

**Charles University**  
**Faculty of Arts**  
**Czech Institute of Egyptology**

Doctoral dissertation

*Social dynamics in the material culture –  
Pottery of the late Old Kingdom  
from the complex of Princess Sheretnebtj at Abusir South*

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Field of study: Egyptology

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2017

**Univerzita Karlova**  
**Filozofická fakulta**  
**Český egyptologický ústav**

Disertační práce

*Sociální dynamika v materiální kultuře –*  
*Keramika pozdní Staré říše*  
*z komplexu princezny Šeretnebej v jižním Abúsíru*

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2017

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V Praze, dne 31.3.2017

.....

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## ABSTRACT

The main aim of the presented thesis is to analyse and interpret the ceramic finds from the complex of Princess Sheretnebtj (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 Sheretnebtj (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.

**Keywords:**

Abusir – Sheretnebtj – Old Kingdom – pottery – classification – methodology – spatial distribution – depositional processes – post-depositional processes – cult pottery – shaft deposits – social trends – dating

## ABSTRAKT

Předkládaná dizertační práce si klade za cíl zpracovat a interpretovat keramické nálezy z pohřebního komplexu princezny Šeretnebtaj (AS 68) v jižním Abúsíru. Zmíněný komplex patří k nejzajímavějším hrobovým celkům na abúsírké nekropoli, a to zejména díky dvěma skutečnostem. Jeho výjimečnost lze spatřovat jednak v tom, že zde byl pohřben jeden z příslušníků královské rodiny, kteří se většinou nechávali pohřbívat na pyramidovém poli v centrálním Abúsíru. Dále se zde našlo velké množství umělecky i historicky cenných nálezů. Mezi nejvýznamnější z nich lze bezesporu zařadit i keramiku, a to nejen díky svému množství (téměř 20 000 zlomků), ale také své výpovědní hodnotě.

Práce je rozdělena do sedmi kapitol, které se zabývají různými aspekty celého keramického souboru. První kapitola je věnována úvodu, který předkládá jednak stručný nástin problematiky a zasazení komplexu do rámce nekropole jižního Abúsíru, a jednak i základní statistická data. Ve druhé kapitole jsou podrobněji rozebrány metody dokumentace, kvantifikace a celkového zpracování keramických nálezů jak v terénu, tak i během následných analýz, včetně stručné komparace s metodami ve světové a egyptské archeologii.

Třetí kapitola nabízí zpracování keramických nálezů v rámci jednotlivých nálezových celků, kterými jsou otevřený pilířový dvůr AS 68, koridor AS 68 a jednotlivé skalní hrobky: Duaptahova (AS 68a), Šepespuptahova (AS 68b), princezny Šeretnebtaj (AS 68c) a Neferova (AS 68d). Analýzy jsou doplněny podrobnými statistickými informacemi a popisem z hlediska chronologie nejdůležitějších skupin nádob.

Následné tři kapitoly jsou interpretační a tvoří velkou vzájemně provázanou skupinu. Ve čtvrté kapitole jsou rozděleny, analyzovány a interpretovány jednotlivé typy kontextů. Kromě diskuse o keramice v rámci darů uložených se zemřelým v pohřební komoře případně v nice se autorka zabývá také tzv. šachtovými, balzamovacími a jinými kultovními depozity, kultovním náčiním nalézaným v superstrukturách a odpadními vrstvami z rituální činnosti. Kromě toho je v práci rozpracováno i sekundární využití keramiky pro různé praktické účely,

včetně upotřebení jako stavebního materiálu. Autorka navíc krátce vymezuje užití hlavních pojmů archeologické teorie v rámci egyptské funerální archeologie.

Pátá kapitola se zabývá detailní analýzou keramického souboru z hlediska typologie. Na základě klasifikačního třídění vytvořeného a dlouhodobě užívaného autorkou byl celý soubor rozdělen do devíti keramických tříd, včetně méně známých a publikovaných podružných či technických tříd jako jsou zátky a nástroje. V rámci každé třídy je k dispozici nástin jejich chronologického vývoje a relevance ve vztahu k souboru z komplexu Šeretnebej.

Šestá kapitola obsahuje tři kratší příkladové studie, které představují nástin problematiky. V první části autorka diskutuje odraz socioekonomického postavení majitelů ve vybavení a bohatosti jejich hrobek. Nabízí také komparaci dostupných ženských a mužských pohřbů v rámci abúsírské nekropole. Druhý oddíl představuje chronologickou studii dochovaných keramických nálezů, s vymezením posloupnosti jednotlivých hrobek, struktur a šachet v případech, kde bylo možné dataci blíže určit. Nakonec pak autorka srovnává celkové trendy jak v Abúsíru, tak i na celé memfidské nekropoli a nabízí základní vymezení jednotlivých fází keramického vývoje pro období Staré říše.

V závěru jsou shrnuty hlavní výsledky dizertační práce, její význam v rámci studia staroegyptské archeologie a keramologie. Nastíněny jsou další otázky, možnosti a plány pro budoucí studium.

**Klíčová slova:**

Abúsír – Šeretnebej – Stará říše – keramika – klasifikace – metodologie – prostorová distribuce – depoziční procesy – post-depoziční procesy – kultovní keramika – šachtové depozity – sociální trendy – datování

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## AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank first and foremost my supervisor, Prof. Miroslav Bárta, who has enabled me to take part in the excavations at Abusir since the year 2007, supported my interest in ceramology and often discussed different topics concerning Egyptology as a whole. I would also like to express my gratitude to Prof. Miroslav Verner for encouragement in the study of this topic. Further thanks belong to Hana Vymazalová who provided me with suggestions and remarks concerning the thesis and gave me permission to use her Illustrator drawings of individual structures.

This work was also influenced by the brainstorming sessions that often transpired directly on the site during the excavation of the complex of Sheretnebty or on the grounds of our institute, whether with my Egyptological colleagues Veronika Dulíková, Lucie Jirásková, Martin Odler, Marie Peterková Hlouchová, Peter Jánosi or with our zoologist Zdeňka Sůvová and anthropologist Petra Havelková, who all added a different layer to the multi-faceted exploration of the site.

I would also like to express thanks to fellow ceramologists and Egyptologists, Drs. Teodozja Rzeuska, Anna Wodzińska, Gae Vivian Callender, Leslie Anne Warden, Christian Knoblauch, Marleen de Meyers, Bettina Bader, Christiana Köhler, Ashraf Senussi and many others who inspired me over the years with invaluable conversations about different aspects of Egyptian pottery.

Finally, I would also like to thank Lucie Vařeková who patiently re-drew in Illustrator hundreds of vessels from my original documentation and also prepared some of the Illustrator plates.

My greatest thanks, however, go to my family and especially my husband Tony for his constant support and patience, as well as his tireless proof-reading of the manuscript.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The complex of Princess Sheretnetby (AS 68) is one of the largest in the cemetery of Abusir South (see also *Chapter 1.2*). The existence of a possible sunken structure in the area immediately east of the mastaba of Ptahhetep (AS 36, see also Fig. 1.4) was already discovered during the autumn season of 2010, when instead of the expected floor, a large block of architrave was uncovered *in situ* during the last days of the excavation season. The events of the Arab spring delayed the archaeological exploration until the following year, as the presence of the Czech team in Abusir in year 2011 concentrated on the documentation of unlicensed digging of robbers and salvage works in the disrupted storerooms.

In the spring of 2012, the courtyard of AS 68 was fully uncovered (see also Fig. 1.5), and by means of the hieroglyphic inscriptions on its four pillar, its owner was identified as *s3(t) nšwt nt ht.f mrt.f im3hwt hr ntr 3 Šrt-nbty*, “the king’s daughter of his body, his beloved, revered with the Great God, Sheretneby” (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 340). During the course of the season, entrances to two rock-cut tombs cut into the bedrock south of the courtyard were discovered, as well as a large engaged statue of a standing man in a naos. The following autumn season of 2012 concentrated on the cleaning of the corridor of AS 68, as well as the chapels of rock-cut tombs AS 68a to AS 68d and a few of their burial shafts and apartments (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013). Three more naoi with various numbers of bound statues were discovered between the entrances to the rock-cut tombs, very likely associated with these tombs (*cf.* Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014). The work continued in the autumn season of 2013, when most of the burial apartments in the area of the open courtyard and rock-cut tombs AS 68a and AS 68c were explored (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014; Vymazalová 2015, *etc.*). Year 2014 saw the final exploration of the complex, with the focus on the remaining shafts in the tomb of Nefer (AS 68d). Since then, the exact architectural relationship between the rock-cut tombs and the superstructures situated above them (*i.e.* AS 66 and AS 69) has not been answered satisfactorily yet and shall hopefully be continued in the future (*cf.* Vymazalová – Megahed *forthcoming*).

## 1.1 OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH AND STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The main aim of the presented thesis is to analyse the assemblage of ceramic finds from the whole complex of Princess Sheretnebtu in light of the wider historical, economic and social development in the late Old Kingdom, with comparisons not only of the area of the Memphite necropolis but also, in lesser extent, the provinces of Egypt. The complex contained a very extensive amount of pottery, numbering almost 20,000 fragments (see *Table 1.1*). The objectives of the research also included their study from the points of spatial distribution, typological and chronological analyses, as well as social trends reflected in certain aspects of the material culture.

*Chapter 2* provides an overview of the main methods of documenting ceramic finds in the field, including outlines of the subsequent statistical, typological and morphometric analyses. The limitations of diverse documentation systems are also discussed.

The main aim of *Chapter 3* is to serve as a reference point, as it offers relevant information of the most important ceramic finds from the complex of Princess Sheretnebtu and all of its structures, organized geographically from the open courtyard AS 68, corridor of AS 68 and the four rock-cut tombs AS 68a to AS 68d. Each of the contexts is provided with detailed statistics regarding the ceramic finds that can serve as fundamental information sources and highlight pottery that is relevant either from the chronological or typological point of view.<sup>1</sup>

The following chapters form the core of the thesis and offer interpretations of the ceramic corpus from a wide range of angles. All of them are closely connected and are designed to arise from each other, as each highlights certain aspects of the assemblage. *Chapter 4* concentrates on the interpretation of the pottery from the viewpoint of the spatial distribution of the ceramic finds, based on the division of the type of the context. Within the two main groups, namely funerary (burial chambers, burial shafts) and cultic (coming from subsequent cultic activity in the tombs), several types of contexts and possible ceramic clusters are discussed in detail and in comparison with similar types of contexts within the Memphite

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<sup>1</sup> It must be emphasized that the chapter is meant to offer details of the contexts of the ceramic finds and is not intended as a publication of the tombs themselves, which is a different, much more complex undertaking.

necropolis. The question of primary versus secondary contexts is closely connected to this, and thus the depositional and post-depositional processes of the ceramic finds shall be explored in this chapter as well.

*Chapter 5* is concentrated on the typological analysis of the finds and composes one of the largest parts of the thesis. Its focus is to discuss and interpret the whole corpus in light of the Abusir ceramic classification, with special attention given to type development, unusual forms and functional analysis. Besides the usual vessel classes, such as jars, bowls, stands, *etc.*), ancillary and technical pottery (such as lids, mud stoppers and tools) were included in this thesis, as well. All the main classes are also discussed within terms of their chronological development and sequences, based on analogies from the Memphite necropolis and, to a lesser degree, from the Egyptian provinces as well.

*Chapter 6* encompasses three individual case studies that shall be explored briefly. The first offers some insight into the social dynamics in the material culture, *e.g.* the development and fluctuation of the social status of the owners of the tombs and shafts reflected in their tombs and funerary equipment both from the viewpoint of social inequity and gender differentiations. These are followed by an analysis of the chronological span and implications of the ceramic finds, which covers a considerably large period of the middle-Fifth to the end of the Sixth Dynasty, respectively the beginning of the First Intermediate Period. A general area trend comparison between the cemetery of Abusir and the Memphite necropolis forms the last part of the case studies.

All the above-mentioned findings are summarized in *Chapter 7*, which offers general conclusions, highlighting the importance of the ceramic corpus from the historical, chronological, social and economic points of view and outlines several topics designated for future research.

One of the most important parts of the thesis is the extensive *Volume II* with plates that contain photos and drawings of the ceramic finds, as well as plans of the main individual structures. All the plates were created by the present author using Adobe InDesign CS6 software. The plans were kindly provided by Hana Vymazalová and Lucie Vařeková, to whom I owe my cordial thanks. The Illustrator figures were created by Lucie Vařeková on the

grounds of the designs devised by the present author. All the photographs are the property of the Archive of the Czech Institute of Egyptology at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University and I am very grateful for the opportunity to use them in this thesis.

Due to the extensive amounts of pottery (see Table 1.1), a catalogue of the uncovered vessels was not included, as the primary objective of the presented thesis was the analysis, synthesis and interpretation of the ceramic finds. A selective catalogue shall be part of the forthcoming publication dedicated to the complex of Princess Sheretnebtj.

As a final note, throughout the thesis, charts and tables are provided in the bulk of the main text, while all the photographs, plans and line drawings of pottery are to be found in *Plates*.

## 1.2 THE COMPLEX OF PRINCESS SHERETNEBTJ

The complex of Princess Sheretnebtj is situated in the area of the so-called central mound of Abusir South (Fig. 1.1), surrounded by numerous other excavated tombs (Figs. 1.2–1.3, see also *Chapter 3*). It contains several individual structures, most prominently the open pillared courtyard (*Chapter 3.1*), corridor of AS 68 (*Chapter 3.2*) and four rock-cut tombs that were hewn into the bedrock south and south-east of the courtyard. Due to the epigraphic evidence, it was possible to identify almost all the main persons interred in these tombs.

The primary owners included *šḥd pr-ḫ Dw3-Pth*, “inspector of the Great House, Duaptah” (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012 and 2014; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014), who was buried in tomb AS 68a and was named on two fragments of a lintel as well as a limestone drum (see also *Chapter 3.3*). The owner of tomb AS 68b, Shepesuptah, served as *ḥry sdm pr-ḫ, ḥry sdm pr-ḫ m gswy-pr, imy-r3 šḥty-ḥtp, wr 10 šmḥ, n(y)-nsw-ḥntt, ḥtm(w) ḥḥt ḥtpwt df3w bity šps-pw-Pth*, *i.e.* “chief of justice of the Great House, chief of justice of the Great house in the two administrative units, overseer of the two fields of offerings, great one of the ten of Upper Egypt, (he who belongs to) the foremost seat, and sealer of the beast offerings and provisions of the King of Lower Egypt” (see also *Chapter 3.4*; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012 and 2014; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014).

The main owner of the easternmost rock-cut tomb AS 68d, Nefer, was named on his beautifully executed false door that was found *in situ* in the chapel. He held several titles, including  $(j)m(j)-r zš(w) (nw) ʕprw, jr(j)-ht nswt (j)m(j)-r prwj-ḥd (j)m(j)-r zš(w) (nw) ʕ(w) (nw) nswt (j)m(j)-ht zš(w) (nw) ʕprw (j)m(j)-r šnwtj (j)m(j)-r gs ḥmwt ḥry-sšḫ zš ʕ(w) (nw) nswt$ , “overseer of the scribes of crews, property custodian of the king, overseer of the two treasuries, overseer of scribes of the king’s documents, under-supervisor of scribes of the crews, overseer of the two granaries, overseer of a gang of craftsmen, one who is privy to the secrets and scribe of the king’s documents” (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 26–27). Nefer also served as  $ḥm-nṯr Rʕ m (st)-jb-(Rʕ) ḥm nṯr B3-Nfr-jr-k3-Rʕ$ , “priest of Ra in the sun temple of Neferirkare and priest of the pyramid of Neferirkare” (see *Chapter 3.6.2*). The false door also provided us with the name and titles of his wife, Neferhathor, who served as  $ḥm(t)-nṯr ḥwt-ḥr m swt.s nb(w)t ḥm(t)-nṯr ḥwt-ḥr nbt nht$ , “priestess of Hathor in all her (cultic) places” and “priestess of Hathor, Mistress of the *nehet*-shrine” (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 26–27).

The whole complex provided us with an extremely large quantity of ceramic finds, numbering altogether 19,820 fragments, out of which 7,423 were diagnostic and amounted to a minimum count of 4,167 individual vessels (see Table 1.1). In all the tables, besides the classes, several groups (especially J-1: beer jars; MB: miniature bowls; MC: miniature cups; MJ: miniaturized jars, *etc.*) are listed separately, as they provide necessary statistic details. In the text, the final percentages per class (*e.g.* miniature vessels as a whole) are usually given as well; even in cases when such a number is not provided due to the flow of the text (which was purposefully not cluttered with an overflow of numbers), it can be easily calculated from the given data.

The nine main ceramic classes, identified by the author on the basis of her work at Abusir South and Centre (see *Chapter 5*; also Kytarová 2009: 62–64; Arias Kytarová 2014a), are the following: jars (J), bowls (B), stands (S), bread forms (F), platters (P), miniature vessels (M), lids (L), mud stoppers (D) and tools (T). Not all of these are necessarily vessel classes, and the chapter on the Abusir ceramic classification system provides details on the division between vessel/container classes (jars, bowls, *etc.*), non-container classes (stands), ancillary



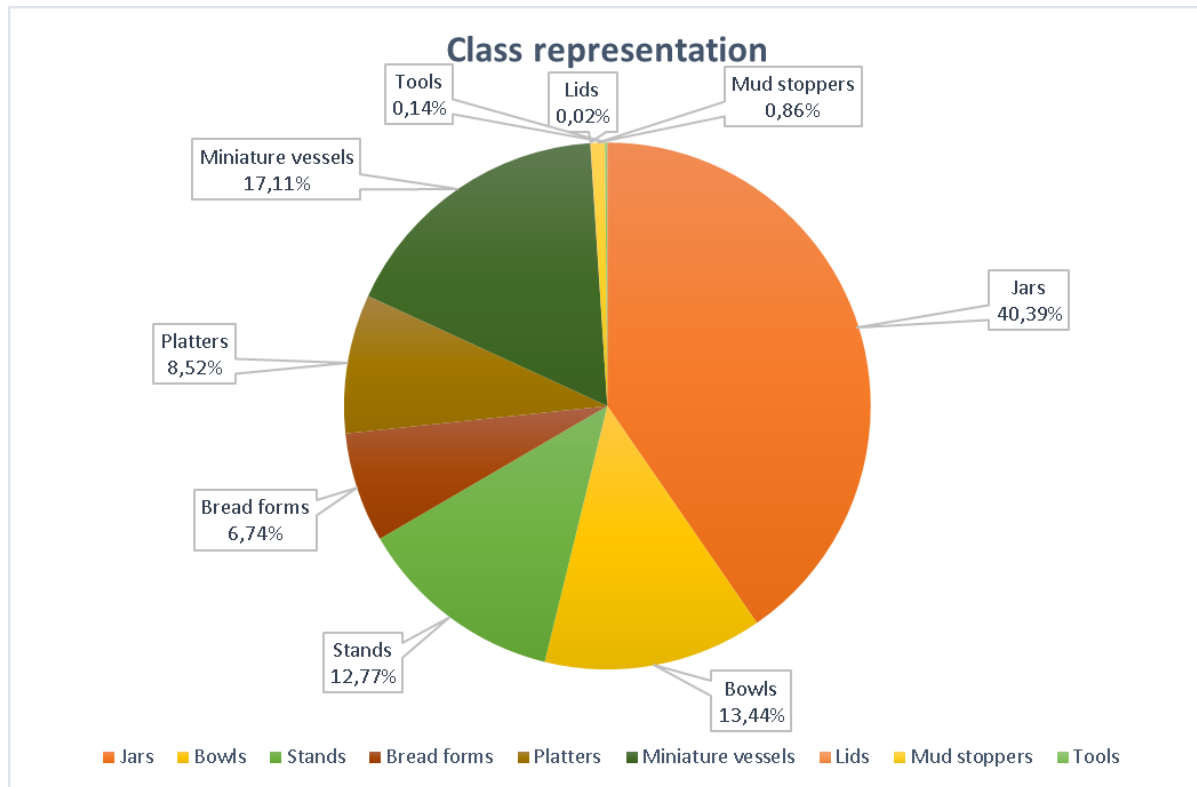
pottery (lids and mud stoppers) and finally technical pottery (tools crafted from ceramic sherds). All of these are considered an integral part of the assemblage, and thus the inclusion of only the six (or seven, in some cases) traditional ceramic classes would limit our knowledge and the scope of the interpretation of the site.

| Context          | Class     | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims        | Bases       | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|------------------|-----------|--|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Complex<br>AS 68 | J-1       | 13                                     | 1333        | 1438        | 5                                | 8587                            | 11376                   | 2791                              | 1545                   | 37,08%               |
|                  | J storage | -                                      | 2           | 2           | 2                                | 18                              | 24                      | 6                                 | 7                      | 0,17%                |
|                  | J fine    | 13                                     | 107         | 49          | 40                               | 270                             | 479                     | 209                               | 131                    | 3,14%                |
|                  | B         | 32                                     | 776         | 40          | 42                               | 1653                            | 2543                    | 889                               | 559                    | 13,41%               |
|                  | B (?)     | -                                      | -           | 1           | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,02%                |
|                  | S         | 76                                     | 846         | 310         | 249                              | 973                             | 2450                    | 1467                              | 532                    | 12,77%               |
|                  | F         | 33                                     | 350         | 64          | 67                               | 480                             | 992                     | 515                               | 281                    | 6,74%                |
|                  | P         | 695                                    | 15          | 30          | 11                               | 396                             | 1147                    | 750                               | 355                    | 8,52%                |
|                  | MB        | 439                                    | 31          | 20          | -                                | 1                               | 491                     | 489                               | 474                    | 11,38%               |
|                  | MC        | 79                                     | 46          | 72          | 13                               | 4                               | 214                     | 214                               | 206                    | 4,94%                |
|                  | MJ        | 13                                     | 6           | 4           | -                                | 3                               | 26                      | 23                                | 23                     | 0,55%                |
|                  | MP        | 1                                      | 5           | 2           | -                                | -                               | 8                       | 8                                 | 1                      | 0,02%                |
|                  | MS        | -                                      | -           | -           | 1                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,02%                |
|                  | MS (?)    | 2                                      | 1           | 2           | 2                                | -                               | 7                       | 7                                 | 7                      | 0,17%                |
|                  | MV        | 1                                      | -           | -           | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,02%                |
|                  | L         | -                                      | -           | 1           | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,02%                |
| D                | 20        | 1                                      | 11          | 11          | 8                                | 51                              | 43                      | 36                                | 0,86%                  |                      |
| T                | 4         | -                                      | -           | 4           | -                                | 8                               | 8                       | 6                                 | 0,14%                  |                      |
| <b>Total</b>     |           | <b>1421</b>                            | <b>3519</b> | <b>2046</b> | <b>447</b>                       | <b>12393</b>                    | <b>19820</b>            | <b>7423</b>                       | <b>4167</b>            | <b>100,00%</b>       |

**Table 1.1 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the whole complex of Sheretnebtj**

Most of these classes were not equally represented. As seen in Chart 1.1, a large majority of the ceramic finds were represented by jars (almost 41%), followed by miniature vessels (more than 17%), bowls and stands (both ca. 13%). The classes of platters and bread forms constituted each less than 10% of the assemblage. Finally, the classes of mud stoppers, tools and lids each made up only less than 1% of the ceramic finds (for details, see individual classes in *Chapter 5*). Such a division is unsurprising, as both jars and miniature vessels often form the largest part of ceramic assemblages in the tombs of higher officials in other parts of

the Abusir necropoleis, e.g. the tomb of Prince Werkaure (*cf.* Arias Kytarová 2014a: Chart 4.1), although in different percentages.



**Chart 1.1 Percentages of ceramic classes in the complex of Sheretnebty**

When comparing the assemblage from the point of individual ceramic groups, it is clear that by far the largest amount of all the finds was composed of beer jars (J-1), which constituted not only 40% of all the ceramic finds but also 90% of all the jars. Among the second-most common class of miniature vessels, the miniature bowls (MB) were unsurprisingly in the lead, followed by miniature cups (MC). All the other miniature groups were attested in only relatively small numbers.

### 1.3 STATE OF RESEARCH

Among other, much more aesthetically and historically valued objects of material culture from the period of the Old Kingdom, pottery tended to be overlooked by the earlier scholars. Commonly, it is possible to find only a few paragraphs devoted to the description of vessels and only a few depictions. One of the reasons was undoubtedly also the large presence of

hand-made, irregular and often very fragmented rough vessels (*e.g.* beer jars and bread forms) in the excavations; as the main focus at that time was on beautiful, finely made objects that could be displayed in a museum.

One of the notable exceptions in this approach was sir William Flinders Petrie, who devoted a large portion of his time to the excavation of Predynastic and Early Dynastic sites. He not only showed great interest in ceramic finds, but also considered them the main focus of the whole assemblage, on which he could base the chronological sequence of individual structures. His creation of the sequence dating system (Petrie 1901: 4–8; Petrie 1920: 3–4) is considered one of the main milestones in Egyptology and archaeology in general. This can be seen within the general trends of the then world-wide ceramic studies that initiated the so-called typological phase (Orton – Hughes 2014: 7–12), which was most notably represented in Dragendorff's seriation of the Roman *terra sigillata* (Dragendorff 1895).

For the period of the Old Kingdom, Petrie did not create a similar dating system, but due to his large-scale excavations, at least provided us with some information concerning the ceramic finds from sites such as Meidum in the Memphite necropolis (Petrie 1892; Petrie – Mackay – Wainwright 1910, *etc.*) and Sedment, Deshasha and others in the Egyptian provinces (Petrie 1898; Petrie 1900; Petrie – Brunton 1924, *etc.*). The main limitation of his published material lies in the fact that he considered all the pottery uncovered in a tomb to reflect the dating of the tomb provided in the epigraphy. Due to our contemporary knowledge of post-depositional processes that occurred in the tombs, it must be stressed that his dating information must be revised; for the site of Meidum, pottery from the Fourth Dynasty tombs has already proven to be actually from the Sixth Dynasty or even the Middle Kingdom (see *e.g.* Rzeuska 2011). This fact does not diminish Petrie's extensive contribution to Egyptian archaeology; in fact, in comparison with numerous scholars of his time, his methods were the most modern and ground-breaking.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> It is possible that our lack of attention to some materials will also be pointed out by scholars in the future, as particularities within such an extensive field as Egyptology widen and deepen constantly. The current research lays a large emphasis on ecofacts and diverse objects (*e.g.* simple tools such as pounders or tools from ceramic sherds), which were often completely overlooked in the past.

As was already stated, only a few scholars followed in his footsteps. During the excavation of the Step Pyramid of Netjerikhet at Saqqara, James E. Quibell and Cecil M. Firth uncovered several hundred vessels, including intentional deposits and primary refuse layers. Unluckily, they published only two beer jars in a drawing and one photo (Firth – Quibell 1935: Pls. XXV and CII, nos. 18 and 20).

The ceramic finds continued to stand in the shadow of other objects, although their numbers slowly increased in publications. Among them, we can name the publications of the excavations at Giza by Selim Hassan (*e.g.* Hassan 1932; Hassan 1941; Hassan 1950), Clarence S. Fisher (1924: 167–170) and particularly Hermann Junker (most notably Junker 1929: 112–129 and Junker 1950: 14–22) who created his own basic ceramic classification.

The most relevant scholar who elevated the study of Old Kingdom pottery to a new level was Andrew George Reisner. Based on his excavation of Menkaure's Valley Temple at Giza, he created a classification of the available ceramic finds and documented also details concerning their place of discovery (Reisner 1931: 201–229). His later thorough revision of this system (*esp.* Reisner – Smith 1955: 60–89) is still in use in a developed or enhanced forms by diverse teams excavating in the necropolis of Giza (*e.g.* Wodzińska 2007; Hawass – Senussi 2009: 191–210; *etc.*).

A different classification was proposed by Werner Kaiser, based on the material from the sun temple of King Niuserre at Abu Ghurab (Kaiser 1969). Kaiser enhanced his analysis by a comparison of this assemblage with vessels from Giza and suggested a sequence of carinated bowls in the course of the Fourth to Sixth Dynasties (1969: 78–82).

The trend of the concentration on fine pottery, especially the carinated bowls (also named Meidum bowls, recurved bowls or even brim-bowls), in order to create a more elaborate dating system, can be seen in the following years. Diverse methods of comparing the shapes and ratios of different parts of carinated bowls were proposed by Pascal Ballet (1987: 1–16) and later by L. Op de Beeck (2004: 239–280).

To that effect, Egyptologists began to devote attention also to other select issues within ceramic studies, such as the development of certain types or classes (see *e.g.* metrical

development of beer jars, Bárta 1996) or functional analyses of vessels on the basis of not only archaeological but also epigraphic sources (*e.g.* Bárta 1995; Faltings 1998; *etc.*).

Modern Egyptian archaeology puts much more stress on the publication of ceramic finds in their entirety. Complete catalogues were provided *e.g.* for the extensive excavation works undertaken in the oasis of Dakhla (see esp. Valloggia 1986; Giddy 1987; Soukiassian – Wuttmann – Pantalacci 1990; Minault-Goult – Deleuze 1992; Castel – Pantalacci – Cherpion 2001; Soukiassian – Wuttmann – Pantalacci 2002; Castel 2005).

This new standard of ceramic assemblage publication was continued by Teodozja Izabela Rzeuska in her monograph devoted to Sixth Dynasty pottery from Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006). In her work, she not only offered a detailed itemized catalogue that enables further comparative studies, but also analysed and interpreted the finds from the point of their distribution within the tomb (*cf.* Rzeuska 2013; *etc.*). Furthermore, the study also proposed a dating based on beer jars rather than the previously preferred fine carinated bowls, with a resulting sequence for the Sixth Dynasty that was substantiated by epigraphic evidence and stratigraphy.

In relatively recent years, a different approach to pottery as a reflection of wider economic trends can be observed. The issue of centralisation in the pottery production, standardization of select types of vessels and the impact on our knowledge of the Old Kingdom economy has been explored *e.g.* by Sarah Sterling (2004) and Leslie Anne Warden (2010 and 2014).

The most current development in ceramic studies highlights the importance of ceramic clays and materials, with more and more sites providing their own petrographic analysis of clays, which will in future enable a comparison within the scope of the whole of Egypt (Jucha 2005: 28–32; Wodzińska 2007: Table 11.3; Rzeuska 2006: 35–44; *cf.* also Nordström – Bourriau 1993: 168–187).

There are far too many ongoing Old Kingdom excavations to be mentioned in detail in this short synthesis. For the particular topic of this thesis, devoted to pottery of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasty, the most relevant ones are those of the neighbouring sites. The publications of the Czech Institute of Egyptology from different parts of the Abusir necropolis shall be

mentioned only briefly, as they are thoroughly referenced in the text (for the most significant ones, see Charvát 1981; Bárta 1996; Bárta 2006; Bárta *et al.* 2009; Kytnarová 2009; Arias Kytnarová 2014a; Arias Kytnarová 2014b).

At Saqqara, diverse tombs of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasty are currently under the exploration of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, French Louvre Museum expedition, Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities and other teams. Institut français d'archéologie orientale continues its work in the Sixth Dynasty necropolis of Saqqara South, and it is to be hoped that besides their excellent volumes on epigraphic remains and religious texts, some studies will also be devoted to ceramic finds. The pottery from the Sixth Dynasty tombs at Tebbet el-Gesh are also to be published in the near future.

Among the Upper Egyptian sites, the most promising ones in relation to the material from Abusir seem to be tombs of the late Sixth Dynasty from Qubbit el-Hawa (see also Edel – Seyfried – Vieler 2008), Abydos (see *e.g.* Knoblauch 2010) and Deir el-Bersha (de Meyers 2015), as well as the exploration of the Old Kingdom levels in the settlements of Edfu (see *e.g.* Moeller 2010; Moeller – Marouard 2014; Moeller 2015).

The aim of this section was to provide a brief overview of the most significant publications devoted to the study of Old Kingdom pottery. The enumeration is by no means exhaustive, as that would be beyond the purpose of this thesis; rather, it offered some insight into the current state of research with the main trends and their developments. There were many other publications that influenced the work of the present author (*e.g.* Kromer 1991; Kammerer-Grothaus 1998; Köhler 1998; Alexanian 1999; Wodzińska 2007; Köhler 2014; *etc.*).

For diverse synthetic works, consult *e.g.* Allyn E. Kelley (1976), who offered all the available published ceramic material up until that time, or Anna Wodzińska (2009), who compiled the main types attested throughout the whole history of ancient Egypt and thus provided also basic references for the ceramic development in the Old Kingdom.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

Due to the large quantity of ceramic finds from the complex of Sheretnebtj (altogether 19,820 fragments, out of which 7,423 were diagnostic, see Table 1.1), not all of them could be documented in full detail. The analysis of the ceramic finds was based on the nature of their contexts, particularly depending on whether those contexts were primary or secondary (see also discussion in *Chapter 4.6*). Primary contexts were usually documented in their entirety, and all the diagnostic fragments uncovered in them, no matter how small, were drawn. In contrast, secondary and mixed contexts were always evaluated according to their resulting information gain. As a rule, the fill of the shafts was documented thoroughly due to the knowledge that it might contain remains of intentional depositions. Similarly, ceramic clusters and refuse deposits were analysed in detail. On the other hand, surface finds were usually documented only selectively, from the statistic viewpoint and the point of the oldest and youngest attested ceramic presence, in order to delimit the time span.

Without exception, all the pottery from the complex of Sheretnebtj was documented by the present author. In the first stage of the analysis in the field, the pottery was divided into diagnostic and non-diagnostic pieces. Non-diagnostic pieces (*i.e.* body sherds) were counted and put aside for the case they could be used for the reconstruction of the vessels. The diagnostic fragments (complete pots or vessels with a complete profile, fragments of profiles or rims, bases, knob feet, spouts, sherds with decoration or with unusual wash or slip) were further sorted into ceramic classes (jars, bowls, bread forms, stands, miniature vessels, platters, lids, tools and mud stoppers). Some, such as the predominant percentage of beer jar bases or rim sherds, were recorded only in statistic amounts per context. Where the type could be identified, it was also marked. Hundreds of beer jar rims were drawn as simple profiles for future reference and further statistical analysis. Only beer jars with a full profile or chronologically relevant pieces were documented fully. Among all the remaining classes, selected vessels (in the case of complex AS 68, approximately 1,500 pieces) were allocated a ceramic number, drawn in scale of 1:1 and fully documented in their dimensions, material,

surface treatment, manufacture qualities (such as hardness and firing) and special features (see Table 2.1). Selected pieces were photographed either in groups or individually.

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Pottery number</b>         | Excavation Number ( <i>e.g.</i> 405/AS68d/2014 = number/tomb code/year of excavation) or ceramic number ( <i>e.g.</i> 58-1.AS68c.2013 = ceramic context-vessel number.tomb code. year of excavation)                        |
| <b>Archaeological context</b> | Description of the exact context of the find ( <i>e.g.</i> burial chamber, Shaft 1, chapel, serdab, niche, <i>etc.</i> )  |
| <b>Description of vessel</b>  | general description of the vessel/fragment  |
| <b>Type</b>                   | Designation of the class, group, type and form (if possible)  |
| <b>Clay</b>                   | Nile Silt A, B1, B2, C and Marl clay A, C and D (see Arnold 1981)   |
| <b>Surface treatment</b>      | untreated, red-slipped, white-washed, wet-smoothed, scraped, polished, <i>etc.</i>  |
| <b>Colour</b>                 | colour of the surface and the break, determined by the Munsell classification (Munsell 1994)  |
| <b>Dimensions</b>             | AD (aperture diameter), MD (maximum diameter), MiD (minimum diameter), <sup>1</sup> SD (shoulder diameter), BD (base diameter), CH (complete height), PH (preserved height), BH (base height), NH (neck height) <i>etc.</i> |
| <b>Rim shape</b>              | Simple, straight, rounded, flat, bevelled, concave, rolled, ledged, angular, triangular, grooved, recurved (carinated), collared, <i>etc.</i>   |
| <b>Body shape</b>             | Ovoid, tubular (cylindrical), globular, hemispherical, spindle-shaped, conical, biconical, concave, convex <i>etc.</i>  |
| <b>Base shape</b>             | Rounded, pointed, partly pointed, flat, footed, ledged, ring-based, <i>etc.</i>   |
| <b>Manufacture</b>            | Hand-made (HM), moulded (M), wheel-made (WM), <i>etc.</i>   |
| <b>Thickness</b>              | thickness of rim and thickness of body sherd (together with the clay defining fine and rough ware)  |
| <b>Preservation</b>           | CV (complete vessel), CP (complete profile), R (rim), Bd (body), Bs (base), Sh (shoulder), N (neck), H (handle), F (foot), Kf (knob foot)   |
| <b>Firing</b>                 | Oxy (homogenous break), mix (zoned break with a core)   |
| <b>Hardness</b>               | soft (very soft, often corroded surface breaking off in pieces), medium hard (slightly eroded, scratchable with another piece of sharp pottery), hard (only knife-scratchable), very hard                                   |
| <b>Notes</b>                  | Special features of the vessel/fragment, such as presence of potmark/s, burned surface, traces of mortar, plaster, mud filling, pigments or copper, outer surface covered in a compact mud layer, <i>etc.</i>               |

**Table 2.1 Guidelines for ceramic sheets used in the Abusir South excavations**

<sup>1</sup> A measurement used with a large number of stand shafts that helps define their resulting dimensions and thus determine their shape and type (*e.g.* compare MiD of 5–6 cm in S-1a and MiD of 9 cm in S-7).



Ceramic numbers were allotted according to contexts; each unique number (*e.g.* 58-1.AS68c.2013) consists of the number of the context (*e.g.* 58: fill of burial chamber of Shaft 1 in AS 68c), number of the drawn vessel within the context (*e.g.* 58-1), code of the tomb (*e.g.* AS 68c: the rock-cut tomb of princess Sheretnebtj,) and finally year of excavation (2013; see also Table 2.1). Ceramic contexts were numbered consecutively within the three-year span of the excavations according to the order of the uncovering of individual structures.

All the pottery was drawn by hand, with special attention given to capturing the main markers of manufacture. As far as other, more modern methods of archaeological documentation are concerned, one specific example shall be discussed. 3D laser scanning and automatic shape capture is gaining in popularity, given its higher objectivity when compared to hand drawings, especially from the point of the angular orientation of the sherds, which is often a matter of the subjective eye of the ceramologist (see Orton – Hughes 2012: 198–200). It also enhances the possibility of immediate calculations of volume and eventually also the mathematical reconstruction of full shape and thus easier creation of typological sequences (Mara – Kampel 2001; Gilboa – Karasik – Sharon – Smilansky 2004). However, while the principle is undoubtedly very promising, it is still limited both in terms of resulting reliability (with 69% of correctly identified sherds, see *e.g.* Makridis – Daras 2012: Table V) and from the point of field work in Egypt. For one, looking past the cost of such scanners, it is problematic to import them and to gain permissions for their employment. Secondly, such machinery usually requires specific conditions and is often employed by scientists either in laboratories or at least in indoor facilities. However, it is impossible to take ceramic vessels or their sherds out of the field, and a daily, non-stop use of such a scanner in the dusty and sandy environment of the Egyptian desert would drastically lower its life expectancy. The Czech Institute of Egyptology uses 3D scanning for architectural structures and features (Brůna – Brejcha – Bárta 2014; Vymazalová – Brůna *in preparation*) as well as diverse objects including exceptional pottery vessels (Brůna – Brejcha – Frouz *et al.* 2016), but a regular, full-term use of scanners in daily ceramic documentation is at present unfeasible, and it currently cannot replace regular field documentation methods and hand drawing. The notable cases when 3D scanning was employed in a test run for ceramic vessels included an intact beer jar covered

with a mud layer from cultic structure AS 74, the imitation of combed ware from Shaft 3 in tomb AS 68d (see Fig. 3.283) and a large X-shaped stand covered in red slip and plaster from the chapel of tomb AS 76 (see Figs. 5.12–5.13).

During post-processing, all the available data is entered in digital form. The two main Excel forms include statistical sheets, recording data concerning the count of sherds per individual baskets, and ceramic sheets that record each individual vessel. In the final stage, all the digital data (*i.e.* scans of original drawings, digitized drawings in Illustrator, available photos of vessels and eventually the contexts *in situ*) are imported into the Abusir Ceramic Database, which was created in Filemaker by the present author. The digitized data enables easier and faster access to morphometric analyses or general context statistics with the help of contingency tables.

## 2.1 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Methods of statistical analysis and quantification are one of the main points of dispute among diverse archaeologists and ceramologists. Four main methods are currently in use during the statistical calculations of ceramic finds (see also Orton – Tyers 1992; Orton – Tyers – Vince 2004: 168–175; Rice 2005: 290–293). The most common but at the same time least reliable is counting the amount of diagnostic and non-diagnostic fragments. A similar method consists of weighing all available fragments and calculating the amount of original vessels in a context based on the estimation of weight in each specific type. A third method, with much higher statistical value, is the identification of the minimum (or maximum) amount of vessels in a context.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the so-called estimated vessel equivalent is based on other, unbiased criteria, such as measurements of rim proportion (see Orton 1982). Each of these methods has advantages and limitations, especially from the point of brokenness and completeness and thus the representation of individual pots in an assemblage, but a combination of two diverse methods (*e.g.* sherd count and weight, see Wodzińska 2007; or sherd count and vessel count,

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<sup>2</sup> This method is likened to the archaeozoological computation of determining the minimum number of individuals (Rice 2005: 292).

see also *infra*) is seen as the ideal combination to achieve unbiased and relatively objective data (see Orton – Hughes 2013: 206–208).

Counting diagnostic and non-diagnostic fragments is the least time consuming method in the field conditions; and at Abusir, it is usually the first step of documentation after sorting the pottery from the respective baskets. However, it must be stressed that such simple sherd count is considered unreliable by itself in any kind of statistical analysis of contexts, as it can have misleading information value in relation to the completeness within the whole assemblage and brokenness in particular type. The main issue is the fact that there is no exact relation between the size and shape of the vessel and the number of sherds it might be broken into (Rice 2005: 291). We can presume that fine pottery breaks easier than rough, badly fired vessels such as bread forms and beer jars, but such a presumption has to be verified for particular contexts. As an example, the numbers of diagnostic fragments in a fictive context (*e.g.* 43 rims and 12 bases of beer jars vs. 13 complete miniature bowls) might lead to the assumption that beer jars were much more numerous in that particular context. Due to the fact that miniatures rarely break into more than two fragments and often stay intact, while beer jars can be broken to as many as 12 diagnostic fragments each, this sherd count has to be calibrated for statistical purposes to count of minimum vessels. In this particular case, up to 10 rim fragments can be associated with a single base, and the actual number of beer jars is much lower than that of the diagnostic sherds.

Therefore, during the documentation of the pottery in Abusir, the information gained from the number of diagnostic fragments is always complemented by the identification of the minimum amount of individual vessels in a context. The number of individual vessels is determined by the most unique part of the pot and may differ from class to class. It is a complex system that requires comparing not only the number of individual diagnostic pieces, but also comparing their surface treatments, firing, material and other attributes. Among stands, the shafts are used as the primary basis for the count of individuals, with the addition of the attested rims.<sup>3</sup> In the cases of beer jars, the number of bases is the foundation of the

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<sup>3</sup> Specifically, in a context with *e.g.* 25 shafts of stands and a further 32 rims, the basic count is grounded on the number of the shafts (= 25). The rims are reviewed as well and divided into individual vessels. If their number is

count, with any diversely treated or shaped rims added to it.<sup>4</sup> For bowls, differently shaped rims are used as the basis for the count. In the case of bowls and jars, there might be non-diagnostic sherds that cannot be associated with any found rims or bases. In that case, these are also counted as examples of the presence of an individual vessel/s. In some contexts, the number of vessels might actually be higher than the number of diagnostic pieces; this often happens in highly disturbed contexts that contain a large amount of very fragmented, un-associated sherds and is proof of the secondary nature of the context.

Due to the specifications of Old Kingdom pottery, the identification of sherds belonging to the same vessel is relatively simple and quick for a trained and experienced eye. The material and firing are usually of low quality, and each vessel has distinct differences, such as outer and inner surface colour, zone colouring in the break, number, size and concentration of organic temper, not to mention surface treatment and its quality, method of its application, the general feel of the sherds (hard, metallic, soft, porous, *etc.*) and lastly, the actual shape and size of the pots. In most cases, it is possible to discern sherds that are part of a single vessel, even in the case of rough pottery such as beer jars. Individual vessels of fine pottery, such as bowls or high quality jars, can be differentiated almost at first sight. Therefore, in Old Kingdom archaeology, identification of the minimum amount of vessels can be used as a reliable tool.

In prehistoric and medieval archaeology, the most common method in acquiring statistical information is to weigh all the collected ceramic finds including body sherds. This is considered the most reliable due to the fact that for some pottery production it is much more

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smaller than the number of shafts (*e.g.* the 32 rims belong to 20 stands) and none of the rims is different in its shape or surface treatment from any of the shafts, the final number of individual stands in the context is 25. However, if among the 20 stands there are *e.g.* two diversely treated rims (*e.g.* red-slipped if there are only untreated stands), the final count is 27. If the number of individual vessels attested by the rims is generally higher than that of the shafts (*e.g.* 30), this number equals the amount of the final individual rims.

<sup>4</sup> In the above-mentioned example, there were surely at least 12 individual beer jars. For the 43 rim fragments, these are compared in their shape, diameters, surface treatment, colouring of the outer walls and zones of the sherds, identifying *e.g.* 15 different rims. The resulting notion is that the context contained at least 15 beer jars.

difficult to identify the minimum or maximum amount of vessels.<sup>5</sup> Also, the weight of certain types is well documented and with negligible divergence between attested examples. Although this method is undoubtedly of high value and reliability for some pottery production, its use for Abusir material is seen as less justified due to the higher time requirements and possibly dubious data. To give a specific example, the present author can name the problem of determining the weight of an average beer jar. Even for the period of the Fifth Dynasty, the difference in the weight of fully preserved beer jars from the same context can be up to 2 kilos.<sup>6</sup> This is due to several reasons, the main one being the lack of standardisation,<sup>7</sup> very rough material and little manufacturing attention – the resulting beer jars are irregular shapes with oval diameters, which can have walls and bases with different thicknesses, thus the amount of fabric used for the creation of each vessel differs considerably. Calculating the amount of individual vessels from an indeterminate average weight is unreliable due to the specifications of Old Kingdom pottery. Let us say the context had 35 kilos of beer jar fragments. Large Fifth Dynasty beer jars can weigh up to 4 kilos, the smaller ones 2 kilos; the average weighed 3. Thus, the maximum amount of vessels is 17 and the minimum is 8, with an average of 11 – whereas in the case of our pottery, after identifying individual vessels according to their fabrics, *etc.* it is clear with a high level of certainty whether the context contained 15 or 8 beer jars. To conclude, whilst the method of weighing all ceramic material is undoubtedly reasonable especially in the case of settlement archaeology and for comparative statistics of closed contexts, for Old Kingdom necropoleis the information gained from the identification of the minimum amount of vessels is much more dependable.

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<sup>5</sup> For the reasoning of the use of this method in Anglo-Saxon archaeology, see *e.g.* Brooks 1987: 116–125; Mainman 1990: 387–390.

<sup>6</sup> In the case of Sixth Dynasty beer jars, this difference is even more striking. Tall tubular beer jars reach up to 40 cm, while the small tubular type is around 20 cm tall. The weight difference between these is more than double.

<sup>7</sup> This topic shall be explored more fully in *Chapter 5.2.1*; to summarize, all the existing studies exclude the existence of standardization in Egyptian pottery during the period of the Old Kingdom (see *e.g.* Sterling 2004; Warden 2009 and 2014). In some closed contexts, such as the beer jars from the burial chamber of Neferinpu, the vessels have similar heights and shapes, but their volumes vary significantly. In most contexts, the variability in all given measurable sizes (height, volume, weight) is perceptible.

The combined method of sherd count calibrated to the number of minimum individual vessels was used in all statistical calculations concerning ceramic finds, such as representation of ceramic classes, groups or types per context or typological frequencies.

## 2.2 DESCRIPTION OF VESSELS

The description of the general shape of the vessels is based on one established by the International Group for the Study of Egyptian Pottery (Arnold 1981) and on the categorization developed for the New Kingdom pottery by Holthoer (1977: 43–44, fig. 51). The main identifier is the *Aperture Index* ( $A_i$ ), which reflects the relationship of the rim size to the maximum body diameter, where maximum body diameter is multiplied by 100 and divided by rim diameter. The resulting number determines whether the vessel has a closed/restricted form ( $A_i \geq 100$ ) or an open/unrestricted form ( $A_i \leq 100$ ). The general shape of the vessel (*e.g.* slender, tall, *etc.*) is determined by the *Vessel index* ( $V_i$ ) on the grounds of the relationship of the maximum body diameter to the total height. It is measured by multiplying the maximum body diameter by 100 and dividing it by the height of the vessel. The resulting groups within the category of restricted vessels are: slender vessels ( $V_i < 50$ ), tall vessels ( $V_i = 50-80$ ), globular vessels ( $V_i = 90-115$ ) and squat vessels ( $V_i > 115$ ). Within the open vessels, groups are: beakers ( $V_i < 150$ ), bowls ( $V_i = 150-275$ ), dishes ( $V_i = 275-500$ ) and plates ( $V_i > 500$ ). The main limitation of these two indexes is that they can be applied only to complete vessels or vessels with a complete profile. In other cases, comparisons and analogies have to be used to sort the pottery into the correct category. Therefore, the *Vessel index* was used only as a guide and not as the main criterion in creating the groups of jars and bowls. The general description of the shape of the vessels was also inspired by general theoretical works on pottery documentation (Rice 2005: 212–22; Wodzińska 2009: 2–6).

Aperture diameter is given as the length between the two uppermost parts of the mouth – in some cases (*i.e.* the bread forms with a flat bevelled rim or the bowls with angular rims), the aperture diameter is equal to the inner rim diameter. The three main traditional designations for the position of the maximum diameter are used, *e.g.* shouldered and ovoid

vessels (with the maximum diameter in the upper third of the total height; shouldered in the case of higher angular shoulder and ovoid in the case of lower rounded shoulder), symmetrical vessels (with the maximum diameter approximately at the middle part of the height) and bag-shaped vessels (with the maximum diameter in the lower third of the total vessel's height). A new important diagnostic measurement is the minimum diameter, identifying the approximate size and height of the X-shaped and A-shaped stands.

The exact description of rim shapes (flat, rounded, modelled, rolled, bevelled, ledged, grooved, ribbed, *etc.*), body shapes (ovoid, shouldered, squat, hemispherical, globular, concave, convex, biconical, rounded, *etc.*) and bases (rounded, pointed, wide pointed, partly pointed, flat, flattened, with a foot, with a base ring, *etc.*) follows widely used terminology (see Wodzińska 2007; Rzeuska 2006; Bárta 2006; Rice 2005; Reisner – Smith 1955; *etc.*).

### 2.3 MATERIAL ANALYSIS

Given the fact that the history of clay identification in Egyptian archaeology, as well as a description of the known clay types and the fabric classification applied to the Abusir ceramic material was offered in detail in the Master thesis of the present author (see Kytarová 2009: 45–48, Fig. 3.15), none of these topics shall be explored in depth. During the last decade, no new petrographic or chemical analysis of clays was able to be undertaken at Abusir and, therefore, no ground-breaking changes in the approach to ceramic material on our site can be stated. For future projects, a comparison of microscopic analyses of our attested clays with those from directly or indirectly neighbouring areas would be desirable, as it would provide additional information to the issues of the source of clays and the dispersion of the production of pottery, especially between fine and rough wares.

Given the above-mentioned reasons, it was not possible to create a distinct clay classification system for the site of Abusir, although such a feat would be undoubtedly advisable. Rather, the so-called Vienna system, created in the early 1990s (see Nordström – Bourriau 1993: 168–187), is applied to our ceramic material, despite its limitations due to the restrictions of the original material that it was based on (see also Kytarová 2009: 45). It is clear that while the Vienna system was a great pioneering project, it needs to be widely

enlarged both from the geographic and chronological aspects – the original clays were identified on the basis of sherds from a limited number of sites, which were dated to only some periods of Egypt. As an example, Old Kingdom vessels were largely underrepresented and thus do not offer an objective source of clay identification.

During the present time, there are numerous sites that either use a slightly enhanced Vienna system, with the addition of newly recognized clays (*e.g.* Mixed clay P-60, see Rzeuska 2006: 35–44), or a refined version of it (differentiating between several variants of some types, see *e.g.* Hawass – Senussi 2009: 249–257) or diversely-defined individual types (*e.g.* consolidation of Nile silt B2 and C at Helwan, see Köhler 2005: 48–49). Some scholars use an abbreviated version of the Vienna system (*e.g.* Kanawati 1995; Kanawati – Abder-Raziq 2001; Kanawati 2006).

However, there are a growing number of Fourth and Third Millennium sites that undertook a creation of their own clay classification system, based on the specifications and particularities of their material. Among the best published is the clay identification of the Giza Plateau Mapping Project (Wodzińska 2007: Table 11.3), which offers a much more refined classification based on the type of inclusions and their sizes (*e.g.* four types that are equivalent to Nile silt B2). Among other notable ones is the system used for the Predynastic settlement of Tell el-Farkha (Jucha 2005: 28–32).



| Fabric  | Texture  | Inclusions   | Fracture colour  | Porosity and hardness                   | Dating  |
|---------|--|--|--|---|---|
| Nile A  | homogenous fine clay with significant amount of silt | fine sand and mica, very few particles of fine straw   | brown to grayish-brown without strongly defined zones  | p: moderate to dense, h: medium         | Badari onwards, in Old Kingdom only very fine vessels |
| Nile B1 | silty groundmass                                     | abundant fine sand, medium to coarse sand, fine straw particles  | reddish-brown surface, black/grey or black/red zoning  | p: moderate to dense, h: soft to medium | Old Kingdom to the beginning of XVIIIth Dynasty       |
| Nile B2 | silty groundmass                                     | abundant fine and medium sand, scattered pieces of limestone, conspicuous coarse straw inclusions                        | brown fracture with narrow red or black cores with violet outer zones                                  | p: loose to moderate, h: medium to hard | Old Kingdom to the Second Intermediate Period         |
| Nile C  | fairly silty clay                                    | common sub-angular to rounded fine to coarse sand grains, predominance of coarse straw particles, visible on the surface | very thick walls, fracture grey-brown to reddish-brown and black core                                  | p: porous, h: soft and medium           | Old Kingdom to New Kingdom                            |
| Nile D  | silty clay   | large amounts of limestone inclusions in the paste   | black core with outer zones of red and violet, sometimes red surface and fracture, vitrification signs | p: loose to moderate, h: hard           | Middle Kingdom to New Kingdom                         |
| Nile E  | silty groundmass                                     | dominant inclusions of fine to coarse sand, common micaceous inclusions  | brown or black fracture  | p: porous, h: soft and crumbly          | Old Kingdom to New Kingdom                            |
| Marl A1 | dense, homogenous groundmass                         | fine sand and limestone particles, very little organic matter  | pale to light red, sometimes grey core   | p: dense, h: hard and firm              | Naqada II to Old Kingdom                              |
| Marl A3 | dense, homogenous groundmass, grainy surface         | very fine mineral, sand and limestone inclusions   | pale red to grey-white, fracture homogenous without zones  | p: very dense, h: extremely hard        | Old Kingdom to New Kingdom                            |
| Marl C  | fine and dense groundmass                            | dominant limestone inclusions, fine and medium sand particles and micaceous inclusions                                   | pale red to brown fracture, grey-white surface and dark or pale grey core with red outer zones         | p: dense to open, h: very hard          | Old Kingdom to Second Intermediate Period             |

**Table 2.2 Main clay types attested at the site of Abusir**

For the site of Abusir, besides the two main types of clay (*i.e.* Nile silt and Marl Clay, see examples in Table 2.2), numerous vessels seem to be made of a different type of clay that might be tentatively determined as Mixed clay. In many cases, finer and rougher subtypes of Nile silt B2 and Nile silt C were able to be observed but were not classified due to the lack of an objective analysis. Nile silt clays make up a large portion, up to 99% of the available ceramic material; basically, all the beer jars, stands, bread forms, platters and miniature vessels were made from the alluvial clays. On the other hand, Marl clays are used only in a small

percentage of fine jars and bowls, and sometimes in very few stands and miniature vessels. Such a percentual frequency is not unusual in the Memphite necropolis; the settlement of pyramid workers at Giza contained over 98% Nile silt vessels (Wodzińska 2007: Table 11.4) and the cemetery of Saqqara West also reported a large predominance of Nile silts in their material (Rzeuska 2006: 35–42). A similar predominance of Nile silts, making up 98% of the assemblage, is also documented *e.g.* in the assemblage from Tell el-Farain/Buto (Köhler 1998: 12, 84). Due to the origin of the Marl clays in the region of Middle and Upper Egypt, the lack of this material in the Memphite necropolis and the Delta is not surprising (see also Wodzińska 2009a: 113).

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE CERAMIC FINDS

The analysis of the ceramic finds from the complex of Princess Sheretnebtj shall be provided from several view-points. One of the most important is the archaeological context, which is the ground stone of all further analysis, in which relevant ceramic finds from individual structures shall be described, starting with the open courtyard, the corridor between tombs AS 68c/d and AS 67 and followed by individual rock-cut tombs (AS 68a–AS 68d). The main aim of this chapter is to provide statistic data concerning each ceramic context, which are to be viewed as reference points. Also, this chapter shall discuss only the most relevant ceramic finds, usually within the span of the oldest to youngest preserved pottery from the specific context. A detailed analysis of these finds shall be provided in the following chapters. This analysis will be based on spatial distribution (comparing *e.g.* all the finds from the burial shafts or chambers among different structures), typological assortment (*i.e.* development of selected types within the necropolis of Abusir and the wider area of the Memphite area), chronological sequence (discussion of relative dating of the structures based on their ceramic finds) and social dynamics (comparative analysis between finds from structures attested in either a gender-based query or one grounded on the socio-economic status of their owners). Due to the importance of this chapter, it is accompanied by extensive photographic and drawing evidence, which shall be further referenced throughout the whole dissertation.

As was already discussed in *Chapter 2.1*, the difference between the number of diagnostic fragments and the minimum number of vessels is accentuated especially from a statistic point of view. A single beer jar could be broken into as many as 30 fragments, possibly as many as 10 of them diagnostic. Therefore, while the total number of non-diagnostic and diagnostic fragments is counted at the beginning of the analysis, after full reconstruction or identifications of sherds belonging surely to the same vessels, the minimum number of vessels is also provided as a more reliable tool. In this paper, statistics (such as percentages of classes and groups in a context) are calculated according to the amount of minimum vessels, not from the number of diagnostic fragments. As a norm, beer jars (J-1) are always enumerated

separately, as they commonly take up a large portion of each individual context and the present author felt it was necessary to differentiate them from the other jars. Also, different miniature groups (*e.g.* miniature bowls, cups, jars and stands) are also listed separately, due to their high numbers. In the text, a percentage of the whole class of miniature vessels is usually given as well and, nevertheless, can be easily calculated from all the given data. Every tomb is introduced with a general statistic count for the whole tomb, and each individual context (such as a burial shaft or chamber) is furthermore provided separately. In cases when pottery was collected in different clusters in a single context (specifically Shaft 1 in tomb AS 68d, consisting of six different contexts collected at different depths), these are also listed in detail for their importance in a discussion of depositional and post-depositional processes. For the particular outline of the main principles of the statistical analysis and the general approach to ceramic documentation in this tomb, see *Chapter 2*.

The complex of Princess Sheretnebtj was large and, as already stated above, brought to light an extremely large amount of ceramic fragments. Throughout the 2012–2014 excavations, the team of the Czech Institute of Egyptology explored altogether four rock-cut tombs (AS 68a – AS 68d), two serdabs (in AS 68c and AS 68d) and 29 shafts (16 in the area of the courtyard and corridor and a further 13 in the rock-cut tombs; Fig. 3.1), containing numerous burial apartments (*cf.* Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012; Vymazalová 2014 and 2015). The complex provided us with interesting questions concerning chronology, ritual activities, secondary building activities and depositional processes, to name just a few (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012 and 2014; Bárta – Vymazalová *forthcoming*; Vymazalová – Arias Kytmarová *forthcoming*).

From the whole complex, we collected an extensive amount of 19,820 ceramic fragments, out of which 7,423 pieces were diagnostic, making up an impressive minimum of 4,167 individual vessels (see Table 1.1 and Chart 1.1). All of these were documented in the course of the 2012–2015 seasons by the present author. Over 1,500 vessels were drawn fully, with dozens of others documented only in profiles (most usually rims of beer jars, stands and bread forms that were in high abundance).

| Structure           | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---------------------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Court and staircase | 418                                    | 952  | 759   | 115                              | 3922                        | 6164                    | 2244                              | 1503                   | 36,1%                |
| Corridor AS68/AS67  | 101                                    | 123  | 78    | 30                               | 412                         | 742                     | 334                               | 214                    | 5,1%                 |
| Tomb AS 68a         | 172                                    | 387  | 180   | 30                               | 1424                        | 2193                    | 769                               | 433                    | 10,4%                |
| Tomb AS 68b         | 45                                     | 95   | 110   | 8                                | 443                         | 701                     | 258                               | 189                    | 4,5%                 |
| Tomb AS 68c         | 412                                    | 1302 | 625   | 125                              | 4327                        | 6789                    | 2448                              | 1369                   | 32,9%                |
| Tomb AS 68d         | 273                                    | 660  | 294   | 139                              | 1865                        | 3231                    | 1370                              | 459                    | 11,0%                |
| Total               | 1421                                   | 3519 | 2046  | 447                              | 12393                       | 19820                   | 7423                              | 4167                   | 100,0%               |

**Table 3.1 Comparison of quantification of ceramic finds per structure in complex AS 68**

As can be seen from Table 3.1, not all individual structures from complex AS 68 brought to light similar amounts of sherds – by far, the most came from the excavation of the large space of the open pillared courtyard (6,164 pieces) and even more from the whole area of the rock-cut tomb AS 68c, presumably the burial place of Princess Sheretneby herself (6,789 pieces). On the other hand, in the rock-cut tomb of Shepesuptah, we uncovered only 701 fragments. The presented chapter shall offer details on individual contexts within these structures.

### **3.1 OPEN PILLARED COURTYARD OF AS 68**

#### **3.1.1 DESCENDING STAIRCASE**

The descending staircase is a nicely preserved example of the original Fifth Dynasty access route into the whole complex of Princess Sheretneby, linking it to the other tombs in the area (see Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 15; Vymazalová 2015: 44). Unlike the entrance to the largest tomb in the area, anonymous mastaba AS 31 (Bárta 2011), which is approached via a simple descending ramp that was covered with a compact mud floor, the staircase to the courtyard of AS 68 was made of nicely cut white limestone blocks. It was built alongside the west wall of the large limestone mastaba of Nefershepes (AS 67), or more specifically, along its outer mud brick facing, in a total length of more than 8 m (Fig. 3.4).

This staircase is closely archaeologically linked not only to complex AS 68 but also to the panelled courtyard of AS 40 and the anonymous tomb AS 41, which are situated at its upper end. Therefore, contexts that do not belong directly to Sheretnebty's courtyard and so will not be included in the general statistical count, shall also be briefly mentioned here in order to provide a better overview.

Both above-mentioned structures, the panelled courtyard AS 40 and the anonymous tomb AS 41 (see Fig. 1.3), are important because they link us chronologically to the period of the second intense building and possibly also cultic activity in the courtyard of Sheretnebty. The excavations in the panelled courtyard, in Shaft 3 of AS 41 (ceramic context 3.AS41.2012) and in the general area of tomb AS 41 provided us with numerous examples of ceramic classes that appear repeatedly in the later shafts built in AS 68. First among those are low tubular beer jars either with a simple or slightly underlined rim (J-1g) that appear *e.g.* in an intact ceramic deposit of nine beer jars in the north-west part of AS 41 (1.AS41.2014). This specific type is chronologically highly relevant, as it was attested only in contexts dated on the basis of epigraphic data to a relatively short time period during the Sixth Dynasty, namely the reigns of Pepy I to Merenre (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 19–20, Table 1–2, Form 6). Its occurrence in several contexts of Sheretnebty's complex, most notably Shafts 1, 5, 9 and 12 points to a larger building (or possibly, robbing) activity in this area. This type is also attested in the space of the staircase itself, on its upper level, in front of the entrance to the panelled courtyard of AS 40 (context 6.AS40.2012), as well as in the area of the north-east corner of the pillared courtyard, at the upper level of the masonry (*e.g.* 16-119.AS68.2012 and 16-120.AS68.2012).

The area above the staircase brought to light a larger amount of miniature vessels, sometime in clusters with other pottery. The most notable example is a deposit of 27 miniature vessels and two beer jars roughly in front of the composed niche of AS 40 (9.AS40.2012, Fig. 3.2). Due to the fact that the open courtyard is lacking in cultic spaces (except for two clearly secondary Sixth Dynasty niches for small false doors cut in the south-west corner of it), the panelled courtyard and niche of AS 40 might have served as a replacement. All these miniatures were wheel-made, although rather small (Fig. 3.3), but they

can be contrasted to the occurrence of hand-made miniature vessels in the complex of Sheretnebty.

The context that was uncovered in the access corridor leading to AS 68 just above the staircase (11.AS40.2012), is noteworthy for its larger presence of fine, red-slipped wares, mostly bowls, as well as a few miniature vessels. Three bowls bear traces of fire either inside or on the outer walls. Two more miniature vessels, together with an incomplete base of a larger bowl or vat, were uncovered in the lower area of the stairs, in context 18.AS68.2012 (see Table 3.2), notably both rough and hand-made.

| Context      | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims     | Bases    | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No.of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|--------------|-------|--|----------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 18.AS68.2012 | J-1   | -                                      | -        | 4        | -                                | 12                              | 16                     | 4                                 | 4                      | 57,1%                |
|              | B     | -                                      | -        | 1        | -                                | -                               | 1                      | 1                                 | 1                      | 14,3%                |
|              | MC    | 1                                      | 1        | -        | -                                | -                               | 2                      | 2                                 | 2                      | 28,6%                |
| <b>Total</b> |       | <b>1</b>                               | <b>1</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>-</b>                         | <b>12</b>                       | <b>19</b>              | <b>7</b>                          | <b>7</b>               | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Fig. 3.2 Amount of ceramic fragments from the lower area of the descending staircase**

### 3.1.2 FILL OF THE COURTYARD

The area of the pillared courtyard itself was one of the richest in the quantity, typological variability, chronological representation and stratigraphic distribution of the ceramic finds. It shall be described only briefly, with the analysis of particular aspects left for following chapters. The courtyard itself is an almost square area with a size roughly of 8.00 × 8.00 m, sunk 4 m deep under the level of the bedrock (see Fig. 3.4; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 20). It is situated between the mastaba of the physician Ptahhotep (AS 36) on the west, the superstructures AS 66 and 69 on the south and the large limestone mastaba of Nefershepes (AS 67) on the east (see Figs. 1.3 and 1.5).

During the excavation of the courtyard in the spring of 2012, altogether six different ceramic contexts were determined, which shall be described separately. The largest both spatially and quantifiably is context 16.AS68.2012, collected in the whole area of the courtyard in different strata. It was by far the most extensive single context in the whole complex, with over 2,800 uncovered ceramic fragments (see Table 3.3). Out of those, there were 1,195

diagnostic fragments, making up a minimum number of 868 individual vessels. From this particular context, more than 165 vessels were drawn and documented fully, especially those in full profile or those with particular chronological or stratigraphic collation values. Almost 30 more (e.g. rims of beer jars, stands and bread forms that were in high abundance) were drawn as profile drawings designated for further study references.

| Context                             | Class  | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims       | Bases      | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--|------------|------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 16.AS68.2012<br>(fill of courtyard) | J-1    | 1                                      | 131        | 381        | -                                | 1225                        | 1738                    | 513                               | 392                    | 45,1%                |
|                                     | J fine | 2                                      | 21         | 15         | 4                                | 23                          | 65                      | 42                                | 34                     | 3,9%                 |
|                                     | B      | 6                                      | 124        | 6          | -                                | 238                         | 374                     | 136                               | 119                    | 13,7%                |
|                                     | B (?)  | -                                      | -          | 1          | -                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,1%                 |
|                                     | S      | 10                                     | 94         | 46         | 46                               | 53                          | 249                     | 196                               | 90                     | 10,4%                |
|                                     | F      | 3                                      | 23         | 6          | 14                               | 44                          | 90                      | 46                                | 38                     | 4,4%                 |
|                                     | P      | 144                                    | 2          | 3          | 3                                | 49                          | 201                     | 152                               | 85                     | 9,8%                 |
|                                     | MB     | 65                                     | -          | -          | -                                | -                           | 65                      | 65                                | 65                     | 7,5%                 |
|                                     | MC     | 18                                     | 8          | 16         | 1                                | -                           | 43                      | 43                                | 43                     | 4,9%                 |
|                                     | MS (?) | -                                      | 1          | -          | -                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,1%                 |
| T                                   | 1      | -                                      | -          | 1          | -                                | 2                           | 2                       | 1                                 | 0,1%                   |                      |
| <b>Total</b>                        |        | <b>250</b>                             | <b>404</b> | <b>474</b> | <b>69</b>                        | <b>1632</b>                 | <b>2829</b>             | <b>1197</b>                       | <b>869</b>             | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.3 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the main area of the courtyard**

The ceramic finds from the fill in the courtyard were carefully documented and labelled, enabling an allocation/assignment of each basket within both a horizontal and vertical strata of the context. Thus, several concentrations could be observed in the extensive material (see *infra*). Also, throughout the excavation of the courtyard, several profiles were documented. As an example, Profile 1 (Fig. 3.5) which ran east-west from pillar 1 to the western wall of the courtyard, contained six main stratigraphic layers, including a top layer of wind-blown sand (1), a thick layer of larger limestone pieces with minimal sand (2), brown sand mixed with limestone chips (3), another layer of large stone pieces with minimal sand (4), brown sand mixed with limestone chips (5) and finally, an above-floor layer of rubble and broken mud bricks (6).

Profile 6, documented a few days later in the fill between pillars 2 and 4 (see Fig. 3.6), can serve as a comparative profile. At that time, the top layer of wind-blown sand had already been removed. The visible strata included alternating layers of brown sand with some



limestone chips and rarely limestone pieces (1, 3 and 5) and layers consisting of large rubble fragments with minimal sand (2 and 4), and a layer of *tafl* rubble at the floor level (6).

As mentioned above, the ceramic finds from the courtyard were not only limited to certain stratigraphic layers (usually those consisting of large rubble fragments and other architectural refuse from the higher levels in the courtyard), but they were also not represented equally in the horizontal analysis of the courtyard. By far the largest cluster of pottery was uncovered in the south-east part of the courtyard, roughly in front of the entrance to the tomb of Shepesuptah. In the level from about 1.2–2.2 m above the floor, a compact layer with a predominance of very large ceramic fragments was observed in a hard compact fill of brown sand mixed with limestone chips and pieces. The majority of the pottery was made up of three classes: beer jars (39 vessels), stands and platters (see Figs. 3.7 and 3.8). From the statistical point of view, over a third of all the stands from the whole courtyard (namely 34 out of 90) were uncovered here. These platters also constitute almost a third of all the platters from the courtyard (28 out of 85). All the other classes were much less represented, with a notable amount of miniatures (24 pieces).

Among the stands from this part of the courtyard, the most common were tall hour-glass shaped stands with a simple rim and base (S-1a1), preserved in very large pieces, in some cases almost complete shapes (see Fig. 3.9). The second most common was the group of low ring stands with a wide body and simple rim and base (S-6a, Fig. 3.9). Notably, the miniature vessels uncovered here were very small and rough, from clays with numerous organic inclusions; the majority (14 pieces) were hand-made (see Fig. 3.9). The platters included two main groups, ones with an inner groove (P-3) and ones with a smooth rim (P-2).

Closely connected to this concentration was ceramic context 19.AS68.2012, uncovered in front of the first naos with a bound male statue (40/AS68/2012; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 345–346; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 22). At the upper level of the naos and to a depth of about a meter, a large amount of pottery was uncovered, consisting in majority of stands (see Fig. 3.10). These include the same variety as named above, namely

tall hour-glass shaped stands with a simple rim of type S-1aI (Fig. 3.11 and 3.12), as well as low ring stands with a simple rim (S-6a).

| Context   | Class        | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|--------------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 14/AS68.2012<br>(SW part of court)              | D            | -                                      | -    | -     | -                                | 1                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 100,0%               |
|   | <b>Total</b> | -                                      | -    | -     | -                                | 1                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 100,0%               |
| 17.AS68.2012<br>(under roofing<br>blocks)       | J-1          | -                                      | -    | 6     | -                                | 5                               | 11                      | 6                                 | 6                      | 85,7%                |
|   | F            | -                                      | 1    | -     | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 14,3%                |
|   | <b>Total</b> | -                                      | 1    | 6     | -                                | 5                               | 12                      | 7                                 | 7                      | 100,0%               |
| 19.AS68.2012<br>(in front of<br>1st naos)       | J-1          | -                                      | 2    | 18    | -                                | 20                              | 40                      | 20                                | 18                     | 35,3%                |
|   | J fine       | -                                      | 1    | -     | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 2,0%                 |
|   | B            | -                                      | 4    | -     | -                                | 5                               | 9                       | 4                                 | 4                      | 7,8%                 |
|   | S            | 1                                      | 9    | 1     | 8                                | -                               | 19                      | 19                                | 10                     | 19,6%                |
|   | F            | 1                                      | -    | 5     | -                                | 1                               | 7                       | 5                                 | 4                      | 7,8%                 |
|   | P            | 8                                      | -    | -     | -                                | 4                               | 12                      | 8                                 | 5                      | 9,8%                 |
|   | MB           | 6                                      | -    | -     | -                                | -                               | 6                       | 6                                 | 6                      | 11,8%                |
|   | MC           | -                                      | 1    | 1     | -                                | -                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 3,9%                 |
|   | D            | 1                                      | -    | -     | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 2,0%                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | 17           | 17                                     | 25   | 8     | 30                               | 97                              | 66                      | 51                                | 100,0%                 |                      |
| 20.AS68.2012<br>(behind first naos)             | J-1          | 1                                      | -    | -     | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 100,0%               |
|   | <b>Total</b> | 1                                      | -    | -     | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 100,0%               |
| 27.AS68.2012 (east<br>of entrance to AS<br>68b) | J-1          | -                                      | 4    | 2     | -                                | 7                               | 13                      | 6                                 | 3                      | 13,0%                |
|   | B            | -                                      | 4    | -     | -                                | 2                               | 6                       | 4                                 | 4                      | 17,4%                |
|   | S            | 1                                      | 5    | -     | 6                                | -                               | 12                      | 12                                | 7                      | 30,4%                |
|   | P            | 10                                     | -    | -     | -                                | 2                               | 12                      | 10                                | 5                      | 21,7%                |
|   | MB           | 3                                      | -    | -     | -                                | -                               | 3                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 13,0%                |
|   | MC           | -                                      | 1    | -     | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 4,3%                 |
|   | <b>Total</b> | 14                                     | 14   | 2     | 6                                | 11                              | 47                      | 36                                | 23                     | 100,0%               |

**Table 3.4 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the remaining contexts in the courtyard**

After the removal of the first naos with the bound statue and its transfer to the storerooms of the Ministry of Antiquities at Saqqara, a fully intact beer jar was found between the naos and the bedrock, placed behind it together with stones and rubble (20.AS68.2012). The beer jar is very tall and slender, with a height of 35 cm and maximum diameter of 16 cm; and has an unusually tall neck (Fig. 3.13). It was found with a false filling of Nile mud, reaching up to more than half of the vessel and drawn in a thin layer along the upper shoulders (Fig. 3.14). Such an occurrence is quite common in the cemeteries of Abusir; in the undisturbed burial chamber of Neferinpu in tomb AS 37, we found altogether nine beer jars filled with Nile mud and even sealed with mud stoppers (see Arias Kytmarová 2014a: Fig.

7.10). The morphological and metrical analysis of the beer jars from the second stage of the tomb of Neferinpu (especially Arias Kytarová 2014a: Fig. 7.10, 11/AS37/2007, Fig. 7.11, 3.AS37.2007) is in accordance with our particular example, confirming the building activity connected with the first naos to the period of King Djedkare.<sup>1</sup>

The ceramic finds from the pillared courtyard of AS 68 are too complex to describe in this short introductory chapter; specific issues, such as details of the spatial distribution within the courtyard (*e.g.* a large concentration of fine wares in the north-west part of the courtyard, see Fig. 3.15), chronological aspects of the ceramic evidence from different layers and other interesting features, shall be analysed in detail in the following chapters.

### 3.1.3 SHAFTS SITUATED IN THE COURTYARD

There were altogether 12 shafts placed irregularly over the whole area of the courtyard (see Fig. 3.1). Due to their stratigraphic positions it was clear that they were hewn over a longer time period and were not part of the original plan of the courtyard. These shafts were explored during the two seasons of 2012 to 2013 (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 20–21; Vymazalová 2015). Their proximity excluded work on two neighbouring structures due to safety reasons. In some cases, their substructures were partly collapsed on several sides and so closely situated that their attribution and interpretation changed over time with the growing influx of data (see *e.g.* the burial chamber of Shaft 6). The largest shaft (Shaft 7) in the courtyard could not be explored fully due to the unstable nature of the crumbling *tafl* bedrock (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 20). Despite all this and the fact that all these shafts clearly belonged to people of a much lower social status than those buried in the adjacent rock-cut tombs, their exploration brought to light important evidence for the architectural development of the whole complex that was not limited to just the late Fifth Dynasty. It also confirmed rich secondary burial activities in the courtyard that lasted up until the late Sixth Dynasty according to the pottery, as well as other archaeological indications

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<sup>1</sup> For the dating of the second stage in the tomb of Neferinpu, see Bárta *et al.* (2014: 98–99 and 205–211).

(Vymazalová 2015: 57) and opened a discussion of the manner of people being allowed to be buried in such a ground (*e.g.* descendants, distant relatives or servants?).

### SHAFT 1

This shaft is situated at the very north-west corner of the courtyard, underneath the preserved roofing blocks (see Fig. 3.16). It was explored already during the spring season of 2012 (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 26–27; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 20). The shaft was rather small, with an opening of 1.10 × 1.10 m and a depth of 6.20 m. The fill of the shaft consisted of brown sand with numerous fragments of *tafl* and limestone chips.

Only a very small number of ceramic fragments were uncovered in the fill of this shaft (see Table 3.5). The preserved stand fragments and platters have very low chronological relevance, as they are not tied to a more specific other than late Old Kingdom date. All the platters were coarse and thick-walled, with only rough smoothing on the upper walls. However, there was one larger/rather large rim fragment of a beer jar with a modelled straight rim and tubular walls, covered outside with a red slip (25-1.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.17). This particular example was preserved only in its upper part but due to its size very likely belonged to type J-1gII with a low tubular body and rounded base. Beer jars of this type, characteristic for their red-slipped surface treatment, appear in larger numbers in the open courtyard of tomb AS 41, situated just above the courtyard (see also *Chapter 5.2.1*) and also in Sixth Dynasty contexts in the rock-cut tombs (see *infra*). From Saqqara West, this type is attested in different structures dated to the reign of King Pepy I to Merenre on the basis of epigraphic evidence from closed contexts (see Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 19–20, Form 6; also Table 1–2).

| Context   | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims     | Bases    | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|-------|--|----------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 25.AS68.2012<br>(fill of Shaft 1 in<br>courtyard) | J-1   | -                                      | 1        | 1        | -                                | 10                              | 12                      | 2                                 | 2                      | 18,2%                |
|   | B     | -                                      | -        | -        | -                                | 1                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 9,1%                 |
|   | S     | -                                      | 4        | -        | 1                                | -                               | 5                       | 5                                 | 3                      | 27,3%                |
|   | P     | 6                                      | -        | -        | -                                | 4                               | 10                      | 6                                 | 5                      | 45,5%                |
| <b>Total</b>                                      |       | <b>6</b>                               | <b>5</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>1</b>                         | <b>15</b>                       | <b>28</b>               | <b>14</b>                         | <b>11</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.5 Ceramic fragments from the unused Shaft 1**

During the excavation in 2012, a burial chamber was discovered east of the shaft, presumed to belong to Shaft 1. Already at this time, the interpretation was complicated by the fact that it was clearly partly collapsed and opened into yet another burial chamber, that of Shaft 3, and the chamber could not be fully explored due to safety reasons (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27). However, full excavation in 2013 showed that in fact the first chamber belonged to Shaft 6 and was only unusually positioned north of it (Vymazalová 2015: 45). The unstable bedrock resulted in the partial collapse of some walls already during the original construction (e.g. between both burial chambers). These were strengthened by the ancient builders by the means of a mud brick and stone rubble wall (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27). After the exploration of Shaft 6 it thus became clear that Shaft 1 probably never held a burial chamber due to a mistake on the part of the builders, who were unaware of a pre-existing structure (Vymazalová 2015: 45).

## SHAFT 2

This shaft is situated south of Shaft 1 and was also explored during the 2012 spring season. It was rather small, with an opening of 1.10 × 1.08 m, and reached only a maximum depth of 1.10 m from the preserved top of its wall. The floor of the shaft was uneven, showing that the shaft was unfinished and never used for burial (Fig. 3.18).

| Context                   | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---------------------------|-------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 24.AS68.2012<br>(Shaft 2) | B     | -                                      | -    | -     | 1                                | 1                               | 2                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 100%                 |
| Total                     |       | -                                      | -    | -     | 1                                | 1                               | 2                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 100%                 |

**Table 3.6 Fragments from the fill of the unfinished Shaft 2 in the courtyard**

From the fill of brown sand mixed with *tafl* and limestone chips, only two ceramic fragments were uncovered (see Table 3.6). On the basis of the material, surface treatment, firing and colour, they both belonged to one vessel, namely a red-slipped bowl with a short tubular spout (Abusir group B-3). The spout was fully preserved (see Fig. 3.19). Spouted bowls

are a less common and thus an interesting part of the ceramic assemblages of Abusir and they shall be analysed in *Chapter 5.3.3*; however, this fragment in itself held minimum dating value, especially given the nature of the context.

### SHAFT 3

This shaft was situated in the east part of the courtyard, directly to the west of the descending staircase (see Fig. 3.1). It was medium-sized, with a mouth of 1.30 × 1.30 m and a depth of 4.00 m. It was explored during the spring season of 2012 (*cf. Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias et al. 2014: 20*). It contained one of the larger assemblages of ceramic fragments, especially of fine wares from the burial chamber (see Table 3.7). The fill of the shaft consisted of limestone chips and pieces mixed with limestone. All the ceramic fragments uncovered therein were only partially preserved, except for one low conical stand reconstructed to full profile (26-9.AS68.2012).

| Context                                   | Class  | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims       | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|--------|--|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 26.AS68.2012<br>(Shaft 3<br>in courtyard) | J-1    | -                                      | 32         | 17        | -                                | 111                             | 160                     | 49                                | 19                     | 43,2%                |
|   | J fine | 1                                      | 5          | 4         | -                                | 27                              | 37                      | 10                                | 4                      | 9,1%                 |
|   | B      | 3                                      | 58         | 9         | 7                                | 50                              | 127                     | 77                                | 12                     | 27,3%                |
|   | S      | 1                                      | 8          | -         | -                                | 5                               | 14                      | 9                                 | 2                      | 4,5%                 |
|   | F      | -                                      | 3          | 2         | -                                | 1                               | 6                       | 5                                 | 2                      | 4,5%                 |
|   | F (?)  | -                                      | 1          | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 2,3%                 |
|   | P      | 2                                      | -          | -         | -                                | -                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 4,5%                 |
| MB  | 1      | -                                      | 1          | -         | -                                | 2                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 4,5%                   |                      |
| <b>Total</b>                              |        | <b>8</b>                               | <b>107</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>7</b>                         | <b>194</b>                      | <b>349</b>              | <b>155</b>                        | <b>44</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.7 Ceramic fragments from the anonymous Shaft 3 and its burial chamber**

The burial chamber was hewn into the west wall of the shaft. In its floor, a burial pit was sunk (Fig. 3.21), with remains of a burial. Part of the west wall of the chamber was collapsed and led directly into another burial chamber (Fig. 3.20), originally thought to belong to Shaft 1 (*cf. Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27*) but later identified as one of Shaft 6 (Vymazalová 2015: 45).

The fill of the burial chamber brought to light several interesting vessels, some of them reconstructed to almost 2/3 of their volume and one to 80% of its rim. The vessels were broken so thoroughly that it is possible this was executed intentionally, possibly as part of the burial rituals (see also discussion on burial goods in *Spatial distribution*). Foremost among these were three bowls and one very fine jar. Two bowls (26-1.AS68.2012 and 26-2.AS68.2012, see Fig. 3.22) are of identical shape, namely low bowls with a lip rim (B-2c) and almost identical sizes (maximum diameters of 31.7 and 33 cm and heights of 9 and 9.3 cm). They were covered in high quality red slip and additionally bear traces of being smoothed with a sharper/somewhat sharp, probably ceramic tool on the outer lower walls. Such bowls with a lip rim are typical late Old Kingdom ceramic material and are attested in numerous tombs from the Fifth Dynasty onwards (see *e.g.* Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 109; also Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 117–124, Forms 170–174). The examples from the burial chamber of Shaft 3 are unusual in having a very shallow body without a bent point. Parallels for this particular form are quite rare.

There was another bowl from the fill of the burial chamber that was able to be reconstructed almost to a full profile. Carinated bowl 26-4.AS68.2012 displays a deeper form with angular shoulders and a slightly flaring tall rim (see Fig. 3.24). With its *Vessel Index*, neck to height ratio and general shape, these attributes point to its manufacture during the middle to late Fifth Dynasty (Op de Beeck 2004; Ballet 1987; Kytarová 2009: 83–85).

From the fill of the burial chamber, there also came a very fine jar found in approximately 35 individual fragments that could not all be connected but undoubtedly belonged to the same vessel (26-3.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.25). The jar was unusually thin-walled, with sherds of only 0.5–0.7 cm in thickness. It was made of high quality Nile Silt A and very well fired, although with characteristic blackened marks resulting from its tight positioning next to other vessels in the kiln. It bore a secondary pot mark, incised on its upper shoulder after firing (see Fig. 3.25, on the right). Similar jars are not very common but the closest parallels come from the late Fifth Dynasty, especially from the area of Abusir (*e.g.* the funerary temple of Raneferef, see Bárta 2006: III, CW-V2) and Abu Ghurab (Kaiser 1969: III, no. 33).

Last to mention is a massive bowl or vat that was found scattered in fragments that came from both the burial chamber and the shaft. Although the upper part of the body (26-17.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.23) and the lower part of the body with the flat base (26-18.AS68.2012) could not be physically connected, they very likely belonged to the same vessel. The resulting shape is one of a large vat with a rolled rim and short tubular spout, convex body and a flat base. It was extensively blackened by fire on both the outer walls and the inner base. Such vessels are attested especially from the older periods of the Old Kingdom, with numerous examples coming from the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties in Giza (*cf.* Reisner 1931: Fig. 76; Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 117; also Wodzińska 2007: Fig. 11.25).

#### SHAFT 4

This shaft was one of the largest among the shafts in the courtyard, with its opening of 1.35 × 1.42 m and a depth of 10.00 m. It was hewn directly underneath a small niche cut in the western wall of the courtyard. Both niches were originally covered with a layer of dark mud plaster (Vymazalová 2015: 46). At a depth of 8.90 m in the shaft, a fully intact false door of a certain Khai was discovered (Exc. No. 247/AS68/2012), which might have been originally positioned in this niche as it corresponds with its size (Dulíková 2013: 66). The door is made of low quality limestone and roughly decorated with the usual offering formulas and epithets (see Fig. 3.53). There were no titles attested on the false door, however it held an unusual feature in naming the deceased *im3hw hr hnty-tnnt* “revered before the god Khentytjenet”, an otherwise rare deity that occurs in several places at Abusir (Dulíková 2016c). The false door provides us with important comparative chronological data, as its iconographic, palaeographic and epigraphic features, among others, date it to the late Old Kingdom or the First Intermediate Period (for a detailed analysis, see Dulíková 2013). On the bottom of the shaft, a small plundered burial chamber was found, containing remains of the original wooden coffin and a disturbed burial.



| Context                                   | Class  | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|--------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 48.AS68.2012<br>(Shaft 4<br>in courtyard) | J-1    | -                                      | 9    | 4     | -                                | 150                             | 163                     | 13                                | 8                      | 25,0%                |
|   | J fine | -                                      | 2    | 2     | -                                | 5                               | 9                       | 4                                 | 5                      | 15,6%                |
|   | B      | 4                                      | 29   | 2     | 1                                | 105                             | 141                     | 35                                | 14                     | 43,8%                |
|   | P      | 1                                      | -    | -     | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 3,1%                 |
|   | MB     | 3                                      | -    | -     | -                                | -                               | 3                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 9,4%                 |
|   | D      | -                                      | -    | -     | 1                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 3,1%                 |
| Total                                     |        | 8                                      | 40   | 8     | 2                                | 260                             | 318                     | 57                                | 32                     | 100,0%               |

**Table 3.8 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the fill of Shaft 4 and its burial chamber**

The ceramic finds from this context were quite rich, numbering over 300 fragments, of which a majority were non-diagnostic rough sherds. There were only 57 diagnostic pieces in the whole shaft and chamber (see Table 3.8); however, providing us with important chronological data. For instance, the shaft brought to light several examples of tall tubular beer jars with an underlined straight rim and rounded base, treated with a red slip on the outer walls (48-18.AS68.2012 to 48-23.AS68.2012, see Fig. 3.26). This particular type of beer jar (J-1fII) is limited to the Sixth Dynasty, more specifically the period of Pepy I to Merenre (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 13–14, Form 3).

There were numerous fragments of fine, red-slipped bowls that came both from the fill of the shaft as well as the fill of the disturbed burial chamber. Whether these bowls originated among the tomb goods and were only displaced and partly take out by the tomb robbers is a matter of discussion. Only one bowl was undoubtedly part of the original tomb equipment. However, the other bowls represent a nice collection of Sixth Dynasty fine ware. There were at least three individual shallow bowls with an inner grooved angular rim (see *e.g.* 48-2.AS68.2012 in Fig. 3.27), two bowls with an outer grooved rim (48-6.AS68.2012), two bell-shaped bowls with flaring walls (*e.g.* 48-5.AS68.2012 in Fig. 3.28), one contracted bowl with a thickly grooved rim (see 48-4.AS68.2012 in Fig. 3.28) and one simple hemispherical bowl (48-3.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.32).<sup>2</sup> Such an assortment is interesting not only due to the fact that several forms are represented by more than one example but also because all these forms have

<sup>2</sup> Although the true hemispherical bowls are characteristic of the Middle Kingdom, the evidence from different contexts at Abusir suggests that this shape must have existed in some form already at the end of the Old Kingdom (see also *Chapter 5*).

analogies in a series of middle Sixth Dynasty tombs at Abusir and elsewhere. Shafts E and L in the tomb of Inti (AS 22) and shaft 5 in the anonymous Sixth Dynasty tomb AS 32 brought to light a number of shallow bowls with angular or modelled rims (Tomášek 2003: Tab. 4, nos. 9 and 14; Kytarová 2009: Fig. 67), bowls with flaring walls (Tomášek 2003: Tab. 3, no. 11), as well as bowls with a contracted grooved rim (Tomášek 2003: Tab. 3, no. 8; Kytarová 2009: Fig. 64). Other parallels of shallow bowls with modelled rims were also found *e.g.* in the burial chamber of Senedjemib in the neighbouring tomb AS 18 (Bárta *et al.* 2009: Figs. 6.3.139–6.3.142).

Only several ceramic fragments were collected in the burial chamber of Shaft 4. These include a broken but fully reconstructed bowl 48-1.AS68.2012 that was found in pieces among the bones of the disturbed burial and fragments of coffin (see Figs. 3.29 and 3.30). It is an example of a very finely-made carinated bowl with rounded shoulders, wide shallow body and relatively short rim (Fig. 3.31). A metrical and stylistic analysis confirms the dating already provided by the above-mentioned ceramic data, namely a middle Sixth Dynasty production date (see *e.g.* Ballet 1987; Op de Beeck 2004; Rzeuska 2006: 408–09; Kytarová 2009: 83–87, *etc.*).<sup>3</sup>

### SHAFT 5

This shaft was one of the smallest shafts from the whole complex. It is situated in the south-west part of the courtyard, roughly in front of the entrance to the tomb of Duaptah (AS 68a). It was explored during the autumn season of 2012 (*cf.* Dulíková – Vymazalová 2013: 27; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 20) and only one small ceramic context (50.AS68.2013) came from it.

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<sup>3</sup> The complex of Sheretnebtj provided us with a large number of carinated bowls, with many of them coming from primary contexts. Therefore, a detailed analysis of the stylistic and chronological development of these bowls, as well as an outline of the main points and issues concerning this particular ceramic type, shall be offered in *Chapter 5.3.1*.

| Context                                   | Class  | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|--------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 50.AS68.2012<br>(Shaft 5<br>in courtyard) | J-1    | -                                      | 3    | 2     | -                                | 57                              | 62                      | 5                                 | 2                      | 16,7%                |
|   | J fine | -                                      | 1    | -     | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 8,3%                 |
|   | B      | -                                      | 11   | -     | -                                | 64                              | 75                      | 11                                | 8                      | 66,7%                |
|   | S      | -                                      | 1    | -     | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 8,3%                 |
| Total                                     |        | -                                      | 16   | 2     | -                                | 121                             | 139                     | 18                                | 12                     | 100,0%               |

**Table 3.9 Ceramic fragments from the anonymous Shaft 5 in the courtyard**

The shaft had an opening of  $0.96 \times 0.98$  m and reached a depth of 3.60 m, with very roughly cut walls (Fig. 3.33). Its fill consisted of limestone and *tafl* chips mixed with brown sand. As can be seen in Table 3.9, there were only very few ceramic fragments. Most of these were preserved as only very small pieces, with around 7–14% of their diameters. The only exception was a larger/rather large fragment of a beer jar rim (50-11.AS68.2012, see Fig. 3.35), preserved to 28% of its diameter. It provides us with some chronological data – it belongs to either short or tall beer jars with a straight rim and tubular walls (type J-1g or J-1f), covered with a thin red slip on the outer walls. These types are attested only in the Sixth Dynasty, most often during the reign of Pepy I to Merenre (see *e.g.* Kanawati – Abder-Raziq *et al.* 2000: Pl. 71, TNE98:17; Rzeuska 2006: Table 1–2). Both types are also well represented in this area of Abusir South; the Sixth Dynasty tomb AS 41, situated just north of the courtyard, brought to light almost a dozen fully preserved examples of J-1g, while both types occur in Sixth Dynasty layers and shafts of the rock-cut tombs AS 68a and AS 68c in particular (*see infra*).

There were at least eight fine, red-slipped bowls in the fill of the shaft. However, all were preserved as only very small rim fragments. Notable among these were three different bowls with a bent-sided contracted body and grooved rim from the outside (50-2.AS68.2012 and 50-7.AS68.2012, see Fig. 3.35), one bowl with a densely grooved rim from the inside, two carinated bowls with a wide body and very short rim and shallow bowls with a modelled rim or an inner groove. Most of these bowls have analogies in Sixth Dynasty contexts<sup>4</sup> and thus seem to confirm the dating given by the beer jar. Whether they can be considered part of the

<sup>4</sup> To name just a few examples, for bent-sided bowls with a contracted rim with outer grooving see Tomášek (2003: Tab. 3, LL, no. 8) and Kytnarová (2009: Fig. 64, JJ-ShE-4, JJ-ShE-5); for shallow bowls with a modelled rim see Kytnarová (2009: Fig. 67); for bowls with a densely grooved inner rim see Rzeuska (2006: Pl. 125).

original deposition of the shaft, which was thoroughly disturbed by tomb robbers, or they got into the shaft only due to the secondary post-depositional processes following the plundering of the shaft is a matter of discussion.

The shaft had a very small niche in the eastern wall, with an imprint of a wooden coffin/box (Fig. 3.34). All the human bones were found scattered in the fill of the shaft, together with some animal bones. Due to the highly disturbed nature of the context, none of the ceramic pieces could be associated directly with the burial.

### SHAFT 6

Shaft 6 was one of the most interesting contexts in the whole complex. Its burial chamber was already discovered during the spring of 2012 due to a break in the west wall of the burial chamber in Shaft 3 (see also *supra* and Fig. 3.20), although it was then presumed to belong to Shaft 1 due to an opening in its north wall that lead into this shaft (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27). At that time, the unstable *tafl* bedrock did not allow a full excavation of the chamber. Therefore, the pottery from the accessible part of the chamber (ceramic no. 46.AS68.2012) was published in a preliminary report as a context from Shaft 1 (Arias Kytarová 2013: 39). The exploration in the autumn of 2013 revealed that the enigmatic burial chamber actually belonged to Shaft 6 and was disturbed by crumbled walls on two sides: on the east, towards the burial chamber of Shaft 3 and on the north, into Shaft 1 (see Fig. 3.39; Vymazalová 2015: 45).

The shaft itself is situated south of the south-western pillar in the open courtyard. It had dimensions of 1.60 × 1.60 m and a depth of 5.40 m. Its fill consisted of grey sand with cut *tafl* mixed with pieces of *tafl*, fragments of pottery and other objects, such as animal bones, charcoal fragments and a hammer stone with traces of copper (Vymazalová 2015: 45).

In the whole shaft and its burial chamber, we uncovered altogether 418 fragments, out of which 145 were diagnostic, totalling to a minimum of 81 individual vessels (see Table 3.10 for details). Even the shaft contained interesting pieces of pottery, as it brought to light a bread form with the majority of its body preserved (70-5.AS68.2013). This bore extensive

traces of exposure to fire, not only on the outer walls, but also on the inside, including a slight amount of residue.

| Context   | Class        | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|--------------|--|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 46.AS68.2012<br>(BC of Shaft 6<br>in courtyard)     | J-1          | -                                      | 1         | 3         | -                                | 32                              | 36                      | 4                                 | 3                      | 23,1%                |
|   | J fine       | 1                                      | 5         | 1         | -                                | 10                              | 17                      | 7                                 | 2                      | 15,4%                |
|   | B            | 1                                      | 5         | -         | -                                | 20                              | 26                      | 6                                 | 6                      | 46,2%                |
|   | S            | -                                      | 1         | 1         | -                                | 2                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 15,4%                |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>2</b>                               | <b>13</b> | <b>5</b>  | <b>-</b>                         | <b>64</b>                       | <b>81</b>               | <b>19</b>                         | <b>13</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |
| 70.AS68.2013<br>(Shaft 6<br>in courtyard)           | J-1          | 1                                      | 25        | 19        | -                                | 98                              | 143                     | 45                                | 20                     | 71,4%                |
|   | B            | -                                      | -         | -         | -                                | 7                               | 7                       | -                                 | 1                      | 3,6%                 |
|   | F            | 1                                      | 2         | -         | -                                | -                               | 3                       | 3                                 | 2                      | 7,1%                 |
|   | MB           | 1                                      | -         | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 3,6%                 |
|   | MC           | -                                      | 4         | 1         | -                                | -                               | 5                       | 5                                 | 3                      | 10,7%                |
|   | MJ           | -                                      | 1         | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 3,6%                 |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>3</b>                               | <b>32</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>-</b>                         | <b>105</b>                      | <b>160</b>              | <b>55</b>                         | <b>28</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |
| 71.AS68.2013<br>(blocking wall to<br>BC in Shaft 6) | J-1          | -                                      | 11        | 6         | -                                | 27                              | 44                      | 17                                | 6                      | 75,0%                |
|   | P            | -                                      | -         | -         | 1                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 12,5%                |
|   | MB           | 1                                      | -         | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 12,5%                |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>1</b>                               | <b>11</b> | <b>6</b>  | <b>1</b>                         | <b>27</b>                       | <b>46</b>               | <b>19</b>                         | <b>8</b>               | <b>100,0%</b>        |
| 72.AS68.2013<br>(BC of Shaft 6<br>in courtyard)     | J-1          | -                                      | 14        | 8         | -                                | 60                              | 82                      | 22                                | 13                     | 40,6%                |
|   | B            | -                                      | 10        | 1         | -                                | 13                              | 24                      | 11                                | 7                      | 21,9%                |
|   | S            | -                                      | 5         | -         | -                                | 2                               | 7                       | 5                                 | 3                      | 9,4%                 |
|   | F            | -                                      | 2         | -         | -                                | -                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 6,3%                 |
|   | P            | 9                                      | -         | -         | -                                | 4                               | 13                      | 9                                 | 4                      | 12,5%                |
|   | MB           | 1                                      | -         | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 3,1%                 |
|   | MC           | 1                                      | 1         | -         | -                                | -                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 6,3%                 |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>11</b>                              | <b>32</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>-</b>                         | <b>79</b>                       | <b>131</b>              | <b>52</b>                         | <b>32</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Fig. 3.10 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the different contexts in the anonymous Shaft 6**

The most notable find from the shaft was undoubtedly a fully preserved beer jar (70-1.AS68.2013) that was found on the bottom of the shaft, just in front of the entrance to the burial chamber (see Fig. 3.36). Inside, it bore a partly articulated filling of Nile mud, commonly attested in such cases (see Fig. 3.37). In this case, the mud filling consisted of two layers – a lower layer of dark, rough clay and on top of it a thinner layer of light-coloured silt. At Abusir, similar depositions of a single beer jar on the bottom of a shaft, often directly in front of a sealing wall leading into either a burial chamber or a burial niche, are attested *e.g.* in Shaft 5 in the tomb of Neferinpu and in four shafts of the Lake of Abusir area (*cf.* Arias

Kytnarová 2011a: Fig. 6; Arias Kytnarová 2014a: 134, Fig. 7.3).<sup>5</sup> The jar itself has a tall slender body with a pointed base, with a height of 35 cm and maximum diameter of 17 cm.

