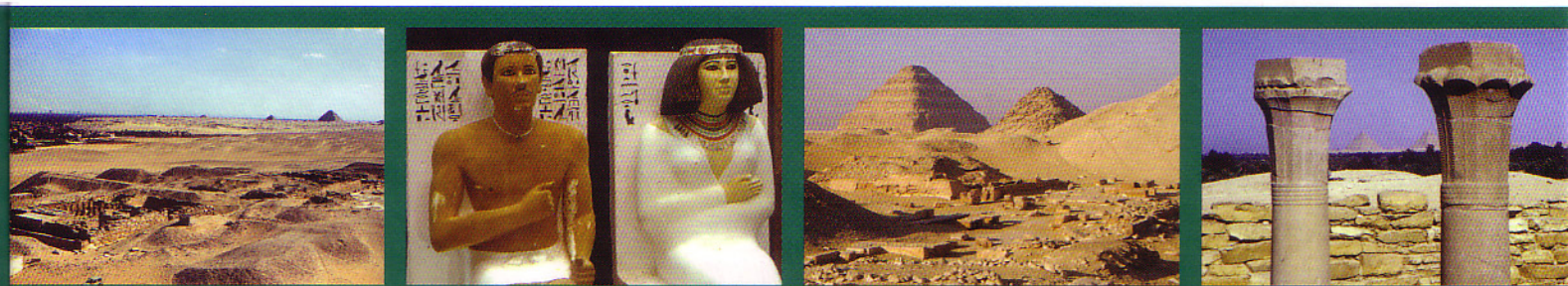


THE OLD KINGDOM ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Proceedings of the Conference



Prague, May 31 – June 4, 2004

Miroslav Bárta
editor

THE OLD KINGDOM ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE HELD IN PRAGUE,
MAY 31 – JUNE 4, 2004

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Foreword

It is with pleasure that after more than two years the publication of the lectures held during the conference on the Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology in Prague in the year 2004 (May 3 – June 4) has been made possible.

The conference held in Prague continued the tradition of previous meetings by being dedicated to the same subject: art and its dating in the Old Kingdom of Egypt: the period that forms the first apogee of the developing Egyptian state. The tradition of these irregular meetings was established in 1991 by Hourig Sourouzian and Rainer Stadelmann, at that time the Director of the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, who organised the first conference.¹ The second meeting also took place in Cairo, at this time the place of the venue was the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology and the conference, held on November 10–13, 1994, was organised by its director Nicolas Grimal.² The penultimate meeting took place in Paris, France, on April 3–4, 1998, and was organised by Christiane Ziegler, Chief Conservator of Egyptian Antiquities in the Louvre.³

The present volume continues a well-established and successful tradition of post-conference publications. As such, it makes available most of the contributions that were presented during the conference in Prague. It was mainly the scientific profile of the Czech Institute of Egyptology that led us to substantially widen the scope of the conference in 2004. The total of thirty-three contributions presented in this volume cover various aspects connected to Old Kingdom culture, not only its art, but also its archaeology and architecture, selected administrative problems, iconography, texts and the latest, often first time published results of ongoing excavations. From the list of contributions it becomes evident that natural sciences and their application in the widest sense receive general acceptance and support from among Egyptologists. It is one of the few aspects that can in the future significantly enhance our understanding of specific issues connected to the Old Kingdom art and archaeology.

Eng. Marta Štrachová carefully edited the manuscript and was essential in producing this volume. The advice and guidance of Eng. Jolana Malátková also proved indispensable. The Czech Academy of Sciences is to be thanked for the production of the book. Last but not least, it was Prof. Dr. Jean Leclant, Secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris, and the chair of the European branch of the Fondation Michela Schiff Giorgini, and Prof. Dr. David Silverman, University of Pennsylvania, chair of the North American branch of the the Fondation Michela Schiff Giorgini and the respective committees that approved this publication and agreed to support it financially.

