Egyptian and Imported Pottery from the Red Sea port of Mersa Gawasis, Egypt

Sally Wallace-Jones

with contributions from Andrea Manzo, Mary Ownby and Karin Kopetzky
Contents

List of Figures ........................................................................................................................................ii
Foreword and acknowledgements ...........................................................................................................vii
Chronology of the Middle Kingdom .......................................................................................................viii

Chapter One Introduction: Mersa Gawasis, the background ...............................................................1
  Vessel content and capacity ....................................................................................................................4

Chapter Two Overall chronology of the site ..........................................................................................7
  Chronological Table of Excavation Units .............................................................................................13

Chapter Three The functioning of the site ............................................................................................14
  WG19: The production area ..................................................................................................................14
  WG 51 Selected body sherds .................................................................................................................17
  WG 49 ..................................................................................................................................................18
  WG61 WG65 ........................................................................................................................................19
  WG67 ..................................................................................................................................................21
  Pottery and spatial arrangement of the site ............................................................................................24
  Evidence for locally produced ceramics ..............................................................................................26
  Re-use of pottery ..................................................................................................................................28
  Ostraca ................................................................................................................................................30
  Miniature and model vessels ................................................................................................................31
  Discovery and identification of Minoan material ..................................................................................32
  Discovery and identification of Middle Bronze Age Syro-Palestinian material ............................32
  Conclusions .........................................................................................................................................33

Chapter Four Pottery technology ..........................................................................................................35
  Techniques used for shaping vessels .....................................................................................................35
  Open forms. Nile clays (Figures 36-49) ...............................................................................................39
  Open Forms. Marl Clays .......................................................................................................................42
  Closed forms: marl clays ......................................................................................................................47
  Technology Conclusions .....................................................................................................................60

Chapter Five Pottery types, fabrics, and wares .....................................................................................62
  Nile clay types ......................................................................................................................................63
  Marl clay types ......................................................................................................................................64

  Corpus of vessel types at Mersa Gawasis ............................................................................................68
    Introduction .........................................................................................................................................68

  Corpus of open forms ..........................................................................................................................75

  Corpus of closed forms ........................................................................................................................79

  Vessel types at Mersa Gawasis not in Wodzińska ...........................................................................82

  Corpus Decorated incised sherds ............................................................................................................84

  Plates ....................................................................................................................................................87

Appendix One: suggested fabric analogies for Middle Bronze Age imported vessels .....................126
  Mary F. Ownby, University of Arizona

Appendix Two: Middle Bronze Age Syro-Palestinian pottery ............................................................127
  Dr Karin Kopetzky, University of Vienna  with Dr Sally Wallace-Jones, Lucy Cavendish College Cambridge

Appendix Three: Nubian and southern Red Sea ceramics ......................................................................128
  Andrea Manzo

Appendix Four: Catalogue of excavated sherd material .......................................................................136

Bibliography ..........................................................................................................................................177

Index .....................................................................................................................................................181
Mersa Gawasis (Ancient Egyptian Saww) is a small Egyptian harbour on the Red Sea and a former Egyptian port city. The harbour lies at the mouth of Wadi Gawasis, 2 km south of the mouth of Wadi Gasus. 25 km north is the city of Safaga and 50 km south al-Qusair. Just two kilometers further south of Mersa Gawasis, a small stele was discovered with fragmentary inscriptions of the cartouche of Senusret I and the geographical name Bia-n-punt. 250 meters west of the harbor, on the north side of Wadi Gawasis, was found a small shrine with the name and titles of Ankhu, valet of Senusret I. The shrine consisted of a limestone anchor as a base, from which the upper holes were cut out. The Red Sea was a trade funnel from the 3rd century B.C. to about 6th century C.E. and the ancient ports of this zone provide evidence of not only trade but other exchanges between the East and the West. The Periplus says, “Of the designated ports on the Erythraean Sea, and the market-towns around it, the first is the Egyptian port of Mussel Harbor. The harbours of both are at the boundary of Egypt, and are bays opening from the Erythraean Sea.” Rightly, the first chapter of the book deals with the recent discoveries made during excavations at some of the Red Sea ports that add further knowledge to what is already well-known. The present site of Mersa Gawsis revealed exceptional information about Pharaonic Era, says the author of the article.