

# URBANISM AND TEMPLE RELIGION IN EGYPT: A COMMENT ON HIERAKONPOLIS\*

By RICHARD BUSSMANN

Hierakonpolis is a central place of Egyptian state formation and key for understanding urbanism and the emergence of sacred kingship in Egypt. Excavations and interpretation of the site focus on the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods, while its later history is little explored. The article sets a review of the Middle Kingdom evidence from Hierakonpolis against a discussion of urbanism and temple religion in Egypt. Urbanism is defined as a driving force of the development and longevity of local temples. Unlike in Mesopotamia, however, it accounts less for the integration of different local gods in the Egyptian pantheon.

ريتشارد بوسمان  
المدنية وديانة المعابد في مصر  
تعليق على هيراكونوبوليس

تعد هيراكونوبوليس مكانا مركزيا لتكوين الدولة المصرية، ومفتاحا لفهم المدنية و بزوغ الملكية المقدسة في مصر. تتركز أعمال الحفائر والدراسة في الموقع على عصر ما قبل الأسرات وأوائل الأسرات، في حين استكشف القليل من تاريخها المتأخر. تستعرض المقالة ما عثر عليه من أدلة من هيراكونوبوليس تعود للدولة الوسطى، ومناقشة المدنية وديانة المعابد في مصر. حيث تعرف المدنية أنها قوة محركة لتنمية وتعمير المعابد المحلية، وذلك بخلاف بلاد ما بين النهرين. بيد أن الدراسة لم تتطرق كثيرا إلى اندماج الآلهة المحلية المختلفة في مجموعات الآلهة المصرية

HIERAKONPOLIS has become an epitome of early Pharaonic kingship after the discovery of the Narmer palette and associated finds in the sacred precinct of Horus at Nekhen in 1898. The iconicity of the palette can easily overshadow the complexity of social, cultural, and environmental trajectories forming the context for an interpretation of the piece. Archaeologically, the lack of context is maybe the most striking feature of the excavation reports produced by J. E. Quibell and F. W. Green.<sup>1</sup> They left behind a landscape of insular sites of outstanding importance for Pharaonic Egypt but little understood in view of their stratigraphy and coherence. Subsequent fieldwork in the area of the Archaic temple and town by J. Garstang and H. Jones in 1905,<sup>2</sup> W. A. Fairservis in 1967–9 and 1971–81,<sup>3</sup> and M. Hoffman until 1989 has brought to light

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<sup>1</sup> J. E. Quibell, *Hierakonpolis I* (ERA 4; London, 1900); J. E. Quibell and F. W. Green, *Hierakonpolis II* (ERA 5; London, 1902).

<sup>2</sup> B. Adams, *Ancient Nekhen: Garstang in the City of Hierakonpolis* (Egyptian Studies Association Publication 3; New Malden, 1995); J. Garstang, 'Excavations at Hierakonpolis, at Esna, and in Nubia', *ASAE* 8 (1907), 132–48, here: 134–6.

<sup>3</sup> W. A. Fairservis Jr., K. Weeks, and M. Hoffman, 'Preliminary Report on the First Two Seasons at Hierakonpolis', *JARCE* 9 (1971–2), 7–68; W. A. Fairservis Jr., *The Hierakonpolis Project: Season January to March 1978. Excavation of the Temple Area on the Kom el Gemuwwia* (Occasional Papers in Anthropology 1; Poughskeepsie, 1983); W. A. Fairservis, *The Hierakonpolis Project: Season January to March 1981. Excavation on the Kom Gemuwwia. Excavation of the Archaic Remains East of the Nighed Gate* (Occasional Papers in Anthropology 3; Poughskeepsie, 1986).



important new features, such as the niched gateway, but the overall picture of the site remains incoherent due to a lack of integration of data in the excavation reports.<sup>4</sup>

B. Adams started to investigate Hierakonpolis through analysis of the digging diaries and field notes made by Green and Garstang.<sup>5</sup> Today, the study of manuscripts and objects forms an important source for the archaeology of the site.<sup>6</sup> A review of archival sources, unpublished objects and material from on-going excavations adds up to a recognizable body of evidence for Middle Kingdom activity at the site presented in the first part of the article (fig. 1). Excavations and interpretation of Hierakonpolis focus on the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods and do not provide a ready-made context for an interpretation of the later material.<sup>7</sup> The second part of the article embeds the development of Hierakonpolis in a model of Egyptian urbanism and temple religion. The discussion adds a stronger diachronic perspective to previous contributions in the field and explores the implications of the model for an explanation of the evidence at Hierakonpolis.

### Hierakonpolis in the Middle Kingdom

Royal activity at Hierakonpolis is attested throughout the Middle Kingdom. Quibell and Green discovered a reworked lintel by Senwosret I 'high above' the Main Deposit<sup>8</sup> and a sandstone block and the offering table CG 23010 of the same king.<sup>9</sup> B. Porter and R. Moss list in their section 'Town enclosure' a stamped brick of Senwosret I mentioned in J. G. Wilkinson's manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> J. Spencer believes that the object was a plaque from a royal foundation deposit rather than a stamped mud brick.<sup>11</sup> Three

<sup>4</sup> Summary in Adams, *Ancient Nekhen*, 3–13. Results of current fieldwork undertaken by Elisabeth Walters, who was a member of Hoffman's team, are unpublished. For re-examination of material from Hoffman's excavation, see G. Di Pietro, 'Nekhen 10N5W Revisited: Charting Ceramic Changes', *Nekhen News* 24 (2012), 13–14, and K. Nagaya, 'Square 10N5W: Innovations in Lithic Production', *Nekhen News* 24 (2012), 14–15.

<sup>5</sup> B. Adams, *Ancient Hierakonpolis* (London, 1974); B. Adams, *Ancient Hierakonpolis Supplement* (London, 1974); Adams, *Ancient Nekhen*.

<sup>6</sup> R. Bussmann, *Die Provinztempel Ägyptens von der 0.–11. Dynastie: Archäologie und Geschichte einer gesellschaftlichen Institution zwischen Residenz und Provinz* (PdÄ 30; Boston, 2010), 42–58.

<sup>7</sup> Later material discovered in current excavations includes a Third Dynasty pottery deposit in the Predynastic elite cemetery HK6, see R. Friedman, 'Remembering the Ancestors: HK6 in 2008', *Nekhen News* 20 (2008), 10–11; and late Second and early Third Dynasty pottery around the Fort, see R. Friedman and D. Raue, 'New Observations on the Fort at Hierakonpolis', in Z. Hawass and J. E. Richards (eds), *The Archaeology and Art of Ancient Egypt: Essays in Honor of David B. O'Connor* (Cairo, 2007), I, 309–36. For work in Old to New Kingdom tombs, see R. Friedman, A. Maish, A. G. Fahmy, J. C. Darnell, and E. D. Johnson, 'Preliminary Report on Field Work at Hierakonpolis: 1996–1998', *JARCE* 36 (1999), 1–35, here: 29–34; R. Friedman, 'The Dynastic Tombs at Hierakonpolis: Painted Tombs of the Early Eighteenth Dynasty', in W. V. Davies (ed.), *Colour and Painting in Ancient Egypt* (London, 2001), 106–12; W. V. Davies, 'The Dynastic Tombs at Hierakonpolis: The Lower Group and the Artist Sedjemnetjeru', in Davies (ed.), *Colour and Painting*, 113–25; R. Friedman, 'The Decoration of Dynastic Tombs at Hierakonpolis: New Insights into Life in the Provincial South', in R. Danforth (ed.), *Preserving Egypt's Cultural Heritage: The Conservation Work of the American Research Center in Egypt* (Cairo, 2010), 19–22; J. Majer and R. Friedman, 'Rock Cut Tombs of the Second Intermediate Period', *ASAE* 82 (2008), 99–100.

<sup>8</sup> Edinburgh, National Museums of Scotland, 1956.349. Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis II*, 57; Adams, *Ancient Hierakonpolis Supplement*, 160; E. Hirsch, *Kultpolitik und Tempelbauprogramme der 12. Dynastie: Untersuchungen zu den Göttertempeln im Alten Ägypten* (Achet A 3; Berlin, 2004), 199, Dok. 60; R. Friedman, 'Hierakonpolis in Edinburgh', *Nekhen News* 24 (2012), 26 and illustration on page 17.

<sup>9</sup> Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis II*, 15, 53; Hirsch, *Kultpolitik*, 199–200, Dok. 61 and 62; A. Kamal, *Tables d'offrandes* (CGC 23001–23256; Cairo, 1909), 9, pl. 5.

<sup>10</sup> PM V, 191.

<sup>11</sup> J. Spencer, *Brick Architecture in Ancient Egypt* (Warminster, 1979), 144 n.36. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for alerting me to this reference.



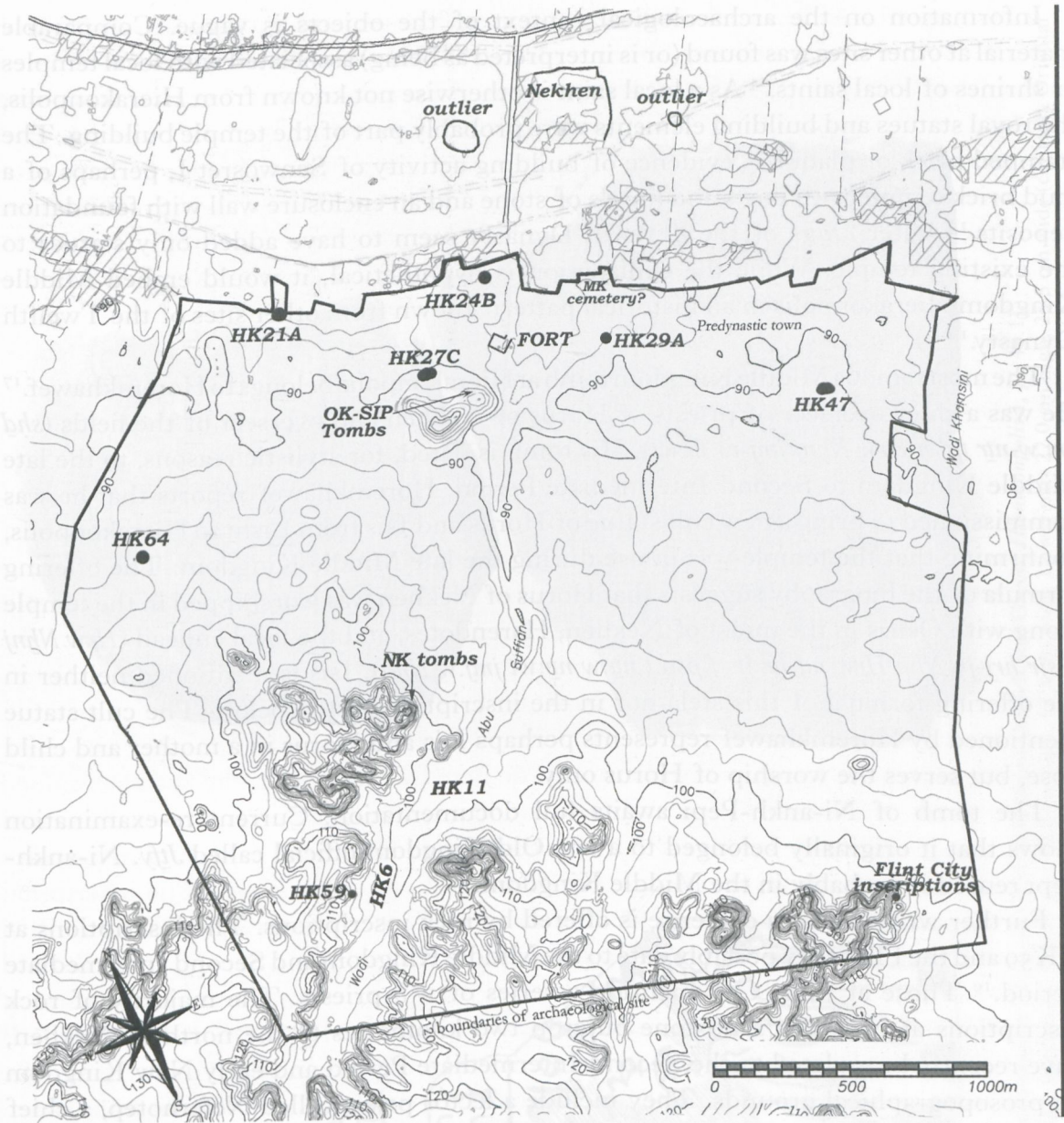


FIG.1. Map of Hierakonpolis with sites mentioned in the text, kindly compiled by R. Friedman (courtesy of Hierakonpolis Expedition).

