

7. Industrial and Domestic Quarters: Areas 251

7.1 Introduction to Area 251 – A Monumental Enclosure Wall from the New Kingdom, a Cemetery and Houses of the Late 2nd Millennium BC and a Predynastic Brewery

7.2 Various Finds

7.2.1 A Glimpse into the History of Ramesside Hieratic in Heliopolis

Introduction to Area 251 – A Monumental Enclosure Wall from the New Kingdom, a Cemetery and Houses of the Late 2nd Millennium BC and a Predynastic Brewery

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During the spring and autumn seasons of 2019, an area south-west of the Heliopolis temenos was excavated as part of a preventive exploration before municipal construction works.¹ This area is located 230 m south-east of the Ramesside temple of Suq el-Khamis (Area 200), 190 m south of the temple of Amun and Mut built by Ramesses II (Area 248), and 430 m west of the obelisk of Senusret I (Fig. 1-3). The excavated area covers about 825 m². The earliest drawings of the site date to the early to mid-19th century with the publication of the *Description de l'Égypte* and the work of Joseph Hekekyan. Both publications suggest that this area was devoid of lake deposits, which indicates that the stratigraphy in this area, and in the vicinity of the enclosure wall, was preserved at a higher level than in the centre of the temenos. Yet, despite this fact, no traces of stone temples have been found in this sector.

A Massive Wall

The excavated area is intersected by a massive straight mudbrick wall running north to south, and pottery found in its foundations suggest that

its construction probably started in the mid-18th Dynasty (Fig. 4–5). The wall was at least 4 m wide, but probably much more. The function of the delimited areas to the west and east of this wall is yet to be determined.

The wall was then subject to several phases of development:

- At the end of the Ramesside Period, a large amount of waste was dumped against its western side, forming a layer up to 3 m high and densely filled with pottery (Fig. 6).
- Around the 11th century BC, a partial demolition of the wall may have taken place when housing and production structures were built on its remaining upper part.
- During the 26th Dynasty, this massive wall underwent a reconstruction phase, resulting in a thickness of 8 m, according to the residual pottery found in the brick matrix (Fig. 7–8). This structure may have been part of a set of new enclosure walls built in 528 BC around the main temple by Amasis, which are mentioned on a stela of a priest called Djed-atum-iuef-ankh.²

¹ Previous excavations in this area during 2018 were directed by Tamer Ahmed Mahmud, Amr Ismail Ibrahim and Mahmud Tharwat Abu el-Fadl. For a preliminary publication of the area: see ASHMAWY/CONNOR/RAUE 2021.

² CORTEGGIANI 1979, 134, 149, note 1. Djed-atum-iuef-ankh specifies that he “supervised the foundation of the mud-brick Wall of Khenemibra (Amasis)”, and that this wall had a thickness of 30 cubits, i.e., approximately 15 m. The wall found in Area 251 is only half this thickness and therefore could not be this main wall. However, it may have been part of the same building project. Djed-atum-iuef-ankh also mentions in his stela a “Wall of Wahibra (Psamtik I or Apries)”, close to which he built a limestone temple for the god Sokar (CORTEGGIANI 1979, 134, 150, note n). Nevertheless, the pottery found in the wall foundation trench (type J2) seems to date to a later period within the 26th Dynasty, which would fit better with the reign of Amasis or Apries than with that of Psamtik I.

The upper levels of the wall, and stratigraphy in the surrounding area are not preserved, perhaps in part because of agricultural work in recent centuries. It is not known how long this wall was used, or what the nature of the occupation of

this part of Heliopolis was in the centuries following the 26th Dynasty. Only the remains of three longitudinal industrial ovens, dated to the 5th century BC according to associated pottery, were excavated 15 m south-east of the wall (Fig. 9).

