

FAIENGE FINDS FROM TELL ATRIB

Polish archaeological excavations in Tell Atrib yielded an assemblage of faience artifacts, amounting to 332 recorded items coming from well stratified contexts and dating for the most part to the Ptolemaic period (only four fragments could be ascribed with certainty to Roman and Byzantine times). More than half the recorded faience artifacts came from Sectors CCC and FFF [Fig. 2 and Table 1 on page 39], but the concentration in itself cannot be taken as

evidence for the localization of faience-producing workshops. It seems more likely that the area was used as a dumping ground for production waste from workshops that would have been located nearby, most probably in Squares LL and MM, where a bathing complex from the times of Ptolemy VI was excavated. A similar workshop complex may have functioned in the southwestern part of the explored area, that is, in Sectors III, LLL, MMM, QQ, KK [see Fig. 7].

KOM SIDI YUSUF SITE

Tell Atrib, Greek Athribis (Ἀθριβίς or Ἀθήρραβίς) is located in the central part of the Nile Delta on the outskirts of the modern town of Benha (Qalyubiyah Governate) (for the most recent list of references, see Laclère 2008: 263–272) [Fig. 1]. The ancient town developed on the right bank of the Damietta branch of the Nile. Today the area lies close to the Fefel channel, which follows the old 'Athribian' branch.

In Pharaonic times Athribis was the capital of the tenth nome of Lower Egypt. Its name, Kem-ur (*Km-wr*)¹⁰ appeared in the sources for the first time in the reign of the pharaoh Sahure (Fifth Dynasty) and from then on it played an important political and economic role in the history of ancient Egypt.¹¹

A mound (*kom*) formed over the ruins in the centuries following the fall of the town. It was comparable in size with similar *koms* found throughout the Nile Delta. Modern architecture (local university campus) as well as infrastructural investment (the Cairo–Alexandria railway line built in 1862) destroyed much of the ancient town

remains (Dąbrowski 1962: 22). Peasants digging for fertile *sebakh* soil and regularly dismantling ancient walls made of mud brick added to the destruction, as did local treasure hunters,¹² leaving behind extensive layers of disturbed rubble, sometimes of considerable thickness. Ancient ruins were preserved only in the northeastern part of the modern town of Benha, in the neighborhood of two small mounds designated as Kom A (or Western Kom) and Kom Sidi Yusuf.

Kom Sidi Yusuf is a low mound topped with the remains of a brick mausoleum from Arab times (on the historical topography of the site, see Myśliwiec 2009: 15–27), containing the burial of Sidi Yusuf, a local saint worshipped for the past few ages. This has effectively barred it from exploration. Instead, archaeological excavations have concentrated on an L-shaped area around it and in the nearest neighborhood. A Muslim cemetery borders the area on the north, while on the south it is cut off by the old Cairo–Alexandria highway.

¹⁰ Kem-ur, represented as a black bull, was the god of the nome of Athribis during the Middle Kingdom. During the New Kingdom the deity was assimilated with a local hypostasis of Osiris, referred to as Osiris-Kem-ur (Vernus, 1980: 384–385). The toponym Kem-ur remained in use in Roman times to designate both the district and the town which was its capital (see Vernus 1975: 519).

¹¹ During the New Kingdom Athribis started to be called *hwt hrj-jb(t)*, that is, "Castle in the middle". Later it was referred to most often as *hwt-t3-hry-jb(t)*. The term *hwt-jb* is found in a few inscriptions from the Late Period (Vernus 1975: 520–521; Jelínková-Reymond 1956: 81; Myśliwiec 1994a: 35). On the historical topography of the town, see Leclère 2008: 233ff.; Szymańska 2005: 15–18.

¹² In 1924 local peasants discovered the "hoard from Athribis", a deposit of jewelry from the Late Period, see Engelbach 1924: 178–185; Shaw, Nicholson 1997: 45.

A Polish–Egyptian team of archaeologists (the so-called Polish–Coptic mission) started excavations at the foot of Kom Sidi Yusuf in 1969 and worked through 1984 (Ruszczyc 1986: 33; 1975: 335–340; 1986a: 331–353; 1990a: 379–381; 1990b: 317–319; 1989–1990: 673–676; 1997; see also Michałowski 1962: 49–66; 1964: 263–244; Kołodziejczyk 1972: 138–145). Their main objective was to search for evidence of the legendary church of the Holy Virgin believed to be the oldest in Egypt. The remains of a sanctuary presumed to be this church were uncovered over the course of a few seasons, as well as part of a Roman bathing establishment and an accompanying cistern (Ruszczyc 1986: 33).

