

Original article

AN EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY POTTERY SAMPLE FROM EL-SALAAM
SCHOOL MUSEUM, AT ASSUIT

Sallam, O.

Egyptology dept., Faculty of Arts, Assuit Univ., Assuit, Egypt.

E-mail: dr_sallam_osama@yahoo.com

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Abstract

The Museum of El-Salaam School was known as "the Faculty of Americans" and located near Assiut University in Assiut governorate, about 380 Km south of Cairo. The Museum consists of two large rooms; the first room includes Pottery vessels, Oil lamps, Ushabti, Funerary cones, Canopic jars, Wooden and Basalt statues, Funerary steels, Soul houses, Glass wares and wooden bolt-lock. The second room includes Coffins, Psalms of David and Mummified animals. The contents of the museum came from the excavation of Petrie at Rifeh, as a donation to the museum by Sayed Pasha Khashaba^(a). The finds are exhibited within old wooden display-windows and labeled with two numbers, the Petrie's excavation number, and the Ministry of Antiquities' recording number. The display-windows are arranged spatially in alphabetical ordering, A, B, C, D, etc. The displayed pottery finds are the dominant feature among the Museum's collection, which date back to different Egyptian historical periods.

Keywords: *Museum, Pottery, Vessels, Canopic, Jars, Funerary*

1. Introduction

The pottery vessels in the collections of the Museum of El-Salaam School are displayed, randomly in different manners, types and categories, without regard to the concepts of pottery studies [1] or the modern methods of museum's display. The types of Pre-Dynastic periods' pottery are displayed side by side with different pottery types from the Middle-Kingdom, New-Kingdom, Ptolemaic and Roman periods, which makes the presentation of finds, somewhat cluttered, confusing and tired. This paper aim to shed light and suggest placing the pottery finds from the Local Museum of El-Salaam School in their proper perspective to be clearly distinguished from each other, arranged and display

chronologically. Nine pottery vessels have been selected according to their shapes and date from two different display-windows to be described, drawn and precise chronicle. The vessels are C115, P356/ C132, P376/ C122, P361/ C109, P350/ C110, P348/ C130, P373/ C106, P351/ B91, P339/ B88, P336 (C and B indicate the display-window name; P indicates the Petrie's excavation number). The seven selected vessels from the (C) display-window are described and recorded in the register of the Ministry of Antiquities as Greek-Roman pots accompanied by photo without scale. The pots are shelved with pots relate to different periods represented in middle Kingdom, New Kingdom, Late Period, Ptolemaic and

Late Roman Period. The two selected vessels from the (B) display-window described and recorded in the same manner as Greek-Roman pottery. They are shelved among pots relate to the

Pre-Dynastic periods, New Kingdom and Ptolemaic Periods, side by side with the soul houses. The vessels, based on Petrie's excavation number, are not published before.

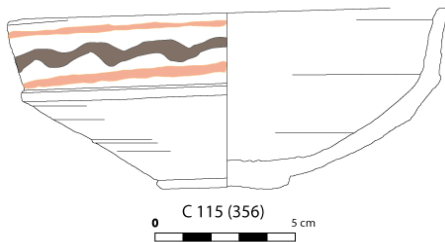
2. The Pottery Finds

2.1. Sample No (1)

This sample, fig. (1) is a carinated bowl with flat base. The height is 6.3 cm, the rim diameter 14.5 cm and the base diameter 4.5 cm. It is made of a marl clay fabric and wheel made with the using of a scraping tool to finish the exterior lower part. The exterior and

interior surfaces are self slipped. The exterior surface has a painted bi-chrome decoration running over body and carried out in brown and red colors. The decoration represents a black wavy line flanked by red bands. The exterior and the interior surfaces have a pale yellow color (Munsell 2.5 Y 8/3).

▪ Description



Register No: (C115, P356).

Type: Carinated bowl with flat base.

Rim Dim. (cm): 14.5 / **Base Dim.:** 4.5 / **Height:** 6.3

State of preservation: complete.

