

Report on the 36th season of excavation and restoration on the island of Elephantine*

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The 36th season of the German Institute of Archaeology and the Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt at Elephantine was carried out from October 22nd 2005 till April 8th 2006.

The work on finds collected in past seasons was continued. This included studies of small finds, pottery and seal impressions of the Old Kingdom, Nubian pottery, pottery of the Middle and New Kingdom and the Late Roman Period, lithic, textiles, pigments, botanical finds and human bones. The epigraphic documentation of the temples of Satet of the Middle Kingdom and the Graeco-Roman temples of Khnum, as well as the survey of rock-inscriptions, was continued. A geophysical survey of the region of the First Cataract was started.

The conservation work of the wooden columns from the palace bakery of the First Intermediate Period was continued in spring 2007. Restoration work focussed on the central part of the town of the Third Millennium BC and the settlement of the Middle Kingdom to the west of the sanctuary of Heqaib.

Excavation work was carried out in the area between the Temple of Satet and the sanctuary of Heqaib, in the temple of Khnum and its later occupation layers and in the strata of the New Kingdom south of the sanctuary of Heqaib (fig. 1-2). Major cleaning activities were started at the north-western part of the town enclosure.

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The Inspectorate of Antiquities was represented by the chief-inspectors Hanan Abd el-Shoukour Abd el-Qader, Mostafa Hassan Khalil and Karima Mohammed Fahmy. To them, as well as to the general director of Aswan, Mohammed el-Bialy, we would like to express our sincere thanks for their kind support and cooperation.

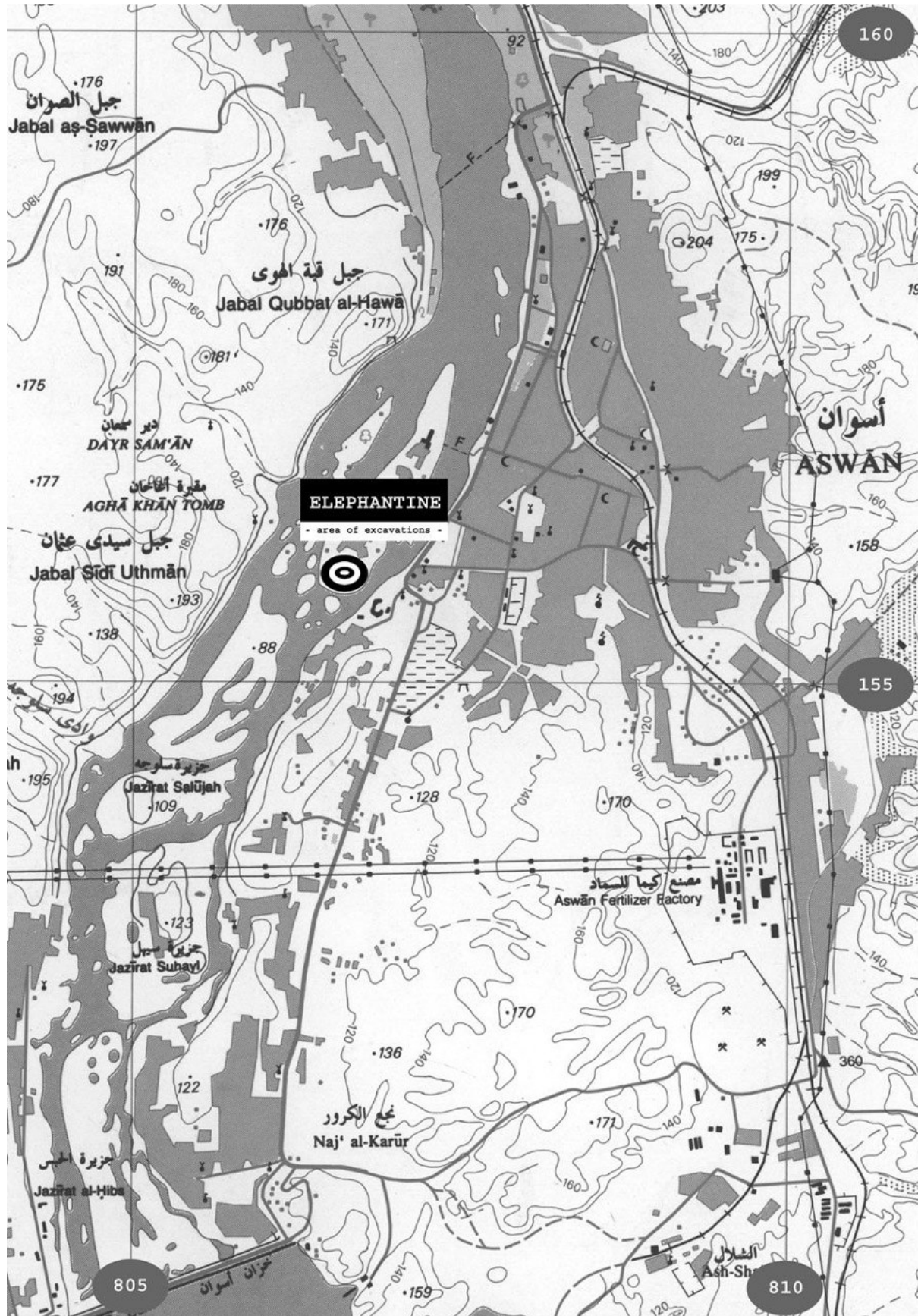


fig.1: Map of Aswan, scale 1:50,000 (from E.G.S.A. sheet NG36B3b).

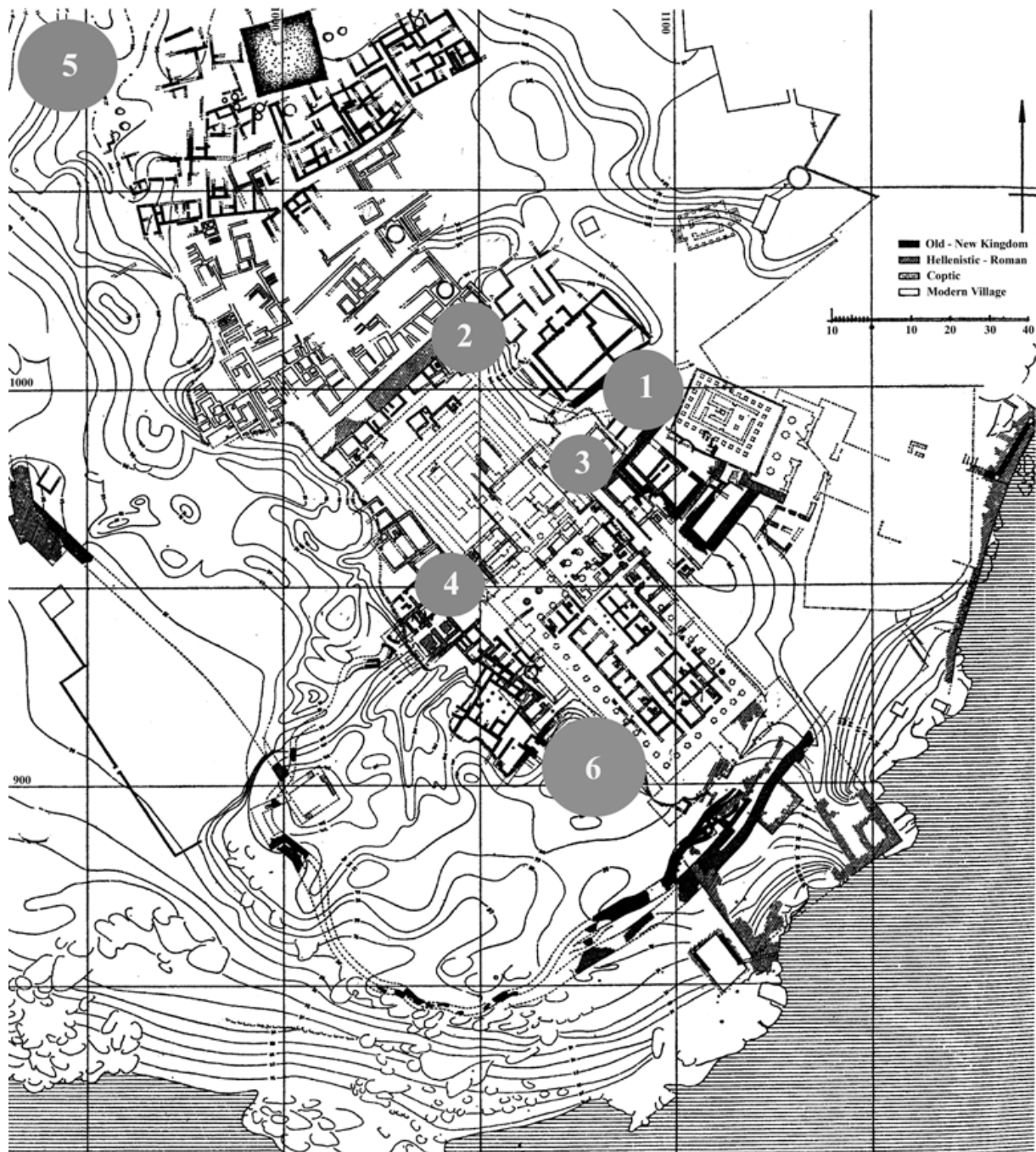


fig.2: Elephantine Excavations 2005/2006, scale 1:2,000: 1. Area XVIII, cult installation of the Old Kingdom west of the temple of Satet; 2. Area II, strata of the New Kingdom; 3. Temple of Khnum: later structure north of the temple; 4. Temple of Khnum: pronaos and house K19; 5. Town enclosure, northwestern part; 6: restoration of the building complex of the Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom in the area south of the courtyard of the temple of Khnum.

I. Area XVIII: Town enclosure walls and settlement of the Third Millennium BC (fig. 3-5, Pl. I)

In the 36th season research was started in the area between the temple of Satet and the sanctuary of Heqaib next to the Old Kingdom town enclosure wall (M1523; fig. 3), where the Nile sanctuary of the Old Kingdom may have been located. This area is situated exactly on the axis of the Old Kingdom Satet temple in a bend of the town wall. However, this place had obviously lost its importance by the end of the 5th Dynasty, because at this time the area was filled up with three metres of debris in one go. Four northeast-southwest oriented walls were found in the fill. The lowest wall was built out of granite (M1560), while the three upper ones were built of mudbricks (M1530, M1558-59) without any mortar. The walls were built on different levels to facilitate the process of filling the area from the south and east as the ground here became extremely steep during the work. Without the support of these terrace walls it would not have been possible to continue to walk there and heap up the debris. The wall M782 might be a substructure for the new town wall. The debris consisted of settlement rubbish with a large quantity of fish bones, some hippopotamus bones, rubble of buildings and some seal impressions bearing the titles of kings and officials. After raising this area a new town enclosure wall was built on top of the debris to close a bend in the older wall.

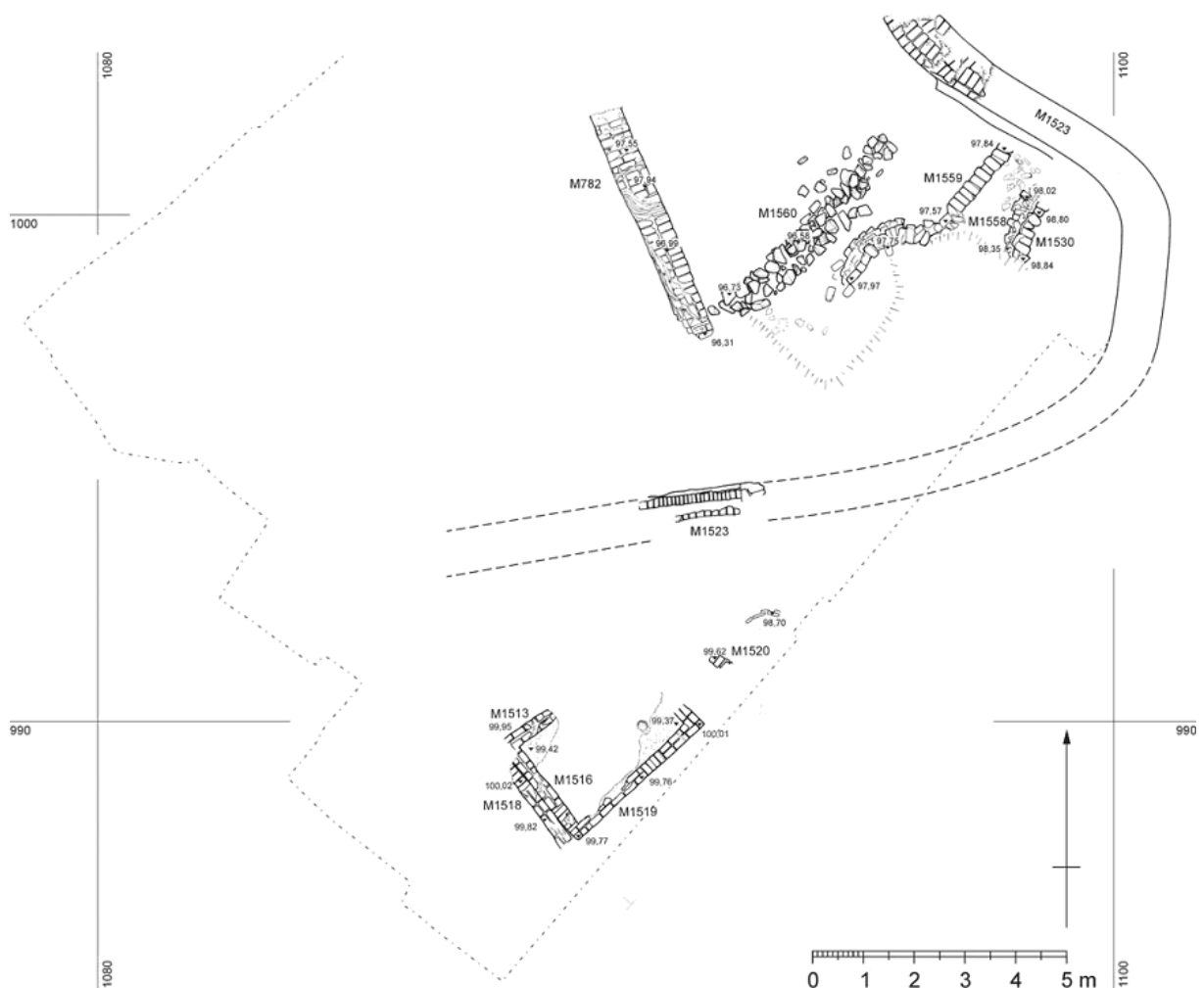


fig. 3: Area XVIII: Old Kingdom town wall and walls in the debris fill.