The promising results of the Polish–Coptic expedition and a galloping urbanization of surrounding areas led the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw to open regular salvage excavations (1985–1995 directed by Karol Myśliwiec and in 1998–1999 by Hanna Szymańska). Geophysical prospection coupled with archaeological testing preceded regular excavations (Myśliwiec *et alii* 1992–1993: 53–80; Myśliwiec, Herbich 1988: 177–189; on site stratigraphy specifically, see Myśliwiec 2009: 15–72, Pls I–XXIV). Undisturbed archaeological layers from the Ptolemaic, Roman and Byzantine periods were noted in several places to the south of Kom Sidi Yusuf.¹³

The area under exploration was divided into 65 sectors, each 10 m by 10 m in size. The sectors were designated with capital letters of the Latin alphabet in successive series: A–Z, AA–ZZ, AAA–ZZZ. The zone was 130 m long E–W and 50 m wide N–S.

Rescue excavations started from the eastern part of the area (Myśliwiec 2000: 13). In many places, particularly in the western part of the area, trenches were dug 4 m deep, at which level the earliest evidence of settlement from the second half of the 4th century BC was discovered. Culturally sterile natural layers lay below (Myśliwiec 2000: 28; Szymańska 2005: 20). An extensive urban district was uncovered over the course of a dozen seasons. Clear stratigraphy

empowered the distinguishing of several phases of occupation that were subsequently dated with varying exactitude thanks to a rich assemblage of coins and pottery, the latter including stamped amphora handles (for the dating of individual archaeological contexts, see Południkiewicz 2000: 263–266; Sztetyło 2000: 53–168; Krzyżanowska 2009: 75–204).

Pottery vessels were the principal dating criterion for particular layers and stratigraphic contexts.¹⁴ Amphora stamps were considered of secondary importance for dating, providing *termini post quem*. Similarly, coins found in the layers could have remained in circulation for longer periods of time (see, e.g., Krzyżanowska 1995: 81–83). In the case of Athribis, however, numismatic dating was dependent on a quantitative majority of given coins in specific stratigraphic contexts, in which case the dating could be considered as near to absolute.

Two long walls cutting across sectors LL, FF, U, T and Z separated the Ptolemaic architecture (western part of the site) from Roman and Late Antique buildings (eastern and southern part). A district of workshops was discovered in the western part of the area. It formed an extensive conglomerate of small units (rooms) separated by narrow streets and irregular courtyards. Dried brick was the building material *par excellence*. Coins and stamped amphora handles found in individual chambers precisely distinguished layers corresponding to successive occupational phases of each urban complex:

Phase I

Structures from the late 4th century BC through the reign of Ptolemy V;

Phase II

Structures raised in the rule of Ptolemy VI and his direct successors;

Phase III

Structures raised in the second half of the Ptolemaic period and in the beginning of Roman rule (Myśliwiec 2000: 28; 2009: 33).

¹³ For the deposit in Trench III, see Myśliwiec *et alii* 1988: 188–190, Pls 35–38a; Myśliwiec 1987: 63–65, Pls 1–4; 1990a: Pl. 68 [1–2]; 1993b: 49; 1994a: 36–37, Figs 3–5. On the results of the excavation in other trenches, see Myśliwiec 2000: 10ff.

¹⁴ The pottery finds are being studied by Anna Południkiewicz.



Fig. 1. Plan of excavations in Tell Atrib; insets, location of the Ptolemaic and Roman district with regard to Kom Sidi Yusuf and location of the site in the Nile Delta

