

CHANGING CULTURAL PARADIGMS: FROM TOMB TO TEMPLE IN THE ELEVENTH DYNASTY

Richard BUSSMANN

(University College London)

Temples have become the core institutions of Pharaonic society in the New Kingdom and the Late and Graeco-Roman Periods¹. They have developed into centres of the countrywide administration and the transmission of knowledge. Archaeologically, they stand out as monumental buildings decorated with royal iconography and texts centred on the exegesis of temple cult and kingship. If monumentality was understood a mirror of the importance of an institution in society the analysis of temples would ultimately deal with society rather than with architecture, decoration or inscriptions only.

Viewed from this angle, the lack of a monumental temple tradition in 3rd millennium BC Egypt raises questions on the nature of Old Kingdom society as opposed to later periods. It has been suggested in older Egyptology, often implicitly in search of continuity and due to a lack of good excavated examples, that the Old Kingdom pyramid temples were forerunners of later divine temples². Indeed, Middle Kingdom temples of deities draw widely on the iconography and texts of Old Kingdom pyramid temples and it could be argued that pyramid temples and divine temples are, in a way, the same thing. The integration of New Kingdom royal mortuary temples with the temple of Karnak has further contributed to obliterating the difference between royal mortuary temples and local temples for deities.

However, excavations at Elephantine, Tell Ibrahim Awad, and Tell el-Farkha over the last four decades have demonstrated that the actual forerunners of later monumental divine temples are small mud-brick shrines³. They are scattered across the country

¹ J. F. QUACK, 'Das Buch vom Tempel und verwandte Texte. Ein Vorbericht', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2 (2000), 1-20; see also the last paragraph of this paper.

² In the chronological arrangement of B. SHAFER (ed.), *Temples of Ancient Egypt* (London 1998), for example, the Old and Middle Kingdoms are represented with a contribution on pyramid temples. D. O'CONNOR, 'The Status of Early Egyptian Temples: an Alternative Theory', in: R. FRIEDMAN, B. ADAMS (eds.), *The Followers of Horus. Studies dedicated to Michael Allen Hoffman 1944-1990*, Egyptian Studies Association Publication 2, Oxbow Monograph 20 (Oxford, 1992), 83-98, reads the later monumental tradition and the Early Dynastic monumental royal building activity at Abydos and Hierakonpolis into all provincial temples of the 3rd millennium.

³ R. BUSSMANN, *Die Provinztempel Ägyptens von der 0. bis zur 11. Dynastie. Archäologie und Geschichte einer gesellschaftlichen Institution zwischen Residenz und Provinz*, Probleme der Ägyptologie 30 (Boston – Leiden, 2010); additional material W. VAN HAARLEM, *Temple Deposits at Tell Ibrahim Awad* (Amsterdam, 2009).

in various settlements of local communities whereas royal pyramid temples are attached to the royal burial. Moreover, pyramid temples have a funerary purpose in the first place and their decoration is composed, in principle, of monumental versions of tomb iconography rather than temple scenes. While it is now widely agreed that pyramid temples and local temples of deities represent different social and functional settings in the Old Kingdom the emergence of a monumental temple tradition in the Middle Kingdom has not yet been fully explored.

The 11th Dynasty temples, situated on the interface between the Old and Middle Kingdoms, play a pivotal role in the discussion and have been analysed along various interrelated lines of thought. Some Egyptologists have discussed royal building programs in light of the political history of the period, such as the reunification of Egypt or domestic and foreign politics⁴. Others have argued that local iconographic styles were replaced by a sophisticated royal style⁵. Stylistic development was interpreted to reflect social history, more specifically the integration of local traditions with the new state of the Middle Kingdom and the transformation of the Theban nomarchs from local rulers to the kings of the 11th Dynasty⁶. A third strand in the discussion focuses on temple administration in the late Old Kingdom, the First Intermediate Period, and the Middle Kingdom. It has been demonstrated that close ties existed between local temples and the provincial elites who set up statue cults in the temples and contributed to their growing economic role⁷.

⁴ L. GESTERMANN, *Kontinuität und Wandel in Politik und Verwaltung des frühen Mittleren Reiches in Ägypten*, Göttinger Orientforschungen IV/18 (Wiesbaden, 1987), 114-8; L. HABACHI, 'King Nebhepetre Mentuhotep. His Monuments, Place in History, Deification, and Unusual Representations in the Form of Gods', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 19 (1963), 16-52. For a cultural historical approach exploring the local microcosm of Gebelein see recently L. MORENZ, *Die Zeit der Regionen im Spiegel der Gebelein-Region. Kulturgeschichtliche Re-Konstruktionen*, Probleme der Ägyptologie 27 (Leiden – Boston, 2010), 141-204.

⁵ R. FREED, *The Development of Middle Kingdom Egyptian Relief Sculptural Schools of Late Dynasty XI with an Appendix on the Trends of Early Dynasty XII (2040-1878 BC)*, Dissertation New York 1984 (Ann Arbor, 1994), 179-80. E.F. MAROCHETTI, *The Reliefs of the Chapel of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Gebelein* (CGT 7003/1-277) (Leiden – Boston, 2010), 17-20.

⁶ S.J. SEIDLMAYER, 'The First Intermediate Period (c. 2160-2055)', in: I. SHAW (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2000), 123-6; D. FRANKE, 'Middle Kingdom', in: D.B. REDFORD (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt. Volume 2* (Oxford, 2001), 393-6.

