

The Hyksos Ruler Khyan and the Early Second Intermediate Period in Egypt:
Problems and Priorities of Current Research

Proceedings of the Workshop of the Austrian Archaeological Institute and the
Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Vienna, July 4–5, 2014

Irene Forstner-Müller – Nadine Moeller (eds.)

ERGÄNZUNGSHEFTE ZU DEN JAHRESHEFTEN DES
ÖSTERREICHISCHEN ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN INSTITUTES

HEFT 17

WIEN 2018

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Herausgeber

Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut
Franz Klein-Gasse 1
A-1190 Wien
<www.oeaw.ac.at/oeai>

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Veröffentlicht mit Unterstützung des Austrian Science Fund (FWF): PUB 504



Der Wissenschaftsfonds.

Eigentümer & Verleger

Verlag Holzhausen GmbH
Leberstraße 122
A-1110 Wien
Verlagsleitung: Robert Lichtner
<www.verlagholzhausen.at>

HOLZHAUSEN
— *Der Verlag* —

Redaktion: Barbara Beck-Brandt, Judith Kreuzer
Satz und Layout: Andrea Sulzgruber

1. Auflage 2018

Verlagsort: Wien – Herstellungsort: Wien – Printed in the EU

ISSN 1727-2505
ISBN 978-3-902976-83-3
2018 Verlag Holzhausen GmbH

Die verwendete Papiersorte ist aus chlorfrei gebleichtem Zellstoff hergestellt, frei von säurebildenden Bestandteilen und alterungsbeständig.

Bibliografische Information der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek und der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek: Die ÖNB und die DNB verzeichnen diese Publikation in den Nationalbibliografien; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet abrufbar. Für die Österreichische Bibliothek: <<http://onb.ac.at>>, für die Deutsche Bibliothek: <<http://dnb.ddb.de>>

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Daniel Polz

The Territorial Claim and the Political Role of the Theban State at the End of the Second Intermediate Period

A Case Study

The Vienna workshop on Khyan and the Second Intermediate Period (SIP) has re-opened a discussion on the internal chronology of the period in general, and the chronological position of individual rulers and their historical relationships within the period in particular. New archaeological evidence – especially from sites such as Tell el-Dab^a in the north-east of Egypt and Tell Edfu in the south – certainly justifies consideration of a possible earlier placement for the Hyksos Khyan. Although the evidence put forward from these two sites, as well as through other contributions at the workshop, seems to weigh heavily in favor of an earlier place in history for Khyan, the discussions during the workshop have – as was to be expected – not resulted in the unanimous acceptance of a new and distinctly earlier position for this ruler.

Until recently, Khyan and his two successors Apophis and Khamudi formed the last group of Hyksos at the very end of the SIP, making them contemporaries of the last kings of the 17th Dynasty¹. Objects inscribed with the names of Khyan and Apophis found in southern Upper Egypt have often been interpreted as proof of some kind of Hyksos control – if not domination – over that part of the country².

In the following, therefore, an outline of a political and historical map of the area during the late 17th Dynasty will be presented. Since, meanwhile, different scholarly opinions exist concerning the definition, chronological position and territorial coverage of dynasties during the SIP, it has to be made clear which of these one follows. In this paper, the 17th Dynasty is defined as a short ›Theban‹ dynasty³ which is, in principle, identical with the one reconstructed by Kim Ryholt, with certain differences⁴. For the purpose of this contribution, two of these differences must be highlighted:

- a) As a result of newly discovered objects and new interpretations of already known objects and structures, Ryholt's sequence of rulers of the 17th Dynasty should be altered at certain points as indicated in the list below⁵.
- b) Ryholt's ›re-creation‹ of a 16th (Theban) Dynasty *immediately* followed by a short 17th (Theban) Dynasty is certainly justified. His main argument⁶ for an hiatus between the two dynasties, i.e. the end of a Hyksos occupation in southern Upper Egypt, however lacks plausibility⁷.

¹ Ryholt 1997, 118–150.

² See the discussion in Polz 2006.

³ Polz 2007, 5–11 with tab. 1.

⁴ Ryholt 1997, 167–183. 265–281. 410 tab. 98. Cf. a most thorough and concise treatment of the chronologically extremely problematic period, Schneider 2006, 181–192.

⁵ Cf. Polz 2010, 20–59 and tab. 1 on p. 7; Schneider 2006, tab. on p. 90–91; for a slightly different view concerning the beginning of the dynasty see: Marée 2010.

⁶ Ryholt 1997, 143–148.

⁷ Schneider 2006, 183; Polz 2007, 8–11; cf. Allen 2010, 5.

The following sequence of rulers of the 17th Dynasty will be used as a basis for all relative-chronological arguments⁸:

Wah-Khau Rahotep
 Wadj-Khau Sobekemsaef
 Shed-Taui Sobekemsaef
 Sekhem-Ra Wep-Maat Intef
 Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef
 Heru-Her-Maat Intef
 Senakht-en-Ra *Ahmose*⁹
 Seqen-en-Ra Ta-aa
 Wadj-Kheper-Ra Kamose

The outline presented here is based mainly on the interpretation of objects or installations which can be clearly attributed to one particular king of this dynasty. The ruler in question is Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef, who is also the best attested king of this period – provided one takes only such objects and installations into consideration as sources which contain a minimum of solid contextual information¹⁰. With this precondition, the material evidence attributable to the reign of Nub-Kheper-Ra offers itself as a suitable basis for a case study.

On the east bank of Thebes, activities of Nub-Kheper-Ra are attested at Karnak – like those of a few other kings of the period – and quite obviously, Karnak never lost its theological importance throughout the SIP¹¹. Nub-Kheper-Ra erected a monumental stela there (fig. 1) the upper part of which was discovered in the early 20th century by Georges Legrain between the 3rd and 4th pylons of the temple of Ptah¹². In the decoration of this unusual stela, the king is represented in front of the three deities Amun-Ra, Mut, and Ptah. Like the last-mentioned god, the king himself is not depicted anthropomorphically, but is present only through what once was his complete royal name protocol written in exceptionally large hieroglyphs covering almost half of the upper round of the stela.