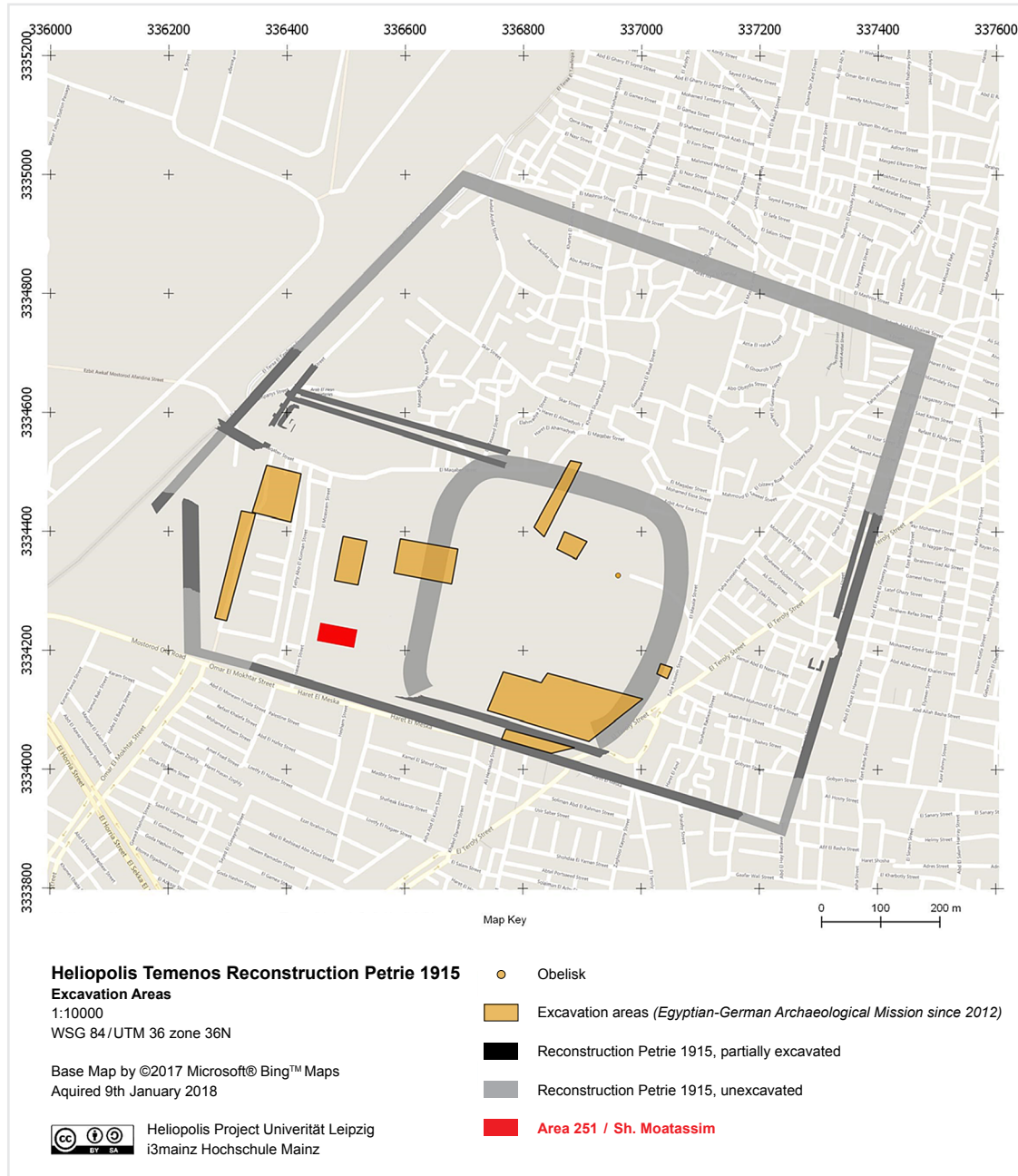


Fig. 1: Map of the archaeological area of the precinct of Heliopolis. Area 251 is highlighted red (Map by © 2017 Microsoft ® Bing ® Maps, 2018).

