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Abstract:

The site of Gebelein, whose Arabic name “two mountains” seems to reflect the ancient Egyptian *gbrtj*, “two rocks,” was occupied from Prehistory to the Roman Period. Tombs from Naqada I to the Middle Kingdom have been found in the area. Remains such as papyri discovered in tombs of the 4th Dynasty are the most ancient documents of their kind. A settlement developed close to the sacred area of the temple built on top of the southern hill at least from the 2nd Dynasty on. Aside from the temple blocks, the remains from there are mainly votive inscriptions offered to the goddess Hathor by kings and private individuals from the Middle Kingdom to the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods. After being a royal estate during the Old Kingdom, Gebelein appears to have become a place for recruitment of mercenaries, a military post, and, in the Ptolemaic Period, a garrison settlement.

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GEBELEIN

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Elisa Fiore Marochetti



Gebelein
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*The site of Gebelein, whose Arabic name “two mountains” seems to reflect the ancient Egyptian *jnrtj*, “two rocks,” was occupied from Prehistory to the Roman Period. Tombs from Naqada I to the Middle Kingdom have been found in the area. Remains such as papyri discovered in tombs of the 4th Dynasty are the most ancient documents of their kind. A settlement developed close to the sacred area of the temple built on top of the southern hill at least from the 2nd Dynasty on. Aside from the temple blocks, the remains from there are mainly votive inscriptions offered to the goddess Hathor by kings and private individuals from the Middle Kingdom to the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods. After being a royal estate during the Old Kingdom, Gebelein appears to have become a place for recruitment of mercenaries, a military post, and, in the Ptolemaic Period, a garrison settlement.*


موقع جبلين (Gebelein) والذي يعنى اسمه فى العربية «جبلين» ، فيما يبدو أن اسمه كان يرادف كلمة « *jnrtj* - الصخرتين» فى اللغة المصرية القديمة ، كان الموقع مأهولا بالسكان منذ عصر ما قبل التاريخ وحتى العصر الروماني . عثر فى تلك المنطقة على مقابر تؤرخ بعصر نقادة الأولى إلى عصر الدولة الوسطى. كذلك تم الكشف عن لقى أثرية كالبردي عثر عليه بمقابر الأسرة الرابعة ، والتي تعد من أقدم الوثائق من نوعها. تطورت المنطقة السكنية حتى وصلت بالقرب من منطقة المعبد المقدسة والمشيد على التل الجنوبي منذ الأسرة الثانية على الأقل. وإلى جانب الكتل الحجرية الخاصة بالمعبد فإن البقايا الأثرية المكتشفة هناك يغلب عليها طابع النقوش النذرية المقدمة للإلهة حتحور من الملوك وكبار رجال الدولة والتي ترجع إلى الدولة الوسطى وحتى العصور البطلمية والرومانية. الجدير بالذكر أن هذه المنطقة بعد أن كانت مقاطعة ملكية خلال الدولة القديمة أصبحت فيما بعد منطقة تجنيد للمرتزقة، ونقطة عسكرية، ثم مستوطنة «حامية» عسكرية خلال العصر البطلمي.

The first mention of the toponym *Jnrtj*, “two rocks,” referring to the god Anubis is found in the Gebelein papyri, dating back to the 4th Dynasty (Gomaà 1986: 74 - 77; Posener-

Krieger 2004: 66). There the name of the village  is read *Jnrtj Jnpw*, “the two rocks of Anubis” (or “the two stones of Anubis” in Posener-Krieger 1975: 218, 2004: 14). From the Middle Kingdom on, the

writing can include two superimposed ovoid hieroglyphs , which would represent the two stones (Posener-Kriéger 1975: 219; Zibelius 1978: 44 - 45), or two rectangular signs  also symbolizing two stones. *Jnrtj* may refer to the site's geography, with its characteristic two hills (ref. *jnr*, “outcrops,” “cliff, rock,” Hannig 2006: 88). However, the writing *Jntjw* is found in a passage of the Pyramid Texts in which the place-name relating to the god Thoth is read (PT §1271c; Kees 1925: 14; see also Allen 1974: 109, §134). The Greek rendering of the name of the goddess Hathor and her place attribute (“lady of the two mountains”), whose etymology, however, is far from being clear, is Αθηρνεβενται(γ)εως. In the Gebelein Demotic papyri of the Ptolemaic Period, the epithet of the goddess Hathor is “Lady of *ntjrwj*,” of uncertain etymology, somehow considered to be the equivalent of the Greek (Griffith 1909: 130; Pestman 1965: 52 - 53; Sethe and Gardiner 1910: 45; Spiegelberg 1928: 153).

