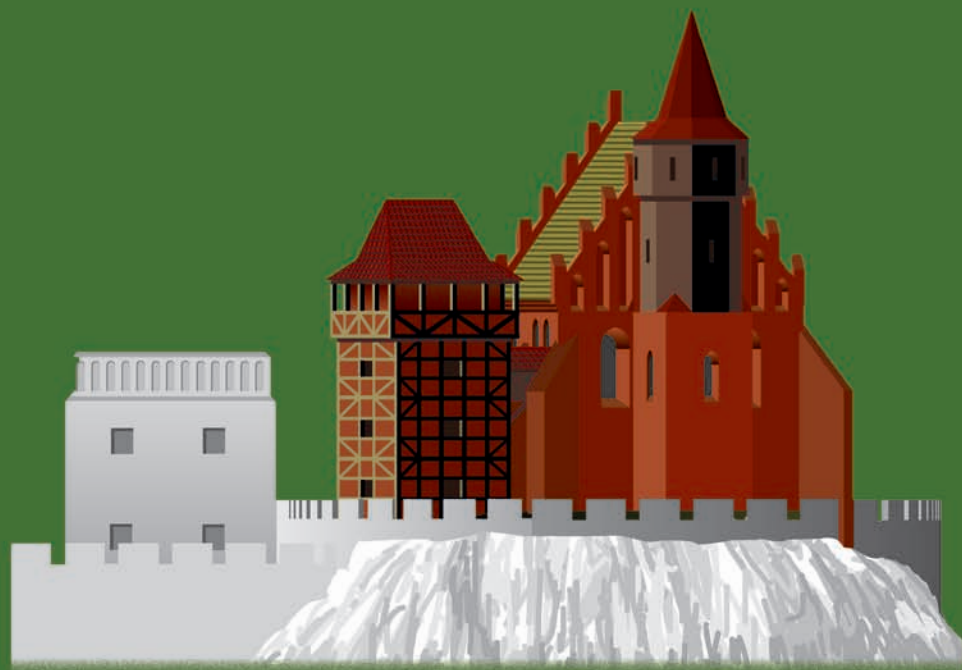


L'INSTITUT D'ARCHEOLOGIE
DE L'UNIVERSITE JAGIELLONNE
DE CRACOVIE

RECHERCHES ARCHEOLOGIQUES

NOUVELLE SERIE 2



KRAKÓW 2010

**L'INSTITUT D'ARCHEOLOGIE
DE L'UNIVERSITE JAGELLONNE DE CRACOVIE**

**RECHERCHES ARCHEOLOGIQUES
NOUVELLE SERIE 2**

KRAKÓW 2010

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L'Eglise StMichel et le monastère paulinien à Cracovie dans le début du XVIIe siècle
(la reconstruction par J. Poleski)

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Krzysztof M. Ciałowicz

Excavations at the Western Kom at Tell el-Farkha 2007–2008¹

Description of results

During the 2006 campaign a new trench in the western part of the Western Kom was opened (cf. Ciałowicz 2007; 2009b; Chłodnicki, Ciałowicz 2008). In one of recently unearthed rooms a few pots of an undoubtedly ritual character were discovered. Near the eastern wall was a small jar (23 cm in height) covered by a bowl, decorated with engraved representations of a bird and two herbivores. The vessel appeared to be full of miniature objects. Altogether there were 62 items in it: figurines made of hippopotamus tusk, models of various objects made of stone, faience and bone as well as miniature stone vessels. Some of the figurines are unique pieces of art, previously un-noted in this early period of Egyptian history.

The following field campaigns at the Western Kom in Tell el-Farkha were conducted in 2007, 2008 and 2009. Layers excavated in 2007–2008 were evidently related to the older phases of the same administrative-cultic centre which was discovered in 2001 (cf. Ciałowicz 2006) and 2006. Layers unearthed in 2009 should be probably joined with a different structure, which will be excavated also during the next

campaign in spring 2010. In such a situation only preliminary results of research from 2007–2008 may be presented in this report. The research of 2009 will be described together with the 2010 campaigns.

After three years of excavations in the western part of the mentioned administrative-cultic centre, it is evident that we should distinguish two or even three phases of its development. However, at the present state of research it is still too early to formulate a final conclusion – it needs more studies and analyses of different artefacts to be done. To emphasise the changes of the main shrine shape more strongly, the campaigns of 2007 and 2008 will be described separately.

The campaign 2007 saw the continued excavation of the trench opened up during the previous year. Further rooms were revealed abutting the aforementioned one excavated in 2006. Most of the freshly uncovered rooms lie to the south and north of the room with the deposit. An open space extends to the east, probably representing an internal courtyard enclosed by much thicker walls than those separating individual rooms from one another. The situation to the west of the room with the deposit is unclear. Here, the tell was evidently damaged, probably by the creation of contemporary fields, and in particular by the digging of a canal (now filled

¹ The campaign in 2007 lasted from 3rd March till 7th May; in 2008 between 23rd February and 10th April.

up) which was still operational at the start of the Polish excavations. Only fragments of the walls survived; they had originally stretched further west and probably formed an outer ring of rooms encircling, from this side, the shrine with deposit.

To the north and the south we are dealing with relatively small rooms aligned along a NE–SW axis and enclosed by thin walls (30–45 cm thick). The remains of ovens and hearths were recorded within these rooms, as were layers of ash, abundant potsherds (very occasionally whole vessels) and relatively rare examples of flint and stone tools. Unfortunately, work in these rooms, particularly those to the north, is complicated by the presence of numerous pits dug by animals and layers of contemporary rubbish. The scale of the trench opened up in 2006 (encompassing over 8.5 ares), the vast quantity of artefacts recovered from it, and, most of all, the degree of devastation, mean that work is still ongoing on the surface strata of the Western Kom.

The most significant discoveries made this year are still associated with the room (number 211) containing the deposit revealed in 2006. The shrine changed its shape in comparison with the layers examined in the previous year. During season 2006 it was a rectangular room with its longer axis oriented SE–NW (Fig. 1). The shrine is about 9×3 m, but the western part of it is evidently cut away, probably in modern times, and so the western wall is not preserved. The eastern and northern walls are straight, but the southern one forms a rectangular corner together with another partially preserved wall going towards SW.

In the deepest layers excavated in 2007 the shape of the described shrine changed, which is a proof that we can distinguish a few phases of its development. The room is a little shorter (*ca.* 8×3 m) than in the later phases, and fortunately all debris is

preserved (Fig. 2). The room is narrower in the west than in the east and an impression arises that a kind of a vestibule existed to the western extreme of the shrine. This view is reinforced by the presence of a slightly rounded wall, which separates the north-western corner of the described structure. The walls of this room are thicker than in the topmost layers (*ca.* 45 cm), but still not as thick as those of the room surrounding the deposit discovered in 2001 (cf. Ciałowicz 2006).