Fabric: Marl clay.

Shaping technique: wheel made.

Surface treatment: exterior, self slip and the lower part scraped; interior self slip.

Decoration: painted bi-chrome decoration carried out in brown and red colors.

Munsell Color of surface: exterior and interior, pale yellow (2.5 Y 8/3).

Comments: crack on body.

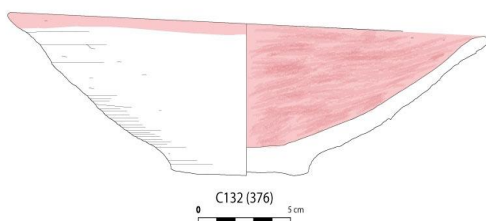
Chronology and comparada: the early form of this type date back to early 18th dynasty and usually decorated with black band around the rim, an example of this form preserved in Petrie museum under No. UC19022 [2]

2.2. Sample No (2)

This sample, fig. (2) is a dish with flat base. The height is 7 cm, the rim diameter 26 cm and the base diameter 7.5 cm. It is made of a Nile clay fabric and wheel made. The exterior surface, its upper part has the wheel

marks and the lower part scraped; the interior surface smoothed, slipped and burnished. The exterior surface has a light brown color (Munsell 7.5 YR 6/4) and the interior surface has a red color (2.5 YR 5/6).

▪ Description



Register No: (C132, P376).

Type: Dish with flat base.

Rim Dim.: 26 cm. **Base Dim.:** 7.5 cm. **Height:** 7 cm.

State of preservation: complete.

Fabric: Nile clay.

Shaping technique: wheel made with knife-cut base.

Surface treatment: exterior, the upper part untreated and the lower part scraped; interior: smoothed, slipped and burnished

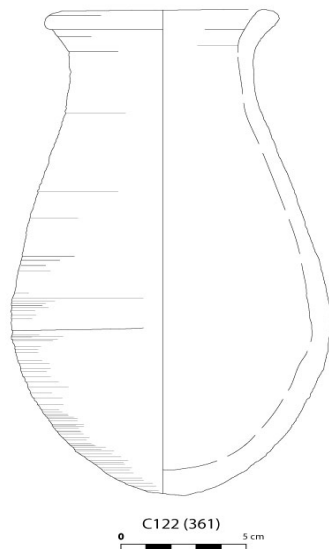
Munsell Color of surface: exterior, light brown (7.5 YR 6/4); interior, red (2.5 YR 5/6).

2.3. Sample No (3)

This sample, fig. (3) is an ovoid jar with rounded base. The height is 23.2 cm, the rim diameter 8.5 cm. It is made of a Nile clay fabric and wheel made. The exterior surface slipped, its upper part below the color has the

wheel marks and the lower part scraped; the interior surface untreated. The exterior surface has a light red color (Munsell 10 R 6/6) and the interior surface has a light brown color (7.5 YR 6/4).

▪ Description



Register No: (C122, P361).

Type: Ovoid jar with rounded base.

Rim Dim.: 8.5 cm. **Height:** 23.3 cm.

State of preservation: complete.

Fabric: Nile clay.

Shaping technique: wheel made.

Surface treatment: exterior, slipped; interior, untreated

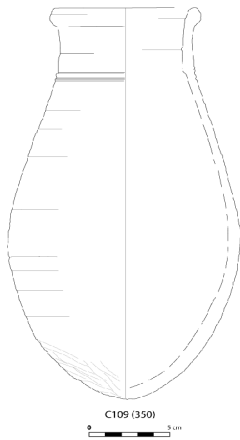
Munsell Color of surface: exterior light red (10 R 6/6); interior, light brown (7.5 YR 6/4).

2.4. Sample No (4)

This sample, fig. (4) is an ovoid jar with rounded base and incision below rim. The height is 28.6 cm, the rim diameter 8.5 cm. It is made of a Nile clay fabric and wheel made. The

exterior surface slipped, and the interior surface is untreated. The exterior surface has a red color (Munsell 2.5 YR 5/6) and the interior surface has a light brown color (7.5 YR 6/4).

