

TELL EDFU

27-29. Calcite vases from the mastaba of Isi

Tell Edfu. Mastaba of Isi (NOI XIX)

Sixth Dynasty

27. Globular jar with the neck imitating a bowl with recurved rim

H. 12.6 cm, calcite (travertine)

Cairo, Egyptian Museum, Inv. No. JE 71818

28. Elongated jar with lid and spout in the form of an uraeus

H. 16 cm, calcite (travertine)

Cairo, Egyptian Museum, Inv. No. JE 71891

29. Hes vase with siltstone lid

H. 12.6 cm, calcite (travertine)

Cairo, Egyptian Museum, Inv. No. JE 71820

Isi, father of Qar, was the nomarch of Edfu, whose career spanned the decades from the reign of King Djedkare Izezi of the Fifth Dynasty up to the time of King Teti of the Sixth Dynasty. After his death Isi was given the title of vizier and became a kind of local saint. His cult was maintained at his tomb till the end of the Thirteenth Dynasty. The mastaba of Isi was discovered by *sebakhin* in 1932. The following year the French mission directed by M. Alliot saved it from sharing the fate of the mastaba of Qar, but it was only the superstructure where the French excavations were carried out. In 1939 the Franco-Polish mission discovered two burial shafts of the mastaba, belonging to Isi and his consort. The burial chamber of the nomarch was thoroughly looted already in antiquity; among the scarce remains of the original equipment left by the looters there was a large siltstone bowl (Egyptian Museum in Cairo, JE 71834, not displayed). The burial chamber of Isi's consort, however, was found untouched and richly furnished. The equipment included, among others, a set of stone vases of exceptional design and quality. The shape of the globular jar with a neck imitating a small bowl (27) is without parallel and the motifs incised on the body (*ankh* between two uraei) put the vessel into the same group as the vase inscribed with the names of King Teti (see above). Two other vases (28 and 29) also represent the highest level of Old Kingdom craftsmanship. Most probably they were manufactured in royal workshops in Memphis.

J.A.

27. K. Michałowski, C. Desroches, J. de Linage, J. Manteuffel, S. Żejmo-Żejmis, *Tell Edfou 1939 Fouilles franco-polonaises. Rapports III*, Le Caire 1950, p. 175, No. 65, fig. 109, pls XVI, 3; XVII, 3
28. *Ibidem*, p. 176, No. 73, pls XVI, 12; XVII, 2
29. *Ibidem*, p. 177, No. 77, pl. XVI, 16; p. 77, No. 82