Miroslav Bárta

¹ The conference was held in the German Archaeological Institute, Cairo, on October 29–30, and the proceedings published in 1995 in the volume *Kunst des Alten Reiches. Symposium des Deutschen Archäologischen Institut Kairo am 29. und 30. Oktober 1991*, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo, Sonderschrift 28, Mainz am Rhein.

² N. Grimal, ed., *Lex critères de datation stylistiques à l'Ancien Empire*, Bibliothèque d'Étude 120 (Cairo, 1998).

³ Ch. Ziegler, N. Palayret, eds., *L'Art de l'Ancien Empire égyptien. Actes du colloque organisé au Musée du Louvre par le Service culturel les 3 et 4 avril 1998* (Paris, 1999).

Bibliography

Abbreviations for journals, series and monographs used throughout the volume follow the system of *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* (cf. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie, Band VII. Nachträge, Korrekturen und Indices*, founded by W. Helck and E. Otto, edited by W. Helck and W. Westendorf, Wiesbaden 1992, XIV–XXXVIII).

The following additional abbreviations are also used:

ACER – *The Australian Centre for Egyptology: Reports*, Sydney;
AOS – *American Oriental Society*, Michigan;
BSAK – *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur, Beihefte*, Hamburg;
CA – *Current Anthropology*, Chicago, Illinois;
Hannig, *Handwörterbuch* – R. Hannig, *Die Sprache der Pharaonen. Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800–950 v. Chr.)*, Mainz 1995;
Harpur, *DETOK* – Y. Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom. Studies in Orientation and Scene Content*, London and New York 1988;
Harvey, *WSOK* – J. Harvey, *Wooden Statues of the Old Kingdom. A Typological Study, Egyptological Memoirs 2*, Leiden 2001;
KAW – *Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt*, Mainz am Rhein;
LingAeg – *Lingea Aegyptia, Journal of Egyptian language Studies*, Göttingen;
OrMonsp – *Orientalia Monspeliensia*, Montpellier;
PAM – *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, Warsaw;
SAGA – *Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens*, Heidelberg;
WES – *Warsaw Egyptological Studies*, Warsaw.

Miniature and model vessels in Ancient Egypt

Susan Allen¹

The use of models and miniaturization in ancient Egyptian ritual and magical thought is very complex. The abstract thoughts of the ancient Egyptians had a sort of three-dimensional virtual reality, magically effective in the present and for eternity: it combined text, expressed in hieroglyphic writing; pictures of objects and actions on offering stelae and in tomb scenes; and actual objects such as pottery, stone and metal vessels, foodstuffs, and model and miniature vessels and objects. To insure the life of the deceased in the next world, an offering list in a tomb or an offering table or model foodstuffs made of faience or cartonnage were magically equivalent to real food – and less likely to spoil throughout eternity. Moreover, should the offerings to the deceased by the living cease, the texts, pictures and model offerings could continue to function magically and provide for the afterlife of the deceased.

The use of model and miniature vessels, and indeed models of all sorts, as votive objects is common throughout pharaonic history from the earliest periods onward.² Indeed, the forms that were employed for model and miniature vessels seem to derive from vessel types in use in the late Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods,³ which became ‘frozen’ in the symbolic and visual language of ritual practice. The usual laws of pottery seriation, local and regional stylistic developments, and geographic distribution do not seem to have applied to these forms. Moreover, they exhibit a dynamic exchange between vessel shapes in stone, metal, and pottery.

Sets of model vessels and offerings were first deposited in tombs in the early Fourth Dynasty.⁴ The practice continued during the Middle Kingdom with model and miniature vessels in stone and pottery and in the New Kingdom with imitation stone vessels.⁵

At the same time, models and miniatures were also employed in the foundation deposit ritual, scenes of which appear in the Sun Temple of Nyuserra at Abusir.⁶ The use of miniature pottery vessels and model tools was standard for foundation deposits in temples and tombs throughout Egyptian history.⁷

Stone model vessels are common in Old Kingdom tombs⁸ and model vessels in copper were produced in the Sixth Dynasty,⁹ but by far the most numerous

¹ The author would like to thank The Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition to Lisht and Dahshur, Dr. Dieter Arnold, Director, for permission to include unpublished material in this paper; and William Barrette of the Department of Egyptian Art, MMA, for his assistance with the photograph used in this paper.

