

# The Social Setting of the Temple of Satet in the Third Millennium BC

(PLATE 3)

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## Introduction

The temple of Satet on Elephantine island plays a pivotal role for a discussion among Egyptologists about the nature of Third Millennium BC Egypt<sup>1</sup>. Due to an exceptionally well preserved stratigraphy it was possible to trace the development of the temple through to its origins at the beginning of Pharaonic history in the late 4<sup>th</sup> millennium. As a result, the temple of Satet has entered the textbooks as a standard model of the history of early provincial temples in Pharaonic Egypt: starting as a local temple at the beginning of the Third Millennium and developing into a royal institution by the early Middle Kingdom<sup>2</sup>. BARRY KEMP has argued that Egypt was a country of two disintegrated cultures in this period, a residential and a provincial culture, and that the development of provincial temples is indicative of the gradual colonisation of local communities by kingship<sup>3</sup>. The discussion raises wider questions on models for the integration of sociocultural centres and peripheries in Ancient Egypt and it has become evident that the central perspective reflected more strongly in royal and elite culture needs to be seen as a distinctive tradition constructed within and responding to a more diverse social and cultural universe.

The exemplary nature attributed to the temple of Satet can easily suggest that all provincial temples of the Third Millennium developed in the same way. It may even seem as if this process was natural, automatic, and not requiring further explanation. However, the development of the temple of Satet has to

be seen as the result of both wider macro-historical processes addressed in KEMP's model and a specific local environment.

The aim of this article is to outline the social setting of the temple of Satet from a local perspective. It will be demonstrated that an integrated approach of material culture, iconography, and textual data helps reveal the complexity of Ancient Egyptian local institutions beyond an elite perspective that tends to dominate the record and interpretation. I will briefly review the archaeological evidence at Elephantine, compare it to other provincial temples and set the results against some observations on the local administration of the temple of Satet. It will be argued that the temple of Satet is deeply rooted in a local social and administrative network and attracted royal interest prior to Mentuhotep II primarily due to its specific location at the southern border of Egypt at the First Cataract.

## Elephantine

Traditionally, the history of the temple of Satet is reconstructed on the basis of royal objects<sup>4</sup>. The early mudbrick shrine is centred on a natural niche of granite rocks and lacks any reference to kingship. Royal names appear increasingly in the archaeological record of the later Old Kingdom. The most important object is the naos of Pepi I which may have served a royal cult in the forecourt of the temple (Fig. 1)<sup>5</sup>. Royal evidence of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty also includes in-

<sup>1</sup> R. BUSSMANN, *Die Provinztempel Ägyptens von der 0. bis zur 11. Dynastie. Archäologie und Geschichte einer gesellschaftlichen Institution zwischen Residenz und Provinz*, PÄ 30, Leiden 2010, pp. 1–13.

<sup>2</sup> J. ASSMANN, *Ägypten. Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur*, Stuttgart 1991, pp. 48–50, Fig. 4; D. ARNOLD, *Die Tempel Ägyptens. Götterwohnungen, Baudenkmäler, Kultstätten*, Zürich 1992, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> B. J. KEMP, *Ancient Egypt. Anatomy of a Civilization*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London 2006, pp. 111–135.

<sup>4</sup> G. DREYER, *Elephantine VIII, Der Tempel der Satet. Die Funde der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches*, AV 39, Mainz 1986. Update with new interpretation by D. RAUE/P. KOPP, *Reinheit, Verborgtheit, Wirksamkeit. Innen-, An- und Außensichten eines ägyptischen Sanktuars jenseits der zentralen Residenzulte*, in: *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 10, 2008, pp. 31–50.

<sup>5</sup> C. ZIEGLER, *Catalogue des stèles, peintures et reliefs égyptiens de l'Ancien Empire et de la Première Période Intermédiaire vers 2686–2040 avant J.-C., Réunion des Musées Nationaux*, Paris 1990, pp. 50–53; R. BUSSMANN, *Der Kult im frühen Satet-Tempel von Elephan-*



scriptions of Merenre and Pepi II on one of the granite rocks<sup>6</sup> and faience plaques inscribed with the names of Pepi I and II<sup>7</sup>. The integration of the temple with the natural landscape led to an idiosyncratic architectural layout. Antef II and III maintained the overall design according to KAISER's reconstruction<sup>8</sup> and added stone lintels, door posts, architraves and columns (Fig. 2). Mentuhotep II replaced the temple with a large building part of which is a monumental basin for the local flood festival (Fig. 3)<sup>9</sup>. Mentuhotep III furnished the temple with finely carved reliefs<sup>10</sup>, and the stone temple of Sesostris I<sup>11</sup> marks the final stage of the first phase of monumentalization (Fig. 4).

Votive objects were found re-deposited in and under walls and scattered on the floors of the temple. Those made of faience outnumber by far objects of greater intrinsic value made of ivory, travertine, limestone, other hard stones and semi-precious stones as well as simple votive objects made of mud (Fig. 5)<sup>12</sup>. Many votive objects represent human beings (Pl. 3a), baboons (Pl. 3b), and other animals (Pl. 3c). ULRIKE DUBIEL has shown<sup>13</sup> the strong overlap of their shapes

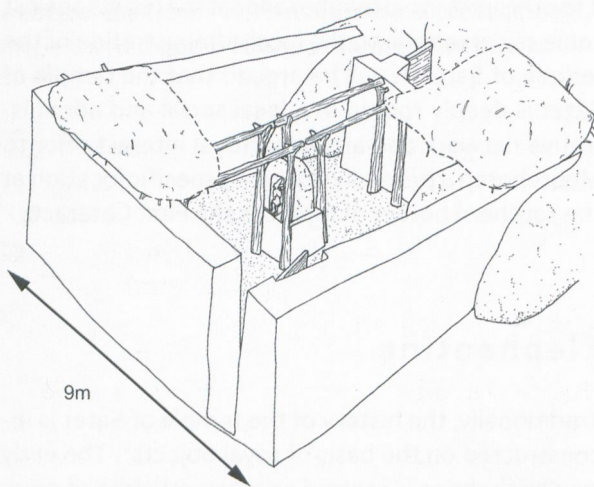


Fig. 1 Elephantine, author's reconstruction of temple of phase IV with naos for cult of Pepi I placed on decayed pillar and wooden posts serving as a new support for the organic roof (9 m × 10 m), based on G. DREYER, *Elephantine VIII*, AV 39, Mainz 1986, Taf. 2a

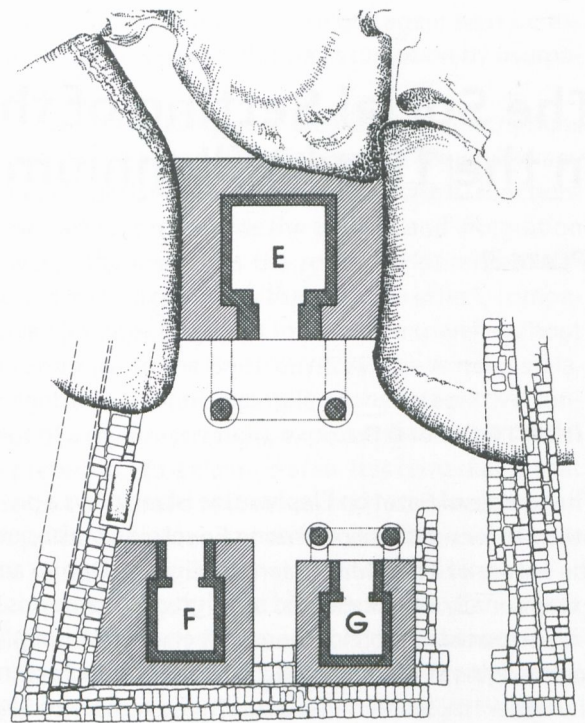


Fig. 2 Elephantine, reconstruction of the temple of Antef III (10 m × 10 m), after W. KAISER, *Die Entwicklung des Satettempels in der 11. Dynastie*, in: W. KAISER ET AL., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 19./20. Grabungsbericht*, in: MDAIK 49, 1993, pp. 145–151, Fig. 7

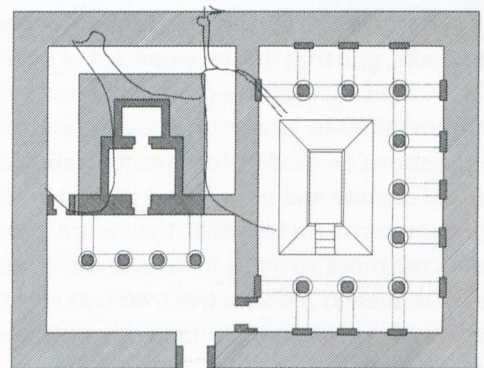


Fig. 3 Elephantine, reconstruction of the temple of Mentuhotep II (18 m × 13,50 m), after W. KAISER, *Die Entwicklung des Satettempels in der 11. Dynastie*, in: W. KAISER ET AL., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 19./20. Grabungsbericht*, in: MDAIK 49, 1993, pp. 151–152, Fig. 8

tine, in: H. ROEDER/J. MYLONOPOULOS (eds.), *Archäologie und Ritual. Auf der Suche nach der rituellen Handlung in den antiken Kulturen Ägyptens und Griechenlands*, Wien 2006, pp. 25–36 (a revised version of the article will be part of the English translation of the volume). B. KEMP, *Ancient Egypt*, p. 400, footnote 7 raises doubts about whether the naos was originally set up in the temple.

<sup>6</sup> G. DREYER, *Der Satettempel: Felsnische*, in: W. KAISER ET AL., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. Sechster Grabungsbericht*, in: MDAIK 32, 1976, pp. 78–80.