⁷ B. KEMP, 'How Religious were the Ancient Egyptians?', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 5 (1995), 38-41; S.J. SEIDLMAYER, 'The First Intermediate Period (c. 2160-2055)', in: SHAW (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 131-3; E. BROVARSKI, *The Inscribed Material of the First Intermediate Period from Naga ed-Deir*, Dissertation Chicago 1989 (Ann Arbor, 2005), 418-510; J.C. MORENO GARCÍA, 'Les temples provinciaux et leur rôle dans l'agriculture institutionnelle de l'Ancien et du Moyen Empire', in: J.C. MORENO GARCÍA (ed.), *L'agriculture institutionnelle en Égypte ancienne: état de la question et perspectives interdisciplinaires*, *Cahier de recherches de l'institut de papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille* 25 (2005), 93-124; D. FRANKE, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib auf Elephantine. Geschichte eines Provinzheiligtums im Mittleren Reich*, Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens 9 (Heidelberg, 1994), 122, 126.

The following paper aims to extend the discussion into a wider view of temple development in Egyptian society during the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC. It focuses on the institutional context of display and the migration of textual and iconographic models from tomb to temple. Tombs and temples are understood paradigms of a society providing frameworks for symbolic communication. It will be argued that 11th Dynasty royal temple display reflects the beginning of a more fundamental long-term development of Ancient Egypt from a small-scale tomb-centred to a large-scale temple-centred society.

Kings and local temples in the 11th Dynasty

Intef II and III begin to furnish local temples at Elephantine and Karnak with stone columns, doorposts, lintels, and architraves inscribed with royal titles and the formula “beloved by the local god” and “son of the local god”⁸. They are supra-local nomarchs with royal aspirations trying to redevelop a monumental mode of display. Old Kingdom royal culture serves as a model but was not very widespread beyond the Memphite pyramids. Accessibility to relevant knowledge was probably restricted to a few royal inscriptions Old Kingdom kings had left in southern Upper Egypt. As a result, Intef II and III produce a cultural amalgam composed of Old Kingdom royal elements and the culture of the provincial nomarchy. An interesting piece is the controversial inscription on a column dated to Intef II and found in the Karnak temple. Intef II claims to be “the governor of the country, pillar of Thebes whom he [i.e. Amun-Re] loves and praises”⁹. The latter formula is typical of inscriptions in non-royal elite tombs where the tomb owner identifies himself as “beloved and praised by the king”¹⁰. The column inscription, if interpreted correctly as part of a divine temple building, indicates that Intef II uses non-royal, tomb-centered textual models for monumental display in a temple context.

⁸ Overview of 11th Dynasty temple blocks in BUSSMANN, *Provinztempel*, chapter 4. The blocks of Intef II and III were found at Elephantine and Karnak: W. KAISER, ‘Die Entwicklung des Satettempels in der 11. Dynastie’, in: W. KAISER, M. BOMMAS, H. JARITZ, A. KREKELER, C. VON PILGRIM, M. SCHULTZ, T. SCHMIDT-SCHULTZ, M. ZIERMANN, ‘Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 19./20. Grabungsbericht’, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 49 (1993), 145-52; T. ZIMMER, F. LE SAOUT, A. EL-H. MA’AROUF, ‘Le Moyen Empire à Karnak: Varia’, in: *Cahiers de Karnak VIII 1982-1985* (Paris, 1987), 294-7.

⁹ D. FRANKE, ‘Erste und Zweite Zwischenzeit – Ein Vergleich’, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 117 (1990), 125. An alternative translation by L. MORENZ has been rejected by M. ULLMANN, ‘Zur Lesung der Inschrift auf der Säule Antefs II. aus Karnak’, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 132 (2005), 166-72.

¹⁰ J. JANSSEN, *De traditioneele Egyptische autobiografie vóór het Nieuwe Rijk* (Leiden, 1946), sub voce “mrj” and “hzi”; K. JANSEN-WINKELN, ‘Zur Bedeutung von hzj und mrj’, *Göttinger Miszellen* 190 (2002), 47-52. I am grateful to K. Jansen-Winklen for these bibliographic references.

Mentuhotep II decorates local temples more lavishly and comes closer to Old Kingdom royal models¹¹. Most of his inscriptions are framed by *w3s*-scepters and the hieroglyph representing the sky. The inscriptions on lintels and doorposts are used for more elaborate theological statements with local differences being expressed. The epithets of the dynastic god Month in the inscriptions of el-Tôd, for example, are "lord of Thebes, first of the two countries, foremost of the gods" and "heir of the whole sky" which is in contrast to the simple epithets of other local deities as "lord" or "lady of the local city"¹².

The most significant change from the reign of Intef III to Mentuhotep II is the use of stone reliefs for the decoration of local temples. A subtle but revealing modification occurs again in the reign of Mentuhotep II from the pre- to the post-reunification period. On some blocks of his pre-unification monuments¹³ Mentuhotep II is represented with a non-royal headdress and uraeus. He is also shown in company of a fellow in his ka chapel in Dendera and on a (temple?) fragment from Ballas dated to Mentuhotep II where a fellow calls the royal figure "his lord" (fig. 1)¹⁴. The representation of persons in a relationship of patron and client is typical of the tomb decoration and cemetery organization during the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom¹⁵. Similar to the Karnak inscription of Intef II mentioned above, the pre-unification temple decoration of Mentuhotep II includes a series of iconographic models originating in the non-royal tomb tradition of the nomarchs.

Thematically, Mentuhotep II highlights the aggressive dimension of kingship in the pre-unification temple decoration. The representation of the king smiting his enemies features prominently in Gebelein and on the rear wall of the Dendera chapel¹⁶. On a

¹¹ The material of Mentuhotep II is presented by HABACHI, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 19, 16-52. For the more recently discovered blocks from Elephantine compare KAISER, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 49, 151-2. The material from Gebelein has recently been presented and reevaluated by MAROCHETTI, *Reliefs Nebhepetra*, and MORENZ, *Zeit der Regionen*, 141-204.