² S. Swain, ‘The Use of Model Objects as Predynastic Egyptian Grave Goods: An Ancient Origin for an Dynastic Tradition’, in S. Campbell, A. Green, eds., *The Archaeology of Death in the Ancient Near East* (Oxford, 1995), 35–37. Peter Lacovara, ‘No. 7. Set of eighty model vessels’, in S. D’Auria, P. Lacovara, C. Roehrig, eds., *Mummies and Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt* (Boston, 1988), 77–78.

³ Petrie, *RT I*, pls. XLIII–XLIV.

⁴ Junker, *Giza I*, 107, 126–129, pls. XLI, XLIIIe–f. Reisner, Smith, *Giza II*, 91.

⁵ Hayes, *Scepter I*, 228–229, fig. 136.

⁶ Bissing, Kees, *Re-Heiligtum II*, pl. 1.

⁷ J. Weinstein, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Egypt* (PhD. dissertation: University of Pennsylvania; Philadelphia, 1990).

⁸ Do. Arnold, ‘214. Thirty-two Miniature Vessels and Table’, in *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* (New York, 1999), 492–493.

⁹ G. A. Reisner, ‘New Acquisitions of the Egyptian Department’, *BMFA* 11.66 (November, 1913): 59–61. Y. Markowitz, ‘39. Copper Model Vessels from the Tomb of Ptahshepses Impy’, in Y. Markowitz, J. Haynes, R. Freed, eds., *Egypt in the Age of the Pyramids* (Boston, 2002), 102–103.

representatives of the genre, especially in mortuary temples, are miniature vessels made of pottery. Even among pottery specialists, however, these miniature vessels have often been regarded almost as novelty items – mass-produced, nonutilitarian, and not useful for seriation or chronological studies. Though often intact, they have

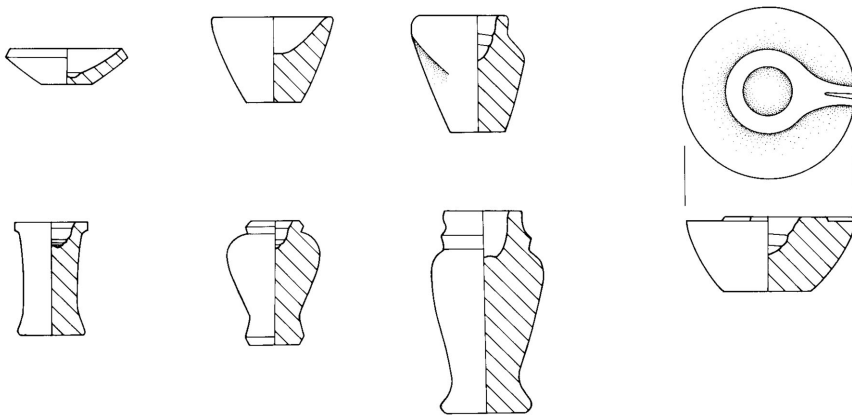


Fig. 1 Alabaster model vessels from Giza, Fourth Dynasty. From P. Lacovara, 'No. 7. Set of eighty model vessels', in D'Auria, Lacovara, Roehrig, eds., *Mummies and Magic*, 77, figs. 37–43

generally been passed over in favor of other pottery types, perhaps because they are found loose or in dumps and usually in enormous quantities: the excavators at Abu Roash calculated that some 45,000 were found in just three seasons of excavation.¹⁰

Only a few scholars working at Old Kingdom sites – Bárta at Abusir,¹¹ Marchand at Abu Roash,¹² Faltings at Dahshur,¹³ and Pantalacci at Balat¹⁴ – have studied them in detail and tried to relate them to their contexts. In 1995 Miroslav Bárta, in an article in *Göttinger Miszellen*, noted that 'No great attention has been paid to the miniatures so far despite the fact that they form a substantial body within the corpus of the pottery from the Old Kingdom', and called for further discussion on the subject, pointing out several aspects of their manufacture and distribution, which he related to socioeconomic factors in the Fourth Dynasty.¹⁵

The terms 'model' and 'miniature' are often used interchangeably in site reports and exhibition catalogs. The adjective 'dummy' is also sometimes employed. In German these small vessels are called 'Scheinbeigaben' – mock dishes.¹⁶ The ancient Egyptians, however, would have seen model and miniature vessels as two distinct types, though overlapping in both form and use. Size was not the determining factor.

