

## **HIERARCHICAL SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS AND POTTERY VARIABILITY OF LATE FORAGERS AND EARLY HERDERS AT JEBEL SABALOKA, SUDAN**

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This paper presents the results of new surveys with test excavations and an analysis of variability of pottery productions. It will provide evidence for spatial and temporal relations between task sites, minor settlements and the core sites of Sphinx and Fox Hill. It also offers new dating and interpretation of the settlement systems by late foragers and early herders. Finally, the large pottery assemblages from Jebel Sabaloka may contribute to building a solid bridge between the Near East and Northeastern Africa. Repeated surveys in the western part of the Jebel Sabaloka and in the surroundings of the Sixth Nile Cataract, in central Sudan, have brought to light some thirty sites occupied by late foragers (Mesolithic, Early Khartoum) and early herders (Shaheinab Neolithic). The sites differ in size, depth of deposits, finds and primary activities. They could be classified according to a three-level hierarchy, consisting of task sites, minor settlements, and core occupation sites. Sphinx (SBK.W-60) is core site that preserves more than one meter of anthropic sediments. Its chronology anticipated the emergence of the Early Khartoum complex to the beginning of the ninth millennium BC. Abundant impressed and incised pottery is present from the lowest levels, confirming that systematic pottery production in Northeastern Africa dates from the late tenth/early ninth millennium BC, as observed in the Egyptian Western Desert. The decorated pottery from Northeastern Africa offers hints on the origin of pottery in the Near East: impressed sherds are found in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic C in Turkey, dating to beginning of the seventh millennium BC. They are totally different from local Pottery Neolithic ceramics and were thought to have a western, Mediterranean, origin. However, impressed pottery is about two-thousand years older in Northeast Africa. Therefore, impressed pottery in the Near East might originate from Northeastern Africa.

### **Keywords**

Pottery production, Settlement system, Late foragers, Early herders, Sudan

### **Note/comment**