¹² The exceptional role of the temple of el-Tod in the later 11th and the 12th Dynasty is mirrored in the wealth of the inscriptions and relief blocks from this site, see E. HIRSCH, 'Die Kultpolitik Amenemhets I. im Thebanischen Gau', in: R. GUNDLACH, M. ROCHOLZ (eds.), *Ägyptische Tempel – Struktur, Funktion und Programm. Akten der Ägyptologischen Tempeltagungen in Gosen 1990 und in Mainz 1992*, Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge 37 (Hildesheim, 1994), 137-42.

¹³ G. ROBINS, 'The Reign of Nebhepetre Montuhotep II and the Pre-Unification Theban Style of Relief', in: G. ROBINS (ed.), *Beyond the Pyramids. Egyptian Regional Art from the Museo Egizio, Turin* (Atlanta, 1990), 39-45.

¹⁴ HABACHI, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 19, Figure 7; H.G. FISCHER, *Inscriptions from the Coptite Nome*, *Analecta Orientalia* 40 (Rome, 1964), Number 46.

¹⁵ S.J. SEIDLMAYER, 'Wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung im Übergang vom Alten zum Mittleren Reich. Ein Beitrag zur Archäologie der Gräberfelder der Region Qau-Matmar in der Ersten Zwischenzeit', in: J. ASSMANN, G. BURKARD, V. DAVIES (eds.), *Problems and Priorities in Egyptian Archaeology*, *Studies in Egyptology* (London, New York, 1987), 207-15.

¹⁶ HABACHI, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 19, Figures 6, 16, 17; MAROCHETTI, *Reliefs Nebhepetra*, 50-4 and Fig. 27b.



Fig. 1. Right wall of the *ka*-chapel of Mentuhotep II in Dendera. King in company of fellow (top left) and with non-royal headdress (bottom left).

L. HABACHI, 'King Nebhepetre Mentuhotep. His Monuments, Place in History, Deification, and Unusual Representations in the Form of Gods', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 19 (1963), fig. 7. Courtesy DAI.

relief from Dendera Hathor is shown suckling the king and promising him to destroy his enemies (fig. 2).

The post-reunification temple decoration of Mentuhotep II does not display either of these features although aggressiveness is once expressed by Month promising the king to give all foreign countries "under your sandals"¹⁷. The iconographic arrangement seems to be a little more standardized as the royal name is written in an emblematic layout and the king appears with the winged falcon which is only rarely the case in pre-unification representations¹⁸.

¹⁷ F. BISSEON DE LA ROQUE, *Tôd (1934 à 1936), Fouilles de l'Institut Français de l'Archéologie Orientale* 17 (Cairo, 1937), Fig. 25.

¹⁸ Emblematic layout of royal name: HABACHI, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 19, Figure 19; King with falcon in pre-reunification relief: HABACHI, *Mitteilungen des*

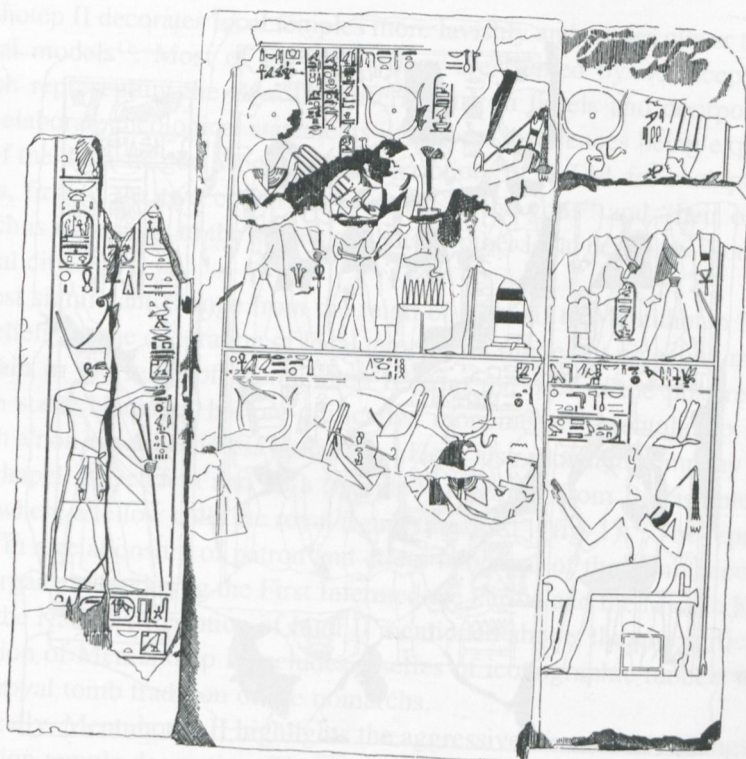


Fig. 2. Left wall of the *ka*-chapel of Mentuhotep II in Dendera. Suckling scene with inscription (top centre). L. HABACHI, 'King Nebhepetre Mentuhotep. His Monuments, Place in History, Deification, and Unusual Representations in the Form of Gods', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 19 (1963), fig. 8. Courtesy DAI.

The temple decoration of Mentuhotep III shows the future trend in the development¹⁹. The king is consistently represented with all due royal attributes, including the winged sun disk, vulture, or falcon, and the wall scenes are framed by the star sprinkled sky, the colored band and the kheker frieze. The royal titles are regularly arranged in an emblematic layout²⁰. Some textual phrases appear now for the first time in temple

Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo 19, Figure 7. King with falcon in post-reunification relief: W.M.F. PETRIE, *Abydos II* (London, 1903), plate 24 top, plate 25 top = plate 23[1]; FREED, *Style*, 96, Fig. 12.