<sup>7</sup> G. DREYER, *Elephantine VIII*, cat. no. 428–445.

<sup>8</sup> W. KAISER, *Die Entwicklung des Satettempels in der 11. Dynastie*, in: W. KAISER ET AL., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 19./20. Grabungsbericht*, in: MDAIK 49, 1993, pp. 145–151.

<sup>9</sup> W. KAISER, *op. cit.*, pp. 151–152.

<sup>10</sup> R. MOND/O.H. MYERS, *Temples of Armant. A preliminary survey*, EES 43, London 1940, Pl. 88 top, left.

<sup>11</sup> W. KAISER, *Zur Rekonstruktion des Satettempels der 12. Dynastie*, in: W. KAISER ET AL., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 15./16. Grabungsbericht*, in: MDAIK 44, 1988, pp. 152–157.

<sup>12</sup> G. DREYER, *Elephantine VIII*.

<sup>13</sup> U. DUBIEL, *Anthropomorphe Amulette in den Gräbern der Region von Qau el-Kebir (Mittelägypten)*, in: Afo 31, 2004, pp. 156–188; U. DUBIEL, *Amulette, Siegel und Perlen. Studien zu Typologie und Tragesitte im Alten und Mittleren Reich*, OBO 229, Fribourg – Göttingen 2008.



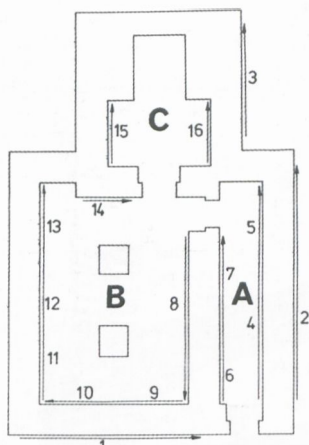


Fig. 4 Elephantine, reconstruction of the temple of Sesostrius I (7 m × 10 m), after W. KAISER, *Zur Rekonstruktion des Satettempels der 12. Dynastie*, in: W. KAISER ET AL., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 15./16. Grabungsbericht*, in: *MDAIK* 44, 1988, pp. 152–157, Fig. 7

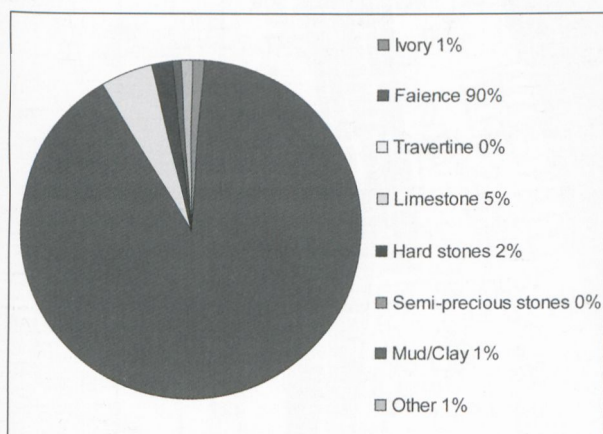


Fig. 5 Elephantine, distribution of votive materials (n = 497)

with the iconographic repertoire of amulets and button seals found in Old to Middle Kingdom tombs of the lower social classes in Qau. The island cemetery of Elephantine, similar in date and social setting, yielded comparable material<sup>14</sup>. Like amulets and seals in tombs the votive material of the temple of Satet includes

also beads and other pieces of jewellery (Pl. 3d). Together with unworked flint pebbles (Pl. 3e) they form a substantial body of easily accessible objects offered in the temple.

## Tell Ibrahim Awad

At first glance, the small mud brick temple of Tell Ibrahim Awad located in the Eastern Delta is an exact northern counterpart of the temple at Elephantine (Fig. 6)<sup>15</sup>. The full documentation of the votive material was published only after the manuscript of this article was submitted and will not be explored on quantitative grounds here<sup>16</sup>. However, some qualitative differences are to be noted. No royal name is attested on any of the objects. Faience seems to be the votive material most often used, but quite a few items are made of ivory and are morphologically comparable to the fine ivories of Hierakonpolis<sup>17</sup>. A dwarf made of carnelian is the most precious object among the finds<sup>18</sup>.

Compared to Elephantine, the temple has never attracted royal attention prior to the erection of the large temple of phase 1 (Fig. 7)<sup>19</sup>. However, the quality of some votive objects and the choice of materials point into a slightly more elite sphere of material culture than the votive material of Elephantine.

## Hierakonpolis

Recent excavations at Hierakonpolis have concentrated on the low desert strip and brought to light, among other things, an elite Predynastic cemetery (Hk 6) with a series of proto-royal tombs<sup>20</sup>. The contemporaneous settlement is located between Hk 6 and the modern cultivation and includes an arena or plaza (Hk 29a) which could have been used for cultic

<sup>14</sup> S. J. SEIDLMAYER, *Ausgrabung in der Nordweststadt von Elephantine 1979–1982: Ein Gräberfeld des Alten und Mittleren Reiches und andere Befunde*, Habilitationsschrift Berlin 1994; S. J. SEIDLMAYER, *Ikongraphie des Todes*, in: H. WILLEMS (ed.), *Social Aspects of Funerary Culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms, Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden University 6–7 June 1996*, OLA 103, Leuven/Paris/Sterling 2001, pp. 205–252.

<sup>15</sup> D. EIGNER, *Tell Ibrahim Awad. Divine Residence from Dynasty 0 until Dynasty 11*, in: *Ägypten und Levante* 10, 2000, pp. 17–36.

<sup>16</sup> W. VAN HAARLEM, *Temple Deposits at Tell Ibrahim Awad*, Amsterdam 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Especially the lions and the boat: W. VAN HAARLEM, *The ivory objects from Tell Ibrahim Awad*, in: *EA* 20, 2002, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> W. VAN HAARLEM, *Temple Deposits at Tell Ibrahim Awad II – an Update*, in: *GM* 154, 1996, p. 31.

<sup>19</sup> D. EIGNER, *A Temple of the Early Middle Kingdom at Tell Ibrahim Awad*, in: E. C. M. VAN DEN BRINK (ed.), *The Nile Delta in Transition. 4<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium B. C.*, Tel Aviv 1992, pp. 69–78. It may be questioned, however, whether the temple of phase 1 was erected by kings because no royal name was found associated with the building.

<sup>20</sup> R. F. FRIEDMAN/W. VAN NEER/V. LINSELE, *The elite predynastic cemetery at Hierakonpolis. 2009–2010 update*, in: R. F. FRIEDMAN/P. N. FISKE (eds.), *Egypt at its origins III. Proceedings of the Third International Conference "Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt"*, London 27<sup>th</sup> July–1<sup>st</sup> August 2008, Leuven 2011, pp. 157–191.



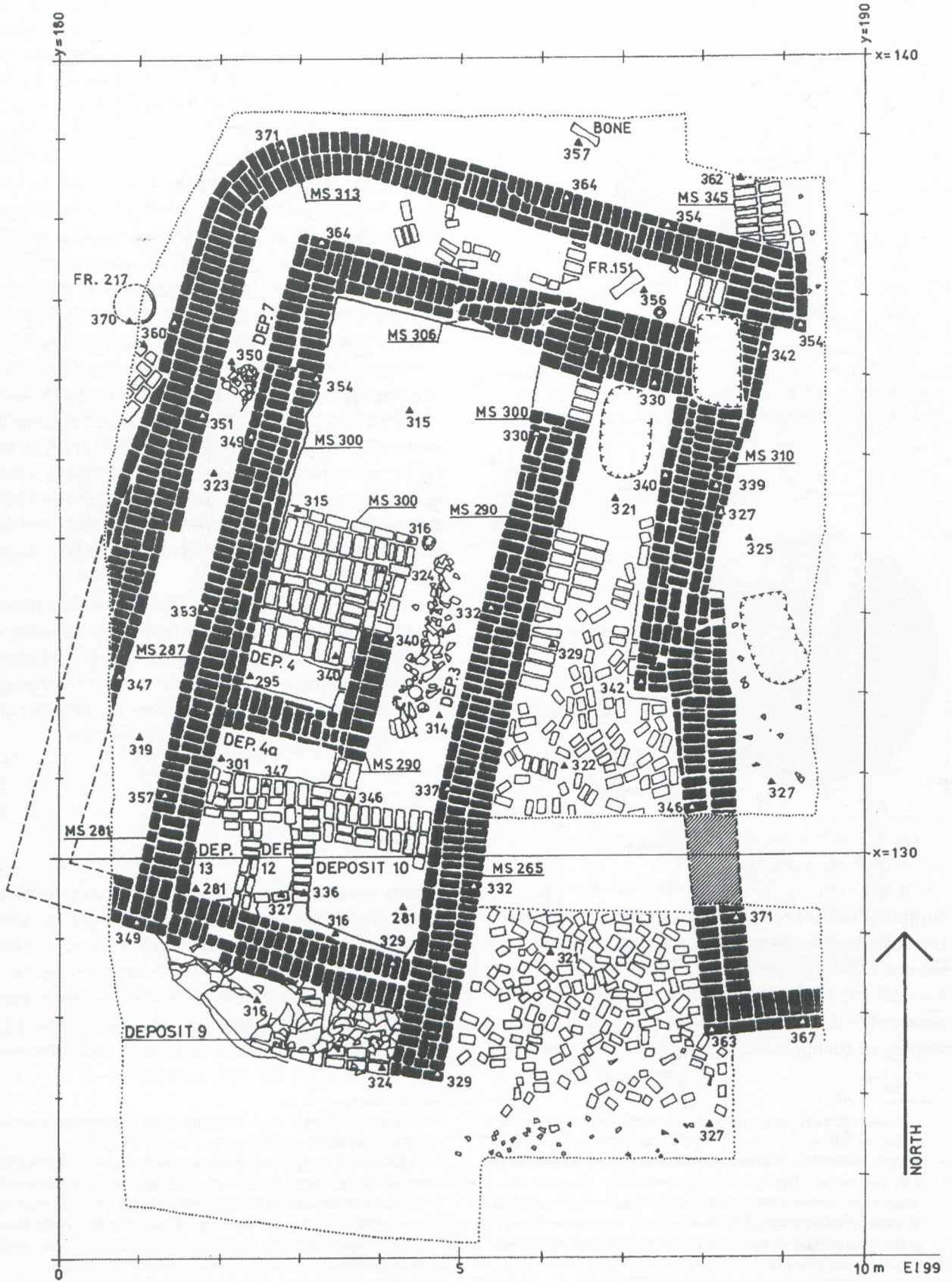


Fig. 6 Tell Ibrahim Awad, temple of phase 2c (7,50 m × 12 m), after D. EIGNER, *Tell Ibrahim Awad. Divine Residence from Dynasty 0 until Dynasty 11*, in: *Ägypten und Levante* 10, 2000, pp. 17–36, Fig. 3