The term '**model**' is used here to define vessels that are votive in nature and have no functional ability. They can be virtually solid or with no significant capacity, but they stand for the real thing. Since the interior volume of these model vessels is negligible, it is their outward form that is symbolically important and their contents are implied by their shape. The most obvious example of this is the opening-of-the-mouth set with its nearly solid cups and bottles, which is a model of the ritual equipment used by the funerary priests in the rites for the deceased.¹⁷

¹⁰ S. Marchand, M. Baud, 'La Céramique Miniature d'Abou Rawash: Un Dépôt à l'Entrée des Enclous Orientaux', *BIFAO* 96 (1996): 269.

¹¹ M. Bárta, 'Pottery Inventory and the Beginning of the IVth Dynasty', *GM* 149 (1995): 15–24.

¹² Marchand, Baud, *BIFAO* 96 (1996): 255–288.

¹³ D. Faltings, 'Die Keramik aus den Grabungen an der nördlichen Pyramide des Snofru in Dahshur: Arbeitsbericht über die Kampagnen 1983–1986', *MDAIK* 45 (1989): 133–154, figs. 3a, 7.

¹⁴ G. Soukiassian, M. Wuttman and L. Pantalacci, *Le Palais des Gouverneurs de l'Époque de Pépy II: Les Sanctuaires de Ka et Leurs Dépendances*, *FIFAO* 46 (2002).

¹⁵ Bárta, *GM* 149 (1995): 15.

¹⁶ E. Martin-Pardey, 'Scheingaben', *LÄ V* (1984), cols. 560–563. Junker, *Giza I*, 108–113.

¹⁷ A. M. Roth, 'No. 11. Model equipment with a *pesesh-kef* knife', in D'Auria, Lacovara, Roehrig, eds., *Mummies and Magic*, 81.

Most often models are quite small, but they can be full-scale vessels, like the faux stone jars made of wood from the New Kingdom, which are usually referred to as dummy vases.¹⁸ Models may copy existing full-size vessel forms or they may be shapes limited exclusively to the model vessel corpus. The forms they copy may be similar to ones in contemporary use or derived from vessel shapes already archaic. They may be interpretations of traditional shapes such as the *hs* vase or *nmst* jar, which continue throughout Egyptian history. They are almost exclusively restricted to funerary contexts.

Model vessels in stone, usually alabaster or limestone, occur in sets in the burials of the Fourth Dynasty at Giza and elsewhere (fig. 1). The set is often made up of a table, washing bowl and ewer, an assortment of different kinds of jars, and vases and numerous small plates.¹⁹ Junker noted that these sets were normally composed of about eighty vessels, which he theorized was a three-dimensional rendering of the compartmentalized offering list, which also appeared at this time.²⁰

Models were also produced in other materials, such as copper. A beautifully detailed and rendered model set in that metal, found by Reisner in the tomb of Ptahshepses Impy at Giza and dated to the late Sixth Dynasty (Pepy II), is a rare expression in miniature of the sort of ritual equipment used in funerary ceremonies and probably also in temple settings.²¹ A very interesting and unique set of handmade vessels of unbaked mud, found recently in the funerary temple of Queen Ankhesenpepy II at Saqqara South, is modeled after vessels that existed in both stone and metal.²²