Furthermore, a fragment of a small stela (fig. 2) was unearthed in front of the 1st pylon at Karnak¹³. Given its dimensions it may well have been the stela of a private person donated during Nub-Kheper-Ra's reign. It should be kept in mind, however, that according to our present knowledge, the preserved architecture in/around the two above-mentioned find spots – the temple of Ptah and the ›tribune‹ in front of the 1st pylon of the main temple – did not exist at the time when the two objects were set up. One may assume, therefore, that all of the objects of SIP date found at Karnak were originally placed in pre-existing structures within the perimeters of the Middle Kingdom temple, i.e. within the wider area of the so-called Middle Kingdom Court. Alternatively, there could have been smaller, free standing sanctuaries or chapels in the area surrounding the main temple, similar to the chronologically slightly later chapels erected by Amenhotep I¹⁴. It is per-

⁸ In the current state of knowledge, it seems impossible to assign even a vague number of regnal years to specific kings and hence to the entire dynasty – none of these rulers' names can be identified on the last preserved page of the Turin King List (Ryholt 1997, 167; Schneider 2006, 181–183; Allen 2010, 3–4).

⁹ On the newly discovered personal name of this king see below, n. 11 and 14.

¹⁰ For objects and structures attributable to this ruler, see Polz 2007, 116–133 and 330–347; cf. Ryholt 1997, 167–183; especially 394–395.

¹¹ Polz 2007, 77–81. Even a comparatively well explored site like the vast area of the temple of Karnak can yield unexpected results concerning the sequence of Egyptian rulers at the time of the SIP: in the spring of 2012, the French-Egyptian mission discovered in the area surrounding the temple of Ptah blocks of a monumental gate, inscribed with parts of the royal titulary of king Senakht-en-Ra including his hitherto unknown personal name (see below, n. 14).

¹² Legrain 1902, 113–114; Polz 2007, 79–80 and 334 (with further bibliography) pl. 13 b.

¹³ Lauffray – Traunecker 1971, 139–140 fig. 39.

¹⁴ Cf. Graindorge 2002. In this context, the recent discovery of a fragmented lintel and an almost complete left jamb of a limestone gate of a granary (*sb3 n šnw:t*) in the Ptah temple area is of particular importance (Biston-Moulin 2012;



Fig. 1 Limestone stela of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef from the temple of Ptah at Karnak (Cairo Temp. no. 20.6.28.11) (Photo: P. Windszus, © German Archaeological Institute Cairo)



Fig 2 Fragment of a stela from the temple of Karnak (after: J. Lauf-
fray – C. Traunecker, *Abords occidentaux du premier pylône
de Karnak. Le dromes, la tribune et les aménagements por-
tuaires. Annexe épigraphique*, in: *Kêmi* 21, 1971, 139 fig. 39)

Biston-Moulin et al. 2012). Both jamb and lintel are inscribed with the royal names of king Senakht-en-Ra *Ahmose*. They constitute the first contemporary evidence of this king who is otherwise only known through later so-called King Lists with his *prenomen* Senakht-en-Ra and varying personal names (see the most recent discussion in: Biston-Moulin 2012, 63–65). This granary may well have been (re- [?]) installed by the king in connection with an already existing or a newly erected sanctuary at the site – an amazingly close parallel to a similar installation at Medamud, where, only a few decades earlier, another ruler of the 17th Dynasty, Sekhem-Re Wadj-Khau Sobekemsaef renewed the magazines or store-rooms of the Middle Kingdom temple and left a similar inscription with the name of a gate (*sb3 n šn*); cf. Eder 2002, 110–114; Polz 2007, 77).



Fig. 3 Decorated limestone block from the sanctuary of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef in the temple of Min at Koptos (London UC 14780) (Courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, UCL)

haps noteworthy that Nub-Kheper-Ra shows up among the rulers depicted and mentioned in the Karnak ›King List‹ created during the reign of Thutmose III¹⁵.

About 40 km to the north of Thebes, in the temple of Min at Koptos¹⁶, numerous decorated limestone blocks discovered by William M. F. Petrie and James E. Quibell in 1893/1894 clearly indicate that Nub-Kheper-Ra erected a small sanctuary dedicated to the god Min of Koptos (fig. 3)¹⁷, close to the already existing larger temple of Amenemhat I and Senusret I¹⁸. Following a plausible reconstruction by Christian Eder, this sanctuary seems to have been an architecturally independent entity, a one room sanctuary-type building surrounded by two en-

closure walls (fig. 4)¹⁹. According to Petrie, the decorated fragments were found carefully buried below the pavement of a later building erected by Thutmose III, presumably at the same spot²⁰. From the find spot of the fragments it seems quite probable that the sanctuary was originally set up in front of the older Middle Kingdom temple.

In the latter temple, Nub-Kheper-Ra added one of the famous ›Koptos Decrees‹ on the inner side of a monumental limestone door-frame created during the reign of Senusret I²¹ (fig. 5). This royal decree dates to the king's third regnal year and contains a highly political text which orders the dismissal and replacement of a high official in the administration of the city of Koptos. The true grounds behind this royal action are not understood in detail²², but there are hints that could explain why it was deemed necessary to have it recorded at this prominent place in the doorway of the city's major temple: mentioned in the text of the stela, perhaps as beneficiary of the decree, is the »mayor of Koptos« (*ḥ3tj-ʿn Gbtw*) Minemhat. As such, he would have been in charge of the control of what was perhaps the most important eastern desert track in Upper Egypt at that time. Starting from Koptos the track leads through the Wadi Hammamat and terminates in the wider area of the modern Red Sea port Quseir²³.

The mayor of Koptos Minemhat is also known from a small limestone stela found in a local sanctuary at the galena/lead-glance-mines of Gebel ez-Zeit on the Red Sea coast, some 230 km

¹⁵ As do other kings of the 17th Dynasty, e.g. Wildung 1979.

¹⁶ On the site of Koptos in general see now Pantalacci 2012.

¹⁷ I am grateful to Alice Stevenson (Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology UCL) for granting me the permission to publish and providing the photograph in fig. 3.

¹⁸ Petrie 1896, 4–5. 9–10 with pls. 6–7; see Ryholt 1997, 394 (file 17/4 [4]); Eder 2002, 57–79; Polz 2007, 69–76 with figs. 15–18. 331–333; photographs of some of the blocks in the University College London in: Gabolde 2000, 40–41 (cat. 12); 67 (cat. 19).

¹⁹ Eder 2002, 57–79.

²⁰ The find spot of the blocks is labelled ›Antef slabs‹ on Petrie's plan in fig. 4.

²¹ Petrie 1896, 9–10; Polz 2007, 69–73. 331–333 (with further bibliography) pls. 12–13 a.

²² For a more recent interpretation, see Goebis 2003, 27–37.

²³ On the general economic importance of Koptos in connection with mines and quarries in the Eastern desert, see de Putter 2000.