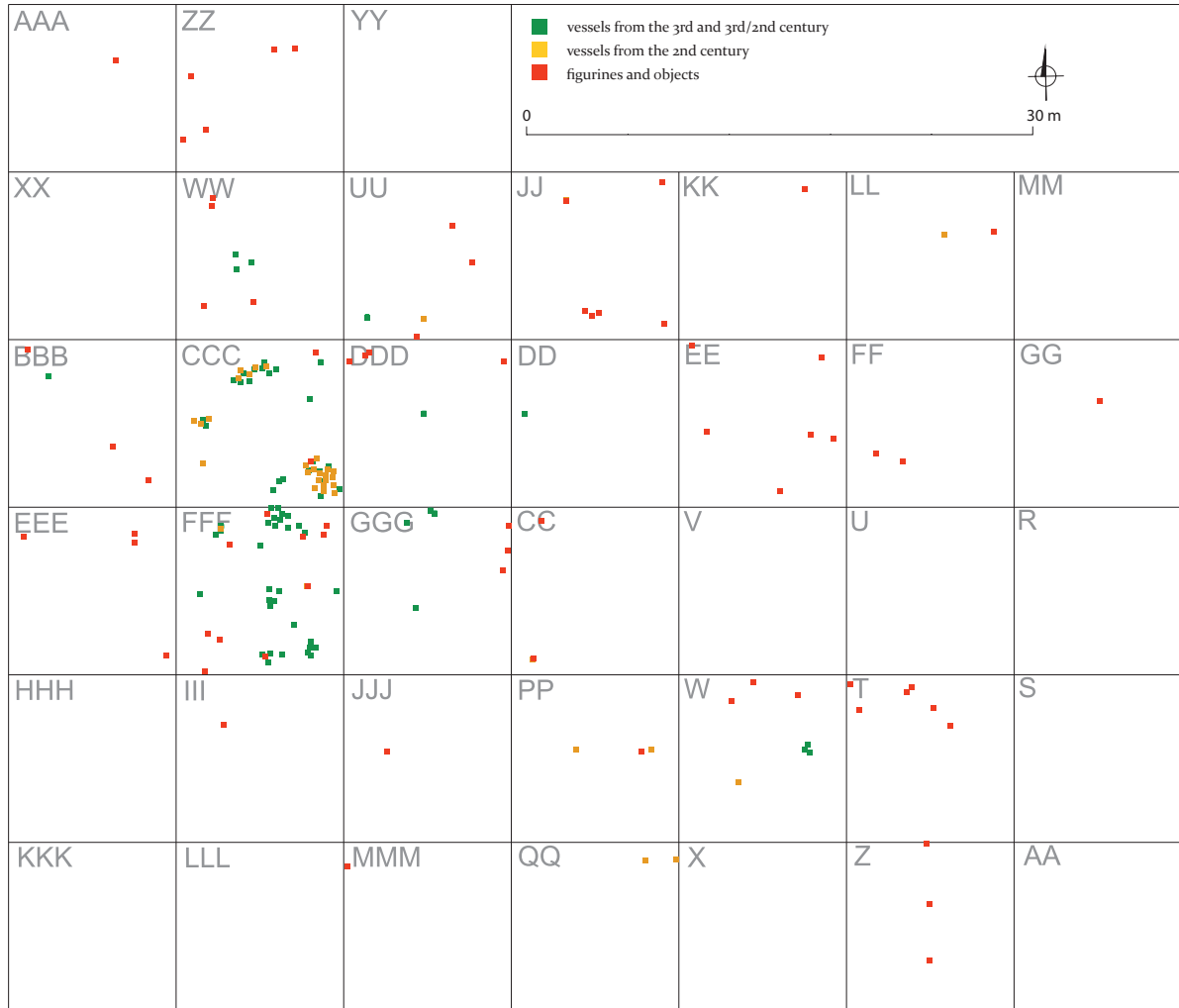


Fig. 2. Distribution plan of faience finds by sectors (colors differentiate between chronological periods and finds categories)

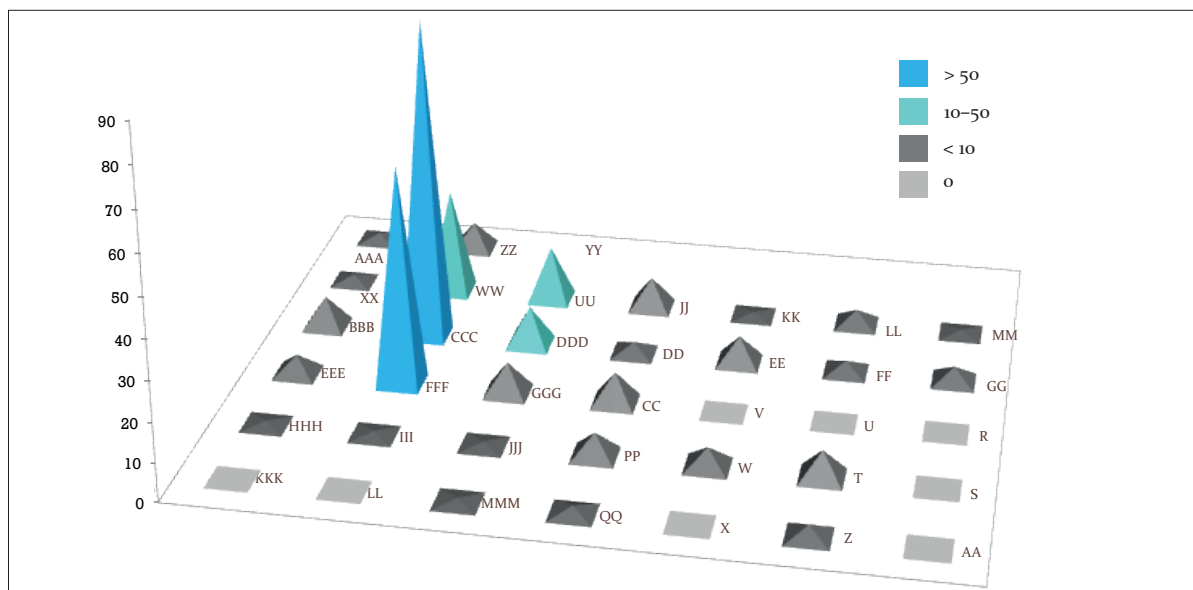


Fig. 3. Distribution of faience finds by sectors (compare plan in Fig. 2)

DISTRIBUTION OF FAIENCE FINDS

Objects of faience were found in virtually all of the sectors where Ptolemaic architecture was discovered. The present catalogue lists 332 items, but this is but an approximate number as the documentation did not encompass non-diagnostic fragments. The percentage shares of finds from particular sectors, presented here [Table 1], should therefore be treated with caution, but they do give a general idea of the concentration of sherds (see also the concordance table of catalogue entries, sectors and dating at the end of the volume).