▪ **Description**



Register No: (C109, P350).

Type: Ovoid jar with rounded base.

Rim Dim.: 8.5 cm. **Height:** 28.6 cm.

State of preservation: complete.

Fabric: Nile clay.

Shaping technique: wheel made.

Surface treatment: exterior, slipped; interior, untreated

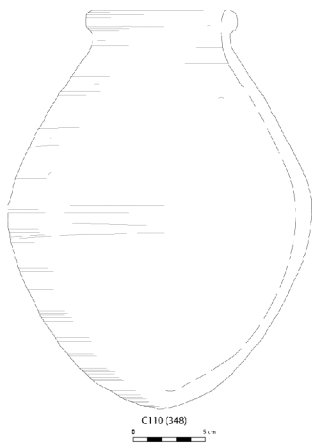
Munsell Color of surface: exterior, red (2.5 YR 5/6); interior, light brown (7.5 YR 6/4).

2.5. Sample No (5)

Sample, fig. (5) is a globular jar with rounded base. The height is 27.2 cm, the rim diameter 9 cm. It is made of a Nile clay fabric and wheel made. The exterior surface slipped, and the interior

surface is untreated. The exterior surface has a red color (Munsell 2.5 YR 5/6) and the interior surface has a light brown color (7.5 YR 6/4).

▪ **Description**



Register No: (C110, P348).

Type: Globular jar with rounded base.

Rim Dim.: 9 cm. **Height:** 27.2 cm.

State of preservation: complete.

Fabric: Nile clay.

Shaping technique: wheel made.

Surface treatment: exterior, slipped; interior, untreated

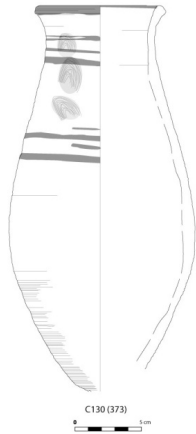
Munsell Color of surface: exterior, red (2.5 YR 5/8); interior, light brown color (7.5 YR 6/4).

2.6. Sample No (6)

Sample, fig. (6) is a ovoid jar with rounded base. The height is 29.4 cm, the rim diameter 9 cm. It is made of a Nile clay fabric, wheel made and finishing the base by scraping tool. The exterior surface slipped, and the interior

surface is untreated. Painted bands of decoration running over rim and body, carried out in black color. The exterior surface has a red color (Munsell 2.5 YR 5/6) and the interior surface has a light brown color (7.5 YR 6/4).

▪ Description



Register No: (C130, P373).

Type: Ovoid jar.

Rim Dim.: 9 cm. **Height:** 29.4 cm.

State of preservation: missing part of base.

Fabric: Nile clay.

Shaping technique: wheel made.

Surface treatment: exterior, slipped; interior, untreated

Decoration: painted black bands with finger prints as traces of the decoration process.

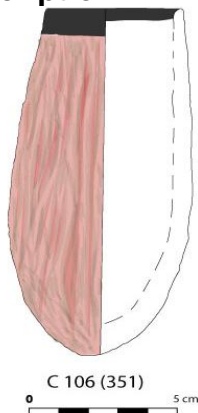
Munsell Color of surface: exterior, red (2.5 YR 5/8); interior, light brown color (7.5 YR 6/4).

2.7. Sample No (7)

Sample, fig. (7) is a beaker with rounded base and black band of painted decoration running over rim. The height is 13.8 cm, the rim diameter 4.5 cm. It is made of a Nile clay fabric and wheel made. The exterior surface smoothed,

slipped and burnished; the interior surface is untreated. The exterior surface has a red color (Munsell 10 R 5/6) and the interior surface has a light brown color (7.5 YR 6/4).

▪ Description



Register No: (C106, P351).

Type: Beaker with rounded base and black band running over rim.

Rim Dim.: 4.5 cm. **Height:** 13.8 cm.

State of preservation: complete.

