

UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN

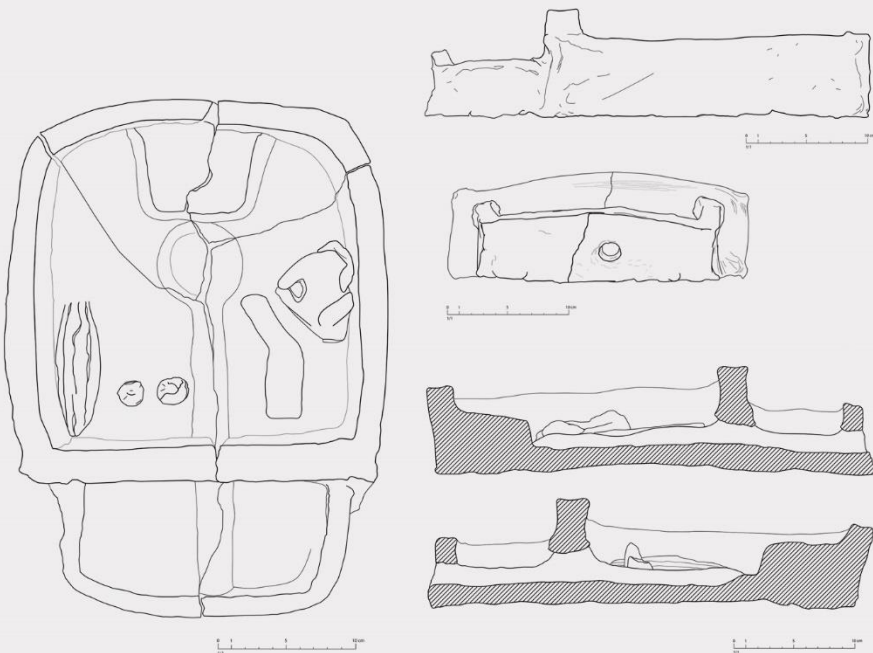
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES Y CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN  
DEPARTAMENTO DE ANTROPOLOGÍA, GEOGRAFÍA E HISTORIA

# Offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa

A study of the artefacts and their archaeological, funerary  
and religious contexts



Cristina Lechuga



Presentada por:  
**Cristina Lechuga Ibáñez**

Directores:  
**Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez**  
**Dr. Alejandro Jiménez Serrano**

Tutor:  
**Dr. Alejandro Jiménez Serrano**





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**PRESENTADA POR:  
CRISTINA LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ**

**DIRIGIDA POR:  
JOSE MANUEL ALBA GÓMEZ  
ALEJANDRO JIMÉNEZ SERRANO**

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*‘Si has perdido el rumbo, escúchame  
Llegar a la meta no es vencer  
Lo importante es el camino y en él  
Caer, levantarse, insistir, aprender’*

**La posada de los Muertos – Mägo de Oz, 2005**

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## **Abstract**

Pottery offering trays have primarily been discovered within funerary contexts, and there has long been a consensus regarding their principal function, which is to provide offerings to the deceased, much like stone offering tables. However, offering trays have also been unearthed in domestic contexts. Consequently, considering this significant finding, this thesis presents a novel interpretation of these artefacts, shedding light on aspects that have hitherto been overlooked. To achieve this goal, the necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa has played a pivotal role in understanding the function, occurrence in both funerary and domestic contexts, as well as the relationship between these artefacts and Ancient Egyptian society. In doing so, this thesis draws distinctions between ceramic offering trays, stone offering tables and soul houses, which have traditionally been perceived by scholars as substitutes or evolutionary forms of one another.

Furthermore, this research constitutes the first complete study on offering trays from the Qubbet el-Hawa to date, filling an important gap in the existing scholarly literature. Consequently, this study not only clarifies the production place of these artefacts, but also it provides information on their chronology and developmental trajectory within the Aswan region. Furthermore, it increases the typology initiated in 2019. Thus, it establishes a comprehensive corpus of data that will facilitate future research on these artefacts throughout Egypt.

In conclusion, this thesis marks the culmination of current research on the Qubbet el-Hawa offering trays. However, it also works as base for future studies on these artefacts, as well as on other pottery objects from the Aswan area.

## Chronological table

Period	Chronology	Dynasties
Predynastic Period	4 <sup>th</sup> millennium	-
Early Dynastic Period	2900 - 2545 BCE	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Old Kingdom <sup>1</sup>	2543 – 2118 BCE	4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> , and 8 <sup>th</sup>
First Intermediate Period	2118 – 1980 BCE	9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup>
Middle Kingdom	1980 – 1759 BCE	11 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup>
Second Intermediate Period	1759 – 1539 BCE	13 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup> , and 17 <sup>th</sup>
New Kingdom	1539 – 1077 BCE	18 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup>
Third Intermediate Period	1076 – 723 BCE	21 <sup>th</sup> , 22 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>th</sup> , and 24 <sup>th</sup>
Late Period	722 – 332 BCE	25 <sup>th</sup> , 26 <sup>th</sup> , 27 <sup>th</sup> , 28 <sup>th</sup> , 29 <sup>th</sup> , 30 <sup>th</sup> , and 31 <sup>th</sup>
Greco-Roman Period	332 BCE – 31BCE	Roman province after the battle of Actium in 31BCE

Based on Hornung, Krauss, and Warburton, 2006.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more information about the 7<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, See Hornung, *et al.* (2006).

<sup>2</sup> To know reasons for its use, See chapter 1.2. Methodology.

## **List of museums and collections with offering trays and soul houses consulted during this study**

Agricultural Museum (Cairo, Egypt)	Louvre Museum (Paris, France)	Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (Washington DC, United States)
Ägyptischen Museums und Papyrussammlung (Berlin, Germany)	Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (Brussels, Belgium)	St. Mungo Museum (Glasgow, Scotland)
Antikenmuseum Basel (Switzerland)	Museo Arqueológico (Córdoba, Spain)	The Georg Steindorff Egyptian Museum, (Leipzig, Germany)
Arts and Heritage Resource Centre (Rochdale, United Kingdom)	Museo Egizio (Turin, Italy)	The Manchester Museum (United Kingdom)
Ashmolean Museum (Oxford, United Kingdom)	Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, United States)	The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, United States)
Atkinson Museum (Southport, United Kingdom)	Muzeum Narodowe (Warsaw, Poland)	The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow, Russia)
Bonn Museum (Germany)	National Museum (Edinburgh, Scotland)	University of Swansea, Egypt Centre (United Kingdom)
Bristol Museum (United Kingdom)	Penn Museum (Pennsylvania, United States)	World Museum (Liverpool, United Kingdom)
British Museum (London, United Kingdom)	Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology (London, United Kingdom)	
Cracow Museum (Poland)	The National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (The Netherlands)	
Egyptian Museum (Cairo, Egypt)	Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum (San Jose, United Kingdom)	
Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge, United Kingdom)	Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto, Canada)	
Garstang Museum of Archaeology (Liverpool, United Kingdom)	Silk museum (Macclesfield, United Kingdom)	

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# 1. Introduction

The present PhD thesis is an extension of the study of pottery offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa initiated in 2019 as a Master's thesis.<sup>3</sup> The initial research involved a preliminary examination of the remarkable number of offering trays discovered at the Qubbet el-Hawa necropolis during Elmar Edel's archaeological work between 1957 and 1984 (EDEL, 2008, v. 2, 3). The primary objective of this investigation was to examine the distinctive features of these artefacts, their location and context within the necropolis, and their connections to other artefacts unearthed in Egypt. A preliminary typology was established, to facilitate future studies of the offering trays discovered at this archaeological site. In the course of the preliminary study, together with the subsequent discovery of new trays by the University of Jaén from 2008 onwards, further questions were raised about these archaeological artefacts. This served as a catalyst for further research, which encompassed a wider exploration of various aspects, including their role in religion and social structure.

In the process of research, it was determined that the offering trays had been part of the museum's collection since the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (MI, 2020: p. 3).<sup>4</sup> However they received limited attention from researchers, resulting in a scarcity of academic works dedicated to them during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, although there was an increased focus of study in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The lack of interest in the past may be attributed to the absence of inscriptions or textual information (MI, 2020: p. 3). In addition, earlier archaeologists may have been more interested in artefacts with higher aesthetics, while the offering trays were associated more with intermediate and lower social groups, found frequently in connection with modest burials and tombs (Shaft tombs<sup>5</sup>) (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 102).

The offering trays have been dated between the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom<sup>6</sup> (PETRIE, 1907; TOOLEY, 1989; KILIAN, 2012, 2016; MÜLLER and FOSTNER-MÜLLER, 2015: p. 198). Their raw material (clay), their placement, and the

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<sup>3</sup> Lechuga Ibáñez, C. (2019a). *Estudio preliminar sobre las bandejas de ofrendas en Qubbet el-Hawa*. MA Thesis. Granada, Universidad de Granada. Unpublished. Directors: Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez and Dr. María Isabel Fernández García.

<sup>4</sup> For more information, See Leemans (1840: p. 104).

<sup>5</sup> We can dismiss the connection of shaft tombs with intermediate and lower social group exclusively. A recent example of shaft tomb and high social group, is the tomb of Ii-Shemai (QH43bb).

<sup>6</sup> In 2015, offering trays were found at Kom Tuman. These were preliminarily dated between the Late Period (722-332 BC) and the Ptolemaic Period (332-31 BC). For more information, See IVANOV (2015: pp. 115, 125).

similarity of some of them to stone offering tables, has led to the conventional interpretation of these pottery offering trays as substitutes for stone offering tables for intermediate and lower social groups (PETRIE, 1907: p. 15; NIWINSKI, 1984: p. 806; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 111; SNAPE, 2011: pp. 163, 164).

However, pottery offering trays have also been found in certain tombs belonging to individuals of considerable social and/or economic status. The social groups of these individuals are identified by the funerary objects accompanying them<sup>7</sup> or by their titles (CHASSINAT and PALENQUE, 1911: p. 164; PEET, 1913: pp. 23-24; PETRIE, 1921: p. 66; PETRIE and BRUTON, 1924: pl. 38, 39; RYAN, 1988: pp. 30-31, 47-49, 59-60, 76, 80; CHUDZIK, 2015: p. 241; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2022: pp. 127-136). These examples deviate from the initial concept that these items were associated intermediate and lower social positions only.

This thesis also examines the divergence of thought among Egyptologists concerning the evolution and typology of these artefacts. On one hand, some researchers have advocated a linear and chronological development, transitioning from rectangular forms to house-shaped (known as soul houses) (PETRIE, 1907; NIWINSKI, 1975, 1984; SNAPE, 2011). On the other hand, particularly in recent studies, there has been a growing inclination to consider an independent evolution of their shape because of regional preferences (SLATER, 1974; TOOLEY, 1989; LECLÈRE, 2001, KILIAN, 2012, 2016; BARAHONA MENDIETA, 2018; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019a; MI, 2020). Finally, there are still doubts about the function of these trays. This uncertainty is due to the fact that these artefacts have been discovered not only in necropoleis, but also in fortresses and cities<sup>8</sup> (PETRIE, 1891 p. 9; DUNHAM, 1967; EMERY, *et al.*, 1979: p. 151; LAUFFRAY, 1980: p. 47; AZIM, 1980: pp. 161, 165; DEBONO, 1982: p. 381; CZERNY, 2015: pp. 352-354). However, even within the necropolis, they can also be found in different locations within the tombs, as Seen at Qubbet el-Hawa.

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<sup>7</sup> It is important to emphasize that numerous tombs containing offering trays were looted during ancient times, rendering it impossible to ascertain the entirety of the material inventory and establish a definitive connection between the tombs and a specific social group. This detail is considered by Tooley (1989: 300) and Kilian (2012: 113-114).

<sup>8</sup> Several fragments of pottery offering trays have been found under the temple from Ezbet Ruschdi, in Tell el-Dab'a. But the disturbed stratigraphy makes their interpretation difficult, and, thus, these artefacts can be assigned to the temple context or to the previous domestic structures, above which the temple was built in the middle of the 12th Dynasty (CZERNY, 2015: pp. 352-354). Likewise, this case would be similar to the offering trays found in Karnak (LAUFFRAY, 1980: p. 47; AZIM, 1980: pp. 161, 165; DEBONO, 1982: p. 381).

In the case of offering trays found at Qubbet el-Hawa (Aswan) and its surrounding areas, research is scarce, with only brief references indicating their discovery. These include offering trays found at Elephantine island by Rainer Kaiser, during the work of the *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut* and *Schweizerisches Institut* between 1969 and 1970 (KAISER, *et al.*, 1973: p. 90, note 1); at Aswan (MÜLLER and FOSTNER MÜLLER, 2015: pp. 194, 195); as well as Elmar Edel's trays; and the soul houses found by Lady Cecil between 1902 and 1904 in the necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa (CECIL, 1903: pp. 51-73; 1905: pp. 273-283). A significant number of pottery offering trays have been found by the Qubbet el-Hawa Project led by Dr. Alejandro Jiménez Serrano and Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez from the University of Jaén. These recent findings, together with previous discoveries, contribute to the formation of a remarkable collection. The new offering trays were discovered in different tombs: QH32, QH33, QH34ff, QH35p and QH36. Many of these objects are sherds found in a mixed stratum, but others are complete artefacts located *in situ*. Similarly, elsewhere in Egypt, offering trays have been discovered in various areas within tombs, including courtyards, shafts, and burial chambers. Hence, the objective of this research is to analyse the newly unearthed artefacts by the University of Jaén within their funerary and religious contexts. The aim is to establish a complete study of offering trays mainly in the Aswan area. Each of the pottery offering trays discovered in the region will be examined carefully together with other artefacts associated with their function. The aim of this comprehensive analysis is to present an ultimate theory for these trays. Furthermore, an exploration of the archaeological objects found in conjunction with the offering trays will provide valuable insights into their contexts. Lastly, the typology established during the preliminary study in 2019 will be reviewed and enhanced through the incorporation of newly studied artefacts.

### **1.1. Objectives**

From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the recent discoveries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a significant collection of pottery offering trays has been amassed from various areas of Aswan. Among these locations, the necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa stands out as the archaeological site where the largest and most extensive group of trays has been unearthed. Additionally, this area offers valuable insights into understanding these objects and their intricate relationship with the funerary and religious beliefs of ancient Egyptian society. Therefore,

the offering trays excavated by the Qubbet el-Hawa Project are the main objects analysed in this study. Their comprehensive analysis, facilitated by a multidisciplinary approach, will enable thorough research and study of these items.

This thesis endeavours to address several questions that arose during a previous study of pottery offering trays conducted in 2019. Specifically, it focuses on clarifying the following aspects: their function depending on the place where they were found; the relationship between these trays and Egyptian society and associated beliefs; the place of production; and the extent of their dissemination and associated interactions across different regions within Egypt, which in turn influenced their design. Furthermore, the recent finds have given rise to further questions regarding the chronological development of the offering trays, their presence in prominent tombs, their relationship with their respective owners, and the significance of the capital city in influencing archaeological material.

Therefore, the aims of this research are the following:

- To analyse and describe the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa.
- To compare the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa with each other.
- To pick up parallels and/or influences between these archaeological objects and other objects found in different archaeological sites.
- To classify them the offering trays according to typology.
- To study the offering trays in their archaeological and historical context.
- Interpreting the offering trays in their funerary and religious context of the Ancient Egypt, mainly in the first Nome.
- To understand their function.
- To know the relationship of the offering trays within the Egyptian society and their beliefs.
- To establish at place or places of production of these artefacts and the contacts/transmissions with other Egyptian regions that influenced them.
- To understand their presence in elite tombs and their relationship with the owner.
- To understand the relevance of the capital town on the offering trays.

- To create a database of the artefacts from Aswan's region

## **1.2. Methodology**

To conduct this thesis, the first step is a review of the documentary sources. For it, it is necessary to examine the bibliographic material about the offering trays and funerary sphere, mainly between First Intermediate Period and beginning Second Intermediate Period. This will provide information about previous theories relating to their contexts, use and function, their relationship with the society, and their origin, chronology, and manufacture. Bibliographic sources for the Aswan's region, and specifically Qubbet el-Hawa, will also be examined to provide a good understanding of the area of study.

Archaeological and iconographic sources will also be investigated in order to analyse the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa and the material related to them, and also those found at other archaeological sites. The aim of this research is to find parallels or influences between artefacts. Iconographic sources will be used to identify the elements that are modelled on the surface of the trays, by comparing the pottery items with banquet and offering scenes.

The next step is laboratory work to further investigate the information obtained from fieldwork, namely archaeological records, inventories, and graphic documentation. The acquired data will be compiled through the following methods:

1°. Archaeological excavations in different tombs of the necropolis. The current archaeological methods provide complete and multidisciplinary knowledge about the artefacts and their contexts.

2°. Rebuilding the fragmented offering trays using reversible techniques for the correct conservation and study of the artefacts.

3°. Graphic documentation (photography and drawing). This allows to record the artefacts for their study. The software tools for processing this documentation are Photoshop and Inkscape, widely used in the archaeological field.

4°. Study of the offering trays by non-destructive and comparative analysis. These techniques enable the identification of the clay, the method of manufacture, and other

relevant elements and features. For this I will follow the Vienna and the Munsell systems, which are criteria extensively applied to archaeological methodology in Egypt.

The chronology used in this research will follow Hornung, E. K., Rolf, K., and Warburton, D. A. (eds.) (2006) *Ancient Egyptian Chronology*, Leiden and Boston, Brill. This provides a chronology based on different sources including archaeology and epigraphy. Moreover, this chronology was used in the preliminary Master thesis, so there will be continuity across both studies. Archaeological agency will also be considered, bearing in mind that these objects would have been part of social interaction and society structure so should be considered a reflection of past actions and decisions (GELL, 1998; BARRETT, 2001: p. 22).

Finally, all the collected technical data on the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa will be included in a database created with Filemaker. This database will be available (on a website) for researchers wishing to study the objects found at Qubbet el-Hawa or from another region.

### **1.2.1. Limitations of the study**

During the course of this study, several limitations were encountered. Notably, the primary challenge lies in the geographical location of the materials. As they are situated in Egypt, the offering trays must be studied *in situ*. However, the country's legal restrictions prohibit the study of artefacts in locations other than those designated by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, so it was not possible to conduct all desirable analyses. Another difficulty is caused by the dispersal of the artefacts. While part of the collection is preserved in various tombs, together with a considerable amount of materials accumulated over many years, others are kept in the storehouse in Aswan, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Antiquities. Consequently, this arrangement hinders the documentation and analysis of the artefacts. The recent COVID pandemic further complicated the situation.

The study of offering trays discovered prior to the University of Jaén's excavation in the Aswan region, has proved to be complicated. Specifically, the offering trays from Edel's collection are stored in the Aswan storehouse. However, these artefacts are accompanied by a significant volume of material, making it difficult to isolate and focus on specific objects. Additionally, obtaining specific permission is necessary for their examination.

Furthermore, many of these artefacts lack proper contextual information, further complicating their study. These factors, coupled with the limited time available for this thesis, contributed to the difficulties faced when attempting to carry out a comprehensive analysis. In respect to the offering trays found in Elephantine and the soul house from Aswan, the situation is similar to the artefacts found by Edel. The location of the soul houses found by Lady Cecil is unknown.

As a result of these difficulties, it was necessary to focus mainly on the offering trays found by the University of Jaén. Moreover, the analysis and interpretation of these artefacts had to rely heavily on existing literature and the limited documentation provided by other researchers, requiring a collaborative approach in order to carry out a comprehensive study the offering trays.

Lastly, a significant challenge arises from the vast number of offering trays and soul houses discovered throughout Egypt, making it arduous to establish parallels or to identify their respective workshops. There are numerous examples currently housed in museums worldwide; however, databases often provide limited information about these artefacts. Moreover, the nomenclature associated with these objects is extensive. Consequently, publications and databases frequently employ varied terminology to refer to these artefact types, such as pottery offering trays, pottery offering tables,<sup>9</sup> or soul houses,<sup>10</sup> which often have the same features and different names in the sources.

## **2. State of the art: findings and previous studies<sup>11</sup>**

The pottery offering trays have been found in all Egypt's territory (TOOLEY, 1989: pp. 293-297; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 1001; KILIAN, 2012: p. 106; CZERNY, 2015: pp. 352-354), but also, in Nubia, concretely in the fortresses and cemeteries of Aniba, Buhen,

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<sup>9</sup> The author has concluded that this name refers to the quadrangular offering trays.

<sup>10</sup> Numerous publications interchangeably refer to simple offering trays as soul houses, or conversely, use the term offering trays to describe soul houses.

<sup>11</sup> At this chapter include offering trays and soul houses, due to the fact that the researchers have considered to them the same object.

Mirgissa, Qubban, Uronarti, Askut, Sesebi,<sup>12</sup> Sanam,<sup>13</sup> and Sedeinga<sup>14</sup> (FIRTH, 1927: pp. 67-68; STEINDORFF, 1935: pp. 40-41, 69; EMERY, *et al.*, 1979: p. 151; DUNHAM, 1967: pp. 55, 160; SMITH, 2003: pp. 127-131; RILLY and VINCENT, 2013: p. 63; VINCENT, 2016: p. 50). These artefacts have been found in various contexts, as it was mentioned in the previous chapter, which are domestic<sup>15</sup> and funerary spheres. In domestic contexts, offering trays have been discovered in Kahun/Lahun, Karnak, Buhen, Mirgissa, Uronarti, Askut, and Aswan<sup>16</sup> (PETRIE, 1891: p. 9; EMERY, *et al.*, 1979: p. 151; DUNHAM, 1967: pp. 55, 160; LAUFFRAY, 1980: p. 47; AZIM, 1980: pp. 161, 165; DEBONO, 1982: p. 381; SMITH, 2003: pp. 127-131; MÜLLER and FOSTNER MÜLLER, 2015). Meanwhile, the rest of the examples of offering trays have been found in necropolises. Thus, the locations of the findings in Egypt are as follows (TOOLEY, 1989: pp. 254-294; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 103, fig. 1; SMITH, 2003: pp. 127-131; KILIAN, 2012: p. 115, table 1; CZERNY, 2015: pp. 352-354; MÜLLER and FOSTNER-MÜLLER, 2015) (table 1, 2 and 3):

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<sup>12</sup><http://harbour.man.ac.uk/mmcustom/Display.php?irn=101098&QueryPage=%2Fmmcustom%2FHumDtIQuery.php> (Accessed 25/04/2022).

<sup>13</sup><http://harbour.man.ac.uk/mmcustom/Display.php?irn=196736&QueryPage=%2Fmmcustom%2FHumDtIQuery.php> (Accessed 25/04/2022).

<sup>14</sup> During the season of 2019, other three pottery offering trays were found in Sedeinga (II\_T347\_D001, II\_T347\_D002 and II\_T347\_D003), which are unpublished yet. Personal communication of Ms Marie-Paule Jung.

<sup>15</sup> Also, See footnote 6.

<sup>16</sup> In Aswan, a soul house was found, but it was in a secondary context. This artefact was reused in the pavement of a house (MÜLLER and FOSTNER-MÜLLER, 2015). Additionally, its typology was initially incorrect. Following the present thesis, this artefact has been correctly identified as a quadrangular offering tray, similar to artefacts found in QH33 (See chapter 5.1.1.).

<b>NUBIA</b>	<b>UPPER EGYPT</b>		<b>LOWER EGYPT</b>	
Aniba	Abydos	El-Tarif	Ezbet Rushdi	
Buhen	Armant	Esna	Giza	
Mirgissa	Asasif	Gebelein	Harageh	
Qubban	Aswan	Gournet Murrain (south of Qurna)	Kahun/Lahun	
Uronarti	Asyut	Hu	Saqqara	
Askut	Ballas	Karnak		
Sedeinga	Balat	Kôm el-Ahmar (Hierakonpolis)		
Sesebi	Beni Hasan	Kom Tuman (Memphis)		
Sanam	Deir el-Bahri	Matmar		
	Deir el-Bersha	Meir		
	Deir Rifeh	Mostagedda		
	Dendera	Qubbet el-Hawa		
	Edfu	Qurna		
	Elephantine	Rizeikat		
	Ehnasya	Sedment		
	El Kab	Töd		
	El-minsha			

*Table 1. Archaeological sites where offering trays and soul houses have been found.*

Domestic context		
Quantity of offering trays	Place	Remarks
2 Offering Trays <sup>17</sup>	Askut	Together with domestic shrine in a house
1 Soul House <sup>18</sup>	Aswan	Domestic structure
34 Soul Houses/Offering Trays <sup>19</sup>	Buhen	Debris of houses/barracks and streets
4 Offering Trays	Ezbet Rushdi	Under the temple, together with domestic structure
4 Offering Trays	Karnak	Domestic structure
3 Offering Trays	Kahun/Lahun	Houses
2 Offering Trays <sup>20</sup>	Mirgissa	Debris of houses/barracks
11 Offering Trays <sup>21</sup>	Uronarti	Debris of houses/barracks and streets

Table 2. Offering trays found in domestic context.

<sup>17</sup> Minimum two offering trays: a quadrangular tray and a rounded one.

<sup>18</sup> Soul house according to the authors.

<sup>19</sup> Several fragments of the offering trays and completes ones. Some quadrangular offering trays are published as soul houses. Additionally, most offering trays were documented in the field notebooks as soul houses. Documentation checked *in situ* by the author in 2023. Courtesy of the Robert Anderson Trust and The Egypt Exploration Society.

<sup>20</sup> Minimum two offering trays. Two fragments in room VI and 1 fragment in room XXXII.

<sup>21</sup> Fragments.

Funerary context	
Place	Place
Aniba	Harageh
Abydos	Hu
Armant	Kôm el-Ahmar (Hierakonpolis)
Asasif	Matmar
Asyut	Meir
Balat	Mostagedda
Ballas	Kom Tuman (Memphis)
Beni Hasan	Qubban
Deir el-Bahri	Qubbet el-Hawa
Deir el-Bersha	Qurna
Deir Rifeh	Rizeikat
Dendera	Sanam
Edfu	Saqqara
Ehnasya	Sedeinga
El Kab	Sedment
Elephantine	Sesebi
El-minsha	Töd
El-Tarif	
Esna	
Gebelein	
Giza	
Qurnet Murrai (south of Qurna)	

*Table 3. Offering trays found in funerary context.*<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The extensive corpus of offering trays found in funerary contexts makes it difficult to accurately account for them, as attempted in Table 2. Additionally, the current available publications and unprovenanced artefacts scattered across various museums hinder the proper provision of this information.

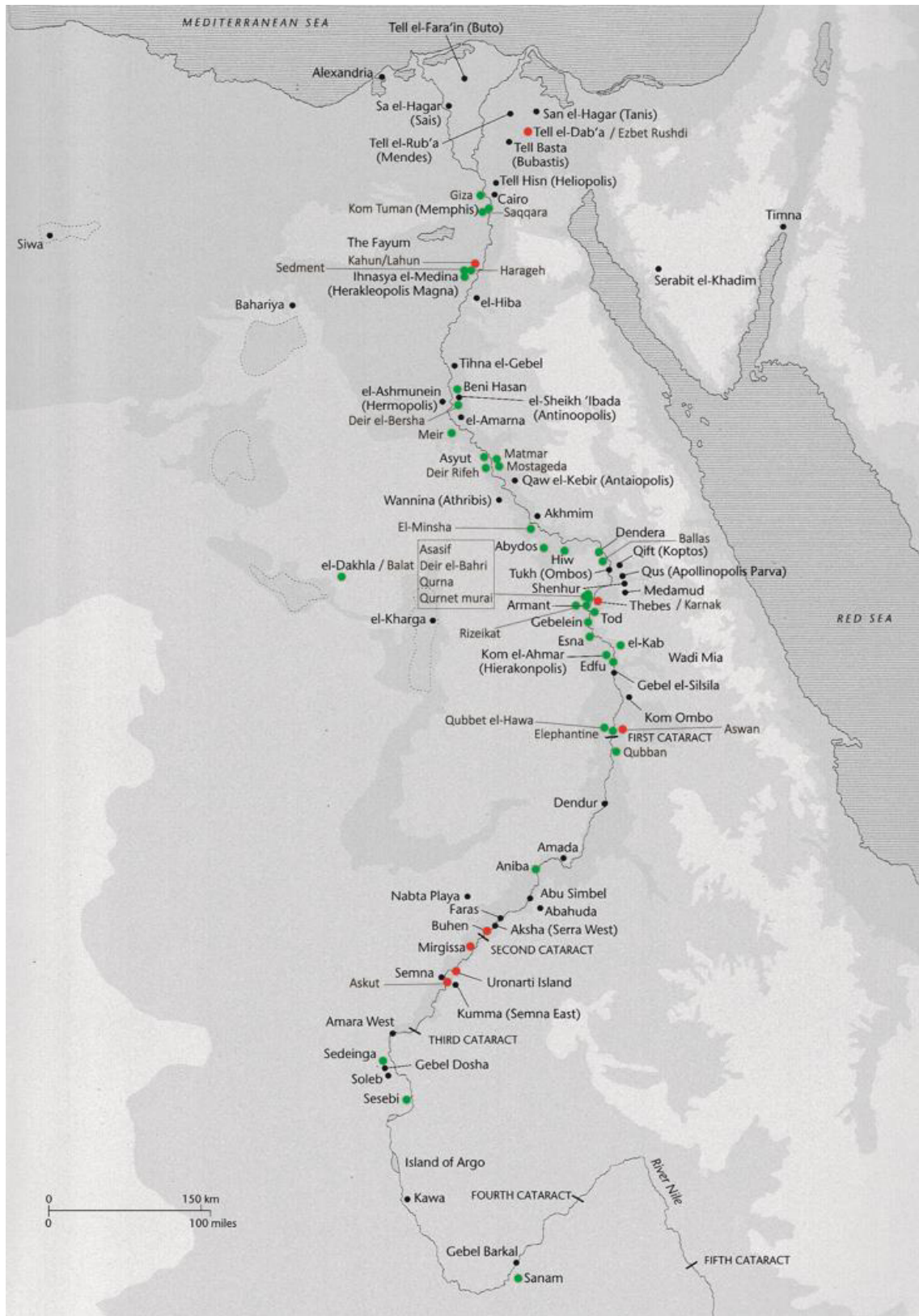


Figure 1: map of the distribution of offering trays and soul houses throughout Egypt. Red: domestic context. Green: funerary context. Map created by the author based on Wilkinson (2003: p. 9).

As for the first findings of these artefacts and their publications, it is worth mentioning William Matthew Flinders Petrie, who excavated at the town of Kahun in 1890 and discovered offering trays (Fig. 1) in a domestic area (PETRIE, 1890: p. 25, pl. 13; 1891: p. 9, pl. 4; 1891: pp. 7, 9, pl. 4). In his publication, these artefacts were only mentioned and described along with other objects dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

Later, in 1895, other offering trays and a soul house (Fig. 28) were found in the necropolis of Ballas by William Matthew Flinders Petrie and James Eduard Quibell (1896: p. 42, pl. 44). In their publication, they attempted to explain the presence of these artefacts in the tombs, which was caused by the reuse of ancient tombs during the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. They suggested that the offering trays with offerings on their surface would be a survival of the orthodox offerings of the 'New Race'<sup>23</sup> (PETRIE and QUIBELL, 1896: p. 42). This publication may be considered the first to attempt an explanation of the origin of these artefacts. This is due to the fact that offering trays were unknown artefacts for the first Egyptologists, among other objects. Likewise, they proposed that simple offering trays developed their shapes into soul houses (PETRIE and QUIBELL, 1896: p. 42).

Furthermore, in the following years, Petrie found more offering trays and soul houses in Dendera (1900: p. 26, pl. 19) and Hu (1901: p. 43, pl. 25); and Quibell discovered some in el-Kab (1898: p.18, pl. 5). However, in 1907, Petrie discovered an enormous group of offering trays and soul houses in Deir Rifeh. This discovery marked the first extensive study of these artefacts. Additionally, the Egyptologist created the first typology of these objects based on his findings at Deir Rifeh (PETRIE, 1907).<sup>24</sup> This has been the main reference for all subsequent studies on these artefacts and any new findings up until the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **2.1. First half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

After the aforementioned findings and studies (particularly from Petrie's study in 1907), subsequent researchers who discovered offering trays and soul houses relied on Petrie's publications as a reference, along with previous works by Petrie and/or Quibell.

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<sup>23</sup> Petrie's theory about an invading group in Egypt based on the features of the material found during the excavations, which were previously unknown to Egyptologists (PETRIE and QUIBELL, 1896: p. vii, pl. 6; CHALLIS, 2016: pp. 4-7), was highly relevant for several years. (WEBB, 1899: pp. 176-184; PETRIE, 1914: pp. 3, 199).

<sup>24</sup> After this finding, Petrie found more offering trays in Qurna (1909: p. 4, pls. 20, and 21).

Consequently, Egyptologists did not extensively study these objects. Instead, offering trays and soul houses were often regarded as poor materials lacking interest. Thus, during the first half of the 20th century, only brief references about the discovery of offering trays and soul houses can be found. These mentions do not offer new perspectives on these artefacts; they merely limit themselves to note the archaeological findings (KAMAL, 1901: pp. 38-39; SAYCE and CLARKE, 1905: pp. 251, 254; GARSTANG, 1907: pp. 33, 155; CHASSINAT and PALENQUE, 1911: p. 164; KAMAL, 1911: p. 14; CARNAVON and CARTER, 1912: pp. 28, 54; PEET, 1913: p. 24; KAMAL, 1916: p. 70; PETRIE and BRUNTON, 1924: p. 8; PETRIE, 1925: p. 11; CAPART, 1927: p. 48; FIRTH, 1927: pp. 55, 67-68; ; BRUNTON, 1927: pp. 38,67; 1937: 110; MICHALOWSKI, 1938: pp. 121,183-184, 189, 192-193; 1950: pp. 67, 82-84, 305, 306).

On the other hand, the publications that briefly examined these artefacts continued the research line of Petrie and Quibell (JÉQUIER, 1910: pp. 211-215; WAINWRIGHT, 1926: pp. 160-66, 170; BISSING, 1934: p. 106; MOND and MYERS, 1934: p. 77; 1937: pp. 59-60, 63; STEINDORFF, 1935: pp. 40-41; 1937: p. 69; PETRIE, 1937: pp. 4-5; VANDIER, 1955: pp. 976-978), suggesting that offering trays were developed from stone offering trays as an economic substitute for stone offering tables, and they finally progressed to soul houses (PETRIE, 1907: p. 15). In this way, they only limit themselves to referencing the above studies and explaining the presence of offering trays in archaeological sites from the point of view of Petrie and Quibell. However, in the mid-century, it is possible to find new analyses about offering trays and soul houses, which continued to be based on Petrie's study. Jacques Vandier in 1955<sup>25</sup> reduced the typology of soul houses established by Petrie, summarizing it into four groups based on their architectural features. Additionally, he delayed the beginning of the offering trays until the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The reason for this chronological change remains unclear. However, it may be linked to the features of soul houses studied by Vandier and the origin of the artefacts, as established by Petrie (1907: p. 15), who indicated their origin from stone offering tables of the late Old Kingdom.

Despite Vandier's study, Petrie remained the main authority on the study of offering trays and soul houses during the first half of the 20th century, with Quibell following him with the same interpretation.

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<sup>25</sup> For more information, See Vandier (1955: pp. 976-978).

## 2.2. Second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

During the second half of the 20th century, Petrie's study continued as a reference for the study of offering trays and soul houses. However, during these decades, there was a growing interest in these artefacts, leading researchers to present new ideas and studies that either diverged from prior ones or provided new information.

So, in the 1970s, a new study about these artefacts emerged, led by Andrej Niwinski, who conducted a comprehensive review and study of the offering trays and soul houses. He established a new formal evolution of these artefacts (1975: pp. 74-115) based on Petrie's study (1907) and the Warsaw National Museum collection. Niwinski's study became the most complete investigation on offering trays and soul houses to date, and it became the main reference for these objects, alongside Petrie's study.

Additionally, Niwinski researched into the origin zone of offering trays and soul houses, compared to the previous authors, and he pinpointed the area of *Iti-t3wy*<sup>26</sup> as the origin place. As for the chronology, he dismissed the suggested one of Vandier and Petrie and established the beginning of offering trays in the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. However, Niwinski retained the idea that offering trays developed from stone offering trays and that soul houses represent the last form in this evolutionary process.

Additionally, Niwinski conducted other studies about these artefacts during the next decade (1981: pp. 65-107; 1984: pp. 806-812). In the first study, he analysed the offering trays and soul houses found in Edfu, which are currently kept in the Warsaw National Museum. Niwinski also established four categories for these objects and examined their manufacturing process and the limited interest of researchers in them (NIWINSKI, 1981). In contrast to previous studies, this last one provides new perspectives on their production.

Later, in 1984, Niwinski reviewed his earlier study (NIWINSKI, 1975: pp. 85-93) and raised additional questions about the features of the offering trays and soul houses according to the region. Besides, he provided an explication for offering trays without items on their surfaces, which we will note later (NIWINSKI, 1984: pp. 806, 811-812).

Concurrently with Niwinski, Ray Anita Slater submitted her PhD thesis, where she analysed the offering trays found in Dendera by Henry George Fisher, among other

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<sup>26</sup> See chapter 4. Historical context of offering trays and study area.

artefacts (SLATER, 1974).<sup>27</sup> Slater examined different features of these offering trays and created a typology of offering trays from Dendera, which was based on the design complexity of the artefacts. Furthermore, she dated the objects between the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, according to the archaeological context. This study challenged the theory proposed by Niwinski (1975) about the chronology.

In addition, Slater proposed two origin areas for the offering trays different to Niwinski's suggestion. And two different developments, which differed to the previous authors' proposals. In the south, the rounded, oval, and horseshoe-shaped trays might have derived from flat plates. While, in the north, the offering trays with a quadrangular shape might have developed from Old Kingdom offering basins<sup>28</sup> (SLATER, 1974: pp. 402-403). Thus, this proposal contradicts Niwinski's suggested origin as well.

On the other hand, Rainer Stadelmann (1977: pp. 1067-1068) provided new data about soul houses that might contradict contemporary studies, especially Niwinski's ones. He highlighted that soul houses, as dwelling models, already existed in the Predynastic Period. Therefore, he repositioned these artefacts in the category of funerary models and, indirectly, he marked the first difference between offering trays and soul houses. However, this idea went unnoticed due to the relevance of Petrie and Niwinski's studies. It was not until the 21<sup>st</sup> century that the dissociation between offering trays and soul houses would be reconsidered, as will be explained below.

In addition, in 1981, Charles Kuentz published a study about offering trays without the offering models and the meaning of the drainage systems and dividing walls. He suggested that this type of tray could represent agriculture fields, and the channels and compartmentation could symbolize the irrigation system (KUENTZ, 1981: pp. 248-255). In regard to this type of offering trays, Niwinski mentioned another idea in one of his studies. He proposed that the libations became very significant symbolically, and the offering models were not necessary (NIWINSKI, 1984: pp. 811-812).

Another relevant study about offering trays and soul houses was conducted by Angela M. J. Tooley in 1989. This study was a chapter of her PhD thesis, and she reviewed all the offering trays found in Egypt. The chapter discusses the various shapes of the offering

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<sup>27</sup> These offering trays are mainly kept in the Penn Museum (Pennsylvania).

<sup>28</sup> Peter Lacovara and Betsy Teasley Trope (eds.) (2001: p. 25), in their catalogue, briefly suggested the same origin later years. See pp. 18-19 of this thesis.

trays and the different areas where they are predominant (TOOLEY, 1989: p. 294). She also explored the different types of offering trays and their respective features on their surfaces. Tooley followed the previous studies that suggested offering trays and soul houses were the same objects, but her new revision added proposals that were not considered before.

In contrast to previous authors, Tooley argued that the typology of the artefacts depends on regional trends rather than a chronological development. This idea aligns with Slater's proposal (1974) about different origins based on shapes. Additionally, she related offering trays to wooden house models and stone or faience models (TOOLEY, 1989: pp. 249-304), as all these artefacts served the same function of providing offering food to the deceased. Furthermore, Tooley discarded the origin zone and limits established by Niwinski, as offering trays were found in Nubia, and they are chronologically present in different places (TOOLEY, 1989: p. 300). She also suggested a new idea about the presence of offering trays in different zones of the tombs:

*...It is clear that originally offering-trays were conceived as substitute stone altars, and as such were placed in a position where the living could pour libations for the dead. Out of this practice developed the idea that the trays were self-contained providers of nourishment, a departure which meant that they could be placed in positions inaccessible to the living but not to the dead, thus effectively doing away with the necessity for the deceased's family to visit the tomb to replenish the food supply... (p. 302)*

Later, Niwinski provided a new publication about offering trays. He presented a review of his prior studies and does not provide new information. However, in this publication, he suggests a private manufacture. He proposes that the families could create the offering trays and, later, these were cooked in the workshops (NIWINSKI, 1997: pp. 41), something that had already been suggested in his previous study of 1981, but which he now insists on. In this sense, Niwinski was the first author to take manufacturing into account.

Despite the relevance and solidity of the research conducted by Tooley (1989) and Slater (1974), among others, Petrie's study (1907) and Niwinski's (1975) were the main references for these artefacts during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and even into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Consequently, the new findings of offering trays and soul houses, just like in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were only mentioned in publications or briefly studied

based on Petrie and Niwinski's studies and ideas, primarily (DUNHAM and JANSSEN, 1960: pp. 85-88; DUNHAM, 1967: pp. 3-10, 38-40, 43, 45, 49-50, 55, 143-144, 160, 163; ARNOLD, 1972: pp. 26-31; 1973: pp. 135-162; 1976: pp. 23, 34; 1978: pp. 136-139; DOWNES, 1974: pp. 93-94; HAYES, 1978: pp. 255-257; EMERY *et al.*, 1979: pp. 151-152; VERCOUTTER, 1979: p. 458; AZIM, 1980: pp. 159, 161, 165; BRESCIANI, 1980: p. 7; MINAULT-GOUT, 1980: p. 277; 1992: p. 7, 27, 124; 1995: p. 307; LAUFFRAY, 1980: pp. 47-48; BOURRIAU, 1981: pp. 118-119; 1988: pp. 101-103; DEBONO, 1982: pp. 378-381; EGGBRECHT, 1984: p. 166; NIWINSKI, 1985: p. 199; SNAPE, 1986: pp. 60, 267; RYAN, 1988: pp. 30-31, 34, 37, 41, 46, 48, 55, 59, 60, 65, 76; DONADONI ROVERI, 1990: p. 60; LUNSINGH SCHEURLEER, 1992: pp.89-90; BINEKOWSKI and TOOLEY 1995: pp. 80-81; PONS MELLADO, 1998: pp. 30-32).

Thus, during the second half of the 20th century, the first theories about offering trays persisted, suggesting them as substitutes for stone offering tables and proposing a chronological evolution, despite various alternative proposals. However, it is worth noting that new reviews have emerged, covering aspects such as chronology, origin, and manufacture, which had not been previously considered. Among these studies, Niwinski's work stands out as particularly influential. Consequently, Petrie, along with Niwinski, are currently the main researchers studying offering trays and soul houses. But, it is possible to note that these research are being obsolete nowadays.

### **2.3. 21<sup>st</sup> century**

In the 21st Century, researchers continue to build upon the main studies and ideas from the 20th century, particularly the research of Petrie and Niwinski, as primary references for new finds and contributions (TAYLOR, 2001: pp. 106-107; CZERNY, 2002: p. 138; DAVID, 2003: pp. 86, 186-199; RUMMEL, 2007: p. 34; BUDKA, 2010: pp. 516, 517; LÓPEZ GRANDE, 2011: pp. 581, 583, 59; VINCENT, 2013: p. 63; 2016: pp. 48-52; IVANOV, 2015: pp. 115-127; CHUDZIK, 2015: pp. 239-246; SECO, *et al.*, 2015: pp. 329-395; AMAN, 2016: pp. 73-93). Although, it is possible to find a mix of ideas of different authors. This is the case of Peter Lacovara in 2001. This author maintained ideas about the function and development of offering trays and soul houses as proposed by Petrie and Niwinski. Additionally, he incorporated a portion of Slater's proposal (1974:

pp. 402-403) regarding the origin of these artefacts from offering basins<sup>29</sup> (LACOVARA and TROPE (eds.), 2001: p. 25).

However, during this century, other studies have researched into offering trays and soul houses, providing new perspectives. Among them, the study of François Leclère (2001) stands out for being the first in the 21st century to provide extensive research and new ideas on offering trays and soul houses. This Egyptologist widely reviewed the offering trays and established their origin in Thebes's area.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, he created a new typology based on three groups: simple plates or trays, building models, and models with funerary architecture. He further divided these groups into various subgroups based on different features of the artefacts. Additionally, Leclère explored other aspects of offering trays and soul houses, such as chronology, development, and symbolism.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, this researcher provided new ideas about these objects and distanced himself from some established ideas, as the origin zone or chronology indicated by Niwinski (1975). Additionally, he established different developments for rounded, oval, and horseshoe-shaped trays, as well as quadrangular ones. This is reminiscent of Slater's study (1974: pp. 402-403). Additionally, Leclère noted in the Theban area round offering trays might be previous to quadrangular ones (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 120).

Furthermore, Leclère restated the regional trend previously expounded by Slater (1974) and Tooley (1989) regarding the predominance of quadrangular and other tray shapes according to different areas. Moreover, he indicated the beginning of soul house type from the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, a point that had not been previously considered (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 120). As for the disappearance of these artefacts, Leclère indicated that coincides with the wooden models ones, and the appearance and use of shabtis (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 120).

Nevertheless, while he brings soul houses closer to the wooden models, a point already commented on by Tooley (TOOLEY, 1989: p. 249), and previously intuited by Stadelmann (1977: pp. 1067-1068), in general terms, he follows the idea that offering trays and soul houses are the same artefacts, as it was established by Petrie and Niwinski.

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<sup>29</sup> See p. 16 of this thesis.

<sup>30</sup> See chapter 3.6. Origin zone and main areas of the offering trays and soul houses according to their features.

<sup>31</sup> See chapters 3.4. Development and function of the offering trays and soul houses and 3.5. Chronology of the offering trays and soul houses.

One year later, another study was published, conducted by Regina Hölzl in 2002. In this study, she analysed different aspects of the stone offering tables from different periods, as well as the components of the offering ritual. She also established a division of the different elements according to their functions:

- ‘*Real-Funktionale*’: These elements attend a material purpose, such as the channels.
- ‘*Magisch-Funktionale*’: These elements have a symbolic use, such as the modelled elements on the surfaces.

In this study, Hölzl included the pottery offering trays and applied the above functions to them as well. This was due to the fact that she considered offering trays to have progressed from the stone offering tables (HÖLZL, 2002: p. 74), as some mentioned authors have defended (PETRIE, 1907; NIWINSKI, 1975; KUENTZ, 1981; TOOLEY, 1989). Furthermore, Hölzl reviewed the placement of these artefacts in the necropolis, which would be over simple shaft-tombs according to her, and their function based on the features of offering trays and soul houses (HÖLZL, 2002: p. 126). As a result, she indicated an identical function for pottery offering trays and stone offering tables, which was also established by Petrie (1907) and subsequent authors (KUENTZ, 1981: pp. 144-145; TOOLEY, 1989: p. 302; NIWINSKI, 1984: p. 806), as explained in chapter 2.4. ‘Development and Function of Offering Trays and Soul Houses.’ Additionally, Hölzl identified that offering trays with architectural elements represented the cult space, a concept previously interpreted by Slater (1974: p. 311). Therefore, the novelty in Hölzl’s study lies in the distinction of functions of the elements on the artefacts.

Later, more studies were carried out by Andrea Kilian. The first one was her MA thesis in 2009, which has not been published. However, her study is accessible through an article published in 2012. In this article, Kilian presents a comprehensive review of the artefacts, including their elements, origin, development, chronology, and features according to the regions, function, and placements; as well as about the offering trays from Asyut. This study was a turning point because she distinguished between pottery offering trays and stone offering tables based on their elements, and the presence of stone offering tables and pottery offering trays in a same context. Additionally, she emphasized the presence of offering trays in “wealthier” tombs<sup>32</sup> (KILIAN, 2012: pp. 113-114). Later, Andrea

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<sup>32</sup> This was noted by Anne-Hélène Perrot (2018: pp. 71-89) as well (See p. 21 of this thesis).

Kilian published two more studies about offering trays and other pottery artefacts from Asyut (2016: pp. 173-195; 2019: pp. 107, 484). The studies conducted by Kilian imply that many deeply rooted ideas about offering trays from previous times can be discarded, and that the debate about offering trays is still open.

In 2011, Kate Spence carried out a study about soul houses, focusing mainly on those found in Rifeh but also reviewing other archaeological sites. She studied these artefacts, as well as the Coffin Texts,<sup>33</sup> which were also considered by Tooley (TOOLEY, 1989: p. 304). In the case of Spence, she suggested that all elements of the soul houses were intended to provide comfort to the deceased, and she proposed a different interpretation of the offering models of the soul houses:

*'However, the representation of the offerings in the courtyard of each soul house may also serve as a reminder of the role of the household in provisioning the tombs of deceased relatives and in carrying out the ritual activity associated with offering.'* (p. 908)

Likewise, Spence disagreed with the idea that the soul houses were related to the lower social groups (2011: p. 909), as some authors suggested during 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>th</sup> century. Here, it is possible to observe new perspectives that question established ideas, similar to what Kilian did in her study (2012).

Next relevant publication was carried out in 2018 by Anne-Hélène Perrot. This paper presents two offering trays found in the tomb APO.CN21 under the Ramesseum (Thebes). This tomb, was dated between the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, thanks to the material found. But, later, this tomb was reused (PERROT, 2018: pp. 72-73). The importance of this paper reside in the fact that it is possible to find ideas developed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that are becoming prevalent in the current research about offering trays and soul houses. Therefore, this study distances itself from strongly some established ideas by Petrie and Niwinski, and it is supported in the new proposals emerging in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that have opened up new lines of research on these artefacts, mainly those developed by Kilian (2012). Concerning this, it is possible to note that Perrot, like Kilian, disassociates the offering trays with only modest burials (PERROT,

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<sup>33</sup> In the case of Spence, she focused on architectural elements linked to the wind, as *malqafs* (See p. 53 of this thesis). The *ḥw*, wind, (also breath or air) appears in the Coffin Texts (Spells 297 and 355) as essential element for the life after death. But, also these spells are related to the idea of dwelling somewhere and both refer to a structure. For more information of this interpretation about soul houses, See Spence (2011: pp. 902-908).

2018: pp. 84-85). Also, another idea of Kilian (2012), which disagrees with the study of Hölzl (2001) along with mentioned authors from 20<sup>th</sup> century, is supported by Perrot. This is the independent development between stone offering table and pottery offering trays (PERROT, 2018: p. 85). Regarding the chronology, Perrot presents an idea suggested by Leclère (2001) previously. This is the rounded and oval trays in Theban region might have presence before the quadrangular ones, and, later, both shapes coexist (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 120; PERROT, 2018: p. 86). But, as Perrot points out, in the Theban corpus, there is not a relevant number of offering trays that have been studied together with the artefacts of a precise context to be able to confirm this absolutely (PERROT, 2018: p. 87).

The last proposal that Perrot briefly considers in a footnote is the difference between offering trays and soul houses (PERROT, 2018: p. 74, footnote 10). This will be kept in mind by subsequent authors, as it will be explained below.

On the other hand, in 2019, Filippo Mi conducted a study about soul houses from *Rijksmuseum van Oudheden*. In this research, he analysed various aspects of these artefacts, including chronology, development, and function. Additionally, he reviewed and studied the elements that comprise the group of soul houses kept in the museum and determined that the soul houses are tomb models (MI, 2021), as previously it was interpreted by Slater (1974: p. 311) and Leclère (2001: 112-115).

A year later, in 2020, Mi published another study about offering trays kept in the *Museo Egizio di Torino*. These offering trays were found in Asyut and Gebelein, while others are unprovenanced. In this study, Mi reviewed the features of these offering trays and established the main characteristics of these areas and typologies associated with them. This study is essential in understanding possible production centres or internal and external stylistic influences of offering trays in other places. Additionally, similar to what Kilian did, Mi differentiated between offering trays and stone offering tables, but in this case, due to the chronology, as the stone tables continued after the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (MI, 2020: p. 96).

Therefore, it is possible to notice that Filippo Mi has analysed the offering trays and soul houses separately, even though these museums keep both offering trays and soul houses. The reason would be that although traditionally offering trays and soul houses have been

considered the same object, they have characteristics that make necessary to analyse them separately.

In the same year that Mi published his study in 2020, Esmeralda Lundius also published another one about offering tables as ritual landscapes (2020), where she included offering trays and soul houses in a typology. In this, Lundius links pottery offering trays, stone offering tables, and soul houses, which were divided in the types A, B, C, and D (LUNDIUS, 2020: pp. 86-87). The reason of the types and the link of these artefacts to each other, it is due to she created this typology on the basis of the ritual landscape, and not on the basis of physical or stylistic characteristics. Moreover, she considers soul houses, pottery trays, and stone tables again as the same artefacts, just like Niwinski (1975; 1984) designated. Additionally, Lundius analyses these artefacts and their contexts, and she notes that the soul houses might be representations of tombs (LUNDIUS, 2020: p. 89), as Mi indicate in his study in 2019.<sup>34</sup> In short, her study, though, is not specifically about offering trays and soul houses, but rather about how she relates these artefacts in the stage of funerary rituals, where they would act as centrepieces in the ritual space (LUNDIUS, 2020: p. 88). Maybe, this is the reason for maintaining that association between the artefacts.

In addition, during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there are studies about concrete museums' collections,<sup>35</sup> such as the one conducted by Filippo Mi in 2020. These other authors, who have also researched the offering trays and soul houses from the Egyptian Agricultural Museum in Cairo, are Marzouk Al-sayed Aman and Taher Abd Elhaimd.

Marzouk Al-sayed Aman (2016) was the first one to publish his research on these artefacts through formal analysis of them. Later, in 2021, Taher Abd Elhaimd reviewed these offering trays and soul houses to suggest the provenance and date of the artefacts, which were previously unknown.

Thus, both studies complement each other and clarify some questions about these artefacts. However, the main references in these researches are once again Petrie and Niwinski's studies.

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<sup>34</sup> Study presented in 2019 in *Current Research in Egyptology 2019 at Alcalá de Henares (Spain)* and published in 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Marwa Abdel Razek Mahmoud presented her MA thesis about soul houses from Egyptian Museum (Cairo) in 2015.

Also, in 2018, Marisol Solchaga conducted a study in which she reviewed offering trays and soul houses, together with garden and agricultural elements depicted on them, and their symbolism (SOLCHAGA, 2020). She mainly followed the work of Kuentz (1981) and continued the ideas of Petrie (1907) and Niwinski (1975; 1984). In addition, this researcher defended her PhD thesis about offering trays in 2021.<sup>36</sup>

Apart from the studies aforementioned earlier, during this century, it is possible to find other studies that deal with offering trays and soul houses from new perspectives. In these cases, some authors only mention these artefacts because they are not the main topic of their research. However, these objects are included because they are found in domestic contexts. Furthermore, in some cases, they are found together with certain cult installations (SMITH, 2003: pp. 127-131). These studies associate offering trays with dead cults and/or ancestor cults<sup>37</sup> (SMITH, 2003: pp. 127-131; MORENO GARCÍA, 2010: p. 10; SCHIELSTL and SEILER, 2012, vol. 2: p. 398; HARRINGTON, 2013: pp. 124-125; PICARDO, 2014: pp. 67-68; MOTA, 2015: pp. 103-104; LEGROS, 2016: pp. 65-67, 90, 104). Thus, these demonstrate that the traditional function of the offering trays and soul houses might modify over time with new studies. They provide new perspectives that keep the study about offering trays and soul houses open, as Kilian (2012) slightly suggested in her article.

## **2.4. Aswan area**

In Chapter 1. Introduction, the findings of offering trays and soul houses in the Aswan area were briefly explained. Now, these artefacts will be described in detail.

### **2.4.1. First half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

The first findings of soul houses were those discovered by Lady Cecil between 1902 and 1904 at the necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa.<sup>38</sup> The first soul houses were uncovered outside tomb 23 (Fig. 56). These artefacts, which Cecil referred to as tomb models, were found

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<sup>36</sup> Personal communication. PhD thesis unpublished.

<sup>37</sup> Dead cult is carried out during the funerary act, while the ancestor cult is performed after the funeral. It is typically realized in the tomb or sanctuary on a regular basis (FITZENREITER, 2018: p. 54).

<sup>38</sup> The first excavations carried out in this place were in 1885 and 1886. The British General Grenfell and the Egyptologist Ernest Wallis Budge led these archaeological works. However, there is no evidence or records about offering trays or soul houses (BUDGE, 1920).

alongside other potteries, and she highlighted the good conservation state of one case, but not the other (CECIL, 1903: p. 72). On the other hand, in 1904, Cecil found another soul house outside tomb 29 (Fig. 2). It was also among other clay artefacts, but in this case, she did not comment on the state of conservation of the objects (CECIL, 1905: p. 278). The information provided by Cecil is scarce, and at present, the current location of these artefacts is unknown. Thus, the only reference about them is the reports of archaeological interventions published in the *Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte*.



Figure 2: possible location of Lady Cecil's tombs with soul houses. Image by the author based on Google Earth and De la Torre Robles (2019: pp. 114-115); Cecil (1903: pp. 51-73; 1904: pp. 273-283).

#### 2.4.2. Second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

The next offering trays found in Qubbet el-Hawa are from the second half of the 20th century. Between 1967 and 1968 when Elmar Edel found a large group of 24 offering trays<sup>39</sup> in different tombs of the necropolis. However, the original location of only 15 artefacts is known because not all of them were published (EDEL, 2008, vols. 2, 3). These offering trays were found in different tombs: QH90b, QH93, QH106, QH110, QH206a, and QH207 (Fig. 3). Meanwhile, the rest of the objects are decontextualized.

Currently, all offering trays found for Edel are kept at the storehouse of the ministry of antiquities in Aswan, except the artefact 106/1, whose location is unknown.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Information courtesy of Mr Osama Ahmer.

<sup>40</sup> 106/1 is the offering tray with text, which was discussed in Chapter 3.3.5. Unusual elements. The author has consulted and contacted, unsuccessfully, the database at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, Edel's register of the storehouse in Aswan, and the Bonn museum.

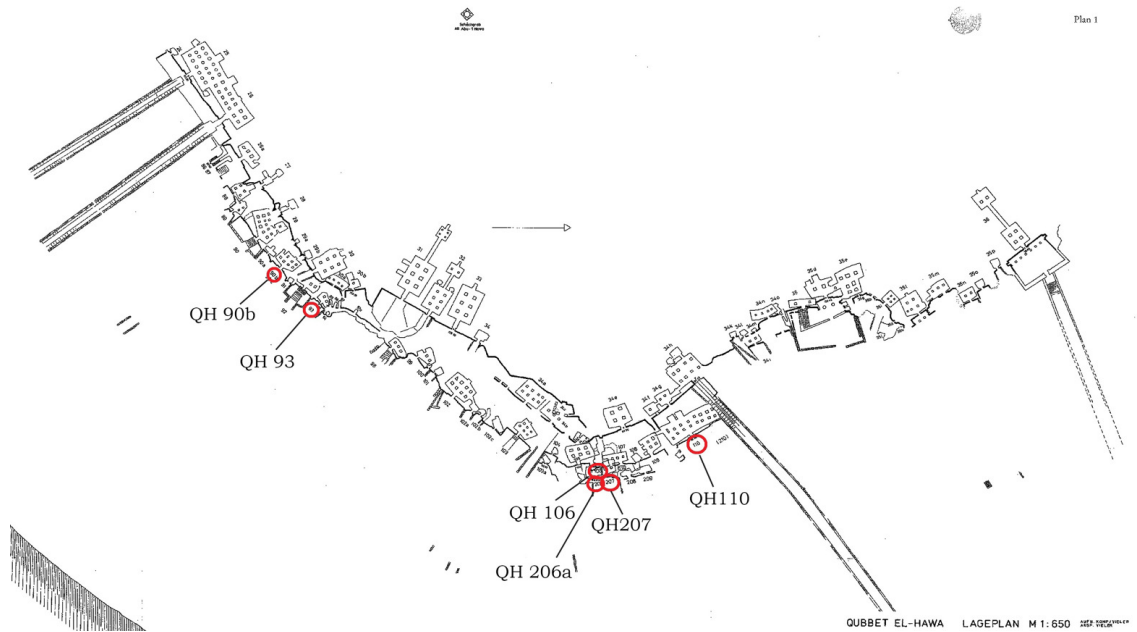


Figure 3: Location of the offering trays found in Qubbet el Hawa. Image of the author based on plan of Edel (2008).

These artefacts were either complete, fragmented, or they were merely sherds, as shown in the table 4.

In later years, between 1969 and 1970, there were new findings of offering trays in the Aswan area, specifically in the Elephantine Island. The archaeological work was carried out by the *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut* and the *Schweizerisches Institut für Ägyptische Bauforschung und Altertumskunde in Kairo* (KAISER, 1973: pp. 87-91). Werner Kaiser only provided information in a footnote about the offering trays found in the cemetery on Elephantine (KAISER, 1973: p. 90, footnote 1). There are no further records about them, but probably, these artefacts are kept at the storehouse of the Ministry of Antiquities in Aswan.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Personal communication of Mr Mahmoud Abdela.

No. offering tray	Tomb	Preservation conditions		
		complete	sherd	fragmented
0/754	QH90b	X		
0/665	QH93	X		
0/666	QH93	X		
0/667	QH93	X		
0/668	QH93			X
0/669	QH93	X		
0/621	QH93	X		
106/1	QH106			X
110/22	QH110		X	
110/91	QH110		X	
110/78	QH110		X	
110/90	QH110			X
0/1114.01	QH207		X	
0/1325.04	QH206		X	
0/1318.01	QH206/206a		X	

*Table 4. Conservation of the offering trays contextualized. Table based on Lechuga Ibáñez (2021: p. 27).*

### 2.4.3. 21<sup>st</sup> century

After the last finds, new offering trays were uncovered in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first ones were found by the Qubbet el-Hawa Project at the necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa between 2010 and 2020. This collection of offering trays was discovered in different tombs (QH33, QH34ff, QH35p, and QH36), with a total of 23 records of offering trays. These artefacts were found in shafts, courtyards, and chapels, and their state of preservation depends on

the tomb where they were found.<sup>42</sup> These artefacts have different designs, but many of them share similar features. These features are also present in the trays found by Edel, as it will be explained in Chapter 5.

At the same time that the University of Jaén made these findings, other artefacts have been found in Qubbet el-Hawa and Aswan. First of them, in 2015, the Swiss-Egyptian Mission, which has been working in old Aswan since 2000, found a soul house inside a domestic structure of the Middle Kingdom (MÜLLER and FOSTNER-MÜLLER, 2015: pp. 192-194). This artefact was fragmentary and was found face down, indicating it was in a secondary context as part of the pavement of the room (MÜLLER and FOSTNER-MÜLLER, 2015: p. 195). The authors analysed this artefact, basing their study on the research mentioned during Chapter 2, and they concluded that this soul house belongs to the 3rd group of the formal evolution established by Niwinski in 1975 (MÜLLER and FOSTNER-MÜLLER, 2015: p. 199). However, during the present research, this artefact has been identified as quadrangular offering tray similar to others found in QH33.

Finally, a few years later the Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Aswan, concretely in 2019, there was another finding at Qubbet el-Hawa. The Egypt Exploration Society and Macquarie University carried out archaeological work<sup>43</sup> in the causeway of QH351, which was divided in three sectors. These were the following: in the lower part of the necropolis (Site B), the mastabas zone (Site C), and at the end of the ramp (Site A) (BOMMAS, 2020: p. 20). During the work at Site A, the team found a fragment of an offering tray, possibly in a quadrangular shape based on the description in the publication<sup>44</sup> (BOMMAS, 2020: p. 31). The information provided about this artefact is scarce. Bommas only mentioned the type of clay (Nile C) and explained the group of pottery in general. This group of artefacts was eroded, probably due to their use as debris, or perhaps their original placement was in an exposed zone (BOMMAS, 2020: p. 31). Anyway, the original context of this tray is unknown.

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<sup>42</sup> These artefacts will be studied in the following chapters.

<sup>43</sup> Archaeological work, led by Dr. Martin Bommas, Professor at Macquarie University, took place between 2018 and 2019. Previously, between 2015 and 2016, interventions were executed by the University of Birmingham and the Egypt Exploration Society, also under the leadership of Dr. Bommas.

<sup>44</sup> Artefact described as 'offering table'.

## 2.5. Conclusions of the chapter 2

The studies of the offering trays are based on the first research carried out during the 20<sup>th</sup> century mainly. But they were rare, due to the lower consideration of them among the researchers. The reason about it, could be due to that fact that the archaeology was link to the aesthetics, which would be an inheritance of the history of art and collecting. In this sense, the offering trays are more about functionality than about the aesthetics of the object. The potter and the user of the artefact would give greater importance to the ritual and symbolic function than to its aesthetics, as it will show through this thesis, mainly in the chapter 5. However, there is a certain realism in the modelled items due to their symbolic charge. An example of this is the representation of the heads of cattle, to which it is possible to identify the breed to which they would belong, as it will be explained in the Chapter 3 (p. 44).

However, some researchers as William Matthew Flinders Petrie in 1907, who carried out advances in the archaeological discipline,<sup>45</sup> published the first extensive study about offering trays and soul houses found in Deir Rifeh. This publication is one of the most relevant studies about these artefacts, which was focused on the origin, function, typology, and typological development of the offering trays. This study was reference for new finds, and few new perspectives on offering trays and soul houses emerged during the first half of the 20th century.

But from second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a new study based on Petrie's study arose. This was the publication of Andrej Niwinski in 1975, which became in a new reference along with Petrie's research. Thus, both studies, Niwinski and Petrie, and their proposals have been accepted and followed by other scholars. Nevertheless, it is possible to noticeable new ideas about origin and chronology, as those of Slater in 1974 and Tooley in 1989. Therefore, we can note that the consideration of these objects among researchers was changing slightly. The reason would be the innovations and ideas that Petrie incorporated into the archaeological discipline, as well as the new currents that began to emerge from the 1960s onwards.<sup>46</sup> This will be progressively joined by the new trend known as Agency

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<sup>45</sup> Among many innovations, he created the system known as sequence dating, which is currently called seriation. For more information about William Matthew Flinders's contributions, See Woodbury (1995: pp. 23-24).

<sup>46</sup> New Archaeology. For more information, See Lerner (1994) and Nyambiya (2019).

Archaeology, on which the present thesis is based, as it was commented in the chapter 1.2. Methodology.

However, these studies developed during 20<sup>th</sup> century do not take into account the presence of the offering trays in domestic contexts and the link between society and these artefacts (Fig. 4). As for the findings in the domestic sphere, they are only mentioned and attempts are made to link the offering trays with the funerary context or with a workshop of offering trays (EMERY, *et al.*, 1979; LAUFFRAY, 1980: pp. 1-65). This creates a relevant gap in the knowledge of these artefacts, due to lack of information to expose an interpretation common for every artefacts. Additionally, it excludes understanding about users of these objects.

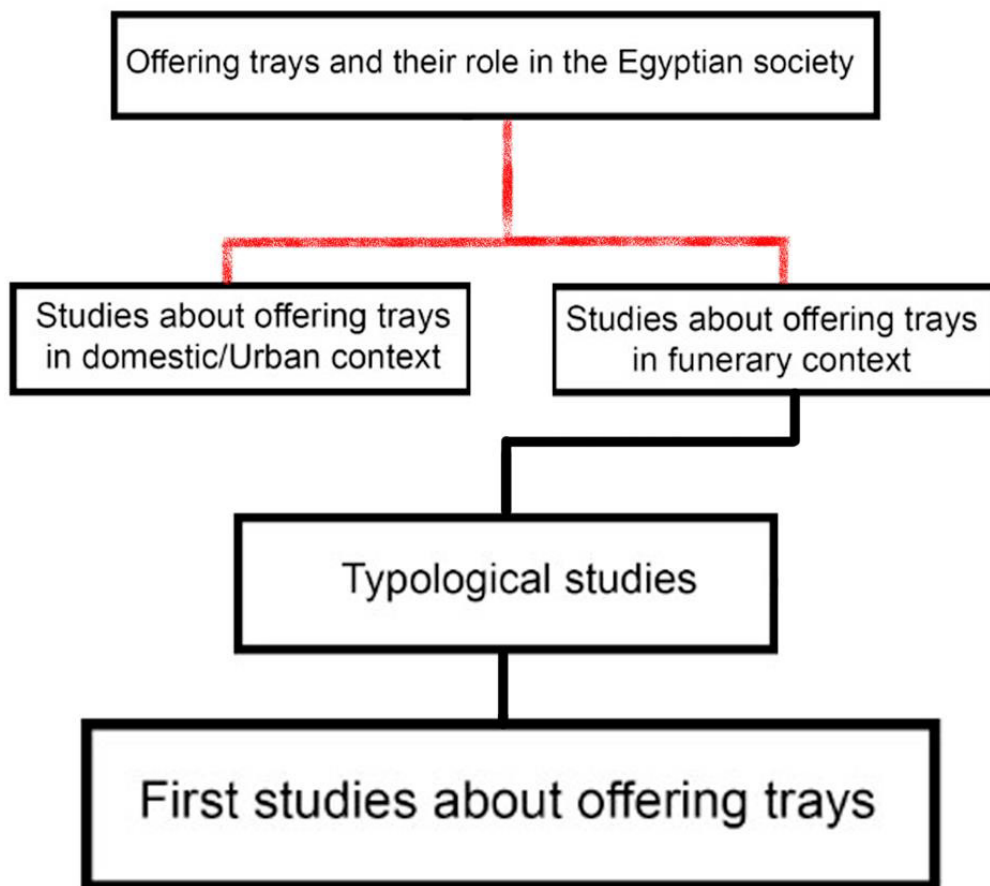


Figure 4: Red line: scarce or absence studies. Black line: studies carried out from the first ones. Diagram created by the author.

Regarding the studies carried out in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they provide new proposals, such as the origin of the offering trays, chronology, and differences between offering trays, soul

houses and stone offering trays (LECLÈRE, 2001; KILIAN, 2012; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019b; MI, 2020). But, many of them do not delve deep into this issue and only focus their proposals on physical or, scarcely, chronological features.

Finally, the studies about offering trays from Aswan region are scarce (MÜLLER and FOSTNER-MÜLLER, 2015; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019a). This does the general research about offering trays is unfinished, avoiding a correct interpretation and knowledge of them. This due to the collection of offering rays from Aswan, concretely Qubbet el-Hawa, provide a wide information about their contexts that allow to understand the artefacts and their function among other aspects.

### **3. Distinguishing between offering trays and soul houses**

In the current chapter, the distinction between offering trays and soul houses will be clarified. Within the field of Egyptology, there has been a prevailing theory that pottery offering trays and soul houses are essentially the same object. It is argued that the latter represents the final shape in the formal evolution of offering trays (PETRIE, 1907: p. 15; VANDIER, 1955: p 907; NIWINSKI, 1975: pp. 85-93; NIWINSKI, 1984: pp. 806-808). In relation to this matter, the proposed evolution, supported by multiple authors (HAYES, 1978: pp. 255-256; TAYLOR, 2001: p. 107; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 120; SNAPE, 2011: pp. 163-165; SPENCE, 2011: p. 908; MÜLLER and FOSTNER-MÜLLER, 2015: p. 199; LEGROS: 2016: p. 104), can be outlined as follows:

1. Simple offering trays (Fig. 5a-d): These trays exhibit various shapes such as rounded, quadrangular, oval, or horseshoe-shaped, mainly. Furthermore, their surfaces often display depictions of food offerings and/or drainage channels.
2. Offering trays with a model of hut (Fig. 6a): These trays bear resemblances to the aforementioned ones, but they also present a model of a hut on their surface. This element may include depictions of a seat inside, a hieratic human figure (Fig. 6b), or a stair on the side.
3. Soul houses: In this instance, the offering trays with a hut design evolve into complete architectural models, frequently incorporating a courtyard with modelled offerings (Fig. 7).

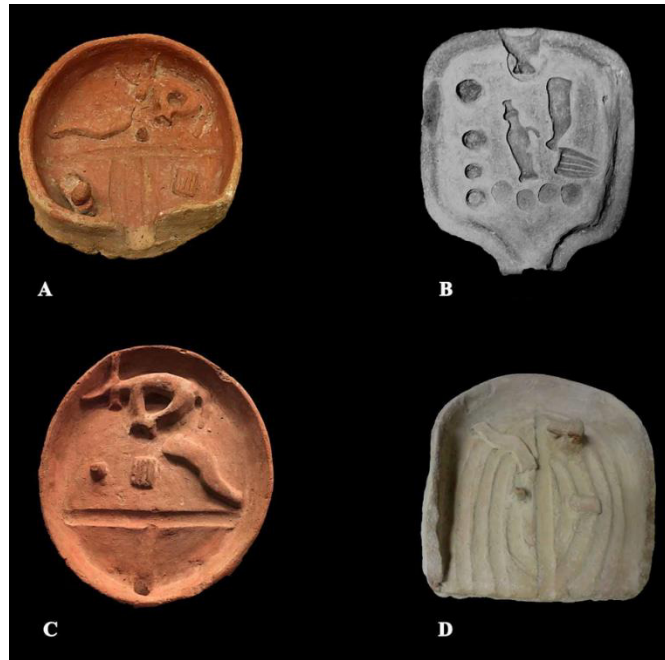


Figure 5a-d: a) Rounded offering tray. Unprovenanced, Antikenmuseum Basel, image courtesy of Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez; b) Quadrangular offering tray. Kahun, Penn Museum, No. E268; c) Oval offering tray. Unprovenanced, British Museum. Image courtesy of Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez; d) horseshoe-shaped offering tray. El-Kab, The Manchester Museum, No. 3078.

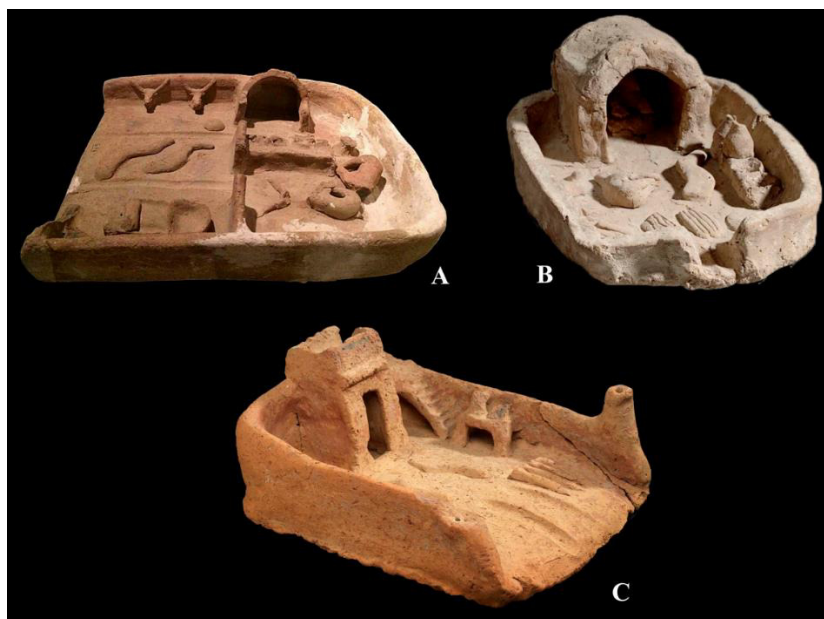


Figure 6a-c: a) Offering tray with hut, offering, table, and hand-mill models. Unprovenanced, Egyptian Agricultural Museum (Cairo), No. 676, image courtesy of Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez; b) Offering tray with hut, offering, stand, and anthropomorphic figure models. Unprovenanced, Ägyptischen Museums und Papyrussammlung zu Berlin, No. AM 14357, image of Sandra Steiß; c) Offering tray with hut, offering, stairs, and table model. Deir Rifeh, Royal Ontario Museum, No. 909.80.566.



Figure 7: soul house with portico, offerings, stair, terrace and *malqaf*.<sup>47</sup> Deir Rifeh, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, No. 07.231.10.

### 3.1. Pottery offering trays

Pottery offering trays are artefacts crafted from clay, and hand-made.<sup>48</sup> Although occasionally, they may be wheel-made<sup>49</sup> and finished to hand-made. These objects exhibit

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<sup>47</sup> See chapter 3.3.4. Architectural elements.

<sup>48</sup> The University of Oxford through experimental archaeology undertook the manufacture process of the offering trays/soul houses. For more information, See Blanks, 2017 in: <https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/news/soul-houses-of-ancient-egypt> (Accessed 01/01/2021).

<sup>49</sup> Upon reviewing a museum photography, the author of this thesis observed possible wheel-lines on the surface of the offering tray No. 5026 from the Manchester Museum. Similarly, Filippo Mi, in his study on the offering trays from the Museo Egizio (Turin), highlights a round offering tray that is likely to have been wheel-made (MI, 2020: p. 110). Further examples include the offering trays discovered in Kom Tuman, which, as stated by Ivanov, were likely manufactured using a dual process involving both hand-making and wheel-making techniques. This observation is supported by the presence of parallel artefacts found in the Petrie Museum (IVANOV, 2015: p. 115).

a variety of designs, characterized by the arrangement of their elements. Notably, offering trays commonly have several shapes, often featuring a rim or edge. These shapes can include rounded, quadrangular, oval, or horseshoe<sup>50</sup> (See fig. 5a-d) (KILIAN, 2012: p. 106). Moreover, it is occasionally possible to find other, albeit rare, shapes. These include triangular-shaped trays (Fig. 8a) (MI, 2020: p. 111), as well as a peculiar shape referred to by Ray A. Slater (1974: p. 307) as an ‘egg-tray’ (Fig. 8b-c), due to its resemblance to the depressions found in egg cartons.<sup>51</sup>

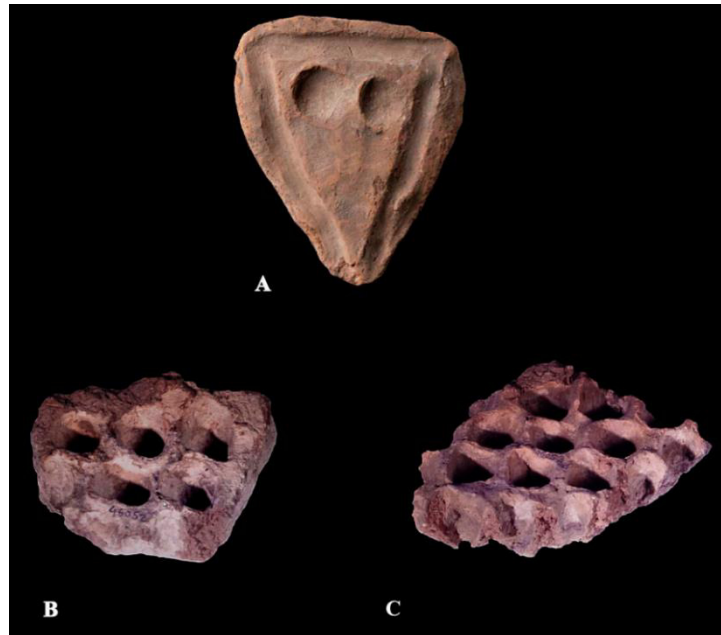


Figure 8a-c: Triangular offering tray. Gebelein, Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S. 11965. Image of Nicola dell’Aquila and Federico Tavemi; b) ‘Egg-tray’. Dendera, The Egyptian Museum (Cairo), No. 46052; c) ‘Egg-tray’. Dendera, The Egyptian Museum (Cairo), No. 46053, image by the author.

On the other hand, the offering trays display distinct characteristics that set them apart from one another. These include the presence of incised or modelled offerings (Fig. 9a-b), incised or modelled channels and/or basins, spouts (See figs. 5b, 6b, and 8a), and internal dividing walls (Fig. 9b). The wide range of designs observed by researchers is attributed to the creativity of the potter or sponsor of the object, the workshops involved, or the specific geographical regions. (SLATER, 1974: p. 402; TOOLEY, 1989: p. 249; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 4).

<sup>50</sup> Also called U-shaped (MI, 2020).

<sup>51</sup> There is another similar fragment found in Ain Asil (Oasis of Dakhla), which was described as ‘cellular sectioned plate’ by Sylvie Marchand (2012: pp. 413, 416, fig. 2, No. 2089-4).

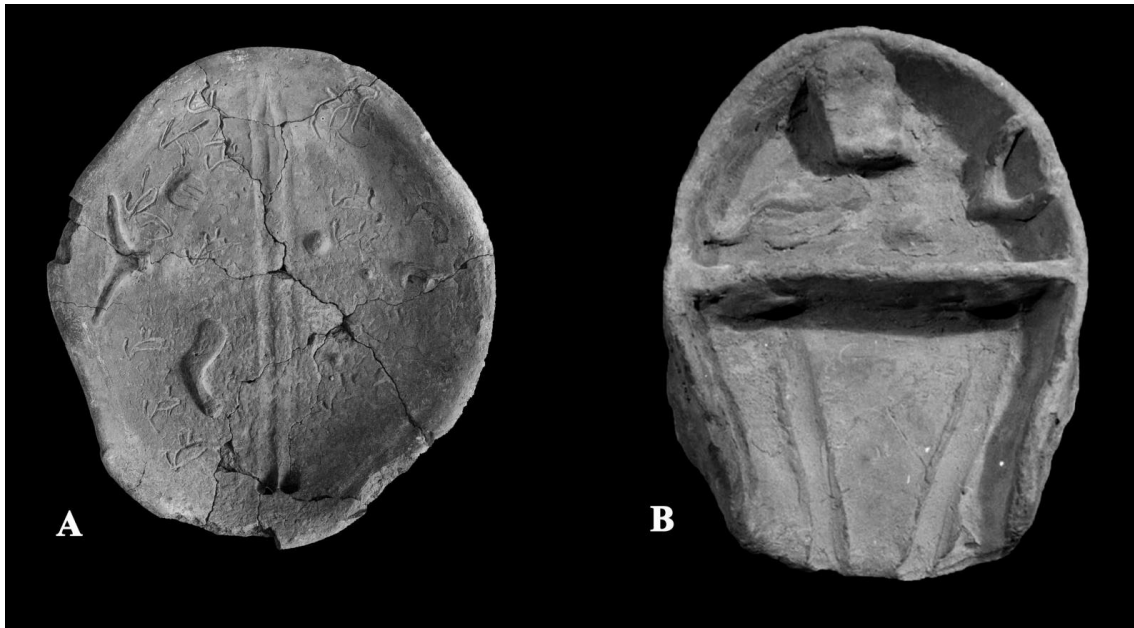


Figure 9a-b: a) Offering trays with modelled and incised offerings. Thebes, Deir el-Bahri, Tomb MMA 105, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, No. 28.3.257; b) Offering trays with transversal dividing wall. Dendera, Penn Museum, No. 29-65-704.

In addition, the offering trays commonly show a surface treatments. These are a red slip and/or a white coating (Fig. 10a-b). Typically, these treatments are found on the surface and edges of the trays. However, not all artefacts have these features, possibly due to poor preservation resulting in its loss over time. Alternatively, it is also possible that some trays were never coated (KILIAN, 2012: p.111).

In Ancient Egypt, the colour red was associated with concepts of life, regeneration, and protection (WILKINSON, 1999: p. 106). Conversely, the colour white was connected to ideas of the sacred, purity (WILKINSON, 1999: p. 106), and purification in funerary rituals (SEILER, 2005: pp. 116-117; YOSHIMURA, KAWAI, and KASHIWAGI, 2005: p. 396; KAWATI, KAZUMITSU and YAZAWA, 2012: p. 151). In relation to the latter point, researchers have noted that pottery artefacts coated with a thickness layer of white coating had a tendency to detach easily (SEILER, 2005: p. 116). As a result, once the tray was covered with this white layer, it is believed that it were not reused, as the white coating was not durable when exposed to liquids (KILIAN, 2012: p. 111). However, offering trays with white coating show a degradation of it. This makes it difficult to know whether they received libations or not.

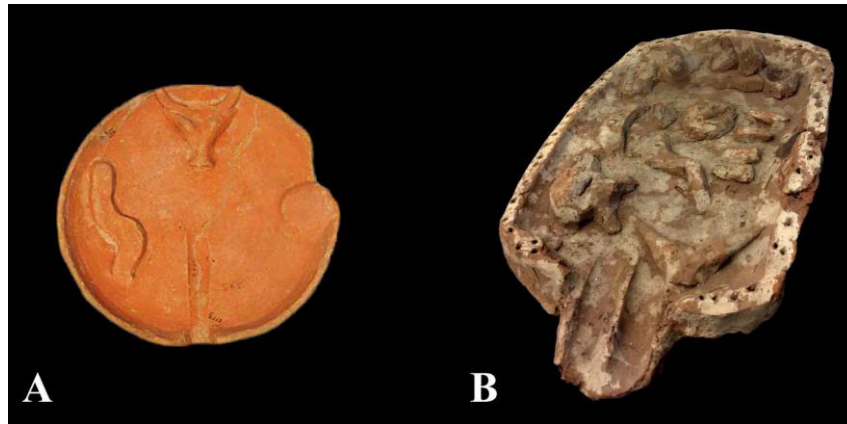


Figure 10a-b: a) Rounded offering tray with offering models, channel, and red slip. Esna, The Manchester Museum, No. 3773; b) Quadrangular offering tray with offerings, stands, spout and white slip. Unprovenanced, Bonn Museum, image courtesy of Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez.

With regard to the aforementioned features, it is possible to discern two main groups of offering trays, which were crucial in establishing an initial categorization of the trays (See chapter 5) from Qubbet el-Hawa (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019a; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2021). On one hand, there are offering trays that have a drain system (channels, spouts, basins, and/or dividing walls), as well as clay models (See figs. 5a-d, 9a-b, and 10a-b). On the other hand, there are offering trays that solely show a channels system (Fig. 11).

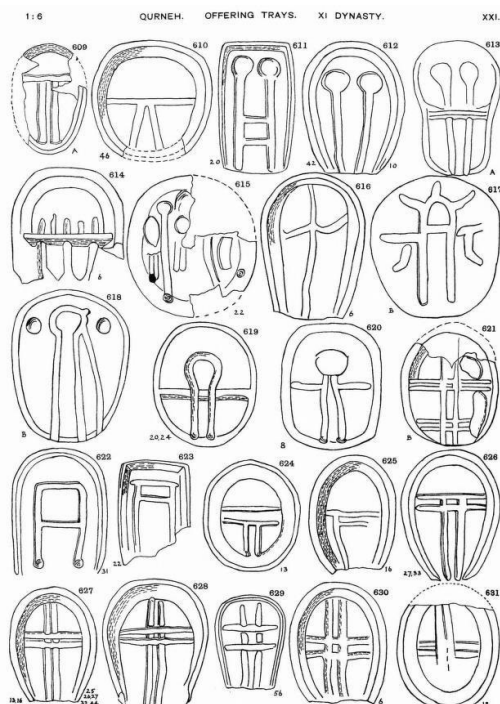


Figure 11: offering trays with only channels<sup>52</sup> (except No. 615). Qurna, image of Petrie (1909: pl. 21).

