

In the shadow of Kaaper. Preliminary report on the anonymous Fifth Dynasty tomb AS 88¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an archaeological report on the anonymous Fifth Dynasty mastaba AS 88 from the Abusir South necropolis, south-west of the tomb of the official Kaaper (AS 1). The tomb was reduced to the ground in antiquity and only fundamentals of its architectural disposition remain: the chapel and serdab located in the southernmost third of the ground plan, and the main burial Shaft 4 with looted burial chamber to the north. The tomb owner was a robust male who lived to relatively old age, between 40 and 60 years. Neighbouring ritual Shaft 5 has been undisturbed since antiquity and near its opening, a dislocated base of a combed-ware vessel of Syro-Palestinian provenance was found, probably having come from the looted burial equipment of Kaaper. Other selected ceramic, anthropological (including two undisturbed Old Kingdom burials in subsidiary shafts of the tomb), and archaeozoological finds are presented as well in the report. The last part of the article discusses the importance of similar structures in the broader understanding of the Old Kingdom at Abusir, as they provide a humble counterpart to the pyramids and major tombs of Royal Abusir.

KEYWORDS

Old Kingdom Egypt – Abusir South – tomb – pottery – Fifth Dynasty – Syro-Palestinian combed ware – palaeo-anthropology – archaeozoology

في ظل كاير. تقرير مبدئي عن مقبرة (AS 88) غير معروف صاحبها من الأسرة الخامسة

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المخلص

تقدم هذه الورقة تقريراً أثرياً عن مصطبة (AS 88) المجهول اسم صاحبها والتي تؤرخ بعصر الأسرة الخامسة عثر عليها بجبانة جنوب أبو صير، والتي تقع إلى الجنوب الغربي من مقبرة الموظف كاعبر (AS 1). تهدمت جدران المقبرة في العصور القديمة، ولم يتبق منها سوى أساسها المعماري: المقصورة والسرداب يقعان بالثلث الأقصى الجنوبي من مخطط المقبرة، والمدفن الرئيسي، وهو البئر رقم 4 ذو حجرة الدفن المنهوبة إلى الشمال. كان صاحب المقبرة قوى البنيان عاش حتى سن الشيخوخة نسبياً، حيث توفي عن عمر بين 40 و 60 عاماً. كما تم العثور على البئر رقم 5 المجاور، والذي عثر عليه بحالته

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- 2 Relevant subchapters are marked by a shortcut of the author's name. Chapters without the abbreviation were written by the first author.

منذ العصور القديمة، وتم العثور بالقرب من فوهته على قاعدة لإناء فخارى ممشط من أصل سورى فلسطينى، ربما جاء من متاع حجرة الدفن المنهوبة من مقبرة كاعبر. كما يعرض التقرير أيضاً بقايا أواني فخارية وعظام بشرية مختارة أخرى (بما فى ذلك دفنتين من عصر الدولة القديمة عثر عليهما بالأبار الجانبية للمقبرة لسليمتين)، بالإضافة إلى بقايا عظام حيوانية أخرى. يناقش الجزء الأخير من المقال معنى المباني المماثلة من خلال فهمنا الأوسع لعصر الدولة القديمة فى أبوصير حيث أنها توفر شبيهاً متواضعاً للأهرامات والمقابر الرئيسية من منطقة أبوصير الملكية.

الكلمات الدالة

الدولة القديمة – جنوب أبوصير – مقبرة – فخار – الأسرة الخامسة – الفخار السورى/الفلسطينى الممشط – علم الإنسان القديم – علم آثار الحيوان

AS 88 is a simple “textbook mastaba”, a structure that suffered considerably due to its location at the southern limit of the Abusir South necropolis (fig. 1). There is not much to be said about it beyond the architecture and the material culture. The dating is intriguing, as it can be set most probably to the first half or middle of the Fifth Dynasty, one of the phases of the Old Kingdom that are not so dominantly represented and known, in ceramics in particular. Since it was excavated completely and partially built on the virgin bedrock of this part of necropolis, it allows us to formulate some research questions that might influence also the research of the “important” Old Kingdom mastabas and the modelling of the local, site-specific chronology and development. It provides a humble counterpart to the major mastabas of the Fifth-Dynasty Royal Abusir.

The spring part of the 2016 season at Abusir South, conducted by the Czech Institute of Egyptology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, focused predominantly on the documentation



Fig. 1 Tomb AS 88 from the east (photo M. Odler)

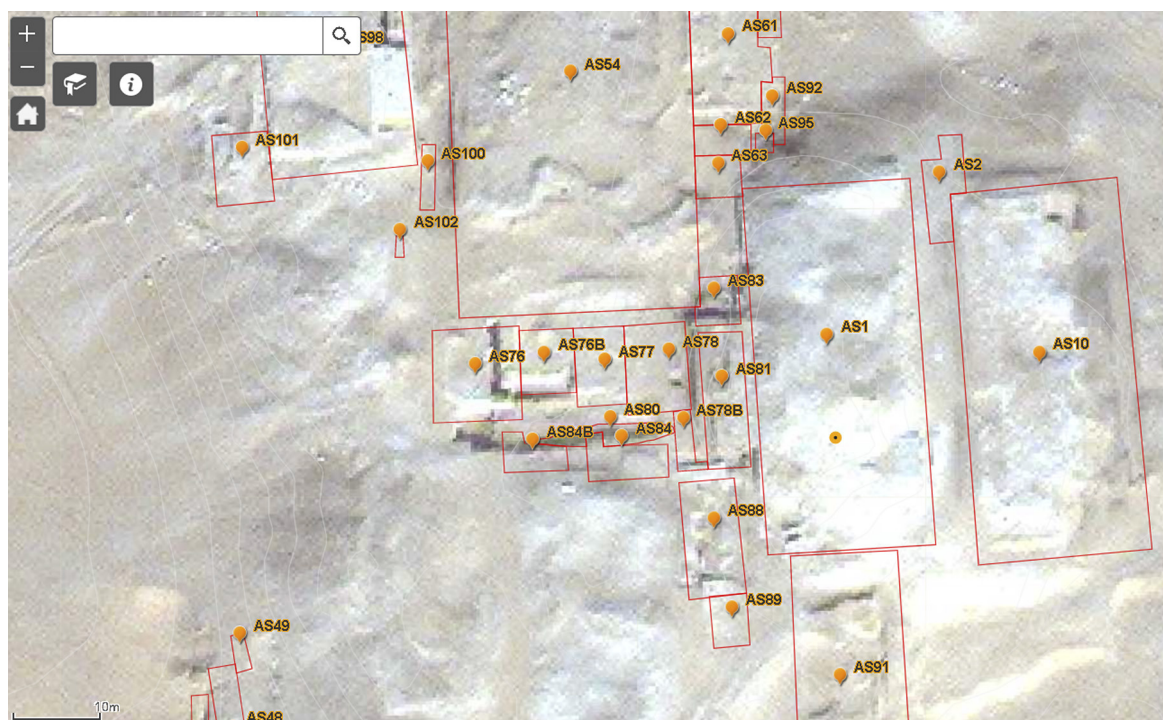


Fig. 2 Location of tomb AS 88 (ArcGIS online application, details available in Bárta *et al.* 2020)

of the late Third Dynasty boat, AS 80 (Bárta 2019). A trench to the south-east of the boat was opened to clarify the situation, and it was established that there was only a single boat, without any other structural remnants of tomb AS 54 (Bárta 2011). Two new tomb numbers were assigned during the work: AS 88 and AS 89 (fig. 2). Tomb AS 88 was excavated completely, but AS 89 was numbered and only the visible architecture was documented. The southern limit of tomb AS 81 was established and the adjacent structure AS 81b was excavated as well (except for the shafts). Several more shaft openings were identified in the space between the tombs AS 88, AS 81 and AS 1 of Kaaper (Bárta 2001: 143–191). These were not uncovered due to the lack of time, as in the middle of April, a new excavation of the tomb AC 31 started at Abusir Centre (Krejčí 2016).

SUPERSTRUCTURE

Tomb AS 88 was discovered in March 2016 and explored on 3rd–16th April 2016. The complete ground dimensions of the mastaba are 13.10 × 6.30 m (fig. 3). It was built of stone masonry, with a casing made of grey local limestone, typical of smaller Abusir South mastabas. Some architectural parts, *e.g.* parts of shaft mouths, were built of mud brick. The tomb was massively damaged by stone robbers: a large part of the eastern outer wall and a half of the southern wall were removed completely, the chapel and the serdab were reduced to the ground, to the local level of tafla (figs. 4 and 5). Local erosion reduced the structure further, substantially and gradually since antiquity. The human bones found near the north-west corner of AS 88 could be from one of the disturbed shafts of the tomb or its vicinity (6/AS88/2016; for details, see below).



Fig. 3 Ground plan of mastabas AS 88, AS 89 and AS 81b. Shaft 7 and shafts without numbering were not excavated (drawing M. Odler, L. Várešková)



Fig. 4 Tombs AS 88 and AS 81b, viewed from south-east (photo M. Frouz)

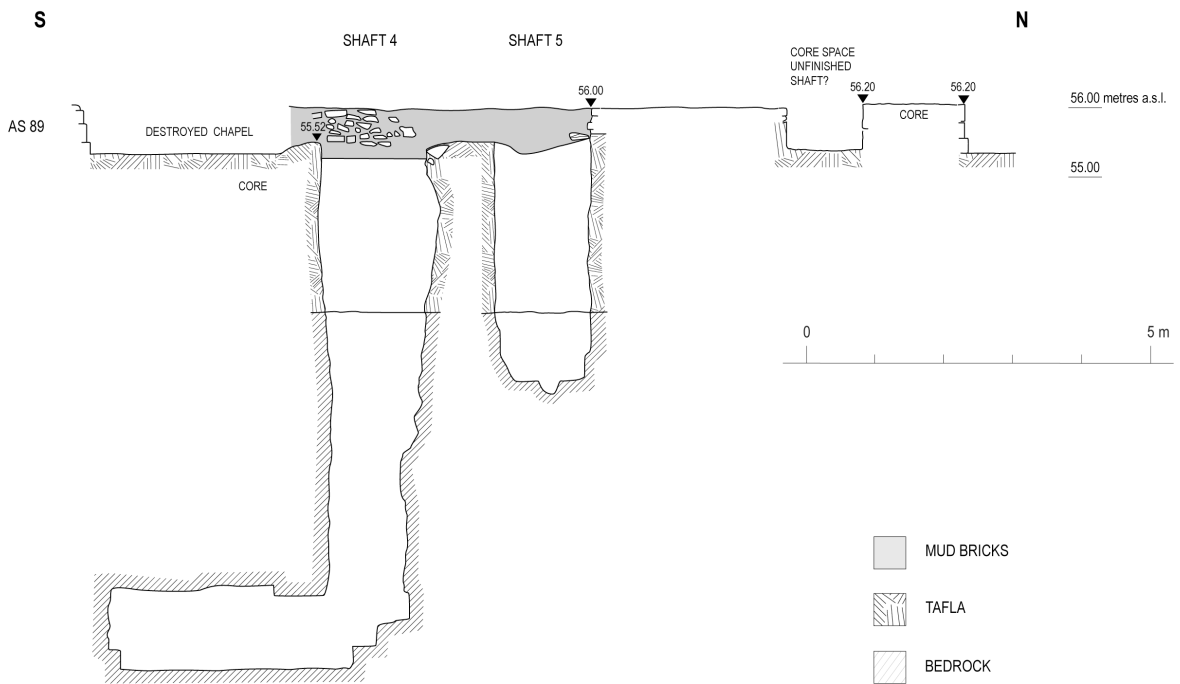


Fig. 5 North-south section of tomb AS 88 (drawing M. Odler, L. Vařeková)