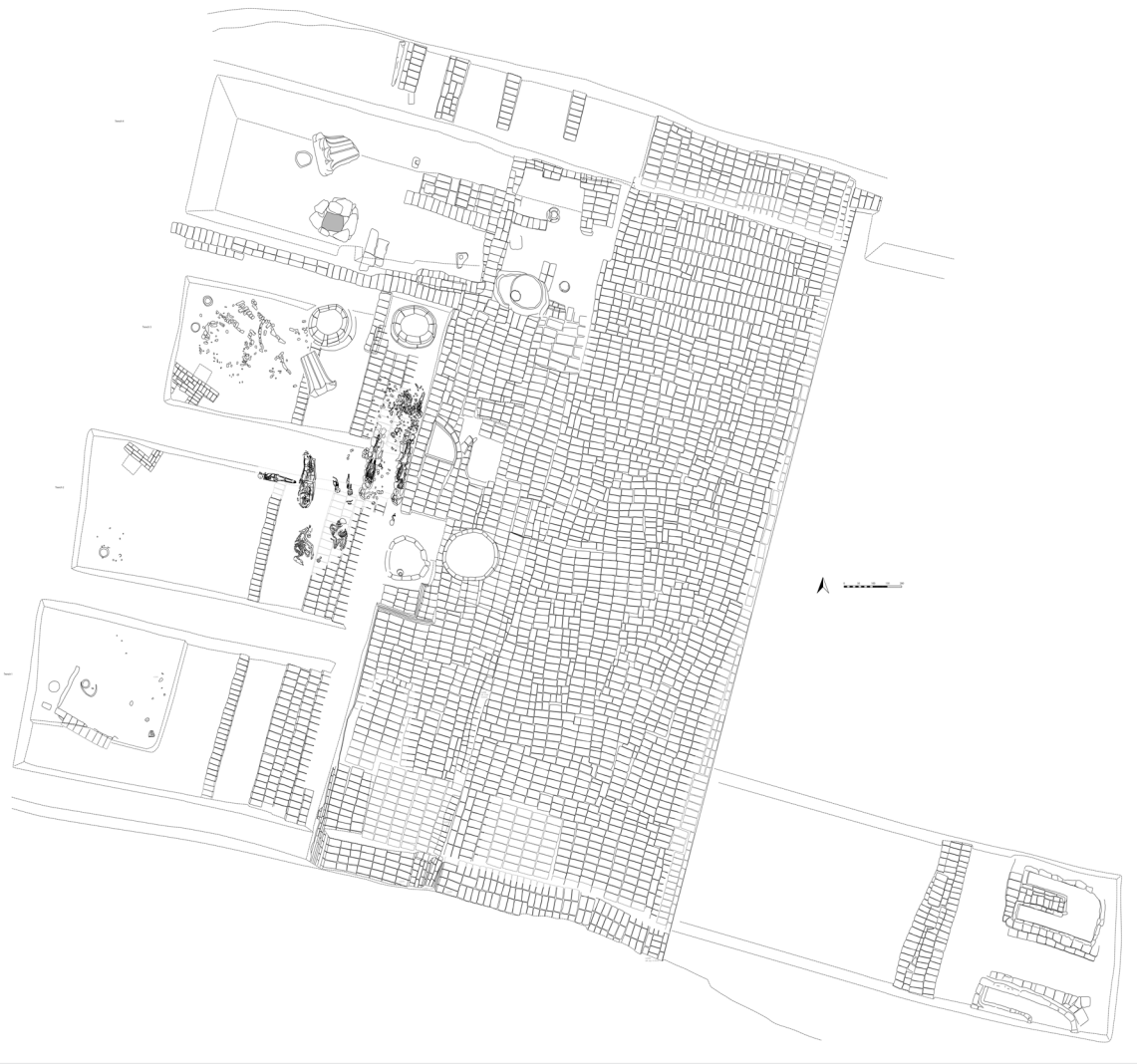


Fig. 2:
Map of Area 251
(Drawing: S. Connor,
E. El-Keshky, M.
Tawfik, R. Ali Ra-
madan, A. El-Naggar
and F. Langermann).

Apart from these ovens, the area east of the wall was poorly preserved and could not be properly excavated. However, the area to the west yielded traces of several successive occupation layers.



Fig. 3: View of Area 251 in September 2019, with the pumping system allowing us to excavate 2 m deep trenches west of the large wall (Photo: S. Connor).



Fig. 4: The southern part of the mid-18th Dynasty wall and its podium (eastern face). The foundation trench is filled with white limestone chips. The flooded area covers the remaining predynastic layers, which are still visible in the southern profile (Photo: S. Connor).

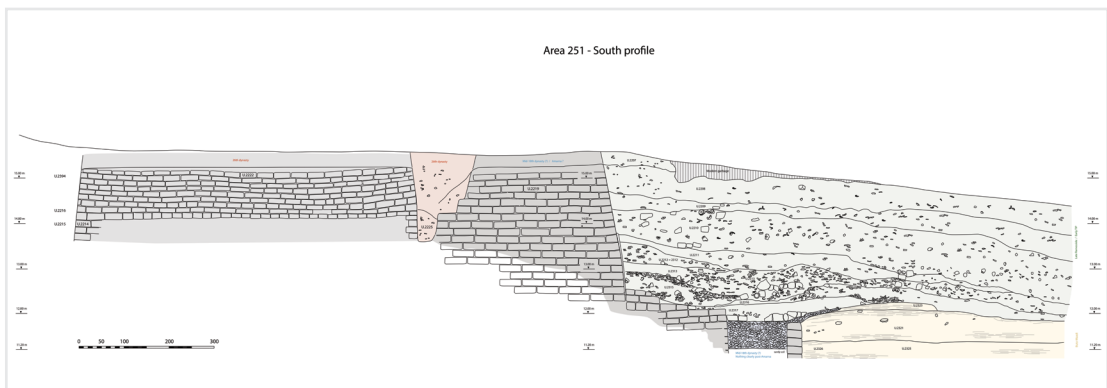


Fig. 5: Southern section of the excavated area, showing the predynastic layer in yellow, cut by the mid-18th Dynasty foundation trench (blue) and covered by the late Ramesside/early Third Intermediate Period succession of dump layers (green). (Drawing: S. Connor, E. El-Keshky, M. Tawfik and R. Ali Ramadan).



Fig. 6:
Eastern section of the excavated area, showing the podium of the mid-18th Dynasty wall. The wall itself is only well-preserved in its southern part, where the level of dumping from the late Ramesside/early Third Intermediate Period is also the highest
(Drawing: S. Connor, E. El-Keshky, M. Tawfik, R. Ali Ramadan, A. El-Naggar and F. Langermann).