<sup>52</sup> The design of crossed channels could have response thanks to the study of Kuentz (1981: pp. 248-254), who interpreted that these channels were inspired by the irrigation systems used in Egyptian agriculture

### 3.2. Soul houses

Soul houses are considered by numerous researchers as pottery offering trays with a distinctive shape (See fig. 7). These artefacts show architectural elements on their surface, and many scholars consider to them like the ultimate development of offering trays, as it was explained.<sup>53</sup> This progression reveals two distinct categories: offering trays with a simple shelter on the back side (second group) (See fig. 6a-c), and offering trays with architectural elements as columns, multiple floors, stairs, terraces, and so forth (third group) (Fig. 12b-d). The latter type represents an authentic model of a dwelling, which may show a courtyard with miniature food models or may not (Fig. 13). However, some authors have identified these artefacts like tomb and/or chapel models (NIWINSKI, 1975; LECLÈRE, 2001). But also, there are another ideas about interpretation of the soul houses. In this case, the soul houses would represent different building type, due to the fact that they show some architectural features that are not present in the tombs (Stairways, rooftops, windows, windcatchers, under-stair storage units, water installations, and canals). These features are common in domestic building, and are seldom, if ever, found in tombs or temples (MI, 2021: p. 70).

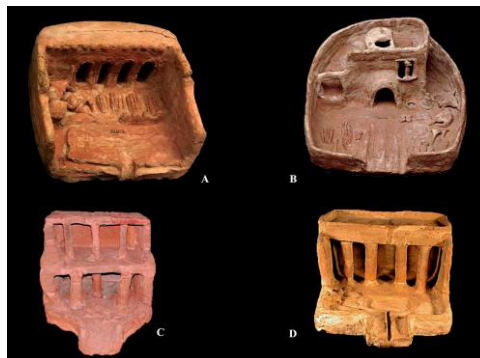


Figure 12a-d: a) Soul house with four openings and decoration, offerings, red slip. Unprovenanced, British Museum, No. 32613, image courtesy of Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez; b) Soul house with door and window, terrace, *malqaf*,<sup>54</sup>stair, offerings, channels, and white slip. Unprovenanced, British Museum, No. 32619; c) Soul house with two floors, columns, offerings, terrace, spout and red slip. Unprovenanced,<sup>55</sup> Fitzwilliam Museum, No. E. 58.1907; d) Soul house with portico and terrace, offerings, basin, spout, and red slip. Deir Rifeh, *Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire* (Bruxelles), No. 3175.

<sup>53</sup> See p. 2 in this thesis.

<sup>54</sup> See chapter 3.3.4. Architectural elements

<sup>55</sup> According to the author of the present thesis, the origin of this soul house could be Deir Rifeh due to the features showed on it. For more information about these features, See Chapter 3.6 and fig. 56 a-d.

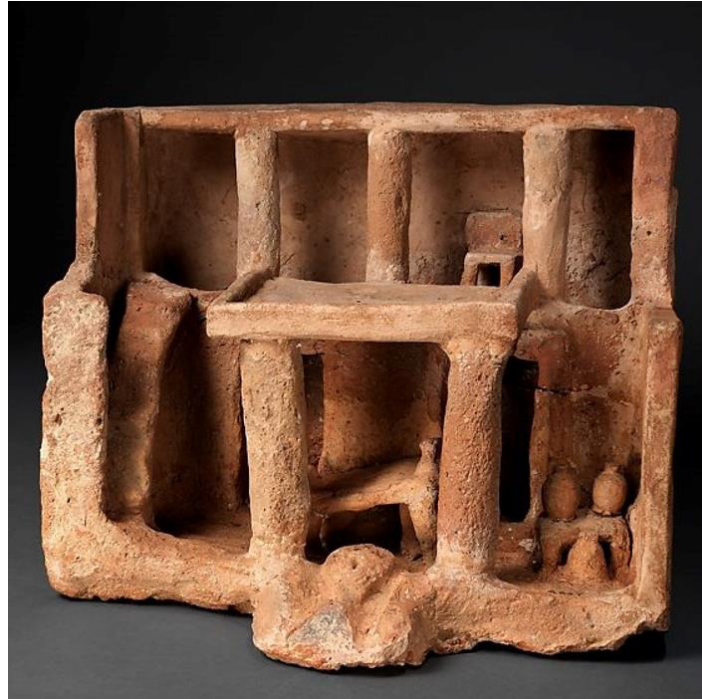


Figure 13: soul house with two floors, portico, stair, furniture, stand, jars models, spout, and red slip. Deir Rifeh, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, unknown register number.

In relation to house models, various researchers have posited that these artefacts not only represent actual architectural structures (both domestic and funerary<sup>56</sup>), but they may have also been a scale models of the houses of the deceased. (SMITH, 1938: p. 199; SMITH, 1960: p. 72; LECLÈRE, 2001: pp. 112, 115; SPENCE, 2011: pp. 901, 905).

In addition, soul houses typically show offerings or furniture models on their surfaces, along with the presence of drain systems or spouts. These features are observed in both types of artefacts, namely offering trays and soul houses. However, a notable distinction between the two lies in the prevalence of anthropomorphic figures doing different activities, which are more commonly found in soul houses (Fig. 14a-b). In contrast, the figures depicted on simple offering trays or offering trays with a hut assume a hieratic position (See Figs. 29d and 34a). Lastly, another shared characteristic is the use of a red slip or a white coating.

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<sup>56</sup> Both architecture types share elements. This is due to the connotation of the tomb as dwelling for the deceased. For more information, See Lacovara and Teasley, 2001; Kanawati, 2001; Leclère, 2001.



Figure 14a-b: a) Soul house with stair and column, offerings and anthropomorphic figure bearing a jar. Unprovenanced, British Museum, No. 22782. Image of the author; b) Anthropomorphic figure with a hand-mill, according to the museum description (bibliographic reference Petrie, 1907: pl. XXII). Deir Rifeh, The Manchester Museum, No. 4362.

Therefore, the primary distinguishing features between offering trays, whether they have a shelter or not, and soul houses are in the architectural elements they present.

### **3.3. Elements on the offering trays and soul houses, and their meaning in the ancient Egypt**

Regarding pottery models, they represent commonly offerings, which, as argued by Regina Hölzl (2002: pp. 72-74), have a ‘*Magisch-Funktionale*’ due to their symbolism. These models were typically crafted separately and subsequently incorporated onto the tray. However, in certain cases, the offerings were incised directly onto the surface of the artefacts. Among these offerings, various elements can be observed, as food and/or vessels that are the predominant ones. They often correspond to those depicted on the walls of tombs or other funerary objects (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022). Moreover, these offering types were either included in the offering formula or physically placed within the tombs (SPENCER, 1982: p. 55; LECLÉRE, 2001: p. 107; IKRAM, 2008: p. 361; SZPAKOWSKA, 2008: p. 192; KAMRIN, 2015: p. 30). Furthermore, it is important to note that these offerings represented those that were part

of the daily diet in ancient Egyptian society and were intended for consumption<sup>57</sup> (WILSON, 1988; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022).

Moreover, both the offering trays and soul houses exhibit additional elements that can be either modelled or incised, showcasing diverse designs such as the shape of the trays or the arrangement of clay models. These elements include incised channels, incised or modelled basins, modelled spouts, or modelled internal dividing walls. They may appear alongside offering models or other aforementioned elements, or alternatively, they may be the sole components displayed on the trays. The primary purpose of these elements is to facilitate the drainage of liquid from the libations performed on the artefacts. As Regina Hölzl's research established, these elements had a '*Real-Funktionale*' role due to their practical functionality (HÖLZL, 2002: pp. 71-72).<sup>58</sup>

Regarding these elements, both models of offering models and channels, create a noticeable division of space on the surface of the trays. On one hand, there is the area destined offerings and/or other elements, typically located towards the rear of the surface. On the other hand, the frontal part of the surface is dedicated to the channels and other features necessary for liquid drainage. However, it is worth noting that in certain instances, trays can be found with offering models placed inside the basins themselves (Fig. 15).

Regarding offering trays that solely feature channels, basins, and/or internal dividing walls on their surfaces, it has been suggested that they were inspired by the irrigation systems used in Egyptian agriculture (KUENTZ, 1981: pp. 248-254). Additionally, this particular type of tray has acquired the designation of 'Field-form' (TOOLEY, 1989: p. 249), particularly when they have a quadrangular shape. Another proposition posits that these trays could serve as models of gardens for the deceased (SOLCHAGA, 2020). On the contrary, Andrej Niwinski (1984: pp. 811-812) put forward the idea that libations assumed significant importance, rendering the need for offering models obsolete. Thus,

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<sup>57</sup> Depending on the social status of individuals, they would have greater or lesser access to one or other foodstuffs.

<sup>58</sup> For more information about the difference between '*Magisch-Funktionale*' and '*Real-Funktionale*', See Hölzl (2002).

it was believed that the libations alone were sufficient to provide provisions to the deceased.



Figure 15: offering tray with offering model inside basin. Unprovenanced, Louvre Museum, No. 26927.

### 3.3.1. Food models

Regarding the food models it is possible to find: bread, animals, or parts of them, as offerings of meat, and vegetables or fruits (Figs. 16a<sup>59</sup>-c,) (KILIAN, 2012: p. 107; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022).

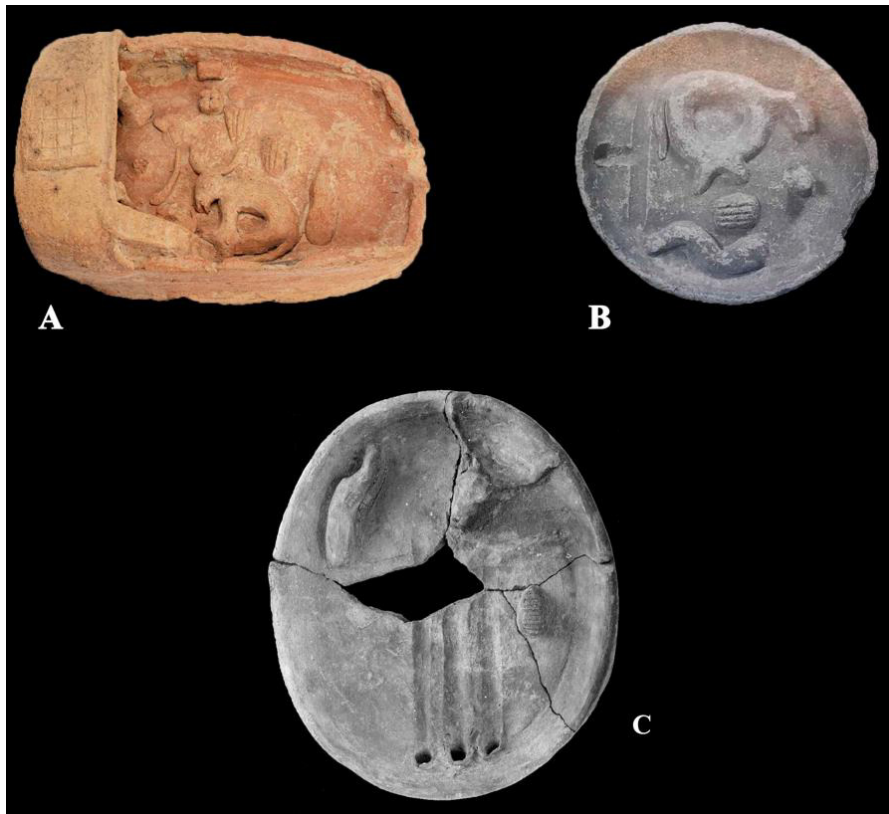


Figure 16a-b. a) Soul house with different offerings on its surface. Unprovenanced, Fitzwilliam Museum, No. E.15.1950; b) Offering tray with different offering on its surface. Saqqara. Image of Seipel (1989: p. 97, fig. 63b); c) Offering tray with ox head, leg, and ribs meat models. Thebes, Deir el-Bahri, Tomb MMA 101 Metropolitan Museum of Art, No. 28.3.210.

#### 3.3.1.a. Bread

As for the bread, it is common the presence of loaves with different shapes, including rounded, quadrangular, elongated, triangular, ovoid-shaped, or conical (Fig.17a-d) (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 107; KILIAN, 2012: p. 107; 2016: p. 183, 189; LÓPEZ GRANDE, 2012-2013: p. 98; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022). This food together with the beer were essential in the daily diet. These food were consumed frequently by individuals across all social strata (RUFFER, 1919: p. 45; WILSON, 1988: pp. 11-19, 21-

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<sup>59</sup> See footnote 64.

25; MENDOZA, 2017: p. 131; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022). Likewise, they were present among the funerary offerings, and his relevance is showed in the hieroglyphic system through the combination of signs  $\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{I}}\overline{\text{B}}$  (*pṛt-hrw*,<sup>60</sup> O3 Gardiner) which was essential in the offering formula. This sign encompassed the hieroglyphic sign of bread  $\text{O}$  (*t*, X3 Gardiner) and beer  $\overline{\text{B}}$  (*ḥnkt*, W22 Gardiner). Thus, these foodstuffs was important in the living and deceased world (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022). Nevertheless, the bread model is less frequent than other offering on offering trays, and this could be key to know the main aim of these artefacts (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022).

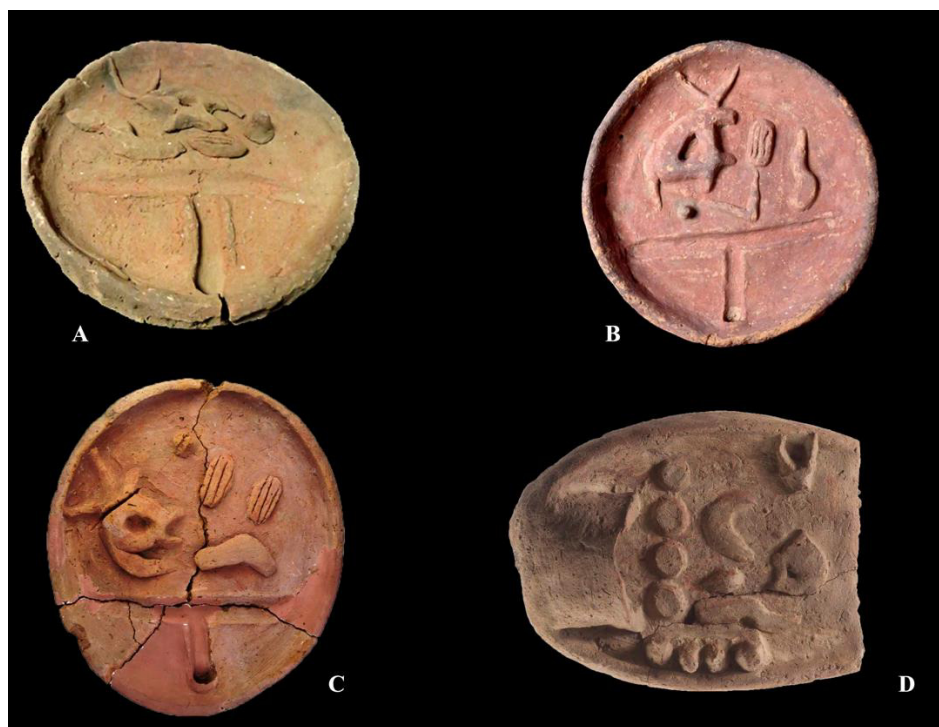



Figure 17a-d: a) Rounded offering tray with tied ox, leg, conical bread, ribs, and T-shaped channels. Unprovenanced, The Manchester Museum, No. 6212; b) Rounded offering tray with tied ox, leg, conical bread, ribs, horns, and T-shaped channels. Unprovenanced, Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, No. 2183; c) Rounded offering tray with tied ox, leg, conical bread, ribs, and T-shaped channels. Armant, Liverpool Museum, No. 1973.1.355; d) Offering tray horseshoe-shaped, with hut model and big offerings, among them rounded bread, head ox, tied ox, legs, meat piece, and jar models. Dendera, National Museum of Scotland, No. 189838264.

<sup>60</sup> For more information about this combination, and later variants, See Gardiner (1957: p. 172) and Faulkner (1962: p. 91).


### **3.3.1.b. Animals and parts of them**

Regarding animals and their various parts, it is common to find depictions of complete bovine (or headless), often with their extremities tied (See figs. 16a-b, 17a-c). Scholars have provided two interpretations of this prevalent image in ancient Egyptian iconography. On one hand, it is believed that this item represents an offering and, also, symbolizes the triumph of humanity over the adversities posed by the desert's hostile forces (PETERS-DESTÉRACT, 2005: p. 120). On the other hand, in some cases, the iconographic representation of the bovine on offering trays has been related to the *Schen* ring (SEIPEL, 1989: p. 97), due to its resemblance to this symbol, which worked as an amulet of protection and regeneration (ANDREWS, 1998: p. 77). Similarly to bread and beer, this protective item was also depicted as a hieroglyphic sign  (*šn*, V9 Gardiner).

In relation to some parts of animal, it is possible to observe portions such as ribs, strips or different pieces of meat, which, some of them, could be a heart model (See figs. 16a-c, 17a-d and 19) (EDEL, 2008: v2, p. 1288; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 107; KILIAN, 2012: p. 107; 2016: p.187; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022). However, the most prominently displayed animal parts are the head and/or the leg of an ox or bull (See fig. 16c-d), which were considered of high quality and significance in funeral rituals (WILKINSON, 1995: p. 87; SPENCER, 1982: p. 48; IKRAM, 1995: p. 199). Regarding this matter, a recent study highlights the various depictions of animal heads in the iconography. This suggests the utilization of calf's heads (specifically hornless ones) in offering scenes,<sup>61</sup> with a symbolic purpose of rebirth of the deceased, rather than being exclusively selected for their quality as meat offering (ELSAYYAD, 2017: pp. 411-412). Thus, the presence of the calf's head in the offering scenes would be associated with the rituals of rebirth and regeneration for the deceased. While, offering trays often show a head with horns representing a bovine. This animal might be identified as the breed known as Egyptian Longhorn Cattle. This identification is based on the long horns modeled on many of these clay heads present on the offering trays, resembling pictorial representations and archaeological evidences identified with this breed (VAN NEER,

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<sup>61</sup> Marisol Solchaga during her communication in International conference: *Living in the House: Researching the Domestic Life in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* IFAO-PCMA 27 to 30 November 2022, which was based on her PhD thesis, she points out the different heads showed in offering scenes and offering trays. In addition, in this last one, she identifies the slaughtering ritual in the offering trays through the head with horns and the complete ox.

2010: pp. 8-9). In the context of offering trays, these depictions could be interpreted as representations of food offerings due to their resemblance to the hieroglyphic sign  (*k3*, F1 GARDINER) in the offering formula. But, the legs and head of the bovine represent the ritual of slaughter, symbolizing the same concept as the representation of the tied animal. This symbolism is the victory over hostile forces. Specifically, the legs would symbolize the immobilization of enemies (DE MEYER and SERRANO, 2017: p. 405), while the head was considered the part that identified to the creature (ELSAYYAD, 2017: p. 411). Therefore, the inclusion of the leg and head of the bovine in tombs or artistic scenes would work as both food offerings and symbols of protection and security (DE MEYER and SERRANO, 2017: p. 405). Consequently, in the case of offering trays, they would have this dual function, working as both symbol of protection and food offerings. Therefore, the presence of bovine on the trays provides a different function to the wall scenes where the calf's head appears.

Other animals that are depicted on the offering trays, although less commonly, include fowls such as ducks and others unidentified species (Fig. 18a-b and 111a-b) (EDEL, 2008: p.1293; KILIAN, 2012: p. 107; 2016: p. 187). The first ones are often represented in the offering scenes of the tombs (Fig. 19), and his symbolism is linked to the fertility and the rebirth (O'NEIL, 2015: p. 42). On the other hand, the remaining birds were a significant part of the daily diet for the ancient Egyptians, being a primary source of protein (WILSON, 1988: p. 35; PETERS-DESTÉRACT, 2005: pp. 292, 293, 305). However, wild fowls were generally considered taboo within the religious context, as they were associated with chaos (*Isfet*) (IKRAM, 1995: p. 57; MENU, 2004: p. 93; GOLDSMITH, 2019: p. 343-345, 347-348). Thus, they would not have been considered suitable in the funerary event (IKRAM, 2008: p. 364; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022). Conversely, wild fowl have been discovered as offering models, and like ducks, they were also depicted in funerary scenes within tombs (IKRAM, 2008: p. 362, footnote 2). The presence of these animals can be attributed to two reasons. Firstly, they were a common source of food for all social groups. Secondly, in the higher strata of society, these fowls were specifically hunted. This practice symbolized the triumph over malevolent forces (IKRAM, 1995: p. 57; GOLDSMITH, 2019: p. 348). In this way, these animals together with bovine, and their representations, would be related to the slaughter ritual as well (FISCHER, 1978: p. 57).

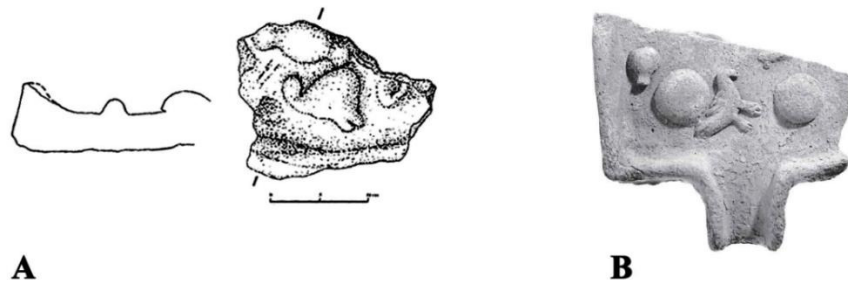


Figure 18a-b: a) Offering trays shard with bird, bread, and meat models. Asyut, image of Kilian (2016: p. 187), OT25 (S04/213); b) Fragmentary offering tray with bird, bread, and possibly fruit model<sup>62</sup> Balat, Image of Minault-Gout (1995: p. 307, fig. 12).



Figure 19: relief of the deceased together with an offering table with different food front of an offering table with different food, among them there are two ducks' depictions among other food offerings. QH36 tomb, Qubbet el-Hawa, Middle Kingdom. Image courtesy of Dr. Luisa María García González.

<sup>62</sup> See footnote 65.

The last animal, rarely present on the offering trays, is the fish (Fig. 20) (DONADONI ROVERI, 1990: p. 84; IVANOV, 2015: pp. 120-122, 125). This animal shared the same symbolism as the fowls, as they were associated with chaos (IKRAM, 1995: p. 57; GOLDSMITH, 2019: p. 343-345, 347-348). Nevertheless, it was a main product for the Egyptian society (WILSON, 1988: p. 35), and, concretely, the tilapia symbolized life, fertility and eternity in the Egyptian beliefs (JURGIELEWICZ, 2020: p. 401), as the duck representation. In addition, the fishing had an identical consideration to the hunting activity (GOLDSMITH, 2019: p. 348). Thus, his presence on the trays might have the same reasons as the fowls.



Figure 20: offering tray with crocodile<sup>63</sup> and, probably, fish models. Also, in the middle anthropomorphic figure. Unprovenanced, Petrie museum, No. UC7485, image of the author.

<sup>63</sup> For more information about crocodile, See chapter 3.3.5. Unusual elements.

### 3.3.1.c. Vegetables

Regarding vegetables, bundles can be observed on the offering trays. These food have been identified as onions, garlic, cucumbers, leeks, and lettuces models (BOURRIAU, 1988: p. 101); LECLÉRE, 2001: p. 107; KILIAN, 2012: p. 107; LEGROS, 2016: p. 90; AMAN, 2016: pp. 89-92, LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022). These foods were consumed in Ancient Egypt, and the lettuce, in particular, was associated with masculine fertility and the god Min (GERMER, 1980: p. 87; WILKINSON, 1994: p. 3; WILKINSON, 2003: p. 116; AMAN, 2016: 91). Thus, the vegetables would be present on the pottery trays as food offerings, with the exception of lettuce, which might add symbolic significance to the artefact (Fig. 21 and 111a-b). Additionally, among the food offerings, there are models representing fruits. The main types include figs<sup>64</sup> (See fig. 16a) (BOURRIAU, 1988: p. 101), doum fruits (Fig. 111a-b) (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022), and, probably, pomegranates<sup>65</sup> (See fig. 18b). These fruits held symbolic significance. On one hand, figs were consumed by the entire Egyptian population, and the fig tree was associated with the goddess Hathor, who was revered as the 'Lady of the Sycamore' (WILSON: 1988: p.27; MURRAY, 2000: p. 622). This deity was related to the female sexuality, love, and motherhood (WILKINSON, 2003: p. 141). The doum nuts were also commonly consumed (TÄLCKNOR and TÄLCKNOR, 1977: p. 269; MURRAY, 2000: p. 621; ISMAIL, MOSLEH, and EL WESHAHY, 2016: p. 4). In this instance, the tree of the doum nut was associated with the god Thoth depicted as a baboon (WILKINSON, 1994: pp. 2-3; MURRAY, 2000: p. 621; OSBORNE, 2014: p. 124; ISMAIL, MOSLEH, and WESHAHY, 2016: p. 8). Furthermore, this tree was also linked to the god Min (WILKINSON, 1994: pp. 2-3), and symbolically, it was associated with masculine strength (TÄLCKNOR and TÄLCKNOR, 1977: p. 269; MURRAY, 2000: pp. 619, 621). The last fruit is the pomegranate, which was known in the Middle

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<sup>64</sup> Possibly sycamore figs, due to they were the most common in ancient Egypt and eaten for all social strata. Besides, they had symbolism and link with the goddess (WILSON, 1988: p. 27). The offering tray No. E.15.1950 from the Fitzwilliam Museum shows a clay model that has been identified by the researchers as a plate with figs (BOURRIAU, 1988: p. 101). However, the author of this thesis identifies this model as a plate with rounded bread loaves, as there are no distinguishing features that clearly identify them as figs, based on other representations of this fruit.

<sup>65</sup> On the offering tray No. 281 from Balat, which is dates between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasties based on other discovered artefacts, shows a clay model identified as a *nw*-vase (MINAULT-GOUT, 1995: p. 307, fig. 12). However, the author of this thesis identifies it as a pomegranate. This interpretation is based on other vessel models found on various offering trays and soul houses, which are depicted in their natural vertical orientation. In contrast, the model on the Balat artefact is shown lying down. The only vessels depicted horizontally on the trays are *hs*-vases, which may be due to technical reasons, accurate representation, or, even, influenced by the *hs*-vases depicted on stone offering tables.

Kingdom, but it was not cultivated until the New Kingdom (GEISSEN and WEBER, 2008: p.287; MURRAY, 2000: p. 612; JACOMET, *et al.*, 2002: p. 84; DE VARTAVAN, *et al.*, 2010: p. 200; NIGRO and SPAGNOLI, 2018: pp. 51-52, footnote 6; EL-DIN and ELKASRAWY, 2020: p. 63). Also, this fruit had a symbolic meaning. It was related to the fertility, abundance, perfection, and sanctity (SPAGNOLI and NIGRO, 2018: pp. 49; EL-DIN and ELKASRAWY, 2020: pp. 64).



Figure 21: offering trays with meat strips (black) and lettuce (white). Unprovenanced, Bonn Museum, image courtesy of Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez.

### 3.3.2. Vessels

These include different types of vessels that were associated with funerary offerings, libation rituals, and even footed simple bowls (SCHIELSTL and SEILER, 2012: pp. 354-356). Examples of these vessels include *hs*-vases, bowls, jars, stands, plates, or *nw*-vases<sup>66</sup> (Fig. 22a-e) (PETRIE, 1890: pl. 13; 1891: pl. 4; 1900: pl. 19; 1925: pl. 28; PETRIE and QUIBELL, 1896: pl. 44; SLATER, 1974: p. 310; BOURRIAU, 1988: p. 101; MINAULT-GOUT, 1995: p. 307, fig. 12; BIENKOWSKI and TOOLEY, 1995: p. 80, fig. 126; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 108, figs. 2, 4; KILIAN, 2012: p. 109; MI, 2020: 101, 103-104).

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<sup>66</sup> See footnote 65.

These models can be identified with actual vessels (SLATER, 1974: p. 310; SCHIELSTL and SEILER, 2012) found in the tombs or depicted in offering scenes, as mentioned before in relation to food models (See pp. 42-49). However, in some cases, these vessel models show an unidentified type due to their schematic shape.

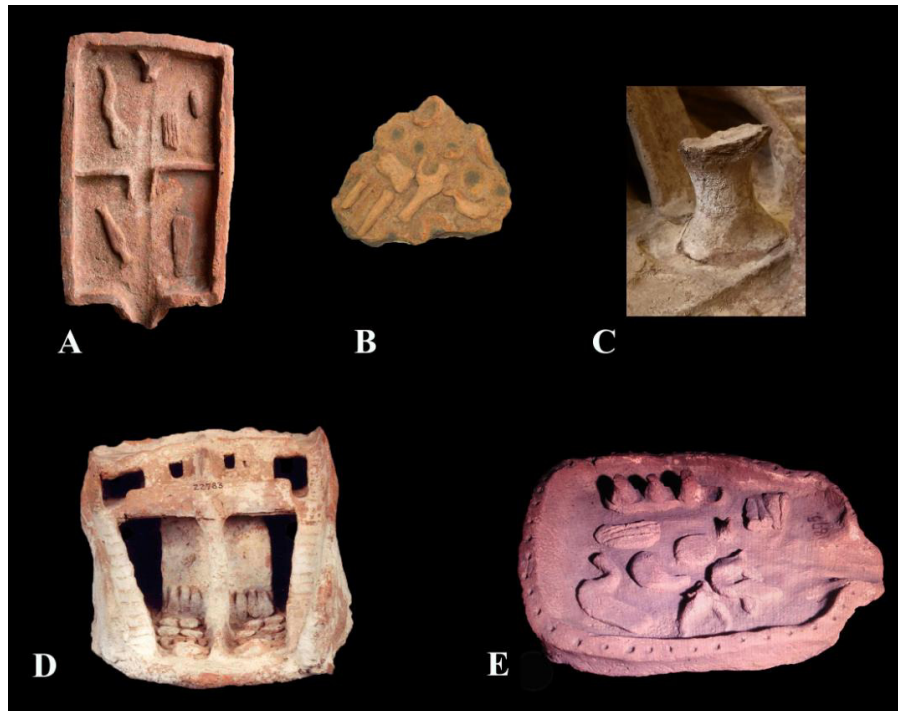


Figure 22a-e: offering trays and soul houses with different types of vessels among other clay models. a) Offering tray with *Hs*-vase and food models, walls in T-shaped, and spout. Asyut, Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S. 14940, image of Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni; b) Fragment of offering tray with food offering and *hs*-vase. Unprovenanced, University of Swansea, Egypt Centre, No. E705; c) Detail of footed simple bowls. Unprovenanced, British Museum, No. EA 32611. Image of the author; d) Soul house with food models and jars models. Unprovenanced, British Museum, No. EA 22783; e) Offering tray with food, jars, and stands. Unprovenanced, Egyptian Museum (Cairo), No. 1895.

### 3.3.3. Furniture

Other clay models represent furniture such as seats, tables and beds<sup>67</sup> (Fig. 23a-e). The seats are typically represented as quadrangular blocks placed at the back part of the trays (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 107, KILIAN, 2012: p. 107). Nevertheless, occasionally, they can show the back of the seat, armrests (BRESCIANI, 1980: pl. 6, fig. 3, No. 404), and/or the

<sup>67</sup> They used to be found in the soul houses.

legs. Additionally, they are rarely decorated with an incised pattern (SLATER, 1974: p. 309). According to researchers, the purpose of this element was to represent a seat for the deceased, who would receive the offerings located on the trays (SLATER, 1974: p. 309; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 107). However, in some cases, offering trays show seat model but not offering models (Fig. 45a), as Slater highlighted it (1974: p. 309).<sup>68</sup>

Additionally, sometimes, there are models of tables on the trays (PETRIE, 1900: pl. 19, figs. 7, 9; LECLÈRE, 2001: pp. 108, 109, figs. 2, 4). These elements could represent models of offering tables for the deceased, especially when they are placed in front of the seat or in the centre of the surface (Fig. 23d). However, on other artefacts, these elements can be found near of the edges.

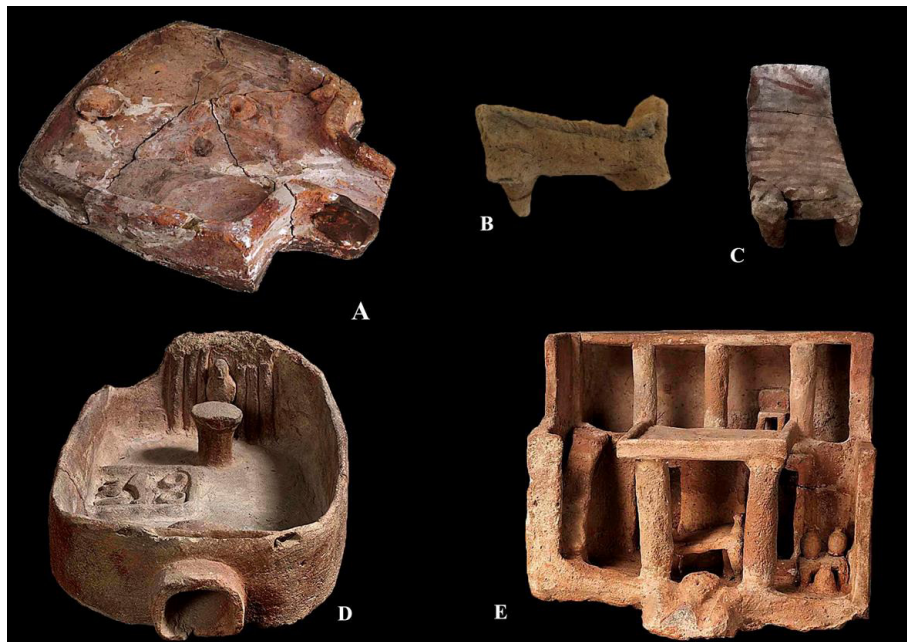


Figure 23a-e: a) Quadrangular offering tray with quadrangular block model, offering models, and spout. Armant, Liverpool Museum, No. 1973.1.352; b) Bed model belongs to soul house, but according to the museum it is a stand to jars. Deir Rifeh, The Manchester Museum, No. 4370; c) Bed model. Unprovenanced, Egyptian Museum (Cairo), unknown register number; d) Offering tray with offering model inside basin, rounded table, anthropomorphic figure, and false door. Unprovenanced, Louvre Museum, No. 26927; e) Soul house with two floors, portico, stair, furniture, stand, jars models, spout, and red slip. Deir Rifeh, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, unknown register number.

<sup>68</sup> In these cases the offerings could be provided to the deceased though of orality, as it is explained in the Chapter 4.7.2.1. Letters.

Regarding the seat models, another idea can be suggested based on the real shrines, which were sometimes coated with white plaster (Fig. 24a-c). This plaster coating may have the purpose of symbolizing purity (STEVENS, 2009: p. 4), similar to some offering trays (See p. 35). These shrines and altars bear resemblance to the quadrangular block models or even the seat models with backs found on some trays. Additionally, if we consider the depiction of the table model or incense burner positioned in front of the ‘seat’ on certain offering trays (See figs. 23d, 25 and 26c), it is a similar case of stone offering tables placed in front of tomb shrines or incense offering made in front of shrines or altars . Therefore, the models with legs could represent seats, while the quadrangular blocks or ‘seats with back’ could potentially depict altar models. This idea is supported by both real examples (Figures 24a-c) and shrine models (Figures 26c, 29a-e) that are explained in Chapter 3.3.4. Architectural Elements. In the latter case, shrine models typically depict a similar item within them (Figures 29c, 30c), which would be representations of altars belonging to these shrine models.

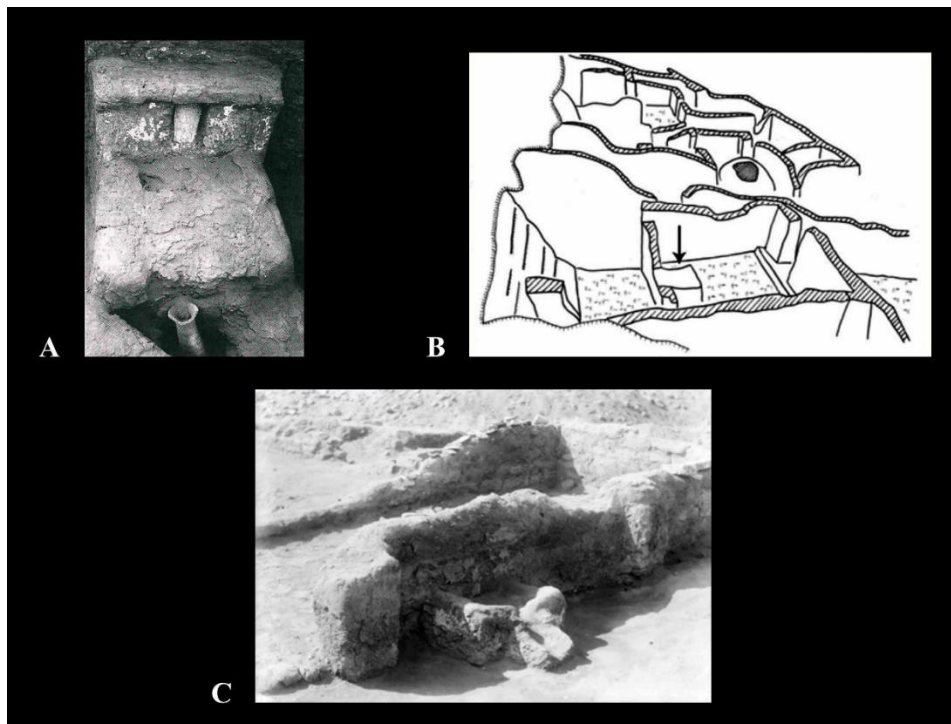


Figure 24a-c: a) Household shrine inside of a house at Askut fortress, Middle Kingdom, image of Smith (2003: p. 129, fig. 5.26); b) Possible mud-brick altar in a house at Lisht, around the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, image of Stevens (2009: p. 4, fig. 2); Domestic altar in the house P46.24 at el-Amarna, image of Stevens (2009: p. 4, fig. 3).

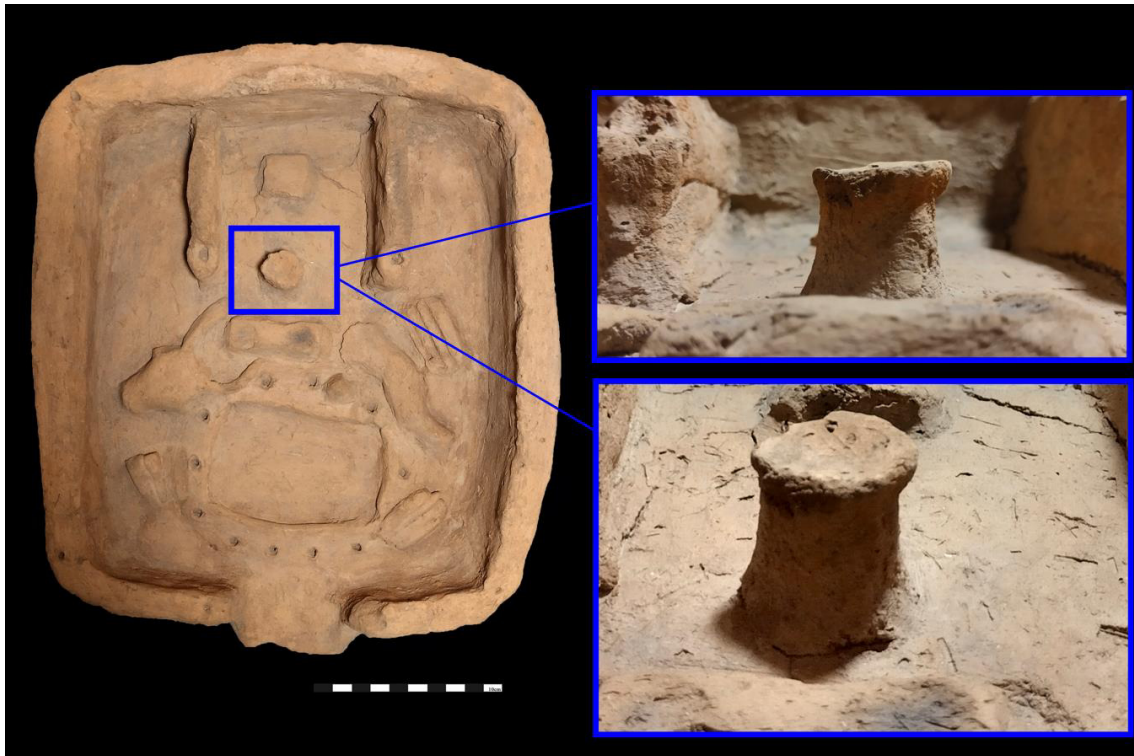


Figure 25: offering tray with ‘seat model’ and incense burner in front of it. El-Kab, Petrie Museum, No. UC18418, image of the author.

### 3.3.4. Architectural elements

The architectural elements are distinctive of the soul houses. Among them, there are buildings with one or two floors, featuring doors and/or windows. Usually, they also display furniture models inside them (See figs. 23e, 26a, d) and a courtyard.

In addition, occasionally, these buildings include a portico (Fig. 26b). The roof of these artefacts is flat and have a terrace or *satah* (Fig. 26a, c, d), which might present different elements. These elements may be models of seats, mats, crenelated balcony or any decoration (See fig. 12a and fig. 27a-b). Additionally, they may also incorporate *malqafs* (Fig. 26b), which are upper structures designed to facilitate ventilation within the buildings (SALA, GALLO, and SAYINGH, 1988: p. 90).

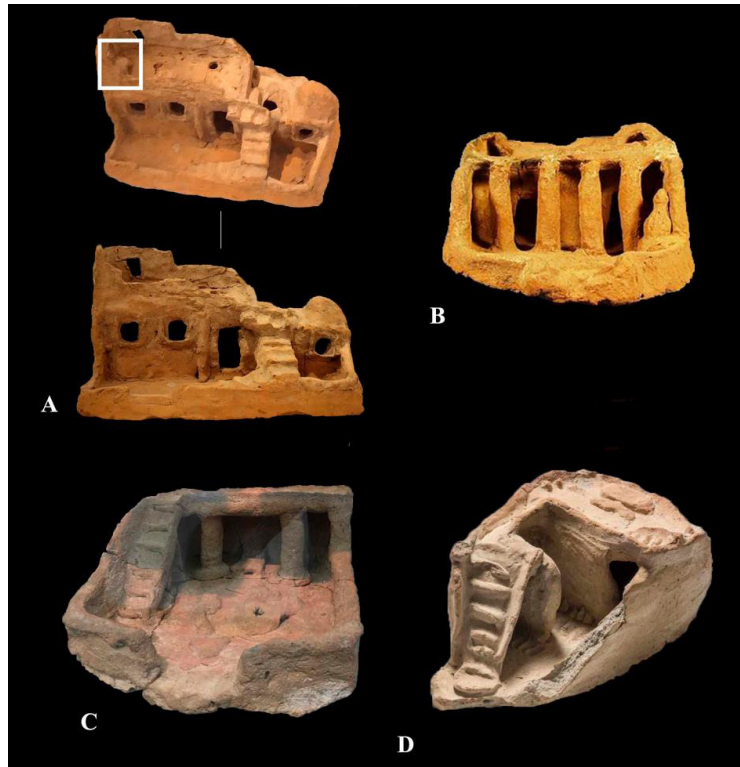


Figure 26a-d: a) Soul house with door and windows, stair and terrace. White square: table model. Unprovenanced, Ägyptischen Museums und Papyrussammlung (Berlin), No. 15089, image of the author; b) Soul house with portico, incised offerings, model jar, and malqafs. Deir Rifeh, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (Bruxelles), No. 3176; c) Soul house with column, stair, terrace, offering models, and 'seat' model inside. Unprovenanced, Leipzig Museum, image courtesy of Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez; d) Soul house with stair, terrace, and offering models. Gebelein, Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S. 16031, Image of Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni.



Figure 27: soul house fragments. Two of them are crenellated. Deir Rifeh, The Manchester Museum, No. 4390.

Also, these building models use to show a staircase, usually located on the exterior, leading up to the terrace. The staircase not only works as a completion to the building model but also holds symbolic significance (AMAN, 2016: pp. 87-88). It is associated with the act of ascending to the sky, as described in the Pyramid Texts<sup>69</sup> and Coffin texts (SETHE, 1908, vol. 1: p. 190; DER MANUELLIAN, 2005: pp. 56-57, 137-138, 292-293; ALLEN, 2006, vol. 8: p. 281; HAYS, 2010: p. 207; ALLEN, 2013: vols. 1 and 3; POPIELSKA-GRZYBOWSKA, 2015: p. 89). An example about this is PT 267, *Pyr.* 365a-b from the Unis' pyramid:



*sk.t n.f t3 rdw r pt pr.f jm r pt prr.f hr htj n jdt wrt*

*The earth is beaten into steps for him towards heaven that he may mount on it towards heaven...*<sup>70</sup>

Besides the aforementioned features, some offering trays have a simple shelter model, which occasionally is vaulted.<sup>71</sup> According to some researchers, this shelter could work as a refuge for the *ka*, resembling a primitive model of a house. However, when it is considered this shelter together with the cult shrines found in tombs or sanctuaries, noticeable similarities emerge<sup>72</sup> (Figs. 28, 29a-e and 30a-b). Additionally, the presence of this element on the offering trays is often accompanied by the quadrangular block or 'seat' model (Figs. 29e and 30c).<sup>73</sup> But also, rarely, a hieratic human figure may be showed (Fig. 29d).

<sup>69</sup> Since kings of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty it is possible to find this reference inside their tombs. For more information, See Allen (2005).

<sup>70</sup> Transcription, transliteration, and translation of PT267 365 of according to Allen (2013) and Piankoff (1968: p. 40, pl. 25).

<sup>71</sup> These particular trays belong to the second group discussed in the evolution described in chapter 3. Distinguishing between offering trays and soul houses (See p.31).

<sup>72</sup> Andrej Niwinski (1984: pp. 806-807) and Filippo Mi (2021: p. 73) noted this proposal as well.

<sup>73</sup> Here, the author identifies the shrine model as seat to understand the refereed element.



Figure 28a-c: a) Cult shrine from QH31 tomb, Qubbet el- Hawa (Aswan), image of the author; b) Cult shrine QH33 tomb. Qubbet el- Hawa (Aswan), image courtesy of Juan Luis Martínez de Dios; c) Cult shrines of Heqaib (deified) and Sarenput I. Heqaib's temple, Elephantine (Aswan), image of the author



Figure 29a-e: a) Offering tray with cult shrine and offering models. Unprovenanced, Garstang Museum, No. 6355 Image courtesy of Dr. Luisa M. García González; b) Offering tray with cult shrine with decorated frieze and offering models. Deir Rifeh, Royal Ontario Museum, No. 918.32.23; c) Offering tray with cult shrine, stair, offerings, jars, seats and stand models. Deir Rifeh, Royal Ontario Museum, No. 909.80.566; d) Offering tray with vaulted cult shrine, offering, stand, and anthropomorphic model inside the shrine. Unprovenanced, Ägyptischen Museums und Papyrussammlung (Berlin), No. AM 14357, image of Sandra Steiß; e) offering tray with vaulted cult shrine, offering models, and spout. Deir Rifeh, Petrie Museum, No. 18410.

Therefore, the similarities between real shrines and these models, along with the cultural context surrounding the offering trays, lead us to dismiss the shelter model or a rudimentary house model. Hence, it is more accurately a representation of a cult shrine, as has been occasionally identified (NIWINSKI, 1997: pp. 171-172). This idea is further supported by pottery models identified as tomb models or soul houses with only one room (Figs. 30a-b), reminiscent of real cult shrines and the models found on offering trays. Consequently, we can also suggest that these models, initially identified as tombs or single-roomed soul houses, may also represent shrines.



Figure 30a-c: a) According to museum, it is a soul house with only one room. Deir Rifeh, The Manchester Museum, No. 4377; b) Tomb model according to Niwinski. Edfu, image of Michalowski, *et al.* (1938, vol. 2: pl 42) and Niwinski (1981: pp. 101-102); c) Pottery chapel model with shrine inside. Unprovenanced, British Museum, No. EA 32611, image of the author.

### 3.3.5. Unusual elements

On the offering trays, there are other uncommon clay elements that are rare in comparison to the previous ones. These are the following: small holes (Fig. 31a), some animal

depiction, human figures (Fig. 31b), text (Fig. 125a-b), tools (Fig. 31c), parts of the body of person (Fig. 31d), feathers (Fig. 31e), and grain storages<sup>74</sup> (Fig. 31f).

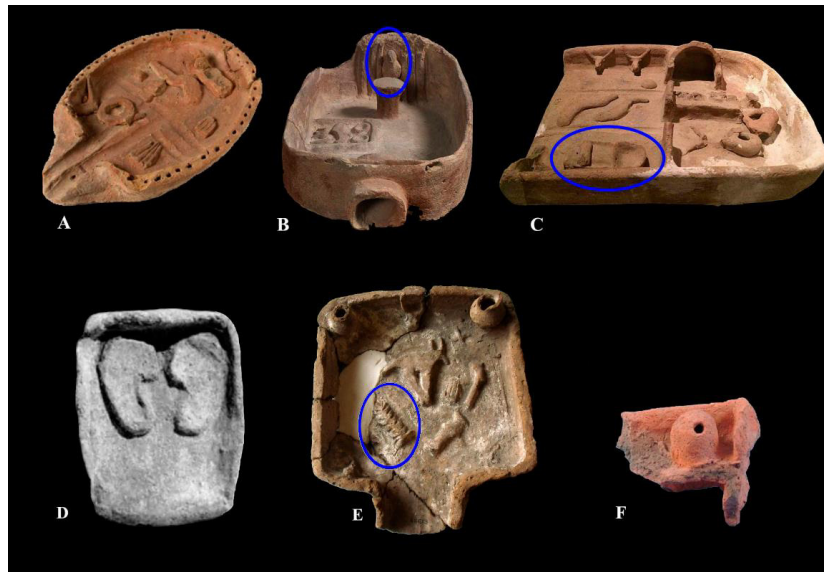


Figure 31a-f: a) Offering tray with offering models, stand model, channels, spout, and small holes on its edge. Unprovenanced, Bristol Museum, No. 1627; b) Offering tray with offering hieratic anthropomorphic figure in front of a false door (blue). Unprovenanced, Louvre Museum, No. 26927; c) Offering trays with a shrine model, table, offerings, and hand-mill model (blue). Unprovenanced, Egyptian Agricultural Museum (Cairo), No. 676, image courtesy of Jose Manuel Alba Gómez; d) ‘Small tray’ with ear models found at the Buhen fortress. Image of Emery, *et al.* (1979: pl. 104, fig. O.1661); e) Offering tray with offering models, two vessel models on the corners, and feather model (blue). Asyut, British Museum, No. 46613. Image of the author; f) Fragment of soul houses with a silo, according to the museum. Unprovenanced, Petrie Museum, No. UC75609.

The small holes are the most common among these features. They are usually located around the incised basins (Fig. 32) or on the edges of the trays (Fig. 31a, 33a). According to researchers, these holes have two purposes. They could be used to support a canopy/*eshsha* or vegetation models. Both aims would be to provide decoration or shade for the deceased (PETRIE, 1907; KUENTZ, 1981; HUGONOT, 1989: p. 194; LECLÈRE, 2001; TAYLOR, 2001; IVANOV, 2015). Thus, the purpose would be to provide comfort to the deceased, similar to the seat or bed models (SPENCER, 2011).

<sup>74</sup> Despite the museum's description indicating that this element belongs to a soul house, the author thinks that this fragment would be part of a pottery granary model. This according to the parallels.

Sometimes, these holes are made in a salient part (Fig. 33b). The reason of these could be a better fixing of the element placed on them.



Figure 32: fragmentary soul house with food models, pedestal, spout, and quadrangular basin with hole around it. Deir Rifeh, Manchester Museum, No. 4400.

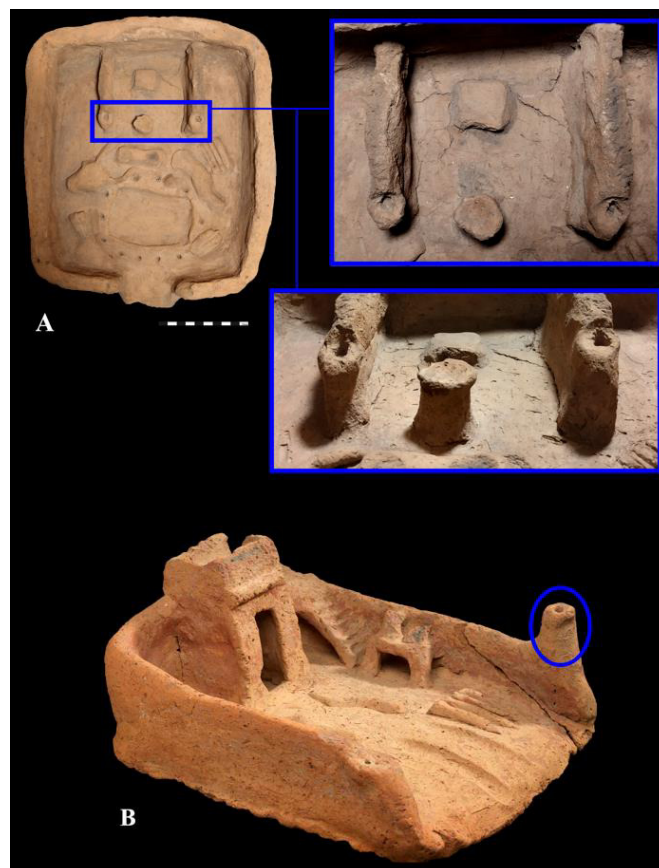


Figure 33a-c: a) Offering tray with shrine model, rounded table in front of it, and two holes in the edges (blue). El-Kab, Petrie Museum, No. 18418, image by the author; b) offering tray with cult shrine, stair, offerings, jars, seats, stand, and *appliqué* with hole (another one is lost) (blue). Deir Rifeh, Royal Ontario Museum, No. 909.80.566.

Regarding the figure models, two types can be found: anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures. The anthropomorphic figures are depicted either in a hieratic pose (See fig. 29d and fig. 34a) or engaged in any activity (See fig. 14a-b), such as transporting jars or grinding grain. Respect to the hieratic figures, which are depicted seated or standing, they have been interpreted as representations of the deceased who would receive the offerings. Additionally, their presence is related to the offering trays as funerary models where these figures represent the funerary statue of the deceased (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 112; IVANOV, 2015: p. 123).

As for the presence of dynamic human figures, they are predominantly found on soul houses. According to the author's previous research, these artefacts could be associated with wooden models (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019b: p. 199), where various figures are depicted engaged in different production activities. On the other hand, some offering trays show zoomorphic figures<sup>75</sup> that represent crocodiles. These figures have been associated with protection, prevention, and healing. (IVANOV, 2015: pp. 120, 124). The presence of this animal on offering trays would have an apotropaic function, aiming to avert the evil eye, safeguard the home, and attract wealth and good luck to the members of the household (IKRAM, 2010: p. 85). The depiction of crocodiles and their symbolism provides new insights into the function of offering trays, which will be explained throughout this thesis (See chapter 4.9, Conclusions).<sup>76</sup>

The following clay elements include false doors, tools, ears, feathers, and platforms. Concerning the false door, it is typically found in conjunction with a hieratic human figure and/or a table model<sup>77</sup> (Fig. 34a) (NIWINSKI, 1984: p. 808; LECLÈRE, 2001: p.108, fig. 2). With regard to the tools, it is possible to find a hand-mill (See fig. 31c).

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<sup>75</sup> Previously, the various food items displayed on the trays were discussed. Among them, the tied ox was included due to its function as a food offering and its symbolism (See chapter 3.3.1, Food Models). Additionally, its presence on the offering trays is common, unlike that of crocodiles. For these reasons, the author has found it appropriate to analyze these animal figures in separate chapters.

<sup>76</sup> The author presented these results at the international conference: *Living in the House: Researching the Domestic Life in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* IFAO-PCMA 27 to 30 November 2022.

<sup>77</sup> The author has found a single example, but she does not dismiss the possibility of new findings in the future, considering the cultic background surrounding offering trays and the stylistic influence they may have on each other.



Figure 34a-b: a) Detail of offering tray with offering hieratic anthropomorphic figure in front of a false door (blue). Unprovenanced, Louvre Museum, No. 26927; b) False door of Mereruka. 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Saqqara. Image of the author.

In reference to the ears (See fig. 31d) (EMERY, *et al.*, 1974: P.151, pl. 104, fig. O 1661), they could potentially be associated with a votive offering (SMITH, 2003: p. 128). In this instance, Walter B. Emery, Harry S. Smith, and Anne Millard (1979: pp. 151-152) have included a pottery artefact with modelled ears within the collection of offering trays and soul houses discovered within the fortress of Buhen, describing it as ‘A small pottery tray’ (EMERY, *et al.*, 1974: P.151). Nonetheless, this item with two ears<sup>78</sup> would be another votive object type that enjoyed great popularity during the New Kingdom (SADEK, 1987: p. 245). Accordingly, this artefact can be identified as an ears stela (See fig. 31d), which is different from an offering tray, despite both artefacts being made of clay.

With regard to the feathers (Fig. 31e) (WAINWRIGHT, 1926: p. 170), they could be linked to the concept of *Ma’at*, which was applied in all areas of life (HELCK, 1980: pp. 1110-1111).<sup>79</sup> Once again, this element distances itself from being a food offering. This, along with the crocodile figure, offers keys to the idea that offering trays have a more

<sup>78</sup> This object represents the ears of the deity, who hears the prayers of the petitioners through of this representation (SADEK, 1987: pp. 265-267; HEINZ, 2019: p. 382).

<sup>79</sup> *Ma’at*: Egyptian concept of the truth and justice. The goddess who personifies to the *Ma’at* has a feather on top of her head as attribute (BARD, 2005: pp. 551-553).

complex function (See chapters 4.9. Conclusions of the chapters 4 and 7. Final conclusions) than the mere presentation of offerings to the deceased (See chapter 3.4. Development and function of offering trays and soul houses).

In addition, offering trays may have a platform positioned at the back or, occasionally, in the centre of them. In some examples, these platforms showed a resemblance to *hṯp*-shaped bread (LEGROS, 2016: p. 90). Meanwhile, some trays have a platform that imitates the same shape as the tray. But, others have a quadrangular shape positioned at the centre (Fig. 35a-d). The purpose of these elements is unclear, and researchers have not offered any suggestions regarding their significance. However, with regard to the platform, in the case of the bread-shaped ones, it is possible to propose that they functioned as additional offerings. Conversely, other examples may suggest an alternative form designed to create a basin-like structure on the surface, which would indicate that these designs would be influenced by the stone tables (Fig. 35c-d).



Figure 35a-d. a) Offering trays with offering and seat models, spout, dividing walls, and platform in *hṯp*-shaped. Dendera, Manchester Museum, No. 2758; b) Offering tray with offering models, spout, and platform. Qubbet el-Hawa (Aswan) image courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer; c) Stone offering table, Heqaib's complex, Elephantine, (Aswan), image of the author; d) Stone offering table of Heqaib, Heqaib's complex, Elephantine, (Aswan), image of the author.

Other unusual features found in the offering trays and soul houses include incised marks and/or inscription (Fig. 36a-b and 125a-b). In regard to the first, Petrie (1907: pl. XIIIJ) discovered a collection of soul houses in Deir Rifeh displaying incised marks, which were

potter's marks. These are not attested on the offering trays, leading us to believe that the production of soul houses and offering trays had different social attentiveness. On one hand, soul houses could have been part of regulated production, and their control might explain the presence of marks on them. On the other hand, offering trays are popular artefacts, and their production would have been outside state control (See chapter 5.2, 'The Manufacture and Production Area of the Offering Trays from Qubbet el-Hawa'). Thus, they did not require any markings.

Conversely, there is a single example in all of Egypt of an offering tray showing incised text (EDEL, 2008, v3: p. 1627, fig.2, p. 1633, fig. 8; KILIAN, 2016: p. 174; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2021: p. 32; MI, 2020: footnote 27). This text is part of the offering formula,<sup>80</sup> a ritual inscription that presents various food offerings to the deceased. This text fragment could support the idea regarding the established function of offering trays. However, it must review other aspects and artefacts of ancient Egyptian culture and religion to understand offering trays fully (See the entirety of Chapter 4. Historical Context of Offering Trays and Study Area).

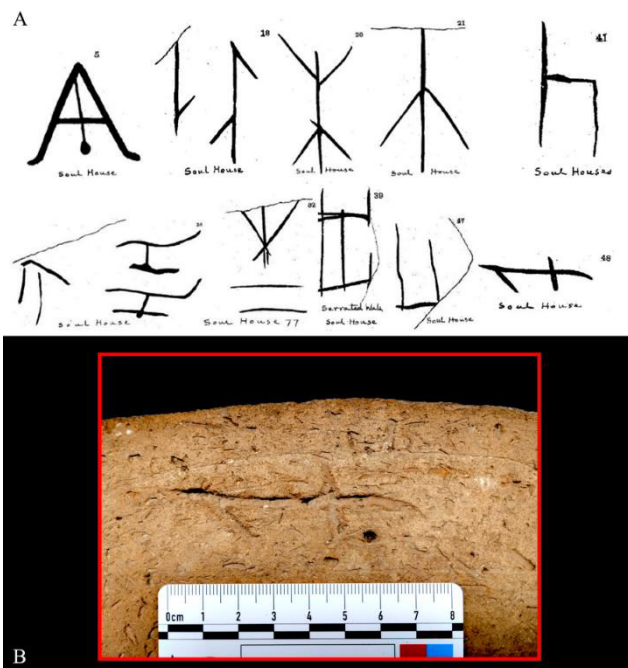


Figure 36a-b: a) Incised marks on some soul houses found at Deir Rifeh, image of Petrie (1907: pl. 13J); b) Incised marks on some soul house. Deir Rifeh. National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, No. F.1939/1.18, image of the author.

<sup>80</sup> This text is found within funerary contexts, appearing on various supports such as tomb walls or grave goods. Its purpose is to provide the deceased with the offerings described in the text. Through magical activation achieved by regular recitation, the offerings were bestowed upon the deceased (SPENCER, 1982: p. 55; SZPAKOWSKA, 2008: p. 192).

### 3.3.6. Unidentified elements

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to address uncertainties surrounding some items that have yet to be identified by current researchers.

On the one hand, there are a clay models with quadrangular shape whose sides are concave. These models are showed on the offering tray No. S. 10648 from *Museo Egizio di Torino* (Fig. 37a), which has been studied recently by Filippo Mi (2020). However, Mi did not propose any specific interpretations or explanations about these models. But, while this thesis has been conducted, similar models have been discovered on other artefacts, as cartonnage trays (Fig. 37b-c) found in Deir el-Bersha (DARESSY, 1900: p. 27, fig. 2 No. 15; p. 35, fig. 1 No. 11). On these trays, there were various clay models, and one of them reminds to the clay item found on the offering tray housed in the Museo Egizio di Torino. The Egyptologist who discovered these cartonnage trays interpreted them as ‘*Gâteau*’ (DARESSY, 1900: p. 26). Hence, based on these similarities, it is possible to propose that the offering tray identified as No. S. 10648 shows cake models.

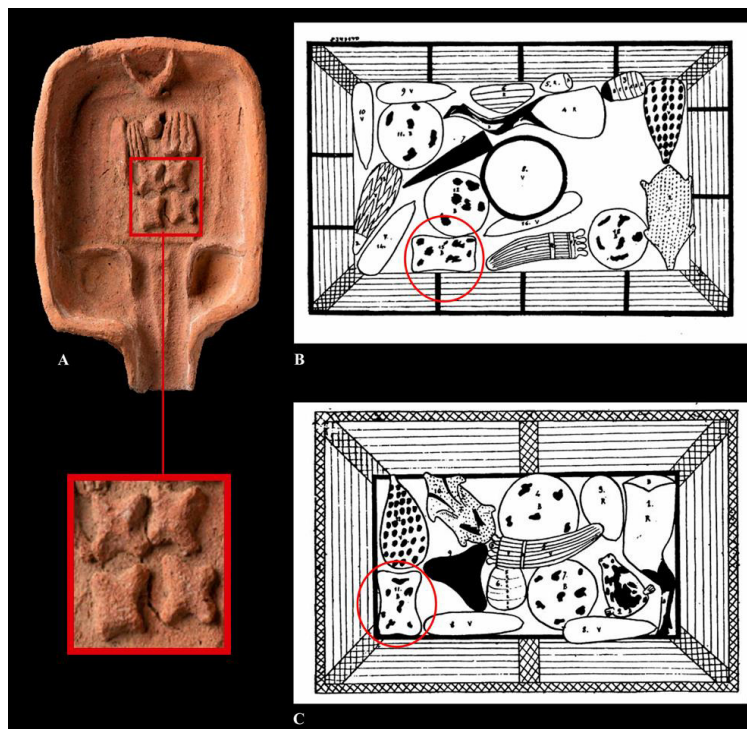


Figure 37a-c: a) Offering tray with cake models. Asyut, Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S. 10648.

Image by Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni; b) Cartonnage offering tables with clay models, among them cake models (red). Deir Bersha, image of Daressy (1900: p. 27, fig. 2 No. 15); c) Cartonnage offering tables with clay models, among them cake models (red). Deir Bersha, image of Daressy (1900: p. 35, fig. 1 No. 11).

Other unidentified models found on the offering trays and soul houses include incised and/or relief grill squares. Specifically, one notable example can be found on the soul house No. E.15.1950 kept at the Fitzwilliam Museum (Fig. 38). This architectural model shows an item with incised squares at the top.<sup>81</sup> The museum description does not offer any information about this particular element. However, in the catalogue by Janine Bourriau (1988), an analysis of this soul house and its corresponding element was conducted. She commented the following about it:

*...an outside staircase to the roof, on which there is a canopy' (p. 101).*

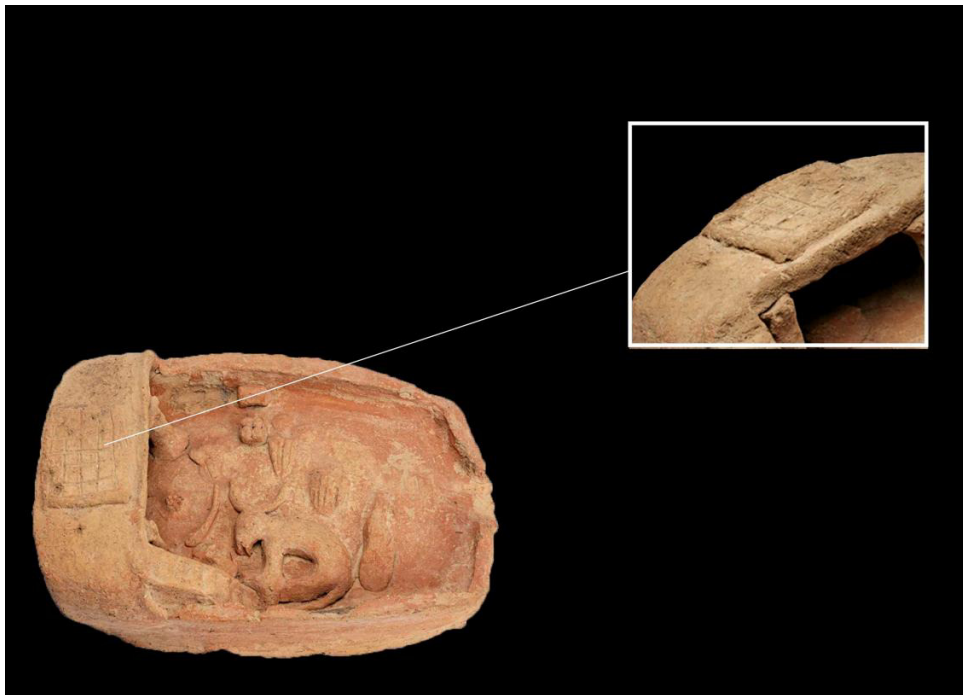


Figure 38: detail of soul house with a grid on the roof. Unprovenanced, Fitzwilliam Museum, No. E.15.1950.

Another example where it could be found, it is on the soul house from the Manchester Museum identified as No. 4371 (Fig. 39a). On the spout of this artefact, there is a relief grid. The Museum description indicates the following:

*'...offering area divided into four compartments'*.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Another example of a house model with an incised mat on its roof is artefact No. 1901/9.120 from the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden.

<sup>82</sup><http://harbour.man.ac.uk/mmcustom/Display.php?irn=196749&QueryPage=%2Fmmcustom%2FHumDtIQuery.php> (Accessed 18/01/2021).

However, Marisol Solchaga identified this element on the artefact No. 4371 (Fig. 39a) as a grid garden (2020).

On the other hand, there is another item similar to the previous ones, which displayed on the offering tray No. S. 14946 from the Museo Egizio di Torino (Fig. 39b). The museum description does not provide any information about this particular item. Likewise, Filippo Mi (2020: p. 105, fig. 8), who has studied this offering tray, does not offer an interpretation for this clay item and only points out its presence:

*'...one is a series of four square'* (p. 104).



Figure 39a-b: a) Soul house with offering models and modelled grid. Deir Rifeh, Manchester Museum, No. 4371; b) Offering tray with internal dividing walls, offering models, and modelled quadrangular elements. Asyut, Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S. 14946. Image by Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni.

Regarding these models, we need to examine other archaeological artefacts such as stone offering tables with basins, pottery offering trays showing only channels and/or walls on their surface, and funerary gardens to know more about these items. In relation to stone offering tables and pottery trays, they have been associated with agriculture and garden

irrigation systems due to the channels and basins showed on their surfaces (KUENTZ, 1981: pp. 250-251, 254; LEGROS, 2016: p. 92; SOLCHAGA, 2020).

Regarding other pottery artefacts, there are two noticeable examples that have been found that may resemble to garden models. One of them, it is UC42135 (Fig. 40b), which is recorded by Petrie Museum as ‘vessels’, and added the following:

*‘Pottery model granary/offering (?) tray.’<sup>83</sup>*

However, concerning specimen UC42135 (Fig. 40b), the author of this thesis is conducting a study on a similar artefact found in Elephantine by Labib Habachi. The research in progress, suggests that the function of the Habachi's artefact may be to facilitate communication between humans and gods. Thus, it is unlikely to be a model garden. Although there might be a connection between this object and the use of water.

The second artefact was discovered by William Matthew Flinders Petrie (PETRIE, 1909: p. 4, pl. 20) at Qurneh, which shares similarities with the clay items on E.15.1950 (See fig. 38), No. 4371 (See fig. 39a), and S. 14946 (See fig. 39b). This particular artefact is identified as No. 597 (Fig. 40a). In his publication, Petrie (1909) merely mentions the object without providing further details:

*‘The cellular dish 597 is a new form’ (p. 4).*

In relation to the garden models, there are examples that remind to objects No. 597 from Qurneh. These two artefacts were discovered in Deir el-Bahari by George Herbert de Carnarvon and Howard Carter (1912: p. 54, pl. 47). They were initially recorded as pottery offering trays with multiple compartments and small holes along the edges. However, later, Charles Kuentz (1981: p. 252) identified these objects as garden miniatures. Nonetheless, he did not add in his study to the object No. 597 as garden models. Thus, he could consider them another artefact type, although, according to Kuentz's study (1981), it might be linked to agriculture and irrigation systems.

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<sup>83</sup> <https://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/detail.aspx?parentpreref=> (Accessed 18/01/2021).

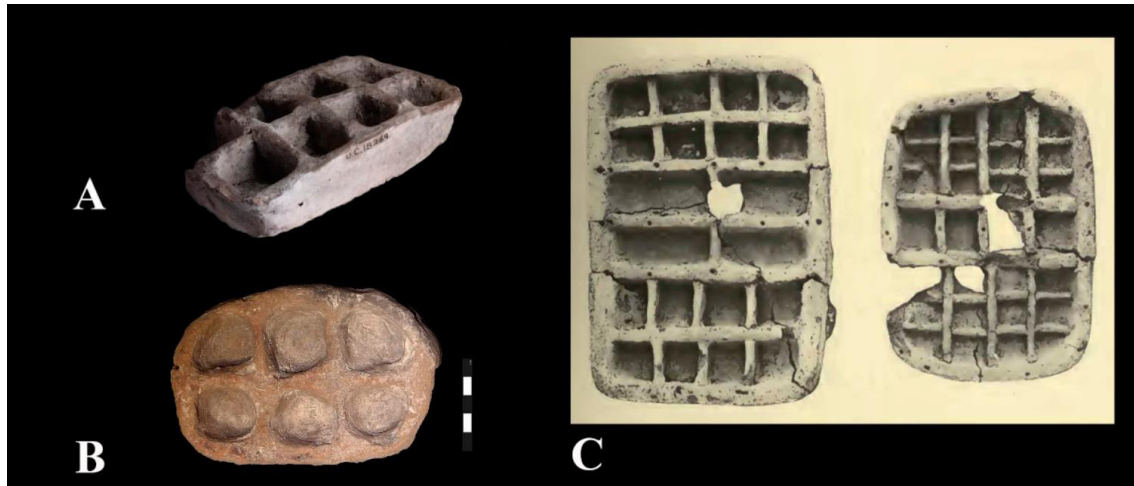


Figure 40a-c: a) Offering tray No. 597 found at Qurna. Image of Petrie (1909: pl. 20), Petrie Museum No. UC18269. Image of the author; b) Artefact No. UC42135 from the Petrie Museum. Image of the author; c) Offering tray/Garden miniature found in the 24 tomb at Thebes. Image of Carnavon and Carter (1912: pl. 77).

Regarding the quadrangular artefacts identified as garden models, it is worth noting that the artificial gardens have a grid-shaped design in close proximity to all the aforementioned artefacts and clay models. Three notable examples include the artificial garden located in area ix of the Main Chapel within the Amarna workmen's village (Fig. 41a) (KEMP, 1987: p. 34, pl. 4, fig. 1), the funerary garden discovered during the Djehuty Project at Dra Abu el-Naga<sup>84</sup> (Fig. 41b) and the funerary garden in the Djari's tomb, initially discovered by Winlock and later re-excavated by the Middle Kingdom Theban Project (MORALES, *et al.* 2018: p. 214).

Besides, Marisol Solchaga (2020) emphasizes their connection to luxury, leisure, fertility, and regeneration. In addition, they were linked to the gods Min and Osiris (WILKINSON, 1994; SOLCHAGA, 2020). Furthermore, these gardens provided sustenance to the deceased when located within a tomb, or to the gods in the case of a temple (WILKINSON, 1994: pp. 4-5; SOLCHAGA, 2020).

<sup>84</sup> [https://www.csic.es/sites/default/files/04mayo\\_FuneralGardenDjehuty%20%28ENGLISH%29\\_0.pdf](https://www.csic.es/sites/default/files/04mayo_FuneralGardenDjehuty%20%28ENGLISH%29_0.pdf) (Accessed 18/01/2021).

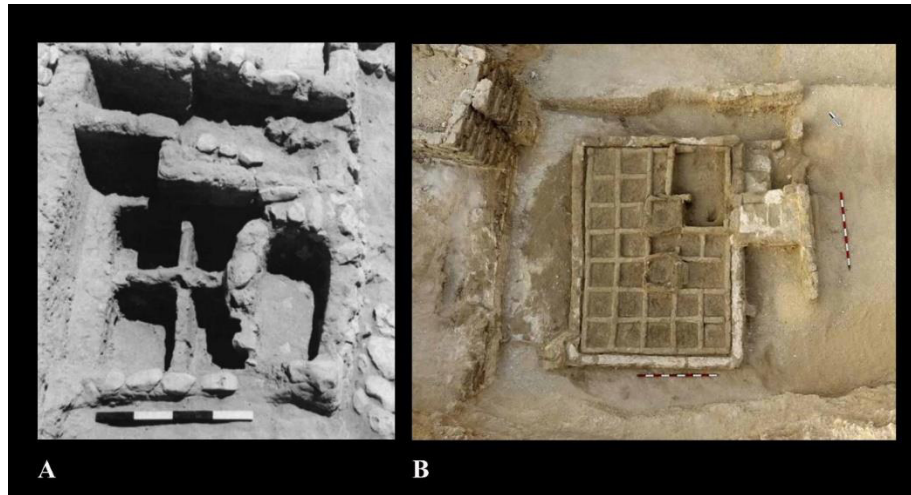


Figure 41a-b: a) Artificial garden with growing plots. Main Chapel from the Amarna workmen's village. Image of Kemp (1987: pl. 4, fig. 1); b) Funerary garden found by Djehuty Project in Dra Abu el-Naga. Image of National Geography, ©CSIC Communication.

After conducting this review, it can be proposed that the clay grid-shaped items found on the artefacts No. 4371 (See fig. 39a) and S. 14946 (See fig. 39b) may represent garden models or agricultural irrigation systems. This suggestion arises from their resemblance to other archaeological discoveries found in the funerary context, which are the mentioned artificial gardens. Furthermore, the function of the offering trays and soul houses could be linked to the significance of these models. In opposition, the object E.15.1950 (See fig. 38) appears to show a fully different element, possibly a mat associated with food drying or sleeping purposes (Mi, 2021: p. 60). This interpretation might be supported by the positioning of the element on the roof of the house model, due to a garden on this house part would hardly be possible.<sup>85</sup> Additionally, the use of this space in the diary life it would be attested thanks to other house models that show elements as seats, tables, or other household items on the roof (See fig. 26a, d).

Finally, some lintels of chapel models exhibit an applied rounded decoration that, as Dr. Jose Manuel Alba suggested to the author of the present thesis,<sup>86</sup> may imitate the so-called funerary cones (See fig. 29b). These pottery items were placed above the lintel of private tombs, mainly in Thebes, during the Middle and New Kingdoms. These artefacts, placed as a frieze, have different interpretations. Funerary cones have been identified as bread or

<sup>85</sup> To See the similarity between the incised element and a real mat, See objects No. 12.181.315 and 12.180.11 from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

<sup>86</sup> Personal communication.

meat offerings, ornamental memorials, boundary markers of the tomb's limits, depictions of the solar disc, or a means to identify the tomb's owner (from the New Kingdom) (MANNICHE, 2001: pp. 565-567). Their presence in offering trays could suggest their provenance from the Thebes region. Thus, they might be a relevant clue to locate the find area of some unprovenanced artefacts with these elements.

### 3.3.7. Channels

The channels present in the offering trays and soul houses have varied designs, which in many cases correspond to specific regions.<sup>87</sup> These designs include, among others, transversally arranged, parallel, T-shaped, straight, curved or diagonally arranged channels (See fig. 11).

### 3.3.8. Basins

With regard to the basins, some researchers as Slater or Rémi Legros (SLATER, 1974: p. 304; LEGROS, 2016: p. 92) proposed that they could symbolize lakes or ornamental gardens, which would provide a place of pleasure for the deceased. However, these elements are not consistently present, and when they appear, they may exhibit a design with either rounded or quadrangular shapes. Furthermore, they might be modelled or incised (Fig. 42a-b).

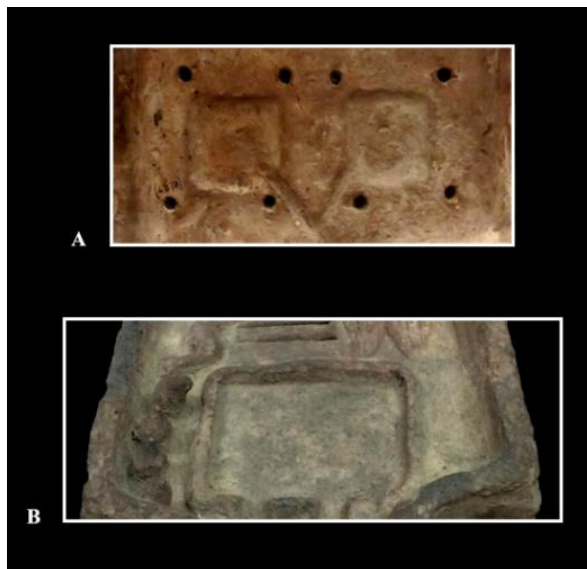


Figure 42a-b: a) Detail of the offering tray with incised quadrangular basins. Deir Rifeh, The Manchester Museum, No. 4378; b) Detail of the offering tray with modelled quadrangular basin. Unprovenanced, Agricultural Museum (Cairo), No. 667, image courtesy of Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez.

<sup>87</sup> See chapter 3.6. Origin zone and main areas of the offering trays and soul houses according to their features.

### 3.3.9. Outflow system

In respect to the outflow of libation liquids, various types of systems can be identified, which may be modeled or incised. Their purpose is to facilitate the drainage of libation liquids from the object. On one hand, quadrangular offering trays and soul houses mainly have a spout (Fig. 43a-b). Conversely, offering trays with oval and rounded shapes allow for the drainage of libations through holes or channels located at the front edge (Fig. 43c). Lastly, horseshoe-shaped artefacts commonly have an open edge at their front (Fig. 43d-e).

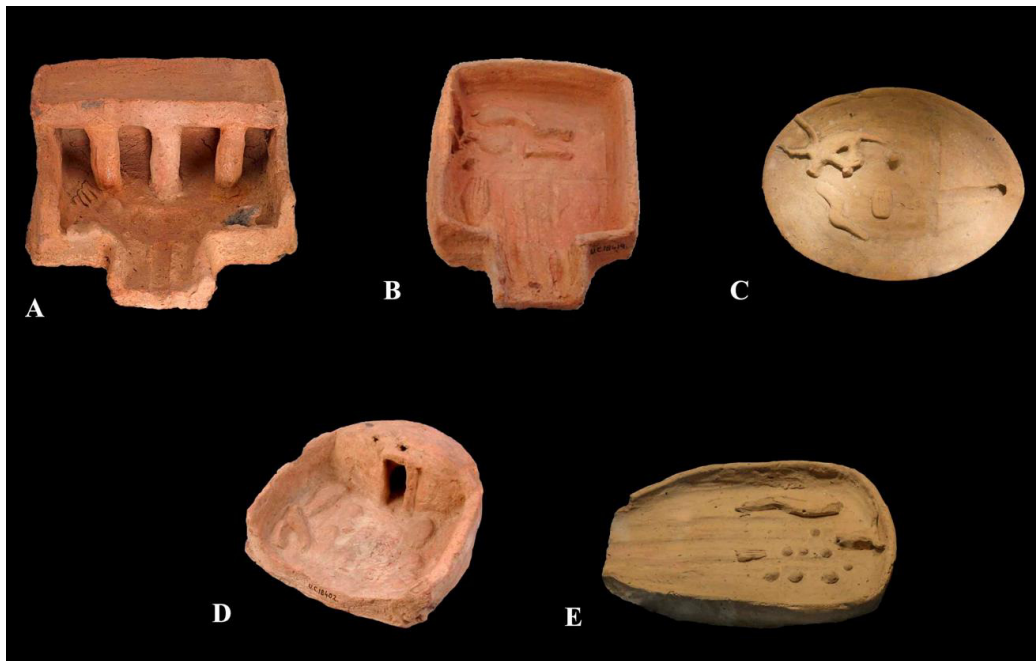


Figure 43a-e: a) Quadrangular soul house with spout. Deir Rifeh, National Museum Scotland, No. A.1907.713.4 A; b) Quadrangular offering tray with spout. El-Kab, Petrie Museum, No. UC18419; c) Oval offering tray with a hole in the edge. Thebes, Atkinson Museum (Southport), unknown register number; d) Soul house with horseshoe-shaped. El-Kab, Petrie Museum, No. UC18402; e) Offering tray with horseshoe-shaped. Unprovenanced, Smithsonian National Museum, No. 5091.

### 3.3.10. Internal dividing walls

The presence of internal dividing walls is a relatively uncommon feature that is associated with the drainage system. These walls are frequently observed in Dendera and Asyut,<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> See chapter 3.6. Origin zone and main areas of the offering trays and soul houses according to their features.

but they are rare in other regions of Egypt. In terms of their design, the L-shaped configuration or intermediate walls with holes for the channels are commonly employed (Fig. 44a-b).

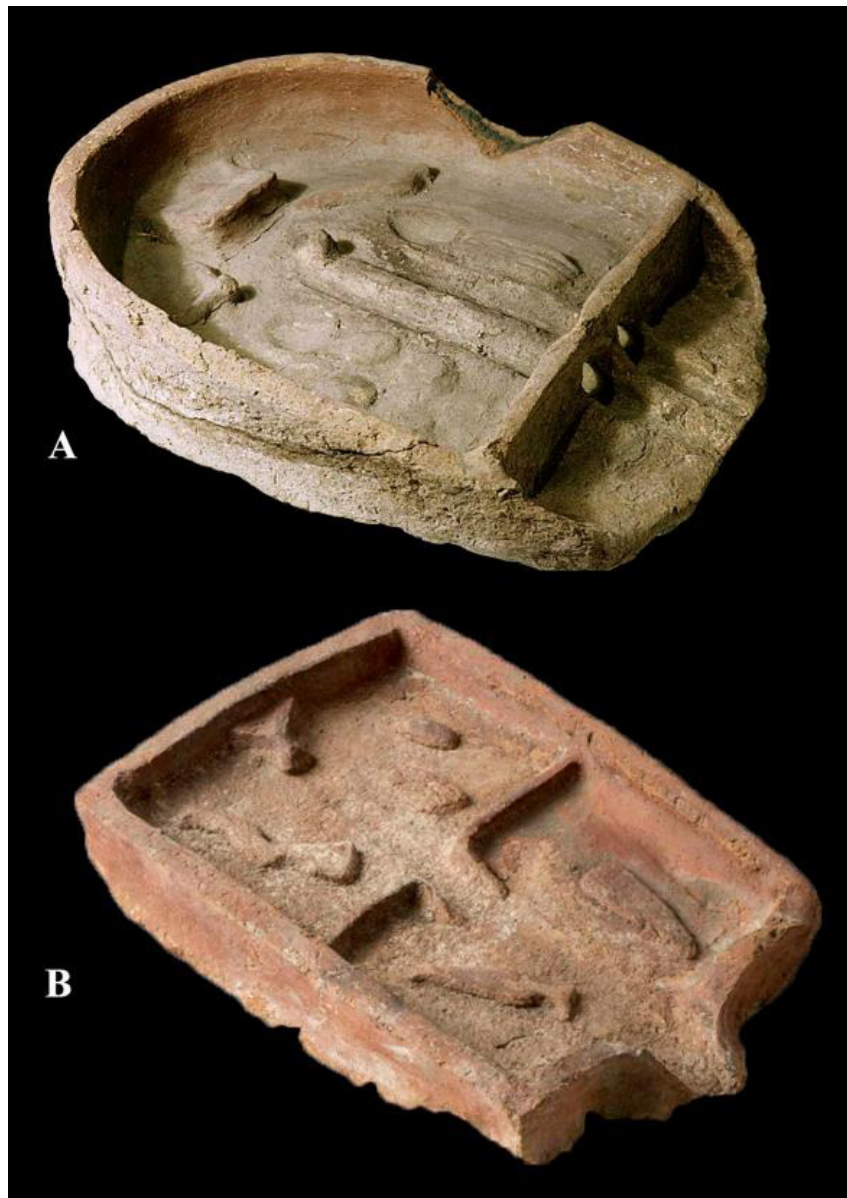


Figure 44a-b: a) Offering tray with internal wall, which has two holes to drain the liquids. Dendera, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, No. 98.4.40; b) Offering tray with L-shaped walls. Asyut, Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S. 14940. Image by Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni.

### 3.4. Development and function of the offering trays and soul houses

Regarding the function, in Chapter 1. Introduction, a brief explanation was provided about the origin of the offering trays as a more economical alternative to stone offering tables. These trays were intended to provide perpetual offering to the *ka* of the deceased belonging to lower and intermediate social groups (PETRIE, 1907: p. 15; JÉQUIER, 1910: 213; KUENTZ, 1981: pp. 144-145; TOOLEY, 1989: p. 302; NIWINSKI, 1984: p. 806; BOURRIAU, 1988: p. 101; LECLÈRE, 2001: pp. 101-102; HÖLZL, 2002: p. 74; SNAPE, 2011: pp. 163, 164; LEGROS, 2016: p. 90).