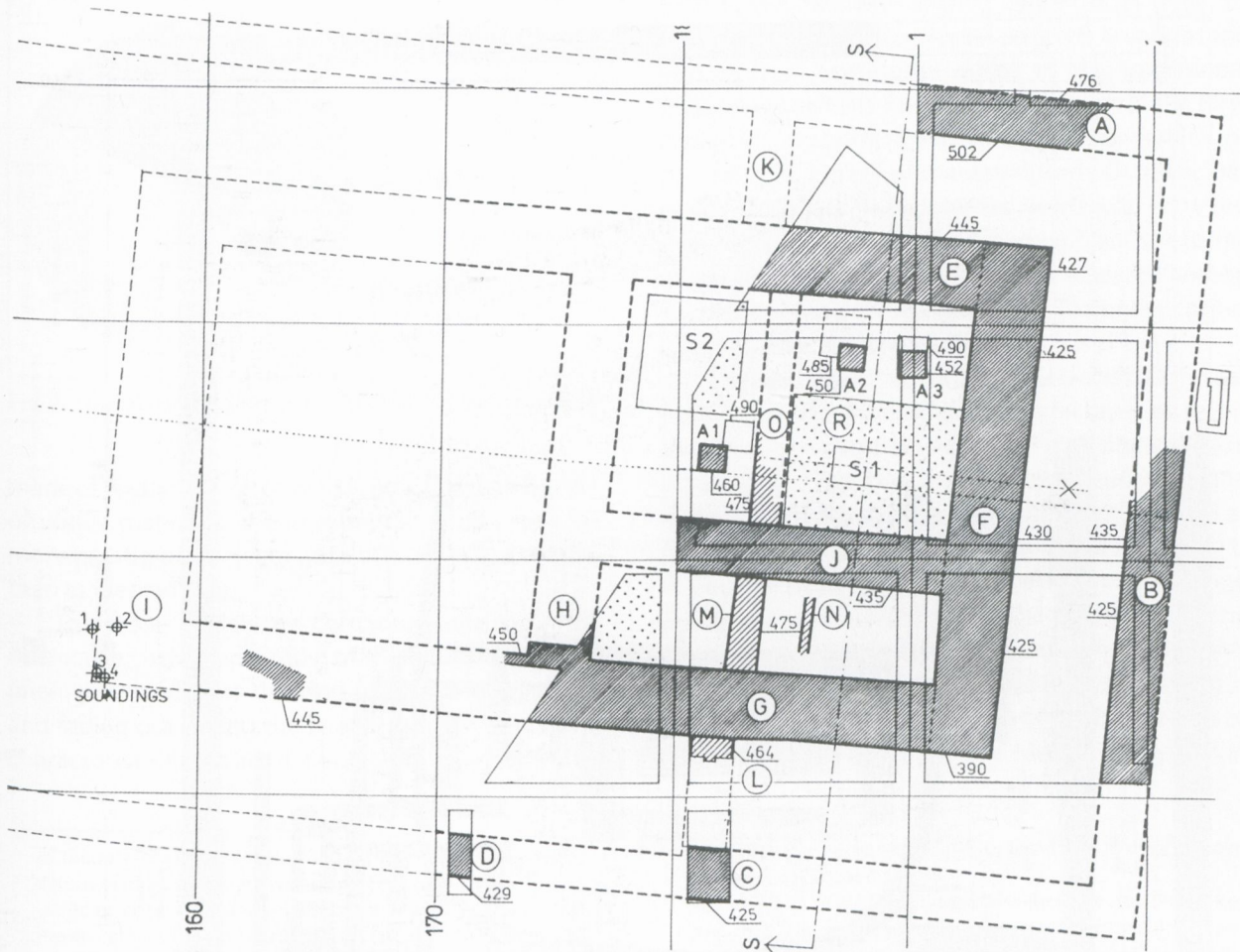


Fig. 7 Tell Ibrahim Awad, temple of phase 1 (inner building reconstructed 15,60 m × 31,20 m), after D. EIGNER, *A Temple of the Early Middle Kingdom at Tell Ibrahim Awad*, in: E. C. M. VAN DEN BRINK (ed.), *The Nile Delta in Transition. 4th – 3rd Millennium B. C.*, Tel Aviv 1992, pp. 69–78, Fig. 2

purposes<sup>21</sup>. It seems that, over the time, the settlement followed the river Nile which migrated towards Elkab<sup>22</sup>. The late Predynastic and Early Dynastic temple was established on what appears as a shallow mound in the modern cultivation.

The archaeological situation of the huge temple area of Hierakonpolis is difficult to understand due to the low quality of the excavation reports (Fig. 8)<sup>23</sup>.

Only two aspects will be highlighted here, the chronological and sociological setting of the temple. Royal names attested in the temple area date to Dynasty 0, the Early Dynastic Period, the early Old Kingdom and Dynasty 6<sup>24</sup>. Eleventh Dynasty kings are not represented at all. Votive objects made of ivory, travertine, limestone and other hard stones prevail over faience objects (Fig. 9)<sup>25</sup>. A series of votive objects is

<sup>21</sup> B. J. KEMP, *Ancient Egypt*, pp. 147–149, Fig. 53 with critical comment and references.

<sup>22</sup> J. M. BUNBURY/A. GRAHAM, *There is nothing boring about a borehole*, in: *Nekhen News* 20, 2008, pp. 22–23.

<sup>23</sup> Archaeological synthesis of the British and American excavations: B. KEMP, *Ancient Egypt*, pp. 121–124. The most recent re-interpretation has been brought forward by L. MCNAMARA, *The Revetted Mound at Hierakonpolis and Early Kingship: A Re-Interpretation*, in: B. MIDANT-REYNES/Y. TRISTANT (eds.), *Egypt at Its Origins II, Proceedings of the International Conference "Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt"*, Toulouse 5<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> October, OLA 172, Leuven 2008, pp. 901–936. Further comments on the role of the temple of Hierakonpolis in the Early Dynastic Period: R. BUSSMANN, *Die ägyptischen Tempel der*

*Staatseinigungszeit*, in: L. MORENZ/R. KUHN (eds.), *Vorspann oder formative Phase? Ägypten und der Vordere Orient 3500–2700 v. Chr.*, *Philippika* 48, Wiesbaden 2011, pp. 109–128.

<sup>24</sup> B. ADAMS, *Ancient Nekhen, Garstang in the City of Hierakonpolis*, *Egyptian Studies Association Publication* 3, Whitstable 1995, pp. 19–80 with a historical essay about the site of Hierakonpolis.

<sup>25</sup> The figures are drawn from the studies of B. ADAMS, *Ancient Hierakonpolis*, Warminster 1974; *Ancient Hierakonpolis. Supplement*, Warminster 1974; *Ancient Nekhen, Garstang in the City of Hierakonpolis*, *Egyptian Studies Association Publication* 3, Whitstable 1995. The publications include a large amount of objects, but the documentation is difficult to handle, sometimes self-contradictory and false, and not complete. Notwithstanding, most







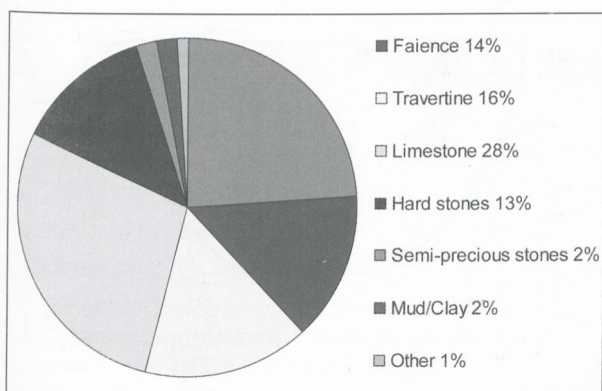


Fig. 9 Hierakonpolis, distribution of votive materials (n=810)

made of costly semi-precious stones. The distribution of votive materials at Hierakonpolis shows that far more prestigious objects were offered in the temple than at Elephantine.

The stone vessels are chronologically the most distinctive votive type. Most of them represent morphological traditions deriving from the Predynastic and fading out during the First Dynasty<sup>26</sup>. The most characteristic types are flat bottomed travertine and

limestone bowls with slightly convex sides (Figs. 10 and 11). They have the closest parallels among stone vessels from cemeteries dated to the transitional phase between the Predynastic Period and the First Dynasty<sup>27</sup>. In contrast, flat bottomed bowls with incurved rims, typical of the entire Early Dynastic Period<sup>28</sup>, round and flat bottomed bowls with recurved rims, typical of the early Old Kingdom<sup>29</sup>, and the forms of the later Old Kingdom<sup>30</sup> are not attested among the stone vessels of Hierakonpolis. The entire corpus can therefore be dated to Dynasty 0 and 1.

