external rounded rim.

Group II

Inv. no.: GR100-1K. Fig. 3: 3. Dimensions: H: 5.2cm; RoD: 8.3cm; BtD: 4.2cm. Basalt/Diabase.

A small-size vessel of the cup type. The edge of the rim is rounded. The walls are straight with a flat thick base.

Inv. no.: GR100-2K. Fig. 3: 4. Dimensions: H: 10.0cm; RoD: 16.3cm; BtD: 6.6cm. Basalt/Diabase.

A vessel of the cup type. The edge of the rim is rounded. The walls are straight with a flat thick base.

Inv. no.: GR100-6K. Fig. 3: 5. Dimensions: H: 7.3cm; RoD: 15.3cm; BtD: 4.8cm. Basalt/Diabase.

A vessel of the cup type. The edge of the rim is rounded. The walls are straight with a flat thick base.

Vessels of this group were made of basalt/diabase (hard rock). The surfaces of the walls inside and outside were polished. This shape was very popular from the Naqada III period to the 5th Dynasty and also during the New Kingdom (Aston 1994, 110: form 47). Cups and bowls with straight walls and rounded rims generally date to S.D. 78 (Petrie 1938, 7, Pl. XIII). Those with a flat base also date to the S.D. 78 phase, but examples present during the S.D. 79 phase appear to have a base with small feet (Petrie 1938, Pl. XIII). Interestingly, the vessel with inv. no. GR100-1K, found in grave no. 100, was of a very small size, the form of which generally dates to the 1st Dynasty (Aston 1994, 110: form 48). Moreover, vessels of the type described above were discovered in Naqada – grave no. 1248 (Petrie 1896, 27, Tab. XII: S.44-84, No. 50). Other examples were discovered in Abusir in graves nos 10 and 11. Both burials date to the 1st Dynasty (Bonnet 1928, 7-53). Similar vessels come, for example, from grave no. 6 discovered in Tarkhan. They are made of alabaster. Inside there is a countersunk base. The burials date to the 1st Dynasty (S.D. 81) (Petrie 1913, 11, Tab. XXXII: 14b). One example has been discovered in tomb X at Sakkara (Emery 1949, tomb X 107, type X1 113). In this case it was Emery's class X1 of an oval-mouthed bowl (Emery 1949, type X1 113, Fig. 77: X1). Other examples have also been discovered in the Zawiyet el-Aryan graves, which also date to the 1st Dynasty (Dunham 1978, 10: grave 103: 21, 19: grave 124: 2, 21: grave 132: 11).

Group III

Inv. no.: GR100-4K. Fig. 3: 6. Dimensions: H: 4.2cm; RoD: 38.8cm; BtD: rounded. Basalt/Diabase.

A large dish with concave walls. Rounded rim horizontally contracted at the top. The walls are thicker in the middle part. The surface of the walls inside and outside is quite well polished. The base is thin and slightly rounded. The vessel is incomplete, some parts of the rim and base are missing.

Dishes and bowls are very popular types of vessels with some variations of their own, such as the rounded base and the different shapes of the rim. In this case, the square or rounded rim which incurves was most popular. This type of rim is most common from the 1st Dynasty onwards (Aston 1994, 112-113, forms 52 and 54). The vessel (GR-1004K) from grave no. 100 at Tell el-Farkha with a straight vertical rim with a rounded edge is unique to the site and possibly from an earlier period (before the 1st Dynasty). Very few other examples of this type exist. One example similar in form

and in rim shape was discovered in a grave dating to the 1st Dynasty (S.D. 81) in Abydos (Petrie 1938, 7, Pl. XIX: 298). Other examples have been found in a grave also dating to the 1st Dynasty at Helwan (Köhler 2006, 74-75, Tab. 46: 4-5), but in this case the rim is slightly more incurved to the inside of the vessel than in the vessel from Tell el-Farkha. Similar pottery examples come from the settlement in Tell el-Fara'in/Buto. For example, a pottery dish, which is rounded and contracted at the top rim, was found in a context dating to the 1st Dynasty (Köhler 1998, Taf. 55: 8). With the stone vessels from grave no. 100 it is probably difficult to determine an absolute chronology. The forms and shapes of the stone vessels found in this grave were common from the beginning of Naqada III to the 5th Dynasty. Cylindrical jars with a decoration (e.g. rope-band pattern) below the rim are forms known from the Naqada III (Protodynastic) period (Petrie 1921, Pl. XXX). Decoration patterns on the pottery from this grave indicate that this type of decoration was rather more popular during the period before Iry-Hor¹⁵. Plain cylindrical stone vessels with straight walls date from the Naqada III period (Aston 1994, 99). This group of vessels is very well known from other sites. The described vessel is from an earlier date (Naqada III) in comparison to the incurve rimmed vessels which were very popular during the 1st Dynasty. After comparing the design features of the stone vessels with the closely similar decoration of the pottery assemblage from the same grave, we can establish its (grave) date to Dynasty 0 (Naqada IIIa2-IIIc2).

