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Elements in Ancient Egypt in Context

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CERAMIC PERSPECTIVES ON ANCIENT EGYPTIAN SOCIETY

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Ceramic Perspectives on Ancient Egyptian Society

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Abstract: This Element demonstrates how ceramics, a dataset that is more typically identified with chronology than social analysis, can forward the study of Egyptian society writ large. This Element argues that the sheer mass of ceramic material indicates the importance of pottery to Egyptian life. Ceramics form a crucial dataset with which Egyptology must critically engage, and which necessitate working with the Egyptian past using a more fluid theoretical toolkit. This Element will demonstrate how ceramics may be employed in social analyses through a focus on four broad areas of inquiry: regionalism; ties between province and state, elite and non-elite; domestic life; and the relationship of political change to social change. While the case studies largely come from the Old through Middle Kingdoms, the methods and questions may be applied to any period of Egyptian history.

Keywords: Egyptian society, Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, Egyptian economy, Pottery

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