Generally speaking, it is more than evident that over half the recorded items came from the combined sectors FFF (56) and CCC (82). In the rest of the area, finds were more scattered and less numerous. Sectors yielded from 1 to 10 pieces on average (the biggest number coming from squares WW (27), UU (14), DDD (10), BBB, CC, GGG and JJ (8 each) and EE, T and ZZ (7 each). No faience finds were recorded in sectors in the eastern part of the site and in three sectors farthest to the southwest [Figs 2, 3].

Faience objects were discovered solely in Ptolemaic layers, limited to the workshop district in the western part of the investigated area. The eastern limit of the occurrence of faience artifacts was marked by a double wall separating the Hellenistic district from later Roman and Byzantine structures.

Faience vessel fragments were clearly concentrated in the area of the westernmost squares CCC and FFF, while figurines, amulets and beads were scattered throughout the excavated Ptolemaic district in a fairly uniform manner.

District areas of concentration of faience artifacts were noted during the exploration in 1994 of squares CCC and FFF. In FFF, a denser pattern of finds characterized the northern and central part of the square, in neighboring CCC, concentrations were noted mainly in the southeastern part and rooms 235 and 236 [see Figs 2, 3]. It should be kept in mind that the faience fragments were not connected functionally with the architecture, in which they were found, but were part of a rubbish dump that accrued among the ruins of earlier buildings.

Table 1. Distribution of faience finds by sectors and categories

Sector	Number of finds			%	
	Total	Figures	Objects		Vessels
AAA	2	1	0	1	0.60
BBB	8	3	0	5	2.41
CC	8	1	1	6	2.41
CCC	82	2	1	79	24.70
DD	3	0	0	3	0.90
DDD	10	3	2	5	3.01
EE	7	2	4	1	2.11
EEE	5	2	3	0	1.51
FF	3	2	1	0	0.90
FFF	56	5	5	46	16.87
GG	4	0	1	3	1.21
GGG	8	3	0	5	2.41
HHH	1	1	0	0	0.30
III	1	0	1	0	0.30
JJ	8	5	1	2	2.41
JJJ	1	0	0	1	0.30
KK	1	0	1	0	0.30
LL	4	1	0	3	1.21
MM	1	1	0	0	0.30
MMM	1	1	0	0	0.30
PP	6	2	1	3	1.81
QQ	2	0	0	2	0.60
T	7	2	5	0	2.11
UU	14	2	1	11	4.22
W	5	0	3	2	1.51
WW	27	2	2	23	8.13
XX	2	0	1	1	0.60
Z	3	2	1	0	0.90
ZZ	7	4	2	1	2.11
All	287	47	37	203	86.45
Surface	42+3	7+1	4+2	31	13.55
TOTAL	332	55	43	234	100

FAIENCE ARTIFACTS FROM SECTOR CCC

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The total number of faience objects found in square CCC is 82, most of these being vessels with monochrome glaze. Three bowl types: *B.1*, *B.2*, *B.7* and alabastra constituted 56% of all the finds. Ten of these fragments were overfired or preserved other evidence of the production process, such as remains of conical props still attached to the base ring. Five wasters of this kind were found in layers dated to the 3rd century BC, one in a deposit from the turn of the 3rd century BC, the rest in layers from the 2nd century BC. Plain fragments constituted 58% of the assemblage, decorated ones 42%.

The stratigraphic distribution demonstrated a relative quantitative balance between faiences from 2nd century BC layers and those found in 3rd century BC contexts, although about 18% of the assemblage originated from layers that constituted the interface corresponding to the turn of the two centuries. Since most of the latter could be assigned to the first half of the 2nd century BC based on characteristic features, it should be assumed that in sector CCC fragments from the 2nd century BC were more numerous.

The southeastern part of the square yielded the greatest number of faience fragments, including a large set of vessels with both mono- and polychrome decoration. The sequence of layers here has been distinguished in the present study as *stratigraphic sequence 1* (for a detailed discussion, see below). The 34 fragments found within its confines constituted more than half of the finds from square CCC. Predominant in this group were bowls of types *B.1*, *B.2*, *B.7* and alabastra (55% of all the finds). Notably, the stratigraphic distribution of faience objects from this relatively limited area corresponded to the quantitative relations between particular types of vessels established for square CCC as a whole. Four fragments from this assemblage appeared to be workshop waste. In this set, plain faience fragments were definitely superior to the decorated pieces and fragments from 2nd century BC contexts were superior (50%) to those from chronologically earlier contexts dated to the 3rd century BC (26%).

Stratigraphic sequence 2 encompassed unit 235, a part of which was cleared in the northern section of square CCC [see *Fig. 4*]. A total of 16 fragments of faience vessels was discovered here. Bowls of types *B.1* and *B.2* predominated, constituting close to half of the assemblage. Plain fragments (10) were

clearly superior in number to the decorated pieces (6). Another characteristic element is the relatively large number of wasters, 4, making for almost half of the finds of this kind from the square considered as a whole. The chronological distribution, based on stratigraphic premises, revealed a clear predominance of material from 3rd century BC layers.

