

ABSTRACT

The main aim of the presented thesis is to analyse and interpret the ceramic finds from the complex of Princess Sheretnebtu (AS 68) at Abusir South in a wider context of the known development in the Memphite necropolis. This complex belongs among the most noteworthy funerary units from the necropolis of Abusir due to the large amount of historically and artistically valuable finds. Among these, the pottery is undoubtedly one of most significant, not only from the point of quantity (almost 20,000 fragments) but also from the resulting value of information.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters dealing with different aspects of the ceramic assemblage. The first chapter offers an introduction to the problematics, setting the complex within the frame of the Abusir necropolis and providing general statistic data concerning the pottery. In the second chapter, the methodology of documentation, quantification and general analysis of the ceramic finds are described and compared with methodologies in world archaeology and Egyptology in general.

The third chapter presents a detailed description of the individual archaeological contexts within the complex, including the open pillared court, the corridor of AS 68 and the rock-cut tombs of officials Duaptah (AS 68a), Shepesuptah (AS 68b), Nefer (AS 68d) and Princess Sheretnebtu (AS 68c). This chapter provides detailed statistic figures concerning the contexts, as well as an account of the chronologically most relevant finds.

The next three chapters form the core of the interpretation of the assemblage and are closely tied together. Chapter Four aims to define, analyse and interpret specific types of contexts. Besides the funerary equipment from the burial chambers or niches, the author also deals with the so-called burial shaft deposits, the embalming and other ritual deposits, as well as the cult pottery and refuse layers resulting from the ritual activity in the superstructure areas of the tombs. This chapter also puts forward an outline of the secondary use of pottery in diverse activities. A separate part is devoted to a discussion of the main terminology concerning archaeological contexts within the frame of Egyptian funerary archaeology.

The fifth chapter is devoted to a detailed typological analysis of the ceramic assemblage. On the basis of the classification system created by the present author, the pottery was divided into nine main classes, including the classical six vessel classes and further supplemented by ancillary and technical classes such as lids, mud stoppers and tools. Each class is provided with an outline of its chronological development and relevance in relation to the material from the complex of Sheretnebtj.

In Chapter Six, three diverse case studies are discussed briefly, offering an outline of the studied issues. The first provides a view of the impact of the socio-economic power of the tomb owners on their tombs and equipment, as well as a comparison of male and female burials within the necropolis of Abusir. The second section offers a chronological study of the available ceramic material, resulting in a proposed sequence of individual tombs, structures and shafts, if such a dating could be provided. Finally, the author compares general trends within the necropoleis of Abusir and the whole Memphite region, and summarizes the main phases of ceramic development for the period of the Old Kingdom.

The conclusion is intended to encapsulate and emphasize the main results of the thesis, moreover its importance within the study of Old Kingdom archaeology and ceramology and outlines further questions and topics for future research.