¹⁹ An overview of the material is given by GESTERMANN, *Kontinuität und Wandel*, 116 and FREED, *Style*, 90-1, 105, 117-22, 129-34, 148-50.

²⁰ L. POSTEL, *Protocole des souverains égyptiens et dogme monarchique au début du Moyen Empire. Des premiers Antef au début du règne d'Amenemhat I^{er}*, *Monographies Reines Elisabeth 10* (Turnhout, 2004), 172-5, 252-3.

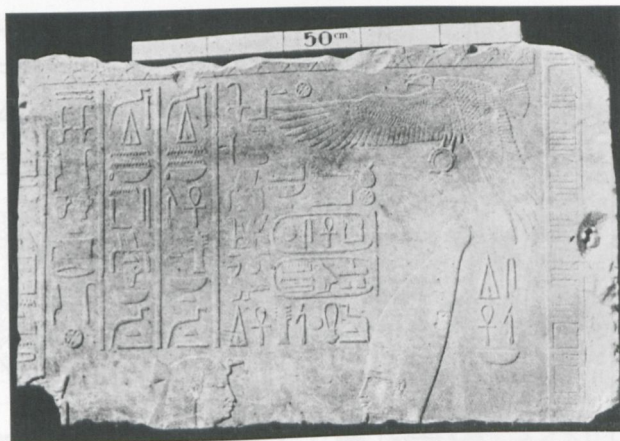


Fig. 3. El-Tod, temple block of Mentuhotep III with emblematic writing of royal titles and beginning of *wnꜥf ḥntj kꜣ.w* formula. F. BISSON DE LA ROQUE, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Médamoud* (1930) (Cairo, 1937), fig. 37.
Courtesy IFAO

decoration. Many inscriptions in el-Tôd include, for example, the formula *wnꜥf ḥntj kꜣ.w nḥ.w nb.w ḥꜥj(.w) ḥr s.t Ḥrw* “May he be at the front of the living kas when he has appeared on the throne of Horus” (fig. 3)²¹. The iconography is overall much more standardised and the iconographic and textual models mentioned above can clearly be traced back to Old Kingdom pyramid temples, for example of Sahure and Pepi II (fig. 4)²².

Aggressiveness, a rather consistent theme in the otherwise fragmented evidence of Mentuhotep II’s temple blocks, does not feature in the temple decoration of Mentuhotep III. A particularly interesting example is the suckling scene attested for both kings. Whereas Mentuhotep II attributes an aggressive meaning to it the caption of Mentuhotep III reads *rnnꜥj tw r njswy.t tꜣ.wj r wtꜣ ḥꜥ.w* “I nurse you for the kingship of the two lands in order to raise the crowns.” (fig. 5)²³. This may be interpreted as an attempt to replace “biographical” references to political and military conflict in the reign of Mentuhotep II with a more timeless theme of sacred kingship situated off real world experience.

²¹ BISSON DE LA ROQUE, *Tôd*, Figures 33, 34, 36, 37, 49.

²² D. STOCKFISCH, *Untersuchungen zum Totenkult des ägyptischen Königs im Alten Reich. Die Dekoration der königlichen Totenkultanlagen*, Antiquitates 25 (Hamburg, 2003), Dok. 5.2.37, 6.5.12, 6.5.32 (*ḥntj kꜣ.w* formula in 2nd person) and passim; A. ĆWIEK, *Relief Decoration in the Royal Funerary Complexes of the Old Kingdom. Studies in the Development, Scene Content and Iconography*, Dissertation Warsaw 2003, passim.

²³ BISSON DE LA ROQUE, *Tôd*, Fig. 46.

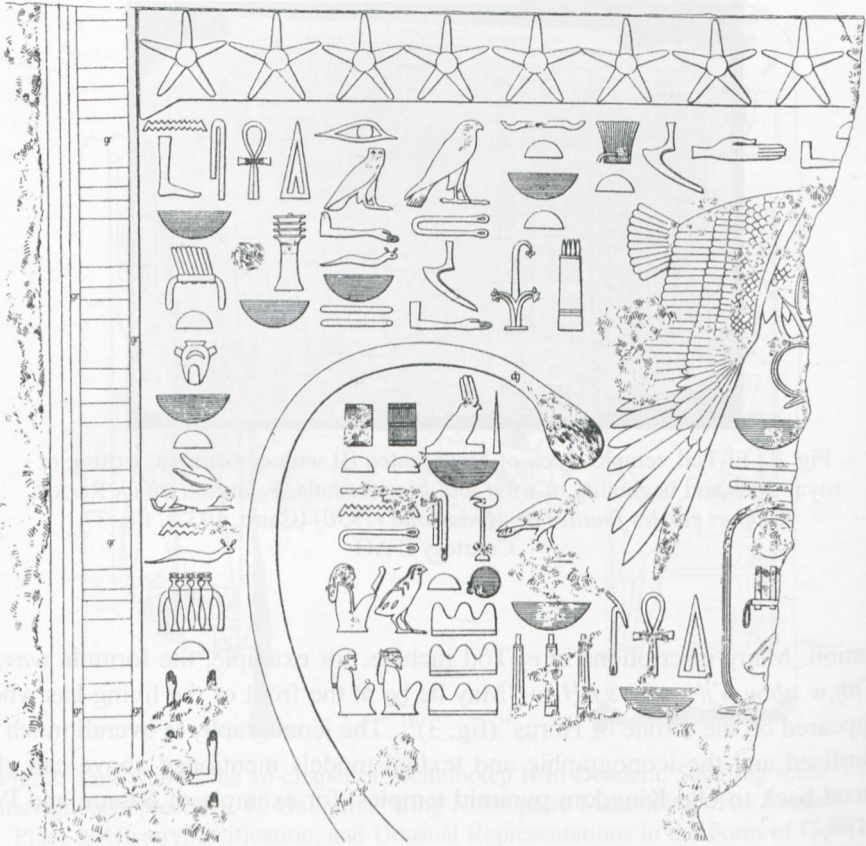


Fig. 4. Decoration of funerary temple of Sahure showing emblematic writing of royal titles and beginning of *wnꜥf hntj k3.w* formula. L. BORCHARDT, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Ša³hu-Re^c*, II. Die Wanddekoration (Leipzig, 1913), Blatt 8.