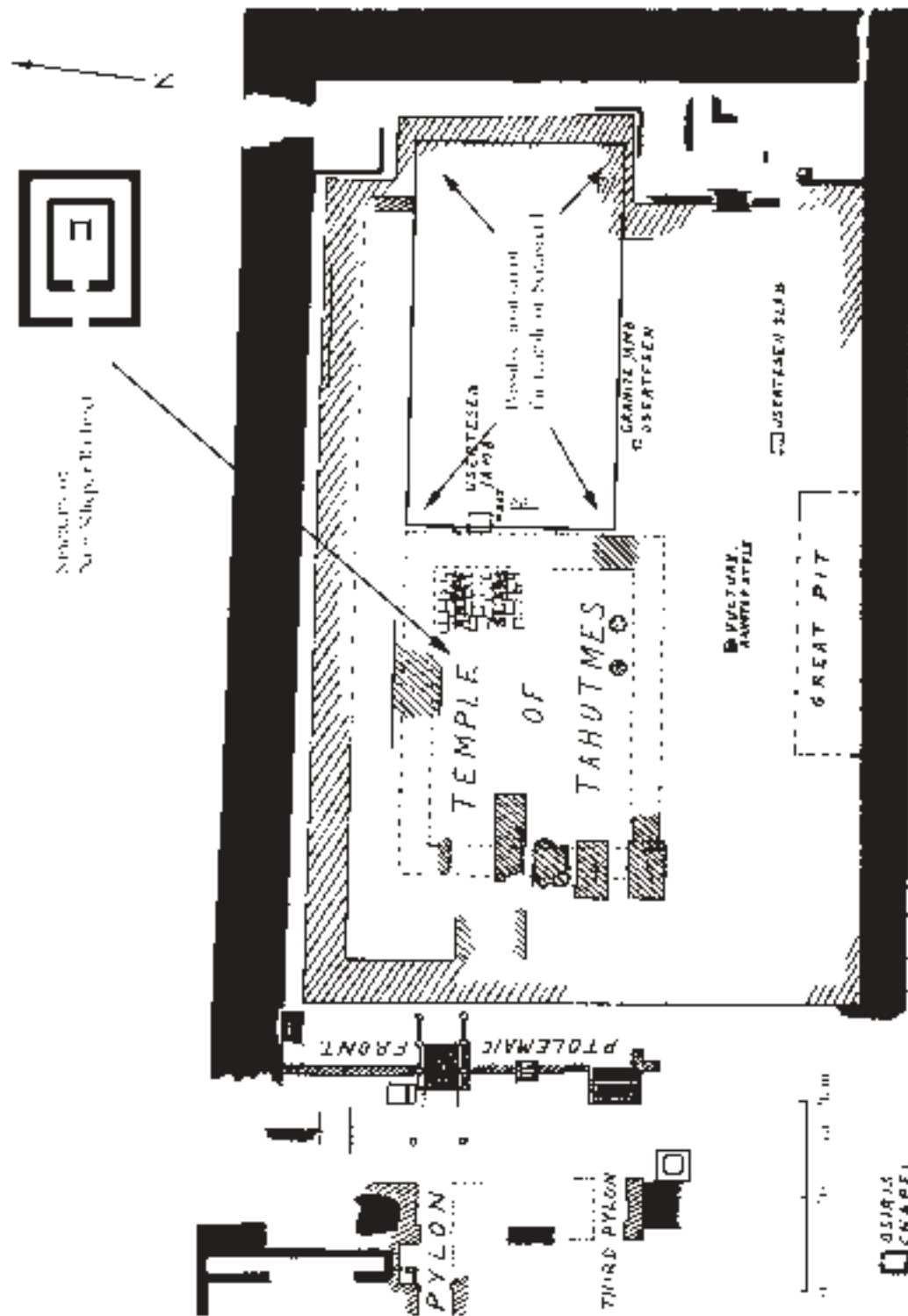


Fig. 4 Plan of the temple of Min at Koptos, showing the possible position of the chapel of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef (after: Petrie 1896, pl. 1 and Eder 2002, pl. 40)



Fig. 5 The Koptos decree of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef on a block from the Senusret I temple of Min at Koptos (Photo: P. Windszus, © German Archaeological Institute Cairo)

north of Quseir²⁴. On this stela, Minemhat is depicted adoring the deities Min and probably Hathor of Koptos (fig. 6). The intrinsic connection between the two localities Gebel ez-Zeit and Koptos, although separated by almost 400 km, seems evident. From the site of Gebel ez-Zeit comes a vast number of royal and non-royal objects, many of which can be dated with certainty. Based on these objects, one can safely conclude that the galena quarries were exploited from Middle Kingdom times (from the reign of Amenemhat III) through the SIP and well into the New Kingdom (as late as the reign of Ramses II²⁵). It should also be noted that, as is attested at least during Middle Kingdom times, Koptos housed one or more dockyards on the Nile. Here, seagoing ships seem to have been constructed in sections, and were then transported through the Wadi Hammamat²⁶. The ships would eventually be assembled in a harbour or a landing place (e.g. at Mersa/Wadi Gawasis²⁷) on the Red Sea coast.

Thus, controlling the roads to and from the Red Sea through the Wadi Hammamat was an essential political (since highly economically significant) factor and one need not be surprised that Nub-Kheper-Ra himself was involved in filling the position of the controller²⁸. In this context, the strong military presence in the text of Nub-Kheper-Ra's Koptos decree is hardly surprising: next to the mention of mayor Minemhat, a »king's son and troop commander of Koptos« (*z3 njswt tsw n Gbtjw*) and even the »entire army of Koptos« (*mš' r dr=f n Gbtjw*) are listed as addressees of the king's decree²⁹.

Minemhat's title and name occur once more on a small wooden box (fig. 7). The object was part of a burial of the court official (*rh-njswt* 'q, »king's acquaintance [with right of] access«) Hor-

²⁴ Régen – Soukiasian 2008, 29–30 with pl. on 60; for differing interpretations of some of the royal objects from Gebel ez-Zeit, see Marée 2009.

²⁵ Régen – Soukiasian 2008, 48–54; Marée 2009, col. 147.

²⁶ Sayed 1977, 170 n. 18; Bard 2007, 250.

²⁷ Sayed 1999; Bard 2007, esp. 250–253.

²⁸ Although Katja Goebs, for example, arrives at a different interpretation of the decree's main purpose, she also thinks it possible »that one purpose or context of the Antef Decree was the assertion of royal authority in the Coptite nome« (Goebs 2003, 30 n. 16) – and beyond, one should add, in the light of the above discussion.