There were several beer jars uncovered in the fill of the burial chamber or at the entrance to it. At least four of them (72-7.AS68.2013 to 72-10.AS68.2013) belonged to a very specific type that appears quite often in these later shafts of the courtyard, namely a tall beer jar with a straight rim, tubular walls and rounded base (J-1f). None of the rims were able to be connected to the bases. They are slightly different from those from Shaft 4, specifically in having diagonal rather than vertical smoothing on their bodies and exhibiting a thin layer of mud on the shoulders. All these examples were red-slipped on the outside. As mentioned before, tall tubular beer jars with a straight rim appear only during the Sixth Dynasty, especially during the period of Pepy I to Merenre (*e.g.* Rzeuska 2006: Tab. 1–2; Kanawati *et al.* 2006: Pl. 73, TNE96:SH69).

Given the fact that the burial chamber was disturbed from two different sides, it was surprising to find the burial pit covered with slabs and sealed with mortar (Fig. 3.38). Inside, there was an intact burial of a man of 20–30 years. The most exceptional find was the presence of a rather large model tool made in copper (Fig. 3.40), which was found close to his right hand (Vymazalová 2015: 45).

The burial chamber brought to light several vessels, some already during the 2012 partial cleaning and others a year later. Only a few were possible to reconstruct to full shape or at least complete profile, such as a small globular jar with a rolled rim and small flat base (46-1.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.41) or a shallow bowl with a modelled rim with an inner groove (46-2.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.42). The jar was fired at a very low temperature, resulting in a very pale and soft sherd. Analogical jars were found *e.g.* in the tomb of Inumin in Saqqara, dating to the period of Pepy I (Kanawati *et al.* 2006: Pl. 79, TNE96:228 and Pl. 76: TNE96:249) or from the Sixth Dynasty tomb G 2381 in Giza (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 86, 12-12-161).

Among the numerous bowls, there were several dominant types (see Fig. 3.42). All these do appear in greater numbers in all the surrounding shafts, especially Shaft 4 in the

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<sup>5</sup> For further references and a detailed analysis of such sealing deposits, see *Chapter 4.2.1*.

courtyard and Shafts 13 and 14 in the corridor (see *infra*). These include shallow bowls with an angular rim and inner groove (for parallels, see *e.g.* Kanawati *et al.* 2006: Pl. 79, TNE96:228), bent-sided bowls with dense grooving from the outside (*e.g.* Tomášek 2003: Tab. 3, no. 8 and Kytarová 2009: Fig. 64, JJ-ShE-4, JJ-ShE-5), bell-shaped bowls with flaring walls (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 98–99) and other types.

### SHAFT 7

Shaft 7 is by far the largest shaft in the whole complex of Princess Sheretnebt, with an opening of  $2.06 \times 2.10$  m. It is situated in a prominent place in the courtyard, namely in the large open space between the staircase and the inscribed pillars, roughly in front of the entrance to the tomb of Shepesuptah (see Fig. 3.1). All these facts made it seem likely that this was intended as the burial place for a person of a high social rank (*cf.* Vymazalová 2013: 27). However, the exploration of the shaft was severely complicated by the unstable, crumbling *tafl* bedrock that started to collapse at deeper levels. At a depth of 5 m, the shaft decreased in size to  $1.60 \times 1.50$  m, and instead of regular sandy fill mixed with pottery, it was filled with *tafl* bereft of ceramic fragments or any other finds (Vymazalová 2013: 27). The dangerously crumbling walls forced the exploration of the shaft to finish at a depth of 7.50 m. However, it is possible that the shaft was never finished in antiquity for exactly the same reasons.

| Context   | Class     | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims       | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|-----------|--|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 31.AS68.2012<br>(fill of Shaft 7<br>in courtyard) | J-1       | 1                                      | 75         | 75        | 1                                | 613                             | 765                     | 152                               | 87                     | 43,3%                |
|   | J storage | -                                      | -          | 1         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,5%                 |
|   | J fine    | -                                      | 5          | 1         | 3                                | 7                               | 16                      | 9                                 | 9                      | 4,5%                 |
|   | B         | 2                                      | 25         | 2         | 1                                | 59                              | 89                      | 30                                | 25                     | 12,4%                |
|   | S         | -                                      | 4          | -         | 1                                | 11                              | 16                      | 5                                 | 6                      | 3,0%                 |
|   | F         | 3                                      | 14         | 4         | 3                                | 20                              | 44                      | 25                                | 13                     | 6,5%                 |
|   | P         | 3                                      | 1          | -         | -                                | 2                               | 6                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 1,5%                 |
|   | MB        | 41                                     | 3          | -         | -                                | -                               | 44                      | 44                                | 44                     | 21,9%                |
|   | MC        | 9                                      | 2          | 2         | -                                | -                               | 13                      | 13                                | 13                     | 6,5%                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                      |           | <b>54</b>                              | <b>134</b> | <b>85</b> | <b>9</b>                         | <b>792</b>                      | <b>994</b>              | <b>282</b>                        | <b>201</b>             | <b>100,0%</b>        |

Table 3.11 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the large anonymous Shaft 7

The ceramic fragments from this shaft were very plentiful, numbering altogether 994 fragments, out of which only 282 were diagnostic – the majority of the finds were non-diagnostic pieces of rough pottery, such as beer jars (see Table 3.11). The whole shaft held a minimum of 201 individual vessels. A large percentage of these were miniature vessels, both wheel-made and hand-made (Fig. 3.49).

Beer jars constituted the vast majority of the whole assemblage, however only one was preserved in full profile. Beer jar 31-31.AS68.2012 (Fig. 3.43) was uncovered in the upper levels of the shaft, with traces of the original filling of Nile mud. It was rather tall and slim, with a tall straight neck, ovoid tapering body and pointed base. Its shape as well as size (with a height of 33.5 cm) point to its manufacture in the span of the terminal Fifth or beginning of the Sixth Dynasty. There was another beer jar of similar shape and size, preserved only up to its neck (31-24.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.44). With a preserved height of 33 cm, it is very likely that it had similar dimensions, as its missing rim would add only about 2.5 cm to its height.

However, there were also fragments of a very different type of beer jar, all coming from the upper levels of the shaft. There were at least two different rims of a beer jar with a simple rim, articulated shoulders and tubular body (see *e.g.* 31-25.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.45). These were complemented by a large fragment of a tubular tapering body that was reconstructed from several fragments (31-26.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.46). Notably, none were red-slipped. All of them very likely belong to type J-1eI, namely a tall beer jar most characterized by its articulated shoulders and rounded base (see also *Chapter 5.2.1*). In the cemetery of Saqqara West, this type is attested in several tombs dated to the very early Sixth Dynasty, as it was found in the tombs of Merefnebef and Niankhneferem, which are dated epigraphically/by epigraphic data to the reigns of Teti to Weserkaf (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 9–10, Table 1–2). Notably, during the 2015 excavations in Abusir South, we uncovered two fully preserved examples of this type in a ceramic deposit situated in the eastern façade of the anonymous tomb AS 77 (Dulíková – Jirásková – Arias Kytarová 2016: 33, Obr. 11).

Among the *bdj* bread forms, there were both groups F-1 (with a rounded base) and F-2 (with a flat base), although the former seemed to be slightly more prevalent. Three bread



moulds were preserved in full profile, the rest only as base or rim fragments. Bread form 31-3.AS68.2012 was uncovered in the top layers of the shaft below the opening. It belonged to type F-1b and had a tall body with open walls, a flat bevelled rim and rounded base. Another F-1 bread form (31-35.AS68.2012) had a rather low body with an almost flat rim and a rounded base knob only roughly attached to the base. The other fragments came from deeper levels of the shaft, such as a full profile of 31-33.AS68.2012 with a concave body, bevelled rim and flat base (Fig. 3.47). There was at least one more flat base (Fig. 3.48) and two more rounded bases from the fill of the shaft.

There was a relatively large group of fine, red-slipped bowls. Only two were reconstructed to full profile. One was a carinated bowl with a straight rim and rounded base (31-5.AS68.2012) and another was a bell-shaped bowl with flaring walls and an outer modelled rim (31-9.AS68.2012; for both, see Fig. 3.50). The carinated bowl had traces of fire inside, probably from a secondary use. The main attributes of the carinated bowl, namely its medium shallow shape, *Vessel Index*, ratio between the neck and the rim diameter, date the manufacture of the bowl sometime at the end of the Fifth or early Sixth Dynasty (Op de Beeck 2004: Tabs. 3, 7 and 9). The bell-shaped bowl is also attested in different forms – in Saqqara West, such thicker-walled flaring bowls with a modelled rim are documented in the first part of the Sixth Dynasty (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 98, From 141). The other bowls uncovered in the shaft represent a mixture of terminal Fifth to early/middle Sixth Dynasty wares, with shallow bent-sided bowls, other carinated bowls similar to the one above, shallow bowls with modelled rims and deeper bowls with modelled rims.

### SHAFT 8 (HETEPUNI?)

Shaft 8 was situated in front of the entrance into the tomb of Shepespupthah, on its western side (see Figs. 1.3 and 3.125). It was relatively small, with an opening of 1.20 × 1.20 m and a depth of 5.70 m. The fill consisted of brown sand mixed with *tafl* fragments and a low number of limestone chips (Vymazalová 2015: 45). A small burial chamber was hewn into the southwest side of the shaft at its bottom, with a shallow burial pit containing a body of a male 40-60

years old (Dulíková – Arias Kytnarová – Cílek 2014: 44). He was originally laid in a coffin made of wood (*Acacia nilotica*) that had fallen apart, resulting only in its imprint on the walls of the pit and a few fragments. There were no traces of burial equipment in the burial chamber and all the attested pottery came from the fill of the shaft.

The most notable find from the shaft was a small limestone false door, belonging to the official Hetepuni (Exc. No. 283/AS68/2013, Fig. 3.52), found in several fragments at a depth of 4.35 m in the shaft. It was inscribed in black ink, providing us with the usual offering formula and the titles of the owner, namely *jmj-r3 st hntj(w)-š pr-ꜥ3 wꜥb 200 Mn-nfr-Rꜥ wꜥb ꜥ3 hm-ntr hntj-tnnt*, “overseer of the department of *khentyu-she* of the Great House, the *wab* priest of the two hundred of the (pyramid complex) Enduring is the splendor of Meryre, the great *wab* priest and the *hem-netjer* priest of Khentytjenenet” (Dulíková – Arias Kytnarová – Cílek 2014: 40–41; Vymazalová 2015: 45–46). The owner of the false door, Hetepuni, served in the pyramid complex of Pepy I and according to the stylistic analysis of the false door itself, lived sometime at the end of the Sixth Dynasty or even later (Dulíková – Arias Kytnarová – Cílek 2014: 39–40). However, it is questionable whether the door can be associated with Shaft 8, as no niche has been identified above it and it was found in secondary refuse (Vymazalová 2015: 46).

Compared to the other shafts from the courtyard (except for the unusually large Shaft 7), its ceramic finds were relatively numerous. There were altogether 271 fragments, out of which 61 were diagnostic, making up a minimum of 33 individual vessels (Table 3.12). These were all uncovered in the fill of the shaft itself, and none were found in the burial chamber or the burial.

| Context                                   | Class  | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases    | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|--------|--|-----------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 56.AS68.2012<br>(Shaft 8<br>in courtyard) | J-1    | 1                                      | 26        | 6        | -                                | 162                             | 195                     | 33                                | 12                     | 36,4%                |
|   | J fine | -                                      | -         | 1        | 2                                | 3                               | 6                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 9,1%                 |
|   | B      | 1                                      | 20        | 1        | 1                                | 43                              | 66                      | 23                                | 16                     | 48,5%                |
|   | F      | -                                      | 2         | -        | -                                | 2                               | 4                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 6,1%                 |
| <b>Total</b>                              |        | <b>2</b>                               | <b>48</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>3</b>                         | <b>210</b>                      | <b>271</b>              | <b>61</b>                         | <b>33</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.12 Ceramic fragments from the fill of the presumed shaft of Hetepuni**

Except for two vessels that were reconstructed to full profile, most of the others were preserved as only very small fragments, between 10–18% of the diameters. This is especially the case with the bowls, where eight examples were preserved to only a maximum of 8% of their diameters. Given this fact, the whole context was very likely secondary and its dating value should be taken with caution.

Bowls were the most commonly attested class, with examples of 16 individual vessels. They fall into four main typological groups, namely carinated bowls, shallow bowls with modelled rims, medium-sized bowls with outer grooved rims and finally deep bowls with modelled rims. Among these, the carinated bowls made up the largest group, with altogether five examples. One was preserved in full profile (56-1.AS68.2013, Fig. 3.54) and shows a medium-deep bowl with rounded shoulders and a straight rim underlined with a groove (B-1bIV). Such particular bowls have numerous analogies *e.g.* in two different shafts in the tomb of Inti (Kytnarová 2009: Fig. 55, JJ-ShE-08) and another shaft in the neighbouring anonymous complex AS 32 (Kytnarová 2009: Fig. 55, LL-Sh5-31 a LL-Sh5-37). Other parallels include finds from the tomb of Pehenptah in Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 126, 635) and from Sixth Dynasty layers in the sun temple of Weserkaf (Kaiser 1969: Abb. XVII, 112–113).

The complex of the sons of vizier Qar from Abusir provided parallels to several other vessels from Shaft 8. From Shafts E and L in the above-mentioned tomb of Inti came analogies to deep bowls with modelled rims (Kytnarová 2009: Fig. 65, JJ-ShL-01 a JJ-ShE-02). The burial chamber of Senedjemib provided us with both a shallow bowl with an angular rim and a medium deep bowl with a straight rim grooved outside (Bárta *et al.* 2009: Fig. 6.3.139–6.3.142). These vessels have further analogies *e.g.* in the tomb of Inumin from Saqqara (Kanawati *et al.* 2006: Pl. 79, TNE96:228; Pl. 76, TNE 96:254; Pl. 80, TNE96:SH44).<sup>6</sup>

Among the rough wares, there was only one example of a beer jar in full profile, reconstructed from numerous fragments (56-20.AS68.2013, see Fig. 3.55). It had a 32.5 cm tall tapering body with a partly pointed base. This particular type of beer jar is common during the late Old Kingdom; in the cemetery of Saqqara West there were several examples

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<sup>6</sup> For additional parallels to the vessels from Shaft 8, see Dulíková – Arias Kytnarová – Čílek (2014: 44–47).

with almost identical shape and dimensions from a ceramic deposit in the tomb of Pehenptah (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 28, Form 9, nos. 77 and 80).

### SHAFT 9

This shaft is one of the smaller shafts in the complex, with an opening of 1.00 × 0.90 m and a depth of 6.5 m. It is situated east of Shaft 8, in front of the entrance to the rock-cut tomb of Shepesuptah (see Figs. 1.3 and 3.125) (*cf.* Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 20). The fill consisted of dark sand mixed with *tafl* and contained only a relatively small amount of pottery (Table 3.13).

| Context                                   | Class  | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases    | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|--------|--|-----------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 42.AS68.2012<br>(Shaft 9<br>in courtyard) | J-1    | -                                      | -         | 8        | -                                | 40                              | 48                      | 8                                 | 8                      | 33,3%                |
|   | J fine | -                                      | 1         | -        | -                                | 3                               | 4                       | 1                                 | 3                      | 12,5%                |
|   | B      | -                                      | 14        | -        | -                                | 22                              | 36                      | 14                                | 8                      | 33,3%                |
|   | S      | 1                                      | -         | -        | 1                                | -                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 8,3%                 |
|   | F      | -                                      | 2         | -        | -                                | 2                               | 4                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 8,3%                 |
|   | P      | 1                                      | -         | -        | -                                | 2                               | 3                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 4,2%                 |
| <b>Total</b>                              |        | <b>2</b>                               | <b>17</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>1</b>                         | <b>69</b>                       | <b>97</b>               | <b>28</b>                         | <b>24</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.13 Ceramic fragments from the fill of the anonymous Shaft 9**

The most notable pieces are those of beer jars and one fine jar. Beer jars are represented by two very different types. The first by two individual bases of (most likely) low tubular forms with a rounded bottom (42-3.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.57) and the second by a very sharply pointed, slender base. The low tubular forms of type J-1g have a recurrent frequency in this part of the cemetery, from almost a dozen examples in the neighbouring tomb and panelled courtyard of tomb AS 41 (see also *Chapter 5.2.1*) to examples from other shafts in the courtyard of Sheretnebtj (*e.g.* Shaft 1, see *supra*). This type is well dated by parallels from the tombs of Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 18–19).<sup>7</sup> The sharply pointed beer jars are much rarer and although they appear in full form in the southern area of Abusir South (*e.g.* the anonymous tomb AS 84b), there were only a handful of examples from this particular part of

<sup>7</sup> There is another type of tubular beer jars, J-1f with tall tubular body, but it tends to be larger and generally more massive (see also *Chapter 5.2.1*). It is dated to the same period as J-1g (*e.g.* Rzeuska 2006: Table 1–2).

the cemetery, none preserved to full profile. Their exact typological attribution is therefore not left to speculation.

The fine ware is represented by the traditional types (also appearing in other shafts of the courtyard), namely deep bowls with modelled rims (B-5), shallow bowls with angular or modelled rims (B-6) and others. Notable is an example of a small fine jar made of Nile silt B1, covered by a thick layer of white wash on the outer walls and inner rim (42-1.AS68.2012). Although its rim and the body/base fragment could not be physically connected, they undoubtedly belonged to the same vessel due to their material, surface treatment, colours of the sherds and other attributes. The shape is one of a small ovoid jar with a low neck and rolled rim (Abusir group J-2), which occurs throughout the whole late Old Kingdom.

### SHAFT 10

This shaft was situated immediately in front of the descending staircase (see Figs. 3.1 and 3.59). Similar to Shafts 5 and 11, its opening was strengthened by a low mud brick wall that reached 30 cm high at the time of discovery (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27). The shaft had dimensions of 1.10 × 1.20 m and was originally quite deep. Due to the low quality of the bedrock and crumbling shaft walls, we were forced to abandon the works in the shaft at a depth of 7.00 m (*cf.* Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27). Most of the ceramic fragments, especially the assortment of stands, came from the upper levels of the shaft, from a fill of brown sand with some cut *tafl*.

| Context                                    | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|--|-------|--|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 47.AS68.2012<br>(Shaft 10<br>in courtyard) | J-1   | -                                      | 14        | 16        | -                                | 152                             | 182                     | 30                                | 16                     | 36,4%                |
|  | B     | -                                      | 6         | -         | -                                | 15                              | 21                      | 6                                 | 6                      | 13,6%                |
|  | S     | 2                                      | 19        | 5         | 2                                | 21                              | 49                      | 28                                | 12                     | 27,3%                |
|  | F     | -                                      | 1         | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 2,3%                 |
|  | P     | 21                                     | -         | -         | -                                | 6                               | 27                      | 21                                | 7                      | 15,9%                |
|  | MB    | -                                      | -         | 1         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 2,3%                 |
|  | MC    | -                                      | -         | 1         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 2,3%                 |
| <b>Total</b>                               |       | <b>23</b>                              | <b>40</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>2</b>                         | <b>194</b>                      | <b>282</b>              | <b>88</b>                         | <b>44</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.14 Amounts of pottery from the anonymous Shaft 10**

There were still relatively numerous ceramic fragments that came from this shaft (Table 3.14). The material is clearly distinctive from most of the other shafts in the courtyard. There was a large amount of bowls and platters, and, more importantly, stands of similar shapes and sizes to those attested both in the burial shaft deposits in the rock-cut tombs (*e.g.* Shafts 1 and 2 in the tomb of Duaptah and Shafts 1 and 2 in the tomb of Nefer), as well as certain clusters in the open pillared courtyard itself. There was one medium deep carinated bowl with angular shoulders and equal rim and shoulder diameter (47-3.AS68.2012), characteristic for the late Fifth Dynasty, as well as two other carinated bowls with rounded shoulders. Besides these, there was also one bent-sided bowl (47-2.AS68.2012), similar to those found in the primary floor layer in the burial chamber of the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebtu (Shaft 1, tomb AS 68c). However, all the bowls were preserved in very small fragments, in only 4–8% of their diameters, which points to a secondary deposition.

The stands were preserved in larger numbers as well as in larger diameters (*e.g.* the rims between 28–36%), but this could only be due to their thicker walls and generally greater durability and break resistance. Among the represented groups, there were two full profiles and other rim/base fragments of small ring stands with simple rims (S-6a), very similar to those from the late Fifth Dynasty shaft deposits (see *e.g.* the material from the deposits of Nefer and Neferhathor, Fig. 3.244 and 3.265). The second group was made up of tall biconical stands with a simple rim (S-1aI), also attested by numerous examples in the aforesaid contexts (see *e.g.* Fig. 3.244 and 3.265).

There are two possibilities – either this particular shaft was built during a similar time period as those mentioned above (*e.g.* the late Fifth Dynasty) or, which cannot be excluded, the shaft was thoroughly robbed and later filled in with ceramic material that was actually discarded from older cultic activities in the courtyard.<sup>8</sup> Given the nature of the finds, the second possibility is more feasible.

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<sup>8</sup> For a summary of diverse interpretations of funerary and cultic activities in the open courtyard and corridor, see *Chapter 7*.

### SHAFT 11

This shaft was also built in front of the staircase, immediately south of Shaft 10 (Fig. 3.1). Similar to Shafts 5 and 10, it had a strengthening low mud brick wall around its opening, and therefore it was presumed that they were built in a similar period (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27). The shaft had a mouth of 1.15 × 1.12 m and reached a depth of 4.15 m. It was very irregular and held only a small, roughly cut niche at the bottom. There was no articulated burial, but the fill contained scattered human bones.

| Context                                    | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|--|-------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 45.AS68.2012<br>(Shaft 11<br>in courtyard) | J-1   | -                                      | -    | 1     | -                                | 3                               | 4                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 50,0%                |
|  | B     | -                                      | -    | 1     | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 50,0%                |
| Total                                      |       | -                                      | -    | 2     | -                                | 3                               | 5                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 100,0%               |

**Table 3.15 Ceramic fragments from the fill of anonymous Shaft 11**

Ceramic fragments from this shaft were very poor, with only five pieces; completing two individual vessels (see Table 3.15). Besides a beer jar base, there was a base of a fine, red-slipped bowl (45-1.AS68.2012) that is noteworthy due to a layer of white substance on its inner walls and was thus most likely used as a mortar or plaster container. Markedly, a thin layer of plaster was observed on the irregularly cut niche at the bottom of the shaft (Fig. 3.58).<sup>9</sup>

### SHAFT 12

The small shaft 12 was situated in the south-west corner of the pillared courtyard, next to the entrance to the tomb of Duaptah (Fig. 3.1). It was hewn right underneath a secondary niche in the courtyard's western wall. The shaft had a mouth of 1.10 × 1.00 m and reached a depth of 5.80 m. On the bottom, there was a small burial chamber cut in the west and south-west side (Fig. 3.60). The burial contained an articulated body of a man 40–60 years old, lying on the

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the numerous cases of vessels used as mortar or plaster containers, coming from burial shafts in the complex of Sheretnebtj, see *Chapter 4.1.3*.

floor of the chamber (Fig. 3.61), but originally placed in a wooden coffin (Vymazalová 2015: 46).

| Context                                     | Class        | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No.of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|--------------|--|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 49.AS68.2012<br>(Shaft 12,<br>upper layers) | J-1          | -                                      | 2         | 9         | -                                | 38                              | 49                     | 11                                | 9                      | 56,3%                |
|   | J fine       | -                                      | -         | -         | 1                                | 3                               | 4                      | 1                                 | 2                      | 12,5%                |
|   | S            | -                                      | 1         | 1         | -                                | -                               | 2                      | 2                                 | 2                      | 12,5%                |
|   | F            | 1                                      | -         | -         | -                                | 1                               | 2                      | 1                                 | 1                      | 6,3%                 |
|   | P            | 2                                      | -         | -         | -                                | -                               | 2                      | 2                                 | 2                      | 12,5%                |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>3</b>                               | <b>3</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>1</b>                         | <b>42</b>                       | <b>59</b>              | <b>17</b>                         | <b>16</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |
| 68.AS68.2013<br>(Shaft 12,<br>lower layers) | J-1          | -                                      | 3         | 21        | -                                | 86                              | 110                    | 24                                | 21                     | 58,3%                |
|   | J fine       | -                                      | 1         | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                      | 1                                 | 1                      | 2,8%                 |
|   | B            | -                                      | 5         | 3         | -                                | 19                              | 27                     | 8                                 | 4                      | 11,1%                |
|   | S            | -                                      | 1         | 2         | -                                | 2                               | 5                      | 3                                 | 3                      | 8,3%                 |
|   | F            | 1                                      | 1         | -         | 2                                | -                               | 4                      | 4                                 | 2                      | 5,6%                 |
|   | P            | 4                                      | 1         | -         | -                                | 2                               | 7                      | 5                                 | 3                      | 8,3%                 |
|   | MB           | 2                                      | -         | -         | -                                | -                               | 2                      | 2                                 | 2                      | 5,6%                 |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>7</b>                               | <b>12</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>2</b>                         | <b>109</b>                      | <b>156</b>             | <b>47</b>                         | <b>36</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |
| 69.AS68.2013<br>(BC of Shaft 12)            | J-1          | -                                      | 3         | 1         | -                                | 17                              | 21                     | 4                                 | 2                      | 28,6%                |
|   | J fine       | -                                      | 2         | -         | 2                                | 2                               | 6                      | 4                                 | 1                      | 14,3%                |
|   | B            | -                                      | 4         | -         | -                                | 7                               | 11                     | 4                                 | 2                      | 28,6%                |
|   | S            | -                                      | 1         | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                      | 1                                 | 1                      | 14,3%                |
|   | F            | -                                      | 1         | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                      | 1                                 | 1                      | 14,3%                |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>-</b>                               | <b>11</b> | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>                         | <b>26</b>                       | <b>40</b>              | <b>14</b>                         | <b>7</b>               | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.16 Amounts of pottery from the different contexts in Shaft 12**

The pottery was collected in altogether three contexts from this shaft, one in season 2012 from the cleaning of the opening to a depth of 1 m (49.AS68.2012) and later, in the autumn of 2013, from the main body of the shaft and its burial chamber (68. and 69.AS68.2013). The whole shaft brought to light 255 ceramic fragments, out of which 78 were diagnostic, making up at least 59 individual vessels (see Table 3.16). Most of these were beer jars (more than 54%), followed with a wide margin by bowls and stands (each over 10% of the assemblage).

Among the beer jars, the most notable was an example of a low tubular beer jar with a slightly modelled rim (68-8.AS68.2013, Fig. 3.63) that came from the lower levels of the shaft. It belongs to type J-1g, which was attested in several other shafts of the open courtyard, notably Shaft 1, Shaft 9 and very likely also Shaft 5 (see *supra*). There were also numerous examples of this type in the area of the neighbouring tomb AS 41 and its open courtyard.



Although our excavations did not provide us with fully reliable chronological data for these structures, in the cemetery of Saqqara West, such low tubular beer jars are dated to the period of Pepy I to Merenre on the basis of epigraphic evidence and general stratigraphy (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 19–20, Table 1–2, Form 6).

The other ceramic material, including the other beer jar fragments, contained a mix of late Fifth and middle Sixth Dynasty material, with the latter prevailing. Notable is one almost complete, very roughly made platter (68-1.AS68.2013, Fig. 3.62) and a bread form with a rounded base, slightly open concave walls and bevelled flat rim (68-9.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.63). All the bowls fell into the category of Sixth Dynasty wares, such as two individual shallow bowls with a modelled rim, grooved from inside (such as examples from the tomb of Inti and anonymous tomb AS 32, Kytarová 2009: Fig. 67, LL-Sh5-26 and JJ-ShL-14) and a bowl with an outer triangular rim (for a parallel from the burial chamber of Senedjemib, see Bárta *et al.* 2009: Figs. 6.3.141–6.3.142).

Among the fine ware, there was also one large and exceptionally finely-made miniature bowl of type MB-4, with open walls and a tall body, and a maximum diameter of 5.9 cm (68-4.AS68.2013). While during the Fifth Dynasty and the earlier part of the Old Kingdom, these particular large-sized miniature bowls commonly have a red-slipped surface (*e.g.* the numerous examples from the tomb of Kaaper, Bárta 2001: Pl. LXXIIIb and Pl. LXXIVa); or the yet unpublished assemblage from the tomb of Kakaibaef in Abusir Centre), in the Sixth Dynasty they are merely wet-smoothed and self-slipped (*e.g.* the four miniature bowls from the burial chamber of Senedjemib, Bárta 2009: 270, Fig. 6.3.162).

### 3.2 THE CORRIDOR OF AS 68

During the initial exploration in the spring of 2012, it was assumed that the corridor of AS 68 (see Fig. 3.1) might have been used as the main entrance-way into the whole necropolis. However, the exploration in the autumn of 2012 showed that this corridor was completely closed off on its east side and served only a limited number of activities constrained to tombs

AS 68c and AS 68d. Thus, the descending staircase (see *supra*) served as the only access route into the whole complex (e.g. Vymazalová 2015: 44). Four small shafts were hewn into the floor of the corridor at a later point in time (Shafts 13–16, cf. Vymazalová 2015: 46–48; see also *infra*).

Although the corridor is undoubtedly connected to the open courtyard itself and shall be discussed in detail from the point of cultic activities in the following chapter, it was felt it should be introduced separately in the initial introduction. The whole area of the corridor was relatively poor in ceramic finds, consisting only of five different contexts. In the whole space, including the four small shafts, we collected 742 fragments, out of which 334 were diagnostic, adding up to a minimum of 214 individual vessels (see Tables 3.17–3.20). The most common were predictably beer jars with 27%, followed by stands (20%) and bowls (18.7%), being thus in concordance with the frequencies from the open courtyard. For details of particular contexts, see the following sections.

### 3.2.1 FILL OF THE CORRIDOR

The corridor is situated directly behind the first naos with an almost life-sized bound statue of an unknown man that can be tentatively associated with Shepespuptah, the owner of tomb AS 68b (Exc. No. 40/AS68/2012, see Fig. 3.64; cf. Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 345–46; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 21–22; Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 90–91). Although it was first discovered during the spring season of 2012, due to extensive works in the area of rock-cut tombs AS 68a and AS 68b, as well as the open courtyard of AS 68 and its shafts, the exploration of the corridor was left to the next (autumn) season of 2012.

Only a relatively small amount of pottery came from the cleaning of the upper levels of the corridor, from the fill containing brown sand mixed with limestone blocks, larger pieces and chips (ceramic context 29.AS68.2012, see Table 3.17). Only one vessel shall be mentioned in detail here, namely beer jar 29-11.AS68.2012, which was reconstructed to full profile from large fragments (see Fig. 3.67). It belongs to typical late Fifth Dynasty ware, with an ovoid body, low contracted rim and partly pointed base (Abusir type J-1bI). The metric analysis of

the jar, with a height of 30 cm and maximum diameter of 15 cm, seems to confirm this. Due to its stratigraphic position, it is clear that it is a result of diverse post-depositional processes occurring in this particular part of the cemetery, or secondary refuse from the above-situated mastaba AS 69, rather than a vessel attesting the dating of the corridor itself.

| Context                    | Class        | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|----------------------------|--------------|--|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 29.AS68.2012<br>(corridor) | J-1          | 1                                      | 1         | 10        | -                                | 47                              | 59                      | 12                                | 11                     | 50,0%                |
|                            | J fine       | -                                      | 1         | 1         | 1                                | -                               | 3                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 13,6%                |
|                            | B            | -                                      | 3         | 1         | -                                | 4                               | 8                       | 4                                 | 4                      | 18,2%                |
|                            | S            | -                                      | 2         | -         | 1                                | -                               | 3                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 13,6%                |
|                            | F            | -                                      | 2         | -         | -                                | 2                               | 4                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 9,1%                 |
|                            | <b>Total</b> | <b>1</b>                               | <b>9</b>  | <b>12</b> | <b>2</b>                         | <b>53</b>                       | <b>77</b>               | <b>24</b>                         | <b>22</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |
| 39.AS68.2012<br>(corridor) | J-1          | -                                      | 10        | 30        | 2                                | 113                             | 155                     | 46                                | 36                     | 23,8%                |
|                            | J fine       | -                                      | 3         | -         | -                                | 2                               | 5                       | 3                                 | 2                      | 1,3%                 |
|                            | B            | -                                      | 13        | -         | 3                                | 36                              | 52                      | 16                                | 17                     | 11,3%                |
|                            | S            | 8                                      | 41        | 11        | 19                               | 32                              | 111                     | 80                                | 38                     | 25,2%                |
|                            | F            | 1                                      | 2         | 2         | -                                | 9                               | 14                      | 5                                 | 7                      | 4,6%                 |
|                            | P            | 59                                     | 1         | 6         | -                                | 32                              | 98                      | 66                                | 20                     | 13,2%                |
|                            | MB           | 20                                     | -         | -         | -                                | -                               | 20                      | 20                                | 20                     | 13,2%                |
|                            | MC           | 7                                      | 1         | 3         | -                                | -                               | 11                      | 11                                | 11                     | 7,3%                 |
|                            | <b>Total</b> | <b>95</b>                              | <b>71</b> | <b>52</b> | <b>24</b>                        | <b>224</b>                      | <b>466</b>              | <b>247</b>                        | <b>151</b>             | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.17 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the fill of the corridor between tombs AS 68c/d and AS 67**

By far the most pottery came from the lower levels of the corridor, explored during the course of several days in autumn of 2012 (ceramic context 39.AS68.2012, see Table 3.17). They were concentrated in several clusters, carefully labelled within baskets. The most relevant clusters were those found in front of individual naoi.

A group of stands, platters, hand-made miniature cups and a bowl was found in front of the second naos from the west (Exc. No. 140/AS68/2012; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 22) at the level of the belly and lower. All the stands belong to type S-1aI, with hour-glass shaped body and a simple rim (*e.g.* 39-23.AS68.2012 and 39-24.AS68.2012). Another stand of identical type was uncovered at the level of the man's leg, in a disarticulated cluster of human bones (39-25.AS68.2012, see Fig. 3.68 and 3.69).

From the west part of the corridor in the wider area of the second naos, there came a larger amount of fragments, comprising in majority again of stands. Many of these were either

preserved in full shape or complete profile or were reconstructed to such. The most notable pieces include a tall hour-glass shaped stand 39-3.AS68.2012 with a simple rim and base (see Fig. 3.70). There were also five examples of low ring stands of type S-6a that were preserved in full profile, with simple rims and bases (39-2.AS68.2012 and 39-4.AS68.2012 to 39-7.AS68.2012, Figs. 3.71 and 3.72). Their dimensions were very homogenous, with rim diameters between 12–14 cm and heights of 9–10 cm. All these stands are metrically and typologically very similar to numerous late Fifth Dynasty stands found *e.g.* in the burial shafts of Nefer (Shaft 1 of AS 68d), Neferhathor (Shaft 2 of AS 68d), Duaptah (Shaft 1 in AS 68a) and Nefermin (AS 68a), to name only the few geographically most closely related.

Some ceramic finds were collected at the top part of the third naos (Exc. No. 141/AS68/2012; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 22), namely two complete wheel-made miniature bowls with concave walls (MB-2, nos. 39-32.AS68.2012 and 39-33.AS68.2012). More fragments were uncovered in the area in front of the naos, including fine ware, such as late Fifth Dynasty carinated bowls with angular shoulders and a tall rim (*e.g.* 39-15.AS68.2012), shallow bent-sided bowls (*e.g.* 39-16.AS68.2012) and thin-walled jars with tall wide necks (*e.g.* 39-18.AS68.2012 and 39-19.AS68.2012). Some fine pottery fragments were also collected in the fill of brown sand with small rubble in front of this naos, in a layer of 15–20 cm above the floor; unluckily, most of them non-diagnostic.

The last naos (Exc. No. 158/AS68/2012) is situated at the eastern end of the corridor, at the east side of the entrance to tomb AS 68d (see Fig. 3.73; *cf.* Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 22). Some fragments of pottery were collected from the fill of brown sand with broken mud bricks and some limestone fragments, in the east end of the corridor, in front of this fourth naos (G). A small amount of pottery also came from the floor layer of this area, such as small rim and base fragments of fine-walled bowls. There was a larger concentration of miniature vessels, with altogether 16 pieces (half of all the miniatures from the whole corridor). However, these do not exhibit nearly any common features – besides the regular, wheel-made miniatures there were also rough, hand-made miniature bowls and cups of different forms and sizes (see also Fig 3.74).

Among the notable finds from the area of the last naos, there were fragments of at least two large stands highly different from the other ones in this context, being much more massive and treated not only with a red slip, but also subsequently white-washed. The A-shaped stand 39-56.AS68.2012 was slightly larger; its largest piece was preserved to a height of 18 cm (see Fig. 3.75). Based on parallels, it is possible that the original stand was up to 40 cm in height, with a maximum preserved width of 18.5 cm. The slip was a continuous thick layer that started to chip off in some places. In comparison, stand 39-57.AS68.2012 was much slenderer, with tubular walls (see Fig. 3.76). Its most distinctive feature is a thick layer of plaster on the outer walls. Such surface treatment is not unusual and although the numbers of red-slipped and subsequently white-washed or even plastered stands are not high, they appear especially in the cultic areas of tombs. In Abusir, we found an almost fully intact 1 m tall X-shaped stand with a thick layer of plaster in front of the false door in the chapel of the official Kaisebi (see Dulíková – Jirásková – Arias Kytarová 2016: Obr. 6). White-washing was connected with ritual purity and thus commonly present not only with/on stands and other vessels, but also offering basins, altars and even false doors (see e.g. Dulíková – Arias Kytarová – Cílek 2014: 41–43; also Rzeuska 2006: 513–14). White-washing concerning stands shall be explored in detail in *Chapter 4.4.1*, as it was attested in several cases throughout the complex of Sheretnebtj.

### 3.2.2 SHAFTS IN THE CORRIDOR

There were altogether four small shafts hewn into the floor of the corridor (see Fig. 3.1), all explored during the autumn season of 2013 (Vymazalová 2015: 46–48). Two of them were hewn directly in front of the naoi with statues, namely Shaft 13 in front of the first naos with the bound male statue (Exc. No. 40/AS68/2012) and Shaft 16 in front of the second naos with a double bound statue (Exc. No. 140/AS68/2012). Two other shafts were built in the entrances of the rock-cut tombs: Shaft 14 in the entrance to the tomb of Nefer (AS 68d) and Shaft 15 in the entrance of AS 68c. From the viewpoint of their dimensions (both of their mouths and their depths), they belong among the smallest shafts in the whole complex (see Table 6.1).

Unsurprisingly, the ceramic finds from them were rather poor and only in some cases were they able to provide us with a reliable dating criterion.

### SHAFT 13

The small Shaft 13 was situated at the western end of the corridor, roughly in front of the first naos (Exc. No. 40/AS68/2012), although undoubtedly not connected with it, besides the desire for proximity from the viewpoint of the anonymous owner. It was rather small, with a mouth of only 1.00 × 1.00 m and a depth of 6 m (Vymazalová 2015: 46).

The fill of the shaft consisted of cut *tafl* and contained only a small amount of ceramic sherds (ceramic context 75.AS68.2013, see Table 3.18). However, these include several chronologically relevant pieces. Foremost among these are fragments of beer jars with a simple tubular rim (75-14.AS68.2012) and a tall tubular body with a rounded base (75-2.AS68.2012, Fig. 3.79). Both vessels were covered with a thin red slip outside. Complete vessels of this type (Abusir group J-1f) are usually quite tall – in the south part of the tomb of judge Inti, dated to the early part of the reign of Pepy II by epigraphic data, a beer jar of this type reached 38 cm (Arias Kytarová in Bárta – Vachala et al., *forthcoming*). In the cemetery of Saqqara West, beer jars of so-called Form 3 are dated to the period of Pepy I to Merenre (Rzeuska 2006: 382–383, Table 1–2).

| Context                                   | Class  | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|--------|--|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 75.AS68.2013<br>(Shaft 13<br>in corridor) | J-1    | 1                                      | 5         | 8         | 2                                | 70                              | 86                      | 15                                | 5                      | 29,4%                |
|   | J fine | 1                                      | 2         | 1         | 2                                | 7                               | 13                      | 6                                 | 1                      | 5,9%                 |
|   | B      | -                                      | 14        | -         | -                                | 19                              | 33                      | 14                                | 8                      | 47,1%                |
|   | F      | -                                      | -         | 1         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 5,9%                 |
|   | MB     | 1                                      | 1         | -         | -                                | -                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 11,8%                |
| <b>Total</b>                              |        | <b>3</b>                               | <b>22</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>4</b>                         | <b>96</b>                       | <b>135</b>              | <b>38</b>                         | <b>17</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Fig. 3.18 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the fill of the anonymous Shaft 13 in the corridor**

Other notable finds from the fill of Shaft 13 are numerous fragments of fine, red-slipped bowls. Five of them are deep bowls with diverse modelled rims (Abusir type B-5) that were made of very well-fired, hard Nile silt B1 (nos. 75-5.AS68.2013 to 75-9.AS68.2012). One

of them (75-7.AS68.2013, see Fig. 3.79) was preserved to almost full profile and reveals a bowl with a maximum diameter of 31 cm and preserved height of 15 cm. Almost identical bowls were uncovered in the tomb of Inti (AS 22) in the embalming deposits of Shafts E and L (Tomášek 2003: Tab. 4, no. 1; Kytarová 2009: Fig. 65, JJ-ShL-03, JJ-ShL-01 and JJ-ShE02; Arias Kytarová 2010: Obr. 7, right corner), as well as in the anonymous tomb AS 32, also dating to the Sixth Dynasty (Kytarová 2009: Fig. 66, LL-Sh5-21 and LL-Sh5-49).

Besides these, there were two different shallow bowls with an inner groove (75-11.AS68.2013 and 75-12.AS68.2013) of Abusir type B-6. Closest analogies again come from shaft L in the tomb of Inti and shaft 5 in tomb AS 32 (see Tomášek 2003: Tab. 3, no. 13; Kytarová 2009: Fig. 67).

Among the finds were also numerous fragments of a small ovoid jar made of Marl A3 (75-4.AS68.2013, see Fig. 3.78). Ovoid jars were quite common throughout the late Old Kingdom and are attested in various contexts. However, in predominant cases they were made of Nile silt and treated with a red slip (see also group J-2 in *Chapter 5.2.2*). Marl was usually reserved for much larger storage jars. Similar ovoid jars made of greyish-white material, although larger, appeared e.g. in the burial chamber of Qar Junior (Bárta 2009: 253–255, Fig. 6.3.132, nos. 7–11 and Fig. 6.3.133, nos. 13–15). Both metrically and typologically parallel vessels also appeared in different superstructure areas in the tomb of Inti (Arias Kytarová in Bárta – Vachala et al., *forthcoming*).

The burial chamber of Shaft 13 was very simple and contained a burial pit with the remains of a man over 50 years old (Vymazalová 2015: 46). The walls of the pit bore imprints of the largely disintegrated wooden coffin that the deceased was buried in (Fig. 3.77). Unluckily, no ceramic fragments were associated with the burial.

#### SHAFT 14 (SEFEKHU)

This shaft was situated directly in the entrance to the tomb of Nefer, almost at the end of the corridor between tombs AS 68c/d and AS 67 (see Fig. 3.1). It was rather small, with dimensions of 2.00 × 0.80 m and a depth of only 3.80 m (Vymazalová 2015: 46). The fill

consisted of very compact brown sand mixed with small amounts of rubble, limestone fragments and some pieces of mud bricks.

Only very few ceramic fragments came from the shaft, most notably rims of five different bowls and two complete miniature bowls (see Table 3.19). The miniature bowls were both wheel-made and of the usual quality. The bowls are more interesting, although the fragments were too small to draw far-reaching conclusions from them. Although one rim was preserved to 31% of its diameter (73-1.AS68.2013), all the others only within the 8–10% range. On the other hand, all of them seem to correspond chronologically. There were two different-sized bowls with convex walls and grooved rim (73-1.AS68.2013 and 73-2.AS68.2013, Fig. 3.83) that have parallels *e.g.* in the fully preserved example from the burial chamber of Senedjemib (Bárta *et al.* 2009: 259 and Fig. 6.1.139–6.1.140), dated by epigraphic evidence to the reign of Pepy I. Another bowl, with a grooved rim with a maximum diameter at the lower groove (Fig. 3.83), has analogies among vessels from the middle of the Sixth Dynasty from the cemetery of Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 95, esp. no. 495). A bowl with a contracted rim and multiple outer grooves (73-5.AS68.2013) has parallels in the material from Shaft E in the tomb of Inti (Kytarová 2009: Fig. 64, JJ-ShE-4 and JJ-ShE-5) and Shaft L in the anonymous Sixth Dynasty tomb AS 32 (Tomášek 2003: Tab. 3, no. 8).

| Context                                   | Class        | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases    | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|--------------|--|-----------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 73.AS68.2013<br>(Shaft 14<br>in corridor) | J-1          | -                                      | 3         | -        | -                                | 17                              | 20                      | 3                                 | 2                      | 22,2%                |
|   | B            | -                                      | 7         | 1        | -                                | 3                               | 11                      | 8                                 | 5                      | 55,6%                |
|   | MB           | 2                                      | -         | -        | -                                | -                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 22,2%                |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>2</b>                               | <b>10</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>-</b>                         | <b>20</b>                       | <b>33</b>               | <b>13</b>                         | <b>9</b>               | <b>100,0%</b>        |
| 74.AS68.2013<br>(BC of Shaft 14)          | B            | -                                      | 1         | -        | -                                | 5                               | 6                       | 1                                 | 3                      | 75,0%                |
|   | J-1          | -                                      | -         | -        | -                                | 1                               | 1                       | -                                 | 1                      | 25,0%                |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>-</b>                               | <b>1</b>  | <b>-</b> | <b>-</b>                         | <b>6</b>                        | <b>7</b>                | <b>1</b>                          | <b>4</b>               | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Fig. 3.19** Amounts of ceramic fragments from the shaft and burial chamber of Sefekhu

The burial chamber in Shaft 14 was hewn to the east of the shaft and had dimensions of 2.00 × 0.80 m, with a maximum height of 0.80 m (Vymazalová 2015: 47). The burial of a man over 50 years was uncovered placed in a partly disintegrated coffin made of acacia (see



Fig. 3.80) that still bore sunken/engraved inscriptions filled with white paste. These inscriptions provided us with the name of the deceased, *jm3hw sfhw rn.f nfr It(j)*, “revered Sefekhu, his good name Itj(i)” (Fig. 3.81) and also part of his title, mentioning the god Khentytjenenet (see Vymazalová 2015: 47). If Sefekhu, indeed, served as a priest of the god Khentytjenenet, he would be the second person with such a rare title from this complex, as it was also held by the presumed owner of Shaft 8 in the courtyard, Hetepuni (see *supra*; cf. Dulíková – Arias Kytmarová – Čilek 2015; Dulíková 2016c). What is even more intriguing is that the ceramic vessels from both these shafts have a common feature to numerous analogies in the assemblages from the tombs of Inti, Qar Junior and Senedjemib. However, the theory that Sefekhu was actually a member of this family, being equivalent to the son of Inti named in several scenes of tomb AS 22 (Vymazalová 2015: 47),<sup>10</sup> cannot be proven without more concrete evidence.

As far as the pottery is concerned, there were very few fragments from the fill of the burial chamber and none of them of particular importance. A rim fragment of a bowl (74-1.AS68.2013) was so small (only 4% of its diameter) that it is possible it was only an accidental intrusion rather than part of any intentional deposition. It also belongs to a Sixth Dynasty production.

### SHAFT 15

Shaft 15 was hewn directly in the entrance to tomb AS 68c (see Fig. 3.1). It was irregular, with rough dimensions of 2.33 × 1.24 m and was left unfinished, having been abandoned at a depth of 0.96 m (for details, see Vymazalová 2015: 47–48). It held no ceramic fragments or any other finds.

### SHAFT 16

This shaft was situated roughly in front of the second naos (Exc. No. 140/AS68/2012), immediately west of Shaft 15 (Fig. 3.82). Similar to the previous one, this shaft was also

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<sup>10</sup> There are several preliminary reports on the inscriptions and the relief decoration in the tomb of Inti (AS 22; see e.g. Vachala 2003; Bárta 2003 and 2009; also Bárta – Vachala et al., *forthcoming*).

unfinished, reaching a depth of only 1 m (Vymazalová 2015: 48; Vymazalová 2016: 15). However, it did contain several notable finds. Foremost among these was a large inscribed limestone block (Exc. No. 372/AS68/2012, Fig. 3.84) that very likely formed part of a false door. This lintel belonged to Ankhiamptah and his wife Neferhekenhathor (for alternative reading and further discussion, see Vymazalová 2015: 48). Interestingly, Shaft 6 in tomb AS 68c brought to light a small offering basin with an identical name (Exc. No. 318/AS68c/2013; see also Vymazalová – Arias Kytarová *forthcoming*). Given the fact that the ceramic finds from both shafts confirm a Sixth Dynasty date, it is very likely that Shaft 16 was commissioned during this period and later left unfinished.

| Context                                   | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No.of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|-------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 76.AS68.2013<br>(Shaft 16<br>in corridor) | J-1   | -                                      | 2    | 3     | -                                | 12                              | 17                     | 5                                 | 3                      | 30,0%                |
|   | P     | -                                      | 1    | -     | -                                | -                               | 1                      | 1                                 | 1                      | 10,0%                |
|   | B     | -                                      | 4    | -     | -                                | 1                               | 5                      | 4                                 | 3                      | 30,0%                |
|   | S     | -                                      | 3    | -     | -                                | -                               | 1                      | 1                                 | 3                      | 30,0%                |
| Total                                     |       | -                                      | 10   | 3     | -                                | 13                              | 24                     | 11                                | 10                     | 100,0%               |

**Table 3.20 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the unfinished Shaft 16**

The ceramic finds from the fill of the shaft are very sparse (see Table 3.20), but they do provide us with some chronological information. One vessel (76-1.AS78.2013) was preserved to almost full profile and to 28% of its diameter, namely a shallow bowl with a modelled rim with an outer groove, similar (but not identical) to the ones from Shaft 14. Parallels can be found *e.g.* the burial chamber of Senedjemib (Bárta *et al.* 2009: 259 and Fig. 6.1.139–6.1.140). There was also one small fragment of a deep bowl with a modelled rim (B-5), also known from Sixth Dynasty contexts (Tomášek 2003: Tab. 3, no. 4 and Tab. 4, no. 1; Kytarová 2009: Fig. 65). The fragments of beer jars and stands were too small to draw any conclusions.

### 3.3 ROCK-CUT TOMB OF DUAPTAH (AS 68A)

This tomb was the first of a series of four rock-cut tombs, uncovered during the spring of 2012. It is situated at the southwest corner of the open courtyard, with the entrance roughly in front of the south-west pillar and it was thus directly accessible from the courtyard (Figs. 3.1 and 3.85). The tomb was not large – it consisted of a simple chapel with two shafts built into its floor (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 24; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 343). The chapel of the tomb was uncovered during the 2012 season, with the fill consisting not only of Fifth Dynasty pottery but also late Sixth Dynasty ceramics, interpreted at the time as evidence of robbing activity in the tomb (*cf.* Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 32). The shafts of the tomb were explored later, during the 2013 autumn season.<sup>11</sup>

The name of the main owner of the tomb is preserved on two fragments of a lintel that was originally very likely situated above the entrance (Fig. 3.87; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 343; Vymazalová 2015: 18 Obr. 8). One part (Exc. No. 77/AS68a/2012) was found in front of the entrance to the tomb, in the courtyard of AS 68; the other part (Exc. No. 244/AS68a/2012) was uncovered in the fill of Shaft 4 in the courtyard. Besides the common offering formula, it bears the name and title *šḥd pr-ꜣ Dwꜣ-Pth* (“inspector of the Great House,<sup>12</sup> Duaptah”; see Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: Fig. 7).<sup>13</sup> An identical name and title of the presumed owner was also confirmed on a limestone drum (Exc. No. 270/AS68a/2013, Fig. 3.89) that was found behind the entrance of the burial chamber of Shaft 1 (see also Vymazalová 2015: 49).

In the tomb, there were only two shafts, aligned along the same axis and of similar dimensions (see Figs. 3.90 and 3.91), probably built roughly at the same time. At the beginning of their excavation, in the autumn of 2013, we presumed that the southern shaft belonged to the owner of the tomb and the northern one to his wife. Despite the fact that both chambers were found disturbed, there were partially preserved burial goods found in both.

<sup>11</sup> The pottery from the substructures of this tomb was partly published in a preliminary report (Arias Kytarová 2016a).

<sup>12</sup> Another possible reading of the title is “inspector of the palace attendants” (Jones 2000: 924, no. 3401).

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the occurrence of the name and the title, see also Vymazalová – Dulíková (2012: 343).

Thanks to the anthropological analysis it became clear that not only the southern shaft but also the second (northern) shaft contained the burial of a man, both of whom were over 50 years old (Vymazalová 2015: 50). This discovery was supported by the ceramics as well; in the fill of Shaft 2 and its burial chamber, numerous fragments of a small jar made of Marl clay A3 were found, with the name *Nfr-mnw* cut into the area of the shoulders (see also *infra*). The lower part of the determinative is missing, but it is very likely to be a Gardiner sign of A1, a sitting man. Therefore we can presume that this was the name of the owner of Shaft 2 and its burial chamber (Vymazalová 2014: 18).

| Context      | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of minimum vessels |
|--------------|----------------|--|------|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Tomb AS 68a  | J-1            | -                                      | 196  | 135   | -                          | 1088                     | 1419                 | 331                         | 137                 | 31,6%                |
|              | J fine         | 1                                      | 13   | 4     | 9                          | 36                       | 63                   | 27                          | 12                  | 2,8%                 |
|              | J storage      | -                                      | 1    | 1     | -                          | -                        | 2                    | 2                           | 2                   | 0,5%                 |
|              | B              | 1                                      | 67   | 3     | 5                          | 145                      | 221                  | 76                          | 73                  | 16,9%                |
|              | S              | 8                                      | 80   | 28    | 5                          | 32                       | 153                  | 121                         | 53                  | 12,2%                |
|              | F              | 1                                      | 26   | 2     | 6                          | 28                       | 63                   | 35                          | 24                  | 5,5%                 |
|              | P              | 95                                     | 1    | -     | 1                          | 91                       | 188                  | 97                          | 54                  | 12,5%                |
|              | MB             | 56                                     | 1    | 1     | -                          | -                        | 58                   | 58                          | 57                  | 13,2%                |
|              | MC             | 5                                      | 2    | 4     | 1                          | -                        | 12                   | 12                          | 12                  | 2,8%                 |
|              | MS (?)         | 1                                      | -    | 2     | 1                          | -                        | 4                    | 4                           | 4                   | 0,9%                 |
|              | D              | 3                                      | -    | -     | 2                          | 4                        | 9                    | 5                           | 4                   | 0,9%                 |
| T            | 1              | -                                      | -    | -     | -                          | 1                        | 1                    | 1                           | 0,2%                |                      |
| <b>Total</b> |                | 172                                    | 387  | 180   | 30                         | 1424                     | 2193                 | 769                         | 433                 | 100,0%               |

**Table 3.21** Amounts of pottery from the whole tomb AS 68a, including its burial apartments

As far as the ceramic fragments are concerned, there was a considerably high amount of them, divided into five main ceramic contexts (28.AS68a.2012 and 51.-54.AS68a.2013). In the whole area of the tomb, including its burial shafts and chambers, 2,193 fragments were collected (Table 3.21). Only 769 of them were diagnostic, making up a minimum number of 433 individual vessels. In the following chapters, each context shall be analysed separately.

### 3.3.1 CHAPEL

Despite the size of the chapel with maximum length of 11 m and width of 4 m (see Fig. 3.92), only a relatively small number of ceramic fragments were collected in the fill, namely 168

fragments, out of which only 71 were diagnostic, totalling to a minimum of 54 vessels (see Table 3.22). The chapel was only partially filled with debris, consisting of limestone pieces, *tafl* and other rubble. The fill reached to 0.5 m under the ceiling of the chapel in its northern part, sloping to the very floor at Shaft 2, which was found partially empty at the time of discovery (see Fig. 3.86). Immediately south of Shaft 2, a rough and irregular wall was built of large pieces of limestone, supported by mud bricks on the lowest level (see Fig. 3.88). It can be assumed that it was built by tomb robbers to prevent rubble from falling into the shaft. Behind this wall, the southern part of the fill was documented.

| Context                                | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of minimum<br>vessels |
|--|----------------|--|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 28.AS68a.2012<br>(chapel of<br>AS 68a) | J-1            | -                                      | 16        | 19        | -                                | 61                          | 96                      | 35                                | 19                     | 35,2%                   |
|  | J storage      | -                                      | 1         | 1         | -                                | -                           | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 3,7%                    |
|  | J fine         | -                                      | 4         | -         | -                                | 2                           | 6                       | 4                                 | 4                      | 7,4%                    |
|  | B              | -                                      | 8         | -         | -                                | 26                          | 34                      | 8                                 | 9                      | 16,7%                   |
|  | S              | 1                                      | 3         | -         | -                                | 3                           | 7                       | 4                                 | 4                      | 7,4%                    |
|  | F              | -                                      | -         | 1         | -                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 1,9%                    |
|  | P              | 9                                      | -         | -         | -                                | 5                           | 14                      | 9                                 | 7                      | 13,0%                   |
|  | MB             | 4                                      | -         | -         | -                                | -                           | 4                       | 4                                 | 4                      | 7,4%                    |
|  | MC             | 1                                      | 1         | 1         | -                                | -                           | 3                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 5,6%                    |
| D                                      | 1              | -                                      | -         | -         | -                                | 1                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1,9%                   |                         |
| <b>Total</b>                           |                | <b>16</b>                              | <b>33</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>0</b>                         | <b>97</b>                   | <b>168</b>              | <b>71</b>                         | <b>54</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>           |

**Table 3.22 Amounts of pottery from the fill of the chapel in AS 68a**

By far the largest percentage of pottery was made up of rough vessels, mostly beer jars. Among them, the most chronologically interesting fragments are those of low beer jars with a tubular body and modelled rim (such as *e.g.* 28-10.AS68a.2012 and other unnumbered rim fragments) of Abusir type J-1gII (see Fig. 3.93). This particular type is characteristic not only for its shape but also surface treatment, being always covered with a thin red-violet slip on the outer walls. Such beer jars are typical of the early to middle Sixth Dynasty, as can be seen in parallels, but they also do occur in earlier contexts. There are a few examples from Giza from the late Fifth Dynasty mastaba of Iymeri (G 6020; see Weeks 1994: Pl. 128, 25-12-110).<sup>14</sup> The

<sup>14</sup> The beer jar was found in the plundered burial chamber of the main owner (Weeks 1994: 72) and might not actually belong among the original tomb goods.

type is much more common at Saqqara, represented *e.g.* in the assemblages from the anonymous complex 13 and the tomb of Ikhi in Saqqara West excavation (for the closest analogies see Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 19, nos. 41 and 44 and Pl. 20, nos. 47–48), both dated to the time of Pepy I to Merenre. Similar beer jars were also found *e.g.* in the tomb of Nikauisesi (Kanawati *et al.* 2000: 6, Pl. 71, TEN 98:17) and outside mastaba M I in the cemetery around the pyramid of Pepy II in Saqqara South (see Jéquier 1929: 11, Fig. 7). In the case of such late beer jars in a Fifth Dynasty chapel, there are two main possibilities: they can be interpreted as either attestations of continuous cultic activity in this period or as proof of robbing. Due to the fact that such red-slipped beer jars were uncovered only in ritual contexts, the present author leans towards the interpretation as remnants of cultic activities in the tomb. Common beer jars used for sustenance had no reason to be covered with a red slip, unless it was meant for water-proofing. However, the slip in this particular type almost always covers only the middle to upper body, with the base left un-slipped. In an attempt at water-proofing, such omission would be contra productive. Besides, no such red-slipped beer jars were found in purely settlement contexts.<sup>15</sup> Since the excavation in the complex of Sheretnebty, a number of this particular type of beer jars were found in the whole surrounding area, most prominently in several diverse contexts of tombs AS 40 and AS 41, just north of Sheretnebty's open courtyard (see *Chapter 3.1.2*). For a more detailed discussion of the issue of red-slipped beer jars and their interpretation, see *Chapter 5.2.1*.

All the other beer jars from the fill of the chapel seem to belong to the typical Fifth Dynasty production, with either simple or modelled contracted rims (type J-1a) or low necks (J-1b). The available bases also confirm this, as they show round-pointed bases typical of ovoid beer jars. None were preserved in full profile; therefore, the precise typological attribution cannot be absolutely certain.

Only a relatively small amount of finer pottery belongs to the time of building of the tomb. These are predominantly fragments of fine jars made of high quality clays such as Nile

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<sup>15</sup> In the case of the settlement of Elephantine, red-slipped beer jars were found in a sanctuary of Heqaib that was built in a settlement, therefore also fall into the ritual category (with kind thanks to Teodozja Rzeuska for a personal communication).

silt A and Marl clay A3. These include jars with a low to medium high neck and modelled rim, with analogies known from the late Fifth Dynasty tombs of Neferinpu (Arias Kytarová 2011: Fig. 12, 13/AS37/2007) and the neighbouring tomb of Kaiemtjenedet, as well as from the funerary temple of King Raneferef (Bárta 2006: II, no. ACbIII and V, no. Z2).

Closely related to the jars is the discovery of a fully preserved mud stopper (no. 28-31.AS68a.2012). This appears as a roughly-made conical stopper with traces of coiling on its outer walls. The imprint of a jar aperture is visible on its base and shows that the jar had a diameter of 8.5–9 cm. Conical mud stoppers (Abusir type D-3) were most commonly used with beer jars, as is attested not only in iconographic attestations but also in primary finds.

Among bowls, there were two examples of bell-shaped bowls with flaring walls, one with a simple rim (28-6.AS68a.2012) and one with a modelled rim (28-22.AS68a.2012, see Fig. 3.93 for both). Their analogies range throughout the whole late Old Kingdom – *e.g.* Reisner 1931: Fig. 78, nos. 2–4; Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 121, 14-3-66, 29-4-125 and 27-6-12; Kaiser 1969: type XLI, 209–212). A rather unusual shape can be seen in a bowl with a modelled incurved rim and bent-sided body (no. 28-11.AS68a.2012, Fig. 3.93).

The stands are represented by only a few examples, such as bi-conical hour-shaped stands with a simple rim (S-1aI) or a modelled rim (S-1aII), with the latter being prevalent. There was only one stand preserved in full profile, namely a small ring stand with a simple rim (28-26.AS68a.2012, see Fig. 3.93). All of these fall into characteristic late Fifth Dynasty production, well known from other parts of the necropolis at Abusir.

The other ceramic finds were chronologically insignificant, such as the numerous platters which so far do not have a reliable chronological sequence (see also *Chapter 5.6*). Compared to ceramic finds from the other chapel fills (especially those of tombs AS 68c and AS 68d), there were only very few miniature vessels, namely 7 pieces. Only one of them was hand-made, which is interesting when contrasted with the large percentage of hand-made miniatures from the burial contexts in this tomb (see *infra*).

### 3.3.2 SHAFT 1 (DUAPTAH)

The southern shaft of the main owner, Inspector of the Great House Duaptah, contained extensive ceramic remains both in the shaft and the burial chamber. The shaft itself was 1.50 × 1.60 m large and not particularly deep, being only 4.70 m (see Fig. 3.92).<sup>16</sup> The fill was not homogenous and besides numerous ceramic sherds, also contained pieces of *tafl* in the upper levels and broken limestone fragments in the lower area (Vymazalová 2015: 48–50). Concerning the sherds, there was a predominance of small and very small beer jar fragments.

| Context                                 | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims       | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of minimum<br>vessels |
|---|----------------|--|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 53.AS68a.2013<br>(Shaft 1 in<br>AS 68a) | J-1            | -                                      | 72         | 43        | -                                | 462                         | 577                     | 115                               | 47                     | 35,6%                   |
|   | B              | -                                      | 19         | 2         | 1                                | 51                          | 73                      | 22                                | 23                     | 17,4%                   |
|   | S              | 1                                      | 22         | 7         | 1                                | 8                           | 39                      | 31                                | 16                     | 12,1%                   |
|   | F              | -                                      | 7          | -         | 2                                | 5                           | 14                      | 9                                 | 7                      | 5,3%                    |
|   | P              | 26                                     | -          | -         | -                                | 20                          | 46                      | 26                                | 18                     | 13,6%                   |
|   | MB             | 14                                     | -          | -         | -                                | -                           | 14                      | 14                                | 14                     | 10,6%                   |
|   | MC             | 3                                      | -          | 1         | -                                | -                           | 4                       | 4                                 | 4                      | 3,0%                    |
|   | MS (?)         | 1                                      | -          | 1         | -                                | -                           | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 1,5%                    |
| D                                       | 1              | -                                      | -          | -         | -                                | 1                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 0,8%                   |                         |
| <b>Total</b>                            |                | <b>46</b>                              | <b>120</b> | <b>54</b> | <b>4</b>                         | <b>546</b>                  | <b>770</b>              | <b>224</b>                        | <b>132</b>             | <b>100,0%</b>           |

**Table 3.23 Amounts of ceramic finds from the fill of the shaft of Duaptah**

As can be seen in Table 3.23, from different levels of the shaft, altogether 770 ceramic fragments were collected, out of which 224 were diagnostic, making up a minimum total of 132 vessels. Only 37 were preserved in full profile, namely 18 platters, 18 miniature vessels and one mud stopper. There was a high predominance of beer jars, making up 36% of the vessels, followed by bowls and miniatures. All the other classes were represented by much smaller amounts.

One find from the fill of the shaft is worth mentioning, namely the mud stopper (no. 53-1.AS68a.2013), as it bears visible traces of the original fastening of cloth pieces, textiles and ropes of different thicknesses (Fig. 3.97). It was uncovered at a depth of 2.6 m in the shaft, by

<sup>16</sup> Compare the 3.2–11.1 m deep shafts in the neighbouring rock-cut tomb of the princess Sheretnebtj (AS 68c), (Vymazalová 2015: 50–56 and *infra*).



the northern wall. It is evident that the mud stopper was tied not only diagonally across the body but also along the sides. It has a low rounded body, and mud stoppers of this kind are known predominantly for their use in sealing finer jars. This particular mud stopper was designated for a smaller jar with an aperture diameter of only 6.5 cm. No such jar was found in the shaft nor in the burial chamber; the jars preserved *in situ* in the chamber had not only wider apertures but also much thicker and flatter rims, therefore none of them could have been sealed with it. It is possible that this mud stopper originally sealed yet another jar; in the fill, we uncovered a few non-diagnostic sherds of a small vessel made of Marl clay A3, different from the one in Shaft 2 in that it has a red core.

A notable feature can be mentioned concerning the miniature vessels. In the whole area of the complex of Princess Sheretnebt, besides the usual wheel-made miniatures that are sometimes found in the hundreds and thousands in the cultic areas of the tombs or in discard areas, the present author was able to observe a large amount of hand-made miniatures, in some contexts amounting to half or more than half of the miniature vessels. These included very small miniature bowls, cups and possibly stands. In the fill of Shaft 1, this pattern was able to be confirmed, with the predominant ones (11 pieces) being these rough, hand-made miniatures. For the hand-made bowls, two types were able to be observed; miniature bowls with a rounded base and convex body, very similar to simple limestone miniature bowls often found in contexts of burial chambers in Abusir South (Fig. 3.106, row 4–5)<sup>17</sup> and those with a flat base and open walls (Fig. 3.106, rows 2–3).<sup>18</sup> In both cases, they are made of lower quality clay with visible organic inclusions. Often, the surface is left untreated or only roughly smoothed, unlike the wet-smoothed, wheel-made miniature bowls. The body and base was clearly shaped with the fingers. The question whether the occurrence of such rough hand-made miniatures is a singularity limited to the area of Abusir or such vessels were simply disregarded by earlier archaeologists on other sites due to their high quantities and low aesthetic and chronological value, has still to be resolved (see also *Chapter 5.7*); however, it is

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<sup>17</sup> For comparable miniature bowls made from limestone (see *e.g.* Jirásková 2014: Figs. 8.1 and 8.3).

<sup>18</sup> This type can also be seen in stone version (*e.g.* Jirásková 2014: Fig. 8.2, no. 40 and Fig. 8.5, nos. 68 and 71).

clear that there is almost no mention of such examples and all (even if very little) attention is given to the wheel-made miniatures.<sup>19</sup>

The burial chamber was situated south of the shaft and was rather large, with a width of 2.80 m, length of 3.30 m and height of 1.55 m. The entrance into the chamber was partly closed by a wall built of irregular limestone fragments, with a beer jar uncovered on the top of the fill (Figs. 3.94 and 3.95). In the floor, a sarcophagus pit was built of several limestone slabs in a north-south orientation. It contained a disturbed burial of a man over 50 years old (Vymazalová 2015: 50).

The amount of ceramic finds from the chamber was relatively high, namely 582 fragments, out of which 247 were diagnostic and belonged to a minimum of 133 different vessels (Table 3.24). The majority of these finds came from the area immediately behind the disturbed mud brick wall blocking the entrance into the burial chamber and the northern section of the chamber, which was filled with dark brown sand mixed with limestone pieces and *tafl* chips to almost half of its height (see Figs. 3.96 and 3.98). Due to the character and class representation of these ceramic finds, we can ascertain that most of them are of secondary refuse and actually originated in the shaft itself. In the fill of the burial chamber, there was a predominance of jars (31%), stands (20%), platters (18%) and miniature vessels (16%) – such a composition is more characteristic for remnants of so-called shaft deposits. These most probably consist of pottery used during burial rituals that was subsequently deposited in the fill of the shaft as both a practical measure (less sand and rubble required) and cultic need (preventing further profane use of these vessels). At Abusir South, such burial shaft deposits consisting predominantly of stands and platters, but also other classes, can be found in Shaft 1 of the anonymous tomb AS 47, both shafts in the tomb of Nefer/Nefershepes

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<sup>19</sup> It must be stressed that other types of miniature and miniaturized vessels, such as beer jars, are also hand-made and these are known in lesser numbers from other parts of the complex of Sheretnebtj (see *Chapter 5.7.4*) as well as the Sixth Dynasty tombs in Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 162, 832–834).

(AS 67) and the shafts of Nefer and Neferhathor in the neighbouring rock-cut tomb of Nefer (AS 68d) (see also *infra*).<sup>20</sup>

| Context                                       | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of minimum<br>vessels |
|---|----------------|--|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 54.AS68a.2013<br>(BC of Shaft I<br>in AS 68a) | J-1            | -                                      | 20        | 41        | -                                | 216                         | 277                     | 61                                | 41                     | 30,8%                   |
|   | J fine         | -                                      | 3         | 4         | 5                                | 4                           | 16                      | 12                                | 5                      | 3,8%                    |
|   | B              | -                                      | 7         | -         | -                                | 13                          | 20                      | 7                                 | 7                      | 5,3%                    |
|   | S              | 6                                      | 52        | 18        | 3                                | 21                          | 100                     | 79                                | 27                     | 20,3%                   |
|   | F              | 1                                      | 3         | -         | 4                                | 15                          | 23                      | 8                                 | 6                      | 4,5%                    |
|   | P              | 56                                     | 1         | -         | -                                | 66                          | 123                     | 57                                | 24                     | 18,0%                   |
|   | MB             | 15                                     | -         | 1         | -                                | -                           | 16                      | 16                                | 16                     | 12,0%                   |
|   | MC             | 1                                      | 1         | 1         | 1                                | -                           | 4                       | 4                                 | 4                      | 3,0%                    |
|   | MS (?)         | -                                      | -         | 1         | -                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,8%                    |
|   | D              | 1                                      | -         | -         | -                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,8%                    |
| T   | 1              | -                                      | -         | -         | -                                | 1                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 0,8%                   |                         |
| <b>Total</b>                                  |                | <b>81</b>                              | <b>87</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>13</b>                        | <b>335</b>                  | <b>582</b>              | <b>247</b>                        | <b>133</b>             | <b>100,0%</b>           |

**Table 3.24 Ceramic finds from the burial chamber of Duaptah**

There were at least 16 different stands in the secondary fill of the burial chamber. It is interesting that six of them were preserved in full profile and each with more than 70% of their volume, reconstructed from small fragments (Figs. 3.104 and 3.105). Other stands were preserved only as rim, body or base sherds. There was a predominance of the tall slim stands with hour-glass (or biconical) bodies, both in a variant with a simple rim and a slightly modelled/rolled rim. All the examples are similar in their sizes, having aperture diameters of 13.5–15 cm, base diameters of 13–15 cm and heights of 28.5–31.5 cm. In some cases, the bodies were irregular both in their shape (oval rather than rounded diameter) and in their heights (*e.g.* Fig. 3.104, no. 54-30.AS68a.2013). An interesting technical feature was a rough ring of left-over clay on the inner base and in a few cases also on the outer base (*e.g.* Fig. 3.104, no. 54-28.AS68a.2013).

There were only two small ring stands preserved in full profile. With ring stands, their low quality of manufacture and lack of attention to detail is even more distinctive. In the whole complex of Princess Sheretnebt, ring stands were usually oval (with a difference of

<sup>20</sup> Only the anonymous tomb AS 47 has been published so far (Arias Kytarová 2011a, Figs. 19–21). For the ceramics from the tomb of Nefer (AS 68d), see *Chapter 3.6.2* and *3.6.3*.

0.5–1 cm in diameter) and lop-sided, with a height variance of also 0.5–1 cm. As an example, the larger ring stand from the burial chamber of Duaptah had an oval aperture diameter of 17 × 17.5 cm, base diameter of 14.5 × 15 cm and irregular height of 15–15.5 cm.

Among the finds from the burial chamber, there were again two interesting mud stoppers. They have similar conical shapes and a unique feature in that the body is intentionally pierced with a hole. The smaller stopper (Exc. No. 275/AS68a/2013, Fig. 3.109) bore seal impressions with the Horus name of Djedkare, *Dd-hꜣw*, thus providing us with a date for the burial of Duaptah (*cf.* Vymazalová 2014: 17, Obr. 7 and Vymazalová 2015: 48–49). The function of such stoppers with a hole is questionable – in the case of the taller one (no. 54-2.AS68a.2013, see Fig. 3.108), it could have served as a kind of spout, with the primary function of a stopper being only partly retained. The other stopper, with Djedkare's name, exhibits deep imprints of a thicker rope running across the lower side, pointing to the fact that it was probably used as a seal for a cross bound object such as a box with canopic jars<sup>21</sup> rather than a vessel.

Similar to the situation in the shaft, almost half of the intrusive miniature vessels were hand-made (9 pieces). Again, both types were represented, being those with a rounded base (Fig. 3.106, row 5) and a flat base (Fig. 3.106, row 3). Notably, there was also a base fragment of a very high quality miniature vessel, namely a large, wheel-made bowl covered with a red slip on the surface.

Some of the ceramic fragments were found mixed with the disturbed burial in the sarcophagus pit itself, including one almost complete platter (Fig. 3.110). Altogether, there were 36 diagnostic fragments uncovered from the sarcophagus pit, belonging to miniature vessels, platters, stands and beer jars. While in prior periods, such as the Predynastic Period, it was usual to bury the dead with vessels directly in the coffin (predominantly jars and bread forms), during the period of the Old Kingdom this custom is not attested and we can assume with certainty that these fragments came either from the fill of the chamber or the shaft and were displaced during robbing activities.

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<sup>21</sup> It is worth mentioning that traces of disintegrated wood, which might have come from such a sealed wooden chest, were documented in the burial chamber near the stopper (Vymazalová 2015: 49).

In the whole area of the burial chamber, only three jars can be seen as remnants of the original tomb goods. Two of them (54-45.AS68a.2013 and 54-46.AS68a.2013) were found *in situ* in the south-east corner of the burial chamber, south of the sarcophagus pit (Figs. 3.100 and 3.101). Further fragments, complementing these two jars and one more (54-47.AS68a.2013) were found in the fill south of the sarcophagus pit. It is clear that the vessels were broken, most possibly during the robbing of the chamber. None of these jars is complete but due to some being preserved in their upper and some in their lower parts, we can reconstruct a full shape of this type. All three were medium-tall shouldered jars with a narrow and tall neck with a flat short-ledged rim and flat base (Figs. 3.102 and 3.103). Their sizes are almost identical, with aperture diameters of 7.5 cm, outer rim diameters of 8 cm, maximum diameters of 15–15.5 cm and base diameters of 9–9.5 cm. In the case of the neck fragment, no. 54-48.AS68a.2013, it belonged most probably to jar 54-47.AS68a.2013. All three jars were of identical make, with very badly fired material (Nile silt B1) and low quality red slip covering the outer surface. Due to the low quality of the firing, the vessels have not only zoned profiles with inner black cores, but also a slate-like feel to the sherds. As a consequence, large sections of the red slip layer were chipped off and the inner cores of the jars were exposed (see Fig. 3.102).<sup>22</sup> There are no exact analogies to the shape, but similar jars are known from the mortuary temple of Menkaure.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.3.3 SHAFT 2 (NEFERMIN)

The northern shaft, that of an otherwise unspecified Nefermin, was 1.30 × 1.25 m large, had a depth of only 3.5 m and contained much fewer ceramic finds (Vymazalová 2015: 50). Its fill brought to light 562 fragments of pottery, consisting of 212 diagnostic fragments that belonged to at least 104 individual vessels. Almost a third of the finds were beer jars (at least 27 examples). Only 25 vessels were preserved in full profile, namely 21 miniature bowls and four platters (see Table 3.25). Besides these, the shaft yielded only a few other finds, such as a

<sup>22</sup> This is to be differentiated from erosion resulting in exposure to wind, sand or water.

<sup>23</sup> For jars with a similar flat short-ledged rim, see Reisner (1931: Fig. 68, no. 1, type XVII) and for shouldered jars, *e.g.* Reisner (1931: Fig. 68, no. 2, type XVIII). Our vessels are a combination of these two types.

hammer stone, a fragment of a travertine vessel, a few animal bones and charcoal fragments (Vymazalová 2015: 50; see also Fig. 3.116).

| Context                              | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of minimum vessels |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|--|------|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 51.AS68a.2013<br>(Shaft 2 in AS 68a) | J-1            | -                                      | 85   | 29    | -                          | 264                      | 378                  | 114                         | 27                  | 26,0%                |
|                                      | J fine         | -                                      | 4    | -     | 3                          | 29                       | 36                   | 7                           | 2                   | 1,9%                 |
|                                      | B              | -                                      | 31   | 1     | 4                          | 45                       | 81                   | 36                          | 30                  | 28,8%                |
|                                      | S              | -                                      | 3    | 3     | 1                          | -                        | 7                    | 7                           | 6                   | 5,8%                 |
|                                      | F              | -                                      | 16   | 1     | -                          | 8                        | 25                   | 17                          | 10                  | 9,6%                 |
|                                      | P              | 4                                      | -    | -     | 1                          | -                        | 5                    | 5                           | 5                   | 4,8%                 |
|                                      | MB             | 21                                     | 1    | -     | -                          | -                        | 22                   | 22                          | 21                  | 20,2%                |
|                                      | MC             | -                                      | -    | 1     | -                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 1,0%                 |
|                                      | MS (?)         | -                                      | -    | -     | 1                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 1,0%                 |
| D                                    | -              | -                                      | -    | 2     | 4                          | 6                        | 2                    | 1                           | 1,0%                |                      |
| <b>Total</b>                         |                | 25                                     | 140  | 35    | 12                         | 350                      | 562                  | 212                         | 104                 | 100,0%               |

**Table 3.25 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the shaft of Nefermin**

The most important ceramic find from the fill of Shaft 2 was undoubtedly a very fine jar made of Marl clay A3 (no. 51-35.AS68a.2013, Fig. 3.112) with a light grey surface, found broken into numerous fragments and scattered in the fill of Shaft 2, its burial chamber and in the fill of Shaft 1. Due to the predominance of fragments (around 20) and the largest individual pieces in Shaft 2, the jar probably originated from here. The importance of this vessel lies in that it provided the name of the owner of the vessel, *Nfr-mnw*, scratched into the surface of the shoulders after firing (Fig. 3.113). Considering the provenience of the fragments we can assume that Nefermin was not only the owner of the vessel but also that this vessel was part of his tomb goods and attested the name of the owner of the shaft. The vessel itself has a very slim and slender shape, with a wide medium-tall neck, rolled rim and unarticulated shoulders. The base was not preserved, but due to the existence of a complete jar of this type *in situ* in the burial chamber of Nefermin, we can estimate that it was flat. The jar had an outer rim diameter of 6.5 cm, maximum diameter of 11 cm and preserved height of 25 cm.

From the chronological point of view, a very interesting find is that of a so-called collar rim beer jar (51-1.AS68a.2013; see Fig. 3.115). It constitutes by far the oldest ceramic type in the whole complex. These beer jars (Abusir type J-1h) are characterized by slim bodies and a

highly modelled rim with a sharp ledge or collar made by finger in the area between the rim and the shoulders. This particular fragment was preserved to about 2/3 of its height and showed a rather wide example with a maximum diameter of 16 cm. Collar beer jars were common in the earlier parts of the Old Kingdom and the ceramic type has even older roots, being most usually associated with the contexts of the Third to maximum early Fourth Dynasty (e.g. Arias Kytarová 2010a: 27–28, Fig. 2.5.1; see also *Chapter 5.2.1*). Its presence in the fill of Shaft 2 confirms that the shaft was robbed and cleared during its existence. Where the fragment came from is questionable; the closest so-far uncovered structure of such dating is the anonymous mastaba AS 54, situated about 40 m away over the hill. The fill in the neighbouring tomb of Neferherptah (AS 65) yielded a few fragments of collar beer jars as well, making it possible to assume that Third Dynasty structures existed on (or very near) the site and were either robbed, or, in the present author's opinion, disturbed by the building activities of the late Fifth Dynasty, thus providing an accessible refuse material.

The burial chamber was situated north of the shaft, with the entrance partly blocked by a wall made of small stones and rubble (Fig. 3.114). Except for two ceramic vessels uncovered *in situ* (see *infra*), it was almost void of any other tomb goods. The burial was very simple and consisted of the body of the deceased lying directly on the floor of the chamber, in its northern part (Fig. 3.117).

| Context                                       | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims     | Bases    | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of minimum vessels |
|---|----------------|--|----------|----------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 52.AS68a.2012<br>(BC of Shaft 2<br>in AS 68a) | J-1            | -                                      | 3        | 3        | -                          | 85                       | 91                   | 6                           | 3                   | 30,0%                |
|   | J fine         | 1                                      | 2        | -        | 1                          | 1                        | 5                    | 4                           | 1                   | 10,0%                |
|   | B              | 1                                      | 2        | -        | -                          | 10                       | 13                   | 3                           | 4                   | 40,0%                |
|   | MB             | 2                                      | -        | -        | -                          | -                        | 2                    | 2                           | 2                   | 20,0%                |
| <b>Total</b>                                  |                | <b>4</b>                               | <b>7</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>1</b>                   | <b>96</b>                | <b>111</b>           | <b>15</b>                   | <b>10</b>           | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.26 Amounts of pottery from the burial chamber of Nefermin**

The ceramic finds from the burial chamber of Nefermin were very scant, numbering only 111 fragments, of which only 15 were diagnostic, belonging to 10 different vessels (Table 3.26). Out of these, only two can be seen as part of the original equipment of the chamber. A

complete jar made of Marl A3 was found *in situ* immediately south of the skull of the deceased, lying on its side, with its mouth toward the east (Fig. 3.117). It is almost identical in shape to the abovementioned jar inscribed with the name of Nefermin, found in fragments in the shaft as well as in the chamber (see Fig. 3.112). It is therefore very likely that both jars were originally deposited here as tomb goods, and one of them was broken and displaced during the robbing activities. Jar 52-1.AS68a.2013 has almost identical dimensions and shape, with an outer rim diameter of 6 cm, maximum diameter 10.5 cm and full height of 25 cm (Fig. 3.119). It has a very narrow, flat base with a diameter of 2.5 cm; it is therefore very likely that jar 51-35.AS68a.2013 had a narrow, flat base as well. It was found with a false filling of Nile mud inside. The shape of these jars is unusual, with the closest parallels coming from the sun temple of Weserkaf in northern Abusir (Kaiser 1969: Abb. V, 44 and 57) or the Fifth Dynasty cemetery in Qau (Brunton 1928: Pl. LXXX, 72G and 72K).

The second vessel uncovered *in situ* was an intact bowl 52-2.AS68a.2013 made of Nile silt B1, found immediately south of the skull and next to jar 52-1.AS68a.2013, partly covering it. It belongs to Abusir type B-4a with a partly contracted rim and bent-sided walls. The bowl is medium large, with an aperture diameter of 23 cm, maximum diameter of 25 cm and height of 12.2 cm (Fig. 3.118). It was covered on both sides with a darker red slip of hue 10R4/6. The outer lower surface was smoothed with a rough object, such as a ceramic sherd tool.<sup>24</sup> The analogies to this type can be found in the whole Memphite necropolis, *i.e.* in Giza in the tomb of Neferbaupthah (G 6010) dated to the period of Niuserre or after (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 108, 25-11-69). In central Abusir, similar bowls were found in the mortuary temple of Raneferef (Bárta 2006: Pl. XXIX, AA-Z).

### 3.4 ROCK-CUT TOMB OF SHEPESPUPTAH (AS 68B)

The tomb of Shepespuptah is situated immediately east of the tomb of Duaptah, accessible from the pillared courtyard of the Princess, being positioned almost opposite the descending

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<sup>24</sup> There were other examples of tools possibly used as scrapers from Abusir (see Arias Kytarová 2011b: Fig. 6.9, 40-12.AS59.2010 and Fig. 6.10, 35-4.AS57.2010; Arias Kytarová 2014b: Fig. 4.103, T and 4.104).



staircase (see Fig. 3.1). On the right side of the entrance, looking towards the open courtyard, the first of a series of naoi with bound statues was found. This first naos (Exc. No. 40/SA68/2012) was 2.06 m tall and held a life-size bound statue of a standing man (see also Fig. 3.64). Unluckily, the naos was found uninscribed. Whether the owner of the statue can be associated with Shepesuptah as the undisputed owner of the closest tomb, is a matter of ongoing discussion (see *e.g.* Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 346; Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 90–91).

Tomb AS 68b consists of a rock-cut chapel with an antechamber and a burial chamber at its south end (Fig. 3.120). There was only one shaft in the tomb, originally presumed to be the shaft of his wife. However, it was found unfinished, with no traces of human burial. The tomb was documented in the course of two seasons. The chapel and burial chamber were explored during the spring of 2012 (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 343–44; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 24), while the shaft was explored together with other burial apartments in the autumn of 2013 (Vymazalová 2015: 50).

The chapel is exceptional in that, although it was not decorated in a traditional sense, its eastern wall and several blocks were found inscribed with several hieratic graffiti in red paint, providing us thus with not only the name and titles of the owner (Figs. 3.121 and 3.122), but also with a date (Fig. 3.123). The titles of the owner were relatively extensive: *hry sdm pr-ꜣ, hry sdm pr-ꜣ m gswy-pr, imy-rꜣ shꜣty-htp, wr 10 šmꜣ, n(y)-nst-hntt, htm(w) hꜣt htpwt dfꜣw bity šps-pw-Pth*; namely “chief of justice of the Great House, chief of justice of the Great house in the two administrative units, overseer of the two fields of offerings, great one of the ten of Upper Egypt, (he who belongs to) the foremost seat, sealer of the beast offerings and provisions of the King of Lower Egypt, Shepesuptah” (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 343–344; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 24; Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 102–103).

One of the limestone casing blocks in the chapel of Shepesuptah, uncovered in situ by the west wall of the chapel, provided us with a hieratic inscription detailing the date of an unknown inspection that occurred in the year after the 20<sup>th</sup> occasion of the cattle count (for details, see Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 103–104). It is impossible to state whether this

inspection can be associated with the construction of the tomb or it occurred later in time (Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 104). In both cases, however, it provides us with a *terminus ante quem*, as the tomb was either close to completion or was already in use at the time of that inspection, given the position of the inscription on a finished casing block. Within the late Fifth Dynasty, such a high cattle count can be associated only with King Djedkare (see e.g. Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 344) and thus we can theorize that Shepesuptah was buried sometime before the given date. It has to be noted that an official named Shepesuptah appears also in the papyrus archive from King Raneferef's funerary temple at Abusir Centre, dating to the period of Djedkare as well (for details, see Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 344; Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 104–106).

| Context      | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases      | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of minimum<br>vessels |
|--------------|----------------|--|-----------|------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tomb AS 68b  | J-1            | -                                      | 53        | 91         | -                                | 394                         | 538                     | 143                               | 96                     | 50,8%                   |
|              | J fine         | 1                                      | 2         | 5          | -                                | 3                           | 11                      | 8                                 | 6                      | 3,2%                    |
|              | B              | 1                                      | 15        | 3          | -                                | 18                          | 37                      | 19                                | 15                     | 7,9%                    |
|              | S              | 1                                      | 3         | 1          | 6                                | 6                           | 17                      | 11                                | 12                     | 6,3%                    |
|              | F              | 3                                      | 12        | 5          | -                                | 20                          | 40                      | 21                                | 12                     | 6,3%                    |
|              | P              | 9                                      | -         | -          | -                                | 2                           | 11                      | 9                                 | 8                      | 4,2%                    |
|              | MB             | 16                                     | 3         | 1          | -                                | -                           | 20                      | 20                                | 20                     | 10,6%                   |
|              | MC             | 8                                      | 2         | 1          | -                                | -                           | 11                      | 11                                | 11                     | 5,8%                    |
|              | MP             | 1                                      | 5         | 2          | -                                | -                           | 8                       | 8                                 | 1                      | 0,5%                    |
|              | MV             | 1                                      | -         | -          | -                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,5%                    |
|              | MS (?)         | -                                      | -         | -          | 1                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,5%                    |
| D            | 4              | -                                      | 1         | 1          | -                                | 6                           | 6                       | 6                                 | 3,2%                   |                         |
| <b>Total</b> |                | <b>45</b>                              | <b>95</b> | <b>110</b> | <b>8</b>                         | <b>443</b>                  | <b>701</b>              | <b>258</b>                        | <b>189</b>             | <b>100,0%</b>           |

**Fig. 3.27 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the whole tomb AS 68b, including the burial apartments**

On the matter of ceramic finds, there were very few of them, both from the area of the chapel and the burial apartments. From the whole tomb, only 701 fragments were collected, out of which 258 were diagnostic, adding up to a minimum of 189 individual vessels (see Table 3.27). When compared to the neighbouring rock-cut tombs (AS 68a, but most prominently AS 68c and AS 68d), this tomb held a very small amount of pottery. It constitutes only 4.5% of the whole complex (see Table 3.1). By far, the most pottery came from the fill of

the chapel, especially in its northern part near the entrance. From the burial chamber and the unfinished shaft, only a small amount of sherds were uncovered.

### 3.4.1 CHAPEL

As mentioned above, by far the predominant amount of pottery came from the area of the entrance to the tomb and the fill of the main part of the chapel (ceramic no. 21.AS68b.2012). Among those, beer jar fragments were again most common. Notable is the presence of miniature vessels (almost 19% of all ceramic finds, see Table 3.28), which would point to the existence of on-going cultic activities. All the other classes were represented by very little numbers. Only 42 vessels were preserved in full profile, with more than half of them miniatures.

| Context  | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of minimum<br>vessels |
|--|----------------|--|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 21.AS68b.2012<br>and<br>30.AS68b.2012<br>(chapel of<br>AS 68b) | J-1            | -                                      | 23        | 81        | -                                | 247                         | 351                     | 103                               | 82                     | 48,8%                   |
|  | J fine         | 1                                      | 2         | 5         | -                                | 3                           | 11                      | 8                                 | 6                      | 3,6%                    |
|  | B              | 1                                      | 14        | 3         | -                                | 18                          | 36                      | 18                                | 14                     | 8,3%                    |
|  | S              | 1                                      | 3         | 1         | 6                                | 6                           | 17                      | 11                                | 12                     | 7,1%                    |
|  | F              | 3                                      | 12        | 5         | -                                | 15                          | 35                      | 20                                | 10                     | 6,0%                    |
|  | P              | 9                                      | -         | -         | -                                | 2                           | 11                      | 9                                 | 8                      | 4,8%                    |
|  | MB             | 16                                     | 3         | 1         | -                                | -                           | 20                      | 20                                | 20                     | 11,9%                   |
|  | MC             | 7                                      | 2         | 1         | -                                | -                           | 10                      | 10                                | 10                     | 6,0%                    |
|  | MS (?)         | -                                      | -         | -         | 1                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,6%                    |
| D  | 4              | -                                      | 1         | -         | -                                | 5                           | 5                       | 5                                 | 3,0%                   |                         |
| <b>Total</b>   |                | <b>42</b>                              | <b>59</b> | <b>98</b> | <b>7</b>                         | <b>291</b>                  | <b>497</b>              | <b>205</b>                        | <b>168</b>             | <b>100,0%</b>           |

**Table 3.28 Amounts of pottery from the fill of the rock-cut chapel of Shepesuptah**

The beer jars were numerous but all fragmentary. None could be reconstructed to full profile. Several examples from the area of the entrance to the tomb had remains of the original filling of Nile mud, pointing to the fact that they were indeed designated as offerings in the cult of the deceased. At least several of them must have been originally sealed with mud stoppers. One of the beer jars had a flat base, very likely of type J-1i. Similar beer jars were uncovered in the vicinity of this tomb (e.g. in the fill of the tomb of Ptahhotep, AS 36, situated

just above the courtyard of the Princess) and others in the area of Abusir Centre from tombs dating to an analogical period (e.g. the tomb of Kakaibaef, see Krejčí 2013).

The youngest ceramic example (no. 21-72.AS68b.2012) is without any doubt a sharply pointed base of a beer jar of type J-1c. Analogical vessels were uncovered in the upper layers in the corridor between the tomb of Neferinpu and Shepseskafankh (AS 37 and AS 39), which served as the main entrance route to the complex of Sheretnebty, the anonymous tomb AS 31 and the tombs of Nefershepes, Ptahhetep and Kaiemtjenenet, as well as to the Sixth Dynasty tomb AS 41 (see also Vymazalová 2015: 44). Numerous fully preserved examples were uncovered at other parts of Abusir South in several shafts of anonymous tombs AS 84 and AS 84b and in Shaft 2 of the tomb of Ptahwer (AS 76b). Outside of Abusir, this type is well documented in the excavations of Saqqara West, e.g. in the tombs of Pehenptah and Seshemnefer (Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 29–31, form 10). On the basis of these analogies, it is possible to state that the chapel was still in use during the early part of the reign of Pepy II. The ceramic evidence is too scarce to specify whether these Sixth Dynasty vessels (see also *infra*) could be seen as remains of cultic activity during that period or proof of tomb robbing. In the case of the other tombs (especially AS 68c and AS 68d), it is much more credible to presume ongoing cultic activities, as there was rich secondary burial activity in these tombs (see *Chapters 3.5.5–3.5.7 and 3.6.5*). The burial chamber of AS 68b was undoubtedly robbed and the base of a beer jar dated to the early part of Pepy II may indicate when this occurred.

Among other votive vessels, the miniatures constitute the largest group. Interesting among them is the presence of two red-slipped examples. Such surface treatment is uncommon with miniatures and is usually found only in larger, very well-made examples. It should be mentioned that in Abusir Centre, a much larger amount of such red-slipped miniatures (namely more than 30 pieces) came from a context immediately east of the mastaba of the high official Kakaibaef (AC 29), presumed to be a refuse layer from the cultic areas of the tomb, also dated to the second half of the Fifth Dynasty. The chapel in the tomb of Shepesuptah brought to light only two such examples (one miniature bowl and a likely fragment of a miniature stand), both incomplete. From this tomb, there was again a larger

percentage of very small, low quality miniature vessels that were produced by hand (exactly half the miniature vessels). Even the wheel-made ones were tiny; the smallest miniature bowl (no. 21-18.AS68b.2012) had a rim diameter of only 2.5 cm.<sup>25</sup>

One of the possible interpretations of such diverse examples of miniature vessels, both from the perspective of typology and quality of make, is longer-lasting cultic activity in the tomb. Later generations of the same family declined in their socio-economic status (or, in another possible scenario, servants of the original family) and so brought much poorer offerings. The dating of hand-made miniatures cannot be stated with any certainty – they have been noticed in larger numbers only in the cemetery of Abusir South so far and are surprisingly lacking from other sites, at least based on the published material.<sup>26</sup> The recent excavations around the tomb of the official Kaisebi at Abusir (*e.g.* tombs AS 76, 77 and 78; *cf.* Dulíková – Jirásková – Arias Kytarová 2016) revealed even larger amounts of them. So far, it is impossible to state their precise chronological development.

The entrance to the burial chamber was blocked by a partly preserved wall made of irregular blocks of limestone (Fig. 3.126). The fragments uncovered in front of the wall constitute a very small ceramic context no. 30.AS68b.2012. The most significant ones are two almost fully preserved bread forms with a flat base that were able to be reconstructed from numerous sherds (see Figs. 3.127 and 3.128). They are of the same type (F-2) but not of identical shape or dimensions. Bread form no. 30-1.AS68b.2012 is slimmer and taller, with a height of 18.5 cm. The second bread form (30-2.AS68b.2012) is wider and slightly shorter, of only 15 cm in height. Both have almost identical maximum diameters. Both are irregular in shape, being lop-sided and off-centered. The most interesting feature is extensive traces of exposure to fire on their inner and outer surfaces, especially on no. 30-1.AS68b.2012. It is very likely that these two bread forms were not part of any votive offerings; if so, they were used

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<sup>25</sup> The complex of Sheretnebtj brought to light even smaller miniatures – the smallest of them all was a miniature bowl with a rim diameter of only 1 cm.

<sup>26</sup> Personal communication with some other ceramologists suggests that their presence is not limited to our site and hopefully future publications will provide some concrete data.

later, secondarily, for baking or as other utility ware.<sup>27</sup> This specific type of bread form with a flat base (Abusir F-2) appears during the late Fifth Dynasty, but becomes much more common in the Sixth Dynasty. The shape development is relatively well documented, with vessels becoming taller and slimmer throughout time. Our examples belong to earlier forms, as they have a wider diameter (21 and 21.5 cm) than height.

### 3.4.2 BURIAL CHAMBER

The burial chamber of Shepesuptah is situated south of the chapel. It is unusual among the other burial apartments of the complex, as it is accessed directly from the chapel and not via a vertical shaft as is the case of all the other substructures (for other examples of such burials, see *e.g.* Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 94). The deceased was buried in a sarcophagus pit in the west wall of the burial chamber (Figs. 3.129 and 3.130). The analysis showed that he was a male of 35–50 years. Shepesuptah was rather tall (173 cm) and suffered many health issues, including tooth aches, degenerative changes in his spine and a few injuries (see Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 97–102).