Room no. 211 was excavated very slowly and meticulously. All of the fill removed from it was sieved and individual layers were delimited every 5 cm. That we are dealing with a building and fill representing a single period is attested by the fact that parts of the same artefacts were found at considerable distances from one another and at a variety of depths. Examples include a stone vessel broken in two, the pieces in question being recovered from strata separated by a vertical distance of 20 cm. Similarly, various fragments of a clay figurine were found in several places within this room. In 2006 a kind of ink container or offering stand was found. It was a thin pottery slab, 7 cm wide, with three (about 4.5 cm in diameter) round containers filled with a black substance. Another fragment of this item was found during the 2007 campaign, and now the slab is composed of four containers.

In the middle of the room, near its north wall, were three large storage vessels which had clearly been concealed beneath the floor (cf. below). Nearby, though hidden in the north wall (Fig. 3), was a jar covered by a small bowl identical in type to the one covering the jar containing the deposit found in 2006.

In addition to numerous pottery sherds, the shrine with deposit also yielded several other whole, or almost whole, pottery vessels. The most interesting and significant of

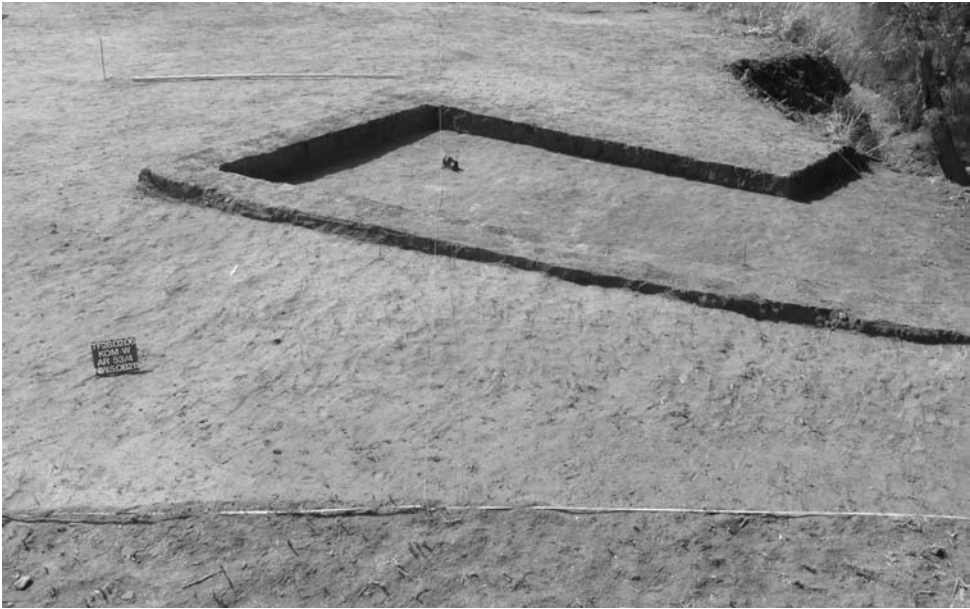


Fig. 1. Room no. 211 during excavations in 2006 (photo R. Słaboński)

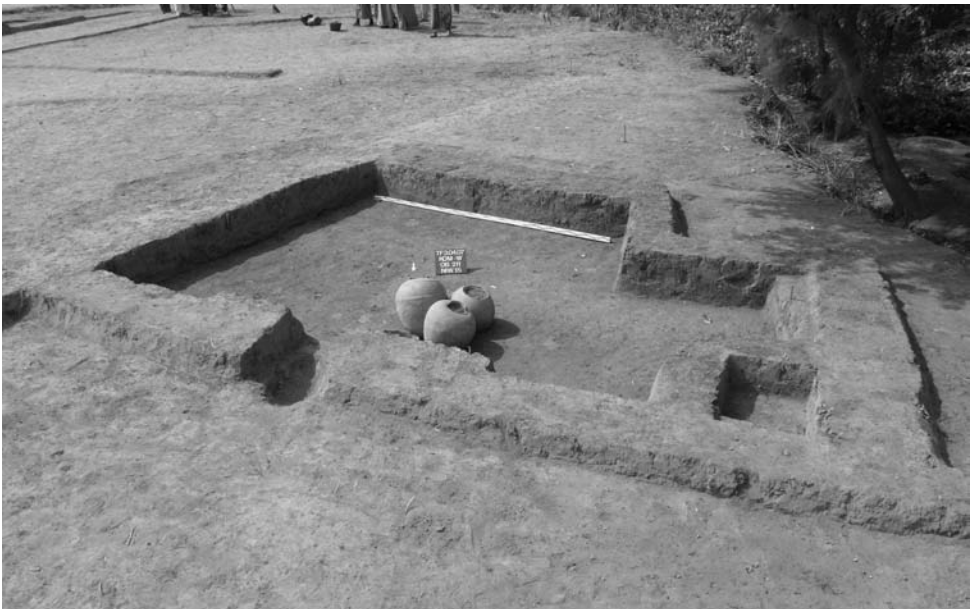


Fig. 2. Room no. 211 during excavations in 2007 (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 3. Jar hidden in the northern wall of the shrine
(photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 4. Fragmentarily preserved pottery pot-stand from
room no. 211 (photo R. Słaboński)

these was, undoubtedly, a fragmentarily preserved ceramic stand (Fig. 4) similar to one which was found during the previous season. Many others fragments of such stands (5.52% of the pottery from room 211) were also discovered (Sobas 2009, 31). Another interesting vessel is a *hes*-jar (Fig. 5), used in ritual libations in the Early Dynastic period. Similar jars were found for instance in the deposits from Tell Ibrahim Awad (Eigner 2000) and Hierakonpolis (Quibell, Petrie 1900, p. 11, pl. XXXV). The same fill strata also produced fragments of a clay statuette representing a seated figure (Fig. 6). Unfortunately, all that survived of this figurine was a pair of relatively large legs (18 cm high), with knees closely drawn up. On the right knee, a remnant of a hand is visible. Probably this clay sculpture represented a seated boy with a finger in his mouth, similar to the two ivory ones found in the deposit recovered in 2006.