As the chapel and the serdab were destroyed, the only remaining architectural feature was a large, roughly cut block (size $1.5 \times 0.35 \times 0.5$ m) in between these areas. The function of the serdab was confirmed by the find of an outstretched hand and arm of a wooden statuette (9/AS88/2016_b, length 17 cm, width 2.3 cm; fig. 6). Another worked piece of wood (9/AS88/2016_a, $22 \times 7 \times 6$ cm) was less determinable, but it might also have been part of the original statuary equipment of the serdab.

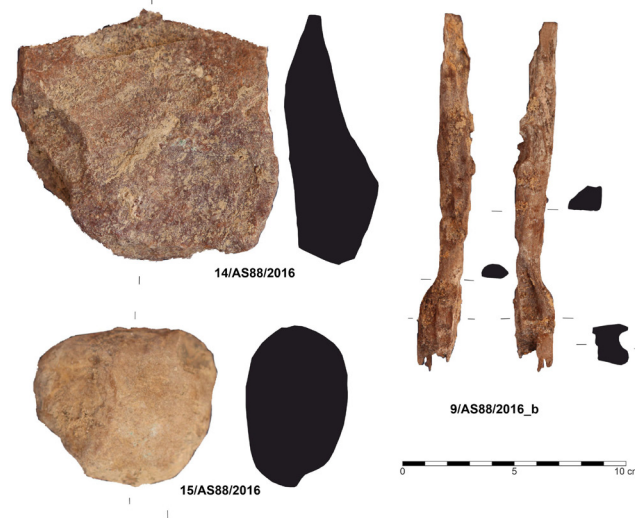


Fig. 6 Selected finds from the tomb AS 88 (photo M. Odler)

To the east of the roughly cut block was a deposit of yellow sand and mud brick destruction, mud brick size $23 \times 11.5 \times 8.5$ cm, filling the presumed space of the chapel. Not a single fragment of decoration was found. Yellow sand is often present in recent disturbances on the site, in topmost parts mixed with modern refuse including plastic bags. Moreover, tomb AS 1 of Kaaper retained traces of early twentieth-century excavations, such as fragments of newspapers (Bárta 2001: 177). Presumably, some fragments of the original decoration of the AS 88 could have been illegally exported long ago in the past, like the decoration fragments of the chapel of Kaaper (Fischer 1959; Bárta 2001: 143–191). Even if the whole chapel was not decorated, a false door in its western side might have existed.

A presumable room uncovered in the northern third of the mastaba turned out to be a part of the superstructure's core filled with a large number of ceramic fragments (the ceramic context 8.AS88.2016 is discussed below). It could also have been a space for an unfinished shaft filled with pottery later on, when the structure was completed for the funerary cult.³

The highest preserved outer casing wall was on the north, with three courses of masonry over the ground level (height ca. 0.7 m). The casing was built directly on tafla. The layer at the northernmost part of the tomb probably has remained undisturbed since antiquity.

³ There are several examples of such filling of the hollow spaces inside Old Kingdom structures with ceramic refuse, e.g. in the tomb AC 29 (Krejčí 2013: 28) or in tomb AC 15 (Verner – Callender 2002: 18, fig. B4, pl. Bf 14).

SUBSTRUCTURE

The main burial compartment was located immediately to the north of the chapel and the serdab, with two shaft openings, Shafts 4 and 5. Shaft 4 together with the tomb's only burial chamber was looted in the Old Kingdom, while Shaft 5 remained undisturbed (tab. 1).

Shaft	Inside / outside of AS 88	Opening length (m)	Opening width (m)	Depth (m)	Burial	Ceramic context	Figure
1	inside	0.82	0.82	0.92	none		1, 3, 4
2	outside	0.80	0.55	0.18	8/AS88/2016	10.AS88.2016	1, 3, 4, 19
3	inside	0.90	0.80	1.28	none	13.AS88.2016	1, 3, 4, 20
4	inside	1.50	1.40	7.60	16/AS88/2016	14.AS88.2016	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8
5	inside	1.50	1.50	3.97	none	15.AS88.2016	1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11
6	outside	0.80	0.80	1.50	4/AS88/2016	2.AS88.2016	1, 3, 17

Tab. 1 Shafts of AS 88 (M. Odler)

SHAFT 4

Shaft 4 (opening 1.5 × 1.4 m, depth 7.6 m) contained a burial in the burial chamber hewn in the bedrock to the south of the shaft bottom, located under the area of the serdab and the chapel (dimensions 3.25 × 2.15 × 1.07–1.22 m). The topmost fill of the shaft was of yellow wind-blown sand mixed with occasional ceramic fragments. A quartzite tool blade sharpener with traces of copper (14/AS88/2016; 16.4 × 12.4 × 3.45 cm, weight 527.5 g; fig. 6) was found half a metre below the shaft opening and could have belonged to the tomb builders or tomb looters. *Astragalus* (13/AS88/2016) found ca. 3 m below the shaft opening might have been part of the original burial equipment. The fill of the shaft changed at a depth of 4 m to blocks of local yellow limestone and tafla with ceramic fragments in old brown sand. This indicated that the burial chamber had been looted in antiquity. Flint with green stains from copper was found ca. 4.5 m below the shaft opening (15/AS88/2016; 8.05 × 6.9 × 5.1 cm, weight 357.3 g; fig. 6).

The bottom of the shaft was chiselled out in the form of two east-west running steps. Oblique chisel marks were preserved also on the walls of the burial chamber, with the width 0.5, 1.3 and 1.2 cm; in that period, the chisels were most probably made of arsenical copper (Odler 2016; Odler *et al.* 2021). The raised burial pit (2.20 × 0.75 × 0.45 m) at the western side of the burial chamber was built of stone masonry. Irregular stone boulders were in its south-western sector of the burial chamber, and the complete masonry originally covered with white plaster (figs. 7 and 8). The pit was covered with two flat blocks of white limestone (the larger 106 × 60 × 6.5 cm, the smaller 75 × 55 × 9 cm), fixed by pink mortar in a cut-out ledge in the western wall of the chamber. The body might have been originally deposited in an outstretched position, with the legs positioned to the south. The burial chamber was robbed in antiquity, but the soft tissues of the body had decayed by that time. Feet bones, several long leg bones and the pelvis were found in the raised burial pit, while one femur and the bones of the upper part of the body, including the skull, were thrown outside the pit, in the area of the burial chamber (16/



Fig. 7 Burial chamber of Shaft 4 with a detail of the raised burial pit (photo M. Frouz)

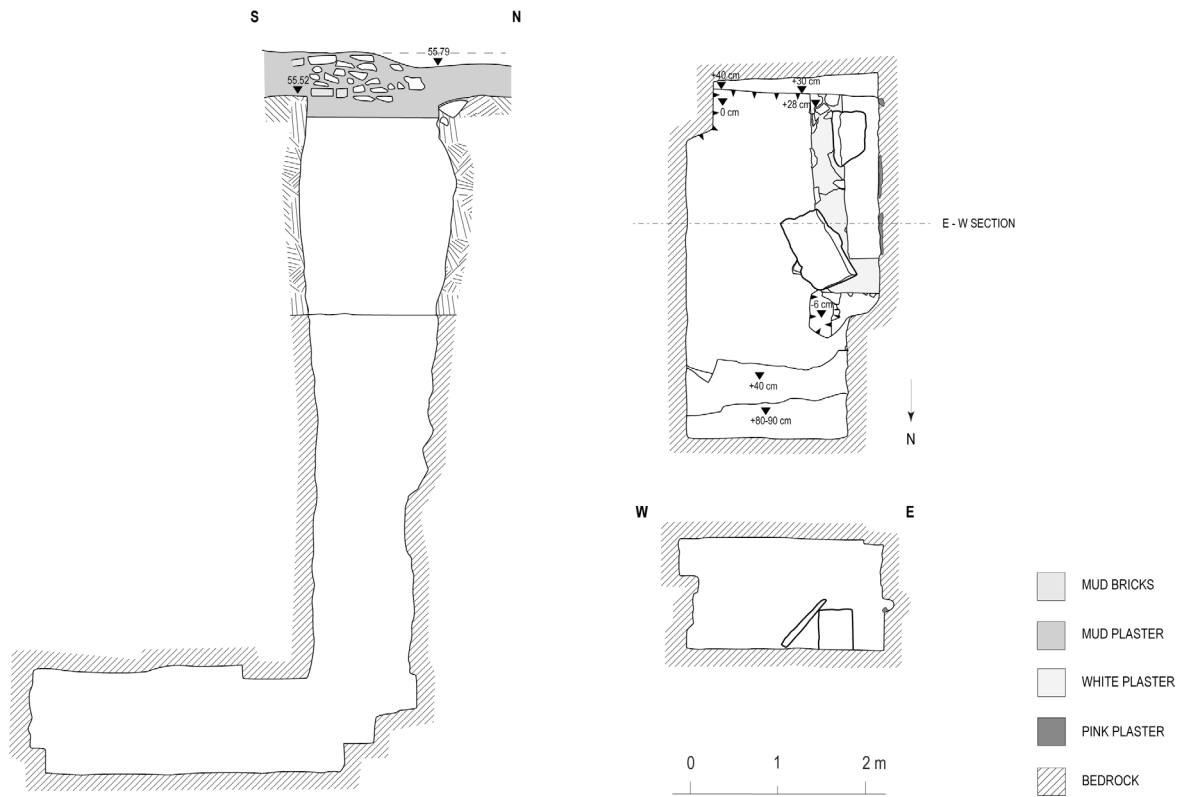


Fig. 8 Ground plan and section of Shaft 4 and its burial chamber (drawing M. Odler, L. Vařeková)

AS88/2016_a). The body was probably treated by a sort of superficial mummification process; traces of the material were sampled (16/AS88/2016_c). Mud fragments were found in the burial chamber and in the burial pit, indicating that the body might have been covered by a layer of mud. Not a single piece of the burial equipment was identified. A large complete beer jar covered with a white layer at the eastern side of the burial chamber dates probably from the time the chamber was looted, or after it. Due to the occurrence of the Old Kingdom ceramics in the burial chamber, this might be *terminus post quem* the looting happened. Charcoal pieces (17/AS88/2016) were too small to be analysed by the ^{14}C dating technique currently available in Egypt; they also could refer instead to the time of the tomb looting.