The same date may apply to the ivories. Different from ivory objects of other provincial temples several types from Hierakonpolis were also discovered in burials (Fig. 12). Lions, knife handles, bull's legs and some other ivory objects were found in tomb L19 at Qustul<sup>31</sup>, tomb 11 at Hk 6<sup>32</sup>, in tombs of cemetery U at Abydos<sup>33</sup>, the royal tombs of the First and Second Dynasty at Abydos and their subsidiary graves<sup>34</sup>, the tombeau royal<sup>35</sup>, the Great Tombs of Saqqara North<sup>36</sup> and Giza Mastaba V and its subsidiary graves<sup>37</sup> and in the larger tombs of the Early Dynastic cemeteries of the Memphite region like the Montet cemetery at

of the references are reliable and form a statistically relevant corpus of objects. The analysis of the distribution of materials is based on criteria established in greater detail in R. BUSSMANN, *Provinztempel*. Broadly speaking, all objects from the Main Deposit, those objects classified as 'Main Deposit' by ADAMS (e. g. mostly ivory objects and mace heads), all objects from the citadel, the anthropomorphic, theriomorphic and model objects from the temple and from sites of uncertain location within Hierakonpolis and the stone vessels from the temple are included.

<sup>26</sup> R. BUSSMANN, *Provinztempel*, pp. 260–261, 267–268, 271–278.

<sup>27</sup> Elkab, Naqada III Cemetery, tomb 85: S. HENDRICKX, *Elkab V. The Naqada III Cemetery*, Brüssel 1994, Pl. 24[M370; M332; M323; M321]; Matmar, Cemetery 200, tombs 210, 211, 213, 222, 236, 238: G. BRUNTON, *Matmar, British Museum Expedition to Middle Egypt 1929–1931*, London 1948, Pl. 21[26–28, 30, 32, 33, 36]; Tarkhan, Valley and Hill Cemeteries, tombs 10, 129, 260, 262, 1023, 1026, 1054, 1570, 1801, 1845, 2050: W. M. F. PETRIE/G. A. WAINWRIGHT/A. H. GARDINER, *Tarkhan I and Memphis V*, BSAE 23, London 1913, Pl. 35, types 17, 18d, 18f, 18h; W. M. F. PETRIE, *Tarkhan II*, BSAE 25, London 1914, Pl. 25, types 13a, 18g, 18k, 21o; Tombeau Royal: J. J. M. DE MORGAN, *Recherches sur les origines de l'Égypte. Ethnographie préhistorique et tombeau royal de Négadeh*, Paris 1897, Figs. 573, 575, 576, 577, 579, 585. For the dating of Matmar, Cemetery 200, and Tarkhan, Hill Cemetery, to the Naqada III Period, Dynasty 0 and 1 respectively, compare T. A. H. WILKINSON, *State Formation in Egypt. Chronology and society*, Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 40, BARIntSer 651, Oxford 1996, pp. 43–49. Comparable vessels of the Early Dynastic Period tend to have a more restricted base and more flaring sides.

<sup>28</sup> G. A. REISNER, *Mycerinus. The Temples of the Third Pyramid at Giza*, Cambridge/Massachusetts 1931, p. 148; B. G. ASTON, *Ancient Egyptian Stone Vessels. Materials and Forms*, SAGA 5, Heidelberg 1994, types 50–54.

<sup>29</sup> G. A. REISNER, *op. cit.*, p. 172, Fig. 42[5–9]; G. A. REISNER, *A Provincial Cemetery of the Pyramid Age, Naga-ed-Dêr Part III*, University of California Publications in Egyptian Archaeology 4, Los Angeles 1932, p. 49, N555/5 and N561/1–3.

<sup>30</sup> G. A. REISNER, *op. cit.*, pp. 56–75; B. G. ASTON, *Ancient Egyptian Stone Vessels*, types 117–138.

<sup>31</sup> Bull's legs: B. WILLIAMS, *Excavations Between Abu Simbel and the Sudan Frontier I. The A-Group Royal Cemetery at Qustul: Cemetery L*, The University of Chicago, Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition 3, Chicago 1986, Pl. 63b[No. 38].

<sup>32</sup> Bull's legs made of ivory and wood: B. ADAMS, *Excavations in the Locality 6 Cemetery at Hierakonpolis 1979–1985*, BARIntSer 903, Oxford 2000, pp. 97[no. 162], 109–111[no. 211], Fig. 12, Pls. 33b–34.

<sup>33</sup> Knife handles: G. DREYER ET AL., *Umm el-Qaab. Nachuntersuchungen im frühzeitlichen Königsfriedhof. 5./6. Vorbericht*, in: MDAIK 49, 1993, pp. 26–27, Pl. 6d–f (tomb U-127); G. DREYER ET AL., *Umm el-Qaab. Nachuntersuchungen im frühzeitlichen Königsfriedhof. 9./10. Vorbericht*, in: MDAIK 54, 1998, pp. 89, 91–92, 99, Fig. 7, Pl. 5a–b (tombs U-287 and U-503).

<sup>34</sup> Lions, dogs, bull's legs: W. M. F. PETRIE, *RT I*, Pl. 37[17–18] 'in hard wood'; *Id.*, *RT II*, Pls. 6[3–4], 32[1–9, 12–13], 34[1–17, 21–22], 37[1–11], 38[30–31], 39[1–20, 51–53], 40[3–9, 15–20], 43[1–4]; *Id.*, *RT*, Special Extra Publication, London 1901, Pl. 6a[7, 9, 12]; *Id.*, *Tombs of the Courtiers*, Pls. 7, 20–21 (subsidiary tombs 473, 485, 507, 787 of Djer and 126, 156, 426 of Djet). The bull's legs which PETRIE and the German Mission found in dump areas of former excavations are not listed here but confirm the large amount of this type in the royal cemetery of Abydos.

<sup>35</sup> Lion, dog, bull's legs: J. J. M. DE MORGAN, *Recherches sur les origines de l'Égypte. Ethnographie préhistorique et tombeau royal de Négadeh*, Paris 1897, Figs. 685, 686, 688, 698–699.

<sup>36</sup> Lions, dogs, bull's legs: W. B. EMERY, *Hemaka*, Pl. 19e; *Id.*, *Excavations at Saqqara 1937–1938. Hor-Aha*, Cairo 1939, Pl. 15b; *Id.*, *Tombs of the First Dynasty I*, Pl. 11 (tomb 3471, wooden bed); *Id.*, *Tombs of the First Dynasty II*, Pls. 26 (wood), 27, 29 (tomb 3504); *Id.*, *Tombs of the First Dynasty III*, p. 84, no. 73–74, 124, Pl. 102 (tomb 3507).

<sup>37</sup> Bull's legs: W. M. F. PETRIE, *Gizeh and Rifeh*, BSAE 13, London 1907, p. 4, Pls. 4, 5[28] (subsidiary tomb 000).



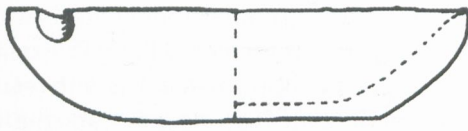


Fig. 10 Hierakonpolis, travertine bowl, D: 12,0 cm, H: 2,7 cm, after B. ADAMS, *Ancient Hierakonpolis*, Warminster 1974, Fig. 252

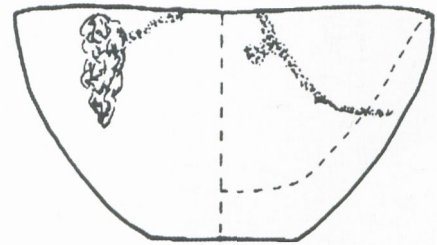


Fig. 11 Hierakonpolis, travertine bowl, D: 11,0 cm, H: 6,0 cm, after B. ADAMS, *Ancient Hierakonpolis*, Warminster 1974, Fig. 250

Late predynastic super-elite	Early dynastic kings	King-like persons	Persons of elite social networks	New residential elite
Qustul: L 19	Abydos: Royal tombs	Naqada: Tombeau Royale	Abydos: subsidiary graves	Abu Roash: Montet cemetery
Hierakonpolis: Hk 6, No. 11		Saqqara North: Great Tombs	Giza Mastaba V: subsidiary graves	Abu Roash: Klasens cemeteries
Abydos: cemetery U		Giza: Mastaba V		Tarkhan: Hill and Valley cemetery
				Abusir el-Meleq
				Saqqara: Archaic Mastab
				Saqqara: Cimetière Archaïque

Fig. 12 Tombs with parallels to specific Hierakonpolis ivories

Abu Roash<sup>38</sup>, the Klasens cemeteries at Abu Roash<sup>39</sup>, Tarkhan<sup>40</sup>, Abusir el-Meleq<sup>41</sup>, the Archaic Mastabas<sup>42</sup> and the Cimetière Archaïque of Saqqara<sup>43</sup>.

