Some Remarks on Meroitic Pottery from Jebel Barkal / Napata (Grazyna Bakowska)

The pottery sherds presented come from excavations conducted by the Italian Archaeological Mission at Jebel Barkal/Napata. The ceramic objects examined were found in the ruins of an impressive palace designated B 1500 and dating to the reign of king Natakamani, palace B 2400 and structure B 2200. They consist mainly of wheel-made ceramic pieces, although some fragments of handmade ceramics were also recovered. The pottery in question reveals a great variety of forms and decoration types. Numerous imports and imitations can be identified, leaving influence of other cultures visible in shapes and primarily in decoration. Some other imports, mostly from Egypt, were also found. In comparison with the surrounding area of Aswan, some may even attest contacts with the eastern Mediterranean.

Decorated ceramics allows distinguishing religious and symbolic as well as anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, floral, astral and geometrical motifs. They base on local tradition or derive from Pharaonic and Hellenistic art, also leaving this variety and syncretism visible in the Meroitic architecture of Napata.