SHAFT 5

Shaft 5 was found undisturbed from the surface level (opening 1.5×1.5 m, depth 3.97 m); the upper part of the shaft contained a large quantity of pottery that was so much joined by hard mortar that it could be excavated only by pickaxes (fig. 9). This particular deposit was limited to the opening of Shaft 5 and was not identical with the hardened deposit north of the tomb. Ceramic concentrations were not apparent, except for a group of a ceramic stand and a bread form (15-10.AS88.2016 and 15a-6.AS88.2016) 55 cm below the north-eastern corner. Ceramic fragments ceased to appear in large numbers at a depth of ca. 2 m, replaced by tafla fragments. Scattered bones (10/AS88/2016) were found at a depth of ca. 2.5 m, identified as fragments



Fig. 9 Sample of plaster covering the opening of Shaft 5 (photo M. Frouz)

of child bones, with a flint nodule bearing traces of green and yellow pigment at the same level (11/AS88/2016; $8.2 \times 6 \times 6$ cm; weight 274.9 g).⁴ The shaft was hewn by a chisel; 1.5 cm wide oblique chisel marks were visible on its sides. The shaft was without a burial (the child bones were most probably deposited unintentionally in the shaft), but as the bottom was shaped in several deepening levels, its purpose was most probably ritual (figs. 10 and 11; see discussion on ceramic finds below).

SHAFTS 1 AND 3

The remaining shafts of the inner part of the tomb were unfinished. More to the north was Shaft 3 (opening 0.9×0.8 m, depth 1.28 m) without any trace of a burial and filled with ceramic

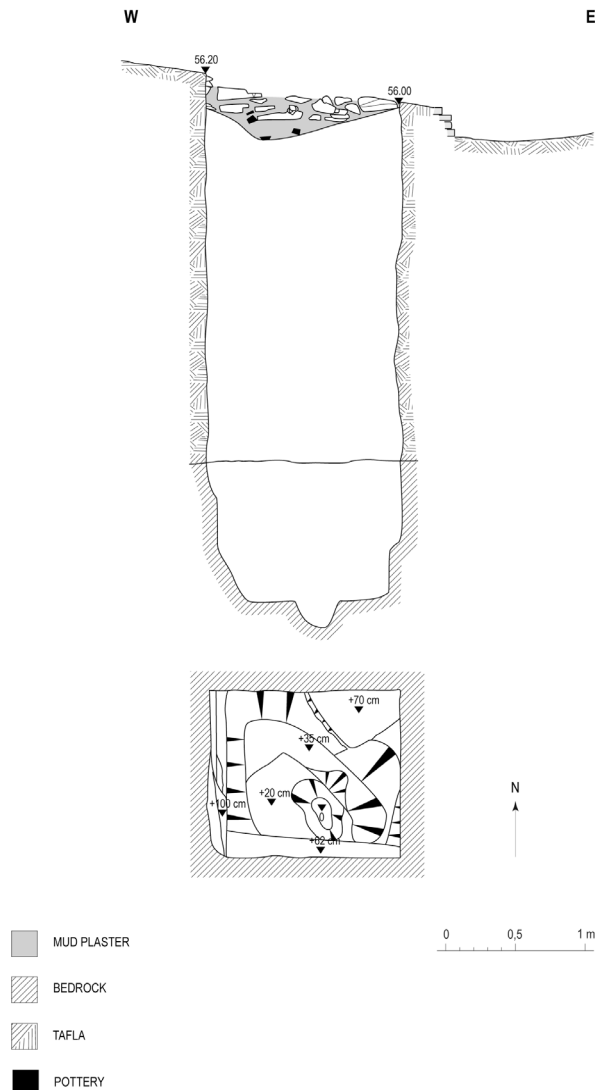


Fig. 10 Section and ground plan of the bottom of Shaft 5 (drawing M. Odler, L. Vařeková)

⁴ It is analogical to similar stones from the structure AS 74 (Bárta *et al.* 2017).

context 13.AS88.2016 (discussed below). Nothing besides pottery was found inside. The purpose of the feature numbered Shaft 1 east of chapel is entirely unclear, as it reached a depth of only 92 cm. However, the opening was built of stone masonry, which means that a shaft might have been at least planned there, but not deepened further.

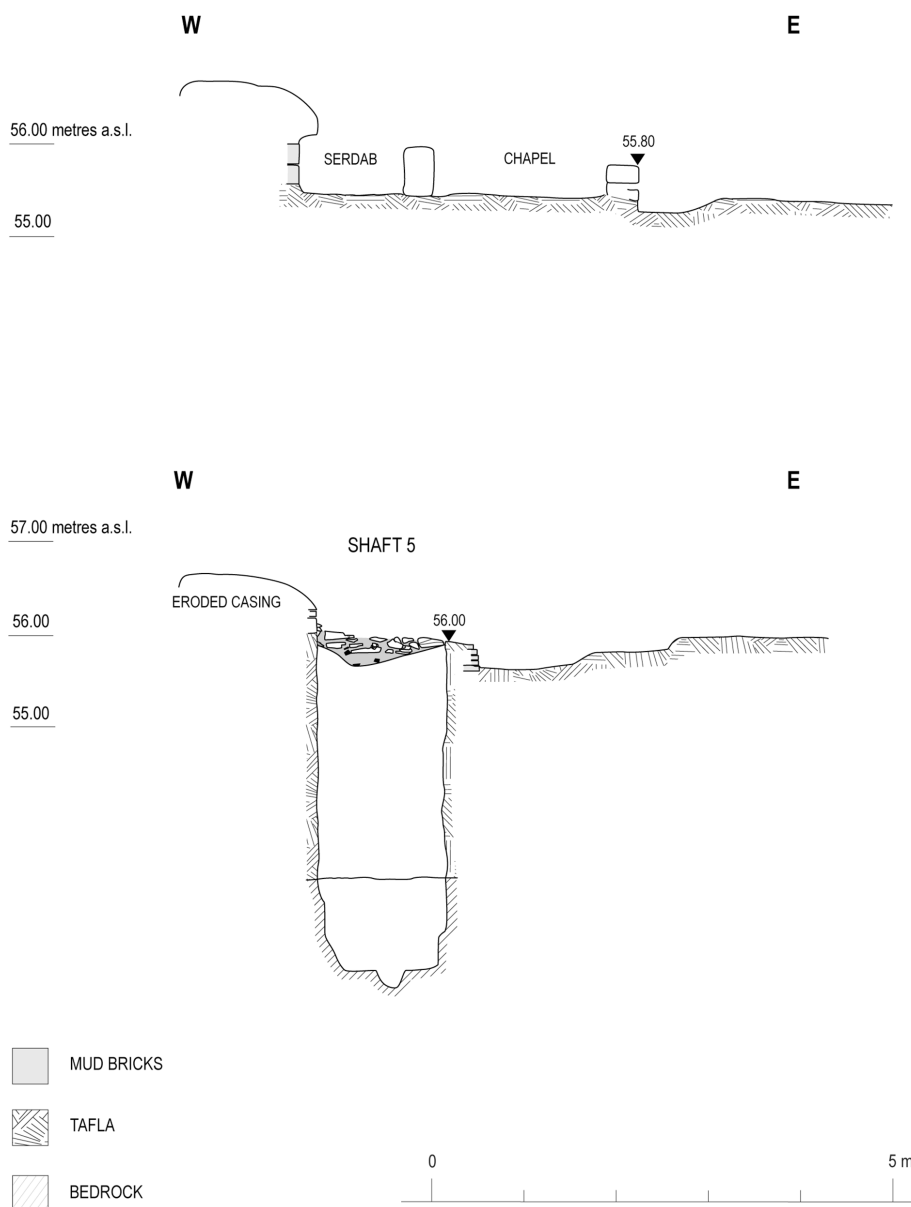


Fig. 11 East-west sections of tomb AS 88 (drawing M. Odler, L. Vařeková)

NEIGHBOURING SHAFTS

Outside the area of AS 88 were later Shafts 2 and 6. Shaft 2 contained a child burial (8/AS88/2016) in a wooden coffin (dimensions 40×30 cm, height 18 cm, thickness of planks 2 cm) covered on the inside with red pigment. Behind the head of the skeleton was a tiny ceramic fragment (10.AS88.2016), and a third of a mud brick (8/AS88/2016_c; 13.5×10.5×6.9 cm) was used as a crude headrest.

The area between AS 78b and AS81b in the north and AS 88 in the south was filled by a fairly hard layer, excavated by pickaxes, indicating an undisturbed situation (the ceramic context, 1.AS88.2016, is discussed below). Two shaft openings were identified below the fill, in tafla; one of them, Shaft 6, was excavated. The fill was of darker brown sand with limestone fragments and ceramics. The ceramic context (2.AS88.2016) included a bread form 50 cm below the shaft opening, positioned with the base upwards. Shaft 6 comprised an undisturbed adult burial (4/AS88/2016_a). The skull of the skeleton was positioned at a depth of 105 cm from the north-eastern corner of the shaft. Besides the skeleton, a sample of presumable mummification material was taken (4/AS88/2016_b), as were beetles found west of the pelvis (4/AS88/2016_c). At the level of the human burial there was also a fragment of a fossilized shell (5/AS88/2016), but it is impossible to ascertain whether it was an intentional addition to the shaft. Intriguingly enough, the shaft continued even below the burial, from the depth of 1.35 m (context 3.AS88.2016).

