Introduction

The second volume in the **Early Makuria Research Project. El-Zuma Cemetery** publication showcases the results of the examination of the pottery assemblage excavated in the course of the Early Makuria Research Project at the El-Zuma tumulus cemetery site. The ceramic wares discussed herein came from 28 tumuli (see General map of the El-Zuma archaeological site at the end of this volume) dated to the Early Makurian period (see Volume I, Chapter 4). These tumuli have been classified into three main types:

- type I, large tumuli with a U-shaped shaft and several burial chambers and tunnels;
- type II, medium-sized tumuli with an L-shaped or U-shaped shaft and two to five burial chambers;
- type III, small tumuli with a rectangular shaft and one side burial chamber (Mahmoud El-Tayeb 2012, 61–75; see Volume I, pp. 125–154).

The pottery presented in this volume was recovered from:

- two fully excavated type I tumuli (T.2, T.5);
- six partly excavated type I tumuli (T.1, T.3, T.4, T.6, T.7, T.8)—only the external shafts and tunnels were examined (pottery was found mainly in the external shafts and inside the tunnels);
- ten fully excavated type II tumuli (T.9, T.11, T.13, T.14, T.15, T.16, T.23, T.24, T.25, T.26);
- one partly excavated type II tumulus (T.12);
- nine fully excavated type III tumuli (T.10, T.17, T.18, T.19, T.20, T.21, T.22, T.27, T.28).

Reports on the pottery uncovered in the course of ten years of excavations have been published successively (Mahmoud El-Tayeb 2005, 2007, 2010a, 2010b, 2012, 85–105; Klimaszewska-Drabot 2010b; Mahmoud El-Tayeb and Czyżewska 2011; Klimaszewska-Drabot and Czyżewska 2012; Klimaszewska-Drabot and Mahmoud El-Tayeb 2014; Mahmoud El-Tayeb, Juszczak-Futkowska, and Czyżewska 2014; Czyżewska-Zalewska 2016, 2017).

The research has raised several questions concerning the function of specific types of vessels in grave contexts, the continuity of Meroitic traditions and the changes in pottery that can be observed in comparison to the Meroitic period. Nonetheless, the most important question was about the function and meaning of the vessels deposited in the El-Zuma tumuli.

The analysis of the pottery from the El-Zuma burial contexts has been rooted in an outline of the state of research into archaeological pottery from post-Meroitic period sites excavated in Ancient Nubia. It includes a discussion of

production technology and a description of vessel types, a catalogue of which can be found at the end of this volume. An important part of the presentation is a mapping of the distribution of pottery and lamps inside the tumuli.