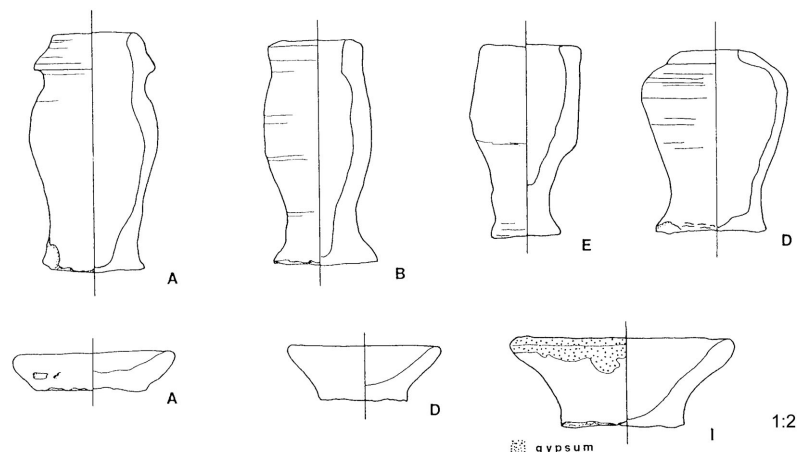


Fig. 2 Miniature pottery vessels from Meidum, early Fourth Dynasty. From A. Milward-Jones, 'The Pottery', in A. el-Khouli, *Meidum* (ACER 3, 1991), 43–45, pl. 50

'Miniature' is the term applied here to those small vessels that can be compared to vessel forms normally encountered full scale. There are, of course, many small vessels – cosmetic jars, for example – that were meant to be small and whose size is a reflection of their function, contents, and use as personal items. A true miniature vessel, however, is one that has been miniaturized: that is, a vessel produced at a significantly reduced scale but retaining its functional ability. Miniature vessels had the potential of containing small amounts of liquids or perhaps grain.²³

Miniature vessels occur almost exclusively in pottery (fig. 2). They can be found in both funerary and mortuary contexts. The manufacture of pottery miniatures is similar to the production of full-scale pottery: that is, they were mass produced on

¹⁸ Hayes, *Scepter I*, 228–229.

¹⁹ Arnold, in *Egyptian Art*, 492–493. Lacovara, in D'Auria, Lacovara, Roehrig, eds., *Mummies and Magic*, 77–78.

²⁰ Junker, *Giza I*, 108–109

²¹ Reisner, *BMFA* 11.66 (November, 1913): 59–61. Y. Markowitz, in Markowitz, Haynes, Freed, eds., *Egypt in the Age*, 102–103.

²² A. M. Hamed, 'II. Un dépôt d'argile crue, dans le temple funéraire de la reine Ankhesenpepy II', *RdÉ* 53 (2002): 241–242.

²³ Faltings, *MDAIK* 45 (1989): 153, note 43.

a turntable or slow wheel rather than handmade as were stone and metal models.²⁴ They have, therefore, an interior volume, and their shapes are more organic than those of model vessels of similar size and purpose. The production of a solid pottery vessel would have seemed unnatural to an ancient Egyptian potter.

In the Old Kingdom, the use of stone and metal model vessels and that of pottery miniature vessels were closely related. Both types were placed in tombs, sometimes together.²⁵ All examples seem to derive from the same corpus of shapes, which originated in the Early Dynastic Period, and all were part of the funerary ritual and offerings. Model and miniature vessels of stone and pottery were deposited in tomb chambers next to

full-size pottery jars and dishes.²⁶ The fact that all three kinds of vessels – model, miniature, and full-size – occur in combination and in varying materials must imply that those providing the funerary offerings regarded them as distinct in purpose and not just cheaper substitutions for the larger vessels or those made of more expensive materials.

The vast majority of the miniature vessels found on Old Kingdom sites, however, derives from the above-ground offering ritual conducted in the cult chapel of a private individual or the mortuary temple of a royal complex.²⁷ Because the offerings were made repeatedly or even daily, huge numbers of miniature vessels were used and discarded – hence their overwhelming numbers in dump heaps and specially dug trash pits, and their liberal distribution over pyramid sites. Millions were made and used in the mortuary temples and tomb chapels of Meidum,²⁸ Dahshur,²⁹ Abu Roash,³⁰ Abu Gurob,³¹ Abusir,³² Saqqara,³³ and Giza³⁴ from the Fourth to the Sixth Dynasties.

