

# Magdalena Żurek

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## Naqlun 2005 : Pottery Deposit from Room G.8 A

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## NAQLUN 2005 POTTERY DEPOSIT FROM ROOM G.8A

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Room G.8a of Building G, where a pottery deposit was excavated in 2005,<sup>1</sup> is a small space opening to the south with a small arched opening situated low in the west wall. The architecture and finds have supported the interpretation of this room as a toilet.

The room was filled with a compact layer of pottery exceeding 50 cm in thickness. Interestingly, there were no glazed ceramics among the finds. The vessels are incomplete except for a few examples. They represent mainly bag-shaped amphorae or bottles (especially bottoms and necks). The following can be distinguished: nine bag-shaped amphorae, upper parts; one bottle, upper part; three bag-shaped bottles, upper parts; 30 bases of amphorae or bottles; at least six bodies of bag-shaped bottles and one complete vessel; three qullas (including a complete one; nine plates; six cooking pots; one qadus; one basin; five bowls. The material appears to be fairly homogeneous, especially the amphorae and bottles which look like they belong to a single type.

Plate Nd.05.106, made of Nile silt, is of the Egyptian Late Roman type: big, fairly deep, with everted rim (Dia. 34.0 cm), strongly flaring walls, ring base (Dia. 13.4 cm) and massive bottom. The form is

similar to that of a plate found in sector S.3 (Nd.05.323), room AA.20.1 (Nd.00.017) and Mausoleum 1 (Nd.02.184). The ceramic assemblage from the latter spot has been dated by the present author to the 10th - early 11th century.<sup>2</sup> Similar plates with flatter rim were found in Tebtynis, in a layer from the second half of the 9th - early 10th century.<sup>3</sup> Similar plates from Elephantine are dated to the second half of the 7th through the 8th/9th century.<sup>4</sup>

Plate Nd.05.142, fragmentarily preserved, is made of Nile silt, big (Dia. 38.0 cm), with everted rim and poor tectonics. It resembles to some extent plates found earlier in Sector D (Nd.92.285, Nd.92.274). The group it belongs to includes shallow plates with flat everted rims, typical of the 9th-10th century.

Plate Nd.05.138, also fragmentarily preserved and made of Nile silt, is deep, big (Dia. 44.0 cm), with obliquely cut and incurving rim decorated with a white band, and S-shaped body section. Plates from rooms AA.40.4 (Nd.00.583, 8th-early 9th century) and street A/E (Nd.00.445, 9th century) have a similar body shape, while the rim is like that of a plate from room AA.40.4 (Nd.00.584, 7th-8th century).<sup>5</sup> Body walls are similarly shaped but less

1 See W. Godlewski's report in this volume.

2 Unpublished report from Sector A/E for the year 2002.

3 S. Marchand, M.-O. Rosset, "Secteur nord de Tebtynis (Fayyoun). Mission de 1999", *AnIsl* 34 (2000), Pl. 42.

4 R. Gempeler, *Die Keramik römischer bis früh-arabischer Zeit, Elephantine X* (Mainz am Rhein 1992), 66, Pl. 9.11.

5 Unpublished report by the author.

flaring in the smaller bowls from Fustat, dated to the 11th century.<sup>6</sup> Shallower than our example are the plates from Elephantine, discovered in layers dated to the 6th/7th - mid 7th century.<sup>7</sup> Our plate Nd.05.138 can be dated to the 8th-9th century.

Plate Nd.05.141, one more plate of Nile silt preserved fragmentarily, is big (Dia. 29.0 cm), rather shallow, red-slipped, with strongly flaring, carinated walls and weakly profiled rim. This is a fairly popular form in Naqlun. A similar plate was found this season in sector S.1 (Nd.05.232) and in previous years in sector A.G (Nd.05.039) and in room D.15, the fill of which is dated to the 9th-12th century.<sup>8</sup> Shallow plates with carinated walls are typical of the 9th-10th century. A similar plate was discovered in House X in Tebtynis, in a layer dated to the second half of the 9th-early 10th century.<sup>9</sup> Similar plates were also found in Elephantine.<sup>10</sup>

Plate Nd.05.139 of Nile silt is of similar shape, but with less emphasized tectonics. Preserved fragmentarily, it is of substantial size (Dia. 32 cm), rather shallow, with strongly flaring, gently carinated walls. Similar plates have been found previously in sector D: Nd.92.159 in Building DB I, Nd.92.354 in room D.15. Despite an insignificant difference of form, it should thus be dated also to the 9th-10th century.