Fig. 5. *Hes*-jar from room no. 211 (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 6. Fragment of a pottery figurine (sitting boy?)
(photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 7. Ivory figurine of a baboon (photo R. Słaboński)

Four other miniature figurines carved in hippopotamus ivory were found in layers of room 211. The first of them is a schematic representation of a baboon (2.2 cm high): the animal is sitting with its forefeet lying on the knees (Fig. 7). The second (Fig. 8) is a small representation of an undetermined animal with a long snout (1.5 cm high; an anteater?). Its eyes were probably inlaid with some other material (stone, faience?). The third is a further example (Ciałowicz 2009b: 432–434) of a female dwarf (2.3 cm high; Fig. 9). The woman wears a long robe and has spread legs with arched knees and feet joined together. Her short hands are separated from the body. A large wig is separated in the middle and falls onto the shoulders and back. Few incisions emphasise the curls of the wig. Her face is lightly marked with almond-shaped eyes, a small nose and thin lips (Buszek 2008, 48). In the vicinity a fragment of another she-dwarf figurine,

standing on a rectangular base, was found (2 cm high). Only the curved legs in a long robe have been preserved, roughly up to the waist. Also noteworthy is a bone amulet in the shape of a bull's head (3.5 cm high; Fig. 10). Amulets of this type are particularly characteristic of the terminal Naqada II and entire Naqada III period (Hendrickx 2002).



Fig. 8. Ivory figurine of an unidentified animal (anteater?) (photo R. Słaboński)

Unquestionably one of the most valuable finds discovered in 2007 was a greywacke spoon (10.5 cm long) with a crocodile-shaped handle (Fig. 11). The animal was very carefully modelled, its features (teeth; segments of the body) being emphasised

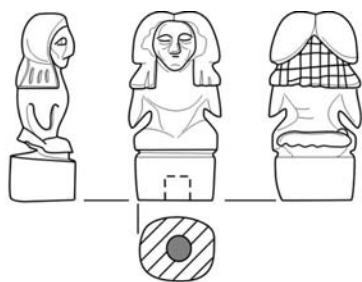


Fig. 9. Ivory figurine of a she-dwarf (drawing by A. Longa)



Fig. 10. Bone amulet in the shape of a bull's head (photo R. Słaboński)

with incisions. Eyes are almond-shaped, legs are marked as small, oval knobs. Very interesting, but unfortunately partially preserved is a bone (cattle rib) model of a fish-tail knife (12.2 cm long; Fig. 12).

Four stone vessels were found in 2007 in the shrine, room 211. Two were made of a soft stone (travertine) and are very badly preserved. Two others are in a much better condition. The first of them (18 cm high; Fig. 13), almost cylindrical in shape and with 6 small hollows on the rim, is made of basalt. The second one is a stone jar (11 cm high; Fig. 14) with two lug handles on the body. This vessel was found broken in two pieces in different layers of room 211.

Other finds worth mentioning include a flint knife found with some cattle ribs alongside the three storage jars; fragments of a greywacke bracelet; part of a bone spoon; remnants of copper artefacts unidentifiable due to their poor state of preservation. Beads made of both semi-precious stones and faience were especially numerous represented (*ca.* 350 items).

The objects recovered from the four storage jars mentioned earlier deserve separate consideration. The vessel concealed in the north wall contained several dozen faience beads, and, most importantly, a faience cylindrical seal (2.4 cm high) adorned with



Fig. 11. Greywacke spoon with a crocodile-shaped handle (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 12. Bone model of a fish-tail knife (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 13. Basalt jar with a decorated rim (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 14. Stone vessel with lug-handles (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 15. Faience cylindrical seal found in a jar hidden in the northern wall of room no. 211 (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 16. Ostrich egg found in a jar hidden in the northern wall of room no. 211 (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 17. Jar no. 231 from room no. 211 (photo R. Słaboński)

X-signs and two gazelles (Fig. 15). Above one of the X-signs is a schematic figure, which could be a representation of a falcon. At the bottom of the jar was an undecorated ostrich egg with an oval hole cut in its top (Fig. 16). The combination of a gazelle-decorated seal and an ostrich egg may be of some significance (cf. below).

The three jars hidden beneath the floor contained a far greater number of items, though the contents of each jar were not the same. The first one (no. 231; Fig. 17) contained only a few faience beads and small fragments of animal bones.

Over 400 faience beads (Fig. 18) were found in the next jar (no. 232; Fig. 19) along with three objects made of hippopotamus ivory: a circle (a finger ring?) of 2 cm in diameter, a model of a bull's leg (3.2 cm high; Fig. 20) and very poorly preserved and fragmentary remains of an anthropomorphic figurine. Only the top of this figure survived (Fig. 21), its hair featuring a central parting. The eroded surface and indiscernible details made it impossible to establish whether this figure was of a woman or a man, though the former seems more likely.

The greatest number of valuable objects was concealed in the third vessel (no. 230; Fig. 22). The most significant of these was a hippopotamus ivory figurine (Figs 23–24) representing a female dwarf (8.5 cm high). This naked figure with well modelled, clearly drooping breasts and a relatively large belly stands with legs apart and bent at the knees. The slightly sagging breasts and skin fold below the neck may point to an advanced age. The legs were intentionally finished off just below the knee in a sharp point. Thus, the figure could not have stood up without some additional support. The head is disproportionately large; only one ear survives and vestiges of the hair, which was probably braided, some of the plaits falling onto the

breasts, those at the back reaching down to the waist. The face is carefully modelled, and facial features, such as the eyes, wide nose and mouth, are emphasised. Only the shoulder of the right arm survives. The left shoulder features a hole of 0.5 cm in diameter that gave attachment to the arm, which was found in two pieces outside the vessel. Although the figurine is white, the arm is dark brown as a result of having been affected by external factors. The hand, with precisely rendered fingers, was clenched in a fist, leaving a space in the middle, where a staff or stick was probably held. It was only by leaning on this staff that the figurine could stand up.

The vessel containing this figure also concealed two cosmetic palettes: the larger one rectangular (17 cm long; Fig. 25) and the smaller one fish-shaped (8.7 cm long; Fig. 26). The last one has details emphasised with incisions, the eyes were probably inlaid with some other material. An especially interesting item found inside this jar is a bone model of a dagger with a central rib (Fig. 27). It is evidently an imitation of copper daggers used during this period and noted at a few sites in Upper Egypt (Ciałowicz 1985: 163). There was also a hollowed out bone object (Fig. 28), which is probably an imitation of a sheath for the said dagger. Two small stone



Fig. 18. Faience beads from jar no. 232 (photo R. Słaboński)

vessels: a bowl and a water bottle (Fig. 29), several beads and a few fragments of animal bone were also recovered from the jar.



Fig. 19. Jar no. 232 from room no. 211 (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 20. Ivory model of a bull's leg (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 21. Partially preserved ivory figurine (of a woman?) (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 22. Jar no. 230 from room no. 211 (photo R. Słaboński)

Undoubtedly, the mentioned jars should also be treated as deposits, but their role is probably different than that of the jar discovered in 2006. Those with 62 items inside served, in all probability, for hiding valuable *ex votos* before the Western Kom was abandoned. The three jars discovered in 2007, together with those hidden in the northern wall, might have been placed there when the shrine was being built and probably all of them should be treated as a foundation deposit.