Both of these shafts adjoining AS 88 presumably can be considered additional shafts to this larger tomb, for relatives or dependants of the AS 88 tomb owner. The complete local site history cannot be defined until all the other shafts are excavated (mapped on fig. 3).

AS 89

The stone mastaba AS 89 was identified south of AS 88. It is stratigraphically earlier than AS 88; the south outer casing of AS 88 was leaning on AS 89, but the original situation was already collapsed when fig. 1 was taken. The tomb was left unexplored as it was presumably largely destroyed by stone looters; its preserved dimensions are 6 m (length of west casing) and 4 m (length of north casing); four courses of stone blocks are preserved, hewn from local limestone (maximal height of wall *ca.* 0.8 m). The structure was built on tafla, as was AS 88. To the east of these structures, another tomb was reduced almost totally to the ground, AS 91 (Peterková Hlouchová *et al.* 2017).

AS 81B

The ground plan of AS 81 was established; it ends on the southern outer side with a mud brick wall. The mud brick structure AS 81b (6.5×3.6 m) is located south of AS 81 and west of AS 1 (tomb of Kaaper). The structure is later than both the tomb of Kaaper and AS 88, its small shafts and chapels were inserted in the remaining space, adjacent to the west outer wall of AS 1. A north-south running corridor contained three niches on the west and four shafts in the floor; two more shafts are located west of it, in the area between AS 81b and AS 88. One undisturbed shaft was located also north of AS 88 and probably also in its north-eastern

corner. All eight shafts listed above remain unexplored and were covered for the later excavations (fig. 3).

CERAMICS (JH)

The excavation of tomb AS 88 yielded considerable amounts of pottery. Ceramic contexts of significant size were recovered mostly from the tomb's interior, namely from Shafts 3 (13.AS88.2016) and 5 (15.AS88.2016), and the fill of the core (8.AS88.2016). Another accumulation of sherds was collected from a compact layer to the north of the tomb (1.AS88.2016). Most pottery, with the notable exception of contents of Shaft 5, came from secondary archaeological contexts. The whole assemblage was characterised by high fragmentation and predominantly incomplete vessels, except for the class of miniature vessels (Abusir class M).

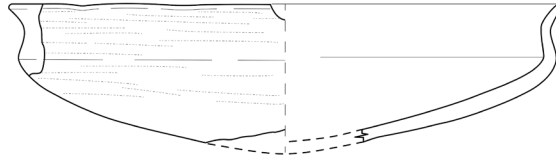
Overall, the assemblage was dominated by low-quality vessels, especially beer jars (type J-1) which comprised slightly less than half of the pottery recovered. Pieces of fine pottery included mostly various kinds of bowls (Abusir class B) and stands (Abusir class S).⁵ Only a few singular finds represented finer wheel-made jars. Such clear predominance of low-quality pottery may be representative of rather humble furnishings of tomb AS 88 and other immediately neighbouring structures. Two pieces of a single imported vessel, presumably coming from tomb AS 1 (see below), represent clear outliers in this respect and were very likely intrusive. Judging by the absolute numbers, miniature vessels were the second-best represented pottery class in the assemblage after beer jars. However, almost all of them came from a single context, namely the fill of Shaft 5 (15.AS88.2016).

A limited quantity of pottery came from the mastaba's exterior. Overall, it showed signs of heavy weathering and included mostly ovoid beer jars (types J-1a and J-1b) but also some bowls and bread forms (Abusir class F) with a few platters (Abusir class P) and miniature vessels. Over half of these ceramics belonged to a collection of sherds recovered from a distinct compact surface layer between the north wall of AS 88 and AS 78b (1.AS88.2016). The best-preserved vessel from this layer was the upper body of a beer jar found by the south wall of AS 78 (1a-18.AS88.2016; variation J-1bIII; fig. 12). The jar's shape and dimensions may point to its origin in the middle part of the Fifth Dynasty (e.g. Bárta 1996; Arias Kytarová 2011b: *passim*, esp. 93). Other beer jar fragments from this context seem to have belonged to vessels of similar shape. Among others, the context also yielded two sherds from bowls with an inner ledge (types B-10a and B-10d) and fragments of nine miniature vessels.

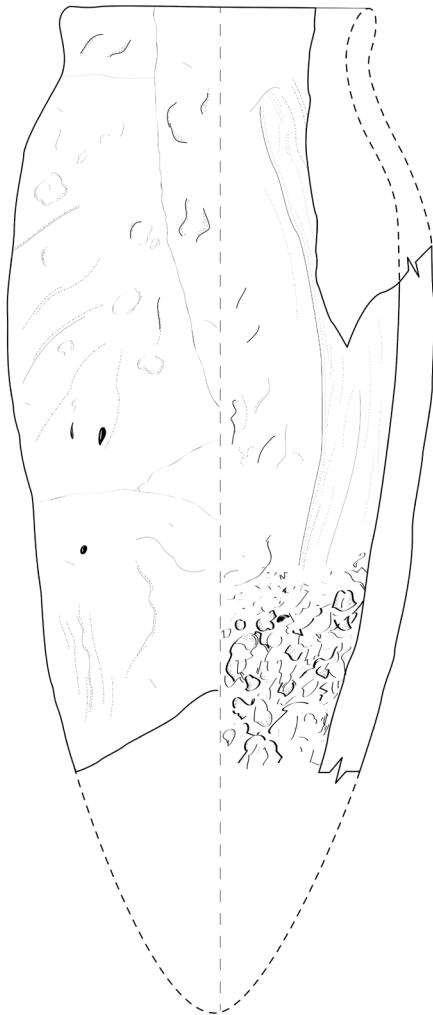
A significant sherd assemblage was recovered from the rubble fill of the mastaba's core (8.AS88.2016). The collection was dominated by fragments of beer jars, belonging to at least 88 individual vessels (ca. 75% of the assemblage). They were highly fragmented; only a few incomplete profiles could be at least partially restored. Judging by them, it seems that most if not almost all of the sherds came from ovoid beer jars (types J-1a and J-1b). However, there appeared to be considerable variability in shapes and sizes of these vessels, as they included small and slender as well as broader, presumably more voluminous specimens. There was also a fragment of a beer jar rim with a plastic rib which belonged to a type employed from

5 For the ceramic classification system of Abusir, see e.g. Arias (2017) and Arias Kytarová (2011a).

8a-1.AS88.2016
B-1b



1a-18.AS88.2016
J-1b



3-2.AS88.2016
J-1b

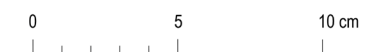
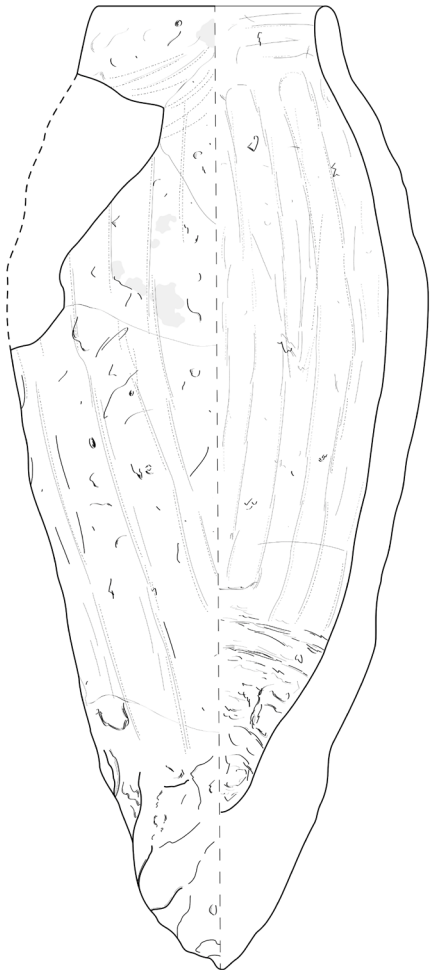


Fig. 12 Selected pottery from various contexts in tomb AS 88 (drawing J. Honzl, L. Vařeková)

the Third to the early Fourth Dynasty (e.g. Arias Kytarová 2010: 27–29). One of the beer jars had remains of Nile mud filling (8-30.AS88.2016).

Apart from the beer jars, the pottery recovered from the mastaba's core included fragments of wheel-made jars (Abusir class J), various bowls, hourglass-shaped stands (type S-1a), *bd3* bread forms (types F-1 and F-2), and platters. Several fragments of finer jars included a modelled rim sherd from an ovoid jar (8-14.AS88.2016; group J-2) and part of a sharply pointed base trimmed by a sharp object (8-16.AS88.2016). Among bowls, there was an incomplete carinated Meidum bowl (8a-1.AS88.2016; fig. 12). The vessel was of outstanding quality, noticeably surpassing that of most other fine vessels from tomb AS 88. As preserved, the bowl seems to have been relatively shallow. It has a high recurved rim and a rounded carinated shoulder with roughly the same diameter of both (type B1bII). By its shape, the Meidum bowl from the core of AS 88 seems to be comparable to specimens datable to the late Fourth/early Fifth Dynasty (e.g. Kaiser 1969: 57, XIII, esp. no. 83; Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 110, 33-1-59 c). Other bowl fragments belonged mostly to bowls with flaring walls (group B-12) and a few to bent-sided bowls (group B-2).

An almost complete ovoid beer jar (1-18.AS88.2016; variant J1aI) was recovered from the burial chamber at the bottom of Shaft 4. The vessel has relatively elongated shape and is more than 30 cm high. It seems to be most likely datable to the latter half of the Fifth Dynasty (e.g. Bárta 1996; Arias Kytarová 2011b: *passim*, esp. 93).

Shaft 5 alone contained nearly half of all the documented pottery recovered from tomb AS 88. Compared with other ceramic contexts, the assemblage of Shaft 5 (15.AS88.2016) included fewer beer jars, although they remained the best-represented group of pottery. All of them belonged to ovoid types (J-1a and J-1b), most of them having a contracted mouth and a simple round rim (variation J-1aI). The completeness of some of the beer jars was relatively high. As mentioned above, a large collection of nearly 200 miniature vessels, mostly miniature bowls (145 pieces), was recovered from the shaft. They were deposited mainly in the form of compact clusters.