In the south-western part of area XVIII it was possible to observe later developments. Here, settlement layers of the 6th Dynasty were preserved above the fill of debris. Inside the new town wall courtyards with beehive-shaped granaries were found (fig. 4) in the early and middle 6th Dynasty layers. Because the fill of debris was compressed by its own weight, and also the weight of the settlement upon it, the area settled wherever it was not supported by the older town wall (M1523).

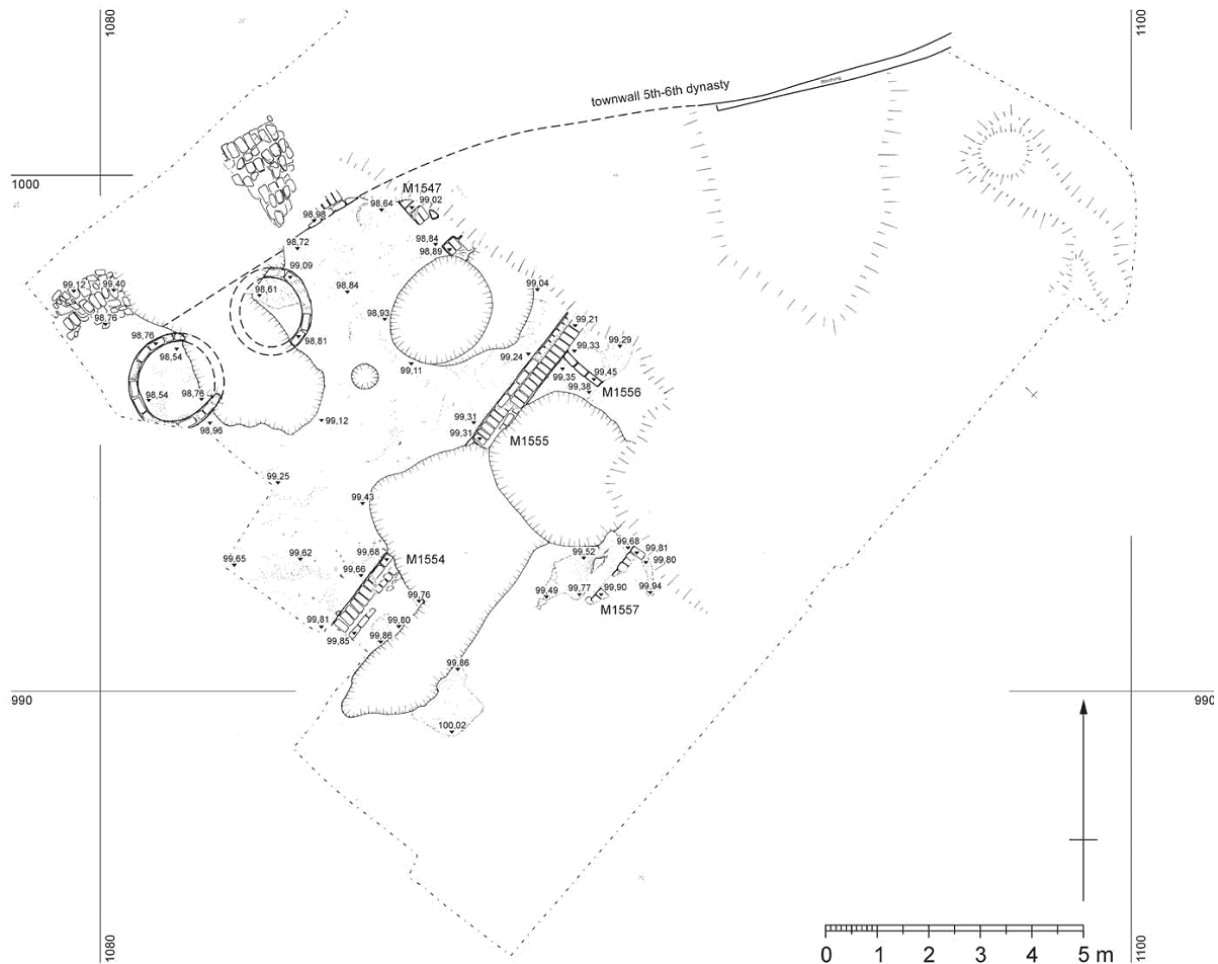


fig. 4: Area XVIII: Settlement of the early-middle 6th Dynasty.

Until now, three main settlement strata were observed on top of the Old Kingdom town wall (M1523). These were divided into several phases of renovation. The walls in the area were removed completely on two occasions, and the depression that resulted from the subsidence of the debris was filled up again to level the site for building purposes. New foundation trenches were dug in the location of former walls, and the new walls were built more or less in the same place as their predecessors. Courtyards constructed from quite thin, unplastered walls were found in the north-east sector, while houses with plastered walls and smaller rooms were situated in the south-west. The relative absence of tools, manufacturing waste or evidence of administrative functions indicates that this area must have been a residential quarter. From the late 6th Dynasty on, storage facilities are built as underground cellars.

In situ finds were only discovered in one of the beehive-shaped cellars (pl. I) dating to the late 6th Dynasty. They comprised several vessels, five of which were set in small pits in the ground. Three vessels were still covered with lids. In one of the vessels were two balance weights, parts of a wooden chest, a falcon figurine made of bone and the handle of a fan¹.

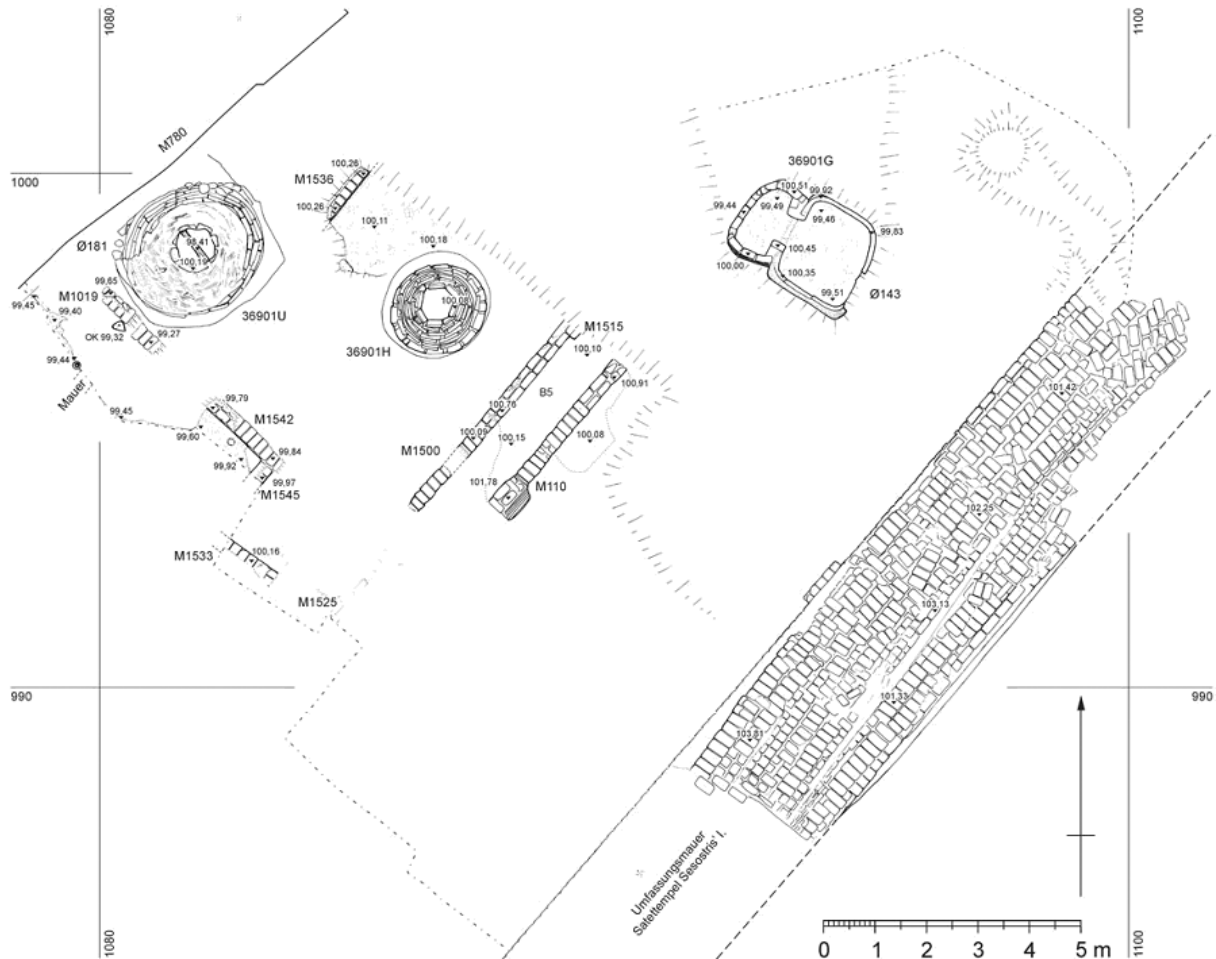


fig. 5: Area XVIII: Settlement of the First Intermediate Period.

At the beginning of the First Intermediate Period the new town enclosure wall had already lost its function. A pit for a cellar (36901U) was dug into it and in the south-west section of the cellar a floor covered the wall (fig. 5) This floor was subsequently cut into by the foundation trench of wall M780. Another well-preserved beehive-shaped cellar in area XVIII also dates to the First Intermediate Period (36901H), while a further cellar with two rooms dates to the Middle Kingdom (36901G).

P. Kopp

¹ Weight No.1: 4.5 x 5.5 x 7.4 cm, serpentinite, find-no. K9419, excavation-no.: 36901 L/n-2, register-no.: 4116; weight No.2: 5.3 x 5.5 x 6.9, find-no. K9420, excavation-no.: 36901 L/n-3; register-no.: 4117.

II. Area II: Domestic Quarters of the New Kingdom (Pl. II)

Stratigraphical investigations at the northern edge of the kom were continued in the domestic quarters to the south-west of the Heqaib Sanctuary.² This area was chosen because it still preserves, in a building lot beside the central lane of the town, a continuous accessible stratigraphical sequence that includes the layers of the New Kingdom which have disappeared in almost all other parts of the site due to modern as well as ancient activities.

Beneath the level of the Third Intermediate Period, a section of a building (House 61) of the Ramesside Period (Bauschicht 7) was investigated. Although only a small part of the building is preserved it exhibits all of the features of a substantial mansion comparable to those known from Amarna (Pl. II). Working on the assumption that pre-existing architectural elements were reused within the same building lot,³ the owner of the mansion can be identified as a certain Hori, a high official from the mortuary temple of Merenptah in Thebes. A doorjamb inscribed with his name and titles was found in a previous season, reused as a step in a later building (Bauschicht 6) erected on the same lot in the early Third Intermediate Period.⁴

All the rooms and courtyards of H 61 were paved with mudbricks. Fragments of coloured plaster in the destruction debris of the house prove that the walls were once painted in red, yellow and white. The substructure of a staircase in a central passage provides evidence for the existence of an upper storey.

A small bathroom or purification area was uncovered adjacent to this passage, separated from it by a thin screen wall. This bathroom is the first of its kind to be found in the town and it consists of a shallow sandstone basin with an outlet above another roughly shaped red granite basin sunk into the surrounding pavement.⁵

Of the original layout of the mansion, two circular granaries in a courtyard and a rectangular vaulted cellar in an adjacent room survive in the northern part of the building. The large storage facilities indicate the high status of the mansion and its owner.

To the west of the mansion, no walls of adjacent buildings earlier than an annex of H 61 (consisting of a courtyard with several granaries) in phase 7a were discovered. From the evidence of the continuous accumulation of windblown sand here, the whole area was obviously in disuse for a long period of time during the occupation layers 8 and 7b (late-Eighteenth to Twentieth dynasties). An explanation of this remarkable phenomenon relies on future work to determine the limits of abandoned properties to the west of H 61.

B. and C. von Pilgrim

² For previous work see B. von Pilgrim, Stadtgebiet nördlich des späten Chnumtempels, in: Dreyer et al., Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine - 31./32. Bericht, in: *MDAIK* 61, 2005, pp. 58 ff.

³ For the reuse of a doorframe from the Second Intermediate Period until the New Kingdom in a building lot nearby see C. von Pilgrim, *Untersuchungen in der Stadt des Mittleren Reiches und der Zweiten Zwischenzeit, Elephantine XVIII, AV* 91, p. 150.

⁴ Cf. J. Budka, Bauteile des Wohnsitzes einer thebanischen Beamtenfamilie in Elephantine, in: Dreyer et al., Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine – 33./34./35. Bericht, in: *MDAIK* 64, 2008, forthcoming.

⁵ For similar installations see Borhardt / Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser in Tell el-Amarna, WVD OG* 91, 1980, p. 194-195 and pl. 21.