Plates Nd.05.151-Nd.05.152 are preserved as fragmentary bottoms with ring bases and parts of walls, sufficient for the plate depth to be roughly estimated. They are also of the Egyptian Late Roman type. The rather high, slightly angled and triangular in section ring base of thin-walled Nd.05.152 merits attention. It resembles the bases of plates Nd.01.050 (AA.20.2, layer 4, 7th-8th century) and Nd.01.011 (AA.20.2, layer 2, 9th century, probably the end)<sup>11</sup> and Nd.02.244 (slightly lower, AA.40.2, floor level, 9th century, probably the end). Our plate should be dated also to the 9th century. The ring base of plate Nd.05.153, even, flaring, strongly flattened, is typical of bases found on glazed vessels.

All of the bowl fragments (Nd.05.203-Nd.05.207) come from big, not very thick-walled vessels made of Nile silt with diameters ranging from 36 to 45 cm; they feature slightly flaring walls and a rim which is triangular in section. The rim shape of bowls Nd.05.203 and Nd.05.207 is typical of 10th-century vessels.<sup>12</sup>

Basin Nd.05.143 is a thick-walled, big and relatively shallow vessel of Nile clay, on a ring base (Dia. 22.0 cm), with flat bottom, vertical walls and flaring rim. The proportions are unlike anything found so far on the site. Smaller and more slender examples were found in 2002 in sector A.NE at

6 W. Kubiak's unpublished typology of domestic wares from Fustat.

7 Gempeler, op. cit., 87, Pl. 31.5.

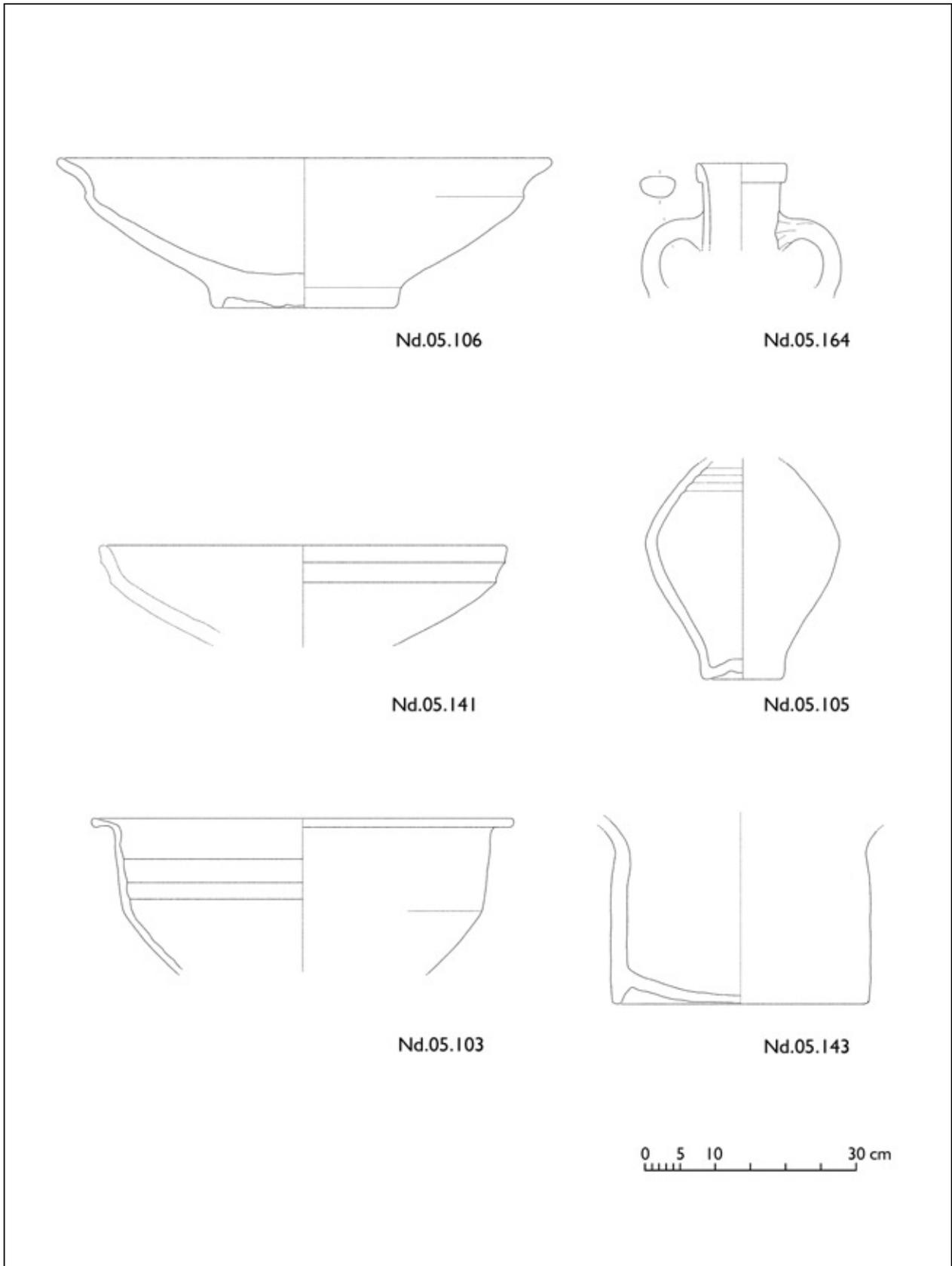
8 T. Górecki, "Deir el Naqlun 1992: the pottery", *PAM IV, Reports 1992* (1993), 62.