Middle Kingdom royal statues of Senwosret II, Senwosret III, and Amenemhet III (CG 422, 423, 425) are registered in the Journal d’entrée in 1889 and 1892 (i.e. prior to Green and Quibell’s excavation) as coming from Hierakonpolis.<sup>12</sup> An additional statue of Senwosret III is located in the Petrie Museum (UC 14635). The cartouches of a Sobekhotep and an Intef date to the Thirteenth and Seventeenth Dynasty, respectively.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> L. Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo II* (CGC Nos 1–1294; Berlin, 1925), 30–2 and pls 68–9; Hirsch, *Kultpolitik*, 81, 91, 112, 309, 339, Dok. 192, 269.  
<sup>13</sup> Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis II*, 11. Adams, *Ancient Hierakonpolis Supplement*, 29 shows a cartouche of Sobekhotep belonging to either a royal or private inscription. The pieces are not discussed by C. Eder, *Die Barkenkapelle des Königs Sobekhotep III. in Elkab: Beiträge zur Bautätigkeit der 13. und 17. Dynastie an den Göttertempeln Ägyptens* (Elkab 7; Turnhout, 2002), 133–50. Garstang, *ASAE* 8, 136 reports Eleventh Dynasty inscriptions and may refer here to a block with the name Intef. However, information is too vague for a true understanding.



Information on the archaeological context of the objects is vague. Comparable material at other sites was found (or is interpreted as being) associated with local temples or shrines of local saints.<sup>14</sup> As a local saint is otherwise not known from Hierakonpolis, the royal statues and building elements were probably part of the temple building. The stamped brick or plaque is evidence of building activity of Senwosret I, perhaps of a mud brick temple with posts and lintels of stone and an enclosure wall with foundation deposits.<sup>15</sup> Later kings of the Twelfth Dynasty seem to have added only statues to the existing temple. While the explanation is hypothetical, it would embed Middle Kingdom Hierakonpolis in an historical pattern known from other sites of the Twelfth Dynasty.<sup>16</sup>

The most famous Middle Kingdom tomb at Hierakonpolis belongs to Horemkhawef.<sup>17</sup> He was a chief overseer of priests of Horus of Nekhen and overseer of the fields (*shd hm.w-ntr tpj n Hrw Nhnj jmj-r3 3h.wt*). His tomb is dated, for stylistic reasons, to the late Middle Kingdom to Second Intermediate Period. Horemkhawef reports that he was commissioned to bring a new cult statue of Horus and Isis from Lisht to Hierakonpolis, confirming that the temple was in use during the late Middle Kingdom. The offering formula of the biography suggests that Horus of Nekhen was worshipped in the temple along with Osiris in the midst of Nekhen, Harendotes, and the local ennead (*Hrw Nhnj Wsjr hrj-jb Nhn Hrw nd-hr jt=f psd.t ntr.w ntr.wt jmj.w Nhn*). Isis is mentioned neither in the offering formula of this stela nor in the inscriptions listed below. The cult statue mentioned by Horemkhawef represents perhaps Isis and Horus in a mother and child pose, but serves the worship of Horus only.

The tomb of Ni-ankh-Pepi awaits full documentation. Current re-examination shows that it originally belonged to a late Old Kingdom official called *Jtfy*. Ni-ankh-Pepi reused it probably in the Middle Kingdom.<sup>18</sup>

Further written *in situ* evidence is offered by rock inscriptions. The inscriptions at HK59 and the Flint City possibly date to the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period.<sup>19</sup> Those at Flint City mention a series of *w<sup>c</sup>b*-priests. The majority of rock inscriptions at HK64, a sandstone outcrop two kilometres to the north of Nekhen, have recently been dated to the Second Intermediate Period and early New Kingdom on prosopographical grounds. They include a lector priest called Neferhotep, a chief priest of a temple, another lector priest called Horheriat, two commanders of the ruler's crew, one of whom is called Renseneb, several Chiefs of Tens of Upper Egypt and Dignitaries and Mouths of Nekhen, and an Overseer of the Unit (*w<sup>c</sup>r.t*) of Sculptors.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Hirsch, *Kultpolitik*, passim; D. Franke, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib auf Elephantine: Geschichte eines Provinzheiligtums im Mittleren Reich* (SAGA 9; Heidelberg, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> For a parallel in Elephantine, see W. Kaiser, G. Dreyer, H. Jaritz, A. Krekeler, T. Schläger, and M. Ziermann, 'Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine'. 13./14. Grabungsbericht', *MDAIK* 43 (1987), 78–88.

<sup>16</sup> Hirsch, *Kultpolitik*, 166–7, Karte 1–8.

<sup>17</sup> W. C. Hayes, 'Horemkhacuef of Nekhen and his Trip to It-towe', *JEA* 33 (1947), 3–11; Davies, 'Dynastic Tombs', in Davies (ed.), *Colour and Painting*, 116–9.

<sup>18</sup> H. G. Fischer, 'Varia Aegyptiaca', *JARCE* 2 (1963), 17–51, here: 47–9. Davies, 'Dynastic Tombs', in Davies (ed.), *Colour and Painting*, 113–16.

<sup>19</sup> HK59: F. Hardtke, 'Off to a Rocky Start: The Rock Art Survey of HK', *Nekhen News* 21 (2009), 26–7. Flint City: R. Friedman and D. Youngblood, 'Concession Survey', *Nekhen News* 11 (1999), 7–8. The inscriptions are dated in this article to the New Kingdom. R. Friedman kindly showed me the original drawings of the inscriptions and proposed a revised date to the Middle Kingdom.

<sup>20</sup> R. Friedman, 'Pebbles, Pots and Petroglyphs: Excavations at HK64', in R. Friedmana and B. Adams (eds), *The Followers of Horus: Studies Dedicated to Michael Allen Hoffman, 1944–1990* (Egyptian Studies







The original position of the following objects is uncertain: two non-royal stelae of those published by Quibell and Green, today in Chicago and Edinburgh, can be dated to the Middle Kingdom or Second Intermediate Period, judging from their stylistic similarity to the stela of Horemkhawef. Parts of the inscribed surface of the Chicago stela have vanished since its publication by Quibell and Green.<sup>21</sup> I include a photo of the piece taken in 1948 (fig. 2a, 2b), but I have not inspected the original. The object would need careful surface cleaning and fresh photos for clarification of the reading.

- (1) [h<sub>tp</sub>-dj-njswt H<sub>rw</sub> N]h<sub>nj</sub> Ws<sub>jr</sub> h<sub>rj</sub>-jb N<sub>hn</sub> H<sub>rw</sub> n<sub>d</sub>-h<sub>r</sub>-j<sub>t</sub>=f  
 (2) [n<sub>tr</sub>:w n<sub>tr</sub>:wt j<sub>mj</sub>.]w N<sub>hn</sub> dj=s<sub>n</sub> p<sub>r</sub>:t-h<sub>rw</sub> t<sub>3</sub> h<sub>nq</sub>.t k<sub>3</sub>.w 3<sub>pd</sub>.w h<sub>t</sub>.t n<sub>b</sub>.t  
 (3) [n<sub>fr</sub>:t n<sub>h</sub>.t n<sub>tr</sub>]j<sub>m</sub> n k<sub>3</sub> n h<sub>m</sub>-n<sub>tr</sub> t<sub>pj</sub> n H<sub>rw</sub> N<sub>hnj</sub> J<sub>b</sub>-j<sub>f</sub>  
 (4) [j<sub>rj</sub>.n w<sub>r</sub>] m<sub>d</sub>w š<sub>m</sub><sup>c</sup>.w D<sub>d</sub>[j] m<sub>s</sub>[.n] b<sub>3</sub>k.t n.t h<sub>q</sub>3 N<sub>b</sub>w-w<sub>b</sub>n=s  
 (5) ??? s z<sub>3</sub>=f h<sub>m</sub>-n<sub>tr</sub> t<sub>p</sub>[j] H<sub>rj</sub>

‘(1) [An offering which the king gives and Horus of Nekhe]n, Osiris in the midst of Nekhen, Harendotes (2) [and the gods and goddesses who reside i]n Nekhen. May they give a voice offering, bread, beer, oxen, birds, and all [good] things (3) on [which a god lives] for the ka of the First Prophet of Horus of Nekhen Ib-iai, (4) [made by the Chief] of the Tens of Upper Egypt Ded[i], born [of] the servant of the ruler Nebu-webenes.<sup>22</sup>(5) ???<sup>23</sup> his son, the First Prophet Hori.’

In the bottom field, the owner of the stela is depicted with his wife, the aforementioned son Hori, another male person, and two daughters. The inscription above the seated couple reads: h<sub>m</sub>-n<sub>tr</sub> J<sub>b</sub>-j<sub>f</sub> h<sub>m</sub>.t=f [...] ‘Priest Ib-iai. His wife [...]’. The inscription above the first son reads: z<sub>3</sub>=f h<sub>m</sub>-n<sub>tr</sub> H<sub>rj</sub> ‘his son, the prophet Hori’. The inscription above the second male person is lost. The daughters are labelled z<sub>3</sub>.t[=f] N<sub>b</sub>w[...] ‘[his] daughter Nebu[...]’ and z<sub>3</sub>.t[=f] N<sub>b</sub>w-H<sub>rw</sub>(?) ‘[his] daughter Nebu-Hor(?)’. Several officials called Ib-iai and Hor/Hori are known from inscriptions on objects found at Edfu and other sites, but their titles differ from those mentioned on the Chicago stela.<sup>24</sup>

The Edinburgh stela is in a bad state of preservation (fig. 3a, 3b).<sup>25</sup> Again, the inscription as published by Quibell and Green is the best basis for translation to date.

- (1) h<sub>tp</sub> dj njswt H[rw N<sub>hnj</sub>] Ws<sub>jr</sub> h<sub>rj</sub>-jb <N<sub>hn</sub>> dj=f p<sub>r</sub>:t-h<sub>rw</sub> j<sub>r</sub>t.t  
 (2) k<sub>3</sub>.w 3<sub>p</sub>[d.w] ??? n<sub>fr</sub> [...] m<sub>s</sub>j.n J[...] z<sub>3</sub>.t  
 (3) J<sub>m</sub>n [...] s<sub>n</sub>=f n<sub>h</sub>-s-w-n<sub>ht</sub>? [...] m<sub>s</sub>  
 (4) j [...] j [...] s [...] s<sub>n</sub>.t=f S<sub>t</sub>.t=f

Association Publication 2, OMS 20; Oxford, 1992), 99–106; R. Friedman and B. Adams, ‘Pots, Pebbles and Petroglyphs II. 1996 Excavations at Hierakonpolis Locality HK64’, in A. Leahy and J. Tait (eds), *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H. S. Smith* (EES OP 13; London, 2000), 101–8; M. Marée, ‘The Rock Inscriptions at HK64’, *Nekhen News* 24 (2012), 28–9.

<sup>21</sup> OIM 5032. Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis* I, 46.1.

<sup>22</sup> The reading of the name and title of Nebu-webenes was kindly suggested to me by W. Grajetzki.

<sup>23</sup> Probably title and name of the wife.

<sup>24</sup> D. Franke, *Personendaten aus dem Mittleren Reich (20.–16. Jahrhundert v. Chr.): Dossiers 1–796* (ÄA 41; Wiesbaden, 1984), dossiers 59–64 and 415–25; D. Farout, ‘Trois nouveaux monuments de la famille des gouverneurs d’Edfou à la Deuxième Période Intermédiaire’, *RdE* 58 (2007), 41–69.

<sup>25</sup> NMS 1956.346. Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis* I, 46.6. The object will be discussed by M. Marée in a future issue of *Nekhen News*.