III. Temple of Khnum: temple and later structures

In continuation of the investigation of the Ptolemaic-Roman Khnum temple – its use, destruction and re-use – work was carried out in the following areas:

North Door of the Temple Court: As part of the documentation of the Ptolemaic-Roman building phases of the Khnum Temple, the north door of the temple court was cleaned and studied. The entrance has two building phases: first, a simple entrance was created, and later the entrance was supplied with two staircases, one leading up from the level to the north of the temple, the other leading down again to the level of the temple court. The reason for the change is unclear. The hypothesis that the temple court originally had a higher level cannot be substantiated. Possibly the change had a ritual purpose, increasing the separation between the courtyard and the outside space.

Northern Inner Enclosure Wall, Building T43: To the north of the temple a segment of the inner enclosure wall was investigated. This segment is of special interest because it is in this area that the foundations of the so-called ‘Temple A’ had to be integrated into the foundation pit walls of the Khnum temple. Changes in the construction of the foundations indicate that this posed practical problems. During the work, an older wall was discovered made of very large mudbricks. The wall may have been built during the Middle Kingdom, in which case it could have formed a part of the Khnum temple complex of the Middle Kingdom, of which no other walls have so far been found.

During the 6th century AD, a building was erected on top of the remains of the inner enclosure wall, which may have served as a small Christian chapel (Building T43). A semicircular structure on the floor may be interpreted as an indication of the position of the altar of this chapel. The investigation of the building showed that this apse was built in two phases, first in sun-dried brick, then later in stone and fired brick.

Area South of the Khnum Temple: South of the temple the study of the stratigraphy between the priest’s house K19 and the temple side entrance was continued. Layers of the fifth to ninth centuries AD were investigated, overlaying layers of the use and destruction of the temple. A wall of the Roman period was discovered which may have belonged to a forecourt of the priest’s house.

Area North of the Khnum Temple (Buildings T51 and H200): The area north of the Khnum temple still offers the chance to investigate the development of a zone closely linked to the temple. Preliminary documentation work – in anticipation of future excavations – suggests the following sequence of layers:

1. a building of the late New Kingdom
2. construction debris and terracing, possibly originating from the Late Period. Palm trees were planted on the terrace
3. A large house of the Roman period (Building H 200), possibly a priest’s house like K19
4. Debris from the destruction of the Khnum temple
5. House remains of the fifth and sixth centuries
6. A large house of the seventh century (T51), with an addition of a courtyard and a cellar in the ninth century

F. Arnold

IV. Graeco-Roman Epigraphy: Temple of Khnum

Another This season of research on decorated fragments from the Ptolemaic and Roman temples of Elephantine was a continuation of works aimed at distinguishing the development phases of the Khnum temple and reconstructing its architectural form. Investigation focussed on fragments uncovered during current excavation works.

The register of studied fragments includes 510 objects. Each subsequent phase of research reveals fragments whose connection to the reconstructed architectural form of the Khnum temple does not seem possible. These fragments support the hypothesis that the temenos of the Khnum temple included other buildings.

The fragments studied hitherto form distinct groups that pose the following different research problems:

1. Decoration in high relief (GR 100, 97, 48, 227, 133, 181, 130, 124, 58, 2, 275, 41, 464) belonging to a previously identified building: Complex VIII, dating from the time of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II.⁶ A fragment depicting the goddess Nut (GR 257), as well as a section of the horizontal frieze from the top of a wall (GR 136) differ in style from other contemporary decorative treatments represented by architraves once located in the pronaos (GR 202 and GR 191). At the same time, other reliefs belonging to Complex VIII do not correspond in scale to the enormous, and at times very carefully carved, figures which must also have been part of the decoration of the pronaos (GR 61, 96, 34, 466, 274, 101, 461, 462, 463, 452, 467). Both these observations suggest that we should rid ourselves of the hypothesis that Complex VIII was located in the pronaos. They provide support for the already voiced suggestion that this group of fragments was associated with one of the rooms of the 'Temple-House' of Nektanebo II⁷
2. A group of decorated fragments dating to the time of Domitian and imitating the style of Complex VIII (GR 3, 4+5, 8, 6+7, 12, 75, 81-83, 64, 1, 440). Stylistic similarities make the two groups of uncovered fragments – those of Domitian and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II - practically indistinguishable. The simplest interpretation is that Domitian's decoration was a continuation of that of Ptolemy VIII within the same room. The earlier hypothesis which associates Complex VIII with the pronaos of the Khnum temple would imply that Domitian's decoration was also found inside the pronaos. Such a location does not now seem possible, considering the variety of Ptolemaic decoration found whose connection to the pronaos is more securely justified. Fragment GR 260 supports the supposition that Domitian's decoration and Complex VIII were connected to the same part of the temple. This bears out the hypothesis that in the time of Domitian a portico was added to the Khnum temple, which was connected in its liturgical function to the room whose decoration is represented by Complex VIII.
3. The theme of rebirth, a primary concept in the theology of Elephantine, is represented by motifs present in both groups of reliefs.. Among the most spectacular of these is the depiction of a tree that recalls the Osirid ritual of abaton (GR 62, 70+71, 66+68+72+73). Also noteworthy are two other fragments, one illustrating a procession (GR 63), and the other showing riverside vegetation with a bird flying out of it (GR 423). Allusions to the concept of rebirth are also found on fragments depicting the procession of Niles carrying

⁶ E. Laskowska-Kusztal, *Elephantine XV: Die Dekorfragmente der ptolemäisch-römischen Tempel von Elephantine*, AV 73, Mainz 1986, pp. 67-70.

⁷ Laskowska-Kusztal, *Elephantine XV*, p.68

bundles of plants (GR 258, 80, 65, 44) or offerings of grain ears and flowers (GR 117, 273, 98, 99, 102). This permits a hypothesis that both groups of reliefs were related to the cult of the Nile in its broadest theological associations (the Nile as a hypostasis of Khnum or Osiris). Searching for their original position of these fragments, the first location that comes to mind is the rooms of the 'Temple-House' located to the north of the temple's axis, communicating through side doorways with cult buildings located to the north of the precincts of Satet and Khnum, and associated with the cult of Osiris and the revival of the Nile. It can be supposed that an additional structure was connected with this part of the temple.

4. A problem that remains unsolved is the location of fragments already distinguished as belonging to Complex IX (eg. 6, 441, 432, 427, 413, 344, 345)⁸ and therefore representative of the decoration of Ptolemy VIII. These mainly consist of sections of the upper friezes of walls and horizontal texts. Stylistic analysis allows us to suppose that sections of decoration whose fragments are part of Complex IX were executed by the same team of artisans as Complex VIII, but for reasons unknown to us they were not made with as much care. This stylistic classification is supported by the existence in several fragments (GR 127, 109, 59+60, 78, 425, possibly belonging to Complex IX) of decoration with details executed in relief which were later omitted in this complex. Complex IX, to which the architrave GR 193 belongs, was once thought to be located in the porticoes of the courtyard of the Khnum temple. However, the established association of the construction and decoration of the courtyard of the Khnum temple in its present form exclusively with the Roman period precludes that hypothesis. Considering the evident stylistic similarities between Complexes VIII and IX, as well as reservations about the first hypothesis locating Complex VIII in the pronaos, the concept of an auxiliary building accompanying the Khnum temple should be recalled.
5. The studied material includes a relatively large number of fragments of doorway decoration. The only comparative material for these fragments are the remains of the southern side doorway of the 'Temple-House' with the decoration of Nektanebos II and Augustus, as well as fragments of the northern side doorway of the pronaos with Ptolemaic decoration. The reconstructed architecture of the pronaos assumes the presence of three doorways in the façade of the pronaos and two doorways in its back wall (still evident).
6. Another fragment formed a part of the northern doorway to the pronaos (GR 90). Fragment GR 189 is associated with the main entrance to the pronaos (Felix Arnold's identification). Fragment of jamb GR 134 can be located in the south doorway. This connection would mean, however, that the architectural form and decorative scheme of the side doorways to the pronaos were not uniform. The existence of a different architectural form for the south doorway would permit a number of other fragments (GR 85, 86+87, 56, 93, 89, 88, 91, 92, 315, 276) to be considered as a part of this doorway instead of only fragment GR 134.
7. Particularly careful analysis is needed when dealing with a group of jamb fragments that differ from the others in their style of decoration (GR 263, 265, 309, 264, 266+281, 282). These belong to the outer and inner face of a hitherto unidentified doorway,. Taking into consideration the Khnum temple alone and its established chronology it is possible to suggest a connection between this group of fragments and a doorway in the back wall of the pronaos. The problem of a possible connection between this group of jamb fragments and an as-yet unidentified accompanying structure remains open to discussion.

⁸ Laskowska-Kusztal, *Elephantine XV*, p. 70-74

8. Various fragments of doorways whose internal decoration was formed by ankh and was friezes (GR 415, 389, 422, 385, 435, 457, 351, 417 and jambs GR 284, 436, 469) remain without even a hypothetical placement in the temple. A connection with doorways located in the Roman parts of the Khnum temple cannot be excluded, at least as far as the friezes are concerned.
9. Interpretative difficulties of a similar nature are posed by a relatively small number of fragments of architraves dating solely to the Ptolemaic period. Some fragments may be related to the pronaos of the Khnum temple, both the colonnade of the façade and the columns inside (GR 202, 191, 201, 473, 488, 200). This proposed location must be verified in the context of other architraves with different parameters (represented by fragments GR 474, 439, 313, 346). Special attention must also be paid to architraves connected with smaller structures (GR 261 and GR 311). Many interpretative dilemmas should be solved by the association of architrave GR 193 with Complex IX. The consequence of excluding this architrave as a part of the pronaos and courtyard of the Khnum temple is the distancing of Complex IX from the Khnum temple altogether.
10. A category of architectural elements that requires particularly careful investigation is column fragments. The only precisely identified group consists of fragments of columns belonging to Complex XVII. These originate from the courtyard of the Khnum temple, are covered with a thick layer of plaster, and bear friezes dated by the cartouches of Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius (176, 184, 175, 171, 29, 187, 178, 418, 480, 46, 51, 405). The identification of other elements decorating these columns, such as figural scenes or registers of texts, remains hypothetical unless accompanied by cartouches.⁹
11. Dating and locating column fragments covered with thick plaster is further impeded by our knowledge of renovation works in the Khnum temple executed during the reigns of Trajan and Antoninus Pius. These works, which consisted of the addition of a thick layer of plaster and polychrome decoration, were carried out in the outer parts of the temple, including its façade. This plaster can also be found on fragments of screen walls, whose location in the façade is beyond any doubt (GR 140, as well as GR 180, 493, 420, and possibly 157). It may also be supposed that the columns of the façade were repainted during these restorations. It is particularly important to verify from the architectural viewpoint the location of many column fragments in the façade (GR 160+161+162, 300, 301, 177, 182, 27, 28, 54, 407, 406, 484, 421, 408, 52, 400, 404).
12. The painted decoration laid over sunk relief on architrave GR 202, bearing a cartouche of Ptolemy VIII, may indicate that very thick plaster was used as a ground for polychrome decoration in the Ptolemaic period. This plaster, however, did not reach the thickness of that used during the Roman period. The analysis of plaster from this architrave led to the isolation of column fragments covered with identical plaster, which were thus dated to the time of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II. The stylistic criteria seem to allow for the association of these fragments both with the colonnade of the façade of the pronaos (they correspond to architrave GR 202 which has been connected with this façade) as well as the row of columns inside the pronaos (on the shafts preserved in situ the same 'Ptolemaic' plaster is found). An investigation regarding the possible connection with either one or the other row of columns should also be conducted for other fragments (GR 18, 186, 55, 188, 166+167, 302, 305, 185, 303, 495).

⁹ Laskowska-Kusztal, *Elephantine XV*, p. 115-126.

13. Of key significance for the verification of the hypothesis assuming the existence of other cult structures around the Khnum temple is a group of fragments belonging to columns bearing the decoration of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II. These have no traces of thick plaster upon them (cf. groups in pts. 8-9), but instead have traces of whitewash (154, 148+149, 145, 192, 314, 142, 256, 173, 143, 254, 382, 289, 174, 175, 146, 278, 239, 147, 271, 240, 251, 268, 255, 228). The decoration of these fragments is executed with care and the hieroglyphics are at a relatively small scale. The decorative programme features figural scenes, ankh and was friezes, as well as friezes of cartouches flanked by birds or cobras. The examination of their relation to the colonnades of the pronaos should set guidelines not only for the interpretation of these columns, but also for the wall decoration executed in small-scale sunken relief (see Point 13 below).
14. Another separate group of fragmented column decoration exists that were part of the decoration of Ptolemy VIII (GR 144, 225, 245, 229, 277, 248, 424). This decoration was evidently executed by a different group of artists than the fragments considered above in Point 10, but bore no traces of either thick Roman plaster or thinner 'Ptolemaic' plaster.
15. Undoubtedly connected with a separate building are the decorated fragments of columns from the time of Ptolemy VIII which are smaller in diameter (GR 196, 198, 236, 199, 500, 246, 242, 105, 222, 234, 235). The decorative fragments that are preserved represent mainly registers of vertical text and bear no traces of thick plaster. In terms of stylistic traits and scale they resemble the decoration of columns commented on at Point 10. It is important to determine whether the dimensions of the building from which this group of fragments originated allow a connection with the roof of the Khnum temple.
16. The architectural interpretation of the columns mentioned in Points 10 and 12 is of key significance for setting further guidelines for research on fragments of wall decoration executed in sunk relief during the Ptolemaic period which show no sign of renovation activity. Fragments of this Type of decoration found many years ago were originally assigned to Complex XII located in the pronaos of the Khnum temple¹⁰. This group, analyzed during research conducted in 2005-2006, includes fragments of astronomical motifs, figural decorations at a very small scale, fragments of scenes, horizontal text friezes, fragments of a dado with procession scenes and a fragment of a frieze crowning a wall with a Hathor emblem inscribed in a cartouche (GR 391, 384, 392, 380, 26, 25, 386, 438, 465, 450, 104, 288, 410, 331, 414, 224, 232, 378, 428, 379, 348, 478, 365, 270, 249, 243, 252, 250, 19, 20, 21, 238, 350, 387, 259, 290, 16).
17. In the context of the decoration of columns (Points 10-12) and exterior walls (Point 13) one should examine the cornices on which there are columns of text placed between palm leaves (GR 141, 231, 489) as these provide evidence the existence of a structure in smaller scale.
18. Serious research dilemmas are still connected with fragments of wall decoration covered with thick plaster.¹¹ There is confirmation of the presence of thick plaster over Ptolemaic sunk reliefs adorning screens in the façade of the pronaos (cf. Point 8). It is presumed that in the Roman period sunk relief decoration covered with thick plaster was carved in the side walls of the pronaos. Perhaps these Roman reliefs were only a supplement to an incomplete Ptolemaic decorative programme, which, just like the new decoration, was covered with thick plaster. It also cannot be excluded that the exterior walls of the courtyard were decorated.

