

For me, as a translator of Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* into Slovak (*Holubičkin náhrdelník* 1984), it was highly rewarding to go through Chapter 12 and see the lofty building of Andalusian culture depicted in vivid and truthful colours.

Our generation of Arabicists could only dream of such an elaborate teaching/learning device as that recently materialized in the Cambridge University Press *Advanced Course* program. It should be highly recommended to all those who have already devoted a part of their time and energy to mastering Standard Arabic at an intermediate level and who are able and willing to spare another part of their time and energy to further develop their knowledge of this fascinating language.

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HOPE, Colin A.: *Egyptian Pottery*. Second Edition 2001. Shire Egyptology 5. ISBN 0 7478 0494 X, 64 pp., 76 b/w illustrations. Price 4.99 GBP.

The second edition of the reviewed book contains the revised text of the original version first published in 1987 and some new illustrations. Their complete list can be found on pages 4-5 followed by a short table of chronology of ancient Egyptian history.

The first chapter of Hope's book titled *The Egyptian potter* (pp. 6-10) starts with a passage from a Middle Kingdom text "The Satire of the Trades" preserved on the Papyrus Sallier II. This text presents the profession of the potter as a dirty and uncomfortable occupation. The potters belonged to the poorer members of Egyptian society. Based on the study of reliefs and other scenes one can say that the production of pottery was mostly a male prerogative. They lived and worked in larger villages and towns. In addition to the providers of the pottery for the community, the potters were employed by and worked for the estates owned by the king, members of the royal family, temples, funerary estates and other high officials. The workshops of the potters were situated on the outskirts of the settlements because of the presence of the clay deposits on the one hand as well as the smoke from their kilns on the other. Some of the potters especially those employed by the temples may have been specialized in the manufacture of particular types of pottery.

The second chapter *Pottery manufacture* (pp. 10-19) deals with the process and methods of production. The potters worked basically with two types of clay. The alluvial Nile-silt clay available on the banks of the Nile and in the cultivated areas was more abundant and frequently used in Egypt. The marl clay found on the desert edge was the second type. Throughout the history of ancient Egypt several techniques of pottery manufacture were used. The principal methods were: hand-forming; hand-forming and finishing on a stand; forming on a wheel. Hand-forming includes several different methods of pottery manufacture. The simplest one was fashioning the vessel from a lump of clay with the fingers. Hand-forming and finishing on a stand consisted of forming the vessel by hand and finishing the neck and rim by standing it on a device that enabled the vessel to be rotated. The lower parts of such vessels reflect the marks of hand-forming and the upper ones the marks produced by rotation. These simple rotating devices developed into the pivoted wheels that enabled the clay to be rotated throughout the manufacturing process. All the methods of pottery manufacture are known from the study of the tomb reliefs and scenes as well as the archaeological material preserved from all periods of Egyptian history. The vessels were baked in kilns. They can have straight or concave sides made of mud bricks. The Old Kingdom examples were about the height of a man and between 1 and 3 metres in diameter. The height of the New Kingdom kilns seem to have increased and some of them could have concave sides. These kilns were able to reach the temperatures between 600° and 1100° C.

An inseparable part of the ancient Egyptian pottery is its *Decoration* (pp. 20-28). Several decorative techniques were used by Egyptian potters, such as burnishing, fenestration, incision, modelling the vessel wall and painting. The painting decoration could be used before as well as after firing.

The fourth chapter contains a *Historical development* (pp. 29-48) of the pottery. The author does not forget to mention William Matthew Flinders Petrie, a pioneer in the study of Egyptian ceramics and one of the leading persons of Egyptian archaeology at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. The pottery development is presented in the main periods of Egyptian history. The Early Dynastic pottery is known mostly from the royal cemeteries at Abydos and Saqqara. Cylindrical jars bearing a lattice design, imitating rope slings in which pottery was carried, belong to the well-known representatives of this period. The Old Kingdom ceramics can be divided into the storage vessels and table wares with coated or polished surfaces on the one hand and the bread moulds, dishes and jars with uncoated surfaces on the other. The ceramic products of the First Intermediate Period reflect regional variations. Characteristic shapes of the Middle Kingdom include hemispherical bowls, stemmed cups, medium-sized jars with pronounced flaring necks and large necked jars with thickened rims. Some of the bowls contain polychrome decoration with geometric, human, animal and floral motifs. During the Second Intermediate Period regional variations start to appear again. A lively trade with the Levant and other countries of the Mediterranean area during the early New Kingdom period influenced the development of the manufacture of the ceramics in the Nile valley. Some new forms appeared, such as round-bodied, two handled jars, known as amphorae. In the second half of the Eighteenth Dynasty, tall one-handled bottles became more common. Small amphorae with polychrome decoration were used during the rest of the New Kingdom. The pottery of the following period before the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great is divided into several phases. The pottery from the middle of the 1st millennium BC reflect influences from abroad, especially that of the Greeks and Persians. The former became more evident during the rest of the period.

Some features, such as the size, shape, quality of manufacture, material, in some cases also remains of contents and inscriptions, can indicate *The functions of pottery*, a subject discussed in the fifth chapter of this book (pp. 49-54). Another characteristic, for example finding in context or reliefs may help to solve the problem of function. The author distinguishes three main categories of the functions of pottery: daily life, religious activities and funerary practices. As for the first category, the Nile-silt clay was used for domestic vessels and the marl clay for jars used for storage and transport of fluids. The domestic vessels were easily obtainable unlike the decorated ones used by wealthier members of society. Fragments of broken vessels were used by artists and scribes for sketches, pictures and short inscriptions. Besides the stone and metal vessels the use of pottery during the religious rituals and ceremonies as well as funerary practices is also known. Sometimes burials can be found in the large pottery jars.

In the last chapter titled *The role of pottery in the study of ancient Egypt* (pp. 55-58), the author deals with the technology describing the skills of the ancient Egyptian potters to manufacture their products, further dating and trade showing how the pottery can be used as one of the methods of dating, and decorative arts.

A selected bibliography, museums to visit including their addresses and index close the book on Egyptian pottery. This book is very informative and accompanied with many representative illustrations. It can be used as a short introduction to ancient Egyptian pottery for readers interested in ancient Egyptian civilization. Results of the latest research make the book up-to-date and available also for the students of Egyptology.

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