The majority of votive objects from Hierakonpolis points into a specific chronological and sociological horizon. They represent the material culture of the late Predynastic and early Early Dynastic Periods. Sociologically, they are associated with the super-elite

of the late Predynastic and their successors, the Early Dynastic kings, with king-like individuals of the Early Dynastic Period and persons of their social networks who are buried in the subsidiary graves, and with the new elite of the upcoming residence at Memphis. Reducing the temple of Hierakonpolis to key pieces like the Narmer palette and mace head (Fig. 13) is methodologically inadequate. Historically, it is not entirely

<sup>38</sup> Lions, dogs and bull's legs: P. MONTET, *Tombeaux de la I<sup>ère</sup> et de la IV<sup>ème</sup> Dynasties à Abou-Roach*, in: *Kêmi* 7, 1938, pp. 34, 48; *Id.*, *Tombeaux de la I<sup>ère</sup> et de la IV<sup>ème</sup> Dynasties à Abou-Roach II. Inventaire des objets*, in: *Kêmi* 8, 1942, pp. 186–193, Pls. 7–8 (tombs I, III and VIII). MONTET mentions an ivory handle found in tomb III which might be similar to the cylinders or the knife handles from the Main Deposit: *Id.*, *Tombeaux de la I<sup>ère</sup> et de la IV<sup>ème</sup> Dynasties à Abou-Roach*, in: *Kêmi* 7, 1938, p. 34. For a recent update of the material cf. Y. TRISTANT/J. SMYTHE, *New excavations for an old cemetery. Preliminary results of the Abu Rawash Project on the M cemetery (Dynasty 1)*, in: R. F. FRIEDMAN/P. N. FISKE (eds.), *Egypt at its origins III. Proceedings of the Third International Conference "Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt"*, London 27<sup>th</sup> July–1<sup>st</sup> August 2008, OLA 205, Leuven 2011, pp. 313–332.

<sup>39</sup> Bull's legs: A. KLASSENS, *The excavations of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities at Abu-Roash. Report of the Second Season II*, in: *OMRO* 40, 1959, p. 59, Pl. 27[3], Fig. 10[1–2] (tomb 400); A. KLASSENS, *The excavations of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities at*

*Abu-Roash. Report of the First Season II*, in: *OMRO* 39, 1958, p. 30, Fig. 10[6] (tomb 13).

<sup>40</sup> Bull's legs of ivory or wood: W. M. F. PETRIE/G. A. WAINWRIGHT/A. H. GARDINER, *Tarkhan I and Memphis V*, *BSAE* 23, London 1913, pp. 23–26, Pls. 8–9, 14[16–18] (tombs 144, 54, 117, and tombs without number).

<sup>41</sup> Lions, dogs: G. C. J. MÖLLER/A. SCHARFF, *Die archäologischen Ergebnisse des vorgeschichtlichen Gräberfeldes von Abusir el-Meleq*, *WVDOG* 49, Leipzig 1926, p. 63, Pls. 39, 58[8–16] (tombs B and 58c4). The bull's leg described by G. C. J. MÖLLER/A. SCHARFF, *op. cit.*, p. 63, Pl. 40 is made of limestone.

<sup>42</sup> Bull's leg: J. E. QUIBELL, *Excavations at Saqqara (1912–1914). Archaic Mastabas*, Cairo 1923, p. 6, Pl. 11[4, 6] (tomb 2171H which was supplanted by a large mastaba of the Second Dynasty).

<sup>43</sup> Boat: R. MACRAMALLAH, *Fouilles à Saqqarah. Un cimetière archaïque de la classe moyenne du peuple à Saqqarah*, Le Caire 1940, pp. 15, 55, Pl. 49[1] (tomb 175).



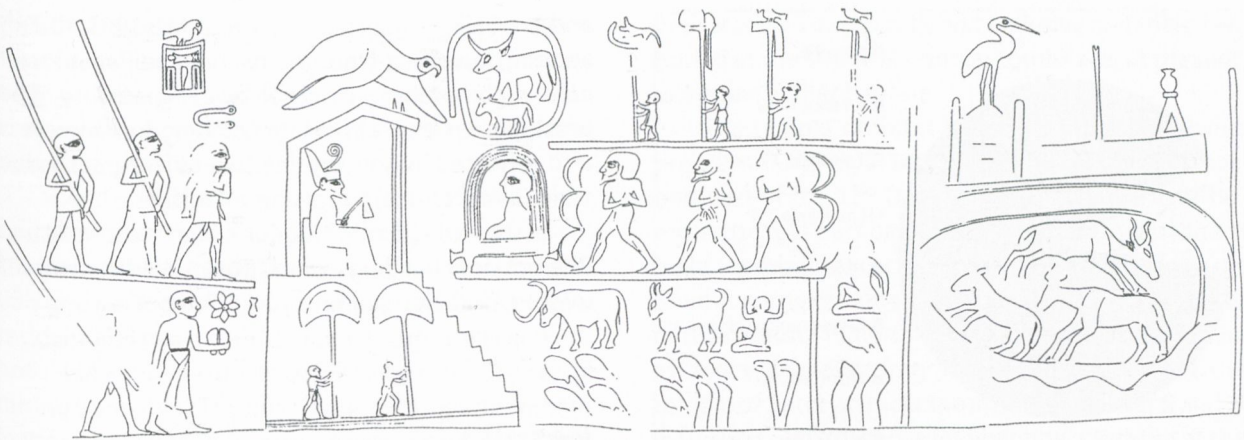


Fig. 13 Hierakonpolis, Narmer mace head (no scale), after R. FRIEDMAN, *The Ceremonial Centre at Hierakonpolis*. Locality HK29A, in: J. SPENCER (ed.), *Early Dynastic Egypt*, London 1996, pp. 16–35, Fig. 12

wrong. These pieces depict the kind of people whose material culture is found among the votive objects of Hierakonpolis: the king and the court society of the so-called state formation period.

## Abydos

Similar to Hierakonpolis, Abydos sees the emergence of a highly stratified local community during the Naqada period<sup>44</sup>. It finally becomes the burial ground of the Early Dynastic kings and it could be expected that the temple of Abydos would have profited from this environment (Fig. 14)<sup>45</sup>. Surprisingly, it did not. Most of the votive objects are made of faience, and royal names of the Early Dynastic Period are rarely attested (Fig. 15)<sup>46</sup>. The repertoire is similar to Elephantine and, maybe even more, to Tell Ibrahim Awad because at Abydos, too, a reasonable amount of elite objects like ivories and stone vessels was found. Different from Hierakonpolis, however, Abydos does not seem to have attracted the countrywide elite in the Early Dynastic Period.

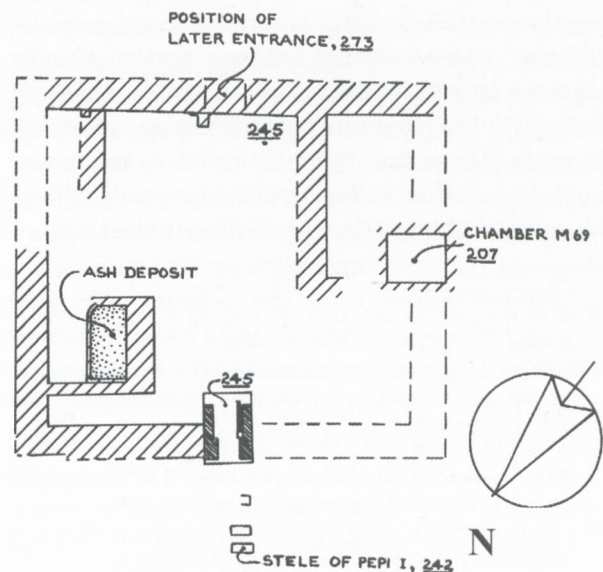


Fig. 14 Abydos, temple of Sixth Dynasty (18 m x 21 m), after B. J. KEMP, *The Osiris Temple at Abydos*, in: *MDAIK* 23, 1968, pp. 138–155, Fig. 3

The royal career of the temple of Abydos begins in the Old Kingdom. Several royal names of the Fourth and Fifth Dynasty are attested on seal impressions<sup>47</sup>,

<sup>44</sup> R. HARTMANN/U. HARTUNG, *Social and Gender-Specific Differentiation in Predynastic Cemetery U at Umm el-Qaab, Abydos*, Abstract of paper given at the Forth International Conference "Egypt at its Origins IV", [http://www.origins4.org/Origins\\_4\\_program.pdf](http://www.origins4.org/Origins_4_program.pdf), accessed on 9 June 2012.

<sup>45</sup> W. M. F. PETRIE, *Abydos I* (1902), *Memoir EEF* 22, London 1902; W. M. F. PETRIE, *Abydos II* (1903), *Memoir EEF* 24, London 1903; B. J. KEMP, *The Osiris Temple at Abydos*, in: *MDAIK* 23, 1968, pp. 138–155; M. ZIERMANN, *Abydos – Bauanalytische Anmerkungen zum Grabungsbefund im Bezirk des Stadttempels*, in: *Bericht über die 41. Tagung für Ausgrabungswissenschaft und Bauforschung, 31. Mai bis 4. Juni 2000 in Berlin*, Berlin 2002, pp. 18–45; Id., *Macht und Architektur: zwei altägyptische Tempel und ihre städtebauliche Rolle bis zur Wende zum 2. Jts. v. Chr.*, in: K. RHEIDT/

E.-L. SCHWANDNER (eds.), *Macht der Architektur – Architektur der Macht, Diskussionen zur archäologischen Bauforschung* 8, Mainz 2004, pp. 34–47.

<sup>46</sup> As a general rule, the finds from the votive pits M 69, M 64 and M 65/89, as well as anthropomorphic, theriomorphic and model objects and stone vessels from the temple are included in the study. Moreover, the "Neufunde" which appeared in several collections and are said to come from the temple of Abydos are included, compare G. DREYER, *Elephantine VIII*, pp. 54–58. The inclusion of this material with uncertain provenance does not substantially affect the quantitative distribution of votive materials at Abydos.