Works on the Western Kom were continued in 2008 and the western part of the large administrative-cultic centre was still the main subject of research. Compared to previous years, the shape of the shrine was clearly changed. Evidently we are dealing with an older phase of the chapel. At that time the shrine was formed by a small, almost square room, 2×2 m in dimensions (Fig. 30). A Red Sea shell (*Pteroceras* or

Lambis truncata) was found in the south-east corner of this room (Fig. 31; cf. below).

During the deconstruction of the walls of the younger chapel (excavated in 2007), cultic objects were still being found. Uncovered, among others, were 2 limestone pear-shaped mace heads (Fig. 32), which numerous appear in other temple deposits, for example in Hierakonpolis (e.g. Adams 1974, 5–14) or Tell Ibrahim Awad (Van Haarlem 2009: 151–153), proving their possible connection with an early ruler. In their vicinity, very close to the jar containing the ostrich egg described above (cf. Figs 3 and 16), a gazelle's horn was found. From among other findings we could mention a large zoomorphic figurine, unfortunately only partially preserved, most probably a hippopotamus (Fig. 33); the lower part of a stone zoomorphic pot in the shape of a frog (Fig. 34) and relatively few beads made of various stones and faience.

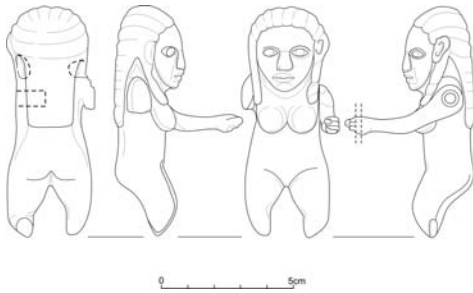


Fig. 23. Ivory figurine of a she-dwarf from jar no. 230.
(drawing by A. Longa)



Fig. 24. Ivory figurine of a she-dwarf from jar no. 230
(photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 25. Greywacke rectangular cosmetic palette from
jar no. 230 (photo R. Słaboński)

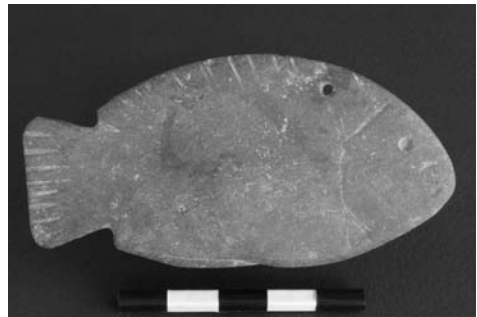


Fig. 26. Greywacke fish-shaped cosmetic palette from
jar no. 230 (photo R. Słaboński)

(Fig. 35) closed by thick walls (160 cm wide), to which, from the northern side, a complex of relatively small rooms, rectangular as well as almost square, is adjacent (Fig. 36). The walls were originally between 30 and 60 cm thick, but now are, in their most part, destroyed by animal holes. The method of their construction is much less solid, and ovens with pots as well as fireplaces and typical settlement pottery contained within, are a proof of a utility character of these rooms.

The most interesting result of the works undertaken during the last two campaigns are observations on the architectural development of the discussed administrative-cultic centre and the creation of its ground plan. It consists of an almost square courtyard

The westernmost part of the trench is mostly limited to the aforementioned chapel and a few fragmentarily preserved rooms – in some of them ovens with pots were extant. Most probably there were many more of those auxiliary rooms, but they were



Fig. 27. Bone model of a dagger from jar no. 230 (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 28. Bone model of a sheath for a dagger (?) from jar no. 230 (photo R. Słaboński)

destroyed. That took place in a rather unidentifiable period when modern fields were set and the canal was built. The tell in this area is clearly cut down and falls in an almost vertical cliff, while in the other directions it ends with a gentle slope. The eastern part of the tell and the administrative-cultic complex were explored in the 2001–2002 seasons, and to the thick walls limiting the aforementioned yard from this direction, numerous utility rooms also adjoined.

On the southern end of the complex (Fig. 37) a situation can be observed which is similar to the one on the northern part: several rooms of different shapes and sizes, sometimes in an enfilade alignment, are separated from one another by relatively thin and shoddily made walls. Here, hardly any ovens and fireplaces can be found, although in some rooms a layer of ash was recognized. From this area comes a relatively large number of complete pots, mostly of small dimensions. Fragments of pottery



Fig. 29. Stone miniature of a water bottle from jar no. 230 (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 30. Older phase of the shrine excavated in 2008 (photo R. Słaboński)

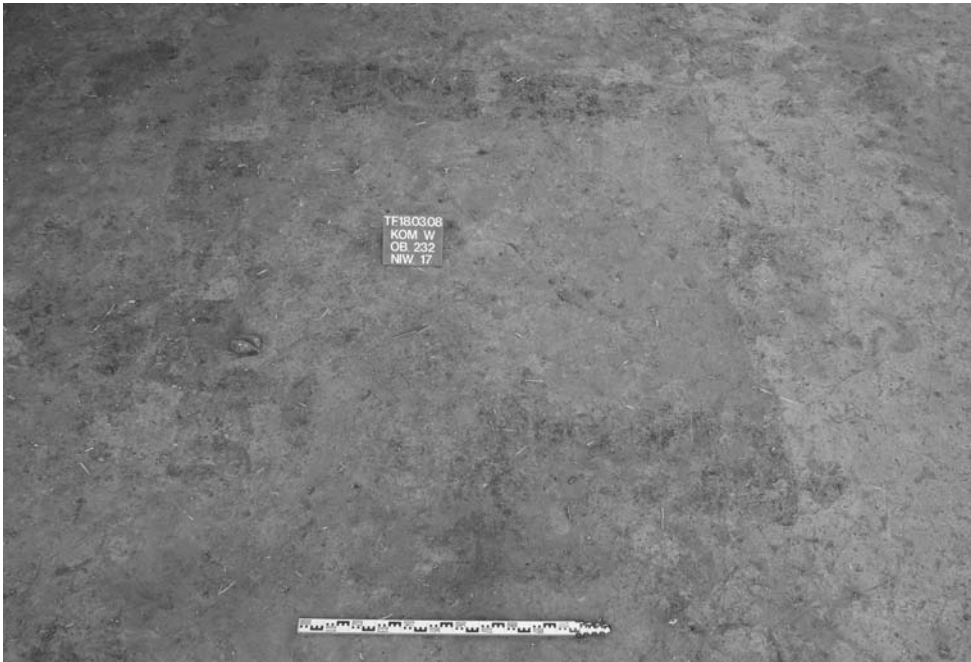


Fig. 31. Top layer of the older phase of the shrine (photo R. Słaboński)