Pr-Hwt-Hrw, “the house of Hathor,” used since the 12th Dynasty, subsequently developed into Pathyris, which can be found in numerous Greek and Demotic papyri (Griffith 1909: 130). An engraved stela from the 12th year of Trajan dedicated to the goddess Isis of Pathyris (Daressy 1888b: 140; Helck 1982: col. 915)—together with information gathered from late papyri—ensures the identification with the toponym *Pr-Hwt-Hrw* as referring to the site of the temple erected on the southern hill at Gebelein (Gardiner 1947, Vol. II: 17 - 18; Papyrus Reisner II, see Simpson 1965: 44, Fr. 5, Vs. 14). As Hathor was equated with the Greek Aphrodites, the town can probably be identified with the Aphroditopolis mentioned by Strabo (*Geographia*, XVII, I, 47; Gomaà 1986: 73 - 74).

T3-hd, a site sacred to the local god Anubis (Kees 1935), which seems to appear in the Middle Kingdom, is a toponym referring to the necropolis of Gebelein, while *Jwnwt* () is difficult to classify and can be found in the royal epithet *hk3 Jwnwt* “ruler of

Iunut, i.e. Gebelein” on the Nebhepetra Mentuhotep chapel in Gebelein (see, for example, Turin Suppl. 12195; Gomaà 1986: 77 - 79; Otto 1952: 99; Postel 2004: 143; Sethe and Schäfer 1909: 115-11 and 125-12; Spiegelberg 1928: 1 53; see also Gauthier 1926: 2; Goedicke 1966: 12 - 57). It seems to refer to the temple area in a stricter sense, perhaps as counterpart of Dendara, the temple that was dedicated to the same goddess.

Jrw is the name of a village of a funerary estate dating back to the 4th Dynasty and mentioned in the papyri from Gebelein together with *Jnrtj Jnpw* as both depending on a *hwt-ntj nt Snfrw* “temple of Sneferu” (Jacquet-Gordon 1962: 50, 239 - 242; Posener - Kriéger 1975: 218, 2004: esp. 14, pls. 3 - 4, 18, pls. 30 - 33, and 66), which can probably be identified with Asfun, the neighboring village to the south (Gomaà 1986: 71 - 72). It is again mentioned on religious papyri of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods (fourth century BCE - first century CE; Bucher 1928, Part I: 156).

The toponym *Jw-mjtrw* (modern Rizeiqât) refers to a funerary domain further north (Jacquet-Gordon 1962: 119) and is often mistaken for the location of the town itself; *Swmnw* indicates the cult place of the god Sobek, not far to the north of Gebelein (Greek Κροκοδείλων πόλις, Crocodilopolis, modern el-Mahamid Qibli; Bakry 1971: 131 - 146; Bucher 1928, Part II: 41 - 52; Gardiner 1947, Vol. II: 330 - 331; Gomaà 1986: 81 - 82, 117 - 122; Herbin 1977 - 1978: 466; Kuentz 1929: 123 - 135; Sauneron 1968: 58). Crocodilopolis as the twin city of Pathyris (Kuentz 1929: 113) was probably located on the southern border of the 4th nome (Gomaà 1986: 122 - 127; Habachi 1975b: 34, note 30). The topographic lists of the late Middle Kingdom (Gardiner 1947, Vol. I: 6; Goedicke and Wente 1962: pl. 32, no. 61; Grdseloff 1951) indicate from south to north the toponyms *Pr-Hwt-Hrw*, *Swmnw* (Brovarski 1976: 34; Gardiner 1947, Vol. I: 77), and then *Jw-mjtrw* as all being subordinate to Armant. From the Demotic papyri found at Gebelein

we even know that *Jw-mjtrw* was later pronounced *Amur* (Griffith 1909: 130, 144; Kuentz 1929: 113, 153; Pestman 1965: 52). The Demotic documents indicate that the two administrative jurisdictions of *Pr-Hwt-Hrw* and *Jw-mjtrw* were separate, one at Gebelein and the other between Gebelein and Armant. The cult of Sobek of *Swmnw*, first attested in the First Intermediate Period tomb of Ini at Gebelein, was associated with that of Hathor of Gebelein at least from the 18th Dynasty on (Bakry 1971: 133, 136; Pestman 1965: 53).