¹⁰ Laskowska-Kusztal, *Elephantine XV*, p. 100-103.

¹¹ Laskowska-Kusztal, *Elephantine XV*, pp. 115-126, Complex XVII.

Because of this variety of hypotheses the location of many fragments remains unspecified (GR 135, 494, 399, 401, 403, 53, 402, 481, 479, 170, 498, 172).

19. Equally problematic is the interpretation of fragments in high relief, covered with thick plaster, which should be located inside a closed space or on walls of colonnaded porticoes (cf. GR 151, 287, 334).
20. In the light of interpretative dilemmas, promising results might be obtained from an architectural analysis of screen GR 308, whose possible exclusion from the façade of the Khnum temple would be a significant indication supporting the hypothesis of the existence of other buildings.
21. The lack of a precise location for most fragments coming from walls also concerns the majority of cornice fragments. The parameters and style of the cornices that crowned the walls of the 'Temple-House' forming part of Trajan's decoration are known (cf. GR 206, 211, 214, 204).¹² It is presumed that certain fragments representative of Ptolemaic decoration come from the refurbished façade of the pronaos (GR 208, 207). Following the hypothesis that locates Roman decoration on the side walls of the pronaos one may suggest that a number of other fragments should be associated with the same walls (GR 152, 153, 205, 57, 203, 204, 294).

Conclusions: The direction of further research seems to depend on the confirmation or refutation of the connection between column fragments coming from the pronaos of the Khnum temple (described in Points 10-12) and the screen GR 308 (cf. Point 17). The rejection of the fragments as coming from the pronaos would justify a search for an additional building.

E. Laskowska-Kusztal

V. Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom Seal Impressions

Work on the Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom seal impressions was resumed during February 2007. It focussed on those impressions among both the published and unpublished material that bear royal names since these are – among the seal impressions – the principal means to provide dating evidence for other groups of objects. One caveat to this is that some of the seal impressions seem to be intrusive objects in their respective find spots.¹³ Table 1 gives an overview of the royal names that are thus far attested and the context in which they occurred.

Only a fragmentary part is preserved of most of the seals so that a complete reconstruction will be impossible for the majority. In a few cases, some signs are preserved next to the royal names, belonging to the titles of officials such as scribes and assistants of scribes (Fig. 6.3), overseers of Elephantine (Fig. 6.1)¹⁴ and soldiers (Fig. 6.2). Another seal shows several wild animals next to Djedkara's [?] serekh (Fig. 6.4).

¹² Cf. complex VII, Laskowska-Kusztal, *Elephantine XV*, pp.61-66).

¹³ Martin Bommas, Untersuchungen im Bereich der Verbindungstreppe zwischen den Tempeln des Chnum und der Satet, in: Kaiser et al., Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine - 23./24. Bericht, in: *MDAIK* 53, 1997, p. 140.

¹⁴ Cf. E.-M. Engel, Seal Impressions of the Old Kingdom, in: D. Raue et al., Report on the 35th season of excavation and restoration on the island of Elephantine, in: *ASAE* (in press), p. 15, Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.1: Seal from 24305a; reign of Userkaf

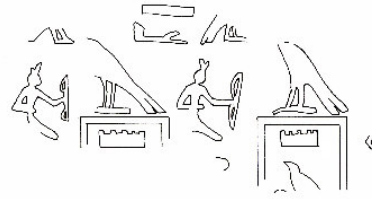


Fig. 6.2: Seal from 34101 N/e-1; reign of Menkauhor



Fig. 6.3: Seal from 33114 Y/g-1; reign of Djedkara

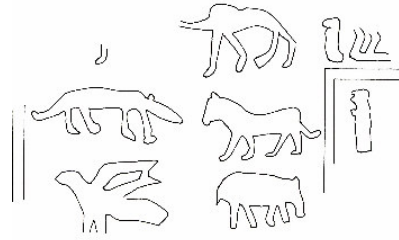


Fig. 6.4: Seal from 16427c; reign of Djedkara?



Fig. 6.5: Seal from 26108 Y/e-6, 26108 Y/e-7, 26108 Y/e-8, 27102 B/d-10, 28101 F/b-2, 29103 N/e-1, 29103 N/f-1; reign of Pepi I.

Fig. 6: seal impressions of the Old Kingdom

The royal seals were applied to stoppers of vessels (Type G3N¹⁵), to cords or nets (Type S2), to doors or wooden boxes (Type T1), and to papyrus scrolls (Type P1, P2). The group of seal impressions with royal names is not homogeneous insofar as some of the seals were probably in use on the island itself (this can be assumed at least for those bearing the title 'overseer of Elephantine'), while others were probably attached to objects which were sent from the residence (as was probably the case with Fig. 6.3, which was applied to a papyrus sealing).

E.-M. Engel

¹⁵ Eva-Maria Engel/Vera Müller, Verschlüsse der Frühzeit: Erstellung einer Typologie, in: *GM* 178, 2000, pp. 31-44.

	King	Exc.-No.	Publication
Dyn. 2	Peribsen	14963a	Cat. ¹⁶ 079; Dreyer, in: <i>MDAIK</i> 43, 1987, S. 107f., Abb. 13a, Taf. 15a
		20910s	Cat. 203
	Sekhemib/ Peribsen/Teti	17304dd	Cat. 490
Dyn. 3	Netjerichet	14313a	Cat. 306
		16350ee	Cat. 452
		16350ee	Cat. 453
		21335b	Cat. 657
		24302a	
		14305b	Cat. 293; Dreyer, in: <i>MDAIK</i> 43, 198, S. 108f., Abb. 13b, Taf. 15b
		14305b	Cat. 294; Dreyer, in: <i>MDAIK</i> 43, 1987, S. 108f., Abb. 13b, Taf. 15b
		14313a	Cat. 304; Dreyer, in: <i>MDAIK</i> 43, 1987, S. 108f., Abb. 13b, Taf. 15b
		14313a	Cat. 305; Dreyer, in: <i>MDAIK</i> 43, 1987, S. 108f., Abb. 13b, Taf. 15b
	Sekhemkhet	20301kk3	Cat. 562
		21329c	Cat. 650
		21335b2	Cat. 662
			Bommas, in: <i>MDAIK</i> 53, 1997, S. 142, Abb. 12
	Chaba	14300l	Cat. 280; Dreyer, in: <i>MDAIK</i> 43, 1987, S. 108, Abb. 13b, Taf. 15b
		16355d	Cat. 469
		21311e	Cat. 578
		21329c	Cat. 651
		32101 K/e-1	
	Sanakht	21316b	Cat. 587
			Seidlmayer, in: <i>MDAIK</i> 38, 1982, S. 304, Abb. 15, Taf. 65b
	Dyn. 4	Seneferu	30103 L/f-1
30103 L/h-19			35 th season, 2006, p. 15, Fig. 5
30103 L/h-20			
30103 L/h-21			35 th season, 2006, p. 15, Fig. 5
30103 L/h-6			
30103 L/k-11			
30103 L/k-9			35 th season, 2006, p. 15, Fig. 5
32101 B/a-7			
32108 B/q-2			35 th season, 2006, p. 15, Fig. 5
33108 A/h-4			
Menkaura		24303i	
		36901V/b-1	
Dyn. 5		Userkaf	24305a (Fig. 6.1)
	Userkaf?	15905a	Cat. 036
	Neferirkara	21301a2	Cat. 572
	Niuserra	20301bb	Cat. 548
	Niuserra/Unas/ Teti/Pepi I.?	30105 S/a-1	
	Menkauhor	34101 N/e-1 (Fig. 6.2)	
	Menkauhor?	34103 H/c-1	

¹⁶ Catalogue numbers are those of Jean-Pierre Pätznick, *Die Siegelabrollungen und Rollsiegel der Stadt Elephantine im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr. Spurensicherung eines archäologischen Artefaktes*, *BAR International Series* 1339, Oxford 2005.

Djedkara	20301 mm3	Cat. 565	
	32114 Y/g-1 (Fig. 6.3)	The German Archaeological Institute in Kairo 1907 – 2007, Meeting the Past – A 100 Years in Egypt, Catalogue of the Special Exhibition in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo	
	33109 J/j-3		
	33111 H/e-2		
	33111 Hg-1		
	36100		
	36901 V/d-8		
	Djedkara?	16427c (Fig. 6.4)	
Unas	33109 J/k-7		
	33109 V/p-2		
Dyn. 6	Pepi I.	26108 Y/e-6 (Fig. 6.5)	Type ¹⁷ 400
		26108 Y/e-7 (Fig. 6.5)	Type 401
		26108 Y/e-8 (Fig. 6.5)	Type 400
		27102 B/d-10 (Fig. 6.5)	Type 400
		28101 F/b-2 (Fig. 6.5)	Type 408
		29103 N/e-1 (Fig. 6.5)	
	29103 N/f-1 (Fig. 6.5)		
	Pepi?	27102 B/c-15	Type 402
Merienra	21332a	Cat. 665	

Table 1: Kings attested so far on cylinder seal impressions

VI. Pottery of the New Kingdom (Fig. 7-10; Pl. III)

The 36th season of work on the New Kingdom pottery from Elephantine focussed on material excavated in 2004-2006 from area B2. Material from all New Kingdom strata was recorded (*Bauschicht* 10 to 7). The principal aim of the work was to enlarge the corpus of shapes and wares, especially for the Ramesside levels (*Bauschichten* 8 and 7).¹⁸ Within the latter, the focus was on decorated wares – painted marl and Nile clay as well as mixed clay vessels. Until recently there was only scarce evidence for *blue painted* and *black hatched ware* at Elephantine,¹⁹ but the latest excavations have changed this picture.

The date of pottery from level 10 (Bauschicht 10): The bulk of material from the New Kingdom comes from this level,²⁰ which can be subdivided into at least two phases. Large amounts of sherds from a debris-layer

¹⁷ Type numbers in Table 1 refer to: A. Dorn, *Die Funde aus dem älteren Heqaiheiligtum auf Elephantine*, unveröffentlichte Lizensiatsarbeit, Basel 2000; Andreas Dorn.

¹⁸ For preliminary comments on wares and shapes see J. Budka, in: G. Dreyer et al., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine – 31./32. Bericht*, *MDAIK* 61, 2005, pp. 90–116.

¹⁹ See D. A. Aston, *Elephantine XIX, Pottery from the Late New Kingdom to the Early Ptolemaic Period*, AV 95, Mainz am Rhein 1999, nos. 26–28, 394 and 1365 (blue painted) and nos. 184–185 (black hatched).

²⁰ See A. Seiler, in: W. Kaiser et al., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine – 25./26./27. Bericht*, *MDAIK* 55, 1999, pp. 204–224.

covering the area of house 99²¹ attest that *Bauschicht* 10 includes part of the reign of Thutmose III as well,²² thus dating from the very early New Kingdom.²³ According to this evidence, intense building activity in the area of the temple of Khnum might have taken place during the sole reign of this king and not during the joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmosis III.²⁴

Pottery from level 9 (Bauschicht 9): Both the late phase of *Bauschicht* 10 and the early phase of *Bauschicht* 9 are characterized by material dating to Thutmose III (cf. fig. 7, eg. small plates with red rim bands and ‘splash decoration’ on the interior,²⁵ Marl D amphorae,²⁶ painted squat carinated jars, flower pots etc.).

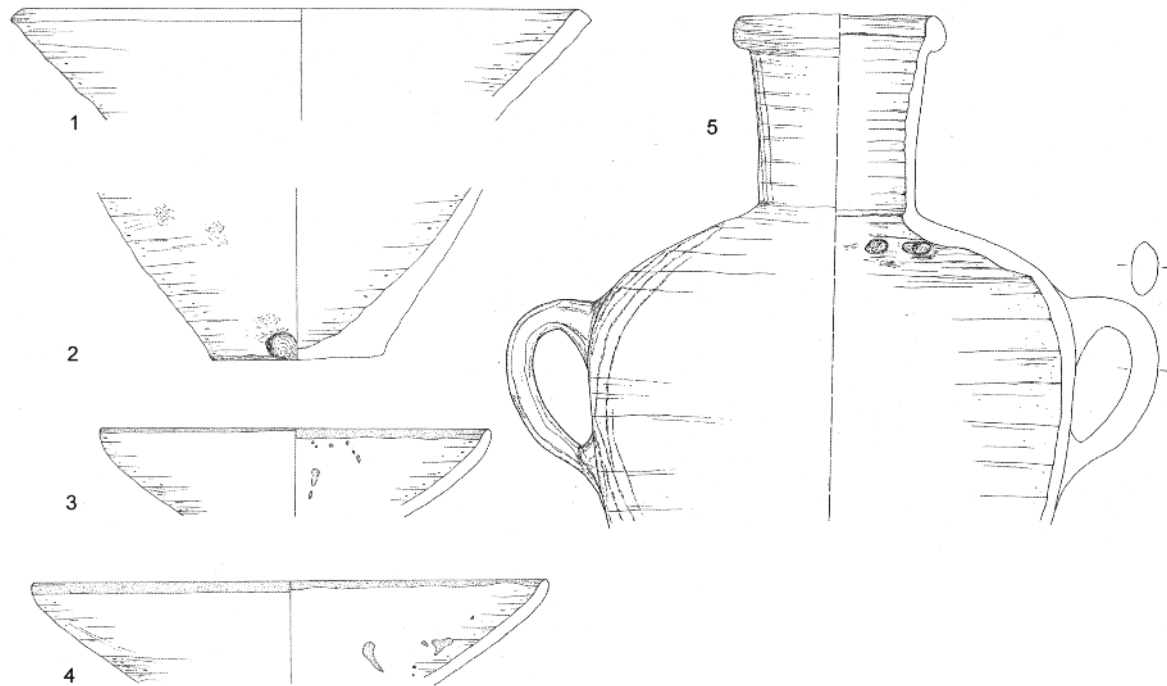


fig. 7: Pottery dating from the reign of Thutmose III, late *Bauschicht* 10 and 9: 1. Sherd of rim of flowerpot, Nile B2, Exc.No. 36604D/g-045; 2. Base of flowerpot, Nile B2, Exc.No. 36604D/g-38; 3. Sherd of rim of dish,

²¹ Cf. C. von Pilgrim, *Elephantine XVIII, Untersuchungen in der Stadt des Mittleren Reiches und der Zweiten Zwischenzeit*, AV 91, Mainz 1996, p. 165.

