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The Gebelein Region in the Third Intermediate and Late Periods

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Abstract: While relatively much is known of Gebelein in the second and third millennia BCE, as well as the Ptolemaic times, the role of the town of Per-Hathor and its surrounding in the Third Intermediate (*c*. 1076–747 BCE) and Late (*c*. 747–332 BCE) periods remains largely obscure. The aim of this paper is to examine the existing sources pertaining to the history of Gebelein with the particular focus on state activities in the area, diachronic changes in settlement pattern and sacral topography, as well as funerary landscape in the first three-quarters of first millennium BCE and analyse the available information in a regional context. For this, published and unpublished records are utilised, together with the results of the current field prospection in Gebelein.

Keywords: Gebelein, Third Intermediate period, Late period, Egypt

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The complex of archaeological sites of Gebelein (**Fig. 1**), Upper Egypt, currently investigated by the Gebelein Archaeological Project, is perhaps best known for the discoveries of predynastic mummies and later history, documented by numerous artefacts dated until the end of the New Kingdom, and finally papyri archives of the Ptolemaic town of Pathyris. The latter sheds some light on the history of the region and the town of Per-Hathor (Pathyris in Greek), which for about a hundred years became administrative capital of the Pathyrite district.[1] While there is a lot of historical and archaeological data from the fourth, third and second millennia BCE, hardly any information is available from the Third Intermediate and Late periods.

[1] Manning 2003: 77, n. 66; Vandorpe, Waebens 2009; Ejsmond, Skalec, Chyla 2022; Eller 2022: 88–94.

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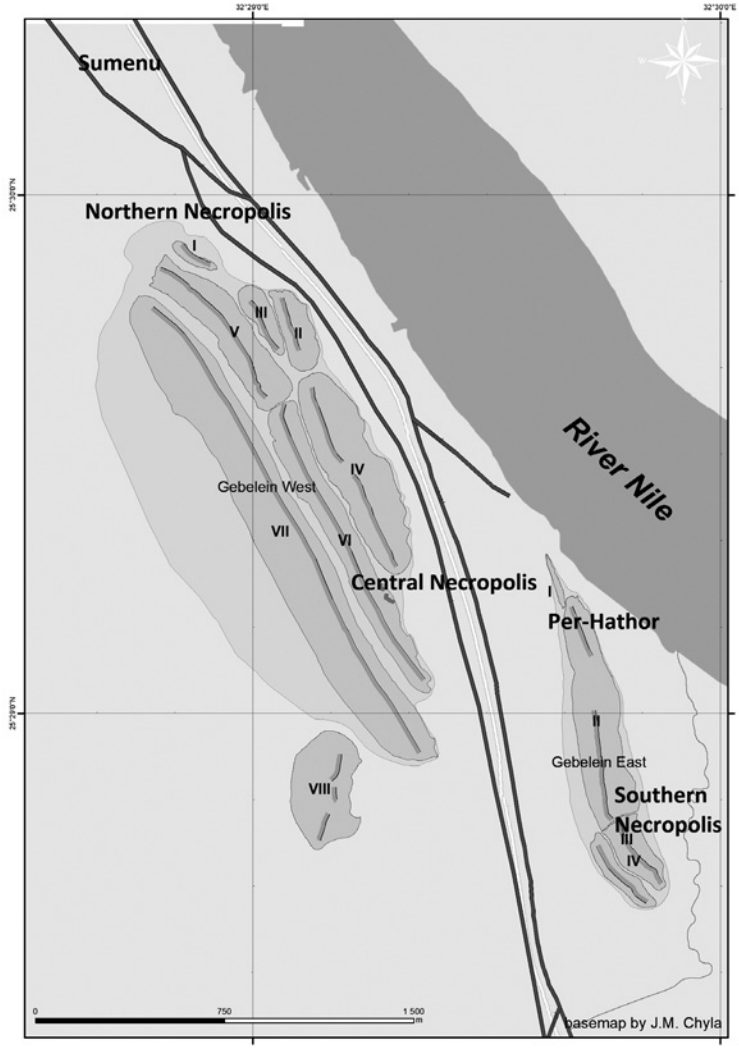
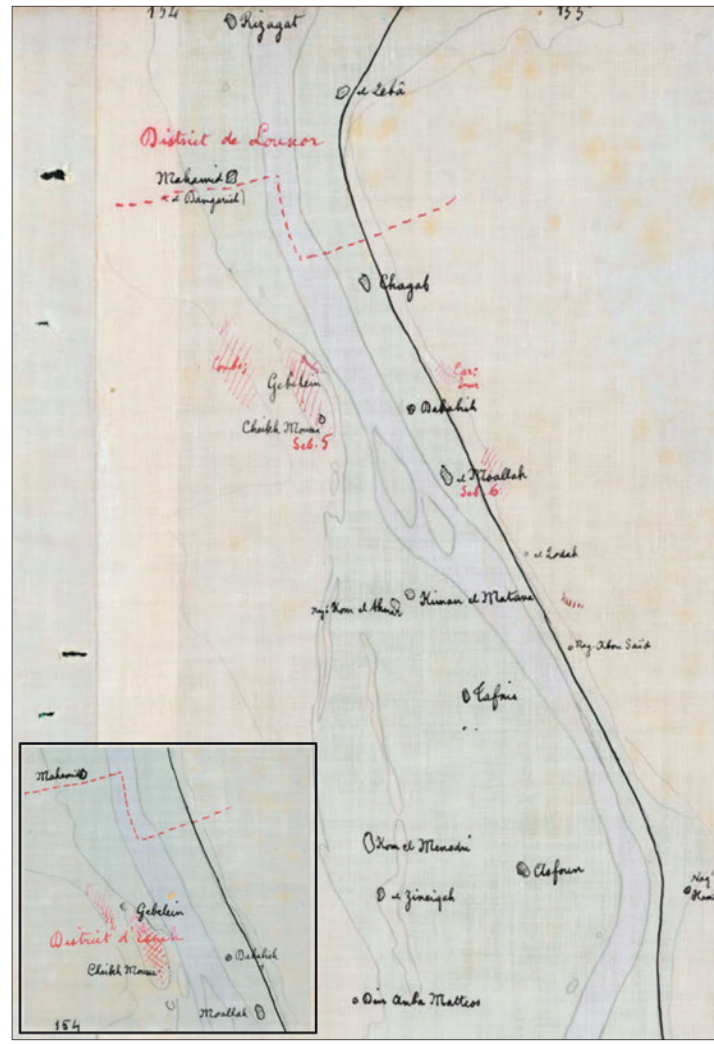


1. Archaeological plan of Gebelein micro-region (Drawing: J.M. Chyla; elaborated: W. Ejsmond).

This paper examines the sources, primarily archaeological, pertaining to the history and role of the area (**Figs 2**–**3**) in the times between the end of the New Kingdom and the beginning of the Ptolemaic period. In dynastic times, Gebelein was located in the border region between the third and fourth Upper Egyptian nomes,[2] hence a regional perspective was chosen to analyse the available evidence, with er-Rizeiqat constituting the northern and Asfun the southern border of the investigated area. The sites included in this analysis are (from the north): on the west bank er-Rizeiqat, a group of sites in the Gebelein

[2] For the recent discussion on the subject, see: Manassa 2009: 75.