G. P.

The decorated shovel

One of the artifacts found in grave no. 100 belongs to a small group of objects known from only a few examples. It is a kind of shovel made of clay with a length of 40cm. It consists of two parts: a scoop and a handle (Figs 4-6). The handle has a length of 19.5cm and is made of a clay-roll (circular in cross section) with a diameter of 3.5 to 6cm which is attached to the scoop in two places. The space between the arms of the handle does not allow for the insertion of a palm into the middle of the hole. This suggests the need to hold the entire handle in the course of any operation or possible exploitation. The dipper is constructed as a kind of rectangular dish measuring 26 x 13.7cm at the upper edge and 6.3 x 12.5cm at the bottom. It has four trapezoid walls and a bottom similar in shape to a rectangle.

¹⁵ See above in the section on the pottery vessels.



Figs 4-5. Decorated shovel from grave no. 100.
Photo R. Słaboński

Both the sides and the bottom are covered with longitudinal lines made of clay rollers (Fig. 7). The lines converge at the corners of the shovel and are also visible on the upper edge of the object and function as a kind of a frame. They are somewhat reminiscent of the braiding patterns characteristic for objects made of organic materials. The front wall is slightly tapered at the edge which probably helped with dipper filling during its hypothetical use. At the four corners of the scoop plastic figurines of animals lying down – most probably lions – with heads positioned supinely are visible on the outside (Figs 8-9). The two figurines near the handle are preserved in good condition while the one in front of the object under description is preserved fragmentarily. Such imaging of animals (lions) was typically used as an early-dynastic decorative motif and the Tell el-Farkha representations are very similar to other objects such as two monumental limestone lions from Koptos dating to the 1st Dynasty (Janssen 1982, 134).

We do not know many analogies to objects of this type. The closest analogy can be seen in a set of monuments made of wood and bones found at a Tarkhan cemetery. These include items interpreted as both dippers and trays as well as spoons of a cosmetic nature. The most similar

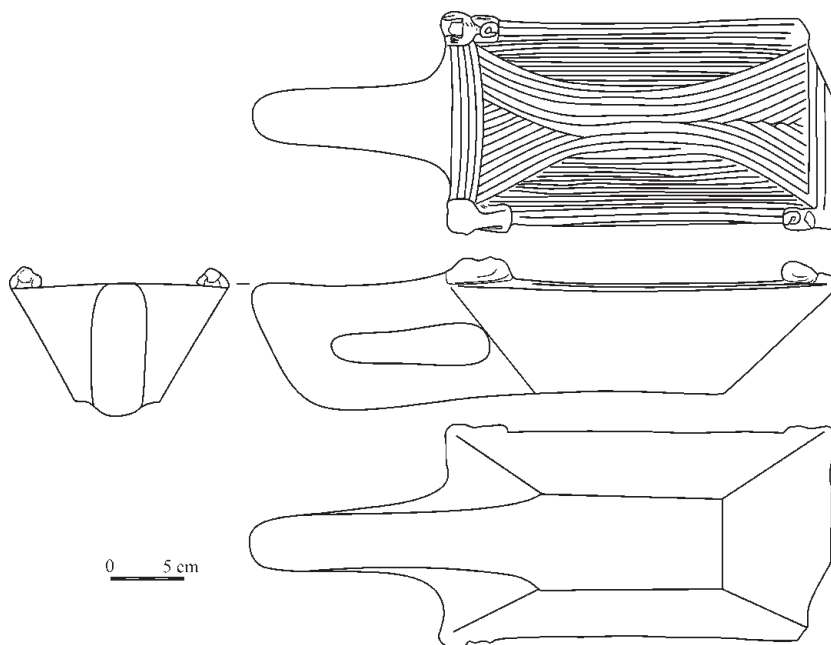
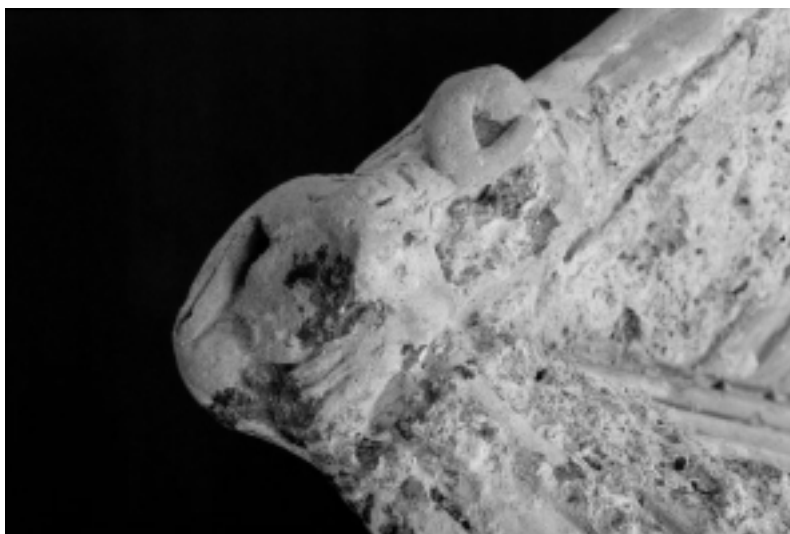