Careful study of deposits of these discarded cult vessels can provide important information. Through systematic excavation of areas around the pyramid complex of Radjedef (2528–2520 B. C.) at Abu Roash, where miniature vessels and other cult pottery had been deposited, the excavators were able to establish a sequence for the use and disposal of these vessels. The sequence shows that the mortuary cult of Radjedef flourished in the Fourth Dynasty and probably continued to the end

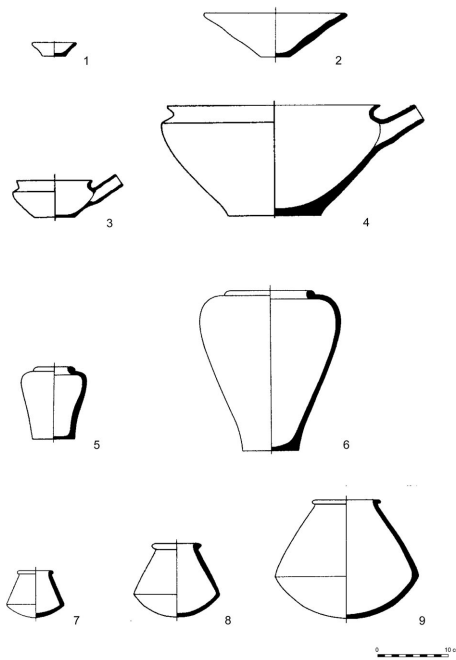


Fig. 3 Full-scale and miniature pottery forms from the tomb of Hetepheres, Giza, Fourth Dynasty. From Reisner, Smith, *Giza II*, figs. 127 (1), 121 (2), 74 (3), 119 (4), 99 (5–6), 87 (7), 59 (8), 60 (9)

²⁴ Reisner, Smith, *Giza II*, 86. P. Charvát, *The Pottery: The Mastaba of Ptahshepses* (Prague, 1981), 148. Bárta, *GM* 149 (1995): 16.

²⁵ Junker, *Giza VII*, 63–64, fig. 26.

²⁶ Reisner, *Giza I*, 460–465, fig. 279.

²⁷ S. Thompson, 'Cults: Funerary Cults'; J. Wegner, 'Cults: Royal Funerary Cults', and B. Lesko, 'Private Cults', in D. Redford, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt I* (Oxford, 2001), 330–337. A. J. Spencer, *Death in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1982), 54–55.

²⁸ A. Milward-Jones, 'The Pottery', in A. el-Khouli, *Meidum*, *ACER* 3 (1991), 43–45, pl. 50.

²⁹ Faltings, *MDAIK* 45 (1989): 137–142, figs 3a, 7.

³⁰ Marchand, Baud, *BIFAO* 96 (1996): 269.

³¹ W. Kaiser, 'Die Tongefässe', in Ricke, *Userkaf – SH II*, 56–75.

³² M. Bárta, 'Význam nálezu keramiky z pyramidového chrámu panovníka Raneferefa' (*Pottery from the pyramid temple of Raneferef and its interpretation*) I, Text (M. A. Dissertation, Prague, 1994), 58.

³³ B. Mathieu, '21. Saqqara–Sud (Complexe de Djedkare-Isési)', *BIFAO* 102 (202): 527, fig. 12.

³⁴ Reisner, *Mycerinus*, 13–14, 228.

of the Old Kingdom – in contrast to the long-standing hypothesis that internecine struggles between the rulers of the Fourth Dynasty led to the active suppression of his mortuary cult and memory.³⁵

Pottery miniature vessels were cheaply and easily mass produced and were therefore especially suitable for frequently repeated or daily offerings. Bárta, based on his work at Abusir, proposed that the expansion of the economy and its associated bureaucracy in the Fourth Dynasty and the increased number of tombs of the officials necessitated more economical funerary offerings than the superb hard stone vessels used earlier.³⁶ This resulted in new modes of pottery production and the increased use of the slow wheel. These miniature pots were quickly made using a turning device; they have flat bases string-cut off the hump and show no further trimming or finishing other than the smoothing of a potter's wet hands. Nearly all are made of Nile clay.