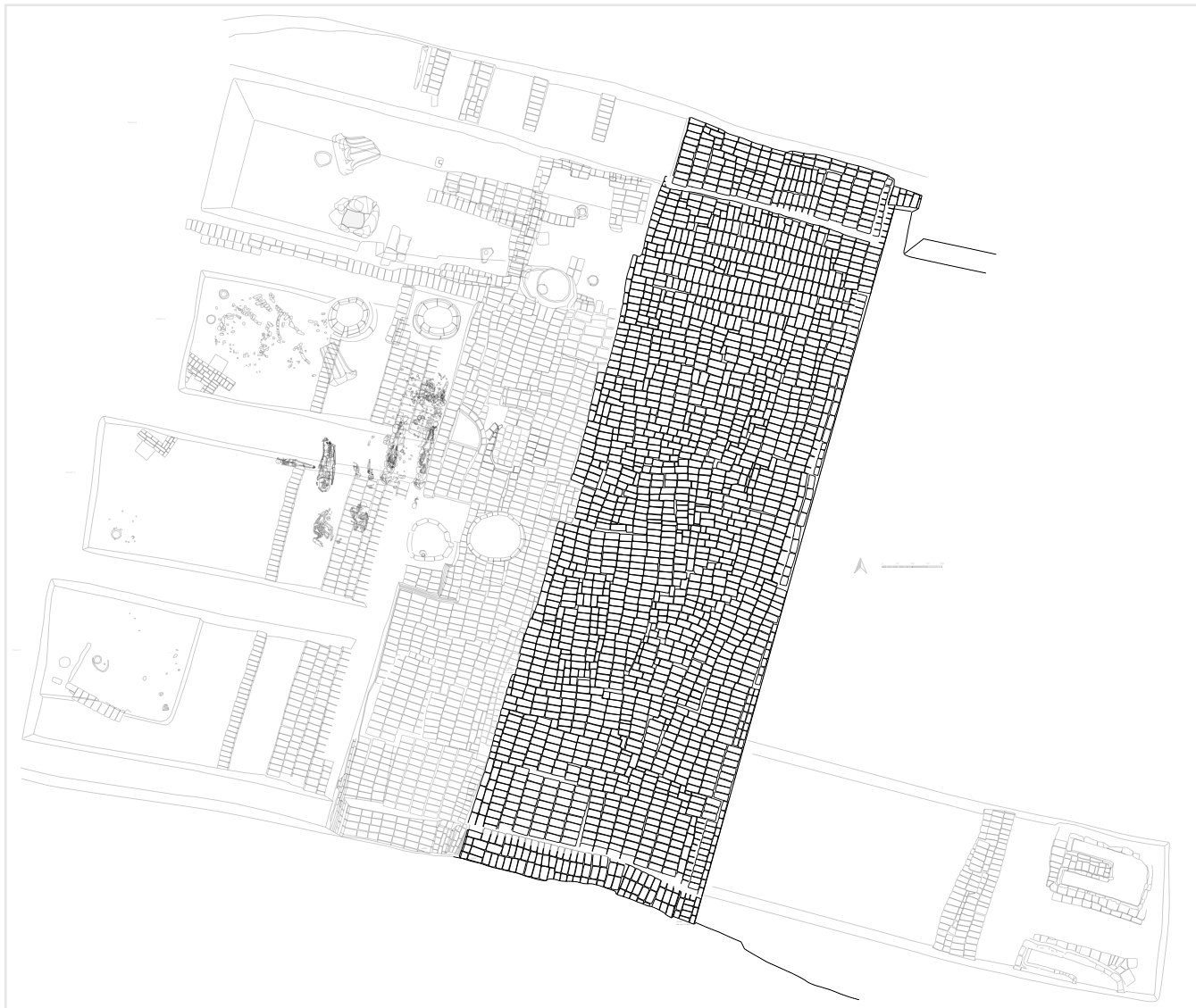


Fig. 7:
Area 251 with the reconstructed wall of 26th Dynasty highlighted dark grey (Drawing: S. Connor, E. El-Keshky, M. Tawfik, R. Ali Ramadan, A. El-Naggar and F. Langermann).



Fig. 8:
The 26th Dynasty
wall, seen from the
north-east
(Photo: S. Connor).



Fig. 9:
The 5th century
kilns, seen from the
south-east
(Photo: S. Connor).

A Cemetery and Industrial Activity During the Third Intermediate Period

The solid podium and the lower part of the massive New Kingdom mud-brick wall disappeared from view towards the end of the Ramesside Period or at the transition to the Third Intermediate Period (at least at its western side, we are lacking of information concerning the eastern side). A thick layer of waste, densely filled with pottery, covered the base of the wall, as well as the New Kingdom walking level, extending about 10m to the east on a gentle slope. This layer of waste reached a height of about 3 m and contained a large quantity of blue-ware pottery from the 18th and 19th Dynasties. The remains of several thousand “beer jars” were also found of a peculiar type in that they were all pierced prior to firing with a hole at the foot, the function of which is yet to be determined. A number of architectural and sculptural fragments were also dumped in this layer, including the shoulder of a

Middle Kingdom quartzite sphinx; a relief from the early reign of Akhenaten showing the king as a sphinx with human arms (see p. 368–376); and two complete granite palmiform capitals (Fig. 6) with additional fragments of at least a third one, the dating of which is still under debate. Similar (re)inscribed capitals with the name of Ramesses II and later rulers, have been found at Tanis or Herakleopolis Magna. But their similarity to capitals from 5th Dynasty funerary temples suggests that they might be Old Kingdom elements reused in a Ramesside temple, which was dismantled approximately when the dumping activity took place around the 11th century BC. The homogeneity of the pottery material in this layer abutting the western side of the wall suggests that the dumping activity was relatively rapid. The surface of this area, as well as the upper part of the partially demolished wall subsequently underwent successive occupations during the Third Intermediate Period (Fig. 10–11). These occupation levels overlap throughout more than three metres of stratigraphy.



Fig. 10: The late Ramesside/early Third Intermediate Period urban installation seen from the south (Photo: S. Connor).



Fig. 11: An oven/stack of baking plates in the middle of the house of the late Ramesside/early Third Intermediate Period (Photo: S. Connor).

A series of structures from the early Third Intermediate Period directly cover the partially demolished massive wall and the late Ramesside/early Third Intermediate Period dump layer. They consist of production and storage facilities, including a kiln, a well, several silos, and rooms made of thin mud-brick walls. At about the same time a cemetery was established on the southern side of these structures against the western face of what remained of the old massive wall (Fig. 12–14). Fourteen modest burials were preserved, as well as those of two calves. The individuals included four children, two elderly and several young adults, of both genders, who were all buried directly into the ground; only one individual had a pottery coffin.³ The only grave goods found were scarabs on the finger of some individuals, a necklace with an *udjat*-amulet,

and a modest bead necklace around the neck of a child.