²⁹ Hieroglyphic transcription of the decree's text in: Miosi 1981, 30 figs. 5–8; cf. Polz 1998, 225–226.

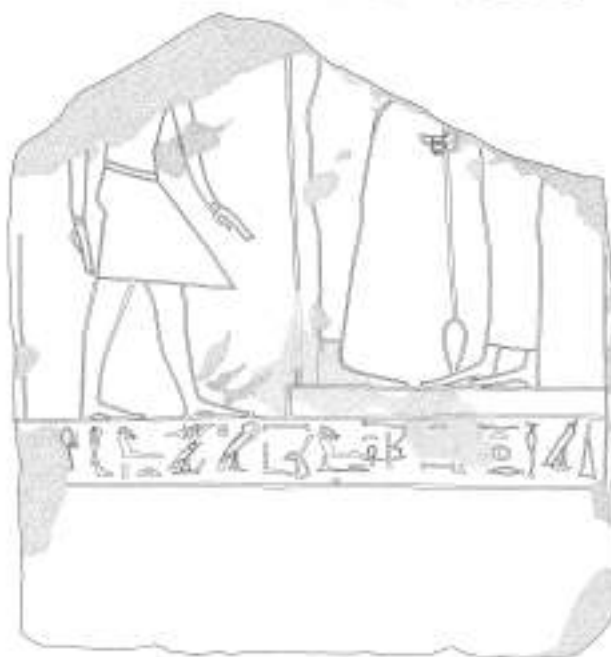


Fig. 7 Wooden box of the mayor of Koptos, Minemhat, from the tomb of the »king's acquaintance« Hornakht in Dra^c Abu el-Naga (after: A. Mariette-Pacha 1872, pl. 51)

Fig. 6 Fragment of a limestone stela of the mayor of Koptos, Minemhat, from the galena mines at Gebel ez-Zeit on the Red Sea coast (reprinted from: Régen – Soukiassian 2008, 60; © IFAO. Courtesy of the Institut français d'archéologie orientale)

nakht³⁰, which was discovered undisturbed by Luigi Vassalli in 1862/1863 at the northern end of the necropolis of Dra^c Abu el-Naga in Western Thebes. Hornakht's rishi-coffin and other objects of the accompanying burial equipment clearly support a dating of the whole burial to the very end of the SIP, placing Hornakht the same time³¹.

Further north, at Abydos, there is evidence of a substantial architectural and therefore, given the particular location, theological engagement during the time of Nub-Kheper-Ra. There must

³⁰ Tiradritti 2010, 336–340; note that in Marée's review of Régen – Soukiassian 2008 (Marée 2009, col. 161) Hornakht's tomb is wrongly attributed to a Sobeknakht with the same title.

³¹ Ryholt 1997, 174; Polz 2007, 42–45.

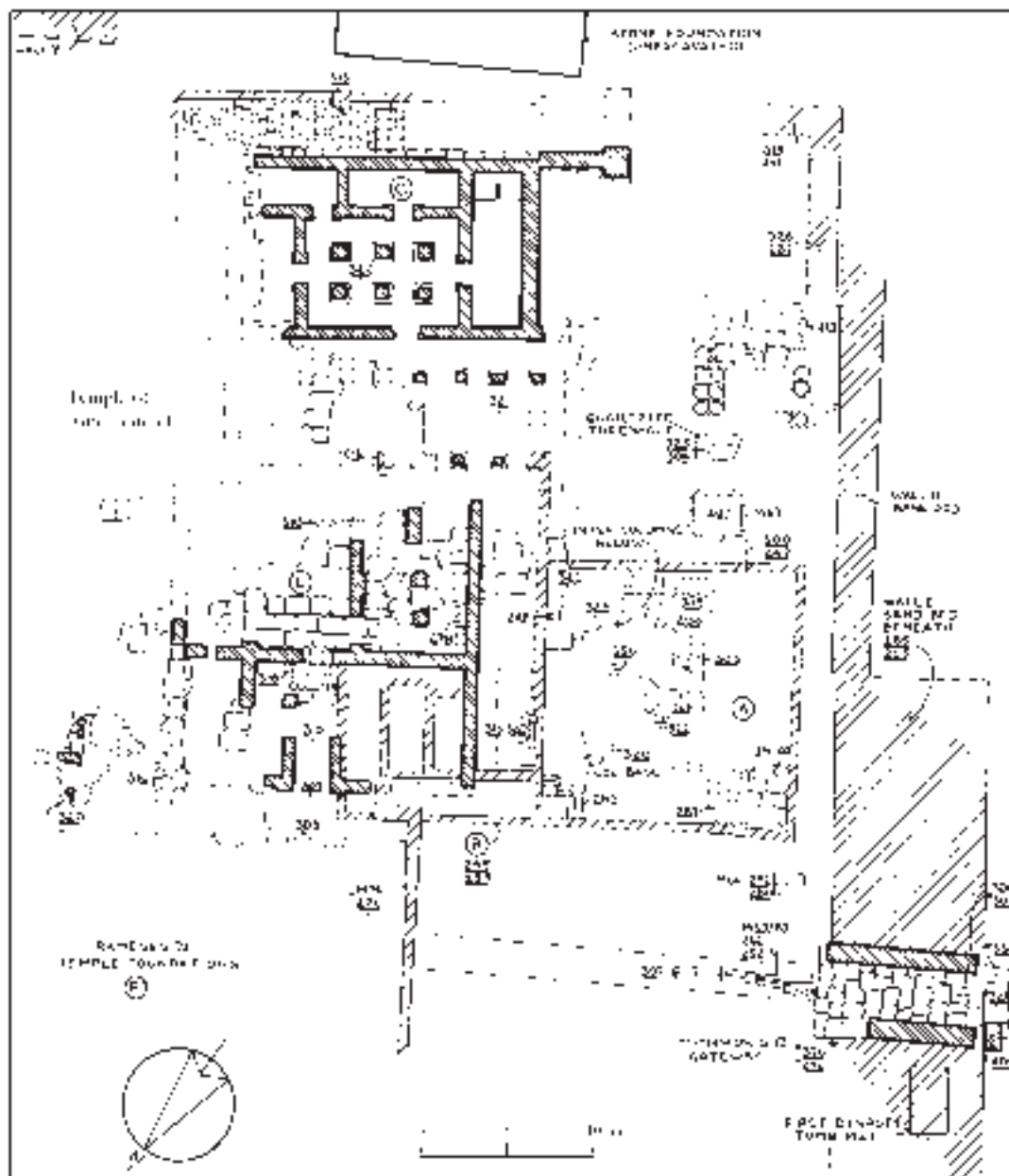


Fig. 8 Detail of Kemp's plan of the reconstructed temple of Osiris at Abydos (after: Kemp 1968, 138–155 fig. 1)