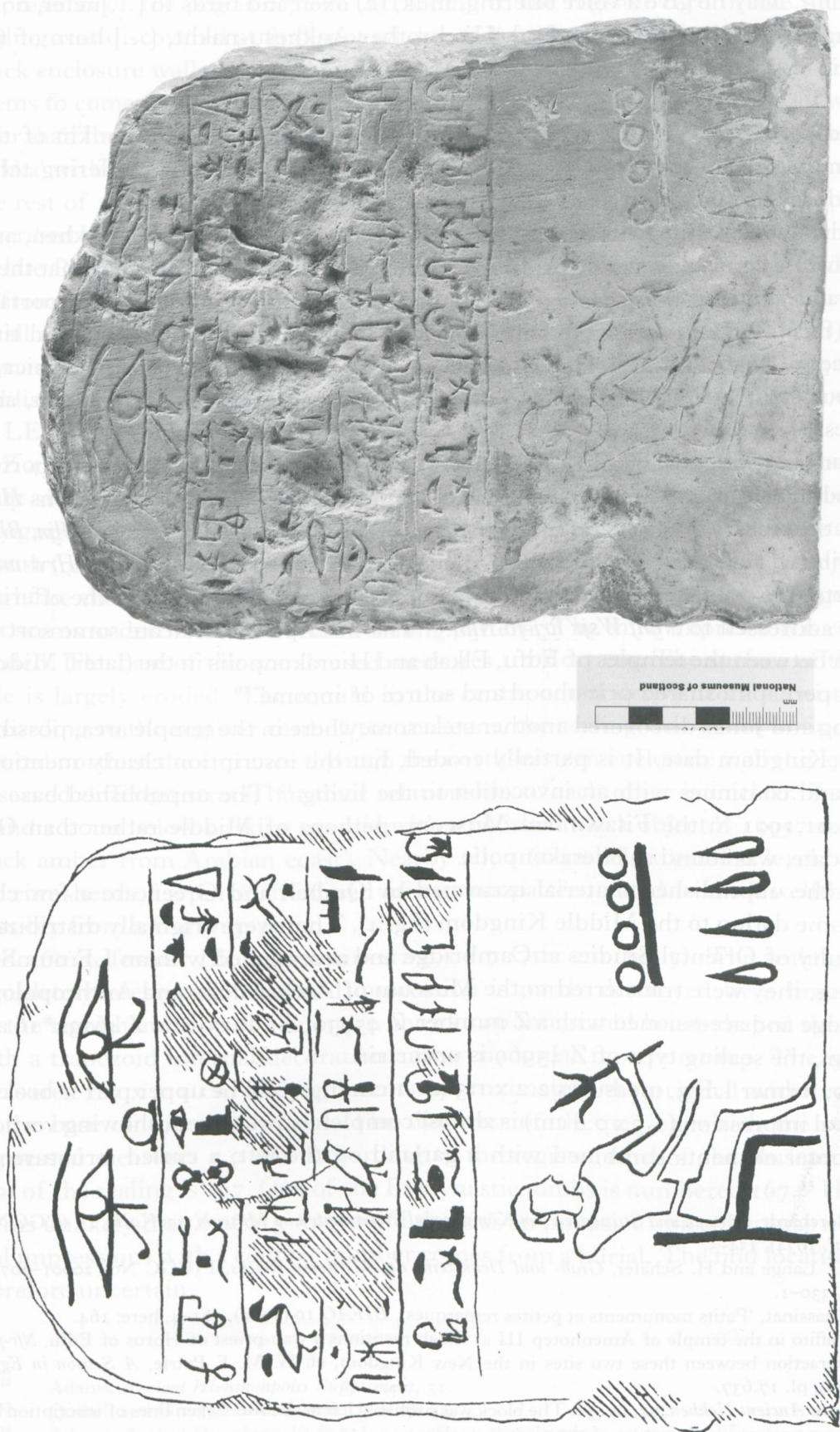


FIG. 3A. Edinburgh, National Museums of Scotland NMS A.1956.346 (from Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis I*, pl. 46.6).  
FIG. 3B. Edinburgh, National Museums of Scotland NMS A.1956.346 (courtesy National Museums Scotland).



'(1) An offering which the king gives and H[orus of Nekhen] and Osiris in the midst <of Nekhen>. May he give a voice offering, milk, (2) oxen and birds to [...]nefer, born of the daughter of I[...] (3) Amun[...]. His brother Ankhesu-nakht, [...] born of (4) [...]. His sister Setef.'

The badly preserved lines 3 and 4 seem to list family members of the kin of the stela's owner. The bottom field shows a man (or woman?) before an offering table smelling a lotus flower.

Ib-iai, the owner of the Chicago stela, was a First Prophet of Horus of Nekhen, and Horemkhawef a chief overseer of priests of Horus of Nekhen. This implies that there was a hierarchy among the priests of the temple and that the temple was important enough to receive revenues for the subsistence of its priesthood. The name and title of the owner of the Edinburgh stela are unclear. The gods mentioned on the Chicago and Edinburgh stelae include Horus of Nekhen, Osiris in the midst of Nekhen, and Harendotes.

A similar range of gods is addressed in the offering formula on other objects reported to be found in 'Kom el-Ahmar'. The granite statue of Mmj CG 1263 mentions *Hrw Nhnj*<sup>26</sup> and the stela CG 23318, referring to *Jjj-mr*, mentions *Nhb.t*, *Wsjr hrj-jb Nhn*, *Bhd.tj* and *ntr.w ntr.wt jmj.w Nhb*.<sup>27</sup> The stela of the lector priest of Horus of Edfu, *Hrw-mnj*, is of uncertain provenance but possibly originates from Hierakonpolis, as the offering formula is addressed to *Nhnj Wsjr hrj-jb Nhn*.<sup>28</sup> The inscriptions indicate some sort of interaction between the temples of Edfu, Elkab and Hierakonpolis in the (later) Middle Kingdom, perhaps a shared priesthood and source of income.<sup>29</sup>

Garstang and Jones discovered another stela somewhere in the temple area, possibly of Middle Kingdom date. It is partially eroded, but the inscription clearly mentions *Hrw Nhnj* and continues with an invocation to the living.<sup>30</sup> The unpublished base of a statue E.01.1901 in the Fitzwilliam Museum, perhaps of Middle rather than Old Kingdom date, was found at Hierakonpolis.<sup>31</sup>

Among the unpublished material excavated by Quibell and Green are a few clay sealings, some dating to the Middle Kingdom (fig. 4). They were originally distributed to the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Cambridge and accessioned with an LE number. In the 1990s, they were transferred to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge and accessioned with a Z number. Z 45930, Z 46015, and Z 46132\*16 are peg sealings, the sealing type of Z 45969 is uncertain.

Z 45930, former LE 3, measures 2.2 x 1.5 x 1.1 cm (fig. 5). The upper part is broken off. The oval impression (1.5 x 0.8 cm) is almost completely preserved, showing vertical and horizontal elements combined with a garland on the left, a curled structure on

<sup>26</sup> L. Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo*, IV (CGC Nos 1-1294; Berlin, 1934), 134-5.

<sup>27</sup> H. O. Lange and H. Schäfer, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs*, I (CGC Nos 20001-20780; Berlin, 1902), 330-1.

<sup>28</sup> É. Chassinat, 'Petits monuments et petites remarques', *BIFAO* 10 (1912), 161-4, here: 164.

<sup>29</sup> A graffito in the temple of Amenhotep III at Elkab mentions a wab-priest of Horus of Edfu, *Nfr-pri*, indicating interaction between these two sites in the New Kingdom, cf. W. M. F. Petrie, *A Season in Egypt* (London, 1887), pl. 17.637.

<sup>30</sup> Adams, *Ancient Nekhen*, 92, fig. 39. The block was probably left at the site. Seven lines of inscription but no depictions are preserved, the nature of the piece is unclear.

<sup>31</sup> Bussmann, *Provinztempel*, 52, cat. No. H1012.



top and a sign similar to the hieroglyph of a seal on the bottom. The diameter of the impression of the peg is 0.7 cm. According to the register card of the museum, the sealing was discovered at find spot 98, located near one of the two south-eastern mud brick enclosure walls of the temple (fig. 9).<sup>32</sup> The material associated with find spot 98 seems to come from beneath the footing of the wall, in which case the wall would date later than the material. The chronological range of the material is mixed. One 'object in dukka' with criss-cross pattern is dated by the excavators to the Twelfth Dynasty, while the rest of the datable material is earlier and includes: a fragment of a porphyry vase inscribed with the name of Khasekhemwy, a pot that looks like a wavy-handled vase of late Predynastic date, an alabaster vase Z 15592, a pot UC 15100 (Third Dynasty, or from burial?) and several pieces classified as clay sealings, including a non-inscribed small mud stopper Z 45929A (= LE 2A), a flat mud disc Z 45929B (= LE 2B), an Early Dynastic sealing with a pictorial impression showing a row of birds Z 45932 (= LE 5, published by Quibell and Green<sup>33</sup>), and another debased pictorial impression Z 45963 (= LE 38, provenance not entirely clear).

Z 45969, former LE 43, measures 2.3 x 2.3 x 1.2 cm (fig. 6). The top, bottom and right sides are broken. Only one of the three oval impressions is preserved to some recognizable degree. It shows a circle around a squatting (?) figure with one arm to the mouth (or does this represent a beard?) and the other hanging down. The adjacent sign might be the upper part of an 'nh'-sign. The impression to the right is largely eroded but seems to derive from the same sealing pattern. The third impression is completely eroded. The base of the scarab used measures 1.0 x 0.7 cm. The surface of the reverse side is largely eroded. The mould in the centre could derive from a twisted string. According to the register card of the museum, the sealing was found at find spot 123 located north to the entrance through the north-eastern enclosure wall (fig. 9).<sup>34</sup> Green observed different strata, but their relationship to each other is unclear. Z 45969 was found 1.20 m below walking ground with a polished black object Z 15957 and a 'fancy black amber from Arabian coast'. Nearby (?), 1.60 m below ground level, was found the rim sherd of a pot with incised criss-cross pattern dated to the Twelfth Dynasty, possibly from a C-group pot.

Z 46015, former LE 89, measures 2.0 x 1.7 x 1.1 cm (fig. 7). The sealing is almost completely preserved. The oval impression is partly destroyed by a finger imprint on the right hand side. The pattern shows two integrated heart-shaped designs, each with a trapezoid internal decoration and a triangular motive on top. The impression measures 1.0 x 1.4 cm and represents approximately the original width and length of the base of the scarab used. The diameter of the peg on which the sealing was impressed measures 1.0 cm. According to the register card of the museum, the find spot of the sealing is 167. One of the Predynastic tombs is numbered 167.<sup>35</sup> However, it seems unlikely that Z 46015 was found there as an intrusive object because none of the seal impressions with a context number comes from a burial. The find location remains therefore uncertain.

<sup>32</sup> Adams, *Ancient Hierakonpolis Supplement*, 31.

<sup>33</sup> Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis II*, pl. 71.44.

<sup>34</sup> Adams, *Ancient Hierakonpolis Supplement*, 58.

<sup>35</sup> Adams, *Ancient Hierakonpolis Supplement*, 93.



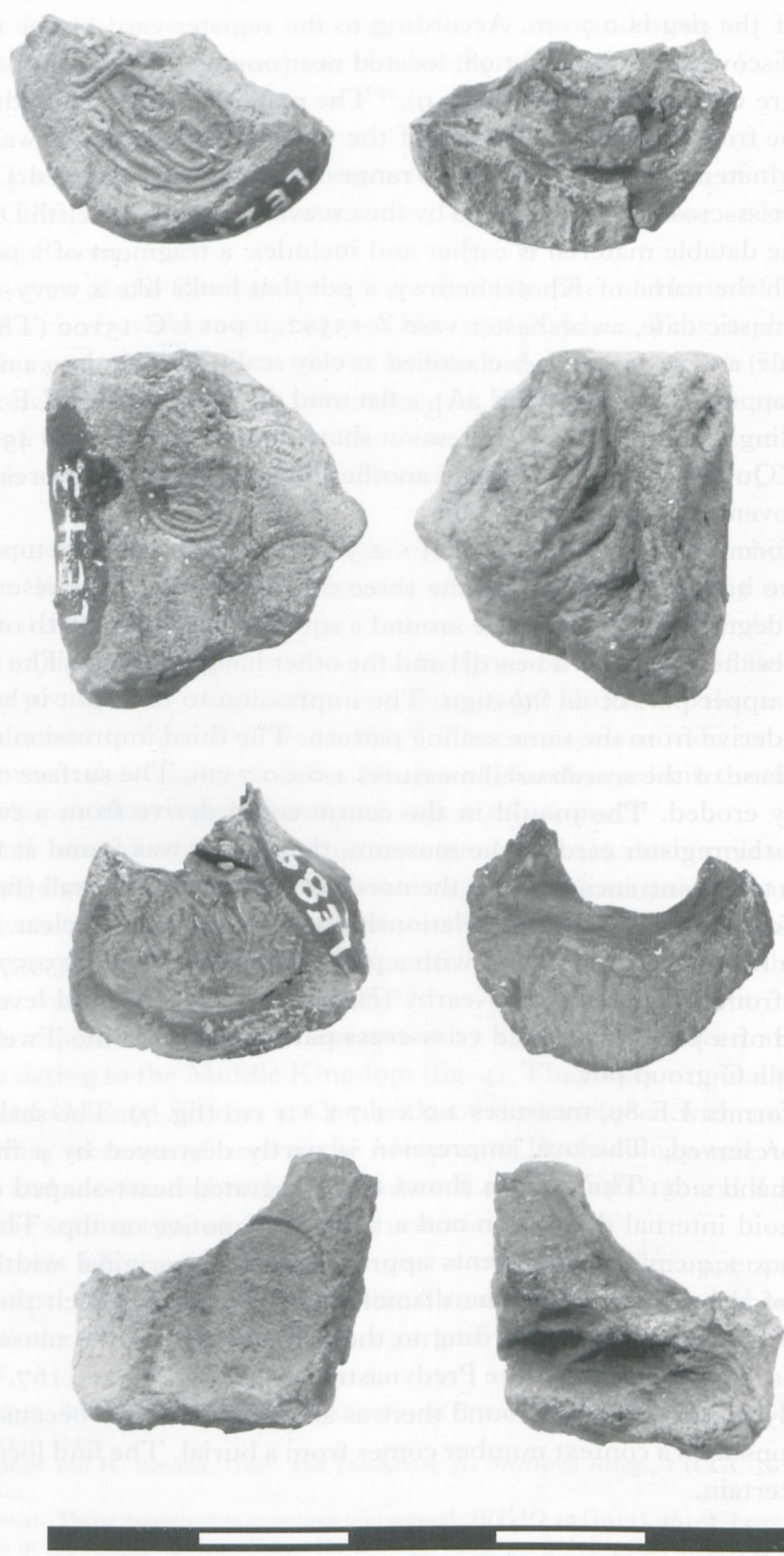


FIG. 4. Middle Kingdom clay sealings from Hierakonpolis in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.  
From top to bottom: Z 45930, Z 45969, Z 46015, Z 46132\*16  
(photograph by the author; courtesy Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge).