Ramesside architectural stone elements (Fig. 15) along with several structures (dwellings?) from this period were found within this layer and the above layers. Unfortunately, these are very poorly preserved, but include ornate lintels that may have originated from the Heliopolis necropolis, currently under present-day Ayn Shams (see p. 489–494).

Based on the ceramic evidence, the upper occupation levels date to the 25th Dynasty. The whole stratigraphy was disturbed during reconstruction of the massive mud-brick wall and the digging of its foundations during the 26th Dynasty.

³ Another pottery coffin was found in the western extension of this cemetery during preceding excavations by the SCA in Autumn 2018.

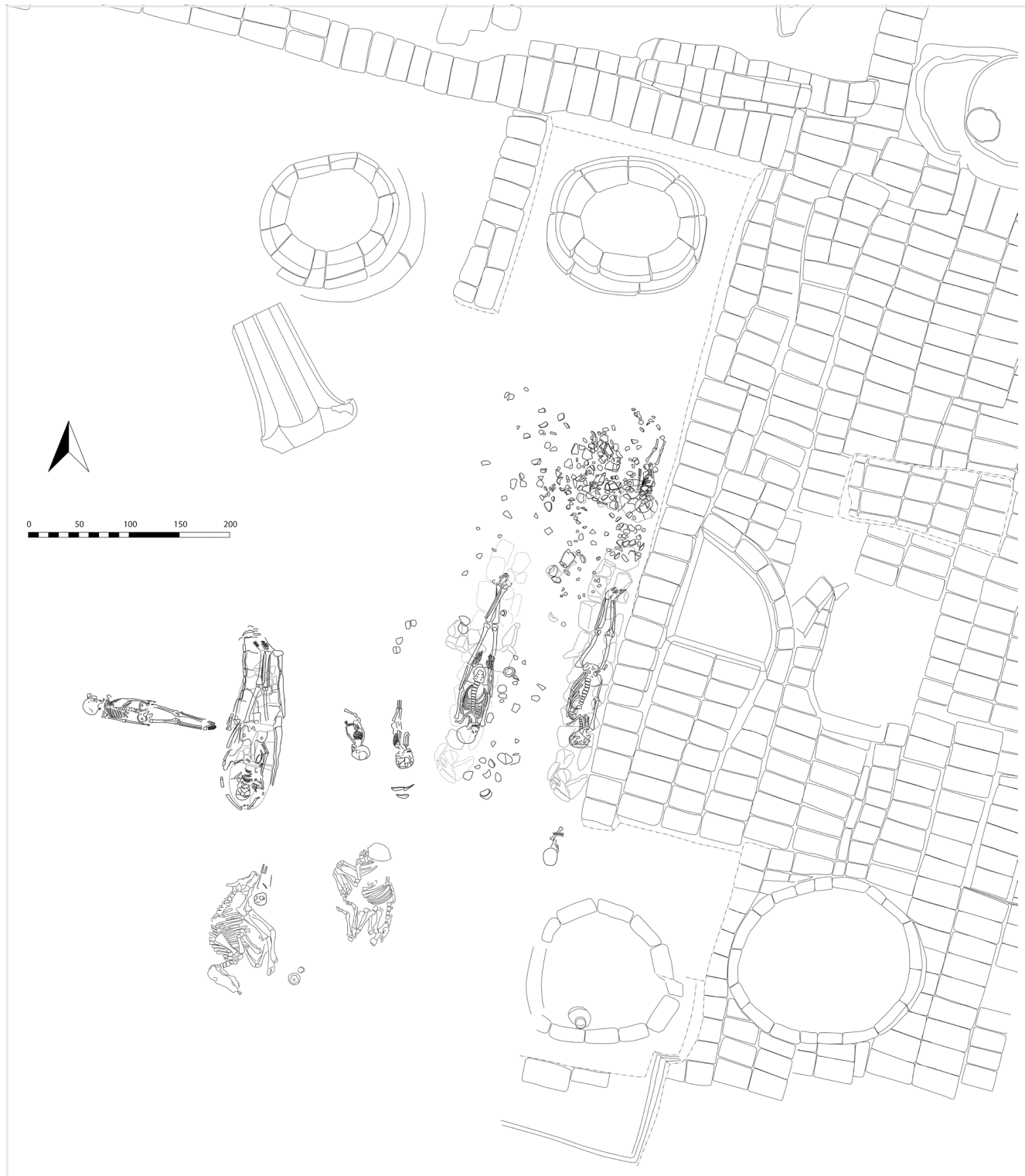


Fig. 12:
 Map of the late Ramesside/early
 Third Intermediate Period cemetery
 (Drawing: S. Connor and
 F. Langermann).



Fig. 13–14: The late Ramesside/early Third Intermediate Period cemetery (details); Photos: S. Connor and F. Langermann.



Fig. 15: The late Ramesside/early Third Intermediate Period "house", including Ramesside reliefs reused as thresholds (Photo: S. Connor).