Due to the fact that the blocking wall leading into the burial chamber, as well as the sarcophagus pit, were found disturbed, and given the easy access to the burial apartment (in comparison to the otherwise attested access in form of a deeper shaft), it is not surprising that only very little was left of the original funerary equipment. Only a few ceramic fragments were found in the whole area of the chamber (see Table 3.29).

| Context                         | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims     | Bases    | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of minimum<br>vessels |
|---------------------------------|----------------|--|----------|----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 32.AS68b.2012<br>(BC of AS 68b) | J-1            | -                                      | 1        | -        | -                                | 6                           | 7                       | 1                                 | 2                      | 50,0%                   |
|                                 | MP             | 1                                      | 5        | 2        | -                                | -                           | 8                       | 8                                 | 1                      | 25,0%                   |
|                                 | MC             | 1                                      | -        | -        | -                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 25,0%                   |
| <b>Total</b>                    |                | <b>2</b>                               | <b>6</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>-</b>                         | <b>6</b>                    | <b>16</b>               | <b>10</b>                         | <b>4</b>               | <b>100,0%</b>           |

**Table 3.29 Ceramic finds from the burial chamber of Shepesuptah**

<sup>27</sup> Bread forms could have been used not only for baking bread but also secondarily for smelting copper (*e.g.* Wodzińska 2007: 298). For details on the use of bread forms, see *Chapter 5.5*.

Only one of these fragments can be considered as belonging to the original burial goods of the deceased. Miniaturized platter no. 32-1.AS68b.2012 can be counted among the finest examples of ceramic craft uncovered at Abusir (see Fig. 3.131). It was found in several fragments in the floor level ca. 50 cm to the east of the broken lid of the burial pit. The platter is an exact miniaturized copy of a platter with a long-ledged rim and three knob feet. It is extremely fine, with a sherd width of only 0.3 mm. The dimensions are astounding – a height of 1.5 cm and a maximum diameter of 7 cm. The attention to detail is extraordinary and even in such miniaturized form, the potter attempted to show the grooving on the upper rim walls. The whole vessel was covered with a very fine red slip. In such miniaturized form, analogies are very rare, such as the example from the sun temple of Niuserre at Abu Ghurab (Kaiser 1969: type XLII: 217). However, in fully functional size, as a platter with a long-ledged rim and three knob feet, it is quite well represented in the Memphite necropolis, predominantly from contexts dating to the later Fifth Dynasty. Some of the large platters are fine and well fired (Reisner 1931, Fig. 78: 8), but more usually they are made of lower quality clays (Nile silt B2 or even C) and belong among rougher ceramic wares (Junker 1950: Fig. 38: 4; Kaiser 1969: type XLII: esp. nos. 213, 215 and 216; Bárta 2006: Fig. XLII: esp. ACb; Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 72: 311). Numerous examples were lately discovered in the series of tombs in the so-called Nachtsare cemetery at Abusir Center (see *e.g.* Krejčí – Arias Kytnarová – Odler 2015; the pottery remains yet unpublished).

### 3.4.3 SHAFT 1

There was only one shaft hewn into the floor of the chapel, situated close to the entrance to the tomb. Originally presumed to have belonged to the wife of the main owner (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 344), it was found unfinished (size of 1.60 × 1.60 m, with a depth of only 1.40 m) and without any traces of a burial or burial equipment (Vymazalová 2015: 50). From the whole shaft, only very few pieces of ceramic fragments and a quartzite pounder with traces of copper (Exc. No. 280/AS68b/2013) were found in a fill of limestone chips and pieces, mixed with brown sand (see also Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 94).

| Context                                 | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of minimum<br>vessels |
|---|----------------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 55.AS68b.2013<br>(Shaft 1 of<br>AS 68b) | J-1            | -                                      | 29   | 10    | -                                | 141                         | 180                     | 39                                | 12                     | 70,6%                   |
|   | B              | -                                      | 1    | -     | -                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 5,9%                    |
|   | F              | -                                      | -    | -     | -                                | 5                           | 5                       | 1                                 | 2                      | 11,8%                   |
|   | MV             | 1                                      | -    | -     | -                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 5,9%                    |
|   | D              | -                                      | -    | -     | 1                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 5,9%                    |
| Total                                   |                | 1                                      | 30   | 10    | 1                                | 146                         | 188                     | 43                                | 17                     | 100,0%                  |

**Table 3.30 Ceramic finds from the unfinished shaft in the chapel of AS 68b**

The ceramic finds were almost completely limited to beer jars, attested mostly as non-diagnostic body fragments (Table 3.30). The whole fill contained only about 17 vessels and due to the character of the fill and the fragmentary nature of the finds, it is most likely that none were part of any intentional deposition. All the beer jars were identified as characteristic Fifth Dynasty production, with partly pointed bases and rims of type J-1b with a low neck. There were only four pieces that belonged to different classes, namely two miniature vessels, one rim of a low bent-sided bowl and a fragment of a mud stopper. Out of these, only miniature vessel no. 55-1.AS68b.2013 is exceptional, as it is the only example of a miniature vase from the whole complex of Sheretnebtj. It is a relatively finely-made example covered with a red slip on the outer walls. The shape (Abusir type MV-1) is one of the most ancient of such and follows the archetype of tubular ointment jars made in stone (e.g. Reisner – Smith 1955: Figs. 135 and 136), known since the Predynastic times (for more details, see *Chapter 5.7.3*). At Abusir, miniatures of this type were found in other tombs dated to the later Fifth Dynasty, such as the anonymous tomb AS 47 (Arias Kytarová 2011a: Fig. 29). All the fragments from the unfinished shaft seem to point to the fact that the shaft was built and abandoned during the construction of the tomb itself, or in close proximity to its creation.



### 3.5 ROCK-CUT TOMB OF PRINCESS SHERETNEBTY (AS 68C)

Rock-cut tomb AS 68c is the second tomb from the east, accessible from the corridor running between AS 68 and AS 67. It is the largest tomb of this complex, having 17 m in length and 3 m in width (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.*: 27–28; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 3). The tomb also contains the highest number of shafts, namely six, situated from the south to the north (see Fig. 3.133). The southern two are the deepest and largest and belonged undoubtedly to the main owner and his wife (Vymazalová 2015: 51–54). The other four shafts were very likely designated for other family members (Vymazalová 2015: 54–56). The last two shafts (Shaft 5 and 6) are the youngest, and based on the ceramic finds, as well as other indications, were added later, in the course of the terminal Fifth and Sixth Dynasty (Vymazalová – Arias Kytarová, *forthcoming*).

Unluckily, neither the name of the male owner nor that of his wife is attested. On the basis of several indirect indicators we can assume that this wife was Princess Sheretnebtly herself; however, this theory remains tentative due to the fact that the archaeological research of this shaft was inconclusive; but it remains the most likely possibility.<sup>28</sup> Princess Sheretnebtly could not have been buried in any of the remaining rock-cut tombs – in tomb AS 68d, we presume to have the burial of Neferhathor, the wife of the main owner Nefer, in the second shaft from the south,<sup>29</sup> with the three remaining shafts containing male skeletons. In tomb AS 68b, there was only one burial chamber for the main owner, Shepesuptah, and no other burial (see *supra* and Vymazalová 2015: 50). Finally, in tomb AS 68a, we have only two shafts,

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<sup>28</sup> For a detailed description and discussion of the spatial attribution of the burial of the princess, see the published preliminary reports (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 347–349; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 2–3; Vymazalová 2015: 54).

<sup>29</sup> The identification of Neferhathor with the owner of Shaft 2 in tomb AS 68d is based on several facts, such as the mention of her name and titles on the false door of her husband, who was buried in Shaft 1 (*cf.* Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 29, Fig. 10), feminine attributes in the architrave above the neighbouring false door west of Shaft 2 and finally the presence of a female skeleton in the sarcophagus uncovered in the burial chamber of Shaft 2.

both with male owners confirmed not only by the anthropological research but also by the epigraphy.<sup>30</sup>

| Context      | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims        | Bases      | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of min. vessels |
|--------------|----------------|--|-------------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Tomb AS 68c  | J-1            | 3                                      | 582         | 481        | -                          | 3080                     | 4146                 | 1066                        | 515                 | 37,6%             |
|              | J fine         | 2                                      | 19          | 6          | 6                          | 40                       | 73                   | 33                          | 25                  | 1,8%              |
|              | J storage      | -                                      | 1           | -          | 2                          | 18                       | 21                   | 3                           | 4                   | 0,3%              |
|              | B              | 11                                     | 221         | 4          | 20                         | 498                      | 754                  | 253                         | 142                 | 10,4%             |
|              | S              | 6                                      | 229         | 37         | 37                         | 384                      | 693                  | 294                         | 113                 | 8,3%              |
|              | F              | 9                                      | 196         | 25         | 38                         | 260                      | 526                  | 268                         | 137                 | 10,0%             |
|              | P              | 148                                    | 5           | -          | 2                          | 38                       | 193                  | 155                         | 85                  | 6,2%              |
|              | MB             | 198                                    | 23          | 16         | -                          | 1                        | 238                  | 236                         | 222                 | 16,2%             |
|              | MC             | 25                                     | 21          | 42         | 11                         | 4                        | 103                  | 103                         | 97                  | 7,1%              |
|              | MJ             | 1                                      | 4           | 3          | -                          | 3                        | 11                   | 8                           | 8                   | 0,6%              |
|              | MS (?)         | 1                                      | -           | -          | -                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 0,1%              |
|              | L              | -                                      | -           | 1          | -                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 0,1%              |
|              | D              | 7                                      | 1           | 10         | 7                          | 1                        | 26                   | 24                          | 17                  | 1,2%              |
| T            | 1              | -                                      | -           | 2          | -                          | 3                        | 3                    | 2                           | 0,1%                |                   |
| <b>Total</b> |                | <b>412</b>                             | <b>1302</b> | <b>625</b> | <b>125</b>                 | <b>4327</b>              | <b>6789</b>          | <b>2448</b>                 | <b>1369</b>         | <b>100,0%</b>     |

**Table 3.31 Amounts of pottery from the whole tomb AS 68c**

The ceramic finds from the whole area of the tomb were extremely rich, numbering 6,789 fragments, making it thus the second largest assemblage constituting 32.9% of pottery from the whole complex (see Table 3.1). Only 2,448 pieces were diagnostic, making up an impressive amount of at least 1,369 individual vessels (Table 3.31). This tomb was by far the richest from the standpoint of the quantity, as well as the quality, typological diversity and chronological representation. In various contexts, there was pottery of the late Fifth to the late Sixth Dynasty. It is without any doubt that the chapel was used for burials throughout the whole late Old Kingdom and that the ritual activity also continued until the end of the Sixth Dynasty.

<sup>30</sup> For a more detailed description of the burial compartments of tombs AS 68a–c, see preliminary reports and studies (Vymazalová 2015; Vymazalová – Arias Kytarová, *forthcoming* and Vymazalová – Pieke, *forthcoming*).

### 3.5.1 CHAPEL AND SERDAB

The chapel in tomb AS 68c is the largest among these four rock-cut tombs, measuring 15.45 m in length, 2.8 m in maximum width and 2.56 m in maximum height (see Vymazalová – Arias Kytnarová *forthcoming*). The fill reached only up to 0.5 m under the ceiling, similar to the other chapels. It was divided into heaps placed in the northern and southern part of the chapel. The northern reached about 4 m into the tomb, partly over the secondary secondary wall; and the southern part of the fill covered the area south of Shaft 2. The fill was mostly homogenous and covered with a thin layer of dried mud from above, interpreted as evidence of seasonal rain and flooding with mud (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012). In the northern part of the tomb, the fill consisted mostly of brown sand with numerous fragments of pottery, limestone chips and larger pieces, as well as dried bricks, scattered human and animal bones, also stone hammers and other finds. The fill in the south part of the chapel was decidedly different, consisting mostly of limestone chips and pieces that contained only a small number of mud bricks (Vymazalová – Arias Kytnarová *forthcoming*).

In the north part of the tomb, a niche was hewn in the west wall, serving as a serdab (Fig. 3.135). In the serdab, a high number of fragments of both limestone and wooden statues were found (Figs. 3.136–3.142; *cf.* Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 3–7; Bárta – Vymazalová *forthcoming*), including a few complete examples. The statues include an adult couple (Exc. No. 215-1/AS68c/2012, Fig. 3.3.140), a young couple (215-2/AS68c/2012), a sitting official (215-3/AS68c/2012), a mother with a child (215-5/AS68c/2012, Fig. 3.141) and others (Fig. 3.142). There were remains of at least 9 statues in the serdab at the time of discovery and several were able to be reconstructed to almost full shape from the pieces (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 4; Bárta – Vymazalová *forthcoming*). Only one statue was found inscribed, a small statuette of a seated official made in white limestone (215-4/AS68c/2012, Fig. 3.139), bearing a title of *jmj-r3 gs Iti* (“overseer of the gang, Iti”; *cf.* Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 5–7; Bárta – Vymazalová *forthcoming*; Vymazalová – Pieke *forthcoming*).

The amount of ceramic finds from the fill of the chapel was very extensive; namely more than 1,789 fragments, out of which 715 were diagnostic, totalling to a minimum number

of 419 individual vessels (see Table 3.32). Only some selected pieces relevant from the position of the chronological development of the tomb chapel shall be mentioned in this chapter. The whole fill layer uncovered in the chapel was designated as a single ceramic context (43.AS68c.2012), with individual baskets collected and documented from specific areas of the fill (e.g. basket 43b.AS68c.2012 from the fill of the serdab). Therefore, it is possible to allocate specific vessels to certain provenances within the tomb.

| Context   | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims       | Bases      | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of min. vessels |
|---|----------------|--|------------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 43.AS68c.2012<br>and<br>221/AS68c/2012<br>(fill of chapel in<br>AS 68c) | J-1            | 1                                      | 138        | 120        | -                          | 869                      | 1128                 | 259                         | 122                 | 29,1%             |
|   | J fine         | -                                      | 3          | 3          | 4                          | 11                       | 21                   | 10                          | 12                  | 2,9%              |
|   | B              | -                                      | 56         | 1          | 3                          | 86                       | 146                  | 57                          | 45                  | 10,7%             |
|   | S              | 3                                      | 92         | 19         | 11                         | 38                       | 163                  | 112                         | 38                  | 9,1%              |
|   | F              | 3                                      | 41         | 9          | 5                          | 33                       | 91                   | 58                          | 31                  | 7,4%              |
|   | P              | 69                                     | -          | -          | -                          | 20                       | 89                   | 69                          | 29                  | 6,9%              |
|   | MB             | 102                                    | 5          | 6          | -                          | -                        | 113                  | 113                         | 109                 | 26,0%             |
|   | MC             | 6                                      | 9          | 8          | -                          | -                        | 23                   | 23                          | 23                  | 5,5%              |
|   | MJ             | 1                                      | -          | -          | -                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 0,2%              |
|   | MS (?)         | 1                                      | -          | -          | -                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 0,2%              |
|   | L              | -                                      | -          | 1          | -                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 0,2%              |
|   | D              | 2                                      | -          | 1          | 5                          | 1                        | 9                    | 8                           | 5                   | 1,2%              |
|   | T              | 1                                      | -          | -          | 2                          | -                        | 3                    | 3                           | 2                   | 0,5%              |
| <b>Total</b>  |                | <b>189</b>                             | <b>344</b> | <b>168</b> | <b>30</b>                  | <b>1058</b>              | <b>1789</b>          | <b>715</b>                  | <b>419</b>          | <b>100,0%</b>     |

**Fig. 3.32 Amounts of ceramic finds from the area of the chapel and serdab in AS 68c**

One of the notable features is the high presence of miniature vessels (namely 134 pieces), making up 32% of the whole assemblage. Most of them were miniature bowls and cups, with the addition of one stand and one miniaturized beer jar. Such a high percentage is very unusual, especially given that beer jars constitute only 29% of the vessels. A whole third of them was found in the area immediately south of the serdab, between the serdab and the secondary wall (Fig. 3.143). Moreover, the miniature vessels are far from uniform – more than two thirds were the usual wheel-made miniatures (see Figs. 3.145–3.148); the rest were highly irregular, hand-made miniatures from a coarser material with organic inclusions (see Figs. 3.149 and 3.150). A similar observation was able to be made in the assemblages of both previous rock-cut tombs, but with a higher presence of the finer miniatures in this particular chapel. Due to the fact that only small groups, usually coming from contained areas within the

chapel, could be seen as coming from the same batch, the present author sees the variability as an account of longer-lasting cultic activity of persons from different social and economic background. From the serdab, only wheel-made miniatures were uncovered.

What is interesting is the amount and variability of carinated bowls from the chapel, covering the whole span of the late Old Kingdom. The oldest examples were uncovered in the fill of the serdab and in the area around it, such as examples with a straight rim, rounded shoulders and relatively deep body (*e.g.* 43-32.AS68c.2012, Fig. 3.153) – these belong among the oldest ceramic types from the tomb, namely the late Fifth Dynasty. These finds no doubt correspond with the initial use of the tomb. However, Sixth Dynasty wares were also found in the chapel. One of the carinated bowls that was uncovered in several large fragments in the disturbed serdab was reconstructed to full profile (43-20.AS68c.2012, Fig. 3.154). Another bowl in full profile had a slightly open rim with an outer groove and articulated rounded shoulders (43-31.AS68c.2012, Fig. 3.151). A Fifth Dynasty carinated bowl was discovered in the fill on the floor of the entrance, in the north part of the tomb, namely one with a tall rim and angular shoulders (43-17.AS68c.2012, Fig. 3.152).

As far as other ceramic finds from the serdab are concerned, they were rather scant, consisting altogether of fragments of only about 15 vessels. None were found complete and some were able to be connected to fragments from the main area of the chapel, especially the entrance, pointing to significant robbing activities resulting in the dispersion of the material. Similar observations were made concerning other finds, such as the statues from the serdab. On the other hand, the pottery from the serdab is important, as it shows typical late Fifth Dynasty wares. It is possible that at least some of the fragments came from the time of the building of the tomb and fill of the serdab.

For the purpose of this chapter, which concentrates on the time span of the existence and active use of this particular tomb chapel, it is also important to mention examples of the youngest pottery uncovered in the fill. These include some of the already mentioned carinated bowls, especially the types with very short rims with a visible groove (*e.g.* 43-24.AS68c.2012, 43-26.AS68c.2012, see Fig. 3.154), as well as ones with angular shoulders and flaring rims,

with analogies from well-dated contexts of the Sixth Dynasty, such as the ceramic deposits in the false shaft in the tomb of judge Inti from Abusir South (Kytnarová 2009: Fig. 55, B-1bIII). Most of them came from the south part of the tomb, south of the so-called secondary wall.

Besides these, we also have a well preserved beer jar with a low tubular body and modelled rim (43-87.AS68c.2012, Abusir type J-1gII, Fig. 3.155), found in large fragments placed into the secondary wall close to the serdab. Such beer jars, characteristically covered with a red slip on the outer walls, are typical for the first half of the Sixth Dynasty and were found *e.g.* in the burial chamber of Nikauisesi (Kanawati *et al.* 2000: pl. 71, TNE98:17), or in several examples in the cemetery of Saqqara West (*e.g.* Rzeuska 2006: pl. 19–20). Another such example, although less preserved and with a simple rim (43-86.AS68c.2012, Abusir type J-1gI, Fig. 3.155), was found in the very entrance to the tomb. These beer jars were used in cultic activity, meaning that at that period, offerings were very likely still being placed in front of the false doors in this tomb chapel. Refuse from such activity was then very likely used for the building of the secondary wall— by the presence of the beer jar in its fill, we can at least state *terminus post quem* for the construction of the wall.

A different beer jar type from the end of the Sixth Dynasty was found in the south part of the chapel, namely a tall jar with a low neck, tubular tapering body and rounded base (Abusir type J-1d). This example was found immediately behind the secondary wall, to the north-west of Shaft 3 (43-6.AS68c.2012, see Fig. 3.155). It was preserved in full profile, with a height of 33.5 cm. Parallels can be seen in the ceramic finds from the cemetery in Saqqara West, dated to the first half of the reign of Pepy II (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 15, nos. 27–28). Yet another beer jar type was found only in base fragments, therefore the full shape can only be estimated (43-88.ASS68c.2012, 43-89.AS68c.2012, Fig. 3.155). However, such clearly pointed bases should belong to Abusir type J-1c, which is characteristic of the second half of the Sixth Dynasty (*e.g.* Rzeuska 2006: pl. 28–29, types 9 and 10). All the examples were found in the northern area of the chapel, north of the secondary wall.

There were several examples of bread forms of similar dating, particularly *bd3* forms with a flat base (Abusir type F-2, *e.g.* 43-39.AS68c.2012 and 43-41.ASS68c.2012, Fig. 3.156) or

tall bread trays known as *štt* that usually had oval bodies and also a flat base (Abusir type F-4, *e.g.* 43-38.AS68c.2012, 43-40.AS68c.2012 and 43-43.AS68c.2012, Fig. 3.156). Two of the *bdβ* bread forms bear traces of fire, both on the outer surface as well as the inside (Figs. 3.157 and 3.158). All of this particular pottery is much younger than the expected period of the building of the tomb and attests to the time span of its use well into the Sixth Dynasty.<sup>31</sup>

To sum up, the ceramic finds from the area of the chapel cover a considerable time span. Except for a few pieces of ceramics dated to the Fifth that were found in the disturbed serdab, most of the other pottery came from the fill that accumulated in the chapel itself. Almost all of this other pottery can be attributed to the later part of the Sixth Dynasty, from the early part of the reign of Pepy II onwards, with some pieces of cultic pottery (notably the ones associated with the secondary wall built in the north part of the tomb) from the slightly earlier period, namely of Pepy I to Merenre.

### 3.5.2 SHAFT 1 (“HUSBAND”)

Due to the abovementioned facts the owner of Shaft 1 in the rock-cut tomb AS 68c is generally described as “the husband of Princess Sheretnebtj”, although neither his name nor titles are known. However, it is clear that he was an official of very high economic and social status – his shaft, with an opening of  $1.50 \times 1.60$  m, is the deepest in the whole complex (having 11.10 m) and his burial chamber contained an exquisitely made sarcophagus of high quality white limestone (see also Vymazalová 2015: 50–53; Vymazalová – Arias *forthcoming*).

The fill of Shaft 1 contained an extremely large amount of ceramic finds, namely 2,248 fragments, out of which 824 were diagnostic pieces with a minimum count of 496 individual vessels (Table 3.33). The analysis of the ceramics from this shaft exemplified even more the importance of differentiation between the number of diagnostic fragments (which are counted in the first stage of analysis) and the number of minimum vessels (which is determined after the fragments are studied in detail and, when possible, glued to gain a more complete shape; see also *Chapter 2.1*). The difference between the two numbers can be very small (if we have

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<sup>31</sup> For analogies, see *e.g.* Rzeuska (2006: Pl. 144, no. 728 and 730, Pl. 149, no. 760).

a rather undisturbed context) or very large, such as here, when the ceramics were broken to many pieces as an outcome of rituals or robbing activities. The resulting information consists not only of the likely number of the originally deposited vessels but also their fragmentation, whether accidental or intentional. In cases where the difference between the minimum amount of vessels and diagnostic fragments is almost double we can assume with reasonable doubt that the fragmentation was intentional, probably as part of a burial ritual.

| Context                                 | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims       | Bases      | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|----------------|--|------------|------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 57.AS68c.2013<br>(Shaft 1<br>in AS 68c) | J-1            | -                                      | 215        | 251        | -                                | 1130                        | 1596                    | 466                               | 257                    | 51,8%                |
|   | J fine         | -                                      | 3          | -          | -                                | 6                           | 9                       | 3                                 | 2                      | 0,4%                 |
|   | B              | -                                      | 37         | -          | 9                                | 82                          | 128                     | 46                                | 40                     | 8,1%                 |
|   | S              | 3                                      | 55         | 16         | 17                               | 78                          | 169                     | 91                                | 43                     | 8,7%                 |
|   | F              | -                                      | 70         | 8          | 18                               | 111                         | 205                     | 96                                | 52                     | 10,5%                |
|   | P              | 53                                     | 2          | -          | 1                                | 15                          | 71                      | 56                                | 36                     | 7,3%                 |
|   | MB             | 23                                     | -          | 4          | -                                | 1                           | 28                      | 27                                | 27                     | 5,4%                 |
|   | MC             | 4                                      | 5          | 16         | 7                                | -                           | 32                      | 32                                | 32                     | 6,5%                 |
| MJ                                      | -              | 4                                      | 3          | -          | 3                                | 10                          | 7                       | 7                                 | 1,4%                   |                      |
| <b>Total</b>                            |                | <b>83</b>                              | <b>391</b> | <b>298</b> | <b>52</b>                        | <b>1426</b>                 | <b>2248</b>             | <b>824</b>                        | <b>496</b>             | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.33 Amounts of ceramic fragments from the fill of Shaft 1 in tomb AS 68c**

The ceramic finds from the shaft were very diverse and consisted predominantly of jars (beer jars), almost 52% of the minimum number of vessels. All other classes were much less represented, such as miniature vessels (13%), bread forms (11%), stands (9%), bowls (8%) and least, platters, with only 7%. Not all shall be discussed in detail in this chapter, as the sheer volume of the ceramic evidence is very extensive; rather, the author would like to concentrate on certain notable features.

The fill in the shaft was not homogenous and it was possible to observe several strata (Fig. 3.159, for more details, see also *Chapter 4.6.3*); however, it must be stressed that the shaft was robbed, so this term should be taken with caution. In the light of this, the stratum from 1.70–3.50 m was distinctly different from the rest and contained most of the pottery, namely almost half of all the ceramic finds from this shaft. Also, this uppermost layer contained a very high concentration of very specific beer jars – very large, thick-walled fragments covered on the outer surface with a red slip (Figs. 3.161 and 3.162). Such a surface treatment is very



unusual for beer jars and becomes characteristic only for the Sixth Dynasty, with the earliest known examples from the period of Pepy I.<sup>32</sup> So far, only three types of red-slipped beer jars have been discovered in the Memphite necropolis; namely a tall tubular jar; a low tubular jar and a tall fusiform jar with a high rim or neck and a pointed base (Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 13–14 and Pls. 19–20; Rzeuska 2013: Fig. 163, Form 233). The difference in height between the two tubular types is considerable, with the tall type measuring up to 40 cm and the small only to maximum 23 cm. All the red-slipped beer jars from the Memphite necropolis are dated to the Sixth Dynasty<sup>33</sup> on the basis of objective external criteria such as epigraphic attestations and names and titles of the deceased. Thus, it is unlikely that these particular jars from Shaft 1 actually came from the second half of the Fifth Dynasty, in which the shaft was built.

All the red-slipped beer jars from Shaft 1 were extremely massive, as could also be seen in their thick-walled fragments with rather large diameters – unluckily, none were able to be reconstructed to full profile (Fig. 3.161). Some individual sherds were rather small, including the very thick bases, which could point to the fact that they were broken on purpose and with a considerable degree of effort. They are preserved at most to about 1/2 of their heights; in two cases, this is 27.5 cm and 28 cm and therefore the estimated height could be up to 50 cm or more. At this height, they have diameters of 25 cm and widen still.<sup>34</sup>

The present author was able to identify two main types of rims (see Fig. 3.160): (A) a simple tubular thick rim and (B) with a low neck. These differ from other beer jar rim fragments in having red-slipped outer, as well as part of the inner, surface. For red-slipped bases, also two types were discerned: (A) a wide rounded base with tubular walls and (B) one with open walls of a more ovoid shape. On the grounds of this identification, it is possible to tentatively connect the tubular rims with the first type of base (A–A) and the low neck open

<sup>32</sup> *E.g.* from the tombs in Saqqara West (see Rzeuska 2006: Table 1, Forms 3 and 6).

<sup>33</sup> With the possibility of one of the types, Form 233, continuing into the First Intermediate Period (see Rzeuska 2013: 492) on the basis of an analogy from an intact ceramic deposit uncovered in tomb QH 102c in Qubbit el-Hawa (Edel – Seyfried – Vieler 2008: 1498, Abb. 19, no. 102c/74).

<sup>34</sup> To compare, typical ovoid beer jars found in Abusir South, from the second half of the Fifth Dynasty, more precisely the time span between kings Niuserre and Djedkare, measured between 25–37 cm in height and around 17 cm in diameter (Arias Kytarová 2011c: 89–93). Some unusually tall beer jars reaching 40–41 cm were found in the burial chamber of Neferinpu, dating to the period of Djedkare (see Arias Kytarová 2014a: 114–122).

body with ovoid-shaped bases (B–B). The tubular rims have an irregular oval diameter, which is often also attested in the complete examples from the Abusir South cemetery.<sup>35</sup> As was mentioned before, none of the vessels are complete, therefore no parallels were able to be provided for sure; some comparisons can be seen in vessels from the cemetery of Saqqara West.

Among the red-slipped beer jars, the tall and massive tubular types are more common, with examples coming predominantly from the Memphite necropolis, such as the tomb of Ikhi and other structures at Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 13–14) and the tombs in Tabbet el-Gesh (Pantalacci 2005: 424–25, Fig. 9, first vessel from the left), dated to the span of the reigns of Pepy I to Merenre.

The second type with a low neck and probably ovoid body is more problematic, as the lack of shoulders makes the final shape questionable. There are a few possible variations. It is very likely not related to Saqqara West Form 233. While our examples have a low well profiled neck, Form 233 has a tall wide rim/neck and less pronounced, smooth shoulders. It is more likely that our example constitutes a new type.

The main question is, what was the function of these massive red-slipped beer jars, given their sizes, presumed volumes and surface treatment? There were at least six individual vessels in the upper levels of Shaft 1. So far, red-slipped beer jars are unknown from settlement contexts and as a rule come only from cemeteries.<sup>36</sup> The practical function of the red slip is dubious – it might have served as an upgraded level of water-proofing and insulation, but the lack of such jars from settlements seems to contradict this.<sup>37</sup> Also, very often, the slip covers the whole outer surface except for the very base, which would contravene

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<sup>35</sup> The most complete examples of low tubular red-slipped beer jars come from an intact beer jar deposit uncovered in the north-west corner of the anonymous tomb AS 41, where almost all of them exhibit an oval diameter (yet unpublished).

<sup>36</sup> Even in the case where such red-slipped beer jars were found in settlements, their particular contexts are related to cultic instalments (chapels, niches, *etc.*) and are therefore also counted amongst offering pottery (see also the next note).

<sup>37</sup> In the case of red-slipped beer jars that come from the settlement of Elephantine, it must be stressed that they come from the context of a temple or a shrine and were very probably used in the cult (Teodozja Rzeuska, personal communication).

the use of any functional water-proofing. The make of these red-slipped beer jars is in no other way different from “classical” beer jars, as they are hand-made of very rough fabrics, such as Nile silt B2 or C and very often exhibit numerous organic inclusions on their surfaces. Their absence from settlement contexts and high numbers in cemeteries could point to the fact that it was this surface treatment that identified them as cultic vessels, and that they were designed for this function from the start. Due to their sizes and especially weights, it seems improbable that they were brought here by tomb robbers as part of their provisions, and therefore should not be seen as the secondary remnants of their necessities, as they must have been extremely heavy and difficult to manage – even the smaller base fragments weighed several kilograms. Besides this, we found massive fragments of Nile mud filling that did not fit the smaller Fifth-Dynasty beer jars from this shaft. Therefore, I would propose that these massive red-slipped beer jars were designated exclusively for cultic purposes and can be seen as direct refuse of cultic activities. The resulting proposal for their occurrence in the upper levels of the shaft is that they are proof of ongoing cultic activity in this tomb during the period of Pepy I or even later, thus meaning that it spanned at least a few generations following the burial of its main owner.

There were also several “classical” beer jars belonging to the period of the construction of the tomb, namely the later Fifth Dynasty. All came from the lower levels of the shaft. There were more than 10 individual beer jars covered with a white wash – such a surface treatment is usually seen as proof of use in ritual activity, as white-washing represents purification for religious purposes. From Abusir South, we can name analogical examples from the burial chamber and shaft of Neferinpu (Arias Kytarová 2014a: Fig. 7.10 and Pl. 7.1).

Besides these, we also had beer jars with a thick layer of a light-coloured substance inside, used secondarily as containers for mortar or gybs (Fig. 3.164). There were only about six bases, with many further body fragments. These are also important remnants of activity in the tombs: mortar was commonly used to seal the sarcophagus and plaster was used for white-washing the walls of the burial chamber or the sealed entrance into the chamber – all of this for reasons of ritual purification (Rzeuska 2006: 448). After this secondary use as containers,

the jars were simply discarded and can often be found in the fill of the shaft. These six jars did not necessarily have an absolutely identical purpose, as some were filled with a rough pinkish substance (very likely mortar), while others had only a relatively thin layer of finer white substance, probably plaster. Both of these materials can be confirmed archaeologically in Shaft 1, as the partly disturbed sealing wall leading into the burial chamber was built of pieces of stone and *tafl*, joined with pinkish mortar. Furthermore, following the burial rituals, this wall was also white-washed on its outside with a layer of fine plaster.

Another interesting example of the secondary use of beer jars is provided by a base and other fragments with remnants of red pigment (Fig. 3.163). So far, none of them have yet been analysed, therefore the exact identification remains tentative; however, such an occurrence is of high prominence. We may note here that we had examples of fine jar bases filled with the remains of ochre in the neighbouring tomb of Shepesuptah (AS 68b) and even a bread form base with similar remnants of red colour from the area of the open court. The tomb of Shepesuptah had hieratic inscriptions in red colour on the walls of its rock-cut chapel, specifying his name and titles (see above; also Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 102–104; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 24); therefore, the vessels found in his tomb might be seen as direct technical refuse from such activities, when they were used as a kind of container for the pigment.

The pottery from the middle cluster in Shaft 1 (see Fig. 3.159) consisted predominantly of classes expected in such a context, namely stands, platters, some bread forms and the already mentioned Fifth Dynasty beer jars. Some of the stands include A-shaped stands of very large sizes (Abusir group S-2), covered in a thick layer of red slip on the outside, including some with a so-called triangular “window” cut in the body of the stand (*cf.* Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 129, 36-3-43 and 34-12-3). However, the most common stand groups are those of tall hour-glass shaped stands (S-1) and low conical ring stands (S-6). Most of the platters were preserved only to relatively small proportions, usually about 15% of their diameter. They belonged most commonly to group P-3 with a groove under the inner rim; platters with simple concave walls or with flaring rims were also attested. A detailed analysis

of all attested groups and types is not the aim of this paper; however, it is important to stress that such typological occurrences as mentioned above are quite common in Abusir South, and in the tombs of high officials, it is customary to find burial shafts filled with the above-mentioned classes.<sup>38</sup>

To draw some preliminary conclusions concerning the strata in the shafts, these were probably created during the course of the robbing activities. Due to the lack of Sixth Dynasty ceramic material in the burial chamber and the predominance of Fifth Dynasty vessels in the floor levels of the shaft, we can tentatively presume that the chamber had already been robbed in the Fifth Dynasty (see also detailed discussion in *Chapter 4.6.2*). Following the robbing, the shaft was partially filled in with its original shaft contents – consisting predominantly of stands, platters and bowls. Later on, the remaining volume of the shaft was filled with the refuse from the ongoing activity in the chapel, namely the abovementioned large red-slipped beer jars and other Sixth Dynasty vessels.

| Context                                       | Class or group | Complete vessels/ complete profiles | Rims      | Bases     | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of min. vessels |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 58.AS68c.2013<br>(BC of Shaft 1<br>in AS 68c) | J-1            | -                                   | 2         | -         | -                          | 32                       | 34                   | 2                           | 2                   | 11,8%             |
|   | J fine         | 2                                   | 4         | 1         | -                          | 3                        | 10                   | 7                           | 4                   | 23,5%             |
|   | B              | 6                                   | 41        | 2         | 3                          | 65                       | 117                  | 52                          | 6                   | 35,3%             |
|   | S              | -                                   | 1         | -         | -                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 5,9%              |
|   | F              | -                                   | 1         | -         | -                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 5,9%              |
|   | D              | -                                   | -         | 7         | -                          | -                        | 7                    | 7                           | 3                   | 17,6%             |
| <b>Total</b>                                  |                | <b>8</b>                            | <b>49</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>3</b>                   | <b>100</b>               | <b>170</b>           | <b>70</b>                   | <b>17</b>           | <b>100,0%</b>     |

**Table 3.34 Ceramic finds from the burial chamber of the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebt**

The burial chamber of Shaft 1 was located at the bottom of the shaft, in its south wall. The entrance was blocked by a wall built of limestone blocks and smaller pieces that were joined with mortar and further covered with pinkish plaster (see Fig. 3.165; Vymazalová 2015: 51). The occurrence of both mortar and plaster is interesting, as the fill in the lowermost part

<sup>38</sup> It is possible to name two particular examples, such as the assemblage from Shaft 1 in the anonymous tomb AS 47 (Arias Kytarová 2011a: 122–23, Figs. 19–22) and the pottery from the fill of Shaft 1 and 2 in tomb AS 68d (*Chapters 3.6.2 and 3.6.3, cf. Arias Kytarová 2015: Figs. 3 and 13*).

of the shaft contained broken beer jar bases used as containers of both a rough white substance (probably mortar) and finer pinkish plaster, very likely left behind by the tomb sealers after the body interment (see *supra*). The burial chamber is medium-sized, with dimensions of 3.60 × 3.00 m. The sarcophagus takes up most of the western part of the chamber and most goods were found scattered on the floor east of it or, in a few cases, in the narrow space directly south of it (see also Fig. 3.166). Part of the fill of the shaft spilled through the entrance. As was mentioned before, the husband of Princess Sheretnebtj was undoubtedly a highly positioned official, as can be judged from the size of his shaft and the make and quality of his white limestone sarcophagus (Vymazalová 2015: 57; Vymazalová – Arias Kytarová *forthcoming*). Despite the fact that the chamber was robbed, numerous remnants of the original tomb goods intended for the afterlife of the deceased were found in the floor layer of the burial chamber, including the four canopic jars and their lids (Vymazalová 2015: 53).

All the finds were collected very carefully as per their stratigraphic layers and bagged according to their respective clusters of deposition, which enabled us to study not only the finds themselves but also the manner of their original placement in the chamber and enquire into the question of intentional deposition versus accidental disarray. Most of the ceramics were found in fragments scattered all over the eastern and partly the southern part of the chamber (Fig. 3.167 and 3.168). Originally, during the collecting, this scatter seemed disarrayed, as if resulting from robbing activities in the chamber, when the pottery got broken, trampled on and misplaced. However, a subsequent analysis of the ceramic material proved that most of the fragments of a single vessel were found in only a maximum of three neighbouring areas. The quality of evidence of these ceramic finds shall be discussed in detail in the next section below.

As far as the typological variety of the pottery is concerned, there were altogether six open vessels and four closed ones (Table 3.34 and Fig. 3.169). Most of them were able to be reconstructed to almost full diameter. The open ones include a large deep bent-sided bowl, two shallow bent-sided bowls, one carinated bowl and one beaker. The restricted vessels

consist of three large ovoid jars and one small shouldered jar. All the fragments had clean and sharp breaks without any trace of erosion, evidencing that they were never exposed to sun, wind or water.

The largest open vessel, no. 58-5.AS68c.2013, is a deep bent-sided bowl with an open rim and a flat base (Abusir type B-2aI). Its diameter is slightly oval, with an aperture of 35–36 cm, and it is quite deep, with a depth of 14 cm (Figs. 3.170 and 3.174). This bowl was uncovered in three neighbouring clusters, with the largest number of fragments immediately south of the “pedestal” and further sherds uncovered in the south-east corner of the chamber. The bowl is of very high quality, made of Nile silt B1, red-slipped and thoroughly polished to a metallic shine. It was recovered fully, without any missing pieces. Noteworthy analogies for this type come from the so-called false shaft (room AC26-11) in the tomb of prince Werkaure at Abusir Centre (AC 26; Arias Kytarová 2014a: Figs. 4.29–4.32, nos. 73.AC26.08 and 74.AC26.08). Similar deep bent-sided bowls with a flat base and simple rim were also found in Fifth Dynasty mastabas of Giza (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 126, esp. 28-6-6, 14-3-46 and 14-2-105; Weeks 1994: Fig. 128, 25-12-77 and Fig. 131, 25-12-267) and in the upper part of the sun temple of Weserkaf in northern Abusir (Kaiser 1969: Abb. XXII).

There were three other bent-sided bowls, but of a different form, namely wide and shallow (Abusir type B-2aII). All three had similar dimensions, with aperture diameters of 21–23 cm, maximum diameters of 21.5–24 cm and heights of 4.7–5.7 cm. They differ slightly in the accentuation of the inner and outer bend, with no. 58-4.AS68c.2013 having a pronounced groove in the inner bend and *i.e.* 58-12.AS68c.2013 a very smooth transition of body to base (Figs. 3.169 and 3.170). All three were covered with a red slip; however, one was highly polished to an almost metallic shine, while the other two remained unpolished. Bowl no. 58-12.AS68c.2013 was the only one that exhibited distinct traces of diagonal smoothing on the outer lower body. As far as their original position in the burial chamber is concerned, they were found in sherds in a cluster immediately south-east and south of the sarcophagus. All three were fully recovered. Such shallow bent-sided bowls are known from the whole

Memhite necropolis, with this particular form coming especially from Fifth Dynasty tombs and structures (*e.g.* Weeks 1994: Fig. 128, 25-12-50; Roth 1995: Fig. 86, 39-3-22 and 39-3-23).

The most interesting feature of one of these shallow bowls is the traces of blue pigment on the inner walls of no. 58-11.AS68c.2013. These traces are very faint, sometimes preserved only in the crevices from the burned organic temper (see Figs. 3.171 and 3.172). The question of the exact purpose of such a bowl with blue pigment inside has not been solved satisfactorily yet. We have extensive use of blue pigment in the decoration of the false door in the neighbouring tomb of Nefer (AS 68d; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: Fig. 10) and therefore it is not far-fetched that a similarly painted false door was also originally manufactured for the presumed husband of princess Sheretnebtj. However, no painted false door or its fragments have been found,<sup>39</sup> and even if it had existed, the purpose of depositing a bowl with the remains of the pigment inside the burial chamber is contentious.

The chamber held only one bowl with a carinated rim (58-13.AS68c.2013). The bowl had a medium tall neck and similar rim and shoulder diameters (27, respectively 26 cm), with a height of 8 cm (Fig. 3.175). It was covered with a high quality red slip and was highly polished, with a metallic shine. It was the least preserved bowl from the chamber, as only 80% of the rim and body were recovered. Its general shape, with an angular shoulder and almost identical aperture and shoulder diameters, as well as other indicators, such as the neck height, indicate its Fifth Dynasty production.<sup>40</sup>

The last bowl from the chamber, a small beaker no. 58-10.AS68c.2013, was found broken into a few sherds in a single cluster next to the “pedestal” east of the sarcophagus (see Fig. 3.169). Its whole inner surface was covered with a thin layer of ash (Fig. 3.177). Unluckily, no analysis of the content has yet been executed, but we could theorize that the ash might constitute the remains of plants or other organic matter burned during burial rituals. In the vicinity, animal bones were uncovered, which could also have served as part of the offerings.

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<sup>39</sup> Fragments of several false doors were uncovered in the tomb AS 68c (see Vymazalová 2016: 12 and Vymazalová – Arias Kytmarová *forthcoming*).

<sup>40</sup> The dating limitations of the carinated bowls have been discussed in detail on many occasions (see *e.g.* Rzeuska 2006: 408–409; Op de Beeck 2004: 239–80 and Arias Kytmarová 2011c: 95); For further discussion on the development of carinated bowls, see *Chapter 5.3.1*.



There were altogether four closed vessels in the area of the burial chamber. Three of them are of identical type, material and size (nos. 58-1.AS68c.2013, 58-2.AS68c.2013 and 58-9.AS68c.2013, see Figs. 3.170 and 3.174). They were all made of light grey Marl A3 and belong to Abusir type J-3, large ovoid jars with a low neck and modelled rim with an inner groove. Two of them (nos. 58-1 and 58-2) were found fully intact in the south-east corner of the burial chamber, among the scattered canopic jars and canopic lids (Fig. 3.169). The last one (no. 58-9) was recovered as a large upper body fragment in the rubble along the north-east side of the sarcophagus. None of these vessels had the remains of Nile mud filling but, notably, all of them bore slight traces of a black substance (not mud) on their inner walls.<sup>41</sup> Their dimensions are almost identical, with aperture diameters of 8–8.3 cm, maximum diameters of 19–21 cm and heights of 33 cm for the two fully preserved vessels. They have faint traces of slightly diagonal smoothing on the outer lower body. This type of large ovoid jar with a low neck is a very common one, especially in identical contexts. In Abusir, at least two such jars each were uncovered in fragments in the robbed burial chambers of Shafts 1 and 2 in the neighbouring large mastaba of Nefershepes (*cf.* Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 19–22).<sup>42</sup> Another one, albeit slightly wider, was uncovered fully intact in the burial chamber of Shaft 1 in the anonymous tomb, AS 47, with a partly preserved false filling of Nile mud inside (Arias Kytarová 2011a: Figs. 11 and 17, no. 3/AS47/2007). Such large ovoid jars are common for the whole period of the second half of the Old Kingdom, with one of the oldest uncovered in the burial chamber of Hetepheres in Giza.<sup>43</sup> It is the examples from the later Fifth Dynasty that exhibit a specific rim shape, namely an outer rolled rim with an inner groove.<sup>44</sup> J-3 is a ceramic group commonly made of Marl clays, although some examples are known also to be of Nile silts, in that case frequently covered with a white wash. They are commonly described as wine

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<sup>41</sup> As with the blue pigment and the remains of ashes, none of these finds have been analysed yet due to the specifications and limitations concerning such finds in Egyptian archaeology.

<sup>42</sup> Some preliminary observations on the pottery from the burial chambers were published in Czech (see Arias Kytarová – Havelková – Jirásková *et al.* 2013: 88–90).

<sup>43</sup> These examples vary from ours mainly in the shape of the rim (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 58).

<sup>44</sup> See *e.g.* jars from the tomb of Shepseskafankh (G 6040) and anonymous tomb G 4733 in Giza (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 82, 25-12-69 and 14-2-115; also Weeks 1995: 131, 25-12-69).

jars or other storage jars designated for liquids, as Marl clays have denser and more impermeable quality (Wodzińska 2007: 289–290).

Besides the light-coloured Marl A3 jars, there was also one example of a small jar made of Nile silt B1 and covered with a thick layer of red slip (no. 58-3.AS68c.2013, see Fig. 3.176). Similar to other “red pottery”, it was found in fragments in a single cluster east of the sarcophagus, and unlike any other vessel from the chamber, it could not be reconstructed to full shape or at least to complete profile. The shape is one of a small shouldered jar with a flattened base, with only 12 cm in shoulder diameter and 13 cm in incomplete height. The jar had either a contracted modelled rim or a low neck, such as the estimated parallels from the Memphite necropolis.<sup>45</sup> Its most exceptional feature was the presence of spatters of a white substance not on its surfaces but on the breaks of individual sherds, evidencing that the jar surely did not serve as a container for plaster but that plaster made contact with it only after the vessel broke. This was not the only example of such an occurrence, as some of the bowl sherds also had a white substance on unrelated places on their breaks. The interpretation and importance of this feature shall be discussed in the following chapters (see *Chapter 4.6.2*).

### 3.5.3 SHAFT 2 (SHERETNEBTY?)

Shaft 2 in tomb AS 68c was the second deepest shaft in the whole complex, with a depth of 10.7 m, only surpassed by its neighbouring Shaft 1 (see Fig. 3.133 and Table 6.1). The mouth of the shaft measured 1.40 × 1.30 m. During the excavation works, it became clear that both the shaft and its burial chamber were unfinished (Vymazalová 2015: 54). The owner cannot be stated with certainty, as no epigraphic evidence was uncovered. However, on the basis of the auxiliary evidence, it is highly likely that the shaft was designated for Sheretnebtly herself (see Vymazalová 2015: 54; Vymazalová – Arias Kytmarová *forthcoming*).

Although Shaft 2 is almost of the same depth as Shaft 1, it contained much less pottery (compare Table 3.35 and Table 3.33). The most represented class was that of jars, followed by

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<sup>45</sup> Providing analogies for incomplete vessels is always problematic; with that in mind, the jar seems similar to neckless shoulder jars known from the necropolis of Giza (*cf.* Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 63: nos. 32–52 and 34-3-53 for similarly-sized examples).

miniature vessels and (by a far margin) by stands, bread forms, platters and finally bowls. Almost all the material was very fragmented and except for the miniature vessels, none were recovered in full shape. Most often, only a small percentage of the diameter was preserved, pointing to the fact that the shaft was not only robbed, but also that it was left partly emptied by the robbers (Vymazalová 2015: 54), and thus it contained very little of its original fill. Jars could be counted only on the grounds of the number of their bases, as none were reconstructed to full profile. Bowls, platters and stands were preserved to very small percentages of their diameters, often as small as 4–8%, most commonly around 15%, indicating that they are most likely part of secondary and not primary refuse.

| Context                                       | Class or group | Complete vessels/ complete profiles | Rims       | Bases     | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of min. vessels |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 66.AS68c.2013<br>(Shaft 2<br>in AS 68c)       | J-1            | -                                   | 44         | 29        | -                          | 344                      | 417                  | 73                          | 39                  | 39,4%             |
|   | B              | -                                   | 15         | -         | 1                          | 35                       | 51                   | 16                          | 6                   | 6,1%              |
|   | S              | -                                   | 27         | -         | 1                          | 34                       | 62                   | 28                          | 9                   | 9,1%              |
|   | F              | -                                   | 24         | -         | 3                          | 50                       | 77                   | 27                          | 12                  | 12,1%             |
|   | P              | 12                                  | -          | -         | -                          | 3                        | 15                   | 12                          | 8                   | 8,1%              |
|   | MB             | 9                                   | -          | 1         | -                          | -                        | 10                   | 10                          | 10                  | 10,1%             |
|   | MC             | 6                                   | 1          | 6         | 2                          | -                        | 15                   | 15                          | 15                  | 15,2%             |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>27</b>                           | <b>111</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>7</b>                   | <b>466</b>               | <b>647</b>           | <b>181</b>                  | <b>99</b>           | <b>100,0%</b>     |
| 67.AS68c.2013<br>(BC of Shaft 2<br>in AS 68c) | J-1            | -                                   | 3          | 1         | -                          | 12                       | 16                   | 4                           | 2                   | 40,0%             |
|   | F              | -                                   | 2          | -         | -                          | -                        | 2                    | 2                           | 2                   | 40,0%             |
|   | S              | -                                   | 1          | -         | -                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 20,0%             |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>-</b>                            | <b>6</b>   | <b>1</b>  | <b>-</b>                   | <b>12</b>                | <b>19</b>            | <b>7</b>                    | <b>5</b>            | <b>100,0%</b>     |

**Table 3.35 Amounts of ceramic fragments from Shaft 2 in tomb AS 68c**

One of the notable exceptions was an extremely fine carinated bowl recovered in numerous fragments in the lower part of the shaft (66-22.AS68c.2013, see Fig. 3.181). It was of a very high quality of make, with a wall thickness of only 3 mm. Due to the fact that all the fragments came from the last day of excavation in the lowermost levels of the shaft and the fact that unlike any other vessel in the shaft, it was able to be glued to almost 30% of its diameter, it is possible to assume that it might have been part of the original tomb goods, originally placed with the body of the deceased in the burial niche. However, such an interpretation is tentative. The dating of this bowl is in agreement with the presumed late Fifth Dynasty interment.

The miniature vessels were the second-most common class, with 25 examples. Interestingly, more than half (13 pieces) were hand-made, thus following the pattern that was already observed in the other rock-cut tombs. These hand-made miniatures included both bowls and cups and were made from visibly rougher material.

The unfinished burial chamber was hewn into the west wall of the shaft and partly sealed with a mud brick wall (Fig. 3.178), with the body of the deceased found disarticulated on the uneven floor of the chamber (Fig. 3.179). According to the anthropological analysis, the body belonged to a woman between 25–40 years of age (Vymazalová 2015: 54). Although there were some ceramic fragments uncovered in the fill of the chamber (see Table 3.35), none were associated with the burial and their character points to the fact that they actually came from the fill in the shaft. Thus, the only item that theoretically could have belonged to the original equipment intended for the afterlife of the deceased female was the fine carinated bowl uncovered in the lower part of the shaft.

#### 3.5.4 SHAFT 3

Shaft 3 was 1.30 × 1.35 m large and reached 5.20 m in depth, making it the third deepest shaft in tomb AS 68c. Interestingly, there were two secondary breaks from this shaft; the upper one, at a depth of 2.00 m, lead to the burial chamber of the neighbouring Shaft 4. The lower opening, at 2.80 m deep, lead to Shaft 2 (Vymazalová 2015: 54–55).

In the fill of the shaft, brown sand was mixed with a negligible amount of limestone chips and larger limestone blocks. It contained a very little amount of chronologically valuable pottery fragments. The statistics show that some of the ceramic classes (namely jars and bowls; on a lower scale miniature vessels and stands) were almost equally represented (see Table 3.36). There was a surprising amount of finer pottery but this might actually be secondary, originating from the fill of the chapel. However, it is notable that none of the fragments were eroded, and most of the fine pottery was found in the deeper levels of the shaft, namely at a depth of 3.25 m and deeper. It was possible to reconstruct two bowls to full profile; all the other vessels were preserved in only very small fragments. Most of the pottery can be dated to

the Sixth Dynasty (such as the two bowls in full profiles), while some Fifth Dynasty ware is present as well, in smaller fragments. It is questionable whether this reflects the time of the construction of the shaft (which is less likely) or simply a discard of the ceramic material accumulated over time in the area of the chapel itself.

| Context                                       | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|----------------|--|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 59.AS68c.2013<br>(Shaft 3<br>in AS 68c)       | J-1            | -                                      | 12        | 9         | -                                | 173                         | 194                     | 21                                | 11                     | 26,8%                |
|   | J fine         | -                                      | 1         | 1         | -                                | -                           | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 4,9%                 |
|   | B              | 2                                      | 21        | 1         | -                                | 37                          | 61                      | 24                                | 11                     | 26,8%                |
|   | S              | -                                      | 23        | -         | 6                                | 8                           | 37                      | 27                                | 6                      | 14,6%                |
|   | F              | -                                      | 2         | -         | -                                | -                           | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 4,9%                 |
|   | P              | 4                                      | 3         | -         | 1                                | -                           | 8                       | 8                                 | 4                      | 9,8%                 |
|   | MB             | 2                                      | -         | -         | -                                | -                           | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 4,9%                 |
|   | MC             | 1                                      | 1         | 1         | -                                | -                           | 3                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 7,3%                 |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>9</b>                               | <b>63</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>7</b>                         | <b>218</b>                  | <b>309</b>              | <b>89</b>                         | <b>41</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |
| 60.AS68c.2013<br>(BC of Shaft 3<br>in AS 68c) | J-1            | -                                      | 1         | -         | -                                | 5                           | 6                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 50,0%                |
|   | MB             | -                                      | 1         | 1         | -                                | -                           | 2                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 50,0%                |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>-</b>                               | <b>2</b>  | <b>1</b>  | <b>-</b>                         | <b>5</b>                    | <b>8</b>                | <b>2</b>                          | <b>2</b>               | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.36 Amounts of pottery from Shaft 3 and its burial niche**

Among the notable pieces is the incomplete rim of a bowl with an inner ledge (59-13.AS68c.2013, Fig. 3.186), an otherwise early Old Kingdom type that survived until the end of the Fifth Dynasty, as can be seen by its presence in the late Fifth Dynasty tombs and structures at Abusir Centre (*e.g.* the tomb of Werkaure, Arias Kytarová 2014a: Figs 4.45–4.46; the funerary temple of King Raneferef, Bárta 2006: XXXIIIa\*). Another example is a beer jar with a flat base (59-12.AS68c.2013) that occurs with frequency in several late Fifth Dynasty tombs at Abusir Center (*e.g.* the tombs of Kakaibaef and Khentkaus III; Krejčí 2013 and Krejčí – Arias Kytarová – Odler 2015), some structures in Abusir South (*e.g.* the core of the mastaba of physician Ptahhotep, see Fig. 4.69, 2-1.AS36.2010) and the sun temple of Niuserre at Abu Ghurab (Kaiser 1969: type IX). Among the Sixth Dynasty types, the most noteworthy are two bowls in full profile that were found in fragments in the lower half of the shaft, at a depth of 3.25 m and deeper. One is a medium deep bowl with a simple rim, open walls and rounded base (59-1.AS68c.2013), which seems to be a forerunner or an earlier stage of

hemispherical bowl (see Fig. 3.184). It was covered with a high quality red slip and thoroughly polished to an almost metallic shine. The second is a carinated bowl with rounded shoulders and a flaring, slightly thickened rim (59-2.AS68c.2013, see Fig. 3.185), as well as other, much more fragmented fine bowls.

The shaft had a highly unfinished burial chamber on its western side, with dimensions of  $2.26 \times 1.60$  m and a maximum height of 1.34 m (see Fig. 3.183; Vymazalová 2015: 55). The entrance to the chamber was fully blocked with identical shaft fill (see Fig. 3.182), which pervaded slightly into the chamber as well. Unluckily, no traces of a burial were found, and it is possible that the chamber was never used for interment (Vymazalová 2015: 55). Ceramic fragments from the fill of the burial chamber were extremely scant (60.AS68c.2013, see Table 3.36) and due to their nature should rather be seen as part of the fill of the shaft.

### 3.5.5 SHAFT 4

Shaft 4 was one of the smaller shafts in tomb AS 68c, with a mouth of  $1.35 \times 1.35$  m and a depth of only 3.5 m (Vymazalová 2015: 55). A notable feature was the fact that in the shaft, a possible deposit consisting of animal offerings in the form of bones of ungulates, piscis and domestic pig was uncovered at a depth of 0.50 m (see Vymazalová – Arias Kytarová *forthcoming*). The fill of the shaft consisted of brown sand with cut *tafl* and irregular limestone and *tafl* pieces.

| Context                                 | Class or group | Complete vessels/ complete profiles | Rims      | Bases    | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of min. vessels |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 61.AS68c.2013<br>(Shaft 4<br>in AS 68c) | J-1            | -                                   | 11        | 2        | -                          | 55                       | 68                   | 13                          | 6                   | 6,3%              |
|   | B              | 1                                   | 13        | -        | -                          | 25                       | 39                   | 14                          | 10                  | 10,4%             |
|   | S              | -                                   | 1         | -        | -                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 1,0%              |
|   | F              | 1                                   | 21        | 1        | 3                          | 15                       | 41                   | 26                          | 10                  | 10,4%             |
|   | P              | 7                                   | -         | -        | -                          | -                        | 7                    | 7                           | 6                   | 6,3%              |
|   | D              | 2                                   | -         | -        | -                          | -                        | 2                    | 2                           | 2                   | 2,1%              |
|   | MB             | 44                                  | 14        | -        | -                          | -                        | 58                   | 58                          | 51                  | 53,1%             |
|   | MC             | 7                                   | 1         | 3        | -                          | -                        | 11                   | 11                          | 10                  | 10,4%             |
| <b>Total</b>                            |                | <b>62</b>                           | <b>61</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>3</b>                   | <b>95</b>                | <b>227</b>           | <b>132</b>                  | <b>96</b>           | <b>100,0%</b>     |

**Table 3.37 Amount of ceramic fragments from the fill of Shaft 4**

Shaft 4 brought to light a relatively small amount of ceramic finds, both from the fill of the shaft and the fill of the burial chamber, namely 227 fragments, out of which 132 were diagnostic, amounting to a minimum of 96 individual vessels (Table 3.37). The shaft is exceptional due to the presence of an extensive number of miniatures (over 60 pieces, see Fig. 3.190). Almost all of these came from the middle and upper level of the shaft (from a depth to 2.50 m) and in shape, material and general quality of make, are almost identical to numerous examples from the fill of the chapel. It is therefore possible that they originated in the chapel and only got into the shaft in the course of secondary post-depositional processes. Even though they could be correlated with the animal offering deposit, it must be remembered that they were found approximately one meter deeper. A large majority of them (52 out of 61 pieces) were the standard wheel-made miniatures, predominantly bowls. Only nine pieces were made by hand.

There were very few examples of other ceramic classes from the fill of the shaft, such as a few bread forms, platters and bowls. All the pottery is of very late Fifth or early Sixth Dynasty date. Some vessels, such as a small beaker (61-15.AS68c.2013) found in fragments in the fill of the shaft, bear similarities to material from Shaft 1.

The burial chamber was cut into the west wall of the shaft, with an entrance still blocked by a wall made of irregular blocks of limestone at the time of discovery (Fig. 3.188). The chamber was relatively large, with dimensions of 3.70 × 2.50 m and maximum height of 1.4 m (Vymazalová 2015: 55). As already noted above, the burial chamber was disturbed in its south wall by a break from the neighbouring Shaft 3 (Fig. 3.189), as well as on the north side from the burial chamber of Shaft 6 (see also *infra*). It is impossible to state whether it was an accidental break due to poor stability of the bedrock material, or an intentional hole made *e.g.* by tomb robbers (Vymazalová 2015: 55). A disturbed skeleton of a female was found on the floor of the chamber (Fig. 3.194), together with remains of wood that were interpreted as a possible coffin (Vymazalová 2015: 55).

| Context                                       | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of min. vessels |
|---|----------------|--|------|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 62.AS68c.2013<br>(BC of Shaft 4<br>in AS 68c) | J-1            | -                                      | 97   | 52    | -                          | 147                      | 296                  | 149                         | 52                  | 41,6%             |
|   | J storage      | -                                      | 1    | -     | 2                          | 18                       | 21                   | 3                           | 4                   | 3,2%              |
|   | J fine         | -                                      | 4    | -     | -                          | 8                        | 12                   | 4                           | 2                   | 1,6%              |
|   | B              | -                                      | 2    | -     | -                          | 14                       | 16                   | 2                           | 8                   | 6,4%              |
|   | S              | -                                      | 4    | 2     | -                          | -                        | 6                    | 6                           | 4                   | 3,2%              |
|   | F              | -                                      | 17   | 2     | 6                          | 21                       | 46                   | 25                          | 13                  | 10,4%             |
|   | P              | 3                                      | -    | -     | -                          | -                        | 3                    | 3                           | 2                   | 1,6%              |
|   | MB             | 18                                     | 3    | 4     | -                          | -                        | 25                   | 25                          | 22                  | 17,6%             |
|   | MC             | 1                                      | 2    | 8     | 2                          | 4                        | 17                   | 17                          | 12                  | 9,6%              |
|   | D              | 3                                      | 1    | 1     | 1                          | -                        | 6                    | 6                           | 6                   | 4,8%              |
| Total   |                | 25                                     | 131  | 69    | 11                         | 212                      | 448                  | 240                         | 125                 | 100,0%            |

**Table 3.38 Amounts of pottery from the burial chamber of Shaft 4 in AS 68c**

The amounts of pottery from the burial chamber were relatively high – in the fill, 448 fragments were uncovered, out of which 240 were diagnostic, making up at least 125 individual vessels (see Table 3.38). Due to the fact that the chamber was disturbed in not one but two places (the break in the south wall and the partly dismantled sealing wall of its own shaft), it is difficult to distinguish which pottery fragments might have belonged to the original equipment of this burial, and which came in with the fill of these shafts. Most of the pottery was preserved only in very small fragments, especially bowls, but also beer jars and bread forms. None were able to be reconstructed to full profile. The only ceramic class that was found in full shape was the miniature vessels, found in a relatively large amount, but these were also slightly worn (see Fig. 3.195). Both miniature bowls and cups were represented. Unlike the examples from the fill of Shaft 4, a vast majority of these miniatures were hand-made rather than wheel-made (32 out of 34 examples). Their typological sequence is similar to those found in Shaft 3, making it possible to assume that they originated in the fill of this shaft. Furthermore, it is important to note that ceramic miniature vessels are present only rarely as part of the burial equipment after the end of the Fifth Dynasty (Arias Kytarová 2016b: 269).

One of the more interesting features is the presence of several mud stoppers in the burial chamber, uncovered underneath the legs of the deceased. Two of them had an intentional hole (see Fig. 3.196), and all of them were slightly or highly deformed, thus



rendering their actual use improbable. The explanation for their presence in such a context is problematic. Their shapes, even with the deformations, seem to point to type D-1 with a low rounded body. Such stoppers were most commonly used with smaller and finer ovoid jars, such as Abusir type J-2. The rim of one such jar (62-5.AS68c.2013) was indeed uncovered in the fill of the burial chamber. Concerning the intentional holes, the complex of Sheretnebtj brought to light several such examples, and they shall be discussed in detail below in the chapter *Chapter 5.9*.

The other available fragments provide a mixture of late Fifth and early Sixth Dynasty wares. All the available bread forms have a ledged “shoulder”, otherwise typical for the late Fifth Dynasty. Two beer jars preserved in their lower two-thirds appear to be relatively smaller, ovoid jars with a partly pointed base – there are no examples of typical Sixth Dynasty beer jar production, which is otherwise well attested in Shafts 5 and 6, as well as the chapel of this tomb. On the other hand, the fragments of fine ware, such as the bowls, have their closest parallels in the early Sixth Dynasty. As a final note, none of the vessels from the burial chamber have the preservation or the character of burial equipment meant for the afterlife of the deceased.

### 3.5.6 SHAFT 5

Shaft 5 was one of the smaller shafts in tomb AS 68c (with a depth of only 3.2 m and mouth of 1.10 × 1.00 m) and the last built along the east wall of the tomb. Due to its size and position, it could be assumed that it was very likely built at a later stage (Vymazalová – Arias Kytarová *forthcoming*) and this theory was confirmed by and specified in the ceramic finds.

No layers were possible to observe in the fill of this shaft. We collected altogether 490 fragments, out of which 119 were diagnostic, giving us a minimum of 43 vessels (Table 3.39). The ceramic finds were interesting from the viewpoint of their preservation, as despite the fragmentation, almost every vessel was able to be reconstructed from sherds to at least 2/3 or more of their volume (compare the abovementioned poorly preserved examples from *e.g.* Shaft 2 and 4).

| Context                                 | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|----------------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 63.AS68c.2013<br>(Shaft 5<br>in AS 68c) | J-1            | 1                                      | 50   | 15    | -                                | 234                         | 300                     | 66                                | 16                     | 37,2%                |
|   | B              | 1                                      | 15   | -     | 3                                | 48                          | 67                      | 19                                | 7                      | 16,3%                |
|   | S              | -                                      | 1    | -     | -                                | 59                          | 60                      | 1                                 | 4                      | 9,3%                 |
|   | F              | 5                                      | 17   | 5     | 3                                | 29                          | 59                      | 30                                | 13                     | 30,2%                |
|   | MC             | -                                      | 2    | -     | -                                | -                           | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 4,7%                 |
|   | D              | -                                      | -    | 1     | 1                                | -                           | 2                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 2,3%                 |
| Total                                   |                | 7                                      | 85   | 21    | 7                                | 370                         | 490                     | 119                               | 43                     | 100,0%               |

**Table 3.39 Amounts of pottery from the fill of Shaft 5 in tomb AS 68c**

The ceramic finds include a tall and very slim beer jar with a low neck and pointed base (63-3.AS68c.2013, Fig. 3.201) of Abusir type J-1c. The jar was found in fragments but was possible to reconstruct to full profile. It is notable for its low quality of make, with an irregular, oval body and blackened and indented places, where the vessel was leaning against another object during its firing. The body was very tall and slim, with a height of 33 cm and maximum diameter of only 14 cm. Parallels include examples from ceramic deposits and other contexts in the complex of Pehenptah in Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: pl. 28, nos. 77, 78 and 40), as well as Shafts 4269 and 4082 in Giza (Junker 1950: 15, first row). At Abusir South, besides the jar from the neighbouring Shaft 6 (see *infra*), a large number of J-1c beer jars was also found in several shafts of the anonymous tomb AS 84b (yet unpublished). This respective type of beer jar is dated to the first half of the reign of Pepy II on the basis of epigraphic and stratigraphic data (Rzeuska 2006: 382–383, tab. 1 and 2, Form 9).

In addition to this beer jar, from the fill there were at least three examples of a different Sixth-Dynasty beer jar type, preserved only as large base and body fragments. Their full shapes cannot be estimated with certainty, however these examples indicate beer jars with tall tubular bodies and rounded bases, covered with a thin red slip on the outer walls (most likely Abusir type J-1f). Different forms of tall tubular beer jars appear during the reign of Pepy I and continue onwards, confirming thus a Sixth Dynasty date for the fill of Shaft 5.

Other ceramic finds included several bread forms, out of which four were chronologically relevant. Two bread forms were reconstructed to full profile from small fragments, resulting in *bd3* bread forms with shorter bodies, concave walls and slightly round

flattened bases (63-1.AS68c.2013 and 63-2.AS68c.2013). The first form was partly blackened by fire on its outer rim and had a small amount of mortar or perhaps a different white substance inside its inner base. Both forms are similar in having wider bodies (maximum diameters of 21 and 20 cm) in addition to their heights (both 16.5 cm) and appear to have been made by the same potter. Besides these, there were also two bread forms with flat bases, unluckily preserved only to about 1/3 of lower volume (63-10.AS68c.2013 and 63-11.AS68c.2013). One of these bore traces of fire inside.

Another find is a very unusually tall and extremely slim stand with tubular walls, covered with a thick layer of red slip (63-5.AS68c.2013, Fig. 3.200). It was reconstructed to a height of almost 35 cm from more than 20 individual pieces. The complete shape is difficult to estimate, as the full size of the stand must have been impressive. It is possible that it had a thick rolled or modelled rim, such as fragment 63-6.AS68c.2013, which could theoretically belong to this stand. The full shape was either tubular or A-shaped, with the former more feasible.<sup>46</sup> Stands are one of the most difficult classes to date, as (except for very few chronologically restricted forms) they tended to have rather minor morphological developments throughout the Old Kingdom.

There were only a few bowls in this context. One of them was also reconstructed to full profile, namely a deep bent-sided bowl with a modelled angular rim (63-4.AS68c.2013, Fig. 3.202), preserved to about 70% of its diameter. There was another bowl of the same type (63-9.AS68c.2013), preserved only in numerous rim fragments, as well as a shallow bent-sided bowl (63-8.AS68c.2013). These could have been originally part of the burial goods, as they correspond to vessels commonly found associated with burials of this period. Most of these vessels have parallels in the first half of the Sixth Dynasty.

The burial chamber was unusual in its position, namely north of the shaft (Vymazalová 2015: 55). There were no traces of a sealing wall between the shaft and the chamber. It seems clear that the builders of the chamber had knowledge of the existence and layout of the burial chamber of Shaft 4 and thus needed to avoid it (Vymazalová – Arias

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<sup>46</sup> In the case of an A-shaped stand, the preserved part would only be the upper half of the stand, with the lower one much wider (e.g. Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 129, 36-3-43; 34-11-9, 38-6-51).

Kytnarová *forthcoming*). The position of the chamber resulted in an unusual direction of the body. The deceased was found in a seemingly undisturbed burial directly on the floor of the chamber, in a contracted position and in an east-west direction (Fig. 3.198; *cf.* Vymazalová 2015: 55). There was no pottery associated with the burial.

### 3.5.7 SHAFT 6

Shaft 6 was the only shaft in the chapel of AS 68c that was built out of line, along the west rather than the east wall of the tomb. It points to the fact that again, the shaft was presumably younger in date and the builders were probably trying to avoid positioning it directly in the entrance (Vymazalová – Arias Kytnarová *forthcoming*).

| Context                                 | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of min. vessels |
|---|----------------|--|------|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 64.AS68c.2013<br>(Shaft 6<br>in AS 68c) | J-1            | 1                                      | 9    | 1     | -                          | 62                       | 73                   | 11                          | 6                   | 54,5%             |
|   | J fine         | -                                      | 2    | -     | 2                          | 7                        | 11                   | 4                           | 1                   | 9,1%              |
|   | B              | -                                      | 10   | -     | 1                          | 34                       | 45                   | 11                          | 2                   | 18,2%             |
|   | S              | -                                      | 9    | -     | -                          | 96                       | 105                  | 9                           | 2                   | 18,2%             |
| Total                                   |                | 1                                      | 30   | 1     | 3                          | 199                      | 234                  | 35                          | 11                  | 100,0%            |

Table 3.40 Amounts of pottery from the fill of Shaft 6

The shaft was 1.00 × 1.00 m large and only 3.50 m deep and the ceramic finds from its fill were quite scant (see Table 3.40). The assumption that this shaft was built later than the other four shafts is confirmed by the ceramic evidence. At a depth of 0.4 m, there was a complete beer jar placed by the south-west corner of the shaft, with its rim turned towards the north (64-1.AS68c.2013, Fig. 3.206). It is similar to the one from Shaft 5, with a very slim, tall body (with a height of 36 cm and maximum diameter of only 13 cm) and a pointed base, belonging to type J-1c. Analogical vessels were found in abundance in Saqqara West in burial shaft 28 of the complex of Pehenptah and in ceramic deposits of the same tomb (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 30, especially nos. 87 and 88), thus enabling us to date the type to the first half of the reign of Pepy II. The most notable feature of this beer jar is the presence of an intentional hole in its upper base, made before firing (Fig. 3.207). Such intentional holes are characteristic for

this particular type and occur in about half of the attested examples – *e.g.* in the case of the ceramic deposit of Shaft 2 in the anonymous tomb AS 84b at Abusir South, there were over 20 examples of beer jars exhibiting holes. Such a perforation very likely did not serve any practical purpose but rather disabled the reuse of the vessel by its ritual and symbolic “killing” (for further discussion, see also *Chapter 5.2.1*). This particular beer jar was undoubtedly used as an offering, as it held broken filling of Nile mud, reaching to about half of the vessel.

One of the finer examples from Shaft 6 includes a small jar made of Marl A3 with a wide neck and slender, spindle-shaped body (64-6.AS68c.2013, Fig. 3.208). The base was missing but the general shape seems analogical to slender spindle-shaped jars with a flat base found *e.g.* in ritual shaft no. 34 in the complex of Pehenptah in Saqqara West and other structures of Saqqara West cemetery (Rzeuska 2006: pl. 37, nos. 118 and 120).

The burial chamber of Shaft 6 was hewn into the west wall of the shaft. It was relatively large and regular, with dimensions of 2.60 × 1.10 m, with maximum height of 1.10 m (Vymazalová 2015: 56). It was partly disturbed in its south wall, with an opening to the burial chamber of Shaft 4 (Fig. 3.204 and 3.205).

| Context                                       | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases    | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of min. vessels |
|---|----------------|--|-----------|----------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 65.AS68c.2013<br>(BC of Shaft 6<br>in AS 68c) | J-1            | -                                      | -         | 1        | -                          | 17                       | 18                   | 1                           | 1                   | 6,7%              |
|   | J fine         | -                                      | 2         | 1        | -                          | 5                        | 8                    | 3                           | 2                   | 13,3%             |
|   | B              | 1                                      | 11        | -        | -                          | 72                       | 84                   | 12                          | 7                   | 46,7%             |
|   | S              | -                                      | 15        | -        | 2                          | 71                       | 88                   | 17                          | 4                   | 26,7%             |
|   | F              | -                                      | 1         | -        | -                          | 1                        | 2                    | 1                           | 1                   | 6,7%              |
| <b>Total</b>                                  |                | <b>1</b>                               | <b>29</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>2</b>                   | <b>166</b>               | <b>200</b>           | <b>34</b>                   | <b>15</b>           | <b>100,0%</b>     |

**Table 3.41 Amounts of pottery from the burial chamber of Shaft 6**

From the burial chamber, there was only a relatively small amount of ceramic finds (see Table 3.41), but these were very interesting. All were broken to pieces but able to be reconstructed to large segments of their diameters. There was no fine, thin-walled pottery – all the vessels were very massive and relatively thick-walled, but at the same time some were covered with a high quality, thick red slip. There were at least four very tall stands differentiated on the grounds of their fabric, firing, clay density and hardness, surface

treatment, colours of the break, as well as sizes. The largest one was preserved to a height of almost half a meter (48 cm), which made up only about half of the full stand (65-6.AS68c.2013, Fig. 3.211). It was reconstructed from about 30 individual pieces and had a rolled rim with a diameter of 25 cm. In its lower part, it had very thick walls with inner rough coils, typical of the middle part of stands where two individual pieces (lower and upper) were connected together by the potter. Thus, it is very likely that the stand was about 1 m tall, especially given its solidity.

The second stand, of a similar shape but different fabric, was slightly smaller and had a triangular rim (65-13.AS68c.2013). Another example included a 31 cm tall shaft of an A-shaped stand without a rim (65-5.AS68c.2013, Fig. 3.212). Each of these was glued together from numerous fragments. Even though shafts often contain examples of stands (see Arias Kyntarová 2015), there is no other case of such massive and tall stands from the tomb of the princess – some of them undoubtedly reached a full height of about a meter. Among the available parallels with similar quality and size, is a tall stand from Shaft B in the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Shepseskau (Reisner – Smith 1955: fig. 129, 36-3-43) and another one uncovered in front of a niche in the chapel of the Fourth Dynasty tomb G 1407 (Reisner – Smith 1955: fig. 129, 34-12-3).<sup>47</sup>

Besides these, there were three very large bowls or vats. One vat was heavily deformed and thus difficult to measure, with around 50 cm in maximum diameter. It was rather thick-walled, red-slipped and with large blackened and deformed areas (65-7.AS68c.2013, Fig. 3.213). Based on analogies, it is possible to assume that the deformations, as well as discolouring, were created due to it being tightly positioned in a firing kiln. Finally, there was a deep carinated bowl with a rim diameter of 35 cm and height of 22 cm (65-4.AS68c.2013). All these vessels are unusual for the context of a burial chamber, as they do not represent the otherwise fine tableware expected in such a place. The vat is roughly similar to vats used in beer production (see *e.g.* Wodzińska 2007: Fig. 11.25) but with an angular rather than

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<sup>47</sup> Due to the fact that chapels were, as a rule, open and accessible with the main purpose being long-term ritual activity, it can be assumed that in almost all cases the finds from the chapels are of a (much) younger date than the building of the tomb.

rounded rim. The ceramic context is strikingly different from the available pottery from the other shafts. As far as the dating of Shaft 6 is concerned, due to parallels of vessels both from the shaft and the burial chamber, it can be narrowed down to the early to middle part of the reign of Pepy II.

### 3.6 ROCK-CUT TOMB OF NEFER (AS 68D)

Tomb AS 68d is the easternmost among the four rock-cut tombs of this complex. It was hewn with an entrance from the eastern part of the corridor. During the autumn season of 2012, the chapel and serdab were excavated, bringing to light four statues that confirmed the name of the main owner of the tomb, also previously uncovered on his beautifully decorated and very well preserved false door (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 26–30). There are four shafts in this tomb (Fig. 3.214); one (Shaft 2) was explored in 2012, while the other three were excavated in the 2014 season.

Similar to the neighbouring tomb AS 68c, the ceramic finds from this tomb were very rich not only in quantity and quality, but also in their typological diversity and partly chronological sequence. Out of 3,231 fragments, 1,370 were diagnostic, making up a minimum amount of 459 individual vessels (see Table 3.42). Even with such a high count, this assemblage constituted only 11% of the pottery from the whole complex (see Table 3.1). In the case of this tomb, the most attested class was surprisingly the one of stands with almost two hundred individual examples, 37 of which are preserved in full profiles (see also *infra*). Beer jars are represented by much fewer examples than in other tombs and were also chronologically much less diverse than in the other three tombs. Miniature vessels followed the pattern of the neighbouring tombs in the fact that a large number of them were hand-made rather than wheel-made.

| Context      | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims       | Bases      | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|--------------|----------------|--|------------|------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Tomb AS 68d  | J-1            | 3                                      | 125        | 72         | -                                | 840                             | 1040                    | 200                               | 86                     | 18,7%                |
|              | J fine         | 4                                      | 23         | 8          | 10                               | 99                              | 144                     | 45                                | 16                     | 3,5%                 |
|              | B              | 2                                      | 112        | 2          | 3                                | 253                             | 372                     | 121                               | 49                     | 10,7%                |
|              | S              | 37                                     | 335        | 177        | 116                              | 423                             | 1088                    | 667                               | 166                    | 36,2%                |
|              | F              | 9                                      | 59         | 12         | 4                                | 90                              | 174                     | 84                                | 26                     | 5,7%                 |
|              | P              | 173                                    | 3          | 21         | 4                                | 158                             | 359                     | 201                               | 63                     | 13,7%                |
|              | MB             | 22                                     | -          | -          | -                                | -                               | 22                      | 22                                | 22                     | 4,8%                 |
|              | MC             | 5                                      | 2          | 1          | -                                | -                               | 8                       | 8                                 | 8                      | 1,7%                 |
|              | MJ             | 12                                     | 1          | 1          | -                                | -                               | 14                      | 14                                | 14                     | 3,1%                 |
|              | MS             | -                                      | -          | -          | 1                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,2%                 |
| D            | 5              | -                                      | -          | -          | 2                                | 7                               | 5                       | 6                                 | 1,3%                   |                      |
| T            | 1              | -                                      | -          | 1          | -                                | 2                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 0,4%                   |                      |
| <b>Total</b> |                | <b>273</b>                             | <b>660</b> | <b>294</b> | <b>139</b>                       | <b>1865</b>                     | <b>3231</b>             | <b>1370</b>                       | <b>459</b>             | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.42 Amounts of ceramic finds from the whole tomb AS 68d**

The tomb is also highly interesting due to its individual burials; the shafts of Nefer in Shaft 1 and Neferhathor in Shaft 2 contained the remains of very extensive shaft deposits; in addition, the burial chamber of Neferhathor brought to light a copper tool and models of wooden boats of the late Fifth Dynasty. The burial chamber of Shaft 4 was fully intact, and the burial chamber of Shaft 3 held a burial of a very young boy, who was equipped, among other things, with a large imported Syro-palestinian storage jar (often wrongly called “amphora”)<sup>48</sup>, small miniaturized jars with organic material such as seeds, and partly preserved faience jewellery, among other things.

### 3.6.1 CHAPEL AND SERDAB

The chapel of tomb AS 68d is similar in size and layout to that of the neighbouring tomb AS 68c. It was a rock-cut chapel of roughly elongated, rectangular shape, with a length of 15.50 m, width of 2.35 m and maximum height of 2.80 m (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 26).

<sup>48</sup> The present author, as a classical archaeologist, strongly discourages the use of the term “amphora” for Egyptian or Syro-Palestinian wares of the Fourth and Third Millennium BC. This term is closely associated with a particular vessel shape of Greek origin and later Roman use and should be only used as such.



The most notable feature was the presence of a serdab in its eastern wall, near the entrance. Despite the fact that the serdab was found disturbed (Fig. 3.218), four medium-sized limestone statues were discovered in its fill (Fig. 3.219). These include two male striding statues of Nefer (149a/AS68d/2012 and 149c/AS68d/2012, see Fig. 3.220 and 3.223), one exquisite scribal statue of Nefer (149b/AS68d/2012, Fig. 3.228) and finally, in the lower levels of the serdab, also a double statue of Nefer with his wife Neferhathor (149d/AS68d/2012, Fig. 3.226). The statues name Nefer as  $(j)m(j)-r zš(w) (nw) ʕprw$  (“overseer of the scribes of crews”, Figs. 3.221 and 3.224), complemented on other statues by  $(j)r(j)-ht nswt$  (“property custodian of the king”, Fig. 3.222),<sup>49</sup> with an epithet  $jm3hw hr ntr-ʕ3$  (“well-provided before the Great God”). His wife bears a single title of  $(j)r(jt)-ht nswt Nfr-ḥwt-ḥr$  (“property custodian of the king, Neferhathor”, Fig. 3.225; see also Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias 2014: 26–27).

The identity of Nefer as the main owner of the tomb, and also the owner of the southernmost (and usually the most important) shaft in the tomb (Shaft 1), is confirmed by his uniquely preserved false door, which was uncovered *in situ* in the first niche of the tomb (so-called niche i, see Fig. 3.216). Besides the above-mentioned titles, he is also named as  $(j)m(j)-r prwj-ḥd (j)m(j)-r zš(w) (nw) ʕ(w) (nw) nswt (j)m(j)-ht zš(w) (nw) ʕprw (j)m(j)-r šnwtj (j)m(j)-r gs ḥmwt ḥry-sšt3 zš ʕ(w) (nw) nswt$ ; “overseer of the two treasuries, overseer of scribes of the king’s documents, under-supervisor of scribes of the crews, overseer of the two granaries, overseer of a gang of craftsmen, one who is privy to the secrets and scribe of the king’s documents” (Fig. 3.233).<sup>50</sup> From the chronological point of view, there are two important titles that name him as  $ḥm-ntr Rʕ m (st)-jb-(Rʕ) ḥm ntr B3-Nfr-jr-k3-Rʕ$ , “priest of Ra in the sun temple of Neferirkare” and especially “priest of the pyramid of Neferirkare”, which point to the fact that he served in office sometime after the death of King Neferirkare, when his mortuary cult was fully functioning.<sup>51</sup> In his false door, his wife Neferhathor is mentioned again and besides her title “property custodian of the king”, she also bears two titles connecting her to the goddess Hathor, namely  $ḥm(t)-ntr ḥwt-ḥr m swt.s nb(w)t ḥm(t)-ntr ḥwt-$

<sup>49</sup> More on the diverse readings of this title and its discussion, see Bárta (1999) and Jones (2000: no. 1206).

<sup>50</sup> For the complete list of titles of Nefer, attested on his false door, see Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* (2014: 29).

<sup>51</sup> For further outline of the dating of this tomb, see *Chapter 6.2*.

*hr nbt nht*, “priestess of Hathor in all her (cultic) places” and “priestess of Hathor, Mistress of the *nehet*-shrine” (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 29).

The false door of the second niche (niche ii) from the south was unluckily removed by tomb robbers, leaving behind only the decorated lintel (Fig. 3.231; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 29). However, the identity of his wife as the owner of the neighbouring Shaft 2 is of little doubt (even though the name *per se* was not preserved), as this lintel belonged to a female and was executed in a very similar style and quality to that of Nefer’s false door (Fig. 3.232), and both were therefore likely produced as a single order. Also, it is with highest probability that his wife was buried in the closest shaft. The anthropological analysis showed that the burial in Shaft 2 contained a body of a female (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 29–30) that confirmed this hypothesis further;<sup>52</sup> the present author shall therefore further operate with the assumption that Shaft 2 belonged to Neferhathor.

There were no remains of false doors in niches iii and iv, although niche iii originally held one. In front of some niches, small offering places were found, in the form of a limestone basin (niche i and iv, see Fig. 3.229) or a limestone altar with two basins (niche iii, Fig. 3.230; see also Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 29). We do not know the names of the owners of the remaining two shafts (Shaft 3 and 4).

The ceramic finds were not nearly as extensive as in the neighbouring tomb AS 68c. There were 522 fragments, out of which only 198 were diagnostic, making up a minimum of 98 individual vessels (Table 3.43).

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<sup>52</sup> As a side note – the other two burials in this tomb (Shaft 3 and 4) belong to a child and a male, thus excluding the possibility of Neferhathor being buried in a different shaft.

| Context   | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims       | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|----------------|--|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 40.AS68d.2012,<br>41.AS68d.2012<br>and<br>204/AS68d/2012<br>(fill of chapel<br>in AS 68d) | J-1            | -                                      | 22         | 11        | -                                | 90                              | 123                     | 33                                | 18                     | 18,4%                |
|   | J fine         | 1                                      | 15         | 4         | 2                                | 76                              | 98                      | 22                                | 8                      | 8,2%                 |
|   | B              | -                                      | 46         | -         | -                                | 87                              | 133                     | 46                                | 25                     | 25,5%                |
|   | S              | -                                      | 22         | 4         | 5                                | 25                              | 56                      | 31                                | 17                     | 17,3%                |
|   | F              | 1                                      | 40         | 5         | -                                | 42                              | 88                      | 46                                | 10                     | 10,2%                |
|   | P              | 2                                      | 1          | -         | -                                | 4                               | 7                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 3,1%                 |
|   | MB             | 11                                     | -          | -         | -                                | -                               | 11                      | 11                                | 11                     | 11,2%                |
|   | MC             | 2                                      | -          | 1         | -                                | -                               | 3                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 3,1%                 |
|   | MJ             | 1                                      | -          | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 1,0%                 |
|   | MS             | -                                      | -          | -         | 1                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 1,0%                 |
| D   | 1              | -                                      | -          | -         | -                                | 1                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1,0%                   |                      |
| <b>Total</b>  |                | <b>17</b>                              | <b>147</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>8</b>                         | <b>324</b>                      | <b>522</b>              | <b>198</b>                        | <b>98</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.43 Amounts of pottery from the fill of the chapel in AS 68d**

The fill of the chapel did not bring to light any beer jars in full profile and their numbers were surprisingly small, when compared to the neighbouring tombs (see *supra*). Also, there was no distinctive presence of Sixth Dynasty material such as types J-1d, J-1f and J-1g in the chapels of tombs AS 68a–c.

One of the most distinctive contexts was the fill of the serdab, which contained 87 fragments of exclusively fine pottery, 15 of them diagnostic (see Fig. 3.234), collected in the upper layers of the fill around the statues. After the analysis, it was clear that there were originally at least six fine ovoid jars of slightly different size and morphological details. Four were medium-sized jars made of Marl clay A3, with modelled rim and low neck. Two were much smaller ovoid jars with rolled rims. None could be reconstructed to full profile but their typology is in accordance with parallels from late Fifth Dynasty contexts, such as the burial chamber of Shaft 2 in the tomb of Neferinpu (Arias Kytnarová 2014a: Fig. 7.16a, b) or the material from the burial chamber of Shaft 2 in the tomb of Nefershepes (AS 67; Arias Kytnarová – Havelková – Jirásková *et al.* 2014: 88).

A complete ovoid jar of the same type (namely J-2) came from the fill of the chapel, where it was found in front of the false door of Nefer, 65 cm east of its central panel. This jar (no. 40-3.AS68d.2012) was typically small, with a height of 18 cm (Fig. 3.236). It had a rolled rim and characteristic diagonal scraping from bottom upwards on the outer walls, visible even

through the red-slipped surface. It can be assumed that it was scraped with a ceramic tool such as those found in the nearby contexts.

The amount of miniature vessels from the fill of the chapel was surprisingly small, especially in comparison with the two neighbouring tombs AS 68c and AS 68a. Both wheel-made and hand-made miniatures were attested (see Fig. 3.237), scattered in the whole area of the chapel. Notable is miniaturized beer jar 40-27.AS68d.2012, preserved in full profile (although having only a small percentage of its rim, see Fig. 3.238), from the south part of the tomb, near the second niche. The jar had a maximum diameter of 6.5 cm and height of 11.5 cm. It copies full-sized beer jars with its open rim, low neck and ovoid body with a pointed base. The complex of Sheretnebtj revealed several examples of such miniaturized beer jars and they shall be discussed in detail in *Chapter 5.7.4*.

One of the most distinctive ceramic classes from the chapel of Nefer was the class of stands. Although not represented by many pieces, they were exceptional in their size and morphology. There were at least two different examples of stands with a decoration consisting of so-called “windows”, namely cut-out triangular or angular openings in the middle area or the lower third of the stand (*e.g.* Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 129). Both were very tall and had to be reconstructed from numerous pieces. Stand 40-61.AS68d.2012 was preserved to a height of 36 cm, which made up around half of its complete size (Fig. 3.239). The second stand (no. 40-42.AS68d.2012) was similarly tall, with a preserved height of 33.5 cm, but had a much narrower tubular body (Fig. 3.241). On both examples, the windows were preserved only partially, but show a nicely finished and even red-slipped coating on the openings (see Fig. 3.239, detail). Such extremely large stands are attested *e.g.* in the mastabas of the late Fifth Dynasty in Giza, such as G 1407 and the mastaba of Shepseskau (G 2006B), both with sizes around 80–90 cm (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 129, 36-3-43 and 34-12-3).

There was a relatively large amount of bowls, making up the largest percentage of vessels in the fill of the chapel. These included several fine carinated bowls with rounded shoulders, shallow bowls with modelled rims, *etc.* Interesting is the presence of a rather thick-walled carinated bowl (type B-15) with a heavily blackened outer surface, likely from direct

exposure to fire (see Fig. 3.242). Another rough bowl is represented by vessel 40-36.AS68d.2012 with an angular rim, also with traces of fire. They were found together with shallow carinated bowl 40-35.AS68d.2012, heavily burned inside and outside, in the south part of the chapel. It is possible that these bowls were secondarily used for cooking or a different, technical preparation requiring fire.

The last notable class was bread forms, preserved mostly as base or rim fragments. However, one example was reconstructed to full profile from several pieces. Mould 40-8.AS68d.2012 has a typical irregular, almost oval shape, with maximum diameters of 22 × 25 cm and height of only 15 cm (Fig. 3.243). It belongs to group F-2 with a flat base. Bread moulds of similar shapes and sizes appear *e.g.* in the chapel of Duaptah (see *supra*) and can be found in contexts ranging from the late Fifth to early Sixth Dynasty.

### 3.6.2 SHAFT 1 (NEFER)

The southernmost shaft in tomb AS 68d belonged without any doubt to the main owner of the tomb, high official Nefer, as is attested by his false door uncovered *in situ* roughly west of it (see also *supra*). It was rather large, with dimensions of 1.55 × 1.55 m and depth of 6.00 m (yet unpublished). It was excavated in the course of the 2014 season. The ceramic finds from this shaft were very extensive and exceeded those uncovered in the neighbouring Shaft 2 of his wife.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Part of the assemblage was published in a paper comparing the ceramic finds from the two main shafts (Shaft 1 and 2) in the tomb of Nefer (AS 68d) (see Arias Kytarová 2015).

| Context  | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims       | Bases      | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|--|----------------|--|------------|------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 77.AS68d.2013<br>to<br>82.AS68d.2013<br>(fill of Shaft 1<br>in AS 68d) | J-1            | 1                                      | 37         | 34         | -                                | 348                             | 420                     | 72                                | 37                     | 16,7%                |
|  | J fine         | -                                      | 1          | 1          | 2                                | 4                               | 8                       | 4                                 | 3                      | 1,4%                 |
|  | B              | -                                      | 29         | -          | 2                                | 127                             | 158                     | 31                                | 10                     | 4,5%                 |
|  | S              | 27                                     | 250        | 139        | 74                               | 327                             | 817                     | 490                               | 110                    | 49,8%                |
|  | F              | 7                                      | 6          | 2          | 1                                | 8                               | 24                      | 16                                | 6                      | 2,7%                 |
|  | P              | 144                                    | 1          | 21         | 4                                | 135                             | 305                     | 170                               | 44                     | 19,9%                |
|  | MB             | 6                                      | -          | -          | -                                | -                               | 6                       | 6                                 | 6                      | 2,7%                 |
|  | MJ             | -                                      | 1          | 1          | -                                | -                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 0,9%                 |
|  | D              | 1                                      | -          | -          | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 0,5%                 |
| T  | 1              | -                                      | -          | 1          | -                                | 2                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 0,9%                   |                      |
| <b>Total</b>   |                | <b>187</b>                             | <b>325</b> | <b>198</b> | <b>84</b>                        | <b>949</b>                      | <b>1743</b>             | <b>794</b>                        | <b>221</b>             | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.44 Amounts of pottery from all the contexts in Shaft 1 of tomb AS 68d**

The fill of the shaft was not homogenous and as a result, the ceramic finds were collected in several levels, each having a different context number (for the final count of ceramic fragments, see Table 3.44). There were altogether six ceramic contexts in the shaft. The largest amount of pottery, at least 154 individual vessels, came from the top layer of the shaft, from a depth down to 1 m, and included very large fragments of stands (context 77.AS68d.2014, Table 3.45). The most distinctive context (78.AS68d.2014) came from a depth of 3 m, where numerous ceramic fragments were found in a cluster in the south-east corner of the shaft, together with animal bones Exc. No. 374/AS68d/2014. Yet another concentration of pottery was unearthed at a depth of 3 m (80.AS68d.2014) in the south-west corner of the shaft, also accompanied by animal bones (Exc. No. 375/AS68d/2014). Context 79.AS68d.2014 filled the area around and underneath this context, to a depth of 3.50 m. Careful documentation of the ceramic finds was necessary, as during the following reconstruction of the finds, fragments from different levels of the shaft were found to complement each other, thus proving the disturbed nature of the shaft. To give an explicit example, a large vat with a spout was uncovered in three different contexts; some body sherds came from context 77, one half of the spout was found in context 78 and the other half plus most of the body sherds from context 79. If a vessel was found in pieces in different contexts, the final vessel number was allocated according to pieces with the largest size, in this case context 79.

| Context                                 | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims       | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|----------------|--|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 77.AS68d.2014<br>(Shaft 1<br>in AS 68d) | J-1            | 1                                      | 35         | 29        | -                                | 284                             | 349                     | 65                                | 32                     | 69,7%                |
|   | J fine         | -                                      | -          | 1         | 2                                | 4                               | 7                       | 3                                 | 2                      |                      |
|   | B              | -                                      | 3          | -         | -                                | 6                               | 9                       | 3                                 | 1                      |                      |
|   | S              | 19                                     | 173        | 100       | 56                               | 273                             | 621                     | 348                               | 87                     |                      |
|   | F              | -                                      | 2          | -         | 1                                | 7                               | 10                      | 3                                 | 2                      |                      |
|   | P              | 68                                     | -          | -         | 1                                | 71                              | 140                     | 69                                | 27                     |                      |
|   | MB             | 2                                      | -          | -         | -                                | -                               | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      |                      |
|   | MJ             | -                                      | -          | 1         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      |                      |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>90</b>      | <b>213</b>                             | <b>131</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>645</b>                       | <b>1139</b>                     | <b>494</b>              | <b>154</b>                        |                        |                      |
| 78.AS68d.2013<br>(Shaft 1<br>in AS 68d) | B              | -                                      | 3          | -         | -                                | 3                               | 6                       | 3                                 | 1                      | 5,0%                 |
|   | S              | 4                                      | 2          | 4         | 3                                | 3                               | 16                      | 13                                | 6                      |                      |
|   | F              | -                                      | 1          | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      |                      |
|   | P              | 4                                      | -          | -         | -                                | -                               | 4                       | 4                                 | 2                      |                      |
|   | D              | 1                                      | -          | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      |                      |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>9</b>                               | <b>6</b>   | <b>4</b>  | <b>3</b>                         | <b>6</b>                        | <b>28</b>               | <b>22</b>                         | <b>11</b>              |                      |
| 79.AS68d.2014<br>(Shaft 1<br>in AS 68d) | J-1            | -                                      | 2          | 3         | -                                | 42                              | 47                      | 5                                 | 3                      | 22,2%                |
|   | B              | -                                      | 20         | -         | 2                                | 90                              | 112                     | 22                                | 7                      |                      |
|   | S              | 3                                      | 75         | 33        | 15                               | 51                              | 177                     | 126                               | 15                     |                      |
|   | F              | 7                                      | 3          | 2         | -                                | 1                               | 13                      | 12                                | 3                      |                      |
|   | P              | 72                                     | 1          | 21        | 3                                | 64                              | 161                     | 97                                | 15                     |                      |
|   | MB             | 4                                      | -          | -         | -                                | -                               | 4                       | 4                                 | 4                      |                      |
|   | MJ             | -                                      | 1          | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      |                      |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>87</b>                              | <b>102</b> | <b>59</b> | <b>20</b>                        | <b>248</b>                      | <b>516</b>              | <b>268</b>                        | <b>49</b>              |                      |
| 80.AS68d.2014<br>(Shaft 1<br>in AS 68d) | S              | 1                                      | -          | 2         | -                                | -                               | 3                       | 3                                 | 2                      | 2,3%                 |
|   | B              | -                                      | 3          | -         | -                                | 28                              | 31                      | 3                                 | 1                      |                      |
|   | J fine         | -                                      | 1          | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      |                      |
|   | T              | -                                      | -          | -         | 1                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      |                      |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>1</b>                               | <b>4</b>   | <b>2</b>  | <b>1</b>                         | <b>28</b>                       | <b>36</b>               | <b>8</b>                          | <b>5</b>               |                      |
| 81.AS68d.2014<br>(Shaft 1<br>in AS 68d) | lost           |  |            |           |                                  |                                 |                         |                                   |                        | 0,0%                 |
| 82.AS68d.2014<br>(Shaft 1<br>in AS 68d) | J-1            | -                                      | -          | 2         | -                                | 22                              | 24                      | 2                                 | 2                      | 0,9%                 |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>-</b>                               | <b>-</b>   | <b>2</b>  | <b>-</b>                         | <b>22</b>                       | <b>24</b>               | <b>2</b>                          | <b>2</b>               |                      |

Table 3.45 Individual contexts from Shaft 1, with percentages within the whole shaft

Finally, there was a base of a beer jar (82.AS68d.2014, Fig. 3.254) found at the bottom of Shaft 1, in front of the partly disturbed mud brick wall leading into the burial chamber. However, this beer jar should not be seen as any remnant of offerings or tomb goods but rather as refuse from secondary ritual activities connected to the burial – it was found with a thick layer of mortar (or another white substance) inside and therefore most likely served as a container for mortar used to seal the sarcophagus or whiten the closing wall. While it was evidently used during the sealing rituals, its presence at the bottom of the shaft may be

intentional only in the sense that such a jar could not be later reused for any other purpose due to religious beliefs and thus had to be abandoned there purposefully; or it was left due to neglect. Due to the frequent occurrence of vessels filled with mortar or a different white substance (such as finer plaster) at the bottom of diverse burial shafts, the first possibility is considered more likely by the present author (see also *Chapter 4.1.3*). The cases include most notably contexts in Giza, Nazlet Batran, Saqqara and Meidum (*cf.* Reisner 1942: 428-429, Fig. 245; Reisner – Smith 1955: 14; Kromer 1978: 28; Rzeuska 2006: 446–48, Pl. 174). Other examples were uncovered in the Abusir South cemetery, such as those from the bottom of Shaft 1 in AS 68c (see Fig. 3.159) and Shaft 5 in AS 38 (Arias Kytarová 2011c: Fig. 6.4). They are not to be confused with the religious meaning and function of fully intact beer jars with false Nile mud filling inside, often uncovered *in situ* on the bottom of shafts, such as a jar from Shaft 5 in the tomb of priest Neferinpu (Bárta *et al.* 2014: Figs. 3.56 and 3.57) and in the tombs of the Abusir Lake cemetery (yet unpublished). Some of those beer jars were additionally sealed with a stopper and undoubtedly served as an offering during the closing rituals.<sup>54</sup>

The ceramic finds from the shaft bore several interesting characteristics, such as a large percentage of certain classes. Among these, the classes of stands and platters were by far the most dominant (see Table 3.44). Also, a large number of these stands and platters were able to be reconstructed to full profile, with more than 70% of their rim and base diameters preserved. All this could point to the fact that the fill of the shaft, although disturbed, was not composed of some accidental refuse but rather that large parts of the original fill of the shaft were still in place. The fragments from which these vessels were reconstructed measured from large (especially shafts of stands) to very small (rim and base sherds) and all of them had sharp, un-eroded edges without any traces of exposure to sun, wind or other elements. Some platters were able to be glued almost fully from more than 10 individual fragments (see *infra*). The classes otherwise uncovered in other shafts included some bread forms and beer jars.