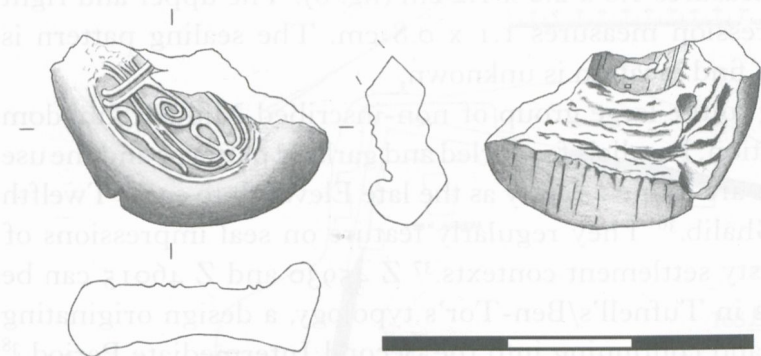


FIG. 5. Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Z 45930 (drawing by the author and C. von Elm).

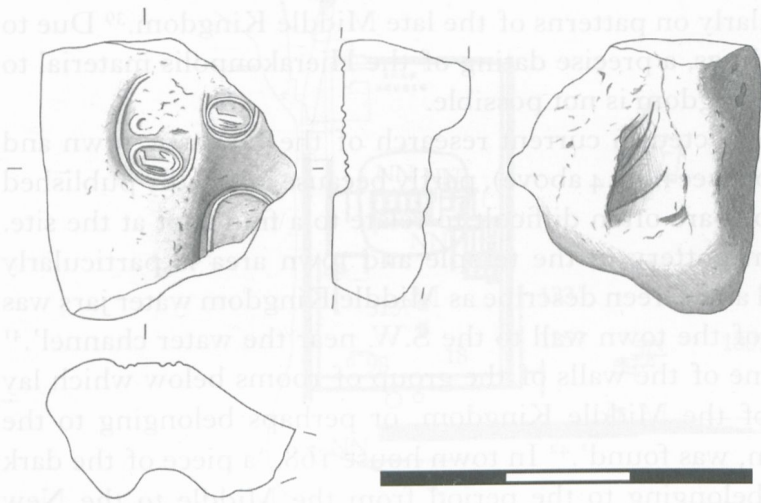


FIG. 6. Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Z 45969 (drawing by the author and C. von Elm).

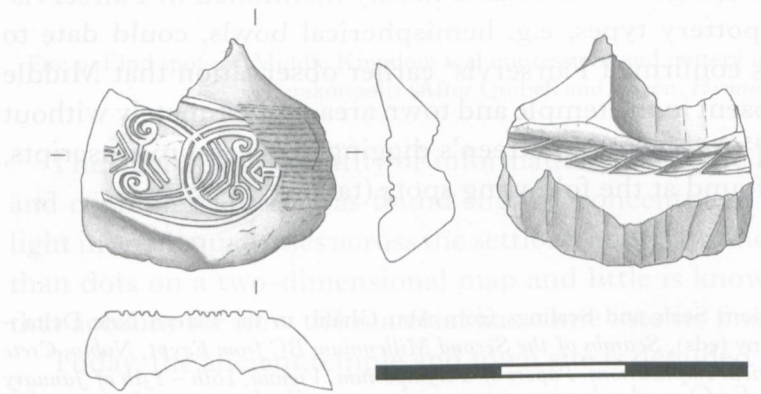


FIG. 7. Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Z 46015 (drawing by the author and C. von Elm).

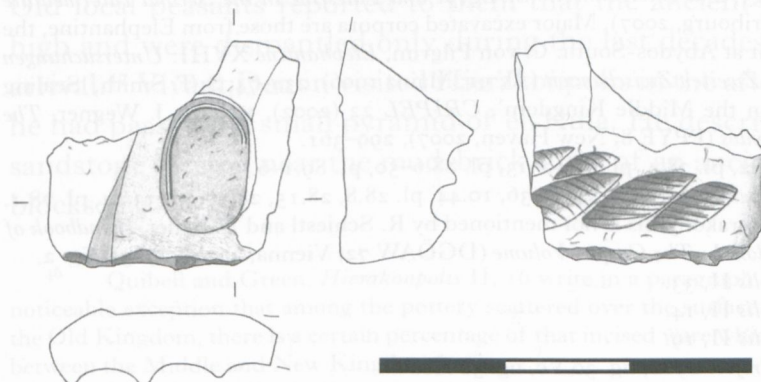


FIG. 8. Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Z 46132\*16 (drawing by the author and C. von Elm).



Z 46132\*16, former LE 209, measures 1.8 x 2.0 x 1.2 cm (fig. 8). The upper and right side are broken off. The impression measures 1.1 x 0.8 cm. The sealing pattern is almost completely eroded. The find location is unknown.

The sealing patterns belong to the large group of non-inscribed Middle Kingdom scarabs used in local administration. Parallels for curled and garland patterns and the use of 'amuletic' hieroglyphic signs are found as early as the late Eleventh to early Twelfth Dynasty material from Abu Ghalib.<sup>36</sup> They regularly feature on seal impressions of Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasty settlement contexts.<sup>37</sup> Z 45930 and Z 46015 can be classified as design class 6B1-2 in Tufnell's/Ben-Tor's typology, a design originating in the early Middle Kingdom and continuing into the Second Intermediate Period.<sup>38</sup> The encircled man displayed on Z 45969 does not seem to have a close parallel, but encircled *nfr*-signs feature regularly on patterns of the late Middle Kingdom.<sup>39</sup> Due to the limited number of clay sealings, a precise dating of the Hierakonpolis material to the early, high, or late Middle Kingdom is not possible.

Pottery is almost entirely neglected in current research of the Dynastic town and temple area of Hierakonpolis (but see note 4 above), partly because it is badly published and individual pots in collections are often difficult to relate to a find spot at the site. Evidence for Middle Kingdom pottery in the temple and town area is particularly patchy.<sup>40</sup> A pile of what Quibell and Green describe as Middle Kingdom water jars was heaped against the 'outer face of the town wall to the S.W. near the water channel'.<sup>41</sup> They also report that 'under one of the walls of the group of rooms below which lay the main deposit a water-jar of the Middle Kingdom, or perhaps belonging to the early part of the New Kingdom, was found'.<sup>42</sup> In town house 168, 'a piece of the dark ware with incised cross lines belonging to the period from the Middle to the New Kingdom was found'.<sup>43</sup> Middle Kingdom material is hardly mentioned in Fairservis' reports although some of his pottery types, e.g. hemispherical bowls, could date to the Middle Kingdom.<sup>44</sup> Adams confirmed Fairservis' earlier observation that Middle Kingdom pottery was almost absent in the temple and town area, unfortunately without specifying the exact find spots.<sup>45</sup> According to Green's digging diary and manuscripts, Middle Kingdom pottery was found at the following spots (table 1, fig. 9):

<sup>36</sup> T. Bagh, 'Early Middle Kingdom Seals and Sealings from Abu Ghâlib in the Estern Nile Delta - Observations', in M. Bietak and E. Czerny (eds), *Scarabs of the Second Millennium BC from Egypt, Nubia, Crete and the Levant: Chronological and Historical Implications. Papers of a Symposium, Vienna, 10th - 13th of January 2002* (DGÖAW 35; CCEM 7; Vienna, 2004), 13-26.

<sup>37</sup> D. Ben-Tor, *Scarabs, Chronology, and Interconnections: Egypt and Palestine in the Second Intermediate Period* (OBO, Series Archaeologica 27; Fribourg, 2007). Major excavated corpora are those from Elephantine, the Nubian forts, and the planned settlement at Abydos-South: C. von Pilgrim, *Elephantine XVIII: Untersuchungen in der Stadt des Mittleren Reiches und der Zweiten Zwischenzeit* (AV 91; Mainz 1996), 234-74; S. T. Smith, 'Sealing Practice, Administration and Literacy in the Middle Kingdom', *CRIPPEL* 22 (2002), 173-94; J. Wegner, *The Mortuary Temple of Senwosret III at Abydos* (PPYE 8; New Haven, 2007), 299-361.

<sup>38</sup> Ben-Tor, *Scarabs*, 25, pl. 14.1-42, pl. 38.4, pl. 60.12-13, pl. 88.6-50, pl. 89.1-6.

<sup>39</sup> Ben Tor, *Scarabs*, pl. 7.63, pl. 10.14, 10.15, 10.23, 10.36, 10.44, pl. 28.8, 28.15, 28.17, pl. 33.44, pl. 78.1.

<sup>40</sup> The town and temple area of Hierakonpolis is not mentioned by R. Schiestl and A. Seiler, *Handbook of the Pottery of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom I: The Corpus Volume* (DGÖAW 72; Vienna, 2012), 27-31, fig. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis* II, 33.

<sup>42</sup> Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis* II, 14.

<sup>43</sup> Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis* II, 19.

<sup>44</sup> Fairservis, *The Hierakonpolis Project 1981*, fig. 30 Vc, fig. 31 Xb.

<sup>45</sup> Adams, *Ancient Nekhen*, 76.



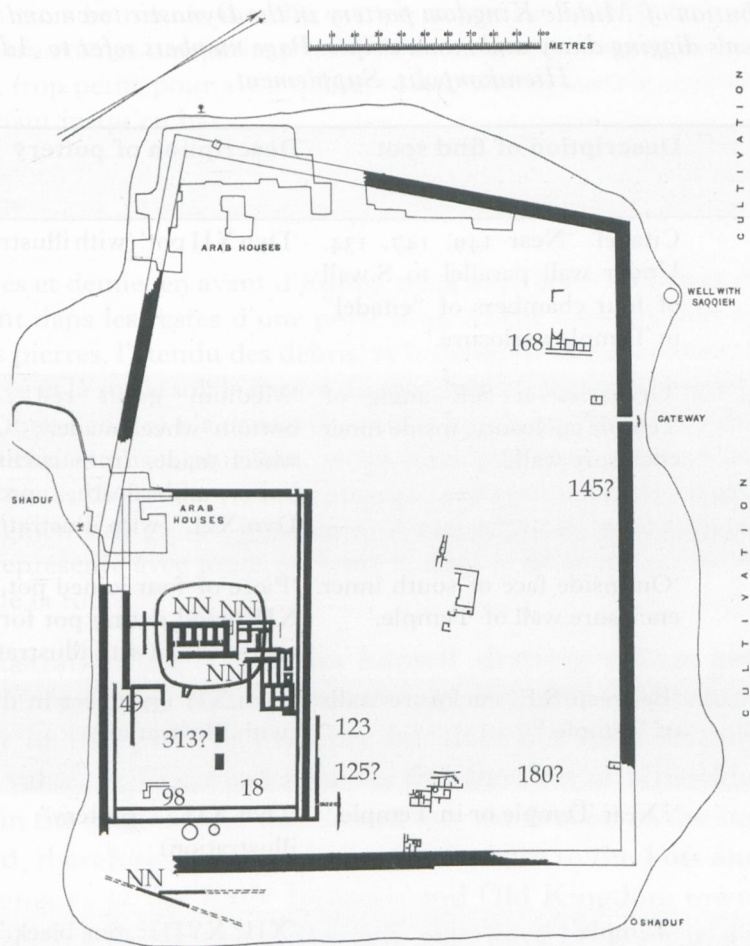


FIG. 9. Find spots of Middle Kingdom seal impressions and pottery in the Dynastic town and temple area of Hierakonpolis (After Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis II*, pl. 73).

The quality and quantity of information on Middle Kingdom pottery is low. Sealing and ceramic material was found slightly concentrated in the temple area but came to light in small quantities across the settlement.<sup>46</sup> The find spots are, of course, little more than dots on a two-dimensional map and little is known of the taphonomic processes that account for how the material has come into its final position.

Today, the ancient temple and town site is denuded to a sandy area in the floodplain (fig. 10). It was a shallow settlement mound when Quibell and Green began excavation. Old local peasants reported to them that the ancient walls were standing six metres high and were dismantled only during the last decades prior to Quibell’s and Green’s arrival.<sup>47</sup> Vivant Denon visited Hierakonpolis in the afternoon of 30 January 1799 after he had passed the small pyramid of el-Kula. He describes a large temple gate made of sandstone located near the mud-brick ruins of an ancient town, mixed up with granite blocks:

<sup>46</sup> Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis II*, 16 write in a paragraph on the Old Kingdom houses: ‘There is a noticeable exception that among the pottery scattered over the surface of the site, the bulk of which belongs to the Old Kingdom, there is a certain percentage of that incised ware which seems to be characteristic of the period between the Middle and New Kingdom.’

<sup>47</sup> Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis II*, 26.