The Site of Gebelein

Gebelein is located about 28 kilometers south of Thebes on the west bank of the Nile (Donadoni Roveri 1990: 23, 1999; Habachi 1975b: 33, fig. 4; Posener-Kriéger 1975: 218; Roccati 1975; Wildung 1977). The current Arabic name of the location el-Gabalein, “the two mountains,” reflects the ancient name. Indeed, two hills dominate the area, running from north to south. The first (fig. 1), to the north, was used as a cemetery from the Predynastic Period onwards and is crossed by a railway line and a canal. This raised massif is furrowed by numerous depressions and is several kilometers distant from the Libyan plateau to the west. Rock-cut tombs, mastabas, and shafts with burials dating from the Early Dynastic to the 12th Dynasty pierce the eastern side while the Predynastic cemetery extends to the west of the hill. Weigall (1910: 298) stated that “about halfway along the first range (i.e., the northeast side of the northern hill) are some grotto-like quarries from which the stone for building the temple seems to have been procured.”

The other, about 1.5 km long hill to the south, along the Nile, is called Sidi Musa after the tomb of the Islamic saint (Otto 1952: 92 - 105). A temple was built on top of the hill, probably during the 2nd Dynasty (2800 - 2670 BCE; Morenz 1994). The location was presumably at the same site as the later Ptolemaic temple, which was erected at the center of the summit. During the 11th Dynasty, at the beginning of his reign, Nebhepetra Mentuhotep (2061 - 2010 BCE)

built a chapel dedicated to the goddess Hathor, Lady of Dendara (*nbt Jwnt*), which was subsequently enlarged by Thutmose III (1479 - 1425 BCE) and Ptolemy VIII Evergetes II (170 - 163, 145 - 116 BCE); foundations and fragments were found at the end of the nineteenth century (Fraser 1893). Many stelae dedicated to Hathor, Lady of Gebelein (*nbt Jnrtj*), dating from the 12th Dynasty onwards and once set up in the temple, have been found in the area (Leospo 1988: 90 - 91). At the western edge of the southern hill the village of Pathyris extended, which was partially inside the temenos of the temple of Hathor and inside the fortress wall. A causeway reached the temple cutting the village from the north side (Bergamini 2003; Pestman 1965: 54 - 56).

This area is now the site of the villages of northern el-Gherira and southern el-Gherira (Curto 1985: 167 - 168). On the east bank, at Dibabija, two quarries of excellent quality, bright white limestone were probably exploited by neighboring Gebelein (Barre 1993: 17, 21; Daressy 1888a: 133 - 138; Habachi 1975a: col. 1079; Kitchen 1986: 256; Klemm and Klemm 2008: 136).

History

Gebelein was occupied from the Naqada I Period (4000 - 3400 BCE) onwards (Lortet and Gaillard 1909: 29 - 38; CGT 2073 - 2078, CGT 18800, and Louvre E 25383-4, see Graff 2009: 195, 198, 212, 236, 240 - 241; also Aksamit 1989). The famous painted linen (Turin Suppl. 17138, see fig. 2; Galassi 1955: 1 - 42) that was found in a pit tomb belongs to the Naqada Ic-IIa Period (Adams and Cialowicz 1997: 36; Farina 1929: 293; Leospo 1989: 186 - 189, figs. 281 - 284; Midant-Reynes 2003: 331; Williams and Logan 1987: 255 - 256, fig. 15). Naqada II rectangular pit tombs containing black-topped red pottery and red decorated wares were found by Lortet and Gaillard (1909: 34; Graff 2009: 269, 300, 351, 362, 374). During the Early Dynastic Period, a massive temple, whose deity is still unknown, was built that provides evidence of a nearby settlement, along with burials from



Figure 1. View of the northern hill.



Figure 2. Painted linen, dating to Naqada Ic-IIa. MAE Turin Suppl. 17138.

this period (Curto 1953; Morenz 1994; see also the wooden macehead, in Bußmann 2010; Daressy 1922).

In the Old Kingdom, *Jnrtj*—together with *Jrw*—appears to have been an agricultural estate, most probably dependent on a funerary domain of King Sneferu (2575 - 2551 BCE; Gomaà 1986: 71 - 72; Posener-Kriéger 2004: P. Geb. I rto, plate 3).