However, there are alternative perspectives on the origin of the offering trays based on their features. Firstly, Ray A. Slater (1974: pp. 402-403) posited that the quadrangular offering trays may have evolved from the stone offering basins of the Old Kingdom, while the other tray shapes could have derived from rounded flat plates.

Another researcher, François Leclère (2001: p. 106) noted the resemblance between them and the stone offering tables. But, he arrived at a similar conclusion to Slater, regarding the origin of the rounded offering trays (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 112). He suggested that they could have developed from the rounded stone offering tables of the Old Kingdom, or, alternatively, from pottery plates with meat from the same period. However, Leclère also proposed another possible origin, suggesting that they might have evolved from clay "terrines" manufactured during the First Intermediate Period.

On the other hand, the researchers have also provided a possible origin and development of soul houses, which have been linked to offering trays. There are different propositions about them. On the one hand, according to William Stevenson Smith (1960):

*'At the end of the Old Kingdom pottery offering trays were made in the form of a model house with a columned porch. Some of them have barrel-vaulted rooms and others an exterior staircase leading to a second story...'* (p. 72).

Therefore, he suggests that soul houses would be one of the earliest forms of offering trays. In contrast, Andrej Niwinski <sup>89</sup> (1975: p. 76; 1984: pp. 806-808) proposed that soul houses were the final form of the offering trays, evolving from stone offering tables. In

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<sup>89</sup> In respect to the Niwinski's proposal, Petrie (1907: p. 15) had already put forward a similar idea for the soul houses.

this research line about connexion between both artefacts types, Marisol Solchaga (2022)<sup>90</sup> proposes that offering trays and soul houses are the same objects. Additionally, she defences these artefacts represent the slaughtering ritual, and, specifically soul houses, characterise the ritual space in the domestic context also (SOLCHAGA, 2021: pp. 433, 449).

Additionally, recent studies have proposed that the offering trays had independent development from the stone offering tables (KILIAN, 2012: p. 113; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019b: p. 99; MI, 2020: p. 96). This conclusion is drawn from the distinct features of the offering trays and stone offering tables, as well as the continued usage of the latter beyond the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Also, current studies are breaking away from ideas that connect the development of stone offering trays, pottery offering trays and soul houses. On one hand, Filippo Mi (2021: p. 70) asserts that soul houses were tomb models, while offering trays had independent development from stone offering trays (MI, 2020: p. 96), as other authors have also suggested previously (KILIAN, 2012: pp. 111-112; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019a: p. 99 ; 2019b: pp. 198-199).

In respect to the function of offering trays and soul houses, according to the ideas that link both artefact types, clay offering models shown on the surface would be magically supplied with libations of water poured over them (PETRIE and QUIBELL, 1896: p. 42; JÉQUIER, 1910: pp. 205-226; KILIAN, 2016: p. 174). In this way, the use of water held on these artefacts a religious connotation (JÉQUIER, 1910: p. 213; LEGROS, 2016: p. 89), which may detach these artefacts from the mere presentation of food. This may be attributed to the fact that its purpose was more social in nature, rather than purely material (LEGROS, 2016: p. 91, footnote 398). Furthermore, the presence of offering trays without clay models<sup>91</sup> would further support the aforementioned notion, potentially indicating that these trays were not solely intended for perpetual offerings to the deceased, contrary to Niwinski's idea (1984), which indicates the following:

*‘Die symbolische Bedeutung des Libationsaktes war so groß, daß die Modelle der Speiseopfer nicht absolut nötig zu sein schienen. Es gibt viele Opferplatten ohne Speiscopfermodelle, wohingegen alle Platten einen Ausfluß haben’* (pp. 811-812).

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<sup>90</sup> Communication in International conference: *Living in the House: Researching the Domestic Life in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* IFAO-PCMA 27 to 30 November 2022 based on her PhD thesis.

<sup>91</sup> To understand these tray's types, according to this thesis, See chapter 4.7.2.1. Letters.

Regarding their interpretation and function of offering trays and soul houses, in addition to magically providing offerings to the *Ka* of the deceased, authors have proposed other ideas. On the one hand, Slater proposed that the offering trays functioned as substitutes for the traditional offering places (SLATER, 1974: p. 311).

Sidney Aufrère (1992: p. 21) put forth a similar interpretation to Slater's, wherein the Egyptologist perceived the offering trays as symbolic representations of the tomb itself.<sup>92</sup> According to this viewpoint, the surface of the trays would symbolize the courtyard of the tomb, while the liquid's outlet would represent its entrance or door.

Regarding the soul houses, their function is closely related to the aforementioned proposal. In this regard, Andrej Niwinski (1975: 101-105), Kate Spencer (2011: p. 909), and François Leclère (2001: pp. 102, 112) suggested that these objects could symbolize the cult chapel of the deceased, working as a substitute for the actual structures (JÉQUIER, 1910: p. 214; BISSING, 1934: p. 106). Furthermore, Remi Legros (2016: p. 101) and Collen Manassa (2011: pp. 4-5) highlight that the offering trays could work as substitutes for the superstructure of the tomb.

On the other hand, Leclère and other researchers<sup>93</sup> propose alternative theories. Leclère suggests that the soul houses were miniature versions of actual houses, displaying similar architectural elements (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 112). But also, another proposal suggests that these houses were clay models representing the dwelling of the deceased, with their function being to provide shelter for the *ka* (PETRIE, 1907: p. 15; NIWINSKI, 1984: p. 806; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 115). But, Niwinski (1984: p. 806) added they could be substitutes for the cult chapels within the tombs.

On the other hand, Marisol Solchaga<sup>94</sup> (2022) indicates that these artefacts symbolize the rituals of slaughter, offering, and cult dedicated to the deceased, all of which are intended for the benefit of the deceased. Solchaga also suggests that soul houses, along with all elements of architecture and furniture, imitate the ceremonial space for these rituals, both in the funerary and domestic context.

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<sup>92</sup> Gustave Jéquier (1910: pp. 213-214) proposed a similar analysis regarding the offering tables, trays, and soul houses. But, before to Jéquier, Leemans described offering trays with a chapel model as a hypogeum (1840: p. 104, No. 146).

<sup>93</sup> According to John H. Taylor (2001: pp. 106-107) soul houses provide information about domestic architecture; also, Arne Eggebrecht (1984: p. 166) suggested soul houses represent dwellings of high officials.

<sup>94</sup> See footnote 61.

Regarding the discoveries in a domestic context, Walter B. Emery, Harry S. Smith, and Anne Millard (1979: pp. 30, 55, 151-152) understood that these artefacts provided offerings to the *ka* of the deceased in the necropolis. But, they tried to provide a response to the presence of them in Buhen, and they suggested that offering trays could potentially be votive offerings, toys for children, or just these artefacts were stored inside the fortress (EMERY, *et al.*, 1979: p. 151).<sup>95</sup>

On the other hand, Stuart Tyson Smith (2003: p. 128) suggested that the trays found at the fortress of Askut<sup>96</sup> could be associated with ancestors and possibly household cults.

Hence, the development and function of the offering trays and soul houses remain perplexing due to their diverse features and the varied contexts in which they are discovered. A unifying proposal that encompasses all examples has not yet emerged. Furthermore, even within the studies of a single author, different options may be presented in an attempt to resolve the ongoing debate surrounding the offering trays and soul houses. Nevertheless, the consensus among the majority of researchers is that the offering trays and soul houses represent the same artefact.

However, this study reveals distinguishable differences between offering trays and soul houses, indicating that they are different artefacts (See Chapter 3.8. Conclusions of chapter 3). These disparities encompass variations in chronology, the presence or absence of certain elements, and the existence of building models in other civilizations (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, *in press*<sup>B</sup>). Furthermore, in terms of function, this study also proposes a contrasting role for offering trays as votive offerings to communication with the ancestors and the intercession of them for resolving earthly problem. This new lecture has been exposed by the author of the present research in the International conference: *Living in the House: Researching the Domestic Life in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* IFAO-PCMA 27 to 30 November 2022. Additionally, the reasons of this proposal is throughout this thesis.

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<sup>95</sup> See chapter 2, pp. 7-8.

<sup>96</sup> Household shrines have been found in houses, together with some artefacts *in situ*. This reinforces the idea about domestic cult practices (SMITH, 2003: 128-129). Another example about early activities of cult in domestic context is Kahun (Petrie, 1891: p. 11).

### 3.5. Chronology of the offering trays and soul houses

In respect to the chronology of the trays, it is not clear. The majority of researchers have dated the offering trays from the First Intermediate Period (2118-1780 BC) (PETRIE, 1907: p. 15; BRUTON, 1927: p. 67; SLATER, 1974; pp. 302-313; TOOLEY, 1989: p. 251; HÖLZL, 2002: p. 126; KILIAN, 2012: p. 106; LEGROS, 2016: p. 90; MI, 2020: pp. 96-97) to the early Second Intermediate Period, specifically the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1759-1630 BC) (TOOLEY, 1989: p. 251; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 120; KILIAN, 2012: p. 106; LEGROS, 2016: p. 90; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019b: pp. 98-99; MI, 2020: pp. 96-97). As for this chronology, there is a broad consensus regarding the date of the disappearance of the offering trays in Ancient Egypt.<sup>97</sup> However, the beginning of the trays raises doubts among the authors.<sup>98</sup> On one hand, some authors suggest that they originated in the late Old Kingdom (2543-2118 BC) (HAYES, 1978: p. 255; VANDIER, 1955: p. 976; SMITH, 1960: p. 72; ARNOLD, 1978: p. 136; AMAN, 2016: p. 92). Alternatively, Andrej Niwinski (1975: p. 97; 1984: p. 810) identified the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty as the period when the trays first appeared and suggests that this dynasty marks both the origin and the end of these artefacts.

With regard to soul houses, other authors have dated these artefacts between the First Intermediate Period and the New Kingdom (1539 – 1077 BC) (STEINDORFF, 1935, 2: p. 69; TOOLEY, 1995: p. 58). However, there are clay house models that date back to earlier periods, such as the artefacts found in predynastic cemeteries (Fig. 45a-b) (RANDALL-MACIVER, 1901: pp. 49-54; RANDALL-MACIVER and MACE, 1902: p. 42, pl. 10; STADELMANN, 1977: p. 1067; HASSAN, 1988: pp. 147, 155; BARD, 2005: p. 27). Additionally, house models made from various materials have been discovered in Egyptian and Nubian archaeological sites. These artefacts have been dated to the Middle Kingdom and later periods, including the New Kingdom (Fig. 45c), 3rd Intermediate Period (Fig. 45d), Greco-Roman Period (Fig. 45e, f), and even Late Modern

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<sup>97</sup> The discovery of a set of offering trays in Kom Tuman has sparked a new discussion regarding their chronology. These trays were provisionally dated between the Late Period (722-332 BC) and the Ptolemaic Period (332-30 BC) based on a group of offering trays from the Petrie Museum, which were temporarily dated by Stephen Quirke (IVANOV, 2015: pp. 120-122). This finding has prompted the author to raise several questions in order to understand the presence of the offering trays in Kom Tuman. These include: whether they represent a return to ancient traditions, if there was a change in the rituals associated with the offering trays but without any recorded evidence, or if the offering trays from Kom Tuman and previous examples shared a similar shape due to their similar function (IVANOV, 2015: p. 125).

<sup>98</sup> It is important to highlight that the majority of authors who associate the beginning of the offering trays with the late Old Kingdom specifically refer to the type known as ‘soul house’ (HAYES, 1978: p. 255; SMITH, 1960: p. 72; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 100).

Period (Fig. 45g) (PETRIE, 1909: p. 4, pl. 53; FIRTH, 1927: pp. iv, 55, pl. 10; DE GARIS DAVIES, 1929: p. 250; NIWINSKI, 1997: pp. 174-176).

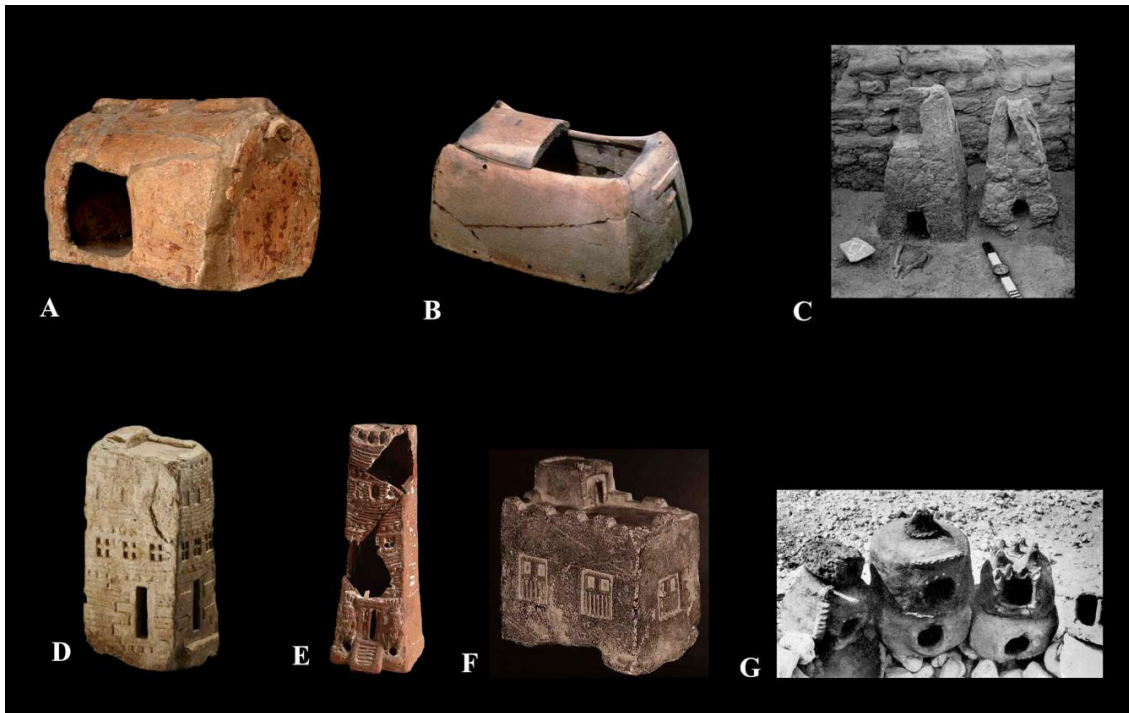


Figure 45a-b: a) Clay house model. Naqada II, Naqada, Royal Ontario Museum, No. 900.2.45; b) Clay house model. Naqada III, El-Amrah, British Museum, No. EA35505; c) Clay house models from New Kingdom tomb. Kubban (Nubia). Image of Firth (1927: pl. 10);<sup>99</sup> d) House model of limestone. 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Period, Unprovenanced, British Museum, No. EA 2462; e) Clay house model. Roman Period, Unprovenanced, Louvre Museum, 32572; f) Limestone house model. New Kingdom or Greco-Roman Period, Unprovenanced. Image of Niwinski (1997: p. 175); g) Modern house models. Qurna. Image of Petrie (1909: pl. 53).

<sup>99</sup> Similar structures were discovered in Assasif between 1915 and 1916 (LYTHGOE, LANSING, and DE GARIS DAVID, 1917: p. 20, fig. 13). These structures were built in the courtyard of Middle Kingdom rock-cut tombs, but they were located close to a shaft tomb (pit 1). These Middle Kingdom tombs had suffered extensive looting and were later reused during the New Kingdom. Regarding pit 1, the author did not provide details about the materials found inside. However, the small structures contained shawabtis in coffins, models of loaves, and a small stele made of glazed steatite with the names of the deceased, his wife, and the donor (Late Second Intermediate Period to New Kingdom). For more information about the stele See <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/545751> (Accessed 09/05/2022). Another similar structure was discovered in Aniba between 1929 and 1934 (STEINDORFF, 1937, vol. 2: pp. 168-169, pl. 22a-c). They are dated between the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period. These structures are identified as small shrines or shrine models rather than model houses. However, in the case of Kubban, they are found alongside a small offering table and are positioned differently. Therefore, they may represent different elements compared to the previously mentioned structures (NÄSSER, 2017: p. 565).

Once again, doubts arise regarding these artefacts, particularly concerning their chronology. However, the majority of findings and studies on offering trays suggest that the main periods for these items were between the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, with their peak during the Middle Kingdom (1980 – 1759 BC). On the other hand, many authors assert that the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty marked a significant increase in the prevalence of soul houses as grave goods (VANDIER, 1955: p. 976; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 120; ARNOLD, 2005: p. 32; MI, 2021: p. 53).

In summarize, the appearance of offering trays in the First Intermediate Period could be attributed to the social, political, and ideological changes that occurred during the late Old Kingdom (BARD, 2007: p. 162; GOLDSCHMIDT, 2008: p. 22). These changes included the decentralization of royal power, the rise of provincial authority, and the expansion of religious and funerary ideas among the population (SHAW, 2004: pp. 157, 159-160; DODSON and IKRAM, 2008: p. 177; GOLDSCHMIDT, 2008: p. 22). All these changes, especially those related to religion, allowed people to have greater and more direct contact with the funerary context and their ancestors. Hence, new artefacts linked to religious and funerary contexts emerged (ADAMS, 1998: p. 24; LESKO, 2012: pp. 197-209; MOTA SILVA, 2015: p. 117), such as offering trays.

As for the disappearance of these objects, some scholars have proposed that during the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, and progressively, new religious change emerged, which led to a reduction in the interaction between the living and the deceased (MORENO GARCÍA, 2010: p. 10; O'NEIL, 2015: p. 63; MORENO GARCÍA, 2016: p. 10-11). Thus, offering trays were replaced by new funerary artefacts, such as shabtis, which became widely used during this period, and more in keeping with the new religious and funerary context (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 120; TOOLEY, 2001: p. 426).

### **3.6. Origin zone, main areas of the offering trays and soul houses according to their features and manufacture**

Concerning the origin zone of the offering trays, there are doubts among researchers, such as it has occurred in the previous topics about these artefacts. As a result, multiple proposals have been put forth regarding their origins (Fig. 46). According to Niwinski's perspective (1975: p. 93), the origin of the offering trays can be traced back to the Lisht area. This hypothesis is based on his proposed chronology of the offering trays during the

12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Niwinski supported his theory by the presence of the Egyptian capital and royal residence, Ity-Tawy,<sup>100</sup> which was located in that area during the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (SHAW, 2004: p. 209). Furthermore, Niwinski (1975: p. 93; 1984) proposed that the evolution of the offering trays played a crucial role in supporting his theory. According to him, the trays initially had a quadrangular shape but later evolved into rounded, oval, or horseshoe-shaped forms. Niwinski's idea gained further support from the higher prevalence of quadrangular trays in Middle Egypt, while rounded ones were more common in Upper Egypt (NIWINSKI, 1975: pp. 85-95).

Another proposal regarding the origin of the offering trays was presented by Angela M. J. Tooley (1989: pp. 298-299). Tooley emphasizes that it is impossible to pinpoint a specific origin zone due to the presence of offering trays from the same period found in various geographical locations. Although, she indicated the area between Ballas and el-Minsha show a large variety of designs (TOOLEY, 1989: pp. 298-299). For this reason, Kilian later proposed this area as a possible origin zone for offering trays (KILIAN, 2012: p. 110).

On the other hand, François Leclère (2001: pp. 99-101) suggests that the Thebes area could be the origin zone for the offering trays. Lastly, the author of this thesis also proposes their own idea regarding the origin of the offering trays (2019a: pp. 43, 98). She suggested the Thebes area, similar to François Leclère's previous proposal. However, she supported her proposal by highlighting the wide variety of shapes found in that area. Additionally, she emphasized the significance of Thebes during the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, which coincide with the appearance of offering trays. Thebes functioned as a prominent dynastic centre and was the capital of Egypt during the early Middle Kingdom (GRIMAL, 1996: pp. 175-176; SEIDLMAYER, 2007: p. 232).

Regarding the features of the offering trays, despite their variety of designs, it is possible to identify specific regions that exhibit predominant characteristics.<sup>101</sup> Firstly, there are two main areas: Middle Egypt and Upper Egypt. In the Middle Egypt region, quadrangular offering trays are predominantly found, while in Upper Egypt, rounded, oval, and horseshoe-shaped trays are more prevalent (TOOLEY, 1989: p. 294; SLATER,

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<sup>100</sup> It was a new founded city by Amenemhat I, possibly it located in the Fayum area (SHAW, 2004: p. 209).

<sup>101</sup> The ox head is notably present on many offering trays from various archaeological sites; however, it is absent in the oasis zones (KILIAN, 2012: p. 109).

1974: p. 402; KILIAN, 2012: pp. 108-109; CZERNY, 2015: p. 352) (Fig. 47a-b). As for specific regions, eight can be differentiated: Asyut, Dendera, Qurna, Armant, Gebelein, El-Kab, Esna, and Edfu. This group of sites is currently scarce, mainly because the analysis of the features is ongoing and has recently begun.<sup>102</sup> Additionally, the collection of artefacts is extensive and scattered worldwide, lacking provenance information in most cases.

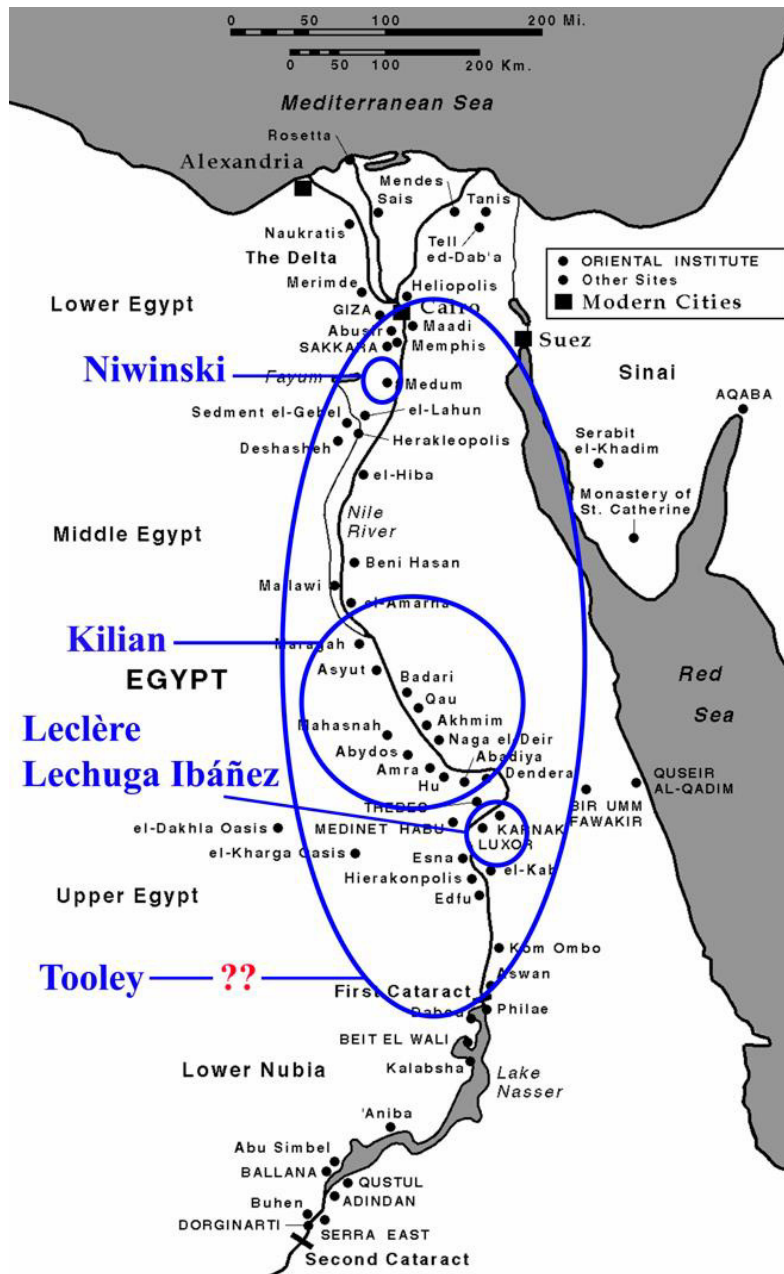


Figure 46: proposal about origin zone suggested by Niwinski, Kilian, Tooley, Leclère, and Lechuga Ibáñez. Image by the author based on Lechuga Ibáñez (2019b: p. 195, fig. 6).

<sup>102</sup> In the future, thanks to the progress of studies, we will be able to identify new locations and features.

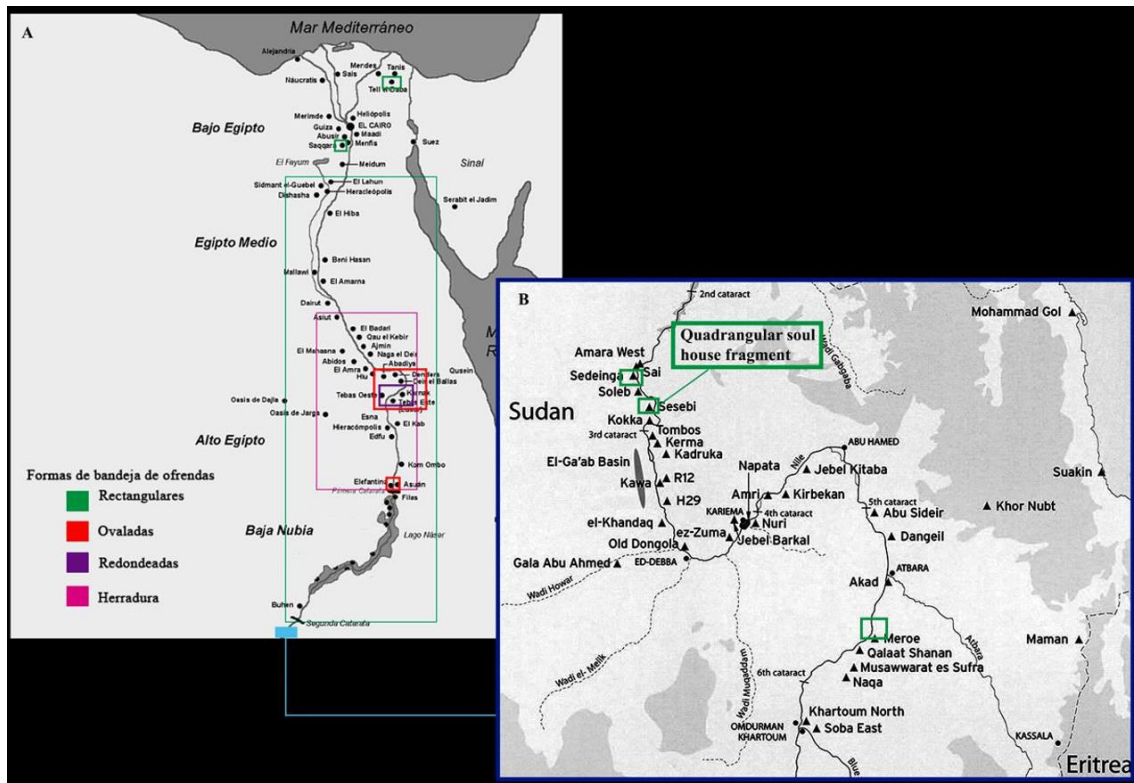


Figure 47a-b: a) Distribution of shapes of the trays according to study of Kilian (2012: pp. 108-109), and news findings. Image by the author based on Lechuga Ibáñez, (2019b: p. 198, fig. 13); b) Finds of offering trays and soul houses in Nubia. Image by the author based on map of Sudan in <http://www.sudarchrs.org.uk/resources/map-of-sudan/> (accessed 10/05/2022).

As for Asyut, the offering trays typically feature a quadrangular shape with spouts and/or internal dividing walls, often in a C or L shape (Fig. 48c and 48a-b). Additionally, they commonly include basins, models of *hṭp* bread, an ox head at the centre of the back edge, *hs* vases, birds,<sup>103</sup> tied oxen, and conical or triangular bread models<sup>104</sup> (Fig. 48a-c) (KILIAN, 2012; MI, 2020).

On the other hand, at Dendera, the predominant types of offering trays are oval or horseshoe-shaped. These trays usually have few or no offering models and are characterized by parallel straight channels or U-shaped ones. Occasionally, they may show a perforated transversal wall, and a notable feature is the presence of an altar<sup>105</sup> model (Fig. 49a-b) (KILIAN, 2012).

<sup>103</sup> Also, it is showed on offering trays found in Kahun, Abydos, and Balat (KILIAN, 2012: p. 109).

<sup>104</sup> These bread model types have been found in Kahun, Armant, and Rifeh (KILIAN, 2012: p. 109).

<sup>105</sup> See chapter 3.3.3. Furniture.



Figure 48a-c: a) Offering tray with food models and Hs vases model. Asyut, Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S. 14940. Image by Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni; b) Offering tray with a model of Htp bread. Asyut, Museo Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S. 9179. Image by Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni; c) Offering tray with Hs vases model, and food models, among them a triangular bread. Asyut, Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S. 14848. Image by Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni.



Figure 49a-b: a) Horseshoe-shaped offering tray with shrine model and U-shaped channel. Dendera, Penn Museum, No. 29-65-711; b) Horseshoe-shaped offering tray with perforated transversal wall, two diagonal channels, offerings, and shrine model. Dendera, Penn Museum, No. 29-65-704.

In the case of Qurna (Fig. 50), the offering trays are primarily rounded or oval in shape. Many of them have only channels, which can be either one or two straight channels, or they are crossed by other channels (See fig. 11). Additionally, basins are commonly found on these trays. As for the offering models, they are rarely depicted on them (PETRIE, 1909: pl. 20, 21; KILIAN, 2012).

Armant<sup>106</sup> typically presents oval or rounded offering trays (KILIAN, 2012; NIWINSKI, 1984). The channel in these trays is T-shaped, which is similar to some offering trays found in Gebelein (MI, 2020). As for the offering models depicted in Armant trays, they commonly include tied oxen, ox heads, ribs, legs, and conical bread (KILIAN, 2012) (Fig. 51).



Figure 50: rounded offering tray with crossed channels and two hole in the edge. Qurna, The Manchester Museum, No. 5026.



Figure 51: rounded offering tray with tied ox, head of ox, ribs, leg, conical bread, and T-shaped channels. Armant, Liverpool Museum, No. 1973.1.355.

<sup>106</sup> Some of the offering trays found in Ballas are identical to the ones in Armant.

However, the offering trays from Gebelein show oval, rounded, and horseshoe-shaped designs, while the quadrangular shape is unusual. As for the rounded trays, their design sometimes resembles the offering trays from Esna and Armant. In terms of the channels, they can be crossed, T-shaped, or consist of two channels and basins, similar to some trays from Qurna (MI, 2020). Among the typical offering models is the tied ox, as Seen in Asyut (KILIAN, 2012) (Fig. 52).

The El-Kab trays use to present oval or horseshoe-shaped designs, and often they feature multiple channels rising from the artefact's central part, with the offering models on the backside (NIWINSKI, 1984; KILIAN, 2012) (Fig. 53).



Figure 52: rounded offering tray with lettuce, tied ox, leg, meat strips, crossed channels, and hole to drain. Gebelein, Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S. 16032.

Image by Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni.



Figure 53: horseshoe-shaped Offering tray with offering models and several channels. El-Kab, The Manchester Museum, No. 3078.

At Esna, the offering trays are normally rounded, oval, or horseshoe-shaped, although quadrangular trays can also be found. In some cases, they exhibit only channels or basins, as well as transversal dividing walls. Rarely, they lack liquid outflow (DOWNES, 1974: p. 94, figs. 63 and 65). Another peculiar feature of some Esna trays is the absence of an edge (Fig. 54) (KILIAN, 2012). Furthermore, it is characteristic for them to have large-sized offering models.

Finally, the offering trays from Edfu used to be horseshoe or quadrangular-shaped (SLATER, 1974: p. 306). As for their channels, they were similar to the trays from El-Kab, meaning that they had multiple channels extending from the central part of the tray. Among the offering models, there were small bowls or plates, occasionally (Fig. 55) (KILIAN, 2012; NIWINSKI: 1984).



Figure 54: rounded offering tray with big offering models, without channels, and possible wheel-made. Esna, Liverpool Museum, No. 1973.1.353.



Figure 55: horseshoe-shaped Offering tray with offering models, several straight channels, and bowl model. Edfu, image of Michalowski, *et al.* (1938: pl. 42, fig. 3).

As for soul houses, linking these artefacts with a specific area is more difficult due to their varied designs and the limited studies available on them. However, it is possible to establish a connection between certain features of soul houses and the Rifeh area.<sup>107</sup> The presence of porticos, terraces, second floor, spout, and sometimes *malqafs* are elements consistently found in the artefacts of this region (Fig. 56a-d).

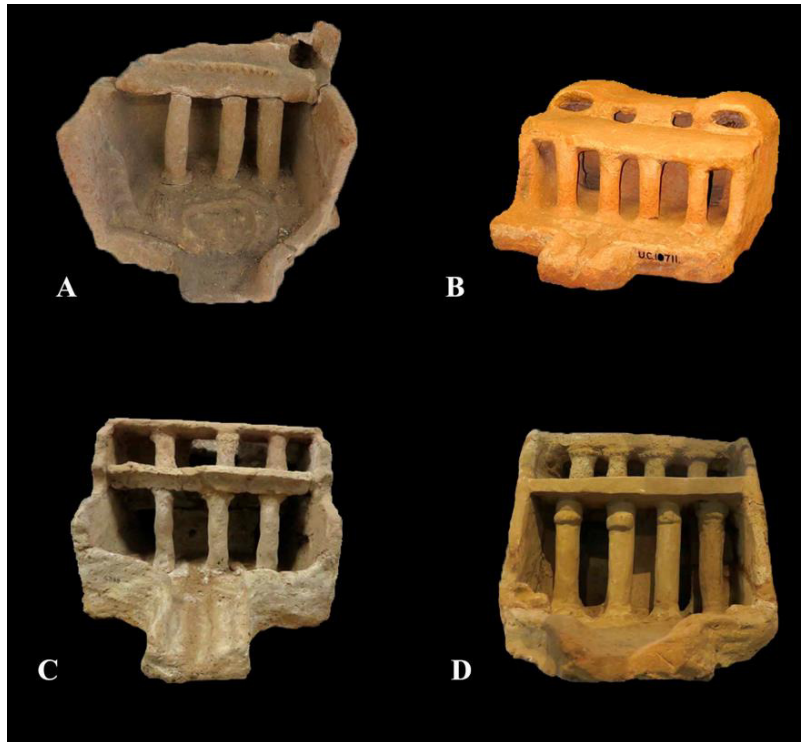


Figure 56a-d: a) Soul house with columns, stair, basin, spout incised offerings and probably two floors. Deir Rifeh, The Manchester Museum, No. 4389; b) Soul house with portico, *malqafs*, and spout. Deir Rifeh, Petrie Museum, No. UC10711; c) Soul house with two floors, column, and spout. Deir Rifeh, The Manchester Museum, No. 4388; d) Soul house with two floors, columns with different architectural order, and spout. Deir Rifeh, The Manchester Museum, No. 4386.

Regarding the previous explanations about features and areas, while the features on these offering trays may have regional characteristics, they can still be identified in other archaeological sites. Consequently, it becomes difficult to pinpoint the original production centres of these artefacts. Nevertheless, there are clear relationships of influence between regions and workshops concerning the offering trays in Egypt, due to these features may be found in distinct places together with other own that create a

<sup>107</sup> This is the result of the analysis of the typology of Petrie (1907) and the observation of different information of museums' databases.

specific design.<sup>108</sup> An example about it is the case of Qubbet el-Hawa, which will be explained in this thesis.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that Upper Egypt shows the largest variety of features and transference between different areas. However, Middle Egypt appears to display more consistency in this regard.

Regarding the manufacture of the offering trays, there has been scarce discussion and consensus among researchers. Two proposals have emerged in this regard. On one hand, it has been suggested that the offering trays were manufactured in workshops (AZIM, 1980: p. 161; NIWINSKI, 1981: p. 103; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 104). On the other hand, an alternative hypothesis suggests that the common people made the offering trays and then brought them to workshops for the firing process (NIWINSKI 1981: p. 103). However, the latest hypothesis could be dismissed due to the presence of potter's marks<sup>109</sup> on some artefacts, concretely on soul houses (See fig. 36a-b), as it was noted by Petrie in Rifeh (PETRIE, 1907: pl. 13J; NIWINSKI, 1981: p. 103). In the case of offering trays, the presence of common features suggests a somewhat 'serialized' production likely originating from a workshop. Qubbet el-Hawa provides a clear example, as explained in Chapter 5.2.

Certainly, the offering trays were likely manufactured in workshops with different criteria compared to official craftwork, which may explain why the potter did not mark all the artefacts (NIWINSKI, 1981: p. 103). The sponsor could have indicated certain design features for the trays, or the craftsmen may have made decisions based on their expertise, resulting in the creation of various types of offering trays (NIWINSKI, 1981: p103; LECLÈRE, 2001: 104).

### **3.7. Location of the offering trays and soul houses in the archaeological sites**

Regarding the location of these artefacts, it was briefly explained in Chapter 1 (pp. 1-3) that offering trays and soul houses are typically found mainly in funerary contexts.

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<sup>108</sup> These characteristics have been statistically assigned to the sites. However, since these recent analyses are still in progress, they are under constant review.

<sup>109</sup> In his contribution, Petrie collected a set of marks on potteries dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasties. Among these, he highlighted the marks on soul houses (PETRIE, 1907: pl. 13J).

However, simple offering trays have also been discovered in urban/domestic contexts<sup>110</sup> (DUNHAM, 1967: pp. 55, 160; EMERY, *et al.*, 1979: pp. 98, 151; LAUFFRAY, 1980: pp. 47-48; SMITH, 2003: pp. 128-129; CZERNY, 2015: p. 352-354.). In contrast, soul houses are exclusively found in funerary contexts.<sup>111</sup> Concerning their placement within the necropolis, these artefacts are primarily situated in the public space of the tomb, such as the cult chapel (CHASSINAT and PALENQUE, 1911: p. 164) or its courtyard (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1192, 1288, 1292). However, some examples have been found in the private spaces of tombs, including inside shafts (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1762-1789; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2021: p. 129) or burial chambers (KILIAN, 2016: p. 174). Upon reviewing publications about archaeological work in these private areas, it becomes evident that these offering trays were found in secondary contexts, likely as a result of tomb plundering and/or reuse (MICHALOWSKI, 1938: p. 184; MICHALOWSKI, 1950: pp. 67, 82, 84; SLATER, 1974: p. 311; RYAN, 1988: p. 37).

As for the soul houses, they have been found in the same places as the offering trays, which are the public zones of the tombs.<sup>112</sup> However, in some cases, they have been discovered close to the deceased (CAPART, 1927: p. 48; PEET, 1913: p. 24). On these occasions, the soul houses were found alongside other objects considered of high status.

### **3.8. Conclusions of the chapter 3**

Consequently, the offering trays, soul houses, stone offering tables, and offering scenes occasionally share some depiction of food offerings. Nonetheless, the essential offerings in the offering rituals were bread, beer, cow/ox, and fowl (LE PROVOST, 2013: p. 48). But, offering trays and soul houses do not always contain the same offerings, especially when it comes to beer, cow/ox, and fowl. While, offering trays and soul houses predominantly show offerings that symbolize protection, security, fertility, rebirth, or

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<sup>110</sup> The author considers urban and domestic contexts as two different spheres.

<sup>111</sup> In the fortress of Buhen, offering trays with architectural elements were found. According to the initial discoverer, these Artefacts might have been brought from the cemetery (EMERY, *et al.*, 1979: p. 98, pls. 55, 104). However, after a review of field notebooks and reports conducted by the author of this thesis, it was determined that these Artefacts were simple offering trays or contained shrine models. The majority of the architectural models were recorded as possible granary models, but after, they were published as soul houses. All documentation related to the archaeological work at Buhen is preserved at The Egypt Exploration Society (London).

<sup>112</sup> The most significant collection of these Artefacts comes from the group of offering trays and soul houses discovered by William Matthew Flinders Petrie in Rifeh. According to the Egyptologist, these objects were found at the top of the shafts, near the mouths of simple tombs (PETRIE, 1907).

justice and order;<sup>113</sup> offering scenes prominently display offerings with meanings of rebirth and fertility, such as the calf's head and lettuce. Additionally, the main purpose of these scenes is to provide perpetual food to the deceased compared to offering trays, as will be explained throughout this thesis. Furthermore, offering scenes are often accompanied by the offering formula and the depiction of the dead, which reinforce their function and distances them from the main purpose of the offering trays.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the offering trays and soul houses exhibit other elements that are not in the offering scenes found on the tomb walls or steles. As a result, offering trays have a more complex function than the offering scenes, which is an interaction and exchange of favours between the living and the dead.<sup>115</sup>

Similarly, the offering trays and soul houses differ from the stone offering tables.<sup>116</sup> The offerings of the stone tables are closely related to the offering scenes and the offering formula, and their function is well-known—to continuously provide food to the deceased through libation rituals. In contrast, the offering trays and soul houses share only a few similarities with the stone offering tables, such as the presence of a drain system and the use of libations on the artefacts, due to the magical function of the objects. However, while the repeated use of stone offering tables in the offering ritual is known, the function of the offering trays and soul houses is not clear. But, this study suggests that they may have function as a means of communication between the living and the dead, as it has been commented and it will be explained later in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Moreover, although the conventional function of offering trays and soul houses, according to studies, is to provide food and/or refuge to the deceased, their presence is limited throughout Egypt. These artefacts have been found in tombs belonging to various social groups, as mentioned in Chapter 1. The scarcity of these artefacts, as discussed in Chapter 2, is noteworthy when considering the accessibility to their raw material, the number of burial sites in Egypt, and the necessity for maintaining a cult to the dead through the offerings. Thus, this may indicate a different purpose for these artefacts.

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<sup>113</sup> These according to symbolism of offering, as it was explained in the chapter 3.3. Elements on the offering trays and soul houses, and their meaning in ancient Egypt.

<sup>114</sup> In the chapter 3.3.5. Unusual elements, it mentioned the offering tray with part of the offering formula from Qubbet el-Hawa. But, after the present thesis, it has been concluded that this artefact is linked to votive offerings and the interaction between living and dead. For more information about it, See chapter 7. Final conclusions.

<sup>115</sup> To understand this proposal, See chapter 7. Final Conclusions and Lechuga Ibáñez (In press<sup>A</sup>).

<sup>116</sup> This question was analysed by Andrea Killian in her study of 2012, and she concluded that offering trays and stone offering tables are different artefacts.

Regarding the offering trays and soul houses, as it was mentioned, they share some characteristics. However, there are differences in certain features, such as the presence of anthropomorphic figures engaged in various activities and architectural elements. For instance, soul houses often depict building models similar to the funerary wooden models that show human figures doing different activities.<sup>117</sup> Additionally, house models are found beyond the chronological range of the offering trays. Furthermore, the location of the offering trays and soul houses differs. Both artefacts are found in funerary and urban/domestic contexts; nevertheless, the presence of soul houses in urban contexts raises doubts about the precise typology<sup>118</sup> of these artefacts and their provenance.<sup>119</sup>

Therefore, the features of these artefacts, their chronology, locations, and the coexistence of offering trays and soul houses in the same place and chronological period (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, in press<sup>B</sup>) indicate the absence of a linear and chronological evolution.

Thus, all these reasons might indicate a dissociation between the soul houses and the simple offering trays,<sup>120</sup> meaning that offering trays and soul houses are different artefacts. In this way, the simple offering trays, with or without shrine models, constitute a specific type of artefact, while the soul houses, representing building models, and they constitute another type that is more closely related to funerary models (Fig. 57a-b) (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019b: p. 199; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, in press<sup>B</sup>). Although they share some features with the offering trays, this might be an influence due to the chronological period and religious context. Finally, it should be noted that building models are found in other periods and cultures as well (PARROT, 1955: p. 193, fig. 4, pl. 15) (Fig. 58a-b), which reinforces the idea that soul houses do not emerge from offering

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<sup>117</sup> There are some funerary models made in clay, e.g. the granary representations.

<sup>118</sup> See footnote 6.

<sup>119</sup> At the fortress of Buhen, offering trays and soul houses have been found. Either researchers have considered these objects to be votive offerings or, alternatively, they could have originated from the necropolis and ended up in the town due to the plundering of the cemetery. Additionally, it is suggested that these objects might have been brought by children and used as toys. There is even a possibility that they were stored inside the fortress but never put to use (Emery *et al.* 1979: pp. 30, 55, 151-152).

<sup>120</sup> See Chapter 3.5. Chronology of the offering trays and soul houses.

trays.<sup>121</sup> Instead, there seem to be external factors and/or previous influences that contribute to the development of soul houses independently from the offering trays.



Figure 57a-b: a) House wooden model of Meketre. Middle Kingdom, Thebes, Egyptian Museum (Cairo), unknown register number, image of the author; b) House wooden model. Middle Kingdom, Unprovenanced, Malawi Museum, unknown register number, image of the author.

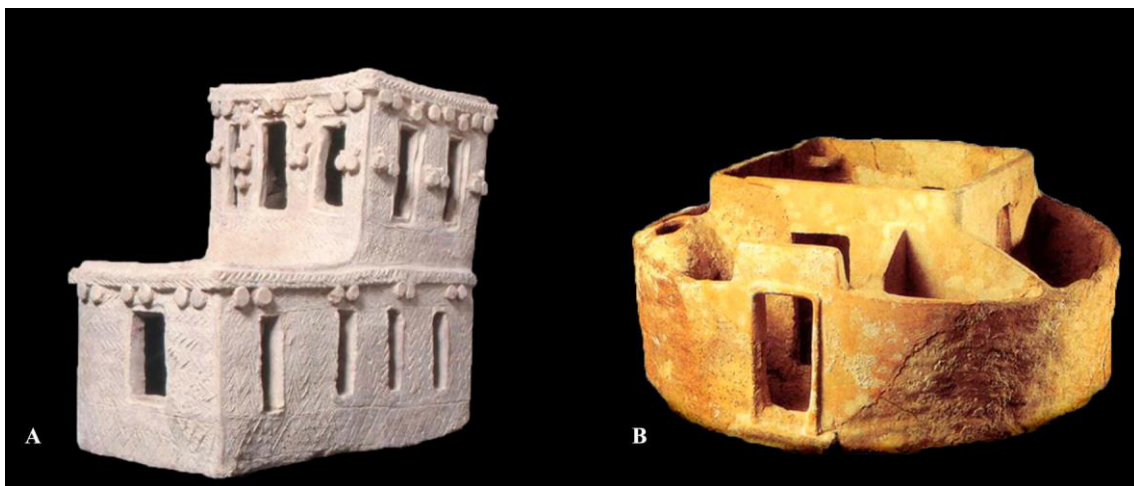


Figure 58a-b: a) Babylonian Spirit House. Old Assyrian Period (2600 BCE), Mesopotamia, Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, No. RC-2084; b) Clay rounded house model. Early Dynastic Period, Mari, Tell Hariri, Mesopotamia, National Museum of Damascus, No. S 2351.

<sup>121</sup> It should be noted that not all soul houses have a drainage system (See fig. 26a).

## 4. Historical Context of offering trays and study area

The chronology of the offering trays ranges from the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Dynasty to the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, as it was explained in Chapter 2.5. Therefore, the historical periods of offering trays are the First Intermediate Period, Middle Kingdom, and the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period (See annex: Chronological table, p. VI).

### 4.1. Old Kingdom

It is well-known that during the Old Kingdom, politically, the territory was unified under the figure of the king, who represented full power and was the intercessor between the earthly and the divine world (BARD, 2007: pp. 139-143). However, Egypt was symbolically divided into the south and the north, with the capital, Memphis, located in the north (PÉREZ LAGARCHA and ERRANDONEA RODRÍGUEZ, 2016: p. 25). From the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, only a few individuals held managerial positions, and from the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the title of ‘vizier’ became accessible to officials of non-royal origin. This title represented an administrative post held by the highest civilian bureaucrats (BÁRTA, 2013: pp. 163-164, 166; PAPAZIAN, 2013: p. 46; WILLEMS, 2014: pp. 23-33).

In addition, the organization and management of the country's resources were gradually delegated to different administrative centres (MORENO GARCÍA, 2013: p. 49-50). Therefore, there was another territorial division, namely administrative. Egypt was divided into different provinces, known as *nomes* from the Greek period, and each *nome* was ruled by a local governor or nomarch. Likewise, these provinces had a capital, which was the main city (BARD, 2007: p. 126). Nevertheless, these governors depended on the royal palace in Memphis.

Later, during the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty the local governors acquired greater power, who got more autonomy. This growing independence was reflected through the creation of local necropolis in their territory<sup>122</sup> (DODSON and IKRAM, 2008: p. 177). Therefore, this development and autonomy of the local rulers produced a decentralization and loss of the

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<sup>122</sup> During previous dynasties, the officials, courtiers, and nobles buried close to their king (GRIMAL, 1996: p. 141; MORENO GARCÍA, 2004b: p. 206).

royal power. In contrast, the regional power increased, and as result, the governors' titles changed;<sup>123</sup> and later, they created local dynasties (MALEK, 2000: p. 107).

The decline of royal power in favour of the local authorities caused political, economic, and cultural changes. Additionally, these changes were intensified in Upper Egypt; even the governor posts rapidly became hereditary.<sup>124</sup> Whilst, in the provinces close to the court, the independence of the local governors could be more difficult; but there are not enough archaeological evidences to confirm this (SEIDLMAYER, 2000: p. 111; MALEK, 2007: p. 219).

## 4.2. First Intermediate Period

The prior events led to the First Intermediate Period. During this time, power was divided among different provincial courts, with some of them highlighting over others (BARD, 2007: pp. 159-160). The capital was transferred from Memphis to Heracleopolis during the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Dynasties (SEIDLMAYER, 2006a: pp. 163-167), as the Heracleopolitan sovereigns, who began these mentioned dynasties, asserted their authority<sup>125</sup> (GRIMAL, 1996: p. 158; SEIDLMAYER, 2007: p. 222). Likewise, these kings were heirs of the Memphite lineage, as their coronation names show (GRIMAL, 1996: p. 158). On the other hand, during this period, other sovereigns emerged at Thebes, who also highlighted their authority. Therefore, there were two main centres in conflict. Additionally, different kingdoms (*nomes*) fought against each other and against the Theban and Heracleopolitan potentates. Examples of these are 'The House of Antef' (Theban potentates) and 'The House of Khety' (Heracleopolitan potentates) (MORENO GARCÍA, 2004b: pp. 284, 290-299; MORENO GARCÍA, 2020: p. 146).<sup>126</sup>

In addition, other nomes were involved in the confrontation. Some of them were in favor of Heracleopolis, while others supported Thebes (GRIMAL, 1996: pp. 159-160; SEIDLMAYER, 2007: pp. 222-223; GOLDMISCHMIDT, 2008: p. 22). Regarding this, the Heracleopolitan rulers maintained control through different local dynasties in regions

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<sup>123</sup> New titles began to appear as early as the mid-5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty in the provinces, and the king granted these titles. Earlier titles included *ḥd-mr* and *imi-r3* + nome o town (TRIGGER, *et al.*, 1983: p. 78; WILLEMS, 2014: pp. 24-25).

<sup>124</sup> The heredity of titles began at the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (MALEK, 2007: p. 157).

<sup>125</sup> Another reason was the foreign invasion (GRIMAL, 1996: p. 158; SEIDLMAYER, 2007: p. 222; GOLDMISCHMIDT, 2008: p 22).

<sup>126</sup> The nome *T3-sty* (currently Aswan) was related to 'The house of Khety' for a period of time, as shown by the inscriptions on the walls of Setka's tomb. (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1743-1744).

near the capital, such as Middle Egypt, some zones of the Delta, and a few southern regions. Meanwhile, the regions far from the capital confronted the Heracleopolitan sovereigns. These last areas seem to have depended on the rule of Thebes (MORENO GARCÍA, 2004b: p. 146; GRAJETZKI, 2006: pp. 7-8). Finally, the monarchs from Thebes asserted their authority over all of Egypt, and in this way, the country was unified again.

### **4.3. Middle Kingdom**

The Middle Kingdom was an age characterized by strong royal power and is considered the classical era. This is due to the period experienced significant developments in literature and art (GRAJETZKI, 2006: p. 1). After the victory of the sovereigns from Thebes, a new dynasty of kings began. This was the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, which was initiated by Mentuhotep II (SEIDLMAYER, 2006a: pp. 159-163), and its capital was located in Thebes. Mentuhotep II is known as the 'builder king' due to the large quantity of monuments built during his reign (GRIMAL, 1996: pp. 175-176; CALLENDER, 2000: p. 139; SEIDLMAYER, 2007: p. 223). During this dynasty, the power of the king was firmly established over the courtiers, and the regional administration was reorganized, based on the models from the Old Kingdom and the First Intermediate Period (CALLENDER, 2007: p. 328; GOLDMISCHMIDT, 2008: p. 22; GRAJETZKI, 2020: pp. 640, 768). However, the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty was short-lived, and it gave rise to the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (SCHNEIDER, 2006: pp. 170-175), which began with Amenemhet, who had probably served as vizier for his predecessor. He was the first king of this new, Amenemhet I, who transferred the capital to the north, to Ity-Tawy. This new foundation city was built close to the Fayum and Lisht areas, although its location remains unknown (CALLENDER, 2007: pp. 337-338; GRAJETZKI, 2020: p. 642).

Concerning the international relationships, this period was relevant because of the Nubian military conquests by the Egyptian state, which were more significant during the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. In contrast, the relationships with the north were commercial affairs and military some campaigns (SANMARTIN and SERRANO, 1998: p. 284; CALLENDER, 2007: p. 342; ALLEN, 2008).

From the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, some changes are noticed throughout Egypt. Among them, it stands out the disappearance of the largest tombs of the local elite from some provincial necropolises, possibly due to decreased resources and power. As for the large monuments,

they were built by the kings and their court. The main centres now included the Memphite-Fayum region, Abydos, and Thebes (GRAJETZKI, 2020: p. 643).

Later, during the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the political system continued as the previous one, but with a new lineage, and the same capital. In fact, the names of the kings from the first half of the dynasty are preserved in the Turin canon. However, in the second half of this, the documentation about the kings is scarce (GRAJETZKI, 2006: p. 63; CALLENDER, 2007: p. 361; GRAJETZKI, 2020: p. 770).

#### **4.4. Second intermediate Period**

During the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the kings no longer controlled the entire Nile valley (BOURRIAU, 2007: p. 384). As a result, the Delta region had a large influx of people from the Levant, who settled there. Their capital was Avaris, where the presence and power of this community grew (MÜLLER, 2015a: p. 340). In contrast, Egyptian authority in the north declined (GRAJETZKI, 2020: pp. 648-649). Consequently, the capital was transferred back to Thebes (BOURRIAU, 2007: p. 384).

In addition, the Hyksos established their own dynasty, because of their increasing power in the Delta (GRAJETZKI, 2020: p. 649). Thus, during this period, several dynasties coexisted: the 14<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Hyksos dynasty) in the western Delta,<sup>127</sup> the 15<sup>th</sup> (Hyksos dynasty), and the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasties from Theban lineage (SANMARTIN and SERRANO, 1998: p. 291; SCHNEIDER, 2006: p. 169; GRAJETZKI, 2020: pp. 648-649; WEGNER and CAHAIL, 2021: pp. 338-339).

As for the Nubian territory, Egyptian control was lost around the reign of Sobekhotep IV (ca. 1709–1701BCE, 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty). In contrast, Egyptian influence in Byblos remained for half a century (CALLENDER, 2007: p. 361; GRAJETZKI, 2020: p. 647).

Finally, the Theban kings recovered the Nubian fortresses. The first mentions of these military campaigns belong to the reign of Kamose (17<sup>th</sup> Dynasty). The next step was to expel the Hyksos after several years of conflict. Consequently, during the reign of Ahmose (18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) Egypt was unified again, and this led to next period, the New Kingdom (SANMARTIN and SERRANO, 1998: pp. 296-297; BOURRIAU, 2000: p. 203; BRYAN, 2007: p. 207).

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<sup>127</sup> A dynasty arose in Xoïs, which led a secession against the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (BOURRIAU, 2007: pp. 249-251)

## 4.5. Provincial Administration

During the Old Kingdom, rulers of the provinces imitated the administrative organization of the state capital but on a smaller scale. However, they were accountable to the central government. Likewise, these officials were educated in the court and later returned to the province (EYRE, 2020: p. 781). Gradually, they would establish changes in the regional administrative structure (PAPAZIAN, 2013: p. 49). The posts of the local potentates were not hereditary at the beginning,<sup>128</sup> nevertheless the kingship patterns were important to hold a title (STRUDWICK, 1985: p. 338; MALEK, 2007: p. 157; EYRE, 2020: 781; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2023).

The transformation at the provinces during the First Intermediate Period was accentuated (SEIDLMAYER, 2007: p. 231). They even became substitutes for the central government, but their loyalty depended on the proximity or benefit obtained from a particular sovereign (GRAJETZKI, 2006: pp. 7-9). There is occasional archaeological and documentary information about the administration of the provinces. But, we can briefly understand the administration of Lower and Middle Egypt, which followed the model of the Old Kingdom in these territories (HUSSON and VALBELLE, 1998: pp. 69-70; GRAJETZKI, 2013: p. 218; 2020: p. 218). Meanwhile, the sovereigns from Upper Egypt, specifically the Theban governors, based their administration on the late Old Kingdom provincial court's precedents (GRAJETZKI, 2013: p. 219; HUSSON and VALBELLE, 1998: pp. 69-70). Regarding the administrative posts found during this period are similar to those from the Middle Kingdom. However, the range of titles during the First Intermediate Period appears to be wider than those found in the Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom (HELCK, 1958: pp. 77, 92; GRAJETZKI, 2020: p. 219).

Concerning the Middle Kingdom, the central government system was based on that of the Old Kingdom (SCHNARE, 1981: p. 193), and the posts of the provincial officials were similar as well. However, new titles were created according to the context or place's necessities<sup>129</sup> (CALLENDER, 2007: pp. 228-229; GRAJETZKI, 2009: p. 109; 2013: p. 215; GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2022: pp. 196, 215, 390). After the reunification, many

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<sup>128</sup> Later, the titles will be inherited. See chapter 4.1.1. Old Kingdom.

<sup>129</sup> Dr. Luisa García González (2022) has studied a clear example. It is the case of Heqaib (Hermitage), who held the title *imy-r ḥntyw Nḥsy/Hntyw/Hntytyw* (overSeer of the chiefs of the Nehesy/ overSeer of southerners/ overSeer of the Khentyt-people) (GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2022: pp. 208, 215). Another case is the title 'overSeer of Lower Egypt', which seems to be established during the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty according to Grajetzki (2009: p. 109).

potentates of provinces retained their positions, specifically those who supported Thebes (SCHNARE, 1981: pp. 193-194; MORENO GARCÍA, 2020: p. 170). From the mid-12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, powerful local families accepted the royal authority, but they imitated to the royalty in their spheres (SCHNARE, 1981: pp. 193-194; EYRE, 2020: p. 782). After the administrative reorganisation of Senwosret III, which was not as violent as previously established (FRANKE, 1991: pp. 51-67), in the end of the Middle Kingdom and the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period the administrative system did not undergo an abrupt change; rather, it continued to function similarly (CALLENDER, 2007: p. 197).

#### **4.6. Social structure**

Regarding the social structure, Egyptian history shows a stratified society. In general, at the top was the king, followed by the palatial administrative group and the provincial elites, some of whom may have been members of the royal family. The next group consisted of individuals holding various religious or administrative positions at the central or local level. After them, a large group of scribes and temple or palace servants from different regions formed an intermediate social group, maintaining personal and professional connections for several generations. Following them were specialized workers such as artists, builders, craftsmen, potters, etc. Finally, the largest group comprised the rest of the population, about whom researchers have limited knowledge. The reason is the lack of direct or indirect documentation about these individuals, in contrast to the previous social groups (GRAJETZKI, 2006: pp. 139-166).

During the Old Kingdom, the provincial potentates also led patronage networks, but their influence was limited to the provincial level. As rulers, they often enriched themselves at the detriment of vulnerable sections of society. This enrichment was further increased during the crisis of the monarchy and state system (MORENO GARCÍA, 2004b: pp. 145-146; SEIDLMAYER, 2007: pp. 229-230; WILLEMS, 2013: pp. 349-350).

Therefore, the mentioned situation in the Old Kingdom led to cultural, social, and economic changes in the rural stage (SEIDLMAYER, 2007: pp. 229-230). These variations ushered in the First Intermediate Period. During this, various circumstances emerged among the lower social sectors; some of them improved their positions, while

others worsened. As a result, the intermediate social group<sup>130</sup> in the population grew during this period (SANMARTÍN and SERRANO, 1998: pp. 273-274; MORENO GARCÍA, 2004a: pp. 48-49; O'NEIL, 2015: p. 8).

After these changes, during the Middle Kingdom, this intermediate social group continued. These people had considerable wealth but did not hold administrative positions. Thus, they did not belong to the ruling class, but occasionally, they could have family ties with it (GRAJETZKI, 2006: pp. 149-151).

Regarding the society during the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period, there seem to have been few changes, at least according to the material culture (GRAJETZKI, 2020: p. 643). However, power became more centralized since the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, and new administrative titles arose (GRAJETZKI, 2020: p. 643). Despite this, the overall society did not undergo significant transformations from previous periods.

#### **4.6.1. Household**

In order to better understand the functioning of the social structure, it is necessary to review society from the point of view of the family and how it was formed and understood. This is important because it is the basis on which the society was articulated, both at state and provincial level. Hence, this was relevant for the Egyptian administration. In this way, the household was the familiar basic unit in Ancient Egyptian, often referred to as an extended family (*3bt*) in private sources (MORENO GARCÍA, 2012: pp.1-2; OLABARRIA, 2020: pp. 78-79). The household was encompassed by the father, mother, children, siblings, and serfs (*mrt*). Additionally, it included patrimonial goods and/or resources and other people without family ties, such as citizens (*dmj*), companions (*jrj-rmnw*), friends (*hnmsw*), loved ones (*mryt*), associates (*sm3w*), and concubines (*mt-hnwt*) (ASSMANN, 2002: p. 50; MORENO GARCÍA, 2012: pp. 2-3; MÜLLER, 2014: p. 7; OLABARRIA, 2020: p. 76). Therefore, households could encompass hundreds of people, depending on the status of the head of the family (MORENO GARCÍA, 2012: p. 3; MÜLLER, 2014: p. 7).

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<sup>130</sup> During the Old Kingdom existed an intermediate social group kind, which did not belong to the administrative group, but they had certain level of wealth and education (GRAJETZKI, 2006: pp. 149-150). This group is denominated by Grajetzki as the 'middle class', but the author of the present thesis prefers to refer to it as an intermediate group, as the first term originated during the Modern Era.

The household experienced significant growth from the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty,<sup>131</sup> driven by changes in the monarchy, particularly in the provinces. Consequently, many people began to use various means of expression, as writing, monumental,<sup>132</sup> to legitimize their position and authority, often alluding to the extended family (ASSMANN, 2002: p. 50; MORENO GARCÍA, 2010: pp. 137-139; 2012: pp. 3-4; 2016: p. 9; OLABARRIA, 2020: p. 189). These extended families could grow or dissolve due to agreements or conflicts of interest among each other (MORENO GARCÍA, 2012: pp. 2, 5).

Thus, the social organization in Ancient Egypt was formed by a patronage system, and the family concept was broader than the recent definitions of it (ASSMANN, 2002: pp. 50-52; STOWERS, 2012: p. 6; CAMPAGNO, 2014; BARDONOVÁ and NOVÁKOVÁ, 2016). In this way, the family encompassed blood and other ties (MORENO GARCÍA, 2012: p. 4).

Having explained the above, this family structure also played an important role in the religious private sphere (PICARDO, 2015: p. 257), which mainly focused on ancestor cults (MÜLLER, 2015a: p. 356; MORENO GARCÍA, 2010). In these cults, some or all members of the household could participate (PICARDO, 2015: p. 257; MÜLLER, 2015b: p. 86).

#### **4.7. Religion and funerary beliefs**

The religion and beliefs of Ancient Egypt are known primarily through the texts<sup>133</sup> that have been preserved. Additionally, other sources include iconography showed on funerary artefacts and cult objects. All these sources are interconnected (BICKEL, 2020: pp. 821-822).

The religion played a crucial role in the state system, with its main myth centred on Osiris in the funerary sphere. It established a model for funerary cults and kingship (BICKEL, 2020: p. 826). As a result, the religion became a tool of control for the ruling groups over

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<sup>131</sup> Household has its origins in the prehistoric clan system (ASSMANN, 2002: pp. 50-51).

<sup>132</sup> According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2014), monumental, concerning the monument term: *'monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features which are of outstanding value from the point of view of history, art or science'* (p. 134).

<sup>133</sup> Also, classical authors provided information about Egyptian beliefs, as Manetho or Palaephatus (VIDAL, 1993: pp. 5, 24 footnote 27).

the rest of the population (BICKEL, 2020: p. 826; MORENO GARCÍA, 2020: p. 145). During the Old Kingdom, the king served as the intercessor between the gods and humans (MORENO GARCÍA, 2020: p. 145). Additionally, he was considered the guarantor of order in the world and the protector of the country against external enemies and malevolent forces (MALEK, 2007: p. 138). Definitively, he guaranteed the *Ma'at*,<sup>134</sup> which was a significant function of the king during his life and even in the afterlife. Consequently, after the king's death, several cults were established to preserve this royal function. These cults involved presenting offerings and/or libation rituals <sup>135</sup> at his funerary complex (MALEK, 2007: p. 143). These cults and rituals aimed to ensure the deceased's survival in the afterlife and were emulated by the courtiers, functionaries, and potentates across Egypt. Reproducing these rituals in the provinces served to legitimize the religious status of the administrative rulers, especially in the provinces distant from the capital (WILLEMS, 2008: pp. 178, 181, 225-228).

In addition, this religious expression among the local elite, which emerged from the late Old Kingdom, was accompanied by new funerary goods from early times. As a result, the tombs display a collection of daily and ritual/symbolic objects (WILLEMS, 2008: p. 143; SMITH, 2009). This tradition persisted during the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom. Moreover, the symbolic objects were not only found in the elite tombs but were also present in the burials of the rest of the population, according to economic position of the deceased (LACOVARA and TROPE, 2001: p. 20; WILLEMS, 2008: p. 144).

On the other hand, the Middle Kingdom saw a notable development in the access between people and deities, eliminating the need for the arbitration of kings or priests (CALLENDER, 2007: p. 378). Regarding the Osirian cult, it experienced significant promotion during the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, mainly in Abydos, due to the patronage of the sovereigns (CALLENDER, 2007: p. 377; MORENO GARCÍA, 2016: pp. 10-11).

Furthermore, in the late Middle Kingdom, funerary conceptions began to change. The deceased would assume a higher cosmological role, and their relationship with the gods became more personal. As a result, tombs and grave goods reduced in size and quantity,

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<sup>134</sup> See footnote 79.

<sup>135</sup> Objects or food used during the life of the deceased were included because the afterlife was considered the continuity of the earthly life (ASSMANN, 2005: p. 15; WILLEMS, 2008: pp. 142-143; SHUSHAN, 2009: p. 53; BARTA, 2011: p. 94).

while collective burials became more prevalent (O'NEIL, 2015: p. 63; GRAJETZKI, 2003: pp. 54, 63).

Finally, these changes in the funerary ideas caused a reduction in the interaction and requirements between the living and the deceased (MORENO GARCÍA, 2010: p. 10; O'NEIL, 2015: p. 63; MORENO GARCÍA, 2016: p. 10-11).

#### **4.7.1. Popular religion**

The ancient Egyptian population could participate in various religious events. These events included festivals or processions, some regulated by the calendar and others not, votive offerings in temples or chapels, and/or practices related to funerary cults. All of these events were linked to both the official and non-official religion (MOTA, 2011: p. 72; BAINES and WARAKSA, 2017: p.1). However, there is a group of popular practices that were part of the communities and, mainly, carried out in domestic contexts. These practices are attested in early the Old Kingdom-First Intermediate Period (ADAMS, 1998: p. 24; LESKO, 2012: pp. 197-209; MOTA SILVA, 2015: p. 117).

Therefore, popular religion is synonymous with private religion and also includes the concepts of 'domestic religion,' 'household religion,' 'folk religion,' and 'personal religion,' which encompasses a group of beliefs and practices. In addition, the magic is difficult to separate from popular religion, because both are closely linked to each other (BODEL and OLYAN, 2012: p. 2; RITNER, 2012: p. 171-196; BAINES and WARAKSA, 2017: p. 1).

Conversely, this type of religion consisted of magic charms (*hk3*), rituals and cults<sup>136</sup> dedicated to divinities, ancestors (MOTA SILVA, 2015: p. 123). Therefore, among these practices, it is possible to find spells aimed at protection against dangerous animals or persons, diseases, or the evil eye. Additionally, these practices also addressed issues related to fertility, births, or childhood (PINCH, 1983: pp. 405-414; STEVENS, 2009: p. 2; MOTA SILVA, 2012: p. 33; LESKO, 2012: pp. 198-199; RITNER, 2012: p. 171-196; MORENO GARCÍA, 2020: p. 145). Specialist practitioners within the community carried out these magic charms. In other cases, common people might conduct simple spells,

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<sup>136</sup> According to Cambridge dictionary:

Magic is the use of special powers to make things happen that would usually be impossible.

Ritual is a fixed set of actions and words, especially as part of a religious ceremony.

Cult is a particular system of religious belief.

which were often transferred orally (SZPAKOWSKA, 2009: pp. 799-800; STEVENS, 2009: p. 2). However, in the latter case, textual documentation does not exist, and the information is known through indirect textual references or material culture (STEVENS, 2009: pp. 1-2; MOTA SILVA, 2015: pp. 102-103).

Regarding archaeological objects related to these cults in household spheres, altars/portable shrines, basins, stone offering tables, pottery offering trays, stands, incense burners, and figurines found in domestic context have been included among the materials linked to the ancestor cult (SMITH, 2003: pp. 127-131; PICARDO, 2014: p. 68; MOTA SILVA, 2015: pp. 103-104; LEGROS, 2016: pp. 67-68). A clear example of the connection between offering trays and domestic cults is the finding at Askut, where a domestic installation for the cult was discovered along with fragments of offering trays (SMITH, 2003: pp. 127-131).

#### **4.7.2. Ancestors cult**

In respect to abovementioned, in popular or private religion, one of the cults carried out was the ancestor cult. This was linked to the household (See chapter 4.6.1), because the ancestors were considered active members of it (MÜLLER, 2015b: p. 88). The ancestor cult consists of ritual practices carried out after the burial, which begins during the burial<sup>137</sup> itself; that is when the wife and successor son establish new relationships between the deceased and his social surroundings (FITZENREITER, 2018: p. 54).

After the funeral, regular activities were carried out at the tombs, temples,<sup>138</sup> or domestic spaces, with the aim of establishing relationships between the living and the deceased. In this way, the living might gain spiritual benefits, and the deceased may ensure its survival through offerings (PINCH, 2003: p. 444; STOWERS, 2012: p. 11; MÜLLER, 2015b: pp. 85-88; FITZENREITER, 2018: p. 54).

Regarding the purpose of these cults, they involved a relationship of reciprocal need as they facilitated the interaction between the living and the dead. In this context, the *ꜣḥ* was

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<sup>137</sup> Fitzenreiter notes the difference between ancestor cult and dead cult. The dead cult consists of the rituals and practices carried out during the funeral events (FITZENREITER, 2018: p. 54). For more information about burial perform See Abbas (2020: pp. 856-866).

<sup>138</sup> Temples dedicated to the veneration of the deceased - an example is Heqaib's temple in Elephantine.

the form of the deceased that allowed communication with the living and served as an intercessor with the gods (MÜLLER, 2015b: p. 88).

The worship of ancestors was linked to both the political and domestic spheres. In the former, it legitimized power, while in the latter, it served the purpose of social cohesion (HARRINGTON, 2013: p. 29; MORENO GARCÍA, 2016: p. 2; MORENO GARCÍA, 2020: p. 145). Among the practitioners of the ancestor cult were individuals from all social groups and genders<sup>139</sup> (HARRINGTON, 2013: pp. 83-84; MÜLLER, 2015b: p. 93). This is evident from artefacts and/or installations found in domestic contexts in various cities such as Elephantine,<sup>140</sup> Lahun, Askut, Abydos, Deir el-Medina, or el-Amarna (PETRIE, 1891: p. 9; ADAMS, 1998: p. 24; SMITH, 2003: pp. 127-131; EXELL, 2008; STEVENS, 2003: pp. 143–168; VON PILGRIM, 2006: pp. 403-418; HARRINGTON, 2013: pp. 65-66; MOTA SILVA, 2012: p. 35, 2015: p. 43). However, the venerated ancestors were usually heads of the main households or a couple, who belonged to the elite of the community (HARRINGTON, 2013: p. 29; MORENO GARCÍA, 2016: pp. 3-4). This information is known through textual sources or relevant local installations, such as Heqaib's sanctuary in Elephantine (MORENO GARCÍA, 2016: p. 8). Additionally, it should be noted that other extended families belonged to intermediate social groups, including minor officials or modest people (MORENO GARCÍA, 2012: p. 3). Therefore, it is essential to consider the social composition of the households and the literacy and orality in society related to the ancestor cult.

Besides, it must keep in mind that oral communication and spoken words held significant importance in all social strata, as demonstrated by many religious texts<sup>141</sup> (MORENO GARCÍA, 2004b: p. 209; JAY, 2019: p. 313; JAY, 2020: pp. 959-962).

#### **4.7.2.1. Letters**

In respect to literacy and orality in household religion, it is possible to highlight the letters containing religious procedures. The topics include medical or magical spells, offering

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<sup>139</sup> The ancestor cult at the tomb was carried out for the eldest son (MÜLLER, 2015b: p. 93).

<sup>140</sup> See Chapter 4.5.1. Abu.

<sup>141</sup> Many texts show the phrase which translates literally as 'saying words'. Therefore, this indicates that the words must be pronounced (JAY, 2019: p. 313). A clear example of this is the title 'Lector priest,' whose function was to recite the rituals and litanies (MORENO GARCÍA, 2004b: p. 209).

formulae, and dedicatory texts, all of which were conducted at home as well (MOTA SILVA, 2011: p. 73; DONNAT, 2019: p. 46).

However, among the textual sources, there is a group of them that were left at the necropolis.<sup>142</sup> Many of these letters have an unprovenanced origin, and only their region or site might be hypothesized (TROCHE, 2018: p. 6). These texts were written on various materials such as pottery vessels, strips of linen, stelae, ostraca, papyrus, and even on some figurines known as ‘Fertility figurines’ (BUNSON, 2002: p. 37; TROCHE, 2018: p. 2; DONNAT, 2019: p. 52). These inscribed artefacts are collectively known as ‘Letters to the dead’.

These letters are attested as early as the Late Old Kingdom and continued until the 7th Century BCE<sup>143</sup> (WENTE, 1990: p. 210; RITNER, 1993: p. 180; MORENO GARCÍA, 2010: p. 10; DONNAT, 2019: p. 46). However, the main period of these artefacts is the First Intermediate Period, probably due to social, political, and religious changes (TROCHE, 2018: p. 8). The writing used for them was the hieratic script, although some examples show hieroglyphic writing as well (TROCHE, 2018: p. 2; DONNAT, 2019: p. 46).

Regarding the letters to the dead, there are two different approaches concerning their literality. On one hand, they are considered a subcategory of the ‘letter’ textual genre (GRIESHAMMER, 1975: p. 864; DONNAT, 2019: p. 53). On the other hand, they are considered a non-formalized genre, which encompass written communication to the dead (MINIACI, 2014: p. 17; DONNAT, 2019: p. 53).

The letters to the dead, as their name indicates, were addressed to the ancestors that were known as *3h ikr n R*<sup>144</sup> (RITNER, 1993: p. 182; BUNSON, 2002: p. 37; MÜLLER, 2015b: p. 88; DONNAT, 2019: p. 46; SCHIAVO, 2020: p. 202). Their aim was to seek the intervention of the deceased in the lives of the members of the ‘*pr*’ (household) to solve problems or, in contrast, to prevent and calm any malevolent intervention of the deceased on the living (BUNSON, 2002: p. 37; MÜLLER, 2015b: p. 90;

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<sup>142</sup> At the moment, it is the only known location. However, it must be highlighted that this corpus of letters is scarce. This may be due to the fragility of the material (HARRINGTON, 2013: p. 34; MINIACI, 2014: p. 17; DONNAT, 2019: p. 46).

<sup>143</sup> From the Ramesside period onward, the letters were addressed to the gods (WENTE, 1990: p. 210).

<sup>144</sup> ‘The excellent spirit of Re’ (RITNER, 1993: p. 182; BUNSON, 2002: p. 37; SCHIAVO, 2020: p. 202).

FITZENREITER, 2018: p. 58; DONNAT, 2019: p. 46). The main topics of these letters were the following (TROCHE, 2018: p. 6):

- Inheritance.
- Aid for or protection against harm, illness, haunting, or some undefined threat.
- Fertility/sexual reproduction.

The recipients of these letters used to be the one who was head of the household, but a woman might also receive these texts (TROCHE, 2018: p. 5; SCHIAVO, 2020: pp. 203-206).

In respect to the letters to the dead, according to Sylvie Donnat (2007):

*'...the letter to the dead itself is not only a written text. It is a ritual performance.'* (p. 6)

That is, these letters are:

*'...a reminder of the ritual performances regularly done by the livings.'* (p. 6)

The reason of this Donnat's proposal about the letters is that some letters are designated as *pr.t hrw*<sup>145</sup> (WENTE, 1990: p. 215, No. 348, DONNAT, 2007: p. 6; HARRINGTON, 2013: p. 35). Besides, many of them are written on pottery libation bowls, plates, or jar-stands, which implies a symbolic offering as well (DONNAT, 2007: p. 6).

As for the petitioners, it is impossible to know their level of literacy because many letters might be written by professional scribes (BAINES, 1991: p. 155; VERHOEVEN, 2003: p. 35; TROCHE, 2018: p. 6). Nonetheless, it seems clear that these letters were recited before being deposited (BAINES, 1991: p. 155; VERHOEVEN, 2003: p. 35; TROCHE, 2018: p. 6). In this way, we must consider that many uninscribed objects found in different contexts, mainly funerary, might have the same objective as the letters. That is, these objects would be 'letters' to the dead but with verbalized petitions (BAINES, 1987: p. 87; PINCH, 2003: p. 445; DONNAT and MORENO GARCÍA, 2014: p. 184). Therefore, the social composition of extended families and the reduced literacy, as well as the importance of oral communication in ancient Egyptian society, probably support this proposal.

Finally, taking into account the long period during which these letters to the dead existed, the scarcity of these inscribed artefacts is particularly notable. Concerning it, there is a

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<sup>145</sup> 'Invocation-offerings'.

hypothesis to explain this scarcity: the petitions found *in situ* were not solved, and the petitioners would have returned to repeat the request. On the other hand, if the petitions were resolved, these objects could have been destroyed or removed because they accomplished their purpose. Alternatively, they could have been substituted for offerings (HARRINGTON, 2013: p. 35).

#### 4.8. First province

The first province of Egypt was *T3-sty*, which is nowadays the Aswan region. It was the southernmost province, which extended from Gebel Silsila in the North to the First Cataract, and was a border in Ancient Egypt (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2023: p. 49). However, this frontier line changed based on Egyptian conquests in Nubia or the loss of Nubian territories. The capital of the first province was *3bw* ('elephant town' or 'Elephantine') that situated on a large island in the middle of the Nile (Fig. 59a) (HABACHI, 1975: p. 1217; GATTO, 2005: pp. 72, 74).

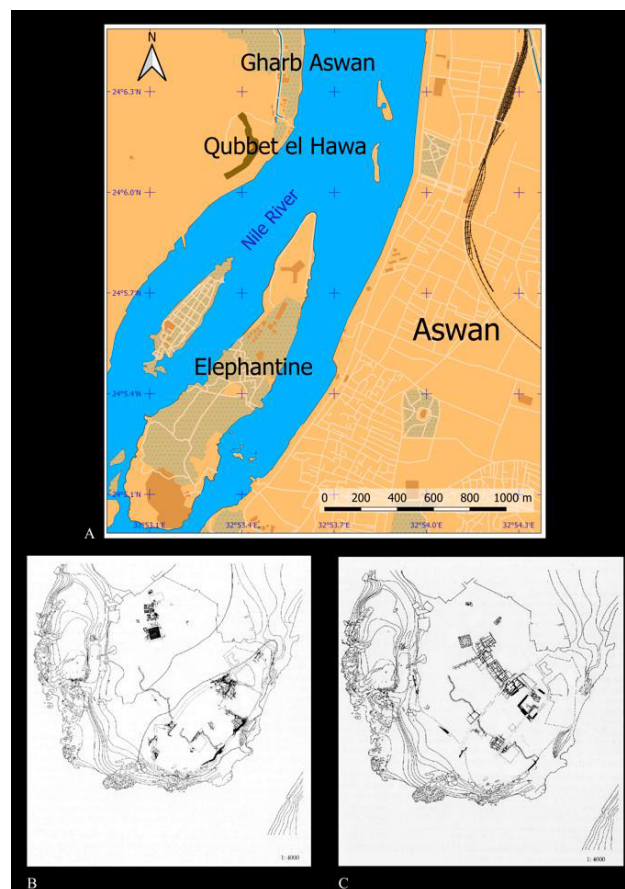


Figure 59a-c: a) Location of Qubbet el Hawa, Elephantine, and Aswan. Image courtesy of Dr. Antonio Mozas Calvache and Dr. José Luis Pérez García. University of Jaén. ©Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa; b)

Elephantine in the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period. Figure of the author based on Kaiser (1998: p. 11, fig. 1); c) Elephantine in the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period.

Figure of the author based on Kaiser (1998: p. 12, fig. 2).

Apart from *3bw*, some highlighting areas in *T3-sty* were *Nbyt* or *Nbw* ('the Golden One', currently Kom Ombo), *Swnw* (nowadays Aswan), and al-Kubaniya (GUTBUB, 1980: p. 676; BARD, 2005: pp. 174, 504; VON PILGRIM, MÜLLER and WERLEN, 2011; FOSTNER-MÜLLER, *et al.*, 2020: p. 57; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2023: pp. 49, 216). Regarding *Swnw*, it depended of rulers from *3bw* (VON PILGRIM, 2021; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2023: p. 216). Similarly, al-Kubaniya, which is a wadi whose occupation traces back to Predynastic Period,<sup>146</sup> depended on rulers from *3bw* as well (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2023: pp. 183-184). This site shows archaeological evidences of both domestic and funerary spheres (JUNKER, 1922: p. 3; GATTO, *et al.*, 2009: p. 187). However, *Nbyt* was an independent administrative centre at least since the Middle Kingdom, as some findings have demonstrated<sup>147</sup> (YOYOTTE, 1957: p. 88; FOSTNER-MÜLLER, *et al.*, 2020: pp. 58, 59).

As for the population of *3bw* and the surrounding area, archaeological evidences of Nubian presence since predynastic times have been found. This is due to the findings of artefacts belonging to the 'A-group' and 'C-group'. Therefore, there is a population mix, which is because it is a border zone (BARD, 2000: p. 64; RAUE, *et al.*, 2013: pp. 136, 153). Additionally, another area that demonstrates the Nubian presence in the region is al-Kubaniya,<sup>148</sup> where a cemetery with a hundred tombs belonging to the Nubian 'C-group' was found. However, despite this presence, the administration of the region was Egyptian (GRAJETZKI, 2006: p. 80; RAUE, *et al.*, 2013: pp. 136, 153).

#### ***4.8.1. Elephantine***

Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, this settlement was the administrative centre in the south (the First Cataract area) that controlled the trade between Egypt, Nubia, and the Eastern and Western Deserts. From the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards, it also served as the centre for

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<sup>146</sup> The first human activities in al-Kubaniya back to Late Palaeolithic (between 20,000 and 12,000 BCE) (BANKS, *et al.*, 2018).

<sup>147</sup> Two cylinder sealings of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty that are located at the British Museum and the Art Institute of Chicago. They show 'Sobek, Lord of Kom Ombo' (Sobekhotep) (YOYOTTE, 1957: p. 88; FOSTNER-MÜLLER, *et al.*, 2020: p. 59).

<sup>148</sup> The Nubian presence expanded to Kom Ombo (GATTO, 2005: p. 72).

provisioning commercial and military expeditions. Additionally, this settlement was responsible for receiving goods from Central Africa (GRAJETZKI, 2009: p. 111; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2012: p. 31; MORENO GARCÍA, 2020: pp. 168-169). Similarly, *3bw* (Elephantine) was significant because of its proximity to quarries of granite and diorite (HABACHI, 1975: p. 1217; PÉREZ LARGACHA and ERRANDONEA RODRÍGUEZ, 2016: p. 21; BLOXAN, 2020: p. 174).

Regarding the urban structure of Elephantine during the Old Kingdom (See fig. 59b), it was significant due to state intervention<sup>149</sup> (MORENO GARCÍA, 2004b: p. 80). The city was built on two parallel rock outcrops; the eastern side was used as a settlement, while the western one served as the city's cemetery (SIGL, 2019: p. 151). The settlement replicated the layout of the Egyptian capital but on a different scale, as seen in other Egyptian towns. Its main areas included temples and/or sanctuaries, the governor's residence, storage and production areas, domestic spaces, and a defensive wall (MOELLER, 2016: pp. 17-18, 22).

However, during the First Intermediate Period, the ancient abandoned villages in the island were reoccupied. The population also began to settle in the depression between the eastern and western sides (VON PILGRIM, 2010: p. 257; MOELLER, 2016: p. 219). The crisis of the monarchy and the state administrative system was reflected in the urbanism and territory as well (MORENO GARCÍA, 2004b: p. 80). Finally, during the Middle Kingdom (See fig. 59c), Elephantine was densely populated on its eastern side and also on part of its western side, and the depression between both island sides was filled completely (VON PILGRIM, 2010: p. 257; MOELLER, 2016: p. 305).

As for the urbanism, it highlights the governor's residence (house H2), which was an administrative area as well. The excavations show a continued use of this structure during the late Old Kingdom until the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (VON PILGRIM, 2006: 399-414; MOELLER, 2016: p. 221). In this building, which is severely affected by *sebkhin*, evidence of domestic cult practices is revealed<sup>150</sup> (MOTA SILVA, 2015: p. 43; MOELLER, 2016: 222-225).

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<sup>149</sup> Prior to this state intervention, the island was populated with different villages, which were abandoned due to the mentioned reason (MORENO GARCÍA, 2004b: p. 80).

<sup>150</sup> Other pieces of evidence of domestic cult in Elephantine include two child burials from the Old Kingdom and an offering table from the Middle Kingdom (MOTA SILVA, 2015: p. 43).

In respect to the religion in Elephantine, it highlights the gods' local triad: Khnum, Satet, and Anuket.<sup>151</sup> The first god was linked to floods, the second goddess<sup>152</sup> to the guardianship of the Egyptian border and Lower Nubia, and the last one was identified with different epithets, one of which was 'Goddess of the waterfalls of the Lower Nile'. She was a deity closely associated with this region of Upper Egypt (KAISER, *et al.*, 1997; VAN DIJK, 2007: p. 621; WILKINSON, 2003: pp. 138, 164-165, 194-195; HART, 2005: 28). During the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, many temples throughout Egypt were favoured by the kings. In the case of Elephantine, the temple of Satet was one of them. It received donations and was exempt from taxes and compulsory service (MALEK, 2000: p. 105).