have existed a small temple or sanctuary in the Osiris temple area, at the very spot where Amenhotep I created a modest temple building (fig. 8). As Barry Kemp has convincingly demonstrated³², the remains of the sanctuary erected by Nub-Kheper-Ra were carefully buried beneath the floor of an adjacent building³³, where they were found by Petrie – an interesting parallel to the find spot of the chapel of Nub-Kheper-Ra in the precinct of the Middle Kingdom temple at Koptos mentioned above. The decoration of the existing fragments of Nub-Kheper-Ra's chapel in the Osiris temple area seems to point to a building in which he also paid tribute to his ancestors – as did Amenhotep I in his temple, and before him Neb-Pehtj-Ra Ahmose at his installations in southern Abydos. Somewhere in the same area of the Osiris temple, Petrie also discovered two fragmented limestone stelae which are remarkably similar in content and layout, and which depict and mention

³² Kemp 1968, 140–143 with fig. 1; Polz 2007, 101–104 with figs. 22–23.

³³ The finding spot is marked »Intef columns below« on Kemp's plan.

high officials following their king Nub-Kheper-Ra. Both stelae were most probably originally erected within or close to the chapel of the king. It is a noteworthy detail that in the text of the stela of the »king's son of the ruler Intef and troop-commander« (*z3 njswt n hq3 Jnj-jtj=f hrj pdt*) named Nakht³⁴ (fig. 9), this chapel is called *hwt Jnj-jtj=f m 3bdw* – »the temple of Intef at Abydos«³⁵.

On the other stela, a high official and »king's follower« is depicted behind the king (fig. 10)³⁶. He is the »sealer of the Upper Egyptian King, overseer of the sealers and follower of the king« (*hmtj bjtj jmj-r3 htmw šmsw njswt*) with the name Jahnefer. These two stelae and their find spot vividly demonstrate the status and qualifications of two individuals of the king's closest entourage at the administrative and military level.

Returning south to the West Bank of Thebes: from the northern part of the Theban Necropolis, several paths lead up to the Western Desert Plateau and terminate in what is known as the »Farshût Road«, a desert route cutting across the bend of the Nile between Erment/er-Rizeikat in the south and Nag Ham-madi in the north³⁷. The Farshût Road runs between the two sites of (Western) Thebes and Hu (Diospolis parva) and shortens the distance between them from roughly 110 km by the river to about 50 km overland. Thus, depending on the time of the year and the respective strength of the wind, overland transport and messengers on donkeys (and, of course, also moving military personnel³⁸) using the



Fig. 9 Limestone stela of the »king's son, troop commander« Nakht from the temple of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef at Abydos (after: W. M. F. Petrie, Abydos 2, EEF 24 [London 1903] pl. 57)

³⁴ Petrie 1903, pl. 57; Polz 2007, 345 fig. 104. For a recent transliteration, translation and commentary of the stela's texts, see Kubisch 2008, 162–165.

³⁵ Interestingly, the same name (without the toponym) also occurs partly and with a slightly different spelling in the text of the Ramesside Papyrus Harris 500 as the name of the building on whose walls the so-called (harper's) song of king Intef – the earliest known variant of the harpers' songs – is said to have been inscribed. For a concise overview of the main textual and chronological issues of the »harpers' songs«, including Jan Assmann's (partly modified) translation of the »song of king Intef« in pHarris 500, see Burkard – Thissen 2008, 96–98.

³⁶ Petrie 1903, 35 pl. 32 [3]; Polz 2007, pl. 11.

³⁷ Darnell 2002, 1–6 with maps on p. 4.

³⁸ As was already the case during the early 11th Dynasty (Darnell 2002, 30–46).



Fig. 10 Upper part of a limestone stele of the »king's follower« Jahnefer from the temple of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef at Abydos (© University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia, E 16021; Courtesy Penn Museum, image #144048)

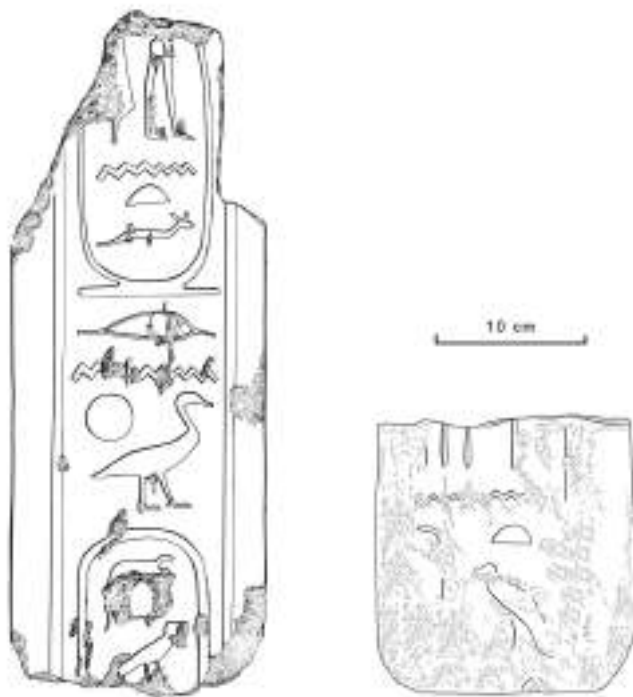


Fig. 11 Two fragments of door jambs from a chapel of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef on the Farshût Road (drawings: J. C. Darnell – D. Darnell; inking left jamb: S. Osgood; right jamb: J. C. Darnell; Courtesy J. C. Darnell/D. Darnell)

desert track could have been much faster (and, if deemed necessary, more clandestine) than traveling by boat on the river Nile³⁹.