Well represented in Shaft 5 were also other classes of pottery, namely bowls, stands, and bread forms. There were some relatively well-preserved vessels, namely several bases of bowls with flaring walls (group B-12; fig. 13), two A-shaped stands (group S-2), and several *bd3* bread forms. One of the bread forms (15-10.AS88.2016, type F-1b; fig. 13) and one of the stands (15a-6.AS88.2016; fig. 13) were nearly complete. The stand was preserved to the height of ca. 43 cm and only its very bottom was lost. There were two windows cut into the convex lower part of its body. The other well-preserved A-shaped stand (15-12.AS88.2016) had traces of a white plaster covering on its outer surface. The volume of pottery recovered from Shaft 5, the typological composition of the assemblage, as well as the completeness of some of the vessels suggest that part of the pottery was intentionally broken and thrown into the shaft, comprising a so-called shaft deposit (e.g. Arias Kytarová 2011a, 2015, and 2016; Dulíková *et al.* 2016; Dulíková *et al.* 2017). Other recovered pottery, including one piece presumably coming from tomb AS 1, came from the disturbed area of the shaft opening.

The sand fill of Shaft 1 contained only several pottery sherds belonging to two partially preserved beer jars. The better preserved one of them (7-2.AS88.2016) had a shape suggesting relatively small dimensions and modelled rim (variant J-1aII). As such it is well comparable to beer jars of the early Fifth Dynasty (e.g. Bárta 1996; Arias Kytarová 2011b: esp. 73–77; Odler *et al.*

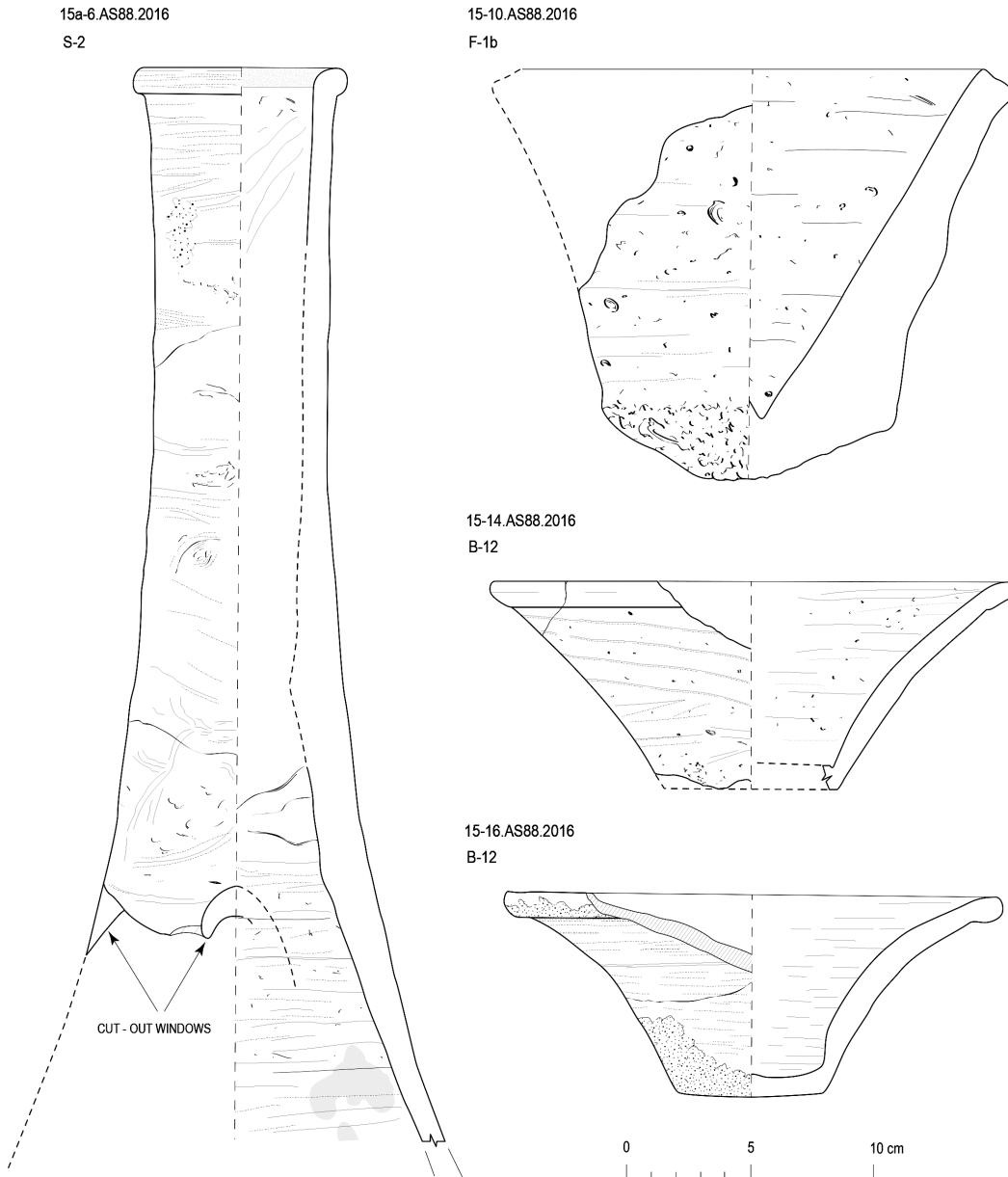


Fig. 13 Selected pottery from Shaft 5 of AS 88 (drawing J. Honzl, L. Vařeková)

2018: 84–85, fig. 12). Fragments of the other beer jar (7-1.AS88.2016) clearly came from a vessel of different shape (variant J1aI) and of larger dimensions.

Compared to other ceramic contexts recovered from the shafts of tomb AS 88, the one from Shaft 3 (13.AS88.2016) was much more fragmented, resembling the condition of the pottery collected from the tomb's exterior. Thus, it clearly represents relocated refuse deposited initially on the surface, likely exposed to mechanical stresses for a longer time than in the cases of other ceramic contexts from shafts. There were, however, no signs of more extensive atmospheric weathering. Beer jars were the prevailing pottery group from the

shaft. The two best-preserved examples recovered (13-9.AS88.2016, 13-17.AS88.2016) seem to represent relatively small specimens of ovoid beer jars (types J-1a and J-1b). The same is likely for most of the other recovered fragments as well. One of the beer jars fragments (13-7.AS88.2016) had traces of white plaster on its inner side. Of other pottery classes, only bread forms were notably represented by more than a few sherds coming from at least six individual vessels.

The ceramic contexts of Shaft 6 (2.AS88.2016 and 3.AS88.2016), with the burial 4/AS88/2016 found in its fill, contained several relatively well-preserved beer jar examples. A complete profile of one of the beer jars (2-3.AS88.2016; fig. 12) was preserved. It was a slender ovoid 34 cm high vessel with a neck and a simple rim (type J-1bII). Its general shape is well comparable to the (nearly) complete vessels from tomb AS 38 (Arias Kytarová 2011b: Fig. 6.1, 15-4.AS38.2010, Fig. 6.8, 2-3.AS38.2010), but it is slightly larger. Therefore, it is possibly datable to the later part of the Fifth Dynasty. There were traces of white plaster on the jar's exterior. Other beer jars from Shaft 6 may have been of similar shape. Some parts of the best-preserved beer jar (2-3.AS88.2016) were found just below the burial 4/AS88/2016, and the rest deeper in the shaft. Fragments of another beer jar bottom (2-6.AS88.2016) were found both below and above the burial. It had a hole punctured in its base before firing. Some of the beer jar fragments from Shaft 6 contained traces of mud coating and lumps of compact mud, probably representing the original filling of at least some of the jars, which were found alongside. All of this shows the funerary ritual purpose of at least part of the pottery recovered from the shaft. There was also a large lower body of a *bd3* bread form (2-7.AS88.2016; group F-1).

KAAPER'S DISPERSED BURIAL GOODS? (KA)

Some ceramic finds from the area do not fit the relatively small size of tomb AS 88 and the presumed socio-economic standing of its owner, based on the building material used in the tomb, the lack of titles and the absence of other finds besides pottery (see above). There was one exceptional ceramic context, namely Shaft 5, situated north of the shaft of an unknown owner (see fig. 3). It must be noted that this shaft was only 3.97 m deep and did not contain any chamber or niche and had no traces of a burial. While its main content (context 15.AS88.2016) came from the densely packed fill of the presumably undisturbed shaft, the opening of this shaft was not clearly discernible when the excavations began to focus on this area, thus ceramics from its vicinity could have found a way into the first basket with pottery. From this layer came two conjoining fragments of a single storage jar made of a foreign fabric with large non-organic inclusions (15-8.AS88.2016, fig. 14b). Given the shape, fabric and surface treatment, these fragments belong without any doubt to a large two-handled storage jar with a flat base – so-called combed ware of Syro-Palestinian origin (fig. 14a; Abusir group J-4, see e.g. Kytarová 2009: 76–79).

Considering that the owner of tomb AS 88 was very likely only a lower official, the presence of a genuine imported Levantine storage jar seems quite extraordinary and unusual. Moreover, unlike the compact fill of the shaft itself that brought to light several well-preserved vessels of homogenous sizes and types in full shape or at least complete profile (see above), there were no other fragments of Syro-Palestinian fabric in the lower fill of the shaft, which makes it possible that this base was secondary or even tertiary presence in the area of the tomb AS 88.