TABLE I *Distribution of Middle Kingdom pottery in the Dynastic town and temple area according to Green's digging diary and manuscripts. Page numbers refer to Adams, Ancient Hierakonpolis. Supplement.*

Find spot (find spot no)	Description of find spot	Description of pottery	Page
Citadel (NN)	Citadel. 'Near 149, 147, 134. Under wall parallel to S.wall of four chambers of "citadel" in Temple enclosure.'	'Dyn XII pot' (with illustration)	15
Temple (18)	'Granaries at S.E angle of Temple enclosure, inside inner enclosure wall.'	'Medium grain red, rough bottom wheel made.'; 'Coarse wheel made, from cutting off lines underneath, probably Dyn.XII.' (with illustrations)	23-4
Temple (49)	'On inside face of south inner enclosure wall of Temple.'	'Piece of four joined pot, Dyn. XII (good dating pot for MK) coarse red.' (with illustration)	27
Temple (98)	'Between S.E. enclosure walls of Temple.'	'Dyn.XII on object in dukka.' (with illustration)	31
Temple (125)	'?Near Temple or in Temple.'	'Dyn.XII pottery.' (with illustration)	33-4
Temple (313)	'Temple'	'XII? XVIII?, fine black.' (with illustration)	45
Temple (NN)	'East side of last chamber near hawk chamber, Temple.'	'Fragment of Dyn XII, water jar.' (no illustration)	53
Outside temple (123)	'North side of granite door block, wast [sic] side of Temple, outside entrance.'	'Part of pot XII' (with illustration)	58
Town (145)	'Trench parallel to Town wall, little east of middle point.'	'Pottery of mixed date. Dark incised, XII or EK? OK, possibly XII, but no late pottery found.' (with illustrations)	70
Town (180)	'Near south east angle of Town, 10m. east of red mound no.190.'	'Most of pottery seems to be OK, though fragments of red MK pottery with irregularly scored bottom.' (with illustration)	73



Le 30, après trois heures de marche, à trois quarts de lieue de fleuve, sur le bord du désert, nous trouvâmes une petite pyramide de cinquante à soixante pieds de base, bâti en moëllons, trop petits pour avoir conservé leur assise; aussi le revêtement en est-il dégradé du haut jusqu'en bas.

### Hiéraconpolis

A deux heures et demie, en avant d'Edfou, nous trouvâmes les ruines d'Hiéraconpolis, qui consistent dans les restes d'une porte d'un édifice considérable, à en juger par la grossière des pierres, l'étendu des débris, et le diamètre des chapiteaux frustes que l'on trouve épars çà et là sur le sol; la nature du grès dont étoit bâti le temple d'Hiéraconpolis est si friable, que l'édifice n'a conservé aucune forme, et que les détails sont tout-à-fait perdus. A quelques toises plus loin, on en distingué avec peine un autre encore plus dégradé: les restes de la ville ne sont plus que des monceaux de briques très cuites, et quelques fragments de granit. Je dessinai ce que je pus de ces ruines presque effacées; je m'y suis représenté avec toute ma suite et dans le délâbrement où m'avoient réduit les fatigues de la route.<sup>48</sup>

Denon's illustration (fig. 11) shows himself drawing a large gate set in a desert landscape. The fact that Denon features in his own illustration highlights the fictional nature of this piece of evidence but does not automatically compromise its archaeological value. R. Friedman assumes that the Fort of Khasekhemwy is depicted at the horizon in the original and was turned into the fireball of the sun in later prints.<sup>49</sup> The gate would, therefore, be located at some distance to the Fort and might well have stood on the remains of the Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom town. As some blocks connect to adjacent stone masonry the gate may have been set in a stone rather than a mud-brick enclosure wall. The mud-brick remains and granite blocks described by Denon also match the record excavated by Quibell and Green in the temple and town area. Friedman believes that the gate is part of a Ptolemaic temple, an interpretation followed in this paper.<sup>50</sup> Adams assumes that the site was completely levelled for the construction of the Ptolemaic temple and that the floodplain separating the temple and town site from the Predynastic settlement on the low desert strip is man-made.<sup>51</sup>

Fig. 12 is an attempt to visualize a reconstructed site stratigraphy based on the sketch produced by Quibell and Green.<sup>52</sup> The naos of the Ptolemaic temple of Edfu is superimposed in correct scale on the existing structures in the temple area. The late fourth and third millennium walls are shaded in black, New Kingdom structures in grey, and the Ptolemaic temple building in white. The bad quality of excavation reports makes it difficult to date any feature with certainty, and many detailed observations of the excavators remain obscure. Fairservis claims an Old Kingdom date for the town enclosure wall.<sup>53</sup> He found pockets of New Kingdom pottery on top of Naqada

<sup>48</sup> *Voyages dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte, pendant les campagnes de Bonaparte, en 1798 et 1799. Par Vivant Denon et les savants attachés à l'expédition des Français. Edition ornée de CXVIII planches en taille-douce.* A Londres: Chez Charles Taylor, Hatton Garden, Sherwood, Neely, et Jones, Paternoster Row. 1817, p. 195–6. The English translation includes comments and additions to Denon's original report.

<sup>49</sup> R. Friedman, 'The Fort Forgotten', *Nekhen News* 23 (2011), 25.

<sup>50</sup> R. Friedman, 'The Fort Forgotten', *Nekhen News* 23 (2011), 25.

<sup>51</sup> Adams, *Ancient Nekhen*, 79–80.

<sup>52</sup> Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis II*, pl. 72.

<sup>53</sup> Fairservis et al., *JARCE* 9, 20–1 assumes that the town enclosure wall in its preserved shape was erected





FIG. 10. Temple and town area of Hierakonpolis today (photo by the author, 2006).



FIG. 11. Ruines d'Héraconpolis, one of four studies for plate 54 bis of the artist's 'Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte, pendant les campagnes du Général Bonaparte', 1802.

Reg. No. 1836,0109.79 (courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum).



II to Old Kingdom structures in the town.<sup>54</sup> The stratigraphy of the temple area is richer and exhibits Predynastic (?), Early Dynastic, Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom and Ptolemaic pottery. The revetted mound of the Early Dynastic period has created an artificial elevation and seems to have saved the adjacent layers from destruction.<sup>55</sup> The five-chambered building is counted here towards the third millennium. In the temple area, a pavement, a stone-lined pylon, two architraves or lintels, and perhaps some square bases for columns or pillars date to the New Kingdom.<sup>56</sup> The temple enclosure wall seems to date to the New Kingdom in its preserved form, although it might replace an earlier structure.<sup>57</sup>

The preserved record can be interpreted as the bottom part of a larger settlement mound. The temple was continually used from the late Predynastic Period to Ptolemaic times. The cutting of foundation trenches for later temple buildings led to ransacking of the existing stratigraphy. It is no surprise then to find later material mixed with earlier objects. A good example is the seal impression Z 45930 found in one of the trenches along with earlier material. Due to sebbakh digging, erosion, the rising water table, and the spread of Halfa grass, the sensitive mud-brick architecture of the town vanished more rapidly than the structures in the temple area. This leaves it up to discussion to what extent the excavated parts of the town were used in different periods.

There is good evidence for habitation of the site from the Early Dynastic Period to the early Old Kingdom. Twenty-two rock tombs facing the Wadi Abu el-Suffian, a series of royal objects, and the pottery pockets mentioned above indicate that Hierakonpolis was inhabited also during the New Kingdom.<sup>58</sup> In contrast, most of the late Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom evidence is concentrated on the temple area. This is, to a certain extent, a result of differential preservation of materials. Statues, stelae, and building elements are made of hard stone, and the royal objects were probably set up in the temple. Horemkhawef's biography adds to the bias towards the temple because the royal commissioning of a new temple statue was prestigious enough to be mentioned in the inscription.<sup>59</sup>

Non-inscriptional evidence from outside the temple and town area supports the hypothesis that the settlement was in use during the Middle Kingdom, even if perhaps on a more limited scale than in earlier and later periods. Renée Friedman kindly

together with the later walls of the niched gateway and that it was in use at the same time as the early Old Kingdom houses of the town.

<sup>54</sup> Fairservis, *The Hierakonpolis Project 1981*, 2.

<sup>55</sup> Fairservis hypothesises that the revetment was built only in the New Kingdom to retain the sand below his 'building A', cf. *The Hierakonpolis Project 1978*, 10–11. However, the stone-lined New Kingdom temple was built further to the south-east, so I stick here to the traditional dating of the revetment to the late Predynastic period.

<sup>56</sup> One architrave of Thutmose III was found near the pylon whose casing block was inscribed with the name of the same king, see Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis II*, 11, 33. A Thutmosid lintel is mentioned by Fairservis et al., *JARCE* 9, 26, fig. 39, perhaps identical with Fairservis, *The Hierakonpolis Project 1978*, 6, fig. 5. A different architrave or lintel is depicted on two negatives of Garstang, see Adams, *Ancient Nekhen*, 92, figs 37 and 38. Further references to New Kingdom building activity in the temple area are Fairservis, *The Hierakonpolis Project 1978*, 5–8 and 13–15.

<sup>57</sup> Fairservis, *The Hierakonpolis Project 1978*, 8–9; Fairservis, *The Hierakonpolis Project 1981*, 3–5. A pivot stone and a doorpost standing *in situ* indicate an earlier wall, however, at a different location, see Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis I*, 6, pl. 3.3, 3.4; Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis II*, 34, 36; Adams, *Ancient Hierakonpolis*. Supplement, front map, label 'door socket'.

<sup>58</sup> B. Adams, *LÄ* 2, s.v. 'Hierakonpolis', 1182–6.

<sup>59</sup> Hormose reports in the autobiography of his tomb at Hierakonpolis that the temple had fallen in ruins in the reign of Ramses XI and was rebuilt under his auspices, see Fairservis, *The Hierakonpolis Project 1978*, 14



alerted me to a 'XII Dynasty cemetery' mentioned in an unpublished map in Green's manuscripts (see fig. 1). Several areas with Nubian evidence were discovered outside the temple and town area of Hierakonpolis (fig. 1). They include (a) the C-Group cemetery HK27C, dated to the Eleventh to Seventeenth Dynasties, with a major focus of activity in the early Twelfth Dynasty; (b) the Pan Grave cemeteries HK21A and HK47 dated to the late Middle Kingdom or early Second Intermediate Period; and (c) the campsite HK64 located on a sandstone outcrop two kilometres north of Hierakonpolis exhibiting material remains and rock inscriptions from at least the Old to the early New Kingdom.<sup>60</sup> Cemetery HK27C yielded three scarabs.<sup>61</sup> Two have garland patterns similar to Z 45930 and Z 46015 and suggest a contemporaneous use of cemetery and temple area. A few Nubian pots and sherds were also found in the temple and town area awaiting further investigation.<sup>62</sup>

### Urbanism and temple religion: Hierakonpolis in context

The Middle Kingdom evidence suggests continued habitation of Hierakonpolis, with the temple serving as a centre. The following discussion offers a broader perspective on the settlement development of Hierakonpolis and outlines a context for interpretation within wider urban dynamics in Egypt during the third and second millennia.

The preponderance of temples in the Egyptian landscape was misunderstood in initial contributions to a discussion of Egyptian urbanism as a reflection of small towns built around large cultic centres and populated by specialists only, such as priests, craftsmen, and elite administrators.<sup>63</sup> The model was, among other factors, the result of a lack of good evidence for early towns and temples, prompting some Egyptologists to believe that monumental temples, similar to those of the New Kingdom, existed already

and R. Friedman, 'The Dynastic Tombs', *Nekhen News* 12 (2000), 22.

<sup>60</sup> Friedman et al., *JARCE* 36, 18–29; R. Friedman, J. Jones, S. Ikram, and S. Giuliani, 'Nubians at Hierakonpolis', *Sudan and Nubia* 5 (2001), 29–45; R. Friedman, S. Giuliani and J. D. Irish, 'The Nubian Cemetery at Hierakonpolis, Egypt: Results of the 2003 Season', *Sudan and Nubia* 8 (2004), 47–59; R. Friedman, M. Judd, and J. D. Irish, 'The Nubian Cemetery at Hierakonpolis, Egypt: Results of the 2007 Season', *Sudan and Nubia* 11 (2007), 57–71; R. Friedman, 'The Nubian C-Group Cemetery at Locality HK27C', in R. Friedman, T. Hikade, M. Baba, I. Takamiya, E. Hitoshi, X. Droux, G. Pyke, and R. Jaeschke, 'Report on the 2006–2007 Season of the Hierakonpolis Expedition', *ASAE* 83 (2009), 191–234, here: 204–7; M. Millet, 'HK27C Revisited: The Egyptian Pottery', *Nekhen News* 24 (2012), 24–5.

<sup>61</sup> Friedman et al., *Sudan and Nubia* 5, 29–38, fig. 5a, scarab with garland pattern from burial 2A; Friedman et al., *Sudan and Nubia* 11, 57–62, colour plate XXV, scarab with garland pattern from tomb 41, debased clay stamp seal from tomb 54, one scarab with unclear pattern from tomb 17.

<sup>62</sup> Adams, *Ancient Hierakonpolis*, cat. no. 289, 291–4, 318, UC 15061–15066. If they date to the third millennium they may reflect a similar pattern of Egyptian-Nubian interaction as at Elephantine, see S. J. Seidlmayer, 'Beispiele nubischer Keramik aus Kontexten des hohen Alten Reiches aus Elephantine', in D. Mendel and U. Claudi (eds), *Ägypten im afro-orientalischen Kontext: Aufsätze zur Archäologie, Geschichte und Sprache eines unbegrenzten Raumes. Gedenkschrift Peter Behrens* (Afrikanische Arbeitspapiere Sondernummer 1991; Köln, 1991), 337–50; D. Raue, 'Who Was Who on Elephantine in the Third Millennium BC?', *BMSAES* 9 (2008), 1–14, here: 2–5. For the Middle Kingdom, see T. Rzeuska, 'Zigzag, Triangle and Fish Fin: On the Relations of Egypt and C-Group during the Middle Kingdom', in G. Włodzimierz and A. Łajtar (eds), *Between the Cataracts: Proceedings of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies, Warsaw University, 27 August–2 September 2006 II. Session papers 2* (Warsaw, 2010), 397–419. I thank Maria Gatto for alerting me to this paper.