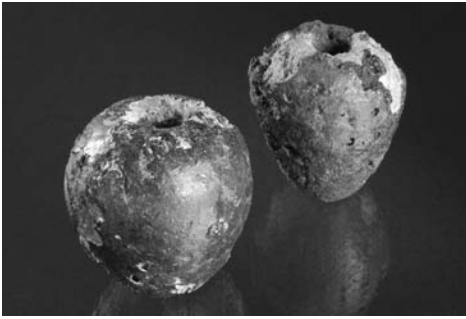


Fig. 32. Two pear-shaped mace-heads found under the northern wall of room 211 (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 33. Fragmentarily preserved clay figurine of an animal (hippopotamus?) (photo R. Słaboński)

come from pots of a similar character to the ones in the northern area. Worthy of attention is also the scarce presence of flint tools – as in the whole western tell. In these rooms two cosmetic palettes were found – one almost square (Fig. 38), the second, only partially preserved, in the shape of a fish. This fact is worth noticing, because during the 2001–2002 seasons, a few other palettes, usually not found in settlements, were discovered in the south-eastern part of the tell.

Preliminary conclusions

The pottery analysis confirms a cult role of room 211. The so-called Nubian vessels: lidded barrel shaped jars decorated with dots and incised lines, known from

the shrine at Tell el-Farkha, were found on some Upper Egyptian and Nubian sites of the Naqada III period (Sobas 2009, 26). Similar ones were also discovered in Nahal Tillah in Palestine, where they were accompanied by cult-stands (Kansa *et al.* 2002, 202). As mentioned above, pottery stands with cut or incised triangles, dated at phase 5 at Tell el-Farkha, are known mainly from this area. The vicinity of ritual vessels, as well as their high quality, suggest their connection with ceremonies that took place in the shrine (Sobas 2009, 31). A limited number of bread moulds, found alongside, suggests they were used not to bake bread but rather as sacrificial gifts offered in the temple (Sobas 2009, 30).

The results of the last three seasons' work have to be combined with those obtained in 2001 (Ciałowicz 2006), when the uppermost strata at the eastern part of the Western Kom were excavated. It was then that a



Fig. 34. Lower part of a stone zoomorphic pot in the shape of a frog (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 35. General view of the Western Kom after season 2008 (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 36. Northern part of the Western Kom during season 2007 (photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 37. Southern part of the Western Kom during season 2008 (photo R. Słaboński)

part of a large building of diverse functions was unearthed. Individual rooms were separated from one another by walls of various thickness (from 30–45 cm up to 1 m) and the rooms appear to have been used for a range of purposes. Most of them were undoubtedly domestic or utility areas, as evidenced by ovens and hearths, layers of ash

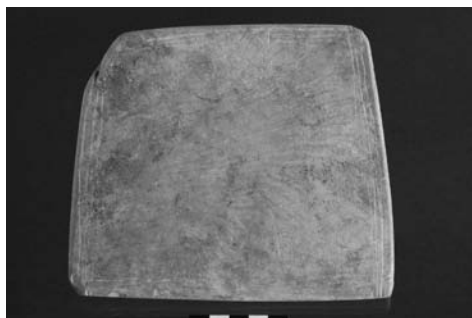


Fig. 38. Greywacke cosmetic palette found in the southern area of the Western Kom (photo R. Słaboński)

and the artefacts which they yielded: typical domestic pottery and scanty flint and stone tools. The most interesting of the rooms was a small, almost square one delineated by thick walls. It was in this room that the first votive deposit at Tell el-Farkha was found. This comprised two human figurines, several representations of animals (baboons and a crocodile), five ceramic rattles adorned with incised decoration, models of mace-heads, gaming pieces and numerous miniature vessels made of clay, faience and stone.

When one compares the ground plans of the buildings discovered in 2001 and 2006–2008, it is easy to see that they represent a complex which served as an administrative and cultic centre, one of the oldest of its kind to have been found, not only in the Nile Delta, but in the whole of Egypt. This complex consisted of a central, almost square, empty space, probably fulfilling the role of an inner courtyard, surrounded by

rooms differing in size and nature, and of various functions. The two most important rooms were, indubitably, those in which votive deposits were found. The first of them, almost square in plan, abutted the north-east side of the courtyard. The second room, elongated and rectangular, was positioned on the courtyard's west side, closer to the south corner than the north. The remaining rooms appear to have been used for domestic and utility purposes. The size of the complex (several hundred square metres), the variety, not only of the rooms, but also of the techniques used in raising their walls, and in particular the two probable shrines used for cult purposes, allow us to draw several very preliminary conclusions at this stage.

Firstly, the deposits discovered at Tell el-Farkha are the only ones in Egypt to be so precisely dated. All of those found earlier included items from the later great periods of development of Egyptian civilization: the Old Kingdom, the First Intermediate Period, and even from the Middle Kingdom. For this reason some scholars linked them to much later periods and negated the idea that there was a separate period of Egyptian art associated with the Proto- and Predynastic period (e.g. Baumgartel 1968). The Tell el-Farkha deposits come from contexts securely dated to the transition between dynasties 0 and I. It is worth recalling that the Western Kom at Tell el-Farkha was ultimately abandoned in the first half of the First Dynasty and was never resettled, thus providing an excellent *terminus ante quem*. This dating of finds at Tell el-Farkha makes it possible to assert conclusively that the first great period of development in Egyptian art took place during the formation of the Egyptian state. Many models established at that time were copied with greater or lesser modifications over the next three thousand years until the fall of Egyptian civilization.

Secondly, the fact that the content of deposits varies between individual sites suggests that no universally accepted canons were in force during the emergence of the Egyptian state. It also implies that various forms of rituals and cults were practised in various parts of Egypt.

Thirdly, the shrines provide confirmation of the fact that Tell el-Farkha was a very important centre in the Eastern Delta during the transition between the late Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods. It may even have served as a local capital or administrative centre associated with the first rulers of Egypt.

Fourthly, the presence of votive deposits found in numerous locations throughout Egypt (in Upper Egypt: Elephantine, Hierakonpolis, Abydos; in Lower Egypt: Tell Ibrahim Awad) evidences the existence of complex local cults, though it is difficult to ascertain who they were addressed to. It is still unclear whether at the dawn of the Egyptian state specific clearly defined gods were already worshipped, or whether the king, as guarantor of order and all aspects of life, was the subject of cult devotion to whom offerings were made.

The latter question is especially important and preliminary analyses of different items discovered in room 211 at Tell el-Farkha allow us to put forward at least some hypotheses.