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<sup>54</sup> See also a more detailed discussion of beer jars filled with Nile mud and positioned in front of the sealed entrance into a burial chamber or niche (*Chapter 4.2.1*, also Arias Kytarová 2014a: 134).



The two ceramic contexts (78.AS68d.2014 and 80.AS68d.2014) that were collected around the animal bones, at a depth of 3 m in the south-east and south-west corner of the shaft, contained only a small number of individual vessels, but some of these were able to be reconstructed almost fully, such as platter 78-4.AS68d.2014 (see Fig. 3.249) and stand 80-1.AS68d.2014 (see Fig. 3.245). The animal bones have not yet undergone an analysis; it is therefore impossible to state whether the bones were part of a single animal or two different ones. The fragments from these two contexts complemented each other well, especially in the case of platters.

The whole assemblage is most characteristic for its high number of stands, having a high predominance over all the other ceramic classes. These stands are not all identical and they belong to three main groups; namely tall hour-glass shaped stands, lower biconical stands and finally low ring stands. For each group, the specimens are very similar in quality, sizes and surface treatment. The tall hour-glass shaped stands (Abusir type S-1a) have either a simple or a rolled rim (Fig. 3.245). The examples with a simple rim (S-1aI) are slightly smaller, with aperture diameters between 12.5 and 13 cm, base diameters of 10.5–12.5 cm and very constant heights of 23–23.5 cm (Fig. 3.244, second row).<sup>55</sup> Those with rolled or modelled rim (S-1aII) are visibly larger, with aperture diameters of 13–15 cm, base diameters of 12–14 cm and heights of 27.5–29 cm (Fig. 3.244, first row).<sup>56</sup> There were also a few medium-sized biconical stands, with heights of only 15.5–16 cm (Fig. 3.246). Finally, the small ring stands of Abusir group S-6 were also constant in their sizes, with aperture and base diameters of 10–12 cm and heights between 11 and 14.5 cm (see Fig. 3.248).<sup>57</sup> From this enumeration it should be clear that this was not random refuse but rather the remnants of a single deposit of a specific set and that the original number of stands in this shaft must have been very high. The different groups of stands served a diverse purpose; from iconographic representations it is clear that while low ring stands were used as stands for tall jars and especially beer jars, the tall biconical

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<sup>55</sup> In the whole shaft, we found seven stands of this form (S-1aI) preserved in full profile, together with at least 12 other largely preserved ones.

<sup>56</sup> There were eight stands of form S-1aII preserved in full profile, with numerous other rim and base fragments.

<sup>57</sup> In the shaft, we uncovered six low ring stands with a simple rim, preserved in full profile, with at least six other examples in incomplete fragments.

stands were rather used for bowls (*e.g.* Moussa – Altenmüller 1977: Tf. 57) or platters, creating thus a sort of table.

As a rule, all these stands were made of medium fine Nile silt B1 fabric. The tall hour-glass shaped stands were made from coils and finished on a wheel in two different parts that were joined in the middle, resulting in a very rough inner middle surface which is characteristic for this group. All the low ring stands were made on a wheel, also from coils. A predominant number of these stands were left uncoated and were only wet-smoothed, leaving horizontal to diagonal smoothing marks on the outer body. An interesting technological detail is the little attention that was given to the bases of these stands – in almost all cases, while the rims of the stands were carefully smoothed, the bases are often left rough, with superfluous clay remaining on the inner and sometime even the outer walls of the base (Fig. 3.245 middle and compare Fig. 3.247). In all cases from this shaft, it was therefore possible to identify whether a diagnostic sherd of a stand belonged without any doubt to a rim or a base.

Besides the stands, the platters were the most common ceramic class. In the whole area of the shaft, we uncovered numerous fragments belonging to at least 25 different platters. Some of them were able to be painstakingly reconstructed to full shape. Most of these platters belong to so-called Abusir group P-3, with either a fine or deeper groove under the inner rim (Figs. 3.249, 3.250, 3.252 and 3.253). Most share similar features; as a rule, they were made of rougher fabric, such as most commonly Nile silt B2. Despite this fact, almost all of them were covered with a thin layer of red slip on their upper (inner) surfaces and sometimes also on the outer rim. While their inner surfaces are roughly smoothed, their bottoms were only pounded and left further untreated.

The class of jars was surprisingly underrepresented. Concerning beer jars, there were numerous rims, body sherds and base fragments but only one example could be reconstructed to full profile, providing us thus with some metrical data. This beer jar (no. 77-6.AS68d.2014) was uncovered in fragments in the topmost layer of the shaft. It belongs to Abusir type J-1b with a low straight neck, ovoid body and pointed base (Fig. 3.255). The beer jar was 33 cm tall, with an aperture diameter of 8.5cm and a maximum diameter of 17 cm. This metric data is in

accordance with the time period between the first and the second stage of the nearby tomb of Neferinpu, thus very likely the reign of king Niuserre (see Chart 1 in Krejčí – Arias Kytarová – Odler 2015). This beer jar is an exemplary case for observing some technological details concerning the making of these jars. They were commonly built by hand from three separate parts – the base, main body and finally the neck. In this case, the neck itself was finished on a turning device. On the lower body, the point at which the body and base were connected is clearly visible both from inside and outside. The main body of the jar was smoothed; on the inner walls, there are visible traces of vertical smoothing in two levels. The outer shoulders and lower body were smoothed in diagonal strokes. Additionally, the upper shoulders were covered with a thin layer of mud. Such a surface treatment is not unusual; it is clearly visible in early Old Kingdom beer jars, such as those from anonymous tomb AS 54 (Arias Kytarová – Jirásková 2015: Fig. 8). The purpose is unclear – in the case of the jars from AS 54, the whole of their outer walls were covered in a compact layer of mud and this could have served either as additional water-proofing or as thermal insulation. As far as jar 77-6.AS68d.2014 is concerned, only an attempt at thermal insulation can be seen, as the layer here is very thin and only randomly distributed over the shoulders, seeming more symbolic than functional.

There were numerous notable ceramic finds from the fill of Shaft 1 but not all can be discussed in this paper. One interesting find that shall be mentioned is ceramic tool no. 79-1.AS68d.2014, which was found in fragments in the middle area of the shaft, underneath and around the cluster with animal bones. It is an example of a tool made from a ceramic sherd, very likely originally belonging to a fine un-slipped jar. It has an ellipsoid shape, and due to its smooth upper and lower surface and clearly worn edges, it must be assumed that it served as a scraper or smoother (Fig. 3.251). Such tools are gaining more interest, and in Abusir, we have uncovered several pieces.<sup>58</sup> The closest parallels are those that come from the tomb of prince Werkaure in Abusir Center (Arias Kytarová 2014b: Fig. 4.103: T and Fig. 4.104). The

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<sup>58</sup> See tools from Shaft 5 in the anonymous tomb AS 20 (Tomášek 2002: Tab. 3, no. 5) or those uncovered in tombs AS 59 (Arias Kytarová 2011b: Fig. 6.9, 40-12.AS59.2010) and AS 57a–c (Arias Kytarová 2011b: Fig. 6.10, 35-4.AS57.2010).

presence of ceramic tools in a shaft is unusual; however, it must be stressed that stone tools such as flint knives have been found both in ritual and burial shafts (see *e.g.* Rzeuska 2006: 451, 496, Tables 4 and 7 and Arias Kytarová 2014b: 86). While these flint knives undoubtedly served a very different function, very likely connected directly to the cutting of the animal pieces that are found as offerings in these shafts, it is possible that ceramic tools could also have had some so far unknown cultic purpose. It is, however, more likely that they were part of the so-called technical pottery. It is of no little interest that at least two examples of finer jars with visible traces of deep vertical smoothing, which could have resulted from the use of such a tool, were uncovered in the shaft of Nefer. None of these were able to be reconstructed to full profile, but two belonged to spindle-shaped jars with pointed bases, while the last one to a larger jar with articulated shoulders, similar to the one almost fully preserved in the shaft of Nefer's wife (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: Fig. 13).

| Context                                 | Class or group | Complete vessels/ complete profiles | Rims     | Bases    | Other diagnostic fragments | Non-diagnostic fragments | No. of all fragments | No. of diagnostic fragments | Min. no. of vessels | % of min. vessels |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 83.AS68d.2014 (BC of Shaft 1 in AS 68d) | J-1            | -                                   | 4        | 2        | -                          | 73                       | 79                   | 6                           | 2                   | 50,0%             |
|   | B              | 1                                   | 4        | -        | 1                          | 5                        | 11                   | 6                           | 1                   | 25,0%             |
|   | D              | 1                                   | -        | -        | -                          | -                        | 1                    | 1                           | 1                   | 25,0%             |
| <b>Total</b>                            |                | <b>2</b>                            | <b>8</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b>                   | <b>78</b>                | <b>91</b>            | <b>13</b>                   | <b>4</b>            | <b>100,0%</b>     |

**Table 3.46 Ceramic fragments from the burial chamber of Nefer**

Compared to the plentiful pottery from the shaft, the ceramic finds from the burial chamber of Nefer seem rather poor (Table 3.46). However, the burial chamber was discovered with a partially collapsed and unstable ceiling and thus only part of the original tomb goods were able to be recovered during the risky cleaning works (Fig. 3.257 and 3.258). While the original extent of the items placed in his chamber is unclear, there was a set of limestone miniatures (Fig. 3.259) and at least two different ceramic vessels – one beer jar found in fragments (83-3.AS68d.2014 and 83-4.AS68d.2014) and a carinated bowl, also broken to pieces (83-1.AS68d.2014). As far as the beer jar is concerned, it could not be reconstructed to full profile, but due to the quality, firing and colours of the sherds and their surface treatment, it is clear that these fragments belonged to a single vessel. It had a slightly oval mouth with a

diameter of 10.5–11 cm. Such disfiguration is not unusual and probably occurred either during the drying (Rzeuska 2006: 385) or the firing of the vessels (Junker 1950: 16), when they were stacked on each other or placed too tightly in rows. Additionally to the beer jar fragments, the burial chamber also yielded an intact mud stopper from unfired mud (no. 83-2.AS68d.2014, Fig. 3.261). As the beer jar rim is incomplete and oval in shape, the association of the mud stopper with it is tentative, but they could have belonged together. The mud stopper has the shape of a truncated cone (Abusir type D-4), similar to those found *in situ* in the undisturbed burial chamber of priest Neferinpu in tomb AS 37 (Arias Kytarová 2014a: Figs. 7.8 and 7.9), but this one is of more compact material, without visible traces of coiling and smoothing on the outer walls. The presence of a sealed beer jar in a burial chamber is very common and the vessels were part of the tomb goods of the deceased, representing different items needed for the afterlife. In the case of the jars, these represented diverse fluids, in this case naturally the beer. It is noteworthy that in the above-mentioned intact burial chamber of priest Neferinpu, we uncovered ten such beer jars, probably designated as an afterlife *per diem* ration for the priest, consisting of one beer jar per day within the course of a 10-day week (see also Arias Kytarová 2014a).

The carinated bowl uncovered in fragments east of the sarcophagus, underneath the collapsed ceiling, was able to be reconstructed to almost full shape (Fig. 3.260). The bowl was of very high quality, being made of Nile silt A and covered thoroughly with a well-polished red slip of hue 10R4/8. It had a tall neck and angular shoulders, with identical aperture and shoulder diameters (21 cm) and a medium deep body with a height of 7.5 cm. All its typological and metric features point to the fact that this bowl was manufactured in the late Fifth Dynasty (Op de Beeck 2004: 265, Table 3), with all reservations to the limitations of such a dating.<sup>59</sup> Bowls such as these were commonly placed in the burial chambers representing

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<sup>59</sup> As discussed on many occasions (*cf.* Rzeuska 2006: 408–409; Arias Kytarová 2014a: 126; Arias Kytarová 2014b: 128–129), carinated bowls are not considered a reliable tool for dating individual structures, as they could have been kept for an unknown amount of time before being deposited in the given context. As such, they reflect the period in which they were made but rarely the date of the structure in which they were found (see also *Chapter 5.3.1*).

most likely the food for the deceased. There were no other fragments belonging to a different bowl, so it is very likely that this was the only one.

### 3.6.3 SHAFT 2 (NEFERHATHOR)

Shaft 2 was very likely created for the wife of the main owner, Neferhathor, and was found disturbed by tomb robbers at the time of its discovery in the autumn of 2012 (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 29–30), leaving it partly empty to a depth of about 3 m. This identification of the owner is based on the grounds of the epigraphic evidence, with her name attested on the false door of her husband Nefer (situated immediately west of Shaft 1) and the fact that she would be expected to have been buried in this next, second shaft of the tomb. The anthropological analysis confirmed that a female was buried in the sarcophagus of the burial chamber of Shaft 2 (see Table 6.1, *cf.* Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 29) and thus the association of Neferhathor with the owner of this shaft is relatively conclusive.

| Context   | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims       | Bases     | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|----------------|--|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 44.AS68d.2012<br>and<br>188/AS68d/2012<br>(fill of Shaft 2 + BC<br>in AS 68d) | J-1            | 2                                      | 25         | 15        | -                                | 123                             | 165                     | 42                                | 19                     | 20,0%                |
|   | J fine         | 2                                      | 3          | 2         | 2                                | 13                              | 22                      | 9                                 | 2                      | 2,1%                 |
|   | B              | 1                                      | 31         | 2         | -                                | 32                              | 66                      | 36                                | 12                     | 12,6%                |
|   | S              | 9                                      | 62         | 33        | 37                               | 65                              | 206                     | 143                               | 37                     | 38,9%                |
|   | F              | 1                                      | 12         | 5         | -                                | 30                              | 48                      | 18                                | 7                      | 7,4%                 |
|   | P              | 26                                     | -          | -         | -                                | 19                              | 45                      | 26                                | 14                     | 14,7%                |
|   | MB             | 1                                      | -          | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 1,1%                 |
|   | MC             | -                                      | 1          | -         | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 1,1%                 |
| D   | 1              | -                                      | -          | -         | 2                                | 3                               | 1                       | 2                                 | 2,1%                   |                      |
| <b>Total</b>  |                | <b>43</b>                              | <b>134</b> | <b>57</b> | <b>39</b>                        | <b>284</b>                      | <b>557</b>              | <b>277</b>                        | <b>95</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.47 Amounts of ceramic finds from the burial shaft and burial chamber of Neferhathor**

Ceramic finds were uncovered in several levels of the shaft and its burial chamber. Unlike the above-mentioned shaft, they were all assigned a single ceramic context number (44.AS68d.2012), only differentiated by the letters of the baskets and in the description (Table

3.47).<sup>60</sup> Similar to Shaft 1, the burial chamber of Shaft 2 was also robbed and, therefore, at least part of this shaft must have been emptied. However, clusters of pottery in certain corners of the shaft point to the fact that it was probably not emptied fully. The fill was rather compact, consisting of brown sand mixed with *tafl*, limestone chips and fragments.

The most relevant context was a cluster of large ceramic fragments in the south-east corner of the shaft at a depth of 2.70–3.50 m, consisting very likely of the remains of the original shaft deposit. Its contents were comprised predominantly of stands, platters and finer pottery (see Figs. 3.262–3.264). Roughly underneath this deposit was a scatter of animal bones (Exc. No. 186/AS68d/2012), found along the east, west and north side of the shaft, as well as fragments of wood (Exc. No. 185/AS68d/2012). Smaller amounts of interspersed pottery from Shaft 2 came from below the cluster, from a depth of 3.50 m and deeper.

Finally, at the bottom of the shaft, at a depth of 6.50 m and directly connected with the entrance into the burial chamber, the remains of numerous fragments of pottery were found. This cluster consisted mainly of stands, as well as a fully preserved bread form and sherds of finer pottery, including a bowl with a thick layer of a fine white substance inside, very likely plaster intended for coating. This bowl (44-5.AS68d.2012) is of Abusir type B-2c, namely with bent-sided walls and a spouted rim (Fig. 3.271). Both curved spouts were found, although the vessel was preserved only to about 55% of its diameter. The use of such fine pottery as a container for plaster is less usual, but in principle it reflects the similar discovery of a beer jar base with mortar filling at the bottom of Shaft 1 and must be interpreted in a similar way (see *supra*).

This was not the only fine pottery used as a container for plaster – the context in front of the sealing wall contained fragments of another vessel, of much less usual shape, also with a layer of white substance on its inner walls. It is very small, with an aperture diameter of only 18.5 cm and a height of 9.5 cm. The most unusual feature is not only its spouted rim but also a ledge, decorating the area underneath the outer rim (see Fig. 3.265, 44-6.AS68d.2012).

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<sup>60</sup> The ceramic finds from the shaft of Neferhathor were partially published in a paper comparing shaft deposits uncovered in Shaft 1 and 2 in the tomb of Nefer (see Arias Kytarová 2015).

The ceramic vessels from Shaft 2 were found extremely fragmented and many vessels were broken to numerous small pieces, including a large and rather thick-walled storage jar 44-13.AS68d.2012, which was glued together from over 30 fragments (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: Fig. 13). Such fragmentation is probably not just the result of robbing activity – more probably, it can be interpreted as the result of intentional breaking of the pottery, which shall be discussed below.

Looking at the main characteristics and typological similarities to Shaft 1, the most numerous classes attested were again stands and platters. These two classes occur very often together in ritual activities, making up small portable “tables”. In the case of this shaft, we had altogether at least 37 stands and 12 platters (see e.g. Fig. 3.270). For both classes, the numbers can actually be slightly higher, but they are about half of those from neighbouring Shaft 1. Also, there were at least eleven attested bowls and ten jars. All other classes were sparse, with just one miniature bowl and one cup and only four bread forms.

Among the stands, two main groups (one with two variations) were observed, again very similar to the features attested in Shaft 1. The most common group was the tall hour-glass shaped stands with conical walls and with either a simple or a modelled rim (Fig. 3.267). The second, much more infrequent group, were medium-sized stands with conical walls and, as a rule, simple rims (Fig. 3.268). Amidst the tall hour-glass shaped stands (Abusir type S-1a), the form with a simple rim and base (S-1aI) was highly predominant. They were highly uniform not only in their forms but also sizes – the six fully preserved examples had rim diameters of 12–13.5 cm, base diameters of 10–13 cm and heights of 23 cm (five examples) and 26 cm (one example). Even the partly preserved examples (such as only upper rim or base rim fragments) showed conformity with these dimensions. As a rule, upper and lower rims were able to be easily distinguished, as the upper rims were carefully smoothed while the base rims were often slightly flattened and sometimes left slightly rough, with the remains of redundant clay still on their inner surfaces (Fig. 3.269, compare also Fig. 3.247 for occurrence from Shaft 1). Another rule that was observed was that the tall hour-glass shaped stands had either simple upper and base rims or modelled upper and base rims; there was never a case of



a combination of a simple upper rim with a modelled base rim or vice versa.<sup>61</sup> The variation with simple rims (S-1aI) was much more common, with six fully preserved examples and almost 60 more fragments. On the other hand, the variation with modelled rims (S-1aII) was represented by only two incomplete examples with rim/base diameters of 14.5 and 13 cm. The technical details of their production, surface treatment and other details are identical to those from Shaft 1 (see *supra*).

The ceramic finds uncovered in the burial chamber were very poor, consisting of only three partly broken beer jars and several other fragments. The beer jars were found *in situ*, deposited west of the sarcophagus (Fig. 3.274 and 3.275; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: Fig. 11). One of them was able to be reconstructed to full profile (no. 44-43.AS68d.2012) and belongs to type J-1b with a straight low neck, ovoid body and partly pointed base. It is rather large, with an aperture diameter of 10 cm, a maximum diameter of 17 cm and a complete height of 36.5 cm (Figs. 3.276 and 3.277). The other beer jar (no. 44-44.AS68d.2012) was preserved only to the lower part of the neck but has similar dimensions, with a maximum diameter of 16.5 cm and preserved height of 33 cm. These beer jars were very likely part of the burial goods of the deceased woman, similar to the already mentioned ten beer jars from the intact burial chamber of priest Neferinpu (Arias Kytarová 2014a: Figs. 7.8 and 7.9) and the fragment from the chamber of her husband Nefer (see *supra*), symbolizing beer as a sustenance for her afterlife. The burial chamber held several other objects, most notably four canopic jars, a small set of copper tools and bones of animal offerings.

As far as the dating is concerned, this shaft was probably built and used slightly later than that of her husband. Both the rough pottery (such as the beer jars from the burial chamber) as well as the fine vessels (a large spindle-shaped jar, bent-sided bowls and other vessels from the shaft) point to the fact that they come from a time period before the stone enlargement of Neferinpu's tomb. This enlargement can be dated due to the presence of two

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<sup>61</sup> This was noted particularly while documenting the extensive ceramic remains from the complex of princess Sheretnebt, including all the tombs, not only Nefer's.

inscribed mud stoppers in the burial chamber of his wife, with the name of King Djedkare (Bárta *et al.* 2014: Figs. 6.37–6.40).

### 3.6.4 SHAFT 3

Shaft 3 was explored as the last shaft in the whole complex of Sheretnebty, in the autumn of 2014. The shaft was 1.30 × 1.30 m large and only 2.60 m deep. It is unique among the other substructures in being found intact at the time of discovery, as well as holding a burial of a relatively young boy with fine burial goods. The shaft is still unpublished, only the faience beads associated with the burial were shortly dealt with in a preliminary report on the jewellery from the complex of Sheretnebty (Dulíková 2016: 23).

Shaft 3 was the shallowest shaft in tomb AS 68d. It contained a fill of dark sand with limestone fragments. There was only a small number of ceramic finds – out of 82 fragments, only 26 pieces were diagnostic, totalling to a minimum amount of 11 vessels (Table 3.48). Interestingly, miniature vessels make up most of them, with altogether 7 pieces. Except for one bowl, all the other miniatures were hand-made (see Fig. 3.279). Their quality and morphology is in accordance with other hand-made miniature vessels from the whole complex, and they shall be discussed in detail in *Chapter 5.7.4*.

| Context                                 | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases    | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|----------------|--|-----------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 87.AS68d.2014<br>(Shaft 3<br>in AS 68d) | J-1            | -                                      | 16        | 2        | -                                | 51                              | 69                      | 18                                | 2                      | 18,2%                |
|   | F              | -                                      | -         | -        | -                                | 5                               | 5                       | -                                 | 1                      | 9,1%                 |
|   | P              | 1                                      | -         | -        | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 9,1%                 |
|   | MB             | 3                                      | -         | -        | -                                | -                               | 3                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 27,3%                |
|   | MC             | 3                                      | 1         | -        | -                                | -                               | 4                       | 4                                 | 4                      | 36,4%                |
| <b>Total</b>                            |                | <b>7</b>                               | <b>17</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>-</b>                         | <b>56</b>                       | <b>82</b>               | <b>26</b>                         | <b>11</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.48 Amounts of ceramic finds from Shaft 3 in rock-cut tomb AS 68d**

The mud brick sealing wall leading into the burial chamber was found fully intact and even partially plastered with mud (see Fig. 3.280). The burial chamber was relatively small but contained a very interesting assemblage of burial goods including pottery (Table 3.49). Most of the finds were laid out on the three limestone blocks forming the lid of the burial pit (Fig.

3.281). The most notable part of the assemblage was a tall two-handled jar with combed decoration that was tightly squeezed into the space between the lid and the roof of the chamber. Next to it was a cluster of small, miniaturized jars together with an animal skull (Fig. 3.282). Inside the pit was the body of a young child, probably a boy, estimated to an age of 10–12 years (Petra Havelková, personal communication). It was intentionally covered in sand, and among the other items, the skeleton was equipped with different pieces of jewellery (see Dulíková 2016).

The burial chamber provided us also with notable chronological evidence, namely a mud brick bearing a preserved seal imprint with the Horus name of King Niuserre (yet unpublished). Their presence provides us tentatively with a *terminus ad quem* for the burial of the child. The position of the shaft, in direct neighbourhood of the main shafts of tomb AS 68d (Shaft 1 and 2), as well as the rich funerary equipment of the burial, additionally suggest that this child could have been an offspring of Nefer and Neferhathor, who died prematurely and was buried during the reign of Niuserre (Veronika Dulíková, personal communication).

| Context  | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims     | Bases    | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|--|----------------|--|----------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 405/AS68d/2014 +<br>408/AS68d/2014<br>(BC of Shaft 3<br>in AS 68d) | J fine         | 1                                      | -        | -        | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 7,7%                 |
|  | MJ             | 11                                     | -        | -        | -                                | -                               | 11                      | 11                                | 11                     | 84,6%                |
|  | D              | 1                                      | -        | -        | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 7,7%                 |
| <b>Total</b>   |                | <b>13</b>                              | <b>-</b> | <b>-</b> | <b>-</b>                         | <b>-</b>                        | <b>13</b>               | <b>13</b>                         | <b>13</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.49 Ceramic vessels from the burial chamber of a young boy in Shaft 3 of AS 68d**

The two-handled jar (Exc. No. 408/AS68d/2014) is one of the few that were found fully intact in the whole cemetery (Fig. 3.283). This type belongs to the so-called Syro-Palestinian combed ware that is attested in burial chambers of high officials from the early Fourth Dynasty and was used as a container of wine or oil. A shorter variation of this type had already appeared in Abydos during the First Dynasty, but the bulk of their occurrences falls into the Fourth to Sixth Dynasties (see also Sowada 2009). They are attested in the tombs of the officials at Giza (Junker 1929: 119–126, Abb. 13, nos. 16–17; Hassan 1936, 145, Fig. 173, 3–4;

Reisner – Smith 1955: 74–76, Figs. 96–98), Saqqara (Jéquier 1929: 14, 26), Matmar (Brunton 1948: 45, Pl. XXXVII, 2), Nazlet Batran (Kromer 1991: 41, 67, Fig. 1, Taf. 23, 38/4) and at other sites. During the Sixth Dynasty, there was an increase in imitations of this highly valued commodity (see *e.g.* Rzeuska 2004: 134, Fig. 134; Bárta *et al.* 2009: 243–253), although imported vessels also occur in limited numbers (*e.g.* Knoblauch 2010: 254–258, Figs. 5–7).

At Abusir, such vessels are relatively rare and have been attested only in four other tombs so far, namely the burial chamber and associated areas in the early Fifth Dynasty tomb of Kaaper (AS 1, see Bárta 1991: 185, Pl. LXXXVIIIb) and numerous diverse examples from the burial chamber of Senedjemib and Inti from the Sixth Dynasty (see Bárta *et al.* 2009: Figs. 6.3.131–6.3.133, esp. nos. 1 and 12, Fig. 6.3.150). During the last season of 2016, two more examples were uncovered – one in tomb AS 88 that undoubtedly originated from AS 1 and got into one of the shafts during different post-depositional processes following the robbing. The second one came from the burial chamber in the anonymous Sixth Dynasty tomb AS 41 (both yet unpublished).

These two lately uncovered pieces are exemplary of the development of approach to this type of imported vessels, mentioned above. Whereas the sherds from AS 88 (originating from AS 1) were undoubtedly made of Syro-Palestinian clay, the vessel from AS 41 was made of Nile silt B2 and only poorly imitated the combed decoration on the outer walls. It seems plausible that while during the early Fifth Dynasty the two-handled jars were limited to actual imported vessels brought from the Levantine region, in the Sixth Dynasty the local Egyptian potters found no shame in imitating these valuable and prestigious wares. In the case of the complete vessel from Shaft 3, it was found fully intact and therefore no analysis of the break could be undertaken. Comparison to the clearly imported clay of the sherd from AS 88 shows that it lacks some characteristic features of that particular imported clay; however, a final assertion will have to wait until experts can confirm or rebut this theory.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, the combed decoration on jar 408/AS68d/2014 is very thorough (see also Fig. 3.284), and it

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<sup>62</sup> While the present author has an extensive experience with Egyptian clays of different periods, she is no expert in Levantine materials.

was found sealed with a mud stopper of non-Egyptian morphology. The remains of a dark organic substance inside additionally also point to the fact that it was filled with actual offering, rather than a symbolic clay filling.

Besides the combed-ware jar, there was a cluster of eleven miniaturized jars (405/AS68d/2014, Fig. 3.285) that might have been originally deposited in a basket (?) made of reeds, judging by the organic remains around and underneath them. These all belonged to the same type (MJ-3) with a wide neck, squat body with articulated shoulders and a flat base. All the examples were rather roughly and carelessly made on a wheel, with typical marks of string cutting on their bases (see Fig 3.286). Only two pieces were relatively regular, the rest were clearly lopsided. One vessel had a likely intentionally-made hole in its base (405-11/AS68d/2014). Most of the jars had traces of a dark powdery substance inside that has not yet been analysed; in one jar (405-9/AS68d/2014), there was even a heap of partly burned seeds (see Fig. 3.287).

It is interesting to note that miniaturized jars of analogical shape occur in larger amounts *e.g.* in the late Sixth Dynasty contexts of Qubbit el-Hawa, where they also occasionally served as holders of different organic matter and were often inscribed as containers of diverse fruits (see *e.g.* Edel – Seyfried – Vieler 2008: Figs. 8–9, 13–14, Abb. 4–33, 100, *etc.*). Similar squat miniaturized jars are attested at Abusir from the early Fifth Dynasty onwards, with the earliest examples from the tomb of Kaaper (Kytnarová 2009: Fig. 94) and the anonymous tomb AS 93 (yet unpublished). During the later Fifth Dynasty they were attested *e.g.* in the funerary temple of Queen Khentkaus II at Abusir Centre (see Fig. 5.27).<sup>63</sup>

### 3.6.5 SHAFT 4

Shaft 4 was among the last explored substructures in Sheretnebty's complex and was excavated in the 2014 spring season. The shaft was 1.40 × 1.20 m large and 4.50 m deep (yet unpublished). This shaft held a burial chamber with size of 2.96 × 2.14 m, also equipped with

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<sup>63</sup> There were several other examples of miniaturized jars that shall be discussed in more detail in *Chapter 5.7.4*.

a limestone sarcophagus, making AS 68d the only rock-cut tomb in the whole complex where almost all the attested shafts were furnished with sarcophagi.

The shaft was relatively shallow; however, its importance lies in the fact that similar to neighbouring Shaft 3, it was found unplundered, with an intact sealing wall made of irregular limestone blocks (Fig. 3.289). The ceramic finds from the fill of the shaft were very poor, with a minimum number of only 7 individual vessels (see Table 3.50). These finds include a very small rim fragment of a shallow bent-sided bowl (84-1.AS68d.2014), small fragments of beer jars with a low neck and one piece of a bread form with a bevelled, flat rim. The most notable finds include a small stand with a modelled base and simple rim (84-3.AS68d.2014), which was reconstructed to full profile from several pieces. Another interesting find is that of an unusual slim jar with a pointed base that was found in the lower levels of the shaft in several fragments (84-2.AS68d.2014). It was made of Marl A3 with characteristic greyish colour, and it was scraped on its outer base with a very sharp tool, leaving vertical marks (Fig. 3.297). This base undoubtedly belongs to jar 86-1.AS68d.2014, found in pieces in the burial chamber of this shaft. They share identical material, surface treatment and colouring of the break, as well as morphological classification (see also *infra*).

| Context                                 | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims     | Bases    | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|---|----------------|--|----------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 84.AS68d.2014<br>(Shaft 4<br>in AS 68d) | J-1            | -                                      | 5        | 2        | -                                | 32                              | 39                      | 7                                 | 2                      | 28,6%                |
|   | J fine         | -                                      | -        | 1        | 2                                | 6                               | 9                       | 3                                 | 1                      | 14,3%                |
|   | B              | -                                      | 2        | -        | -                                | 2                               | 4                       | 2                                 | 1                      | 14,3%                |
|   | S              | 1                                      | 1        | 1        | -                                | 6                               | 9                       | 3                                 | 2                      | 28,6%                |
|   | F              | -                                      | 1        | -        | 1                                | 2                               | 4                       | 2                                 | 1                      | 14,3%                |
| <b>Total</b>                            |                | <b>1</b>                               | <b>9</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>3</b>                         | <b>48</b>                       | <b>65</b>               | <b>17</b>                         | <b>7</b>               | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.50 Ceramic fragments from the fill of Shaft 4 in AS 68d**

The entrance to the burial chamber was found sealed with irregular blocks of limestone, connected with mortar (see Fig. 3.289). The burial chamber itself was partly covered in fill and loose blocks (see Fig. 3.290). Part of the burial goods, most notably three canopic jars and their limestone lids, were found lying on the lid of the sarcophagus (also Fig. 3.291). The sarcophagus was found intact and sealed with mortar. Inside, there was an

articulated body of a male over 50 years old (Petra Havelková, personal communication), with his head towards the north, supported by a limestone slab serving as a provisional head-rest (see Fig. 3.294). The body was very well preserved and showed traces of mummification. It was originally equipped with jewellery, as is attested by the presence of several heaps of faience beads deposited at different parts of the body (see Dulíková 2016b: 21) and by a cluster of golden foil next to his knees (Fig. 3.295).

| Context  | Class or group | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims      | Bases    | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | % of min.<br>vessels |
|--|----------------|--|-----------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 86.AS68d.2014<br>and<br>397/AS68d/2014<br>(BC of Shaft 4<br>in AS 68d) | J-1            | -                                      | 16        | 6        | -                                | 123                             | 145                     | 22                                | 6                      | 60,0%                |
|  | J fine         | -                                      | 4         | -        | 2                                | -                               | 6                       | 6                                 | 1                      | 10,0%                |
|  | F              | -                                      | -         | -        | 2                                | 3                               | 5                       | 2                                 | 1                      | 10,0%                |
|  | P              | -                                      | 1         | -        | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 10,0%                |
|  | MB             | 1                                      | -         | -        | -                                | -                               | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 10,0%                |
| <b>Total</b>   |                | <b>1</b>                               | <b>21</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>4</b>                         | <b>126</b>                      | <b>158</b>              | <b>32</b>                         | <b>10</b>              | <b>100,0%</b>        |

**Table 3.51 Ceramic finds from the burial chamber in Shaft 4**

The ceramic finds from the burial chamber were very scant. Out of 158 fragments, only 32 were diagnostic and added up to a minimum of 10 individual vessels (Table 3.51). Most of these should be considered secondary, as they were present only in small fragments. The two notable exceptions are an almost complete beer jar and a fine jar made of Marl (86-1.AS68d.2014)

The beer jar was reconstructed from several fragments (397/AS68d/2014, Figs. 3.296) and was originally filled with Nile mud in substitution of beer. Beer jars are very common among burial goods, commonly situated closely to the sarcophagus and often found with false mud filling and in some cases sealed with mud stoppers, *e.g.* in the burial chamber of Neferinpu (Arias Kytarová 2014: Figs. 7.8 and 7.9) and the burial chamber of Neferhathor (see Figs 3.274 and 3.275), representing drink for the deceased on a symbolic level. This particular beer jar was relatively tall and massive, with a height of 37 cm and a maximum diameter of 17.5 cm. Its particular shape points to the Sixth Dynasty and such dating is also confirmed by the canopic jars, which have a very slim shape with convex rather than more traditional concave walls (Lucie Jirásková, personal communication; see also Fig. 3.293).

By far the most noteworthy ceramic find from this burial chamber was the fine jar made of Marl A3 (86-1.AS68d.2014, Fig. 3.297). It was in an interesting archaeological context, being found in numerous fragments both in the fill of the chamber (upper 2/3 of the vessel), but also in the lower levels of the shaft (84-2.AS68d.2014, base). Due to the fact that the sealing wall was undisturbed, it is most likely that the jar was already broken during the burial and thus scattered in different places. It has a very peculiar shape, with two outer ribs on its wide neck and a very slim, tall body with a pointed base. The outer walls of the jar were scraped with a sharp object, such as a ceramic tool, leaving characteristic vertical marks on the whole area from the maximum diameter downwards. Parallels for this jar are very rare. Throughout the Old Kingdom, there are different vessels with outer ribs decorating the rim, most commonly in the early part of it. However, bowls with outer ribs occur also in the late Old Kingdom, as can be seen *e.g.* in the material from the neighbouring Shaft 2 of Neferhathor (see Fig. 3.265). In jars, ribbing is less common and appears *e.g.* on small collar jars of the Fourth Dynasty (*e.g.* Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 88). Our jar, although decorated with two ribs, is undoubtedly later, being much slender in general shape, in accordance with Sixth Dynasty material. A roughly similar rim appears on one of the jars from the complex of Raneferef (Bárta 2006: Fig. II, ACd 1). In stone, see *e.g.* the miniature vessel from G 7761 B (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 144, 29-11-502).



#### 4 SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION AND AREA TRENDS

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the use of pottery in various funerary contexts, from vessels uncovered in primary layers in the burial chambers, those forming intentional shaft deposits or remnants of cultic activity in the chapels to those that were used secondarily as technical pottery or even as a building material. The scope of this chapter surpasses the complex of Sheretnebtj and discusses and draws parallels from the whole area of the Memphite necropolis throughout the late Old Kingdom. Finally, the issues of depositional and post-depositional processes shall be discussed in this chapter, as they both highly influence the approach to the ceramic material and its interpretation.

Due to the origin of the primary material used in this dissertation, only the most relevant funerary contexts shall be taken into account. Nonetheless, even with such constraints, several main kinds of contexts can be observed, which shall be further described in more detail:<sup>1</sup>

- a) burial goods – objects that were part of the primary depositions in burial chambers/niches,
- b) sealing ritual deposits – items situated at the bottom of the shaft,
- c) burial shaft deposits – clusters found in the middle/upper fill of shafts, sometimes broken,
- d) other ritual deposits – *e.g.* so-called embalming deposits,
- e) cult pottery – vessels used for cultic activity in chapels,
- f) votive offerings – vessels brought during regular rituals to chapels/niches,
- g) refuse deposits – vessels intentionally thrown out of cultic places to be deposited in the vicinity of the tomb,
- h) secondary building material – vessels found in the fill of mastabas or other structures.

Burial contexts include all items uncovered in the burial chambers or niches and directly associated with the burial. They were part of the burial goods meant for the Afterlife of the deceased. During the late Old Kingdom, these could encompass a variety of objects,

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<sup>1</sup> These types of contexts are not necessarily all the existing ones, rather the most important that were attested throughout the exploration of the cemetery at Abusir South.

most notably ceramic and copper vessels, canopic jars, copper models of tools, wooden models, *etc.* (for some well documented Sixth Dynasty examples, see *e.g.* Bárta *et al.* 2009). Ceramic vessels were by far the most common uncovered kind of burial goods, as they often survive even repeated robbing activities, due to their low economic and aesthetic value for the thieves. The idea behind placing pottery in the burial chamber was to provide food and drink for the deceased. Therefore, the most commonly found vessels include a variety of bowls and various groups of jars, such as beer jars and wine jars (*e.g.* Arias Kytarová 2014a: 130–133). The wine jars or so-called imports were most possibly considered the most desirable and we can assume that only lower-ranking officials had to settle for beer jars (see also *Chapter 4.1.1*).

Sealing ritual deposits are not quite common – at the Abusir South cemetery the present author has been able to observe that burial shafts had either a sealing deposit or a shaft deposit, but never both. The difference between them may seem negligible but it is still noteworthy. Sealing ritual deposits consist of vessel/s found immediately in front of the sealed and white-washed or mortared wall leading into the burial chamber or niche (*cf. Chapter 4.2.1*). Sometimes, they were combined with the discovery of burned animal bones, and thus it is very likely that they were part of a single ritual ensuring the proper sealing of the chamber. More often than not, they consisted of a single beer jar found intact leaning against the mentioned wall, such as *e.g.* in Shaft 6 of the tomb of Neferinpu (Arias Kytarová 2011: Fig. 6).

On the other hand, burial shaft deposits are more commonly found in the middle to upper part of the shaft and very often consist of numerous vessels that might have been intentionally broken to pieces (*Chapter 4.2.2*). At Abusir South, the Czech mission recently uncovered several of such shaft deposits (*e.g.* Arias Kytarová 2015 and 2016a). Some of them consisted primarily of beer jar, while others could also include other classes such as stands and platters. Unlike in the previously mentioned sealing ritual deposits, these vessels are sometimes found only randomly deposited in the shaft, sometimes clearly thrown inside and broken during the process. They are often mingled with sand and pieces or chips of limestone. It is possible that these vessels come from funerary rituals conducted during the burial. Due to the fact that they could not be reused for any other purpose, they had to be disposed of and

ritually buried. This is undoubtedly also connected to the common ritual of *sd dšrwt*, breaking of the red vases. Other types of ritual deposits are analysed in *Chapter 4.3*, dealing with shafts without traces of burials.

Cult pottery is understood as vessels that were stored permanently in the cultic places of the tombs, such as large stands with either bowls or platters that are sometimes found in front of false doors or niches in the chapels (also *Chapter 4.4.1*). This pottery is often of high quality of make, covered with a thick, polished red slip that was subsequently treated with white wash or, even more often, a layer or layers of fine white plaster during the rituals. It has to be assumed that such vessels were part of the permanent inventory of a tomb and were only replaced after damage or destruction.

In contrast, votive offerings are understood as vessels that were brought during repeated daily or weekly rituals and were regularly replaced by new offerings. Their main features are a much lesser quality of make (most prominently in the case of beer jars and thousands of carelessly-made miniature vessels) and their large quantities (see *Chapter 4.4.2*). They are very rarely uncovered *in situ* in the primary floor levels of chapels or other cultic spaces. There are several reasons for this – firstly, cultic activities occurred in the widely accessible superstructure areas of the tombs and secondly, new cultic activity required removal of the remnants of previous offerings. Therefore, we find only rarely primary floor layers in chapels or cultic places in open courtyards. More often than not, the vessels uncovered there are more likely the remains of accumulative post-depositional processes. However, some chapels and their adjacent corridors yielded several fully preserved or only partly broken beer jars, still with false Nile filling inside (e.g. the early collared beer jars from tomb AS 54, see Arias Kytnarová – Jirásková 2014: Fig. 7).

By far, the largest amounts of vessels come from so-called refuse deposits, namely intentional dumps of offering vessels used during the cultic activities and thrown away in the neighbouring area, often behind the nearest wall or next to an older tomb. To name just a few examples of such deposits, there were over 300 Third Dynasty beer jars in the ceramic deposit discovered in the North temple of the Step pyramid of Netjerikhet (Firth and Quibell 1935: pls. XXV and CII, nos. 18 and 20). From the early Fifth Dynasty, a much smaller but similarly

laid-out deposit of beer jars was found close to the entrance of the chapel of Kaaper at Abusir South (Bárta 2001: 184). These deposits can have any number of vessels, reaching from a few to several hundred, and they are very likely remnants of the cleaning of ritual structures. As said before, all ritual pottery had to be ritually disposed of, as none of it could be used for any practical domestic purpose.

Another very common context, although only very rarely documented in detail and often mentioned only in passing, is the use of vessels (most commonly beer jars, but also stands and other classes) as a secondary building material. Ancient Egyptians were highly practical and did not shy away from using offering vessels deposited around tombs as a filler during the construction of new tombs. The latest very particular example of extensive use of pottery as building material comes from the recently discovered tomb of Queen Khentkaus III in the pyramid field of Abusir (Krejčí – Arias Kytarová – Odler 2015: Fig. 9a–b). There, the whole area immediately south and southeast of the burial chamber consisted of a continuous layer of predominantly ceramic vessels, mainly beer jars, mixed with occasional stones, sand and *tafl* pieces (see also *Chapter 4.5.1*).

The study of the exact archaeological context of the finds is of immense importance, as it highlights the original function of the vessels. Although vessels from varied depositions often share common features, such as being filled with Nile mud as a symbolic replacement of beverage or being covered with a white wash or even plaster, different contexts may point to diverse meaning or dissimilar rituals. Thus, it is possible to deduce additional information concerning the use of these vessels.

#### 4.1 BURIAL CHAMBERS

The burial chambers belong among the most important places of deposition, especially in the case of pottery. Unlike other objects, whether made from copper, stone or wood, ceramic vessels were usually of minimum interest to tomb robbers in antiquity and thus were often left in place, in the worst case broken or pushed aside to the corner of a chamber to allow access to the more profitable goods. It is still important to realize that not all the vessels from the burial chambers necessarily represent the original tomb equipment – there can be an unknown

percentage of intrusive pottery that could have originated from the fill of the shaft (although this can be traced relatively easily with attentive and well documented archaeological excavation), could be pottery left behind by the original builders (so-called repurposed pottery, used *e.g.* as containers for plaster sealing the sarcophagus or the sealing wall) or could be vessels left behind by tomb robbers (*e.g.* lamps or other vessels used secondarily as sources of light). In the following section, all four cases shall be discussed on the material not only from the complex of Sheretnebt, but also within the scope of the Memphite necropolis, to provide parallels for similar attestations.

As far as details of the contexts from the complex of Sheretnebt are concerned, they shall be referenced only in the most important cases; all the additional information can be found in respective sections of the chapter dealing with the archaeological context of the ceramic finds (*Chapter 3*).

#### 4.1.1 BURIAL GOODS

Although there were a relatively high number of shafts in the complex of Sheretnebt, only a number of them can be used in this particular analysis. Three of the shafts were largely unfinished (Shaft 2 in the courtyard and Shafts 15 and 16 in the corridor), two more never had a burial chamber or traces of a burial (Shaft 1 in the courtyard and Shaft 1 in AS 68b). Furthermore, the exploration of Shafts 7 and 10 in the courtyard had to be abandoned due to safety reasons and thus never satisfactorily clarified the question of the existence of their burial apartments.

The complex thus provided us with 22 burial apartments that were accessible from the shafts and one more (the main burial chamber of tomb AS 68b) that was positioned at the end of the chapel itself. However, even this number has to be further reduced for this particular analysis. Although all these shafts were equipped with burial chambers or niches, in one case it can be assumed that it was never used for burials due to the lack of human bones or any kind of burial equipment (Shaft 3 in AS 68c). Seven other burial chambers did not hold any kind of ceramic fragments in their fills (Shafts 5, 8, 9 and 11 in the courtyard, Shaft 13 in the corridor; Shafts 2 and 5 in AS 68c). In several cases, the nature of the fill in the chamber and

especially the nature of the ceramic fragments points rather to it being a secondary fill originating from the shaft (Shaft 4 in AS 68c and very likely also Shaft 6 in AS 68c, see *supra*).

Considering the main criterion of archaeological relevance, *i.e.* the issue of primary deposits, it must be stressed that only very few burial chambers were uncovered fully intact, with an undisturbed sealing wall. In some cases, even such an unbroken sealing wall does not have to signify an intact chamber, as it might have been resealed by priests or workers after the robbing or the chamber could have been robbed from the neighbouring shaft or chamber (such as *e.g.* Shaft 4 in tomb AS 68c, see *Chapter 3.5.5*). One of notable examples of such was the burial chamber of Inti at Abusir South; his burial shaft contained three levels of deposits in the seemingly undisturbed burial shaft, including very badly fired bread forms that would fall apart under careless handling. Despite this fact, the burial chamber was found disturbed and partly plundered – it is most likely that it was robbed shortly after the placement of the deceased and his tomb equipment into the chamber and before the filling of the shaft (Bárta 2003a: 21–22, Fig. 2).

Abusir South provided us with only a few undisturbed burial chambers. Some were unlooted simply because they were probably considered to be too poor and void of any valuables; this is the case of the burial chambers of Shafts 7, 9 and 10 in the tomb of Kaiemtjenet (AS 38, see Vymazalová *et al.* 2011: 31–34). In some cases, these burials held no items besides the body of the deceased and thus are not discussed in detail in this study. The more prominent burials were almost always successful targets of tomb robbers and we can name only a handful that were uncovered intact; one such is the burial chamber of priest Neferinpu (AS 37, Shaft 1; see Bárta *et al.* 2014: 28–38) and the second is the burial chamber in Shaft 5 in the tomb of Qar (AS 16; Bárta *et al.* 2009: 76–77). In the complex of Sheretnebty, we uncovered only a few such examples of intact, sealed burial chambers, most notably in Shafts 3 and 4 of tomb AS 68d. Of note is also the sealed burial pit of an otherwise disturbed burial chamber in Shaft 6 in the court.

On the other hand, it is important to stress that even in the case of disturbed burial chambers, the ceramic vessels uncovered in their primary floor layers can be seen as remnants of the original tomb goods. The best examples of such cases were floor layers of the burial

chambers in Shafts 3, 4 and 6 in the court, Shafts 1 and 2 in AS 68a, Shaft 1 in AS 68c, Shafts 1 and 2 in AS 68d. Naturally, we do not know for sure the extent of the percentage of representation of these goods (*i.e.* how much was originally there and thus how much remained), but it can be assumed that the robbers did not try to take out pottery. Ceramic vessels were often large and heavy, especially the jars filled with Nile mud, and they are difficult to manipulate even in the conditions of the archaeological excavations, even less during the robbing that had only a temporary access route into 6–11 m deep shafts. In some cases, they might have been pulled partly into the shaft by tomb robbers, and sometimes we find vessels that are suspiciously similar to those uncovered in the burial chamber on the bottom of the shaft or in the level of the entrance to the chamber itself. One such particular case was a small heap of ceramic and limestone miniature vessels found on the bottom of Shaft 1 in the anonymous tomb AS 47 (ceramic context 2.AS47.2007), which were almost certainly originally part of the assemblage of ceramic and limestone miniatures (ceramic context 1.AS47.2007) uncovered east of the sarcophagus in the burial chamber (see also a detailed discussion in *Chapter 4.2.1*).

The complex of Princess Sheretnebtu was far from unified or standardized from the point of the items that served as burial goods. The quantity as well as quality varied greatly, even considering only the well-preserved examples. The relatively “poorest” (or more modest) burial chambers such as the one of Nefermin in Shaft 2 of AS 68a (*Chapter 3.3.3*) contained only a skeleton lying in a contracted position on the ground, with one bowl and one jar deposited near his head (see Figs. 3.117–3.119), lacking any other preserved burial goods (Vymazalová 2015: 50). The fill of his shaft brought to light another example of a jar identical to the one from the burial chamber (see Fig. 3.112) and thus it is very likely that both were originally deposited next to the body of the deceased.

As a contrast, the richest preserved example was the burial of the unknown official from Shaft 1 of tomb AS 68c, the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebtu (*Chapter 3.5.2*, see Figs. 3.168–3.170). Although we have no name and no titles attested for the owner, his shaft and particularly the burial chamber and its equipment point to the fact that he must have held at least similar offices to those of Nefer from tomb AS 68d (see discussion in

Vymazalová 2015: 56; Vymazalová – Arias Kytnarová *forthcoming*). The presence of a bowl with blue pigment in the floor layer of the burial chamber (see Figs. 3.171–3.173) is highly unusual and might indicate that the owner's chapel was equipped with a false door (today entirely lost) decorated in blue colour, analogical to the false doors of Nefer and Neferhathor in AS 68d (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.*2014: 28–29). As far as his burial chamber is concerned, it held a larger array of objects including canopic jars made of limestone, ceramic jars and bowls of several types, remains of animal bones, remnants of burned offerings, *etc.* (Vymazalová 2015: 51–53). The burial chamber was also highly interesting from the point of view of its state of discovery, which shall be discussed in detail in *Chapter 4.6.2*.

Another notable burial chamber was the one identified as belonging to Neferhathor, the wife of Nefer (Shaft 2 in AS 68d, *Chapter 3.6.3*). She was buried in a limestone sarcophagus, and next to it we uncovered not only three beer jars, four limestone canopic jars and animal bones, but also a set of copper models of tools and especially one of the (so far) oldest known example of wooden models of boats in private tombs (see Figs. 3.272–3.275; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.*2014: 29–30). Unluckily, the burial chamber of her husband, Nefer (Shaft 1 in AS 68d, *Chapter 3.6.2*) could not provide us with sufficient material comparison, as it was uncovered with a partly collapsed ceiling that continued to deteriorate during the exploration and thus had to be abandoned before full cleaning due to safety reasons. Only the easternmost part of the burial chamber was cleared and brought to light a ceramic bowl, a mud stopper (pointing to the fact that the burial chamber held at least one ceramic jar) and a heap of limestone miniature vessels (see Figs. 3.258–3.261). It can be assumed with certainty that there were other objects in the unexplored part of the burial chamber.

The burial of an anonymous boy in Shaft 3 of tomb AS 68d, who might have been the son of Nefer and Neferhathor (see *Chapter 3.6.4*), was found intact, behind an undisturbed sealing wall. It held a variety of rather unusual objects (see Figs. 3.281–3.282) – on the burial pit covered with limestone slabs, there was a large jar imitating Syro-Palestinian combed ware with an intact mud stopper (Fig. 3.283). The jar itself did not contain any Nile mud or any



other false filling but had a thin layer of a black powdery substance inside. The stain on the inner side of the jar suggests that it once held liquid contents. Due to the fact that the jar was fully preserved, it was impossible to analyse its clay in order to ascertain the place of origin. However, an outer comparison with preserved examples of imported wares showed that this jar might be an imitation manufactured in Nile silt. On the lid of the burial pit, an assortment of 11 miniaturized ceramic jars was found (see Figs. 3.285–3.288). These all belonged to an identical type (MJ-3) and were all similar in being made of low quality material, with little care and attention to detail. Almost all of them were irregular and lopsided. Many had intentional notches on two opposite sides of the shoulders and one had a large intentional hole in its base. Additionally, one of the miniaturized jars contained seeds and a few others dark powder. As was already mentioned, diverse forms of miniaturized jars of a later date also contained seeds and were even inscribed as holding different kinds of fruits (*e.g.* from the tombs at Qubbit el-Hawa, see Edel – Seyfried – Vieler 2008: 480, QH34e/9, Fig. 13).<sup>2</sup> In the case of the burial of the boy in Shaft 3 of AS 68c, these burial goods were complemented by a bovine head and other animal bones. Unluckily, no detailed analysis has yet been undertaken to provide us with detailed information about the exact nature of these organic remains. Furthermore, the body of the deceased was equipped with an array of different types of jewellery adorning his neck, arms and legs.

The burial chamber of Shaft 3 in the court (see *Chapter 3.1.3*) held a comparatively large amount of ceramic finds, most notably two bowls with a lip rim (B-2c), one carinated bowl with an angular shoulder (B-1a) and one very fine large storage jar with a wide neck (J-5).

There were a few chambers that present a much more complicated archaeological situation. Besides their primary floor level, a deep layer of debris collected either in a particular place of the chamber (usually behind the disturbed sealing wall) or filled the whole area of the chamber up to certain height. One such burial chamber, that of Duaptah in tomb

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<sup>2</sup> Although it has to be stressed that the majority of vessels with hieratic inscriptions from the burial contexts in Qubbit el-Hawa were medium-sized rough vessels resembling beer jars in their quality (*e.g.* from tomb QH35e, see Edel – Seyfried – Vieler 2008: 827–831, Figs. 4–11).

AS 68a (*Chapter 3.3.2*), held the burial of the main owner and was filled almost to 2/3 of its height with debris (see Figs. 3.96 and 3.98). He was interred in a sarcophagus pit built of limestone slabs and his original equipment, preserved in the floor layer of the chamber, included at least four fine squat jars, animal bones and other finds (Fig. 3.100–3.103). Another example of a highly mixed fill comes from the main area of the burial chamber in Shaft 6 of the courtyard, which held only one bowl from the original tomb equipment (*Chapter 3.1.3*, see Figs. 3.39 and 3.40). A fully preserved copper tool was uncovered in the sealed burial pit; *cf.* Vymazalová 2015: 45).

Thus, at first sight (compare also Table 6.2), there does not seem to be any level of standardization in the burial equipment in the complex of Sheretnebt, despite the fact that these structures cover only a relatively short period of the late Fifth to the terminal Sixth Dynasty. Only three burials held canopic jars (Neferhathor in Shaft 2 of AS 68d, unknown man in Shaft 4 in AS 68d and presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebt in Shaft 1 of AS 68c). It can be deduced, given his false door, sarcophagus and attested offices, that Nefer (Shaft 1 in AS 68d) also originally had canopic jars in his burial chamber. Only two chambers had copper models of tools (one in Shaft 6 in the courtyard and one of Neferhathor). Wooden objects were quite rare among the preserved objects – noteworthy are the four models of boats from the chamber of Neferhathor. In some cases, it was difficult to ascertain whether the remains of wood belonged to a coffin, a chest or were remnants of other unidentified objects.

Although many burials were equipped with ceramic vessels, their exact natures are highly dissimilar. The only common feature is the class – as per usual, burial chambers held examples of bowls and jars. However, the individual groups are not identical. Among jars, we find beer jars (J-1; Neferhathor, Nefer), fine large ovoid jars made of Marl (J-3; “husband”), an imitation of a Syro-Palestinian combed ware (J-4; boy burial in Shaft 3 of AS 68d), squat jars (J-14; Duaptah) and even slender jars with a tall neck (J-16; Nefermin). With the bowls, there is a relatively higher level of consistency, especially when compared with other chambers of the Abusir cemetery – carinated bowls (B-1) are attested in three chambers (Nefer, “husband”, Shaft 6 in the courtyard), bent-sided bowls of different forms (B-2) were found in one

chamber (“husband”) and there was only one example of a bowl with contracted walls (B-4; Nefermin).

Otherwise, the burial chambers did not bring to light any other ceramic class from their primary floor layers. In some cases, other pottery was discovered, but it was decidedly of a different character and either part of secondary fill (upper levels of the fill in the chamber of Duaptah) or part of a fill cluster, found just behind the disturbed sealing wall (the upper part of a stand in the chamber of “husband”). In some cases, the fill from the burial chambers was of such mixed character that it was impossible to differentiate between remnants of primary floor layers and secondary shaft fill that penetrated into the chamber (*e.g.* Shaft 3 in the courtyard). Such contexts were left out of this particular analysis due to their disputable nature.

One of the most important things to realize is the variability of the burials in this complex, especially from the point of their social status (one cannot compare the burials of “husband” and Nefermin on the same level, to give a particular example) and also their gender attribution (for a detailed analysis, see also *Chapter 6.1.1*). As the titles of the deceased were often not preserved, one must turn to auxiliary criteria, such as the presence of a sarcophagus versus a burial pit versus a wooden coffin versus a simple burial on the ground, to name only the most obvious example. Secondly, the complex of Princess Sheretnebty was undoubtedly large, but even with its 29 shafts, it does not provide a sufficient amount of comparative statistical data. In order to achieve more reliable results, one must include burials from the wider area. The cemeteries of Abusir South and Centre shall serve as the most credible source due to the fact that the author had access to all the available documentation (such as excavation diaries, find cards, plans, photos and drawings) and not only data from published monographs, which are often abbreviated for obvious reasons of size and cost of books. Comparisons with the wider area of the Memphite necropolis will be made whenever possible; however, there were numerous limitations including the lack of published data, mentioned above, or well-documented and available data from inapplicable periods (*e.g.* the detailed publications of the Saqqara West Sixth Dynasty could not be used reliably for most our burials that date to the Fifth Dynasty).

When all the above-mentioned criteria are applied (diverse burial customs in the late Fifth and late Sixth Dynasty, differences between high/low officials and private people, gender division, *etc.*), a pattern becomes more obvious (for a detailed discussion, see *Chapter 6.1*). Some relevant burial contexts from the other tombs in Abusir, as well as the Memphite necropolis, shall be explored briefly.

The late Fifth Dynasty saw a large expansion of building activity in both the cemeteries of Abusir South and Centre (*cf.* Verner 2002 and 2014; Krejčí 2010). The mastabas in the central part of Abusir were undoubtedly connected to the funerary complexes of the royal family, especially the kings and queens. The popularity of Abusir South as one of the main burial grounds is more difficult to state, as it is rather removed from the main pyramid fields of both Abusir and Saqqara. Princess Sheretnebtj is the first known direct member of royal family (being a presumed daughter of King Niuserre) that was buried here, very likely due to a marriage to an official whose family was traditionally buried in this part of the Memphite necropolis (*cf.* Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012 and 2014).

Family clusters were nothing new – Giza exhibits numerous examples of continuous and expanding tomb complexes of several families (most notably those of Senedjemib Inti, see Brovarski 2000). At Abusir South, we can name the example of a cluster of Fifth Dynasty tombs built for several family members, such as the tomb of Kaiemtjenenet (AS 38, *cf.* Vymazalová *et al.* 2011) and the tomb of Neferinpu (Bárta *et al.* 2014), who might have been additionally related to each other. Another example is that of the complex of vizier Qar and his sons Inti, Qar Junior and Senedjemib from the Sixth Dynasty (*e.g.* Bárta *et al.* 2009). This complex was probably further enlarged towards the west with further Sixth Dynasty tombs, whose exact relation to Qar's family has not fully been proven yet (tombs AS 32, AS 85 *etc.*). At Abusir Centre, the presumed members of Djedkare's family (Verner – Callender 2002; for a discussion, see Megahed 2016: 59–61) were buried in a cluster as well.

This provides us with valuable comparative material. Late Fifth Dynasty tombs make up most of the tombs of Abusir South and Centre. Notable ceramic material came from the burial chambers of the tomb of Nefershepes (AS 67). This tomb is a direct neighbour to complex AS 68 on its whole eastern and north-eastern sides, and on the basis of the ceramic

analysis, was built at a similar time period. The tomb belonged among not only one of the largest, but also one of the most visible and accessible due to its position on the top of the central mound of Abusir South. Thus, it was presumed before the excavation in the autumn of 2012 that the tomb was thoroughly robbed. Surprisingly, although it was confirmed that it was plundered, resulting *e.g.* in the missing false door, both burial chambers as well as individual rooms of the superstructure still held a surprising amount of items, predominantly pottery.

The two main shafts in mastaba AS 67 shared several characteristics. In both chambers, the original owners were buried in limestone sarcophagi (or a burial pit covered with a slab, in the case of Shaft 2) and equipped with canopic jars, among other objects (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 18–20). Subsequently, both chambers were reused for later burials, very likely of family members that were laid on the bottom of the chamber in front of the sarcophagi (see Arias Kytarová – Havelková – Jirásková *et al.* 2013). The archaeological situation is thus highly complicated and must be interpreted with caution. Both chambers were filled with debris at the time of discovery. The fill in the burial chamber of Shaft 1 contained sand and a layer of dried clay, pointing to the fact that the chamber had been flooded at some point (Fig. 4.1). The ceramic fragments uncovered from the fill (context 5.AS67.2012) were reconstructed to make several vessels, which typologically follow those uncovered in the primary layer of the burial chamber of “husband” in Shaft 1 of AS 68c. These included five large ovoid jars made of Marl (J-3, see Fig. 4.2), four small ovoid jars (J-2, Fig. 4.2), three carinated bowls (B-1), three large and deep bent-sided bowls with a simple rim (B-2a, Fig. 4.3), as well as one with a modelled rim (B-2b), one small bowl with a ring base and one very large and deep carinated bowl (B-15).

The burial chamber in Shaft 2 of AS 67 was considerably different in nature, as it contained predominantly rubble and debris (Fig. 4.4) and a much larger amount of ceramic fragments (context 4.AS67.2012). Some of them undoubtedly belonged to a shaft deposit that pervaded into the burial chamber with the fill (see *infra*). However, the fill also contained many fragments of fine pottery that typologically followed the sequence attested in the burial chamber of Shaft 1, in the burial chamber of “husband” in Shaft 1 of AS 68c and other tombs and thus should be considered to belong among the original tomb goods. These included four

large ovoid jars made of Marl (J-3, Fig. 4.5), one carinated bowl (B-1, Fig. 4.7), three deep bent-sided bowls with a modelled rim (B-2b, Fig. 4.6), one deep bent-sided bowl with a simple rim (B-2aI) and one shallow bent-sided bowl with a simple rim (B-2aII). It must be noted that while typologically these three chambers follow very similar patterns, the particular sizes and other characteristics of the vessels are different for each chamber, providing us with comparative ceramic material that was manufactured at very similar, but without any doubt, not identical time periods.

Other comparable burial chambers of the late Fifth Dynasty from Abusir included two accessible from Shaft 1 in the tomb of Neferinpu (AS 37; Bárta *et al.* 2014: 27–42) and one from Shaft 1 in anonymous tomb AS 47 (Fig. 4.8; Arias Kytarová 2011a: 121–125, Fig. 10). They shared several common features – in all of them, there were only two classes represented, namely jars and bowls. The jars were different in each case – Neferinpu was equipped with ten beer jars (J-1), his presumed wife with four large ovoid jars made of Nile silt (J-3) and the owner of AS 47 with a single ovoid jar made of Marl clay (J-3). They all had several bowls in the assemblage, broken to pieces, including those in the intact chamber of Neferinpu. The most commonly attested were carinated bowls (B-1, Fig. 4.11) and bent-sided bowls (B-2), present in all cases. The burial chamber of Shaft 1 in tomb AS 47 is unusual in being equipped with ceramic miniature vessels besides the more common limestone ones (Fig. 4.10). All three burial chambers were furnished with other objects, such as canopic jars (see *e.g.* Fig. 4.9). Neferinpu's also held miniature vessels made in limestone.

The cemetery of Abusir Centre provided us with a limited amount of comparative ceramic material as well. The largest amount of pottery came from the burial chamber of Hedjetnebu (AC 19, see Verner – Callender 2002: 90–91, Pl. XXI, Kf4). Unluckily, the chamber was found filled with a large amount of debris to the level of the sarcophagus. The ceramics that were uncovered in the debris include tall stands, beer jars and platters, otherwise closely connected to deposits uncovered in burial shafts. Due to the fact that the pottery was not documented in detail, it is very difficult to differentiate between the original funerary equipment and vessels that might have been part of the secondary fill. The burial chamber of Princess Khekeretnebtu in the neighbouring mastaba AC 15 contained a very large number of

vessels; however, most of these were part of secondary debris that pervaded into the chamber from the overhead pressure-relief vault (see *infra*). One of the few items that undoubtedly belonged to her original burial equipment was a miniaturized red-slipped carinated bowl (no. 155/B/76, see Verner – Callender 2002: Fig. B39 and pl. VIII, Bf22) that was found inside the sarcophagus. On the floor of the chamber, underneath limestone chips, there was another miniaturized red-slipped bowl with a grooved rim (no. 156/B/76, see Verner – Callender 2002: fig. B40, pl. VIII, Bf23). The chamber contained a large amount of other finds in the floor layer, including limestone canopic jars, a cluster of calcite miniature vessels, model tools made of copper, a tablet for seven sacred oils, a calcite headrest, a wooden model of a boat, a flint knife and animal offerings, all of which provide us with additional information about the extent of burial goods designated for a member of the royal family.

The Sixth Dynasty at Abusir South is represented by tombs of the highest-ranking officials (*i.e.* vizier Qar, see Bárta 2009: 49–143), lower-ranking officials (the tombs of his sons and possibly other descendants, see Bárta *et al.* 2009: 144–273), as well as persons without any attested titles, buried in the simple mud brick tombs (*e.g.* Sixth Dynasty tombs at the Lake of Abusir area, see Bárta 2001: 43–48). Therefore, it is possible to also observe differences between diverse social classes, which shall be analysed further in detail (see *Chapter 6.1.1*).

The burial chambers of vizier Qar and his sons Inti, Qar Junior, Senedjemib and Ikay showed us a great increase in the quantity and variability of tomb equipment (for details, see Bárta *et al.* 2009). The items included canopic jars (Shaft 5 in AS 16), stone and copper miniature vessels (Senedjemib, Qar Junior, Inti), copper models of tools (Senedjemib, Qar Junior, Inti), palettes for seven sacred oils (Senedjemib, Inti), calcite headrests (Senedjemib, Inti), models of food offerings (Inti) and flint knives (Senedjemib, Qar Junior). Among the ceramic vessels, the most distinctive feature is the presence of numerically various imitations of Syro-Palestinian combed ware (Qar Junior, Senedjemib, Ikay). Besides these, there were various tall ovoid jars made of Nile clay (J-3; Qar Junior, Senedjemib, Shaft 5 in AS 16; see Figs. 4.13, 4.15 and 4.16), very wide bent-sided bowls (B-9, Senedjemib, Qar; see Fig. 4.14) and smaller bowls with modelled rims (Senedjemib, Qar Junior).

Other recently excavated structures from the Sixth Dynasty that could serve as comparative ceramic material include tombs situated east and north-east of the tomb of vizier Qar, which also dated to the middle to late Sixth Dynasty (most prominently tombs AS 32, AS 82 and AS 85; yet unpublished). These tombs reveal the very different building activity that was spread out across a longer time period and without a unified plan. Only one burial chamber shall be mentioned in detail, that of lady Setib from Shaft 14 in tomb AS 79. It was found partly plundered, with the body of the deceased partly taken out of the coffin and one of the jars lying on the disturbed sealing wall (Fig. 4.17). Regarding ceramic finds, the tomb equipment included one shallow bowl with a modelled rim (B-6, Figs. 4.18–4.19), a small white-washed beaker (B-11, Fig. 4.18) and four large bulging ovoid jars made of Marl clay (J-3, Fig. 4.20). The jars were filled with a dark, articulated and very light filling of an unknown (burned?) substance, very likely of organic nature. It was proposed that these jars functionally substituted for canopic jars during the later Sixth Dynasty (Lucie Jirásková, personal communication). However, on several occasions similar jars were found in the same type of context together with canopic jars, *e.g.* in the burial chamber of Hefi at Saqqara, dated to the early Sixth Dynasty (Kanawati – Abder-Raziq 2001: Pl. 14, TNE99:2, TNE99:25a, b; Pl. 55), which excludes their use as such. Besides that, large ovoid or bulging jars with a low neck of various types are attested in the burial chambers of high to low officials throughout the whole Old Kingdom (see *e.g.* Shaft 1 in AS 68d, Shafts 1 and 2 in tomb AS 67, Shaft 1 in AS 47, *etc.* that all also held a full set of four canopic jars) and represent one of the more recurrent features that continues into the Sixth Dynasty (see also *e.g.* Shaft 1 in the tomb of Merefnebef, Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 40, nos. 128 and 129, Pl. 170:1). Nonetheless, it cannot be excluded that these particular jars from the burial of Setib were used as canopic jars due to the lack of the financial means for stone material, ignorance of the exact function of particular shapes, development of funerary customs in the later Sixth Dynasty or a different reason. Only a chemical analysis of the context can show us whether these jars indeed contained remains of a corporeal substance that originated from an embalming process; or they held different organic matter, such as burned vegetation (for a comparison of burned floral offerings, see *e.g.* Rzeuska 2006: 468–480). The jars from the chamber of Setib are also notable due to the fact



that they were sealed with an unusual combination of an inner stopper made of fired clay, then completely covered by a mortar stopper (Fig. 4.21; for stoppers, see also *Chapter 5.9*).

The last burial chamber to be mentioned in detail is one of (very likely) official Ptahwer, built into the annex of the tomb of Kaisebi (AS 78b), which is a good representation of a simpler burial (*cf.* Dulíková – Jirásková – Arias Kytnarová 2015). The burial chamber was also found disturbed but contained some of its original tomb equipment, most notably four large beer jars scattered around the sarcophagus (Figs. 4.22–4.23). They belong to type J-1d with a tall tubular tapering body with a rounded base (see Fig. 4.24). All four were filled with false Nile mud representing beer and originally sealed with partly preserved mud stoppers (see Figs. 4.25–4.26).

The complex of Princess Sheretnebtu contained several shafts that were very likely hewn in the course of the Sixth Dynasty (see also *Chapter 6.2.1*). These include, among others, Shafts 4, 5, 6, 12 in the court and Shafts 13 and 14 in the corridor. Some of the rock-cut tombs also held later burials, such as Shaft 4 in the tomb of Nefer (AS 68d) and Shafts 5 and 6 in the tomb of Sheretnebtu (AS 68c). Unluckily, only very few of these held any relevant pottery in their burial chambers (for details, see *supra* in *Chapter 3*; *cf.* also Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 20–22; Vymazalová 2015: 43–57).

In summary, burial chambers usually held two main classes of pottery, namely jars and bowls. Other classes, such as *e.g.* miniature vessels, are attested very rarely in our cemetery – in the context of other parts of the Memphite necropolis, they appear often, with a predominance in the early and middle Fourth Dynasty; while at Abusir, they are attested also during the Fifth Dynasty, but with much fewer occurrences (*e.g.* in the burial chamber of Kaaper in AS 1, Shaft 1 in AS 47 and surprisingly also in the chamber of Senedjemib in AS 18). Miniaturized jars were also found in the burial chamber of the young boy in Shaft 3 of AS 68d. Other classes occur only very exceptionally in primary floor layers of burial chambers, although they are often part of secondary debris covering the chamber or its part (see *e.g.* Duaptah in AS 68a, Shaft 2 in AS 67, *etc.*).

The class of jars is represented almost in all cases but differentiates in the particular ceramic groups and types, very likely depending on the economic power of the owner. Two

groups are most common at Abusir – beer jars (*e.g.* the burial chamber of Neferinpu in AS 37, Ptahwer in AS 76b, Nefer in AS 68d, Neferhathor in AS 68d, *etc.*) and large ovoid jars made in Marl (burial chamber of the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebty in AS 68c, both chambers in tomb AS 67, in Shaft 1 of AS 47, lady Setib in AS 79, *etc.*) or Nile silt (burial chamber of the wife of Neferinpu in AS 37, Qar Junior in AS 17, Senedjemib in AS 18, *etc.*). Very large ovoid jars with pointed bases also appear in the burial chambers of Queen Khentkaus III (AC 30) and the official Kakaibaef (AC 29), among others. Other jars can appear as well, such as imported Syro-Palestinian combed ware or its imitations (burial chambers of Kaaper in AS 1, Qar Junior in AS 17, Senedjemib in AS 18 and Shaft 3 in AS 68d). In the cemetery of Princess Sheretnebty, there also appear tall slender jars of different types (burial chamber of Nefermin in AS 68a, Shaft 4 in AS 68d) and shouldered jars with a low neck (burial chamber of Duaptah in AS 68a).

The class of bowls is also very varied, even though it does have common features. Carinated bowls appear in several burial chambers (Shaft 6 in the courtyard, Nefer in AS 68d, “husband” in AS 68c, Neferinpu in AS 37, Shaft 1 in AS 47), often together with bent-sided bowls of different shapes (“husband” in AS 68c, Neferinpu in AS 37, Shaft 1 in AS 47, Senedjemib in AS ). During the Sixth Dynasty, shallow bowls with modelled rims become very common in the tomb equipment (Setib in AS 79, Ptahwer in AS 76b, Senedjemib in AS 18), as well as very low, wide, bent-sided bowls (*e.g.* Qar Junior in AS 17, Senedjemib in AS 18).

The resulting notion is that the tomb equipment was quite varied, and in its details, it developed over time (see also *Chapter 6.3*). The richness, quantity, quality and variability depended on several factors, most notably the social status of the owner and his access to rare versus common materials and highly skilled versus ordinary craftsmen. Therefore, it is necessary not only to look at structures from a parallel period but also those belonging to people of similar socio-economic power (see *Chapter 6.1.1*).

#### 4.1.2 INTRUSIVE POTTERY IN BURIAL CHAMBERS

As was already noted above, burial chambers were often discovered with a disturbed sealing wall or lacking such, and as a result, were almost always filled at least partially with secondary

fill. The items coming from the fill have to be carefully evaluated, as they often represent objects originating from the shaft, whether as part of random debris or, in some cases, part of intentional shaft deposits. The nature of shaft deposits shall be discussed in detail in a different section; however, the present author would like to highlight several cases of large amounts of intrusive pottery in burial chambers, which is important especially in light of interpretations of post-depositional processes.

One such example is the already mentioned burial chamber of Shaft 2 in the tomb of Nefershepes (AS 67; *cf.* Arias Kytarová – Havelková – Jirásková *et al.*2014). It was found almost completely filled with rubble and debris at the time of discovery (see Fig. 4.4). From the fill, a high number of ceramic fragments were collected. After the analysis, it became clear that these fragments were not part of the random debris, as they proved not only to belong to about a dozen individual vessels, but also to vessels of high typological and metrical homogeneity. To give a particular example, several tall hour-glass shaped stands were reconstructed to full profile and their dimensions varied only very slightly (*e.g.* aperture diameters in type S-1aII of 12.5–14.5 cm and heights of 27–28.5 cm). The fill contained a high number of vessels that are otherwise often attested in burial shaft deposits (most noticeably, stands and platters) and wound up in the burial chamber after the disturbance of the sealing wall.<sup>3</sup>

A similar situation also occurred in the burial chamber of Duaptah (Shaft 1 in AS 68a; *Chapter 3.3.2*). The chamber was filled with debris to almost 2/3 of its height at the entrance and brought to light a large amount of ceramic fragments, as well as a few complete vessels (see Fig. 3.96 and 3.98). Interestingly, the class representation is very similar to that in tomb AS 67. Among the vessels, there was a predominance of stands (most notably tall hour-glass shaped stands and ring stands of different forms) and platters, all commonly attested as part of shaft deposits and, additionally, identical in metrical and typological features to those found in the shaft itself.

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<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the fill also contained fragments of fine pottery that were almost certainly part of the original burial equipment (*see supra*).

The burial chamber of the anonymous official from Shaft 1 in AS 68c (named “husband” of the princess) held an array of objects in its disturbed but primary floor layer (see also discussion in *Chapter 4.6.2*). Its sealing wall was found partially intact which hindered a large intrusion of secondary fill into the chamber – there was only a small heap of debris, found immediately behind the entrance, and it brought us the only secondary piece of pottery from this context, namely part of a rim of a tall stand.

As a last example, the burial chamber of Princess Khekeretnebtj at Abusir Centre (AC 15) shall be named as a very specific case. At the time of discovery, it held an extensive amount of pottery, including some complete vessels. However, the archaeological situation in this chamber was complicated due to the fact that the area above the chamber was filled with a high number of complete ceramic vessels as a means of simplifying the building process, and probably lowering the pressure on the ceiling slabs as well as the cost of the tomb (see also Verner – Callender 2002: 20–21, Fig. B8). Already in the antiquity, part of the ceiling slabs had collapsed, resulting in an unknown amount of the above-mentioned fill to pervade into the chamber. As a result, during the excavation it was very difficult to differentiate between the originally deposited vessels and the ones that had infiltrated from the fill above the chamber.

To conclude, when considering the pottery from a relatively closed context, such as a burial chamber or niche, one has to look at several main points. In the case when the burial apartments contained pottery, it is very likely that at least part of it belonged to the primary burial goods, as it is more probably that objects were taken out rather than brought in (except in the case of secondary disturbances such as described below). This is especially the case of very deep shafts with difficult access, when considering large and heavy objects such as ceramic vessels. The main attention point should be the state of the context itself, e.g. the existence of an intact or disturbed sealing wall, the presence or absence of secondary fill and the exact nature of the fill. Even broken pottery does not necessarily mean that the context had to be disturbed – in the intact burial chamber of priest Neferinpu, all the fine pottery was found broken to pieces, whether by accident due to being positioned on a wooden box that had disintegrated, or, more likely, due to funerary rituals that included the smashing of the vessels (see also *infra*). If there is a large amount of fragments, the main indications are their

state of preservation (*i.e.* signs of erosion versus sharp, clean breaks) and, most of all, the homogeneity versus the variability of the assemblage, both from the standpoints of classification and metrical assortment. Worn and eroded sherds denote exposure to sun, wind and sand, and thus prove to have very little archaeological value. In the case that the context brings forth a large amount of well-preserved but heterogeneous and unrelated fragments, each represented by only a small degree of diameter (*i.e.* 4–8%), the context is very likely secondary or was filled with accidental debris. However, if there is a large amount of fragments that belong to only several vessels and, even more importantly, these vessels are of similar or identical types and sizes, the context most likely constitutes remnants of intentional deposition that might have been disturbed at one point. In cases where a large number of sherds result in only a few vessels (*e.g.* the burial chamber of Shaft 1 in AS 68c, where 170 sherds made up 14 individual vessels and 3 mud stoppers, most of them complete; see Table 3.34), it is very possible to deduce the use of intentional smashing of pottery in the course of funerary rituals (see also *infra*). Even in heavily disturbed burial chambers, the uncovered vessels were either:

- a) part of the original deposition,
- b) left behind on purpose due to practical (or partly also ritual) reasons (*i.e.* so-called repurposed pottery, see *infra*),
- c) part of accidental secondary debris that got into the chamber via a disturbed outer wall (see *e.g.* Shafts 3 and 6 in the court), a sealing wall from the shaft (*e.g.* Shaft 1 in AS 68a) or the ceiling (*e.g.* the chamber of Khekeretnebty discussed above),
- d) were brought by secondary intentional actions (*e.g.* subsequent burial or robbing activity, see *e.g.* Shaft 6 in AS 68c).

#### 4.1.3 REMNANTS OF REPURPOSED POTTERY

Vessels with remains of a white substance, whether mortar, plaster or gypsum, should not be considered as part of the original tomb goods, even if they came from the burial chamber. Rather, they were used secondarily as containers for sealing mortar or for white-washing (and thus ritually purifying) ritual objects; therefore, they are considered repurposed pottery by the

present author. They are most commonly attested in shafts, often deposited immediately outside of the entrance to the burial chamber (see *Chapter 4.1.3*). However, in rare cases, they do occur in burial chambers as well, where they could be part of secondary fill or they could have been used for sealing sarcophagi or burial pits – see *e.g.* the intact burial pit covered with limestone slabs and sealed with mortar in the burial chamber of Shaft 6 in the courtyard. One such example was the upper half of a beer jar with a rim (83-5.AS68d.2014) found in the burial chamber of Nefer (Shaft 4 in AS 68d), just behind the disturbed sealing wall. In this case, it undoubtedly belonged to the base of a beer jar filled with mortar (82.AS68d.2014) that was found at the bottom of this shaft.

Other cases are attested as well – in the tomb of Hefi in Saqqara, dated to late Teti/early Pepy I, a large bent-sided bowl and a base of a beer jar were found in his burial chamber, both with layers of fine plaster inside (Kanawati – Abder-Raziq 2001: 54, Pls. 14 and 57, nos. TNE99:8 and TNE99:11). Due to the presence of seven large almost globular jars from the same contexts, all with traces of identical white substance on the outer shoulders and neck (Kanawati – Abder-Raziq 2001: 53-54, Pls. 14 and 55, nos. TNE99:1–7a), it is most likely that the plaster was applied as a sealing medium on these jars. A creamy slip was also discovered on the preserved mud stoppers from this context (*Ibid.*: 55, TNE99:19a-19b). In relation to this, it must be noted that very unusual plaster stoppers were recently discovered in the burial chamber of lady Setib at Abusir South (AS 79), also dated to the Sixth Dynasty, that sealed very similar large bulging jars made of Marl clay (yet unpublished).

## 4.2 BURIAL SHAFTS

Shafts belong among the most common source of ceramic material – in the case of the complex of Sheretnebty, some shafts (*e.g.* Shaft 1 in ASS 68c, belonging to the presumed husband of the princess) brought to light more ceramic fragments than the whole area of the rock-cut chapels.

The quantitative contribution of shafts as individual, relatively closed archaeological contexts is unquestionable. However, it is their exact archaeological nature that is often the source of doubt, discussion, validation and dispute. In the vast amount of cases, the burial

chambers uncovered at the bottom of the shafts were found robbed. Therefore, it has to be assumed that the robbers gained access to the chamber via this shaft and thus had to empty it at some point in time or even repeatedly.<sup>4</sup> If there is enough archaeological evidence, it is sometimes possible to pin-point such activities in time or at least narrow down the latest of such acts.

Therefore, the most problematic question is the approach to the interpretation of all the items that are uncovered in the shafts. The following sections will offer some insight into some possibilities of the source, validation, and relevance of the ceramic (and, reflectively, also other) finds.

#### 4.2.1 POTTERY ORIGINATING FROM BURIAL CHAMBERS

The aim of this particular section is not to analyse in detail all the available cases of items dispersed from the burial chamber into the area of the shaft, but to highlight the importance of the consideration of such a possibility. Archaeologist should always approach each context critically, assuming that the objects found in it were possibly misplaced.

In the anonymous tomb AS 47, the burial chamber of Shaft 1 brought to light several items (see also *supra*; cf. Arias Kytarová 2011a), among them a large amount of both limestone and ceramic miniature vessels that were concentrated in an area north-east of the sarcophagus (see Fig. 4.10). Earlier, during the exploration of the shaft that gave access into the chamber, we found a cluster of almost identical limestone and ceramic miniatures at the level of the upper end of the entrance to the chamber (Fig. 4.12). Therefore, it is without any doubt that these vessels were all part of the same assemblage that was originally deposited in the burial chamber itself. It is possible that the robbers attempted to steal some limestone miniature vessels and lost several on the route; or these were accidentally picked up with other, unknown objects that were the primary objective of the tomb robbers. Shaft 1 held a large array of vessels that were part of an intentional shaft deposit (see below), but these

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<sup>4</sup> Naturally, the robbers could have gained access to the chamber via a different route, such as a neighbouring burial chamber (e.g. burial chambers of Shafts 3 and 6 in the courtyard, Shaft 4 in AS 68c) or the neighbouring shaft (e.g. Shaft 2 in the tomb of Neferinpu robbed from Shaft 1).

consisted in large majority of stands, platters and other items. Given that miniature vessels were found only in the lowest part of the shaft, in a cluster of limestone miniatures, and of identical types and sizes to those from the burial chamber, leaves no doubt as to their original place of deposition.

In the tomb of Hetepi (AS 3, former code CC; Bárta 2001: 55–61), Shaft 9 contained two vessels broken to pieces at a depth of 130–150 cm, namely one large ovoid jar with a neck (5/CC/1991; J-3) and one shallow bowl with a modelled rim (4/CC/1991; B-6). Given numerous analogies of the occurrence of both types in the burial chambers, it is with little doubt that both of these vessels belonged to the original tomb equipment (see also Kytarová 2009: 130).

In the case of several shafts in the complex of Sheretnebty, we found vessels that stand out when compared to the usual shaft debris. Burial shaft deposits, as will be often mentioned throughout the following sections, consisted predominantly of rough or medium rough ware – most commonly stands (unslipped), platters (often red-slipped on their upper sides) and beer jars. Fine pottery (such as carinated bowls, bent-sided bowls, *etc.*) is often limited to the burial chamber. One very important exception is the so-called false or ritual shafts that served as depositions of pottery used during the embalming process; however, these are a very particular case with a very specific array of objects and shall be discussed separately. In cases of the presence of a few very fine bowls, preserved to more than 30% of their diameters, among predominantly rough wares, it can be considered as a possibility that these might have originally been part of the burial goods in the burial chamber. However, the disturbed nature of the shafts does not allow us to draw definite conclusions.

#### 4.2.2 SEALING RITUAL DEPOSITS

The so-called sealing deposits, as well as burial shaft deposits, are one of the more common archaeological contexts, although also one of the least studied (for a notable exception, see Rzeuska 2006: 444–452). For the vast majority of scholars, shafts were considered unimportant and irrelevant archaeological contexts, despite the fact that they often contained



clusters of pottery, animal bones and other finds. These were often interpreted as possibly originating from burial chambers and dispersed into the shafts during robbing activities.

The difference between the two contexts is predominantly in the nature of the finds. Sealing deposits often contained only a single beer jar situated on the very bottom of the shaft, in front of the entrance into the burial chamber. In contrast, burial shaft deposits can consist of dozens of vessels, either exclusively beer jars or in combination with stands and/or platters, found in clusters or in a wider layer of the fill of the shaft (see *Chapter 4.2.4*). Curiously, the two contexts almost never occur together, and thus it is quite possible that they actually represent similar customs designated for persons of diverse socio-economic status – sealing deposits are attested, at least in Abusir South, only in poorer burials (see *infra*). Thus, for the purpose of this dissertation, these contexts shall be divided.

The sealing deposits of Abusir South can be characterized as items intentionally placed in front of the sealing wall that is leading into the burial chamber or niche. In the vast majority of cases, they consist of a single beer jar, standing on the bottom of the shaft, very often fully preserved, filled with a false filling of Nile mud and sometimes even sealed with a mud stopper. The most notable cases include Shaft 6 in the courtyard of Sheretnebty (see *Chapter 3.1.3*), Shaft 6 in the tomb of Neferinpu (AS 37; see Figs. 4.27–4.28, also Arias Kytarová 2014a: 112) and Shafts 3 and 4 in tomb AS 29 in the Abusir Lake area (see Figs. 4.29–4.30 and Arias Kytarová 2014a: 134). In all these cases, the context was found fully intact, with an undisturbed sealing wall. As was noted before, all such burials were rather poor and contained no or minimum tomb equipment; it is therefore likely that they were of very little interest to tomb robbers.

During the Sixth Dynasty, the sealing ritual deposits become more elaborate and can sometimes include a larger variety of objects. The late Sixth Dynasty cemetery of governors at Balat (Ayn Asil) provided us with examples of animal bones consisting most commonly of skulls and the backbone of a bull, *e.g.* at the bottom of shafts 3000, 5000 and 6000 in the tomb of Khentika (Castel – Pantalacci – Cherpion 2001: 45–47, 52–54 and 265–266, Figs. 31 and 33), in the main tomb of Mefunefer as well as subsidiary Tombs 2 and 8 (Valloggia 1986: 31–32, 59, Pls. IX–X, XVI/D, XLIII/D and XL/B) and in the mastaba of Imapepy (Minault-Gout –

Deleuze 1992: 38–40, Pl. 19e), as well as in tomb C (Minault-Gout – Deleuze 1992: 26–27 and 54–55, Fig. 9, Pl. 27A). At Saqqara West, such deposits included most notably pottery, predominantly miniature vessels but also diverse censers (see Rzeuska 2006: 444–446). In one case, animal bones were also uncovered (skull of a bull in Shaft 46), as well as flint tools and shells.

It is noteworthy that several shafts in the complex of Sheretnebty contained animal bones (most notably Shaft 1 of Nefer in tomb AS 68d, see *Chapter 3.6.2*). However, they were found in much higher levels and in more than one cluster. They are also represented by different parts of animals (Zdeňka Suvová, personal communication). As such, they are almost always associated with ceramic fragments that are part of the shaft deposits and shall be further analysed as such (see *Chapter 4.2.3*).

#### 4.2.2 REMNANTS OF REPURPOSED POTTERY IN SHAFTS

This category of vessels is very closely connected to the rituals conducted while sealing the sarcophagus and/or the burial chamber (see also *Chapter 4.1.3*). It was quite common to discover vessels with remains of a white substance, either mortar or plaster, at the bottom of the shaft or close to the entrance to the burial chamber. Such finds were often mentioned only in passing but still confirm a large number of attestations in the Memphite necropolis, ranging from the Fourth to the late Sixth Dynasty. The vessels used as mortar or plaster containers varied greatly – most commonly jars or their bases were employed, but bread forms, bowls and vats are attested as well. As a fact, the custom seems to have developed from open vessels to closed ones in the course of the Fourth to Fifth Dynasty (Rzeuska 2006: 446–447). Other objects could be used to hold the plaster, such as a basket from the bottom of Shaft A in the tomb of Seshatsekhtiu (G 2120) in Giza (Reisner 1942: 429, Fig. 245, no. 33-1-30, Pl. 35a).

Large, unrestricted shapes were used especially during the Fourth Dynasty. In the shaft of Rahotep at Meidum (M6), a large bowl with convex walls, a modelled rim and a short tubular spout was found filled with mortar at the bottom of his shaft and Petrie reported that pieces of similar bowls were also uncovered in other groups (1892: 35, Pl. XXXI, no. 21). In the case of Shaft G 7000 X of Queen Hetepheres, fragments of large basins with fillings of

plaster were found at the bottom of the shaft, although none were able to be reconstructed (Reisner – Smith 1955: 14). Similar thick-walled vats with characteristic rims with an outer groove and large convex bodies, either filled with mortar or with a layer of it on the inner walls, were also found in several shafts by Junker (1929: 104, Taf. X) and were considered a common occurrence by him, although in other cases he refers to “Mörtelkrüge”, *e.g.* in both shafts in the tomb of Hemiunu (Junker 1929: 161).

During the course of the late Fourth and early Fifth Dynasty, jars occur more commonly as containers of mortar, as evidenced *e.g.* by an intact beer jar filled with a white substance from Ostsshaft 2 in the mastaba of Nazlet Batran (Kromer 1991: 28, Taf. 28:1). There, the presence of a partly preserved sealing wall with traces of white plastering from outside confirms the function of such vessels. The Sixth Dynasty examples show that besides bowls and jars, bread forms could be used, too, as containers of mortar, as evidenced by the finds from the cemetery of Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 174, Table 4).

There was a relatively large presence of vessels filled with mortar or plaster in the burial shafts in the complex of Sheretnebtj. Some vessels were located directly at the bottom of the shaft or in its lower part, close to the entrance to the burial chamber. Most commonly, there was only one such vessel, either a beer jar (*e.g.* Shaft 9 in the court), bread form (Shaft 1 in the court) or a bowl (Shaft 11 in the court). In tomb AS 68a, a bread form with a layer of a white substance was discovered in the fill of Duaptah’s burial chamber of Shaft 1; however, it came from the intrusive cluster immediately behind the entrance and very likely also originated from the shaft.

In a few instances, more than one piece was attested. The most notable examples include one bread form and one beer jar, both broken into several fragments, from Shaft 3 in the courtyard. In Shaft 1 in AS 68d, the lower part of a beer jar was found on the bottom of the shaft, in front of the entrance to the burial chamber of Nefer (see Fig. 3.254). The upper part of a beer jar with a thick layer of mortar was also discovered in the fill of the disturbed burial chamber, and it is very likely that these were part of the same vessel. Furthermore, a bent-sided bowl with a layer of plaster was uncovered in the middle section of Nefer’s shaft. Shaft 2 of his wife Neferhathor contained fragments of two bowls with continuous layers of fine white

plaster inside (see Fig. 3.271); all came from the bottom of the shaft and were also partly found in the disturbed wall leading into the burial chamber itself.

Shaft 1 in tomb AS 68c brought to light several examples of vessels filled with diverse white substances – in the cluster of pottery found at a depth of about 4.5 m and deeper, a carinated bowl with traces of mortar was discovered. The fill in the lower parts of the shaft held at least four individual beer jars, filled with mortar, one deposited close to the bottom of the shaft (see Figs. 3.159 and 3.164). One jar was also preserved in a rim, showing a traditional late Fifth Dynasty shape with a low neck and an ovoid body with a partly pointed base.

As can be seen, the variability of vessels used as mortar or plaster containers is relatively high. Not only beer jars, but also bread forms and bowls are represented. The main reason behind this is the simple practicality – any well-manageable vessel or its fragments would be considered suitable for such a function. In the case of beer jars, their upper part is almost always missing and the preserved examples include only bases or little more than lower halves of vessels. The same applies for bread forms, which would be too large and heavy to use in their full shape. In the case of bowls, these are never preserved fully intact but often contain a plaster layer up to their rims, indicating that complete vessels were used. The most favourite bowl type seems to be the bent-sided bowl (B-2), which is attested in almost all our cases.

In most examples, it was possible to differentiate between mortar and plaster with the naked eye. Mortar is usually rougher and grainy, with visible particles, and can have a slightly pinkish colour (see *e.g.* Fig. 4.54–4.55). Plaster, on the other hand, is much finer, almost powdery in structure, usually applied only in a thin layer and has a strikingly white colour (see *e.g.* Fig. 3.271). Naturally, there were some instances when such a clear distinction and identification was not possible, and in those cases, the filling is simply described as a “white substance” with details concerning its consistency.

Abusir South provided us with numerous other examples that came from different parts of the cemetery. In the tomb of Kaiemtjenet (AS 38), beer jars filled with pinkish mortar was discovered in Shafts 1, 2, 3 and 5 (*e.g.* Arias Kytarová 2011c: Fig. 6.4),<sup>5</sup> as well as

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<sup>5</sup> Namely beer jars nos. 33-3.AS38.2010 (Shaft 1), 8-2.AS38.2010 (Shaft 2), 10-10.AS38.2010 (Shaft 3) and 15-3.AS38.2010 (Shaft 5).

in so-called Room 6. The one in Shaft 1 came from the very bottom of the shaft, above the burial (no. 33-3.AS38.2010). One such beer jar was found in Shaft 2 of tomb AS 51 (cont. 22; Arias Kytarová 2010c: 282). A base of a flat-bottomed bowl with a thin layer of white substance also came from Shaft 1 in the anonymous tomb AS 47 (33.AS47.2007).<sup>6</sup> Beer jars with mortar were also found in front of the intact sealing wall leading into the burial chamber of Shaft 5 in the tomb of Qar (Kytarová 2009: 150–152). Other examples still await publication, such as two beer jars filled with very fine white plaster from the shaft deposit in Shaft 7 in tomb AS 78b and one in Shaft 1 of tomb AS 78, as well as a beer jar with rough, grainy mortar from Shaft 3 of AS 77, to name just a few from the recent excavations. From Abusir Centre, a platter with remains of plaster (15d/K/1987) was found *e.g.* in the fill in front of the entrance to the burial chamber of Princess Hedjetnebu (AC 19, unpublished field documentation).

The reasoning for leaving behind such mundane vessels that had no direct connection to the burial equipment or the funerary rituals performed during the burial seems to be clear. These vessels, although often only partly preserved and of no possible further use, had to be disposed of, as they were indirectly part of the sacred rituals and thus belonged to the sphere of the dead (see also Rzeuska 2006: 448). They were broken on purpose, or simply through carelessness, and left behind, often in the immediate vicinity of their use, preserving thus the *sacrum* and ritual purity of the tomb.