The exploration of adjoining unit 236 (*stratigraphic sequence 3*, see below) uncovered a total of six vessel fragments, two representing bowl type *B.1*, the others bowls *B.3* and *B.7*, dish *D.1* and plate *P.5*. Fragments from 2nd century BC layers (3) were insignificantly superior to those from 3rd century BC contexts (2). One fragment could be considered as a waster.

DISCUSSION OF STRATIGRAPHY

The disturbed surface layer in square CCC reached different depths in the eastern and western parts of the square (1 m and 0.50 m respectively), reflecting an uneven ground surface falling overall approximately 0.50 m to the west (Myśliwiec, Bakr Said 1991: 202). In the western part of the square, the surface layer contained mainly very fragmented pottery. In the eastern part, there was less ceramics and much more compact brown soil superimposed on a bed of black ashes (concentrated especially in the southeastern part of the sector).

The assemblage of finds from the disturbed surface layer represented a broad chronological range from the end of the Dynastic period through the reign of the Ptolemies, Roman and Byzantine rule and including the Arab medieval period. The bottom of the layer was more homogenous, including limestone blocks with carved hieroglyphic inscriptions of Late Dynastic and Ptolemaic date (Myśliwiec 1991: 191; 2009: 29). Coins found in the same context were mainly Ptolemaic, less frequently Roman. The tops of brick walls making up units 235, 236, 237 in the northern part of the square were cleared at a depth of approximately 1 m below ground surface. They were preserved to a height of one course of bricks laid on an extensive layer of clay loam.

a. *Stratigraphic sequence 1*

The upper limit of an extensive red-black layer of burning, intercalated with thin ash laminae was recorded flush with the so-called upper walls (at a depth of 0.50–1.00 m) in the southeastern and eastern part of the sector. The layer was replete

with plaster fragments bearing painted decoration of red, yellow, black and white color. The same kind of decoration could be seen on the walls of baths of Middle Ptolemaic date uncovered in squares JJ and MM (Kołodziejczyk 1999: 99–160). There can be little doubt that the fragmented plaster found in square CCC actually came from this bathing establishment, which would date the burning to a period after the deserted workshops had been cleared away, an event which took place some time in the first half of the 2nd century BC. The presence of ashes and vessel fragments indicates that nearby pottery furnaces must have been leveled as well, along with neighboring structures. Eight faience fragments were discovered in this layer. The accompanying pottery deposit was fairly homogeneous in terms of typology: mainly amphoras and other pottery forms with so-called damp patch decoration from the 2nd century BC (see Myśliwiec, Bakr Said 1999: 204–205).

The undisturbed stratigraphy left little doubt as to the Ptolemaic date of the layer with burning and ashes, rather the middle of the period or slightly later (terracotta oil lamps, TA 94/38, TA 94/40, found in the context of this layer, were dated to the middle of the 2nd century BC).¹⁵ Coins struck by Ptolemaic rulers, found in this layer, confirmed the proposed chronology. Issues of Ptolemy VI (TA 94/20, TA 94/29, TA 94/54, TA 94/4p) were recorded from 0.30 m to 1.50 m below the tops of E–W walls intersecting in squares BBB and CCC.¹⁶ Two of these coins merit special attention. The first, found by the northeastern corner of the square (TA 94/34), bears on the obverse an image of Isis officially identified with Cleopatra I. It was struck during the regency of this queen, immediately after the death of Ptolemy V (181–174 BC). The second, bearing a head of Herakles in lion's skin, was assigned to the rule of Ptolemy VI (TA 94/264). A fine terracotta statuette depicting Isis with two young boys found in the same context was interpreted tentatively as an image of Cleopatra I dressed as Isis, shown with two of her sons, the future kings of Egypt, Ptolemy VI and VIII (Myśliwiec 2001).

Finds of stamped amphora handles from imported vessels were useful in verifying the chronology of sector CCC. Three from the disturbed surface layer (TA 94/9, TA 94/14, TA 94/15) cannot be considered as a dating element. Two others were recorded at a depth 1.10 m below ground surface, which corresponded to 0.20 m below the tops of preserved Late Ptolemaic (“upper”) walls crossing square CCC from east to west. The names of the eponym Philtatos I and the maker Nysios, both dated to 188–167 BC, were recorded on one of these (TA 94/32) (Sztetyło 2000: Cat. 147). The other featured a representation of a dolphin and the name of the fabricant Euboulos, active in 188–176 BC (TA 94/33). Other stamped amphora handles from the same stratigraphic sequence, found from 0.30 m to 0.60 m below the top of the preserved Late Ptolemaic wall cutting across the square from east to west, corresponding respectively to 1.15 m and 1.30 m below ground surface, were also attributed to the 2nd century BC (TA 94/41, TA 94/48, TA 94/49, TA 94/65).

The burning layer approximately 0.90 m below the top of the Late Ptolemaic walls, especially in units 235, 236, 237, contained a large quantity of broken ceramic vessels. A similar abundance of pottery in the assemblage was observed for the southeastern part of square CCC (see below).