15-8.AS88.2016

a

J-4

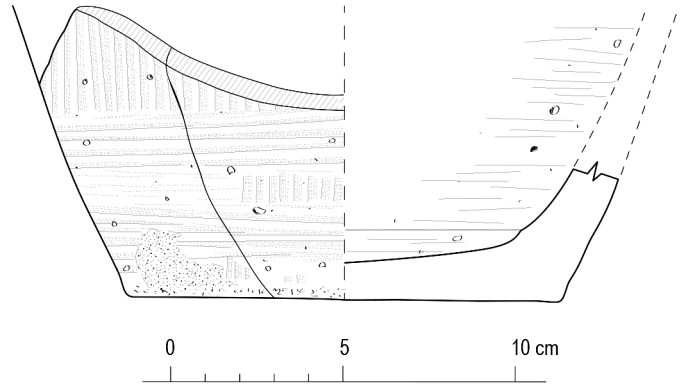


Fig. 14 a) Base of a two-handled Syro-Palestinian storage jar (drawing J. Honzl, L. Vařeková);
b) detail of Syro-Palestinian fabric with a combed surface and large inorganic inclusions (photo K. Arias)



The analysis of Fifth-Dynasty two-handled storage jars known from the Memphite necropolis shows that during this period, and especially at the beginning of the dynasty, such vessels seem to have been reserved for high officials.⁶ All of them came from burial chambers and

⁶ For the discussion of Syro-Palestinian imports, see *e.g.* Reisner – Smith (1955: 74–76); Junker (1929: 119–126) and, most extensively, Sowada (2009), with further bibliography.

were undoubtedly part of the original tomb goods of the deceased (see tab. 2). In several cases, the owners were clearly stated by their titles, such as Nefernisut (G 4970; Junker 1938), Seshemnefer I (G 4940), Kaaper (AS 1; Bárta 2001), Khnumnefer (G 2175; Reisner – Smith 1955), Senedjemib Inti (G 2370; Brovarski 2001) and Kaemheset (McFarlane 2003). In the absence of titles, the status of the tomb owners can be deduced from the size and material of their tombs⁷ or the inclusion of other precious burial goods.⁸ For example, the unknown owner of Shaft A in tomb G 1031 was buried in a double coffin and was also equipped with a porphyry stone vessel.⁹ The anonymous male owner of the small western tomb in Nazlet Batran was interred in a disintegrated wooden coffin, with diverse ceramic vessels placed around his head and in front of him (Kromer 1991: 40–41, Abb. 12–13). The presumed owner of Shaft A in G 4410, Nishepsenisut, was buried in a limestone sarcophagus and his chamber contained not only fine ceramic vessels and miniatures but also copper models, limestone canopic jars, alabaster model vessel and fragments of golden foil (Reisner 1942: 514–516). The owner of Shaft 294 was also interred in a limestone sarcophagus and had a rich assemblage including calcite model vessels, a calcite table, two ovoid ceramic jars with contents, another imported vessel (a one-handled Palestinian jug), five red-slipped bowls and other finds (Hassan 1936: 145). The anonymous owner of G 2350 (G 5290) had a large mastaba and was equipped with a wooden headrest in his burial chamber.¹⁰ One of the most interesting contexts was the burial chamber of Shaft 1 in tomb D 6 in Giza that contained several objects *in situ* around the rectangular pit cut in stone including a large copper ewer, a copper model chisel (see Odler – Kmošek *et al.* 2020), as well as a calcite tablet of seven sacred oils, calcite miniature bowls and a calcite headrest.¹¹

Given these facts and the likely secondary nature of the imported fragment, a different place of origin should be considered. Tomb AS 88 is situated only 2 m west of the tomb of the official Kaaper (AS 1, Bárta 2001: 143–192), next to its tall mastaba superstructure. The limestone mastaba AS 1 is one of the largest at Abusir South, with a size of 41.20 × 19.20 m and an impressive height consisting of six preserved courses of casing. The tomb's single shaft was one of the deepest at Abusir South, reaching 23.15 m.¹² The finds from Kaaper's disturbed burial chamber included two fragmentary two-handled imported jars with a combed surface, made of an unidentified foreign fabric with large inclusions of quartz and limestone (Bárta 2001: 185, pl. LXXXVIIIb). Both were relatively small, with an estimated height of 32–33 cm and a maximum diameter of 22 cm (see fig. 15). It is important to stress that Kaaper served (among numerous other titles, see tab. 1) as *zš mšꜥ nswt m Wnt m Zrr m Id3 htjw-(m)fk3t h3swt imntt i3bt*, “scribe of the army of the king in Wenet, in Serer, in Tepa, in Ida, Terraces of the Turquoise and the Western and Eastern foreign lands” (Bárta 2001: 179). Some of these local-

7 Except for two (G 1224 in Giza and the tomb of Kaemheset in Saqqara), all the tombs were built of blocks of limestone.

8 Several of the discussed tombs remain unpublished, but the information about their sizes, contexts and finds can be found in scanned original documentation and online resources (see below and tab. 1).

9 <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/195/full/>. Accessed on 12th August 2021.

10 <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/568/full/>. Accessed on 12th August 2021.

11 The two-handled storage jar from this tomb had been brought to the Ägyptisches Museum der Universität Leipzig but was lost during World War II (see http://www.giza-projekt.org/Funde/UL_1484/UL_1484.html. Accessed on 12th August 2021; also Arias 2020).

12 For the as yet unpublished finds from Kaaper's tomb, see Kytnarová (2009: 18–21).

Site	Tomb	Context	Context details	Owner of the tomb	Title(s) of the owner of the tomb	Dating of the tomb
Giza	G 1031	Shaft A, BC	the jar was found in a small niche west of the coffin of the owner	unknown	unknown	Khafre – Neferirkare (Reisner – Smith 1955)
Nazlet Batran	small west mastaba	Shaft, BC	found <i>in situ</i> next to the disintegrated wooden coffin of the deceased	unknown	no titles preserved	IV–V (Kromer 1991)
Giza	G 4410	Shaft A, BC	found in fragments on the floor of the disturbed burial chamber	<i>Ni-špss-nswt</i> (?)	<i>jr-nt hm-k3</i> , possibly also <i>hm-k3 jmj-r šsr</i>	Weserkaf or later (Porter et al. 1974; Odler 2016)
Giza	G 4970	North shaft, BC	found in the disturbed debris of the burial chamber in the northern shaft of the tomb, belonging to the wife of the owner, priestess <i>hntt-k3</i>	<i>Nfr-nswt</i>	<i>jmj-r h s3b hrj-sšt3 jmj-r prw msw-nswt d-mr grgt jmj-r mnw jmj-r nswtjw hk3 hwt t3 sšm-t3 t3-wr sšm-t3 w3dt jmj-r wbw wrhfr hrp jmjw šw wr-hfr hm-ntr hfr</i>	Weserkaf – Sahure (Harpur 1987) / early – middle V (Baer 1960; Porter et al. 1974) / early V (Odler 2016)
Giza	G 4940	Shaft B, BC	probably intrusive?	<i>Sšm-nfr I.</i>	<i>rh nswt hrj-tp nswt hwt hr-hpr ht h3 hm-ntr hkt hm-ntr hr thnw k3-š s3b d-mr wr mdw šm hrj-sšt3 jmj-r kt nt nswt jmj-r šw hr-š nswt hrj-wdbw m hwt-nh jmj-r stj-dšw smr hm-ntr jnpw hrp h</i>	Sahure – Neferirkare (Baer 1960) / Sahure – Nyuserre (Kanawati 2002) / Weserkaf – Neferirkare (Harpur 1987) / early Dynasty V (Strudwick 1985)
		Shaft A, BC	found in the debris of the burial chamber			
Abusir	AS 1	Shaft, BC	found in fragments in the debris of the burial chamber	<i>K3(j)-špr</i>	<i>mnjw z3b(w)t zš mr(w) z3b(w)t zš pr-md3t nfr šhd zš(w) (n) z3b zš md3t (n) z3b zš (n) z3b zš mš nswt m Wnt m Zrr m Id3 htjw-(m)k3t h3swt imntt i3bt d-mr (n) z3b wr md šm hr(j)-sšt3 d(r) m3t n nb-f wd-mdw [n hr(jw)-wdb(w)] hrp jz df3 hrp jzwj df3 hrp pr-hd hrp tm3t(jw) nb(w) jmj-r [...] n(j) jb ntr-f jmj-r mš jmj-r k3(w)t (nt) nswt tp(j) hrt nswt hm-ntr hkt</i>	beginning of V (Bárta 2001)
Giza	G 2175	Shaft B, BC	vessel was found intact in front of the feet of the deceased	<i>Hnm-nfr</i>	<i>wšb nswt</i>	first half of V (Porter et al. 1974) / Weserkaf – Raneferef (Harpur 1987) / middle – late V (Sowada 2009)
Giza	Mastaba of Shaft 294	Shaft 294	vessel was found in the south-east corner of the burial chamber, together with three other jars	unknown	no titles preserved	middle V (Hassan 1936)

Tomb material	Tomb size	J-4 description	Vessel no.	Main resources
limestone blocks	24.35 × 14.60 m	complete storage jar with two handles and combed surface	no number	Reisner – Smith 1955: 76, fig. 96, pl. 51d; http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/195/full/
limestone	8.30 × 5.00 m	complete storage jar with two handles and combed surface, with a pot mark	no number	Kromer 1991: 36–41, 67, fig. 1, Taf. 23, 38/4
limestone blocks	22.75 × 9.80 m	jar, incomplete, plaster stopper with the imprint of saucer	15-12-67	Reisner 1942: 514–516, fig. 318; http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/1027/full/
limestone blocks	23.80 × 10.00 m	combed storage jar with two handles, found in fragments, reconstructed to full profile	no number	Junker 1929: Abb. 14:11, Taf. XLIIIb; Junker 1938: 166; http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/1165/full/
limestone blocks	29.20 × 14.90 m	weathered fragments, probably intrusive	15-1-9	Reisner – Smith 1955: 76; http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/1161/full/
		13 fragments of combed storage jar	15-11-36	
		fragment of two-handled combed ware used probably as a tool (digging sherd)	15-11-37a	
limestone blocks	41.20 × 19.20 m	a large storage jar with two handles and combed surface, reconstructed almost to full profile	no number	Bárta 2001: 185, pl. LXXXVIIIb
		fragments of a second storage jar with two handles	no number	
limestone blocks	7.90 × 6.65 m	complete storage jar with a relatively tall narrow neck, two handles and combed surface	13-1-506	Reisner – Smith 1955: 76, fig. 96, pl. 51i; http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/730/full/
limestone blocks	estimated size 11.5 × 9 m	jar, fragmentary, potter's mark, inside small proportion of fatty matter	no number	Hassan 1936: 145, fig. 173:4

Site	Tomb	Context	Context details	Owner of the tomb	Title(s) of the owner of the tomb	Dating of the tomb
Giza	G 1224	Shaft A	no details	unknown	unknown	Neferirkare – Wenis (Reisner – Smith 1955)
Giza	G 2350 (=G 5290)	Shaft L, BC	found in the debris of the burial chamber	unknown	unknown	Neferirkare – Wenis (Reisner – Smith 1955)
Saqqara	Mastaba of Ka-emhaset	South shaft, BC	found during the re-excavation of the lower part of the shaft and burial chamber of Kaemheset	<i>K3-m-ḥzt</i>	<i>jmj-r ḳd(w) jmj-r ḳd(w) ḥnw wr jrt m Ḃ-wr mdḥ ḳd nswt rh nswt ḥwt ḥdt ḥm-ntr sš3t ḥrj-sš3t n pr-ḳ3</i>	late Nyuserre – Djedkare (McFarlane 2003)
Giza	G 2370	Shaft B, BC	found in the fill of the burial chamber	<i>Sndm-ib Inti</i>	<i>ḥrp sšw nbw ḥrj-tp nswt jmj-r šnwtj jmj-r pr-ḥ3w mdḥ ḳd nswt m prwj jmj-r prwj-ḥd jmj-r jswj ḥkr nswt jmj-r st nbt nt ḥnw jmj-r prw msw nswt jmj-r ḥkr nswt jmj-r ḥwt-wrt sjsw jmj-r sdmt nbt jrj-pḥt ḥ3tj-ḥ t3jtj s3b t3tj jmj-r ḳ3t nbt nt nswt jmj-r sšw ḥ nswt ḥrj-sš3t wdt-mdw nbt nt nswt ḥrj-ḥb smr wḥtj</i>	middle – late Djedkare (Harpur 1987) / Djedkare (Porter et al. / Djedkare – end of V (Baer 1960) / late Djedkare (Kanawati)
Giza	D 6	Shaft 1, BC	found <i>in situ</i> in the burial chamber of Shaft 1, next to the south-east corner of the sarcophagus	unknown	no titles preserved	late V (Odler 2020)

Tab. 2 Two-handled Syro-Palestinian storage jars found in Fifth-Dynasty funerary contexts in the Memphite necropolis (K. Arias)

ities are connected with the Delta region and the north-east border of Egypt. The “Terraces of Turquoise” are traditionally identified as the well-known turquoise and copper mining site of Wadi Maghara in Sinai (Tallet 2018: 17, although Kaaper’s inscription is wrongly provenanced to Saqqara in this monograph). Thus, it is very likely that Kaaper had not only the access but also the means to procure original Syro-Palestinian imports.