<sup>47</sup> W. M. F. PETRIE, *Abydos II* (1903), *Memoir EEF* 24, London 1903, Pl. 16.



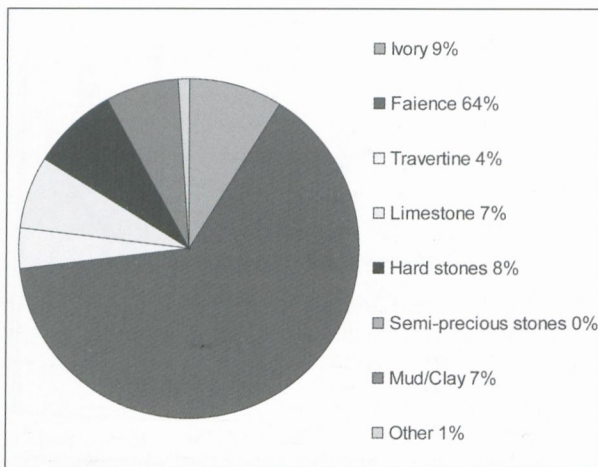


Fig. 15 Abydos, distribution of votive materials (n=449)

and kings start to erect statues and stelae in the temple<sup>48</sup> which indicates perhaps that royal cults were set up in local temples already before the Sixth Dynasty<sup>49</sup>. The temple had its first heyday in the Sixth Dynasty. Many door lintels<sup>50</sup>, including two previously unpublished examples in the Oriental Institute Museum of Chicago (Inv. no. 8307) and the Museum

and Art Gallery Bolton (Inv. no. BOLMG 1903.46.7)<sup>51</sup>, and the decrees of Neferirkare, Teti and Pepi II<sup>52</sup> witness a comprehensive royal building activity. The prestigious nature of the late Old Kingdom temple is also reflected in non-royal votive objects, such as a series of cylindrical travertine vessels<sup>53</sup>.

In the early Middle Kingdom, Mentuhotep II and III erect new buildings which JOSEF WEGNER argues might have belonged to royal ka-houses<sup>54</sup>.

## Results

A fuller review of the archaeology of provincial temples would need to consider other sites as well, including the Theban temples at el-Tod, Armant, Karnak and Medamud, erected by Mentuhotep II and III<sup>55</sup>; the temple at Koptos, the late predynastic twin sister of Hierakonpolis and cultic centre of the First Intermediate Period<sup>56</sup>; the temples of Elkab<sup>57</sup> and Gebelein<sup>58</sup> with royal buildings of the Early Dynastic Period and Mentuhotep II; and the temples at Heliopolis<sup>59</sup>, Herakleopolis Magna, in the Delta<sup>60</sup> and at

<sup>48</sup> W. M. F. PETRIE, *op. cit.*, Pl. 18 = Pl. 14[293]; *Id.*, *Abydos I* (1902), *Memoir EEF* 22, London 1902, Pl. 55[2].

<sup>49</sup> D. FRANKE, *Heiligtum des Heqaib*, pp. 118–127; R. MÜLLER-WOLLERMANN/H. VANDEKERCKHOVE, *Elkab VI. Die Felsinschriften des Wadi Hilâl*, Turnhout 2001, pp. 331–332.

<sup>50</sup> W. M. F. PETRIE, *Abydos I* (1902), *Memoir EEF* 22, London 1902, Pl. 54 (top and middle); *Id.*, *Abydos II* (1903), *Memoir EEF* 24, London 1903, Pls. 20 (top and bottom left), 19 (left) = Pl. 21[16].

<sup>51</sup> R. BUSSMANN, *Der Kult für die Königsmutter Anchenes-Merire I. im Tempel des Chontamenti. Zwei unpublizierte Türstürze der 6. Dynastie aus Abydos*, in: *SAK* 39, 2010, pp. 101–119.

<sup>52</sup> H. GOEDICKE, *Königliche Dokumente aus dem Alten Reich*, *ÄA* 14, Wiesbaden 1967, pp. 37–40, 81–86.

<sup>53</sup> W. M. F. PETRIE, *Abydos II* (1903), *Memoir EEF* 24, London 1903, Pls. 14 [289–291], 21[5–10].

<sup>54</sup> J. WEGNER, *The mortuary complex of Senwosret III: A study of Middle Kingdom state activity and the cult of Osiris at Abydos*, Ann Arbor 1996, pp. 73–86. For Middle Kingdom votive chapels behind the temple cf. J. RICHARDS, *Society and Death in Ancient Egypt. Mortuary Landscapes of the Middle Kingdom*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 38–42.

<sup>55</sup> E. N. HIRSCH, *Die Kultpolitik Amenemhets I. im Thebanischen Gau*, in: R. GUNDLACH/M. ROCHHOLZ (eds.), *Ägyptische Tempel – Struktur, Funktion und Programm. Akten der Ägyptologischen Tempeltagungen in Gosen 1990 und in Mainz 1992*, *HÄB* 37, Hildesheim 1994, pp. 137–142.

<sup>56</sup> W. M. F. PETRIE, *Koptos*, London 1896; B. J. KEMP, *The Colossi from the Early Shrine of Coptos in Egypt (with assistance from Andrew Boyce and a geological report on the stone by Jones Harrell)*, in: *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 10:2, 2000, pp. 211–242; H. GOEDICKE, *Königliche Dokumente aus dem Alten Reich*, *ÄA* 14, Wiesbaden 1967, s. v. „Koptos A“ – „Koptos T“.

<sup>57</sup> A. H. SAYCE/S. CLARKE, *Report on certain excavations made at El-Kab during the years 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904*, in: *ASAE* 6, 1905, p. 239; J. CAPART ET AL., *Fouilles de El Kab. Documents*, Bruxelles 1940, pp. 21–22, Pl. 30a–b; S. HENDRICKX/D. HUYGE, *Elkab IV.*

*Topographie, Fascicule 1. Archaeological-Topographical Surveying of Elkab and Surroundings*, Brussels 1989, Fig. 12 and Fascicule 2; S. HENDRICKX/D. HUYGE, *Inventaire des sites archéologiques*, Bruxelles 1989, pp. 2, 3.

<sup>58</sup> W. M. DAVIES, *An Early Dynastic Lion in the Museum of Fine Arts*, in: W. K. SIMPSON/W. M. DAVIES (eds.), *Studies in Ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Sudan. Essays in honor of Dows Dunham on the occasion of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday*, Boston 1981, pp. 34–42; L. MORENZ, *Zur Dekoration der frühzeitlichen Tempel am Beispiel zweier Fragmente des archaischen Tempels von Gebelein*, in: R. GUNDLACH/M. ROCHHOLZ (eds.), *Ägyptische Tempel – Struktur, Funktion und Programm. Akten der Ägyptologischen Tempeltagungen in Gosen 1990 und in Mainz 1992*, *HÄB* 37, Hildesheim 1994, pp. 217–238; *Id.*, *Die Zeit der Regionen im Spiegel der Gebelein-Region. Kulturgeschichtliche Re-Konstruktionen*, *PÄ* 27, Leiden/Boston 2010, pp. 141–204; E. F. MAROCHETTI, *The Reliefs of the Chapel of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Gebelein (CGT 7003/1–277)*, Leiden 2010.

<sup>59</sup> S. CURTO, *The Royal Sites: Heliopolis and Giza*, in: A. M. DONADONI ROVERI (ed.), *Egyptian Civilization. Religious Beliefs*, Milan 1988, pp. 44–61; S. QUIRKE, *The cult of Ra*, London 2001, pp. 84–90.

<sup>60</sup> Several stone elements of kings of the Old Kingdom were found at Herakleopolis Magna and at Delta sites. DIETER ARNOLD argues that they belonged to Old Kingdom temples at these sites: *Hypostyle Hall of the Old and Middle Kingdom?*, in: P. DER MANUELIAN/R. E. FREED (eds.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, Boston 1996, pp. 39–54. However, these temples would display a monumentality unparalleled throughout the whole Nile Valley during the Old Kingdom. Therefore, the traditional hypothesis of a provenance in the royal pyramid complexes seems more plausible: E. P. UPHILL, *The Temples of Per-Ramesses*, Warminster 1984, pp. 230–232. Archaeological remains are attested at Bubastis (most recently: E. LANGE, *Die Ka-Anlage Pepis I. in Bubastis im Kontext königlicher Ka-Anlagen des Alten Reiches*, in: *ZÄS* 133, 2006, pp. 121–140), at Mendes (D. B. REDFORD, *Report on the 9th season of Excavation at Tell el-Rub'a/Mendes*, in: *ASAE* 75, 2000, pp. 17–22), and at Tell el-Farkha (K. CIAŁOWICZ, *Kośćizoto.*



Balat<sup>61</sup>. However, most of the available evidence reflects royal building activity only and does not fully bear on the question of this paper. The discussion concentrates, therefore, on the archaeologically richer temples reviewed above.

Hierakonpolis is a supra-local cult centre during the so-called state formation period in Dynasties 0 and 1. The local elite, the upcoming kings, king-like individuals and persons of their social network, and the new residential elite make offerings to the god of Hierakonpolis. Elite votive objects cease to be offered already during Dynasty 1. The building activity of Khasekhem in the late Second Dynasty is no longer part of an existent tradition of royal and elite interest in the temple and looks like an individual initiative of this specific king at the site. Evidence for the temple of Hierakonpolis fades out during the early Old Kingdom, and the royal activity of the Sixth Dynasty is not backed up by a contemporary stream of non-royal votive offerings. Only in the early 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty is royal building activity attested again.