#### 4.2.4 BURIAL SHAFT DEPOSITS

Burial shafts often contained very large amounts of ceramic fragments, far surpassing the numbers of vessels from burial apartments. In the past, archaeologists often noted their content only in passing and only very rarely do we find more detailed information. In cases where the shafts held a larger array of pottery, this was very often attributed as coming from the burial chamber, as shafts were considered of secondary importance, being filled with accidental debris. There is almost no information on the content of shafts from the early

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<sup>6</sup> For a preliminary report on the ceramic finds from tomb AS 47, see Arias Kytarová (2011a).

excavations in Meidum, Dahshur and other sites. Later excavations at Giza gave us only a little information, such as *e.g.* that numerous beer jars came from the fill of the shafts (Reisner – Smith 1955: 70–71). However, it was only during the very late 20<sup>th</sup> century that scholars started to notice certain patterns occurring in the ceramic material coming from the shafts. As an example, the excavations at Balat provided us with very well-documented examples of stratified burial shaft deposits in shafts 3000, 5000 and 6000 in the mastaba of Khentika (Castel – Pantalacci – Cherpion 2001: 194–195, 265–266), and in tombs 2 and 4 in the mastaba of Medunefter (Valloggia 1986: 60 and 157).

The main idea behind the importance of the study and analysis of the material from the burial shafts is that they often contained similar items, predominantly ceramic vessels and animal bones, but also other objects that were very likely part of intentional deposition and therefore can bring us information about the funerary rituals conducted during the burial. One of the ground-breaking works in this respect was the analysis undertaken by Rzeuska of the material from the Saqqara West necropolis, including also other previously published structures from neighbouring sites (Rzeuska 2006: 453–465). The site of Abusir, being of an older date, revealed slight variations in the exact representation of the ceramic material.

In the following section, several shafts from the complex of Sheretnebtj (*i.e.* the shafts of Nefer and Neferhathor in AS 68d, Shaft 1 in AS 68c and shafts of Duaptah and Nefermin from AS 68a) shall be compared from the standpoint of their ceramic representation with other shafts from the area of Abusir, most notably both main shafts from the tomb of Nefershepes (AS 67), Shaft 1 in the anonymous tomb AS 47, Shaft 1 in the tomb of Neferinpu (AS 37) and several shafts from the Lake of Abusir area. In addition, they shall be weighed against similar contexts from the Memphite necropolis both from a synchronic and a diachronic view.

When comparing the ceramic finds from two exemplary shafts, such as those of Nefer and Neferhathor in tomb AS 68d, it is important to stress the main facts – although both were undoubtedly robbed and thus the fills of these shafts must have been emptied at least once during their existence, their nature would suggest that the objects uncovered in them were not

accidental arrangements of unrelated items.<sup>7</sup> In both shafts, we were able to uncover a large amount of fragments belonging not only to certain ceramic classes (especially stands, platters and jars) but also the same groups, such as tall hour-glass stands of group S-1 or the low stands of group S-6 (compare Figs. 3.244–3.250 and 3.266–268). Also, numerous examples from both shafts were able to be glued together to at least full profile, if not to full diameter. Had the shafts been emptied and then filled with material coming from the whole surroundings of the tomb, such an occurrence would not be expected. During the excavations in Abusir South, the present author came across material from disturbed shafts in which each vessel was represented only by 7–10% of its diameter. Such shaft fills can be seen as truly secondary in nature. Shafts like the one of Nefer (Shaft 1) and Neferhathor (Shaft 2), in which predominant numbers of vessels were preserved to more than 60–70% of their diameter, should be considered as the potential remnants of the original context. Naturally, the exact state of the fragments was also carefully studied; in the case of the material from these two shafts, no traces of erosion or exposure to sun, wind or sand were observed. Therefore, we can indeed assume that the shafts were back-filled with either their full original contents or at least a large part of it. The reasoning behind such back-filling is simple – if the shafts were robbed, the robbers might have attempted to hide such a fact and filled the shaft to accomplish this. Or, more likely, the robbed shafts might have been back-filled by priests who discovered that they had been robbed, both for reasons of safety (the ceramic evidence proves that funerary rituals were conducted in the rock-cut chapels until the terminal Sixth Dynasty) and religious piety. Naturally, such theories are to remain tentative unless more palpable data is collected supporting it. However, recent exploration in Abusir has proven that careful documentation of even disturbed contexts can bring to light very interesting results that might directly reflect funerary rituals (for a discussion of other interpretation of the debris from the shafts, see also *Chapter 6.2.2*).

One of the most important facets of burial shaft deposits was the presence of animal bones. In the shaft of Nefer (AS 68d, Shaft 1), we discovered three main clusters of animal

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<sup>7</sup> The comparison of the ceramic finds from the shafts of Nefer and Neferhathor in tomb AS 68d is based on a paper analysing these two burial shaft deposits (see Arias Kytarová 2015).

bones. One was at a depth of 3 m and contained both animal bones and ceramic fragments in its south-eastern corner and its south-western corner (see *infra*). More animal bones appeared slightly lower, scattered at around depth of 3.50 m. Finally, at a depth of 4.90 m, there was a deposit of several animal bones including a lower jaw. It is possible that all these bones belonged to a single deposition that was later dispersed in the shaft due to post-depositional processes – the burial chamber was robbed and thus the fill of the shaft must have been extracted at least once. Thus, it is impossible to state with certainty whether any of these bones belonged to a sealing deposit or a shaft deposit. Their existence, however, shows without doubt, in combination with the attested vessels from the shaft, that they represent the remains of intentional deposition after the funeral.

A very similar pattern appears in three more shafts in the complex of Sheretnebty, namely both shafts in the tomb of Duaptah (AS 68a; see Figs. 3.104–3.105) and the ceramic cluster in the middle part of Shaft 1 in AS 68c, belonging to the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebty. In all of them, a large number of vessels were able to be reconstructed to more than 70% of their bodies. Furthermore, they represent very homogenous sets of vessels of similar shapes and sizes (in all cases, tall hour-glass shaped stands, low ring stands, platters and beer jars, *etc.*) that were very likely part of the intentional deposits.

To give more evidence for this assumption of deliberate shaft deposits, consisting of vessels used most likely during the burial itself and then ritually destroyed by being thrown into the shaft, it must be highlighted that similar compositions of ceramic classes were also uncovered in other shafts in the area of Abusir South. These include the two shafts in the tomb of Nefershepes (AS 67; Arias Kytarová – Havelková – Jirásková *et al.* 2014) as well as the shaft of the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebty (Shaft 1 in AS 68c; *Chapter 3.5.2*) and Shaft 1 in the anonymous tomb AS 47 (Figs. 4.31–4.34; see also Arias Kytarová 2011a: 121–123, Figs. 19–22 and 25). In all these cases, the shafts were filled with large amounts of ceramic sherds, with a prevalence of the classes of stands and platters. Also, in each case, although these classes were the same, the types and forms were not necessarily identical and the sets from each shaft can be easily distinguished from each other by size, quality and general make. These differences can be seen either as the result of the social status of the



owner and thus his economic capacity (in being able to afford better quality stands covered in red slip such as those in the tomb of Nefershepes) or even with yet unexplored questions such as differences in ceramic material between male and female burials, or ceramic production from diverse coexisting pottery workshops, which come to light with increasing material from Abusir South.

Other cases include the burial shafts of Princess Khekeretnebtu (AC 15) and Princess Hedjetnebu (AC 19) at Abusir Centre. The first held a cluster of ceramic vessels, predominantly stands, together with animal bones at a depth of ca. 5 m in the burial shaft, roughly in front of the entrance into the burial chamber (see Figs. 4.35–4.36; *cf.* Verner – Callender 2002: 18). The stands included diverse types, *e.g.* tall hour-glass shaped, low wide ring stands, *etc.* Due to the fact that this cluster was found at the bottom of the shaft, it is possible that it actually was part of a sealing deposit – however, as already mentioned above, it is also quite likely that sealing deposits and shaft deposits are simply two diverse versions of the same ritual activity, as to the knowledge of the present writer they never occur together. The most relevant find from this particular context was a foreleg of a gazelle on a dish of Nile clay, covered with another such vessel (Verner – Callender 2002: Pl. II, Bf3).

In the case of the shaft deposit of Princess Hedjetnebu, very large quantities of at that time intact ceramic vessels were found, together with other objects, at a depth of 2.5–3.3 m in the 5 m deep shaft (Fig. 4.37; see Verner – Callender 2002: 89 and Pl. XXI: Kf2, Pl. XXIV: Kf9). Again, there was a striking predominance of certain classes, such as stands and platters, complemented by *dšrt* jars, beer jars and their unfired mud stoppers (Verner – Callender 2002: Fig. K7, K18 and K19). Because of the presence of mummy wrappings, this context was interpreted as originally part of the burial goods placed in the burial chamber and thrown out by the tomb robbers. However, due to parallels from our necropolis, it is likely that while part of the contents of the burial chamber indeed pervaded into the shaft, most of the pottery was from the outset part of the shaft fill.

All these above-mentioned shafts from Abusir used as parallels were those belonging to high-ranking officials or members of the high levels of the society, as without any exception their owners were buried in stone sarcophagi and had tomb goods such as limestone canopic

jars. At the same time, we have burial shafts of lower-ranking officials whose shaft deposits are much poorer and often consist of only several vessels, predominantly beer jars. Every bit of this provides valuable comparative material for the study of pottery, not only from the chronological and historical view, but also concerning the differences in the socio-economic power of the deceased.

Among these, we can exemplify a shaft deposit from Shaft 2 in the anonymous tomb AS 23 (formed designation Lake of Abusir, Tomb 2, see *e.g.* Bárta 2003a: 26–28). Objects were uncovered in three different layers of the shaft: at a depth of 3.60 m, a blackened bread form and four beer jars, two of them with false filling of Nile mud (Fig. 4.38); at a depth of 3.90 m, three complete beer jars, bases of two more, four different fillings of Nile mud and half a bread form (Figs. 4.39 and 4.41) and finally, at a depth of 4.90 m, at the upper level of the sealing wall into the burial niche, three beer jars (Fig. 4.40). Notably, almost all the beer jars must have been originally filled with Nile mud.

A combination of beer jars, stands and a bread form was unearthed in Shaft 1 in the tomb of Neferinpu (AS 37), deposited at various depths of 0.40–3.70 m in the almost 10 m deep shaft. The final count includes six complete beer jars, three stands and one bread form (see Bárta *et al.* 2014: Fig. 3.21; Arias Kytarová 2014a: 111). It is notable that the bread form also bore traces of exposure to fire on its outer walls and thus could have been used as a censer. Neferinpu was buried in a roughly cut limestone sarcophagus and equipped with canopic jars and stone miniature vessels, which would theoretically point to a shaft deposit consisting of a much larger variety and number of vessels. However, as was mentioned already above, Neferinpu experienced a rise in social rank during his lifetime, reflected *e.g.* in the enlargement and material enhancement of his mastaba; it is therefore not surprising to find evidence of a combination of different customs in his particular burial.

During the course of the Sixth Dynasty, a prevalence of quantitatively very rich but also typologically much more limited deposits appears. In several tombs of Abusir South, there were shafts filled almost exclusively with beer jars. One such is Shaft 2 in the anonymous tomb AS 84b, excavated during the 2015 season (yet unpublished). The shaft contained over

50 individual beer jars of identical type, namely a tall and very slim body with a pointed base (J-1c). More than half of them had an intentional hole, made before firing, in the upper base.

An interesting case of a burial shaft deposit came from the shaft of judge Inti at Abusir (AS 22; see Bárta 2003a: 21–22, Fig. 2). The shaft was 22 m deep and contained a variety of objects in diverse depths, including a set of limestone miniature vessels at a depth of 4.20 m, beer jars at 4.70 m and 6.60 m and finally two large unfired bread forms with a tall tubular foot at a depth of 9.70 m. According to the excavator, the objects were carefully placed rather than simply thrown into the shaft.

Shafts of the Sixth Dynasty, especially those excavated in the cemetery of Saqqara West where the ceramic finds were documented with utmost care and detail, exhibit similar general features. Often, the shafts contained not only larger amounts of vessels, but also other objects such as animal bones. However, there are also striking differences, as the most common ceramic group present in these shafts is that of beer jars – in a few tombs, the numbers per single shaft can exceed 50 individual vessels. Additionally, some of these beer jars were filled with ashes (Rzeuska 2006: 468–80), a custom not yet recorded in our necropolis. The classes of stands and platters are present in the shafts of Saqqara West but do not constitute the majority of the ceramic finds. Following the beer jars, bread baking forms are the most common class from their burial shafts. Again, such high occurrences of bread forms has not been confirmed in our necropolis; however, all these differences could be the result of several factors, one of them being the different dating of the structures that they come from (the Fifth versus Sixth Dynasty) and therefore the possibility of a slight development in funerary rituals and customs.

To conclude, the aim of this section was to evaluate the potential of the ceramic finds from burial shafts, including those that were clearly disturbed, on the basis of available contexts from Abusir. The main point of discussion was the proposition that in some cases, such robbed shafts still hold relatively extensive remnants of their original deposits. On the basis of the above-mentioned facts, it is highly possible that both these shafts were back-filled with their primary fills within a relatively short time span from their robbing, given the un-eroded nature of the pottery. Thus, large parts of their original contents were still preserved at

the time of discovery and are worth detailed documentation and analysis as they bring to light new facts concerning the use of pottery in rituals connected with burials.

The burial shaft deposits of the Fifth Dynasty were closely linked to sealing deposits situated at the bottom of the shaft. Either one or the other type of deposition appears in a shaft. In the case of poorer people and people without attested offices and titles, a single beer jar positioned at the bottom of the shaft in front of the burial chamber or niche often constitutes the only item provided for the deceased. In other cases, objects such as animal bones were found in these contexts and point to animal offerings that were likely performed during the funerary rituals. In some examples, vessels (*e.g.* bread forms) bear traces of burning on their outer walls. On the other hand, high officials whose burial apartments were equipped with a stone sarcophagus very often had much richer shaft deposits with no surviving traces of a separate sealing deposit. The amount of individual vessels can reach up to dozens and most commonly included a variety of stands, platters and beer jars that were often found in cluster/s of animal bones.

During the course of the Sixth Dynasty, shaft deposits become more restricted and often contained either a predominance of beer jars or a combination with a large number of bread forms, probably linked to a slight change in funerary customs. Stands are attested in only very rare examples. Importantly, animal offerings remain a common feature of these deposits.

### **4.3 SHAFTS WITHOUT BURIALS**

From Abusir South, there are quite a high number of shafts without any traces of a burial. These should not, however, all be seen as “unfinished” or “unused”, as they actually might have served a different kind of deposition. In this section, some of the most distinct examples are specified.

#### **4.3.1 RITUAL SHAFTS WITH EMBALMING DEPOSITS**

The topic of the so-called ritual shafts was introduced and for the first time more extensively studied by Rzeuska (2002 and 2006: 492–510). She noticed, not only in the material coming

from the necropolis of Saqqara West but also from other sites after re-evaluation of older publications, a certain pattern visible in clusters of specific finds uncovered in shallow shafts without a burial. These were, until then, often overlooked and passed over as unfinished or “false” shafts designed to mislead tomb robbers, with little attention given to their specific circumstances.

Rzeuska observed that almost all these shafts were relatively shallow and generally smaller than other shafts and lacked any trace of a burial niche or another burial situation (such as a simple burial at the bottom of the shaft). These shafts have several similar traits: size and dimensions (with a depth of only about 2 m), large amounts of ceramics of very similar typological sequence (predominantly fine red-slipped ware, broken to pieces), remains of wood, textiles, charcoal, animal bones, flint tools and other objects. On the basis of these common features, she has interpreted these shafts as intentional ritual shafts designed for the discard of all items used in the course of the funeral banquet that took place during the burial rituals (Rzeuska 2006: 510). From the cemetery west of the pyramid of Netjerichet, she was able to identify several examples of these, including ritual shafts in the tombs of Merefnebef, Pehenptah, Kheti, from corridor 2 and the anonymous mastaba 2. Besides numerous fragments of red-slipped ceramics, the shafts also had remains of textiles (possibly all five shafts), wood (three of the shafts), charcoal (three shafts), bones, organic remains and shells (each in only two shafts). The ceramic finds from these shafts shared several common features. As a rule, there are predominantly open forms, all very fine and red-slipped, namely bowls and plates, represented by numerous examples – the smallest assemblage from the tomb of Pehenptah included 19 vessels and the largest one from the tomb of Merefnebef had 36 bowls and plates. Typologically, there is predominance of carinated bowls, bent-sided bowls with modelled rims or with lip rims and both deeper and shallower bowls with grooved rims (Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 188–192). Two of the shafts also had examples of miniature beer jars. All of these shafts are dated to the Sixth Dynasty, based on the epigraphic sources from the tombs.

A few other ritual shafts were also identified by Rzeuska in other sites of the Memphite necropolis, namely in Meidum and in Giza (Rzeuska 2002: Fig. 15–19; Rzeuska 2006: 503–508). These range in dating from the Fourth to Fifth Dynasty. In some of these earlier

examples, the finds in the shafts include only ceramics (e.g. the anonymous tomb G 6052, see Weeks 1994: Fig. 132–133). In the tombs from Meidum, there were also remains of textiles and probably also other organic material.

The present author was able to identify at least one new example of such a ritual shaft in Giza, namely Shaft X of the Fourth Dynasty tomb G 1223, which was built between the annex and the south end of G 1223. The shaft was only 1.8 m deep, without a chamber or traces of a burial but contained a large amount of fine, red-slipped pottery (Reisner – Smith 1955: 401, Fig. 227b). Reisner interpreted the vessels as originating from the neighbouring shaft in the annex, attributed to the wife of the main owner. However, the nature, quality and typological sequence of the vessels allocates them to the Sixth Dynasty (for analogies, see e.g. Weeks 1994: 132–133; Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 189–192). More importantly, the whole context is much more significant, as it is very likely also a case of a so-called embalmers' deposit. This is indicated not only by the size and nature of the shaft and the uncovered pottery, but also by the mention of a full basket of fragments of linen, used during mummification (see also Arias Kytarová *in preparation*).

As mentioned above, Rzeuska (2006: 510) interpreted these shafts as deposits of tableware and other objects used during the funeral banquet attended by the participants of the funerary ceremonies. However, based on the discoveries at Abusir and a re-evaluation of the available data from other sites, the present author would like to support a different interpretation which identifies these shafts as embalming deposits, intended as a cache of items used during the mummification process (Bárta 2003b: 226; Kytarová 2009: 184–185; see also Arias Kytarová *in preparation*).

The cemeteries of Abusir brought to light possibly four occurrences of such embalming deposits from the ritual shafts. The most notable examples are two ritual shafts (E and L) in the tomb of judge Inti, dating approximately to the period of Pepy I (*cf.* Bárta 2003b: 224–226). Both were very shallow, with depths of 1.80 and 1.40 m (see Figs. 4.42 and 4.47). Their upper fills were almost empty, with the exception of numerous ceramic fragments, some with traces of resin (Figs. 4.44–4.45) or burned surfaces, pieces of textiles, beetles (Shaft E, Fig. 4.46) and a white hard substance (possibly natron?, Fig. 4.48) found above the floor of the

shafts. Most of the pottery consisted of very fine red-slipped wares, predominantly bowls.<sup>8</sup> Out of 554 fragments from shaft L, there were 314 diagnostic sherds (Fig. 4.49; Tomášek 2003: Tab. 2). A vast majority of these (274 fragments, altogether 87.3% of the assemblage) belonged to bowls and plates. The most numerous represented types in both shafts were bent-sided bowls, both with a simple rounded rim (Fig. 4.51) and a lip rim (Fig. 4.43), carinated bowls (Figs. 4.44 and 4.51), deep bowls with modelled rims (Fig. 4.45) and shallow bowls with grooved rims (Fig. 4.45; see also Tomášek 2003: Tab. 4). This typological sequence is very much in accordance with the above-mentioned finds from ritual shafts from the Saqqara West cemetery. Besides the bowls, there were also five small stands and 13 fragments of restricted wares. As was mentioned above, a large percentage of the bowls exhibited traces of dark fluid, identified as resin. Besides pottery, there were also fragments of bandages found in shaft L (Fig. 4.50). Therefore, we can assume that this shaft also served as a place of ritual deposition of pottery used in mummification and/or funerary rites.

The situation in the neighbouring anonymous tomb AS 32 (former designation LL; see e.g. Bárta 2003b: 226–227; Tomášek 2003: Tabs. 1 and 3) is very similar, although the archaeological situation is much more complicated, and it was not seen as such during the initial excavation and reports. So-called Shaft 5 brought to light a large amount of very fine, red-slipped ware, with a predominance of open shapes. Their typological sequence is analogical to those from Shaft L, consisting mostly of carinated bowls, bent-sided bowls, deep bowls with modelled rims, *etc.*, while also holding a small amount of restricted vessels. The shaft itself is, however, deeper than the usual ritual shafts, with a depth of 6 m. On its bottom, a crack led into a disturbed burial chamber that did not belong to this particular shaft (Bárta 2003b: 227). It is possible that this shaft was originally designated as a burial shaft, however it interfered with a neighbouring chamber; therefore, the originally planned burial apartment could not be executed, and the shaft was reused to hold ritual objects.

The immediate surroundings of these tombs contributed with another example of an embalming deposit. During the autumn season of 2015, the Czech team discovered a shallow

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<sup>8</sup> For a preliminary analysis in Czech, see Tomášek (2003: Tab. 2); a detailed analysis of the assemblage shall be published (Arias Kytarová *in preparation*).

shaft (Shaft 4) in the anonymous complex AS 79, situated north of tomb AS 31. Due to the fact that this tomb is yet unpublished and is not the topic of this dissertation, only some basic facts shall be mentioned here. The shaft reached a depth of 2.6 m and its lower depth was filled with a very high amount of thoroughly broken red-slipped ware. The typological sequence of the vessels (predominantly bowls) corresponds to middle/late Sixth Dynasty, with numerous carinated bowls, bent-sided bowls, deep bowls with modelled rims, *etc.* Notably, numerous fragments were covered with a white powdery substance that was very different from the usual mortar or plaster, and one of the jars even contained a somewhat large piece of a hard substance that could possibly be natron. In the whole context, there was a very large amount of textiles, even those of well-articulated bandages wrapped in rolls.

Such interpretation is supported by finds from other sites as well. Marleen de Meyers reported a context with a large amount of fine pottery, textiles and natron, even inscribed as “natron for the wabet”, from a Sixth Dynasty tomb in Deir el-Bersha (de Meyers 2015). A package of natron was also reported from Shaft 4 in tomb AS 69d (Vymazalová – Megahed *forthcoming*). Thus, the combination of diverse pieces of evidence, specifically the presence of a large amount of textiles, the traces of black substance/resin on the inside of the vessels and, most of all, pieces of natron that was also confirmed in its nature and function by epigraphic evidence, point to the fact that these contexts indeed served as embalming deposits. Why their numbers are so severely limited in the known cemeteries is questionable; however, the custom of keeping the mummification objects and depositing them in the immediate vicinity of the deceased seems to have gained in popularity only during the late Old Kingdom. Also, one has to bear in mind that excavations up until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century generally tended to overlook material coming from shafts (even burial shafts), considering the shaft fill a simple discard with minimum archaeological value. Shafts without burials were commonly disregarded altogether, being considered unfinished. In cases where such shafts were filled with unusual items (and especially fine broken pottery), this was commonly interpreted as resulting from robbing activity in one of the “main” shafts. Therefore, while some cases might be “rediscovered” by current scholars on the basis of available evidence, it is very possible that



their initial number was much higher and went unnoticed and remarked upon by the original excavators.

This particular context was discussed in detail despite the fact that no such ritual shaft was discovered in the complex of Princess Sheretnebt. The embalming deposits are an important type of context that enhances our knowledge of the funerary customs of the Old Kingdom and will be referenced in future chapters.

#### 4.3.2 UNUSED OR UNFINISHED SHAFTS

The complex of Princess Sheretnebt had several shafts that never held a burial. Some of them were clearly unfinished, being abandoned for unknown reasons at a very shallow depth – most notably Shaft 1 in AS 68b, Shaft 2 in the courtyard and Shafts 15 and 16 in the corridor.<sup>9</sup> Others were abandoned at a much greater depth and were possibly unfinished due to safety considerations, *e.g.* Shaft 1 and very likely also Shaft 7 in the courtyard.<sup>10</sup> There were other shafts that were interesting, as they did hold a burial chamber but no trace of tomb equipment or even small fragments of human bones, therefore very likely never contained a burial – most notably Shaft 3 in AS 68c. For a comparison of the depths of various shafts from the complex of Sheretnebt and presence or absence of burials, see also Table 6.1.

Although some of these shafts did contain ceramic fragments (with the exception of Shaft 15 in the corridor), most of them were of clearly secondary nature – that is containing a large amount of very small fragments of unrelated vessels, each represented by only a very small percentage of their diameter (*e.g.* around 7%). Therefore, they shall not be analysed in detail, as they are considered part of accidental debris.

Abusir South cemetery also provided us with shafts that were quite deep, contained possible remains of intentional deposition but were never used for burial. One such is Shaft 3 in the anonymous tomb AS 25 in the Lake of Abusir area. The shaft reached a depth of 7.50 m and at its bottom, in the north-west corner, a cluster of one fully intact beer jar with a fully preserved filling of Nile mud, a small miniaturized jar and a crudely cut stone object very

<sup>9</sup> Their depths were between 0.96 and 1.40 m (for details, see *Chapter 3*).

<sup>10</sup> Shaft 1 was hewn to a depth of 6 m and Shaft 7 was more than 7.5 m deep (see also *Chapter 3*).

vaguely resembling a *psškf* knife were found (Fig. 4.52). Similarly, Shaft 7 in the anonymous tomb AS 78b (*cf.* Dulíková – Jirásková – Arias Kytarová 2016)<sup>11</sup> contained a larger amount of what appears to be intentionally deposited pottery; however, the shaft never held a burial nor bore traces of it. Besides fully preserved stands, there were several beer jars, two of them with a thick layer of mortar inside (Figs. 4.53–4.55). In the case of both shafts, they were very likely related to one of the neighbouring shafts, and one can presume that they served as deposits of objects used during the funerary rituals. Such shafts make it possible to assume that besides human interment and embalming deposits, there were other kinds of depositions connected to the funerary activity.

#### 4.4 CULTIC AREAS

The cultic areas of the tombs are understood as all places that could have served to bring in offerings. These were predominantly chapels, niches in the corridor chapels and niches of the eastern façade, to name only the most important. All of these cultic places were freely accessible after the burial and were subject to repeated cultic activity that could have, theoretically, lasted for more than one generation. The items assembled in front of the offering places were presumably cleared at a regular rate, and the items were transferred or thrown away in refuse deposits or reused as building material. Therefore, it is important to stress that despite the possible intact nature of the primary floor layers from cultic places with objects uncovered *in situ*, these should not be seen as remnants corresponding to the period of the building of the tomb. They always represent a later, ritual activity in the tomb that could have spanned one or even more generations and the preserved floor layers should be interpreted as the last attested activity in the tomb. Often, a middle Sixth Dynasty dating of items from the chapels seems confusing, if the tomb was built in the late Fifth Dynasty. Here, one has to realize that a tomb was never a structure created at a single point in time (we can tentatively call its active use as a “life span”) – rather, its building might have lasted years and

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<sup>11</sup> Shaft 7 of tomb AS 78 was discovered during the spring season of 2015 but fully excavated only in the autumn season. During that time, the cleaning of the whole structure led to its attribution to the later annex built south of AS 78 (*i.e.* AS 78b).

spanned at least two stages of increasing social status (for the Abusir examples, see *e.g.* the tomb of Neferinpu, Bárta *et al.* 2014: 205–208; and the tomb of Ptahshepses, Krejčí 2009). If there was more than one shaft, it is unlikely that their owners were interred at exactly the same time period; in the case of some tombs, individual shafts extend two different dynasties (*e.g.* later shafts in rock-cut tombs AS 68c and AS 68d, see *Chapter 6.2.2*; also shafts in the anonymous tomb AS 78, see Dulíková – Jirásková – Arias Kytnarová 2016: 33–34). The time range of the ritual activity in the easily accessible and open cultic places is the most difficult to determine, as they often contained mixed fill of doubtful archaeological value due to the post-depositional processes occurring in these areas (see also *infra*).

In the following sections, several main kinds of intentional depositions shall be discussed, with their possible meaning, interpretation as well as layout of their chronological value in relation to the “life span” of a tomb. The division between the contexts is based on the identification proposed by Rzeuska (2006: 512–515), who differentiated between the so-called cult pottery, which was fewer in numbers and usually found deposited *in situ* in front of false doors where it remained stationary for longer time periods (*e.g.* white-washed stands in front of false doors), and the offering pottery, which constituted the bulk of the ceramic material, and its vessels were very likely used only a single time as part of regular offerings (*e.g.* beer jars).

#### 4.4.1 CULT POTTERY

Pottery uncovered *in situ* in the cultic spaces of the tombs is rather rare, although there are enough cases to establish the main characteristics. This pottery was usually of high quality material, covered with well-polished red slip and, as a rule, covered in a white wash or plaster. It was designated for long-term placement, unlike the votive offerings that were brought in on a daily (or other regular) basis (see also Rzeuska 2006: 513).

The best documented is the presence of tall, massive stands that were positioned in front of the false door or in front of niches in the corridor chapels. In Abusir, we have several attestations of such a custom, ranging from the Fifth to the end of the Sixth Dynasty.

In the anonymous tomb AS 13,<sup>12</sup> dated to the late Fifth Dynasty on the basis of the stratigraphy, architecture and material culture (Bárta 2001: 50), the first two stages of the chapel brought evidence of such a use. The space in front of the northern niche of the first stage bore a clear imprint of a large stand that was originally deposited there (Bárta 2001: 41, Pl. XXIb). The second stage of the chapel brought to light a fully intact stand (Exc. no. 10/LA-5/1993) that was positioned on the north side of the southern niche (Bárta 2001: 41, Pl. XXIIb). The fully preserved stand belonged to A-shaped stands and was decorated with three cut-out triangular “windows” in its lower part. It was almost half a meter tall, red-slipped and covered with a thick layer of white wash or plaster.

Another documented example came from the late Fifth Dynasty tomb of Gegi (AS 7).<sup>13</sup> In its chapel, two fully intact, large, hour-shaped stands were found *in situ* on each side of the false door of the main owner (Bárta 2001: 126, Pl. XLIVb–c). Both stands (Exc. nos. 5a–b/FF/1993) were of very similar sizes to the one from tomb AS 13, with a height of almost half a meter and three triangular windows cut in the lower half. The false door and both stands were covered with a thick layer of plaster (Figs. 4.56). In the case of stands, this was originally interpreted as imitation of limestone material. However, it is likely that while the manufacturers might have attempted to imitate a more precious material, ritual purity played an equal, if not bigger, role. As *per norm*, false doors, offering tables and walls of chapels were repeatedly white-washed during cultic rituals, and sometimes it was possible to identify numerous subsequent layers of plaster (Kuraszkiewicz 2002: 59; Rzeuska 2006: 513; Dulíková – Arias Kytnarová – Cílek 2013: 41; see also *infra*). The stands that were placed in front of the false door were very likely part of the “permanent” equipment of the chapels and were used for repeated offerings, in combination with open shapes such as bowls (see also Bárta 2001: 127; Rzeuska 2006: 513).

Recent excavations at Abusir brought to light another example of cultic pottery. In the chapel of the official Kaisebi (AS 76), an almost fully preserved stand was uncovered *in situ* in

<sup>12</sup> Originally designated as Abusir Lake Tomb II (LA-5, T. 2) in the older documentation system and publications (e.g. Bárta 2001).

<sup>13</sup> The tomb of Gegi can be found under the code FF (or a so-called Tomb II in Fetekty’s cemetery), in the original documentation and published materials (e.g. Bárta 2001).

front of his false door (Fig. 4.57, see also Dulíková – Jirásková – Arias Kytarová 2016). The upper part of the stand was broken and had fallen into the debris but was reconstructed during the analysis. The stand is of a later date (possibly the early Sixth Dynasty) and is a slightly different type, namely an almost a meter tall X-shaped stand with highly conical walls (S-1bII). It was, analogically to the above-mentioned examples, not only covered with a high quality red-slip and thoroughly polished, but also plastered in thick irregular layers.

The cemetery of Giza also provided us with a limited amount of similar stands. In tomb G 1457 of the Fifth Dynasty, a tall A-shaped stand was discovered fully intact *in situ* in front of the false door of Nisutnefret (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 129, 34-11-9).<sup>14</sup> The stand was very large, with a height of 55.4 cm and base diameter of 25.6 cm, and on its red-slipped and polished surface, it also bore a hieratic inscription. It had an irregular oval-shaped perforation in the lower part of the body. Both the stand and the false door bear traces of white-washing, judging from the photos available in the Giza Archive photo database. An even larger stand was preserved in tomb G 1407. It was found collapsed but intact in front of the niche, together with a limestone offering table and a base that served as the support for the stand (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 129, 34-12-3).<sup>15</sup> It was a very tall tubular stand with a height of 80 cm, covered with a red slip and decorated with a triangular perforation in the middle of the body.

At Saqqara West, a fully intact Sixth Dynasty stand complemented by a bowl was found *in situ* in front of the southern false door in Chapel 11 in the tomb of Merefnebef (Rzeuska 2001b: 165–167, Pls. 29, 34–36; Rzeuska 2006: Pl. XI, 4). The stand is much smaller than the examples from Abusir, with a height of only 26 cm and a rim diameter of 9.5 cm. It belongs to the common hour-glass shaped stands (Abusir type S-1aII, Saqqara Form 216, see Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 152, no. 774). A bell-shaped bowl with a modelled rim was also found fully

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<sup>14</sup> For more extensive photographic documentation including a detailed view of the hieratic inscription and the original position in the chapel, see no. 34-11-9 in [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org). The stand is currently stored in Cairo (Cairo JE 67622).

<sup>15</sup> For views of the niche with the offering basin and stand, see no. 34-12-3 in [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org). The stand is on display in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

intact and with traces of a white substance both inside and outside (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 98, no. 490).

The complex of Princess Sheretnebty did not bring to light any such vessels, uncovered *in situ*. However, there were several cases of large, red-slipped stands that were subsequently covered with a white wash. Most of these come from either the fill of the corridor and the court or from the fill of some burial shafts. None were fully preserved, although quite a large number retained 1/3 to 2/3 of their body volumes (see *e.g.* Figs. 3.200 and 3.211). All of them belong either to the group of A-shaped stands (Abusir S-2) or X-shaped stands (Abusir S-3). The most notable examples of red-slipped and sometimes also white-washed stands include those from the highly disturbed fill of the later shafts in tomb AS 68c, *e.g.* the tall tubular stand 63-5.AS68c.2013 from Shaft 5 (Fig. 3.200, also *Chapter 3.5.6*) and A-shaped stands 65-5.AS68c.2013 and 65-6.AS68c.2013 from Shaft 6 (Fig. 3.211–3.212, *Chapter 3.5.7*). Other examples were uncovered in the fill of the chapels in AS 68c and AS 68d, as well as the corridor accessing these two tombs, such as a large A-shaped stand with a window decoration, no. 40-61.AS68d.2012 (Fig. 3.239, see also *Chapter 3.6.3*).

The interpretation is difficult. Due to the extensive amounts of pottery (almost 20,000 fragments, see Table 1.1), it was not feasible to keep the fragments for subsequent comparisons, and thus it is not possible to exclude the remote potentiality that similar-looking stands from different contexts (*e.g.* Shafts 5 and 6 in AS 68c, the chapel of AS 68c and the neighbouring corridor of AS 68) could belong to the same vessel that had been dispersed during the post-depositional processes. On the other hand, very often stand fragments from a single context seemed at first glance part of one vessel, and only the cleaning and full analysis showed their differences in material, firing, surface treatment, morphological shape and sizes (among others), which identified them as *e.g.* two or three different vessels. Therefore, outwardly similar stands from diverse contexts shall be treated as different vessels for the purpose of this thesis.

#### 4.4.2 OFFERING POTTERY

The main differentiation of offering pottery from cult pottery was its designation and use. Cult pottery consisted of a small number of very well-made vessels that were permanently stored in cultic places of tombs (most particularly massive stands with bowls or platters situated in front of false doors, see *supra*) and were only replaced after damage or destruction. Offering pottery was brought in on a regular basis and was constantly being replaced by new vessels. It is of a much lower quality, consisting predominantly of beer jars (“traditional offering jar” of Reisner, see *e.g.* 1942: 212 and Reisner – Smith 1955: 70–71) and miniature vessels, with the addition of other classes. We find these only very rarely *in situ* in primary layers of chapels and other cultic places, but they occur in large abundance in refuse deposits and clusters around tombs, particularly in the areas close to the entrance to the chapel (for details, see *infra*). These clusters lead us to believe that all of the offering pottery from the cultic activity was, after some period, discarded and thrown out.

Very few chapels and corridor chapels provide us with primary ceramic data. Only in a few of these, were vessels found in the floor layers. As some examples, we can name a beer jar found in front of niche 3 in tomb AS 23<sup>16</sup> (see Figs. 4.58–4.59), a large storage jar from the corridor of tomb AS 24<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 4.60) or two beer jars found in the corridor chapel of anonymous tomb AS 41 (see Fig. 4.61). Notably, the corridor chapels of tombs ASS 23 and AS 24 both contained a somewhat large amount of objects *in situ*, such as offering basins uncovered in several niches (yet unpublished).

Most of the finds come from higher strata. Some examples of such were two corridors belonging to two different stages in the construction of the anonymous tomb AS 54, built at the end of the Third Dynasty, during or after the reign of Huni (see Bárta 2010b). Their stratification can be used in highlighting some current problems in excavating cultic areas. In the corridors, ceramic vessels were uncovered in:

- a) a surface layer (with worn and eroded fragments, bearing traces of exposure to wind, sun and sand),

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<sup>16</sup> Former designation Lake of Abusir, Tomb 1 (LA5-1).

<sup>17</sup> Previous code designation Lake of Abusir, Tomb 2 (LA5-2).

- b) a layer of hard-packed debris with rounded pebbles, reaching diverse depths of 0.50–1.00 m under the surface,
- c) a layer of pure, wind-blown sand, reaching almost to the floor, which probably represents the abandonment of the structure and its slow envelopment (intact vessels of diverse late Third Dynasty types from different areas),
- d) irregularly sized and positioned disturbance pits and layers (*e.g.* later burials of the First Millennium BC),
- e) Floor layers (in this particular case without significant pottery).<sup>18</sup>

Excavations of superstructure areas in tombs are one of the most complicated due to the often mixed nature of the fill. As a rule, only very few finds come from the floor layers of the general area of chapels and corridors, probably due to the performance of regular cleaning and inspection during the initial use of these structures. By far, most ceramics come from strata situated above the floor layers that are often part of possibly secondary debris, unrelated to the original function of the area. A perfect example is the area of the open court of Princess Sheretnebtj – although it brought to light an enormous amount of ceramic material (see *Chapter 3.1.2*), by far the largest amount came from the strata around 1 m above the floor of the court. Some of it was undoubtedly offering pottery in its nature, *e.g.* a cluster of beer jars, common stands and bowls from the south-east part of the court. Given the proximity of three (or even four) possible structures that they could belong to, it is difficult to state with certainty where they originated from. At that time, offerings were brought to the niches in the eastern façade of Ptahhotep’s tomb (AS 36), to the superstructure areas of tombs AS 66 and AS 69 (*cf.* Vymazalová – Megahed *forthcoming*); also noteworthy is that the pathway above the court served as the only access to the niches of the largest tomb in the whole area, anonymous tomb AS 31. The clusters in the court were possibly refuse from cultic activities in one (or more) of these structures.

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<sup>18</sup> This is a simplified list of stratigraphic units from tomb AS 54 – due to the fact that it covered a very large area, its different parts exhibited particularities in post-depositional processes.



#### 4.4.3 REFUSE DEPOSITS AND CLUSTERS

As already mentioned above, the daily cultic activities in the cemeteries must have brought in an enormous amount of ceramic vessels. After some time, such vessels designated for ritual had to be discarded, as they could not be reused in domestic or practical spheres. The archaeological record would have us believe thus. The problem was solved by the creation of so-called refuse deposits, namely intentional deposition of vessels used during the cultic activities in the neighbouring area, often behind the nearest wall or next to an older tomb. Such a custom appeared in the very early Old Kingdom. As an example, during the excavations of the Step pyramid of Netjerikhet, a large deposit consisting of over 300 carefully laid out Third Dynasty collared beer jars was discovered in the area of the North temple (Firth – Quibell 1935: Pls. XXV and CII, nos. 18 and 20).

From the early Fifth Dynasty, two much smaller but similarly laid-out refuse deposits of beer jars were found close to the entrance to the chapel of Kaaper at Abusir South (Bárta 2001: 184, Pl. LXXIIIa; Kytarová 2009: 19–20). The first cluster (7/A/1991) was found at a height of about 0.80 m above the floor level, roughly in front of the entrance to the chapel, behind the screening wall. It consisted of 13 complete beer jars with very homogenous dimensions (e.g. heights of 24–26 cm and rim diameters of 8–9 cm), as well as further beer jar bases, white-washed miniature vessels and two bread forms. The second cluster (8/A/1991) was found in a corresponding layer (Layer III) further north. Besides beer jars, it also contained a larger amount of fine, red-slipped bowls. Both of these clusters shared a common feature, that of random deposition on a simple heap.

A large deposit of various vessels was also found in the area of the so-called structure AS 66, situated roughly above the rock-cut tomb AS 68c (*cf.* Vymazalová – Megahed *forthcoming*). Due to the fact that the excavation of this stratigraphically complicated structure has not been completed yet, the interpretation and attribution of this cluster is complicated. However, the fact remains that it consisted of a large, arbitrary heap of well-preserved ceramic vessels, predominantly beer jars, but also bread forms and platters, all falling into the late Fifth Dynasty date. A number of the beer jars were still filled with Nile mud and several vessels (including platters and bread forms) bore traces of exposure to fire on their outer walls,

evidencing their possible use as censors. This cluster very likely constituted refuse from cultic activity in one of the neighbouring Fifth Dynasty tombs, such as that of physician Ptahhotep (AS 36). As a second possibility, it is also relatively close to the only access route leading towards the southern niche of the large anonymous tomb AS 31, thus it might also have been connected with its daily offerings.

A different kind of deposit was found in the north-west corner of the anonymous Sixth Dynasty mastaba AS 41 at Abusir South (yet unpublished). Nine beer jars of identical type, namely a low tubular body, modelled rim, rounded base and red-slipped on the outer surface (J-1gII), were found lying next to each other in a small pit dug in the north-west corner of the superstructure of the tomb. The position of this particular deposit is curious, as it is slightly farther from the area of the chapel or the panelled court than one would presume. It is very likely that these beer jars were buried with piety rather than simply thrown away. All of them were filled with Nile mud, therefore their use as daily offerings can be assumed with certainty.

Besides beer jars, miniature vessels are often part of ceramic clusters uncovered in diverse parts neighbouring the chapel or other cultic spaces. As an example, the tomb of Prince Werkaure at Abusir Centre (AC 26) yielded almost 700 miniature vessels from the area of the open court and its different parts, far surpassing any other area of the tomb (see Arias Kytarová 2014b: 228–230, Chart 4.3). In the tomb of Kakaibaef (AC 29), an even larger amount of miniature vessels was uncovered in refuse layers east and south-east of the tomb, reaching to the mud floor of the chapel and entrance, numbering several thousands of pieces (yet unpublished). The most prominent cluster (20.AC29.2013, see Figs. 4.62–4.65) contained not only the traditional small-sized miniature vessels but also their slightly larger versions, which were covered with a red slip (Fig. 4.64). Other examples from Abusir Centre include the area outside of the mastaba of Ptahshepses (Charvát 1981: 150).

Similar concentrations could be observed in the cemetery of Giza. Reisner notes that miniature vessels were commonly found in the dumps of offering vessels thrown out of chapels without giving any particular examples (Reisner – Smith 1955: 86). Hundreds of miniature vessels were reported near mastabas S 4051 and S 4067 (Junker 1950: 19–20).

As can be seen, similar clusters can be either depositions of piety or, in more common cases, careless refuse. They can hold any number of vessels, reaching from a few to several hundred, including all kinds of pottery used in daily ritual, most prominently beer jars and miniature vessels, but also bowls and in lesser amount stands and platters. These clusters were created most likely during the cleaning of the ritual structures.

#### 4.5 SECONDARY USE OF POTTERY

Ceramic vessels that are uncovered in the cemeteries far surpass the simple dual functional division as either tomb equipment or votive offerings, although those two are the most common. In domestic contexts, the pottery was often reused – beer jars are *e.g.* attested in iconographic representations of irrigation (see Verner 1977: 33 and 35).<sup>19</sup> From settlements, there is evidence that pots could have been used for a variety of purposes, such as smelting copper or mixing pigments (*e.g.* in Giza, Wodzińska 2007: 289; see also *Chapter 4.5.2*).

Such particular uses are not excluded in cemeteries, but are quite rare. Even beer jars uncovered in refuse clusters often held partly or fully intact filling of Nile mud, which would exclude their use in irrigation or other practical purpose. So far, no study has been undertaken to provide a full comparison of beer jars from settlement versus funerary contexts in order to specify similarities or differences in technological details, quality of material, density, porosity and water-proofing. Notably, all beer jars from the cemeteries of Abusir are of very low quality of make and from a highly porous substance; an experiment undertaken by the present author that involved filling different beer jars with fluid contents has shown that the beer jars were minimally insulated; basically, all the fluid ran out within an extremely short time of 30 minutes.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> It must be stressed that the present author believes that settlement and funerary vessels were not exchangeable, *i.e.* beer jars were either made for a domestic use or for their use in funerary/cultic activity. Thus, the reuse of funerary vessels was possible only in the sphere of the necropolis.

<sup>20</sup> Naturally, the experiment took into account the present level of excessive dryness of the vessels, which were therefore soaked for extended time before use. The leakage was nevertheless extensive, and it is without any doubt that beer jars used in the domestic sphere must have been either thoroughly lined with dense clay (confirmed by iconographic sources, although the taste of the resulting beer is questionable) or treated in a different way, or were made of a much denser clay.

In the following section, the secondary use of vessels in funerary contexts shall be discussed, with particular examples from the cemeteries of Abusir South and Centre, where available.

#### 4.5.1 POTTERY AS BUILDING MATERIAL

The use of ceramic fragments or whole vessels as a means of simplifying the construction or lowering the building costs is attested throughout the whole Memphite necropolis. Ancient Egyptians were highly practical and did not shy away from using vessels deposited around tombs as a cheap material during the construction of new tombs. Such usage is attested for example in Giza in the fill of mastaba S 4570 or in the later structure S 2535 (Junker 1950: 16), as well as in other tombs in the Western Field (Reisner – Smith 1955: 70).

Abusir provided us with several examples of such use. At Abusir South, the most notable examples are vessels used as a filler in a mastaba superstructure – for all, we can name the yet unpublished tomb of Ptahhotep (AS 36), which directly abuts the open courtyard of Sheretnebtj on its western side (see Fig. 1.3). In the northern part of the superstructure, a continuous layer of rubble, sand and beer jars laid in an irregular row was used as a filling (Sit. 2/AS36/2010; see Figs. 4.66–4.67). Curiously, a relatively large number of these vessels were able to be pieced together to full intact state (see Figs. 4.68–4.69), meaning that they were not simply thrown out, but rather carefully laid down – a feature that can also be observed in other similar cases.

Secondary use of ceramic fragments as a filler of the inner masonry of tombs is attested in numerous examples in the cemetery of Abusir Centre. Out of older, published excavations we can name the compact layers of pottery above the burial chamber of Khekeretnebtj and Tisethor (Fig. 4.74), as well as above the serdab in tomb AC 15 (Figs. 4.70 and 4.72; see Verner – Callender 2002: 18, Figs. B8 and B9) and above the burial chamber of Hedjetnebu (Verner – Callender 2002: Fig. K4). In the case of both burial chambers, the pottery was used as a filler of a large room situated above the vaulted ceiling of the burial chamber and served as a pressure-relief measure. The ceramics collected from these areas included a vast array of different types of stands as well as beer jars (for yet unpublished photographs, see Fig. 4.71 and 4.73).

Another notable example was the mastaba of Kakaibaef (AC 29; *cf.* Krejčí 2013) at Abusir Centre. The inner core of the superstructure, most prominently the west wall and south-west corner above the burial chamber, revealed masonry consisting of large and small irregular blocks of limestone, chips of limestone and other debris and also a few broken ceramic vessels used as a filler, particularly beer jars (Fig. 4.75).

So far the most extensive use of ceramic vessels and fragments as a filler inside a tomb superstructure was observed in the mastaba of Queen Khentkaus III from Abusir Centre (see also Krejčí – Arias Kytnarová – Odler 2015). There, in the south part of the burial chamber and the area immediately south of it, a compact and continuous layer made of complete and fragmented ceramic vessels mixed with limestone pieces, sand and pieces of *tafl* was uncovered. It was divided into two ceramic contexts, namely that in the south part of the burial chamber (24.AC30.2014) and one south of it (20.AC30.2014), with a well visible border between them. Both were finished with limestone blocks and altogether reach a height of almost 1.5 m (see Fig. 4.76). What is uncommon is the high occurrence of pottery in this filler, making up the majority of the layer, as well as the almost perfect state of these vessels, not counting the breaks during the building process (see detail in Fig. 4.76). The fill of both contexts was made up of 80% beer jars; a high percentage of these were recovered in both full profile and as complete vessels (Figs. 4.77–4.78). We were able to find numerous fully preserved jars with no traces of erosion or exposure to wind or sun, and therefore these could not have been lying around the necropolis for a long time. It can be assumed that they come from cultic activities occurring in one of the neighbouring tombs (or pyramids) from a period not long before the building of the mastaba itself, and therefore provide a valuable dating criterion.

A very specific example is also the so-called bread form wall, built west of the tomb of Neferinpu (AS 37) and roughly north-east of the tomb of Kaiemtjenenet (AS 38; see Fig. 4.79; *cf.* Arias Kytnarová 2011c: 84–88). This incomplete structure, whose function nor meaning within the necropolis could be clarified satisfactorily, was built in a length of more than two meters in one to two layers of almost complete bread forms, with the addition of other ceramic fragments (Figs. 4.80). Due to the fact that a vast majority of the bread forms were

made of a type with a tall and massive tubular foot (F-3, see Fig. 4.81), which was attested only in the later Sixth Dynasty and most prominently during the reign of Pepy II (Rzeuska 2006: Form 209, Pl. 146, nos. 741–743, Pl. 147, nos. 745, 747–750), the chronological assortment of this wall is unambiguous.

The importance and relevance of pottery used as a secondary building material lies in the fact that it was used in the construction of a tomb, thus it must be older than that particular tomb, providing us with a *terminus post quem*. In some cases, the time difference can reach up to hundreds of years or older – in the New Kingdom tombs of Saqqara, Old Kingdom fine ware such as carinated bowls was found crushed and mixed into the mud bricks (Maartin Raven, personal communication). In our cases, the state of preservation of these vessels (especially in the tomb of Ptahhotep and Khentkaus III) points rather to the fact that they were used in a very short time span since their discard. A number of the vessels were found fully intact or with clean, sharp breaks and without any traces of being exposed to sun, wind or sand prior to their use in the construction. The numbers of beer jars used in the funerary cult, especially in the royal necropolis, must have been enormous – their false fillings of Nile mud prove that they were never filled with an actual food offering (beer) and thus were not divided among the priests at the end of the day. Rather, the old offerings were collected and dumped or deposited in the vicinity (see above *Chapter 4.4.2*). In some cases, it is possible that during the construction of the new tombs, older refuse clusters were discovered and reused or the builders used votive offerings that were only very recently disposed of and were lying around. This would explain the differences between the states of preservation of such vessels.

#### 4.5.2 SECONDARY REPURPOSED VESSELS

The second most common secondary use of vessels was as containers of diverse materials. Vessels used as containers of mortar or plaster were previously discussed on two different occasions above – those coming from the burial chambers, where the substance was used predominantly for sealing sarcophagi or burial pits (see *Chapter 4.1.3*); and from burial shafts, used for white-washing of the sealing wall leading into the burial chamber (*Chapter 4.2.3*).

The superstructure areas of the tombs naturally provided many examples of white-washing as well. All the cultic spaces, most notably false doors, niches, altars, basins, cultic vessels situated permanently in chapels, *etc.*, bear traces of repeated white-washing or covering with layers of plaster. In some cases, more than a dozen individual layers was possible to observe, sometimes even obscuring the relief decoration (*e.g.* the false door of Kaisebi, see Dulíková – Jirásková – Arias Kytarová 2016: 25–31). The main reason behind such activity was the ritual purification of cultic spaces.

Besides mortar and plaster, ceramic vessels could have been used as containers for pigments. In the complex of Sheretnebtj, there were several diverse examples of such repurposed pottery. One of the most notable examples was a shallow bent-sided bowl from the burial chamber of the anonymous owner of Shaft 1 in tomb AS 68c (the so-called husband of Princess Sheretnebtj). It contained remains of blue pigment (see Figs. 3.171–3.172). The occurrence of a container for pigments in a burial apartment is highly unusual. Given the fact that it is one of three almost identical bowls that were all fully reconstructed, it undoubtedly belonged to the original tomb equipment of the owner. It can be theoretically linked to his false door, removed by tomb robbers, which might have been decorated in blue colour, similar to the false door of Nefer in the neighbouring tomb AS 68d (see Fig. 3.233).

In the settlement of pyramid workers at Giza, seven beer jars contained different kind of pigments, most commonly red (four), but also white (two) and yellow (one) (Wodzińska 2007: 289). In the case of our complex, we uncovered only a few vessels with traces of pigments, most commonly ochre. Surprisingly, these included not only beer jars, but also finer jars and bread forms. In the fill between the pillars of the open court, we found a shoulder fragment of a smaller bread form (16-1.AS68.2012) that presumably served for mixing red pigment. It contained a layer of dark red pigment at the bottom, thin layer of plaster towards the upper side of the bread form and a middle part, where these two were mixed to achieve a pale pink hue (see Fig. 5.17). Beer jars served more commonly in such a function, such as the base containing remains of red ochre (57-26.AS68c.2013) that was discovered in the fill of Shaft 1 in tomb AS 68c, which belonged to the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebtj (see Fig. 3.163).

The excavation of settlements has also provided us with other secondary uses of vessels, which are out of the scope of this dissertation but shall be mentioned briefly. During the exploration of the Giza Plateau Mapping Project, there were 29 fragments of beer jars with traces of melted copper, with a further 18 pieces vitrified by exposure to intense fire. Additionally, many other jars have traces of burning inside and outside (Wodzińska 2007: 289). So far, no such cases were uncovered at our cemetery.

#### 4.6 DEPOSITIONAL AND POST-DEPOSITIONAL PROCESSES

In archaeology, depositional processes are understood as ones connected to the original activity, while post-depositional processes are seen as subsequent natural or anthropogenic alterations that occurred after the original deposition and which have transformed them into their present state.<sup>21</sup>

In the following chapter, the issues of formation processes in archaeology and some of the widely used terminology shall be explored briefly. Additionally, two case studies from the complex of Princess Sheretnebtj will be used to exemplify these processes. Shaft 1 of rock-cut tomb AS 68c and its burial chamber provide us with archaeological data that enables us to study both – the archaeological evidence in the burial chamber gives proof of the depositional processes that transpired during the placing of the body into the chamber and the performance of the burial rituals that might have occurred shortly after. On the other hand, the relative stratification of the fill of the shaft brings evidence of subsequent post-depositional processes, as the shaft was robbed and thus emptied at least partially and we found it filled with secondary objects coming most probably from the area of the rock-cut chapel. Both these processes have different values of evidence and thus diverse resulting outcome.

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<sup>21</sup> For theoretical outlines of depositional and post-depositional processes, based predominantly on prehistoric and medieval ceramic corpora, see *e.g.* Schiffer 1972; 1976 and 1989; Sommer 1990 and 1991; and Neústupný 1993; 2007 and 2010.



#### 4.6.1 PRIMARY VERSUS SECONDARY CONTEXTS

The spatial analysis of artefacts found during an archaeological excavation is predominantly dependent on what level they correspond to their actual locations of use during various activities.

A ground-breaking theoretical layout in describing formation processes and their concepts was created by Schiffer, who identified two main types of transformations depending on the agent; namely cultural (c-transforms), caused by human actions and natural (n-transforms), caused by non-cultural processes and post-occupational changes in sites due to the environment (Schiffer 1973: 25–28). Within these, he was mostly interested in settlements and in the processes connected to refuse and its formation. He defined three main types of contexts, namely primary, secondary and de facto refuse (Schiffer 1972: 161). Primary refuse is understood as material discarded at its location of use. Secondary refuse defines material that was moved, and thus its final place of discard does not correlate with its place of use. De facto refuse is identified as one that was created unintentionally, *e.g.* through abandonment of a house or as objects that were lost (Schiffer 1991: 14). Objects of secondary refuse that were moved to a different place through natural processes were identified by different scholars as tertiary refuse (Neústupný 1996: 496). This terminology is in wide-spread use, especially in Anglo-Saxon and European archaeology. However, it is important to stress that this division is based on settlement archaeology and on objects that were intentionally discarded (Schiffer 1972: 161; Neústupný 1996: 494–502) and is not fully applicable in the context of necropoleis and objects found as either tomb equipment or as votive offerings, as neither can be functionally seen as discard nor as abandonment but rather as intentional deposition of items that were created for this particular purpose. Schiffer's analysis is based on the assumption that all the objects have a given life cycle, consisting in its minimum span of procurement, manufacture, use and discard (Schiffer 1972: Fig. 3) and in its maximum range is expanded by replacement, transport and storage (Schiffer 1973: 98). He himself stresses the fact that his analysis does not include “the subject of grave accompaniments and their relationship to other aspects of a system that discarded them” (Schiffer 1972: 160).

An unusual approach to depositional and post-depositional processes in archaeology through the lenses and vocabulary of paleontology was provided by Sommer (1990: 47–49 and 1991: 144–145). For this purpose, she adapted the terminology of paleontological taphonomy, a science devoted to the study of decaying organism and their fossilization, in analysing the demise and transformation of objects in the archaeological material culture. She identified four main stages of the existence of such objects, namely

- a) biocenosis (a self-regulating unit of an ecological community; *e.g.* a group of organism living in one particular place; in the archaeological context, assemblage of objects synchronically in use in a settlement unit),
- b) thanatocoenosis (an assemblage of dead organisms that perished in a single specific area; *i.e.* objects that broke or became useless at the same time and context),
- c) taphocoenosis (an assemblage of dead organisms that were found together but did not necessarily die together; *i.e.* objects that are deposited together) and
- d) oryctocoenosis (remains of thanatocoenosis that were preserved as a fossil; *i.e.* objects that enter the final archaeological record during discovery).

Such a use of paleontologic taphonomic processes in archaeology is sometimes criticized as incorrect and unprecise (*e.g.* Lyman 2010), especially as it disregards some important aspects of transformation processes (*i.e.* quantitative transformations, see Neústupný 1996: 496–497). In some works, it is highlighted as a clearly defined and well-structured discourse of depositional processes (Macháček 2001: 13) that can be used not only for fossils but also for humans and their activities as another taphonomic agent (Domínguez-Rodrigo – Fernández-Lopez – Alcalá 2011: 6).

It is therefore very important to realize that while we can use the terminology and definitions provided by the new archaeologists or behavioral archaeologists, we have to bear in mind that they were created based on given types of archaeological sites, *i.e.* permanent or temporary settlements or hunter-gatherers' camping sites. For funerary archaeology, the term “refuse”, while acceptable in its principle for numerous types of contexts, is very unsatisfactory in defining intentional ritual or funerary activities. In this case, the present

author would like to propose the use of terms such as primary and secondary deposition in addition to primary, secondary and (theoretically) tertiary refuse, when identifying the depositional and post-depositional processes in a necropolis.

#### 4.6.2 DEPOSITIONAL PROCESSES: A CASE STUDY

Depositional processes shall be explored in detail on one particular example, namely that of the floor level in the burial chamber of the so-called husband of Princess Sheretnebtj buried in Shaft 1 of tomb AS 68c. As was indicated above in *Chapter 3.5.3*, there were 13 vessels uncovered in the area of the burial chamber, and all but one (a rim fragment of a stand, found in the fill close to the broken entrance into the burial chamber and very likely originating from the shaft) can be seen as remnants of the original tomb goods. They consist of three marl jars, one small red-slipped jar, two mud stoppers, one beaker and five red-slipped bowls (Fig. 3.170). There were several interesting features in the ceramic material, all of which shall be discussed in detail below:

- a) individual vessels were found in fragments in two or three neighbouring clusters in the burial chamber;
- b) all of the red pottery was found broken to pieces, including bowls, one beaker and a small shouldered jar;
- c) two white Marl jars were completely intact, with a third one found as a single very large upper body fragment that made up almost 2/3 of the vessel;
- d) without any exception, all shards were very sharp, without any trace of erosion or secondary use;
- e) almost all vessels were able to be reconstructed to full or almost full diameter;
- f) in several cases, there were traces of a white substance directly on the breaks of some sherds but not on their inner or outer surfaces.

All these features can be interpreted as evidence of intentional breaking directly here in the burial chamber, maybe as part of the burial rituals, by means of throwing said vessels on the ground. As was mentioned above, the analysis of the spatial distribution of the sherds

showed that fragments belonging to a single vessel were usually found in two or three neighbouring clusters. One example, small red-slipped jar no. 58-3.AS68c.2013, was found in a single cluster directly east of the sarcophagus (Fig. 3.169). Most of the vessels came from two clusters in the south-east corner of the burial chamber and the area slightly north of it (Fig. 3.168). Similarly, two closely connected clusters were one found south-east of the sarcophagus, with a few additional fragments uncovered in the small gap south of the sarcophagus. In some examples, such a cluster could be made up of more than one vessel broken to sherds – in the case of the cluster next to the south-east corner of the sarcophagus, the fragments of altogether three fine bowls were identified here (Fig. 3.169). The tentative interpretation is that these vessels were not broken accidentally during the robbing of the chamber but on purpose and to some degree of pattern. Naturally, some sherds did get misplaced during the following robbing activity, but only to a lesser degree; it could be presumed that the robbers knew that there was nothing of high value among the ceramic vessels and canopic jars and therefore did not bother with them.

These facts bring to mind the ancient ritual of *sd dšrwt*, the breaking of the red vessels. Although the epigraphic evidence of this ritual in the period of the Old Kingdom is still very scant,<sup>22</sup> some archaeological contexts point to the fact that it was in use during funerary rites.<sup>23</sup> Due to the lack of direct evidence, indirect proof of its existence can be provided by the theory of the continuity of rituals in later periods. In the period of the New Kingdom, red vessels were broken during funerary rites either by throwing them on the ground (Borchardt 1929: 97–133) or by dashing them against each other (Brunner 1929: 12–16). Crushing the vessels with a pestle is also attested in the period of the Middle Kingdom; however, this might have had a slightly different nature (Sethe 1926: Pl. 71). Due to our knowledge of the development of the Egyptian religion and its different aspects, it is not far-fetched to suppose that a similar process occurred in the older periods. The concentration of fragments into two

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<sup>22</sup> The ritual is mentioned in the Pyramid Texts (see Sethe 1908–1922: § 249) and in the list of offerings in some late Old Kingdom tombs (e.g. Petrie 1898: Pl. 29; Blackmann 1924: 50, Pl. 18.1; Firth – Gunn 1926: 95; and Duell 1938: Pl. 67).

<sup>23</sup> A detailed account of the possible archaeological evidence of this ritual is provided by Rzeuska (2006: 492–511).

to three neighbouring clusters could be explained by their being broken by means of throwing on the ground; in that case, several fragments would end up slightly misplaced from the main body of the vessel. In the case of vessels being broken by dashing them against each other, a much more concentrated cluster would be expected.

Another interesting feature from this context is the perception of and handling of the white versus red ware. In the chamber, there were altogether three jars made of pale white-grey Marl A3. Two of them were found fully intact and unbroken among the canopic jars in the south-east corner of the chamber (Fig. 3.167). The third one was found as a large upper body fragment east of the sarcophagus. All of these were of very fine thin-walled and well-fired fabric, which is hard but breaks quite easily and with little effort. It must be noted that all the red pottery from the chamber was found broken in small or medium large pieces – if such breaking was indeed intentional, it would not be difficult to also break the remaining white vessels. In this case, the different approach to red (= Nile silt vessels, covered with a red slip) and white ware (= either light Marl clays or white-washed vessels made of Nile silt) could be seen as a direct imperative, resulting from religious thoughts and beliefs. The broken “red pottery” includes not only five bowls, but also one beaker and one small shouldered jar (see Figs. 3.171–3.177).

This burial chamber is not the only example from Abusir South to exhibit intact Marl A3 jars and broken red-slipped bowls – other examples can be seen in the intact burial chamber of Neferinpu, where ten fully intact white-washed beer jars were complemented by three broken red-slipped bowls (Arias Kytarová 2014a: Fig. 7.1 and 7.20). Similarly, we had an intact Marl A3 jar from the disturbed burial chamber in Shaft 1 of anonymous tomb, AS 47, also complemented by three broken red-slipped bowls (Arias Kytarová 2011a: Figs. 11 and 17). However, it must be admitted that there are also cases with broken “white ware”, such as the Marl clay A3 jars from the burial chambers of Shaft 1 and Shaft 2 in the tomb of Nefershepes (AS 67, *cf.* Arias Kytarová – Havelková – Jirásková *et al.* 2013); these can be explained as a result of robbing activity in the chambers. Naturally, it must also be kept in mind that yet another explanation is possible, namely that originally, all the pottery in the burial chambers had been intact, and we found it broken only due to secondary activities in

the tombs. Examples such as the intact burial chamber of Neferinpu, mentioned above, contradict this and rather confirm the suggested different approaches and cultic meaning of red and white wares. However, more such fully intact and undisturbed contexts would be required to draw more definite conclusions.

It is noteworthy that some of the sherds of the red pottery (of all types: bowls, beaker and the abovementioned jar) bore minor traces of a white substance, probably plaster or gyps. What is unusual about this feature is that none of these vessels were used as containers of gyps,<sup>24</sup> and actually, on some sherds the plaster was found directly on the break, which would mean it got there only after the vessels broke (Fig. 3.176). For some of the bowl fragments, we had to scratch away the white substance in order to glue them. This could also confirm that the vessels were broken directly here, before they were accidentally splattered with plaster. Although there is no evidence of the use of plaster inside the burial chamber, the sealing wall blocking the chamber was coated with it from the outside; additionally, this wall was built of stone pieces joined with mortar. The vessels were evidently broken to pieces before the mortar was applied and very probably while it was still in a wet condition, thus before the chamber was sealed. This would be yet another piece of evidence of intentional breaking during the rituals rather than accidental destruction during the robbing.

To conclude, the burial chamber with its relatively intact floor layer is an exemplar of depositional processes during which objects were placed (or in this case, very likely broken) on purpose in a delimited area, mainly south and south-east of the sarcophagus. Even though the chamber was robbed, it is unlikely that the robbers bore away some ceramic vessels; these were, undoubtedly, of very low economic value when considering the issue of selling them after the robbery. The only impact made by the robbers should be seen in the possible misplacement and additional destruction and breakage of the ceramic objects in the burial chamber. The opposite theory, that these vessels might have been brought into the chamber by the tomb robbers, is resolutely considered out of the question for logical reasons

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<sup>24</sup> We have a case of a fine red-slipped bowl used as a container for gyps or mortar *e.g.* from the shaft of Neferhathor in the neighbouring tomb of Nefer (AS 68d). There, the whole inner surface is covered with a compact layer of a white substance and the function is indisputable. For a more detailed list of occurrences, see also *supra*, Chapter 4.2.3.

(there is no reason to bring down such objects) as well as logistical reasons (having to climb down 11 m into a narrow shaft with some eight kilograms of ceramic material). As most vessels were found in full sherd count or were preserved to their full or nearly full diameters, it is very likely that all of them were indeed part of the original tomb equipment.

#### 4.6.3 POST-DEPOSITIONAL PROCESSES: A CASE STUDY

When analysing in detail the formation processes occurring in Shaft 1 and its burial chamber, the contrast between the two contexts is clearly pronounced. The chamber holds many traits of intentional primary deposition that remained partially *in situ* despite the robbing. On the other hand, the shaft itself had to be emptied at least once or at the very least partially during the course of its use, as the burial chamber was disturbed and could be accessed only via this shaft. Therefore, most of its contents should be seen as secondary and as the result of post-depositional processes, undoubtedly of anthropogenic nature, occurring sometime after the sealing of the chamber.

Due to its depth (11.10 m), the shaft was excavated over the course of several days. The excavation was carefully documented and all the finds were allocated not only context numbers (such as no. 57.AS68c.2013) but also depth measurements. In the course of the exploration, several layers (for the lack of a more exact word) were observed in the fill, and it was clear that the shaft was filled over the course of a longer time span and not *en bloc*. The uppermost layer (to a depth of 1.70 m) was identical in quality to the fill from the south part of the chapel; it was therefore allocated its ceramic number and is not included in this analysis. At a depth of 1.70 m, a distinctive 20 cm thick layer consisting of a large amount of limestone chips and stone fragments was uncovered. It was underneath this layer that very high numbers of ceramic fragments began to appear. For the next meter and a half, there was an enormous amount of pottery, usually a full basket per 20 cm in mechanical layers, resulting in nine full baskets from the level of 1.90–3.50 m. Among the sherds, there was a high predominance of massive, thick-walled fragments of beer jars, covered on their outer surfaces with a thin layer of red slip (see also *supra*). Besides the beer jar sherds, this layer also brought to light a large quantity of bread form fragments.

At a depth of 3.50 m, the number of ceramic sherds suddenly decreased. The fill consisted predominantly of limestone chips with some additions of brown sand and, very rarely, large limestone pieces. A large concentration of pottery was uncovered in a small, partly eroded and crumbled section in the south wall of the shaft, at a depth of about 4.50 m. This revealed very large fragments of very different ceramic material, predominantly stands and platters, with a small percentage of “classical” uncoated beer jars. At a depth of 5.60 m, the fill became even sandier, with only a small amount of limestone chips. Up to a depth of 9.50 m, the shaft was filled with mostly sand of light brown colour with additions of small limestone fragments and a relatively small amount of sherds. Finally, the lowermost layer (from 9.55 m on) consisted predominantly of limestone and *tafl* fragments, with almost no sand. The entrance to the burial chamber was situated at a depth of 11.10 m in the south wall of the shaft. It was found partly blocked with the original sealing wall made of large stone fragments joined with pinkish mortar and covered on the outside with plaster. The eastern part of this wall was damaged by a breach and an area of 0.50 m was found missing. The resulting gap was found filled with identical material to the fill of the lowermost part of the shaft.

The ceramic material from the shaft was carefully collected according to the depth. In the case of the concentration of large fragments in certain levels of the shaft, these were collected separately. All the differences in the quality of fill, its consistence, colour and density were also observed. Even during the initial sorting of the sherds it was clear that there were at least two distinct time horizons. Naturally, the shaft was disturbed, maybe even more than once, but several important observations were able to be made. Firstly, the concentration of chronologically sensitive pottery was clearly limited to certain areas. The largest percentage of the Sixth Dynasty ceramics (such as the above-mentioned red-slipped beer jars) came from the layer of 1.90–3.50 m. On the other hand, the largest concentration of Fifth Dynasty ceramics appeared in the small niche at a depth of 4.50 m and lower.

In light of these facts, what is the presumed scenario of the post-depositional processes in the shaft? Due to the fact that in the lowest part of the shaft and in the fill uncovered in the breached sealing wall of the burial chamber only Fifth Dynasty pottery was found, we can



theorize that the chamber had already been robbed in this dynasty. The thick layer with Fifth Dynasty ceramic vessels could point to the fact that the shaft was partially back-filled after the robbery. Were the shaft robbed later, in the course of the Sixth Dynasty, there would be some ceramic evidence for this. The Sixth Dynasty vessels uncovered in the top 3 meters of the shaft were of very specific nature, consisting of a relatively large number of massive thick-walled beer jars that were covered with a red slip on their outer surfaces. From a practical standpoint, these jars could not serve any purpose other than that of a ritual offering, because of their sizes and weights, being extremely large and heavy. They were surely not suitable for any secondary use such as containers of mortar (often attested in the “classical” beer jars) or even real containers for beer; even themselves, they weighed several kilos, and any beverage amount of that volume would make the jars extremely impractical as snack dishes. It is most likely that they were indeed part of the refuse from cultic activity occurring in the course of the Sixth Dynasty in the rock-cut chapel. Tomb AS 68c had altogether six shafts and probably one or two of them (Shafts 5 and 6) were built in the Sixth Dynasty, therefore a continuous cultic activity is very likely. The upper part of Shaft 1 could have been filled with this refuse for a few reasons; these might have been reasons of practicality, as leaving a half-empty shaft in a tomb still in use is highly unsafe. It is also possible that another attempt at robbery occurred during the Sixth Dynasty; at a certain depth, the robbers might have been either discovered or lost interest, and the shaft was filled in. It must be stressed that these theories are preliminary and under ongoing discussion, but the facts remain that at least part of the shaft is stratified and can be delimited chronologically.

On the matter of the study of formation processes occurring in the complex of Princess Sheretneby, it must be emphasized that it is a work in progress, as the ceramic finds have to be evaluated together with other finds, ecofacts, human and animal bones, *etc.*, in order to provide a fully encompassing view. These will be able to provide valuable information not only on the pottery itself, but also on numerous different issues. In the case of primary deposits or their remnants, such as the above-mentioned burial chamber of Shaft 1 in AS 68c, we may also study the rituals conducted during the burial and the depositional and post-depositional processes occurring with the artefacts in such primary layers.

## 5 TYPOLOGICAL STUDY

### 5.1 ABUSIR CERAMIC CLASSIFICATION

The Abusir ceramic classification system was created by the present author and first presented in her Master thesis (Kytarová 2009: 62–64). Since then, the number of classes, types and forms have been enlarged, based on new ceramic material from the excavations at Abusir South and Centre, but the basic outlines and principles of this classification have not changed (see *e.g.* Arias Kytarová 2014b). Therefore, only a brief summary shall be offered here.

The pottery of Old Kingdom Egypt is quite unique due to the fact there has so far never been a cross-examination of its whole scope. The only work that has dealt with all the then available pottery was Kelley's catalogue of ceramic finds, which included both Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom pieces (Kelley 1976); however, it offered only a reprint of all the until then published ceramic figures without any attempt at analysis and interpretation, as its main aim was to serve as a reference book. Most of the available publications concentrate on ceramic material from a single site (most notably Reisner 1931; Reisner – Smith 1955; Kammerer-Grothaus 1998; Rzeuska 2006; Wodzińska 2007; Alexanian 2009; Bárta 2006; Hawass – Senussi 2008; *etc.*), usually from the standpoint of the chronological development of the site, typological sequence of the available vessels and a clay description or analysis. The closest and most herculean attempt at listing all available Old Kingdom types with some basic delineation of their dating was part of *A Manual of Egyptian Pottery*, created by Wodzińska, its main function (reflected in the name) to serve as a quick field guide during excavations and showcasing only the most general trends in the ceramics (Wodzińska 2009a–d).

At the same time, it must be emphasized that such an all-encompassing study is unrealistic in the present stage of knowledge. Old Kingdom pottery was produced on a very local level and so far, no centrally, state-controlled standardization has been discovered (see *e.g.* Sterling 2004; Warden 2010 and 2014). While some general outlines were able to be confirmed in numerous sites, the morphological development of certain forms is decidedly different in the centre (*i.e.* the Memphite region) and the provinces (most notably evidenced

by the material from Balat). Even two neighbouring sites, such as Saqqara and Abusir, share only part of their typological sequences; in other words, each of the sites yields types and forms not available in the other. It is, therefore, unlikely that it will be possible to create a classification that would encompass all the available Old Kingdom material – first, that would require detailed publications of identical or at least similar standards (especially standardized clay identification, as the Vienna system is no longer fully sufficient) from all sites, a feat yet unaccomplished. Many sites are currently under excavation and have already brought forth a plethora of new ceramic data (most notably Giza, Saqqara, Abydos, Qubbit el-Hawa and Deir el-Bersha, including the site of Abusir), which remains published only partially due to time constraints.

For the above-listed reasons, none of the existing classifications (such as most notably Reisner – Smith 1955; Kaiser 1969, Rzeuska 2006 or Wodzińska 2007) could be used indiscriminately for the ceramic material from Abusir, as it would result in numerous gaps of examples unattested at our site, and moreover, would have to be artificially enlarged to encompass new types not available in those sites (Bárta 2006: types LIa, LIb and LIC, *etc.*). The Abusir ceramic classification was created on the basis of the above-mentioned alpha-numeric systems with finer definitions inspired by the typology of the pottery from Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006). So far, nine main classes of ceramic objects have been identified:

- J – Jars
- B – Bowls
- S – Stands
- F – Bread forms
- P – Platters
- M – Miniature vessels
- L – Lids
- D – Mud stoppers
- T – Tools

The classes can be sorted into three main groups, namely containers (jars, bowls, bread forms, platters and miniature vessels), non-containers (stands), ancillary pottery (lids and mud stoppers) and finally technical pottery (tools). Although not all of these objects can be considered vessels, the present author felt it necessary to include all the available ceramic data.

The approaches to ceramic classification can be very diverse and depend first and foremost on the nature of the available material. In the cases when the assemblages consist mostly of small sherds and lack any epigraphic data concerning their exact function or possible full form of the vessels, the classification systems have to be based primarily on the material analysis and surface treatment or decoration (*e.g.* ware classifications). However, the traditional type seriation is still the most common and is represented *e.g.* by Dragendorff's classification of Roman *terra sigillata* (also known as Arretine/Samian ware; see Dragendorff 1895) or, in Egyptian archaeology, by Petrie's *sequence dating* system, which encompasses a combination of morphological and ware typology (Petrie 1921).

In European and Anglo-Saxon archaeology, the methods of different formal classification systems that are based either on measurement analysis or diverse mathematical descriptive systems are wide-spread. Individual components of vessels, such as the shape of the neck, body, rim and base, can be coded for easier identification and comparison (Orton – Hughes 2013: 192, Fig. 14.1; Procházka 2007).<sup>1</sup>

Measurement-based classifications sort pottery on the grounds of the width to height ratio (*e.g.* Webster 1964). In Egyptian archaeology, a similar system was used by Holthoer to analyse New Kingdom vessel shapes (Holthoer 1977: 41–59). Vessels were divided into two main classes (*i.e.* closed and open vessels), on the grounds of their *Aperture index*, and into a further eight groups (*e.g.* beaker, bowl, dish and plate in open vessels) on the basis of their *Vessel index*. The system was later adapted for stone vessels by Hendrickx (1994: 109–128) and Aston (1994: 179–181). Some principles of this system were also used in the Abusir

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<sup>1</sup> This coding is highly useful with fragmentary assemblages and was employed by the present author for her work with selected material, such as *e.g.* bread form rims (see Fig. 5.16; also Arias Kytnarová 2011b: Figs. 11–14). In the case of bread forms, the shape of the rim is unrelated to specific types and does not bear any chronological significance in itself. Such coding facilitates a statistical analysis and comparison of these secondary markers between different assemblages.

ceramic classification, and the width to height ratio was established to define different types. It forms the basis of the morphometric analysis of diverse vessels (see *e.g.* Charts 5.2, 5.6, *etc.*).

Another principle used in diverse versions includes establishing mathematical representations that reflect the shape of the pot. Most of these are based on different algebraic models and applied algorithms (*e.g.* Martínez-Carrillo 2011). Five main methods are currently in use, most predominantly the tangent-profile technique (TP) and the sampled tangent-profile technique (STP); with the others consisting of B-spline curves, the centroid and cyclical curve technique, and the two-curve system (see also Orton – Hughes 2012: 197). However, as some scholars expressed, “many of these approaches seem to be more geared to the needs of efficient computer storage or the exploitation of software created for other purposes than to the characteristics of real pots” (Orton – Hughes 2012: 198). They certainly generate a vast amount of statistic data; however, the efficiency and, most of all, resulting information is limited. On the other side, it has to be noted that some principles can be applied to calculating curvatures of specific vessels, such as *e.g.* the rims of carinated bowls within the scope of a detailed study of their morphological development (see also Sterling 2004: 75–84).

An alternative approach is that of manufacturing sequences, based on the differences arising from various production techniques. It concentrated on the study of the traces left on the vessel that reflect the individual techniques used during its manufacture, using them as a basis for the typological sequences (*e.g.* Schuring 1984).

Many of the above-mentioned systems were created in order to classify large amounts of small or problematic diagnostic and non-diagnostic sherds in largely fragmented assemblages, which would not provide sufficient information through traditional archaeological approaches (see *e.g.* Makridis – Daras 2012; Gilboa – Karasik – Sharon – Smilansky 2003). In comparison with other areas, Egyptian archaeology presents a unique circumstance, as we not only often uncover complete vessels enabling us to study their full morphology and its development, but we also have additional epigraphic and iconographic evidence proving the primary (and sometimes also secondary) function of particular shapes. Also, technological differences between diverse groups and types allow us to sort even small,

non-diagnostic sherds (a typical example can be seen *e.g.* in the body sherds of beer jars, stands and bread forms, in most cases easily recognisable in the assemblage). As a result, the presented classification is a combination of both formal and functional typology, rather than a purely formal classification based on the outer shapes of the vessels.

The *class* is understood as a category of objects that have the same general morphology and identical function (*e.g.* J – jars or B – bowls). As an example, the class of miniature vessels includes all small-sized vessels rather than divides them into diverse classes on the basis of their shapes, since their function is considered one of the primary markers. Ceramic *groups* are understood as categories of vessels of the same class that share a similar shape (*i.e.* *Aperture index*), quality and function. As a result, sometimes very different examples can be part of the same group. For instance, group J-1 (beer jars) encompasses many diverse beer jars, including ovoid, tall tubular, low tubular and spindle-shaped, as they share common function and general quality. These particular differences are understood as *types* and are designated by a lower-case letter (*e.g.* J-1g: low tubular beer jars). They are commonly differentiated on the grounds of objective data such as *Vessel Index* and their size or surface treatment. Possible differences in the shape of the rim or other criteria are understood as *forms* and are identified by a Roman numeral (*e.g.* J-1gII: low tubular beer jars with a modelled rim; as opposed to J-1gI with a simple rim). To summarize with a specific example, for the beer jars the existence of a neck defines a type, while the exact shape of the neck (straight, contracted, open, grooved; *etc.*) delimitates a form (see also Arias Kytarová 2010d: Table 2).

## 5.2 JARS (CLASS J)

Jars were by far the most frequent ceramic class in the complex of Sheretneby, making up 40.39% of the whole assemblage. From all the contexts in total, we uncovered 11,879 fragments of jars, out of which only 3,006 were diagnostic, which made up a minimum of 1,683 individual vessels (see Table 3.1). Among the jars, a vast majority of them (namely 92%) were beer jars. There were only 138 other jars, either fine or storage. Such an occurrence is

not surprising, as beer jars usually constitute a large percentage of the ceramic assemblages of the Old Kingdom.

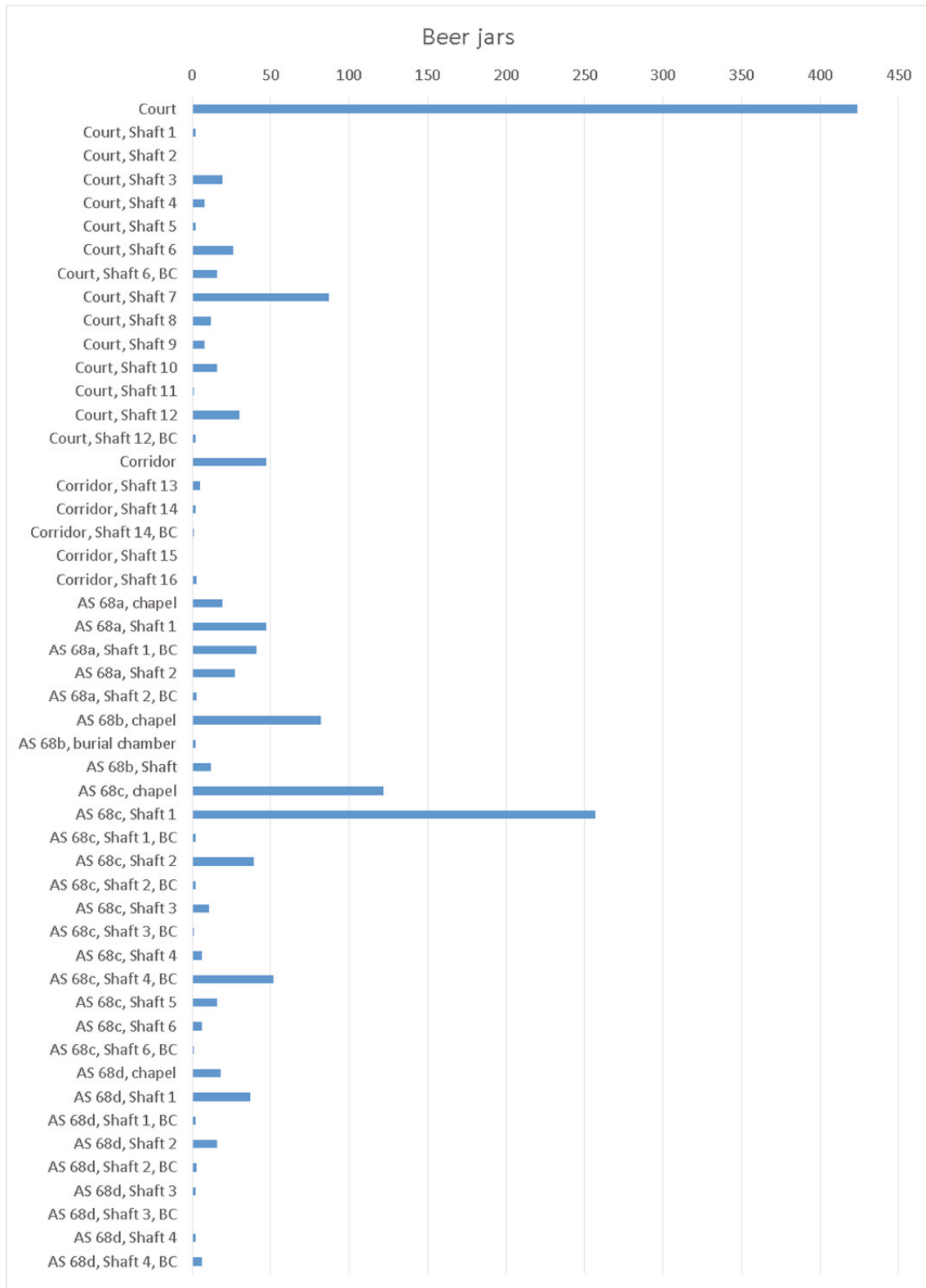
### 5.2.1 BEER JARS (J-1)

Beer jars belong amongst the most common pottery found at the sites of Abusir South and Centre. The complex of Sheretnebtj is no exception from this rule, and group J-1 constituted 37.1% of all the ceramic finds (see Table 1.1). We unearthed 11,376 fragments of beer jars, out of which 2,791 were diagnostic and added up to a minimum of 1,545 individual vessels. However, despite their high numbers, it must be stressed that the vast majority of them were uncovered in fragments (mostly in the form of bases), and only 13 beer jars were found fully intact or were reconstructed to full profile.

| Context             | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | %      |
|---------------------|-------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Court and staircase | J-1   | 5                                      | 356  | 608   | 1                                | 2925                        | 3895                    | 970                               | 653                    | 42,3%  |
| Corridor            | J-1   | 2                                      | 21   | 51    | 4                                | 260                         | 338                     | 81                                | 58                     | 3,8%   |
| Tomb AS 68a         | J-1   | -                                      | 196  | 135   | -                                | 1088                        | 1419                    | 331                               | 137                    | 8,9%   |
| Tomb AS 68b         | J-1   | -                                      | 53   | 91    | -                                | 394                         | 538                     | 143                               | 96                     | 6,2%   |
| Tomb AS 68c         | J-1   | 3                                      | 582  | 481   | -                                | 3080                        | 4146                    | 1066                              | 515                    | 33,3%  |
| Tomb AS 68d         | J-1   | 3                                      | 125  | 72    | -                                | 840                         | 1040                    | 200                               | 86                     | 5,6%   |
| Total               |       | 13                                     | 1333 | 1438  | 5                                | 8587                        | 11376                   | 2791                              | 1545                   | 100,0% |

**Table 5.1 Amounts of beer jars from the complex of Sheretnebtj**

By far most of the beer jars, almost half of their whole assemblage, came from the area of the open court and its structures. Another third was uncovered in tomb AS 68c and its individual shafts (see Table 5.1). All the other tombs followed with much lower frequencies. From the standpoint of individual contexts, the secondary debris of the open court held the most pieces. The second most prominent was Shaft 1 of the presumed husband of Sheretnebtj in AS 68c and the fill of the chapel of the same tomb. A surprising number of beer jars was also uncovered in Shaft 7 of the court (see Chart 5.1).



**Chart 5.1** Amounts of beer jars from various contexts in the complex of Sheretnebty

Beer jars are a very unusual ceramic group due to the fact they can be found in virtually all archaeological contexts, including funerary (necropoleis), permanent settlements



(towns such as *i.e.* Elephantine, Buto, *etc.*) or temporary resident sites (such as quarries). It must be emphasized that, so far, no detailed and fully encompassing analysis of beer jars from the whole period of the Old Kingdom in entire Egypt that includes all the above-mentioned kinds of sites is available. The closest study (Faltings 1998) was concerned with a slightly different topic, as it concentrated more on beer production and comparisons between material culture and iconographic representations. Other studies (Warden 2012) addressed the economic implications of beer jar sizes and was limited to only a small fraction of the actual number of attested vessels, namely a selection of fully preserved beer jars.

During the past decades, the chronological significance of beer jars has increased due to studies of vessels from primary contexts, enabling us to explore not only topics such as the spatial distribution of beer jars, but also their morphological development as a dating criterion (Bárta 1996; Faltings 1998; Rzeuska 2006; Arias Kytnarová 2014a; *etc.*). Tentatively, it is possible to divide the development of the Old Kingdom beer jars into four main stages, namely 1) Third to early Fourth Dynasty, 2) Middle Fourth to early Fifth Dynasty 3) Fifth Dynasty and 4) Sixth Dynasty. Within these stages, several sub stages are possible to observe, but these are not the main focus of this paper.

In the course of the Third Dynasty already, one can perceive two independent typological traditions. In the first, beer jars had very slim bodies with pointed bases and, most characteristically, rims with an outer rib (often also called a collared rim). The other tradition consisted of a generally ovoid body and, most commonly, a contracted modelled rim. Both of these were in use from the Predynastic Period – the collar beer jars were uncovered *i.e.* in the levels of the late Second Dynasty and Third Dynasty settlement on Elephantine (Seidlmayer 1996: Abb. 4, upper right corner; Raue 1999: 181–182, Abb. 36.7, 38.3 and 39.12) and in the Third/early Fourth Dynasty layers of the settlement at Buto (Von der Way 1989: 295, Abb. 9.1; Köhler 1998: 17, Taf. 14.1–14.5). In the Memphite necropolis, they occur in all major tombs of the Third to early Fourth Dynasty, such as *i.e.* in the ceramic deposits in the North temple of the Step pyramid of Netjerikhet (Firth – Quibell 1935: Pls. XXV and CII, nos. 18 and 20), in the early Fourth Dynasty tomb of Netjeraperef in Dahshur (Alexanian 1999: 132–134, Abb. 54, M28–39), the area of the Red pyramid at Dahshur (Faltings 1989: Abb. 5e and Abb. 8e;

Köpp 2009: 68, Abb. 6, Z 501), from Meidum (Petrie – Mackay – Wainwright 1910: Pl. XXVI, no. 63) and the early cemetery and settlement in Giza (Reisner 1942: Fig. 285, 13–10–38; Kromer 1972: Taf. 3.6, 5.4, 15.1–2; Kromer 1978: Taf. 20.3). At our site at Abusir, this beer jar type (named J-1h) was uncovered in several tombs, with most examples coming from the tomb of Ity (AS 10; Kytarová 2009: 72), the tomb of Hetepi (AS 20; Arias Kytarová 2010a: fig. 2.5.1) and the anonymous tomb AS 54 (Arias Kytarová – Jirásková 2015: Fig. 7), all dating to the time span of the late Third to early Fourth Dynasties.

Ovoid beer jars have also been attested for the Early Dynastic Period,<sup>2</sup> but they continue well into half of the Old Kingdom. In the earlier stages of the Old Kingdom, they coexisted together with collar beer jars,<sup>3</sup> but during the course of the Fourth Dynasty, they fully replaced them. The ovoid beer jars of this period occur with a variety of rims, mostly straight, rolled, triangular, angular and grooved, sometimes with a low neck (Wodzińska 2007: 288–289). They were very frequent in the cemeteries but were often neglected in detailed documentation in the older publications, such as *e.g.* from Giza. There, only a few drawings are available for the whole scope of tombs excavated in the first half of the 20th Century.<sup>4</sup> In settlements, such as the recently uncovered one in Heit el-Gurab in the Giza Plateau, they constitute more than 11% of all ceramic finds and are the most commonly found type of jar.<sup>5</sup>

During the course of the Fifth Dynasty, two main types of ovoid beer jars continued to be in use, namely ones with a contracted mouth and ones with a low neck, both with further variations in the exact shape of the rim. It is important to stress that in this period, beer jars

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* from the tombs in Helwan (Köhler 2014: Fig. 79, nos. 4–6, fig. 96, fig. 97, nos. 1–4).

<sup>3</sup> Examples of both ovoid and collar beer jars uncovered in the same structure can be seen in the pottery from the tomb of Prince Netjeraperef in Dahshur (Alexanian 1999: 132–134, Abb. 54, M40–45).

<sup>4</sup> One of the reasons was their rare occurrence in the burial chambers of this period, which were the main aim of the publications (see *e.g.* Reisner – Smith 1955: 70). From the valley temple of Menkaure, where they constitute the second most common ceramic type, only five vessels are depicted (Reisner 1931: 207, Fig. 64) and their chronological development is not discussed. A similar lack can also be observed in the other Giza publications – *e.g.* from the earliest excavations in the Western Field in Giza, Junker does not mention any rough ware of the typical shape or quality among jars (Junker 1929: 117–119). In later volumes, beer jars were designated as “*Spitzkrüge*” and Junker observed that they were not abundant in the record (Junker 1950: 14).

<sup>5</sup> At the same time, they make up 85.55% of all jars from the site, see Wodzińska (2007: 288–289, 301).

start to appear more often as intentional burial equipment in the burial chambers of the officials in the whole Memphite necropolis and not only as part of the fill of the shafts.<sup>6</sup>

Ovoid beer jars with a low neck are preserved in several forms, depending mostly on the exact shape of the neck. It can be straight, closed, open or even grooved (see *e.g.* Arias Kytarová 2011c: fig. 6.16). There are numerous examples available, especially from the area of the Memphite necropolis, such as Giza (*cf.* Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 85, 25–12–134, 30–12–14 and 26–3–22; Hawass – Senussi 2008: 219, nos. 271, 272; 221, nos. 76 and 77, *etc.*).

For the type with a contracted mouth, the rims are most commonly simple, angular or rolled. Out of the many analogies, there were several examples from the Fifth Dynasty tombs at Abusir South, including the tomb of Kaaper (AS 1), Neferinpu (AS 37), Kaiemtjenet (AS 38) and many other structures (*cf.* Bárta 2001: Pl. LXXIIIa; Arias Kytarová 2014a: Fig. 7.11, 9.AS37.2007 and 14.AS37.2007; Arias Kytarová 2011c: Fig. 6.15), as well as the royal complexes at Abusir Centre (*e.g.* Bárta 2006: 315, VIII, jars ACd, ACc and CX). There are also examples from cemetery G7000, Street 7300 and other Fifth Dynasty tombs in Giza (Reisner – Smith 1955, fig. 85, 30-12-14, 27-3-787), and from the cemeteries of workers in Nazlet es-Saman.<sup>7</sup>

An interesting development can be observed during the course of the Fifth Dynasty, namely an increase in the size of beer jars, which is reflected both in their height and volume. Bárta was one of the first scholars to draw attention to this feature (Bárta 1996; Bárta 2006: 307). He compared three assemblages of beer jars from the period of the early Fifth to the early Sixth Dynasty<sup>8</sup> with a resulting notion that both values increased over time with jars becoming more slender, taller and gaining more capacity (from 25/27 to 34/35 cm in height and from 1.5 to 2.6 litres in capacity). A similar observation was made by Rzeuska for the beer jars coming from the cemetery in Saqqara, here increasing from 30 cm in the beginning of the Sixth Dynasty to 42 cm at its end (Rzeuska 2006: 386).

<sup>6</sup> See the burial chamber of priest Neferinpu at Abusir (Arias Kytarová 2014a: Figs. 7.1, 7.8 and 7.9).

<sup>7</sup> *E.g.* vessels in the tomb of Perniankhu (Hawass – Senussi 2008: 219, no. 4, 220, nos. 5, 8, 9, 10 and 13) and one example each from tomb GSE 1916 and G1822 (Hawass – Senussi 2008: 219, no. 274, 221, no. 90)

<sup>8</sup> It was the assemblage from the mastaba of Kaaper (early Fifth Dynasty), assemblage from Raneferef's mortuary complex (middle of the Fifth Dynasty) and mastaba of Fetekty (early Sixth Dynasty).

The Sixth Dynasty brought to light a large expansion of types and shapes. In the cemetery west of the Step Pyramid of Netjerikhet, Rzeuska was able to identify 13 diverse types for this relatively short period of time.<sup>9</sup> Some of these are also possible to confirm elsewhere in the Memphite necropolis. To name just a few, new types included tall tubular beer jars, low tubular jars, spindle-shaped jars and beer jars with articulated shoulders and tapering bodies. Rzeuska was able to create a thorough sequence of these Sixth Dynasty beer jars based on their occurrence in primary, intact and often well dated contexts (Rzeuska 2006: Tables 1–2). Only a few types shall be mentioned in detail here. One of the most characteristic shapes is the low tubular beer jar, attested *e.g.* in a few examples from Giza from the mastaba of Iymeri (G 6020; Weeks 1994: Pl. 128, 25-12-110). It is more usual in Saqqara, represented *e.g.* in the assemblages from the anonymous complex 13 and the tomb of Ikhi at the Saqqara West excavation, both dated to the time of Pepy I to Merenre (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 19, nos. 41 and 44, pl. 20, nos. 47–48). Similar beer jars were also found *i.e.* in the tomb of Nikauisesi (Kanawati *et al.* 2000: 6, Pl. 71, TEN 98:17) and outside mastaba M I in the cemetery around the pyramid of Pepy II in Saqqara South (Jéquier 1929: 11, Fig. 7).

Tall tubular beer jars existed in several variations, namely with simple walls, with articulated shoulders or with a low neck (Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 13–14). At Saqqara West, each of these forms was able to be determined by more precise dating (*e.g.* first or second half of the reign of Pepy II), confirmed by independent data such as epigraphic evidence or the style of tomb and/or decoration. Whether such precise dating can be applied to the whole Memphite necropolis remains to be seen. However, tall tubular jars were also uncovered in other sites, *i.e.* in the contexts dated to the reign of Pepy I in the cemetery of Tebbet el-Gesh (Pantalacci 2005: Fig. 9). At Abusir, the Sixth Dynasty ceramic material remains yet unpublished, but analogical beer jars were uncovered in the tomb of judge Inti (AS 22) and also in the recently excavated mudbrick tombs west of the tomb of Kaaper, especially tombs AS 84 and AS 84b.

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<sup>9</sup> Twelve forms were identified in a previous specialized monograph (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 1–34, forms 1–12) and one more during recent excavations (Rzeuska 2013: Fig. 163, form 234).