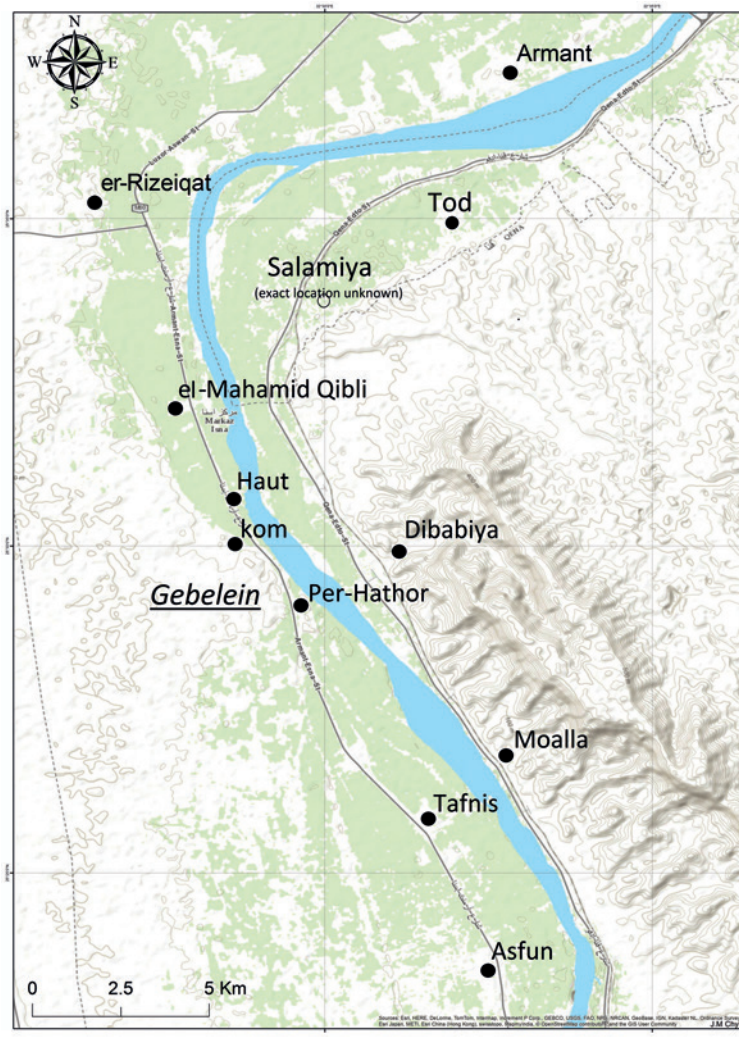
2. Archaeological sites in the er-Rizeiqat-Gebelein-Moalla region in the early twentieth century (Daressy *et al*. 2002: Pl. 41).

micro-region (Northern and Central necropoleis, Per-Hathor), and Asfun, while on the opposite bank Tod with the necropoleis of Salamiya, Dibabiya, and Moalla.

STATE ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA

The most commonly discussed single construction dating to the Third Intermediate period from the region of Gebelein is the so-called fort of the High Priest of Amun Menkheperra (Twenty-first Dynasty) – the southernmost one in a series of fortresses erected by him.[3]

[3] Kitchen 1973: 269–270; Bennett 2019: 204.



3. Map of the Gebelein region (Drawing: J.M. Chyla; elaborated: W. Ejsmond).

The role of the fort in Per-Hathor, if the identification of its remains is correct (see below), was to control the entrances to the Theban nome (its northern counterpart in the Theban nome was the fort at Higazeh) and the Kharga Oasis.[4] The northernmost fortress in the chain constructed by Menkheperra was located at el-Hibeh – a town on the border of the spheres of influence of the High Priest and the pharaoh.[5] The fortress and the temple from Gebelein is mentioned also in Ptolemaic sources, with the former probably located