The rise of the temple of Abydos starts only in the Fourth and Fifth Dynasty. In the Sixth Dynasty, it becomes the most important provincial temple in Upper Egypt. This is also reflected in the local prosopographical and inscriptional evidence. The viziers *Ppjj-nht* and *Idj* of the Sixth Dynasty, the highest state officials, were overseers of priests (probably of the local temple) and buried at Abydos<sup>62</sup>. Moreover, the royal family had a statue cult installed in the temple of Khontamenti<sup>63</sup>.

The temple of Tell Ibrahim Awad is the closest parallel to the temple of Satet. The range of votive materials used points into a slightly more elite sphere. It is interesting to note in this context that larger First Dynasty tombs of a local elite were discovered in area B at Tell Ibrahim Awad<sup>64</sup>. They indicate that individuals

with access to more costly and exclusive materials were buried at the site while similar tombs are, at present, unknown at Elephantine.

The temple of Satet is part of the countrywide programme of royal temple construction in the second part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The situation is different in the first part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Antef II and III build temples only at Elephantine and in their home town at Karnak<sup>65</sup>. Antef II praises Khnum as the opener of the cataract region in one of his inscriptions<sup>66</sup>. The evidence, however fragmentary, suggests that the temple of Satet attracts the interest of Antef II and III in the first place because Elephantine is located at the southern frontier of Egypt.

The same pattern could apply to the royal activity in the temple of the Sixth Dynasty. In the rock inscription mentioned above, Pepi II does not refer to the goddess Satet but to the striking down of foreign rulers. Similarly, Merenre might have left inscriptions in the rock niche and on the naos of Pepi I only because Elephantine was the last Egyptian town on his way further south evidence for which is provided through graffiti in the region of Aswan<sup>67</sup>.

Different from Abydos, royal activity did not result in more non-royal elite votive objects being offered in the temple. Only two stone vessels from the temple of Satet can be dated to this period<sup>68</sup>. One of them is an ape-shaped limestone vessel inscribed with the name of Pepi I. While, in principle, a prestigious object it is of lesser material value and quality than finely carved travertine vessels of this type<sup>69</sup>. Other "elitist" objects from Elephantine also seem to be imitations of more exclusive models. The ivory woman from Elephantine<sup>70</sup>, for example, is very small and roughly carved in contrast to the ivories from Hierakonpolis, Abydos or Tell Ibrahim Awad, and the four mace heads from Elephantine<sup>71</sup> are crude and only

Początki sztuki egipskiej (Paralleltitel: *Ivory and Gold. Beginnings of the Egyptian Art*), Poznań 2007). The function of the structures of layer IV and V at Buto is difficult to interpret and cannot be discussed here: TH. VON DER WAY, *Tell el-Fara'in-Buto I. Ergebnisse zum früh0en Kontext, Kampagnen der Jahre 1983–1989*, AV 83, Mainz 1997, pp. 128–129, 168–173.

<sup>61</sup> A stela with a decree (?) and two door posts dated to Pepi II might be reconstructed as parts of the local temple: A. FAKHRY, *Dachla*, Nos. 28, 38, 39; L. PANTALACCI, *De Memphis à Balat. Les liens entre la résidence et les gouverneurs de l'oasis à la VI<sup>e</sup> dynastie*, in: C. BERGER/B. MATHIEU (eds.), *Études sur l'Ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqâra dédiées à Jean-Philippe Lauer*, *Orientalia Monspeliensia* 9, Montpellier 1997, pp. 341–349, Fig. 5.

<sup>62</sup> A. MCFARLANE, *Holder of Priesthoods*, in: N. KANAWATI, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I. Chronology and Administration*, *Australian Centre for Egyptology Studies* 2, Sydney 1992, pp. 169–172.

<sup>63</sup> R. BUSSMANN, in: *SAK* 39, 2010, 101–119.

<sup>64</sup> W. M. VAN HARLEM, *Les fouilles à Tell Ibrahim Awad (delta oriental du Nil): Résultats récents*, in: *BSFE* 141, 1998, pp. 18–19.

<sup>65</sup> Discussion of the column of Antef II by L. POSTEL, *Protocole des souverains égyptiens et dogme monarchique au début du Moyen Empire. Des premiers Antef au début du règne d'Amenemhat Ier*, *MRE* 10, Bruxelles 2004, pp. 72–78.

<sup>66</sup> L. MORENZ, *Der von Gott begradete Herrscher. Eine sakro-politische Verkündigung des Chnum für Jn.j-jt=f-<sup>c</sup>3*, monumentalisiert auf einem Sakralbau in Elephantine, in: *MDAIK* 60, 2004, pp. 107–118.

<sup>67</sup> G. DREYER, *Der Satetempel: Felsnische*, in: W. KAISER ET AL., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. Sechster Grabungsbericht*, in: *MDAIK* 32, 1976, p. 79.

<sup>68</sup> G. DREYER, *Elephantine VIII*, cat. nos. 345, 455.

<sup>69</sup> M. VALLOGGIA, *Balat I. Le Mastaba de Medou-Nefer*, *FIFAO* 31, Le Caire 1986, pp. 116–117, Pl. 64 (Inv. 1045); A. MINAULT-GOUT, *Sur les vases jubilaires et leur diffusion*, in: C. BERGER/B. MATHIEU (eds.), *Études sur l'Ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqâra dédiées à Jean-Philippe Lauer*, *Orientalia Monspeliensia* 9, Montpellier 1997, p. 307, Figs. 6a–b.

<sup>70</sup> G. DREYER, *Elephantine VIII*, cat. no. 40.

<sup>71</sup> G. DREYER, *Elephantine VIII*, cat. nos. 368–370.



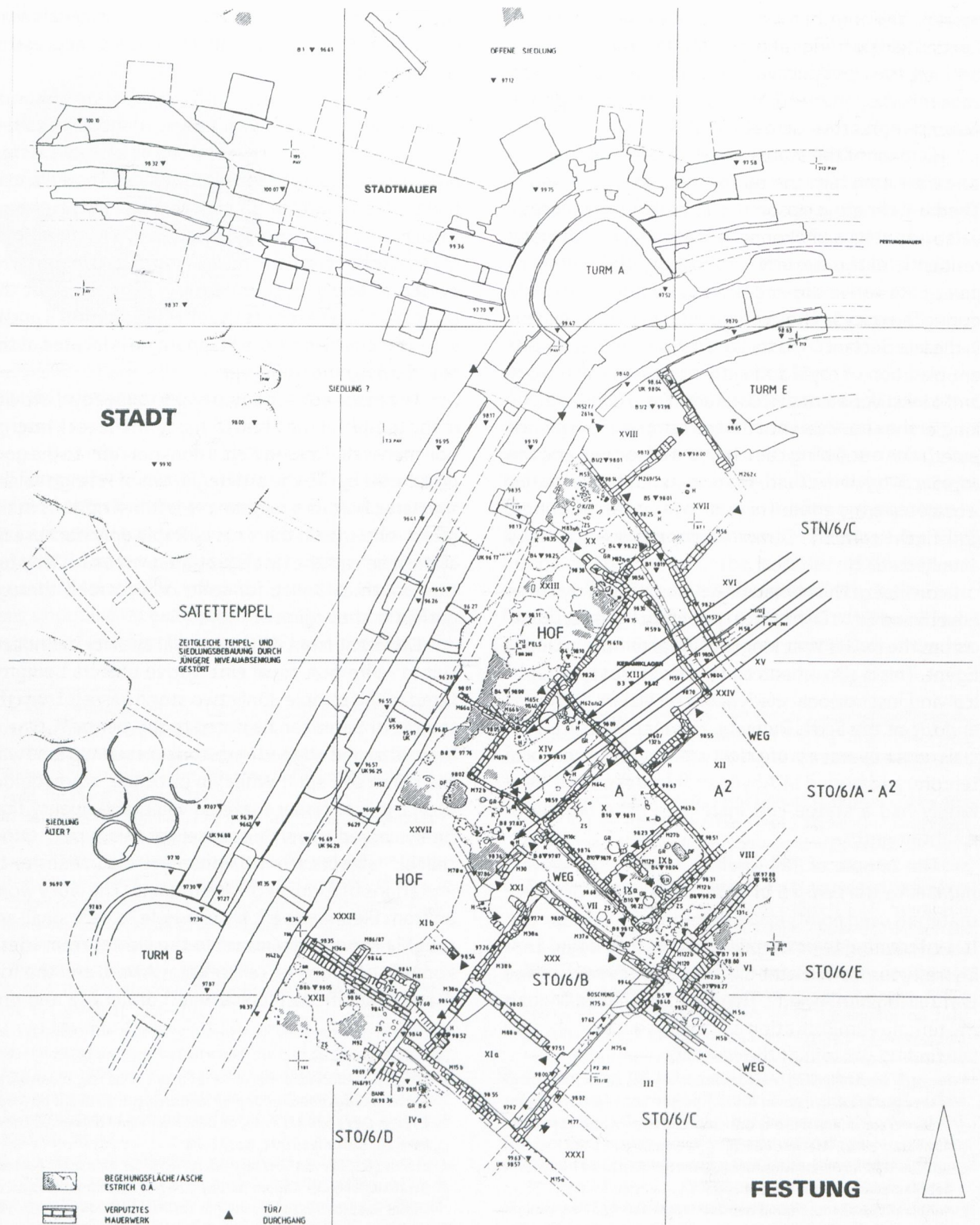


Fig. 16 Elephantine, later houses of early dynastic fortress, arrows pointing to wooden posts, after M. ZIERMANN, *Siedlungsbebauung in der fröhdynastischen Festung*, in: W. KAISER ET AL., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 19./20. Grabungsbericht*, in: *MDAIK* 49, 1993, pp. 136–141, Fig. 2

half as big as the items from Hierakonpolis where they are one of the most common votive type.