The ceramic journals from the 1991 season give a more detailed description of the imported vessels from Kaaper’s burial chamber. Two bases had diameters of 10.5 and 11 cm, while rim fragments had diameters of 8–9 cm. There were numerous body fragments; only one vessel could be reconstructed to *ca.* 2/3 of its height. The base from Shaft 1 in AS 88 fits the general sizes and fabric of Kaaper’s imports.

In this respect, it is important to note another possible case of a similarly displaced vessel. One of the most characteristic parts of Kaaper’s burial assemblage was his set of miniature vessels. There were almost 300 fragments, with bases of at least 12 bowls and 10–12 cups (Bárta 2001: 185). All of them were rather large and tall, the cups reaching a maximum height of 11 cm and bowls having rim diameters of 10.5–12.5 cm and heights of up to 4.3 cm. The most frequent

Tomb material	Tomb size	J-4 description	Vessel no.	Main resources
mud-brick and rubble mastaba	8.70 × 4.70 m	almost complete storage jar with two handles	no number	Reisner and Smith 1955: 76, fig. 97, pl. 51b
limestone mastaba	20.00 × 8.40 m	almost complete combed jar with two handles, with a potter's mark on upper shoulders	40-5-7	Reisner and Smith 1955: 76, fig. 97, pl. 52f; http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/568/full/
mud bricks	18.80 × max. 11.05 m	several fragments of a large combed storage jar with two handles and a flat base	TW2000:6	McFarlane 2003: 45, pl. 17, 51
limestone blocks	22.80 × 20.90 m	two-handled combed jar preserved in fragments but reconstructed to full profile; with a cylinder seal imprint on the upper shoulder	35-7-41	Reisner – Smith 1955: 76, fig. 98; Brovarski 2001, pl. 57a,b; http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/821/full/
limestone	10.50 × 4.60 m	complete	ÄMUL 1484	Odler 2020: xxx; http://www.giza-projekt.org/Mastaba/Mastaba_D6.html

cups had simple closed forms, although recurved and modelled rims were uncovered as well. All these miniatures had an unusual thin break and, most importantly, all were covered with a very fine red slip that was highly polished. Thus, they were easily distinguishable from the small, rather plain wet-smoothed miniatures of the later Fifth Dynasty.

Such red-slipped miniatures, relatively rare at Abusir, were found mostly in the tombs of royal family members and high officials in the pyramid field of Abusir Centre. They make up a few types, *e.g.* red-slipped miniature bowls (MB-4) and vases (MV-1). The largest quantity comes from the tomb of Kakaibaef (AC 29) with dozens of specimens (Arias 2017: Fig. 4.64);¹³ fewer are known also from the tomb of Prince Werkaure (Arias Kytarová 2014: 228–229, fig. 4.90, MB-4), *etc.* At Abusir South, only six pieces were discovered in the complex of Princess Sheretnebtj (AS 68; see Arias 2017: 283–284). One significant difference from Kaaper's assemblage was that all of these vessels were red-slipped but remained unpolished.

¹³ Notice the size and quality difference between red-slipped versus common untreated miniatures from the tomb of Kakaibaef.



Fig. 15 Heavily fragmented Syro-Palestinian storage jar of type J-4 from the burial chamber of Kaaper in tomb AS 1 (photo M. Zemina)

Therefore, it was unusual that another tomb situated immediately west of the tomb of Kaaper and north of tomb AS 88 yielded one example of such red-slipped and polished miniature. A large miniature vase of type MV-1 (6-1.AS81.2016, fig. 16) with an exceptionally thin sherd of only 2–3 mm was discovered in Shaft 1 of tomb AS 81 (fig. 20). It is noteworthy that tomb AS 81 was built only of mud bricks, without any traces of limestone casing or other stone elements; presumably, the owner did not have access to such valuable material. The ceramic material from Shaft 1 was heavily heterogeneous, containing not only a few fragments of Third Dynasty ware (collar beer jars and bowls with an inner ledge) but also Fifth and even Sixth Dynasty pottery (such as a characteristic wide rounded base of tubular beer jars). Thus, there is no doubt that the whole context was heavily disturbed and that the shaft was likely filled with scattered material from all the surrounding tombs. Given that this miniature was one of the finest and most precisely-made miniatures that have been analysed by the present author (including all the examples from the pyramid field of Abusir), a different place of origin came to mind, especially given the proximity to the tomb of Kaaper with its assemblage of well-known red-slipped and polished miniatures. The consultation with Miroslav Bárta, who had personally documented the pottery from AS 1 in 1991, confirmed the suspicion that this

6-1.AS81.2015



Fig. 16 Fine red-slipped and polished miniature vase from Shaft 1 in tomb AS 81 (drawing K. Arias, L. Vařeková, photos M. Frouz)

was in all likelihood originally part of Kaaper's tomb goods, being almost identical in quality, surface treatment and finish.

The question remains of how these items ended up in such diverse places. The possible answer lies in the position of the tombs. The mastaba of Kaaper is the tallest preserved structure in all of Abusir South, creating a highly visible feature, and tombs AS 88 and AS 81 lie underneath its western wall. A possible solution to this enigma came to mind during a visit to the top of Kaaper's tomb in late 2015, as a sloping depression leads down to the bottom of the mastaba on the western side (see also fig. 20). Thus, it is feasible that after his burial chamber was robbed, parts of the scattered burial goods, undesired by tomb robbers (specifically, broken pottery), were left near the top of the shaft. After some time, rain or natural erosion created a depression leading down to the western slope. Some fragments fell to the base of the mastaba and were later unintentionally incorporated into the rubble around the above-mentioned shafts in AS 88 and AS 81. Although this theory cannot be proved, it has to be taken into consideration, as neither the owner of AS 88 nor the owner of AS 81 would be expected to own such rare or extremely fine ceramic vessels, given the low quality of their tomb structure and the general quality (or lack) of their finds.¹⁴

Naturally, a different theory has to be considered as well, namely that the owners of tombs AS 88, AS 81 and AS 81b were either family members or dependents of Kaaper. In that case, Kaaper might have donated more precious burial goods to them, such as the above-mentioned imported vessel and the high-quality miniature vase. As our current knowledge makes it impossible to determine the origin of the discussed pieces with certainty, both theories should be taken into consideration. In light of the specific archaeological context of these finds, however, the first theory is considered more likely by the present author.

¹⁴ I would like to thank Miroslav Bárta, Martin Odler and especially Lucie Jirásková for their contribution to the discussion of this topic.

ANTHROPOLOGY (PBH)

Human skeletal remains of four individuals were unearthed in tomb AC 88 and several bones of another individual were found outside of the tomb. All of them were analysed using contemporary, well established anthropological methods (see Havelková 2014).

The right navicular bone, a tiny fragment of a vertebra and a long bone diaphysis of a non-adult individual were scattered close to the north-west corner of the mastaba (6/AS88/2016). Due to the position and fragmentation of the bones, neither a more precise estimation of age-at-death nor a dating is possible.

All other burials were dated back to the Old Kingdom, two were located inside the structure and two in the adjacent shafts. A rib fragment and three fragments of long bone diaphysis were the only human remains in Shaft 5. According to the robustness and structure of bones, it is very likely that the remains belong to an individual no older than 15 years.

The most important burial was found in Shaft 4, where the owner of the tomb was probably buried. Unfortunately, the human remains were completely disturbed by robbers – several bones were found in a burial pit, some on the floor of the burial chamber. Nevertheless, the preservation of the skeleton was sufficiently good to estimate the age-at-death and sex of the individual. The owner was a robust male who lived to relatively old age, between 40 and 60 years. The approximate living stature based on the length of the femur was 166 cm. Despite his advanced age, no serious pathological changes were found on the skeleton, not even se-



Fig. 17 Burial 4/AS88/2016 in Shaft 6, below the northern outer wall of the tomb AS 88 (its blocks visible on the left side; photo M. Odler)

rious degenerative changes on either the vertebral column or the appendicular joints. Slight arthrosis was recorded only at the acromial-clavicular facet at the scapula and the caput of the radius, both on the right side.

An intact burial was unearthed above the bottom of Shaft 6 (4/AS88/2016; fig. 17). The body, lying in a contracted position, belonged to a middle-aged female who died at 35–50 years of age. She was approximately 151 cm tall based on the length of the humerus (Raxter *et al.* 2008). Interesting anomalies were recorded on the left scapula, where a huge suprascapular foramen developed by a bony bridging at the suprascapular notch and a deep depression of unknown aetiology were located at the dorsal surface close to the glenoid cavity (fig. 18). Posttraumatic changes of the 2nd metatarsal bone indicate a slight injury of the left foot, which she probably suffered during her life.