Fabric: Nile clay.

Shaping technique: wheel made.

Surface treatment: exterior, smoothed, slipped and burnished; interior, untreated

Munsell Color of surface: exterior, red (10 R 5/6); inside, light brown color (7.5 YR 6/4).

2.8. Sample No (8)

Sample, fig. (8) is a necked jar with rounded base. The height is 32 cm, the rim diameter 9 cm. It is made of a marl clay fabric and wheel made. The exterior is self slipped; the interior surface is untreated. The exterior surface has a bi-chrome painted decoration carried in black

and red colors. The decoration represents two bands of triangle pattern, dots line pattern, and multiple line pattern. The exterior surface has zones of colors, pale yellow (2.5 Y 8/3) and pink (7.5 YR 8/4); the interior is pale yellow (2.5 Y 8/3).

▪ Description



Register No: (B91, P339).

Type: Necked jar with rounded base.

Rim Dim.: 9 cm. **Height:** 32 cm.

State of preservation: complete.

Fabric: Marl clay.

Shaping technique: wheel made.

Surface treatment: exterior, self slip; interior, untreated

Decoration: painted bi-chrome decoration (brown and red).

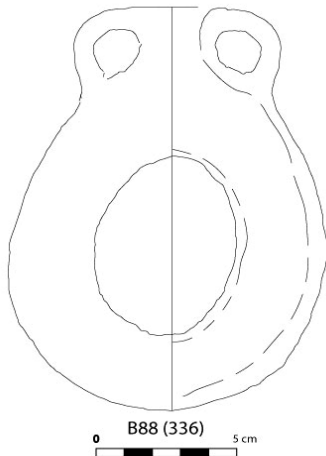
Munsell Color of surface: exterior, pale yellow (2.5 Y 8/3) and pink (7.5 YR 8/4); interior, pale yellow (2.5 Y 8/3).

2.9. Sample No (9)

Sample, fig. (9) is two handled flask with ring-shaped body. The height is 15.5 cm, the rim diameter 4 cm. Its clay fabric is not known (we couldn't get fresh-break for the pot's section to know the exact clay) and hand-made. The

exterior surface is trimmed and has traces of color coated; the interior surface is unreachable. The exterior surface has a light brown color (7.5 YR 6/4) with traces of red coated on surface.

▪ Description



Register No: (B88, P336).

Type: Two handled flask with ring-shaped body.

Rim Dim.: 4 cm. **Height:** 15.5 cm.

State of preservation: missing handle and about 75 % of rim.

Fabric: import!?

Shaping technique: hand-made.

Surface treatment: exterior, trimming; interior, unseen

Decoration: painted bi-chrome decoration (brown and red).

Munsell Color of surface: exterior, light brown (7.5 YR 6/4); interior, unseen

Comments: traces of coat on surface.

3. Results

Nine pottery vessels selected from the Museum of El-Salaam School, are described, drawn and chronicled in modern ceramic methodology. The paper succeeded in shedding light and

suggests placing the pottery finds from the Museum of El-Salaam School in their proper perspective to be clearly distinguished from each other, arranged and display chronologically.

4. Discussion

The sample that has been selected for publishing from the Museum of El-Salaam School, at Assiut, is not published before. It relates to the New-Kingdom Period. The selected shapes are found in the Pharaonic sites of that period, the carinated bowl with flat base, No: 1, fig. 1 (C115, P356), relates to the New-Kingdom pottery assemblage [3]. As well as the dish with flat base, No: 2, fig. 2 (C132, P376), which found in Kom-Rabi^ca [4] during the Eighteenth dynasty and at Rifeh during the time of Thoutmosis I [5]. Likewise, the ovoid jar with rounded base, No: 3, fig. 3 (C122, P361), the ovoid jar with rounded base,