Somewhere close to the southern end of the Farshût Road, John and Deborah Darnell discovered in 1992 a number of decorated and inscribed sandstone blocks which they interpret as parts of »a small temple«. Two of these blocks are fragments of a door frame, each decorated with a single column of inscription (fig. 11)⁴⁰. While the left door-jamb's inscription contains the royal names of two kings, [Nub-Kheper-Ra] Intef and his father (*jr.n*) Sobekem[saef]⁴¹, the right one shows remains of an inscription which seems to have listed at least two of the royal titles of the king's mother (*ms.n mwt njswt [hm]t [njswt] ///*) – unfortu-

³⁹ On the speed per day of donkey caravans in the desert (»pony express«) and via ship on the Nile see, e.g., the respective remarks in Caminos 1963, 36–37; Darnell – Darnell 1997, 14; Darnell 2002, 139. Kuhlmann (2002, 139–140) discusses the issue of »calculation of distance by donkey-km per day« in general and arrives at a realistic average traveling speed of between 30 and 40 km/day. If one accepts this figure for the Farshût Road, a donkey (caravan) could cover the distance between Western Thebes and the area of Hu in far less than two days.

⁴⁰ I am particularly grateful to John C. Darnell and Deborah Darnell who not only gave me the permission to republish the left piece (cf. Polz 2007, 34–37 fig. 9), but also allowed me to publish here for the first time the right jamb with its historically important reference to Nub-Kheper-Ra's mother. John Darnell also provided the newly made drawing of the right jamb.

⁴¹ Darnell – Darnell 1993, 49–52 fig. 4; for a discussion of this filiation see Polz 2007, 34–38. Another sandstone block from a doorway of the same building (?) seems to be inscribed with a graffito mentioning the Horus name of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef (unpublished, see Darnell 1997, 10).

nately her name is missing⁴². Besides the fact that these blocks play an important role in the discussion of the sequence of kings at the end of the 17th Dynasty⁴³, they also display the strategic importance which Nub-Kheper-Ra's administration assigned to this connection between key locations in the region.

It fits well into the picture drawn here that John and Deborah Darnell also discovered the lower half of a sandstone statue depicting a kneeling man at the same spot, the inscription on which strongly supports this interpretation. In the fragmented inscription in the middle of the lap the name of the depicted person is lost, but at least (one of [?]) his title(s) seems to be preserved: he held the office of a *z3 njsw.t n [hq3] nh.t*, »king's son of the victorious [ruler]«⁴⁴. It is, of course, by no means certain that the statue and its owner were actually contemporary with the erection and use of the chapel during the reign of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef⁴⁵. The title, however, would fit well with the owners of the stela of Nub-Kheper-Ra's military officer Nakht from Abydos and the troop commander on the Koptos decree mentioned above. This king's son might well be another member of the king's military entourage at that time. Presumably, his statue was originally set up in Nub-Kheper-Ra's temple at a strategically important site: as in the case of the Wadi Hammamat in the eastern desert, one may safely assume that the one who controlled the southern end of this path through the western desert will also have controlled its northern end – and vice versa. In addition, only a few kilometers to the north-west of Nag Hammadi, another east-west track leads via Kharga to Dakhla Oasis, the latter being »a visibly important station along a south-bound desert path that bypassed the Nile Valley« since Old Kingdom times⁴⁶. And if one takes Kamose's claims on his Karnak stela at face value, it is most probable the Farshût Road (or a similar path from the Western Theban area) through which only a few decades later his troops entered the »oasis bypass« and intercepted a Hyksos messenger from Avaris on his way to Nubian territory.

In the necropolis of Dra^c Abu el-Naga at Western Thebes, the remains of a small mud-brick pyramid and its enclosure walls were discovered in 2001. The position of this building and the discovery of fragments of its limestone pyramidion (fig. 12) leave no doubt that it was erected by king Nub-Kheper-Ra. Almost equally important was the subsequent finding in the same area of a small fragment of yet another limestone pyramidion which can be joined to a larger piece in the British Museum London⁴⁷. It once crowned the pyramid of Nub-Kheper-Ra's elder brother and predecessor, Sekhem-Re Wepmaat Intef⁴⁸. Although neither the latter's pyramid nor the original burial place of either king can yet be identified, the presence of the two pyramids and the discovery of the kings' coffins in Dra^c Abu el-Naga in the early 19th century prove beyond doubt that this part of the Theban necropolis was the royal burial place at the time.

Immediately south of the enclosure wall of Nub-Kheper-Ra's pyramid lies the small chapel and burial shaft of Teti, one of the king's highest officials – given the privileged position of his funerary ensemble, one is tempted to say perhaps *the* highest official of the king at the time when his chapel was erected. On the southern side of the chapel's western wall are the remains of what

⁴² As John Darnell rightly suggested in our correspondence about the inscription on this piece (24.4.2015), the formal layout and contents of the inscription mentioning the king's mother are strikingly similar to one on one side of the pyramidion of Nub-Kheper-Ra's elder brother Sekhem-Ra Wep-Maat Intef in the British Museum in London (Polz 2007, 133–138 figs. 31–35 and pls. 19–20).

⁴³ Polz 2007, 34–37.

⁴⁴ Darnell – Darnell 1993, 51–52.

⁴⁵ Since no photograph or drawing of the fragment is published yet, it is not possible to ascertain its date. However, on the above mentioned stela of the official Nakht from Nub-Kheper-Ra's temple at Abydos, Nakht is also labelled [*z3 njswt n*] *hq3 Jnj-[it=f]* (line 3 of the horizontal text, see Kubisch 2008, 164). The designation *hq3 (nh.t)* used to be a common designation for rulers during the late SIP and the very early 18th Dynasty, although earlier examples are known (e.g., a *z3 njswt n hq3 nh.t*) of king Dedumose, presumably dating to the [Theban] 16th Dynasty, see Kubisch 2008, 200–203).

⁴⁶ Kuhlmann 2002, 138–139.

⁴⁷ Polz 2005, 242–245; Polz 2010, 115–138.

⁴⁸ On the sequence of the Intef kings see Polz 2010.



Fig. 12 Fragments of the limestone pyramidion of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef from the king's pyramid at Dra' Abu el-Naga (Restoration: E. Peintner; photo: P. Windszus, © German Archaeological Institute Cairo)



Fig. 13 Decorated northern wall of the chapel of the court official Teti next to the pyramid of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef at Dra' Abu el-Naga (Photo: D. Polz, © German Archaeological Institute Cairo)

once was an unusually large depiction of one of the royal names of Teti's master, Nub-Kheper-Ra⁴⁹. The painted decoration of the two other walls of the chapel show the owner of the tomb seated in front of an offering table (fig. 13). Above the scene on the northern wall are remains of an inscription in horizontal lines including *hṭp-dj-njswt* formulae and sequences of Teti's titles. The latter consist of a classical Middle Kingdom style listing: *jrj-p^ct, h3tj-^c, ḥtmj-bjtj, smr w^ctj, jmj-r3 ḥtmt* – »hereditary prince, count, seal-bearer of the king of Lower Egypt, sole companion, overseer of the seal«. It seems plausible that – in contrast to the combination of titles of Nub-Kheper-Ra's military and administrative personnel at Abydos, Koptos, and the Farshût Road mentioned above – here we probably have the head of Nub-Kheper-Ra's civil administration⁵⁰. In the debris within and around the chapel, a vast number of fragments of a limestone stela of Teti were unearthed, which was only recently and until now only partly reassembled. Teti's stela origi-

⁴⁹ Polz 2003, 10–14 with figs. 3–4 and pl. 1 b–c.