In the Old Kingdom, the shapes of model vessels in stone and those of miniature pottery vessels were similar (*figs. 1, 2*). They fall into two classes: short and flat, and tall and slender. They include small saucers/plates, cups/bowls, holemouth jars with high shoulders, deep goblets/vases, and elongated jars with thickened or collar rims. They bear little resemblance to full-scale Old Kingdom pottery in daily use, such as Meydum bowls, bread molds, and beer jars. Many, however, can be compared to vessel shapes common in the Early Dynastic Period.³⁷

It is difficult to say at this point which came first: the sets of model stone vessels or pottery miniature vessels in the Fourth Dynasty. Sets of model stone vessels were restricted to funerary offerings and are therefore found in the tombs themselves. Miniature pottery vessels may be found as funerary offerings but their overwhelming use appears to have been in the ongoing offering ritual of the mortuary cult. Certainly the making of fine stone vessels was a long established tradition, and beautiful and sophisticated stone vessels were still produced for funerary use at this time. The model stone vessels, however, are less sophisticated and finished, and are carved in easily worked alabaster and limestone rather than harder stones.³⁸ They are abstractions of vessel forms, whether derived from stone, pottery, or metal prototypes.

In addition to the mass-produced miniature pottery vessels – saucers, jars and vases – there exists another class of small pottery vessels that appear to be reduced-scale versions of full-scale forms. The range of sizes is sometimes found together in the same burial.³⁹ *Fig. 3* shows a comparison of miniature, reduced-scale, and full-size bowls and jars all found in the tomb of Hetepheres, mother of Sneferu, who was buried at Giza. All of these vessel forms – the deep carinated bowl with spout, the high shouldered jar with a flat collar rim, and the squat carinated jar – are classic forms of Old Kingdom funerary pottery. Their thick red coating and burnished surfaces may be intended to imitate metal prototypes.⁴⁰

These miniature, reduced-scale, and full-size vessel forms of the Old Kingdom became the accepted shapes for the funerary pottery of the Middle Kingdom, where both reduced-scale and full-scale pottery vessels are included in tomb assemblages.⁴¹

³⁵ Marchand, Baud, *BIFAO* 96 (1996): 284; Bárta, *GM* 149 (1995): 17–18.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 17–18.

³⁷ Flat-based cylindrical model vessels with rolled rims can be compared to similar cylindrical jars in both clay – often with net patterns covering the body and a wavy line incised below the rim – and Egyptian alabaster found in Naqada III and the First Dynasty: see Hayes, *Scepter I*, fig. 13, bottom row. Tall slender ovoid model jars can be compared to large pottery storage jars found in great quantities in the tombs of the First Dynasty at Abydos: see Hayes, *Scepter I*, fig. 32 (Petrie, *Abydos I*, pl. XXXVI, 50).

³⁸ D'Auria, in D'Auria, Lacovara, Roehrig, eds., *Mummies and Magic*, 78

³⁹ See for examples from the tomb of Hetepheres, figs. 63–63 (shouldered jars with collar rims) and fig. 74 (spouted basins), in Reisner, Smith, *Giza II*.

⁴⁰ J. Bourriau, *Umm el Ga'ab* (Cambridge, 1981), 51.

⁴¹ See fig. 11 in S. Allen, 'Funerary Pottery in the Middle Kingdom: Archaism or Revival?', in *Recent Perspectives on Egypt's Middle Kingdom* (Philadelphia, forthcoming).