The bottom limits of the burning layer were traced 1 m below the top of the Late Ptolemaic walls in the southeastern part of the square. The “lower” set of brick walls appeared just below that, along with furnaces which could be dated to the Early and Middle Ptolemaic period.¹⁷ These structures corresponded to the lower walls from the neighboring square DDD (Myśliwiec 1995: 23). The pottery assemblage from this context was numerous, but different in character, missing the thin-walled vessels with glossy orange-red slip and containers imitating Greek shapes (oinochai, aryballoi, lagynoi, and also ablution bowls) (see Myśliwiec 1998: 123–138). The predominant forms in this context were thick-walled vessels of coarse clay without slip or with a slip of darker, carmine red color.

¹⁵ For details of dating and bibliographic references concerning published finds from the excavations, including coins, lamps, stamped amphora handles and others, see tables on pages 269–272.

¹⁶ The walls were discovered at a depth of approximately 1 m below ground surface, under the disturbed surface layer resulting from the destruction of Late Ptolemaic structures. The foundation level of these brick walls corresponds to the top of the disturbed layer, see Myśliwiec 1995: 21–22.

¹⁷ A set of small ovens found in the eastern part of the square may have served to prepare food, possibly votive bread, as indicated by the presence in context with these ovens of a terracotta stamp with figural decoration for stamping ritual breads. On the stamps, see Myśliwiec, Bakr Said 1999: 202, Fig. 19 a–b.

b. Stratigraphic sequence 2

Unit 235 in the northern part of square CCC was limited on the south by a wall crossing the square from east to west (corresponding to the upper set of brick walls) and on the north, west and east by walls from the so-called middle and lower levels, all continuing their course in adjacent squares BBB and WWW. This area measured 9 m by approximately 1.30 m.

The tops of the brick walls were discovered at a depth of approximately 1 m below ground surface. Most of them were preserved as only a single course of dried mud bricks. Their base corresponded to an extensive loam layer in the western part of the area, composed of tamped earth as well as fragmented and whole bricks. Other walls of similar east-west orientation were uncovered approximately 0.30 m lower down. They had to be dismantled in order to reach the earlier archaeological layers. Two terracotta figurines were found at a depth of between 0.60 m and 0.85 m below the top of the south wall. One was a male head (TA 94/110), the other a female head with classical Greek features (TA 94/130).

A layer of burning with ashes was recorded approximately 1 m below the top of the “upper” walls in the eastern part of the unit. The context yielded large quantities of pottery vessel sherds. A coin of Ptolemy IV (TA 94/179), found in the northeastern part of the square, approximately 0.50 m lower, and a coin of Ptolemy III (TA 94/87p) discovered at the

same depth in the eastern part of the room marked the upper section of an Early Ptolemaic level, the top of which was noted in squares BBB and CCC at a depth of 1.70 m below the preserved tops of Late Ptolemaic mud-brick walls. This level consisted of brown soil mixed with traces of burning and numerous fragments of pottery (structurally, this layer resembles waste deposits from pottery kilns). Exploration of the lowermost, Early Ptolemaic layer in the northern part of the unit yielded a large number of faience fragments.

c. Stratigraphic sequence 3

Unit 236 in the western part of sector CCC was delimited on four sides by mud-brick walls, the tops of which were recorded approximately 1 m below ground surface and were preserved as a single course standing on the same kind of brick and clay loam as recorded in adjoining units 235 and 237. A stamped amphora handle (TA 94/50) was found 0.45 m below the top level of the south wall. A layer of burning containing large quantities of broken ceramic vessels was recorded at 0.90 m below the “upper” walls. Of interest in the assemblage deriving from this context was a coin of Ptolemy V (TA 94/88), found at a depth of 0.70 m below the top of the upper wall, bordering already on the top of the pottery deposit. More chronological evidence for the burning layer was provided by two round stamped amphora handles recorded at a depth of 0.96 m below the top of the west wall of unit 236. One of these featured the name of the maker Athanodotos, active in 188–183 BC (TA 94/116). A well preserved coin of Ptolemy IV (TA 94/188), found outside the south wall, marked the upper level of the underlying Early Ptolemaic layer, which corresponded in character to the 3rd century BC layer already described for unit 235 above.

Summing up the discussion of the stratigraphy in sector CCC, it can be said that faience artifacts came mainly from a homogeneous deposit of ashes and rubble found in the southeastern part of the square and dated by coins and stamped handles of imported amphoras to the reign of Ptolemy VI (possibly also slightly before and after). The ashes, pottery and other remains (including waterproof plaster fragments) constituted rubbish cleared from a complex of artisan workshops which were leveled under the construction of a public bath in the Middle Ptolemaic period. The assumption is that faience objects were brought to this spot within square CCC together with a thick layer of refuse cleared from the area to be occupied by the bath buildings. Confirming this idea was a set of

