



PETROGRAPHIC ANALYSES IN THE STUDY OF EGYPTIAN INTERCONNECTIONS AND CERAMIC TECHNOLOGY

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My principal research focus has been examining Egypt's interconnections with the Levant as seen through imported pottery. But I have also conducted research on pottery technology and the use of raw materials for ceramics made in Egypt. I use the method of thin section petrography to investigate these research questions as this allows me to examine the clay and inclusions utilized to produce ceramic vessels, and how they were manipulated. For the first research interest, I have examined Middle Bronze Age Canaanite jars found at Memphis, and compared to those from the Late Bronze Age, and also from the site of Kom el-Khilgan. I have also studied imports found at the site of Amarna dating to the 5th century CE and 26th Dynasty torpedo jars from Tell Iswid. However, my recent research has focused on Early Bronze Age imports, particularly from the sites of Helwan and Giza. This year I will examine imports from the Predynastic site of Tell el-Farkha with the hope to better understand the beginning of the economic ties with the Levant that brought products to Egypt. Future endeavors will aim to expand this research by analyzing samples from Abydos, Buto, Saqqara, and Abusir dating to the Predynastic and Old Kingdom. However, I will also continue to study imports from later periods including Second Intermediate Period, New Kingdom, and Third Intermediate Period jars from a number of sites.

My research on Egyptian ceramics initially focused on Marl C vessels and the unusual white surface that characterizes them.

This proved to be a scum which is naturally formed when a calcareous clay with salt and added limestone is used to produce pottery. The surface was shown not to be a slip or self-slip. Other petrographic projects have examined fabrics that appear to be mixes of Nile and Marl clay from the Old Kingdom. This revealed a range in the mixing of the two clays. Continued research on Marl fabrics has suggested many contain either natural or added Nile clay. While my focus has been on the Predynastic fabrics from Tell Iswid and Tell el-Farkha and 5th century CE Egyptian fabrics from Amarna, I hope to have further opportunities to examine Nile and Marl fabrics throughout Egypt and from various periods. Recent research on fabrics from the site of Douch in the Kharga Oasis provided information on the types of clays used for pottery making in this area during the Predynastic and Old Kingdom. While petrographic studies have also been carried out for Kharga and Dahkla oases, I hope additional research on oases fabrics and those from the Marmacia coast will reveal important differences that will help to identify the vessels made in these areas in Egypt.

All of the research I conduct is made possible through the generosity and enthusiasm of my colleagues. Their research questions provide constant inspiration and I hope to continue to work with them in gaining a better understanding of Egyptian ceramics and Levantine imports.