Moreover, in Elephantine, there was another local worship that was far away from the official religion. This was the veneration of the deified Heqaib, an official<sup>153</sup> from the city during the Old Kingdom, who was worshipped in his sanctuary as a local deity during the Middle Kingdom<sup>154</sup> (GRAJETZKI, 2006: p. 82). Regarding the governors of Elephantine during the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, they built their chapels alongside that of Heqaib, thus legitimizing their authority through the veneration of the ancestors<sup>155</sup> (MORENO GARCÍA, 2004b: p. 281; SÁNCHEZ LEÓN and JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2016: p. 310; MORENO GARCÍA, 2020: p. 169; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2023). According to researchers and the cult objects found during archaeological work in Elephantine, the cult of Heqaib may have originated in house H2 (MORENO GARCÍA, 2004b: p. 281; VON PILGRIM, 2006: pp. 408-411; RAUE, 2014: pp. 1-4; MOELLER, 2016: pp. 221-226, footnote 53).

In short, the ruling family practiced the veneration of ancestors, as did other social groups. Therefore, this type of worship was a population-wide practice carried out across all social strata, with the aim of interacting with the deceased. Finally, the cult of Heqaib extended among the local citizens of Elephantine. In this way, the inhabitants, who

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<sup>151</sup> The Khnum's temple has been known since the Middle Kingdom (KAISER, *et al.*, 1997: p. 159; GRAJETZKI, 2006: p. 82). The cult of Satet has been known since the Early Dynastic Period (SEIDLMAYER, 2007: p. 266). Anuket was linked to an Egyptian conception of nature, and in this way, this deity was associated with the Nile Falls beyond the southern border (HART, 2005: p. 28).

<sup>152</sup> The temple of Satet was linked to the nilometer. Although there were several nilometers in Egypt, this one was the most important because it was the first to detect the rise of the river (BUNSON, 2002: p. 58).

<sup>153</sup> The Heqaib's cult began shortly after his death (BOURRIAU, 2000: p. 194).

<sup>154</sup> From the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the worship of Heqaib became part of the official religion (VON PILGRIM, 2006: p. 408).

<sup>155</sup> Heqaib was considered a divinity related to the ruling family. Thus, Sarenput I built his chapel together with that of Heqaib. In it, Sarenput was represented making offerings to his ancestors and the local god (SÁNCHEZ LEÓN and JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2016: p. 310).

belonged to the household of the official, could participate in various events to benefit from the power of Heqaib (RAUE, 2014: p. 4; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2023: 72).

#### **4.8.2. The necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa**

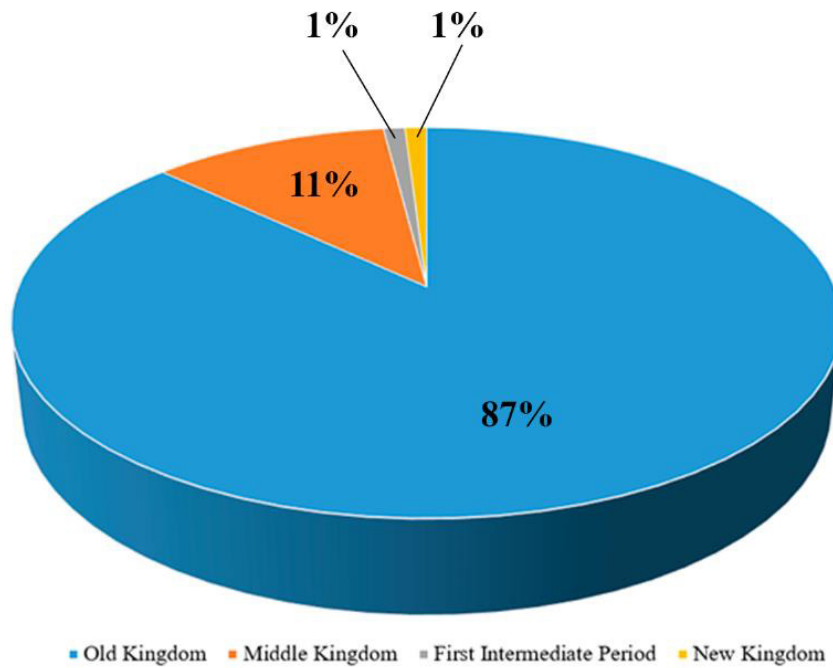
The necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa is located on a hill in front of the modern town of Aswan, on the west bank of the Nile River (See fig. 59a). It was the cemetery for the ruling households from *3bw* from the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards.<sup>156</sup> But, recent studies have found evidence of cult activities and funerary structures dated 4<sup>th</sup> to early 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasties (BOMMAS, 2020: pp. 18, 24-27). In this necropolis, the Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom tombs are particularly noteworthy<sup>157</sup> (HELLINCKX, 2014: p. 269; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2017: p. 111).

Regarding the tombs of Qubbet el-Hawa, they are hypogea carved into the rock of the hill and are disposed in different terraces (fig. 60a-b). Also, at the lower part of the hill, there are mastabas cemetery as well (EL-DIN, 1994; BOMMAS, 2020: p. 24). Concerning the rock tombs, in total, 129 have been documented between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, of which 87% were dated to the Old Kingdom, 11% to the Middle Kingdom, 1% to the First Intermediate Period, and 1% to the New Kingdom (Graphic 1) (MARTÍNEZ DE DIOS, 2011: p. 16). The main tombs are located in the terrace with the best geological strata (MELLADO GARCÍA, 2012: p. 25, table 10). These tombs are the most monumental hypogea, and their owners were the governors of Elephantine, their relatives and/or dependents (Fig. 60a-c) (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2012: p. 32).

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<sup>156</sup> At the same time, the cemetery of Elephantine Island was used until the Middle Kingdom (RAUE, 2013: p. 152). Here, the lower social groups were buried (TAYLOR, 2001: p. 139).

<sup>157</sup> The governors of the First Intermediate Period were also buried in this cemetery. An example is Setka's tomb (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1715-1815). However, current research about the region presents several gaps in the knowledge of the First Intermediate Period and Second Intermediate Period. On the other hand, during the New Kingdom, new tombs were built in the necropolis, and others were constructed on a nearby hill close to Qubbet el-Hawa, which is being excavated by the Egyptian-German mission. For more information See: <http://www.egyptian-museum-berlin.com/f01.php> (Accessed 23/07/2022). Finally, concerning the mastabas found at the lower part of the necropolis, the current knowledge about them is scarce as well (EL-DIN, 1994; BOMMAS, 2020).



Graphic 1. Predominant chronology among the 129 documented tombs of Qubbet el-Hawa.

Graphic by the author based on data of Mr. Juan Luis Martínez de Dios (2011: p. 16).

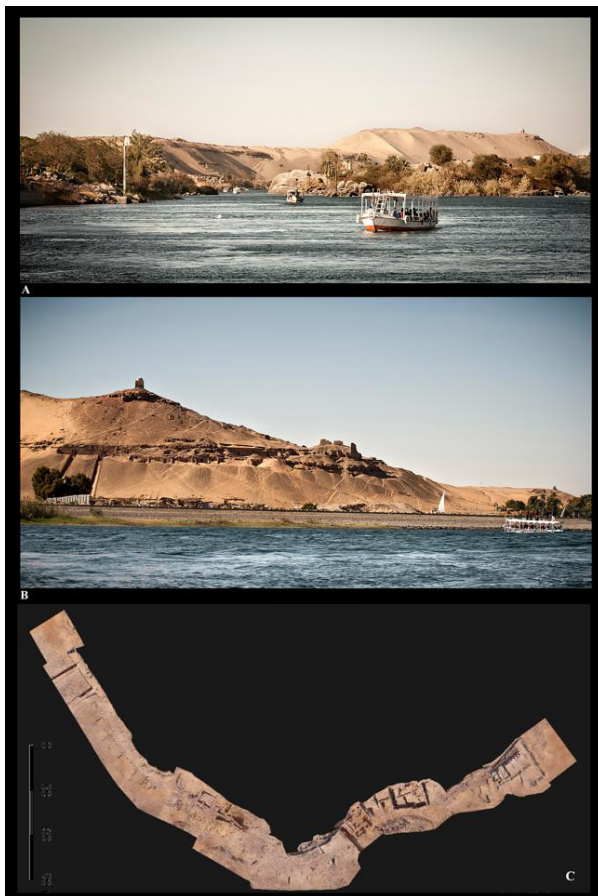


Figure 60a-c: Southern view of Qubbet el-Hawa. Image of the author; b) Eastern view of Qubbet el-Hawa. Tombs located in different terraces. Image of the author; c) Main terrace of the necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa. Image courtesy of Dr. Antonio Mozas Calvache and Dr. José Luis Pérez García. University of Jaén. ©Proyecto Qubbet el-Hawa.

These tombs were reused in different periods (Second Intermediate Period, New Kingdom, Third Intermediate Period, Late Period, and Greco-Roman Period) (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2009: p. 42; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2012: pp. 115-116; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2013: p. 38; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2015: p. 10; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2016: p. 44, 45, 48; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2017: pp. 15, 18, 104-105; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2018: p. 16, 19-20, 23, 54; ALBA GÓMEZ, *et al.*, 2019: p. 19; MARTÍNEZ DE DIOS, 2011: p. 14; HELLINCKX, 2014: p. 269; DE LA TORRE ROBLES, 2019). Additionally, during the Byzantine Period, some areas and tombs of the necropolis were occupied or reused by a Coptic monastery and hermitages<sup>158</sup> (BARBA COLMENERO, 2021; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2014: pp. 24-25).

Regarding the architectural structure of the tombs, they exhibit different levels of complexity. However, common features found in the tombs are private and public zones.<sup>159</sup> The private zones include the burial spaces (shafts, corridors, antechambers, and burial chambers), which became inaccessible after the burial. On the other hand, the public zones consist of open areas accessible to the public (courtyards and chapels) (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2014: p. 32). In these areas, members of the deceased's household could interact with them (D'AURI, LACOVARA and ROEHRIG, 1988: p. 20).

As for the household and social networks of the deceased in Qubbet el-Hawa, an example is the large set of inscribed jars found by Elmar Edel (EDEL, 1975) in several tombs. These jars display the titles and/or names of the offerers. Among them are members of the local elite of Elephantine and others without titles (MORENO GARCÍA, 2016: p. 3). Therefore, this collection shows the social and family links of the deceased beyond blood ties.

Finally, a clear example of the interaction between the living and deceased in Qubbet el-Hawa is the bowl found by Edel in QH30b (EDEL, 2008: pp. 407-408). This bowl, which

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<sup>158</sup> An example is the tomb QH34aa (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2014: pp. 24-25).

<sup>159</sup> Pattern followed in other necropolis of Egypt during the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, as Beni Hasan, Deir el-Bersha, Asyut, or Meir. These cut-rock tombs had architectural elements and spaces that differed from the mastabas typical of the Old Kingdom. Nonetheless, the functionality of these zones resembled that of them (TAYLOR, 2001: p. 151).

is a 'letter of the dead', was discovered in the burial chamber<sup>160</sup> (SEIDLMEYER, 2006b: pp. 95-103; TROCHE, 2018: p. 7; DONNAT, 2019: p. 57).

#### **4.9. Conclusions of the chapter 4**

With respect to the historical context of offering trays, it is possible to note different changes in society and religiosity. Firstly, the provinces gained more administrative and religious autonomy from the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. This sovereignty would be increased or decreased depending on the situation of the central government.

Regarding this, the provincial administration imitated the central government, and this situation was accentuated during the First Intermediate Period. However, the local governors of Lower and Middle Egypt followed the Old Kingdom model, while the rulers of Upper Egypt continued the provincial court pattern of the late Old Kingdom. Later, in the Middle Kingdom, the families of provincial potentates accepted the royal authority, and their posts became more limited. This provincial administrative model continued during the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period.

Concerning the social structure, ancient Egyptian society was highly hierarchical, as other complex societies. The main social model was patronage, in which the household played a prominent role, encompassing all persons associated with the head of the household. In this way, the members of a household might be linked through blood ties, work ties, or other types of dependence or relationships. Therefore, it is possible to argue that extended families were made up of people from different social groups. Consequently, it is necessary to study society and material culture from a broad perspective that includes the relationships among people and artefacts. This is regardless of the social position presumed a priori by an archaeological context.

On the other hand, religion also underwent changes due to its connection with political issues. Consequently, modifications in the state and local administration affected religion. However, it also highlighted other religious practices among all social strata, known as household religion or popular religion. Ancestor cults were particularly popular throughout Egyptian history, carried out in homes and/or tombs. Veneration of ancestors

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<sup>160</sup> In this case, the offerings offered seem to be part of a contract allowing for the burial of the father in a previously owned tomb (TROCHE, 2018: p. 4).

was linked to legitimacy and social position, primarily by the local elite and their households.

In this religion, the letters to the dead were connected with the interaction between the living and the deceased, considered by scholars as ritual performances rather than just messages for the dead. These letters served as evidence of the ritual of communication. Through these letters, members of the extended family sought solutions for various earthly problems from the deceased.

As for the offering trays, they have been found in domestic contexts and are linked to ancestor cults. Thus, they are examples of the interaction between households and their deceased, along with other artefacts, such as the letters to the dead (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, in press<sup>A</sup>). Consequently, in order to understand these objects, social relations must be considered, specifically those developed in the domestic sphere. To this purpose, the offering trays must be analysed considering the social factors and their religious link discussed in this chapter.

As for *t3-sty*, its main town *3bu*, which provides examples of ancestor veneration, such as the worship of Heqaib through his temple and/or the shrine found in house H2 in Elephantine. This cult was significant among the ruling families as they legitimized their positions through this ancestor. Additionally, the veneration of Heqaib became a popular cult.

Finally, other examples about household religion, and relationship between the living and the dead are located in Qubbet el-Hawa. They are the letter to the dead written on a bowl found in QH30b and the large set of inscribed jars found in different tombs.

## 5. Offering trays of Qubbet el-Hawa

In the current chapter, we will present a group of pottery offering trays that have been discovered at Qubbet el-Hawa. These have been found in various tombs within the necropolis, and it is possible to distinguish between two distinct phases of these discoveries.<sup>161</sup> The first one, spanning from 1957 to 1984 and corresponds to the archaeological work of the University of Bonn, led by Dr. Elmar Edel. During these

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<sup>161</sup> The soul houses found by Lady Cecil could not be studied because their current location is unknown, as it was mentioned in Chapter 1.2.1, Limitations of the Study.

excavations, 25 offering trays and fragments were uncovered. Regarding their context, we have knowledge of only 15 trays (Fig. 61), while 10 remain without a clear context.

The second phase encompasses the period from 2008 to the present day. These archaeological activities are conducted by the University of Jaén, which are led by Dr. Alejandro Jiménez Serrano and Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez. During these excavations, 16<sup>162</sup> offering trays and fragments were discovered (Fig. 61).



Figure 61: density and dispersion map of contextualized offering trays found in Qubbet el-Hawa by University of Bonn and University of Jaén. Map created by the author from GIS software. Orthophoto of Dr. Antonio Mozas Calvache and Dr. José Luis Pérez García. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

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<sup>162</sup> Additionally, there are several tiny fragments that will not be considered in the present study. The reason for this exclusion is that they do not provide relevant information for this research. These fragments are identified as QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604, QH33/12/C10/UE169/T1747, and QH33/13/C1/UE176/T1984/inv. 477. However, these fragments will be taken in account for the final tally and used as statistical data.

## 5.1. Location

With respect to the location of the contextualized offering trays and fragments, these were recovered from the following tomb areas (Table 5):

Register number <sup>163</sup>	Tomb	Shaft	Chamber	Chapel	Courtyard
QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 1	QH33	X			
QH33/10/C10/UE103/inv. 5	QH33	X <sup>164</sup>		X	
QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 6	QH33	X			
QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 8	QH33	X			
QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv.76	QH33	X			
QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv. 19	QH34ff		X		
QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv. 317	QH35p				X
QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv. 252	QH35p				X
QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253	QH35p				X
QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv. 273	QH35p				X
QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv. 54	QH35p				X
QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv. 318	QH35p				X
QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604/inv. 319	QH35p				X
QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv. 316	QH35p				X
QH36/17/9/UE19/241/inv. 86	QH36	X			
QH36/17/9/UE21/308	QH36	X			
0/754	QH90b				X
0/665	QH93				X

<sup>163</sup> The registration number for Artefacts from the University of Bonn's archaeological work is in the format x/x, while the registration number for the University of Jaén is in the format QHx/x/UEx/x.

<sup>164</sup> This fragment joined with QH33/13/C8/UE191/T2198 found in the hypostyle hall also, and with a fragment of QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv.76, which was found inside the shaft (See chapter 5.1.2. QH33).

0/666	QH93				X
0/667	QH93				X
0/668	QH93				X
0/669	QH93				X
0/621	QH93				X
106/1	QH106			X	
110/22	QH110	X			
110/91	QH110	X			
110/78	QH110	X			
110/90	QH110	X			
0/1325.04	QH206				X
0/1318.01	QH206/206a				X
0/1114.01	QH207				X

*Table 5. Location of the 'contextualized' offering trays in the tombs.*

Regarding these placements, it should be noted that shafts and chambers are secondary contexts, while courtyards and chapels serve as the original locations for the offering trays. This will be further explained in the following chapters. The reason behind this is that the offering trays were presented to the deceased by members of the household (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, in press<sup>A</sup>). These artefacts worked for maintaining communication and interaction with the deceased (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, in press<sup>A</sup>). Therefore, the placement of offering trays must be accessible to the living, as in the case of courtyards and chapels.

### 5.1.1. QH33

The tomb QH33 is situated on the first terrace of the necropolis (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, MARTÍNEZ DE DIOS, and ANGUIA ORDÓÑEZ, 2008: p. 36). This hypogeum is a funerary complex associated with a ruling family during the Late Middle Kingdom (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2015: p. 170). It was initially discovered in 1885 by General Francis Grenfell and documented by Jacques De Morgan (1894: pp. 141-201) but remained unexcavated.

Archaeological work in the tomb commenced in 2008, led by the Spanish mission of the University of Jaén (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, MARTÍNEZ DE DIOS, and ANGUIA ORDÓÑEZ, 2008: pp. 35-60) and concluded in 2018 (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO et al., 2018: pp. 26-35). However, prior to these efforts, Grenfell and subsequently the University of Bonn conducted archaeological clearances in the courtyard in front of the entrance (EDEL, 2008: p. 429 footnote 1) but did not excavate down to ground level. (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, MARTÍNEZ DE DIOS and ANGUIA ORDÓÑEZ, 2008: p. 40).

QH33 is one of the most monumental tombs in the necropolis, with a large courtyard in front of its entrance. Evidence suggests that this hypogeum was left unfinished (as indicated by architectural evidences) (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, MARTÍNEZ DE DIOS, and ANGUIA ORDÓÑEZ, 2008: pp. 42-43; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO et al., 2010-2011: p. 66).

Inside the tomb, there are three naves separated by pillars. In the central nave, on the western wall, a high niche is located (refer to Fig. 24b), which likely held the owner's statue. In the southern nave, specifically in the southern walls, two burial chambers can be found. In the western wall, there's another niche,<sup>165</sup> albeit smaller than the one in the central nave. In front of this niche, a shaft with two burial chambers is present. Moving to the northern nave, you'll find a burial chamber in the northern wall, and in the western wall, there's an antechamber that leads to the main shaft of the tomb. Within this shaft, there's another antechamber with two burial chambers (See Fig. 62).

This tomb has been dated to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, specifically between the reigns of Senwosret III and Amenemhet III, based on architectural features and archaeological materials (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO et al., 2014: pp. 9- 23; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO et al., 2018: pp. 34-35). Regarding the identity of the tomb's owner, researchers have some

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<sup>165</sup> It would hold another statue.

doubts but suggest it could be Ameny-Seneb or Heqaib-Ankh. Their reasons are supported by genealogical and archaeological evidence (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO et al., 2018: p. 34).

Furthermore, the tomb holds several burials belonging to relatives of the owner. Additionally, this funerary complex was reused during the Second Intermediate Period (17<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), New Kingdom (18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), and the Late Period (26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Dynasties). It was also subject to multiple instances of plundering, likely occurring shortly after the burials took place (DE LA TORRE ROBLES, 2019: p. 538).



Figure 62: plan of the tomb QH33. Plan by Dr. Antonio Mozas Calvache and Dr. José Luis Pérez García. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

#### 5.1.1.1. Offering trays

Regarding the archaeological work within QH33, a significant quantity of mixed archaeological material was unearthed. Among these artefacts, various fragments of offering trays<sup>166</sup> were discovered, specifically in sectors C8, C10 (the Hypostyle room), and C21 (the Southern burial shaft) (refer to Fig. 63). The locations of these trays, combined with the extensive erosion present on all fragments, indicate substantial alterations to the tomb during periods of reuse and plundering. Consequently, it becomes impossible to determine their original placement within the tomb.

<sup>166</sup> A fragmentary anthropomorphic figure was discovered in sector C1 of QH33. The author's study suggests that this figure might belong to a soul house due to its similarities with other anthropomorphic figures. For more information about this See Lechuga Ibáñez (in press<sup>A</sup>).

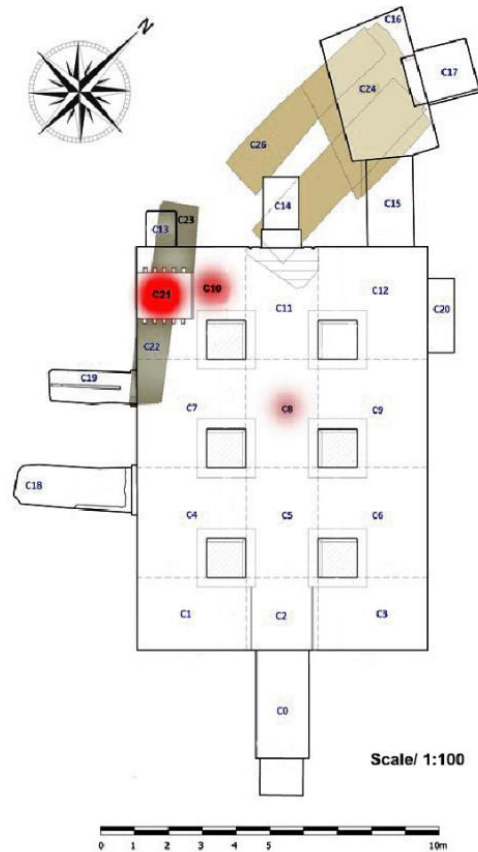


Figure 63: plan of the tomb QH33. Dispersion and quantity of offering trays fragments (Red). Image of the author based on the plan of Mr. Juan Luis Martínez de Dios.

©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

Due to the disturbed conditions of the tomb resulting from reuses and plundering, it is impossible to link the offering trays found in QH33 with any of the buried individuals.<sup>167</sup> Nevertheless, it is evident that these trays were devoted for deceased individuals belonging to the ruling family of Elephantine, who were buried in QH33 (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2021: pp. 127-136). The offerers/petitioners responsible for these artefacts were members of the deceased's household (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, in press<sup>A</sup>). However, these artefacts can be dated to the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty based on the chronological framework of the offering trays, their study, and the tomb's chronology.

<sup>167</sup> There are 7 original burial chambers in QH33, but only in 5 of them original burials are known: 4 individuals in C24 (two of them were sub-adults), 1 individual C22, 1 individual in C23, and 1 individual in C19 (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO *et al.*, 2012: p. 117; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO *et al.*, 2014: p. 9; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO *et al.*, 2018: p. 35)

#### 5.1.1.1.a. Offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.1

The pottery offering tray, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.1 (See Fig. 64), is quadrangular in shape and fragmentary. It features a spout on the front side and several modeled elements on its surface. Among these elements, we find the following: a model shrine/altar<sup>168</sup> in the middle of the back side, a pottery stand, a quadrangular basin with a channel running into the spout, and various offering models. Regarding the offerings, there are an ox head, round breads, remains of an ox leg, and perhaps a lettuce. Identifying this last element can be challenging, especially since its end parts are missing, but it is resemblanced to the lettuce on the offering tray 0/621 (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022: p. 297) (Fig. 111a-b). Additionally, the offering tray, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.1, has a missing element close to the shrine model. It was round, but it cannot be confirmed as a bread model. This element, along with its placement on the tray, can also be found on other offering trays discovered in QH33 and in Area 45 in Aswan (Figs. 65, 67 and 69). Also, there is a broken raised edge just behind the shrine/altar model.

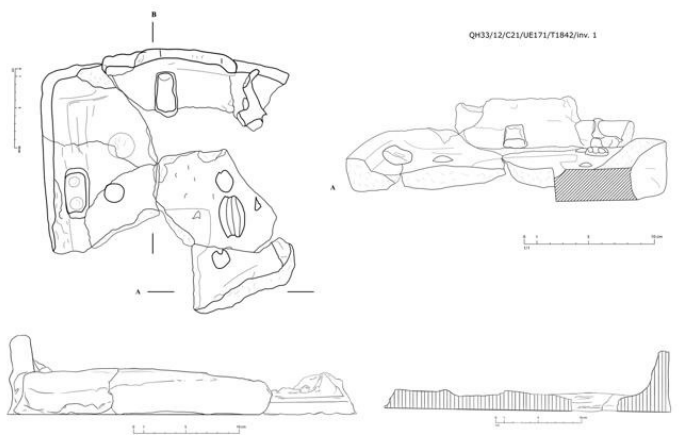


Figure 64: offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171 inv.1. Drawing by the author and Luca Raven Flynn. Photo by the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

<sup>168</sup> This shrine model reminds to the shrine found in Askut (See fig. 24a).

As for its manufacture, this artefact was hand-made and shows rests of red slip and white plaster. It exhibits mixed firing,<sup>169</sup> and its clay type<sup>170</sup> is Nile C (See chapter 5.2.1.b), in which is notable mica, coal residues,<sup>171</sup> and limestone inclusions. According to Teodozja Rzeuska's study (2012: p. 331), the presence of limestone inclusions is uncommon in the production from Elephantine. In regard to the base of the tray, it is unsmoothed.<sup>172</sup>

Concerning the parallels, it is essential to mention other offering trays found in QH33 and QH93. These trays share common features with offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.1, including their shape, modeled items and their placement on the surface, the raised edge behind the model shrine/altar, and the quadrangular basin with a channel (Figs. 67, 69, 70, and 111a-b). Furthermore, the offering tray discovered in Aswan by the Swiss-Egyptian mission (MÜLLER and FORSTNER-MÜLLER, 2015: pp. 189-201) (Fig. 65) has similarities to the offering trays found in QH33 and QH93, as will be explained later

On the other hand, it is possible to find some features present in the offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.1, others found in QH33,<sup>173</sup> QH93,<sup>174</sup> and outside of Aswan region. These features are the following:

- The raised edge can be found on an offering tray discovered in Deir Rifeh. In this particular case, there are two raised edges, and they are positioned on the sides (Fig. 66a).
- The quadrangular basin with a channel is a feature present in the offering trays from Deir Rifeh (Fig. 66a), Asyut (Fig. 66b), Armant (Fig. 68c), and Qurna (Fig. 66c). In the latter site, the shrine model is also present.
- The lost round element located near the shrine/altar model and the stand (See fig. 64). This element could be interpreted as a bread, but it also shares similarities with elements on the offering trays found in QH33 (Figs. 67, 69, and 111a-b) and

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<sup>169</sup> There are three main types of firing: oxidising firing, where oxygen enters the kiln; reducing firing, where the chamber is closed to block the ingress of oxygen; and mixed firing, which involves both oxygen inlet and absence of oxygen in the kiln during the firing process. For more information, See Arnold, Nordström and Bourriau (1993: pp. 104-105).

<sup>170</sup> The author of this thesis follows the Vienne system to identify clay types.

<sup>171</sup> These are vegetal inclusions carbonized during the firing process, a common feature in Nile C clay (ARNOLD, NORDSTRÖM, and BOURRIAU, 1993, vol. 2: p. 173).

<sup>172</sup> Due to the size and conservation state of the offering trays QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.1, QH33/C10/UE103/inv.5, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.6, and QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606 + 598/inv.317, it was impossible to take pictures to their bases without producing them more damage.

<sup>173</sup> See chapters: 5.1.1.1.b. Offering tray QH33/C10/UE103/inv.5, 5.1.1.1.c. Offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.6, and 5.1.1.1.d. Offering trays QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.8.

<sup>174</sup> See Chapter 5.1.6.1.a. Offering tray 0/621.

Area 45 in Aswan (Fig. 65). Although these elements are fragmented or lost, their positioning on the trays reminds us of the items on the offering tray EA46615 from Asyut (Fig. 66b). These elements, characterized by their shape and quantity, resemble bag-shaped jar or globular bottle models

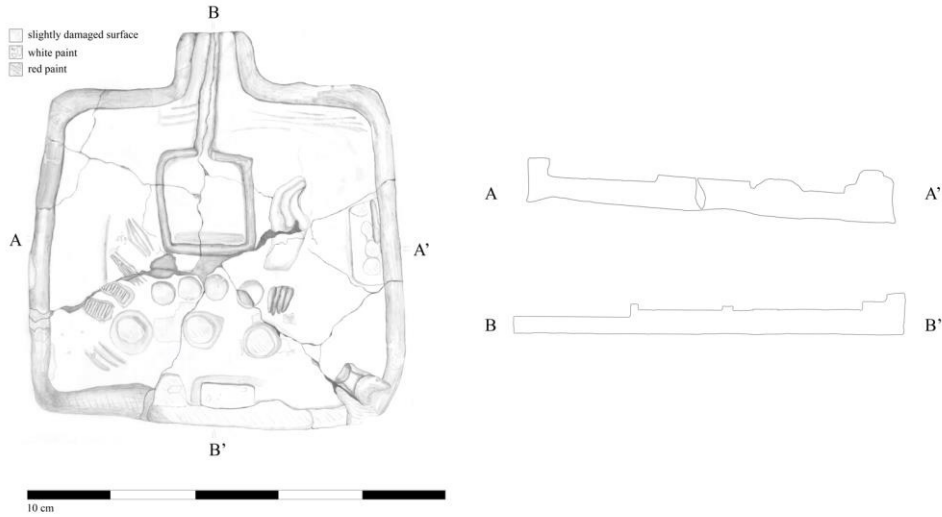


Figure 65: offering tray found in Area 45. Aswan. Image of Müller and Forstner-Müller (2015: p. 196, fig. 15.5).

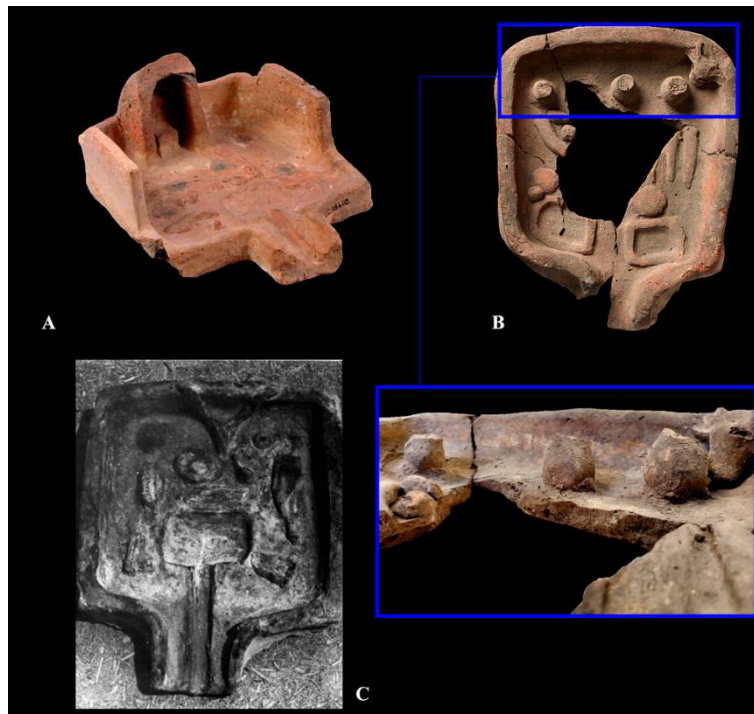


Figure 66a-c: a) Offering tray with raised edges on the sides. Deir Rifeh. Petrie Museum, No. UC18410; b) Offering tray with four possible jar models. Asyut. British Museum, No. EA46615; c) Offering tray found in Quma with a quadrangular basin with channel. Image of Bresciani (1980: pl. 6).

### 5.1.1.1.b. Offering tray QH33/10/C10/UE103/inv.5

The pottery offering tray, QH33/10/C10/UE103/inv.5, is fragmentary (Fig. 67). It was joined with sherds found in different tomb sectors, specifically C21 and C8. These additional fragments were recorded as QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv.76, QH33/13/C8/UE191/T2198, and QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 7. The tray is quadrangular in shape with a spout and displays various items on its surface. These include an ox head and leg, meat strips, a tied complete bovine, meat pieces, an altar model, rest of a channel, and two round lost items near the altar model. Also, it shows an unidentified item that could be a vessel remains. Furthermore, this offering tray exhibits remainders of a raised edge behind the altar model, similar to the previous one.

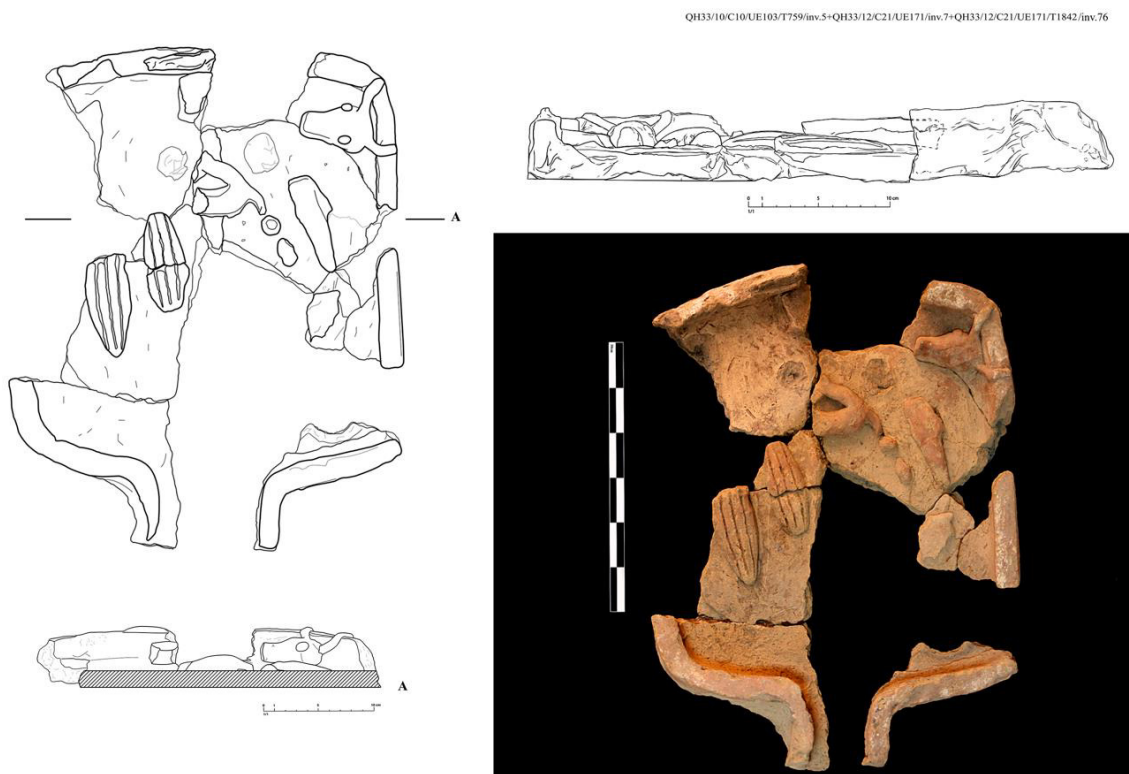


Figure 67: offering tray QH33/C10/UE103/inv.5. Drawing by the author and Luca Raven Flynn. Photo by the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

As for its manufacture, this artefact was hand-made and has remainder of red slip and white plaster. It shows a mixed firing, and its clay type is Nile C (See chapter 5.2.1.b) with traces of coal. In regard to the base of the artefact, it remains unsmoothed.

Regarding parallels, it is possible to observe similarities with previously discussed offering trays, specifically those discovered in QH33 and QH93 (See figs. 64, 69, and 111 a-b). In this instance, the similarities align with those previously mentioned: the shape of the artefact, the presence of a raised edge, lost objects positioned near the altar model, the arrangement of other items on the tray, and, in this case, the existence of a channel.

Concerning parallels outside the Aswan region, it highlights the offering trays discovered in Deir Rifeh (See fig. 66a), Asyut (See fig. 66b), and Qurna (See figs. 66c and 68)

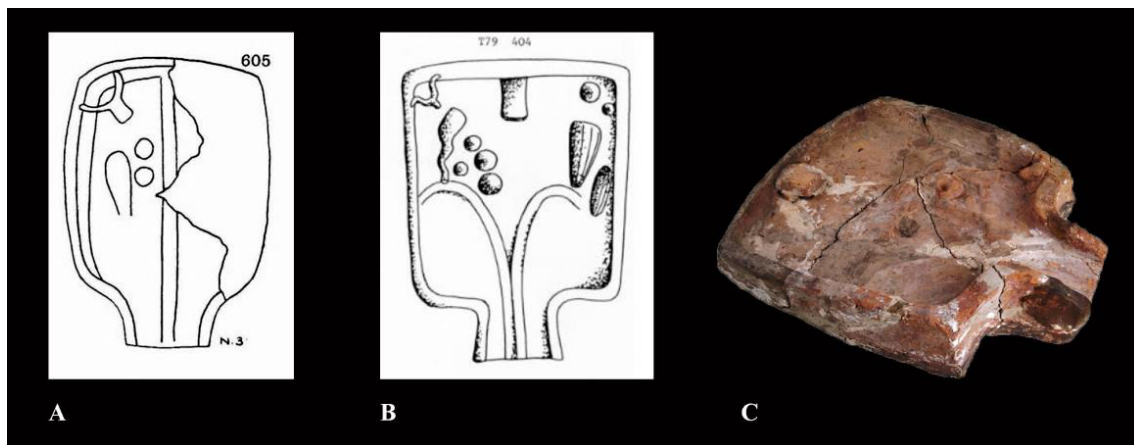


Figure 68 a-c: a) Offering tray No.605 with straight channel and head of ox at the corner. Qurna. Image of Petrie (1909: pl. 20); b) Offering tray with altar model, head of ox in the corner. Qurna. Image of Bresciani (1980: p. 6, fig. 3); c) Offering tray with altar model, head of ox at the corner, and quadrangular basin with channel. Armant, Liverpool Museum, No. 1973.1.352.

#### **5.1.1.1.c. Offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.6**

The pottery offering tray, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.6, is fragmentary. Similar to other offering trays found in QH33, it has a quadrangular shape. Concerning the elements on its surface, there are a tied headless bovine, a bovine leg, meat strips, an altar model, two elements positioned in front of the altar (similar to those described in previous trays), a channel, an unidentified element in the front part, and remnants of a raised edge behind the altar model (Fig. 69).

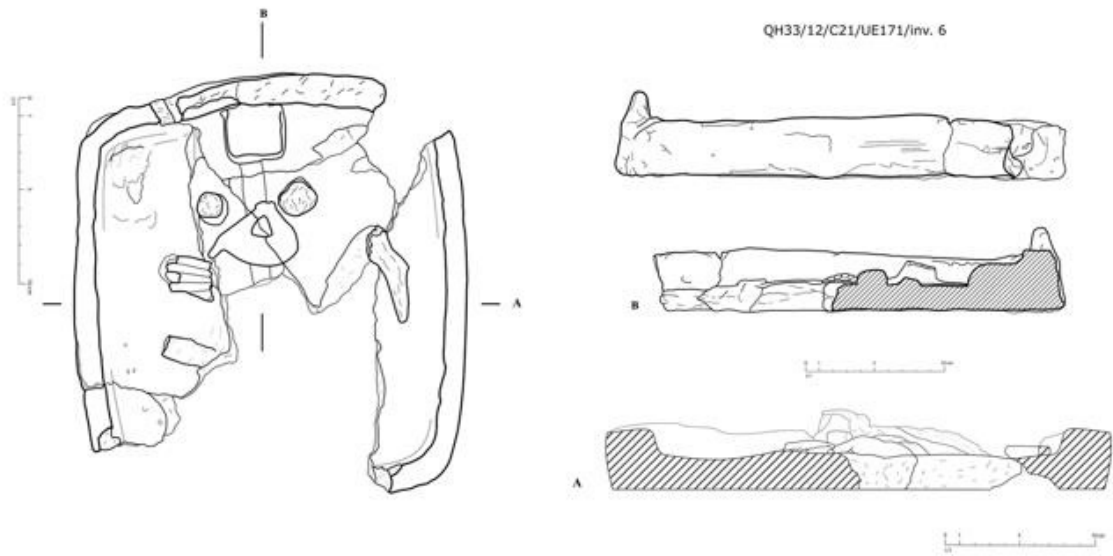


Figure 69: Offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.6. Drawing by the author and Ana M. Mingorance Paredes. Photo by the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

In respect of its manufacture, this tray was hand-made, using a mixed firing and Nile C (See chapter 5.2.1.b) clay. The surface is eroded; however, remainders of red slip are observable on the tray's edges. The base of the tray is unsmoothed.

Regarding the parallels, they are similar to the previous trays, and the reasons are also the same. On one hand, it involves the offering trays discovered in QH33 and QH93 (See figs. 67 and 111a-b) within the Aswan area (See fig. 65). On the other hand, it encompasses offering trays found in Deir Rifeh (See fig. 66a), Asyut (See fig. 66b), and Qurna (See fig. 68a).

**5.1.1.1.d. Offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.8**

The offering tray, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.8, is a fragment of the front part (Fig. 70).<sup>175</sup> This sherd has a spout, a quadrangular basin with a channel, a bovine leg, and a piece of meat.

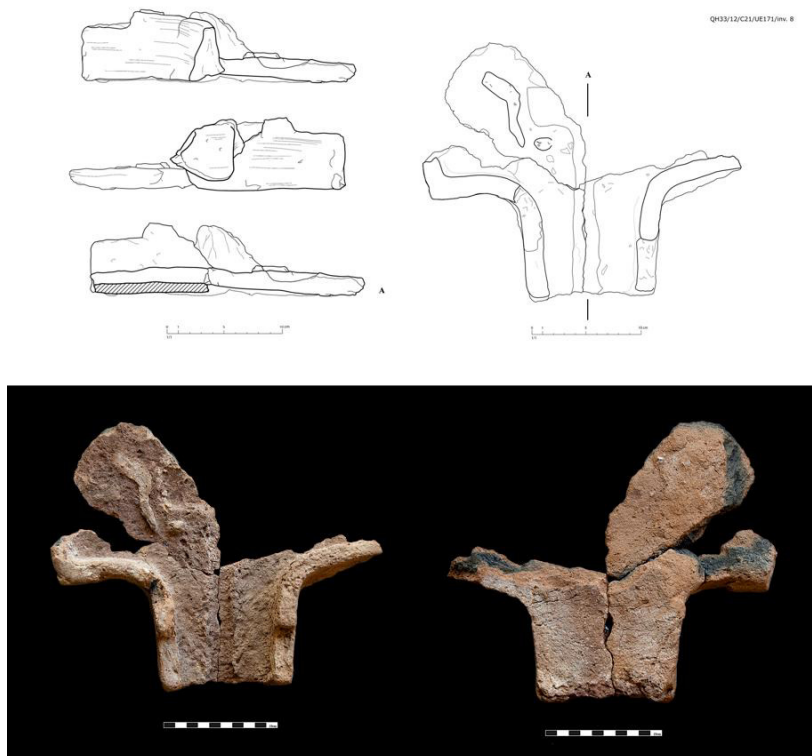


Figure 70: Offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.8. Drawing by the author and Ana M. Mingorance Paredes. Photo by the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

<sup>175</sup> While this offering tray may appear to correspond with others found in QH33, the *in situ* study conducted on these offering trays dismissed this idea.

With regard to its manufacture, this offering tray was hand-made, and the base is unsmoothed. However, this shows some cracks. These fissures, to the knowledge of the author of the present thesis,<sup>176</sup> are likely the result of inadequate kneading and rapid, unstable air-drying. This situation leads to the swift contraction of the clay, causing the cracking. Concerning the firing, it consisted a mixed process, using Nile C (See chapter 5.2.1.b) as the raw material, which once again shows inclusions of coal. The surface is significantly eroded, making it only possible to suspect remnants of a white wash<sup>177</sup> on the edge.

In respect to parallels, it is crucial to highlight the offering tray discovered in QH33 (See fig. 64), which has an identical basin. Similarly, the offering trays found in the Aswan area (See fig. 65), Deir Rifeh (See fig. 66a), Qurna (See fig. 66c), and Armant (See fig. 68c) feature the same drain system. Additionally, all these offering trays share the same shape.

Beyond the previously mentioned similarities in parallels, the offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.8 has a distinctive feature in its spout edges, which are staggered. This feature can also be observed in offering trays from el-Kab (Fig. 71, 72 and 73).

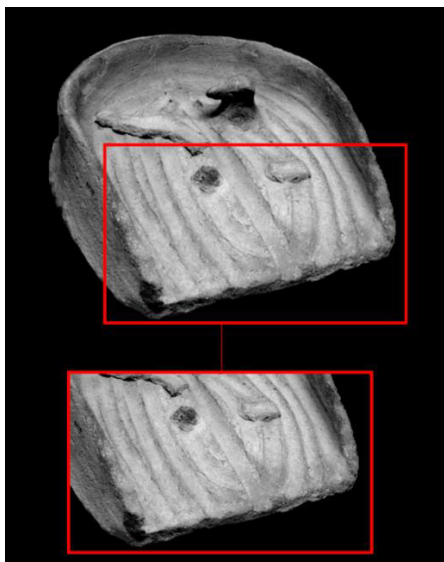


Figure 71: Offering tray with staggered edges. El-Kab. The Manchester Museum, No. 3078.

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<sup>176</sup> The author worked with clay for four and a half years, thanks to the studies carried out at the art school ‘José Nogué’ from Jaén (Spain).

<sup>177</sup> It could be the remainders of a lost white plaster, as it was explained in previous trays.

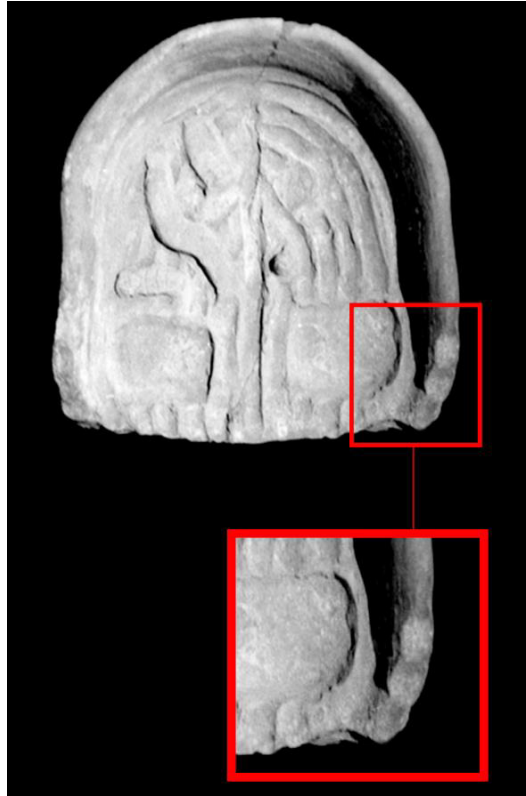


Figure 72: Offering tray with staggered edges. El-Kab. The Penn Museum, No. 248653.



Figure 73: Offering trays with staggered edges. Probably el-Kab. The Petrie Museum, No. UC38984.

Image of the author.

#### *5.1.1.1.e. Other fragments found in QH33: QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv.76*

The register QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv.76 (Fig. 74) includes several small fragments<sup>178</sup> belong to some mentioned trays. But unfortunately, they could not be joined due to their state of preservation. Concerning the surface treatment, they have traces of red slip and white wash,<sup>179</sup> while the raw material used is Nile clay.



Figure 74: eroded sherds of offering trays QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv.76. Image by the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

#### **5.1.1.2. General overview**

In summary, the research conducted in this study revealed the discovery of five quadrangular-shaped offering trays in QH33. All of these trays have a spout, while those with complete profiles show an altar or shrine model and a raised edge on the rear side. Additionally, other common features among these offering trays are modelled offerings, basins with channels, or a single channel. These characteristics are not only shared within the offering trays of QH33 but are also found in the offering trays discovered in the tomb QH93 and area 45 in Aswan. These features signify a distinctive local style. However, it

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<sup>178</sup> Some of these fragments might potentially be part of a soul house (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, in press<sup>B</sup>). Also, See footnote 166.

<sup>179</sup> See footnote 177.

is evident that this style has been influenced by other regions of Egypt, including Middle Egypt (Deir Rifeh and Asyut) and Upper Egypt (Qurna and Armant).

As for the chronology of the offering trays found in QH33, they are dated between the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

Ultimately, these offering trays were intended for the deceased individuals from the ruling family, and the offeror individuals of the offering trays were likely members of the deceased's household. The most of the fragments were discovered in C21 (See fig. 63), which corresponds to the southern shaft. Here, Heqaib III (Sector C23) and Gaut-Anuket (Sector C22) were buried.

Hence, it's reasonable to propose that the initial placement of the offering trays was close to C21, possibly surrounding Sectors C10 and C13 (See fig. 63), which formed the area of cult. Consequently, it is plausible that these offering trays were devoted for an individual buried in proximity to this specific space. Thus, they could have been offered for either Heqaib III, Gaut-Anuket, or possibly both individuals.

### 5.1.2. QH34ff

The tomb QH34ff is located at a lower level within the area between tombs QH34aa and QH34ee. This tomb was unearthed alongside QH34gg, QH34hh, QH34ii, QH34jj, QH34kk, and QH34ll (Fig. 75). The discovery of these tombs and structures took place during the 2019 archaeological season. The excavation aimed to enhance the pathway for tourists and locate the original position of the façade of tombs QH34aa, QH34bb, and QH34dd<sup>180</sup> (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO and BARBA COLMENERO, 2021: pp. 31-33).

As for the tomb QH34ff, it constitutes a simple burial chamber carved into the slope. During archaeological work, several burials were uncovered in front of the entrance. These individuals found next to the entrance of the tomb were dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. This dating was established through limited archaeological material, primarily pottery, and the positioning of the bodies (Fig. 76) (ALBA GÓMEZ, *et al.*, 2019: pp. 21-22; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO and BARBA COLMENERO, 2021: p. 35).

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<sup>180</sup> The author supervised the final work of the pathway improvement in 2018, during which initial evidences emerged indicating an anthropogenic activity expanding into this new area.



Figure 75: location of tomb QH34ff. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.



Figure 76: individual found in front of the tomb QH34ff. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

Inside the tomb, there were various burials and archaeological materials that, preliminarily, would belong to different periods: Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediate Period, and New Kingdom (BARBA COLMENERO, 2022).

#### 5.1.2.1. Offering tray QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19

Among the previously mentioned artefacts was a fragmentary offering tray, QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19 (Fig. 77), which was situated near the entrance (Fig. 78). According to this research,<sup>181</sup> the offering tray was found in a secondary context, and its original placement remains unknown.

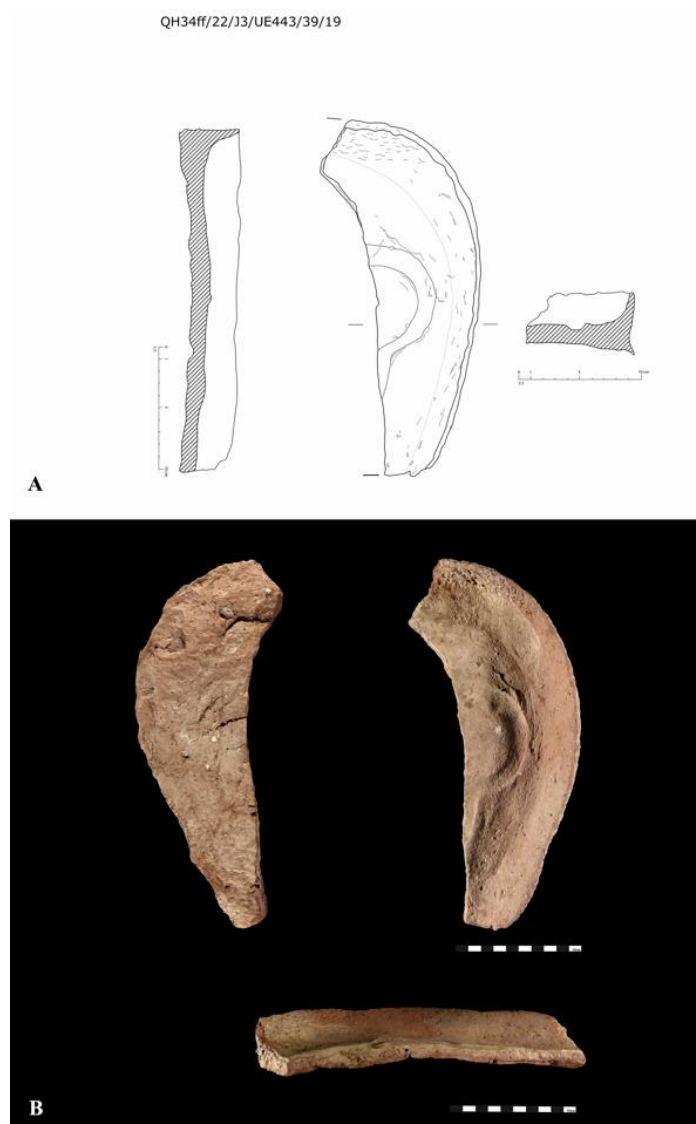


Figure 77a-b: offering tray QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19. a)

Drawing by Ms. Ana Belén Jiménez Iglesias, vectoring by the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.; b) Image courtesy of Dr. Angel Rubio Salvador.

<sup>181</sup> There are reasons that may have led to the scattering and intrusion in the tomb of artefacts from other locations. These causes include the tomb's reuse and the collapse of the slope of the hill (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO and BARBA COLMENERO, 2021: p. 35; BARBA COLMENERO, 2022).



Figure 78: location of offering tray QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19 (green) into the entrance of QH34ff. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

Regarding the design of the tray, it was horseshoe-shaped and does not show modelled items on its surface. This fragmentary artefact only presents a channel with a round basin. Concerning its manufacture, this tray was hand-made, and the base is unsmoothed; additionally, it has remainders of red slip (10R 5/6 red). In terms of its firing, it was oxidizing, and the raw material is a mix between Marl A3 and Marl A4 (See chapter 5.2.1c). The use of this type of clay in offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa is uncommon at the present time.<sup>182</sup> As for its conservation state, it is very eroded, indicating excessive scrolling, as it was observed with offering trays from QH33.

With regard to parallels, this offering tray is reminiscent of offering tray 0/669 found in QH93 (Fig. 79i). Similarly, it displays a stylistic influence from offering trays found in Qurna, specifically in the channels and basin shapes of the artefacts (Fig. 79a-f).

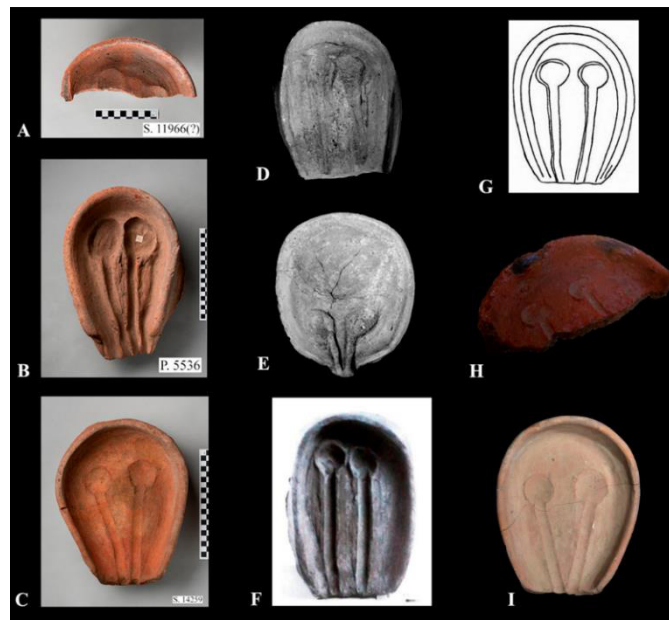


Figure 79a-i: a) Offering tray. Gebelein. Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S.11966(?). Image of Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni; b) Offering tray. Gebelein. Museo Egizio (Turin), No. P.5536. Image of Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni; c) Offering tray. Gebelein. Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S.14259. Image of Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni; d) Offering tray. Dendera. Penn Museum, No. 29-65-719; e) Offering tray. Dendera. Penn Museum, No. 29-65-740; f) Offering tray N3.1. El-Tarif. Image of Arnold (1973: pl. 68); g) Offering tray No. 612. Qurna. Image of Petrie (1909: pl. 21); h) Offering tray K02/88.6. El-Assasif. Image of Budka (2010: p. 807); i) Offering tray 0/669. QH93, Qubbet el-Hawa. Image courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

<sup>182</sup> The study conducted by the author of this thesis on various offering trays from different museums shows that the use of marl clay may be more common than previously thought. However, currently, there is only one example at Qubbet el-Hawa, as explained.

### 5.1.2.2. General overview

In conclusion, the original location of the artefact QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19 is unknown. However, it is possible to speculate about two potential locations. On the one hand, QH34ff is situated just below QH34aa-QH34ee (See fig. 75). As previously explained, the facades and cult areas of these tombs appear to have collapsed, potentially leading to the displacement of the associated archaeological materials. Consequently, offering tray could have shifted from this area. Subsequently, due to the reuse of the tomb entrance area of QH34ff, the tray might have been relocated to its current placement.

On the other hand, the artefact was originally positioned in the exterior zone of QH34ff. With the reuse of the tomb and its surrounding, it might have been removed to its current location at the entrance.

With regard to the above, the tomb QH34ff is currently under study, and only preliminary data has been provided, as explained in this chapter. Therefore, we cannot establish a direct link between the corridor tombs QH34aa-QH34ee and this offering tray. This is because future research may provide new data on the chronology of QH34ff and present new evidences that could potentially link this tomb with the tray. Hence, it is essential to be cautious and keep both possibilities open: on one hand, the potential connection between QH34ff and the tray, and on the other hand, the association of corridor tombs QH34aa-QH34ee with the artefact.

The exact chronology of the offering tray QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19 also remains unknown. However, in this case, the clay used might offer an approach. This is due to the use of features of Marl A4 (See fig. 158), which is very uncommon in the pottery from the Aswan area. According to Rzeuska's study, its use began as early as the reign of Senwosret I and few years afterwards (RZEUSKA, 2012: pp. 330, 334).

Despite the above, the offering tray QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19 holds importance as it provides information about the production of offering trays in the Aswan area. In this regard, the tray demonstrates the use of Marl clay in manufacturing these artefacts, along with an oxidizing firing process. Additionally, concerning stylistic influences, parallels have been found in Qurna. However, in terms of the basin manufacture in this artefact, it suggests a local production influenced by the style of the Thebes region.

### 5.1.3. QH35p

The tomb QH35p is a hypogeum situated in the northern area adjacent to QH36. This tomb has never been studied by the University of Jaén before<sup>183</sup> (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2015: p. 49; GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2022: pp. 218-220), and the available information is limited to a brief description provided by the University of Bonn (EDEL, 2008: pp. 965-966).

The tomb features a central corridor outside, flanked by three annexed chambers on either side.<sup>184</sup> Inside, the tomb comprises a hall room that leads to three areas: a shaft with two burial chambers and an antechamber with three additional chambers (Fig. 80) (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2015: p. 49; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.* 2016: pp. 32-33). The total number of buried individuals in this tomb amounts to 30, both inside and outside. This, combined with the architectural complexity and the array of grave goods found with the individuals, strongly suggests a high social status of the tomb owners and the others buried there, as the case of Sattjeni (GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2021: pp. 145-170). In fact, according to the research carried out by Dr. Luisa M. García González (2022: pp. 218-293), this funerary complex belonged to the ancestors of the governors Sarenputi I and Sarenputi II (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.* 2015: pp. 54; GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2022: p. 222; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming; GARCÍA GONZALEZ, in press). The use of this tomb has been dated by the researchers between the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty<sup>185</sup> (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZALEZ, forthcoming).

The tomb displays different stages of use within its various spaces and underwent several constructional changes (GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2022: pp. 254-255). With regards to the offering trays found in QH35p, they are associated with the initial four phases<sup>186</sup> (GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2022: pp. 254-255):

1. Original use of inner, open courtyard, and offering area outside the enclosure (from the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty).

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<sup>183</sup> The University of Bonn only provided a superficial description of this tomb (EDEL, 2008: pp. 965-966).

<sup>184</sup> These chambers were built after the original use of the tomb (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.* 2015: pp. 51-52; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

<sup>185</sup> Some Artefacts have been preliminarily dated to the early 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (DÍAZ BLANCO and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2021: p. 124; GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2022: p. 292).

<sup>186</sup> The fifth phase involves the construction of the annexed chambers on the sides, built over the previously designated offering area in Sectors A4 and C4 (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2018: p. 55-56).



Concerning the offering trays, a collection was discovered within this zone, specifically in Sectors C4, A4, and B4 (See figs. 80 and 81a-c). These artefacts varied from fragmentary to complete. These fragments, in general, showed little dispersion and minimal signs of erosion, unlike what was observed in QH33 and QH34ff. The offering trays were found *in situ*, alongside other items in the area, where stratigraphic units displayed a high concentration of archaeological material, indicating prolonged use of the zone (Fig. 81a-c) (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2017: p. 47; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2018: pp. 55-56; GARCÍA GONZALEZ, 2022: p. 236).



Figure 81a-c: sectors and stratigraphic units of the offering trays in QH35p. a) Sector A4, SU76; b) Sector B4, SU91; c) Sector C4, SU38. Images by Dr. Luisa M. García González. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

#### 5.1.3.1.a. Offering tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv.317

The artefact QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv.317 is a quadrangular-shaped tray divided into two distinct zones by an intermediate wall containing a hole in the middle (Fig. 82a-b). Although fragmented, the conservation efforts successfully reconstructed all its pieces, rendering this offering tray complete (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

This offering tray displays various modelled items on its surface, including meat strips, a bovine leg, a headless ox bound down, two conical bread loaves, and a model of an altar. The front section of the tray comprises a quadrangular basin, and a straight channel traverses the surface, leading from the rounded basin to the tray's front edge.

It was manufactured by hand. The tray base is unsmoothed and has traces of red slip (5R 5/8 red) on its surface. The potter used Nile C (See chapter 5.2.1.b) clay and a mixed firing process. (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

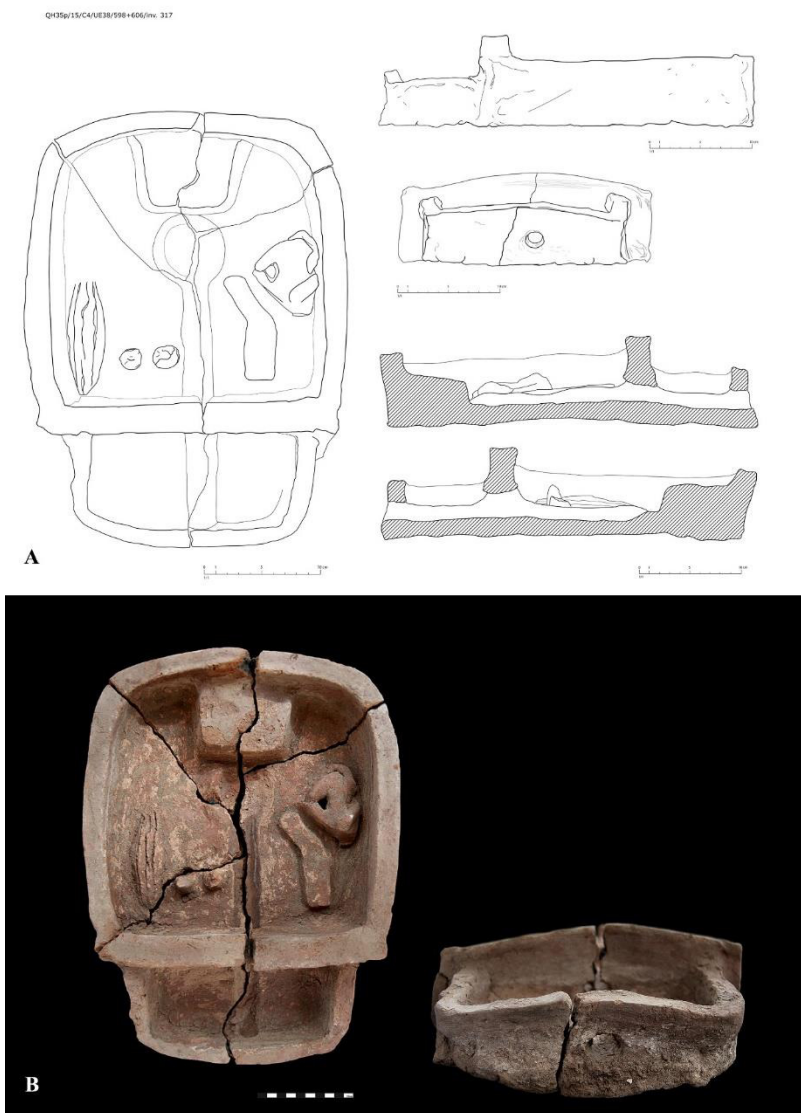


Figure 82a-b: offering tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv.317.<sup>188</sup> a) Drawing by Ms. Ana Belén Jiménez Iglesias, vectoring by the author. ©University of Jaén, Qubbet el-Hawa Project; b) Image by the author. ©University of Jaén, Qubbet el-Hawa Project.

<sup>188</sup> See footnote 172.

No identical artefacts to tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv.317 have been found. However, some objects show similar features to the tray from QH35p have been identified. Notably, the research conducted during this thesis highlights the artefact TR27.11.25.4 SR3-51,<sup>189</sup> currently located at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Fig. 83a). The museum database indicates it is unprovenanced, and its chronology remains unknown. Nevertheless, it shares similarities with QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv.317, particularly in the basin in the front part, the presence of straight channels with basins, and the quadrangular shape of the artefact.

Additionally, another comparable object is an offering tray found in Esna. However, in this case, it features a small spout at the front edge, distinguishing it from the aforementioned artefacts (Fig. 83b).

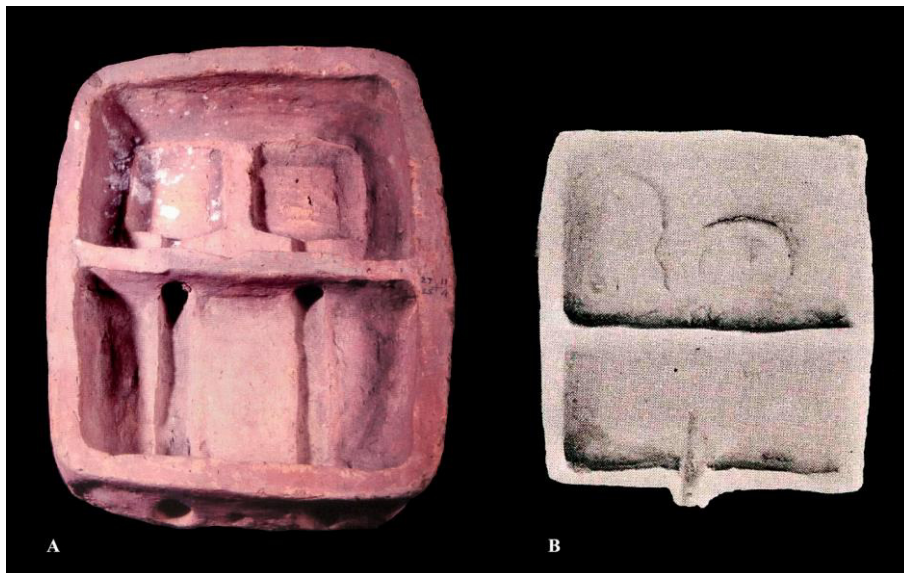


Figure 83a-b: a) Offering tray TR27.11.25.4 SR3-51. Unprovenanced, Egyptian Museum (Cairo);  
b) Offering tray found in Esna. Image of Downes (1974: p. 94, fig. 65).

Additionally, significant similarities exist between elements of the tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv. 317, as well as TR27.11.25.4 SR3-51, and those of trays found at Dendera, Qurneh, and Esna. These shared elements are the intermediate wall and edge holes, commonly observed in Dendera (Fig. 84a). Straight channels alongside rounded basins are frequent features on offering trays from Dendera, Qurna,

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<sup>189</sup> This offering tray has been transferred to the new Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo with the register number 1275. The author thanks to the staff of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo for the courtesy during the visit.

and Esna (Fig. 84a-c). Also, notably, the large size of offering models on the QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv. 317 tray is a common feature observed on some trays from Esna (Fig. 84c) (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

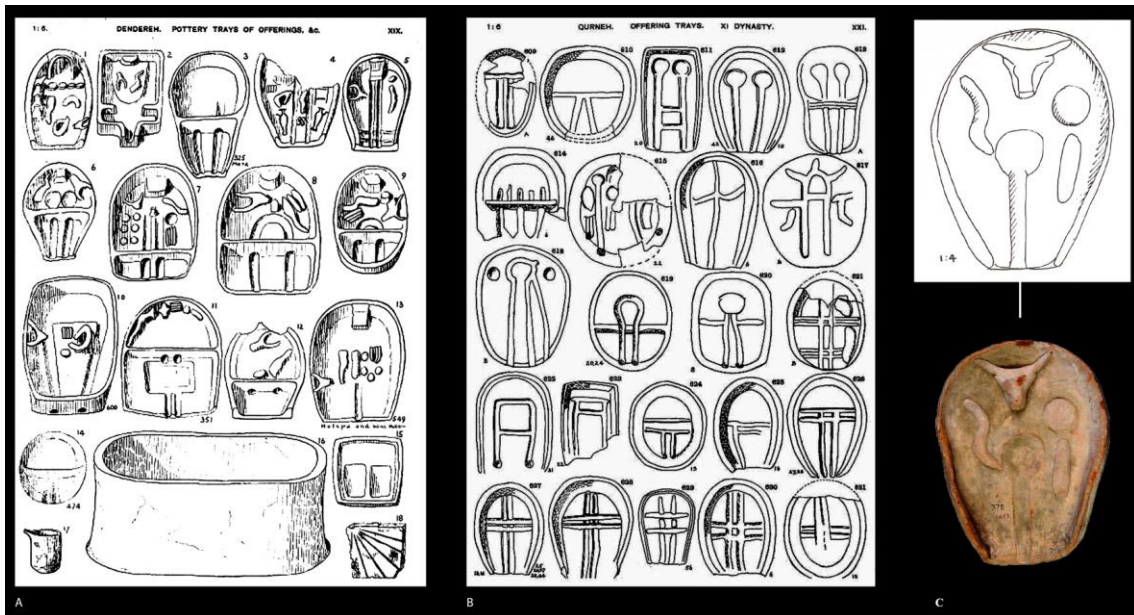


Figure 84a-c: a) Offering trays from Dendera. Image of Petrie (1898: pl. XIX); b) Offering trays with channels and rounded basins from Qurneh. Image of Petrie (1909: pl. XXI); c) Offering tray (No 1973.1.354) with straight channel, rounded basin, and big size offering models from Esna.

Drawing of Downes (1974: p. 94, fig. 63) and image of the Liverpool Museum.

Regarding the quadrangular shape, this form is prevalent in Middle and Lower Egypt, as explained in the chapter 3.6 (SLATER, 1974, p. 402; TOOLEY, 1989: p. 294; CZERNY, 2015: p. 352; MI, 2020: pp. 96-98). However, examples can also be found in Upper Egypt, notably in Qubbet el-Hawa, such as in the offering trays: 0/621(tomb QH93) (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1292-1293; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019a: p. 58), QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.1, QH33/C10/UE103/inv.5, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.6, and QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.8 (tomb QH33) (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2021: pp. 127-136). Additionally, examples are found in Thebes region and the Nubian fortresses as well (See fig. 43a-b).

**5.1.3.1.b. Offering tray QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv.252**

The tray QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv.252 is complete, showing only two straight channels on its surface (Fig. 85a-b). With regard to its manufacture, it was hand-made, and its base is unsmoothed with marks likely created by tools, such as a knife or a pointed object. These marks might be the result of separating the object from the modelling surface or removing some incrustation. Additionally, traces of red slip (10R 7/6 light red) are present. The clay used is Nile B2 (See chapter 5.2.1.a), and the firing process is a mixed firing method. (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

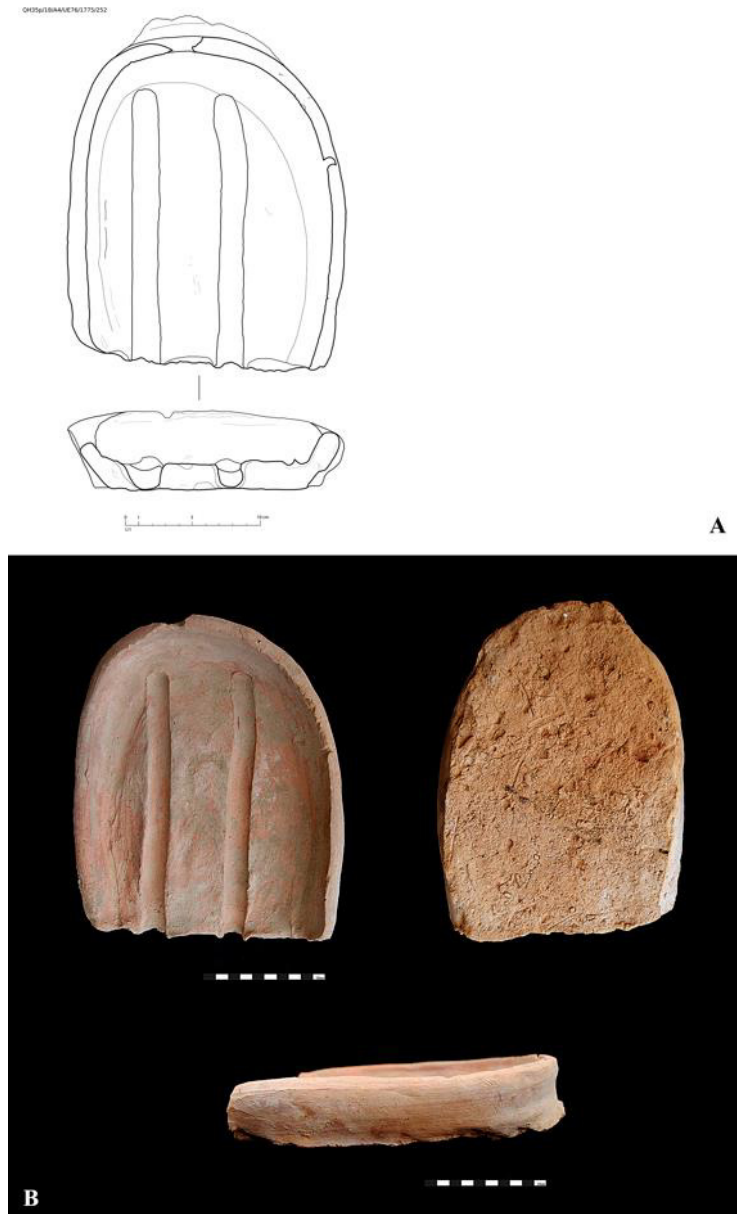


Figure 85a-b: offering tray QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv.252. a) Drawing by Mr. Fernando Luque Cuesta, vectoring by the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa; b) Image by the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

Offering trays from the Theban region have resemblances to the offering tray QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv. 252. These trays share similar shapes and characteristics, notably the absence of modelled items, with only straight channels on their surface (See fig. 84b and 86a-b) (KILIAN, 2012: pp. 107-108; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).



Figure 86a-b: a) Offering trays found in El-Tarif. Image of Arnold (1972: pl. 16); b) Offering trays found in El-Tarif. Image of Arnold (1973: pl. 58).

**5.1.3.1.c. Offering tray QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253 and ox head QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv.273**

On the one hand, the offering tray QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253 is a fragmentary artefact, whose shape was horseshoe. This specimen shows offering model ribs, a model meat piece, and a U-shaped channel (Fig. 87). In respect to the manufacture, it was hand-made and has rests of red slip (7.5R 5/8 red) on its surface, while its base shows what looks like marks of scraping<sup>190</sup> (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming). But in this case, these marks are due to the cord the craftsman used to

<sup>190</sup> Process to remove excess clay (ARNOLD, NORDSTRÖM, and BOURRIAU, 1993, vol. 1: p. 85).

separate the artefact from the manufacture surface. The clay used for this artefact is Nile B2 (See chapter 5.2.1.a), and the firing process is a mixed firing (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).



Figure 87: offering tray QH35p18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253. Drawing and image by the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

On the other hand, the artefact QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv.273 is a modelled bovine head with broken horns (Fig. 88a-b). This item is covered in red slip (5R 5/6 red), and its base is slightly smoothed, suggesting that it was not adhered well to the tray surface. The clay type used is a mix between Nile B1 and B2 (See chapter 5.2.1.d), and the item underwent at least two distinct phases of firing: reducing and oxidizing firing. This is a result of the item was adhered to the tray surface, affecting both the tray and the item differently due to the mixed firing process.<sup>191</sup> The manufacturing features of this item indicate it belonged to the offering tray QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253 (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

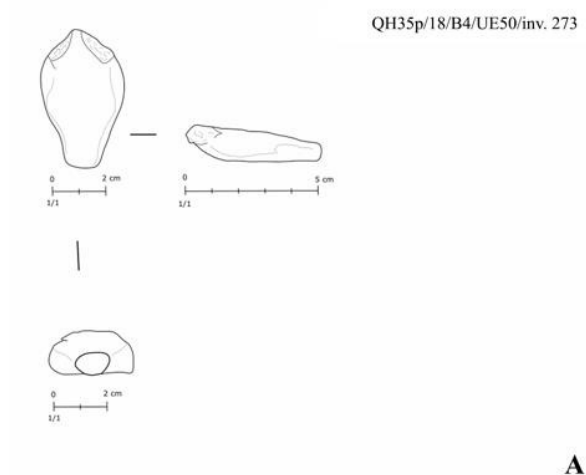


Figure 88a-b: ox head model QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv.273. Drawing by the author; b) Image by Dr. Luisa M. García González. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

<sup>191</sup> The core will be the last to receive the effects of firing, while the outer zones or items will be the first to be fired (GARCÍA ROSSELLÓ and CALVO TRIAS, 2006: p. 95).

In respect to the parallels, there are several similar specimens to the offering tray QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253 + QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv.273 in Qubbet el-Hawa (Fig. 89a-c).



Figure 89a-c: 11a-c. a) Offering tray from Qubbet el-Hawa, decontextualized; b) Offering tray 0/665, QH93; c) Offering tray 0/668, QH93. Images courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

All these trays found in Qubbet el-Hawa (See fig. 87, 88a-b, and 89a-c) share an identical design. Although the items on their surface may vary in each one, they present similar modeling features: absence of eyes in head models, waviness in the leg models, specific item emplacement on the surface, and angular modelling. These features strongly suggest a common workshop. Additionally, they might point out the same timeframe of their production. (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

In addition, it is possible to identify some features of these offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa in others found in Dendera region, as the shape and U-shaped channel (See fig. 84a and 118a-d).

#### 5.1.3.1.d. Offering tray QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv.54

This is a large sherd found in sector A4 that joined the fragment registered as QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604,<sup>192</sup> which was found in sector C4 <sup>193</sup> (Fig. 90). Unfortunately, it is impossible to know the exact elements that were present on its surface. Only the remains of a channel can be identified. Concerning the manufacture, this tray was also hand-made and has rests of red slip (. Its base is unsmoothed and cracked, possibly due to being air-dried too quickly.<sup>194</sup> The clay used for these trays was Nile B2 (5R 5/8 red (See chapter 5.2.1.a), and the firing process is mixed (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

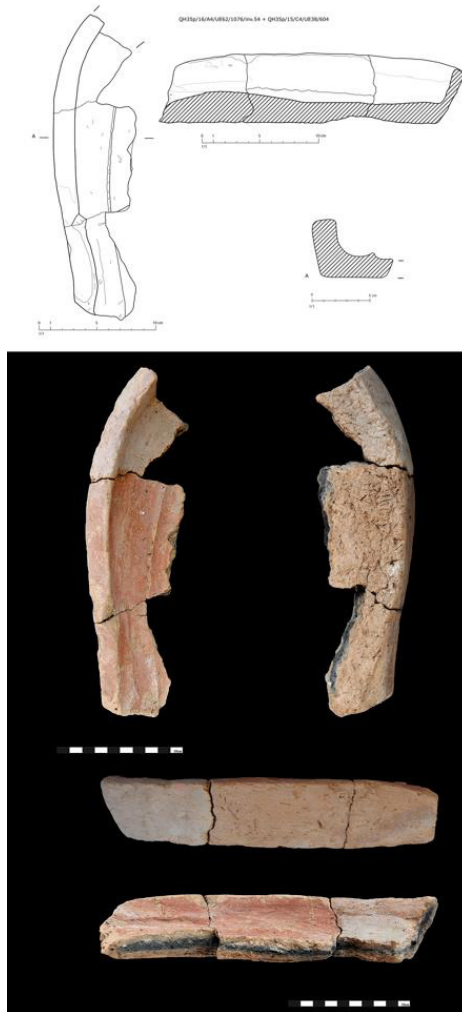


Figure 90: offering tray QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv.54 + QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604.

Drawing and image by the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

<sup>192</sup> The bag containing this record includes various ceramic fragments that lack individual inventory numbers. When a tray fragment is extracted from this collection, it acquires the inventory number of the tray it was reconnected to. However, for reference, the author chooses to indicate the two different registrations for the pieces of the Artefact, aiming to reflect their distinct locations.

<sup>193</sup> The reason about two different sectors, could be the displacement of material for levelling of the ground and to build the two side chambers. The area is under study, so we will be able to confirm this idea in the future.

<sup>194</sup> See footnote 176.

As for the similar specimens, only it is possible to suggest el-Kab and Edfu regions because of the remains of channel in QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv.54 and its shape (Fig. 91). These trays show several channels on their surface, and, on occasion, they follow the outline of the edge, as in QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv.54. Therefore, it might propose a stylistic influence of these areas, at least in terms of the shape and position of the preserved channel (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

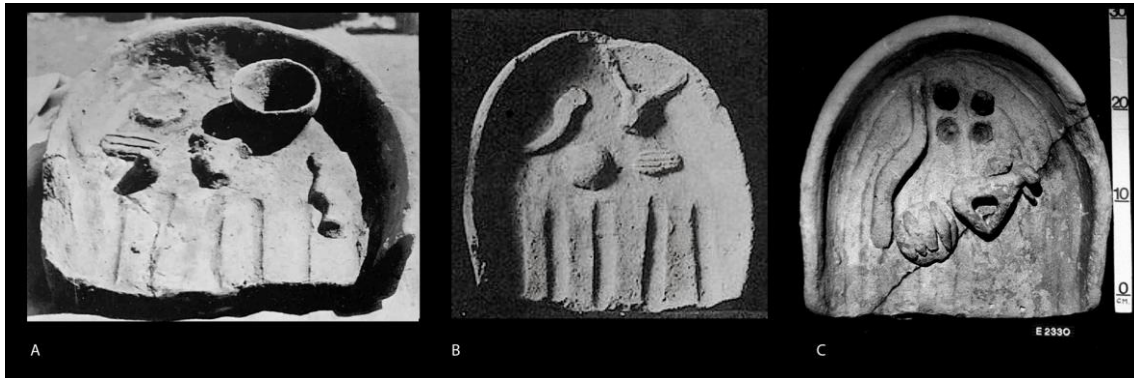


Figure 91a-c: a) Offering tray found in Edfu. Image of Michalowski, *et al.* (1938: pl. 42); b) Offering tray found in el-Kab. Image of Quibell (1898: pl. 5); c) Offering tray found in el-Kab. Penn Museum, No. E 2330.

#### 5.1.3.1.e. Offering tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv.318

This fragment comprises the edge of a horseshoe-shaped offering tray (Fig. 92). At first glance, one might assume this fragment, along with the previous one, QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv.54 + QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604,<sup>195</sup> belongs to the same artefact. However, differences are evident in the angles of their edges and channels. In terms of its manufacture, it was hand-made and shows remnants of red slip (5R 5/6 red) on its surface. The base is unsmoothed, and the clay type used is Nile C (See chapter 5.2.1.b). The firing process is mixed, and the core exhibits signs of vitrification, likely resulting from overcooking during firing (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

<sup>195</sup> For a similar case in Qubbet el-Hawa, See footnote 175.

QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv.318

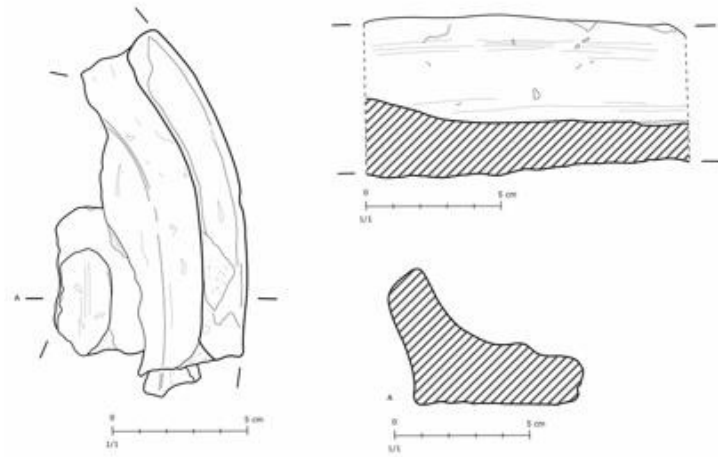


Figure 92: offering tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv.318. Drawing and image by the author.

©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

The position of the channel and the tray shape indicate a stylistic influence<sup>196</sup> from the offering trays discovered in el-Kab and Edfu (See fig. 91a-c) (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

**5.1.3.1.f. Offering tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604/inv.319**

QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604/inv.319 is a shard of offering tray, which shows modelled items. These are an ox head, ribs and the upper part of a hindquarter (Fig. 93). Besides, there is the remains of a straight channel. The manufacture of the models is different to the previous ones. They appears not to be modelled from a free-standing piece of clay, the ox head has incised eyes and the ribs have very superficial incised lines compared to the other examples. This tray was hand-made, has traces of red slip (7.5 R 4/6 red) and the base is unsmoothed. The clay is Nile B2 (See chapter 5.2.1.a) and is of mixed firing. In addition, this shard does not join with any others found in QH35p (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming). The reason for the non join among them, could be the lack of intermediate fragments that allow it, or definitely that they are different artefacts.

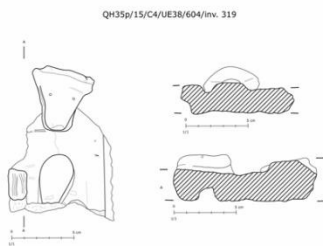


Figure 93: offering tray  
QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604/inv.319.  
Drawing and image by the author.  
©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet  
el Hawa.

<sup>196</sup> The author emphasizes an influence toward the Aswan area rather than the reverse, as the current study indicates different stylistic trends in Aswan. Similarly, the characteristics mentioned are more prevalent in el-Kab and Edfu, suggesting local features specific to these regions. This observation has also been noted by other authors, as Niwinski (1984: p.602) and Kilian (2012: p. 108).