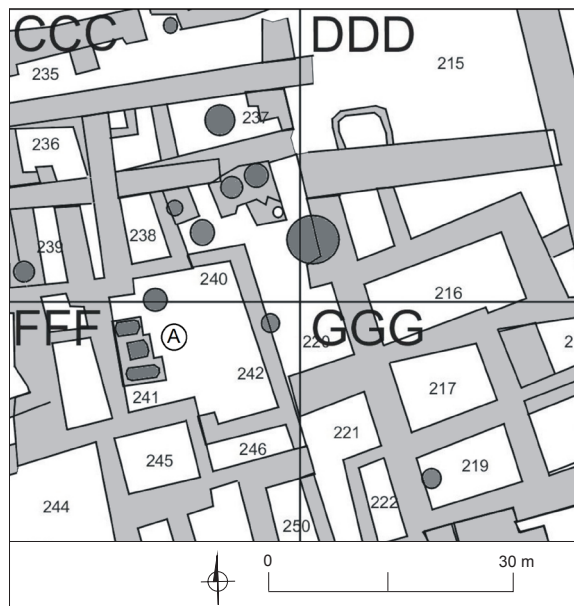


Fig. 4. Plan of sectors CCC, DDD, FFF, GGG yielding the greatest number of faience finds

characteristic askoi, which were found in the same context. They were undoubtedly made in local workshops as indicated by overfired fragments and deformed pieces (Myśliwiec 1995: 22; Myśliwiec, Bakr Said 1999: 204, Fig. 12 b–c), and constituted part of a pottery deposit from the 2nd century BC, found 0.60–0.80 m below the top of the Late Ptolemaic wall cutting across square CCC from east to west. Numerous aryballoi and lagynoi found in the same spot, as well as jugs and flagons of differentiated shape and size (Południkiewicz 1992: 98 [4–6]; Myśliwiec, Bakr Said 1999: 204,

Fig. 12 A; Myśliwiec 1995: 23), undoubtedly made up the equipment of the bath built in the times of Ptolemy VI. They could have been used during *lagynophoria* or other ceremonies associated with the Dionysiac cult celebrated in all likelihood in the bathing complex (Myśliwiec, Bakr Said 1999: 204; Szymańska 1994: 36).

The dating of the faience fragments from the burning layer in square CCC, which is the context of dumped debris, has been set for the first half of the Ptolemaic period, not later than the reign of Ptolemy VI.

FAIENCE ARTIFACTS FROM SECTOR FFF

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Faience objects found in sector FFF, totaling 53 in all, were made up of a large set of beads [Cat. 311, 315, 318], an ushebti figure [Cat. 281], amulets [Cat. 247, 253], small head [Cat. 269], a figurine of Harpokrates [Cat. 240], and a tessera [Cat. 290]. Fragments of vessels with relief decoration and monochrome glaze dominated the assemblage (42). Upon analysis, they proved to be much less varied as type goes, compared to finds from square CCC. The most numerous category, constituting more than half the finds from this square, were bowls of type *B.1* and jars of type *J.1*. Next in terms of quantity were alabaster and decorated plates of type *P.2*. Vessels with multicolored register decoration prevailed (70% share of the material from the square). Three fragments could be considered as production wasters; of these two came from 3rd century BC layers. The number of finds of faience objects from 3rd century BC layers was clearly superior to those from 2nd century BC deposits.

DISCUSSION OF STRATIGRAPHY

Most of the faience objects were found in two areas of the square, in its northern and southern parts. A small number was recorded in the center of the trench [Fig. 5]. The distribution throughout the square was much more uniform compared to that in adjoining sector CCC.

The disturbed surface layer consisted of brown soil with trace amounts of pottery, approximately 1.50 m thick (Myśliwiec 1995: 26). It yielded, among others, two coins of Ptolemy VI (TA 94/1, TA 94/39) and a well preserved Early Ptolemaic coin struck in the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphos (TA 94/78). One should also mention two lamps topped with the head of a swan (TA 94/1p, TA 94/9p), a terracotta figurine of a pig (TA 94/35) and

a stamped amphora handle (TA 94/79), the latter already 0.40 m below ground surface. The handle came from a vessel made in the workshop of the maker Giancola dated to the early 1st century BC.

The bottom of the disturbed surface layer was reached in the northern part of the square at a depth of 1.20 m to 1.30 m (below ground surface at the south side of the trench, referred to as a temporary benchmark) and approximately 0.50 m lower in the southern part.

The underlying thick layer contained finds none of which were later than the reign of Ptolemy V. Coins of Ptolemy IV and Ptolemy III predominated in this assemblage. The tops of mud-brick walls corresponding in date to the times of these two rulers appeared at a depth of 1.50 m below the temporary benchmark on the south side of the square (Myśliwiec 1995c: 43). The assemblage associated with these walls yielded Early Ptolemaic coins (Ptolemy III and Ptolemy IV, TA 94/194, TA 94/196, TA 94/213, TA 94/113p) and a vast pottery deposit including vessels of local production. Here the prevailing shapes were small bowls, beakers (TA 94/91–92p, 192–193, 197, 199, 204–206, 210) and small vessels of bathing function, such as bottles and flasks for ointment and scents (Myśliwiec 1995c: 43). The layer contained numerous fragments of faience objects, mainly relief-decorated bowls of type *B.1*, similar to examples from unit 216 (square DDD). One fragment, preserving two conical props on the base, was actually included in the pottery deposit. Gnathia vases, mainly fluted kantharoi with decoration painted in a band above the rim and glossy black glaze (Myśliwiec, Bakr Said 1999: 204), were also represented in number in this assemblage. Of interest were lumps of chalky marl, yellow-green in color, of varied size (mainly from the center of the square), apparently

confirming the production of marl vessels in local pottery workshops.