A Predynastic Brewery

During the construction of the massive New Kingdom wall, the entire surrounding area must have been levelled to a fairly great depth, as no traces of Middle or Old Kingdom occupation have been preserved in this sector. Instead, the late Ramesside/early Third Inter-

mediate Period dump layer covered a very well-preserved Predynastic occupation. This early level is more than a meter deep and filled with several thousand flint tools and ceramic sherds that belong to the Buto–Maadi culture. A few mud-brick walls were uncovered, as well as fire pits and a brewery installation (Fig. 16-18).



Fig. 16: Upper level of the Predynastic occupation in Trench 1, south-west of the wall (Photo: S. Connor).



Fig. 17: Predynastic brewery installation in Trench 3, west of the wall (Photo: G. Pizzato).

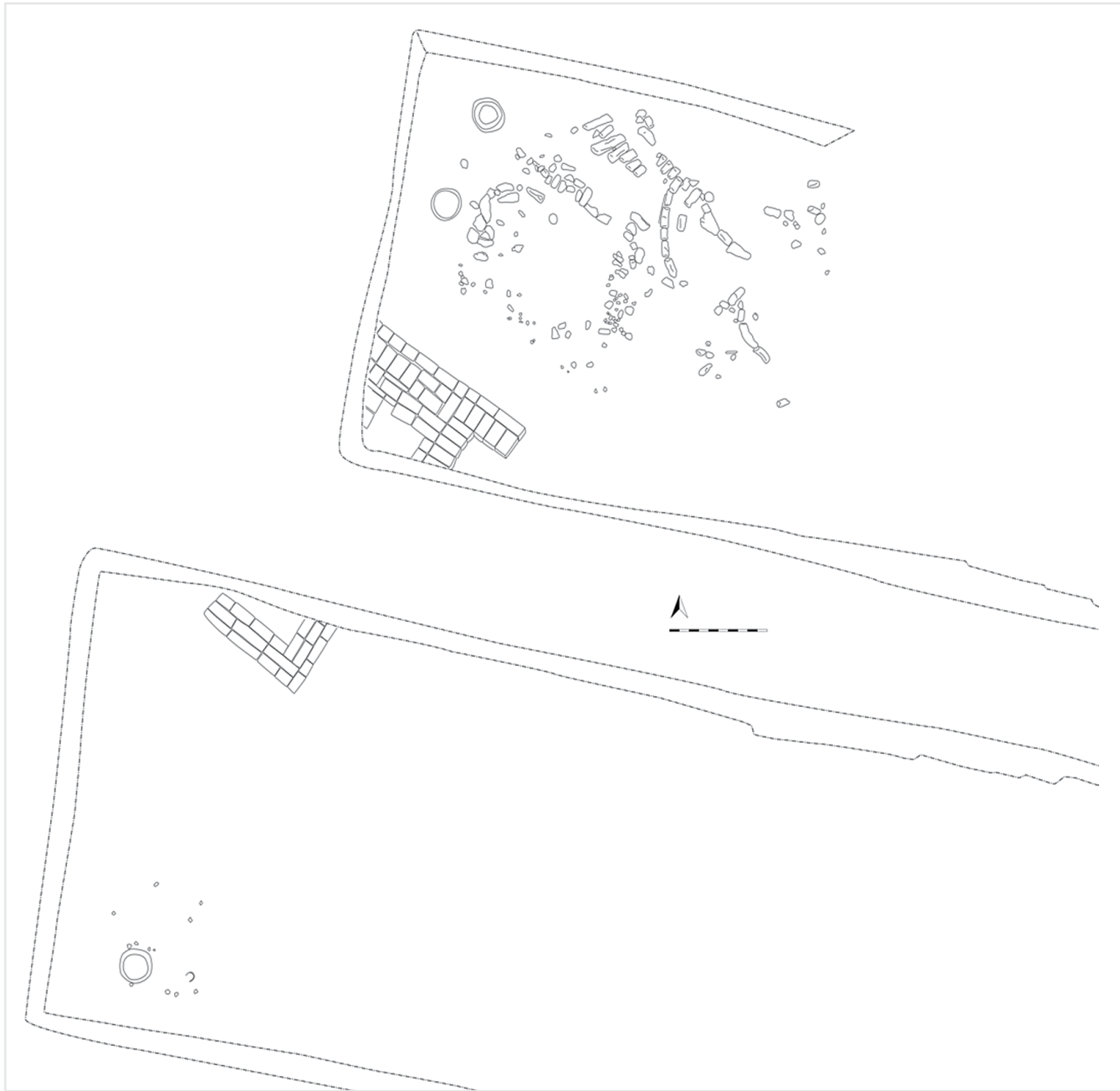


Fig. 18:
Predynastic brewery installation,
mudbrick walls and firepits detail in
Trenches 2 and 3, west of the wall
(Drawing: S. Connor, F. Langermann
and G. Pizzato).