For the parallels, it is only possible to keep in mind the head of ox and the ribs. In this way, it is possible to highlight the offering trays UC38994 and UC38984 (Fig. 94a-b) from the Petrie Museum. These show an ox head with incised eyes, nasal orifices (Fig. 94a-b), and ribs with superficial incised lines (Fig. 94 b). Unfortunately, the provenances of these trays are unknown. However, the tray UC38984 is very similar to offering trays from el-Kab, as it was explained in the figure 71c.

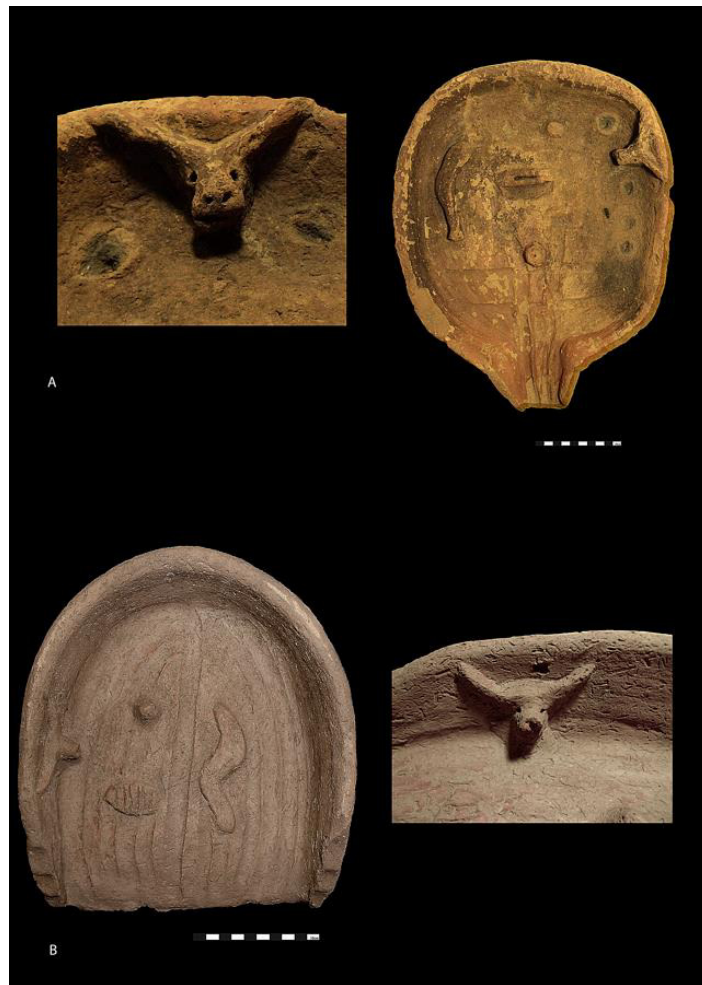


Figure 94a-b: a) Offering tray. Petrie Museum, No. UC38994. Images by the author; b) Offering tray. Petrie Museum, No. UC38984. Images by the author.

The incised eyes, it is found rarely in the trays from Aswan region (See figs. 113b, and 150) and, in addition, they are different from each other. In short, it is a feature scarce in offering trays and it is possible to find it.

**5.1.3.1.g. Offering tray QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv.316**

This is a fragment of edge, whose base seems unsmoothed. The surface is significantly eroded and it shows remains of red slip (2.5YR 6/4 light reddish) on the edge. The clay is Nile B2 (See chapter 5.2.1.a) and the firing was mixed (Fig. 95).

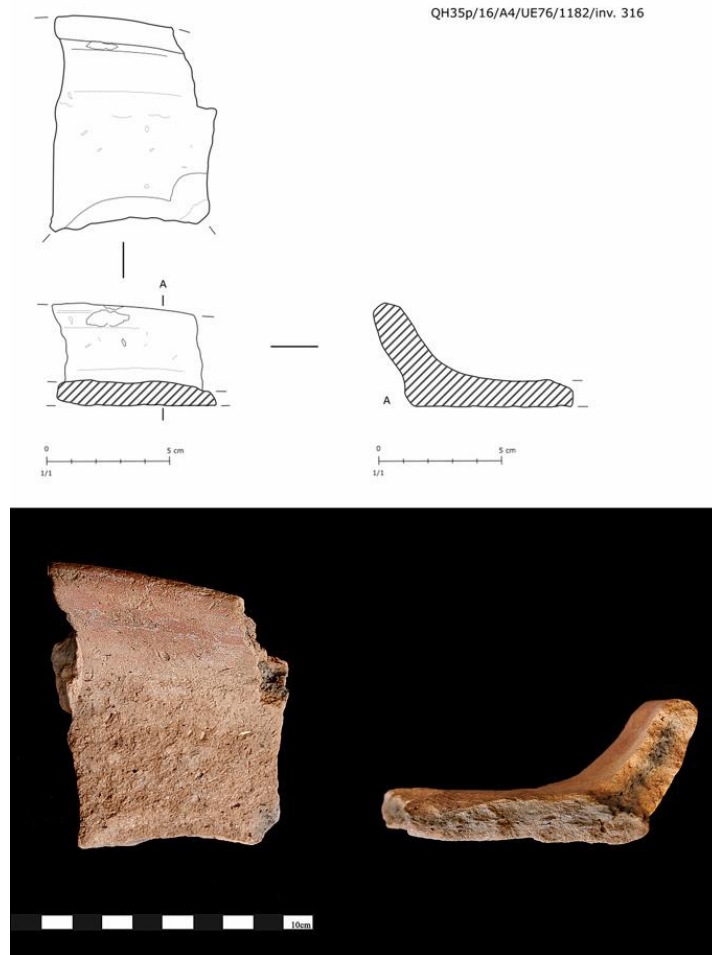


Figure 95: fragment QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv.316. Drawing and image by the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

The fragment QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv.316 does not connect with any others, possibly due to similar reasons as the previous tray. On the one hand, the absence of intermediate fragments to create a connection. On the other hand, this fragment could have been part of a lost offering tray. But also, in this case arose the idea its edges are so eroded that it cannot match with any other documented fragment (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming). Considering the features of this fragment, it is possible that it corresponds to the offering tray QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253.

Similarities in the type of clay, the mark of mixed firing, and the thickness and angle of the edge support this idea. Despite being a small fragment, its shape can be inferred from the inclination and orientation of the edge, indicating a horseshoe-shaped offering tray. This reinforces the notion that offering tray QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253, the fragment QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv.316, and the ox head QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv.273 might all belong to the same artefact.

#### ***5.1.3.1.h. Small fragments QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604***

These are small fragments belonging to an offering tray (Fig. 96). The information provided through these is scarce. But it is possible to identify the placement in the tray, which would be the front part. This due to the fact that they show a straight and carefully finished side. In this way, if it is checked the previous offering trays, it may suggest that they might belong to following confirmed offering trays: QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253 or QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv.54. Finally, as for the manufacture of these small fragments, it is probable to identify a Nile B2 clay and a mixed firing.



Figure 96: fragments QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604. Image by the author. ©University of Jaén.

Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

### 5.1.3.2. General overview

The horseshoe-shaped offering trays are predominant in tomb QH35p; whilst, the offering tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv.317 is the only quadrangular one presents in this tomb. In respect to the production area of these offering trays, the identical specimens found in Qubbet el-Hawa, the absence of direct parallels from other places and the several features in these trays suggest a local production. However, it is possible to find stylistic influences from Thebes, Dendera, Esna, el-Kab, and Edfu areas (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

As for the chronology of the offering trays, it is difficult to give exact dates for the offering trays found in QH35p, at the moment. However, it may be framed in the chronology of the tomb, which is second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

Finally, in this tomb were buried individuals belonging to the ruler family,<sup>197</sup> concretely thirty burials; and there are a maximum of five offering trays. Therefore, once again, the connection of the offering trays and the rituals performed by the members of the household addressed to the communication with ancestors can be seen.<sup>198</sup>

### 5.1.4. QH36

The tomb QH36 has been excavated and documented superficially in different seasons since the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century (BUDGE, 1888: pp. 36-37; DE MORGAN, *et al.*, 1894: p. 180; MÜLLER, 1941: p. 22; EDEL, 2008: p. 967). But, since the beginning of the Qubbet el-Hawa Project from the University of Jaén, different studies have been carried out in this tomb. Among them, there are iconographic and epigraphic ones (GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2011), as well as architectural studies (MARTÍNEZ HERMOSO, 2012). Later, during the season of 2017 the team of the University of Jaén began the excavations at the tomb (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2017: pp. 48-51).

Concerning its architectural features and the iconographic and epigraphic program, tomb QH36 is among the most monumental hypogeum within the necropolis. This vast sepulture comprises a spacious courtyard, preserving the pillars of the portico and featuring two niches, one on each the southern and northern sides (Fig. 97). Within the

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<sup>197</sup> For more information, See García González (2022: pp. 218-301).

<sup>198</sup> For more information about this, See Lechuga Ibáñez, in press<sup>A</sup>; Lechuga Ibáñez and García González, forthcoming.

tomb, there are a hypostyle room, a corridor, and an additional room with two pillars and a niche (Fig. 98). Constructed for the governor of Elephantine, Sarenputi I,<sup>199</sup> this tomb represents the earliest tomb built in the 12th Dynasty at Qubbet el-Hawa, as far as current findings indicate (GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2011: p. 68; GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2022: p. 80).

As for the substructure, the tomb has nine funerary shafts, of which eight are inside and one outside (Fig. 98).



Figure 97: façade of QH36 with the pillars and niches in both sides. Image by Mr. Raul Fernández Ruiz. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

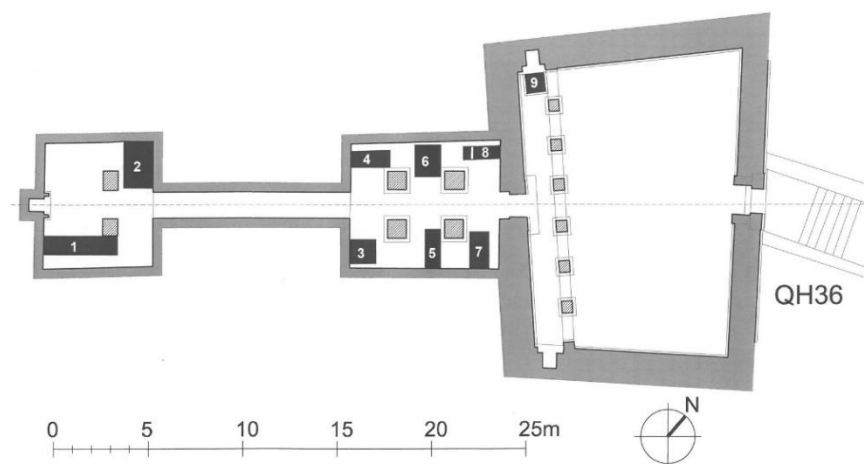


Figure 98: plan of the tomb QH36. Plan by Dr. Juan Antonio Martínez Hermoso. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

<sup>199</sup> To know the new reading about Sarenputi I, See García González (2022: pp. 103-106).

### 5.1.4.1. Shaft 9

This is the only shaft built at the courtyard of QH36, which presents a burial chamber (Fig. 99). It was excavated in 2017 by the Qubbet el-Hawa Project, and the shaft revealed two distinct phases based on the archaeological materials recovered. The first phase contained contemporary material, likely dating back to the 20th Century. While the subsequent phase contained a substantial quantity of pottery artefacts dating to the first half of the 12th Dynasty (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, et al., 2017: p. 49). According to the stratigraphic analysis by archaeologists, the artefacts in the second phase showed no evidence of plundering. However, the burial chamber contained scarce material (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, et al., 2017: p. 49). Thus, this together with the previous contemporary phase and eroded fragments of offering trays, it is possible to suggest a post-depositional process. This due to a contemporary archaeological intervention in the courtyard; or, on the other hand, an ancient plundering, as QH33. This new interpretation might be reinforced by the presence of two fragments of offering trays inside the shaft. These artefacts were placed in public areas of the tombs, as it has been explained in the chapter 3.7.<sup>200</sup> Thus, their presence into the shaft and the features of them, only could be explained as an intrusion.

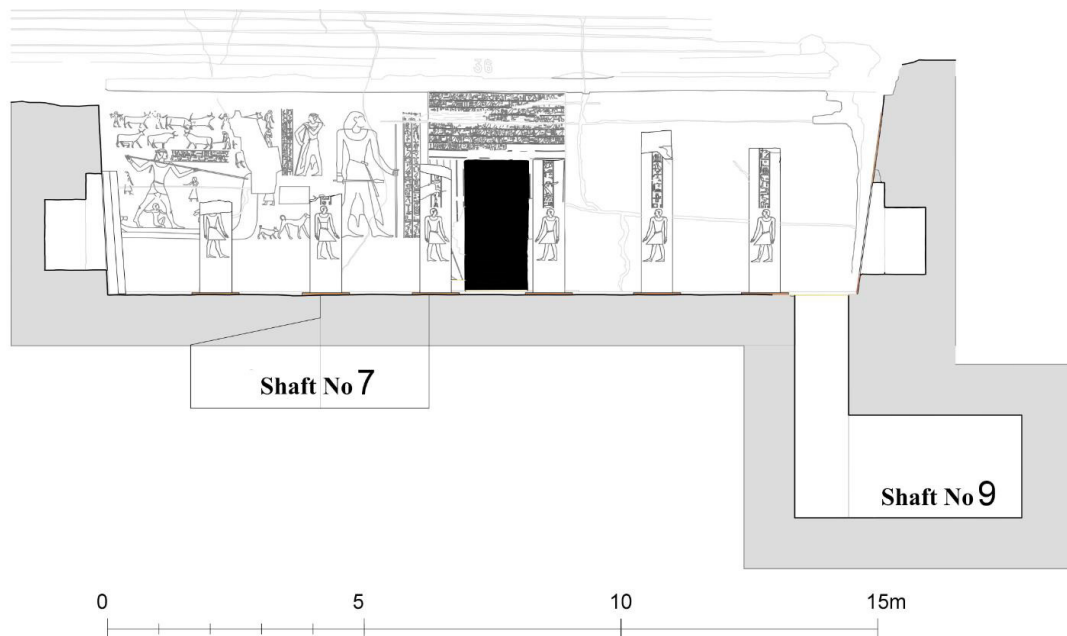


Figure 99: façade of QH36 and shafts excavated during 2017 season. Plan by Dr. Juan Antonio Martínez Hermoso. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

<sup>200</sup> For other examples of offering trays found in shafts at Qubbet el-Hawa, See chapters 5.1. QH33 and 5.1.7. QH110.

#### 5.1.4.1.a. Offering tray QH36/17/9/UE19/241/inv.86

This is a small fragment of a quadrangular offering tray (Fig. 100), which is the only preserved sherd of the tray. This, together with its fracture is eroded, supports the above-mentioned idea about an intrusion into the shaft. Concerning its manufacture, it was handmade with a double rim, and keeps remains of red and white slip. The base might be smoothed, but the erosion of the artefact do not allow to confirm this. As for the firing is mixed.<sup>201</sup>

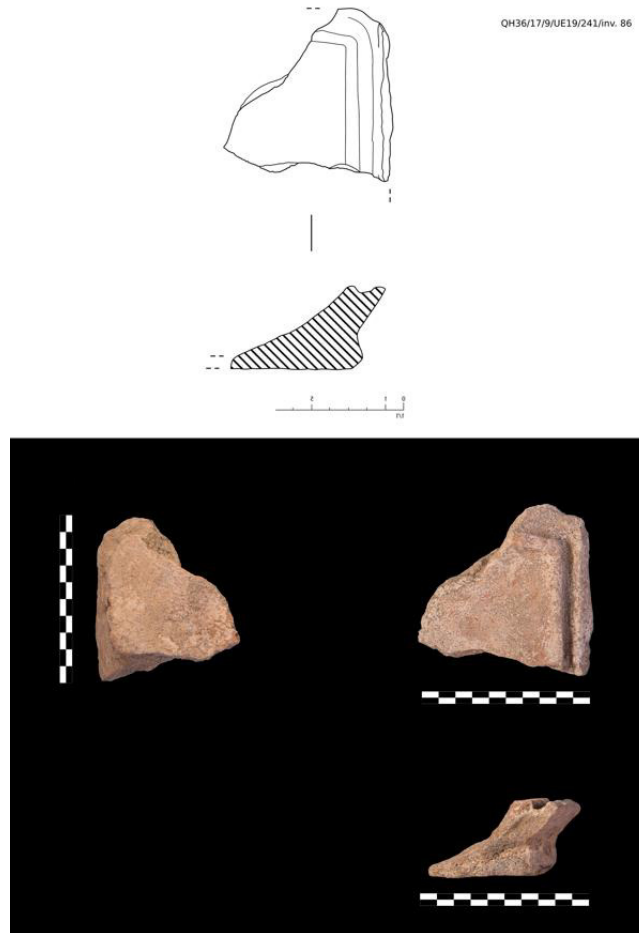


Figure 100: fragment QH36/17/9/UE19/241/inv.86. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

Based on the author's research in this thesis, no similar edges have been found on other offering trays within the Aswan area or at other sites across Egypt, at the moment. Consequently, the primary influential stylistic zone appears to be Middle Egypt, due to the presence of the quadrangular shape.

<sup>201</sup> Analyzing the clay in this fragment has been impossible due to other tasks the author had to complete at the necropolis and the limited time available for this thesis.

**5.1.4.1.b. Offering tray QH36/17/9/UE21/308/inv.429**

The artefact QH36/17/9/UE21/308/inv.429 (Fig. 101) is a large fragment of the edge from a horseshoe-shaped offering tray. Its conservation state is very poor, as it is indicated by the highly eroded surface, rim, and fracture, alongside some concretions in the fracture. This suggests that the fragment was moved and the shaft is not its original placement, similar to the previous fragment. However, the base and exterior side are better preserved. It was hand-made with a slightly narrowing rim. Also, it shows remains of white wash outside. Its base seems smoothed,<sup>202</sup> and the raw material is Nile B2 (See chapter 5.2.1.a). Concerning the firing was alternating. But, this might have been a fail during the firing, in which oxygen would have stopped supplying prematurely (HERAS MARTÍNEZ, 1992: pp. 27, 30; PADILLA MONTOYA, MAICAS RAMOS and CABRERA BONET, 2002: p. 65).

No parallels have been found, and only the shape, which is horseshoe, can be inferred. This suggests that this offering tray shows the predominant shape found in Upper Egypt.

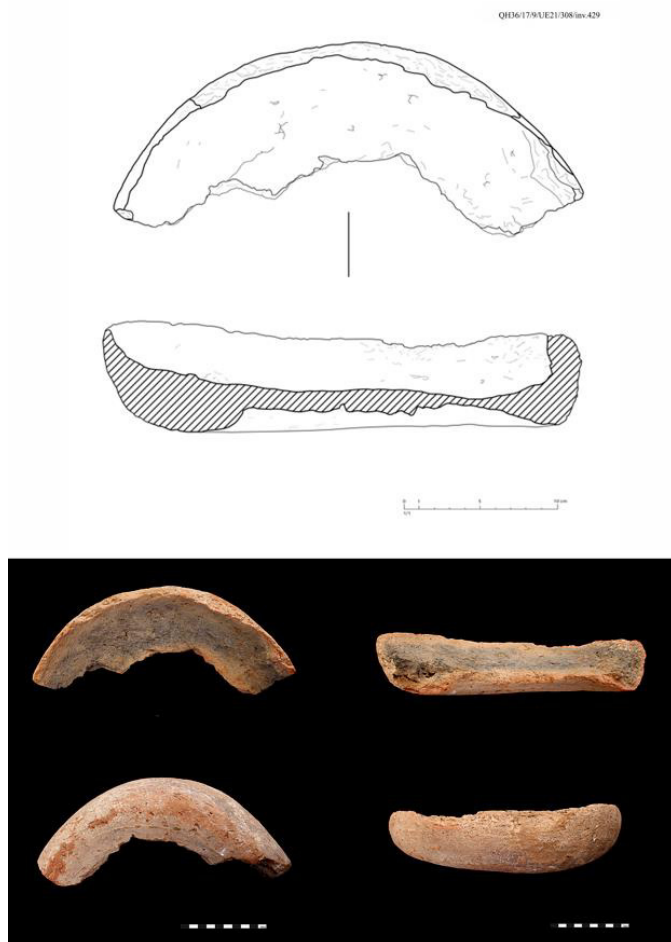


Figure 101: fragment  
QH36/17/9/UE21/308/inv.429.  
Drawing and image by the author.  
©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el  
Hawa.

<sup>202</sup> Confirmation is impossible as it only preserves a small part of the base beginning.

#### **5.1.4.2. General overview**

In summary, these fragments were discovered in a secondary context, as previously detailed. However, they were intermingled with other artefacts dated from the first half of the 12th Dynasty (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, et al., 2017: p. 49), coinciding with the construction period of the tomb and the initial burials. Therefore, these offering trays date back to the 12th Dynasty and onwards.

Concerning the parallels, only it is possible to highlight the shapes, whose influence areas are the Middle Egypt for QH36/17/9/UE19/241/inv.86 and Upper Egypt for QH36/17/9/UE21/308. Whilst, the rims of these fragments would indicate local features, due to the fact that these have not been found in other offering trays discovered outside of Aswan Region, for the time being. Thus, it is possible to note a local production as well as the explained trays before.

#### **5.1.5. QH90b**

The tomb QH90b does not have shafts; it only consists of a courtyard and chapel (Fig. 102). According to Edel, this tomb was unfinished, and the chapel was used as a burial chamber for a small group (EDEL, 2008: p. 1194). Inside the tomb, six individuals were discovered (EDEL, 2008: p.1194). Edel dated QH90b between the Late Old Kingdom and Early Middle Kingdom, based on the artefacts found *in situ* (EDEL, 2008: p. 1194).

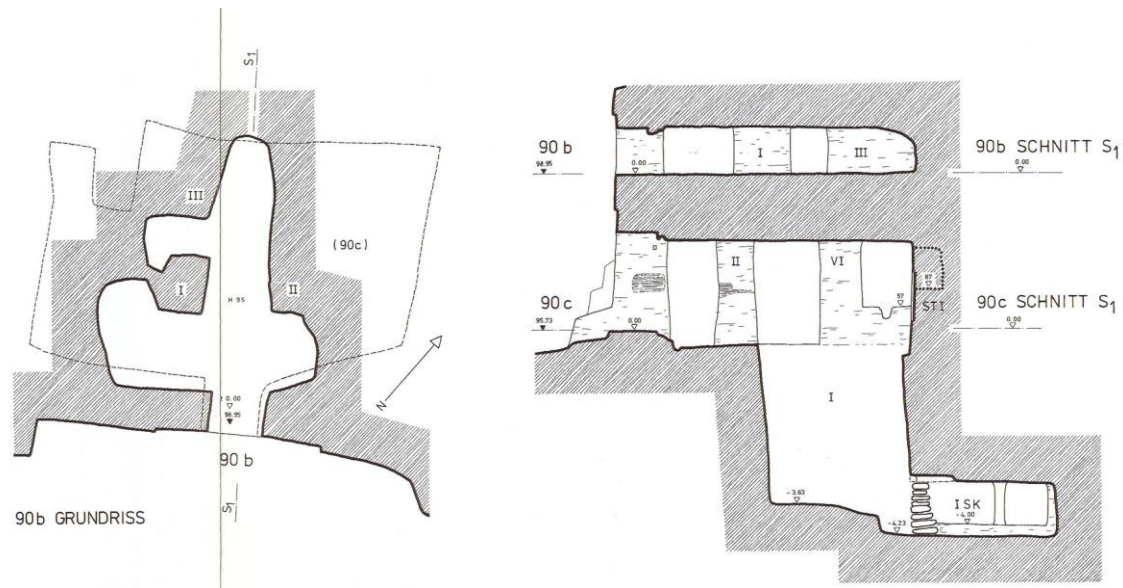


Figure 102: tomb QH90b. Plan 24 of Edel (2008).

However, upon reviewing the documentation regarding the pottery artefacts discovered in QH90b, a preliminary chronology can be specified.<sup>203</sup> No artefacts specifically belonging to the Old Kingdom have been identified among the pottery. This group of objects appears to be dated between the mid-12th Dynasty and the early 13th Dynasty, primarily<sup>204</sup> (SCHIELST and SEILER, 2012: pp. 84-87, 198, 1030). Nonetheless, the chronology of some objects may be traced back to the Late First Intermediate Period onwards. For example, carinated bowls with a direct rim and ring base emerged during the Late First Intermediate Period (EDEL, 2008: p. 1191, fig. 2; SCHIELST and SEILER, 2012: p. 224). Nevertheless, this chronology will need confirmation through future *in-situ* studies.

Regarding the above-mentioned, two ideas can be proposed. Firstly, the tomb QH90b could be an unfinished hypogeum from the Late Old Kingdom, which was used during the Middle Kingdom as suggested by Edel. Alternatively, this tomb might belong to the Late First Intermediate Period and was later repurposed during the Middle Kingdom.<sup>205</sup>

<sup>203</sup> Preliminary analysis of the pottery artefacts was conducted by the author using the limited data published by Edel.

<sup>204</sup> The primary artefacts considered for dating were the hemispherical cups and their corresponding vessel index (See footnote 220). Additionally, other pottery types such as shallow inflected bowls or conical shapes were taken into account.

<sup>205</sup> To clarify these questions, a comprehensive analysis of all archaeological material will be necessary in the future. It's possible that some artefacts found by Edel in QH90b were not published and could be stored. Hence, future studies should take this consideration into account.

### 5.1.5.1. Offering tray 0/754

Among the pottery found in this tomb, there is an offering tray, as previously was mentioned. This horseshoe-shaped pottery offering tray (Fig. 103 and 104a-b) was positioned in the courtyard, located in front of the tomb entrance (Fig. 103), alongside other pottery objects dated from the mid-12th Dynasty onwards

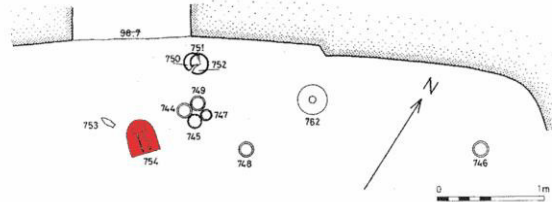


Figure 103: offering tray 0/754 in front of the entrance of the tomb QH90b. Image by the author based on the plan 1 of Edel (2008: p. 1192, fig. 4).

The artefact 0/754 shows different modelled clay items on its surface, representing various offerings, such as an ox leg and head, ribs, meat strips, and a conical bread loaf (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022: p. 297). Additionally, there are pottery miniatures representing three bowls (two of which are currently lost) and a model of a quadrangular altar. This offering tray also includes two straight channels and a quadrangular basin (Fig. 104a-b). Regarding its manufacture and raw material,<sup>206</sup> this offering tray was hand-made, likely using Nile clay. Furthermore, it seems to have undergone a mixed firing process, and the tray surface shows a red slip.

<sup>206</sup> The study of the clay of this offering tray and others have not been possible to carry out *in situ*. This due to the fact that they are located at the storehouse of Aswan currently, and other analyses and works required to the author at the necropolis have done impossible the clay analyses.



Figure 104a-b: a) Offering tray 0/754. Drawing by the author based on current pictures and graphic documentation of Edel (2008); b) Offering tray 0/754 currently located in storehouse of Aswan. Image courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

Hence, in tomb QH90b, there is only one offering tray along with other pottery artefacts, all situated at the cult area of the tomb, the courtyard. Inside the tomb, six individuals were found. Therefore, this offering tray was intended for only one person buried inside.

With regard to the chronology, the dating of this offering tray found in situ might be established between the mid-12th Dynasty and the early 13th Dynasty. This dating is inferred from the presence of other artefacts in close proximity, the general context (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZALEZ, forthcoming), and the chronology currently established for the offering trays.

Regarding parallels, no similar specimens to 0/754 have been found. However, it is possible to identify some comparable features with the offering tray of QH90b (Fig. 105a-d). These characteristics include the shape of the artefact, the double channel, and the quadrangular basin. Moreover, the offering models show similarities also, as does the altar model on the rear side.



Figure 105a-d: a) Offering tray horseshoe-shaped with double channel and quadrangular basin. Dendera.

The Manchester Museum, No. 3253; b) Offering tray horseshoe-shaped with double channel and quadrangular basin. Unprovenanced (property of a private Dutch collector, acquired in the 1970s).

Bonhams Fine Art Auctioneers & Valuers, Lot 55; c) Offering tray horseshoe-shaped with double channel, and offerings and altar models. Dendera. Penn Museum, No. 29-65-713; d) Offering tray horseshoe-shaped with channel and quadrangular basin, and offerings and shrine models.<sup>207</sup> Dendera, Penn Museum, No. 29-65-736.

Regarding the bowl models, are commonly found on the offering trays from Edfu (fig. 106).

<sup>207</sup> This model has an incised mat, thereby reinforcing the idea regarding the representation of these elements as models of altars and/or shrines on the offering trays.

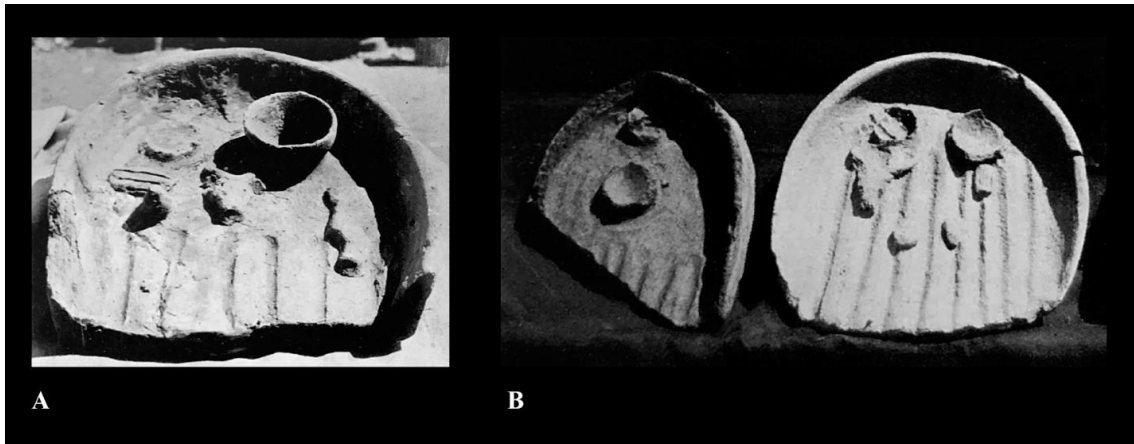


Figure 106a-b: offering trays horseshoe-shaped with several parallel channels, offering models and bowl models. Edfu. Image of Michalowski, *et al.* (1938, v. 2: pl. 42, fig. 3; v. 3: pl. 40, figs. 2 and 3).

Hence, it is plausible to emphasize the zone between Dendera and Edfu as an influential area for the offering tray 0/754 from QH90b. However, the amalgamation of features in this artefact might suggest a local production, similar to what has been observed in previous offering trays.

#### 5.1.5.2. General overview

Summarily, Elmar Edel dated tomb QH90b in the Late Old Kingdom. However, the preliminary analysis of the pottery material suggests a chronology mainly between the mid-12th and the early 13th Dynasty, with some objects potentially belonging to the Late First Intermediate Period. Hence, this dating implies that the tomb might have been constructed later than the period proposed by Edel.

Regarding The pottery offering tray 0/754,<sup>208</sup> shows common features seen in trays discovered in Dendera and Edfu. However, the amalgamation of distinctive elements from these two locations suggests a production zone separate from both. This points towards the likelihood of a local origin.<sup>209</sup> In terms of its chronology, the offering tray

<sup>208</sup> See chapter 5.2. The manufacture and production area of the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa, to know about the manufacture and production of the offering trays from Aswan necropolis.

<sup>209</sup> For more information of this proposal, See chapter 5.2. The manufacture and production area of the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa.

likely dates between the mid-12th Dynasty and the early 13th Dynasty, based on the analysis of the surrounding artefacts.

### 5.1.6. QH93

The tomb QH93 is a hypogeum that, in contrast to QH90b, has two shafts, along with a cult chapel and a courtyard (Fig. 107).

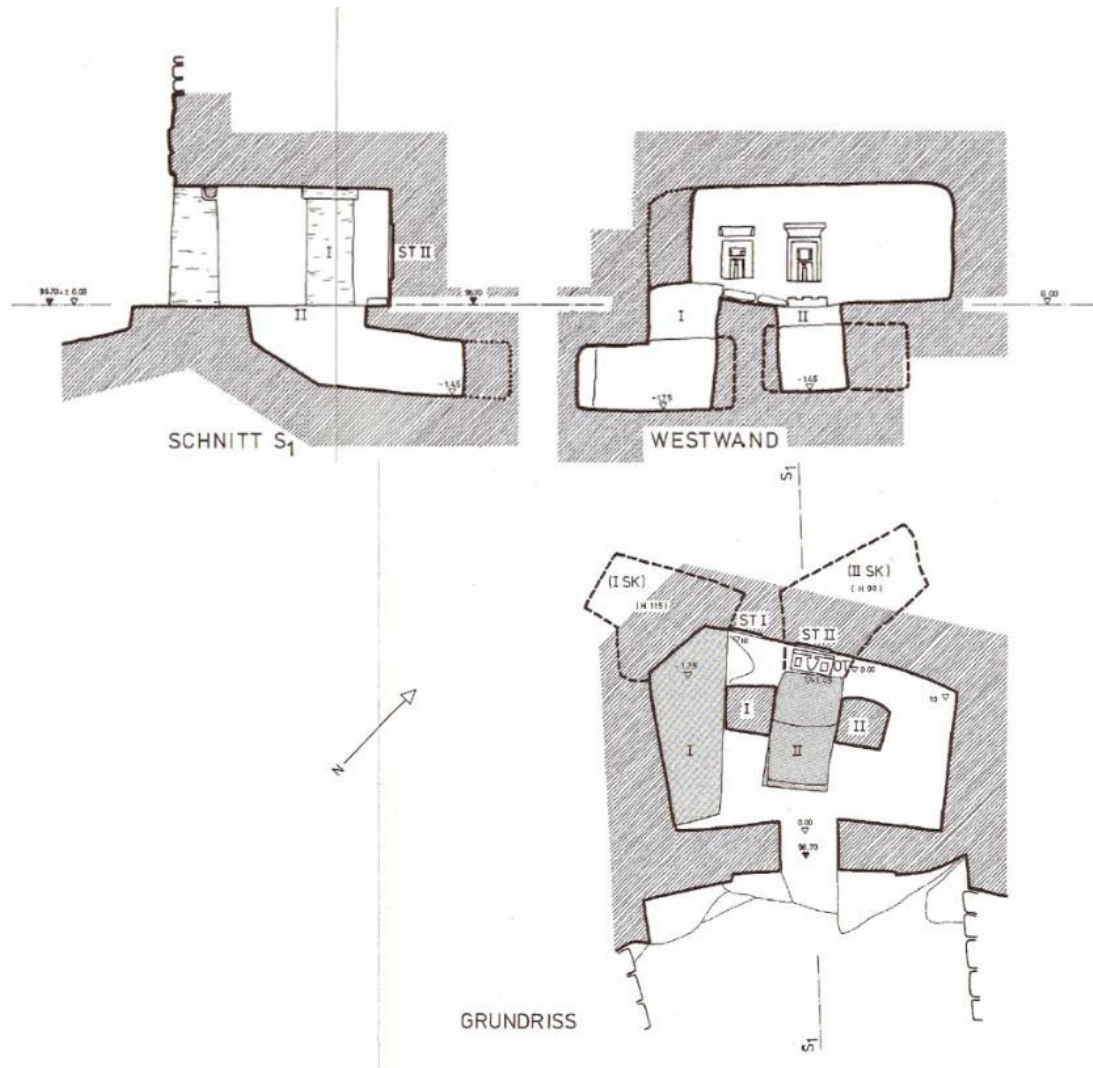


Figure 107: tomb QH93. Plan 26 of Edel (2008).

Within the tomb, there are two false doors, a stone offering table, and white plaster covering the walls. One false door and the stone offering table are positioned at the rear of pit II, which was the main shaft. Meanwhile, the second false door is located to the side of the first one.

The individual buried in shaft II of the tomb is identified as *Ini-ḥtp ḥtp (i)*. His name, according to Ranke (1935: p. 35, No. 20), belongs to the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom periods. However, his title, *imi-irti* (supervisor of the expedition, captain), is associated with the Old Kingdom, as indicated by Edel (2008: pp. 1303, 1307) and Alejandro Jiménez Serrano<sup>210</sup> (Fig. 108). Furthermore, the tomb structure and its elements suggest an Old Kingdom dating for the hypogeum.

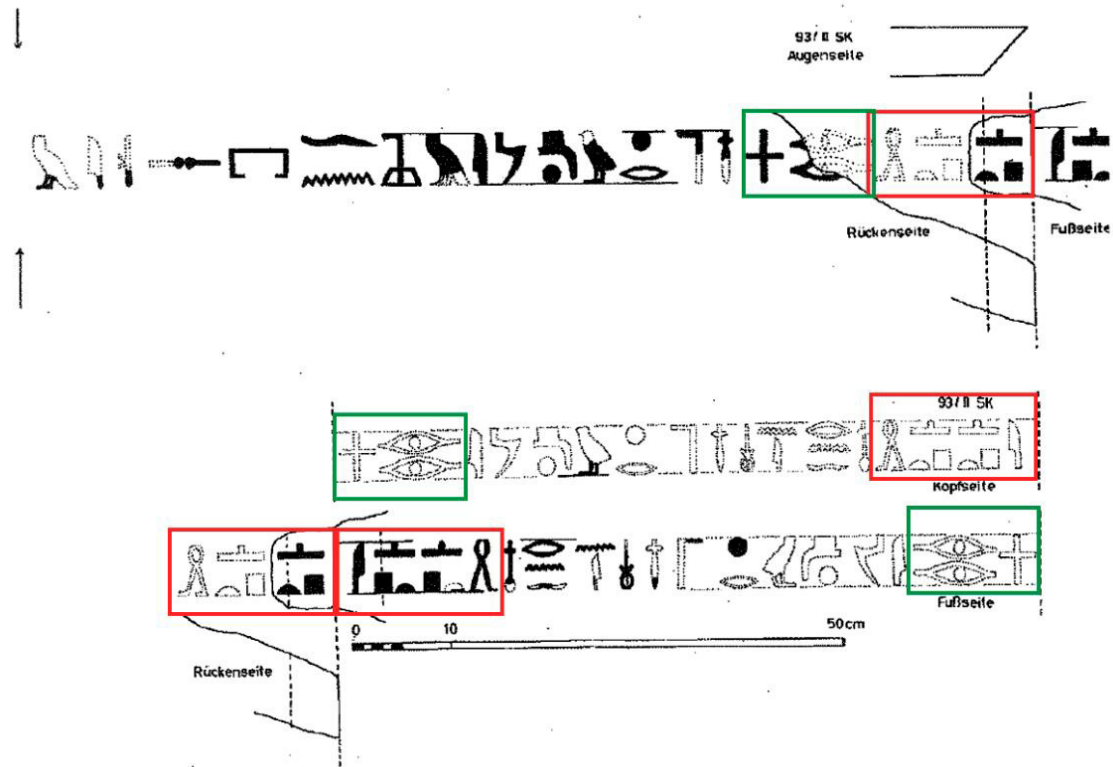


Figure 108: coffin of *Ini-ḥtp ḥtp (i)*, QH93. Red box: name; green box: title. Image by the author based on Edel (2008: p. 1304).

As for the chronology of the tomb, Edel dated it in the Late Old Kingdom, but it was reused during Middle Kingdom (EDEL, 2008: p. 1285, 1307).

Edel identified six different strata in the courtyard (Fig. 109). Among them, in the level 6 and 3 were found several offering trays.<sup>211</sup> These trays were together with various other objects, as we explain below.

<sup>210</sup> Personal communication.

<sup>211</sup> The strata or levels were published by Edel (2008) as planum. For example, See fig. 109.

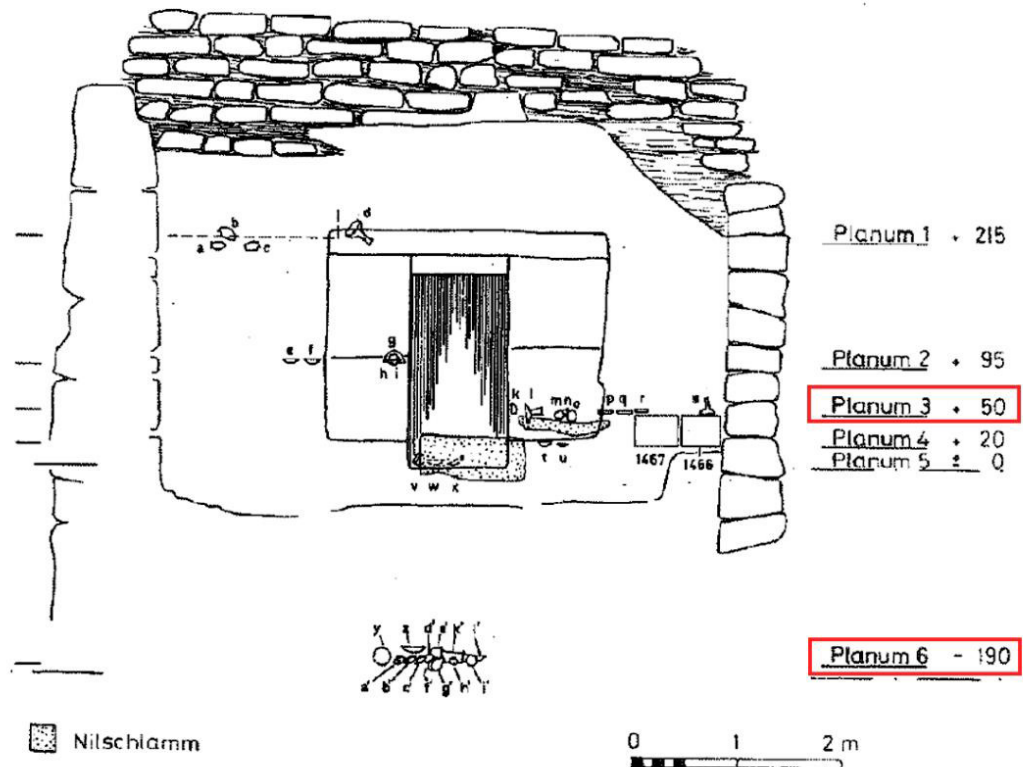


Figure 109: strata of the courtyard of QH93. In red levels of the offering trays. Image by the author based on Edel (2008: p. 1284, fig. 4).

#### 5.1.6.1. Planum 6

In this level<sup>212</sup> Edel found an offering tray together with a set of different pottery objects (Fig. 110). These artefacts were dated by Edel between the Old Kingdom and the beginning of the Middle Kingdom. In respect to the offering tray, Edel dated it in the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (EDEL, 2008: p. 1292).

<sup>212</sup> See footnote 211.

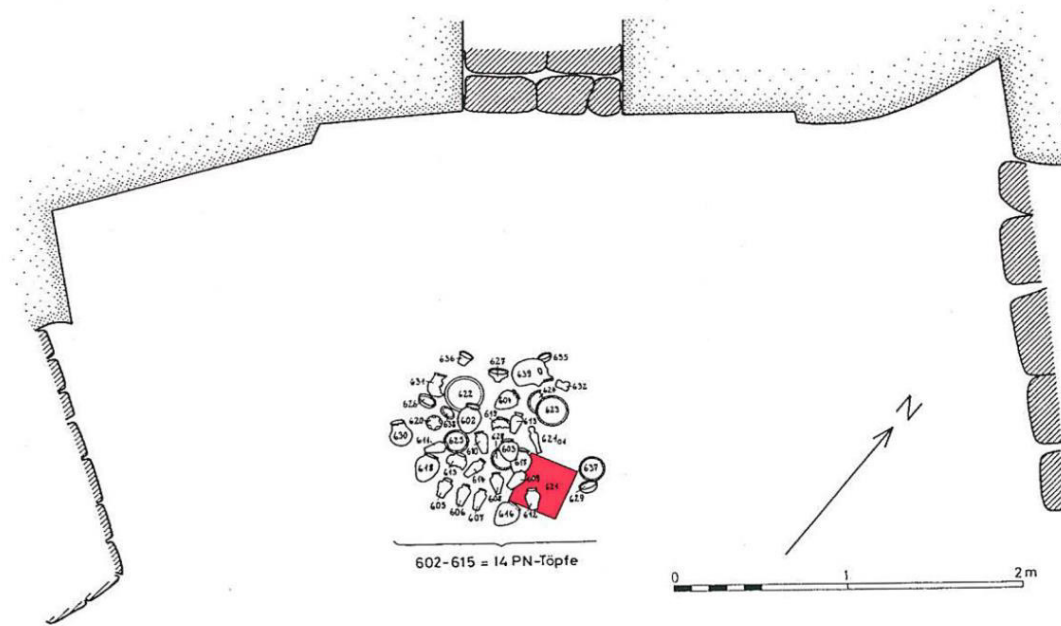


Figure 110: planum 6 of QH93. Build-up of material mix (Red: offering trays 0/621). Image by the author based on Edel (2008: p. 1292, fig. 13).

However, if these objects are reviewed, as was done in the previous tomb, this set presents a mixture of materials. On one hand, there is a group of vessels of the types *j<sup>cc</sup>* and *ntt*, which date back to the Old Kingdom and are quite common in Qubbet el-Hawa (EDEL, 2008). On the other hand, there is a group of pottery dating to the Middle Kingdom, predominantly from the second half of the 12th Dynasty to the mid-13th Dynasty (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZALEZ, forthcoming). Consequently, the offering tray 0/621 can also be dated to this later chronology. This proposition is supported by the chronology of the quadrangular offering trays found in QH33 tomb at Qubbet el-Hawa.<sup>213</sup> But also in Qurneh, concretely at the tomb No. 79 close to the Thutmose IV's temple (BRESCIANI, 1980: pp. 5-7, fig. 3), and the tomb A17 at the temple of millions of years of Amenhotep II (CONNISONI and SESANA, 2016: pp. 103-112).<sup>214</sup>

<sup>213</sup> See chapter 5.1.2. QH33.

<sup>214</sup> The pottery artefacts found in these tombs, were dated in the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (BRESCIANI, 1980: p. 7; CONNISONI and SESANA, 2016: pp. 105-112). These examples are crucial, because other findings of quadrangular offering trays were not precisely dated through other archaeological objects or contextual elements. Therefore, these together with the finds from Aswan area could provide new information about the chronology of the offering trays, as it will explain during the present thesis.

As for the interpretation of planum 6, Edel suggested that the presence of the build-up of material is attributed to a cleaning of the tomb during its reuse in the Middle Kingdom.<sup>215</sup> Additionally, he proposed the possibility of material slippage due to the slope of the courtyard (See Fig. 107) (EDEL, 2008: p. 1292). In any case, both explanations are plausible.

Therefore, the presence of pottery dating back to the Old Kingdom would correspond to the cleaning during the Middle Kingdom. Meanwhile, those dated between the second half of the 12th Dynasty and the middle of the 13th Dynasty might be associated with the ancestor cult during the tomb's reuse. Additionally, the slope of the courtyard would have affected their placement, explaining the mix of materials and their location on the plan.

#### **5.1.6.1. a. Offering tray 0/621**

The pottery offering tray 0/621 (Fig. 111a-b) is quadrangular with a spout on the front side. This artefact shows various offering models, including the legs and head of an ox, a duck, a complete tied ox, two pieces of bread, onions, lettuce, a piece of meat, and a doum fruit (LECHUGA and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022: p. 297). Additionally, it presents a quadrangular altar model and a straight channel.



Figure 111a-b: a) Offering tray 0/621. Drawing by the author based on current pictures and graphic documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1294); b) Offering tray 0/621 currently located in storehouse of Aswan.

Image by Mr. Ahmed Massoud Hassan and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

<sup>215</sup> The review of the pottery material found inside the tomb provides a chronology between the mid-11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

Regarding the manufacture of the offering tray 0/621, it was hand-made, and the raw material is impossible to discern from the pictures of this offering tray.<sup>216</sup> However, it shows a mixed firing and red slip on its surface.

Regarding parallels with the offering tray 0/621, the most direct ones are the offering trays found in the tomb QH33 at Qubbet el-Hawa (See Figs. 64, 67, and 69). This is because they share the same shape, straight channel, spout, altar model, and some element models. However, the most significant features distinguishing the offering tray 0/621 and the others from QH33 are the raised edge on the back side (Fig. 112a-d) and two lost elements in front of the altar model (See figs. 64, 67 and 69),<sup>217</sup> which are missing in 0/621 and the others from QH33. Nevertheless, it is possible to know about these elements thank to the remains on them, and the damage part, which indicates the presence of them.

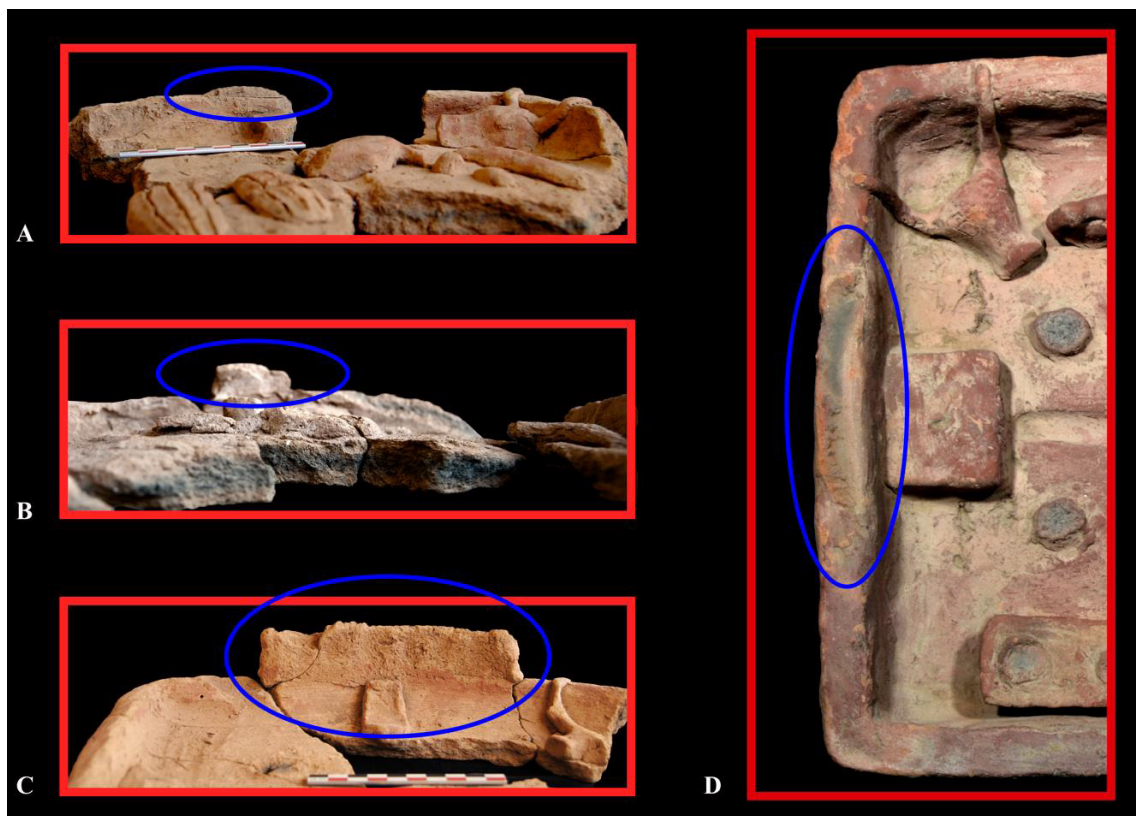


Fig. 112 a-d: a) Offering tray QH33/10/C10/UE103/T759/inv. 5 with raised edge. QH33. Image of the author; b) Offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.6 with raised edge. QH33. Image by the author; c) Offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv. 1 with raised edge. QH33. Image by the author; d) Offering tray 0/621 with remains of raised edge. QH93. Image courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

<sup>216</sup> The clay of the offering trays located at the storehouse in Aswan will be analyzed in the future to create a complete database about the raw material of the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa.

<sup>217</sup> The offering tray found in Aswan shows three similar elements in front of the altar model and also features a raised edge (See fig. 65).

On the other hand, it may highlight the quadrangular offering trays found in the Thebes region as the closest parallels to 0/621 due to the arrangement and typology of elements, such as the straight channel, ox head in the corner, altar model, shape of the tray, and spout (See fig. 68a-c). In respect to the altar model, it is possible to highlight the trays of Dendera region as influence zone of them (See fig. 84a). Besides, a distinctive feature is the incised eyes in ox head, which are uncommon, as it was explained in previous trays (See p. 153). In this case, they are similar to the incised eyes of the ox head on the offering tray AT99 from National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (Fig. 113a). Unfortunately, this tray is unprovenanced.

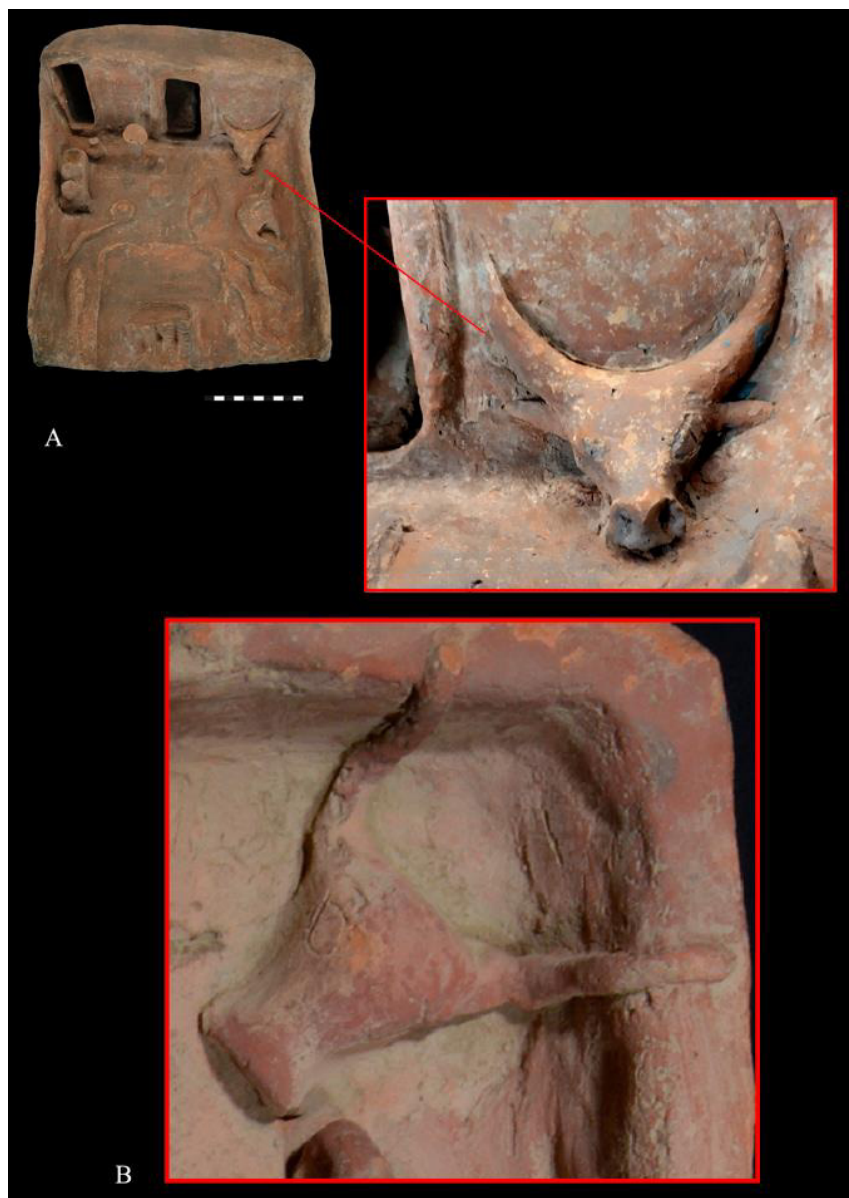


Figure 113a-b: a) Offering tray AT99. Unprovenanced. National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, image by the author; b) Offering tray 0/621. QH93. Image courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

Thus, in this case, the zone between Dendera, Thebes, and the Aswan region is the main influence area. Additionally Middle Egypt, where the quadrangular shape is common and predominant.<sup>218</sup> Once again, there is a combination of features from different zones. This, along with the similarities to other offering trays found in the Aswan area, reinforces the idea of local production.

### 5.1.6.2. Planum 3

The next level with offering trays is planum 3. Here, Edel discovered a set of five offering trays in the northern part of the courtyard, in situ with other pottery artefacts (Fig. 114). Edel initially dated this group of material to the beginning of the Middle Kingdom (EDEL, 2008: p. 1285), while the offering trays to the beginning of the 11th Dynasty (EDEL, 2008: p. 1288). However, after analyzing<sup>219</sup> the group of pottery found in this level, there is a predominance of pottery from the mid-12th Dynasty to the beginning of the 13th Dynasty.<sup>220</sup> Additionally, some artefacts may be dated between the second half of the 11th Dynasty and the beginning of the 12th Dynasty.

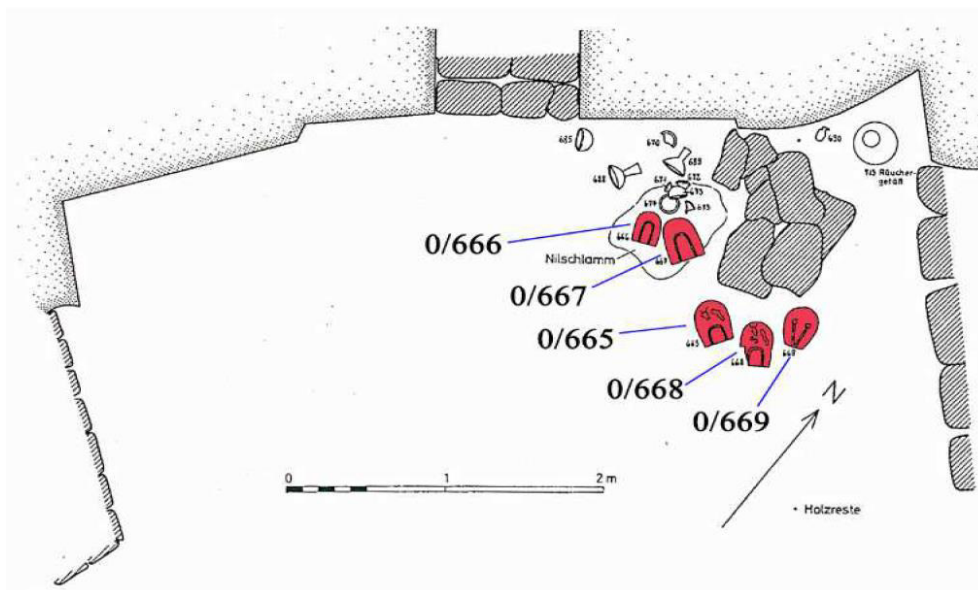


Figure 114: planum 3 of QH93. Build-up of material (Red: offering trays). Image by the author based on Edel (2008: p. 1288, fig. 7).

<sup>218</sup> See Chapter 3.6. Origin zone, main areas of the offering trays and soul houses according to their features and manufacture.

<sup>219</sup> See footnotes 203 and 204.

<sup>220</sup> For the analyses of the pottery, the author has primarily focused on the hemispherical cup and the vessel index, following the studies of Anna Seiler (2012, v. 1), Teodozja Rzeuska (2012, v. 2), and Peter Kopp (2019).

Regarding Edel's interpretation of the material found in the courtyard (across all levels discovered in the courtyard), these artefacts were associated with the cult of the deceased during the reuse of both the inside and outside of the tomb in the Middle Kingdom (EDEL, 2008: p. 1284). However, upon reviewing the next level (planum 4) (Fig. 115), the offering trays and the group of pottery from planum 3 would be connected to it.

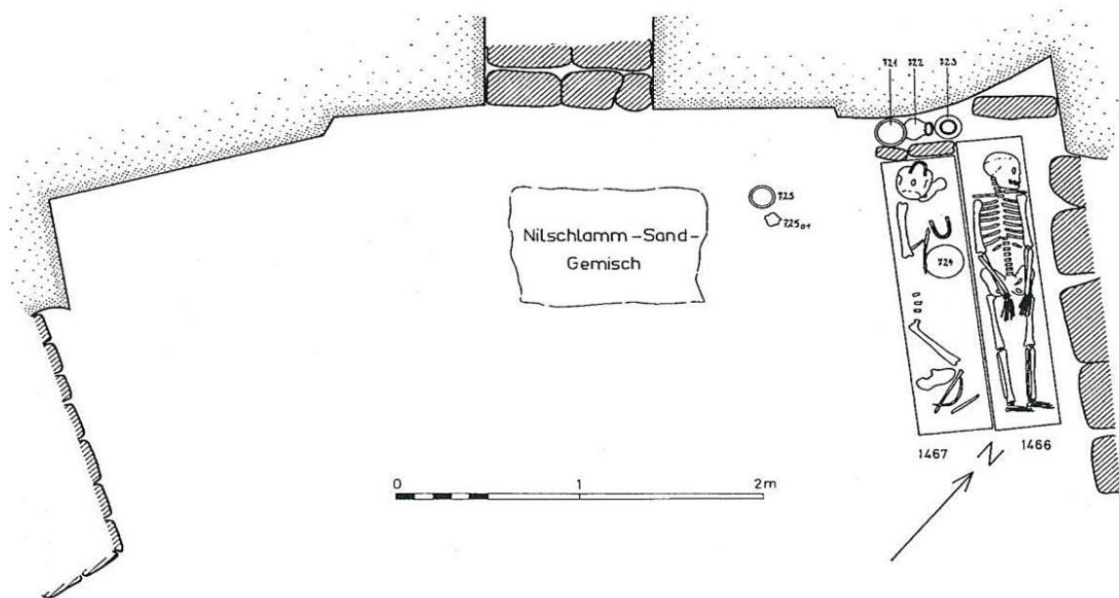


Figure 115: planum 4 of QH93. Double burial down the planum 3. Image of Edel (2008: p. 1290, fig. 11).

Planum 4 comprises a double burial along with pottery material. Edel dated this level between the late Old Kingdom and the First Intermediate Period, suggesting that the individuals buried here belonged to a lower social group (EDEL, 2008: p. 1285-1289). Regarding the analyses of the pottery found in planum 4, it indicates a chronology between the mid-11th Dynasty and the 12th Dynasty. Therefore, considering this latter date along with the location of the offering trays and other artefacts in planum 3 and their chronology, it is possible to establish a connection between both levels. In this way, the offering trays found here are associated with the cult of the individuals in planum 4.

### 5.1.6.2.a. Offering tray 0/665

This offering tray is horseshoe-shaped (Fig. 116a-b) and shows various items on its surface. Among them are a head and a leg of an ox (LECHUGA and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022: p. 297). Additionally, there is a U-shaped channel. Concerning its manufacture, this offering tray is hand-made, and its raw material might be Nile clay<sup>221</sup> due to the vegetal inclusions visible on its surface. Regarding the treatment, the surface has a red slip.

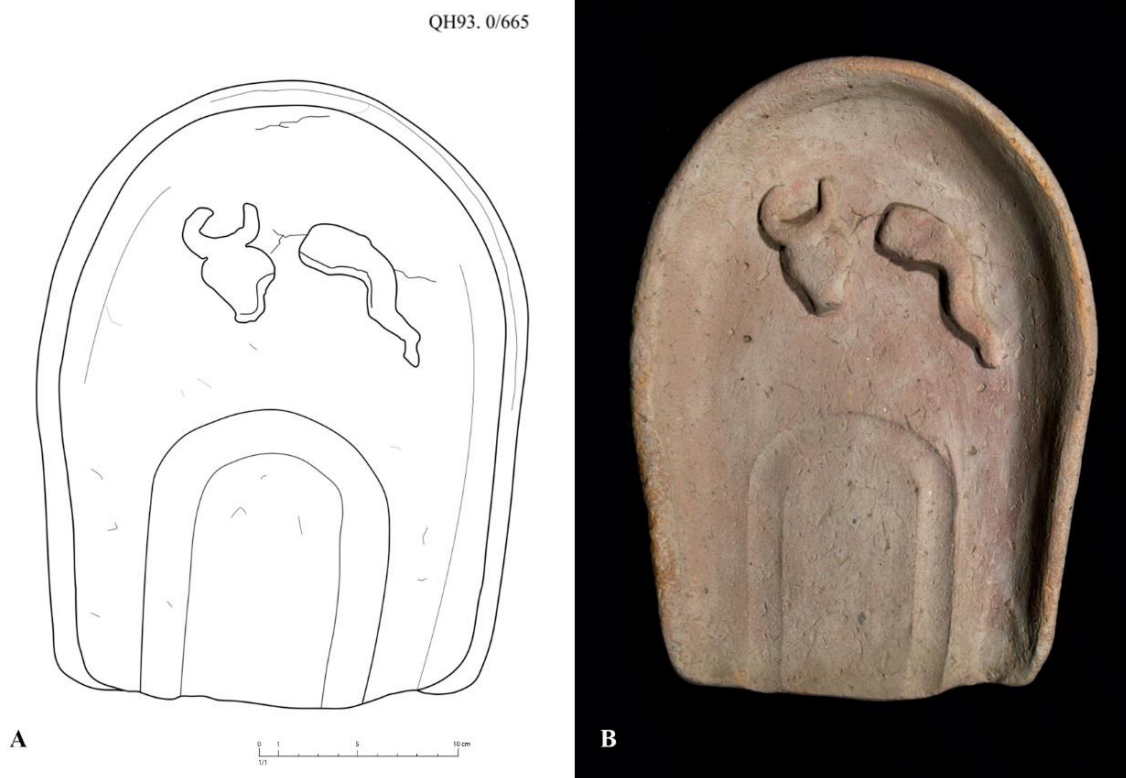


Figure 116a-b: a) Offering tray 0/665. Drawing by the author based on current pictures and graphic documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1310); b) Offering tray 0/665 currently located in storehouse of Aswan.

Image by Mr. Ahmed Massoud Hassan and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

In terms of parallels, there is a set of offering trays found in Qubbet el-Hawa that is similar to artefact 0/665. These trays have been discovered in different tombs. These are 0/668, decontextualized offering tray I,<sup>222</sup> and offering tray QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253 (Fig. 117a-d). They share several features. On one hand, they have the same horseshoe shape, and the channel is U-shaped. On the other hand, the offering models show similar

<sup>221</sup> See footnote 216.

<sup>222</sup> See chapter 5.1.12.9. Offering tray I.

manufacturing. These offering models are different on each one, but the modelling of them is very angular in compare with others.



Figure 117a-d: a) Offering tray I, found by Elmar Edel. Decontextualized. Qubbet el-Hawa. Image of Ms. Heba el-Ders and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer; b) Offering tray QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253. Tomb QH35p. Image of the author. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa; c) Head of ox QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv.273 belong to QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253. QH35p. Image by Dr. Luisa M. García González. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa; d) Offering tray 0/668, found by Elmar Edel. QH93. Image by Ahmed Massoud Hassan and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

In terms of the influential area, horseshoe-shaped offering trays with a U-shaped channel have been discovered outside Aswan, specifically in Dendera (Fig. 118a-d). Therefore, this region serves as the primary influence for the typology of offering trays found in Qubbet el-Hawa.

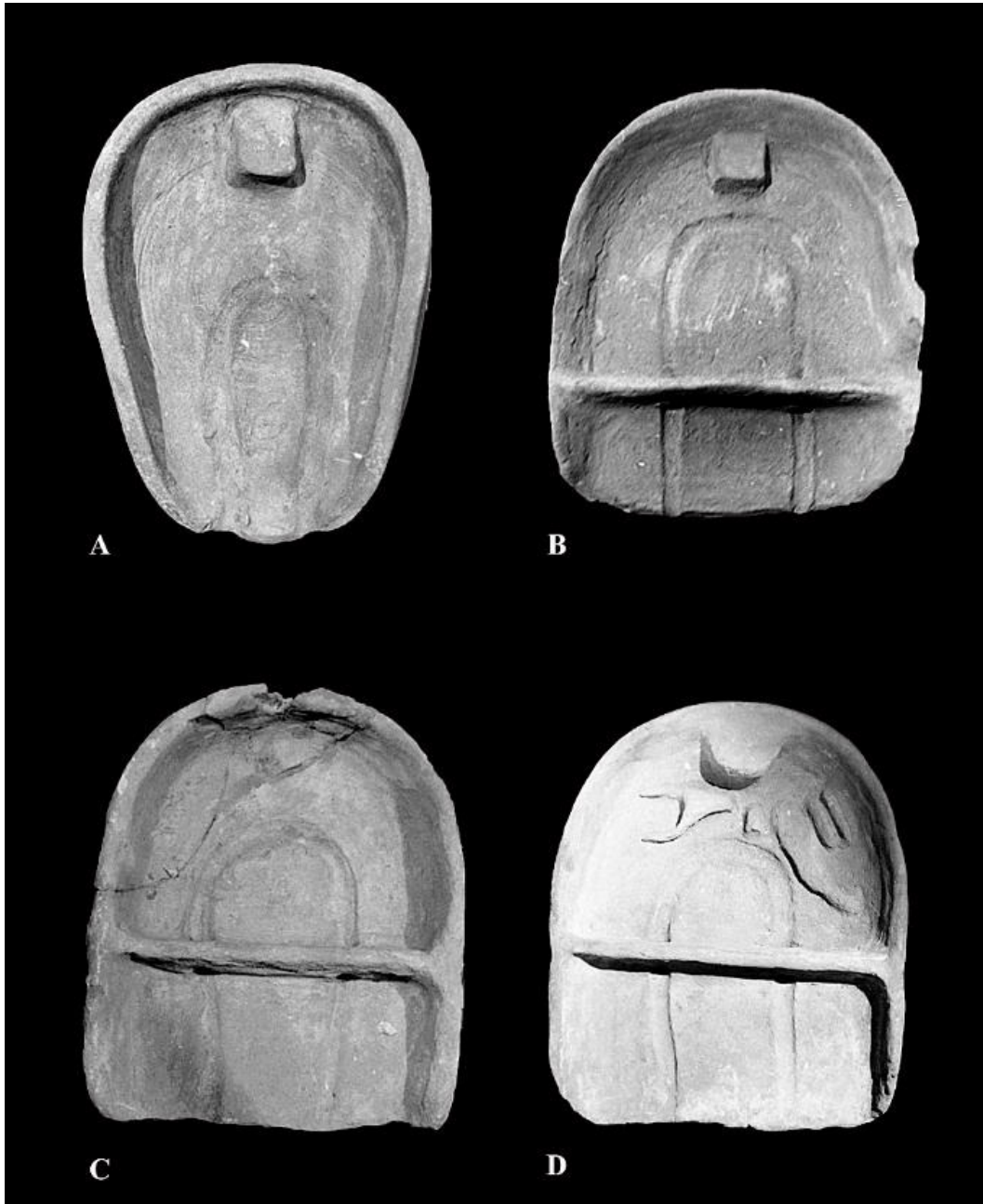


Figure 118 a-d: a) Offering tray with altar model and U-shaped channel. Penn Museum, No. 29-65-711; b) Offering tray with altar model, transversal wall, and U-shaped channel. Penn Museum, No. 29-65-723; c) Offering tray with transversal wall and U-shaped channel. Penn Museum, No. 29-65-738; d) Offering tray with altar model, transversal wall, offering models, and U-shaped channel. Penn Museum, No. E3536.

### 5.1.6.2.b. Offering tray 0/668

This offering tray, 0/668 (Fig. 119a-b), exhibits the same features as the previous one, 0/665. However, in this case, 0/668 shows rib models and a piece of meat, in addition to the head and leg of an ox (LECHUGA and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022: p. 297). Concerning the manufacture, it is hand-made, the clay is likely Nile B, and the firing is mixed (EDEL, 2008: p. 1288). Additionally, the surface shows remnants of red slip.

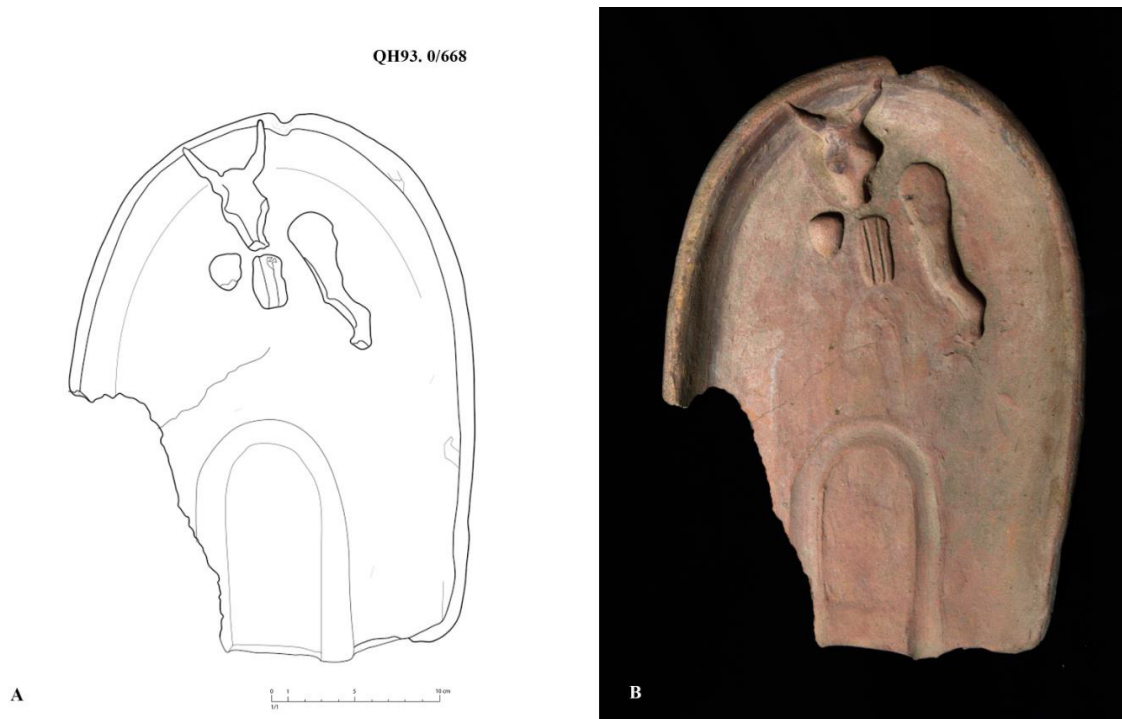


Figure 119a-b: a) Offering tray 0/668. Drawing by the author based on current pictures and graphic documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1310); b) Offering tray 0/668 currently located in storehouse of Aswan.

Image by Mr. Ahmed Massoud Hassan and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

Concerning the parallels, the offering tray 0/668 follows to the same premises to the previous offering tray 0/665.<sup>223</sup>

### 5.1.6.2.c. Offering tray 0/669

The offering tray 0/669 is horseshoe-shaped, similar to the previous ones. However, in this case, the artefact displays only the drain channels with rounded basins (Fig. 120a-b).

<sup>223</sup> See chapter 5.1.7.2.a. Offering tray 0/665.

The channels are diagonal, starting from two rounded basins. Concerning surface treatment, it preserves remnants of red slip. However, it is impossible to identify the firing process from the pictures and the artefact conservation state. Regarding the clay type, confirmation of the raw material is not possible. Nevertheless, it might be suggested as Marl clay. This suggestion is based on the shiny red tone and white inclusions in the small fracture of the edge and on the surface. Moreover, this clay, Seen in the pictures, appears to the clay of the offering tray found in QH34ff (See fig. 77a-b), the type of which was confirmed during this research. Therefore, with caution and as a preliminary suggestion, Marl clay could be proposed.<sup>224</sup>

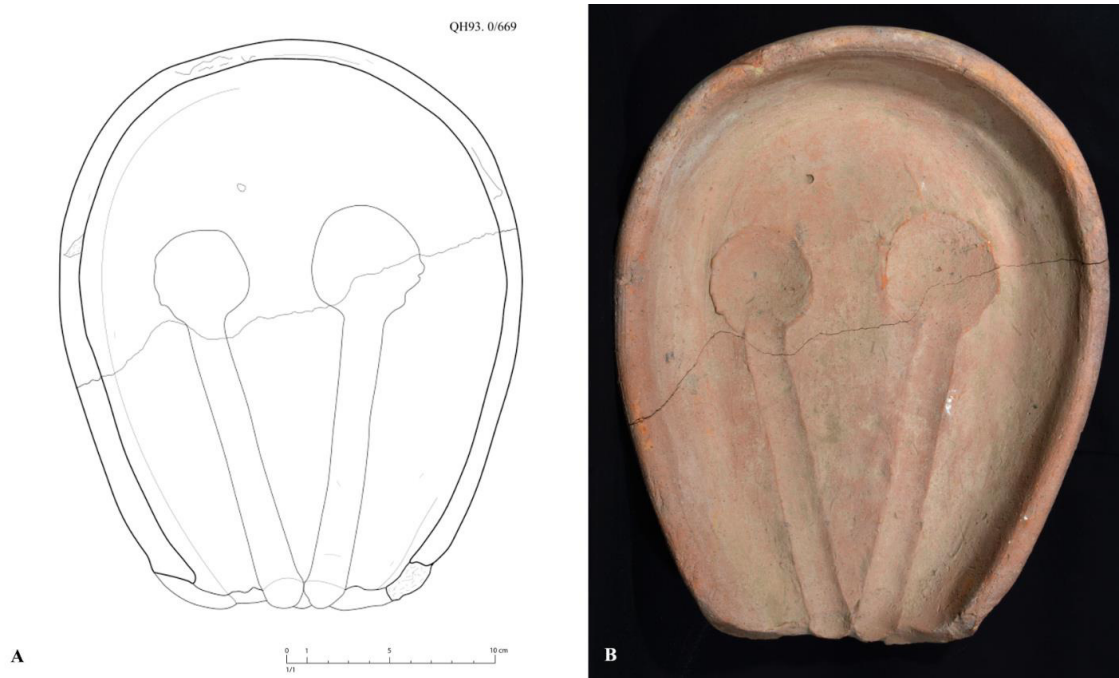


Figure 120a-b. a) Offering tray 0/669. Drawing by the author based on current pictures and graphic documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1310); b) Offering tray 0/669 currently located in storehouse of Aswan.

Image by Mr. Ahmed Massoud Hassan and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

Regarding parallels, several artefacts resemble tray 0/669. Firstly, mention must be made of the fragmentary offering tray QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19 found in Qubbet el-Hawa. This parallel exhibits small differences. On one hand, the edge in artefact QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19 is narrow and pointed, in contrast to tray 0/669. On the

<sup>224</sup> See footnote 216.

other hand, the rounded basin is created from the channel itself. Turning to parallels found in other regions, identical types can be found in the area between Dendera and Thebes again (Fig. 121a-i).

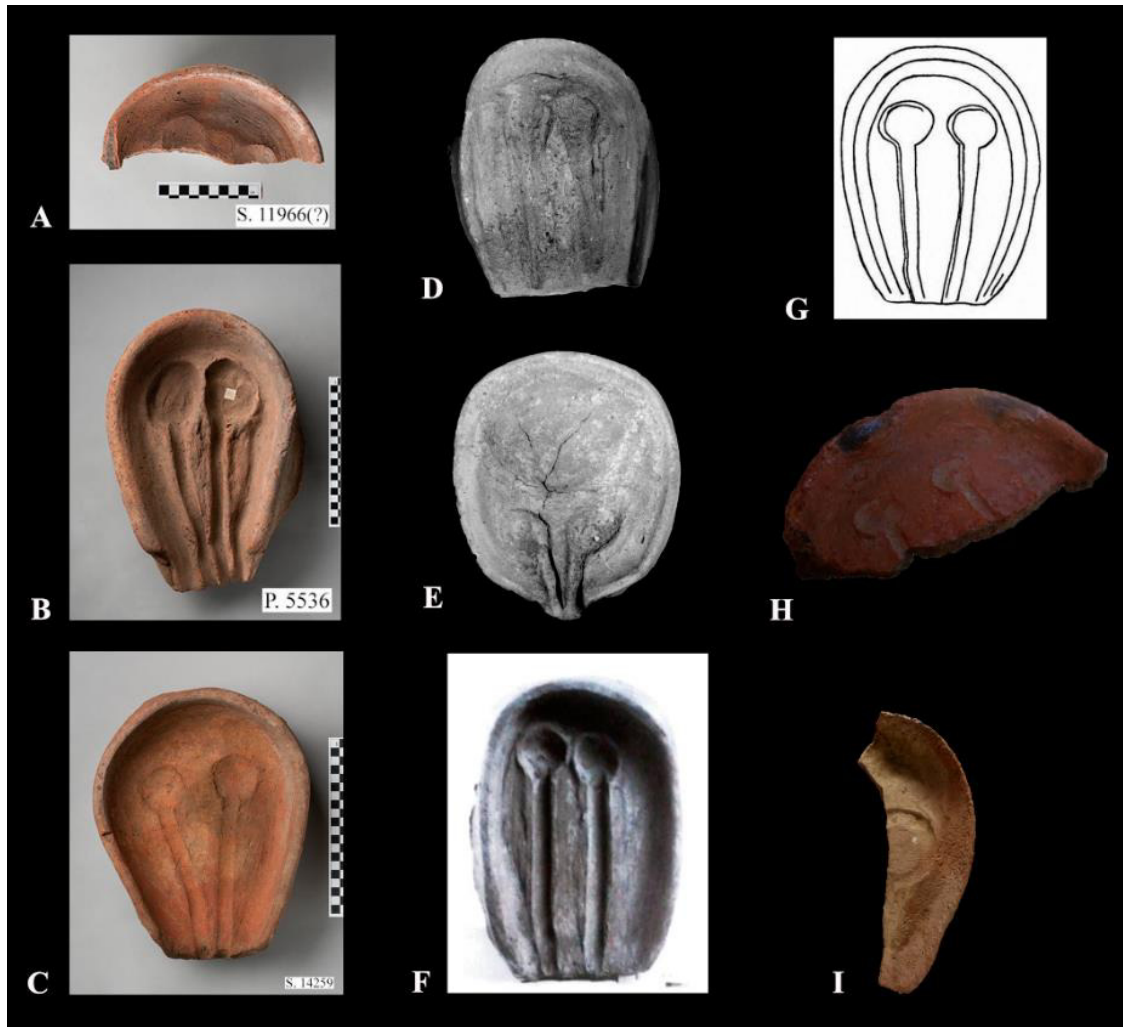


Figure 121: a-i. a) Offering tray. Gebelein. Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S.11966(?). Image of Nicola dell’Aquila and Federico Taverni; b) Offering tray. Gebelein. Museo Egizio (Turin), No. P.5536. Image of Nicola dell’Aquila and Federico Taverni; c) Offering tray. Gebelein. Museo Egizio (Turin), No. S.14259. Image of Nicola dell’Aquila and Federico Taverni; d) Offering tray. Dendera. Penn Museum, No. 29-65-719; e) Offering tray. Dendera. Penn Museum, No. 29-65-740; f) Offering tray N3.1. El-Tarif. Image of Arnold (1973: pl. 68); g) Offering tray No. 612. Qurna. Petrie (1909: pl. 21); h) Offering tray K02/88.6. El-Assasif. Image of Budka (2010: p. 807); i) Offering tray QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19. Qubbet el-Hawa. Image courtesy of Dr. Ángel Rubio Salvador. ©University of Jaén, Project Qubbet el-Hawa.

Therefore, these features are common in the areas of Dendera, Gebelein, and Western Thebes, as identified by Filippo Mi (2020: pp. 110, 114-115) and Andrea Kilian (2012: pp. 107-108). Additionally, thanks to the present thesis, it is now possible to include the Aswan area among the regions of this typology.

#### **5.1.6.2.d. Offering trays 0/666 and 0/667**

The offering trays 0/666 and 0/667, according to the documentation of Elmar Edel (2008: p. 1288), are identical each other. In the volume of Edel, he provides a description of artefact 0/666. Meanwhile, the offering tray 0/667 is only mentioned, and Edel (2008) indicates the following:

*0/667: Opferplatte wie Obj. Nr. 0/666. L.: 28,7 cm; Br. Max.: 21,3 cm. (p. 1288)*

In respect to the graphic documentation about these offering trays, Edel photographed only the artefact 0/667. However, during the present research, the tray 0/666 has been found at the storehouse of Aswan, and it has been recorded as offering tray H.<sup>225</sup>

These identical artefacts are horseshoe-shaped, and show only a U-shaped channel (Fig. 122a-b and 123). As for the manufacture, they are hand-made. With regard to the artefact 0/667 the clay might be Nile C due to the inclusions on the surface, the texture, and the colour in the fracture.<sup>226</sup> This do not present rest of surface treatment, and the firing is mixed. While, 0/666 is oxidative firing, and it has red slip on the surface. In respect to the clay type of 0/666, it is possible to suggest a Marl clay preliminary.<sup>227</sup> This due to the inclusions in the fracture, which reminds to the offering trays 0/669 and QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv. 19.

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<sup>225</sup> See chapter 5.1.12.8. Offering tray H.

<sup>226</sup> See footnote 216.

<sup>227</sup> See footnote 216.

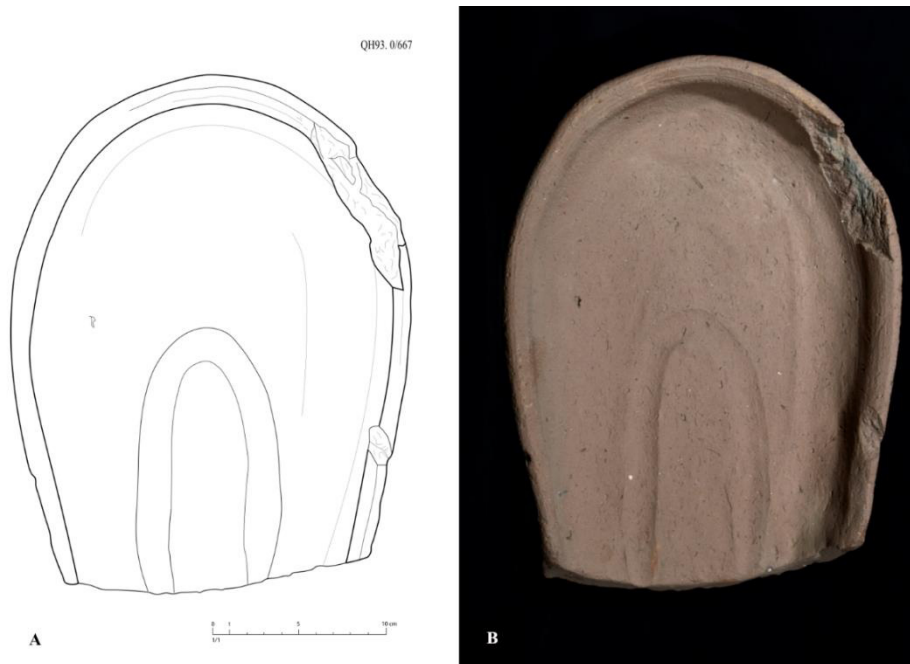


Figure 122a-b: a) Offering tray 0/667. Drawing by the author based on current pictures and graphic documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1310); b) Offering tray 0/667 currently located in storehouse of Aswan.

Image by Mr. Ahmed Massoud Hassan and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.