<sup>63</sup> J. A. Wilson, 'Civilization without Cities', in C. H. Kraeling and R. M. Adams (eds), *City Invincible: A Symposium on Urbanization and Cultural Development in the Ancient Near East Held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, December 4–7, 1958* (Chicago, 1960), 124–36; B. G. Trigger, 'The Evolution of Pre-Industrial Cities', in H. S. Smith (ed.), *Mélanges offerts à Jean Vercoutter* (Paris, 1985), 343–53, here: 348; B. G. Trigger, *Understanding Early Civilizations: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, 2003), 120–41, here: 131–6. For a recent overview of Egyptian settlement archaeology see G. D. Mumford, 'Settlements – Distribution, Structure, Architecture: Pharaonic'. In A. B. Lloyd (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Egypt I* (Chichester, 2010), 326–49.



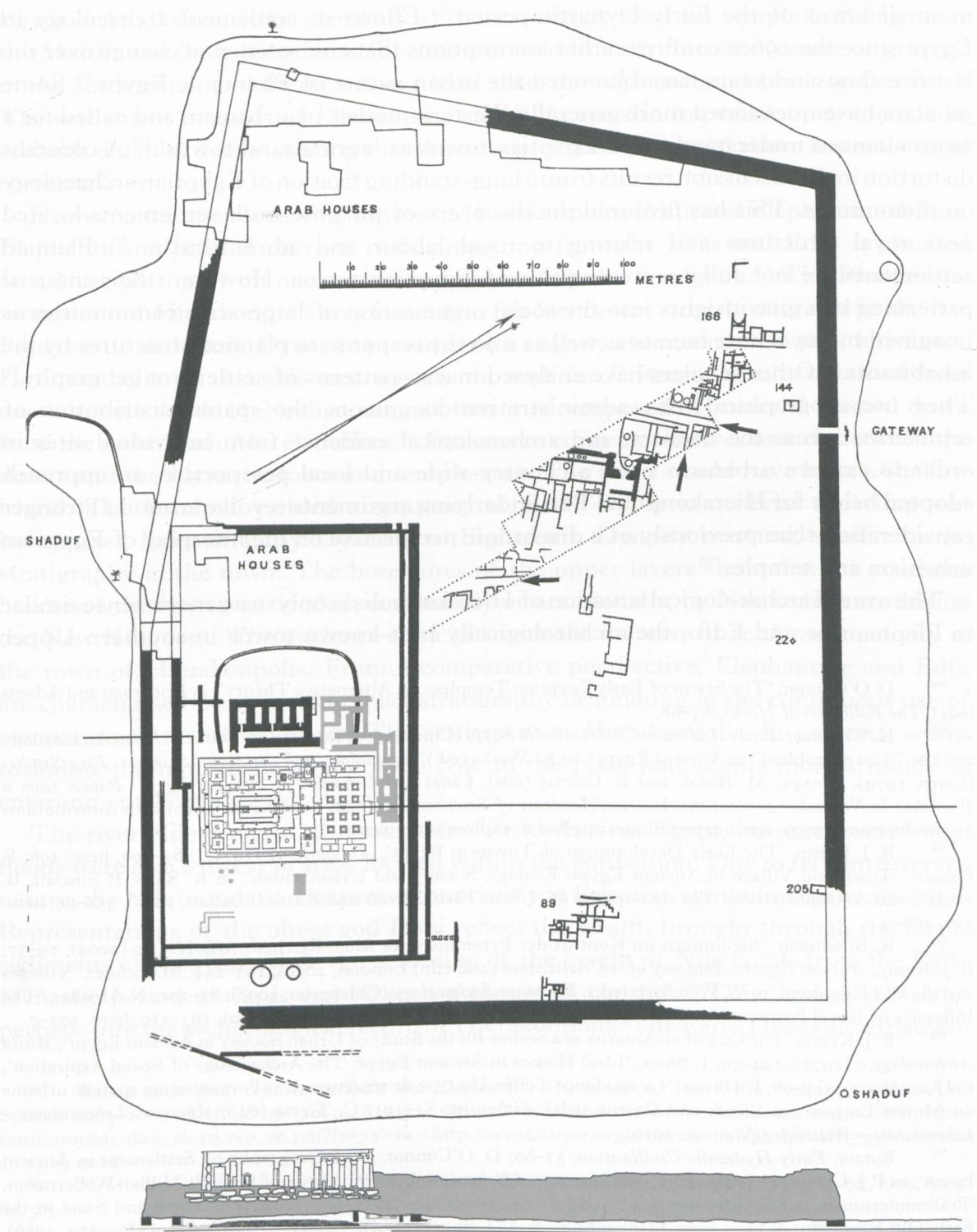


FIG. 12. Reconstruction of the stratigraphy of the temple and town area of Hierakonpolis (after Quibell and Green, *Hierakonpolis II*, pl. 73; D. Kurth, *Treffpunkt der Götter: Inschriften aus dem Tempel des Horus von Edfu* (Zürich, 1994), Abb. 5, 6; Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, fig. 68).



in small towns of the Early Dynastic period.<sup>64</sup> Efforts of settlement archaeology in Egypt since the 1960s confirm earlier assumptions that environmental change over the last five thousand years has obliterated the urban nature of Pharaonic Egypt.<sup>65</sup> Some scholars have questioned more generally Western models of urbanism and called for a more nuanced understanding of Egyptian towns as 'agricultural towns'.<sup>66</sup> A constant distortion in the discussion results from a long-standing fixation of Egyptian archaeology on monuments. This has favoured the discovery of purpose-built settlements located near royal structures and relating to royal labour and administration.<sup>67</sup> Planned settlements are not fully representative of Egyptian towns. However, their internal patterning can give insights into the social organisation of large-scale communities as imagined by royal bureaucrats as well as into the response to planned structures by the inhabitants.<sup>68</sup> Other scholars have analysed macro-patterns of settlement geography.<sup>69</sup> They use geographical lists, administrative documents, the spatial distribution of cemeteries across the country, and archaeological evidence from individual sites in order to explore urbanism from a country-wide and local perspective, an approach adopted below for Hierakonpolis. The underlying arguments revolve around a stronger consideration than previously of a diachronic perspective on the interplay of Egyptian urbanism and temples.<sup>70</sup>

The overall archaeological situation of Hierakonpolis is only in a generic sense similar to Elephantine and Edfu, the archaeologically best-known towns in southern Upper

<sup>64</sup> D. O'Connor, 'The Status of Early Egyptian Temples: An Alternative Theory', in Friedman and Adams (eds), *The Followers of Horus*, 83–98.

<sup>65</sup> K. W. Butzer, *Early Hydraulic Civilization in Egypt* (Chicago, 1976), 4–56; M. Bietak, 'Urban Archaeology and the "Town Problem" in Ancient Egypt', in K. Weeks (ed.), *Egyptology and the Social Sciences: Five Studies* (Cairo, 1979), 97–144; M. Bietak and E. Czerny (eds), *Cities and Urbanism in Ancient Egypt: Papers from a Workshop in November 2006 at the Austrian Academy of Sciences* (DGÖAW 60; Vienna, 2010) with contributions on results from remote sensing techniques applied to explore settlements.

<sup>66</sup> B. J. Kemp, 'The Early Development of Towns in Egypt', *Antiquity* 51 (1977), 185–200, here: 196; F. Hassan, 'Town and Village in Ancient Egypt: Ecology, Society and Urbanization', in R. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah, and A. Okpoko (eds), *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns* (London, 1993), 551–69, here: 556, 568–9.

<sup>67</sup> R. Bussmann, 'Siedlungen im Kontext der Pyramiden des Alten Reiches', *MDAIK* 60 (2004), 19–37; B. J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (2nd edn; London, 2006), 193–244; M. Lehner, 'Villages and the Old Kingdom', in W. Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology* (Chichester, 2008), 85–101; N. Moeller, 'The Influence of Royal Power on Ancient Egyptian Settlements', *CRIPEL* 28 (2009–2010), 193–210, here: 202–7.

<sup>68</sup> B. J. Kemp, 'The City of el-Amarna as a Source for the Study of Urban Society in Ancient Egypt', *World Archaeology* 9 (1977), 124–39; I. Shaw, 'Ideal Homes in Ancient Egypt: The Archaeology of Social Aspiration', *CAJ* 2.2 (1992), 147–66; F. Doyen, 'La résidence d'élite: Un type de structure dans l'organisation spatiale urbaine du Moyen Empire', in Bietak and Czerny (eds), *Urbanism*, 81–101; C. Tietze (ed.), *Amarna: Lebensräume – Lebensbilder – Weltbilder* (Weimar, 2010).

<sup>69</sup> Butzer, *Early Hydraulic Civilization*, 57–80; D. O'Connor, 'The Geography of Settlement in Ancient Egypt', in P. J. Ucko et al. (eds), *Man, Settlement, and Urbanism* (London, 1972), 681–98; R. Müller-Wollermann, 'Präliminierungen zur ägyptischen Stadt', *ZÄS* 118 (1991), 48–54; S. J. Seidlmayer, 'Town and State in the Early Old Kingdom: A View from Elephantine', in A. J. Spencer (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt* (London, 1996), 108–27; R. Wenke, 'City-States, Nation-States, and Territorial States: The Problem of Egypt', in D. L. Nichols and T. H. Charlton (eds), *The Archaeology of City-States: Cross-Cultural Approaches* (London, 1998), 27–49; S. J. Seidlmayer, 'Der Beitrag der Gräberfelder zur Siedlungsarchäologie Ägyptens', in E. Czerny, I. Hein, H. Hunger, D. Melman, and A. Schwab (eds), *Timelines: Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak*, I (OLA 149; Leuven, 2006), 309–16.

<sup>70</sup> The dominant role of temples in Egyptian cities has long been recognised but the discussions centre on the New Kingdom and do not explore the explanatory potential of the phenomenon for earlier periods, see D. O'Connor, 'Urbanism in Bronze Age Egypt and Northeast Africa', in Shaw et al. (eds), *The Archaeology of Africa*, 570–85, here: 578–80; C. Routledge, 'Temple as the Centre in Ancient Egyptian Urbanism', in W. E. Aufrecht, N. A. Mirau, and S. W. Gauley (eds), *Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete* (Sheffield, 1997), 210–20.



Egypt.<sup>71</sup> At all sites, stone elements were increasingly used for temple building since the Middle and New Kingdoms. The temple areas literally form the 'centre of gravity' in the settlements and lie on a lower level than the adjacent mud-brick settlement.<sup>72</sup> The settlement mounds of Elephantine and Edfu are also impressive monuments of sebbakh digging, demonstrating that the reconstruction proposed above has real-world correlates.

However, the environmental setting of Hierakonpolis, Edfu, and Elephantine differs. Elephantine is located on rock cliffs projecting from the river and Edfu is situated on a levee on top of an outcrop of bedrock within the floodplain.<sup>73</sup> The Predynastic settlement of Hierakonpolis was located on the low desert strip. It migrated in the late Predynastic and Early Dynastic period onto a slightly elevated area in the cultivation. Hoffman believed that this area was an old wadi fan.<sup>74</sup> Recent results obtained from one borehole south of Nekhen suggest that it is composed of material washed down from the great Wadi Abu el-Suffian.<sup>75</sup> It seems to cover an old river branch between the desert and the Dynastic town and temple area. The latter would have been a shallow island. The borehole yielded a sequence of Early Dynastic material superimposed by a mixed layer of Early Dynastic to Eighteenth Dynasty material, similar to the stratigraphy in the town. The bore cores of the upper layers show that the southern border of the town was flooded, continually or occasionally, by Nile sediments during the New Kingdom. The evidence coincides with the increase of settlement activity in the town of Hierakonpolis. From a comparative perspective, Elephantine and Edfu are characterised by a more compact stratigraphy originating in the continuous use of comparatively restricted space. The settlement at Hierakonpolis, in contrast, seems to follow the movement of the river Nile in the plain and adapts more strongly to environmental change.

The river Nile is a crucial resource for life in Ancient Egypt, but unexpected high floods were also a threat to areas located within the cultivation. Due to its controversial nature, the Nile inundation features prominently in Egyptian symbolic communication. Representations of the obese god Hapi reflect the wealth brought through the fertile sediments of the river, while the recording of the height of Nile floods from the Early Dynastic period onwards can be seen as a means of control.<sup>76</sup> This tension translates perhaps into the archaeological record of Hierakonpolis. The Early Dynastic settlement

<sup>71</sup> Recent excavation reports on Edfu and Elephantine: N. Moeller, 'Tell Edfu: Preliminary Report on Seasons 2005–2009', *JARCE* 46 (2010), 81–111; <[http://www.dainst.org/sites/default/files/media/abteilungen/kairo/projekte/daik\\_ele40\\_rep\\_en.pdf?ft=33](http://www.dainst.org/sites/default/files/media/abteilungen/kairo/projekte/daik_ele40_rep_en.pdf?ft=33)> or <<http://www.dainst.org/en/project/elephantine?ft=33>> accessed on 13.09.2012.