It is worth remembering that the vessel in which the votive deposit was found in 2006 was decorated with dots and an incised representation of a long-legged bird and two horned herbivores (Fig. 39). While the dots were certainly made, with a stamp of some sort, before the vessel was baked, the animal frieze was carved later. The hard surface may be responsible for a slight chip on the surface of the vessel that had probably appeared during the time the first figure was being carved. As it can be judged by the



Fig. 39. Row of animals from the jar with deposit found in 2006 (drawing by M. Sobas)

preserved fragments: two legs, a larger part of the body and one of the feathers symbolizing a tail, the author intended to depict another bird. The chipped surface made him abandon this intention, which is also proved by the fact that this part of the picture was very shallowly carved – other figures were made with deep grooves, probably achieved by making multiple incisions in the surface. It also needs to be stressed that very little room was left between the above described figure and the bird behind it. The remaining figures were arranged at larger and roughly equal intervals, so that each was separately visible on one side of the vessel. This may be a proof that the artist intended to portray one bird and two horned animals and the current appearance of the frieze was caused by a failure to carve the first figure. By accepting this view we also need to assume that the register on our vessel starts with the depiction of a bird. It has an oval body, a long neck and legs, a small head with no beak and three quite long feathers for a tail. It seems to portray an ostrich (cf. Hendrickx 2000). Behind the bird, a smaller horned animal is depicted. The body and neck are symbolized by a horizontal line ending with a relatively long, upwardly curled tail on one side and an oval head with straight horns on the other. Four lines run from the body downwards, representing legs. A triangle is carved between the hind legs of the animal, which undoubtedly is a schematic

depiction of the udder. The second animal is bigger, presented in a similar way, but without an udder. A female and a male of some horned species are therefore portrayed on the vessel. We may assume that the animals in question are bovines, gazelles or antelopes. On the basis of such a schematic drawing it is hard to unambiguously state what species the animals belong to. Due to the presence of an ostrich we may suppose, however, that the author intended to show a desert scene rather than a row of domestic animals. In this case we may take either gazelles or wild bovines into consideration. The latter (just as their domesticated relatives) are usually depicted with semicircular horns, commonly bent forward (Hendrickx 2002, 279). Our depiction features straight horns, or even slightly curved backwards in the case of the first quadruped. The schematic representation does not allow full certainty, yet we may surmise that the intention was to depict gazelles. In this case the shape of horns may point to oryx or gazelles with lyre-shaped horns, commonly depicted in Predynastic art.

Another depiction of a horned animal was found during the first seasons of research conducted at Tell el-Farkha by an Italian team (Chłodnicki *et al.* 1991; 1992). At that time M. Chłodnicki discovered a vessel used as a flower pot in the house which they had rented. That cylindrical vessel is undoubtedly ancient, and due to

its shape and a single rope pattern under the rim we may date it to the Naqada IIIB/IIIC1 period. A depiction of a herbivorous animal with a large head, long horns and tail was engraved on the vessel. The sketch is very schematic and it is difficult to decisively determine what species the animal belongs to. It may be a depiction of either a bovine or a gazelle, however, as mentioned before, if the horn arrangement is taken into consideration, the second option seems more plausible.

A small (1.5 cm in length) serpentinite amulet showing a reclining herbivore was discovered in 2003 in a settlement on the Central Kom (Chłodnicki, Ciałowicz 2004b, fig. 9:11). Our attention is drawn to a relatively long neck and a manner in which the tucked legs of the animal are depicted, characteristic of herbivore representations in Pre- and Early Dynastic art. The silhouette is schematic and the majority of details were not emphasised. Nevertheless, the form of the animal is legible enough to identify it as a depiction of a gazelle.

A half of a cylindrical seal (Fig. 40), chipped from the other part along a vertical axis, was discovered in the same layer (Chłodnicki, Ciałowicz 2004a, 105). The seal (2.1 cm in length) is made of marlstone. The carving of the depiction was very deep. In the centre of the preserved part, a long-legged bird with short wings, a long neck and a small beak was represented. This manner of depiction allows us to assume that the author intended to portray an ostrich. A hind part (leg and tail) of an ungulate is depicted in front of the bird, while behind the bird an unidentified fragment of another figure is visible. Both above described objects were discovered in a layer dated to Naqada IIIB/C1. A seal impression with a fragmentally preserved depiction of two herbivores, probably gazelles, also originates from that context.



Fig. 40. Half of a marlstone cylindrical seal from the Central Kom (photo R. Słaboński)

As mentioned above, in 2007 an ostrich egg together with a small, faience cylindrical seal were discovered inside the jar hidden under the northern wall of the cultic shrine. The egg was undecorated and only had a small opening (1.8 cm in diameter) cut in its upper part. The seal was covered with a figural pattern (Fig. 41) consisting of two gazelles with large curved horns bent backwards. Despite the fact that the images are very schematic and poorly preserved we may assume with considerable certainty that they should be identified with the Nubian ibex (Hendrickx 1992, 12). Above the animal figures is a silhouette that is very probably a schematic depiction of a falcon, and below them – a mark X, which may be a very simplified rosette symbol. Behind the second animal the seal is chipped downwards, whereas in the upper part there is a quite illegible symbol resembling a line broken at sharp angles or a schematic depiction of a falcon and a boomerang carved

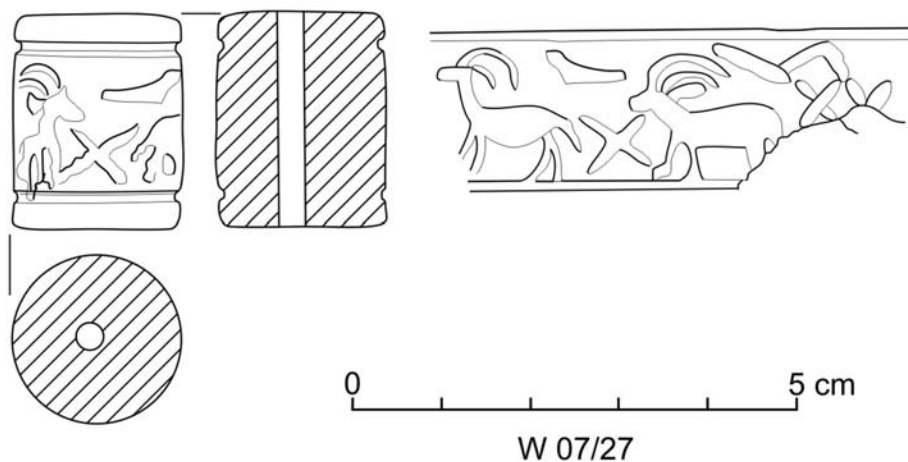


Fig. 41. Faience cylindrical seal found in a jar hidden in the northern wall of room no. 211 (drawing by A. Longa)

right next to each other (which therefore seem one symbol). Below, two X marks are carved.