Figure 123: offering tray H, identified as the artefact 0/666 during the present thesis. Currently located in storehouse of Aswan. Image by Ms. Heba el-Ders and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

Regarding parallels for these offering trays, it is essential to mention the closest parallels found in Qubbet el Hawa. These include artefacts 0/665, 0/668, QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253, and offering tray I (See Fig. 116a-b and 117a-d). These are similar to offering trays 0/666 and 0/667, with the only difference being the presence of modelled items on their surface. However, another similar tray is the decontextualized offering tray D (See Fig. 149), found by Elmar Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa, though its context is unknown.<sup>228</sup>

On the other hand, a review of the Dendera region is necessary again (See Fig. 118a-d). In this area, the U-shaped channel is very common, often accompanied by other elements such as altar models or transversal walls. Additionally, the Thebes area is significant in this case as well. This is because the majority of offering trays found in this place do not have items on the surface; they present only channels (KILIAN 2012: p. 107) (See fig. 7).<sup>229</sup>

Thus, once again, they are local production, but with stylistic influence from Dendera region.

### **5.1.6.3. General overview**

The tomb QH93 was dated in the Late Old Kingdom by Elmar Edel, and the preliminary analyse of the pottery artefacts confirms the chronology.

With regard to the offering trays found here, we can differentiate between two different moments. The first corresponds to the oldest, found in planum 3, with a general timeframe between the mid-11<sup>th</sup> and the early 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasties. However, the location and position of the offering trays suggest an association with the burials in planum 4, dating between the mid-11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. In terms of typology, these offering trays share similarities with those from Dendera and Thebes regions. However, the combination of typical elements from different places and common features with

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<sup>228</sup> Personal communication of Dr Jose Manuel Alba Gómez, who was present during the transferring of archaeological objects found by Edel, which were kept in the tomb QH90 until 2021. These did not have register number, and they were carried from the necropolis to the storehouse of Aswan.

<sup>229</sup> See chapter 3.6. Origin zone, main areas of the offering trays and soul houses according to their features and manufacture.

others from Qubbet el-Hawa suggests local production, as explained in previous chapters.<sup>230</sup>

On the other hand, the most recent level is planum 6, where Edel found the offering tray 0/621. Here, the presence of mixed materials from different chronologies is significant. In summary, the period that predominates in the group of pottery artefacts from the Middle Kingdom is between the second half of the 12th Dynasty and the mid-13th Dynasty. This chronology may also apply to artefact 0/621, similar to the chronology of planums 3 and 4 and the offering trays found here.

Regarding the stylistic influence of the offering trays found in QH93, it highlights Dendera, Gebelein, and Thebes's areas. However, particular features suggest a local production again.<sup>231</sup>

#### 5.1.7. QH106

The tomb QH106, according to Elmar Edel's study, had two different construction moments. Firstly, chamber I and the substructures I were built during the end of the reign of Pepy II (6<sup>th</sup> dynasty, Old Kingdom), carved between the tombs QH105 and QH107 (Fig. 124).<sup>232</sup> Later, the tomb was extended in the First Intermediate Period – the early Middle Kingdom, according to Edel's research (2008: p. 1631). Additionally, the tomb QH106 was reused during the Byzantine Period, but there is scarce information about this (EDEL, 2008: p. 1631). The reuse of the tomb during the Byzantine Period involved mainly structural changes (Edel, 2008: p. 1619).

Regarding the archaeological material, Edel indicates a large disturbance and dispersion of objects (EDEL, 2008: p. 1631). According to Edel, the reason for the dispersion of material on the surface of the chambers might be due to plundering after the Byzantine reuse of the tomb. In this way, many objects could belong to the adjacent tombs (EDEL, 2008: p. 1626). This is because some spaces of the tomb QH106 join with others in QH105 and QH107 (EDEL, 2008: p. 1619) (Fig. 124).

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<sup>230</sup> See chapter 5.2. The manufacture and production area of the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>232</sup> Edel dated the construction of these tombs in the last third of the reign of Pepy II (2008: p. 1631).

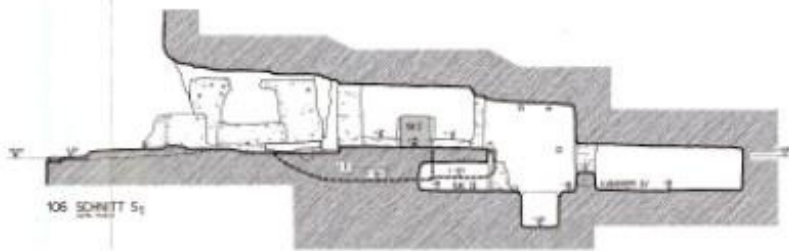
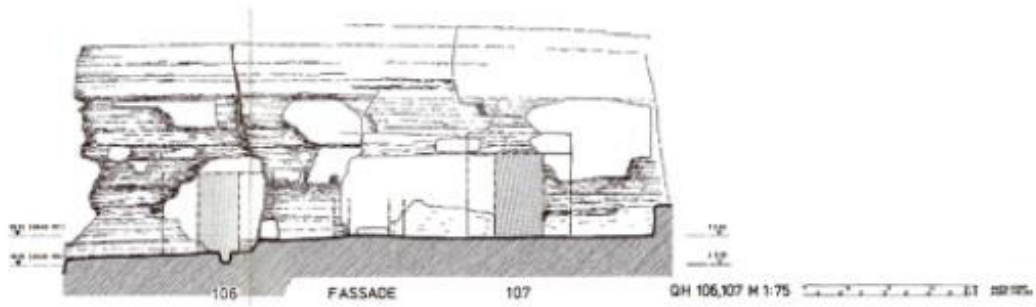


Figure 124: tomb QH106 located between the complexes QH105 and QH107. Plan 34.1 of Edel (2008). In red: placement of the offering tray 106/1. In red: location of the offering tray 106/1, in front of the west wall.

### 5.1.7.1. Offering tray 106/1

The offering tray 106/1 (Fig. 125a-b)<sup>233</sup> was found in the chamber I (See fig. 123), together with a fragment of large vessel dated in the Byzantine Period. This offering tray is fragmentary, comprising the upper part of the artefact. Consequently, it is impossible to determine the original shape, whether horseshoe-shaped or oval. Nonetheless, it keeps two modeled items: ribs and a leg of an ox (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022: p. 297). In addition, this offering tray is the only inscribed specimen in all of Egypt, such as it was explained in the chapter 2.3.5. Unusual elements.

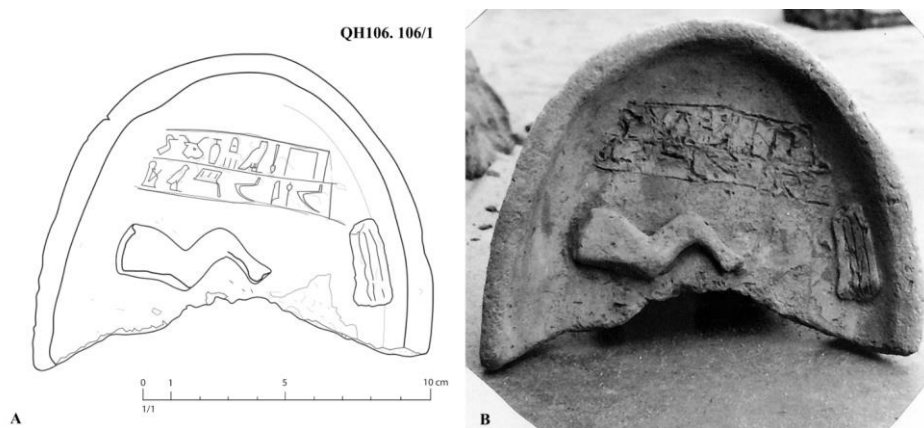


Figure 125a-b: a) Offering tray 106/1. Drawing by the author based on picture and documentation of Edel (2008: pp. 1627, 1633); b) Offering tray 106/, currently, unknown location. Image courtesy of Dr. Frank Förster and Dr. Ludwig Morenz, University of Bonn.

Regarding the chronology it is impossible to know, such as the prior offering trays, due to the only artefact together with it, was a fragment of Byzantine vessel.<sup>234</sup> However, thanks to the inscription, it is possible to date this artefact. At the moment, there is a study in preparation about it.<sup>235</sup> But, it is possible to suggest the First Intermediate Period – early the Middle Kingdom, preliminarily. On the one hand, this because of the graphical sign of *pṛt-hrw* (Fig.126)<sup>236</sup> and the nisbe of *M3-ḥd*, which is the name given to the 16<sup>th</sup>

<sup>233</sup> The current location of these offering trays is unknown to researchers. The author of this thesis has unsuccessfully consulted the database of the Egyptian Museum of Cairo, to the staff of the Museum of Bonn, and the staff of the Ministry of Antiquities of Aswan, who worked with the material found by Edel. Thus, these offering trays could be stored inside some tomb (For similar cases, See footnotes 228 and 244).

<sup>234</sup> It must be reviewed the archaeological material found in QH105, QH106, and QH107 to provide updated data about these tombs and the artefacts.

<sup>235</sup> This study is being carried out by the author of the present thesis together with Dr. Luisa M. García González and Ms. Ana Belén Jiménez Iglesias.

<sup>236</sup> Personal communication of Ms. Ana Belén Jiménez Iglesias.

Nome of Upper Egypt, the Oryx Nome (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2021: p. 32, footnote 5).<sup>237</sup> This nisbe would be linked to the strong sense of belonging and identity that emerged during the First Intermediate Period in Egyptian society.<sup>238</sup> This ideology of identity originated among the local elites but extended to the broader society, as observed through regionalisms in material culture (SEIDLMAYER, 2000:116-117).

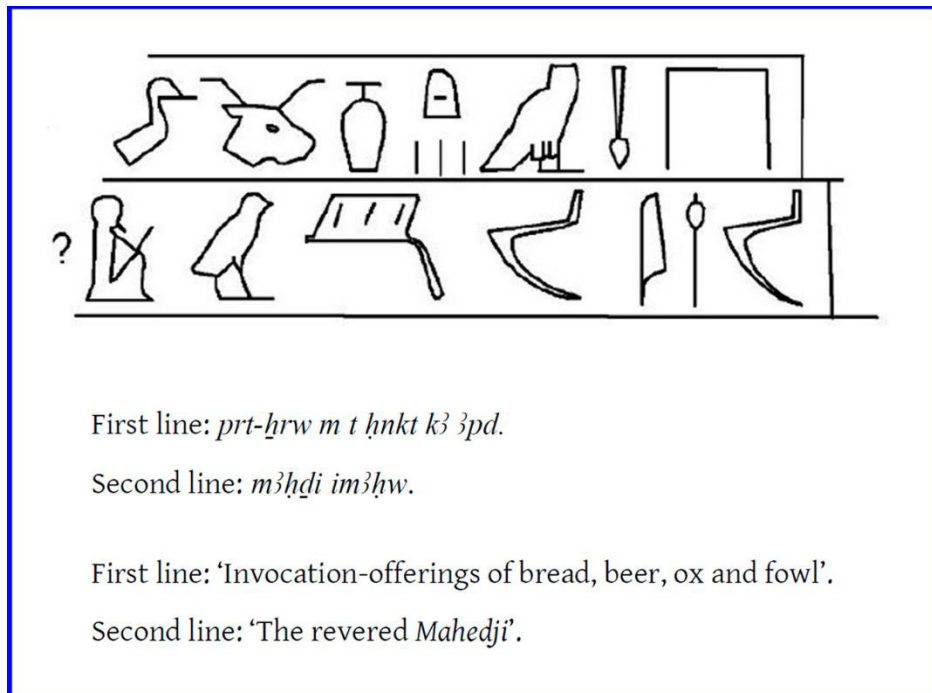


Figure 126: incised text on the offering tray 106/1. Transcription done by Edel (2008: p. 1627, fig. 2). Transliteration and translation by the author published in Lechuga Ibáñez (2021: p. 32).

As for the significance of the text, it was explained in Chapter 3.3.5, Unusual Elements, which is part of the offering formula, specifically the fragment *pṛt-ḥrw*. Questions arise regarding why there is only one offering tray with the offering formula and why it shows only the part *pṛt-xrw*. A response to these questions can be found by reviewing Chapter 4.4, Religion and Funerary Conceptions, in its entirety. This is because the letters to the dead are also called *pṛt-ḥrw* and many uninscribed objects might have the same purpose as the inscribed artefacts, known as 'letters to the dead.' In the case of uninscribed ones, the petitions would be conveyed orally. The offering trays 106/1 could be considered intermediate artefacts between the inscribed and uninscribed artefacts in the set of petition

<sup>237</sup> The author thanks to Dr. Luisa M. García González for the provided information.

<sup>238</sup> The author thanks to Ms. Ana Belén Jiménez Iglesias for the provided information.

objects. Additionally, it is crucial to understand the composition of the extended family, their literacy, and their social position. Writing was linked to medium<sup>239</sup> and high social groups, and extended families were composed of members belonging to various social levels.

#### **5.1.7.2. General overview**

Therefore, this offering tray serves as evidence of its belonging to the group of uninscribed votive objects. These objects were used to communicate with the dead, requesting their intercession to address earthly problems in exchange for offerings<sup>240</sup> (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, in press<sup>A</sup>). Regarding the chronology, considering the features of the text and the shape of the artefact, as explained, it might be suggested a closer proximity to the First Intermediate Period or the early Middle Kingdom than a later date.

#### **5.1.8. QH110**

The tomb QH110 is a monumental hypogeum belonging to the governor Setka and his family, constructed through four phases (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1720 – 1726). This grave was initially excavated by Labib Habachi in the 1950s and later by Elmar Edel in the 1980s (EDEL, 2008: p. 1716). However, Edel suggested in a letter addressed to Habachi that QH110 could have been excavated at the beginning of the 20th century. The reason was that the two main shafts were cleaned and sealed (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1716, 1762).<sup>241</sup>

As for the architecture of the tomb, it comprises a courtyard and a decorated hypostyle room (Fig. 127). Additionally, it features substructures, including six shafts<sup>242</sup> with burial chambers (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1727 - 1762) (Fig. 128).

Regarding the chronology of the tomb, Edel dated it to the First Intermediate Period based on the texts found within the tomb, which mention the ‘Khety’s House’ belonging to the

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<sup>239</sup> This group encompassed people with education, but they do not belong to the administrative ruling class. For more information, See Grajetzki (2006: pp. 149-151).

<sup>240</sup> These offerings could be physic or symbolic, such as the case of offering trays and, probably, some bowls and cups found in deposits (PINCH, 2003: p. 445). An example about this, it is the deposit found in the tomb QH35p in Qubbet el-Hawa (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, forthcoming).

<sup>241</sup> The author of this thesis has searched information about this possible excavation, but there is nothing available on it. Nevertheless, we do not dismiss this possibility, as it was the case of the tomb QH23 (MARTÍNEZ DE DIOS and RODRÍGUEZ SANCHEZ, 2021: pp. 11 – 16).

<sup>242</sup> The shaft II was not excavated (EDEL, 2008: p. 1719).

9th Dynasty (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1795-1796; HELLINCKX, 2014: p. 275), more possibly to the early decades of the 9th Dynasty (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2023: p. 91). However, the tomb was reused in different periods, as indicated the archaeological materials. These periods include the Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediate Period, New Kingdom, and Byzantine Period (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1762 - 1789).

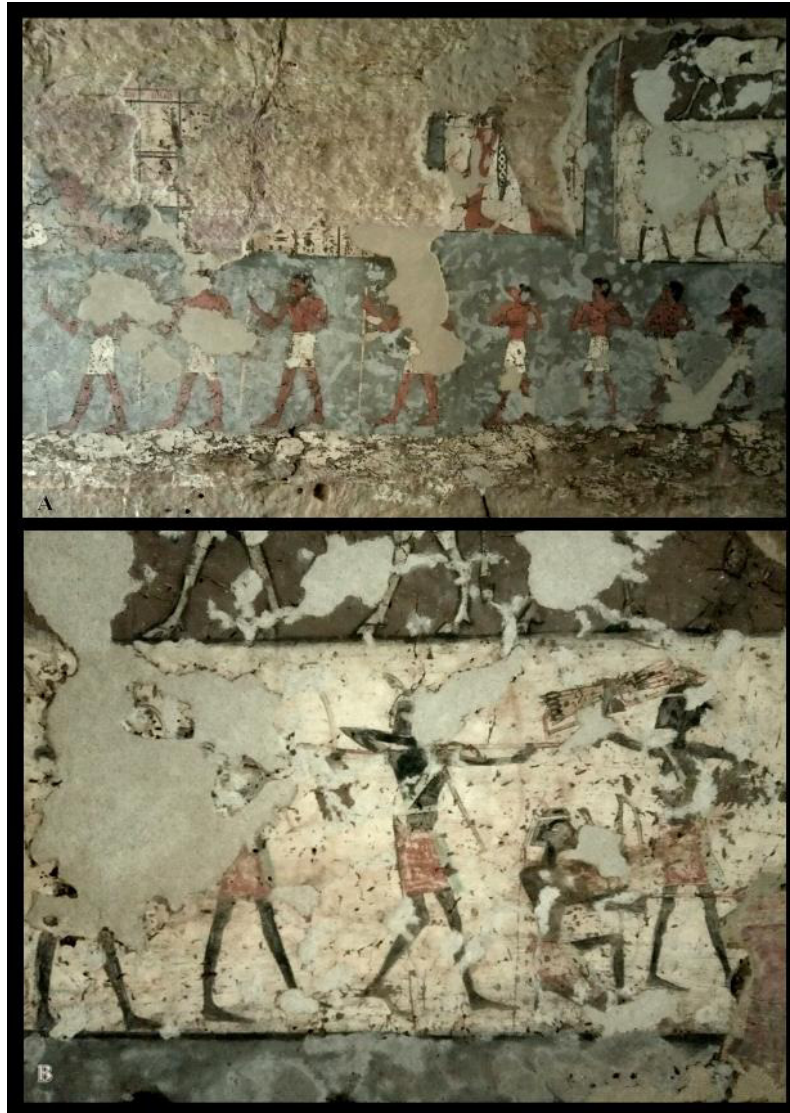


Figure 127: details of decoration inside the tomb QH110. Image courtesy of Ms. Ana Belén Jiménez Iglesias.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> The author thanks to Mr. Ahmed Awadselem and Mr. Hassan Hussien by the opportunity for visiting QH110 and interesting explication about it.

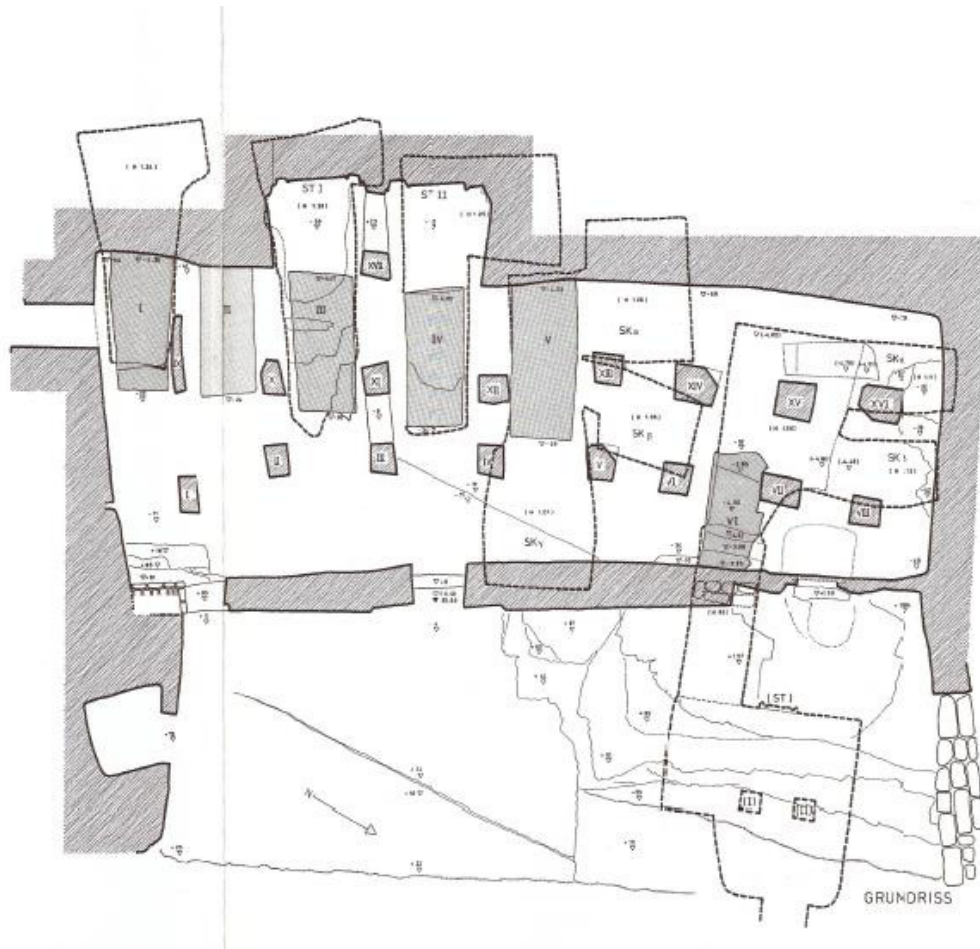


Figure 128: tomb QH10. Plan 36.1 of Edel (2008).

Regarding the archaeological work, Edel conducted a cleaning of the hypogeum, including the shafts. Concerning the material found inside the shafts, Edel suggests recent fillings caused for the early 20th-century excavations, as mentioned. Consequently, any information about their original position is unknown (EDEL, 2008: p. 1762). Therefore, Edel partially documented the findings inside the shafts as a list of objects (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1764, 1771, 1774).

#### 5.1.8.1. Shaft I

The shaft I belongs to the second constructive phase (Fig. 129), along with shaft II (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1722-1724). In this pit, a fragment of an offering tray was found. Concerning this fragment, dating the offering tray through the material found with it is impossible due to the reasons explained previously about the filling of the shafts. Thus, it can only be described and dated according to its features and parallels.

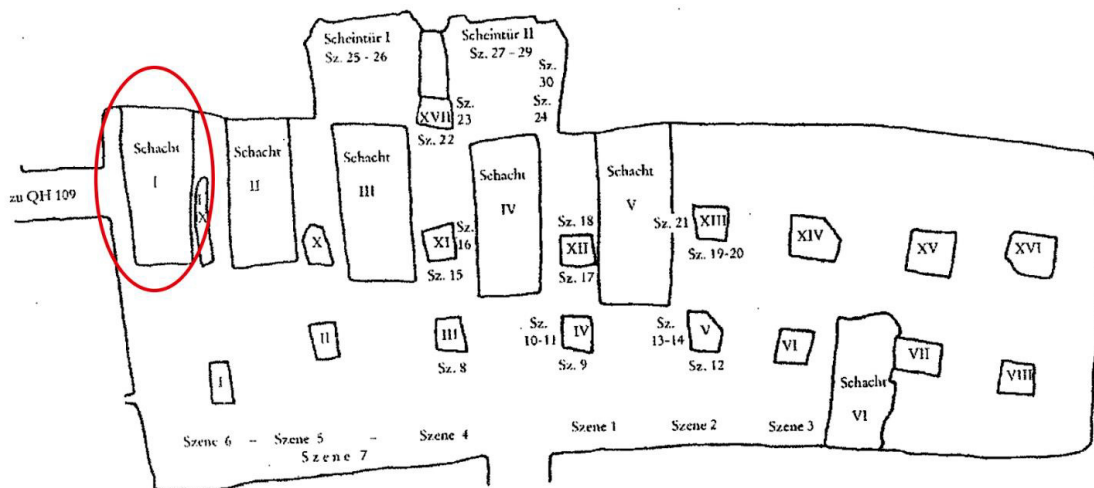


Figure 129: in red, shaft I. Image of the author based on Edel (2008: p. 1723, fig. 1b).

#### 5.1.8.1.a. Offering tray 110/78

The offering tray 110/78 consists of a fragment from the edge and front side of a tray. This shard has remains of a U-shaped channel (Fig. 130). The current location of this fragment is unknown, and it can only be presumed that this artefact is stored in one of the tombs in the necropolis.<sup>244</sup> Unfortunately, there are no modern photographs of this fragment; the only available documentation is from Edel (2008: pp. 1766 - 1768, fig. 26). The Edel's information does not allow to identify the firing process and clay used. However, based on the available data, it is likely that a red slip was applied to the surface. (EDEL, 2008: p. 1766).

With respect to parallels, the closest ones to 110/78 are found in Qubbet el-Hawa. These parallels include offering trays discovered in QH93 (See figs. 116a-b, 119a-b, 122a-b, and 123) and QH35p (See fig. 87), along with the decontextualized offering tray I (See fig. 154). Conversely, when considering external parallels to Aswan, 110/78 shows the same features as those observed in Dendera (See fig. 118a-d).

<sup>244</sup> Some tombs of Qubbet el-Hawa contain archaeological material with a provenance from previous excavations. One example is QH32, which kept artefacts found by Edel. These artefacts were subsequently transferred to the Aswan storehouse in 2019 (Personal communication of Dr. Jose Manuel Alba Gómez). Another example is the tomb QH90 (See footnote 228).

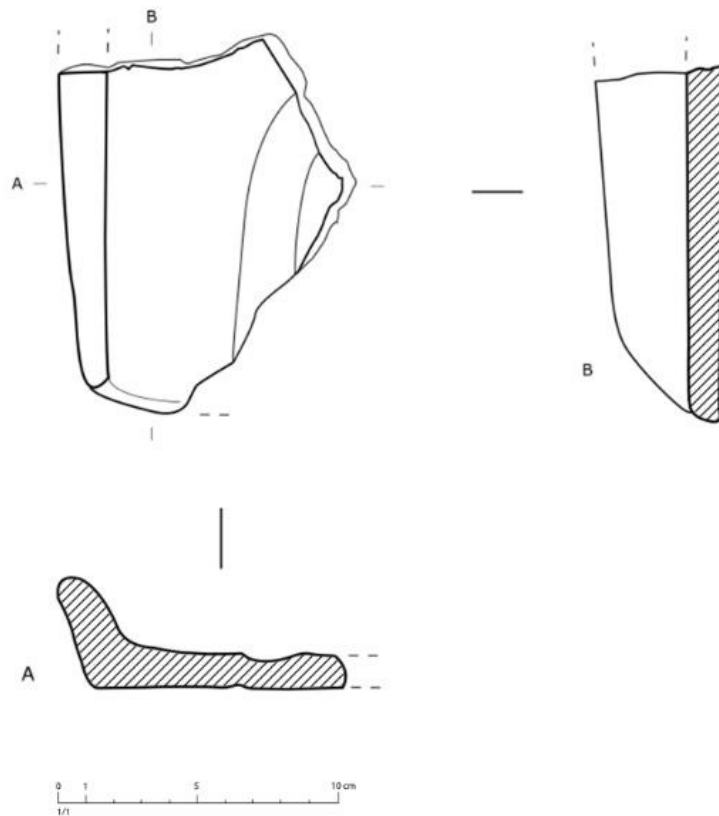


Figure 130: offering tray 110/78. Drawing by the author based on the documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1766, 1768, fig. 26).<sup>245</sup>

### 5.1.8.2. Shafts III and V

The shafts III and V belong to the first constructive phase (Fig. 131), along with shaft IV (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1720-1721). On one hand, in pit III, a fragment of an offering tray was found, recorded as 110/22. On the other hand, in shaft V, a fragmentary offering tray and a fragment of another one were discovered. Regarding the artefacts found in both shafts,

<sup>245</sup> There is a picture of 110/78 in Bonn's Museum (EDEL, 2008: p. 1766, footnote 201). However, it has been impossible to consult it due to various limitations and obstacles encountered during the present research. Therefore, further studies on offering trays, as indicated in footnotes 201 and 216, are pending for the future.

dating them through the material<sup>246</sup> found together with them is impossible, similar to shaft I. This is due to the explained reasons about the filling of the shafts. Therefore, dating might only be according to the features and parallels. As for their current location, it is unknown, and the reason might be the same as that for offering tray 110/78.

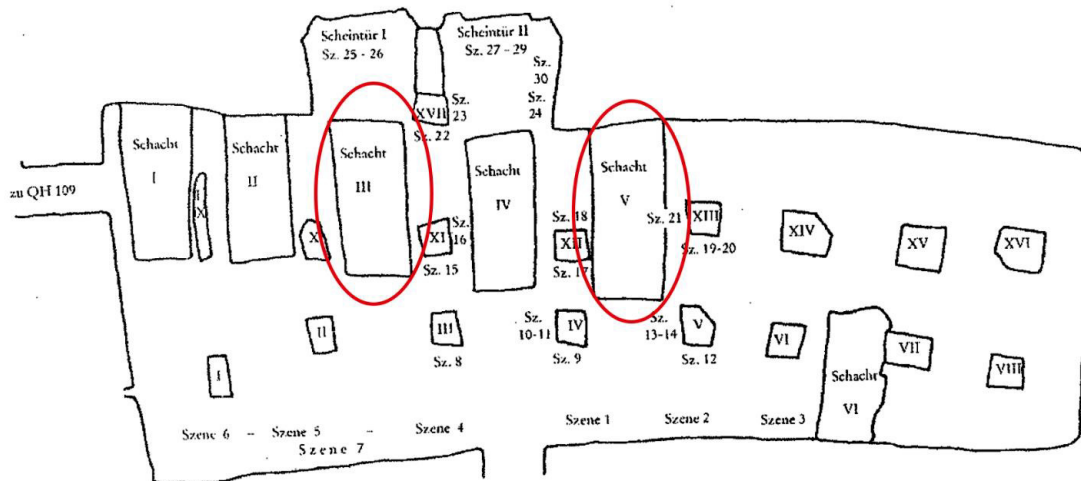


Figure 131: in red, shafts III and V. Image of the author based on Edel (2008: p. 1723, fig. 1b).

#### 5.1.8.2.a. Offering tray 110/22

The offering tray 110/22 (Fig. 132) was discovered in shaft III, representing a fragment of the back edge. Edel provided limited information about it,<sup>247</sup> making it impossible to determine the clay type. Consequently, we can only speculate about its shape, which might be round or horseshoe-shaped. The current location of this offering tray is unknown.<sup>248</sup>

<sup>246</sup> Mix of bizantine and pharaonic periods artefacts. For more information, See Edel (2008: pp. 1764-1788).

<sup>247</sup> Edel only provided a brief mention about this artefact and a drawing. In addition, there is a picture about 110/22 in Bonn's Museum (EDEL, 2008: p. 1772, footnote 226). This artefact is a similar case to the offering tray 110/78 (See footnote 245).

<sup>248</sup> As the offering tray 110/78 (See footnote 245).

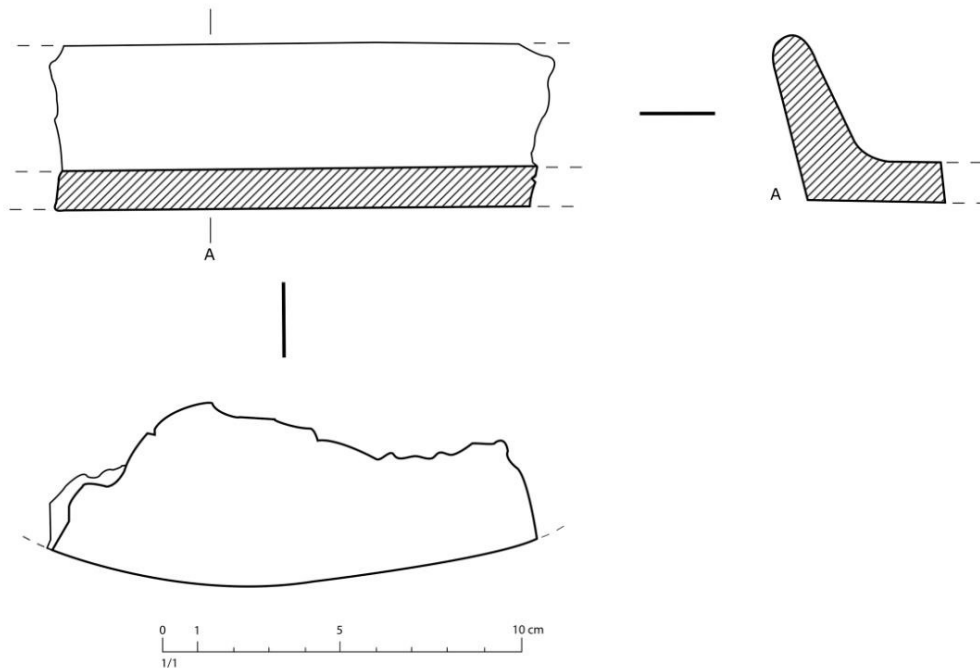


Figure 132: offering tray 110/22. Drawing by the author based on the documentation of Edel (2008: pp. 1772, 1773, fig. 39).

#### 5.1.8.2.b. Offering tray 110/90

The offering tray 110/90 (fig. 133) was found in the shaft V (See fig. 131). This artefact is fragmentary, showing the front part of it. On its surface, several elements may be identified, including a U-shaped channel, an ox leg, and a cucumber (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ and ALBA GÓMEZ, 2022: p. 297). In terms of surface treatment, it features a red slip (EDEL, 2008: p. 1777), while the clay type is unknown. Similar to offering trays 110/78 and 110/22.<sup>249</sup> Edel provided only a brief description and a drawing for this offering tray.<sup>250</sup>

Despite the limited documentation, tray 110/90 provides more information about its typology than previous ones, allowing for the identification of various parallels.

Firstly, this tray is horseshoe-shaped, and its surface features are similar to other offering trays found in Qubbet el-Hawa. On one hand, the U-shaped channel is present in the offering trays H (object 0/666) and 0/667 (QH93) (See Fig. 122a-b and 123). On the other

<sup>249</sup> See footnotes 201, 216, 233, 244 and 247.

<sup>250</sup> Also, there is a picture of 110/90 in Bonn's Museum (EDEL, 2008: p. 1777, footnote 269).

hand, the offering trays 0/668 (QH93), I (decontextualized), and QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253 (QH35p) show a similar shape, offering models, and U-shaped channel as the artefact 110/90 (See fig. 89a-c and 117a-d).

In respect to parallels outside Qubbet el-Hawa, the offering tray 110/90 shares similarities with offering trays found in Dendera, particularly in terms of shape and the U-shaped channel (See fig. 118a-d).

QH110. 110/90

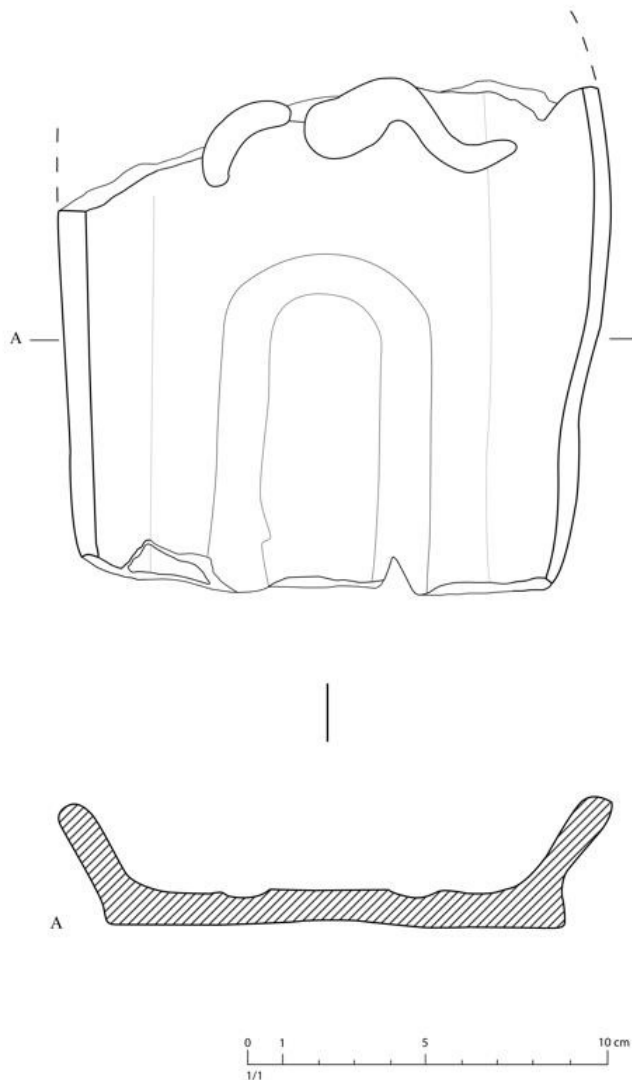


Figure 133: offering tray 110/90. Drawing by the author based on the documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1781, fig. 64).

### 5.1.8.2.c. Offering tray 110/91

The artefact 110/91 is a fragment of the back edge (Fig. 134). Information provided by Edel about this artefact is limited. It is only possible to discern remains, particularly along the edge, coated in white (EDEL, 2008: p. 1777).<sup>251</sup>

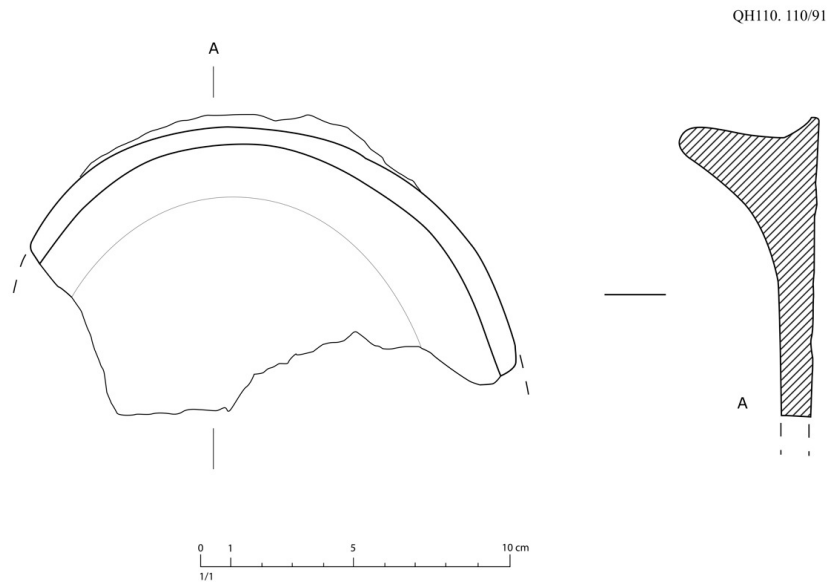


Figure 134: offering tray 110/91. Drawing by the author based on the documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1781, fig. 65).

In terms of parallels, it is difficult to identify any specific examples. The limited documentation only allows for the identification of a possible shape, which could be rounded or horseshoe-shaped. Therefore, potential parallels may be found among offering trays discovered in Upper Egypt, primarily.

### 5.1.8.3. General overview

Concerning the set of offering trays found in QH110, obtaining clear and specific data about them is impossible due to insufficient or non-existent documentation during various interventions in QH110. However, it is possible to propose a provisional date for the offering trays in this tomb. Considering the chronology of the context (QH110) and contextualized parallels found in Qubbet el-Hawa (0/667, 0/668, and

<sup>251</sup> There is a picture of 110/90 in Bonn's Museum (EDEL, 2008: p. 1777, footnote 270).

QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253), a preliminary suggestion places their chronology between the late First Intermediate Period and the beginning of the 12th Dynasty.

### 5.1.9. QH206a and 206

Tombs QH206a and 206 share a courtyard with QH207 and QH207a (Fig. 135a-f and 136). Regarding QH206a, Edel's study suggests that it was an unfinished tomb (EDEL, 2008: p. 1856). This tomb is similar to QH90b, lacking substructures with burials located in the cult chapel. In contrast, QH206 was completed, having both superstructures and substructures. The courtyard was as a cult area (EDEL, 2008: p. 1944), and many artefacts<sup>252</sup> found in this zone likely relate to cult activities directed towards the deceased within the tombs. However, some artefacts might also result from the reuse of these tombs.



Figure 135a-f: a) Blue: tomb QH206a; b) Elevation plan and location of QH206a (Blue); c) Section of QH206; d) Purple: tomb QH206; e) Elevation plan and location of QH206 (Purple); f) Section of QH206.

Image by the author based on the plans 37.1 and 37.2 of Edel (2008).

<sup>252</sup> The artefacts discovered in the courtyard were documented and published in the chapter on QH207 of the volumes of Edel (2008: pp. 1944-1962). However, in the present thesis, the author associates the group of objects found in front of the entrances of QH206a and QH206 with these tombs. This association is made based on similarities with other examples in Qubbet el-Hawa, such as QH90b, QH93 (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019a: pp. 65-66), and QH35p.

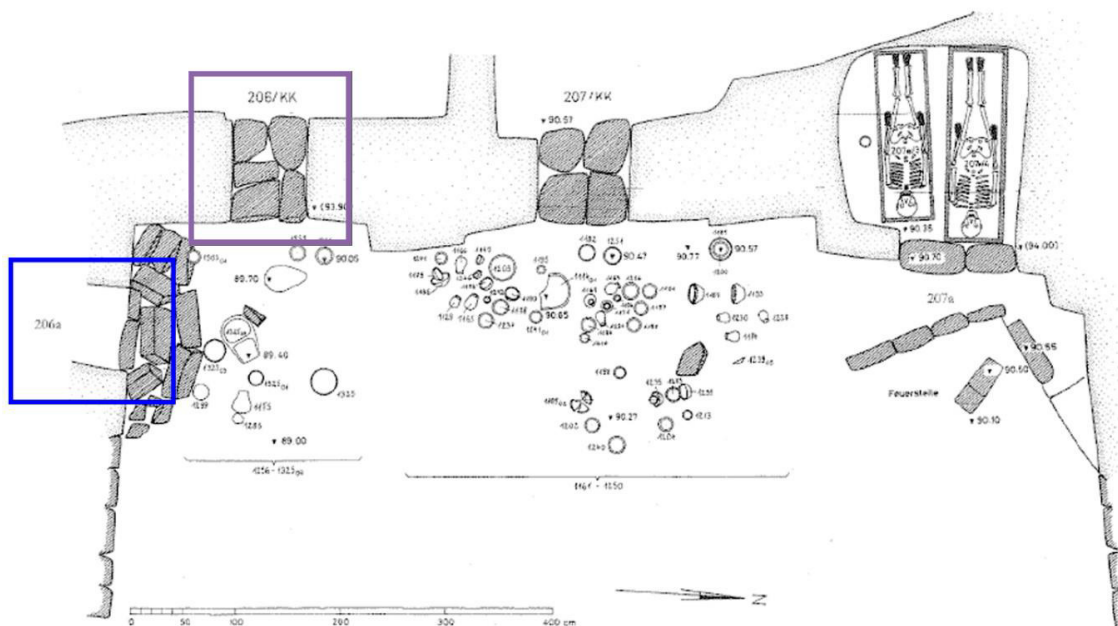


Figure 136: courtyard shared by QH206a, QH206, QH207 and QH207a. Blue: QH206a, purple: QH206. Image by the author based on the documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1945, fig. 193).

With respect to the chronology of QH206a, Edel dated this tomb to the late Old Kingdom. The basis for this dating was the type of architecture and the set of vessels, specifically the *i<sup>cc</sup>* type found inside the tomb (EDEL, 2008: pp. 1856-1860). Other periods were not considered.<sup>253</sup> As for the original owner of this tomb, it remains unknown.

Regarding QH206, it was dated to the late Old Kingdom for the same reasons—specifically, the collection of vessels of *i<sup>cc</sup>* and *nitt* types found inside shaft II, along with the architecture and iconography of the tomb (EDEL, 2008: p. 1837). However, this tomb experienced reuse during the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom, as evidenced the archaeological material (EDEL, 2008: p. 1847). As for the original occupants of QH206, Edel documented four individuals through the tomb's iconography. Edel suggested that these individuals were siblings due to the absence of evidence indicating another connection. Concerning names and titles held by them (EDEL, 2008: p. 1822) are shown at the table 6.

<sup>253</sup> The reason could be the purpose of Elmar Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa, which was the study of Old Kingdom tombs, and mainly, the epigraphy in them. Additionally, he do not add all culture material in his study.

As for the material found outside the tombs, if it reviews the documentation of Edel, such as it has been done in previous tombs,<sup>254</sup> it is possible to identify at the courtyard artefacts from the Middle Kingdom (Figs. 137 and 138a-c), together with the offering trays. This accumulation can be divided into two phases: the first one dating between the 11th and mid-12th Dynasty, and the second one from the mid-12th to the 13th Dynasty. Among these findings, a complete offering tray and a fragment of another one were discovered. Regarding the offering trays found in this context, it is possible to suggest that, at the very least, the offering tray 0/1325.04 may be associated with the reuse of QH206. This due to the group of objects and level of the tomb entrance Seem the same (Figure 137). About the another fragment, Edel do not provide more information about it.

Individual	Title 1	Title 2	Title 3	Name
1	<i>smr w<sup>c</sup>ti</i> <sup>255</sup>	<i>imi-r ʕ3w</i> <sup>256</sup>	<i>imi irti wi3.wi</i> <sup>257</sup>	<i>k3.i-m-snw</i>
2	<i>smr w<sup>c</sup>ti</i>	<i>imi-r ʕ3w</i>	-	<i>ikri</i>
3	<i>smr w<sup>c</sup>ti</i>	<i>imi-r ʕ3w</i>	-	<i>snnw</i>
4	<i>smr w<sup>c</sup>ti</i>	<i>imi-r ʕ3w</i>	-	<i>&lt;m&gt;ri</i>

Table 6. Individuals and their titles. QH206.

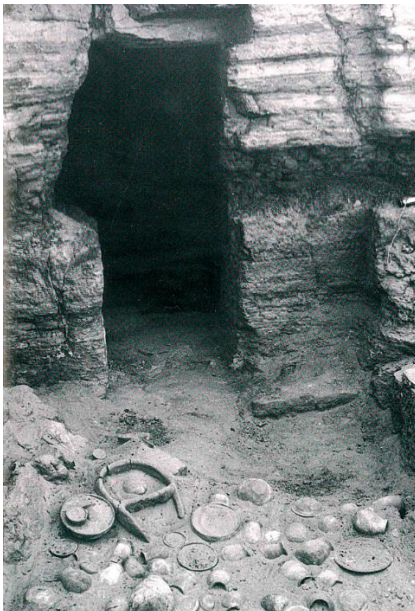


Figure 137: artefacts found opposite of QH206 and QH206a (in the background entry of QH206), among them the offering tray 0/1325.04. Image of Edel (2008: p. 1995, fig. 43).

<sup>254</sup> See footnotes 203 and 204.

<sup>255</sup> *smr w<sup>c</sup>ti*: The Unique Friend.

<sup>256</sup> *imi-r ʕ3w*: OverSeer of the Foreign Mercenaries.

<sup>257</sup> *imi irti wi3.wi*: Expeditionary OverSeer (captains of the two barques) (EDEL, 2008: p. 1822).

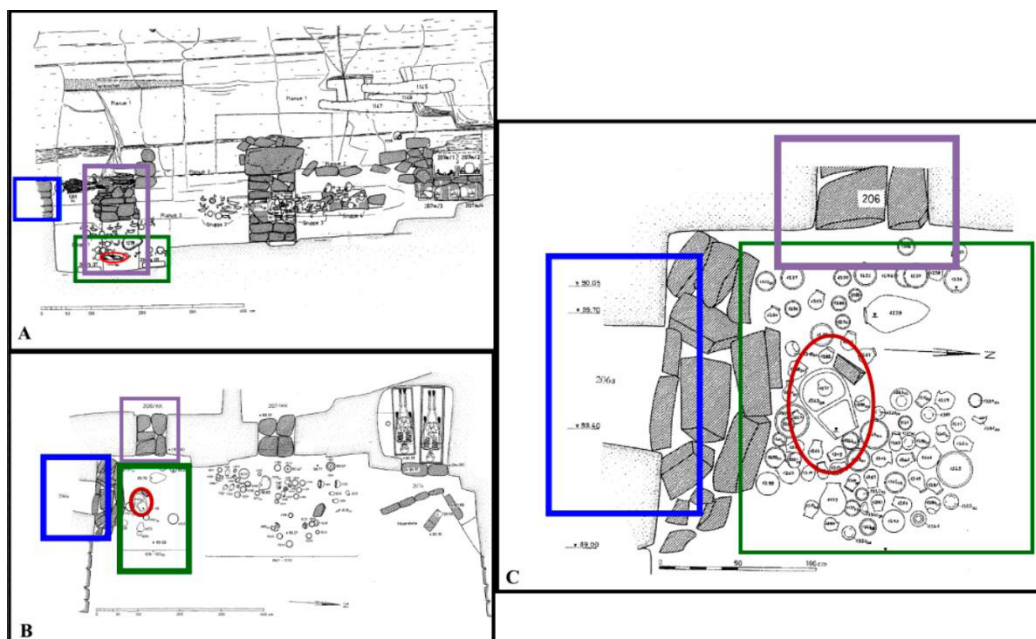


Figure 138a-c: location of the group of artefacts found in front to QH206a (blue: QH206a entrance, purple: QH206 entrance, green: group of artefacts and location of offering trays, red: offering tray 0/1325.04).<sup>258</sup> a) Section of the complete courtyard; b) Planum 3 of Edel. Complete courtyard; c) Planum 3a of Edel. Image by the author based on the documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1933, fig. 167; p. 1945, fig. 193; p. 1946, fig. 194).

### 5.1.9.1. Offering tray 0/1318.01

The artefact 0/1318.01 is an edge fragment of an offering tray (Fig. 139). Despite its small size, it is possible to identify its typology thanks to the remaining preserved transversal wall. However, information about surface treatment or clay type is impossible to determine due to the limited information provided by Edel.<sup>259</sup> Nevertheless, it is known that the artefact underwent a mixed firing process (EDEL, 2008: p. 1956). The current placement of the artefact is unknown.<sup>260</sup>

<sup>258</sup> The fragment of offering tray 0/1318.01 was not showed in the plan, but it was documented by Edel.

<sup>259</sup> Similar to previous offering trays, a photography of 0/1318.01 is kept at the Bonn Museum.

<sup>260</sup> See footnotes 228, 233 and 244 to understand a possible location of the artefact 0/1318.01.

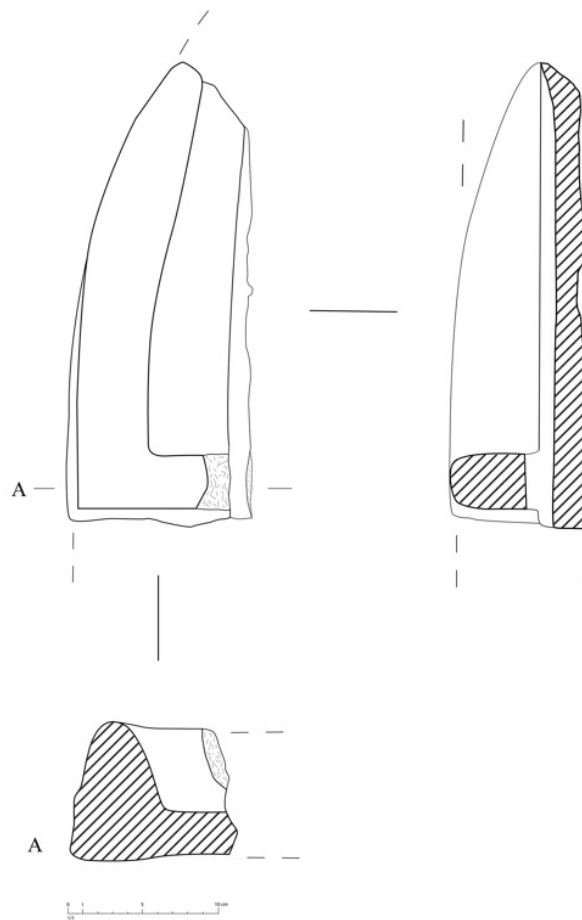


Figure 139: fragment of offering tray 0/1318.01. Drawing by the author based on the documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1961, fig. 260).

In respect to parallels, another similar complete offering tray, with the register number 0/1325.04, was found in the same location, which will be explained below. This tray has been significant for identifying the typology of the fragment 0/1318.01 (See fig. 141). Additionally, concerning other parallels outside Qubbet el-Hawa, offering trays discovered in Dendera are noteworthy. These trays show an identical shape and a transversal wall (Fig. 140). Therefore, the primary influential stylistic area appears to be the Dendera region once again.

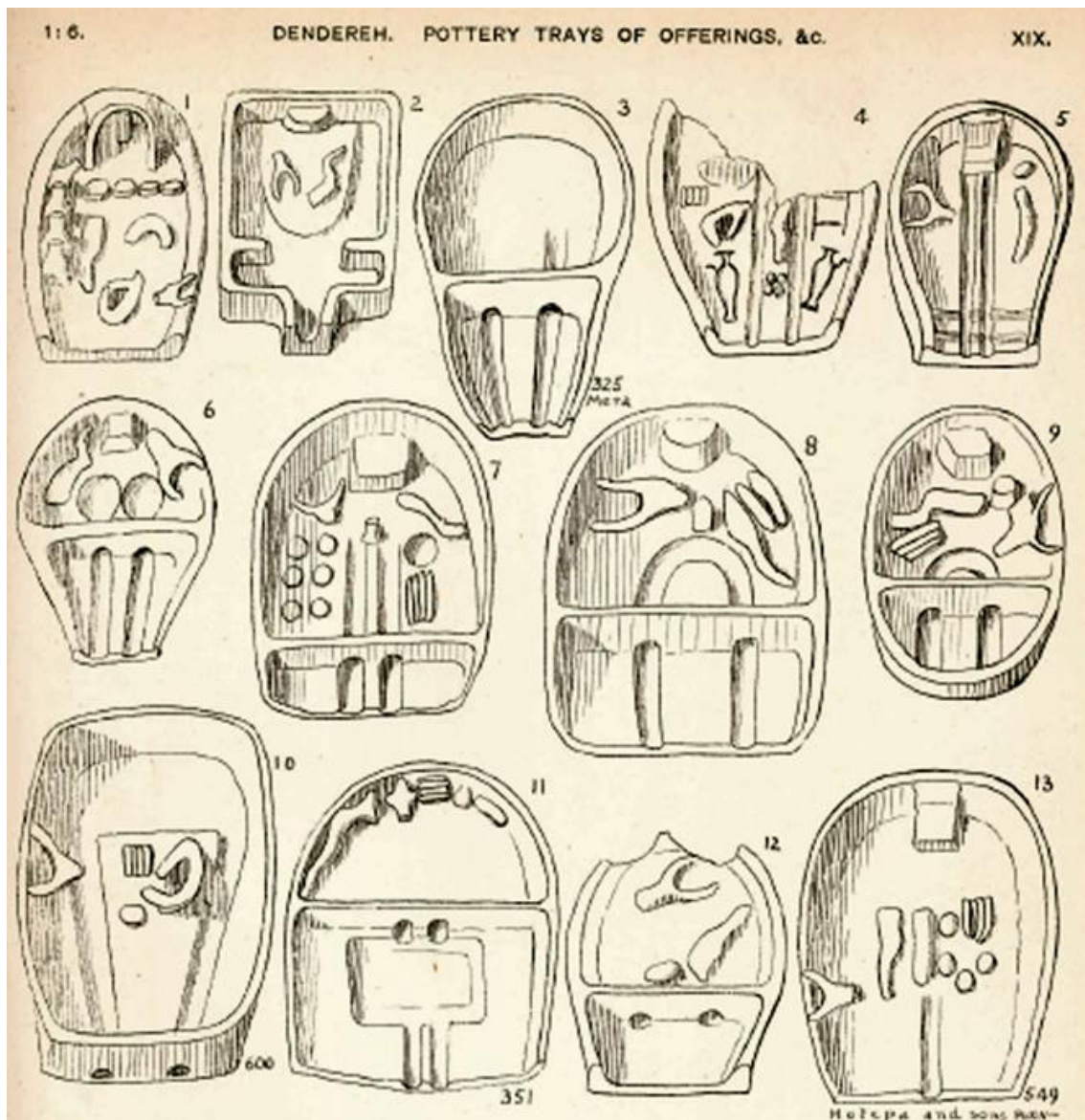


Figure 140: offering trays with transversal wall and channels through them found in Dendera by Petrie (1900: pl. XIX).

#### 5.1.9.2. Offering tray 0/1325.04

The artefact 0/1325.04 is a complete horseshoe-shaped offering tray (Fig. 141). This shows a transversal wall, which is through for two drain channel, and it has not modelled items on its surface.

As for type clay and surface treatment, it is impossible to identify through information provided by Edel.<sup>261</sup> But just as in the previous artefact 0/1318.01, it is possible to identify

<sup>261</sup> Also a photograph of 0/1325.04 is kept at the Bonn Museum.

a mixed firing (EDEL: 2008: p. 1957). In this case, 0/1325.04, the location is unknown as well.<sup>262</sup>

In regard to parallels, the closest one would be the fragment 0/1318.01, such as it was explain yet. Also, outside Qubbet el-Hawa, the Dendera region is key for this kind of offering tray. This due to the fact that Petrie found an identical specimen in Dendera (See fig. 140, No. 3).

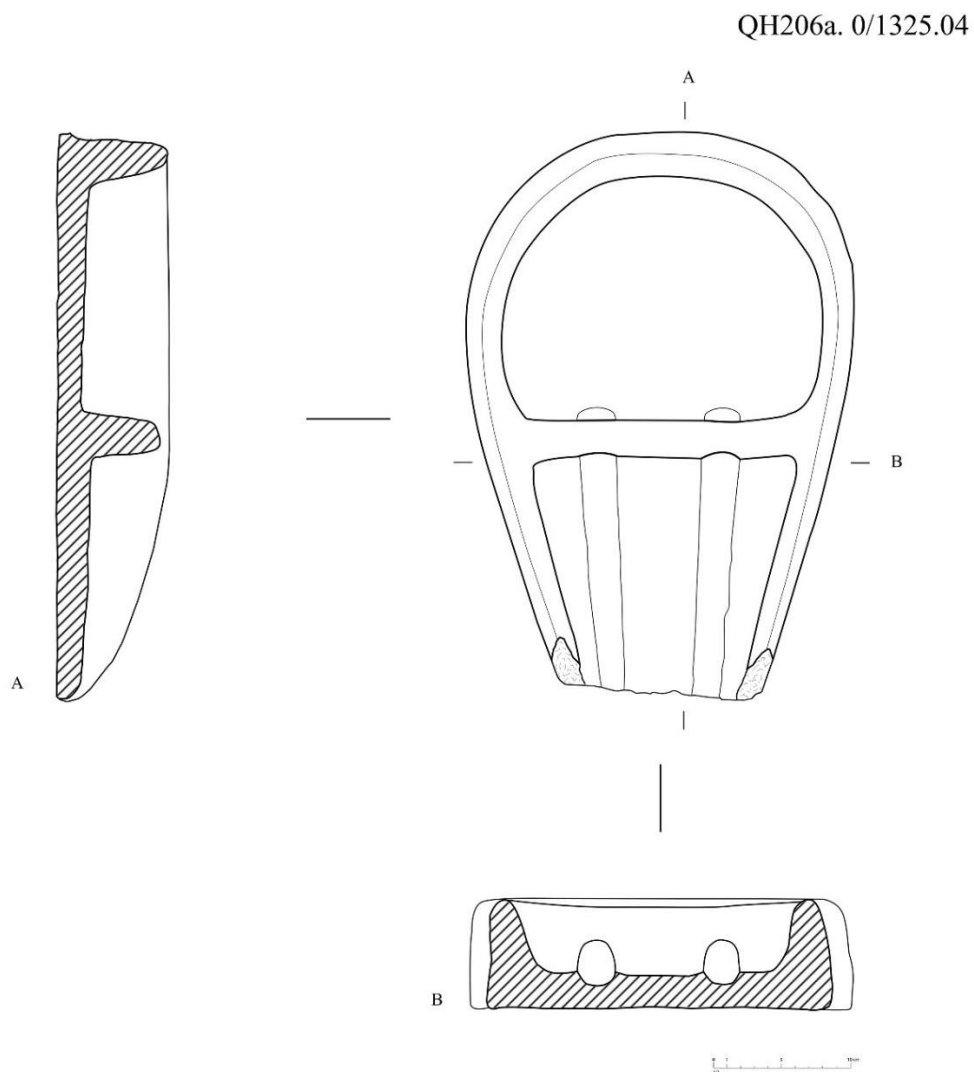


Figure 141: offering tray 0/1325.04. Drawing by the author based on the documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1962, fig. 268).

<sup>262</sup> Probably the reason is similar to previous cases. See footnote 244.

### 5.1.9.3. General overview

In short, the offering tray 0/1318.01 and 0/1325.04 are impossible to know if they belonged to QH206 or QH206a through the documentation of Elmar Edel. But it is clear that they were part of interaction between living and dead, together with the accumulation of material in front to the entrance, such as it happened in QH35p, QH93, and QH90b.

Concerning the chronology of the level of offering trays, there are two phases in the pottery material, such as it happened in QH93. The first one, it is dated between the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and mid-12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. While the second phase, the material may be dated between mid-12<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. But, it is possible to specify the chronology of the offering trays thanks to the parallel. This is the offering tray No. 3 found in Dendera by Petrie, whose owner was Mera, and it was dated in the early 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (PETRIE, 1900: p. 26). Therefore, it may be propose that the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty is possible for the offering trays found in the courtyard of QH206 and QH206a.

### 5.1.10. QH207

The tomb QH207 shares the courtyard with QH206, QH206a, and QH207a, such as it was explained previously. In this case, QH207 shows superstructure and substructures (Fig. 142a-d). The original owner was *sbk-ḥtp*, whose kept title in the tomb wall is *ḥri-tp ʿ3 n niswt* (The ‘great head’ of the king) (EDEL, 2008: p. 1865). Concerning to the chronology of the tomb, it was dated at the end of the reign of Pepy II (EDEL, 2008: p. 1979).

Regarding the study of Edel about this tomb, he focused on the material found outside of the tomb, superficially, and on the epigraphic and iconographic evidences (EDEL, 2008: p. 1932). This Tomb was reused in the Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom,<sup>263</sup> and Late Period (EDEL, 2008: pp.1861-2001). However, if it is checked the material found outside the tomb, it is possible to date some artefact as early as the First Intermediate Period. In relation to this accumulation of archaeological material found in the courtyard of the tomb, Edel recorded a fragment of offering tray (See fig. 142d).

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<sup>263</sup> Personal communication of Dr. Yolanda de la Torre Robles, who studied the archaeological material found by Edel in the tomb QH207 (DE LA TORRE ROBLES, 2019).



Figure 142a-d: a) Yellow: tomb QH207; b) Elevation plan and location of QH207 (Yellow); c) Section of courtyard. Location of the artefacts groups (brown and green) found in front to QH206a (Blue), QH206 (Purple), and QH207 (Yellow). In red: Offering trays. d) *Planum 3* of Edel. Artefacts groups (brown and green). QH206a (Blue), QH206 (Purple), and QH207 (Yellow). In red: Offering trays. Image by the author based on the plans 37.1 and 37.2 of Edel (2008) and Edel (2008: p. 1933, fig. 167; p. 1945, fig. 193; p. 1946, fig. 194).

### 5.1.10.1. Offering tray 0/1114.01

The artefacts 0/1114.01 is a fragment belonging to the back of a horseshoe-shaped offering tray (Fig. 143). This was found in front of QH207 entrance, and Edel depicted it in the planum 3. This fragment only provides information about the shape of the artefact. There are no remains of elements as modelled items, channels, or any additional element.

Regarding the clay and firing type, it is impossible to know through the information provided by Edel (2008: p. 1936). In addition, the current location of this offering tray is unknown, as the previous commented ones.<sup>264</sup>

Concerning the chronology of this artefact is difficult to concrete. The reason is the large quantity of material found together with it, which belonging to different periods. These corresponded to reuses of the tomb. But, if the archaeological material is reviewed as in other tombs, the planum 3 shows a two timeframe. On the one hand, the first phase was

<sup>264</sup> For a possible reason, See footnote 244.

between the late First Intermediate Period and the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty; on the other hand, the second one was between the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. However, it is impossible to indicate the phase of the offering tray 0/1114.01.

In respect to the parallels, it is difficult to find any because of scarce information provided by the fragment 0/1114.01. In this way, the only identified feature is the shape of the artefact, which would indicate stylistic influence from the Upper Egypt.

QH207. 0/1114.01

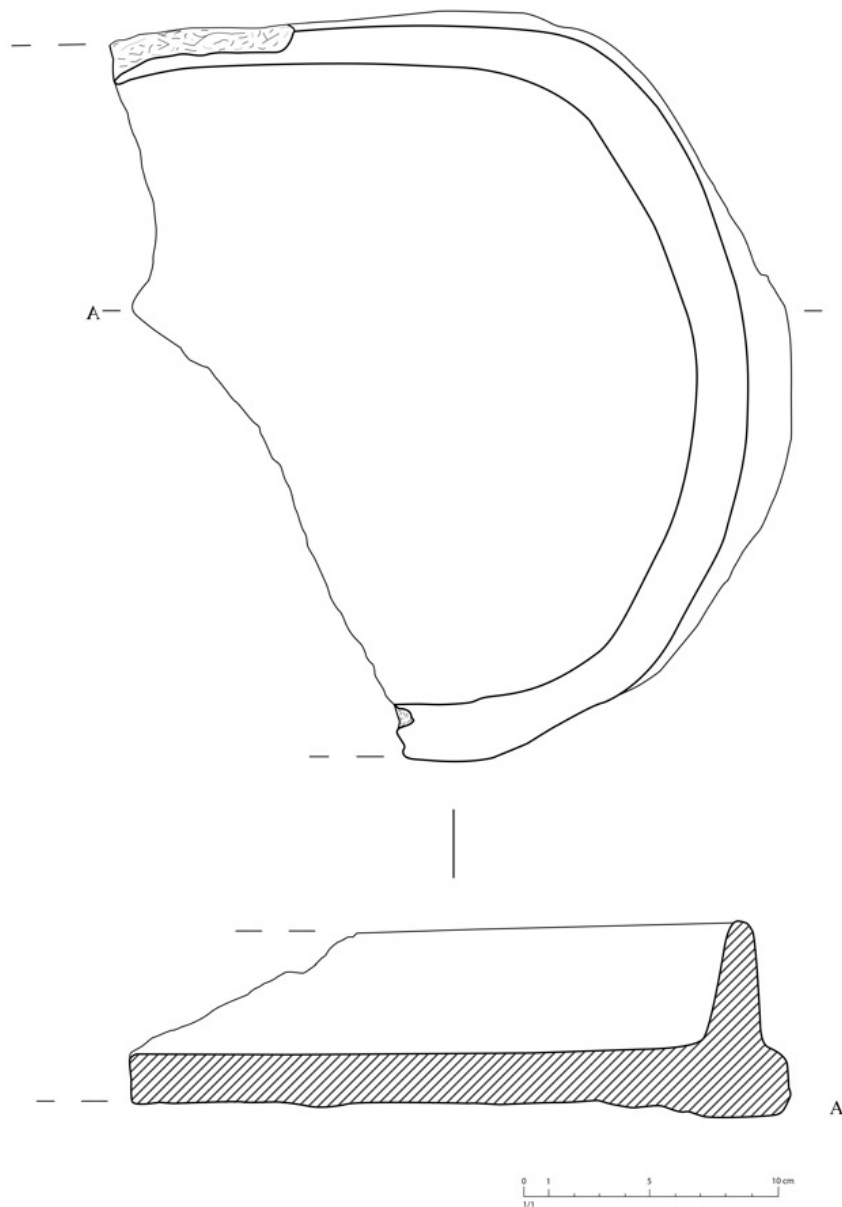


Figure 143: offering tray 0/1114.01. Drawing by the author based on the documentation of Edel (2008: p. 1939, fig. 177).

### **5.1.10.2. General overview**

Regarding the offering tray 0/1114.01 it may only be used statistically, like other offering trays and fragments found in Qubbet el-Hawa and studied in the present thesis. Nevertheless, it is a valuable piece of information for understanding these artefacts in their full context, including their dispersion and presence in a necropolis.

### **5.1.11. Decontextualized<sup>265</sup>**

In the present chapter, it will be analysed the set of decontextualized offering trays found by Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa, which are located in the warehouse of Aswan, currently.<sup>266</sup> These offering trays do not information beyond their typology and manufacture. But, equally, these data are relevant to understand and quantify the production of offering trays in Aswan region; as well as they provide information about stylistic influences in specimens from Qubbet el-Hawa, and new parallels to future studies.

#### **5.1.11.1. Offering tray A**

The offering tray called A was inside the tomb QH32, and it was transferred to the storehouse of Aswan in 2019. This artefact did not show a signature that identifies its provenance.<sup>267</sup>

This offering tray consists of a horseshoe-shaped artefact with an irregular U-shaped channel and without modelled offerings (Fig. 144). As for the manufacture of the offering tray A, it was hand-made. In respect to the surface, it was smoothed, and it seems to show traces of red slip close to the back edge. While, its base is rough and has several cracks. These fissures are probably due to high humidity, poor kneading, and quick and unstable air-drying.<sup>268</sup> Regarding clay type, it is difficult to identify it through the graphic documentation presented in this research. But, it is possible to suggest a Nile clay.

Regarding the stylistic influence on this offering tray, it appears to be from the Dendera area, as demonstrated by previous offering trays. However, upon reviewing various databases and publications, a similar specimen can be found in the Museo Egizio di

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<sup>265</sup> The author of the present thesis has decided to assign a letter to each artefact for identification.

<sup>266</sup> Information provided by Mr Osama Amer.

<sup>267</sup> During its transfer to the warehouse in 2019, the Egyptian staff of the Ministry of Antiquities office in Aswan handled this process. The specific number is currently unknown to the author of this thesis.

<sup>268</sup> See footnote 176.

Torino, published by Filippo Mi as P. 730.1 (2020: p. 115, fig. 23). Concerning this tray (Fig. 145), it is unprovenanced, and Mi only specified the acquisition date by the museum and the stylistic influence of the specimen, which is suggested to be from Upper Egypt (MI, 2020: p. 115)



Figure 144: offering tray A found by Elmar Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa. Unknown tomb. Currently, it located in storehouse of Aswan. ©University of Jaén, Project Qubbet el-Hawa. Image of Jennifer Colas Azcarate.



Figure 145: unprovenanced offering tray P. 730.1 published by Filippo Mi (2020). Museo Egizio (Turin). Image of Nicola dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni.

### 5.1.11.2. Offering tray B

The offering tray called B was inside the tomb QH32, and it was transferred to the storehouse of Aswan in 2019 together with the offering tray A. This offering tray B consists of a horseshoe-shaped artefact with four channels (Fig. 146). Two of them cross to the other ones. In addition, this offering tray has no other items on its surface.

As for the manufacture, this tray was hand-made and shows remains of red slip on its surface. Regarding the type clay, this artefact was manufactured with Nile clay B or C. In respect to this, it is difficult to concrete it, due to the conservation state of the offering tray and its current location.<sup>269</sup>



Figure 146: offering tray B found by Elmar Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa. Unknown tomb. Currently, it located in storehouse of Aswan. ©University of Jaén, Project Qubbet el-Hawa. Image by Jennifer Colas Azcarate.

<sup>269</sup> See chapter 1.2.1. Limitations of the study and footnotes 201 and 216.

In respect to the parallel for the offering tray B, Petrie found in Qurna several offering trays with similar crossed channels. Among them, there is an offering tray with identical features, which is at the Manchester Museum, currently, and it was dated in the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Fig. 147).

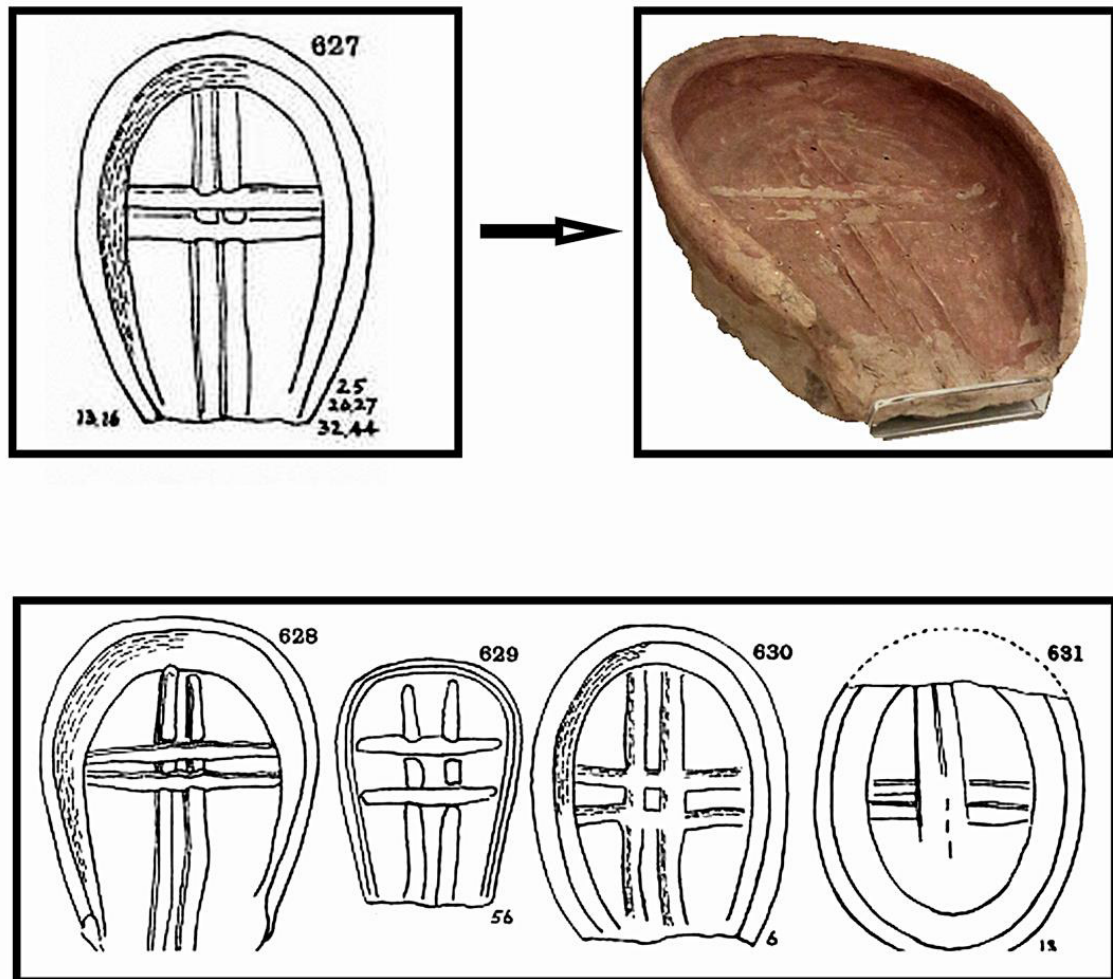


Figure 147: offering trays found in Qurna by Petrie. Image of the author based on the drawings of Petrie (1909: pl. XXI) and photograph of the Manchester Museum (artefact No. 5027).

Therefore, the influence area of this offering is the Thebes region, as the shape and channels design as absence of other elements on its surface.<sup>270</sup> Regarding this, the only difference among them, it is the diagonal inclination of the channels crossing in the offering tray B.

<sup>270</sup> See chapter 3.6. Origin zone, main areas of the offering trays and soul houses according to their features and manufacture.

### 5.1.11.3. Offering tray C

The next offering tray has been called C. It was inside the tomb QH90, and it was transferred to the storehouse of Aswan in 2021 together with other artefacts found by Edel.<sup>271</sup> This is a horseshoe-shaped artefact, without modelled items on its surface. But it shows two slightly incised channels in diagonal. This offering tray is hand-made and presents a particular edge, which has a narrowing rim (Fig. 148). As for the surface treatment, it shows remains of red slip and white wash.



Figure 148: offering tray C found by Elmar Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa. Unknown tomb. Currently, it located in storehouse of Aswan. Image of the author based on a preliminary photograph taken in situ during the transfer.

In respect to parallels, there are no direct anyone. But, if it keeps in mind features of the offering tray C, it is possible to highlight the Upper Egypt as influence zone for this offering tray. Specifically, between Thebes and Dendera areas due to the absence of modelled items, the only presence of channels, and the shape of the artefact.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Personal communication of Dr Jose Manuel Alba Gómez.

<sup>272</sup> See chapter 3.6. Origin zone, main areas of the offering trays and soul houses according to their features and manufacture.

#### 5.1.11.4. Offering tray D

The offering tray D was in the tomb QH90, and it was transferred to the storehouse of Aswan in 2021 as well. Regarding this artefact, it was hand-made, but roughly. Its shape is horseshoe, and it only shows a U-shaped channel. Also, it seems to present remains of white wash and red slip on its surface (Fig. 149). In respect to the type of clay, it is difficult to identify through the images, but it is possible to indicate a mixed firing.



Figure 149: offering tray D found by Elmar Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa. Unknown tomb. Currently, it located in storehouse of Aswan. Image of the author based on a preliminary photograph taken in situ during the transfer.

Regarding the parallels, it is clear the stylistic influence from other offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa, such as it was explained. But also, there is an influence of the offering trays found in Dendera, which was commented as well. This due to the shape of the artefact and the presence of the U-shaped channel. Therefore, Dendera area is the influence zone for it. But the absence of modelled items recognizes a local production from Aswan.<sup>273</sup>

#### **5.1.11.5. Offering tray E**

The pottery offering tray E is a quadrangular-shaped. But it is totally different to previous quadrangular ones, which have been presented in this thesis. The specimen E is kept at the storehouse of Aswan, and it shows a spout and on its surface there is a small platform with spout that imitates the same shape of the artefact. In addition, this platform creates a basin in front of the tray. Regarding the elements of the tray, this artefact shows different modelled items on the back side. Among them, there are an ox head and leg, conical bread, meat strips, ribs, and perhaps, a lettuce. As for other features, the offering tray E has an incised line on its edge, and another one in the inner platform. Regarding the manufacture, this offering tray was hand-made, and it could be suggested a Nile clay and a mixed firing. Also, its surface was smoothed, probably to cover the porosity of the raw material for libation act. On the other hand, in regard to its surface treatment, the artefact E has remains of red slip, but also, there are remains of white plaster (Fig. 150).

In respect to the parallels of artefact E, there is an offering trays No.1676 kept at the Pelizaeus-Museum, in Hildesheim, which has been published by Günther Roeder (1921: p. 72), and later by Eva Martin-Pardey (1991: pp. 47-48), which shows a similar internal design (Fig. 151a). This parallel is unprovenanced, and the author only indicates the following (MARTIN-PARDEY, 1991):

*“Durch W. Pelizaeus 1910/11 im Kunsthandel in Luxor erworben,  
von ihm 1911 dem Museum überwiesen” (p. 47)*

Additionally, there is a similar offering tray from National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden that seems to show design. It is the artefacts F 1901/1.63, which was found in Gebelein (Fig. 151b).

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<sup>273</sup> See chapter 5.1.7. QH93, and concretely, 5.1.7.2. Planum 3.



Figure 150: offering tray E found by Elmar Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa. Unknown tomb. Currently, it located in storehouse of Aswan. Image by Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.



Figure 151a-b: a) Offering tray No. 1676, Pelizaeus-Museum, Hildesheim. Image of Martin-Pardey (1991: p. 48); b) Offering tray. Gebelein, National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, No. F 1901/1.63. Image of the author.

Despite above-mentioned, it could suggest that the provenance of the artefact No.1676 would be in the archaeological sites surrounding area of Luxor.

In regard to local parallels, it may be highlighted the manufacture of the ox modelled head of offering tray E. This element has a modelling very angular, and it reminds to the offering trays 0/665, 0/668, QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253, and offering tray I (See fig. 89a-c and 117a-d). However, the head of tray E has incised lines as eyes and mouth, modelled ears, and flat snout. In respect to these last features, they remind to the offering trays 0/754 (See fig. 104a-b), 0/621 (See Fig. 111a-b), QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv. 1 (See fig.64). But also, it is possible to find them outside of Aswan region, as in Gebelein (See fig. 151b).

#### **5.1.11.6. Offering tray F**

The offering tray F is located at the storehouse of Aswan. This artefact is a horseshoe-shaped, and it only shows two curved channels on its surface. Regarding the manufacture is hand-made and it has a red slip. Also, it has white stains, but it is difficult to identify these through the picture. These stains could be remains of white wash or concretions. As for the clay, it is Nile clay, as vacuoles of vegetal temper indicate on their surface (Fig. 152).<sup>274</sup>

In terms of parallels, a similar specimen has been found in Qubbet el-Hawa—specifically, offering tray G (Fig. 153). Its design is identical, featuring a horseshoe shape and two curved channels. However, there are noticeable differences in the raw material, and the artefact modelling is of poorer quality. Additionally, it is possible to identify a stylistic influence zone for this design. As observed in other specimens studied in this thesis, Upper Egypt stands out once again, specifically the area between Thebes and Dendera. This is due to the absence of modelled items and the exclusive presence of channels, influencing the overall shape of the artefact.

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<sup>274</sup> To identify the stains and clay type, this artefact must be studied deeply in the future, such as it will be done with the rest of offering trays kept at the storehouse and the identification of their clay. Also, See footnote 201 and 216.



Figure 152: offering tray F found by Elmar Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa. Unknown tomb. Currently, it located in storehouse of Aswan. Image by Ms. Heba el-Ders and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

#### 5.1.11.7. Offering tray G

The offering tray G is located in the Aswan storehouse. This artefact is horseshoe-shaped and shows two curved channels on its surface (Fig. 153). Concerning its manufacture, specimen G presents poor modelling compared to others. The surface appears coarsely smoothed, and finger marks from the modelling process, along with the two grooves forming the channels, indicate a high humidity of the clay during its manufacture. As for treatment, it has remains of white slip.



Figure 153: offering tray G found by Elmar Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa. Unknown tomb. Currently, it located in storehouse of Aswan. Image by Ms. Heba el-Ders and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

In respect to the parallels, this design is similar to the offering tray F, such as it was explained in the previous chapter. In addition, as well as the offering tray F, the stylistic influence zone for this design would be the zone between Thebes and Dendera, because of the same reasons above-mentioned.

#### **5.1.11.8. Offering tray H**

The offering tray H, is horseshoe-shaped and presents a U-shaped channel. This artefact is located at the warehouse of Aswan, and according to its features and the description of the Elmar Edel, it corresponds to the offering tray 0/666 (See fig. 123).<sup>275</sup> In respect its manufacture, this offering tray has smoothed surface and a red slip. As for the firing, such as it could observe in the picture, is oxidizing; and the clay could be a Marl clay because the fracture Seem homogeneous, sandy, and with white particles<sup>276</sup> (RZEUSKA, 2012: p. 333). However, it must be analysed in the future<sup>277</sup> (See fig. 123).

#### **5.1.11.9. Offering tray I**

The offering tray I is horseshoe-shaped, and it shows a U-shaped channel and several modelled items on its surface (ox head and leg, piece of meat and a cucumber). This artefact is located at the warehouse of Aswan as well. As for its manufacture, the offering tray I was hand-made, it has a red slip. In respect to the clay, it is difficult to identify, but in the pictures (Fig. 154), the fracture Seems to show various inclusions and vacuoles. Thus, this could be a Nile clay; although, it will be able to analyse in future studies.<sup>278</sup> Concerning the firing, the facture reveals an oxidising firing.

Regarding the modelled items, they are ox head and leg, a cucumber, and a meat piece. These items are identical to ones show on the offering trays 0/665, 0/668, and 110/90 (See fig. 89a-c, 117a-d and 133). Therefore, these last offering trays are parallels to the offering tray I. In addition, the modelling of items is very angular in compare with others, such as it was explained in the chapter 5.1.7.2.a. Offering tray 0/665.

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<sup>275</sup> For more information about offering tray H, See chapter 5.1.7.2.d. Offering trays 0/666 and 0/667.

<sup>276</sup> Usually, these white particles are burnt limestone ones.

<sup>277</sup> See footnotes 156 and 163.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibidem.*

Concerning the influential area outside of Aswan, it is Dendera area the main one for this offering tray typology found in Qubbet el-Hawa. Main features of offering trays found in Dendera are horseshoe shape and U-shaped channel (See fig. 118a-d and 140).



Figure 154: offering tray I found by Elmar Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa. Unknown tomb. Currently, it located in storehouse of Aswan. Image by Ms. Heba el-Ders and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

#### 5.1.11.10. Offering tray J

The offering tray J is unique in Aswan area, at the moment. This artefact was found by Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa also. But, its original place is unknown, and it is located at the warehouse of Aswan, currently. This specimen is oval/horseshoe-shaped with two channels and rounded basins. These channels end at the edge of the tray, which has two holes for draining liquids from the libations. In addition, it has modelled offerings on its surface, and they are ox head and leg, ribs and meat piece. As for manufacture, it is hand-made and has red slip, and probable, remains of white wash. In addition, this offering tray has a hole<sup>279</sup> in on one of the side edges, and it Seems planned<sup>280</sup> (Fig. 155).



Figure 155: offering tray J found by Elmar Edel in Qubbet el-Hawa. Unknown tomb. Currently, it located in storehouse of Aswan. Image by Ms. Heba el-Ders and courtesy of Mr. Osama Amer.

<sup>279</sup> See fig. 156d, g. These offering trays show a hole in one of the side edges as well.

<sup>280</sup> But it will be analysed in the future to know its presence.

Regarding the parallels, firstly, it must search among artefacts from Qubbet el-Hawa. Regarding this, the modelled offerings on the tray J show a similar manufacture to other ones (See fig. 119a-b). In addition, two channels with rounded basins, are possible to find in Qubbet el-Hawa as well (See fig. 120a-b).

However, besides the specific characteristics outlined above, it must be search other parallels about its design outside of Aswan region. In this way, at the Egyptian Museum of Cairo there are two offering trays with a similar design, but the element on its surface are different (Fig. 156a-b). At the Liverpool Museum, there is another tray with similar features. These have a hole in the edge<sup>281</sup> and two channel with rounded basins (Fig. 156d). Nevertheless, these offering trays are unprovenanced. Therefore, It may be highlighted other round-shaped or oval artefacts with channel or channels and holes in their edges (Fig. 156c, e-g). These last specimens were found in the Thebes region.



Figure 156a-b: a) Offering tray. Unprovenanced. Egyptian Museum (Cairo), No. JE2852; b) Offering tray. Unprovenanced. Egyptian Museum (Cairo), No. JE64792; c) Offering tray. Thebes, Qurna. The Manchester Museum, No. 5026; d) Offering tray. Unprovenanced. Liverpool Museum, No. 1973.1.350; e) Offering tray. Thebes, Deir el-Bahri, Tomb MMA 105. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, No. 28.3.257; f) Offering tray. Thebes, Deir el-Bahri, Tomb MMA 101. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, No. 28.3.210; g) Offering tray. Thebes. Atkinson Museum, No. 108. Image courtesy of Dr. Luisa M. García Gonzalez.

<sup>281</sup> In future studies, this hole will keep in mind to confirm that is due to the anthropic process before or after the firing, or in contrast, it is a mark of inclusion lost during the firing process.

Therefore, the offering tray J would have stylistic influence from Thebes area. The reasons are the shape, the hole in the edge, and channels with rounded basins. These last ones present on offering trays found in Qurna (See fig. 7). But, it is important to stand out the Aswan region as well. This because of the configuration of elements and their modelling, which are reiterated in other trays from Qubbet el-Hawa.

#### **5.1.11.11. General overview**

In respect to the decontextualized offering trays found in Qubbet el-Hawa by Elmar Edel, it is impossible to know their original placement and their exact chronology. However, their study allows us to have a complete vision of the production of offering trays in the Aswan area. Moreover, these offering trays, together with the contextualized ones found by the University of Bonn and, later, the University of Jaén, allow establishing features own to this southern area. In addition, they show an external stylistic influence that was adapted in the Aswan zone.

## **5.2. The manufacture and production area of the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa**

After examining the set of offering trays found in Qubbet el-Hawa, this chapter aims to summarize the idea of a local production of these Artefacts. They exhibit features present in offering trays found outside the Aswan region. Hence, it is possible to think that the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa originated from sites between Dendera and Edfu regions (Fig. 157a-b, blue) primarily. Additionally, the sites located in the Middle Egypt (Fig. 157a-b, red).