At the cemeteries of Abusir, nine beer jar types have been identified so far:

- J-1a: beer jars with an ovoid body and contracted rim,
- J-1b: beer jars with clearly articulated low neck, ovoid tapering body and partly pointed base,
- J-1c: beer jars with tall tapering body and pointed base,
- J-1d: massive beer jars with broad arms, wide tapering body and partly pointed base,
- J-1e: tall beer jars with articulated shoulders, cylindrical body and rounded base,
- J-1f: tall beer jars with tubular body and rounded base,
- J-1g: small beer jars with tubular body and rounded base,
- J-1h: collar beer jars with articulated shoulder, tapering body and pointed base,
- J-1i: beer jars with a flat base.

Not all of these types were equally represented in the ceramic assemblage from the complex of Princess Sheretnebtj. Only the most notable examples shall be discussed in detail, especially from the point of their chronological relevance.

By far the oldest ceramic fragment from the complex belonged to a collar beer jar sherd that was uncovered in the fill of Shaft 2 in the tomb of Duaptah (AS 68a). Although the top of the rim was not preserved (Fig. 3.115, 51-1.AS68a.2013), it indicates a sharply modelled collar and shoulder characteristic of type J-1h (Fig. 5.4). It was undoubtedly not part of any intentional deposition but rather accidental refuse from construction or from some neighbouring tombs. It must be mentioned that around the tomb of physician Neferherptah (AS 65), which is situated south-west of the open court of Sheretnebtj (see Fig. 1.3), we uncovered several J-1h fragments, evidencing that there might be a yet undiscovered Third Dynasty tomb in the vicinity. This would be hardly surprising, given that the large anonymous mastaba AS 54 (see Bárta 2010 and Jirásková 2010) and large wooden boat AS 80 are situated just behind the hill.

The complex provided us with numerous examples of the two most common Fifth Dynasty types, *i.e.* ovoid beer jars with a contracted mouth (J-1a) and ovoid beer jars with a low neck (J-1b). The first one was less common and none were able to be reconstructed to full

profile. The type can be divided on the grounds of its rim into two main forms, with a simple contracted rim (J-1aI) and modelled contracted rim (J-1aII, see Fig. 5.1). It is noteworthy that a large number of fully preserved vessels of both forms came from the area situated above the rock-cut tombs, most prominently the clusters from unknown structure AS 66 (yet unpublished). The J-1a examples in AS 68 included, most notably, a beer jar with mortar filling from the burial chamber of Nefer in Shaft 1 of AS 68d (see also Fig. 3.254).

Type J-1b with an ovoid body and a low neck was by far the most prominent, numbering several hundred examples from diverse tombs. In the Abusir ceramic classification, it can be further subdivided into forms on the basis of the shape of the neck (Fig. 5.1), *i.e.* straight (J-1bI), slightly contracted (J-1bII), open (J-1bIII) or grooved (J-1bIV). All four of these forms were attested in the complex of Sheretnebtj. The straight neck was attested most commonly.

Type J-1b featured prominently in the fill of Shaft 7 of the court, the fill of the chapel in AS 68c and its Shaft 1, and in Shafts 1 and 2 of AS 68d, and included some fully preserved vessels. Notable pieces were three beer jars uncovered in the burial chamber of Neferhathor in Shaft 2 of AS 68d (see Figs. 3.276–3.277) and a fully intact beer jar found behind the first naos with the male statue (Exc. No. 40/AS68/2012; Fig. 3.13). Regarding the chronological relevance of their height development (see *supra*), beer jars from the complex of Sheretnebtj reached between 33 cm (*e.g.* 77-6.AS68d.2014 from the fill of Shaft 1 in AS 68d) and 35 cm (10.AS68.2012 from the courtyard; see also Chart 5.2, squares). In relation to other ovoid beer jars from Abusir South, such as those uncovered in the shafts and burial apartments in the tombs of Kaiemtjemenet and Neferinpu (see Arias Kytnarová 2014a: Chart 7.4), our fully preserved examples are taller than all the vessels from tomb AS 38 and the first stage of Neferinpu's tomb, but are similar to beer jars uncovered in his Shaft 1 (see Arias Kytnarová 2014a: Fig. 7.11). Thus, it can be tentatively presumed that both main shafts in AS 68d were built either prior or in a similar time period to the second stage of Neferinpu's tomb. In this respect it is noteworthy that Neferinpu's burial chamber contained two intact mud sealings with the Horus name of King Djedkare, *ḥr dd-ḥꜥw* (Bárta *et al.* 2014: Fig. 6.37–6.40), providing us with a specific *terminus ad quem*. Based on the typological and metric

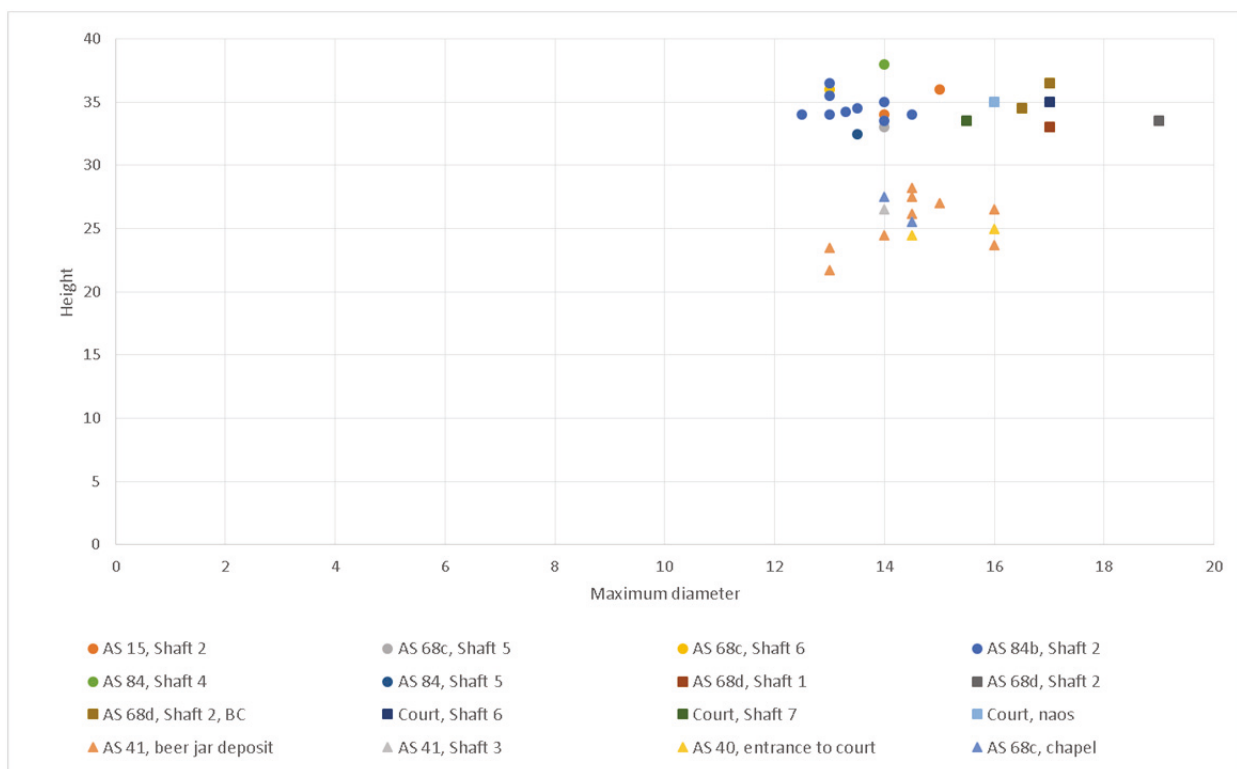
comparison of J-1b beer jars from all three tombs (AS 37, AS 38 and AS 68d), it is possible to state that at least some of the contexts (such as e.g. both main shafts of Nefer and Neferhathor in AS 68d) were built later than the tomb of Kaiemtjenenet and sometime between the first and the second stage of Neferinpu's tomb, possibly during the early reign of King Djedkare.

Sixth Dynasty beer jars were represented extensively in the complex of Sheretnebt, providing us with additional information about the development of the structures and secondary building and funerary activities. Altogether five late beer jar types were uncovered in diverse contexts.

One of the most characteristic types was a tall beer jar with a pointed base (J-1c). Its most prominent feature is a very slender body, often with maximum diameter of only about 12.5–14 cm (in comparison, J-1b jars from AS 68 often reach 16–18 cm in diameter; see Chart 5.2). The rim shapes include a modelled rim and various forms of neck (see Fig. 5.1). One of the most consistent features is the presence of an intentional hole cut into the lower body or base of the beer jar. From the complex of Princess Sheretnebt, we uncovered two fully preserved vessels, with a few other fragmented examples. The beer jar from the fill of Shaft 6 in AS 68c (64-1.AS68c.2013, see Figs. 3.206–3.207) had a modelled rim and a characteristic tall slender body, with a height of 36 cm. It exhibited the already mentioned intentionally-made hole in its lower body and at the same time contained broken remains of the original filling of Nile mud. The second vessel was found broken to pieces in Shaft 5 of tomb AS 68c, but was reconstructed to full profile (63-3.AS68c.2013, see Fig. 3.201). It was slightly shorter, with a height of 33 cm, and was slightly deformed from being compressed during drying or firing.

Thanks to the well stratified and epigraphically supported finds from the cemetery at Saqqara West, it is possible to delimitate the chronological occurrence of these particular jars to the reign of Pepy II, with a predominance in the first half of his reign (see Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 29–30; Table 1, Form 10), thus providing us with a dating for several contexts and shafts in the complex of Sheretnebt. Besides the two named shafts in AS 68c, sharply pointed bases of this type were also uncovered in the fill of the burial chamber of Shaft 6 in AS 68c and in the chapel of the same tomb. Other contexts include the upper fill in Shaft 3 of the courtyard and the fill of the chapel in the tomb of Shepesuptah (AS 68b).

Vessels of this type were found in several contexts in the Abusir South cemetery. The largest number of J-1c beer jars came from tomb AS 84 and its annex AS 84b, excavated during the 2015 season (yet unpublished). In this tomb, some shafts held one beer jar each (Shafts 4 and 5) but Shaft 2 contained well over 50 examples of this type. Around half of them (over 25 documented examples) were found with a hole in their lower bodies or bases. Other documented cases include the unpublished ceramic material from the cemetery at the Lake of Abusir. There, such tall and slender beer jars were found *e.g.* in Shaft 2 of tomb AS 15, in the secondary Shaft 2 in tomb AS 11 and at its western wall, close to the secondary shafts. Two of these jars also bore intentional holes in their bases (see Fig. 3.207). The morphometric comparison of J-1c beer jars to other types shows that while they have similar heights to *e.g.* beer jars of type J-1b (namely 33–36 cm), they always have much slender bodies with maximum diameters of most commonly only 13–14 cm (see Chart 5.2).



**Chart 5.2 Morphometric comparison of ovoid beer jars with a low neck (J-1b: squares), tall slender beer jars (J-1c: circles) and low tubular beer jars (J-1g: triangles)**



The upper fill of Shaft 7 in the courtyard contained two rim and two large body fragments of another noteworthy beer jar type, namely one with a very tall tubular body, articulated shoulders and rounded base (J-1e; see Figs. 3.45–3.46). Although none of these examples were able to be reconstructed to full profile, the resulting height must have exceeded 35 cm, judging by the largest reconstructed piece. Two intact beer jars of this type were recently uncovered in a small ceramic deposit in the eastern façade of tomb AS 77 (see Fig. 5.4, 3-1.AS77.2015, also Dulíková – Jirásková – Arias Kytarová 2016: Obr. 11). They had heights of 35.5 and 36.5 cm and identical maximum diameters of 15 cm. The largest number of beer jars with an articulated shoulder was uncovered at the Sixth Dynasty cemetery of Saqqara West, including several main types with either spindle-shaped bodies (Forms 1 and 2) or cylindrical bodies (Forms 4 and 11; see Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 9–33). The beer jar from Shaft 7 is closest to the very tall beer jars with cylindrical bodies and simple rims (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 32), which are dated to the terminal Sixth Dynasty.

A different type of tall beer jar was J-1f with a tubular body and rounded base. Fragments of at least three different examples were found in Shaft 4 of the courtyard (see Fig. 5.3). Although none were able to be reconstructed to full size, the shape can be presumed from the large rim and body fragments, exhibiting a straight rim and wide rounded base. The rims were both modelled with an outer groove (form J-1fII) and have outer diameters of 13 and 13.5 cm. The three bodies were all extremely large, with preserved heights of 27 and 29 cm. The estimated full height could have been around 38 cm. All fragments were treated with a red slip on their outer surfaces. The closest analogies were uncovered in Saqqara West, dated to the reign of Pepy I to Merenre (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 13, esp. no. 20).

Another notable type belongs to low tubular beer jars with a rounded base (J-1g; see Fig. 5.3). This particular type is characteristic not only for its shape but also surface treatment, being always covered with a thin red-violet slip on the outer walls. We can differentiate between two main forms, namely with a simple straight rim (J-1gI) and modelled rim (J-1gII). There were only two fragments of low beer jar with a simple rim, attested in the fill of tomb AS 68c and the north-east corner of the open court, at the level of the staircase. The form with a modelled rim is much more common and was uncovered *e.g.* in the fill of the chapel of

Shepesuptah (AS 68b), the chapel of tomb AS 68c and in Shaft 12 of the courtyard. It is noteworthy that neighbouring structures exhibited numerous examples of this type. The anonymous tomb AS 41, situated just north-west of the open court, contained nine fully preserved low tubular beer jars in an intentional deposit. Further examples were found in the chapel and Shaft 3 of the same tomb. More of J-1g beer jars came from the floor layer of the panelled court AS 40 and its entrance, situated at the top of the staircase leading into the courtyard of Princess Sheretnebtj. A morphometric comparison with other beer jars types shows that they are consistently shorter, with a height of only 23–28 cm (see Chart 5.2).

Such low tubular beer jars are most characteristic for the early to middle Sixth Dynasty, as can be seen in parallels, but they also do occur also in slightly earlier contexts. There are a few examples from Giza from the late Fifth Dynasty mastaba of Iymeri (G 6020; see Weeks 1994: Pl. 128, 25-12-110).<sup>10</sup> The type is much more common at Saqqara, represented *e.g.* in the assemblages from the anonymous complex 13 and the tomb of Ikhi in the Saqqara West excavation (for the closest analogies see Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 19, Nos. 41 and 44 and Pl. 20, Nos. 47–48), both dated to the time of Pepy I to Merenre. Similar beer jars were also found *i.e.* in the tomb of Nikauisesi (Kanawati – Abder-Raziq *et al.* 2000: 6, Pl. 71, TEN 98:17) and outside mastaba M I in the cemetery around the pyramid of Pepy II in Saqqara South (see Jéquier 1929: 11, Fig. 7).

The large presence of Sixth Dynasty beer jars enables us to study the secondary building and burial activity in the complex. Thanks to the well-dated examples of analogical vessels from the cemeteries at Saqqara and Saqqara West, it is possible to delimit individual shafts. In most cases, each shaft held only one particular type of beer jar, and therefore it is possible to state their relative sequences (for details, see *Chapter 6.2.2*).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The beer jar was found in the plundered burial chamber of the main owner (Weeks 1994: 72) and might not actually belong among the original tomb goods.

<sup>11</sup> On the discussion of post-depositional processes occurring in shafts, see also *Chapter 4.6.3*

### 6.3 BOWLS (CLASS B)

Bowls were the third most-common ceramic class after jars and miniature vessels, making up 13.44% of the assemblage. In the complex of Sheretnebty, we uncovered 2,544 fragments of bowls, out of which 890 were diagnostic and added up to a minimum of 560 individual vessels (see Table 3.1). Only 32 pieces were preserved in full profile; however, a large number of other bowls were preserved to high percentages of their profiles and their diameters.

| Context             | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | %      |
|---------------------|-------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Court and staircase | B     | 17                                     | 319  | 27    | 11                               | 671                         | 1045                    | 374                               | 241                    | 43,0%  |
| Corridor            | B     | -                                      | 42   | 2     | 3                                | 68                          | 115                     | 47                                | 40                     | 7,1%   |
| Tomb AS 68a         | B     | 1                                      | 67   | 3     | 5                                | 145                         | 221                     | 76                                | 73                     | 13,0%  |
| Tomb AS 68b         | B     | 1                                      | 15   | 3     | -                                | 18                          | 37                      | 19                                | 15                     | 2,7%   |
| Tomb AS 68c         | B     | 11                                     | 221  | 4     | 20                               | 498                         | 754                     | 253                               | 142                    | 25,4%  |
| Tomb AS 68d         | B     | 2                                      | 112  | 2     | 3                                | 253                         | 372                     | 121                               | 49                     | 8,8%   |
| Total               |       | 32                                     | 776  | 41    | 42                               | 1653                        | 2544                    | 890                               | 560                    | 100,0% |

**Table 5.2 Amounts of fragments of bowls from complex AS 68**

By far the largest number of bowls was found in diverse contexts of the pillared courtyard, almost half of the assemblage (see Table 5.2). Another third came from the tomb of Sheretnebty (AS 68c). All the other tombs contained much fewer fragments, see *e.g.* only 15 bowls from the whole tomb of Shepesuptah (AS 68b). Surprising is also the small count of bowls from the tomb of Nefer (AS 68d), namely 49 pieces.

As far as individual contexts are concerned, by far the largest number of bowls was uncovered in different strata of the secondary debris of the open court. Considerable amounts also came from the chapel of tomb AS 68c and its Shaft 1, as well as both shafts in tomb AS 68a and Shaft 7 in the court (see Chart 5.3). Several bowls came from the primary floor layers of the burial chambers, where they served as part of the tomb goods, such as the burial chamber of Nefermin in Shaft 2 of AS 68a, the burial chamber of Nefer in AS 68d and, most notably, the disturbed burial chamber of the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebty (Shaft 1 in AS 68c), from which a number of interesting bowls were reconstructed to almost full shape.

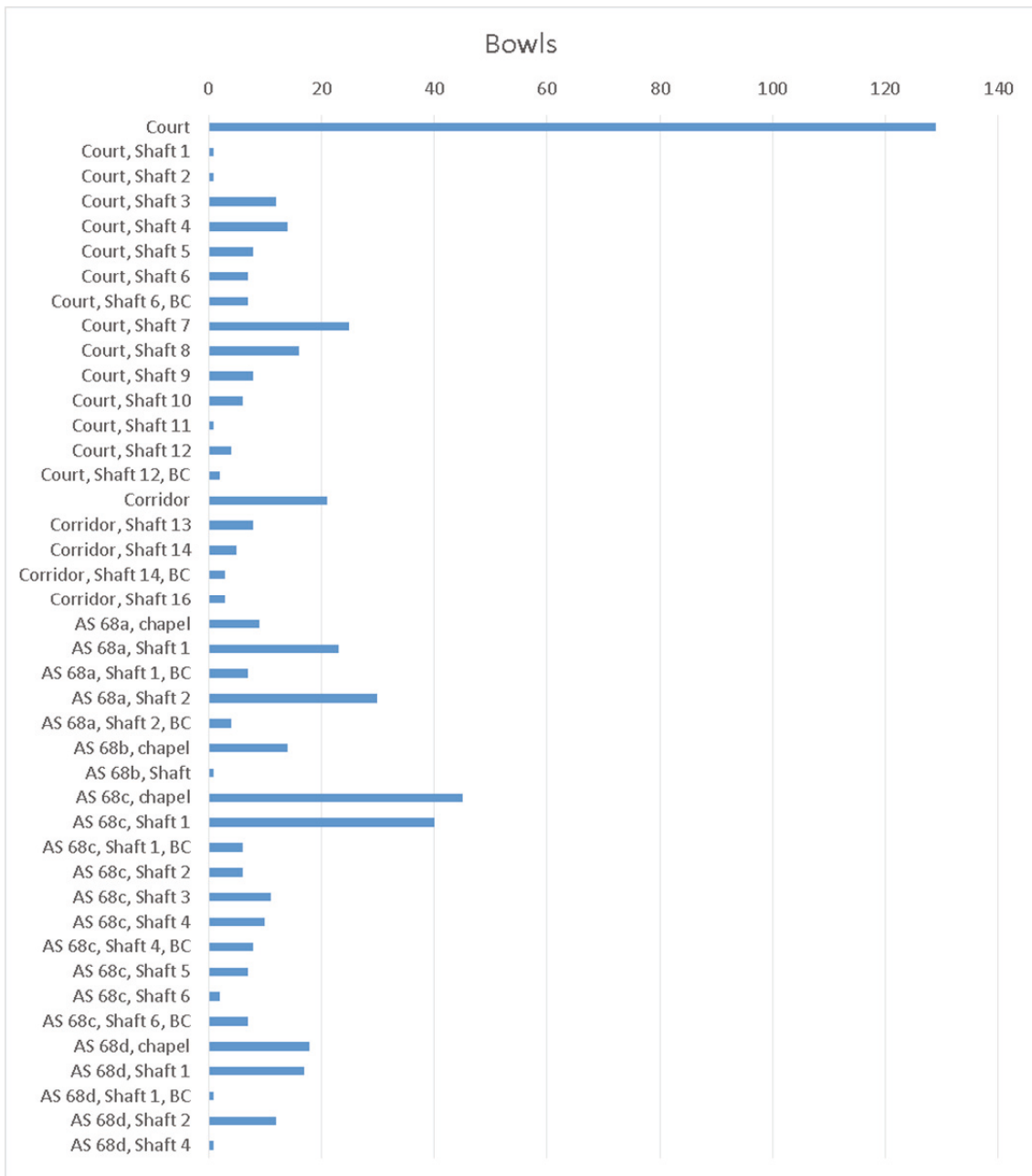


Chart 5.3 Frequency of bowls in diverse contexts

The class of bowls can be divided into several main groups, which in turn can be subdivided into types.<sup>12</sup> The basic groups are:

- B-1: bowls with a carinated rim,

<sup>12</sup> For a description and comparison of other classification systems used in diverse Old Kingdom sites, see Kytarová 2009: 82.

- B-2: bent-sided bowls,
- B-3: bowls with a spout,
- B-4: bowls with contracted walls,
- B-5: very deep fine bowls,
- B-6: shallow bowls with modelled rims,
- B-7: shallow bowls with a triangular rim,
- B-8: bowls with open walls and a flat base,
- B-9: very wide, low plates with a rounded base,
- B-10: bowls with an inner ledge,
- B-11: beakers,
- B-12: bowls with flaring walls,
- B-13: massive vats with modelled rims,
- B-14: semi-globular bowls,
- B-15: large and rougher bowls with convex walls.

Almost all these groups were uncovered in the complex of Sheretneby, with the largest occurrences belonging to carinated bowls, bent-sided bowls and deep bowls with modelled rims (for details, see following sections).

### 5.3.1 BOWLS WITH A CARINATED RIM (B-1)

In general, carinated bowls (also called recurved bowls, brim bowls or, least correct, Meidum bowls) are generally considered one of the most significant bowl groups and one that inspired the most individual studies devoted to their development and typological sequence (see *infra*).

The present author does not consider carinated bowls to be a type, rather a group of diverse types (see *infra*). In the Abusir ceramic classification, they are divided into four main types, depending on the shape of the shoulder and rim. The most significant is the shape of the shoulder, either angular (B-1a) or rounded (B-1b). Deeper bowls with a carinated rim belong to type B-1c and carinated bowls with a modelled rim or rolled rim are designated as B-1d.

All of these types are further subdivided into forms depending on the relationship between the rim and shoulder, such as a larger rim diameter (e.g. B-1aI), equal rim and shoulder diameter (B-1aII) and larger shoulder diameter (B-1aIII).<sup>13</sup> Some of the resulting forms have very specific chronological outlines, while others were recurring forms and could have been present for longer time periods.

In the most general terms, angular shoulders (B-1a) are considered an older trait (see e.g. Wodzińska 2007: 291) and can already be found in the Early Dynastic Period (cf. Raue 1999: Abb. 37, no. 1). Early carinated bowls have a very deep body, and it has been suggested that the type actually developed from a type of carinated jar (Raue 1999: 179, Abb. 36, no. 1). Early Old Kingdom carinated bowls have a particularly deep, almost hemispherical form with the maximum diameter positioned at the shoulder (B-1aIII; see also Raue 1999: 182-183, Abb. 38, no.), which is most common in the course of the Third and very early Fourth Dynasty. At Abusir, such bowls were uncovered e.g. in the tomb of Ity (Bárta 2001: Pl. VIIIc) as well as in the yet unpublished anonymous tomb AS 54 and the large wooden boat (AS 80) uncovered south of it. Another early Old Kingdom type appearing only slightly later is the carinated bowls with a rolled rim (B-1d, also called cooking bowls) that were also uncovered in large numbers in the area of AS 54 and AS 80.

During the early Fourth Dynasty, carinated bowls with angular shoulders exhibit a tall rim and equal rim and shoulder diameters (B-1aII). Over the course of the Fifth Dynasty, rounded shoulders (B-1b) start to dominate the assemblages, with a development from deeper to much shallower forms (see also *infra*). In the Sixth Dynasty, angular shoulders become popular again but are usually present with the maximum diameter at the rim (B-1aI). At Abusir, a development could be observed also in the shape of the rim, going from a straight rim in the Fifth Dynasty to open and flaring in the course of the Sixth Dynasty. In summary, only a combination of several markers, rather than a single trait, provides us with a possible chronological sequence.

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<sup>13</sup> This division was influenced by Op de Beeck (2004).

The development of carinated bowls has been studied by numerous scholars. Brunton was one of the first to note the chronological evolution from almost hemispherical form in the Third Dynasty (Brunton (1927: Pl. XIII, 37G and 37M) to flatter shapes and the fact that the height of the rims decreased over time (Brunton 1928: 5, Pl. LXXXII, 13L). Kaiser was able to confirm this theory during his study of the pottery from the sun temple of Weserkaf at Abu Ghurab. He created a chronological sequence that attributed the deep bowls with high recurved rims to the end of the Fourth and beginning to middle of the Fifth Dynasty and the flatter bowls with low recurved rims to the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties (Kaiser 1969: 78–82). Later, Ballet created an index showing the approximate ages of the carinated bowls based on the relation between their rim heights and widths. The sequence was established on the well-stratified and dated ceramic assemblage from the cemeteries at Dakhla (Ballet 1987). A slightly different approach to the material was provided by Sterling, who studied carinated bowls from the angle of their standardized production in Egypt of the Old Kingdom (Sterling 2004).

On the other hand, other scholars began to consider the difficulties concerning the use of carinated bowls as chronological indicators. As an example, Op de Beeck pointed out the lack of a precise definition of a Meidum bowl, no uniformity of the terminology and typology, the use and study of only limited areas of pottery assemblages, questionable dates in the different publications and individual drawing approaches, all of which make it difficult to compare material from different publications. He widened the scope of measurement analysis, using not only the relationship of rim height to rim width, but also the *Vessel Index*, the relationship between the height of the neck and the total height of bowl, the shape of the shoulder (*i.e.* rounded or angular) and the relationship of the diameter of the rim and the shoulder (Op de Beeck 2004: 251–253).

A corresponding opinion was also expressed by Rzeuska during her detailed analysis of the ceramic material from the late Sixth Dynasty cemetery at Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: 408–409). She noticed that most of the noted elements proved to be unreliable chronological markers and very large and deep bowls (considered older types) occur in closed contexts together with smaller and shallower forms (*e.g.* later types). This was explained by their value and their being cherished and used for long periods. She also pointed out the possible time

lapse, and thus the chronological relationship between the pottery production in the centre (Memphite necropolis) and the periphery (*e.g.* Ayn Asil in the oasis of Dakhla) was not taken into account in his analysis. More recent studies show that in some cases, a lap of almost one generation could have elapsed between takeovers of more “modern” types in the provinces (see Rzeuska 2008), therefore using analogies from well-dated provincial sites can prove very unreliable.

In summary, while the carinated bowls can be used to delimit a dating, it has to be taken into account that as fine tableware, they might have been kept for a longer time period or even a few generations (*i.e.* our porcelain sets) before being deposited in a particular context. Even in closed primary contexts, carinated bowls inform us about the time they were manufactured and not the period of their deposition.

Furthermore, archaeologists of the past used to attribute all the pottery coming from a tomb to the epigraphically evidenced period of that tomb. As an example, Petrie dated all the pottery from the early Fourth Dynasty tombs at Meidum as “Fourth Dynasty pottery” (Petrie 1892: Pls. XXX–XXXI), even though it showcases some Sixth Dynasty vessels and even Middle Kingdom shapes (Rzeuska 2011) that were part of the secondary debris. Current archaeologists should use primary sources to re-evaluate contexts that can be interpreted differently in the present day due to much more comparative published data, new critical methods of archaeological exploration and our current knowledge of depositional and post-depositional processes at particular sites.

As far as the carinated bowls from the complex of Sheretnetby are concerned, they made up a relatively large part of the bowl assemblage, with almost a hundred examples. The largest number of them came from the secondary debris of the open court, but numerous pieces were also uncovered in the chapel of tomb AS 68c and its Shaft 1 (see Chart 5.4). They were attested in altogether six burial chambers, always broken to pieces (very likely due to rituals), but in several instances were reconstructed to full shape, most notably the bowls from the chambers of Shaft 6 in the court, Shaft 1 in AS 68c and Shaft 1 in AS 68d. In other cases (*e.g.* bowls from Shaft 2 in AS 68c) the nature and preservation of the vessels points to the fact



that they were originally also part of the tomb equipment and were only misplaced due to robbing or other post-depositional processes.

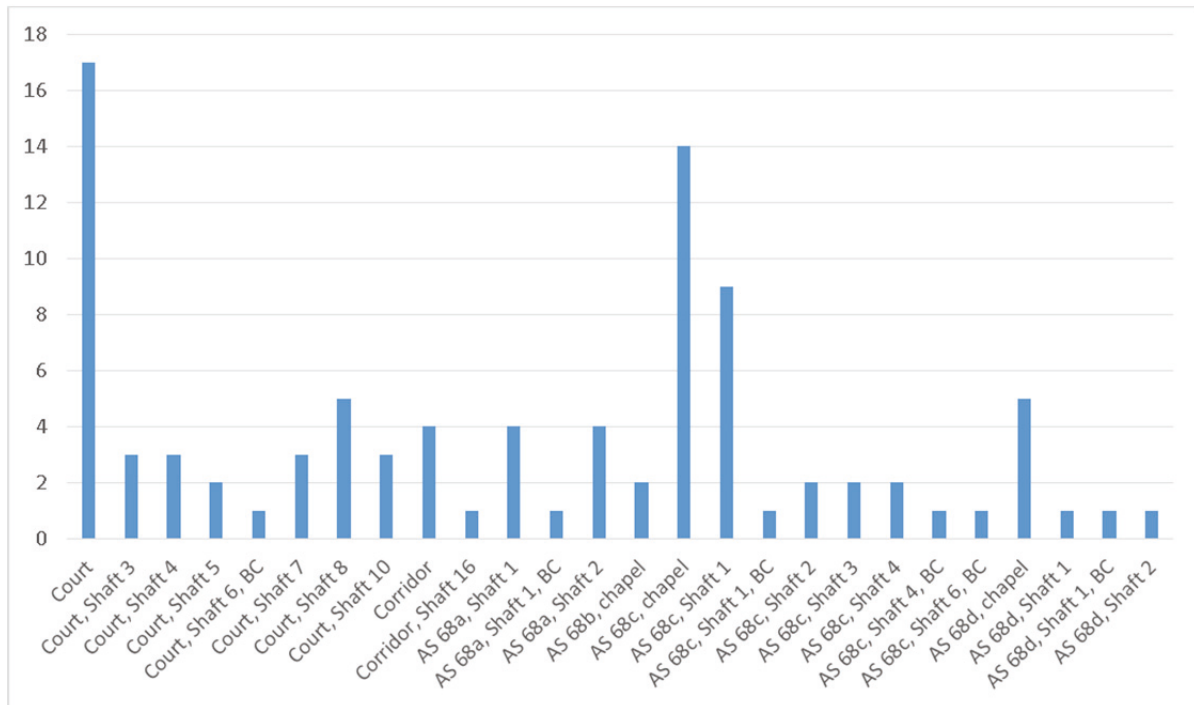


Chart 5.4 Frequencies of carinated bowls in complex AS 68

On the subject of typological attribution, not all types were equally represented, as could be expected. There were only a few examples of the earlier type of carinated bowls with the greatest diameter at the shoulder and rolled rim (B-1d). These came from the debris of the court and Shaft 1 in AS 68a. This type differs from other carinated bowls in its surface treatment, often having white-washed outer walls. In settlement contexts, B-1d bowls are usually interpreted as cooking bowls (see Wodzińska 2006: Pl. 1 and 2007: 291–292). This particular type remained popular until the late Fifth Dynasty, as is attested *e.g.* in the assemblage from the tomb of Werkaure (Arias Kytarová 2014b: Fig. 4.28).

In general, carinated bowls with angular shoulders (B-1a) were attested in only several examples and only in two forms, namely one with equal rim and shoulder diameters (B-1aII; see Fig. 5.5), which is considered a usual late Fourth and Fifth Dynasty vessel; and a with slightly flaring rim (B-1aI; see Fig. 5.5), which is typical for the Sixth Dynasty. The examples of B-1aII that often exhibit a tall rim include the complete bowl from the burial chamber of

Nefer (Shaft 1 in AS 68d), a few pieces from the debris of the chapel in AS 68c and the fill of Shaft 1 of the same tomb.

Carinated bowls with a rounded shoulder (B-1b) were the most common in the complex of Sheretnebty; and among them, the form with the greatest diameter at the shoulder (B-1bIII) was by far the most dominant. It is considered a characteristic example of a late Fifth Dynasty vessel; and at Abusir, it is commonly present in numerous examples in tombs of that period, such as the tomb of Prince Werkaure (see *e.g.* Arias Kytarová 2014b: Fig. 4.23–4.26). In our complex, the attested contexts include the secondary fill of the open courtyard, Shaft 7 and 10 in the courtyard, the fill of the chapel in AS 68c, Shafts 1 and 2 in AS 68c and in the chapel of tomb AS 68d.

Sixth Dynasty carinated bowls include the already mentioned type with angular shoulders and flaring rim (B-1aI), as well as bowls that have rounded shoulders and flaring rim with a visible intentional groove under the rim (B-1bIV; see Fig. 5.5). Analogies can be found *e.g.* in the fine bowls from the tomb of Inti (Fig. 4.44 left; also Kytarová 2009: Fig. 55) and anonymous tomb AS 32 at Abusir South (Tomášek 2003: Tab. 3, no. 25). Such bowls were attested *e.g.* in the upper layers of Shaft 3 of the court, in Shaft 8 of the court and the fill of the chapel in AS 68c. Most examples came from the upper strata of the open pillared court.

In conclusion, the available carinated bowls could be attributed to the whole span of existence and use of the complex. Only in some contexts could they be regarded as part of the primary deposition. Due to the fact that a large majority of them came from secondary refuse either in the court and corridor or came from the mixed fill of the shafts, they cannot be used as a reliable dating criterion. However, together with other ceramic evidence, preferably that based on more quickly outdated rough vessels, they can provide us with additional information concerning the dating.

### 5.3.2 BENT-SIDED BOWLS (B-2)

Bent-sided bowls are the second-most recognisable ceramic group, being identified by their fine material and distinct shape. They encompass all bowls with a characteristic bent angle between the body and the rim. Although they are typical for the late Old Kingdom, they can also be found in limited amounts in the later Fourth Dynasty.

In the Abusir ceramic classification, they are divided into three main types, namely ones with a simple rim (B-2a), a modelled rim (B-2b) or a lip rim (B-2c). Each type is further subdivided into forms based on the shape of the body and the position of the shoulder (see also Kytnarová 2009: 87–89, Figs. 58–60; Arias Kytnarová 2014b: 142–143).

Bent-sided bowls with a simple rim (B-1a) were the more common type in the complex of Sheretnetby and were attested in two main forms, *i.e.* deep and large bowls (B-2aI) and small and shallow bowls (B-2aII). As the largest single context containing these bowls, we can name the primary floor layer in the burial chamber of the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebtu in Shaft 1 of AS 68c. There, four examples were uncovered in pieces and were able to be reconstructed to full shape (see Figs. 3.170–3.171). The fully preserved example of a B-2aI bowl is very large, with a maximum diameter of 36 cm and height of 14 cm. All the other examples from the complex exhibit the same features, namely fine, very well-fired, hard material (usually Nile silt B1) and a thick layer of polished red slip.

In contrast, all the shallow bowls of form B-2aII have rim diameters of 21.5–24 cm and heights of only 4.7–6 cm. They are often made of lower quality clay, either Nile silt B1 or B2 and can contain visible organic inclusions. Their most unusual feature is a body that is sometimes red-slipped only inside and on the upper part of the outer rim, while the lower outer body is scraped with a tool. Their largest concentration was in the above-mentioned burial chamber of Shaft 1 in AS 68c, as well as in the shafts of Duaptah and Nefermin (Shafts 1 and 2 in AS 68a).

The bent-sided bowls with a modelled rim (B-2b) were uncovered in less than 20 examples in our complex. They are characterised by a deeper body and an angular rim, often with either single or multiple outer grooves (see Fig. 5.6). The preserved examples are quite large, with maximum diameters most commonly between 25–27 cm and heights of 11.5–13

cm, when preserved in full profile. They are always made of high quality material, most usually Nile silt B1, and covered with a red slip that is sometimes also polished. B-2b bowls can be part of the tomb goods of the deceased, as is attested *e.g.* in the burial chamber of Shaft 1 in the anonymous tomb AS 47 (Arias Kytarová 2011a: Fig. 17, 15-1/AS47/07) or the burial chambers of the tomb of Nefershepes (see Fig. 4.6).

The complex of Sheretnebtj also provided us with a few bent-sided bowls with a lip rim (B-2c; Fig. 5.6). Two pieces were preserved as only rim fragments, but three others were reconstructed to almost full profile. There were two examples from Shaft 3 in the open court (see Fig. 3.22) and another one from the shaft of Neferhathor (Shaft 1 in AS 68d, see Fig. 3.271). They all had rather shallow, wide bodies with aperture diameters of 31–33.5 cm and heights of around 9–9.5 cm. All the examples were made of fine Nile silt and covered thoroughly with a polished red slip.

In some instances, bent-sided bowls could be used secondarily as containers of mortar or plaster, although this commonly occurs with beer jars. Such a use is attested in one bowl from the area of the open court, in front of the bound male statue in the first naos (19-12.AS68.2012), from the lower part of the shaft of Nefer in AS 68d (79-11.AS68d.2014, Shaft 1) and Shaft 2 of his wife Neferhathor (44-5.AS68d.2012). Notably, one of the shallow bent-sided bowls from the burial chamber of the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebtj (Shaft 1 in AS 68c, 58-11.AS68c.2013) contained traces of blue pigment (see Figs. 3.171–3.172; also *Chapter 4.5.2*).

The function of bent-sided bowls is very similar to carinated bowls. When present in the burial chambers, it can be presumed that they were part of the tableware designated for the afterlife of the deceased and represented food, in combination with various jars symbolizing the drink. Their presence in cultic spaces, such as the chapels, niches or the open court, should be connected with their use in regular offering rituals conducted in the superstructures of the tombs. In such contexts, they are commonly uncovered in clusters with various types of stands and platters that all served in the cultic activities.

### 5.3.3 OTHER BOWLS (B-3 TO B-12)

All the other bowl groups are attested but are represented in much fewer numbers. Only the most notable examples shall be mentioned here.

Bowls with a spout (B-3) are usually very rare and our complex is no exception. There were only two largely incomplete pieces. A short tubular spout was uncovered in the fill of Shaft 2 in the open court (see Fig. 3.19), and the upper body of a bowl with a rim and (very likely) a short spout also came from the fill of the chapel in AS 68c. In other sites, the shapes of the spout and the rim can vary and include either a modelled rolled rim or a recurved rim that is similar to the carinated bowls (*cf.* Reisner – Smith 1955: Figs. 117–119). The excavations at Giza also brought to light a larger amount of long-tubed spouts (*e.g.* Junker 1929: 115-117, Abb. 12, 1–6). At Abusir, the type is not common, and one of the best preserved examples came from the so-called false shaft in the tomb of Prince Werkaure (Arias Kytarová 2014b: Figs. 4.40–4.41).

Bowls with a straight to contracted rim (B-4) are slightly more common and in the complex of Sheretnebty, we uncovered at least 14 examples. They were usually made of Nile silt B1, covered in red slip and polished. They can be subdivided into two main types, based on the shape of rim, either simple (B-4a) or modelled (B-4b, see Fig. 5.7). The bowls with a simple rim were uncovered only in two contexts. One complete bowl and a rim sherd of another one were found in the burial chamber of Nefermin in Shaft 2 of tomb AS 68a (see Fig. 3.117–3.118). The complete vessel had a maximum diameter of 25 cm and height of 12.2 cm. It was scraped on its outer lower body, similar to some bent-sided bowls. Another rim and body fragment came from the area of the staircase leading into the complex of AS 68.

The contracted bowls with a modelled rim (B-4b) can have either a single or multiple grooves on the outside and were far more common. The notable examples include three pieces from Shaft 5 in the courtyard, two from the fill of the chapel in AS 68b and one piece each in Shaft 4 and the burial chamber of Shaft 6 in the court. Their chronological span seems to cover the Fifth (*e.g.* Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 108, CXXVc) and Sixth Dynasty (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 92), with the bowls with a simple rim occurring earlier, *e.g.* in the tomb of Kaaper (Kytarová 2009: Fig. 63). The type with a grooved rim is frequent especially in late Sixth

Dynasty contexts at Abusir South, such as the tomb of Inti and anonymous tomb AS 32 (see *e.g.* Tomášek 2003: Tab. 3, no. 8; Kytarová 2009: Fig. 64).

Deep bowls with a convex body and modelled rim (B-5) belong among the most frequent in the complex of Sheretnebtj, with over 20 examples. They are characteristic in having very dense, well-worked material (Nile silt A or B1) with resulting hard-fired sherds. B-5 bowls are always thoroughly covered with a red slip and polished. The fully preserved examples are very large, with maximum diameters of 30–43 cm and heights of 15.5–17 cm. These bowls are almost exclusive for the Sixth Dynasty, with numerous examples from the tombs of Inti and anonymous tomb AS 32, where they were uncovered in so-called false shafts (see Fig. 4.45; *cf.* Tomášek 2003: Tab. 4, no. 1; Kytarová 2009: Figs. 65–66). In complex AS 68, they were uncovered *e.g.* in Shafts 8 and 9 in the courtyard and in the burial chamber of Shaft 4 in tomb AS 68c. The largest assemblage came from Shaft 13 in the corridor that provided us with four different B-5 bowls, including one in almost full profile (75-7.AS68.2013, see Fig. 5.7). Other pieces were attested in the debris of the court and the corridor, as well as the fill of the chapel in tomb AS 68d. Some of the bowls have blackened surfaces evidencing exposure to fire. Incidentally, it is noteworthy that the bowls from the embalming deposits in the tomb of Inti and in AS 32 had remains of resin inside.

Group B-6 constitutes small and shallow bowls with modelled, often angular rims (see Fig. 5.7). They were the third-most common bowl group, with almost 40 individual examples. However, the majority are represented by only small or medium-sized rim sherds. There were only a few B-6 bowls preserved to almost full profile. They show us open vessels with maximum diameters of 25–28 cm and estimated heights of ca. 6–7 cm. Their outer lower walls are sometimes scraped, similar to low bent-sided bowls. These came from very various contexts, most notably Shafts 4 and 8 in the court, the burial chamber of Shaft 6 in the court and Shaft 13 in the corridor. Given that these vessels are again frequent in the late Sixth Dynasty tombs of Inti and AS 32 (*e.g.* Tomášek 2003: Tab. 3, no. 13; Kytarová 2009: Fig. 67), it is unsurprising that this group is considered a predominantly Sixth Dynasty ware. This is confirmed by numerous examples of various forms from the cemetery of Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 83–89).

Very low and wide plates with a rounded base (B-9) were present as only a few pieces in complex AS 68. They include a variety of types, such as ones with carinated rims, bent-sided walls or modelled rims. Their main characteristic is their size (usually 30–40 cm) and very shallow body with a height of only about 4–5 cm. Even in smaller examples, they should have a width to height ratio of 4:1 up to 7:1. They seem to appear in the second half of the Fifth Dynasty but are particularly popular during the Sixth Dynasty until the end of the Old Kingdom. In our cemetery, this chronological development is confirmed by their occurrence in the late Sixth Dynasty tombs of Senedjemib, Qar Junior and Inti (see Bárta 2009: Fig. 6.3.123 and Arias Kytarová, *in preparation*). The pieces from the complex of Sheretnebtu fall into two types, namely ones with a recurved rim and ones with a modelled rim with inner groove.

Bowls with an inner ledge (B-10) are attested predominantly in the early Old Kingdom (*cf.* Garstang 1903: 18, Pl. XXX, 3–4; Quibell 1913: Pl. XXVII, 21; Kromer 1991: Taf. 24, no. 2; Alexanian 1999: 144–47, Abb. 59, M99–M110; *etc.*), and we uncovered several examples in late Third to early Fourth Dynasty tombs such the tomb of Hetepi (Arias Kytarová 2010a: Fig. 2.5.5), the anonymous tomb AS 54 and its large wooden boat (AS 80; yet unpublished). However, they remain popular and also do occur in much smaller numbers up until the end of the Fifth Dynasty. From Abusir, we can name B-10 bowls from the tomb of Prince Werkaure (Arias Kytarová 2014b: Figs. 4.45–4.46) or the mortuary temple of King Raneferef (Bárta 2006: type XXXIIIa). Only a single rim fragment (59-13.AS68c.2013) was uncovered in the complex of Princess Sheretnebtu. This came from the unused Shaft 3 in tomb AS 68c.

Beakers (B-11) were attested only in two examples, although both were almost fully reconstructed from individual sherds. The smaller example (58-10.AS68c.2013; see Fig. 5.8) was found in the burial chamber of the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebtu (Shaft 1 in AS 68c). It was uncovered close to the sarcophagus and contained a layer of ash inside. The supposed organic content has not yet been analysed. The beaker had a maximum diameter of 13.3 cm and height of 6.5 cm. The second example (61-15.AS68c.2013) was uncovered in the fill of Shaft 4 of the same tomb and was slightly larger, with a maximum diameter of 18 cm

and height of 9 cm (see Fig. 5.8). Both vessels had similar tall and wide bodies with either open or slightly flaring walls and rounded base.

The so-called bell-shaped bowls with flaring walls (B-12) belong among the most attractive Old Kingdom bowls (see Fig. 5.8). Although most were preserved as only rim sherds and one as a base fragment, two were reconstructed to full profile and another to more than 2/3 of its height. Only one bowl (28-6.AS68a.2012, Fig. 3.93) had a simple rim and was larger when compared to the other examples, with a maximum diameter of 29 cm and preserved height of 15 cm. It was uncovered in the fill of the chapel of Duaptah (AS 68a). This type is attested already during the Fourth Dynasty (see Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 121, 14-3-66) but continues until the end of the Old Kingdom.

The second type of bell-shaped bowl with a modelled rim is often smaller and shorter, with a diameter of 21–26 cm and full height of only 10 cm. The complex of Sheretnebty provided us with seven rim fragments and two bowls in full profiles (see also Fig. 5.8). The contexts include the chapels of AS 68c and AS 68d, as well Shafts 4, 7 and 12 in the courtyard. This type is particularly popular during the Sixth Dynasty, as evidenced *e.g.* by the ceramic material from the cemetery of Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 98–99).

Among the least attested examples are two large vats with angular modelled rims and convex walls (B-13, Fig. 5.8). One was uncovered in the fill of the chapel of AS 68d and the other in the burial chamber of Shaft 6 in tomb AS 68c. Both are very large, with maximum diameters of 40 and 50 cm and preserved heights of 19 and 25 cm. The above-mentioned burial chamber also contained a massive flat base that very likely belonged to one of the vats. However, due to the irregular body of the vat with its lopsided and indented surface, it was not possible to securely reconstruct them. The deformation was probably a result of being squeezed by another vessels during drying or, more likely, firing, as the surface is also blackened around the indented areas (see Fig. 3.213). Interestingly, although both vessels were made of rough material and had thick walls, they were treated with a red slip inside and outside. The lower part of the body was trimmed and scraped with a slightly sharp tool. Similar vats were uncovered in larger numbers from the tomb of Queen Hetepheres as well as the mastabas of the officials at Giza (Junker 1929: 247, Fig. 60, no. 1; Reisner – Smith 1955:



65–66, Figs. 67–71 and 123, type D-LXXI). A slightly different form was also present in the settlement of the pyramid builders (Wodzińska 2006: 295–96, Fig. 11.29, type CD 25), where it was found in situ in the area of the bakeries, sunken into the floor (Lehner 1992: 62). As a type usually connected to the production of bread (Faltings 1998: 92, 96, 99), their presence in funerary contexts is surprising, and it is questionable whether they were meant to represent bread and its production for the afterlife or had a different, practical function. No traces of secondary use or filling could be observed on either vessel or the base.

As a final note, it must be pointed out that in numerous contexts, bowls of the same groups occur together. The most frequent examples are Sixth Dynasty shafts 4, 6, 8 and 12 in the court, as well as Shaft 13 in the corridor. These share carinated bowls with grooved rims (B-1bIV), large and deep bowls with modelled rims (B-5), small and shallow bowls with modelled rims (B-6) and bowls with flaring walls (B-12), to name only a few. These occurrences were observed early on and thus it was possible to compare the material from the point of its dispersion, *e.g.* whether similar looking fragments from diverse contexts could actually be part of the same vessel. However, the differences in sizes, particular morphology, firing and surface treatment excluded such a possibility. Thus, these vessels possibly attest that during the Sixth Dynasty, there was relatively large-scale secondary funerary activity in the court.

Naturally, it must also be taken into account that without any exception, all the shafts in the courtyard were robbed and, therefore, none of the material uncovered in them necessarily originated from its final place of deposition. However, it is also possible that the ancient robbers were emptying the shafts in a similar way to present-day excavators, when it is unpractical to have two nearby shafts open at the same time. We could theorize that if they robbed one shaft at a time, they either used its debris to fill some other, previously robbed shaft (which would be a very unlucky case for us) or they used it to cover their own tracks immediately after the robbing by refilling the same shaft (see also *Chapter 6.2.2*). Therefore, the relevance of such mixed contexts remains tentative, although they bring us a plethora of rather homogenous ceramic evidence.

#### 5.4 STANDS (CLASS S)

The stands constituted the fourth most-common class uncovered in the complex of Sheretnebtu with 2,450 fragments, of which 1,467 were diagnostic and amounted to at least 532 minimum vessels (12.77% of the whole assemblage). In the case of stands, far more than any other class, the identification of individual vessels was complicated by the sheer number of small to very small rim fragments. In all the cases, the securely identified numbers of minimum individual vessels were used; however, it is possible that they were actually higher than those presented. As an advantage, in the case of Abusir stands, it was always possible to differentiate with certainty between rim and base fragments (see also *infra*). A relatively large number of stands were able to be reconstructed to full profile, thus enabling not only a stylistic but also morphometric analysis of the vessels.

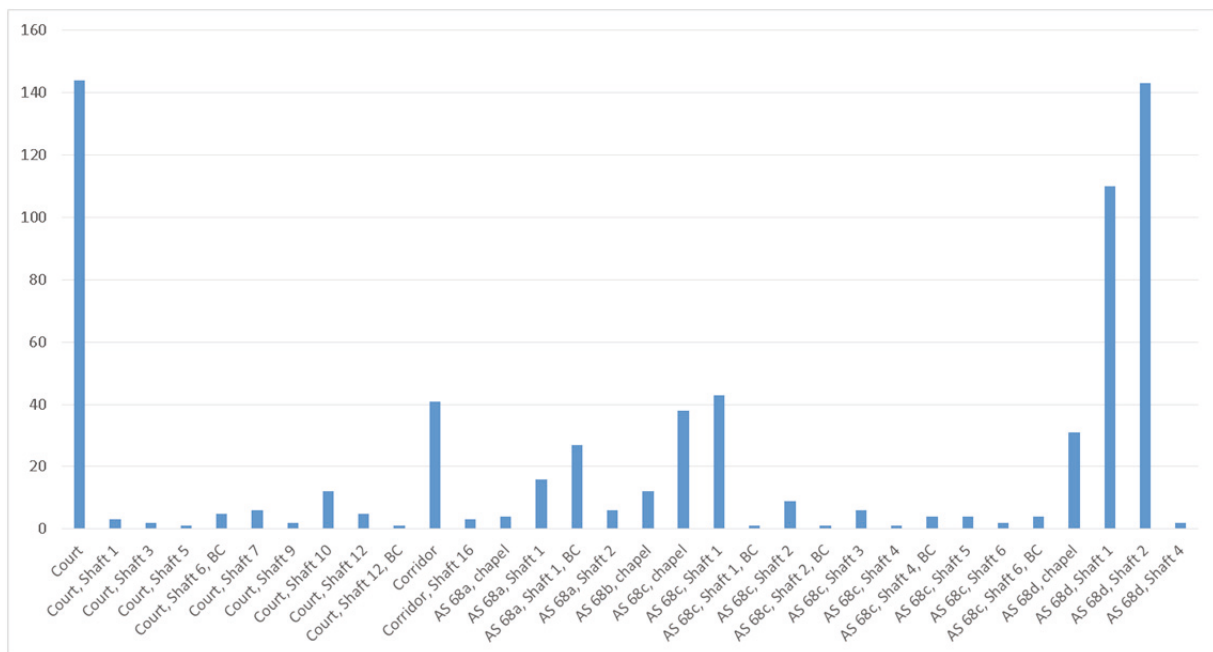
| Context             | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | %      |
|---------------------|-------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Court and staircase | S     | 16                                     | 153  | 56    | 65                               | 96                          | 384                     | 290                               | 144                    | 27,1%  |
| Corridor            | S     | 8                                      | 46   | 11    | 20                               | 32                          | 115                     | 84                                | 44                     | 8,3%   |
| Tomb AS 68a         | S     | 8                                      | 80   | 28    | 5                                | 32                          | 153                     | 121                               | 53                     | 10,0%  |
| Tomb AS 68b         | S     | 1                                      | 3    | 1     | 6                                | 6                           | 17                      | 11                                | 12                     | 2,3%   |
| Tomb AS 68c         | S     | 6                                      | 229  | 37    | 37                               | 384                         | 693                     | 294                               | 113                    | 21,2%  |
| Tomb AS 68d         | S     | 37                                     | 335  | 177   | 116                              | 423                         | 1088                    | 667                               | 166                    | 31,2%  |
| Total               |       | 76                                     | 846  | 310   | 249                              | 973                         | 2450                    | 1467                              | 532                    | 100,0% |

**Table 5.3 The amounts of stands from the complex of Sheretnebtu**

The largest amount of stands came from the secondary refuse clusters of cult pottery in the pillared courtyard (especially its south-east part) and from tomb AS 68d, particularly its two shaft deposits (*i.e.* in Shaft 1 and 2), followed by tomb AS 68c, where it concentrated in the remains of the shaft deposit of Shaft 1 and the debris of the chapel (see also Table 5.3). The stands uncovered in the corridor came from the area neighbouring the south-east corner of the court and were very likely part of the same refuse. Such frequency is unsurprising, as stands were commonly used during cultic activities occurring in front of false doors and niches (hence their occurrence in the fill of chapels, see also *Chapter 4.4.1*).

The cemeteries of Abusir have a particular trait in shaft deposits that were designated for persons of higher socio-economic status. All the deposits dating to the middle to late Fifth

Dynasty often contained large quantities of stands, sometimes in dozens to hundreds of individual pieces. Among them, the most notable were the deposits of both shafts in tomb AS 67, in the anonymous tomb AS 47, in both main shafts of tomb AS 68d, Shaft 1 of AS 68c, the shaft of Princess Hedjetnebu in Abusir and other examples (for details, see *Chapter 4.2.4*). Such shaft deposits often contained different groups of stands, most notably tall, hour-glass shaped stands and low ring stands that were complemented by platters and bowls. It is very likely that these shaft deposits contained vessels that were used during funerary rituals and were subsequently buried due to religious beliefs.



**Chart 5.5 Spatial distribution and frequency of stands in the complex of Sheretnebtu**

The stands uncovered during the excavations of Abusir South and Centre were divided into eight main morphological groups.<sup>14</sup> Almost all of them were represented in the complex of Princess Sheretnebtu, with tall hour-glass shaped stands (S-1) far surpassing all the others. The main groups include:

- S-1: tall hour-glass stands,
- S-2: very tall A-shaped and tubular stands,

<sup>14</sup> For a comparison of typological sequences of stands and classification systems used at other sites, see Kytarová 2009: 92–94.

- S-3: very tall X-shaped stands,
- S-4: lower biconical stands with a diaphragm,
- S-5: low stands with modelled rims,
- S-6: low ring stands,
- S-7: medium tall wide stands,
- S-8: medium tall stands.

As for the method of production, it differs slightly for diverse groups. All the stands were wheel-made, and depending on their resulting size, they were connected from two (*e.g.* low ring stands S-6) or three parts (all the tall stands). As an example, tall S-1 stands were wheel-made in three main parts (rim, middle and base), with the middle part often finished and attached by hand, resulting in a very rough inner surface and a kind of a “step” at the join (compare Charvát 1981: 165; Rzeuska 2006: 423). Low ring stands sometimes also bear remains of the unsmoothed join on their inner bodies. During the final stage, the stands were thoroughly wet-smoothed on the outside, very often in a diagonal rather than horizontal direction, leaving characteristic marks on the outside (see *e.g.* Figs. 3.104–3.105).

Their surface treatments differ according to the place of deposition and function of particular pieces. The stands that were used as permanent cultic equipment in the chapels (most notably S-2 and S-3) were frequently much more massive in size, often reaching almost a meter in height, with very thick walls. These stands were almost always covered with a thick layer of red slip that probably had not only an aesthetic value but also heightened the durability of the vessels. Due to their use in cultic activities, these red-slipped stands were often white-washed or plastered during ritual purification, which also included the walls of the chapel, false door and offering tables (see also *Spatial distribution*). Given the nature and function of such stands, it is unsurprising that they are very rare and only a few pieces maximum are uncovered per single tomb.

In contrast, the stands that made up a large portion of the so-called shaft deposits were much smaller (with the largest types only around 30 cm) and almost never covered with a red slip. Their sizes are quite homogenous within the morphological groups (see Chart 5.6), with

stands of *e.g.* type S-1aI reaching most commonly around 23–24 cm, type S-1aII around 28–30 cm and low ring stands between 9 and 10 cm. These stands were very likely part of the funerary activities and their quantities, rather than their quality, seems to have been of importance. In general, they were used as support for all manner of uneven vessels, whether jars (especially low ring stands) or bowls and platters (tall stands, see *e.g.* Reisner 1931; Charvát 1981: 165; Rzeuska 2006: 423) and are often depicted in relief decoration.

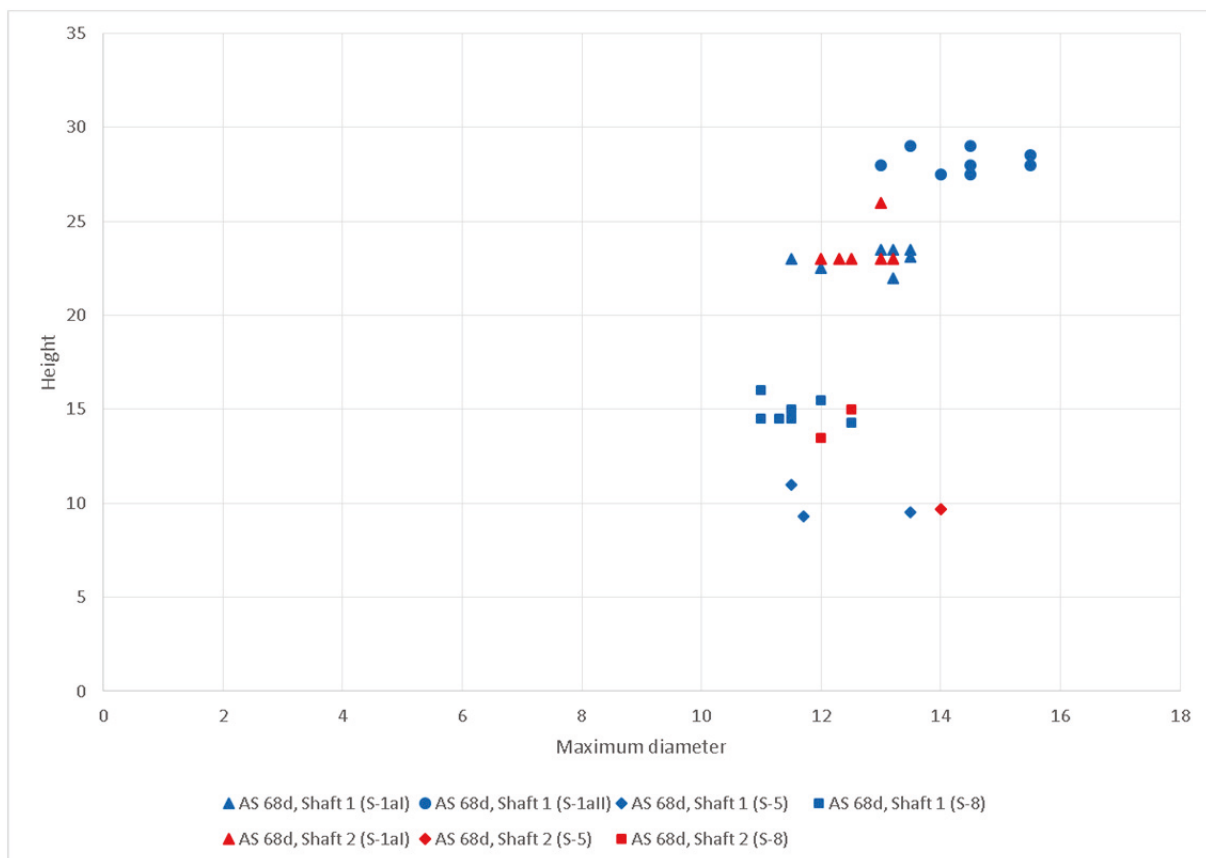
#### 5.4.1 TALL HOUR-GLASS SHAPED STANDS (S-1)

This group constitutes the most common example of stands. It is characterised by a biconical, hour-glass shaped body that was wheel-made in two main parts (rim and base), with the middle section hand-built by coiling. They are subdivided into two main types, namely one with concave walls (S-1a) and one with highly concave X-shaped walls (S-1b). Further division into forms is based on the shape of the rim, either simple (*e.g.* S-1aI, S-1bI) or modelled (S-1aII, S-1bII; see Fig. 5.9). The numerous, fully preserved examples of tall stands confirmed that both rim and base are identical (*e.g.* either simple or modelled), never a combination of two different forms. As a rule, they were made of medium quality Nile silts, predominantly NS B1 and NS B2. Type S-1a is almost always only wet-smoothed on the outer surface, while S-1b is very commonly red-slipped.

Their chronological development is difficult to trace due to the fact that they occur throughout the whole Old Kingdom with minimal morphological changes. For the Sixth Dynasty, Rzeuska proposed a development from a modelled rounded rim in earlier stages to a simple rim in later phases (Rzeuska 206: 423). However, for the site of Abusir, such development cannot be confirmed as both forms often occur together in identical contexts, most notably Shaft 1 in AS 68d, Shaft 1 in AS 68c and Shaft 2 in AS 68a (see also Figs. 3.105 3.244 and 3.266). To name one particular case, Shaft 1 of AS 68d provided us with 7 fully preserved and at least 40 additional partially preserved examples of S-1aI stands with a simple rim. At the same time, the shaft deposit also held 8 fully preserved and more than 30 partially preserved pieces of S-1aII stands with modelled rims. Thus, it is more likely that during the

Fifth Dynasty they appear concurrently and each type of stand bore a slightly different function, namely as supports for diverse vessels.

The morphometric analysis of the fully preserved examples from synchronic contexts in the complex of Sheretnebty (*i.e.* Shafts 1 and 2 of AS 68d, both of late Fifth Dynasty) shows that particular types are rather homogenous in their sizes. Tall stands with modelled rims (S-1aII) tend to be taller, with heights reaching around 28–29 cm. Stands with a simple rim (S-1aI) are usually slightly lower, with heights around 23–24 cm (see also Chart 5.6).



**Chart. 5.6 Morphometric comparison of different types of stands preserved in full profile in two contexts (Shafts 1/blue and Shaft 2/red in the tomb of Nefer)**

#### 5.4.2 VERY TALL A-SHAPED AND X-SHAPED STANDS (S-2 AND S-3)

Stands of these two groups are rather rare in the archaeological evidence and as mentioned above, only a few examples per tomb are uncovered at the most. In the case of the complex of

Princess Sheretnebt, it provided us with several pieces, however none of them in full profile, therefore no detailed typological analysis was possible.

S-2 and S-3 stands both occur predominantly in cultic contexts and were originally part of the permanent furnishing of the tomb superstructures. They are characterised by large dimensions, often reaching a height of more than 40 cm (see *e.g.* Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 129, esp. 36-3-43 and 34-12-3 with heights of 80 cm), thick walls, and the above-mentioned characteristic red-slipped and polished surface that was subsequently white-washed or plastered. On rare occasions, they were uncovered *in situ* in front of the false door, *e.g.* at Abusir in the chapel of Gegi (AS 7, see Fig. 4.56) and Kaisebi (AS 76; Fig. 4.57, see also Dulíková – Jirásková – Arias Kytarová 2016) and at Giza in the chapels of G 1407 and G 1457.<sup>15</sup> Such a use is confirmed at our complex, where most of these massive stands came from the debris of the chapels in AS 68c and AS 68d and from the fill of the corridor running in front of these two tombs. Several pieces also came from Shaft 6 in tomb AS 68c, but the context was highly disturbed and its secondary nature cannot be excluded. All the examples were red-slipped and almost all of them exhibited either an irregular layer of plaster or at least traces of it on the outer walls.

The A-shaped and tubular stands (S-2) were quite common and were attested in several sizes.<sup>16</sup> Based on their occurrences at Abusir and Giza, it is possible to assume that they were most common during the Fifth Dynasty, with several examples of A-shaped stands attested *e.g.* in the tomb of Kaaper, tomb AS 2 (Fig. 5.10) and in tomb AS 13. The smaller version of A-shaped stands also appears in the Sixth Dynasty (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 154).

All the preserved rims and bases from the complex of Sheretnebt are either angular or triangular, with only one slightly flattened base. Their most representative feature consists in the presence of cut out “windows” that had either a triangular, angular or even oval shape (see *e.g.* Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 129), which very likely had a decorative rather than functional

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<sup>15</sup> See [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org). For additional information, see also *Chapter 4.4.1*.

<sup>16</sup> Originally, tubular stands had their own group (S-3; *e.g.* Kytarová 2009: 92–93); however due to the fact that they are closely linked to A-shaped stands and in fragmentary form, it is almost impossible to differentiate between these two. They were both sorted into a single group (S-2) as two types, namely S-2a (A-shaped) and S-2b (tubular) when such a division was possible.

purpose, although this could have been a means of decreasing the final weight of the massive stand. In the complex of Sheretnebty, only three examples of stands with such windows were found, namely two different ones in the debris of the chapel in tomb AS 68d (40-42.AS68d.2013 and 40-61.AS68d.2013, see Fig. 3.239), and one in the fill of Shaft 1 in AS 68c (57-79.AS68c.2013), which probably also originated from the chapel. Based on fully preserved examples from other sites, it is possible to say that such windows were always at the lower part of the stand, near the base.

As far as the sizes of S-2 and S-3 stands from complex AS 68 are concerned, only a few facts can be surmised. The preserved rims and bases are quite large and have diameters of 22–25 cm. The largest reconstructed stand (65-6.AS68c.2013) reached a height of 48 cm, which constituted only about 2/3 to one half of its original size. Other stands were preserved to heights of 31 to 36 cm (*e.g.* 40-42.AS68d.2012, 40-61.AS68d.2012, 63-5.AS68c.2013 and 65-5.AS68c.2013), in all cases making up only a portion of the whole stand. In comparison, the fully preserved stand from the chapel of Gegi reached a height of 41 cm with a base diameter of 21.8 cm, the stand from the anonymous tomb AS 13 had a full height of 49 cm and the almost fully intact stand from the chapel of Kaisebi had a base diameter of 23 cm and height of 51.5 cm.

Group S-3 comprises an X-shaped version of the tall and massive stands with highly concave walls.<sup>17</sup> Similar to group S-2, they occur only in very few pieces throughout the sites. At Abusir, the most notable example was the above-mentioned tall stand uncovered *in situ* in the chapel of Kaisebi (9/AS76/2016, see Fig. 4.57). From the available evidence, it is possible to assume that this particular type is limited to the period of the Sixth Dynasty. They are almost always covered with a highly polished red slip that is often partially covered with a white wash or a layer of plaster (see details in Figs. 5.12–5.13). It is often presumed that such a plastering was meant to imitate stone material (*i.e.* limestone or calcite); however, the present author

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<sup>17</sup> X-shaped stands also occur in group S-1, namely as S-1b. The main difference between them lies in their sizes and surface treatment, given their different original function. While S-1b stands are rather small (around 30 cm in height) and usually only wet-smoothed, S-3 stands can reach almost 1m and are almost always covered in red slip. Given their highly concave walls, S-3 stands are usually easily differentiated from S-2 during post-processing.



leans toward the interpretation of this surface treatment as part of a ritual purification that called for all the main cultic furnishing, *e.g.* false doors, niches, offering tables and stands, to be white-washed as part of the regular offering rituals (see also *Chapter 4.4.1*).

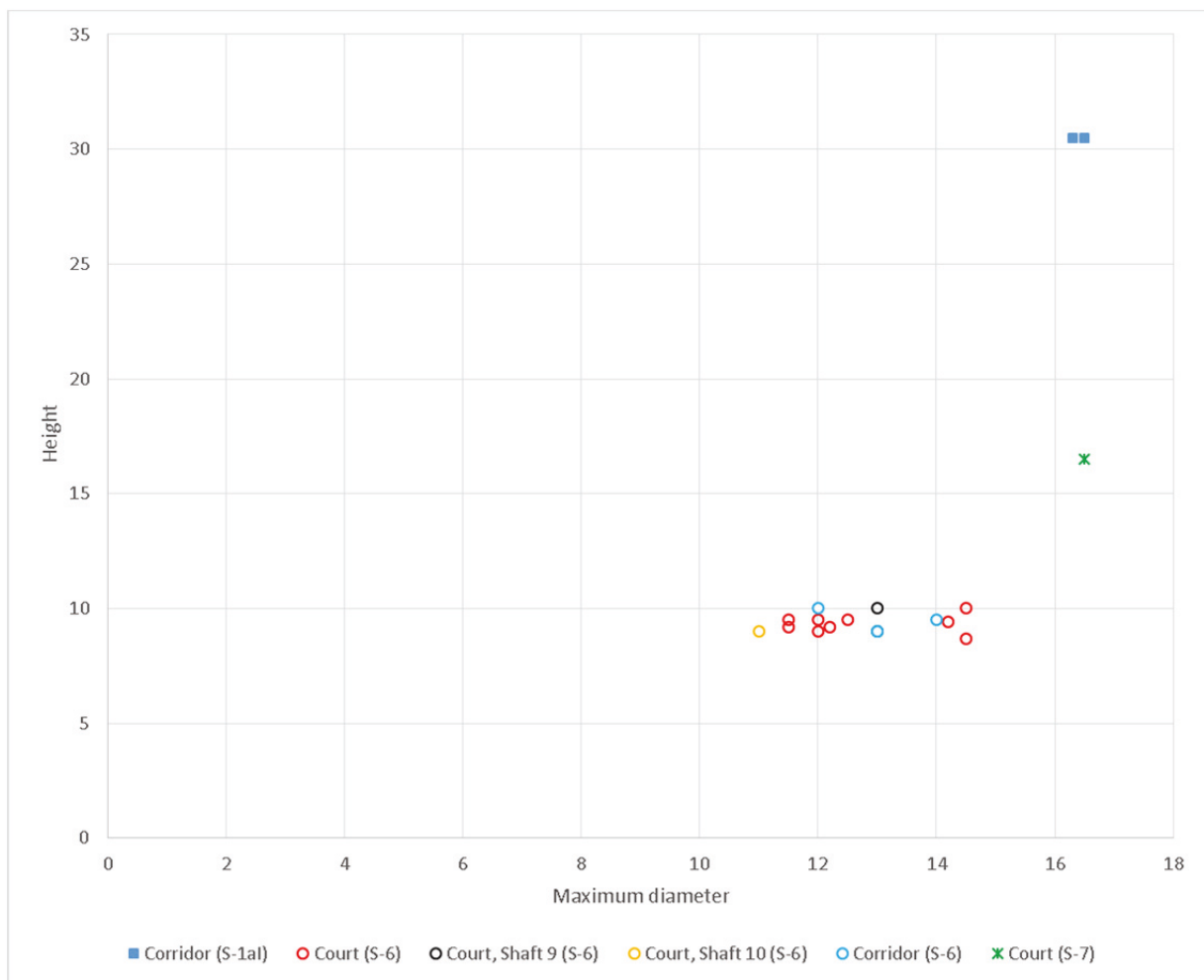
#### 5.4.3 OTHER STANDS (S-4 TO S-8)

Medium-tall stands with flat bottoms and diaphragms (S-4) were not attested in the complex of Sheretnebtu but occur in other contexts of the cemeteries of Abusir South. The two largest assemblages came from Shaft 1 in the anonymous mastaba AS 47 (13 bases, see Arias Kytnarová 2011a: Fig. 22) and Shaft 5 in tomb AS 51 (six examples, see Arias Kytnarová 2010c: Fig. 4.4.15, nos. 1–3 and 6). The fully preserved pieces have heights of 19.5 to 20.5 cm and either a wide flat base or a cut-out diaphragm. Other notable parallels include the funerary temple of Menkaure at Giza (Reisner 1931: 220, Fig. 70, nos. 4–5). Due to the lack of this type in later contexts, it is possible that it is limited to the late Fourth and Fifth Dynasty.

Contrarily, the group of shorter stands with distinctly modelled bases (S-5) was represented by numerous examples in the complex of Sheretnebtu. They concentrated in several notable contexts, with the majority originating from the burial shafts, *e.g.* of the high official Nefer (Shaft 1 in AS 68d), his wife Neferhathor (Shaft 2 in AS 68d), the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebtu (Shaft 1 in AS 68c) and Duaptah (Shaft 1 in AS 68a). They had two diverse forms, namely one with an angular base and a simple rim and one with a flat base and an outer grooving on both rim and base (see Fig. 5.14). All the S-5 stands have low bodies with concave recurved walls. The fully preserved examples have heights of 9.7–11 cm. Other attestations include synchronic contexts from the cemetery of Abusir Centre, *e.g.* from the tomb of Prince Werkaure (Arias Kytnarová 2014b: Fig. 4.76, 167.AC26.2008, 235.AC26.2008 and 236.AC26.2008) and the official Kakaibaef (yet unpublished).

Low ring stands (S-6) were the second-most common stand group uncovered in this complex. Their spatial distribution shows concentrations in the south-east area of the open court and the associated part of the corridor, as well as the debris of the chapel in tomb AS 68c. Interestingly, relatively few pieces came from the shaft deposits otherwise containing large amounts of other stand types. In the Abusir ceramic classification, S-6 stands are

subdivided according to the shape of the body, namely S-6a with concave walls and S-6b with highly concave walls.<sup>18</sup> Only S-6a were uncovered in the complex of Sheretnebty and they all had forms with a simple rim (S-6aI; see Figs. 5.14 and 3.248). The morphometric analysis shows that they had very homogenous sizes, with height being the most important denominator (see *e.g.* Chart 5.7). These stands were very often irregular, with oval rather than round diameters and lopsided profiles. In some cases, S-6 stands were overfired and exhibited grey or thoroughly black sherds. In the vast predominance of cases, they reached only 9–10 cm, but slightly larger examples appeared sporadically.



**Chart 5.7 Morphometric comparison between tall hour-glass shaped stands (designated by squares), low ring stands (loops) and medium tall stands (asterisks) from the contexts in the court and the corridor**

<sup>18</sup> Ring stands S-6b were uncovered *e.g.* in the tomb of Inti and thus seem to be limited to the period of the Sixth Dynasty (see Kytarová 2009: Fig. 80).

The wide stands of group S-7 are relatively rare and constitute an exception rather than a regular part of assemblages. Unlike all the other groups, where numerous examples are preserved that share homogenous shapes and sizes, this group provides us with only very few pieces, which differ from each other. Its main feature consists in the width of the stand, as it is often very wide in relation to its height (*e.g.* 16-68.AS68.2012 with identical maximum diameter and height of 16.5 cm), unlike the other very slim biconical stands. The fully preserved examples from the complex of Sheretnebtu reach heights of 15.5–16 cm and maximum diameters of 15.5–18 cm. Similar wide stands were found in the burial shaft of princess Hedjetnebu at Abusir Centre (Verner – Callender 2002: Pl. XXI, Kf2 and Pl. XXIV, Kf9), dated to the period of Djedkare Isesi.

The last to mention are medium tall stands, S-8. They usually have similar heights to the previous group, being most commonly 15–16.5 cm tall, but have very slim hour-glass shaped bodies; vaguely similar to tall stands of S-1 (see Figs. 3.246 and 5.10 for size comparison between stand groups). In the complex of Sheretnebtu, they appeared in largest numbers in tomb AS 68d and particularly in its two main shafts, namely the shaft of Nefer (Shaft 1) and his wife Neferhathor (Shaft 2), as well as in the debris of the chapel. There were only nine examples preserved in full profile. These stands appear in two main types, S-8a with a simple rim and base and S-8b with a simple contracted rim and a rolled base.

### 5.5 BREAD FORMS (CLASS F)

Bread forms can be one of the most frequent ceramic classes attested in the Old Kingdom funerary contexts; as an example, in the Valley temple of Menkaure they made up 32% of the assemblage (Reisner 1931: 220–222) and in the Giza Plateau Mapping Site, they constituted over 56% of all ceramic finds (Wodzińska 2007: 298). Their main characteristics include: moulded inner surfaces and roughly wet-smoothed outer surfaces, thickness of walls, low quality porous material (predominantly Nile silt C) with numerous organic and possibly also inorganic inclusions, low firing temperature resulting in soft sherds, and a common feature of blackened surfaces due to fire exposure. These make them all relatively easily recognizable even in a highly fragmented form.

The complex of Sheretneby brought to light altogether 992 fragments of bread forms, out of which 515 pieces were diagnostic and made up a minimum of 281 individual vessels (see Table 3.1). The resulting percentage is rather low, as bread forms constituted only 6.7% of all the pottery and thus were surpassed by all the other vessel classes (see Chart 1.1). They only exceeded the classes of auxiliary pottery (lids, mud stoppers) and technical pottery (tools).

| Context             | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | %      |
|---------------------|-------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Court and staircase | F     | 10                                     | 53   | 17    | 19                               | 71                          | 170                     | 99                                | 72                     | 25,6%  |
| Corridor            | F     | 1                                      | 4    | 3     | -                                | 11                          | 19                      | 8                                 | 10                     | 3,6%   |
| Tomb AS 68a         | F     | 1                                      | 26   | 2     | 6                                | 28                          | 63                      | 35                                | 24                     | 8,5%   |
| Tomb AS 68b         | F     | 3                                      | 12   | 5     | -                                | 20                          | 40                      | 21                                | 12                     | 4,3%   |
| Tomb AS 68c         | F     | 9                                      | 196  | 25    | 38                               | 260                         | 526                     | 268                               | 137                    | 48,8%  |
| Tomb AS 68d         | F     | 9                                      | 59   | 12    | 4                                | 90                          | 174                     | 84                                | 26                     | 9,3%   |
| Total               |       | 33                                     | 350  | 64    | 67                               | 480                         | 992                     | 515                               | 281                    | 100,0% |

**Table 5.4 Amounts of bread forms from the complex of Sheretneby**

The majority of the bread forms were found in the rock-cut tomb AS 68c (almost 50% of all), followed by the open pillared court (over 25%; see Table 5.4). Only 33 examples were preserved in full shape or at least full profile, however the existence of numerous bases (namely 64 examples) enabled a further typological analysis.

Old Kingdom bread forms from Abusir can be divided into four main groups, namely conical *bd3* bread forms with a rounded base (F-1), *bd3* forms with a flat base (F-2), bread forms with a tall tubular foot (F-3) and low wide *prt* and *stt* bread forms (F-4; see Fig. 5.15).<sup>19</sup> Every group can be further divided into types that bear chronological significance (see also Arias Kytarová 2011b). Bread forms with a rounded base (F-1) are most common and appear throughout almost the whole Old Kingdom, differing in their exact morphology; however, hitherto, these have not at all been attested in the later Sixth Dynasty (see also *infra*). Type F-2 with a flat base begins to appear in larger numbers only from the Fifth Dynasty onwards and is characteristic for the Sixth Dynasty. Tall bread forms with a wide foot, F-3, are

<sup>19</sup> For an outline of classification systems of bread forms that are used by other scholars, see the analysis in Kytarová 2009: 95–97.

limited to the Sixth Dynasty. The low wide bread forms of group F-4 are most common in the late Old Kingdom.

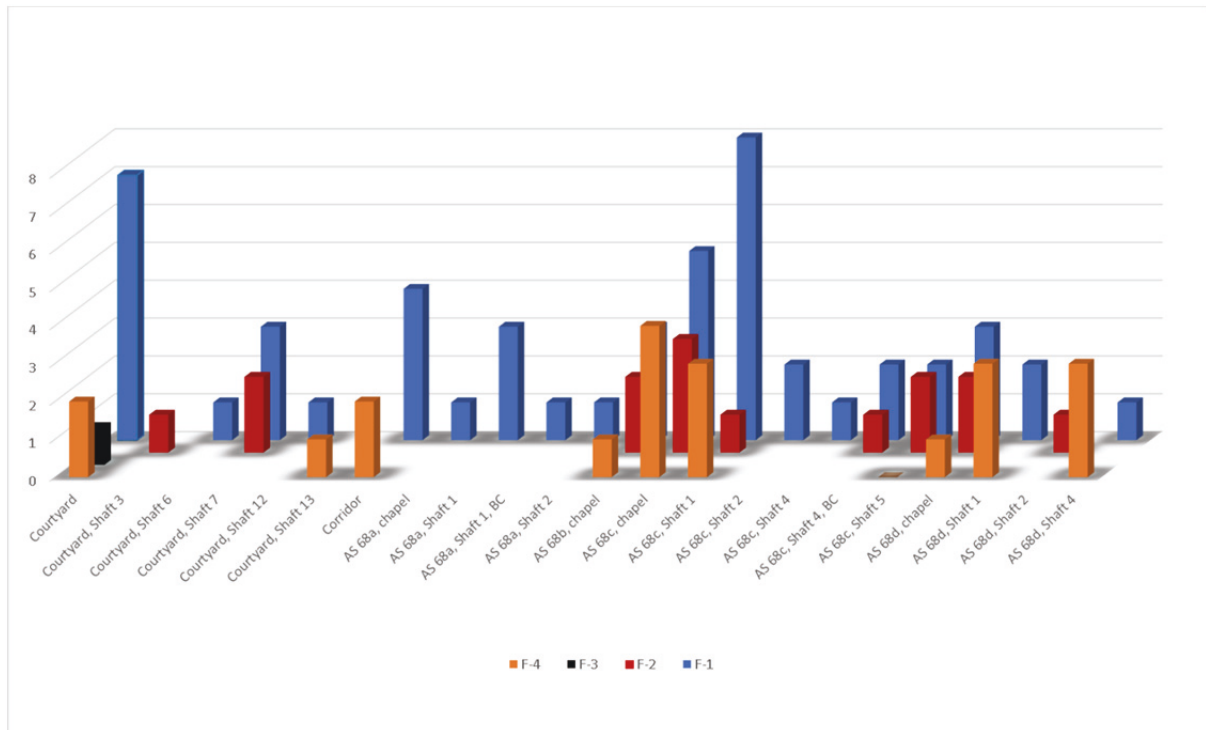


Chart 5.8 Distribution of the reliably classified bread forms attested in various contexts

By far, the most common group was that of *bdj* bread forms with a rounded base (F-1; see Chart 5.8), which was attested in numerous contexts throughout the complex and most significantly in the area of the court and rock-cut tomb AS 68c. The second most common was surprisingly that of flat bread trays (F-4), followed by flat *bdj* bread forms (F-2). Only one example of a tall mould with a tubular foot (F-3) was found.

A large amount of the uncovered bread forms had traces of fire either outside, inside or on both surfaces. Outside, the blackened area is usually concentrated around the base but sometimes can cover large irregular areas of the bread form, confirming the iconographic attestations of placing bread forms directly onto the fire, often overlapping each other (for an extensive list, see *e.g.* Faltings 1998: 89–109, Dok. 1–40).

Some of the bread forms were used secondarily as containers for mortar or plaster and were found at the bottom of a shaft (*e.g.* 26-15.AS68.2012 from Shaft 3 in the courtyard, Fig.

5.17; 54-26.AS68a.2013 from the secondary debris in the burial chamber of Shaft 1 in AS 68a; and 63-1.AS68c.2013 from Shaft 5 of AS 68c) or other areas (43-41.AS68c.2013 from the chapel of AS 68c, Fig. 5.17). Such a use is not uncommon, although it is much more typical to find beer jars fulfilling this function (see also *Chapter 4.5.2*).

On very rare occasions, bread moulds could also be used as a container for pigments, such as ochre. In the fill between the pillars of the open court, we found a shoulder fragment of a smaller F-1b bread form (16-1.AS68.2012) that contained a layer of dark red pigment at the bottom, a thin layer of plaster towards the upper side of the bread form and a middle part, where these two were mixed to achieve a pale pink hue (see Fig. 5.17). It is very likely that this bread form was used by a craftsman for mixing ochre to achieve its different shades, as in a modern palette. It is again more common to find beer jars in such a function – as an example, a beer jar base with remains of red ochre (57-36.AS68c.2013) was discovered in the fill of Shaft 1 in tomb AS 68c, which belonged to the presumed husband of Princess Sheretnebtj (see Fig. 3.163). This find is also interesting considering the fact that his burial chamber held a bowl with remains of blue pigment (see Figs. 3.171–3.172). Both vessels might have been used during the decoration of his false door (similar to the false door of Nefer, see Fig. 3.233) or some other area in the chapel. Unluckily, no such decoration is preserved and therefore this theory has to remain tentative. The use of bread forms as containers for pigments is attested *e.g.* in the settlement of workers at Giza (Wodzińska 2007: 298).

### 5.5.1 BREAD FORMS WITH A ROUNDED BASE (F-1)

This group of *bd3* bread forms is the most common type in the cemetery of Abusir South. Its main feature consists in a body formed over a mould, roughly wet-smoothed from outside and equipped with a rounded base that is attached to the main body (Fig. 5.18). The general chronological development of group F-1 is very well documented.<sup>20</sup> The earliest examples come from the Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods (*e.g.* Petrie 1900: Pl. 6, Figs. 145–148; Petrie 1902: Pl. 29, Fig. 57–59; Brunton 1937: 94, no. 1312, 105, 133, pl. 36:4; Macyńska 2009:

<sup>20</sup> The following sequence (F-1 to F-4) is an expanded version of a paper dedicated to the chronological relevance of bread forms (Arias Kytarová 2011c).

Figs. 9–13) but the type is predominant in the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties and is known to have lasted in much smaller numbers till approximately the middle of the Sixth Dynasty (Brunton – Petrie 1924: pl. 29, 32B and G). However, it is interesting to note the complete lack of this type in some late Sixth Dynasty contexts, such as the Saqqara West cemetery (Rzeuska 2006: 420) or the sites of Balat and Ayn Asil in the Dakhla oasis (*cf.* Valloggia 1986: 135–165; Soukiassian – Wuttmann – Pantalacci *et al.* 1990: 85–121; Minault-Gout – Deleuze 1992: 140–184; Soukiassian – Wuttmann – Pantalacci 2002: 461–512).

The bread forms of the Early Dynastic Period are distinctly different in having a very wide and low body with a width to height ratio of 5:2 and a smooth transition of body and rounded base, with some older forms being almost half-circular (*e.g.* Petrie 1902: pl. 29:57–59; Jucha 2005: 51–52, pl. 68–73; Macyńska 2009: Figs. 9–13; see also Jacquet-Gordon 1981: 11–12). During the Third Dynasty, the bread form acquires a typically slimmer shape with predominantly straight walls, increased height and decreased width of a ratio approximately 7:6 (*cf.* Quibell – Green 1902: Pl. 69, Fig. 15; Garstang 1904: Pl. 23, Fig. 2–4; Fairservis – Hoffman – Weeks 1971–72: Fig. 24, nos. 22–24, 26).

The bread forms of the early Fourth Dynasty are marked by increasingly concave walls with slightly flaring rims (*cf.* Quibell 1898: Pl. 12, fig. 35; Reisner 1932: Fig. 36, 4–5; Hassan 1953: Pl. 48C, 2/1; Arnold 1973: Abb. 12, 3<sup>rd</sup> left, Taf. 50c). Also, in the course of the Fourth Dynasty, the transition between the body and the base (called “shoulder” in this paper, although not entirely correct) becomes slightly pronounced and angular (*e.g.* Kromer 1978: Tf. 20, Figs. 1, 2 and 4; Faltings 1989: Abb. 3c; Wodzińska 2007: Figs. 11.38 and 11.39). Finally, in the course of the Fifth Dynasty, it is replaced by a sharp visible transition of body and base, often with a characteristic base knob only roughly attached to the body without any additional smoothing (from Abusir, see *e.g.* Arias Kytnarová 2010c: Fig. 4.4.3, 1.AS51.09; Arias Kytnarová 2011a: Fig. 15, 10.AS37.2007 and Fig. 21, 34.AS47.2007; Arias Kytnarová 2011c: Fig. 6.23, type F-1b; Arias Kytnarová 2014b: Fig. 4.55, esp. nos. 34.AC26.2008, 36.AC26.2008 and Fig. 4.65). The width to height ratio of the bread forms of type F-1c attested from the late Fifth Dynasty onwards can be up to 3:5, namely tall and narrow vessels – almost completely reversed from the early Old Kingdom wide and shallow examples.

On the basis of this knowledge, three main chronologically significant types of F-1 bread forms were identified for the Abusir pottery corpus: F-1a (with a smooth transition between body and base), F-1b (with articulated transition) and F-1c (with a sharp angle of body and base, often characterised by a base knob, see Arias Kytarová 2011c: Fig. 8). By far the most common type is F-1b, with numerous examples attested *e.g.* in the tomb of Prince Werkaure at Abusir Centre (AC 26). There, the most prominent were two large assemblages of bread forms of this type that were uncovered in the area of the heavily disturbed burial chamber. They were originally very likely part of a single deposit and consisted of a minimum of 14 very large F-1b bread forms with diameters reaching up to 40 cm (see Arias Kytarová 2014b: Figs. 4.56–4.61).

Type F-1b with a ledged shoulder, characteristic for the late Fifth Dynasty, is unsurprisingly the most common also in the complex of Sheretnebtj. It was attested in almost all the contexts containing F-1 bread forms, most prominently Shaft 7 in the courtyard, chapels of AS 68a and AS 68b, Shafts 1 and 2 in AS 68a, and also among possible remains of the original deposit in Shaft 1 of AS 68c, Shaft 2 in AS 68c and Shafts 1 and 2 in the tomb of Nefer (AS 68d). Most of the examples belonged to regular-sized bread forms with heights of ca. 16–18 cm. There were also notably larger vessels, such as one from the secondary debris that filled the burial chamber of Shaft 1 in tomb AS 68a (54-1.AS68a.2013); it reached a height of 24 cm. Another one from Shaft 1 of AS 68c (the “husband”) had a maximum diameter of 40 cm and height of more than 30 cm (57-111.AS68c.2013). Analogies for the latter one can be found *e.g.* in the deposit of large bread forms from the tomb of Prince Werkaure mentioned above; otherwise, such huge bread forms are uncommon and have only been attested in the settlement of pyramid workers at Giza (see Wodzińska 2007: 298, F2C).

The later development of F-1, namely type F-1c with a so-called base knob, was attested in only two cases, namely the fill of the chapel of AS 68c (otherwise rich with Sixth Dynasty pottery due to continuous cultic activity) and the fill of the open court, also used until the end of the Old Kingdom.



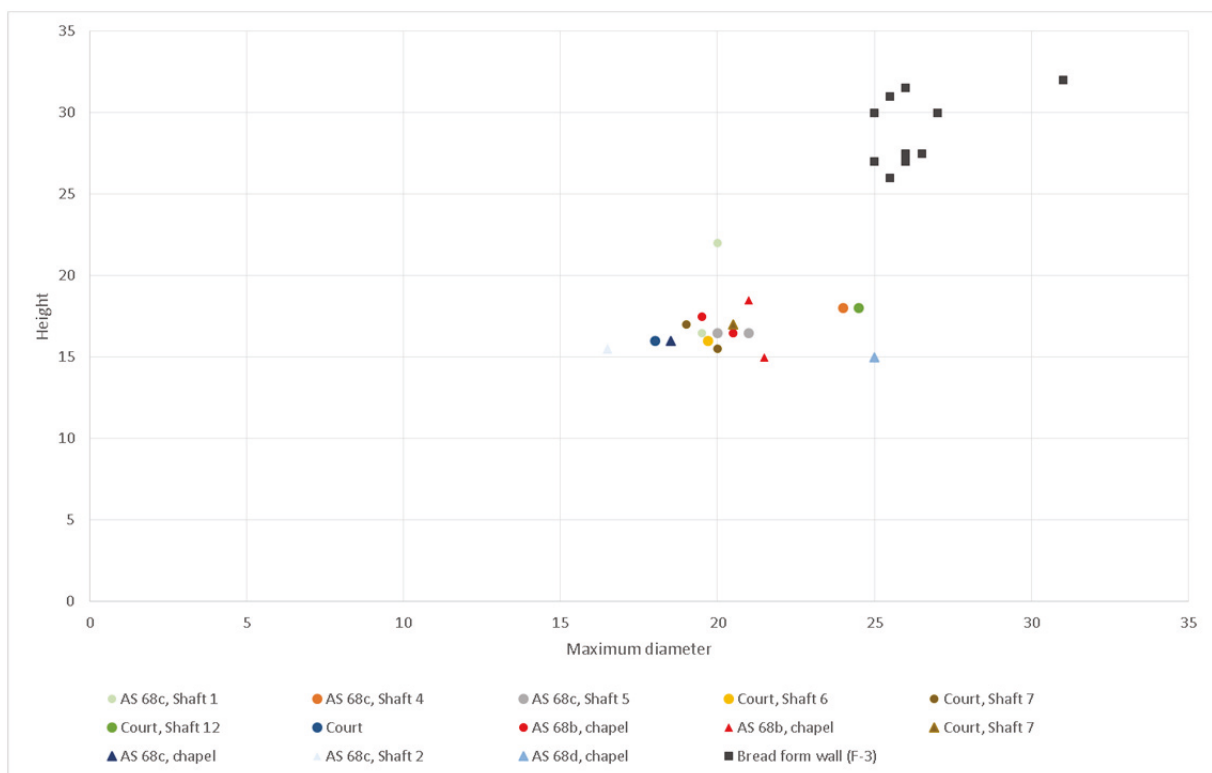
### 5.5.2 BREAD FORMS WITH A FLAT BASE (F-2)

The *bd3* bread forms of group F-2 with a flat base are generally considered a late Old Kingdom ware despite the fact that they were already occasionally present in the Early Dynastic Period (e.g. Petrie 1900: Pl. 43). The earliest examples are very scant and show characteristic shapes similar to the early F-1 type, namely rather low and wide bodies with a width to height ratio of 6:2. The F-2 bread forms of the Third to early Fourth Dynasty show an increase in the height of the vessel (with a ratio of 1:1 to 2:3) but are still present only in very small numbers (Quibell 1898: Pl. XII, Figs. 25 and 38; Peet – Loat 1913: Pl. IV, Figs. 41 and 45).

Notably, there is a complete absence of bread forms with a flat base from some Fourth Dynasty contexts, such as the settlements excavated in the Giza Plateau dated to the mid- to late Fourth Dynasty (Wodzińska 2007: 298–300). On the other hand, the valley temple of Menkaure, built by Shepseskaf and used until the Sixth Dynasty, is characterised by the fact that all the large quantities of bread forms found (145 examples making up 32% of all ceramics) are all represented exclusively by type F-2 with a flat base (Reisner 1932: 220–223, Fig. 71, nos. 1–5).

The use of this type of bread form increases in the early Fifth Dynasty and is well represented in late Fifth to Sixth Dynasty tombs in Saqqara (*cf.* Kanawati – Abder-Raziq 1999: Pl. 66, Figs. TNE97:2, TNE97:10 and TNE97:14) and Giza (Junker 1941: Abb. 32; Reisner – Smith 1955, 88, Fig. 132, nos. 27-3-694 and 30-1-64, Pl. 50b, 3/2-3/3). During this period, its shape changes in having concave flaring walls as opposed to the earlier straight or simple concave walls and the width to height ratio can reach up to 2:4. In the course of the Sixth Dynasty, bread forms with a rounded base fall into disuse and in many sites, the F-2 type with a flat bottom is the only type of *bd3* bread form available. This is especially evident in some late Sixth Dynasty contexts such as the cemeteries at Balat (Soukiassian – Wuttmann – Pantalacci *et al.* 1990: 108–110, Pl. 31; Minault-Gout – Deleuze 1992: 172–173; Castel – Pantalacci – Cherpion 2001: Figs. 128–129, nos. C34–C44; Castel 2005: Fig. 50: 62–63), the settlement in Ayn Asil (Soukiassian – Wuttmann – Pantalacci 2002: 465–66, Fig. 327) or the cemetery at Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 143–145 and 148–151).

In the cemetery of Abusir South, this type of bread form is less usual than type F-1 with a rounded base. Some of the oldest documented F-2 bread forms with a flat base come from the tomb of Rahotep and Isesiseneb (AS 4) and the tomb of Hetepi (AS 3), dated to the late Fifth Dynasty. In both cases, the bread forms usually have straight open walls and sharply pointed inner bases. This bread form continues in use until the end of the Sixth Dynasty, as is evident *i.e.* from the examples from the tomb of Inti (AS 22) as well as from the secondary wall above the tomb of Kaiemtjenet (AS 38), both dated to the terminal Sixth Dynasty. This trend is also confirmed in the tomb of Werkaure. Here, we uncovered only one F-2 bread form (Arias Kytnarová 2014c: Fig. 4.55, 238.AC26.09) in the eastern part of the open court of Werkaure, which yielded larger amounts of Sixth Dynasty pottery.



**Chart 5.9 Morphometric comparison between three main groups of bread forms preserved in full profile:**

**F-1 (circle), F-2 (triangle) and F-3 (square).**

The complex of Sheretnebty provided us with only several examples of F-2 bread forms with a flat base (see Fig. 5.18), most notably in the upper layers of Shafts 3 and 7 in the courtyard, in Shaft 1 of tomb AS 68a, in the chapel of AS 68b, in Shafts 1 and 4 in tomb AS 68c

as well as its chapel and finally, in the chapel of Nefer (AS 68d). The morphometric comparison of the F-1 examples preserved in full profile confirms that the metric development of both groups is almost identical over time, meaning that F-1 and F-2 bread forms of approximately the same period have very similar dimensions and height to width ratios (see *Chart 5.9*). On the other hand, the vessels of group F-3 are decidedly different, being equipped with a very tall, massive foot. A similar analysis of their volumes shows that the development was exactly opposite (namely an increasing height but decreasing volume over time) due to the fact that F-3 bread forms might seem bigger but actually held much less inner capacity, as the vast majority of the bread form was taken up by a solid foot (see also *infra*).

### 5.5.3 BREAD FORMS WITH A TALL TUBULAR FOOT (F-3)

Bread forms of group F-3 with a tall massive tubular foot (see Fig. 5.15) are quite rare and so far, examples have been found only in the Memphite necropolis (esp. Saqqara and Abusir, see e.g. Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 146–147; Kytnarová 2009: 98–99, Pl. XXXVI; Arias Kytnarová 2011c: Fig. 6.14).