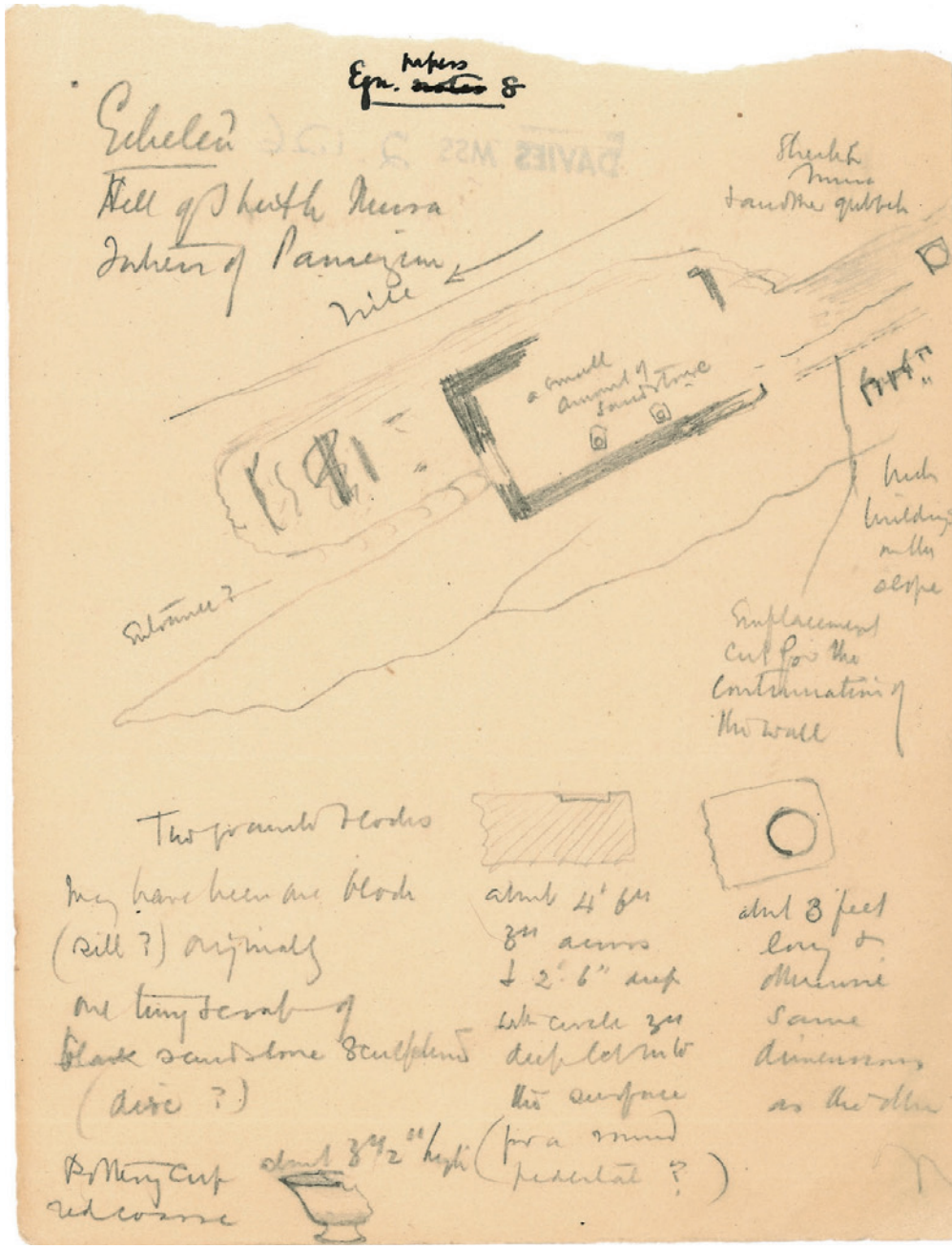
[4] Bennett 2019: 69.
[5] Bennett 2019: 72, 221.

next to the temenos, to the south of it.[6] However, identification of their remains is not straightforward.

A mudbrick enclosure located on the top of the East Mountain at Gebelein (Gebelein East), a plan of which was sketched by Norman de Garis Davis (**Fig. 4**), was interpreted as the actual remains of the fort or temple.[7] The existence of a Twenty-first Dynasty fortress at the site, however, is a conjecture which requires further verification. Moreover, judging from the plan, the enclosure recorded by de Garis Davies was part of the temenos, rather than being a fort.[8] A brick bearing the name of Pinodjem (according George Willoughby Fraser the III) and 'his wife Iset-m-nut', reported by Fraser in 1893, together with some demotic ostraca and one ostracon 'apparently of the transition period between hieratic and demotic', all of unknown exact findspot, are important sources in this discussion.[9] The copy of cartouches published by Fraser, however, indicates that the brick was stamped with the names of Menkheperra, not Pinodjem, and his wife Isetemkheb.[10] Ernesto Schiaparelli, on the other hand, believed it was 'Pianchi Mencheperra' who enlarged the fortress.[11] In this context it should be noted that the published bricks from the top of the East Mountain feature the names of the High Priest of Amun Menkheperra,[12] that of Isetemkheb,[13] and the combination of both names.[14] Considering this, attribution of the names to Pinodjem (Twenty-first Dynasty) or Pianchi (Twenty-fifth Dynasty), therefore, seems to be a mistake.

During the works of the Gebelein Archaeological Project, three types of stamp impressions on the mudbricks were distinguished: two with cartouches of Menkheperra and one with that of Menkheperra and Isetemkheb.[15] Stamped bricks were found only in the northern part of East Mountain in a concentration measuring *c*. 10m on an E-W axis and *c*. 5m on a N-S one, and none in the structure of enclosing wall itself. It would seem that indeed in the Twenty-first Dynasty a building was erected in Gebelein. The possibility that the existing enclosing wall is of a different date than the Twenty-first Dynasty, and that some of the stamped bricks from its area were reused in later times to construct the temenos or to make repairs cannot be excluded. According to José Lull, the bricks stamped with the Menkheperra name could have been later reused to strengthen the external wall of the temple complex.[16] This could be the reason for Schiaparelli's confusion. On the other hand, the discussed wall was in a much better state of preservation at the time of Schiaparelli's work than now (**Figs 5**–**6**), so he had a better starting point for interpretation.

[6] Ejsmond, Skalec, Chyla 2022: 378.
[7] Ejsmond, Wieczorek, Wieczorek 2018: 237.
[8] See for example: Spencer 2011: 40.
[9] Fraser 1893: 498.
[10] Fraser 1893: Fig. XXI.
[11] Schiaparelli 1921: 126–127.
[12] *MetMuseum*: accession number 25.3.328.
[13] Turin S. 13016/13 and S. 13010.
[14] Ejsmond, Wieczorek, Wieczorek 2018: 238, Fig. 2.
[15] Ejsmond, Wieczorek, Wieczorek 2018: 238–239.
[16] Lull 2006: 225.



4. Norman de Garis Davies' sketch of the plan of the structure on top of the East Mountain (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford; Davies MSS 2.126 Gebelein).

5. Exploration of the temple area, probably 1910 (Archivio Museo Egizio C00696).

6. Current view of the summit of the East Mountain (Phot. W. Ejsmond).

All in all, it is unknown whether the fortress known from the Ptolemaic texts[17] was constructed in the Third Intermediate period. One cannot exclude that Menkheperra commissioned some other structure, for example a watch tower,[18] in this area, and that bricks with his name were later reused for construction or repairs. Taking into account the strategic location of Gebelein, its position enabling control of navigation on the Nile and the irrigation canals,[19] thus controlling the water supply of the west bank of Thebes, the building of a fortress in the Twenty-first Dynasty is likely, but so far there is no conclusive evidence of its existence before the Ptolemaic times.[20]