However, despite the above, the combination of different features in artefacts from Aswan question the external origin and/or trade of them. In addition, the repeated presence of characteristic and/or combination of elements on different trays, which create a design, suggest a local production. In this way, it might highlight two main groups that reinforce this question. On the one hand, the raised edge<sup>282</sup> on the offering trays found in QH33 and the tray 0/621 from QH93 (See fig. 112a-d). These combine the quadrangular shape,

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<sup>282</sup> After reviewing of several databases, publications, and reports, the author has not found this feature outside of Aswan.

altar model, lost items in front of one, and straight channel with quadrangular basins in some cases. This is reinforced with the offering tray found in Aswan by Müller and Forstner-Müller (2015), because it shows a similar design to the mentioned offering trays.

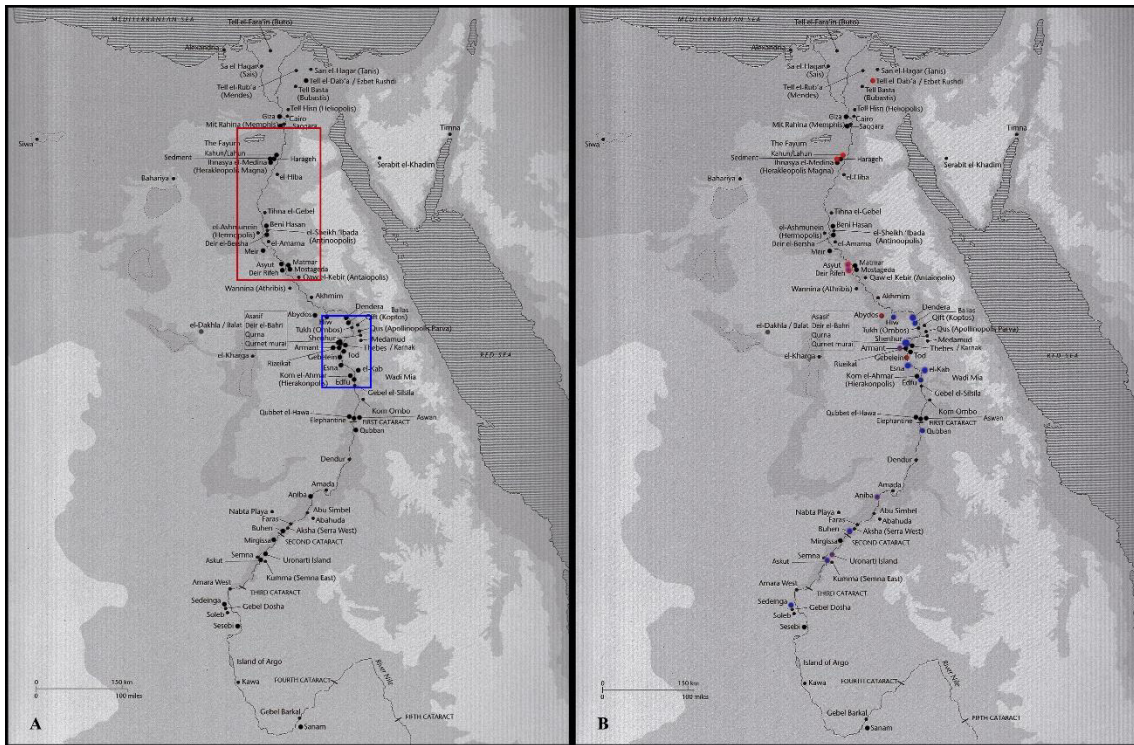


Fig. 157a-b: Egypt maps. Similar features to offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa. Red: Middle and Lower Egypt. Blue: Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia. a) Places and features of offering trays taken into account in this thesis, according to the previous studies carried out by different mentioned authors. b) Places and features of offering trays checked by the author in this thesis. Maps created by the author.

On the other hand, the offering trays found in QH93, the artefact QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253 found in QH35p, and the tray I. These show a combination of horseshoe shape, offering models and U-shaped channel without any other element. In respect to these offering trays, the modelling of the elements on their surface indicate a same production place, and even, the same time. This idea has already been suggested in 2019 (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019a: p. 75). Concerning this, also the offering tray J is related to this group, as for its modelling.

The rest of offering trays from Qubbet el Hawa, as it has been explained in previous chapters, show typical features on other trays from outside of Aswan. But in our case, these characteristics have differences as for the shape, channels, basins, walls, items, and/or combination of them, which differ to external specimens. These are the offering

trays A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H QH34ff/22/UE443/39/inv.19, and QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv.317, QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv.252, and 0/667 (QH93).

However, although the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa have their own distinctive features, there is an identical specimen to outside of Aswan. This is the offering tray 0/1325.04, which is identical to artefact No. 3 found by Petrie in Dendera.

Therefore, if it bears in mind the above-mentioned, it is possible to suggest a local production of offering trays with external stylistic influence. This may be supported by the nature of artefacts. That is, they are linked to the popular beliefs and the private sphere. Thus, the trade of offering trays would be limited to the area surrounding the pottery workshops. However, the transit of people through different regions of Egypt would allow the transference of local features, and this would be the reason of the external influence in offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa.<sup>283</sup>

Regarding the manufacture of some trays, seem careless, as the offering tray D and G, and the cracked bases of several artefacts would indicate unstable conditions during air-drying. Thus, it could indicate that these artefacts were not a regular manufacture in the workshops.

Finally, in respect to firing of the offering trays found by the University of Jaén, have a mixed firing, and only the offering tray QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19 is oxidizing firing, as it is usual for artefacts made of Marl clay. But this firing process is not exclusive in Marl clays, as shown the example of the figure 159.

### **5.2.1. Clay composition of offering trays found by the Qubbet el-Hawa Project**

Concerning the composition and properties of the pottery fabrics types used in the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa, it has been possible to study during the present research only the artefacts found by the University of Jaén, except the tray no inv.86, whose study was impossible.<sup>284</sup> This study allow us to have a first a first approximation of the type of clays presents in Aswan region. It is a first step to future research and, also, it will add new information to previous clay studies. These clay types of the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa are summarized in the table 7.

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<sup>283</sup> Aswan region was a main centre to the transit of people, due to the fact that it has an important trade and military role (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, 2012: p. 31).

<sup>284</sup> See footnote 201.

To carry out this analyse, the study has been through the naked eyes in the surface, base and fractures, magnification lent (x30) in different zones of the fractures, and Bysameyee Microscopio Digital, 8 LED (x1000).

Firstly, it is possible to identify two main types. These are Nile clays and Marl clays. In general, the features of these are usual according to the Vienna system. Among these types understand Nile C and Nile B2; whilst the Nile B2 is used in horseshoe-shaped trays, the Nile C is present in quadrangular ones mainly, and only one horseshoe-shaped specimen (QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv. 318) was made with Nile C. The main feature of these quadrangular offering trays is their size, and the use of this clay type in large artefacts is usual, as Vienna system establishes (ARNOLD, NORDSTRÖM and BOURRIAU, 1993: p. 174). However, we must review subgroups of the Vienna system, which correspond to regional features (RZEUSKA, 2012), for understanding the production of these artefacts.

Among Nile clay artefacts, there is a specimen that shows a mix of clay features is the artefact QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv.273 that displays inclusions belong to Nile B1 and Nile B2 (Annex I). This object, an offering model, was link to the offering tray QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253, which made with Nile B2. The reason of these different clay types between both artefacts, would be due the manufacture of the offering model separately, and its size. The features of Nile B1 presents a more depurated clay than Nile B2, and thus, it would be more appropriate to model small object. Likewise, this clay type in small artefacts would avoid damages in them during its manufacture and after it (CHONG BEJARANO, 2012: pp. 95, 99, 101).

In addition, there is another artefact made with Nile B2, but with features close to Nile B1. It is QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv.252. In this case the reasons would be different to previous example. From the desire to achieve a higher quality artefact as shown by the object itself, to having used the residual clays of manufacture of other artefacts.

Additionally, an only offering tray made with Marl clay (Fig. 158) was found in Qubbet el-Hawa, which shows features in its composition that are specific of Marl A3 and Marl A4. The use of marl clay in Aswan region for manufacturing offering trays Seems an exception, at the moment. But, during this research, has been possible to find other trays from other places made in Marl clay (Fig. 159 and 160). Thus, it is possible to find more specimens with marl clay at Qubbet el-Hawa in the future.

As for mixed clays, which composition will be explained below, their existence throughout Egyptian history has been ascertained (LÓPEZ GRANDE, 2002: p. 102; OWNBY and BRAND, 2019: p. 374; ASTON and ASTON, 2023: pp. 16-17).

Register number	Tomb	Nile C1	Nile B2b	Nile B1a2	Marl A3c4	Indeterminate/ Unknown
QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 1	QH33	X				
QH33/10/C10/UE103/inv. 5	QH33	X				
QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 6	QH33	X				
QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 8	QH33	X				
QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv.76	QH33	X				
QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv. 19	QH34ff				X	
QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv. 317	QH35p	X				
QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv. 252	QH35p		X			
QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253	QH35p		X			
QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv. 273	QH35p			X		
QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv. 54	QH35p		X			
QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv. 318	QH35p	X				
QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604/inv. 319	QH35p		X			
QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv. 316	QH35p		X			
QH36/17/9/UE19/241/inv. 86	QH36					X
QH36/17/9/UE21/308/inv.429	QH36		X			

Table 7. Clay of the offering trays found by the University of Jaén.



Fig. 158: offering tray QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19. Marl A4. Image courtesy of Dr. Ángel Rubio Salvador. ©University of Jaén, Project Qubbet el-Hawa.



Figure 159: Offering tray. Marl A2 clay. Unprovenanced. National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, F 1939/2.38. Image by the author.



Figure 160: offering tray. Marl A2 clay. Gebelein. National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, F 1901/1.63.

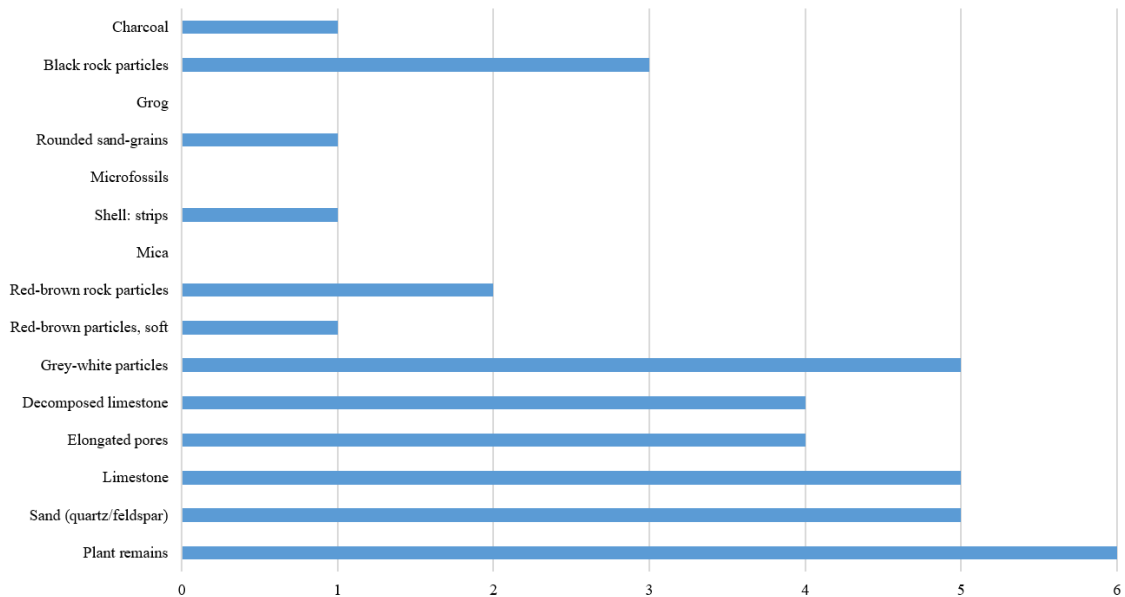
Image by the author.

#### 5.2.1.a. Nile B2: Elephantine's Nile B2b clay

The offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa made with Nile B2 clay are six in total (Annex I), and they present organic and mineral inclusions, as it is usual. The set of trays present a clay structure medium hard, except one sample, which is more crumbly than others. The reason might be a worse conservation conditions than others. While, the sorting of inclusions, generally is fair, except in one case that is poor. The last feature of the clay Nile B2, the porosity is medium, except in one specimen that is open. This last one, inventory number 429, is the same tray whose structure is crumbly. This tray, present a fail firing, as was explained in the chapter 5.1.4.1.b. QH36/17/9/UE21/308/inv.429, and it might be the reason for these differences in its structure and porosity comparing to others.

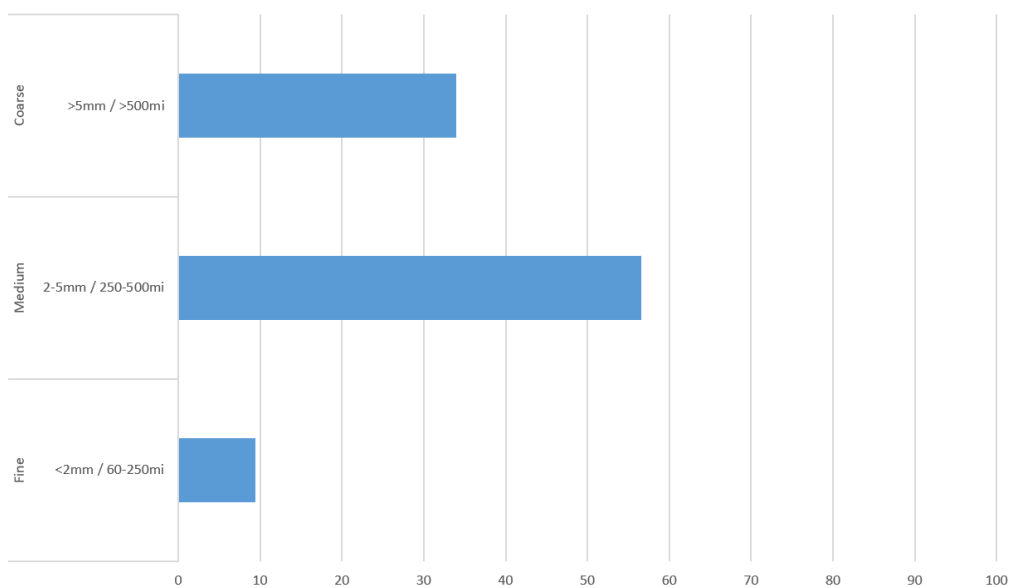
However, among organic inclusions there is a specimen that present rests of charcoal (Graphic 2). The presence of this, might be: simply, organic tempers burnt during the firing process that did not achieve a total combustion; an accidental inclusions; or a new feature in this clay type in Aswan area. Also, there is a tray that Seems to present shell fragments as inclusion, and, according to Rzeuska's study (2012: 331), normally, its presence is together with limestone inclusions. Also, she indicates that limestone inclusions have scarce presence. Among different sub-groups of Nile B2 created by

Rzeuska for clays from Elephantine, these offering trays would correspond to Nile B2b (RZEUSKA, 1999: p. 196). This due to it contains more organic lean particles than sand (See graphic 4).



Graphic 2. Organic and mineral inclusions present in the Nile B2b composition. Total of offering trays made with this clay type, 6. Graphic created by the author.

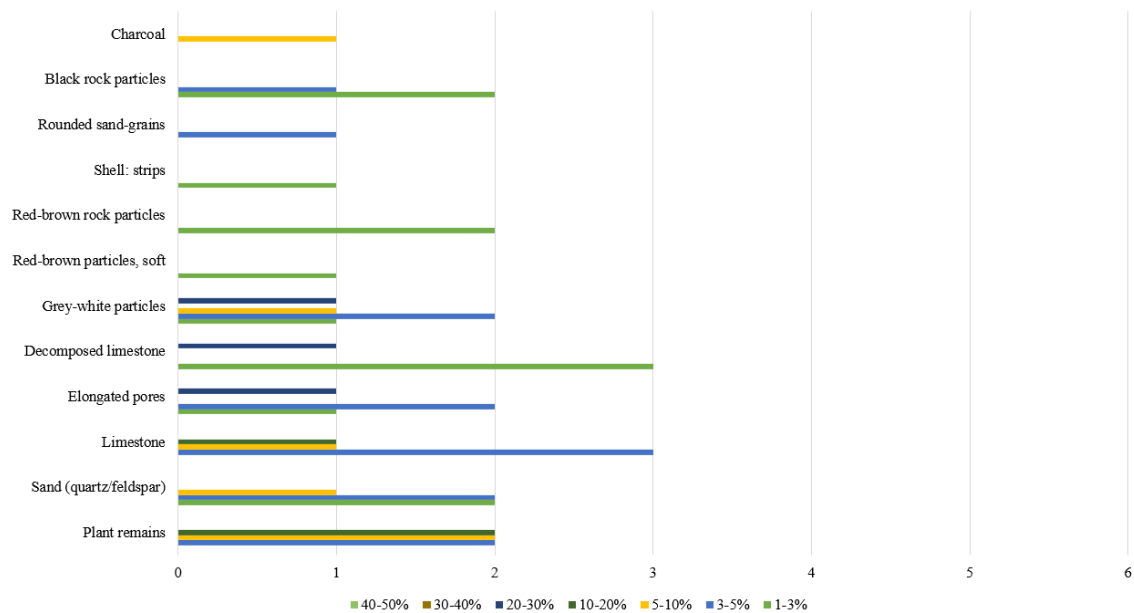
As for the size of these inclusions, coarse and medium are predominant, which are usual in Nile B2 from Aswan area. Medium size, comprising 56.6%, followed by coarse size (33.96%), and finally, only 9.43% of fine size (33.96%) (Graphic 3).



Graphic 3. Percentages of inclusions size used in Nile B2b. Graphic created by the author.

Regarding the frequency of inclusions in the 6 offering trays made with Nile B2, none of them goes beyond 20-30%. Concerning the limestone, whether decomposed or not, it is present in six trays, and its frequency is between 1-20% (graphic 4). This percentage is far from the criteria established by Rzeuska (2012: 331), who indicates limestone inclusions in Elephantine are very rare, as was explained before. Thus, we could be looking a new feature. To confirm or not this, it is necessary to carry out new analyses in the future to confirm this presence of limestone in these artefacts.

On the other hand, there is presence of black rock particles, which might be granite particles, in three offering trays and sand in six of them. These inclusion types is very common in the Nile B2 from Elephantine clays (RZEUSKA, 2012: 331).

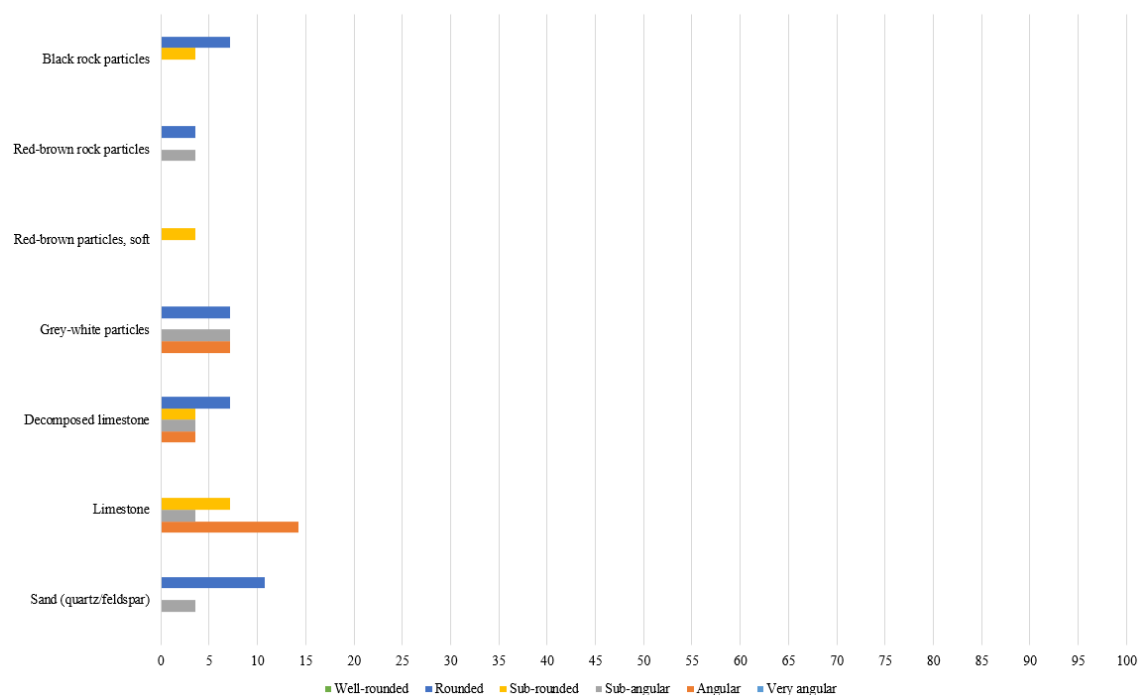


Graphic 4. Frequency of Organic and mineral inclusions in Nile B2b clay. Graphic created by the author.

In respect to the shape of these inclusions, there is a predominance of rounded shape for the sand (10.71%) and black particles (7.14%) (Graphic 5). This could be because of their natural presence in the clay that is these inclusions would present a natural erosion.

In contrast, the limestone shows a predominance of angular (14.28%), and its reason would be that were added for the craftsman. Thus, if the island have a scarce natural presence of limestone, as Rzeuska indicates (2012: 331), the offering trays could be manufactured in another place. However, if we keep in mind the nature of these objects, as was explained in the chapter 5.2. The manufacture and production area of the offering

trays from Qubbet el-Hawa, we might indicate exportations of raw material, specifically, those minerals used as inclusions in the pottery workshops.



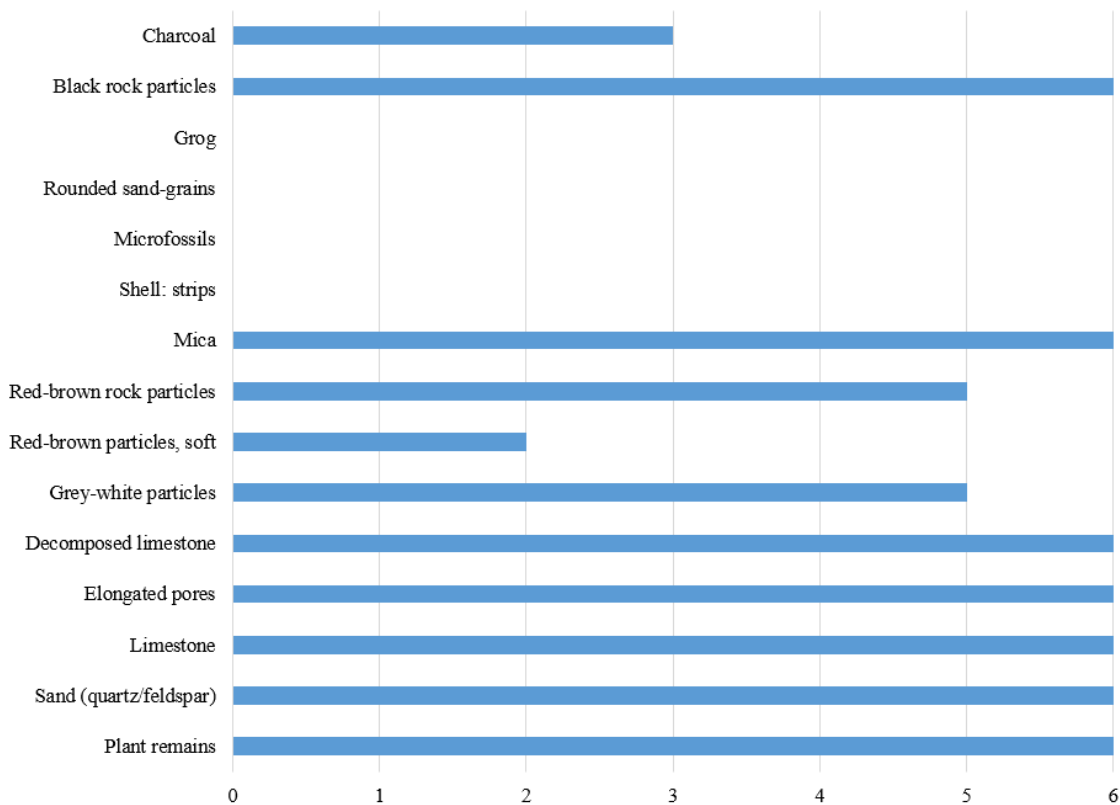
Graphic 5. Percentage and presence of shapes of the inclusions in Nile B2b. Graphic created by the author.

### 5.2.1.b. Nile C: Elephantine's Nile C1 clay

Six offering trays were made with Nile C (Annex I). They have organic and mineral inclusions, and among them there are plant remains, sand, limestone, red-brown and grey-white particles, mica, black rock particles and charcoal. In general, they are present in all these artefacts (Graphic 6). The structure of these trays are medium hard or crumbly; the sorting is poor, except a sample is fair. As for the porosity open or medium, except a trays (inventory number 318) that presents incipient sign of vitrification in its core, as was explained in the chapter 5.1.3.1.e. Offering tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv.318, due to overcooking.

The main different between Nile B2 and Nile C trays, it is the presence of mica and an increased presence of coal in the Nile C artefacts. These inclusions are common in Nile C according the Vienna system and the classification of Rzeuska (2012) about clay from Elephantine. Additionally, the features of these offering trays correspond to sub-group Nile C1 created by Rzeuska (2012: p. 332), due to the quantity of mineral and organic

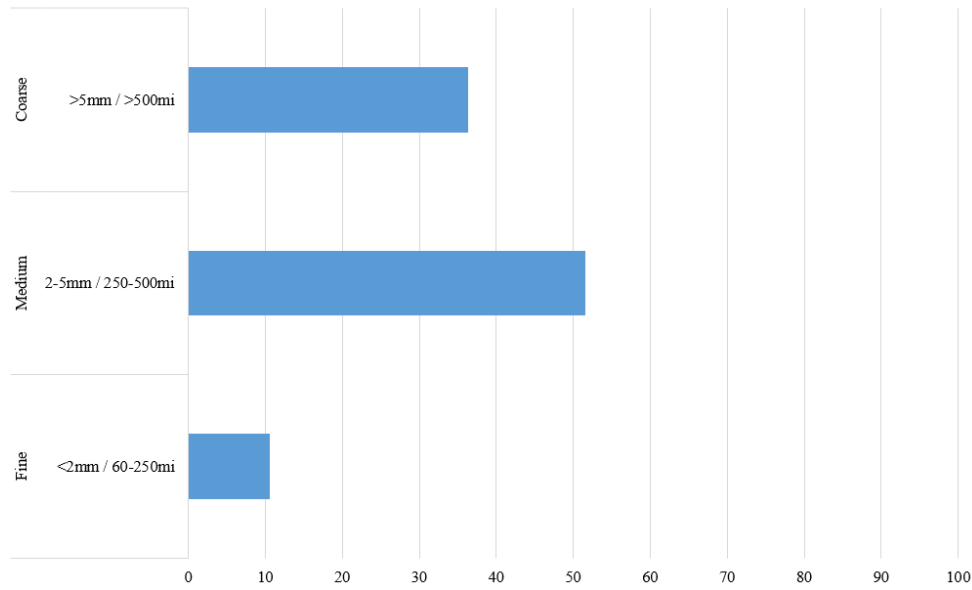
inclusions is similar those described by her. Besides, she understands that the presence of ash in this sub-group is usual, and some trays from this type present charcoal.



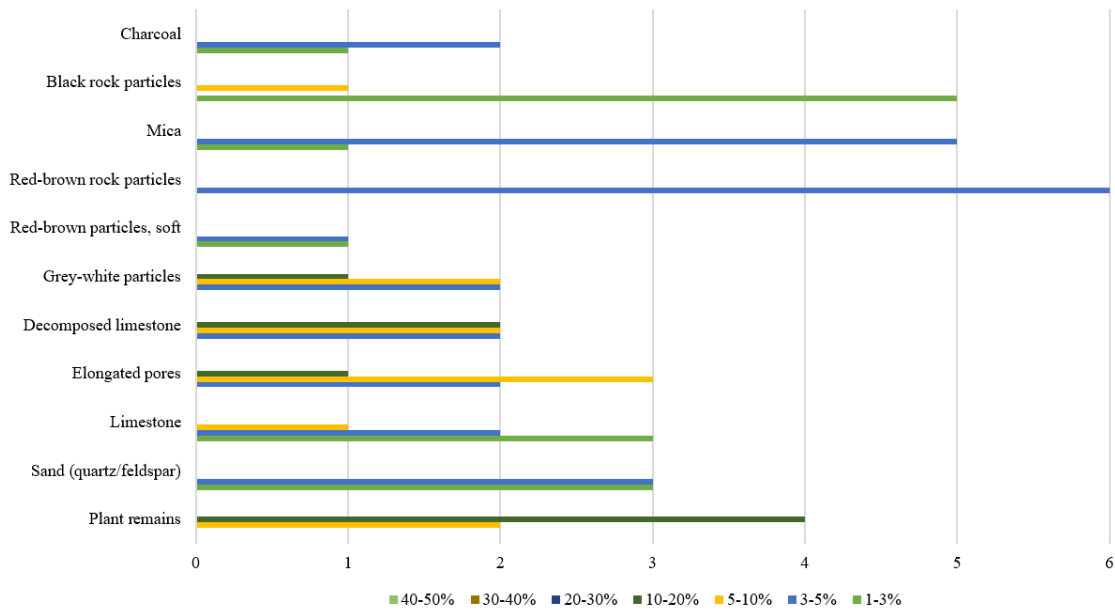
Graphic 6. Organic and mineral inclusions present in the Nile C1 composition. Total of offering trays made with this clay type, 6. Graphic created by the author.

Regarding the size of inclusions, 51.51% are coarse, 36.36% medium and 10.6% fine (Graphic 7). Coarse inclusions are predominant, which is common in Nile C1, comparing to Nile B2 that medium size inclusions have predominance. In respect to fine inclusions, correspond to the mica, mainly.

In respect to the frequency of the inclusions in the artefacts made with Nile C1 do not exceed 10-20%, being the plant remains those with larger frequency than others. While, the black rock particles, red-brown rock particles and mica have a stable frequency and similar percentages, which are between 1% and 5%, except the black particles that in a specimen reaches 5-10% (Graphic 8).



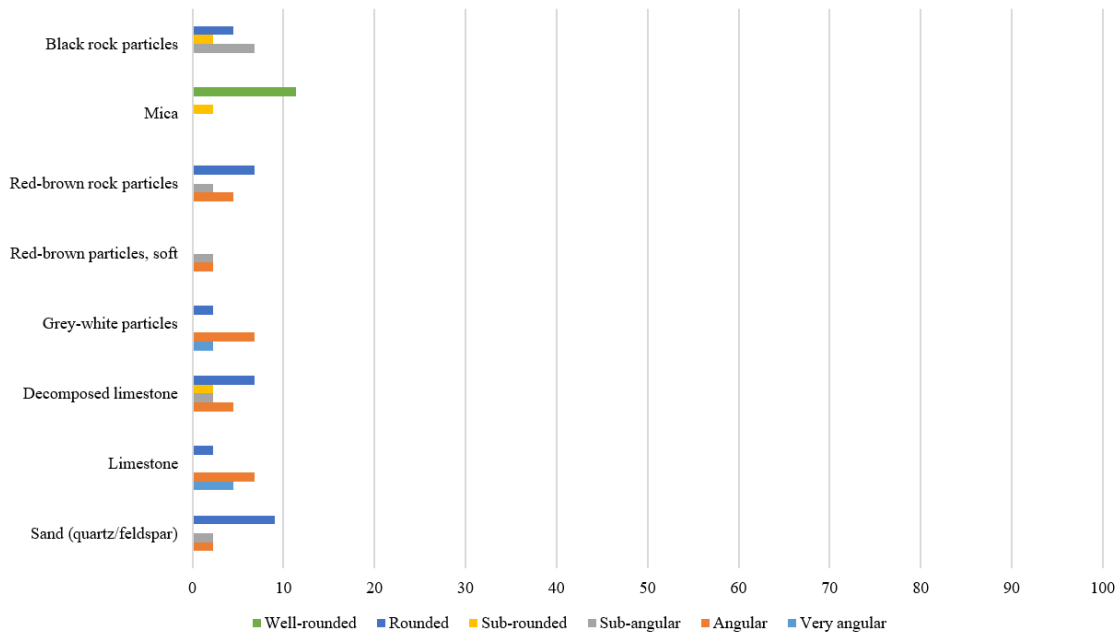
Graphic 7. Percentages of inclusions size used in Nile C1. Graphic created by the author.



Graphic 8. Frequency of Organic and mineral inclusions in Nile C1 clay. Graphic created by the author.

Finally, the shape of mineral inclusions in the Nile C1 trays, there are two main shapes. On the one hand, among rounded shapes, mica (11.36%) and sand (9.09%) are predominant. On the other hand, the main inclusions with angular shapes are limestone (6.81%), grey-white particles (6.81%), and black rock particles that have more balance between the two main shapes (Graphic 9). The reasons for these shapes and the presence of some inclusions in Elephantine's clays, as limestone and black rock particles, are the same to Nile B2. Angular inclusions of limestone would be added for the craftsman,

because the island have a scarce natural presence of limestone, as Rzeuska indicates (2012: p. 331). But the granite, which might be black rock inclusions, is common in the island (RZEUSKA, 2012: 331), naturally.



Graphic 9. Percentage and presence of shapes of the inclusions in Nile C1. Graphic created by the author.

### 5.2.1.c. Mixed Marl clays

Only a tray made with Marl clay (Annex I), as was explained previously. As for this, the composition of clay it is a mix of features of Marl A3 and A4. Regarding the Marl A3, it is possible to specify the regional clay group from Elephantine, which is Marl A3c (RZEUSKA, 2012), and it is identify as following:

*‘Marl A3c, is slightly less popular than Marl A3a. It shows a very close resemblance to the first variant (very fine clay, green or yellowish green in colour, homogeneous and dense in fracture, with well visible oblong pores, and without any inclusions except sparse sand grains or unmixed marl or limestone particles, which, unlike in the case of Marl A2, are yellow) with the major difference lying in the colour. In this case it is not green but pink, sometimes both in the fracture and on the surface. In some cases the fracture is multi coloured, from light pink through yellow and light green. Marl A3c is usually slightly less dense than Marl A3a.’ (p. 334)*

Therefore, the offering tray made with Marl A correspond with this description of marl A3c. However, if review the features of Marl A4, this type is characterized by a coarse,

open and porous texture due to burnt out limestone. In addition, limestone inclusions through magnification are visible, and it is calcareous material. Thus, its presence is natural and not added by the potter. Also, occasionally, other inclusions are mica inclusions and/or straw (ARNOLD, NORDSTRÖM and BOURRIAU, 1993: p. 178).

Therefore, if we take into consideration these characteristics of both types and analyse the offering tray, its clay shares features of both Marl clays (table 8).

The presence of limestone is high, but also, elongated pores and grey-white particles, which could be small fragment of limestone also. Regarding the shape, round-shaped inclusions are predominant, and it would be indicative of a natural presence, as was explained in previous clay types. On the other hand, its structure is hard; the sorting, fair; and the porosity is medium. All of these features correspond with marl clay ones.

Inclusions	Coarseness			Frequency	Shape
	Fine <2mm	Medium 2-5mm	Coarse >5mm	Cf. the density of inclusions chart	Cf. the chart of roundness
<b>Plant remains</b>					
	Fine 60-250mi	Medium 250-500mi	Coarse >500mi		
<b>Sand (quartz/feldspar)</b>					
<b>Limestone</b>	X			10%	Sub-rounded
<b>Elongated pores</b>		X	X	5%	
<b>Decomposed limestone</b>		X		3%	Sub-angular
<b>Grey-white particles</b>	X			5-10%	Rounded
<b>Red-brown particles, soft</b>					
<b>Red-brown rock particles</b>					
<b>Mica</b>					
<b>Shell: strips</b>					
<b>Microfossils</b>					
<b>Rounded sand-grains</b>					
<b>Grog</b>					
<b>Black rock particles</b>					
<b>Other:</b>					

*Table 8. Inclusions in offering trays made with mixed Marl clays.*

Therefore, due to the mix of clay properties and the non-existence of a category for it in the regional classification, we may establish it as a Marl A3c4 clay.

#### 5.2.1.d. Mixed Nile clays

The last type of mix clay (Annex I), it is not a tray, but a model offering, as was explained previously. This artefact shows a structure medium hard; the sorting is fair; and the porosity is dense. They correspond a typical features of Nile B clay. However, some inclusions are present in Nile B1 (Fine sand, mica and fine and disperse straw). Regarding classification established for Elephantine's clay (RZEUSKA, 2012: p. 332), it is possible to specify the use of Nile B1a.

In addition, this object, as was explained, present features common in Nile B2, as limestone inclusions or the quantity of minerals ones (Table 9).

Inclusions	Coarseness			Frequency	Shape
	Fine <2mm	Medium 2-5mm	Coarse >5mm	Cf. the density of inclusions chart	Cf. the chart of roundness
<b>Plant remains</b>		X		1%	
	Fine 60-250mi	Medium 250-500mi	Coarse >500mi		
<b>Sand (quartz/feldspar)</b>		X	X	1%	Sub-angular
<b>Limestone</b>					
<b>Elongated pores</b>		X		1%	
<b>Decomposed limestone</b>		X		1-3%	Sub-angular
<b>Grey-white particles</b>					
<b>Red-brown particles, soft</b>					
<b>Red-brown rock particles</b>		X		1%	Angular
<b>Mica</b>	X			1%	Rounded
<b>Shell: strips</b>					
<b>Microfossils</b>					
<b>Rounded sand-grains</b>					
<b>Grog</b>					
<b>Black rock particles</b>					
<b>Other:</b>					

*Table 9. Inclusions in offering trays made with mixed Nile clays.*

Therefore, this is a similar case to prior mix Marl clay that is the existence of clay mixed properties, and the absence of a category for it in the regional classification. In this way, we may establish it as a Nile B1a2 clay.

### 5.3. Chronology and shapes of the offering trays of Qubbet el-Hawa

Regarding the chronology of the offering trays, as it has been explained during this thesis, these artefacts are dated between the First Intermediate Period and the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period. As for the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa are within this timeframe. However, thanks to the study of the artefacts found together with the trays and the contexts,<sup>285</sup> it has been possible to narrow down the chronology, as the following table shows (Table 10 and graphic 10):

Register number	Tomb	Dating of the context	Remarks
QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 1	QH33	Late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Quadrangular-shaped
QH33/10/C10/UE103/inv. 5	QH33	Late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Quadrangular-shaped
QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 6	QH33	Late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Quadrangular-shaped
QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 8	QH33	Late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Quadrangular-shaped
QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv.76	QH33	Late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Undetermined
QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19	QH34ff 286	First Intermediate Period – ?	Horseshoe-shaped
QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv. 317	QH35p	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Quadrangular-shaped
QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv. 252	QH35p	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253	QH35p	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv. 273	QH35p	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Belong to QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802 /inv. 253

<sup>285</sup> Concerning the offering trays found by the University of Bonn, See footnotes 203 and 204.

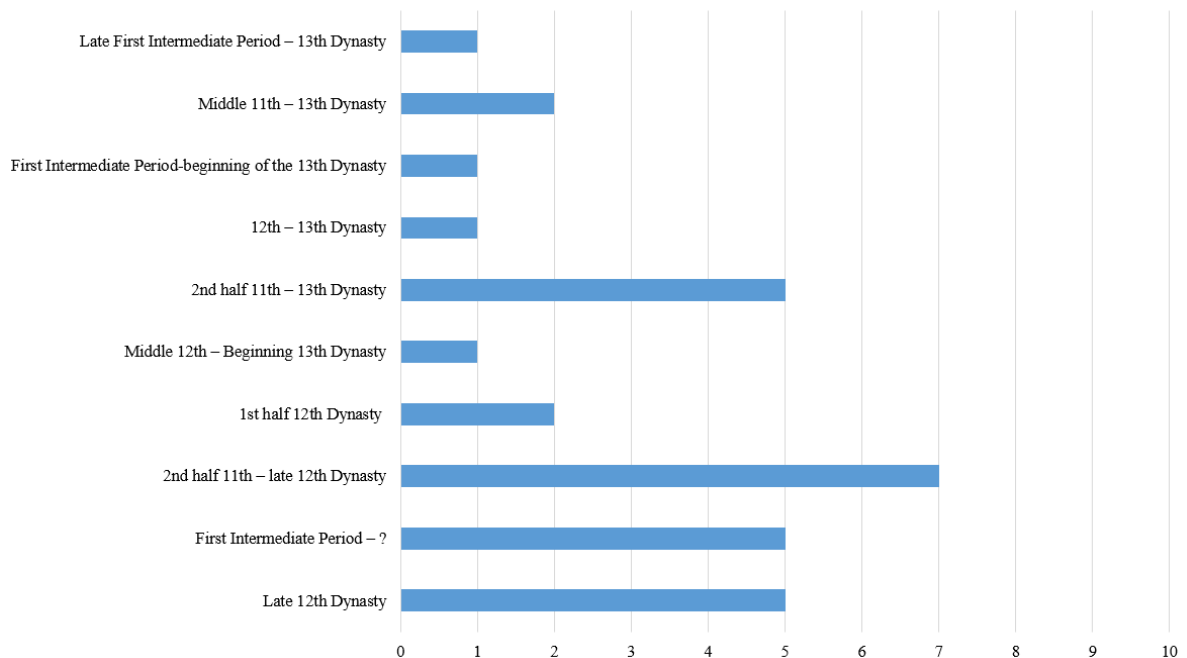
<sup>286</sup> To understand the chronological frame of QH34ff, See chapter 5.1.2. QH34ff.

QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv. 54	QH35p	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv. 318	QH35p	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604/inv. 319	QH35p	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Undetermined
QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv. 316	QH35p	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Belong to QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802 /inv. 253
QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604	QH35p	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – late 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Undetermined
QH36/17/9/UE19/241/inv. 86	QH36	1 <sup>st</sup> half 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Quadrangular-shaped
QH36/17/9/UE21/308	QH36	1 <sup>st</sup> half 12 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe or oval- shaped
0/754	QH90b	Middle 12 <sup>th</sup> – Beginning 13 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
0/665	QH93	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
0/666	QH93	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
0/667	QH93	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
0/668	QH93	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
0/669	QH93	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 11 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
0/621	QH93	12 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Quadrangular-shaped
106/1	QH106	First Intermediate Period- beginning of the 13 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty <sup>287</sup>	Horseshoe or oval- shaped

<sup>287</sup> To understand the chronological problem in QH106, See chapter 5.1.7. QH106.

110/22	QH110 288	First Intermediate Period – ?	Horseshoe or oval-shaped
110/91	QH110	First Intermediate Period – ?	Horseshoe or oval-shaped
110/78	QH110	First Intermediate Period – ?	Horseshoe-shaped
110/90	QH110	First Intermediate Period – ?	Horseshoe-shaped
0/1325.04	QH206	Middle 11 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
0/1318.01	QH206/ 206a	Middle 11 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped
0/1114.01	QH207	Late First Intermediate Period – 13 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Horseshoe-shaped

Table 10. Chronological frame of the offering trays found in Qubbet el-Hawa.

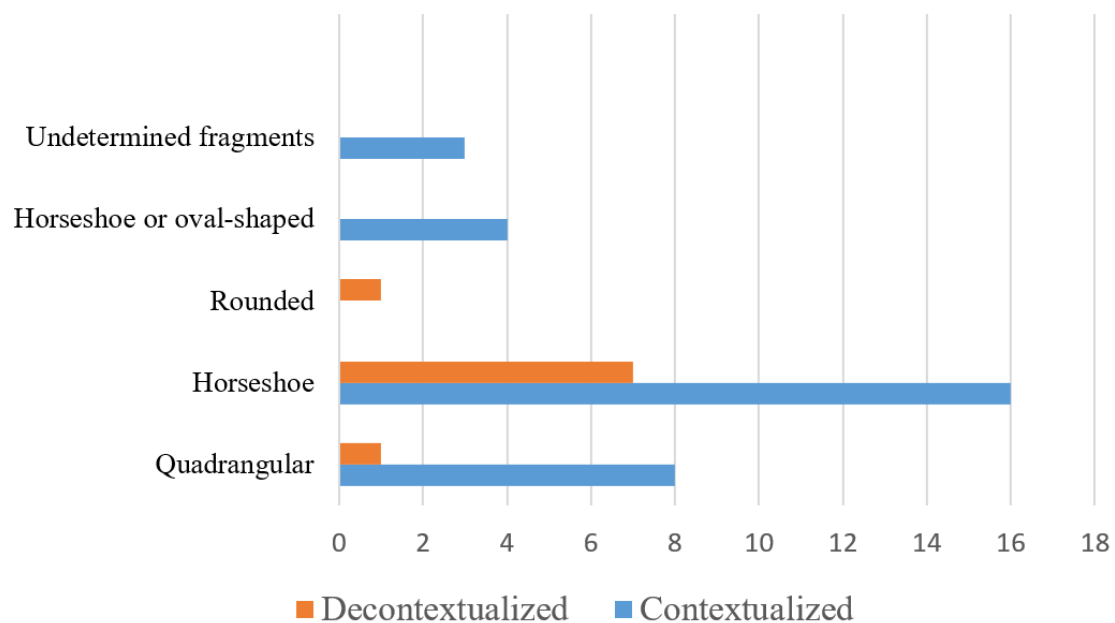


Graphic 10. Quantity and chronology of offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa based on table 10.

<sup>288</sup> To understand the chronological problem in QH110, See chapter 5.1.8. QH110.

In short, the table 10 shows the quadrangular offering trays are present from 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty mainly. While, the horseshoe and/or oval-rounded trays are since the First Intermediate Period. This fact might be related to the changes during the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, when the Egyptian capital change its location. Amenemhat I decided to move it from Thebes to the north area, where he founded a new city, Ity-Tawy. This new town would have supposed a new influence area for the nomes. Concerning the offering trays, in the chapter 3.6. Origin zone, main areas of the offering trays and soul houses was explained the predominance of quadrangular offering trays in the Middle Egypt. In this way, it is possible to take the Niwinski's idea about the influence of the capital. But, it must be reviewed it, due to the fact that his proposal tries to locate the origin of the offering trays in the north. Whilst with this research, it is possible to indicate a transfer of features from the Middle Egypt thanks to the influence area of the new capital to rest nomes.

Concerning the quantity of contextualized offering trays in Qubbet el-Hawa, it may observe a higher presence of horseshoe trays compared to quadrangular ones (Fig. 161). This might support the idea of a transferring of the quadrangular shapes from the north during the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, and their lower presence is due to the short period between this time and the disuse of these artefacts. This last, it is supported by the graphic 11 also, which shows the complete group of offering trays (contextualized and decontextualized).



Graphic 11. Quantity and shape of contextualized and decontextualized offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa. Graphic by the author.

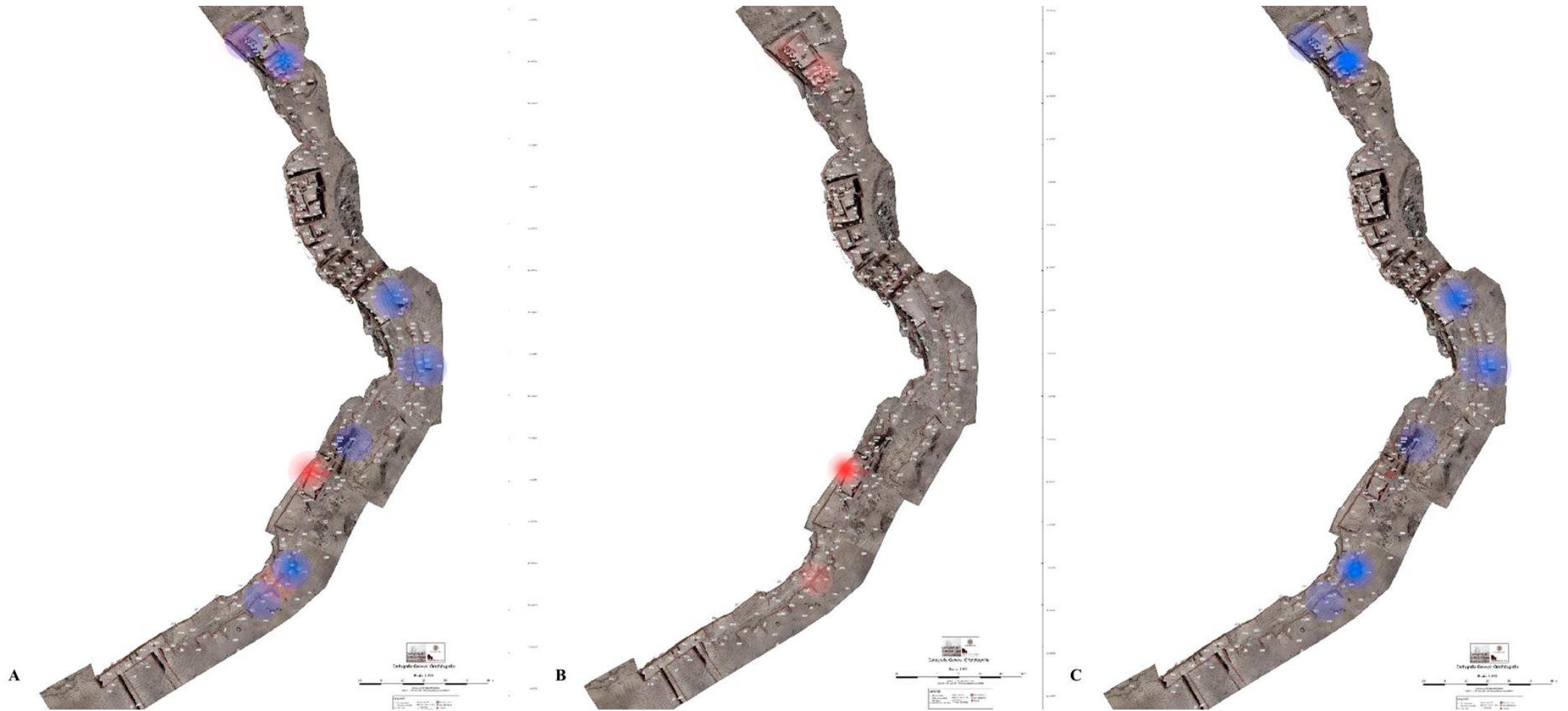


Figure 161: density and dispersion map of contextualized offering trays. Red: Quadrangular trays; Blue: Horseshoe trays. Map created by the author from GIS software. Orthophoto of Dr. Antonio Mozas Calvache and Dr. José Luis Pérez García. ©University of Jaén. Proyecto Qubbet el Hawa.

#### 5.4. Conclusions of the chapter 5

In summary, the offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa have their own characteristics. This, together with the modelling of many of them, indicate the same place of production. In this case, we can indicate that this would be a local production because of the absence of parallels outside Qubbet el-Hawa. Additionally, the trade of these artefacts would be limited to the region, due to their nature belonging to the private sphere. Besides, the poor manufacture in some of them, it would indicate that these artefacts were not a usual production in the workshop. However, there are an external stylistic influences due to the transit of people throughout Egypt, as shapes of the trays, channels and modelled items.

Regarding the clay composition, it shows similar circumstances to previous paragraph. Its characteristics, apart from reflecting the Vienna system, correspond in most cases to the composition of local clays. Additionally, there are two examples showing the use of mixed clays, which is common in all historical periods. However, in our case, this could be either due to production requirements, the testing of craftsmen or any other reason.

Also, thanks to this preliminary study about clays, it has been possible to raise new questions about the presence of limestone in the region's clays. On the one hand, it could be more common than previously established. On the other hand, its presence is mainly artificial, so they are tempers added by the craftsmen, which would indicate a trade of raw materials used in the workshops. To solve these questions, new petrographic analysis will be necessary, such as thin sections.

On the other hand, the chronology of offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa, only we may know those contextualized. Hence, the quadrangular trays seem to be produced in the Aswan region from the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards.<sup>289</sup> This would be because of the influence of the capital over the production of the rest of nomes and the imitation of the court area of them. But also, they keep self-features because of the independence got during the prior periods, together with the aforementioned reasons.

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<sup>289</sup> Another example in Aswan area that reinforces this idea, it is the fragment of offering trays found by Qubbet el-Hawa North Project. This specimen was found together with material dated in the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Personal Communication of Dr Sarah Konert.

Concerning the horseshoe-shaped offering trays, they began to manufacture earlier than 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty,<sup>290</sup> and they coexisted together with quadrangular ones from the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

## 6. Typology of Qubbet el-Hawa

During the study carried out in 2019 about contextualized offering trays found by the University of Bonn. It was established a first typology (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019a; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2021). Nevertheless, after the present study, it is possible to add new artefacts, which complete the typology initiated formerly.

In this way, it identified three groups, QHA, QHB and QHC. The two first ones encompass subgroups (Fig. 162). Each group was standardized according to the design of the trays (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019a; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2021).

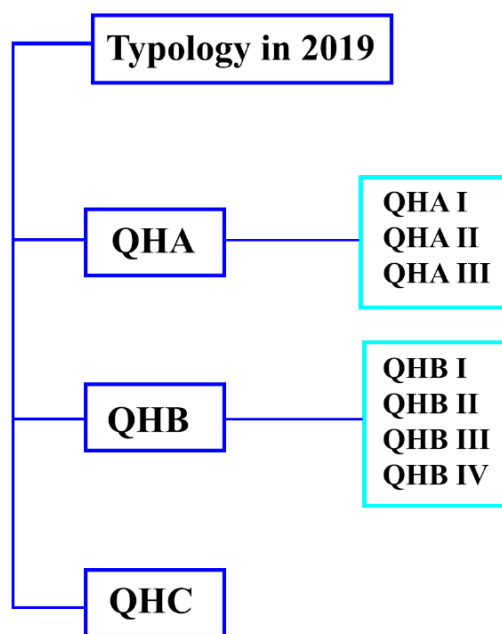


Figure 162: typology established in 2019. Diagram created by the author.

Regarding the previous typology, thanks to the current study it is possible to create new groups and add more offering trays to the one established before.

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<sup>290</sup> According to the studies about offering trays of different authors, the offering trays emerged during the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Dynasties (See chapter 3.5. Chronology of the offering trays and soul houses). However, the research at the necropolis from Qubbet el-Hawa, as well as at Elephantine and Aswan, is in progress. Thus, it is impossible to concretize the emergence of the offering trays production in this region.

## 6.1. QHA group

QHA group show only canals and basins. This group, depending on the designs, was divided in QHA.I, QHA.II in QHA.III. However, as it has indicated above, during the present research, a new subgroup has been created, QHA. IV.

### 6.1.1. QHA.I

They are horseshoe trays with a U-shaped canal, which are 0/667, offering tray I that have been identified as artefact 0/666,<sup>291</sup> and offering tray D (Fig. 163a-c). In addition, in this group is added the offering tray A,<sup>292</sup> which show an irregular U-shaped channel (Fig. 163d).

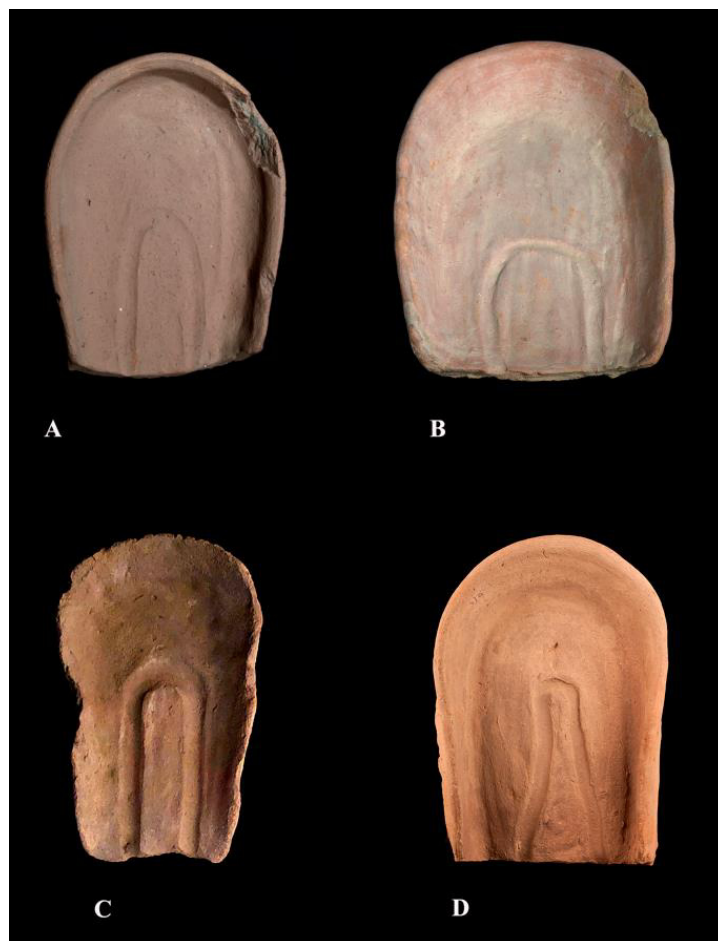


Figure 163a-c: QHA.I. a) Offering tray 0/667; b) Offering tray I (0/666); c) Offering tray D; d) Offering tray A.

<sup>291</sup> See chapter 5.1.2.d. Offering trays 0/666 and 0/667 and chapter 5.1.11.10. Offering tray I.

<sup>292</sup> The author has decided not to create a new subgroup for the offering tray A, in order to avoid difficulties in future studies. However, the typology presented here is not closed, and is susceptible to future modifications according to new findings.

### 6.1.2. QHA.II

These trays are oval or horseshoe-shaped and shows two diagonal canals with two circular basins. They are the offering trays 0/669 and QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19 (Fig. 164a-b).

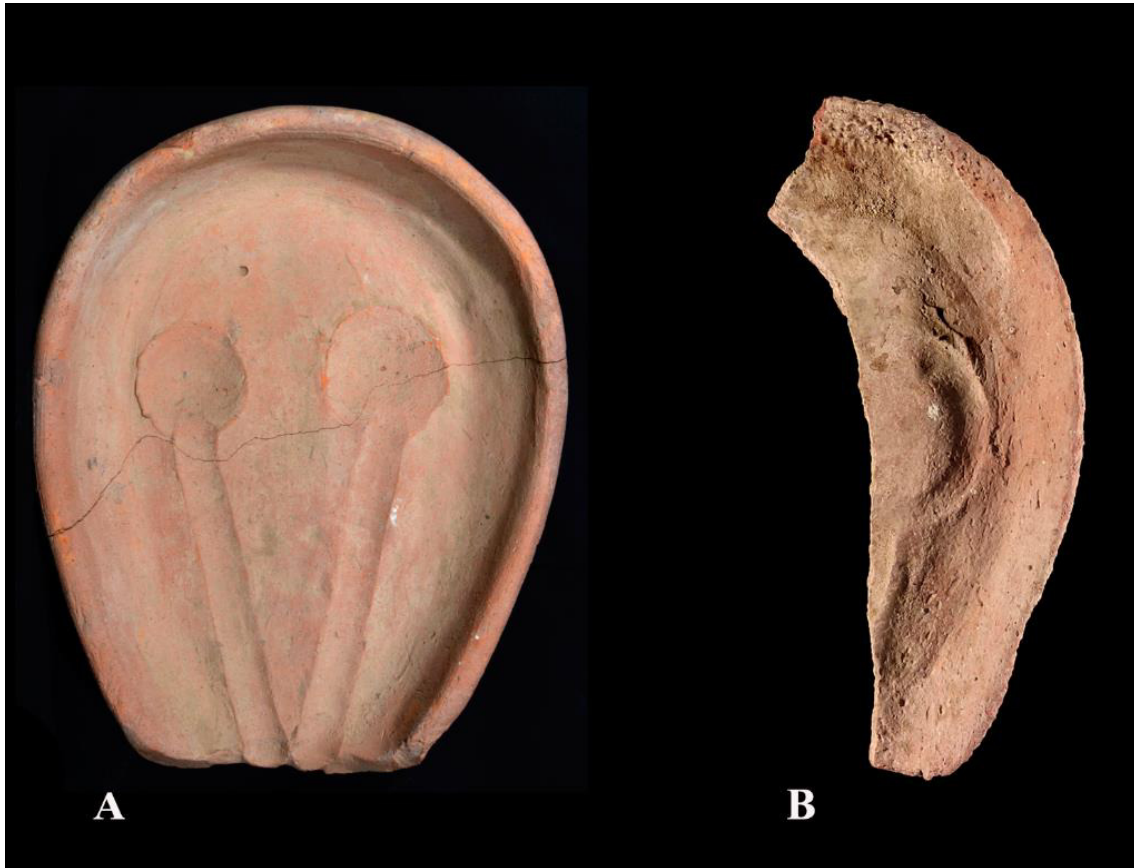


Figure 164a-b: QHA.II. a) Offering trays 0/669; b) Offering tray QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv.19.

### 6.1.3. QHA.III

This group hold horseshoe-shaped trays with two parallel canals and an internal dividing wall, which is the offering tray 0/1325.04 (Fig. 165). At the moment, there is only a tray in this group.

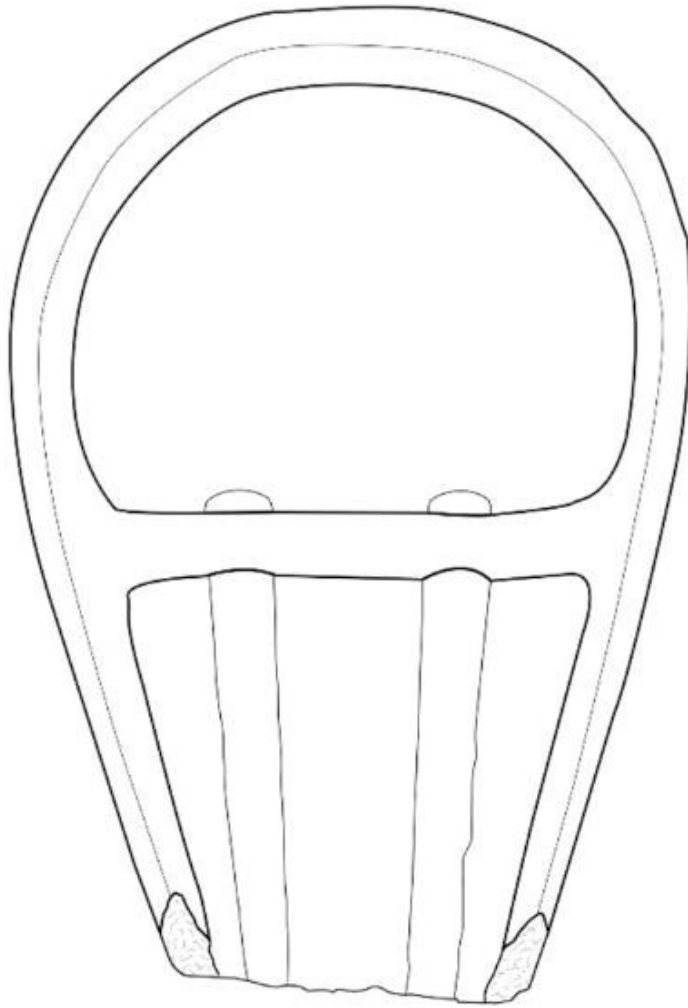


Fig. 165: QHA.III. Offering tray 0/1325.04.

### 6.1.2. QHA.IV

This new subgroup contains the offering trays with diagonal, straight, curved or cross channels, which are QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv.252 and offering trays B, C, F, and G (Fig. 166a-e).

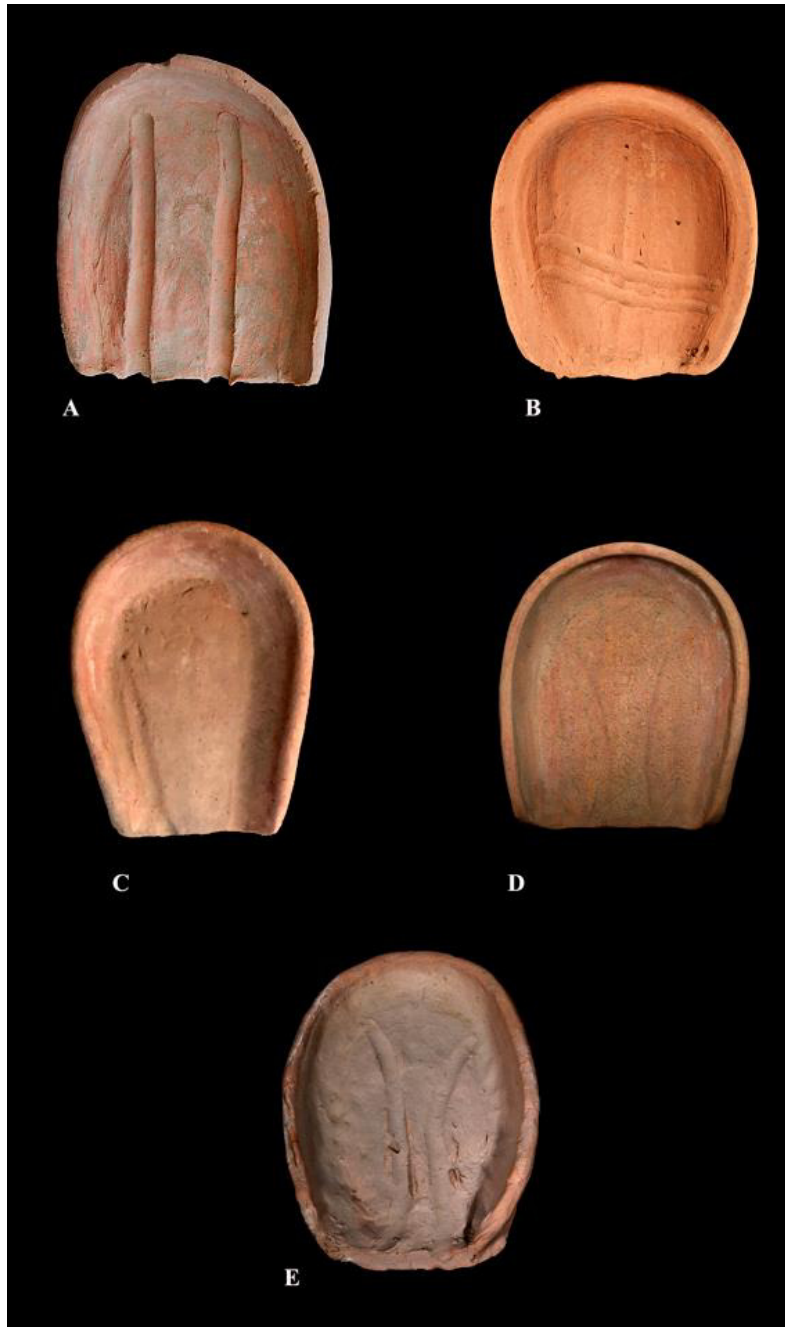


Figure 166a-e: QHA.IV. a) Offering tray QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv.252; b) Offering tray B; c) Offering tray C; d) Offering tray F; e) Offering tray G.

## 6.2. QHB group

QHB group comprises offering trays with libation canals, basins, models, and/or epigraphy. This set was divided in four subgroups depending on their shape and/or elements on their surface.

### 6.2.2. QHB.I

The features of this subgroup are the horseshoe shape, the U-shaped channel, and food offering models. The offering trays in this group are QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253 + QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv.273, 0/665, 0/668, 110/90, and offering tray I (Fig. 167).

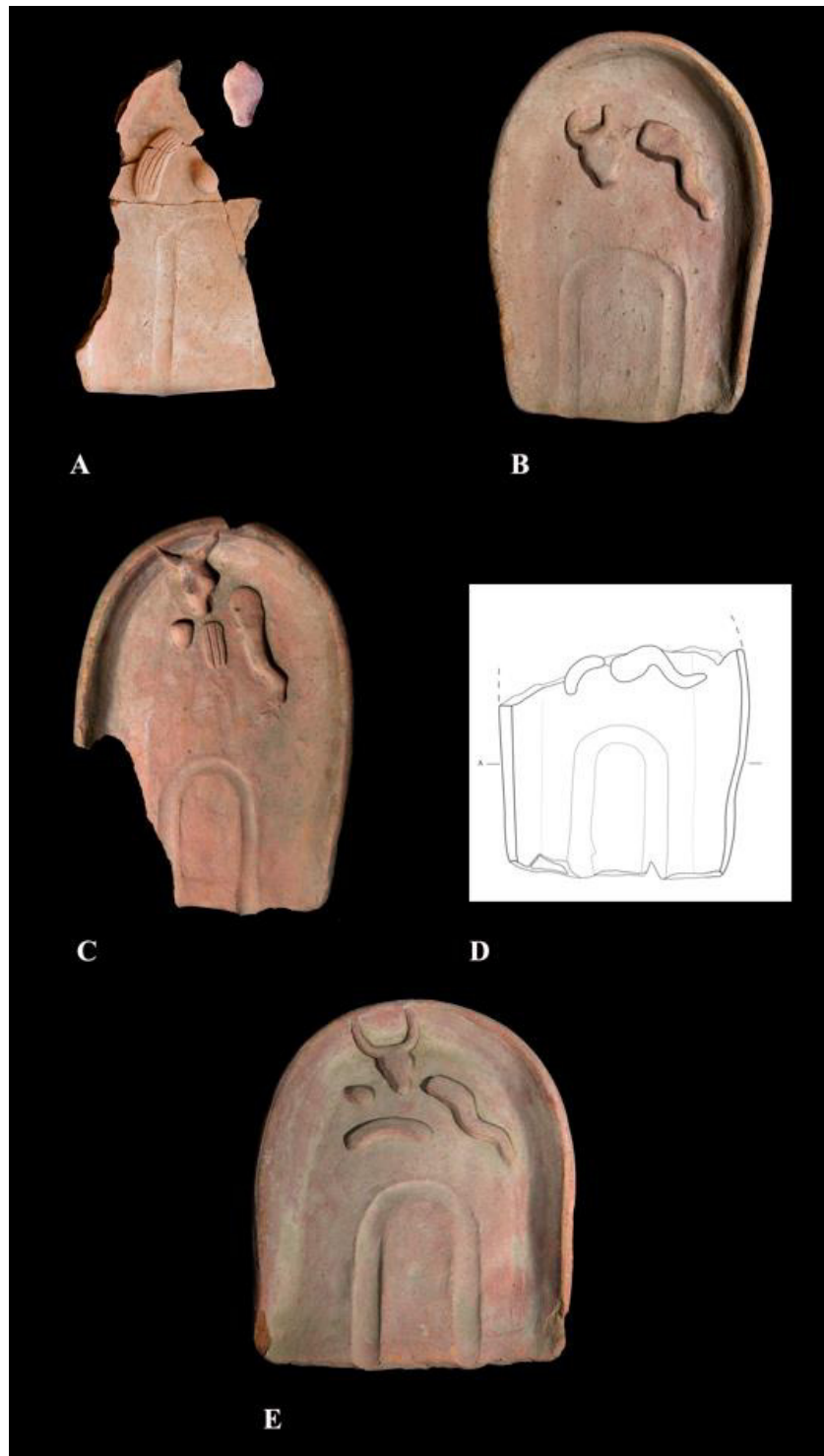


Figure 167a-e: QHB.I. a) Offering tray QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253 + QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv.273; b) Offering tray 0/665; c) Offering tray 0/668; d) Offering tray 110/90; e) Offering tray I.

### 6.2.3. QHB.II

This subgroup comprises offering trays with horseshoe-shaped with models, channels, and/or basins. But, in contrast to the above group, the channels here have another design, which, at the moment, is two straight channels and a quadrangular basin.<sup>293</sup> While, the models may represent food, vessels, an altar and a table. Currently, in this case, there is an only specimen, which is the offering tray 0/754 (Fig. 168).



Figure 168: QHB.II. Offering tray 0/754.

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<sup>293</sup> See footnote 292.

#### 6.2.4. QHB.III

This group includes quadrangular offering trays. These may show offering models, altar and/or table models, basins, and/or channels. The offering trays in this group are QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.1, QH33/C10/UE103/inv.5, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.6, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.8, 0/621, offering tray E, and QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv.317 (Fig. 169a-g).



Figure 169: QHB.III. a) Offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.1; b) Offering tray QH33/C10/UE103/inv.5; c) Offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.6; d) Offering tray QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.8; e) Offering tray 0/621; f) Offering tray E; g) Offering tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv.317.

### 6.2.5. QHB.IV

This subgroup<sup>294</sup> encompasses the horseshoe/oval offering trays. Besides, these show different models, incised text, channels, and/or basins on their surface and/or holes in the edge. This way, the offering trays in this subcategory are the offering tray 106/1 and offering tray J (Fig. 170a-b).

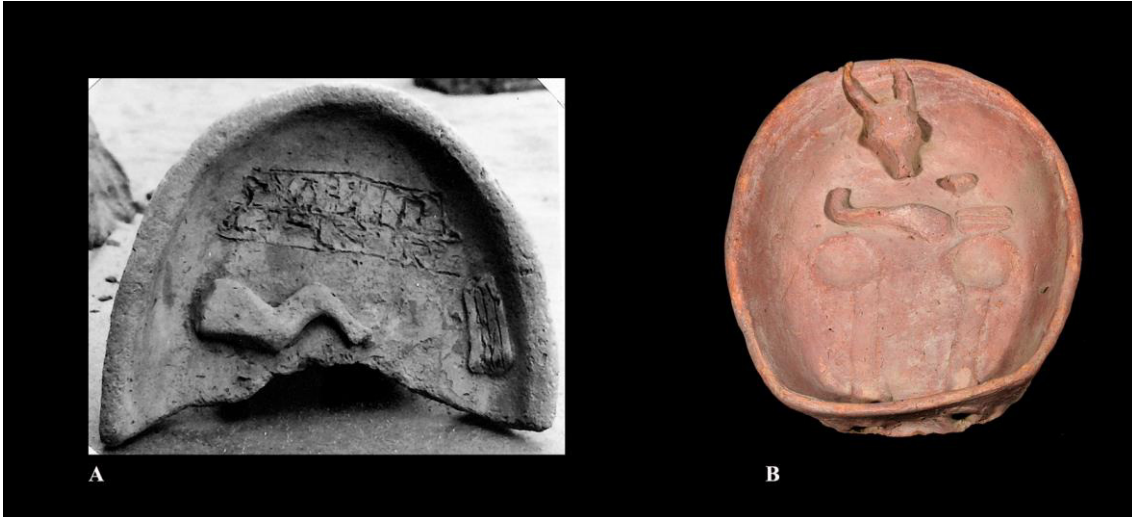


Figure 170a-b: QHB.IV. a) Offering tray 106/1; b) Offering tray J.

### 6.3. QHC group

The group QHC is the last one in the typology of Qubbet el-Hawa. It includes fragments of offering trays, which are impossible to add in prior groups due to scarce information provide for them during this research. Regarding the group QHC, in 2019, subcategories were not established. The reason was the small quantity of fragments. However, during the present research, it has been decided to create two different subgroups, QHC.I and QHC.II, according to the features of these sherds.

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<sup>294</sup> In 2019, the subgroup QHB.IV included only the artefact 106/1, because of particularity of the incised text on its surface (LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2021: pp. 31-32). But, after the present research, taking in account the nature and function of offering trays (See chapter 7. Final conclusions), it has been considered this feature as an element more of the offering trays. Therefore, this subgroup has been opened to new artefacts whose features are rare in Qubbet el Hawa, at the moment.

### 6.3.2. QHC.I<sup>295</sup>

This subgroup includes fragments that show part of the edge of the tray and some elements that provide an idea about the design of the tray and manufacture. These sherds are QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv.54+ QH35p/15/C4/UE38/60, QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv.318, QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604/inv.319, 110/78, and 0/1318.01 (Fig. 171a-f).

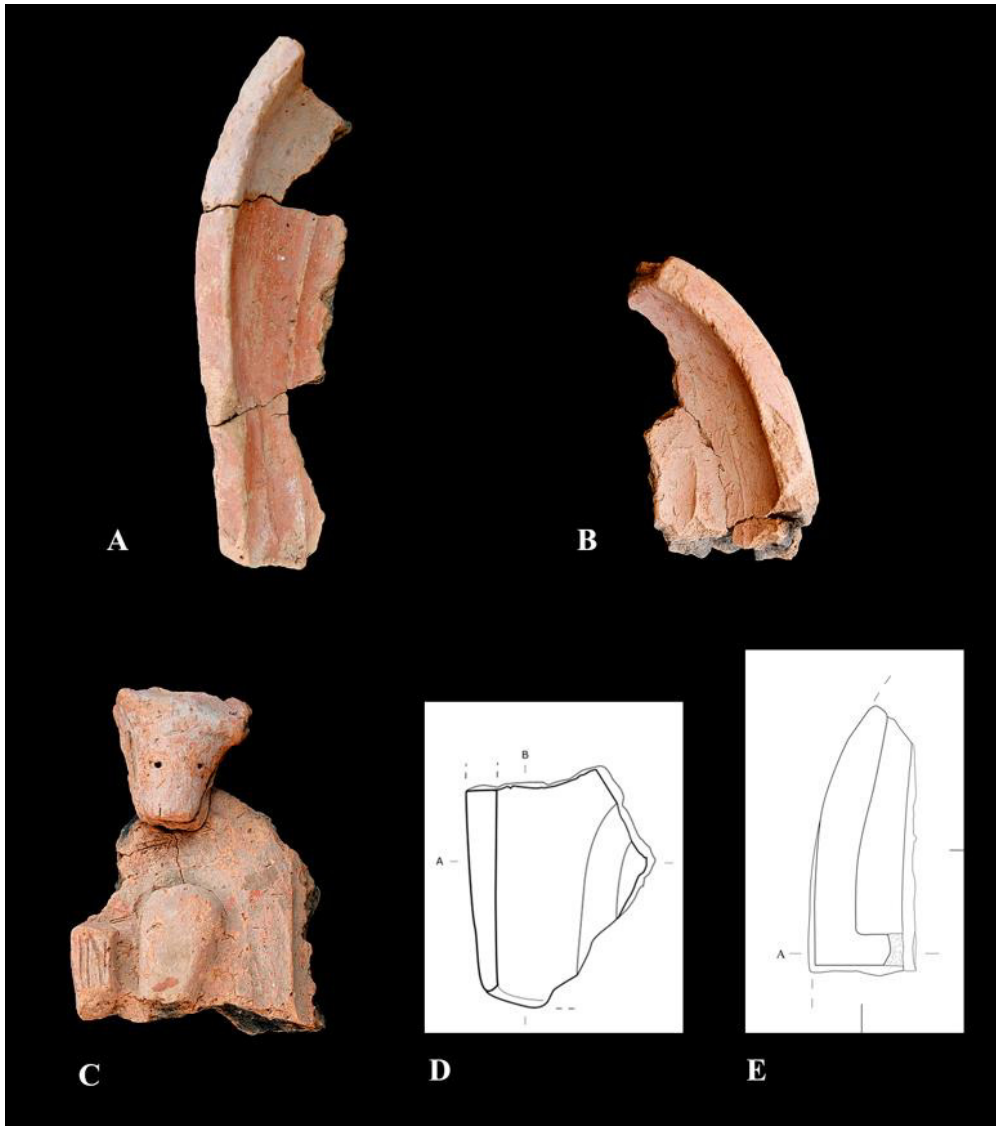


Figure 171a-e: QHC.I. a) Offering tray QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv.54 + QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604; b) Offering tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv.318; c) Offering tray QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604/inv.319; d) Offering tray 110/78; e) Offering tray 0/1318.01.

<sup>295</sup>Although the shape and possible typology are recognizable in some fragments, the absence of other elements makes it impossible to add them to the previous typological groups. It is for this reason that the QHC.I group has been created.

### 6.3.3. QHC. II

The last subgroup, QHC.II, encompasses the fragments that provide information about manufacture and/or, scarcely, about their shape. These are QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv.76,<sup>296</sup> QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv.316,<sup>297</sup> QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604, QH36/17/9/UE19/241/inv.86, QH36/17/9/UE21/308, 110/22, 110/91, 0/1114.01 (Fig. 172a-h).

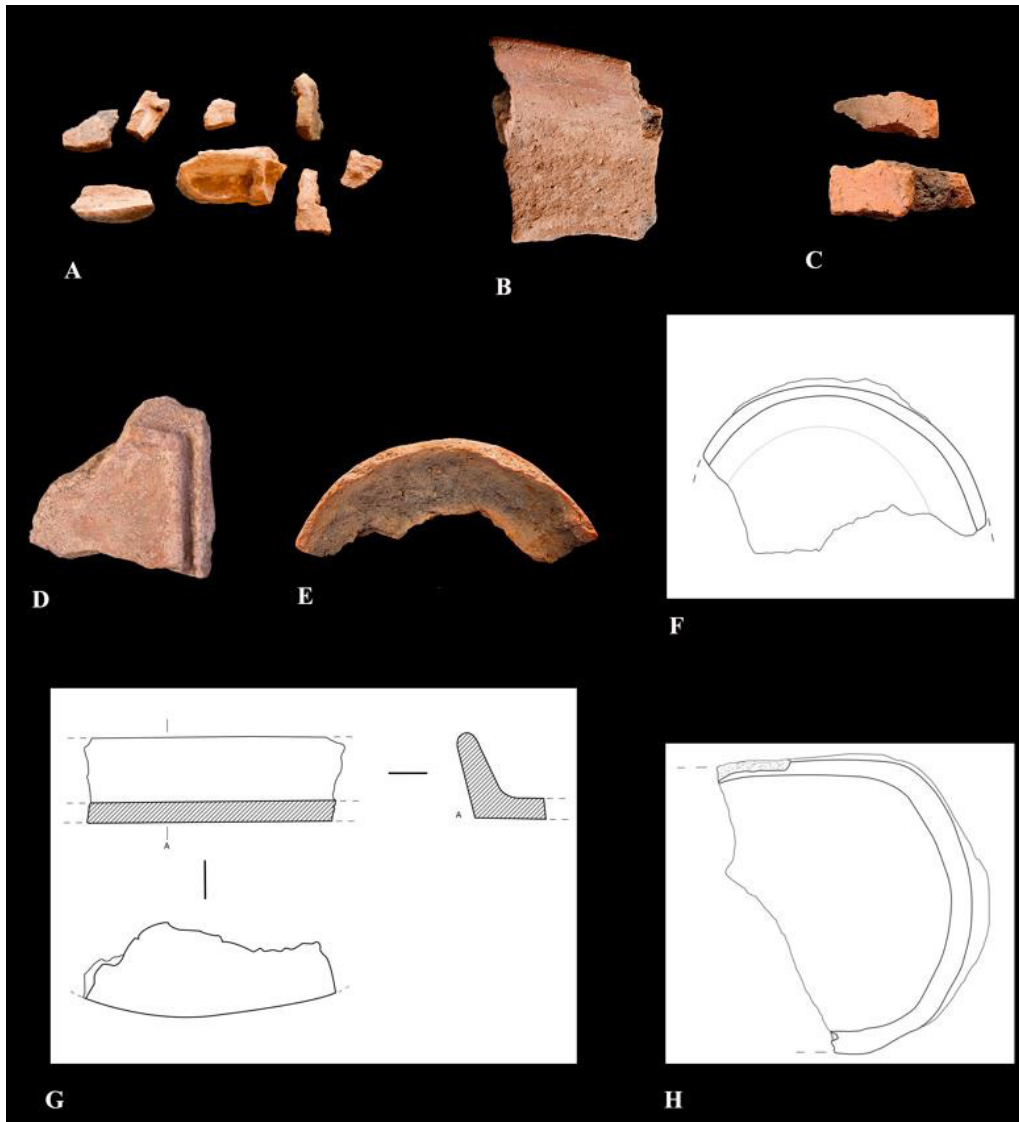


Figure 172a-h: a) Fragments QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv.76; b) Fragment QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv.316; c) Fragments QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604; d) Fragment QH36/17/9/UE19/241/inv.86; e) Fragment QH36/17/9/UE21/308; f) Fragment 110/22; g) Fragment 110/91; h) Fragment 0/1114.01.

<sup>296</sup> See footnote 179.

<sup>297</sup> This fragment could be part of QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253. See chapter 5.1.3.1.g. QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv.316.

## 7. Final conclusions

The main studies of offering trays were carried out during the 20th century. This research focused on origin, function, typology, and typological development. However, the presence of offering trays in domestic contexts and their relationship with Egyptian society were not taken into account. Also, these studies indicate that offering trays and soul houses are the same type of artefact, with soul houses representing the final stage in their chronological development. More recent studies provide new proposals for the origin of the offering trays, and differentiate between pottery offering tray and stone offering tables, but go no further, focusing solely on their typological features or, rarely, their chronological attributes.

Research for this thesis demonstrates that pottery offering trays, stone offering tables and soul houses, occasionally, share features and offering scenes because they share the same cult environment. However, pottery offering trays must be considered as distinct artefacts for a number of reasons.

Firstly, stone offering tables are present in all historical periods of Egypt, as noted by Filippo Mi (See p. 22), whereas pottery offering trays are only present between the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasties. This coincides with changes in society and religious practices during the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom. Although, a group of offering tray fragments were also found in domestic context at Kom Tuman, and their function was included in domestic cults. These artefacts were dated in the Late Period.<sup>298</sup> Therefore, it supports the proposal exposed at the present thesis, as well.

There are also significant differences in iconography between pottery offering trays and stone offering tables. Model offerings found on offering trays are mainly symbolic of protection, security, fertility, rebirth, or justice, with the offeror as the beneficiary. This supports the theory that offering trays were votive objects, as will be demonstrated below. The symbolism on stone offering tables and in offering scenes, however, refers to rebirth and fertility, and it is the deceased who benefits. This iconography is usually found together with the offering formula, supporting the idea of perpetual goods for the deceased.

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<sup>298</sup> According to Sergej V. Ivanov (2015: 125), the gap between 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and Late Period could be because of return to ancient tradition during the Late Period or the absence of archaeological recording yet.

Soul houses, on the other hand, have different features, which are predominately architectural elements, and in some cases, anthropomorphic figures carrying out various activities. In this they are similar to the wooden funerary models.<sup>299</sup> Another important difference is that the soul houses have been found individually, and sometimes, inside the burial chambers, whereas some offering trays have been found in groups, and they are always in public areas.<sup>300</sup> These model houses are also found outside the chronological range of the offering trays, and are also found in other cultures. This supports the idea that soul houses did not develop from pottery offering trays; rather, there is external and chronological evidence to suggest that soul houses were present both before and after the timeframe of the offering trays.

Therefore, the varying features of these artefacts, the chronology, locations, and the presence of both offering trays and soul houses in the same place and chronological context indicate that there was no linear chronological evolution from one artefact to the other.

Pottery offering trays are found in both domestic and funerary contexts as votive objects and the quantity of these artefacts in any particular place varies. These contexts are linked to the household or popular religion, and thus, the ancestor cult. This cult was carried out in the homes, sanctuaries and/or the tombs. The veneration of the predecessor was related to legitimacy and social position. Consequently, this cult was mostly performed by the local elite and their household. This is the reason for the presence of offering trays in tombs belonging to ruling families as well as among the burials of other social groups. These artefacts were presented to the head of the household by the members of his extended family. These people may or may not have belonged to a high social group, because the household included individuals from different social levels. The absence of writing on offering trays might indicate that these artefacts came from household members from lower and medium social tiers, as literacy was rare or non-existent in these groups.