A pottery deposit was located in the central part of the square, directly north of the mud-brick wall closing off a series of units: 245, 246, 248, 249, at a depth of 2.10 m below the benchmark on the south side of the trench, on a level dated by coins of Ptolemy IV. It was composed of four broken pots with rounded bottoms and the lower half of an amphora (Myśliwiec 1995c: 44). One of the vessels contained two small clay figurines of the naked “concubine” type (TA 94/220–221). Neither figurine had feet and one of them had even been fired in this state. Two pairs of feet were found with the figurines, but neither fitted the terracottas. This could indicate their character as technological wasters dumped from a nearby terracotta workshop (Myśliwiec, Bakr Said 1999: 210).

The deposit was found on a floor in the baths dated by the stratigraphic context to the beginning of the Ptolemaic period (end of 4th–beginning of 3rd century BC) (Myśliwiec 2000: 37). In the eastern part of this floor a ceramic pipe was discovered connecting the bathing pools with a cylindrical vessel set in the ground (Myśliwiec, Bakr Said 1999: 209, Fig. 21). Extensive burning remains mixed with mica covered the entire area.

Rooms adjoining the bath on the south produced a number of Early Ptolemaic coins from the reigns of Ptolemy II and Ptolemy IV (the latter, e.g., TA 94/246, TA 94/240, TA 94/242), mostly 0.40–0.50 m below the level of the “lower” walls.

A well preserved limestone head of one of the early Ptolemies, most probably Ptolemy II (TA 94/245), was found in a context dated by these coins, in unit 241, approximately 0.50 m below the top of “lower” walls. The context corresponded to that of a coin of Ptolemy II in adjoining unit 244 (Myśliwiec, Bakr Said 1999: 210, Fig. 23a; Myśliwiec 1997a). Other significant finds included a phallic figurine of Harpokrates sitting on a vase (TA 94/235), found 0.50 m below the level of the “lower” walls. An undisturbed Early Ptolemaic level was reached in units 236, 239, 241, 244, 245 and 250. This layer contained exclusively undecorated pottery from this period.

In unit 241, which adjoined the Early Ptolemaic bath on the west, a thin layer of brown earth fill containing Early Ptolemaic pottery was recorded at a depth of 2.40–2.50 m (below the benchmark on the west side of trench EEE). Below it was an approximately 10 cm thick deposit of red dust mixed with black ashes, the latter originating probably from a furnace located further to the west of the square.



Fig. 5. General view of sector FFF, view from the southeast (scale bar = 1 m)

In units adjoining a group of small pools [Fig. 4], there was a layer approximately 0.30–0.60 m below the foundation of the pools, which could be dated to the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 3rd century BC. As no coins were found there, the dating is based on Early Ptolemaic pottery finds (see Myśliwiec 2000: 37).

Faience fragments were found on practically all levels in square FFF. A large number of objects came from layers explored at depths from 0.95 m to 1.60 m below the benchmark on the south side of the trench. This included a disturbed surface layer reaching down to the level of the Early Ptolemaic (“lower”) walls (reign of Ptolemy III and Ptolemy

IV). An equally large number of fragments was recorded in layers just 0.15 m below the tops of the lower walls, reaching 2.10 m below their footing. This is in contrast with the level of the baths which yielded only one fragment of relief-decorated bowl of type *B.1*. No specific concentration of the assemblage was noted, distribution over the area of the square being much more uniform than in the case of the adjoining square CCC. Even so, the northern part of the square, especially the northeastern corner, could be said to contain the most faience fragments, corresponding to the concentration of faience finds in the southeastern corner of square CCC.

FAIENCEN ARTIFACTS FROM SECTOR UU

Exploration in sector UU [see Fig. 1] uncovered an extensive deposit of Ptolemaic pottery at a depth of 1.60 m below ground surface. This has been described as *stratigraphic sequence 4*. The assemblage also contained large quantities of broken and crushed pottery. The deposit was located on the southern side of a wall cutting across the center of the square from east to west. Two well preserved Ptolemaic coins were found on this level (Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III, TA 91/78A, TA 91/77A).

In stratigraphic terms, the deposit lay within a thick layer of burning extending also into adjoining sectors WW and ZZ, interpreted as accumulation dumped from pottery kilns that were leveled under a new bathing complex constructed in the reign of Ptolemy VI. The coins dominating in this layer were struck in the reigns of Ptolemy V and VI (Myśliwiec 1995a: 208). Early Ptolemaic coins suggested a beginning date for the deposit in the first half of the 2nd century, possibly even the end of the 3rd century BC.