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Various Finds

7.2.1 Ostrakon (Inv. No. U2314-1.1)

A Glimpse into the History of Ramesside Hieratic in Heliopolis

Hans-W. Fischer-Elfert

Technical Details:

Excavation no.:	U2314-1.1 (Fig. 1–2)
Material:	Mixed clay, red-brown, with broad grey core (Memphite G6b / Aston H5; BOURRIAU/SMITH/NICHOLSON 2000, 19, colour plate 2.9), with white slip on the outside
Type of pottery:	jar (max. diam.: 40 cm, Fig. 3)
Dimensions:	H. 15.8 cm; W. 11.7 cm; Th. 1.1–1.4 cm
Condition:	Broken on all sides; faint traces of red dots on the outside next to a single word in Hieratic; inside left uninscribed
Provenance:	Area 251, debris layers west of NK enclosure wall
Date of discovery:	28.8.2019
Date:	Probably Ramesside according to its type/fabric of pottery and associated finds

Ancient Iunu alias Heliopolis and its main temple precinct of Atum-Ra-Horakhty must have contained huge amounts of religious manuscripts in its temple libraries covering a broad range of genres, next to substantial archives with documentary evidence of its management. Scholars working on e.g., Late Period ritual, magical, medical and zoological treatises in hieratic and housed in the Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York were working on the assumption that those manuscripts from the so-called

Wilbour Lot had a definite Heliopolitan background in terms of their material manufacturing as well as in terms of their inscription by local priests. This Egyptological myth has only recently been demystified by J. F. Quack and the present writer and it was particularly Quack who was able to establish a long-distance join between a Wilbour fragment in Brooklyn and another one in the Berlin papyrus collection.¹ Instead, those manuscripts can now firmly be attributed to Elephantine, and with some degree

¹ See his remarks on this issue in his review of GOYON 2012 (QUACK 2013, 256–272, part. 256 for some details).

7.2.1

of certainty even more precisely to the local Khnum temple and its *pr-nḥ* or “House-of-Life” plus attached *pr-mdꜣ.t* – “House-of-Books”.

As Quack notes in his review, “die für Helio-
polis kaum gegebenen Erhaltungsmöglich-
keiten empfindlicher organischer Materi-
alien” will have been responsible for the
disappearance of hieratic manuscripts, let alone hiero-

glyphic and demotic texts, on papyrus and
wooden objects, not to mention leather rolls or
textiles. This tremendous loss of written culture
on portable but transitory materials, covering
a period of more than 2.500 years, cannot be
fathomed with any degree of reliability, but it
may once have been on a par with the contents
of the later Alexandrian Library in Hellenistic
times.

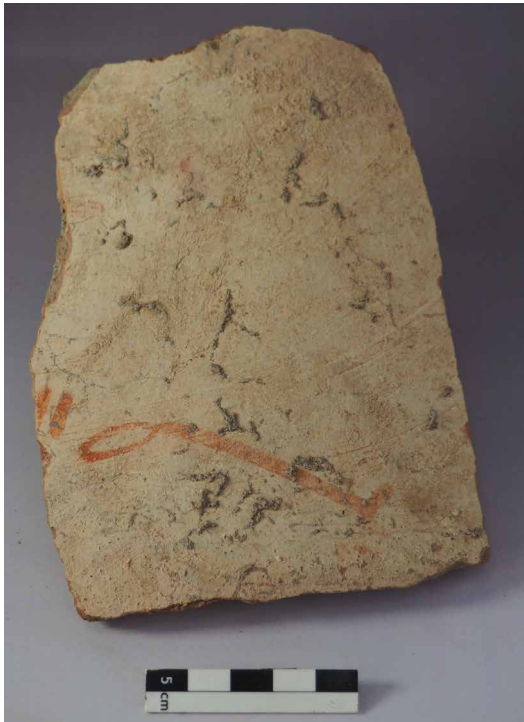


Fig. 1:
Jar docket
[Inv. No. U2314-
1.1]; obverse (Photo:
S. Connor).

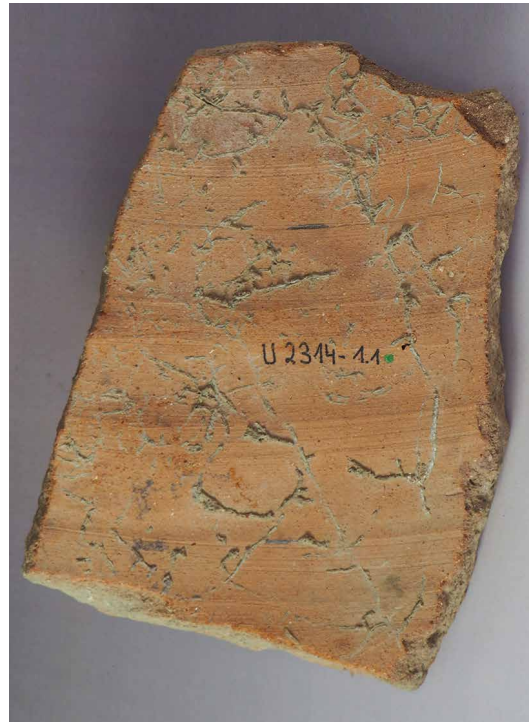



Fig. 2:
Jar docket
[Inv. No. U2314-
1.1]; reverse (Photo:
S. Connor).



Fig. 3:
Inv. No. U2314-1.1,
scale 1:4 (Drawing:
P. J. Collet).

Thus, it should come as a big surprise to find a piece of pottery inscribed in red ink on the outside or obverse, executed in a fine hieratic hand, if any assessment on the degree of training of its ancient writer may be allowed due to the sheer number of just three signs, with two of them appearing even twice. Their transcription can only be this:

[...] 
 ky /kjj [...]
 “another [...]”