Also hidden under the northern wall of the shrine were a horn of a gazelle (Fig. 42) and two pear shaped mace-heads (cf. Fig. 32). Likewise, it is necessary to remind the reader that in the south-east corner of the older phase of our shrine (cf. Fig. 31), a Red Sea shell was discovered (Fig. 43). It was found in the top layer, which means that it is connected rather with the younger stage of the chapel. In this case the shell was hidden under the floor, more or less in the centre of the room excavated in 2007.

Such shells are sometimes depicted in Late Predynastic and Early Dynastic art. The most important representations are on the sides of the famous Coptos Colossi. On one of them, kept in the Ashmolean Museum, a head of a gazelle and mentioned shells are depicted; on another one, in the Cairo museum, an ostrich and shells are represented (Williams 1988: fig. 2). It is rather difficult to see names of predynastic rulers, as it

was suggested by Dreyer (1998, 173–180), in inscriptions from the Coptos Colossi It is more probable that they represented objects connected in some way with a cult: offerings or symbols of power (divine or royal) worshipped in early chapels. Red Sea shells could also be related with trade and form a kind of symbol of relations with the Eastern Lands.

Representations of gazelles and ostriches from Tell el-Farkha are not numerous, but they form an important set. A faience cylindrical seal with depictions of gazelles, an ostrich egg, a horn of a gazelle, two mace-heads and probably a Red Sea shell appeared in one group, put under the shrine at the same time, and it seems that they all form a foundation deposit. Furthermore, 326 beads made of ostrich egg-shells, found together with golden figures discovered in 2006 (Chłodnicki, Ciałowicz 2007), emphasise how much an ostrich was worth to the inhabitants of Tell el-Farkha. All of the above described objects, together with the cylindrical jar discovered in the village, date

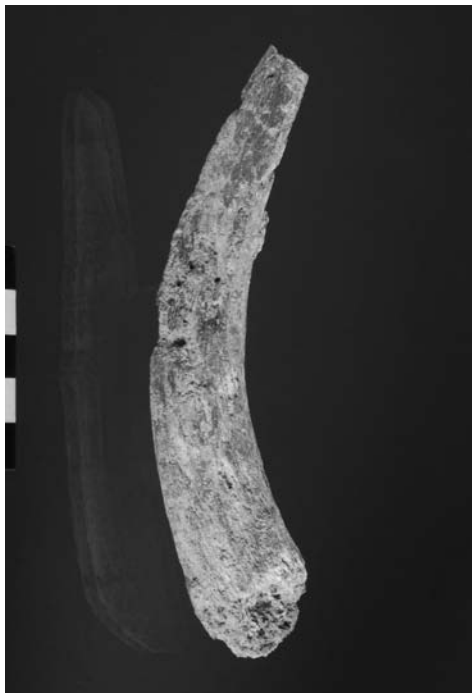


Fig. 42. Horn of a gazelle found under the northern wall of room no. 211 (photo R. Słaboński)

to the end of the Predynastic period and the very beginning of the I Dynasty. It is worth stressing that until now no objects of this type have been discovered in a few dozen graves in Tell el-Farkha, also dated to this period.

One of the best depictions of an ostrich is to be observed on the Manchester palette dated to phase IIC-D (Ciałowicz 1991, 43). A hunter wearing a bird mask is depicted there, approaching three ostriches, and the palette itself seems to have a connection with hunting magic. On the Hierakonpolis painting (Ciałowicz 2001, 157–163), dating to phase IIC, an ostrich was probably depicted once. The condition of the painting does not allow full certainty, but probably this bird was depicted in the centre of the picture, in front of a black boat. There are

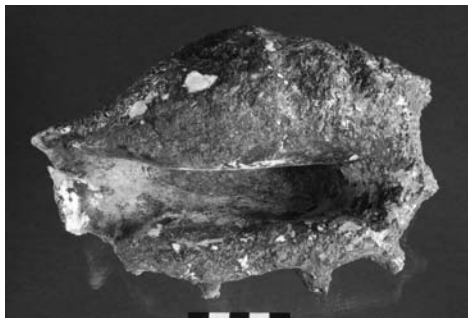


Fig. 43. Red Sea shell from the top layer of the older phase of the shrine (photo R. Słaboński)

numerous gazelles on this painting, belonging to various species. Both oryx, ibex and gazelles with lyre-shaped horns are visible. Probably their meaning is equally manifold. For instance an ibex is attacked by dogs in the upper right corner of the painting. An oryx and three ibexes lie calmly over the biggest of the depicted boats, on which the ritual *heb-sed* run is shown. A gazelle with lyre-shaped horns, caught on a lasso, together with five similar ones, captured in a trap, are painted in the lower left corner together with other scenes of triumph over men (a man killing three captives with a mace) and animals (a hero strangling two lions and a man taming a bull).

An ostrich and gazelles also appear in the centre of the Hunters palette (Ciałowicz 2001, 189–191), which is difficult to date, yet it is most probably connected with phase Naqada IID–IIIA. Showing an ostrich as an object of hunt links this palette with the previously mentioned Manchester one. Quadrupeds mostly have lyre-shaped horns, however, a deer and even a hare were spotted. A separate place is occupied by lions. Animals are hunted with bows and lassoes. Hunters wear possibly ostrich feathers in their hair. On the top of the palette a *per-nu* chapel is shown together with a double bull *protome*, with an undoubtedly symbolic meaning, yet

hard to reconstruct (Hendrickx 2002, 280). Besides, the interpretation of the entire palette is controversial up to date.

An ostrich and gazelles were pictured, among other animals, on a palette from Oxford (Ciałowicz 2001: 191–194). Here, however, the symbolic meaning of both species is more clear. The ostrich is shown only once, but in a deeply meaningful way: between the heads of two serpopards on the obverse of the palette. The fantastic creatures are devouring a gazelle with lyre-shaped horns that was killed during a hunt. Perhaps the bird was to symbolise a place where the offering was made – a chapel or an early temple. We may observe a clear change of meaning. On the above mentioned artefacts, an ostrich was depicted as an object of a hunt, here it becomes a symbol. A change of this type is, however, nothing new in Egyptian art. An obvious example is a bull (e.g. the Hierakonpolis painting and the Bull palette) or a lion (e.g. the Hunters palette and the Battlefield palette). Both species first appeared as hunted animals to become clear ruler symbols later.