From the end of the Old Kingdom up to the unification of the New Kingdom, Gebelein lay within the sphere of influence of the almost independent 3rd nome of Hierakonpolis—its power extending as far as Elephantine and controlling the nome of Edfu, as we can read in the inscriptions on the tomb of Ankhtifi at el-Moalla (Aufrère 2000; Černý 1961; Darnell 2008: 91; Doret 1994; Helck 1974: 78 - 83; Morenz 2009 - 2010; Roccati 1967; Spanel 1984; Vandier 1950: 20, inscr. 2-6-7), who was perhaps a contemporary of King Pepy II Neferkara or of Intef II (Roccati 2000: 213 - 215). After the 6th Dynasty (2350 - 2200 BCE), the army was organized by district chiefs or administrative officials, making it capable of guaranteeing protection based on territorial expansion (Fischer 1968: 154 - 165).

The so-called “soldiers stelae” from Gebelein and Rizeiqât probably date to the period of Ankhtifi and are dedicated by persons who have been identified as members of the army; six stelae portray the soldiers with their families (Fischer 1961: 44 - 80,

1962; Kubisch 2000: 264 - 265; Schenkel 1965: 278, §§462 - 464, 279, §§465 - 466, 281, § 469; Vandier 1943: 25 - 29). Most of them belonged to Nubian contingents, perhaps of Medjay origin (generically defined as *nhsj*, Kubisch 2000: 243 - 248, 264; the *mdz*, with their pan-grave culture, appear to have settled mostly in the Eastern Desert in Lower Nubia, Postel 2008: 337; *nhsj* belong to the ethnic group *mdz* for Zibelius-Chen 2007: 395 - 397), who had assimilated Egyptian customs and adopted Egyptian names. In the tomb of Ini, a cow leather and a skull were found beside the coffin, a possible remainder of a Nubian funerary custom (Donadoni Roveri 1989: 183). However, there is no evidence of pan-graves at the site.

The military events during the 11th Dynasty are portrayed in the well-known paintings in the *saff* tomb of Iti, the god’s seal-bearer and overseer general of the troops (fig. 3; Leospo 1989: 212, figs. 319, 320; titles on Turin stela Suppl. 13114, cf. Leospo 1988: fig. 125; Schenkel 1965: 279, §468). Nebhepetra Mentuhotep (2061 - 2100 BCE) dedicated a chapel to Hathor of Dendera at a site near the Gebel Antef, at the end of the Girga Road—which connects to the Thebaid via the Farshut Road leading to the oasis of Kharga—where he could assemble soldiers and patrol the desert route (Darnell and Darnell 2002). Troop recruitment in the Gebelein area for an expedition to Punt occurred in Year 8 of Seankhkara Mentuhotep (2100 - 1998 BCE),



Figure 3. Painting from the tomb of Iti.

as stated in the inscription of Hen(en)u in Wadi Hammamat (Couyat and Montet 1912: 81 - 84, no. 114; Lichtheim 1988: 52 - 54; MAE Turin Suppl. 14354/26).

The religious importance of the local Hathor cult in history, certainly from the Middle Kingdom up to the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, is confirmed by numerous sources from the Middle and New Kingdom, fragments of votive statues and of votive stelae dedicated to the goddess Hathor (like the stelae from the time of Thutmose III and Sety I now in Turin, cf. Leospo 1988: 91, figs. 112 - 121), and Demotic ostraca and papyri from the Ptolemaic Period (Kaplony-Heckel 1977: cols. 449 - 452).

From the Middle Kingdom onwards, many kings dedicated stelae at the site of the temple of Hathor, including Dedumose (coronation stela of the king, led by Khonsu to Anubis, CGT 20533 and Cairo JE 29238 - JE 29239), Senebmiu (BM 24898; von Beckerath 1964: 258 [3]), Montuemisaf (block JE 39538; von

Beckerath 1999: 102 - 103, XIIIb; Daressy 1893: 72), Neferhotep III (fragment of stela JE T.R. 22/5/26/13; Helck 1975: n. 60) of the late 13th Dynasty (1700 - 1690 BCE) or of the 16th Dynasty (according to Ryholt 1997: 133, 156 - 164, 263), and a king Sobekemsaf (fragment of naos in Turin, Leospo 1988: 92, fig. 117) of the 17th Dynasty (1690 - 1548 BCE). Two stone blocks with the names of Khian and Apep (lintel of Aauserra JE 29298, black granite statue of Khian JE 30392; Daressy 1893: 42; Helck 1975: n. 79; Polz 2006: 239 - 240) could prove the actual extent of the Hyksos domain at the time of the 15th Dynasty (1640 - 1532 BCE). However, Polz (2006: 246) assumes that the Hyksos neither had a brick built fortress at the site nor extended their domain to Upper Egypt, the finds there being part of the sack of Avaris.