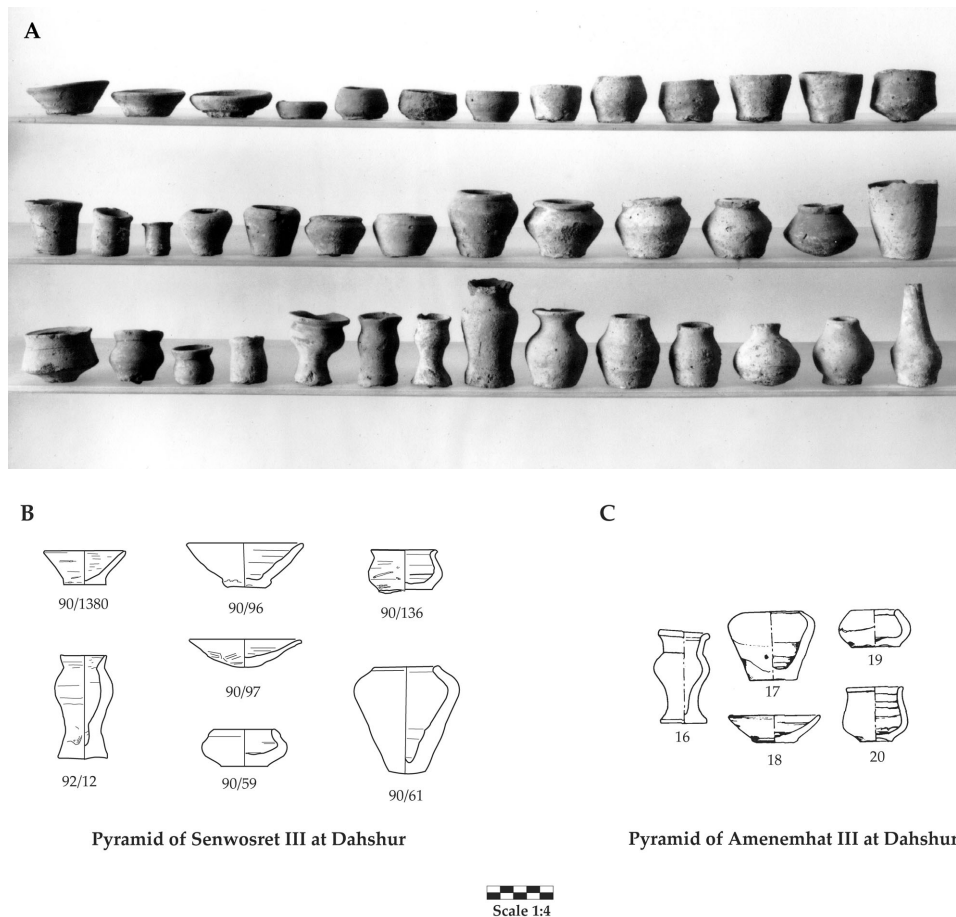


Fig. 4 Miniature pottery vessels from the Middle Kingdom: (A) unpublished field photograph MMA 7LN23, courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of New York; (B) from S. Allen, *BCE XXI* (2000): fig. 4.8–4.10, 1.5–1.8; (C) from Do. Arnold, *MDAIK 38* (1982): 28, fig 2: 36, 42, 57–58

Pottery miniature vessels continued to be used in the Middle Kingdom, when they were included in burials and foundation deposits as well as employed in the offering ritual at the mortuary complexes of Senwosret I at Lisht and Senwosret III and Amenemhat III at Dahshur (fig. 4).

There is something to be gained from careful study of these often repetitive and all too numerous little pots. They provide an insight into the remarkably conservative funerary traditions of the Old and Middle Kingdoms and the significance that the ancient Egyptians assigned to specific vessel forms over more than a thousand years.

THE OLD KINGDOM ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY
PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE HELD IN PRAGUE,
MAY 31 – JUNE 4, 2004

Miroslav Bárta
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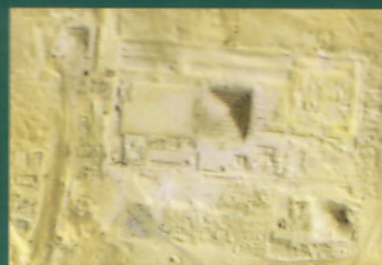
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