Fig. 5. El-Tod, temple block of Mentuhotep III. Inscription of suckling scene. F. BISSON DE LA ROQUE, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Médamoud* (1930) (Cairo, 1937), fig. 46. Courtesy IFAO.

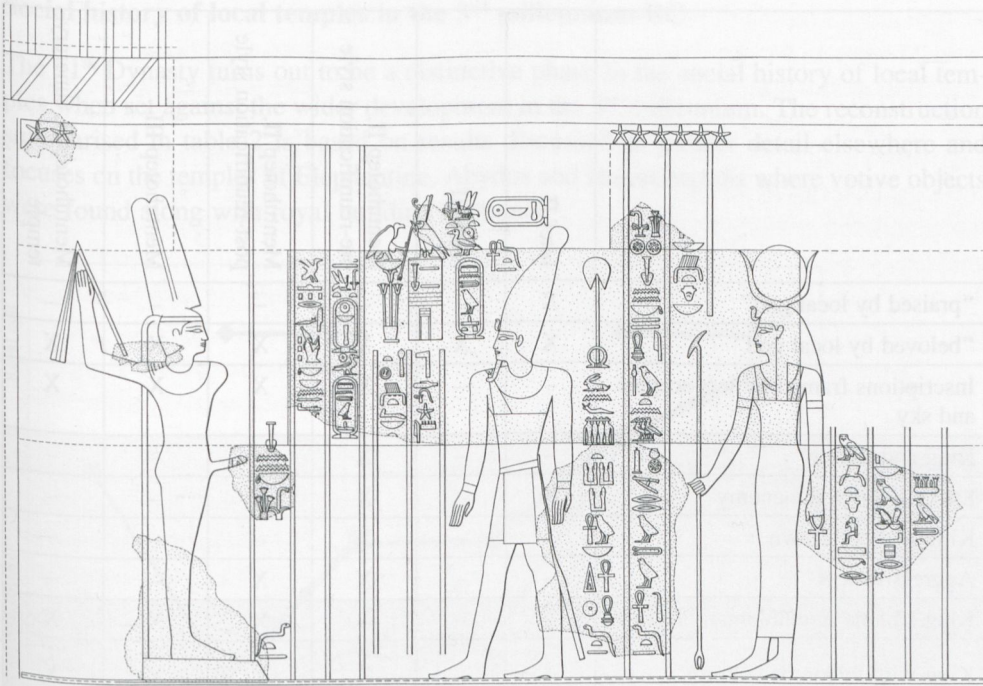


Fig. 6. Deir el-Bahari, decoration of mortuary temple of Mentuhotep II showing emblematic writing of royal titles, *wnzj hntj k3.w* formula, and star sprinkled sky. DI. ARNOLD, *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep von Deir el-Bahari II. Die Wandreliefs des Sanktuars* (Mainz 1974), Taf. 25. Courtesy DAI

The comparison of the temple decoration of Mentuhotep III to the funerary temple of Mentuhotep II at Deir el-Bahari reveals a lot of overlap (fig. 6). The royal name is written in the emblematic layout, the king is represented with winged sun disk, vulture or falcon, and there is evidence of the scenes being framed by the star sprinkled sky, the colored band and the kheker frieze. Typical phrases of Mentuhotep III's temple inscriptions are attested here as well²⁴. It seems that Mentuhotep II uses the royal tomb rather than divine temples to develop a new sophisticated style and decorative program.

Table 1 summarises the major results of the discussion. The development of divine temple decoration in the 11th Dynasty is characterised by increasing formalisation and theological profiling. Mentuhotep III frees temple decoration from all non-royal tomb centered models and draws consistently on textual and iconographic models of Old

²⁴ DI. ARNOLD, *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep von Deir el-Bahari II. Die Wandreliefs des Sanktuars*, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo 11 (Mainz, 1974), Taf. 25, 29, 34 and passim.

	Intef II	Intef III	Mentuhotep II, pre-unification style	Mentuhotep II, post-unification style	Mentuhotep III	Mentuhotep II, funerary temple
“praised by local god”	X	–	–	–	–	–
“beloved by local god”	X	X	X	X	X	X
Inscriptions framed by <i>w3s</i> -scepter and sky	–	–	X	X	X	X
King and fellow	–	–	X	–	–	–
Striking down the enemy	–	–	X	–	–	–
King without crown	–	–	X	–	–	–
Aggressiveness	–	–	X	X	–	–
King’s name in emblematic layout	–	–	–	X	X	X
King with falcon or vulture	–	–	X (rarely)	X	X	X
<i>wnz.f hntj k3.w nb.w ‘nh.w</i>	–	–	–	–	X	X
kheker frieze	–	–	X	–	X	X
star sprinkled sky	–	–	–	–	X	X
coloured band	–	–	–	–	X	X

Table 1. Attestations of ornaments, formulae and epithets in the decoration of provincial temples of Intef II, III, Mentuhotep II, III and of the funerary temple of Mentuhotep II. The white rows refer to inscriptions. The light grey rows refer to the style specific to the pre-unification reign of Mentuhotep II. The dark grey rows refer to the style of the funerary temple of Mentuhotep II and of the provincial temples of Mentuhotep III (with forerunners in the post-unification decoration style of provincial temples erected by Mentuhotep II).