The first kings of the New Kingdom, Ahmose (1548 - 1523 BCE) and Amenhotep I (1523 - 1502 BCE), left their names at the site (stela CGT 34165). A new chapel was built by Thutmose III (1479 - 1425 BCE), whose prenomen is inscribed on the votive objects found in the foundation depository of the extant structures (Leospo 1988: 87, figs. 99 - 102 and fig. 104). The names of both Horemheb (1316 - 1302 BCE) and Sety I (1301 - 1290 BCE) are inscribed on monuments at the temple site (Fraser 1893: 497; Schiaparelli 1921: 126; Turin stela Suppl. 12065, in Leospo 1988: 93, fig. 121).

In the 21st Dynasty, the construction of the fortress of the Theban pontiff, the high priest of Amun Menkheperria (1045 - 992 BCE), whose cartouche is stamped on the bricks together with that of his wife Isetemkheb (Kitchen 1986: 269 - 270, fig. 1; Leospo 1988: 94, fig. 122; for similar bricks at the fortress at el-Hiba and Karnak, cf. Kitchen 1986: 63, 572), again hints at a military settlement, completing the chain of fortresses controlling corridors for the Libyans to the Nile—in this case the Farshut Road leading to the exile-filled oasis of Kharga (Darnell and Darnell 2002: 135). After this period, there is a gap in the documentation.

The religious aspect of Gebelein seems to revive in the Ptolemaic Period, at least from the reign of Ptolemy V on and with Ptolemy VIII, when the temple of Hathor was reconstructed (Fraser 1893: 497). Its military character is also evident as the Ptolemaic rulers established a Greek garrison there between 150 and 88 BCE. The Demotic and Greek documents from Pathyris (Gebelein), Crocodilopolis, and modern Rizeiqât—scattered throughout many museums—are on papyri, pottery, stone ostraca, and wooden labels (Kaplony-Heckel 1989, 2002: note 1). Two Demotic papyri give the account of the revolt of Harwennefer, who ruled from 205 BCE - 199 BCE and whose dominion included Pathyris (Pestman 1995: 101 - 105, 111, 113, 115), which occurred around the third - second century BCE under Ptolemy V Epiphanes, and of the riots of 88 BCE, which spread from Thebes (Kaplony-Heckel 1991: 129; see also Chauveau 2002: 52) when Gebelein as a military center was faithful to the Ptolemaic ruler. The oldest information about the temple administration and priestly organization comes from the military settled there. The many private law documents from family archives mostly contain correspondence between the soldiers and the notary of the priests of the temple of Hathor and Sobek, the land being the property of the temple. Less conspicuous are the Demotic documents of the state bureau. In the Ptolemaic Period, Gebelein was the main center of its own nome, called the “gate of the nome of Pathyris,” as revealed by tax payment receipts and the title of scribe of that nome (Kaplony-Heckel 1977: col. 452). The last Ptolemaic document from Pathyris is dated to 80 BCE (Pestman 1965: 51, note 28).

Stela CGT 9269 (Helck 1982: col. 915) from the 12th year of Trajan (110 CE), discovered among the ruins of the ancient town at the foot of the southern hill and dedicated to the goddess Isis of Pathyris, shows the religious importance of Gebelein at least until the time of this Roman emperor and the syncretism of the cult of Hathor.

Research History

Research activities at Gebelein were officially begun on behalf of the Service des Antiquités in 1885 by Maspero (1893: 211, 231 - 232) and in 1891/1892 by Eugène Grébaut, with the assistance of Georges Daressy. A brief account of their activities next to the tomb of Sidi Musa on the southern hill was reported by Willoughby Fraser (1893: 496 - 500).

The 1891 excavation led to the discovery of the ruins of a Ptolemaic temple, built on top of an even more ancient construction dating back at least to Nebhepetra Mentuhotep; some of the blocks were found in the foundations of a Greek house at the foot of the hill, as also reported by Maspero (1910: n. 322) and Fraser (1893: 497), who saw them the following year and noted some of their inscriptions.