A little to the north, on the opposite bank of the Nile, another piece of textual evidence attests the royal interest in the region in the early Twenty-first Dynasty: the Smendes stela from Dibabiya (**Fig. 3**), recently republished by Cyprian H.W. Fong.[21] The text, carved on a pillar in the Southern Gallery of the Dibabiya limestone quarries, does not provide information on the regnal year in which it was made.[22] It recounts a quarrying expedition to Dibabiya to procure building material for the renovation of a stone embankment in the Luxor temple which had been destroyed by a flood. Four toponyms appear in the text: Memphis, Luxor, Gebelein, and Tod. Of these four, the last two are particularly relevant for the discussion here. Gebelein (*Jnrty*) is mentioned in the context of the geographical setting of the expedition: in the text, we read that 'one fou[nd] this quarry from the time of those who went to the vicinity of Gebelein' (*r-ḥ3w Jnrty*).[23] The (presently unknown) ancient name of Dibabya does not appear in the text. As for the name of Tod (*Ḏrty*), it occurs in the heavily damaged line 13, where the temple of Montu, Lord of Tod, is mentioned, although the context is unclear. According to Fong, the most plausible explanation is that the temple at Tod had been at some point in the past (before Smendes' expedition) constructed or decorated with the Dibabiya limestone.[24]

A large number of late pottery fragments were reported in the Dibabiya area. According to Rosemarie and Dietrich Klemm, they are linked to the large marl clay deposit further to the east, which was exploited already in antiquity.[25] The exact dating of the sherds remains, however, unknown.

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[17] Ejsmond, Skalec, Chyla 2022: 378.

[18] Ejsmond, Wieczorek, Wieczorek 2018: 239.

[19] Ejsmond, Skalec, Chyla 2022: 375.

[20] According to some scholars, one of the sons of Menkheperra, Hori, is said to have been a priest of Hathor of Gebelein (Sousa (Ed.) 2018: 419). However, it would seem that he was a priest of Hathor, Lady of the Theban Valley (*nbt Jnt n W3st*) rather than Lady of Gebelein (see: Niwiński 1988: 119). We would like to thank Dr Andrzej Ćwiek for sharing his comments on this title.

[21] Fong 2021, with bibliography. The first edition of the text was published by Georges Daressy (Daressy 1888).

[22] Fong 2021: 162.

[23] Fong 2021: 143.

[24] Fong 2021: 157–161.

[25] Klemm, Klemm 1993: 185.

A few kilometres to the south, the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's royal activities in the area are attested by the stela of Taharka (CG 38269), most probably from Asfun (**Fig. 3**).[26] The stela, one of four copies of the same text (the other three erected at Kawa, Coptos, and Tanis), records the high inundation which occurred in Taharka's sixth regnal year.[27] In the lunette of the stela, a double scene of Taharka making offerings to Hemen, Lord of Hefat, can be found.

The temple at Asfun has been known to European travellers since the eighteenth century.[28] In 1905, remains of a chapel were unearthed there, with cartouches of the king Psamtek-sa-Neith Menkheperra found on the wall.[29] This name, ostensibly pointing to the Late period, does not belong to any known ruler, and likely is a much later attempt to write the name of an earlier pharaoh. According to Arthur Weigall, the style of the preserved decoration of the chapel suggests Roman times dating, though others propose a Ptolemaic date.[30] Some blocks from the temple with cartouches of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, recovered from a nearby mosque, were identified by Adel Farid.[31] However, Gaston Maspero, who visited the site not long after the discovery made in 1905, remarked that the monument strongly resembled Late period chapels of the God's Wives of Amun at Thebes.[32] The temple at Asfun probably had much older foundations: a statuette of Thutmose III was found nearby.[33]

No unambiguously Twenty-sixth Dynasty remains of royal foundations are known from the study area. The Thirtieth Dynasty is documented by a limestone block with a scene of Nectanebo I offering Maat to Hemen, Lord of Hefat, unearthed in 1964 in Moalla (**Fig. 3**). It was found during the construction of a new canal, 600m north of the Moalla necropolis.[34] The block is now considered an argument for the identification of Moalla with ancient Hefat, albeit it being pointed out that owing to its small size, it is possible that the block was move from its original foundation, possibly even a distant one.[35] Two more blocks are said to have come from this Thirtieth Dynasty building.[36] Moreover, in this context one should mention that the Twenty-first Dynasty Pap. Brooklyn 16.205 contains a record of a judicial oracular judgment for one Ikeni delivered by the oracle of Hemen at Hefat.[37] A composite statuette of Taharka kneeling in front of Hemen, Lord of Hefat, is among the

[26] Vikentiev 1930.
[27] See the recent discussion on the significance of the stelae in Gozzoli 2009.
[28] Farid 1986: 35.
[29] Weigall 1907.
[30] Weigall 1907: 106. Dieter Arnold argues that the temple of Hemen at Asfun was enlarged in the Ptolemaic period by the native Upper Egyptian rulers contemporary with Ptolemy IV (Arnold 1999: 179).
[31] Farid 1986.
[32] Maspero 1906: 58.
[33] PM V, 165.
[34] Gabra 1974.
[35] Manassa 2009: 77.
[36] Manassa 2011: 3.
[37] Parker 1962: 49–50; Beckerath 1994.

Louvre collection (E25276), and probably originates from the region, although its exact provenance is unknown.[38]

The interest of the last dynasties in the area is reflected also in the enlargement of the Middle Kingdom temple at Tod. At least two building phases datable to the Late period are attested in the archaeological material: one is represented by fragments of decoration with cartouches of Achoris, and the other by fragments with cartouches of Nectanebo II, found reused in the area.[39] Pottery fragments and amulets datable to the Third Intermediate and Late periods, as well as a sandstone sphinx of the Twenty-ninth Dynasty or later, were unearthed during the excavations of the Louvre Museum between 1988 and 1991.[40]

There is no evidence on the exact location of the towns of Sumenu and Iumiteru known from textual sources from the time in question. Both settlements were located north of Gebelein, but remain unidentified with any archaeological remains dating to the Late period. As Marilina Betrò observed, Sobek of Sumenu is sporadically attested after the New Kingdom, with a depiction of Herihor making offerings to two forms of Sobek (of Sumenu and Iumiteru) in the company of Hathor of Gebelein on the walls of the temple of Khonsu in Karnak[41] and a wooden figurine of the god dedicated by the superintendent of the royal apartments of the Divine Adoratrice of Amun Hori (Twenty-first Dynasty), currently in Florence,[42] being the only two instances datable to the Third Intermediate period.[43] Then, during the end of the Late period, a winged deity with a crocodile body and double headed hawk with solar crown was carved in the temple of Hibis in Kharga, where he is described in caption as 'Horus residing in Sumenu'.[44] 'Sobek in Sumenu' is mentioned on Nectanebo II's stela in Turin.[45] The name of Iumiteru occurs even less frequently, i.e. in Pap. Strasbourg 2, 7 and 8.[46] To this list a counterweight for ritual necklace from the Third Intermediate period can be added.[47]

TEMPLES AND SETTLEMENTS: A DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS

Analysis aiming at detecting which temples and settlements established in previous periods in the area were still functioning in the Third Intermediate and Late periods and which were abandoned could provide crucial information about the history of the Gebelein region,

[38] For the complete bibliography of the statuette see *Louvre Collections*: Bibliographie.