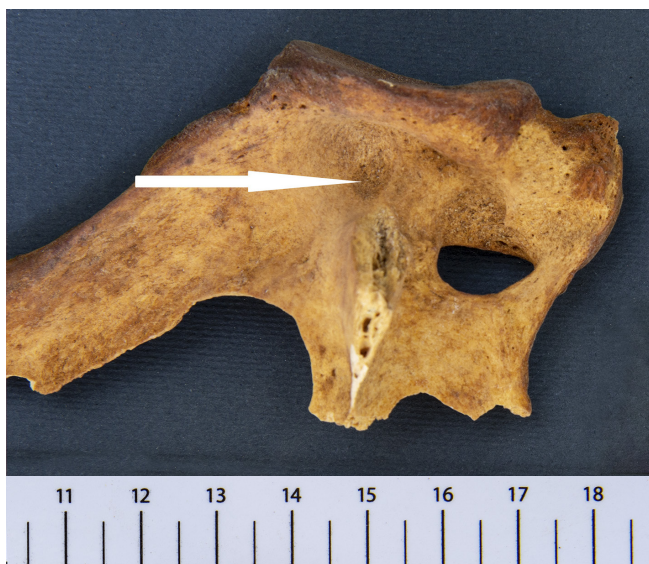


Fig. 18 Suprascapular foramen and depression (arrow) of unknown aetiology at the dorsal surface of the left scapula (photo Š. Bejdová)

An intact child burial was found in Shaft 2, placed in a wooden coffin painted red (8/AS88/2016; fig. 19). The human remains were strongly fragmented, but based on the teeth mineralisation, the age-at-death was estimated at 6–7 years. No pathological changes or anomalies were observed.

ANIMAL BONES (ZS)

Archaeozoological remains were analysed directly at the site of excavations. Standard methods of archaeozoology were used for the analysis (*e.g.* Reitz – Wing 2008), with regards to the field conditions. The assemblage of animal bones contained only two finds. A part of left talus weighing 6.6 g from a subadult individual of the domestic pig (*Sus domesticus*) was found in Shaft 3 (13/AS88/2016). According to the lateral length of the bone, the shoulder-height of the animal was estimated to 67 cm, belonging to a smaller breed. A part of the right mandible from an adult specimen of domestic cattle (*Bos taurus*) was excavated near the north wall of the tomb (18/AS88/2016). The find weighed 170.2 g and was disintegrated into 15 fragments. The bones were decalcified, with dark stains from fungal activity and manganese.



Fig. 19 Child burial 8/AS88/2016 in Shaft 2, notice the mud brick fragment used as a headrest right of the skull (photo M. Frouz)

ANALOGIES AND DATING OF AS 88 ARCHITECTURE, TOMB OWNER'S IDENTITY

The damaged architecture of AS 88 offers only a few clues concerning its original appearance; more detailed information for the determination of its chronology comes from above-discussed ceramics. The location of the serdab behind the western wall of the chapel is most frequent in Fourth- and Fifth-Dynasty mastabas; thus positioned serdab usually had the longer side along the north-south axis (Lehmann 2000: 26-36), which was most probably also architectural solution in AS 88.

A combination of a shaft with a burial chamber and a chamberless shaft appears often in Fifth- and Sixth-Dynasty Giza mastabas at West Field (Steindorff *et al.* 1991: *passim*). A separate “sarcophagus” compartment in the burial chamber of Shaft 4 is an unusual design in Old Kingdom tomb building. In the absence of the sarcophagus, the usual solution was to cut a rectangular burial pit in the floor of the burial chamber, as in tomb AS 65 (Dulíková *et al.* 2011; Jánosi 2017). A raised burial pit above the ground was built in tomb G 2352, Shaft B, although it is bigger than that in AS 88, with dimensions of 2.62 × 1.15 × 0.55 m (Simpson 1980: 35, Fig. 50). It was the main burial chamber of the royal acquaintance, overseer of the fields of Khufu, overseer of the milk herd of Akhet-Khufu, overseer of the cattle Hagy. The tomb is datable to the late Fifth Dynasty or later (Porter *et al.* 1974: 84). The stone slab covering the burial was deposited in a cut similar to the burial chamber of Shaft 4 in tomb G 2098, Shaft D (Fisher 1924:

66, Fig. 53). While the architectural features are common in a broader timeframe, the dating of ceramics narrows down the dating of the tomb presumably to the first half or the middle of the Fifth Dynasty, as well as the architectural setting amongst other tombs in the area. The tomb of Kaaper (AS 1) from the beginning of the Fifth Dynasty is apparently earlier in the area, thus AS 88 was built arguably later, even later than AS 89. The adjacent Shafts 2 and 6 was built in the changed circumstances of the second half of that dynasty. Since Shaft 2 is located at the once existing eastern wall of the tomb, the tomb must have been standing at the time of excavating the shaft.

As for the tomb owner and his identity, it can be presumed from the location of his tomb that he might have had familial or professional ties to Kaaper. To the north of Kaaper's tomb AS 1 was built a tomb of his son, Kaaper Junior (Dulíková 2019). To the south-east of Kaaper was interred Sekhemka, scribe of treasury, where Kaaper also was a presumable official (Odler – Peterková Hlouchová *et al.* 2019). But neither the name nor titles can be guessed. However, it can be assumed that objects from his tomb might be one of the great number of unprovenanced finds from Memphite area.

LOCAL EROSION AT THE SITE

Both natural and cultural factors caused damage to tomb AS 88 (Schiffer 1987). Thanks to the observation of the conditions of other tombs at Abusir South, we can reconstruct some events of this “second life”, or more precisely “second death” of the destruction of this tomb. The tomb was built in the first half or middle of the Fifth Dynasty and its main burial cham-



Fig. 20 Northern part of AS 88, the core of the mastaba, with AS 81b, tomb AS 1 in the background (photo M. Odler)

ber was presumably looted in the Sixth Dynasty at the latest. At an unspecified time in the Second or First Millennium BC, the tomb was largely destroyed by the stone looters and its material reused elsewhere. The damage to the site was gradual: tomb AS 91 situated east of AS 88 was almost erased from the ground (Peterková Hlouchová *et al.* 2017), while AS 88 retained some features, especially in its northern part. Large tombs in the area, such as AS 1 of Kaaper and AS 98 of Ankhires (Dulíková *et al.* 2018), raised the local relief of the cemetery, and wind erosion spared larger parts of these tombs, which became active as natural features of the site (“hills”) rather than tombs *per se*. Thus, the tombs acted as natural phenomena, as “hills” elevating the surfaces of the desert. Tombs on the lower level, such as the AS 88 or AS76 to AS 78 (Dulíková *et al.* 2017), suffered much more and erosion damaged more of their superstructures (fig. 20). Nevertheless, the area was attractive enough for the deposition of coffin burials in the Graeco-Roman Period (Peterková Hlouchová 2017). Their position, however, indicates that substantial parts of the mud brick tombs and smaller stone tombs, such as AS 88, were significantly eroded. Movements of material similar to those described for the ceramic burial equipment of Kaaper could have happened on a much larger scale. In order to evaluate such movements, research is needed on a micro-regional scale rather than only separate tombs, inside their perimeter.

“... JUST ANOTHER TOMB...”

This is a *dictum* that is often heard, although not written down, when a new find of a tomb is presented, even the celebrated ones with decoration and resulting media potential and impact. AS 88 is also “just another tomb” on the much less illustrious end of the spectrum, apparently with nothing interesting outside of academic debate. Such “dull” structures as AS 88 could populate the statistics that might be once made of all preserved Old Kingdom tombs. Its architectural features represent the simplified plan of an Old Kingdom mastaba, reduced to the most fundamental parts of the structure.

There was enough time to uncover the situation east of tomb AS 88, but not enough time to excavate all the shafts and make this addition to the local chronology and site development. Thus, the most important limitation to be defined is that the apparently “void” spaces between the mastabas were not at all void. Responsible excavations ought to focus not only on the tombs themselves but also the space between the mastabas; at Abusir, this approach was used, *e.g.* around tomb AS 38 (Vymazalová *et al.* 2011). On the one hand, this might enhance our true understanding of the site, not only of the major events on the spot. On the other hand, as this could result in an endless pursuit of further spaces, a stop must be made somewhere artificially because the funding is by no means infinite.

The Abusir necropolis is understood to have generally developed in the direction from east to west, the earliest tombs being the First Dynasty tombs of the so-called Bonnet cemetery close to the Lake of Abusir (Bonnet 1928). Later tombs were erected further in the desert, as the free space allowed. Locally, however, the immediate vicinity of tombs AS 88 and AS 54 is an exception to this “archaeological rule” (*cf.* fig. 2), AS 54 being built in the late Third Dynasty, in the reign of Huni (Bárta 2011; Jirásková 2019). The early Fifth-Dynasty tomb of Kaaper (AS 1), however, was built further to the east. This shows that general rules cannot interfere with the lived reality of Old Kingdom Egyptians, who were breaking these theoretical “rules”

if necessary. Moreover, the position of the tombs can be misleading: the owner of AS 54 could have been positioned much higher in the Third Dynasty than the owners of AS 1 and AS 98 in Fifth Dynasty, with a massive structure built in stone, even though AS 54's resulting height in the local landscape is lower.

A way to understand this local development and the local working of the general rules might lie in the excavation of a transect of the necropolis aimed at cleaning the tombs and their vicinity to the ground and thus uncovering all local “events”. This would enable us to model the local chronology and development. Two such permissible areas at Abusir South are around the tomb of Kaaper (AS 1) and around the tomb of Qar (AS 16); neither of them has been excavated completely. The general trends were described already in Bárta *et al.* (2003), but they need to be formulated more precisely by the “ground truth”, which is always more complex than satellite imagery or other surface-surveying methods can reveal. Moreover, the desert surface can be misleading and a surface survey is not enough to understand what was going on in the Old Kingdom, without the knowledge of what is below the surface. The original landscape can be reconstructed only by federated observations of the heights of the *tafla* and bedrock and their modelling below the current landscape. The 2016 excavations increased the comprehension of the results from 1991, of the AS 1 excavation, but as Kaaper's surroundings have not been fully excavated yet, further surprises may be waiting for us.

CONCLUSION

The preliminary report presents the interim results of the study of tomb AS 88. The tomb was built in the first half or middle of the Fifth Dynasty and its main burial chamber was looted in the Sixth Dynasty at the latest. The paper stresses that the importance of a thorough description of even more modest mastabas lies in setting them in the broader context of the era, based on literature comparison, rather than exhaustive statistics of tomb features, which is impossible in the current state of research. With such synthesis in mind, architecture and archaeology of these humble tombs must be described with care to the details, which might later be used, *e.g.* for the modelling of the surface of Fifth Dynasty desert, which was irreversibly changed by the building of the Old Kingdom mastabas. Such modest tombs then can provide information for the reconstruction of the original natural terrain and successive events in the history of necropolis, in this particular case of Abusir South.

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