9 Marchand, Rousset, op. cit., Pl. 42.

10 Gempeler, op. cit., 64-65, Pl. 7.7, classified them as type T202. He considers it probable that they originated from the North African type Hayes 9B.

11 Jar Nd.00.225 (from tomb T.225 dug into the fill of room AA.40.2) has an equally well made base; the vessel was made of marl clay with streaks of glaze on the shoulders.

12 Forms with similar rim shape thus dated by W. Kubiak "Roman-type pottery in Medieval Egypt", in: *Coptic and Nubian Pottery: International Workshop*, Nieborów, August 29-31, 1988, part 1, ed. W. Godlewski, National Museum in Warsaw, Occasional Paper (Warsaw 1990), 75.



*Fig. 1. Selected pottery from the deposit in Room G8A  
(Drawing M.Zurek)*

Naqlun (Nd.02.080 and Nd.02.091). The walls were slightly flaring, but the rim was tooled similarly. A similar vessel came from room D.10/D.1, dated cautiously by the pottery from the occupational level to the second half of the 8th-early 12th century.<sup>13</sup> Somewhat similar forms include: Kubiak 16G (smaller, flat bottom) dated to the 10th-11th century and Kubiak 18E (rounded wall) from the 10th century.<sup>14</sup>

Fragmentarily preserved amphorae appear to belong to four types. Amphorae Nd.05.159-Nd.05.163 are seemingly a homogeneous group. Made of Nile silt, they have a not very high, slightly flaring neck, weak tape rim and small round handles on sloping shoulders gently passing into a bag-shaped body resembling form Kubiak 3B (with less sloping shoulders), connected with a 10th-11th century or rather 9th century context; also Kubiak 4B (with ribbing) of the 10th-11th century, or else Kubiak 5D (with more flaring neck) of the 11th century or later.<sup>15</sup> Gempeler K768 looks similar (with fine ribbing on the shoulders), dated to the 7th/8th century.<sup>16</sup> Amphorae discovered in leveling layers in sector B at Naqlun demonstrate similar forming of the rim, neck and handles, although the body is more bulging and covered with ribbing; they are dated to the 8th-9th century.<sup>17</sup> A similar shape of the handles and body is found on an amphora from rooms D.5-D.7, belonging to a pottery assemblage dated to the period from the

8th to the 12th century.<sup>18</sup> Amphorae Nd.05.159-Nd.05.163 can be dated to the 9th century.

Amphora Nd.05.200, of Nile silt, is a slightly different variant of the form, featuring a flat rim, virtually vertical neck with small, narrow and flat shoulders and small round handles at the turn of the shoulders and body. It resembles amphora Nd.01.246.

Amphora Nd.05.164 has a high, virtually vertical neck, tape rim and large vertical handles. The proportions are very much like Levantine amphorae from the end of the 7th and early 8th century.

Bottle Nd.05.140 is distinctive in its category. Made of Nile silt, it has a flaring profiled rim with offset and a fairly long neck that narrows toward the top. The shoulders are narrow and almost flat, passing into an almost cylindrical body. The neck and shoulders bear a band of white paint decorated with a wavy incised linear ornament. Vessels of similar shape although with a generally broader and straight rim was popular from the 8th to the 10th century. A similar neck is seen on Gempeler T734, a shape that has not been fully reconstructed, originating from Elephantine from layers of the 6th/7th century and later.<sup>19</sup> Jars with a rim of this shape but with a narrower neck and bag-shaped body were found at Tod in layers of the 8th century and later.<sup>20</sup> The rim is interesting because of its uncommon shape, seen both

13 W. Godlewski, T. Derda, T. Górecki, "Deir el Naqlun (Nekluni), 1988-1989, Second Preliminary Report", *Nubica* III/1 (1994), 201-263.

14 See note 6 above.

15 See note 6 above.

16 Gempeler, op. cit., 200, Pl. 129.5.

17 Górecki, *PAM* IV, op. cit., 60-61; T. Górecki, *PAM* XII, *Reports 2000* (2001), 166.

18 Godlewski, Derda, Górecki, op. cit., 231.

19 Gempeler, op. cit., 137, Pl. 78.4.

20 G. Lecuyot, G. Pierrat-Bonnefois, "Corpus de la céramique de Tôd. Fouilles 1980-1983 et 1990", *CCE* 7 (2004), 197.

on open forms (plates and closed ones (bottles) over an extended period of time from the middle of the 7th to the beginning of the 10th century. The shape and the ornament point to a date for bottle Nd.05.140 in the 8th through early 10th century.