This type very likely constitutes a typological development of the F-2 bread forms with a flat base. In the F-3 type, a large tubular piece of clay was added to the base of the bread form after moulding the main body. Its purpose was probably a more effective insulation from the heat of the fire during the baking process. In consequence, the compact base of the bread form is sometimes twice or thrice taller than the actual space for the bread dough, making the capacity of F-3 bread forms much smaller than that of bread forms of type F-2.

At Abusir, this type of bread form is not very common and so far, examples were uncovered only in a handful of tombs and contexts. Foremost among them is a ceramic deposit in Shaft 1 of the anonymous tomb AS 8<sup>21</sup> that provided us with at least 15 individual pieces (see also Kytnarová 2009: 143–144). They have homogenous base diameters of 11–12.5

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<sup>21</sup> In the former publications, this tomb was designated as area FF, Tomb III in the complex of Fetekty (see Bárta 2001: 132). The shaft itself was very shallow and was never used for a burial. It held a large amount of well-preserved homogenous vessels, predominantly beer jars and bread forms (all of type F-3) that point to the fact that it served as a ritual deposit.

cm and complete heights of about 30–33 cm. The height of the base (*i.e.* distance between the flat base and the inner base of the mould) reached between 9 and 16 cm. Some of the bread forms were white-washed on the outer surface and on the rims, confirming their ritual rather than practical function. Several of them bore traces of exposure to fire.

An even larger amount came from the so-called bread form wall, situated north-east of the tomb of Kaiemtjenet (AS 38) and west of the tomb of priest Neferinpu (Fig. 4.79; see also Arias Kytarová 2011c: 84–88, Fig. 6.14), where 25 individual F-3 bread forms were used secondarily as a building material (see also *Chapter 4.5.1*). Ten vessels were preserved in full profile, with wide mouths and bevelled flat or concave rims painted white (see *e.g.* Fig. 4.81). The upper part of the bread form was usually wet-smoothed with distinct regular marks of the moulding on the inside. The foot of the vessel was left untreated, sometimes with a blackened lower part from its position in the fire. The sizes were quite homogenous, with most examples having a diameter of 22–24 cm, only two having larger rim diameters, very constant base diameters of 15 to 16.5 cm (including the partly preserved vessels as well), and heights of 25.7 to 32 cm. Interesting to note is the difference in sizes between the two named contexts, with the bread forms from the secondary wall above the tomb of Kaiemtjenet being taller and generally larger.

Additional examples attested in the cemetery of Abusir include *e.g.* one base from the burial chamber of Hetepi (AS 3; Kytarová 2009: 127–128), six pieces from chapel 2 in the tomb of vizier Qar (AS 16; Kytarová 2009: 153–157), and two pieces from the shaft of judge Inti (AS 22). The last two were part of the burial shaft deposit that was spread out in three different layers of the shaft (Bárta 2003a: 21–22, Fig. 2). They had slightly different shapes, with one being slimmer and taller and the second considerably wider. One example was thoroughly white-washed on the outer surface, whereas the other had only white-washed rim.

The complex of Princess Sheretnebtj provided us with only a single example of this type, which was found in the upper layers of the open pillared court, in its south-west sector. Bread form 16-158.AS68.2012 was preserved only in its lower part, with a flat base of 16 cm in diameter, thus similar to those found in the so-called bread form wall. With an attested height of 19 cm, it can be assumed that it reached at least 30 cm. The tubular foot (*e.g.* the distance

between the base and the inner base) was 9 cm tall. There were no traces of white-washing or exposure to fire.

As far as the dating is concerned, this type of bread form is still quite rare and seems to be limited to the Memphite necropolis of the middle to late Sixth Dynasty (*cf.* Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 146, nos. 741–743 and Pl. 147, nos. 745, 747–750). So far, this type has not been attested in settlements, and it is therefore possible that it was a purely funerary type. In almost all available examples, its rim is treated with a thick white wash or plastering, underlining its possible cultic function.

#### 5.5.4 FLAT BREAD TRAYS (F-4)

Group F-4 encompasses low, platter-like bread baking forms, known from the relief scenes as either *prt* or *stt* forms. Their exact definition of shape is difficult to state due to the fact that no two archaeologists agree on their morphology. In the relief decoration, the *prt* forms seem to have a low body with straight or rounded to almost convex walls (see *e.g.* Wreszinski 1936: Tf. 71; Simpson 1976: Fig. 38; Moussa – Altenmüller 1977: Tf. 23; Schürmann 1983: Abb. 15b) while the *stt* forms exhibit taller concave walls (*e.g.* Wreszinski 1936: Tf. 70; Moussa – Altenmüller 1977: Tf. 23). Some Egyptologists sort all rough platters with a wide flat base into this category (Faltings 1998; Bárta 2006). However, after a detailed analysis of the pottery material, its fabric, surface treatment and general make, the present author separated the class of hand-made rough flat platters from the group of flat bread trays. Their main differences lie in their morphology; the bread forms having taller and more massive walls with usually a flat or bevelled rim, concave walls and articulated to short-ledged base. The platters are often lower, are made up of a slightly finer material with fewer straw and stone inclusions, have a more graceful form with thinner walls, are better fired and are also usually treated with a low quality red slip on the inner surface. In contrast to bread forms they do not display any traces of exposure to fire as they functioned mainly to serve or present food or as offering trays (for several examples of platters, see Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 58–63; from Abusir South, see Arias Kytarová 2010c: Figs. 4.4.5, 4.4.7 and 4.4.14; Arias Kytarová 2011a: Fig. 21).

There are only a few analyses of flat bread trays that could allow a more specific morphological and chronological development of the vessels. Although they are traditionally considered a late Old Kingdom ware, they were already present in a few numbers in the Early Dynastic Period and the early Old Kingdom. In the Third Dynasty, the bread trays show slightly concave walls and a flat or flat bevelled rim (Garstang 1904: Pl. XIII, 5; Peet – Loat 1913: Pl. IV, 40).

During the course of the Fourth Dynasty, their frequency slowly increases. As an example, they accounted for almost 17% of all the ceramics in the excavations of the Giza Plateau Mapping Project, with settlement structures dated to a relatively short time span of mid- to late Fourth Dynasty (however, this being only half of the attested percentage of the most common bread forms of this period, type F-1 with a rounded base). All the flat bread trays were divided into five variants based on their sizes and exact morphology, such as a ledge rim (F1A), bevelled rim (F1B) and flat rim (F1C). Their general shape can be round or oval and there are both very low trays (with heights about 2–5 cm) and taller trays (with heights up to 10 cm; see Wodzińska 2007: 298–300, Figs. 11.36–11.37). The main trait of the flat bread trays of this period seems to be the existence of simple straight walls.

The flat bread trays of the Fifth Dynasty acquired the typical shape with raised walls, slightly articulated to short-ledged base and flat, bevelled or inwards bevelled rim (Junker 1950: Abb. 6/B; Kaiser 1969: 76–77, LII).

The largest assemblage of bread trays (identified as *terrines*) comes from the excavations in the cemeteries of Balat (*cf.* Valloggia 1986: 135–140, Pl. LXXXVIII: nos. 130, 132, 155 and 260; Minault-Gout – Deleuze 1992: 175–180, Pl. 50, nos. 2–5; Castel – Pantalacci – Cherpion 2001: 124, C25–30; Castel – Pantalacci 2005: 545, C80–83 and 551, C139–140) and the settlement structures of Ayn Asil (Soukiassian – Wuttmann – Pantalacci 1990: 116–117, Pl. 36: nos. 127–132; Soukiassian – Wuttmann – Pantalacci 2002: 506, Fig. 346), both dated to the terminal Sixth Dynasty. There were several variations of the bread trays, differing in the shape of the walls (predominantly concave with a short ledge, less frequently perpendicular, straight and a few with a long-ledged base), the general shape (round or oval) and the shape of the rim (the most common was a flat bevelled rim, there were only a few examples of simple

flat rim and inwards bevelled rim). The function of these flat trays is considered to be purely cultic, intended for libations (*e.g.* Castel – Pantalacci – Cherpion 2001: 211).

At the cemeteries of Abusir South and Centre, only relatively few bread trays were found. They were divided into two morphological groups: F-4a (low *ḥprt* bread trays) and F-4b (tall *sṯt* bread trays). Their occurrence at Abusir is limited to the late Fifth and Sixth Dynasty. As an example, a few specimens each were found in the tomb of Werkaure at Abusir Centre (AC 26; see Arias Kytarová 2014b: Figs. 4.64 and 4.65). Low bread trays were represented by four examples. In most cases, it was possible to ascertain that they were oval rather than rounded and had flat rims bevelled inwards. They had heights of 5–7.5 cm. The taller *sṯt* bread trays were even rarer and were preserved in only two examples, with maximum diameters of 31 and 28 cm and heights of 9 and 10.5 cm.

In the complex of Princess Sheretnebtj, there were about 20 individual pieces of F-4 trays. The low *ḥprt* bread trays were uncovered *e.g.* in the area of the court and corridor, in the fill of Shaft 13, in the chapel of tomb AS 68b and in the chapel of tomb AS 68c and its Shaft 1, as well as Shaft 1 in AS 68d. Almost all the examples were rather large, with maximum diameters of 28–40 cm, and it was possible to ascertain that they were oval in shape. All were made of rough Nile silt clays such as Nile silt B2 or C and were left untreated on their outer surface. They reached heights of 4.4–7 cm and all had short-ledged bases (see Fig. 5.18). The taller *sṯt* bread trays from complex AS 68 were attested in even fewer examples and only two of them were preserved in full profile. They exhibited large dimensions, with maximum diameters reaching around 40 cm and heights of 9–13 cm. The shapes included long-ledged and short-ledged bases and either simple concave or irregularly concave walls that were the result of hand-made production. In the cases when the rims were preserved, they were most commonly bevelled inwards (type R6) or outwards (R3), with one indented bevelled rim (R7; see Fig. 5.16).

### 5.6 PLATTERS (CLASS P)

The class of platters is quite common at the cemeteries of Abusir South, although in a large majority of cases, they are preserved in only small fractions of the full diameter. In the complex of Princess Sheretnebt, we uncovered 1,147 fragments of platters, out of which 750 pieces were diagnostic. They added up to a minimum of 355 individual vessels, making thus 8.52% of the whole assemblage (see Table 1.1). In some contexts, most notably the shaft deposits, the full or almost full diameters of the vessels were able to be reconstructed from their fragments (see *e.g.* Figs. 3.110, 3.249–3.250, 3.252–3.253).

| Context             | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | %      |
|---------------------|-------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Court and staircase | p     | 211                                    | 4    | 3     | 4                                | 75                          | 297                     | 221                               | 124                    | 34,9%  |
| Corridor            | p     | 59                                     | 2    | 6     | -                                | 32                          | 99                      | 67                                | 21                     | 5,9%   |
| Tomb AS 68a         | P     | 95                                     | 1    | -     | 1                                | 91                          | 188                     | 97                                | 54                     | 15,2%  |
| Tomb AS 68b         | p     | 9                                      | -    | -     | -                                | 2                           | 11                      | 9                                 | 8                      | 2,3%   |
| Tomb AS 68c         | p     | 148                                    | 5    | -     | 2                                | 38                          | 193                     | 155                               | 85                     | 23,9%  |
| Tomb AS 68d         | p     | 173                                    | 3    | 21    | 4                                | 158                         | 359                     | 201                               | 63                     | 17,7%  |
| Total               |       | 695                                    | 15   | 30    | 11                               | 396                         | 1147                    | 750                               | 355                    | 100,0% |

**Table 5.5 Amounts of platters and their fragments from the complex of Sheretnebt**

The largest number came from the area of the open court, often from contexts associated with high counts of stands as well, and interpreted as refuse from cultic activities. Among the tombs, AS 68c brought us the most platters, followed by tombs AS 68d and AS 68a (Table 5.5). Regarding individual contexts, after the court, the shaft deposits contained the most platters, especially Shaft 1 in AS 68a (especially when adding the platters from the secondary debris in its burial chamber that actually originated from the shaft, see also *Chapter 3.3.2*), Shaft 1 in AS 68c and Shaft 1 in AS 68d – not by incident, the most important male burials in the whole cemetery.



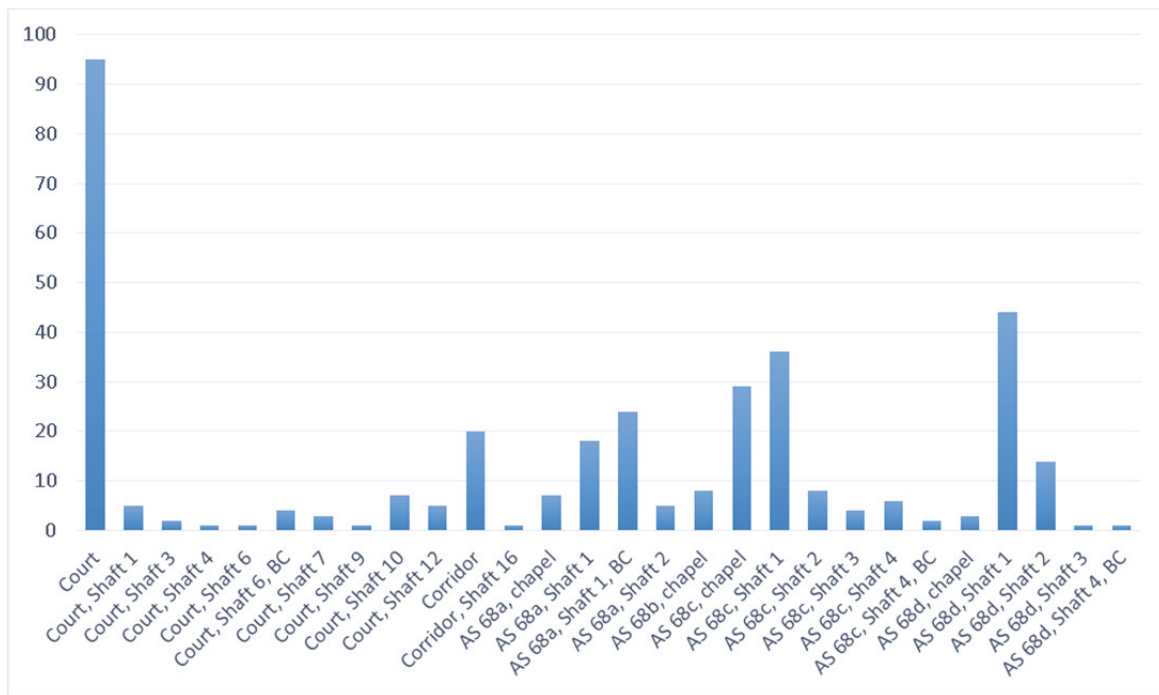


Chart 5.10 Frequencies of platters in the complex of Sheretnebtj

From the point of morphology, platters are open vessels and, therefore, are quite often placed as a type under the class of bowls. In other cases, this class is omitted altogether and all platters are sorted among flat *prt* trays. In reality, many platters do not bear any traces of fire, are manufactured of much finer fabrics (e.g. Nile silt B1 and B2) than would be expected in bread trays (most commonly made of Nile silt C), and also have much finer walls. Consequently, the present author decided to differentiate between platters and bread trays on the basis of their shape, fabric and especially surface treatment consisting in red-slipped inner surfaces, as it is a feature very commonly found with simple offering platters. Bread trays had no reason to be slipped inside, nor is such slipping on the inner surface attested with other securely identified bread form groups, such as *bd3* bread moulds F-1 and F-2 (see also *supra*). In general, bread trays should be taller and made of a rougher substance (see Fig. 5.18, F-4). Their surfaces (being a common cooking ware) are usually left coarse and often bear traces of fire. Thus, the only real bread trays seem to be the deep, thick-walled dishes with flat bases, usually concave walls, flat or bevelled rims (analogical to the large bread forms) and sometimes also grooved inner surfaces.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, platters are identified as very

<sup>22</sup> For the typology of F-4 bread trays and their discussion, see *Chapter 5.5.4*.

wide and low unrestricted vessels with a flat base, very often covered with red slip on the inner surface (*i.e.* on the upper side), which bear no traces of cooking. Given their usual proximity to stands of all shapes and sizes, but predominantly tall hour-glass shaped stands S-1, it is safe to assume that many platters served as a sort of table in combination with these stands.

Considering the often very fragmentary state of platters and the large number of their often small fragments that require time-consuming reconstruction, they are very often documented only very rudimentarily. Most publications list only several shapes in their list of ceramic finds, providing only minimum comparative material for morphological and chronological studies. So far, the most detailed typology of platters has been offered by Rzeuska for the pottery from the cemetery of Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: 398–399), which became the basis for the Abusir classification. As a result, platters are defined as vessels with a *Vessel Index* of more than 700, typically hand-built and having a flat, pounded bottom and coiled walls. The majority are made of coarse Nile clay B2 or C, although B1 might occur as well. Some types are often red-slipped or white washed.

In the Abusir classification, the class of platters was further divided into several morphological groups, depending on the shape of walls, rim and base, as well as general quality (see Arias Kytarová 2014b: 210–227). Not all groups were represented in the complex of Sheretnebtj.

By far the most common was the group with concave walls and a distinctive inner groove under the rim (P-3). Almost half of all the platters belonged to diverse forms of this group, some having simple concave walls and some a slightly accentuated base, with other differences lying in the exact shape of the groove. As a rule, P-3 platters were almost always covered with a layer of red slip on the inner surface and sometimes also the upper part of the outer rim, despite being made of rough fabrics such as Nile silt B2 or C with visible organic inclusions. The groove was made with a simple tool, such as a stick, and runs along the inner side of the rim. Their bases are pounded, often left highly irregular and their outer walls are only roughly smoothed or untreated. In some cases, finger imprints were visible on the lower part of the walls. Due to the fact that several P-3 platters were able to be reconstructed to either full diameter or at least a large portion of it, it is possible to state with certainty that they

had a round shape rather than an oval one. Analogical platters have been uncovered *e.g.* in the mastaba of Hedjetnebu at Abusir Center (Verner – Callender 2002: Fig. K18 and Plate XIII, Kf8), as well as in other Fifth Dynasty tombs of Abusir South, such as the anonymous tomb AS 47 (Arias Kytarová 2011a: Fig. 21, 44.ASW.07 and 50.ASW.07) and the tomb of Kaiemtjenenet (Arias Kytarová 2011b: Fig. 6.1, 8-1.AS38.2010). Numerous examples came from the tomb of Prince Werkaure at Abusir Centre (Arias Kytarová 2014b: Fig. 4.80–4.81). Other parallels include finds from the mastabas of Giza (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 132, 38-6-10).

Platters with concave walls and flaring rims (P-4) were represented by only five pieces, almost all coming from tomb AS 68c, either from the fill of the chapel or Shaft 1 attributed to the husband of Princess Sheretnebtj. They fall into three main types, namely rougher ones with slightly flaring rims (P-4a), fine thin-walled platters with flaring rims (P-4b) and finally very fine flaring platters with short-ledged bases (P-4c). Examples of this group are either nicely wet-smoothed (especially P-4a) or, more commonly, red-slipped on their inner walls and sometimes even on the whole outer surface (*e.g.* 57-45.AS68c.2013). They generally belong among the finer platters from the point of their material (Nile silt B1 and B2), thinner well-coiled walls and the above-mentioned surface treatment with a slip. Similar examples from the Fifth Dynasty have been found during excavations at Abusir South and Centre (Bárta 2006: LIII, ACc1; Arias Kytarová 2010c: Fig. 4.4.14, 12.AS52.09). So far, most examples were uncovered in the tomb of Prince Werkaure (AC 26; Arias Kytarová 2014b: Figs. 4.82–4.83).

The group of platters with a ledged rim (P-7) was very rare in the complex of Sheretnebtj, with only two attested pieces, one from Shaft 1 in tomb AS 68c (57-54.AS68c.2013) and one from the burial chamber in Shaft 4 of AS 68d (86-2.AS68d.2014). Both were preserved only as rim and upper body fragments, with a long-ledged flat rim and open body that was red-slipped on both sides. They were both medium-sized, with maximum diameters of 25 and 28 cm. Other examples preserved in full profile from Abusir show a medium-tall platter with open walls, maximum diameter of around 30–35 cm and a height of 5–6 cm. Their short-ledged rims can have different angles, but are most commonly bevelled

outwards or flat. It is evident that deep platters of this kind had higher capacities than other types and were meant to store or serve a larger amount of food or possibly liquid food – in that case, the red slip surface treatment commonly preserved on the inner side might have served as a means of water-proofing. The largest number of P-7 platters was uncovered in the tomb of Prince Werkaure at Abusir Centre (Arias Kytarová 2014b: Figs. 4.84–4.86).

One of the most common groups in the complex of Sheretnebty was that of very low platters (P-9), preserved in almost 20 examples. These can be divided into two main types, namely one with simple straight walls (P-9a) and one with a short-ledged base (P-9b). Both types are very low, with heights between 2.2–3.2 cm and maximum diameters of around 27–32 cm. Almost all fragments were equipped with a wide inner groove. As far as their spatial distribution is concerned, most pieces came from the open pillared court, the chapel of tomb AS 68c and Shaft 1 in the same tomb.

There were only three examples of platters with knob feet (group P-12), none preserved in full profile. The shape is usually that of a deeper platter with open walls, a short-ledged flat or bevelled rim and a flat base with knob feet. Available analogies as well as complete P-12 platters from the recent excavations at Abusir Centre show us that these feet were usually in threes, positioned in a triangle on the base. Each of the preserved knob feet from complex AS 68 was different, including a rounded conical (71-1.AS68.2013), truncated conical (51-25.AS68a.2013) and a wide truncated foot (21-33.AS68b.2012). P-12 platters are usually red-slipped, most commonly only on the inner surface and the rim, although some examples from the tomb of Queen Khentkaus III also exhibited red-slipping on the outer walls. It was not possible to estimate dimensions for these particular examples, but the ones from other Abusir tombs usually reach a maximum diameter up to 35 cm and height of 8–10 cm. Attested parallels include most notably the yet unpublished ceramic material from some late Fifth Dynasty tombs of Abusir, such as the mastaba of Nefershepes (AS 67) and the mastaba of Queen Khentkaus III (AC 30). Much more fragmented examples were also uncovered in the tomb of Prince Werkaure (AC 26, Arias Kytarová 2014b: Fig. 4.87) and the tomb of Ptahshepes (Charvát 1981: Pl. 4, H250 and I400). Several examples were also attested from the mortuary temple of King Menkaure at Giza (Reisner 1931: Fig. 78, no. 8), the

mortuary temple of King Raneferef (Bárta 2006: XLII) and the sun temple of Weserkaf at Abu Ghurab (Kaiser 1969: 71–72, XLII). It is noteworthy that besides a full-sized platter with knob feet from the chapel of Shepesuptah (AS 68b), his burial chamber contained an elaborate, high-quality miniaturized version of this type (see Fig. 3.131).

The chronological span of platters is very difficult to state, as they were usually of secondary significance to the archaeologists and only a handful of them are published in detail, thus no development in their morphology can be stated with certainty. It is hoped that future publications will provide us with more comparative material to establish some chronological sequence of types.

### 5.7 MINIATURE VESSELS (CLASS M)

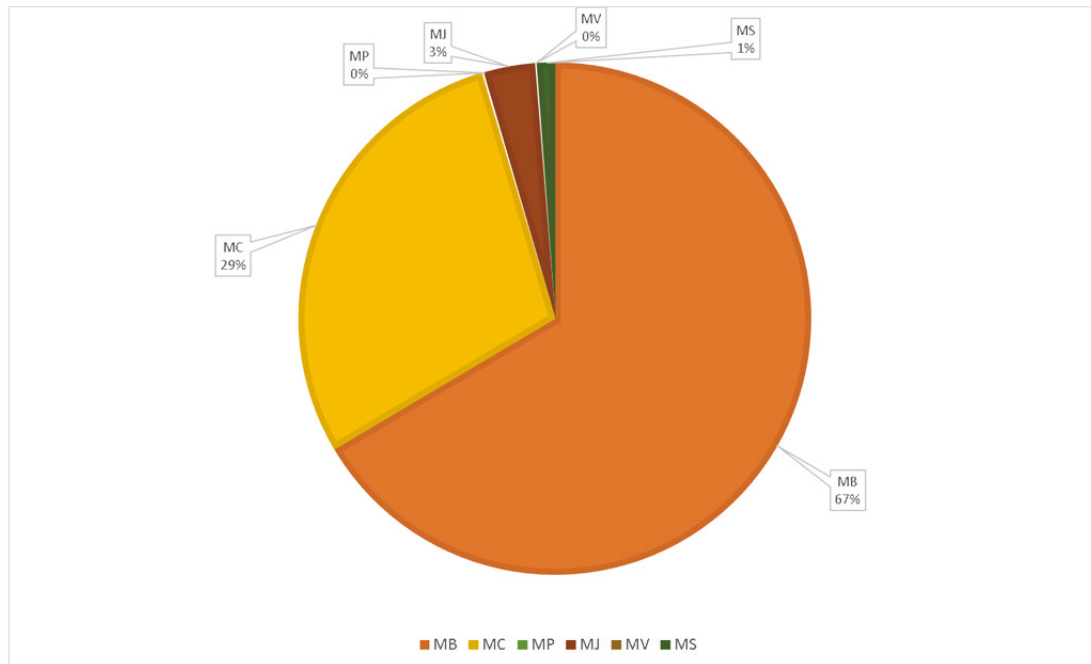
Miniature vessels were the second-most common ceramic class from the complex of Sheretnebtu. We uncovered altogether 713 individual pieces that made up 17.11% of the whole assemblage (see Table 1.1). Almost half of them came from tomb AS 68c, with another third from the area of the open pillared court (Table 5.6). The fewest miniatures were uncovered in tombs AS 68b and AS 68d and the corridor of AS 68.

| Context             | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | %      |
|---------------------|-------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Court and staircase | M     | 153                                    | 23   | 23    | 1                                | -                           | 200                     | 200                               | 198                    | 27,8%  |
| Corridor            | M     | 30                                     | 2    | 3     | -                                | -                           | 35                      | 35                                | 35                     | 4,9%   |
| Tomb AS 68a         | M     | 62                                     | 3    | 6     | 2                                | -                           | 74                      | 74                                | 73                     | 10,2%  |
| Tomb AS 68b         | M     | 26                                     | 10   | 4     | 1                                | -                           | 41                      | 41                                | 34                     | 4,8%   |
| Tomb AS 68c         | M     | 225                                    | 48   | 61    | 11                               | 8                           | 353                     | 348                               | 328                    | 46,0%  |
| Tomb AS 68d         | M     | 39                                     | 3    | 2     | 1                                | -                           | 45                      | 45                                | 45                     | 6,3%   |
| Total               |       | 535                                    | 89   | 99    | 16                               | 8                           | 748                     | 743                               | 713                    | 100,0% |

**Table 5.6 Amounts of miniature vessels from the complex of Princess Sheretnebtu**

A large majority of the miniatures constituted miniature bowls (474 examples, making almost 67%), followed by cups (206 pieces, 29%). All the other groups were represented by less than 3% each, such as miniaturized jars with only 23 examples, stands with 8 pieces and one example each of a miniaturized platter and a vase (see Chart 5.11). Such a typological division is not surprising and was attested in numerous other tombs, such as lately in the tomb of

Prince Werkaure (AC 26) and the official Kakaibaef (AC 29) at Abusir Centre (see also Arias Kytarová 2014b: 228). The most surprising is the large presence of several less usual forms, such as the miniaturized beer jars (MJ-1) and squat jars (MJ-3) and the very finely-made miniature platter (MP).



**Chart 5.11 Frequencies of different groups of miniature vessels**

As far as the spatial distribution is concerned, miniature vessels were uncovered in almost all contexts, most notably in the fills of burial shafts and the debris of the chapels. Their largest numbers came from the area of the open court (see Chart 5.12), especially its south-east part, from layers also containing a considerable amount of stands and platters, which can be very likely interpreted as refuse from cultic activity. Due to the horizontal stratification of these particular layers, these were not daily offerings connected to structure AS 68, given the height of about 1 m above the floor of the court. Rather, it should be seen as secondary refuse from some neighbouring, higher positioned tombs whose chapels were on an access route, *e.g.* the tomb of Ptahhotep, later structures of AS 66 or even the anonymous tomb AS 31. A similar function can be attributed to the large amount of miniature vessels uncovered in the debris of tomb AS 68c.

Miniatures were also unearthed in a number of burial shafts, most prominently Shaft 7 in the court, both shafts in tomb AS 68a and Shafts 1, 2 and 4 in AS 68c. In some cases, miniature vessels were also uncovered in the secondary debris in the burial chambers that undoubtedly originated from the shafts (*e.g.* the burial chamber of Duaptah in Shaft 1 of AS 68a). Some of these contexts are peculiar in consisting of a large percentage of rougher, hand-made miniatures rather than the traditional wheel-made examples (see also *infra*).

Small-sized vessels as an intentional part of the burial goods were uncovered only in two contexts. In the floor layer of the burial chamber of Shepespuptah (AS 68b), we found the already mentioned exquisitely-made miniature platter that very likely belonged to his tomb equipment, given its fine quality and place of deposition (see Fig. 3.131). Such finely-made miniatures that are perfect copies of large-sized vessels were a common part of burial goods in the middle part of the Old Kingdom, especially during the mid-Fourth and early Fifth Dynasty (see also *infra*).

The second case was the intact burial chamber of a young boy in Shaft 3 of AS 68d, dating to the late Fifth Dynasty, that contained 11 roughly-made miniaturized squat jars, some even with remains of ashes and seeds (Fig. 3.285, see also *Chapter 3.6.4*). Similar miniaturized jars continue in such a use until the end of the Old Kingdom, as can be attested in the burial chamber of the anonymous tomb AS 41 at Abusir South (yet unpublished) or, in larger numbers, in various burials of Qubbit el-Hawa (see *e.g.* Edel – Seyfried – Vieler 2008: Figs. 8–9, 13–14, Abb. 4–33, 100, *etc.*)

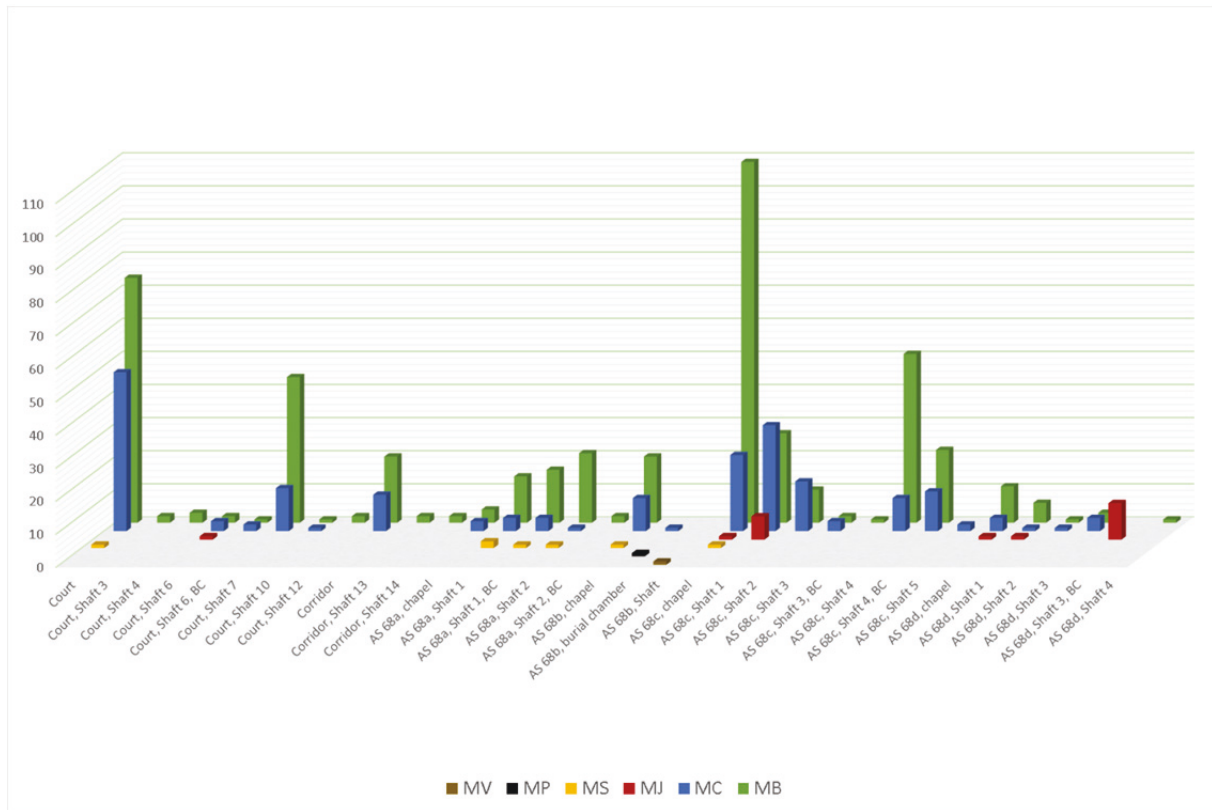


Chart 5.12 Spatial distribution of different miniature vessel groups

In general terms, the class of miniature vessels is one of the most common and encompasses all kinds of small-sized vessels. Exact identification and definition are very diverse, and can be found as “Modelgefäße”, “Scheingefäße” and their English counterparts, such as *e.g.* “dummy vessels”. They are abundant in Old Kingdom tombs and cemeteries, especially in the cultic spaces but, exceptionally, also in shafts and burial compartments. However, it is important to stress the fact that diverse small vessels did not necessarily share the same functions and designations. Susan Allen (2006) defined two main types of small-sized vessels, namely models (seen as votive vessels without any functional ability) and miniatures (that can be compared to full-sized vessels). However, as the present author already suggested in her Master thesis (Kytnarová 2009: 104) and later publications (*e.g.* Arias Kytnarová 2014b: 227–250), she would like to refine these categories and differentiate between three main terms (for a more extensive argumentation, see *e.g.* Arias Kytnarová – Jirásková – Odlar *forthcoming*). Model vessels are understood as those that were never meant as real containers and reflected large-size vessels only outwardly and often in a stylized manner. They



are most commonly represented by stone examples that have only shallow inner volumes. Contrary to these, the miniature vessels were produced as real containers of symbolic amounts of offerings. They were also highly stylized and were not copies of large-sized vessels. They occur in great numbers in funerary contexts, both in the afterlife equipment in the burial chamber and in the votive offerings of the funerary cult and are mainly found as ceramics, although other materials do occur as well. Finally, the so-called miniaturized vessels are intentional and often exact copies of large-size vessels, and also functional pieces meant to hold small amounts of offerings. These were most usually made of stone and copper, although a small percentage of ceramic miniaturized vessels is also attested. As a result, only miniature and miniaturized vessels shall be discussed in the following chapter.

The origins of a systematic production of ceramic miniature vessels are usually dated to the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty (*cf.* Faltings 1989: Abb. 7; Alexanian 1999; Bárta 1995b), although some examples of very small vessels appeared even in the Predynastic Period (Swain 1995; see also Arias Kytarová – Jirásková – Odler *forthcoming*). During the Fourth and Fifth Dynasty, they tend to be slightly larger and well made, sometimes even covered with red slip (Reisner – Smith 1955: Figs. 87, 88, 90 and 99). In the case of the highest elite, often including direct relatives of kings, they are sometimes also complemented by miniaturized vessels, namely smaller copies of actual large-size vessels, in particular flaring bowls, spouted bowls, bag-shaped jars, collar beer jars, neckless jars and other types (most notably the burial of Queen Hetepheres, Reisner – Smith 1955). During the later Fifth Dynasty, the number of small, more carelessly produced ceramic miniature vessels was greatly increased, but rather than being part of the goods positioned in the burial chamber, they become the most common votive offering. From this period, we find hundreds up to thousands of them in the vicinity of the tombs' offering places, such as chapels or cult niches (e.g. Junker 1950: 19–20; Arias Kytarová 2014b: 228, Table 4.13 and Chart 4.3). This practice continued well until the end of the Sixth Dynasty, although in decreased numbers. During the terminal Old Kingdom, while it is very uncommon to find even a few miniature vessels in the burial chambers (such as e.g. Bárta 2009: Fig. 6.3.162), they are still attested in high numbers in the superstructure areas of the tombs. It is clear that by that time the high officials had the necessary means to provide for

much finer and costly miniature vessels, particularly made of copper (e.g. Radwan 1983: Taf. 29-31; Arias Kytmarová – Jirásková – Odler *forthcoming*). The only small-sized ceramic vessels that do appear in greater numbers are rough, hand-made miniaturized versions of beer jars, squat jars and other storage vessels (see e.g. Edel – Seyfried – Vieler 2008: Figs. 8–9, 13–14, Abb. 4–33, 100, *etc.*)

### 5.7.1 MINIATURE BOWLS (MB)

Among the miniature vessels, the bowls are amongst the most common ceramic group. As a rule, hundreds of them can be found around the tombs of the Old Kingdom. In some cases, such as during the excavation of the official Kakaibaef in Abusir Centre (AC 29), several thousand pieces were collected in the area east of the chapel, resulting very likely from long-term cultic activity in this tomb (yet unpublished). In comparison, the complex of Princess Sheretnebtj brought to light much lesser amounts and the difference is also striking in other details – in the tomb of Kakaibaef, part of the assemblage consists of relatively large, very well-made and red-slipped miniature bowls and cups. In the complex of Sheretnebtj, a large percentage of all the miniature vessels was surprisingly not wheel-made but hand-made, also built from a slightly rougher material. The exact reason behind the hand-made production of miniature vessels is unclear. Many of them come from the fills of burial shafts that otherwise encompasses typical late Fifth Dynasty ceramics. Thus, it is unlikely that they were some degenerated Sixth Dynasty replacements of proper wheel-made miniatures, although this theory cannot be immediately refused (see also *infra*).

At Abusir South, nine different types of miniature bowls were identified by the present author so far (see Fig. 5.19), namely:

- MB-1: wheel-made miniature bowls with convex to open walls,
- MB-2: wheel-made miniature bowls with concave walls,
- MB-3: wheel-made miniature bowls with an accentuated foot,
- MB-4: large wheel-made miniature bowls, often covered with red slip,
- MB-5: very small degenerate wheel-made miniature bowls,
- MB-6: hand-made miniature bowls with a rounded base,

- MB-7: hand-made miniature bowls with a flat base,
- MB-8: wheel-made “beaker” miniature bowls,
- MB-9: hand-made wide and low miniature bowls.

Each of these types was differentiated on the basis of shape, material, surface treatment and manufacturing technique. The three hand-made types (MB-6, MB-7 and MB-9) are present in high numbers and despite the lack of such examples being present in the published material of the Old Kingdom, it is very likely that they were rather ignored or avoided in documentation rather than completely absent. This may be for several reasons – miniature bowls, even those wheel-made, are often found in thousands in heavily disturbed contexts, such as areas of the chapels or refuse areas around the tombs. They are commonly documented only in a fraction of their real numbers, being considered insignificant both from the point of chronological relevance and as aesthetically pleasing vessels. The hand-made miniature bowls, even if present, could have been seen as some degenerate or misfired, badly manufactured products and ignored as such. However, due to their high presence in complex AS 68, the present author decided to explore their relevance and possible social or cultic meaning in relation to their wheel-made relatives.

Among the wheel-made miniature bowls, ones with simple straight to convex walls (MB-1) and with concave walls (MB-2) were most frequent. The first type was attested in higher numbers *e.g.* in the chapels of AS 68b and AS 68c, as well as Shaft 7 in the courtyard and Shaft 4 in tomb AS 68c. In all the other contexts, only a few pieces were found. MB-2 was found in higher numbers in the debris of the open courtyard and the corridor, the chapel of AS 68d, the chapel of AS 68c and its Shaft 4 and both shafts of AS 68a.

All the other types are much less represented. As an example, the larger, finely-made miniature bowls that are commonly treated with a red slip (MB-4) were attested in only six individual examples, found one each in the open courtyard and in its Shaft 12, the corridor, the fill of the chapel in AS 68b, the burial chamber of Duaptah (AS 68a) and Shaft 1 of AS 68c. Only three pieces were preserved in full profile, but even the fragmentary examples show us much larger dimensions when compared to other types, such as maximum diameters of 5.9–

7.3 cm and heights of 3.5–5.6 cm. Previous exploration at Abusir brought us a number of such larger, red-slipped bowls from the burial chamber of Kaaper (AS 1, see Bárta 2001: Pl. LXXIIIb and LXXIVa) and from the cultic refuse east of the entrance to the tomb of Kakaibaef (see Fig. 4.64). In comparison, the examples from the complex of Sheretnebtj are much smaller (bowls from the tomb of Kaaper could reach a maximum diameter of 10.5–13 cm) and are much more heterogeneous in their sizes and shapes (see also Fig. 5.19).

In contrast, miniature bowls of type MB-5 are the metrically smallest attested type (Fig. 5.19). The bowls can have tubular or slightly open walls but are extremely small, often called a “degenerate type”. They often reach a height of only 1–1.5 cm and a maximum diameter of around 2–3 cm. The smallest example so far had a maximum diameter of 2.3 cm and height of 0.9 cm. The largest amount of them came from the fill of chapel in AS 68c and from the shaft of Nefer (Shaft 1 in AS 68d).

Hand-made miniature bowls with a rounded base (MB-6, see Fig. 5.19 and 3.149) are very unusual, as their shape resembles that of miniature bowls made of limestone or travertine (see *e.g.* Jirásková 2014: Figs. 8.1–8.3, bowls with round bases). Their largest occurrence was in tomb AS 68a, where they were attested in several pieces in both shafts, as well as the secondary debris in the burial chamber of Duaptah (see Fig. 3.106, row 5 and 6). In all the contexts, they were accompanied by regular, wheel-made miniature bowls; therefore, it is unlikely that they were part of the assemblage as unprofessional, hand-made substitutions for wheel-made miniatures. It is more likely that they were supposed to imitate their more precious counterparts made in stone.

The other hand-made miniature bowls, those with a flat or flat indented base (MB-7) are also very rare (Figs. 5.18 and 5.150). Their largest occurrence (at least 17 examples) was uncovered in the fill of Shaft 3 in the open courtyard. They were also present in larger numbers in the above-mentioned contexts from tomb AS 68a (both shafts and the burial chamber of Duaptah), together with the MB-6 bowls. Another concentration was discovered in Shaft 4 of tomb AS 68c and its burial chamber. The morphological origin of these bowls can also be seen as an attempt to imitate vessels made in stone materials, as similar limestone

bowls were uncovered *e.g.* in the burial chamber of Nefermin (Jirásková 2014: Fig. 8.2, no. 40 and Fig. 8.5, nos. 68, 71).

### 5.7.2 MINIATURE CUPS (MC)

So-called miniature cups are usually the second-most common group of miniature vessels, and in complex AS 68, they made up almost a third of all miniatures (see Table 5.20). On the other hand, the variability of miniature cups is much greater – in a single context, while there are usually more miniature bowls, they fall only into two or three types. The cups, while there are fewer of them, usually represent a much wider typological variety (more types, forms and variations). This great variability, but at the same time occurrence of the same types in different tombs, was not simply a result of incidental making.

The types include:

- MC-1: miniature cups with a simple rim that could be either an open, half-closed rim or contracted rim,
- MC-2: miniature cups with carinated or recurved rim – all possible forms, namely with the greatest diameter positioned either at rim or shoulder or with equal rim and shoulder diameter; the shoulder can be either smooth or rounded,
- MC-3: with modelled rim – the most variable, many different forms; rim can be thickened, ledged, rolled, angular *etc.*,
- MC-4: type with a groove on the outer body,
- MC-5: type with a plastic ledge on the outer body.

One of the obvious problems with these vessels is that there are no large-size equivalents to their shapes (with very few and rare exceptions).<sup>23</sup> Thus, one of the important questions considering the miniature cups is, where did their shapes and their great heterogeneity come from? The general shape of a miniature cup, with a differently modelled

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<sup>23</sup> One such exception is the existence of beer jar type J-1i, which often resembles a large miniature cup due to its splayed foot. However, it is important to realize that this type of beer jar is attested later than the standard miniature cups, therefore it is possible that it actually represents a large-sized imitation of miniature cups.

upper body but always with a tall, splayed foot, has attracted little attention as it does not seem to have a direct model in full-size vessels. Therefore, their functional identification has been unclear as well – what did they represent and what were they envisioned for?

The present author would like to propose a different approach to the question of the morphological origins of the miniature cups, namely to interpret them not as copies of individual full-size vessels but as miniaturized versions of a combination of ritual vessels used in the funerary cult. The basic notion that “some miniature vessels seem to represent bowls on stands” is not entirely new and was expressed in passing *e.g.* by Reisner (Reisner – Smith 1955: 77). However, the present author realized that rather than “some miniature cups”, this rule applies to all of them, as it would explain not only their function, but also their great morphological variability. During the offerings, food was very likely placed in bowls situated on tall stands in front of the false doors or cult niches. In some cases, such examples are even provided by archaeological finds *in situ*, *e.g.* a stand and bowl from the chapel in the tomb of Merefnebef (Rzeuska 2006: CD, photo 52) and stands from the tomb of Gegi in Abusir South (Fig. 4.56; also Bárta 2001: 126–128), also recently a tall stand in front of the false door in the tomb of Sebikai (Fig. 4.57; for a detailed analysis, see *Chapter 4.4.1*).

In this scenario, “miniature cups” should be seen as a means of a functionalist simplification and the ever-present ancient Egyptian practicality, as they replaced real offerings consisting of actual food and full-size vessels. In such a cult, the variety in the shapes of the cups reflects the variety in the bowls, such as carinated bowls, bowls with bent-sided walls, with a contracted rim, or even beakers (Figs. 5.21–5.22). As such, the variability of the carinated bowls (*i.e.* having angular versus rounded shoulders and the precise shape of the rim, whether flaring or straight) would affect the final shape of the miniature cup (Fig. 5.23). In some cases, the resulting shape lets us assume that such a combination was envisioned also for jars, and that some of the cups actually represent diverse beer jars or ovoid jars on low stands.<sup>24</sup> Thus, miniature cups can be seen as a further simplification and economic approach to the funerary cult.

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<sup>24</sup> A detailed paper with a proposal of diverse combinations of morphological origins of particular forms of miniature cups is in preparation by the present author.

### 5.7.3 MINIATURE VASES (MV)

Miniature vases are one of the least common miniature groups produced in pottery, at least at the site of Abusir. They usually have a slim, almost tubular body with a flattened modelled rim and a flat splayed base (see Fig. 5.24). As a rule, they are predominant in the earlier parts of the Old Kingdom, with wider occurrence at Giza, and are undoubtedly designed to copy their stone counterparts (see *infra*). In pottery, they are present only until the last third of the Fifth Dynasty in few numbers. One of larger assemblages attested at Abusir South comes from the anonymous tomb AS 47; there, altogether seven intact examples were found in the debris of the burial chamber of Shaft 1 (Fig. 5.24; also Arias Kytarová 2011a: Fig. 29), dated to the second half of the Fifth Dynasty. They were all wheel-made and covered with a thin red slip on the outer walls and the upper rim. They can be divided into two forms, depending on the formation of the rim (Fig. 5.25, two on left).

An exceptionally beautiful example was uncovered in the fill of Shaft 1 in tomb AS 81 at Abusir South (6-1.AS81.2015, Fig. 5.26). It was relatively tall, egg-shell thin and covered with a highly polished thick slip of light orange colour. Unlike the previous examples, it was made of Marl clay A1. In its general quality and morphology, it resembles large miniatures of the Fourth and early Fifth Dynasty and very likely originated from the early Fifth Dynasty tomb of Kaaper.<sup>25</sup>

This ceramic type is more or less an exact copy of the so-called ointment vessels made in various stone, as well as their stone miniatures in the course of the First to Fourth Dynasty. As such, they are prevalent in the earlier part of the Old Kingdom (*e.g.* Petrie – Mackay – Wainwright 1910: Pl. XIX, esp. 1, 6 and 8). Until the end of the Old Kingdom, they are found representing several or all vessels on the tablets of seven sacred oils (*e.g.* Bárta 2009: Fig. 6.3.161). In the Memphite necropolis, one can name typologically very similar examples in stone both in full size and in miniature form, which come from the tomb of Hetepheres and

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<sup>25</sup> Due to the fact that Shaft 1 of tomb AS 81 is situated directly under the slope of the main shaft of Kaaper (AS 1), and the manufacture, quality and general make of this example is identical to the assemblage of miniature vessels from the burial chamber of this official, it is most likely that it also belonged to his burial equipment before it was taken out during the clearing of the shaft by the robbers, and in the course of subsequent post-depositional processes it slid into the open shaft of AS 81.

other tombs (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 135–137, no. 1196; see also Hassan 1948: 28, no. 3). Miniature ointment jars made in stone were also uncovered in the burial chambers of the late Fifth Dynasty tombs of priest Neferinpu at Abusir South (Jirásková 2014: Fig. 8.6, upper row) and Princess Khekeretnebtj at Abusir Centre (Verner – Callender 2002: 36, Fig. B26). Among ceramics, they are much rarer and the examples are limited to Fourth and Fifth Dynasty contexts, especially from Giza (Junker 1929: Fig. 15, no. 3; Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 102).

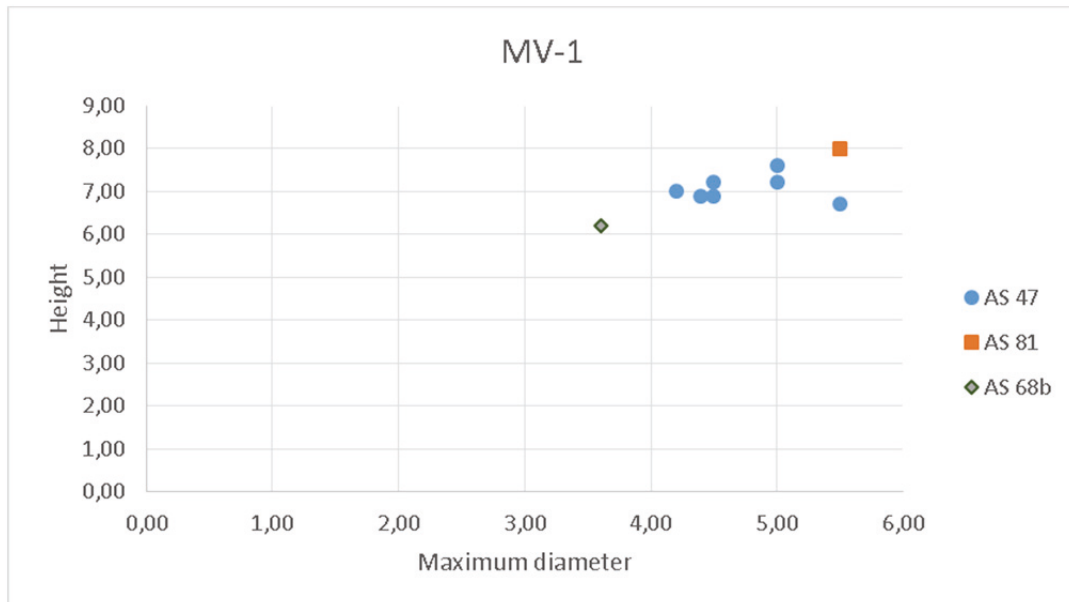
| Ceramic no.     | Site         | MD  | BD  | H   | Surface treatment              | Dating                       |
|-----------------|--------------|-----|-----|-----|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 6a-1.AS81.2015  | Abusir South | 5.5 | 5   | 8   | red-slipped + polished outside | early Fifth Dynasty          |
| 2-10.AS47.2007  | Abusir South | 4.5 | 4   | 7.2 | red-slipped outside            | second half of Fifth Dynasty |
| 2-11.AS47.2007  | Abusir South | 4.2 | 4   | 7   | red-slipped outside            | second half of Fifth Dynasty |
| 2-12.AS47.2007  | Abusir South | 4.4 | 4   | 6.9 | red-slipped outside            | second half of Fifth Dynasty |
| 2-13.AS47.2007  | Abusir South | 4.5 | 4   | 6.9 | red-slipped outside            | second half of Fifth Dynasty |
| 2-14.AS47.2007  | Abusir South | 5.5 | 4.5 | 6.7 | red-slipped outside            | second half of Fifth Dynasty |
| 2-15.AS47.2007  | Abusir South | 5   | 5   | 7.2 | red-slipped outside            | second half of Fifth Dynasty |
| 2-16.AS47.2007  | Abusir South | 5   | 4.9 | 7.6 | red-slipped outside            | second half of Fifth Dynasty |
| 55-1.AS68b.2013 | Abusir South | 3.6 | 3.2 | 6.2 | red-slipped outside            | late Fifth Dynasty           |

**Table 5.7 Size comparison of miniature vases of type MV-1 from the excavations at Abusir South.**

There was only one example of a miniature vase from the whole complex of Princess Sheretnebtj. It was found fully intact in the fill of the rock-cut chapel of Shepesuptah in tomb AS 68b (55-1.AS68b.2013). It was made of Nile silt B1 and additionally covered with a thin red slip on the outside (see Fig. 3.132). Compared with the examples from the above-mentioned anonymous tomb AS 47, this vessel is slightly smaller and more finely made (see Table 5.7). It is possible that originally it belonged to the burial goods in the burial chamber of



Shepesuptah himself, due to the fact that this type is usually almost exclusive to burial compartments.



**Chart 5.13 A morphometric analysis of the available examples of miniature vases from Abusir South**

When comparing the available pieces from Abusir South (Chart 5.13), as well as those from Giza, a common trend towards decreasing size and quality during the course of the Old Kingdom can be observed. Such a development has already been theoretically observed in other miniature vessels, with large, red-slipped examples being attested most commonly during the Fourth Dynasty, with a tendency towards smaller, untreated vessels from the Fifth Dynasty onwards. Looking at precise dimensions and surface treatment might help us refine the chronological sequence of some types.

#### 5.7.4 HAND-MADE MINIATURIZED JARS (MJ)

As was previously mentioned, the present author takes care to distinguish between “standard” wheel-made miniatures, such as miniature bowls and cups, and miniaturized vessels, which are usually of much larger sizes and can be hand-made (see Fig. 5.27). The main differences lie not only in their metric comparisons, but also in their morphological origins. As a rule, the standard miniatures do not have any exact archetypes in the large-sized vessels; miniature

bowls could be inspired by flat-bottomed platters, but no exact forms in full size exist. The so-called miniature cups have an even more complicated origin and the author would like to propose that they represent a kind of “ritual simplification” by combining two vessels in one shape, namely either a bowl and a stand or a jar and a stand (for more details, see *Chapter 5.7.2*). Miniaturized vessels are, on the other hand, very often exact copies of large-sized vessels. So far, several main types have been discerned, consisting mainly of miniaturized beer jars, squat jars, barrel jars and other forms.

During the work with the ceramic assemblages in both Abusir South and Centre cemeteries, we uncovered several very small, roughly made jars that resembled beer jars both in their shape and their low quality of make. They were subsequently classified as so-called miniaturized beer jars (MJ-1). When studying the publications of the Old Kingdom, it became clear that the numbers of published miniaturized beer jars are very low, which might be due to the fact that they are either very rare or were often not collected, being aesthetically unappealing or considered of very low or negligible chronological value. Their basic characteristics are indeed those attributed to rough pottery – they are commonly made of coarse fabrics, such as Nile silt B2 or Marl C, hand-made and only roughly finished. Although they are sometimes designated as miniature beer jars, the term “model beer jars” also occurs.<sup>26</sup> All these jars, despite their rather small size, have a fully functional inner space and could have held a certain amount of substance. As they often represent exact miniaturized copies of full-sized vessels, they were designated as miniaturized beer jars.

There are examples predating the Old Kingdom – among those published, there are several miniaturized beer jars that were uncovered in the site of Helwan. One was found during Operation 2, in the burial chamber of Tomb 3, dating most likely to the Early Dynastic Period. The small jar had a conical body with a low straight neck and pointed base, with a diameter of 6.2cm (Köhler *et al.* 2005: Pl. 33, no. 8). At least nine other pieces of roughly conical to ovoid miniaturized beer jars were found in Operation 4/1 as part of a possible

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<sup>26</sup> This term was not adopted by the present author due to the fact that a “model” traditionally signifies a purely symbolic vessel, usually with only a symbolic inner volume or completely lacking such (see *supra*; also Arias Kytarová – Jirásková – Odler *forthcoming*).

intentional deposit underneath a wall (Köhler *et al.* 2014: Fig. 16, nos. 1–10). These correspond morphologically with full-sized beer jars from the same context, having ovoid to thimble-shaped bodies (see Köhler *et al.* 2014: Fig. 12, nos. 1–29).

From the period of the Old Kingdom, only very few pieces are attested in publications. Whether this fact reflects the real lack of miniaturized beer jars in this period or they simply went unnoticed, remains to be seen. So far, there are no examples from the Fourth Dynasty.<sup>27</sup> From the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, their numbers increase but they still constitute a very low percentage of the uncovered ceramic material.

At Abusir South and Centre, we found almost 20 different examples of these rough, hand-made and larger-sized miniature jars. The oldest example comes from the early Fifth Dynasty and was found in the tomb of Kaaper (AS 1), in front of the eastern façade of the tomb (10/AA/1991, see Fig. 5.28, left). It was rather tall, with a height of 11.5 cm and a rim diameter of 3.5 cm. This miniaturized beer jar had an irregular, almost spindle-shaped body with a pointed base and a high neck. There were also several examples dating to the second half of the Fifth Dynasty. In the tomb of Prince Werkaure (AC 26), one complete jar and a rim fragment of another one were found, both in the area east of the eastern wall of the mastaba (Arias Kytnarová 2014b: Figs. 4.99 and 4.96, nos. 50/AC26/08 and 93.AC26.09). The fully preserved piece had an ovoid body with a rounded base and a low straight neck, with a height of 10.7 cm and a rim diameter of 4.6 cm (Fig. 5.28, right).

Other examples of this type were found also in some Fifth Dynasty structures of Abusir South, including the court of Princess Sheretnebtj (AS 68), her rock-cut tomb (AS 68c), the tomb of Nefer (AS 68d) and the mastaba of Shepseskafankh (AS 39). Although these are not always identical, they share the main features, such as an ovoid body with partly pointed or sharply pointed base and a low neck. They are relatively large, with heights up to 12 cm. By far, most examples came from Shaft 1 in AS 68c, numbering at least seven individual pieces, which were rather homogenous (see Fig. 5.30). Two more examples were attested from

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<sup>27</sup> The one example found in a ritual shaft of Mastaba 24 in Meidum that was dated to the Fourth Dynasty by the excavator (Petrie 1892: Pls.I, XXX, no. 7) has been re-evaluated by Rzeuska, and the whole context was dated to the Sixth Dynasty on the basis of well-documented analogies from Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2011).

the chapel of tomb AS 68c, one fully preserved (43-116.AS68c.2013, see Fig. 5.28, middle), with a height of 10.5 cm. From the chapel of tomb AS 68d, we uncovered one miniaturized beer jar in full profile (40-27.AS68d.2012) with a height of 11.5 cm and a pointed base, and another one with similar shape and sizes, broken into two fragments, was found in the fill of Shaft 1 of the same tomb (77-8.AS68d.2014 and 79-15.AS68d.2014). Finally, a single piece came from the fill of Shaft 6 in the pillared court (70-2.AS68.2013), preserved only in the upper part of the body. When compared to full-sized beer jars, all these miniaturized jars can be seen as direct copies of Abusir type J-1b, namely beer jars with ovoid body, pointed base and low neck.

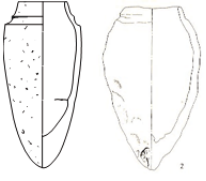
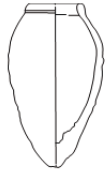
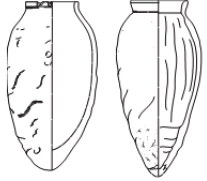
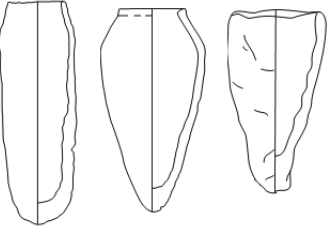


There are a few examples of possible miniaturized beer jars of the Sixth Dynasty, but these are slightly different in shape and reflect the development in large-sized vessels. From Giza, there is only one example documented in detail, which comes from the disturbed burial in Shaft 835 in the mastaba of Khentkawes, Priestess of Hathor (Junker 1944: Abb. 29b). This small, hand-made jar had an ovoid body with pointed base and rather wide open neck, with a height of 13 cm and rim diameter of 5.5 cm. The tomb was dated to the late Sixth Dynasty (Junker 1944: 88).

In the cemetery of Saqqara West, there were lumps of roughly ovoid clay that were identified as possible miniature beer jars. They were all uncovered in the so-called ritual shaft 34 in the complex of Pehenptah, dated to the first half of the reign of Pepy II (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 193). They can be seen as rough copies of large-size beer jars of the same period.<sup>28</sup> There were also other miniature vessels that could be modelled after beer jars, although they are not designated as such (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 162, nos. 832 and 833). They are distinguished from other miniatures in being hand-made and of different material (Marl C1). Judging from the examples from Abusir South, it can be presumed that these are also miniaturized beer jars. They have distinctive thimble-shaped bodies that can be seen as reflecting the shape of regular-sized beer jars of the Sixth to Eighth Dynasty, *i.e.* from Qau (Brunton 1928: Pl.

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<sup>28</sup> Namely full-size beer jars of Phase III (Rzeuska 2006: Table 1, forms 8 and 10).

LXXXVII, nos. 77C and 77D). Other analogies include both miniature and full-size beer jars from the terminal Old Kingdom uncovered at Akhmim and Balat that are discussed below.

|                        | Third/early Fourth Dynasty  | middle/late Fourth Dynasty  | Fifth Dynasty   | Sixth Dynasty   |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Full-sized beer jars   |  |  |  |  |
| Miniaturized beer jars |   |   |  |  |

**Table 5.8 Suggested morphological development of full-sized beer jars and their copies in miniaturized form**

Outside of the Memphite necropolis, a few examples of miniaturized beer jars were uncovered in the late Old Kingdom cemetery of Akhmim (Hope – McFarlane 2006: Fig. 16, A6–A9 and Pl. 7c, A8, front row, left). Their shapes include diverse forms, namely thimble-shaped, long tubular or ovoid with tapering bodies and pointed bases. It is important to stress that all of these forms are available as large-sized beer jars at the same site (Hope – McFarlane 2006: Figs. 4–7). Unluckily, most of the pottery from Akhmim came from disturbed and secondary contexts, therefore the exact spatial distribution and function of these miniatures cannot be studied. Therefore, it cannot be determined whether they were meant as part of the burial equipment, which is very likely, or whether they were part of later activities in the cemetery.

The Sixth Dynasty cemetery of governors in Qila el-Dab'a in the oasis of Dakhla also provided a few examples of miniaturized beer jars. These vessels came from a variety of different tombs, generally as part of the burial goods of the deceased. Only in one case were they included in the equipment of the nome governor, namely Khentika (Castel – Pantalacci – Cherpion 2001: 193, nos. C4–C7). More commonly they were uncovered in the poorer burials of the retainers situated around the main tombs (Castel – Pantalacci 2005: Fig. 34, nos. 1 and

3). The available shapes are again present both in miniaturized and full-size forms.<sup>29</sup> All of these tombs are dated to the second half of the Sixth Dynasty, predominantly the reign of Pepy II.

It is interesting to note that miniaturized beer jars were reproduced not only in pottery, but also very rarely in other, much more precious materials. From Giza we have one alabaster miniature jar imitating the shape of ovoid beer jars with pointed base from the tomb of Seshasekhentiu (G 2120). The jar is very small, with a height of 8 cm and a maximum diameter of 3.6 cm (Reisner 1942: Fig. 245, no. 32-12-16 and Pl. 43d, 4/2). From the late Sixth Dynasty, there are a few examples of miniaturized beer jars made in copper from the tomb of Ptahshepses Impy (G 2381) in Giza. These jars were part of a larger assemblage of copper model tools and vessels that were found in the intact burial chamber of Shaft A, dated to the reign of Pepy II.<sup>30</sup> They clearly copy the characteristic tall cylindrical beer jars with a direct rim as seen in the late Old Kingdom examples from Saqqara West, Qau or Abusir (e.g. Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 13–14; Brunton 1928: Pl. LXXXVII, 77F and 77G). Another miniaturized beer jar from the tomb of Idy in Abydos, also dated to the Sixth Dynasty, can be seen among 26 copper vessels situated on an offering altar designated for voice offerings (*pꜣrt-hꜣrw*).<sup>31</sup> Such occurrence of copper imitations confirms the fact that during the Sixth Dynasty, high officials were able to afford much richer burial equipment, both in quantity and material quality, than in previous dynasties, and we often find models and miniatures of diverse offering and ritual vessels.

This morphological and functional evaluation of full-size beer jars and their miniaturized copies can be considered only preliminary due to the relatively small amount of comparative material. Compared to hundreds of published beer jars, there are less than 50 fully documented pieces of miniaturized beer jars available in publications. In most cases, their occurrence, distribution, function and meaning are not discussed in detail. Therefore, all

<sup>29</sup> See *i.e.* the miniaturized beer jars from the tomb of Khentika (Castel – Pantalacci – Cherpion 2001: Fig. 126, C1–C14) with full-size beer jars from the same context (C15–C24).

<sup>30</sup> See photos available on the web pages of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, [www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org) (nos. 12-12-355 and 13-2985). Ovoid beer jars with pointed bases can be seen in nos. 13-3241 and 13-2939.

<sup>31</sup> See [www.britishmuseum.org](http://www.britishmuseum.org), museum number EA5315.

the conclusions offered in this analysis should be considered preliminary. In some cases, even the identification of these small-size vessels as miniaturized beer jars is problematic. The examples coming from the excavation at Abusir were designated thus on the basis of their material and morphological relationship to large-sized beer jars and the experience of the present author. At other sites, personal analyses conducted by other scholars can naturally lead to different interpretations.

The comparison of the shape of full-size beer jars and their miniaturized counterparts has shown that they roughly reflect their development and can be roughly summarized in the following way. During the course of the Fourth Dynasty, relatively large miniaturized collar beer jars were uncovered in Giza, imitating large-sized beer jars with a collar under the rim. Throughout the Fifth Dynasty, the ovoid miniaturized beer jars became more common, fully reflecting the development of regular beer jars. Finally, in the Sixth Dynasty, besides ovoid miniaturized beer jars, there are also examples of thimble-shaped or tubular ones, again conforming to their large prototypes (see Table 5.8).

The functional analysis is much more complicated, as many miniaturized beer jars came from possibly disturbed or clearly secondary contexts. In cases where their original spatial distribution can be attributed with more certainty, it is clear that both kinds of vessels are present at the same time. It is, therefore, unlikely that the miniaturized vessels were designated to fully replace or symbolize their full prototypes in cases where owners could not afford them. It is possible that they had a slightly different cultic function and meaning, although their small numbers and low occurrences do not allow us to stipulate these precisely. Full-size beer jars can be found in all possible contexts connected to funerary activity, from being part of burial equipment, intentional shaft deposits, serving as votive offerings in subsequent ritual activity to their secondary use as discarded vessels in the building of new tombs. The miniaturized beer jars can also be found among tomb goods, in ritual shaft deposits, in the fill of burial shafts and in chapels. In some cases, they surely symbolized full-size beer jars as their cheaper replacement. In the above-mentioned examples when they are attested together with their large-size counterparts, it is more likely that they had a slightly different cultic function, possibly as a container for a different kind of offering. Hopefully,

recent excavations and future publications will bring forth a larger amount of examples to enable a more thorough study and discussion.

The second type of hand-made miniaturized jars uncovered in our cemetery is that of squat jars (MJ-3). There were only 11 examples from the complex of Princess Sheretnetby (405-1/AS68d/2014 to 405-11/AS68d/2014) and all came from a single context, namely the burial chamber of a young boy in Shaft 3 of tomb AS 68d. Due to the fact that the sealing wall into the chamber was found fully intact, the burial can be considered undisturbed and provided us with important insight into the burial customs (such as *e.g.* the body being intentionally covered with a layer of very pure sand) and tomb goods, which included animal offerings and, among other items, these miniaturized jars. They were all found on top of the sealed burial pit containing the body of the deceased. Interestingly, while they were undoubtedly part of a single set, they were far from identical. All were made of Nile clay and most of them were produced very carelessly, resulting in irregular, lop-sided bodies (Fig. 5.28). The jars are relatively heterogeneous in their sizes, reaching heights of 8.2–11 cm and maximum widths of 8–10 cm. One jar contained plant seeds (405-9/AS68d/2014), which were put aside for an archaeobotanical analysis. Four other jars contained remains of a dark powdery substance inside, presumably also of organic origin. Two other jars had an intentional hole in the base that served an unknown function. In addition, most of the jars were “decorated” on the outside with shallow notches on two opposite sides. Only one jar had remains of white-washing on its outer walls, while all the other jars were only roughly smoothed.

Abusir South provided us with other jars of this type. The oldest examples again come from the tomb of Kaaper (AS 1), from the area east of the tomb chapel. The jar (11/AA/1991, Fig. 5.29, left) was very similar to the above-mentioned examples, especially with its irregular and lop-sided body. It had identical height and width of 8 cm. It is interesting, as it was found in the same context with a miniaturized beer jar (MJ-1, see *supra*) and a miniaturized barrel jar (MJ-2, see also Kytnarová 2009: Fig. 94). An early Fifth Dynasty example recently came from the excavations around the tomb of Kaaper Junior (6-1.AS93.2016), where it was found in a compact layer in front of the niche of tomb AS 93 (yet unpublished). It is a very similar



example with a height of 9.5 cm and a maximum diameter of 9.3 cm. Other instances when both these types (MJ-1 and MJ-3) were used as votive offerings together with the traditional miniatures came from the funerary temple of Queen Khentkaus II at Abusir (387/A/1978, Fig. 5.27, upper left corner). Such use clearly continued into the Sixth Dynasty, as proven by both miniaturized beer jars and squat jars uncovered in the superstructure of anonymous tomb AS 41, particularly in the space of the cultic niche (*e.g.* 1-1.KK.2007).

However, this type is especially popular during the late Sixth Dynasty when it starts to appear as part of the funerary equipment inside the burial chambers. Besides the burial of the young boy in Shaft 3 of AS 68d, it was also uncovered in the burial chamber of Shaft 3 and possibly also Shaft 1 in the already mentioned anonymous tomb AS 41 (Fig. 5.29, right; see also Kytnarová 2009: Fig. 94, second row). The example from Shaft 1 had an intentionally-made, wide hole in its base, similar to two pieces from the burial of the boy.

So far, the largest occurrence of this type in the substructures comes from the cemetery of Qubbit el-Hawa, where almost a hundred pieces were uncovered inside diverse burials, *e.g.* in QH 25, QH 29, QH 34 e and other tombs (*e.g.* Edel – Seyfried – Vieler 2008: QH 29/37, QH29/96, QH34e/9 and Abb. 100). One of the most numerous contexts contained 45 individual pieces inside the burial chamber of QH 29 (QH29/96), while another in QH 34e held 31 examples (QH34e/9). Unluckily, often only a single piece each was drawn and photographed, thus no comparison of morphological diversities among the assemblages is feasible. However, it is possible to assess that miniaturized squat jars, together with miniaturized beer jars and other smaller-sized vessels, could be a more accessible kind of funerary equipment during the terminal Old Kingdom, especially for lower officials and their family members.

### 5.8 LIDS (CLASS L)

Lids are usually a very rare ceramic class and often are found only in a handful of pieces. The only notable exception was the burial chamber of Queen Hetepheres that brought us altogether 11 examples of lids in the tomb equipment (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 78, Pl. 49a). Reisner divided them into three types, namely with two ledge handles (G-LIIa), one loop

handle (G-LIIb) and one with perforated surface (G-LIIc; see Reisner – Smith 1955: 67). The available pieces had not only different shapes but also very diverse dimensions, from very small (*i.e.* less than 20 cm in diameter) to middle-sized (around 30 cm) to very large (almost 50 cm). They were limited to this singular context and Reisner himself pointed out their complete absence in the mastabas of officials. They are considered as connected especially to bowls and bowl-tables, as can be confirmed also by iconographic representations. Interestingly, none of the examples uncovered so far at the site of Abusir South represent any of these three types, showing that the morphology of lids developed quite considerably over the course of the Old Kingdom.

From the complex of Princess Sheretnebty, only a single incomplete fragment of a lid was found, making up a negligible 0.02% of the ceramic assemblage. Fragment 43-15.AS68c.2012 was uncovered in the debris of the rock-cut chapel of tomb AS 68c, in the northern part of the tomb between the serdab and the secondary wall (see Fig. 5.35). Only the upper half of the lid is preserved, with a so-called knob handle (L-1). It was a rather small example (with knob width of 3.3 cm) and very likely served as a cover for a medium-sized bowl. Its preserved height, making up only the upper half of the lid, was 6.3 cm. It was covered with a dark red slip on the outer walls.

Other tombs in the necropoleis of Abusir also provide only a rare occurrences of lids. As an example, from the tomb of Prince Werkaure at Abusir Centre (AC 26), only two incomplete lids were found, one in the fill of the false shaft (Fig. 5.33, left) and another from the secondary structure AC 32 in the open court (Arias Kytarová 2014b: Fig. 4.100). The first one came from a context where it could be tentatively associated as a lid for a bowl on a tall foot (so-called bowl-table of Reisner, see also Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 76) and it is very likely that as such it served as a censor or incense burner with a lid (Fig. 5.33, right). A similar use is attested *e.g.* in an early Fourth Dynasty example from the tomb of Netjeraperef (Alexanian 1999: Abb. 45, S31). Comparing the sizes of these lids, the examples from the tomb of Werkaure seem to be smaller.

A fully preserved example of the same type, namely a lid with a knob handle (L-1) came from the extensive layer of miniature vessels uncovered immediately south of the

entrance to the tomb of Kakaibaef (AC 29, yet unpublished). The lid was almost perfectly intact, with only part of the rim missing (see Fig. 5.32). It was made of fine Nile clay and covered with a dark red slip outside, with irregular and unintentional traces of slip also inside. It was a relatively small example, with 10 cm in maximum diameter.

As far as earlier examples are concerned, another lid with a knob handle was uncovered in pieces close to the entrance to the chapel of the early Fifth Dynasty tomb of Kaaper (4/AA/1991; tomb AS 1). It was slightly larger than the above-mentioned examples, with a maximum diameter of 15 cm and height of 9 cm (Fig. 5.34). Unlike the later pieces, it had a flat rather than modelled knob. The so-far oldest examples of lids with a knob handle were found in the tomb of Ity (AS 10) from the late Third/early Fourth Dynasty. They were uncovered in the entrance to the cruciform chapel and the magazine immediately south of it, at the same level with a cluster of charcoal pieces (see Kytarová 2009: 139). One lid was fully preserved, with a maximum diameter of 10 cm and height of 5.2 cm and had an indented knob. The other lid was larger, with a maximum diameter of 13 cm, and was interesting as it had indicated perforations on the inner surface, with the holes that did not penetrate the whole depth of the lid. Due to their occurrence in association with the fireplace uncovered in the magazine, it is very likely that they served as lids for censers during offering rituals, similarly to the example from the tomb of Netjeraperef (Alexanian 1999: S31).

Similar lids with knobs are known from the whole period of the Old Kingdom into the Sixth Dynasty (see Rzeuska 2006: 424, Pl. 160) and differ mostly only in sizes and details in the shape of the body and the knob. Our examples were found in close proximity to the ritual structures, most commonly near the entrance to the tomb chapels (*e.g.* the tombs of Kaaper and Kakaibaef) or directly in it (tomb AS 68c). These might correspond to lid fragments uncovered *e.g.* in the superstructure areas in the tomb of Merefnebef (Rzeuska 2006: 362, Pl. 160, nos. 825 and 827). The example from the so-called false shaft in the tomb of Werkaure is more likely connected to rituals conducted directly during funerals, as one lid was also found *e.g.* in false shaft 34 in the complex of Pehenptah at Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 160, no. 826). It is noteworthy that only one of our examples exhibited non-functional perforations in the body of the lid.

Given the fact that lids are not a common ceramic class and are usually preserved in only very few numbers, no chronological sequence could be established yet. Due to the absence of lids with knob handles in the early and middle Old Kingdom contexts, it is possible to assume that it was a later type that developed in the course of the Fifth Dynasty, while the types attested in the tomb of Hetepheres (*e.g.* with a loop handle or two ledge handles) constitute the earlier development. From the available evidence it is possible to propose a development from a slightly indented to flattened knob and later to the traditional modelled, protruding knob.

### 5.9 MUD STOPPERS (CLASS D)

As a rule, mud stoppers make up only a small percentage of the uncovered ceramic material, although their original numbers must have been extensive, given the numbers of jars attested in individual contexts. The main reason for their absence is their fragile nature – they were always unfired and thus fall apart very easily. Sometimes, it is very difficult to differentiate between pieces of mud stoppers and fragments of false filling of Nile mud, and one can be mistaken for the other. In theory, mud stoppers should have a well-smoothed outer body and be made of a slightly finer clay, while false fillings often contain large pieces of inorganic inclusions and are much rougher in appearance. However, these customs are not absolute and some well-preserved mud stoppers are made of very rough, unsmoothed clay, while some fillings found *in situ* can be finely worked. In case of doubt, the main marker to look for is the imprint of the jar aperture on the lower side of the mud stopper. As far as surface treatment is concerned, mud stoppers tend to be smoothed on the outside, while false fillings are often smoothed on the inner side, due to having been drawn up along the sides of the vessel (for fillings, see *e.g.* Figs. 3.14 and 4.25).

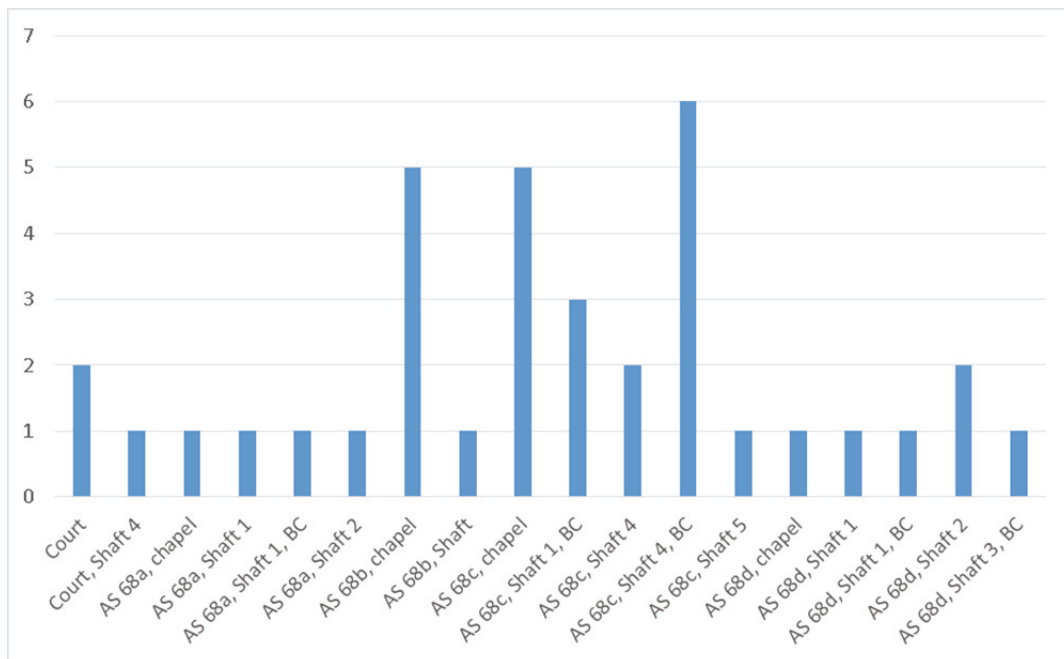
The complex of Sheretnebty is no exception and relatively few mud stoppers were uncovered here. Only 51 fragments totalling to a minimum of 36 stoppers were uncovered, making up less than 1% of the whole assemblage (see Table 1.1). A vast majority came from tomb AS 68c and its diverse contexts, almost half of all the examples, followed by tombs AS

68b and AS 68d equally. The smallest amount was found in the area of the open court and none were uncovered in the corridor of AS 68 (Table 5.9).

| Context             | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | %      |
|---------------------|-------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Court and staircase | D     | 1                                      | 0    | 0     | 1                                | 1                           | 3                       | 3                                 | 3                      | 8,3%   |
| Tomb AS 68a         | D     | 3                                      | -    | -     | 2                                | 4                           | 9                       | 5                                 | 4                      | 11,1%  |
| Tomb AS 68b         | D     | 4                                      | -    | 1     | 1                                | -                           | 6                       | 6                                 | 6                      | 16,7%  |
| Tomb AS 68c         | D     | 7                                      | 1    | 10    | 7                                | 1                           | 26                      | 24                                | 17                     | 47,2%  |
| Tomb AS 68d         | D     | 5                                      | -    | -     | -                                | 2                           | 7                       | 5                                 | 6                      | 16,7%  |
| Total               |       | 20                                     | 1    | 11    | 11                               | 8                           | 51                      | 43                                | 36                     | 100,0% |

**Table 5.9 Amounts of mud stoppers from the complex of Sheretnebtj**

Concentrating on individual contexts, most of the stoppers came from the debris of the chapels. The large amount of mud stoppers in the heavily disturbed burial chamber of Shaft 4 in AS 68c might also be tentatively attributed to secondary debris originating from the chapel. Their presence in funerary contexts is much rarer, surprisingly, especially given the fact that they must have been used to seal the jars used as tomb equipment. They are present in limited numbers in eight shafts and in only five burial chambers (see Chart 5.13).



**Chart 5.13 Spatial distribution of all the attested mud stoppers**

The mud stoppers from the cemetery of Abusir South can be divided into five morphological groups, namely D-1 with a low rounded body, D-2 with a taller rounded body, D-3 with a conical body, D-4 with a truncated body and finally D-5 with a wide flattened body (Fig. 5.36; see also *infra*). The analysis of the available mud stoppers from the complex of Sheretnetby shows that low stoppers were by far the most common, followed by taller stoppers D-2 and D-3 (see Chart 5.14). Given the fact that low stoppers were generally used for sealing smaller jars such as J-2, while taller stoppers (D-2 to D-4) were used predominantly for beer jars, this also provides us with some presumed functional information about the stoppers.

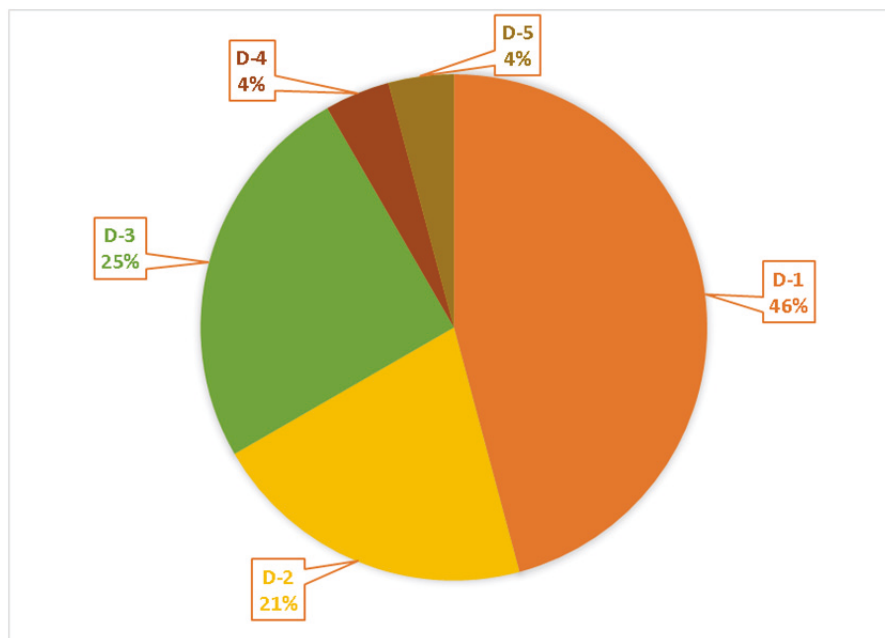


Chart 5.14 Frequency of diverse types of mud stoppers in the complex of Sheretnetby

The cemeteries of Abusir South and Centre provided us with a relatively large amount of comparative data concerning the mud stoppers. The largest individual assemblage so far was uncovered in the so-called ritual structure AS 74 (see also Bárta – Arias Kytnarová – Odler – Šůvová, *forthcoming*). Most of the stoppers came from the continuous floor layer in Area 5 and were closely connected to the occurrence of beer jars. A large number of them (namely 13 examples) were fully intact or were at least able to be reconstructed to complete profile, with numerous others in fragmentary states. Another large set was provided by the

exploration of the tomb of priest Neferinpu, which yielded 16 mostly complete mud stoppers from two main burial chambers of Shaft 1 (see also Arias Kytarová 2014a: 128–130).

The low rounded mud stoppers (D-1) are quite common, and the complex of Sheretnebty brought us at least 11 securely attested pieces. Some of them were surprisingly small and must have been designated for very small jars. As an example, stopper 21-34.AS68b.2012 from the debris of the chapel in the tomb of Shepesuptah (AS 68b) had a maximum diameter of 6.2 cm and height of only 2 cm. The aperture imprint shows that it sealed a jar with only about 5.5 cm in diameter. This context brought to light another very small stopper (21-6.AS68b.2012) with a maximum diameter of 6.7 cm. It was also intended for a very small jar with an aperture of about 5.5 cm. Given the fact that in this chapel, there were at least two small ovoid jars of group J-2 with such dimensions (*e.g.* 21-44.AS68b.2012), it is possible that they can be associated with these stoppers.

One of the most interesting mud stoppers of this type was number 53-1.AS68a.2013, uncovered at a depth of ca. 2.6 m in Shaft 1 of the tomb of Duaptah (AS 68a). Both the inner and upper surfaces bear imprints of diagonal binding with differently thick ropes, strings and pieces of textile (see Fig. 3.97). It is very likely that such a binding was designed to hold the mud stopper in place, but it is not otherwise commonly attested. Interestingly, this mud stopper does not fit any of the available jars, but the context contained further fragments of a very fine jar made of Marl clay A3 that was lacking a rim.

Similar low rounded mud stoppers are very common at Abusir and were found *e.g.* in the neighbouring tomb of Ptahhotep (AS 36, yet unpublished), burial chamber West in the tomb of Neferinpu (Arias Kytarová 2014a: Fig. 7.25), the tomb of Kaiemtjenet (Arias Kytarová 2011c: Fig. 6.27, 13-7.AS38.2010) and the tomb of Prince Werkaure (AC 26, Arias Kytarová 2014b: 251, nos. 274.AC26.08 and 278.AC26.08). Unpublished material from older excavations at Abusir includes numerous examples from the mud brick structures built in the corridor east of the tomb of Kaaper (AS 1) and in the so-called Fetekty's cemetery (AS 6 to AS 9). Analogies from other sites include the burial chamber of Hefi from Saqqara, dated to late Teti/early Pepy I, where they were used to seal fine bulging jars (Kanawati – Abder-Raziq 2001: 55, Pls 14 and 57, TNE99:19a) and in Corridor 2 at Saqqara West, containing refuse

from the second half of the Sixth Dynasty (Rzeuska 2001: 145, Fig. 5). This type usually belongs among smaller mud stoppers and has a diameter of maximum 10 cm and height up to 7 cm, although much smaller examples (such as the ones uncovered at our complex) are more traditional. It is almost never found in association with beer jars; and due to its dimensions, it was likely meant to seal small and medium-sized finer vessels (such as Arias Kytnarová 2014a: Figs. 7.16–7.17). Such a use is confirmed *e.g.* in two D-1 mud stoppers uncovered with smaller ovoid jars within intact burials in tomb QH 25 and another with a fine squat jar in QH 26 at Qubbit el-Hawa (Edel – Seyfried – Vieler 2008: Figs. 24, 42 and 254).

Taller mud stoppers could be either rounded (D-2) or conical (D-3). They were most commonly used for sealing beer jars and as a rule, the visible imprint of the vessel aperture is often oval rather than round, thus reflecting the real shape of beer jars that were often deformed during drying (Rzeuska 2006: 385) or firing (Junker 1950: 16). Both are often seen in iconographic representations sealing beer jars (Brovarski 2001: Figs. 56 and 116b; Schürmann 1983: Abb. 17b; Simpson 1980: Fig. 41 and Pl. XLb and c; Moussa – Altenmüller 1977: Tf. 23; Hassan 1950: Fig. 191; Hassan 1944: Fig. 72; Junker 1940: Tf. VIII; Wreszinski 1923, Tf. 398; *etc.*). When found in situ, they are also usually associated with beer jars.

These stoppers are often made of lower quality clay, with numerous organic and inorganic inclusions (*e.g.* pieces of stones or even pottery sherds). Their surface treatment varies greatly and can range from thoroughly wet-smoothed to one with visible diagonal coiling lines (*e.g.* Arias Kytnarová 2014b: Fig. 4.102) and finally to an uneven, coarse surface. Very often, D-2 stoppers are rougher, while D-3 stoppers tend to be made from finer, well-worked clay. Both of these types are rather tall, reaching up to 10 cm in height.

The examples of D-2 stoppers include two found in fragments in the primary floor layer of the burial chamber of the presumed husband of Sheretnebtj (Shaft 1 in AS 68c). Neither were preserved in full profile but the angle of their walls suggest a rounded shape. Based on the presence of three large jars made of Marl clay A3, it is possible to assume that these stoppers were designated for them. Their sizes are difficult to determine with certainty, given their fragmentary state, but the maximum diameters were between 11.5 and 13 cm. One



stopper from the chapel of Shepesuptah (21-10.AS68b.2012) reflected the often irregular, deformed body of a beer jar, in having also a slightly misshapen oval body.

The tall conical mud stoppers (D-3, Fig. 5.36) are slightly more common in complex AS 68. Four of them have traces of diagonal wet-smoothing with fingers on the outer surface, while the others have a thoroughly even surface. The available pieces have maximum diameters of 9.5 –11.5 cm and heights around 9 cm, although one smaller example (204/AS68d/2012) does appear as well. Based on the above-mentioned iconographic representations, it is safe to assume that they were primarily intended to seal beer jars. One of the stoppers (54-2.AS68a.2013) had an intentional perforation in its top (see the discussion *infra*). During the Sixth Dynasty, much taller conical stoppers appeared, sometimes made of two separate parts, namely an inner rounded stopper surrounded by an outer conical mound (e.g. Rzeuska 2004: Fig. 1).

Tall truncated mud stoppers (D-4) that had an intentionally levelled top, are relatively rare, and the complex of Sheretnetby provided us with only one example (83-2.AS68d.2014), which came from the burial chamber of the official Nefer (Shaft 1 in tomb AS 68d). It was most likely used to seal the broken beer jar that was found in the same context. The stopper had a height of 7 cm and maximum diameter of 11.5 cm and interestingly, its lower half was perforated on the bottom (Fig. 3.261). From Abusir South, we have several attestations of such stoppers from burial chambers. In the intact chamber of priest Neferinpu, dating to the late Fifth Dynasty, we uncovered 10 beer jars, of which nine were stored leaning against the sarcophagus (Arias Kytarová 2014a: Figs. 7.8–7.9). They were filled with Nile mud, and at the time of discovery, were still sealed with D-4 mud stoppers. Another example is provided by the burial chamber of lady Setib (Shaft 14 in AS 79) from the Sixth Dynasty. Although the context was disturbed, it was possible to say that the burial goods included four beer jars; these were scattered around the chamber but still held false fillings of Nile mud (see Figs. 4.22–4.23) and were originally sealed with D-4 mud stopper. These were uncovered in pieces but were possible to fully restore (Fig. 4.26). Although the evidence is still rather scant, we can assume that this type of mud stopper was designated primarily for beer jars.

The mud stoppers of group D-5 are very wide and flattened on their upper surfaces. The most characteristic trait is that, although they might appear tall, the majority of the height is the massive support running along the sides down to the jar shoulder; the actual stopper (measured from the vessel aperture to the top of the stopper) is actually very low. The complex of Sheretnetby provided us with only a single example of this particular group. It was found in the undisturbed, fully sealed burial chamber of a young boy in Shaft 3 of tomb AS 68d. It was used to seal an imitation of a Syro-Palestinian two-handled jar that was deposited on the slabs of the burial pit, together with the other burial goods (see Fig. 3.281). It bore very faint irregular imprints on its outer surface, most likely of a textile rather than an actual inscribed seal. The stopper (408b/AS68d/2014) is quite wide, with a maximum diameter of 13 cm at the base and 12 cm at the top. Its considerable height of 9 cm is mainly taken up by the well-preserved lower side of the stopper, while the actual height between the jar aperture and top of the stopper is only 3 cm. Similar very wide and flattened stoppers were found *e.g.* sealing fine ovoid jars uncovered in situ in the burial chamber of shaft C2/10 of Corridor 2 at Saqqara West (Rzeuska 2006: PL. 39), dated to the second half of Pepy II. Our mud stopper was set aside for chemical analysis in order to determine the place of origin of its material, but given the hitherto known facts concerning the jar itself and the existence of similar stopper shapes at other sites, it is very likely that it was made of local Nile silt.

At Abusir South, the presence of stoppers with intentional holes is not so unusual, and up to now, we have uncovered at least six different examples which came from varied funerary contexts, including the burial chambers and shafts in the complex of Princess Sheretnebt (see Figs. 3.108–3.109, 3.196). Another example of a perforated mud stopper came from the ritual structure AS 74 (6-5.AS74.2013). The function is so far unclear; if the jars were filled with a beverage, such a hole could have served as a kind of spout for pouring. However, most of our jars undeniably contained only a false filling of Nile mud, and therefore, this explanation is not satisfactory. The hole in the stopper was clearly created while the material was still wet, and it did not damage the stopper itself; thus it cannot be interpreted as a secondary modification. It is possible that the hole was intended to allow the originally wet clay filling of

the jar to dry faster and more easily. However, that does not explain the rare occurrence of such perforated mud stoppers.

### 5.10 TOOLS (CLASS T)

Ceramic tools are not directly connected with vessels and their occurrences (unlike mud stoppers that served as auxiliary devices), and thus are often not included in ceramic classifications. They should be characterised as technical pottery given the fact that suitable sherds were shaped to be used secondarily as either scrapers, smoothers, scoops or small shovels. However, the present author feels that they are an important part of the ceramic evidence, and despite their small numbers, they should be taken into account on the same level with attestations of diverse stone tools and their functions. Due to the fact that only a handful of ceramic tools have been published so far and some only with a simple description, the presented text is only a preliminary suggestion on the classification and interpretation, as new data might change our viewpoint and approach to this interesting class.

From the whole area of AS 68, only six tools were unearthed, making up a very negligible 0.14% of the assemblage (see Table 1.1). They were present in only three tombs (AS 68a, AS 68c and AS 68d, see Table 5.10) and the area of the open court. Only a single tool (79-1.AS68d.2014) came from the fill of a shaft, the remainder were found in the refuse debris of the chapels.

| Context     | Class | Complete vessels/<br>complete profiles | Rims | Bases | Other<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Non-diagnostic<br>fragments | No. of all<br>fragments | No. of<br>diagnostic<br>fragments | Min. no. of<br>vessels | %      |
|-------------|-------|--|------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Tomb AS 68a | T     | 1                                      | -    | -     | 1                                | -                           | 2                       | 2                                 | 1                      | 16,7%  |
| Tomb AS 68a | T     | 1                                      | -    | -     | -                                | -                           | 1                       | 1                                 | 1                      | 16,7%  |
| Tomb AS 68c | T     | 1                                      | -    | -     | 2                                | -                           | 3                       | 3                                 | 2                      | 33,3%  |
| Tomb AS 68d | T     | 1                                      | -    | -     | 1                                | -                           | 2                       | 2                                 | 2                      | 33,3%  |
|             | Total | 3                                      | -    | -     | 3                                | -                           | 6                       | 6                                 | 6                      | 100,0% |

**Table 5.10 Occurrence of ceramic tools in the complex of Sheretnebtj**

Such a low occurrence is not unusual – there was only one tool each in the anonymous tombs AS 57 and AS 59 in the area west of the tomb of Neferinpu at Abusir South (Arias Kytmarová 2011c: 105), seven pieces in the anonymous tomb AS 32 (Tomášek 2003: Tab. 1)

and two in the tomb of Werkaure at Abusir Centre (Arias Kytarová 2014b: Fig. 4.103, T). Recent excavations provided us with more comparative material, especially from structure AS 66 situated directly above the rock-cut tombs of Sheretnebty and Nefer, from the exploration of the area north of the large tomb AS 31 and from the tomb of Kaisebi (AS 67), to name just a few examples.

The tools from Abusir can be tentatively divided into several groups, most prominently scrapers and shovels. The scrapers (T-1) were usually manufactured from hard, well-fired sherds of very fine clay (most commonly originating from bowls) and exhibit thoroughly smoothed outer edges. The ones found so far are either oval (see *infra*), rectangular (from tomb AS 32, Tomášek 2003: Tab. 3, no. 5), rhomboid (*e.g.* examples from tomb AS 66), trapezoid (pieces from tombs AS 31 and AS 57, see Arias Kytarová 2011c: Fig. 4.10, 35-4.AS57.2010) or have other polygonal shapes. Oval shapes are the most common, and the scraper uncovered in the shaft of Nefer (Shaft 1 of AS 68d) has such a shape. It is rather small, with a full height of 12.2 cm and a width of 4.9 cm (see Figs. 3.251 and 5.37). Other oval scrapers include both incomplete pieces from the tomb of Werkaure (Fig. 5.38) and from the anonymous tomb AS 78 (yet unpublished).

The proposed function of these scrapers was the smoothing of diverse objects, among others also ceramic vessels (Fig. 5.40). In several contexts of AS 68d, vessels with intentionally scraped outer walls were found, leaving visible vertical or diagonal marks.<sup>32</sup> Some types of bowls (particularly B-2aII and B-10, Fig. 5.39; also see *supra*) were always scraped on their outer lower bodies, making it a deliberate surface treatment that was either supposed to ease the handling of the bowls or allow their greater stability when placed on stands. With jars, the scraping is often present on the whole lower part of the vessel from the shoulders downwards (see *e.g.* Figs. 3.263 and 3.297), making it not only a functional but very likely also an aesthetic feature.

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<sup>32</sup> Most notably three finer jars from Shaft 1 of Nefer (77-15.AS68d.2014, 77-20.AS68d.2014 and 77-50.AS68d.2014), one large spindle-shaped jar from the shaft of his wife Neferhathor (44-13.AS68d.2014) and a smaller jar from Shaft 4 (84-2.AS68d.2014 and 86-1.AS68d.2014).

The other, smaller group of ceramic tools can be tentatively identified as shovels, as they exhibit deeper bodies that were probably used to scoop up some kind of material. They were more commonly made from fragments of convex vessels, either deeper bowls or small fine jars. The shapes can be highly irregular and include different rounded or angular forms. Fully preserved shovel 16-99.AS68.2012, which was uncovered in the upper debris of the north-west sector of the pillared court, was manufactured from a small ovoid jar (J-2) and still retained part of its white wash on the outer walls. It was medium-sized, with a height of 12.5 cm and width of 10 cm. Another shovel, but incomplete, 43-79.AS68c.2012, was found in the fill of the chapel of AS 68c and very likely had an ellipsoid body.

As far as tools from other sites are concerned, only a few brief analyses are available so far, such as the classification of tools from the ceramic workshops at Ayn Asil. There, among the smoothing tools, two main outer forms have been observed, namely rounded or angular (Soukiassian – Wuttman – Pantalacci *et al.* 1990: 87–88, Fig. 40). The rounded type is considered more common and usually includes simple rounded, oval and different irregular oval shapes. A large quantity of ceramic tools, numbering several dozens of examples, was reported from the early Old Kingdom terrace quarry at Saqqara West. Similar to our pieces, they show great diversification in the shapes, predominantly oval, rectangular and triangular (Rzeuska 2014: 332–333, Figs. 11–13, 19). Their outer shapes were determined by their functions, which might have included shaping, gouging and evening of surfaces, especially given the nature of the contexts, *i.e.* a quarry, with a large presence of spatulas.

Otherwise, only a few recorded examples are known. A rounded burnishing tool with a flattened side was also found in the Lower cemetery of the pyramid builders at Giza (Hawass – Senussi 2008: 59, no. 118). It is possible that some objects identified as palettes are actually also ceramic scrapers or other tools (*e.g.* Kromer 1978: Tafel 26, nos. 4 and 5).