²² This corresponds to the dates that small finds with royal names suggest for this stratum: a scarab with the name of Thutmose III from *Bauschicht* 10, cf. C. von Pilgrim, *Elephantine XVIII*, p. 318, fig. 136d (Exc.-No. 17610X-6); cf. as evidence for *Bauschicht* 9 one with the name of Thutmose IV; *ibid*, fig. 136a (Exc.-No. 17603D-2).

²³ Cf. C. von Pilgrim, *Elephantine XVIII*, p. 15 („frühe 18. Dyn. (Vorarnazeit)“); J. Budka, in: 31./32. Bericht, *MDAIK* 61, 2005, pp. 95–99.

²⁴ For the dates of the joint (1473-1458 BC) and the sole reign (1458-1425 BC) cf. lately C. Roehrig (ed.), *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, New York 2005, 6.

²⁵ Cf. D. A. Aston, Making a Splash. Ceramic Decoration in the reigns of Thutmose III and Amenophis II, in: E. Czerny et al. (eds.), *Timelines. Studies in honour of Manfred Bietak*, OLA 149.1, 2006, pp. 65–74.

²⁶ Cf. P. Rose, Ceramics from New Kingdom tombs: recording and beyond, in: N. Strudwick/ J. H. Taylor (eds.), *The Theban Necropolis, Past, Present and Future*, London, 2004 for the as yet earliest evidence of this fabric group from Thebes (amphorae from TT 99 with stamps of Thutmose III).

Nile B2, Exc.No. 36602T/c-06; 4: Sherd of rim of dish, Nile B2, Exc.No 36602T/c-07; 5. Amphora, Marl D, Exc.-No. 36602T/c-25.

Evidence for *Bauschicht* 9 has in general, until now, been scarce in terms of architectural remains in the domestic quarters of Elephantine and thus the pottery material is quite limited. The pottery of this stratum known so far has good parallels in Malqata and Amarna and probably covers the second half of the 18th Dynasty, starting with the last decades of the reign of Thutmose III.²⁷ Blue-painted vessels with floral and figural decoration are associated with this period (see below and figs. 10.5 and 4.6).

Pottery from level 8 (Bauschicht 8): This level comprises more or less the reign of Ramesses II, although it is difficult to differentiate between material from the very early 19th Dynasty and that from the latest 18th Dynasty solely from a ceramic standpoint²⁸. Blue-painted sherds of *Bauschicht* 8 are mostly decorated with linear designs (cf. figs. 10.2-4). There is a notable increase in marl clay decorated wares. Some pilgrim flasks, both decorated and unpainted, were found in contexts of *Bauschicht* 8²⁹.

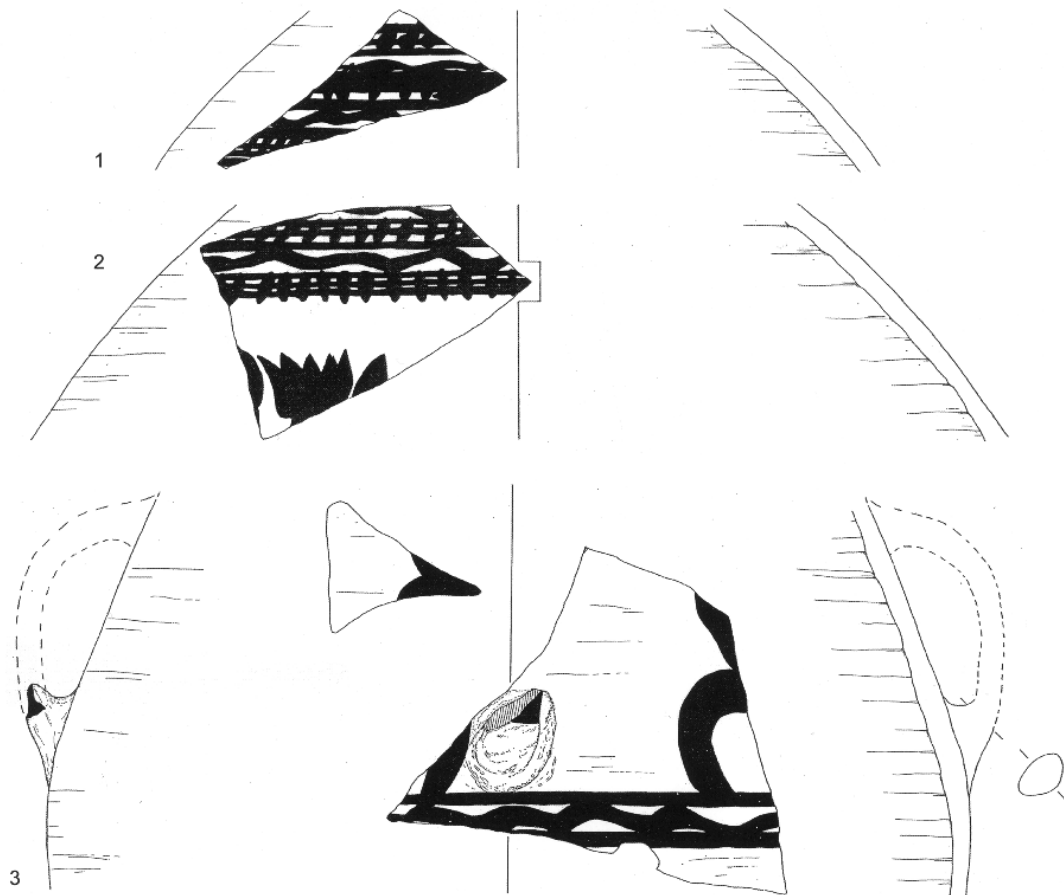


fig. 8: Painted Marl Clay vessels from Bauschicht 8: 1. Marl A4, Exc.No. 36602M/c-03, 2. Marl A4, Exc.No. 36602M/c-02; 3. Marl A4, Exc.No. 36602M/c-02.

²⁷ Cf. J. Budka, in: 31./32. Bericht, *MDAIK* 61, 2005, pp. 99–108.

For the first time, pieces of large painted amphorae with linear decoration in combination with floral motifs were recorded at Elephantine (fig. 8). This otherwise rare ware, which resembles in its design blue painted vessels, finds its best parallels in Amarna³⁰. The vessels from Elephantine are probably imports from the Theban region. Some of these sherds combine linear decoration, which is comparable to the well known *black hatched ware*,³¹ with floral motifs as attested on 18th Dynasty *blue painted ware* (fig. 8.2). Since they are earlier than *black hatched ware* of the 20th Dynasty but later than the floral decorated *blue painted* ones, future research will focus on the question of whether they may link these two painted wares in some respect.

Pottery from level 7 (Bauschicht 7): The material of *Bauschicht 7* seems to date mainly to the 20th Dynasty (fig. 9). The absolute date of the end of this layer still needs to be clarified. *Black hatched ware* with its characteristic design pattern is quite frequently attested and pilgrim flasks, both painted and unpainted, occur in small numbers. Within the corpus of fabrics, an increase in mixed clay fabrics is notable³². The repertoire of shapes of these fabrics is quite limited and mostly restricted to bottles of various sizes and small jugs.

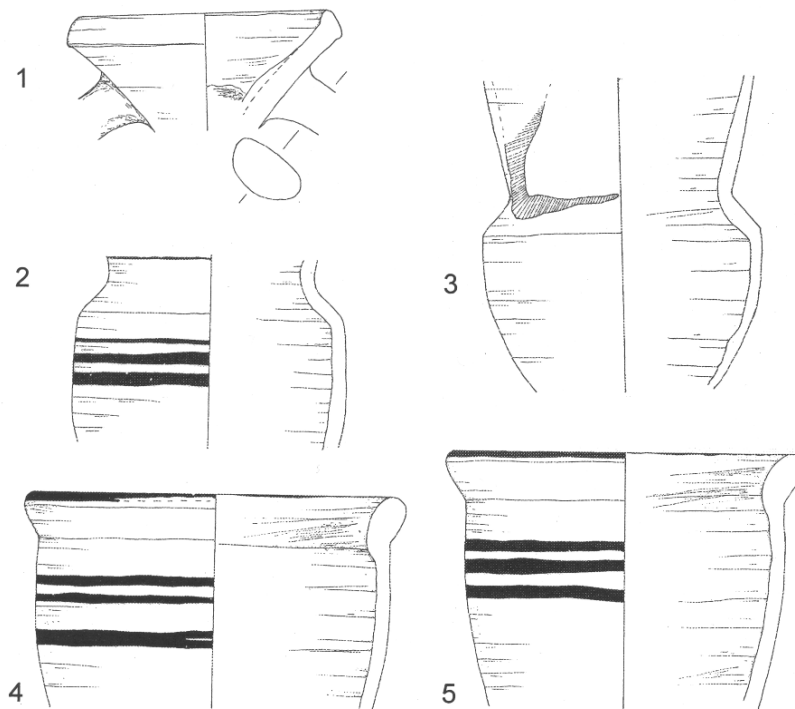


fig. 9: Pottery from Bauschicht 7: 1. Sherd of rim pilgrim flask, Marl A4/2, Exc.No. 35603A/d-01; 2. Jug, Marl A4, Exc.No. 35603S/c-04; 3. Jug, Marl A2/4, Exc.No. 35602S/d-01; 4 – 5. Sherd of rim of black hatched amphora, Marl A4, Exc.No. 36602A/e-03 and -02.

²⁸ Cf. D. A. Aston, The Pottery from H/VI Süd Strata a and b: Preliminary Report, *Egypt & Levant* 11, 2002, p. 177.

²⁹ More common in Late Ramesside and Lybian contexts, see e.g. D. A. Aston, *Elephantine* XIX, nos. 514, 612, 622 and 796.

³⁰ T.E. Peet/L.C. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten* I, EES Excavation Memoir 38, London 1923, pl. 44.1; cf. also J. D. Bourriau, in: *Egypt's Golden Age*, pp. 81–82, nr. 60 (Toronto 910.2.62) with reference to a piece from Gurob.

³¹ Cf. D. A. Aston, Two Decorative Styles of the Twentieth Dynasty, in: *CCÉ* 3, 1992, pp. 74–77.

Date, function and use of blue painted pottery at Elephantine: In the 36th season 46 pieces of blue painted pottery, both from stratified contexts and from debris and surface, were studied. These provide new insights into the date, function and use of this ware-group on the island.³³ Blue painted pottery which only began to appear in quantity during the reign of Amenhotep III is attested in the layers *Bauschichten* 9, 8 and 7, thus dating to the mid-18th Dynasty until the late-Ramesside period. The date of most of the surface finds can be estimated according to their decorative scheme. The majority show linear patterns and lines and can consequently be dated to the Ramesside period (*Bauschicht* 8)³⁴. The rather limited variety of forms within the ware-group is at least partly due to the general randomness of the ware at the site. Mostly restricted forms, like amphorae, bottles, various types of jars (primarily funnel-necked) and only a few plates and lids were found.

Given the small number of pieces of blue painted pottery found at Elephantine, one of the central questions concerning the ware-group is its function. Since there are some extraordinary pieces of this type and considering the rareness of even simple pieces, it is safe to assume that *blue painted ware* does not belong to general household wares as is attested at Amarna or Deir el-Medina.³⁵ The blue painted pots seem, rather, to be connected with the temple cult as is well proven at other sites, for example at Abydos.³⁶

This holds especially true for one large vessel which was studied in 2006. The so called ‘victory vase’ (Exc.-No. 16101G-08, pl. III), of which only the upper part (the mouth up to the shoulder) is preserved, was not a simple container, but had an ornamental value. The vessel probably stood once in a niche since its decoration implies a front and back side. An appliqué was attached to its front side, but is unfortunately lost today. Based on several parallels the appliqué can be reconstructed as the head of an ibex.³⁷ The most striking detail about the amphora, which is also the reason why it is dubbed the ‘victory vase’ are two pieces of applied decoration in the shape of two-dimensional figures of captives. These find no parallels among pottery vessels, but are frequently part of the composition of metal vessels as depicted in both temple and tomb decoration³⁸. These parallels

³² Cf. D. A. Aston, *Elephantine* XIX, p. 6 (Mixed clay fabric I); J. Budka, in: 31./32. Bericht, *MDAIK* 61, 2005, p. 95 (III-b-2).

³³ See in detail J. Budka, in: D. Raue et al., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine – 35./36. Bericht*, *MDAIK* 64, 2008, forthcoming.