⁵⁰ For a recent overview of the development of the state's administration during the Theban 16th and 17th Dynasties, see Shirley 2013, 546–570.



Fig. 14 Sandstone stela of the priest Iuf from Edfu, mentioning queen Sobekemsaef (after: Lacau 1909, pl. 6 right)



Fig. 15 Fragment of a limestone stela from Tell Edfu, depicting queen Sobekemsaef (after: Engelbach 1922, pl. 1, 6)

nally displayed the conventional type of a round-topped stela with a decorated field in the upper part and a horizontally organized text field in the lower. Thus, it certainly once displayed the same general layout shown by the two above-mentioned stelae of the king's followers Jahnefer and Nakht from Abydos. The text of Teti's stela contained, among other elements, an autobiographical section as well as an »Anruf an die Lebenden«⁵¹. On a very small fragment belonging to the decorated upper field, the name of Teti's king, Nub-Kheper-Ra, is partly preserved.

Further south of Thebes, the presence of Nub-Kheper-Ra is less evident – the southernmost location in which events of his time have left any impression is the wider area of Edfu. From the necropolis there comes a stela of the priest Iuf (fig. 14), a contemporary of Thutmose I, who in his autobiographical text states that he was in charge of restoring the tomb of a queen Sobekemsaef (*sic!*)⁵². Given the unusual male form of her name, this queen should be identified with the wife of king Nub-Kheper-Ra⁵³. The queen is also mentioned with the same male name on another small stela fragment, apparently from the area of Tell Edfu (fig. 15), on which other members of the royal family are also depicted⁵⁴. We might, therefore, conclude that there must have existed a burial (or burials) of the royal family in the cemetery of Edfu during the reign of Nub-Kheper-Ra.

⁵¹ Polz (forthcoming a).

⁵² Bouriant 1887, 93; Lacau 1909, 16–17 pl. 6 (CG 34009); Urk. IV, 29–31; cf. Newberry 1902, 285–286. Naturally, one wonders why the tomb of a royal wife was found to be in ruins only some decades after its erection and one is inclined to see a connection with a historical event mentioned in an inscription in one of the tombs of Elkab (see further down and n. 65–66).

⁵³ Explicitly as spouse of Nub-Kheper-Ra the queen is so far known only from two silver spacers in the British Museum with a somewhat doubtful history, cf. Polz 2007, 38–42.

⁵⁴ Engelbach 1922, 116 pl. 1 [6] (JE 16.2.22.23).

As was noted above, the statement of family ties in the inscriptions of royal monuments and objects (the two pyramidia, the door jambs of a chapel on the Farshût Road, the coffin lid of Sekhem-Ra Wep-Maat) seems to have played a vital role at that time, which might foreshadow the importance of royal wives and mothers (Tetisheri, Ahhotep, Ahmes-Nefertari) only slightly later under the rulers Seqen-en-Ra, Ahmose and Amenhotep I. The area of Elkab/Edfu has long been known to contain burials and tombs of local high officials during the SIP and in recent years, the epigraphic project of the British Museum has yielded substantial new historical and epigraphic data on the period⁵⁵. It seems plausible to assume that the ancestors⁵⁶ of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef originally came from two different families – one from the Theban area, and the other from the Edfu area.

To the south of Edfu there are no clear attestations of king Nub-Kheper-Ra or, indeed, of any other king of the 17th Dynasty – except for a somewhat doubtfully provenanced statue of king Sekhem-Ra Wadj-Khau Sobekemsaef on Elephantine island⁵⁷. In addition, during an intensive survey conducted over the past years by Linda Borrmann, Anita Kriener and Stephan Seidlmayer on the rock inscriptions in the wider Assuan area, among over 1,500 texts (of which approximately 500 were newly found or identified) there is not a single one which can be securely dated to this dynasty⁵⁸. A long known but only recently published stamp seal from Elephantine which obviously displays the hieroglyphic signs of a »ruler of Kush« written in a »pharaonic« name-ring, seems – at first glance – to support the interpretation that the southernmost part of Egypt was no longer under the control of the rulers of the 17th Dynasty. However, the uniqueness of the object and its find spot seem to rule out any far-reaching historical or political interpretation at the present time⁵⁹.

On the basis of this case study and additional material which cannot be discussed here⁶⁰, I would like to attempt a somewhat more synthetic review of the political *status quo* at the end of the SIP in Upper Egypt. During the reign of Nub-Kheper-Ra there are clear indications of a fully functional state on the political, economic, and administrative levels, including provisions and logistics; an obviously partly reorganized military force (the »king's sons«, the »entire army of Koptos«⁶¹) secured the routes necessary for the development and utilization of resources and presumably also long-range trade (the oases, eastern desert, and the Red Sea coast).

The Upper Egyptian rump state at the time was clearly a regional player. Its size was territorially limited and its means and claims are certainly not to be compared with advanced forms of state in Middle or New Kingdom times. But one should not underestimate the size of this political entity, stretching at least from Edfu in the south to Abydos in the north, including vital areas in the Eastern desert and the Red Sea shore and certain territories of the western desert – this is, after all, an area covering almost a third of the country (fig. 16). However, even the foundations of such a rump state could not have been developed during the reigns of just one or two rulers. There must have been preceding phases during which the structural basics were prepared, and these would have been developed during the reigns of Nub-Kheper-Ra's predecessor and brother Sekhem-Ra Wep-Maat Intef and the two Sebekemsaef kings, all of whose activities are well attested⁶².

With the scenario just described, the suggestion that southern Upper Egypt was controlled or dominated by the Hyksos rulers at the end of the SIP seems to be extremely difficult to maintain. This does not exclude a Hyksos presence of some form at that time (and/or earlier), be it through

⁵⁵ Davies 2003; Davies 2010.

⁵⁶ Apparently, the unknown mother of Nub-Kheper-Ra and his brother Sekhem-Ra Wep-Maat was not only »king's mother« but also »king's great wife« (cf. above and n. 42).