[39] Mistakenly attributed to Nectanebo I by Fernand Bisson de la Roque. The cartouches drawn by him clearly contain nomen and prenomen of Nectanebo II (Bisson de la Roque 1937: 142–147).

[40] Pierrat *et al*. 1995: 419, 466.

[41] PM II, 230.

[42] PM VIII, 1141 (no. 802-100-600).

[43] Betrò 2006: 92–93.

[44] Sobek of Shedet was sometimes identified with Horus (Zecchi 2010: 29), thus this may be a more developed version of this syncretic deity.

[45] Betrò 2006: 93.

[46] Helck 1968: 121.

[47] Louvre E11520.

its importance, and how it changed over time. The archaeological material, especially pertaining to settlements, is scant. In some cases, it is possible, however, to infer from other kinds of evidence.

The Onomasticon of Amenemope, dated to the Twenty-first Dynasty, lists the following locations in the region (from the south, see **Fig. 3**): *Ḥwt-Snfrw* (identified with Asfun), *Pr-ḥfȝ(t)* (believed by some to be modern Moalla, although this identification is not certain),[48] *Pr-Ḥwtḥr* (Per-Hathor, the later Pathyris), *Smn*/*Sw-mnw* (the later Crocodilopolis), *Jmj*(*t*)*r* (both unknown exact location), and *Ḏrty* (Tod).[49] None of these locations can be found among the toponyms in the text of the Piankhy Victory stela (Twenty-fifth Dynasty)[50] or the list of donations in the Nitocris Adoption Stela (Twenty-sixth Dynasty).[51] The first century BCE Edfu Donation Text mentions land donations of Amasis, Nectanebo I, and Nectanebo II, in what was in the Ptolemaic period the Pathyrite nome.[52] The town of Per-Hathor is mentioned with a double determinative, O48 ('settlement') and Q1 ('place'), indicating perhaps its ambiguous nature.[53]

The temple of Hathor in Gebelein, located on the top of the East Mountain, was rebuilt for the last time by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II.[54] Schiaparelli claimed that the temple was destroyed at some point after the Twentieth Dynasty and rebuilt in Ptolemaic times, while the fortress was expanded during the time of Pharaoh Piankhi Menkheperra.[55] This claim is difficult to verify now. Nevertheless, a Ptolemaic block at Museo Egizio in Turin (S. 12073) from Gebelein confirms that a temple or chapel was constructed there in Ptolemaic times.[56] According to some scholars, Hathor, Lady of Gebelein (*Jnrty*) is mentioned in line 18 of Text A of Montuemhat's Inscriptions at Mut Temple at Karnak (Twenty-fifth Dynasty): '(…) I fashioned [the holy bark] of Hathor, Lady of Gebelein (…)'.[57] However, this reading is dubious and it is more probable that the passage refers to Hathor, Lady of the Valley (*Jnt*) rather than Gebelein.[58] A schist model of a dish with four lugs on the rim (3.8 x 3.8cm), allegedly from unspecified part of Gebelein, purchased by the British Museum from the Reverend Greville John Chester in 1887 (EA 21904), is dated to the Late period.[59] It could indicate that some sort of a cult took place in Gebelein in the Late period. Chester also provided a small Twenty-sixth Dynasty limestone figurine of a monthly priest of Amun,

[48] For the discussion see Manassa 2009: 76–77.

[49] Gardiner 1947: 14–22.

[50] Ritner 2009: 465–492.

[51] Caminos 1964.

[52] Manning 2003: 246–248.

[53] The interpretation presented in Ejsmond, Skalec, Chyla 2022: 374, must be thus revoked. For the text see Meeks 1972: 23, Pl. 11.

[54] Fiore Marochetti 2010: 3.

[55] Schiaparelli 1921: 126.

[56] Gentili (Ed.) 2013: 108, 254. For other mentions of Ptolemaic remains, see: Fraser 1893: 496–500.

[57] Leclant 1961: 215, 219; Ritner 2009: 563.

[58] Our thanks are due to Dr Andrzej Ćwiek for sharing his opinion on this passage.

[59] British Museum, Egypt and Sudan Department, Object register 4: 18; for this object see also the Museum's website: *The British Museum*. We are very grateful to the staff of the museums for information on this object.

Dwanetjer(em)iawykhonsu, to the Ashmolean Museum (AN 1891.34) in 1891.[60] Both objects may have come, however, from Sumenu or any other settlement in the region, e.g. Moalla (see below) since the toponym Gebelein was used in a loose way.

As for the other sites in the region, information on their temples is very scant. On the statue of Neseramun from the Karnak Cachette (CG 42221), dated to the Twenty-second Dynasty, its owner bore, among other titles, that of the priest of Hemen at *Ḥwt-Snfrw* (Asfun).[61] The temple must have been still an active cult centre also in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, as suggested by the aforementioned stela of Taharka.

The vizier Pamiu buried in Deir el-Bahari in the early Twenty-fifth Dynasty, bore the title of a priest of Montu in Armant and Tod.[62] This indicates that the temple at Tod was functioning at that time as well.

CEMETERIES

The heavily destroyed necropoleis of Gebelein (**Fig. 1**) at first glance offer little information on the history of the micro-region in the Third Intermediate and Late periods.[63] There are two cemeteries which were used during the first millennium BCE. The Northern Necropolis seems to have been used by the inhabitants of Sumenu, possibly also people from Iumiteru and Per-Hathor, while the Central Necropolis was a burial ground of the inhabitants of Per-Hathor, considering their relative position and distance from these settlements. The Northern Necropolis featured several First Intermediate period and Middle Kingdom tombs which were reused in the times in question,[64] while an anthropomorphic coffin tentatively dated to the eighth or seventh century BCE was found at the Central Necropolis (**Fig. 7**).[65] A papyrus with spells 100 and 129 from the Book of the Dead (MMA 24.2.18) and amulet plaque (MMA 24.2.19) from the mummy of Garjry, both from the first millennium BCE, allegedly came from one of the cemeteries of Gebelein. They were acquired from the antiquities market in 1924.[66]

Maspero, who excavated Moalla and Gebelein in the 1880s, believed that necropoleis from both sites were originally part of the same cemetery, spread over the two banks of the

[60] *Ashmolean Museum*: accession number AN1891.34.