³⁴ Cf. D. A. Aston, *Die Keramik des Grabungsplatzes Q I. Teil 1*, Corpus of Fabrics, Wares and Shapes, *Forschungen in der Ramses-Stadt. Die Grabungen des Pelizaeus-Museums Hildesheim in Qantir-Pi-Ramesse*, Bd. 1, Mainz am Rhein 1998, p. 78 with n. 231.

³⁵ Blue painted sherds cover only 0.3 % of the diagnostics from *Bauschicht* 9; 1 % from *Bauschicht* 8; cf. Malqata with 6.4 % of diagnostics (C. A. Hope, *Pottery of the Egyptian New Kingdom*, 12) and Amarna with “only a few percent”, C. A. Hope, *Blue Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus*, in: *CCÉ* 2, 1991, p. 17.

³⁶ See J. Budka, *The Oriental Institute Ahmose and Tetisheri Project at Abydos 2002-2004: The New Kingdom Pottery*, *Egypt & Levant* 16, 2006, pp. 105–108.

³⁷ This has major connotations since vessels with that type of appliqué were formerly primarily known from Amarna and Malqata (C.A. Hope, *Pottery of the Egyptian New Kingdom – Three Studies*, 97) and thought to derive “from royal workshops”, see J. Bourriau, *Umm el-Ga’ab, Pottery from the Nile Valley before the Arab Conquest*, Cambridge 1981, 39. Lately, however, gazelle heads as vessel appliqué were not only recovered at Qantir, see D. A. Aston, *Qantir* I, p. 400, no. 1418 but also at Abydos, J. Budka, *Egypt & Levant* 16, 2006, p. 108, fig. 17.

³⁸ E.g. E. Prisse d’Avennes, *Atlas de l’Art Égyptien*, Cairo 1991, pls. no. II. 83 and 96; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur Altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* II, pls. 25c, 37, 38A.3, 44.4, 48 = 49.11, 52, B6 1.9, 59.10; P. Montet, *Les*

suggest that the two captive figures were formerly applied to the lip of the conical foot of the Elephantine amphora³⁹. Since Exc.-No. 16101G-08 shows additional characteristics of imitating non-ceramic material (fluting of the neck, shape of the handles), the piece may be seen as the embodiment of a metal vessel in clay. It was probably brought from Thebes by a high official, maybe even by the viceroy of Kush himself, and donated to the temple during the late-18th or early-19th Dynasty⁴⁰. Interestingly, two more pieces of similar vessels with fluted necks were found, thus forming a small assemblage of ornamental blue painted amphorae (cf. figs. 10.1 and 10.7). Among other blue painted vessels with applied decoration from Elephantine there is a notable fragment with a modelled face of the goddess Hathor⁴¹ (fig. 10.6).

In sum, although the study of blue painted pottery from Elephantine has only begun, it is evident that this corpus of pottery has the potential to provide important information regarding the use and function of this particular ware. At Elephantine, it has certainly neither the character of household ware nor of palace ware,⁴² but large votive vessels like the ‘victory vase’ bear a cultic connotation and suggest private donations in the form of painted pottery vessels to the local temples, imitating metal vessels that are frequently depicted on temple walls as royal gifts to the gods.

Most of the blue painted pottery from Elephantine can be dated to the reigns of Amenhotep III / late-18th Dynasty and to the 19th Dynasty (more or less to the reign of Ramesses II). These two periods are also, in very similar ways, heydays for other categories of monuments on the island: rock inscriptions⁴³ and small barque shrines.⁴⁴ The latter are both connected with festival processions and cultic activities. Consequently, a collective

reliques de l'art syrien dans l'Égypte du Nouvel Empire, Publications de la faculté des lettres de l'université de Strasbourg, Paris 1937, figs. 58 and 59 and *LD III*, pl. 118 (TT 40 of Viceroy Huy).

³⁹ For more details see J. Budka, in: D. Raue et al., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine – 35/36. Bericht*, *MDAIK* 64, 2008, forthcoming.

⁴⁰ Cf. depictions of dedications of metal vessels by high officials in tombs and temple scenes; e.g. Amenemopet in the temple of Beit el-Wali (votive vessel with attached figures of Nubians, similar to the figures from Elephantine), see H. Schäfer, *Altägyptische Prunkgefäße mit aufgesetzten Randverzierungen. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Goldschmiedekunst, Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ägypten* 4, Hildesheim 1964 (reprint Leipzig 1903), p. 23 with note 2 (*LD III*, pl. 176e); possible candidates who might have dedicated the ‘victory vase’ may be found among the officials that are attested around Elephantine Island by means of the rock inscriptions; see J. Budka, in: D. Raue et al., *Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine – 35/36. Bericht*, *MDAIK* 64, 2008, forthcoming.

⁴¹ Exc.-No. 5301-01; for parallels see J. Bourriau, *Umm el-Ga'ab. Pottery from the Nile Valley before the Arab Conquest*, pp. 38–39, nos. 55–56; J. Bourriau, *Pottery Figure Vases of the New Kingdom*, *CCÉ* 1, 1987, pl. 27.4; C. A. Hope, *CCÉ* 2, 1991, fig. 5h, pl. 5b

⁴² This term was suggested while assuming a restricted production in residential workshops at Memphis and Thebes, see C. A. Hope, *Pottery of the Egyptian New Kingdom – Three Studies*, p. 16 and 58 (Malqata and Amarna).

⁴³ Cf. A. J. Peden, *The Graffiti of Pharaonic Egypt. Scope and Roles of Informal Writings (c. 3100-332 B.C.)*, *Probleme der Ägyptologie* 17, Leiden/Boston/Köln 2001, p. 84 and 112; S. J. Seidlmayer, *New Rock Inscriptions on Elephantine Island*, in: Z. Hawass (ed.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century, Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists Cairo 2000*, Vol. 1, Cairo 2003, pp. 443–445.

⁴⁴ The so called *temple du sud*, Amenhotep III. (*Description I*, pls. 31, pp. 34–38; M. F. Laming-Macadam, *Gleanings from the Bankes MSS.*, *JEA* 32, 1946, p. 59, pl. 7) and *temple du nord*, Ramesses II. (*Description I*, pls. 31, 38; L. Borchardt, *Besprechung von Porter-Moss, A Topographical Bibliography*, *OLZ* 41, 1938, p. 156).

term implying the functional use of blue painted pottery on Elephantine might be *festival* pottery than *palace* pottery which is far too limited a term for the attested variability of use of this distinctive ware.

J. Budka

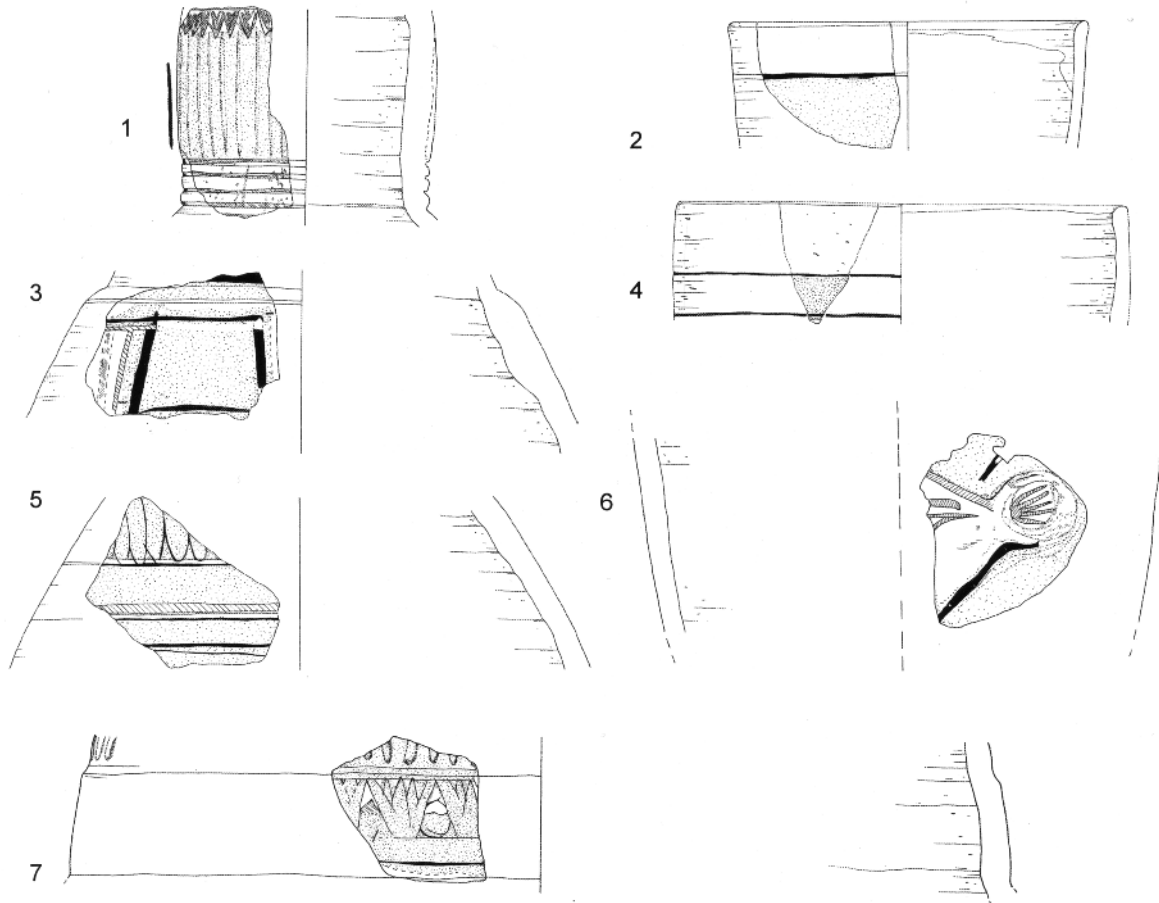


fig. 10: selected blue painted sherds: 1. Amphora, Nile B2, Exc.-No. 18500-01; 2. Sherd of rim of funnel-necked jar, Nile B2, Exc. No. 35601Z/a-01; 3. Jar, Nile B2, Exc.-No. 36602S/c-09; 4. Sherd of rim of funnel-necked jar, Nile D2, Exc. No. 36603R/c-03; 5. Funnel-necked jar, Nile B2, Exc. No. 26000-08; 6. Hathor vessel, Nile B2, Exc. No. 5301-01; 7. Funnel-necked jar, Nile B2, Exc. No. 35603M/d-02.

VII. Textiles of the 1st Millennium AD

The third study mission on Roman, Byzantine and Early Islamic textiles took place from the 17th to the 31st of January 2007. The purpose of this mission was to complete the study of the fragments found during the excavations by Dr. F. Arnold in the residential area north-west of the Khnum's temple, and those found during previous excavations in the same area. 160 fragments were examined and 111 digital photos taken.

These fragments are from the excavations of the 26th, 27th, 29th and 30th seasons.

Wool is again the prevailing fibre (138 fragments); we found only 18 pieces of linen, 2 of goat hair and 2 of palm fibre (used only for cords). The weaving techniques are similar to those found during the second mission:

125 tabbies (including 16 with bands, 12 check patterned and 2 with stripes); 14 tapestries; 2 basket weaves; 3 half basket weaves (2 of them with weft loops); 4 twills; 2 taquetés (compound tabby).

36 fragments were photographed for the forthcoming publication; but most of the peculiar techniques will be explained by drawings. With the help of Mrs Sandrine Pagès, most of the 36 fragments were carefully rinsed and flattened for the photography.

We also studied 22 fragments from trench 24801 recently published by Dr. M Rodziewicz.⁴⁵ Of these, the most interesting is a very small tuft of unspun cotton.

The Elephantine textile database improved considerably since its first version in 2003. To this must be added a new field because of a recent publication on the classification of wool tabbies.⁴⁶ The problem is that two wool tabbies with exactly the same number of threads per centimetre can have a completely different aspect. This depends on how fibres are spun, how thick they are, and how close they are to each other. Since most of the Elephantine textiles are wool tabbies, it seems important to introduce this new classification. After three study missions on site, we have now a general idea of the whole situation. The database and stratigraphical dating will, we hope, confirm this. Results should then be compared with those obtaining at other similar sites that have been studied and published. The fact, for example, that only a few pieces in cotton have been found at Elephantine seems to indicate that the situation here was completely different from that at Qasr Ibrim (320 km south of Aswan). The fact that there are some very fine twills (although small in number) similar to those found at Mons Claudianus, seems to confirm that they ‘arrived’ with the Roman army. But does the fact that some twills are very coarse indicate a local production? And what does ‘local production’ mean since we do not have any evidence of weaving on the island (weaving tools seem to be absent for the Roman and Byzantine period)?⁴⁷

The upper strata are dated to the 9th century, so did Islam influence the textiles of the island? And the answer seems to be negative for the moment; Elephantine was probably already completely in decline by this date.

R. Cortopassi

VIII. Late Roman Pottery from the Khnum Temple Precinct on Elephantine Island (fig. 11-13)

Introduction: After a short introductory campaign in spring 2006, a first season of documentation work on the late Roman pottery from the residential areas adjoining the disused Khnum temple precinct was carried out from January 26th to 26th of March 2007 in order to increase knowledge and understanding not only of the pottery itself but also of the late antique buildings and their occupants.

⁴⁵ M.D. Rodziewicz, *Elephantine XXX. Early Roman Industries on Elephantine*, AV 107, Mainz 2005.

⁴⁶ L. Hammarlung, Handicraft Knowledge Applied to Archaeological Textiles, *The Nordic Textile Journal*, 2005, pp. 87-119.

⁴⁷ Dr. Rodziewicz, says in the chapter on stone object, that “spindle whorls were also uncovered” (*op. cit.* p. 33), but none is published in the catalogue, and the only piece called “spindle whorl” is presented on a photo without dimensions and again it is not in the catalogue. We think it is not sure that it is really a spindle whorl.