No: 4, fig. 4 (C109, P350), the globular jar with rounded base, No: 5, fig. 5 (C110, P348), the ovoid jar, No: 6, fig. 6 (C130, P373) [3], which was used at Rifeh during the time of Thoutmosis I [5], the beaker with rounded base and black band running over rim, No: 7, fig. 7 (C106, P351) [3] which appeared at Rifeh at the time of Thoutmosis I [5] and at Abydos throughout the pottery of the Eighteenth dynasty [6], and necked jar with rounded base, No: 8, fig. 8 (B90, P339), also, relates to the New-Kingdom pottery assemblage [3] and the shape found at North Karnak during the Eighteenth dynasty in the excavations of the treasure

of Thoutmosis I [7]. The above mentioned vessels No: 4, fig. 4 (C109, P350) and No: 5, fig. 5 (C110, P348), found in the temple of Millions of years of Thoutmosis III in Western Thebes and recovered from tomb III -L38, which dates back to late second intermediate period/New Kingdom [8]. The painted bi-chrome decoration in carinated bowl with flat base, No: 1, fig. 1 (C115, P356), which ornaments its exterior surface and represents a black wavy line flanked by two red bands was in use during the New Kingdom and called "the brown and red painted style". The same style of painted decoration used to ornament the necked jar, No: 8, fig. 8 (B90, P339), with different decorative elements represents parallel lines with dots, and triangles. This style of decoration was in use and appeared at the beginning of the Eighteenth dynasty, inspired by the simple stripes decoration of the late Middle Kingdom and the second intermediate period. The decoration usually executed on the Marl A2 and Marl A4 pots in the shape of groups of two or three, even four, parallel lines, and applied in the gaps between them other decorative elements, such as dots, wavy lines, zigzag and triangles [9]. In terms of finishing the lower parts of the pots, the potter of the New-Kingdom period who was involved in shaping the pots, Nos, 2, 3, 5 and 6, used the scraping technique in doing that. This method uses tools like: reed brush or a piece of wood to rub the pots surfaces, leaving distinct random scratches on it [10]. The method, scraping aims to remove excess clay from the lower body and finishing the base to get a round shape. At the time of the new kingdom scraping is not common before the middle of the Eighteenth dynasty. It

does not occur on closed vessels until the end of the second intermediate period, but became standard by the middle of the Eighteenth dynasty [11]. The two handled flask with ring-shaped body, No: 9, fig. 9 (B88, P336), belongs to the New-Kingdom pottery vessels [12]. The shape may relate to the type called pilgrim flasks which is attested in Egypt throughout the New Kingdom of the dynastic Egypt till the Late Roman periods [13]. The Pilgrim flasks have a long history in Egypt, first appearing during the early Eighteenth dynasty as a result of growing contacts with the Eastern Mediterranean and continued on past the Arab conquest [14]. The vessels with ring-shaped body seem to be a short lived distinct form of pilgrim flasks, appearing during the middle of the Eighteenth dynasty [15]. Their presence is rare in the assemblage of the Egyptian pottery. The examples of the ring flasks found at Mit-Rehenah during the Saitic Period and at Meroe during the 2nd century AD, characterized by long neck, decorative patterns and two handles attached to the middle of neck [16]. As well as the Cypriote Pilgrim flask with small aperture which dated to the 12th - 11th century BC [17]. These examples characterized by well-made symmetrical ring body in contrast with our example which its ring body is poorly symmetrical made, in addition to the shaping of handles which its upper part attached to the rim and the absence of decoration which characteristic the later versions. Such notes make us suggest an early version made by hand, their short neck resembling the necks of the lentoid flasks of the 18th dynasty [18].

5. Conclusion

Nine pottery vessels have been selected from the Museum of El-Salaam school at Assiut for a more precise dating. The vessels are exhibited in display-windows with pots of different

periods. The nine pots date back to the New-Kingdom Period. They are divided into two open vessels (bowl and dish) and seven closed vessels (six jars and ring flask). The shapes, surface treatment and the decoration of the selected pottery sample indicate that the nine pots belong to the pottery assemblage of the Egyptian Eighteenth Dynasty.

Endnote

(a) A famous antiques collector from Assiut.

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