<sup>72</sup> N. Moeller, 'Urban Life', in T. Wilkinson (ed.), *The Egyptian World* (London, 2007), 57–72, here: 64–5, fig. 5.5.

<sup>73</sup> M. Ziermann, 'Edfu, Kom Ombo und Hierakonpolis: Bemerkungen zu Topographie und Stadtentwicklung oberägyptischer Städte im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr.', in Koldewey-Gesellschaft (ed.), *Bericht über die 37. Tagung für Ausgrabungswissenschaft und Bauforschung vom 27. bis 31. Mai 1992 in Duderstadt* (Bonn, 1994), 10–24.

<sup>74</sup> M. A. Hoffman, H. A. Hamrrouch, and R. O. Allen, 'A Model of Urban Development for the Hierakonpolis Region from Predynastic through Old Kingdom Times', *JARCE* 23 (1986), 175–87, here: 181.

<sup>75</sup> J. Bunbury and A. Graham, 'There's Nothing Boring About a Borehole', *Nekhen News* 20 (2008), 22–3; J. Bunbury and A. Graham, 'Landscape Change in the Edfu/Hierakonpolis Region of Egypt', *BMSAES*, in press. I would like to thank the authors for sending me a draft of the article.

<sup>76</sup> J. Baines, *Fecundity Figurines: Egyptian Personification and the Iconology of a Genre* (Warminster, 1985), 112–45; S. J. Seidlmayer, *Historische und moderne Nilstände: Untersuchungen zu den Pegelablesungen des Nils von der Frühzeit bis in die Gegenwart* (Achet A 3; Berlin, 2001) on recordings of Nile flood.



develops around the sacred area located closer to the Nile than in the Predynastic. It is set within an enclosure wall, which does not exhibit any military or defensive facilities. N. Moeller argues that the wall may have been built as a protective measure against Nubians but admits that evidence of their attacks in the region date only to more than half a century later.<sup>77</sup> Alternatively, the wall may have served as a shield against occasional higher inundations, similar to the situation in the New Kingdom, demonstrating that the Nile had been experienced as an ambivalent gift.

Sociologically, the decline of Hierakonpolis blends into the transformation of settlement patterns in the Early Dynastic Period and the early Old Kingdom. Egypt developed in this period from a poly- to a mono-centric society mirrored in the increasing concentration of royal and elite cemeteries in the Memphite region. There is a gap in provincial archaeology between the early and late Old Kingdom.<sup>78</sup> It may be due to dating difficulties or reflect an actual process of provincialisation across the country characterised by a retreat of royal display and elite consumption to within the capital. In the late Old Kingdom, nome capitals emerge as new regional foci but they now follow a new settlement pattern governed by the geography of royal administration.<sup>79</sup> Elkab was the winner in the Third Upper Egyptian nome at the expense of Hierakonpolis and is listed as the nome capital in the White Chapel of Senwosret I.<sup>80</sup> The Middle Kingdom cemetery located at Elkab confirms that a larger community populated the town.<sup>81</sup>

Provincial administration of Upper Egypt changed from a system of district governors, i.e. nomarchs, in the late Old Kingdom to town mayors in the Middle Kingdom, while Middle Egypt continued to be governed by nomarchs, a legacy argued by Harco Willems to originate in the political climate of the First Intermediate Period.<sup>82</sup> Evidence of a Middle Kingdom town mayor of Hierakonpolis (*ḥ3tj-ꜥ jmj-r3 ḥm.w-ntr*) is provided by the tomb inscriptions of Ni-ankh-Pepi, if the Middle Kingdom is accepted as the date of reuse.<sup>83</sup> In addition, the New Kingdom list in the tomb of Rekhmire mentions a mayor of Hierakonpolis and may be the copy of an older document.<sup>84</sup> The change towards town mayors in Upper Egypt does not necessarily have to imply that Upper Egypt was more urban than rural Middle Egypt or Lower Egypt. It also does not mean that towns were not important for administration since the beginning of the Pharaonic state. On the contrary, seal impressions from settlements show that the administration of Egypt was based in towns and organised through an urban infrastructure from the Early Dynastic period onwards.<sup>85</sup> It does reflect, however, that

<sup>77</sup> N. Moeller, 'Evidence for Urban Walling in the Third Millennium BC', in B. Kemp, N. Moeller, and K. Spence, 'Egypt's Invisible Walls', *CAJ* 14:2 (2004), 261–5, here: 263–4.

<sup>78</sup> Bussmann, *Provinztempel*, 453–4 and 511.

<sup>79</sup> W. Helck, *Die altägyptischen Gaue* (TAVO 5, Wiesbaden, 1974), 199–208; Seidlmayer, 'Beitrag der Gräberfelder', in Czerny et al. (eds), *Timelines I*, 309–16.

<sup>80</sup> P. Lacau and H. Chevrier, *Une chapelle de Sésostri Ier à Karnak* (Cairo, 1956), 323–4, pl. 3 and 40.

<sup>81</sup> J. E. Quibell, *Elkab* (ERA 3; London, 1898), 13–15, pls 22 and 24.

<sup>82</sup> H. Willems, *Les textes des sarcophages et la démocratie: Éléments d'une histoire culturelle du Moyen Empire égyptien* (Paris, 2008), 58–9, 184–5.

<sup>83</sup> Davies, 'The Dynastic Tombs at Hierakonopolis: The Lower Group and the Artist Sedjemnetjeru', in Davies (ed.), *Colour and Painting*, 113. W. Grajetzki kindly alerted me to this reference and also to the statue CGC 404 argued by Franke, *Heiligtum des Heqaib*, 13, fn. 26, to belong possibly to a town mayor of Hierakonpolis. The statue was found in Upper Egypt and the titles of the owner read *jrj-pꜥ.t ḥ3tj-ꜥ ḥrj-ḥb jmj-r3 ḥm.w-ntr ḥrj-tp ꜥ3 n N[hn]*. The title relating to Hierakonpolis is based on the name of the nome rather than the city and is equivocal for the argument developed here.

<sup>84</sup> W. Grajetzki, *Court Officials of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom* (London, 2009), 120.

<sup>85</sup> Seidlmayer, 'State and Town', in Spencer (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 120–1; J.-P. Pätznick, *Die*



towns are increasingly imagined as the major entities on the administrative map of provincial Egypt, replacing nomes, royal domains and estates in this capacity.

Administrative change is underpinned by a process of urbanisation resulting in the emergence of cities in the New Kingdom. Cities of this period were characterised by large temples which had gradually developed into the major economic institutions within administration.<sup>86</sup> Many excavated cities of this period are capitals with large temples and may not be representative. However, Hermopolis is a large town other than a capital and exhibits a huge temple precinct.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, the New Kingdom temples at Elephantine and Edfu are impressive monuments.<sup>88</sup> The New Kingdom temple of Hierakonpolis is one of the smaller preserved temples of the period comparable to the temples of Naqada or Badari.<sup>89</sup> These wider considerations add flesh to the erratic New Kingdom monuments from Hierakonpolis and help picture the site as a medium-sized town in Upper Egypt.

The key argument in the discussion above is that towns and temples co-evolved in Bronze Age Egypt from towns to cities and from local shrines to large temples. This is not due to Egyptians becoming more and more pious over time. Rather, temples became the primary institution of royal display during the Middle Kingdom.<sup>90</sup> A major pull is the temple building activity of Middle Kingdom kings initiated by Mentuhotep II, if not earlier, and taking the most programmatic design under Senwosret I.<sup>91</sup> Royal appropriation of local cults originates in the late Old Kingdom when rulers recognised the economic importance of local temples within urban communities in the province.<sup>92</sup> It resulted in greater investments in durable materials for representation and raised the appeal of temples to a more elite clientele. High- to mid-ranking officials added to the material prominence of temples by offering libation basins, statues, and stelae. The visual appearance of Ancient Egyptian settlements is, therefore, the result of environmental conditions as much as the built representation of social mechanisms.<sup>93</sup>

Hierakonpolis is an interesting exception in early temple development. In comparison with other known temples of the early third millennium such as at Elephantine, Tell

*Siegelabrollungen und Rollsiegel der Stadt Elephantine im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr.: Spurensicherung eines archäologischen Artefaktes* (BAR IS 1339; Oxford, 2005); R. Bussmann, 'The Seals and Seal Impressions from Hierakonpolis', *EA* 38 (2011), 17–19.

<sup>86</sup> B. J. Kemp, 'Temple and Town in Ancient Egypt', in Ucko et al. (eds), *Man, Settlement and Urbanism*, 657–80. 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* (IBAES 7; London, 2007), 165–70.

<sup>87</sup> A. J. Spencer, *Excavations at el-Ashmunein, I–III* (London, 1989, 1993) on recent work on New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period material from temple and town.

<sup>88</sup> A useful summary of temple development in the settlement of Elephantine is *Elephantine: Die antike Stadt* edited by the German Archaeological Institute 1998, 9–18 with Abb. 3 for the New Kingdom. For Edfu, see PM VI, 168–9.

<sup>89</sup> J. E. Quibell and W. M. F. Petrie, *Naqada and Ballas 1895* (ERA 1; London, 1896), 65–70, pls 1a, 77–9, and 85; G. Brunton, *Qau and Badari I* (BSAE 44; London, 1927), 18–21, pls 22, 31.

<sup>90</sup> R. Bussmann, 'Changing Cultural Paradigms: From Tomb to Temple in the 11th Dynasty', in P. Kousoulis (ed.), *Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Egyptologists*, in press.

<sup>91</sup> L. Gestermann, *Kontinuität und Wandel in der Verwaltung des frühen mittleren Reiches in Ägypten* (GOF IV.18; Wiesbaden, 1986), 114–34; Hirsch, *Kultpolitik*, 27–67.

<sup>92</sup> B. J. Kemp, 'How Religious were the Ancient Egyptians?', *CAJ* 5.1 (1995), 25–54, here: 38–41; J. C. Moreno-Garcia, 'Les temples provinciaux et leur rôle dans l'agriculture institutionnelle de l'Ancien et du Moyen Empire', *CRIPEL* 25 (2005), 93–124; Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 111–35; Bussmann, *Provinztempel*, 506–13.

<sup>93</sup> A similar idea has been discussed for the mortuary landscape of Old Kingdom Elephantine, see S. J. Seidlmayer, 'Die Ikonographie des Todes', in H. Willems (ed.), *Social Aspects of Funerary Culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms: Proceedings of the International Symposium Held at Leiden University 6–7 June, 1996* (OLA 103; Leuven, 2001), 205–52, here: 249–50.



Ibrahim Awad, and Abydos it stands out as a bombastic structure associated with an unrivalled range of monumental and elite objects.<sup>94</sup> The temple of Hierakonpolis may have been laid out like an open plaza and as such succeeded the Predynastic sacred area HK29A, but reconstructions vary considerably.<sup>95</sup> Both HK29A and the Early Dynastic temple could have served the worship of a god or a ruler or both.

Surveys and excavations on the low desert strip demonstrate that HK29A and the Dynastic temple were part of a densely settled area, perhaps a series of successive villages around a larger town.<sup>96</sup> Evidence of nucleation in regional settlement patterns is also known from other parts of Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt, although the local ingredients of the process can vary, including different degrees of royal initiative.<sup>97</sup> It appears that population compression in the horizontal led to the formation of vertical hierarchies whose leaders clustered around new institutions of symbolic display.<sup>98</sup>

While Hierakonpolis is exceptional in respect of both the scale of the sacred area and the population density, the mechanism is also in place at other late Predynastic sites. As far as one can tell from the existing evidence, Egyptian temples come into being within this particular period.<sup>99</sup> In addition to archaeological discussions of the urban nature of Egypt on the basis of size, function, internal organisation, location, and hierarchies of settlements, the very emergence of local cult shrines can be seen as an indicator of nascent urbanism in early Pharaonic Egypt. The scale is still modest and local shrines are small. However, the success of temples in Pharaonic society in the long run is rooted in the structural tie between temple religion and urbanism.

A perspective on the origins of Egyptian temples developed out of broader sociological mechanisms challenges a reading of the archaeological record as direct output of programmatic planning and downscales the active role pharaohs played for early cults.<sup>100</sup> On a theoretical level, it undermines an overly narrow focus on royal agency in the state formation period, and empirically, it is perfectly reflected in the almost complete lack of references to kingship in the archaeology of early Egyptian temples other than Hierakonpolis.

<sup>94</sup> R. Bussmann, 'The Social Setting of the Temple of Satet in the Third Millennium', in S. J. Seidlmayer, D. Raue, and P. Speiser (eds), *The First Cataract: One Region – Various Perspectives*, in press.