In 1893 Jacques de Morgan, now Director General of the Service des Antiquités, sent the Inspector of Antiquities for Upper Egypt Georges Foucart to Gebelein. Foucart discovered a few fragments from the 11th Dynasty, for which he provided no description, and a granite fragment of a statue with the cartouche of Khian (de Morgan 1894: 30; *PM* V: 163).

In that same year, Percy Newberry extended the research of an archaeological expedition of the Egypt Exploration Fund at Beni Hassan and Deir el-Bersha to Gebelein: there they transcribed and recorded numerous inscriptions found on the summit of the southern hill and on the plain extending northwest from it, where the town belonging to the Ptolemaic Period once stood (Daressy 1893: 42, N. 87; Fraser 1893: 497, fig. XV); several ancient limestone blocks were discovered in the town’s walls and foundations (Cairo JE T.R. 24/5/28/5 and probably Cairo JE T.R. 1/11/17/10, see fig. 4; Daressy 1893: 26; Fiore Marochetti 2005, 2010; Habachi 1963: 37 - 40; Robins 1990: 41). At the former site, they identified the remains of the Ptolemaic chapel erected by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II: inside they found pieces of a large black basalt statue, mentioned by Fraser



Figure 4. Block with wall relief. White limestone. Cairo J.E. T.R. 1/11/17/10.

(1893: 497), and inscribed limestone blocks from various periods scattered across the floor.

Between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the area was heavily plundered and many documents appeared on the market and were spread to different collections as a result (Vandorpe 1994). In 1899 a regular survey led by Germans on the northern hill at the site found Middle Kingdom coffins, statues, and models from the tomb of Henuy, which are now in the Berlin and Cairo museums (*PM* V: 162 - 163; Steindorff 1901: 11 - 34).

Lortet and Gaillard explored the area between 1908 and 1909. The finds, mainly flint tools and objects from tombs of Naqada II, are in the museum in Lyon (Lortet and Gaillard 1909: 29 - 38, 225 - 238).

A series of expeditions by the Italian Archaeological Mission (M.A.I.) were led by Ernesto Schiaparelli in the years 1910, 1911, 1914, and 1920 (Schiaparelli 1921: 126 - 128); they were continued by Giulio Farina in 1930, 1934, and 1937 (Farina 1929, 1937).

Schiaparelli's research focused on three sites: the southern hill with the Hathor temple, which was no longer standing; the plain at the foot of said hill where the site of the ancient town once stood, now southern el-Gherira (Bergamini 2003), with its vast adjacent necropolis; and the northern hill, just to the

south of the village of northern el-Gherira, with the settlement and the necropolis of Predynastic origin, the Old Kingdom necropolis on the northeastern side (Curto 1985: 169 - 170), and the necropolis belonging to the First Intermediate Period, where *saff*-tombs, like that of Iti (Leospo 1988: 91 - 94, 1994a), were discovered.

The Predynastic necropolis to the north provided a great deal of material such as black-topped red vases, pieces of furniture like parts of beds, and funerary equipment. Schiaparelli also found burials in large pottery vases (Donadoni Roveri 1969: pls. I - VII). Old Kingdom burial equipment included pleated tunics (for example, Turin Suppl. 14087, see fig. 5; Hall and Pedrini 1984; Pedrini et al. 2006).



Figure 5. Pleated tunic. MAE Turin Suppl. 14087.

The remains of the massive unbaked masonry walls of a fortress, still visible in the photographs taken by the Schiaparelli mission (fig. 6) but now vanished, provided numerous bricks with the cartouche of the high priest of Amun Menkheperra of the 21st Dynasty (Leospo 1988: 87, 91, fig. 122). During the campaign of 1910, Ernesto Schiaparelli explored the area of the 21st Dynasty fortress on the southern hill (Schiaparelli 1921: 126 - 128), where the presence of the Ptolemaic chapel had already been ascertained (Fraser 1893: 497), and of the Early Dynastic chapel, of which two sculpted blocks were brought to light (Turin Suppl. 12341 and Cairo T.R. 20/1/21/7; Bußmann 2010; Curto 1953: 105 - 24; Morenz 1994: 217 - 238, figs. 1 - 2; Smith 1946: 137 - 138, pl. 30). It stood beside the small temple of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep and a new chapel built for the cult of Hathor by Thutmose III. Several blocks from this building and its foundation deposit were found (Leospo 1988: 87, figs. 98 - 102).



Figure 6. View of the southern hill with remains of the 21st Dynasty fortress of Menkheperra and the tomb of Sidi Musa.