Kingdom royal funerary temples. However, the new standard was fully developed already for the decoration of the funerary temple of Mentuhotep II before Mentuhotep III applied it to the temples of deities. The seriation suggested in table 1 is obtained from a rather fragmented empirical basis and, however substantial the evidence of 11th Dynasty temple building activity may be, interpretation is more of a qualitative rather than quantitative nature. It is only in a broader chronological perspective that the results can be backed-up and developed in a more meaningful framework.

Social history of local temples in the 3rd millennium BC

The 11th Dynasty turns out to be a distinctive phase in the social history of local temples when set against the wider development in the 3rd millennium. The reconstruction summarised in table 2 is based on results discussed in greater detail elsewhere and focuses on the temples of Elephantine, Abydos and Hierakonpolis where votive objects were found along with royal building elements²⁵.

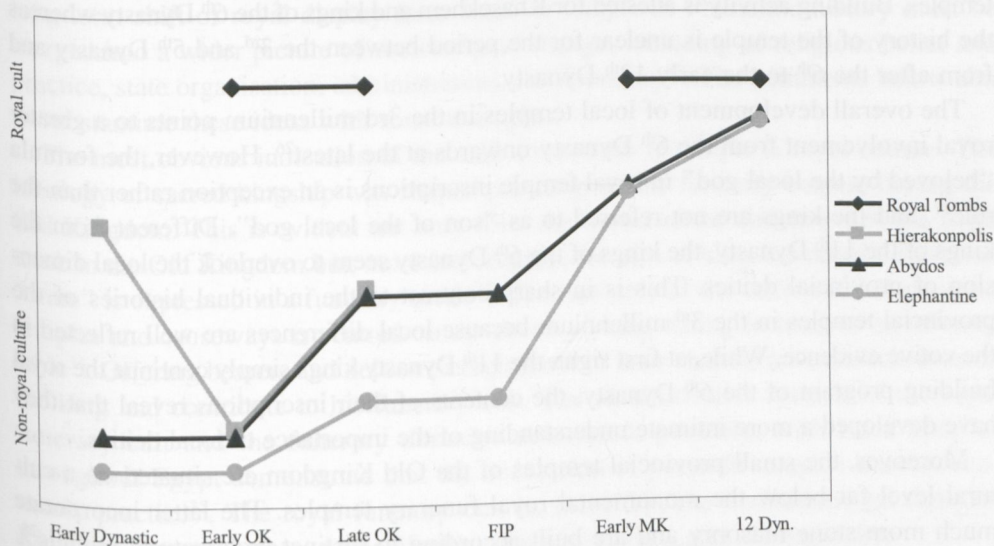


Table 2. Development of the local temples of Elephantine, Abydos and Hierakonpolis from provincial to royal institutions during the 3rd millennium and comparison to the royal funerary temples of the Old and Middle Kingdoms.

Elephantine has entered the textbooks as a typical example of the history of local temples. The early mud brick chapel was furnished with royal objects in the 6th Dynasty. The kings of the 11th Dynasty enlarged the temple in successive building phases and started to use stone masonry. The first temple entirely made of stone was built by Sesostri I.

The temple of Abydos underwent a similar process. The most important difference to Elephantine is the leap in the 5th and 6th Dynasty. A series of royal door lintels, statues and decrees and many travertine vessels offered as comparatively costly votive

²⁵ BUSSMANN, *Provinztempel Ägyptens*; R. BUSSMANN, 'The Social Setting of the Temple of Satet in the Third Millennium B.C.', in: D. RAUE, S. SEIDLMAYER, P. SPEISER (eds.), *The First Cataract. One Region – Various Perspectives* (Berlin, 2013), 21-34; R. BUSSMANN, 'Die Tempel der ägyptischen Staatseinigungszeit', in: L. MORENZ (ed.), *Vorspann oder formative Phase? Ägypten und der Vordere Orient 3500-2700 v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden, 2011), 109-28.

objects attest to the outstanding role of the temple in this period. Notwithstanding, the careless execution of hieroglyphs of royal inscriptions does not meet the high standard of craftsmanship applied in the contemporary royal tombs and the inscriptions are short and, as a rule, reduced to the royal names and titles.

Hierakonpolis is countrywide the most important temple of the state formation period. The large amount of elite stone vessels, mace heads, ivories with royal iconography and votive objects made of semi-precious stones is unrivalled among early local temples. Building activity is attested for Khasekhem and kings of the 6th Dynasty whereas the history of the temple is unclear for the period between the 3rd and 5th Dynasty and from after the 6th to the early 12th Dynasty.

The overall development of local temples in the 3rd millennium points to a greater royal involvement from the 6th Dynasty onwards at the latest²⁶. However, the formula “beloved by the local god” in royal temple inscriptions is an exception rather than the rule²⁷, and the kings are not referred to as “son of the local god”. Different from the kings of the 11th Dynasty, the kings of the 6th Dynasty seem to overlook the local dimension of provincial deities. This is in sharp contrast to the individual histories of the provincial temples in the 3rd millennium because local differences are well reflected in the votive evidence. While, at first sight, the 11th Dynasty kings simply continue the royal building program of the 6th Dynasty, the contents of their inscriptions reveal that they have developed a more intimate understanding of the importance of local deities.