⁵⁷ Habachi 1985, 116 pls. 206–207; Seidl 1996, 119 with n. 179; cf. Polz 2007, 90–91.

⁵⁸ Personal communication Linda Borrmann, January 2015. On the project in general, see Borrmann 2014.

⁵⁹ The object was published twice within a year (Fitzenreiter 2014; von Pilgrim 2015). Obviously, the authors encounter some difficulties in interpreting its historical and/or political implications. Both agree, however – on different grounds – that the stamp seal should be dated to within a relatively short time frame, somewhere between the end of the SIP and the very early New Kingdom. While its find spot seems to be more or less securely datable (von Pilgrim 2015, 217) – its original date of manufacture, usage, and discard, cannot, of course, be easily fixed chronologically.

⁶⁰ Polz (forthcoming b).

⁶¹ The term could point to a »standing army« being garrisoned permanently in Koptos, see Spalinger 2013, 434–435.

⁶² Polz 2007, 61–95.

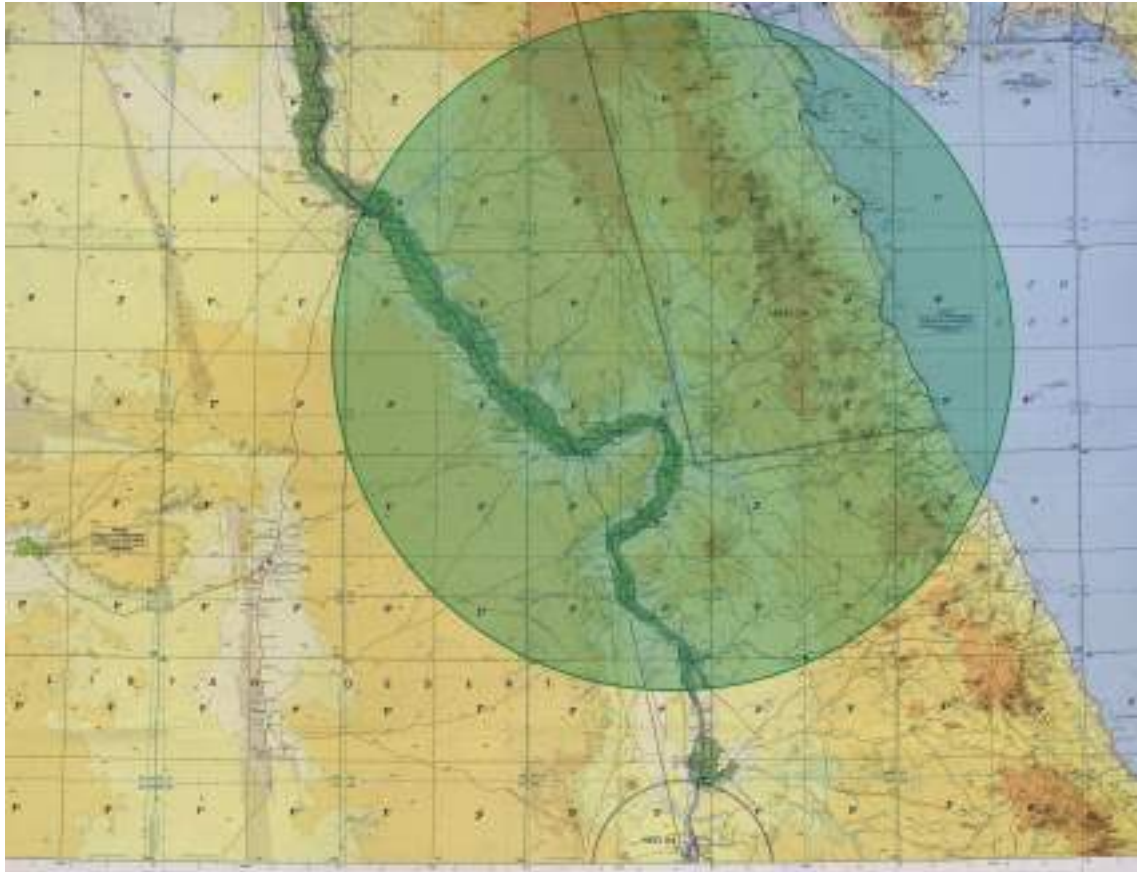


Fig. 16 Map of southern Upper Egypt; the green circle indicates the possible territorial claim of the Theban rulers around the time of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef (detail of: Tactical Pilotage Chart, sheet H-5D, edition 5-GSGS; Copyright © HMSO London 1981)

trade or other economic relations⁶³. The evidence of the objects inscribed with titles and names of Hyksos rulers found in Upper Egypt (at Luxor and Gebelên) does not weigh heavily enough to change the picture⁶⁴.

On the other hand, and in view of the recently recovered tomb inscriptions from Elkab, the scenario would leave space for the insertion of another historical event, namely an obviously hostile military action of Nubian forces into southern Upper Egypt⁶⁵. As demonstrated above, in the archaeological and epigraphic material there are no indications that the area south of Edfu was part of the territory claimed during the reign of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef and, indeed, there is none until the end of the 17th Dynasty. An advance of Nubian troops from the south would, therefore, not have met with substantial resistance – it could only be stopped at the then southern border of the territory of the Theban state in the Edfu area⁶⁶.

⁶³ As the Khyan seal impressions from Tell Edfu suggest, see the contributions of N. Moeller – G. Marouard and I. Forstner-Müller – C. Reali, present volume.

⁶⁴ Polz 2006.

⁶⁵ Davies 2003; Davies 2010. For the respective passages of the biographical text in the tomb of the governor of Elkab Sobeknakht, see Davies 2003, 6.

⁶⁶ One may, however, ask exactly how large a force these Nubian troops comprised and who they were. Sobeknakht's inscription seems to indicate a huge allied force (including Kush, Wawat, Punt, and even Medjau), but this statement could be exaggerated. In any case, it would be in stark contrast to the noticeable presence of Egyptians (including military personnel) at Buhen during the end of the SIP, some of whom officially served the »ruler of Kush« (Kubisch 2008, 86–88 and 166–178). On palaeographic grounds (the inverted *j*^h-sign, see the discussion in Polz 2007, 14–20), at least three stelae of these officials from Buhen can be dated to the period between the reigns of Nub-Kheper-Ra Intef and Ahmose (stelae »Buhen 1«, »Buhen 2«, and »Buhen 5«, in: Kubisch 2007, 86–88. 166–178), which would make their donors contemporaries of Sobeknakht and the »Nubian incident«.

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