In 1911 Schiaparelli left his assistant Virginio Rosa (fig. 7) on the site to continue research activities. During the excavation of the painted *saff*-tomb of Iti (Fiore Marochetti 2009; Leospo 1988: 91 - 94, 1994a), dated to the First Intermediate Period and discovered the year before by Bolos Ghattas in the northern necropolis of el-Gherira, Rosa found part of the funerary equipment of Iti's wife Neferu. He also uncovered, among other tombs, a 4th Dynasty burial (figs. 8, 9, and 18; Fiore Marochetti et al. 2003: 235 - 256), the rock-cut "Tomb of the Unknown" dated to the 5th Dynasty (D'Amicone 1988: 71; Roccati 1971), the rock tomb with the burial equipment of Iti from the 6th Dynasty (*PM* V: 162), and the tomb of the priest of Sobek, Lord of *Swmnw* Ini of the First Intermediate Period (Leospo 1988: 95 - 99, 1994a: 54).



Figure 7. Virginio Rosa.

In 1914 Schiaparelli returned to Gebelein and discovered the 4th Dynasty mastaba of Perim (D'Amicone 1994: 28 - 31), including his coffin decorated with the palace façade and his burial equipment (fig. 10), the so-called "Great Tomb" with the coffin of Iqer (Suppl. 15774) from the



Figure 8. Painted coffin. MAE Turin Suppl. 14061.

mid-12th Dynasty (Hornung 1973: pl. II; Willems 1983), as well as several burials in pottery vases (fig. 11) and baskets (Donadoni Roveri 1969: tabs. I - VII).

In 1920 he excavated the Western Necropolis in northern el-Gherira with Predynastic and later burials in all sorts of containers such as mats, tree trunks (Turin Suppl. 16742, see fig. 12), baskets, vases, goat leather, and children's burials in baskets (Brunton 1940: 521 - 522; Marro 1920, 1929: 33). Coffins painted with palace façades and decorated with palm trees and lotus shaped columns (for example, Suppl. 16756; Donadoni Roveri 1962; Fiore Marochetti et al. 2003), dating to the 4th and 5th Dynasties, were found inside shaft tombs (figs. 13 - 14 and figs. 15 - 17).

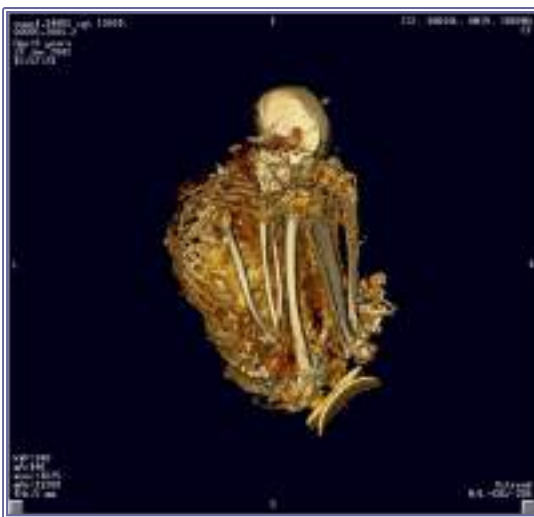


Figure 9. CT scan of mummy MAE Turin Suppl. 14061.



Figure 10. Inlaid box from the mastaba of Perim. MAE Turin Suppl. 16735.

Schiaparelli died in 1928 before writing the excavation account. Giovanni Marro and Giulio Farina continued research in the years 1930 (Farina 1929) and from 1934 to 1937 (Farina 1937; Fumagalli 1953). These excavations provided a great deal of material amongst which were unique painted linen with themes matching vase depictions. Unfortunately there is very little information about the explored areas. Five Old Kingdom papyri, which were found in



Figure 11. Burial in a pottery vase found to the left of the mastaba of Perim. MAE Turin Suppl. 15741.



Figure 12. Burial in a tree trunk. MAE Turin Suppl. 16742.



Figure 13. Coffin with painted palace façade. MAE Turin Prov. 3593.



Figure 14. Coffin with palace façade decoration. MAE Turin Suppl. 16756.

1935 at the southern edge of el-Gherira village, are amongst the most ancient administrative documents ever found (Posener-Kriéger 2004). The papyri were set in a box placed near a coffin with palace façade decoration in a tomb shaft 5 m deep (Posener-Kriéger 1994). A similar burial custom was found in at least one other tomb, again at Gebelein, dating to the 4th Dynasty (fig. 18; Fiore Marochetti et al. 2003).