The adjective *ky* may either stand on its own, be followed by a suffix pronoun, whereas the by far most frequent usage of *ky* and its feminine and plural derivatives is preceding nouns; see *GEG*, § 98, for details. Since there is not even a shred of any other hieratic text on the sherd to be discerned, any reconstruction of what may have followed *ky* remains a moot point.² There are some spots where red dots seem to have been put on the surface, and if so, this might attach a more or less literary character to the entire inscription. A closer look at the breaks reveals their ancient origins.

As for the paleography of the signs, none of them is diagnostic enough so as to fix it more precisely in terms of chronology. That said, it is the very type of pottery and its stratigraphic context that should be applied in order to define a *terminus*

ante quem non, as opposed to the paleography of the signs.

So much for the sheer textual evidence on the outside of the piece. This very evidence of hieratic from the soil of the Atum-temple precinct in Heliopolis, however, deserves a bit more attention when it comes to the issue of its physical preservation in a geomorphological context which quite unexpectedly did not do any harm to the ochre of its red inscription. A damp soil may not have been the only reason for the disappearance of inscribed and highly sensitive writing materials such as papyrus, leather, linen or wood. Richard Parkinson reminds us also of the possibility of “rodents” such as worms, termites or ants who may have added their share of destruction as well.

What do we know about the durability of ancient Egyptian ink in humid areas or when, in a worst-case scenario, it was even exposed to rainfalls? Asked this way, a meanwhile famous passage in one of the *Late Ramesside Letters* comes to mind which may clarify the preservation of the Heliopolis ink inscription here discussed. In his extensive letter to his son on pBM EA 10236 from year 10 of the Renaissance Period at the end of the 20th Dynasty, the scribe Djehutimose i.a. mentions an incident of heavy rainfall affecting a bunch of manuscripts without expunging their ink:³

² One is reminded of the documentary limestone ostrakon DeM 10011, first published by GRANDDET 2006, 93. Carrying nothing but the brief inscription *ky jnr šrj* – “(just) another little stone”, Grandet is certainly right in attributing a humoristic intention to the ancient writer, perhaps making fun of his colleague(s). As for the possibility of any further text having been deleted due to the influence of salt embedded in the fabric of the pottery and surfacing over time, this issue needs further investigation.

³ Transcription in ČERNÝ 1939, 18.13–15 corresponding to ll. 20.1 in the original; cf. the transcription in WENTE 1990, 190–192, no. 313 (LRL No. 9), which I quote here.

hr m-dj n3 zh.w j.hw t3 p.t r.r=w
m t3 ˙.t n zh3 Hr-šrj p3y=j <jtj>
jw=k jn=w r-bl
jw=n gm=w r-dd bwpwy ft

Now as for the documents upon which the rain poured
 in the house of the scribe Horsheri my <(grand)father>,
 you brought them out,
 and we discovered that they had not become erased.

This episode is compared by R. A. Caminos to personal experience when in the 1950ies dealing with a moist lump of papyri “immersed in sewer water for about a fortnight in the flooded vault of a London bank, [which] had become a solid lump the size of a large cake of toilet soap, thoroughly dry and quite hard when it came into my hands” (in: BIERBRIER 1986, 45 and note 15). Remembering the Djehutimose-passage, Caminos then goes on by recounting a simple test he made: “two loose written-on fragments that I steeped in a glass of clean cold water showed not the slightest sign of damage or deterioration or change of any kind after 28 hours of continuous immersion”.⁴

What does this experiment tell us about the disappearance of vulnerable manuscripts like papyri in the Heliopolitan soil? Its humid condition alone would not have done any harm to the ink of hieratic – or hieroglyphic and de-

motic – texts on papyri in the first degree, instead, it will have simply destroyed the fibers they were written on.⁵ You cannot simply wash away ancient Egyptian ink from its surface, you have to do it in tandem with scratching, and this is the way palimpsests will have come about, but systematic studies and observations attesting to this assumption are still in their infancy.⁶

Summing up this glimpse into the history of hieratic writing(s) in ancient Heliopolis, we can only speculate about the sheer amount of cursive texts that have gone lost on this spot since antiquity. The tiny little word *ky*, in any case, fully attests to the validity of the observation of the scribe Djehutimose and to Ricardo Caminos’ experiment. And it is for this very reason, why this seemingly unattractive sherd is of utmost importance for the history of cursive writing in ancient Heliopolis in general.

⁴ To Prof. Parkinson we also owe the following reference on the restoration work on the blank papyrus pBM EA 79709 mounted between glass and labelled as such: “Oct-Nov. 1967 This blank fragment of ancient papyrus was allowed to remain immersed in distilled water for twenty-one days without breaking down”.

⁵ Geomorphological conditions that may have been different from the ones in Tanis when W. M. Flinders Petrie discovered the so-called Tanis papyri, published in GRIFFITH/PETRIE 1889 – Parkinson once again reminds us of their having been carbonized which circumstance will have contributed to their “preservation” and – if only limited – readability, only to be enhanced by means of technical devices.

⁶ See LEACH/TAIT 2000, 242, 244–245 on their restoration treatment in the 20th century AD, as well as LEACH 2006, 225–241, with detailed information on every single manuscript. – On reuse of ostraca in Deir el-Medina, see DONKER van HEEL/HARING 2003, 4 with a list of examples in note 3.

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