## 6 CASE STUDIES

The main aim of this chapter is to offer a brief discussion of the available ceramic material from a few diverse stand-points, namely the relationship of the pottery and socio-economic status of the tomb owners, differences between male and female burials, general chronological implications that enable us to date particular tombs or shafts and finally, a comparison of the general development of the pottery in the cemetery of Abusir and the Memphite necropolis. These case studies are not meant to provide an in-depth analysis, as each of these topics could be the subject of an individual dissertation, especially when incorporating all the available tomb complexes. Rather, they should afford us with some insight, together with suggestions and outlines of future studies and analyses.

### 6.1 SOCIAL TRENDS REFLECTED AT ABUSIR

The society and its development constitute one of the cornerstones of archaeology, although it is not always possible to answer all the questions that we would like to pose. In the past, and especially in the regions of Europe, archaeology was understood primarily as part of the historical sciences, which should focus mainly on answering the issues of chronology and providing objective historical data. In contrast, Anglo-Saxon and American archaeology preferred to view itself as part of cultural anthropology, designed to illuminate larger social developments and analyse a culture as a set of behavioural processes (see *e.g.* Binford 1981; Shepard 1985; Schiffer 1996 and 2011).

During the present time, Egyptology (and archaeology as part of it) is seen as a means of the reconstruction of both major and minor cultural and social changes that can further enlighten also the development of modern societies (see *e.g.* Bárta 2011 and 2015b). Egyptology is on the border not only between these sciences, but is also intricately linked to linguistic and religious studies, as they often form part of a single knot. Unlike many other fields of archaeology, we are provided with both the “mute” material culture and with extensive epigraphic and iconographic evidence, which conveys supplementary information

concerning the aforesaid questions. It must be admitted that our knowledge of Old Kingdom society is largely based on the data provided by elite cemeteries, spread out within the Memphite necropoleis and the provinces, which contained a large number of high officials' tombs. However, during recent decades, the attention of archaeologists has also turned to permanent settlements, temporary sites such as quarries or dams and finally, poorer tombs with simple architecture and minimum or zero burial equipment, thus highlighting the notion that it is important to gain knowledge of Egyptian society as a whole, not only its highest elites.

### 6.1.1 SOCIAL INEQUALITY OF TOMB OWNERS

The relationships between the material culture and social status of the tomb owners is directly or indirectly the subject of almost all the archaeological material published on the Old Kingdom, although sometimes without a wider sociological context or its interpretation. The analysis usually concentrates on several main markers, such as the size, position and material of the tomb, titles of the owner and finally, the quality and quantity of the burial equipment (e.g. Kanawati 2001; Bárta 2005; 2010a and 2012). Such questions are especially relevant for more restricted time periods and in the following sections, several examples from Abusir shall be examined briefly.<sup>1</sup>

As an example, during the late Third and early Fourth Dynasty, the material used for the tomb construction constituted one of the main markers not only from the point of the chronological sequence of the tombs, but also the socio-economic status of their owners. As such, the owners of the largest tombs and/or those built at the most prominent place in the cemetery, should be considered either the oldest or belonging to officials of high social rank. During this period, the two main architectural markers that are considered chronologically relevant are the shape of the substructure of the tomb (earlier stairway access versus later shaft access) and the shape of the chapel (the cruciform versus the corridor chapel – or

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the synthetic nature of this analysis, the individual structures within the complex shall not be referenced repeatedly. All the detailed information concerning their architecture and ceramic finds can be found under respective parts of *Chapter 3*.

a combination of both). A similar approach can be applied to later periods of the Old Kingdom as well. The position of the tomb was one of the main markers and is clearly defined *e.g.* in the layout location of the main tombs of individual parts of the Giza cemetery (*cf.* Reisner 1942; Roth 1995; *etc.*). The further from the main tomb the subsequent owners were, the lower was their social status.

Some scholars have classified diverse markers in an attempt to define differences between social classes. Reisner classified all the main features of tomb architecture, based on the mastabas from Giza. His typology of tomb superstructure, substructure, shafts, chapels, *etc.* is still in use today (for details, see Reisner 1942: 85–176). He linked certain types to general development in Old Kingdom society and observed that the most important tombs of the four nucleus cemeteries (G 1200, G 2100, G 4000 and G 7000) contained single-shaft structures with often large shafts and spacious substructures lined with limestone blocks, as befit the high-positioned persons they were designated for. During the course of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, the number of shafts, their sizes and complexity decreased; the substructures were more numerous but smaller in size, shallower in depth and less elaborate in manufacture, often without any connected passages or stone lining.

For the site of Abusir, Bárta offered a division of the burial apartments of the Late Old Kingdom into two groups, *i.e.* niches and chambers. Niches were defined as rooms where height exceeded their other dimensions; while chambers were understood as rooms with greater width/length (see Bárta 2001: 49). Such a division can certainly be applied in the complex of Princess Sheretnebt, which also provided us with a variety of small-sized niches.

As far as the depths of the shafts in complex AS 68 are concerned, a large majority of them were rather shallow (see Table 6.1). There were only five deep shafts, most notably Shafts 1 and 2 in tomb AS 68c, tentatively associated with Princess Sheretnebt and her anonymous husband, that reached depths of 11.10 m and 10.70 m. Shaft 4 in the courtyard came to a similar depth of 10 m. There were two more shafts that could have been similarly deep (*i.e.* Shaft 7 and 10 in the courtyard), but their excavations had to be abandoned due to safety reasons at depths of 7.50 m and 7.00 m, respectively. All the other shafts were much shallower, with some reaching around 6 m (*i.e.* both main shafts in tomb AS 68d, Shafts 1 and



9 in the courtyard and Shaft 13 in the corridor). All the remaining 19 shafts had less than 5 m in depth, including both shafts in tomb AS 68a.

Among the main owners of the rock-cut tombs, Reisner's Type 4 of large chambers with connecting passages seems to be the most prevalent, being attested in Shaft 1 of AS 68a (Duptyah), the burial chamber accessed via an antechamber in AS 68b (Shepesuptah) and Shaft 1 in AS 68c (the anonymous official, presumably the husband of Princess Sheretnebt). Notably, none of the burial chambers in the complex of Sheretnebt were lined with stone.<sup>2</sup> Among the burial apartments in the area of the courtyard and corridor, only one shaft (Shaft 6) contained a Type 4 chamber. All the remaining ones, both in the rock-cut tombs and in the connected areas, belonged to Reisner's Type 6 and 7 (chambers entered directly from the shaft and open pits, *cf.* Reisner 1942: 88–89). Such a division is not unusual and was attested *e.g.* in the lesser cemetery of Fetekty at Abusir South (see Bárta 2002: 293–294). There, the main owners were predominantly buried in large chambers of Type 4.

One of the main markers of the social importance of the interred individual was also the presence or absence of stone sarcophagi. A recent analysis of the occurrence of sarcophagi during the Old Kingdom (Štěpánová 2011)<sup>3</sup> has shown that while during the Fourth Dynasty, sarcophagi are associated predominantly with the members of the royal family and men serving as viziers, from the Fifth Dynasty onwards they are more commonly attested also with non-royal high officials. During the Sixth Dynasty, diverse groups of officials make up almost 3/5 of all the available sarcophagi (Štěpánová 2011: 69–70).

The size and material of the sarcophagi constitutes another significant feature reflecting the social status of the deceased. The most expensive materials, such as basalt, granite, slate/schist and travertine, were almost exclusively reserved for the king, members of the royal family and the vizier, and from the Fifth Dynasty onwards, also some high officials

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<sup>2</sup> But it must be noted that a burial chamber lined with limestone blocks was built for Nefershepes, the owner of the large mastaba AS 67 situated just north of the corridor of AS 68 (see also Arias Kytarová – Havelková – Jirásková *et al.* 2014).

<sup>3</sup> For older studies devoted to the typology and development of sarcophagi, see *e.g.* Donadoni-Roveri (1969).

(Štěpánová 2012: 81–82). On the other hand, sarcophagi made either of Tura limestone or local nummulitic limestone<sup>4</sup> are most commonly associated with officials of diverse ranks.

| Context             | Shaft opening    | Shaft depth | Burial chamber | Sarcophagus | Burial pit     | Wooden coffin          | Owner              | Male/Female              |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Shaft 1, courtyard  | 1.10 × 1.10 m    | 6.20 m      | -              | -           | -              | -                      | unused             | no burial                |
| Shaft 2, courtyard  | 1.10 × 1.08 m    | 1.10 m      | -              | -           | -              | -                      | unfinished         | no burial                |
| Shaft 3, courtyard  | 1.30 × 1.30 m    | 4.00 m      | 2.70 × 1.60 m  | -           | 1.95 × 0.65 m  |                        | unknown            | female 40–60             |
| Shaft 4, courtyard  | 1.35 × 1.42 m    | 10.00 m     | 2.70 × 1.50 m  | -           | -              | yes                    | Khai ?             | male?                    |
| Shaft 5, courtyard  | 0.96 × 0.98 m    | 3.60 m      | niche          | -           | -              | imprint of wooden box  | unknown            | multiple remains         |
| Shaft 6, courtyard  | 1.60 × 1.60 m    | 5.40 m      | 3.84 × 2.20 m  | -           | 1.70 × 0.43 m  | traces                 | unknown            | male 20–30               |
| Shaft 7, courtyard  | 2.06 × 2.10 m    | > 7.50 m    | unexplored     | unexplored  | unexplored     | unexplored             | unexplored         | unexplored               |
| Shaft 8, courtyard  | 1.20 × 1.20 m    | 5.70 m      | 2.20 × 0.90 m  | -           | 1.85 × 0.49 m  | <i>Acacia nilotica</i> | Hetepuni ?         | male 40–60               |
| Shaft 9, courtyard  | 1.00 × 0.90 m    | 6.50 m      | niche          | -           | -              | pieces of wood         | unknown            | no burial                |
| Shaft 10, courtyard | 1.10 × 1.20 m    | > 7.00 m    | unexplored     | unexplored  | unexplored     | unexplored             | unexplored         | unexplored               |
| Shaft 11, courtyard | 1.15 × 1.12 m    | 4.15 m      | niche          | -           | -              | -                      | unknown            | male 35–50               |
| Shaft 12, courtyard | 1.10 × 1.00 m    | 5.80 m      | 2.23 × 0.79 m  | -           | -              | <i>Acacia nilotica</i> | Khai ?             | male 40–60               |
| Shaft 13, corridor  | 1.00 × 1.00 m    | 6.00 m      | 1.80 × 1.60 m  | -           | 1.60 × 0.44 m  | <i>Ficus sycomorus</i> | unknown            | male > 50                |
| Shaft 14, corridor  | 2.00 × 0.80 m    | 3.80 m      | 2.00 × 0.80 m  | -           | -              | <i>Acacia nilotica</i> | Sefekhu            | male > 50                |
| Shaft 15, corridor  | 2.33 × 1.24 m    | 0.96 m      | -              | -           | -              | -                      | unfinished         | no burial                |
| Shaft 16, corridor  | 0.85 × 0.88 m    | 1.00 m      | -              | -           | -              | -                      | unfinished         | no burial                |
| Shaft 1, AS 68a     | 1.50 × 1.50 m    | 4.70 m      | 2.80 × 3.30 m  | limestone   | -              | -                      | Duaptah            | male > 50                |
| Shaft 2, AS 68a     | 1.30 × 1.25 m    | 3.50 m      | 2.00 × 1.25 m  | -           | -              | -                      | Nefermin ?         | male > 50                |
| BC, AS 68b          | -                | -           | 5.00 × 2.20 m  | -           | 1.75 × 0.40 m  |                        | Shepesuptah        | male 35–50               |
| Shaft 1, AS 68b     | 1.60 × 1.60 m    | 1.40 m      | -              | -           | -              | -                      | unfinished         | no burial                |
| Shaft 1, AS 68c     | 1.50 × 1.60 m    | 11.10 m     | 3.60 × 3.00 m  | limestone   | -              | -                      | unknown            | male > 50                |
| Shaft 2, AS 68c     | 1.40 × 1.30 m    | 10.70 m     | 1.26 × 1.10 m  | -           | -              | -                      | Sheretneby ?       | female 25–40             |
| Shaft 3, AS 68c     | 1.30 × 1.35 m    | 5.20 m      | 2.26 m long    | -           | -              | -                      | unused             | no burial                |
| Shaft 4, AS 68c     | 1.35 × 1.35 m    | 3.50 m      | 3.70 × 2.50 m  | -           | -              | <i>Ficus sycomorus</i> | Neferhekenhathor ? | female > 50              |
| Shaft 5, AS 68c     | 1.10 × 1.00 m    | 3.20 m      | 1.20 × 1.30 m  | -           | -              | <i>Acacia nilotica</i> | Ankhiemaptah ?     | male > 50                |
| Shaft 6, AS 68c     | 1.00 × 1.00 m    | 3.50 m      | 2.60 × 1.60 m  | -           | 1.60 × 0.48 m  | -                      | Ankhiemaptah ?     | male > 50 and male 25–35 |
| Shaft 1, AS 68d     | b: 1.55 × 1.55 m | 6.00 m      | 3.67 × 2.25 m  | limestone   | -              | -                      | Nefer              | male 40–60               |
| Shaft 2, AS 68d     | 1.54 × 1.34 m    | 6.20 m      | 2.75 × 1.80 m  | limestone   | -              | -                      | Neferhathor        | female > 50              |
| Shaft 3, AS 68d     | 1.30 × 1.24 m    | 2.60 m      |                | -           | 1.32 × 0.39 cm | -                      | unknown            | child 10–12              |
| Shaft 4, AS 68d     | b: 1.40 × 1.20 m | 4.50 m      | 2.96 × 2.14 m  | limestone   | -              | -                      | unknown            | male > 50                |

**Table 6.1 Burial apartments in the complex of Sheretneby**

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Klemm – Klemm (2001).

Notably, all the sarcophagi uncovered so far in the cemetery of Abusir South were made of limestone. The situation in the pyramid field of Abusir Centre is different, as granite is also attested. Besides the presence of sarcophagi or their remains in the accessible substructures of the pyramids,<sup>5</sup> they were also attested in numerous tombs of different members of the royal family. The most prominent amongst them were the burials of the presumed daughters of King Djedkare, buried in a complex of mastabas south-east of the pyramid of Niuserre (Verner – Callender 2002). Large granite sarcophagi designated for vizier Ptahshepses and his wife Khamernernebt, the daughter of Niuserre, were preserved in the burial chamber of his tomb (Verner 2003; Krejčí 2009) and were undoubtedly connected not only with the royal origin of Khamernernebt but also the high position of Ptahshepses and his access to the highest quality materials and workmen.

It must be noted that in the complex of Sheretnebt, there were altogether three free-standing sarcophagi used for male burials (Shafts 1 and 4 in AS 68d and Shaft 1 in AS 68c) and a further six examples of men buried in a burial pit or a sarcophagus pit that was either cut into the bedrock or built from limestone slabs (Shaft 3 in AS 68d, Shaft 6 in AS 68c, burial chamber in AS 68b, Shaft 1 in AS 68a and Shafts 6, 8 and 13 in the courtyard). Only a single female (Neferhathor, the wife of Nefer) was buried in a sarcophagus (see also *Chapter 6.1.2*). Another female interment could be tentatively associated with the burial pit in Shaft 3 of the courtyard.

Such a relatively low presence of sarcophagi is not unusual in cemeteries of middle and low-ranking officials. As an example, only two burial chambers in the tomb of priest Neferinpu (AS 37) contained sarcophagi (*cf.* Bárta *et al.* 2014: 27–42, see also *infra*). In comparison, only a single person was interred in a burial pit in the whole area of so-called Fetekty's cemetery, namely Fetekty himself (Shaft 1 in AS 5, see Bárta 2001: 117). Notably, the lesser cemetery at the Lake of Abusir did not contain any burials in sarcophagi.

One of the best markers of the socio-economic power of the owner was also the number and quality of the burial equipment (compare also *Table 6.3*). In the case of poorer

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<sup>5</sup> E.g. the granite sarcophagus of King Raneferef (Verner 1999: 70-76). There were no traces of sarcophagi in the pyramids of Sahure, Niuserre and Neferirkare (for details, see Verner 2003 and Štěpánová 2011: 81-82).

burials, pottery was often the only available and affordable item that the deceased could be equipped with. In many examples, the presence among the tomb goods of beer jars versus fine jars made of Marl clay, and their eventual combination with other items, might point to their socio-economic status.

From this standpoint, beer jars are the most common denominator of the social position of the owner. It is noteworthy that Giza, the most prominent among all the Memphite cemeteries, yielded only very few beer jar examples in the burial chambers (Reisner – Smith 1955: 70). The notable exceptions are five chambers in tombs of the Fifth Dynasty in the area of the Eastern Field, namely G 7421A, G 7253A, G 7161A, G 7766 Z and G 7789 A, which provided us with one beer jar each (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 85).<sup>6</sup>

Contrarily, Abusir South provided us with numerous examples of beer jars used as tomb equipment. Most commonly, this was attested in the burials in the simple mud brick mastabas of the Lake of Abusir area, such as one beer jar found in the north-west corner of the chamber in Shaft 7 and three beer jars in the niche of Shaft 13 in the tomb of Shedu (AS 12; *cf.* Kytarová 2009: 34).

Sometimes we found beer jars in relatively rich burials, such as the chamber of priest Neferinpu (AS 37), which contained fine red-slipped bowls, canopic vessels, limestone miniature vessels and a wooden headrest (*cf.* Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias Kytarová *et al.* 2014: 27–38). In this context, it must be noted that his tomb was enlarged from an older project of a smaller mud brick mastaba, and so undoubtedly points to an unexpected increase in social status and wealth. Therefore, an inclusion of relatively minor pottery such as beer jars is not entirely surprising. It has to be also stressed that ceramic vessels of any kind had a far more important value from the religious than aesthetic point of view, and even rough pottery such as beer jars represented eternal offerings of food and drink for the afterlife and were thus highly significant for the deceased and his sustenance.

Another similar example was provided by the burial chamber of the official Ptahwer in tomb AS 76b (see also *Chapter 4.1.1* and Figs. 4.22-4.26). There, the preserved tomb

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<sup>6</sup> For more detailed information, see also Reisner's manuscript, unpublished *Chapter 11: The Funerary Equipment Found in Burial Chambers*, page 422 (<http://www.gizapyramids.org/view/unpublisheddocs>).

equipment consisted of four beer jars, all containing false filling of Nile mud. All four vessels were originally sealed with mud stoppers. Due to the proximity and architectural link to the mastaba of the official Kaisebi (AS 76), it can be presumed that Ptahwer very likely belonged to a later generation of the same family.

As for the number of beer jars in the burial chambers, it is far from standardized, as can be seen in different examples from our cemetery. Very often, there is merely a single beer jar; in most cases, we find three or four vessels and so far only one known example has brought us ten vessels (the burial chamber of Neferinpu in AS 37, see *Chapter 4.1.1*). It must be noted that most of these chambers were looted and the original number of the objects is thus a matter of discussion. On the other hand, it also must be taken into account that it is unlikely the robbers actually stole the ceramic vessels – they were commonly filled with false filling of Nile mud instead of real valuable content<sup>7</sup> and in themselves, they undoubtedly never represented precious items. Some of them might have been taken out of the chambers and scattered in the lower fill of the shafts. It is possible that the numbers of beer jars found in burial chambers, even in looted contexts, are very close to the original numbers. Some might have been destroyed or displaced into the lower part of the shaft, but their rough material, heavy and bulky nature and low aesthetic and material value exclude them from being targets of robbing activity, especially when such objects would have to be lifted out of several meter deep shafts.

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<sup>7</sup> It has been mentioned before that Nile mud symbolized real offerings of either beer or other beverages (e.g. *Chapter 4.1.1*; also Arias Kytarová 2013; Arias Kytarová 2014a: 131); it has to be noted that at the same time, Nile mud symbolized renewal and rebirth and thus this aspect might have influenced the choice of this substitutive material (see also Dulíková – Odler – Havelková 2011: 12; Vymazalová 2015: 50).



Higher-ranking officials and their family members usually had much finer jars among their funerary goods. The best examples are provided by both burial chambers in the anonymous tomb AS 67, Shaft 1 in tomb AS 47, Shaft 2 in the tomb of Neferinpu and the chamber of lady Setib in tomb AS 79 (see *Chapter 4.1.1*). Except for one case, the number varied between 3 and 4 vessels, and other burial contexts (such as the recently uncovered floor layer in the burial chamber of the anonymous mastaba AC 31 at Abusir Centre) confirm that the most common amount was four jars. Only one burial in the complex of Sheretnebty corresponded to such a standard, namely that of the presumed husband of the princess in Shaft 1 of AS 68c. It is also of no surprise that all the above-mentioned cases shared a common feature of containing either a sarcophagus or at least a burial pit and a large array of other funerary goods. The burial chambers of Senedjemib, Inti and Qar Junior had a much larger amount of not only pottery, reaching up to 15 jars and 9 bowls for the burial of Qar Junior (Bárta *et al.* 2009: 223–229), but also other precious goods (for details, see Bárta *et al.* 2009).

Bowls as part of the equipment in the burial chambers are slightly rarer and in much smaller numbers. Even in the intact contexts or largely preserved disturbed contexts, the number of bowls does not exceed four or five vessels and often, there was only a single bowl. The undisturbed burial chamber of priest Neferinpu contained only three pieces. They were most commonly carinated bowls, bent-sided bowls or shallow bowls with modelled rims. Their morphological requirements changed over time, and while carinated bowls are the most common feature in the Fifth Dynasty burials, they were replaced by different bowls in the Sixth Dynasty, judging by the discoveries in the complex of vizier Qar and his sons (Bárta *et al.* 2009; Kytarová 2009) and the yet unpublished tombs AS 79 and AS 82.

We can conclude that the burials of both higher and lower officials, as well as people without attested titles, reflect the inequality in the society of the Old Kingdom. During that period, there was a rigid social stratification that divided the people into socio-economic layers and affected their access to wealth, property and material goods, which was in turn also mirrored in their tombs and burial goods. Ceramic vessels make up only a small portion of other evidence, and it is clear that unlike the Predynastic Period, pottery was not considered a prestigious part of the funerary equipment. During the terminal Old Kingdom, the growing

wealth also allowed relatively lower social classes to access more prestigious materials and goods.

### 6.1.2 FEMALE VERSUS MALE BURIALS

From the start of the early archaeological exploration of the Memphite region of the Old Kingdom, it was clear that even with the very high numbers of tombs that were preserved, only selected strata of society were represented. Not only did the predominance of tombs belong to members of the royal family and either high and middle-rank officials, but they were dominated greatly by male burials. Female members of the society were buried only exceptionally in their own independent tombs (see *infra*). They were rather interred in subsidiary shafts in the tombs of their husbands, fathers or other relatives. However, the presumption that all the female members were buried in such family tombs is undermined by archaeological data that provides only a small fraction of actual female skeletons. Although the influx of new data from lesser cemeteries is slowly distorting the data, this ratio of male versus female burials is still unusual.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, it is possible to state that Egyptian funerary customs reflected a very androcentric society, *i.e.* one dominated by males and their interests (*cf.* Roth 1999; Bárta 2002). Given the fact that most of the high administrative positions in the country were in the hands of men (for exceptions, see *e.g.* Fischer 1989), this comes as no surprise. However, the lack of female burials even in family tombs is peculiar, especially regarding the fact that in all periods of human evolution, the number of women very likely surpassed that of men and that due to childbirth, their mortality must have been quite high.

When analysing the cemetery of Princess Sheretnebt, it is clear that the prevalence of male burials cannot be accidental (*Table 6.1*). The tomb of Duaptah (AS 68a) held two shafts, which led us to presume before the start of the excavation that they belonged to Duaptah and his wife. However, both shafts contained male burials, with the other possibly confirmed in the epigraphic evidence as Nefermin (see *Chapter 3.3.3*). The tomb of Shepesuptah (AS 68b,

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<sup>8</sup> For general studies devoted to the position of women in Ancient Egypt of diverse periods, see *e.g.* Lesko (1987 and 1996), Fischer (1989) and Watterson (2013).



see *Chapter 3.4*) was equipped with a burial chamber for the main owner, which was accessible via the chapel; a small shaft hewn into its north part, where we again assumed might be the burial of his consort, turned out to be unfinished and unused.

The last two rock-cut tombs were slightly more promising, as AS 68c held altogether six shafts and the tomb of Nefer (AS 68d) contained four. However, out of these nine shafts, only three belonged to females. Given the usual layout of the shafts at the cemetery of Abusir South, we expected burials of the consorts right next to those of their husbands. Thus, Shaft 2 in AS 68d (see *Chapter 3.6.3*) can very likely be associated with Neferhathor the wife of Nefer, who is depicted on his false door. In AS 68c, Shaft 2 contained the body of a relatively young woman, who was probably the wife of a highly-positioned but anonymous official from Shaft 1 and can be tentatively identified as Princess Sheretnebtj herself (see *Chapter 3.5.3* and also Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014; Vymazalová 2015). The particular conditions of the context, with a very deep shaft but largely unfinished burial chamber, and especially the fact that the female was found simply lying on the ground of the chamber instead of in a sarcophagus, can point to the fact that she died prematurely and was interred before the full completion of her funerary apartment (*cf.* Vymazalová 2015: 54). The last female burial, possibly of Neferhekenhathor, was uncovered in Shaft 4 of AS 68c (see *Chapter 3.5.5*) and had no epigraphic evidence, and it cannot be securely associated from the point of family relation to the main owner. To summarize, out of altogether 14 individual burial contexts in the four rock-cut tombs, only three of them were used for the interment of women.

One might assume that the situation in the open courtyard and corridor was slightly different, given the lower status of the buried persons. A suggestion that female members of the society were buried predominantly in minor or secondary burial shafts has already been expressed by Callender (1995: 7). In the case of the courtyard and corridor of AS 68, there were altogether 16 shafts hewn into both areas in the span of the late Fifth and Sixth Dynasties. Four of them were unfinished or unused (Shafts 1 and 2 in the courtyard; Shafts 15 and 16 in the corridor) and two more could not be explored due to the instability of the *tafl* bedrock (Shaft 7 and 10 in the courtyard). However, it is even more surprising, as a majority of the used ones also contained male bodies, and a female was attested only in a single context

(see *Table 6.1*). Furthermore, the human remains in question were uncovered scattered in the disturbed area of the collapsed walls between the burial chambers of Shaft 3 and 6 in the courtyard. Although the attribution of a female burial to Shaft 3 seems likely due to the fact that the male interment in the burial pit of Shaft 6 was undisturbed, it must be considered tentative; and therefore no conclusions concerning the funerary equipment in relation to this particular chamber can be provided.

In comparison, the anthropological exploration of the remains of the lesser cemetery around the tomb of Fetekty at Abusir South showed that even such cemeteries were dominated by male burials and strictly governed by hierarchic principles (Bárta 2002: 292). Three of the analysed tombs of that cemetery, the tomb of Fetekty and Mety (AS 5), AS 7 and AS 8,<sup>9</sup> held only male burials (see also Bárta 2002: Table 1) and can be thus likened to the occurrence in the tomb of Duaptah and Nefermin (AS 68a). Another tomb, that of Hetepi (AS 3, see Bárta 2001: 55–61), held only a single female burial and can be compared to the situation in the tomb of Nefer (AS 68d). Only one of the tombs, the anonymous mastaba AS 6,<sup>10</sup> provided us with a prevalence of female versus male burials (Bárta 2001: 138). There were altogether three female burials, and even one rare example of a woman being interred with a child (Shaft 6 in AS 6). This particular cemetery had another unusual occurrence, namely a joint burial of a male and female in the main apartment of the tomb of Rahotep (Bárta 2001: 69–70). Such combined burials are otherwise very unusual.

A comparable cemetery of lower officials and people without attested titles from the Lake of Abusir area provided us with a similar image (see also Bárta 2001: 41–51).<sup>11</sup> Tomb AS 14 contained one male and one child burial. On the other hand, the tomb of Shedu (AS 12) was highly unusual in having possibly up to four female burials (Bárta 2001: 51, Table 1). One of them was again found accompanied by a male body, namely in Shaft 7.

In the case of the tombs of higher officials at Abusir, these often contained a smaller number of shafts. In some cases, only a single main shaft is attested, although secondary shafts

<sup>9</sup> Formerly designated as Tomb II and III in Fetekty's cemetery (Bárta 2001: 126–132).

<sup>10</sup> Previously designated as Tomb I in Fetekty's cemetery (Bárta 2001: 123–126).

<sup>11</sup> The Lake of Abusir tombs were previously coded as follows: AS 11 (Tomb 1), AS 12 (Tomb 2), AS 13 (Tombs 3), AS 14 (Tomb 4), AS 15 (Tombs 5 and 6).

might have been later hewn into the corners of the tomb or its immediate surrounding. In the case of a single shaft, its owner was in the majority of cases confirmed as male, see *e.g.* one of the oldest tomb in the central mound of Abusir, the tomb of Kaaper (AS 1), which contained the burial of a man in the main shaft (Bárta 2001: 177).

In other cases, there were two shafts, a southern and a northern one, in theory designated for the main owner and his wife. One such example was the late Fifth Dynasty tomb of Nefershepes (AS 67), abutting the complex of Princess Sheretnebty on its north-east side. From a gender viewpoint, the main burial chamber with a sarcophagus contained a male body, while the north one, equipped only with a sarcophagus pit, held a female skeleton. Interestingly, both of these shafts were reused for burials in the late Sixth Dynasty, with identical gender association, *i.e.* male in the southern and female in the northern shaft. In both cases, these secondary bodies were very likely laid on the floor of the chamber (see Arias Kytnarová – Havelková – Jirásková *et al.* 2013). Another example, the tomb of Ity (AS 10), also held two substructures, but one was largely unfinished and held no traces of interment. The main southern substructure contained a male burial (Bárta 2001: 7–11).

Among the tombs of middle-rank officials from Abusir, a higher number of shafts is attested *e.g.* in the tomb of the chief physician Shepseskafankh (AS 39, see Fig. 1.3). There were altogether eight shafts, one of them very likely secondary. In the other seven shafts, a surprising predominance of female burials was uncovered. While there were only two men buried, the tomb attested four women burials. All of the individuals were of an elder age, above 40 years. The remaining shaft contained human remains of at least 2 individuals, but of unknown gender (see Bárta 2015: 27–28).

In the late Fifth Dynasty tomb of priest Neferinpu, only two out of six burials belonged to women. Both of them were buried in the lesser shafts of the mastaba during the earlier stage of the construction of the tomb (*i.e.* Shaft 4 and 6) and both were older than 40 years (Havelková 2014: 169–175). One of these shafts was the second deepest shaft in the whole tomb (Shaft 4, 7.30 m), surpassed only by the shaft of the main owner. Unluckily, none of

these female burials held any funerary goods (see also Bárta *et al.* 2014: 43–45).<sup>12</sup> Contrarily, the neighbouring tomb of Kaiemtjenet (AS 38) held a majority of female burials and even a few children (see Vymazalová *et al.* 2011).

The Sixth Dynasty tomb cluster of vizier Qar and his descendants can provide further comparative data (see Bárta 2009: 313–314). Out of 10 shafts that contained human burials, only two, Shafts 2 and 5 in the tomb of Qar (AS 16) held female bodies. Due to the position and age of the women, they were interpreted as the presumed mother and wife of the main owner. As a further example, the tomb of Inti (AS 22) was comprised exclusively of four male burials.

Comparing the sizes of the shafts from diverse parts of the cemetery of Abusir, it becomes clear that as a rule, the shafts of the women were smaller than those of the men from the same tomb. As an example, the two women in the tomb of Neferinpu (AS 37) were buried in two very diverse shafts (Bárta *et al.* 2014: 205–208). The deeper one (Shaft 4, 7.30 m) was the second deepest shaft surpassed only by the shaft of Neferinpu himself (Shaft 1, 10 m). On the other hand, the second female shaft reached only a depth of 1.20 m (Shaft 6).

In the tomb of physician Shepseskafankh, the main owner was buried in the deepest shaft (Shaft 2, 12.80 m), however two other elder females were also buried in comparatively deep shafts (Shafts 3 and 6, 10.30 m and 10.60 m). The remaining two females were uncovered in much smaller shafts of 5 m and 4.20 m (for details, see also Bárta 2015: 25–26). Interestingly, only three shafts contained proper burial chambers and the largest among them belonged to a female, not the main owner.

As an example of trends in the tombs of lower officials, the women in the tomb of Shedu (AS 12) were buried in 3.15–4.80 m deep shafts, while their male counterparts held shafts up to 5.80 m and 7.90 m deep (Bárta 2001: 139, Table II). The only female from Shaft 7 in the Fifth Dynasty tomb of Hetepi (AS 3) was buried in a 2.50 m deep shaft, in contrast to two males from 6.20 m and 8.32 m deep shafts. The shafts containing the three female burials in the anonymous tomb AS 6 reached between 2.50–4.84 m, while those belonging to men had

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<sup>12</sup> The relatively rich burial of an individual interred in a sarcophagus from Burial Chamber West in tomb AS 37 actually belonged to a male, not a female (see Havelková 2014: 167–169).

3.35–6.10 m (and only a single male shaft was actually smaller than those of the women, see Bárta 2001: Table II).

However, there were also a few exceptions with deeper shafts containing female burials. Some of them exhibit only relative or slight differences, such as a 4.60 m deep female shaft versus a 4.10 m deep male shaft in tomb AS 9 (Bárta 2002: Table 2). The most notable case was an anonymous female burial in Shaft 2 in the tomb of the official Kaiemtjenet (AS 38, see Vymazalová *et al.* 2011: 178–179). The unknown woman 40–50 years of age was buried in the deepest shaft of the tomb (7.50 m), surpassing all the other seven shafts including one belonging to the main owner (Shaft 1, 4.90 m). Her importance might be interpreted as the result of a family relation, *i.e.* as the wife or mother of Kaiemtjenet (see also Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias Kytarová *et al.* 2014: 207).

As was already noted above, one of the most important features signifying the social status of the owner were sarcophagi. Notably, out of 215 documented examples of stone sarcophagi from the period of the Old Kingdom (see Štěpánová 2011: 67), only 22 of them were attested for the burial of women (Věra Štěpánová, personal communication). Furthermore, almost half of them were associated with direct members of the royal family, such as the princesses from the so-called Djedkare family cemetery at Abusir Centre (Verner – Callender 2002). Among the daughters of an unknown king, most possibly Djedkare, two of them were buried in sarcophagi, namely Khekeretnebtu and Hedjetnebu, as well as possibly distantly related anonymous lady L (Verner – Callender 2002: 21, 91, 103, Figs. B8 and K3, Pl. Kf4).

All of these sarcophagi were made of limestone and so far, only two cases of a different material were attested in female burials at Abusir. A granite sarcophagus, belonging to a daughter of King Niuserre, Khamerernebtu, was discovered in the burial chamber of her husband, vizier Ptahshepses (Verner 2002; Krejčí 2009). A small corner fragment of another granite sarcophagus was found in the pyramid of Queen Khentkaus II (Verner 2001: 18). However, due to the fact that this queen might have been an actual ruling monarch during the childhood of her sons (Callender 1994: 240–272 and 2011: 171–179; Verner 2001: 173–174), she belongs in a very different social stratum. In contrast, a wife of a king and Queen mother,

Khentkaus III at Abusir Centre, was equipped with only a limestone sarcophagus, fragments of which were discovered in her burial chamber (Krejčí – Arias Kytarová – Odler 2015: 32).

Out of all the women from the complex of Sheretnebty, only one of them was buried in a limestone sarcophagus – Neferhathor, the wife of Nefer (Shaft 2 in AS 68d). As noted above, the presumed remains of Princess Sheretnebty were uncovered lying on the floor of her burial chamber; however, it is possible that she was meant to receive a sarcophagus as well, given the depth of her shaft (10.70 m) and its position in the tomb, next to the richest burial of the whole cemetery. Her burial chamber was largely unfinished and given the young age of the deceased, it is possible to theorize that she had to be buried in haste after her premature death, resulting in an incomplete funerary apartment (Vymazalová 2015: 54). Her possible daughter, buried in Shaft 4 of tomb AS 68c, was very likely interred in a wooden coffin (Vymazalová 2015: 55).

The last woman from the complex of Sheretnebty probably provided with a more elaborate burial was the anonymous female from the burial chamber of Shaft 3 in the courtyard. She was interred in a burial pit. However, as mentioned above, the context was highly disturbed and the association of the female skeleton with this particular chamber is tentative. It must be noted that such burial pits were considered a cheaper substitution for sarcophagi, being merely hewn into the floor of the bedrock, and are commonly attested with burials of middle- and lower-ranking officials (see *e.g.* Štěpánová 2012: 82). A notable case of a female burial in a burial pit was uncovered recently in the anonymous tomb AS 79 (see *Chapter 4.1.1*, lady Setib).

Otherwise, the privilege of holding a sarcophagus was predominantly held by men. At Abusir South, the most prominent examples include the tomb of sun priest Neferinpu (AS 37), where both main burial chambers hewn east and west of Shaft 1 contained male burials in their sarcophagi (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias Kytarová *et al.* 2014: 27–42).<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the sarcophagus in Shaft 1 of the anonymous tomb AS 47 was used for a male burial (see also Arias Kytarová 2011a: Fig. 11).

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<sup>13</sup> For the gender identification of both human remains as male, see Havelková (2014: 175).

From the Sixth Dynasty, a rich occurrence of sarcophagi was attested in the cluster of the tombs of vizier Qar and his descendants. In total, there were six sarcophagi, including two for the only female burials in the complex. Given the age of the women (over 40 and over 60 years old), it might be possible that one was his wife and another his mother; especially given the fact that the second-most prominent elder male burial was tentatively interpreted as that of Qar's father (Bárta *et al.* 2009: 313).

As far as ceramic vessels are concerned, no pattern could be observed due to the small amount of comparative data, both from the complex of Sheretnebty and other tombs.<sup>14</sup> The only female burial from AS 68 that had a preserved primary floor layer was that of Neferhathor (Shaft 2 in AS 68d). She was equipped with rather poor ceramic equipment, namely three beer jars that were found immediately next to the sarcophagus. At least two of them contained remains of the original filling of Nile mud, similar to other attested cases from our necropolis (see *Chapter 4.1.1*). However, the burial was disturbed, and it is possible that it originally held more vessels. As was already mentioned above, beer jars usually belonged among the less desirable funerary objects and are usually attested only in burials of middle- or lower-ranking officials.

The ceramic evidence from the other female burials is very tentative, given the disturbed nature of the contexts. As an example, no relevant fragments were found in direct association with the female body presumed to be Princess Sheretnebty herself (Shaft 2 in AS 68c). However, we uncovered several sherds of very fine, thin-walled carinated bowl made of Marl A1 that might have been part of her burial goods, as carinated bowls are a common component in burial chambers (see *e.g.* Shaft 6 in the courtyard and Shaft 1 in AS 68d) and the bowl itself is the finest among those from the complex.

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<sup>14</sup> For comparison of other types of material culture in female burials, such as copper models of tools, see *e.g.* Odler 2014.

## 6.2 CHRONOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CERAMIC FINDS

In this section, the ceramic finds shall be explored from the viewpoint of their chronological relevance. It must be stressed that except for very few intact archaeological situations, almost all the contexts from this complex were secondary or mixed in nature, and therefore their resulting value must be considered tentative. Despite this fact, some of the disturbed ceramic contexts exhibit a large level of homogeneity in their typological and metric sequences that make it possible to assume they represent original deposits or refuse layers. As a whole, the pottery finds provide us with a plethora of information concerning individual structures that may enable a better delimitation of the chronological development of the complex.

### 6.2.1 BURIALS OF THE MAIN OWNERS

Concerning the actual construction of the rock-cut tombs or the open courtyard, unluckily no found ceramic finds were possible to associate with it. In the case of superstructures of standard mastabas, their fillings or the mud bricks used for their construction or outer coating (see *e.g.* the tomb of Nefershepes, AS 67; Arias Kytnarová – Havelková – Jirásková *et al.* 2014: Obr. 1) often contain ceramic fragments that can be used in determining *terminus ad quem* or, more commonly, *post quem* (*e.g.* Krejčí – Arias Kytnarová – Odler 2015: 37–38, Fig. 9, also *Chapter 4.5.1*). Due to the fact that these particular chapels were hewn into rock, there were no sherds from such primary structures, and there is no way to determine the time span between the construction of the tombs and the primary burials. It must be said that the relationship between the so-called superstructures (*i.e.* AS 66 and AS 69) is under on-going excavation and discussion and shall not be explored here. Only the most important individual finds shall be referenced; full details can be found under respective sections in the chapter describing archaeological context. Due to the fact that the epigraphic evidence was discussed in each respective context, when available, it shall be only referenced and not analysed repeatedly.

As the primary burials, the present author defines the interment of the original owners of the tombs, buried in the southernmost shafts (*i.e.* all the Shafts 1 in tombs AS 68a, AS 68c



and AS 68d, including the chamber of AS 68b), sometimes with the inclusion of their spouses (e.g. Shaft 2 in both AS 68c and AS 68d). Due to the epigraphic evidence, all of these four main owners are known by name.

Among the main structures surrounding the open pillared courtyard of Princess Sheretnebt, it is possible to suggest the following sequence. The tomb of Nefershepes was probably built either as the oldest structure or approximately at the same time as rock-cut tombs AS 68c and AS 68d (cf. Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias et al. 2014: 17–20). Besides the ceramic evidence, which has to be considered secondary as it always relies only on available parallels that might themselves be from unsecure or mixed contexts, the tomb of Nefer provided us with the titles of the main owner, as well as a seal imprint of King Niuserre on one of the mud bricks found in the undisturbed burial of a young child in Shaft 3 of AS 68d (see *Chapter 3.6.4*). Due to the position of the shaft, which was hewn after the two main shafts, we can suggest that the young boy buried in it was Nefer's son, who died prematurely and was buried with unusually rich equipment. Nefer is attested as a priest working both in the sun temple and the mortuary temple of King Neferirkara (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014), providing us with a *terminus post quem* for his career. It is unlikely that he passed before his son (although such a possibility cannot be excluded). As well, he probably died at the earliest during or shortly after Niuserre's reign.

If we accept the theory that the two main burials in tomb AS 68c belonged to Princess Sheretnebt and her husband (see also *Chapter 3.5.3* and Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014), her burial is also delimited by indirect epigraphic sources including the inscribed pillars of the open court. Her father, although not named, was in all likelihood King Niuserre, and it is noteworthy that at the time of the construction of her complex, he was already denoted as “a great god”, usually referencing a deceased king. Sheretnebt must have died either during the reign of King Menkauhor or eventually Djedkare (cf. Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 347–349; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 10).

The comparison of the two main sets of burials in tombs AS 68c and AS 68d shows that they were created in approximately the same time period. These burials are far from identical, although they share common traits. Both male burials (that of Nefer and of the

anonymous official buried in Shaft 1 of AS 68c) were interred in the deepest shafts of their tombs and equipped with finely-crafted limestone sarcophagi. Despite the fact that they were both robbed, there is enough ceramic evidence to compare them at least partially. In the primary floor layer of the anonymous official, a whole set of vessels was preserved, albeit broken to pieces (very likely intentionally, see *Chapter 4.6.2*). It consisted of at least three large ovoid jars made of Marl clay, one smaller shouldered jar and various bowls, including a large bent-sided bowl, a carinated bowl and three low bent-sided bowls, as well as one beaker. In comparison, the burial chamber of Nefer provided us with only a beer jar and a carinated bowl, but it must be remembered that the exploration of the chamber had to be terminated due to the instability of the bedrock, and thus the chamber might have contained more items. The dating is confirmed not only by the fine pottery from the burial chambers, but also by the numerous examples of homogenous vessels from the burial shaft deposits uncovered in the shafts.

Both tombs AS 68a and AS 68b were very likely built slightly later, during the reign of Djedkare. This king is confirmed in direct evidence, *i.e.* the mud stopper with his Horus name that was uncovered in the burial chamber of Duaptah (see *Chapter 3.3.2*, also Vymazalová 2015: 48–49). He is also attested in indirect epigraphic evidence, such as the date with a very high cattle count that reasonably cannot correspond to any other king, which was found on the walls of the tomb of Shepesuptah (see *Chapter 3.4.1* and Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012; Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 102–104).

Between these two tombs, the scant remains in the burial chamber of Shepesuptah point to a slightly older ceramic tradition, with a relatively large-sized, very finely made miniaturized platter that very likely belonged to his tomb goods (see Fig. 3.131). Such finely-made miniaturized vessels that represent exact copies of large-sized pots were most traditional during the Fourth Dynasty (see also *Chapter 6.3.1*) and survived only until the late Fifth Dynasty. Interestingly, from the point of craftsmanship, this miniaturized vessel represents the finest piece of ceramic production from the whole complex, together with the small, very finely-made carinated bowl of Marl clay that was designated for Sheretnebtj herself.

As stated above, the two burials in the tomb of Duaptah (AS 68a) can both be dated to the late Fifth Dynasty, although the interment of Nefermin in Shaft 2 might be slightly younger than that of Duaptah himself.

The remaining shafts in tombs AS 68c (Shaft 4) and AS 68d (Shafts 3–6) were all built much later, in the course of the Sixth Dynasty. The ceramic evidence from Shaft 6 points to the fact that this shaft is one of the youngest among the rock-cut tombs, with beer jars and other vessels characteristic for the first half of the reign of Pepy II (*cf. Chapter 3.5.7*); however, the shaft was disturbed and relatively shallow, and so the objects uncovered in it might not have reliable chronological value.

### 6.2.2 LATER FUNERARY ACTIVITY

A number of shafts in the rock-cut tombs AS 68c and AS 68d, and especially in the area of the open courtyard and corridor of AS 68, were hewn long after the interment of the main owners of the tombs. In the open courtyard, the shafts were built in a span of several generations from the late Fifth Dynasty until the terminal Old Kingdom. As some examples show, the builders lost knowledge of the position of individual burial chambers, as they sometimes hit them accidentally during the construction of new substructures, *e.g.* Shaft 1 in the courtyard that disturbed the burial chamber of Shaft 6 (see *Chapter 3.1.3*). Another closely related example involves the burial chambers of Shafts 3 and 6, which were built so close to each other that their connecting wall partially collapsed before completion, as can be evidenced by an artificial reinforcement.

The evidence from the shafts is tentative, given the secondary or at least mixed nature of their fills. This fact was previously mentioned and shall be only summarized here. All the shafts in the courtyard were robbed and, therefore, their fills must have been emptied at least once. In such case, it is possible to ask whether study of such secondary contexts has any scientific value, as it might not represent the original archaeological situation. The present author would like to present several main ways to interpret the post-depositional processes involving the pottery:

- 1) After the robbing, the original debris was used to backfill the same shaft; in this case, all the pottery uncovered therein would roughly correspond with the original use of the shaft. Due to the lack of pottery or any other evidence from the post-Old Kingdom/early First Intermediate periods, we can assume that the courtyard fell into disuse after the Sixth Dynasty. All the robbing must have occurred at the latest during the terminal Sixth Dynasty, when the courtyard was still in full use, and so most likely happened during the night or at other, less frequented times. Almost all the shafts were relatively shallow and could be emptied within several hours. It would be logical to presume that the robbers tried to cover their tracks by filling the shaft with the original debris, so as to escape notice.
- 2) After the robbing, the original debris was used to backfill a different, nearby shaft. The main reason behind this was a more effective use of time and resources. This method is commonly used during present excavations, when one shaft is emptied, its fill is sieved and analysed for objects and later used to backfill an older shaft that was excavated beforehand. In the case of robbers, it would enable them to empty two or more shafts in a quicker, more effective way, as it helps with the deposition of the large amount of debris. In the case of this theory, individual shaft fills can be considered rather homogenous but could have been swapped. The courtyard of AS 68 contained altogether 12 shafts in great proximity and such an activity cannot be excluded.
- 3) The debris from the shafts was randomly deposited next to the opening and was only later distributed among diverse random shafts. From the point of ceramic evidence, the homogeneity of vessels and fragments from each shaft is the strongest argument against this assumption.
- 4) The fill of the shafts was mixed with other debris, such as the cultic refuse from the surrounding chapels or the courtyard itself.<sup>15</sup> In this case, the original fill would have to have been deposited outside of the shafts for some period of time, until the accumulation of a larger amount of diverse material found its way into different shafts

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<sup>15</sup> There were at least two niches with small false doors that could have served as offering places during the late Sixth Dynasty, i.e. above Shaft 4 and 12 in the south-west corner of the court (see also *Chapter 3.1.3*).

through human or natural means. This theory is easily refuted by the fact that the pottery fragments from the shafts only exceptionally exhibited worn and eroded surfaces and therefore could not have been exposed to sun, wind and sand for longer time periods. Furthermore, the presumption that some shafts were left uncovered while ritual and funerary activity took place in the courtyard and the chapels is simply unfeasible.

- 5) The fill of the shafts is partly mixed and may contain different strata of diverse origins. One such example is the debris in Shaft 7 that contained Fifth Dynasty ceramics in its lower two thirds and almost exclusively late Sixth Dynasty pottery in its upper meter and a half. Another notable example with diverse layers was the fill in Shaft 1 of tomb AS 68c (see also *Chapter 3.5.2* and Fig. 3.159). In both cases, it is possible to presume that the uppermost part of the shafts was left empty and filled later with Sixth Dynasty debris.

The first theory is based on the presumption that only one shaft was robbed at a time.<sup>16</sup> Given the close proximity of all our shafts, such an assumption is quite logical, as our own work proved that two nearby shafts can easily collapse when uncovered at the same time. The strongest argument in a “single shaft at a time” theory is the relative homogeneity of the ceramic material from one shaft. Certainly, there are shafts whose material resembles each other (most prominently Shafts 4 and 12), but practical comparison between individual vessels has shown that similar looking sherds of identical types actually belong to different vessels. In particular, both these shafts contained bell-shaped bowls with a flaring rim, bowls with a contracted rim grooved on the outside, *etc.* (see *Chapter 3.1.3*). In all the named cases, the pots (often preserved in several fragments) differ either in morphological details, sizes, quality of clay, surface treatment and other features. It is therefore more likely that both shafts were from a similar period than that their fills were mixed.

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<sup>16</sup> It must be emphasized again that all evidence points to the fact that the courtyard fell into disuse after the end of the Old Kingdom and was relatively quickly covered in debris and forgotten. Any later robbing activity would presumably leave proof in the material culture.

Another argument for homogeneity within a single context is the presence of only one type of Sixth Dynasty beer jar per shaft. Although numerous shafts contained Sixth Dynasty material, there was as a rule only a single type of beer jar. In specific terms, Shafts 1, 5, 9 and 12 contained low tubular beer jars of type J-1gII. On the other hand, Shaft 4 held tall tubular beer jars of type J-1f and Shaft 7 the tall beer jars with articulated shoulders of type J-1e (see also *Chapter 5.2.1*).

With regard to all the above-mentioned arguments and reservations, an approximate sequence of secondary funerary activity in the open courtyard and corridor of AS 68 can be proposed. Only the shafts that were equipped with a burial and contained enough ceramic material to be able to draw conclusions shall be mentioned.

Tentatively, it is possible to state that Shafts 3 and 10 were among the oldest in the court, built sometime at the end of the Fifth Dynasty. Shaft 7 was hewn slightly later, with the youngest pottery from its lower half dated to the early Sixth Dynasty, *i.e.* the reign of Teti and Weserkare. Interestingly, both Shafts 3 and 7 had very similar debris of terminal Sixth Dynasty pottery in their top layers, pointing to a possible robbing (or theoretically, cleansing) activity in this time.

All the remaining shafts were built in the following period. Some of them can be delimited more precisely, due to well-dated parallels from the necropolis of Saqqara West. Shafts 4, 5, 9 and 12 held diverse beer jars typical of the reign of Pepy I and Merenre. In Shaft 6 we uncovered vessels that were attested during the reign of Pepy II. Shafts 14 and 15 in the corridor contained numerous analogies to our assemblages from the tomb of Inti, Senedjemib and anonymous tomb AS 32, thus also providing a tentative dating to the reigns of Pepy I and Pepy II.

In conclusion, while a small number of shafts might have been constructed already during the late Fifth Dynasty (*i.e.* Shafts 3 and 10), the majority of building activity in the courtyard and the corridor of AS 68 belongs to the Sixth Dynasty. From the reign of Pepy I, there was a large increase in demand, followed by a sudden flourish of secondary construction operations. It is clear that some shafts were only outlined, without being finished and used for actual burials, while others had to be abandoned due to technical issues. The court thus

provides a unique opportunity to study and analyse long-term development of a relatively closed archaeological complex.

### 6.3 GENERAL AREA TRENDS AND COMPARISONS

On the basis of the available ceramic evidence from the complex of Sheretnebty, as well as from other tombs and structures uncovered at Abusir, it is possible to present some preliminary conclusive remarks concerning general area trends. The main discussed point is the presence, content and extent of burial goods found in the burial chambers and the intentional shaft deposits, as they reflect all the main points discussed in this thesis, *e.g.* those of chronological relevance and social trends observable in pottery. In the last section of this dissertation, these trends shall be compared within a wider scope of the material from the whole Memphite necropolis, with a basic suggestion of stages in Old Kingdom ceramic production and its diachronic development.

#### 6.3.1 ABUSIR SOUTH AND CENTRE

Although the site of Abusir was used already in the Third Dynasty (see *i.e.* Bárta 2001: 1–16; Bárta – Vymazalová – Coppens *et al.* 2010: 3–182; Bárta 2011; *etc.*), it is best known for its extensive Fifth Dynasty necropolis that stretches from the pyramid field of Abusir south towards Saqqara. The oldest tombs are those dating to the early Fifth Dynasty, such as the one of Kaaper (AS 1, former code AA; see Bárta 2001: 143–90). The objects found in his highly disturbed burial chamber and shaft were of a distinctive nature among the other later tombs. In the cemetery of the members of the royal family in Abusir Center, dated to the latter part of the Fifth Dynasty, it is possible to observe the appearance of several main pottery types in the burial chambers.

The wine jars or so-called imports were most possibly considered the most desirable vessels, and we can assume that only lower-ranking officials had to settle for beer jars. However, it is clear that during the Fifth Dynasty, beer jars return as a common part of the burial goods, even if mostly among lower-ranking officials. From Abusir, the most illustrative example includes the fully preserved, undisturbed burial chamber of priest Neferinpu that was

discovered with altogether ten intact beer jars (AS 37, Shaft 1, *cf.* Arias Kytnarová 2014a: Figs. 7.1, 7.8 and 7.9). All of them were filled with intact false filling of Nile mud and nine were still closed with complete mud stoppers at the time of discovery. It is very likely that the number of vessels reflected the Egyptian week and thus in a symbolic way provided the deceased with one beer per day. A similar case can be observed in the burial chamber of Neferhathor, the wife of Nefer (AS 68d, Shaft 2), which contained not only three beer jars but also canopic jars, models of wooden boats and models of copper tools (see Bárta –Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: fig. 11; Arias Kytnarová 2015: 12).

Then again, the owners still preferred finer wares, if these were available. The owner of the burial chamber in anonymous tomb AS 47 (Arias Kytnarová 2011a: fig. 11), in Shaft 1 of AS 68c (the so-called husband of Princess Sheretnebtj; see Arias Kytnarová 2014c: Obr. 1), and both shafts in the tomb of Nefeshepes (AS 67) were equipped with fine ovoid storage jars made of Marl, as well as an assortment of fine, red-slipped bowls. These most often included at least one large and deep bent-sided bowl, several much smaller and shallower bent-sided bowls, a carinated bowl and possibly other shapes such as small beakers. All of these men were undoubtedly high-ranking officials, judging from not only the tomb but also the presence of limestone sarcophagi in their burial chambers, even if their titles are not preserved. A similar presence of fine wine jars and broken red-slipped bowls can also be observed in the burial chamber of an unknown man in Shaft 2 in the tomb of Neferinpu (AS 37; Arias Kytnarová 2014a: fig. 7.2).

During the period of the Fifth Dynasty, it is possible to also observe other customs connected to ceramic vessels. In Abusir, we had several examples of so-called closing ritual deposits consisting of vessel/s found immediately in front of the sealed and white-washed or mortared wall leading into the burial chamber or niche. Sometimes, they are combined with an assortment of burned animal bones, and thus it is very likely that they were part of a single ritual ensuring the proper sealing of the chamber. More often than not, they consist of a single beer jar found intact leaning against the mentioned wall, such as *i.e.* in Shaft 6 of Neferinpu's tomb (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias Kytnarová *et al.* 2014: fig. 3.56).



Besides these, there were also so-called burial shaft deposits that are more commonly found in the middle to upper part of the shaft and very often comprise a relatively large number of vessels that can be intentionally broken to pieces. In Abusir South, the Czech mission recently uncovered several burial shaft deposits, *i.e.* in the tomb of Khekeretnebtj (AC 15; Verner – Callender 2002: Pl. II, Bf2) and Hedjetnebu (Verner – Callender 2002: Pl. XXI, Kf2 and XXIV, Kf9), in the anonymous tomb AS 47 (Arias Kytarová 2011a: fig. 19–22), the two main shafts of tomb AS 68c (Arias Kytarová 2014c) and the shafts of Nefer and Neferhathor in tomb AS 68d (Arias Kytarová 2015). Some of them were made up of primarily beer jars, while others include a large amount of other ceramic classes such as different types of stands and platters. Unlike in the previously mentioned closing ritual deposits, these vessels were sometimes found only randomly deposited in the shaft, sometimes clearly thrown inside and broken during the process. They are often mingled with sand and pieces or chips of limestone. It is possible that these vessels came from funerary rituals conducted immediately after the burial and before the filling of the shaft. Due to the fact that these vessels could not be reused for any other purpose, they had to be disposed of and ritually buried. This context is very likely closely connected with the conducting of the ritual of *sd dšrwt*, breaking of the red vessels. These so-called burial shaft deposits also developed over time, and in the course of the late Old Kingdom, a prevalence of a single ceramic type – that of beer jars – can be observed, especially towards the end of the Sixth Dynasty. However, the social status of the owners undoubtedly also played a role, as with lower-ranking officials, only beer jars were found in their burial shaft even during the Fifth Dynasty.

In the Sixth Dynasty, the general increase in the wealth of the officials led to a significant change in burial customs. Both high and lower-ranking officials were able to afford a high number of until then very costly burial goods, consisting *i.e.* of items made of copper and stone (see *i.e.* the tomb of Qar in Abusir, Bárta *et al.* 2009: Figs. 6.3.108–109, 6.3.111–122, 6.3.124–130, etc). Ceramic vessels were driven into the background, and even if attested, they consisted mostly of fine examples. Beer jars were quite rare as components of burial goods. On the other hand, shaft deposits, which were much more varied from the point of ceramic representation during the previous dynasty (*i.e.* including also a large percentage of stands

and platters), were in some cases made up almost solely of beer jars, or these constituted a large proportion of the deposits. The decreased number of actual vessels found in burial contexts might be connected to the vastly increased amount of decorated areas of the tomb, in which case we could interpret the representations of vessels and goods as a symbolic replacement of some of the physical items (Rzeuska 2006: 443).

The Sixth Dynasty cemetery at Abusir provides a slightly different picture, with less clearer standardisation. There were burial chambers with a very large number of vessels, especially storage jars (*e.g.* the burial of Senedjemib, see Bárta *et al.* 2009: Figs. 6.3.123, 6.3.131–133), while also including open forms. No other ceramic types were attested. During this period, ceramic miniature vessels are almost completely absent from burial contexts. In Abusir, there is only one known case of ceramic miniature vessels from burial chambers of the Sixth Dynasty, namely four miniature bowls from the burial chamber of Senedjemib (Bárta *et al.* 2009: Fig. 6.3.162). In Saqqara West, the situation is similar – miniature vessels are found in smaller numbers in some shafts, such as in the mastabas of Kheti and Pehenptah (Rzeuska 2006: Table 6), but they are not associated with the burial goods. The available jar types include rather small ovoid jars, imported (or, during this period, rather imitated) Syro-Palestinian combed ware and large ovoid jars in various amounts. All of these contexts held extensive amounts of other burial goods, including copper vessels, copper tools, stone models of offerings (such as geese), *etc.*

### 6.3.2 MEMPHITE NECROPOLIS<sup>17</sup>

So far, there is no comprehensive analysis of all the available ceramic evidence from the whole Memphite necropolis. The main limitation of such an analysis is the lack of well published ceramic data. Especially in the case of older publications from Giza, only a few vessels per tomb were offered in drawings and even less in photographic documentation, including the

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<sup>17</sup> A version of this particular section, which was analysed for the presented dissertation, was published in Arias Kytarová 2016b.

existing online databases.<sup>18</sup> As an example, although there were fragments of around 20 vessels found on the floor of the burial chamber in G 2210, none are depicted and described in detail (Reisner 1942: 435). In such cases, it is almost impossible to date contexts with such a limited amount of information.

Additionally, the chronological establishment of tombs and contexts in older publications must be carefully reviewed, as it was assumed that all the finds from a particular tomb belong to the timeframe of that tomb. To give a specific example, Petrie did not differentiate between the original Fourth Dynasty pottery and the late Old Kingdom or even Middle Kingdom vessels found in the Fourth Dynasty tombs in Meidum (Petrie 1892: Pl. XXX, Tombs 24 and 27; Pl. XXXI, vessels nos. 8, 10, 16, 19, 20, *etc.*), as he did not consider and discuss the possibility of later additions or long-lasting cultic activity in the tombs.<sup>19</sup> A similar situation can be seen with some Sixth Dynasty shafts built into Fourth or Fifth Dynasty mastabas in Giza, which are also unrecognized as being much younger in date (*e.g.* Shaft X of G 1223, see *Chapter 4.3.1*).

For all of the above-mentioned reasons, a careful reevaluation of all available published information is important, as the current knowledge of the archaeological material might enable present scholars to draw different conclusions than the original excavators. This chapter will try to discuss the attested data for some particular contexts from the position of the chronological and typological development of the ceramic finds.

Tentatively, on the basis of all the known data, it is possible to divide the development of Old Kingdom pottery into four main stages, with many subsequent phases. The pottery of the Third Dynasty up until the reign of King Snofru in the Fourth Dynasty is decidedly different and follows a much older ceramic tradition, with distinct ceramic shapes. The second stage can be seen to start from the reign of Khufu until the end of the Fourth Dynasty,

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<sup>18</sup> The main online sources for the past excavations undertaken at Giza are the Giza Archives (<http://www.gizapyramids.org/>), Giza Projekt (<http://giza-projekt.org/Einleitung/Giza-Projekt.html>) and *e.g.* the database of objects stored in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (<http://www.artstor.org/content/giza-archaeological-expedition-archive>).

<sup>19</sup> The problems with the original dating of finds from most of the Fourth Dynasty contexts in Meidum were pointed out by Rzeuska (2011). The pottery captioned as belonging to the Fourth Dynasty in reality encompasses characteristic late Sixth Dynasty vessels as well as some Twelfth Dynasty ceramics.

when the tombs seem to have been equipped with a more or less given set of vessels. The Fifth Dynasty is a stage of its own, with at least three possible phases and lasts until the reigns of Teti and Weserkare in the early Sixth Dynasty. During this period, while one can observe several general common features, the sites within the area of the Memphite necropolis exhibit slight differences in the ceramic assemblages. The final stage corresponds to the remaining Sixth Dynasty and is most characteristic by a development of very different types of beer jars, especially the tall and low tubular ones, which are often treated with a red slip on their outer walls. For the Sixth Dynasty, Rzeuska was able to define four main phases (Rzeuska 2006: Tabs. 1 and 2).

Pottery from the Third Dynasty is morphologically different from the later Old Kingdom production and can be well understood as a continuation of older ceramic development. Typologically, there are many vessels that can be traced in their origin to either the Predynastic or Early Dynastic Period. These include the tall and very slim storage jars with cord decoration on the rim, body and base (*i.e.* Bárta 2001: Fig. 1.8 and Pl. IXa, no. 13/EE/1993); beer jars with a very slim body and a so-called collared rim (Quibell and Firth 1935: Pls. XXV and CII, nos. 18 and 20; Arias Kytarová – Jirásková 2015: Fig. 7); bowls with an inner ledge (*i.e.* Quibell 1913: Pl. XXVII, no. 21; Kromer 1991: Taf. 24, no. 2, *etc.*); tall tubular ointment vases, *etc.* One of the most characteristic vessels is the early type of carinated bowl with a deep body, angular shoulders and slightly incurved rim (*i.e.* Quibell 1913: Pl. XXVII, no. 19, *etc.*). At the same time, a new ceramic tradition began to appear, one that continued into the Fourth Dynasty.

Early Fourth Dynasty contexts are characteristic for the presence of a limited amount of the older ceramic types mentioned above together with new wares. To name some examples, in the tomb of Netjeraperef in Dahshur collared beer jars were found together with ovoid ones (*i.e.* Alexanian 1999: Abb. 54 and 55). The early Fourth Dynasty tombs from Meidum bear only a little relevance from the point of ceramic finds, as in almost all tombs the original Fourth Dynasty ware was uncovered with late Old Kingdom or even Middle Kingdom vessels (Petrie 1892: Pls. XXX–XXXI; Rzeuska 2011).

It is in Giza that the new tradition fully develops. There, one of the earliest tombs, the shaft of Queen Hetepheres I, mother of King Khufu (G 7000 X), contained a vast amount of ceramic vessels of high quality craftsmanship. One of the most typical features of the assemblage from her burial is the presence of a high variety of different ceramic types, and not only full-size vessels, but also their finely manufactured miniaturized versions. To name some of the examples that can be found in both sizes, these include bag-shaped jars (Reisner – Smith 1955: Figs. 59–60), neckless shoulder jars (Reisner – Smith 1955: Figs. 62–63), bowls with a recurved rim and tubular spout (Reisner – Smith 1955: Figs. 73–74), bowl-tables (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 76) and even stands (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 77). These miniaturized vessels are exact copies of the large-size examples and are often treated similarly, that is often with a red slip and polish. They are to be differentiated from the more traditional “classical” miniatures that also appear in this tomb (Reisner’s group LXXIX).<sup>20</sup> These comprise altogether 66 examples of miniature bowls that came in two variants, either a shallow or a deep one (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 75, nos. 81–85). Either due to the high social status of the Queen and thus her access to the highest quality objects or because of the relatively early date within the Old Kingdom, these miniature bowls exhibit unusual features, such as being very well-made, thin-walled, relatively large (with rim diameters of 7–11 cm and heights between 2 and 5 cm), and covered with a red slip. In this respect it must be noted that as the Old Kingdom progressed, miniature vessels appear in larger quantities with drastically decreasing quality of production.<sup>21</sup> The ceramic assemblage is also unusual for the presence of several less common funerary types, such as the round-bottomed bowls with a rim spout and ledge handles, flat-bottomed bowls with a contracted rim, large flat-bottomed tubs with rectangular rims or the above-mentioned bowl-tables. However, it must be stressed that the burial equipment of Queen Hetepheres I can hardly be called characteristic or standard due to her social position, the events leading to the reposition of her tomb and thus possible loss of

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<sup>20</sup> For a detailed definition of miniature, miniaturized and model vessels of the Old Kingdom as understood by the present author, see *Chapter 5.7* and also Arias Kytarová – Jirásková – Odler – Peterková Hlouchová *forthcoming*.

<sup>21</sup> The later examples, especially those of the Sixth Dynasty, are only roughly modelled, crooked and irregular, even if still wheel-made (see *infra*).

some of the burial goods and finally the lack of comparable well-preserved royal burials of this period.

To conclude, the first half of the Fourth Dynasty is characteristic by the presence of several types in the funerary contexts, such as *i.e.* the bowl-tables, bowls with a flat base and contracted rim, bag-shaped jars, neckless shoulder jars, round-bottomed bowls with a simple rim and rougher massive tubs with a flat base and a rectangular rim. Even some types that do indeed occur later have a slightly different form, such as the ovoid wine jars. In the first half of the Fourth Dynasty, they tend to have a bulging ovoid body with a more rounded base as compared to the later slender form with a more pointed base (compare Reisner – Smith 1955: Figs. 58, 81 and 82).

The tombs of the officials from the middle of the Fourth Dynasty exhibit a much lower amount and variety of ceramic vessels in their assemblages. Even other members of the royal family, such as the son of Khufu, Wepimnefret, buried in tomb G 1201, have only a relatively small number of ceramic vessels (Reisner 1942: 387, Fig. 218). His burial goods are unusual by an almost exclusive presence of closed vessels, such as a different assortment of small-sized jars with a pointed or flat base. However, as the tomb was robbed, it is possible that the original equipment included more than the preserved types. In the tomb of Princess Meretites, daughter of Khufu (Reisner 1942: 464, Fig. 279), we can find a few ceramic types that were characteristic for this period, such as fine jars with a collared rim or bowls with an internal ledge.

In the latter part of the Fourth Dynasty, some of the older ceramic types disappear while others occur more often. This period can be characterized by a prevalence of bent-sided bowls as well as bowls with carinated rims (so-called Meidum bowls), especially in the subtype with a tall rim and angular shoulder. Some peculiarities in ceramic material include the occurrence of canopic jars made in ceramic instead of limestone. One such example is attested in the undisturbed burial chamber of the possible son of King Rakhef, Khnumbaf (or Babaf, G 8260). The four vessels copy the shape of classical canopic jars and were covered with a thick layer of a white substance, evidently imitating limestone (Hassan 1953: 9, Pls. IX: A, X, XI). They are complimented by four lids made of actual limestone. Such occurrence in a burial of a

royal prince is unusual, as the otherwise rather large presence of rich jewellery and both model tools and large-size vessels made of copper evidences his access to otherwise rare materials. However, the relative morphological similarity of stone canopic jars and ceramic neckless shoulder jars (see above, Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 62) has never been successfully explained, and it is possible that this shape originally had a much wider use than presumed.

Another possible offspring of King Khafre, an anonymous daughter, was probably buried in the likewise undisturbed burial chamber of tomb G 8250. In addition to a kit of model tools, jewellery and the offering of an ox, her burial goods also included several ceramic vessels. Their number is relatively small, with approximately 15 individual pieces (Hassan (1953: 5, Pl. II: B, IV: B, V: B). Most of the group is made up of open vessels, which seem to have been broken on purpose as part of a ritual, suggested also by the presence of a partly burned bowl and the animal offering. Due to the insufficient publication of the tomb, it is possible to say only that the bowls consisted of one or two carinated bowls, at least two bent-sided bowls, one wider rounded bowl and one with contracted walls. There was only one restricted shape, namely a tapering ovoid wine jar with a tall neck and pointed base, developed from the slightly older, more shouldered, ovoid form. Interesting to note is the presence of rather large miniaturized shouldered jars that are well known from the tradition of the Fourth Dynasty.

The idea behind placing pottery in the burial chamber was to provide food and drink for the deceased. Therefore, the most commonly found vessels include a variety of bowls and various groups of jars, such as beer jars and wine jars. More rarely, we can find platters representing tableware used for the serving of food and bread forms that stand in for bread. In the Fourth Dynasty, it was mostly finer pottery (such as storage or imported jars, red-slipped bowls and high quality miniature or miniaturized vessels) that was attested in the burial chambers of higher officials and members of the royal family. The Fifth Dynasty tombs in Giza can be characterized by a slow disappearance of certain ceramic types from the burial chambers (especially the large tubs, simple round-bottomed basins, bag-shaped jars and neckless jars). On the other hand, the three most prominent types that appear more

consistently or in larger numbers are the ovoid wine jars with a narrow neck, bowls with a carinated rim and bent-sided bowls.

The carinated bowls (frequently also called bowls with a recurved rim, brim bowls or Meidum bowls) are the most characteristic ware of the late Old Kingdom. Although they do appear much earlier, their morphological development is well documented and thus makes it easy to differentiate between the early and later carinated bowls. They developed from earlier deep and narrow forms into wider and shallower bowls (see *i.e.* Brunton 1927; Kaiser 1969; Ballet 1987; Op de Beeck 2004, *etc.*). However, as very fine ware, their use as the only exclusive dating criterion is problematic, as they could have been kept in families for generations before being placed in a tomb. Indeed, we often find older and younger forms together in a single context. Thus, it is important to bear in mind that with all the fine pottery (including the bent-sided bowls), their dating provides us only the date of their manufacture and not their placement in an archaeological situation (see also Arias Kytarová 2010b: 96).

Carinated bowls were documented in almost all burial contexts of this period, including the ones disturbed by tomb robbers, as in *i.e.* Shaft 309 (Junker 1951: 186) or in the burial of Iti in G 6030 (Weeks 1994: Fig. 129, 25-12-3 and 25-11-56). The second most common bowl type is that of bent-sided bowls (*i.e.* G 4410, see Reisner 1942: Fig. 318, 15-12-66 or the burial of Iymeri in G 6020, Weeks 1994: Fig. 128, 25-12-77 and 25-12-83). Sometimes both types occur together (*i.e.* in the burial of Neferbaupthah in G 6010, Weeks 1994: Fig. 127, 24-11-64, 24-11-66 and 24-11-66) or even with other bowl types. However, some burials, although equipped with a considerable amount of much more precious material such as copper or stone, held no traces of any ceramic vessels, as is the case *i.e.* of the young boy's burial in Shaft no. 559 (see Hassan 1941: 240–44). Interestingly, in the absence of pottery, the same types of vessels (*e.g.* carinated bowls and bent-sided bowls, eventually round-bottomed vessels with a simple rim) are sometimes represented in copper miniaturized versions (*cf.* the burial of Shaft 585 in G 8656, Hassan 1941: 92, Fig. 82; Shaft no. 559, see Hassan 1941: Fig. 217).

Besides the bowls, it became very common to also place a larger amount of storage jars among the burial goods during the Fifth Dynasty. These can be both finer ovoid jar or slightly



shouldered jars with a pointed base, which most likely represent wine (see *e.g.* the burial of Rawer II in G 5470, Junker 1938: 226, Taf. XIIIb, lowest row; the burial of Khufuankh in G 4520, Reisner 1942: Fig. 310, 14-4-21 and pl. 69b, 1/1–2; the burial of Senedjemib Inti in G 2370, Brovarski 2001: 81, Pl. 57c, Fig. 73, 35-7-23) or, with lower officials, rougher beer jars (*cf.* the chamber of Nikausokar in G6012, Weeks 1994: Fig. 127, 25-11-282). The numbers vary, but it is common to find around four jars in a single context.

Other classes that can be attested in the burial chambers of this period include a variety of flat-bottomed platters (*i.e.* the burial of Rawer II in G 5470, Junker 1938: 226, Abb. 45 and Taf. XIIIb, middle row). Although they are made of rougher fabrics, they are almost always covered with a red slip. The most outstanding platter type includes one with a short or long-ledged rim and three knob feet. From the iconographic evidence, it is possible to assume that originally, this particular type of platter was designated for the serving of meat (Junker 1927: 157).

An important feature of the later Fifth Dynasty burials is the decreased amount or complete lack of miniature and miniaturized ceramic vessels, as they are replaced by their stone counterparts. There are some exceptions, such as *i.e.* the 108 pieces from the burial of Khufuankh in G 4520, see Reisner 1942: Fig. 310, pl. 69c, 1/1–2, 2/1–3).

The early Sixth Dynasty, namely tombs built during the reign of King Teti and early Pepy I, show only small differences from the late Fifth Dynasty material. All the main ceramic types attested before occur in the burial chambers, with only morphological differences depending on the development of particular types. Carinated bowls tend to have much lower, clearly divided rims and shallower bodies, ovoid storage jars are slender and with a pointed base (see *i.e.* the vessels from the chamber of Ankhhafqar in G 8640, Hassan 1941: Fig. 119, pl. XVII; or jars from the tomb of Nedjetempet, Kanawati and Hassan 1996: pl. 10). The jars are often filled with false filling of Nile mud and sealed with mud stoppers (see the example from the burial chamber of an unknown man from Shaft 316 in G 5070, Junker 1944: Abb. 25; Kanawati *et al.* 2006: pls. 60c and 67d, e).

During the course of the Sixth Dynasty, miniature vessels all but disappear from the burial goods, with only very rare exceptions. The finely made examples of earlier periods were

replaced by very small and crudely made pieces of evidently careless production. Even when present, they are found only in restricted numbers. To name just a few examples from Giza, several shafts in the tomb of Qar (G 7101) held a small number of coarse miniature vessels in the fill of the shafts but there were none found in the associated burial pits and chambers (Simpson 1976: 14–18). The neighbouring tomb of Idu (G 7102) was also void of ceramic miniatures but exhibited several examples of full size ceramic bowls and other funerary equipment, such as copper model tools (Simpson 1976: 29–30). Due to the fact that similar observations can also be made for other parts of the Memphite necropolis, it is possible to assume that this marked the already noted change in the development of the material and functional representation amidst the burial goods.

The Sixth Dynasty tombs uncovered in Saqqara brought to light a relatively large amount of ceramic finds. In the case of the excavations of Saqqara West and some of the tombs around the Teti cemetery, these came from well documented and reliable contexts. Although almost all burial chambers were found plundered, in numerous cases enough ceramic vessels remained to be able to discern the main traits of the pottery used as burial goods. The custom of placing mainly jars and bowls to represent drink and food for the deceased remained. The jars are mostly represented by fine ovoid or shouldered jars in much smaller numbers, often only a few pieces (for shouldered jars, see the ones uncovered in the burial chamber of Hefi, Kanawati – Abder-Raziq 2001: Pl. 55). Beer jars are absent from the burial context, while being attested in relatively high numbers in so-called burial shaft deposits, where they can constitute up to dozens of vessels (*i.e.* Rzeuska 2006: 455–58). They are strikingly different from earlier forms, having either a tall or low tubular body or spindle-shaped body with a sharply pointed base (*i.e.* Kanawati *et al.* 2000: Pl. 71, TNE98:17; Rzeuska 2006: Table 1, phases II-IV).

The most commonly attested bowl types are bent-sided bowls, bowls with a lip rim, carinated bowls and shallow plates, such as *i.e.* in the burial chamber of Inumin (Kanawati *et al.* 2006: Pl. 66 g, h, i; Pls. 78–80). One burial chamber also contained a bread form with lumps of charcoal (Rzeuska 2006: 436). During her analysis of the ceramic material from Saqqara, Rzeuska was able to highlight the existence of a certain kind of set, consisting of two jars and

three open forms (bowls or plates), attestable in the necropolis of Saqqara West as well as Saqqara South (Rzeuska 2006: 440).

To conclude, the study of ancient Egyptian pottery and its chronological development is a complex matter that cannot be easily summarized and simplified into a clear formula. There was no production of standardized ceramics during the Old Kingdom (see Sterling 2004; Warden 2010 and 2014) and even such neighbouring sites as Saqqara and Abusir may exhibit different types during the same period of time, attesting to the fact that most of the pottery (if not all) was produced at a very local level; and besides the technological experience of a given pottery shop, personal preferences of specific potters may have played a role in the creation of less common vessels. Additionally to the question of functionality, the issue of fashion must also be explored – it is possible that some people tended towards the older, “outdated” wares. Also, the presence of certain vessels in a tomb depended on a number of factors, such as the social rank, and thus the socio-economic power of the tomb owner, as well as possibly developing religious beliefs.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

The cemetery of Abusir South is unique from several viewpoints. Since the outset of the archaeological exploration of the Czech Institute of Egyptology in 1991, it became clear that it represents one of the most continuous Old Kingdom necropolis in the whole Memphite region, as it was the focus of funerary activity during almost all the relevant dynasties.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the past 30 years of excavation, almost a hundred tombs have been uncovered (Bárta 2001; Bárta *et al.* 2009; Bárta – Vymazalová – Coppens *et al.* 2010; Vymazalová *et al.* 2011; Bárta *et al.* 2014; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014; etc.). They are unique in that they encompass the whole Old Kingdom and represent not only the elite strata of the society, but also burials of minor officials and persons without attested titles. As such, Abusir enables us to study the diachronic development of tomb architecture and its different aspects from the Third until the Sixth Dynasty, and moreover to compare and analyse very diverse burials of members of the royal family (*i.e.* Sheretnebtý's complex, as well as the nearby cemeteries of Abusir Centre, see Verner – Callender 2002; Krejčí – Callender – Verner 2008; Krejčí – Arias Kytarová *et al.* 2014), high officials (*e.g.* vizier Qar, Bárta *et al.* 2009), middle-rank officials (*e.g.* priest Neferinpu, Bárta *et al.* 2014), low officials (Kaiemtjenenet; Vymazalová *et al.* 2011) and finally, persons without any titles that were buried in simple mud brick tombs (*e.g.* Lake of Abusir cemetery, Bárta 2001: 17–52). Furthermore, the proximity and spatial relation to the pyramid field of Abusir Centre renders comparative studies possible between materials provided for the funerary cult of the king (*e.g.* Bárta 1994 and 2006; Verner 2006; Vlčková 2006a and 2006b; etc.) and those for his dependants buried in the vicinity (Arias Kytarová – Jirásková – Odler – Peterková Hloučová *in preparation*).

The complex of Princess Sheretnebtý can be thus set in a wider context of the funerary activity in the late Fifth Dynasty, both in relation to the royal family and other structures. The positioning of her burial away from the pyramid field points to the fact that she married an official outside of the royal family, a common trend from Niuserra's reign onwards), which is

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<sup>1</sup> With a notable exception of middle to late Fourth Dynasty, that is missing from the site so far.

also attested *e.g.* in the union of Ptahshepses and Khamerernebty (*c.f.* Verner 1997; Bárta 2005; Dulíková 2016). With all probability, her husband belonged among those high officials whose family members were buried in the region of Abusir South, and for this reason, her burial place followed that custom (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014). Due to the lack of both the name and titles of her presumed husband, it is difficult to estimate the family relationship within the cemetery. However, the close proximity as well as the diverse architectural links point to the fact that Nefershepes, the owner of tomb AS 67 abutting the complex on its north-east side, might have been part of the same family (for Abusir family complexes, compare Bárta *et al.* 2009; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias Kytarová *et al.* 2014).

The complex itself was relatively extensive and included several individual structures, most notably four rock-cut tombs, hewn into the south wall of the open court and corridor of AS 68 (for details, see *Chapter 3*). Interestingly, most of the main owners were verified thanks to epigraphic data, and some of these owners could even be tentatively associated with persons attested in the papyri archives of Neferirkare and Raneferef (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 343– 344; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 6). These owners included the inspector of the Great House, Duaptah, who was buried in tomb AS 68a (*Chapter 3.4; cf.* Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012 and 2014; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014). The owner of tomb AS 68b, Shepesuptah, served among other titles as chief of justice of the Great House, chief of justice of the Great House in the two administrative units, great one of the ten of Upper Egypt, and sealer of the beast offerings and provisions of the King of Lower Egypt (*Chapter 3.5; cf.* Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012 and 2014; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014). The hieratic graffiti on the casing block of his chapel also provided us with a date, a cattle count in the year after the 20<sup>th</sup> occasion (see Fig. 3.312). Due to the fact that such a high cattle count cannot be associated with a different ruler other than Djedkare in the late Fifth Dynasty (see *e.g.* Vymazalová – Havelková 2016: 103–104), this date provides us with a *terminus ante quem*. Although we cannot estimate with certainty the time difference between the construction of the tomb, interment of the owner and the recorded inspection, it can be

assumed from other sources, predominantly the material culture and especially the pottery, that this tomb was used only slightly later than the primary burials in tombs AS 68c and AS 68d.

The main owner of the easternmost rock-cut tomb AS 68d, Nefer, also held numerous offices and is attested *e.g.* as overseer of the scribes of crews, property custodian of the king, overseer of the two treasuries, overseer of the two granaries, overseer of scribes of the king's documents, overseer of a gang of craftsmen and scribe of the king's documents. At the same time, Nefer served as priest of Ra in the sun temple of Neferirkare and priest of the pyramid of Neferirkare (*Chapter 3.6.2*, Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 26–27), providing us with a *terminus post quem* for his interment. Due to the fact that the presumed burial of his child in Shaft 3 contained a mud brick with a seal of Niuserra, it can be assumed that Nefer served under this king and also died either during his reign or a little later (see also *Chapter 3.6.4*).

Princess Sheretnebtj was named on all four pillars of the open court, and we were able to retrieve at least parts of her heavily damaged false door. She was named as *s3(t) nšwt nt ht.f mrt.f im3hwt hr ntr 3 Šrt-nbtj*, “the king's daughter of his body, his beloved, revered with the Great God, Sheretnebtj” (see also Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 34). An additional title connected to her origin was found on her heavily fragmented false door, identifying her as *s3(t) nšwt [nt] Mn-šwt-Ni-wšr-R<sup>c</sup>*, “king's daughter (belonging to the pyramid complex) Enduring are the places of Niuserra” (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 9–10). So far, the combination of archaeological evidence, stratigraphy and most of all, epigraphic data from the whole complex points to the fact that her father was King Niuserra and that she was buried after his death, during the reign of Menkauhor or, at the latest, Djedkare (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 347–349; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 9–10).

The ceramic finds from the complex of Princess Sheretnebtj (AS 68) were notable from several main viewpoints, most prominently their number, quality and variability. The complex brought to light a vast amount of pottery, namely almost 20,000 fragments (see *Table 1.3*). Despite the fact that a majority of the contexts were either of secondary or disturbed

primary nature, they present us with a plethora of data. The main aim of this dissertation was to analyse these ceramic finds from the point of spatial distribution, typological classification, chronological development of pottery that reflected the chronological sequence of individual structures within the complex, socio-economic trends, gender attribution and, finally, to set them within a wider context of the available analogies of the Old Kingdom Memphite necropolis.

All the pottery was documented in the field by the present author during three consecutive excavation seasons. As far as the methodology is concerned, the documentation was based on the standard created by the author for the cemeteries of Abusir on the grounds of long-term field experience, enhanced by extensive reading of diverse ceramic studies and consultation with different scholars over the course of the last ten years. The material identification follows the so-called Vienna system (Nordström – Bourriau 1993: 168–187) despite its limitations for Old Kingdom pottery (for details, see also *Chapter 2*).

The complex provided us with altogether 29 shafts in the whole area of the pillared court, the corridor of AS 68 and four rock-cut tombs (AS 68a – AS 68d). Additionally, one burial chamber was accessed directly from the rock-cut chapel, *i.e.* the burial of Shepesuptah (AS 68b). Among the diverse types of contexts, the two most significant that came from this particular complex were the tomb goods uncovered in the burial chambers or niches and the remnants of shafts deposits, found in the burial shafts. Certain trends were able to be confirmed in the typological sequences of the ceramic material.

Regarding the burial chambers, the two most commonly-attested classes deposited with the body of the deceased were jars and bowls, both designated to symbolically provide the food and drink for the deceased. We can commonly find them east of the sarcophagus or the body, close to the head of the deceased, pointing to their function as sustenance (*cf.* Rzeuska 2006: 443; Bárta 2012: 42–43); in contrast to other items, *e.g.* stone vessels, designated as cosmetic supply (Junker 1929; Hassan 1948; Jirásková 2014). Such ceramic vessels differ predominantly in their quantity and quality, both attributes depending on the social and economic status of the deceased and possibly also the gender. More often than not, we find

very fine, thin-walled jars made of Marl clays in the burial chambers of high officials and members of the royal family, while beer jars were reserved for lower officials and persons without any attested titles. In the complex of Sheretnebty, only several burial chambers contained fine jars among the tomb goods, most notably those of Duaptah (Shaft 1 in AS 68a), Nefermin (Shaft 2 in AS 68a), the presumed husband of the princess (Shaft 1 in AS 68c), the possible offspring of Nefer (Shaft 3 in AS 68d), the anonymous man buried in Shaft 4 of AS 68d and finally, the unknown woman from Shaft 3 in the courtyard. It must be stressed that the lack of fine jars from other burial contexts does not necessarily signify their complete absence; with the exception of three burial chambers, all the others were robbed and therefore the resulting numbers of the original items must be considered tentative (see also *Chapter 4.1.1*).

The second most significant type of context that occurred repeatedly not only in this complex but also in other neighbouring tombs was the burial shaft deposits. The existence of intentional deposits that contained deliberate ceramic refuse was explored most prominently in the Sixth Dynasty tombs of officials at Saqqara West, with analogies from neighbouring cemeteries (Rzeuska 2006: 455–465). In the case of our complex, these deposits were decidedly different, but shared several main features. The main distinctions may be reflected in the social status of the owner. Also, the particular customs connected to funerary activity seemingly developed over time in some details, as the comparison between our Fifth and Sixth Dynasty material shows. Beer jars were almost always part of such deposits, and in the case of poorer owners, they made up the only available ceramic group. From the Sixth Dynasty, we found shafts filled with almost a hundred individual beer jars (*e.g.* Shaft 1 in tomb AS 84b), a custom confirmed by the discoveries in the cemetery of Saqqara West. Another constant feature is the presence of animal bones signifying ritual offerings, either in a single cluster or in diverse layers of the shafts.

The Fifth Dynasty shaft deposits of high officials were much more varied from the point of the typological sequences of the uncovered pottery. Besides beer jars, they comprised large amounts of stands, platters and bowls. As such, their interpretation, given by the present



author, is that they constituted pottery used during funerary rituals on the day of the burial. After the completion of the rites, they had to be ritually disposed of in order to prevent their subsequent reuse and as a consequence, were thrown into the shaft. In our shaft deposits, the numbers of stands match in approximation the amounts of other corresponding vessels that were used in conjunction with them. As confirmed by iconographic sources, platters and bowls were usually placed on tall hour-glass shaped stands; whereas beer jars were positioned on low ring stands. We were able to confirm a prominent presence of tall stands, low stands, diverse platters, different bowls as well as numerous beer jars in all the available cases that included almost all the shafts of the main owners, *i.e.* of Duaptah (Shaft 1 in AS 68a), the presumed husband of Sheretnebty (Shaft 1 in AS 68c), of Nefer and Neferhathor (Shafts 1 and 2 in AS 68d), as well as numerous other cases in the necropolis of Abusir South (see *Chapter 4.2.2*). Emphatically said, such rich shaft deposits were designated only for high-positioned officials that were at the same time equipped with a sarcophagus and various other items, such as canopic jars and stone model vessels. Lower officials and persons without titles often had only a smaller amount of beer jars or a small selection of beer jars and stands.

The typological study of the ceramic finds was based on the classification system that was created by the present author specifically for the material from Abusir South and Centre (Kytarová 2009: 62–64). By virtue of the number and variability of the finds from the complex of Sheretnebty, these helped to enlarge, specify and develop the existing system. Besides the six traditional vessel classes, further ceramic classes were identified and analysed, including ancillary pottery such as mud stoppers and technical pottery in the shape of tools (see also *Chapter 5*).

Among all the ceramic groups, beer jars were the most numerous as well as most relevant. Due to their low quality that excludes long-term secondary reuse (except the specifically given examples) and negligible material value, beer jars were very likely discarded relatively quickly. This fact, together with their well-documented morphological development over time, makes them a perfect dating tool. Several chronologically sensitive types were observed in the ceramic assemblage, enabling us to date specific contexts. Among the most

notable types are the low tubular beer jars, typical of the early Sixth Dynasty; followed by tall tubular beer jars characteristic for the reign of Kings Pepy I and Merenre; the tall slender beer jars with a pointed base, found most commonly during the first half of the reign of Pepy II and finally, tall beer jars with articulated shoulders, a tapering body and rounded base that occur in the terminal Old Kingdom.

In contrast, fine wares could have been stored for a longer period before being deposited in their final place of discovery; therefore, the author challenges the chronological value of some bowl types and groups, such as carinated bowls and bent-sided bowls (*Chapter 5.3.1*, see also Arias Kytarová 2010b: 95–98). Pottery was always primarily a functional medium, and thus older vessels could have been used in much younger contexts. In the cases of luxurious wares, these might have been purposely kept for a few generations before being placed in a tomb. Thus, such vessels should be viewed as reflecting their date of manufacture rather than date of deposition. Besides that, older and younger types coexisted for a longer time period, and there was never a strict dividing line between them, however much we would like it to exist. Most of all, our data is based on the present stage of exploration, and our knowledge may change with the influx of further data from new excavations.

Some of the ceramic finds provided us with additional epigraphic or chronological information, such as a mud stopper uncovered in the fill of the burial chamber of Duaptah, bearing the serekh of *Dd-h<sup>c</sup>w*, the Horus name of King Djedkare, thus establishing a *terminus ad quem* for the possible placement of the burial (see *Chapter 3.3.2* and Vymazalová 2014: 17, Obr. 7 and Vymazalová 2015: 48–49). In a different case, an inscribed vessel accorded us with a possible name of the owner of the jar or the burial, *Nfr-mnw* (see also *Chapter 3.3.3* and Vymazalová 2014: 18).

The ceramic finds were able to confirm dating provided by the epigraphic evidence, and in other, numerous anepigraphic contexts, to offer at least a rough outline of their sequences. Especially in the case of the shafts hewn into the floor of the pillared court and corridor of AS 68, as well as some later shafts in rock-cut tombs AS 68c and AS 68d, the pottery was almost exclusively the only dating criterion. It was possible to state, with

reservations concerning the archaeological reliability of these contexts (see *Chapter 6.2.2*) that the burial activity in the courtyard commenced in the late Fifth Dynasty but bloomed especially during the Sixth Dynasty, particularly from the reign of Pepy I onwards. The well-dated beer jar sequence from the cemetery of Saqqara West (see Rzeuska 2006: Table 1) enabled us to establish a tentative dating for most of the uncovered shafts. Some shafts in the rock-cut tombs, such as Shaft 4 in AS 68d and Shafts 5 and 6 in AS 68c, were also part of the secondary funerary activity in the Sixth Dynasty and most likely belonged to direct descendants or other family relatives of the original owners.

All four rock-cut tombs shared a common feature in the large presence of Sixth Dynasty ceramic material in the debris layers of their chapels (see also Arias Kytarová 2013; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – Arias *et al.* 2014: 30–32). Due to the high occurrence of stands, bowls and beer jars, it is possible to surmise that these denote the refuse layers of the cultic activity in the chapels, rather than the robbing of the tombs. In respect to the fact that a large number of shafts in the court and even some in the rock-cut tombs themselves were hewn and equipped at this time, a regular cultic activity related to both the original and later burials can be presumed.

The question of the relationship between the architectural features, tomb equipment and socio-economic status of the owner was explored briefly as well for the area of Abusir. One of the best markers of the socio-economic power of the owner, besides the main attributes such as the size and material of the tomb, occurrence or absence of decoration, depth of shaft, size and quality of burial chamber/niche, is also the number and quality of the burial equipment. In this respect, the already mentioned presence or absence of fine versus rougher wares in the burial chambers is the best indicator. The most valued vessels included fine jars made of Marl clay, imported Syro-Palestinian wine jars or their imitations, diverse red-slipped bowls and, predominantly in the earlier Old Kingdom, ceramic miniature or miniaturized vessels (see also *Chapter 6.1.1*). On the other hand, many of the lower-ranked deceased had to be content with simple beer jars and one or two bowls.

In view of gender, a comparison of the different above-mentioned attributes between male and female burials has shown that the Old Kingdom society was primarily androcentric, with a stress on male burials of certain social class. The ratio of female versus male burials is rather small both in the higher levels of the society and the simpler burials (*e.g.* Bárta 2002). In addition, with the exception of the women of the royal family, female burials are as a rule poorer, with fewer or lesser quality items, and buried in shallower shafts (see also *Chapter 6.1.2*). Only a handful of non-royal women were buried in a sarcophagus and only a very small number of them held a tomb in their own right.

Finally, the author discusses comparison and outlines the dating of attested ceramic finds from the whole Memphite necropolis throughout the Old Kingdom. The ceramic development can be divided into four main stages within this time frame (see *Chapter 6.3.2*). Due to the fact that material culture does not necessarily reflect historical stages, the pottery of the Third and early Fourth Dynasty is seen as a direct continuation of the older ceramic tradition of the Early Dynastic Period. From the early Fourth Dynasty onwards, some typical Old Kingdom shapes and vessels appear. Fifth and Sixth Dynasties form their own respective stages, with several sub phases defined by specific forms.

There were several topics that could not be discussed in the presented dissertation but will be part of future research. One of the most interesting is a comparison between Old Kingdom ceramic finds from necropoleis and settlements, *e.g.* funerary and utility pottery. So far, no such comparative study has been undertaken, mostly due to lack of data. From the period of the Old Kingdom, there are only a few regular settlements. The settlement of pyramid workers at Heit el-Ghurab in Giza (see Lehner 2007; Wodzińska 2007) constitutes a very specific example that was not only strictly limited in time but was also based on redistribution of goods and central control over rations; therefore, it does not represent an ordinary settlement. At Elephantine, Old Kingdom layers were uncovered only partially (*e.g.* Raue 1999). The administrative centre at Balat was limited to the terminal Sixth Dynasty and also represents a very specific type of settlement (*cf.* Soukiassian – Wuttmann – Pantalacci 1990; Soukiassian – Wuttmann – Pantalacci 2002). Luckily, new excavations at other sites

(such as *e.g.* Edfu; see Moeller 2010; Moeller – Marouard 2014; Moeller 2015) will hopefully provide us with new ceramic data enabling a comparative study of ceramic assemblages.

In the future, the present author would also like to explore diachronic differences between the pottery from the centre (*i.e.* the Memphite necropolis) and the Egyptian provinces. The main relevant areas of interest include the Oasis of Dakhla with the cemetery of governors and their attendants at Qiba el-Dabba (see *e.g.* Valloggia 1986; Giddy 1987; Minault-Goult – Deleuze 1992; Castel – Pantalacci – Cherpion 2001; Castel 2005). In the area of Upper Egypt, the largest amount of published pottery is available from Elephantine and the cemetery of governors at Qubbit el-Hawa (see *e.g.* Edel – Seyfried – Vieler 2008) and in lesser amount from the necropoleis of nomarchs in Sheikh Said, Meir, Deir el-Gebrawi, el-Hawawish and other sites (*cf.* Kanawati 1980; Kanawati 1981; Kanawati 1987; Kammerer-Grothaus 1998; etc.). Additional sites, such as Abydos (*e.g.* Knoblauch 2010) and Deir el-Bersha (de Meyers 2015) are currently under excavations and have already provided an abundance of very promising comparative data. Such a study would be ideal in cooperation with other ceramologists, as it can lead to the creation of a diachronic chronological sequence of ceramic types for the whole area of Egypt.

The presented dissertation offers a detailed analysis of the available ceramic data from the complex of Princess Sheretnebtj in the wider contextual, typological, chronological, social and socio-economic points of view. It should help expand and deepen our knowledge of the Old Kingdom pottery and its development, enhance the discussion of contextual archaeology and its importance in the interpretation of diverse objects of the material culture, as well as provide further understanding concerning the Egyptian society.

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ÄF – *Ägyptologische Forschungen*, Bruxelles.

ArOr – *Archiv Orientální*, Prague.

ASAE – *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte (SAE)*, Cairo.

AV – *Archäologische Veröffentlichungen*, Mainz am Rhein.

BCE – *Bulletin de la liaison de la céramique égyptienne*, Le Caire.

BdE – *Bibliothèque d'Étude*, Cairo.

BIFAO – *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*, Le Caire.

CCÉ – *Cahiers de la céramique égyptienne*, Le Caire.

CRIPPEL – *Cahier de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille*, Paris/Lille.

FIFAO – *Fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale (IFAO) du Caire. Rapports préliminaires*, Cairo.

GM – *Göttinger Miszellen*, Göttingen.

GOF – *Göttinger Orientforschungen*, IV. Reihe, Ägypten, Wiesbaden.

JARCE – *Journal of American Research Center in Egypt*, San Antonio.

JAS – *Journal of Archaeological Science*, Chicago.

JNES – *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Chicago.

LÄ – *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*. Herausgegeben von Wolfgang Helck und Wolfhardt Westendorf. I–VII, Wiesbaden–Hamburg 1975–1992.

MDAIK – *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo*, Berlin, Wiesbaden, Mainz am Rhein.

OLA – *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, Leuven.

PA – *Památky archeologické*, Prague.

PES – *Pražské egyptologické studie/Prague Egyptological Studies*, Prague.

SAGA – *Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens*, Heidelberg.

SAK – *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur*, Hamburg.

SAOC – *Studies in the Ancient Oriental Civilization*, Chicago.

SASAE – *Supplément aux Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte*, Cairo.

SDAIK – *Sonderschrift des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo*, Cairo.

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