Moreover, the small provincial temples of the Old Kingdom are situated on a cultural level far below the monumental royal funerary temples. The latter incorporate much more stone masonry and are built according to distinct architectural models²⁸. The difference between the royal tomb and local temples starts to diminish in the 11th Dynasty until Mentuhotep III furnishes local temples consistently with iconographic and textual models previously confined to the royal tombs.

Changing cultural paradigms from the Old to the New Kingdom

The review above shows that local temples become more and more important for royal display from the late Old Kingdom onwards. Local temples form a consistent part of

²⁶ S.J. SEIDLMAYER, ‘Town and State in the Early Old Kingdom. A View from Elephantine’, in: J. SPENCER, *Aspects of Early Egypt* (London, 1996), 115-9.

²⁷ For exceptions see 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.* (Paris, 1990), 50-3; W.M.F. PETRIE, *Abydos I* (1902), Egypt Exploration Fund (London, 1902), pl. 54 middle: The end of the top line can possibly be reconstructed as [mry-*Hntj*-imntjw].

²⁸ For an overview of Old Kingdom pyramid temples compare R. STADELMANN, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden. Vom Ziegelbau zum Weltwunder*, 3rd edition (Mainz, 1997), 205-16 and passim; M. LEHNER, *The Complete Pyramids* (London, 1997), 84-163.

Middle Kingdom royal building activity²⁹, and the New Kingdom, especially the Ramesside period, sees an unprecedented scale of monumentality of temples for various local deities. This process is part of the complex transformation of Egyptian religious formation from a cultural paradigm based on funerary culture to a paradigm oriented towards the gods³⁰. John Baines believes that the temple religion of the later periods reflects a more urban setting than the group-oriented small-scale focus on tombs in the Old and Middle Kingdom³¹. Christopher Eyre rightly remarks that the long-term shift of royal display from tomb to temple in Pharaonic history must be merged into a wider picture of sociocultural change, including of religious belief and practice, state organisation, administration, and economy³². The comments below aim to substantiate these ideas with some examples.

The most obvious indication of the shift from tomb to temple is royal culture. The ideology of sacred kingship was shaped primarily in the funerary context during the Old Kingdom. This is evident not only from the monumental dimension of the royal tomb in the Old Kingdom but, more importantly, the idea of kingship and the Egyptian "state" is expressed in a funerary mode³³. The rationale of the decoration of pyramid temples and causeways is centred on the deceased king sitting in front of an offering table³⁴. Offering bearers and deities emerging out of their chapels are oriented towards the king and contribute to his funerary cult. The administrative records of the royal funerary cult and the funerary domains associated, possibly, with local temples throughout Egypt demonstrate that the decoration of pyramid temples mirrors economic practice³⁵. The royal funerary cult is, therefore, the institution that ties Old Kingdom Egypt together, economically, administratively, and ideologically.

²⁹ The evidence for the Middle Kingdom has been studied by E.N. HIRSCH, *Kultpolitik und Tempelbauprogramme der 12. Dynastie. Untersuchungen zu den Göttertempeln im Alten Ägypten*, ACHET Schriften zur Ägyptologie A 3 (Berlin, 2004).

³⁰ J. BAINES, 'Society, Morality, and Religious Practice', in: B. SHAFER (ed.), *Religion in Ancient Egypt. Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice* (Ithaca, London, 1991), 197-8.

³¹ J. BAINES, 'Practical religion and piety', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 73 (1987), 98.

³² C.J. EYRE, 'Who Built the Great Temples of Egypt?', in: B. MENU (ed.), *L'organisation du travail en Égypte ancienne et en Mésopotamie*, Bibliothèque d'Étude 151 (Cairo, 2010), 117-38, here 118-9.

³³ The Narmer palette and macehead deposited in the temple of Hierakonpolis and the Djoser reliefs from Heliopolis show that the funerary is neither the earliest nor the only mode but it dominates display of kingship in the first monumental phase of Pharaonic history during the Old Kingdom. J. BAINES, 'Origins of Egyptian kingship', in: D. O'CONNOR, D. SILVERMAN (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, *Probleme der Ägyptologie* 9 (Leiden – New York – Köln, 1995), 95-156 reviews display and meaning of kingship in Dynasties 0-3 but does not discuss the mode of display as understood here.

³⁴ STOCKFISCH, *Untersuchungen*; ĆWIEK, *Relief Decoration*.

³⁵ P. POSENER-KRIÉGER, *Les archives du temple funéraire de Néferirkarê-Kakaï (Les papyrus d'Abousir)*, Bibliothèque d'Étude 65 (Cairo, 1976) ; P. POSENER-KRIÉGER, M. VERNER, H. VYMAZALOVÁ, *Abusir X. The Pyramid Complex of Raneferef. The Papyrus Archive* (Prague, 2006); H.K. JACQUET-GORDON, *Les noms des domaines funéraires sous l'ancien empire égyptien*, Bibliothèque d'Étude 34 (Cairo, 1962); SEIDLMAYER, in: SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 124.

In the New Kingdom, the royal funerary cult is merged into the spatial, economic, and cultic framework of the temple of Amun in Karnak. The temples of deities, with the Amun temple at the fore, have taken over the functions of Old Kingdom pyramid temples. Kingship and the “state” are now being represented predominantly in the mode of temple cult, i.e. as an interaction between kings and gods³⁶. The Great Harris Papyrus shows that there is a hierarchy of temples located across the country³⁷. This points to a more polycentric economic structure than in the Old Kingdom and is also reflected in the emergence of larger cities clustered around temples of deities³⁸.