[61] Legrain 1914: 47–50.

[62] Sheikholeslami 2018: 332.

[63] The cemeteries at Gebelein feature primarily tombs from the fourth and third millennia BCE. Schiaparelli believed that there had been a break in the use of the burial ground (probably he was referring to the area now known as the Northern Necropolis) between the Eleventh Dynasty and Graeco-Roman times (Schiaparelli 1921: 128). According to Anna Maria Donadoni Roveri, the cemeteries were used up to the Middle Kingdom (Donadoni Roveri 1990: 26). Gebelein itself does not appear in David Aston's seminal study of burial assemblages of the Third Intermediate period (Aston 2009). A closer study of the archival material and publications shows that many tombs were reused in the first millennium BCE (Ejsmond, Skalec, Chyla 2020).

[64] Ejsmond, Skalec, Chyla 2020: 116–119.

[65] The authors would like to thank Prof. Andrzej Niwiński for his expertise.

[66] *MetMuseum*: accession numbers 24.2.18 and 24.2.19.

7. Fragments of a coffin from the Central Necropolis (Phot. W. Ejsmond).

Nile, with Moalla being a burial site of the local elite, while Gebelein for the less affluent.[67] It must be mentioned that he probably knew only the Northern Necropolis of Gebelein, which was discovered in 1884.[68] According to his description, the Moalla necropolis comprised undecorated tombs ('cellules sans ornements'), in which coffins were stacked by the twenty or thirty. Some of these of the highest-quality were anthropoid and supposedly resembled Theban specimens of the sixth century BCE.[69] These coffins were either anonymous or belonged to the Theban clergy of Amun. Such characteristics prompted Maspero's conclusion that the coffins could not have been manufactured locally, but were imported from Thebes to satisfy the need for higher-quality goods.[70] One cannot rule out that these coffins were reused, thus explaining why they were linked to Amun's priests from Thebes.

While the necropolis of Moalla yielded evidence for burials (coffins, human remains, and, in one case, a deposit of pottery), it was the left bank – the modern Gebelein – where, according to Maspero, large quantities of funerary equipment were discovered (as opposed to mummies that were scarce due to the shallowness of the pits in which they had been buried). The grave goods discovered by Maspero included low 'angareb' beds,[71] vessels, deliberately broken bows, arrows, boomerangs, clubs, toiletry kits, food items, spoons, whetstones,

[67] Maspero 1893a: 211–212.
[68] Maspero 1893a: 231–232.
[69] Maspero 1893a: 212.
[70] Maspero 1893a: 212.
[71] Of the type still used by Nubians in modern times.

furniture, musical instruments, and wax 'dolls'.[72] Similar equipment was recovered during excavation in Gebelein, probably at the Northern Necropolis, supervised by Sheikh Omar of Gurna in the 1885–1886 season.[73] Albeit Maspero's description does not allow dating of any of these objects precisely, their character suggests that they predate the first millennium BCE and that they date before the end of the New Kingdom, when objects of daily life were still usually placed in tombs,[74] though the exact dating cannot be established based on the given description. Perhaps some of them could be associated Nubian soldiers present in Gebelein in the First Intermediate period, known from several other sources.[75]

In Charles R. Gillett's catalogue of the Egyptian collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art an intact coffin set belonging to Kharushery is listed as coming from Maspero's excavations in Gebelein. The offering formula on the middle coffin identifies the owner as a 'son of the royal friend (?), Bes' and 'Ta-her-ab'.[76] The set comprises four elements: an outer anthropoid coffin painted black with one vertical line of text running down the centre of the lid (MMA 86.1.31a-b), a middle plain coffin with figural decoration and some texts arranged in lines and columns (MMA 86.1.32a-b), a decorated cartonnage (MMA 86.1.34), and an inner coffin covered with a large number of scenes and texts (MMA 86.1.33a-b), with a mummy inside (MMA 86.1.35), and can be dated to the Twenty-second Dynasty or slightly later. The coffins are visibly Theban in appearance, and later publications give Thebes as their findspot.[77] Since Maspero conducted excavations both in Thebes and Gebelein, one cannot rule out that Gillett was mistaken in giving the provenance to the set. On the packing list made by Maspero and currently at the Metropolitan Museum one finds information that the set was found at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, Thebes.[78] Daressy lists the 'double cercueil de  ' among the objects from Maspero's excavations whose provenance is uncertain. The previous item on the list ('lit funéraire en bois') is suspected by him to have come from Gebelein.[79] One should also take into account that toponyms of Gebelein and Moalla were sometimes confused.[80] It is difficult to say with certainty whether the coffin indeed came from Thebes, and, if so, where the confusion comes from. Since Maspero referred to some excavations of a first millennium BCE necropolis in Gebelein/Moalla, it should be asked where the objects from these works are currently stored.

Maspero's reports suggest that in the nineteenth century Gebelein and its surroundings still yielded large quantities of mummies and funerary equipment, some of which, presumably, found their way into the antiquarian market. Of particular interest here are mummies

[72] Maspero 1893a: 212–214.

[73] Maspero 1893b: 231; Ejsmond, Skalec, Chyla 2020: 106.

[74] Grajetzki 2007: 90–122.

[75] Ejsmond 2019: 23–41, with bibliography.

[76] Gillett 1898: 119, 130–131, 133–134.

[77] PM I.2, 676; Taylor 2003: Pl. 52; Aston 2009: 233.

[78] We owe our thanks to Dr Janice Kamrin for this information.

[79] Daressy 1928: 10–11.