This social and familial unit should not be understood as a linear or pyramidal structure. Instead, it would show ramifications and diverse structures interconnected with each other. However, among these independent units, one may stand out among the others.

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<sup>299</sup> There are funerary models made with clay. Thus, the raw material is not determinant to link to soul houses and offering trays.

<sup>300</sup> The artefacts found inside the funerary shafts, it was explained that they were a secondary context.

These social ramifications could explain the presence of offering trays in contexts of varying social and administrative ranks. In this sense, neither the recipients nor the donors of these objects held specific social or administrative statuses or wealth, as in the case of Qubbet el-Hawa.

Associated with popular religion and the ancestor cult, there are a set of inscribed and uninscribed artefacts linked to the interaction between the living and the dead, considered by the scholars to be part of a ritual performance. These artefacts are known as ‘letters to the dead’, and they are evidence of a ritual of communication. They were also presented to the head of the household. The chronology for these letters is between the late Old Kingdom and the 7<sup>th</sup> Century BCE, but their use peaks in the First Intermediate Period, coinciding with the presence of the pottery offering trays. Through these letters, the members of the extended family requested help from their deceased ancestors in dealing with earthly problems. Orality was highly important in ancient Egypt, which explains why some offering trays are found with model offerings while others are not: model provisions could be replaced by words in the form of petition rituals from the living to the dead.

In addition, the greater or lesser number of trays in any one place supports the idea that they were associated with the requests of the offerors, and not with continued offering to the deceased. This due to the fact that an only tray would be enough for it. Moreover, their concentration in a place is related to the social ramifications mentioned above. However, it is evident that if the deceased held a high rank, their household would likely be larger. Consequently, the number of requests and interactions by the living would be higher, leading to a greater concentration of offering trays. Nevertheless, this is not a decisive factor, as their presence would ultimately depend on the religious needs of the living

As for the symbolism of the elements on the surface of the trays corresponds to the subjects of the petitions recorded:

- Inheritance.
- Aid for, or protection against, harm, illness, haunting, or some undefined threat.
- Fertility/sexual reproduction.

Offering trays can thus be interpreted as depictions of these ritual performances, which explains the presence of the model altars, shrines, food, vessels, etc. on their surfaces.

As for the disappearance of offering trays in the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, some authors have suggested that they were substituted by shabtis. However, we cannot confirm their complete absence, and it is possible to consider a reduction in their use due to changes in religious practices.<sup>301</sup> This is reinforced by the offering tray fragments found at Kom Tuman which were dated to the Late Period. We should also bear in mind that most archaeological work is carried out in high status necropoleis, and that artefacts found in domestic contexts may differ between social groups. An example of this is the Buhen fortress, where offering trays were found. The population there consisted of soldiers, army officials, civil population, and their relatives.

The case of Qubbet el-Hawa is a clear evidence of previous proposals. Offering trays, stone offering tables and fragments of possible soul houses have all been found, proving that one form was not a substitute for another. These artefacts have been found in different tombs and burials, belonging to different ruling families, or individuals related to them. The quantity varies in each placement, and the number of offering trays does not correspond with the number of individuals found, suggesting a votive function for the trays. One particular offering tray - 106/1 – has incised text, and represents the ‘missing link’ between the inscribed and unincised requests of the household members.

The dating of the Qubbet el-Hawa objects conforms to the general chronology of these artefacts, but there are significant details about their shape. The rounded, oval or horseshoe forms, which are typical in Upper Egypt, are present at Qubbet el-Hawa from before the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. However, quadrangular offering trays, which are typical of Middle Egypt, are present at the necropolis from the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards. This confirms the influence of the capital of Egypt at that time, as its local styles spread to other areas. In this case, as the oldest forms are typical of the Theban region and its surrounding nomes, it suggests this region was the zone of origin for the offering trays.

Nonetheless, despite external influence from Middle or Upper Egypt, offering trays of Qubbet el-Hawa have their own features that indicate a local production. These can be seen in their manufacture and design. But also, the nature of the objects, which were created to the private and popular rituals, imply their trade would be limited to surrounding areas of the workshops.

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<sup>301</sup> See chapter 4.7. Religion and funerary conceptions.

The offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa also contribute to studies about the clay. A significant use of Nile clay is in the manufacture of offering trays, which shows a local composition consistent with previous studies on Elephantine's pottery. However, the current preliminary research about clay used for offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa produce new results, notably the widespread use of limestone as a temper and its potential trade for use in workshops. Additionally, this study reveals the utilization of Marl clay. While only one confirmed specimen occurs in Qubbet el-Hawa at present, similar specimens may be found throughout the Aswan region, as previously discussed in this research. Furthermore, this thesis demonstrates the use of mixed clays in offering trays, a practice commonly observed in other pottery artefacts.

Finally, the typology of offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa, which began in 2019, has established three main groups: QHA, QHB and QHC. Each of these is divided into subgroups depending on the features of offering trays. This typology will be continually updated as archaeological work continues, should new findings be made. The creation of this typology will allow other researchers to understand pottery offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa, and to facilitate the study of these artefacts in Aswan region and in Egypt as a whole.

### **7.1. Future research lines**

The present PhD thesis opens new research lines related to offering trays, both as Artefacts from Aswan and those found outside of this region. It also involves the study of other pottery Artefacts. These investigations are:

- Study of offering trays found by Elmar Edel that are kept at the storehouse in Aswan. This line encompasses the recording of the artefacts, analysis of their manufacture, and an attempt to establish their original location and link with those found by Qubbet el-Hawa Project.
- Fabric analysis of all offering trays from Qubbet el-Hawa. This will allow a deeper understanding of the composition of the Aswan's clays, for which there is currently limited local reference, and it will solve the questions raised during this present thesis.
- Study of the pottery found at QH35p. This will help to determine the chronology and context of the *in-situ* offering trays found in this tomb. Additionally, it will

provide information about funerary and religious context of the tomb. Furthermore, it will add data about clay used at Aswan region. Therefore, it is in accordance with prior point.

- Study of offering trays found in other sites, mainly in the Thebes region due to historical changes as the capital town. The aim of this research line is to confirm the presence of quadrangular offering trays from the 12th dynasty onwards, as it is observed in Qubbet el-Hawa, or confirm their presence previous to this date.

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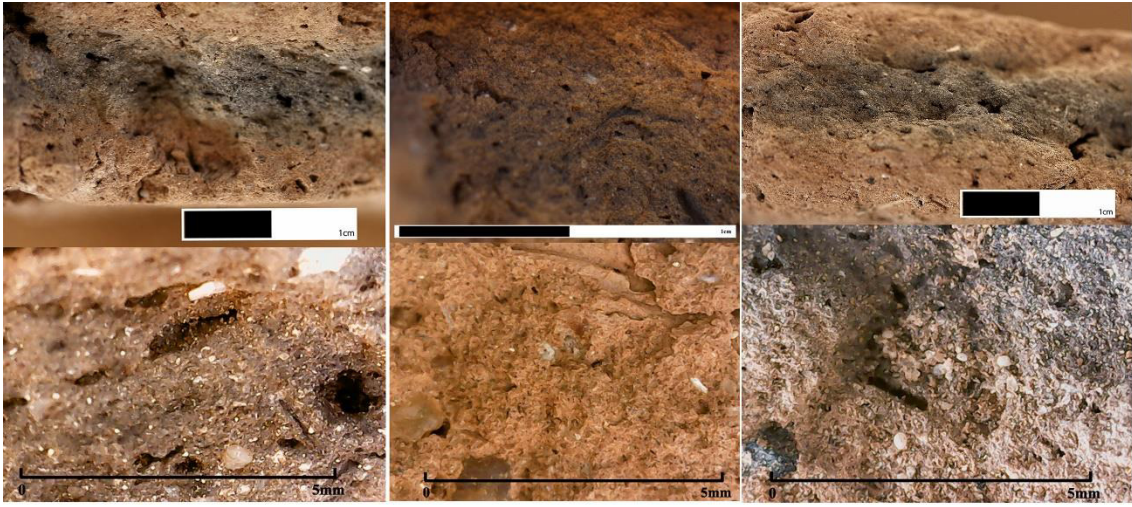
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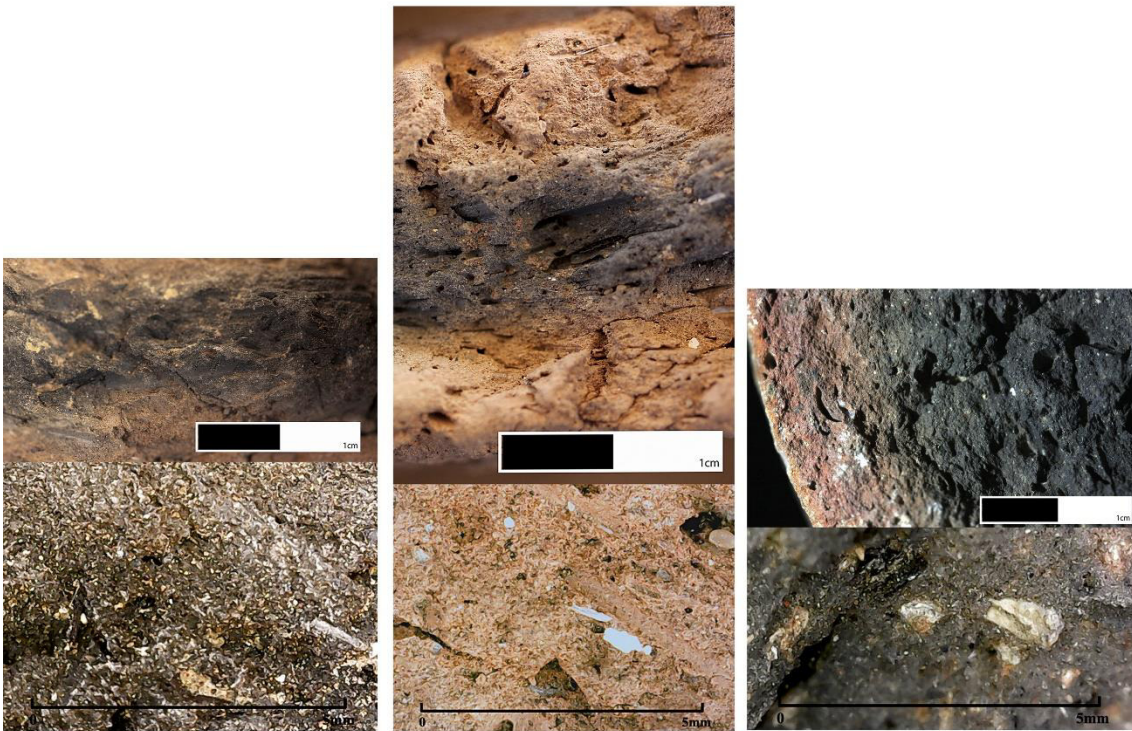
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**ANNEX I. Magnified pictures and Technical  
sheets used in fieldwork for the offering trays  
found by the Qubbet el-Hawa Project**

## Nile B2b clay



QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv.316 QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv.252 QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253



QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv.54 QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604/inv.319 QH36/17/9/UE21/308/inv.429

Offering tray description form			
Inventory Number: 316		Context: QH35p	
Type: QHC.#		Find date: 2016	
Preservation: Fragment			
Conservation state (Erosion): Surface <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fracture <input type="checkbox"/> Base <input type="checkbox"/>			
Drawing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Photograph: General <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clay <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Date: 2021			
Shape		Surface	
Quadrangular <input type="checkbox"/> Horseshoe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Round <input type="checkbox"/> Oval <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	Elements Head bovine <input type="checkbox"/> Leg bovine <input type="checkbox"/> Complete bovine <input type="checkbox"/> Bread loaf <input type="checkbox"/> Meat strip <input type="checkbox"/> Meat piece <input type="checkbox"/> Vessel/s <input type="checkbox"/> Table/support <input type="checkbox"/> Altar <input type="checkbox"/> shrine <input type="checkbox"/> Channel/s <input type="checkbox"/> Basin/s <input type="checkbox"/> Transversal wall <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	Technique	
		Incised	Modelled
Outflow system Spout <input type="checkbox"/> Hole <input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
Remarks			
Rim fragment			
Production		Firing	Surface treatment
Hand-made <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Oxidised <input type="checkbox"/>	None <input type="checkbox"/>	None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wheel-thrown <input type="checkbox"/>	Reduced <input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed (Hand-made and wheel-thrown) <input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Slip <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.5YR Colour: 6/4 light reddish	Slip <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:		Wash <input type="checkbox"/> Colour:	Wash <input type="checkbox"/> Colour:
Measurements		Plaster <input type="checkbox"/> Colour:	Plaster <input type="checkbox"/> Colour:
Length: 8.1cm Width: 7.7cm Thickness: 3.9cm		Remarks: Thickness from the rim	
Edge			
Straight <input type="checkbox"/>		Pointed <input type="checkbox"/>	
Everted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Flat <input type="checkbox"/>	
Inverted <input type="checkbox"/>		Rounded <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other:			

Fabric description form					
Photographs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thin sections <input type="checkbox"/> Naked eye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Magnification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Microscope <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Structure / Hardness		Sorting		Porosity	
Crumbly <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium hard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Open <input type="checkbox"/>	
Hard <input type="checkbox"/>		Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Dense <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Very good <input type="checkbox"/>		Incipient <input type="checkbox"/>	
				Vitrification <input type="checkbox"/>	
Temper					
Organic <input type="checkbox"/>		Mineral <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Group code					
Nile B2		Dating and occurrence: all periods and regions <small>Chronological spread, main context of ceramic properties</small> Many typology of vessels			
Inclusions	Coarseness			Frequency	Shape
	Fine <2mm	Medium 2-5mm	Coarse >5mm	Cf. the density of inclusions chart	Cf. the chart of roundness
Plan remains		X		5%	
	Fine 60-250mi	Medium 250-500mi	Coarse >500mi		
Sand (quartz/feldspar)		X		1-3%	Rounded
Limestone					
Elongated pores					
Decomposed limestone		X	X	5-10%	irregular and angular
Grey-white particles		X		5%	sub-angular
Red-brown particles, soft					
Red-brown rock particles					
Mica					
Shell: strips					
Microfossils					
Rounded sand-grains					
Grog					
Black rock particles		X		5%	Rounded
Other:					
Additional comments and observations					
Problems, relationship to other fabrics, distinctive properties					



Offering tray description form			
Inventory Number: 253	Context: QH35p		
Type: QHBF	Find date: 2018		
Preservation: Fragment			
Conservation state (Erosion): Surface <input type="checkbox"/> Fracture <input type="checkbox"/> Base <input type="checkbox"/>			
Drawing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photograph: General <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clay <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Date: 2022			
Shape	Surface		
	Elements	Technique	
Quadrangular <input type="checkbox"/>		Incised	Modelled
Horseshoe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head bovine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Round <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Leg bovine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oval <input type="checkbox"/>	Complete bovine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	Bread loaf <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outflow system	Meat strip <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spout <input type="checkbox"/>	Meat piece <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hole <input type="checkbox"/>	Vessel/s <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	Table/support <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Altar <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	shrine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remarks	Channel/s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-same to inv. 273	Basin/s <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-V-shaped channel	Transversal wall <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other: Ribs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Production	Firing	Surface treatment	Base treatment
Hand-made <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Oxidised <input type="checkbox"/>	None <input type="checkbox"/>	None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wheel-thrown <input type="checkbox"/>	Reduced <input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed (Hand-made and wheel-thrown) <input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Slip <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.5 R Colour: 5/8 red	Slip <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	Comments:	Wash <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Colour: white	Wash <input type="checkbox"/>
Measurements		Plaster <input type="checkbox"/>	Plaster <input type="checkbox"/>
Length: 29cm	Remarks: Base shows mark of the cord.		
Width: 12cm			
Thickness: 3'3			
Edge			
Straight <input type="checkbox"/>		Pointed <input type="checkbox"/>	
Everted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Flat <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Inverted <input type="checkbox"/>		Rounded <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other:			

Fabric description form				
Photographs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thin sections <input type="checkbox"/>	Naked eye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Magnification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Microscope <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Structure / Hardness		Sorting		Porosity
Crumbly <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium hard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Open <input type="checkbox"/>
		Fair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Dense <input type="checkbox"/>
Hard <input type="checkbox"/>		Very good <input type="checkbox"/>		Incipient <input type="checkbox"/>
				Vitrification
Temper				
Organic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Mineral <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Group code				
Mile B2		Dating and occurrence: all periods and regions <small>(Chronological appraisal, main contexts of appearance, frequency)</small> many typology vessels		
Inclusions	Coarseness			Frequency
	Fine <2mm	Medium 2-5mm	Coarse >5mm	Cf the density of inclusions chart
Plan remains				Cf the chart of roundness
	Fine 60-250mi	Medium 250-500mi	Coarse >500mi	
Sand (quartz/feldspar)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		5-10%
Limestone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		5-10% Rounded
Elongated pores		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10-20% angular
Decomposed limestone		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3%
Grey-white particles			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5-10% Sub-rounded and angular
Red-brown particles, soft				
Red-brown rock particles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			1% sub-angular
Mica				
Shell: strips				
Microfossils				
Rounded sand-grains				
Grog				
Black rock particles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1% Rounded
Other:				
Additional comments and observations				
Problems; relationship to other fabrics; distinctive properties				

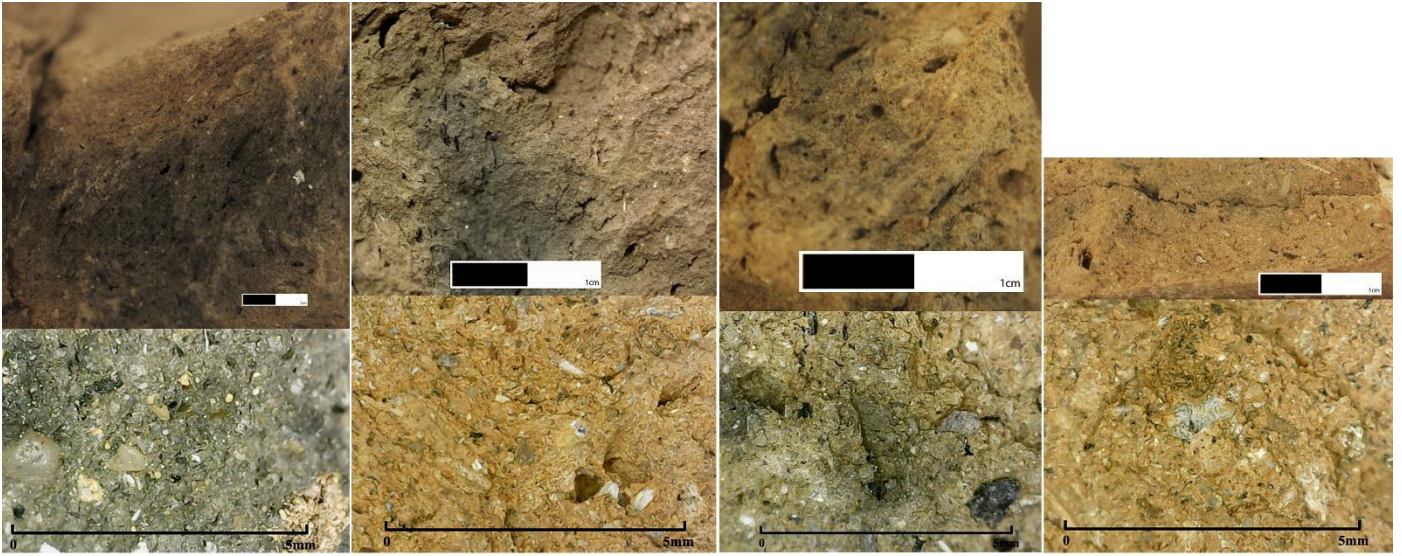


Offering tray description form			
Inventory Number: 319		Context: QHC-2	
Type: QHC-2		Find date: 2015	
Preservation: Fragment			
Conservation state (Erosion): Surface <input type="checkbox"/> Fracture <input type="checkbox"/> Base <input type="checkbox"/>			
Drawing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Photograph: General <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clay <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Date: 2021			
Shape	Surface		
	Elements	Technique	
Quadrangular <input type="checkbox"/> Horseshoe <input type="checkbox"/> Round <input type="checkbox"/> Oval <input type="checkbox"/> Other: unknown Outflow system Spout <input type="checkbox"/> Hole <input type="checkbox"/> Other: unknown Remarks Incised eyes in the head	Head bovine <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Incised <input type="checkbox"/>	Modelled <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Leg bovine <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Complete bovine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bread loaf <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Meat strip <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Meat piece <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Vessel/s <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Table/support <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Altar <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	shrine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Channel/s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Basin/s <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Transversal wall <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other: ribs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Production	Firing	Surface treatment
Hand-made <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Oxidised <input type="checkbox"/>	None <input type="checkbox"/>	None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wheel-thrown <input type="checkbox"/>	Reduced <input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed (Hand-made and wheel-thrown) <input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Slip <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.5R Colour: 4/6 red	Slip <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	Comments:	Wash <input type="checkbox"/>	Wash <input type="checkbox"/>
		Colour:	Colour:
Measurements		Plaster <input type="checkbox"/>	Plaster <input type="checkbox"/>
Length: 11.5cm Width: 8cm Thickness: 3.7cm		Colour:	Colour:
Remarks:			
Edge			
Straight <input type="checkbox"/>		Pointed <input type="checkbox"/>	
Everted <input type="checkbox"/>		Flat <input type="checkbox"/>	
Inverted <input type="checkbox"/>		Rounded <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other:			

Fabric description form					
Photographs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Thin sections <input type="checkbox"/>		Naked eye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Magnification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Microscope <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Structure / Hardness		Sorting		Porosity	
Crumbly <input type="checkbox"/> Medium hard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Very poor <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/>		Open <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Hard <input type="checkbox"/>		Fair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/>		Dense <input type="checkbox"/> Incipient <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Very good <input type="checkbox"/>		Vitrification <input type="checkbox"/>	
Temper					
Organic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Mineral <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Group code					
Mile B2		Dating and occurrence: all periods and regions. <small>Chronological sequence: consists of appearance: fragments</small> many fragments of vessels			
Inclusions	Coarseness			Frequency <small>Cf. the density of inclusions chart</small>	Shape <small>Cf. the chart of roundness</small>
	Fine <2mm	Medium 2-5mm	Coarse >5mm		
Plan remains				20%	
	Fine 60-250mi	Medium 250-500mi	Coarse >500mi		
Sand (quartz/feldspar)				5%	Rounded
Limestone				3-5%	Sub-rounded and angular
Elongated pores				20%	
Decomposed limestone				70%	Rounded
Grey-white particles				20%	Sub-angular and angular
Red-brown particles, soft					
Red-brown rock particles					
Mica					
Shell: strips					
Microfossils					
Rounded sand-grains				5%	
Grog					
Black rock particles				1-3%	Subrounded
Other: charcoal				5-10%	
Additional comments and observations					
<small>Problems, relationship to other fabrics, distinctive properties</small>					



# Nile C1 clay



QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.1

QH33/10/C10/UE103/inv.5

QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.6

QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.8



QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv.317

QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv.318

Offering tray description form			
Inventory Number: <b>1</b>	Context: <b>QH33</b>		
Type: <b>QH.B.III</b>	Find date: <b>2012</b>		
Preservation: <b>Fragmented</b>			
Conservation state (Erosion): Surface <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fracture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Base <input type="checkbox"/>			
Drawing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photograph: General <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clay <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Date: <b>2022</b>			
Shape	Surface		
	Elements	Technique	
Quadrangular <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Horseshoe <input type="checkbox"/> Round <input type="checkbox"/> Oval <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	Head bovine <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leg bovine <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete bovine <input type="checkbox"/> Bread loaf <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meat strip <input type="checkbox"/> Meat piece <input type="checkbox"/> Vessel/s <input type="checkbox"/> Table/support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altar <input type="checkbox"/> shrine <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Channel/s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basin/s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transversal wall <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <b>left</b>	Incised	Modelled
Outflow system <input type="checkbox"/> Spout <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hole <input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
Remarks <i>Raised edge in the back side</i>			
Production	Firing	Surface treatment	Base treatment
Hand-made <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wheel-thrown <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed (Hand-made and wheel-thrown) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments:	Oxidised <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments:	None <input type="checkbox"/> Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/> Slip <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Colour: <b>Red</b> Wash <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Colour: <b>white</b>	None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/> Slip <input type="checkbox"/> Colour: Wash <input type="checkbox"/> Colour:
Measurements		Plaster <input type="checkbox"/> Colour:	Plaster <input type="checkbox"/> Colour:
Length: <b>33.5cm</b> Width: <b>31.8cm</b> Thickness: <b>7cm</b>		Remarks: <i>Thickness from Raised edge</i>	
Edge			
Straight <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Everted <input type="checkbox"/> Inverted <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		Pointed <input type="checkbox"/> Flat <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rounded <input type="checkbox"/>	

Fabric description form					
Photographs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thin sections <input type="checkbox"/> Naked eye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Magnification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Microscope <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Structure / Hardness		Sorting		Porosity	
Crumbly <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium hard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Open <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hard <input type="checkbox"/>		Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Dense <input type="checkbox"/>	Incipient <input type="checkbox"/>
		Very good <input type="checkbox"/>			Vitrification
Temper					
Organic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Mineral <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Group code					
<i>Nile C</i>		Dating and occurrence: <i>All Periods and Regions, many variants - Large vessels</i>			
Inclusions	Coarseness			Frequency	Shape
	Fine <2mm	Medium 2-5mm	Coarse >5mm	Cf. the density of inclusions chart	Cf. the chart of roundness
Plast remains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		10-20%	
Sand (quartz/feldspar)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1%	Sub-angular
Limestone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			1%	Rounded
Elongated pores		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5-10%	
Decomposed limestone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3-5%	angular
Grey-white particles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		3-5%	angular
Red-brown particles, soft			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1%	angular
Red-brown rock particles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		3%	Sub-angular
Mica	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			3%	Well Rounded
Shell: strips					
Microfossils					
Rounded sand-grains					
Grog					
Black rock particles			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1%	Sub-angular
Other:					
Additional comments and observations Problems, relationship to other fabrics; distinctive properties					



Offering tray description form			
Inventory Number: <b>6</b>	Context: <b>QH33</b>		
Type: <b>QH.B.III</b>	Find date: <b>2012</b>		
Preservation: <i>Fragmented</i>			
Conservation state (Erosion): Surface <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fracture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Base <input type="checkbox"/>			
Drawing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photograph: General <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clay <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Date: <b>2022, 2023</b>			
Shape	Surface		
	Elements	Technique	
		Incised	Modelled
Quadrangular <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head bovine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horseshoe <input type="checkbox"/>	Leg bovine <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Round <input type="checkbox"/>	Complete bovine <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Oval <input type="checkbox"/>	Bread loaf <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other:	Meat strip <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outflow system	Meat piece <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spout <input type="checkbox"/>	Vessel/s <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hole <input type="checkbox"/>	Table/support <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	Altar <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	shrine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remarks	Channel/s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>-Raised edge in the back side (roots). May be, spout</i>	Basin/s <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Transversal wall <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other: vessels/supports? (lost)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Production	Firing	Surface treatment	Base treatment
Hand-made <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Oxidised <input type="checkbox"/>	None <input type="checkbox"/>	None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wheel-thrown <input type="checkbox"/>	Reduced <input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed (Hand-made and wheel-thrown) <input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Slip <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Slip <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	Colour: <i>Red</i>	Colour: <i>Red</i>	Colour:
	Wash <input type="checkbox"/>	Wash <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Colour:	Colour:	
Measurements	Plaster <input type="checkbox"/>	Plaster <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Colour:	Colour:	
Length: <i>27.4 cm</i>	Remarks: <i>Thickness from raised edge</i>		
Width: <i>33.5 cm</i>			
Thickness: <i>6.4 cm</i>			
Edge			
Straight <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pointed <input type="checkbox"/>		
Everted <input type="checkbox"/>	Flat <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Inverted <input type="checkbox"/>	Rounded <input type="checkbox"/>		
Other:			

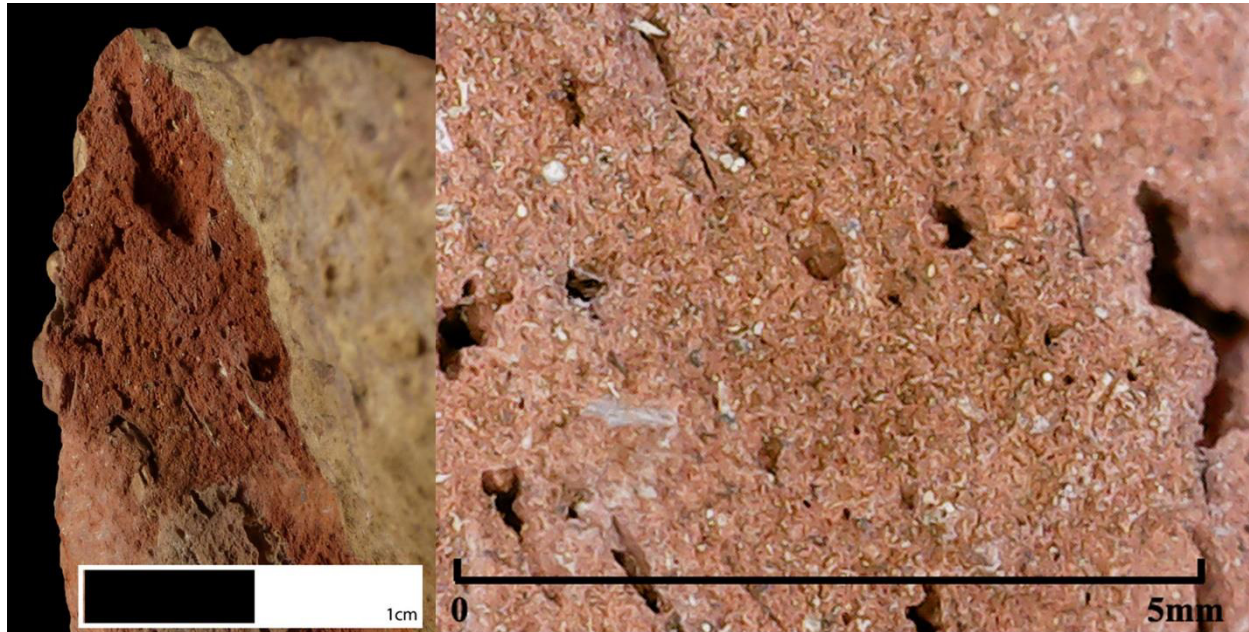
Fabric description form				
Photographs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thin sections <input type="checkbox"/>	Naked eye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Magnification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Microscope <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Structure / Hardness		Sorting		Porosity
Crumbly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Medium hard <input type="checkbox"/>	Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Open <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hard <input type="checkbox"/>		Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Dense <input type="checkbox"/>
		Very good <input type="checkbox"/>		Incipient <input type="checkbox"/>
				Vitrification <input type="checkbox"/>
Temper				
Organic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Mineral <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Group code				
<i>Nile C</i>		Dating and occurrence: <i>APP periods and regions, many variants. Large vessels.</i>		
Inclusions	Coarseness			Frequency
	Fine <2mm	Medium 2-5mm	Coarse >5mm	Cf. the density of inclusions chart
Plan remains				
	Fine 60-250mi	Medium 250-500mi	Coarse >500mi	
Sand (quartz/feldspar)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>3%</i>
Limestone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>5-10%</i>
Elongated pores	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>10-20%</i>
Decomposed limestone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>10-20%</i>
Grey-white particles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>10-20%</i>
Red-brown particles, soft	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>3%</i>
Red-brown rock particles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>3%</i>
Mica	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>3%</i>
Shell: strips	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>3%</i>
Microfossils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>3%</i>
Rounded sand-grains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>3%</i>
Grog	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>3%</i>
Black rock particles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>3%</i>
Other:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>3%</i>
Additional comments and observations				
Problems; relationship to other fabrics; distinctive properties				







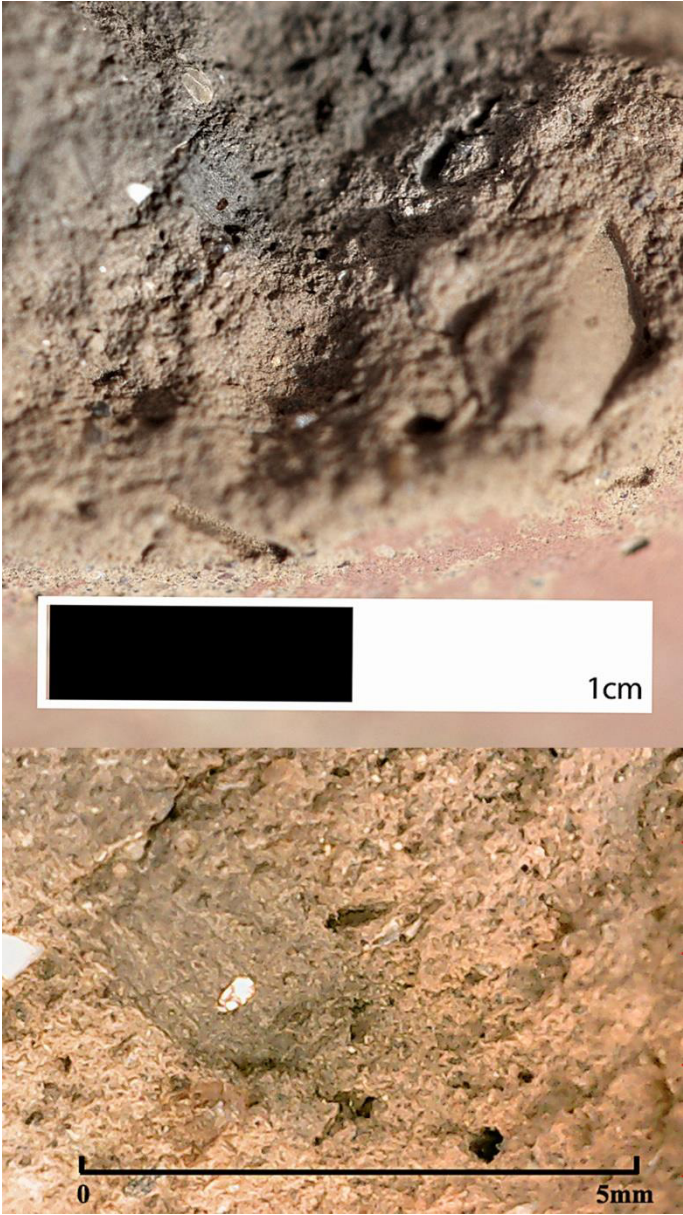
### Marl A3c4 clay



Offering tray description form			
Inventory Number: 19	Context: 04348		
Type: QH A.#	Find date: 2019		
Preservation: Fragment			
Conservation state (Erosion): Surface <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fracture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Base <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Drawing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photograph: General <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clay <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Date: 2022			
Shape	Surface		
	Elements	Technique	
		Incised	Modelled
Quadrangular <input type="checkbox"/>	Head bovine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horseshoe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Leg bovine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Round <input type="checkbox"/>	Complete bovine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oval <input type="checkbox"/>	Bread loaf <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	Meat strip <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outflow system	Meat piece <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spout <input type="checkbox"/>	Vessel/s <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hole <input type="checkbox"/>	Table/support <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: <i>open side</i>	Altar <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	shrine <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remarks	Channel/s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Basin/s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Transversal wall <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Production	Firing	Surface treatment	Base treatment
Hand-made <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Oxidised <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None <input type="checkbox"/>	None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wheel-thrown <input type="checkbox"/>	Reduced <input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothed <input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed (Hand-made and wheel-thrown) <input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed <input type="checkbox"/>	Slip <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10R Colour: 5/6 red	Slip <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	Comments:	Wash <input type="checkbox"/>	Wash <input type="checkbox"/>
		Colour:	Colour:
Measurements	Plaster <input type="checkbox"/>	Plaster <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Colour:	Colour:	
Length: 32.5cm Width: 9.3 Thickness: 5cm	Remarks: <i>maximum width</i>		
Edge			
Straight <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pointed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Everted <input type="checkbox"/>	Flat <input type="checkbox"/>		
Inverted <input type="checkbox"/>	Rounded <input type="checkbox"/>		
Other:			



Fabric description form					
Photographs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thin sections <input type="checkbox"/>	Naked eye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Magnification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Microscope <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Structure / Hardness		Sorting		Porosity	
Crumbly <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium hard <input type="checkbox"/>	Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Open <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Fair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Dense <input type="checkbox"/>	
Hard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Very good <input type="checkbox"/>		Incipient <input type="checkbox"/>	
				Vitrification	
Temper					
Organic <input type="checkbox"/>	Mineral <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Group code					
Marl A3-A4	Dating and occurrence: Middle Kingdom and <small>Chronological appraisal: main context of appearance: (region)</small> Common in New Kingdom. Common in VE (S3)				
Inclusions	Coarseness			Frequency	Shape
	Fine <2mm	Medium 2-5mm	Coarse >5mm	Cf. the density of inclusions chart	Cf. the chart of roundness
Plan remains	Fine 60-250mi	Medium 250-500mi	Coarse >500mi		
Sand (quartz/feldspar)					
Limestone	X			10%	Sub-rounded
Elongated pores		X	X	5%	
Decomposed limestone		X		3%	Sub-angular
Grey-white particles	X			5-10%	Rounded
Red-brown particles, soft					
Red-brown rock particles					
Mica					
Shell: strips					
Microfossils					
Rounded sand-grains					
Grog					
Black rock particles					
Other:					
Additional comments and observations					
<small>Problems; relationship to other fabrics; distinctive properties</small>					
<i>It would have features of Marl A3 and Marl A4</i>					


**Nile B1a2 clay**








**ANNEX II. Database created from Filemaker  
Software**



Inventory No.	0/667
Tomb	QH93
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	U-shaped channel
Material	Nile C?
Manufacture	hand-made, mixed firing
Surface treatment	?
Chronology	2nd half 11th – 13th Dynasty
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	28,7 x 21,3cm
QH Typology	QHA. I
Remarks	
Parallels	<b>QH (channel and shape):</b> 0/666, 0/665, 0/668, 110/90, QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253, offering tray I, offering tray D; <b>Dendera, Penn Museum (channel and shape):</b> No. 29-65-711, No. 29-65-723, No. 29-65-738, No. E3536; <b>Qurna (absence of modelled items):</b> Petrie, 1909: pl. 21.
photography	
Drawings	



Inventory No.	0/666
Tomb	QH93
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	U-shaped channel
Material	Marl clay?
Manufacture	Hand-made, smoothed surface, oxidising firing
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	2nd half 11th – 13th Dynasty
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	19 x 29,5cm
QH Typology	QHA. I
Remarks	Identified as Offering tray H / Store register No. ASW.QH402
Parallels	<b>QH (channel and shape):</b> 0/667, 0/665, 0/668, 110/90, QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253, offering tray I, offering tray D; <b>Dendera, Penn Museum (channel and shape):</b> No. 29-65-711, No. 29-65-723, No. 29-65-738, No. E3536; <b>Qurna (absence of modelled items):</b> Petrie, 1909: pl. 21.
photography	
Drawings	


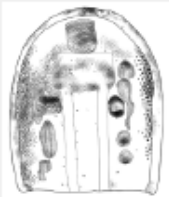
Inventory No.	0/669
Tomb	QH93
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	Two diagonal canals with two circular basins
Material	Marl clay?
Manufacture	Hand-made
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	2nd half 11th – 13th Dynasty
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	27 x 22,5 cm
QH Typology	QHA. II
Remarks	Edel (2008, 2)
Parallels	QH: QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv. 19; Gebelein (Museo Egizio di Torino ): No. S.11966(?), No. P.5536, No. S.14259; Dendera (Penn Museum): No. 29-65-719, No. 29-65-740; El-Tarif: Arnold, 1973: pl. 68, N3.1; Qurna: Petrie, 1909: pl. 21, No. 612; El-Assasif: Budka, 2010: p. 807, K02/88.6.
photography	
Drawings	



Inventory No.	0/1325.04
Tomb	QH206
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	Internal dividing wall
Channels/Basins	Two parallel canals
Material	?
Manufacture	hand-made
Surface treatment	?
Chronology	Middle 11th – 13th Dynasty
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	44,8 x 30, 6 cm
QH Typology	QHA. III
Remarks	
Parallels	<b>QH:</b> No. 0/1318.01 <b>Dendera:</b> Petrie, 1900: Pl. 19, No. 3
photography	
Drawings	



Inventory No.	110/90
Tomb	QH110
Current location	Unknown
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	bovine leg and a cucumber models
Channels/Basins	U-shaped channel
Material	?
Manufacture	hand-made
Surface treatment	?
Chronology	First Intermediate Period – ?
Conservation	Fragmentary
Measurement	16,4 x 18,6 cm
QH Typology	QHB. I
Remarks	It may be kept inside of some tomb from Qubbet el-Hawa.
Parallels	<b>QH (Channel and shape):</b> 0/666, 0/667; <b>(Channel, shape, and models on surface):</b> 0/665, 0/668, offering tray I, QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253. <b>Dendera, Penn Museum (channel and shape):</b> No. 29-65-711, No. 29-65-723, No. 29-65-738, No. E3536
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	0/665
Tomb	QH93
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	bovine head and leg models
Channels/Basins	U-shaped channel
Material	Nile B?
Manufacture	Hand-made
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	2nd half 11th – 13th Dynasty
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	28,4 x 20,3cm
QH Typology	QHB. I
Remarks	
Parallels	<b>QH (Channel and shape):</b> 0/666, 0/667; <b>(Channel, shape, and models on surface):</b> 110/90, 0/668, offering tray I (ASW.QH288), QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253. <b>Dendera, Penn Museum (channel and shape):</b> No. 29-65-711, No. 29-65-723, No. 29-65-738, No. E3536
photography	
Drawings	


Inventory No.	0/668
Tomb	QH93
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	bovine head and leg, meat piece and ribs models
Channels/Basins	U-shaped channel
Material	Nile B?
Manufacture	Hand-made, mixed firing
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	2nd half 11th – 13th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragmentary
Measurement	29,8 x 19,7cm
QH Typology	QHB. I
Remarks	
Parallels	<b>QH (Channel and shape):</b> 0/666, 0/667; <b>(Channel, shape, and models on surface):</b> 110/90, 0/665, offering tray I (ASW.QH288), QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253. <b>Dendera, Penn Museum (channel and shape):</b> No. 29-65-711, No. 29-65-723, No. 29-65-738, No. E3536
photography	
Drawings	

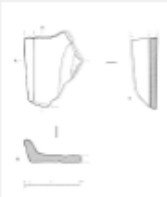
Inventory No.	0/754
Tomb	QH90b
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	bovine head, meat strips, ribs, bovine leg, conical bread, three bowls, and altar model
Channels/Basins	Quadrangular basin and two straight channels
Material	Nile clay?
Manufacture	Hand-made, mixed firing
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	Middle 12th – Beginning 13th Dynasty
Conservation	Complete, but two bowl models lost
Measurement	27 x 32cm
QH Typology	QHB. II
Remarks	
Parallels	There are no parallels, only some comparable features: Shape, channel and/or basin, models and altar model (Dendera and Edfu)
photography	
Drawings	

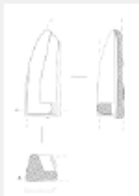
Inventory No.	0/621
Tomb	QH93
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	leg and head of bovine, duck, tied bovine, two lost items, onions, lettuce, meat piece, doum fruit altar and stand models
Channels/Basins	straight channel
Material	?
Manufacture	Hand-made, mixed firing
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	12th – 13th Dynasty
Conservation	Complete, with some elements and part lost
Measurement	28,8 x 39,8cm
QH Typology	QHB. III
Remarks	In the back side there are remains of a raised edge lost.
Parallels	<b>QH and Aswan:</b> QH33/10/C10/UE103/T759/inv. 5, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.6, QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842/inv. 1, Müller and Fostner-Müller, 2015: p. 196, fig. 15.5; <b>Zone between Dendera-Thebes:</b> some comparable features(Shape, channel and/or basin, models and altar model); <b>Shape:</b> Middle Egypt
photography	
Drawings	


Inventory No.	106/1
Tomb	QH106
Current location	Unknown
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Oval or Horseshoe
Elements	bovine leg and ribs models and incised text
Channels/Basins	?
Material	?
Manufacture	Hand-made
Surface treatment	?
Chronology	Until beginning of the 13th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragmentary
Measurement	15 x 17,5cm
QH Typology	QHB. IV
Remarks	This offering trays could be kept inside of some tomb.  Text: <i>prt-xrw</i> fragment
Parallels	
photography	
Drawings	


Inventory No.	110/22
Tomb	QH110
Current location	Unknown
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Rounded, oval or Horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	-
Material	?
Manufacture	Hand-made
Surface treatment	?
Chronology	First Intermediate Period – ?
Conservation	Fragment of back edge
Measurement	13 x 5cm
QH Typology	QHC. II
Remarks	This fragment could be kept inside of some tomb.
Parallels	
photography	
Drawings	


Inventory No.	110/91
Tomb	QH110
Current location	Unknown
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Rounded, oval or Horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	-
Material	?
Manufacture	Hand-made
Surface treatment	White coated
Chronology	First Intermediate Period – ?
Conservation	Fragment
Measurement	9 x 16cm
QH Typology	QHC. II
Remarks	This fragment could be kept inside of some tomb.
Parallels	
photography	
Drawings	


Inventory No.	110/78
Tomb	QH110
Current location	Unknown
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	U-shaped channel
Material	?
Manufacture	Hand-made
Surface treatment	?
Chronology	First Intermediate Period – ?
Conservation	Fragment
Measurement	12,5 x 10,4cm
QH Typology	QHC. I
Remarks	This fragment could be kept inside of some tomb.
Parallels	<b>QH (Channel and shape):</b> 0/666, 0/667; <b>(Channel, shape, and models on surface):</b> 110/90, 0/668, 0/665, offering tray I (ASW.QH288), QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253. <b>Dendera, Penn Museum (channel and shape):</b> No. 29-65-711, No. 29-65-723, No. 29-65-738, No. E3536
photography	
Drawings	


Inventory No.	0/1318.01
Tomb	QH206
Current location	Unknown
Artefact type	offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	Internal dividing wall
Channels/Basins	-
Material	?
Manufacture	Hand-made, mixed firing
Surface treatment	?
Chronology	Middle 11th – 13th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragment
Measurement	28,6 x 11,4 cm
QH Typology	QHC. I
Remarks	This fragment could be kept inside of some tomb.
Parallels	QH: 0/1325.04 Dendera: Petrie, 1900: pl. 19, No. 3.
photography	
Drawings	



Inventory No.	0/1114.01
Tomb	QH207
Current location	Unknown
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	-
Material	?
Manufacture	Hand-made
Surface treatment	?
Chronology	Late First Intermediate Period – 13th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragment
Measurement	28 x 32cm
QH Typology	QHC. II
Remarks	This fragment could be kept inside of some tomb.
Parallels	
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	Offering Tray A
Tomb	Unknown
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	Irregular U-shaped channel
Material	Nile clay?
Manufacture	Hand-made, smoothed surface, base is rough with several cracks
Surface treatment	red slip
Chronology	FIP-MK
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	21,5 x 30,5cm
QH Typology	QHA. I
Remarks	
Parallels	Museo Egizio di Torino: P. 730.1 (Unprovenanced) Stylistic influence from Upper Egypt
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	Offering tray B
Tomb	Unknown
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	Four channels. Two of them cross to the other ones
Material	Nile clay B or C
Manufacture	Hand-made
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	FPI-MK
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	23,02 x 28,05cm
QH Typology	QHA. IV
Remarks	
Parallels	<b>Qurna:</b> Petrie, 1909: pl. 21, No. 627, 628, 629, 630, 631.
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	Offering tray C
Tomb	Unknown
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	Two diagonal channel
Material	?
Manufacture	Hand-made, narrowing rim
Surface treatment	Red slip and white wash
Chronology	FIP-MK
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	?
QH Typology	QHA. IV
Remarks	
Parallels	There are no parallels. Upper Egypt as stylistic influence zone
photography	
Drawings	

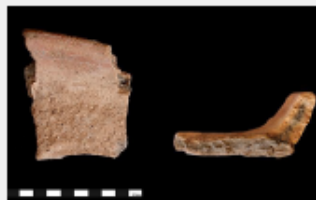
Inventory No.	Offering tray D
Tomb	Unknown
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	U-shaped channel
Material	?
Manufacture	Hand-made, mixed firing
Surface treatment	White wash and red slip
Chronology	FIP-MK
Conservation	Complete (fragmented edge)
Measurement	?
QH Typology	QHA. I
Remarks	Roughly manufactured.
Parallels	QH: 0/667, 0/666 (Offering tray I), Offering tray D. Dendera (Channel and shape): No. 29-65-711, No. 29-65-723, No. 29-65-738, No. E3536
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606+598/inv. 317
Tomb	QH35p
Current location	QH33
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Quadrangular
Elements	meat strips, bovine leg, headless bovine, two conical bread, and altar models. Intermediate wall with a hole
Channels/Basins	Quadrangular basin, straight channel and a rounded basin
Material	Nile C
Manufacture	Hand-made, unsmoothed base and mixed firing
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	2nd half 11th – late 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Complete. Slip bad condition
Measurement	25 x 37cm
QH Typology	QHB. III
Remarks	The surface content has been taken as a sample.
Parallels	There are no direct parallels. Middle and Upper Egypt as stylistic influence zones.  TR27.11.25.4 SR3-51. Unprovenanced, Egyptian Museum in Cairo; Esna: Downes, 1974: p. 94, fig. 65
photography	
Drawings	

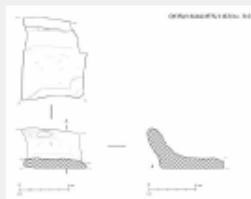
Inventory No. QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv. 316  
 Tomb QH35p  
 Current location QH33  
 Artefact type Offering tray  
 Shape Horseshoe-shaped  
 Elements -  
 Channels/Basins -  
 Material Nile B2  
 Manufacture Hand-made, mixed firing  
 Surface treatment Red slip  
 Chronology 2nd half 11th – late 12th Dynasty  
 Conservation Fragment, very eroded  
 Measurement 3,9 x 7,7cm  
 QH Typology QHC. II  
 Remarks Belong to QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253?



Parallels



photography



Drawings



Inventory No.	QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv. 273
Tomb	QH35p
Current location	QH33
Artefact type	bovine head model
Shape	-
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	-
Material	Nile B1 and B2
Manufacture	Hand-made, mixed firing, smoothed base
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	2nd half 11th – late 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Hornless
Measurement	1,5 x 3,1 x 5cm
QH Typology	-
Remarks	Belong to QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253
Parallels	
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv.253
Tomb	QH35p
Current location	QH33
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	horseshoe-shaped
Elements	Meat piece and ribs
Channels/Basins	U-shaped channel
Material	Nile B2
Manufacture	Hand-made,scraping mark in its base, mixed firing
Surface treatment	red slip
Chronology	2nd half 11th – late 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragmentary
Measurement	29,5 x 17, 8cm
QH Typology	QHB. I
Remarks	same to QH35p/18/B4/UE50/inv. 273 and, maybe, QH35p/16/A4/UE76/1182/inv. 316
Parallels	<b>QH (Channel and shape):</b> 0/666, 0/667; <b>(Channel, shape, and models on surface):</b> 110/90, 0/668, offering tray I (ASW.QH288), 0/665. <b>Dendera, Penn Museum (channel and shape):</b> No. 29-65-711, No. 29-65-723, No. 29-65-738, No. E3536
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No. QH35p/18/A4/UE76/1775/inv. 252  
 Tomb QH35p  
 Current location QH33  
 Artefact type Offering tray  
 Shape horseshoe-shaped  
 Elements -  
 Channels/Basins Two straight channels  
 Material Nile B2  
 Manufacture Hand-made, unsmoothed base, mixed firing  
 Surface treatment Red slip  
 Chronology 2nd half 11th – late 12th Dynasty  
 Conservation Complete  
 Measurement 26,4 x 20,5cm  
 QH Typology QHA. IV  
 Remarks There are some marks in the base, most likely made by tools.


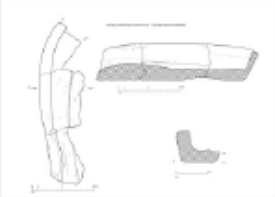
Parallels **Dendera (Parallel channels and shaped):** Petrie. (1900). Dendera 1898. Pl. XIX  
**Qurna (Without models, only channels):** Petrie. (1909). Qurna. pl. XXI



photography



Drawings



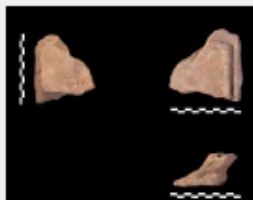
Inventory No.	QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv. 54
Tomb	QH35p
Current location	QH33
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	horseshoe-shaped
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	Channel remains
Material	Nile B2
Manufacture	Hand-made, unsmoothed base, mixed firing
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	2nd half 11th – late 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragment
Measurement	25,5 x 7,5cm
QH Typology	QHC. I
Remarks	it joined with QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604
Parallels	Stylistic influence from el-Kab and Edfu regions
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	QH36/17/9/UE21/308/inv. 429
Tomb	QH36
Current location	QH32
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Rounded or horseshoe-shaped
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	-
Material	Nile B2
Manufacture	hand-made, smoothed?, alternating firing
Surface treatment	White wash
Chronology	Middle 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragment, eroded fracture
Measurement	30,5 x 10,8cm
QH Typology	QHC. I
Remarks	Maybe, its alternating firing was a wrong during the firing
Parallels	
photography	
Drawings	

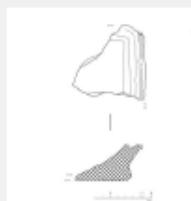
Inventory No. QH36/17/9/UE19/241/inv. 86  
 Tomb QH36  
 Current location QH35p  
 Artefact type Offering tray  
 Shape Quadrangular  
 Elements -  
 Channels/Basins -  
 Material ?  
 Manufacture Hand-made, smoothed base?  
 Surface treatment Red and white slip  
 Chronology Middle 12th Dynasty  
 Conservation Fragment, eroded  
 Measurement 9 x 9,05cm  
 QH Typology QHC. II  
 Remarks


Parallels


photography





Drawings





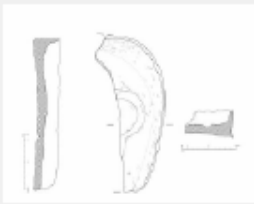
Inventory No.	Offering tray E
Tomb	Unknown
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Quadrangular
Elements	bovine head and leg, conical bread, meat strips, ribs, and perhaps, a lettuce models
Channels/Basins	doble spout and basin
Material	Nile clay?
Manufacture	Hand-made and, maybe, mixed firing, smoothed surface
Surface treatment	White and red slip
Chronology	First Intermediate Period-Middle Kingdom
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	35,5 x 38cm
QH Typology	QHB. III
Remarks	ID number in storehouse: R400
Parallels	No. 1676 in Pelizaeus-Museum, Hildesheim No. F 1901/1.63. Gebelein, National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden
photography	
Drawings	

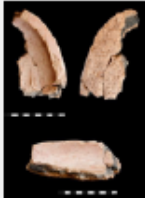
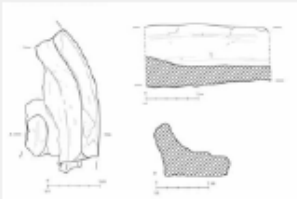
Inventory No.	Offering tray F
Tomb	Unknown
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe-Shaped
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	two curved channels
Material	Nile clay?
Manufacture	Hand-made
Surface treatment	Red slip and white wash?
Chronology	First Intermediate Period-Middle Kingdom
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	33,5 x 39cm
QH Typology	QHA. IV
Remarks	ID number in storehouse: ASW.QH227
Parallels	<b>QH: offering tray G</b> <b>Qurna (two curved channels): bresciani, 1980: p. 6, fig. 3, No. T79 404</b>
photography	
Drawings	


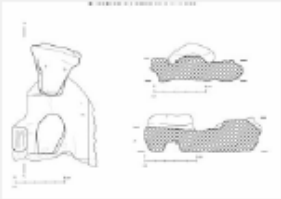
Inventory No.	Offering tray G
Tomb	Unknown
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe-shaped
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	two curved channels
Material	?
Manufacture	Hand-made, smoothed surface coarsely
Surface treatment	white slip
Chronology	First Intermediate Period-Middle Kingdom
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	21,5 x 28cm
QH Typology	QHA. IV
Remarks	ID number in storehouse: ASW.QH228 Finger marks, high humidity of the clay during its manufacture
Parallels	<b>QH:</b> offering tray F <b>Qurna (two curved channels):</b> bresciani, 1980: p. 6, fig. 3, No. T79 404
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	Offering tray I
Tomb	Unknown
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe-shaped
Elements	bovine head and leg, piece of meat and a cucumber
Channels/Basins	U-shaped channel
Material	Marl clay?
Manufacture	Hand-made, oxidising firing
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	First Intermediate Period-Middle Kingdom
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	21,5 x 28cm
QH Typology	QHB I
Remarks	ID number in storehouse: ASW.QH288
Parallels	<b>QH (Channel and shape):</b> 0/666, 0/667; <b>(Channel, shape, and models on surface):</b> 0/665, 0/668, 110/90, QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253. <b>Dendera, Penn Museum (channel and shape):</b> No. 29-65-711, No. 29-65-723, No. 29-65-738, No. E3536
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	Offering tray J
Tomb	Unknown
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offerin tray
Shape	rounded
Elements	bovine head and leg, ribs and meat piece
Channels/Basins	Two channels, rounded basins and two hole to drain
Material	Arcilla Nile
Manufacture	Hand-made
Surface treatment	Red slip and white wash?
Chronology	First Intermediate Period-Middle Kingdom
Conservation	Complete
Measurement	17 x 22cm
QH Typology	QHB. IV
Remarks	ID number in storehouse: ASW.QH401 It has a small hole in a side edge.
Parallels	<b>Rounded tray with hole to drain and/or two channel:</b> JE2852 and JE64792 (Unprovenanced. Egyptian Museum of Cairo); No. 5026 (Qurna. The Manchester Museum); No. 1973.1.350 (Unprovenanced. Liverpool Museum); No. 28.3.257 and No. 28.3.210 (Deir el-Bahri, The Metropolitan Museum of Art); No. 108 (Thebes. Atkinson Museum)
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	QH34ff/22/J3/UE443/39/inv. 19
Tomb	QH34ff
Current location	QH32
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe-shaped
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	Diagonal channel and rounded basin
Material	Marl A3 and A4
Manufacture	Hand-made, unsmoothed base, Oxidizing firing
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	First Intermediate Period -?
Conservation	Fragmentary, very eroded
Measurement	15,5 x 27cm
QH Typology	QHA. II
Remarks	Chronology according to other artefacts
Parallels	QH: 0/669; Gebelein (Museo Egizio di Torino ): No. S.11966(?), No. P.5536, No. S.14259; Dendera (Penn Museum): No. 29-65-719, No. 29-65-740; El-Tarif: Arnold, 1973: pl. 68, N3.1; Qurna: Petrie, 1909: pl. 21, No. 612; El-Assasif: Budka, 2010: p. 807, K02/88.6.
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv. 318
Tomb	QH35p
Current location	QH33
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Horseshoe
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	Channel remain
Material	Nile C
Manufacture	Hand-made, unsmoothed base, mixed firing
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	2nd half 11th – late 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragment
Measurement	8 x 14,7cm
QH Typology	QHC. I
Remarks	The core has signs of vitrification
Parallels	Stylistic influence from el-Kab and Edfu
photography	
Drawings	


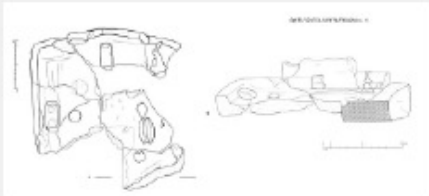
Inventory No.	QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604/inv. 319
Tomb	QH35p
Current location	QH33
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	-
Elements	bovine head, ribs and the upper part of a hindquarter
Channels/Basins	Channel remains
Material	Nile B2
Manufacture	Hand-made, unsmoothed base, mixed firing
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	2nd half 11th – late 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragment
Measurement	8,03 x 11,5cm
QH Typology	QHC. I
Remarks	Models do not seem modelled from a free-standing piece of clay
Parallels	
photography	
Drawings	



Inventory No.	QH35p/15/C4/UE38/604
Tomb	QH35p
Current location	QH33
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	-
Elements	-
Channels/Basins	-
Material	Nile clay
Manufacture	Mixed firing
Surface treatment	-
Chronology	2nd half 11th – late 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragments
Measurement	7 x 5,8cm Aprox.
QH Typology	QHC. II
Remarks	Belonging to QH35p/18/B4/UE91/1802/inv. 253, QH35p/16/A4/UE62/1076/inv. 54 or QH35p/15/C4/UE38/606/inv. 318
Parallels	


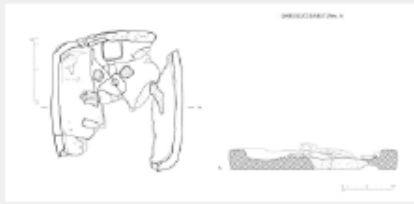
photography




Drawings

Inventory No.	QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 1
Tomb	QH33
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Quadrangular
Elements	bovine head, round breads, remains of bovine leg, and, perhaps, a lettuce, shrine model potter's stand
Channels/Basins	spout, Channel and quadrangular basin
Material	Nile C
Manufacture	Hand-made, unsmoothed base, mixed firing
Surface treatment	Red and white slip
Chronology	Late 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragmentary
Measurement	
QH Typology	QHB. III
Remarks	Raised edge in the back side.
Parallels	QH: QH33/10/C10/UE103/inv. 5, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 6, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 7, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 8, 0/621; Aswan: Offering tray found in Area 45
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	QH33/10/C10/UE103/inv. 5
Tomb	QH33
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Quadrangular
Elements	bovine head and leg, meat strips, tied bovine, pieces of meat, altar model
Channels/Basins	Remain of channel and spout
Material	Nile C
Manufacture	Hand-made, unsmoothed base, mixed firing
Surface treatment	Red and white slip
Chronology	Late 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragmentary
Measurement	
QH Typology	QHB. III
Remarks	It joined with QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842, QH33/13/C8/UE191/T2198 and QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 7. Raised edge in the back side.
Parallels	QH: QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 1, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 6, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 7, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 8, 0/621; Aswan: Offering tray found in Area 45
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 6
Tomb	QH33
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Quadrangular
Elements	Tied headless bovine, bovine leg, meat strips, altar model
Channels/Basins	Channel remain
Material	Nile C
Manufacture	Hand-made, unsmoothed base, mixed firing
Surface treatment	Red slip
Chronology	Late 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragmentary, eroded surface
Measurement	
QH Typology	QHB. III
Remarks	Raised edge in the back side.
Parallels	QH: QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 1, QH33/10/C10/UE103/inv. 5, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 7, QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 8, 0/621; Aswan: Offering tray found in Area 45
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No.	QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv.8
Tomb	QH33
Current location	Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan
Artefact type	Offering tray
Shape	Quadrangular
Elements	bovine leg and meat piece
Channels/Basins	spout, channel and quadrangular basin
Material	Nile C
Manufacture	Hand-made, unsmoothed base, mixed firing
Surface treatment	White wash
Chronology	Late 12th Dynasty
Conservation	Fragmentary, eroded surface
Measurement	
QH Typology	QHB. III
Remarks	
Parallels	QH: QH33/12/C21/UE171/inv. 1; Aswan: Offering tray found in Area 45
photography	
Drawings	

Inventory No. QH33/12/C21/UE171/T1842  
Tomb QH33  
Current location Store of the Ministry of Antiquities from Aswan  
Artefact type Offering tray and soul houses  
Shape -  
Elements -  
Channels/Basins -  
Material Nile  
Manufacture Hand-made  
Surface treatment Red slip on some fragments  
Chronology Late 12th Dynasty  
Conservation Fragments  
Measurement -  
QH Typology QHC. II  
Remarks Some fragments might belong to Soul houses and others to offering trays

Parallels

photography



Drawings

**ANNEX III. Parts of the thesis in Spanish as  
indicated in the regulations of the University of  
Jaén**

## Título

Bandejas de ofrendas de Qubbet el-Hawa. Estudio de los artefactos y de su contexto arqueológico, funerario y religioso

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## **Resumen**

Las bandejas de ofrendas de cerámica se han descubierto principalmente en contextos funerarios y desde hace tiempo existe un consenso sobre su función, que es la de proporcionar ofrendas al difunto de forma parecida a las mesas de ofrendas de piedra. Sin embargo, también se han encontrado en contextos domésticos. Teniendo en cuenta esto último, esta tesis presenta una interpretación novedosa de estos artefactos, arrojando luz sobre aspectos que hasta ahora se habían pasado por alto. Para lograr este objetivo, la necrópolis de Qubbet el-Hawa ha desempeñado un papel fundamental en la comprensión de la función, la aparición tanto en contextos funerarios como domésticos, así como la relación entre estos artefactos y la sociedad del Antiguo Egipto. Además, esta tesis establece la diferencia entre las bandejas de ofrendas de cerámica, las mesas de ofrendas

de piedra y las casas de almas, que tradicionalmente han sido percibidas por los estudiosos como sustitutos o formas evolutivas unas de otras.

Asimismo, esta investigación constituye el primer estudio completo realizado hasta la fecha sobre las bandejas de ofrendas de Qubbet el-Hawa, satisfaciendo así una importante laguna en la bibliografía académica sobre las bandejas de ofrendas. En consecuencia, este estudio no sólo aclara el lugar de producción de estos artefactos, sino que también proporciona información sobre su cronología y trayectoria dentro de la región de Asuán. También, amplía la tipología iniciada en 2019. Así pues, establece un corpus de datos que facilitará futuras investigaciones sobre estos artefactos en todo Egipto.

En resumen, esta tesis supone el inicio de la investigación sobre las bandejas de ofrendas en Asuán, pero también la exposición de novedosas ideas sobre algunos aspectos no abordados anteriormente o tratados brevemente. Por último, también es la base para futuros estudios sobre estos artefactos, así como para otros objetos de cerámica de la zona de Asuán.

## **1. Introducción**

La presente tesis doctoral es una prolongación del estudio sobre las bandejas de ofrendas de cerámica de la necrópolis de Qubbet el-Hawa, iniciado en 2019 como trabajo fin de máster.<sup>302</sup> La investigación inicial consistió en un examen preliminar de las bandejas de ofrendas descubiertas por Elmar Edel entre 1957 y 1984 en el mencionado yacimiento (EDEL, 2008, v. 2, 3). La motivación de ese estudio preliminar tuvo su origen importante colección de estos artefactos, los cuales no habían sido estudiados aún. El objetivo principal de este trabajo final de máster era examinar sus rasgos distintivos, su localización y contextualización dentro de la necrópolis, así como sus conexiones con otros artefactos similares desenterrados en Egipto. Además, se estableció una tipología preliminar, destinada a facilitar futuros estudios sobre las bandejas de ofrendas descubiertas en este yacimiento arqueológico.

En el transcurso del estudio preliminar, junto con el descubrimiento de nuevas bandejas por parte de la Universidad de Jaén a partir de 2008, se plantearon nuevas preguntas sobre

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<sup>302</sup> Lechuga Ibáñez, C. (2019a). *Estudio preliminar sobre las bandejas de ofrendas en Qubbet el-Hawa*. Tesis de máster. Granada, Universidad de Granada. No publicada. Directores: Dr. José Manuel Alba Gómez y Dra. María Isabel Fernández García.

estos artefactos arqueológicos. Esto impulsó una investigación posterior, que abarcó una exploración más amplia de diversos aspectos, incluyendo la religión y la estructura social.

En el proceso de la investigación doctoral, se han determinado que las bandejas de ofrendas han formado parte de las colecciones de museos desde la primera mitad del siglo XIX (MI, 2020: p. 3).<sup>303</sup> Sin embargo, estos artefactos han recibido una atención limitada por parte de los investigadores, lo que se ha traducido en una escasez de trabajos académicos dedicados a ellos durante los siglos XIX y XX. Sin embargo, en el siglo XXI se ha prestado más atención al estudio de estas bandejas que en épocas anteriores. La falta de interés en el pasado puede atribuirse a su naturaleza anepigráfica, ya que no presentan inscripciones ni información textual (MI, 2020: p. 3), y al interés de los arqueólogos por los artefactos de mayor estética. Además, se han relacionado principalmente con grupos sociales intermedios y bajos. Esto se debe al hecho de que las bandejas de ofrendas se han encontrado frecuentemente en conexión con enterramientos y tumbas modestas<sup>304</sup> (LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 102). Estos artefactos se han datado entre el Primer Periodo Intermedio y el Reino Medio<sup>305</sup> (PETRIE, 1907; TOOLEY, 1989; KILIAN, 2012, 2016; MÜLLER y FOSTNER-MÜLLER, 2015: p. 198). En consecuencia, su materia prima (arcilla), algunas características similares con las mesas de ofrendas de piedra, junto con su colocación, estas bandejas de ofrendas de cerámica se han interpretado convencionalmente como un sustituto de las mesas de ofrendas de piedra para los grupos sociales intermedios y bajos (PETRIE, 1907: p. 15; NIWINSKI, 1984: p. 806; LECLÈRE, 2001: p. 111; SNAPE, 2011: pp. 163, 164).

Sin embargo, también se han encontrado bandejas de ofrendas de cerámica en ciertas tumbas pertenecientes a individuos de considerable estatus social y/o económico. Los grupos sociales de estos individuos se identifican por los objetos funerarios que los acompañan<sup>306</sup> o los títulos que ostentan (CHASSINAT y PALENQUE, 1911: p. 164; PEET, 1913: pp. 23-24; PETRIE, 1921: p. 66; PETRIE y BRUTON, 1924: pl. 38, 39;

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<sup>303</sup> Para más información, véase Leemans (1840: p. 104).

<sup>304</sup> Podemos descartar la conexión de las tumbas simples con el grupo social intermedio y bajo exclusivamente. Ejemplos recientes en la necrópolis de Qubbet el-Hawa son el enterramiento de Ii-Shemai (QH34bb) y el de Sattjeni (QH35p).

<sup>305</sup> En 2015 se encontraron bandejas de ofrendas en Kom Tuman. Se dataron de forma preliminar entre el Periodo Tardío (722-332 a.C.) y el Periodo Ptolemaico (332-31 a.C.). Para más información, véase IVANOV (2015: pp. 115, 125).

<sup>306</sup> Es importante destacar que numerosas tumbas que contenían bandejas de ofrendas fueron saqueadas durante la antigüedad, lo que hace imposible determinar la totalidad del inventario material y establecer una conexión definitiva entre las tumbas y un grupo social específico. Este detalle es considerado por Tooley (1989: 300) y Kilian (2012: 113-114).

RYAN, 1988: pp. 30-31, 47-49, 59-60, 76, 80; CHUDZIK, 2015: p. 241; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2022: pp. 127-136). Por tanto, estos casos desvían a las bandejas de ofrendas de la concepción inicial sobre la relación de las bandejas y la posición social intermedia y baja del difunto.

Además, esta tesis ahonda en las divergencias existentes entre los egiptólogos en cuanto a la evolución y tipología de estos artefactos. Por un lado, algunos investigadores han defendido un desarrollo lineal y cronológico de los mismos, pasando de formas rectangulares a formas de casa (conocidas como casas del alma) (PETRIE, 1907; NIWINSKI, 1975, 1984; SNAPE, 2011). Por otro lado, sobre todo en estudios recientes, ha crecido la inclinación a considerar una evolución independiente de su forma, cuyo diseño obedecería a preferencias regionales (SLATER, 1974; TOOLEY, 1989; LECLÈRE, 2001, KILIAN, 2012, 2016; BARAHONA MENDIETA, 2018; LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, 2019a; MI, 2020). Por último, los investigadores siguen teniendo dudas sobre la función de estas bandejas. Esta incertidumbre se debe al hecho de que estos artefactos se han descubierto no sólo en necrópolis, sino también en fortalezas y ciudades<sup>307</sup> (PETRIE, 1891 p. 9; DUNHAM, 1967; EMERY, *et al.*, 1979: p. 151; LAUFFRAY, 1980: p. 47; AZIM, 1980: pp. 161, 165; DEBONO, 1982: p. 381; CZERNY, 2015: pp. 352-354). Pero incluso dentro de la necrópolis, pueden encontrarse en diferentes ubicaciones de las tumbas, como ocurre en Qubbet el-Hawa.

En el caso de Qubbet el-Hawa, en Asuán y sus alrededores, la investigación sobre estos objetos es escasa, y sólo existen breves referencias que indiquen su descubrimiento. Se trata de bandejas de ofrendas encontradas en la isla Elefantina por Rainer Kaiser, durante los trabajos del *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut* y el *Schweizerisches Institut* entre 1969 y 1970 (KAISER, *et al.*, 1973: p. 90, nota 1), en Asuán (MÜLLER y FOSTNER MÜLLER, 2015: pp. 194, 195); así como las bandejas de Elmar Edel y las casas de almas halladas por Lady Cecil entre 1902 y 1904 en la necrópolis de Qubbet el-Hawa (CECIL, 1903: pp. 51-73; 1905: pp. 273-283). En el marco del Proyecto Qubbet el-Hawa, dirigido por el Dr. Alejandro Jiménez Serrano y el Dr. José Manuel Alba Gómez de la Universidad

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<sup>307</sup> Bajo el templo de Ezbet Ruschdi, en Tell el-Dab'a, se han hallado varios fragmentos de bandejas de ofrendas. Pero la estratigrafía alterada dificulta su interpretación, por lo que estos artefactos pueden asignarse al contexto del templo o a las estructuras domésticas previas, sobre las que se construyó el templo a mediados de la dinastía XII (CZERNY, 2015: pp. 352-354). Asimismo, este caso sería similar a las bandejas de ofrendas encontradas en Karnak (LAUFFRAY, 1980: p. 47; AZIM, 1980: pp. 161, 165; DEBONO, 1982: p. 381).

de Jaén, se ha descubierto un importante número de bandejas de ofrendas en la necrópolis. Estos recientes hallazgos, junto con los descubrimientos anteriores, contribuyen a la formación de una notable colección de estos artefactos. Estas nuevas bandejas de ofrendas se han descubierto en diferentes tumbas: QH33, QH34ff, QH35p y QH36. Muchos de estos objetos son tiestos hallados en un estrato de material mezclado, pero otros son artefactos completos localizados *in situ*. Del mismo modo, en Egipto se han descubierto bandejas de ofrendas en diversas zonas de las tumbas, como patios, pozos y cámaras funerarias. De ahí que el objetivo de esta investigación sea analizar los artefactos recientemente desenterrados por la Universidad de Jaén dentro de sus contextos funerarios y religiosos. Se pretende establecer un estudio completo de las bandejas de ofrendas, principalmente, en la zona de Asuán. Para ello, se examinarán cuidadosamente todas las bandejas de ofrendas de cerámica descubiertas en la región, junto con otros artefactos asociados a su función. Este análisis pretende presentar una teoría definitiva sobre estas bandejas. Además, el estudio de los objetos arqueológicos hallados junto a las bandejas de ofrendas proporcionará valiosos datos sobre sus contextos. Por último, la tipología establecida durante el estudio preliminar de 2019 se revisará y mejorará mediante la incorporación de nuevos artefactos.

## **7. Conclusiones finales**

Los principales estudios sobre las bandejas de ofrendas se realizaron durante el siglo XX. Estas investigaciones se centraron en el origen, la función, la tipología y el desarrollo tipológico. Sin embargo, estos estudios no tuvieron en cuenta la presencia de las bandejas de ofrendas en contextos domésticos y el vínculo con la sociedad. Además, estos estudios indican que las bandejas de ofrendas y las casas del alma son el mismo artefacto. De este modo, las casas del alma serían la última forma desarrollada de las primeras. Respecto a los estudios actuales, aportan nuevas propuestas en cuanto al origen de las bandejas de ofrendas. Estas investigaciones diferencian las bandejas de ofrendas y las mesas de ofrendas de piedra, pero no profundizan en esta cuestión, y sólo centran su propuesta en sus características tipológicas o, escasamente, cronológicas.

Tras la presente investigación, podemos confirmar que las bandejas de ofrendas de cerámica, la mesa de ofrendas de piedra, las casas de almas y escenas de ofrendas, en ocasiones, comparten rasgos entre ellas debido al ámbito cultural que rodea a estos. Sin embargo, las bandejas de ofrendas son artefactos diferentes, cuyas razones son las siguientes:

Por un lado, cronológicamente las mesas de ofrendas de piedra están presentes en todos los periodos históricos de Egipto, como señaló Filippo Mi (ver p. 22). Sin embargo, las bandejas de ofrendas sólo están presentes entre las Dinastías IX/X y principios de la XIII, lo que coincide con los cambios en la sociedad y la religiosidad durante el Primer Periodo Intermedio y el Reino Medio. No obstante, en Kom Tuman se encontró un grupo de fragmentos de bandejas de ofrendas, cuya función se incluyó en los cultos domésticos. Estos artefactos de Kom Tuman fueron datados en Baja Época.<sup>308</sup> Por lo tanto, también apoya la propuesta expuesta en la presente tesis.

Además, en las bandejas de ofrendas predominan los modelos de ofrendas que simbolizan la protección, la seguridad, la fertilidad, el renacimiento o la justicia, cuyo beneficiario es el donante. Además, estos significados están relacionados con la función de las bandejas de ofrendas como objetos votivos, como se va a explicar a continuación. Mientras, en las mesas de ofrendas de piedra y en las escenas de ofrendas destacan las ofrendas que simbolizan renacimiento y la fertilidad, cuyo destinatario es el difunto. También, estas últimas suelen ir acompañadas de la fórmula de ofrenda que apoya la función de bienes perpetuos al difunto.

Por otro lado, las casas del alma tienen características diferentes, y en ellas predominan los elementos arquitectónicos y, a veces, figuras antropomorfas realizando algunas actividades. Mantienen características similares a los modelos funerarios de madera.<sup>309</sup> Además, las casas del alma se han encontrado individualmente y, en ocasiones, dentro de las cámaras funerarias. Mientras que las bandejas de ofrendas se han encontrado en grupos en algunos casos y siempre en zonas públicas.<sup>310</sup> También se han encontrado modelos de casas fuera del rango cronológico de las bandejas de ofrendas y en otras culturas. Por lo tanto, esto apoya la idea de que las casas del alma no surgen de las bandejas de ofrendas, ya que hay evidencias externas y cronológicas a estas.

Por lo tanto, las características de estos artefactos, la cronología, las ubicaciones y la presencia de las bandejas de ofrendas y las casas del alma en el mismo lugar y contexto cronológico indican que la evolución lineal y cronológica es inexistente.

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<sup>308</sup> Según Sergej V. Ivanov (2015: 125), el hiato entre la dinastía XIII y la Baja Época podría deberse a un retorno a la tradición antigua durante este último periodo o a la ausencia de registros arqueológicos por el momento.

<sup>309</sup> Existen modelos funerarios realizados con arcilla. Por lo tanto, la materia prima no es determinante para relacionarlos con las casas del alma y las bandejas de ofrendas.

<sup>310</sup> Los artefactos encontrados en el interior de los pozos funerarios, se explicó que eran un contexto secundario.

En cuanto a la función de las bandejas de ofrendas, como objetos votivos, se encuentran en contextos domésticos y funerarios y la cantidad de estos artefactos en un mismo lugar varía. Estos contextos están vinculados a la religión doméstica o popular y, por tanto, al culto a los antepasados. Este culto se llevaba a cabo en los hogares, los santuarios y/o las tumbas. La veneración al ancestro estaba relacionada con la legitimidad y la posición social. En consecuencia, era practicado principalmente por la élite local, sus familias y allegados. Esta es la razón de la presencia de bandejas de ofrendas en tumbas pertenecientes a familias de gobernantes, pero también en enterramientos de otros grupos sociales. Los miembros de la familia entregaban estos objetos al cabeza de de la misma. Estos miembros podían pertenecer o no a un grupo social elevado, ya que la familia estaba formada por individuos de distintas escalas sociales, así como por lazos de sangre o no. Por lo tanto, la ausencia de escritura en las bandejas de ofrendas podría indicar que estos artefactos proceden de grupos sociales bajos y medios pertenecientes a estos hogares. Esto se debe a que la alfabetización en estos grupos sería nula o escasa.

En cuanto a la religión popular y el culto a los antepasados, existe un conjunto de artefactos con y sin inscripción vinculados a la interacción entre vivos y muertos, que los estudiosos los consideran una representación ritual. Son las cartas a los muertos, una de las pruebas del ritual de comunicación. Estos objetos se presentaron a los cabeza de familia, hombres y mujeres. Su cronología se sitúa entre finales del Reino Antiguo y el siglo VII a.n.e. pero su apogeo fue en el Primer Periodo Intermedio, que coincide con las bandejas de ofrendas. A través de ellas, los miembros de la familia solicitaban a los muertos soluciones para sus diferentes problemas terrenales. La oralidad en el Antiguo Egipto tenía una gran importancia y ésta sería la razón de encontrar bandejas de ofrendas con modelos de ofrendas o no en su superficie. Esto debido a que los rituales de petición de los vivos a los muertos se hacían oralmente. Además, el mayor o menor número de bandejas en un lugar apoya esta idea, es decir, se debe a la cantidad de peticiones que los oferentes harían y no a una ofrenda continuada al difunto, que en este último caso un solo artefacto sería suficiente. Además el simbolismo de los objetos de su superficie corresponde a algunos de los temas de las peticiones, que son:

- Herencia.
- Ayuda o protección contra daños, enfermedades, fantasmas o amenazas indefinidas.
- Fertilidad/reproducción sexual.

En cuanto a la interpretación de las bandejas de ofrendas, serían la representación misma de los rituales. Esta sería la razón de la presencia en ellas de modelos de altares, santuarios, alimentos, vasijas, incensarios, etc.

En cuanto a la desaparición de las bandejas de ofrendas durante la dinastía XIII, algunos autores han indicado que estos artefactos fueron sustituidos por shabtis. Sin embargo, no podemos confirmar su total ausencia, y es posible considerar una reducción de su uso debido a nuevos cambios en las prácticas religiosas.<sup>311</sup> Para reforzar esta idea sobre su uso, contamos con los fragmentos de bandejas de ofrendas halladas por Ivanov (2015) en Kom Tuman, que fueron datadas en la Baja Época. Además, debemos tener en cuenta que los principales trabajos arqueológicos se han realizado en necrópolis de grupos sociales altos y los artefactos encontrados en contextos domésticos pueden diferir en cuanto a grupos sociales. Un ejemplo de ello es la fortaleza de Buhen, donde se encontraron bandejas de ofrendas. La población allí estaba formada por soldados, oficiales del ejército, población civil y sus familiares.

El caso de Qubbet el-Hawa es un claro ejemplo de las propuestas anteriores. Por un lado, aquí se han encontrado bandejas de ofrendas, mesas de ofrendas de piedra y fragmentos de posibles casas de almas. Por lo tanto, esto es una prueba de que ninguno sustituye a otro.

Estos artefactos se han encontrado en diferentes tumbas y enterramientos, que pertenecían a distintas familias gobernantes o a individuos relacionados con ellas. Su cantidad varía en cada emplazamiento y el número de bandejas de ofrendas no se corresponde con los individuos encontrados. Por tanto, responde a la función votiva de las bandejas comentada. Además, la bandeja de ofrendas 106/1, que muestra texto inciso, sería el “eslabón perdido” de los artefactos con y sin inscripción relacionados con las peticiones de los miembros de la familia.

En cuanto a su cronología, se adecuan a la general de estos artefactos. Pero tenemos un detalle significativo en cuanto a las formas. Las redondeadas, ovaladas o de herradura, típicas del Alto Egipto, están presentes en Qubbet el-Hawa desde antes de la dinastía XII. Sin embargo, las bandejas de ofrendas cuadrangulares, típicas del Egipto Medio, están presentes en la necrópolis a partir de la dinastía XII. Esto confirma la influencia de la capital de Egipto en esta época, que dependiendo de su ubicación expande los rasgos propios de

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<sup>311</sup> Véase el capítulo 4. 7. Religion and funerary belief.

su zona a otras. Además, esto apoya a la región de Tebas y los nomos circundantes como zona de origen de las bandejas de ofrendas. Esto se debe a que las bandejas de ofrendas más antiguas datadas pertenecen a estas zonas. No obstante, las bandejas de ofrendas de Qubbet el-Hawa, a pesar de la influencia externa del Alto y Medio Egipto, presentan características propias que indican una producción local. También la técnica de modelado de las mismas lo refuerza. La producción local se explicaría, aparte de por la fabricación y el diseño de las bandejas, por la naturaleza de estos artefactos. Se creaban para los rituales privados y populares, por tanto el comercio se limitaría a los alrededores de los talleres.

Asimismo, las bandejas de ofrendas de Qubbet el-Hawa contribuyen a los estudios sobre la arcilla utilizada en las bandejas de ofrendas. De este modo, la presencia de arcilla aluvial (Nile) es elevada, pero este estudio demuestra también el uso de arcilla margosa (Marl) en estos artefactos. Por el momento, sólo hay un espécimen confirmado en Qubbet el-Hawa, pero no se descarta más hallazgos con esta característica en el futuro ya que es posible encontrar otros ejemplos de margosa fuera de la región de Asuán, como se ha explicado en esta investigación.

Por último, la tipología de bandejas de ofrendas de Qubbet el-Hawa, iniciada en 2019, establece tres grandes grupos: QHA, QHB y QHC. Asimismo, estos se dividen en subgrupos en función de las características de las bandejas de ofrendas. Esta tipología estará abierta a nuevos cambios debido a que los trabajos arqueológicos continúan en la actualidad, y es posible que se produzcan nuevos hallazgos. Su creación permite a otros investigadores comprender las bandejas de ofrendas de cerámica de Qubbet el-Hawa y facilitar el estudio de estos artefactos en la región de Asuán y fuera de ella.

### **7.1. Futuras líneas de investigación**

La presente tesis doctoral abre nuevas líneas de investigación relacionadas con las bandejas de ofrendas, tanto de los artefactos procedentes de Asuán como los hallados fuera de esta región. Asimismo, implica el estudio de otros artefactos cerámicos. Estas nuevas rutas de investigación son:

- Estudio de las bandejas de ofrendas encontradas por Elmar Edel que se conservan en el almacén de Asuán. Esta línea abarca el registro de los artefactos, el análisis de su fabricación y un intento de establecer su ubicación original y su relación con los encontrados por el Proyecto Qubbet el-Hawa.

- Análisis de arcilla de todas las bandejas de ofrendas de Qubbet el-Hawa. Esto permitirá crear una base de datos sobre las materias primas utilizadas en la fabricación de los artefactos cerámicos producidos en la región de Asuán, para los que actualmente no existe ninguna referencia local.
- Estudio de la cerámica hallada en QH35p. Esto ayudará a determinar la cronología y el contexto de las bandejas de ofrendas in situ halladas en esta tumba. Además, proporcionará información sobre el contexto funerario y religioso de la tumba. También, aportará datos sobre la arcilla utilizada en la región de Asuán. Por lo tanto, está en consonancia con el punto anterior.
- Estudio de las bandejas de ofrendas halladas en otros yacimientos, principalmente en la región de Tebas, debido a los cambios históricos por ser la capital. El objetivo de esta línea de investigación es confirmar la presencia de bandejas de ofrendas cuadrangulares a partir de la dinastía XII, como se observa en Qubbet el-Hawa, o confirmar su presencia con anterioridad a esta fecha.