Oryx, ibex and gazelles with lyre-shaped horns are hunted on both sides of the palette from Oxford. However, only the last of those animals was depicted as killed or sacrificed by a ruler, probably symbolised here by lions in the upper part of the reverse. Sacrificing gazelles is also confirmed by the scene from the Narmer mace-head. Three dead gazelles with lyre-shaped horns are depicted there in a distinct hollow spot. The sanctuary where the sacrifice was made is not indicated by an ostrich, however, but by a long-legged marsh bird standing on the roof of a chapel. Nevertheless, its role as a symbol of a place or gods/powers worshipped there is unquestionable. A forked pole and a jar on a characteristic pot-stand with triangular notches on the sides were marked within the boundaries of the wall encompassing the sanctuary. It is

worth recalling that similar pot-stands with matching bowls were found in the middle of room 211.

Judging by the described representations in early Egyptian art, ostrich and gazelles played an important role in the Late Predynastic and Early Dynastic society. The discovery from Tell el-Farkha gives another proof of a significant symbolic meaning of ostriches and gazelles from the end of the Predynastic period until the rule of the I Dynasty. The object discovered on the Western Kom is especially important in this case. It can be no accident that in a room that undoubtedly served as an early sanctuary/chapel votive objects were discovered in a vessel decorated with depictions of an ostrich and gazelles. We may, however, consider the difference in the artistic quality between the figures inside the jar, which mostly can be counted among outstanding works of early Egyptian art, and incised decoration on the outer surface of the vessel. Presumably, it was not made by an exceptional artist, the creator of the deposited sculptures, but rather by a person who packed these figures into the jar and hid it by the eastern wall of room 211. The reasons for doing so may had been various: the need to make space for new votive gifts; the need to hide them from incoming danger; or, more probably, a situation when this early sanctuary had to be abandoned, possibly for economic reasons, just like the entire western part of the city in Tell el-Farkha. In this case the relatively primitive drawing is unsurprising, however, the combination of motifs it comprises remains significant. A further link between gazelles and ostriches is the foundation deposit, probably placed at that spot at the time when the chapel walls were raised.

On the seal, besides the gazelle, one can see a schematic depiction of the falcon-Horus and an X sign. The latter may be a schematic rosette, which appears on

objects related to King Scorpion, Narmer and at the end of some rows of animals (including gazelles) decorating the handle of the Brooklyn knife or Davis comb. Probably rosettes should also be associated with the iconography of early rulers (Ciałowicz 1992, 254).

The appearance of this group of objects and the decoration of the jar containing the deposit seem to point to a strong relation between the inhabitants of Tell el-Farkha with the two discussed species. They may have had a cultic-symbolic meaning, especially that neither was present in the Delta at that time. The ostrich egg must have been brought from the south, and placing it in a foundation deposit instead of using it to produce beads testifies to a symbolic significance of such a deposit. A cylindrical seal depicting ibexes and a horn of a gazelle that was placed nearby demonstrate a symbolic-cultic significance of those animals. Perhaps the egg, seal and horn were a sacrifice placed at the time when the chapel was founded to substitute for a "real" sacrifice of ostriches and gazelles. Yet another possibility is that both animals were somehow connected to rituals or a cult or even were symbols of gods or powers worshipped in the shrine in Tell el-Farkha. As mentioned above, along with the gazelles, the seal also contains a depiction of the falcon-Horus and perhaps rosettes. Both symbols may point to a connection with the ruler and his symbolism. The fact that they were discovered under the same wall of the cult shrine together with two mace-heads (unquestionable symbols of royalty) may only strengthen and emphasise this relation. It should be remembered that among the figures of the deposit there are (Ciałowicz 2009b: 431): a man in

a characteristic coat, probably a representation of an anonymous ruler during the *sed* festival; a woman with a child on her knees, sitting in a palanquin – perhaps the (divine) mother of a ruler (Ciałowicz 2009a, 17); as well as a schematic figure of a falcon and four cobras-uraeuses.

It is then quite possible that both shrines from Tell el-Farkha were connected not only with the cult of early gods, but also (presumably even in the first place) with the cult of a king as the most important person in the Universe and the guarantor of order and all aspects of life.

Also the appearance of the carving depicting an ostrich and probably gazelles on the vessel in the deposit may not have been a coincidence. Grouping the same animals as in the foundation deposit only emphasises their role and even allows us to presume that they were somehow connected to the name of the place – a city in Tell el-Farkha or a shrine built there. Such a conclusion may be regarded as rather improbable, but it should be considered nevertheless.

The above described amulet in the shape of a gazelle and a seal depicting an ostrich and a gazelle (?) from the Central Kom are dated to the same period as the administrative-cultic centre from the Western one. While the shape of the amulet may be coincidental, the set of animals on the seal, on the other hand, is undoubtedly intentional. Such a seal may have been used to mark goods sent out from Tell el-Farkha in various directions. This would be yet another proof of a link between ostriches and gazelles with the name (symbolic/protective forces) of the cult shrine on the Western Kom or the settlement itself, which at that time may have been the same thing anyway.

Badania wykopaliskowe na zachodnim kopcu w Tell el-Farkha, w sezonach 2007–2008

W sezonach 2007–08 prace koncentrowały się w odkrytym w latach 2001 i 2006 centrum o charakterze administracyjno-kultowym, gdzie eksplorowano starsze warstwy założenia. Odkryto kolejne pomieszczenia leżące na północ i południe od kaplicy kultowej. Te pierwsze sprawiają wrażenie wzniesionych w pośpiechu i dla doraźnych potrzeb.

Najważniejszych rezultatów dostarczyły badania w kaplicy kultowej. Odślonięto kolejne przedmioty o wotywnym charakterze, zarówno rozsiane na całej przestrzeni kaplicy, jak i wyraźnie ukryte w dzbanach pod jej podłogą oraz w murach otaczających założenie. Do najważniejszych należy dzban typu hes używany w rytualnych libacjach, fragmenty dużej glinianej figurki, przedstawiającej zapewne siedzącego chłopca, kolejne wykonane z kłów hipopotama figurki ukazujące ludzi i zwierzęta czy modele różnych przedmiotów (m.in. sztyletu). Wśród najcenniejszych znajduje się łupkowa łyżeczka z rączką w kształcie krokodyla. W przebadanych warstwach odkryto się też kilkaset paciorków z różnych surowców.

Inne zabytki (m.in. pieczęć cylindryczna dekorowana motywem gazeli i sokoła-Horusa, strusie jajo, muszla z Morza Czerwonego, róg gazeli, głowice maczug) i porównanie ich z wcześniej odkrytymi w różnych miejscach stanowiska pozwalają na wysunięcie hipotezy, że zwierzęta te mogły symbolizować nazwę centrum administracyjno-kultowego i całego miasta w Tell el-Farkha bądź utożsamiać siły czczone w obu odkrytych kaplicach.

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