This is in complete accordance with the overall distribution of votive materials. Many objects are of

low intrinsic value, e. g. natural stone pebbles, simple faience beads and discarded tools like flint knives, blades and others. This represents a range of material culture accessible also for lower social groups. It is dif-



difficult to tell whether similar objects were found in substantial quantities at other sites or simply escaped the interest of the excavators. Some natural pebbles from Hierakonpolis and Abydos suggest that they are a common feature across Third Millennium Egypt, independent of the status of individual temples<sup>72</sup>.

Architecturally, the temple of Satet is not separated by a large enclosure wall like the temple areas of Abydos and Hierakonpolis, and it stands in close contact with the settlement houses<sup>73</sup>. The measurements of the temple and its skew layout within the natural landscape are comparable to the houses on Elephantine island, and the use of wooden posts in the temple of the late Old Kingdom is known also from the local settlement architecture (Fig. 16)<sup>74</sup>.

To sum up, the votive objects of the temple of Satet range sociologically below the corpora of Hierakonpolis, Abydos and, to some extent, Tell Ibrahim Awad during the entire Third Millennium. Architecture and finds from the temple demonstrate that it is deeply rooted in the local community of Elephantine. It is controversial to what extent kings are involved in the emergence of early local temples<sup>75</sup>. The comparison above shows that kingship materialises very differently in local contexts and needs to be considered individually for each site<sup>76</sup>. The correlation between the origins of sacred kingship and local cults may be of a more indirect nature rather than reflecting direct patronage.

## Local administration

JEAN-PIERRE PÄTZNICK published 35 seals and seal impressions from 'Satet-Süd' and dated them to the Early Dynastic Period<sup>77</sup>. Their exact relationship to the temple administration is difficult to establish from the find context but if the material is accepted to re-

fect the administrative setting of the temple the discussion above can be extended from archaeology to prosopography.

None of the inscriptions includes a royal name, and titles which would relate the seal bearer to the royal sphere are rarely attested. Most seal inscriptions mention only local institutions and titles or epithets typical of local administration, such as *hbnj*, *rnw*, *s3d*, *mjtr*, and *nfr-qd-M3<sup>c</sup>.t*<sup>78</sup>. The temple of Satet seems, therefore, to have operated in a primarily local network.

One of the highest-ranking individuals is a *rh-njswt* and *rnw* called *Trj-wmt/Nj-wmt*<sup>79</sup>. His titles *sšm-<sup>c</sup>hm.w* and *sšm-<sup>c</sup>hm.wt* might indicate that he was the leader of some kind of local institution and the fact that he has sealed a door suggests that he was physically present in the town, if not an internal official living in Elephantine. The combination of the courtly title *rh-njswt* with the epithet *rnw* connects him to both the local community and the (lower end of) the central administration. *Trj-wmt/Nj-wmt* is the kind of official who provided a bridge from the local network to the king.

However, the actual interface between local and central administration was not the temple but the Eastern Town, the successor of the Early Dynastic royal fortress. Most of the so-called 'Amtssiegel' with a royal name come from this site<sup>80</sup> and show that the Eastern Town was embedded in a network of officials with stronger connections to the court. Even on the local level, the temple of Satet turns out to be more provincial than other institutions in the settlement.

There is surprisingly little prosopographical evidence for the temple of Satet in later periods of the Third Millennium. *Hwfw-wr* was overseer of priests and belonged to the local elite of the early Old Kingdom<sup>81</sup>. Yet, it is debatable whether the link between the office of overseer of priests of the local temple and the local elite, well-known from other late Old

<sup>72</sup> One extraordinary pebble was published by W. M. F. PETRIE, *Abydos II (1903), Memoir EEF 24*, London 1903, Pl. 9[203]. It is kept by the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford together with further pebbles from the votive pit M 64 (1903.22.11–1903.22.16). Two pebbles from Hierakonpolis are kept by the Museum for Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge (Z15569, Z15576) and another one by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (E.92.1898).

<sup>73</sup> M. ZIERMANN, *De l'habitat à la ville fortifiée: Éléphantine. Données choisies sur l'urbanisation et l'architecture (I<sup>ère</sup>–VI<sup>e</sup> dynastie)*, in: *Archéo-Nil 12*, Paris 2002, pp. 29–46.

<sup>74</sup> G. DREYER, *Der Satetempel: Bebauung des Alten Reiches im Vorbereich*, in: W. KAISER ET AL., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. Achter Grabungsbericht*, in: *MDAIK 36*, 1980, pp. 249–250, Fig. 2; M. ZIERMANN, *Siedlungsbebauung in der frühdynastischen Festung*, in: W. KAISER ET AL., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 19./20. Grabungsbericht*, in: *MDAIK 49*, 1993, pp. 136–141, Fig. 2.

<sup>75</sup> J. BAINES, *Society, Morality, and Religious Practice*, in: B. E. Shafer (ed.), *Religion in Ancient Egypt. Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice*, Ithaca 1991, pp. 173–174.

<sup>76</sup> D. RAUE/P. KOPP, in: *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte 10*, 2008, pp. 38–44.

<sup>77</sup> J.-P. PÄTZNICK, *Die Siegelabrollungen und Rollsiegel der Stadt Elephantine im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr. Spurensicherung eines archäologischen Artefaktes*, *BARIntSer 1339*, Oxford 2005, pp. 203–207, cat. nos. 1–35.

<sup>78</sup> J.-P. PÄTZNICK, *op. cit.*, pp. 149–171.

<sup>79</sup> J.-P. PÄTZNICK, *op. cit.*, cat. nos. 26, 32.

<sup>80</sup> J.-P. PÄTZNICK, *op. cit.*, pp. 199–203.

<sup>81</sup> S. J. SEIDLMEYER, *Town and State in the Early Old Kingdom. A view from Elephantine*, in: J. SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, London 1996, p. 118.



Kingdom sites<sup>82</sup>, was of a structural nature at Elephantine. The sparse evidence from Elephantine does not fit in this picture. *St-k3*, the only attested nomarch at Elephantine, was not affiliated to the local temple, and the two known priests of Satet *Hrw* and *Hpj* mentioned on pot inscriptions from the Qubbet el-Hawa were not nomarchs<sup>83</sup>. While the empirical basis is admittedly thin, the evidence suggests that the temple of Satet has never had the status of a prestige institution used as arena of display by the local elite as temples at other sites did.

## Conclusion

The comparative method applied in the discussion shows that early provincial temples in Egypt are not only local institutions in a generic sense but respond to specific settings composed of wider historical developments and individual social environments. The

development of the temple of Satet was definitely not normal or typical in every respect. It is more local, more provincial and less prestigious than other temples of the period. The kings seem to have been interested in the temple primarily as a last whistle stop on Egyptian ground during expeditions to the south and due to the location of Elephantine in the border region of the First Cataract. Late Old Kingdom royal interest, however, is not paralleled by an increase of more costly votive objects offered in the temple by a local elite. Archaeology and the prosopography of seal inscriptions suggest that the temple remained on this level until the rise of the Middle Kingdom.

While knowledge of Ancient Egypt is still biased towards elite contexts it is possible to reveal the local dynamics of social developments behind the more static scenes of elite culture. For a fuller understanding of local Egyptian temple development, it would be necessary to write more local histories and to combine the results obtained from external comparison with more internal data from individual sites.

<sup>82</sup> J. C. MORENO-GARCIA, *Les temples provinciaux et leur rôle dans l'agriculture institutionnelle de l'Ancien Empire et du Moyen Empire*, in: J. C. MORENO-GARCIA (ed.), *L'agriculture institutionnelle en Égypte ancienne: état de la question et perspectives interdisciplinaires*, CRIPEL 25, Lille 2005, pp. 93–124, especially pages 96, 99, 102, 105–107.

<sup>83</sup> E. EDEL, *Die Felsengräber der Qubbet el Hawa bei Assuan, II. Abteilung. Die althieratischen Topfaufschriften I. Die Topfaufschriften aus den Grabungsjahren 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963 und 1965*, Wiesbaden 1970, pp. 86–93.





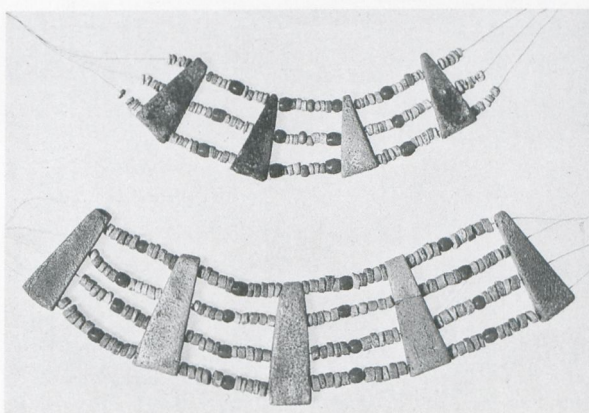
3a Elephantine, faience boy,  
H: 7,7 cm, after G. DREYER,  
*Elephantine VIII*, cat. no. 73, Taf. 20



3b Elephantine, faience baboon,  
H: 4,9 cm, after G. DREYER,  
*Elephantine VIII*, cat. no. 132, Taf. 26



3c Elephantine, faience frog,  
H: 5,9 cm, after G. DREYER,  
*Elephantine VIII*, cat no. 170, Taf. 32



3d Elephantine, beads and spacers, length of spacers: max. 3,8 cm,  
after G. DREYER, *Elephantine VIII*, cat. nos. 327, 328, 330, 332, 333, Taf. 43



3e Elephantine, natural pebbles, after G. DREYER, *Elephantine VIII*, cat. no. 457, Taf. 57