<sup>95</sup> L. McNamara, 'The Revetted Mound at Hierakonpolis and Early Kingship: A Re-Interpretation', in B. Midant-Reynes, Y. Tristant, J. Rowland, and S. Hendrickx (eds), *Egypt at Its Origins 2: Proceedings of the International Conference 'Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt', Toulouse (France), 5th – 8th September 2005* (OLA 172; Leuven, 2008), 901–36; R. Friedman, 'Hierakonpolis Locality HK29A: The Predynastic Ceremonial Center Revisited', *JARCE* 45 (2009), 79–103.

<sup>96</sup> W. Kaiser, 'Bericht über eine archäologisch-geologische Felduntersuchung in Ober- und Mittelägypten', *MDAIK* 17 (1961), 1–53, here: 5–12.

<sup>97</sup> D. Craig-Patch, *The Origin and Early Development of Urbanism in Ancient Egypt: A Regional Study* (PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1991), 304–62; Seidlmayer, 'Town and State', in Spencer (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 113, 126–7. An overview of Predynastic settlements is offered by K. Bard, 'Urbanism and the Rise of Complex Society and the Early State in Egypt', in L. Manzilla (ed.), *Emergence and Change in Early Urban Societies* (New York, 1997), 59–86.

<sup>98</sup> N. Yoffee, *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations* (Cambridge, 2005), 42–90.

<sup>99</sup> Both the temple of Elephantine and of Tell Ibrahim Awad, the archaeologically best-known examples, date back to the late Predynastic period only, see G. Dreyer, *Elephantine VIII: Der Tempel der Satet: Die Funde* (AVDAIK 39; Mainz, 1986); D. Eigner, 'Tell Ibrahim Awad: Divine Residence from Dynasty 0 to 11', *Ä&L* 10 (2000), 17–36.

<sup>100</sup> J. Baines, 'Society, Morality, and Religious Practice', in B. E. Shafer (ed.), *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice* (Ithaca, NY, 1991), 123–200, here: 173–4; D. Raue and P. Kopp, 'Reinheit, Verborgenheit, Wirksamkeit: Innen-, An- und Außensichten eines ägyptischen Sanktuars jenseits der zentralen Residenzkulte', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 10 (2008), 31–50, here: 38–44.



Given the urban origin of temples, Egyptian gods could be argued to be urban gods. This must not be misinterpreted as Egyptian gods having no relationship to environmental phenomena, thus bringing 'town' into an opposition to 'nature'. In fact, Egyptian religion nestles intimately in the landscape.<sup>101</sup> However, it could be expected that nascent urbanism and temple religion have had an impact on shaping Pharaonic theology. It has been debated whether the Egyptian pantheon reflects political structure during its formative period in the sense that major gods represent the leading towns of the country.<sup>102</sup> The model works well for some sites and deities, but not for all. Hierakonpolis would be a primary example of how the local falcon god turns into an icon of kingship during the state formation period when the town flourished. Equally, the sun god becomes head of the most prestigious and maybe oldest formal arrangement of deities, the Heliopolitan Ennead, in the Early Dynastic period, when the Memphis-Heliopolis region rises to be the unrivalled centre of the country.<sup>103</sup>

Within the Heliopolitan Ennead, the gods of the youngest generation have comparatively good counterparts in archaeologically attested settlements and temples, including Horus/Hierakonpolis, Seth/Naqada, and Osiris/Abydos, the three best-known central places of Egyptian state formation.<sup>104</sup> In contrast, the female companions of Osiris and Seth, i.e. Isis and Nephthys, are difficult to identify on the ground in the Early Dynastic period. An even more perplexing phenomenon is the second and third generation of gods, Shu, Tefnut, Geb, and Nut. Egyptian sources do not seem to mention any temple of these deities over a three thousand years period, and only few priests serving them are known.<sup>105</sup> It seems as if they were not part of any urban community at any time but existed for theological purposes in the first place.

The Egyptian evidence becomes more pronounced when compared to other complex civilizations.<sup>106</sup> Mesopotamia is an interesting example because it shares wider sociological and ideological developments with Egypt, such as the emergence of social complexity and sacred kingship, but has an outspoken urban nature from its beginning in the fourth millennium. Different from Egypt, the archaeology and administrative texts of third-millennium city-states in Southern Mesopotamia leave no doubt that temples played a leading role in the political and economic organisation.<sup>107</sup> This observation

<sup>101</sup> H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago, 1948); S. J. Seidlmayer, 'Landschaft und Religion: Die Region von Aswân', *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 2006/1, 223–35; D. Jeffreys, 'Regionality, Cultural and Cultic Landscapes', in Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology*, 102–18.

<sup>102</sup> For the debate of a cult-topographical vs an essentialist school in Egyptology, see E. Otto, *LÄ* 2, 653–5, s.v. 'Götter, Lokal-', here: 654; J. Baines, 'Origins of Egyptian Kingship', in D. O'Connor and D. P. Silverman (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Kingship* (PdÄ 9, Leiden, 1995), 95–156, here: 100–1; E. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen: Altägyptische Götterwelt* (6th rev. edn; Wiesbaden, 2005), 238–41.

<sup>103</sup> W. S. Smith, *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom* (2nd edn; Boston, 1949), 132–7; L. Morenz, 'Die Götter und ihr Redetext: Die älteste Sakral-Monumentalisierung von Textlichkeit auf Fragmenten der Zeit des Djoser aus Heliopolis', in H. Beinlich, J. Hallof, H. Hussy, and C. von Pfeil (eds), 5. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung, Würzburg, 23.–26. September 1999* (ÄAT 33.3; Wiesbaden, 2002), 137–58, especially 143–5 challenges the reconstruction of the deities forming the Heliopolitan Ennead, but his interpretation is not followed by others.

<sup>104</sup> The neat equations may result from a pitfall of anachronism. The allocation of gods to specific places might have been a later inner-Egyptian interpretation, an invention of tradition.

<sup>105</sup> H. te Velde, *LÄ* 2, 427–30, s.v. 'Geb', here: 428; U. Verhoeven, *LÄ* 6, 295–304, s.v. 'Tefnut', here: 299–300; H. te Velde, *LÄ* 5, 735–7, s.v. 'Schu'; D. Kurth, *LÄ* 4, 535–41, s.v. 'Nut'.

<sup>106</sup> Most systematic recent comparisons by Yoffee, *Myths of the Archaic State*, 42–90, and Trigger, *Understanding Complex Civilizations*, 120–41.



confirms both a strong interdependence of urbanism and temple religion and a lesser role of towns and temples in the fabric of early Egyptian civilization as opposed to Mesopotamia. Attempts to model late Predynastic Egypt as a series of chiefdoms, similar to city-states, run the risk of overlooking the different nature of urbanism in Egypt and Mesopotamia.<sup>108</sup> The difference surfaces not only in different settlement sizes but also in different institutional arrangements and urban concepts. In third-millennium Mesopotamia, the temples are the administrative centres for the political organisation of individual city-states. In contrast, the country-wide integration of Egypt in this period is modelled on the royal funerary cult. The erection and maintenance of pyramids in a weakly urbanised environment afforded an infrastructure of planned pyramid towns, a type of urbanism alien to Mesopotamia.<sup>109</sup>

There seems to be a general understanding that major super-regional gods in Mesopotamia, such as An, Enki, and Enlil, represent major city-states of the third millennium, suggesting a straightforward political reading of theology.<sup>110</sup> While the political dimension of cities is coupled with cosmological qualities in Mesopotamia, i.e. An/Anu of Uruk represents the sky, Enki/Ea of Eridu the freshwater, Enlil of Nippur the wind, etc.,<sup>111</sup> the 'political' and youngest generation of the Heliopolitan Ennead in Egypt has no obvious relationship with the cosmos, and the 'cosmological' gods Shu (light, air), Tefnut (moisture), Geb (earth), and Nut (heaven) have no urban grounding. The competitive city-state climate of Mesopotamia seems to have led to a more political strategy of forming a super-regional theological framework than the less urban structure in Egypt. However, both in Egypt and Mesopotamia, systematic theology is deeply rooted in language and art, sound and visual design. Formal arrangements, e.g. in numeric-genealogical models (Ennead), lists arranged according to shape of cuneiform signs, male/female oppositions, or alliterative order, demonstrate that theology follows modes of objectification different from a purely political framework.<sup>112</sup>

If urbanism accounts for the emergence of Egyptian temples, it may also help explain the maintenance and longevity of cults. In the case of Middle Kingdom Hierakonpolis, one could argue that the temple was maintained because of the relevance of Horus for kingship. However, it seems that the temple of nearby Edfu had taken over this function

<sup>107</sup> J. N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* (London, 1992), 109–36.

<sup>108</sup> Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 73–8, fig. 21.

<sup>109</sup> The latter point is highlighted by D. Wengrow, *What Makes Civilization? The Ancient Near East and the Future of the West* (Oxford, 2010), 141–2. The founding of pyramid towns, many of which did not survive the end of the Old Kingdom, has fostered the urbanisation of the capital region around Memphis, see Bussmann, *MDAIK* 60 (2004), 39.

<sup>110</sup> W. Lambert, 'The Historical Development of the Mesopotamian Pantheon: A Study in Sophisticated Polytheism', in H. Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts (eds), *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the Literature, History and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (Baltimore, 1975), 191–9, here: 192. However, local differences are apparent, see A. Archi, 'How a Pantheon Forms: The Cases of Hittite-Anatolia and Ebla of the 3rd Millennium B.C.', in B. Janowski, K. Koch, and G. Wilhelm (eds), *Religionsgeschichtliche Beziehungen zwischen Kleinasien, Nordsyrien und dem Alten Testament* (OBO 129; Göttingen, 1993), 1–18; G. Selz, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des altsumerischen Stadtstaates von Lagaš* (Philadelphia, 1995).

<sup>111</sup> S. Pollock, *Ancient Mesopotamia: The Eden that Never Was* (Cambridge, 1999), 186–95, table 7.2.

<sup>112</sup> M. Krebernik, 'Vielzahl und Einheit im mesopotamischen Raum', in M. Krebernik and J. van Oorschot (eds), *Polytheismus und Monotheismus in den Religionen des Vorderen Orients* (AOAT 293; Münster, 2002), 33–51. Karen Radner kindly alerted me to this article. See also more recently G. Rubio, 'Gods and Scholars: Mapping the Pantheon in Early Mesopotamia', in B. Pongratz-Leisten (ed.), *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism* (Winona Lake, 2011), 91–116. For Egypt, see Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 62–101, 231–8.



by then.<sup>113</sup> From a less theological point of view, the temple of Hierakonpolis may have created a settlement nucleus used by a population of medium size and was perhaps integrated into wider cultic activities based in Elkab and Edfu, for example temple processions.<sup>114</sup> To date, this scenario belongs in the realm of imagination. However, the wider implication is that temples are not only a result of urbanism. They are also economically established institutions and symbolically condensed spaces resisting the consequences of environmental fluctuations, such as depopulation and migration. The local temple is ingrained in the institutional matrix of Egyptian urban society, preventing their easy abandonment. The interplay of urbanism and temple religion can, therefore, materialize in a mediated way demonstrating the dependent nature of both phenomena lying at the heart of urban Egypt.

### Conclusion

Hierakonpolis was probably inhabited throughout Pharaonic times. However, the Middle Kingdom record reviewed in the first part of the article is thin and concentrated on the temple area. Either the layers of this period were removed for later building activity, or the centre of the settlement was relocated in response to a migration of the river Nile. The reconstruction of the stratigraphy of the site is designed to explain the nature of the preserved structures in the temple area as the foundations of a later temple. The repeated rebuilding is due to the central role of temples for royal display in urban communities since the early Middle Kingdom. Together with environmental factors, the shifting focus of royal symbolic communication on temples has considerably contributed to shaping the Egyptian landscape.

Temple religion in Bronze Age Egypt is tied to an urban setting. The co-evolution of temples and urbanism is argued to account for the emergence of local temples in the late Predynastic period and, in the long run, for the success of Egyptian temples in the urban society of the New Kingdom and later periods. The temple of Hierakonpolis is exceptionally large in the Early Dynastic period and therefore not representative of the modest shrines found at other sites. It is suggested here that the nature of urbanism is not only reflected in settlement size but also in different institutional arrangements. Different from the temple-based city-state climate of Southern Mesopotamia, third-millennium urbanism in the Nile Valley is comparatively limited.

The weak role of towns during the formative period of Pharaonic Egypt challenges a reading of the Egyptian pantheon as a representation of leading city-states. Archaeological evidence of larger settlements in the Delta, such as at Buto, Tell el-Farkha and Tell el-Isuid, may change the picture. It might be worth an attempt in the future to compare in a more systematic way the impact of environment and urban structure on theology in different civilizations.

<sup>113</sup> P. Vernus, 'Les inscriptions d'Edfou du début de la XII<sup>e</sup> dynastie au début de la XIII<sup>e</sup> Dynastie', *L'Information Historique* 50.1 (1988), 14–9, here: 18–19. I am grateful to Nadine Moeller for making the article accessible to me.

<sup>114</sup> Temple processions at Elkab are attested since the Old Kingdom although they were directed towards a temple in the desert rather than to Hierakonopolis, see R. Müller-Wollermann and H. Vandekerckhove, *Die Felsinschriften des Wadi Hilâl* (Elkab VI; Turnhout, 2001), 381.