The shift from tomb to temple affects not only large-scale administration, settlement structure, and ideology but filters through entire society down to local landscapes. On the level of “folk culture” or “practical religion”, the letters to the dead are a prominent example³⁹. They were addressed to the deceased ancestors and placed, whenever the archaeological context is known, in the tomb. From the Ramesside period onwards, letters with similar inquiries and format were put forward to the gods at the occasion of temple processions⁴⁰. This does not imply that the belief in deceased ancestors has ceased to exist but indicates that a different paradigm has become dominant in society, i.e. temple cult. The migration of a practice previously affiliated to the funerary sphere into the framework of temple cult led to a different strand of the belief system being pushed to the surface of the positive evidence.

A similar argument applies for temple processions and feasts. It is well known that they played a major role from the New Kingdom onwards at the latest⁴¹. Evidence from the Middle and Old Kingdom suggests that temple processions were an integral

³⁶ For the interpretation of temple decoration in the context of state and kingship compare J. ASSMANN, *Ma'at. Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Ägypten*, 2nd edition (München, 1995), 200-12.

³⁷ P. GRANDET, *Le papyrus Harris I (BM 9999)*, Bibliothèque d'Étude 109 (Cairo, 1994), vol. I, 91-5. J.J. JANSSEN, 'The Role of the Temple in the Egyptian Economy During the New Kingdom', in: E. LIPINSKI (ed.), *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East II. Proceedings of the International Conference organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from the 10th to the 14th of April 1978*, OLA 6 (Leuven, 1979), 505-15; S.S. EICHLER, *Die Verwaltung des "Hauses des Amun" in der 18. Dynastie*, Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur, Beiheft 7 (Hamburg, 2000); B. HARING, 'Ramesside Temples and the Economic Interests of the State: Crossroads of the Sacred and the Profane', in: M. FITZENREITER (ed.), *Das Heilige und die Ware*, Internet-Beiträge zur Ägyptologie und Sudanarchäologie 7 (London, 2007), 165-70.

³⁸ B.J. KEMP, 'Temple and town in ancient Egypt', in: P. UCKO, K. TRINGHAM, G.W. DIMBLEY (eds.), *Man, settlement and urbanism* (Cambridge, MA, 1972), 657-80 with some ideas on this but based on a limited range of data available at the time.

³⁹ R. GRIESHAMMER, *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 1 (Wiesbaden, 1975), 864-70, s.v. Briefe an Tote; M. O'DONOGHUE, 'The "Letters to the Dead" in Ancient Egyptian Religion', *Bulletin of the Australian Center for Egyptology* 10 (1990), 87-104.

⁴⁰ J. BAINES, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 73 (1987), 97 with footnote 90 points to some of the difficulties with a too simple model of the change.

⁴¹ J. ASSMANN, 'Das ägyptische Prozessionsfest', in: J. ASSMANN (ed.), *Das Fest und das Heilige* (Gütersloh, 1991), 105-22.

part of the life of local communities already since early Pharaonic history⁴². Over time, they became more and more prestigious until kings got involved in patronage and control over temple cult (and economy) became a major tool of power.

Private names like “Amun-in-the-feast” and names with references to gods and temple activity start to appear in the Middle Kingdom⁴³. They reflect ideas and concepts potentially shared by wider parts of society and demonstrate that the temple as a cultural paradigm mattered increasingly for social groups beyond the elites⁴⁴.

Local landscapes were also subject to cultural change. The rock inscriptions of the First Cataract are located at places of secular transport in the Old and Middle Kingdom whereas the New Kingdom inscriptions face the processional ways⁴⁵. Temple procession seems to have become the dominant framework for public display in this period. Moreover, Old and Middle Kingdom rock inscriptions are composed of funerary textual and iconographic models, i.e. the offering formula and the offering table scene, whereas New Kingdom rock inscriptions prefer models of the temple cult, i.e. the *rdj.t* *ḥw* formula and representations of individuals with raised arms in a praying position.

Conclusion

The examples demonstrate that tombs and temples are not only pieces of architecture, administrative institutions and religious foci but cultural paradigms governing symbolic communication of Ancient Egyptian society. It would be necessary to fine-tune the shift from tomb to temple chronologically and in different functional and social contexts. There may also be phenomena running counter the model proposed here. However, the changes in 11th Dynasty temple decoration, however fragmentary the evidence may be compared to later periods, fit well in the model. They show that the social and political transformations of the First Intermediate Period have become driving forces of long-term cultural change. Analysis of details of temple decoration and inscriptions becomes a sensitive prism for the understanding of the shift from tomb to temple in Egyptian society during the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC.

⁴² FRANKE, *Hekaib*, 127-31 and S.J. SEIDLMAYER, ‘Frohe – und andere – Botschaften. Kult und Kommunikation im Alten Ägypten’, in: U. PETER, S.J. SEIDLMAYER (eds.), *Mediengesellschaft Antike? Information und Kommunikation vom Alten Ägypten bis Byzanz*, Berichte und Abhandlungen der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Sonderband 10 (Berlin, 2006), 102-11.

⁴³ H. RANKE, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen II* (Glückstadt – Hamburg – New York, 1953), 235.

⁴⁴ A fuller socio-historical analysis of private names would be needed, however, to substantiate the issue.

⁴⁵ S.J. SEIDLMAYER, ‘Bemerkungen zu den Felsinschriften des Alten Reiches auf Elephantine’, in: S.J. SEIDLMAYER (ed.), *Texte und Denkmäler des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*, Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae 3 (Berlin, 2005), 301-3. The “hieratisation” of Sehel is also evident from the location of rock inscriptions on that island, cf. A. GASSE, V. RONDOT, *Les inscriptions de Séhel*, Mémoires de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale 126 (Cairo, 2007).