Figure 15. Old Kingdom burial.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, joint excavations by the Soprintendenza al Museo Antichità Egizie of Turin and the University of Rome “La Sapienza” again explored the site of the cemetery of southern el-Gherira, discovering a *saff*-tomb, and Pathyris (Bergamini 2003).

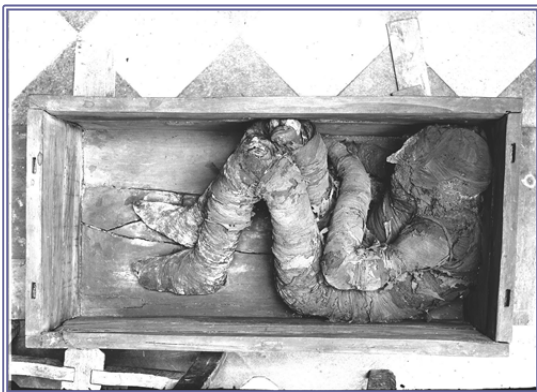


Figure 16. Old Kingdom coffin with mummy. MAE Turin Suppl. 16760.



Figure 17. Old Kingdom coffin with mummy.

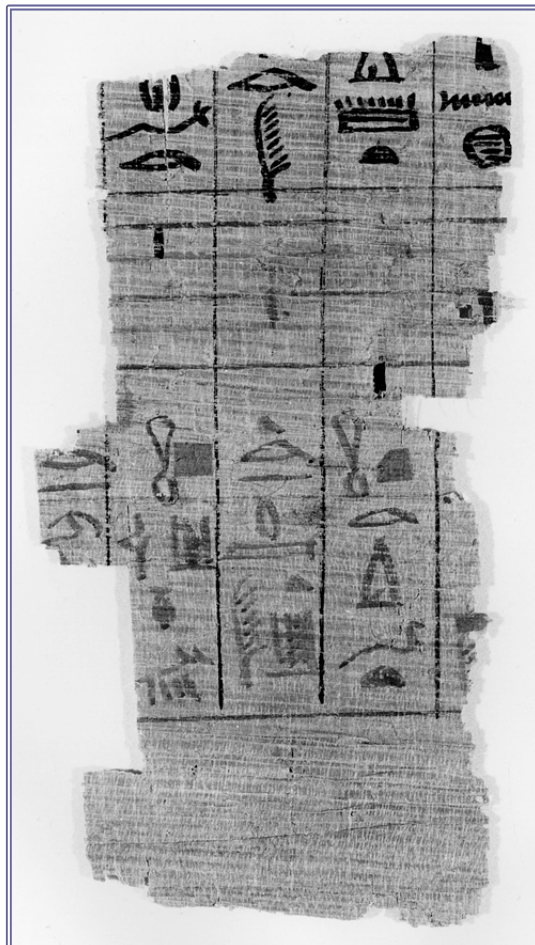


Figure 18. Fragment of Papyrus MAE Turin Suppl. 14062. 4th Dynasty.

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The edition of 4th Dynasty Gebelein papyri is found in Posener-Kriéger (2004). The presence of policemen, soldiers, and Nubian contingents is discussed in Fischer (1961), Vernus (1986), Andreu (1991), and Kubisch (2000). The reliefs of the chapel of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep are published in Fiore Marochetti (2010), while articles by the same author (Fiore Marochetti 2009; Fiore Marochetti et al. 2003) concern finds of a 4th Dynasty burial and inscribed vases from the First Intermediate Period tomb of Iti. The tombs of the Unknown and of Ini and Iti as well as the account of their reconstruction can be found in Turin Museum occasional publications (i.e., D'Amicone 1988, 1994). A Demotic bibliography on Gebelein is in Kaplony-Heckel (1977, 2009), Ritner (1984), Massa (1999), and Chauvaux (2002); Pestman (1965) has published the Greek-Demotic private archive documents. Vandorpe (1994) discusses the history of legal and illicit market acquisition, from 1891 to 1903, of Demotic and Greek documents now spread throughout various museums. Vleeming (1987) focuses on tax receipts and suggests Armant as the provenance of some early Ptolemaic tax receipts (Vleeming 1994). Kaplony-Heckel (1963)

and Massa (1999) discuss temple oath documents. Morenz (2009) provides a picture of the third century BCE Gebelein society. Anthropological notes on human remains in the University Museum of Turin are also in Fumagalli (1951 - 1952, 1952a, 1952b).

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