[80] Daressy 1922: 25–26. Alexander Ilin-Tomich noticed that such mistakes may also concern artefacts attributed to er-Rizeiqat, which possibly in fact were acquired as coming from other sites in the region (Ilin-Tomich 2017: 113).

from Gebelein purchased by Adolph Sutro from Mohammed Mohassib in 1884, mentioned by Charles Wilbour in his correspondence.[81] Likely, at least one of them came along with a coffin, initially displayed at the Sutro Baths in San Francisco (where the mummies were kept),[82] now preserved at the San Francisco State University Global Museum (inv. nos 104.1, 104.2).[83] The anonymous coffin, with distinctive yellow decoration, resembles specimens popular in Thebes between the late Twenty-first and early Twenty-second Dynasty.[84] However, it needs to be remembered that Sutro had 'astonished Luxor by buying yesterday a room of antiquities for twenty-five hundred franks from Mohammed Mohassib, much good, more bad',[85] and not all of these objects must have come from Gebelein, thus the coffin's provenance is not entirely certain. Luckily there are some artefacts with certain and exact findspots. A fragment of a wooden anthropoid coffin, datable to between the Twenty-first Dynasty and the Ptolemaic period, was found by Yahiya Abdel El Barry Abdel El Razek and Abdel Hadi Aly Mahmoud Mohammed in 1998 together with some faience cylinder beads in the tomb of Iti II in the Northern Necropolis of Gebelein, attesting its reuse in the first millennium BCE.[86] Not to mention the reuse of two more *saff*-tombs nearby[87] but details regarding their exact dating, reuse, and the whereabouts of their furnishing are unknown. The date of Sutro's purchase indicate that these artefacts could have come from the Northern Necropolis, which was discovered in this same year by local people and looted, providing objects for the antiquities market.[88]

A coffin made for a woman with a mummy inside, also with no name of the owner, is currently kept at the Neues Museum in Berlin (ÄS 9679, 9680) and is said to have come from 'Mehalle bei Gebelein'.[89] The coffin can be dated to the late Twenty-first or Twenty-second Dynasty.[90] An another lower part of a coffin and a mummy (ÄS 8516, 8517) from Gebelein, is also anonymous, similarly provenenced and dated.[91] According to guidebook of Royal Prussian Museum in Berlin these coffins came form 1886 excavations of Todrous Boulos,[92] who was a Prussian agent in Luxor.[93] Some fragments of coffins 'de la dernière époque pharaonique' were found in Moalla in 1885. One of them, devoid of the name of the deceased, bore two cartouches of Amenhotep I,[94] which could point to a date in the Eighteenth Dynasty. The name and figure of deified Amenhotep I frequently appeared,

[81] Wilbour 1936: 291–292.
[82] Wilbour 1936: 292, n. 1.
[83] See website *SFSU Global Museum*.
[84] Niwiński 1988: lid type IIIa.
[85] Wilbour 1936: 293.
[86] Ejsmond, Skalec, Chyla 2020: 109, 110.
[87] Ejsmond, Skalec, Chyla 2020: 109, Fig. 4: G.prov. 1 and 2, Figs 9 and 10: G.prov. 1 and 2.
[88] Ejsmond forthcoming: 154–155.
[89] Anonymous 1899: 175–176; Aston 2009: 153.
[90] Niwiński 1988: lid type V.
[91] Anonymous 1899: 176; Aston 2009: 153.
[92] Anonymous 1899: 175–176.
[93] Bierbrier 2012: 542
[94] Bouriant 1887: 82.

however, on coffins postdating the New Kingdom as well.[95] It is likely that Antiquities Service works of 1885 were then continued by local dealers or were supervised by them, and, as was customary, a number of artefacts were kept by them.[96]

Since all the coffins discussed above are of distinctly Theban style, the question of their place of origin is an essential one. For now, it is impossible to say whether they were indeed imported from Thebes or manufactured at a local workshop or made in Thebes, used there, and then reused in the Gebelein region.

A necropolis with Late period graves was located 4km west of Asfun. It was examined by Hassan S.K. Bakry during four short excavation campaigns: in December 1963,[97] February–March 1965,[98] February 1966,[99] and August 1967.[100] The investigated area was divided into three parts, termed Site A, B, and C by the excavator. The majority of investigated graves were rectangular or oval pits in the ground. On their western side often a 'recess' is situated where the burial was deposited. The niches were later sealed with mudbricks.[101] At least some of these graves were covered with a layer of mudbricks, forming their roof.[102] Several more elaborate structures, with more than one chamber, were found as well. Additionally, remains of a mudbrick building, consisting of three rooms and containing some human bones, beads, an offering table, amulets, and a red-ware bowl, were also discovered.[103] It is difficult to establish the date of the building based on the information from the report. In 1966, excavations at Site A revealed a large Tomb 25: it was built of mudbricks, with three steps leading to the entrance doorway, and had five burial chambers. Remains of pharaonic times burial equipment which cannot be dated precisely were unearthed in various parts of this tomb.[104]

The most characteristic group of objects found at the Asfun necropolis seem to be pottery coffins, though fragments of wooden specimens came to light as well. The scarcity of the latter could be the result of the damp conditions.[105] Mummified bodies were deposited in coffins,[106] while some individuals were simply buried in the pits, with no traces of mummification.[107] The mummies were further equipped with beads, amulets (some of them originally forming bead nets), faience ushebtis, scarabs (including one decorated

[95] See, for example, the Twenty-second Dynasty coffins of Amenemopet, MMA 17.2.7a-b (Lilyquist, Dorman, Russman 1983–1984: 45; Niwiński 1988: 159, no. 306).

[96] Raven 2018: 51.

[97] Bakry 1968: 37–42.

[98] Bakry 1968: 43–46.

[99] Bakry 1968: 47–53.

[100] Bakry 1973.

[101] Bakry 1968: 44.

[102] Bakry 1968: 43.

[103] Bakry 1968: 39–40.

[104] Bakry 1968: 50–51.

[105] Bakry 1968: 43.

[106] At least in some cases, the quality of mummification was poor, which according to Bakry lends credence to the hypothesis that the burials belonged to the middle class (Bakry 1968: 53).