The main aim of the pending research thus was the establishment of a relative chronology for the Roman pottery from the site of the late antique building M12A. This is based on stratigraphic research from Dr. F. Arnold's excavations of the buildings adjoining the Khnum Temple precinct.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, it is impossible to cover all of this material completely, as primary archaeological research is still in progress.

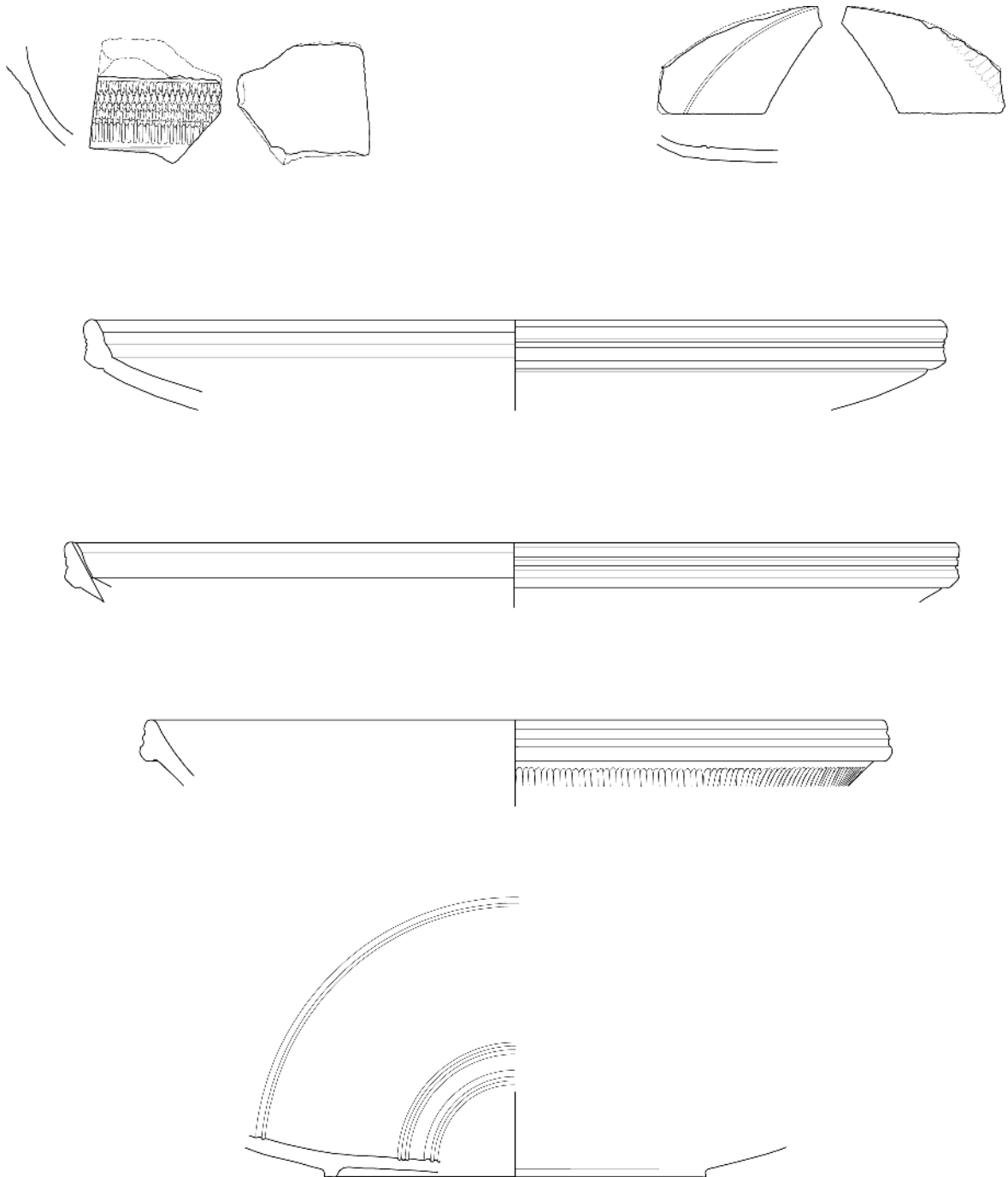


Fig. 11: Central tunisian ARS forms Hayes 82 and 84 in C5 fabric, stamped with Chi-Rho.

⁴⁸ F. Arnold, *Elephantine XXII. Die Nachnutzung des Chnumtemepelbezirks*, Mainz 2003.

Short historical summary: With the triumph of Christianity in the late fourth and early fifth century, the end of the Khnum cult meant the disuse and, later on, destruction of the temple precinct while scattered occupation surrounding the now disused area was erected simultaneously or soon after.⁴⁹ This development provides archaeologists with an array of late antique buildings being occupied from the fifth up until the ninth/tenth century respectively. During this period, occupation of the houses led to the accumulation of major pottery deposits of different quantities and quality, thus enabling us not only to distinguish the varying usage of areas such as working units or living quarters, but at the same time to refine the chronology.

Current Research: The range of mostly locally produced so-called Egyptian Red Slip Wares A and B (including table-wares, cooking and domestic wares such as pots, jugs, flagons and amphorae, as well as other wares made of Nile silt) have already been studied by R. Gempeler in the early 1990s⁵⁰. On the basis of these investigations, Gempeler was able to establish a typology of pottery types from Elephantine Island which, unfortunately, is based purely on the criteria of size and shape rather than any formal similarities.⁵¹

The current study therefore represents an attempt to put the finds from current excavations into the context of evidence that has been published to date.⁵² Thus I concentrated on the documentation of as large a number of pottery vessels as possible, while at the same time developing a clearer framework for probable associations of vessel types. This was particularly important for Egyptian Red Slip Ware A (hereafter ERS A), which was at least partially produced on the island itself,⁵³ and which has been discovered in huge quantities. This pinkish or orange-red ware was the finest of the Egyptian wares and is predominant at late Roman sites in Upper and Lower Egypt.⁵⁴ Most of the vessels seem to be an imitation of other late-Roman fine wares, especially of late-Roman ARS forms in C⁵, D¹ and D² fabric from central and northern Tunisia respectively, including attempting to copy their stamped decoration.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, the size, dating range and range of forms of each of the known potteries producing ERS A is as yet unknown and is in need of further research. Therefore the material from selected late-antique areas on Elephantine island will only further our knowledge and add to the as yet rather confusing, typological framework presented by Gempeler.

Such a framework will thus lead to the establishment of a relative chronology. It is of great importance to ensure a securely established stratigraphy based on fixed points such as closed coin-dated pottery deposits including imported late Roman fine wares from the north African provinces of *Africa Proconsularis* and *Byzacena* as well as the Near Eastern Roman provinces⁵⁶. Unfortunately, numismatic evidence is thin. Most of

⁴⁹ Ibid., *Elephantine XXII*, pp. 18-21; P., *Elephantine II. Kirche und spätantike Hausanlagen im Chnumtempelhof*, Mainz 1980, pp. 27-29.

⁵⁰ R.D., *Elephantine X. Die Keramik römischer und früh-arabischer Zeit*, Mainz 1992.

⁵¹ Ibid., *Elephantine X*, pp. 17-18.

⁵² Cf. ibid., *Elephantine X*; D.M. Bailey, *Excavations at El-Ashmunein V. Pottery, Lamps and glass of the Late Roman and early Arab periods*, London 1998; M. RODZIEWICZ, *Alexandria I. La Céramique romaine tardive d'Alexandrie*, Warsaw 1976; J. Hayes, *Late Roman Pottery*, London 1972, pp. 387-401.

⁵³ Gempeler, *Elephantine X*, pp. 56-57; P. Ballet/F. Mahmoud/M. Vichy/M. Picon, *Artisanat dans l'Égypte Romaine tardive et Byzantine. Prospections d'ateliers de potiers de Minia à Assuan*, in: *CCE* 2, 1991, pp. 129-143.

⁵⁴ J. Hayes, *Supplement to Late Roman Pottery*, London 1980, p. 531; Bailey, *El-Ashmunein*, pp. 8.

⁵⁵ Hayes, *LRP*, pp. 387-394.

⁵⁶ For imported fine wares cf. Hayes, *LRP*; M. Mackensen, *Die spätantiken Sigillata- und Lampentöpfereien von El Mahrine (Nordtunesien). Studien zur nordafrikanischen Feinkeramik des 4.-7. Jahrhunderts*, Munich 1993; M. Mackensen/G.

the coins can be attributed to the third and fourth century, whereas numismatic evidence after 400 AD is rather lacking on Elephantine⁵⁷ Byzantine coin circulation can best be described as being rather sparse for this particular area of the Thebaid (Upper Egypt).

Thus, the excavations of remains of the living quarters and small forecourt of house M12A provided a welcome exception to the rule by delivering Byzantine coinage of Leo I (457-474) from underneath (or within⁵⁸) the earliest floor levels. Sherds of imported African Red Slip ware (hereafter ARS) forms Hayes 82 and 84 stamped with Chi-Rho from Central Tunisia in C⁵ fabric additionally confirm a date for construction in the second half of the fifth century (fig. 11).⁵⁹ With the walls very possibly having been built in the late fifth or early sixth century,⁶⁰ this would give us a *terminus post quem* of AD 491 for the construction of the building and thus a chronological fixed point for the stratified pottery. ERS A sherds from this layer include dishes of Gempeler form T 106a, T210 a (resembling ARS form Hayes 59), T211 a (imitating ARS form Hayes 67), T218a (imitating ARS Hayes form 82) and T218b (imitating ARS Hayes form 84). Furthermore, bowls or deep dishes of Gempeler form T 325b and beakers Gempeler form T608 a/b were also found (fig. 12 and 13).

Working through the stratified layers from the oldest to the latest material, a substantial change in vessel types could be observed, which hints towards a sequence of forms developing through a time span of probably 250 years. The material represents a chronological frame dating roughly from the late fourth or early fifth to the seventh century, with the main emphasis on vessels of the fifth and sixth century. Whereas the older deposits are dominated by Gempeler forms T106, T 210 and T211, stratified material from more recent deposits mainly contained the Gempeler forms T218, T219 and T 220. Subsequently, the latest deposits that were found in M12 included vast amounts of Gempeler forms T 230, T231 and T348/349 of a much improved quality compared to the older forms mentioned above, which were missing completely.

This can only be summarised as a first rough outline of a chronological sequence. From this, however, a typological development, however, could be established and thus future work on even more deposits will only clarify and deepen this knowledge.

M. Weber

Schneider, *Production centres of African red slip ware (3rd-7th c.) in northern and central Tunisia: archaeological provenance and reference groups based on chemical analysis*, in: *JRA* 15, 2002, pp. 121-158 (in the following cited as Mackensen/Schneider, *Production centres*); M. Bonifay, *Etudes sur la céramique romaine tardive d'Afrique*, BAR-IS 1301, Oxford 2004.

⁵⁷ The coins from the excavations were classified by H.-C. Noeske.

⁵⁸ Current research in this area will hopefully clarify the original location of the coin hoard.

⁵⁹ Hayes, *LRP*, pp. 128-131; 132f.; Mackensen/Schneider, *Production centres*, pp. 132-134.

⁶⁰ A coin of Anastasios [491-518] cannot be securely assigned to the foundation trench of the wall. It was, however, probably found within the mud bricks itself.

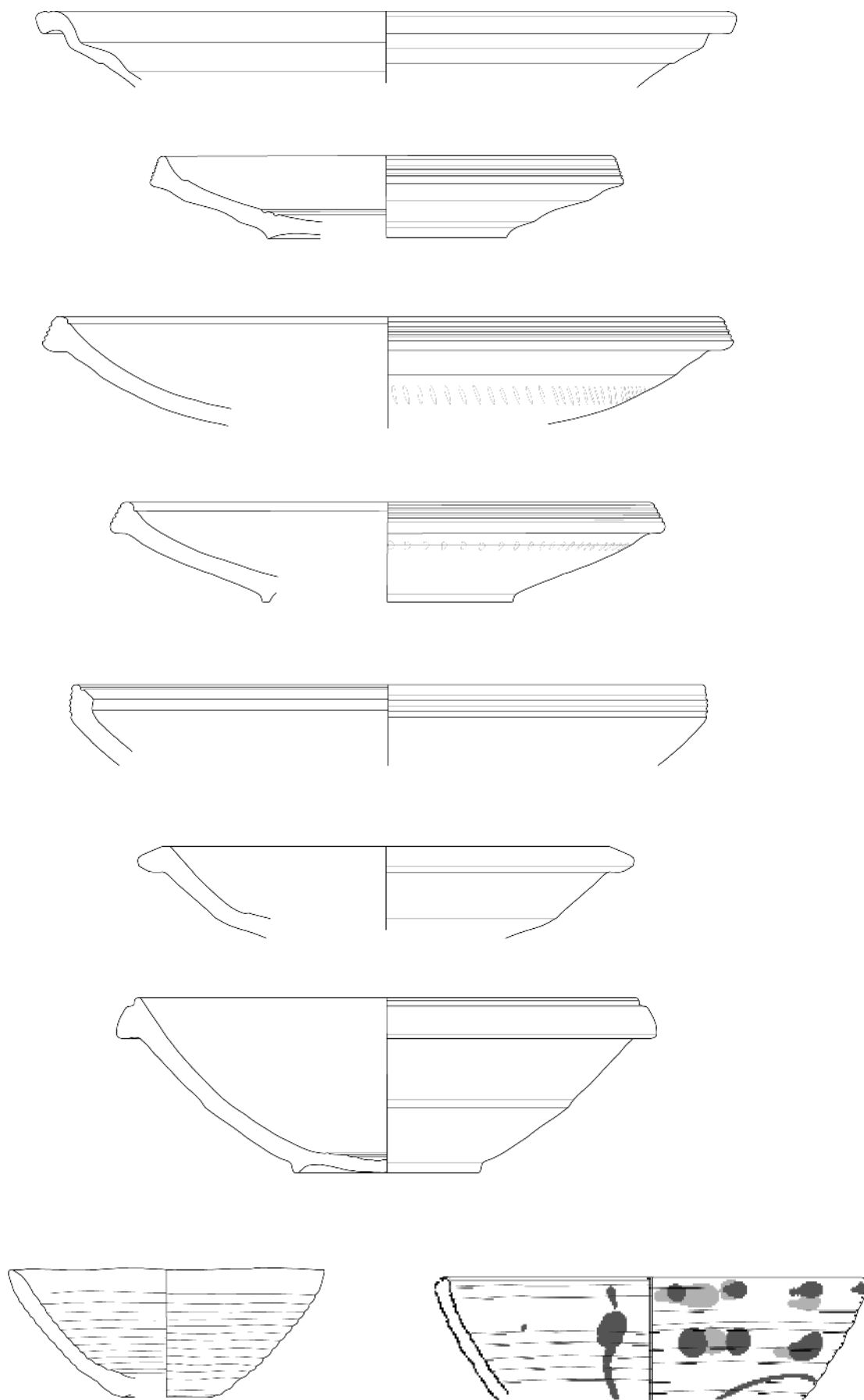


Fig. 12: ERS A forms including Gempeler T 211a, T 218a and b from stratified deposits in building M12A.