The remaining bottles appear to be of similar shape despite insignificant differences in the tooling of the rim. Incomplete bottle Nd.05.145 with its bag-shaped body and weakly marked base represents a form typical of the 9th-10th century, although unlike the majority of such bottles which were made of Nile silt, it was made of a hard red fabric.

Bottles Nd.05.196, Nd.05.197 and Nd.05.201, all of Nile silt, featuring a weak tape rim, slightly flaring neck and steep shoulders, resemble Kubiak 6A type which was popular at Fustat in layers from the middle of the 10th to the end of the 11th century.<sup>21</sup>

Amphora or bottle bottoms from the deposit are relatively thin-walled and covered with fine ribbing. They resemble the bottoms of bag-shaped bottles of the 10th-11th century. Body sherds with wavy ornament, incised and underscored with cream-colored paint, have also been found. Similarly decorated bodies of bottles from the 10th-early 11th century have been recorded on many sites of the period, Naqlun included (sectors D and A.A).

*Qulla* Nd.05.105, incomplete, made of Nile clay, has broad and steep shoulders, bulging body and hollow base. This kind of base was observed on vessels from room C of hermitage 89, as well as on an incomplete thin-walled pot of marl clay with globular

body (jug/*qulla*?) Nd.00.295, discovered in room AA.40.4, from where the pottery assemblage has been dated generally to the 8th-9th century, perhaps through the 10th. The thick walls of the *qulla* and overall body shape place it rather in the group of vessels coming from sector D and A.A, dated to the 9th-10th century.

The rare cooking pots in the assemblage represent mostly thin-walled vessels with large mouths. Cooking pot Nd.05.103 is made of Nile silt and it is a big thin-walled vessel with wide flaring rim, very much like vessels from Hermitage 25 (e.g. Nd. 89.323, although the rims there were not as flaring as in this case). Of similar shape is a slightly smaller pot found in a storage pit inside room B.1 of Hermitage 25, the fill of which is generally dated to the third quarter of the 7th century.<sup>22</sup> A similar form on Elephantine, classified as Gempeler K225 (with ribbing) has been dated to the 5th/6th century.<sup>23</sup> These datings appear to be too early with regard to our specimen. Of similar shape is cooking pot Nd.05.155, of Nile silt, big and thin-walled, featuring a wide, strongly flaring rim (Dia. 28.0 cm), and virtually straight walls.

Cooking pot Nd.05.104 made of Nile silt, thin-walled, with ellipsoid body and slightly flaring rim, recalls vessels found in the fireplace in room AA.40.4, dated to the 9th century (Nd.00.592). A fragmentarily preserved cooking pot Nd.05.156 made of Nile silt, thin-walled and with wide flaring rim (Dia. 22.0 cm) and carinated wall, resembles in shape a vessel discovered above the floor of room D.15 (Nd.92.335), where the accumulated fill was dated to the 9th-

21 See note 6 above.

22 Godlewski, Derda, Górecki, op. cit., 234.

23 Gempeler, op. cit., 152, Pl. 86.17.

24 Górecki, PAM IV, op. cit., 65.

25 Gempeler, op. cit., 162, Pl. 95.4.

12th century.<sup>24</sup> Similar vessels classified as Gempeler type K357 are dated on Elephantine in the 6th/7th century.<sup>25</sup> Our pot is thus likely to be of 9th century date. Cooking pot Nd.05.157 is a thin-walled vessel of Nile silt, featuring a wide flaring rim (Dia. 20.0 cm) and steeply sloping shoulders. The body profile resembles Gempeler type K.330 of indeterminate date.<sup>26</sup> Cooking pot Nd.05.158 is of Nile silt, big and thin-walled, with flaring rim (Dia. 26.0 cm), deeply indented and with carinated wall.

Fragmentary *qadus* Nd.05.144, is of Nile silt and features a short wide neck. It resembles form S.23, dated by Gempeler

to the 5th-7th centuries.<sup>27</sup> A similar form, although with slightly wider and weakly profiled rim, is presented by the *qawadis* from Tod, where they are dated to 750-900.<sup>28</sup>

The pottery from room G.8a represents a fairly narrow repertoire of shapes, all of them originating from the 9th-10th centuries. The Fustat finds alone suggest a chronological horizon extending into the early 11th century, but all things considered, this date appears to be too late for the pottery assemblage in question. Thus, it should be assumed, based on the pottery, that room G.8a was used definitely in the 9th and 10th centuries.

26 Gempeler, op. cit., 158, Pl. 92.2.

27 Gempeler, op. cit., 208, Pl. 133.6.

28 Lecuyot, Pierrat-Bonnefois, op. cit., 168.