[107] Bakry 1968: 42.

with an image of an obelisk adored by two baboons),[108] wooden figurines (referred to as 'wooden dolls' by Bakry),[109] canopic jars, offering tables, and pottery. The presence of Bes vases,[110] located at the head or the feet of the deceased, was reported in at least four burials from Site B. They were dated to around the sixth century BCE.[111] Of interest is also an unusual faience amulet representing a striding double-headed hawk, found in 1967.[112] A similar specimen, which comes from the el-Kurru necropolis[113] and can be dated to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, is currently kept at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.[114] In one grave, remains of a child were unearthed, accompanied by a scarab with the royal name Sobekhotep, amulets, shells, and three small polychrome pots.[115]

On the whole, the Asfun necropolis was dated to the Twenty-sixth or Twenty-seventh Dynasty by David A. and Barbara G. Aston.[116] In addition to the Late period dating, Colleen Manassa Darnell dates at least one of the tombs (clearly the one in which the scarab bearing the name Sobekhotep in the cartouche was found) to the Second Intermediate period.[117] According to Bakry, the necropolis was reused at some point.[118] The lifespan of the site may therefore be longer than just the Late period. A Coptic cemetery was located to the east of the Pharaonic one.[119] One can speculate whether the Asfun necropolis was the cemetery mentioned by Sekhahatyamun, who was interrogated in relation to the tomb robbery during the Twentieth Dynasty. He mentioned robbing tombs west of Hefau (probably the Twentieth Dynasty spelling of Hefat): 'I was in the West of Hefau with the foreigners of Hefau, all of them'.[120]

Finally, two more sites need to be mentioned here: Dibabiya and er-Rizeiqat. According to the Cairo Museum's Journal d'entrée, two Late period objects come from Dibabiya: a fragment of a shabti bearing the name Nectanebo I (JdE 29898) and a vase with the name of Apries (JdE 29899). The former (CG 48540) was published by Percy E. Newberry, albeit with no data on findspot. Newbery identified the name as belonging to Nectanebo II rather than to Nectanebo I.[121] It is difficult to say how the statuette found its way to Dibabiya. The site is primarily associated with the quarry, and so far, no necropolis has been identified there. One cannot exclude a confusion of findspot, as happened with some of the aforementioned artefacts.

[108] Bakry 1973: Pl. VIIIb.
[109] Bakry 1968: 51.
[110] Aston, Aston 2003: type III.
[111] Aston, Aston 2003: 99–100.
[112] Bakry 1973: Pl. XIIIb.
[113] Ku. 52, tomb of queen Neferukekashta.
[114] 24.682: Dunham 1950: 82, Pl. LIV (1065); *Museum of Fine Art Boston*. Note, however, the different headdress and arrangement of hands.
[115] Bakry 1968: 44, 46.
[116] Aston, Aston 2003: 100.
[117] Manassa 2009: 77.
[118] Bakry 1968: 43.
[119] Bakry 1968: 43, 46, 51–52.
[120] Peet 1930: 151.
[121] Newberry 1937: 394.

The material evidence for the cemetery of er-Rizeiqat after the New Kingdom is very limited. Nevertheless, in Maspero's report from work in the area, one finds a mention of shallow graves without coffins belonging to the lower classes, equipped with 'des milliers de perles en pâte bleue, en cornaline, en verre coloré, et surtout des vases en albâtre de toute grandeur et de toute forme'.[122] These beads in blue paste may in fact be the remains of bead nets, which appeared for the first time around 750 BCE.[123] Such beads were also found in more recent years and are currently preserved in antiquities magazine at Moalla.[124]

CONCLUSIONS

The majority of evidence for the region of Gebelein as defined above in the Third Intermediate and Late periods comes from the cemeteries and to a lesser extent – temples. Virtually nothing is known of the settlement pattern(s) in the area in the first millennium BCE before the Ptolemaic period. However, the available data allow the shedding of at least some light on Gebelein and its surroundings in this time.

The only archaeological site that did not yield remains datable to the discussed periods is Salamiya. It was probably a cemetery associated with the nearby Tod.[125] According to Weigall, the cemeteries in the vicinity of Tod had been almost entirely plundered out,[126] which may have contributed to the lack of evidence for the periods in question.

At least three temples (at Tod, Sumenu, Asfun and possibly Moalla as well), foundations from previous periods, were still functioning religious centres at some points of the Third Intermediate and Late periods. This fact alone could imply the presence of settlements in the region, but their locations cannot be precisely established. However, in the case of Gebelein, for which no settlements are mentioned in contemporary textual sources, with the exception of an ambiguous passage in the Great Donation Text in Edfu temple, there is no conclusive evidence for the temple at Per-Hathor. Either the occupation in Gebelein was reduced, indicating a significant shift in settlement pattern, or the Third Intermediate and Late periods strata simply were not recorded by previous missions or did not survive to our times, with the exception of Menkheperra's bricks. Fragments of coffin dated to the eighth or seventh century BCE found at the Central Necropolis (**Fig. 7**) indirectly suggest that the settlement was functioning, but one also cannot rule out that people from other places were buried there. The rationale behind Schiaparelli's opinion that the temple in Per-Hathor 'was eventually destroyed down to its foundations in a period following the Twentieth Dynasty, only to be reconstructed during the Ptolemaic era'[127] is unknown. On the one hand, there is no solid evidence in the form of architectural remains or artefacts for the functioning of the temple, while the other temples in the region are attested by texts

[122] Maspero 1889: 186.
[123] Aston 2009: 290–293.
[124] Ejsmond 2017: 244.
[125] Gomaà 1986. A Twentieth Dynasty offering table was also reported as coming from this site (PM V, 169).
[126] Weigall 1910: 301.
[127] Schiaparelli 1921: 126–127. Translated by Wojciech Ejsmond.

and artefacts. On the other, the aforementioned Great Donation Text mentions domains and fields of Hathor, Lady of Per-Hathor.[128] Thus by the end of the Late period the temple was still the landowner – that is, if the names of the fields are not only traditional toponyms, which cannot be excluded. This may suggest that the temple of Hathor was functioning on at least a reduced scale. The lack of royal patronage is however difficult to explain since other temples in the area received it. Evidence for a fortress is also inconclusive.

Other evidence relates to the quarries at Dibabiya, which were exploited in the Twenty-first Dynasty, and possibly also in later times. The lack of regnal year in Smendes' stela from this area could be linked to the realities of political fragmentation. Such a hypothesis is, however, impossible to prove now.

The cemeteries at Gebelein, Moalla, Asfun, possibly Dibabiya and er-Rizeiqat, must have served as burial sites for the local population. However, with the exception of Asfun and perhaps Moalla, no new tombs were constructed at this time: the majority of burials seem to come from reused tombs. Further examination will be required to establish the pattern of reuse of the tombs in the region. A large necropolis north-west of Esna, reused in the Third Intermediate and Late periods,[129] may offer some important comparative material for future analyses. The cemetery at Asfun, established at that time, might indicate that a new, possibly administrative, centre was established there, and local elite emerged in the Late period in the area.

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[128] Manning 2003: 246–248.

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