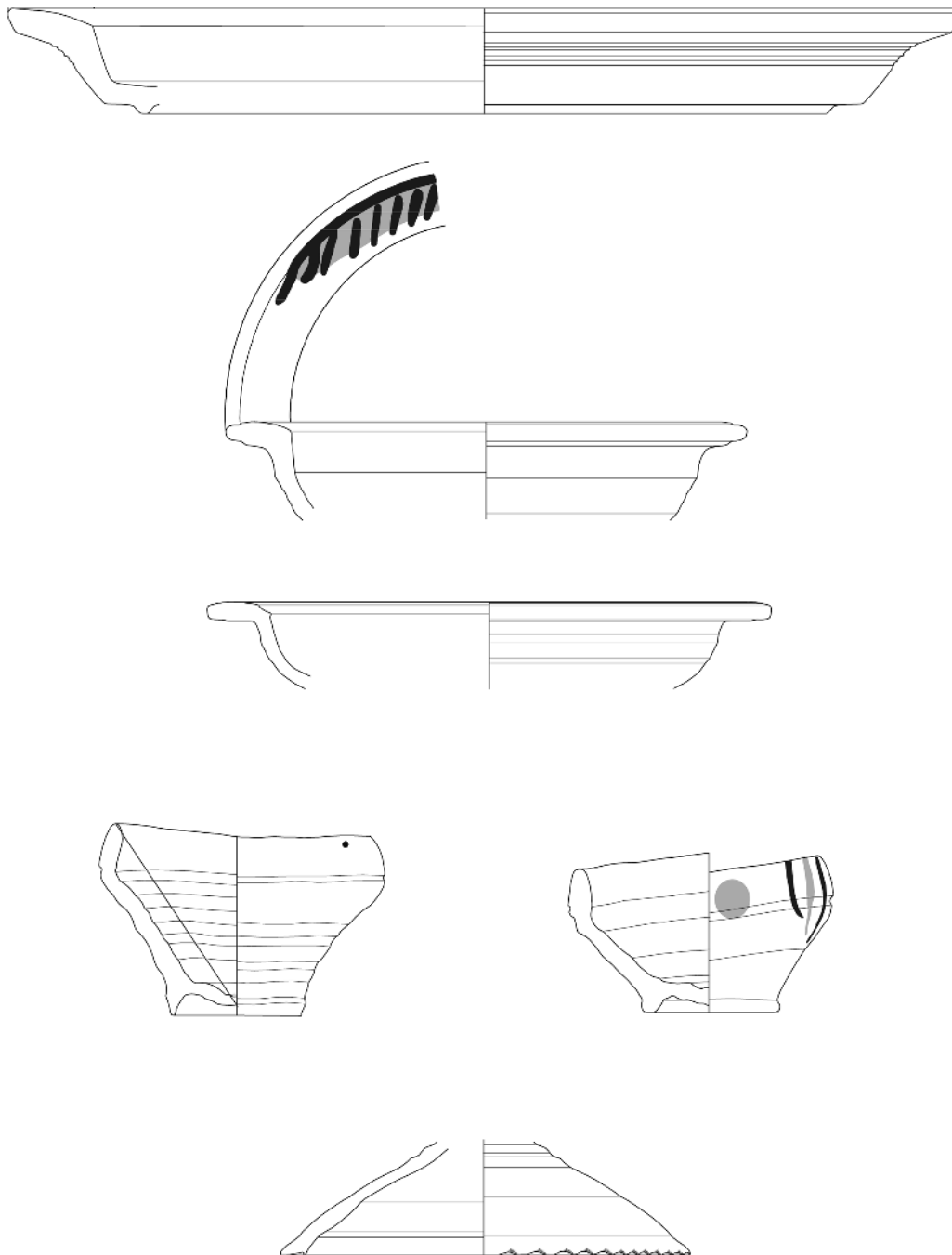


Fig. 13: ERS A forms including Gempeler T 106a, T 210a and b, T608a from stratified deposits in building M12A.

IX. Rock inscriptions (pl. IV-V)

The project to survey and record the rock inscriptions on the east bank of the River Nile directly opposite Elephantine island was continued during this season. These inscriptions are directly linked to the situation on Elephantine itself, both by prosopographical and by topographical ties.

In this season, work on the inscriptions which border the starting point of the ancient road between Aswan and Philae was completed after checking a few details and completing the topographical survey. It is now clear that this group of some 80 inscriptions from the Middle and New Kingdoms borders a narrow way which

directly linked the Aswan bay opposite Elephantine with the ancient portage road which served to bypass the cataract and to give access to the quarry areas. Since this ancient road is so narrow, it could not be used for the transport of bulky loads or as a route for larger groups of people. Rather it must have served only as a convenient route for smaller groups of leading officials and their entourages. This determination of the function of the road is in close accordance with the prestigious character of the inscriptions applied to the rocks bordering it.

After finishing this part of the project, work concentrated on the area immediately bordering the river in front of Elephantine. Here, a number of sites of rock inscriptions could be examined.

In the area in front of the back entrance to the Old Cataract hotel the famous inscription of the late 18th Dynasty sculptors Men and Bak was studied, and for the first time a proper facsimile copy was made. The same was done for an inscription of Akhenaten immediately to its right side, which had been discovered and published by Labib Habashi. In both cases a number of epigraphic problems evident in the earlier copies were settled and substantial progress in our understanding of the monuments was made. In addition, a splendid inscription of a 12th Dynasty official Mentuhotep, which was never copied before, was studied and documented (Pl. IV). This inscription is an extremely rare example of an inscription where traces of the original paint, which enhanced the visibility of the carved text in ancient times, is still preserved. On the winged sun-disk which surmounted the tableau of the inscription, red paint was clearly visible on the central sun-disk.

Continuing the work, the area to the south was closely surveyed. Here, a group of inscriptions in the village of Gebel Tagug was studied. The overall situation shows clearly a line of inscriptions bordering a path parallel to the shoreline of Elephantine on the Aswan side in an area which was probably used as a larger harbour site. Since ancient times, however, the landscape has been greatly altered both by Roman quarrying operations which substantially changed the distribution of the original rocks, and by modern building which nowadays nearly completely covers the site. A great effort is therefore needed to reconstruct the original landscape in this area.

For the first time, a site of rock inscriptions immediately adjacent to the ferry connection between Elephantine and Aswan on the site of the modern Nilometer was examined. This site forms the northern end of the huge rock face below the public garden of Aswan. This rock face is densely covered by an number of important rock inscriptions.

On the area of the modern Nilometer, about a dozen inscriptions were discovered and documented. Among this material, four inscriptions made by viceroys from the 18th and 19th Dynasties are most prominent (Pl. V). Nowadays, these inscriptions are nearly completely obliterated; in ancient times, however, these large tableaus were highly visible. In connection with the inscriptions on the Elephantine side of the river, these texts and pictures visually dominated the approach to the city of Elephantine in ancient times.

During this season, the work on this last group of inscriptions remained incomplete. However, the rich and significant finds made so far amply merit a continuation of the effort to provide a new and detailed documentation of this material.

St. J. Seidlmayer

X. Restoration of Wooden Columns (Pl. VI)

Restoration and Consolidation of the columns of the bakery of the 1st Intermediate Period was resumed this season.⁶¹

Current State: The wood of the columns is from Acacia L. (*nilotica Delile*) [Arabic: *sant, sont*].⁶²

In Pharaonic times, this wood was used for timber, the bark for tanning, and the leaves, flowers and pods found multiple uses in medicine. Nile acacia, which grows near the river, was probably the main source of wood used in pharaonic boat-building and for constructing buildings. Every part of this tree is intensively used. Wood from the acacia is hard, good for carving and turning, and is also used for making many different tools. The acacia's alleged resistance to termites is doubtful and can be disproved in the present case. It is excellent for fuel and charcoal and provides good quality gum Arabic, which was commercially extracted in the past.

The wooden core of pillar W4 is missing. A termite infestation completely destroyed the inner core and the lower part (about 30cm) of this pillar. Wood flour and termite excrement have accrued in some areas of the pillar's hollow centre. This has damaged the pillar's load bearing capacity to such an extent that the pillar cannot even support itself on its foundation. Since the upper part of the pillar is missing it is impossible to determine its original height. The preserved height is 3.18 cm.

There are two wooden attachments to the pillar, which are made of the same wood as the pillar itself. These two attachments had previously been used on a different object, which can be proven by the different wooden connections. It cannot be determined to which objects these wooden parts originally belonged.

Restoration: The pillars' restoration or consolidation has been undertaken because of their uniqueness. Octagonal wooden pillars, are rarely preserved in the context of Ancient Egyptian architecture. Thus, the main aim of the project is the conservation and, at a later stage, presentation of the pillars in a museum.

To restore the pillar W4's internal strength the wooden substance needed to be reinforced. In several sample tests the material "primal" has shown the best results. To intensify the effect of "primal", ethyl alcohol was pre-injected in some areas.

Even after the wood was reinforced in this way, the pillar was still unable to support itself on a stone foundation. Therefore a metal bar of two metre length was inserted into the hollow centre of the pillar. This metal bar was screwed to the inside of the walls and the screws were fixed to the intact wooden substance to prevent the creation of possible weak points. The metal bar protrudes beneath the bottom of the pillar by about 30cm. In this way the metal bar can be precisely inserted into a square metal socket on the pre-built base. This ties the pillar to the basis, enabling it to stand on its own.

Replacement sections of wood will be cut out of wooden slats and precisely inserted into the voids. These replacements will be recessed about 3mm from the face of the original timber in order to make them clearly distinguishable from the original⁶³. The work on the pillar will be resumed next season.

E. Peintner

⁶¹ For the methods applied in the course of restoration, compare E. Peintner, in D. Raue et al., Report on the 32nd season of excavation and restoration on the island of Elephantine', *ASAE*, in press.

⁶² L. Manniche, *An Ancient Egyptian Herbal*, London 1999.

XI. The Archaeological Area: painted outlines of reconstructed reliefs at the Satet Temple and restoration work in the building complex of the Old Kingdom (Pl. VII-IX)

Satet Temple, 18th Dynasty: In order to improve the comprehensibility of the relief reconstructions at the Satet Temple, it was decided to add some missing parts of the decoration in outline. Only those parts of the reconstructions where the theme of the original reliefs is easily apparent will be outlined (Pl. VII).

The individual outlining was done with fine brush strokes in a brown colour on modern plaster, in order to make them less prominent than the original reliefs. This technique was carried out on a silicate basis and has been proven to work for many years. Not only do the outlines improve the readability of the reliefs, they also subdivide the large plaster infill panels visually.

E. Peintner

Building complex of the late Old Kingdom: The restoration work of last season was continued. It is intended to present future visitors to the site with several sections of the stratum XVIII, a large building complex that was built in the late 6th Dynasty and whose walls were partially still in use in the early Middle Kingdom. Excavations of this structure in the area of the later temple of Khnum and to its south were finished in 2003⁶⁴ and to its east in 2005.⁶⁵ (Pl. VIII - IX)

Reconstruction work was finished in House 136. This unit of the stratum XVIII was approached by an entrance from the street to the west. Furthermore, the large cellars of the adjoining premises (House 2) were re-erected. Older features in Area XXX have been backfilled to protect the remains of 2nd, 3rd and 5th Dynasty buildings.

On the opposite side of the Palace Bakery Street (area XXIV), restoration work was begun and shall be continued in the forthcoming season.

D. Raue

⁶³ Major parts of this work, as well as the cleaning of termite damage, were executed by Aid Abu'l Hamid and Saad Abadallah.

⁶⁴ See C. Jeuthe, Bauschicht XVIII – Haus 136 in: G. Dreyer et al., 31./32. Grabungsbericht, *MDAIK* 61, 2005, pp. 25-29 with Abb.3.

⁶⁵ D.Raue, in: id. et al., 'Report on the 35th season of excavation and restoration on the island of Elephantine', *ASAE*, in press.



Pl. I: Area XVIII, cellar of the late 6th Dynasty.



Pl. II: Area II: House 61, Ramesside Period.



Pl. III: The elements of the so called "victory vase", Nile B2, blue painted , Exc.No. 16108G-08



Pl. IV: Inscription of a 12th Dynasty official named Mentuhotep. The sun-disk above the text still shows traces of red paint



Pl. V: Work on a large rock inscription of a viceroy of Ramesses II directly opposite the main harbour of Elephantine



Pl. VI: wooden column of the bakery of the 1st Intermediate Period in course of restoration



Pl. VII: Temple of Satet of the 18th Dynasty, Room D



Pl. VIII: building complex of the late 6th Dynasty before restoration



Pl. IXa-b: building complex of the late 6th Dynasty (Bauschicht XVIII, house 2 and house 136) after restoration