Fig. 6. Drawing of the decorated shovel from grave no. 100.
Tell el-Farkha Expedition Archive



Fig. 7. Decorated shovel from grave no. 100 – longitudinal lines, made of clay rollers on the dipper part of the item. Photo R. Słaboński



Figs 8-9. Decorated shovel from grave no. 100 – figurines of lying lions.
Photo R. Słaboński

is a wooden object from grave no. 144 (Petrie 1913, 25, Pl. XI: 26). It is close in size to the artifact from Tell el-Farkha. However, it is devoid of figural and geometric decoration. Due to the material of which it has been made, it has significantly less weight compared to the item from Tell el-Farkha, which probably made it easier to operate. It could have been used as a tool for scooping both liquid and granular products.

Another example of an item similar to that found at Tell el-Farkha is the kind of spoon made of bone discovered in grave no. 1023 (Tarkhan cemetery as well, Petrie 1913, 25, Pl. XIII: 1-6) with a scoop similar to the described object. It has a single handle decorated with a presentation of a couchant calf. Both the external walls and the bottom of the spoon dipper are decorated with a carved decoration consisting of five alternating strips depicting dogs and oryxes. This object, due to its size and delicacy, was probably used in cosmetic operations. The same applies to several other examples of even smaller items such as a spoon found in tomb 501 (Tarkhan cemetery as well, Petrie 1913, 25, Pl. XIII: 15). It is a small object made of bone with a dipper shaped similarly to the item from Tell el-Farkha and a long handle imitating a snake.

A wooden, undecorated object of unknown origin stored in the Petrie Museum (UC30703) should also be counted within this type. It is only partially preserved and has the dimensions of 8.5cm height and 47.5cm length.

It is also worth mentioning that objects with similar shapes of the dipper-part were already known in Badari culture (Ciałowicz 1999, 203). An interesting example seems to be the ivory spoon from Badari presently in the Petrie Museum (Drenkhahn 1986, Taf. XXVII: 6). Such items most probably had their roots in objects made from reeds or other organic materials which, of course, could only be used for scooping loose products such as cereal. The introduction of materials such as wood, bone, ivory and clay allowed them to be used for liquid materials. Decoration which suggests the imitation of organic materials (e.g. reeds) is also well known from other objects, for example from numerous stone vessels (e.g. Emery 1961, Pl. 39b).

Due to its weight, the material from which it was made and its delicate ornaments, the object from Tell el-Farkha appears to be less useful than similar objects made of ivory, bone or wood. Perhaps it was prepared as a model or as a symbol made only for funeral purposes, for instance to emphasize the rank or function of the deceased.

P. K.

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Joanna Dębowska-Ludwin
joanna.debowska-ludwin@uj.edu.pl

Mariusz A. Jucha
jucha_m@hotmail.com

Grzegorz Pryc
gpryc@farkha.org

Piotr Kołodziejczyk
kolodziejczyk@farkha.org